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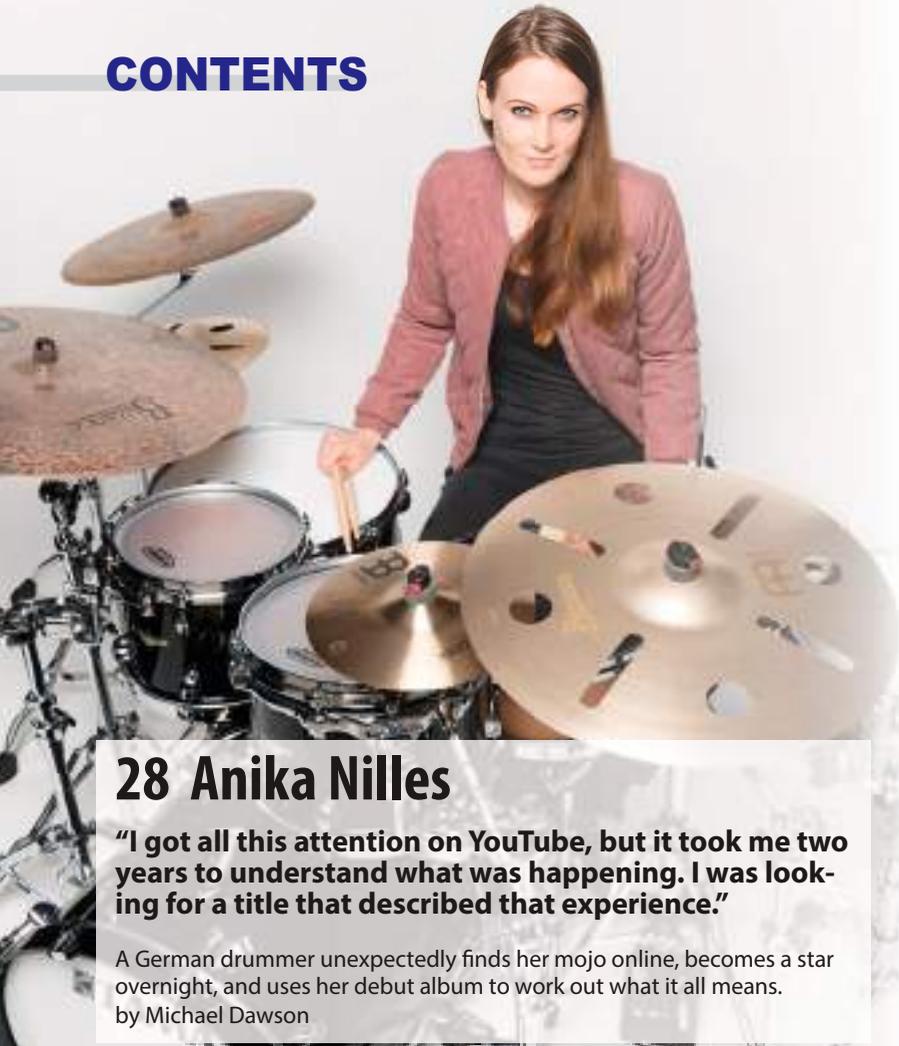
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28 Anika Nilles

“I got all this attention on YouTube, but it took me two years to understand what was happening. I was looking for a title that described that experience.”

A German drummer unexpectedly finds her mojo online, becomes a star overnight, and uses her debut album to work out what it all means.
by Michael Dawson

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WHEN
YOU PLAY,
IT SHOULD
ALWAYS
COME FROM
YOUR SOUL,
NOT FROM
YOUR HEAD.

— ANIKA NILLES

SET THE TONE |

EVANS
DRUMHEADS

AN EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

MD Archive Online

Hello, longtime subscribers, casual readers, and newcomers to the *MD* family! We are super-excited to announce that—for the first time in our forty-plus-year history—every single issue of *Modern Drummer* is now available for viewing via our new iOS and Android app and the special Archive section of moderndrummer.com.

If you're a current subscriber, you should have received an email with instructions on how to set up your account. If you overlooked that email, feel free to send a message to mdinfo@moderndrummer.com, and we'll walk you through the process. Basically what you need to do is click on the "My Profile" button at the top of moderndrummer.com, click "Lost Password," and then enter the email address that's associated with your subscription. Once you receive the password-reset email, click the link in the message to take you to a page where you can create a password to access content on our website. The "My Profile" page also has a section where you can add up to five mobile devices (smartphone, tablet, etc.). Make sure you also download the *Modern Drummer* app on your devices so you can check out the digital editions of the magazine without having to use a web browser.

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When it comes time to renew, or if you're considering purchasing a subscription for the first time, there are several options. You can access the entire archive in addition to receiving the print and digital copies of each new issue for \$54.95 per year, or you can forgo the print for just the digital edition and archive for \$49.95 per year. If you don't want the archive, you can get the digital edition for \$24.95, or the print and digital for \$29.95. (These prices are for U.S. subscribers. International rates are available at moderndrummer.com/subscribe.)

Combing through the digital archive is sure to keep you informed, entertained, and practicing for hours on end. There are dozens of lessons from legendary drummers/educators like Joe Morello, David Garibaldi, Peter Magadini, Terry Bozzio, and Rod Morgenstein. And there are hundreds of amazing interviews with the greatest drummers of all time. Tony Williams, Steve Gadd, Bill Bruford, Phil Collins, Billy Cobham, Neil Peart, Vinnie Colaiuta, Dave Weckl, Max Roach, Elvin Jones... the list goes on and on! It's also really fun to flip through the older issues to check out the advertisements and the various gear and fashion trends of the time.

Enjoy this issue—and go to moderndrummer.com to enjoy all the rest!



Michael Dawson
Managing Editor



MODERN DRUMMER

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Ronald Spagnardi
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Hybrid Setups: Pros? Cons?



In recent years, electronic/acoustic hybrid setups have seen a relatively rapid rise in popularity. And it's easy to see why, considering the dominance of produced sounds and tones in modern popular music and the need to reproduce those sounds live. Here, our social media followers give us their thoughts on the pros and cons of using a hybrid setup.

In a cover band that plays dance music, it's great because you can use electronic kick sounds that are closer to the commercial release, which helps propel the dance floor. A variety of sounds can enhance a relatively straightforward gig. In terms of drawbacks, in addition to the possibility of a power outage, having one of your trigger pads malfunction in the middle of a song isn't very pleasant. But it doesn't really happen that often. If you're a heavy-handed player, you may make more damage than music with electronic drums and pads.

Leon Lamont

I love having a hybrid kit. I use an SPD-SX sampler with two external pads and an electronic kick to enhance my basic five-piece acoustic set. With the sampler, I can create sounds that are unique, whether they're loops or single sounds that mimic snares and kicks. I can also trigger other sounds, like synths, bass lines, or even backing vocals. And I can place the sounds anywhere—I might place a snare sound on the bass drum pad while the hands play tribal rhythms on the toms. Having a hybrid kit opens up a whole new world, and I couldn't imagine my setup without electronics.

Richard Sester

The concept is obviously catching on. But whenever I've played a hybrid kit, I've experienced a disconnect between the acoustic sounds that come directly from the drums or cymbals and the electronic sounds that come out of a speaker that's farther away.

Andrew Frechtman

I think most modern drummers play hybrid setups now. They expand your sound almost endlessly, they're fun to play, and they can make you rethink the way you set up and play your drums. At the same time, if you're not too tech savvy it can be a bit tricky to pick up. And if you have a technical hiccup mid-gig, it can be a nightmare!

Ty Walker

I don't use a hybrid setup, but I'd love to try one. Adding a new pad is like adding another acoustic piece to your kit, except it's totally variable. You can make it a wind chime for one song and a clap sound for another. And electronic pads are small enough that you can add a bunch and they won't be obtrusive. I've seen pads used at live shows to send a click to the band so the audience doesn't hear it, which could be extremely useful. Overall, new sound sources and utilities are never a bad thing!

Ian Dubson

I embrace the hybrid kit simply because it allows you to be a bigger part of the music and contribute more to the show. Turn your nose up at samples and loops all you want, but they're not going anywhere. Best to dive in.

Kevin Ousley

I think it's not a bad thing. But if it's not done carefully and properly balanced, there can come a time when you're more dependent on the digital aspect of your setup than on the acoustic side. It's tricky ground and it definitely demands balance, taste, and finesse. The execution can make or break it.

Yasser Sanchez

Want your voice heard? Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, and keep an eye out for next month's question.

Thanks From Peter

Kindly allow me to express sincere thanks to all of the readers of *Modern Drummer* who voted in this year's Readers Poll. My family and I are thrilled that the *MD* Hall of Fame now includes my name. The funny thing about being wary of any "popularity contest" or poll is that all such reservations go right out the window as soon as your own name appears at the top of the list! That said, a review of the

MD Hall of Fame over the years makes me feel incredibly humble and grateful to be a part of that legacy and roster, and it inspires me to do my best to continue drumming and to spread the good word about music.

Thank you all, you modern drummers!

Peter Erskine



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Out Now



Eric Slick on *Palisades*

On April 21, Eric Slick, the drummer for the '60s-influenced indie-rock band Dr. Dog, released his debut solo album, *Palisades*. Although he also recruited drummer Ricardo Lagomasino to contribute, Slick plays the majority of the huge, fluid drum grooves that brew beneath the record's distorted, melodic, and meditative tracks. Slick explains that stepping out from behind the kit allowed him to gain a new perspective on the drummer's role in a band. "Sometimes when I'm working with Dr. Dog, I try so hard to push the envelope with what I can get away with," he says. "I try to get a Jim Keltner or Glenn Kotche vibe by throwing up trash can lids and running contact microphones on my drums. But nowadays I'm just interested in being completely transparent. Sometimes playing something simple is exactly who you are in that moment. No one else can play like you. I would stress that to all younger drummers, and I wish I'd learned it sooner."

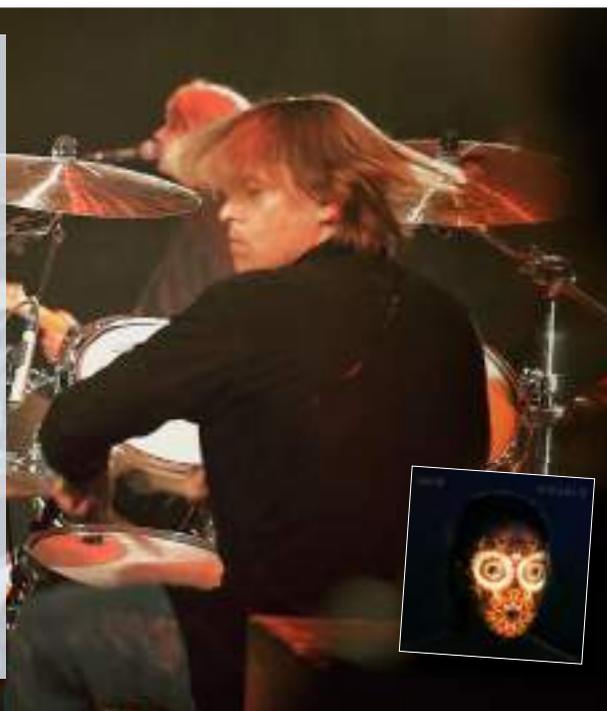
While massive, Bonham-esque tones tear through the majority of the album, Slick also employed some unique production techniques to create the brooding, atmospheric drum sounds on songs such as "Palisades." "The original idea for that tune was to not have any drums at all," he explains. "We initially used an old Chamberlin tape-loop drum machine to keep time, which is still in the track. Then I reversed the feel of the loop in Pro Tools. Then we ran that reversed tape loop through a modular Moog in a studio at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. We were triggering all kinds of oscillators. Then we recorded the drum take at Ricardo's place and opened up the studio door. The hallway to his studio is huge, and we basically used it as an echo chamber. One take and it was done." **Willie Rose**

Silas Utke Graae Jørgensen on Mew's *Visuals*

This past April 28, the Danish indie-rock band Mew released its seventh full-length album, *Visuals*. Throughout the record, drummer Silas Utke Graae Jørgensen's creative and intricate hand patterns complement the solid and grooving four-on-the-floor pulses that often energize the tracks. And although *Visuals* doesn't necessarily showcase some of the more prog-infused elements that the band has flirted with in the past, there are plenty of moments where Jørgensen's chops shine in between Mew's signature infectious hooks and pop-infused melodies. "Sometimes hooks can be interesting if they serve the song well," Jørgensen says. "But I'm not very technically trained. I do feel that there's a fine line between playing loosely and still keeping control. I think both elements can be good from time to time. And the band grew up with pop music. It's still in our DNA today."

Mew formed more than twenty years ago in Copenhagen. When they went into the studio to record their latest album, the band members decided to produce the recordings themselves. "We had a great working process while making *Visuals*," Jørgensen says. "It was a good decision to self-produce the record, because the time felt right to do so. I think we've learned a few tricks over the years."

And what does it take to have a lasting career through those years? For Jørgensen, it's simple: "Believe." **Willie Rose**



MORE NEW RELEASES

Kevin Eubanks East West Time Line (Jeff "Tain" Watts, Marvin "Smitty" Smith) /// **Robert Cray** Robert Cray and Hi Rhythm (Steve Jordan) /// **Preservation Hall Jazz Band** So It Is (Walter Harris) /// **Trans Am** California Hotel (Sebastian Thomson) /// **Tigerwine** Die With Your Tongue Out (Steve Lichtenwalter) /// **Alvarez Kings** Somewhere Between (Richard Walker) /// **Maximo Park** Risk to Exist (Tom English) /// **The Octopus Project** Memory Mirror (Toto Miranda) /// **Procol Harum** Novum (Geoff Dunn)

On
Tour



Josh Eppard with Coheed and Cambria

A decade on, the seasoned drummer revisits a landmark Coheed record on the road.

Josh Eppard is currently touring with Coheed and Cambria on a nearly thirty-date national trek that lasts through May. The group is exclusively playing its third album, *Good Apollo, I'm Burning Star IV, Volume One: From Fear Through the Eyes of Madness*. The 2005 recording saw the band adopt more of a progressive sound while retaining its harder yet melodic roots. It was also the group's first major-label release, and to this day it remains its most successful effort.

"Revisiting the material from *Good Apollo, Volume One* has dredged up a plethora of emotions, but the most prevalent one is excitement," Eppard says. "When you're lucky enough to be in a band for as long as Coheed has been together, these records become like time capsules. The little things that come back as you listen and play these songs can be quite powerful. Listening to them deeply, the way one would when you're preparing to play them live, brings

on a flood of memories and feelings, and I'd imagine that those feelings are pretty unique to the individual who's listening. For me, it's been an emotional look back and truly affirms how powerful and transformative music can be."

As the group gets a fresh perspective on each of *Good Apollo, Volume One's* tracks for the current tour, Eppard explains that the songs will still grow on stage. "Any touring musician will tell you that over time songs absolutely evolve," the drummer says. "I guess in a sense you could draw a comparison to how I would handle playing another drummer's parts. There's a guideline, if you will. But inside of that guide there are many opportunities to expand on things. And playing a song night after night is a great way to know a piece so well that you naturally start to toy with those opportunities. Coheed songs always evolve live, while staying within those parameters set by the original recording." **Willie Rose**

Ernie "Dirty Err" Falconer

Q&A

More with Eric Slick
and Josh Eppard at
moderndrummer.com

Also on the Road

Matt Cameron with Soundgarden /// **Jack Ryan** with the Marcus King Band /// **George Daniel** with the 1975 /// **David Lovering** with the Pixies

WHO'S PLAYING WHAT



Forero

Broadway drummers **Andrés Forero** (*Hamilton*), **Matt Vander Ende** (*Wicked*), **Sean McDaniel** (*The Book of Mormon*), **Warren Odze** (*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*), **Sammy Merendino** (*Kinky Boots*), **Jared Schonig** (*The Color Purple*), **Gary Seligson** (*School of Rock*), and **Joe Bergamini** (various) are endorsing **Cympad** accessories.



Paschall

Christian Paschall (Maren Morris) has joined the **Vater** artist roster.



Robinson

John "JR" Robinson has joined the **Soundbrenner** family.

PMC Reunites Hal Blaine and Ronnie Spector at 2017 Winter NAMM Show



Alex Solter

Hal Blaine, one of the most recorded musicians of all time, famously drummed with Phil Spector's "Wall of Sound" studio band, which was nicknamed the Wrecking Crew. One of the most popular songs they recorded was "Be My Baby," sung by Ronnie Spector and the Ronettes. This past January 21, at the NAMM Show, members of the Percussion Marketing Council (PMC) arranged for Ronnie Spector to perform the song on the Nissan Grand Plaza Stage with two drummers: Blaine and former Billy Joel kit man Liberty DeVitto.

"Ronnie looked exactly like she looked all those years ago—absolutely gorgeous," Blaine says. "And she sang absolutely gorgeous. I had goose bumps, and my beautiful new DW drums and Zildjian cymbals had goose bumps too. The audience was covered with goose bumps—and Liberty played his goose bumps off! The performance was a holistic adventure that brought me back to Gold Star Studios in Hollywood in the '60s. I'm thankful to the wonderful PMC members for giving me the opportunity of my life to relive

those memories."

PMC members Drum Workshop, Zildjian, and Hal Leonard made the reunion possible by contacting Spector's management and arranging for Blaine to have his drumset available. The PMC consists of drum and percussion companies that share the mission to go outside the industry and make more players by implementing programs with schools and retailers. "The PMC strives to bring inspiring events to the next generation of players," director Karl Dustman says. "Hal Blaine's playing on 'Be My Baby' made a generation of kids want to pick up sticks and experience the joy of drumming, creating thousands of new drummers. We felt it was worth the effort to have him play with Ronnie Spector when the opportunity was presented. We're grateful to Ronnie; her manager, Jonathan Greenfield; Liberty DeVitto; and drummer Dennis Diken, who suggested the idea. That song continues to inspire people to become musicians."

Zildjian Names John Stephans President

Zildjian recently announced that John Stephans has been appointed company president, reporting directly to CEO Craig Zildjian. Stephans was formerly CEO of IdeaPaint, creators of an innovative dry-erase paint for workplace collaboration. In his new role, he will lead all sales, marketing, product development, and manufacturing efforts for the Zildjian and Vic Firth brands.

In a statement, Zildjian says that Stephans brings significant experience in managing and growing global brands, having also previously held senior leadership roles in marketing and general management for Monster Worldwide, Ocean Spray, and Gillette. "Throughout my life I've had a passion for music, so it's an honor to join a truly legendary company," Stephans says. "I hope to use my experience to grow these great brands now and in the future."





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Zildjian K Custom Special Dry Series

The original dark, dry cymbals return with an expanded palette.

Zildjian originally released a limited range of Special Dry series cymbals in 2003, and many drummers flocked to them for their unique mix of quick attack, dark tone, and short sustain. This year, Zildjian revived and redesigned the series to provide a complete range of thinner, trashier, and funkier tones for contemporary applications that require a more “processed” sound.

Specs

The new Special Dry series includes a 10" splash, three sizes of hi-hats (13", 14", and 15"), a perforated 14" FX hi-hat top, five crashes (16", 18", 19", 20", and 22"), three perforated Trash crashes (17", 19", and 21"), a perforated 18" Trash China, and two rides (21" and 23"). All of the models have a raw, patina-finish top with wide lathing across the bow and extensive clustered hammer marks to increase trashiness. The bottoms have a traditional finish. Compared to the original Special Dry hi-hats, crashes, and rides, the new versions are thinner, which gives them a faster attack, a more complex tone, and a shorter and more controlled sustain.

Hi-Hats

The 13" Special Dry hi-hats, which were my favorite of the series, feature a thin top cymbal and a heavy bottom. The heavy bottom gives them a very solid foot chick, while the thin top offers a lot of expressivity at soft and loud dynamics. These hi-hats speak very quickly and have incredible articulation. They sound a bit deeper and darker than standard 13" K hi-hats, and they have a very short, dry sustain. If you like to play a lot of diddles and fast figures on the hi-hats, these 13"s are the way to go—not too dark, not too bright, and with a crisp response.

The 14" Special Dry hi-hats also feature a thin top and heavy bottom. The foot chick is crisp and deep, and the stick sound is low-pitched and woody with a nice touch of grit. The open sound is breathy and has a dry, short sustain, which attenuates the sizzle when played half-open while improving the response of quick open/closed barks. These are a great option for situations where you want dark-sounding hi-hats that get out of the way quickly and blend in the midrange frequencies of the mix.

The 15" Special Dry hi-hats are drier and chunkier-sounding than the other two pairs, and they have more emphasis on the woody stick “click.” The foot chick and stick sound is deep yet crisp, and the half-open tone has a cool, guttural quality that doesn't get too overpowering or washy. These are the hi-hats that I would choose when going for a dark, “dead” drum sound; they paired very well with a large, deeply tuned, and heavily muffled kit.

The 14" FX Hat top is a thin cymbal with .5" holes throughout the bow. It can be coupled with any hi-hat bottom cymbal to emulate a heavily effected tone that sounds like it's been filtered, distorted, and processed via various studio effects. When used with the Special Dry 14" bottom, the FX Hat gave the pair a very trashy, fast attack with super-short sustain and a tight, compressed tone. Experimental rock, hip-hop, and electronica drummers should check this one out, for sure.

Crashes

For the revamped Special Dry line, Zildjian added a couple new sizes of crashes and reworked the design to make them thinner, faster, and more controlled. The 16" crash is very thin and has a super-quick, papery attack and a trashy, very short sustain. This cymbal hits and gets out of the way immediately, which makes it great for fast accents, but its volume and cutting power are fairly limited; it'll disappear in a loud, dense mix. On the flipside, this is a perfect crash for low-volume jazz and acoustic gigs. The 16" Special Dry crash was also an excellent option for use as a hi-hat top when paired with a medium or heavy 16" crash on gigs or sessions requiring a hefty Steve Jordan-type sound.

The 18" and 19" Special Dry crashes also have a quick, breathy attack that shuts down very quickly, but they have bigger, trashier voices that punch through with a bit more gusto. The 18" had a slightly flashier attack, but the 18" and 19" crashes were fairly similar, with the 19" having a lower pitch.

The 20" and 22" Special Dry crashes weren't as washy as I expected. The sustain is marginally longer than that of the smaller crashes, and the attack is a touch slower as well, which helped give them a broader and more dramatic character. Similar to the 16" Special Dry crash, the 20" and 22" versions seem to be ideal for situations where controlled cymbal sounds are required. They deliver a big, dark, complex crash sound in a tighter and more focused package.

Trash Crashes, China, and Splash

To up the quickness and grit factor even further, Zildjian added 17", 19", and 21" Trash crashes, which feature rows of different sized round holes from the bell to the edge. These cymbals are paper-thin and have an ultra-fast, trashy attack that hits like a China with a short but smooth sustain. The 17" was my favorite for punctuating short accents, while the 21" sounded great when hit at more dramatic moments, like at the end of long phrases or fills. All three Trash crashes dissipate very quickly, so you can hit them hard and not have to worry about the sustain lingering into subsequent phrases.

The 18" Trash China has a similar hole pattern as the Trash crashes except that the holes don't extend onto the flanged edge. This is the most aggressive-sounding cymbal in the series, but it doesn't sound out of place with the crashes and Trash crashes. The attack is very quick, the sustain has a lot of hiss and white noise, and the decay is fairly fast but smooth. The holes add to the trashiness of this China,





but they also contribute to its more controlled sound when compared to standard Chinese cymbals. The 18" Trash China is also a great choice for use in stacks. It pairs well with the 16" crash, the 14" FX Hat, and the 10" splash for different textures.

The 10" Special Dry splash is a fun little cymbal that has an excellent mix of quick, glassy attack, dark overtones, and a fast decay. It doesn't sound hollow or gongy, and it's not overly bright. Other than the obvious volume limitations of a paper-thin cymbal of this size, I found the 10" Special Dry splash to be practically flawless.

Rides

The 21" Special Dry ride was the centerpiece of the original launch of the series in 2003 and remains a highly coveted model among drummers who favor dark, dry, and articulate tones. (The 21" Organic ride is actually an adaptation of the Special Dry designed in collaboration with Zildjian endorsing artist Pat Petrillo.) The new

version of the 21" Special Dry ride is a bit thinner than the original and is hammered a bit more to provide additional crash potential and to increase complexity. This is my favorite cymbal of the entire Special Dry series, as it perfectly meets my musical needs, which require a ride cymbal that can cover a wide variety of dynamics and musical genres, from acoustic jazz and light singer-songwriter sessions to more aggressive indie rock and experimental styles. The 21" Special Dry ride has a solid woody stick sound, a dark, controlled, and breathy wash, and a well-integrated bell tone. You can also accent it on the edge for subtle, puffy crashes.

The 23" Special Dry ride is more articulate than the 21", and its crash sound is a little more low-key. The bell sounds stronger and deeper, and the wash is lower in pitch and less pronounced. The 23" ride provides a bit more ping than the 21" while still serving the deep, dark, earthy flavor that permeates the entire series.

Though not appropriate for every playing style, the K Custom Special Dry series is a much-welcomed revival in the Zildjian catalog, providing a full palette of fast, funky tones desired by many contemporary drummers.

Michael Dawson



Vic Firth

Modern Jazz Collection

A quintet of versatile sticks beta-tested by some of today's top improvising artists.

Since its inception, Vic Firth has relied on input and feedback from its endorsing artists when considering adding new sizes and shapes of sticks to its catalog. Legendary jazz/pop/session drummer Steve Gadd was the first to be immortalized with his own Signature Series drumstick, and now that line boasts over fifty models. The Modern Jazz Collection is another collaborative effort, but this time the company forwent signatures for simple monikers (MJC1, MJC2, MJC3, MJC4, and MJC5) to increase appeal among all drummers. Let's check them out!

MJC1

The .580"x16.125" MJC1 has the same diameter as Vic Firth's popular 55A, but it's slightly longer. (The 55A is .580"x16".) This stick features a medium taper from the shoulder to the neck for a balanced response, and it has a traditional oval tip rather than either the company's more common teardrop or acorn shapes.

This stick, which is the preferred model of Greg Hutchinson (Betty Carter, Joe Henderson, Roy Hargrove, Joshua Redman), has a slightly heavier feel and a bit more reach than a standard 5A. The extra weight produces a fuller sound, especially when playing at lower volumes. The oval tip has a lot of surface area, so you get more wood-on-metal contact for darker, richer cymbal tones while still retaining clean, clear articulation. You can get a big, meaty sound from the kit with these sticks, and they're applicable to almost any style of playing, from light straight-ahead jazz to harder-hitting funk and fusion.

MJC2

The most unusual-looking of the five Modern Jazz Collection models, the .550"x16" MJC2 is slightly thinner than a 5A and has an extra-long taper for a faster/lighter response. The elongated arrow-type tip provides extra surface area that can be utilized to draw out a range of overtones from cymbals depending on the angle from which you strike. The flatter the MJC2 is held in relation to the cymbal, the more complex the sound. Steeper angles allow for a more articulate tone with a tighter, cleaner attack. These are versatile sticks for players requiring volume control and a range of articulation types, from full and dark to bright and focused. The MJC2 is the stick of choice for Latin-jazz and big band drummer Joe McCarthy.

MJC3

The .540"x16.3125" MJC3 is the most front-heavy of the series, which increases power without adding weight. This stick is an elongated 8D and has an oval tip and a medium taper. The MJC3 is the preferred model of modern-jazz great Lewis Nash (Branford Marsalis, Tommy Flanagan, Joe Lovano), who is revered for having razor-sharp chops and a crystal-clear touch. These sticks promote clean, full tones, especially at low volume, and the oval tip is great for achieving a consistent, woody-sounding ride pattern.



MJC1



MJC2



MJC3



MJC4

MJC4

The MJC4 is the only maple stick in the series. (The rest are made of hickory) It measures .595"x16.375", and it has a long taper and a small barrel-shaped tip. Although it's the largest stick of the five models, the MJC4 has a quick, light feel, and it produces a focused cymbal sound. This model was designed in collaboration with Jeff Ballard (Chick Corea, Brad Mehldau, Avishai Cohen), who prefers to use larger sticks so he can "let the stick do a lot of the work," as he states in a video testimonial on vicfirth.com.

The MJC4 feels like a 5B, but it's lighter and more articulate, making it a perfect choice for drummers who prefer larger sticks but need something with additional focus and control when playing at lower volumes. This was my personal favorite model of the series.

MJC5

The .540"x16" MJC5 is similar to an 8D, but it has a uniquely shaped nylon tip that's a combination of a barrel and an oval. A medium-length taper is used to give these sticks a balanced response. The slightly wider tip promotes fuller cymbal tones while also offering a bright, ultra-articulate attack. I'd use these sticks when playing in situations where a standard wood tip doesn't provide enough clarity or when I'm trying to coax additional point from thin, washy rides. Toss the MJC5 into your stick bag along with the similarly sized arrow-tip MJC2, and you'll have a wide range of articulations at your disposal.

The MJC5 lists for \$16.75 per pair, and the wood-tip models are \$16.25.

Michael Dawson



MJC5

PRODUCT CLOSE-UP

Brass Ball Drums

Stave-Shell Snares

Innovative snares with a concave contour.

Every so often, established drum shell designs are revisited for different reasons—to achieve increased resonance, to offer distinctive appearances, or to incorporate unconventional materials for construction. From the mind of a career woodworker in Buda, Texas, Brass Ball Drums is making uniquely shaped stave-shell drums with some fresh ideas about mounting lugs and hardware.

Poring Over the Options

Thirty-plus years into a woodworking career that involved everything from carving signs for historic Austin music venues to outfitting an upstate New York library with ornate columns and cabinets, Brass Ball founder Cliff Scott was asked by his son to build him “the best drumkit ever.” Scott began researching the common goals of existing drum companies: shell resonance, minimal hardware-to-shell contact, reliable hardware, and beautiful finishes. He saw more opportunities to experiment within the solid/stave-shell design because, as Scott says, “It causes the wood’s cell structure to allow for the greatest shell response.” He considered trying a single-ply shell, but attested that “the method produces extreme stress on the wood’s fibers.” He also avoided using block-shell construction because he felt that a horizontal grain is less conducive to shell response.

Rethinking Hardware and Shell Shapes

Scott also observed that many lug designs left an oversized footprint on the outside of the shell, and there were too many screws and washers inside the drum. He arrived at a ball-shaped lug and a concave shape for the exterior shell wall that’s thick enough at the point where the lugs are attached to eliminate the need for interior screws. The lug is positioned on a nodal point of the shell, and the inside of the shell bows inward slightly.

The Review Drums

Scott sent us two 5.5x14 snares to check out. One had a quarter-sawn bubinga shell outfitted with Brass Ball’s proprietary lugs and a unique strainer that mounts to the lugs and has a fine-adjustment knob on the butt plate. The second drum was straight-sawn bubinga with center-drilled tube lugs and a stock strainer (not shown).

Both snares came with double forty-five-degree bearing edges and Evans G2 Coated batter heads. It’s speculation whether it’s the shell’s contour, the hardness of the bubinga, or a combination



of both, but if I were regularly playing stadiums I would definitely consider using one of these snares. When playing a gig in a dry room with a ten-piece band, I could still hear every ghost note. Rimshots had some serious authority that would satisfy the heaviest funk and metal players. The bubinga drum with Brass Ball’s hardware sells for \$625, and the one with standard hardware goes for \$425.

Brass Ball’s snare mechanism is a simple but clever design with the fine-tuning knob positioned on the butt plate opposite the throw-off lever. This might be an issue if you often turn the snares off and on and adjust the snare tension mid-song. But the design is a noteworthy innovation because the throw-off is removed from the shell itself to maximize resonance.

These Brass Ball drums are gorgeous. If you favor handcrafted drums, premium hardwood shells, or unique artisanal designs, give these a look and listen at brassballdrums.com.

Stephen Bidwell

Nord Drum 3P Multipad

A powerful percussion-modeling synthesizer with nearly limitless sonic potential.

These days, Swedish company Nord is most known for its distinctive red-colored keyboards. But the company's founders, Hans Nordelius and Mikael Carlsson, originally collaborated in 1983 to create the world's first commercial-grade digital drum, the Digital Percussion Plate 1. An improved version was released in 1984, under a new name: ddrum. The ddrum brand was sold off in 2005, and it wasn't until 2012 that Nord put out a new drum product, simply called the Nord Drum.

All in One

We reviewed the Nord Drum and a separate six-trigger Nord Pad in 2014, and we were impressed by how much you could manipulate the internal sounds in real time. But it was a pricey product (\$699 for the module and \$499 for the pads), and you ultimately had to buy both in order to get the most out of it. With the release of the Nord Drum 3P, the module and pad are integrated into one unit, which sells for \$699.

Specs

The 3P is a bit smaller, thinner, and lighter than other multi-pads on the market, measuring roughly 12"x11"x2" and weighing just four pounds. It has six rubber pads with independently adjustable threshold, sensitivity, and dynamic response curve, and there's an external trigger input on the back for connecting a kick drum pad. Sound from the module is routed to two unbalanced quarter-inch outputs (left and right) and to an eighth-inch stereo jack. MIDI connections are made via standard five-pin inputs and outputs.

The module comes configured with four different drumkit banks with fifty presets per bank, and there are eight empty user banks. The sounds are categorized into bass drums, snare drums, toms, hi-hats, cymbals, percussion, bells, tuned percussion, and effects. The sounds are generated by an internal synthesizer, which is different from other multi-pads that trigger audio samples stored in internal memory or on an SD card.

It's important to point out that you can't use the 3P to load in and play prerecorded samples and loops. But it's not designed to do that. This is a specialized electronic instrument that allows you to create your own unique synthesized sounds and textures by adjusting various parameters, such as resonance, EQ, ring modulation, FM-synthesis, high- and low-pass filters, attack, and noise waveforms.

There are global effects in the module that affect the entire kit, including five types of stereo reverb and three types of delay. Each instrument in the kit can also be affected with drive (i.e. distortion), sample-rate reduction, ring modulation, and EQ. All effects adjustments, as well as sound bank changes, are quick and easy to make via the buttons and scroll wheel on the top of the module. Having all the effects and tone adjustment controls at your fingertips is a great feature, especially when you want to audition sounds and effects quickly between songs—or even mid-song. You can't do that quite as easily with other electronic drums, where you have to dig through submenus on an LED screen to find the various controls.



In Action

The Nord Drum 3P comes with a stand holder that mounts to its underside, so you can attach it to a multi-clamp or cymbal stand base. Because the 3P is more compact than most multi-pads, it's easy to position comfortably within a drumset. I liked placing it just to the left of the hi-hat so that I could play the pads with my left hand while continuing to hold down a groove with my right hand and feet. I could also sneak it into a spot just above the floor tom and below the ride for times when I wanted to play the 3P's synthesized percussion tones with the right hand instead.

The 3P pads don't have a ton of rebound; they feel like the hard-rubber side of a two-sided practice pad. But the sensitivity of the module is excellent. I was able to explore ideas that utilized the entire dynamic range, from pianissimo to fortissimo, and the 3P never double triggered or missed a hit.

There are a lot of cool and interesting drum, percussion, and synthetic sounds to explore within the stock kits of the 3P. Most of them are configured so that softer strokes play one sound and louder strokes play another. Each kit has different effects and synthesis parameters applied to give you a more fully realized soundscape to explore right out of the box.

To take full advantage of the 3P, however, you really need to spend some time investigating how the Noise, Tone, and Click parameters transform each sound into a totally new texture. This is where Nord's multi-pad excels beyond many others. Then when you begin to explore the array of effects that can be applied to each pad, you open up a whole new world of sonic possibilities. But be forewarned: it takes some know-how on the basics of synthesis and sound design in order to get the most out of the 3P and its infinite capabilities. So read the manual and take time to experiment with each parameter. Once you get the hang of it, the Nord Drum 3P is an incredible tool for drummers looking to add some sophisticated electronic elements to their performances.

The Nord Drum 3P can also be used as a MIDI controller with other modules and software, and the company has created an iPad app, Nord Beat, that allows you to sequence rhythmic patterns that utilize the unique sounds of the 3P.

Michael Dawson

Bucks County

Semi-Solid Mahogany/Poplar Drumset

Combining the strength and dependability of ply drums with the enhanced tonal quality of solid shells.

Unhappy with the quality of drums that were available to him at the time, lifelong woodworker Chris Carr put his years of experience to use and started building his own drums in 2005. After selling a few kits to other drummers, Carr decided to start his own company, Bucks County Drums, which is named after the region outside of Philadelphia where he lives.

Semi-Solid Shells and Specs

What makes Carr's drums unique is his patented Semi-Solid shell, which features a single-ply steam-bent interior adhered to five plies of maple. Reinforcement rings are added on the inside of the solid portion to increase stability. The bearing edges of the toms are cut to forty-five degrees on the inside and rounded on the outside so that the drumhead sits squarely on the solid portion. Kick drums have forty-five-degree edges all the way to the outside of the shell. The kit we received for review is a classic rock-sized setup that included 9x13 and 15x16 toms with a solid interior of mahogany and a 14x24 bass drum with solid interior of poplar.

Bucks Co. offers a wide variety of wrap and lacquer finishes, and they can do custom colors on special request. Our review drums are finished in an old-school black-diamond pearl wrap. Long- and mini-tube lugs are available, as well as vintage-style beavertails, which is what came on our kit. The toms were outfitted with traditional 2.5mm single-flange steel hoops with clips, but we also requested sturdier 3.0mm triple-flange versions to see how the two impacted the drums' tone and projection. Evans drumheads come standard, and our set was supplied with G2 Coateds on the tops and G1 Clears on the bottoms of the toms, with a Clear EMAD on the batter side of the kick and an EQ3 Coated on the front.

Power, Punch, and More

Mahogany is a popular timber for drums that are designed to have a classic, vintage-type sound, as it provides a warm, smooth tone with a lot of low end. The Bucks toms had a big, round tone reminiscent of vintage 3-ply drums but with more power and punch. They didn't choke at high volumes, and they spoke fully when hit lightly. The toms tuned up quickly and easily, and there were numerous sweet spots between super-low and very tight that sounded pure and resonant. When outfitted with the single-flange hoops, the toms produced overtones that sprayed a bit wider. The 3.0mm triple-flange hoops reined everything in to a tighter and more focused pitch.

The 14x24 had a solid poplar interior, which Carr likes to use on bass drums for its warmth, punch, and increased volume. When played with the supplied EMAD and EQ3 Resonant and no additional muffling, this kick had a strong, snappy attack and deep, thunderous sustain that remained consistent whether the heads were tuned high, low, or anywhere in between. It's a powerhouse kick that can pack a massive punch while also supplying some sweet, satisfying low tones. To soften the attack a bit, I swapped out the EMAD for an EQ4 Frosted batter. To my ears, the EQ4 was a perfect match for this drum because it rounded off some of the high-end "click" that I was getting from the EMAD. The result was a warmer and more balanced tone with an even spectrum of overtones, a chesty punch, and a darker sustain.

Similarly, replacing the clear bottoms on the toms with single-ply coated versions gave those drums a smoother, deeper sound that edged them closer to the classic fat tones of vintage drums without sacrificing power, responsiveness, or tuning versatility.

This is the second Bucks County kit we've reviewed, and in both cases the Semi-Solid shells succeeded in offering a "best of both worlds" option for drummers looking to combine the warm, punchy sounds of classic multi-ply drums with the rich tones and increased response of modern-made single-ply designs.

Michael Dawson





Grand Funk Railroad's Don Brewer



The man still has lightning hands and a killer right foot, and he tears into his drums nearly as ruthlessly as he did in 1973, when he was known as one of the hardest-hitting players in rock.

Craig Clingan



Listen to Don Brewer's powerful drumming on FM staples like "I'm Your Captain/Closer to Home" and "Footstompin' Music." Now zero in on his he-man vocals on the number-one Grand Funk Railroad hits "We're an American Band" and "The Loco-Motion." You'd be forgiven for assuming that Brewer is the type of fella you might not want to meet in a dark alley. But truth be told, he's one of the most congenial personalities in rock.

Perhaps it's his roots in working-class Swartz Creek, Michigan, or simply the fact that he still retains a youthful passion for his instrument. Either way, Brewer's work ethic perfectly represents Grand Funk Railroad's reputation as "the people's band," earned largely due to singer/guitarist Mark Farner, bassist Mel Schacher, keyboardist Craig Frost, and Brewer's remarkably energetic live performances. And the people sure paid back the band in kind, rewarding it with thirteen gold and ten platinum albums and worldwide sales in excess of 25 million copies.

And though it hit a wall in 1976, Grand Funk has never been far from fans' hearts. Since reforming in 1996, the group has been in a fairly constant state of activity, despite Farner's 1998 exit. Brewer has even found time between Funky commitments to tour with Bob Seger and the Silver Bullet Band, which he's done for the better part of the past thirty years, and in 2000 he confirmed his legendary status among our tribe by performing at the Modern Drummer Festival. Nearly twenty years later, the interest in Grand Funk remains strong, as evidenced by its full concert calendar, as well as by Audio Fidelity's hybrid SACD reissues of the popular *Shinin' On* and *All the Girls in the World Beware!!!* albums, both of which originally landed in 1974.

When you learn how Brewer got into the drums in the first place, the latter title begins to take on new meaning. "In junior high I played the clarinet, and I *hated* that," Don recalls. "I actually worked myself up to first chair, then quickly down to last chair! One day the music instructor asked for volunteers to carry the bass drum in the [marching] drum section, which was all girls. Of course I immediately put my hand up. Are you kidding—it was a no-brainer!"

Brewer quickly developed his chops, as famously presented in the intro to the title track of Grand Funk's 1973 blockbuster, *We're an American Band*, which was produced by '70s superstar Todd Rundgren. "That was done on a single pedal," Brewer tells *MD*, "a Rogers Swiv-o-Matic. I broke several of those, and they were always being fixed

by Mark Farner's dad, who worked at General Motors. He would temper the metal rods, and then I'd switch the leather strap by blowtorching a car seatbelt to fit. So the 'secret' to the intro of 'American Band' is all about retooling the pedal!"

Despite his classic vocal performance on "American Band," Brewer is quick to insist, "I was a drummer who sang, but a drummer first, not a bona fide vocalist. Playing and singing just came naturally to me. Plus Farner and I had a nice mix: I had the gruff thing, and he had this smooth R&B thing. That's what Grand Funk really is, an R&B band pumped up on steroids."



Craig Clingan

When the band members went back in the studio to record *Shinin' On*, they once again enlisted Rundgren, but this time they went for a more commercial R&B flavor, which is reflected in the album's title cut, the horn-section-adorned "To Get Back In," the blistering "Little Johnny Hooker," and a somewhat surprising remake of the Goffin-King classic "The Loco-Motion." "We needed another hit," Brewer recalls. "We'd come off of *We're an American Band*, plus we'd gone through all this litigious crap with our manager, Terry Knight.

"We recorded the album at the Swamp, across the street from Mark's farm," Brewer continues. "[One day] we broke for dinner and went to McDonald's, and when Mark walked back in he started belting out, 'Everybody's doin' a brand-new dance now,' and all of us cracked up. I mean, how silly is that: Grand Funk doing 'The Loco-Motion'? 'Hey, it just might work!' Todd then did his magic, making it seem like a party was going on in the background. By the time we finished it, I think we all knew it was going to be a huge hit."

Bob Girouard

Brewer endorses DW drums, Sabian cymbals, Evans heads, Promark sticks, and PureSound snare wires.



Poison's Rikki Rockett

With a series of offstage setbacks behind him, the notorious glam-rock drummer, accompanied by his longtime bandmates, is back in front of the masses.

In July of 2015, Rikki Rockett, the happy-go-lucky drummer for one of the most notorious bands to emerge from the Sunset Strip in the '80s, was diagnosed with oral cancer. Intense chemotherapy and radiation treatment followed, but Rockett's cancer recurred. In the midst of all this, the father of two young children went through a divorce, had to drastically cut back on drumming, and was forced to essentially cease operations of his custom drum company, Rockett Drum Works.

But after undergoing experimental immunotherapy at Moores Cancer Center in San Diego, Rockett got the best news of his life last July: He was cancer free. On top of that, the clean bill of health he received after participating in the clinical trial helped to prompt the FDA to approve the

immunotherapy drug pembrolizumab.

"When I walk through that hospital, I know I had something to do with it," Rockett says. "I know [the FDA] was looking at my results. It's not all me, obviously. But I did have a contribution. And that is one of the most fulfilling things I've ever felt in my life."

Having beat cancer, Rockett has returned to the drums. He's been gigging with his side band, the Devil City Angels, and Poison is celebrating its thirtieth anniversary (albeit a year late) on a tour with Def Leppard and Tesla, and mulling working on new material. Rockett is also collaborating with Vater on a series of special drumsticks, with proceeds benefitting Moores Cancer Center. The full plate is most welcome, given where Rockett has been the last couple of years.

"I was a little unmotivated, quite honestly," the drummer says of his desire to play while undergoing treatment. "It took all my energy just to get in a workout and be with my kids and do everything I need to do. I couldn't really travel. I had to stay away from things that might get me sick. I wasn't allowed to do Brazilian jiu-jitsu, which has been a huge part of my life for eighteen years. I'm getting back into everything now, slowly. I can go on tour, but I have to be very careful shaking hands—things like that. It'll normalize over time, but over the next few months I have to still worry about it."

As for Rockett's post-cancer outlook on life, if you were expecting the man who powered pop-metal classics like "Unskinny Bop" and "Talk Dirty to Me" to adopt a "have a good time all the time" perspective, you might be in for a surprise. "You have this appreciation for life, but you also have a little less tolerance for certain things," Rockett explains. "Like, 'I need to move on with my life...can we make a decision, please?' If people say they're going to call me back and they don't, I'm kind of done with them quicker. It's like my vetting system is on higher alert. I don't have time for people that aren't truly friends, or aren't in my corner." **Patrick Berkery**

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Alex Salca





Anika Nilles

Welcome to the New Age

Perhaps it's fitting that when it came time to name her brand-new debut album, the German drumming phenomenon couldn't find its title in the dictionary. After all, her international notoriety had been earned precisely because of her willingness to commit to traveling down an uncharted, unpaved road. As it turned out, an unprecedented number of us were ready and willing to go along for the ride, and, in the process, expand our definition of "drumming superstar."



About seven years ago, German drummer/composer Anika Nilles took a leap of faith, abandoning a steady career in social education to pursue her true passion: music. "It was really risky," Nilles says via Skype from her home in Mannheim. "I always knew that I wasn't that happy at that job, but when you get money and you are safe, it's not that easy to quit." Once she made the decision to refocus her life on drumming and composing, Nilles began practicing multiple hours a day in order to make up for the time she had lost since venturing into the professional world after earning a degree in popular music and music business from the Popakademie conservatory in Mannheim.

To make ends meet, Nilles spent several years teaching lessons and gigging around Germany. Then in 2013 she went into the studio to record a video of one of her original compositions so that she could send it to local producers, bandleaders, and booking agents to help secure additional work. The song was "Wild Boy," and it showcased the drummer's deep pocket, wicked linear chops, and strong melodic sensibility. Anika posted the video to YouTube in October of that year, and that's when everything changed for her.

Story by Michael Dawson

Photos by Alex Solca

Literally overnight, "Wild Boy" racked up thousands of views by people all around the world, effectively thrusting Nilles to the top of the heap of up-and-coming drummers who were taking advantage of the global reach of YouTube to build a fan base. A few months later, Anika posted a second video, the original composition "Alter Ego," which went viral as well. ("Wild Boy" has been viewed 1.5 million times, and "Alter Ego" is closing in on the 3 million mark.)

No one can plan for the level of immediate attention that Nilles earned from those two videos, but as the Roman Stoic philosopher Seneca wrote, "Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity." Nilles has carved her own path to success by focusing on producing top-notch performance videos of her original compositions rather than retreading more predictable paths that other YouTube stars have forged, with drum covers of popular songs and gratuitous solos.

It wasn't long before Nilles became a hot commodity on the international drum festival and clinic circuit. In 2015 she made appearances at the London Drum Show, the Meinl Drum Festival, and PASIC, and also on Drumeo, and her schedule became increasingly packed with workshops at

drum shops and music schools around the world. Nilles also released MP3s of "Wild Boy," "Alter Ego," and the quintuplet-based track "Queenz" on iTunes, and she included "minus drums" versions of each for her fans to use for play-along practice.

Incredibly gracious and humbled by the unexpected success, Nilles continues to use YouTube as the primary distributor of her original work; there are eleven full-production performances currently posted to her channel, and several more are slated for release later this year. But the thing that Anika is most excited about at the moment is the release of her first full-length album, *Pikalar*, which is a rhythmic tour-de-force featuring super-hip odd-time and odd-grouping grooves, tricky metric modulations, and intense full-kit fills presented within the context of soaring prog/fusion arrangements, singable melodies, and incredible playing from a supporting cast of bassist Frank Itt, keyboardist Maze Leber, and guitarist/producer Joachim Schneiss.

We caught up with Nilles just as *Pikalar* was about to drop, so we could dig into some of the drumming and musical concepts that she's exploring on this batch of tracks.





MD: Congratulations on the album. You must be excited to get this batch of original music out there.

Anika: Yes. I've been working on it for one and a half years between touring and traveling.

MD: The drum sounds and mixes are very consistent throughout. Did you use the same studio for everything?

Anika: Yeah. I've been working with a producer named Joachim Schneiss for the last six years. We work really well together. You never change a winning team, you know? He also plays the guitars on the album.

MD: I'm curious about the writing process of drummers who compose. Was it always a goal to focus on your own music?

Anika: No, it wasn't. I started composing while studying drums at the university. First I composed on the guitar. Then I switched to the keys and worked more with recording programs like Logic and Cubase. That helped me to develop my composing skills, because I was really limited on the guitar.

MD: Did you study piano when you were a kid?

Anika: No. I can't really play piano. I can play for a couple of bars, but that's it. It's not really in the flow or anything. I just compose with it and then bring in a real keyboard player.

MD: How did the ideas develop? Did you start with a bass line or chord progression, or did the songs start from drum parts?

Anika: I often start with a drum part. My composing style is really rhythmic. I have a lot of ideas, and I'll put them into my laptop and then put on bass lines, keyboard melodies, and other stuff. The guitar plays the main melodies, but I write them by singing them first. So I'm basically putting vocal melodies into a guitar line.

MD: What particular concepts were you exploring on the drums when you wrote these songs? What was the inspiration?

Anika: It's instrumental music, so I don't have words. I listen to a lot of other musicians and other music, and I always get more into a song when I feel something from the melody. When I listen to songs with vocals, I don't really care about the words. I look for something with the melody that gives me goose bumps.

I do a lot of driving, so there are often moments when I'm listening to music and the sun is shining a certain way or I'm passing through some cool-looking fields, and I feel some type of connection. Those are the feelings I remember when I'm composing. And that's why the songs are called "Greenfield" and things like this.



MD: What does the title *Pikalar* mean?

Anika: *Pikalar* isn't really a word. You can't find it in a dictionary or on Google. It's a word that I created to stand for things that happen

in life that you can't describe. That's what happened to me over the last three years. I got all this attention on the internet and YouTube, but it took me two years to understand what was happening. So I was looking for a title that described that experience, but all the words I found sounded stupid. So I thought it would be cool to put a new word together that would have the meaning for that.

MD: When you first started doing videos for YouTube, did you have a plan, or did you just feel like making them?

Anika: I started making videos about three years ago, and the idea was to put out videos to get attention from people around my area to hire me for jobs. That was it. People were always asking for stuff to listen to or to watch, so I recorded one of my tracks and posted it. By the next morning, it went totally crazy. [laughs]

I don't know why that happened, but a lot of people wrote messages and were very supportive, so I thought why not put out a second song? That was "Alter Ego," and it went crazy too. It was cool for me, because I now had a tool to put out my own music. That's how everything started, but it wasn't planned.

MD: Did you end up getting local gigs from the videos, or did your career go straight to international opportunities?

Anika: I've been playing the drums for a long time, so I've played a lot in my area and around Germany. I'm coming from playing live on stage with different bands. But with the videos, things started going international immediately.

MD: When you're home, do you still play gigs around your town?

Anika: I don't live in a big city like Berlin or Hamburg. I live in a smaller town. We have some things going on, but it's not every week. But I work for a couple of agencies who book shows everywhere in Germany. I'm playing on the weekends a lot and



sometimes during the week. But things are really busy with my own stuff, so I can't do a lot of those shows.



MD: On the opening track, "Synergy," how much of the drum part is written and how much is improvised?

Anika: This song is called "Synergy" because it's about the synergy of two time signatures. There are two time signatures going on, and I play a different one from the band. The verse groove is composed, and all the other musicians rely on that. But the fills are always improvised, so they are always different. The grooves are more composed.



Anika's Setup

Drums: Tama Starclassic Bubinga in piano black finish

- A. 6x14 Starphonic Aluminum snare
- B. 5.5x14 Dynamic Bronze snare
- C. 9x12 tom
- D. 8x10 tom
- E. 12x14 floor tom
- F. 18x20 bass drum

Cymbals: Meinl

- 1. 15" Byzance Dual hi-hats
- 2. 16" Byzance Trash crash
- 3. 10" Byzance Traditional splash
- 4. 24" Byzance Big Apple ride
- 5. 18" Artist Concept Anika Nilles Deep Hats
- 6. 20" Byzance Extra-Dry Thin crash

Anika also often uses a 24" Byzance Extra-Dry Medium ride, a 20" Byzance Hammered crash, and a 10" Byzance Traditional splash stacked over a 14" Generation X Filter China.

Sticks: Vic Firth 55A

Hardware: Tama, including Iron Cobra bass drum pedal and hi-hat stand

Heads: Evans Genera HD auxiliary snare batter, Onyx main snare batter, EC2 Frosted tom batters and G1 Clear resonants, G2 Coated floor tom batter and G1 Clear resonant, and EMAD Onyx bass drum batter and EQ3 front head

Favorites

John Mayer Continuum (Steve Jordan, Clayton Cameron) ///

John Scofield Überjam (Adam Deitch) /// **Toto** IV (Jeff Porcaro) ///

Michael Jackson Thriller (Jeff Porcaro, Ndugu Chanler), Off the Wall (John "JR" Robinson) /// **Joss Stone** Colour Me Free! (Karl Brazil, Lemar Carter, Steve Gadd, Stanton Moore) /// **Meshell Ndegeocello** Bitter (Abe Laboriel Jr.) /// **The Police** Outlandos d'Amour (Stewart Copeland) /// **Stanton Moore** III (Stanton Moore) /// **Foo Fighters** There Is Nothing Left to Lose (Taylor Hawkins, Dave Grohl)



MD: How do you keep track of the pulse when you get into sections where you play extended fills? Are you thinking about patterns or the pulse?

Anika: I'm thinking about the subdivisions. "Synergy" is in 3/4 and is at 90 bpm. So I know exactly which subdivisions, like fives, sevens, or nines, I can play at that bpm. When I'm improvising, I'm just playing over a subdivision. "Synergy" has a lot of nines and some sevens. I've studied a lot of groupings to play in those subdivisions, but I don't

think about them anymore. I just feel them over the pulse.

MD: What would be one grouping that you use most often?

Anika: I play groups of five a lot. That pattern is like home for me.

MD: What's the sticking?

Anika: It's right-left-right-kick-kick.

MD: On the second track, "Mister," what's the sticking pattern in the chorus, where the hi-hat plays fast figures?

Interview continues on page 36

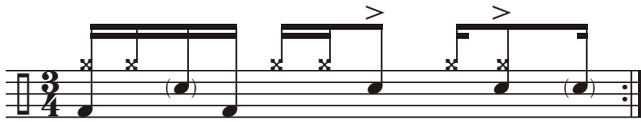
Pikalar Picks

A half dozen unique beats from Nilles's debut album.

Transcribed by Michael Dawson

"Synergy"

The main rhythmic concept in this song involves blending 3/4 and 4/4 within the same measure. Anika outlines the 4/4 feel played by the band with a syncopated kick and snare pattern, while the hi-hat stays locked in 3/4. (0:22)



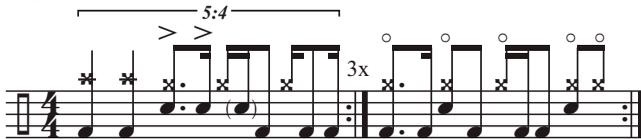
"Mister"

Nilles bookmarks a quick 32nd-note pattern on beats 2 and 3 with big, open 8th notes on beats 1 and 4 during the chorus of this song. (0:49)



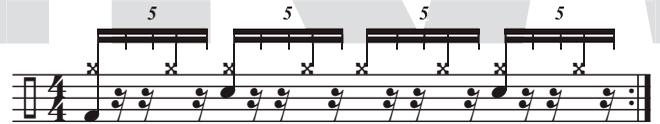
"Orange Leaves"

Anika creates a powerful and unexpected tempo shift in this song by modulating into 5/4 for three bars before returning to the original pulse in measure 4. (2:31)

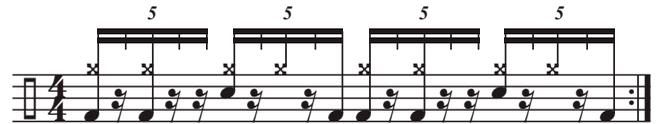


"Mallay"

The spacious opening groove in this track sounds like a basic shuffle, but it's actually built using a quintuplet subdivision. (0:00)



When the band kicks in, Nilles shifts her pattern to emphasize the first and third notes of the quintuplet. (0:23)



"Pikalar"

Anika creates a smooth, comfortable flow in this 7/8 groove by keeping a steady quarter-note feel with the hi-hat. (0:35)



"People always want me to play drum solos, but I'm completely happy when I can play straight 4/4 without any fills."





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Anika's Setup

- Byzance 16" Extra Dry Medium Thin Hi-hat
- Byzance 20" Extra Dry Thin Crash
- Generation-X 12" Filter China (used as stack - bottom)
- Byzance 16" Trash Crash (used as stack - top)
- Byzance 24" R&D Ride
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Anika Nilles

Anika: It's 32nd notes, and I'm playing them as right-right-left-kick. This song is really hard to play because it's a slow tempo. It's difficult to keep the time exact, especially during the verse.

MD: What do you do to keep the time together? Do you count faster subdivisions?

Anika: I try to feel the 16ths.

MD: Do you play these tracks live with a click?

Anika: Yeah. I'm not that good to play them without a click track. [laughs] I'm working on that, but I think I'll work on that my whole life.

MD: There's a metric modulation in the middle of "Mister." What's going on there?

Anika: The new time signature is based on the quarter-note triplet, so the triplet becomes the quarter note.

MD: What was the inspiration behind this song?

Anika: It was inspired by Michael Jackson.

MD: Did you grow up listening to R&B?

Anika: Yeah, I listened a lot to *Off the Wall* and *Thriller*.

MD: Who are your biggest influences?

Anika: Jeff Porcaro has been a big influence for my whole life. Then there's Chris Coleman, Jojo Mayer, and Benny Greb, who I've studied a lot over the past couple of years. I also really like Stanton Moore.

MD: What is it about Jeff Porcaro's playing that's so influential?

Anika: I love a lot of stuff about his playing. First, his ghostings were nuts. His playing was so dynamic. He caught all these soft things with the other musicians, but he still played with a really good flow. He was so musical.

MD: The next track is "Orange Leaves."

Anika: This song is coming from more Asian-based stuff. I live in Mannheim, where there are a lot of people from Turkey and those areas. So we have all those influences here. When I decided to put something together in that style, I chose that title because for me orange is a color that fits that sound.

MD: What is the metric modulation in "Orange Leaves"?

Anika: This is the hardest one—it keeps me busy. [laughs] I'm playing in 4/4, and then the new time signature is based on a quintuplet. So the click stays in 4/4, while I play five beats over that.

This song grew while we were recording with different musicians. I got the idea for the modulation at the last second before we put it out on YouTube. I felt that the middle part was a little bit boring, so I

thought it would be cool to try playing in five over it.

MD: The next song is "Greenfield." The first thing I thought of when I listened to it was Steve Jordan. Was he an inspiration for this track?

Anika: Yeah, totally. I wanted to have the sound of Steve on John Mayer's albums. I really like that style of playing, and John Mayer is one of my big composing influences. This song is a little like his stuff.

MD: The snare sound is different on this track. What drum did you use?

Anika: It's a 7.5x13.

MD: Your drum sounds on the record are very punchy and clean. What do you do to get that sound?

Anika: I checked out a lot of stuff to get that sound. I wanted to have a clear sound where you can hear all the ghostings and fast single strokes. I also wanted it to be powerful. So I was looking for drumheads that already had that sound. That's why I use EC2s on the rack toms and a G2 on the floor tom, which is tuned very low so I can do rolls on it that sound like double bass.

MD: How do you tune the top head versus the bottom head on the toms?

Anika: I tune the bottom heads of the toms to the lowest point, and the top heads are up a little bit from that.

MD: What about the bass drum? Is it heavily muffled?

Anika: I use the Onyx EMAD, which is a 2-ply head with a special coating and a muffling ring. And I have two of Evans' pads inside. The kick is always tuned really low, so you can see the screws shaking. [laughs]

MD: How did you choose which cymbals to use?

Anika: I like dark and dry sounds, which I know are hard to hear sometimes. But I really like that sound. When I record, I try to choose cymbals that fit each song.

MD: How often were you changing cymbals? Was it every song?

Anika: Yeah. Sometimes I kept the hi-hat and one or two crashes, but I changed a lot of cymbals for each song.

MD: Why change them so often?

Anika: When you're recording, you're always looking for the best sounds for the song. That's why we switched snares often too. But I think your choice of cymbals gives you the most character. Meinl cymbals have a certain character, but if you use Zildjian it's a totally different sound. Each cymbal is different, so I'm always looking for a

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Anika Nilles (drummer/songwriter)

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Anika Nilles

setup that fits within the song.

MD: How many snares did you use?

Anika: I had eight different snares, and I used six of them.

MD: What do you look for in a snare drum when choosing it for a song?

Anika: I personally like aluminum and brass snares, but they don't fit on every song. Sometimes you need a thinner wood shell that sounds more open. It depends on the drumheads you use too—whether it sounds more open or muffled.

MD: “Mallay” has a quintuplet groove. You've become pretty well known for your experimentations with quintuplets in grooves. How did you get into that?

Anika: That happened while I was working on my final exam at the university. I was looking for something different from all the Dave Weckl play-alongs the guys were playing each year. I had a jam with bassist Frank Ilt, who ended up playing on my album, and he asked me if I could play some quintuplet grooves. I couldn't, but I thought it was cool. So I put something together using quintuplets to play on my final exam. I worked on it for several months and created my own exercises, because I couldn't find anything on the internet. “Queenz” was my final-exam piece.

MD: That was one of the songs you posted to YouTube.

Anika: Yeah. The idea was to bring quintuplets into a groove, with a backbeat on 2 and 4, and make it feel groovy, rather than just playing crazy stuff. For people who aren't into fives, it still sounds crazy. But you can feel a backbeat, and that was my goal. In “Mallay,” everyone in the band is playing quintuplets.

MD: This song has a laid-back, J Dilla-type feel that sits somewhere between straight and swung 16th notes. Were you listening to drummers who play like that, like Chris Dave or Daru Jones, when you wrote it?

Anika: No. It was just a mathematic idea—to count and play in five.

MD: It sounds like you most often accent the first and fourth subdivisions in your quintuplet grooves.

Anika: Just as with 16ths, you have many hi-hat patterns that you can use with quintuplets. You can play on 1 and 4; 1, 3, and 4; 1 and 3; and so on. And each hi-hat pattern has a different feel.

MD: Did you work on putting the kick drum underneath those patterns? Was that how you started practicing quintuplets?

Anika: No, I started simple with a quintuplet hand-to-hand sticking on the hi-hat and immediately focused on playing the kick in five. I wanted to figure out how to play

different patterns on the bass drum first.

MD: And then you started leaving notes out of the hi-hat pattern?

Anika: Yeah, but that was like step ten of the process. [laughs]

MD: The next song is “One Ride, One Life,” which has a half-time-shuffle feel.

Anika: Yeah, this song is Jeff Porcaro-influenced. I took a layout of this song with me while visiting L.A. two years ago. We drove up to the hills, and it was one of those times where the sun was shining and everything felt fine. I listened to this song and the title came to me, which more or less means you only get to have one of those experiences in your life.

MD: You did an Instagram video on how to play a half-time shuffle using quintuplets. How are you doing that?

Anika: That came about during a Skype lesson with someone who asked me if I had ever tried to put regular grooves into quintuplets. I hadn't ever thought about it, so he asked me to try the half-time shuffle. It sounds really interesting.

MD: The track “Pikalar” is in 7/8. How do you make that time signature sound smooth?

Anika: That comes from the hi-hat and ride cymbal work. On the ride, I play more in 7/4, while the snare and kick play in 7/8. That creates a flow where you can nod your head like it's in 4/4. Also, where you place the snare makes it sound groovy.

MD: Where do you often place the snare in a 7/8 groove?

Anika: I usually hit the snare on the 5, which gives it a little bit of a half-time feel.



MD: When did you know you were going to be a drummer?

Anika: I started playing really early, at the age of six. I didn't practice a lot, but I always knew I wanted to be a drummer. But my parents urged me to get a “real” job, so I worked for six years outside of music. It wasn't until I was twenty-six that I started really working on my skills to become a professional drummer.

But I always knew that this is what I wanted to do. There was a time when I was totally into my old job. I had a lot of people who worked for me, and I was making money. But then I thought, *Is this really the thing I want to do for the rest of my life?* Several months later I decided to quit and begin working on my drum skills.

MD: Were you already playing gigs on the weekends while you were working your old job?

Anika: Yes. I was teaching, and I was playing

in cover bands a few times a month.

MD: Did you take lessons when you first started at six?

Anika: I took lessons at a local music school for three years, and I had a few private lessons. I didn't take any more lessons for a couple years, but then I started studying with Claus Hessler, who lived twenty minutes from me.

MD: When did you realize it was important to make well-produced videos to further your career?

Anika: Like I said, it wasn't planned. The first and second videos aren't that produced, honestly. But I think it's important to make good videos with good sound and to write good songs. This is what makes me different from others—staying focused on my own music and producing everything at the highest quality possible.

MD: Are you planning to make videos for all of the new songs?

Anika: I plan to put out two or three more from the album, but I'm already writing new stuff that I want to put out this year.

MD: The next track is "Those Hills," which is another quintuplet-based song. This one could have had an over-the-top drum solo in it, but you decided to jam more with the music. Was that deliberate, and what do you think of drum solos in general?

Anika: I don't like them, honestly. When it comes to a drum solo, I can't play anymore. I feel totally empty. I have no ideas, no flow—nothing. I always need music to get inspired. I need melodies in order to feel something. I don't listen to other drum solos, and I don't like watching them. I don't find them interesting—they're just rhythms. People always want me to play drum solos, but I'm completely happy when I can play straight 4/4 without any fills.

MD: How do you feel about drum clinics, then?

Anika: It was awkward at first. I was thinking too much while I was playing, but now it's okay. I feel more comfortable, but I still miss the guys.

MD: How do you structure your clinics?

Anika: No drum solos! [laughs] I know that people want to hear me play without the sequencers, so I'll put on a metronome and jam a little bit. Then I'll play a few songs and answer questions.

MD: What are the most popular questions you get asked?

Anika: I always get asked about why I angle my cymbals away from me, and why I switched the order of the rack toms.

MD: And the answers are...?

Anika: [laughs] I switched the rack toms because I had played a lot on a smaller

setup with just two toms: a 12" and a 14" or 16". When my drumset started to grow again, I put the 10" on the right side, because I felt more comfortable with the 12" in front of me.

The cymbals are angled away from me because I set them really low. And sometimes when you're crash-riding a cymbal that's angled toward you, it starts moving totally crazy and you have to stop hitting it for a second until it's back in place. When you tilt the cymbal a little away from you, you can control it much better, because it follows your stick better. And no, I haven't broken more cymbals because I angle them that way. [laughs]

MD: Your setup is positioned very tight and close. Have you always played with everything close together?

Anika: Not always, but I developed that over the past seven years, because when everything is really tight together you don't need to reach out. You can handle faster stuff, and you don't lose as much energy from reaching.

MD: What was the inspiration behind the track "White Lines"?

Anika: This song is inspired by gospel music.

MD: You play some cool licks in the song that incorporate the splash. Was that something you spent time practicing?

Anika: Yeah, that's an orchestration thing. I have stickings that I use for groups of five, six, and so on, so when I practiced that stuff I experimented with orchestrating them on unusual things besides toms, like cymbals, hi-hats, stacks, and percussion. So sometimes I use the cymbals, stacks, and splashes to orchestrate fills a little bit differently. But it's within a specific sticking.

MD: The last song is "Alter Ego," which was the second song you released on YouTube. Why did you include it on *Pikalar*?

Anika: This song is where everything in my career starts. That song went totally viral on social media, so I got a lot of attention from it. I put it on the album as a thank-you to all the people who have followed and supported me over the years.

MD: What advice would you have for a drummer looking to make a career in music today?

Anika: I think the important thing is to stay focused on your goals. You have to work out your own stuff. If you think something you're playing is cool, go with it. You have to find one thing that's yours. But you also have to keep really good time and play musically with other musicians. That's really the most important thing.



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Michael Miley

In the school of hard rock, the members of RIVAL SONS are at the top of their class. But even after logging thousands of miles opening for legends like Deep Purple and Black Sabbath, they know that the journey never really ends, and the hunger to succeed never subsides. And that's just the way they like it.

Story by Ken Micallef
Photos by Alex Solca



Rival Sons' fifth album, *Hollow Bones*, packs a Led Zeppelin-size wallop in songs that shake, rattle, and reverberate like the ghosts of rock gods mingling with blues royalty. At the center of the storm, drummer Michael Miley balances his fixations on studio legends Jeff Porcaro, Steve Gadd, and Bernard Purdie with the coliseum thud of Zeppelin's John Bonham, AC/DC's Phil Rudd, and Black Sabbath's Bill Ward.

A graduate of California State University at Long Beach, where he received a bachelor's degree in percussion, Miley possesses the legit tools of a concert percussionist, but also the passion of a grimy rock urchin steeped in groove goō. Miley's well-documented solos are all flash and phantasm balanced by deep pocket, thick tone, and thumping delivery. And as he creates drum parts on the fly when the band records tracks, Miley must keep his intuition and

musical skills fully active and on alert, 24/7.

Joined by fellow Sons Jay Buchanan (vocals), Scott Holiday (guitar), and Dave Beste (bass), Miley performs classic-rock sounds as a twenty-first-century musician who is fully aware of listener expectations and business demands. Rock is no longer simply about jamming with your buds; it's a corporate business where every decision, every note, and every musical choice has long-term implications on your career.

Playing London's O2 Arena with Black Sabbath the day of our *Modern Drummer* interview, Miley notes that he's thankful for "our cult following in the U.K., built on playing with big acts and getting exposure and sweating our butts off." American ingenuity...American work ethic...American success story.

MD: When Rival Sons plays these giant tours across the U.K. and Europe, what's your takeaway?

Michael: I watched Black Sabbath's drummer, Tommy Clufetos, every night, and he opened a lot of doors as to how I approach my own drum solo. When Rival Sons does a headlining gig, I usually take a three-minute solo. It's not a gigantic thing, but the way Tommy structures his solo and the way he stays in shape have influenced me. I have a hard workout regimen on the road; Tommy has a harder one! He's super-professional. And as a part owner of Rival Sons, I really take note of Black Sabbath's production.

When you're on the arena level you see how the big boys do it. Having opened for Kiss, AC/DC, Black Sabbath, Lenny Kravitz, Deep Purple—all these big boys—you see how they run their show, what kind of lighting rigs they're using...so we go to school every night.

MD: You said you're part owner of Rival Sons—is the band incorporated?

Michael: We have five albums and one EP; it's a big business. It's merchandise, publishing, records, and touring. Four income streams. A lot of musicians think, *I'm going to join a band*. It isn't just jamming in your garage. It's a big-time business when you get out here on this level. I never took a class on the music business. Some people read Donald Passman's *All You Need to Know About the Music Business*. I've read big parts of it. I've signed multiple record deals, and at this point in Rival Sons each one of us individually has had record deals before, so when we came into this band we had a better business mindset.

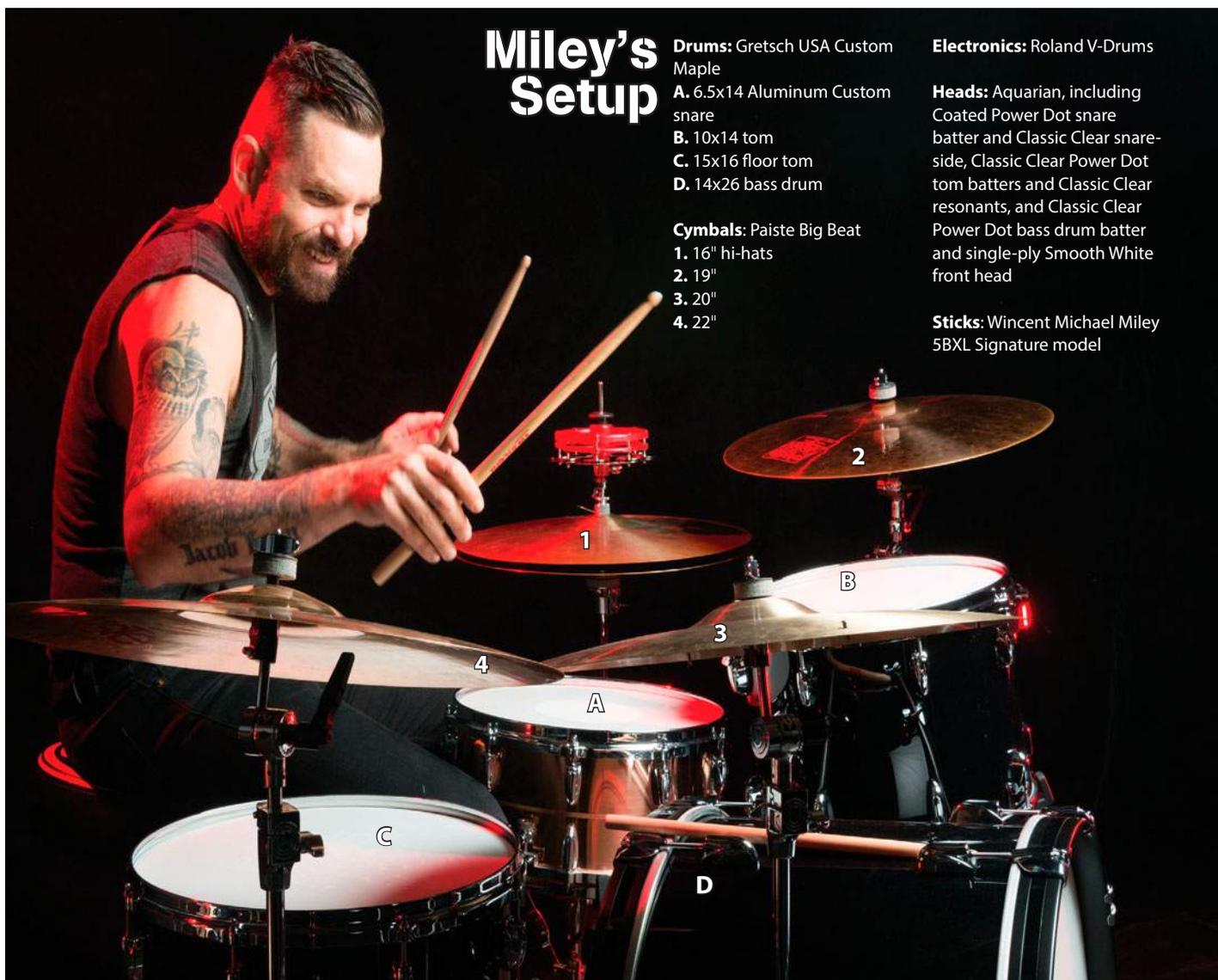
Rival Sounds

MD: Your drumming and tones are reminiscent of the '70s ideal of big drum sound, big live room. Sometimes you sound slightly behind the beat, another classic

maneuver. How do you generally create a drum part in Rival Sons?

Michael: I always say a good song will write itself. The groove is insinuated from a good song. If it's a simple lyric and a simple rhythm, I should play a simple beat. In "Thundering Voices" [from *Hollow Bones*] I was just building off that groove while we were jamming in the studio. Dave Cobb, our producer, was like, "Miley, just keep playing that over and over so we can come up with a riff." And so it happened that way.

On most songs, though, you have a riff that dictates the bass drum melody. Then you decide if you want an open or closed hi-hat based off of what the others guys are playing. There's formulaic stuff: closed hi-hat in the verse, open in the chorus. Ride cymbal in the intro, the re-intro, and the guitar solo. A good ol' rock 'n' roll tune is not rocket science. I'm not trying to reinvent the wheel. But I am trying to find the funk in the grooves. Funk and jazz are my favorite stuff



Miley's Setup

Drums: Gretsch USA Custom Maple
A. 6.5x14 Aluminum Custom snare
B. 10x14 tom
C. 15x16 floor tom
D. 14x26 bass drum

Cymbals: Paiste Big Beat
1. 16" hi-hats
2. 19"
3. 20"
4. 22"

Electronics: Roland V-Drums

Heads: Aquarian, including Coated Power Dot snare batter and Classic Clear snare-side, Classic Clear Power Dot tom batters and Classic Clear resonants, and Classic Clear Power Dot bass drum batter and single-ply Smooth White front head

Sticks: Wincent Michael Miley 5BXL Signature model

Q You consistently go for a ringing snare drum sound. Why?

A Rival Sons has big balls! Nothing in this band should sound polite or orthodox.



to play, so I ask myself, *What would David Garibaldi do here?* or *What would Bernard Purdie play here?* as well as *What would Bonham or Jeff Porcaro do?* All my heroes. I have a whole toolshed of influences.

So when I play something in the studio, maybe everyone turns around and says, "That's it!" Or they say, "What the hell are you doing?" I'm trying to be as natural with it as possible. We write and record a song a day. Everything you're hearing on the album is my first instinct. Everything on the album is a first or second or third take. Dave Cobb wants to keep it visceral and dangerous. We leave in the mistakes. Bass, drums, and guitar record together on the studio floor. Jay either sings with us or he adds his voice later.

MD: Generally speaking, are you using the same drums throughout the record?

Michael: Yes. I use a 26" kick drum and we use the Glyn Johns miking technique: one

mic overhead, one mic to the side near the floor tom, and one mic on the kick drum. That is the basic sound. Very Beatle-esque approach. A pure drum sound.

MD: You consistently go for a ringing snare drum sound. Why?

Michael: Rival Sons has big balls! Nothing in this band should sound polite or orthodox. Sonically I have to cut through those big fuzzy guitars and the low midrange bass. Everybody has their frequency spectrum that they sit in; we've figured this out over the years.

And regarding the ringing snare drum sound, all my favorite drummers from the British Invasion, most of those snare drum sounds were big, open, ringing metal drums, tuned high. Mitch Mitchell, Keith Moon, John Bonham, Ginger Baker—they all used higher-pitched, ringing snare drums. That's how I interpreted it. The '70s was when drum muffling began, but no one was

muffling in the '60s.

MD: What heads do you use in the studio?

Michael: Aquarian Coated Power Dot for the snare drum, wide open. On the toms, Classic Clear Power Dots. They're sort of like the Remo CS batter head.

MD: You're always very relaxed sounding. What's the key to staying relaxed in music that requires a big, open groove? And how do you maintain that in concert, when tempos can speed up?

Michael: Scott, our guitar player, plays on top of the beat. He has more of an urgent kind of feel. He makes me sound behind the beat. Scott and I have been playing together since 2005, so whatever is happening there, I'm not consciously playing behind the beat. But as far as playing relaxed, I am influenced by the funk drummers, including Chris Dave. His feel is insane. He's a pioneer for feel in the modern era; he has opened doors.

MD: But he doesn't play behind the beat.

Michael: No, he's perfectly on the click. But he's got such good timing, he can phrase anywhere he wants, whether it's flaming the backbeat, which will automatically make you sound behind the beat—or it may be earlier, depending on how you look at it. I have open ears for other drummers, other

Influences

Toto "Hold the Line" (Jeff Porcaro) /// **Phil Collins** "In the Air Tonight" (Phil Collins) /// **Tower of Power** "What Is Hip?" (David Garibaldi) /// **Led Zeppelin** "Good Times Bad Times" (John Bonham) /// **The Who** "My Generation" (Keith Moon) /// **Cream** "Sunshine of Your Love" (Ginger Baker) /// **The Jimi Hendrix Experience** *Axis: Bold as Love* (Mitch Mitchell) /// **The Beatles** all (Ringo Starr) /// **Steely Dan** all (miscellaneous)

genres, to allow that influence in.

Rock 'n' roll was originally black music played by white British guys. Black American music, rhythm and blues, gospel. Jimmy Page, Keith Richards, Mick Jagger, these guys were obsessed with American blues and R&B. In the modern era, I want to be just as open. I won't be dropping a sampled beat from A Tribe Called Quest in any of our songs, but Chris Dave can play bebop, funk—he's a multifaceted guy. I allow for those influences, as well as Jeff Porcaro. And Keith Carlock. He's another guy who can phrase around the beat; he's not such a grid-oriented drummer. There's a feel, an energy. Whereas Benny Greb is more on the grid, and he's got as great a feel. I'm trying to draw from all of these guys while also trying to figure out Steely Dan grooves.

Warm-Up to Practice

MD: What's your warm-up routine?

Michael: I have a DW Go Anywhere Practice Set. My awesome drum tech sets it up every day. During the day I'll practice on my own, then one hour before the show I'll do calisthenics, jump rope, to get my blood flowing. Push-ups and resistance bands for ten minutes. Maybe some yoga postures. Then I get on the kit and play doubles, singles, paradiddles, and paradiddle-diddles with a basic foot pattern. I will start slow and get up to as fast as I can. Specifically, I have the metronome speeding up two beats per minute every eight bars. I can get from 100 bpm to 200 bpm in about twelve to fifteen minutes. It's a slow build until I peak out my singles and doubles; that warms up my hands. Then I start improvising singles, doubles, paradiddles, and paradiddle-diddles. Or I'll work on Gary Chaffee's *Linear Time Playing*, or Ted Reed's *Syncopation*, or George Lawrence Stone's *Stick Control*. I have these books with me on the road, just trying to find different patterns. I call it untying knots, finding little melodies.

Everything you play on a kit will be a rudiment, somehow, some way. It could be a single, a double, a flam, or any combination therein. You can play a paradiddle on a snare drum, but the second you put a hand to the cymbal and leave your other hand on the

Recordings

Rival Sons "Radio" (from *Rival Sons EP*), "Pressure and Time" (*Pressure & Time*), "Run From Revelation" (*Head Down*), "Open My Eyes" (*Great Western Valkyrie*), "Black Coffee" and "Thundering Voices" (*Hollow Bones*)



snare drum, now you have a funk beat. But it's still a paradiddle. It's getting the brain to adapt to phrasing rudiments around the kit. That's what I do every single day. Just trying to open up my vocabulary. So the more your ear can hear different patterns, the more patterns you can drill into your muscle and brain memory, the more your vocabulary can speak naturally to where you can sound relaxed. You can hear when someone is overthinking. You can hear when somebody is relaxed. I think the people who sound relaxed have put in their 10,000 hours. Do you know that reference?

MD: Yes, from Malcolm Gladwell's *Outliers*. I know it, though I don't completely agree with the premise.

Michael: I'm not in full agreement with it either, but you do have to put a lot of time into your craft.

MD: Working on so much sticking before a gig, do you ever blow yourself out?

Michael: No. I used to not warm up at all. I used to love going up cold. It feels so fresh. But I'm not doing my warm-up at any super volume. I'm playing everything at low to medium volume, and I'm working on things

that I have trouble doing. And so when I get on stage, I know these grooves like the back of my hand. They're a lot louder live, and I'm playing on the full kit. But I do want to break a sweat during warm-up. I want moist skin. I want blood in my muscles when I walk on stage. It's definitely a balance. But I never play so hard that I blow out my chops before a gig.

MD: When you have time to practice, what do you focus on?

Michael: Everything I just said in a more macro, concise way. I'll spend six to ten hours a week on Gary Chaffee's *Linear Time Playing*, thirty minutes to an hour a day, where I'm digging in deep and spending longer periods of time on these things. So when I get on tour I have a few exercises I'm working up to speed.

At home I'm taking my time and playing grooves at 50 bpm. Funk grooves that you might play at 120 or 130 bpm, I'm playing at 50 bpm. Really slow and methodical and to a metronome. I've been studying with Dave Elitch [the Mars Volta,

Antemasque] for two years. I home in on technique. If I have any injuries...I had a left-foot problem, so I was working on my hi-hat technique. I try to repair any errors or damage that was done on the last tour. I never want to be complacent.

We're becoming more popular, and [the press] are comparing me to Bonham and the British Invasion guys. And we're playing blues-, gospel-, and R&B-infused rock 'n' roll music. That's the language. But I don't take it for granted. I don't want the band to have a hit single and then my single-stroke rolls still are only [operable] at 160 bpm. I'm only going to get more of a spotlight as the band becomes more popular, so I don't take it for granted. I work really hard, and I want to be the best I can be.

Rival Songs

MD: "Thundering Voices" has an unusual contrasting bridge section where it sounds like you're playing a three-over-two pattern. It breaks things up in an unusual way.

Michael: It's basically a Cuban triplet. It's not a strict triplet. You know the clave [sings pattern]; the part I play there is

basically the 3 of the 3:2 clave repeated. It's dotted quarter, dotted quarter, quarter. I'm flamming on the toms and playing a straight-four bass drum pattern. I'm flamming the Cuban triplets. The hi-hat is playing straight four with the bass drum. The guitar went from a single-note, fuzzy guitar riff to clean fingerpicking, a complete contrast. So I wanted to create a complete contrast as well. The vocals change as well; it's a big contrasting section. I wanted it to sound tribal.

MD: You play a clean buzz roll on "Fade Out." No one in modern rock, or even Chris Dave, plays buzz rolls. Why did you play that there, and what gives you license to do so? Buzz rolls are like Ian Paice.

Michael: Oh, yeah. That's the reason. It works perfectly musically there, and I've always loved a [dynamically controlled] buzz roll into a rimshot. I think it has great effect to set up the next section of a song, especially a second verse, as in "Fade Out" after that Gilmour-esque guitar solo. A buzz roll was the first thing I thought to play. The producer loved it. I wear my love for R&B and jazz on my sleeve. I like that sound better than I like Avenged Sevenfold. I think INXS featured a really clean roll in a hit single. Jeff Porcaro, Jim Keltner, Steve Gadd on the Steely Dan records all played rolls. They're my heroes.

MD: Are you playing rimshots on 2 and 4 on *Hollow Bones*?

Michael: Yes. On anything that's up-tempo and loud I'm cracking the snare every time. Even on the "Fade Out" verses, I'm playing rimshots. On other ballads I'll play the tip of the stick, not a rimshot. I also play a little further past the center of the snare head, which I learned from Jeff Porcaro. It gives a little fatter sound. It adds a little low end to the crack. It's not just all high-pitched; I want some low end in the crack. I play a Wincent 5BXL drumstick. It's a heavier stick.

MD: The intro of "Black Coffee" is a pummeling blast of drums and cymbals. How did you create that?

Michael: We wanted it to be on "11." Then the verse drops way down to hi-hat only. We wanted to come out of the gate just swinging balls to the wall. Like the horse races, right out of the gate at top speed. A lot of licks, a lot of drum and guitar fills. I think it's effective. We're going for big contrasts of light and shade there. That was all live, including vocals.

MD: In the studio, you create grooves in the moment. Do they change radically on tour?

Michael: We will hone certain aspects, but I'll stick to the pattern on the album. If there's

a fill that goes into choruses, I'll play stuff verbatim from the album like a drum hook. Then there's certain fills in sections where I have more liberty to improvise. And we have spots that are purely improvisational.

MD: You've found your style within a larger style. What tips can you give to younger drummers on creating their own style?

Michael: Listen to as many different styles and genres as possible. That's how you become well rounded. My goal was to be a studio musician, originally. I wanted to be called for jazz, polka, Afro-Cuban, R&B—

anything that was required. I wanted all those tools in my shed. I suggest playing in the school orchestra. Go for a music degree, which will give you twenty-four hours a day in a practice room. That will shape you musically. If you know what I-IV-V means as a drummer, you'll be able to identify phrases as sentences. Then you're not phonetically speaking each vowel—you're speaking in entire sentences, and entire paragraphs. You'll be able to develop longer phrases that have musical meaning.



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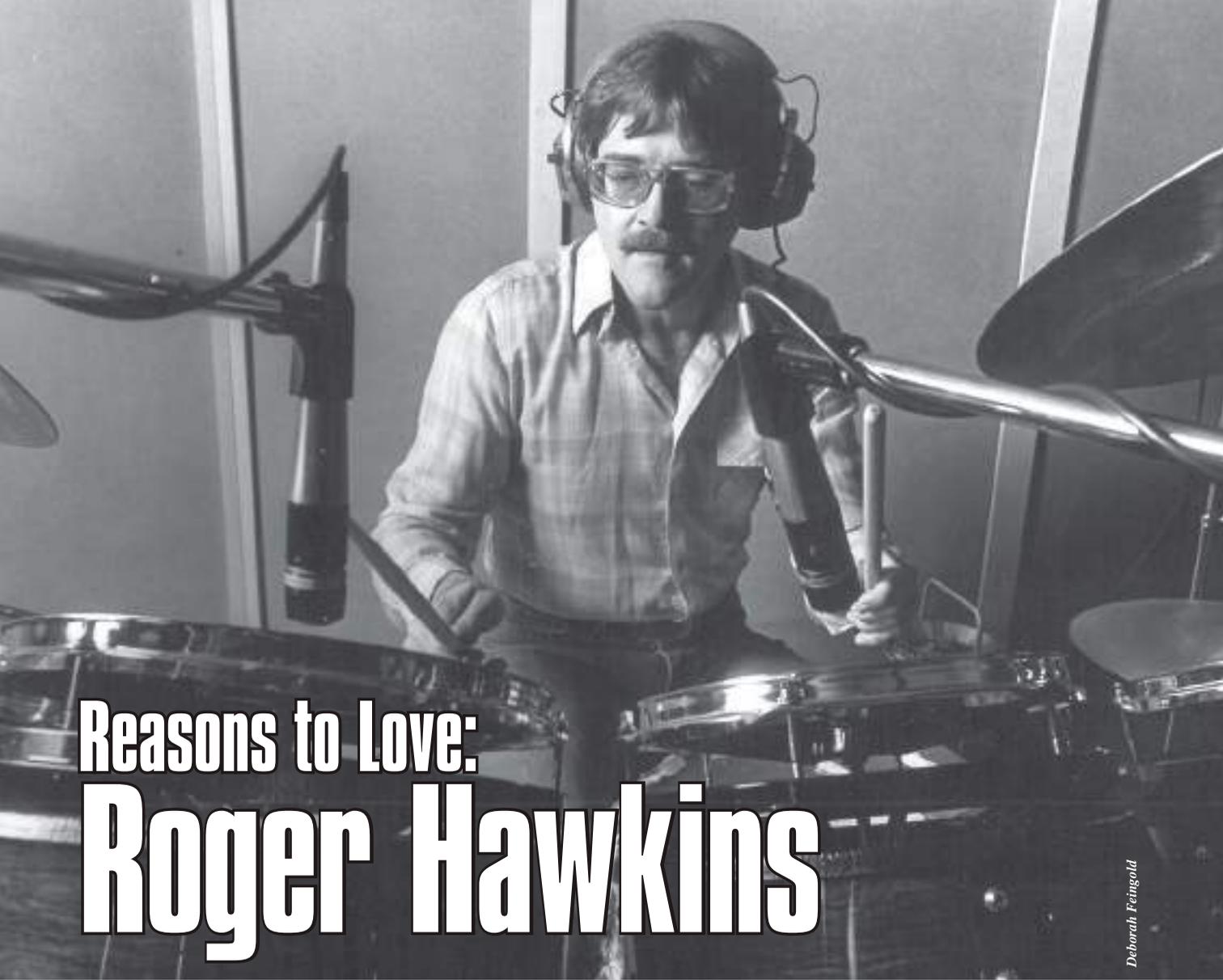
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Deborah Feingold

Reasons to Love: Roger Hawkins

by Jeff Potter

Speaking matter-of-factly but with a hint of reflective wonderment, Roger Hawkins chuckles, “We just kind of made it up as we went along.” Specifically, the ace session drummer is recalling how, as a member of the famed Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section, he and his bandmates created consummate instrumental parts and laid down tracks with a spontaneity and exhilarating groove that repeatedly made music history.

Hawkins is simply one of the greatest studio drummers of all time. His spot-on time, deep Southern-infused pocket, and uncluttered parts have fueled a long list of landmark soul and R&B classics with artists including Aretha Franklin, Etta James, and Wilson Pickett. His massive album discography features legends of rock, blues, country, and pop, including Bob Seger, Eric Clapton, Joe Cocker, Glenn Frey, Paul Simon, Duane Allman, Boz Scaggs, Rod Stewart, Lightnin’ Hopkins, Albert King, Bobby “Blue” Bland, Willie Nelson, the Oak Ridge Boys, Alabama, and many, *many* more.

Hawkins began cutting soulful tracks in the mid-’60s as the house drummer at FAME Studios in Muscle Shoals, Alabama. Along with his core Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section bandmates—bassist David Hood, guitarist Jimmy Johnson, and keyboardist Barry Beckett—the unit (also known as “the Swampers” for their funky Southern feel) eventually became so in demand that they founded their own studio, Muscle Shoals Sound, in 1969. There they held

court while top artists flocked southward to tap their sound through the following decades.

Asked to pinpoint the key to his drumming success, Hawkins says, “I don’t play the drums. Thump your fist on your heart—that’s where the drums are from.” Here, Hawkins recalls four career-changing soul landmarks.

“When a Man Loves a Woman,” Percy Sledge

This ultra-classic track from February 1966 opened doors for Hawkins and his Muscle Shoals comrades. The drummer’s soulful, socked-in backbeat and urgent ride fuel the raw in-the-room energy on the scorching soul ballad.

Atlantic Records picked it up for distribution, yielding the first number-one hit for the Muscle Shoals musicians. “[Legendary Atlantic producer] Jerry Wexler was impressed with that,” Hawkins says. “He called down and said, ‘Who *are* those guys playing on that record?’ That’s how he and [FAME owner/producer] Rick Hall joined up.”

“Land of 1000 Dances,” Wilson Pickett

Known for his sweaty, sexy, hard-groove funk, Wilson Pickett tracked numerous sides driven by Hawkins that remain cornerstones of soul, including “Mustang Sally,” “Funky Broadway,”

and the July 1966 hit that turbo-charged the drummer's career, "Land of 1000 Dances." The fevered dance-party raver is trademarked by its irresistible drum/vocal breakdown.

"I interpreted a lot for him," Hawkins says of Pickett. "If I started doing something he liked, he'd say, 'Yeah! Hold that right there!' Or sometimes he'd say, 'Man, this stinks. I wish you guys could think of something else.'"

"When we were recording this one, he said, 'We need a breakdown right here while I'm singing 'naaa, na-na-na-naaa...!' I was in the control room and I thought, *He wants a breakdown? What am I gonna do?* In my mind I knew something I might try. But he said, 'Try this,' and he was beating on his leg with his foot playing a pattern. He said, 'Can you do that?' And the breakdown was cookin'; it was great!"

"As the years went by, I always wanted to tell him, 'Thank you for giving me that part—it helped my career so much.' I always told everybody, 'It wasn't me, it was Wilson Pickett!'"

"Think" and the Aretha Atlantic Sessions

When Atlantic Records signed Aretha Franklin, she had previously recorded for Columbia with only moderate results; the label hadn't yet tapped her full potential. Seeking to reconnect Aretha with her gospel roots, Wexler made the unorthodox decision to send her to Muscle Shoals to record with the white Southern rhythm section that had so impressed him. The results were a turning point, setting the stage for the singer to blossom into the Queen of Soul.

The first session, slated at FAME Studios on January 24, 1967, yielded the sublime classic "I Never Loved a Man (the Way I Love You)." "When we started cutting tracks with Aretha, she was very pleased," Hawkins recalls. "And I somewhat vibed with her, because we'd kind of look at each other every now and again. She would look over at me and smile. To me that meant I was playing a part that she liked. We didn't get any closer than that, but there was a real communication in the studio."

Wexler invited the musicians to New York for follow-up sessions, and the hits kept rolling. Over subsequent years, Hawkins drove multiple Franklin smashes, including "Chain of Fools," "Save Me," "Drown in My Own Tears," "Baby I Love You," "The House That Jack Built," "I Say a Little Prayer," the game-changing "Respect," and the titanic "Think." On April 15, 1968, during the recording of that last watershed track, with its stratospheric "Freedom!" refrain, Hawkins connected with Aretha's church roots.

"The first time I ever played drums was in the church," Hawkins says. "I was about eleven years old. And when I'd go to a Pentecostal church in Indiana with my aunt, they'd play what they called the 'sanctified beat,' where the drums played a four-on-the-floor. So when Aretha was singing, 'You'd better think, think...' I thought, *I've heard this kind of piano playing before. It's a sanctified beat, and that's the only thing I knew how to play on that.* Then Jerry Wexler said, 'Hey, Roger, try something a bit more syncopated,' because he was used to the bass drum doing a lot of syncopation. Aretha looked at me, smiled, and said, 'Jerry, Roger's playing the right thing.' [laughs] That's how I got to stick to that part, because she had felt it."

"I'll Take You There," the Staple Singers

The Swampers backed the Stax artists the Staple Singers with spectacular results, including the classic track "Respect Yourself" and the number that topped both the soul and pop charts in February 1972, "I'll Take You There." Hawkins' hybrid soul/reggae-inflected drum part helped make the tune one of the deepest tracks in groove history.

"That was kind of an outrageous part back then," Hawkins says.

"Not braggin' about it, but it's one of my favorite tracks that I ever had the pleasure of playing on. We had gone on tour with Traffic, and during that time reggae and ska were being introduced to England, so we heard a lot of that and were influenced by it.

"I probably got the cross-stick idea from the Jamaican players; that was going through my head. So I tried to play a reggae type of bass drum part on 2 and 4 instead of on 1 and 3. But after a couple times hearing it back, I just knew that wasn't working. No one said that. But when I listened, I said, *Man, that's dragging it down with the other things going on.* So I thought, *Well, America likes 2 and 4,* so I changed the bass drum to the more traditional thing. I turned the foot around, and that worked real good. Then everybody started moving.

"There were two Neumann mics over the drums and a mic on the bass drum—the only mics there. I started thinking about those little surprise timbale hits in reggae. So I lowered the overhead mic down pretty close to the head of the snare drum. I told the engineer what I was doing so he wouldn't get spiked out. I played, then listened back and thought, *This is not quite it.* So I pulled that mic down even more, and the close miking allowed me to get it all at once: the snare drum part with the cross-stick and the timbale-like hits.

"Once I listened back, I thought, *There's nothing like this!* There are points when you're playing on that kind of track, and all of a sudden it's, *Good God! This is great! How am I doing this?* And you just try to use your mind to stick with it." Hawkins adds with a laugh, "Because when you try to analyze—*How am I doing this?*—you're setting yourself up for failure."



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Russ Titelman

The man at the helm of classic tracks like Steve Winwood's "Higher Love" and Randy Newman's "Rednecks," and Eric Clapton's *Unplugged* and *Journeyman* albums, takes us inside the making of a hit.

by Billy Amendola

Three-time Grammy-winning producer Russ Titelman's name is attached to the work of dozens of classic pop and rock's greatest acts, including Little Feat, Randy Newman, James Taylor, Brian Wilson, Cyndi Lauper, Rickie Lee Jones, George Harrison, Chaka Khan, the Bee Gees, Ry Cooder, Paul Simon, Aztec Camera, George Benson, David Sanborn, Womack and Womack, Patti Austin, Steve Winwood, and Eric Clapton. Consequently, he's been in the room when some of history's great studio drumming performances have gone down. It's an enviable position to be in, and one that has given him rare insight into the creative process.

"Russ Titelman is brilliant, innovative, and among the most well-respected producers in modern times," drummer John "JR" Robinson, a regular Titelman collaborator, tells *Modern Drummer*. "Russ has amazing song sense and knows what it takes to get the absolute best out of the artist. His pairing of musicians and artists is pure magic, and his hits are timeless." Russ is also widely considered to be one of the most down-to-earth and friendly guys you're likely to meet at the top levels of the music industry.

Titelman was born in Los Angeles on August 16, 1944, and began writing at a young age, landing his songs with, among others, the Monkees, the Hollies, Dusty Springfield, and Linda Ronstadt. He's also cowritten with legendary behind-the-scenes figures such as Gerry Goffin, Cynthia Weil, Jack Nitzsche, and Ry Cooder, and he's worked beside production giants like Phil Spector. He's made his mark on stage as well; among his early gigs was playing rhythm guitar in the house band for the popular '60s TV show *Shindig!*

After scoring a publishing deal in the early '60s with music entrepreneur Don Kirshner, a nineteen-year-old Titelman came to New York City to ply his songwriting skills, on occasion returning to L.A., where he did session and film work and enjoyed a twenty-five-year association with industry executive Lenny Waronker and Warner Bros. Records. In 1983, missing the energy and excitement of New York, he moved back to the East Coast, where he continues to work as a producer. Titelman recently took time out of his schedule to talk about some of his more memorable recordings and to offer tips to aspiring players.

MD: What are the most important qualities that you believe every drummer should have?

Russ: For me the most important quality every drummer should have is the ability to listen. A drummer must also be able to understand the basic underlying groove of a piece of music, and to play it simply, elegantly, and imaginatively.

MD: As the producer, how hands-on are you as far as getting drum sounds?

Russ: I'll make suggestions if I need to. If I'm not hearing something I want to hear, I'll jump in. I might say to the engineer, "Put another microphone over here so we can get more room sound," or "Maybe the kick needs to be a bit punchier." As a producer, it's a matter of casting and hiring the right people for the job, whether it's engineers or musicians. You want someone you trust and who you know will get the right sounds. And then let them do their thing. So if an engineer wants to use something I may not be used to, I let them do it. If I'm not hearing what I'm looking for, I might suggest something. If the person is great and it sounds great, I don't say anything.

When we were doing Steve Winwood's "Back in the High Life Again," [engineer] Tom Lord-Alge was so creative. We did drums at Studio B, a small room at Unique Studios in New York City. He had mics all around and made the room sound great. Sometimes, though, when you're mixing, the engineer has to go outside the room for a few minutes and get away from it. And if it's not quite there, I know how to work the board well enough that I can get it sounding the way I want. So it's a collaboration of the engineer's fantastic ears and ability to get it on tape. Engineer Jason Corsaro knew how to get that Power Station sound. He'd take an RCA 44 mic and put it behind the drummer near the snare and also have the regular snare mic nearby.

MD: Do you have favorite go-to microphones?

Russ: Yes, but it depends on the room. We'd use [Neumann] U87s for overheads or [AKG] C414s, [employing] different mic techniques for different records. Some records were more close-miked, and sometimes we'd back off the [close] mics to get more room sound. A Royer stereo mic is great for overheads.

MD: How about drum gear—are there any specific models that you prefer?

Russ: No, I leave that up to the drummer. I trust the drummer that I hire. A producer is like a movie casting director. Most producers love Jim Keltner because he's so creative. He was always one of the go-to guys. Another one I love is Steve Jordan.

MD: Who else comes to mind?

Russ: There are so many, and I'd hate to leave anyone out. I like Shawn Pelton—I only worked with him once, on the Lyle Lovett track "Summer Wind," which we used in the baseball movie *For Love of the Game*. Nice little swing chart with horns. I liked working with Paulinho Braga on John Pizzarelli's *Bossa Nova* album. I love Mickey Curry [Hall and Oates, Bryan Adams]. There's Rick Marotta, who I worked with a few times. I've always wanted to work with Bernard

Purdie but haven't had the opportunity to yet. I loved Earl Palmer's playing. Gary Chester—his drum fills were twisted. Listen to Gene Pitney's "Every Breath I Take"—amazing drum fills. Buddy Saltzman, who did all the Four Seasons records. L.A. drummer Jesse Scales was on one of the first demos I made of my original songs. I recorded it at Gold Star Studios with Larry Levine as the engineer. That demo ultimately got me signed to Don Kirshner's publishing company, and that's when I first came to New York City.

I also love Andy Newmark. I first met him in the early '70s, before we did the *George Harrison* record [1979]. The rhythm section on that was Andy and Willie Weeks. Before that, I'd brought Andy and Willie in on Randy Newman's *Good Old Boys* album [1974], which is half Newmark and half Keltner. Andy is on the tracks "Rednecks," "Louisiana 1927," and "Mr. President." Then I worked with Andy on the James Taylor *Gorilla* album in 1975. That one was Andy and Russ Kunkel. And Newmark and Steve Gadd are on the [1977 self-titled] Rickie Lee Jones record I did. Mark Stevens played brushes on "Easy Money," and Gadd played on "Chuck E.'s In Love," which was the first time I worked with him. [Jeff Porcaro also appears on the album.]

MD: Speaking of the *George Harrison* album, I found this quote from a press conference in 1979: "The last couple of albums were really difficult to make. You know, you write all these tunes, you sing them, you play on them, you produce them, and you mix them. You know, you go crazy—I do. You can get a bit lost, so I decided I would work with somebody else. So I prayed to the Lord to send me a coproducer, and I got a coproducer. And that helped a lot."

Russ: Wow! I'm happy the Lord sent me to him. [laughs] George

was so great to work with, and he was so modest. I really wanted Andy and Willie on that record, so I suggested it to George. I didn't know that he had already worked with them, so he was happy about it. On the track "Love Comes to Everyone," I wanted it to have an R&B feel. So I asked Andy to just play the toms—kind of like a [Philly soul producer] Thom Bell record. George and I worked so well and trusted and supported each other on that album.

MD: You did a lot of great records with Jimmy Bralower programming. Did you program the drum machines with Jimmy?

Russ: Absolutely! The two of us were a great team. I'm a frustrated drummer. So I would say, "I want the kick drum part

to be like this," and we would work out the parts together. He would get the basic groove, and then I might change the kick pattern or say, "Let's make it like a Stevie Wonder fill on 'Signed, Sealed, Delivered.'"

MD: How do you explain to a drummer what you want him to play?

Russ: If I'm looking for a certain feel and they're not yet getting it, I might reference another record. I'll give them something to relate to. There have been times when I knew exactly what I was looking for and would suggest a part. Of course, I'm fortunate to work with the best musicians, so they would give me something better than I could ever imagine.



Mike Stattsbury

Russ and George Harrison

A Different View

Sometimes I might say, "Try a cross-stick instead of the snare hit," and then between us we'll come up with the part. And it's wonderful when everyone has an open mind. Just because it's your part, you can't hold on to it if it's not working. You try it, and if it's not working, you go for more ideas until you get it. I usually hire a band that I know will bring it for that particular session and song.

MD: Earlier you mentioned the title track to Steve Winwood's *Back in the High Life* album. Can you talk about the track "Higher Love" from that album?

Russ: On "Higher Love" we had a basic drum machine going that Winwood wrote the song to. At first it was flat, with just one pattern looped over and over. So we're a few months into working on the record, and we have all the basics down. [Keyboardist] Robbie Kilgore was important in terms of getting the right sounds on that record. At one point I said to Steve, "We have to write a kick drum part for this record that will work with your bass part." He was playing keyboard bass with his left hand. I believe Nile Rodgers was coming in to play guitar that day, and that kick would be the foundation of whatever else would be going on the record. So we spent a day writing that part.

One of my favorite records at that time—and still today—was "Sexual Healing" by Marvin Gaye. So we kind of used that feel with an inverted, slightly changed pattern. And then that day we wrote in the extra little parts for the bridge and verses. I remember Steve said, "Make the snare drum feel like it's rushing a bit in the bridge, because I want it to feel more exciting." So we pushed a bit ahead of the beat.

When JR Robinson came in on "Higher Love"—he's on most of the album—he played the whole kit all the way through at first. And, not to blame him, but we were all sitting there, going, "This is

not really working with this part." But we had machine hi-hat and machine conga going, and at one point I asked him to lay down a real hi-hat. So he played that all the way through, with all of his fantastic fills. We then sampled his snare and kick from what he'd played in the room and keyed it into the program. When [the places for] the drum fills came, we turned him on only for those. But it sounds like a live person playing. It's a complete combination of human and machine, and later we kept the real hi-hat, but there's also machine hi-hat on there.

When Chaka Khan came in to do her vocal parts, way toward the end of the track—the song was long, like seven or eight minutes—JR started playing this pattern, and she turned around and said, "What is that? It sounds like voodoo music!" To be honest, I'm not really sure whose idea it was to fly that drum pattern he was playing to the beginning of the track. But that's why you don't know where 1 is [at first]. And that tension builds until the song kicks in. Then, when Tom Lord-Alge was working on the mix, we created that breakdown [section] and brought it back in. We had so much fun making that record.

MD: Any last bits of advice?

Russ: The most important element of being a musician is listening to what's happening, especially when it's a live session. You have to be present at all times. If you're prepared, it's easy, so *always* be prepared. And remember, you're not there to prove anything. Don't play too much. Think about all your favorite records. They're all fundamentally simple at their core. The grooves are not complicated. It's all deep feel—listen to Norman Roberts, James Gadson, Earl Palmer, and Al Jackson. It's all about being in service to the song.



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Medeski, Martin and Wood's Billy Martin

Drums:

- A. 5.5x14 snare
- B. 9x12 tom
- C. 14x14 floor tom
- D. 14x20 bass drum

Cymbals:

- 1. 14" Constantinople hi-hats
- 2. 16" A ride with six holes for rivets (none installed)

Percussion:

Morfbats hammered metal percussion bells (made by Adam Morford), circular metal instruments from Revival Drum Shop in Portland, sound rings from Nepal, nipple gongs from Thailand, flat gongs from China, a 6" pot lid, and agogo bells

Hardware:

Drumheads: Attack Terry Bozzio model

Accessories: A leather pouch filled with coins and strapped to a lug for use as a dampener

Sticks: Regal Tip Billy Martin signature model and various twigs

Electronics: Ableton Live software and Push pad

We recently visited MMW co-founder Billy Martin at his home studio, which is a custom-built shed on the drummer's New Jersey property that he uses to teach, compose, practice, and conduct workshops. The simple, beautiful, four-piece drumkit that lives in the space is a special one that was built for Martin several years ago by the late, great craftsman Johnny Craviotto. Billy outfits the kit with a sparse cymbal selection comprising one small crash/ride and a set of hi-hats. "I found the cymbal in a hockshop on the road," says Martin. "It fits in my suitcase, so I don't have to carry a [separate] cymbal bag. I bring a lot of percussion in a suitcase when I go on the road, and the ride fits in there nicely with my hi-hats. It has a good crash and a good ride without being too ringy."

Discussing his eclectic collection of Morfbats percussion instruments, Billy says, "Adam Morford is a prolific metal percussion creator along the lines of Pete Engelhart. He took a Skype lesson with me, and we talked about things that I used on records. He had very specific questions about sounds that he heard. I drew him some designs, and he made me what we talked about. The smaller metal shapes are a new collaboration we just started. I wanted to string them together like seedpods for an atmospheric sound, but I ended up putting them on some foam, which helps them vibrate. They are made out of steel, and I play them with my hands or sticks.

"I like to get unique tones out of metal," Martin continues. "I'm always looking for a certain relationship of tones. I'll put unrelated pieces of metal next to each other to create some kind of harmonic relationship, whether it's a scale or something microtonal."

Another unique approach for Martin is that he'll often play his drums and percussion with twigs and branches rather than standard drumsticks. "[Experimental jazz great] Bob Moses is a mentor of mine, and he made those for me," says Billy. "He's known for playing with twigs and sticks. They handicap you

GEARING UP

Interview by Dave Previ
Photos by Paul LaRaia



in one way and give you an advantage in another. Because they're different shapes, they make you play differently. And I like being thrown off a little when I'm playing."

The latest addition to Martin's setup is the Ableton Live electronics rig. "This is a brand-new endeavor for me," he says. "It's been since the '80s that I've used electronics. I use it to make breakbeats and bass lines. Veve Mechanic is a new project of mine that's more dance-oriented, so I've been exploring Ableton for those sounds. The Push pad is really incredible. I can make choices on the spot, so there's still an improv element. Even though I have loops ready to trigger, there are always things I can change. I might detune the bass line or slow down the tempo, and I can combine different parts and then play along. I've been using it with different musicians to see how everyone reacts. It's another way of jamming, with the goal being to seamlessly blend in the electronics while keeping the music organic."



2

C

D

B

A

1



Hi-Hat Splashes

Spicing Up Your Backbeats

by Rich Redmond

The **hi-hat foot splash** is an under-used voice, especially among younger players. Performing the splash requires getting the ball of the foot and much of the leg involved in the motion. Legendary players like Steve Gadd and Steve Smith are masters of this technique. I practiced splashing the hi-hat on beats 2 and 4 and closing it on beats 1 and 3 for many hours in order to commit the motion to muscle memory, and I use it in all styles. It's especially useful in backbeat-oriented music, as the splash can sound like it lengthens each snare hit. Practice these exercises slowly with a metronome and focus on accuracy. Use the splash to spice up your backbeats, and have fun!



Building Blocks

1 2 3 4

5 6 7 8 9

Combinations

10 11

12 13

14 15

16

Rich Redmond drums for country star Jason Aldean, is an award-winning clinician, and is an active session drummer in Nashville and Los Angeles. His recent book/DVD, *FUNdamentals of Drumming for Kids* (coauthored with Michael Aubrecht), is available through Modern Drummer Publications.



Groove Construction

Part 13: Left-Handed Split Grooves

by Jost Nickel

In this workshop we're expanding a groove concept that I introduced in the January 2017 issue, in which we split the right hand between two voices in various places throughout a phrase. This time we'll focus on grooves that split the left hand between the snare and hi-hat.

This concept works particularly well within patterns that contain broken 16th notes, such as the groove in the following example.

1

R L R R L R R L R R L R L R L R

When playing two strokes in a row on the hi-hat or ride, I often accent the second stroke. I'll usually accent single strokes when riding as well. Exercise 2 demonstrates these accents.

2

R L R R L R R L R R L R L R L R

Now let's vary the orchestration. We'll move the right hand to the ride and split up the left-hand figure. To get comfortable with the left hand's orchestration, play only one of the six left-hand strokes from Exercise 2 on the snare and the rest on the hi-hat. Be sure to use the same sticking from the previous example. When I play these grooves with my right hand on the ride, I usually place accents on the bell and unaccented strokes about one or two inches to the left of it.

3

R L R R L R R L R R L R L R L R

4

R L R R L R R L R R L R L R L R

5

R L R R L R R L R R L R L R L R



6

R L R R L R R L R R L R L R L R

7

R L R R L R R L R R L R L R L R

8

R L R R L R R L R R L R L R L R

Once you're comfortable with the previous examples, alternate the left hand between the hi-hat and snare.

9

R L R R L R R L R R L R L R L R

In Exercise 10, the left-hand orchestration starts on the snare before alternating with the hi-hat.

10

R L R R L R R L R R L R L R L R

Instead of working through tons of new grooves, try experimenting with dynamics and additional orchestrations of the examples in this article to find your own fresh ideas. If you're interested in more groove concepts, check out my book, *Jost Nickel's Groove Book*.



Jost Nickel is a top session and touring drummer in Germany, as well as an international clinician endorsing Sonor, Meinl, Aquarian, Vic Firth, and Beyerdynamic.



Playing Melodically

Part 1: "Billie's Bounce"

by Peter Erskine

In this new series I hope to present my thoughts and pass along some experience and insights on playing jazz. Many of the upcoming topics will be drawn from a series of more than 200 lessons that form my jazz drumming ArtistWorks curriculum at artistworks.com.

These lessons will largely deal with the symbiotic relationship between playing what the mind hears versus what the hands and feet know. Am I proposing that drumming is a thinking person's game? No. I believe music is a *listening* person's game. And that small difference between musical choice and muscle memory can become a Maginot Line if a musician isn't paying attention to what he or she is doing.

One of the more common questions I get from drummers is, *How can I develop my melodic playing on the kit?* A simple reply could be, "Try starting out by listening to a few Max Roach solos." This wouldn't be a bad answer. But anything worth learning requires deeper digging. So we can instead ask ourselves, *How did master jazz drummers develop their sense of melody on the drumset?*

The simple answer is that the creators of the jazz-drumming lexicon listened to and emulated the way soloists played—particularly horn players. This emulation of phrasing and style harkens back to the roots of jazz, especially in the call-and-response patterns found in African tribal traditions that were brought to the U.S. by way of the slave trade/tragedy and heard on plantations. Call-and-response later became a way of the jazz language, usually in the conversation between a soloist and the band (such as a drummer trading fours with an ensemble). This emulation has also been evidenced in the way that Frank Sinatra learned to phrase—purportedly by studying and listening to Tommy Dorsey—or similarly in the way that Jaco Pastorius learned to phrase on the bass by studying and listening to Frank Sinatra.

All to say, it's a good idea to study and listen to horn players and singers to learn how to play melodically. It's not enough



to only listen to Joe Morello or Max Roach, although that's a good start. But it's always best to go to the source whence your heroes have drawn their waters of inspiration and knowledge.

And so, when teaching at University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music, I have my students listen to, memorize, transcribe, and learn solos by the likes of Louis Armstrong, Freddie Hubbard, Cannonball Adderley, Michael Brecker, and Joe Zawinul, among others, in addition to learning drum solos of note.

Now, you could ask yourself, *How do we play a melody on a drum?* I'm not necessarily interested in creating melody on the drums by changing the pitch of a drumhead with elbow or drumstick pressure. I'm more interested in suggesting or evoking melody by using dynamics and stickings while playing. So the challenge here is to suggest or imply melody on one drum.

I'll suggest some simple rules to start with when interpreting a melody on the drums. Higher notes are generally louder than lower notes on a horn because they require more air. Play these higher notes as accents to whatever degree sounds and feels right to you. Use your lead hand for these notes. Also, utilize diddles. A smooth, legato phrasing is more easily achieved by occasionally using double strokes instead of alternating strokes.

Before we tackle the transcription and interpretation of a horn solo, let's start with a relatively simple bebop melody, "Billie's Bounce" by Charlie Parker. I've simplified the original melody by removing a couple of appoggiaturas, which are embellishing tones that precede a main note of the melody and are usually notated with grace notes.

I suggest that you try playing this first on the snare with brushes. Use a “dead-stick” technique by playing into the head and allowing the brush to stay on the surface of the drumhead until you need to move it to play the next stroke. This technique gives a nice spread to the sound of the brush and should help you hear the drum as a melodic instrument. Use accents and dynamics, and make it swing. Try to think of a smooth,

legato feel with forward motion, in much the same way that trombonist J.J. Johnson plays the melody with Stan Getz on *Stan Getz and J.J. Johnson at the Opera House*. “Blow” through the phrase, as a horn player would, and sing the melody as you play it. Also learn the melody by ear and sing it as you play it. Use the following example for sticking suggestions, but get your nose out of the music as quickly as possible.

R L R L L R L L R L R R L R R L R R L

5 R R L R R R L R L R L R R L L R L L

9 R R L R L L R R L R L L R R L R R L R R

Now ask yourself, *What other melodies might lend themselves to being interpreted on a single drum?* Next month we’ll check out a Freddie Hubbard solo played on the snare.

Peter Erskine is a two-time Grammy Award winner and an *MD* Readers Poll Hall of Famer who’s played on over 600 recordings. He is currently a professor at University of Southern California’s Thornton School of Music, and he teaches an online jazz drumming program at ArtistWorks.com.



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Septuplet Permutations

Diving Deep Into an Odd Subdivision

by Aaron Edgar

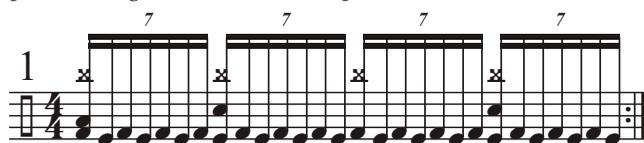


I find that the best way to become proficient with a new subdivision is to isolate each partial within the grouping and then combine the partial with all of the other available notes in the subdivision. Using triplets as an example, you can play the first, second, or third note; the three different combinations of two of the notes; and all or none of the notes. This gives us a total of eight variations. When considering septuplets, however, the number of possibilities is exponentially larger, with 128 variations. Check out moderndrummer.com to see all 128 septuplet rhythms organized into a single document. We'll be referencing rhythms from this sheet in the following exercises.

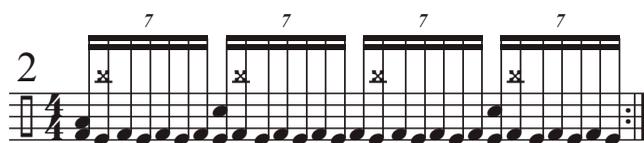
Playing septuplets with double bass can set up a foundation that outlines the subdivision. This is helpful because everything you play over it will have a partial to line up with—your feet create a grid that you can use to quantize your hands.

Practicing in the context of a groove can help you internalize how septuplets feel musically. In these first exercises, we'll play septuplets with double bass in 4/4. The left hand plays a heavy quarter-note feel on a floor tom or gong drum on beat 1 and a snare backbeat on 2 and 4. When playing these exercises, count each septuplet partial out loud using the syllables "ta, ka, din, ah, ge, na, gah."

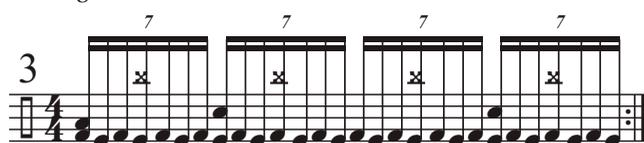
First we'll get comfortable with each individual partial. Exercise 1 places the first note of each septuplet onto a China or cymbal stack with the right hand. This reinforces our quarter-note pulse. Practice this until it feels consistent and has a solid pocket. It's important to feel this quarter-note pulse throughout all of the examples.



Exercise 2 places the China or cymbal stack on the second partial of the septuplet, or "ka." On beat 3, the right hand plays only the second septuplet note, which can be challenging. Before playing the entire groove, try looping the first half of the beat until it feels comfortable.

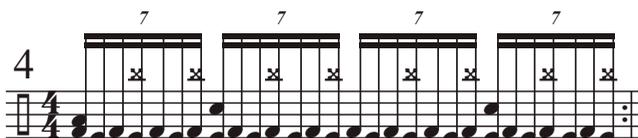


For variation, try playing the fourth note of the septuplet on the China or cymbal stack. The spacing between the left- and right-hand notes is slightly skewed from 8th notes and creates a tilting feel.

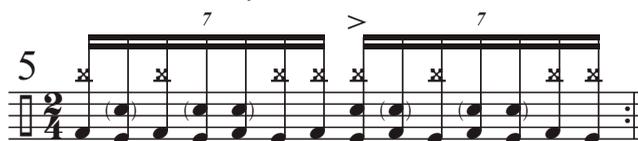


Apply the previous concept to each septuplet partial. It'll take dedicated practice to be able to comfortably feel each individual note of the septuplet. But consider the previous exercises as your foundation. The 121 remaining septuplet rhythms comprise combinations of these seven notes.

Next we'll explore the two-note options. Exercise 4 adds the seventh septuplet partial, labeled Rhythm D4 in the supplemental document, to Exercise 3.



Work through all of the available possibilities in this fashion. Exercise 5 demonstrates one of the four-note variations, labeled Rhythm K6, with ghost notes added between the China or cymbal stack.

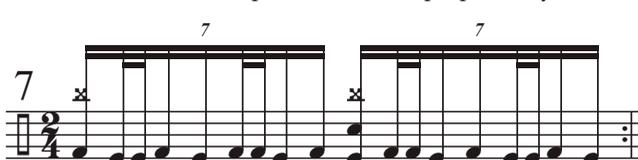


With so many rhythmic variations to work on, you can gain more benefit from your practice time if you combine other elements into these exercises. For instance, applying diddles into the septuplet bass drum pattern will force you to work on doubles with both feet.

In Exercise 6, the hands play quarter notes on the China or cymbal stack with a backbeat on the snare. There's also a double stroke in the bass drum part on the sixth partial of the septuplet (Rhythm A6).



The two-note variations are especially interesting when applying doubles to the bass drum. Exercise 7 places doubles on the second and fifth partial of each septuplet (Rhythm D2).



Once you're comfortable with the last two patterns, fill out the beat by adding a counter rhythm with a China or cymbal stack. Exercises 8 and 9 revisit the previous two examples while placing the first, third, and fifth partial of each septuplet on the China or cymbal stack (Rhythm H1).

When you start stacking multiple septuplet rhythms on top of each other, thousands of options become available. However, each variation is still a combination of the seven partials.

Exercise 10 places a ride pattern from two septuplet rhythms (Q4 and Q3) over the bass drum phrase from Exercise 9. Before trying the groove as written, get comfortable with the hand pattern over straight septuplets on double bass without the diddles. Once that's solid, add the doubles.

You can also explore septuplet variations in a polyrhythmic context by spacing the seven-note grouping over two quarter notes instead of just one. Exercise 11 lays the foundation that we'll use to continue drilling bass drum doubles. The hands play quarter notes on the China or cymbal stack with a backbeat on beats 2 and 4. The bass drum plays every second septuplet partial, which results in seven equally spaced notes over two quarter notes, or a seven-over-two polyrhythm.

Exercises 12 and 13 place doubles in the bass drum on two different septuplet partials (A1 and A5).

Exercise 14 explores an embellished hand pattern on the first, fourth, and fifth septuplet partial (Rhythm I1). In Exercise 15, add bass drum doubles on the third bass drum note of each seven-note grouping (Rhythm A3). In the following two exercises, unaccented snare notes should be ghosted.

At this point we've worked on balance, dynamics, time, independence, and technique, all while drilling septuplets with different rhythmic variations. Hopefully you've discovered new rhythms that inspire you. Don't be afraid to branch off and modify this concept if it speaks to you rhythmically. However, make sure to return to the original material and continue exploring.



Aaron Edgar plays with the Canadian prog-metal band Third Ion and is a session drummer, clinician, and author. He teaches weekly live lessons on Drumeo.com. You can find his book, *Boom!!*, as well as information on how to sign up for private lessons, at aaronedgardrum.com.



Hone Your Human GPS

Setting Goals, Defining Problems, and Devising Solutions

by Mark Schulman

I've researched how people define GPS as it relates to the human condition, and I think best-selling author Jim Samuels' philosophy is the simplest and most effective take. Samuels' formula involves goals, problems, and solutions. We set goals and then solve problems that arise as a result of those goals. For example, if you're thirsty, you get a glass of water. The process is actually quite sophisticated if you try to break it down, but most of the time we handle it subconsciously.

No More Negative Goals

Most of us will create negative goals at various points in our careers. I did it during my audition for Bad English, which I shared in my article in the March 2017 issue. In order to win the audition, I needed to focus on playing with rock-solid meter, but my "don't rush" mental chatter moved me in the wrong direction. The brain tends to cooperate with whatever we emphasize, especially when we're under duress or our sensibilities are impeded by anxiety. In those stressful moments, a negative goal will never give you the clarity that you need to be successful. When you create a negative goal, your true objective is obscured. Without clarity about what you want to achieve, you end up solving the wrong problems, which distracts you from your original target.

People spend a lot of time solving problems that obscure goals and create busywork. Stop trying to work through unnecessary challenges, and figure out the clearest path toward your goals. Does that involve problem solving? Yes, but always ask yourself if the problem you encounter is leading you back to your goal. If it isn't, stop trying to solve it.

The first step toward clarity is to define the length of your goal. Is it something that can be accomplished in the short-term, mid-term, or long-term? Knowing the timeline will help clarify the path and build confidence. Every time you accomplish a goal, no matter how big or small, you create a win for yourself. As you accumulate more wins, your confidence grows, and the ratio of confidence to fear tips more in your favor.

Solidify Your Integrity

Transformational models expert Werner Erhard once wrote, "By 'keeping your word,' we mean doing what you said you would do and by the time you said you would do it." There's power in taking action, specifically the exact action you agree to do. This agreement can be with yourself or others. Remember that the end goal isn't to reduce your anxiety but to build confidence.

My short-term goal was picking a tempo or tempo range for



each practice session and getting to the point where I could clap along with a metronome for a minute and not hear the click. I needed to get so synchronized with the metronome that my clapping and the metronome beep were one. This required stopping and starting many times until I found complete concentration. Depending on my level of focus that day, the practice could take ten minutes or more than three hours. But eventually I could bury the click at tempos from 40 to 220 beats per minute.

My mid-range goal was to play my drumset for a minute at various tempos in that tempo range, moving in and out of beats, fills, style changes, and transitions, while continuing to

lock with the click the entire time.

For the long-term, I wanted to master playing with a click. I can now play beats and fills at any tempo and bury the click for the length of an entire song. And I can do this in any situation (recording studio, live shows, or seminars), in front of anyone. I can also play consistently behind or ahead of the click. This has come in handy when the click is slightly out of sync from the rest of the recorded track. In live rehearsals with Pink, we often received tracks from the record where the click was slightly ahead of or behind the music. Because of all the practice I did, I can shift the placement of my drumming to accommodate.

Action Steps

Now it's time to get to work! To begin, copy the list of questions below. Write your answers in a journal or jot them down on a piece of paper that you can post on your studio or practice room wall. You'll be amazed at what you can accomplish once you clarify exactly what you want to do.

1. What is something you want to achieve?
2. What are the problems standing between you and your goal?
3. What is one solution that you could implement that moves you closer to fulfilling that goal?
4. What's something you can do in the short-term (daily) to make progress on your objective?
5. What's a good mid-term (weekly or monthly) target to shoot for?
6. What's the ultimate long-term (life) goal?

Mark Schulman is a first-call drummer for various world-class artists, including Pink, Foreigner, Cher, Billy Idol, Sheryl Crow, and Stevie Nicks. For more information, go to markschulman.com.



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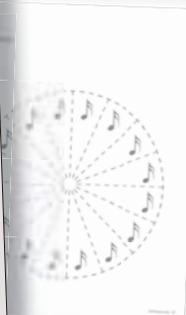
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ddrum.com



Yamaha

DT50 Series Drum Triggers

Yamaha's new triggers include the DT50S for snares and toms and the DT50K for bass drums. Both models feature a die-cast body, a chrome finish, and a lug-style design. The revamped casing was designed to resemble the appearance of hardware found on acoustic drumkits.

The DT50S features dual-trigger capability with isolation between the head and rim sensors to capture vibrations accurately and separately. Both models mount on most rims and utilize a soft material at the point where the sensor makes contact with the drumhead. A quarter-inch cable is included. List price for each is \$129.

yamaha.com



Grover Pro EQlipse Dual Apex Snare Drum

The EQlipse Dual Apex offers two interchangeable bearing edges: a 45-degree cut for bright contemporary sounds and a rounded one for dark, vintage-type tones. The drum comes with SX non-spiral snares and has a 10-ply cross-laminated maple shell with a Sound Mirror internal finish. Other features include single-point bow-tie lugs, a Trick throw-off, and a high-gloss ebony lacquer finish. Central to the EQlipse sound is a metal tone belt that provides additional focus and power. List price for a 5x14 snare is \$799, while the 6x14 model is \$839.

groverpro.com



Tama 1st Chair Glide Rider Thrones

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The HT530BCN model has a threaded rod and a T-bolt system for height adjustment and lists for \$249.98. The HT550BCN features a lever-operated Hydraulix system and lists for \$283.32.

tama.com



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The new Energy series 21" ride and 21" crash-ride are said to offer power and crisp stick articulation. The 19" Energy crash delivers a punchy sound that can cut through a dense mix and has an evenly tapered decay.

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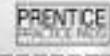
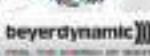
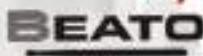
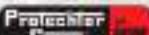
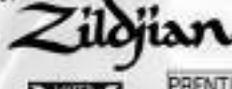


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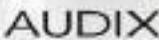
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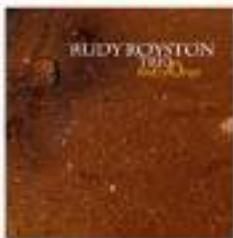
A former Yellowjacket and his creative/life partner drop a funky and finely detailed collection that isn't shy to show a little tenderness or to head down lots of creative avenues.

As the album-opening "Block Party" heats up into a joyous gospel jump, Marcus Baylor romps all around the handclaps, then solos over the out-vamp, multiplying and subdividing the beat while never losing focus. The versatile drummer also shines while energizing the

well-traveled "Our Love Is Here to Stay," channeling Elvin Jones on "Afro Blue," and ad-libbing on the free-form "Journey." But even on vocal tunes like a jazz-flavored take on "Great Is Thy Faithfulness," a super-chill "Summertime," or Herbie Hancock's "Tell Me a Story," with lyrics by Marcus's wife, singer Jean Baylor, the drummer urges a more quiet, equally effective intensity from his kit, picking his spots gracefully and taking full musical advantage.

(Be a Light) **Robin Tolleson**

Rudy Royston Trio *Rise of Orion*



The drummer's star keeps on rising via ongoing stints with high-profile progressive jazz artists like Bill Frisell, Rudresh Mahanthappa, and Dave Douglas—and also on his solo releases, like this one, his second.

There's a splendid touch in Rudy Royston's powerful, swinging, and assertive drumming. Royston supports soloists but definitely likes to stir things up with his whirlwind nouveau-Elvin-isms. This intense outing is markedly different from Royston's 2014 debut,

303, which featured a septet (with two bassists) playing finely wrought ensemble arrangements. Here Rudy strips down the canvas to a drums/bass/sax trio, resulting in a raw, wide-open set of his originals that's all about adventurous interplay. The selections are punctuated by short interludes of dive-right-in blowing, including the incendiary drum solo "Mintaka." With tenor/soprano saxophonist Jon Irabagon and bassist Yasushi Nakamura again on board (both performed on 303), Royston has likeminded comrades who are game for taking chances. And the risks definitely pay off. (Greenleaf Music) **Jeff Potter**

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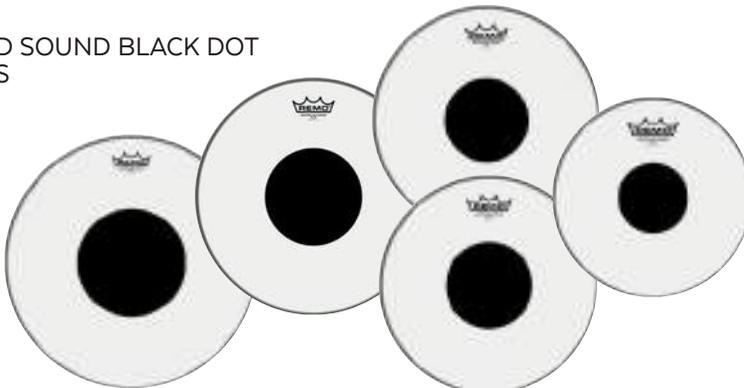
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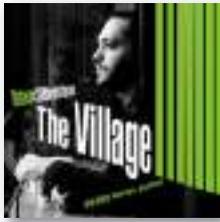
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CRITIQUE

Yotam Silberstein *The Village*

World jazz from New York's finest, with top-shelf drumming as the centerpiece.



Israeli-born but now New York-based guitarist Yotam Silberstein has assembled a who's who of brilliant jazz players for his new record, including pianist Aaron Goldberg, bassist Reuben Rogers, and the excellent **GREGORY HUTCHINSON** on drums. Hutchinson works his snare with fluttery singles on the Brazilian "Parabens"

before soloing with ride-bell offbeats and well-placed tom jabs. Later, on the title track, he gently paints on his ride before the rhythm takes shape, and suddenly the band is off on an up-tempo swing that's seriously cooking. Hutchinson's touch is of the light variety, but he generates excitement with his command from inside the music. Check out the killer triplet vibe on "Albayzin," where the drums propel everything forward with spark after spark and Hutchinson even dispenses with the traditional cymbal accompaniment underneath the top of the piano solo, instead using space and his drums to allow things to breathe. Gorgeous stuff. (Jazz&People) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

Yuri Juárez *Guitar Sapiens*

The merger of Afro-Peruvian rhythms and styles with jazz is an increasingly fertile forum; guitarist Juárez makes a notable contribution with this highly ambitious double disc.



While Yuri Juárez's superb previous release, *Afroperuano*, highlighted his nylon string and electric guitar artistry, *Guitar Sapiens* further portrays the artist as a formidable arranger and composer in settings spanning orchestral to small ensembles and duets. Juárez has wisely tapped the impressive talents of Peruvian drumkit

and cajon player **HUGO ALCÁZAR** (who also graced *Afroperuano*). Drummer **SHIRAZETTE TINNIN** turns in three fine tracks as well. Embracing the flowing phrasing of jazz, Alcázar pilots compositions drawing from multiple South American sources, contemporary jazz (from straight-ahead to progressive), and classical. Breaking down borders, he infuses world sounds with the distinct loping phrasing (check out "Gitanos y Criollos") and invigorating rhythms of his homeland. A big-hearted album bursting with lyricism and transporting rhythms. (yurijuarez.net) **Jeff Potter**

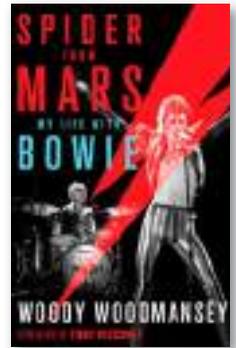
MULTIMEDIA

Spider From Mars: My Life With Bowie
by Woody Woodmansey

An early Bowie accomplice sheds light on the origins of some of glam rock's masterpieces.

Woody Woodmansey's drumming on David Bowie's unparalleled early quartet of albums, *The Man Who Sold the World*, *Hunky Dory*, *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders From Mars*, and *Aladdin Sane*, helped define the loose, tough swagger of glam rock. This clear and unadorned memoir relates the rapid rise of the Spiders' modest club days to the insanity surrounding the final tour dates behind *Aladdin Sane*. While Woodmansey did not

have an intimate relationship with Bowie and was fired unceremoniously before the recording of *Pin Ups*, the two were tremendous creative partners. Passages describing the breakneck pace of the studio sessions reveal the wide latitude the drummer was given in the studio to build those iconic beats (Bowie rarely played more than two takes). Lucid descriptions of the drum arrangements to hit songs like "Changes" and "Life on Mars?" will be enlightening to students of studio drumming. (St. Martin's Press) **John Colpitts**



Rock Drumming: 50 Tasty Chops 'n' Licks
by Geoff Battersby

A detailed set of rock beats and fills to whip out at your next gig.

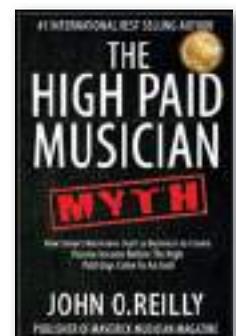
This book presents lots of examples of conventional rock drumming patterns ("chops"), with some slick fills thrown into the mix ("licks"). Author Geoff Battersby includes five play-along pieces that contain a wealth of cool beats, which he proceeds to break down to their fundamental essence. Those include the usual building blocks of paradiddles, seven-stroke rolls, and flams, but seeing it all on the printed page while listening to the accompanying audio CDs makes for an easier and more organized practice session. Featured is the "Bonham Triplet Chop" and the "Swiss Army Triplet Lick," along with a bunch of fun linear beats with ghost notes, so things get tricky and more advanced quickly. There's an almost overwhelming amount of information here, so it's probably wise to focus on just one fill that you like at a time, and use the step-by-step breakdown to construct it as is or add your own flavor. The two CDs also include no-drums play-along tracks. (£15, amazon.com, drumsteps.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



The High Paid Musician Myth by John O.Reilly

The Trans-Siberian Orchestra drummer focuses on the business of music in this no-holds-barred book.

John O.Reilly tells it from the heart in *The High Paid Musician Myth*, as he sounds the alarm on the state of the music industry and stresses the need to establish alternate sources of income. With recent changes in our industry as a backdrop, O.Reilly sets out to encourage all musicians to start a business of their own in order to create another source of income to sustain them when the gigs dry up or they age out of the game. "Sometimes we all need a swift kick in the ass to put our heads on straight and take the blinders off," O.Reilly says, challenging readers to diversify their efforts while pursuing careers in music. From discussion on exploiting the internet to determining your perceived value to obtaining life insurance, the author covers a lot in a relatively short space. (\$10, johnoreillylive.com) **H. Aaron Strickland**



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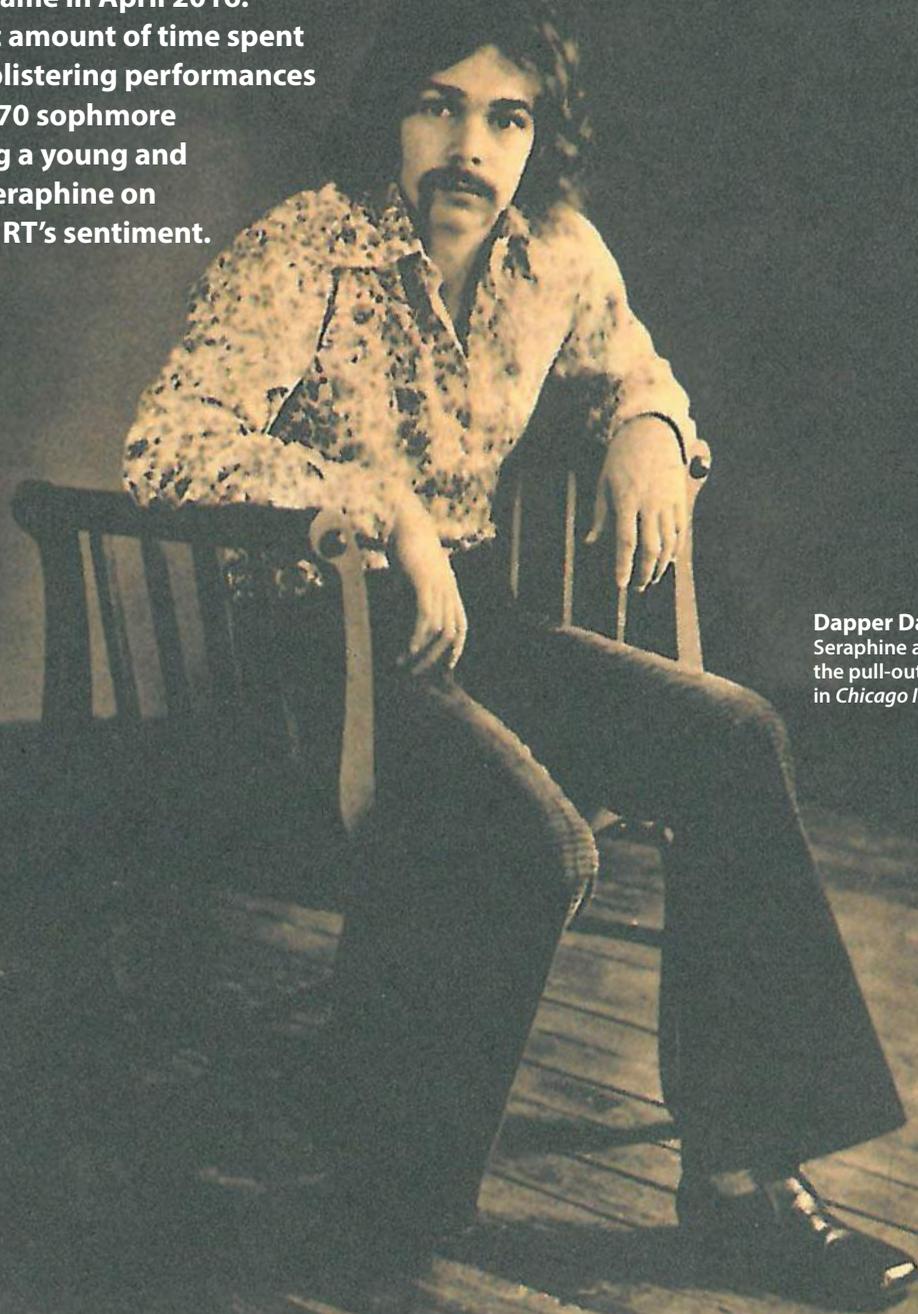
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Chicago II

"If you think Chicago is your mom's band, then, man, I want to party with your mom!"

So said Matchbox 20 singer Rob Thomas upon inducting Chicago into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in April 2016.

And even a short amount of time spent listening to the blistering performances on the band's 1970 sophomore release, featuring a young and hungry Danny Seraphine on drums, supports RT's sentiment.



Dapper Dan
Seraphine as he appeared in the pull-out poster included in *Chicago II*

Dismiss Chicago as lite-rock mom-core at your own peril. Discerning mothers, fans of deep classic rock, and Rob Thomas all know that long before singer/bassist Peter Cetera and producer David Foster steered the band toward dullsville in the '80s with ballads like "You're the Inspiration" and "Hard to Say I'm Sorry," Chicago was a seven-headed musical force. Jimi Hendrix recognized it too. He famously said that the Windy City band's three-piece horn section sounded like one set of lungs, and that force-of-nature guitarist Terry Kath was better than he was. When one of the most innovative and influential musicians of all time gives such glowing props, you know the shit is legit.

Early on especially, Chicago mirrored its hometown's diverse musical influences, ambitiously merging jazz, soul, rock, and blues into a series of howling rockers, sweet ballads, intricate song suites, and pop gems that stood out among the many strains of rock (psychedelic, heavy, progressive, folk) taking hold during the late '60s. Helping to glue together these pieces of a unique musical puzzle was Danny Seraphine, a jazz-rooted drummer who could whiz around the kit like Mitch Mitchell, lean into the groove like Bernard Purdie, and make it swing like Buddy Rich.

Chicago's breakthrough 1970 sophomore album—a double, like many of the group's early releases—was recently reissued (again) as *Chicago II: The Steven Wilson Remix*, featuring a new stereo mix. Another fitting subtitle would be *Danny Seraphine's Greatest Hits, Volume 1*, as the record compiles much of the drummer's best work with the band in one handy place.

Seraphine had a tall task with Chicago in the early days. He had to make this big band—with its horns blaring, its lead guitarist melting faces, its shifting time signatures and feels, and its three lead vocalists singing the works of several distinct songwriters—swing and sway; he had to make the group rock *and* roll. This called for something more sophisticated than standard rock drumming. And circa 1970, the rule book on how to hold it down for a band



with skin in the rock, jazz, and soul games was still a work in progress. So Seraphine made up his own rules. And not much was out of bounds on *Chicago II*, be it overdubbing messy fills to flesh out the caveman stomp of "25 or 6 to 4" or flipping and subdividing a 6/4 feel while deep in the weeds of a seven-part song cycle like "Ballet for a Girl in Buchannon."

Busy drumming was also fair game and features throughout *Chicago II*, though it's not as if Seraphine was overplaying just to place himself atop the sonic

dog pile of seven instruments. He routinely picked sweet spots to cut loose, like his classic solo breaks in "Make Me Smile." They fit perfectly, and they're as fluid and melodic as any horn line on the record. Slick licks like those fortified Seraphine's integral role in Chicago's unique sound, as did his graceful transitions.

On "Movin' In," Seraphine moves seamlessly from smooth grooves in the verses to a free and easy swing feel in the jazzy instrumental breaks before digging in hard on the 6/8 coda as the shape-shifting song screeches to a cold stop. In "Poem for the People" Danny is grooving and filling along squarely in the pocket, when out of nowhere he's piloting the band through a double-time bridge that shifts between four, five, and seven. It's a change you never see coming, and he turns it so naturally that before you know it he's slipped back into the main groove. These are tricky maneuvers, and the young Seraphine pulls them off like a guy who's been in the drumming trenches for years.

As the '70s wore on and Chicago's music steered more toward the middle of the road, Seraphine's playing became decidedly less adventurous. And by the time of the band's commercial renaissance in the mid-'80s, the drummer was chained to a click track keeping straight time for a safe-as-milk pop band that had become a shadow of its former self. But back when Chicago was in the business of taking risks and making bold musical statements like the ones on *II*, Seraphine's skills were put to excellent use.

Patrick Berkery

Hot Stuff

Giving the guitar player some. Seraphine definitely digs in a little harder on the Terry Kath tunes. How could he resist, playing behind someone who could sing like Ray Charles and was a certifiable guitar god? He tears it up on Kath's "In the Country," slamming out a fatback groove and ripping off some daredevil fills.

Psychedelic swing. Chicago might have been a band of the '70s, but songs like "Fancy Colours" betray the members' roots as children of the '60s. Seraphine puts a groovy swing to this swirling waltz and caps it with a fill for the ages—an eleven-second solo snare-and-toms combination that falls into one looped dissonant note for the fade. Yes, this is the same Chicago that did "Hard Habit to Break."



Stanton Moore Drum Academy

by Stephen Bidwell

New Orleans groove juggernaut Stanton Moore has been one busy timekeeper, working seemingly nonstop since his main project, Galactic, took off around twenty years ago. Moore is involved in myriad projects, including a Frenchmen Street residency with his trio, featuring bassist James Singleton and pianist David Torkanowsky, and ongoing gigs like Garage a Trois, Midnite Disturbers, and Dragon Smoke. His new solo release, an all-star tribute to New Orleans legend Allen Toussaint with appearances by Cyril Neville, Maceo Parker, Nicholas Payton, and Trombone Shorty, should be out around the time this issue hits the streets.

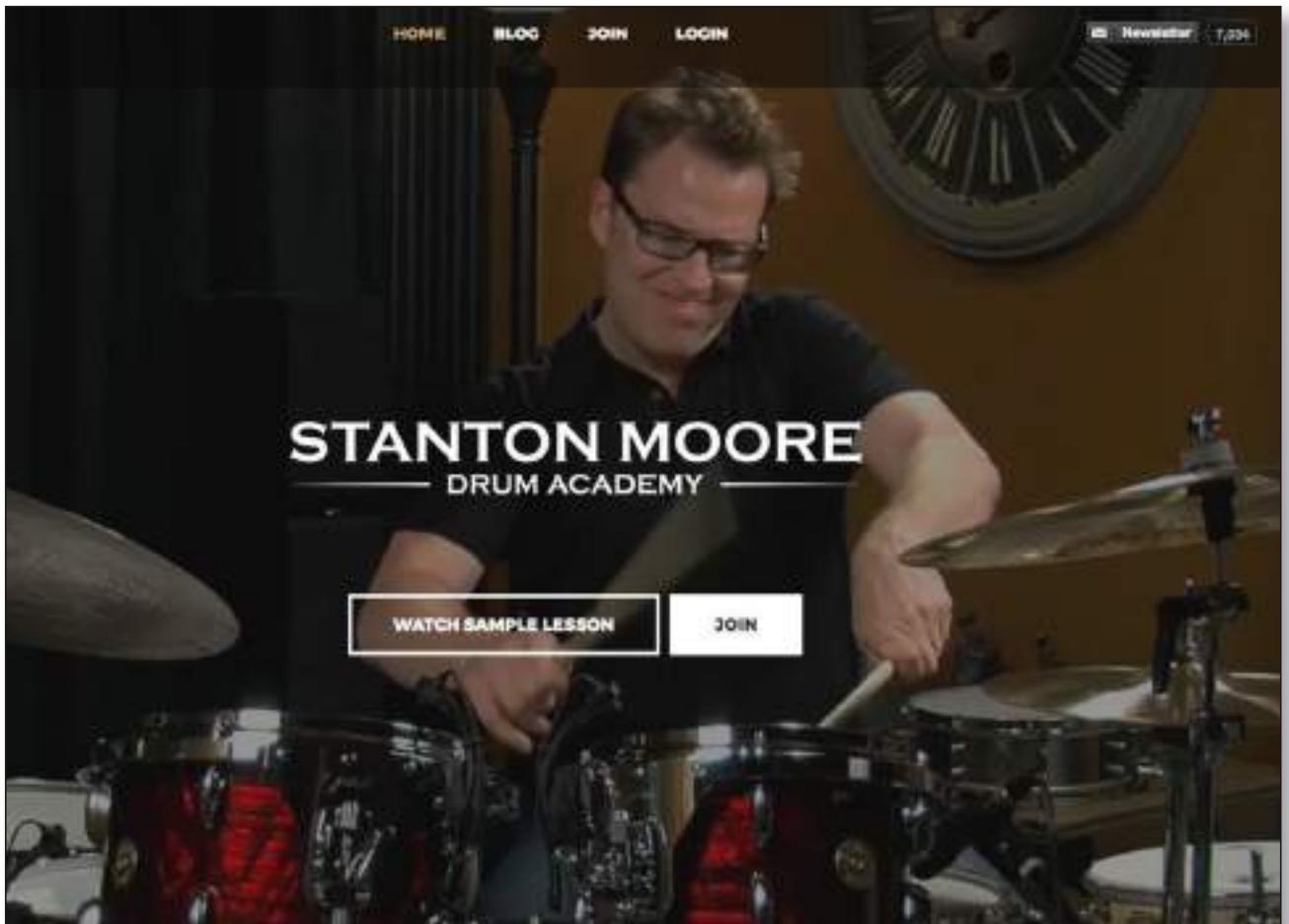
For years Moore has also been a sought-out educator. This past December he hosted his fourth-annual Spirit of New Orleans Drum Camp, and now he's launched stantonmooredrumacademy.com, which is designed to provide educational content for players of all skill levels, as well as for other instructors.

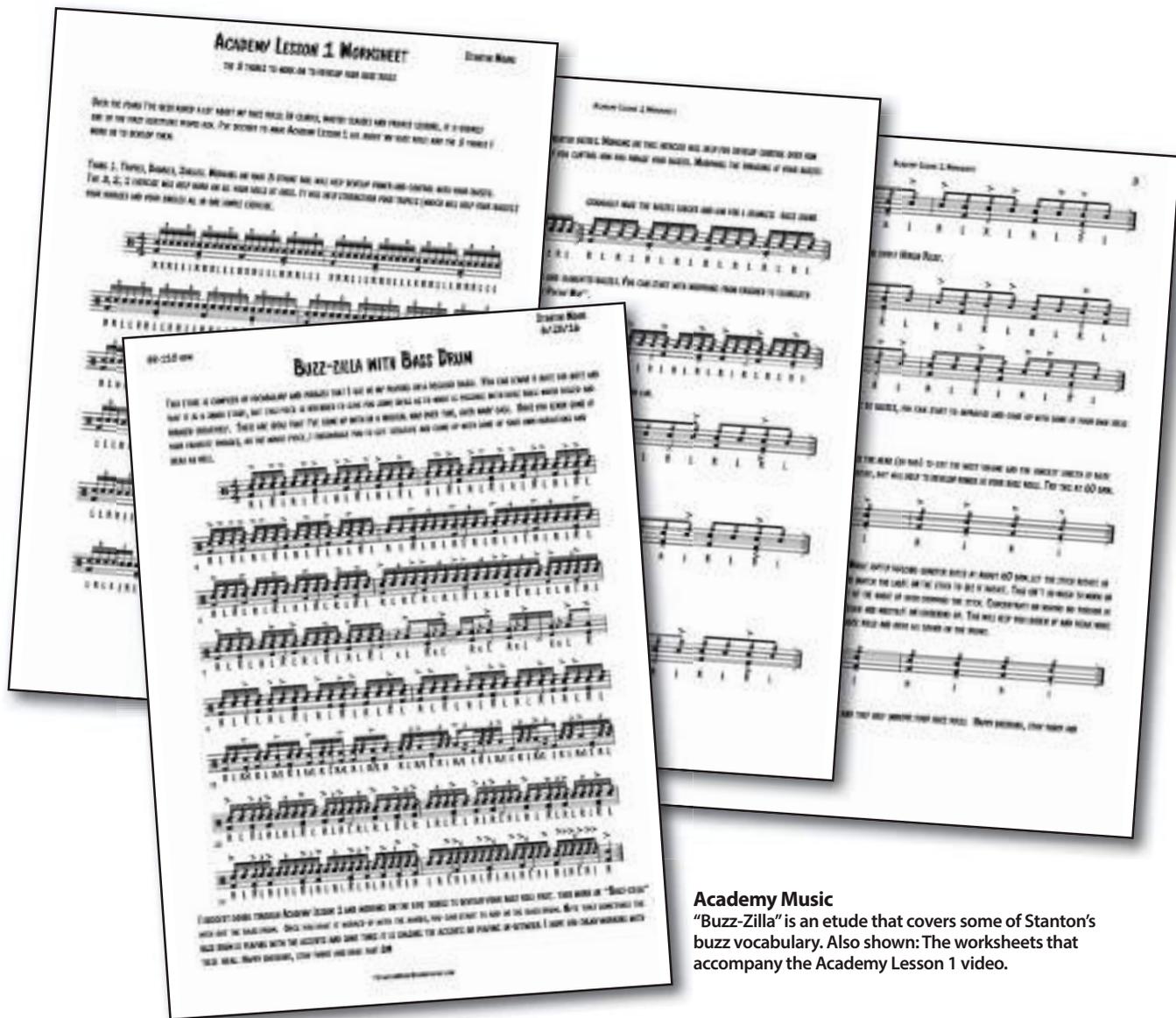
The initial content of the Stanton Moore Drum Academy is built around accompanying videos for the book *A Fresh Approach to the Drumset*, by Moore's partner Mark Wessels. More than nine hours of video lessons designed to benefit players of all levels are available for viewing. Setup, technique, styles, reading, grooves, and sound production all get covered. Moore

is also taping similar material to accompany Wessels' *A Fresh Approach to the Snare Drum*, to be included on the site.

In addition, Moore's exclusive Academy Lessons, posted twice a month, cover more advanced material. The video lessons are well produced, with great sound and clear notation at the bottom of the screen. Related transcriptions are available for download at the side of the screen. The six videos uploaded as of press time cover buzz rolls, triplet warm-up, variations on the "blushda" lick, drag applications for the drumset, and two clips on brushes, which Moore says he's been obsessed with for some time, devouring every brush-related book and DVD on the subject. "I talked and hung out with Ed Soph and Jeff Hamilton, took a few lessons with Kenny Washington, and got together with Russ Miller, John Riley, and Steve Smith," Stanton tells *MD*. "And after I went to see him play in Portland six or seven times, Mel Brown [April 2017 *Modern Drummer*], who studied with Philly Joe Jones and Papa Jo Jones, brought his floor tom over to my table and showed me stuff."

Among the other unique parts of Moore's site is the Beat of the Month area, in which subscribers submit a fifteen-second clip of themselves playing their favorite grooves. Moore chooses one each month, posts his own version of the beat on the site and on his social-media pages, and encourages other academy





Academy Music

“Buzz-Zilla” is an etude that covers some of Stanton’s buzz vocabulary. Also shown: The worksheets that accompany the Academy Lesson 1 video.

members to post their takes. In a related Video Uploads section, members are able to post clips of themselves playing in any situation, and, again, Moore will offer his feedback, as well as encourage others to comment. (Moore also recently started doing in-person master classes hosted by members of the Academy, held at teaching facilities, homes, venues, or stores. Members can reach out to Stanton directly to set these up.)

Included in the site’s entrance fee is access to monthly live chats and to the forum section, which Moore says he’s most excited about—and which may be worth the tuition on its own. “As we go into the forum,” Stanton explains, “drummers are giving me new ideas for lessons that they want to see. So when I go in and film another batch of lessons, I’ll have tons of ideas of new stuff to do.”

As an example of how this type of interaction works, a subscriber posts a video of himself playing some variations on Elvin Jones’ parts from John Coltrane’s *A Love Supreme*, and Moore responds with a few pages of related exercises, including Elvin’s use of paradiddle-diddles as related to him by the legendary drum instructor Jim Chapin. With this approach, one thread could potentially result in several lessons’ worth of content. “Through the forum, the live chats, posting answers in Finale, and the occasional guerrilla-style video taken with my phone,” Moore says, “I’ll be able to tend to everyone’s answers.”

Membership to the Stanton Moore Drum Academy is \$19 a month or \$149 a year. Private video lessons with Moore and other teachers (see the Study Suggestions sidebar) are available for between \$75 and \$150 an hour, depending on the instructor.

Study Suggestions

In addition to presenting his own educational material at the Drum Academy, Moore has enlisted former student Kyle Sharamitaro and famed New Orleans drummer Johnny Vidacovich to offer private lessons either via Skype

or one on one. “Johnny has more of a conceptual approach,” Stanton explains, “and he might be more for the guys with a little more experience. Kyle studied with me and then went to Loyola, where both Johnny and I graduated from, so if

you want to take more regular lessons via Skype on the foundational stuff, you can do that with Kyle. With me or Johnny, usually guys will want to digest it and hit me back in a couple months.”



Alphonse Mouzon

At the very end of last year the drumming world said its final goodbyes to the influential jazz-rock drummer Alphonse Mouzon. Although he was not quite as recognizable among the wider drumming audience as pioneering players such as Billy Cobham and Lenny White, Mouzon was highly regarded by hardcore followers of fusion drumming. To some, in fact, his name was synonymous with a powerful yet intricate approach to the drumset that still informs contemporary players, from Living Colour's Will Calhoun to Animals as Leaders' Matt Garstka to Snarky Puppy's Robert Searight, Larnell Lewis, and Jason Thomas. And, to be sure, his influence extends beyond the fusion genre, leading even country-rock drummers like Rich Redmond to offer props. "Whether serving as a featured sideman with the likes of McCoy Tyner and Herbie Hancock, or leading his own jazz-rock-fused solo projects," the Jason Aldean drummer says, "Alphonse could do it all, with fire, spirit, swagger, and originality."

Upon his passing, *Modern Drummer* compiled a playlist of some of Mouzon's greatest recordings and posted an interview he did with the magazine back in 1979; both are accessible at moderndrummer.com. For this piece, we contacted several members of our Pro Panel—each a fusion drumming star in his own right—to get their take on Mouzon's contribution to our art.

Peter Erskine

When the first Weather Report album was released in 1971, all of us who heard it were awestruck and mesmerized by the mixture of unheard-of sounds and genres—those forward-looking avant-garde sensibilities coupled with R&B grooves that seamlessly morphed into post-Miles jazz beats (if it has

to be put into words; I find it as impossible a task now as when I first played the LP on my stereo). All that the album's liner notes would tell me about Alphonse Mouzon was that he had played with Chubby Checker (among others). Who was this guy?

It turns out that Mouzon's jazz pedigree

was firmly in place by the time he made that album with Miroslav Vitous, Airtio Moreira, Joe Zawinul, and Wayne Shorter. And though his tenure with the band was not as long as it might have been, he alone established the direction that the band would follow, and set the bar for hipness



that has yet to be bested. Alphonse Mouzon showed us the way. I can think of no higher accolade, and I will always be grateful for his drumming greatness.

Antonio Sanchez

Alphonse was a driving force in the music world. Finesse, power, technique, and assertiveness were a few of his traits as a musician. He has, directly or indirectly, influenced an unbelievable number of drummers. His absence has left a big void in our community. Rest in peace, brother.

Steve Smith

Alphonse Mouzon was very influential to my concept, and important to me in my formative years. I first heard Alphonse in the early '70s on the McCoy Tyner albums *Sahara*, *Song for My Lady*, and *Enlightenment*, and I loved the way he played jazz with the new jazz-rock intensity that was the vanguard of jazz at that time. His cymbal setup looked extremely cool and interesting to me, so I set up my two ride cymbals the way he did, up high, at a 90-degree angle.

The first Weather Report album was very important in my world, especially as a young student at the Berklee College of Music. I first saw Alphonse in 1973 at the Jazz Workshop in Boston with Larry Coryell's Eleventh House, and his playing had changed into the new style of fusion modeled after Billy Cobham, with the large kit and over-the-top aggressive super-chops, along with a deep funk pocket. I went up close to check his setup and noticed he had cut off the tips of his sticks

and was playing only with the butt ends!

I had Alphonse's Blue Note solo albums, which were as hip for the covers and his stylish mode of dress as they were for the burning music, especially the album with Tommy Bolin, *Mind Transplant*. Thank you, Alphonse Mouzon, for your inspirational life and career in music.

Paul Wertico

I first saw Alphonse with the McCoy Tyner Quartet at the Jazz Showcase in Chicago around the time of McCoy's *Sahara* recording, and I sat right in front of him, which was an experience I'll never forget. His power, speed, intensity (and volume!) were like a force of nature. It was so impressive that you could just listen to him alone and be completely mesmerized. His drumming on the song "Ebony Queen" from *Sahara* is something I play for my students to this day, as well as Weather Report's debut album, the Larry Coryell and the Eleventh House recordings, the Mangelsdorff/Pastorius/Mouzon *Trilogue—Live!* recording, and his own recordings, like *The Essence of Mystery*. His untimely death is another irreplaceable loss in a year that was so sad for music. If anything, hopefully, because of the attention his passing is getting, new generations of players will realize who he was and how great he was, and will be inspired by his musical brilliance.

Rod Morgenstein

The '70s was an amazing time to be a young, aspiring musician, as the world of fusion made its mark on the musical

landscape. I remember hearing the Mahavishnu Orchestra for the first time, a life-changing moment that sent me off and running on that jazz-rock fusion path. It was not long after hearing Mahavishnu that I heard Alphonse Mouzon playing with Larry Coryell. The reaction was similar: Here was another amazing drummer combining the technical and rhythmic sophistication of jazz with the sheer, raw power of rock. Alphonse was a consummate musician whose legacy will live on forever, and whose drumming will continue to inspire countless drummers through his vast discography. Rest in peace, Alphonse.

Benny Greb

Another drum legend has left us. Alphonse Mouzon was one of those players that people are influenced by, whether they know it or not. Because even when they didn't check him out directly, they were influenced by drummers and musicians who Mouzon had an impact on. Fortunately, when a musician of that caliber leaves us, his contribution in music doesn't.

A sad loss like this should make us more aware of how much great music is out there and, at the same time, how many legends are still among us that we can benefit greatly from by taking the time to enjoy and honor. Maybe we can buy albums and pay our respects more often while they're still alive, and instead of spending another night on Netflix, we can make sure that we give listening to great music even more space in our busy lives. Now *that* sounds like a great resolution to me.



Alphonse Mouzon

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The 2016 Guitar Center Drum-Off Grand Finals

This past January 14, Guitar Center held its twenty-eighth-annual Drum-Off Grand Finals, at the Novo club in downtown Los Angeles. Over the course of the competition's numerous preliminary rounds, which took place in more than 250 Guitar Center locations nationwide, five finalists were chosen from among a pool of around 4,500 drummers to compete at the event.

Those finalists were Kwesi Robinson, Anthony Burns, Fred Boswell Jr., Mark Pacpaco, and Hilario Bell, and each played a five-minute solo on a standard five-piece drumset. As a welcome twist to past competitions' drum setups, this year's kit didn't incorporate any electronic sampling pads. Finalists were judged on technique, groove, originality, stage presence, and overall performance.

Pacpaco, an engineering student from West Covina, California, who started playing when he was three years old, took home this year's crown. He dropped to his knees when he heard the results. "It's all hard work and persistence," he said after the finals. "I really sacrificed a lot for what I had to do for this competition." Pacpaco grew up watching drummers play in church and was also a quarterfinalist in last year's competition, and he says he saw the Drum-Off as an opportunity to get constructive criticism from other players in order to strengthen his drumming vocabulary.

Pacpaco's prizes included \$25,000 in cash, a VIP experience at the Winter NAMM 2017 trade show, a featured Drum Channel performance, a Roland TD-50KV electronic drumset and SPD-SX sampling pad, and a choice of a complete custom drum setup from the event's sponsors. Past Drum-Off winners have gone on to perform with artists such as Prince, Beyoncé, Jay Z, and Alice Cooper, among others.

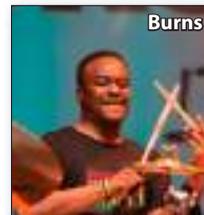
Among this year's judges were Steve Ferrone (Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers), Gil Sharone (Marilyn Manson), Tony Royster Jr. (Jay Z), Rich Redmond (Jason Aldean), Thomas Lang (Paul Gilbert, educator), Cora Coleman-Dunham (Dave Chappelle), Dave Elitch (Antemasque), Gerald Heyward (Chris Brown), Eric Leiderman (*Late Night With Seth Meyers*), Venzella Joy Williams (Beyoncé), Aaron Spears (Usher), and Hannah Welton (Prince). When asked what she was looking for in the finalists' performances, Welton said, "Versatility, presence, and performance. I wanted to see guys up there have fun and show that they're passionate about what they



Pacpaco



Robinson



Burns



Bell



Boswell

do. And I was blown away tonight." Gregg Bissonette (Ringo Starr and His All-Starr Band) returned to host the event.

The duo of Larnell Lewis (Snarky Puppy) and Rashid Williams (John Legend) opened the guest-artist performances by playing original compositions while also taking individual solos. "It's not often that you get a chance to have a conversation like that with a drummer, especially when you've only met each other a few times and have never played together before," Lewis said. "[It was] completely in the moment, and we fed off of each other rhythmically and harmonically." Williams explained that the two wanted to create a massive, tribal, heavy piece that would emotionally sway the audience: "That was our only recipe. I'll start something, and we'll work our way into building this picture. Hopefully everyone was able to see that, because there's musicality and points of melodic structure that we can create as drummers."

Next Bissonette honored two recently deceased drum-industry vets: Boston Symphony percussionist and drumstick manufacturer Vic Firth and Richie Ring developer Richie Pidanick. "Pidanick was generous, supportive, and one heck of a drummer," Bissonette said. The event was dedicated to Pidanick, who was also a longtime Guitar Center executive.

After the contestants' sets, Snarky Puppy's Robert "Sput" Searight

introduced Guitar Center's RockWalk inductees for the event, the legendary James Brown alumni John "Jabo" Starks and Clyde Stubblefield. (To the great sadness of the entire drum world, Stubblefield passed away a few weeks after the Drum-Off.) "I've had the opportunity to hear these guys my entire life, because my family listened to all of their records," Searight said. "In our day and age, we don't get to pay real tribute to legends that we've heard on records from the '60s and the '70s. Tonight we get to honor these two people."

Afterward Stubblefield and Starks took to the stage to place their hands in the cement that would later be part of Guitar Center's RockWalk outside the retailer's Hollywood location. "This is such an honor," Starks said. "Who would've thought that ol' C and I would've been here doing this? We thank you. We're glad to have done something that other drummers would appreciate. It's an honor."

Sheila E. (Prince) closed out the night's performances alongside her father, percussionist Pete Escovedo, with duets and full-band tunes, and at one point Bissonette joined them on stage.

Representing the feelings of everyone in attendance at the Drum-Off, Venzella Joy Williams said, "It was incredible from start to finish. There was no better way to open than with Larnell Lewis and Rashid Williams, who are two of the most musical drummers in the industry. Then honoring the legends who played for James Brown, and then hearing the finalists—those guys were incredible. And ending it with Sheila E., who to me is the quintessential female drummer... She paved the way, playing drums when it wasn't common for females to do that. When she came on the scene, she had so much grace and femininity, and she incorporates that into her playing. I think the Drum-Off hit on so many levels—whatever type of drummer you are, something appealed to you."

Event sponsors included DW, Drum Channel, Evans, GoPro, Gretsch, LP, Meinl, Pearl, Promark, Remo, Roland, Sabian, Tama, Vic Firth, Yamaha, Zildjian, and *Modern Drummer*.

Story by John Martinez

Photos by Alex Solca



Lewis



Stubblefield and Starks



Williams



Escovedo and Sheila E.





Split Hybrid



This hybrid electronic/acoustic drumset comes to us from the New York City–based drummer Howard Alper, who explains that the ability to combine traditional acoustic drums with loops and samples enables unique solo performances on a relatively small setup. “Recently I’ve been creating some interesting music on this kit,” Alper says. “It’s compact, yet it allows me to compose and play a variety of styles because of the different electronic options.”

The electronics include a Roland Octapad SPD-30 sampling pad, KD-7 kick trigger, and PDX-8 pad, and a Native Instruments Maschine 2 production system. “To complement the electronic gear,” Alper says, “I chose clear Crush acrylic drums for their sleek modern look and wide-open sound.” Those drums include a 6.5x14 snare and

an 18" floor tom that Alper converted to a bass drum with a Trick mount. The setup is rounded out by a Tama Speed Cobra double bass pedal and Zildjian hi-hat and ride cymbals.

Alper has divided the kit so that the acoustic voices are on the left-hand side and the electronic sounds are on the right, which demands a certain amount of playing coordination. “One example of how I use the kit is to first set up loops with the Octapad that I can play over,” he says. “While the loops are running, I then play the acoustic part of the kit with my left hand, and with my right hand I play samples or pads with the Maschine 2 controller.”

To see a video of the kit in action, search YouTube for “Howard Alper Android Diffraction.”

Photo Submission: Hi-res digital photos, along with descriptive text, may be emailed to kitofthemonth@moderndrummer.com. Show “Kit of the Month” in the subject line.



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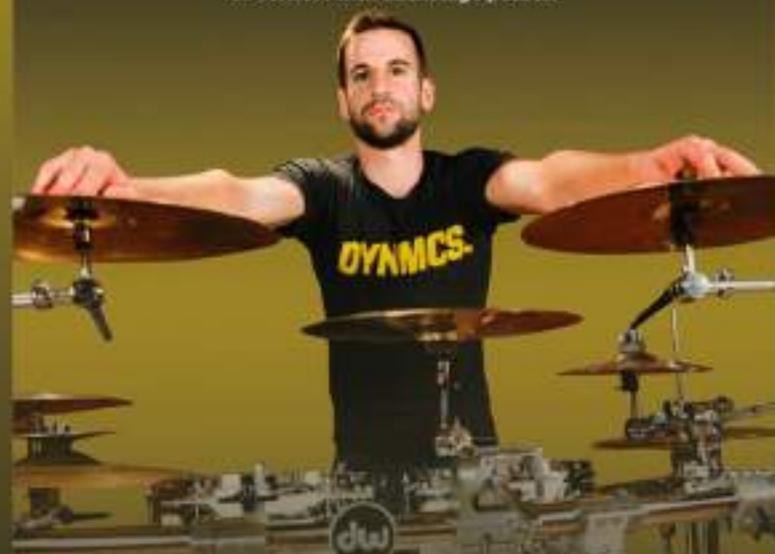
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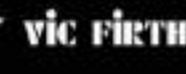
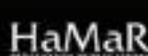
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Gretsch has more choices than ever when it comes to achieving the ultimate personalized snare sound. No matter what style of music you play, both USA-made and Full Range™ snares offer a sonic palette that's just waiting to be discovered.



chris fryar • zac brown band
5" × 14" gretsch usa copper



gary novak • michael landau/la studios
6" × 14" gretsch usa black brass



mark schulman • pink!
6½" × 14" gretsch usa solid maple

joe labarbara • bill evans/educator
5½" × 14" full range rosewood

THE ONE THAT SPEAKS TO YOU
THE ONE THAT MAKES THE GUITAR PLAYER'S HEAD HURT
THE ONE THAT DEFINES YOUR SOUND
THE ONE EVERYONE WANTS TO BORROW
THE ONE THAT SOUNDS GREAT RIGHT OUT OF THE BOX
THE ONE THAT MAKES YOU SMILE
THE ONE THAT EVERY OTHER DRUMMER WANTS
THE ONE THAT IS WORTH EVERY PENNY
THE ONE THE ENGINEERS LOVE
THE ONE THAT TUNES PERFECTLY
THE ONE THAT LOOKS THE SEXIEST
THE ONE THAT RESPONDS JUST LIKE YOU EXPECT IT TO
THE ONE THAT YOU'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR
THE ONE THAT WORKS ON EVERY GIG
THE ONE THAT MELTS PEOPLE'S FACES OFF
THE ONE THAT YOU HAND DOWN TO YOUR KID
THE ONE YOUR DRUMMER BUDDIES TALK ABOUT
THE ONE THAT IMPRESSES THE OPPOSITE SEX
THE ONE THAT RECORDS PERFECTLY EVERY TIME
THE ONE YOU PROTECT WITH YOUR LIFE
THE ONE THAT MAKES YOU PLAY BETTER
THE ONE THAT INSPIRES YOU
THE ONE THAT SOUNDS LIKE THUNDER
THE ONE THAT YOU NEVER LEAVE IN THE CAR
THE ONE YOU'LL NEVER SELL
THE ONE THAT DESERVES THE REALLY NICE BAG
THE ONE THAT GETS YOU THE DREAM GIG
THE ONE YOU ALWAYS DREAMED OF OWNING
THE ONE THAT SOUNDS PERFECT AT ANY VOLUME
THE ONE YOU ALWAYS GO TO



matt sorum • hollywood vampires/kings of chaos
6½" × 14" gretsch usa phosphorus bronze



steve ferrone • tom petty & the heartbreakers
6½" × 14" gretsch usa bell brass

THE ONE

Which Gretsch snare will you choose?



GRETSCHDRUMS.COM

GERALD HEYWARD

THE NEW K CUSTOM SPECIAL DRY COLLECTION
#DRYDONERIGHT

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Introducing the all new K Custom Special Dry Collection. We created the dry sound over a decade ago and have now remastered these raw and earthy cymbals for today's modern music styles. Each cymbal delivers a dry, funky sound with a fast attack and lots of trash for a unique expression. Once again, Zildjian has taken the art of cymbal making to the next level and has left its imitators behind. This is #DryDoneRight.

See and hear all 16 models at Zildjian.com.



Zildjian