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September 2014

LINKIN PARK'S ROB BOURDON

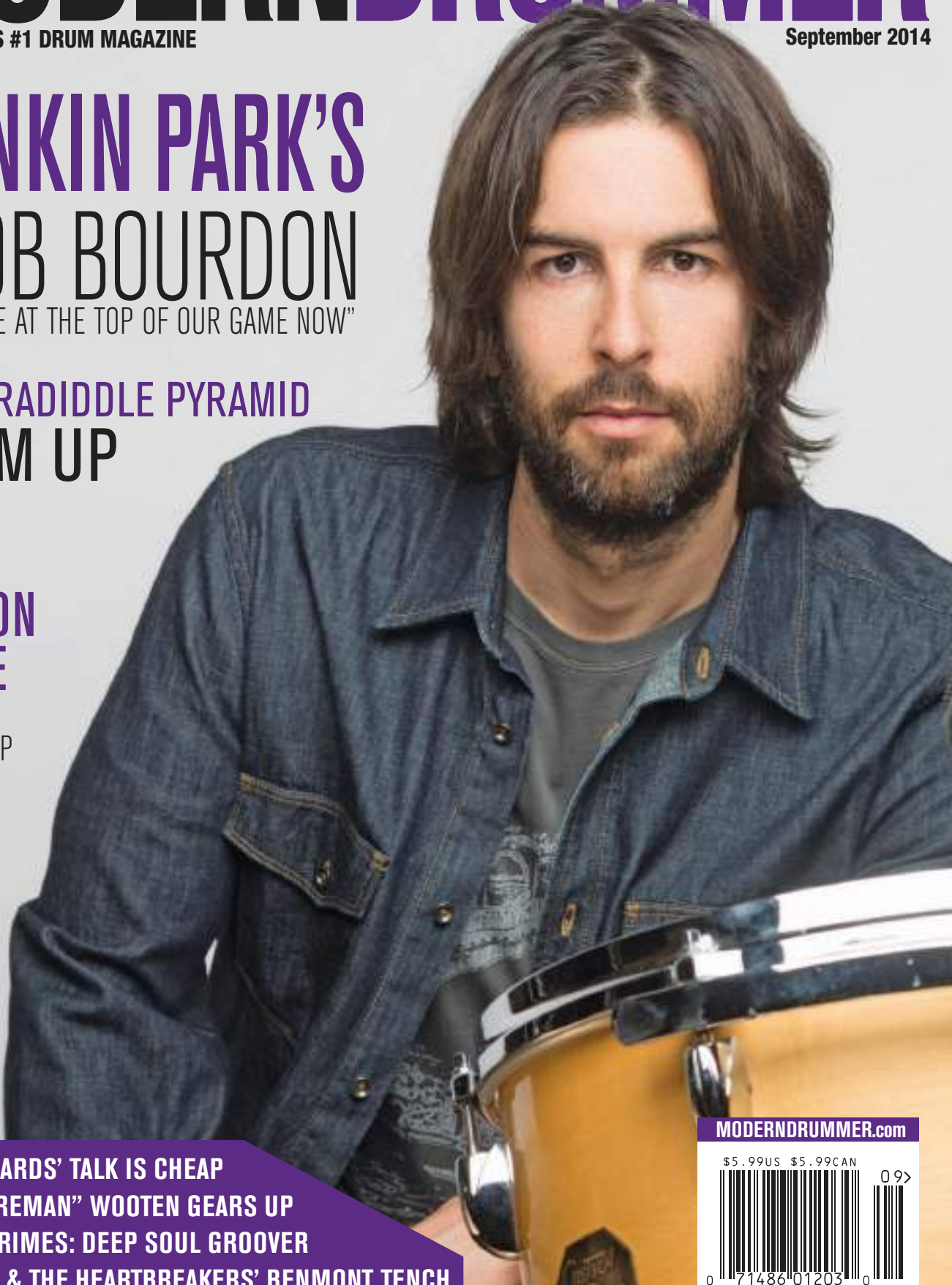
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On the Cover

44 Linkin Park's Rob Bourdon

by Ken Micallef

It's not as if the group didn't rock before. But with its new album, Linkin Park is positively *raging*. And that's no accident. Here's the inside story on how drummer and band raised their game through the roof.

Cover and contents photos by Alex Solca

Features

- 36 Encore** **Keith Richards, *Talk Is Cheap*:** Stone swagger. by Patrick Berkery
- 38 Catching Up With...** **Vinnie Paul /// Chris Vatalaro /// Florian Pilkington-Miksa**
- 40 Setting Sights** **Stanton Moore** gets down to jazz business. by "Pistol" Pete Kaufmann
- 56 Influences** **Clem Burke**, new wave's premier showman. by Patrick Berkery
- 58 What Do You Know About...?** **Howard Grimes**, Hi Records' soulful secret weapon. by Patrick Berkery
- 78 A Different View** **Benmont Tench** of Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers. by Michael Parillo
- 84 Up & Coming** **Hozoji Matheson-Margullis** of Helms Alee. by Stephen Bidwell

Education

- 62 Basics**
Screaming Clave
Big Beats Based on Afro-Caribbean Root Rhythms
by Rich Redmond
- 63 Strictly Technique**
The Paradiddle Pyramid
A Quick and Effective Warm-Up Routine for the Hands and Feet
by Philip Elliot
- 64 Around the World**
Samba Starter
Part 3: Mangueira Samba School Grooves
by Adam Osmianski
- 66 Rock 'n' Jazz Clinic**
Volume Independence and Musicality
More About "How" Than "What"
by Marc Dicciani
- 68 Jazz Drummer's Workshop**
Syncopation Revisited
Part 4: Brazilian Applications
by Steve Fidyk
- 74 Concepts**
"Nothing Endures but Change"
An Introduction
by Russ Miller

Equipment

- 20 Collector's Corner**
William S. Hart Snare
The Most Costly Drum in the World?
- 24 Product Close-Up**
 - **Yamaha** Absolute Hybrid Drumset
 - **Bosphorus** Ari Hoenig Signature Lyric Series Cymbals
 - **Angel Drums** Akaju Mahogany and Inox Steel Snare Drums
 - **KickPort** Complete Bass Drum System
 - **Carmichael** Drum Throne
- 32 Electronic Review**
Zoom H6 Handy Recorder
- 34 Gearing Up**
The Wooten Brothers'
Roy "Futureman" Wooten
- 86 New and Notable**



page 71

Departments

- 8 An Editor's Overview**
Get Crackin'
by Michael Parillo
- 10 Readers' Platform**
- 12 News**
- 16 Ask a Pro**
Jimmy Keegan, Jerry Gaskill
- 18 It's Questionable**
Mind Matters: Did I Forget...?
- 88 Showcase**
Featuring Drum Market
- 92 Critique**
- 94 In Memoriam**
Armando Peraza
- 96 Kit of the Month**
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Get Crackin'

It's often said that college is an experimental phase, where you're free to try different things and learn about yourself and your goals without too much fear of repercussion. Well, in college I experimented with heavy metal.

I've loved metal and heavy music for as long as I remember, maybe dating back to the old "Priest or Maiden?" choice that for some silly reason was forced on rocker kids back in junior high.

(Priest!) But it wasn't until college that I got to scratch the itch myself, in a sort of Black Sabbath-inspired band called Izzy and the Vermin that gave me some of the most fun and cathartic moments of my musical life. When we all graduated, it was most likely the end of helping to churn up a mosh pit with my drumming.

That was a long time ago. Yet, as I write this, I'm fresh off a reunion performance by this old band of mine. We convened in Maryland a few days ago for a friend's wedding, and reviving former groups was high on the agenda for a postnuptial party.

It *hurt* to play this stuff after so long. The guitarists shook out their hands between songs, unused to the required intensity of attack. I've remained an active drummer, but I, too, was a bit shocked by the fiercer energy levels demanded by a proper performance of Vermin music. We hit it hard for the little crowd—my arms rose higher than usual and came down firmer, my hats opened wider, my foot tried to put a hole in the bass drum head—and everyone had big fun playing long-lost songs that we feared were gone forever. No one moshed, but heads banged, if a little more softly.

I'd spent time beforehand playing along at a moderate level with old recordings on my iPod and remembering the songs, which are fairly complex. What I now wish I'd done was practice bashing. Once our singer—that would be Izzy—opened his mouth during the performance, his awesomeness, still crazy after all these years, inspired me to dig deeper, and...ouch. It hurt so good, but it's a fine line.

Stanton Moore, a true pro, knows better. When he decided to revisit music he hadn't played in a while—jazz—for his new trio album, *Conversations*, he went about it in a more buttoned-up way, studying with master jazzers and getting comfortable existing in a world that was familiar to him yet unexplored in recent years. You can read Moore's story in the latest installment of our Setting Sights column, which focuses on a drummer tackling a specific goal.

Likewise, our cover artist, Rob Bourdon, needed to bear down on his own playing to summon the fire he'd breathe all over Linkin Park's majestically heavy and live-sounding new album, *The Hunting Party*. You'll be moved to raise your own game after you learn how Rob holed up in the practice room to raise his.

Examples abound. In this issue's Up & Coming, Hozoji Matheson-Margullis discusses how acutely she challenges herself with each recording by her band Helms Alee, breaking herself down and then building back up to reach drumming bliss. And in A Different View, a story that was a real treat for me, I interview Benmont Tench, the keyboardist for one of my all-time-favorite (not-so-heavy but still *heavy*) bands, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, who mentions the work he had to do to learn to mesh with Steve Ferrone after decades of sharing a unique homegrown rapport with Stan Lynch.

So read up, then get crackin'!



Margit Erb

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The *Modern Drummer* Pro Panel is an open-ended group of professional drummers who contribute regularly to the magazine's content. It represents an unparalleled amount of musical experience, which members share with readers across the spectrum of the magazine's editorial mix. The Pro Panel was established in 2011, with multiple players added to its ranks during each of its first three years. Beginning in 2014, players are being added one at a time.

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READERS' PLATFORM



Nate Morton

Thank you for making Nate Morton the cover feature of the June 2014 issue. I don't watch much television, but I DVR *The Voice* every week just to listen to Nate play. In a world where so much of the music is programmed, it's refreshing to hear a player like Nate showing his stuff during prime time. Thank you, MD, and thank you, Nate!

David Alexander

Great interview with Nate Morton! He's a superb talent and extremely humble, which is always a great combination. Thanks to Nate for taking time out of his busy schedule to allow us to share his journey through a season of *The Voice*.



Philip Kurut

2014 Readers Poll

There's nothing like your first... A heartfelt note of thanks to the readership of MD for your votes in the latest Readers Poll. Just to be included among such incredible talent is an honor, and to win in the jazz category is indescribable. They say timing is everything, and for me, your timing couldn't have been better. You've given me a huge shot of much-needed adrenaline to complete *Filosophy* (yes, four years in the making!) and new recordings featuring both bands, on each coast of the U.S. We're in a very exciting time

for the music industry, with changes happening away from the drums, as well as on the throne itself. Here's hoping everyone out there is navigating these uncharted waters with agility and a lot of positive energy. We get what we give, and you all have given me an incredible honor. Thank you!

Tommy Igoe

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NEWS



Alex Solica

Chuck Silverman Tribute

A memorial in honor of Chuck Silverman was held at the concert hall at Musicians Institute in Los Angeles this past May 14. Silverman, who passed away unexpectedly on May 1, was a world-renowned percussion educator who specialized in Afro-Cuban music. The longtime *Modern Drummer* contributor was also a popular instructor at MI, and the event was attended by current and former students and faculty, music industry professionals, and an all-star cast including the famed drummers Jimmy Branly, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, and Richie Gajate Garcia. A memorial plaque was presented to Silverman's wife, Elaine; a duplicate copy will be hung in room MI-370, a classroom now dedicated to the late percussionist. Elaine was also given a scrapbook of notes that students and faculty had left for her husband. The event, which more than 200 people attended, culminated in a group samba led by drum instructor Fred Dinkins.



Fred Dinkins

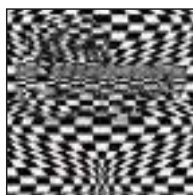
Alex Solica



Richie Gajate Garcia

Alex Solica

Out Now



Chicago Now (Chicago XXXVI) (Tris Imboden, Walfredo Reyes Jr.) /// **Brian Setzer** Rockabilly Riot! (Noah Levy, Slim Jim Phantom) /// **Freeman** Freeman (Kyle Keegan) /// **Reigning Sound** Shattered (Mikey Post) /// **Grinder Blues** Grinder Blues (Scot "Little" Bihlman) /// **Celebration** Albumin (David Bergander) /// **John Hiatt** Terms of My Surrender (Kenneth Blevins) /// **Earthless Meets Heavy Blanket** In a Dutch Haze (Mario Rubalcaba) /// **Spanish Gold** South of Nowhere (Patrick Hallahan) /// **Sean Jones** Im.pro.vise: Never Before Seen (Obed Calvaire) /// **Pennywise** Yesterdays (Byron McMackin)



Making of New Foo Fighters Album to Be the Subject of HBO's *Sonic Highways*

The making of the Foo Fighters' upcoming eighth album will be accompanied by an HBO series documenting the odyssey during which the record was created. In *Sonic Highways*, directed by bandleader Dave Grohl, the group taps into the musical heritage and cultural fabric of eight cities—Chicago, Austin, Nashville, Los Angeles, Seattle, New Orleans, New York, and Washington, D.C.—basing itself at famed recording studios integral to the unique history and character of each location. One song was recorded in each city and features a local musical legend who is also interviewed by Grohl for the documentary. *Sonic Highways* and the upcoming Foo Fighters album are due this fall.

Nashville Drummers Jam 4: A Tribute to John Bonham

In 2012, two hardworking Nashville drummers, David Parks and Tom Hurst (of, respectively, LoCash Cowboys and Tracy Lawrence), had the idea to bring together the crème de la crème of the local drumming community for the Nashville Drummers Jam. Musicians stepped up in a major way, with a Kings X tribute in the inaugural year and a Jeff Porcaro tribute in 2013. This year's salute to Led Zeppelin's John Bonham featured nineteen top Nashville drummers getting the Led out at the city's Douglas Corner Café on April 24. More than \$1,500 was raised for the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, with the remainder going to local family organizations. Highlights of this year's event included Maggie Rose's Sarah Tomek and her rendition of "Black Dog" and Rascal Flatts drummer Jim Riley's take on Bonzo's signature solo tune, "Moby Dick." The response to NDJ has been so strong that Parks and Hurst are forming a nonprofit organization specifically dedicated to a different charity on a yearly basis. The next jam is scheduled for this November, in honor of Rush's Neil Peart. **Bob Girouard**



Back row, from left: Travis McNabb (Sugarland), David Parks (LoCash Cowboys), Dave Black (Easton Corbin), Tom Hurst (Tracy Lawrence), Nick Buda (Taylor Swift, studio), and Pat McDonald (Charlie Daniels Band). Middle row: Jim Riley (Rascal Flatts), Russ Whitman (Craig Morgan), Miles McPherson (Paramore, Kelly Clarkson), Tucker Wilson (Josh Thompson), and Sean Paddock (Kenny Chesney). Front row: Gregg Lohman (Kellie Pickler), William Ellis (Montgomery Gentry), Sarah Tomek (Maggie Rose), Kevin Murphy (Randy Houser, Tonic), Chuck Tilley (Alabama, Richard Marx), and Boone Daughdrill (the Band Perry). Not pictured: Ben Sesar (Brad Paisley) and Nir Z (studio).



Travis McNabb (Sugarland) is using Gator ProtecThor cases.

Jimmy DeGrasso (Black Star Riders) has joined the Innovative Percussion artist roster.



Jason Cooper

Natal's growing list of artists now includes **Jason Cooper** (the Cure), **Ben Gordelier** (Paul Weller), **Sean Moore** (Manic Street Preachers), **DJ Bonebrake** (X), **Nate Arling** (the Last Vegas), **Kevin Heuer** (Vigilantes of Love), **Luis Hernandez** (independent), **Mark Manczuk** (Jean Marx Express), and **Jerry O'Neill** (Voodoo Glow Skulls).

Who's Playing What



"Pistol" **Pete Kaufmann** (Black Wail) is playing Warlock drums and Amedia cymbals.

On Tour



Chiodos (pictured), featuring drummer **Derrick Frost**, has been co-headlining the Crowd Surf America tour with Blessthefall, featuring **Matt Traynor**.



Marc Millman

Jean-Paul Gaster with Clutch /// **Shannon Forrest** with Toto /// **Daru Jones** with Jack White /// **Ray Luzier** with Korn /// **Andrea Belfi** with Mike Watt /// **Isaac Teel** with Tauk



Tim Soter

Hamish Kilgour is out with the Clean. The beloved Australian pop group's *Anthology* is now available on quadruple LP as part of Merge Records' twenty-fifth-anniversary reissue series.



Erik Kabnik

Frank Ferrer has been playing residencies with Guns n' Roses at the Joint at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas.



Nick Yacyshyn is out with Baptists, including an upcoming appearance at Southwest Terror Fest III: The Western Front, in Tucson, Arizona.





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Spock's Beard's **Jimmy Keegan** on Soloing

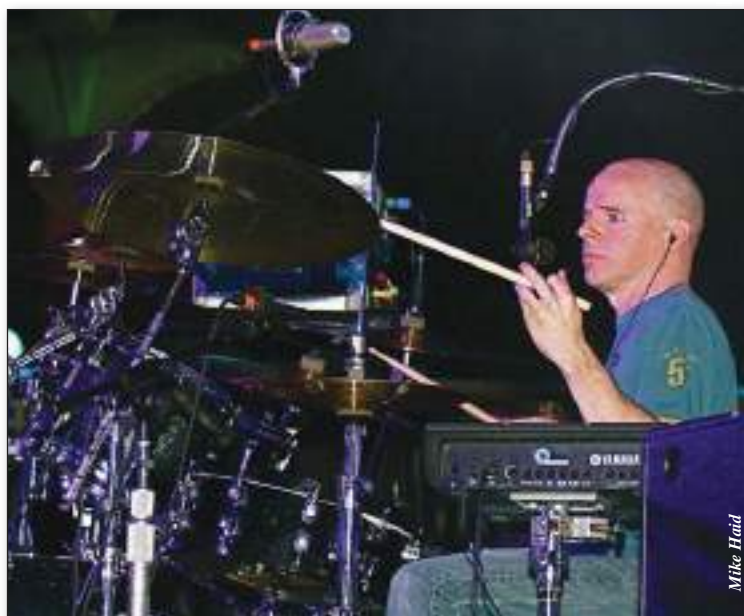
Drum solos have always been a funny thing to me. When the guitar player or sax player takes a solo, the band plays cool chords and rhythms as support. The drummer takes a solo and everybody runs for the bar. I prefer to solo with the band. It gives the listener a rhythmic base so I can go to more interesting places. That said, it's unusual when I get that option.

"If you have a bit of time to make some kind of statement, then make sure you say something."

I rarely plan out a solo. I read the audience to determine if it's a musically educated crowd or just regular listeners, and then I'll plan my attack. I like setting a foundation of some kind that everyone can follow. This is really based on how I feel at that moment. From there I plan it much like you would in a jazz solo: Establish the theme, embellish the theme, and then let the universe take you somewhere.

I rely a great deal on the communication between the band and the audience. When the time comes to let loose, I consider the feel of the song, because I'm usually coming out of that groove, tempo, or feeling. It's all a bit relative. If I'm playing in a rock situation, I play a rock solo. Jazz will get you a jazz solo.

Just remember that playing a lot of fast notes and fancy tricks doesn't make a great solo. If you have a bit of time to make some kind of statement, then make sure you say something. Try not to



linger too long—say it and move on. Give it a song structure if you can. If not, at least make sure it has a beginning, middle, and end.

The two most important things: After you've listened to all the greats and figured out every exact note of every solo they've done, go out and be yourself. And have fun!

Must-Have Gear

Jerry Gaskill of King's X

I've never been a drummer who feels like I must have a certain piece of gear to be able to perform properly. If I sit in with somebody or have a gig where the kit is provided, then that's my kit and I'll make the best of it. I believe the power and truth of what we do as artists is ultimately in our hands and our feet. I'd say in our whole bodies, actually. That said, I do have gear that I love.

I remember the very first time I hit a GMS kick drum. It was 22", and I felt as though I was in love. I've been using GMS drums ever since. When I play around town, I use a smaller kit with a 20" kick drum. This drum has a power and warmth that demands comments from others. Thanks, GMS.

The first time I hit an 18" Paiste Signature series Full crash, I was again in love. I've since discovered the Dark Energy series as well, which I also love. The feel of the instrument is the most important thing to me, and these cymbals just feel right. I'm still learning and discovering the new cymbals Paiste has to offer.

Thanks, Paiste.

The new Evans Level 360 EC2 heads are great! Used along with the EC Reso on the bottom, I almost feel like they tune themselves. Thanks, Evans.

My kick drum pedal is also very important. I have to have a chain-driven model. I currently use the Tama Iron Cobra. Once again,



I love it. As a matter of fact, I use all Tama hardware. Thanks, Tama.

And to hit all this stuff, I use Vater sticks. With King's X I always use a 5B with a nylon tip. Around town I might use the Los Angeles 5A or even the Manhattan 7A, depending on the situation. I love Vater too. Thanks, Vater.

So there you go—that's me and my gear in a nutshell.





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Mind Matters

by Bernie Schallehn

Did I Forget...?

About a year ago I took the plunge and joined a band. I'd taken lessons and put in my practice time, and I felt I was ready. We're playing one to three gigs a month now. I love it, but two things really take away from my enjoyment. When I'm packing my gear for the gig, I'm filled with fear that I'm going to forget a piece of equipment. I can relax only when I'm set up and see that all of my stuff is in place. Also, during the gig, there are a couple songs that I keep thinking I'm going to forget how to play. Rather than having fun, I'm obsessing about these songs coming up on the set list. Can you help?

First, let's take a common-sense approach to your fear of forgetting a piece of equipment. It's not an earth-shattering strategy, but sometimes the simplest solutions are the best. Ready?

Make a checklist. Type a list containing every cymbal, stand, drum, and accessory that you bring with you to the gig. Print out a bunch of copies. Buy a clipboard, and attach a new checklist for every gig. As you place a piece of your kit in your vehicle, check it off the list. This should lower your anxiety.

Now let's hit the problem from a psychological perspective. Ask yourself: "If I were to forget any piece of equipment, what would happen?" Most likely your answer would fall into the realm of negative evaluation. You fear your bandmates would be angry with you, and you wouldn't be able to play in your signature style. Maybe even audience members would judge you negatively if they saw that you were missing rack toms. This process is called catastrophizing, which in layman's terms means you're making mountains out of molehills.

I remember hearing a story about a name drummer (whose name I've since forgotten) who had a gig in a very rural area. It was nighttime, and as he was setting up he discovered he'd forgotten his stick bag. Instead of panicking, he went outside and fashioned some homemade drumsticks from tree branches with a penknife. Granted, I'm sure they didn't

sound or rebound like a store-bought 5B, but he made it through the gig.

Plus, you don't really *need* every piece of your kit in order to make compelling music. There are a lot of successful drummers who often play with just a snare, a bass drum, and a cymbal. Even the Who's Keith Moon often played without a hi-hat. Try it sometime! I recently saw a well-known artist in concert, and his drummer played a miked cajon and a tambourine that he shook with his foot. Even without a dozen cymbals, five toms, and a gong, this guy got the job done—and done well. There was nothing lacking in the overall sound of the band.

My point is that even if you do forget a piece of equipment, you can make it through the gig. To lower your anxiety even more, though, you may want to keep a few extra pieces of gear in your car for backup. I always have a pair of drumsticks duct-taped to a small shelf in the back of my car. I also carry an extra snare head in case I break the one on my drum, and I bring an extra kick drum pedal. (I have a case that holds two.) And I suggest that you internalize this simple yet powerful mantra: "Whatever happens, I can handle it."

You also fear forgetting songs in your repertoire. I have some bad news: Anxiety blocks concentration, which only makes the situation worse. But if you can relax and bring yourself down a few points on your anxiety scale, the likelihood of forgetting parts to a song will be reduced. There are many easy-to-learn relaxation techniques available in print and online. Just do a little research to find one that works for you.

Another way to ward off the anxiety is to make sure the songs are well rehearsed. Then, when you get to the gig, remind yourself of that fact. In my private counseling practice, I once worked with a bass player who had the same issue. He found the technique of telling himself that he was merely a conduit for the music, that music was an entity that flowed through



him, to be quite effective in reducing his anxiety.

The lead singer in my current band is also new to playing gigs. A few weeks ago, he blanked on the words in the first song of our opening set. Over the mic I asked the audience, "How about we give him a do-over?" They crowd laughed and applauded, and the singer launched into the first song again. This time he nailed it. I'm assuming you haven't forgotten parts of any of these songs. Do you know how to predict the future? Look to the past. You have no evidence to believe you'll stumble. Think of *fear* as an acronym: "false evidence appearing real."

In closing, remember to check your breathing. When we get scared, we sometimes hold our breath. Our body then goes into a state of alarm and our anxiety spikes. Keep breathing, keep playing, and you'll be fine.



Bernie Schallehn has been a drummer and percussionist for over forty-five years. He holds a master's degree in counseling psychology and, while in private practice, held the credentials of a certified clinical mental health counselor and a certified alcohol and substance abuse counselor.



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COLLECTOR'S CORNER

William S. Hart Snare

The Most Costly Drum in the World?

by Harry Cangany

In 1915, motion pictures were silent, and a middle-aged actor from New York, William S. Hart, became America's favorite western movie hero and would remain so for ten years. Hart and his films were noted for their real locales and characters, devoid of the glitzy costumes and emphasis on stunts that would come later. Hart appeared to be a serious man, and each story had a moral to it.

In 1921, Hart married, and his only child, William S. Hart Jr., was born the next year. For his son's third birthday, Hart wanted a special gift—a one-of-a-kind snare. His request to the dealer was to “secure the best drum money could buy.” It would take some time to build such a instrument. In the meantime, the store sold him a gold, engraved 4x14 Ludwig & Ludwig Triumphal. I bought that drum in 1990 from William F. Ludwig II, and it came with a desk plaque that referred to it as the “William S. Hart Drum.” I asked Mr. Ludwig why he had Hart's drum, and he didn't know.

I believe Hart paid \$115 for the Triumphal and took it while he waited for the factory to build the perfect drum for his son. That young Bill would have something in September for his birthday. (William S. Hart also owned Billy the Kid's guns and had custom-engraved Colt revolvers made, so a specially commissioned snare drum would not be unexpected.)

Using the Triumphal as a starting point, Hart had the custom drum made. It cost \$650, more than five times the price of the Triumphal and a full ten to twelve times more than a normal Ludwig metal snare.

The new drum would be the same

size as the Triumphal, but with a solid silver shell and gold and silver plating. It was also adorned with a recurrent motif—swastikas. Keep in mind that this was 1925, which was eight years before Adolf Hitler came to power and eleven years before the world became aware of the Nazi Party at the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin. Native American tribes, as well as other ancient civilizations from around the world, used the swastika as a sacred symbol for strength and good luck thousands of years before Hitler was

titled “The Most Costly Drum in the World” and included a black-and-white photo of the drum and a picture of Hart dressed as a cowboy.) This special-edition newsletter was not for the public but for Ludwig dealers. The company was pleased and proud to talk about the three months of labor it took to make the world's finest snare, which involved craftsmen working 150 hours on the engraving and brushing.

I have been in touch with the Hart family. The drum still exists and is a cherished legacy to them. The William S.

Hart snare came with a gold-plated stand, gold-plated wires, and two pairs of sticks with gold caps.

Southern California Music in Los Angeles was the dealer that sold the custom snare to Hart.

My suspicion is that they took back the Triumphal when the new drum was delivered. Since they could no longer sell the Triumphal as new, my guess is that the store returned it to the Ludwig factory. Once at the factory, the Triumphal was put on display with the “William S. Hart Snare Drum” nameplate.

The story behind these two unique drums was a long time in the making. I started researching the real William S. Hart snare in 1994. I knew it had to exist, but it wasn't until twenty years later that I was able to speak to Hart family members to confirm that they still had it.

The last time a Triumphal sold, it went for more than \$50,000. What would a drum that cost five and a half times a Triumphal in 1925, one that was specifically commissioned by a movie star, go for today? Only time will tell, if and when the Hart family decides to put it up for sale.



Hart's one-of-a-kind 1925 All Gold snare came adorned with swastikas, which prior to being appropriated to represent the Nazi Party were universal symbols for life and good luck. Swastikas were also commonly used by cowboys (like those Hart portrayed in films) and Native American tribes to ornament clothing, blankets, and saddles until the conclusion of WWII in 1945, at which time the symbol became universally forbidden.

born. Hart, who became aware of the original meaning of the swastika through his acting work in western films, chose to add the symbol to his drum as a sign of blessings to his son—not as an implication of anti-Semitism, as it would come to represent at the onset of World War II in 1939. There is also a heart-shaped plaque of solid silver on the drum shell, which reads, “Bill Hart, Jr., from his dad on his third birthday, Sept 6, 1925.”

Ludwig & Ludwig published a special edition of its newsletter, “The Ludwig Drummer,” to showcase this instrument on the front cover. (The story was



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Yamaha Absolute Hybrid Drumset

With an excellent combination of attack, depth, and decay, plus a wide tuning range and supreme sensitivity, these drums provide everything you could need...and then some.

Since its introduction at the 2014 NAMM Show, Yamaha's new Absolute Hybrid series has been surrounded by a great deal of buzz. I was excited to get my hands on a kit and put it through its paces. The drums we checked out include 8x10 and 9x12 toms, a 15x16 floor tom, an 18x22 bass drum, and a 6x14 snare, all in a beautiful, flawless pink champagne sparkle lacquer. The finish is deep and lustrous and takes on the appearance of gold, silver, and even orange under stage lights.

The toms are fitted with 2-ply Remo Clear Emperor batters and single-ply Clear Ambassador bottoms, while the kick drum sports a Clear Powerstroke 3 batter and a Smooth White Powerstroke 3 front head. The snare has a Coated Ambassador batter and a Hazy Ambassador bottom. The toms and snare feature aluminum die-cast hoops, and the toms are fitted with Yamaha's new YESS III mounts. All of the drums also come with the company's quick-release Hook lug.

Absolute Hybrid drums differ from the rest of Yamaha's product line in that each shell has a core ply of wenge (a dense hardwood native to Africa) sandwiched between plies of North American maple. Yamaha's literature on the series says that the goal was for the drums to "perform at all dynamic levels." We decided to put this to the test. Over almost a month, I used the kit in every situation I'm currently working in, which included gigs in small spaces where brushes and multirods were necessary, as well as larger shows in 2,000-seat rooms where I'm basically required to aim for the floor.

I focused on the bass drum first. Starting out by leaving the front head intact (no hole) without muffling, I found that the drum had a big, round, and full yet controlled tone at all volumes. It wasn't too boomy and had an excellent combination of attack and depth from where I was sitting. It possessed a lot of sensitivity as well. I had a friend sit in on a gig while I listened to the kit from the front, and the kick sat perfectly in the mix: clear, full, and punchy. I'm betting that the ten strategically placed vent holes in the shell also contributed to the lack of "chatter" occurring when I buried the beater.

Then, before playing a venue where every drum is close-miked, I ported the front head with a small hole at the five o'clock position and put an hourglass pillow inside the drum. With the port and the pillow just slightly touching each head, the drum had a commanding presence. It produced a fat, meaty punch that required little work to dial in, and it had enough low end to shake the walls. With other 18"-deep drums, I've found that I've had to work harder to move the air inside the shell. Not so much with the Absolute Hybrid kick. Again, perhaps it's because of the ten vent holes, but the drum felt "faster" than what I expected.

The venue where I was playing does live webcasts, so I was able to check out recordings of the kit the next day. Even in a basic board mix these drums sang. The toms had all the warmth, sensitivity, and fatness you'd expect from maple, along with crispness—a clear, bright tone that made them cut effortlessly through two loud



guitarists and a bass player who seems to have lost a lot of hearing in his low register. I was especially impressed with the big, fat tone that came from the floor tom. I was able to drop the tension to that of a low growl without the drum letting me down. The Hook lugs held tight with no rattle, even at low tensions.

The Absolute Hybrid snare had plenty of crack and projection, with a meaty bark and a wide tuning range. I tuned it way down and went at it with multirods and brushes, and it still had a nice, crisp presence. Cranked up, it offered a cutting bark that couldn't be ignored. The Q-type strainer evoked the feel and look of a boutique item and did its job flawlessly. While I would have preferred a little more shell tone while playing rimclicks, the die-cast hoops produced a pleasant bell-like quality, and they added a nice metallic ping to the throaty rimshot sound. The hoops also contributed to the cutting attack of the toms.

The kit possessed a wide tuning range and responded with

great sensitivity at all tensions. Plainly put: All of the Absolute Hybrid drums sounded EQ'ed for optimal tone, and the sound engineer at the venue said he didn't need to do much to get them sounding great through the PA. I heard similar comments about the kit from other engineers in different venues. The drums spoke clearly and with more authority than any maple kit I've ever played, possibly due to the wenge core ply. The list price for an Absolute Hybrid kit in this configuration is \$5,720.

Nick Amoroso



Bosphorus Ari Hoenig Signature Lyric Series Cymbals

Designed in collaboration with a modern jazz great, this new lineup comprises highly distinctive yet musical cymbals.

I was quite interested to get my hands on the new Lyric series from the Turkish company Bosphorus, designed in close collaboration with modern jazz heavyweight Ari Hoenig. For those not yet introduced, Hoenig has a fiercely individual approach to jazz drumming, which is borne out in the character of this cymbal set.

The Lyric series consists of a 23" ride, a 21" sizzle ride with three rivets, and 14" hi-hats. Gorgeous hand hammering and lathing are evident on all of the cymbals, creating visually beautiful instruments.

It took a little while for me to figure out how the cymbals worked as a set, mainly because of the substantial difference in weight between the rides and hi-hats. Both ride cymbals are quite thin and bendable, and they possessed the characteristic edge wobble of classic thin rides. The hi-hats, however, are almost what I would consider a "rock" weight, as both top and bottom are stiff and heavy—certainly not your garden-variety jazz cymbals.

23" Ride

The 23" Lyric ride weighs 2,700 grams (the weight is stamped under the bell) and has wide lathing and distinct hand hammering on top and bottom that appears to be done with

two types of hammers. This was the "wettest" cymbal of the set, with a clear ping and a lovely dark wash. The low-profile, unhammered bell produced tones that were somewhat soft and muted, with an integrated quality often found on vintage handmade Turkish cymbals.

The 23" ride could be crashed easily on the edge, and the wash recovered quickly for time playing. The overall pitch was higher than I expected for a cymbal of this size, putting it closer to the range of 20" jazz rides.

One important note about the particular cymbal we were sent is that it had a distinct low undertone that continued to sustain once the original wash had decayed away. I'm not sure if this is something we can expect from all of the 23" rides Bosphorus produces for the Lyric line or if it's a characteristic of this specific cymbal, but several drummers who heard the ride in action also noticed this sustaining drone.

21" Sizzle Ride

The 21" Lyric ride weighs 2,200 grams. It's heavily hand hammered up to the final .25" of the edge and has what appears to be very light hairline lathing on top and bottom. It came with three



rivets that were spaced evenly around the circumference. Stick attack on this cymbal produced the coveted woody “tah” with a slightly drier sustain than the 23” ride, balancing nicely underneath the light, lush sizzle of the rivets. Bell sounds were clear and clanging, with a much more distinct tone than with the 23” model. Like the 23”, the 21” doubled nicely as a crash, with the decay of the rivets lasting several seconds before trailing off in a very controlled fashion.

14” Hi-Hats

On the other end of the spectrum, the 14” Lyric hi-hats were much brighter, louder, and cutting than the rides. The top and bottom cymbals feature fine lathing that’s reminiscent of the grooves on a vinyl record, plus only light evidence of hand hammering. The bottom cymbal weighs 1,377 grams and the top is 1,070. Perhaps the most noticeable feature of these hi-hats was the authoritative and hissing “chick” sound they produced when closed with the foot pedal. They featured a very clear “tick” sound when held closed and played with the tip of the stick, and a slight bit of darkness entered the wash when they were played open. While these were brighter cymbals than I expected, one nice difference between them and other heavy hi-hats I’ve played is that there wasn’t any of that whining over-ring that sometimes occurs. This was an extremely crisp pair of hats.

As a Group

With the Lyric cymbals as a set, the combination of the loud, bright clang of the hi-hats and the large, thin, dark roar of the rides immediately brought to mind Tony Williams during his *Believe It!* fusion era. I heard a very wide spectrum of sound coming from the individual cymbals, where each clearly had its own distinct character, as opposed to the set blending together into a homogeneous group.

To my ears, the 21” Lyric ride was the most versatile of the lot. I would feel comfortable bringing it to a singer-songwriter gig, a quiet Americana session, or any situation where a darker, quieter ride is needed to support the music. The hi-hats were a different story. They could work well in a louder amplified situation, where you want cymbals that can cut through the band with perfect clarity, like in modern R&B or gospel. And if you’re seeking an



undeniable “chick” sound for modern jazz playing, definitely give these a listen. Just look elsewhere if you’re searching for that dark, papery Papa Jo Jones–type sound.

I do have a bit of a reservation concerning the 23” ride, due to the strong undertone that it emanated. I’d be very interested to hear more examples of this model to see if that characteristic is universal or if it’s a result of the one-of-a-kind nature of handmade cymbals. Either way, that tone could be troublesome for some players, especially in low-volume situations without a lot of amplified instruments to drown it out. Also note that a 23” ride will not fit in many standard cymbal bags.

Knowing what a singular artistic vision Ari Hoenig possesses, it doesn’t surprise me that the cymbals in his signature set are not immediate no-brainers on a mass-market level. These are somewhat specialized and unique models that might not be for everyone. But they are beautifully crafted, and the 21” sizzle ride and 14” hi-hats have a lot more to offer beyond a specialized modern jazz setting. As a final note, I would urge you to audition these cymbals in person, rather than simply ordering a set from a mail-order company and expecting them to be exactly like what we reviewed here. These are individually handmade instruments, so some variance from cymbal to cymbal is to be expected.

Dylan Wissing

Log on to moderndrummer.com for a video demo of these cymbals.

Angel Drums Akaju Mahogany and Inox Steel Snare Drums

Precise construction, professional performance, and innovative hoops make for a very impressive first showing from this custom-shop newcomer.

The custom drum market is growing rapidly, with companies churning out products that are not only beautiful but also innovative. Founded in 2011, Angel Drums produces quality custom pieces made in Hungary by master craftsman Zoltan Angel. Each component is manufactured in house with impeccable attention to detail, including the hand-machined, solid brass hardware, cast bronze throw-offs, and patent-pending stainless steel hoops. We were sent two visually and tonally impressive snares to check out: a 6.5x14 segment-shell Akaju mahogany and a 6.5x13 Inox stainless steel.

Akaju Mahogany

The Akaju mahogany snare has a solid, segment-style shell and weighs around 8 pounds. The wood grain is coated with a glossy finish, giving the drum a holographic look—similar to what you'll find on a high-end PRS electric guitar. Once I got beyond the gorgeous aesthetics, I played the drum across a wide tuning range, taking the Remo Coated Ambassador batter from fairly low to quite high. (The Akaju came with a Hazy Ambassador bottom head.)

Tuned relatively low, the drum had a snappy response with a significant amount of rebound for such a loose tension. The tone was thick and woody with some added bark, which worked well. Tightening the batter up to a medium tuning resulted in even better stick response. The drum was very easy to roll on and felt soft on the hands, and its tone had solid body throughout the entire dynamic range. Rimclicks also had great depth and a strong attack that cut right through the fuzzy sounds of my rock trio.

When I took the Akaju mahogany into a higher tuning range, it began to remind me of a classical snare drum in that it was



sensitive yet explosive. It articulated the softest and loudest strokes with ease. At lower volumes, there was more body to the tone, and at mezzo forte (medium loud), high-end overtones started to blend into the mix. One final crank of the tension rods offered up some great Latin characteristics when I played the drum with the snares off. Even at a very high tension, it was extremely dynamic, with more pop and crack than before.

Throughout its entire tuning range, the Akaju snare had a dry spot in the center of the head that was really appealing. When struck there, it sounded as if the perfect amount of dampening had been applied.

Inox Stainless Steel

The 6.5x13 Inox stainless steel snare has a shell with a high level of chromium, protecting against rust and corrosion. I tested this drum, which weighs around 14 pounds and also comes in 5.5x14 and 6.5x14 versions, with a Remo Coated Emperor batter and an Ambassador bottom.

While the Inox had definite metallic qualities, the thick 3 mm shell and brass hardware added warmth and smoothness not typically associated with steel. And at a low tuning, the drum produced a musky vintage sound with a lot of tone and body. If a muscle car moonlighted as a snare drum, this would be it. Tensioning the batter head up to medium resulted in a greater attack, and the volume output jumped up quite a bit as well.

At a high tuning, the Inox still retained some depth, but higher overtones and a cracking attack were now dominant. Although I usually prefer a medium and lower tuning range for my snares, playing rimclicks on this drum in this range was



divine. What happens when you crank up a steel snare? It gets loud, makes a fierce attack, and cuts through just about anything. That's precisely how the Inox performed.

The Hardware

The patent-pending Angel hoops used on these drums are hand rolled from high-grade, single-flange steel. The tension rods fit into little half moons that are welded onto the outer side of the hoop and hang below, allowing the hoop to sit evenly on the bearing edge and hold the drumhead firmly in place.

Angel hoops can be used on practically any drum with standard lug spacing. I wanted to see if they made a difference on a drum I was familiar with, so I swapped out the top hoop on my 1960s Ludwig Supra-Phonic with one of Angel's. To my surprise, the drum changed in both feel and sound. The old batter head felt brand-new, with a ton of snap, and the tone was greatly improved. Very cool!

All other Angel hardware is machined from solid brass and bronze. The lugs are threaded completely through, so they don't require any springs or other potentially rattling parts. The tension rods are always in contact with the threads, which provides extra gripping power to prevent the rods from detuning. The solid-bronze throw-off was super-durable, and the bottom component, where the snare wires attach, swivels to ensure even placement on the

snare bed. My only complaint is that I wasn't able to adjust the snare tension while the snares were engaged. (The company is working on a new version that's adjustable.)

Another unique feature of Angel drums is the symmetrical venting. The company has done away with the single eyelet vent and added tiny holes under each lug. The holes are almost imperceptible and, according to the company, result in a 30 percent improvement in both volume and projection. It's hard to say if this is an accurate measurement, since I wasn't able to compare our review models with an identical drum featuring a traditional eyelet hole, but it does make sense, even with my basic understanding of physics.

Summing Up

The Akaju mahogany and Inox steel models are top-shelf instruments that look *and* sound great. They're for players who are looking for versatile, responsive drums. As with any high-end musical instrument, they come with a pretty steep price tag—the Akaju mahogany is \$1,379.99, and the Inox steel is \$1,119.99—but you get an amazing drum as well as a lifetime warranty. If you're not in the market for an entirely new snare but would like to upgrade your current one, I encourage you to check out the Angel hoops. You won't regret it!

Ben Lauffer

KickPort Complete Bass Drum System

The KickPort/FX system provides added attack and depth, and you don't have to worry about cutting the portholes yourself.

KickPort, the maker of the nifty bass drum port attachment designed to emphasize the lower frequencies of the resonant head for a perceived deeper sound, is now offering a complete system comprising various Remo or Evans drumheads with a preinstalled KickPort on each head. The resonant head (we were sent a Remo Ebony Ambassador) comes with the original 4"x4" KickPort attached at the four o'clock position, and the batter head (in our case a Remo Clear Powerstroke 3) comes with a smaller 2"x2" FX port attached at the two o'clock position.

Having checked out the KickPort when it was first introduced a few years back, I knew it would help minimize overtones, focus the fundamental pitch, and give the drum more punch. But I had no idea what to expect from the FX batter-side attachment. The company claims that it "reduces high frequencies and removes unwanted overtones and over-ring to add clarity and focus." To me, this sounds like a win-win combo for drummers who like to play a wide-open bass drum but also want the sharper attack you get when using internal muffling (pillow, blanket, foam, etc.) or heavily dampened drumheads.

We tested the bass drum system on an 18x22 midlevel birch bass drum, which was outfitted with a Remo Clear Powerstroke 3 batter and an Ebony Powerstroke 3 resonant with a 4" porthole. Before swapping out the heads, we played and recorded the drum as is, with no internal muffling, to establish a baseline for comparison.



The drum sounded surprisingly punchy, with a plastic-like attack and decent low end, but it had a noticeable basketball-like "boing" as well.

Swapping out the batter for the FX head yielded a similar sound but with a more focused attack and less midrange and low-end rumble. (The "boing" was still present.) The drum also felt more solid to play, and the beater didn't flutter off the head as much as it did with the original unported batter. When I swapped out the PS3 resonant for the Ebony Ambassador that had the KickPort installed, the drum had a lot more sustain and boom, mainly due to

the fact that the Ebony Ambassador doesn't have the tone control ring found on the PS3.

With the FX system installed, the bass drum sounded deeper and boomier, with a lot of low end and snappy attack, but it wasn't as controlled as it was with the regular Powerstroke 3 heads. If I were going to use this system, I'd most often need to add some muffling inside the drum to dampen the sustain of the resonant head. Or I'd opt for a version with a Powerstroke 3 head instead of the Ambassador, which is also available. Either way, the KickPort/FX bass drum system is worth checking out if you're looking to get a little more attack and depth from your drum without having to sacrifice volume and sustain due to excessive muffling. The list price is \$84.99.

Michael Dawson

Carmichael Drum Throne

The most important seat in the house just got better—for your back.

The Carmichael throne is an excellent option for anyone who has to spend a lot of time sitting on the job, as we drummers do. Its aim is to relieve the lower-back pain and fatigue brought on by the compression of the spine that you feel after prolonged periods on just about any other seating surface.

In April of 2012, I suffered a severe back injury, one that required extensive surgery and rehabilitation. I wasn't able to find any relief, even with the cushiest round or bicycle-type thrones I had. Then I came across the Carmichael throne. It arrived pre-drilled for my existing Roc-n-Soc base, so setup was a snap.

As soon as I sat on the Carmichael, I noticed a difference: no compression of the spine, and significantly less pain and fatigue. Due to the design of the throne, which involves a channel running down the center of the seat, my weight was essentially transferred from my tailbone to my hips. Thanks to this throne, I was able to get back on the drums with significantly less pain in just a little over two months, after a major surgery that I've seen sideline drummers for half a year or more.

The seat top we received has a .875" spindle mount that fits Tama, Gibraltar, DW, and most other throne bases and sells for \$210.78. The throne with a spindle base is \$299.99, and a version with a hydraulic base is \$333.99. The pre-drilled holes fit Carmichael's own mount as well as those made by Roc-n-Soc, and the mount has holes pre-drilled to fit a Roc-n-Soc backrest.

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Nick Amoroso



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Zoom H6 Handy Recorder

For hassle-free stereo or up to six-channel multitrack recording without the need for a computer, this super-portable device is a true standout.

Most people know me from my work in sample production. That said, I also get a lot of questions about recording without a computer, a topic I've been wrestling with for a few years. As luck would have it, Zoom recently released the H6, which allows you to do just that. You'll still need a computer for editing and mixing the recordings, but the H6 includes a simple version of Cubase that works on the majority of computers available today. This article will serve as a review of the Zoom H6 as well as a how-to on recording without a computer.

The Gear

We received the Zoom H6 Handy Recorder and accessory kit. This includes the H6, an XYH-6 ("XY stereo") microphone element, an MSH-6 ("mid/side") microphone element, an EXH-6 ("external XLR/TRS") module for connecting up to four additional microphones, a remote control, a foam windscreen, an ENG-type windscreen, a mic-stand mounting adapter, and all of the necessary cables. The pieces fit into a hard plastic case that offers complete protection for the main recording unit and the two stereo elements.

The Session

I set up my Dunnett Ti set to record with this new gear, placing the H6 on an overhead stand using the microphone mounting adapter. The position was about 7' off the ground and over the bass drum, pointing toward the throne. (See photo on page 31.) Next I added individual microphones on the bass drum, snare, and two toms. For this review I decided to use common drum mics, including a Shure SM57 on the snare, a Sennheiser 421 on the bass drum, and Sennheiser e604 tom mics. I then recorded two different passes. The first pass utilized the XYH-6 XY stereo microphone element, which has two settings for the stereo spread: 90 and 120 degrees. In the small room where I was recording, 90 degrees was the best choice. For the second pass I used the MSH-6 mid/side microphone element.

The stereo microphone elements feature a built-in preamp that has a dial for gain control. This is what you use to set the level. All I had to do was arm the tracks and adjust the gain so that the red light didn't flash. I then referred to the meter graphics on the H6 to fine-tune the recording level. With the H6 in an overhead position, I had a decent amount of gain to work with. The MSH-6 element required me to move the unit back a bit farther from the drumset.

Each of the other four external mic inputs features a dial for the preamp level and a -20 db pad. For this recording session I chose to engage the pad so I could increase the gain on the preamp a bit. I did all of this initial setup without opening the manual, which proved that the H6 is very easy to operate.



The Sound

The XY stereo element offered exceptional stereo perspective and sounded very natural to me. I'm confident that this will be suitable for most people working in a small bedroom or basement drum room. Each instrument was clear in the stereo field, and the 90-degree XY setting minimized slap-back echo from the walls on either side of the set. The microphones in the XY element are also mounted in a position in which phasing is not an issue.

Next, I added the direct microphones for each drum. This was as simple as plugging them in and setting the proper gain. Again, the H6 captured a clear representation of the entire kit. The next thing I did was import the files into my computer so I could analyze them in the included Cubase software.

Once I attached the H6 to the computer with the included USB cable and powered it on, the H6's screen gave me a choice of SD card reader or audio interface. Selecting the SD card reader resulted in the H6's memory card showing up on my desktop. Clicking on that opened up folders that were easy to navigate to find the individual tracks that were recorded. From there, I just set up a Cubase session and imported the audio files. It was

a very easy experience.

Next, I changed the H6 to the mid/side capsule. I'm a big fan of recording with mid/side, but the theory behind how it works is an article topic unto itself. For the purpose of this review, let's just say that the sound was great. You don't need to worry about all of the technical things going on with this mic capsule; the H6 takes care of it for you. I really liked using the mid/side capsule, which turned out to be my favorite, because I have dedicated plug-ins designed to work with mid/side tracks.

I also decided to take the H6 out for some field recording. The unit is not very big, so it's convenient for carrying around to different locations. I tried recording a concert rehearsal with a church choir and pipe organ. I set the H6 on a large mic stand in front of the balcony, and the results were very clear. I then added two omnidirectional microphones at an even distance on either side of the H6. I swapped out the mid/side element for the EXH-6 external microphone preamp, which plugs into the H6 the same way as the microphone elements. This way, I could use my own mics to record the choir. The H6 did a great job of capturing the performance.

Overall

My overall impression of the H6 is that it's an excellent alternative to using a computer to capture audio. You'll still want to use the included Cubase software to edit and mix your recordings, but this is an excellent recorder, and we highly recommend it. The list price is \$499.

To hear audio samples of the H6, go to modern drummer.com. The file we've posted is broken into four sections. The first sample is



the XY stereo mic by itself. I then added the additional drum microphones. The third section is the XY capsule and separate drum microphones with a small amount of processing. The last part of the audio sample features the mid/side capsule, separate drum microphones, and a small amount of processing.

John Emrich

[Listen to the H6 in action at modern drummer.com.](http://modern drummer.com)



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Interview by John Martinez • Photos by Mothertone USA

The Wooten Brothers' Roy "Futureman" Wooten

Drums: Sleishman Pro series maple (no lugs) in walnut satin finish (modified by Mothertone USA)

- A. 5.5x14, 10-ply snare
- B. 9x12 tom
- C. 8x10 tom
- D. 6.5x13, 10-ply bubinga snare
- E. 16x20 upright bass drum with "f" holes cut into the shell
- F. 12x14 floor tom
- G. 14x16 floor tom

Cymbals: Sabian

- 1. 18" HHX Evolution O-Zone crash
- 2. 20" HH Manhattan ride
- 3. 14" HHX Evolution hi-hats
- 4. 22" HHX Manhattan ride
- 5. 16" HHX Evolution O-Zone crash

Heads: Remo Coated Controlled Sound snare batters and Hazy Ambassador bottoms, Clear Emperor tom batters and Clear Ambassador bottoms (floor toms are muffled with Drumtacs), and Clear Powerstroke 3 on both sides of bass drum

Hardware: Sleishman twin pedal (modified by Mothertone USA), DW 9000 series stands and cable hi-hat, Pearl bass drum pedal with Gibraltar Cajon Beater, Roc-n-Soc throne

Sticks: Regal Tip 5B and Gripped Thai model

Percussion: Swan Percussion cajon

Electronics: Korg Wavedrum

"I was hunting for excellent drums," Wooten says of his recent Sleishman setup. "I played these drums at the Summer NAMM Show and thought they had great tone. Before I was going out on tour, I knew I wanted to try this new drumset. I went to the Mothertone office and had a chance to try out the double pedals. I told Michael Turner of Mothertone, 'These work so good I'd like to see about getting the bass drum horizontal so I can [hit] the bottom head and the top.' It was an idea I had since high school. He said, 'Great. When do you want it?' I said, 'Two weeks. We're going on tour.' The race was on; I was stirring up trouble.

"The first thing Michael did was modify the pedals to beat upward to the bottom bass drum head. We started by trying to see if we could mount the bass drum sideways. We leaned it up against the couch, so I could sit down and imagine it. We didn't have the pedals done [at this point]. But if I could get to the bass drum just like I could get to the snare drum, that would open up the playing field of the drumset to a new horizontal place, which is something I have been trying to get to—where the bass drum is equal with the snare. The bass drum front head is real estate I've been trying to get to for years. As soon as we put the bass drum on its side, I could get to the bottom of it with my feet and the top with my hands. The bass drum had become a musical centerpiece.

"I began to attack another problem of the drumset, the hi-hat placement, by swinging it over to a low [left-side] ride position, and I moved the snare drum slightly to the left. It felt like a traditional drumset, but my hands are unlocked and uncrossed.

"The craziest idea was to cut 'f' holes in the bass drum just like a cello. Sleishman doesn't drill lugs into the shells. The insight was that when you mike the bass drum from the 'f' hole, you can hear the top and bottom heads with so much clarity.

"We were trying to live up to the Sleishman legacy, and when we said to [company founder] Don Sleishman that we cut into his shells, but in a way that [treated] the drum like a classical double bass, he said he was proud of us," Wooten concludes. "That meant a lot."





Keith Richards

Talk Is Cheap

On the Rolling Stones guitarist's solo debut, what Steve Jordan gave him wasn't just impeccable playing—it was a creative jolt at a time when he needed it most.

Fired up by a crack backing combo dubbed the X-Pensive Winos and by his anger over Mick Jagger's decision to put the Stones on the backburner for the second time in three years in order to focus on his solo career, Keith Richards, with his 1988 debut solo album, *Talk Is Cheap*, made the last Rolling Stones-associated project you would dare mention in the same breath as the band's classic work. Richards sounds wickedly inspired here, and it's not far-fetched to assume the chief source of that inspiration was his drummer, Steve Jordan, who coproduced and cowrote the album's eleven songs. Jordan's grooves, unfussy production, and songwriting chops brought focus to Keef's swagger and looseness, lighting a spark that encouraged Richards to stretch out beyond his boogie-and-blues comfort zone, and the results are consistently fantastic.

The trend-chasing Jagger would've killed to bring the kind of funk that Richards and Jordan do on the album-opening "Big Enough." Jordan begins playfully with a

snare crack on the "&" before 1, which leads into two bars of a pounding groove that features the bass drum on 1, 2, 3, and the "a" before 4. Then he falls naturally into a kick/snare/floor tom beat that dances with a slippery bass line from James Brown/Parliament-Funkadelic legend Bootsy Collins and anchors a sweet sax solo by another JB heavy, Maceo Parker. And you can be sure Mick would've loved a shot at singing "Make No Mistake," a steamy soul number that features the Memphis Horns and finds Jordan in full-on Al Jackson—at-Hi Records mode, bringing the 2 and 4 on a deep, fat snare and filling out the rhythm with a conga part lifted straight from the Al Green playbook.

Jagger was likely less enthused by "You Don't Move Me," Richards' scathing indictment of his longtime musical partner in the Stones. Jordan's simple pattern—straight fours on the kick underneath a taut rhythm tapped out on a muffled high-pitched snare and hi-hats—gives the stripped-down rocker a raw, harsh edge. The snare and hat accents weave through the hard-panned electric and acoustic guitars, while shakers rattle in the background; you can imagine Richards' demo for "Street Fighting Man" sounding similarly spare, loose, and ominous.

While Jordan's involvement spurs Richards to think beyond his roots, the guitarist certainly doesn't abandon them. One of the record's high points is the boogie-woogie shuffle "I Could Have Stood You Up," where Jordan shakes, rattles, and rolls like he's backing up Chuck Berry circa 1957. His swinging right hand alternates between ride cymbal and rim, as he sits in the pocket while NRBQ bassist Joey Spampinato and Berry's piano player, Johnnie Johnson, do the walking (and former Stone Mick Taylor's guitar does some talking). Steve's choice of fills is perfect here—tumbling rolls on the snare and rack tom after the choruses and a series of staccato snare hits that alternately answer and accent Richards' lyrics. The



Talk Is Cheap (1988)

Big Enough • Take It So Hard • Struggle • I Could Have Stood You Up • Make No Mistake • You Don't Move Me • How I Wish • Rockawhile • Whip It Up • Locked Away • It Means a Lot

Keith Richards: guitar, vocals

Steve Jordan: drums, bass, guitar, vocals

Charley Drayton: bass, drums, vocals

Ivan Neville: keyboards

Waddy Wachtel: guitar

Plus guest musicians

Produced by Keith Richards and Steve Jordan

drums are right up front in the mix, so when Jordan smacks out those snare accents, you feel it.

Of course *Talk Is Cheap* has plenty of Stones-y moments. It is Keith, after all; it would sound like the Stones if he was playing a lute through an oscillating fan. And Jordan doesn't stray much from the classic blueprint on these songs, making straight time swing like Charlie Watts, albeit with his own unmistakable attack that's slightly more on top of the beat than Charlie is. Jordan's solid 4/4 pushes the jittery "Struggle," which features a tasty flurry of fills (notably the sweet combinations between the snare and high-pitched rack tom) that don't disturb the groove even a little bit. On the riff-based "Whip It Up" and "How I Wish," Jordan and X-Pensive Winos bassist Charley Drayton carve out their pocket in the spaces between Richards' slashing chords.

Keith Richards hasn't played with many drummers over the course of his iconic career. And there's a reason for that. The ones he's worked with most, Watts and Jordan, give him exactly what he needs.

Patrick Berkery

Hot Stuff

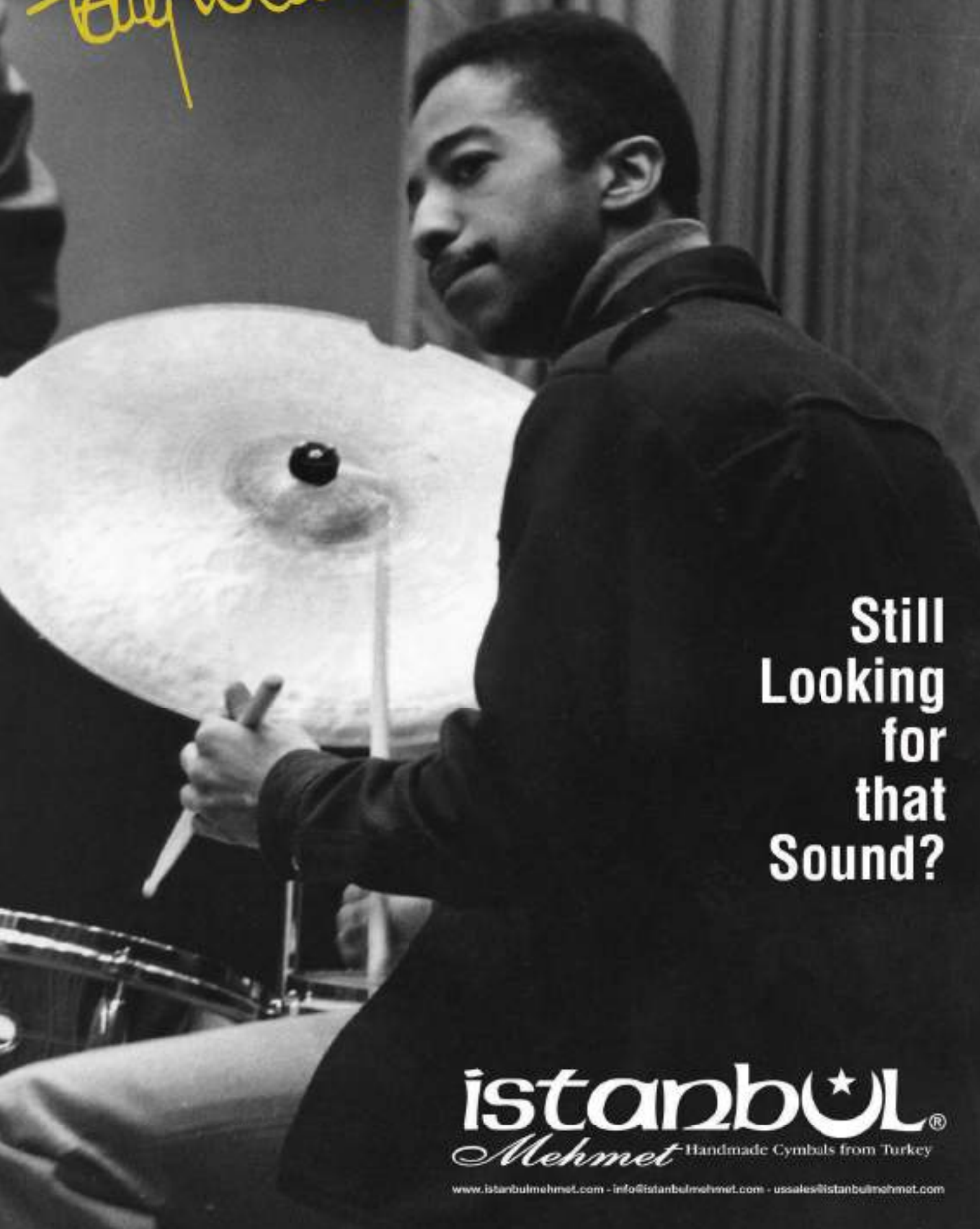
Turn the beat around. As if "Big Enough" wasn't funky enough, dig how Jordan flips the groove at the 2:40 mark, a quick four-bar burst that turns this funky song plain nasty on its way out the door.

Role reversal. It might sound like Jordan playing drums on the single "Take It So Hard," what with the cracking snare and insistent pulse. But it's actually bassist Charley Drayton laying down that slamming take. Jordan plays bass on this one and does a damn fine Bill Wyman impersonation by getting in some melodic licks during the ending jam.

Cool sounds. At a time when even the Stones were falling prey to the over-processed drum sounds of the day (see 1986's *Dirty Work*), Jordan emphasizes rustic tones on *Talk Is Cheap*. Snares buzz, brushes keep time on close-miked, muffled snare drums, and on the beautiful "Locked Away," Jordan offers quiet accompaniment on hi-hats, kick, and a deep-tuned rack tom.



Bey Williams



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Hellyeah's Vinnie Paul

Metal party-anthem heroes Hellyeah hit the road this past April supporting Avenged Sevenfold on an arena tour throughout Canada and the United States. Playing to capacity crowds of twelve to fifteen thousand stalwart metalheads each night proved to be the perfect way to kick-start momentum for the band's fourth studio album, *Blood for Blood*. Hellyeah fans might be surprised by the new material, though, which is somewhat of a departure from the Southern-tinged metal sound the group grew its roots with. *Blood for Blood* is a serious statement that runs the gamut of heavy, from the fast to the furious to the brooding, dark, and moody. "Heavy is not always measured in speed or angst or whatever," founding drummer Vinnie Paul says. "Sometimes it's measured in the darkness of the lyrics or the mood of a song."

"I've always played enough to keep drummers interested, but not so much that it goes over the average listener's head."

Blood for Blood required an adjustment of sorts for Paul, whose sonic assault on Pantera's classic albums represents, for many, a watershed moment in the evolution of metal drum sounds. The main instigator of this change, the drummer says, was producer Kevin Churko, who's worked with Five Finger Death Punch, Ozzy Osbourne, Slash, and Hinder, among others. Paul had previously produced or coproduced every release he'd played on, but he felt that in order to get the best performances from each member of the band, he had to focus his attention on playing and let Churko do his job. "It's difficult to be in the studio for sixteen to eighteen hours a day and focus on recording yourself as well as everybody else," Paul explains. "Sometimes you get a little too close to it. I recorded the demos, so we pretty much did preproduction, and I

found that Kevin's just an easy person to trust. I value his opinion, and his track record speaks for itself.

"The only thing Kevin had me do that I was leery about at first was bringing down the pitch of the snare drum," Paul adds. "He said that keeping it tuned higher competes with the vocals or any other featured instrument, and that he could make it louder and bigger in the mix with it tuned a bit deeper. We eventually found a happy medium—a little lower than I like and a little higher than what he likes. I think it really fit the sound of the band better."

Fans of Paul's signature powerhouse grooves and tasty fills will not be disappointed—and, true to form, there's one track on the record, "Say When," that's guaranteed to leave jaws agape. "That song was a challenge," Paul admits. "When I came up with that lick, I immediately recorded it and had an idea in my head of how I wanted the song to go. It's one of the most intense drum songs I've done since anything on [Pantera's breakout album] *Far Beyond Driven*. I'm really proud of it."

Paul has always focused on creating a deep pocket rather than competing for the limelight, which is one of the reasons he's got such an identifiable style. "A lot of drummers get carried away writing their parts for other drummers, and it's too much," he says. "It takes away from the music. I've always played enough to keep drummers interested, but not so much that it goes over the average listener's head."

And the secret to creating that famous pocket? Making each hit as intense as the one before it. "If I can't play something with lots of power, I won't do it!" Vinnie insists. "I stay away from ghost notes and things like that. I feel that I'm almost my own compressor in that way. I've always prided myself on realizing that the most important thing for the drums is to be the backbone of the band."

David Ciauro

Chris Vatalaro

There are very few drummers as busy as Chris Vatalaro. Since *MD* sat with Vatalaro in August 2009, when he was playing with the neo-Afrobeat collective Antibalas, the now London-based transplant has been chalking up album credits and road miles aplenty. Among his more notable recent projects are working with Mark Ronson on the official Coca Cola video for the London Olympics, appearing with Bat for Lashes on the popular British TV show *Later With Jools Holland*, and touring with Imogen Heap.

Perhaps most notably, Vatalaro appears on two releases by Underworld vocalist Karl Hyde and art-rock pioneer Brian Eno, *Someday World* and its quick follow-up, *High Life*. A recent performance of the song "Daddy's Car" on *Later*, viewable on the BBC's YouTube channel, offers a prime example of what the drummer can bring to the table, namely unusual but unfussy and hugely grooving support. "Brian operates with a pretty specific kind of intuition about what's going to work or not," Vatalaro shares. "Most of the time [when I'm called to do a session with him], I just go over there with what I can carry on the train. The first time I brought a snare drum and some shakers, and the next time I brought my little KAT trigger that I got in 1989 and a keyboard. I've been running my old pickups into my sound card and using that as a trigger with plug-in samplers. Another time I brought my old

"I never quite know what's coming with Brian Eno. It's cool, and I'm learning a lot."



Sariti

Slingerlands. I never quite know what's coming. It's cool, and I'm learning a lot. He has stuff to play along to—he just puts it on and I make up little parts. Brian's fun to play with. He'll stop a session to sing a rendition of 'El Paso' or maybe 'Everyday People' to keep stuff moving."

Working with a wide array of artists, Vatalaro explains, demands being open to anything and everything—such as being asked to play timpani, woodblocks, and vibes at Tanglewood while actress Sigourney Weaver recites Shakespeare. "You just have to be a quick learner, find out what the artist is interested in, and keep healthy chops-wise." **Bob Girouard**

Curved Air's Florian Pilkington-Miksa



Chris Tarrant

The beginnings of the progressive rock movement in the '70s were heady days indeed. Bands seemed to come out of the woodwork, uniquely blending and bending genres, adventurously jamming their way into the hearts of audiences on both sides of the Atlantic. One of the most

renowned early progressive groups was Curved Air, whose core lineup featured vocalist Sonja Kristina, violinist Darryl Way, keyboardist Francis Monkman, and drummer Florian Pilkington-Miksa.

Like many players from the original art-rock scene, Pilkington-Miksa wasn't interested in aping the drummers who came before him as much as paving his own way. "I was influenced by all sorts of different people," he says today, "but no one in particular more than any other. We were a progressive band and very aware of being innovative. What I played was very much affected by what I was actually physically able to play and think of at the time. I did not have a library of rhythms from which to choose, since I was just starting to play drums and made up a rhythm for each song as it came along. I very much played everything as I wanted to do it and as an expression of me, quite simply because that was the only way I could do it."

Though the original band began splintering in the early '70s (future Police

"I very much played everything as I wanted to, quite simply because that was the only way I could do it."

drummer Stewart Copeland took over the throne for a period in the mid-'70s), the group resurfaced sporadically and since 2008 has been relatively active, releasing a rerecording of songs from its heyday and a live album. This year saw the release of *North Star*, Curved Air's first major studio effort since 1976. The collection, while retaining some of the group's folk-rock and spoken-word traditions, also carves out new niches of sound and style. "I've met a lot of very loyal fans [at shows] who enjoy themselves as much as ever," Pilkington-Miksa says. "I've also met their children, who have grown up listening to their parents' music and quite evidently appreciate a wide range of music, which includes ours as well as the music of their own generation."

Bob Girouard



Stanton Moore

by "Pistol" Pete Kaufmann



Jerry Moran

New Orleans funk maestro Stanton Moore has challenged himself once again, this time by revisiting his jazz roots. *Conversations*, the drummer's first straight-ahead jazz album, not only showcases driving shuffles and impressive brushwork, it also represents a more sensitive, lighter-touched, and more dynamic Moore, who is widely known for his powerful fatback grooves with the modern funk band Galactic. *MD* wanted to know how Stanton aimed to raise his jazz game for this release.

MD: As a New Orleans musician, you were influenced by jazz. But Galactic's fan base might be in for a surprise with your new direction.

Stanton: It's kind of a reinvention. But at the same time it's a return to my roots. I started checking out jazz when I was around seventeen, eighteen years old. At that point I realized that if I could understand and play jazz, it would make me a better overall drummer. I started buying records, studying with Johnny Vidacovich, and playing in the jazz band in high school. Then I went to Loyola University and got into the big band and combos there; it became very much a part of my development.

But then I became known for Galactic and my trio as a funk and groove player. I was still playing occasional jazz gigs around New Orleans, though, and I was always studying and working on a lot of Elvin Jones, Philly Joe Jones, Max Roach solos, and Tony Williams stuff.

MD: How did *Conversations* come about?

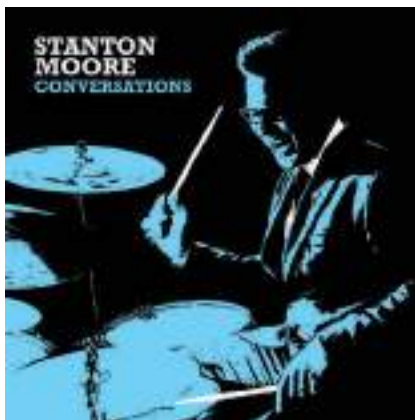
Stanton: What happened was I went through the whole *Groove Alchemy* [method book/DVD] project. That was almost a five-year process, practicing and transcribing all the stuff so I could demonstrate it on the video. It was a lot of work, and I was thinking, *I'm never going to do THAT again*. But, of course, a few weeks later I began thinking, *What's the next challenge?* I felt like I had put myself in a five-year doctoral program in funk and groove drumming, so I wanted to do the same thing with the jazz side of my playing. So I started taking lessons with Kenny Washington, and when I'd stop by Jeff Hamilton's house I'd pick up brushwork from him.

MD: What exactly did you work on with those two?

Stanton: With Kenny I wanted to find out more about Philly Joe Jones and the way Philly used the Charles Wilcoxon books to develop his vocabulary. Kenny would have me work on certain pieces, “Rhythmania,” “Paradiddle Johnny,” and “Roughing the Single Drag” in particular. He would have me play these pieces one measure at a time at a slow tempo, usually about 60 bpm. He would have me play the accents firm but play the unaccented notes as soft as possible. You can’t play the unaccented notes soft enough.

After working on these pieces like this, I started to internalize and memorize them, which made it much easier to recognize and quickly execute a lot of what I find in Philly Joe transcriptions. The stickings start to become intuitive as well. But maybe the most important benefit to practicing the Wilcoxon material this way was that I started to become much more comfortable playing at lower volume levels, and my touch and finesse started to improve.

With Jeff, we’re partners in Crescent Cymbals together, so we’ve gotten to



“Practicing the Wilcoxon material, I became much more comfortable playing at lower volume levels, and my touch and finesse started to improve.”

know each other that way. Jeff has had me come over to his house a few times to drink some wine and hang and check out his awesome view of the ocean. My first time there, I sat down at his drums to show him what I had been working on with brushes. He watched and

listened with wine in hand and a smile on his face, and he would say, “Yeah, but try to get a more lateral motion; get more snap out of your nudge in the left hand.” I said, “Show me,” and handed him the brushes. Jeff said, “Oh, it’s going to be like that, huh?” I said, “It’s going to be exactly like that!” We both laughed, and Jeff proceeded to show me some of the key elements of his brushwork, a lot of which comes from Philly Joe Jones’ book *Brush Artistry*. You really need someone who studied with Philly Joe to show you some of the strokes in that book, so Jeff taking the time to show me those things was invaluable information.

On one of my visits to Jeff’s house I asked him to check out my ride cymbal pattern and to pull no punches. After he tore me apart a little bit, he showed me how to play “the stroke,” which is the way he plays the ride cymbal. You drop the stick on the cymbal on beat 4, let it rebound for the skip beat, pick it up on beat 1, then repeat that process on beat 2. The key is to do this with a loose, open, relaxed grip, but not let it sound too lazy or undefined. After working on that and internalizing it, my ride cymbal playing has become more relaxed and

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#PLAYMORE

Stanton Moore

organic and has improved a good deal.

MD: You chose one of the best veteran New Orleans rhythm sections for your album, pianist David Torkanowsky and bassist James Singleton.

Stanton: Aside from "Driftin'" by Herbie Hancock, all the compositions on *Conversations* were written by New Orleans composers, including my tune "Tchefunkta." David and James played extensively with all of them, so they understand this music. These guys know how to have a musical conversation when we play; nobody is "talking over" anyone, hence the title *Conversations*. But these tunes have also been the topic of conversation for New Orleans musicians for years, especially in the modern jazz realm. Songs like James Black's 5/4 "Magnolia Triangle" are still kicking people's asses today. Being able to play "Magnolia Triangle" is a rite of passage for any aspiring drummer in New Orleans. So even though the music may be considered more straight ahead, there is still my own personal connection to it.

MD: As well as rehearsing with your trio and shedding daily, you were refining your jazz playing by performing weekly at the New Orleans jazz club

Snug Harbor.

Stanton: I wanted to make sure it was right before I decided to record the album. Snug Harbor would record the gigs for me, so I would listen back to the recordings, take notes, and shed things. Some of it was dealing with challenging forms, dealing with solo sections like the 5/4 vamp with the hits on the "&" of 4 in "Magnolia Triangle." At other times it might be my articulation during an up-tempo song. In fact, some of the up-tempo stuff I didn't put on the record because I didn't think it was ready yet. Maybe it will make it to the next record, but the weekly gig gave me an opportunity to tweak things, like a workshop. I had a weekly outlet to perform the music, listen back to it, shed it, and refine and improve it.

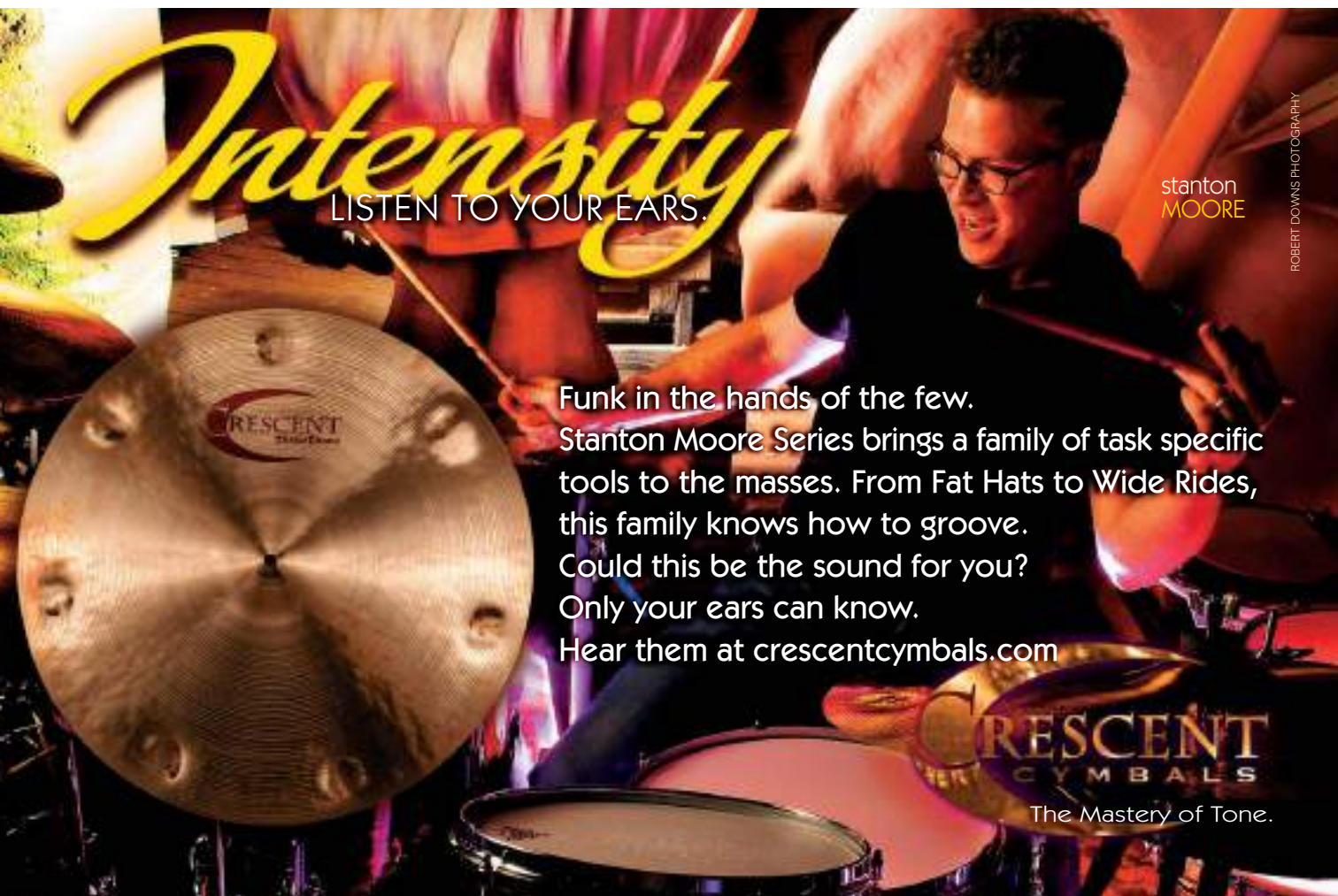
MD: This is a very listenable and melodic jazz album, unlike a lot of modern jazz albums that focus on complexity, tricky arrangements, and chops.

Stanton: That was a major concern, because I didn't want to just spit out a record of "Look what I can do!" When my wife and I are home, we listen to a lot of Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald. Sometimes we try to put on

other things, like recently when I put on Coltrane as I was making morning coffee. Of course I was diggin' it, but she came out of the bedroom saying, "This is a bit chaotic for me first thing in the morning." When we had dinner parties we kept getting back to Louis and Ella, and I wondered why. Because it's melodic, and it creates a vibe. It's not too energetic, hectic, or distracting. That's what I wanted to accomplish with this record. Like you said, there are some great complex albums out there, but the question is: Who is going to listen to it, and when are they going to listen to it? I tried to make this an album you could listen to in life. All the songs were picked appropriately for this album; there were a lot of other great songs, but they just didn't fit.

MD: Can we expect any tours anytime soon with your jazz trio?

Stanton: Absolutely. My manager and I are exploring which jazz venues would work based around Galactic's touring schedule. I'd like to do three nights at a venue, and then possibly do a weekend drum camp so I'm in town for five or six days. That's the model I'm trying to put together, as well as doing some festivals.



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#PLAYMORE

ROBBO



Linkin Park's drummer is bursting with enthusiasm about the band's new album, *The Hunting Party*—and with good reason. Recording it was his biggest professional challenge to date, and the results are downright monumental.

Story by Ken Micallef
Photos by Alex Solca

URDON



Most bands with a winning track record eventually hit a creative wall, where the fork in the road to the future leads either to reinvention or a rehashing of their old hits. Linkin Park's *The Hunting Party* is clearly an example of the first approach, as it finds the multiplatinum group shedding its commercial skin for a raging rock fest that includes forays into punk and grindcore and some serious shredding.

No one is happier about the change than Rob Bourdon. "Being in a successful band, we have our hits to play and draw from, so it's really easy to become comfortable," the thirty-five-year-old drummer says from his home base in Los Angeles. "It's like finding the time to play drums went away for a while. Now, with *The Hunting Party*, it's like we're starting all over again. I got back that inspiration that made me want to be a drummer in the first place—spending hours locked away in the practice room in my studio, finding those moments where you discover something new or play something that surprises you. Every musician really needs that to keep going."

The Hunting Party may alienate fans who are fond of the band's more electronic-infused songs and studio-slick productions. But for those who like their rock raw and rebellious, the album is a welcome return to form. Sure, Bourdon and Co. went aggro on the dreamscape-meets-doomsday single "Somewhere I Belong" (from 2003's *Meteora*), the flagellating military smackdown of "No More Sorrow" (2007's *Minutes to Midnight*), and even the electronic-friendly "The Catalyst" (2010's *A Thousand Suns*). But *The Hunting Party* is a mad beast compared to those puppies.

From the opening, growling, spasmodic shouts of "Keys to the Kingdom," Linkin Park sounds like a band that has gone through forty days and forty nights of hell on earth and survived to report the bloodletting. Guitars thunder, vocals spew like apocalyptic messages, and Bourdon levels his rhythms so hard and heavy, you hope his health insurance is paid up.

Recorded entirely to tape for a meaty analog sound and with less dependence on Pro Tools grids or programmed DJ beats, Bourdon's rhythms pummel, his ideas soar; the drumming is a thing of beauty smashing against a wall of grinding metal intent. The knock-kneed beat of "All for Nothing" is both funky and smart, with the song's metal-pipe-rattling bridge resounding like a war chant. Bourdon is front and center throughout *The Hunting Party*, from the progressive drum corps fantasia of "Guilty All the Same" and the Zigaboo-on-steroids funk of "Wastelands" to the sweetly anthemic, low-slung thrash of "Rebellion." You can hear it in his voice, and you can definitely feel it in his drumming: Rob Bourdon is one bad...shut your mouth!



MD: Linkin Park reinvents itself on *The Hunting Party*. It sounds like a rock band in love with music again.

Rob: Yeah, that's the main headline. As a drummer I'm very excited about the new record. Our last couple records were more electronic heavy, especially with the live drums playing more of a supplemental role in the way that we created and recorded the parts. The new album is

exactly the opposite. It's all about the live performances.

MD: Why did the band change direction to a more live approach?

Rob: It just felt like the right thing to do. One of the things about our band is that we like to change what we're doing from album to album. There have been different phases. There was live recording on *Minutes to Midnight*; that album involved a couple

years in the studio renting all different types of gear and really experimenting. Then after finishing the last album [2012's *Living Things*] and touring, we really had this desire to go into the studio and play our instruments together. We missed hearing rock music out in the world.

When the band began, we were hearing a kind of music in our heads and imagining this music that didn't exist at the time. The



RECORDINGS

"A Line in the Sand," "Mark the Graves," "Rebellion," and "Guilty All the Same" from *The Hunting Party* /// "A Place for My Head" from *Live in Texas* (DVD) /// "Somewhere I Belong" from *Meteora* /// "The Little Things Give You Away," "No More Sorrow," and "In Pieces" from *Minutes to Midnight* /// "The Catalyst" from *A Thousand Suns*

more powerfully. That's one of the inspirations for me, translating electronic rhythms on the album to the live setting, which is more geared toward a rock band playing together. One of the goals was to capture more of that on record.

MD: "Guilty All the Same" begins with what sounds like a guitarist and a drummer jamming, recorded with very lo-fi equipment, and then the track blasts into the full studio version.

Rob: [Rapper/multi-instrumentalist] Mike Shinoda and I recorded that. We set up with the idea of trying to get the sound of a garage band, and we recorded in a tiny room off the control room. We put a couple mics over the drums, and the amp was in the room with me. We asked the tech not to tune the drums, so that they sounded like they'd been sitting in a garage for a long time. And we only used three mics in that small room.

All the drums were recorded live to tape, which was really exciting for me, and a lot of love and care went into the drums on this record. I'm playing a full take per song, beginning to end, recorded to tape to get a really great drum sound. That forced me to come into the studio so prepared that I could actually go on stage and play the songs. In the past we'd usually write the drum parts in the studio and then record them. Then we'd do a lot of editing to put the pieces together. But on this one it was more like playing the album live in front of an audience in the way it was captured.

MD: Was that true for the entire band or just the drums?

Rob: We recorded most of the vocals and guitars at Larrabee Sound Studios, and then we had a room at EastWest Recording Studios in Hollywood purely for drums. We wanted to have a really big room sound. Our engineer did some cool miking setups that gave the drums so many different options, from close miking and overheads to mics that were kind of staggered back through the room. It gave mixer Andy Wallace [Slayer, Nirvana, Foo Fighters] so many options. He's a legendary mixer, and

"When I was beginning I always learned to play the difficult music, the stuff that pushed me. We wanted to do that with this record —really think outside the box."

mainstream trends are very different now; rock has taken a backseat. We wanted to invigorate that music, and it felt like a really fun thing for us to do. It was also really challenging, guitar-wise and with the drumming. I spent a lot of time practicing. I hadn't done this kind of daily practice regimen in a while, and it felt really good to get back in there and push myself.

MD: The drums and the drumming sound

great on the new album. Where does the electronic element fit now?

Rob: I've always had sample pads and triggers, but we also added a whole electronic section to the live kit: six pads to my left to replicate electronic parts, and also DJ Joe [Hahn] is playing parts on pads. In a live setting, if a breakdown that has electronic elements comes in, we might play it differently so that it comes across

he really complemented our engineer. [Studio drum tech] Jerry Johnson brought in his drums, and we chose a specific snare and other drums for each song.

MD: What were the different drumsets that you used?

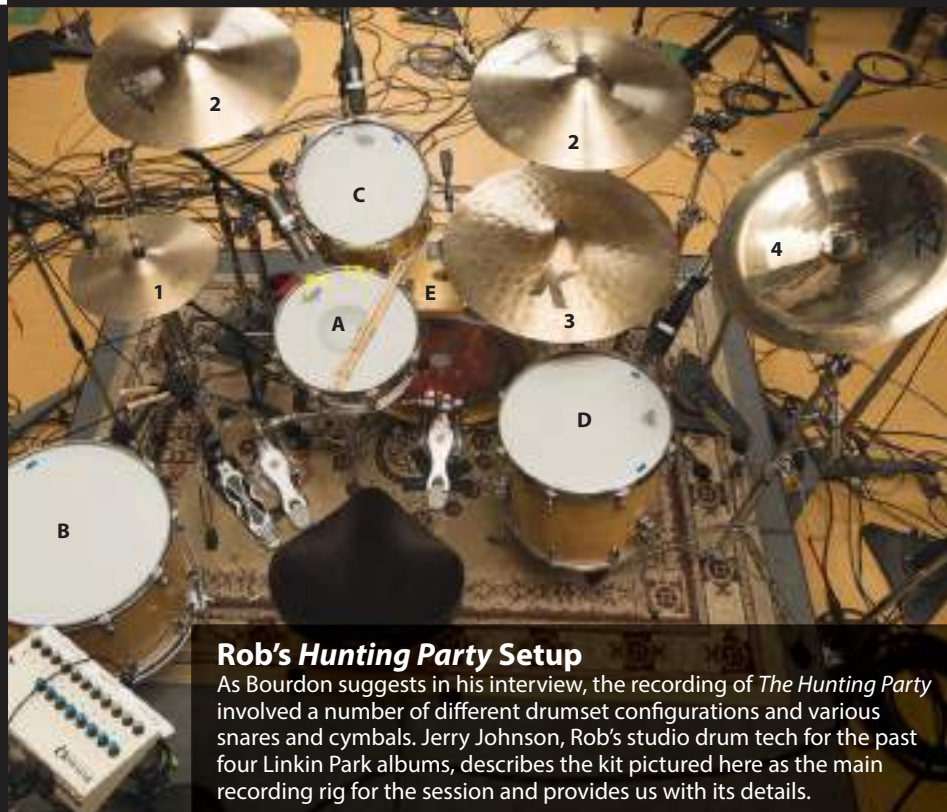
Rob: We used all kinds of vintage gear, including late-'70s and early-'80s Gretsch and Ludwig kits. And we had thirty different snare drums [to choose from], as well as both 1960s-era and contemporary Zildjian cymbals. Then it was down to tuning and mic placement. I played a lot of snare drums, including a 1970s Ludwig marching snare, a super-deep model.

MD: You're very adept at recording yourself. Did you create Pro Tools templates for learning the songs?

Rob: I rely heavily on Pro Tools when I'm learning a song. By the time we record, everything is memorized. I take the song in chunks—the intro, the first verse, the bridge—and hammer that down for a while until it feels solid. Then I move on to the next section. Mike programmed drums for some of the early demos—he's an excellent drum programmer—and I used ideas from his parts for some songs. Other times I'd take the general idea of what the band was hearing and add my own flavor to it. But as far as playing in the studio, it's all memorization and repetition: locking

INFLUENCES

Led Zeppelin "Good Times Bad Times" from *Led Zeppelin* and "Fool in the Rain" from *In Through the Out Door* (John Bonham) /// **Tower of Power** "Get Yo' Feet Back on the Ground" from *Tower of Power* (David Garibaldi) /// **Aerosmith** "Walk This Way" from *Toys in the Attic* (Joey Kramer) /// **The Police** "Walking on the Moon" from *Reggatta de Blanc* (Stewart Copeland) /// **Bad Religion** "Do What You Want" from *Suffer* (Pete Finestone) /// **Steely Dan** "Josie" from *Alive in America* (Dennis Chambers) /// **System of a Down** "Know" from *System of a Down* (John Dolmayan) /// **Incubus** "Pardon Me" from *Make Yourself* (Jose Pasillas) /// **Dave Matthews Band** "Say Goodbye" from *Crash* and "Dive In" from *Big Whiskey and the GrooGrux King* (Carter Beauford)



Rob's Hunting Party Setup

As Bourdon suggests in his interview, the recording of *The Hunting Party* involved a number of different drumset configurations and various snares and cymbals. Jerry Johnson, Rob's studio drum tech for the past four Linkin Park albums, describes the kit pictured here as the main recording rig for the session and provides us with its details.

Drums: Gretsch late-'70s/early-'80s "drop G badge" in natural maple finish
A. 1970s 5x14 chrome-over-brass snare
B. 16x18 floor tom
C. 9x13 tom
D. 16x16 floor tom
E. 16x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian
1. 14" New Beat hi-hats
2. 20" A Medium Thin crash
3. 24" K Light ride
4. 19" A Custom China

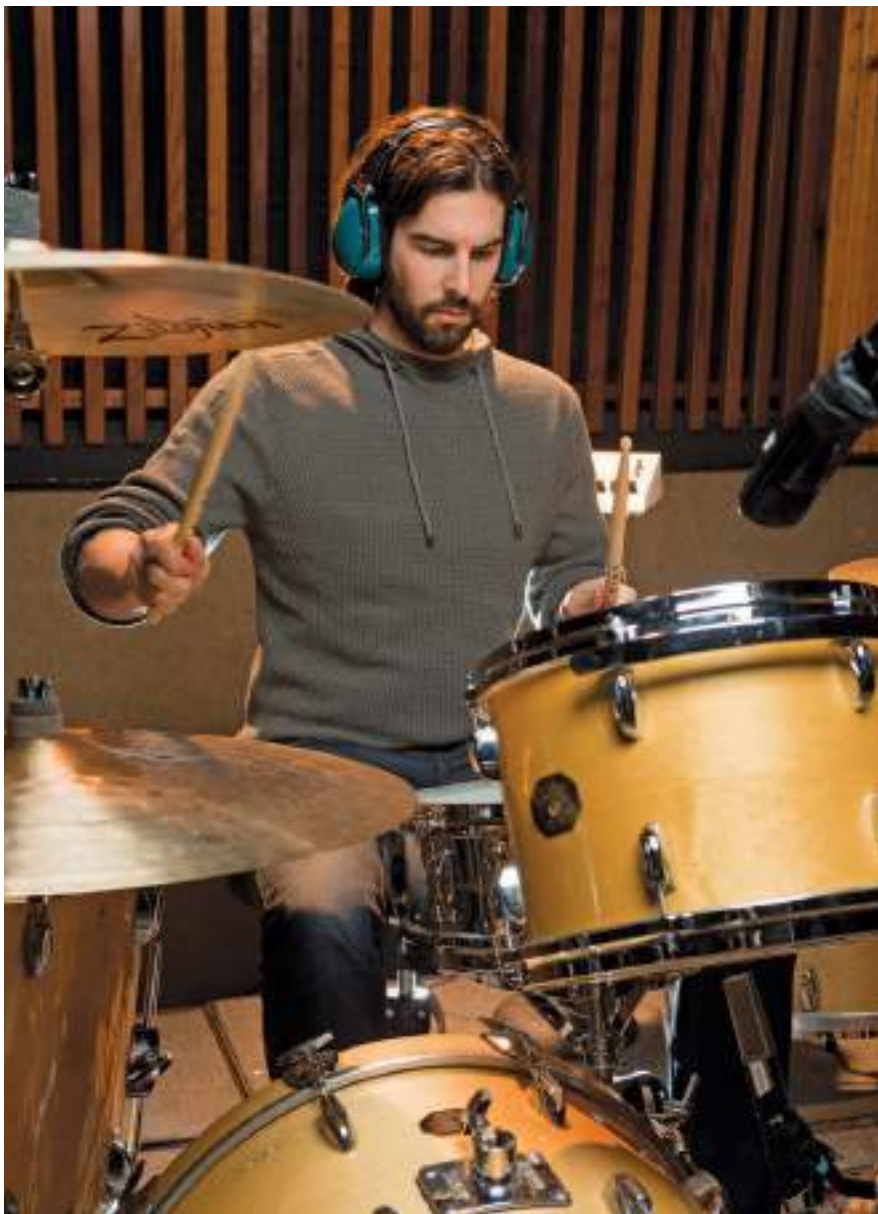
Heads: Remo Controlled Sound snare batter, Coated Ambassador tom batters and Smooth White Ambassador bottoms, and Powerstroke 3 bass drum batter and Smooth White Ambassador front head

Sticks: Vater 5B

Hardware: Gibraltar (pictured) or DW 9000 double bass pedal

Electronics: Roland triggers, Ableton Live

Accessories: ButtKicker bass shaker



down a part, then playing it until it becomes second nature.

MD: How do you write in Pro Tools?

Rob: In my home studio I have everything miked and set up to record. If I'm working on a section I'll loop it in Pro Tools and keep trying different things. For every new idea I'll create a playlist in Pro Tools. I went up to fifty different playlists for some of the new tracks. I like to get in the flow of writing without thinking about whether the part sounds cool or what style I'm playing. I go totally all over the place, from playing a heavy punk pattern to a samba, depending on the song, literally all over the map. I'll come back to what I've tracked the next day with fresh ears and listen through. Usually the right thing jumps out at me—the part that makes it sound like a song versus a drum part over a song.

MD: Once in the studio, what instruments did you record to? A basic scratch track?

Rob: Even on this record we had vocals early on, so I'm pretty much tracking to everything in the studio: guitars, bass, all the sampled drum sounds if there are supplemental sounds. The songs were in demo form, but we really knew what they would sound like pretty early. We have to set deadlines. Otherwise we'll keep editing and arranging. Once the final drums were laid down, then the guys would retrack their parts.

MD: Do the members of Linkin Park trade a lot of computer files? Is that part of the band's songwriting process?

Rob: We definitely do that. We aren't the kind of band to get in a room and jam together. We work in pairs and individually, and then we get together every Monday to listen to all the ideas. Then we

pair up and work on different aspects of the tune together. We like writing in teams. On this record we did do some jamming in the studio, which was really fun. Some of the interludes on the record are moments of us jamming.

MD: You mentioned returning to a rigorous practice routine. What did that entail?

Rob: On "Guilty All the Same," for instance, that tempo was definitely faster than I'm used to playing. The snare fill that ends the intro part was fast and I wanted to play it cleanly, so I spent a lot of time practicing single-stroke rolls, starting with a slow tempo and ramping it up. I'd go for twenty minutes playing single strokes on a practice pad before getting behind the kit. That was my warm-up routine. Also, I like to be able to play everything faster than the actual song I'm working on so that when I'm recording the song I can lock into the pocket and not push to reach the tempo. I like to practice 20 to 30 percent faster than the song's actual tempo so I can nail it when we record. I also practiced a lot of other rudiments.

Another big thing for me was bringing back the double kick pedal. I used a Gibraltar pedal, but mostly the DW kick pedal that I received from Joey Kramer for my thirteenth birthday.

MD: How did you practice double kick?

Rob: I hadn't played double kick in a long time, and I was never super-fast to begin with. When I heard John Bonham doing so much with one kick, that became my goal. But I was always good at doing twos and fours with the double kick: two on the hands and four on the feet, then mixing that up. [I'd do] a variation on a 16th-note pattern on the kick and then add different stickings above it using paradiddles. Or I might mix groups of six between my hands and feet. Someone gave me some double kick rudiments too. That helped shake up my left foot and get those cobwebs out. When I first began practicing, I could hear my left foot was a tiny bit slower; it didn't have the right feel. Once that got up to speed, it became really fun. A double kick in the middle of a drum fill can fill in all the gaps and sound great.

MD: So you're playing single-stroke snare rolls on "Guilty All the Same"?

Rob: Yes, on the big Ludwig marching snare drum.

MD: "Keys to the Kingdom" is like a band of punks bashing in a garage. The drums sound really fat, and you can hear their natural ring. How did you track that song?

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Rob Bourdon

"I'll punch in up to ten options for fills. I tend to be ambitious, so a lot of the fills are too crazy."



Rob: There are a couple exceptions, but I'm not playing along with the guys in the studio live. All the temp tracks were outlined in Pro Tools, which I played to. We recorded drums from beginning to end on tape. Tracking went fairly quickly for "Keys to the Kingdom." We recorded a handful of takes. It takes me a couple passes to warm up, and the last four passes were really good. Once we get those strong passes down, we'll go through certain sections and I'll play some options for different fills. We'll go through different transitions, and I'll punch in up to ten options for fills. I tend to be ambitious, so a lot of the fills are too crazy, too distracting for the song, but at least we have all these options. Then it all gets edited together.

I listen back once the edit is done. We'll usually use the majority of one of the passes that has a really good feel or something special about it. And if there are mistakes or fills we want to replace, we do it then. As the songs are progressing, we're always listening to everything being tracked.

MD: You add the final fills once you've found something you like?

Rob: I'd have fills that I knew I would play. A lot of those probably ended up on the record. But just for fun, to see if we could write something better than what's on the track, I would punch in some crazy fills to see if they'd sound more exciting.

MD: Also on "Keys to the Kingdom," you play three-against-two snare accents, which sound sampled, as if you're intentionally going for an electronic sound.

Rob: There are a couple spots in that song where we did some sampling. We sampled my live drums and chopped them up in Pro Tools on the grid. There are some other sampled sounds added to the live snare so that it punches through even more. They're all created from the snare drum used in the song.

MD: The drums on "All for Nothing" are boxier, more programmed-sounding than on the rest of the album. And the cymbals are very flat tonally.

Rob: We wanted to have more of a sampled sound overall in that track. The verses have a sampled electronic sound. In that case we edited the live drums to sound more [rigid] on the grid, so that when we're hitting the verse [from the chorus] it doesn't sound too different. We want to have a similar aesthetic throughout the song. If the drums go from electronic and raw to garage-band sounding, it won't sound cohesive. We actually recorded that song quickly. There wasn't as much attention paid to the feel, because we knew we'd work with sampled sounds. It's live but electronic at the same time.

MD: The breakdown in "Keys to the

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Rob: That's exactly what we aim for as a band—for someone with a trained ear not to be able to tell if it's live or sampled. [laughs] That's a spot-on goal of the band, to make something that sounds so unique that it's hard to tell exactly what the source is.

MD: There's much less electronic or DJ-oriented production on this album; you can really hear the band stomp.

Rob: We do still use sampled elements. One cool thing on this record is that we recorded the MIDI information from the drums as I played. We had an Ableton Live setup that captured my kick and snare and toms. So if we wanted to add those electronic sounds, we didn't have to grid my live drums to the electronics; we could actually place the electronics on top of the live drum feel that was captured, so we're bringing those two worlds together. On past records, if we had a live sample, we'd place the drums on top of it. You can't have flammings between the drum sounds, so we'd end up gridding a lot of the drums to the samples. It was fun to keep the human element alive this time.

MD: It sounds like an aggressive rock band now.

Rob: "War" is one song that's live all the way through, pure punk rock. It's raw drumming with nothing added, nothing edited. That's really new for us, almost one take all the way through. Completely live and untouched. I think I used the ending from a different take, but that's it.

MD: How did you create the intro to "Wastelands"?

Rob: Mike Shinoda made that loop. He does a lot of the drum programming and creates a lot of the loops. He sampled a live drum track and added effects to it. The sound was very manipulated. Mike spent a long time just producing it and getting the feel. That loop is the driver of that song.

MD: The drum sound on "Wastelands" is distorted and trashy. It's very John Bonham-ish, and the beat is unusual, almost shuffle/hip-hop. Are you playing off Mike's loop there?

Rob: Yes. I love working on the drums with Mike, because he brings so much stuff in that as a drummer I wouldn't even think of or naturally sit down to play. He brings in certain things and writes drum parts that force me to play things I wouldn't normally play, and it opens up the creative collaboration between the two of us. We end up somewhere very different from where either one of us would go on our own.

MD: It sounds like live drums for most of "Wasteland," not loops.

Rob: I'm playing what the loop is playing, so it's a combination of the loop and live drums. The chorus is entirely live drums.

MD: And do you know how the drums are treated there? They sound wild—trashy and menacing.

Rob: They set up a ton of mics, so there was the ability to change the sound. There was so much flexibility within all the different miking setups. Mike also has a lot of experience producing, engineering, and mixing.

MD: "Rebellion" has a prog-metal groove. And you switch up the rhythms on the cymbals a lot, from "&" on the hi-hat to freer playing on the bell of the ride cymbal.

Rob: It's a triplet feel primarily, and ghost notes on the snare drum. It's 8th notes happening between my right and left hand. There are some sections with a syncopated ride pattern as well. Listening back, I'm not sure how that one fit in there. The hi-hat on "&" was Mike's idea. It took some work to get the right feel, where I'm playing the downbeats on the hi-hat and ghosting the "&" on the snare and hitting the accents. When it changes to the syncopated hi-hat groove, it was hard to keep the triplet groove going. That section took some work.

MD: How did you work on it?

Rob: I had to play it over and over until it grooved. For me to really be able to play something well that has the right feel, I have to almost be out of my head. It's really a feel thing for me. So I put a lot of time in. It's about playing the part over and over until it almost feels like I'm observing myself playing the part. Then I can actually adjust the feel of it. Because I'm not formally trained—I learned to read music but I didn't pursue it—I was always so excited about playing by ear that now I do everything by ear. I don't think that analytically about the parts. It's more knowing if I like it and whether it sounds great.

MD: What was the hardest or most challenging track to record?

Rob: "Guilty All the Same," because it was the first track we recorded for the album. Up until that point we'd tracked "Until It's Gone," which is definitely a more straightforward drum part, and it's similar to things I've played on previous records. Whereas "Guilty All the Same" is faster than I'm used to playing. It took a bit to get my head around it, to realize we were making a heavy rock record. It took weeks

#SWITCHOVATER



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Rob Bourdon

of four- to six-hour days hitting single strokes, paradiddles, and various rudiments, getting my hands and feet going. It was really cool.

MD: Were there particular drummers that inspired you during this period?

Rob: Yeah, for one, I was listening to Kristofer Steen with Refused on the track "Deadly Rhythm" [from *The Shape of Punk to Come: A Chimerical Bombination in 12 Bursts*]; that's really cool. And we just played a show for our charity, Music for Relief, with Bad Religion. Their songs were some of the first ones I learned as a drummer—those fast, up-tempo songs. Their drummer, Brooks Wackerman, is awesome. I was also inspired by Travis Barker, who joined us on stage for the charity show. We did a little drum duet together—he kills it. A very inspirational guy. I was also listening to Stewart Copeland.

MD: How long did you maintain a four- to six-hour practice regimen?

Rob: Between writing and practicing, it lasted three or four months.

MD: That explains why your drumming is off the hook on this album. It's unusual for a band to attempt reinvention after so much success.

Rob: Thanks. We definitely wanted to challenge ourselves. We wanted our fans and other musicians to say, "Wow! I want to play that song!" When I was beginning I always learned to play the difficult music, the stuff that pushed me. We wanted to do that with this record—really think outside the box. It took a lot of hours of putting sawdust on the floor.

MD: What else brought the band to this point, to make a bare-bones record?

Rob: This was originally a different kind of record, more like radio material. Mike brought a first batch of songs to the table, and they were good songs, but they weren't inspiring. We weren't pushing ourselves. So Mike threw those songs away and we started from scratch. And then we went in the opposite direction. "Guilty All the Same" was the first single, because it really represents the whole vibe of the record. But it was also the first demo that Mike played for us that got the whole band inspired. Some of us were quicker to jump on it than others, but it did get everyone inspired about playing something that was musically challenging, that was aggressive, visceral, and had this energy behind it. And it felt good to do that.

MD: Why did you call the album *The*

Hunting Party?

Rob: It represents this energy of going after what you want to do and what you want in life. It was about really proactively moving forward, as opposed to some music we've made in the past that was more introspective. This is an extroverted, pushing-forward project. The band is playing music together better, and we're closer than we've ever been. It's not that we weren't close before—we're always touring and doing things together. But everyone was involved in the actual recording process of this record. It was really fun and inspiring.

MD: Did the other band members practice a lot as well for this record?

Rob: Yes. Brad [Delson] has always played great, then the last couple records he took more of an interest in learning Pro Tools, engineering, and keyboard sounds and sampling. He wasn't playing guitar as much. Mike really encouraged him to play more guitar, and when he brought the first song in everyone got inspired. Then Brad spent a ton of time working on his chops. There's a lot of shredding on this album.

MD: I didn't expect this record.

Rob: I didn't expect it either! [laughs] I didn't know the guys could do this. It's incredible.

MD: People are always curious about the pitfalls of artistic fame and success, and it sounds as though Linkin Park addresses those concerns on this album.

Rob: Whenever you have a lot of success, the number-one pitfall is staying in a comfort zone and not growing—especially if you combine being successful and comfortable at the same time. We take the record-making process very seriously. We've never slacked in the effort we've put into an album. But on this one we demanded more of ourselves as musicians, and I'm more excited about the drumming on this record than most of what I've recorded in the past. On some past records we spent a lot of time on the sessions, but it was more about songwriting and production. We typically approached records more as a writing team, but this time we had to play our instruments as musicians, and there was no faking it. We had to hammer down and hit it for those four to six hours a day, just playing our instruments. I'm really excited for what this is going to do for our live shows. We're at the top of our game now, and I'm the best drummer that I've ever been.



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—Superchunk's Jon Wurster, from Modern Drummer Publications' *The Drummer: 100 Years of Rhythmic Power and Invention*

Rick Malkin

Clem Burke: Pure Pop Power

It's hard to say what would have become of Clem Burke had he passed his auditions to join LaBelle and the Patti Smith Group in the early '70s. There's no doubt that a player with Burke's skills would have made a name for himself keeping time for either of those acts. But it's hard to imagine Burke making the kind of impact with LaBelle or Patti Smith that he's made keeping the beat with Blondie, the iconoclastic band that broke out of New York's '70s punk/new-wave scene with its blend of girl-group pop, reggae, rock, disco, and rap, which was commercially successful during its initial run and remains profoundly influential as the band celebrates its fortieth anniversary this year. Burke's go-for-it spirit lives within many a power pop and indie rock drummer, including Fountains of Wayne's Brian Young and Superchunk's Jon Wurster, and his dance-floor-friendly grooves have informed the beats of No Doubt's Adrian Young and Arcade Fire's Jeremy Gara.

Burke stood out among the rhythmic minimalists at legendary New York venues like CBGB, as a masterful drummer with taste and chops, not to mention a stylish mod look. And he remains the perfect drummer for a band that has consistently tested the parameters of what a three-minute pop song should be. "We never had any tunnel vision," Burke says. "That's what made us—and my drumming, I guess—unique. All those influences—disco and reggae and rap, things like Can and Kraftwerk—came out of the urban environment that we existed in. In New York City, a lot of stuff came over from the U.K. and Europe. Those influences were seeping in."

Long before he was putting those inspirations to use on songs like "The Tide Is High," "Heart of Glass," "Rapture," "Call Me," "One Way or Another," and "Atomic," Burke, who was born on November 24, 1955, in Bayonne, New Jersey, just across the Hudson River from where Blondie would make its bones in lower Manhattan, was cutting his teeth in the school band. Clem got his start in his grammar school's orchestra doing whatever was required,

from buzz rolls on concert snare to playing the crash cymbals on "Pomp and Circumstance." He later joined a local drum corps, where he served as the rudimental bass drummer, picking up tricks he still employs to this day. "That's where I got a lot of my chops from," Burke says. "It's pretty arduous—marching and playing all the rudiments on a bass drum and all that show stuff that a rudimental bass drummer does. I still use all those rudiments to warm up. It syncs your brain with your hands, which is the idea."

Burke was also doing what countless other kids in America were doing in the '60s after the Beatles' generation-defining performance on *Ed Sullivan*—playing in rock bands. He notched his first rock gig at age thirteen with a group called Total Environment. By fourteen he had worked in a recording studio for the first time (tracking a cover of Blood, Sweat and

"Clem's a very quiet guy, until he sits down to play—then he explodes. He has a great feel and is one of my drumming heroes." —bassist Duff McKagan

Tears' "Somethin' Goin' On") and played Carnegie Hall, both part of a contest with New York City radio legend "Cousin" Bruce Morrow.

In the early '70s Burke made the move across the river and was gigging with a glam-rock band on the same circuit as two of his future Blondie bandmates, singer Debbie Harry and guitarist Chris Stein. Inspired in equal parts by the drummers of his youth, including Hal Blaine, Dino Danelli, Keith Moon, Earl Palmer, and Ringo Starr, and contemporaries like David Bowie's Woody Woodmansey and fellow Lower East Sider Jerry Nolan of the New York Dolls, Burke arrived in Blondie in 1974 as a young yet seasoned player who saw himself as a perfect fit for Harry and Stein's classic pop sensibilities. "Being influenced by Hal Blaine and Earl Palmer helped me interpret the early Blondie material," Burke explains, "because I could hear the girl-group overtones and the '50s and '60s pop overtones. I tried to incorporate all of that into my sound. It's stuff that was kind of forgotten by that

time but was very influential for me."

Blondie released its first album in 1976 and within a few years had achieved mass critical and commercial success with songs that appealed to the rock, pop, and new-wave crowds. While "Disco sucks!" became the mantra of many rockers in the late '70s, Blondie embraced the form, with Burke even citing the *Saturday Night Fever* soundtrack as a big influence, especially on the hit "Heart of Glass." And as peers from the CBGB days, like Talking Heads, Television, and the Ramones, were occupying distinct places among rock's avant-garde with varying degrees of commercial success, Blondie was a cutting-edge hitmaker, owner of four number-one U.S. singles between 1979 and 1981.

That success wasn't enough to keep Blondie together amid a disappointing reception to 1982's *The Hunter* and

internal turmoil, and the group disbanded in 1983. After a false start with the short-lived hard-rock band Chequered Past, Burke hit his stride as a versatile drummer for hire in the mid-'80s,

playing with Pete Townshend on the Who guitarist's *White City* solo album, recording and touring frequently with the Eurythmics, and even working with Bob Dylan. Blondie eventually reunited in 1999, and the band has been working relatively steadily since. Burke has maintained a busy schedule outside the group as well, playing with everyone from the Romantics to Nancy Sinatra to the Melvins and working to pursue connections between drumming and health with the Clem Burke Drumming Project. Well into his fifth decade as a working drummer, Burke has no intentions of slowing down.

"When Blondie ended in the '80s, I didn't really have a plan but to continue playing," he says. "That's always been my plan. Because of the success I've had with Blondie, I'm able to do stuff for the love of the music, the love of the project. I just plan to keep on doing that."

Patrick Berkery



WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT...?

Howard Grimes

by Patrick Berkery

He might not share quite the same name recognition as some of his contemporaries, but his deep grooves grace many of the heaviest and most well-known soul recordings of all time.



Nathan Black

At twelve years old, Howard Grimes was already performing with local Memphis combos several nights a week. The young drummer couldn't even reach the kick pedal very well yet. But what he could do was figure out, on the fly, how to play the early pop and R&B hits of the day, and even the occasional rumba, samba, calypso, and bossa nova. Before long Grimes was known as an in-demand drumming wunderkind.

"God had given me something," the seventy-three-year-old musician says from his Memphis home. "I didn't even know how, but I could pick up on a rhythm—and so fast. I knew I had something. I'd never heard these songs they were throwing at me, but I felt real relaxed and comfortable playing them. I just followed the count-in, fast or slow. I was learning just by being around music 24/7. Playing drums and listening to the radio...WDIA in Memphis gave me a great education. I was picking up everything—what music was about and how it was played. I wanted to know all of it. I never had time for playing or hanging out with my friends."

One of those WDIA disc jockeys would go on to more directly help Grimes advance his burgeoning career. At seventeen Grimes was already earning \$12 a night—hardly chump change for a kid in the '50s. But when the upstart R&B singer Rufus Thomas, who was working as a DJ at the radio station at the time, came out to see the promising young musician, he was impressed enough to invite Grimes to record with him at the Satellite Records studio, in the company of seasoned pros. The offer was accepted—though Grimes' mom had one stipulation. "Rufus came to my house," Howard recalls with a laugh, "and my mother says, 'I'm going to let you have my son—but you're going to be

responsible for him.” Thomas assured Mrs. Grimes, and her son’s long and sometimes bumpy journey as a drummer on the Memphis studio scene was under way.

During that first session, Grimes played on a brassy R&B number called “Cause I Love You,” a duet written by Thomas and performed with the singer’s daughter Carla. As it turns out, the Thomases weren’t the only R&B royalty on the session; Chips Moman (Elvis Presley, Willie Nelson) produced, and a teenage Booker T. Jones honked the baritone sax. Grimes was wide-eyed at being in a recording studio for the first time but remained poised enough to reach into the deep bag of tricks he’d developed on the club circuit, to give the song just the right kick.

“Willie Mitchell carried a feel in him...he was never in a hurry for anything. He was so laid back, he pulled me into him. He trained me on this.”

“I was nervous sitting behind those drums,” Grimes remembers. “The microphones and stuff—it was all new to me. They even put me on a smaller wood stool, so my feet could reach the pedals. And this rhythm they were trying to come up with—we couldn’t find it at first. So the upright bass player, Wilbur Steinberg, said to me, ‘Play that rhythm you play at the club on [early New Orleans R&B hit] ‘Ooh Poo Pah Doo.’” Rufus went into the song again, and I played that rhythm. Chips looked at me and said, “That’s it.”

Championed by Moman, Grimes worked steadily in the early ’60s, cutting iconic sides like Carla Thomas’s top-ten pop single “Gee Whiz” and William Bell’s “You Don’t Miss Your Water.” As Satellite morphed into Stax Records, Grimes played on sessions with popular soul acts including the Mar-Keys, the Triumphs, Barbara Stephens, the Mad Lads, and Prince Conley. He also played on saxophonist Floyd Newman’s finger-popping instrumental “Frog Stomp,” which featured a young Isaac Hayes on organ. “Frog Stomp” is the first of those early tunes where Grimes really digs into the 8th notes on the hi-hat, a feel that would become a staple on many of the



tracks he’d later cut for Hi Records.

Things started to dry up for Grimes at Stax around 1962, when the older and more seasoned Al Jackson Jr. entered the picture. Jackson was already working in the local clubs with legendary Memphis bandleader Willie Mitchell and serving as the house drummer at Mitchell’s Hi Records. Jackson was recruited to play on Booker T. & the MGs’ classic instrumental “Green Onions,” after which he never ceded the throne at Stax unless he was on the road. Grimes says that despite being the odd man out after Jackson’s arrival, the pair “had a great

relationship” and were the “best of friends.” Still, their friendship didn’t make the situation any easier to process.

“I didn’t know what was going down,” Grimes says. “It was almost like they pulled games on you. Nobody tells you that they’re making a switch. New musicians come in and you’re left standing outside like you don’t know what’s going on. You feel bad, because you thought you were doing the job. You thought everything was satisfactory. I’d heard about this kind of stuff from the older guys. I was getting my first lesson in it, and it was difficult. I

just didn't understand it."

Grimes kept working as the '60s progressed, gigging and recording locally and touring with the rock band Flash & the Board of Directors. As fate would have it, Willie Mitchell eventually needed a drummer to fill in when Al Jackson was on the road with Booker T. & the MGs. Hi house guitarist Teenie Hodges recommended Grimes, who landed the gig after auditioning with Mitchell. With Grimes and Jackson splitting drumming duties, the Hi

rhythm section, which also featured Hodges' brothers Leroy on bass and Charles on organ, as well as pianist Archie Turner, would establish itself as one of the great studio crews of the era. And under Mitchell's tutelage, Grimes' already deep pocket became even deeper, with a distinct sound that was all driving hi-hat, fat snare, and, on tracks like Ann Peebles' "I'm Gonna Tear Your Playhouse Down" and Al Green's "Love and Happiness," very little in the way of cymbal crashes



Nathan Black

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chewing up space between the groove, the vocal, and the elegant chord structures Mitchell favored.

"Willie was definitely into what Leroy and I were doing, because it was all built around us," Grimes says. "He locked me in on the hi-hat, kick, and snare—he loved that deep snare. Willie never liked crashes too much. He thought they interfered. He always wanted everything to groove. Willie carried a feel in him...he was never in a hurry for anything. He was so laid back, he pulled me into him. He trained me on this. He could pretty much get anything out of me, because he had me so laid back—it was so easy. He didn't like all that rolling on the drums. He liked the dynamic and the build, but rolling on the drums? He'd say, 'Man, don't play that shit. I don't want that.'"

Grimes enjoyed success at Hi, but sharing the workload with Jackson remained uncomfortable at times. Mitchell navigated this territory diplomatically by using different drummers for different feels. He liked to use Jackson on the smoother grooves—Green's "Let's Stay Together" is Jackson on kit with Grimes on conga, a pairing the producer used often—and he called on Grimes when something needed a little more grit, like on Green's "Take Me to the River" and Peebles' "I Can't Stand the Rain."

Unfortunately Green wasn't so diplomatic, according to Grimes, who claims the singer wanted to have the last word on who was playing drums on



Jackson.' He told me, 'You're fired.' I told him, 'You can't fire me, man. I work for Willie Mitchell.' Willie heard this—I didn't know he had the talkback button on in the control room. He came out and said, 'Howard, what's wrong?' I said, 'Al Green said he's going to fire me,' but Willie told Al, 'I do the hiring, and I do the firing.' I stayed and ended up cutting the track."

Despite the falling out with Green, Grimes continued to work at Hi, cutting hits with singers like Otis Clay, Syl Johnson, and O.V. Wright. The Hi rhythm section, under the name Hi Rhythm, even made its own album in 1976, a funky curiosity called *On the Loose*, which is one of the highlights of Fat Possum Records' recent Hi reissue campaign. When work slowed down at Hi in the late '70s, Grimes and the rhythm section scratched out a living touring with Peebles, Clay, and Wright while doing occasional shows of their own. Grimes and Leroy Hodges have continued to work together over the years, backing a number of blues and soul artists live and on record, touring and recording with fellow '60s and '70s

his songs—and eventually didn't want to use Grimes at all. "We were alright at first, but then he really started nitpicking at me," Howard says. "He really shifted on me. At one point while we were doing 'Love and Happiness,' Al said, 'I don't want Howard to play no more. Call Al

Memphis music vets in the Bo-Keys, and recording with Cyndi Lauper for her 2010 tribute album, *Memphis Blues*. Grimes describes the Lauper sessions as rough going initially—until, he says, a voice from the past helped him find the groove: the late Willie Mitchell.

"Lauper was giving me trouble about the tempo," Grimes says. "I don't even think she knew who I was. Her producer had to tell her what I'd done. But I went easy with it because I needed the work. Then I heard Willie's voice in my head. He told me, 'Look, you know what you're supposed to do. Let her know who in the hell you *are*. You're a pro. All them hit records you been on...nobody runs over you.' And the moment I heard him, I kicked in and we started clicking."

It wasn't the first time, or the last, that Grimes' mentors would provide motivation and inspiration over his long and winding career. "Guys like Willie and Chips Moman were so kind to me," Howard says. "Chips really got me believing I could do this, that it could be a career for me. And Willie taught me so much through his feel and his wisdom. It lives in me today."



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by Rich Redmond

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MUSIC KEY	
open	○
H.H.	⊗
S.D.	●
B.D.	◐

Clave comprises the root rhythms used as the basis for most Afro-Caribbean music. These rhythms are two measures long (written in cut time), with three notes in one measure and two notes in the other. If you play the three-note measure first, it's called 3-2 clave. If you play the two-note measure first, it's called 2-3 clave. There are two types of clave: son and rumba. The difference between them is the phrasing of the three-note measure. If the notes are evenly spaced, it's son. If the third note is delayed, it's rumba. Here's what the clave patterns look like:

son

rumba

You can also write the clave rhythms in one measure using 16th notes instead of 8ths. Here's how those look.

son

rumba

These clave rhythms have been seeping into popular music for many years, in songs such as Johnny Otis's "Willie and the Hand Jive" and Toto's "Rosanna." You'll hear these rhythms in classical music and jazz as well; they're everywhere. In this article I've written some rocking and funky grooves that utilize the universal clave patterns. Play them with a click track or metronome at all tempos and dynamic levels.

1

2

3

4

5

Now try coming up with your own two- and four-bar versions. Here are a couple to try.

6

7

8

There are many other ways to get more bang for your buck out of these clave-based grooves. (The following ideas can be applied to any other pattern as well.) The point is to experiment with the various colors available on your drumset to create something that sounds and feels unique, even when the kick/snare patterns remain the same. For starters, try playing the hi-hat part on the ride, a rim, a cowbell, or a floor tom. Or play the snare parts as rimclicks. You can also play an 8th- or 16th-note pattern with the right hand using a tambourine or shaker. And don't forget to try opening and closing the hi-hat at different points in the groove. The options are endless!

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



The Paradiddle Pyramid

A Quick and Effective Warm-Up Routine for the Hands and Feet

by Philip Elliot

MUSIC KEY

S.D. ●
B.D. ●
H.H. ✕
w/foot B.D. 2

The following exercise routine is great for drummers who have limited practice time. It also makes for a killer warm-up before gigs, sessions, or rehearsals. The routine is multifaceted in that it works on technique through rudiments and helps develop hand/foot coordination.

The paradiddle pyramid is a sticking that combines three rudiments: the single, double, and triple paradiddle. The sticking involves four single paradiddles, four double paradiddles, and four triple paradiddles and then goes back to four double paradiddles and four single paradiddles. It's a seven-bar exercise, and the sticking looks like the following. Be sure to play through the sticking groupings without stopping, and use continuous 16th notes in 4/4 time.

1

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

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

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

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

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

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

Add the Feet

After you can play the paradiddle pyramid with the hands by themselves, begin adding different foot ostinatos. Start with

quarter notes on the bass drum, and then try quarter notes on the hi-hat. After you have that down, add the hi-hat on the offbeats.

2

3

4

If you play double bass, try playing steady 16th notes with the feet, using right-foot lead, left-foot lead, or double strokes (RRL and LLRR).

5

You might want to begin the exercise by playing four bars of simultaneous 16th notes between your hands and feet, to get them steady and tight, before moving into the paradiddle pyramid. Just make sure your hands and feet are playing in perfect unison—no flams!

6

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

4x



Samba Starter

Part 3: Mangueira Samba School Grooves

by Adam Osmianski

MUSIC KEY

T.T.	●
S.D.	●
FT.	●
B.D.	●
H.H.	✕
w/ foot	○

Last time, we dug into the batucada style of samba and talked about the lead instrument, the repinique, and how to develop the distinctive samba suinge (swing). Now let's look at how some of the individual escolas de samba (samba schools) in Rio play, along with ways that we can apply these styles to the drumkit.

When talking about the different styles of samba schools, I like to use drumset players as an analogy. To an untrained ear, jazz greats Philly Joe Jones and Jimmy Cobb probably sound exactly the same. But once you understand what you're listening to, you'll wonder how you couldn't hear the difference from the beginning. It's the same thing with the various escolas de samba. At first they all sound like the same big, loud samba group. But the schools have very specific stylistic differences that we can use to make our sambas on the drumset more distinctive.

First, let's look at Mangueira. A crowd favorite, Mangueira is one of Rio's oldest and most respected samba schools. What makes its sound particularly unique is the caixa (snare) and surdo (bass drum) patterns. Keeping the suinge in mind, here's a typical Mangueira-style caixa pattern.

Mangueira uses a specific sticking for the caixa pattern, which you may want to check out on your own. But for the purpose of being able to play other parts of the kit, we'll keep the sticking as hand to hand. Note that the buzz roll is not played as a six-stroke roll but rather as a short press with just one stick.

The Mangueira caixa pattern works well with any of the bass drum ostinatos that we discussed last time, but let's take a look at Mangueira's unique surdo pattern.

Most samba schools use a surdo pattern that looks like this:

Mangueira, however, plays both surdos on beat 2, like this:

You can capture this feel on the drumset by playing the bass drum and the floor tom on beat 2. Combine that with the Mangueira caixa pattern and you've got a tasty little groove.

Remember that the 16th notes shouldn't be played too straight. Search online for Mangueira video to find play-along material to help you get the feel right.

Each escola de samba also has a third higher-pitched surdo that plays a more syncopated and sometimes improvisatory role. Mangueira third surdo looks like this (notated over the top of the other two):

Here are two ways to add the third surdo to the previous Mangueira-inspired samba groove.

Once you learn these variations, experiment with some of your own ideas. Playing escola de samba arrangements on the kit not only adds authenticity but also gets us away from using only ride-based samba patterns, which can be a refreshing change of pace in many musical situations.

Adam Osmianski is a freelance drummer from Pittsburgh, now residing in London. He's an online lecturer for West Virginia University and the author of thatdrumlog.blogspot.com. For more information, visit adamosmianski.com.



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Volume Independence and Musicality

More About "How" Than "What"

by Marc Diccianni

MUSIC KEY

H.H. 
 S.D. 
 B.D. 

There are many different concepts and methods for developing independence. Most of us spend countless hours working on independence the traditional way, by playing a rhythm with one hand (e.g., a jazz swing ride pattern) while playing another rhythm with the other hand (e.g., quarter-note triplets).

In addition to figuring out how to get the hands and feet to play different rhythms simultaneously, there's another kind of coordination that needs to be developed: volume independence. Tower of Power drummer David Garibaldi talks about this concept in his classic book *Future Sounds*, and many others have stressed the importance of dynamic control. The more I've worked on this with students, the more I've realized how important volume independence is and how much it's linked to musicality and feel.

Often when we listen to something that sounds great, we focus on what is being played, such as the notes, chops, and patterns. But when we try to play those ideas, they don't sound the same—something's missing. Sometimes that missing element is the ability to control the volume levels between the limbs and within the rhythms that each limb is playing.

The problem could be that the volume of one sound, such as 8th notes on the hi-hat, is too flat (all the notes are being played at the same volume), or the volumes of the different elements of the entire pattern (like the hi-hat, snare, and bass drum) are out of balance so that one part is being played too loud or too soft in comparison to the others. Volume independence is what helps the groove of David Garibaldi, Steve Gadd, and Questlove sound so deep, and it's what makes the time feel of Roy Haynes, Jeff Hamilton, and Mel Lewis so identifiable, with such a hard swing. It's also what makes JR Robinson and Paul Leim such great studio players—they know how to blend their parts perfectly with everything else on the track.

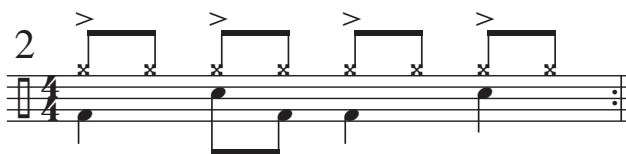
When you look at a notated drum pattern or a transcription, you might see the marking of accents or ghost notes, but most often there is no indication of the volume relationships required to make the patterns sound like music and not just an exercise. But we want to be sure we're developing our ability to hear our own dynamics as we work on executing new ideas with our hands and feet.

Single-Limb Dynamics

Let's begin with a simple 8th-note pattern with no indication of which sounds are to be played louder than the others or where accents might occur naturally. Try playing this example exactly as written, with each of the three limbs at the same volume.

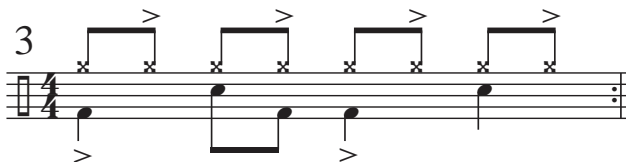


It doesn't sound very good, does it? Now start adding some accents on the hi-hat on the downbeats. Notice how this changes the feel of the groove, even though you're still playing the same rhythms with each limb.



Experiment with the volume of the accents and the non-accented notes. How hard you play the notes should be based on the musical effect you want to achieve. The accents can be played with the neck of the stick on the edge of the hi-hat or with the tip of the stick in the middle of the bow of the cymbal. You should also try varying how tightly you hold the cymbals together. All of these variables will have a great impact on the feel and emotion of what you're playing. Experiment with a complete range of accent and non-accent volume levels. Then try moving the accents to different notes of the hi-hat pattern to learn how that affects the feel.

In this next example, I've added a bass drum accent on beats 1 and 3 of each measure and changed the hi-hat accents to occur on the upbeats. This one will be a bit more challenging, because the right hand and right foot are playing accents at different times. This is the first step in developing volume independence. Again, experiment with different volumes for the accents and the non-accented notes to find the levels that sound the best to you.



Let's move on to a 16th-note pattern. Try playing all of the hi-hat notes in this next groove at the exact same level, and play the bass drum, snare, and hi-hat at the same volume relative to one another. Take the pattern slowly at first.



The groove sounds a little stiff, right? Now add a simple accent pattern on the hi-hat on beats 1 and 3, and accent the snare on beats 2 and 4. Listen to how much momentum and life the accents add to the groove.

5

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

Here's a variation where I've added a 16th note on the bass drum, as well as accents on the hi-hat, snare, and kick.

6

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

Let's try the same procedure with a typical Afro-Cuban cascara rhythm (in 2-3 clave). Play this on the shell or rim of the floor tom or on a cowbell. Start by playing it without accents.

7

Now apply a typical accent pattern to it. Listen to how much more musical the accented version sounds.

8

Relative Volume

Now let's begin to play around with shifting the volumes of the sounds and limbs as they relate to each other. To begin, try Example 1 again and play the overall level of the hi-hat softer than the volume of the snare and bass drum. Then try shifting the volumes of all three limbs a little at a time until you find an overall balance that sounds good to you. Do the same thing with the other examples in this article, and then move on to some of your own grooves and patterns.

Here's a different example in a triplet-based jazz style. As before, experiment with the two parts of volume independence. Work with the way the notes are accented in each limb and by how much, and think about how the ride cymbal, snare, bass drum, and hi-hat relate to each other in terms of volume.

9

As you work with these concepts, remember that the relative volume between the limbs will change depending on the style, the context, and your personal taste. There's not one correct way to play. The important thing is that you develop the ability to hear and control the accents and volumes of sounds independent of each other. Check out some of your favorite recordings and listen closely to the way the drummers are playing—how they use accents and balance the sounds to improve the music. Record yourself, and compare your playing with your favorite recordings by other drummers. The ability to listen musically is an essential ingredient in being able to play musically. Have fun!

Marc Dicciani is a professor of drumset and the director of the School of Music at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. For more information, visit dicciani.com.



Syncopation Revisited

Part 4: Brazilian Applications

by Steve Fidyk

MUSIC KEY

R.C.	⊗
S.D.	●
B.D.	○
H.H.	⊗
w/ foot	⊗

We continue our series on ways to interpret the classic Ted Reed book *Progressive Steps to Syncopation for the Modern Drummer* by applying Brazilian rhythms and phrasing ideas to the written manuscript. The following applications can be used with any of the seventy-two repetitive one-measure examples from pages 29, 30, and 33–36, the thirty-two-measure rhythmic melodies from pages 37–44, or the accented-8th-notes section that begins on page 46.

The cornerstone of Brazilian music is samba, and performing in this style requires intensive study and listening. Check out master drummers like Milton Nascimento, Airto Moreira, and Portinho to help you develop the feeling that's essential for playing this beautiful music. Samba rhythms have a lift and propulsion, much like jazz rhythms do. To achieve this technically, strive for a consistent balance of dynamics while focusing on your stroke and touch on each surface of the drumset.

Foot Patterns and Warm-Up Exercises

Try the following three samba foot patterns. Strive for consistency of sound and rhythm. Assign various dynamics (soft, medium-soft, medium-loud, loud, and very loud) to each, and practice with heel-down and heel-up approaches. Do this with a metronome to ensure that each subdivision is solid.

A B C

For a good warm-up, apply various exercise combinations from *Syncopation*, starting on page 46, on the snare. Here's a two-measure phrase that utilizes Example 11 from page 46 and Example 21 from page 47 over the second samba foot pattern.

1

Now try moving the accents to the toms while playing the unaccented notes on the snare. Below is Example 15 from page 47 and Example 26 from page 48 over the third samba foot pattern.

2

Once you have control of the previous material, try replacing the unaccented 8th notes with 16th-note double strokes. Here's Example 25 from page 48 coupled with Example 12 from page 46 over the first samba foot pattern.

3

Unison Study

Try phrasing any of the one-measure examples that begin on page 29 as unisons between the ride cymbal and snare. Then add one of the three samba foot patterns. Here's Example 6 from page 33 and Example 35 from page 35.

4

Also try applying your own accents to the written material, and experiment by playing the accents on the cup of the cymbal and as rimshots on the snare. Here are the first four measures from page 37 with one accent interpretation.

5

Musical notation for exercise 5, showing a four-measure phrase in common time. The notation features a series of eighth notes with accents (>) on the first note of each measure. The bass line consists of quarter notes and eighth notes.

Once you have control of the previous applications, separate your hands, and practice the following hi-hat patterns with your dominant hand while reading the rhythms from *Syncopation* on the snare.

A B C D

Four hi-hat patterns labeled A, B, C, and D, each consisting of a sequence of eighth notes with various accents (circles and pluses) above them. Pattern A: quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note. Pattern B: quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note. Pattern C: quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note. Pattern D: quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note.

The following phrase combines the last four measures from page 43 of *Syncopation* with the third hi-hat pattern. For variation I've added accents to the written line.

6

Musical notation for exercise 6, showing a four-measure phrase in common time. The notation features a series of eighth notes with accents (>) and circles above them. The bass line consists of quarter notes and eighth notes.

Surdo Substitutes

Here are four rhythms that are traditionally played on large bass-drum-like surdos in Brazilian music. These rhythms are essential to samba. Jazz drummers often apply the patterns on the floor tom or bass drum as a substitute for the standard samba bass drum ostinato.

A B C D

Four surdo rhythms labeled A, B, C, and D, each consisting of a sequence of quarter notes and eighth notes. Pattern A: quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note. Pattern B: quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note. Pattern C: quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note. Pattern D: quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note.

Here's a fun application that incorporates the last eight measures of the written line from page 43. In this example I'm accenting the rhythms from *Syncopation* on the snare drum while phrasing the unaccented 8th notes as 16th-note double strokes and playing the first surdo rhythm on the floor tom.

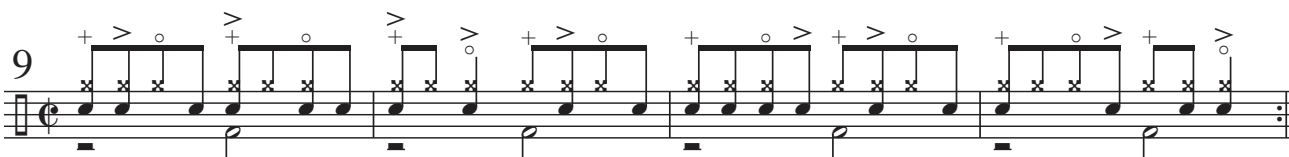
7

Musical notation for exercise 7, showing a four-measure phrase in common time. The notation features a series of eighth notes with accents (>) and circles above them. The bass line consists of quarter notes and eighth notes.

Also try stretching the phrasing, which is common in samba, by replacing each 8th/quarter/8th rhythm with a quarter-note triplet. Here are the first eight measures from page 37 applied in this manner.



Our final application this month combines the first four measures from page 41 with the fourth hi-hat pattern and the first surdo rhythm. For variation I've added accents to the rhythm melody from *Syncopation*, which is played on the snare. Once you have all of these ideas down, experiment and come up with your own accent schemes and exercise combinations. Have fun!



For a video demo of some of these patterns, visit modern drummer.com.

Steve Fidyk has performed with Terell Stafford, Tim Warfield, Dick Oatts, Doc Severinsen, Wayne Bergeron, Phil Wilson, and Maureen McGovern, and he's a member of the jazz studies faculty at Temple University in Philadelphia. For more info, including how to sign up for lessons via Skype, visit stevefidyk.com.



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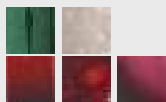
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“Nothing Endures but Change”

An Introduction

by Russ Miller



When the editors of *Modern Drummer* invited me to write a few Concepts pieces, my first reaction was, “Me? That’s Roy Burns and Billy Ward’s column, right?” I always loved reading Roy’s articles. He was the first drum clinician I ever saw and was a great inspiration to me when I was a young student. He wrote Concepts stories from 1980 to around 1992. Billy Ward took over the column for several years after that, and his insightful discussions were compiled into a great book titled *Inside Out: Exploring the Mental Aspects of Drumming*. After reading through a considerable number of these experts’ articles, I realized that many of the ideas they discussed are still relevant today. There have been so many changes to the music business and drumming in the past several years, however, that many of the details of what it takes to be a successful drummer have changed dramatically. This is why I quote the Greek philosopher Heraclitus for the title of my first installment: “Nothing endures but change.”

Everything in life changes, and shifts usually come at a quicker pace than is comfortable. What is wanted from us as drummers is different too. We are now expected to have machine-level

timekeeping. And what we’re required to look like as a musician has changed, largely due to the fact that video has become a vital component of all genres of music. What we need to do in order to make a living in this business is different as well. It’s very difficult to simply play an instrument; we must diversify into marketing, even if it’s something as simple as promoting events via social media and the Web.

The music business has been altered dramatically, which often requires adjusting or creating new business models. Case in point: 2014 is the first year in which full-album downloads have surpassed CD sales. The delivery method of our product—music—has changed. Yet we’ve seen record labels try to hold on to their old business models and fail, and we’ve seen CD retailers try to maintain prices of up to \$18.99 when the online price is half that. Even instrument manufacturers have tried to keep using outdated methods. These companies are now in dramatically different positions.

All of this change relates directly to us as drummers. I know several players who have struggled in this new scene. Some refuse to progress, adjust, modify, or advance. Change is understandably

When you go to bed at night, ask yourself, “Am I better today than I was yesterday?” There are drummers all around the world who *did* work toward getting gigs. Make sure you’re one of them!

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more difficult for drummers who have had previous successes.

Some of the most legendary drummers I've gained friendships with over the years were required to do one thing: play drums. Maybe later in their career they became the employer (aka bandleader) and not just the employee, but this usually centered on playing drums. They were never required to be a videographer or programmer or own tons of electronic instruments and an inventory of state-of-the-art studio equipment. To research this a bit, I thought I would look up descriptions of a few

legendary drummers. These are the titles that were given to them on Wikipedia.

Buddy Rich: American Jazz Drummer and Bandleader

Roy Burns: American Drummer, Educator, and Percussion Manufacturer

Neil Peart: Canadian Drummer, Producer, Songwriter, Lyricist, Author, and Educator

As you can see, more and more descriptions were added as these musicians' careers progressed. After looking through those bios, I decided to write my various job titles as of today: drummer, employer, bandleader, sideman, composer, studio

owner, programmer, inventor, author, teacher, clinician, product-design consultant.... My point is that as time has passed, more and more is required of us as professionals to compete in the marketplace. At the beginning of my career, like most drummers, I was primarily a player. As time has gone by, I've been required to do more and more.

The business has changed, so we *must* adjust our own business models. I will be writing about many of these new responsibilities in future columns. I want to address finding the balance between artistry and commerce, which is crucial in order to have a successful professional career. You need to be the drummer who sees change as a necessity and an exciting challenge.

If you can't read music, get with a teacher and learn. There are drummers I met fifteen years ago who were struggling to get gigs, mainly because they couldn't read music. I see them now, and they still can't! They saw a hole in their professional attributes years ago and still haven't made an attempt to fill it. Along the same lines, if you can't swing, buy some jazz records and get a pair of brushes and a good jazz method book (one option is MD founder Ron Spagnardi's *Progressive Independence: Jazz*). Get with a teacher, and work toward swinging. It's an essential skill if you want to be a professional drummer who can take any gig that comes your way.

Work a little each day on training yourself to develop skills that will provide you with a more fruitful career. Take lessons, research, refine, and work toward your goals bit by bit. When you go to bed at night, you need to ask yourself, "What did I do today to make a step toward my goals? Am I better today than I was yesterday?" There are drummers all around the world who *did* work on getting those gigs, teaching positions, auditions, or recording sessions. Make sure you're one of them!

My goal with these articles is to address many of the questions I'm often asked about being a professional musician. I want to encourage and inspire you to look forward. Change your playing, change your attitude, change your approach, change your circumstances, and even change your setup if it will inspire you. Work to improve a little bit each day, and, most of all, embrace change!

Russ Miller has played on recordings with combined sales of more than 26 million copies. His versatility has led him to work with a wide range of artists, including Ray Charles, Tina Turner, Nelly Furtado, and Andrea Bocelli. For more info, visit russmiller.com.

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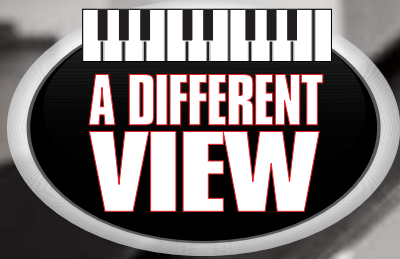
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Benmont Tench

by Michael Parillo

The Heartbreakers keyboardist and first-call session player has worked with a vast number of the world's top drummers. On his first solo album he adds another fine player to the list.

When *Modern Drummer* arrives to chat with Benmont Tench in his New York City hotel room, the keyboardist, who lives in Los Angeles, is listening to Van Morrison's *Saint Dominic's Preview* album—on vinyl. A guitar is propped up in the corner, and an electric keyboard is set up in the lounge area. Tench, who's in town promoting his very first solo album, this year's *You Should Be So Lucky*, explains that he travels to New York frequently enough to justify having instruments and a turntable at the ready, and yes, you quickly understand: It would be a shame if he had to go without this stuff. Musical nourishment to be taken daily.

Tench, a founding member of Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers and a beloved fixture of the rock 'n' roll session scene, is one of those cats who has *big ears*. Whether it's his knack for communing in the moment with his

fellow musicians, his gift for hitting the bull's eye of the song he's playing, his wide-ranging and passionate music fandom, or even his attentiveness in conversation, the man is a listener before he's anything else. This concept turns out to be the thread that weaves together our discussion.

"It's the key," Tench says. "I mean, if a musician isn't listening, then he should get another job. As someone said, and I believe it was the bassist John Clayton: 'When you're playing, don't listen to yourself—listen to everybody else, especially when you're soloing.' It's a very Zen, Taoist thing to think about, and it's impossible to do...and if you get too lost in it, then you'll probably play the best you ever played in your life, but I haven't gotten there yet. But that's what it is for me: Listen to everybody else more than you listen to yourself, and above all, listen to the song."

Going Solo

After forty years of conceding the singer-songwriter role to Tom Petty, no slouch, Tench found he had enough of his own material, some brand-new and some dating back decades, to make a record. It helped to get a nudge from the famed producer/engineer Glyn Johns (Led Zeppelin, the Who, Eric Clapton), who encouraged Tench to record his songs and who ended up producing the album in his signature clear, homey, no-fuss style, organically capturing seasoned players with great sound. Tench met some of his core *You Should Be So Lucky* band, including the English drummer Jeremy Stacey (Sheryl Crow, Steve Hackett), while hanging at the L.A. club Largo, where the keyboardist plays regularly when he's at home in California and where he's formed countless musical alliances. Tench and Stacey would later play

together on Ryan Adams' 2011 album, *Ashes & Fire*, which Johns produced.

"It was really sweet," Tench says of the *Ashes & Fire* experience, "and I just fell in love with the way Jeremy played. So when I decided to do a record, he was the only person I thought of. I know so many great drummers, but I thought that for these songs it would just be telepathic with Jeremy and I wouldn't have to say a word to him. And I didn't, really.

"While Jeremy can clearly play just about anything that comes to mind, he's very busy listening. So whatever he plays, it suits the song and the moment, and it never takes you out of the trance. I really like a band that doesn't let you leave the mood of the song, that doesn't make you sit up and go, 'That was a cool lick.' And although Jeremy plays plenty of things that are praiseworthy, it's never something that startles you out of the mood of the song."

Tench sings in a conversational voice that can't help but be influenced by Petty, especially by the cozier side of Petty's wizened-confidant/rabble-rouser delivery. And, again like his longtime bandleader, Benmont knows how to write a melody that sticks in your head. These traits, plus a healthy range of tasty roots-based feels, point Stacey toward straightforward, supportive drumming but also help keep the ideas flowing. Stacey gets to rock ("Veronica Said," "You Should Be So Lucky"), use brushes ("Ecor Rouge," "Corrina, Corrina"), inject hints of Ringo-like swing ("Like the Sun"), play a leisurely bolero ("Wobbles"), work a country shuffle (Bob Dylan's "Duquesne

Whistle"), and concoct a kit-and-percussion hybrid ("Dogwood") that sounds simple until you really zero in. "You figure out how the hell one man did that at once," Tench says of the single-take drum track on "Dogwood."

On "Blonde Girl, Blue Dress," Stacey's drums sit beneath a tambourine overdub by Ringo Starr himself. "Ringo was going to play drums on 'Blonde Girl,'" Tench says, "but there was a mix-up as to the dates. So by the time we got ahold of each other, the time had passed. But it needed a tambourine..." Ringo shakes the tambourine with his unique feel that's between straight and swinging, and you get the sense that he didn't overthink his part. "He showed up twenty minutes after he called, and he was gone twenty minutes after he showed up," Tench says. "He was great. He's the greatest." And a bonus track on the vinyl version of *Lucky*, "After All I've Done for You," finds Stacey digging in along with Ethan Johns, Glyn's son, who plays various instruments on the album, in a hard-driving double-drummer shuffle under Tench's Booker T.-style organ.

Throughout, Stacey, with his warm, deep drum sound, manages the tricky balance of sounding perfectly measured yet off the cuff. "He's very special," Tench says. "I've been really lucky with the drummers that I've played with in my life, from Randall Marsh in [the pre-Heartbreakers band] Mudcrutch through Stan Lynch to Steve Ferrone, and all the times that I've worked with Jim Keltner, Russ Kunkel, Ringo. I even worked a little bit with the Rolling

Stones and got to play with Charlie Watts. So I've been blessed to work with a lot of drummers, and Jeremy is right up there with all of them." Stacey picks his spots for fills on the album, such as the buoyant tom patterns on the spy-theme-ish title track. "The fills are propulsive, and they fit the mood," Tench says. "And they seem very instinctive. It makes the songs feel to me like they're just coming out.

"I don't enjoy a lot of modern recorded music, because it sounds so well arranged, which is probably a byproduct of programming and all that," Benmont continues, widening his scope. "There was some special magic that the Beatles had and certain great pop records, even to this day, have, where they sound spontaneous yet all the parts fit together really well. I lean toward what happened on [Bob Dylan's] *Blonde on Blonde*, where everyone knew what they were doing, clearly, but it also sounds like there's a fair amount of winging it going on. There's a little bit of chaos. So I think that's the thing, with Jeremy and with everybody else on the record.

"I miss that in the constructed music that goes on today. But it isn't about whether it's arranged or constructed or built instrument by instrument or somebody's making it up on the spot—I want to hear the *people*. The Heartbreakers' late bass player, Howie Epstein, produced a John Prine album called *The Missing Years*, and on that one we built the whole thing up, but it was still very spontaneous, with everybody playing at different times but

English Drummers and Southern Drummers

More observations on Benmont Tench's favorite timekeepers

MD: Let's talk about playing with the Rolling Stones and Charlie Watts.

Benmont: It was very limited, but it was very special, because there's the Beatles and the Rolling Stones and Bob Dylan, and then there's everybody else, you know? The first time I worked with them was on *Voodoo Lounge*. I wound up overdubbing, but they were there. The second time was *Bridges to Babylon*. We were set up, and the Hammond was about as near to Charlie as I am to you. And I was a very happy son of a bitch. Because if you want to know how I think one should play the drums, put on "Beast of Burden."

MD: There's behind the beat, and then there's Charlie.

Benmont: Listen, Charlie is *on time*, but somehow Charlie is propulsive and "back"—like Earl Palmer, like Earl Phillips, like Ringo, who is *dead* on the money but doesn't feel uptight. Ringo's a rhythm-and-blues drummer. And Charlie is a jazz-and-blues drummer. That was magic. I also wound up in another room, playing some boogie-woogie with just Charlie and Keith [Richards], and maybe Keltner was there too, playing some Hoagy Carmichael songs. That was really special.

MD: You've worked a lot with Keltner.

Benmont: There is nobody in the world like Jim Keltner, as a man or a musician. I saw Little Village play once, and I was left thinking that I love Nick Lowe and John Hiatt—boy, do I—and if you put Nick Lowe or John Hiatt up on stage with a guitar or a piano, they will make music. But if you put Ry Cooder or Jim Keltner on an *empty stage*, they will make music; they will somehow make music out of thin air.

I walked into the late, lamented Cello, a recording studio in Los Angeles, once, and they had new metal lampshades. I tapped one, and as a joke I said, "Tell Keltner to come sample *that* for a sound." Someone said, dead serious, "He already has." Jim is always finding something.

There are two people that I've learned a lot from about playing just the moment and from the heart, and they're Jim Keltner and Fiona Apple. Fiona seems to always be just who she is at the moment. And Jim is always playing the way he's listening at the moment. He's always going, "On this take this belongs here. Maybe on that take it didn't belong at all or it belonged *there*."

Keltner's a wonderful man, and he's the only Jim Keltner. Jim Keltner ought to be on a stamp.

Benmont Tench

somehow playing off each other.

“That’s what I want from music: a human connection. It doesn’t matter if it’s Future Islands or Taylor Swift or Howlin’ Wolf or the Beatles or the Replacements—I want to feel the human touch.”

Being a Heartbreaker

That human touch is a huge part of the Heartbreakers’ enduring appeal; this is a band that sets up on stage and blows the roof off the place through the sheer chemistry among the musicians and

their shared history and love for pure rock ‘n’ roll. In the drum chair from the band’s 1976 inception until 1994 was Stan Lynch, an influential player in terms of his ability to serve the song while remaining active and combustible on the kit. In 1995, after playing on Petty’s second solo album, the previous year’s *Wildflowers*, Steve Ferrone, formerly of the Average White Band and a very different drummer given his British-funk pedigree and clean, super-sturdy feel, joined the group.

“We’ve done well on the drumming

front,” Benmont says of his main gig. “Steve is something else—and going from Stan to him, because Stan is a remarkable drummer. Stan is just a lovely damn drummer.” Responding to the idea that there’s a lot of Ringo in Lynch’s playing, Benmont says, “There’s Ringo and Charlie [Watts], and there’s some Simon Kirke and Kenney Jones in Stanley. He’s got his own thing. I’d swear I hear some Kenny Buttrey in there, but I don’t know if he’d agree. The Heartbreakers, if we just sit around and play, it’s *all* kinds of music. The breadth is remarkable. You’ll get Merle Haggard songs, Howlin’ Wolf songs, and Slim Harpo songs, and quite the wide range, if we’re just messing around. So I get to hear how everybody plays all that stuff. It’s *fun*.”

Tench and Lynch, two old friends from Gainesville, Florida, last played together back in 2002, when the Heartbreakers were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. “I email back and forth with him all the time, so we’re still tight,” Tench says. “But I haven’t played with Stanley in years. I would love to. There was a lot of telepathy there. I learned how to play in a band with Randall Marsh and Stan Lynch. Randall’s very cool too. There’s a through line [from Marsh to Lynch to Ferrone]. It’s all either Southern drummers who like English drummers or a drummer from the south of England. It’s all got England and the south in it.”

So what about making the switch from Lynch to Ferrone? “They’re very different—as they should be,” Tench says, “because otherwise why lose Stan if you’re not going to change things? You’re not going to get a better version of Stan. So while I wasn’t behind Stan leaving the band—you’d have to ask Tom—it was a very interesting transition. It changed the way I play, because Stan’s time is very much ‘go with everybody else.’ He knows where it is, but he’ll lean the way that it’s leaning. And Steve’s time is very much ‘here’s where the time is,’ although he is listening and going with everybody in his way. So I had to practice.

“If you play with any different drummer, like if you go from Stan to Keltner, which I did the first time I did a session with Dylan, or if you go from Keltner to Ferrone to Kunkel, or something, you’re learning a different dialect of the same language. The language is rhythm, and everybody

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speaks their own dialect. So I had to learn Steve's dialect, and he had to learn ours. And he has. And in the process there's a slightly different dialect being created."

At this point we comment that a song like *Wildflowers*' "You Wreck Me," with its relentless unaccented hi-hat 8th notes, gives drummers fits. "Oh, there are reasons for that, right?" Benmont says. "One is that your right wrist will freeze." That is the primary reason, yes. Yet it's no sweat for Ferrone. "I know, because I see him do it night after night. 'Running Down a Dream' is like six minutes long live, and sometimes on the vamp I go, *Okay, I'm going to see how long I can do 8ths along with Steve*. Not very long! At that intensity, no. It's a miracle. To play 'You Wreck Me' with Ferrone is an oh-my-God experience. I love Steve. I flat-out love Steve."

As we suggest that accenting certain notes can help drummers maintain a fast pattern, adding that Ferrone has no such luxury on "You Wreck Me," Tench responds, "My take on that, and I can't speak for Tom and I can't speak for [Heartbreakers guitarist] Mike [Campbell], who cowrote the song, is that when Roger Linn invented his version of the drum machine, you had that kind of drumming come in. But it's always been there. If you listen to [the Beatles'] 'Things We Said Today,' Ringo's not doing a lot of accents. He can't help but swing, but the hi-hat's pretty steady on that. In fact, there's not a single fill in that song. The hi-hat gets farther open in the bridge, then it closes up. And I don't think there are fills in 'Misery' or 'From Me to You' either. So that's been there all along, but I think it came to the fore for a lot of people when the drum machine showed up."

"Mike is an ace drum machine programmer. If you listen to [Don Henley's] 'Boys of Summer,' that's Mike programming a drum machine. That would be my guess, that that's what got folks into playing even like that. Because if you listen to the Average White Band, Steve doesn't play the hi-hat like that. There's a lot of nuance in the hi-hat."

In the Studio

As we flit back and forth between discussing drumming in the Heartbreakers and Tench's other life as a session musician—he's recorded with, among *many* others, Stevie Nicks, Elvis Costello, Willie Nelson, Johnny

Cash, Green Day, and Fiona Apple—parallels emerge, namely that Benmont thrives on spontaneity and the type of *Blonde on Blonde* "chaos" he referred to earlier, regardless of whether he's playing together with old friends or overdubbing alone in the studio. He's not the kind of guy who does his best work with a complicated or fully charted-out arrangement—but he's just the man you want when it's time to sit down, open your ears, and play. And that's one reason why the Heartbreakers' 2010 album, *Mojo*,

stands out, along with Ferrone's lively, fat-sounding performance on it.

"Ninety percent of that record is just us on the floor, with [monitor] wedges instead of headphones," Tench explains. "We're set up like we play live, except Tom is turned around facing us. Steve is beautiful on that album. The opening track, 'Jefferson Jericho Blues,' he just slams it. It sounds like Muddy [Waters]'s band. That album is really representative of us, as much as anything we've done since *Damn the Torpedoes* or *Hard Promises*, because it's

The advertisement features a central image of Tony Royster Jr. wearing a black beanie, sunglasses, and a black hoodie, holding a black snare drum. The drum has the Ahead Armor Cases logo on it. The background is a dark brick wall with red horizontal lines. In the top left, there is a logo for Ahead Armor Cases. To the right of the logo, the text reads "THE NEXT LEVEL IN PROTECTION". Below that, it says "AHEAD ARMOR PROUDLY WELCOMES" followed by a signature and "TONY ROYSTER JR.". At the bottom, the website "AHEADARMORCASES.COM" is listed, along with "DISTRIBUTED BY BIG BANG DISTRIBUTION | 818.727.1127".

Benmont Tench

just us on the floor playing. Those albums, and *Long After Dark* and the first two, for the most part, are just us on the floor playing.

"On the first Heartbreakers record, the studio we were working in was so small.... If it was 'Breakdown,' I could play on the track as we cut it. But if the song was loud, like 'American Girl,' I had to come in after and put the piano on once they'd done the guitars, bass, and drums, because if you had all that cacophony going on, it would get in the piano [mics] too much. But a lot of that stuff is all of us on the floor.

"The *Southern Accents* stuff, less so, because [producer] Dave Stewart was in and we were experimenting. And the Jeff Lynne stuff is done Jeff's way. *Wildflowers*, Rick [Rubin] is very specific about arranging, and that's when Steve came in. But *Mojo* is kind of back to Tom showing up with a guitar, or, if he wrote the song on piano, showing it to me on the piano, and us just seeing where we take it. And that is my favorite way to make music, with anybody, and absolutely with the Heartbreakers. And since we didn't have headphones, and since we record in our own space now, it doesn't

feel like anything other than just hanging out and playing. Playing for ourselves. There isn't the nervousness that the tape is rolling. I like that record a lot."

After we've concluded our chat with Tench, it's announced that Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers will release their latest studio album, *Hypnotic Eye*, in the summer of 2014, before *MD* has the chance to take a listen. Tench, however, has a bit of inside scoop, which he provides in a quick follow-up conversation. "It's pretty hard-driving," he says of *Hypnotic Eye*. "Lots of guitar. And it's really a shining moment for Steve. He's very versatile on it. Being Ferrone, the songs didn't necessarily have that feel when Tom started playing them. They might have suddenly taken on that feel, because Steve is a very creative drummer. He's one of a kind, and I think this shows it pretty well."

We check a fact or two and then sign off with Tench, telling him we think this Different View story is looking good as we head to press. "Just so long as I mention that Steve Ferrone is a *god*," Benmont says. "And so is Stan Lynch. They're gods from different versions of groove paradise."



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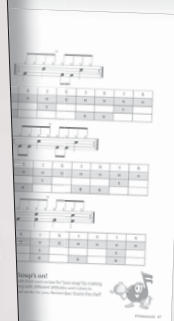
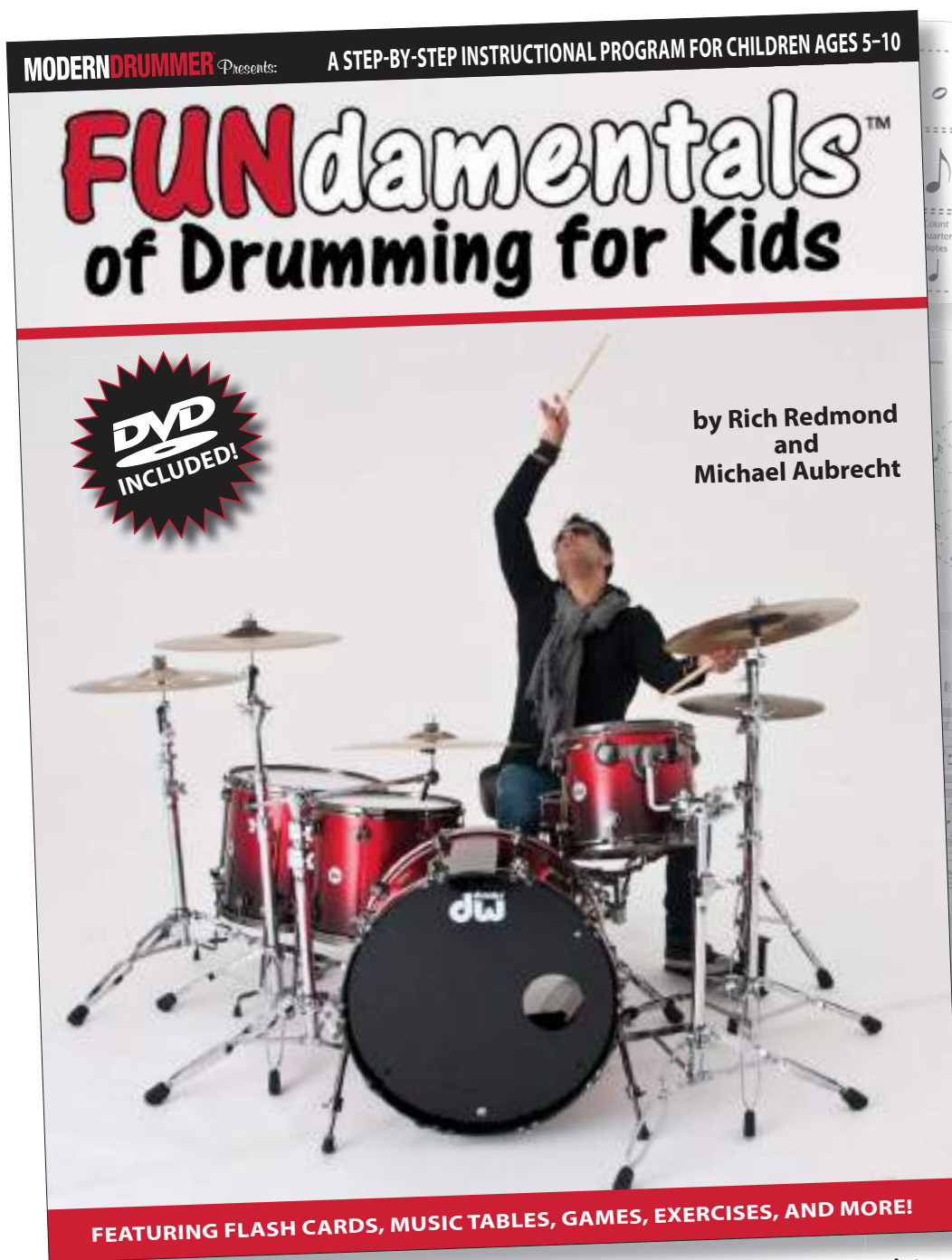
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Hozoji Matheson-Margullis

by Stephen Bidwell



Covering lead and backing vocals while playing over rapidly shifting arrangements—with a refreshing open-handed approach—she can't help but make **Helms Alee** stand out on today's indie-rock scene.

Over the course of three full-length albums, Helms Alee, from Seattle, has developed an appealing sound that references a number of heavy styles from the past twenty years. The distillation of sludge metal, post-hardcore, and melodic rock continues to progress on the group's latest album, *Sleepwalking Sailors*.

All three members of Helms Alee—singer/vocalist Hozoji Matheson-Margullis, guitarist/vocalist Ben Verellen, and bassist/vocalist Dana James—contribute to the writing process, and the trio took the better part of three years to create *Sleepwalking Sailors*, whose broad range of moods and dynamics is bolstered by a huge drum sound emanating from a late-'60s script-badge Rogers kit. "My dad bought me my first drumset when I was fifteen," Matheson-Margullis says, "and I play that to this day. I've been through a couple of other kits, but the Rogers is still my favorite."

Matheson-Margullis took drum lessons for about a year after getting that Rogers set, and her parents were supportive of her taking up stringed instruments as well. But it's clear when talking to her that simply being a music fan during a particularly fertile period in Washington State rock 'n' roll provided much of her education. Aside from classic groups like Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin, artfully raging bands like the Melvins, Big Business, Karp, and Murder City Devils loomed large on the '90s Northwest scene, and drummers like Sara Lund from Unwound made for serious inspiration. "I saw her play for the first time a month after I got my first drumset," Matheson-Margullis recalls, "and that was a really big deal to me. I wanted to be just like her."

In addition to being the drummer in Helms Alee, Matheson-Margullis plays guitar and sings alongside her high school friend and fellow drummer Justine Maria Valdez in Lozen, a band that

predates Helms. A quick listen to the distinct but equally intense two-piece suggests that a youthful catharsis fuels whatever project Matheson-Margullis undertakes. "As soon as I started playing, I would just bash and scream," Hozoji says. "I've always been naturally drawn to that. It feels really good to beat the shit out of the drums, but it's really *next level* for me to play the drums and sing."

We'll get more into that subject presently, but let's go back to the mammoth drum sound on *Sleepwalking Sailors* for a moment. It seems not to have hurt having former These Arms Are Snakes drummer Chris Common at the controls. Common, who has also worked behind the board for the progressive metal bands Pelican and Mouth of the Architect, tracked to tape in a high-ceiling room at Studio Litho in Seattle, furthering a deep, drum-forward mix. "Working with Chris was fun and rewarding," Matheson-Margullis says. "He's a real hyper guy, and he used that energy to focus his ear deep on sound quality and the creative flow of ideas. He had that perfect combination of being super-hardworking and devoted but fun to be around for twelve intense hours at a time."

Of course, a great drum sound is nothing without a commanding, creative player, and Matheson-Margullis keeps the intensity and ambition at a high level by continually pushing herself, especially in the studio. "I have the same challenge with every recording session," she explains, "in that I write beats that are slightly outside my comfort zone and then I have to face them under the studio microscope, where I'm [forced to deal with the fact that I'm] not quite as good at playing them as I thought I was. This can send me into a mental spiral that sucks me so deep into my mind that I become almost completely disconnected from my body and lose all ability to control my motor functions for a bit. I inevitably work my way back until I reach the point of being able to play the beat in question better than I ever have before."

Matheson-Margullis confirms that her thundering tom-tom work is influenced by the Melvins' Dale Crover but adds that it's also inspired by her Native American heritage. Hozoji, who is Puyallup—when not on tour, she works as a commercial clam diver for the western Washington State tribe—says, "I've always been drawn to native-style drumming. I went to powwows a lot as a kid, and still do." Consult YouTube for a Puyallup powwow, then follow it with a live clip of Helms Alee performing "Lefty Handy Man Handle" from its 2008 debut album, *Night Terror*, and it's not hard to see the connection.

Among Matheson-Margullis's drumming approaches is playing open-handed ride patterns, which she was inspired to try in 2007 by Clint Baechle, the drummer with OVVL and Hazzard's Cure. "I wasn't playing drums with anyone then," Hozoji recalls. "I was in a lull, and when Ben and Dana asked me to play with them, I figured I had nothing to lose. I'd seen Clint play open-handed, and he was just shredding. I was enchanted by that and decided I was going to try playing that way. I fell in love with it, and it totally changed the way that I write. It makes you play different beats and it's really efficient, so I highly recommend it for everyone."

In Matheson-Margullis's role as a lead singer, she might have to sing in one time signature while playing a drumbeat in another, upping the ante. "Playing drums and singing is something that I've worked hard on since I first started playing drums," Hozoji says, "because it *feels* so good. It's always challenging at first when we're writing a new song, but that's true of all aspects of writing and playing music. It's just a matter of having patience for the repetition. Do it enough times and your body and mind will sync up and allow you to accomplish what you've set out to do."

Still, singing over math-rock workouts like the five-beat triplet pattern under *Sleepwalking Sailors*' "Dangling Modifiers" must take some serious calculating. But Matheson-Margullis tries not to get hung up on the math. "More often than not I write entirely around feeling the riff," she says. "Occasionally I will have a specific skill or style in mind that I want to build up or include in a song, and I will purposely write it in. But most of the time I just listen and reply."

Helms Alee's countering of moody melodic passages with brutally loud sections is powered in part by guitarist Ben Verellen's company, Verellen Amplifiers, which builds 300-watt guitar heads. That's more than double the output of your average Marshall, kids. Matheson-Margullis seems unfazed by the epic volume, though. "I've never been in a band that *didn't* have really loud guitars," she says, "so I was trained from the beginning to beat the hell out of my drums. It was never even a thought process for me. I just started as a frustrated teenager playing with other frustrated teenagers, and we all wanted to thrash, so we did, and it was loud. Now I'm a grown woman—not quite so thrashy, but still beating the hell out of my drums."

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Matheson-Margullis's late-'60s black Rogers kit includes 12" and 13" rack toms, a 16" floor tom, and a 22" bass drum. Hozoji plays a 14" Yamaha snare, and her cymbals include 14" Zildjian hi-hats, a 16" Zildjian A Custom Projection crash, and an 18" crash and 20" ride from Sabian's Paragon line. Her Yamaha hardware includes a single bass drum pedal, and she plays Regal Tip Quantum 3000 nylon-tip sticks.



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The famed saxophonist/composer places ceremonial drums at center stage on this unique release.

Furthering his quest to meld Afro-Cuban folkloric music with progressive jazz, Yosvany Terry imports the rarely heard sounds of the Arará tradition to his group Ye-Dé-Gbé. The Arará heritage—originally from Dahomey, Africa (now Benin)—is preserved in a handful of Caribbean locales, including Matanzas, Cuba, where Terry communed with local keepers of the flame. After learning their ceremonial repertoire, the saxophonist commissioned a set of authentic Arará drums for this recording. The set of three (sometimes four) single-headed drums of various sizes is played soulfully by the top-shelf trio of **Román Díaz**, **Sandy Pérez**, and MVP sensation **Pedrito Martínez**, who



also delivers impassioned vocal chants. **Justin Brown** supports the drums with tight, funky kit grooves on select cuts. In addition to his intuitive alto and soprano explorations, Terry also displays his percussion prowess with a shekere solo on “Ojún Degara.” The superb core group, augmented by guests, includes bassist Yuniory Terry, pianist Osmany Paredes, and guitarist Dominic Kanza. An ecstatic highlight is the title track, driven by heated drumming and Martínez’s soaring voice answered with ensemble vocals. And “Healing Power” revels in the naked potency of Arará drums and voices alone. Sophisticated, spiritual, and earthy. (5Passion) **Jeff Potter**



Billy Joel *A Matter of Trust: The Bridge to Russia*

The superstar singer-songwriter was everywhere in the mid-'80s—even the former Soviet Union. A new expanded version of his historic concert document takes us back to those heady days.

Essentially an expanded rerelease of

Billy Joel’s 1987 live album, Концерт, the double-CD/Blu-ray/DVD package *A Matter of Trust: The Bridge to Russia* delivers unreleased audio and a more complete performance of the album’s companion concert film, *Live in Leningrad*. It adds an in-depth documentary as well. Fans of popular Joel drummer **Liberty DeVitto** will savor newly unearthed versions of “The Ballad of Billy the Kid” and “Scenes From an Italian Restaurant,” and the ninety-minute Blu-ray/DVD is filled with the hard-hitting DeVitto whaling away on FM staples like “Prelude/Angry Young Man” and bringing a muscular swing to “Big Man on Mulberry Street.” The camera loves DeVitto’s animated toughness, so dig him leaving out the ghost notes and forging head down through rockers like “Sometimes a Fantasy,” “You May Be Right,” and “Big Shot.” The drum sound does suffer from the dreaded late-'80s reverb, and the video is strangely not upgraded to 5.1 surround, but fans of Joel’s classic band lineup and DeVitto’s attack will have many hours of enjoyment revisiting this era of the piano man. (Columbia/Legacy) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



Syd Arthur *Sound Mirror*

This young band may be inspired by a long-gone musical movement, but the tunes sound fresh by any measure.

Serious psychedelia has staged a comeback recently, with acts like Australia’s Tame Impala and now Syd Arthur, from Canterbury, England,

resurrecting the atmospheric prelude to prog rock with an artful wink and a lyrical nod. In concert, Syd Arthur is a gritty jam band, twirling odd meters and soaring via colorful keyboard melodies. Its second studio effort, *Sound Mirror*, is a beautifully cosmic record drawing on Gentle Giant (“Autograph”), Caravan (“What’s Your Secret”), early King Crimson (“Forevermore”), and the esoteric electronic rockers Space Art (“Backwardstepping”). Drummer

Fred Rother supports the kaleidoscopic sounds with a gentle, measured pulse, as if Nick Mason and Pierre Moerlen had a love child raised by Pip Pyle. (Harvest) **Ken Micallef**



Nels Cline Singers *Macroscopic*
Looking for some muscular trio music played with detailed attention to dynamics but with no adherence to rules? Step right in.

Genre hopping has been Wilco guitarist Nels Cline’s method of operation across his solo efforts, and that sense of

adventure permeates the proceedings on the fifth album by his Singers trio, which features drummer **Scott Amendola** and now bassist Trevor Dunn. (A sixth album, 2010’s *The Celestial Septet*, was a collaboration with the avant-garde sax quartet Rova.) This is take-no-prisoners stuff, as Amendola leans in hard on his ride during the 6/4 “Canales’ Cabeza,” whipping out huge fill after huge fill and working his bell on the out head. Percussionists **Cyro Baptista** and **Josh Jones** augment the trio on several cuts, adding Brazilian and Afro-Cuban flavors to “The Wedding Band” and “Respira.” Amendola is wonderfully loose on “Seven Zed Heaven,” working his cymbals and hi-hats underneath Dunn’s acoustic bass before the song veers off into a hazy wash of guitars and electronics. (Mack Avenue)

Ilya Stemkovsky



Neneh Cherry *Blank Project*
On her latest album, the genre-melding singer makes the most out of the virtual and the real.

For this Four Tet–produced, rather bare ten-track outing, Neneh Cherry teams with the U.K. synth/drums duo RocketNumberNine, comprising two

brothers, Benjamin Page on keyboards and **Thomas Page** on drums. Aside from Cherry’s maniacal cackling and titillating yet controlled orgasmic screams, what’s especially effective here is the juxtaposition of programmed beats with acoustic drum patterns. Staving off electronic rigidity, Thomas Page skillfully fuses rock backbeats with Latin-jazz and classic funk grooves, helping to forge a vibrant, free-flowing, accessible song cycle shaped by subtle

rhythmic variation and seamless hybrids of man and machine. Having burst on the international scene in the late '80s as an R&B/rap artist, Cherry, the stepdaughter of legendary trumpeter Don Cherry, has evolved into a multitalented singer who continues to demonstrate a keen ability to pursue intriguing musical partners and projects. (Smalltown Supersound) **Will Romano**



KXM KXM

With a flood of so-called supergroups and pet projects out there, this is one of the few that hold water.

Masterful musicianship is the undercurrent beneath the mature lyrical content and superbly crafted compositions of KXM's debut album, which features Korn's

Ray Luzier on drums. Fans of King's X will, as usual, rejoice in dUg Pinnick's soulful vocals and unmatched bass tone, while followers of George Lynch (Dokken, Lynch Mob) will bathe in the guitarist's earthy, Hendrix-ian metal grit. And of course it's Luzier's diverse, dynamic, relentless playing that will draw drummers to this project. The passion in Luzier's kit work is felt immediately in the flowing modern-rock mix, and Ray's smooth yet deceptively dense chops are front and center here. Precision double bass on tracks like "Gunfight" and "I'll Be OK" surfaces when necessary, but it's Luzier's deep groove and hypnotic feel that grab your ear. Credit engineer Chris Collier for a stellar drum mix and overall production masterstrokes. (Rat Pak) **Mike Haid**



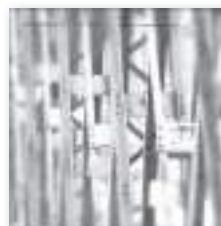
Mark Rivera *Common Bond*
After twenty-five-plus years in the business, the first-call sax man steps out front for his first ever solo record.

With his debut as a leader, Mark Rivera, who's spent years perfecting his craft on the road and in the studio with artists including Foreigner, Daryl Hall and John

Oates, Sam and Dave, Peter Gabriel, John Lennon, and Joe Walsh, has made a record intent on bringing back an old-school vibe.

Charley Drayton rocks his Charlie Watts feel on "Sticky Situation" and "Tell Me All the Things You Do," channels Mitch Mitchell on a cover of Jimi Hendrix's "Spanish Castle Magic," and glides a smooth, musical, tasty groove on "Start Over," complementing Rivera's vocals, which are among the many pleasant surprises here. Elsewhere, Rivera's bosses Billy Joel and **Ringo Starr** make significant guest appearances, such as on the first single, "Money, Money, Money," where Ringo lays down a rock-solid beat that might not hit you at first as the work of the ex-Beatle. Later, coproducer **Jimmy Bralower** kicks "Why You Dance So Good" into high gear from behind the kit, showcasing his drumming talents and reminding us that he's more than a programming guru. And don't think for a minute that because Rivera is a saxophonist, this record doesn't rock. Because it *does*.

(MREG/Dynotone) **Billy Amendola**



Don Peretz and Oz Noy
Manufactured Region

There might not be a lot of fireworks on this fusoid meeting, but there's plenty of heat.

The **Don Peretz/Oz Noy** drums-and-guitar duo returns here with another recording of atmospheric fusion and interesting

production. (The pair previously collaborated on the drummer's 2010 release, *AMBean*.) On "Bundled," Peretz establishes a tight 16th-note

groove before he and Noy begin a jousting session that ends in a draw. "Groomed" highlights some nice Peretz chops on the closing solo, while "Logos" is all space and texture, forcing the drums to keep it simple while Noy explores. Improvisational gatherings usually head toward "look at me" territory, but this tandem goes for a sound and feel that's light on melodrama but heavy on mood. The production also occasionally colors the drums with new sounds and timbres, so it feels less like two guys jamming in a room and more like an album with its own identity. (donperetz.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

MULTIMEDIA

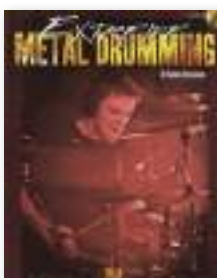
RATINGS SCALE



Rock Candy Funk Party *Takes New York: Live at the Iridium*

For fans looking to hear guitar great Joe Bonamassa playing something different from his usual bluesy rock, this live DVD/two-CD set of head-bobbing grooves will hit the spot. Featuring Bonamassa's regular touring drummer, **Tal Bergman**, this is no-nonsense, funky throwback fusion

focusing on group interplay and egoless soloing. Bergman does let his hair down on "Ode to Gee," sticking to tight pocket playing before interjecting some big snare-and-China combos. The drummer's solid work on the faster-paced "Spaztastic" and rumbling solo on "One Phone Call" further mix things up. But medium-tempo funk is king here, and Bergman, bassist Mike Merritt, and percussionist **Daniel Sadownick** form a three-headed monster designed to move your feet. (Ironically, the footage shows an enthusiastic but completely seated jazz audience.) An exceptionally well-produced drum sound and musician-friendly editing round out a nice package. (\$19.95, rockcandyfunkparty.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



Extreme Metal Drumming
by Hannes Grossmann

In this book/CD package, German drummer Hannes Grossmann (Obscura, Blotted Science) clearly details the fine points of developing proper technique for the fast and furious extreme metal genre. Five chapters of this 102-page instructional cover building a strong foundation,

focusing on warm-ups, double bass technique, blast beats, speed, endurance, and fills. The remaining five chapters put the double pedals to the metal by applying the fundamentals in a musical setting with metal grooves, more blast beats, advanced double bass concepts, and a much-appreciated section on using shortcuts to play high-speed foot patterns with fewer notes. The well-recorded play-along CD features various examples from the book, including three songs with and without drums. This package is an affordable introduction to unlocking the rhythmic mysteries of a physically and mentally challenging drumming style. (\$19.99, Hal Leonard)

Mike Haid



Armando Peraza

Percussionist Armando Peraza, whose pioneering work brought together the worlds of Afro-Cuban, jazz, and rock music, passed away this past April 14 in San Francisco at age eighty-nine. He is survived by his wife, Josephine, a daughter, and three grandchildren.

Peraza was born in Cuba in 1924. An orphan at age seven, he was supporting himself on the streets of Havana at fourteen, working as a vegetable vendor, a semipro baseball player, and a loan shark. A fifty-five-year musical career began when the youngster, nineteen and desperate for money, convinced Alberto Ruiz of the group Kubavana that he played congas. As Peraza related it to *MD* in 1999, "One day I was waiting for a bus, and Alberto said to me, 'Armando, I need a conga player.' I said, 'You need a conga player? I am the conga player.' I went and bought a conga for six dollars.

"I learned to play with one of the best groups in my country concerning Cuban music. As I was learning my way to play with these guys, the main thing was to keep good time. Sometimes the riff was coming and I couldn't play it, but I was keeping good time. They saw that I was responsible, that I didn't drink, that I didn't smoke, and they kept me in the band."

Peraza moved to the United States with Mongo Santamaria's Cuban Black Diamonds revue in 1950, and soon found a touring gig with Slim Gaillard. He was invited to join George Shearing's band in 1955, and he stayed with the British pianist for nine years. "We were one of the exponents of Latin jazz, or Afro-Cuban jazz," Peraza recalled. "Machito, George Shearing with Candido, and then myself. And then Cal Tjader."

In 1968, following a stint with vibraphonist Tjader, Peraza released the album *Wild Thing* on Skye Records, his one and only disc as a bandleader. The big band Afro-soul-jazz date featured the likes of Chick Corea and Sadao Watanabe. Peraza then performed for a short time with bassist Jaco Pastorius in Florida. He appears on guitarist Harvey Mandel's *Cristo Redentor* and was invited to join Santana in 1980. "This was the beginning of conga drums to play rock 'n' roll music," Peraza said. "Santana revolutionized the world. It was a fusion, Afro-fusion, but this guy created something of his own.



And I had the privilege to participate with all these guys."

Conguero Raul Rekow played with Peraza during many of those years. "I was brought in to replace him because he was sick," Rekow tells *Modern Drummer*. "When he got better, Carlos [Santana] asked me if it would be okay with me if he asked Armando to come back and play alongside me. I said of course." The more he thought about it, however, Rekow became a little apprehensive. "I was concerned by what Armando might think of me, this Filipino/German/Polish guy from San Francisco playing an instrument that is typically Afro-Cuban. He put my fears to rest really fast.

"When we first got together he asked me who my favorite conga drummer was. I figured this might be a trick question. Maybe he's thinking—wanting—that I will say him. I thought I needed to be honest, so I said, 'Um, Armando, you're the best bongo player I've

ever heard, but my favorite conga drummer is Francisco Aguabella.' He looked at me and paused, and that pause seemed like it took forever, and then he laughed and said, 'Yeah, me too.' He told me he loved the way I sounded. He told me that I played like no one else and that my tone was unique. He said, 'Raul, there's a lot of people out there that all sound alike, but you hit the drum one time and I know it's you.' That was the greatest encouragement he could have given me right at the beginning of working together."

Peraza performed on Santana albums from 1972's *Caravanserai* to 1990's *Spirits Dancing in the Flesh* and composed more than a dozen songs, including the instrumental "Mandela" on the band's 1987 album, *Freedom*. "To play with Santana, you better learn to play the grooves and swing too," Peraza said.

Says Rekow, "Armando told me, 'Every stage is Carnegie Hall,'

and what that means is that you give your best whether it's a million people or one. He used to say, 'Never let them see you're tired, and always finish strong.'"

Rekow planned the music for a private service held in Peraza's memory in San Francisco on April 26, with percussionists John Santos, Michael Spiro, Jesus Diaz, Harold Muñoz, Carol Steele, and Rekow himself among the performers. "We're going to do a drum tribute for Armando," Rekow said before the event. "A tribute fit for a conga king." **Robin Tolleason**



Armando Peraza (center), Raul Rekow (left), and Orestes Vilato on stage with Santana





Latin Percussion remembers Armando Peraza (1924-2014). May his legendary inspiration live on.





Bamm-Bamm's Fantasy



“I’ve always been inspired by drums from other parts of the world,” Dean Rossi of Reno, Nevada, says. “I thought it would be fun to assemble a hybrid kit that honored the sound of an ancient tradition and had a classic rock ‘n’ roll look.”

“The friendly folks at Taos Drums were kind enough to invite me to their factory in New Mexico after I took interest in their drums at their NAMM Show booth one year. I was lucky enough to meet their chief drum maker and get a tour of the facility. I came across a few drums with modern hardware, which had been discontinued. This really inspired me, and the idea was born. I ended up staying at the factory for two days, carefully auditioning more than 500 drums. The best part is that I was able to select drums for their tone and not just for looks. Each drum is handcrafted and a work of art.”

As for the makeup of the drumheads and the sound of the kit,

Rossi explains, “Most of the heads are made of medium to thick cowhide, and one is antelope. As with any natural animal skins, the heads change tone with temperature and humidity. When it’s warm and dry the toms sound the best, and when it’s cool and rainy the bass drums sound the best. The toms are stave-type construction, and the bass drums are carved out of solid logs of aspen and cottonwood. The tones are deep, natural, and very warm.”

As much of a blast as it would be to catch this rig in action, “I play it mostly in my home studio for fun but have played it on some singer-songwriter, textural, and ambient recordings,” Rossi says. “Even though these are Native American drums, I often play traditional West African dunun patterns on them—three bass drum parts simultaneously. And occasionally I play classic-rock grooves to honor the Flintstones and the town of Bedrock!”

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



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