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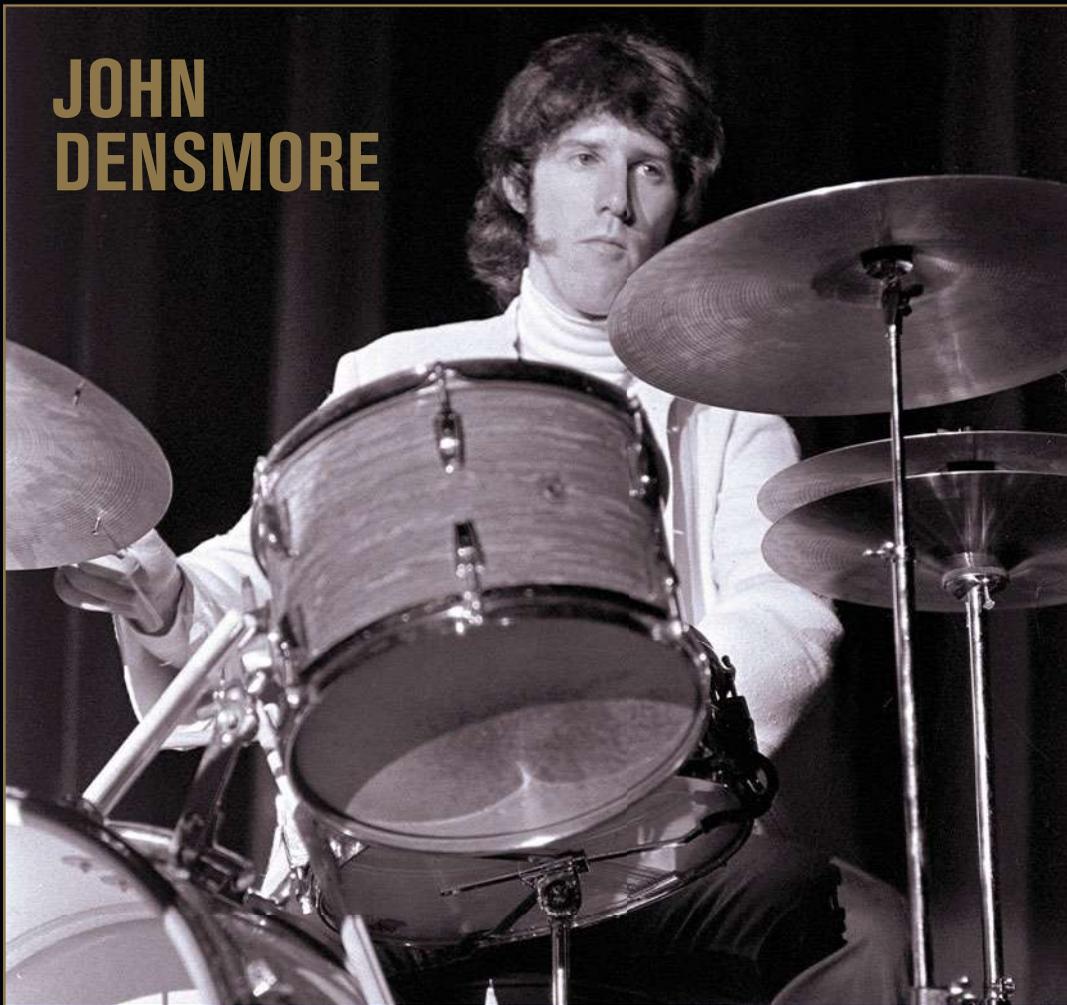
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AND MITCH MITCHELL

PLUS THE ZOMBIES' HUGH GRUNDY
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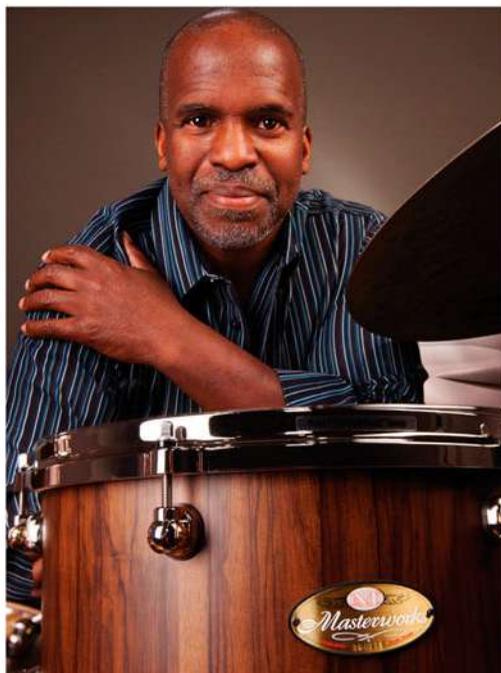
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1967

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The Birth of Classic Rock Drumming

Travel back fifty years in time, as we examine the music, gear, and lives of world-renowned drummers who ushered in the classic-rock period.

Exclusive interviews with **John Densmore** of the Doors, studio legend **Hal Blaine**, **Carmine Appice** of Vanilla Fudge, **Graeme Edge** of the Moody Blues, and **Hugh Grundy** of the Zombies.

Jim Keltner, **Steve Jordan**, **Rich Pagano**, **Liberty DeVitto**, **Denny Seiwell**, and **Chad Smith** on **Ringo Starr**.

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Hal Blaine and Carmine Appice
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ANIKA NILLES



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TAMA

AN EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

1967, the Summer of Love

Happy summer, everyone! Putting together this special issue has been a lot of work, but just as much fun.

I was ten years old in 1967. *Rolling Stone* magazine debuted that year, and I'd just gotten my first "real" drumkit. I started playing when I was seven—like most drummers in my age bracket, after seeing Ringo and the Beatles on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. What a year to start playing along to records, which is how we did it back in the day. I had my record player set up on a table right next to my drums so I could work the needle back and forth, over and over, to learn how to play the parts. I was also playing along to so many hit songs that were on the radio. At the time my friends and I didn't know that session drummer Hal Blaine was twenty of our favorite drummers!

That same year Carmine Appice came along, and everything got a bit heavier. Again, like many other young players at the time, I was greatly influenced by Carmine—though it was a bit more personal for me than for many. You see, Carmine and I came from the same neighborhood, and the place I went for drum lessons was a few blocks from where his family lived. I'm ten years younger than Carmine, though, and when I became aware of him, he was already on his way to stardom. My teacher at the time was Al Humphrey, and in his waiting room he had this huge poster of Carmine that I would stare at. As I was leaving, Al would always say, "If you want to be a big star like Carmine, you better practice!"

There were many more drummers that I played along to and learned from in 1967—even if I didn't know all their names at the time: John Densmore with the Doors, Mitch Mitchell with Jimi Hendrix, Dino Danelli with the Rascals, Ginger Baker with Cream, Al Jackson Jr. with Booker T. and the MG's, all the great Motown drummers, Clyde Stubblefield on James Brown's "Cold Sweat".... I *thought* I was playing along with Micky Dolenz of the Monkees as well—even though studio pros like Hal Blaine, Fast Eddie Hoh, Billy Lewis, Gary Chester, and Earl Palmer played on most of their recordings. (Micky did get to record most of the group's *Headquarters* album, though, the second of *three* albums the group released in '67.) But the records that literally changed my life in 1967—as a drummer, songwriter, and recording artist—were the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and *Magical Mystery Tour*. Listening to the music the Beatles made in 1967 was like hearing music for the first time. It's a sentiment shared by pretty much all of the drummers we spoke to for our cover story this month. (After you finish with this issue, you might want to check out Brian Southall's great new book, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band: The Album, the Beatles, and the World in 1967*, as well as the newly released fiftieth-anniversary reissue of the legendary album that changed the world all those years ago.)

We hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as we dug putting it together. Stay groovy, keep drumming, and remember, all you need is love, love, love!



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 Editor at Large

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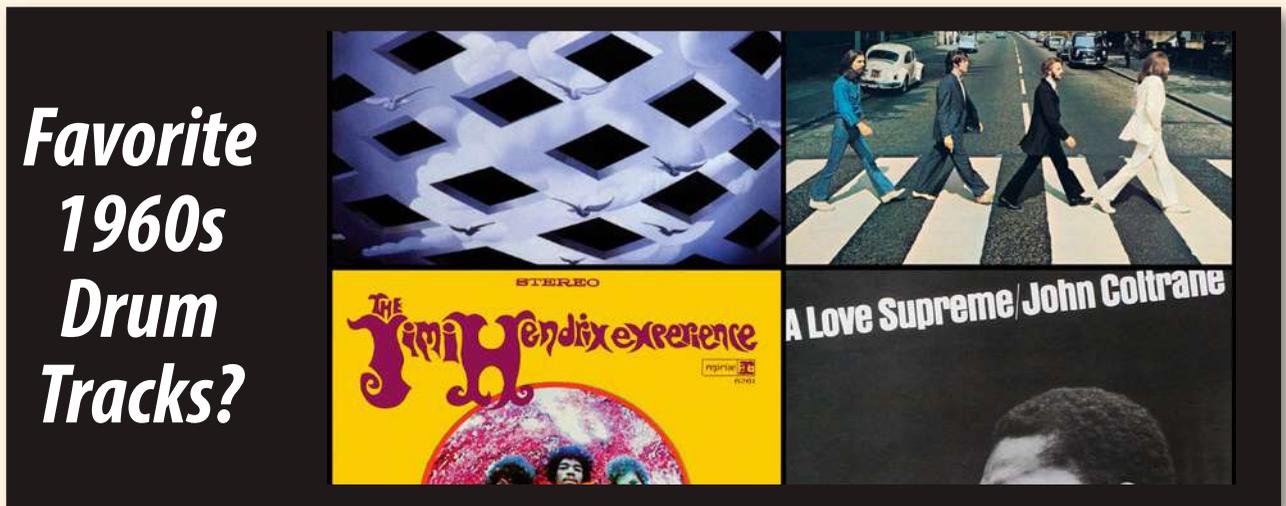
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Favorite 1960s Drum Tracks?

As we were taking a look back at some of the most iconic drummers and performances of 1967 for this month's cover feature, we wanted to find out which tracks our readers and social media followers felt marked the greatest drumming of the entire decade. While certain '60s drumming staples, such as John Bonham's performance on "Moby Dick" or Ringo's timeless "Come Together" groove, were popular choices, plenty of varied cuts stood out in the picks. Here are some favorites.

"Black Comedy" from *Miles in the Sky* by Miles Davis with Tony Williams on drums. The form of the tune has complex and shifting time signatures, and the band navigates it perfectly with beautiful solos. Williams' drumming is like a culmination of his previous innovations, including advanced metric modulations and some of the most beautiful and accurate comping. The tune also foreshadows the fusion movement of the '70s.

Chris Davidson

John Bonham, on Led Zeppelin's "Moby Dick" from *Led Zeppelin II*. Bonham will always be the king of the power groove. And the song features a definitive drum solo that integrates into the rest of the music so well. There's so much musicality.

Jon David Jeffery

Otis Redding's version of "Satisfaction." Few drummers can cleave to a groove like Al Jackson Jr.

Eric Wechter

The drumming on the Beatles' "Rain" is ingenious. To me, that track is an impeccable demonstration of Ringo's ability to shred behind the kit.

Alex Gabennesch

I love Levon Helm's playing on the Band's "The Weight." Check out the tone of the drums (especially the toms), the feel, and the fact that his part supports the song. It's just a perfect performance. Plus his vocals are so soulful. There can only be one Levon Helm.

Ian MacKay

Elvin Jones on "JuJu" by Wayne Shorter, Tony Williams on "Out to Lunch" by Eric Dolphy, Roy Haynes on "Reaching Fourth" by the McCoy Tyner Trio, Zigaboo Modeliste on the Meters' "Cissy Strut," Clyde Stubblefield on James Brown's "I Got the Feelin'," and John Bonham with Led Zeppelin on anything off of their debut. These songs define the decade for me!

Timothy Monaghan

Ringo on the Beatles' "With a Little Help From My Friends." You could serve those tom fills as dessert. His timing, feel, sound, and song enhancement...they're all delicious!

Björn Rautio

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

Mel Brown

Thank you for the comprehensive feature on Mel Brown in the April 2017 issue. I saw Mel play in Portland in a small jazz club decades ago. He was playing his Camco kit, swinging like crazy, and infusing the room with good vibes from his huge smile. Years later I was in Portland again and bought a pair of Allegra Jazz sticks at the Allegra drum shop and music store. Mel Brown designed the sticks, and I wore out the tips over time because I loved them so much. When I called the store again to order more, they weren't selling them anymore. However, I found out that Vater had originally manufactured them for Allegra. I got the dimensions and ultimately found the Swing model in the Vater catalog. I believe this is the

closest thing to the original Mel Brown Allegra Jazz stick. So I'm happily playing them, trying to re-create that Mel Brown vibe! Thanks again for the great article.

John Huxsol

Fort Bragg, California

Dropped Beat

In the Gearing Up section of the April 2017 issue, drum tech Henry Luniewski's last name was misspelled.





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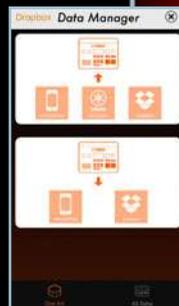
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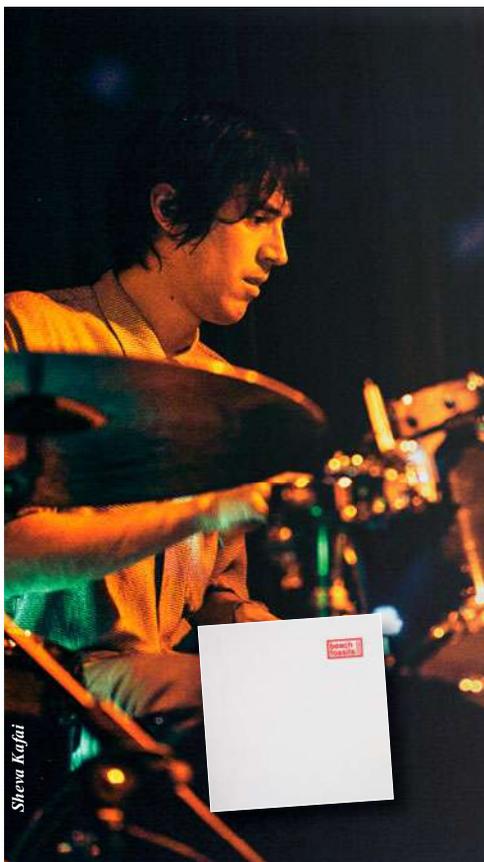
Out Now



Greg Saunier on Big Walnuts Yonder's *Big Walnuts Yonder*

On its self-titled debut, released this past May 5, the indie-rock collective Big Walnuts Yonder fuses wild time shifts, explosive punk tones, and unhinged improvisation on ten electrified, cohesive tracks. The veteran group, comprising bassist and vocalist Mike Watt (Minutemen, the Stooges), guitarist Nels Cline (Wilco, Nels Cline Singers), guitarist and vocalist Nick Reinhart (Tera Melos), and drummer Greg Saunier (Deerhoof), spent three days recording in 2014 after extensive discussions. "We'd been planning this meet-up for years," Saunier explains. "So once we were finally all in the same room, it was just relentless, frantic energy."

The group loaded its debut with heaps of frenetic chops, free-jazz-influenced ventures, and sharp, daring moments, including a jarring yet perfectly executed triplet metric modulation that opens the album. "I think shifting to a tempo related to the triplet can feel so cool and refreshing," Saunier says. "Of course, if you think the timing is funny now, you should've heard my demo. I did it in GarageBand, [and] if you have RAM issues, then there's latency, and the timing shifts around. When the guys heard the demo right before the session, I think they got pretty worried that they picked a drummer who didn't understand rhythm!" **Willie Rose**



Anton Hochheim on Beach Fossils' *Somersault*

"I feel bad," Beach Fossils leader Dustin Payseur says, regarding the way the drums were recorded for the group's first album in four years, *Somersault*. "We were all sitting there, staring over Anton's shoulder, probably making him nervous, telling him, 'Keep it like a drum machine, as minimal as possible.' He did *such* a good job, though."

Payseur should know. Though he's widely recognized as the singer, songwriter, and guitarist in one of the most highly regarded bands to emerge from the Brooklyn indie-rock scene in the past decade, he's a more than competent kit player himself. And he certainly seems to have chosen very well by hiring Anton Hochheim for *Somersault*. The drummer, whose busy schedule includes playing with the L.A. punk band Hit Bargain, the popular New York fuzz-pop act the Pains of Being Pure of Heart, and the duo Ablebody (with his identical twin brother, Christoph), is skilled at coming up with streamlined yet meaningful parts on short notice. "When Dustin sent me the demos," Hochheim says, "all the tracks already had drums that were programmed or that he'd played himself. So he had a pretty precise idea of the feel on every song. But he was also open to ideas."

In addition to the challenge of recording drums for a singer who knows what's up behind the kit, Hochheim's skills were further tested by the methods of producer Jonathan Rado, leader of the much-buzzed-about L.A. group Foxygen. "Rado likes to record all analog to tape," Hochheim explains. "So there wasn't the luxury of overdubs. I'd never worked like that before—it was really difficult." [laughs]

And like Payseur, Rado had much to offer in the way of Hochheim's parts. "My approach is pretty minimal," Anton says. "But there were definitely parts in the recording process where Rado was like, 'Let's do even fewer fills.' Then, 'Let's do a pass where there's no floor tom at all.' And he'd just take away a floor tom. Then, 'Let's do it without any crash cymbal,' so all of a sudden there's no crash on the kit. *Oh, shit, my drumset's shrinking!* [laughs] But it was cool to not rely on muscle memory; it was very spontaneous. The whole process was pretty fun."

Adam Budofsky

MORE NEW RELEASES

Mutoid Man War Moans (Ben Koller) /// **Warrant** Louder Harder Faster (Steven Sweet) /// **Jaco Pastorius** Truth, Liberty & Soul—Live in NYC: The Complete 1982 NPR Jazz Alive! Recording (Peter Erskine) /// **Miss May I** Shadows Inside (Jerod Boyd) /// **Lonely Robot** The Big Dream (Craig Blundell)

On
Tour

Christian Paschall with Maren Morris

The sticksman behind a rising country star talks touring and offers advice for up-and-coming players.

Nashville-based drummer and producer Christian Paschall is currently on the road supporting the country singer and songwriter Maren Morris on a tour that lasts through late September. Paschall's solid feel, deep groove, and unwavering time have supported the rising artist on her 2016 tour with Keith Urban, a headlining trek earlier this year, and a slew of high-profile television performances, including a 2017 Grammy appearance where Morris also took home the Best Country Solo Performance award.

Live, the drummer and group bandleader employs loops to best replicate the production of Morris's 2016 debut album, *Hero*. "I love playing with loops—I love the feel it imparts on the music," Paschall says. "Modern production often utilizes loops and other programming, and to me those are different instruments from a drumset. If there's programming on top of an acoustic kit on a record, I like to approach it that same way live. Having said that, if there's a shaker track and I have a free hand—on 'I Could Use a Love Song,' for example—I definitely like to play that kind of thing rather than put it on a track."

Originally based in Atlanta, Paschall relocated to Nashville and picked up work with artists he'd played with previously. And while the drummer maintains a busy recording schedule both locally and via remote sessions in his personal studio, he explains that being in a city with a substantial music scene helps bolster his opportunities. "As much as I hate to say it," Paschall offers, "I believe that even in this day and age of the internet and remote recording, being in a music hub like Nashville or L.A. is necessary to build a long-term career in commercial music. Sure, there are exceptions to that. But most of the music we hear is recorded in one of those two cities, so it makes sense that that's where the majority of the work would be.

"The internet hasn't changed the fact that people still want to work with their friends," Paschall goes on. "If I'm producing a record, it doesn't make sense to have someone in Tulsa play guitar on it when my friend that I hung out with last night is a killer guitar player and lives here in town. That's not to say that I never work with people outside of Nashville. I just think that if you're an up-and-coming musician who wants to build a career in commercial music, move to Nashville or L.A., meet people, play with people, and come up in the industry with people. There's plenty of work to go around." **Willie Rose**



Q&A

More with Greg Saunier, Anton Hochheim and Dustin Payseur, and Christian Paschall at moderndrummer.com

Also on the Road

Shannon Forrest and **Lenny Castro** with Toto /// **Abe Cunningham** with Deftones /// **Tony Hajjar** with At the Drive-In /// **Lars Ulrich** with Metallica /// **Rick Allen** with Def Leppard /// **Steve Ferrone** with Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers /// **Dominic Howard** with Muse

WHO'S PLAYING WHAT



Mark "Lovestick" Falgren (Lukas Graham) has joined the **Paiste** artist roster.



Jason Marsalis (independent) is using **Mike Balter** mallets.



Ryan Van Poederooyen (Devin Townsend Project) is using **Audiofly** in-ear monitors.



The Drum Thing

“The most exciting thing,” photographer Deirdre O’Callaghan says, “is to be around passionate people with a drive to master an instrument. It’s truly magical.”

That drive and passion come across crystal-clear in the images and words of the ninety-six drummers included in O’Callaghan’s new hardcover book, *The Drum Thing*. Featuring an extremely hip selection of players covering several generations and multiple genres, *The Drum Thing*, published by Prestel, is the most sophisticated book of its kind, perfectly balancing our primary concerns of geeking out on wonderful gear, learning more about our craft, and being inspired by drummers’ stories.

O’Callaghan was part of the original design team for the influential British style magazine *Dazed & Confused* (now simply *Dazed*), and had pitched a photo-essay feature on drummers. But the idea quickly snowballed into a book-length project, which she eventually self-funded. The photos that make up *The Drum Thing*, most of which are taken in the drummers’ homes, provide

a remarkable amount of information about the subjects. Framed images of Max Roach, John Bonham, and tabla players adorn East/West-fusion drummer Dan Weiss’s wall. Jazz legend Jack DeJohnette plays the piano, seemingly lost in an improvisatory flight. Deerhoof’s Greg Saunier concentrates on the notes on a page.

Adding even more weight to the collection are excerpts of O’Callaghan’s interviews with the players, a decision prompted by a particularly frank conversation with 1999 *MD* Hall of Fame inductee Roy Haynes. “I got *time* with people,” says O’Callaghan, who feels that many of the musicians opened up more than they otherwise might have because they were documented in their own environments. “They were really relaxed and up for it.”

Text by Armine Iknadossian and Adam Budofsky



Steven Drozd (Flaming Lips)

“I think it was when we were making *Clouds Taste Metallic* when I really felt like I was doing my own trip. I really felt like, on that record especially, people could hear that it was me: ‘That’s Steven Drozd playing drums.’”



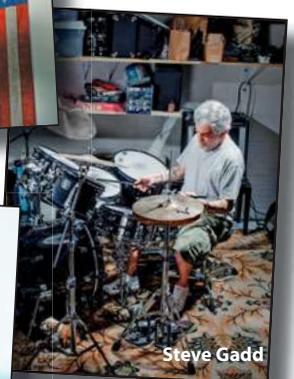
Brian Chase (Yeah Yeah Yeahs)

"When I practice, I spend so much time on technique, the way in which I play and not just *what* I play. Remaining conscious of my posture, my hand position, and the way the stick functions as an extension of my body then become primary concerns. In this I value looseness, ease, and grace. Then there are the moments when I'm overwhelmed by the passion of the music, and at these times my restraint for the sake of an ideal in form often becomes compromised, and my body becomes a metaphor for what I'm feeling as my experience. The muscles in my face can become tense with the excitement, my neck can lurch forwards with eagerness, and my grip can tighten from the intensity. Not that this necessarily helps the music—and sometimes it can detract from the concentration, from the focus—but it can be fun to watch. There's a joy in the openness of playing, and for me that's what there is to communicate."



Zach Hill (Death Grips, Hella)

"I have a hard time talking about music because I play music. It's my whole language and I play to express things that I can't verbalize. I'm slightly a masochist by nature in a lot of ways. Playing, I want it to be biting me, grating on me while I'm doing it. It's like I'm concentrating so hard that I'm not concentrating at all."



Yamaha

DTX760K Electronic Drumset

Expanded sounds, more customization, and a responsive, natural feel.

Yamaha has long held a substantial presence in the competitive and rapidly evolving electronic drumset market by offering a full range of products that encompass everything from entry-level options to high-end setups. In early 2016, the company announced an expansion of its upper-range DTX700 e-drum series with two additions—the DTX720K and DTX760K.

According to Yamaha, the configurations build upon the company's DTX700 drum module by including the larger, more natural three-zone pads that are normally reserved for the company's flagship DTX900 series, while offering more sound customization options. We were sent the DTX760 model to check out.

What's in the Box?

The DTX760K comes with a 12" XP120SD snare pad, two 10" XP100T tom pads, a 12" XP120T floor tom pad, a 10" KP100 kick pad, a 13" RHH135 hi-hat, two 13" PCY135 crashes, and a 15" PCY155 ride cymbal. As mentioned above, each XP drum pad has three zones: the main drumhead and two rim zones. The rim zones were usually assigned rimclick and rimshot sounds by default. The drum pads also come with a control knob that can be assigned to adjust parameters such as tuning, muffling, or snare sensitivity. The cymbals had three zones as well—bow, edge, and bell—and each cymbal's sustain could be choked by grabbing the underside of the pad.

The hardware included an HS740A chain-linked hi-hat stand, an SS-662 single-braced snare stand, a lightweight RS700 drum rack, and Yamaha's standard booms and hexagonal tom arms to mount the drum and cymbal pads. Specialized washers and mounts are included for the cymbal pads. The kit also comes with a modified hi-hat clutch and stand base to mount the pad onto either the included stand or any other model.

The DTX700 module comes with a mount for the rack and trigger cables to connect the pads. After unboxing, the only gear needed to get up and running is a throne, a bass drum pedal, sticks, and headphones or an amplification setup.

The Module

The DTX700 module includes 1,268 acoustic and electronic drum and percussion samples spread over fifty preset kits. While every kit is fully customizable, there are ten spots available for users' own configurations. Acoustic samples are taken from Yamaha's lines of maple, birch, oak, beech, and other signature drumsets, and there's a slew of modern- and vintage-styled acoustic, electronic, and percussion kits. Players can also upload their own samples into the module using a USB flash drive (not included). The size of each individual voice is customizable, and adjusting the dimensions felt like adding new pieces to the kit as opposed to simply changing the tuning.

Navigating the module's interface can feel slightly less than intuitive at first, but after spending time with the controls and reading through the manual, adjustments became quick and easy. Yamaha also offers a free smartphone app that can be used externally to quickly switch between kits and adjust parameters such as instrument voice, tuning, muffling, tempo, and time signature.

The module comes with ninety-three play-along songs and a fun—if humbling—graphic metronome function that tests rhythmic accuracy. There's an Aux In connection to play along with external audio sources. The kit also came with Steinberg's Cubase AI music production software, so you can record audio and MIDI straight into your computer or use the kit as a VST controller to expand the module's voices almost limitlessly via USB (cable not included).

How's It Feel?

If Yamaha was shooting for a more natural feel for the DTX700 series, the company nailed it. Snare rimshots felt great and responded with close to the same physical crack that could be expected from an acoustic drum. And with the real estate of the larger pads, misfires were rare when switching between drumhead strokes, rimclicks, rimshots, or cymbal bow and bell strikes.





The KP100 bass drum pad had roughly the same response and give of an acoustic kick, and the large playing surface allows plenty of room to accommodate a double pedal.

Most impressive, however, was the kit's fluid dynamic range and sensitivity. There was a smooth flow from quiet ghost strokes to hard rimshots throughout each voice. The module also offers nine sensitivity options to fine-tune the dynamic range of the pads even further.

The hi-hat required the most adjustment. I felt like there needed to be more space between the hi-hat pad and the stand base than I typically use on acoustic hi-hats in order to trigger splashes accurately or to play wide-open notes. Once the hi-hat controller was dialed in, splashes and openings performed smoothly, and executing fast Tony Williams-style foot patterns sounded tight and crisp.

At an MSRP of \$3,499.99, the DTX760K provides a natural feel, versatile options, and plenty of Yamaha's signature sounds without the heftier price tag of the company's flagship DTX900 series electronic drums. While no electronic drumset perfectly matches the response or feel of an acoustic kit, Yamaha is certainly making strides in the right direction.

Willie Rose

UFIP

Class and Vibra Series Cymbals

Centrifuge-cast for the purest B20-bronze tone possible.

Italian manufacturer UFIP has been creating small-batch cymbals since 1931. Its process is unique from that of other companies in that it utilizes a centrifuge to cast high-quality B20 bronze (20% tin and 80% copper) into shape. This procedure, which UFIP calls Rotocasting, is said to remove impurities from the bronze to produce a more pure and musical sound while also allowing for the bell to be cast thicker than the bow and edge. We were sent a selection of models from UFIP's Class and Vibra series, so let's check them out.

Class Series

The Class series is UFIP's flagship line and is designed to provide a complete and versatile range of high, medium, and low tones. We were sent a pair of 14" Light hi-hats, 18" and 20" Light crashes, an 18" Fast China, and a 22" Light ride. The cymbals have a traditional finish and are evenly hammered and lathed from bell to edge.

The 14" Light hi-hats had a 960-gram top cymbal and a 1,150-gram bottom. While the cymbals are light, they don't feel flimsy or papery. There's no noticeable flex from either one, which gives the foot "chick" a strong, clean attack while also providing a powerful stick sound and crystal-clear articulation. The open tone has a pure, even sustain and a moderately low pitch. The closed stick sound is crispy but also has some heft and density. These would make great general-purpose hi-hats to cover a wide range of applications, from light jazz to hard-hitting rock.

The 18" and 20" Class Light crashes weighed 1,310 grams and 1,745 grams respectively. They had some flex but, like the hi-hats, they were a bit firmer than I expected, which resulted in a bit more power and projection than you'd get from typical "light" crashes. Both crashes opened up easily and had super-smooth sustain with a balanced spectrum of high and low overtones. They had a moderately long decay that tapered off very nicely after single hits and blended seamlessly into subsequent attacks when crash-riding. The bells were very musical and slightly integrated within the overall cymbal sound. These Class crashes are all-around winners for players looking for clean, all-purpose sounds that fit well in any musical situation.

The 18" Fast China weighed 1,200 grams, which was light enough to give it some flex but not so light as to make it feel hollow. UFIP uses square bells on its Chinas to help stabilize them on the cymbal stand when inverted in the typical manner with the bell on the underside. This company is known for making some incredible-sounding effects cymbals (splashes and Chinas), and the 18" Fast China upheld that reputation. It was trashy and funky yet still had a musical tone. You can ride the bow for a gritty texture, or you can smack it hard to punctuate accents with an aggressive attack that's coupled with a pleasant, smooth sustain. The small, square bell is a little difficult to strike, but if you aim accurately you can elicit some cool spraying overtones from it.

The 22" Class Light ride weighed 2,800 grams. It had some flex, but it's firmer than the crashes. It felt somewhere between a light- and medium-weight cymbal. It also had softer hammer marks than those found on the crashes. Its sound was a blend of shimmer, balanced sustain with clean, medium-pitched stick articulation and a bright- and pure-sounding bell. Aside from some extreme playing situations that require maximum cut and clarity, this 22" Class Light ride fell right in line with the other cymbals, providing a great all-purpose tone with an even balance of high-end sheen and midrange warmth that would serve well in most live and studio situations.





Vibra Series

The Vibra series is a newer lineup from UFIP designed to offer more modern sounds without straying too far from the smooth, musical tones that are the company's trademark. The models we received for review were the 15" hi-hats, 19" and 21" crashes, and a 22" ride. These cymbals are more deeply hammered than the Class series. They feature a brilliant-finish bell and 1" outer ring and a traditional-finish bow.

The 15" Vibra hi-hats are a bit heavier than the Class models; they weighed 1,200 grams/1,412 grams. The top cymbal didn't have as much flex as the Class version, and the hammering employed on the Vibra series is less pronounced. Vibra hi-hats are designed to be powerful and dynamic. The 15" pair we reviewed had a clean, crisp attack and a low pitch that keep them from sounding overly bright. The open tone was throaty but controlled, and the foot chick was articulate and quick.

The 19" and 21" Vibra crashes were medium-thin (1,558 grams and 2,010 grams) and had deeper and wider hammer marks, which help to give the cymbals a more explosive attack and a slightly trashy sustain. The 21" crash had a huge voice with a slightly slower attack, while the 19" hit faster and had a brighter and more general-purpose tone. Both Vibra crashes had a nice balance of high, medium, and low overtones plus a touch of the grit and complexity that many drummers favor these days. The Vibra crashes were my favorite models of the batch. They recorded beautifully and packed plenty of punch for live playing while remaining highly musical in the studio.

The 22" Vibra ride weighed 2,830 grams, which is just slightly heavier than the Class model. This ride had some flex, so it had some crash potential and an even wash. The pitch of the Vibra ride is very close to that of the Class, but the Vibra sounded a touch deeper, most likely due to the extra-wide hammering that's employed on this series. The stick sound of the Vibra ride was clear and articulate without being overly pingy, and its sustain was warm and pure. The bell

had a deep and powerful voice. The Vibra ride had a bit more shimmer than the Class, which made it a little more versatile and musical to my ears. If clean, vibrant cymbal sounds are what you're after, UFIP delivers with its classic Class and new, modern Vibra series.

Michael Dawson



Remo

Classic Fit and P3 Felt Tone Drumheads

No more struggling to fit skins on oversized vintage snare and tom shells or wrestling with testy felt strips to achieve a classic fluffy/punchy kick tone.

This year Remo released two products designed especially for vintage-drum owners and fans of a classic, lightly muffled kick sound. These are the slightly oversized Weatherking Classic Fit (available in Ambassador Clear and Coated, Ambassador Hazy, and Diplomat Fiberskyn weights) and the uniquely designed Powerstroke P3 Felt Tone, which features a built-in floating felt stripe. (Felt Tones are available in Hazy and Fiberskyn versions.) Let's check them out!

Classic Fit

Prior to the invention in the mid-twentieth century of the modern drumhead, which features thin plastic film stretched over a metal hoop, drummers often made their own custom drumheads using calfskin and flexible wooden flesh hoops. There wasn't a need for drum manufacturers to be hyper-particular about the

dimensions of the shells, so drums made during the first half of the 1900s are often slightly oversized or imperfectly shaped.

The imperfect nature of old shells makes fitting modern drumheads on them tricky at times; the flesh hoop can rub and stick against the shell, or the collar might not sit squarely on the bearing edge. Similar issues can occur on newer drums finished in thick wraps and with drums that have warped a bit over time.

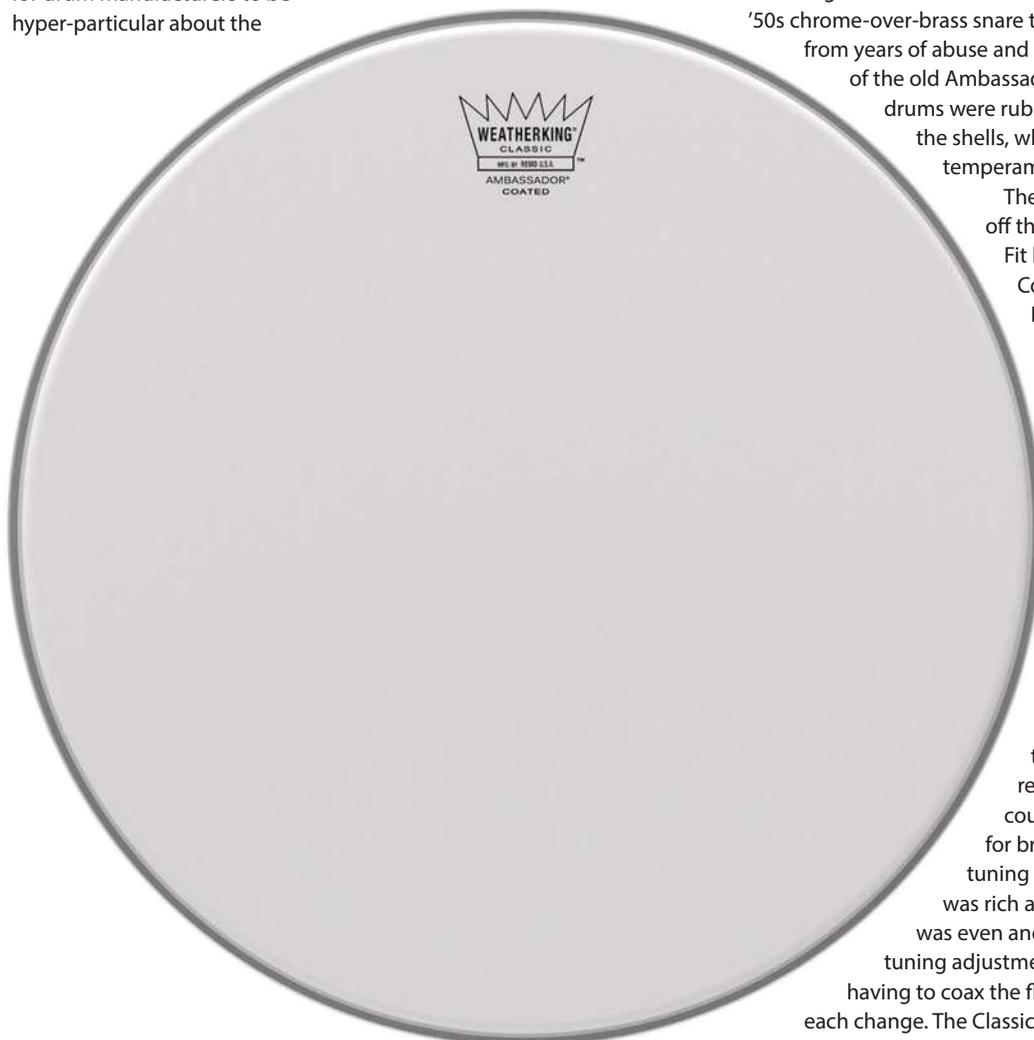
Remo's Classic Fit heads are designed to mitigate these problems by extending the width of the Mylar without increasing the overall diameter of the drumhead, so that it still sits perfectly under the counter hoop of the rim. This extra distance is achieved via a narrower flesh hoop and a smaller bend in the film between the collar and hoop. (Remo refers to this bend as a "step.")

We tested Ambassador Coated and Clear and Diplomat Fiberskyn Classic Fit heads on '70s Slingerland 3-ply 12" and 14" toms with round-over edges and a thick black wrap finish, and on a 5x14

'50s chrome-over-brass snare that had warped out of shape from years of abuse and neglect. The counter hoops of the old Ambassadors that were already on the drums were rubbing against the outside of the shells, which historically made them temperamental to tune.

The old heads had to be muscled off the drums, but all of the Classic Fit heads (Ambassador Clear and Coated, Hazy Snare Side, and Diplomat Fiberskyn) installed with very little resistance. The heads didn't rotate freely all the way around the bearing edges—there were a couple spots where the flesh hoops snagged the shells—but I was able to find several positions that were friction-free.

Once outfitted with the Classic Fit heads on top and bottom, these old drums opened up like they never had before. I could tune them super-low to get studio-ready fat, punchy sounds, or I could crank them all the way up for brighter bebop tones. At any tuning the pitch was pure, the sustain was rich and unrestricted, and the decay was even and balanced. I could also make tuning adjustments quickly and easily without having to coax the flesh hoops up or down with each change. The Classic Fit drumheads earned "must-have" status for anyone working with imperfectly sized drums.





Felt Tone

Drummers have been muffling their bass drums with felt strips for decades; John Bonham's cannon-like kick drum tone with Led Zeppelin is partly a result of his use of solid drumheads on front and back that were muffled with 2.5" felt strips placed on the underside of each head.

The problem with that approach to muffling is that it compromises the consistency of tuning from lug to lug because the felt strips fold over the bearing edge, which causes the drumheads to sit unevenly.

Remo's answer to the tuning issues caused by traditional felt-strip muffling was to adapt and utilize the technology of its popular Powerstroke 3 drumhead, which features a thin outer ring of film around the entire circumference, so it could float across the head a felt strip that stops prior to the bearing edge to allow for unencumbered seating and tuning. The P3 ring used on the Felt Tone heads, which are available in Hazy and Fiberskyn models, is thinner than it is on a regular Powerstroke 3. The additional layer of Mylar also extends behind the entire length of the felt strip. The felt is glued to the Mylar strip but not to the drumhead itself, which allows the felt to momentarily float off the head after each stroke. This floating action is what gives the Felt Tone heads more resonance than other pre-muffled varieties, while eliminating the high overtones and minimizing extraneous rumble.

We tested the Hazy and Fiberskyn Felt Tones on vintage 18" and 24" bass drums. The Hazy was used for the batter, and the Fiberskyn was used for the resonant. On the 18" drum, we wanted to test how the heads responded to tighter bebop tunings. Some pre-muffled heads choke or lose attack when tuned high. The Felt Tones were right at home at that tension. Their resonance was controlled, but the tone was deep and full, the pitch was pure, and the attack was dense and punchy. You can hit the Felt Tone hard without the sustain ringing excessively, and you can articulate patterns in whisper-quiet contexts as well. The Felt Tones also extended the low-end potential of the 18" kick when tensioned as loosely as possible.

The Felt Tones also breathed new life into a testy old 14x24 mahogany bass drum that hadn't yet lived up to its full sonic potential when outfitted with other drumheads. Basic single-ply heads caused this drum to sound thin and anemic, while thicker heads resulted in a lifeless, dull "thwack." The Felt Tones, however, turned this drum into the thunderous cannon that it was always meant to be. With the Hazy batter and Fiberskyn front tuned about as low as they could go, the drum had a meaty punch and a focused sustain that rumbled unencumbered for a brief moment and then shut down evenly. The Felt Tones had no papery highs or feedback-inducing low-mid overtones—just fat, useable low end and a clean top end that gave each note the perfect amount of snap and clarity. Perfection personified.

Michael Dawson

PRODUCT CLOSE-UP

RTOM

Black Hole Practice System

Snap-on mesh heads that convert an acoustic kit to a low-volume rehearsal set in seconds.

RTOM, makers of the ubiquitous Moon Gel damper pads, has developed a new product designed to reduce the sound of an acoustic kit up to eighty percent without eliminating all of the natural tone. This system, called Black Hole, comprises a black-mesh drumhead affixed to a metal counter hoop embedded in a 1.5" rubber rim. Available in 10"-24" sizes, the Black Hole heads employ a fabric dot in the center that enhances the realism of the response and provides a more audible attack.

How It Works

You snap the tom and snare Black Hole heads into place on drums with stamped triple-flange hoops by pushing the rubber hoop between the tension rods and the rim of the drum. On snares and toms with die-cast or wood hoops, you may need to use optional elastic hook attachments (sold separately) to lock the Black Hole heads in place. These attachments connect the head to the bottom hoop. Similarly, bass drum models are secured in place with elastic cables and claws that affix to the front hoop (included).





The bass drum system also includes a metal extender plate that you use to connect the pedal. Simply clamp the pedal to the extender, and then slide the extender under the hoop of the Black Hole until it locks into place.

Each head can be independently tuned to match the pitch and tension of the drum on which it's attached by rotating a turnbuckle located on the underside of the rubber hoop with an included tool.

In Use

We tested the Black Hole system on a basic five-piece kit (10", 12", and 16" toms, 14" snare, and 22" bass drum). Installing the heads on the drums took less than five minutes, and the only adjustment we had to make to the setup was to lower the snare and toms 1.5" to compensate for the extra height added by the rubber hoops of the Black Holes.

The Black Hole heads did a great job of decreasing the overall volume of the kit so that we could practice at full dynamics without producing decibel levels that would be disturbing to next-door neighbors or damaging to our own hearing. (According to the National Institute of Health, prolonged exposure to sounds exceeding 85 decibels can lead to hearing loss; an unmuted drumset played moderately loud can easily exceed 100 decibels.)

Mesh drumheads have way more bounce than Mylar heads, but the fabric dot on the Black Holes helps to provide a more accurate feel that's not overly springy. On the flipside, striking the dots produces an audible, snappy attack. This attack is good for practicing so you can monitor your timing accuracy, but it also makes the Black Hole heads louder than other mesh heads that don't have a dot. (You can achieve a significantly quieter sound by striking the area of the mesh head that's not covered by the dot.)

The Black Hole heads also allow some of the drum's natural tone to ring, so the snare wires responded accurately and the toms and kick produced some pitch and sustain. The rubber hoops of the Black Hole heads allow you to practice rimshots without a significant increase in volume.

If you're looking to create a near-silent practice setup for at-home practice, the increased attack of the Black Holes caused by the fabric dots may make this system too loud for your situation. (We should point out that the Black Hole setup is markedly quieter than some other dampening systems that utilize foam-rubber mutes.) If you're looking for sound dampening that can be installed and removed easily without having to swap out the existing drumheads, while also providing significant sound reduction and realistic response, RTOM's Black Hole heads are highly recommended.

Michael Dawson



COLLECTOR'S CORNER

1938-41 Slingerland Hollywood Boulevard Outfit

Most of today's drumkits include at least one rack tom, a floor tom, a hi-hat, and a ride cymbal. But back in 1938, renowned American drum manufacturer Slingerland's most popular setup, the Hollywood Boulevard Outfit, came only with a bass drum, a snare, a Chinese tom, and various percussion instruments. Our featured kit this month is a pristine example of the Hollywood Boulevard Outfit that looks just as it would have when it left the factory floor nearly eighty years ago.

Slingerland featured the Hollywood Boulevard setup in its catalogs from 1938 to 1941. Our kit includes a 14x28 Artist Model bass drum and a 6.5x14 Gene Krupa model Radio King snare in white marine pearl. Sitting on top of the bass drum is a trap table that's also detailed with white marine pearl edges. The kit is complete with the correct snare stand, an Epic model pedal, cymbal arms, a 10" Chinese tom and holder, a 12" sizzle cymbal, a 13" thin cymbal, a woodblock, and Korean temple blocks.

Matt Sinyard of the Georgia-based Bonzo Drum Company is responsible for the impeccable restoration of these drums. While the drums arrived in near-perfect condition, he stripped and painted the trap table, reapplied the pearl to the edges, and added a wood-grain veneer to the top. All of the hardware for the tray was freshly plated as well.

An artist who has worked in the White House was commissioned to restore the temple blocks. I was told he researched Asian paint ingredients and mixing techniques of the late-'30s to make sure the blocks were restored as accurately as possible.

The 1938-41 Slingerland catalog shows that the bass drum for the Hollywood Boulevard drumset was single-tension, and there was a stud in the center of the drum. But beavertail lugs, like those used on this kit, were also employed as the receivers for the single-tension rods. They have holes on both ends with no spring or lug nut. The heads are tensioned by long T-rods that are



threaded into claws on the front hoop.

The snare drum offered in 1938 with the Hollywood Boulevard kit was a 5x14 Radio King. The 1941 catalog shows this outfit with the 6.5x14 model. The 6.5x14 is the more highly sought-after version, mainly because swing-era superstar Gene Krupa played that size.

These drums were well taken care of for many years. The white of the marine pearl

finish has no glimpse of yellowing or other discoloration, and the Krupa Radio King snare will always go up in value.

I don't know what Sinyard is capable of doing with less pristinely kept drums, but the finished product for this project is beautiful, classy, and a great tribute to the Chicago craftsmen working at Slingerland before World War II.

Harry Cangany





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Photo by Joe West

CHOOSE YOUR LOOK

GT BLACK

WITH NATURAL BEECH HOOPS



CRUISER BLUE

WITH WALNUT HOOPS



HOT ROD RED

WITH NATURAL BEECH HOOPS



ROADSTER GREEN

WITH WALNUT HOOPS



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14" x 6.5" (with dual glide strainer)

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resonant head (bass drums)

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Mounting on all rack & floor tom leg brackets produce a full and unrestricted sustain

WITH 45° BEARING EDGES produce high-end frequencies for projection and defined low-end for body. (Bass Drums: 10-ply/10mm, Snare,

(CLTF) shell manufacturing with **OPTIMUM SHELL MEASUREMENT (OSM)** produce maximum resonance, easier tuning and clear pitches

in rods from loosening during play to ensure tuning stability

HEADS: Ambassador Coated batter & Ambassador Clear resonant heads (snare & toms), Powerstroke P3 Clear batter & Powerstroke P3 Fiberskyn

SEE THE DIFFERENCE

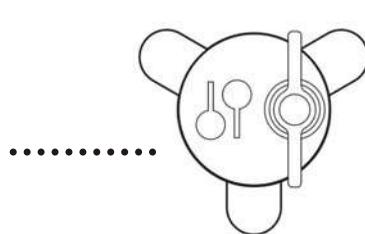


The SOUND SUSTAINER Drum Mount

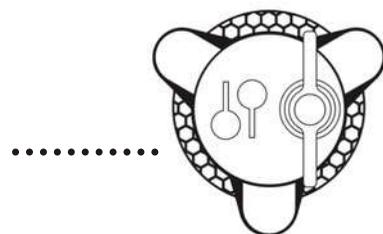
The new Sound Sustainer technology is based on engine damping concepts applied in the automotive industry. Isolating the metal mount from the wooden shell guarantees a full, long-lasting and clean sustain on both rack and floor toms.



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SOLID MOUNT



SOUND SUSTAINER

Casey Cooper

**Dream big.
Work hard.
Influence many.**



“My goal is not only to inspire people through the playing, but to show them that what I do is attainable for anyone.”

By today's standards, a YouTube Gold Play Button Award is equivalent to a gold record in the recording industry. The plaque recognizes the accomplishment of one million subscribers to a YouTube channel. Twenty-five-year-old Casey Cooper, aka COOP3RDRUMM3R, is the first drummer on YouTube to have earned this prestigious honor.

"It's crazy to me that this has happened," Cooper says. "I'm never going to be the best drummer on the planet, but that's not what my YouTube channel is about. It represents entertainment, education, and inspiration for people interested in drumming. This award inspires me to keep doing what I'm doing to help inspire others."

Like many drummers, Cooper played in multiple high school bands, and at one point gigged with as many as five or six different groups at a time. Eventually he came up with the idea that a strong YouTube presence could possibly be the most effective way to jump-start his goal of being a professional drummer. In his senior year of high school, rather than asking his parents to pay for him to go to his prom or take the band trip to Disney World, he suggested they purchase recording gear for his videos.

After graduation, Cooper attended Georgia State University, where he studied music business, played in the marching band and the rock ensemble—and set up his video gear. "What I discovered quickly," Cooper says, "is that, with visual media, it doesn't matter how good you are if you're super-boring to watch. I'm not saying that if you're boring to watch you need to change the way you play. But if you want to gain exposure through visual media, you have to have a highly visual aspect to your playing. I play pop music that people recognize, and then put my own spin on it while staying true to the main drum parts. I pay close attention to what new songs are hot, and I quickly become the first to do a drum cover of it, which generates more hits."

When he first launched his YouTube channel, Cooper was recording, editing, and posting a new video every day—this, while holding a job, attending classes, and playing in the marching band. "I didn't sleep much," the drummer says. "I stayed up until 3 a.m. answering questions, posting comments, and posting pictures on Instagram and other social media to get my name out there. I've released nearly a thousand videos on my channel in the past five years, mostly produced by me. I do get some assistance from my friend Zach Sturino, who helps when I want some moving-camera footage or more intricate camera work."

"I use GoPro cameras because they have an extremely wide angle and great video quality for the price," Cooper continues. "I can capture the entire kit from two feet away with the GoPro wide angle. It's important to capture the whole kit so the audience can see exactly what I'm playing and how I'm playing it. I also invested in a PreSonus interface and Logic recording software. I mix in Logic, then

export WAV files to Final Cut Pro X for final A/V editing. Overall, it's a very affordable system that produces a high-quality video. The idea is to be creative with the budget you have and make the most of what you've got until you can afford to upgrade. You can go back and look at my early videos and totally see the quality difference from where I started to where I am now. But it's taken a lot of hard work to get here."

Today Cooper is proud of the fact that he's one of the few drummers who have managed to make YouTube drumming a full-time job. "My goal is not only to inspire people through the playing and entertainment," he says, "but to show them that what I do is attainable for anyone. That's why I keep my recording process simple, to emphasize the fact that your success is not based on how expensive your gear is, but on the love and passion you put into it with the talent that you have. I also make a point of always showing my face, because people relate to a smile, which equates to having fun."

Cooper recalls receiving an email from one of his subscribers that he says changed his life and strengthened the idea in his mind that he was on the right path. A woman wrote to him about her daughter, who suffered from a physical condition that kept her in constant pain; she didn't smile or really enjoy her life—except when she was on her iPad, watching Cooper's YouTube videos. "If that was the only story that came out of all the work I put into this channel, that would be worth it to me," Cooper says. "But in fact there are thousands of stories from people who watch my videos and have been inspired to get behind a drumkit and play for the fun of it. So many drummers on YouTube seem out of reach because they're super-talented. I make it a point to keep my playing simple, encouraging, and easily reachable. Another reason I don't do insane prog-metal tunes, for instance, is because that's not who I am. I enjoy pop, rock, and alternative music, so that's what I play."

That's not to say that the young YouTube sensation doesn't have musical ambitions, though. "My next step is to create my own original music," Cooper explains. "Once my new studio is fully functional, I'll have the capability to produce high-quality recordings of my own music at home. The cool part of having a large audience will be reaping the rewards of owning my material. I won't have to reimburse a record label or play 150 shows as part of a record contract. I'm a family guy, and I have a wife and baby now. I have everything I have ever imagined in my life. I'm very blessed and completely satisfied with my life. But at some point I'd like to be able to hang a gold record on the wall in my studio next to my Gold Play Button. I can't wait for the day when my audience is playing drum covers to my original music. That would be totally awesome."

Story and photo by Mike Haid

Casey Cooper endorses Pearl drums, Zildjian cymbals, Vic Firth sticks, Remo heads, 64 Audio in-ear monitors, and DrumLite and Drumtacs products.



ON TOPIC



Deep Purple's Ian Paice

On More...or Less?

You do the job that is necessary for the track in front of you. The more years I have under my belt playing, the more I realize that less *is* more. If you don't need to play a drum fill, then maybe you shouldn't do it.

On Playing for the Mics

When you're in the studio, you're in an artificial environment. You're playing for a machine; you're not playing for an audience, which is a totally different thing. Your tempo has to be precise and feel good, because it's being captured for eternity.

On Time

We're all a product of what we see and hear going on around us. Today, if we hear music where the tempo slips, it sounds wrong to us. Thirty or forty years ago, we accepted that the music moved within itself. We've become conditioned to this machinelike tempo that popular music offers now.

On Working With Legendary Producer Bob Ezrin

Bob really lets me get on with it. He trusts me to do the job quickly and efficiently. Occasionally he'll suggest changing the drums for a different sound, but we didn't do that so much on our latest record, *Infinite*. I usually try working with what's in front of me and just tune in the snare drum to find what he's looking for.

On Deep Purple's Classic 1972 Live Album, *Made in Japan*

Made in Japan is not our most musically perfect recording. But it is a wonderful document of our brand, and [was made during] a very exciting time, when we were allowed to express ourselves and take as long as we wanted over solos and create bits of music rather than songs. It's probably the most raunchy, loudest jazz record in the world. And if you listen to some of the extended solos, that's not far from the truth.

On the Group's 2016 Induction Into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame

I don't really mind that it was long overdue. I just wish it happened a few years sooner so that our dearly departed friend Jon Lord could have been there to accept it with us. [The Deep Purple keyboardist died in 2012.] These awards start to smell of Hollywood, where people pat themselves on the back for doing their job. You should *always* do your job well. I don't think rock 'n' roll really has anything to do with that sort of culture. It was nice for our fans. For me, let's just say it hasn't changed my life.

On the Importance of the New

Whether the development of rock 'n' roll drumming was partly down to me, I very much doubt it. There are really no new things; there are just new ways of doing old things. Most of what I've done are old things that I tried updating a bit. The most important thing from my career, which I hear quite often when I meet a drummer, is that I'm the reason they started playing drums. That's pretty cool. More than anything else, *that* brings a smile to my face.

On the Long Goodbye Tour

The idea of shutting the door on fifty years of your life is pretty scary, especially if you don't want to do it. But there's the realization that, at our age, two or three years is a long time. When you are twenty-one years old, three or four years later you're still in your twenties and you're the same physical creature. We're not guaranteed that youthful longevity anymore. We know it's coming to an end, but we'll keep it going as long as we are physically able and mentally enjoying it. Once that changes, it will stop. But building up to a last date, a last gig in a defined city, that is an awful thought. I'd rather it happen one morning, when someone wakes up and says, "Okay, I don't want to do it anymore. That's it—bye, bye!" That's a lot easier to take.

Interview by Mike Haid

Ian Paice plays Pearl drums and Paiste cymbals and uses Promark sticks and Remo heads.





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1967

The Birth of Classic Rock Drumming

The seeds were sown in 1966. While jazz had dominated the attention of progressive music fans the previous decade, rock 'n' roll was now the place where the real avant-garde activity was going down. The Beatles' *Revolver*, the Beach Boys' *Pet Sounds*, Bob Dylan's *Blonde on Blonde*, and *Freak Out!* by Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention revealed that the palette contemporary artists were allowed to paint from was very wide indeed. In fact, it was wider than anyone would have dared imagine back in the '50s, when Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Fats Domino, and Elvis Presley showed the world how cool it sounded when you mashed together country, jazz, gospel, and rhythm and blues.

By '67 the mass awakening to the infinite artistic possibilities of rock 'n' roll was complete. Even the mythical birthplace of early rock seemed quaintly domestic when compared to the outer reaches of time and space that the new music was setting its sights on. The drummers woke up to the potential as early as anyone, and now the beats, fills, and emotional complexity that modern players were

capable of, which would have seemed unimaginable a year or two earlier, were blaring out of car stereos, transistor radios, and TV sets with startling regularity.

In this special *Modern Drummer* feature, we take a close look at that musical revolution, through the drummers' eyes. We sit with the Doors' John Densmore and Vanilla Fudge's Carmine Appice, who were right there in the thick of it fifty years ago as classic rock drumming was inventing itself. We talk with Hal Blaine, the studio legend who seemingly played on every other pop and rock hit of the day. We delve into the genre-defining recordings and drum setups of Cream's Ginger Baker, the Jimi Hendrix Experience's Mitch Mitchell, and the Who's Keith Moon. And we query contemporary thinkers like Steve Jordan about Ringo Starr's revolutionary drum parts on the Beatles' classic pair of 1967 releases, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and *Magical Mystery Tour*.

So strap yourself in, and let's begin our trip by visiting the scene where so many musical trends have begun, the world-famous recording studios of Hollywood, USA....



Hal Blaine

In 1967, at age thirty-eight, he was ruling the studios—and at the center of a pop music revolution.

by Dennis Diken

Hal Blaine drove the bus on records for Elvis Presley, Sam Cooke, the Byrds, Frank Sinatra, Nancy Sinatra, the Beach Boys, Johnny Rivers, Sonny & Cher, Jan & Dean, the Mamas & the Papas, Gary Lewis & the Playboys, Dean Martin, Petula Clark, and the Grass Roots...to name but a few. And his seismic sonic boom laid the foundation for Phil Spector's "Wall of Sound." By the end of 1966 he'd nailed scores of chartbusters. Along with Earl Palmer, he was one of the chief engines of the Wrecking Crew, a name Blaine himself coined for a cadre of Los Angeles studio wizards who navigated the sea of trends in the kaleidoscopic pop world of the '60s and conjured sounds that are still fresh and vital in the twenty-first century.

Popular music was changing in 1967. That June, the Beatles released *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, often hailed as the record

that elevated the long-player to an art form. A year before, Blaine and his fellow maestros helped Brian Wilson express his artistic vision for a work that today is considered by many to be as iconic as *Sgt. Pepper*. In fact, Beatles producer George Martin later said *Sgt. Pepper* wouldn't have existed had the Fab's not first heard the Beach Boys' 1966 masterpiece, *Pet Sounds*.

The Doors would "try to set the night on fire." Jefferson Airplane sang of "hookah-smoking caterpillars." The Grateful Dead, Cream, and other bands were jamming ad infinitum. But as the pop world was freaking out in 1967, Blaine was able to do his own thing. "These groups never bothered me," Hal says today. "They were their own identities. They played their hits and misses. When producers hired me for my sound and expertise, they'd rarely ask me to be

a Ringo, a Charlie Watts, or a Keith Moon. And when a new producer came along and gave me instructions to 'Try the intro the way the Beach Boys did something,' which was me anyway, or they would say, 'Let's do the bridge like the Rolling Stones and an ending like whoever had a hit record,' I would gently say, 'We could sure do that for you, but why not let us make a record for your artist that will make other producers say, "I want that sound that you did on this or that hit record"?' It usually worked."

Blaine was all over the place in '67. Literally. He routinely banged around United, Western, Gold Star, RCA, and other L.A. studios, but also flew to New York City to cut some sessions for Simon & Garfunkel's celebrated *Bookends* LP.

Then there was the Monterey Pop Festival in June, which featured historic appearances

by Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, Otis Redding, and a slew of the new self-contained groups that were turning on the world. Blaine was there as the house drummer/bandleader for any artists who needed a sticksman. Among them were Laura Nyro, the Mamas & the Papas, Scott McKenzie, and Johnny Rivers.

One band that “broke it up” at Monterey was the Who. The group’s unhinged drummer studied Blaine’s extroverted style and blasted it into a new stratosphere. Hal remembers, “I met Keith Moon at Monterey. He was one of my biggest fans. I thought he was great! He was being an actor; he was all theatricals. And at the finale, when they started smashing everything... we’d never witnessed that in the studio, obviously. [But] in interviews Keith would say, ‘When I grow up I want to be like Hal Blaine.’”

Blaine’s drumming could also be found on all reaches of the Hot 100—usually near the top. It took skill, talent, and, perhaps most important, a deep sense of caring to make a successful, enduring piece of music. Blaine explains, “I’d usually ask, ‘What is a song?’ It’s a story. If you’re blasting on the drums at one particular loudness because you feel that it’s your record, you’re wrong. The songs were wonderful, and I personally listened to every new song in order to examine my motivation. I was like a painter as a drummer

accompanist. I used my drumsticks sort of like a painter’s brushes. I filled in spaces and colored my work according to that given story.”

The examples of Blaine’s artistry in 1967 are multifold. His brisk, crisp beat grounds the Association’s number-one hit “Windy,” and his gentle brushwork graces the group’s “Never My Love,” a number-two *Billboard* smash and BMI’s second-most-played song on radio and television of the twentieth century. Blaine grabbed his second Grammy for Record of the Year in ‘67 with Frank Sinatra’s “Strangers in the Night” (recorded in 1966). His third was the Fifth Dimension’s airy 1967 hit “Up, Up and Away.” Amazingly, he won this award for six consecutive years.

Scott McKenzie’s “San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair)” served as an unofficial anthem for the Summer of Love and showcases the cool, clean bass work of Joe Osborn, arguably Blaine’s main partner in crime in ‘67. Together they fashioned a distinctive, hit-making sound.

Everybody loved Hal. He had a ready sense of humor that he used to diffuse tense moments in the studio, and he consistently divined the sweet spot. Plus he invented the coolest, most musical fills, making for percussive hooks that upped the appeal of a track. Johnny Rivers’ “Summer Rain,”

with trademark Blaine dynamics and lyrical accents, is a shining example. And check out the Mamas & the Papas’ “Dedicated to the One I Love” and their overlooked take on Rogers and Hart’s “Glad to Be Unhappy,” where Blaine playfully struts his stuff with tight, controlled abandon. “Let’s face it,” Hal chuckles, “drummers are all basically showoffs looking for recognition!”

Space just does not allow a thorough discussion of Blaine’s myriad significant records of ‘67. But here’s a few more anyway: Love’s classic *Forever Changes*, the radical-grooved “Mary, Mary” by the Monkees (later sampled by Run-D.M.C. and others), and pieces for the Beach Boys’ fabled epic *SMILE*. Look up the rest—you’ll be amazed.

In fact, Blaine did make a statement that decidedly reflected the vibe of ‘67, with *Psychedelic Percussion*, one of his three solo albums on the Dunhill label. The original liner notes tout it as “a mind excursion of rare beauty,” and titles include “Love-In (December),” “Hallucinations (April),” and “Flower Society (May).” Blaine plays wiggly solos while Emil Richards and Gary Coleman smack Siamese gongs, wobble boards, a U.S. Navy gas alarm, tubular chimes, and Tahitian Pooee Lee sticks, and electronica mavens Paul Beaver and Mike Lang wax trippingly with keyboard sounds extraordinaire.

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Hal Blaine

"My idea was to get several of the great percussionists that I was working with a lot to go into the studio," Blaine recalls. "I'd kick off a tempo and the guys would all come in, just pure noise. Not really a part of any psychedelic percussion, but it worked. We all laughed and had a ball. I was the guy who was always coming up with weird ideas to be different."

By the end of 1967, Blaine, along with his tech, Rick Foucher, was finalizing an innovative "monster kit" that expanded on his four-piece blue-sparkle Ludwig set

by adding custom-made, single-headed, fiberglass toms. Blaine scholar John Sheridan explains, "The concept was an octave of drums. He tuned his four lower concert toms to the opening four-note melody of 'I Got Rhythm,' starting with largest one—16" to 14" to 13" to 12"—then tuning the 10", 8", and 6" to the appropriate intervals above."

"Around the kit" fills now took on a new meaning, with a signature sound that marked Blaine's career throughout the coming years. The idea had been brewing since the late '50s, when he began detuning

timbales to add new weapons to his arsenal. "I started developing my Octoplus setup," Blaine says, "because, being a musically trained individual, I wanted more drums for more musical ideas—and more showoff stuff! There are other drummers out there who are trying to take credit for my Octoplus setup. I think the general drum industry knows that my rack setup was my design."

What was it like to be Hal Blaine in 1967? "Arlyn's Answering Service kept my work book/calendar," he says. "I typically got up at 6 A.M. to make an 8 A.M. downbeat in the studio. I was usually booked up to three months in advance. Producers and artists came from all over the planet to record, because we had so many hit records on the charts in those days."

"I usually worked at least three major union sessions a day," Blaine continues, "sometimes seven days a week. In between these three-hour sessions I would often do an overdub for someone next door or across the street while on a five- or ten-minute break. Hence, more sessions on the contract—up to seven in one day! Rick was always one setup in front of me and tearing down a setup that I had just finished. He was the man that saw to it that I was always on time for a session. Guitarist Tommy Tedesco and I often would lie down in front of our instruments when we finished a session at three in the morning, and then we had an 8 A.M. call in the same studio. They'd wake us with coffee, and we were ready to hit the bathroom and start recording. Those were all wonderful and amazing days and nights."

And the beat went on. Blaine would record and tour for decades to come, racking up a total of forty number-one singles and 150 top tens before semi-retiring, a concept that seems abstract to the Rock and Roll Hall of Famer who's pushing ninety. In 2013 he reunited with guys from the Wrecking Crew for a fellow member's final recording session. "I just received my eighth Grammy winning Record of the Year, Glen Campbell's 'I'm Not Gonna Miss You,' all of these years later. It was just part of my fourth Oscar-winning soundtrack. I'm still in shock." And in 2017 Blaine was on the kit with Ronnie Spector at a special NAMM Show event to reprise his iconic groove from the Ronettes' "Be My Baby."

Blaine's massive discography boasts more than 35,000 recorded tracks, including nearly 6,000 singles, LP cuts, jingles, TV themes, and film scores. How does he account for such greatness? "Attitude meant a lot," Hal says. "I used to tell the guys, 'If you smile, you stay around for a while. If you pout, you're out!'"

Now *that's* a groovy mantra.

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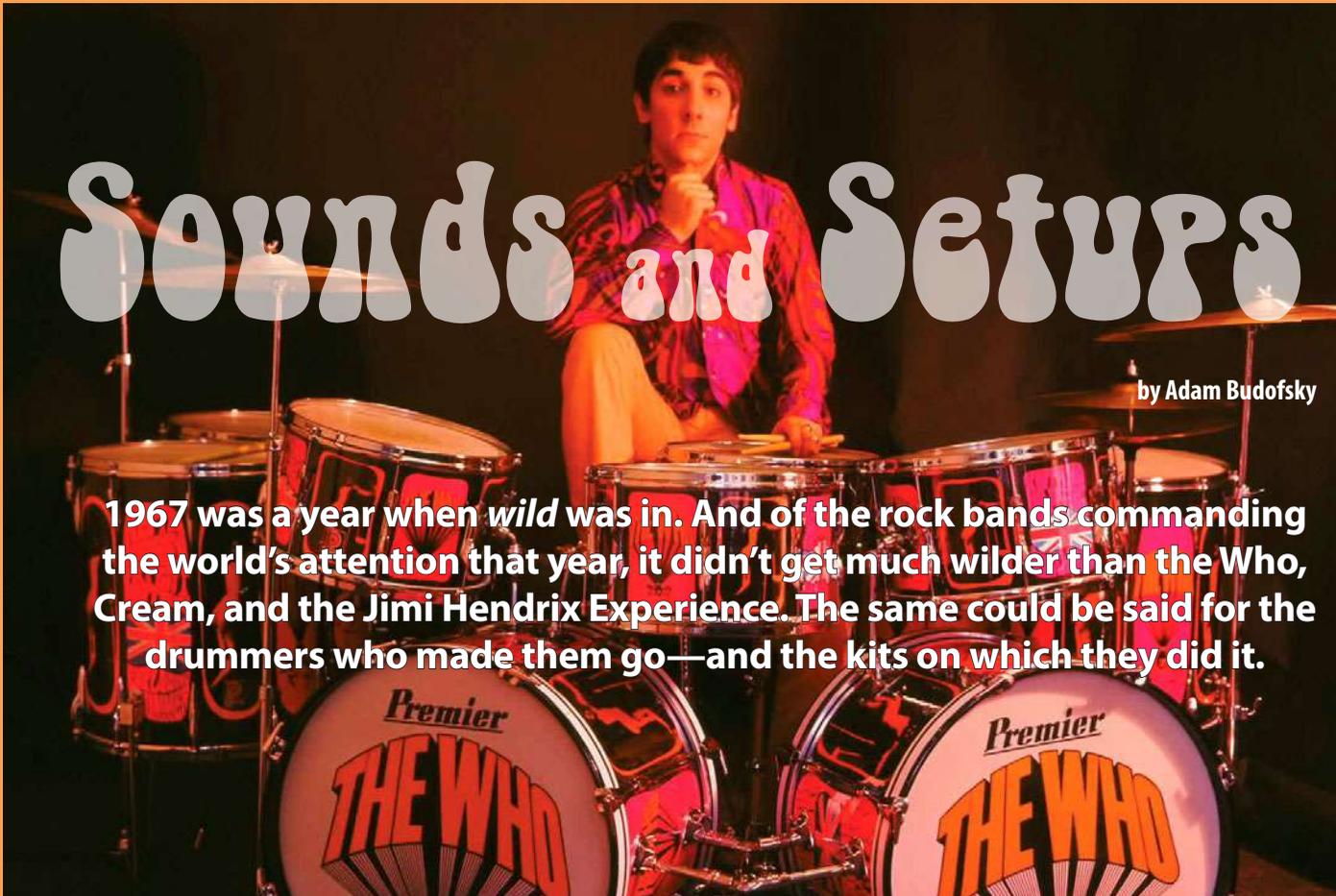


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Sounds and Setups

by Adam Budofsky

1967 was a year when *wild* was in. And of the rock bands commanding the world's attention that year, it didn't get much wilder than the Who, Cream, and the Jimi Hendrix Experience. The same could be said for the drummers who made them go—and the kits on which they did it.



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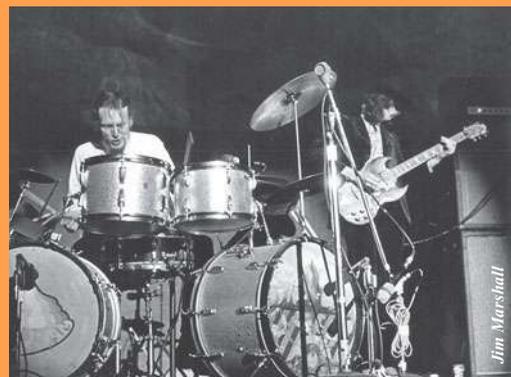
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Ginger Baker

Sounds

Like most of its peers in the rapidly maturing London rock 'n' roll scene, in 1967 Cream was hurtling full-throttle down the psychedelic highway. On *Disraeli Gears*, which was recorded quickly in May at New York City's Atlantic Studios, drummer Ginger Baker, bassist Jack Bruce, and guitarist Eric Clapton seemed a bit looser and freakier than on their 1966 debut, *Fresh Cream*. Take the opening number, "Strange Brew," a slinky cautionary tale of "a witch of trouble in electric blue." While Baker wisely ignored the urge to slay with cleverness at every turn, his loping, almost exotic feel perfectly captured the hazy, experimental mood of the day.

Track two, "Sunshine of Your Love," is no less heavy. "Jack introduced the riff," Baker told his daughter Nettie for his 2010 autobiography, *Hellraiser*, "and I famously said, 'It's awful! We need to slow it down.' So I added a backwards drum beat on the riff instead of the normal 2 and 4 on the snare, and it immediately became, *Wow!*" "Sunshine" is an absolute triumph of approach. Any other drum orchestration would just seem... lame.



Other drumming highlights on *Disraeli Gears* are "Tales of Brave Ulysses," featuring lots of classic tom fills throughout the verses; "SWLABR," with its halting snare/bass injection after the first bridge (1:16); and the slow 12/8 cut "We're Going Wrong," where Ginger mostly keeps to circular descending tom runs and a menacing hi-hat chicking out the time. It's a reminder that, among many other things, he's a master at setting a tone.



Setup

Baker's thundering, attack-heavy drum sound in '67 was achieved on a Ludwig silver sparkle kit. His iconic arrangement featured a 20" bass drum on his right foot and a 22" on his left ("I had Ludwig cut down their shells by 3"). Ginger told *MD* in September 1990, flat-angled 8x12 and 9x13 rack toms often struck with rimshots, and 14x14 and 14x16 floor toms. Baker's favorite snare at the time was a 1940s-era Leedy wood-shell model. His cymbals included a 22" riveted ride and 14" hi-hats that he got from Zildjian the year before. "My happiest memories [from the time] were of a visit to the company's factory," Baker said, "where I chose the cymbals that I still use today." And in a March 1983 feature, he told *MD* that he was using the same Martin Fleetfoot bass drum pedals that he'd been playing for twenty years. Long since discontinued, the pedals required that Ginger periodically retrofit them with new leather straps.

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Keith Moon

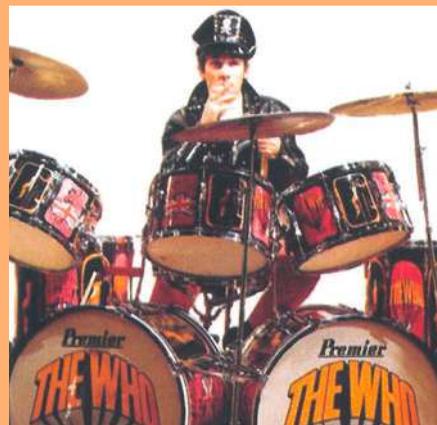
Sounds

The Who's 1967 album, *Sell Out*, includes several of the group's very best early tracks, including one of drummer Keith Moon's most-loved performances. The concept album before the concept album ('68's historic *Tommy*), *Sell Out* is presented as an hour-or-so slice of commercial radio, placing a number of real and imagined product jingles between the songs. Included among those is one for Keith Moon's drum supplier of choice, on which we hear him ripping across the tubs for fifteen seconds as the rest of the band shouts, "Premier drums! Premier drums!" over and over. Fun, audacious, and rocking—the Who, and Keith, in a nutshell.

Many of the tracks on *Sell Out* feature two distinct drum or percussion tracks, panned hard left and right, which serves to add a cinematic spaciousness and symphonic heft. Among the cuts benefiting from this are "Mary Anne With the Shaky Hand," on which we hear guiro and castanets; "Our Love Was," with its low tom overdub (or is that a timpani?) in the right channel; and "Silas Stingy," with its left-channel tom rolls and right-channel cymbal trills.

By far the most famous song on *Sell Out* is "I Can See for Miles," which again features double-tracked drums. It's rightly considered one of Moon's most timeless efforts. Eschewing an easy beat throughout, Keith

instead offers sinister, stuttering snare rolls during the paranoia-soaked verses, and fully pounds them home in the triumphant choruses. It's a glorious performance, the kind that made so many of us fall in love with his playing over the years.



Setup

One track released by the Who in 1967 but not present on the *Sell Out* LP is "Pictures of Lily," which came out on a 7" in April in the U.K. and in June in the U.S. (*Sell Out* dropped in December.) The song is significant not only because it was the Who's seventh straight successful single, but because it inspired Moon's most famous drumset—in fact, one of the most identifiable instruments in rock history. Inscribed with the words "Keith Moon, Patent Exploding British Drummer" and wrapped in a series of pop-art-style pictures of the song's real-life subject, actress Lily Langtry, the setup, which Premier made several versions of and later retrofitted for strength, was used from mid-'67 to late '68.

The kit featured two 14x22 bass drums (secured to each other with metal bracings), three 8x14 toms, three floor toms—one 16x16 and two 18x16—and a 5.5x14 steel snare. Shells were made of birch, and hardware included Gretsch fittings, Rogers Swiv-o-Matic tom holders, and Premier 250 bass drum pedals and LokFast stands. Cymbals—generally 18" and 20" crash/rides and (rarely used) 14" hi-hats—were either Paiste or Zildjian. While no complete version of the set exists today, individual pieces have landed in places like the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. And in 2006 Premier issued the Spirit of Lily tribute set, which replicated the original artwork on a kit with modern shell and hardware construction.



Mitch Mitchell

Sounds

Contrasting Ginger Baker's earthy feel and Keith Moon's fiery delivery is Mitch Mitchell's airy, gravity-defying style. Mitchell's drumming helped Jimi Hendrix's fiercely out-there guitar playing take flight, and his influence can be heard in the work of many popular players who came after him, from Chicago's Danny Seraphine to the Red Hot Chili Peppers' Chad Smith to Rival Sons' Michael Miley. As famed producer Eddie Kramer put it in *Modern Drummer's* 2009 tribute to Mitchell, who had passed away the previous November, "There were other drummers who auditioned for the job [of backing Hendrix], and certainly there were others who were capable. But I don't think any of them fit the bill in the true sense that Mitch did. He was able to sense where Jimi was going and keep up with him and challenge him."

Are You Experienced, released in May of '67, contains a bevy of the Jimi Hendrix Experience's best-known songs. (American and British versions initially differed significantly in song choice and running order, but current digital releases contain the totality of tracks.) "Manic Depression," a medium-fast 3/4 number, finds an active Mitchell tumbling gleefully through the changes. "May This Be Love" and "The Wind Cries Mary" support Hendrix's sensitive side with dancing toms and purring cymbal tings. (Dig how Mitch judiciously double-times the ride in spots.) The eminently funky "Fire" recalls Bernard Purdie in its topsy-turvy drum breaks. And "Third Stone From the Sun" finds Mitchell dabbling in an almost pure bebop mode. Throughout, somehow, Mitch's personality consistently comes to the fore, raising the bar for what subsequent generations of rock drummers would have to achieve if they were to be recognized for reaching some level of greatness.



Setup

Though Mitchell would be seen playing various setups with Hendrix until the guitarist's death in 1970, including double bass kits, his classic 1967 arrangement was a five-piece Ludwig silver sparkle outfit with a 9x13 tom, two 16x16 floor toms, a 22" bass drum, and a 5x14 Supraphonic snare, topped with Zildjian cymbals.



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On Ringo Starr

The Shock of the New

Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, the Beatles' landmark 1967 album, put Ringo Starr front and center as "the one and only Billy Shears," the fictitious character who delivers the second track, John Lennon and Paul's McCartney's "With a Little Help From My Friends." It's a song that to this day brings audiences to their feet when it's performed on tour by Ringo and His All-Starr Band.

The *real* lasting power of the drummer's work that year, however, came in the form of the fiercely creative and wholly unique drum parts Ringo concocted for the most ambitious productions of the band's historic recording career. Music, and drumming, have never been quite the same since.

by Billy Amendola

Ringo Starr turned twenty-seven in 1967, and had recently ended four frantic years touring, recording, and making public appearances with the most popular band on the planet. The former Richard Starkey had married his childhood sweetheart, Maureen Cox, two years earlier, and in August the couple announced the arrival of their second son, Jason. (Zac, now the drummer with the Who, was born in 1965, and daughter Lee arrived in '70.) The same month Jason was born, the Beatles suffered the loss of their manager, Brian Epstein. Ringo became more interested in photography that year, while the group filmed the *Magical Mystery Tour* movie. Recording technology would also play a part in his artistic development in '67, as the Beatles entered a period of pioneering

studio work that would set the standard for the way the world would hear music.

Two pivotal Beatles albums came out in 1967: *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, released in June, and *Magical Mystery Tour*, a companion piece to the group's third feature film, which hit the shelves in November. In the ensuing years, the ever-joking Ringo would tell reporters that his best memory of recording *Sgt. Pepper* was learning to play chess, and in 1997 he told *Modern Drummer* that a highlight was playing the piano chord at the end of "A Day in the Life." When pressed, though, he said, "I felt the drums [on "A Day in the Life"] were as colorful as the song and the guitars." This echoes a view that many others have expressed, and that the top drummers we spoke to for this story support: 1967 was the

year when the Beatles announced to all the world the concept of using the recording studio as an instrument, and Ringo's drums were no less a part of this sonic revolution than the vocals and guitars of John, Paul, and George, or the myriad other sounds the group employed in its startlingly vivid new music.

Today the Beatles' eighth studio release is widely considered, by critics, fans, and musicians alike, "the greatest album of all time." Recorded at Abbey Road Studios on EMI's Studer J37 four-track machines, and employing copious bouncing and overdub effects, the album was the most successful marriage of avant-garde and pop elements to date. The approach, applied to some of the Beatles' most enduring songs, perfectly captured the blooming psychedelic culture



Calderstone Production LTD, Universal Music Group

of the day, and the album stayed at the top of the charts for twenty-seven weeks in the United Kingdom and fifteen in the United States. At the tenth annual Grammy Awards, *Sgt. Pepper* won in the categories of Best Album Cover, Best Engineered Recording, and Best Contemporary Album. It also took Album of the Year—the first rock LP to ever receive the honor.

Sgt. Pepper became the soundtrack to 1967's "Summer of Love." A landmark among the Beatles' LPs and beyond, it was the first album of theirs to be issued simultaneously worldwide and the first on which the songs and their order of appearance were exactly the same for the U.K. and U.S. versions. It was also the most expensive album package of its time, featuring a gatefold cover designed by Peter Blake and Jann

Haworth, printed lyrics, cardboard cutouts of Sgt. Pepper Band costume elements, and, on the cover, an iconic collage of historical characters. This year the album, which has sold more than 35 million copies worldwide, was remastered and reissued as a special fiftieth-anniversary edition.

With all the attention paid to *Sgt. Pepper*, it's easy to forget that the Beatles unleashed *Magical Mystery Tour* before the year was out as well. Continuing the mind-bending sonic and visual elements of its predecessor, the album presented another remarkable collection of out-there pop, from the carnival-like title track and "Hello Goodbye" to the woozy dream-state soundtracks "Flying" and "Blue Jay Way" to the otherworldly pop confections that made up the famous "double A-side," recorded during

the *Pepper* sessions, of "Strawberry Fields Forever" and "Penny Lane." Throughout these tracks and those on *Sgt. Pepper*, Starr was very much the equal to his relentlessly creative bandmates, rising to the occasion with exploratory drum arrangements that gave little heed to the ways things used to be done and offered tons of evidence that the drums could be as revolutionary as any other music-making tool.

And to be sure, drummers—even those working in other genres—were paying close attention to Ringo's new moves, with lasting effects that fed their own recordings for decades to come. *MD* asked several of those world-famous musicians to describe the impact that Ringo's drumming had on them and to explain just how it represented the shock of the new.

Jim Keltner

“Animal instinct and a deep, natural feel”

In 1967, besides listening to Miles and Coltrane, the songs that hit me by the Beatles were “Strawberry Fields,” with that beautifully compressed and limited sound on Ringo’s drums, and the unusual prettiness of “Penny Lane.” “Within You Without You,” from *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, was so cool because it had nothing to do with pop music but the vibe was so good it made its way onto a Beatles album. One of my absolute favorites to this day is “All You Need Is Love,” from *Magical Mystery Tour*. It still gets to me every time I hear it. The sound and feel of the song are absolutely perfect in every way.

The chemistry between those four guys was monumental! When they stopped touring they really started to understand what they could do in the studio. They

started making records with sounds that no one had ever heard before in pop music. They got the world’s attention big time with their songwriting, singing, playing, and point of view. Ringo had his work cut out for him, but he was always ready for the challenge. His playing and those songs will remain timeless.

They were really blessed to have Ringo in the band. He upped their game when he came in. When I first met him and we started talking, I would ask him about certain fills and what he was thinking. He told me, “I just blacked out when I played the fills.” And that’s when he told me he starts all his fills with his left hand. His playing on “Strawberry Fields” is a perfect balance between carelessness and great attention to detail. And to try and copy that

or make it happen with your own playing is impossible.

In the very early days, Ringo was cooler than everyone else in the neighborhood. (This was told to me by George, John, and Paul.) They all wanted to be like him. He was the oldest, had more experience, had a car, was funny, and had cool hair. He wasn’t a schooled player, and he didn’t realize what he was creating technically—it was total animal instinct and a desire to swing in the way he remembered from what he heard on the Glenn Miller, Sarah Vaughan, and Little Richard records his stepdad, Harry, played around the house. Everything Ringo played had such great, deep natural feel. He is the epitome of a feel-good drummer, with just the right amount of chops needed!

WHERE
WERE
YOU IN '67?



Jim Keltner with
the Afro Blues
Quintet Plus One,
April '67

I was twenty-five years old in 1967, and back playing jazz—after being fired from Gary Lewis and the Playboys in 1966. I learned a serious life lesson. I let my young ego get in the way. I became full of myself. I went from doing all these cool gigs with Gary and playing on his hit album *She’s Just My Style*, making decent money, feeling like a star. I was driving around L.A. in my Corvette, listening to myself on the radio. But soon after that I was standing on the unemployment line. It was a big wakeup call. The real highlight of 1967, though, was the birth of our beautiful daughter, Jennifer Lee.

In '67 I was doing gigs with Gabor Szabo around L.A. and up in San Francisco and Sausalito. And I was in a band with some great players called the Afro Blues Quintet Plus One. We played all over L.A. Then

my best friend and genius bass player, Albert Stinson, got me the gig with John Handy up in San Francisco at a club called the Both/And. Our good friend Bobby Hutcherson was in the band, so it was truly a dream gig for me. A real bona fide jazz gig! Jack DeJohnette and I would hang out for the after-hours jam and watch John Handy’s drummer, the great Terry Clarke, play. He was Canadian, and his work visa had expired. That’s how I got the gig.

After that I joined a band called MC2. We were signed to Warner Bros. Records. That was when I met and got to watch session drummer Jim Gordon up close playing on one of their songs. He was so good and had a big effect on me and made me want to do more recording.

Steve Jordan

Early on, he recognized that Ringo was opening doors that we'd *all* want to walk through.

I was a kid in 1967, but I had a vast record collection. The unique thing about Ringo's drumming from that period really started in '66 with *Revolver* and when they stopped touring. He was already laying the foundation for a new, groundbreaking approach.

There was no doubt that Ringo was listening to his influences, and that's what came out in his playing. And this is when they, as a complete group, started changing the landscape of recording. The songs they were writing really dictated his new style of playing and what the drums did. It wasn't solely based on the Mersey beat anymore, with that open hi-hat and driving beat, which had been the hallmark of their sound. That was the major change in Ringo's drumming. And then you add the sonic experimentation with the drums, which was also pioneering. In the recording process they now used compression, limiting, phasing, and backward recording. And then there was the use of the tea towels on his drums. So you combine those elements and you have sounds and playing that no one had ever heard before. All of this was brand new.

For anyone who'd ever questioned Ringo's playing before, this [period] really highlighted his or her ignorance about the value of his playing and what his contribution was to the greatest band of all time. The drums are so prominent on *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and *Magical Mystery Tour*—very dominant. It was clear to me, and I believe everyone else, that it was absurd to not understand his importance.

Let's go through some of the tracks on those albums. With the kick-off title track of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, you have the beginning of the driving/riding of the tom-tom—so different because there's no hi-hat until later on in the tune. It sets up the album, like, *Okay, this is going to be different from anything else*. Then into "With a Little Help From My Friends," you have this great snare sound, with the tambourine taking the place of the hi-hat. And you have those huge toms.

On "Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds," once again there was compression on the toms. This is where he adds his parts to the composition to fit the dictation of the song—though still sounding and feeling very natural and improvised. However, his fills were never "squared off," straight 8th notes; the fills were always swinging. Ringo comes from that skiffle/shuffle vibe, and the man can swing with the best of them—listen to "Getting Better."

"Fixing a Hole," that's a wacky and fun performance. "Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite," that big tea-towel sound—again, very dominant [and informed by] the songwriting. He plays that carnival, marching band thing. It's very spot-on for the song.

One of my favorite drum tracks of all time is "Lovely Rita." I just love the way he plays on that song—and those fills, just fantastic. "Good Morning, Good Morning," the big snare sound is brilliant, and his fills are interjecting hooks. That's another thing about Ringo's drumming in general—all his drum parts had hooks. Then the reprise of "Sgt. Pepper," that beat comes in, just him, like a breath of fresh air. Then he hits that groove that's familiar. And those fills are amazing—and,

again, that swing. Then "A Day in the Life," which really highlights the inventive and dramatic drum fills that punctuate the lyrics.

These recordings broke barriers of how things were recorded. No one had ever heard anything like them before. And it changed the way every band played and recorded from that point on. Same with "Strawberry Fields," which was the single recorded during the making of the *Sgt. Pepper* album. Ringo was always playing for the sake of the song and not at all for the chops. He was driven by a different desire, and that's why the drums are so prominent in those mixes. Those fills and drum parts all *meant* something. It was all musical hooks. Being in

a tight-knit band is like being in a perfect marriage. You become so close that you can finish each other's sentences. And that's how he played a song written by John, Paul, or George. And it became very natural. No one else would have played those songs like that.

On the *Magical Mystery Tour* album, the song "Flying" is another of my favorite tracks of all time. When I was a kid, I loved that song so much, I would listen to it over and over. The groove is so sweet and the pocket is wonderful and shows how much they loved the blues. On "Blue Jay Way," you have the phase-shifter thing going on the drums—big fills, really the start of the defined psychedelic drum sound. On "Your Mother Should Know," that was the closest thing you wanted to hear in those two years that had that skiffle/shuffle groove of the earlier days. Then we have "I Am the Walrus," with that legendary

opening fill. Again, the song dictates the part. And the groove is great!

On "Hello Goodbye" he's riding the toms on the chorus, with more trademark Ringo fills with the tea towels. On "Penny Lane," that song *really* dictated what he played. "Baby You're a Rich Man," here again, sonically, you have the tea towels—which by now was the norm. That one is very loose and lot of fun. "All You Need Is Love"—I'd always wished the drums were a bit louder in the mix. The bass really drives that one. When they did it live for that satellite TV show, Ringo's playing along to the TV track and that's always tricky—even these days.

The thing I'd like people to take away from this is that Ringo's playing in 1966/67 went to another level of drumming, with a new approach and style that you could hear on the radio. Up until then, you didn't really hear that amount of drumming on AM radio. It was always the beat being the most important thing, but you didn't have those melodic and musical drum fills that punctuated the music. Can you imagine anyone else coming up and playing those parts? I can't! His drumming had purpose. He always played the song first. And then you add all the new sounds and new ways of recording with the experimentation at its highest peak. It's amazing that, still to this day, it's just as important and relevant as it was fifty years ago. *That* says it all.



Rich Pagano

Notes from two decades of studying Ringo under the microscope

As we know, the Beatles had quit touring by 1967 and for the most part had locked themselves in Studio Two at Abbey Road. With touring and its headaches behind them, the band was now able to focus on deeper levels of songwriting and presentation. The biggest change on *Sgt. Pepper* and *Magical Mystery Tour* from previous recordings is the number of ideas that were being crammed into the

production, occasionally to the detriment of Ringo's drum sound but more importantly to create a broad landscape.

Reductions of tracks from one multitrack machine to another usually meant that the first instruments recorded were going to be squashed in the transfers. For this reason, the drums can sometimes be a bit low in the mix or less of a pulse, with later percussion overdubs sometimes louder than the

drums themselves. Having said that, this also created a dreamy bed of waves of groove and crazy percussion. An example would be the song "Magical Mystery Tour," with its glistening, airy drums and improvised cowbell overdubs.

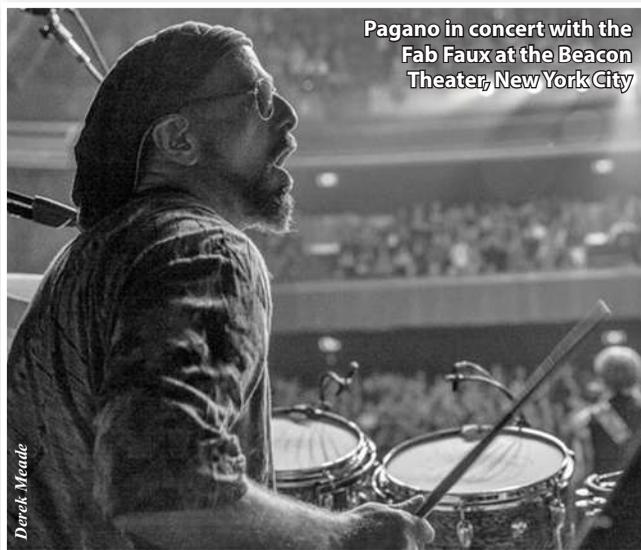
Another example of this is the song "It's All Too Much," which was recorded in '67 but not released until '68, on *Yellow Submarine*. It's a freight-train haze of drums and percussion that creates a third entity, complete with the drum tracks having been placed in backwards at the last chorus (snare on 1 and 3). This was the blueprint for a new way to paint—and it was about color more than pulse. Artists like Pink Floyd, the Rolling Stones, and Jimi Hendrix took on this method soon after.

Ringo was marking new territory with his sonic and playing approach in other ways. At the time, most drummers were still tuning their kits in a jazz fashion, with a high pitch to cut through. On songs like "A Day in the Life" and "Lovely Rita," the toms were purposely

tuned way down to sound like kettle drums. Levon Helm noted that he tuned his toms low for the Band's "The Weight" after hearing "A Day in the Life." Beatles engineer Geoff Emerick relayed that this is the period where he brought the microphones closer to the drums and cymbals in an attempt to maximize the tone. The result was a punchier sound on some songs, like the snare on "Baby You're a Rich Man" and the crisp overall sound of "Hello Goodbye."

There was also extreme experimentation, like the double drumkit tracks on "Fixing a Hole," the snare overdubbing on "I Am the Walrus," and the flanging techniques, invented in Beatles sessions, on "Blue Jay Way."

Ringo was now also becoming an extreme arranger with his parts. The kick/hat-to-tom pulses on "Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite" is perfection and creates a carnival-act image. With his trademark groove, innovative arrangements, and brand-new sonics, Ringo Starr opened the door once again to a higher level of creativity.



Pagano in concert with the Fab Faux at the Beacon Theater, New York City

Liberty DeVitto

Lesson learned: Drums are as important as guitars!

On 1967's "Strawberry Fields Forever"/"Penny Lane" single and the *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and *Magical Mystery Tour* albums, the Beatles were doing more complicated and orchestrated music, as well as experimenting more with sound. To fit in, Ringo's drums became part of the orchestra. The miking of his drums was different, and he started placing tea towels on his drums for a flatter sound. Not only was he keeping time, he was now creating different parts for the intro, verse, chorus, and bridge of the song—his parts changed with the mood changes in the song. On "A Day in the Life" and "Strawberry Fields," his drums

were the instrument that answered the vocals, whereas before the release of *Sgt. Pepper*, it was normal to hear guitar or keys doing the answering. This took the mind of a thinking drummer. When the melody changed, so did Ringo's drum part. To change a Ringo drum part in a Beatles arrangement would be like changing the chords to the song.



Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band was released on June 1, 1967, and I turned seventeen on August 8. I was playing with the New Rock Workshop, and I met Billy Joel that year as well as my bandmates, guitarist Russell Javors and the late bassist Doug Stegmeyer. I also met Carmine Appice and Vanilla Fudge, and I jammed with Fudge guitarist Vinnie Martell.

Denny Seiwell

Recognizing Ringo's genius, the jazzer was unknowingly preparing for his own classic work with Paul McCartney.

I was always a fan of Ringo's drumming, and I must say that it influenced me coming from the world of jazz to the world of pop and rock. Those days were extremely busy in the studio world, and I didn't get much time to listen to pop music, but you couldn't avoid hearing the Beatles. Ringo's drumming on *Sgt. Pepper* was simply breathtaking. His feel on "Getting Better" and the use of the hi-hat breaking up his patterns was groundbreaking. "Lovely Rita" was also one of my favorites, as well as his iconic drum fills on "A Day in the Life," where he played the muted toms within the sparseness of his parts, which seem to fit the songs so perfectly.

Two of my favorites on the *Magical Mystery Tour* album were "Hello Goodbye," where his fills were so musical, and again, his use of the toms so distinct and stylistically Ringo. And when I first heard "Strawberry Fields," I understood what a creative genius Ringo was in crafting drum parts that were perfect for each song. Ringo has influenced drumming as much as any musician has throughout time.



I was just starting my career in 1967. I got home from my last position in the navy band after being in the south of France, and I landed a gig in New York in the Catskills. I was in a band that played with a singer/dance team and a comedian, six nights a week. It was great training to play with New York musicians—challenging music every night. One night a bass



player named Russ Savakus filled in for our regular bassist, and he turned out to be a contractor for recording studios in New York City. After working together, he suggested that I come into the city and he'd help get me started in session work. I was also playing with a piano player named

Dave Frishberg, who told me of an opening at New York's famed jazz club the Half Note. I went down to sit in with Al Cohn and Zoot Sims, and I got that gig and became the house drummer for about a year and a half. During that time session work became steadier, and I did my first recording with J.J. Johnson and Kai Winding.

Bernard Purdie

In 1967 I had just recorded my first solo album, *Soul Drums*,

on Columbia-Date Records.

By this time I was producing Peaches & Herb



and Sly and the Family Stone for the label as well. My manager at that time was Dave Kapralik, the vice president of Columbia Records and also the manager of Peaches & Herb and Sly and the Family Stone. It was a fortunate time for me. I was the hottest drummer in [New York City] and was doing twelve to fifteen recordings a week.

Chad Smith

Ringo taught the future Chili Pepper that the song was king, and commitment is the law.

In that great musical year of 1967, I was six years old; I could barely read and write, but even at that young age I knew I liked music, and I knew that if it had a good beat I liked it even more. Back then we got our music either from the Detroit AM stations on our transistor radios or in our parents' car, or from a record on the stereo. They would play Marvin Gaye, Johnny Cash, the Beach Boys, James Brown, and the Beatles all in one block of time. We were exposed to a lot of different styles, and from the jump I enjoyed the music that rocked.

The Beatles were here, there, and everywhere back then. You couldn't miss 'em. My sister and brother listened to them, and it seemed like they were *always* on the radio. Being that young, I don't specifically remember the days *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* or *Magical Mystery Tour* came out—I just remember the music was

changing, and those two records probably had more to do with that change than anything else. The bar was raised.

The main thing I learned about drumming from Ringo on those recordings was just how important it is to fit the drums to the song rather than the other way around. He would find the exact right thing to play, and play it like he owned it. Ringo used to get the rap from music snobs that he was "simple" in his approach to drumming—as if that's a bad thing! He could play simple and strip a part down to its essential pieces and make it work—and *swing*—but if you think he couldn't compose intricate drum parts, take a listen to "Getting Better," with its unorthodox approach that only Ringo could have come up with. It works so well for the song that, fifty years later, you can't imagine a better way to do it.

I think about swing and unique fills when

I think about Ringo. I love his fills on songs like "A Day in the Life" and "I Am the Walrus." His pocket and time are fantastic, and his character comes through on every take. When Paul and Ringo zero in on a rhythm track, you know it's not going anywhere. I try to channel that commitment when I record. I want the groove to help propel the song, but not so much that it gets in the way of what the essence of the song is. That's the Ringo influence.

It blows me away to think that *Sgt. Pepper* and *Magical Mystery Tour* came out within seven months of each other. Ponder that for a moment. The Fabs were producing iconic, history-changing music at a rate we can't even imagine today. Their entire recording career only lasted seven years! And fifty years later no one has come close to topping them. That's a pretty amazing legacy.

SWINGING LONDON

THE ZOMBIES and **THE MOODY BLUES** might have originated in St. Albans and Birmingham, respectively, but few groups more fully captured the urbane and artsy edge of the British Invasion's London HQ—even if one band was on its way up and the other on its way out.

The Moody Blues'

Graeme Edge

Nineteen-sixty-seven was a transitional year for the former beat group and its drummer, who recalls a time when musical history was routinely made without warning.



David Woo

by Ilya Stemkovsky

In 1967, the Moody Blues were at a crossroads, having toured several years as an R&B act and experienced little traction beyond their lone hit, 1964's "Go Now." After some lineup changes, the band's luck would shift when the members gathered to record the landmark *Days of Future Passed*, often regarded as one of the very first progressive rock albums.

Containing some of the Moodys' most beloved songs, including "Nights in White Satin" and "Tuesday Afternoon," *Days* is a full-on concept album, following a man's journey from morning through night. The recording features an orchestra mixing sweetly with the group's brand of psychedelic ballads and '60s pop, but also brings to the frontline the tape-based Mellotron keyboard, which became an indispensable part of the Moody Blues' music and a key component in many future progressive rock albums from other bands.

Drummer Graeme Edge plays just what's needed, from the frantic pounding on "Lunch Break: Peak Hour" to the simple but controlled timekeeping on the yearning "Nights in White Satin," perhaps the band's best-known song. But contrary to what's perceived, the Moody Blues never tracked with a live orchestra during the sessions. "We were playing gigs [at night], so we would record from midday to five o'clock," Edge tells *MD*. "Not even on 'Nights in White Satin' did we record with the orchestra. It was always with the Mellotron. And you didn't want to do any busy fills, because you had to let the orchestra speak. So the fills

were powerful but with plenty of space."

Now, fifty years later, the Moody Blues are going out on the road to perform *Days of Future Passed* in its entirety, including several dates where they'll be joined by an orchestra. "We toured with a live orchestra before, for ten years, so there's no secret with that," Edge says. "And you have these tiny mics that you place on each instrument in the orchestra. Not like the old days, where you hung a mic above the whole thing and hoped for the best." And though Edge is still up to the task, some auxiliary sidemen are always welcome. "I can still do it. But I do have a young man up there with me. There are two drummers and I do take some rests."

Looking back at 1967, Edge reflects on the London scene and his place in it. "We saw lots of groups around that time, like the Graham Bond Organisation with Ginger Baker," he says. "We were suitably impressed. But when the Moody Blues would play, thank God for the teenyboppers, because all they did was scream. Our failings were covered by the screaming, so we were all right."

When asked about the gear he used

says, "although the fittings did rattle. But that wasn't a problem on stage, just for recordings. We were always tightening and taping. And I always used the Premier bass drum pedal. The Ludwig pedal was made for guys who were swivelling their foot back and forth. But rock drummers stamp on it. And only the Premier pedal could suffer that."

Edge is also sometimes credited with helping to invent and using the first electronic drums on record, for "Procession," on 1971's *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour*. Was that something the drummer was imagining back in 1967? "Oh yeah, I imagined more than that," Edge says. "I was always conscious of the drum's ring being out of tune. So I wanted a drumkit that you could tune to the key of a song. That's why people started to tape cigarette packets to drums and all that—to eliminate that ring so it wouldn't mess with the guitars. And that [first electronic] kit was a dismal failure—but a heroic failure."

What wasn't a failure, though, was Edge's accomplished drumming. Mid-'60s London was quite the place for legendary musicians



back in the day, which in general was still evolving to accommodate the increasingly heavier playing of classic rock's early drummers, Edge suggests he managed just fine. "Ludwig was first-class drums," he

to gather, and opportunity knocked one evening in a local bar. Edge recalls a special occasion where he found himself on stage with royalty of a different kind. "There was a club called the Scotch of St. James," Graeme

Graeme Edge plays **DW** drums, **Zildjian** cymbals, and **Roland** TD-20 and HandSonic HPD-20 electronics, and he uses **Ludwig** Weather Master heads and **Regal Tip** sticks.

says. "We all used to go down and jam. I had one memorable night there where, when the house band was done, we just went up and took charge of their instruments. It was me on drums, Jack Bruce on bass, Eric Clapton on guitar, and a black kid from Seattle who played his guitar upside down. He was just introduced to us by Chas Chandler of the Animals. And I sat there and drummed behind two guys who fell in love musically. Jimi Hendrix and Clapton were swapping 12s and 24s [bars] backwards and forwards. Just fantastic blues. And there

wasn't a single cell phone in the audience. [laughs] It was one of those occasions where you play a lot better than you normally could because you're inspired so much. Me and Jack were just laying it down solid. I assume so at least, because no one moved us off."

Beyond his drumming, Edge has written a significant amount of poetry over the years, including some of the spoken-word sections and lyrics on *Days of Future Passed*. Around this time, he wrote a line that would be used on the Moody's' next record, *In Search*

of the Lost Chord: "Between the eyes and ears there lie the sounds of color and the light of a sigh." Edge explains, "You can listen to your favorite piece of music fifty times and still get something from it. But the best movie you've ever seen, you get ten, eleven [views], and it's done. Because music is hot and the visual is sort of cold. Music is tempo, form, and pitch. Through the eyes, you've got color, perspective, and form. So you get through the eyes the same way you get through the ears, with really creative vibrations."

The Zombies'

Hugh Grundy

At the time of its release, he had no clue that the tracks he'd laid down for the Zombies' second album, *Odessey and Oracle*, would one day be considered a nearly unparalleled slab of psychedelic pop, and a prime example of song-sensitive classic-rock drumming.

by Adam Budofsky

The Zombies' *Odessey and Oracle* LP, recorded in 1967 at EMI's Abbey Road studios soon after the Beatles put down *Sgt. Pepper* there, was roundly ignored upon its release. Yet so much belated love has come its way in recent years that the four surviving members of the original group are now touring the world, playing the album to rapturous audiences.



This past March, *Modern Drummer* was fortunate to witness a rehearsal for the East Coast run of the Zombies' fiftieth-anniversary *Odessey* tour, which finds the original rhythm section of Hugh Grundy and Chris White rejoining singer Colin Blunstone and keyboardist Rod Argent in a contemporary, extended version of the band. (Founding guitarist Paul Atkinson passed away in 2004.) Watching the nine-piece lineup play through the album

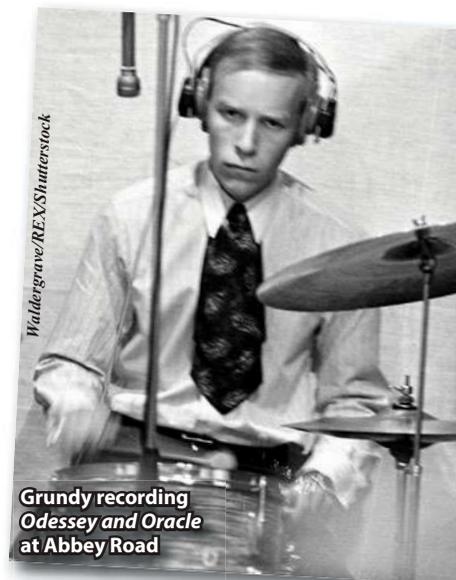
was a truly moving experience. Grundy brought to life the parts he wrote fifty years ago, with all the panache he played with back in the day—but with even more sophistication, as he's spent a good amount of time in the intervening years upping his game.

"After the Zombies broke up in '67," Grundy explains, "I did many different things, including working A&R for CBS Records. But then I felt I needed to play again. It was always in my blood. So I went to see a drum teacher, who played open-handed [left hand on the hi-hat, right on the ride]. And that's why I play that way today. Recently

I thought you should be able to do it with your feet as well. I think it's very good for the subconscious mind to have that knowledge that you can play a paradiddle with your feet." At the rehearsal, Grundy's limb freedom came to the fore on the *Odessey* track "This Will Be Our Year," where he threw in some particularly tasty upbeat hi-hat splashes.

After the group was done playing, Grundy, who recently released the single "I'd Do It All Again" with the Geckos, a band he plays with at home in Menorca, Spain, expressed his sincere gratitude to be in the position he's in today—and for the accolades shown by the rock community. Many of these artists are quoted in a brand-new coffee-table book, *The Odessey: The Zombies in Words and Images*. "Having musicians like Paul Weller and Dave Grohl, and indeed even Brian Wilson of the Beach Boys, contribute their thoughts...it's just a huge honor," Grundy says.

During the recording of the original album, the Abbey Road staff...well...let's just say they weren't quite as respectful. "These guys in brown coats would come right into the studio while we were recording," Grundy recalls. "Indeed, on one of the tracks, I think it was 'Changes,' they came in and started shifting the piano! We were getting close to one o'clock—lunchtime—and that's when you had to stop. We were doing vocals, and the red light was on, but it didn't make any difference to them. They say that if you listen closely enough to it today, you can hear them come in and move things around. [laughs] That's just what it was like then at Abbey Road. But we were privileged to have worked there, and to work with Geoff Emerick, the Beatles' engineer. And now the album's come to be regarded as a bit of a masterpiece. And to be on it—for me, that's just awesome."



Grundy recording *Odessey and Oracle* at Abbey Road



The original *Odessey and Oracle* cover (left) and the new Zombies coffee-table book, *The Odessey: The Zombies in Words and Images*.

Vanilla Fudge's Carmine Appice

If any drummer in the history of classic rock can say he's seen it all, it's him. From defining the role of star journeyman player in the '70s, penning a classic method book, and pioneering the rock-drumming clinic to setting the bar for rock-star excess that's still referenced today, the drummer known to many simply as "Carmine" has made a career out of standing out from the crowd. It all started fifty years ago, when he powered an explosive young group that grabbed TV audiences by the throat and promptly skyrocketed up the charts. . . .

by Ken Micallef

In 1967, the U.S. was convulsing as old modes of thinking gave way to innovations that would resonate for decades to come. The Vietnam War raged on, civil rights riots erupted from Detroit to Newark, the Space Race was promising that we'd conquer the moon, and New York's Vanilla Fudge scored its first chart-topper, "You Keep Me Hanging On."

A radical cover of the Supremes' 1966 hit, Vanilla Fudge's version was a half-time slab of white-hot proto-metal soul. A four-piece band that churned hard via Mark Stein's Hammond B3 organ, Vince Martell's electric guitar, Tim Bogert's bass, and Carmine Appice's blistering drumming, Vanilla Fudge sounded like no one else, its heaving grooves and passionate vocals presaging Deep Purple and Led Zeppelin.

In a Vanilla Fudge video performance from the period, Carmine Appice's originality is obvious: the oversize drums, rampaging full-set single-stroke rolls, cymbal crashes quickly muted by arm movements, and mighty grooves that would be dissected in his yet-to-be-published best-selling book of 1972, *The Realistic Rock Drum Method*. Only twenty years old in 1967, with the acts Cactus, Rod Stewart, King Cobra, Travers & Appice, and Beck, Bogert & Appice still ahead, Carmine set the template of the modern rock drummer. And he isn't finished yet.

Carmine Appice plays **ddrum** drums and **Istanbul Mehmet** cymbals and uses **Vic Firth** sticks, **Evans** heads, **Calzone** cases, and **Audix** mics.

MD: What was the life of a successful rock drummer like in 1967 as opposed to now?

Carmine: There was no drumming world back then. When *Modern Drummer* began in the mid-'70s I was in the first issue. I was always into drums. Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich were my idols. Back then we were *rock stars*; we weren't drum stars. The only place we got any coverage as drummers was through our drum company, which for most of us then was Ludwig. Ringo Starr, Mitch Mitchell, Ginger Baker—all Ludwig.

MD: How did 1960s Ludwig kits compare to today's drumsets?

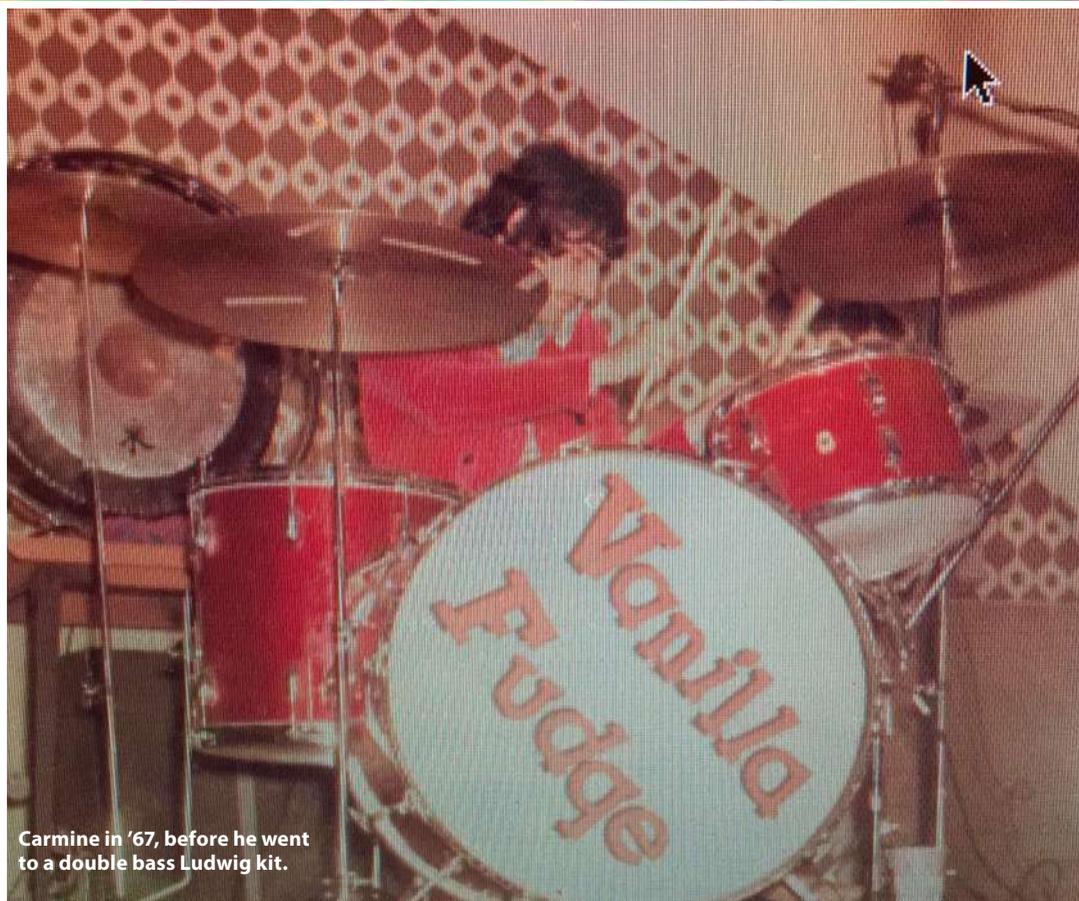
Carmine: I haven't played a modern Ludwig kit, but the drums then had a different tone. My Ludwig bass drums had more midrange punch. Drums today are designed to produce more bottom end. Today I play ddrum's MAX model; they sound similar to my 1967 Ludwig drums.

MD: What about hardware? Did you play Speed King pedals?

Carmine: Oh, yeah. Speed Kings on both bass drums. I started the fad of the 26" bass drum in rock. I'd bought a 15x26 Leedy & Ludwig marching bass drum for Vanilla Fudge. When I recorded "You Keep Me Hanging On," I was playing a Gretsch kit with a Rogers snare drum. Then I got a Ludwig endorsement. I'd wanted two bass drums since seeing Louie Bellson, but I couldn't afford two. But with Ludwig I ordered two 14x26 bass drums, and because those bass drums were louder than a 22" bass drum, I ordered a 12x15 tenor drum as my main tom, positioned on a snare drum stand between the two bass drums. I also had a 16x16 floor tom and a 14x22 bass drum turned on its side as my really big floor tom. I used that giant tom on recordings, live—everywhere. And I played a 6.5x14 Ludwig snare drum.

MD: What about cymbals?

Carmine: Back then a Paiste endorsement accompanied a Ludwig



Carmine in '67, before he went to a double bass Ludwig kit.

endorsement. I had a 22" 2002 Heavy ride on an L-shaped stand attached to the bass drum, a 20" 2002 Medium crash attached to the other bass drum, and an 18" 2002 Medium crash on the right. And 15" hi-hats—bigger meant louder. I was competing with Marshall stacks. There was no monitoring. PAs were the Altec "Voice of the Theater" cabinets used in movie theaters. I miked my drums using a Shure mixer with five Shure SM57 microphones and a Fender Dual Showman amplifier with two 2x15 cabinets. I put those amps next to the Altec PA. That's how we toured with Jimi Hendrix, and Mitch Mitchell used my drum amps.

MD: How did touring differ in 1967?

Carmine: There was no lighting, no staging. You had a riser and an amplifier. No merch, no backdrops. We all traveled on planes. We would back up the equipment truck to the plane and unload the gear into the cargo hold.

MD: How did it feel to go from being a local guy in Brooklyn to a rock star?

Carmine: It was unbelievable. It was all new. The underground FM radio movement, the counterculture—everything was innovating. The music Vanilla Fudge played was innovative. Out of necessity I created an innovative drumming style by accident. Sabian awarded me for creating a heavy rock style that continues today.

MD: How did you record "You Keep Me Hanging On"?

Carmine: We recorded a one-take demo of "You Keep Me Hanging On." Seven and a half minutes that changed my life. [Producer] Shadow Morton brought us into the studio, and we played the

song. The demo was played on underground FM radio in New York. It was in mono, so the drum sound was monstrous. It created this new R&B rock drum sound that influenced many drummers. The album was mostly live takes.

MD: Did you tune your drums any differently between stage and studio?

Carmine: No, wide open. There was no dampening until the mid-'70s.

MD: What was your goal for *The Realistic Rock Drum Method*?

Carmine: I'd been teaching students out of *Syncopation* and *Stick Control*. Then I walked into Sam Ash and saw a rock drum book in 1971. The title was *Learn to Play Rock Drums*. The drummer on the cover had slicked-back hair, and he was using traditional grip. The material in the book was worthless. So I decided to write a book that focused on a realistic way to play rock drums. I used variations of rock grooves that *worked*. I covered syncopation, using the hi-hat, double bass drum workouts.... I got a \$500 advance, which was great. I owned the copyright. It sold 4,000 units in the first year; 400,000 sold in total.

MD: What keeps you busy now?

Carmine: Cactus re-formed in 2006; Vanilla Fudge started performing again in 2001. I'm leaving on a cruise with Vanilla Fudge, then a U.S. tour. Cactus released a new album, *Black Dawn*. Vanilla Fudge released *Spirit of '67* in 2015. This year is our fiftieth anniversary. Ddrum is releasing a replica of my 1968 Ludwig aluminum snare drum. Istanbul Mehmet cymbals is reissuing my 22" Heavy ride. And my brother Vinny and I are recording an album, *The Appice Brothers*. ●

"I used a 14x22 bass drum turned on its side as my really big floor tom... and 15" hi-hats. Bigger meant louder. I was competing with Marshall stacks."

To read much more about Carmine Appice, including the Rock Perspectives column he wrote for the very first issue of Modern Drummer, as well as his first cover story, from April 1978, go to moderndrummer.com and browse through our brand-new Archive.

The Doors'

John Densmore

Tapping Into Infinity

With the Doors he helped kick rock 'n' roll into the future, contributing greatly to the soundtrack of history's most challenging and successful youth movement. Fifty years later, the music is still in high rotation, and as relevant as ever.

Story by Adam Budofsky
Photos by Alex Solca

If the Stones were a boulder picking up bits of soil, sweat, and grease as it rumbled through the American South, and Pink Floyd was a spaceship sending home images from across the galaxy, then the Doors were a great wave approaching an unsuspecting shore, moving quietly with suspicious calm and mystery, then crashing down with the explosive violence of a natural disaster.

As the drummer in this most unexpected and mercurial of '60s-era American rock bands, John Densmore was not only challenged to surf the crest of singer Jim Morrison's wild yet scholarly lyrics on stage, he also had to plot the course through each unique compositional odyssey that he, guitarist Robbie Krieger, and keyboardist Ray Manzarek took across the six studio albums the Doors released between 1967 and 1971.

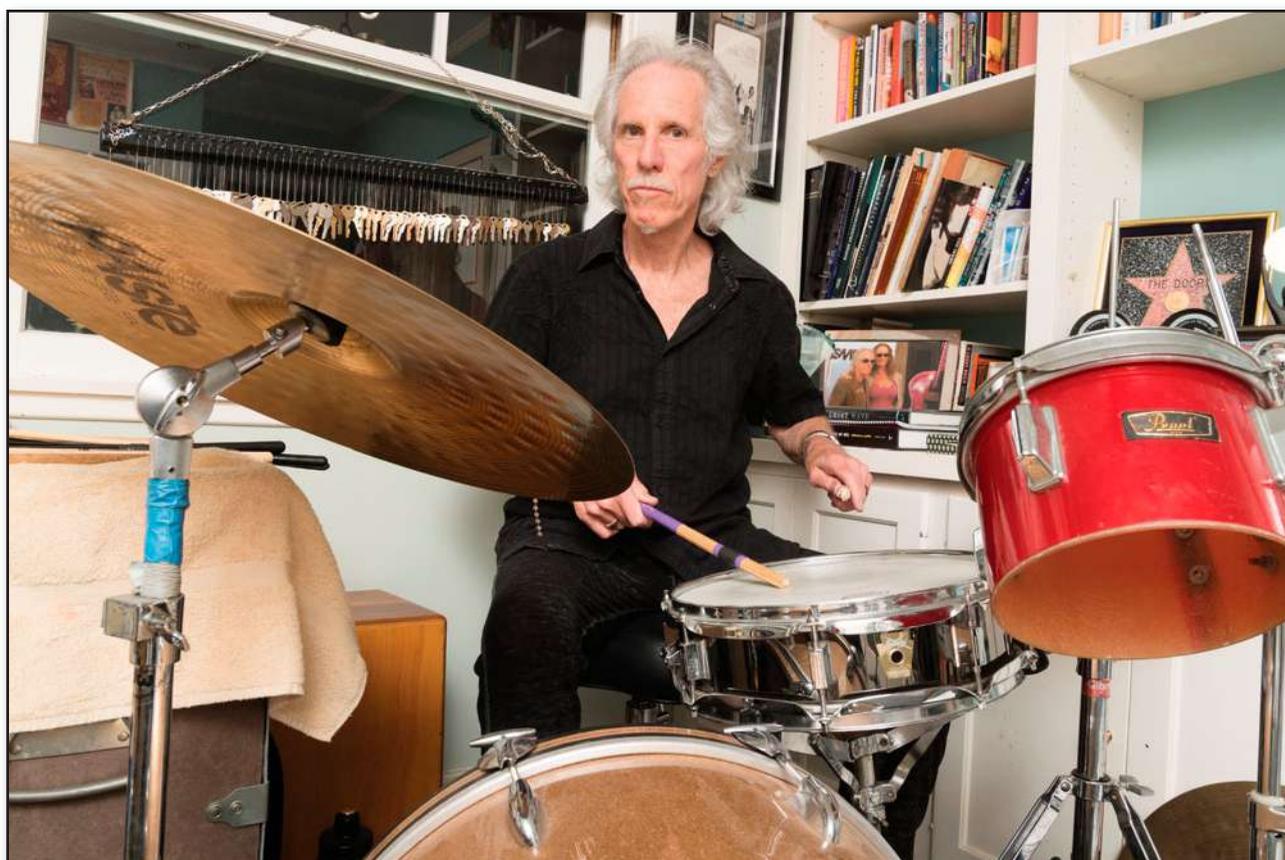
The opening track of the group's iconic self-titled debut album features a bar of Densmore's unaccompanied bossa nova beat—not the kind of thing you'd imagine

grounding an open musical invitation to blow your mind, replete with rock-god screams and garage-rock riffing. But it worked wonders. And the album ended as dramatically as it had begun, with Densmore supporting Morrison's tale of Oedipal rage with some of the most dramatic and beautifully recorded tom work in rock history. In between, the band covered the Bertolt Brecht/Kurt Weill whiskey-bar sing-along "Alabama Song," and Densmore captured the decadent vibe of prewar Germany with a classic oompah beat. Elsewhere, on "Soul Kitchen" and "Twentieth Century Fox," they dug out their R&B chops like the seasoned bar band they were; jammed fantastically for seven full minutes on "Light My Fire"; and played it delicate and romantic on "The Crystal Ship" and "End of the Night," Densmore pulling out his best rimclick love-beats and, on the latter song, playing a swelling floor tom single-stroke roll that can still raise the hair on the back of your neck.

Strange Days, released before the year was out, was no less shocking or satisfying. The album contains several of the Doors' most enduring cuts, including "Love Me Two Times," "People Are Strange," and "Moonlight Drive," each an opportunity for Densmore to flex his ever-creative song-shaping abilities, which often employed odd tom-tom placement, Art Blakey-inspired press rolls, and sudden starts and stops. Most important, *Strange Days* ends with the eleven-minute "When the Music's Over," arguably the quintessential Doors song. The track finds Densmore supporting some of Morrison's most colorful and cutting lyrics with sympathy, soul, and a painterly approach that rarely gets heard in rock music today but that nonetheless is as timeless as the themes Morrison

explored throughout the band's short career.

With half a century having passed since *The Doors* and *Strange Days* were released, you'd forgive Densmore for having hazy recollections or tempered emotions about the albums, but that was hardly the case when we spoke with him for this special MD feature. As sharp and passionate as ever about the music he loves—he's in the midst of writing his third book on the subject now—John easily travels back in his mind to the heady days of the Doors, and he's quick to make the connections between the musical and cultural ground they tilled all those years ago and the sounds and issues of today. And, like most drummers, he still gets excited when the topic turns to the relative merits of one Richard Starkey....



John: Jim Keltner and I have had several conversations about Ringo, how his pocket is just so wonderful. People dis him. Buddy Rich dissed him, said he didn't have enough chops or some shit. I sent a note to him after reading that. Then Buddy's daughter came to a Doors gig. She came backstage, and I said, "Tell your dad that, of that era, I prefer Krupa to him." [laughs] Because of the pocket. All the technique in the world is not everything.

So, who else is in this issue?

MD: Hal Blaine, Carmine Appice...

John: Hal's a little before my time, but the fills on "Hello, I Love You," I guess those are thanks to Hal and his Rototoms. Carmine and I saw Paul Simon together. He has more chops than me. He's a solo drummer, I'm not. I pride myself on being an accompanist. That's what I learned from Elvin Jones. I had conversations with Jim.

MD: Keltner's in the issue as well.

John: That Bill Frisell album with him [*Gone, Just Like a Train*]...oh my God, that's the best. Loose, jazzy—he's got that down.

MD: In his piece, Keltner talks about what it was like coming up around '67. What was it like for you, being on your first album that year?

John: I was hoping at that time that we could just pay the rent. Now what do we have here, fifty years? We've done all right.

We honed for a year or two. Jim said

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John Densmore

it was like a bow being pulled back for twenty-two years and then being let go.

MD: Were you already out of the house and supporting yourself when you were in the studio recording the first album?

John: A year or two before that I finally got out of the house and got a place with Robbie Krieger. We were a couple bachelors, playing the Whiskey—the mecca. Once you played there, Mario the doorman would let you in, so we'd go there and see everybody, look for girls....

MD: Do you remember any local drummers who you were inspired by?

John: Before we were the house band at the Whiskey, we were down the street at the London Fog. I used to walk down to the corner and see Arthur Lee's Love. This sounds arrogant, but I used to think, *Dammit, I'm better than their drummer—why am I not in that band at the Whiskey?* Arthur Lee graciously asked the president of our record company to come and see us.

But jazz guys were my idols, and I'd go see them. One time I sat right next to Art Blakey's hi-hat. I went home and tried to copy his stuff for days.

MD: Do you remember feeling part of a drummer fraternity early on?

John: I've been in the drum fraternity my whole life. Endured the dumb drummer jokes, to which I say: *Ex-cuse me—drums were the first instrument. First you heard your mother in the womb. So you already had polyrhythms going, with your own heartbeat. So it's rhythm from the beginning. And it's a great fraternity. All of us understand the function of a hi-hat. Most people haven't a clue. But it's our world. Ride cymbals, hi-hats—that's how we go through the world. Filmmakers see the world; we hear it. Rhythm. It saved my life.*

MD: How so, by giving you something to focus on?

John: Yeah, and maybe...well, I wrote this in my first memoir, *Riders on the Storm*. I remember when drum machines were first invented, and I just loved what Ringo said: "I'm the f****n' drum machine." I understand how drum machines are very helpful for hip-hop and folks who have no money. That's cool. But getting a good sense of time, which is everything in drumming, if you don't have to learn that discipline over years, then something is lost on a physical level.

It's kind of like meditation. A groove is

like "Om," which helps the individual. The discipline of learning rhythm helps evolve the consciousness of the rhythm maker.

You know when musicians are playing together and smiling at one another? It doesn't matter if it's a duet or a forty-piece orchestra, you're trying to get back to the womb, and that's tapping into infinity. This is all in my new book. You get good time to try and reach timelessness.

MD: Do you see the sort of encroachment of electronic devices as intrinsically working against that?

John: Not necessarily. I'll hear Herbie Hancock play an incredible synth solo, and I love it. But now there are lots of folks who get annoyed when they're not dancing to an electronic pulse. That worries me, because we're not perfect.

MD: I was listening to "Wooden Ships" by Jefferson Airplane today....

John: Spencer Dryden. Very sweet guy.

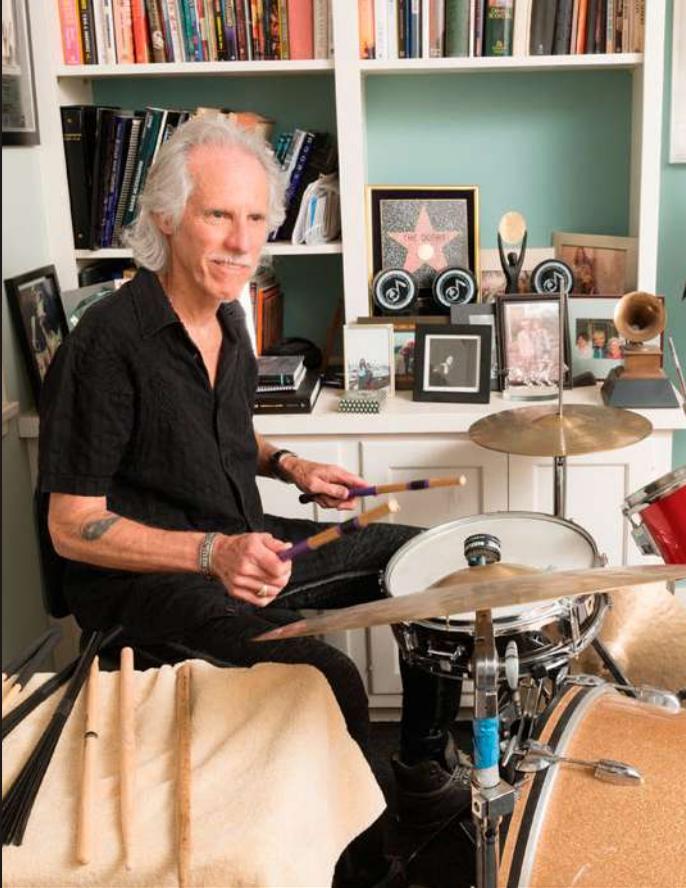
MD: I bring it up because that song is all about dynamics, which is an approach you can't even attempt if the basis of the music is metronomic. So there's more lost than just the human groove.

John: Okay, now that's really important to me. Dynamics is my entire thing. I learned this from classical music, playing timpani in orchestra. There are moments of pianissimo, or quiet, all the way to fortissimo, or loud, and everything in between. That's very human musically.

Springsteen asked me, "Why did you play those really loud tom-tom fills in the quiet section of 'The End'?" I don't know, but later I listened to it and thought I increased the tension, which was great. But loud and soft and everything in between is about contrast. If it's all at one level...that's cool in punk or heavy metal. But for me it's not human enough.

MD: "When the Music's Over" is a classic example of how the Doors employed dynamics. How does that song resonate with you now?

John: One of my favorites. My second epic, and it breathes like crazy. Loud and soft. Like in "The End," we had these sections where Jim could throw in any poem he wanted. *Improvisation. [Quoting lyrics] "What have they done to the earth? What have they done to our fair sister? Stuck her with knives in the side of the dawn. Tied her with fences, dragged her down."* I don't know why I stopped the beat. I just



London Fog 1966?

John: It's a little embarrassing to me. But then again, everybody was bootlegging us with lousy sound. And I would pick up Coltrane compilations that had six versions of one tune leading to the master, and I enjoyed figuring out how that road went.

London Fog is young guys trying to find their center.

MD: Hearing your press roll that early...it seemed like you had your aesthetic together by then. Is that fair to say?

John: I guess so. I mean, I had played a lot, and I perfected Art Blakey's press roll. Jim was finding himself much more than

would be affected by them and try to be the best accompanist possible.

MD: Did you feel at the time that you were doing something that nobody else was doing?

John: Not me. The band, yes. First of all, we auditioned bass players, and we sounded like the Rolling Stones. A blues band. Then Ray found a keyboard bass, and, *Wow, this is going to make us more unique!* It would be a harder job for me, because Ray's left hand...he'd take a solo with his right hand and sometimes get excited, and I'd have to be, "Whoa, hold it, you're speeding up there." It was more open. More room for fills. Different. So we didn't realize it, but a little later we thought about it: Okay, I bring jazz, Ray brings the blues from Chicago, Robbie brings folk music and flamenco, and Jim brought all the words in the world...this is unique, this is an American melting pot. So don't close the borders, goddam it! [laughs]

MD: Ha! Well, we can't talk about 1967 without getting into politics, right?

John: I had this jazz group, Tribal Jazz. I had two or three African drummers. World music is a great metaphor for what we've

did. Ray's still playing the bass line. And I'm programmatically jabbing at the cymbals like "sticking knives in the side of the dawn." It's a conversation...Elvin and Coltrane battling it out.

It's funny, the words... Drummers of course count tunes off. And I hear the words and the melody and immediately pick the correct tempo. I don't know why that is. It's something about the rhythm. "The day destroys the night, night divides the day. Tried to run, tried to hide, break on through to the other side." It tells you. But yeah, I like those breaks in "When the Music's Over." Then there's four beats of total silence. I just love that. It's like breathing. The silence between the sounds is what's really important. Without that, you don't have a comparison.

I'm writing a chapter on the conductor of the L.A. Philharmonic, Gustavo Dudamel. He'll finish conducting a real loud symphony—Beethoven, let's say—and he'll keep his arms up so the audience knows not to applaud yet, because he's not done. And for the longest time, a minute or two, we'll be salivating in the silence after the last sound. And it's like heaven. Arms down—you're emaciated. The composer John Cage said that silence is as important as the sound.

MD: You mentioned the *London Fog* earlier. What do you think of the new live release,

me then. He wouldn't face the audience; he was so shy a lot of times at the *Fog*. But as Jim found himself and wrote more songs, I

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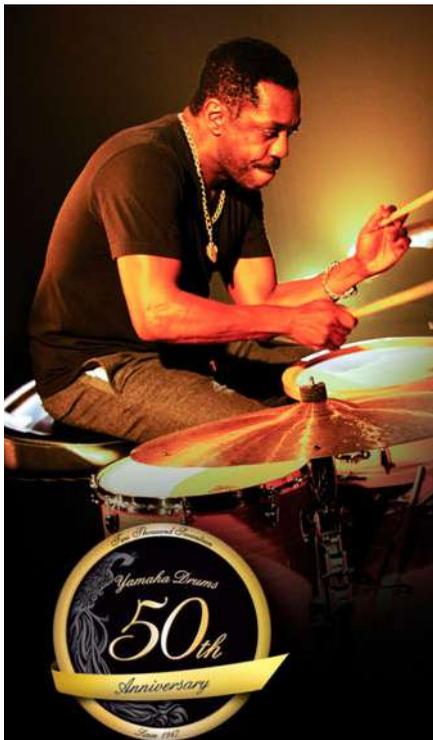
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John Densmore

gotta do. You get the feeling of a culture when you hear their music. Whether you can understand the words or not, that's healing. So it is a global village. We've got to get along here. All right, I'll come off the soapbox now. [laughs]

MD: Do you remember what kind of drums you used back then?

John: First it was Gretsch, then I moved to Ludwig and stayed with them most of the way.

MD: In the photos of the London Fog set, you can see that the front of your bass drum didn't have a head on it.

John: Yeah, I always took the head off and put a pillow in there. This was way before engineers got quick to cut a hole in the front head. Then there's guys like Tony Williams who liked both heads on, real tight, almost like a tom-tom. Sounds great for him. I like a deader sound.

MD: So it was basically a sonic choice.

John: Yeah. And then I learned from our producer, Paul Rothchild, that you want a more dampened drum sound in the studio than live. That took some getting used to. We muffled the snare drum, and it doesn't bounce back so it's harder on your chops. Learning curve.

But then we did the last album, *L.A. Woman*, and we had a little falling-out with Paul. Mind you, he was tired. Jim's self-destructiveness was increasing and Paul was tired of pulling vocals out of him. So our longtime engineer, Bruce Botnick, produced *L.A. Woman* with us. In twenty minutes he said, "That's it, John, your drum sound is great." It used to take an hour with Rothchild, and I'd be getting tired before even playing the tunes. And after many albums, Bruce made me feel strong about my sound. I know what I want and like.

MD: Do you remember what it was like when you first heard yourself back in the studio?

John: I remember listening to the playback real loud, and it was like having an orgasm. We were pretty tight. That's where the power comes from. And I do remember driving in my car and hearing "Light My Fire" on the radio, rolling the window down and turning the volume up real loud so my neighbor could hear it. "That's me!" That's a high, hearing your drumming in the car.

MD: When did you begin to feel like you



were successful?

John: By the end of '67 we started playing small concert halls. That was the moment for me. You work and work, hoping to pay the rent. Then, "My God, we're gonna make a *living* playing music? This is really cool!" Playing Madison Square Garden, that adulation is exciting. But a small concert on your way up is more exciting because of the potential.

MD: What's the focus of your next book?

John: The subtitle is *Meeting With Remarkable Musicians*. And it's a few minutes or a few years with various musicians that have fed me—Elvin, Ravi Shankar, Patti Smith, Emil Richards, Gustavo Dudamel.... What struck me is that what connects all of them is the love of sound. If you watch Bob Marley or Gustavo Dudamel, both of them have something amazingly similar. Their entire bodies are emitting the sounds that you're hearing. They're so into it, they're gone. It's like Australian-aboriginal dreamtime.

But here's what's really important: If you're playing music to get into that zone, it's the same zone as Yo-Yo Ma is in. You're getting fed by the same muse in that zone. So go there. It's all connected.

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A man with a beard and dark hair, wearing a black blazer over a grey t-shirt and blue jeans, stands in a drum room. He is leaning against a wooden radiator. In the foreground, there is a silver and white drum set with a black bag of sticks and mallets. A large window in the background shows a cityscape under a clear blue sky. The title 'Yuval Lion' is written in large, bold, green letters on the right side of the image.

Yuval Lion

A concept will take you far—in this case, across the sea from Israel, through New York City's labyrinthine underground music scene, and then high above the stage in David Byrne's Off-Broadway production *Joan of Arc: Into the Fire*.

**Story by Ken Micallef
Photos by John Fell**

Enjoying a long run at New York's Public Theater, the rock opera *Joan of Arc: Into the Fire* features a striking young actress/vocalist adorned in chain mail, sixteen male dancer/singers, and a rock band that pumps out David Byrne's original score like it's the last performance on planet earth. At the center of this tribal sound festooned with triumphal vocals and blistering guitars is the potent drumming of Yuval Lion.

Joan of Arc is both a test of endurance and a showcase for the Israel native's atmospheric, laid-back, and highly stylized drumming. The rock opera demands that Lion pound out military marches, create pulsating patterns akin to Jim Keltner drumming for a death march, and play both full-on loud and triple-piano soft, all while reading nine-page charts and following a conductor on a pair of small monitors. Positioned in a tiny "treehouse" booth ten feet above the stage and out of sight to cast, crew, and audience, Lion plays *Joan of Arc* like a solitary man drumming his way through centuries of history and musical soul.

Lion arrived in New York City in 1998, and was soon drumming on small stages and in smaller studios. He's played with bands known and unknown, from sessions with Chrissie Hynde and Lionel Loueke to work with a series of New York rockers that includes Pink Noise (2002–2012), Meshell Ndegeocello (2008), Lionz (with Lionel Loueke, 2011–2012), Wave Sleep Wave (2012–2014), Martha Wainwright (2012–2016), and Suzanne Vega (2016). The artists he regularly continues to play with include Cibo Matto, Jim Keller, and Trixie Whitley.

Besides *Joan of Arc*, Lion is currently most involved with the New York City institution Big Lazy, a spacey guitar trio that allows him to fully explore his behind-the-beat, deeply atmospheric, and spacious groove. Lion never plays two songs alike, but once he's planted his concept on the material, it can never withstand a different interpretation. Lion's beats are integral to each song he records, whether he's syncopating a pattern, using odd source material, or simply turning the unexpected into the perfect part, track after track.

Currently finishing Big Lazy's latest release and another by the twelve-piece horn band Zion80 (an album of John Zorn music), Lion brings slow-motion funk and eclectic soul to New York's frantic city streets.

MD: Does the *Joan of Arc* show allow you to play your very syncopated and atmospheric style?

Yuval: It's a rock-oriented show [telling] the historic story of Joan of Arc. Each song is different. Some songs have breakdowns; it's more of a theatrical approach. The songs start one way and end a different way. There can be an insert within a song to serve the story. I'm lucky to have been there from the beginning, working from the demos and playing the music. That's how I created my parts, with direction and by listening to the demos and constantly changing and looking for sounds.

MD: Did you augment your kit specifically for *Joan of Arc*?

Yuval: I play a four-piece vintage Ludwig kit. Hi-hat and a couple cymbals. For *Joan of Arc* I added Roland SPD-S pads with Ableton Live. I program in Ableton; the pads are a MIDI controller. I use different sounds I've collected and created over the years. Some sounds are from the software, and I manipulate them with effects.

MD: Are the sounds acoustic or more esoteric and electronic?

Yuval: Electronic sounds. One song is entirely electronic drums, then it becomes acoustic. It's tricky. The sounds keep evolving and changing. For this show I use open toms—no bottom heads.

MD: The drums are heavily taped. Why?

Yuval: I went for a specific sound during rehearsals.

Removing the bottom tom heads created more punch and low end, which fits the music and the vibe of the show. There are a lot of tom-oriented parts, very primal/tribal style. The drums are quite dead as far as the overtones, yet very warm and powerful sounding. This is where the tape comes in. And the drums are tuned very low, so the heads are a bit floppy and wavy. The tape also keeps the heads from buzzing when they are tuned that low. The snare drum is also tuned low and taped down. I use another snare that's tuned higher and has a bit of a ring to it as a contrast to the main snare drum.

MD: Your drums in the booth are very isolated from the band and the actors. How did you make that work? What are the challenges of being that isolated?

Yuval: You might think being isolated would affect the band's feeling while playing together, but you adapt and get used to that. The biggest challenge is to make sure the energy of a live show gets through. It's important to have a good headphone mix to make sure the balance is good so nothing gets in the way of the performance. Usually in a live show or in the studio you can see or feel the audience or artist and interact with the band. When you're in a booth with no direct sight lines or sense of an audience, it can change the way you might feel the music, but luckily it doesn't [necessarily]. It might even make you listen harder, because it's all about what you hear, as there

isn't really anything to look at while playing in that drum booth!

MD: How did you get the *Joan of Arc* gig?

Yuval: The person who assembled the band in the first workshop was a friend of mine, Daniel Mintseris. He's the keyboard player in St. Vincent's band. I got the call and was lucky to play the early workshops, where they work out and format the show.

Lion's Lineage

MD: How did growing up in Israel influence your drumming?

Yuval: Israel is a special place, because there isn't really an Israeli style. It's a mishmash of styles from different countries. There are musicians from North Africa, the Gulf countries, Europe... a melting pot of cultures. It's the same with food. What's Israeli food? Eastern European food mixed with Egyptian food.

MD: But aren't there specific Israeli rhythms, like the hora?

Yuval: Yes, but the base of the hora is

klezmer, like a Polish two-beat. A polka played on a Middle Eastern drum gives it an interesting rhythm, sound, and flavor.

MD: Did you play those rhythms growing up?

Yuval: I was mainly into the Beatles, Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, and the Who—'70s rock—then new wave and the Cure. David Bowie. And I listened to Israeli pop: Gidi Gov, Meir Banai. I played along to the radio. I also liked the Israeli musicians who played on Israeli pop sessions. Then I got into jazz: Pat Metheny and Jack DeJohnette.

MD: When did you first play the drums?

Yuval: I was always banging. My first drum lesson was when I was nine. I am a lefty, but my first teacher taught me as a right-handed drummer. My second teacher, when I was twelve, was Arale Kaminsky. He played with Manhattan Transfer. He's a major drummer in Israel; he brought Brazilian music to Israel. He asked me to clap my hands and knew instantly that I was a lefty. He noted the leading hand in the two

hands clapping. Our lessons were divided into three parts: rudiments, sight-reading, and we would learn a rock beat or a waltz. Then finally we got into jazz and swing. I was excited about that. I also studied with David Rich, who had moved to Israel from the U.S. in the 1960s. He was a student of Joe Morello and taught his concept.

MD: Did you attend music school?

Yuval: Yes, I got a scholarship to Berklee in 1997. I had played in a youth big band in Israel, then I joined the army and was fortunate enough to play in the air force orchestra, a sixteen-piece pop big band. That was *real* music school. That turned me into a professional. I started practicing a lot; every day I had a rehearsal in the morning, then I played a show. That gave me stage and reading experience. Even before then I'd played and recorded in bands in Israel, on TV shows. The army really made me better. I worked solid throughout Israel for three years before I moved to the States.

MD: So why come to the States if you were

Lion's Setup

Drums: 1970 Ludwig

- A. 5x14 Acrolite snare (or 5x14 Supraphonic snare)
- B. 9x13 tom
- C. 16x16 floor tom
- D. 14x20 bass drum

Cymbals: Istanbul Agop

- 1. 14" Signature hi-hats (or 17" hi-hats consisting of two Xist crashes)
- 2. 20" OM crash
- 3. 21" Traditional Original ride
- 4. 22" Signature ride

Sticks: Innovative Percussion Hybrid sticks, WBR-1X wire brushes, and Phat Broomz

Heads: Remo, including Coated Ambassador snare batters and Hazy Ambassador resonants, Coated Emperor tom batters and Clear Ambassador resonants, and Coated Emperor bass drum batter and Coated Ambassador front head (no hole, with felt strips on both sides)

Electronics: Roland SPD-S sampling pad, KT-9 kick drum pedal, and PD-8 pad (shown in *Joan of Arc* setup shot); Ableton Live

Accessories: Roots EQ drum mutes



The main shot here is Lion's go-to kit for studio and live gigs. The inset shot is his *Joan of Arc* setup, which swaps out his 22" Signature ride with a 22" Xist crash and a 20" OM crash, and the 21" Traditional Original ride for a 20" Alchemy Professional crash and a 17" Xist crash. Yuval also added a 6" Turk mini bell on top of a 12" mini China ("an old, beat-up, and cracked no-brand model"). Also unique to the set are a Remo pandeiro, an aluminum Turkish doumbek, and a circa-'70s 5x14 Ludwig Acrolite auxiliary snare drum. The main snare is a 6.5x14 Ludwig Supraphonic from the '90s.





Feel and Diversity

David Byrne Answers 5 Questions About Drumming

MD: Do you recall a time in your early musical development when you became conscious of how much of an effect a drummer can have on a track?

David: Ha, ha—I'm old enough that my references are James Brown, Ginger Baker, and Keith Moon... the latter two probably because their playing drew attention to itself.

MD: What are the first things you take note of when you consider working with a particular drummer?

David: Feel—which is pretty hard to quantify—and diversity, as my writing often incorporates and references a range of styles. Economy too. Sometimes less really is more.

MD: What aspects of Yuval Lion's playing allow him to either translate your rhythmic or sonic ideas effectively or create unique parts that complement your music well?

David: Playing for a show like this is really a special beast. Sometimes the band is playing straight-up songs and grooves, but sometimes the playing is really at the service of storytelling. Builds and pauses are often about narrative clarity as much as music. Yuval gets this, and he manages to make what are sometimes fairly unmusical segues sound natural!

MD: What sort of rhythmic and percussive elements are prominent in *Joan of Arc*, and how actively do they push forward the action on stage?

David: Pretty straightforward so far—drums, acoustic and electronic, and some hand drums and shaker. Occasionally there are effects, which are borderline percussive—explosions and such—that Yuval has to play to.

MD: Do you think that we're in sort of a post-ethnic era, where the internet has lessened the effect of a drummer's geographic roots on his or her own playing style? Or are there still distinct rhythmic flavors that musicians will only ever be able to play authentically if they come from the country of their origin?

David: Wow, good loaded question! Can white men play the blues? Can someone not born and bred in NOLA play second-line? Can a Scotsman play Latin music? Of course they can. Larry Harlow, nicknamed "the marvelous Jew" by salsa musicians, was 100 percent accepted. Granted, there are feels that are pretty ingrained and regional, but some folks can learn those too. Though it's probably easier and quicker to work with someone raised in a style.

I think a lot of this issue is about perception of authenticity. Not true authenticity, which hardly exists, but a perception, as folks like a story attached to a performer. A story of background, biography, hardship—or not—etc. None of us are immune to those biases, but that's what they are.

Interview by Adam Budofsky

Q Do musicians and producers come to you now for your style?

A I hope so. I'm not trying to be different, but I am trying to push it to the left as much as possible without making it crazy or not musical.

so busy in Israel?

Yuval: My teacher David Rich helped me get a scholarship. I sent a tape including a blues, standards, improvisation, and funk. I studied at Berklee with Kenwood Dennard, Rick Considine, Casey Scheuerell. It was tough to return to school after playing professionally in Israel. Nobody cared who you were there. I rebuilt my education, studied harmony and arranging. After a year I moved to New York, where I played with Milo Z and on the Bleecker Street circuit. My goal was to make it as part of a band, staying creative and working on originality. Pretty soon through networking I started playing gigs.

Working, Networking, Plying Producers...

MD: How did studio work develop for you?

Yuval: It's word of mouth. I recorded a Chrissie Hynde record that never came out, and a record with Lionel Loueke that wasn't

released. The producer who had mixed a record by my band Pink Noise called me for the Hynde sessions. I had a lot of experience in the studio from playing with bands and making records around New York after I arrived. Not major-league records, but a lot of studio work. When you work with a band and create your own parts and have the luxury of recording and listening and trying things, that process is a great way to hone your studio chops.

MD: How did you get called for the Suzanne Vega record?

Yuval: The producer, Gerry Leonard [David Bowie, Duncan Sheik], had worked Bowie's last tour. He called me. I was recommended by a bass player from Jim Keller's band, Byron Isaacs; he's with the Lumineers now. Jerry liked my drumming in my band Big Lazy and wanted that sound. He wanted a rock drummer with jazz sensitivities who grooved hard and sounded dirty. It had to be

Yuval Lion

pocket and funky and solid. We tracked live.

Big Lazy is an instrumental guitar trio. We're working on a new album. We just played our twentieth-anniversary show. It's another sonic adventure. It addresses my concept, which is to find this one beat that will work for the song. It's about distilling the drum part to this core that works for the song.

MD: How do you create these very individual, atmospheric grooves?

Yuval: There's not a lot of planning involved. By playing a lot of original music with bands, you [learn to] distill the drum part to what works for the song. When I'm in sessions or with different artists, I borrow from prior work; I might go to a Big Lazy track that was similar. I have a bag of tools that I know works. It's from playing music that is not straightforward, that's not pop or mainstream. I always look for the angle, and when you do that for a long time it gets in your gut—it becomes your first instinct. For instance, I could play a pattern on the hi-hat, but what if I play it on the tom rim, or what if I don't play the hi-hat at all? I could play 2 and 4 and occasionally ride the snare drum, for instance.

MD: Do musicians and producers come to

you now for your style?

Yuval: I hope so. I want people to call me for my style and my sound. I'm not trying to be different, but I am trying to push it to the left as much as possible without making it crazy or not musical. A song has a vibe; I usually follow the vocals, which have a vibe. That's how I create the sonic landscape in my mind for that song with the drums. I don't like high, treble sounds; my cymbals are dark and my drums are tuned pretty low. If it's a high sound [that's needed], I will play rims or use a shaker.

Studio Sounds

MD: You don't play hi-hat often?

Yuval: I do, but my balance for hi-hat is low in the mix. If you want a fat backbeat, stay low on the hi-hat. That works for me. As I said, I usually go for lower drum sounds; I like the fatness. Also, I don't like smaller drums. And I might play with a brush in one hand and a stick in the other. I put stuff on the drums, I throw keys on the hi-hat—I like to experiment. I might cut the rim away from a drumhead and put [what's left of the head] on the snare drum, which lowers the tone. And I'll throw a Roots EQ mute on the head. They are precut to the size of the

head. It gets that '70s sound. Sometimes I hit the snare drum in different spots, either way back or closer in. I once heard Jim Keltner say, "I tune a drum so it makes me want to play it." I believe a lot of the sound comes from your feel, the way you hit the drum, how much energy you put into the strike.

MD: When creating parts in the studio, is it more a thought process or intuition?

Yuval: Always intuition, then trial and error, and a lot of listening while playing. I try to play as if I am away from the kit, to hear what's going on. What's happening in the room with the sound, with the music? But the key is listening and reacting to what's happening around you. Not reacting like in jazz, but reacting sonically. You want to hear the whole [production] as you're doing it.

MD: Do you get involved in production?

Yuval: Oh, yeah, I work a lot at Vibromonk studio in Williamsburg, where they know my sound. I might change the snare drum or suggest a sound for the bass guitar. When you work in a band in session, you have to know when to step in and when to step back. Then you venture out as a freelancer, but you have all that experience of trying to do something the best you can and being



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Recordings

Big Lazy Don't Cross Myrtle /// **Suzanne Vega** Lover, Beloved /// **Pink Noise** Here Is Happiness, What Will Happen If Someone Finds Out? /// **Jim Keller** Heaven Can Wait /// **Lionz** (with Lionel Loueke and Ben Zwerin) Lionz /// **Wave Sleep** Wave Never Notice

creative. I was always in a few bands, in different styles. One band feeds another.

Beat Making

MD: How do you think about space in the beat, placement, and creating a wide beat?

Yuval: I go for the widest sound possible and for the pocket to be as wide as possible. I always play behind the beat. It's not something I've worked on. When I started playing with a metronome I realized I was behind the beat. It's a challenge for me to

play on top. I can do it, but it's not natural for me. In *Joan of Arc* there's a click, and sometimes they want to push sections. Sometimes the click speeds up and you have to be with it. I love the click. The danger in playing behind the beat is you don't want to drag. There's a fine line between dragging the song and playing behind the beat.

MD: Do people come to you for the behind-the-beat, relaxed sound?

Yuval: I don't know. It's my sound, I guess—behind the beat. I always go for a direct sound. Nothing too pristine, snare drum typically a little dirty. Sometimes that's what's called

for. You'll play a ringy drum or a totally dead drum in a certain way, which is why I go with this sound in *Joan of Arc*. I didn't want it to be show drums or Broadway drums. You expect a certain sound on Broadway, but that's why I went for this different sound—that's what I hear.

MD: What are you currently practicing?

Yuval: I practice in the treehouse booth at the Public Theater. I warm up with singles and doubles, different combinations. I have a drum studio in Brooklyn where I

work on things I have to nail down, like a specific part for a song, or I just play. I might program something and play along. Come up with ideas. I practice playing slow with a click. Play a slow backbeat for a while. If you're honest with yourself, you will practice things you need to work on. I worked on 6/8 African rhythms for a year.

MD: You came to New York City in 1998.

What advice do you give to drummers who want to follow in your footsteps?

Yuval: Create your own voice. Find places where you can do that. For me it was in a band context. If people see you play on YouTube, make sure that is something you want them to see. If you're not playing well or if you don't like the music, why bother? If you play out, play something meaningful. Find a way to do that. It's not easy anywhere, much less in New York, where the cost of living is so high and the competition is fierce. But if you play out with a band or a vocalist, make sure it's really something you want to do and that will lead to something else. And if it's a gig that's great and makes you sound great, you will be happier doing it. And even if you play for free, play for the music.



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Interview and photos
by Sayre Berman

Awolnation's Isaac Carpenter

Drums: Masters of Maple

- A. 6.5x14 bell brass snare
- B. 9x13 gum/rosewood tom
- C. 14x16 gum/rosewood floor tom
- D. 16x22 maple/gum bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 15" New Beat hi-hats
- 2. 14" Trashformer with a 12" Spiral Stacker on top
- 3. 19" K Dark crash
- 4. 22" K ride
- 5. 20" K Dark Thin crash
- 6. 20" Oriental China

Sticks: Vic Firth 5A

Hardware: DW 9000 series boom stands and hi-hat (with Mega Clamp attachment for the stacker), Tama Iron Cobra Rolling Glide kick pedal

Drumheads: Remo Clear Emperor tom batters and Clear Ambassador resonants, Coated X14 snare batter, Powerstroke 3 Black Dot kick batter and Starfire Chrome front

"When we were rehearsing for the latest album," says modern pop group Awolnation's drummer, Isaac Carpenter, "Masters of Maple owner Sahir Hanif brought his bell brass snare, and it seemed like our band sounded twenty-five-percent better. You can hit it on the side [of the head] or in the middle, and it always has such a good tonal quality. It's not overly loud; it just has such great presence. It has all the cliché attributes that you'd want in a snare: great top-end volume with nice low end that hits you in the chest."

"We're not using any electronics," Carpenter continues. "Maybe I'm old-fashioned, but when I go to a live show I would rather see a singer try and fail with conviction than see him sing to a bunch of tracks and be 'perfect.' I'd also rather see someone try to approximate the sounds of the album—perhaps by using a different instrument—than to play the exact sounds with samples. I use tons of samples when I record, and [Awolnation leader] Aaron Bruno adds beautiful electronics. But live, you might as well see someone do it for real. So many bands are playing to tracks. It sounds perfect, but it doesn't give you any sort of charge. There's no risk; there's no danger."

Regarding his choice of cymbals, Isaac says, "I've been using Zildjian forever. The Ks can be delicate, or they can be washy. For instance, if I hit my ride really hard on the bell, it can be extremely piercing. But the thing I'm most excited about now is my lethal trash guy—the Trashformer! I never thought I'd add something like that into my setup. It sounds like a different hi-hat stab. It's even caused my left arm to get stronger because I always want to do accents on it. It's fast and kind of extreme, but it fits into the mix really well. Sometimes it almost sounds like a shaker. I usually hit it right before or right with the snare."

Carpenter's tuning generally leans toward the tighter side, but on the Awolnation gig he says he's cranking his drums higher than ever. "Tuning this way helps the drums cut through," he explains. "Our guitars and synths are loud. And our engineer, Bob Strakele, gates the toms, so he can add a lot of low end to them and it won't affect anything else. He has a crazy old vintage ADR Complex F760 compressor/expander on the overheads, so he can make one song really hyped and then make the next one really subdued. People think he's using triggers on the drums, but he's just using a lot of gating and EQ."





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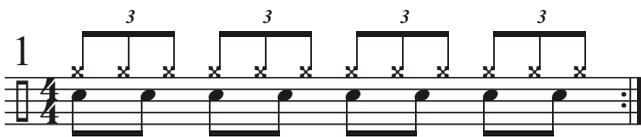
Swing Interpretations

Modern Groove Applications

by Stephane Chamberland



There's an interesting relationship between two-note (binary) and three-note (ternary) subdivisions that can help you develop better vocabulary and feel on the drumset. To understand this relationship, play an 8th-note triplet with your right hand while playing a straight 8th-note subdivision with your left hand, as demonstrated in Exercise 1. Try switching the hands, or move one of the hand's phrases to the bass drum or hi-hat foot. For example, play the triplet with your left foot while playing straight 8th notes with your right hand. Another option is to play the triplet with your left hand on the hi-hat while playing straight 8th notes with the bass drum. These variations can open the door to some interesting ostinatos.

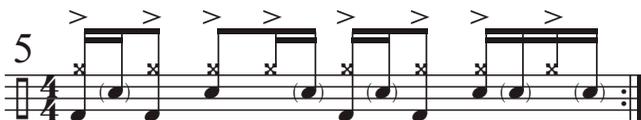
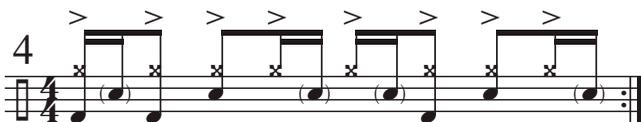


You can also interpret straight 8th notes by using an 8th-note triplet subdivision. In other words, two 8th notes will equal an 8th-note triplet without the second partial. Ted Reed's seminal book *Progressive Steps to Syncopation for the Modern Drummer* contains plenty of material to help you practice this interpretation. It's important to master this concept in order to play the different swing variations we'll explore in this article. Start by taking a look at the following exercise, and notice the difference in two interpretations.

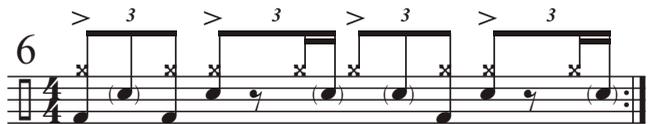


When you apply this interpretation to funk grooves, you will discover many interesting ways to swing the notes in order to change the feel and essence of the groove. Let's explore some of the ways to swing straight 8th- and 16th-note patterns.

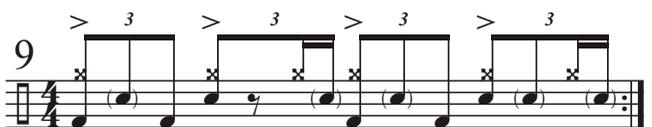
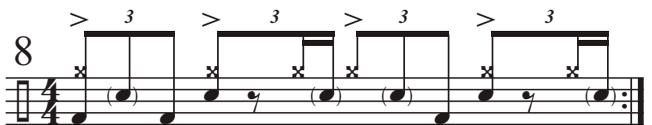
First we'll play a groove as written with a straight feel. Play along to a metronome, and make sure to play the ghost notes softly. You can also add accents to the hi-hat rhythm and modify the bass drum pattern for variations of the following exercises.



Shuffle and jazz are closely related, so it's important to practice comping patterns with both jazz and shuffle ride patterns. As we shift into an 8th-note triplet subdivision, we'll start with a shuffle pattern. You'll also have to adjust the feel of the snare and bass drum parts. If a snare or kick note falls between two 8th notes on the ride, keep it between the cymbal partials, as demonstrated in the following exercises.



Also try using a jazz ride pattern by removing the third triplet partials of beats 1 and 3 from the shuffle pattern. With this concept, you can turn any shuffle groove into a jazz pattern.



Next we'll try swinging 16th notes. This interpretation only affects the "e" and "a" of each beat—8th notes will remain even. In the following exercises, we'll swing the 16th notes by displacing them by one 32nd note. Steve Jordan and other masters often play with this type of feel.



Once you understand these concepts, apply them to other grooves, and compose your own patterns with a swing feel.

Stephane Chamberland is an internationally recognized drummer, clinician, educator, and author who currently leads the Stephane Chamberland Jazz Quartet. He is the co-author of the books *The Weaker Side*, *Pedal Control*, and *Drumset Duets* (Wizdom Media). For more info, visit stephanechamberland.com.



Playing Melodically

Part 2: Freddie Hubbard's Solo on "Make It Good"

by Peter Erskine



Last month we took a jazz melody, Charlie Parker's "Billie's Bounce," and implied its melodic rhythm on the snare. This month we'll phrase trumpet great Freddie Hubbard's solo on "Make It Good" from the 1967 Duke Pearson album *The Right Touch* on the drums. First let's recap some ideas for playing melodically on the drumset.

1. When playing a horn, higher notes are generally louder than lower notes. Use your lead hand for the higher notes and accent them.

2. Utilize diddles. Legato phrasing is more easily achieved by occasionally using double strokes as opposed to only using alternating strokes. (My lessons at artistworks.com regularly reinforce the importance of legato phrasing.)

3. If a solo seems too daunting to learn at first, try playing a simple bebop melody, such as "Billie's Bounce" from Part 1 of this series, on the snare. If using brushes, employ dead strokes by pressing the brush into the drumhead. Also use dynamics and creative stickings to achieve the most melodic rendering.

4. Remove ornamentations, such as grace notes or appoggiaturas, from the solo to reveal the musician's primary intention. Ornamentation is simply icing on the cake. The primary rhythmic thrust of the solo or fill can be revealed

when the adornments are removed. Look for the soloist's destination points, and listen for how the melody relates to the solo.

Now let's check out Hubbard's solo. Ask yourself, *What's the form? How many bars make up a chorus?* Most jazz standards follow a thirty-two-bar harmonic structure that's similar to George Gershwin's "I Got Rhythm," which has an A-A-B-A structure with eight bars per section. "Make It Good" has a thirty-bar form with an A-A-B-C structure. While the A and B sections are each eight measures long, the C section is six measures. Try to identify the form when listening to the song.

Hubbard's solo reflects a wealth of musical knowledge. It's melodically and harmonically brilliant, and there's plenty of rhythmic pushing and pulling of the time, which is almost impossible to notate. Hubbard adheres to all of the hallmarks of a great jazz solo—there's swing, hipness, and wit. And his solo provides drummers with a terrific means to learn melodic expression on the drums. Be sure to check out the great Grady Tate's drum performance on this track as well.

Here's one chorus of Hubbard's solo. (Go to modern drummer.com for the full solo.)

Chord changes for the solo:

- Staff 1: C7, F13, C7, F13
- Staff 2: E7(#9), A7(#5), E7(#5), A7(#5)
- Staff 3: D9, D#9, C7, F13 (Lay back:)
- Staff 4: E7(#9), A7(#5), D9, D#9
- Staff 5: C7, F13, C7, F13

E 7(#9) A7(#5) E 7(#9) A7(#5)

D9 G7 C7 F13 C7 A7 D7 G7

And here's the solo notated for the snare.

9 3 Lay back:

13 3 3

17 >

21 ^ ^ ^ ^

25 3

Make a copy of this example and write down the accents and stickings that give your playing the most melodic shape. Experiment! Record yourself and listen back. *Does it swing? Can you hear the melody?* And remember: if you can sing it, you can swing it. I recommend that you make melodic playing a regular part of your daily practice routine.

Attentive listeners might detect an appreciable amount of sass in Hubbard's playing. The man had some attitude, and it showed when he played. Ask yourself, *How do I convey that feeling on a drum?* Next month I'll demonstrate my stickings, accents, and attitude suggestions for interpreting this solo on the drums. Have fun!

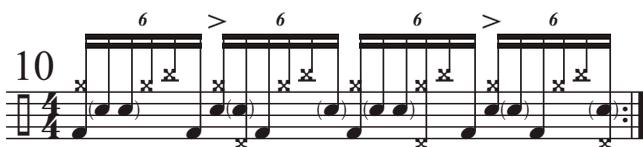
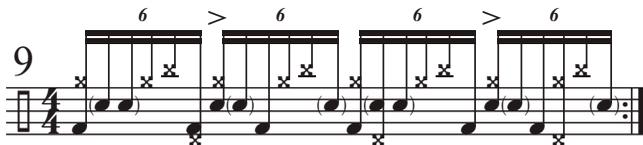


Peter Erskine is a two-time Grammy Award winner and an MD Readers Poll Hall of Famer who's played on over 600 recordings. He is currently a professor at University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music, and he teaches an online jazz drumming program at ArtistWorks.com.

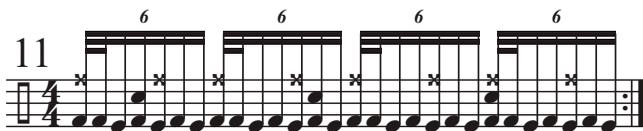




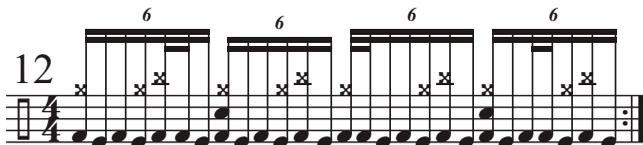
These rhythms get especially interesting when accenting the four side on less common partials. Exercises 9 and 10 have a syncopated right-hand pattern between the hi-hats and a stack. The stack accents the four side on the fifth 16th-note triplet partial. The kick and snare create a funky groove, and the three side is played with the left foot.



One of my favorite ways to play polyrhythms is within double bass grooves. In Exercise 11, the four side is voiced with bass drum doubles. The snare plays the three side starting on the third 16th-note-triplet partial.



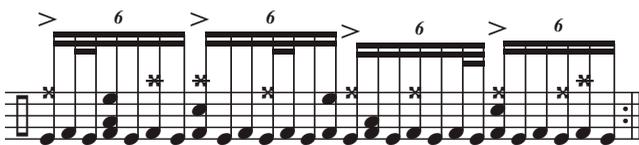
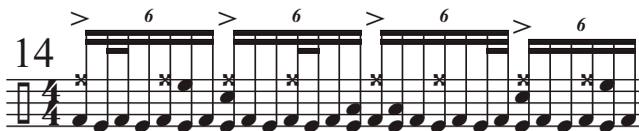
In Exercise 12, both sides of the three-over-four polyrhythm start on the fifth 16th-note triplet partial of beat 1. We'll use the hi-hat and stack pattern from Exercises 9 and 10 to accent the four side of the polyrhythm.



The next two examples use a similar double bass approach. However, this time we'll play alternating three-stroke ruffs instead of doubles. Exercise 13 applies this to the four side of the polyrhythm on the second 16th-note triplet partial. The three side is played with the snare starting on the downbeat.



Exercise 14 is an embellished groove that moves the three-stroke ruffs in the bass drum to the three side, starting on the second partial. The four side starts on the downbeat with quarter-note cymbal accents.



Exploring all eight of the three-note permutations and all six of the four-note permutations can be a lengthy process. We've only scratched the surface of what you can do with these ideas to expand your rhythmic palette. Be creative, and come up with your own ways to explore all of the possibilities as well.



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.



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RTOM

Building Confidence

The Right Kind, the Right Way

by Russ Miller

I recently performed a gig with the great comedian Bob Newhart where I was sight-reading big band charts with him and his opening act. I've done shows with Bob many times over the years. They don't have a ton of music in them, but we always have to read the opening act's book as well. I was handed a book of eight charts

because we killed it. If the musical director is smiling, then I know that I'll most likely be back for the next one.

The reason I bring up this particular gig is to demonstrate how confidence plays a serious role in the execution of any performance. Confidence is defined as "full trust; belief in the powers, trustworthiness, or reliability

line. They brought you in, so if you destroy the gig, they might not be asked to continue working for the artist. The other band members are also putting their trust in you to make their jobs easier and make them sound as good as possible. Finally, the promoter has the money locked into the gig.

Everyone involved is counting on you to do your part to make it a successful and profitable event. If you barely made it through, you've failed. This is why it's so hard to break into high-level gigs. You have to have a history of dependability before you'll even be considered for these types of situations.

"You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, *I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.*"

—Eleanor Roosevelt (American politician, diplomat, and activist)

that I'd never seen before. The songs had varying grooves, a wide range of tempos, and several different time signatures. One piece even had a metric modulation intro based on the quarter-note triplet.

The expectation for these gigs is that everyone should perform at an extremely high level. Flawless execution is required. While there might be a few affirming fist bumps afterwards, I don't expect everyone to jump up and down

of a person or thing." But simply having confidence in yourself is not enough. The artist, the bandleader, other band members, and even the promoter have to be confident in you as well.

Ultimately it's the artist's career that's on the line. If the show tanks because of mistakes you made, no one in the audience walks out of the venue criticizing the drummer. They will most likely put the blame on the artist.

The bandleader's job is also on the

How Is Confidence Achieved?

Let's start by clearing up a modern misconception. Popularity doesn't define mastery. There are tons of celebrities on the Internet with little or no actual talent, yet they grace the pages of tabloids. I'm not saying that visibility on things like YouTube and Facebook isn't great—it is. But you need to be getting the right kind of visibility. Videos of you performing at gigs or a behind-the-scenes clip from a recording session are great to include on your channel. The most important thing is to show yourself playing music

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with other musicians. Jamming to play-along tracks or soloing by yourself won't gain you a lot of confidence from other players and bandleaders who may be looking to hire a drummer.

I'm not saying you shouldn't have fun making videos. Everything helps to build your profile. But if you're looking to be hired for top gigs, you need to get out and play with bands and other musicians and start making connections. You need to build some history of your abilities and work ethic to develop confidence in yourself and to gain the confidence of others.

Take Every Gig

Each gig provides an opportunity to learn something, so take whatever offers come your way. You need to be put on the spot a bit too, whether that involves sight-reading charts, playing different styles, or improvising. Use each gig to

help build your vocabulary so that you're even better prepared for the next one. This is part of what builds long-term confidence in your abilities.

As you build up your experience level from playing in different situations, you'll have better confidence to handle more challenging gigs. This helps to relieve the pressure of high-level performances, and other players will notice when you make them play better too. The former NFL quarterback Payton Manning said something great about pressure: "Pressure is something you feel when you don't know what the hell you're doing." It's extensive experience playing music with others that prepares you to deal with the various pressures that you'll come across throughout your career. So get out there and make music as often as possible. That's where true confidence comes from.



Russ Miller has recorded and/or performed with Ray Charles, Cher, Nelly Furtado, and the Psychedelic Furs and has played on soundtracks for *The Boondock Saints*, *Rugrats Go Wild*, and *Resident Evil: Apocalypse*, among others. For more information, visit russmiller.com.

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Drum Center of Portsmouth Portsmouth, New Hampshire



Shane Kinney picked an ideal location to open his store in 2009, after he'd been playing in bands and working in drum retail in New England for more than a decade. In Portsmouth there was no drums-only competition and no sales tax, and the scenic coastal town is a great day-trip destination—making a visit to the shop an easier sell to a drummer's significant other.

Even with all that in his favor, Kinney endured a rough start, opening at the height of the Great Recession on what he says was "a shoestring budget—and not even a new shoestring." Eight years later, the store's fortunes have improved significantly. Kinney has six employees and recently moved into a much larger space, an 18,000-square-foot building he purchased with the intention of fostering a greater sense of community among drummers.

When I opened, I was at a place in my life where I had to make this work. It was just me for the first ten months. I couldn't have imagined this business turning into what it has. But I had the balls to do it. And my ethos was able to attract the right employees. That is really what brought us to where we are. I couldn't have done this by myself. I hired the right people, and I kept them.

This new space is a major investment. We've been doing it one way for seven years, and now we're making it up to be totally different. We're still going to have a ton of boutique stuff. Boutique is really where my heart is. But I'm going to have a museum room with a lot of my vintage pieces. And I want to tell the history of the brands. When you see the Sonor display, you'll see the history of Sonor—the conflict they had to go through during World War II. I want to create a reason for people to come in and buy things, and an environment to make people want to spend time here. It's getting harder and harder to do that right now. I believe

there's incredible value for a drummer to have a retailer. It's very important for them to have that type of relationship. And it's important for people like me to instill in the customer that we actually care about what they're doing.

Portsmouth is one of the most highly regarded small towns in America. That's what led me here. It's a big sales tool. Being halfway between Boston and Portland, we get people coming from both areas. Berklee students, in particular—they understand the value in picking out stuff at stores. And having no sales tax is awesome. If somebody wants to buy a \$3,000 drumset in Massachusetts or Maine, they've got to pay a lot more to do it. I immediately have a 6 to 7 percent price advantage.

We've found tremendous value in social media. It was a timing thing. When I started in retail, the internet was just getting started; it wasn't a competitor. But I saw where it was going. I think I have the wisdom accrued from the old-

school experience, but I have an eye for the future. And you realize [certain employees] have certain strengths—they can spend time making and editing videos, taking pictures...it's a great sales tool.

Customers are armed with more info than ever before. When they come in the door they know everything they need to know; they're just looking for a contrarian type of opinion or a confirmation. People will come in asking questions about particular drums, and they'll say, 'Well, I've been reading these online reviews....' And I ask them, 'Well, the person that wrote this review, what sort of experience did they have with the instrument? Do you even know who this person is?' I may have used the drum or cymbal in a studio setting or live. I might have a lot more experience with it, so we can make a qualified decision to answer a customer's question.

It's important for us to support drummers and the community. There's a nonprofit school here, the Portsmouth Music and Arts Center, and I supply them with all their gear. They had a concert recently, and it was just so moving to watch these kids really have a go at it and make music. And I'm thinking to myself, *People that buy from these faceless places, like Amazon or something, it's just such a bad allocation of their money. Spend it with people who actually care about the drum community and music as a whole.* When you give your business to a drum store, you're supporting drummers and the drum community. That's a really big deal.

Interview by Patrick Berkery



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Written by renowned drummer Jonathan Joseph (Jeff Beck, Joss Stone, Richard Bona) and University of Miami director of drumset studies Steve Rucker, *Exercises in African-American Funk* is designed to introduce musicians who've studied jazz, R&B, rock, soul, and blues to a concept that applies West African rhythms to various genres.

The series of exercises contained in the book guide you through a fusion of African and American elements. On the American side, we have shuffle and shuffle-funk. On the African side, we have the rhythms from Cameroon known as mangambe and bikutsi. Mastering these exercises will strengthen your groove, provide you with an understanding of the three-against-four polyrhythm, give you an awareness of the second partial of the triplet, and introduce you to a fresh new way to hear and feel music.

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Chapter 4: Half-Time Shuffle-Funk

In this chapter, we move the backbeat of the shuffle groove over to beat 3. What this does is transform the shuffle into a half-time, triple-based funk groove, which we'll call "shuffle-funk." The "shuffle-funk" made famous by the legendary 1960s drummer Bernard Berrett, is one version of this type of groove.

The first hand pattern contains six ghost notes. The groove becomes more and more dense as we add ghost notes. As in the previous exercises, the ghost notes should be played extremely soft. The primary focus of the groove is on the "boom" and the "chick."

As mentioned before, it's very helpful to your practice to alternate between a simple groove and the more difficult exercise. For instance, you can switch between each line of the exercises and this traditional marching groove.



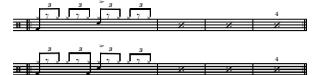
Although these exercises are written with 16th-note triplets for consistency, you might also conceptualize them as 32nd-note triplets. That interpretation would put the backbeat on beats 2 and 4 of a bar of 4/4. So Hand Pattern 3 would look like the following.



As before, we'll start with a simple hand pattern and gradually add ghost notes. Practice the exercises between 70 and 120 bpm.



Here are some exercises that use Hand Pattern 1 with different bass drum variations.



Chapter 6: Bikutsi

In this chapter, we introduce the African rhythm known as bikutsi. Bikutsi is a musical genre from Cameroon that features the 3:4 polyrhythm. It has roots in the traditional music of the four people who live around the city of Yaounde, along with various elements of the pop-rock idiom.

The characteristic rhythm of the bikutsi is a grouping of triplets in a four-note pattern. Elements of this chapter are directly related to Chapters 1 and 2. If you aren't clear on the 3:4 polyrhythm, please review those chapters.



Here's an example of a bikutsi-pop drumset rhythm.



By moving the snare accent to beat 3, we can create a simple bikutsi shuffle-funk pattern.



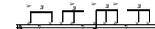
Here's a shuffle-funk variation with the bass drum on the first beat only.



We can also open the hi-hat where the accents occur.



Here's the same variation with the bass drum on the first beat only.



Check out a video of concepts and exercises included in the book at modern drummer.com, and order a copy today— for only \$14.95.

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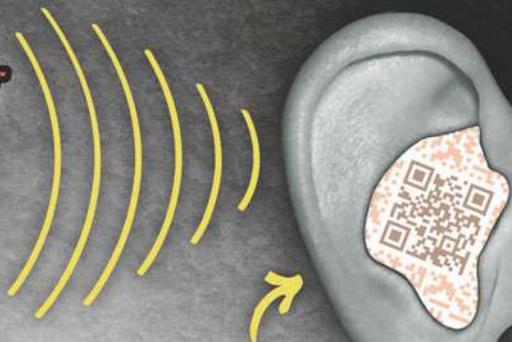
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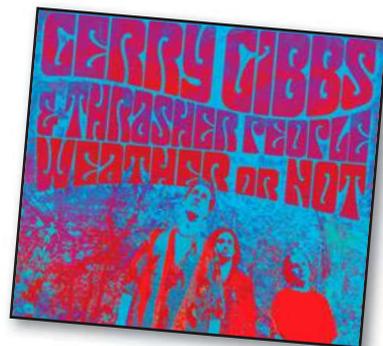
RECORDINGS Taking the Reins

Gerry Gibbs & Thrasher People *Weather or Not*

Whatever the musical source, this drummer unflinchingly makes it his own.

On his previous disc, *Live in Studio*, drummer/composer Gerry Gibbs transformed a selection of “elevator music” warhorses into an engaging, swinging affair. Here he has a richer lode to mine, reimagining the music of Weather Report in a mostly acoustic trio setting. No fawning homage, it’s wildly inventive, stylistically sprawling, and often downright gonzo. Driven by Gibbs, who’s got the kinetic energy of a caffeinated hummingbird, the keyword is exuberance. Expect numerous lightning tempos. Gibbs’ tight, rollercoaster arrangements are supported dazzlingly by bassist Hans Glawischnig and pianist Alex Collins, the latter adding touches of Rhodes and organ.

This two-disc package (with its inexplicable but tres cool psychedelic-’60s cover) also includes a set of Gibbs’ own compositions, covering expansive ground from aggressive swing to funk, gospel, Latin, and the wacky wah-wah cop-show vibe of “Kojak.” Like Gibbs’ spirited, grooving drumming, this outing brims with joie de vivre. (Whaling City Sound) **Jeff Potter**



Peter Erskine and the Dr. Um Band *Second Opinion* Peter Erskine New Trio *In Praise of Shadows*

Two new releases from the esteemed Mr. Erskine where he (sort of) plugs in.

The first Dr. Um disc got Peter Erskine grooving again, and after a Grammy nomination, why not return with *Second Opinion*, another outing of funky, expertly played material where the drumming shines? “Hypnotherapy” bobs along slow and steady, as Erskine paces things with deliberate snare backbeats that say *I’m not in a rush*. There are softer ballads (“Street of Dreams”) and swingers (“Did It Have to Be You?”), but for the most part this is Erskine returning to his electric roots—with years of maturity and playing experience adding a little extra sauce to the pot.

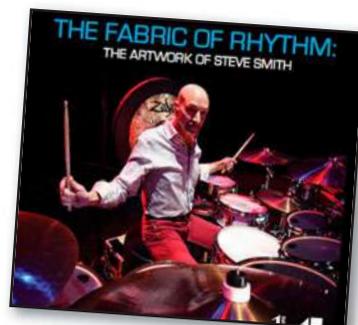
In Praise of Shadows is a second disc from Erskine’s enchanting New Trio (think intimate jazz piano trio briefly dabbling in lighter fusion territory with some complex arrangements), and features keyboardist Vardan Ovsepian and the drummer’s son Damian, who has developed into an extremely accomplished electric bassist. “What If” is all intricate lines and rhythms, and hearing Erskine weave in and out of the moving chords with clever solo breaks is beholding a master at work. Also check out “Silhouette Shadows” for an end-vamp solo with some call-and-response melodic tom rolls. No, these releases aren’t really a return to the Weather Report days, but a funky Erskine in whatever form is always welcome. (Fuzzy Music) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



Steve Smith *The Fabric of Rhythm*

Solo drum pieces that work together with canvas art but that also do just fine by themselves.

Created as a supplemental audio component to Steve Smith’s canvas art pieces made using lighted sticks, *The Fabric of Rhythm* comes as a collection of solo drum tracks featuring improvisations and composed material. “Banyan” mixes South Indian Konnakol vocalizing with drumset patterns based on groups of five, while “Condor” features Smith stretching a 12/8 beat with marching band elements and modulations. Then dig on “Kinetic Dance,” a piece in 4/4 that contains intricate groupings of sevens and nines and some smooth singles, and the wicked “Interdependence,” where Smith plays a jazz beat with his left hand and solos melodically with his right. The full package comes with a swanky, limited-edition hardcover book featuring examples of the art itself, including Smith’s own thoughts on each canvas and audio piece, photos of the drummer across the years, an essay chronicling his music career, and a vinyl record. And though it’s enjoyable to hear these tracks while also looking at the visual piece they’re linked to and reading Smith’s breakdown, as a stand-alone disc of drum music *The Fabric of Rhythm* has gotten our attention already. (vitalinformation.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



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Def Leppard *And There Will Be a Next Time... Live From Detroit*



RICK ALLEN brings rock power on a live set of arena anthems.

Def Leppard has now been around for forty (!) years, but there aren't many official live video releases on the market. *Live From Detroit* presents a show from the band's 2016 tour across one DVD and two CDs, and aside from a few requisite new tracks, the DVD set list is a fan-friendly selection of greatest hit after greatest hit. Rick Allen sticks to album versions of the classics, with the occasional improvised fill thrown in, and his triggered kit is lean and mean but has multiple hi-hats and pedals for him to choose from. The drummer, who lost his left arm in a 1984 car accident, alternates between playing a snare sound with a left-foot pedal and a normal snare with his right hand, so he's really working up there. Check out the insistent dotted thump of "Rocket" and the simple, almost funky groove of "Man Enough" for a taste of Allen's tightness. Then dig the speedy bass drum licks on "Bringin' on the Heartbreak" and the need for more cowbell on a rocking "Photograph." (\$26.98, Eagle Vision) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

Heads of State *Four in One*

Four legendary statesmen show how it's done.

It's a straight-ahead concept: four jazz veterans with serious cred join forces to swing hard. Can't lose. Especially when the authoritative gents are Gary Bartz (alto, soprano sax), Larry Willis (piano), David Williams (bass), and the great groove-popping, jaw-dropping, non-stopping **AL FOSTER** on drums. On its second disc, the supergroup handles diverse covers superbly, and each member contributes an original composition, including a rarity: Foster's own "Aloysius," a catchy groover that shifts between jazz-samba and swing. Foster both leads the way and interacts brilliantly, from the percolating bop of Charlie Parker's "Moose the Mooche" to the airy interplay of Wayne Shorter's "Dance Cadaverous." Whether expertly drawing from tradition or exploring the edge—as he did during his thirteen-year stint with Miles Davis—Foster has always been about a joyous right-in-it feel; observe his ever-present performance smile. What a pleasure hearing Foster with these peers in musical royalty. Hail to the chiefs! (Smoke Sessions) **Jeff Potter**

Hard Proof *Stinger*

This Austin band deals in lots of tasty beat making.

Anyone tantalized by the thought of Afrobeat in 7/4 will love the album-opening title track of *Stinger*, and those holding a soft spot for jazz flute will be hooked by "Men of Trouble." "Incendiary" builds into an epic Santana-esque sendoff, with drummer and MD writer **STEPHEN BIDWELL** finding spaces for his accents alongside percussionists **TOMMY SPAMPINATO** and **TONY CRUZ**. "Trickle Down" flirts with Afro-dub, a bare and beautiful Bidwell funk track led by the drummer's crackling, reverb-enhanced snare. Joe Woullard's bari sax helps Bidwell drive the 12/8 "War Gin," and on "Lots" the drummer toys with dancehall accents, mixing it up on the dynamic swells, taking advantage to go big and slightly rogue. Bidwell gives a final nod to Fela sticksman Tony Allen on "Soul Thing," crafting a slick groove that dances around, but not on, the expected backbeats. (Modern Outsider) **Robin Tolleason**

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This gorgeously kept example of 1970s drum history comes to us from Orange County, California, drummer Thomas Smith, who originally purchased the Rogers Block-finish setup as a nine-piece kit. "I was very busy in cover bands, traveling throughout California," Smith explains, "so I decided to scale down and modify it over the years with Tama and Pearl hardware and Paiste and Sabian cymbals."

The outfit includes 9x13 and 10x14 rack toms, a 16x16 floor tom, a 16x24 bass drum, and a 6.5x14 Pearl Bronze Sensitone snare drum. And while Smith typically uses Remo skins, "I've found that the

Evans EMAD bass drum head gives the kick a nice and controlled, cannon-like sound," he says.

Smith purchased the drums, the original hardware, and a set of Zildjian cymbals from their second owner in 1979, and he says the rig has been cared for in cases all of its life. "The way I see it, I can't really afford my dream kit," he explains. "So I maintain and take excellent care of every single piece that I have. They still sound great—and to some band members they're too loud!"

Photo Submission: Hi-res digital photos, along with descriptive text, may be emailed to kitoftthemonth@modern drummer.com. Show "Kit of the Month" in the subject line.



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