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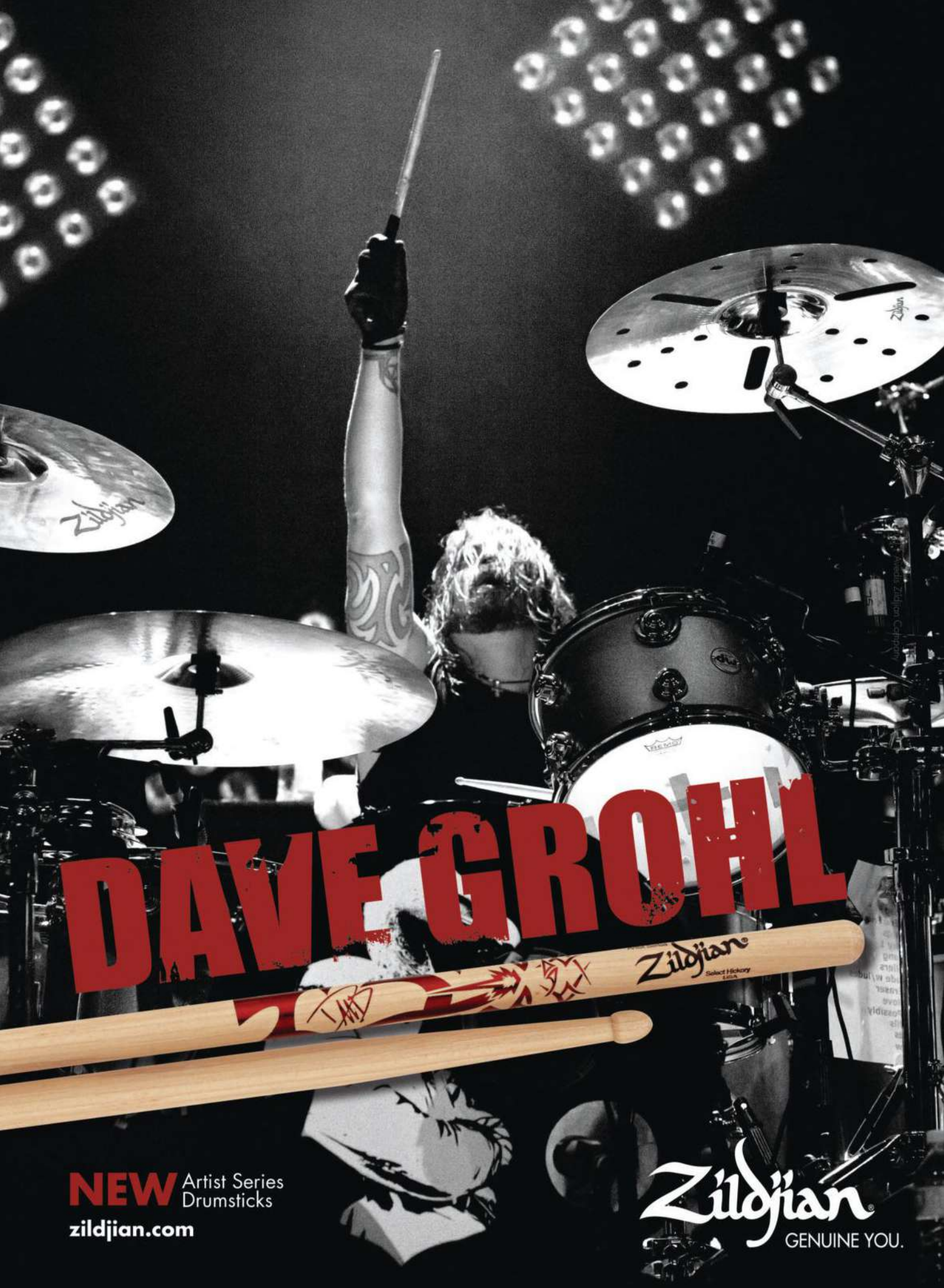
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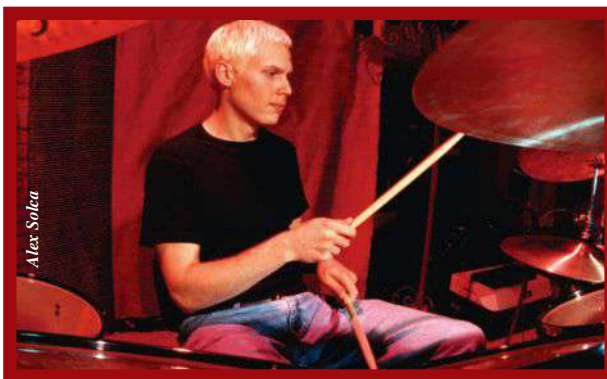
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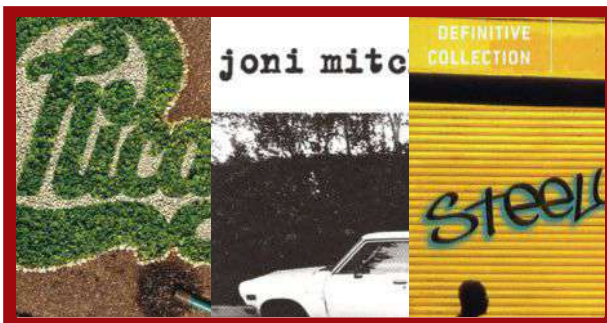
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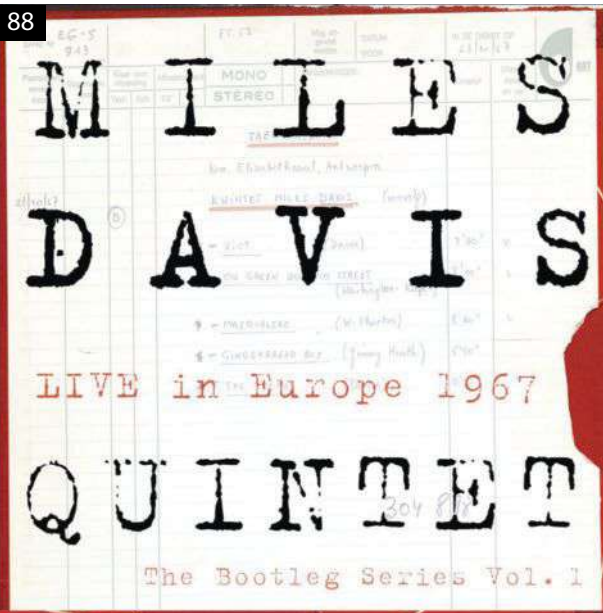
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Modern Drummer's Digital Archive 3.0

We live in a world where the desire to access information grows each day. With that in mind, we're proud to announce the reengineered, redesigned, enhanced, and upgraded Modern Drummer Digital Archive.

Like many of you longtime readers, I still have all of my back issues of *Modern Drummer* magazine, from the very first one published thirty-six years ago to the current issue. And since I've been working at MD for close to fifteen years, I have a collection here at my office and one at my studio at home. My wife can't really understand it—but that's a different topic for another time!

When the Digital Archive was first introduced years ago, I was like a kid in a candy store. If you're looking to do research on anything drums and drumming, you just can't beat it. As an editor, I've found the archive invaluable. As a fan of the magazine, I've spent hours exploring older issues by typing in the names of my favorite drummers. In seconds, every single time that drummer was mentioned in MD—even in a blurb—it's there at my fingertips. I also enjoy many of the advertisements that I haven't seen in so long. It's particularly fun when a drummer who will later go on to great things is "introduced" in an ad—it always makes me think, *Wow, look how far that drummer has come!*

When we introduced that first Modern Drummer Digital Archive several years ago, readers all over the world flocked to take advantage of having lightning-fast access to every single page published in the magazine's first twenty-five years. At first it was available only for PCs, but in 2007 our introduction of the Digital Archive 2.0 allowed Mac users to get in on the action.

The new 3.0 version of the MD Archive represents a major upgrade that will work on Windows Vista and 7 and Mac OS, including Leopard, Snow Leopard, and Lion editions, with a database spanning thirty-six years (and growing). That's almost 400 issues and over 50,000 pages of news, advice, reviews, educational columns, and the best drumming journalism and photography in the world.

Among the upgrades is the new app-style control panel, which offers easy navigation, an updated browser window, and enhanced search capabilities for issues published through 2003 (with a searchable index through 2011). Whatever drum stuff you're looking for, it's in there.

The Digital Archive 3.0 is now available via download. For more information and to purchase it, visit moderndrummer.com.



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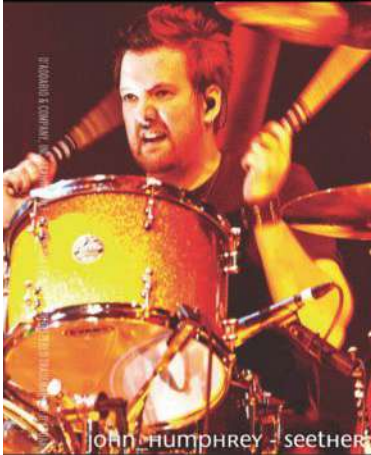


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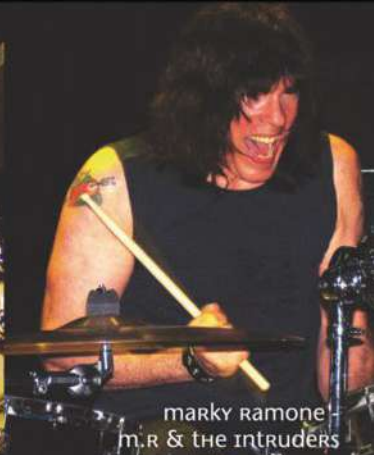
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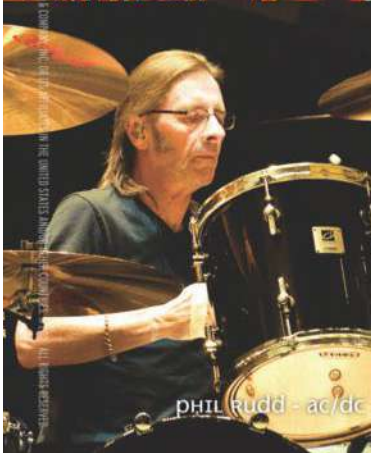
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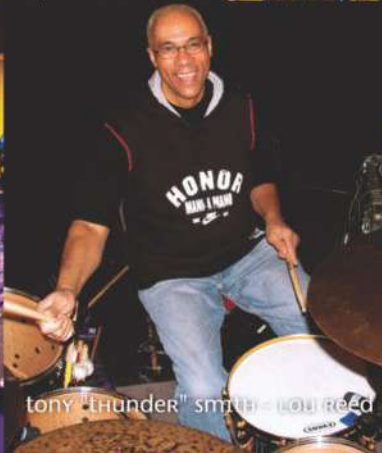
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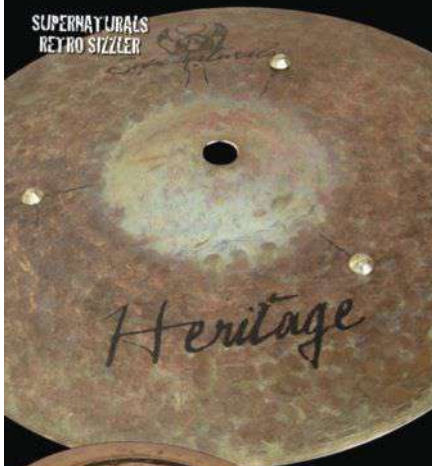


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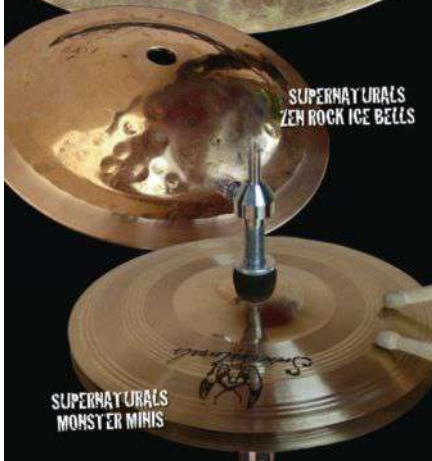
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JANUARY 2012 ISSUE

MD always puts out a quality issue, but there are times when you completely hit it out of the park! The January 2012 issue did just that. It features one of my favorite drummers, Matt Chamberlain, on the cover, with a great inside look at his career. I've been a big fan of Matt's since his days with Edie Brickell, as I'm sure a lot of your subscribers have been. The Wallflowers' album *Bringing Down the Horse* is a personal favorite, and Matt's less-known Critters Buggin' CDs should be checked out as well. Recently, Matt recorded two major pop tunes, and readers might not be aware that it's him: "You'll Think of Me" by Keith Urban (his brushwork is phenomenal) and "Love Song" by Sara Bareilles (his killer shuffle makes the tune).

Second, Benjamin Homola's article, "The Working Drummer's Survival Kit," is spot on. Adding pictures of the items is a nice touch. Bravo! And lastly, Adam Budofsky's Editor's Overview is "dead-on balls accurate," as Marisa Tomei so eloquently says to Joe Pesci in the movie *My Cousin Vinny*. One can only imagine what the staff at *MD* encounters every day from drummers around the world. Kudos on yet another great issue.

John Rogers



36 YEARS AND COUNTING

When I was a kid, I remember seeing an advertisement in the back of a music magazine about a new drum publication that was going to premiere. As a young drummer, I saved my money each week and invested in my first subscription to *Modern Drummer*, sight unseen. When I received the first copy, with Buddy Rich on the cover, I knew *MD* was going to be something special. To this day I am still a committed working drummer and a committed subscriber to the magazine. Thank you for all you do, and keep up the great work!

Eric Selby

GEARING UP

Having read *MD* for many years, I have to say that the new Gearing Up structure with the full-page driver's-seat photo is just awesome! Hope it sticks around for some time.

AJ Donahue

25 TIMELESS DRUM BOOKS

I've been playing drums for over forty-five years, and at age sixty I can tell you that Paul Wertico's sidebar in December 2011's "25 Timeless Drum Books" is right on target! Paul and I must have a lot in

common, since I'm sure we're close in age and we're professors in higher education. From my start with *Ludwig Drummer* magazine in the '60s to the current *Modern Drummer*, you are the number-one source for the percussionist.

Mike "Mickey" Jones

STRICTLY TECHNIQUE

I respectfully disagree with the technique described for holding drumsticks in the "Spivack/Wilson Approach to Technique" article in the September 2011 issue, at least for drumset players. I have been playing the drums professionally for over forty-five years. I've never had any symptoms of carpal tunnel using the method that I endorse, which is matched grip with both thumbnails facing up. I believe that this gives the drummer more power and reduces the chance of injury to the hands and wrists. As you know, drumset players perform for hours at a time, usually at a high energy level. The Spivack/Wilson technique may work best for some drumming styles, but I don't believe it's the best choice for drumset players.

Denis Hill

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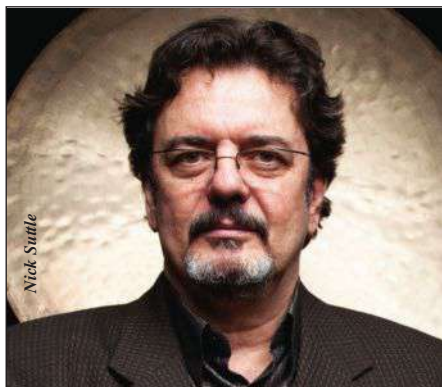
Whitesnake

"Whoa! Look out for Natal, they've got it right! They have paid attention to detail and have gone that extra mile to build drums, hardware and pedals that look great, sound awesome and are totally roadworthy."

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Uriah Heep

"If you want that fat, full sound that powers any band, then I suggest Natal are the drums for you!"



Nick Suttile

DUDUKA DA FONSECA

Easy is as easy does for the busy Brazilian jazzer.

When a nasty software glitch threatened to dampen his Rio recording session, Duduka Da Fonseca suggested the band take a walk on the beach to lighten the mood. "It was a beautiful, sunny day," Da Fonseca recalls. "We had some coconut water, looked at the ocean, saw the beautiful girls of Ipanema. We returned to the studio so relaxed."

The resulting tracks on *Duduka Da*

Fonseca Trio Plays Toninho Horta exude that sensuous ease in their seamless meeting of Brazilian and jazz elements. "What I love about playing with pianist David Feldman and bassist Guto Wirtti is that we have a very strong rhythm together," the drummer says. "Their time is like my time. It feels so good playing with them. I can leave space and there's no doubt where the time is—we trust each other. It can breathe, be elastic, and I love that."

Duduka's commanding yet unobtrusive grooves percolate the CD with a masterfully balanced drive. "I used to tell my students: Treat the drums as a piano. You want to hear the high, middle, and low notes with the same volume. Then if you want to accent something, it speaks, and

you have a good control of the instrument. And in leading the band, you must be firm without being forceful."

Overlapping projects keep Da Fonseca globe-hopping. He's active as a longtime member of the acclaimed Trio Da Paz and also leads the Brazilian Trio featuring pianist Helio Alves. And with bassist Rufus Reid's Out Front trio, he gets to flex his straight-ahead muscles. Another mainstay, the Duduka Da Fonseca Quintet, delivers a Rio-meets-New York blend on its latest CD, *Samba Jazz/Jazz Samba*. That ensemble recently played a concert in California where late flights created pre-show stress. Duduka came to the rescue. "We're going to skip soundcheck," he said. "Let's take a walk on the beach...." **Jeff Potter**

JAMES "THE WORM" WORMSWORTH

Barefootin' to a big break on late-night TV.

New York City native and charter member of Conan O'Brien's Basic Cable Band James Wormworth first came to prominence on O'Brien's *Late Night* show as a steady replacement for Max Weinberg, when the Mighty one was fulfilling touring obligations with Bruce Springsteen. Conan moved to L.A. in 2009 to host *The Tonight Show*, and "the Worm" followed, playing percussion each night and taking over the kit whenever Weinberg was out. When that doomed late-night broadcasting experiment ended after seven months, the drummer joined Conan on his Legally Prohibited From Being Funny on Television tour. O'Brien returned to TV in November of 2010 to host his current TBS show, *Conan*, and Wormworth was back on the throne, spreading pure drumming joy with every performance.

"The transition was pretty abrupt," Wormworth says of his move westward. "Conan, his producer Jeff Ross, and Basic Cable Band leader Jimmy Vivino asked me if I would make the move to L.A. to do the new *Tonight Show*. Having subbed for Max in New York, and having been in various bands with all of those guys for a long time, I couldn't say no. Two months

later I was in rehearsals for the new show. Fortunately I'd already made some recording connections in L.A. throughout the years, so the transition went pretty smoothly."

A major component to Wormworth's climb has been his diversity. Weaned on classic R&B, soul, and jazz, James has a style that gives a nod to drumming giants like Al Jackson Jr., Bernard Purdie, and Steve Gadd, while his fresh, open sound is both modern and retro at once. The drummer attributes his artistic maturity to having backed such icons as Chuck Berry and Johnnie Johnson. "I'm so fortunate to have gotten to play with a lot of pioneers," he says. "That has given me firsthand knowledge and a strong foundation in terms of where the music comes from. I believe that looking to and learning from the past will inform one's present and future that much more."

Between his taping schedule in L.A. and flitting back to NYC, Wormworth is juggling some choice projects: a movie soundtrack recording, the Love Trio with Paul Tillotson and BCB mate Mike Merritt, and, as a leader, Worm & the Mezcal Playas.

And for all the *MD* readers who've won-



Courtesy of Meghan Sinclair/Team Coco

dered why he plays barefooted, Wormworth says, "I'm not sure when or why that actually started. If anyone has pictures of me playing with shoes on, please send them in! These days it's a comfort issue, plus playing barefoot has allowed me to develop techniques that bring more subtleties to my bass drum and hi-hat playing." Confirmation, perhaps, of that old cliché "Don't mess with success."

Bob Girouard

BOBBY JARZOMBEK

The journeyman elevates singer and song with metal mastery.

Alex Solca



Bobby Jarzombek's powerful, progressive drumming style has turned heads since the late 1980s, and his flow and creativity have allowed him to work with an impres-

sive list of acts in the years since. In fact, Jarzombek's star continues to rise, as he's seemed to be everywhere lately, appearing on new recordings by Rob Halford (Judas Priest), Sebastian Bach (ex-Skid Row), a

reunited Riot, and the Fates Warning spin-off Arch/Matheos. These releases showcase different aspects of the drummer's style, from his energy and intensity to his finesse with complex rhythms.

Whether he's working in a band or supporting a singer-driven project, Jarzombek says that in the studio he always pays attention to the songs and plays what he feels is appropriate. "On stage," he's quick to add, "the two types of gigs are different. Frontmen like Rob and Sebastian dictate the tempos of the songs, the ending crashes, and my all-around focus throughout the show. With a band like Fates Warning or Riot, I can take more control or maybe focus on any one of the

band members, depending upon the song, section, riff, and so forth."

Playing with a formidable open-handed technique that allows for unique patterns (check out studio footage in the Recent Videos section of moderndrummer.com), Jarzombek takes an exciting command of the kit. "When I'm working on a song," he explains, "I try to play the best, most inventive drumming ideas that I can come up with." With several tours on the horizon, plus more recording projects, including one with Fates Warning, fans will have ample opportunity to hear what kinds of uniquely effective ideas the drummer will be working on in the coming year.

Martin Patmos

JEREMY "B-WACK" BUSH

After a decade at the forefront of Christian rock, one of the genre's most intriguing drummers says he's looking forward to new challenges.

Jeremy "B-Wack" Bush rocked beats for the David Crowder Band since its inception in 2000. A lefty, B-Wack started playing open-handed out of necessity. "My first teacher thought it was really important that my left hand be on the hi-hat," he says. "He wasn't going to turn his kit around every time I had a lesson."

This scenario presented a challenge, but it paid off. "I'd have to read charts that would have been a lot easier had I been right-handed," Bush recalls. "But I just figured out ways to get around it. I would always rather be slightly different, and I think it's resulted in a certain creativity. I love layering drums, for example. It's something we did a lot on our albums, doubling or tripling drum parts." To bring that layered sound to life on stage, B-Wack would enlist the talents of stage manager Steven Samuels, who's also a drummer. "In a perfect world," Bush says, "I would always be playing next to another drummer."

When the contemporary Christian group wrapped its 7 tour this past January and released its sixth and final album, *Give Us Rest (A Requiem Mass in C)*, the DCB called its collective musical journey complete and disbanded. B-Wack says he's already formed a new group with DCB mates Mark Waldrop, Mike Dodson, and Jack Parker. "The four of us are very excited about starting something new," says the drummer, who adds that together they've purchased a building in Waco, Texas, and are outfitting it as a recording studio, for themselves and other artists.

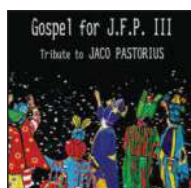
With a Dove Award, a Grammy, and a list of other recognitions and awards to their credit, B-Wack and the David Crowder Band have made an indelible mark on the Christian music scene with a beautiful collision of musical styles. But the best may yet be to come.

April Singer



Mike Dodson

OUT NOW



CDs

Various *Gospel for J.F.P. III: Tribute to Jaco Pastorius* (Alex Acuña, Danny Gottlieb, Billy Hart, Kenwood Dennard, Jonathan Joseph, Rich

Franks, Jorge Osvaldo Fattoruso, Armando Marçal, Othello Molineaux) /// **UFO** *Seven Deadly* (Andy Parker) /// **Mitch Ryder** *The Promise* (James Gadson) /// **Dr. Dog** *Be the Void* (Eric Slick) /// **Matt Wilson's Arts & Crafts** *An Attitude for Gratitude* (Matt Wilson) /// **Kaya** *Born Under the Star of Change* (Frank Vilardi) /// **Pete Zimmer** *Prime of Life* (Pete Zimmer) /// **Joan Osborne** *Bring It on Home* (Aaron Comess) /// **The Used** *Vulnerable* (Daniel Whitesides)



DVDs

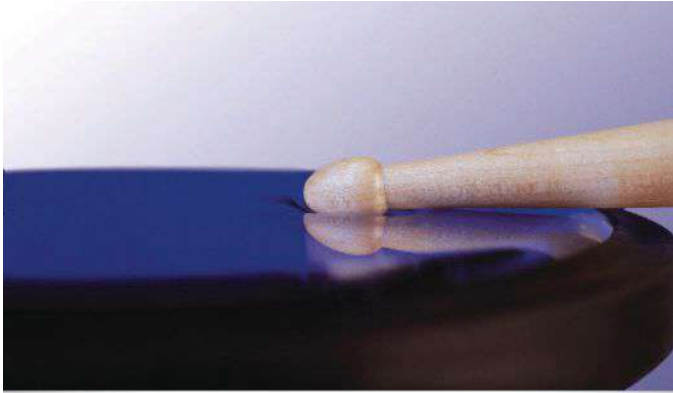
Todd Rundgren *Todd Live, September 14, 2010* (Prairie Prince) /// **The Richard Thompson Band** *Live at Celtic Connections* (Michael Jerome) /// **Styx** *The Grand Illusion/Pieces of Eight Live* (Todd Sucherman)

ON TOUR



Virgil Donati with Allan Holdsworth /// **Matt Kelly** with Dropkick Murphys /// **Chris Culos** with O.A.R. /// **Woody**

Giessmann with the Del Fuegos /// **Vinny Appice** with Kill Devil Hill /// **Chris Durling** with Scars on 45



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NEWS



Paul Wertico's radio show, *Wild World of Jazz*, is now available via stream, between 9 and 11 P.M. on Sunday nights, Central Standard Time. The multiple Grammy winner and 2011 *Modern Drummer* Pro Panelist plays an eclectic mix of standards, cutting-edge modern tracks, and obscurities from all eras, including a good deal of drum-oriented material. Go to paulwertico.com to listen live.

Jazz/fusion great **Lenny White** has designed a commemorative pen and card case. Visit acmestudio.com for more.



Thirty-year drum industry vet **Victor Salazar** has opened a dedicated drum and percussion store in the Music Garage, a world-class rehearsal facility in Chicago. For more, contact Vic's Drum Shop at 312-770-1200 or vic@vicsdrumshop.com.

WHO'S PLAYING WHAT

David Kinkade (Soulfly) is now an Alesis drum artist, as is **Ryan Van Poederoyen** (Devin Townsend Project), who will be using the DM10 brain for his triggers on tour.



Abe Laboriel Jr. (Paul McCartney) has joined Protection Racket's artist roster.

Paiste has added **Garrelt Riepelmeier** (Randale), **Peter Knausz** (Thornwill), **Hubert Gasiul** (Wilki), **Satsha Siyabulela** (Joyous Celebration), **Paco Garcia** (independent), **Per Soläng** (Corroded), **Marc Hemantha Hufschmid** (Lea Lu, Baum), **Roger Hintermann** (Kandlbauer), **Joe Butterworth** (Talanas), **Darren Toms** (Hammer of the Gods), and **Sergey Balalaev** (SunSay) to its family of artists.



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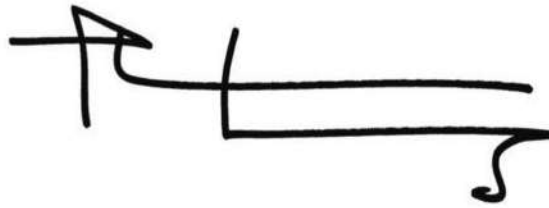
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Thomas Lang

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SIMON PHILLIPS

In his December 1986 cover story, the drummer talked about the origins of his left-hand-lead approach, and he used his playing on Pete Townshend's hit "Face the Face" as an example of how in performance he incorporates variations of the technique.

I suppose it took about a year until [playing left-hand lead] felt natural. Then I reached a point where I played so much left-hand lead that I couldn't play right-hand lead anymore. So I had to put a cymbal up on the right to force myself to play the other way again. But now I am able to swap over between the two, which is very useful.

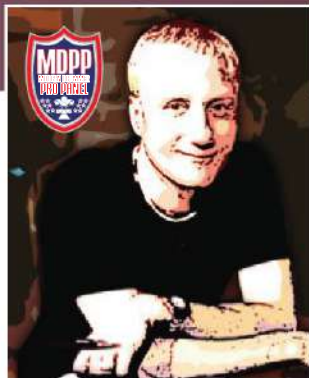
When we do Pete Townshend's "Face the Face" live, I do it with two snare drums and two hi-hats. In the intro, with my left

hand I play the metal drum, which is to the left of the left-hand hi-hat, while playing the hi-hat with my right. Then I switch to the snare drum that's in the usual position between my legs, still with the left hand, and my right hand plays the cymbals on the cable hat to my right. Later, during the solos, I play the central snare drum with my right hand and the hi-hat to the left of it with my left hand. So I can move around between the three positions.

Having that variety is great. Also, while you're playing, you can hit the odd tom-tom without having to cross over or do anything awkward. It makes you so much freer. I have the hi-hat only a touch higher than the snare drum, which means that the tom-toms on the left can come in much closer. People look at the drumkit and think that it's enormous because they can only see my hair, but actually from behind it's quite compact. I've spent a long time trying to get it that way, which was hard in the '70s, because you didn't have the holders you do now.



Original interview by Bill Miller. To watch a video of Simon playing "Face the Face" with Pete Townshend, go to YouTube and search "Pete Townshend and David Gilmour Face the Face live."

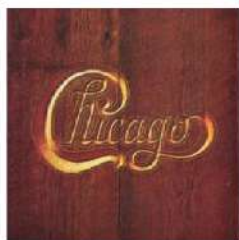


GREGG'S BIG DOZEN

MD 2012 Pro Panelist Gregg Bissonette has to be the perfect choice for the drummer with Ringo's All-Starr Band. The revolving-member rock 'n' roll caravan, which has toured roughly every other summer since 1989, was conceived to bring to the masses the ex-Beatle's considerable catalog of hits, as well as those by the members of his carefully chosen "backing" band. This summer Bissonette will be returning to his role once again.

Gregg is famously able to cover nearly every conceivable style, and his feel for and knowledge of pop-music history is unsurpassed. We asked him to talk about twelve albums that have meant the most to him over the years, which we'll present to you in installments. For the debut of "Gregg's Big Dozen," we focus on the legendary 1972 studio album by rock's most successful horn band, Chicago.

CHICAGO V (DANNY SERAPHINE)



Danny Seraphine is one of my hugest influences. Growing up in Detroit, I saw Chicago live three times, and I loved

every Chicago album. One Christmas Day I remember having two albums under the tree that I wanted—*Chicago V* with Danny Seraphine, and *Yes's Fragile* with Bill Bruford. When Danny came over to my house once, I asked him to sign my LP and told him, "This is probably *the* most impor-

tant album in my life."

When I was a kid I had my kit set up in the basement, but sometimes my mom or dad would say, "Okay, you can bring your drums upstairs," and I'd jam along with the console stereo on really loud. I'd play to that album front to back, over and over. There's one song, "Now That You've Gone," that starts with Danny on toms and snare and kick [sings beat]. I remember having a 1968 Slingerland blue agate kit, with two toms mounted on the bass drum, plus the floor tom. We even jammed on that in my garage a few months ago.

Another song, "State of the Union," was kind of a forerunner to "Rosanna" with Jeff

Porcaro or "Babylon Sisters" with Bernard Purdie—a great half-time shuffle. And of course there was the single "Saturday in the Park." When I was about fourteen, I had a band with my brother, who was then twelve—he's a bass player—and we would play a not-so-good version of "Saturday in the Park." "All Is Well" is another one I loved, and "Dialogue," "A Hit by Varèse"....

I still listen to *Chicago V* today. In fact, a couple weeks ago I took a long flight to Germany for some Mapex clinics, and I put my Bose headphones into my iPhone and listened to that album, and it just put me in a great mood.



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My

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Loud Bass Drum Doubles



When using heel/toe double strokes on the bass drum, without triggers, is it possible to get each stroke as loud and defined as you would get by running on the pedals doing single strokes?
Shelby Brown

We sent your question to 2012 MD Pro Panelist Gil Sharone, whose incredible bass drum technique can be heard on recordings by the hardcore band Dillinger Escape Plan, the metal group Otep, and the drummer's own project Stolen Babies. Here's what Sharone has to say about developing strong foot skills. "In my experience it's very possible to play double strokes with power and consistency using the heel/toe technique, at any tempo from slow to blazing. The key is patience, discipline, and practicing the right way. I recommend practicing singles and doubles at a comfortable tempo. Don't worry about speed at first; focus on consistency. Each hit of your doubles should be equal in volume and tone, so try not to make your first hit super-heavy and your second hit half as loud. If that happens, slow things down and check the mechanics of your motion. If you don't have consistency at a comfortable tempo, it definitely won't be there at a fast one. Over time your legs, ankles, and feet will naturally develop the power, speed, and coordination to get you to the next level. Your doubles and singles will sound killer, and no triggers will be needed."

ELECTRONIC PADS

I just got my first electronic drumset, and I was wondering if I should play the electronic pads differently from my acoustic drums.

The simple answer is yes, but only in the approach you take. You have to make slight adjustments for every drum that you play, regardless of whether it's acoustic or electronic. Just as different-size snare drums will cause you to make minor adjustments to your technique for articulations like rolls and flams, understanding the way different trigger pads work will go a long way toward getting the best performance out of them.



The first example is the Roland-style mesh-head pad. A closer look at the trigger underneath the drumhead shows a foam cone with a piezo trigger element (figure 1). That element pushes up against the center of the head in order to generate the trigger signal. This type of construction can create a very sensitive hot spot right above the piezo. I recommend reserving the center of a mesh head for only the loudest hits. This is similar to how you would play an acoustic drum. Many drummers prefer to play just off center to get a richer sound. As you play more softly, you move toward the edge of the drum. The same approach applies to the mesh-head trigger pad. Just be careful not to play too close to the rim, because then you're getting farther away from the trigger element and the pad might not respond as accurately. You need to experiment to find the range on the head that works best.

The same basic approach should be used for a rubber pad, like the ones on Yamaha electronic drums. You won't find a hot spot on these, but you can easily get into what's referred to as a machine-gun response, where one sound/sample is played repeatedly at the same velocity. To avoid that, try not to strike the pad in exactly the same spot when playing multiple strokes. Additionally, a rubber pad might require you to use a slightly heavier stick to generate the proper dynamic response without having to overplay. With both types of pads, the gain structure within your sound module will come into play. (We'll cover basic drum-module setup in a future installment.)

Cymbal pads also require a bit of understanding in order to achieve the best performance. All electronic cymbals feature a company logo. The trigger placement inside these pads is optimized when you have the logos facing you (figure 2). The most sensitive area is from the bell straight down to the six o'clock position. As you move around toward nine o'clock, you lose a little trigger sensitivity. This can work to your advantage when you're playing at softer dynamics.

One thing that needs to be cleared up involves edge strikes on a cymbal pad. The trigger element for edge sounds is usually a switch-type sensor on top of the outer edge of the pad (figure 3). You can strike the very edge of the pad to trigger the edge sounds, but you'll get a better response if you use the shoulder of the stick on the outer end of the top of the cymbal. Plus, playing the edge of the cymbal can cause damage to the pad (figure 4).



John Emrich is an expert in the field of electronic percussion. He has produced sample libraries on FXpansion's BFD2 and Eco platforms and has produced products for *Modern Drummer*, Platinum Samples, Bosphorus, Mapex, Alesis, Pearl, WaveMachine Labs, Native Instruments, Yamaha, and Zildjian. For more info, visit johnemrich.com.





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NATAL

Maple, Ash, and Bubinga Drumsets by David Ciauro

Being cynical is easy. It's a scapegoat excuse to write something off without ever taking the time to learn about it beyond the surface details. Reading that Marshall Amplification had acquired the percussion pioneer Natal, it would be easy to assume that the Marshall juggernaut was trying to crash the overcrowded drum industry by using its name to hawk mediocre-quality kits to the uninformed and impressionable world of novice players. Thus, I admit some initial hesitation and doubt that these Natal kits would be impressive. After all, what does Marshall know about drums, right? (Cue the snarky remark: "Let me guess—these drums are supposed to go to eleven!")

Well, as it turns out, Jim Marshall, founder of Marshall Amplification and demigod of distortion, started as a drummer. In the 1960s, he owned a drum shop in the U.K. and became an amp legend by happenstance, due to his talent for being able to rework amplifiers. Coincidentally, his shop sold Natal percussion products, so the Marshall/Natal

connection goes back over forty years.

So, what does Marshall intend to do with Natal under its wing? After spending some time with three Natal kits, we can assure you that the company is hell bent on making a serious impression on the drumming community. These drums speak for themselves and don't need the Marshall name to support their worth or build their reputation...but I'm sure that won't hurt.

PRIDE IN SPECIFICS

What's important to mention straight away is that Natal drums are not Frankensteins made by joining together common components from other companies. All of the drums feature throw-offs, mounts, lugs, and hardware designed by Natal for Natal, and they were rather impressive in both form and function.

Natal's sun logo adorns the lugs and throw-offs and is incorporated into the badges, yet it doesn't come across as an overbearing motif. The bass drum's

surface-mounted legs are incredibly sturdy, with retractable spikes to prevent slippage. The brackets and legs don't feature ultimate adjustability, employing simpler notched settings, which makes for faster, more consistent setup times.

The NRM (Natal Resonance Mount) tom mounts cleverly attach to the exterior surface of the round lugs, which makes for improved resonance, since there's no additional shell contact. The inner workings of the mounts feature a nonslip aluminum ball, rather than the plastic ones used by some other companies. The mounts are easily removed with an Allen key, should you choose to mount a tom on a snare stand, or if your cases aren't tailored to account for mounting hardware.

The Tri-Throw snare throw-offs offer three position settings: off, on, and half on, for a looser feel without the need to readjust the snare tension knob. This feature is more applicable to live situations, where subtle snare tone differences can help you navigate set lists that bounce



around from snappy funk tunes to power ballads, lo-fi indie rockers, and Top 40 hits. The effect isn't drastic but is effective for situations when it's impractical to change out snare drums.

Natal kits also have nice consistency with regard to shell plies (seven for all maple and bubinga drums, six for ash), number of lugs, and hardware. All rack

toms have six lugs, floor toms have eight, and snares and bass drums have ten. Bass drums feature wood hoops, while snares and toms incorporate chromed, double-polished, 2.3 mm triple-flange steel hoops. A range of Aquarian heads was used on our review kits, all of which proved to be perfectly suitable and complementary to the different shell types.

The drums come with sharp 45-degree bearing edges that are hand-finished with beeswax. The Tru-Tune tension rods are dipped in nylon and feature a three-washer system to help keep the drums in tune.

MAPLE

The five-piece maple kit on review (\$2,750) had a high-gloss green fade finish and consisted of a 9x12 rack tom, 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms, an 18x22 kick, and a 5 1/2 x 13 matching snare. The toms had medium-weight single-ply Aquarian Classic Clear heads that provided a fast, wet attack with a good open tone and round decay. The bass drum had a premuffled clear single-ply Force 1 batter head and a black Natal-logo resonant head. The kick had tremendous punch and warm resonance that sat well with the rest of the kit and made for a straight-up classic drum sound. Placing a pillow inside the drum helped focus the attack and brought out more of the low end, while taming some of the midrange frequencies.

The maple snare was a nice surprise. Matching snare drums are typically the Achilles heel in the arena of "affordable" drumsets. With all the kits on review here, however, the matching snares were equal to the rest of the drums, if not standouts. The maple snare came outfitted with an Aquarian Texture Coated single-ply batter that handled sticks, rods, and brushes quite well, while offering up some serious power and warmth with a cracking top end, a clear midrange, and a fair amount of body and depth.

ASH

The five-piece gray sparkle ash kit (\$2,170) came with 10x12 and 11x13 rack toms, a 16x16 floor tom, an 18x22 bass drum, and a matching 5 1/2 x 14 snare. The sparkle finish has a compressed pattern that popped nicely under lights.

This was probably the most resonant drumkit I've ever played. I don't mean it was the loudest or that it had the most overtones; it simply resonated beautifully, if not to a fault. The best way to describe my experience with this kit was that it sounded as if it had built-in convolution reverb that made my cozy little studio seem as though it was actually an esteemed live tracking room. The decay was not a wash of frequencies but rather a harmonious tail that made the drums sound huge without interfering with the clarity of the attack.

This ash kit came equipped with Aquarian-designed heads (Galaxy Coated snare and tom batters, clear Zenith tom

PRO SERIES HARDWARE

Not only is Natal cranking out high-quality drums, but the company's hardware is equally impressive.

All stands came equipped with sturdy memory locks and were of excellent quality.

The custom-designed dual-chain-drive bass drum pedals (\$300) are available with a choice of Speed Cam or Smooth Cam and feature self-leveling hoop clamps. The action was very fluid and balanced, with zero noise and a comfortable footboard.

The cymbal stands (\$200) feature a disappearing boom and very generous extensions. Using the straight version of one of the stands, I was able to mount a crash cymbal over seven feet in the air; with the boom arm out, the stand reached only slightly under the seven-foot mark. Double-braced legs ensure sturdiness at such great heights, yet the models are surprisingly lightweight for the amount of metal used.

The two-leg hi-hat stand (\$330) was stable and smooth, but its coolest feature was how the aluminum footplate folded up using a gliding mechanism, allowing it to stay intact and attached when packed up.

The snare stand (\$230) was shockingly sturdy and widely adjustable. The offset basket can house a drum from 10" to 15" and has a ball-socket adjustment for infinite positioning. This was the one stand that seemed a bit overdeveloped and more heavy-duty than necessary, yet its design is impressive nonetheless.

bottoms, Zodiac snare-side head, Clear Polaris kick batter, and black Natal-logo resonant head). The set sounded great through a range of tunings and had a nice balance from drum to drum. I found the ash snare to be superb, and the overall feel of the kit made it fun to play.

Depending on the application, the ample resonance of the ash drums could be a turn-off or an asset. I found that the resonance enhanced slower grooves, filling the space nicely between hits. If you prefer a big, roomy sound, or you like to use a minimalist miking technique when recording, such as the Glyn Johns or Recorderman method, this kit could be a good way to go.

BUBINGA

The six-piece bubinga kit (\$5,650), in natural finish, proved to be the most melodic of the bunch, with a brighter high end and a superlative midrange tone. The set comprised 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms, 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms, an 18x22

bass drum, and a 5¹/₂x14 snare that truly shined when tuned slightly above the natural pitch of the shell.

The stock heads included Aquarian Texture Coated batters on the toms and snare and a clear Force 1 kick batter. The low-end frequencies were more subdued on this kit and were felt more as an aftershock of the initial attack. The drums had a lot of tone and a good stick response off the heads, which made for an enjoyable playing experience. The kick packed some wonderful punch but did need additional muffling; the tone was a bit cloudy when the drum was played wide open. The toms also benefited from a dab of tape to help bring them into focus, but they sounded great wide open and were easy to tune. Brushes and rods sounded very nice on this kit, and it was easy to keep an even dynamic with clear articulation when traveling around the drums.

nataldrums.com

TOCA PERCUSSION

Jamal Signature Doumbeks and Bougarabou Drum

by Michael Dawson

In addition to offering a wide range of classic Afro-Cuban percussion instruments for professionals and hobbyists alike, Toca also boasts a fairly extensive selection of Middle Eastern and African hand drums. The models we have for review this month, the medium and large Jamal Signature doumbeks and the Senegalese-style bougarabou, blend traditional handmade elements with the consistency of modern-day construction.

JAMAL SIGNATURE DOUMBEEKS

These Persian-style goblet drums, which were designed in collaboration with doumbek expert Jamal Mohamed, come in two sizes: medium (18¹/₄x9¹/₂) and large (20³/₄x11). They feature a hand-painted antique-silver finish on a sturdy fiberglass shell. The bottom edge is protected by a plastic rim, and the synthetic drumhead is pretuned to produce tight, high "tek" sounds and a deep, resonant "doum." The head has a silk-screened Jamal logo decal and is stretched completely around the edge, which gives the drum a very smooth, seamless feel.

These models are solidly built and well balanced, yet they're lightweight and comfortable to carry. They





aren't quite as warm and earthy sounding as traditional wood- or clay-shell doumbeks with a snake or goatskin head, but they have a crisp, clean sound with a wide range of dynamics. The medium version (\$219) was livelier and a bit more expressive, and it sounded best when held hori-

zontally. The large Jamal doumbek (\$239) offered a darker, denser flavor with deeper bass tones, and it sounded best when held vertically between the legs.

BOUGARABOU

The bougarabou is a West African goblet drum that's most commonly used by the Jola people of Senegal and Gambia. Although it's sometimes played in sets, like congas, the bougarabou can also be played as a single instrument, much like a djembe. Toca's version (\$359) features a 24x12 hand-carved mahogany shell, a calf-skin head, and a traditional rope tension system. The shell is stained dark brown and is ornamented with a beautiful African mask design. The bowl of the drum is more elongated than that of a djembe, which is said to help accentuate the deep bass tones you get from striking the drum slightly off center with the palm.

Toca includes a booklet explaining a bit of background on the instrument, as well as a step-by-step guide to the traditional Mali-weave diamond-knot tuning method.

Just as it takes time to learn to produce the proper tones on a bougarabou, it takes some practice—plus a bit of arm strength—to get the hang of how to tune these instruments. You'll want to tune the drum before playing it, since the head will likely have detuned during shipping. You'll know the drum needs to be tightened a bit if the open tones are a bit unfocused and low.

Toca also includes descriptions of the three basic tones (bass, open, and slap) and a few simple exercises and rhythmic patterns, so you can get going fairly quickly on this rich-sounding, versatile instrument. The calfskin head has a nice, soft feel, and although the bougarabou is a relatively heavy drum, it sits comfortably between the knees.

All Toca bougarabous are built from government-inspected, plantation-grown mahogany, so no rainforest trees are sacrificed to make the drums.

tocapercussion.com

FIDOCK

Blackwood Snare Drums

by David Ciauro

Australian drumsmith Stephan Fidock's handcrafted pieces are the drumming equivalent of Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture, in that they embody the beauty of the environment from which they came. Fidock builds functional works of art that have a unique sound. This month we'll be looking at three blackwood stave snares: a 6x13 with matching counterhoops, a 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 with die-cast hoops, and a 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 with the company's new "slotless" hoops.

6X13 BLACKWOOD

The surprisingly lightweight 6x13 blackwood stave snare (\$1,500) has eight tube lugs, a Trick GS007 notched throw-off, twenty-strand snare wires, a Remo Coated CS batter head, and a Hazy Ambassador resonant. The wood hoops have a dovetail joint seam, and the slotted bottom hoop allows the snare straps to pass through for easy access without distraction from the visual appeal. The stave shell's reinforcement hoops are actually carved into the shell.

The sonic warmth of the blackwood is immediately apparent once you start playing a Fidock drum, and the fact that black-

wood is lightweight adds to the airy textures and overtones. This drum had an impressive tuning range and was responsive throughout the spectrum. Lower tunings offered a very robust backbeat, and the tone was still intact even when the head was detuned to the "sloppy" zone.

At a medium head tension with the snares loose, the drum had a sophisticated intensity with a throaty attack that balanced sizzle and restraint. Tuned tight, the snare took on a brand-new persona. It was focused and snappy, while maintaining its dark, earthy warmth and organic character. The wood hoops provided a great whip-



Fidock's new slotless hoop



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crack effect for rimshots, and the clave-esque rimclick sound was one of the drum's most pleasing highlights. The overtones were too pronounced for my ears, even with the CS batter head, but just a little Moongel went a long way to channel the drum's energy more efficiently.

6 $\frac{1}{2}$ X14 WITH SLOTLESS HOOPS

The 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 blackwood (\$1,500) features a new hoop design that takes Fidock's penchant for uniformity and aesthetic beauty to the next level. The design creates a seamless appearance while also being extremely functional. The new hoop style, with a long, slanted seam instead of a dovetail, has an exaggerated recession in its underbelly to conceal the bottom edge of the drumhead. A quirk of this drum was that the bottom-side wood hoop didn't fit in my usual snare basket. I had to dig up an old snare stand that extended a bit farther, and even then I had to finesse the drum into the basket.

This model, which features eight tube lugs, a Trick GS007 notched throw-off, twenty-strand snare wires, a Remo Coated Ambassador batter head, and a Hazy Ambassador resonant, was my favorite of the bunch. It oozed tonality and had a natural aura that begged to be played. Rimshots and rimclicks were simply wonderful, and the drum had an expansive tuning range that didn't reveal any weak spots. The sound seemed to conform to the player. An ample amount of overtones was present, which may need to be tamed to personal taste.

5 $\frac{1}{2}$ X14 WITH DIE-CAST HOOPS

This stave-shell drum with die-cast hoops (\$1,400) also has carved reinforcements and features eight tube lugs, a Trick GS007 notched throw-off, twenty-strand snare wires, a Remo Coated Ambassador batter, and a Hazy Ambassador resonant head. Wide open and at a medium tension, this model had a constant high-end overtone that was noticeable when I played the drum by itself but that blended into obscurity within the full kit. Playing from the center of the drum outward toward the rim revealed a wealth of overtones and demonstrated how well the drum opens up. This super-open, singing quality could be seen as a pro or con depending on your playing style and sonic preference.

I was surprised by how lively this drum sounded with the batter head tensioned loosely. The midrange overtones were more prominent, which prompted me to reach for more Moongel. Cranked up a bit, the drum dried out nicely and produced a focused tone with excellent response for quieter playing. The die-cast hoops provided cracking rimshots, and rimclicks were quite dense sounding—in a good way.

CONCLUSION

Each of these one-of-a-kind Fidock drums was extremely sensitive, and despite the dark, earthy tonalities, articulation was crystal clear at all volumes. Although my skills for playing with whisper-quiet precision are lacking, I can imagine that a slick jazz player with a more delicate touch would sound sublime on any Fidock drum. Daring to be unique can be a dangerous proposition for a drum builder. The potential of limiting mass appeal in the pursuit of establishing a distinctive sound is a risk in terms of business language, but it speaks volumes about artistic integrity.

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Household Fixes

for Common Drumset Problems

by Benjamin Homola

You might remember MacGyver—the action-adventure television character who often found himself stuck in a bind yet always managed to create a solution out of next to nothing. Like MacGyver, we drummers get in a pinch from time to time, scrambling for a quick fix for an immediate problem. Luckily, many solutions can be found right in our own homes. What we have here is a list of nine simple household fixes that may prove useful at some point in our playing lives.



>Instant Sizzle Ride

You never know when you'll be called to play a low-volume gig where the sustained buzz of a sizzle ride would provide the perfect texture. Rather than punching holes in your cymbals and adding rivets, you can get a similar effect by taking that ball chain that's hanging on an unused light fixture in your basement and tying it to your stand, just below where the felt sits. (Hardware stores sell these chains as well—cheaply.) You can also use a few inches of tape with a dime stuck on the end for a more subtle sizzle effect.



>Rubber Tubing Cymbal Sleeves

The plastic sleeves on your cymbal stands will wear out over time, leaving the cymbal exposed to bare metal, which can lead to keyholing and cracking. Grab some rubber tubing that you're not using anymore, like from the filter of an old fish tank, and cut it into inch-long pieces. Your cymbals will thank you.



>Ribbon Strainer Strap

Most snare strainers nowadays use a nylon strap to hold the wires in place. If one of those happens to break, find a stash of ribbon and cut a piece to the right size. It'll work great until you can get your hands on a proper replacement.



>Dampening With Cotton Balls

If the bottom heads of your toms are ringing too much but you don't want to change the timbre with muffling, take a handful or two of cotton balls and toss them inside the drum. The cotton acts as a nice natural gate; experiment to find the amount that works for you.



>Old Drumhead Mufflers

Need to get a deep, mushy snare tone but all you brought was a high-pitched, ringy steel piccolo? Grab an old drumhead, cut out the center, and tape that centerpiece right to your batter head. It will give you an instant fatback Beatles/Al Jackson sound. A sheet or two of notebook paper can work wonders too.



>Pant Leg Stick Holder

To make use of some clothes you don't wear anymore, find an old pair of pants in the back of your closet, cut off the lower half of one of the legs, and sew the bottom opening shut. Punch two holes at the top and thread in some old shoelaces, and you've got yourself a drumstick holder.



>Two-by-Four Kick Anchor

We've all dealt with a rogue bass drum that keeps wandering off. By drilling two holes in a small piece of wood and fastening it with bolts and washers to the end of your rug, you'll be able to keep the drum in place. Make sure to cover the two-by-four with felt or a piece of carpet to protect your hoop.



>Wallet on the Snare

This is a classic, simple way to dry up your snare sound. You might want to tape down the wallet to keep it from moving around. The more cash, cards, and receipts you have in there, the tighter the tone will become.



>Duct Tape Gate

Sometimes you want a bright, resonant snare sound but you don't want the overtones to ring out too long. To tamp them down, take a 3" to 4" piece of duct tape and fold in one end halfway. Stick the other half to the rim of the snare, so that the folded section rests on the drumhead. The hanging part will absorb some of the vibration without choking the sound.



NICK FATOOL

by Bruce Klauber

Swing-era drummers like Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, and Papa Jo Jones received most of the publicity and critical acclaim. But few drummers of *any* era played so long, so well, and with so many jazz legends as Nick Fatool.

Nick Fatool was a schooled and versatile player, adept at swinging big bands and small groups and highly effective live and in the studio. His sound was crisp and clean. As evidenced particularly by the series of “big band re-creation” projects he recorded in the 1950s with Glen Gray, he could deftly approximate the sound of other drummers, and he paid a lot of attention to the tone of his drums, which he tuned for maximum

Haymes, George Hall, and Don Beston.

As good as those groups may have been, their bandleaders were not gigantic industry names. Benny Goodman, however, was. The King of Swing always had a hard time with drummers, never really knowing what he wanted from them. After all, this was the guy who fired Sid Catlett, let Gene Krupa and Dave Tough go, gave Mel Lewis a hard time, and wouldn't give the time of day to Buddy

of Benny Goodman, star Goodman trumpeter Chris Griffin says, “Outside of Dave Tough, Nick Fatool was the best drummer we ever had as far as playing with and for the band.”

As usual, BG treated a number of his men poorly, including Fatool. According to saxophonist Jerry Jerome, “For some reason Benny just wasn't satisfied, and he started giving Nick ‘the ray’ [Goodman's famously intimidating stare] when we



resonance—not an easy task with the calfskin heads he used in that era.

Stylistically, Fatool wasn't an innovator on the scale of Jo Jones or Sid Catlett, nor was he a technical marvel à la Gene Krupa or Buddy Rich—though he listened to them all and was especially inspired by the Dixieland drummer Ray Bauduc. Fatool came in and did his job with a minimum of fuss. And what jobs they were.

The drummer was born in Millbury, Massachusetts, on January 2, 1915, and his early playing experiences included local gigs in the Providence, Rhode Island, area. At the age of twenty-two, Nick decided that living in New York City was necessary for anyone serious about the music business, and once he made the move he performed with the bands of Joe

Fatool's “traditional” chops were as good as those of genre giants Ray Bauduc and Zutty Singleton.

Rich. When Krupa left to form his own band in 1938, Goodman went through a succession of fine drummers, including Tough and Buddy Schutz. After playing for a short time with trumpeter Bobby Hackett in 1939, Fatool was asked to join Goodman's orchestra, which was the hottest band in the country at the time. The drummer stayed for two years.

During this period, Fatool participated in a series of legendary and groundbreaking recordings with what was to be the first Benny Goodman Sextet, the group that introduced guitar genius Charlie Christian to the world. In Ross Firestone's book *Swing Swing Swing: The Life & Times*

were recording in California. During the rehearsal he said to him, ‘Lay out while we do this,’ which is a normal thing to do, and after we finished rehearsing without the drums, he had Nick come back in and play. But then he had him lay out again, and this time he turns around and says to the band, ‘You know, I think it sounds better this way.’ Now, whether Benny meant this cruelly or whether this particular thing we were doing did sound better without the drums, I don't know, but Nick wanted to cut off his head with a cymbal. He was absolutely furious at being humiliated like that, and he subsequently left.”

Goodman's rival in those days was the

enigmatic clarinetist/bandleader Artie Shaw. Fatool spent most of 1941 and 1942 with Shaw, who was then called "the King of the Clarinet." The drum chair with Shaw's crew wasn't an easy one to fill—Buddy Rich held the spot in late 1938 and much of 1939—and like Goodman, Shaw could be a difficult personality.

After his stint with Shaw, Fatool marked some time with the popular though non-swinging band of Jan Savitt, played with the innovative Claude Thornhill organization, and joined the advanced ensemble of guitarist Alvino Rey.

Fatool was, in retrospect, quite the visionary. In the early '40s he realized that the music industry's future was going to be based in the recording studios of Los Angeles. Nick got his ticket to the coast by way of a tour with Harry James's band in 1943 and began doing studio work there. He remained one of the busiest session players through the '50s, recording with Louis Armstrong; pianists Erroll Garner and Jess Stacy; trumpeter Billy Butterfield; big band leaders Glen Gray, Tommy Dorsey, and Billy May; and singers Billie Holiday, Jo Stafford, Peggy Lee, Nat "King" Cole, Dean Martin, Gordon MacRae, Frank Sinatra, the Andrews Sisters, Margaret Whiting, and Betty Hutton. He even appeared on record backing the actors Robert Mitchum and Andy Griffith.

Among the film soundtracks Fatool played on are *Pete Kelly's Blues* (1955) and *The Five Pennies* (1959), the latter a highly fictionalized version of the life of trumpeter Red Nichols. And Nick can be seen in action with Artie Shaw in the Fred Astaire vehicle *Second Chorus* (1940).

By the late '50s, mainstream popsters were being replaced on the charts by rock 'n' roll artists, and during a 1956–58 stint playing on Bing Crosby's radio program, Fatool refocused on live performance with singer/bandleader Bob Crosby, Bing's brother. This represented the beginning of a more than thirty-year identification with Dixieland jazz. Though Fatool came from a big band and studio background, his "traditional" chops were as good as those of genre giants Ray Bauduc and Zutty Singleton. You can hear a good deal of early jazz drumming great Baby Dodds in his playing as well.

Crosby's "orchestrated Dixieland"—epitomized by the hit "Big Noise From Winnetka"—was innovative and wildly

successful, and Fatool's association with the group comprised a 1957–59 club and concert run in the States, a Far East tour in 1964, a tenure in Vegas with Crosby and comic Phil Harris between 1969 and 1973, and an overseas tour in 1981.

In the '60s Fatool worked extensively with trad-jazz clarinet great Pete Fountain. The '70s found the drummer playing with yet more traditionalists, including trumpeter Dick Cary, clarinetist Matty Matlock and Peanuts Hucko, and

the ever-popular Dukes of Dixieland. Nick remained active on the Dixieland revival/festival circuit in the '80s.

Remarkably, in 1987 Fatool recorded his first project as a leader, a trad date on the Jazzology label that included tenor saxophonist Eddie Miller and clarinetist Johnny Mince.

Nick Fatool passed away on September 26, 2000.



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TERRY BOZZIO

A Workshop at Drum Workshop

Story by Waleed Rashidi • Photos by Alex Solca

Stepping into progressive drumming legend Terry Bozzio's practice room inside the Drum Workshop headquarters in southern California elicits a bit of sensory overload for the eyes and ears. This former lunchroom has been reconfigured for the artist-in-residence to demo projects, rehearse, tinker with various instruments and accessories, run his Drum Channel affairs, and of course, find a home for his mammoth drumset.

The set, which is dubbed T3—Bozzio says it's his "third big kit," and it's one of four he has stored around the world—occupies half of the room and features several rows of toms tuned to specific notes, plus a massive array of Bozzio's Sabian Radia signature cymbals. Just getting seated at the throne involves some mild body contortions.

Though it's now a permanent fixture in the room, T3 is a well-traveled rig, having been all over the U.S. and Canada and also making cameo appearances in India with Zakir Hussain and Giovanni Hidalgo. Bozzio has since retired the kit to the room because he doesn't always have a tech available to break it down and build it when needed.

"It takes me at least a week to get it all set up back there by myself," Terry says. "And everybody else around here is real busy. It has sort of become a part of the DW tour. Everybody who comes in here gets to see it."

Just outside Bozzio's room is a percussion table with rolling casters. Although it's

loaded with an amazing assortment of rhythmic goodies—including custom gongs and various items from the drummer's immense collection—the table appears diminutive when sized up against T3. "I figured, Man, I'm going to leave all the old gong stands at home and rebuild everything here as rolling racks," Bozzio



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says. "So it's a DW rack system with these casters, and there's a mix of different gongs and chimes and stuff. It's got the mallets, and everything is ready to go. You can literally just roll it into the room."

Stored below the shelving in the adjoining DW warehouse are some of Bozzio's other kits. Terry points out a unique-looking metallic drum rack and explains the customization process. "I had the guys burn it with propane, and then I hit it with a grinder, so it's got this kind of coloring," he says. "I've always been into the 'look' thing, and I always wanted my racks to be black. But it's difficult, as the powder-coating process adds a layer that just destroys everything. Now they have a new process, which I'll use next time; it's really good because it's chemically safe and cheap and nontoxic."

Next, Bozzio shows what he calls the "sick jazz kit," a decidedly smaller outfit featuring a full set of chromatic Rototoms, five standard toms, and three bass drums (one is remote), plus several crashes and Chinas. Like the percussion table, this set was built for portability, utilizing a rolling rack setup. "I put the carpet down, roll it through those doors, get it in position, lock it down on the carpet, and then just set up the bass drums," Bozzio explains. "In about ten minutes the kit is ready to go."

Bozzio has been at DW headquarters for nearly four years, helping to run DrumChannel.com, an Internet "edutainment" site that features online



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lessons, master classes, and performances with invited guests to talk everything drums. "It's a total dream gig for me," Terry says. "I do everything. I help set up, I make coffee, and I interview and play with the greatest drummers. I even give tours of the factory."

Back inside Bozzio's room, there's a desk with a computer set up as a Pro Tools rig and a customized drum with the shell featuring the sheet music to Frank Zappa's legendary drum feature "The Black Page No. 1." There's also a large collection of percussion on a table, including various Indian and African instruments. The

tablas, doumbeks, cuicas, finger cymbals, Moroccan clay bongos, and glow-in-the-dark skull shakers are representative of nearly forty years of collecting instruments. "A lot of these things I've bought cheaply here and there, and the other things other percussionists have given me," Bozzio says. "I have lots of found objects and junk that I use as well."

One of Bozzio's percussive finds is unusual but not all that exotic, considering that it was purchased from Target. "You can get a set of bowls that comes with these plastic tops," Terry explains. "They can be used several different ways.

You can put them on the floor without their tops. If you turn them over, they have another kind of sound and pitch."

Bozzio's room also sports a museum-worthy collection of music memorabilia, plus musicology books ("Very special stuff to me—enough to practice for a lifetime"), a Parker pen collection, old LPs, photographs with famous drummers and celebs, and a Peavey mixing console with a 16-track, 2-inch 3M tape machine. And though he has all his tools at his disposal, Bozzio doesn't always have a chance to get in his practice time. "I inevitably get sidetracked," he says, "and I'm such a hundred-percent guy that whatever I'm doing, I'm doing too much. So if I'm off the road and I get involved in Drum Channel stuff, I find myself going days without practicing. Then I get back on the road and have the chance to get my

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chops back up and start thinking about music again. I come back off the road with my chops on fire and wanting to play more and more. I always try to practice something I don't know how to do. So depending on what I'm thinking about at the time, I just work on that. It's usually an ostinato figure that I can't do while soloing on top of it, so I chip away at it."

But whether he's conceiving jaw-dropping ostinatos or messing around with drum-related gadgetry, Bozzio has been able to make the best use of this former lunch spot. "There've been times when I've had three kits in here," he says. "The floor's always filled with parts and something I'm working with. It's like Santa's magic toy shop for drummers."

For a free video lesson with Bozzio shot at Drum Channel's facility, log on to moderndrummer.com.





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GEARING UP



Interview by David Ciauro Photos by Paul La Raia

Drums: Yamaha Maple Custom

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- A.** 6x14 steel snare (7x14 hammered copper model by Echo in the U.K.)
- B.** 6x14 snare
- C.** 10x12 tom
- D.** 14x14 floor tom
- E.** 16x16 floor tom
- F.** 16x24 bass drum

"I wanted to play Yamaha ever since I saw Larry Mullen Jr. in U2's *Rattle and Hum*," Jupp says. "In 2009, we got to support U2 back home, which was an amazing and defining moment."

"The gear we use when we tour the States is stored in Los Angeles. My main snare is tuned deeper for a nice wallop, while the side snare is cranked up for a contrasting sound and texture. The Akira Jimbo snare I have on my U.K. kit has wood hoops, which give a great rimclick and rimshot sound. The steel snare I use in the U.S. has triple-flange hoops, so my tech added a Jingle Wedge but removed the jingles to emulate the rimshot sound of the Jimbo drum.

"Speaking of hoops, I use die-cast hoops on my main snare and toms, which I feel add a nice character to the drums."

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1.** 14" K Custom Dark hi-hats
- 2.** 18" K Custom Dark crash
- 3.** 20" K Custom Dark ride
- 4.** 19" K Custom Hybrid crash
- 5.** 14" A Mastersound hi-hats (stacked)
- 6.** 16" K Custom Fast crash

"I've been using mostly K Custom Dark models, but when I recently broke one of my beloved crashes, I got hold of one of these K Custom Hybrid cymbals. After soundcheck that night, my tech and soundman came running up and said, 'That sounds ace!' So I've since switched over to all K Custom Hybrids because they seem to blend well with the band's sound.

"The Mastersound hats on my right are stacked for an effect instead of being used as functional hi-hats. I use [the stack] on the tune 'Grounds for Divorce' to emulate a handclap. It makes a wicked noise that we stumbled upon after hunting for sounds. We've dubbed it the Blue Peter, which is the name of a kids' TV program back in the U.K. that often gets creative with using stuff lying about to make all sorts of crafts and such."

Heads: Evans G2 Coated snare batters and Hazy 300 bottoms, G2 Coated tom batters and bottoms, and EMAD Clear bass drum batter and black EQ3 front head with 6" port

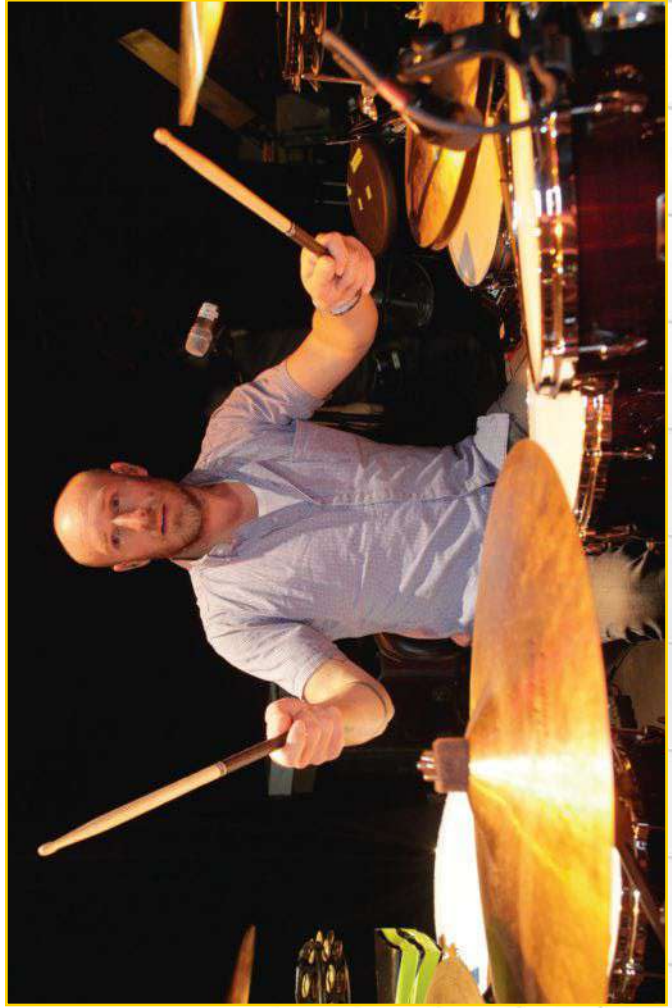
Percussion: Rhythm Tech Hat Trick tambourines (on remote hi-hat), LP tambourines (at left of hi-hat and at right of floor tom) and cowbell

Hardware: Yamaha stands, Trick Pro 1-V Bigfoot bass drum pedal

Sticks: Pro-Mark Jupp signature model

Electronics: Roland Edirol R-44 four-channel field recorder and PD-8 V-Pad

Accessories: Evans EQ bass drum patch, Plexiglas drum shield





MICHAEL SARIN

by Martin Patmos

Texture shifts, quiet drive, and a finely honed melodic sense are the subtle tools this drummer uses to facilitate **some of today's most intriguing new jazz.**

One thing I like to do is mute the snare with the brush, then take the brush off in another part of the song, changing the sound," reveals the busy New York jazz drummer Michael Sarin. "From just one drum you can get all kinds of texture—stick, brush, hands, rods, using pressure on the head—all of which changes the dynamic of the music."

In a performance with cellist Erik Friedlander's group, Sarin (pronounced "sa-REEN") bends his tom pitch by pressing the head while seamlessly switching sticks. The use of such tactics comes down to listening and observing, Sarin suggests. "There's no formula to texture," he says. "Sometimes it works, sometimes not. Jazz is transitory, and sometimes I listen back and wish I hadn't played this or that. But it's about creating on the spot."

Looking over the list of jazz and improvisational players that Sarin works with, you notice a shared quality: the desire for a considered yet honest cre-

ative push—one that often blurs boundaries in the process. A drummer who's comfortable with the uncomfortable, Sarin is frequently found in settings where many musicians might pause while figuring out what to play. Sarin listens, drawing on a broad range of influences. It comes down to texture and color, and also to the desire to, as Michael says, "try something surprising. There's a willingness to bend to the music, to take what I do and mold it to the context I'm in.

"In 1989, when I moved to New York," the drummer explains, "I didn't come to play with [tenor sax legend] Johnny Griffin or anything. Not that there's anything wrong with mainstream jazz, but I was hearing other things that were bringing in more influences."

Coming from a small, creative music scene in Seattle, Sarin took some time to meet up with like-minded people in New York. But eventually he was moving among those associated with the downtown scene, working with the trumpeter

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Sarin uses a mix of drums, including an 18" Pearl maple bass drum; 10", 12", and 15" GMS toms; and sometimes a Yamaha 14" pedal tom, which can pitch-bend like a timpani. He chooses from several snares, including a Ludwig 6 1/2 x 14 Super-Sensitive, a Gretsch 5 1/2 x 14, and an old Time Tech 5 x 14 maple model. He usually uses Remo Ambassador heads. His cymbal setup is apt to change but generally includes either Istanbul or UFIP 13" hi-hats, 16" and 18" UFIP crashes, a 1960s 20" Zildjian A (which he got from Jerry Granelli, a former teacher), a 21" Bosphorus Master, and a 20" Paiste 602 Flat ride of Kenny Wollesen's. (Kenny, if you're reading this, Michael wants to know: "Do you want this cymbal back?") And he has continuously used a lightweight Yamaha bass drum pedal from 1984.



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Dave Douglas, the saxophonist Andy Laster, and the late sax and flute player Thomas Chapin. Musicians of this ilk were absorbing sounds from many diverse sources: the explorations of Steve Coleman's groups, the work of composers such as György Ligeti, and folk music from various corners of the globe. "Dave was writing music with classical and Balkan influences," Sarin recalls, "and people who could read difficult, multi-metered music and not just jam were needed. People started using me for pieces with this kind of writing. There was a lot of free improvisation, but it was improv with ideas about sections and composition. It wasn't totally free; there were written parameters."

By being open to these influences and ideas, Sarin has built an impressive career. Highlights include performing and recording with Chapin's trio, involvement with Douglas's landmark string group and its album *Five*, clarinetist David Krakauer's jazz-klezmer hybrids, and projects with Myra Melford, Mario Pavone, and Brad Shepiak, among others. All the while, Michael has developed a reputation for being an instinctive, versatile, and sympathetic player.

When asked about filling the needs of musicians with such individual visions, Sarin says, "Few people tell me what to play; the tune usually suggests it. But I'm not trying to play a generic feel, like samba, swing, drum 'n' bass, or one-drop

reggae. Rather, I'm trying to capture a particular feel for a given piece of music, using my own creativity and style. I think people hire someone because they know what they'll bring to the music."


Recent projects include the album *Sacred Chrome Orb* by Joe Fiedler's adventurous trombone trio and the brilliant Americana sound of Erik Friedlander's *Bonebridge* album, an outgrowth of the cellist's Broken Arm Trio. Playing with these musicians involves open ears, as each artist synthesizes a broad spectrum of influences into his personal aesthetic, calling on Sarin to use color and feel in creative ways. In each case the drummer interacts as an equal, engaging in a quietly propulsive dialogue that provides a framework for others in the group to work from.

Also notable with these artists is Sarin's control of volume while maintaining energy, often by way of using brushes and rods. "In Seattle I learned a lot about playing quietly in hotel bands," Michael says. "And brushes I learned from just playing and watching others—there was this book that Philly Joe Jones had written, *Brush Artistry*, and then there were Ed Thigpen's videos. But basically my brushwork comes from playing a lot and experimenting.

"It's a personal style," Sarin continues, "and there are certain things I will never be. I'm never going to be Elvin Jones. But I like the sounds of brushes, and not everyone does."

Really, it just comes down to what the music calls for. "Joe Fiedler plays a lot of multiphonics on the trombone," Sarin says, "which are difficult to play and can't be done loudly, so I use brushes there. The drumset is a collection of instruments. You have to be aware of the timbres you're playing and the timbres of who you're playing with in the group. What sound do you use on the drums, and when? Great drummers play something and it sounds like it should be there. Listen to Gerry Hemingway, Tom Rainey, or Joey Baron and how they approach orchestration. Also Shelly Manne—when I was young I listened to him and how he played compositionally. Paul Motian, Al Foster, and Billy Hart are also like that.


"I always heard from a melodic standpoint," Sarin concludes. "Some people are born to be a catcher in baseball or a goalie in hockey, and some are born to play the drums. I don't believe I'm like that, as much as I love the drums. I always heard music from a melodic standpoint. Because of that, I think I bring something different to the drums. What I play is usually triggered by something going on in the melody."




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TONY ESCAPA

In Constant Motion



Story by Ken Micallef
Photos by Chino Lemus



Exemplifying the power of versatility and the perseverance of tradition, Ricky Martin's main rhythm man is a juggernaut of sheer drumming muscle.

If you could somehow merge the monster groove of Abe Laboriel Jr., the jazz skills and independence of Antonio Sanchez, and the sizzling energy of a Latin percussion section into one drummer, that drummer would be Tony Escapa.

Whether he's playing with the Latin pop superstar Ricky Martin, the Puerto Rican singer-songwriter Franco De Vita, or the jazz alto saxophonist Miguel Zenón, Escapa marks each gig as his own. His contributions to De Vita's CD/DVD set *Franco de Vita en Primera Fila* offer a lesson in groove keeping of the highest order, showcasing the thirty-one-year-old drummer's tastefully chosen parts and gorgeous-sounding kit. On the other side of the spectrum, the zone where jazz and Puerto Rican percussion meet in the boxing ring, Escapa scalds odd-meter Latin jazz on Miguel Zenón & the Rhythm Collective's limited edition *OYE!!! Live in Puerto Rico*.

Early on, Escapa, who's a native of Puerto Rico, played along to the recordings of Weather Report, Journey, and Miles Davis—learning the value of versatility at a young age—and found his drum footing working with his father, a renowned keyboard player. Between 1999 and 2003, Tony attended the Berklee College of Music on a full scholarship, then left school to join a Latin jazz orchestra. In 2005 he joined Ricky Martin's "Livin' La Vida Loca" band. After that, there was no looking back.

Escapa has since performed with Al Di Meola, David Sanchez, the Caribbean Jazz Project (subbing for Dafnis Prieto and Mark Walker), and the NY Gypsy All-Stars. He's also recorded his own as yet unreleased projects, including *Progress Report*, an earlier version of the group *Now vs. Now*. Other artists he's recorded with include *Manhattan Vibes*, bassist Steve Jenkins, and cellist Dana Leong. "These recordings went under the radar," Escapa says, "but I feel really proud of them all, because I was doing some things that I think contributed to what's going on musically in New York nowadays, and because I got to hang with some really heavy cats and learn a lot from them."

MD spoke with Tony soon after he came off Ricky Martin's 2011 world tour.

MD: You cover many different styles of drumming on your various gigs. What's the key to performing with that level of versatility?

Tony: I understand the concepts of changing styles, and that has a lot to do with changing sounds by using different drums, trying different drum sizes and tunings, and hitting the drums differently. There are so many parameters. Some drummers are trying to find an authentic sound and be super-unique. But I come from the studio-drummer angle—it's a work in progress and a matter of trial and error to find what works.

MD: How do you strike the drum differently with Franco De Vita versus Miguel Zenón?

Tony: First, I tune the drum in a whole different way with Miguel Zenón. For acoustic jazz I tune the drums higher, so they're more in the range of the other acoustic instruments and so that they don't get in the way sound-wise. For acoustic music and jazz I go with open tuning, and I use traditional grip because it takes me into that whole vibe of playing jazz. For pop music I use bigger drumsticks and I hit harder, using a bigger stroke and trying to get a fatter sound. And I tune the drums lower. With Franco, for instance, I use a 24" bass drum. It all depends on the gig.

MD: Traditional or matched grip for Zenón's hard-charging Latin?

Tony: Traditional. We put that band together for the [John F.] Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts to travel to Africa. It's Miguel's music fused with Latin rhythms. I also played a year and a half with Claudia Acuña while I lived in New York between 2003 and 2009. I played with





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Sticks: Vater Josh Freese H-220, Bamboo Splashstick, GS-Fusion, Sugar Maple Teardrop, and Sugar Maple Fusion

Accessories: Vater Single Pair stick holder and drink holder

barline playing or messing with the time, it's really good for everyone on the bandstand.

MD: On the LP video you also play a left-hand clave pattern on the left bell while improvising around the set with your

Oz Noy as well. I came to New York as a percussionist after leaving Berklee. I landed a gig with Alfredo de la Fe's salsa big band. It was the last ten-piece salsa band assembled to travel the world before 9/11.

MD: In an online Latin Percussion video, you're playing Latin rhythms ambidextrously between two cowbells, to the left and right of the set. Did you also do that in de la Fe's orchestra?

Tony: Basically, yeah. In de la Fe's orchestra I was the timbale player. I didn't grow up listening to Latin music, although I am from Puerto Rico. When I was a young kid I played drums with my father, who was a keyboard player with many national Puerto Rican acts; he hipped me to the Yellowjackets, Weather Report—music with a lot of keyboards. So I was into jazz-rock fusion as a kid. I thought salsa sucked. *There's no drums*, I thought—I was ignorant. But when I was fourteen we moved to Florida, and I felt I had to go back to my roots. So I started studying Latin percussion, and I really got into playing congas and timbales.

When I moved to Orlando I went back to salsa. It's part of my heritage. I was always aware of it and always listening to it. It just came out naturally.

Understanding the Cuban side of Latin culture was harder. Puerto Rican music is simple and straight up. When you add the Cuban influence, they have a whole different thing happening, with rumba and the tradition. Understanding all of that made my drumming really solid

rhythm-wise. I already had the 2-and-4 and the rock and fusion thing together; the sensitivity came from listening to jazz. That teaches you to interact and react in a trio or quartet setting.

MD: How has studying Latin percussion helped your kit playing?

Tony: As a drummer I felt that I had to understand Latin percussion. Drums are always separate; you don't really hear the drumset in Latin bands. There were bands with drummers back in the '70s, like Fania All Stars—Billy Cobham even played on a couple of their records. Changuito was the first bandleader to introduce the drumset to a salsa band. I studied all that music, and it gave me an understanding of the drummer's space within a Latin band.

Latin music is primitive in a way. It's all patterns. There's not much freedom in terms of what you play. As a drummer I understand the role of the congas, bongos, and timbales, and I can incorporate the drums without stepping on the percussion. I groove and I know how to play flexibly with time inside the concept.

MD: Perhaps that relates to your deep groove on the set, because you understand Latin percussion as a whole.

Tony: Latin music is very syncopated, so you have to be aware of where the 1 is. Everyone else's rhythms are all over the place, so if you always know where 1 is, then you can flow and do things on the drumset that are really cool for the percussionists. When the drummer fluidly plays ideas that incorporate over-the-

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TONY ESCAPA

right hand and feet. Then you play another Latin rhythm on the right cowbell over a funk pattern. What advice can you give to enable that kind of ambidexterity?

Tony: You just have to practice it slowly and with a metronome to understand the different patterns. You have to understand the different claves, how the cascara fits with the clave; that's how I started. I worked really hard with the metronome. I would practice the patterns with either hand. One of the best method books is Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez's *Conversations in Clave*. It teaches you how to subdivide everything so that you know how it all fits with the pattern of the clave or cascara. You work out every beat playing the patterns. It's all repetition and independence.

MD: What are the demands on you in Ricky Martin's band?

Tony: With Franco De Vita I approach the gig as if I'm Abe Laboriel Jr. With Ricky it's like a Broadway show; it's almost exactly the same every night. They want consistency. Ricky's gig is hard for a lot of drummers. You need to understand all these different concepts. When Ricky plays pop, you have to understand pop music. The Latin sections of his music require you to really know each rhythm. It's not just the song or cascara or a salsa; you have to

RECORDINGS

Miguel Zenón & the Rhythm Collective OYE!!! Live in Puerto Rico /// **The Damon Grant Project** Sonidos Nuevos /// **various** Got the Impeach Bush/Cheney Blues /// **Yan Carlos Artime** Recuerdos Que Lleva el Viento /// **Cucu Diamantes** Cuculand /// **Franco De Vita** En Primera Fila

INFLUENCES

Rush Moving Pictures (Neil Peart) /// **Yellowjackets** Live Wires (Will Kennedy) /// **Tony Williams** Lifetime (Tony Williams) /// **Luis Alberto Spinetta** all with Daniel "El Tuerto" Wirtz /// **Sintesis** Ancestros 2 (Raul Pineda) /// **Vinnie Colaiuta** Vinnie Colaiuta (Vinnie Colaiuta) /// **The Beatles** all (Ringo Starr) /// **Tito Puente** Golden Latin Jazz All Stars (Ignacio Berroa) /// **Prince** The Rainbow Children (John Blackwell) /// **Toto** Past to Present 1977–1990 (Jeff Porcaro) /// **U.K.** Night After Night (Terry Bozzio) /// **Los Van Van** all with Changuito or Samuel Formell

understand Brazilian percussion too. *How do I incorporate a samba drum line into the drumset?*

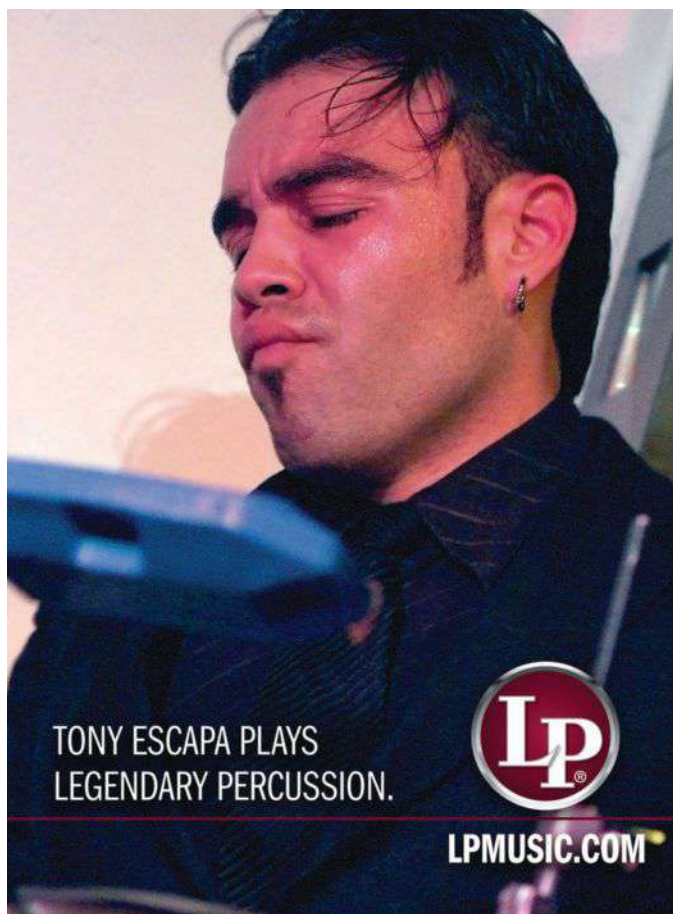
In "Cup of Life" I play a batucada rhythm on top and four on the floor on the bass drum. I add more or play less. Generally I stylize the beats into my own thing within all these traditional elements. On "Lola" I'm playing timbale accents on the cymbal bell and hitting accents with the soloists. It's Latin, but it's pop too. Generally I have to find the fine line between playing hip Latin and super-straight grooves for the audience

and Ricky.

MD: Were you hired for the Ricky Martin gig because of your versatility?

Tony: I was hired because of a mistake! I was called to Miami for the audition, and that same day we got six songs down, so I stayed. They needed someone to come in fast. I had to play five different songs on the audition. The hardest was the new single, "I Don't Care." The song is entirely electronic, so I had to approximate the live drums to match the electronic drums.

At home I had checked out all the hits: "Cup of Life," "Vuelve," and "Livin' La Vida



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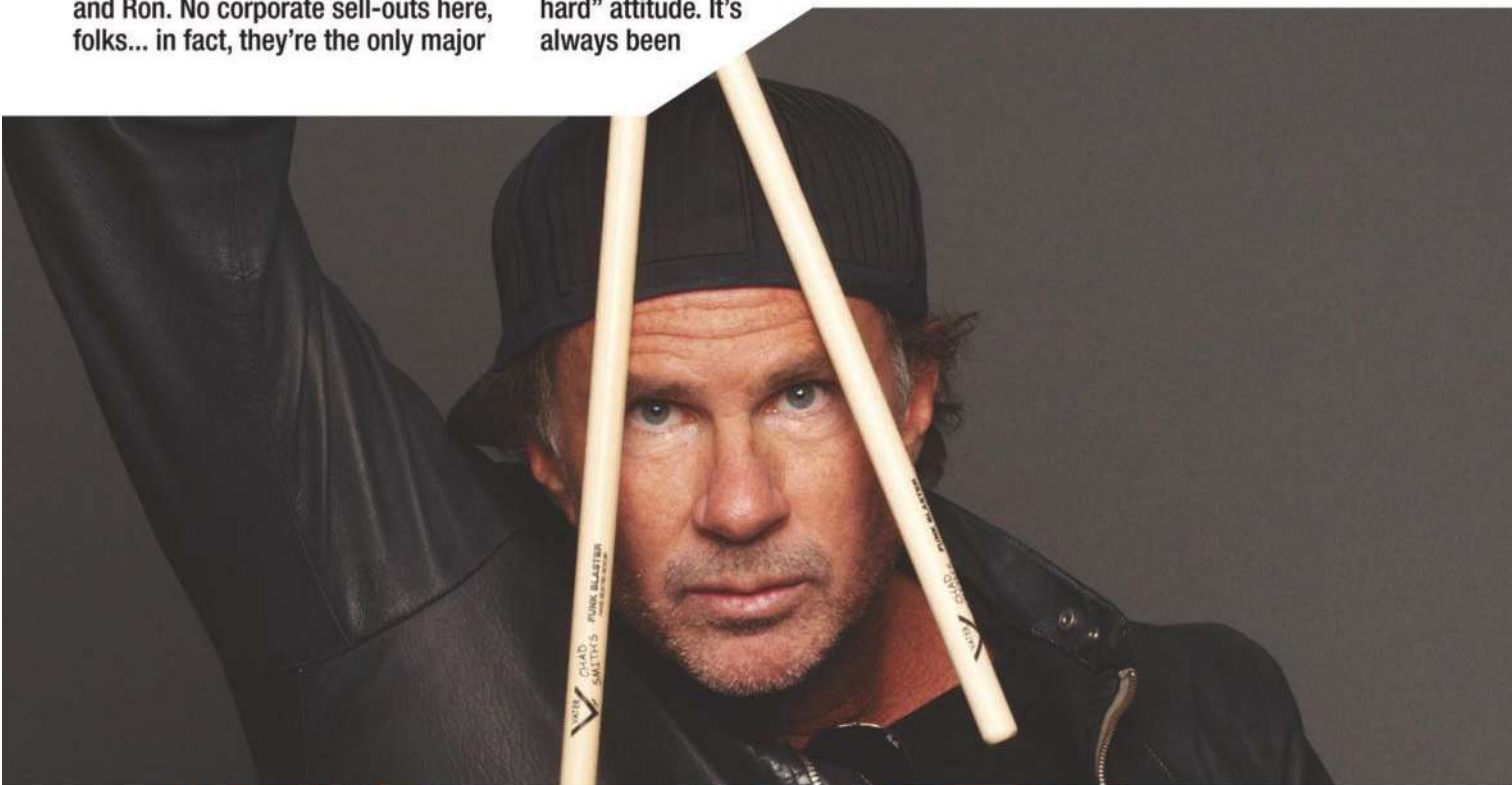
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Loca," which was ska-punk. I knew all the hit songs when I got there. But nobody told me what songs to prep. They didn't say *anything*. But we played all those songs. On "I Don't Care" I incorporated triggers into the drumkit. Then they sent me the electronic tracks from the record, and I incorporated those into the acoustic drumset as well. We distributed all the original sound clips from that song onto Pintech pads. I also approximated the programmed electronic part of the song on the acoustic kit. That all came from the audition.

MD: What's in your current electronic setup?

Tony: Well, the show runs on a click

because of the visuals. Everything is synched. The tour in '05 was more live, more open. We could really play then. On the latest tour Ricky wanted to replicate the techno and electronic styles and rock guitars of his new record, *M.A.S.* Josh Freese recorded the few tracks on the album with live drumming. I used the Yamaha DTX-MULTI 12 for electronics. I use a trigger on my bass drum to get that techno feel. That gives me the acoustic feel mixed with the electronic sound; it makes me play more in the style. I have a pad on my left if I need to play a particular sound, and I use the MULTI 12 for two songs that are entirely electronic. I use it as a color in the kit. That gets me in the

whole techno headspace.

MD: What are the other challenges of Ricky Martin's gig?

Tony: It takes a lot of endurance to play with Ricky Martin. Back then I ran five miles a day to get in shape. The show is two hours, nonstop. I am the only instrumentalist playing nonstop for the entire night. I have to play super-hard, everything from "Livin' La Vida Loca" to heavy, slow songs and the Latin thing. On one song I play a solo batucada for six minutes while Ricky does a call-and-response section with the audience. You're in a stadium, and if you want the crowd to feel your energy you have to play hard. I was trying to achieve the consistency to play loud and controlled.

MD: Which specific Latin rhythms do you play with Miguel Zenón?

Tony: Traditional *songo*, *bomba*... That gig is strange because we created something avant-garde with Puerto Rican music. His music has super-complicated meters, a lot of mallet playing—it's very challenging. The way Miguel composes, he'll combine odd-metered bars to bridge sections. So you really have to understand subdividing. For preparation, Miguel emails all the charts and MP3s, then I study the music for days. I have to identify all these little bars that he puts in there to screw things up. It's making something simple very complicated, but in a very musical way. His music is amazing.

MD: What do you practice now?

Tony: I still practice with old records, like Miles Davis's *Nefertiti*, Jeff "Tain" Watts and Journey albums, the Brecker Brothers with Steve Jordan, Todd Rundgren's "If I Have to Be Alone" from *2nd Wind*—that song has a 6/8 feel. I actually don't work on technique that much now. Earlier, though, I learned a lot from Dennis Chambers' *Serious Moves* and *In the Pocket* videos, and I loved Buddy Rich videos. And I played with the Magic of Orlando drum and bugle corps for a short time; that's where I got all my technique.

MD: What do you think is the key to your success?

Tony: Versatility has been helpful for me—understanding groove, understanding rhythm, and understanding melody. Knowing a little about harmony is important. And just being able to understand how music works, the whole pop song form. And knowing what the gig calls for. I always find little ways to shine, but the most important thing is to find out what the artist wants and make them sound great. That's also the greatest thrill.

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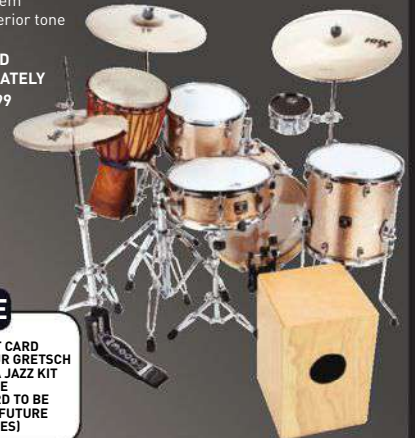
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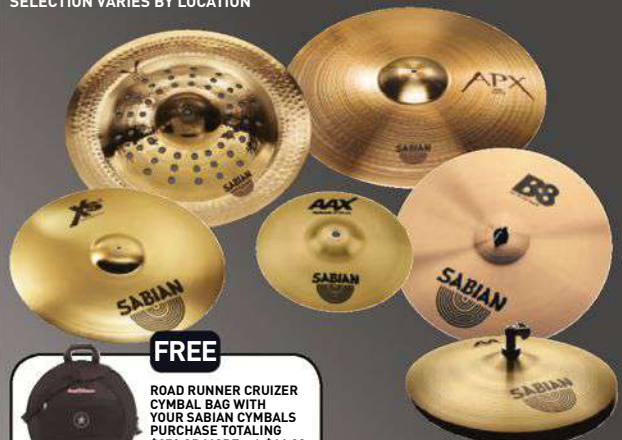


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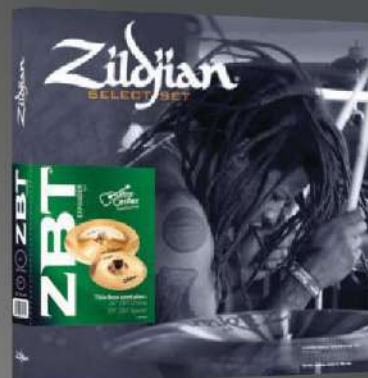
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- Drumstick bag pocket
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- Durable nylon construction

(P0738) LIST: \$99.95

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tier tube featuring Gibraltar's
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Aluminum Leg Base for a
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www.GibraltarHardware.com

GLENN KOTCHE

The lengths some people will go... **Wilco's** compositionally minded drummer prepares his kit with a glorious array of mechanical and digital devices, each with a specific, meaningful effect—and its own set of performance demands.

At one point in the middle of this interview with percussionist, composer, and Wilco band member Glenn Kotche, I joke that we're going to tag him with the description "The John Cage of Rock Drumming." ("He'd be rolling," Kotche responds.) But if you've ever seen the Chicago-based drummer/explorer in action—shaking Scandinavian chicken paddle toys, scraping cymbals with threaded rods, or making otherworldly sounds with his various "in-Glenn-tions"—you'll know that such a seemingly incongruent comparison isn't really that far off.

See, back in the 1930s and '40s, Cage shattered the rules of "classical" composition by forgoing traditional music theory in favor of unconventional ideas like treating rhythm as melody ("Pulse") and writing for silence and the randomness of environmental space ("4'33'"). Cage was also one of the first composers to explore the new sounds of the prepared piano ("Bacchanale"), which involves modifying the instrument with nails, screws, paper, and other items placed between the strings.

Drawing inspiration from Cage, as well as from the minimalist composers Terry Riley, Steve Reich, La Monte Young, and others, Kotche takes a similarly creative, forward-thinking, and nontraditional approach within his own drumming, composing, and equipment choices, whether he's playing big rock beats and abstract percussion textures

in outdoor sheds and theaters with Wilco; exploring the divide between performer and spectator at art galleries and alternative venues with his experimental performance-art duo with bassist Darin Gray, On Fillmore; or entertaining his own muse in a variety of settings as a soloist or featured drumset artist.

And after watching Kotche and his drum tech, Nate Murphy, spend the few brief moments between tunes during a Wilco show carefully making a series of well-choreographed drum and cymbal modifications—taping snare wires to the bass drum head, adding/removing homemade hi-hat shakers/jingles, or covering the drums with loose heads, motorized back massagers, and other noisy bits—there's no doubt that the instrument Glenn uses to express his musical voice has as much in common with Cage's prepared piano as it does with the traditional drumset used by groove masters like Jim Keltner, John Bonham, and Al Jackson Jr.

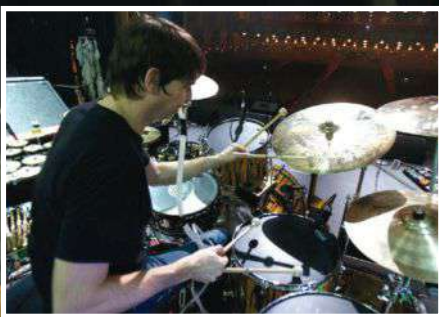
Since our last cover story (August 2007), which ran shortly after Wilco released *Sky Blue Sky*, its first studio album with the current six-piece lineup comprising Kotche, vocalist/guitarist Jeff Tweedy, multi-instrumentalists Mikael Jorgensen and Pat Sansone, bassist John Stirratt, and lead guitarist Nels Cline, the drummer has been busier and more productive than ever. Wilco put out two more recordings,

Wilco (the Album) and *The Whole Love*; On Fillmore recorded, released, and toured behind its third album, *Extended Vacation*; and Glenn moonlighted as a session player on Andrew Bird's *Useless Creatures*, Radiohead drummer Phil Selway's *Familial* solo album, and the collaborative charity project *7 Worlds Collide*, which was organized by Crowded House frontman Neil Finn and included members of Wilco and Radiohead, singer-songwriter KT Tunstall, and Smiths guitarist Johnny Marr.

Kotche's credibility as a contemporary composer has also skyrocketed these past few years. Just a partial list of the ensembles he's composed for and/or performed with includes the Kronos Quartet, the Bang on a Can All-Stars, Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble, and So Percussion, which commissioned Kotche to contribute material for a program sponsored by the new music organization Meet the Composer. (So Percussion premiered these works—a series of drumkit quartets—in April 2011 at the Morgan Library & Museum in New York City.)

We caught up with Kotche while he was on the road with Wilco in support of *The Whole Love*, so we decided to focus our conversation on how he came up with the unique parts and sounds that appear on the record, as well as how he's translated those tracks into something he can pull off on stage.





MD: You've always done a lot of layering of percussion and drumset with Wilco, both live and in the studio. Where do you start when figuring out how to translate the recordings to the live show?

Glenn: I just try to cover what's on the record as accurately as possible. But taking into account overdubs and multiple passes, I have to see how much of it I can handle. It's a really fun challenge, and it dates back to my first tour after joining the band for *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot*, when I had to figure out how to play a song like "I Am Trying to Break Your Heart," which has interlocking parts on crotales, drumset, and sampler.

MD: How do you know which parts are crucial, especially percussion overdubs like shaker and tambourine?

Glenn: If there are shaker, tambourine, and drumset parts and it's a louder rock song, you're not going to miss the shaker live. But other parts with actual notes, or parts that have a hook or an interesting sound that affects the overall texture of the song...I consider those important.

MD: Tell us about what's going on in the first tune on *The Whole Love*, "Art of Almost." That opening groove has a hypnotic, syncopated feel.

Glenn: I came up with that beat years ago and always kept it in the back of my head. This tune originally had a mid-tempo soul vibe. I came up with a groove on a Roland CompuRhythm drum machine and then layered drums on top. But after doing a pass, I started messing around with this odd beat. Jeff heard that and wanted to try singing over it, so I went back and played it over the entire song. That set off a chain reaction. Our keyboardist Mikael started messing around to create an electronic thing. Then we added recordings of hard drives starting up, and John revamped his part.

MD: Has the beat evolved now that you're playing it on tour?

Glenn: The beat on the record is sparser than what I'm playing now. I'm doing a few subtle variations with extra bass drum here and there. The groove is in 4/4, but instead of grouping it in four groups of two, it's grouped as three plus three plus two. When I studied with Paul Wertico, he talked about this idea of finding the

clave in all types of music—not just in bossa nova, samba, and Afro-Cuban. He got me thinking about coming up with rhythms that go over traditional 4/4 groupings and then playing off those instead of being married to the downbeat.

MD: The track has two very distinct drum sounds, one that's heavily treated and another that sounds more like a standard drumkit. Are you trying to replicate that live?

Glenn: Somewhat. On the record, the intro version has all kinds of preparations taped and draped on my cocktail kit—little shakers, chains, and bells. I did another version on my regular kit using the same groove, and then I overdubbed a second part in one of the choruses. Live, I play the beginning section while holding toy sleigh bells backwards in my right hand, along with a drumstick. Right before John comes in with that funky bass line, I drop the sleigh bells to get a clean drumset sound. When I drop the jingles, I play on the top of the hi-hat instead of on the edge to get a cleaner, more focused sound.

I'm covering the big electronic hits with the DrumKAT, and I add floor

tom in certain sections to emulate the overdubbed second drum part.

MD: Tell me about the beat you play in "I Might."

Glenn: The left-foot hi-hat part is the melody of the beat in this song. It involves some independence to get the left hand to play against the steady hi-hat pattern during the snare fills. Live, I put a bunch of jingles on the hi-hat so that it's really loud.

MD: There are subtle percussion textures in "Sunloathe."

Glenn: It may seem like there isn't much drumming in this song, but I'm actually doing a lot of stuff. The first thing I do is put a bunch of back massagers and hand fans on the drums to create a low rumble. Live, I put the massagers in these big Kenyan shaker bracelets, which keep them from falling off the drums, and they add a bit of extra sound.

For the second part on the record, I shook these bizarre Vibra-Slap-type things and played a vintage toy teapot on the backbeats. Live, I use these Indian clappers for the backbeat, and instead of the Vibra-Slaps I use a modified tambourine that has washers, keys, and animal tags instead of jingles to get a dry "chick" sound.

For the bridge, I play Scandinavian chicken paddle toys. I screwed a finger cymbal to the middle of them, so the wooden chickens peck it when I move the paddle in a circle. The guys made fun of me when I recorded that part; they said it sounded like a bunch of elves in a workshop. [laughs]

MD: "Dawned on Me" is a more straightforward rock song. Have you modified your parts for the live show?

Glenn: I play it exactly the same, except that where I played tambourine thumb rolls and castanets in the second verse on the record, I play four-stroke ruffs on a mounted tambourine and some castanets that are attached to the cowbell on my bass drum. There's a hand-siren part going into the bridge, which I sampled and play with the DrumKAT. I also sampled the big Vibra-Slap hit at the break, and I add jingles on the hi-hat to help lift the chorus a little bit.

MD: "Black Moon" is another track with subtle percussion parts.

Glenn: When we recorded this song, I put



GLENN'S *WHOLE LOVE* TOURING SETUP

Drums: Sonor Delite in tiger stripe finish

- A. 5x14 black steel snare
- B. 9x13 tom
- C. 16x16 floor tom
- D. 18x18 floor tom
- E. 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ x24 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 14" K Dark Thin hi-hats
- 2. 17" K Custom Dark crash
- 3. 22" K Dark Thin ride
- 4. 19" K Dark Thin crash ride
- 5. 18" A Custom Rezo Pang

Glenn also uses a 40" traditional gong, a Burma bell, high and low octaves of crotales, and various sizes of prototype frying pans.

Heads: Evans, including an EC Reverse Dot snare batter and Hazy 300 bottom, Onyx tom batters and G1 Coated bottoms, EQ4 bass drum batter and EQ3 smooth white front head, and extra Hydraulic heads that are placed upside-down on the floor toms for certain songs

Sticks: Pro-Mark 747B Super Rock Hickory sticks with Pro-Grip, custom prototype drumset mallets, TXSD7W and TXSD5W multi-percussion sticks, Webs, customized B600 brushes, Lightning Rods, Smaxx, Voyager Pete Lockett PL1 sticks, PSX30R keyboard mallets, FK2AL large aluminum

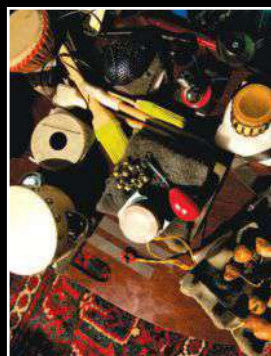
keyboard mallets, PST3 felt timpani mallets, FTB1S Tom Freer steel triangle beater, and PSGB1 gong beater; PureSound Speedball bass drum beater; several custom versions of rods, brushes, and threaded dowel sticks

Hardware: Sonor 600 series

Percussion: LP, including customized small One Shot hi-hat shakers, large One Shot shakers, Cyclops mountable tambourine with dimpled brass jingles, Prestige cowbell, Cyclops jingle rings (brass and steel), Rock shaker, Fiber maracas, Cyclone shaker, Ching Chok, Jingle Sticks (steel and brass), Flex-a-Tone, Vibra-Slap, and Factory Metal Cross Crasherz and Celtic Bells

Electronics: Native Instruments Battery 3 software loaded with samples recorded in the studio, Apple MacBook Pro laptop, DrumKAT, contact mics on the snare and bass drum (made by Glenn's drum tech, Nate Murphy), SDT1 piezo film contact pickups on toms

Contact mics are run through a mixer into a Schroeder Blister Agent distortion pedal that's controlled with an Ernie Ball VP Jr. pedal (placed next to the hi-hat pedal).



little percussion sounds all over the drums. To do it live, I mounted shakers, little bitty drums, sleigh bells, and jingles on a 16x14 lap desk that's padded on the bottom. I set that on my floor toms and play it with little pastry brushes. I also add sizzlers on the cymbals for the swells, and I mount LP One Shot shakers on the hi-hat and disengage the cymbals so you hear just the shakers when I play the pedal.

MD: It must get a bit nerve-racking having to make all these changes, especially in high-pressure situations like playing on live television.

Glenn: I credit my experience in the Cavaliers drum and bugle corps for helping me get ready mentally. Some guys crack when they get in bigger situations, but you'll never know that until you're in the hot seat. It has nothing to do with talent or technique—it's a mental skill.

Most of the guys that come to me for lessons are professionals wanting to know how to get to the next level. There's no one answer to that, but often the thing they need to do more than anything else is figure out how to pull through under pressure. That's what will separate most people.

MD: Do you do anything to prep mentally for a show?

Glenn: I always warm up physically but not mentally, and I've gotten better the less I worry about it. For the first four or five years with Wilco, I would have a metronome under my hi-hat to help with count-offs. But I forgot the metronome for one tour, and that was the best that things had felt for a long time. Now I just don't think about it anymore.

MD: Without that pressure, I imagine you're having a bit more fun on stage.

Glenn: Yeah, and also the tempos on the record aren't necessarily where we're playing them now. Some songs need to breathe a little more, or they need a little more energy. The tempos of the recorded versions aren't necessarily going to gel with where everyone's feeling them now.

MD: Have there been times when you've had to adjust a tempo on the fly?

Glenn: Occasionally. I've noticed that the stage sound makes a big impact. If it's a dry, dead stage, things tend to be a little on top because you feel like you have to fill the space more. If it's a great-sounding stage, or even a boomy one, things fall more in the pocket, if not a little back.

MD: Does your monitor mix play into it?

Glenn: It does. I switched from wedges to in-ears last year, which helped make the stage sound quieter and more consistent. I can hear everything more clearly and there's a more collective feel, so I can help steer the ship more easily.

MD: You guys have a very fluid band sound. You all seem to move together.

Glenn: And that's the way we want it to be. When I first joined the band, we tried a couple things with backing tracks, but Jeff couldn't stand it. He likes it to breathe, like it does with the music we grew up listening to and still love.

I love Pro Tools, and we used it exclusively on this last record, but so many people are going in and making "perfect" performances. As a drummer, of course you want your best representation out there, and I can't say that if I didn't have five other band members policing me and keeping me from doing more takes that I wouldn't do that too.

THE WHOLE LOVE GROOVE SAMPLER



"Art of Almost"

recorded version

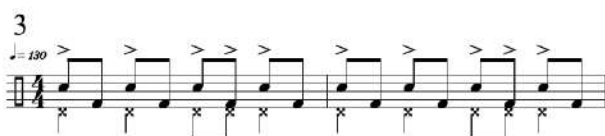


live variation



"I Might"

main beat



snare fill



"Born Alone"

second verse groove



chorus pattern



"Rising Red Lung"

ending tag



"Whole Love"

verse beat



outro



MD: Especially when there's a click track that always reveals the truth.

Glenn: Right! I battled with that during the end of "Sunloathe." I still listen to those fills and think it feels like it's sitting back. But I listened to it in the studio against the click track, and it's dead on. I don't know if it was the bass, guitar, or vocal phrasing, but something makes it feel like it's laying back to me. But that's music—it breathes.

MD: Do you do anything differently when you intentionally want to play behind the beat?

Glenn: Sometimes I introduce a little more motion to what I'm doing so that it's physically a little more difficult to play on top. I do that a lot when I'm playing slow tempos, especially on the ride cymbal—I'll use big, round strokes. And I'll use more of a Moeller approach on the snare to keep my body in constant motion.

SO PERCUSSION DRUMKIT QUARTETS

MD: Last year you premiered a few drumset quartet pieces with So Percussion. How did that project come about?

Glenn: I'd been working on a bunch of commissions for different groups over the past few years, but I had a desire to get back to composing for percussion. I really enjoyed writing for string quartet, so I figured why not write a drumset quartet? I was touring a lot with Wilco, so I set a goal to write one idea a day. Sometimes I would wake up and go to a café, and from what I was hearing around me an idea would pop into my head. I remember getting woken up at a festival in Holland by somebody checking their hi-hats, so I took that as a jumping-off point.

In the middle of this tour, So Percussion contacted me to work with them. I chose about ten of the quartets that I thought were the strongest or the most interesting, and I started finishing them. For one that they premiered, "Drumkit Quartet #51," I took the parts that were originally written on drums and orchestrated them on marimbas using four pitches. Some of the others are more conceptual and

more about the social aspect of how the four players interact.

MD: What were you trying to explore in these pieces? Some of the music involves advanced polyrhythms between the players, while others are more textural and incorporate the audience a bit.

Glenn: The polyrhythmic things are ideas I thought would be cool to figure out how to play on the kit myself. But with the reality of being a touring musician with a family, I knew I wouldn't have time for that, so I decided to explore the ideas with four players instead.

A lot of my writing comes from my own curiosity about things I want to try. Sometimes it seems feasible to make it happen as a solo piece, and sometimes it makes more sense to orchestrate it for multiple players. "Drumkit Quartet #1" is really aggressive. That one started as a solo piece, but then I arranged it for four drummers. I've since rearranged it back to a solo piece, incorporating the different sounds that were used in the quartet version. The big reason I do all of this composing is to make myself a better drummer.

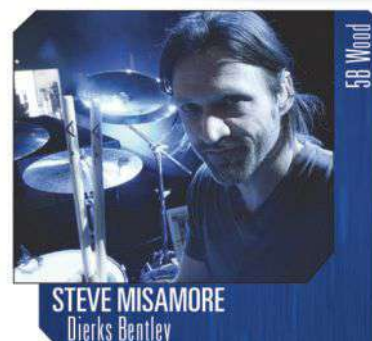
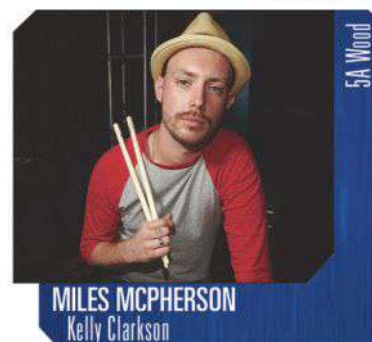
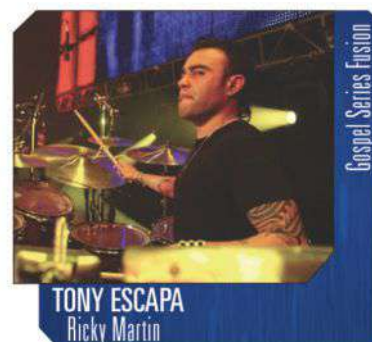
MD: How much of your composing starts with free exploration versus coming up with a concept ahead of time?

Glenn: I almost always start with a concept. I'm basically asking myself questions and seeing if I can answer them. Or sometimes problems are presented to me, like having to write for a certain group of instruments. That gives me parameters to work in, so then I have to figure out what I can do that's honest and reflects where I'm at musically at that time.

MD: Do you always start from the drums and percussion?

Glenn: That's who I am, so everything is an outgrowth of that. It bothers me a bit when a drummer makes a solo album and it's a pop record. I mean, more power to them if they want to play all the instruments and write lyrics. But I always want to hear a *drumming* record. I want to see where our instrument can go, so that's what I do. I'm just being honest. The drumset is an amazing instrument, and it's

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so much more than a backbeat provider. It's so limitless when compared to other instruments.

"Drumkit Quartet #6" is based on Wilco grooves. It involves air drumming and some other concepts. I was basically trying to push the definition of the drumset—treating the four parts more like one single organism.

MD: When I saw the premiere of these pieces, I was most intrigued by "Drumkit Quartet #50" because it was so abstract and interactive. There was a point when the performers left the stage and started taking pictures of members of the audience with disposable cameras. You could tell that some of the people there had never experienced that type of thing.

Glenn: That idea came about from my duo project, On Fillmore. We've started incorporating a little more theater in our shows. I'll go out into the audience with my bullroarers and swing them around, or we'll call people up on stage to play drums while I walk around playing bells or chicken paddle.

We want to explore ways to dissipate that divide between audience and performer. It's not done confrontationally; it's done invitingly and humorously. But I'm all for the uncomfortable, as long as you're not invading anyone's personal space or hurting them. I personally like to be challenged when I go out to see music, a play, or a performance of any sort.

BRINGING IT BACK TO WILCO

MD: Did any of your work on the drumkit quartets end up influencing the drum parts on *The Whole Love*?

Glenn: For "Drumkit Quartet #54," I was thinking about coming up with beats where the time was kept on the bass drum. We were working on the song "Born Alone" at the same time, so this concept was in the back of my mind. In the main groove, the bass drum keeps the time while the hi-hat creates a little melody with short and long notes.

MD: Are you playing the bass drum more quietly than you normally would?



Glenn: Yes, especially in the verses. I'm only coming off the head a couple inches, because I don't want it to sound like someone slapping you on the back. It has to be musical. But this is nothing new. Big band drummers have always kept time on the bass drum, whether it's heard or not.

MD: This idea of changing up where you keep the time makes me wonder where drumming is going to go next.

Glenn: Right! And who knows. But then you listen to a guy like Tony Allen, who, because of his influences, plays completely originally. He plays these weird broken diddle things between the snare and bass drum, but it works.

As drummers, we're brought up in the canon of, "This is how you become a great drummer: Learn this independence, these patterns, and these Latin grooves." We're all playing the same things over and over, which any great artist has to do. You have to learn the vocabulary. With so many drummers, though, it's like we amass all these skills but then just regurgitate things over and over.

MD: I still struggle with the idea of playing four quarter notes convincingly.

Glenn: And that's the thing—we could spend our entire lives refining how to play the basic vocabulary and still never quite get there. But I like the analogy with visual arts: Learn how to paint so that you can make it look like a photograph, but then don't just do realistic paintings. Use those skills you

practiced to make something completely new, fresh, and mind-blowing.

FINAL PREPARATIONS

MD: The drum sound on "Open Mind" is very dark and dry.

Glenn: I used goatskin on the toms for that song, so it has an old Merle Haggard vibe. Live, I put [Evans] Hydraulic heads upside-down on my floor toms to get a similar sound. I do the same thing on "I Am Trying to Break Your Heart," "Kamera," and "Whole Love." It gives the drums a deep, thuddy tone with little sustain.

MD: How do you keep the Hydraulic heads from popping off the drums?

Glenn: I tape three Moongels to the playing surface of the Hydraulic heads. That gives them enough tackiness that they don't fly off. I also use smaller heads—a 14" on the 16" floor tom and a 16" on the 18" drum.

On the record, I did two passes for this song. One was with brushes, and the other was with sticks. We spliced between the two takes in different sections. You can't really notice, but that's the most manipulated performance on the record.

MD: "Capitol City" has a strange, buzzing bass drum sound.

Glenn: I taped snares to my bass drum batter head, right where the beater hits, to give that buzzing sound. I use those live too.

On the snare drum, I tape a rawhide shaker filled with shotgun shot to get a really tight "snap," almost like a Scottish drum. Live,

music starts here **D'Addario**



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- GLEN KOTCHE, WILCO

I play the first verse with Pro-Mark Webs, and then I switch to SD7s to get a tighter hi-hat sound.

MD: The ending drum part on “Rising Red Lung” has a little bit of a Steve Gadd “50 Ways to Leave Your Lover” vibe.

Glenn: That’s what I was afraid of. [laughs] I wasn’t thinking that, but it’s okay. It’s like someone saying your song sounds like the Beatles. Are you going to get offended? But I was actually thinking more about a modified soca/calypso feel, split between the hi-hat and snare.

This song is pretty complicated to pull off live. It starts with a choir of suspended cymbal rolls, so I’m holding four mallets and doing one-handed marimba rolls on two different cymbals, which is a technique I learned from Jim Campbell at the University of Kentucky. Then my left hand switches to a Pro-Mark Smaxx on the outside and a threaded rod on the inside. When we come to the first bridge, I rake the Smaxx down the crotales. Then, during the hold, I scrape the rod down the cymbal.

For the next verse, I play an egg shaker that’s strapped to my right hand, which is also holding a rod. My left hand picks up mallets to play suspended cymbal, and then I put those down and pick up a rod with the left hand to play that “Gadd-y” part on the snare drum.

MD: Where do you put the mallets so they’re easy to get to during these quick changes?

Glenn: I have a tray underneath my crotales on the left, and I have a towel on my electronics rack on the right. I put a bunch of sticks, rods, brushes, and mallets in those two places. I use about eight different types of sticks and mallets throughout a show, which is kind of insane. If I didn’t have a drum tech, I’d be screwed. He helps get everything ready from song to song, including switching the samples in the sampler.

MD: It sounds like you used goatskin heads again for the triplet-based tom parts in “Whole Love.”

Glenn: I did. So live I put on the Hydraulic heads. I use SD5 sticks, which have a small bead, for more articulation, and I add a hi-hat tambourine.

The choruses have an Elvin Jones–type ride pattern with an accented upbeat

RECORDINGS

Glenn Kotche Mobile, Introducing, Next /// **Wilco** The Whole Love, Wilco (the Album), Yankee Hotel Foxtrot, Sky Blue Sky, A Ghost Is Born, Kicking Television, The Wilco Book companion CD /// **On Fillmore** Extended Vacation, Sleeps With Fishes, On Fillmore /// **Seven Worlds Collide** The Sun Came Out /// **Phil Selway** Familial /// **Loose Fur** Born Again in the USA, Loose Fur /// **Jim O’Rourke** Insignificance (double drumming with Tim Barnes), Eureka, All Kinds of People Love Burt Bacharach /// **The Minus Five** Down With Wilco

FAVORITE DRUM RECORDS

Max Roach Survivors /// **Paul Lytton** The Inclined Stick /// **Lytton & Lovens** Moinho da Asneira, Was It Me? (Paul Lytton, Paul Lovens) /// **Alex Cline** Not Alone /// **Masahiko Togashi** The Face of Percussion /// **Chris Cutler** Solo /// **Eddie Prévost** Loci of Change /// **Chris Corsano** The Young Cricketer /// **John French** O Solo Drumbo

CURRENT OBSESSIONS

Albert Marcoeur Celui Où Y’a Joseph (Gérard Marcoeur) /// **John Luther Adams** Four Thousand Holes /// **White Denim** D (Josh Block) /// **Meehan/Perkins Duo** Travel Diary (Todd Meehan, Doug Perkins) /// **Buke and Gass** Riposte (Aron Sanchez, Arone Dyer) /// **Kandis** Airflow, 1996–1999 (Jens Massel) /// **J Dilla** Donuts /// **So Percussion** It Is Time (Jason Treuting, Adam Sliwinski, Josh Quillen, Eric Beach) /// **Mauricio Kagel** Acustica /// **Stuart Saunders Smith** Breath: The Percussion Music of Stuart Saunders Smith /// plus anything with John Bonham, Levon Helm, Max Roach, Tony Allen, Maureen Tucker, Jack DeJohnette, Tony Williams, Ed Blackwell, Kenny Buttrey, Al Jackson Jr., Jaki Liebeckzeit, Ringo Starr, and Jon Christensen

that I play on the floor tom, and the bridge part is something that goes back to my college days, when I was practicing Ted Reed’s *Syncoption* exercises by playing all the written notes with bass drum and ride cymbal and filling in the rests with triplets.

MD: “One Sunday Morning” is a long tune with a subtle, hypnotic brush pattern played throughout.

Glenn: I originally did one pass of this song where I was just picking up different things and playing them. It sounded like someone rummaging through a junkyard. When we listened back, Jeff and I loved it, so that became the basic drum part until we got further along and decided to add the brushes.

Part of me thought that with something as long and repetitive as this, the drums should keep moving and changing to help the song evolve. But then we realized that maybe it just needed a static part to create a bed for everything else to evolve over.

The remnants of my original approach appear in two instrumental sections when we play the song live. That’s when I play the chicken paddle, large sleigh bells, and another little wooden toy instrument.

MD: The idea of breaking free from metered rhythms and playing textures on drums sounds very liberating.

Glenn: It is. I remember when I was recording a song with Simon Joyner, about fifteen years ago, and I decided to stop playing in the chorus and just ring this little bell. It was so empowering, and it was much more dramatic to have the drums go away and be replaced with this miniature drone.

MD: So I have to finish off by asking: why? Why go to all this extra effort to replicate these subtle, or not so subtle, sounds from the record when you get on stage?

Glenn: Well, because that’s the sound of the kit. It’s like when guitarists switch guitars or apply effects, or when keyboardists switch sounds. I feel like the sounds we created for the drums in the studio become important parts of the songs, and I want to be true to them—even if it’s just little things, like adding hi-hat jingles on “Dawned on Me.” If that tambourine part weren’t there in the chorus, it would sound different. And it affects the way I play.

On “Whole Love,” I’m treating the floor toms like the ride cymbal. There are a lot of fast triplets happening, so if I didn’t have the Hydraulic heads on top of them and I was just using an open tom, it would become a drone and you wouldn’t hear the articulation. So that’s why I go to the trouble: It just sounds better. And let’s be honest—it’s fun!





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Alex Salca

CHAD SEXTON: A Free Spirit to the Corps

Chad Sexton and 311 have been riding a wave of good vibes for over twenty years. Since the band's 1993 debut album, *Music*, which followed several independent releases, there have been no hiatuses, no lineup changes, and no periods of bizarre musical experimentation. The band members have stayed true to themselves and the promises they made to each other when they were still teenagers back in Omaha, Nebraska: Love life, love music, and be a great live band. A 311 concert remains a communal experience, and at its epicenter sits Chad Sexton, melodically fusing grooves that are hard to resist—and not exactly easy to cop either.

"If you're a musician," Sexton has said, "you're supposed to serve, not be wrapped up in your ego." This simple yet meaningful sentiment is an excellent springboard to a discussion of Chad's musical gifts, which have influenced drummers, other types of instrumentalists, and non-musicians alike. Over the years, 311 has amassed fan mail from around the globe, revealing how the band's music, specifically the rhythms, has helped listeners get through challenging times. Sexton's contributions have not only resonated with fans, they have resonated *within* them—an influence that touches on the elements of music that connect people to the "universal pulse" that transcends the superficial barriers of human existence.

Sexton took up drumming in second grade and eventually became absorbed by the vinyl soundscapes of Led Zeppelin, Steely Dan, and Kiss, which bounced off the walls of his childhood home in the late '70s. Early influences like John Bonham and Steve Gadd laid the foundation for the opposing approaches that later converged in Chad's unique sound: on one hand, the raw, unhinged energy and imaginative exploration of rock, prog, and jazz, and on

the other, the strict precision of Neil Peart and drum corps. The key ingredient in the recipe for the drummer's developing style, however, was his free-spirited personality, which allowed him to find a balance between the carefree and the tightly regimented. Later, Sexton found creative inspiration in musicians such as Jaco Pastorius, Frank Zappa, and John McLaughlin, whose songwriting and musicianship explored previously uncharted territories, and whose recordings introduced Chad to drummers like Narada Michael Walden, Vinnie Colaiuta, and Terry Bozzio.

Drummers who cite Sexton as a main influence are perhaps unknowingly showing an indirect appreciation for drum corps. Corps legends Tom Float and Ralph Hardimon may be unfamiliar to some *MD* readers, but their style had a tremendous impact on Chad's approach to the drumkit. For kit players, pulse tends to be associated with the low end of the bass drum, and a drummer's feel is more about the placement of the backbeat. It might seem counterintuitive to drumset players without a corps background, but Sexton's pulse is actually in his backbeat, while his touch

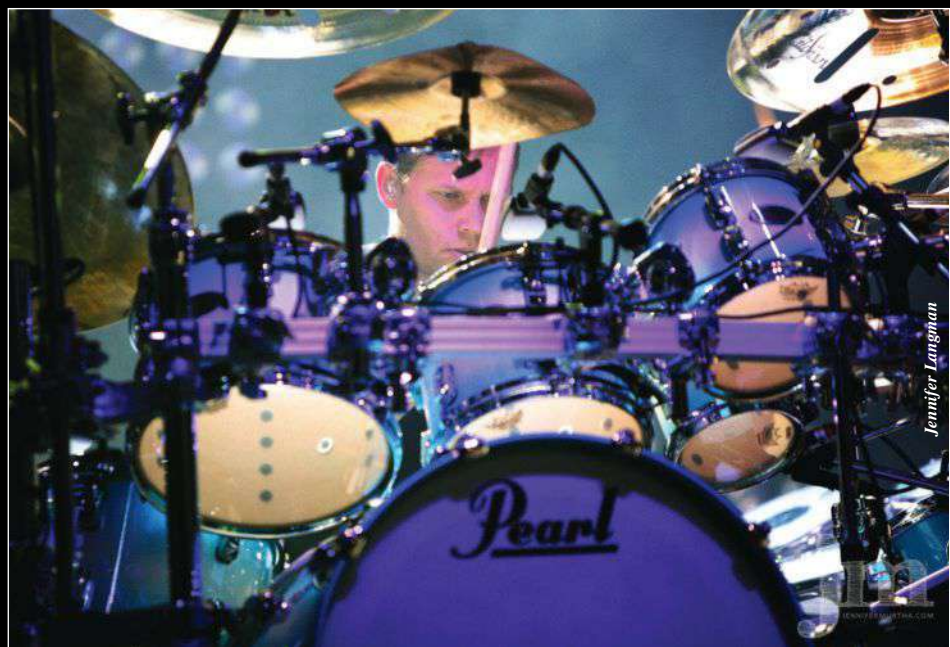
and feel are defined by all the ghost notes, accents, and syncopated kick patterns that lock in his bandmates.

The power of Sexton's time and groove is also inseparable from 311's song arrangements. Sexton composes on the kit as if his limbs are independent drum corps sections, with his kick dynamically even-keeled compared with what he's playing on the cymbals and toms. He creates a fluid motion even when the parts are chopped and syncopated, which fosters a trancelike groove. This approach is why Chad is unique. It's why he's cited as an influence by so many drummers, and it's a big reason why 311 continues to be so successful.

Sexton remains a humble student, never letting his notoriety impede on his chance to learn something new. If he hears someone shredding a kit at his San Fernando Valley drum shop, Drum City—whether it's a well-known drummer like Chris Coleman, Thomas Pridgen, or Ronald Bruner Jr. or some unknown teenager—he'll jump at the chance to ask how a certain lick is played. Sexton's ability to separate confidence from arrogance shows his maturity as a person and promotes his peaceful acceptance of his place in music history and the universe. This creates an ongoing cycle of inspiration chauffeured by the positive karmic vibrations that he and 311 have been pumping into the atmosphere for more than two decades.

David Ciauro

Chad Sexton's grooves are characterized by a laid-back intensity akin to a heartbeat—a subliminally hypnotic pulse that breathes life into 311's music—and a signature snare sound, which has garnered enough myth and mystique to spawn numerous online forums. Another Chad, Breaking Benjamin's Chad Szeliga, said in his October 2010 *MD* feature, "**When you hear Chad Sexton hit his snare, you know it's him.**"



Jennifer Langman



Get the BEST

When we discover a new favorite band or drummer, it's not always easy to know where to go for a compilation of recordings that *really* packs a punch. Have no fear—*MD* is here to help you with your search.

Our new series *Get the Best* begins by pointing you toward the most worthy "best of" albums currently available, then suggests other essential tracks for you to purchase. What you'll end up with is a killer mix of the world's greatest music—and, just as important, the prime performances of the most influential drummers in history.

Each installment of *Get the Best* will focus on one style of music. In this, our debut column, we take a look at the work of three jazz-rock legends.

by Ilya Stemkovsky

CHICAGO

The Very Best of Chicago: Only the Beginning

The horn section may get all the acclaim, but the real spice in Chicago's ambitiously progressive jazz-pop stew is drummer

DANNY SERAPHINE's tight but loose swing. *Only the Beginning* contains a whopping thirty-nine tracks covering 1969 through the early '90s, so you get Seraphine's relentless rock drive on early classics like "25 or 6 to 4," the chugging pocket of "Lowdown," and the huge programmed backbeats of '80s hits like "Stay the Night" and "You're the Inspiration." At over two and a half hours, the compilation has the room to include middle-period gems like "Old Days" (dig those kick doubles) and "No Tell Lover" (check out Seraphine's linear funk and slick fills). But it's the tracks and kit work from the first few albums that newcomers should focus on—"Saturday in the Park," "Make Me Smile," "Free," "Just You 'n' Me"—each filled with inventive, "no rules" drumming that's worlds apart from the stifled, quantized approach favored by today's producers.

Amazon.com physical double CD (from 2002): \$13.80*

iTunes full album download: \$16.99

EXPAND THE PICTURE:

Although *Only the Beginning* is an almost definitive pre-Tris Imboden-era collection, try downloading any track from 1971's live *Chicago at Carnegie Hall* from iTunes. "I'm a Man," specifically, contains a wild drums-and-percussion encore segment.



Seraphine

STEELY DAN

The Definitive Collection

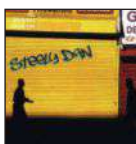
In the '70s, the jazzified pop group Steely Dan was the hip outfit that all musicians paid attention to. *The Definitive Collection* (one disc, seventy-seven minutes) represents a bite-size chunk of the hits and features razor-sharp drumming performances from some of the all-time greats. Drummer **JIM HODDER** blends with the congas on "Do It Again," and his slinky shuffle on "Reelin' in the Years" is ubiquitous on classic-rock radio. Already famous from "Layla" and other hits, session ace **JIM GORDON** is all business on "Rikki Don't Lose That Number"—tight and perfect. A young **JEFF PORCARO** graces the relentless "Black Friday," while "Peg" features **RICK MAROTTA**'s super-funky offbeat hi-hats. **BERNARD PURDIE**'s celebrated shuffle is all over "Babylon Sisters," and his lilting approach on "Kid Charlemagne" and "Deacon Blues" is textbook groove. Latter-era Dan is represented by **LEROY CLOUDEN**'s no-frills timekeeping on "Cousin Dupree" and current drummer **KEITH CARLOCK**'s straight pulse on "Things I Miss the Most."

Amazon.com physical CD (from 2006): \$11.19*

iTunes full album download: not available

EXPAND THE PICTURE:

Only two tracks from Steely Dan's most famous and arguably best record, *Aja*, are here, so from iTunes download "Josie" (with **JIM KELTNER**'s tasty licks), "Black Cow" (with **PAUL HUMPHREY**'s minimalism), and of course, the title tune, a legendary one-take **STEVE GADD** tour de force of floor-tom backbeats and outrageous rolls.



Marotta

JONI MITCHELL

Hits

Like Steely Dan's work, Joni Mitchell's jazz-inflected records benefited from the services of many top-notch session drummers. *Hits*, a single-disc collection from 1996, sheds light on this rich and varied lineage.

RUSS KUNKEL's understated percussion is found on *Blue* classics "Carey" and "California" and on "You Turn Me On I'm a Radio" from 1972's *For the Roses*. In the mid-'70s, Mitchell consciously veered away from her folk beginnings, and studio ace **JOHN GUERIN**'s slick accompaniment is the perfect seasoning on *Court and Spark* tracks like the rocking "Raised on Robbery" and the 16th-note-heavy "Help Me." Also dig **VINNIE COLAIUTA**'s rimclicks on 1991's "Come In From the Cold."

Amazon.com physical CD (from 1996): \$12.73*

iTunes full album download: not available

EXPAND THE PICTURE:

Drummers **MANU KATCHÉ**, **PETER ERSKINE**, **JIM KELTNER**, and **BRIAN BLADE**, among many others, have appeared on Mitchell's albums. For more Vinnie, download from iTunes "Wild Things Run Fast" for his muscular attack and reggae outro. Also check out "In France They Kiss on Main Street" from 1980's live *Shadows and Light*, with a band that includes jazz greats Jaco Pastorius and Pat Metheny, with percussionist **DON ALIAS** playing excellent drumset.



Kunkel and Guerin sharing a studio moment



PLAY BY YOUR RULES

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Paul Kodish; Apollo 440, Jean Michel Jarre, Maximum Roach, Pendulum, Bad Company, with his touring rig for The FRESH:LIVE Project.

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Intelligent Percussion by **Zildjian**

THE CORE

6 Exercises to Build Strength and Stability

by Shirazette Tinnin



Have you ever found yourself trying to execute a passage on the drums and you get thrown off balance? Or maybe you can't seem to get your legs up to speed with the rest of your body. Perhaps your muscles are exhausted after you solo or support an especially climactic piece of music. If any of those things sounds familiar, read on.

In my first article for *MD* (September 2011), I talked about exercises that eliminate tension in order to create more fluidity in your playing. The focus this time is on a few drummer-specific exercises for your core and stabilizer muscles. These moves help to build your foundation, which will in turn keep you performing longer and stronger and with more control.

GOLF SWING

This exercise will help open up the lower back area. Plant your core evenly on both legs, with your feet shoulder width apart. Very slowly, swing one leg from front to back. Each time you swing, allow the natural force of your body and core to move your leg higher in each direction. The leg should feel like dead weight.

This exercise is key in stretching out the lower back and helping to prevent compression, which could cause sciatica or other lower back issues in the future. The move should be repeated at least three times with twenty reps on each leg, and it can be part of a daily routine, either when you wake up or before or after practice sessions and performances.



21 BALANCE

This exercise requires either a balance board or a BOSU ball to stand on. As you step onto the board, think about the way you move your body when you're about to sit down on a chair. This position is referred to as a squat. You want to lower yourself into an almost seated position, using your legs and abs to support you into a squat position. It's very important to remember to breathe in while going down and contracting your abs and then to breathe out slowly on the way up. Count to three on the way down (at 60 bpm), hold for two seconds, and count to three on the way up.



I refer to this exercise as 21 balance because you'll do seven repetitions in the regular squat position, then seven reps using a one-leg position with the right leg, and finally seven reps with the left. The exercise is great for leg development as well as for keeping the knee, ankle, and hip joint strong and flexible.

Do three sets of this exercise one to two times a week. Allow a break of thirty to sixty seconds between sets.

KICKBACK

Another exercise for the legs and behind is the kickback. You can perform it either kneeling or standing. While centering your weight, simply kick back one leg at a time. Do twenty reps on each leg. I recommend about three sets per leg. The kickback is very important because it will keep your gluteus maximus flexible and strong.



CORE STRENGTH DEVELOPMENT

Now let's work on your core. This exercise focuses on the hip flexors. As drummers, we sit a lot, so the hip flexors can become weak or imbalanced.

Lying on a mat on the floor, take a medicine ball or stability ball and place it between your feet. (You can also do the exercise without any weight. Just hold your legs together with your toes touching.) Slowly lift your feet, contracting your muscles and breathing in on the way up. You can see from the photo that I'm pressing my lower back into the floor for support while I breathe. If you feel discomfort, it's okay to place your hands underneath your back for more support until your core is stronger.

Lift slowly until your legs and body create the letter L, and then slowly return to the starting position. I recommend doing four sets of ten, twelve, or fifteen reps.



OH NO!



Our final exercise—which I like to refer to as the “oh no!”—targets the oblique portion (side) of the abs.

Take a ball (medicine, stability, or tennis ball) and create a V shape with your hand around it while your arms are extended in front of you. The starting position is always in the front, and then you twist from right to left.

The key to this exercise is to go past the point of feeling the burn. Just don't confuse burn with pain. It's also important to twist your trunk only. There shouldn't be any movement in your neck while you perform this exercise. Your knees should be bent throughout. The goal is to do three sets of fifty to a hundred reps.

THE PLANK

After you've warmed up the hip flexors, I suggest a very fun and challenging two-in-one exercise called the plank, which not only targets the core but also strengthens the stabilizer muscles and helps develop stamina.

The key is making your core do most of the work.

While breathing continuously, stay stable with no movement. Your back shouldn't have a concave or convex appearance. Your feet should be completely together, and your weight should be evenly distributed through your upper body, core, and legs.

The goal is to hold the plank for a minute or more. I suggest repeating the exercise in five sets of ninety-second holds, with a thirty-second rest between sets. Set a metronome at 60 bpm to help you keep an accurate count.



WRAP-UP

These exercises, which are high in reps, use mostly body weight, and can be performed just about anywhere, are designed to improve your overall performance.

If any of the movements causes discomfort, modify it to the point where you're able to develop at your own pace. When your muscles begin to give out as you do the exercises, hold the position temporarily instead of stopping suddenly.

If the exercises are too easy, add another set or modify them to increase in difficulty. I suggest warming up by jumping rope, climbing stairs, or using other cardiovascular movements for ten minutes before beginning any practice or workout session. Warming up helps reduce the risk of injury and improves your overall performance. Remember that when you perform as a drummer, flexibility, speed, endurance, and stamina are vital. Good luck!

Shirazette Tinnin is a professional drummer and ISSA-certified personal trainer at NYSC in New York City. She can be reached at shirzettetinnin@gmail.com.



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Open-Handed Playing

Part 3: Triplet Groove Systems

by Claus Hessler

MUSIC KEY

C.C.	✦
S.D.	●
B.D.	●

In this article I'd like to take the idea of avoiding crossed hands into the rhythmic field of triplets. Triplet-based grooves have their own special twists and turns. Playing these ideas open-handed can be a serious

challenge, one that will greatly improve your skills. The roads less traveled are usually the least comfortable, but they can turn out to lead us to interesting places.

Some of these exercises would be hard to play in a regular cross-handed position. When I encounter things like that, I often choose to learn them open-handed right away so that I don't have to reprogram myself.

As a warm-up for the grooves presented here, practice the eight triplet exercises below (Examples 1–8), which feature all of the possible rhythmic positions of ghost notes on the snare beneath a shuffle groove on the hi-hat. You can practice these building blocks in any order. You'll likely notice that your snare drum hand (in an open-handed position) isn't used to playing ghost notes, so make sure you're not playing them too loudly. As you practice, consider the following tips:

1. Create a strategy for mastering the different patterns. Focus the bulk of your time on the most challenging ones, while polishing those that you can already play comfortably.
2. Lower your hi-hat.
3. Start slowly and gradually increase the tempo.
4. Keep the snare drum notes soft.
5. Clearly articulate the dynamic change between accented and unaccented notes on the hi-hat. (Use the wavelike Moeller motion to produce the accents.)
6. Keep the triplets even.

Advanced players can also practice doubling the snare notes with soft strokes on the bass drum. (Don't flam!)

Here are the basic exercises.

Once you're comfortable with those, replace the soft snare notes with the following nine patterns, which feature accents and ghost notes. The challenge is maintaining different dynamic structures (soft versus loud) between the hands. Keep the shuffle going on the hi-hat.

For a more musical type of practice, play one bar of a shuffle groove followed by one bar of the exercise. The following example features the fourth accent pattern in bar 2.

These different accent patterns will increase your open-handed vocabulary on the drums. Once you've mastered them, you'll see how much easier it is to play accents on the snare at different points without disturbing the flow of the hi-hat. Have fun, and enjoy the journey!

Claus Hessler, who is based in Germany, is an in-demand drummer in Europe. His book, *Open-Handed Playing Vol. 1*, is available through Alfred Publishing. For more info, visit claushessler.de.



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The Official 26 Polyrhythm Rudiments

Part 1: Metered Rolls and Flam Variations by Peter Magadini

The twenty-six polyrhythm rudiments combine the traditional snare drum rudiments with basic polyrhythms. When you're practicing, note that the metronome markings here have been thoroughly tested to ensure that each polyrhythm rudiment is playable at many levels of technique. The tempos are suggestions only.

Though it's not always necessary, it's tempting to figure out the math that's implied in each polyrhythm rudiment. You may, however, want to try playing the patterns by ear at first. I suggest experimenting through trial and error to learn each basic polyrhythm as it applies to each new rudiment. Just remember that both rhythms begin together on beat 1. Eventually the polyrhythms will become part of your rhythmic knowledge and technical vocabulary, and they will be easier to play as your hearing progresses. Use a metronome and tap your foot as you practice each rudiment.

FIVE-STROKE ROLL

Here's the traditional five-stroke roll.

R R L L R L L R R L

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

When played as quarter-note triplets (a rhythmic ratio of one and a half beats to one), you have a polyrhythm of six over four.

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

SEVEN-STROKE ROLL

Here's the traditional seven-stroke roll.

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

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

Here's what the seven-stroke roll looks like when played as a five-over-four polyrhythm (one and a quarter beats to one). In addition to the same-hand sticking notated here, you can alternate the rolls.

R L R L R L R L R L

NINE-STROKE ROLL

Here's the traditional nine-stroke roll.

1. R R L L R R L L R
2. L L R R L L R R L

R R L L R R L L

Here's the nine-stroke roll played as a seven-over-four polyrhythm (one and three-quarters beats to one).

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

ELEVEN-STROKE ROLL

Here's the traditional eleven-stroke roll.

1. R R L L R R L L R R L
2. L L R R L L R R L L R

R L R L R L R L

Here's the eleven-stroke roll played as half-note triplets to create a polyrhythm of three over four (three-quarters of a beat to one).

R L R L R L

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FLAM PARADIDDLE-DIDDLE

The flam paradiddle-diddle fits naturally in 6/8 when played as 16th notes.

IRLRRL L rLRLLR R IRLRRL L rLRLLR R

A three-over-four polyrhythm can be created by phrasing the flam paradiddle-diddle with a half-note-triplet pulse.

$\text{♩} = 74$ I R L R R L L r L R L L R R I R L R R L L
r L R L L R R I R L R R L L r L R L L R R

In the next installment, we'll complete the twenty-six polyrhythm rudiments with ruffs, ratamacues, paradiddles, and open rolls.

Peter Magadini is a professional drummer/educator and the author of *Polyrhythms: The Musician's Guide* (Hal Leonard) and *Polyrhythms for the Drumset* (Alfred). For more info, visit petermagadini.com. Audio files of "The 26 Polyrhythm Rudiments" can be purchased at cdbaby.com. Peter would like to acknowledge the assistance of Spiros Damianos.



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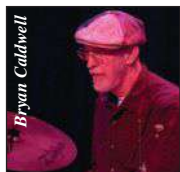
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Inner Drumming

Part 1: How to Listen With All Four Limbs

by George Marsh

Ever since I privately published my book *Inner Drumming* in 1983, I've received hundreds of letters and emails wanting to know exactly what it is and how to obtain a copy. This is the first of a series of articles bringing this very simple and powerful approach to you.

Before we delve into the complexities of what I call Inner Drumming Rudiments, it's important to pay attention to each limb separately. With any style of music, there's always the need to learn certain rhythmic patterns with specific limb combinations. These patterns are part of the accepted styles and are extremely important because they get you through the door so you can play music. They work great as you learn to interact with other musicians and play the music you love. But the potential downside of playing only style-specific patterns is that you can become restricted in your ability to create fresh ideas. The concepts we're going to explore here can help change this by training your reflexes to be free to respond and listen in new ways. The exercises prepare you for spontaneous playing, thinking, and listening.

PERMISSION

It's important to give yourself permission to feel and listen deeply while doing these exercises. Drummers are used to playing fast and getting on with it. Inner Drumming is different, because by working slowly at first you'll gain the immediate benefit of greater relaxation and the long-term benefits of increased control and endurance at all tempos. If you want to achieve speed with control and sensitivity, then you must incorporate internal awareness as an essential part of your sound. This will help you discover new ways to play the music you love.

ONE AT A TIME

Start with one limb, and take your time. Begin with the bass drum. Sitting at your drumset, visualize and feel the energy coming from the center of the earth through your lower belly to the leg, ankle, and foot. Notice how the muscles work as you make a stroke. Relax your foot and listen to the sound until it dies away. While relaxing, visualize the energy moving back through your foot, ankle, leg, and lower belly to the center of the earth.

This internal visualization, the sound itself, and the relaxation before and afterward form what I call listening—or sounding—with the limbs. You're dealing not just with the sound that's coming from the bass drum but rather with the whole scanning process *plus* the sound. At first this is done very slowly, until you create a natural groove. This slow groove should be played with full attention to the movement of internal energy. As you do this, continue to listen to the

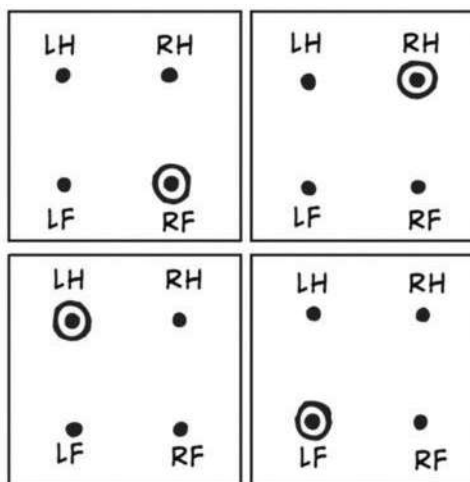
sound coming from the bass drum.

Next, try a slightly faster tempo with the same attention to energy flow. Continue increasing the pace until you reach a tempo that's slightly uncomfortable. Breathe and relax until it feels smooth and effortless again.

Now slow down the tempo and try a favorite rhythm. Continue to feel internally as you play the rhythm. When you think you're ready, bring your attention to another limb, and repeat the entire process. Continue until you've explored all four limbs individually.

ENERGY FLOW CHARTS

I've been using a simple system in which four dots represent the right foot, right hand, left hand, and left foot. The circled dot indicates the starting point for each particular exercise. The diagrams below show the previous exercises of sounding with each limb separately.



TWO-LIMB COMBINATIONS: ALTERNATES

After working with each individual limb, try combinations of two. There are two ways of sounding with two limbs: alternates and unisons. We'll start with alternates using the right foot and the right hand. Begin by making a single sound with the bass drum, and slowly visualize the energy moving through the body to your right hand. Now make a sound with your right hand. Relax your hand and visualize the energy moving down through the body to the bass drum. Continue sounding back and forth between these two limbs.

As with the single-limb studies, let a slow, steady groove appear. Stay there for a minute or two, and then play slightly faster. Let each new tempo settle into a groove and become internalized. Continue this way until the process starts to get uncomfortable. When this happens, breathe and focus on the muscles until things smooth out. At some point you may

start to lose touch with the flow from right foot to right hand. If this happens, gradually slow things down until you return to a relaxed tempo that allows for full awareness.

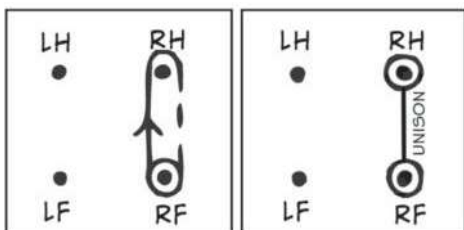
As with the single-limb studies, plug in rhythms that travel back and forth between the two limbs.

TWO-LIMB COMBINATIONS: UNISONS

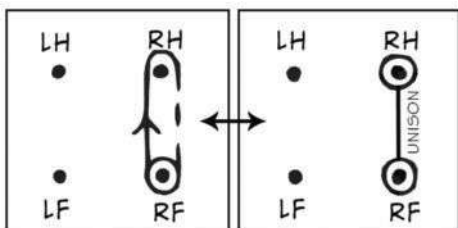
Next, work with the right foot and right hand to play unisons. Bring your awareness from the center of your belly to both limbs simultaneously, and make a stroke. Continue sounding this way until you're playing unisons with a minimum amount of flammings. Like before, let a slow tempo appear, and stick with it until it's internalized. Then pick a slightly faster tempo, and work with it in a similar way.

TWO-LIMB DIAGRAMS

In the diagrams below, the circled dot represents the starting point for the right-foot/right-hand combination (RF-RH). In the first box, the solid line represents scanning from the right foot to the right hand. The dashed line represents scanning from the right hand to the right foot. (The reason for the dashed line will become apparent later, when we work on more complex patterns.) The box with the two circled dots represents the right-foot/right-hand combination played in unison.

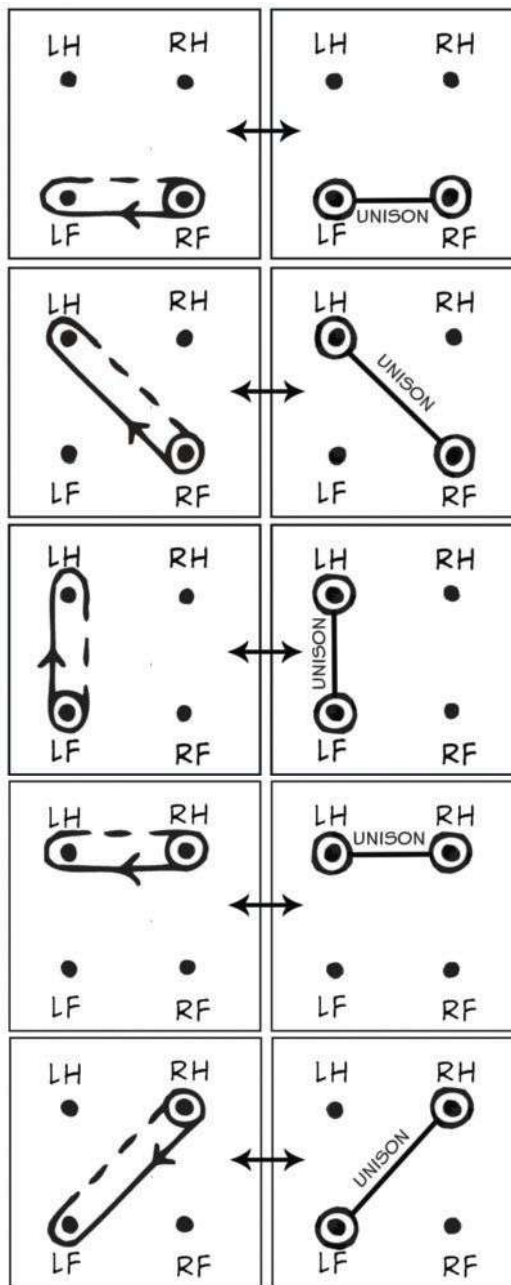


There are six different two-limb combinations, each containing an alternating and unison approach. When you play each combination, practice the alternating one first, followed by the unison. Give yourself permission to work slowly, to enhance the awareness of sound and feeling. This helps you develop elasticity and relaxed control. Your internal groove, the physical movement, and the sound will all become one. It may take several days to work through all of the combinations, but there's no hurry. Here's the first one. (The remaining five are to the right.)



TRY EASY

For years I've wanted to play controlled, fast single-stroke rolls between my bass drum and my right hand on the floor tom. Although there are many drummers who can do this fluently, there are also many who cannot—and I was one of



them. So about a year ago I homed in on listening and sounding with each individual limb. After working on that for a couple of days, I started to work on alternating between the bass drum and the right hand on the floor tom. I made sure I approached this very slowly, and I increased the speed gradually as my comfort level rose. The end result: I could do it! Maybe this isn't too big of a deal for some drummers, but it was very important to me because it opened up an area of my drumming that had been dormant...and it was easy.

George Marsh is a San Francisco-based jazz drummer/composer currently playing with the David Grisman Sextet. He's recorded with John Abercrombie, Terry Riley, Jerry Garcia, Pauline Oliveros, Denny Zeitlin, Maria Muldaur, and others. Marsh has taught at the University of California at Santa Cruz and at Sonoma State University since 1982, and he maintains a private studio in Santa Rosa, California. For more info, visit marshdrum.com.



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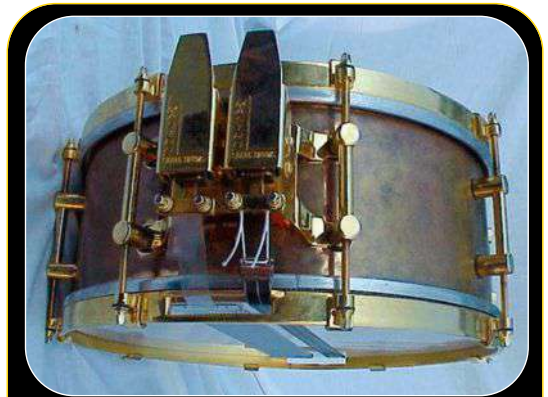
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LEEDY

Autographs of the Stars Drumset by Harry Cangany

There are still hidden gems out there. Roman coins are buried in Europe, the pieces of eight lie in the Atlantic, and in basements and attics across America we treasure hunters look for vintage drums.

But as far as I know, no one has found one of these—an ultra-rare version of Leedy's 1940 proprietary-finish Autographs of the Stars drumset, which got its name because each drum has a pattern of reproduced signatures of Leedy endorsers. Some of the signatures are mentioned in the company's monthly promotional booklet, *Topics*, from fifteen years earlier, and this exact kit appears in the final issue.

THE BACKSTORY

I'll delve deeper into the finish later, but here's the tale of the drums. Probably in early 1941, a man bought his thirteen-year-old son the drumset of his dreams. It

was a Leedy Improved New Yorker, a five-piece set that was a little different from what we now call a five-piece. This outfit consisted of a 14x28 bass drum, 7x11 and 9x13 toms, and a 7x14 snare. Nestled between the two mounted toms was a 4x10 Chinese-style tom. The 11" and 13" drums have tacked bottom heads. The bass drum has single-tension lugs and an arch rail or rail console that goes around most of the drum. The rail holds the three toms and two cymbal holders. There is no floor tom. The snare is Leedy's flagship model—the Broadway—with a shell date of July 1940. The toms are dated December 1940.

THE FINISH

In the Leedy catalogs of 1940 to 1942, seven plastic wraps were available. One had a light aqua background with various white stars and the signatures of

endorsers. That was the Autographs model, as far as I knew. I've seen a picture of one drum with this finish (bottom right), as well as the catalog shot.

At the same time, then sister company Ludwig had its own proprietary finish, known as Top Hat and Cane, which was a white marine pearl wrap with a recurrent pattern in black ink of a hat, a cane, and two gloves. Within the last ten years a limited run of that finish was made, and there are Ludwig drums and other brands covered in it.

Recently, I was sent a picture of the bass drum from this kit, and it showed the typical yellowed white marine pearl we find on vintage drums, but I could see a pattern of signatures. If that were the case, this would be an uncataloged version of Autographs of the Stars—one that used the Top Hat and Cane colors.

I have a theory as to why this might have happened. Leedy and Ludwig drums were then made in the same factory. Since there are more drums with the Top Hat and Cane finish than there are aqua Autographs, I wonder if Leedy kept only a small supply of the blue-green plastic, and when it ran out the company switched to regular white marine pearl as the base plastic upon which the signatures were reproduced.

Maybe there's another explanation. Leedy management would have wanted to lower costs and limit anything considered unpopular. So I think the company switched to white marine pearl with black ink and did not advertise it. By 1942, with the United States involved in World War II, Leedy and its competitors lost the majority of their sales, and choices became limited.

THE SIGNATURES

I looked at the signatures in this finish, and I recognized some of the names and searched for others. Many are lost to history. While Leedy had a great cross-section of famous and semi-famous percussionists, including Frank Holt of Sousa's band and marimba virtuoso George Hamilton Green, the company didn't include the hot drumset players of 1940, like Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, and Jo Jones. Maybe that affected the sales of the finish.

I did see two other names to mention. Philadelphia boasted a left-handed drummer who wrote a book that many of us used at contest time—*The All-American Drummer*. That author is Charley Wilcoxon. His signature is on the drums, along with that of Johnny Williams, who played on NBC and CBS radio.



Here's a rare 1950s Leedy & Ludwig snare in the original aqua Autographs finish, owned by Michael Curotto.

Music was very important in the Williams house. Johnny's son and namesake chose music as a career too; he's the John Williams who composed the music for *Star Wars*, *Jaws*, *Superman*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, and many other blockbuster films.

Some drumsets are very special because of the famous people who played them. Others are special because they're unique. This drumset is certainly unique. It has features that collectors look for—originality, great condition, and rarity. I'm not sure if any other white marine Autographs series sets were made or have survived.

The original owner of this Improved New Yorker drumset was not a celebrity. He was Joseph Taylor, a teenage drummer who became a businessman, husband, and father. He loved his Leedys, and he played them, shared them with his children, and kept them ready to go. Now they're owned by Mike Leshkovich, who purchased them from Steve Maxwell's Vintage and Custom Drums in Chicago. Let's hope that when these drums are a hundred years old, they look and sound just as good as they do now, at seventy-one.



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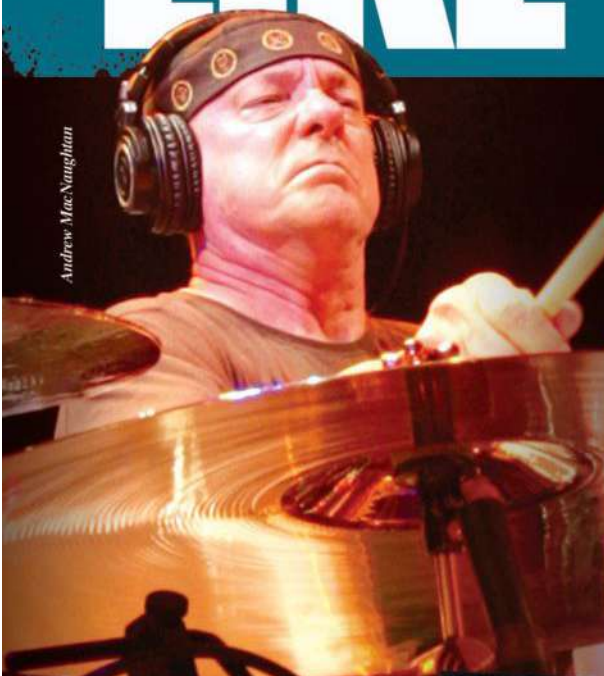
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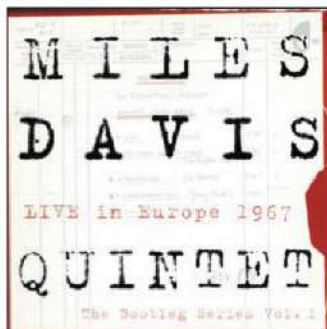
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For Tony Williams lovers—and who isn't one?—this multi-CD/DVD collection is nonstop bliss.

This superb set of three CDs plus one DVD captures five concerts from a searing 1967 European tour. The lineup of **TONY WILLIAMS**, Miles Davis (trumpet), Herbie Hancock (piano), Wayne Shorter (tenor sax), and Ron Carter (bass), commonly known as

Davis's "second great quintet," remains one of the most astonishing and forward-thinking bands in jazz history. And it treated the world to the seismic shock that was Tony.

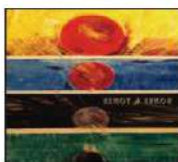
The probing quintet was Miles' longest-lived unit, spanning 1965 to '68. It's heard here in its later years, stretching boundaries ever further and hitting new peaks. The band plays long sets without pause, segueing between numbers with a fleeting suggestion of melody and then immediately plunging into intense expansions and deconstructions. Soloists hit full throttle while Tony drives them—*provokes* them—with a fierce, hair-raising, "broken up" yet pulsing attack.

Comprising material previously unreleased or available solely on bootlegs, these state-sanctioned radio recordings feature surprisingly good fidelity. Although the bass is sometimes shy in the mix, what we do get is an up-front earful of historical Tony. Forty-five years later, it still feels like the shock of the new. (Legacy) **Jeff Potter**

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What a gas it is when a drummer's solo album sounds exactly like you hope it will—yet still manages to surprise.

The music on first-call studio and stage drummer **MATT CHAMBERLAIN**'s solo recording *Company 23* is a logical representation of the artist we're familiar with from his many collaborations with rock royalty: meticulous but not calculating, bursting with musical color but never annoyingly trendy, playful but not precocious, soulful without trying very hard to be, and always conscious of the way an arrangement is supposed to move—and move a listener. The tracks here elicit a range of attitudes, from film-noir-ish mood pieces to hyper action-thriller chase-scene themes to King Crimson-esque horror-movie evilistics. You'll forgive the reliance on visual allusions here, but this really is music for the mind, from one of our most musical minds. And even though the songs take center stage—as they should—drummers will find plenty of rhythmic events and devices to study over and over. Such fun. (mattchamberlain.com) **Adam Budofsky**



BONES & TONES *BONES & TONES* **Timbre, texture, and rhythm are equally appealing on this percussion-centric group's debut CD.**

Sure, the rhythms are intoxicating, but it's the sensual *sound* of this quartet that makes the disc so seductive. The lead pairing of vibraphone and marimba, handled by legendary M'Boom cofounder **WARREN SMITH** and master percussionist **LLOYD HABER**, is arranged in a rich weave that never clutters. Add Abdou Mboup (voice, kora) and Jaribu Shahid (bass), who share percussion duties as well, and you've got a rare texture. At its core, the pulse is African, dressed with world influences and plenty of odd-time ostinatos layered with jazz harmonies. Assertive yet surprisingly serene. (Freedom Art Records) **Jeff Potter**



CINQUE *CATCH A CORNER* **Steve Gadd burning through a set of instrumentals? Yup, some things never get old.**

Really, only **STEVE GADD** could bust out the ghost-stroke-laden, slightly behind-the-beat, super-funky pattern on "Conflicting Advice," the opening track on *Catch a Corner*, a hip jazz-funk disc featuring B3 great Joey DeFrancesco. Halfway through the tune, Gadd starts flipping the beat around and throwing in his trademark kick syncopations, never relinquishing the feel or pulse. There are swingers ("Geppetto's Blues") and Latin-esque brush groovers ("Bolivia"), but it's the old-school, wide-open snare and well-timed ride pattern of the title track that remind us why forty years on, Gadd is *still* the number-one guy for countless artists. (almarecords.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

SMASHING PUMPKINS *SIAMESE DREAM* AND *GISH* 2011 DELUXE EDITION REISSUES

The Pumpkins' first two records get the deluxe treatment they deserve: remastered, with a bonus disc of outtakes and rarities and an era-specific concert DVD.

From the opening tom pattern of "I Am One," from 1991's *Gish*, it was clear that drummer **JIMMY CHAMBERLIN** was a horse of a different color, fusing lithe, jazzy beats with the all-out heaviness that was de rigueur for the alternative groups of the day. By 1993's *Siamese Dream*, the Chicago quartet was a confident, brazen crew, with Chamberlin's frenetic drumming on scorchers like "Geek U.S.A." and "Silver***k" leading the charge. The DVDs are the real treat here, though. The 1990 *Gish*-era show is a slightly dated look at a young band growing, but it features Chamberlin's fully developed, dramatic soloing over the end of "Snail." The 1993 concert is the Pumpkins as wild animals, on the brink of stardom, with Chamberlin's 32nd-note snare tsunami in "Quiet" achieving liftoff, building his and the band's undeniable legacy. (EMI) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



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In this refreshing instructional video, Siouxsie Sioux's spiky-haired drummer, Rob Brian, accentuates the differences between implementation and inspiration. By applying various rudiment-based sticking patterns to the kit, Brian demonstrates how these exercises will not only tweak your mechanics but will also provide keys to unlock creativity. For example, mastering the linear phrases presented here builds independence while helping to facilitate more highly developed musical ideas. What might be the video's most valuable and insightful moment occurs when Brian flubs a John Blackwell-style 16th-note-triplet crossover pattern in the segment titled "Finale, Drum Solo." This endearing miscue, acknowledged by the drummer on camera, highlights the physical demands of Brian's technical workouts and underscores the notion that musicality is a concept in constant flux. (robertbrian.co.uk) **Will Romano**



LEVON HELM RAMBLE AT THE RYMAN DVD LEVEL: ALL \$19.98

Ramble at the Ryman isn't an instructional video, but the things that make Levon Helm a great drummer and performer are very evident in this 2008 concert. Sixty-eight at the time of the show, Helm doesn't let anything slide, doesn't take one measure of rhythm for granted, never gives one beat less than his full attention. He works the hi-hat from all angles, pops the snare with holy conviction, and maintains a strong drive behind numerous horn solos on Chuck Berry's "Back to Memphis." Tony Leone keeps the strong drumming going when Helm moves to mandolin. On a stage full of excellent musicians—Buddy Miller, Sam Bush, Sheryl Crow, Larry Campbell, to name a few—Levon inspires the lot. (Vanguard) **Robin Tolleson**

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The idea of this book is appealing—having a student and teacher play together and practice playing with another musician—but there are some problems with the execution. The exercises and layout, employing 1a and 1b examples on facing pages, are clear for playing purposes, but how the parts relate is less obvious than if they were written in an over/under format. (A CD of MP3 files does allow you to hear the beats together.) Also, from a composition standpoint, it's hit and miss: Some beats sound really cool together, while many seem haphazardly paired. Some discussion of how drumsets can interlock—like the way African or Afro-Cuban drums work together—might have been nice too, just for perspective and ideas. All of that said, the idea for this book is to have fun playing with another drummer, and it does facilitate that to a degree. (Wizdom Media/Alfred) **Martin Patmos**

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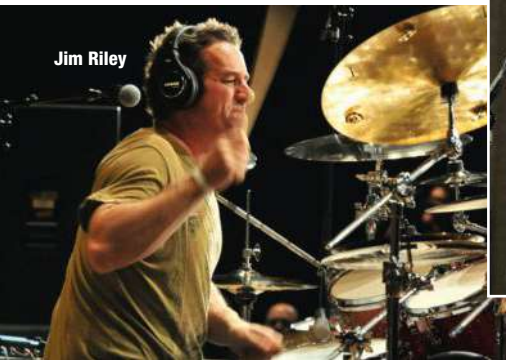
This past November 9 through 12 in downtown Indianapolis, the Percussive Arts Society celebrated its fiftieth anniversary at PASIC. The convention covered academic research and kit, orchestral, marching, world, jazz, and digital drumming. Featured artists included **Billy Martin, Allen Herman, Florian Alexandru-Zorn, John Riley, Claus Hessler, Rich Redmond, Jim Riley, Bobby Sanabria, Walfredo de los Reyes, Fred Dinkins, Gil Sharone, Grant Collins, Steve Fidyk, Ed Soph, Keith Carlock, Peter Erskine, John Emrich, Cora Coleman-Dunham, Larry Lelli, and Simon Phillips.**

PASIC 2012 will be held from October 31 through November 3 at the Austin Convention Center in Texas. For more info, visit pas.org.

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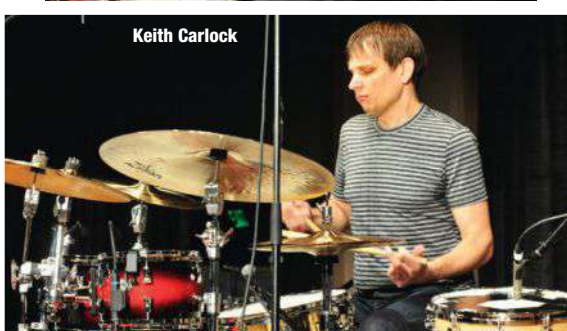
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Tom Roady

by Jim Riley

On November 27, 2011, the music world lost a great friend, percussionist Tom Roady, who was just sixty-two. Tom was born on January 17, 1949, in Alton, Illinois, and began playing drums when he was five years old. Inspired by the music of Latin-jazz artists like Mongo Santamaria and Cal Tjader, he began his lifelong journey as a hand percussionist at age fourteen. After college he began playing professionally in the St. Louis area.

In 1973, at the urging of fellow musicians, Roady moved to Muscle Shoals, Alabama, where he began to work with the legendary Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section. It was there that he recorded with artists such as Etta James, Percy Sledge, Dr. John, and Art Garfunkel. Searching for some new challenges, the percussionist relocated to L.A. and landed the gig with Paul Anka. When he wasn't on the road, Tom performed with pianist Don Randi at the famed L.A. jazz club the Baked Potato. While most of us would find it easy to settle in with a great road gig and fulfilling in-town work, Tom was still looking for something more. So in 1983 he packed up his gear and moved to Nashville.

Roady immediately began working with some of Nashville's finest, including Bela Fleck, Mark O'Connor, Sam Bush, and Emmylou Harris. This was the beginning of a twenty-five-year run as a top-call percussionist. During this time Tom racked up over a thousand recording credits, with artists including Kenny Chesney, Vince Gill, Ricky Skaggs, Sara Evans, Bob Seger, Wynonna,

Trisha Yearwood, Chet Atkins, Randy Travis, Hank Williams Jr., Martina McBride, Roy Orbison, Brooks and Dunn, Delbert McClinton, Michael McDonald, and the Dixie Chicks. Throughout his prolific recording career he still found time to get out and play live dates with John Denver, Paul Anka, Aretha Franklin, and James Taylor.

In October of 2011, Tom was diagnosed with stage four metastatic cancer. He was faced with the news that he had maybe a year to live, and rather than undergoing treatment that might have bought him a few months, he decided to go on the road on Ricky Skaggs' Christmas tour, as he had for the past nine years. He commented to friends that he would not let cancer beat him. It never did. Tom spent his last day playing percussion at a rehearsal for the tour, which was to start the following evening. After rehearsal, the band got on the bus and headed to Clemson, South Carolina. Tom texted his wife, told her he loved her, and went off to sleep. He was found the next morning lying peacefully in his bunk. The cause of his demise was not the cancer but heart failure. As a tribute to Tom, the band set up his drums and played the show in his honor.

A memorial service was held this past December 4 in Nashville, not to mourn Tom's death but to celebrate the life of a great man. Those who knew Tom Roady will never forget his smile, his charm, and his sense of groove. We'll miss you, Tom.



Rick Malkin

PROPS FROM PEERS

"Some of the greatest moments I shared with a percussionist were with Tom—live with James Taylor's acoustic band, and certainly on many projects in the studio. There was none better!"

—Nashville session drummer
Eddie Bayers

"Tom and I became close friends in the Vegas heyday of the '70s and '80s. He was with Paul Anka, and I was with Wayne Newton. Man, he was a fun guy to be around. On my trips to Nashville, I would stay at his house and learn so much from him about electronics and timpani. Tom always had a smile on his face. Out of the blue, he would call me and say, 'Hey, Wolllllfreido, this is Fatso!' and we would talk for hours. We'll miss him lots...he was a special human being."

—Master percussionist
Walfredo Reyes Sr.

"Much of my equipment is stored at a warehouse in Nashville, which was hit during the flood of 2010. I had a locker full of percussion gear three or four feet under water. Two days after the flood, Tom contacted me and offered his gear. He basically said, 'Anything of mine is yours.' Not only was he a world-class player, he was an incredible human being. I'm grateful to have had the chance to work with him, and I'll never forget his kindness, not only to me, but to so many."

—Nashville session
percussionist **Eric Darken**

"One of the great sources of pride for me, being from St. Louis, is the long lineage of great musicians that ventured out from there, not the least of which was Tom Roady. Tom was a world-class drummer and percussionist and, more importantly, my friend."

—Pop singer **Michael McDonald**



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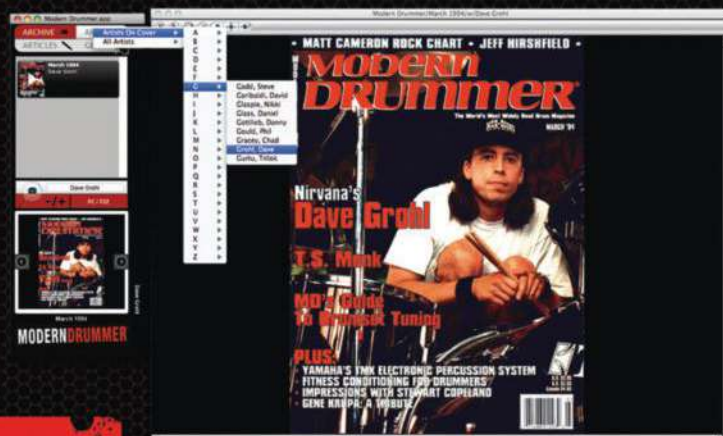
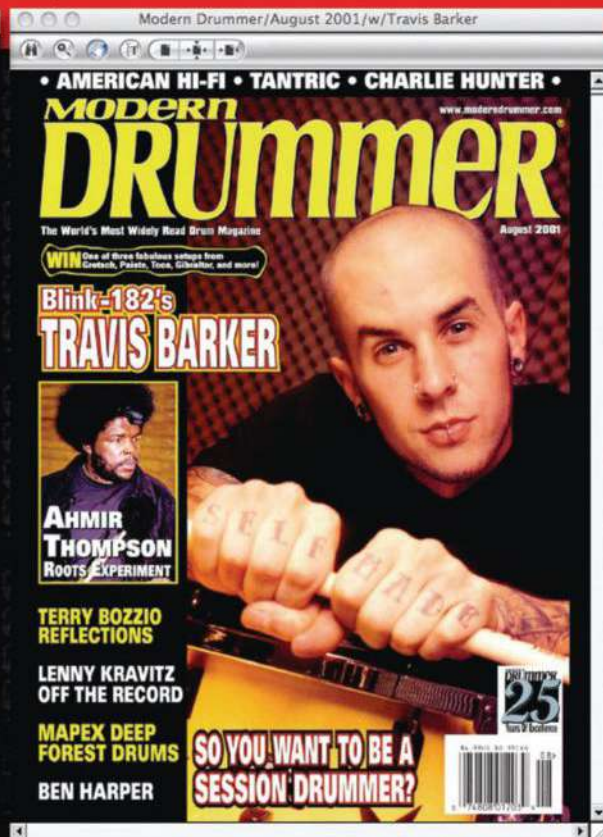
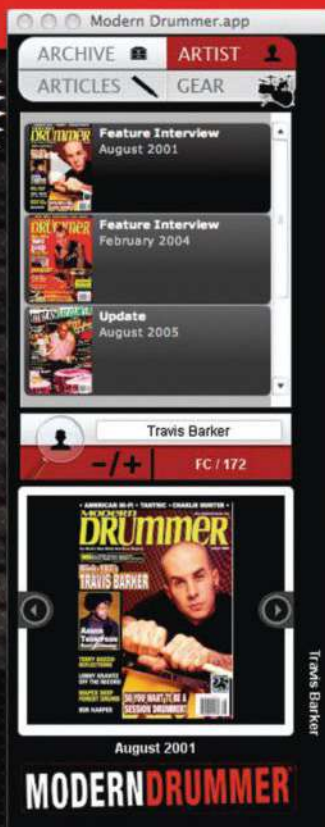
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Front and Center

Our latest kit comes from Scott Metko of Nashville, who's the touring and recording drummer for the country artist David Ball. "The kit evolved over time," Metko explains, "in response to David's requests, his music, and my interpretation of it. David doesn't care much for the current trend of low frequencies dominating the drum sound, so I removed most of the toms and went with a 20" bass drum. He loves the warmth of wood snare drums. The piccolo is tuned high and doubles as a timbale for his Latin- and Tex-Mex-influenced compositions. Some songs are played with my hands on all surfaces; other times the bongos are played with wire brushes.

"For years I've been reading in *Modern Drummer* about how we should support the music first and foremost, and that's what I always try to do," Metko continues. "All the fancy licks are great, but they take

a backseat to the music and the song." Scott's prized possession is an original bow-tie-shaped Pete Engelhart crasher from the mid-'80s. He explains, "Everyone asks, 'What is *that* thing?' Steve Jordan's recordings first turned me on to it."

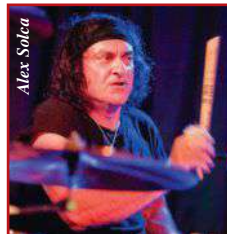
Metko plays his kit standing up because Ball wants the whole band up front, in the traditional folk and bluegrass tradition. "I find that standing up together allows for a better connection with the fans," Metko says. "No one is standing in front of anyone else. All of our energy, all of our vocal harmony, all of our connection with the crowd—it's all up front."

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



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