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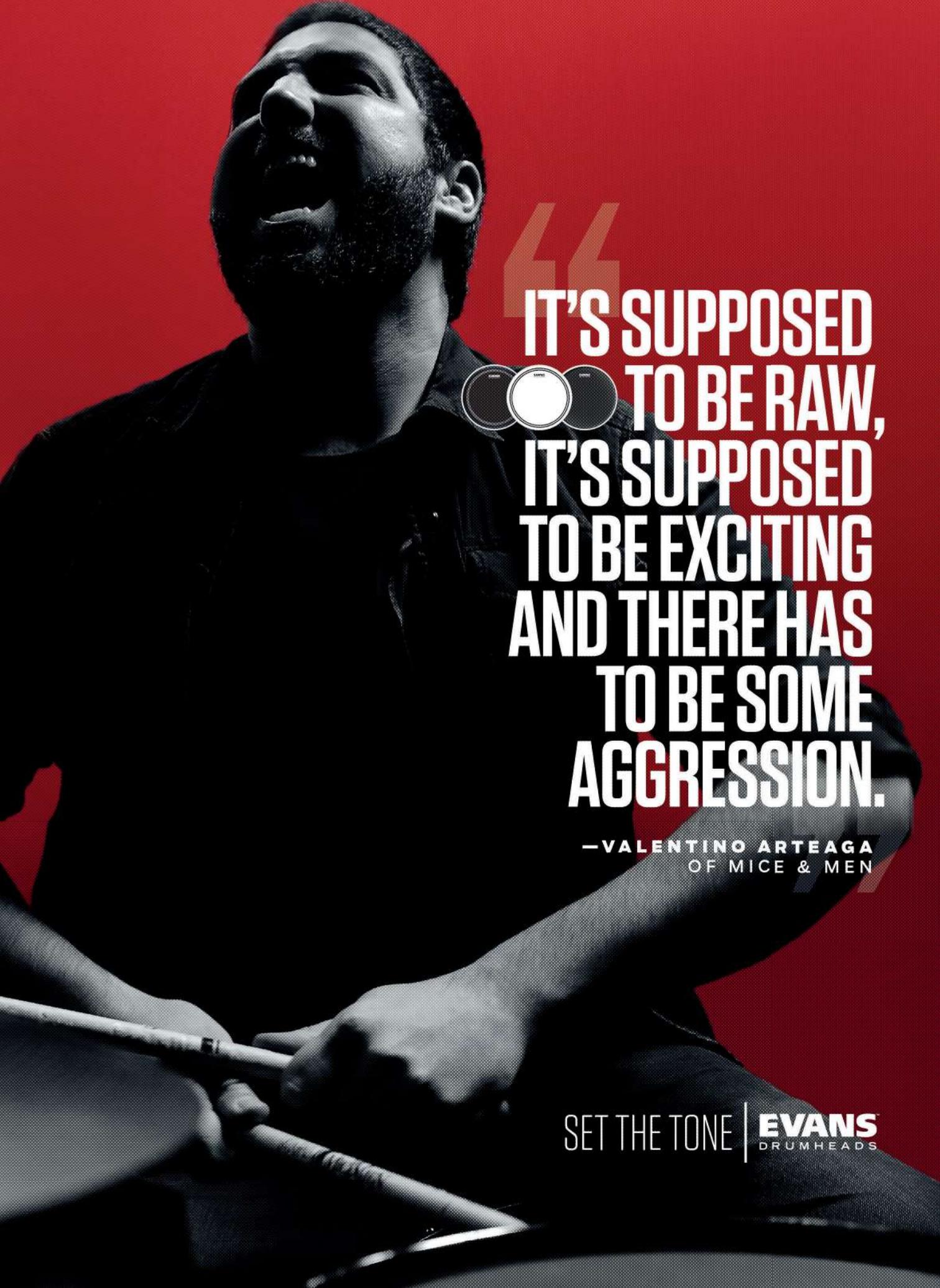
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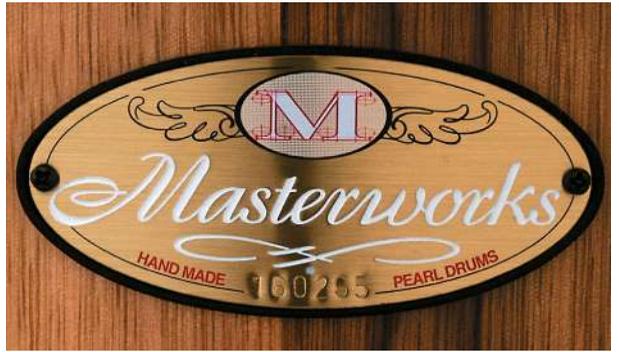
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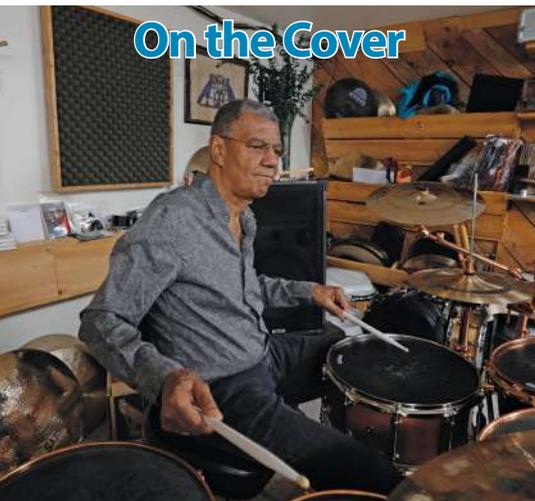
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FEATURES

100 YEARS OF JAZZ DRUMMING

Recorded jazz is precisely a century old this year. *MD* celebrates the art of swinging folks into bad health.

On the Cover



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The drummer—arguably the most potentially unpredictable player of the last half-century—marks his seventy-fifth year on planet earth with a recording and tour featuring a bona-fide jazz supergroup.
by Ken Micallef

40 50 CRUCIAL JAZZ DRUMMING RECORDINGS

From classic LPs of the golden age of bebop to cutting-edge contemporary releases, *MD* guides you through some of the genre's most important albums of all time—with one or two surprise gems thrown in for good measure.

50 ANTONIO SANCHEZ SOARS BEYOND *BIRDMAN*

The success of his unique 2014 film score blew open the doors of perception for many a curious drummer. His latest projects are no less exploratory—or inspiring.
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For the past nineteen years he's held the throne for one of rock's most enduring organizations. It hasn't always been easy, but rock 'n' roll eventually rewards its true survivors.
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The seasoned basher reunites with Thursday, backs a British boy band, drives the bus for Yellowcard, and releases a solid new sample library.
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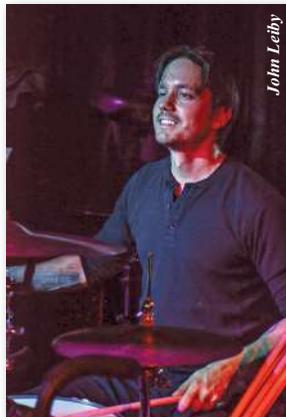


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AN EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

Jazz in the 21st Century

Many scholars argue that jazz, which was first documented on record one hundred years ago by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, is America's greatest musical gift to the world. I couldn't agree more. I mean, what other art form encapsulates the messy, diverse mix of cultures that makes up our modern society better than this innovative, expressive, and ever-evolving genre? Within jazz, you'll find European classical chord progressions and military-style instrumentation, African traditions of improvisation and polyrhythmic layering, the "Spanish tinge" (i.e., clave) of Cuban folkloric dances, and the spiritual, heartfelt inflections of call-and-response field songs created by African-Americans in the late 1800s. On paper, those elements shouldn't gel. And yet they do—beautifully.



John Leiby

From a drumming perspective, there are countless benefits to studying jazz, even if you never intend to play it in its traditional form. First off, most of the rhythmic vocabulary we use on the drums has its origins in jazz. The way we apply rolls and other rudiments to the drumset can be traced back to early pioneers like Baby Dodds and Zutty Singleton. Full-kit triplet licks and tribal tom beats were used to great effect by Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa, Cozy Cole, and other big band drummers during the Swing Era. And the over-the-barline phrasing found in contemporary prog and fusion was a hallmark of the bebop style invented by Kenny Clarke, Max Roach, and others in the '40s, '50s, and '60s.

Jazz also demands a high level of independence in order to be able to carry on a musical conversation with the snare, kick, and hi-hat while maintaining a consistent groove on the ride cymbal. And the ebb and flow of the swing feel, which is vital to a convincing Bonham-style rock groove or hip-hop breakbeat, is best internalized by listening to—and playing along with—classic jazz records. Similarly, you'll learn how to coax the most musical sounds possible from your kit, often at low volume, when drumming in an unamplified setting with an upright bass and acoustic piano.

For this jazz-focused issue, we culled a list of some of the greatest drum performances in the genre, and we analyzed the hip phrasing of post-bop legend Tony Williams. We also caught up with contemporary-jazz trailblazer Antonio Sanchez to discuss his latest drum-centric album, *Bad Hombre*, and sat down with ever-evolving jazz icon Jack DeJohnette, who's been paving new ground with the multigenerational supergroup Hudson, which includes guitarist John Scofield, keyboardist John Medeski, and bassist Larry Grenadier. We hope you enjoy this special issue!

Mike Dawson

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Managing Editor

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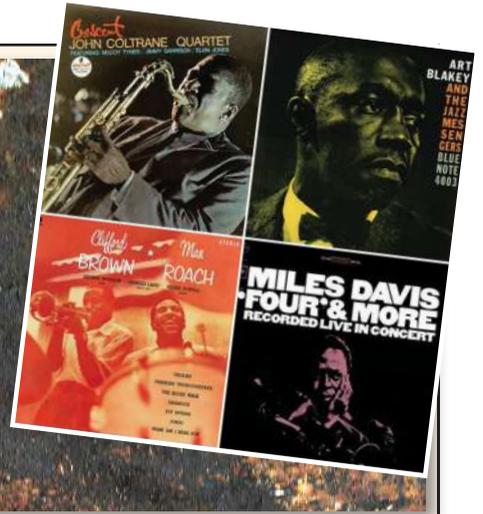
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What's Your Favorite Jazz Drumming Album?



When we recently asked our social media followers for their favorite jazz drumming record, enthusiastic responses quickly flooded in. We tallied up the drummers that appeared on each pick and made a top-five list. The late pioneer Elvin Jones played on the most albums, followed by Art Blakey, Tony Williams, Max Roach, and Buddy Rich, in that order. Around half of the picks were recorded in the 1960s, a little over 20 percent were recorded in the '50s, and the rest encompassed an even spread among the decades since the '70s. Here are some of the comments.

I don't recall ever feeling as deeply moved by the drums on a jazz album as I did when I listened to Elvin Jones work his wonders on John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*. Elvin's drumming here is nothing short of sublime. He seamlessly blended motivic development, complex polyrhythmic coordination, and highly musical comping into one.

Greg Zajac

Miles Smiles by Miles Davis. Tony Williams transforms the bebop vocabulary into a very powerful expression that fuels the band's improvisations. This is also when he started playing constant quarter notes on the hi-hat while beautifully bashing the hell out of his drums, which taught listeners that there are no limits to what can be done with a small drumset.

Chris Davidson

Bill Stewart on Peter Bernstein's album *Stranger in Paradise* has been killing me lately. His power is complemented by his accuracy. And his musicality is enhanced by the amazing sounds he draws from his kit.

Elijah Oguma

The first Miles Davis record that I got with Tony Williams was *The Complete Concert: 1964 (My Funny Valentine + "Four" & More)*. I'd never heard the drums played so powerfully and with the undeniable swing he encompassed. Tony could go from a whisper to a roar—all within the same tune.

Bill Fleming

A Love Supreme by John Coltrane. Elvin is one of my favorite drummers. His comping is so spontaneous and crisp, and it's a fun challenge to learn. Listening to his stuff has definitely boosted my triplet chops. Plus Coltrane's vocabulary is so haunting and catchy. It gives me chills to hear him rip.

Dan Silver

Chick Corea's *Now He Sings, Now He Sobs*. It's a trio with Miroslav Vitouš on bass and Roy Haynes on drums. You can't listen to an individual song from the album—each track flows into the next. And the way Haynes plays the drums makes the kit sound more like a melodic voice than anything else. His style of playing can be heard in Tony Williams' output, but Roy Haynes just has an ebb and flow that appeals more to me.

Lorenzo Siciliano

Dave Brubeck, *Time Out*. Joe Morello's laid-back, less-is-more approach made me realize that jazz doesn't have to be busy and abstract to still be good groove-oriented music.

Danny Moore

Wayne Shorter, *Speak No Evil*. Elvin Jones' left-hand complexity doesn't sacrifice any pocket. He reinforces the band without taking center stage. So hip.

Steve Gould

Third Round by Manu Katché. It's very melodic, warm, and touching music. Katché's drumming is unique. The way he paints music with his cymbals and approaches his drumming from a percussionist's perspective is refreshing and a big contrast to older bebop masters. Katché always has this special groove deep down in his heart.

Fabian Schindler

Chick Corea's Akoustic Band, *Live From the Blue Note Tokyo*. Vinnie Colaiuta plays with such a beautiful swing on this album. There's high energy, great flow, momentum, and touch, and he has great interactions with the rest of the band. Whenever I think I'm getting somewhere with my own playing, listening to this album is always a rude awakening as to how far off I am.

Will Beavis

Tony Williams on Miles Davis' *The Complete Concert: 1964 (My Funny Valentine + "Four" & More)*. His interaction with [pianist] Herbie Hancock and the rest of the band is unreal. His drums and cymbals sounds great, and Williams was only nineteen at the time.

John Richardson

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OUT NOW

Charlie Hall on the War on Drugs' *A Deeper Understanding*

While several drummers pave an unwavering groove foundation on the popular indie group's new release, its main kit man contributes on multiple levels.

On August 25, the indie rock collective the War on Drugs, which was founded in 2005 by guitarist/singers Adam Granduciel and Kurt Vile, released its fourth full-length, *A Deeper Understanding*. Since the band's last album, 2014's *Lost in the Dream*, Granduciel spent the better part of three and a half years writing and recording in New York and Los Angeles with the group's core members and an array of guests. (Vile left in 2008 for a successful solo career.) And although drum duties were primarily covered by longtime War sticksman Charlie Hall, a robust cast of musicians took over the kit at various points, including Anthony LaMarca (who also plays guitar and keyboard in the band), Darren Jessee, Otto Hauser, and *MD* contributor Patrick Berkery. "I love that some of my best friends also happen to be some of my favorite drummers, and you can hear them on different parts of the record," Hall says. "They're all amazing and totally different from one another in terms of their approach to time and feel."

Working in various studios allowed the group to take advantage of various types of gear and ambience. "I'm endlessly fascinated by the effect that different rooms and physical environments have on music-making," Hall says. "Everything affects it—not just the acoustics, but the physical layout as well. Every studio has a different flow: Is everyone hanging in the control room and remaining an active part of tracking? Is it comfortable? Is there enough space to be creative and work on ideas while staying out of the way when you need to? Are there distractions? What are you doing when you're not in the studio? This stuff all matters. It would be crazy to think that being in Los Angeles didn't have an effect on the shape this record took."

Other than drumming, Hall played guitar and vibes and sang on the record, and he explains that playing other instruments contributes just as much to his rhythmic DNA as drumming itself does. "While I hate the sound of my own voice," Hall says, "singing can help your understanding of melody. It's no coincidence that some of the most special drummers of all time were also vocalists—I'm thinking of Stevie Wonder and Levon Helm in particular. It's all one thing. My passport says 'Musician,' not 'Drummer.' Being able to talk about chord changes or being able to put yourself in other musicians' shoes is all part of being a good drummer. Music is another form of communication, so being able to understand and use the language is key." **Willie Rose**



More New Releases

The Convalescence This Is Hell (Charles Webber)

Able Baker Fox Visions (Jeff Gensterblum)

Paradise Lost Medusa (Waltteri Väyrynen)

Beneath Ephemeric (Mike Heller)

Lakeshore 41 (Joe Lionetti)



Unkle The Road: Part 1
(Jon Theodore, Justin Stanley)



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(Anthony "Abaddon" Bray)



Tera Melos Trash
Generator (John Clardy)

ON TOUR



Randy Johnson

Daxx Nielsen With Cheap Trick

More than forty years since its birth in Rockford, Illinois, the classic hard-rock group is as vibrant as ever, thanks to some recent, well-deserved recognition.

Since Cheap Trick finally got its due with a 2016 induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, the giant of '70s and '80s pop-rock has witnessed a rebirth of sorts. With a dense touring schedule and a new album, *We're All Alright!*, on the shelves, there seems to be no stopping the ageless Illinois rockers. Daxx Nielsen, son of founding guitarist Rick Nielsen, has officially held the drum chair since 2010. "It's an honor to be a part of Cheap Trick at such an amazing time in their legacy," he says. "I've been working with the band on and off since 2001, and since 2010 it's been a full-time career for me. We average about 150 shows a year and have recorded a few albums along the way."

Nielsen confirms that the group's renown has skyrocketed since its Hall of Fame induction. "Without a doubt, the band's popularity got a solid boost by it," he says. "Over the years I've seen legendary artists such as Aerosmith, Joan Jett, and Pearl Jam mention Cheap Trick's influence on them in their own Hall of Fame induction speeches."

On tour, Nielsen pays serious respect to original drummer Bun E. Carlos. "I try to honor the great drum parts that made Cheap Trick's sound and songs so iconic," Daxx says. "At the same time, my drumming incorporates all of my influences, physical makeup, and style, so it isn't going to sound exactly the same. Every night we

change up the set list. This leads to trying new ideas and approaching songs differently based on the pace of the show. That being said, I try to improvise while staying true to the proper parts."

Has the band eased up on its notorious touring schedule? Nielsen firmly says no. "Cheap Trick is still one of the hardest-working bands in the business. We typically play three nights on and one night off. Robin Zander's vocal strength is unbelievable. Some guys want to sing one night and then have a few days off. Robin's the exact opposite. Cheap Trick will always be a live band. We get our energy from playing on stage, and the crowd feeds off of that."

Regarding their working relationship, Daxx says that he tries not to think of Rick Nielsen as his father. "I treat this gig the same as every other job that I've done in the past," the drummer explains. "I give Rick, Robin, [bassist] Tom Petersson, our road crew, and our management the same respect and professionalism that I would give anyone that I play with. It's great to be in a band with my dad and the guys that have known me since I was born. There's a bond that goes back to my early childhood. When we play together, the memories and personal connections definitely help our interaction."

With its current tour extending through mid-November, the band doesn't look like it'll be slowing down anytime soon. "We've released two studio albums in the last fourteen months," Nielsen says. "Pair that with all the live shows we do, and I think you could easily say that the Cheap Trick work ethic is as strong as ever." **Mike Haid**

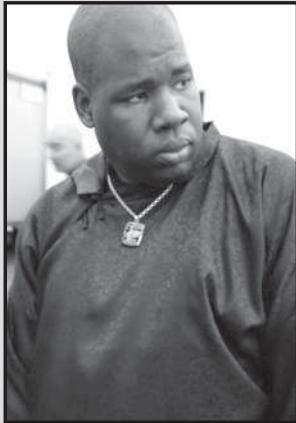
Also on the Road

Patrick Keeler with the Afghan Whigs /// **Robert Grey** with Wire /// **Joe Magistro** with the Magpie Salute ///
Dale Crover with the Melvins /// **Abe Laboriel Jr.** with Paul McCartney /// **Bill Stevenson** with Descendents ///
Blake Richardson with Between the Buried and Me /// **Seamus Menihane** with Vattnet

NEWS

IN MEMORIAM

John Blackwell Jr.



As we went into production for this month's issue, the *Modern Drummer* staff was saddened to hear about the passing of John Blackwell Jr. on July 4. In a social media post, Blackwell's wife, Yaritza, announced that the forty-three-year-old drummer passed away peacefully in her company. Blackwell played with Prince, Patti LaBelle, Justin Timberlake, and D'Angelo, among many others, and made educational drumming contributions with multiple instructional videos. Look for our feature tribute to John in an upcoming issue.

Kim Plainfield

This past April 8, renowned player and educator Kim Plainfield passed away unexpectedly at the age of sixty-three. Plainfield was known and respected by a significant number of players, especially those who grew up, studied, or worked on the East Coast, where he mentored hundreds at Drummers Collective, SUNY Purchase, and Berklee College of Music.

"Kim was particularly sensitive to people who came to Drummers Collective who were socially or economically disadvantaged," former student Tom Maynard says. "It was nothing for him to give a student money who may not have had anything to eat, I being among them. At times Kim would take time out from his busy schedule and work with students who needed help—for free! He was more interested in motivating his students to succeed in life, not merely self-gain."

A fierce defender of fusion music, Plainfield told *Modern Drummer* in an August 2007 feature interview, "Fusion is music where the majority of the best musicians *play*; that's what they want to do the most. These are the best players in the world. The drummer has more control over the music than anyone else. Therefore you have to assume the responsibility as the drummer."

And Plainfield walked the talk. During his career he recorded several albums with the famed fusion artists Bill Connors, Tania Maria, Didier Lockwood, and Bill O'Connell, as well as *Night and Day* with bassist Lincoln Goines, all of which were platforms for his relaxed yet intense jazz-rock, funk, Latin, and fusion playing.

Plainfield was born in Berkeley, California, and moved to New York City when he was twenty-two years old. He wrote two well-regarded method books, *Advanced Concepts* and *Fusion: A Study in Contemporary Music for the Drums*, and at Berklee conducted a seminar titled Positive Performance Thought. "I wanted to address the psychological health of the performing artist," he told *Modern Drummer*. "The seminar deals with performance anxiety, lack of confidence, fear, paranoia—all these different dynamics that creep into the life of the musician. Every musician has to deal with it, and I've seen the worst."

Plainfield will be sorely missed, not only for his ability to teach the mechanics of drumming, but also for his humane and generous approach to passing the knowledge on to future generations.



Paul La Raia

Sweetwater GearFest 2017 Draws Record Crowds and Sales

The 2017 edition of music retailer Sweetwater's GearFest trade show and festival was held this past June at the company's corporate headquarters in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The event broke every attendance and sales record set by the festival since its launch in 2002, and featured manufacturers' exhibits, clinics, demos, performances, and a musicians' flea market. Special guests included Terry Bozzio and Omar Hakim, and drumsets owned by Bozzio and Eric Singer were on display.

"One of the most exciting and humbling experiences I enjoy every year is personally greeting thousands of our customers at the front door as they arrive," Sweetwater founder and president Chuck Surack says. "Their enthusiasm for Sweetwater and GearFest is astounding, and they really appreciate our incredible employees and their personal, caring, and welcoming interactions with each and every attendee."



Dweezil Zappa performs at the close of day one in the Sweetwater pavilion.

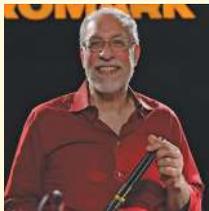
Vic Firth Joins in Global Make Music Day Celebration

This past June 21, the Vic Firth company gave away hundreds of pairs of sticks and sponsored drumming workshops in plazas and parks nationwide in celebration of Make Music Day. Participants included kids and adults, professionals and amateurs, and the event ranged from structured classes to free-flowing bucket-drumming circles. Held every June 21 since 1982, Make Music Day is part of the international Fête de la Musique, a free festival taking place in 750 cities across 120 countries.



Dan Gottsman

Who's Playing What



Dom Famularo (educator, author, clinician) is using **Promark** drumsticks.

Lenny Castro (Toto) and **John "JR" Robinson** (studio) have joined the Innovative Percussion family of artists.



Corey Fonville (Butcher Brown, Christian Scott) and **Wendell Holmes Jr.** (Ryan Follese) have joined the Yamaha artist roster.





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Tune in to the [Talking Shop](#) podcast with Brain and Dave Elitch.



Tammy Glover

of Thorcraft Cobra

“Changing up my gear keeps me inspired. That said, I’ve been using my dad’s vintage 1953 Gretsch red sparkle on recordings since the ‘90s. Initially it was a three-piece kit with a 16x22 kick, a 6x14 snare, a 10x13 rack tom, and a 16x16 floor tom. The original tom has the Stop Sign logo, and in the ‘60s my dad used a punch drill to add a second rack tom. The drums still have the original twin-pad tom mufflers, Gretsch floor tom legs and mounts, and disappearing bass drum spur mounts.

I use a Yamaha Stage Custom live, so there’s consistency on tour if we need to rent local gear. However, lately I’ve also been using a tiny Ludwig Breakbeats by Questlove set for smaller live gigs around Los Angeles with Thorcraft Cobra. Billy Zimmer, my bandmate, and I travel light! The kick drum is small—14x16—but it has a lot of punch.

I’m a big fan of Zildjian cymbals. I use 14” Mastersound K Custom hi-hats and a 16” A Custom crash, and I also have two of my dad’s hand-hammered “trans stamp” [vintage] cymbals. One is a 20” crash and the other is a 22” ride.

I rely on Remo drumheads. For our latest album, *The Distance*, I put Coated Ambassador batters on the snare and toms, Clear Ambassadors on the bottoms of the toms, and a Clear Diplomat on the bottom of my snare. For my Gretsch kick, I use a Remo Fiberskyn because it has such a cool, warm sound. I’ve used Remo RemOs Tone Control Rings to quickly take the ring out of my toms and snare, but I’ve also used the Evans Min-EMAD Tom and Snare Dampener, and that works well too. Finally, I’m also a fan of Vic Firth’s Extreme 5A drumsticks with Vic Grip, as well as my DW 5000 kick pedal.

Look for Glover on tour with Thorcraft Cobra in support of its latest album, The Distance, which was recently released on vinyl. And though the brand-new Sparks album, Hippopotamus, features programming rather than live drumming, Tammy looks forward to doing some shows with the group, which she’s been associated with for twenty years, in the not-too-distant future.





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PRODUCT CLOSE-UP

Paiste

Masters Thin Series

Broad, rich tones with a sparkling, silvery attack.

Paiste launched the Masters series in 2011 as a collection of twelve unique, high-end ride cymbals made from traditional b20 bronze. The series was expanded in 2014 to include three crashes and two sets of hi-hats. This year Paiste introduced Masters Thin models, including 14", 15", and 16" hi-hats; 20", 22", and 24" crash-rides; and a 22" Swish. Let's check them out.

Crash-Rides

Masters Thin cymbals are designed for quiet to medium-loud live and studio situations that call for highly expressive and musical tones. They feature swelling, broad crash sounds; smooth, rich wash; silvery, crystalline attack; and subtle, integrated bells.

The 20", 22", and 24" multifunctional crash-rides are the focal points of the line. They provided luscious, full crashes as well as refined, expressive articulation. The 20" is the most crash-like of the three, and the 24" had the strongest ride potential. The 22" was a great marriage of the two, delivering sparkling stick attack and dynamic, explosive crashes. Minimalist drummers looking to create a small setup incorporating a single cymbal will find everything they need in the 22" Masters Thin. It had a warm, classic tone that's not as complex or trashy as some vintage-style hand-hammered cymbals, plus it had extra high-end clarity that gave it a touch more articulation. I preferred using the 20" as a large crash and an alternative washy ride, while the 24" was best suited for massive accents and Bonham-style ride grooves. In fact, the Masters Thin crash-rides were reminiscent of the Giant Beat cymbals Bonham used in the early days with Led Zeppelin, only in a much darker, lower-pitched color.





Hi-Hats

The 14", 15", and 16" Masters Thin hi-hats comprise a thin top and a medium-thin bottom. They have a vintage-like feel that's softer than most contemporary hi-hats, and the stick sound is wide and airy. These cymbals had a very wide dynamic range. They responded well to different stroke types (tip, shoulder, etc.), producing smooth, warm sounds that had more high-end clarity than papery vintage hi-hats. Very few metallic overtones were present, which made them ideal for recording situations where heavier, brighter hi-hats often bleed into other mics on the drumkit.

The Masters Thin hi-hats could be hit hard, either closed or open, without fear of them becoming overwhelming. The 16"s were perfect for midtempo tracks, while the 14"s were super-expressive at lower dynamics—Think Papa Jo Jones' smooth open-closed swing beat with the Count Basie big band. The 15" Master Thins were a happy medium between the big, swooshing voice of the 16"s and the quick, airy vibe of the 14"s. As such, they were the most all-purpose of the three.

22" Swish

The 22" Swish is the most musically satisfying China-type cymbal I've ever played. It's very thin, so it has a quick response, and the sustain is smooth and balanced. While it has a complex and trashy attack, the tone is more exotic and smoky than harsh and abrasive. You can play on the bow for sizzling, simmering ride patterns, or you can smack the edge for hissing accents. Mallet swells are cinematic, and bell strikes produce a swathe of unique overtones. If you'd like to add a large effects cymbal that's more sophisticated sounding than a typical China, give the more subtly toned 22" Masters Swish a try. It's as good as it gets.

Michael Dawson



2Box

DrumIt Five Module and TriglT Triggers

A plug-and-play trigger system with 4 GB of flash memory for uploading original sounds.

2Box is a Swedish company focused on creating high-powered, user-friendly electronic drum products for performing musicians. Its flagship offering is the DrumIt Five, which is a full five-piece e-kit plus two cymbals, hi-hats, and a compact rack. The module for that kit is also available separately, and is a perfect solution for hybrid setups incorporating acoustic drums and triggers, like 2Box's TriglT set. For this review, we were sent the DrumIt Five module and TriglT triggers for kick, snare, and three toms.

Open Sound Drum Module

The DrumIt Five brain comes with ten trigger inputs (the snare and tom channels are dual-zone for assigning two different sounds to center and rim strikes), eight audio outputs, and 4 GB of internal flash memory. The company has created 100 preset kits, and each of those can be modified to swap out sounds, adjust tuning, and so on.

The module's stock drum and cymbal samples were recorded with multiple microphones in a professional studio to produce the most natural tones possible. Each instrument (kick, snare, cymbal, etc.) was also recorded at many different dynamic levels—some have as many as 128 individual layers—to further improve realism and dynamic response. The cymbals include bell, bow, and edge samples, and the hi-hat open-to-close timbre is responsive to a continuous controller foot pedal (not included).

The DrumIt Five module comes with play-along tracks and

a metronome, and settings for both of those can be adjusted, assigned, and saved to each of the 100 kits. There's also a line-in jack on the back if you want to connect a separate audio source.

The instruments and samples in each preset can be assigned and edited on the LCD screen, or you can connect the module to a computer, via USB, to access 2Box's software editor. The software is simply designed and displays virtual pads and volume faders for each input, and there are additional controls for tuning, pan, and decay.

If you want to replace the factory sounds with your own loops, tracks, and samples, simply delete the sound assigned to a particular pad and then drag over the file you want to use from the library folder. I was able to find plenty of useful acoustic, electronic, and percussion samples from within 2Box's extensive libraries. (I especially liked the tabla sounds in the Lockett kit.) But the software editor made the process of creating original kits with my own samples super-easy. Multiple samples can be layered on each trigger channel, and the sounds can be put into loop mode within the software.

Each instrument can be assigned to different outputs, whether that's to the headphone jack, a main stereo mix (1/2), or to one of six quarter-inch mono outputs. Having six mono outputs is great for recording and performing situations where you want to have more isolated control over the mix of each instrument. For a standard kit of acoustic drum and cymbal samples, I had the best results by assigning the kick to output 1, the snare to output 2, the toms to outputs 3 and 4, and the cymbals to outputs 5 and 6. That





Bass drum trigger



Snare/tom trigger



setup provided plenty of flexibility for tweaking the sounds with EQ, compression, and other effects in my recording software or live mix rig.

The DrumIt Five module has a simple, intuitive interface with separate buttons for each instrument for auditioning sounds. And it's an easy one- or two-click process to access different menus on the LCD screen to dig into each kit to swap sounds, assign outputs, apply effects, adjust the balance, or make further customizations. If you import full backing tracks that have the music panned to one side and a click to the other, there's a Split Wave mode that allows you to send just the click to the headphone jack and the music to the main output.

Rugged and Responsive

The Trigt acoustic drum triggers are designed to be compatible with the DrumIt Five or any other sound module. They include a sleek, sturdy metal and plastic casing that clamps to the hoop via a drumkey-operated screw. I was able to easily place the triggers on the kick, snare, and three toms at locations that were out of the

way of possible stick hits and didn't affect how the drums were positioned.

When I loaded 2Box's Trigt preset into the DrumIt Five module from the software editor, the module was configured to respond accurately and dynamically to each of the triggers. I didn't need to adjust any of the gain or threshold settings to get the Trights to react properly to my playing style, but those parameters are easy to access within the module.

I've used many different trigger systems over the years, and the DrumIt Five and Trigt setup was one of the best, in terms of simplicity, reliability, response, and durability. The triggers are built to withstand many hours of use, and the module is incredibly powerful and malleable to your own personal hybrid setup needs. Check out our demo on moderndrummer.com to get a taste of what this simple yet powerful system can do.

Michael Dawson



PRODUCT CLOSE-UP

HeadHunters

Crossovers Hybrid Rods

Blending the response and feel of regular drumsticks with the controlled, articulate sound of rods.

The Canadian manufacturer HeadHunters focuses on creating innovative percussive implements. One such product is what the company calls Crossovers.

A Perfect Balance

Crossovers inhabit a middle ground between regular drumsticks and rods. These hybrid implements employ a stick lathed from maple or hickory and rods of assorted materials on the playing end. Various types and sizes of rods combined with a certain diameter stick net different results. The pair I preferred most was the Crossovers II Bamboo, which has a maple handle and bamboo rods.

All Crossovers models come with a stick grip made of a tacky material. Unique to these sticks is a secondary striker located where the rods insert into the handle. This allows you to play at higher dynamics when needed. Crossovers also come with an adjustable rubber band on the rods that can be moved up or down to customize the feel and response.

Crossovers are perfect for low-volume situations. They provide excellent control while allowing for louder accents than what you would get from standard rods or brushes. The balance is good, and the rebound is surprisingly fast. The wood shaft allows you to utilize the Crossovers for stick-like rimshots and rimclicks.

The Crossovers Hybrid Bundles held up well throughout our fairly rough testing period. They sell for \$25 per pair and are a good option for gigging drummers and percussionists.

Brian Hill



Outlaw Drums

Heritage Series Snares

More than 150 years of American history commemorated in reclaimed heart pine snares.

When Outlaw Drums founder Michael Outlaw decided to try making snares from reclaimed lumber, he began with the estate remains of former Confederate soldier Charles Edward Wilder, who served in the 17th Georgia Infantry Regiment. Upon returning from the Civil War, Wilder built a home from the wood of the native pine trees that grew on his land.

Preserving the Story

The trees used for the Wilder house date back to the 1600s. Trees of that age and type are extremely hard and dense and have a very tight grain pattern. Taking up residence in a building for more than 150 years allowed that old timber to cure and dry evenly.

With all of that history in mind, it made sense that the historical origins of the wood be celebrated when it was repurposed into drum shells. For the two drums I ordered, I suggested Outlaw embed Civil War-era bullets into the wood to make them even more historically relevant.

My drums included a 6x14 with ten tube lugs and a 6x10 with six tube lugs. The shells are stave-constructed and have reinforcing rings for added strength. Outlaw uses a bearing edge that falls somewhere between a rounded vintage edge and a more modern design.

Both drums were made from the same board of reclaimed lumber. The idea was to timbre-match the drums as closely as possible to make them a matched set. Hardware was employed with the same strategy. The 2.3mm counter hoops, lugs, and air vent are black nickel-plated. Matching Trick three-position throw-offs and PureSound snares were used.

The Civil War-era bullets embedded in the shells were wood-struck. Two of them had hit dead-on, producing a mushroom shape. The other two hit at about a forty-five-degree angle. Two of the bullets were

from the Confederate army, and two were from the Union. One Confederate and one Union bullet were placed in each drum.

To finish off the design, Outlaw used a rough exterior and an aged white and blue paint to give the drums a weathered look that harkened back to the original building. A dab of dark red paint was applied around each bullet. This color was used to represent the terrible cost of the Civil War.

The stave-constructed shells, made from aged heart pine hardwood, give these drums a very reflective, lively sound with a controlled openness that's devoid of unpleasant overtones.

While being incredibly sensitive and responsive, both snares sounded earthy, warm, and deep. They had plenty of presence to prevent them from being lost in a mix, while being devoid of any unpleasant, overpowering tendencies. They're especially suited for large stages and loud environments, but they're versatile enough for any application. The 10" snare was ideal for accents, effects, and adding a layer of higher-pitched grace notes.

Outlaw brings a lot to the table with its superior instruments—no detail is overlooked. For those who enjoy great-sounding drums that have a story to tell, check out what the company has available at outlawdrums.com.

Brian Hill





Gavin Wallace-Ailsworth

The Boston-based sextet **Bent Knee** makes the most of the aesthetic freedom that it demands, creating some of the freshest-sounding art-rock of recent times. You'd be right to assume the drumming is pretty awesome.

by Ilya Stemkovsky

Since forming in 2009 while the members attended the Berklee College of Music, the group known as Bent Knee has released several records and done extensive touring, including a string of European dates last summer followed by opening slots on the U.S. leg of Dillinger Escape Plan's farewell tour.

While genre-bending compositions and technical virtuosity are crucial to its sound, the band is not short on big hooks and melodic invention, most recently on display on its major-label debut album, *Land Animal*, released this past June on Sony's Inside Out imprint.

Drummer Gavin Wallace-Ailsworth does more than navigate odd times or lay down solid timekeeping. He's a thinker, always throwing in an unexpected spice to give the songs a little twist, or playing a chops-laden fill to elevate the vibe. Of course, as with any collective that can boast top-shelf players, there are plenty of ideas flying around, so sometimes a little space is what the music needs most from the drummer. *MD* recently asked Wallace-Ailsworth about his approach to Bent Knee's music—which, in retrospect, it seems he's been preparing himself to play since he first picked up the sticks...

MD: Were you always interested in progressive music?

Gavin: My father was a drummer, so drums were always in the house. I would take the boom box downstairs and play along to albums I was listening to. I'm a huge Peter Gabriel fan, and of all the drummers who've played with him—Manu Katché, Jerry Marotta.... So as a six-year-old, I was attempting to play along with some of that stuff.

MD: You can clearly hear that in your playing—cool patterns but lots of space.

Gavin: Thanks. There are six people in Bent Knee making a lot of sound. I naturally find that the way I have to orchestrate my drum parts is to leave space for the other five people. I got into progressive music just before my middle-school years. I was a huge Kiss fan and I learned so much about rock drumming from studying what Peter Criss did. He taught me how to do a shuffle with "Detroit Rock City." One day I said to my father that Peter Criss was probably the best drummer of all time, and the next day he came home with Rush's *All the World's a Stage*, and it blew my mind. So I tried to learn all the Rush and King Crimson stuff I could. Bill Bruford's playing with Crimson is a major influence.

MD: And Berklee had an impact?

Gavin: I loved Berklee. To be in an environment where everyone is as passionate about music as you are was new for me, and a very special thing. You saw someone with a Rush T-shirt and you could strike up a conversation about how Neil's playing changed over the years. And in my first semester, I had private lessons with Rod Morgenstein, who is an amazing drummer and human being. He would give me just a keyboard track from his Rudess/Morgenstein Project and tell me to come up with my own part without listening to his [original drum part]. I started finding my own voice during my lessons with him.

MD: There are videos of you playing bass guitar as well. Does that help your drumming?

Gavin: It's given me a deeper understanding of what it's like to be on the other side of the rhythm section. Before I learned bass, I would overplay on the drums and not allow the bassist room to be himself or herself. Afterwards, it made me more sensitive to what the bassist's sensibility might be. It also made me think in terms of pitch a little bit more. It made me think about the singability of how I'm voicing fills on the toms.

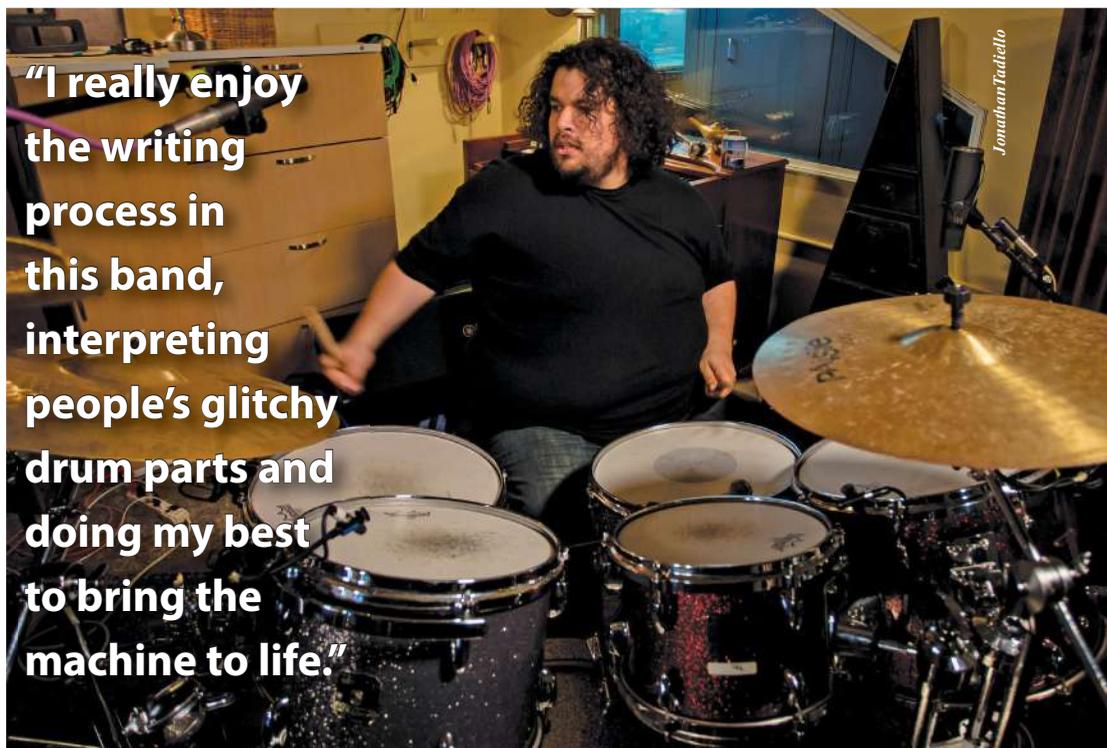
MD: Are you interpreting demos for the Bent Knee songs? Or are

drum parts coming out of jams?

Gavin: A lot of the demos brought in are people programming drums with whatever software they're using. I really enjoy the writing process in this band, interpreting people's glitchy drum parts and doing my best to bring the machine to life. For "Terror Bird," we've been inspired by the [Swiss] composer Nik Bärtsch. On the guitar, Ben [Levin] was doing this hybrid picking polyrhythm thing, with the guitar pick between his thumb and index finger, doing six, and with his ring finger on another string doing four. And then alternating between four over six and five over four. So we jammed for twenty minutes, switching back and forth between those parts, and I played it all different ways at the kit, and eventually just found the groove that wound up being the beginning of "Terror Bird."

MD: Do you take a fairly organic approach to playing live?

Gavin: Yeah, we don't have any click tracks or anything like that. It's funny, but I'm the only entirely acoustic member of the band. The vocals and violin go through effects on a laptop, for instance. I'd like



"I really enjoy the writing process in this band, interpreting people's glitchy drum parts and doing my best to bring the machine to life."

to incorporate electronics into what I do at some point.

MD: Do you get new ideas from solo practice?

Gavin: Much of my own personal improvement comes from working with the band. But I'm trying to move away from the kick/snare/hi-hat kind of thing. I tend to gravitate toward tom-based textures. I'm always striving to make my playing more melodic and to widen my sound palette. It's hard to just sit down for an hour and completely reinvent the way I think about how a drumkit is used. I'll sequence drum grooves on my laptop, with inhuman sounds and weird delays and reverbs, and then try to re-create that on the drumkit.

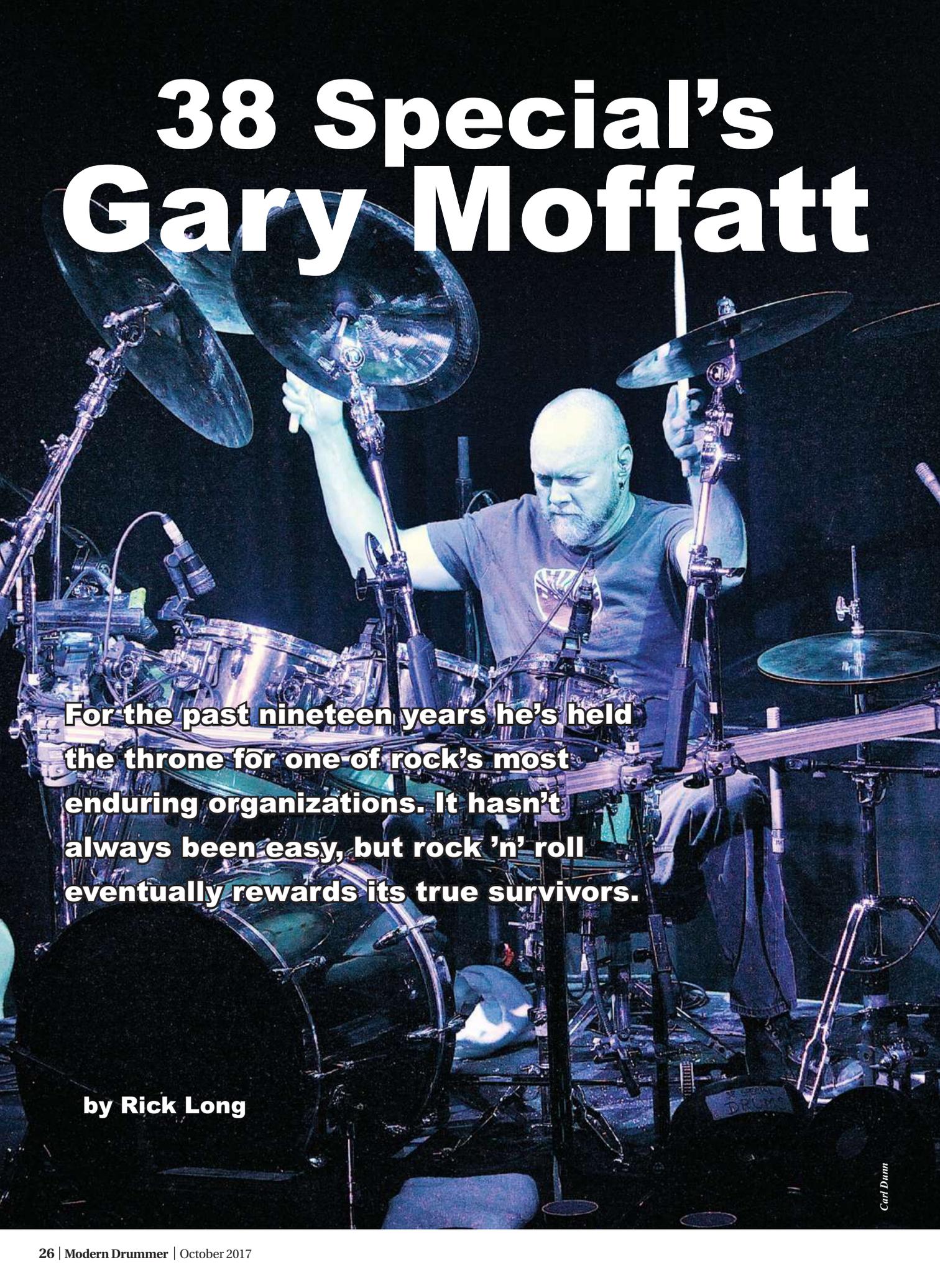
There's a fair amount of people with an aversion to those who write with samples and stuff like that, and letting that influence their playing on a drumkit that they sit down at. But that's the future of where a lot of "iconic" drum parts are going to come from—from people who maybe don't even play a drumkit as we know it.



Tools of the Trade

Wallace-Ailsworth plays a D'Amico drumset in the studio; on the road he generally uses provided backline kits along with his D'Amico snare, which is fitted with Remo heads, plus various Zildjian and Paiste cymbals. Gavin uses Rich drumsticks.

38 Special's Gary Moffatt



For the past nineteen years he's held the throne for one of rock's most enduring organizations. It hasn't always been easy, but rock 'n' roll eventually rewards its true survivors.

by Rick Long

By blending Southern-rock roots with arena-rock riffs, 38 Special, from Jacksonville, Florida, came to prominence in the late '70s and found massive success the following decade. Hits like "Rockin' Into the Night," "Hold on Loosely," "Caught Up in You," and "Second Chance" are still in regular rotation on classic-rock radio. And while Gary Moffatt wasn't in the band during those salad days, he's charged with bringing to life 38 Special's big and bawdy beats, originally played by Jack Grondin and Steve Brookins, as if he wrote them himself only yesterday. Moffatt's passion for his craft is evident in every performance, and he knows that audiences, and his bandmates, expect nothing less.

Moffatt, like so many drummers coming up in the '60s, caught the bug after watching Ringo Starr with the Beatles during the group's February 9, 1964, debut performance on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. Soon after, Moffatt was banging on everything in sight. Eventually he built his first drumset out of cardboard boxes. He received a practice pad in the third grade, which was followed by a snare drum. His first real kit came a couple of years later.

Today Moffatt is quick to thank his parents for their early support of his dreams. "They sacrificed so much in the name of love for me and my two brothers," he says. "For example, they drove me and my drumset to school tons of times, until I was old enough to drive."

In the early '70s, Moffatt got his first van to haul drums and surfboards, as well as his first Honda SL 125 dirt bike. Whenever he wasn't surfing or riding, he was sitting at his drums, stereo speakers blaring on either side him, trying to emulate his heroes. "I couldn't understand at the time why I didn't sound just like them," Gary recalls. "Forty years later, though, I'm still surfing, still riding, and still playing the drums."

Throughout his school years, Moffatt studied music and participated in marching band, jazz band, orchestra, and his church praise band. During this time he also studied keyboards. All of these experiences prepared him well for college-level training at the prestigious Berklee School of Music in Boston.

At Berklee, keyboard and music theory were the emphasis, and writing classical music and jazz remains a creative outlet for Moffatt to this day. But it was the drums that brought him work, including a role in a Top 40 funk band. "Late nights on the gig didn't help at all when it came time to get up for 8 a.m. classes," Moffatt recalls. When performing became a full-time gig, the drummer decided to leave Berklee after his first year.

Eventually Moffatt returned to his home in Florida and began working for a group led by Nick Russo, who'd been the lead trumpet player with comedian, actor, and bandleader Jackie Gleason for eleven years. The band, Gabriel's Brass, featured four trumpets, four trombones, and a rhythm section, and they had a steady gig at Disney World. Later Moffatt toured with Floyd Radford from Edgar Winter's White Trash, played in a number of successful regional groups, and accompanied former Bad Company singer Brian Howe on his first solo tour.

In 1997, 38 Special guitarist and vocalist Don Barnes called Moffatt on a recommendation from the group's keyboard player, Bobby Capps. Drummer Scott Hoffman, who was leaving 38 Special at the time, also recommended him. "Two of the crew members for the band knew my work too," Moffatt recalls, "and they also suggested I get invited."

It was the kind of call that every drummer dreams of: an arena-



level band with multiple radio hits and album sales in the millions. Still, after twenty-three years in the game, 38 Special was struggling to keep up with changes in the music business. It was far from the only established act experiencing hard times in the late '90s, but unlike many others, the group hung in there, and with Moffatt on drums rebuilt its success from the ground up. "The band was playing clubs when I came along," Moffatt says, "but we kept at it and built it back to where it is today. Baby boomers rule the world now and want to hear the music they grew up with. Along with that, we see their kids and their *kids'* kids in the audience. Good music is enjoyed by everyone, and 38 gives them that night after night."

Today Moffatt couldn't be happier with the working conditions around 38 Special. "All the band members and crew get along very well," he explains, "and the whole operation is consistent and professional. We have this down so well that unless we're changing the set list, the crew actually does the soundcheck for us. And my drum equipment is so bulletproof, the drum tech does double duty running the light show. He's quite good at that."

In addition to touring and recording dates with 38 Special and other artists, Moffatt has done demo work and jingles for clients including Yellow Pages, Warner Bros., Fox News, Chick-fil-A, Budweiser, Walt Disney World, and Sea World. He's also a dedicated drum instructor, mentoring a small number of aspiring players across the age spectrum. Like most good teachers, he stresses the rudiments. "They're the foundation necessary for learning everything else on the drumset," Moffatt says. "I make sure that all my students learn them and get a strong background in the fundamentals."

These days Moffatt enjoys being semiretired—if you can call playing a hundred gigs a year being semiretired. "The shows are either sixty, seventy-five, or ninety minutes long," Gary says, "with about 90 percent of them being the longer headliner shows. So if you add it up, I only work about 130 hours a year. The rest of the time I'm just relaxing and waiting for the show."

Between tours, Moffatt enjoys life at home on the Florida coastline. A typical day finds him on his WaveRunner or surfboard—when he's not running down the highway on his Harley-Davidson Fat Boy. "I'd like to develop an R&B/funk band someday to play along the beach area," the drummer muses. For now at least, he's happily continuing his working relationship with 38 Special, whose current tour runs through mid-October.

Tools of the Trade

Moffatt plays Pearl drums and Sabian cymbals and uses Evans drumheads, Vic Firth drumsticks, Groove Juice cymbal cleaner, Heil Sound mics, QwikStix accessories, and Bantex Cohesive Gauze Tape (for improved grip on his sticks).






Starclassic
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PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

EXOTIC MAPLE JOINS THE PARTY

Earlier this year TAMA celebrated a decade of success with its Starclassic Performer B/B line by rolling out a Limited Edition 10th Anniversary kit with an Exotic Elm outer ply. The feedback was so positive TAMA decided to keep the party going by offering a 10th Anniversary limited edition kit with an Exotic Maple exterior shell ply in three striking new finishes: **Figured Ocean Fade**, **Figured Stout Fade**, and **Figured Natural Maple**.

One thing that hasn't changed over the last 10 years is Performer's unique hybrid combination of Birch & Bubinga woods which have produced an unmistakably punchy sound and a consistently superior performance, both live or in the studio.

All three finishes available but limited and won't last long. *Hey*, that's just how it is if you're late to the party.

10th Anniversary kit in Figured Ocean Fade shown with TAMA Iron Works Studio Microphone Stands



Figured Stout Fade

Figured Natural Maple

TAMA[®]

Jack DeJohnette

Let Freedom Ring!

“I always wanted to just be free—to do what I feel like, but also to be dedicated to the music, be inspired, and do it with a passion, which I still strongly have.”

Last September, Dizzy’s Club Coca-Cola in New York City hosted a tribute to producer, writer, and record label founder Orrin Keepnews. The late man-about-Manhattan was an important figure in the combustible jazz circles of the ‘50s, ‘60s, ‘70s, and beyond, giving many future jazz greats a voice on his Riverside, Milestone, and Landmark record labels.

The two musical groups assembled for the evening featured the crème de la crème of New York jazz royalty. The large Sonor Hilite drumset positioned at center stage set pulses racing for the headliner. A swinging performance by the trio of bassist Ray Drummond, drummer Akira Tana, and pianist Larry Willis broke the ice. Then Willis, saxophonist Gary Bartz, bassist Rufus Reid, and drummer Jack DeJohnette took the stage. “When I first came to New York,” DeJohnette told the crowd from behind his drums, “Orrin asked me to come up with a concept for a record, and I did. I had Roy Haynes and Stanley Cowell on the record, which was called *The DeJohnette Complex*. No one else would give me the time of day, but Orrin was right there, supporting me. He loved the music; he was open. He really made a great contribution.”

The quartet played a hard-charging, tempo-terrifying,

Story by Ken Micallef
Photos by Paul La Raia







bloodletting version of “It Don’t Mean a Thing If It Ain’t Got That Swing.” DeJohnette drove the music with the same fury, fire, and rolling-thunder grace that he had on his 1969 debut.

Forty-eight years after *The DeJohnette Complex*, the seventy-five-year-old, soft-spoken, Chicago-born DeJohnette is one of the great acknowledged masters of the drumset. And he remains as forward-thinking and innovative a force as he was as a young musician, when he meshed the drum music of Elvin Jones, Roy Haynes, and Tony Williams with his potent, multidirectional, intensely conversational and poetic exhilarations.

Tracing this drummer’s history is taking a trip through jazz profundity. After making his mark in the mid-’60s with the popular Charles Lloyd Quartet, DeJohnette became an in-demand sideman, cutting serious vinyl sides with Jackie McLean, Dick Katz, Abbey Lincoln, Betty Carter, Freddie Hubbard, Joe Henderson, and Bill Evans; his work with Evans was further documented on recently unearthed live and studio performances released by Resonance Records. In 1969 DeJohnette replaced Tony Williams in Miles Davis’s band, first appearing on the landmark album *Bitches Brew*, then as a member of “the Lost Quintet” (celebrated in the recent CD/DVD box set *Live in Europe 1969: The Bootleg Series Vol. 2*). DeJohnette’s

burning, churning funk fusillades exuded grit and grease, propelled by earlier Chicago avant-garde experiments with the likes of Sun Ra and Roscoe Mitchell.

DeJohnette’s early training as a pianist brought him to record his first solo album in 1968, followed by a series of exceptional ’70s and ’80s releases on the ECM label: *Untitled*, *Pictures*, *New Rags*, *New Directions*, *Special Edition*, *New Directions in Europe*, *Tin Can Alley*, *Inflation Blues*, and *Album Album*. DeJohnette has continued to break new ground up to the present, releasing albums that feature diverse thematic material (as well as his husky baritone vocals), while also recording and touring with the celebrated Keith Jarrett Trio. In 2016, DeJohnette returned to ECM with *In Movement*, a trio recording with saxophonist Ravi Coltrane and bassist Matthew Garrison, and he went back to his piano roots with the solo release *Return* on the vinyl-only Newvelle label.

DeJohnette’s latest project is the jazz supergroup Hudson. Featuring guitarist John Scofield, keyboardist John Medeski, and bassist Larry Grenadier, Hudson lets DeJohnette stretch as drummer, composer, and vocalist. *MD* took the pleasant two-hour drive up to Jack’s home in upstate New York to learn more about the music—and the land—that inspires his newest direction in sound.





Q: You're able to *burn* at will on the drums. Is that how it feels to you?

A: Oh, yeah. I'm totally focused. My consciousness, my vibration opens up.



MD: What is the focus of the Hudson band?

Jack: Larry, Scofield, Medeski, and I all live in the Hudson Valley. We got together initially to play the Woodstock Jazz Festival, and we did some cover tunes, including Bob Marley's "No Woman, No Cry." We had such a good time playing together, I thought it would be great to celebrate my seventy-fifth year by making a record and touring the U.S., which we're doing from June to October.

We live up here because of the people, the land, the vibe. It's a great place to create. We wanted tunes that grooved, cover tunes and originals, and we thought the cover tunes should connect to the Woodstock area. So we picked artists who'd played the original Woodstock Festival in 1969: Joni Mitchell, Jimi Hendrix, as well as tunes from the Band and Bob Dylan [who famously rehearsed and recorded together in the area]. The title tune is a collective composition, "Hudson." And then there are original tunes from Scofield and me.

MD: Your last record with John, Trio Beyond's 2006 live release, *Saudades*, was a killing performance.

Jack: Right. That was a loose tribute to Tony Williams.

MD: Hudson's version of "Woodstock" is moody and dark. Did the band mean to imply a protest vibe with the song choices?

Jack: We liked the lyrics of [Bob Dylan's] "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall," and the other cover songs have elements of protest, but we chose them because we like the songs. My "Song for World Forgiveness" says that we really must learn to forgive each other; that's our species' hardest dilemma. There's been a tremendous amount of bad karmic stuff that we've all done to each other, all the countries, throughout history. For us to become more enlightened, forgiveness has to happen—instead of this polarized energy that is going around, giving people the illusion that they're separate. We can't build walls. That's over.

MD: Scofield's "Tony Then Jack" addresses the progression from Tony Williams to you in Miles Davis's band?

Jack: Yes. We first played that with Trio Beyond, but we never recorded it.

MD: The album opens with a groove, like a 1970s *Bitches Brew* vibe.

Jack: Absolutely. We all loved that one. It's a collective track, really a jam. Scofield just started playing that groove, and it took off from there. It was organic.

MD: Hudson's take on "Woodstock" is almost sad.

Jack: It's a feel based off one of John Coltrane's tunes—we approached it like a Latin "A Love Supreme." "Dirty Ground" has an interesting relevance as well. It was cowritten with Bruce Hornsby and originally recorded for my 2012 album, *Sound Travels*. Bruce wrote the lyrics; I did the arrangement. It was originally dedicated to Levon Helm. I'm singing on this version. It's in 7/4 and 4/4. It's got that Levon thing, so the first thing you think of is him. [sings] "Dirtied up water, feel like lambs going to slaughter, been down on my knees but I'm rising up. I got to believe." It's about the flood victims of Hurricane Katrina, so it talks about rising up and coming back.

MD: Hudson's version of "Hard Rain" is in 6/4. Then the band takes it out.

Jack: But it's very subtle. It's not angry. It's lucid. The nature of the lyrics led to our expanding on it improvisationally. Dylan talks about all of that in the lyrics, so we did a jazz interpretation of that. There's a tribute to Sun Ra in there as well.

MD: On Hendrix's "Wait Until Tomorrow," the band uses the melody as the jumping-off point for improvisation?

Jack: No. I actually tried to sing that song, but my voice was messed up. So I asked Sco to do an instrumental version. We also did a version of [Hendrix's] "Castles Made of Sand" that's a bonus track overseas. I sing the last verse.

Jack Swings, Jack Sings

MD: You sing on the two Compost records from the 1970s. What other records do you sing on?

Jack: My *Music for the Fifth World*—I sang "Witchi-Tai-To," a Jim Pepper song. I sang "Inflation Blues" on the self-titled Compost album [1971], back when a dollar was worth about twenty cents. I changed it to "Deception Blues" for *Music for the Fifth World*, which had Scofield, Vernon Reid and Will Calhoun [from Living Colour], Lonnie Plaxico, and Michael Cain.

MD: "Inflation Blues" was on the Special Edition record of the same name as well.

Jack: Right. *Inflation Blues* features [horn players] Baikida Carroll, John Purcell, and Chico Freeman. On *Music for the Fifth World* I did a dub sequence of the song. [sings] "You see deception in the mass mass-media; you ask for truth and they tell you they don't need ya." I've recorded some protest songs through the years.

MD: The Hudson album closes with "Great Spirit Peace Chant."



Jack: That's the band with me; we're all singing. It's something that came to me while I was walking out toward our garden. It was a gift from the great spirit. A chant for peace.

MD: Have you chanted before in song?

Jack: My whole family is initiated into the Seneca Wolf Clan; we are all wolves. My wolf name is Light Thunder. There is some Native American Indian ancestry in my bloodline. I have an affinity. The drum I played there is just a floor tom with a towel on it, using a mallet. It gives it that heartbeat, the ceremonial sound—that's the cadence. We all played native flutes, laying that down as a carpet, then Larry and John and I sang, and Medeski sang the rounds.

DeJohnette/Coltrane/Garrison

MD: What did you want from *In Movement*, the album with Ravi Coltrane and Matthew Garrison? Where did you expect that collaboration to go?

Jack: Where we wanted it to go, which was somewhere unexpected. The spontaneity of the music. A lot of pieces were not that tightly arranged; many of them gave birth to improvisations that occurred at soundchecks or rehearsals. "Two Jimmys" happened at Matthew's ShapeShifter Labs. The title track happened there as well; we primed many of the pieces there.

MD: Your drumming is always in the moment, such as the Orrin Keepnews tribute at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola.

Jack: I was having fun. It's the same with Ravi and Matthew. They have the experience; they

have their personal stamps. We know that we can go wherever we feel like going.

Jazz Drumming Greats, Yesterday to Today

MD: From your standpoint, who furthered the major advancements in jazz drumming since the early 1900s?

Jack: Kenny Clarke definitely took the emphasis off the 4/4 bass drum and put it on the ride cymbal. That opened up the music for the ensemble. Then you could hear all the other instruments better. Not that you couldn't hear them with a 4/4 bass drum, but it gave the music more sonic clarity.

MD: Was he feathering the bass drum on 4/4?

Jack: He might have been. There were guys doing it to where you almost didn't notice it. I know Tony Williams used to do it. I never did, unless I really wanted to do it for an effect or a mood in the music. In big bands and organ trios, that kind of 4/4 bass drum was popular. It helped [propel] the acoustic bass. There was a place for that. Papa Jo Jones carried on what Kenny Clarke did; Zutty Singleton is also important. Gene Krupa is another one—he swung his ass off! And then you have Art Blakey, and Philly Joe Jones was next. Philly started changing the cymbal beat around.

MD: I thought Philly Joe Jones always played the ride cymbal pattern straight.

Jack: No, he turned it around. Roy Haynes was doing that even before Philly Joe, though. They are around the same age, but a lot of what he played came from Roy. Check it out. Elvin had a different kind of touch, a

heavier touch. But listen to some of the licks that Roy played compared to Elvin; he took it totally in his direction and added valuable contributions that are still influential and resonate today.

Then you had Tony Williams, and then, on the other end of spectrum, great drummers like Andrew Cyrille, Paul Motian—Paul was free! After Paul left Bill Evans he just wanted to *play*. He could swing anytime, but he became like I see myself: Paul became a painter with the music, particularly in the quartet with Charlie Haden, Dewey Redman, and Keith Jarrett. Paul was amazing, and the way he hit the drums—just the sound he got! Whatever came out, he was so spontaneous and really quick. Very musical.

In terms of freeing the drummer's role up, Rashied Ali is another one. Milford Graves too. And all those guys could play time, but they were all into a multidirectional, more abstract approach to drumming; they put their own stamp on the music.

MD: Which you've done as well.

Jack: Well, that's part of the tradition. You take your favorite influences and shuffle them around, and they come out with your own way of telling a story.

MD: Elvin seemed to overshadow Roy, even though Roy's drumming is so witty, urbane, and hard swinging. Where did Roy get his insanely creative drumming?

Jack: I don't think Roy is overshadowed. He's still playing in his nineties! Roy is on some of the Coltrane recordings, when Elvin couldn't make the gig. He's on *A Different Drum*

[the 1978 Impulse! compilation album *The Mastery of John Coltrane, Vol. II: To the Beat of a Different Drum*].

MD: And he's on your debut album, *The DeJohnette Complex*.

Jack: Right. But Roy has so much recognition now. If you go to his house, he's got tons of awards. He's not overlooked now. Everyone knows he's one of the masters. And Roy knew how to pick great musicians, like Chick Corea, Bennie Maupin, and Wayne Shorter. He always had his own bands while he worked as a sideman with other people like Sarah Vaughan. He was a great dresser, like Miles. He was in *Esquire*. Roy has always had great taste.

MD: One can hear a lot of Roy in your drumming—that popping commentary. You hear Roy in Bill Stewart and Ari Hoenig as well.

Jack: Tony Williams had that too. He had a unique cymbal sound, a unique touch. He was also influenced by the so-called avant-garde when he played with Sam Rivers [*Fuchsia Swing Song*], and on his own records *Life Time* and *Spring*. Tony was trying to do different things, and he experimented. In Miles Davis's band he was breaking up time, slowing tempos, and creating intensity, and the way

he propelled a band, creating a sense of drive, was unique. One of my favorite records of Tony's is *The Story of Neptune*, with his acoustic quintet.

MD: Why is that a favorite?

Jack: Because of the compositions Tony wrote for that album. I know that was important to him. And there's a killer version of Freddie Hubbard's "Birdlike" on there. There's a bootleg version of "Birdlike" by Hubbard at Kimball's East Supper Club in California, with pianist Billy Childs, and Tony sits in—whoa!

MD: Why did his drumming change so radically in the '80s, that focus on 8th notes? Post *Believe It!*, even with the Great Jazz Trio, he plays a more 8th-note-influenced approach, though he still swings very hard.

Jack: I don't know. That's the way he heard the drums at that point. I heard rumors that he had planned to move back to a smaller kit. I think he hadn't played for a while, because he took time off to write his last album, *Wilderness*. That was very important to him. But he was planning on getting back into the groove. Unfortunately we lost him. He was a great contributor to the music and to drumming. I'm still learning from Tony.

MD: So if we follow the ride cymbal beat: Kenny Clarke opened it up, as did Philly Joe



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Jack DeJohnette

Jones, then Tony, and Elvin Jones....

Jack: And Roy Haynes is in that mix. That's where Roy doesn't get the acknowledgement. Max [Roach] and Philly Joe were of that era, but Roy was doing that stuff too, playing an 18" bass drum, because the places where guys had to play, they never made accommodation for the band.

MD: Is that also why Roy doesn't play 2 and 4 on the hi-hat often?

Jack: That's just what Roy heard. He played 2 and 4 on the hi-hat and then he'd break it up. Tony and Elvin did that too; that was the way drums were going. And Roy was doing that. And you see the parallel of Elvin doing that too, only thicker.

DeJohnette, the Complex One

MD: And you took it out further with Special Edition, Gateway, Terje Rypdal, and your various bands. You're a composer; you've recorded at least three solo piano albums, a piano album with a Japanese rhythm section, one-off projects, world music, ambient music.... Was it always your goal to be recognized beyond your drumming?

Jack: I always wanted to just be free. Period. That's free to be, to do what I feel like, but also play the music and be dedicated to it, be inspired, and do it with a passion, which I still strongly have. It gets stronger all the time. And joyful. One thing I've always said is, "Have fun with this music." If you're fortunate enough to create and make a living with music—doing what you love to do with great people—then come to the bandstand with joy to give the people something. I endeavor to play with a conscious intention that the music has a healing effect on people.

MD: Conscious intention as to how it touches people?

Jack: Yes, that's important. So I always tell students to make sure you have fun and have joy. If it becomes a job, you need to consider something else.

MD: As musicians age they tend to break the rules less. Yet you continue to push boundaries. You were amazing at Dizzy's—total DeJohnette complex!

Jack: I'm playing more relaxed, and I pace myself now—I'm older. But my enthusiasm to play is just as strong as it was when I was twenty. I haven't lost that excitement to get on the bandstand and hit. I was fortunate, of course, to come up at a time when there was an environment of LPs and radio. Record companies nurtured artists and you got radio play; there was a network. I do feel for the younger players, because there are obstacles. How do you get recognized in an industry that just wants to make money off of your compositions? And it's a challenge just

to work.

MD: Doing a nationwide tour as a jazz group, as Hudson is doing, is practically unheard of.

Jack: There are so many music schools, and really talented music students. They have a passion for playing the music. Once you leave school, what do you do? You have to wear many hats. You have to be an entrepreneur, find a way to embrace and utilize social media, create a fan base, and then get people to come to your gig. Apprenticeship is different now for young artists. There are mentors like Chick Corea, Pat Metheny, and Terri Lyne Carrington—she mentors many young musicians; she's fabulous. But there's a heavy responsibility for a young drummer to survive in the music world. The modus operandi now is for musicians to stream their music or make digital albums or just tracks, then print tangible CDs for their live performances. Each generation finds a way to adapt. Not everybody is going to be...

MD: ...Jack DeJohnette?

Jack: But you know, musicians haven't given up, even though it is daunting.

Jack on Jack: Selected Discs

MD: What are your favorite ECM records that you've recorded as a leader?

Jack: The first Special Edition record [1980] was great; it allowed me to expand my writing for horns. I had Peter Warren [bass], Arthur Blythe [alto saxophone], David Murray [tenor saxophone, bass clarinet]. For the track "Zoot Suite," I expanded the sonic aspect of the group by utilizing the electronic melodica, which I played, and the arco bass. That made the small group sound bigger.

Then there's the *New Directions* LP [1978] and *New Directions in Europe* [1980]. There's the Gateway trio records with guitarist John Abercrombie and bassist Dave Holland: *Gateway* [1976], *Gateway 2* [1978], *Homecoming* [1995], and *In the Moment* [1996]. That was a great trio.

MD: I especially like *Sorcery* [1974] and *Pictures* [1977].

Jack: Yes, *Pictures*, then *Album Album* [1984] is another one. I like *Earthwalk* [1991]. That was the Special Edition band with Gary Thomas [tenor sax], Greg Osby [soprano and alto sax], Michael Cain [keyboards], and Lonnie Plaxico [bass]. Check that one out!

MD: What are your favorite records as a sideman?

Jack: Gary Peacock's *Tales of Another* [1977]. That's the first time we played with Keith Jarrett. The trio grew out of that album.

MD: And the Japanese release, a piano trio record with a Japanese rhythm section. Seriously on fire!

Jack: That's *Jackeyboard* [1973]. George

Ohtsuka is on drums. He was influenced by Roy Haynes. I like Freddie Hubbard's *Straight Life* [1970], *Super Blue* [1978], and *In Concert Volume Two*, with Stanley Turrentine [1973]. Joe Henderson's *Tetragon* [1968] and *Power to the People* [1969]. Jackie McLean's *Demon's Dance* [1970] and *Jackknife* [1975]—I actually recorded with him before Charles Lloyd. Betty Carter's *Feed the Fire* [1994] with Dave Holland on bass and Gerri Allen on piano. Betty was such an outside-the-box singer. But the label didn't push Betty. She didn't translate to records like she did live. She really developed young musicians, though.

Then there's the Michael Brecker records. McCoy Tyner's *Supertrios* [1977]. Sonny Rollins' *Reel Life* [1982]—that was some funky stuff. A Japanese Benny Golson album, *This Is For You, John* [1984] with Pharoah Sanders, Ron Carter, and Cedar Walton. *Zebra* [1986], another Japanese-label album—that's me and Lester Bowie.

Different Drummers and Sentient Beings

MD: You're able to burn at will on the drums. Is that how it feels to you?

Jack: Oh, yeah. I'm totally focused. That's one of those special places for me. I go into an altered state. I am present, but I am somewhere else too. My consciousness,

my vibration opens up. Also, the musicians I'm playing with, we open up to a higher frequency.

MD: You played for years with the Keith Jarrett Trio. Was that a different mode of expression from, say, Trio Beyond?

Jack: With the piano trio, my dynamics are different, more subtle. But I still use dynamics even when I have to play more aggressively. I adapt to the space, what the music calls for, what's happening in the moment. Adjust to the flow, seamlessly.

MD: What's your take on how the basic ride cymbal beat has changed, from early styles to the multidirectional approach to today, when Marcus Gilmore might place the swing element anywhere on the drumset? Is jazz drumming about improvisation as much as swing now?

Jack: It depends on the composer, what

the music calls for, how much freedom the drummer is being given, and how much the music allows the drummer to experiment. That ability to move rhythm and time around on different elements of the drumset is something I really like to do when I solo. I don't keep the time there, but I imply it. If I'm playing in time, playing phrases that are out of time, that's something different: building the motifs and the structure as I go along. It depends on the composer and the group, and what the parameters for the musicians are. Ambrose Akinmusire's group plays a lot of odd time signatures, and Justin Brown does a great job navigating and shuffling in and out of them but not making it feel scattered. He's great.

I also like Nasheet Waits, Kim Thompson, Kendrick Scott—whew! And Jaimeo Brown. He's a composer and a drummer. A lot of



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Jack DeJohnette

drummers write their own music now. Matt Wilson is another. And there's Antoine Roney's son, Kojo. He's been playing since he was three. He's almost like Tony Williams in a way—starting young, so he checked out Rashied Ali and me; he's great. And Bill Stewart, he's like family. He's not full of himself. I love his writing. He does what he wants to do—I love that about him.

MD: You can hear the multidirectional approach you exemplify in all of those drummers.

Jack: People also ask me about electronics. I had Special Edition groups for eight years, and we explored electronics on *Irresistible Forces* [1987] and *Audio-Visualscapes* [1988]. We did an electronic version of Ornette Coleman's "Sphinx." We were way up in there.

MD: On the many records where you're playing multidirectionally—playing over the barline, using the entire kit to play the beat—what gave you license to go there? Your piano playing? The influence of Roy and Elvin?

Jack: Some of that, but I was also involved with musicians such as Muhal Richard Abrams and Roscoe Mitchell in Chicago. I spent time playing with Sun Ra and his Arkestra, making rehearsals and playing gigs with him in Chicago. This is before I came to New York, before the AACM [Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians] officially chartered. Muhal Richard had an experimental orchestra with me, Henry Threadgill, and Joseph Jarman. He and I went to college together, and we would play free for hours together, daily. We were inspired by Ornette and other people, Chicago's own eclectic music scene. Everything I eventually played in New York I was already doing in Chicago. They were just extensions of what I'd grounded myself in.

MD: So you experimented with an avant-garde approach before coming to New York.

Jack: Oh, yeah. We played concerts, everything. I didn't record with Sun Ra. But he had the ability to arrange music with room for free expression. He had this whole thing about outer space, and not being from here. I think that is true; there are a lot of beings on this planet who are not necessarily from here. Sentient humanoid beings.

MD: Are you speaking of alien or spiritual beings?

Jack: Well, it depends on which ones you want to look at or associate with. I don't really like the term *ET*, because it's been misused to create disinformation about other interdimensional beings that do exist. We are not the center of the universe. We are a small part of something; we are so infinitesimal. When we start to wake up to that, all this bickering will no longer be desirable. We're

moving into the last vestiges of that now. That's why everything is in upheaval—you have chaos before new things happen.

MD: What do you practice?

Jack: I just improvise, or play with records when I want to build my stamina. I play with Herbie, Miles, Coltrane, Joe Henderson.

MD: Is there anybody who you wish you could have played with?

Jack: Hendrix was one I would have liked to play with. I played with Coltrane. I sat in with him one night in Chicago for most of the set. Then he hired me to go back to Chicago at the Plugged Nickel for a week, with Rashied Ali. Not recorded. One night Roscoe Mitchell sat in, though, and that was amazing.

What's Next

Jack: I've been tracking with Paul Simon; he's revisiting some of his older material. We did "How the Heart Approaches What It Years." Paul doesn't sing at the sessions. He just wants to get the working track. He adds a vocal later. We recorded with Joe Lovano, John Patitucci, and a piano player. And sessions with Wadada Leo Smith and Vijay Iyer as a trio, and quartet.

MD: Steve Gadd recorded that song originally with Simon. Very tricky meter!

Jack: I played it in seven, but it was originally in 10/8. I put in 10/8 too, but I wanted to do it in a different meter as well. I did some things at his home studio, and those appeared on *Stranger to Stranger* ["The Riverbank," "Insomniac's Lullaby"]. I admire his production work. I told him I loved the way he used percussion and rhythm and vocals, and I said, "I'd love to work with you." Paul said, "Yeah, I wanted to do something with you too but was afraid to ask." So we've been working on some things. I like *Stranger to Stranger* a lot.

MD: Do you have any parting advice to young drummers?

Jack: I recommend that they have knowledge of a melodic instrument. Rashied Ali would carry a flute around all the time. I want to get some bamboo that isn't affected by weather, shape it like a brass reed to use as a reed in my melodica. I want less of a harmonica sound and more of a reed sound. If I can find somebody to experiment, I could replicate the shape of a brass reed using bamboo. I'd be curious to hear how that would sound in my melodica.

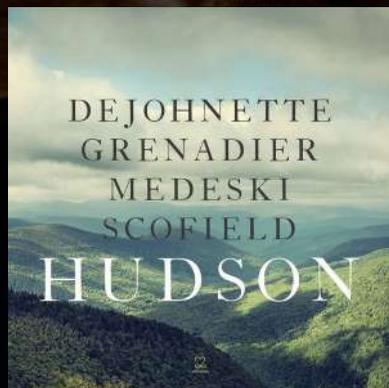
But other than that, listen to everything, and keep an open mind. Be a team player. To be a good leader you have to be a good follower and listener.



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50 Crucial Jazz Drumming Recordings

A hundred years. It's a wonder to think that's how long people have holed themselves away with their Victrolas, hi-fis, iPods, and Google Homes, listening intently to the wondrous music that four generations' worth of jazz drummers have gifted humankind. It's mind-boggling to ponder the myriad ways they've found to express their emotions and imaginations within a musical style that is well defined (it swings, and it demands improvisation) yet capable of incorporating infinite feels and timbres.

So, is it possible to distill a century's worth of drumming on jazz recordings, which by any reasonable guess would comprise tens if not hundreds of thousands of titles, down to a list of fifty crucial examples? In a word, no. But you try anyway. You try because one hundred years of official documentation is a pretty big milestone for any art form, and it deserves at least an attempt at concise discussion. And even if coming up with a "definitive" short list is a fool's errand, there's much to be gained in trying—or at the very least using it as a starting point to make some salient points about our art.

If you can guide folks through a good number of jazz drumming's high points, turning points, and significant points of departure, you've done them a valuable service. If you can hip them to some thrilling performances that they might be unfamiliar with, even better. And if you can inspire them to continue their research, develop their own list of personal faves, and pay that forward to the next generation... well, now you've really done something. And that's the something we're trying to do this month.

So, we hope you leave here educated, entertained, but most important inspired to get behind the drums—and maybe even imagine adding your own voice to the next century's worth of great jazz drumming on record.

1. Louis Armstrong "Knockin' a Jug" (Joseph "Kaiser" Marshall, 1929)

"This is one of the earliest tracks where you can hear in detail what drummers of the era were playing," says Paul Wells of Vince Giordano and the Nighthawks and Curtis Stigers' band. "Marshall switches between playing brushes on the snare and the sticks on the rim. For me that was a big lesson in what these guys were actually doing. And once you hear that track you'll start to be able to hear it better on others where the drums aren't recorded as well." You can find "Knockin' a Jug" on Louis Armstrong's *Complete Hot Five and Hot Seven Recordings*.

2. Chick Webb *Spinnin' the Webb* (Chick Webb, 1929-39)

"On tracks like 'Harlem Congo' and 'Clap Hands! Here Comes Charlie!' you can hear what a big sound Chick had," says famed jazz educator and performer Kenny Washington. "He really wrote the book on big band drumming in terms of setting up figures. And he had all these different sounds—he'd use a Chinese cymbal behind the lower brass and the trombones, or he would play woodblocks behind the piano solo. Chick was amazing."

ALSO CHECK OUT: Chick Webb "Liza" from *The Savory Collection, Volume 3: Honeysuckle Rose* (1938) // Chick Webb and His Savoy Ballroom Orchestra "My Wild Irish Rose" from *The King of the Drums* (1939)

3. Benny Goodman *The Famous 1938 Carnegie Hall Jazz Concert* (Gene Krupa)

A groundbreaking concert—unavailable on record until 1950—that featured jazzmen in a "legit" hall. Krupa's throbbing beat and famed extended solo on the twelve-plus-minute "Sing Sing Sing (With a Swing)" put drum power up front, driving the crowd wild. The limelight was no longer just for front-liners. Drummers, Krupa proved, could be stars. The double LP was a rarity: both a jazz landmark and a popular hit.

ALSO CHECK OUT: Gene Krupa/Buddy Rich *The Drum Battle* (1952)



4. John Kirby Sextet *Biggest Little Band in the Land* (O'Neil Spencer, 1938)

"The John Kirby Sextet had a chamber sound," Kenny Washington explains. "This is where Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie are coming from. You can really hear O'Neil Spencer stretch out on 'Rehearsin' for a Nervous Breakdown.' 'Original Dixieland One-Step' shows him off too. Spencer was a master of brushes, and sometimes he would do different combinations using a stick and a brush. He was a good big band drummer too."

ALSO CHECK OUT: John Kirby *The Best Of, 1937-45*

5. Duke Ellington *Never No Lament: The Blanton-Webster Band* (Sonny Greer, 1939-42)

"Sonny Greer was into using combinations of different sounds," Kenny Washington says, pointing to tracks like "Jumpin' Punks" and "Harlem Airshaft." "Duke said something once to the effect of, 'Sonny has every ping for my pong.' In other words, all these sounds that Duke would create, these tonal clusters and things, Sonny Greer knew instinctively what to do to make the band sound the best that it could. Sometimes instead of playing with the tip of the stick on the cymbal, he would play the edge with the shank, just below the tip, which gets a different sound. He could swing too."

ALSO CHECK OUT: Duke Ellington *At Fargo, 1940 Live*

6. Sidney Bechet *The Legendary Sidney Bechet* (Baby Dodds, 1932-41)

"You can hear Baby Dodds real well on the early-'40s RCA Victor sides by Sidney Bechet and His New Orleans Feetwarmers," Kenny Washington says. "Being from New Orleans, Dodds was one of the guys who played on lots of records, like those of Louis Armstrong. He was a hell of a drummer."

As a bonus, the tracks on this collection also feature Kenny Clarke, Big Sid Catlett, Zutty Singleton, and several other early greats.

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Baby Dodds** *Footnotes to Jazz, Volume 1: Talking and Drum Solos* (1951)

7. Woody Herman and His First Herd

The Old Gold Radio Shows 1944, Volume 2 (Dave Tough)

In *MD* founder Ron Spagnardi's book *The Great Jazz Drummers*, longtime *Tonight Show* drummer Ed Shaughnessy says, "Dave Tough was one of the finest examples of someone who didn't have lightning-fast hands and never wanted to solo, but was still one of the most in-demand drummers in the history of jazz. He had such immense power. He never brought the drums to the forefront, but preferred to simply build a tremendous foundation." Spagnardi added that Tough "had an intensity that only Buddy Rich could match."

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Woody Herman** *Old Gold Rehearsals* (1944), *The Complete Columbia Recordings of Woody Herman and His Orchestra & Woodchoppers* (1945-1947)

8. Coleman Hawkins *The Chronological Classics 1945*

(Sid Catlett)

"This collection on the Classics label features the tune 'Mop de Mop Mop,'" Kenny Washington says. "It was originally Sid Catlett's date, with Coleman Hawkins playing on it. Big Sid played his ass off on that track. He's also the drummer on the Dizzy Gillespie/Charlie Parker track 'Salt Peanuts.' That's a great solo, man. He plays the intro on 'Hot House' too."

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Louis Armstrong** "Steak Face" from *Satchmo at Symphony Hall 65th Anniversary* (1947)

9. Count Basie *America's #1 Band*

(Shadow Wilson, 1936-50)

"Every Wilson performance," Ron Spagnardi wrote, "clearly demonstrates the tasteful, unobtrusive playing of one of the jazz world's true unsung heroes." "One of things that was unique about Shadow," Kenny Washington adds, "was his less-is-more approach. This box set is the easiest way to hear classic recordings of his like 'Queer Street,' 'Avenue C,' and 'Blue Skies.'"

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Thelonious Monk Quartet with John Coltrane** *At Carnegie Hall* (1957)

10. Dizzy Gillespie *Showtime at the Spotlite*

(Kenny Clarke, 1946)

It's arguable that Kenny Clarke invented the timekeeping function of the modern ride cymbal, but there's no doubt that he perfected it in the 1940s, as heard on this early bebop date. Bass drum bombs and a free, conversational left hand give the music shape, but it's that insistent spang-a-lang that allows the soloists to go into flights of fancy atop a solid bedrock. Jazz would never be the same.

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Kenny Clarke & His 52nd St. Boys** "Epistrophy" (1946) /// **Miles Davis** *Walkin'* (1954)

11. Mezz Mezzrow "Drum Face" (Arthur "Zutty" Singleton, 1951)

As Ron Spagnardi wrote in *The Great Jazz Drummers*, Arthur "Zutty" Singleton followed the melodic lines of a jazz improvisation more closely than anyone who had come before him, and his press-roll timekeeping technique foreshadowed the modern jazz cymbal beat. Though Zutty is famous for his appearance on Louis Armstrong's legendary Hot Five and Hot Seven recordings in the late '20s, Kenny Washington recommends the later track "Drum Face" by clarinetist Mezz Mezzrow, which you can find on iTunes on the collection *Drum Face, Volume 1*.

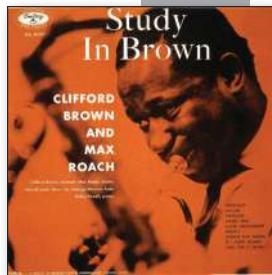
ALSO CHECK OUT: **Pee Wee Russell** "About Face" (1941, available on *Jazz Original*)

12. Clifford Brown & Max Roach Quintet

Study in Brown (Max Roach, 1955)

From *Modern Drummer's* December 2007 tribute issue to Max Roach: "Although his earlier work with Charlie Parker established him as a major force of drumming innovation, it wasn't until Max teamed up with rising trumpeter Clifford Brown that his true genius took hold. If there's one Clifford Brown/Max Roach record to have, *Study in Brown* is it. Each track features brilliant playing by the entire band, and Max's solos are particularly clean and clear. Plus, the quintet's blazing version of 'Cherokee' is a modern jazz masterpiece."

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Sonny Rollins** *Saxophone Colossus* (1956) /// **Buddy Rich/Max Roach** *Rich Versus Roach* (1959) /// **Max Roach** *We Insist!* (1960), *Drums Unlimited* (1966), *Chattahoochee Red* (1981)



13. Shelly Manne and His Men

Volume 4: Swinging Sounds (Shelly Manne, 1956)

"This album contains the track 'Un Poco Loco,' which features a drum solo that's amazing for a couple reasons," Paul Wells explains. "Shelly has a tambourine on the head of the floor tom, he has a brush in his right hand and nothing in his left hand, and his snares are off. So the sounds are completely unique. And the entire solo is based on a four-note descending figure: snare/rack tom/floor tom/bass drum. He varies the rhythms but not the melodic content—every possible permutation. Totally stunning."

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Shelly Manne** *My Fair Lady* (1956) /// 2-3-4 (1962)

14. Manny Albam-Ernie Wilkins Orchestra

The Drum Suite (Osie Johnson, Gus Johnson, Don Lamond, Teddy Sommer, 1956)

"I grew up with this record," the highly regarded drummer/leader Gerry Gibbs says. "It's a very early example of having multiple drummers on a bandstand at the same time. On this album they're not always playing at the same time. The first thing they did was make their feel similar, so the band didn't have to adjust. They were all coming out of the same place, and they were extremely melodic soloists. They all kind of said, *This is what's going to make the music sound good.*"

ALSO CHECK OUT: *Son of Drum Suite* (Gus Johnson, Don Lamond, Mel Lewis, Louis Hayes, 1960)

15. Ahmad Jamal *At the Pershing:*

But Not for Me (Vernel Fournier, 1958)

Vernel Fournier's unique performance on "Poinciana," heard on this best-selling live recording, helped to keep the album—Chess Records' first jazz release—on the charts for more than a hundred weeks. "Hearing Vernel with the Ahmad Jamal Trio inspired me to be a drummer," this month's cover artist, Jack DeJohnette, told *MD* in 1998. "It was his finesse and feel." "I didn't create the [drum part to 'Poinciana'], I discovered it," Fournier said in an *MD* interview. "It came from the bass drummers in the parade bands and funeral bands in New Orleans. They would play rhythms on the beat with the right hand on the drum, and they would have a cymbal on top of the drum that they'd hit on the offbeat with a stick or a coat hanger. I heard that beat all the time growing up."

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Clifford Jordan Quartet** *Repetition* (1984)

16. Miles Davis *Milestones*

(Philly Joe Jones, 1958)

"Tony Williams supposedly said that you could learn everything you need to know about jazz from this record," Paul Wells shares. "And I know that trumpeter Wallace Roney said that Tony could sing every solo and bass line on it. It's a perfect jazz record, and Philly just slays on it. Interestingly, he plays the entire record with just one tom-tom."

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Miles Davis** *Cookin', Relaxin', Workin', Steamin'* (1956) /// **Art Pepper** *Meets the Rhythm Section* (1957) /// **Wynton Kelly** *Kelly at Midnight* (1960)

17. Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers

Moanin' (Art Blakey, 1958)

Blakey was one of the most visceral drummers in jazz history, able to make the hair on the back of your neck stand up with one of his famous press rolls and cause the earth to shake with his more overtly African-inspired, percussion-heavy pieces. Beyond his playing reputation, earned via seminal recordings with many of the giants of jazz, including Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, and Miles Davis, Blakey is known internationally as one of the great nurturers of jazz talent, providing a platform for Lee Morgan, Wayne Shorter, Horace Silver, and Wynton Marsalis, among many other future stars. The famous *Moanin'* album finds Blakey in a sextet format, with excellent punchy arrangements that allow him to set up heads, kick soloists, and display his awesome power.

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Thelonious Monk** *Genius of Modern Music, Volume 1* (1951) /// **Art Blakey** *Orgy in Rhythm* (1957), *Caravan* (1962) /// **Art Blakey and the Afro-Drum Ensemble** *The African Beat* (1962)

18. Jo Jones Trio *Jo Jones Trio* (Papa Jo Jones, 1958)

"Papa Jo's masterful musicianship, which served as the backbone for the Basie orchestra, is showcased here in this small-group setting," Yeah Yeah Yeahs drummer and Jo Jones devotee Brian Chase tells *MD*. "Every note of the melody, every ensemble passage, and every twist and turn of his bandmates' solos gets full support by Papa Jo with his unparalleled creative elegance, dynamic sensitivity, and deep groove. Additionally, there are solo segments in most of the

songs that prove Papa Jo as a leading innovator of melodic drumming.”

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Count Basie** *The Original American Decca Recordings* (1937-39) **/// Jo Jones and Milt Hinton** *Percussion and Bass* (1960) **/// Jo Jones** *The Drums* (1973)

19. Miles Davis *Kind of Blue* (Jimmy Cobb, 1959)

By the time he'd joined trumpeter Miles Davis's band, Jimmy Cobb had already logged much work with Billie Holiday, Charlie Rouse, Earl Bostic, Dinah Washington, and Dizzy Gillespie, among others. Within the Miles sextet Cobb laid down impossibly good-feeling, spacious grooves that allowed the solos of pianist Bill Evans and sax players Cannonball Adderley and John Coltrane to take full flight. *Kind of Blue* is the most popular jazz album in history—and for good reason. In addition to the classic compositions it contains, it provides a master class for those looking to learn about depth of feel in jazz.

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Miles Davis** *Friday and Saturday Nights at the Blackhawk, Complete* (1961)

20. Dave Brubeck Quartet *Time Out*

(Joe Morello, 1959)

Jazz had been emancipated in many different ways, Steve Race wrote in the original liner notes to *Time Out*, but not yet rhythmically. “Take Five” elegantly pulsates in 5/4, and “Blue Rondo à la Turk,” a Middle Eastern folk-tinged excursion slipping in and out of 9/8, was inspired by the jazz outfit's tour through Turkey, India, Iran, and Iraq, months prior to the recording of the album. In 2007, Joe Morello told *Modern Drummer* contributor Will Romano, “[Brubeck] said to me, ‘Do you think jazz should always be played in 4/4?’ I said, ‘Hell, no! You can play it in waltz time or 5/8, 7/4, 5/4.’ Paul Desmond wrote it, but the odd time was really kind of my idea.” I told Paul, “Just write a tune around this pattern,” Brubeck confirmed. “Right away people started copying that rhythm.”

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Dave Brubeck Quartet** *At Carnegie Hall* (1963)

21. Art Taylor *A.T.'s Delight* (Art Taylor, 1960)

Arthur Taylor played on more than 300 albums with dozens of the greatest jazz artists in history. He also released a handful of well-regarded recordings under his own name. This, his third, features heavies Wynton Kelly on piano, Paul Chambers on bass, Dave Burns on trumpet, and Stanley Turrentine on tenor sax, as well as Carlos “Patato” Valdés on congas, who adds a critical dimension to the interplay on Thelonious Monk's “Epistrophy” and Taylor's own “Cookoo and Fungi.”

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Arthur Taylor** *Taylor's Waiters* (1957), *Mr. A.T.* (1992) **///**

Miles Davis *Miles Ahead* (1957) **/// Thelonious Monk Orchestra** *At Town Hall* (1959) **/// John Coltrane** *Giant Steps* (1960)

22. Cannonball Adderley Quintet

The Quintet Plus (Louis Hayes, 1961)

Detroit-bred Louis Hayes, who was most influenced by the jazz giants Max Roach and Kenny Clarke, first made his mark with multi-instrumentalist Yusef Lateef. But when rising piano star Horace Silver beckoned from New York, Hayes heeded the call, and promptly became a vital part of the NYC scene, playing with John Coltrane, Cecil Taylor, and Hank Mobley, to name a few. But it was his decision to join Cannonball Adderley's group—a hugely popular ensemble that recorded often and toured the world to great acclaim—that would prove to be his biggest move.

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Horace Silver** *Quintet 6 Pieces of Silver* (1956), *Finger Poppin'* (1959) **/// Louis Hayes** *Featuring Yusef Lateef & Nat Adderley* (1960) **/// Horace Silver** *A Prescription for the Blues* (1997)

23. Terry Gibbs Dream Band *Volume 5: The Big Cat*

(Mel Lewis, 1961)

Gerry Gibbs, son of the great jazz vibraphonist and bandleader Terry Gibbs, is in a unique position to comment on this particular release. “Mel was a true big band innovator, like Buddy Rich,” Gerry tells *MD*. “He moved to L.A. in '57, and everything he did [there] with my dad's band is what he brought to the Mel Lewis/Thad Jones band. The way he sets up the big band figures is unique. They're kind of simple, but they have space in them. He was the epitome of

knowing how to get up underneath the band. The way he tuned his drums was also innovative.”

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Band** *Presenting Joe Williams* (1966)

24. Ornette Coleman *This Is Our Music* (Ed Blackwell, 1961)

Matching his earthy New Orleans drumming to alto saxophonist Ornette Coleman's space-age free-jazz-folk, Ed Blackwell cracked and juggled the time, dropped bass drum bombs, and elevated spirited snare drum commentary.

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Eric Dolphy** *At the Five Spot* (1961) **/// Dewey Redman Quartet** *The Struggle Continues* (1982)

25. Lee Morgan *The Sidewinder* (Billy Higgins, 1963)

The feel on the title cut of this renowned album is funky and swinging, and hard to replicate. Higgins, one of the most recorded drummers in jazz history, provides *such* a great feel on this track, and on the album as a whole.

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Sonny Rollins** *Our Man in Jazz* (1963) **/// Jackie McLean** *Let Freedom Ring* (1963)

26. John Coltrane *A Love Supreme* (Elvin Jones, 1965)

Elvin's swirling rhythmic layers and huge, tumultuous sound transported this volcanic game-changer. But it's ultimately about much more than his impressive physical performance: Elvin channeled spiritual resonance through his kit—a drummer possessed.

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Tommy Flanagan** *Overseas* (1957) “Elvin's grossly misunderstood,” Kenny Washington says. “He couldn't do what he did with Wayne Shorter and John Coltrane if he didn't have his basics together. And the early records show what he really could do in an ensemble. This one features Elvin sticking to brushes, using his muscle and his sensitivity.”

27. Sonny Rollins *Alfie* (Frankie Dunlop, 1966)

Sonny Rollins' 1966 soundtrack to the popular film *Alfie* revealed the true, swinging sportsmanship of drummer Frankie Dunlop, whose bubbly, buoyant drumming also played a key role in the groups of Thelonious Monk.

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Maynard Ferguson** *A Message From Birdland* (1959)

28. Frank Sinatra *Sinatra at the Sands With Count Basie & the Orchestra* (Sonny Payne, 1966)

There's magic here, and not just in the wondrous darkness of Sinatra's expressive voice. The Chairman cut two previous studio albums with the Count, and their symbiotic musical relationship is in full swing for this classic live offering. Sonny Payne's impeccable timing, playful phrasing, and rhythmic punctuation drive these arrangements and help to fuel Sinatra's effortless lyricism. As Sinatra eggs on the orchestra, Payne's crisp patterns simmer to a boil in “My Kind of

Town” and the Cole Porter standard “I've Got You Under My Skin”—a fiery interpretation superior to Ol' Blue Eyes' own studio version for Capitol Records a decade earlier.

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Count Basie** *Basie at Birdland* (1961)

29. Cecil Taylor *Conquistador!* (Andrew Cyrille, 1967)

What Andrew Cyrille does with time here, and Cecil Taylor's brand of avant-garde jazz on the whole, is stunning. Cyrille worked with the pianist for more than ten years, during which he developed a reputation as one of the top “free” jazz drummers—though he'd spent much of the '50s and '60s playing with more mainstream jazz artists, like Roland Hanna and Coleman Hawkins. Cyrille is still active today.

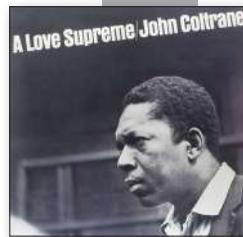
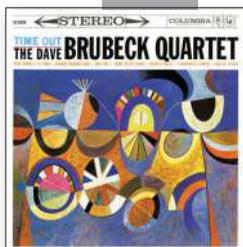
ALSO CHECK OUT: **Andrew Cyrille** *What About?* (1971) **/// Kenny Clarke/Andrew Cyrille/Milford Graves/Famoudou Don Moye** *Pieces of Time* (1984)

30. Duke Pearson's Big Band *Introducing*

(Mickey Roker, 1968)

The pianist had released a number of well-received small-group recordings since the '50s, but began leading an experimental modern big band in the late '60s, and this debut LP kicks on multiple levels. During his long and successful career, Mickey Roker, who passed away earlier this year, spent time as a house drummer at Blue Note Records and during the '70s was associated with Duke Ellington.

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Duke Pearson** *Sweet Honey Bee* (1967) **/// Herbie Hancock** *Speak Like a Child* (1968)



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Pictured: Damon Grant

50 Crucial Jazz Drumming Recordings

31. Chick Corea *Now He Sings, Now He Sobs* (Roy Haynes, 1968)

Roy Haynes has logged hundreds of great drumming moments—at ninety-two, he's considered the dean of jazz drummers—but this classic of feel and interaction is an ideal platform for his chops, time, and ability to fit into the most cutting-edge environment, even well after he established himself with giants of jazz like Charlie Parker, Sarah Vaughan, Lester Young, and Stan Getz.

ALSO CHECK OUT: Roy Haynes *We Three* (1958) /// Oliver Nelson *The Blues and the Abstract Truth* (1961) /// John Coltrane *Newport '63* /// Chick Corea *Trio Music Live in Europe* (1984)

32. Buddy Rich *Very Alive at Ronnie Scott's* (Buddy Rich, 1971)

"The world's greatest drummer" recorded a number of classic LPs (such as *Swingin' New Big Band* in 1966, *Big Swing Face* in '67, *Mercy, Mercy* in '68, and *The Roar of '74*), but the ferocity, drive, and command that Buddy displays here were pointed out by several contributors to this piece.

ALSO CHECK OUT: Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong *Ella and Louis* (1956) "This is an iconic jazz record," Paul Wells says. "Buddy plays brushes on the whole thing, and it's all super-swinging, tasty, mellow drumming. The second album by Ella and Louis, *Ella and Louis Again* (1957), features Louie Bellson on drums and is equally great."

33. Paul Motian *Conception Vessel*

(Paul Motian, 1973)

Paul Motian's first effort as a bandleader shows that the well-regarded sideman envisioned an alternate type of jazz, one that was a little slower and stranger than popular sounds of the '60s. With Persian and Armenian melodic influences and deep, throaty drum sounds, Motian, aided by pianist Keith Jarrett on the title track, started a quietly subversive body of work with *Conception Vessel* that would continue to present a sort of Zen counterargument to more muscular displays of jazz artistry.

ALSO CHECK OUT: Bill Evans *Sunday at the Village Vanguard* and *Waltz for Debbie* (1961)

34. Miles Davis *Agharta* and *Pangaea*

(Al Foster, 1975)

Al Foster is widely known as the drummer during Miles Davis's most ferocious fusion period, of which these two double albums, recorded on the same date at the Festival Hall in Osaka, Japan, are standouts. Foster can be heard here whackin' the heck out of sloshy hats and poking and prodding his bandmates to great heights of intensity—influencing a generation of fusion drummers in the process. "Hanging out with Miles rubbed off," Foster told *Modern Drummer* in his January 1989 cover story. "I started playing more 8th-note things, and that's what I wanted to do. But if you said to pick one style of music that I prefer playing, I would definitely pick straight-ahead jazz."

ALSO CHECK OUT: Kenny Barron *Landscape* (1985) /// Eddie Daniels *To Bird With Love* (1987) /// Quest (Dave Liebman) *Quest* (1991)

35. New Tony Williams Lifetime *Believe It*

(Tony Williams, 1975)

Like Roy Haynes, Max Roach, and very few others, Tony Williams made important contributions to jazz history in remarkably varied settings and eras. Williams could easily have appeared earlier in this list for his groundbreaking work on Miles Davis's mid-'60s "second great quintet" albums, from 1963's *Seven Steps to Heaven* (recorded when he was merely seventeen) through the transitional '68 release *Filles de Kilimanjaro* and '69's maiden "electric" album, *In a Silent Way*. Regardless of the style, Tony's touch shows absolute control—he could be feathery or bombastic at will—and his advanced concepts of polyrhythmic playing and metric modulation seem to flow from his sticks effortlessly. Of course, in addition to the sheer talent that he was born with, Tony was a dedicated woodshedder whose rudimentary control was unmatched. He was also a forward thinker who took Miles' cues toward a future music that mixed jazz and rock in equal measure and produced his own groundbreaking fusion recordings, such as this debut album by his second Lifetime band, featuring guitarist Allan Holdsworth, keyboardist Alan Pasqua, and bassist Tony Newton.

ALSO CHECK OUT: Eric Dolphy *Out to Lunch!* (1964) /// V.S.O.P. *The Quintet* (1977) /// Tony Williams *The Story of Neptune* (1991)

36. Chick Corea *Three Quartets* (Steve Gadd, 1981)

Is it acoustic fusion? Labels don't apply here, as Steve Gadd lays down propulsive swing, whips out outrageous fills and accents, and brings military-grade precision to a set of intricately composed material. He was "the man" before, but after this, Gadd became a god.

ALSO CHECK OUT: Michel Petrucci *Trio in Tokyo* (1997)

37. Jaco Pastorius *Big Band Twins, Live in Japan*

(Peter Erskine, 1982)

"Peter had a lot of experience playing in big bands that were intricate, like Stan Kenton," Gerry Gibbs says. "The music here is wild, and Jaco left a lot of space for blowing. Peter knows exactly what to do to give the band something to sit on—that's the most important thing. And he had to adjust to six or seven soloists. Also having a conga drummer can be problematic, but Peter knew just how to play with Don Alias."

ALSO CHECK OUT: Weather Report *Night Passage* (1980) /// Marc Johnson *Bass Desires* (1985)

38. Wynton Marsalis *Black Codes (From the Underground)* (Jeff "Tain" Watts, 1985)

"This album was one of the first to show that the Young Lions movement was not about guys just trying to replicate the past," Paul Wells says. "Tain was coming out of Tony and Elvin but was also influenced by the fusion drumming of Billy Cobham, and brought some of his ideas and aggressiveness, but he could be very sensitive as well. He's probably best known for having his own language of polyrhythmic drumming, and this record is a great showcase for that."

ALSO CHECK OUT: Jeff "Tain" Watts *Folk's Songs* (2007)

39. Michael Brecker *Michael Brecker*

(Jack DeJohnette, 1987)

"There's so much ensemble playing here," Gerry Gibbs says, "yet Jack can still play in a certain way where it's almost like he doesn't have to make adjustments. He can just be Jack D and still make it fit into that music. He never thinks about style, and that's what makes him unique. Jack's drumming is everything there ever has been in drums."

ALSO CHECK OUT: Miles Davis *Live-Evil* (1971) /// Jack DeJohnette *Special Edition* (1979)

40. Tommy Flanagan *Jazz Poet*

(Kenny Washington, 1989)

"This album is, from beginning to end, a master class in brush playing," says Paul Wells, who not only studied extensively with Kenny Washington but interviewed him for the April 2015 issue of *Modern Drummer*. "Kenny played with the most perfect, beautiful sound, and on an extremely wide range of tempos, from ridiculously slow to insanely fast."

ALSO CHECK OUT: Grant Stewart *Downtown Sounds* (1992)

41. Tommy Flanagan *Beyond the Blue Bird*

(Lewis Nash, 1990)

In January of 1997, Lewis Nash appeared on the cover of *Modern Drummer* alongside the legendary Roy Haynes—no small compliment to the junior drummer, who made his name in the working bands of top-level artists like Ron Carter, Sonny Rollins, Branford Marsalis, and Betty Carter. This album is among the highlights of pianist Tommy Flanagan's later but still vital work, and it's a great introduction to Nash's "gleaming swing feel, crack-shot energy, and extensive working knowledge of jazz history," in the words of *MD* scribe Ken Micallef.

ALSO CHECK OUT: Branford Marsalis *Random Abstract* (1987) /// Kenny Barron *Invitation* (1990) /// Clark Terry *Having Fun* (1990)

42. John Scofield and Pat Metheny

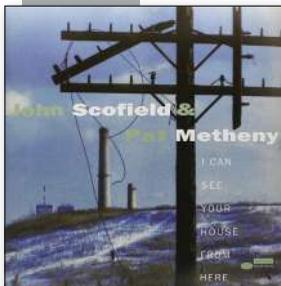
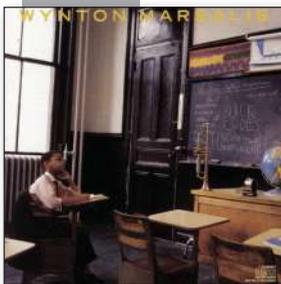
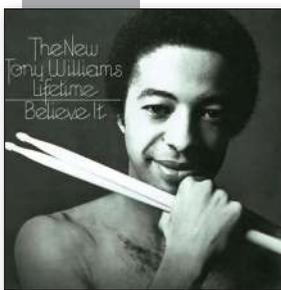
I Can See Your House From Here (Bill Stewart, 1994)

Still early in his career, Bill Stewart had already established himself as a singularly unique master of swing and taste, all filtered through an irreverent post-bop concept and impeccable hand chops. Check him here supporting two guitar giants with new-jazz combustion and flair.

ALSO CHECK OUT: Marc Copland *New York Trio Recordings, Volumes 1-3* (2006-09)

43. Carl Allen *Testimonial* (Carl Allen, 1995)

Though he's recorded dozens and dozens of albums with the cream of the jazz



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crop, this solo release neatly reflects Carl Allen's multitude of skills beyond the kit—which are of course also in evidence here. But the producer, composer, and marketing-savvy artist put all his interests together on this release, which he described in his September 1995 *MD* cover story as “a jazz record with gospel overtones.”

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Freddie Hubbard/Woody Shaw** *Double Take* (1985) /// **Vincent Herring** *Evidence* (1990) /// **Jackie McLean** *The Jackie Mac Attack Live* (1991)

44. Billy Drummond *Dubai* (Billy Drummond, 1996)

“I was never just a Blue Note–listening, hard-bop kind of guy,” Billy Drummond told *Modern Drummer* in July of 1997. “In the ‘70s, when I was buying a lot of records, I was into ECM as well as straight-ahead, swinging stuff.” This third solo release by the drummer, who cut his teeth with jazz greats including Horace Silver, Sonny Rollins, Joe Henderson, and Freddie Hubbard, reflects his wide view of jazz, and ups the exploration levels of his first two recordings, particularly on “Drum Head,” written by tenor saxophonist Walt Weiskopf.

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Renee Rosnes** *For the Moment* (1990) /// **Bobby Hutcherson** *Mirage* (1991) /// **Walt Weiskopf** *Sextet Simplicity* (1992)

45. Joshua Redman *Timeless Tales (for Changing Times)* (Brian Blade, 1998)

Pop and jazz standards done in odd times? Sounds like another gimmick to bring in a wider audience. Except Brian Blade kills on this, working his beautiful cymbals into a frenzy and supplying a constant stream of drama. Blade's drumming is fiery, pristine, and full of surprises.

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Brian Blade** *Fellowship* (1998)

46. Bobby Watson & Horizon *Horizon Reassembled* (Victor Lewis, 2004)

This release represents the reemergence of the group that described its sound as “post Motown bop.” In his June 1992 interview with *Modern Drummer*, Victor Lewis explained his approach to the concept this way: “With Motown stuff, they would find the death groove for a particular bass line, for that feeling—the right lick. With jazz and improvisation, from each section of the tune I not only try to do what's written in the head, but I also try to think of what each section represents, compiling a whole set of subsections within each section.” This deep approach to analyzing exactly what a specific musical situation calls for has kept Lewis on the short list of go-to jazz drummers for more than forty years, with artists as diverse as Woody Shaw, Stan Getz, Kenny Barron, George Cables, and Carla Bley.

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Victor Lewis** *Know It Today, Know It Tomorrow* (1992)

47. Bill Frisell *East/West* (Kenny Wollesen, 2005)

This double live album, recorded at the Village

Vanguard in New York and Yoshi's in Oakland, is a perfect showcase for guitarist Bill Frisell's all-inclusive sound, where jazz mixes with rock, soul, avant-garde, and country music. And Kenny Wollesen—swinging, slogging, brushing, grooving, but always listening—is the perfect copilot for Frisell, able to steer the ship through changing waters without even looking at the radar.

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Julian Lage** *Arclight* (2016)

48. Terri Lyne Carrington *Money Jungle: Provocative in Blue* (Terri Lyne Carrington, 2013)

Carrington has put down penetrating performances on albums by Herbie Hancock, John Scofield, Wayne Shorter, and many other top jazz artists. She's also released a handful of excellent solo albums stuffed with exhilarating playing, including 2012's Grammy-winning *The Mosaic Project*. This follow-up is a reimagining of the famous 1963 Duke Ellington/Charles Mingus/Max Roach release, *Money Jungle*. On it Carrington not only plays with her usual exemplar fire, but makes a strong case for her lyrical and conceptual voice being among the most intriguing in modern jazz.

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Wayne Shorter** *Joy Rider* (1998)

49. Mark Turner Quartet *Lathe of Heaven* (Marcus Gilmore, 2014)

“Marcus plays complicated odd times better than almost anybody,” Paul Wells says, “but he does it with the most beautifully organic feel, so it never sounds mathematical.”

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Steve Coleman and Five Elements** *Weaving Symbolics* (2006) /// **Gonzalo Rubalcaba** *Avatar* (2008) /// **Gilad Hekselman** *This Just In* (2013)

50. Ambrose Akinmusire *A Rift in Decorum: Live at the Village Vanguard* (Justin Brown, 2017)

Thirty-three-year-old Justin Brown is a bicoastal, extremely busy jazz drummer whose history working with Thundercat, Gerald Clayton, Christian McBride, Stefon Harris, Esperanza Spalding, and Vijay Iyer is simply a foretaste of his brilliant debut as a leader with his band Nyeusi. His cathartic drumming and '70s-inspired funk/fusion material is thoroughly earth-scorching. To hear the state of his art, check out this double album by trumpeter Akinmusire.

ALSO CHECK OUT: **Gerald Clayton** *Bond: The Paris Sessions* (2011) /// **Scott Tixier** *Cosmic Adventure* (2016)

We reached out to a number of drummers for research help with this article. Kenny Washington spent several hours assisting us with the task at hand, and no doubt several more re-filing the dozens of records he pulled off his shelves in the process. Gerry Gibbs, Paul Wells, and Brian Chase each offered invaluable insight. We also consulted with the longtime MD contributing writers Jeff Potter, Robin Tolleson, Michael Parillo, Ken Micallef, Will Romano, Martin Patmos, Ilya Stemkovsky, and Mike Haid. And we pored through the many responses MD readers provided on social media. Thanks to everyone for your contributions.





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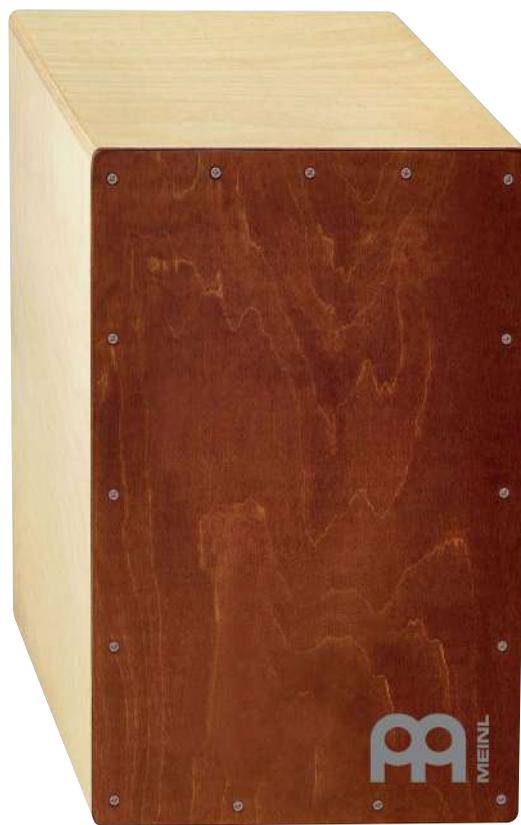
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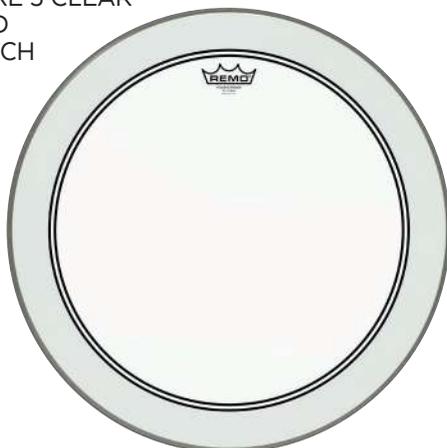
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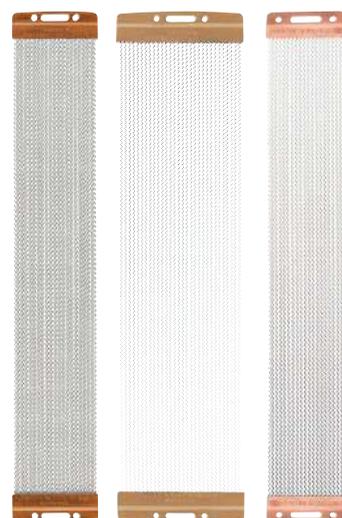


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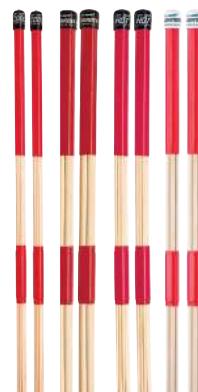
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Antonio Sanchez

Soars Beyond *Birdman*

The success of his unique film score blew open the doors of perception for many a curious drummer. His latest projects are no less exploratory—or inspiring.

Story by Jeff Potter

Photos by Paul La Raia



Antonio Sanchez knows the key to being a successful jazz drummer in this unpredictable decade: Always keep evolving. To stay ahead of the game—both artistically and business-wise—the indefatigable artist embraces a whirlwind schedule and wholeheartedly welcomes a challenge.

In addition to his seventeen-year association with famed guitarist Pat Metheny, Sanchez globe-hops with his own dynamic unit, Migration, which has been touring his epic sixty-minute *Meridian Suite*. Other recent projects include an improvisational quartet featuring saxophonist David Binney, bassist Matt Brewer, and guitarist Ben Monder, as well as an all-star unit that includes Snarky Puppy guitarist/bassist Michael League and top percussionist Pedrito Martinez. And a release

next year will showcase Sanchez performing his own compositions with Cologne's WDR Big Band.

In 2014 Sanchez famously ventured into film with his groundbreaking solo drumset score to the Oscar-winning film *Birdman*. That triumph led to further film work, including the drum-centric score for the EPIX TV series *Get Shorty*. Antonio has also released *Bad Hombre*, a drumset-meets-electronics venture that he singlehandedly created in his home studio. "One of the most fun parts for me was getting out of my comfort zone—being this completely different kind of drummer, producer, and musician," Sanchez says. And, indeed, *Bad Hombre* is a must-hear, the work of a drummer/composer intent on discovering new sounds in his environment, and within himself. Antonio recently sat with *MD* to talk about the album's creation.



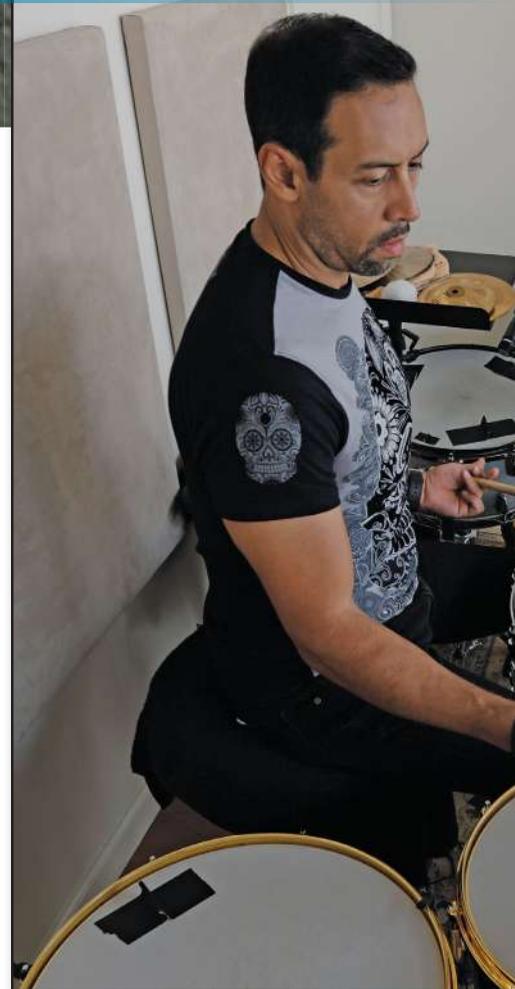
MD: You continually find new directions for your drumming, *Birdman* being a dramatic example. Now *Bad Hombre* takes that trajectory to another level. Given today's rapidly changing music world, what do you think the future of drumming is, and what do you think is the secret to survival in the industry?

Antonio: It's versatility. You have to have your hands in many pies. Because if you're relying on one thing, it might dry up at any given moment.

Experiencing the *Birdman* phenomenon,

I was able to peek into Hollywood a little bit. At the beginning I was a little standoffish, thinking, *Okay, if I'm going to be writing music for somebody else, how can I be writing for myself?* and *It's not artistic freedom because of all the parameters that you have to follow when you write music for TV or film.*

But I talked about it with Alan Silvestri, who's an incredibly accomplished Hollywood composer, and he said, "You didn't just open a door for yourself with *Birdman*, you blew up the whole side of a building! So if you want to take advantage



of it, it's there."

So when the opportunity arose to buy a house with a basement, I thought, *Great—I'm going to have a place to practice.* Then right when *Birdman* was happening, I got a few offers to do some commercials. The "drums only" concept was becoming a thing because of *Birdland* and *Whiplash*, I guess. Suddenly I was getting lots of offers. One was an independent Spanish documentary [*Política, Manual de Instrucciones*], and one was a British film [*The Hippopotamus*]. I thought maybe I could turn [my basement space] into a recording studio for myself and it could pay for itself very quickly.

So I set up the studio, and all of a sudden I had this incredible laboratory down there. Once I started experimenting with the different possibilities, it was almost overwhelming: You have no time constraints, no money constraints. All you have as a limit is your creativity.

MD: How did *Bad Hombre* evolve musically from *Birdman*?

Antonio: In *Birdman*, it was great to hear the drums up front, with some pads in the background and atmospheric sounds. I wanted to try my hand at doing my version of that, but go all the way. I envisioned the drums being at the forefront, but with something that hadn't been done before:

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I wanted to juxtapose really acoustic-sounding drums with an all-electronic background.

I didn't want it to be just vamps; I didn't want it to be tunes—I wanted it to be waves of energy, soundscapes. But I wanted it to have shape and form and be sonically gratifying, because I grew up listening to very well-produced music—rock, pop, and, later, electronic—and honestly, I think jazz often lacks production values. A lot of jazz albums sound like crap to me because they're recorded in one day, mixed in one day, and mastered in one day. It's a *huge* difference when you take a little bit more time.

Nowadays you can have the studio in your laptop; the possibilities are mind-boggling. It's now about how you're going to use those tools for the betterment of music and artistry—and yourself.

MD: Electronic projects can often sound labored and stiff due to meticulous programmed layering. But what struck me most about *Bad Hombre* is the human element, a sense of interaction. What was the process?

Antonio: Every track was slightly different.

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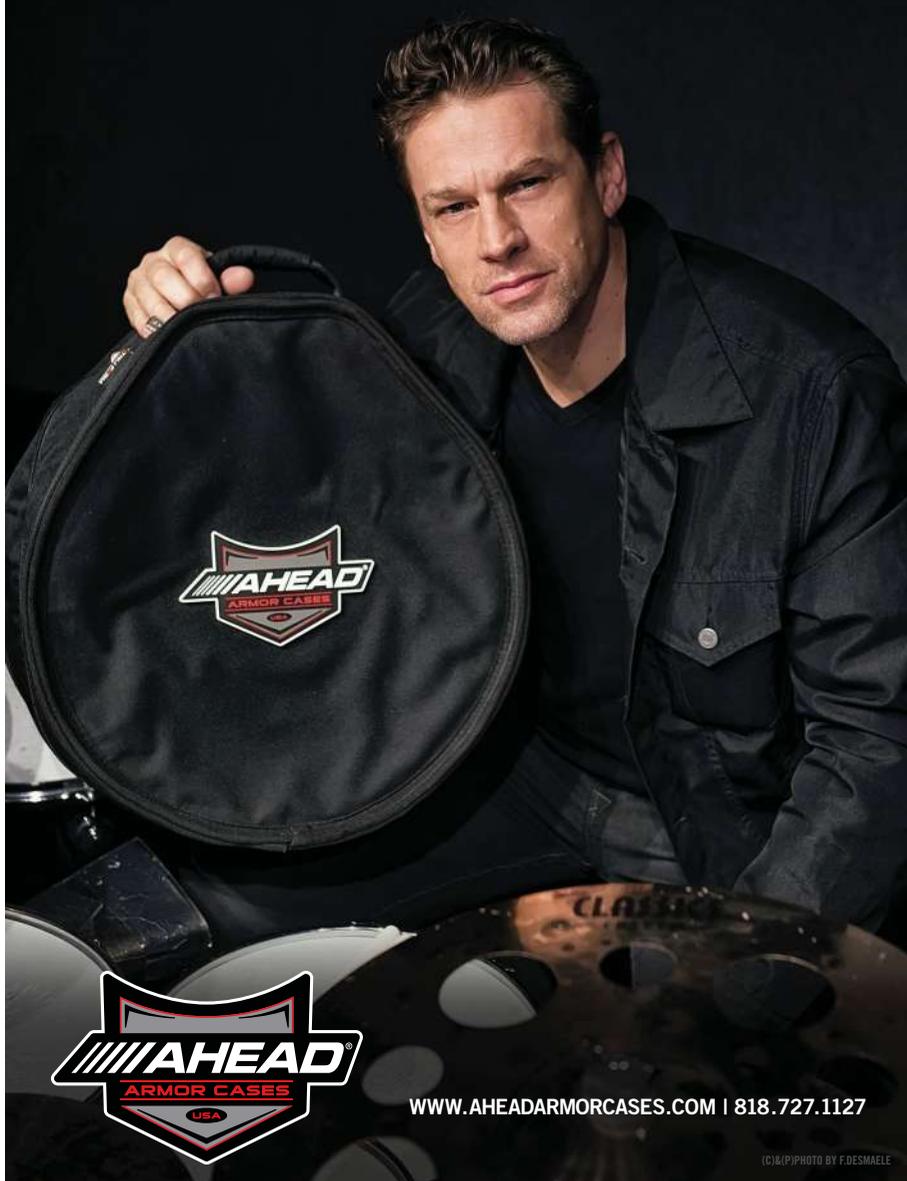
But the main idea was to record a bunch of drums—and to have something in mind when I sat down to play. For example, when recording “Momentum,” I thought, *I’m just going to start playing and then speed up, and that’s it*—no click track, no nothing, just start with open soloing, go into a groove, then start elaborating on that groove and speed up.

Whenever I was home for a couple days, I would record a bunch of stuff and then bring it on the road with me. I’d listen to it with my Pro Tools rig and my laptop. Then I would try to find shapes. I’d done

long improvisations, so I wanted to edit them down to something palatable. Once I had a footprint of a good track that was interesting by itself, I would figure what sounds would go with that.

On some parts, once I had the drum tracks the way I liked them, I added bass, reacting to whatever I had previously played. One of the clearest examples of that is “Fire Trail.” The only thing I had going when I recorded that is what you hear in the very beginning, an arpeggiator playing a pattern in 4/4. But even though it’s in four, my idea was to be thinking in 5/4 on the

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drums, so it starts going over the barline for a while before it comes back.

When I recorded the drums on that, I was purposely being very spastic—trying to be very unpredictable so that I would leave spaces for me to fill some other way later. As I was listening to it, I improvised bass on the keyboards. [Then] I had arpeggiators going on where I was improvising chord changes, reacting to the drums *and* the bass. Once I had that going, I added atmospheric sounds on top. But the main idea was for the human element to be there—to interact with what I had just done and not think about it too much, so that it would be very spontaneous.

There are two tracks that I did the other way around. I found a sound I liked and started improvising with it, and found a form in my head. Then I immediately went to the drums and looked at the screen, amplifying the track so that I could see the events I had just recorded—because I hadn’t learned them yet. So I was just seeing where the events were going to hit in real time and reacting to that.

MD: The track “BBO” is driven by nonstop, super-fast snare work, using a myriad of textures.



Antonio: For that, I found a sound that I liked and started playing stuff in seven without thinking about it too much. I took it home and I wasn't really sure of what to do with it. But I kind of heard this fast continuous thing underneath. So I recorded a really fast snare drum part with two snares. One was tuned very high and had a little splash on top to make the [pitch] even higher. The other was a deep snare.

I didn't want to just play two bars and loop it; I wanted it to be ever-changing. So I did a few passes, going absolutely nuts on the snares, playing 32nd notes for a long time through the whole thing. Once I had that bed, I created a completely new drum track, doing a really fast bebop thing on top. That's the most experimental track.

MD: There's a political aspect here. The term *bad hombre*, for instance, was used by Donald Trump in a presidential debate.

Antonio: It's something personal for me because I'm Mexican. I feel that President Trump has belittled Mexican people right from the get-go. I'm very outspoken when it comes to that; I'm outraged, like a lot of people. On the track "Bad Hombre Intro," I wanted to include Trump's voice talking about "bad hombres." But [it was] such

a nasty thing to say that I wanted to balance it out with something beautiful and very Mexican.

MD: That opening features a scratchy Mexican record with voice and guitar, and your beat fades in and syncs to it. Does that old record hold special significance for you?

Antonio: [chuckles] Yes, *very* much so. What you hear is my grandfather's voice. He's a very famous actor in Mexico. He's ninety-two and still active. Right now he's doing two plays simultaneously. He's

unbelievable—like the Roy Haynes of acting. He's one of my role models, the first person I saw that could make a living doing what he loved and support the whole family.

I had recorded a beat and a bass line and thought it would be so nice if I could include something that was very personal, very Mexican, and what better than my grandfather. I went through some of the records he'd done, and it just so happened that that one was in the right key for my track. I said, *Oh my God, this is all so fortuitous!* It was like it was meant to be.



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Buddy Rich: A Timeline

No player in history could so confidently—and inarguably—wear the title of “the world’s greatest drummer.” Buddy Rich was simply a phenomenon, astounding vaudeville audiences in the late 1910s and early ’20s, well before most children began their conventional schooling.

Indeed, there was nothing *conventional* about Buddy Rich. On the drums, he simply went places that no one else could go. For sure, he knew the value of dazzling an audience. But Buddy also understood the value of hard work, and he was notorious for the demands he put on himself and on the players in his bands.

Ultimately, it was his loyalty to the music and to the concept of greatness that drove him. Even though he was paid historically well early in his career, later he risked his savings, his friendships, and even his health taking the music—his music—to the people. What he left us with was a treasure trove of recordings featuring the most exciting drumming of all time, a lifetime’s worth of staggering performances, and the notion that magic, in the form of drumming wizardry, is a very real thing indeed.

Here we celebrate the century that has passed since the greatest drummer of all time was born.

1917

On September 30, Bernard “Buddy” Rich is born in the Sheepshead Bay section of Brooklyn to Robert and Bess Rich.



1923

Buddy, now the second-highest-paid child star in the world, tours Australia at age six.

1938

Rich joins the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, beginning a long personal, artistic, and business relationship with singer Frank Sinatra.

1939

Buddy joins the big band led by Artie Shaw, one of the most popular acts of the swing era.

1917

1921

1923

1937

1938

1939

1942

1944

1921

At four years old, Rich becomes known as “Traps, the Drum Wonder.”



1937

Rich joins his first major jazz group, led by clarinetist Joe Marsala.



1942

Rich enlists in the Marine Corps in the midst of World War II.

He and drum instructor Henry Adler coauthor the popular method book *Buddy Rich's Modern Interpretation of Snare Drum Rudiments*.



1946

Frank Sinatra provides financial backing for Rich to start his own band.

1954

Rich reportedly earns \$1,500 a week with the Harry James Orchestra, making him the highest-paid sideman in the world.



In April, Buddy's only child, Cathy, is born.



1962

Rich begins his longtime friendship with TV stars Johnny Carson and Merv Griffin. He will appear on the variety shows hosted by both men throughout his career. Buddy's 1970s appearances on Carson's *Tonight Show* in particular influence an entire generation of drummers.

1946

1950

1953

1954

1955

1959

1962

1966

1968

1950

Rich appears on most of *Bird and Diz*, a studio album by Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. Max Roach plays on two tracks.

1959

Rich suffers his first heart attack.

1966

Rich performs a big band arrangement of a medley from Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story*, and records it as the "West Side Story Suite" for the album *Swingin' New Big Band*.

1953

Rich begins a twelve-year, on-again-off-again stint with trumpet player Harry James.

Buddy marries Marie Allison on April 21.

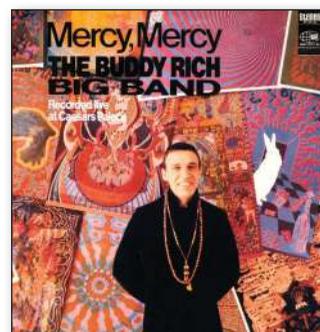


1955

Rich and Gene Krupa, the two most popular drummers in the world at the time, team up for the album *Krupa and Rich*. They appear on only one cut together, "Bernie's Tune," which features a six-minute drum battle between the two heavyweights.

1968

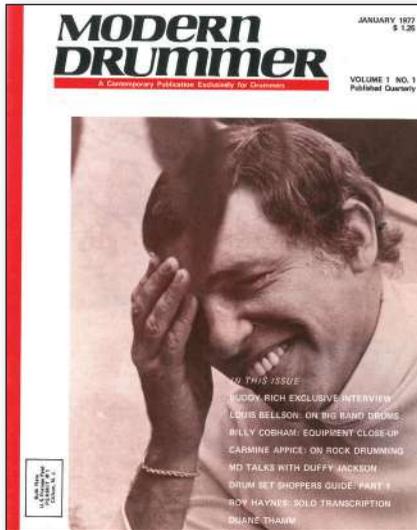
One of Rich's most popular performances, a live recording from Caesars Palace of "Channel One Suite," is featured on the album *Mercy, Mercy*



1944

Buddy, following a discharge from the Marines for medical reasons, rejoins Tommy Dorsey.

Buddy Rich: A Timeline



1977
Buddy appears on the cover of the debut issue of the world's first major drum magazine, *Modern Drummer*.



1983
After playing Rogers, Slingerland, and Ludwig drums at different points in his career, Buddy tours with a custom kit built for him by Drum Workshop.

1973

1974

1977

1980

1981

1983

1984

1985

1974
Rich opens his own New York club, Buddy's Place.

1981
Buddy appears in an episode of *The Muppet Show* that features a drum battle with the Muppet character Animal, whose drumming is provided by English musician Ronnie Verrell.

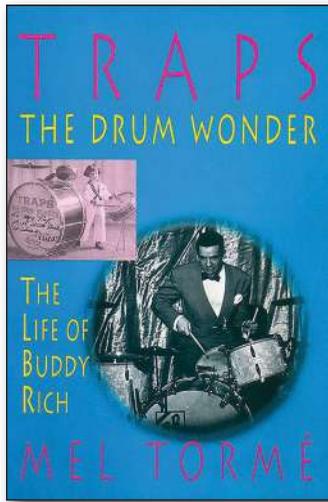
1984
Rich's grandson, Nick, is born on September 9.

1980
Rich is inducted into the *Modern Drummer* Hall of Fame.

1973
PBS TV broadcasts Buddy's performance at the Top of the Plaza in Rochester, New York. It's the first widely seen full-length concert by the Rich band, and subsequently becomes a touchstone for thousands of nascent jazz drummers.



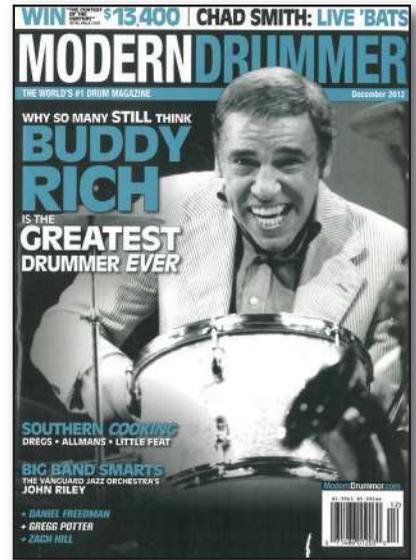
1985
Mr. Drums: Live on King Street hits the shelves. It's the last of Buddy's albums released during his lifetime.



1991
Longtime friend and confidant Mel Tormé's Buddy Rich biography, *Traps, The Drum Wonder*, is released.

1998
Genesis drummer and solo star Phil Collins performs at a tribute concert organized by Cathy Rich, *A Salute to Buddy Rich*, which is later released on DVD. The event also features Steve Smith and Dennis Chambers.

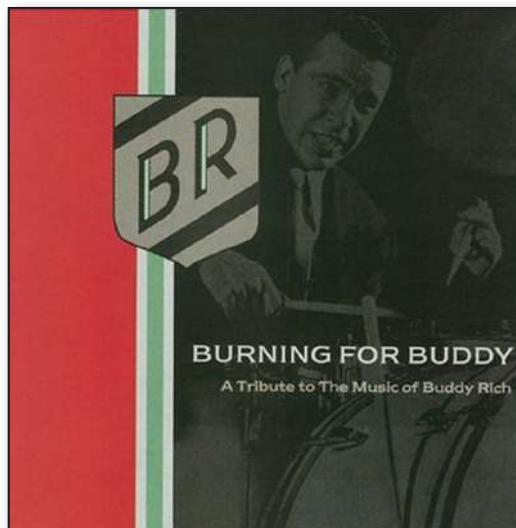
2002
Rich appears on the cover of the April issue of *Modern Drummer*, his fifth time.



2012
Rich is voted the greatest drummer of all time by *Modern Drummer* readers.

1987 1991 1994 1998 2002 2012 2014 2017

1994
Burning for Buddy: A Tribute to the Music of Buddy Rich is released. Produced by Rush's Neil Peart, the album features performances by Joe Morello, Steve Gadd, Max Roach, Billy Cobham, Dave Weckl, Simon Phillips, Steve Smith, Kenny Aronoff, and Peart himself, accompanied by the Buddy Rich Big Band. A second volume is issued in 1997.



2014
The popular film *Whiplash* is released, featuring music recorded by Rich.

2017
Cathy Rich, along with Gregg Potter and the Buddy Rich big band, celebrates the hundredth anniversary of Buddy's birth with shows in Los Angeles, New York City, Texas, Chicago, Italy, and the U.K.



1987
On April 2, at age sixty-nine, Rich dies of heart failure, following surgery for a malignant brain tumor.



Tucker Rule



The seasoned basher reunites with Thursday, backs a British boy band, drives the bus for Yellowcard, and releases a solid new sample library.

**Story by Ben Meyer
Photos By John Fell**

Thirty-nine-year-old New Jersey native Tucker Rule has remained more than busy since his band Thursday—one of the most successful to emerge from the brutally passionate hardcore/emo/screamo scene that took hold on the East Coast in the 1990s—disbanded in 2012. Following a stint backing British boy band the Wanted and filling in with Murphy’s Law and My Chemical Romance, the drummer toured with pop-punk standouts Yellowcard and recorded an EP with famed producer Ross Robinson in the side project Get Involved! Last year saw Thursday reuniting for several shows, and 2017 found the group on the road for real. *MD* spoke with the recently married drummer, fresh off the initial leg of the band’s first tour in six years.





MD: What's the status of the rebooted Thursday?

Tucker: We just finished a month-and-a-half-long tour with Touché Amoré and Basement, which was awesome. People have been asking what's happening with the band, and the response is we're just

trying to get through this time right now. We might write a new record, we might not. We might do some more touring, we might not. It's just kind of up in the air. If it wasn't by the seat of our pants, it wouldn't be how we've always done it.

MD: During Thursday's hiatus, you were

pretty much as active as you'd ever been, correct?

Tucker: Absolutely. I didn't have any real lapse, aside from a few months here and there. I'd think, *I can't wait to get home*, and then a week and a half later I'd want to be back on tour.

Tools of the Trade



Drums: Q Drum copper kit in damask patina with maple reinforcement rings

- A.** 7.5x14 brass snare
- B.** 10x14 tom
- C.** 16x16 floor tom
- D.** 16x18 floor tom
- E.** 14x26 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1.** 16" K Light hi-hats
- 2.** 22" Avedis ride
- 3.** 24" K Light ride
- 4.** 22" K Light ride
- 5.** 22" K Kerope ride with Promark R22 Cymbal Rattler

Heads: Remo X14 snare batter (with Moongel for muffling) and Hazy Ambassador snare-side, CS Black Dot or White Dot tom batters and Clear Ambassador resonants, and Coated Powerstroke 3 bass drum batter (with Falam Slam Pad and small towel for muffling) and Smooth Ambassador front head

Sticks: Promark Forward Balance 5B 595

Hardware: DW 5000 series stands and bass drum pedal with Low Boy wood beater

Accessories: PureSound Custom 24-strand snare wires, Reflexx CP1 Conditioning Pad, Big Fat Snare Drum products, Jerry Harvey Audio JH16 custom in-ear monitors

Tucker Rule teaches at reverbleasons.com and can be reached at instructors@reverbleasons.com.

MD: So what did you do when Thursday stopped working?

Tucker: Right when Thursday broke up, I had the opportunity to be in the backing group for this British boy band called the Wanted, which was a super-cool experience. We did a show at the Gramercy Theatre in New York for a bunch of industry folk, and the boys in the band loved the way we

played, so they took us around the world for three or four years. It was amazing. We did a bunch of television, and it was one of the craziest experiences of my life. It really taught me to try to play as perfectly as you possibly can, because you're under a microscope.

MD: You're still playing reatively flat toms and cymbals.

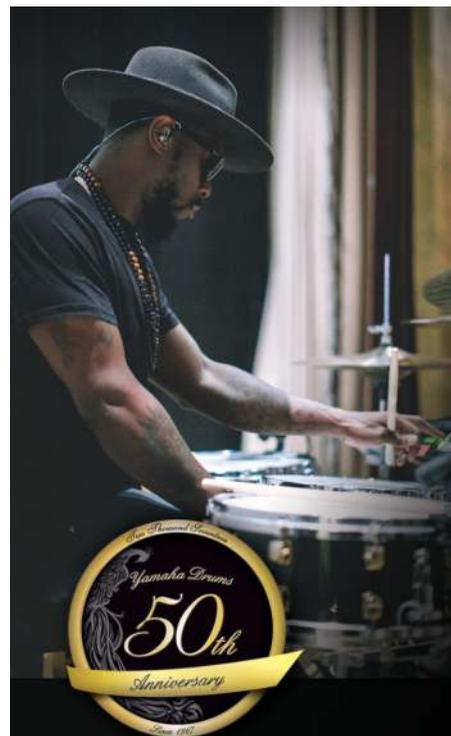
Sample This

Tucker Rule was recently approached by John Naclerio of Nada Recording and drumsamples.com to create a sound library with his custom Q Drum Company kit. The library consists of more than 2,500 individual samples with an average of fifteen velocity layers and multiple articulations per instrument. Naclerio sampled Rule's custom copper-shell Q drumkit as well as a Q maple kit. Snare samples include Rule's primary 7x14 brass Q snare, an 8x14 steel-shell Keplinger, a 6.5x14 Tama bell brass, a 5x14 Ludwig Supraphonic, a 7x14 Ayotte maple, a 6.5x14 Ayotte steel, and a 7x14 Q aluminum that Rule favored on tour with Yellowcard.

Samples of Rule's complete set of Zildjian K Custom Special Dry cymbals are also included,

captured with close mics, room mics, and multi-mic combos. The library includes presets for both Native Instruments' Kontakt 5 sampler and Steven Slate Drums' Trigger 2.0 plugin. MD got to check out the library, and the snares alone are well worth the \$34.99 price tag. The kicks and toms sound huge and warm, and the cymbals are dripping with character.

"This is something I'd always wanted to do," Rule says, "but it's hard to come up with the funding to do a project like this. John hit me up and said that he wanted to do a sample library. There were a bunch of other drummers I knew that were [already] part of it. It kind of fell in my lap." Visit drumsamples.com for more information.



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Tucker Rule

Tucker: When I started playing in Yellowcard, there were a lot of faster fills around the kit, so I started tilting the rack tom a little more toward me just to make it easier to get between the toms. Everything else is the same. I played the same cymbals with the pop band as I did with Yellowcard, which are the same ones I play with Thursday. All rides, all the time! [laughs] My kit is all Bonham sizes.

MD: And you're still tilting your snare down and away from you.

Tucker: That started when I got tired of buying new jeans, because I would either soak them in blood or rip holes in them where my snare hand would hit. So I raised it, but I didn't like the angle. I figured out along the way that I preferred the sound of a rimshot, because a lot of the stuff I played, I was fighting loud guitars. Playing rimshots helps me be loud enough to cut through the music.

MD: So tilting the drum away from you helped you get a consistent rimshot?

Tucker: Yeah, and it turned out to be comfortable for me somehow. Though as I angled it, it got to a place where no one else could play my drums! [laughs]

MD: Talk about your relationship with Q Drum Company. Did you move directly from C&C to them?

Tucker: I did. When I was with the boy band I got in touch with Ilan Rubin [Nine Inch Nails], who's part owner of Q Drum Company, and I asked him if he could put me in touch with Jeremy Berman, co-owner and builder with Q. I'd been sweating them for few years. Thursday did a tour with Taking Back Sunday a bunch of years ago, and [Ilan's solo project] the New Regime was the opener. His live drummer, Hayden Scott, had one of the first Q kits, and I thought it sounded awesome. I fell in love with them, and once I saw that they were making metal drums with riveted seams, I decided that I *needed* one of these kits. Ilan is a good bud of mine, and Jeremy's become a close friend, so it's worked out really nicely.

MD: How did Get Involved! come about, and what was it like working with producer Ross Robinson?

Tucker: Get Involved! was a project with my friend Todd Weinstock, who used to play in Glassjaw. We've always been close

and I've always loved his playing. When Todd told me that he'd gotten Lars Weiss, the bass player from Judge, I asked who else was involved. He said that Brian Deneve [From Autumn to Ashes] was playing, and I was like, *Cool, all my friends—let's do this!*

Since Glassjaw had done a record with Ross Robinson, we decided to have him produce our EP. It was awesome, a crazy experience. He's a super-deep dude and really knows how to get it out of you. I was terrified at first. I was like, *I know he hates drummers and he's going to beat me up.* But he was super-cool. I thought that I'd really trimmed the fat and created rhythmic hooks that a producer would appreciate, and he was like, "Play more. More fills, more everything." I learned a lot from that experience.

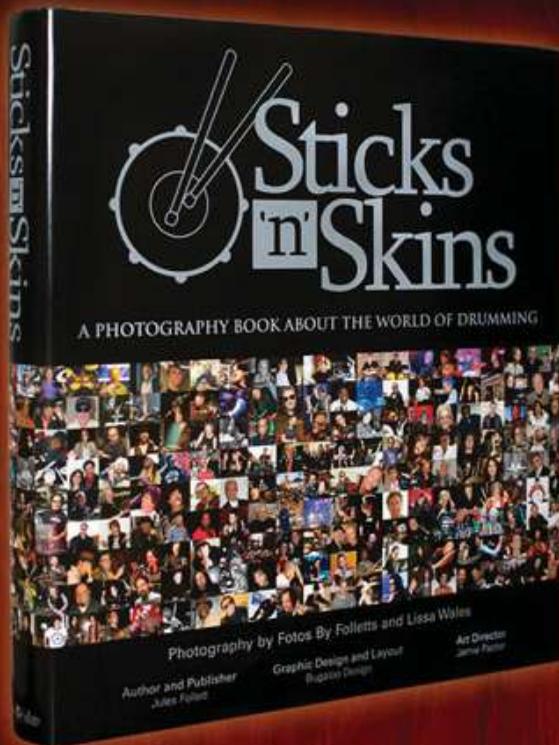
MD: How has getting married affected your career goals?

Tucker: It has and it hasn't. My wife's always been really supportive. She understands that I take this really seriously, sometimes way *too* seriously, and she allows our spare bedroom to be filled with drums and other crap that I collect. I guess this is something that every drummer and musician says, but now if I'm going to leave the house, it's got to be for something that's really awesome and for the good of the whole. I try to take everything that makes sense. I just love playing drums, and if I get an opportunity I'm going to take it, and she usually has my back.

MD: Part of being a musician is realizing that we can't play like we're twenty forever. Have you had any hand or wrist problems over the years?

Tucker: No, thankfully I haven't. It's kind of ridiculous, but I attribute it to playing larger cymbals over the years. There's so much give in them that you can bend them with your hand. And I've always tried to keep up with my technique and figure out how to evolve it. I always stretch a bunch before shows, and I just recently started using the Reflexx CP1 pad. It's really gotten me into stretching and playing more rudiments. I think it's what's kept me from ripping up my hands on this last Thursday tour. You can get more power from hitting just as hard with better technique.





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Interview by Dave Previ
Photos by Heather Courtney

Fishbone's Philip "Fish" Fisher

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- C. 9x12 tom
- D. 16x16 floor tom
- E. 18x20 bass drum

Sticks: Promark 747 Hickory "Fishstick"

Hardware: DW 9000 series pedals, stands, throne, and remote hi-hat

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 15" K Light hi-hats
- 2. 19" Constantinople crash
- 3. 19" K Custom Dark Thin crash
- 4. 12" Zil-Bel
- 5. 22" Constantinople Medium ride
- 6. 18" K Custom Dark crash
- 7. 13" K Custom Hybrid hi-hats
- 8. 20" Oriental China Trash

Heads: Remo Vintage Coated Ambassador batters on all drums, Clear Ambassador tom resonants, DW vented on front of kick

Philip "Fish" Fisher recently returned to legendary ska/funk/punk band Fishbone after a sixteen-year hiatus, during which time the drummer played with Justin Timberlake, House of Pain, Lady Antebellum, and Christina Aguilera. Fish stepped back into the band for a tour to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the 1996 release *Chim Chim's Badass Revenge*.

Fishbone is a large band that's known for putting on high-energy shows, and Fish often sets up sideways. "Nobody was doing that [at the time], and it worked better sonically," he says. "The mics didn't catch as much cymbal bleed in the smaller rooms we were playing. It started at Madam Wong's in L.A., where Fishbone did its first gig. I looked at the stage and said, *I'm going to set up sideways*, and it stuck."

When asked why he plays large cymbals, Fish replies, "The bigger the cymbal, the wider the tonal range. I don't like the sound of fast, short, small cymbals. I like to use various techniques to get all kinds of sounds out of them."

"I choose my snare based upon the environment," Fish continues. "If I'm playing outside, I'm probably going to use a wood drum. If the gig is inside, I'm most likely going to use metal." The snare Fish used on the night this interview was conducted has a brass shell. "It has the right amount of clang, cut, and body," he says.

Fishbone is a powerful band, but Fish chooses to kick it with a smaller bass drum. "The 20" is my favorite size," he says. "My first recording was on a 20" drum, and everybody was surprised at the tone I got out of it. Most drummers were using bigger drums, which gave them a bigger click but less tone. I've always loved to have some tone in my kick."

The entire setup, including the timbale and bell, is an exact replica of what Fish used in 1996 during the original *Chim Chim's Badass Revenge* tour. "Truth be told," says Fish, "that's the same head on the timbale from the record date."





8

7

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E

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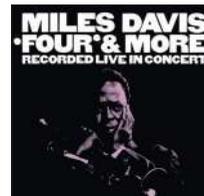
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4

“Walkin’”

Tony Williams’ Technique, Language, and Innovations

by Ruben Bellavia



In private lessons with educators such as John Riley, Ari Hoenig, and Greg Hutchinson, I learned how important it is to understand and embrace the conventions of the jazz idiom. The great jazz drummers of the past invented and developed a new musical language. And in order to understand any language, you have to listen to it carefully, imitate it, and then internalize its vocabulary. In this lesson we’ll examine a portion of the jazz drumming lexicon by taking a look at Tony Williams’ performance on “Walkin’” from the 1964 live Miles Davis album “Four” & More.

During a speech he made at a 1985 Zildjian Day performance, Williams said that his idea of a perfect drummer included the technique of Max Roach, the groove of Art Blakey, and the creativity of Philly Joe Jones. Williams explained that he learned entire performances by Roach, Jones, and Blakey by ear. This was illuminating, and I thought, *If I transcribe Tony Williams, I could also learn from each drummer he studied.*

“Walkin’” is a very fast up-tempo blues. Every week I tried to learn four measures of the tune at eighty percent of the original speed. Gradually I linked phrases together and increased the tempo. Once I learned the drum solo and the comping during Miles’ solo, I wrote out the parts. By thoroughly studying this track, I was able to notice many different aspects of Tony’s playing.

Technique

One of Tony’s signature phrases includes a fast combination of five consecutive ride notes. The figure is repeated in “Walkin’” with different variations. Here’s an example that starts at 0:16.

Williams adds the bass drum on the first 8th note at 0:34.

At 1:30, the snare replaces one of the cymbal strokes. Williams makes it seem like there are still five notes on the ride by balancing the dynamics between the bass drum, snare, and ride.

In this passage, Williams incorporates all four limbs into a phrase, which is another of his trademarks (0:47).

At 1:38, all four limbs are comping. Similar combinations can be found in *Four-Way Coordination* by Marvin Dahlgren and Elliot Fine and in *Advanced Techniques for the Modern Drummer* by Jim Chapin.

Language

Williams’ vocabulary reveals a deep knowledge of the bebop language. The strong influence of Jimmy Cobb, Max Roach, and Philly Joe Jones can be clearly heard. These excerpts illustrate some references to the bebop vocabulary while pushing the ideas further.

At 0:19, you can hear Williams’ bebop comping. Max Roach and Kenny Clarke often played these ideas.

You can hear this next figure played by Jimmy Cobb on some live Miles Davis recordings from the late '50s and early '60s. You can end this fill on beat 4 or the downbeat of the following measure (0:50).

At 1:35, Tony plays a rimclick on the fourth beat, which is typical of Art Blakey and other hard-bop drummers.

Innovations

Tony reinvented comping by introducing polyrhythms, implied modulations, and longer phrases. “Walkin’” features a few of these moments. Check out how he phrases two- and three-note groupings at 0:36.

9

There's another example of three-note groupings at 0:57.

10



Ruben Bellavia plays with international jazz musicians including Antonio Faraò, Fabio Giachino, and Fabrizio Bosso, among others. Bellavia endorses Inima snare drums, Istanbul Agop cymbals, and Vater drumsticks. For more info, visit rubenbellavia.com.

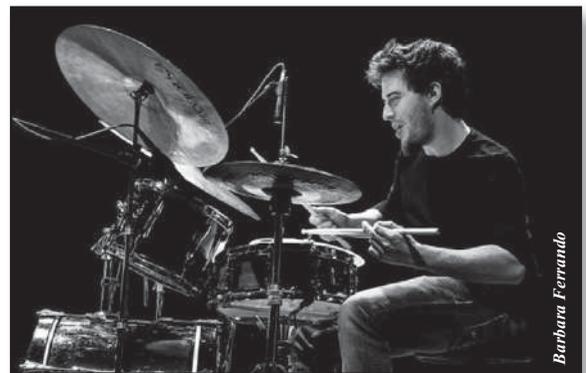
At 1:07, Tony creates an alternating effect between hi-hat splashes and the snare.

11

This powerful fill at 1:16 isn't resolved until beat 4 of the following measure.

12

f



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Tony Williams' Concepts

Developing Tension and Release

by Matt Fisher

Tony Williams redefined the role of the modern jazz drummer with his original and innovative vocabulary. This lesson presents some of the central themes of his lexicon as heard on the up-tempo version of "So What" from the Miles Davis record *"Four" & More* and provides some practical applications of these ideas.

Williams turned traditional bebop drumming on its head by freeing up the role of the drummer. He extended the parameters of a drummer's activity with polyrhythmic command and technical virtuosity.

Tension and Release

Central to Williams' playing is the idea of tension and release, a common feature of jazz music that displaces the listener's musical expectations. Tony often obscures the pulse by varying the continuity of the meter. He then reverts back to a simpler rhythm in which the meter is much more explicit, providing a resolution for the listener. Implying a new meter by superimposing rhythmic groupings over the original pulse became a significant feature of his style.

Williams causes one of the first extended moments of rhythmic tension in "So What," at the beginning of the first chorus of Herbie Hancock's piano solo (5:58). Tony fragments the pulse with a five-beat quarter-note rhythmic cycle, notated in Exercise 1.

1

The cycle repeats three times, followed by further development of the idea in measure five. Due to the five-beat cycle's repetition, the quarter notes recur in different places in each bar, causing displacement of the meter. As a result, the listener gets the sensation that beat 1 is lost.

The repeated figure in the following example also suggests a common 4/4 jazz ride pattern that starts on beat 2.

2

Displacement Application Exercise

In the following exercise we'll play four bars of jazz time, then the five-beat displacement rhythm, repeated three times, followed by a return to the original feel. The hi-hat foot is played on beat 3 of each five-note cycle to enhance the effect of the implied slower tempo.

3

Next we'll apply the five-note grouping to 16th notes to imply a faster tempo. This exercise works better at medium and fast tempos. Initially you may want to play ghost notes between the ride cymbal notes, and play the bass drum on beat 1 of each bar.

4

To further emphasize the new meter, try putting the hi-hat on the implied beats 2 and 4, as notated in Exercise 5.

5

Dotted Quarter–Note Superimpositions

Williams generates another implied decrease in tempo in the piano solo at 6:22 by using dotted quarter notes. Here's what he plays.



Check out how Tony's ride lines up with a dotted quarter–note rhythm.



Similar to the five-beat rhythmic cycle, Williams again creates the illusion of a slowed-down jazz ride pattern. This became an integral part of the drummer's vocabulary throughout his time with Miles Davis.

Implied Metric Modulation Exercises

To get comfortable with dotted-quarter-note-modulations, start with the following exercise.



Removing the ghost notes leaves a dotted quarter–note jazz ride pattern, as notated in the second half of the next exercise. Play four bars of time followed by four bars of the implied dotted-quarter-note rhythm. To start, play the bass drum on beat 1 and the hi-hat on beats 2 and 4. You may prefer to at first play the sticking from Exercise 8 while playing the left hand on a quiet surface, such as your knee, to help you hear the subdivisions. These exercises work well in medium and fast tempos.



Now let's keep the hi-hat foot on beats 2 and 4 while playing the bass drum on the implied beat 1.



Finally, move both the hi-hat and the bass drum to the implied tempo.



Try playing these exercises over eight-bar (or more) forms to produce a longer duration of tension.



Matt Fisher has performed and collaborated with Tina May, Jacqui Dankworth, Najma Akhtar, and Steve Waterman, among others, and has toured internationally. Matt is also an educator, an examiner for Trinity College London, and an adjudicator for the International ArtsGames Drumming Federation held in Canada. He endorses Kandu cajons.



A New Perspective

Displacing Four-Over-Three Polyrhythms

by Aaron Edgar



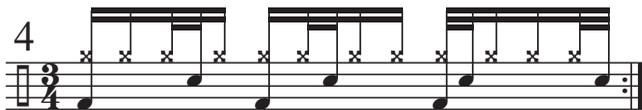
The **four-over-three polyrhythm** comprises four equally spaced notes and three equally spaced notes played simultaneously. We can build one by using a subdivision that both sides of the rhythm can fit within evenly. A measure of 16th notes in 3/4 gives us twelve notes that are evenly divisible by both four and three. By playing quarter notes, we get the three side of the polyrhythm. The four side is created by accenting every third 16th note.

Exercise 1 demonstrates a four-over-three polyrhythm applied to the bass drum and snare with a 16th-note hi-hat pattern that ties the rhythm together.



In the previous example, both sides of the polyrhythm start on the beat. Within a 16th-note framework, you can displace the four side to start on either the “e” or “&” of beat 1. If you start Exercise 1 on either beat 2 or beat 3, you’ll see these permutations.

The possibilities get especially interesting when you displace the four side by one 32nd note, as notated in Exercise 2. Exercises 3 and 4 demonstrate the two remaining offbeat 32nd-note positions.



Practice these exercises slowly, count the 16th notes out loud, and focus on making the four side of the polyrhythm even. You’re looking for the patterns to groove on autopilot until the four side of the polyrhythm feels evenly spaced. Keep your hi-hat and bass drum solid while running through all six variations.

When practicing advanced rhythmic concepts, developing them within a groove gives us a musical context. If you alternate between an ordinary 16th-note hi-hat beat and the exercises in this lesson, you can home in on how the pocket is supposed to feel. Make sure the polyrhythm remains consistent.

Next we’ll incorporate a familiar ride pattern. Our hi-hat foot will play the “&” of each beat and represent the three side.

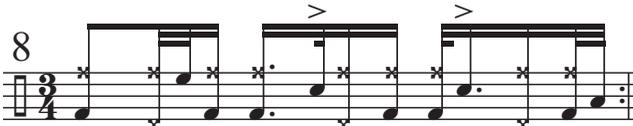
Practice exercises 5–7 by alternating each pattern with a

straightforward groove, but maintain the notated hi-hat and ride cymbal pattern throughout both phrases. Try to maintain the same pulse from the basic groove when you play the polyrhythmic variations.



Once you’ve mastered Exercises 5–7, try accenting each snare note individually. For example, play Exercise 5 and ghost all the snare notes except the third. Do this for each snare note in the exercise, and come up with your own grooves that feature your favorite accents.

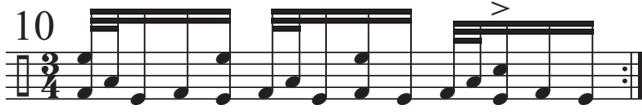
This next exercise adds a bass drum ostinato and moves the four side of the polyrhythm around the drumkit.



Next let’s explore all of the possible permutations of this rhythm by playing a double bass pattern and splitting the four-over-three polyrhythm between our hands. In Exercise 9, the four side starts on the beat with our left hand on a rack tom. The three side, which so far has been represented by a quarter note on the bass drum or hi-hat foot, can also be displaced to any of the eight 32nd-note partials within each beat. We’ll push the three side forward by one 32nd note with our right hand on a floor tom between the first and second bass drum notes of each beat.



Similar to how we accented each individual note of the four side in Exercises 5–7, try replacing each of the rack tom notes in Exercise 9 with the snare. In Exercise 10, the fourth rack tom note is played as a snare accent to create a syncopated groove. Be sure to practice these examples into and out of more standard 16th-note double bass grooves.

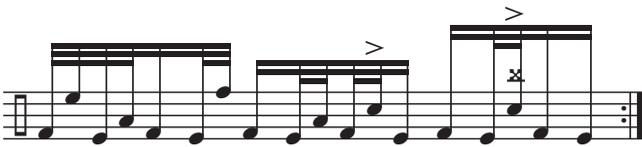
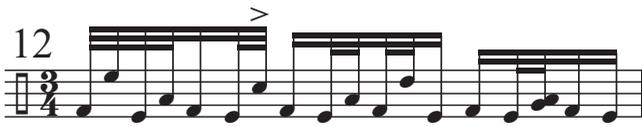


The next example pushes the four side forward by one 32nd note. The polyrhythm is now played entirely between the 16th-note double bass pattern. Go slowly, practice with a metronome, and make sure the rhythm sits evenly. Once comfortable, move each partial of the polyrhythm to an accented snare to isolate and solidify the feel of each note.



With your right hand between the first and second kick of each beat, experiment with the remaining permutations of the four side on the rack tom.

Within this double bass framework, you can work your way through each permutation of both sides of the polyrhythm. The application of these rhythms and the context in which you practice them is only limited by your imagination. Exercise 12 demonstrates an offbeat variation that forms a tom melody between the bass drum pattern.



Now we'll voice the three side on the "e" of each beat and play four aggressive snare accents. Exercise 13 demonstrates a displaced feel when alternated with a more common 16th-note double bass groove. In Exercise 14, the snare pattern is pushed forward one 32nd note and lands entirely between the double bass pattern.



Come up with your own ways of voicing these rhythms musically while you work through the remaining variations. Think dynamically and musically while you explore these new rhythms to expand your own creativity.



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.



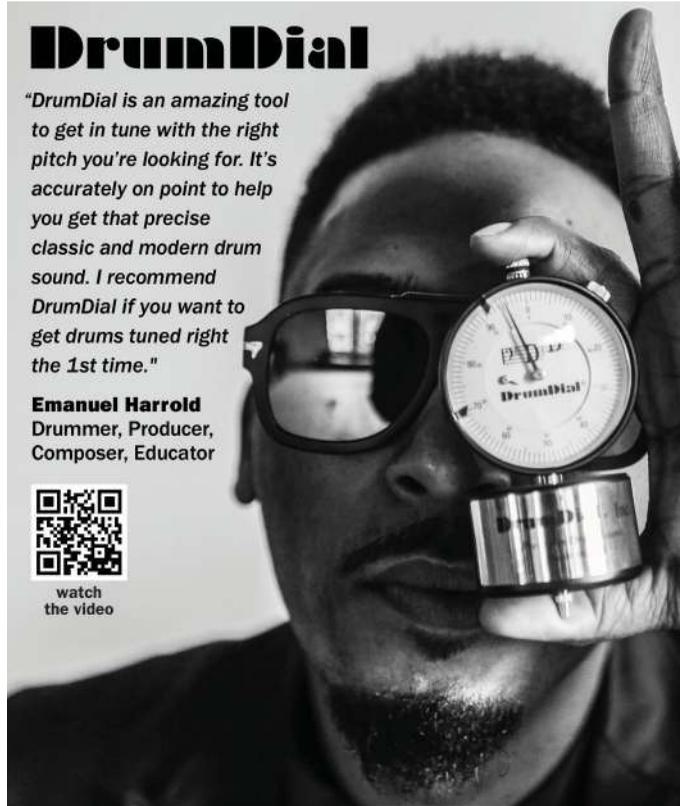
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CONCEPTS

Visualize

Get Set Up for Success Before You Hit the Stage

by Mark Schulman

Professional high diver Lucy Streeter stared down 120 feet and nine inches to the water below from her one-square-foot perch—and jumped. The speed as she descended clocked in at nearly eighty miles per hour. She claims to have had no fear, that she's "tough as nails."

Streeter jumped from the cliffs of Acapulco, where divers have to time their jump to an approaching wave and clear twenty-two feet of distance away from the cliff, or end up smashing into the rocks below. But, "I can't tell you that I've ever

been afraid," she says. "It's freedom to me. It's flying through the air, and I feel like I'm a bird. I just love speed, and I love the wind in my face. Before I [jump], I see myself doing a flip, landing perfectly straight up and down, and squeezing as tight as I possibly can—because your body can be ripped apart as soon as you hit the water. I see myself coming up and waving and smiling to the crowd. That's always huge."

Streeter's process employs visualization, which means using your imagination to create mental images.

This is a method people use to find success for specific behaviors or events. It's the foundation for positive thinking, and athletes, speakers, soldiers, and actors frequently use it to enhance their performances. Visualization practices are also a common form of spiritual exercise. In Vajrayana Buddhism, complex visualizations are a very important part of the practice.

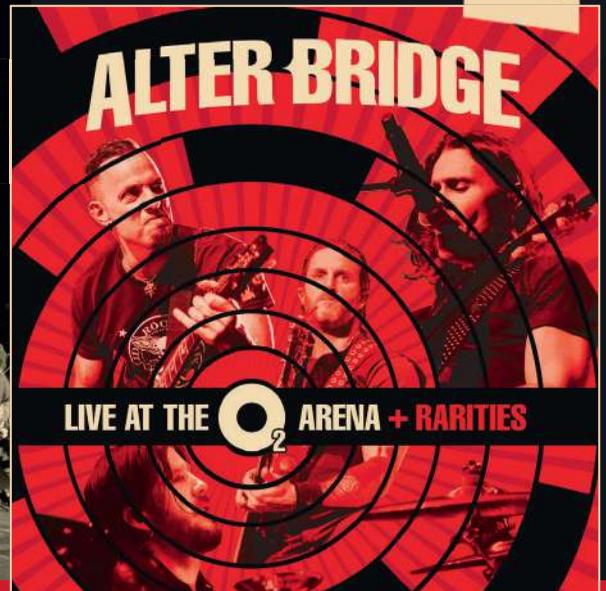
There are a number of ways to use visualization to gain clarity, especially when cultivating a relationship with your

audience. Try visualizing the crowd as being full of loving allies. Grammy-nominated saxophonist Dave Koz always thinks of an audience this way. "They can't wait to love you," Koz once told me. "So instead of worrying that people will hate you, remind yourself that they're just waiting to love you. Then all you need is to go out there and be yourself. If you have that confidence going in, it makes jumping off the cliff easier because you know that they're there with the net."

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Action Step

Close your eyes and spend a minute breathing in for five seconds and then out for five seconds. Continue breathing slowly, and conjure images of people you love and who love you. Imagine these people are in the audience of your next gig, loving everything you do. Now imagine everyone else in the audience loving everything you do. Own and absorb their appreciation for you.

Sian Beilock writes about visualization in the book *Choke: What the Secrets of the Brain Reveal About Getting It Right When You Have To*. Beilock points out that sports trainers often suggest that athletes associate thoughts of love and family with the adrenaline rush they get during performances. It reduces their chances of messing up, because instead of associating that adrenaline with reasons to fail, they associate it with positive thoughts.

Dr. Richard Bandler models the conscious and unconscious patterns unique to each of us in such a way that we are continuously moving toward a higher potential. His neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) creates change in people as they respond to and utilize what they think (neuro), what they say (linguistic), and what they do (programming). The process is all about visualization.

I've had some positive experiences using NLP techniques from motivational speaker Tony Robbins. In one, I think of a happy memory, note how I feel about it, and then make that

memory bigger and brighter in my mind. The general function behind this—other than mood control—is to accomplish goals. You visualize yourself achieving a particular objective and focus on that visualization until you've achieved it in real life. In theory, this allows you to focus on a particular goal more fully and achieve it more readily.

In the book *Change Your Life With NLP*, Lindsey Agness writes that the conscious mind is the goal-setter, and the unconscious mind is the goal-getter. The key is to allow your unconscious mind to achieve whatever you focus on with your conscious mind. Just be careful where you place your attention, because it will manifest itself—positively or negatively.

Claude Bristol was a forerunner on these ideas about visualization in the 1940s, expanding on 19th-century principles that suggested there's intelligence in everything that exists in the universe. In the book *The Magic of Believing*, Bristol argued that we're all linked by a universal mind. Psychiatrist Carl Jung had a similar idea, which he referred to as the collective unconscious. He theorized that the beliefs of individuals were quantifiable and could directly impact the minds of other people. So the more powerfully you broadcast your thoughts, the more likely the world would pick up on them and react accordingly.

Astrophysicist Sir Arthur Eddington was sure that the physical laws of the universe could be influenced by

human thought. Some modern scientists argue that quantum physics supports this as well. Bristol's explanation is that a person with a strong belief exists with a certain vibration that seeks those with similar frequencies.

My conclusion is this: You can't achieve deep-felt goals by action alone. You are helped along the way by the quality and intensity of the beliefs that you hold.



Mark Schulman is a first-call drummer who's played for Pink, Foreigner, Cher, Billy Idol, Sheryl Crow, and Stevie Nicks. For more information, go to markschulman.com.



An advertisement for RTOM's 'turn down the volume' product. The top half features the text 'turn down the volume' in a large, blue, sans-serif font. Below the text is a photograph of a drum set. The bottom half of the ad contains the following text: 'The Black Hole Practice System retains your drum's tone—just 80% quieter. Easy Installation. Our single point tuning system makes tuning quick and easy. Available in sizes 10" – 24".' At the bottom, it says 'From the company who brought you MOONCEL' and 'RTOM See more at www.rtom.com'.

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vater.com



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britishdrumco.com

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tune-bot.com



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This new hi-hat stand is said to deliver flexibility in tight spaces, portability, and quick setup and teardown. Features include dual-leg construction, a security clutch, six-way tension adjustment, a swiveling footboard, and direct-pull action.

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Hired Gun

A new music documentary pushes some of the world's greatest freelancers—including many of our favorite drummers—"out of the shadows and into the spotlight."

by Billy Amendola

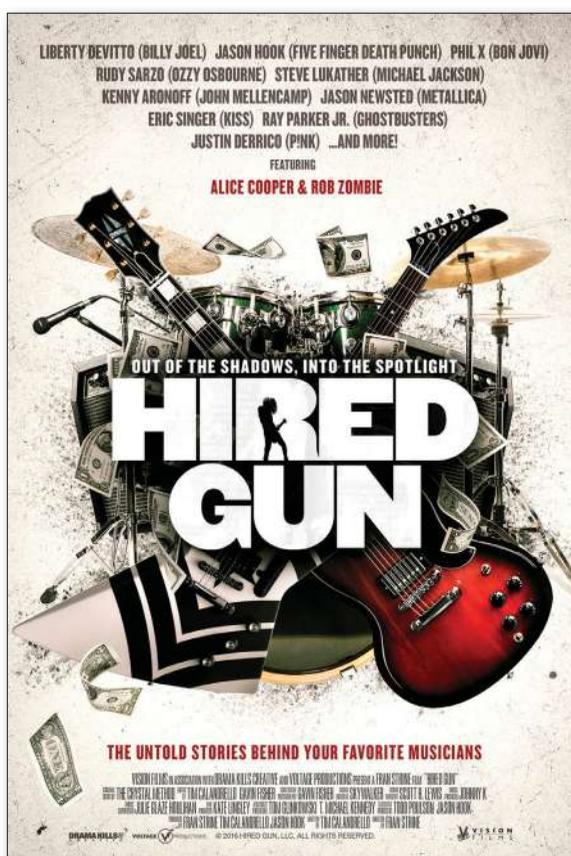
There's been a lot of anticipation, buzz, and positive feedback surrounding the film *Hired Gun: Out of the Shadows, Into the Spotlight*, and it's easy to see why. *Hired Gun* shares hard truths about the music industry that anyone who's spent time in it inherently understands, but in a way that's compelling even to non-musicians.

"*Hired Gun* tells the story of musicians who get hired by the greatest artists and bands to tour and record," explains Kenny Aronoff, who in the film explains in grueling detail the pressure he faced in the studio coming up with his part for John Mellencamp's 1982 megahit "Jack & Diane." "The film captures the ups and downs of what it's like being a sideman. It doesn't glorify the glamour—there's life and death in this movie."

Director Fran Strine digs deep in his interviews. You'll hear emotional accounts of the rollercoaster ride of being a sideman with no guarantees, including tales of band members losing their jobs—and sometimes their lives—in the process. "*Hired Gun* is about musicians whose DNA is all over the recordings and tours we love," Strine says, "but whose names or faces we might not know. It's a music documentary with passion and talent at its core." Examples of that talent are not just talked about but strewn across the film; the included musical performances feature plenty of shredding guitars and drum solos—and even unique musical pairings. "A highlight for me was playing double drums with [longtime Billy Joel drummer] Liberty DeVitto," Aronoff says with the enthusiasm of a lifelong fan.

The success of *Hired Gun* is surely in part down to the fact that it was coproduced by one of its own, guitarist Jason Hook. In the film the journeyman musician shares personal experiences of playing rock 'n' roll, then suddenly finding himself touring with soft-pop artists Mandy Moore and Hilary Duff, then getting back to heavy music with Alice Cooper, and eventually finding success as a member of the popular groove-metal band Five Finger Death Punch.

"The most important goal in any creative project is to make sure you touch a nerve in the heart of the audience," Hook tells *MD*, "and our aim with *Hired Gun* is to rip the nerve out of your chest



and throw it in a blender! We chose to focus on Liberty DeVitto, for instance, because his story is simultaneously triumphant and tragic."

"Liberty was the first person I reached out to for an interview," Strine adds. "His story was so compelling that I knew he had to be a focal point in this film. It'll make heads spin." And to be sure, DeVitto holds nothing back as he talks about his long association with Billy Joel, including how it came to an unceremonious end after thirty years.

Among the other drummers who get to share their stories and music are Mark Schulman (Pink, Cher, Foreigner), Eric Singer (Lita Ford, Black Sabbath, Kiss), Glen Sobel (Tony MacAlpine, Elliott Yamin, Alice Cooper), and Chris Johnson (Seal, Patti LaBelle, Rihanna). Also represented are non-drummers including Rudy Sarzo (Quiet Riot, Whitesnake), Phil X (Triumph, Bon Jovi), Jason Newsted (Voivod, Metallica), Steve Lukather (Toto, Boz Scaggs), and Jay Graydon (Al Jarreau, Steely

Dan), as well as famous bandleaders and producers such as Alice Cooper, Rob Zombie, Bob Ezrin, and David Foster.

For the players involved, *Hired Gun* provided more than just a chance to talk about themselves. "My participation was a great opportunity to give thanks to all of those people who trusted in me and were influential in my career," Rudy Sarzo says. "Fran Strine was instrumental in getting all the fine details of my story." And, mirroring Kenny Aronoff's words above, a highlight for Sarzo was the opportunity to perform with Aronoff and DeVitto: "For a bass player," he says, "it doesn't get any better than that." It's a neat reminder that for many hired guns, the opportunity to play top-level music far outweighs promises of fame and fortune.

Following a Fathom Events screening in more than 300 theaters across the United States this past June, *Hired Gun* was released worldwide on video on demand, as well as on DVD and Blu-ray, by Vision Films in association with Sony Pictures Home Entertainment. The collector's-edition DVD and Blu-ray versions contain exclusive bonus material. It's definitely one for your music library. For more, go to hiredgunthefilm.com.



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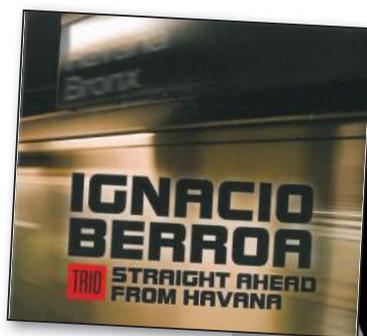
RECORDINGS Taking the Reins

Ignacio Berroa Trio *Straight Ahead From Havana*

Berroa blends the best of both worlds.

A key architect in the fusion of Afro-Cuban and modern jazz styles for the drumset, Ignacio Berroa takes a different tack from his previous discs here, offering jazz takes on classic Cuban popular songs. On some tunes, the straight-ahead element is literal in its 4/4 swing. On others that are framed by Cuban rhythms, the straight-ahead is implied by Berroa's looser, open jazz sensibility. The entire session sizzles.

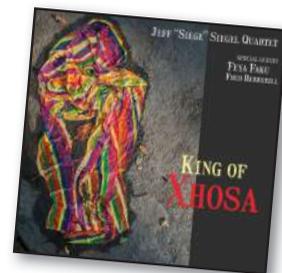
Berroa's young sidemen, pianist Martin Bejerano and bassist Josh Allen, are keenly attuned to his concepts. Rubén Blades (a former employer) cameos on the humorous swinger "Negro de Sociedad," while guest conguero **CONRADO "COKY" GARCIA** is a fiercely grooving partner with Berroa on "Los Tres Golpes." It's an overdue pleasure to have the fiery, grooving drummer back in the leader's seat, as this is only the third solo disc of his long, prolific career. More, por favor. (Codes Drum Music) **Jeff Potter**



Jeff "Siege" Siegel Quartet *King of Xhosa*

A drummer-led group with a fresh take on a classic sound.

Jeff "Siege" Siegel has worked with his quartet for some time, but now, after developing a bond with South African trumpeter Feya Faku, he's added a fresh dimension. With that beautiful trumpet voice intertwining with sax and a driving rhythm section, *King of Xhosa* took shape. Siegel's drumming supports, prods, and moves the group expertly—clean ride cymbals shimmer, while crisp snare accents push the soloists to the next level. It's that ability to build levels of energy that makes Siegel's playing stand out. And on the tunes where he opens into a drum break or short solo, his execution is inventive and to the point. A solid and well-played album. (Artists Recording Collective) **Martin Patmos**



Harris Eisenstadt *Recent Developments*

Thoughtful, fun, creative music from a unique voice.

Drummers can hear things differently from the way other musicians do, and Harris Eisenstadt proves the point. After a series of albums with his Canada Day project, on *Recent Developments* he breaks new ground as a writer and player. Eisenstadt's adventurous compositions are challenging, humorous, catchy, and atmospheric, and they draw on contemporary chamber music, jazz, improv, and avant-garde techniques. Serving his vision, Eisenstadt's drumming provides pulse and color while displaying judicious chops. Yet perhaps most exciting is the combination of instruments joining him here—flute, bassoon, trumpet, trombone, cello, bass, banjo, tuba—and his ability to break these instruments out of traditional roles and blend them. As a composer and improviser of creative music, Eisenstadt is one to watch. (Songlines) **Martin Patmos**



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The Conga and Bongo Drum in Jazz by Trevor Salloum with Bobby Sanabria

A well-researched and comprehensive guide sheds light on two arguably overlooked voices in modern jazz education.

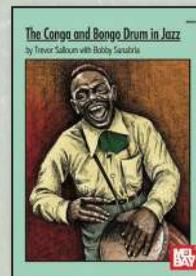
With *The Conga and Bongo Drum in Jazz*, percussionist, author, and educator Trevor Salloum presents history, techniques, stylistic approaches, and plenty of additional resources for playing congas and bongos in contemporary jazz settings. The book opens with a fairly thorough historical retrospective on the drums' uses in jazz and the pioneers of the instruments, such as Candido Camero and Chano Pozo. Salloum also discusses bongo and conga drumming's current state, or lack thereof, in modern jazz music-education programs.

Notation, instrument descriptions, posture, and proper tuning are discussed and accompanied by photos where needed, and diagrams illustrate exactly which part of your hand plays each stroke. Swing patterns, as well as suggested grooves for Latin jazz tunes, are notated for both congas and bongos. Proper clave technique and patterns are also covered.

Be sure to dig into the book's extras, which include an interview with veteran jazz guitarist and UCLA professor Kenny Burrell, plus video demos and a helpful glossary. Salloum also presents a comprehensive discography with additional percussionist information, and each suggested tune is annotated with specific insight that relates to material covered earlier in the book.

The method has a few minor organizational hiccups—for instance, a martillo rhythm is referred to a few times at the beginning of the bongo chapter yet remains undefined until the chapter's final section. But ultimately Salloum's work succeeds in addressing the clear need for more educational resources on the role of conga and bongo drums in jazz. (Mel Bay, \$19.99)

Willie Rose



Dead Cross *Dead Cross*

Pummeling, satisfying, and fresh from the first note, the debut album by this quartet is exactly what DAVE LOMBARDO fans will hope it is.

Dave Lombardo's playing with Dead Cross combines his signature double kick, ride bursts, and furious tom fills with punk-inspired savagery that serves both the structure and bombast of the music. Lombardo's breathless blast beats on opening track "Seizure and Desist" and classic thrash attack on "Obedience School" and "Shillelagh" show that he hasn't lost a step since his fabled years with Slayer. Produced by Dead Cross and Ross Robinson, the project features distinct vocal contributions from Lombardo's Fantômas bandmate Mike Patton as well as guitarist Michael Crain (Retox) and bassist Justin Pearson (Retox, the Locust). Dead Cross should please fans of any of its members' projects and new ones alike. (Ipecac) **Ben Meyer**



The Contortionist *Clairvoyant*

The Indianapolis sextet's highly anticipated fourth full-length finds drummer JOEY BACA and band branching out but keeping their roots firmly in the soil.

On the strength of its 2014 breakthrough album, *Language* (reissued in 2015 with several live, semi-acoustic tracks), the Contortionist has toured the States and Europe, sharing stages with heavy tech bands like Periphery, Norma Jean, Between the Buried and Me, Good Tiger, Dance Gavin Dance, and Toothgrinder. Drummer Joey Baca's signature precision, grace, and power are on full display on *Clairvoyant*, with big, natural drum tones thanks in no small measure to the band's choice, once again, of producer/engineer/mixer Jamie King (the Basement Recording NC). Featuring rich, ambient sonic explorations, clean vocals, and more prominent, glassy synth textures, *Clairvoyant* is the next logical step in the band's move toward ambient prog territory and away from the angular technical death metal of its

first two releases. Fans of the group's heavier material won't be disappointed here, though, as the album's opener and title track feature the Contortionist's signature grinding heft. Drumming highlights include Baca's slick metric modulations on "Godspeed" and "Absolve" and his deeply textured playing on the album's nine-and-a-half-minute 5/4 closer, "Monochrome (Pensive)." (Good Fight Music) **Ben Meyer**





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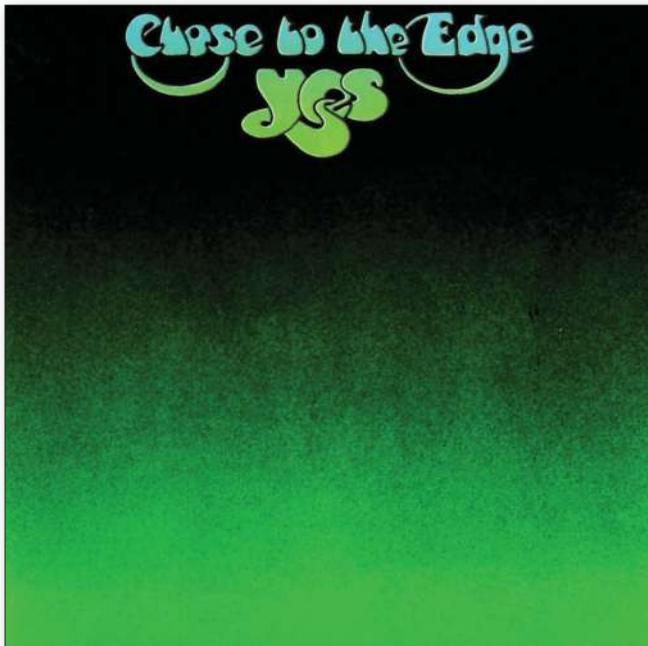
Yes's *Close to the Edge*

In the long list of accomplishments that led to Yes's induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame this year, Bill Bruford's final statement with the band surely ranks as highly as any.

When the term *independence* is applied within the context of a *Modern Drummer* feature, it's usually in reference to a technical skill drummers possess by which they simultaneously orchestrate different rhythmic patterns with multiple limbs. On *Close to the Edge*, Yes's fifth studio album, drummer Bill Bruford demonstrates those aforementioned drumming abilities, as many a great skinsman has. But in this case the word can be applied in a much broader sense as well—to the inarguably groundbreaking nature of the 1972 release itself, which effectively closed the argument that the full artistic potential of rock music could or should be constrained in any way.

The first thing you should know about the record is that the nineteen-minute, multi-sectional title track consumes the entire first side of the original LP. Yes had explored vast musical terrain previous to *Close to the Edge*, having sculpted enduring classics such as the top-twenty U.S. hit "Roundabout" and the cosmically hip "Starship Trooper." These songs are now considered classics. But they're nothing on the order of magnitude of "Close to the Edge," which elicits the grandeur, dynamics, and scope of classical symphonies while somehow maintaining cohesiveness, conciseness, and coherency.

"Close to the Edge," featuring lyrics by singer Jon Anderson that were inspired by Hermann Hesse's 1922 novel, *Siddhartha*, ends as it begins—wish a rush of running water, chirping birds, and buzzing insects, representing the river and the majestic "om" at the center of the German author's fictional yarn. The character of Siddhartha, spiritually transformed upon hearing the river's calming sound, perceives it as the hum of the cosmos—all human joys and sorrows,



pains and pleasures, fused into one universal experience. This philosophical connectedness is represented beautifully by the multitude of musical styles the band explores in the work, and may well serve as a metaphor for the kaleidoscopic spectrum of influences that prog rock, in general, embraces.

Bucking trends and any sensible record executives' expectations, Yes boldly designed a jigsaw pattern of musical genres snugly juxtaposed to one another, from American country and western and avant-garde jazz-rock fusion (with shades of Mahavishnu Orchestra) to eighteenth-century European baroque. Percussive puzzle master Bruford carves out several elegant patterns throughout the epic track, varying them slightly through

beat displacement, among other rhythmic and compositional methodologies, to create subtle complexity.

"What was my role in the track's creation?" Bruford posits to *Modern Drummer* in an exclusive interview for this article. "Good question, since the handful of photos of the time show me sitting at the kit reading a paper or otherwise looking bored. I'm interested in group dynamics and the creative process. In that light, and thinking about it a bit, I was at best the grit in the oyster, the provocateur, something of an irritant, always asking a different question, wanting to do it another, better, different way at a better, different tempo or meter."

"And You and I," which opens the original LP's second side, may be the epitome of symphonic pastoral prog, a transcendent blend of hypnotic acoustic/folky qualities and sweeping, slowly unfolding passages. Bruford's playing here is economical, generating maximum power with a minimal number of beats.

Bruford shares top songwriting billing for composing one of the overarching themes of the song, as well as a co-credit, with bassist

Drums on the Edge

"I was pretty disinterested in equipment [at the time]," Bruford tells *MD* today. "So long as it stood up and sounded okay, I was happy enough." Bruford banged Hayman drums with a teakwood finish. He chose from either an 8x12 or 9x13 tom-tom and a 14x14 or 16x16 floor tom. His bass drum was 14x22, and he played either a 5x14 Ludwig Supraphonic or a 5.5x14 wood Hayman snare. The cymbals he used were a 15" Super Zyn crash as well as an arsenal of Paistes, including 15" Giant Beat hi-hats; 16", 17", 18", and 20" 602 crashes; and 20" and 22" 602 rides. A cowbell was always at the ready, as were percussion accessories such as a tambourine and triangle. Remo heads were spanked with Ludwig or Hayman 5A sticks.



Chris Squire, for penning the “Eclipse” section. “Piano had always been my second instrument, and a fascination,” Bruford says. “So long as the tempo was slow enough, my limited technique was just about sufficient to get the point across. I was given a generous credit for the main theme of ‘And You and I,’ so I had begun to dip my toe in the composition waters, for sure.”

The final entry, “Siberian Khatru”—the shortest song on the record, running a skimpy nine minutes—throbs with a common-time pulse and boasts two main feels: a straightforward dance-y beat and a jazzy shuffle. A snare drum figure, perhaps constructed of double-stroke rolls, slowly surfaces within the stereo image at approximately 5:40. The patterns are stealthy but impactful—a hallmark of Bruford’s playing.

Economical Abandon

As guitarist Steve Howe performs nearly atonal guitar acrobatics in the title track, Bruford lunges for the jugular, playing patterns that possess properties of conversational dialogue and free-jazz abandon. As the song progresses through its four major movements, the band traverses several different tempos. Bruford navigates time signatures such as twelve, nine, and six by employing economical rhythms possessing an underlying logic.

To some observers it might appear as though nary a beat is out of place on the record, yet this precision was the offspring of a painful birth. Yes spent weeks—*months*—writing, rehearsing, recording, and mixing *Close to the Edge*. Tracking, layering, and tinkering were part of the seemingly never-ending creation process.

The meticulous work began to grind on Bruford’s nerves. “The pitch of the snare drum descends over the course of the [title] track, which, suggested [one] commentator, indicates how long it was taking to record,” Bruford says. “True, I guess. I just hadn’t noticed, and probably wouldn’t have cared if I had.”

A creeping mania beset the band’s collective consciousness and led to one infamous incident that’s passed into Yes lore. The story goes that a missing piece of tape from the album’s title track had been accidentally discarded, only to be recovered from the dustbin before being lost forever. Miraculously, coproducer Eddy Offord was able to patch things up. But, as it turns out, the slice of

audiotape was the wrong piece, at least according to stories spun by keyboardist Rick Wakeman. The sonics didn’t quite match up, and the band was forced to live with the track as is.

The tortuous process of constructing *Close to the Edge* convinced Yes’s founding drummer to jump ship. In an effort to sharpen his musical instincts and develop fully as an artist, Bruford accepted an invitation to join Robert Fripp’s semi-improvisational King Crimson, an early Yes rival. He couldn’t wait to leave. Bruford was so eager to skedaddle from the hit-making prog band, in fact, he announced his exit prior to the September release of the album.

Drummer Alan White, ostensibly Bruford’s replacement, racked up credits early in his career as a young journeyman, having performed or recorded with John Lennon, Joe Cocker, George Harrison, and Terry Reid, among others. As the decade wore on, White steadily evolved into his role as a hard-driving foil for his more cerebral Yes cohorts. Meanwhile, Bruford conducted a wide-ranging search for musical independence and percussive innovation. During the 1970s he could not sit still; he collaborated with Crimson, Gong, Genesis, U.K., Missouri-based Pavlov’s Dog, Led Zeppelin/Pink Floyd pal Roy Harper, and National Health. Bruford even reunited with his former Yes partners on occasion and spearheaded the (largely) instrumental rock band bearing his name.

In the decades since the record was unleashed, *Close to the Edge* has not only come to represent the pinnacle of Yes’s musical and compositional ambitions, but to trigger artistic growth and free thought among its hordes of followers. It provided Yes with a prototype for commercial success, if not a license to indulge in creative excess (and combat conventional music industry “wisdom”), while also liberating a maverick percussionist to redefine his career and reshape progressive rock forever.

Will Romano

A Simple “Ding!”

The six-beat bump sculpted by our crafty drummer and bassist Chris Squire in “And You and I,” beginning at approximately 1:13, is actually a looped bit of audio. Marking this pulsating figure is the beautiful chime of a triangle. Why did Bruford choose this particular piece of concert percussion? “Same reason anyone does anything in music,” he says. “Because it might be effective and/or beautiful—on a good day, both.”



The 2017 Chicago Drum Show

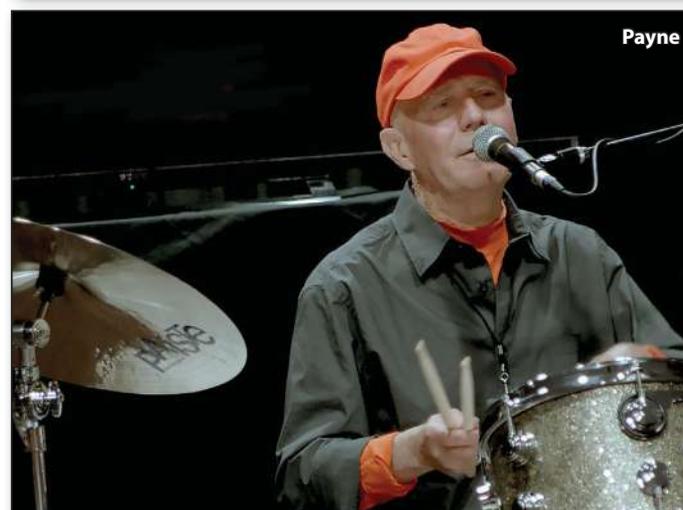
A weekend of rhythmic bliss replete with vintage and modern gear, enlightening workshops, and brilliant performances.

The Chicago Drum Show, the enduring brainchild of drum historian Rob Cook, returned to the Odeum Expo Center in Villa Park, Illinois, this past May 20–21 for its twenty-seventh edition. Global manufacturers and collectors packed the venue with tantalizing vintage, custom, and modern gear. The vintage corner featured extremely rare snares from collector Joe Luoma, including an engraved 5x14 Slingerland Black Beauty Artist model, a one-of-a-kind uncatalogued Ludwig & Ludwig cinnamon swirl 5x14, two 5x14 Leedy snares—one in red onyx finish and one in black onyx—and a 6x14 Billy Gladstone drum. Collector Brian Hill also displayed a wonderful assortment of well-preserved French and Indian War-, Revolutionary War-, and Civil War-era rope-tension drums.

A bevy of talented boutique and well-known drum manufacturers exhibited gear galore, including wares from companies such as Bolanos, Canopus, Chicago Drum, Craviotto, daVille Drumworks, Doc Sweeney, Dixon, Dunnett Classic/George Way, P. Ellis, Goodman, Holland, Holloman, Infinity, Jenkins-Martin, Kumu, Ludwig, Outlaw, Palmetto, Parra, RBH, SJC, Sonor, Stone Custom, William F. Ludwig III, and Yamaha. The custom drum company Beat Boogie displayed a stunning 24K-gold-plated, engraved brass Beat Beauty model, which was the result of a collaboration between the company and drum craftsman Adrian Kirchler. At the Trick Drums booth, Mike Morgan (studio, independent) hand engraved a brass shell using a pneumatic engraving tool and stereo microscope. Attendees also feasted on a wide array of fine vintage and modern cymbals from Amedia, Crescent, Meinl, Paiste, Sabian, UFIP, and Zildjian.

Master classes were held both days, with insights from Jim Payne (author and educator), Daniel Glass (Royal Crown Revue), Jim Riley (Rascal Flatts), Gregg Bissonette (Ringo Starr and His All Starr Band), and Aldo Mazza (educator and KoSA founder). Remo representative Jeff Davenport held a tuning clinic, and Gary Astridge, the curator of Ringo Starr's drum collection, discussed the former Beatle's setups. Kelli Rae Stubbs (author and educator), Matt Brennan (University of Edinburgh), and Glass held a roundtable discussion on their *Postcard Project*, a forthcoming book that surveys the evolution of the drumset from 1900 to 1930 as depicted on surviving postcards from that period.

Mazza opened the clinics on a unique hybrid kit that included a glockenspiel, djembe, and Korg Wavedrum. He integrated the acoustic and electronic voices seamlessly while infusing them with modern and Latin rhythms. In the next clinic, Bissonette regaled attendees with funny stories about his experiences with Ringo and his early days at the University of North





Texas. He also demonstrated a tasty paradiddle-diddle fill.

On Saturday evening, KHS America treated a packed room to a series of drum clinics performed by Johnny Rabb (Collective Soul, author), Nir Z (studio), and Lee Pearson (Chris Botti). Rabb demonstrated blazing one-handed rolls. He also created guiro-like effects with his RhythmSaw ridged drumsticks and cleverly manipulated small cymbals on his snare to create electronic-inspired sounds. Nir Z emphasized the importance of solid timekeeping and the need to play seamlessly with sequenced tracks—skills that the session guru explained are necessary for modern studio drummers. During a melodic and dynamic performance, Pearson explored his drumset's textures with rods, mallets, and sticks. While he admitted that showmanship isn't everything, he explained that it helps to get the attention of his audience. He then capped off an incredible solo by playing for several minutes with a towel completely covering his head.

Riley opened Sunday's clinics by handily playing to a variety of tracks in different styles. At the end of his performance, he invited the audience on stage for a group photo. Payne gave an informative clinic on James Brown's drummers that served as a fitting tribute to the players who so profoundly shaped the sound and feel of modern drumming.

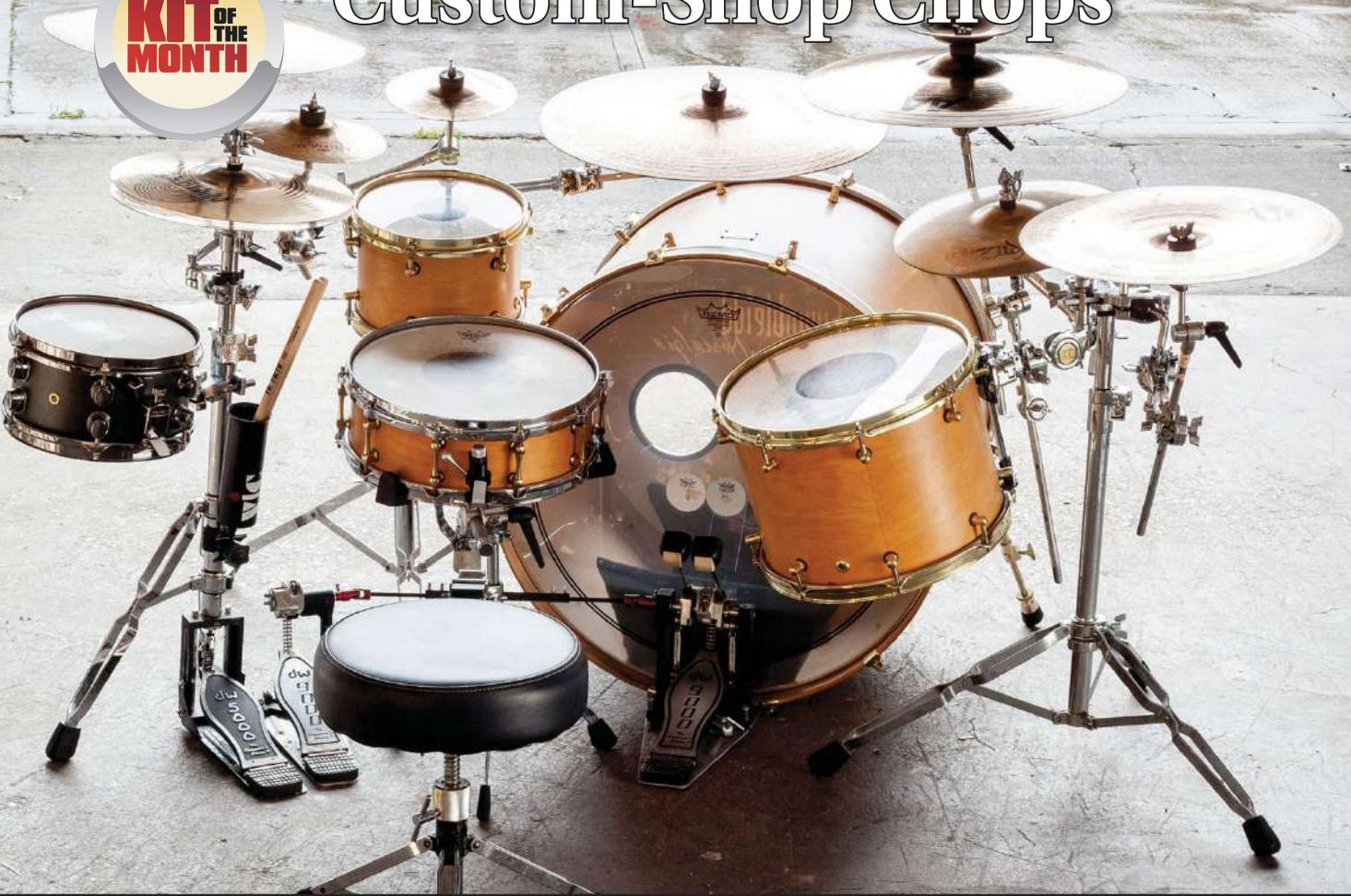
Event organizer and host Rob Cook says, "2017 was a breakout year for the Chicago Drum Show. Toward the end of the setup day, it felt like the show was already in full swing. Although initial access was limited to exhibitors, VIPs, and staff, there were nearly 600 people in the arena, and our 'circular economy' was booming. When the show opened to the public Saturday morning, there were long lines waiting to get in. Saturday set a single-day attendance record for the show, and overall attendance for the weekend was up by 26 percent this year. We're very encouraged by this growth and have started planning for the twenty-eighth show in 2018."

Story and photos by Robert Campbell





Custom-Shop Chops



This one-of-a-kind kit comes to us from New York City-based drummer Adam Romanowski, who commissioned a budding drum builder for the set in 2003. "My friend Ilya Hamovic started making drums after a short stint working at [the now defunct music retailer] Manny's Music in New York City," Romanowski says. "He figured he could probably build the same-quality drums that many top manufacturers were producing at the time."

Hamovic started out by building snare drums that were eventually purchased by a few top drummers, including Dennis Chambers and Will Calhoun. "That was a good sign that he was doing something right," Romanowski says. "After he started gaining traction, I asked him to build a snare drum for me. Once he completed the snare, I persuaded him to build this drumset. I always imagined a certain configuration in my head, but I wasn't able to find it on the market. I asked Ilya, and he agreed to make it for me."

The kit comprises a 5x14 snare, a 7x10 tom, a 10x14 floor tom,

and a 20x28 bass drum featuring maple shells with brass fittings. (Romanowski will use various auxiliary snares, depending on the gig he's playing.) The hardware is made by DW and includes the company's 5000 series hi-hat stand and 9000 series double bass pedal.

According to Romanowski, Hamovic built a total of only four drumsets under the Custom Works manufacturing label, and each was unique to the customer who ordered it. "Nowadays Ilya builds custom motorcycles," Romanowski says. "He's a true artist!"



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



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