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– Josh Freese



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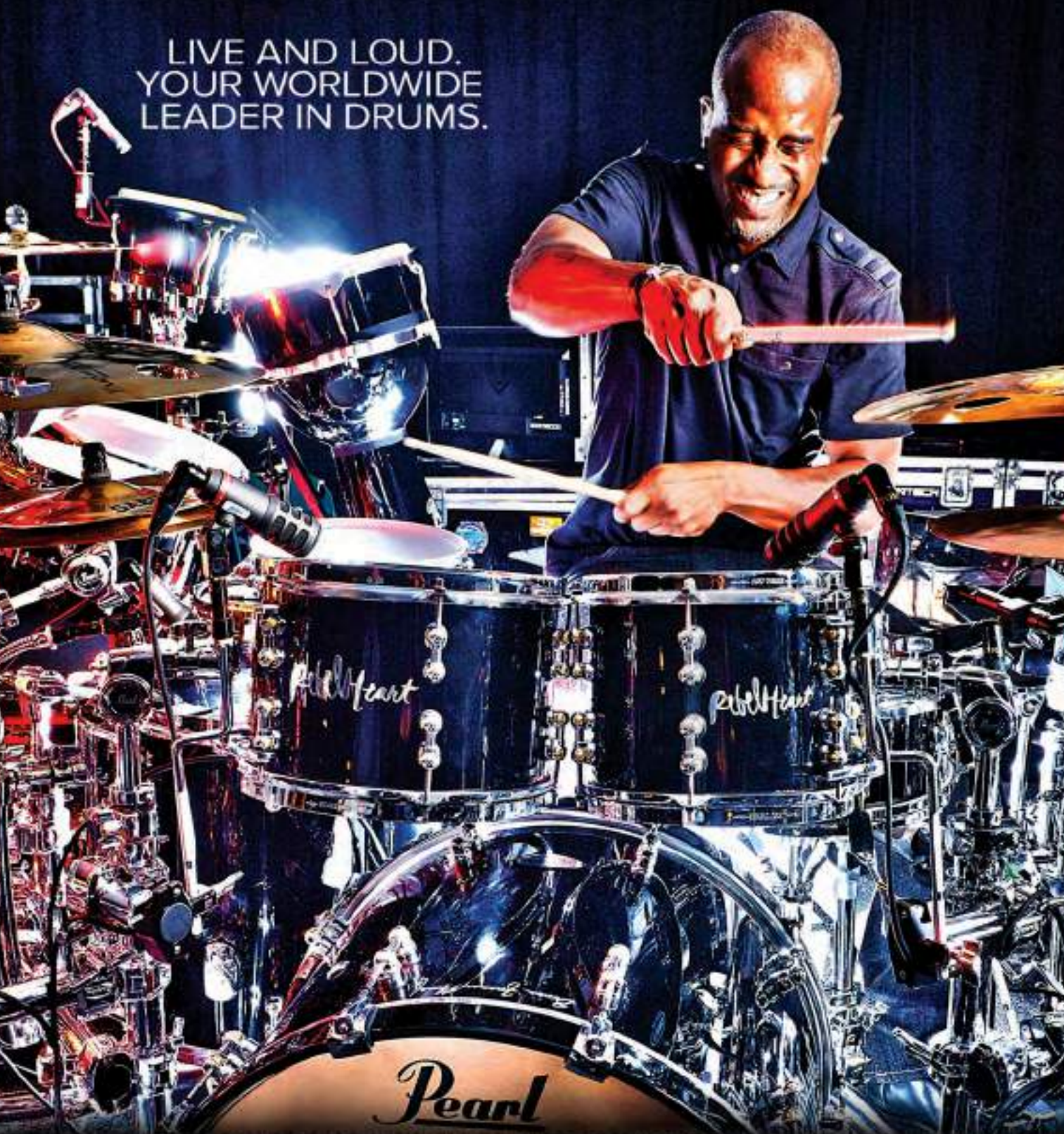
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Pictured: Florian Alexandru-Zorn with the New Split Brush SB
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Pearl

36 On the Cover

Brian Frasier-Moore

by Billy Amendola

“You never know what’s going to happen with artists like Madonna and Justin Timberlake, but you know *something* is definitely going to happen!”

The life of a first-call touring drummer comes with daily challenges and, occasionally, big-time surprises. Madonna’s groove monster has it down to a science.

Cover and contents photos by Alex Solca

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It Don't Come Easy

Back when I used to teach drum lessons, I asked a young student who had just started playing why he chose drums, and he said, "Because I want to be famous and not have to work." I thought to myself, *Boy, do I have my work cut out for me.*

I sat him down and did my best to explain that, yes, one day he might indeed become famous, but that he should be prepared to work extremely hard, for a very long time. After about a year of lessons I think he started to get a clearer idea of what becoming famous entails. He realized that if you want something, you need not only passion and talent but the willingness to work long and hard to get it—in most cases with little or no financial compensation.

This month's cover artist, Brian Frasier-Moore, knows all about the hard work required to become famous. Yes, Brian has been passionate about drums since he was young, and he was born with a God-given talent for the instrument. But he also understood early on that that wasn't going to be enough. If he wanted to achieve his goals, he'd have to put in the time.

During one of several interviews we conducted over a three-month period for his feature, Brian mentioned that for years he was always being asked questions about breaking into the music business. While on tour in 2013 with Justin Timberlake, he began addressing the topic in seminars and clinics. Today these appearances have turned into a full-time business called BFM Consultants. As he grows his consulting empire, Brian still does major tours. This year he's out once again with Madonna, with whom he originally played on the 2008 Sticky & Sweet tour, after which he spent two years traveling with Timberlake's 20/20 Experience tour. The pattern continues today—one world tour ends and another immediately follows. Talk about working hard.

In some ways, the demands of being one of the world's top musicians are as tough as the work required to get there. It's not easy being away from loved ones, and traveling around the world isn't as glamorous as it looks. When I asked Brian's wife, Brandi, what it's like being married to a successful touring musician, she replied, "There are so many preconceived notions, like [you have to deal with your spouse being] irresponsible, flirtatious, lazy, uninvolved. But my life is very different from that. As a husband, Brian is the opposite of that. He works hard and makes a lot of sacrifices for our family. And despite all his success, he never discredits my work. I'm so proud of him, and I never tire of seeing him thrive and soar in his gift."

You can read all about Brian's hard-earned achievements starting on page 36. In truth, all of the artists featured in this and every other issue of *Modern Drummer* know about the sacrifices involved in making it in the music business. There's simply no avoiding the struggle. And the challenge never stops—those of you who've been in the game for a long time should check out Russ Miller's "Starting (or Advancing) at Any Age" article elsewhere in this issue. After all, the mark of true professionals is that they're always learning, no matter how long they've been at it. There's always room for improvement. So enjoy the issue...then get to work!



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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.

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READERS' PLATFORM



Words of Gratitude

Your magazine has been a part of my drumming since I played my first pro gig in 1979, and I can wholeheartedly say that *MD* made a real positive difference for

me when I was active on the gig scene in the late '70s, '80s, '90s, and so on. At fifty-five now, I still enjoy getting *MD*, because I still love to play just for the joy of it. And yes, I'm still learning, thank you very much.

The magazine itself, while getting a new look and feel, has never compromised its integrity and commitment to generations of drummers, old and new. So I got my July 2015 issue, and that's what prompted me to write this from my heart to you, *MD*. Thank you so much for being there for me and millions of drummers throughout the years, and, I trust, many more years to come. Groove on!

P.S. Concepts, with Roy Burns, Billy Ward, and Russ Miller, etc., has always been one of my personal favorite columns.

Marco White

Vince Cherico

Vince Cherico, featured in your July issue, makes everyone he plays with sound great. That's what makes him a great player.

Dan Rosen

Dropped Beats

Our August issue included a line on the cover about a Bill Evans Encore with Paul Motian on drums. That piece actually ran in June. Also in August, we mislabeled a photo on page 93, in the Backbeats story on the Nashville Drummers Jam. That's Tim Horsley in the top left corner, not Pat McDonald. You'll get to see what Pat really looks like in an upcoming feature—stay tuned.

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GLENN KOTCHE

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MIKE WENGREN

Disturbed is back with a new, heavy-as-all-get-out album called *Immortalized*. MD Online gets the inside scoop.

SHAUN FOIST

Breaking Benjamin's drummer strikes gold with the group's chart-topping comeback album, *Dark Before Dawn*.

PRODUCT CLOSE-UP

Check out demos of Pearl's Wood Fiberglass drumset, Soultone's Noa cymbal pack, and Gaii snare drums.

BASICS

Rich Redmond demonstrates the powerful "falling rocks" fill.

ROCK 'N' JAZZ CLINIC

Mike Johnston shares focused exercises for building raw bass drum speed.

ROCK PERSPECTIVES

Watch a video illustrating how to incorporate odd groups, which Aaron Edgar explores in part five of his "Progressive Drumming Essentials" series.

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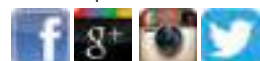
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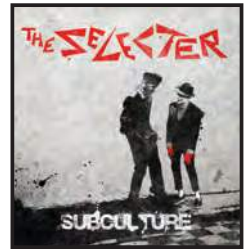
Disturbed *Immortalized*

The metal band has returned from a four-year hiatus with a new album. "With the last few," drummer **Mike Wengren** tells *MD*, "we decided to use technology and send files back and forth for writing and sometimes for recording. That worked, but part of our chemistry is when we're in a room together. It's hard to replicate that." *Immortalized* was recorded in secret with producer Kevin Churko (Ozzy Osbourne, Five Finger Death Punch) at his Las Vegas studio. "Kevin started his career as a drummer," Wengren says, "so it was very easy to communicate with him. It was awesome from both a performance and a sonic aspect. I've never been prouder of the tones we were able to get on a record." **Stephen Bidwell**



The Selector *Subculture*

"As we've been touring extensively, we knew there wouldn't be much time to record," drummer **Winston Marche** says of the influential second-wave ska band the Selector's new studio album. "So we decided to record the drums over a two-day period. Of course, given the choice, we'd like the luxury of having more time, so I knew I had my work cut out for me. I think whenever you play, you're not just there to accompany but to be an integral part of the track. There was very little time to think about these kinds of things in those two days, though. But once you get started, it just flows from one song to the next. I remember being quite surprised when we were about to record the last song, 'See Dem a Come.'" Marche, an adaptable player who has studied with the acclaimed British educator Francis Seriau, plays a Yamaha Recording Custom kit and Zildjian cymbals. "I've always found my gear versatile enough to handle all the different styles I've been required to play over the years," he says.



Other New Releases

Don Henley Cass County (Alex Hahn, Greg Morrow, Will Henley, Gregg Bissonette, Shannon Forrest) /// **Keith Richards** Crosseyed Heart (Steve Jordan) /// **Tesseract** Polaris (Jay Postones) /// **Sevendust** Kill the Flaw (Morgan Rose) /// **Widespread Panic** Street Dogs (Duane Trucks) /// **Clutch** Psychic Warfare (Jean-Paul Gaster) /// **Wand** 1,000 Days (Evan Burrows) /// **K's Choice** The Phantom Cowboy (Wim Van Der Westen) /// **Eagles of Death Metal** Zipper Down (Josh Homme) /// **the Dears** Times Infinity Volume One (Jeff Luciani) /// **Silversun Pickups** Better Nature (Christopher Guanlao) /// **Devil City Angels** Devil City Angels (Rikki Rockett) /// **the Sheepdogs** Future Nostalgia (Sam Corbett) /// **Larry Newcomb Quartet** Live Intentionally! (Jimmy Madison) /// **Children of Bodom** I Worship Chaos (Jaska Raatikainen)

Who's Playing What



Artega

Valentino Artega (Of Mice and Men), **Drew Shoals** (Train), **Nathan Sexton** (Justin Moore), **Christian Mora** (Black Veil Brides), **Ryan Rabin** (Grouplove), **Joshua Sales** (Sam Hunt), **Matt Sanchez** (American Authors), **Vinny Mauro** (Motionless in White), **Carlin White** (J. Cole), **Bryan Carter** (independent), **George Schmitz** (Stick to Your Guns), **Matt Traynor** (Blessthefall), **Adam Savage** (While She Sleeps), **Deborah Knox-Hewson** (Charli XCX), and **Josh Macintyre** (Marmozets) have joined Zildjian's artist roster.

Josh Devine (One Direction), **Zak Starkey** (the Who), **Stuart Kershaw** (OMD), **Jay Sikora** (Paolo Nutini, Lianne La Havas), **Scott Ottaway** (the Searchers), **Andy McGlasson** (Lady Gaga, Lionel Richie), **Gerry Morgan** (James Bay), **Rick McMurray** (Ash), **Steve DiStanislaw** (David Gilmour), **Pete Parada** (the Offspring), **Ira Elliot** (Nada Surf), **Shannon Forrest** (Toto), **David Uosikkinen** (the Hooters), **John Paris** (Earth, Wind & Fire), **Frank Zummo** (Krewella, Gary Numan), **James Kottak** (Scorpions), **Mauricio "Fritz" Lewak** (Jackson Browne), and **Christian Strybosch** (the Drones) are endorsing Porter & Davies.



Gregg Bissonette has joined the Audix microphones artist roster.

Top Players Create Online Drum Tutorial Site



A new online tutorial website, 180 Drums, is designed to connect aspiring drummers of all skill levels with top pros. Current instructors include **Aaron Gillespie** (Paramore, Underøath, the Almost), **Luke Holland** (the Word Alive), **Garrett Goodwin** (Carrie Underwood), **Adrian Bent** (Drake, Jay Z, Eminem, Lil Wayne), **Nate Robinson** (Lecrae), **Brian Haley**

(TobyMac), **Ben Satterlee** (Nashville studio drummer), and **Marcus Finnie** (Lady Antebellum, Kirk Whalum), along with 180 Drums founders **Steve Augustine** (Thousand Foot Krutch) and **Jake Nicolle** (Elevation Worship). In addition to lessons, the site features interviews, comments, and practice videos. For more information, go to 180drums.com.

Taylor Hawkins Fan-Collaboration App



Foo Fighters drummer Taylor Hawkins has released a video session for the WholeWorldBand app for Mac, Windows, iPad, and iPhone that enables fans to write new songs featuring him

on drums, as well as create a video of them playing together. The resulting collaborative recordings can be shared on social media by fans and monetized by the original artists. WholeWorldBand, which was founded by video director and 10cc drummer Kevin Godley, was a grand-prize winner at the Eircom Spiders Awards and was nominated for a TEC Award in the category of audio apps for smartphones and tablets.

Vic Firth Passes



This past August the drum world was saddened to hear of the passing of Vic Firth, the legendary principal timpanist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and founder of the major drumstick and accessory manufacturing company that bears his name. Stay tuned for a full tribute to the man and his remarkable career in an upcoming issue of *MD*.

Dave Lombardo Art Opening

At the Forgotten Saints boutique in West Hollywood, California, this past July, former Slayer and current Philm drummer Dave Lombardo debuted his "rhythm on canvas" artwork. Lombardo showcased his entire *Rhythm Mysterium* collection, which he collaborated on with the Los Angeles-based art team SceneFour, and discussed the work with visitors in two symposiums. Lombardo also performed a drum solo to demonstrate the process.



The Trap Set Podcast



The Trap Set is a new weekly podcast about the lives of drummers. Host Joe Wong, who's a Los Angeles-based composer and drummer, tells *MD* that although the craft of drumming is sometimes discussed, the show is primarily concerned with being a springboard for broader topics such as family, money, spirituality, love, travel, addiction, recovery, the creative process, and artistic collaboration. Wong's coproducer is Chris Karwowski, a comedy writer whose credits include twelve years at *The Onion*. Guests have included Sheila E, Billy Cobham, Brian Chase, Drumbo, Dave Lombardo, Kid Millions, Dale Crover, Kliph Scurlock, and Stella Mozgawa.

Industry Happenings



Drummer Misaki Nakamichi, from Osaka, Japan, recently won a Yamaha Young Performing Artists award. Nakamichi joined the competition's other winners at an all-expenses-paid weekend retreat at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, this past June, where she participated in workshops and a concert. In Japan, Nakamichi has led her own jazz band and performed in various jazz events with world-famous musicians, including trumpet legend Eddie Henderson. She is currently studying jazz performance on a full-tuition scholarship at Berklee College of Music.



Paiste America has appointed KMC Music to serve as its sole U.S. distribution partner. In addition to Paiste, KMC currently distributes the Gibraltar, Latin Percussion, Remo, Toca, Vater, and Vic Firth lines.

On Tour

After a six-year hiatus and a significant lineup change, Breaking Benjamin has returned with *Dark Before Dawn*, the band's first album to hit the number-one slot of the *Billboard* 200 album chart. Among the four new players in Breaking Benjamin's five-man lineup—led, as always, by singer/guitarist Benjamin Burnley—is drummer **Shaun Foist**. "We're having such an amazing time together on tour," Foist says. "Breaking Benjamin fans have waited a long time for Ben's return, and we're all very happy to be a part of this next chapter in the band's legacy." Breaking Benjamin has been touring across the U.S. this fall; among its upcoming gigs is a headlining slot on the Axes & Anchors Cruise next February.



Michael Warth



Butch Vig is out with Garbage.

Also on the Road

Bobby Jarzombek with Fate's Warning
/// **Richard Danielson** with Vintage Trouble
/// **Jeff Sipe** with Warren Haynes
/// **John Humphrey** with Seether, supported by **Rich Beddoe** with Saint Asonia
/// **Jay Weinberg** with Slipknot
/// **Drew Hester** and **Joe Vitale** with Joe Walsh
/// **Johnny Rabb** with Collective Soul

Christopher Ernst





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Get to know Akira Jimbo here:
4wrd.it/JimboIPY



Mark Guiliana

The forward-leaning musician finds clues to the future by engaging his passion for the past.

Since Mark Guiliana's cover feature in *MD*'s November 2014 issue, the groundbreaking drummer's momentum has remained in high gear. The Mark Guiliana Jazz Quartet makes its debut on *Family First*, released on Guiliana's Beat Music Productions label. This riveting recording, featuring Jason Rigby on sax, Shai Maestro on piano, and Chris Morrissey on bass, is Guiliana's first album as a leader set in an entirely acoustic jazz format. His trademark ultra-accurate and highly syncopated "beat" grooves are present, but the organic setting offers heightened interplay. "It opens up some new paths, for sure," Mark confirms.

Jazz was a prime grounding stage for the evolving drummer during his most intensive years of study. "I looked to the classic heroes—Tony Williams, Elvin Jones, Roy Haynes, Art Blakey," Guiliana says. "The list goes on. When I think of acoustic improvised music, I still return to those landmark recordings—the ones that got me excited about that language. So this recording was a deliberate decision to make a statement within that context *sonically*. My goal was to sonically create something that reminded me of those influential records, although the context is quite different."

Diverging from his previous electroacoustic discs, Guiliana sought to simplify things a bit. "When I decided to commit to this instrumentation, it was intimidating at first," he explains. "It seemed like a bit of a prison, because it draws a lot more attention to composition. I couldn't hide behind, for instance, a fascinating synth sound. I wasn't sure I could be totally expressive within it. But then it became very liberating. It led to a more cohesive record; it feels like the most complete thing that I've made.

"On my previous records, I could consider changing cymbals each track, or a snare or kick—or invite different artists for different



Guiliana recording *Family First* at the Bunker Studio in Brooklyn

tracks. But with this record it was nice to say, 'Here's the palette. We, the musicians, have to be the expression.'

Touring jaunts are booked into 2016 for both Guiliana's quartet and his electric unit, Beat Music, including multiple European legs. The quartet debuted in Russia in July.

Handling a hyper-busy schedule this past year, Guiliana also toured with Mehliana, his ongoing duet project with keyboardist Brad Mehldau, and worked with trumpeter Dave Douglas and saxophonist Donny McCaslin. In a departure, he appears on David Bowie's single "Sue (or in a Season of Crime)." Currently he has a new Beat Music album in the pipeline as well as a second disc with his early breakthrough "experimental garage jazz" unit, Heernt. A solo electronic music project is on the backburner as well.

Despite Guiliana's ability to juggle what he calls "two years of overlapping projects," his status as an influential musical voice has brought his burgeoning goals into tighter focus. "For now," Mark says, "I'm slowly trying to tip the scales in presenting more of my own music, both on records and on the road." **Jeff Potter**

The Mark Guiliana Jazz Quartet at the Bunker.
From left: saxophonist Jason Rigby, bassist Chris Morrissey, Guiliana, and pianist Shai Maestro.



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Chris Adler

No one came out of Lamb of God's 2013 legal tribulations unscathed. But the band and its drummer seem hell-bent on proving their survival skills.

In July 2015, Lamb of God released its seventh full-length album, *VII: Sturm und Drang*. But the uncertainty that preceded regrouping to write new material could have easily led to the band's demise.

During a much-needed respite in the wake of tragedy and very real trials, detailed in Adler's March 2013 *MD* cover story, the group decided to take some time off. "Even though it had been financially difficult to get through that process—none of us were set up to take extended time off—we needed to stop for a little while to reconnect with our families and realize what's really important in our lives," Adler says.

When the time came to reconvene, there was an air of finality hovering, along with the

fragile process of determining whether or not the band members felt they had anything left to say. "On previous albums," Adler explains, "the thought process going in was always, 'Let's go for a more thrashy sound this time,' or 'Let's write faster songs,' or 'Let's have better production.' This time, the question we asked ourselves was, 'Are we still good enough to put out something relevant?'"

Sturm und Drang is an intense listening experience, the most profound musical and lyrical statement to date for Lamb of God. The emotional wear and tear the band experienced created a shared connection that translated to the music. "This album came from a totally different mindset,"

Adler says. "It was the first time everyone came into the process unselfishly. It's odd—when you stop trying so hard to do something a certain way and just approach it naturally with pure intention, the result is far more cohesive."

Adler also recorded drums for the upcoming Megadeth album, and he'll be touring with both bands for the remainder of 2015 and into 2016. "We're working out our touring schedules now so that I can attempt to be full-time in both bands," the drummer says. "Luckily everyone's friends, and maybe we'll do some touring together."

Musically, the two groups are quite different in their approach. "It was important for me to know my place and not try to be a



Travis Shinn

Slim Jim Phantom

The drummer's bold playing and even bolder stage presence with the '80s rockabilly icons the Stray Cats helped prompt a resurgence of interest in rock's roots. Though that wasn't necessarily the plan from the start.

superhero on the record," Adler says of his experience with Megadeth. "However, I think there's a reason [leader] Dave Mustaine called me, so it would be irresponsible to try to eliminate every part of my personality on the drums. I knew my signature snare would be a little bit piercing or higher pitched compared to what they're used to hearing, so I was willing to use deeper or bigger snares. When it came to fills, a lot of my typical tool-belt stuff is to pull out splash cymbals and little accent things. That was new to Dave, and he didn't really know how to process it at first. In the end, Dave dug a lot of it, so it was cool to be able to throw some of my style in and add something new to Megadeth's sound." **David Ciauro**



Anyone familiar with Slim Jim Phantom's role in the Stray Cats knows that he played standing up, making for one of the enduring images of '80s new wave. "It's been that way since I was a kid," Phantom says. "The Stray Cats were young yet forward-thinking. We knew that we wanted to do a band that no one had done before, which meant bringing the drummer up to the front. In other words, we were all frontmen. We honed it and got good at it.

"I grew up in Massapequa, New York, on Long Island," Phantom continues. "Like others at that time, I was influenced by guys you could see on TV or hear on the radio, namely Ringo and Charlie Watts. I worked in the local music store, and my dream was to study jazz. I ended up taking lessons with jazz great Mousey Alexander, who replaced Gene Krupa in Benny Goodman's band. Whether it was by accident or not, my future bandmates Brian Setzer and Lee Rocker and I were looking for something not exactly mainstream, something that wasn't influenced by the Beatles, and we found rockabilly music. That's when I discovered drummers like D.J. Fontana [Elvis Presley], Dickie Harrell [Gene Vincent], and Jerry Allison [Buddy Holly and the Crickets]."

Among Phantom's recent projects is *Easy Piracy*, the debut album by Dead Men Walking. Phantom plays with his signature swing and swagger—a style he calls "punk rock around the campfire." The fifteen explosive tracks feature high-octane rock with fat backbeats, splashy cymbals, a kick you can feel, and a snare tuned for maximum bite. Dead Men Walking, which is being billed as a supergroup of sorts, features Mike Peters of the Alarm on vocals, Captain Sensible of the Damned on bass, and Chris Cheney from the Living End on guitar. Aside from his drumming, Phantom contributes lead vocals to "Song for Eddie,"



Russ Harrington

his personal tribute to rockabilly legend Eddie Cochran.

"The Cats went to England in 1980," Jim says, recalling his first encounters with the future Dead Men. "We were looking for adventure and trying to get a record deal at the time. That's where I first met Mike Peters and Captain Sensible. About seven years ago, Mike had the idea to do a catalog of each of our hits, with four or five of us contributing to each. Chris Cheney came on board, and now we've released an album of originals."

A string of live dates accompanied the release of *Easy Piracy* earlier this year, and in August Phantom performed a number of solo shows in England. As you read this, Dead Men Walking should be embarking on a tour of the eastern United States.

Bob Girouard



Rebuilding Double Bass Chops

Do you have any tips for an older guy to get his double kick chops back? I'm really struggling. What should I practice? My hips get tight.

Jay

As in any area of drumming, there are no shortcuts to building chops. You have to invest a considerable amount of time and make sure you're practicing efficiently and effectively, with proper mechanics. If you had strong double bass skills when you were younger but you're having trouble regaining them at your current age, it's likely that you never developed a proper technical foundation and instead relied on youthful energy and stamina to push your legs, feet, and ankles to execute your ideas. Your joints are probably not as limber as they once were, and you may even have some minor injuries, like lower-back strain, that could be slowing you down.

The first thing we suggest is to dedicate some time each day to improving your overall flexibility and abdominal strength. Double bass requires both feet to be off the floor at various points, so without a strong and stable core you'll likely sway off balance, which will disrupt your flow at the kit.

Next, examine how you're positioning yourself at the drums. As explained in Bobby Rondinelli and Michael Lauren's method book, *The Encyclopedia of Double Bass Drumming*, "Your seat should be

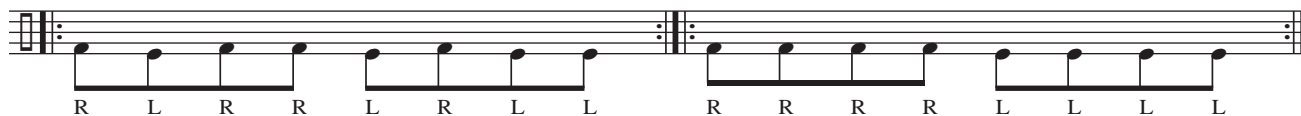
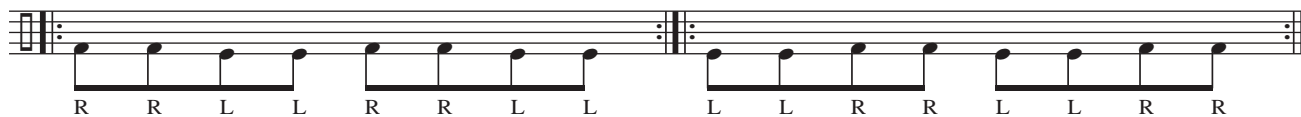
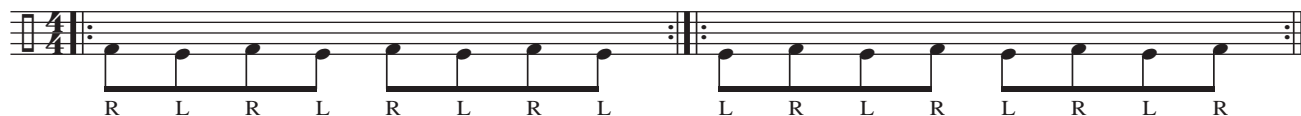


positioned where, when your arms are relaxed at your side and your elbows are bent at about a 90-degree angle, your sticks can reach the center of the snare drum.

"How close you position yourself to the drum is also an important factor. If you sit too far back, you're probably going to experience back problems. But if you're too close, your legs will eventually cramp up. Your legs should always be in a natural position.... In general, you should sit at a height where your thighs are parallel to the floor."

As for exercises, start by focusing on the feet by themselves, practicing various sticking patterns, like those found in George Lawrence Stone's book *Stick Control*. Start very slowly (40 to 60 bpm), use a metronome, and focus on achieving even, consistent

strokes while remaining perfectly balanced on your seat. Then add basic hand ostinatos over those patterns, like quarter notes, 8th notes, or offbeats on the ride and 2-and-4 backbeats on the snare. Just be patient, work at it every day, and strive to make small improvements in each practice session. There are a ton of additional exercises and tips in *The Encyclopedia of Double Bass Drumming*, which can be purchased at moderndrummer.com. Good luck!



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Pack That Van!

15 Essential Things to Take With You on Your First Tour

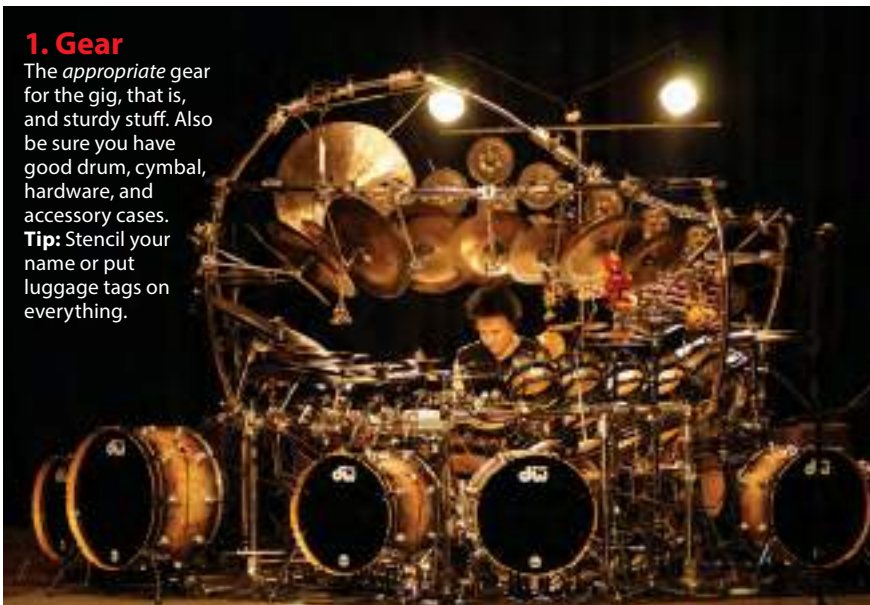


You got the gig, the band is rehearsed, and you're excited to hit the road. All that's left is to throw your stuff in the van and go. But before you do, consider bringing along these items to ensure that your journey is a successful one. *by Rich Scannella*

1. Gear

The *appropriate* gear for the gig, that is, and sturdy stuff. Also be sure you have good drum, cymbal, hardware, and accessory cases.

Tip: Stencil your name or put luggage tags on everything.



2. Stick bag

Stock it with sticks, brushes, rods, and whatever else you'll need to cover the style your band plays.

3. Replacement parts

A bare-bones list would include a spare snare, bass drum pedal, and bass drum head, plus extra cables, cords, and batteries if your setup includes electronics.

Tip: Make sure to keep everything within reach on stage.



4. Toolbox

Pack it with drum keys, felts, washers, cymbal sleeves, lug locks, Moongel, duct tape, strapping tape, snare wires, tension rods, kick beaters, kick drum muffler, oil, earplugs, and a clean rag.

5. First-aid kit

Include aspirin, Tums, Alka-Seltzer, cough drops, allergy medicine, hand sanitizer, soap, Neosporin, and, for outdoor gigs, sunblock.

Tip: Don't forget your hands! Bring whatever it takes to protect them—lotions, creams, balms, medical tape, or gloves.



6. Pillow, blanket, and sleeping bag

Getting proper rest in the back of a stuffy or cold van is hard enough, so pack some creature comforts.

Tip: Toss in earplugs and a sleep mask.



7. Healthy snacks

Keep energy bars, dried fruit, and plenty of water on hand. A convenience store, much less a restaurant, may be hours away.



8. Entertainment

Want to stay sane during long stretches? Electronics, books, magazines, and games can help.

Tip: Clear your head with a walk or jog whenever possible.

9. Appropriate clothing

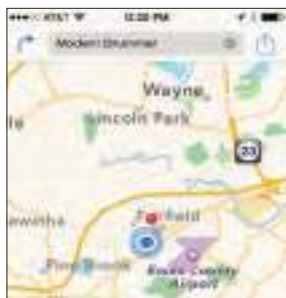
Check the weather and pack accordingly, and if you really want to look sharp on stage every night, don't forget the travel iron and lint roller.

Tip: A waterproof laundry bag will keep dirty and wet clothes contained until you can get to a hotel or laundry facility.



10. GPS

Make the investment in a stand-alone unit, or download an app—but have conventional maps as well, just in case. Punctuality counts. And getting lost stinks.



11. Van tools

Items like wrenches and flares can prove invaluable in an emergency. Before you hit the road, though, complete all scheduled vehicle maintenance and make sure your insurance and inspection information is up to date.



12. Contact information

The hotel can't find your reservation? Keep confirmation numbers and names to avoid confusion and delays.

Tip: If you're traveling with a large group, print and email hotel rooming lists so everyone can stay in communication.



13. Electronic devices

You'll want some kind of recording device, a metronome, a camera (all of which could be in the form of an app on your smartphone), in-ear monitors, and a wireless charger for when you don't have a nearby outlet or power source.

Tip: For international tours, be sure to get yourself a universal electrical converter.



14. Miscellaneous items

Consider filling a bin with bungee cords, a tarp (to protect gear at outdoor shows), zip-top bags, zip ties, air freshener, garbage bags, laundry detergent, toilet paper, Sharpies, a clamp light, and any other small items that might come in handy.



15. A sense of humor

Long hours spent with others can be demanding—especially in the confined space of a van. It can be easy to forget why you decided to go on this crazy adventure in the first place. So, above all else, don't forget to have fun. When things do go wrong, try to keep a positive attitude; it can defuse a potentially explosive situation. Being able to persevere and push through adversity with good humor could be the most important skill you'll take with you on your first tour.



Rich Scannella is the drummer for Jon Bon Jovi & the Kings of Suburbia, has performed with Bruce Springsteen, Bon Jovi, and Lady Gaga, and is an adjunct professor at Rider University in New Jersey. He can be reached at richscannella.com.



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Don't sweat the technique. When foot meets pedal and the action is undeniable, a drummer simply smiles. It's not something that can be explained in mechanical terms, it just does what it's supposed to do; become an extension of musical expression. When a pedal can elicit that sort of feeling in a simple and stylish package, it's time to rejoice. Concept Series Direct Drive pedals befriended geometry to maximize weight distribution and throw. A very low-mass Cobalt linkage keeps things feather-like and a newly-designed DW 2-way Air beater does the same. So what does this mean for direct drive aficionados? More than likely, it means you'll be pleasantly surprised.

FEATURES

- COBALT LOW-MASS LINKAGE
- EXTENDED FOOTBOARD
- DW AIR 2-WAY BEATER
- DW OFFSET TOE CLAMP

2015 DRUMMER'S GEAR GUIDE

Some of the coolest new stuff to hit the drumming world might not be high-end or boutique, but it's certainly getting lots of attention. We submit for your approval, some of this year's best kept secrets.

Increasingly, drummers expect top-level performance and won't settle for less when it comes to fueling their passion for crafting beats. Companies such as Pacific Drums and Percussion, better known as PDP, have taken the challenge to heart and produced cutting-edge designs that deliver the goods. Case in point, PDP's latest offerings...

Concept Series® Black Wax Snare™ Drums



MODELS/SIZES
6x10: PDSN0610BWCR
6x12: PDSN0612BWCR
5.5x13: PDSN5513BWCR
7x13: PDSN0713BWCR
5.5x14: PDSN5514BWCR
6.5x14: PDSN6514BWCR

Maple has long been the preferred shell making material for snares. Sure, there are plenty of options these days, but nothing has replaced old faithful when it comes to projection, resonance and overall woody tone. It's been time-tested and recorded for decades; hit after hit. With that in mind, PDP decided to finish the aforementioned wood in a hand-applied ebony, Minwax®-like matte stain that seals the shell and affords a neutral palette to compliment just about any kit. Thus, the name. With a variety of sizes on the table and a price that your mother might tell you is too good to be true, drummers might want to consider more than one.

FEATURES

- ALL-MAPLE 8-PLY SHELL
- MAG THROW-OFF™
- TRUE-PITCH TUNING™
- REMO HEADS



Concept Series® Black Nickel over Steel Snare Drums



MODELS/SIZES
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6x12: PDSN0612BNCR
6.5x13: PDSN6513BNCR
5.5x14: PDSN5514BNCR
6.5x14: PDSN6514BNCR

A workhorse snare drum means different things to different players, but most can agree that a wood snare and a metal snare are must-haves. Of course, sound and overtones are in the ear of the beholder, but this drum might appeal to all that have the good fortune of hearing it. Drum Workshop has taken their penchant for snare drum making to the PDP line with a steel drum that has already found it's home with some very notable pros. For starters, the thin 1mm rolled shell provides ample brightness and cut. The drum can be corked up or tuned fairly low courtesy of a massive tuning range and when experimenting with head combinations it can prove to be versatile and formidable. Whether or not money is no object, this still may be the drum to get.

FEATURES

- 1MM STEEL SHELL
- MAG THROW-OFF™
- TRUE-PITCH TUNING™
- REMO HEADS

Pearl

Wood Fiberglass Drumset

The innovative hybrid shell that defined the company forty-plus years ago is back...and better than ever.





While American companies like Ludwig, Slingerland, and Gretsch established their now-classic drum sounds in the late '60s with all-wood makeups (3-ply maple/poplar or mahogany/poplar for Ludwig and Slingerland, 6-ply maple/gum for Gretsch), something a bit more adventurous was taking place across the Pacific Ocean at the Pearl factory.

In a quest for a new sound, Pearl utilized the luan mahogany shells that had been a staple for the company and its OEM brands since the 1940s and tried applying a thin layer of fiberglass to the interior. (The company also made all-fiberglass drums.) The result was a unique tonal combination that retained the warm, thumpy tone of luan coupled with the crisp attack and strong projection associated with fiberglass.

This year, Pearl revived the Wood Fiberglass series, with notable upgrades. Like the originals, the shells are 7-ply with a thin fiberglass inner ply. They have been improved, however, with the use of denser kapur in place of the original luan mahogany. Kapur is known to produce warm, full-bodied tones with an emphasis on lower frequencies.

The shells are 7.5 mm thick, and the inner layer of fiberglass is applied by hand to ensure consistency from drum to drum. The toms have sharp 45-degree bearing edges, and the bass drum edges are fully rounded. The Wood Fiberglass series is available in four lacquer finishes (piano black, antique gold, satin cocoa burst, and platinum mist), and in three traditionally sized configurations. The FW-903XP includes 8x12 and 14x14 toms and a 14x20 bass drum; the FW-923XP includes 9x13 and 16x16 toms and a 14x22 bass drum; and the FW-943XP includes 9x13 and 16x16 toms and a 14x24 bass drum. We received the FW-923XP setup featuring a 22" bass drum, in platinum mist finish.

Wood Fiberglass toms come with Pearl's Superhoop II steel hoops and Remo UT Clear Pinstripe batters and UT Clear Ambassador bottoms. The rack tom has an OptiMount suspension system that connects to two adjacent lugs, on top and bottom, to minimize pressure on the shell and to maximize sustain. RL10/20 Session-style lugs are included on the drums. All of the hardware, including the bass drum claws, is insulated with molded rubber gaskets.

The bass drum has a Remo UT Clear Powerstroke 3 batter and a UT Coated Powerstroke 3 front head with an offset porthole. The telescoping spurs feature a spike tip and retractable rubber feet. The floor tom legs come with Pearl's R-40 rubber feet, which are designed to maximize tone and resonance by floating the drum off the floor.

Kapur is known to have rich low-end frequencies, so when you marry that with the cut and projection provided by the fiberglass you have a unique drum sound that packs a lot of power and attack while retaining a dark, fat, punchy tone with focused decay. The sharp edges on the toms give them a strong attack, while the Pinstripes help center the pitch, shorten the sustain, and accentuate the lower overtones. The round bearing edges and PS3 heads used on the kick keep it controlled and deep sounding, while the fiberglass provides the crystal-clear snap and click desired in most contemporary live and recording situations.

I took the Wood Fiberglass into the studio, along with a similarly constructed 6.5x14 Hybrid Exotic kapur/fiberglass snare, to track a dense industrial rock tune that required deep, punchy drum tones with a lot of modern edge. Before I tweaked the tunings for that, I first tested the drums across their entire range, from high (rack tom at C, floor tom at F, bass drum at F an octave below) to medium (rack tom at A, floor tom at D, bass drum at D an octave below) to low (rack tom at F#, floor tom at B, bass drum at B an octave below). The drums sounded incredible and felt completely at home at all three tunings, producing focused, balanced tones with snappy attack and a deep, dark timbre.

None of the drums, including the kick, required muffling, and they recorded very well. The kick is tailor-made for gut-punching modern rock, especially with one mic inside the drum and another placed a couple inches from the center of the resonant head. When I tracked the Wood Fiberglass, tuned low, for the aforementioned industrial rock tune, it gave me exactly what I wanted (dense attack, short sustain, and rich, low tones), without any additional tuning tweaks, muffling, or EQ adjustments.

The Wood Fiberglass FW-923XP three-piece shell pack, with the 22" bass drum, has the surprisingly affordable street price of \$1,055. You can check out a video demo of all three tunings at moderndrummer.com.

Michael Dawson

Vater

New Nude Sticks, Player's Design Models, and Sound-Enhancing Accessories

Unobtrusive dampeners, clever percussion attachments, and thoughtful drumstick additions for two alt-rock heavy hitters and everyday hand sweaters.

Vater is good about balancing its catalog with highly practical products and innovative designs and accessories. This year the company introduced unfinished versions of two of its most popular "rock" models, the 1A and 3A, and added custom designs for Primus's Tim Alexander and 311's Chad Sexton. Also new are two sizes of clear muffling gels, the Buzz Kill and Buzz Kill Dry, and a couple of inventive StickMates, which allow you to add shaker or tambourine textures to your grooves via a slim, lightweight plastic grip attachment. It's all very cool stuff, so let's take a look.

3A and 1A Nude Drumsticks

Vater's Nude series has become popular among drummers who find lacquered sticks a bit too slippery, especially after the hands start to sweat or when using gloves. Nude sticks have a finely sanded grip that leaves a slightly textured, dusty feel. The 3A is a standard length (16") and has a diameter of .590", which is thicker than a 5A (.570") but thinner than a 5B (.605"). A sturdy shoulder and neck and a rounded barrel wood tip are employed to deliver punchy, full-volume tones. Even though it has the same length as a 5A, the 3A felt shorter and had a blunter and more powerful sound. It would be a great choice for players who have to get around on a tight setup in louder situations. The barrel tip produced wide, washy cymbal tones, and the unfinished grip grabbed onto my skin just enough so that I could play with a looser and more relaxed fulcrum.

The 1A Nude is 16.75" long and .590" in diameter. It has an acorn-shaped wood tip, for full drum and cymbal sounds and increased response. I'm a big fan of the 1A, whether lacquered or not. I like to play with a spread-out setup, and the extra reach of the 1A allowed me to keep from overextending my arms. It also delivered a stronger and more powerful sound from drums and cymbals than what I get from a typical 5A, while retaining a nimble response.

Sexton and Alexander Player's Designs

Chad Sexton's custom stick is nearly identical to a regular 3A, with a similar taper and rounded wood tip. The difference is a matter of .01" of diameter; the 311 drummer's stick measures .580"x16", while the

3A is .590"x16". Although that may seem nominal, Sexton's model felt less blunt and was more agile than the 3A. It still provided a big, full sound, but I found that it offered just a bit more speed and flexibility for jumping around the kit quickly.

Tim Alexander's Player's Design stick, however, is highly unusual. It has a thick 2B-size grip (.635") and a 5A/5B length (16"), and it tapers down dramatically to a tiny ball tip. It's made of sugar maple, so it's lighter than a hickory 2B, but it still felt quite hefty. The tiny tips were great for hi-hat and ride clarity, while the 2B grip helped elicit fuller tom tones, smacking rimshots, and washing sustain from crashes and crash/rides. It's not a stick for every player or every situation. But if you have big hands or prefer to use sticks with a thicker grip, and you require sharp articulation and quick action, that's what the Alexander model is all about.

Buzz Kill, Buzz Kill Dry, and StickMates

While many drummers love the unfettered tone of fully sustaining drums, the reality is that we almost always have to tame down the overtones with some type of muffling, whether playing live under microphones, in the studio, or in untreated



rooms with harsh high-end frequencies. Tape, towels, T-shirts, rings, and other appliqués are all viable options for reining in our sound to more manageable levels, but they often leave the kit looking messy. Vater's Buzz Kill and Buzz Kill Dry dampeners offer a clear, nearly invisible alternative. They're round, super-tacky, easy to apply and remove, and infinitely reusable. They can be placed on batter heads, resonant heads, cymbals, cowbells....

The Buzz Kill is 1.25" wide and about .1875" thick. Providing more muffling, the Buzz Kill Dry is 1.5" wide and .25" thick. Both worked great to provide a little or a lot of tone control, and they stayed put and didn't leave any residue behind.



The most innovative new product from Vater this year is the plastic StickMate attachment, which connects to the butt end of a drumstick and comes with either tambourine jingles (three sets) or a small shaker. It's easy to put on and take off—a small rubber band keeps it connected to the stick above the fulcrum point. And it's lightweight so as to allow for a fairly unencumbered response. You can use StickMates in either hand to add percussive textures to backbeats or ride patterns. I found that the shaker version worked best in the ride hand, with the StickMate facing down/forward, while the tambourine option was also great for adding bright overtones to backbeats as well as for riding.

The StickMate shaker had the volume output of a typical egg shaker but with a slightly coarser timbre. The StickMate tambourine added a subtler jingle than a full-size tambourine, and the jingles sounded tighter and more controlled. These are much cleaner and less permanent alternatives to taping maracas, small shakers, or tambourines to drumsticks, and they fit easily into most stick bags. Check out a video demo of the StickMates at modern drummer.com.

Michael Dawson

Soultone Noa Cymbal Pack

A beginner's pre-pack with potential for professionals.



When putting together its first pre-pack, the Noa, Soultone wanted to keep the price down without sacrificing quality. To do that, the company decided to use the same B20 bronze alloy from its high-end series, but with the options limited to a simple, compact three-piece package comprising 13" hi-hats, a 16" crash, and a 19" ride. The pack also comes with a Soultone-branded gig bag.

These medium-weight cymbals are all finished the same way, with a large, raw, hammered bell and a subtle two-tone bow that's brilliantly finished on the outer two inches and traditionally finished and sparsely hammered on the inner section. They're meant for beginners as well as gigging pros who need something they can grab quickly, cram into a jammed van, and set up on a tight stage. The pack is also designed to be airline compliant so that it fits in an overhead compartment.

Designed as all-purpose cymbals, the Noa pack provides all-around sounds that lean toward contemporary rock, pop, and R&B applications. The 13" hi-hats were fairly bright and crisp, and there was a bit of high, bell-like din whether they were played closed, partially open, or completely open, or splashed with the foot. They were a bit too chunky sounding for super-light playing, like acoustic jazz, but they were quick and expressive at moderate to loud volumes, and they blended well when tested in the studio on a driving country-pop track.

The 16" Noa crash was quick, explosive, and bright without being harsh. For general applications, it had a nice all-around crash sound, and the raw bell had a clean, clear tone that could be used effectively for quick accents or quiet riding.

My favorite of the Noa series was the 19" ride, which was heavy enough to produce clean, pingy patterns but light enough to prevent gonginess and to provide some warm, washy sustain that built up evenly as the dynamics increased. The bell had a strong, clear tone as well. Its relatively small size also allowed for it to be positioned in tighter quarters in the kit.

Regardless of how it's being marketed, the Noa pack is a solid collection of cymbals that should satisfy the most basic needs of any beginner or everyday working drummer. The list price is \$1,333. Check out a video demo at modern drummer.com.

Michael Dawson

Gaai

Sun & Stars Collection Snare Drums

One-of-a-kind hand-cut finishes and classic maple tones...with a twist.

Gaai Drums is a two-person operation based in Los Angeles, with Gaai Nakamura handling design and construction and his partner, Tomo, handling business and marketing endeavors. The company started in 2008, with a mission to produce meticulously handcrafted drums from the finest North American maple shells, often with painstakingly detailed custom-cut veneer finishes.

The three snares we have for review are from the one-off Sun & Stars collection, featuring playful designs created from contrasting wrap materials and veneer sheets. The trio comprises the 6.5x14 Five Stars model with a zebrawood/walnut/mahogany/maple hand-cut veneer and matching wood hoops, the deep 8x14 Golden Beam with a mirror gold/ginger glass spiral finish, and the specialty 9x10 Poppin' Chiiko Blue with a blue/turquoise/white glass spiral finish. All of the drums feature 8-ply Keller maple shells.

Five Stars

This 10-lug beauty is the centerpiece of the collection and epitomizes what Gaai Drums is all about. The shell inlays were gorgeously designed and perfectly executed, to the point where you'd easily believe it's a paint job. The wood hoops also feature star inlays, which makes the transition from shell to hoop seamless and cohesive. The drum came with twenty-strand snare wires and a Remo Coated Ambassador batter head.

Despite its one-of-a-kind appearance, the Five Stars had a great jack-of-all-trades sound. It could be cranked super-high for a Steve Jordan-like "ping," with the wood hoops providing a thicker, chunkier attack than standard steel hoops would. Or it could be tuned medium for a great open tone that blended well in the mix while retaining some strong snap and crack. Then, if you need to go super-low for a fat but tight drum-machine sound, simply

detune the batter just above wrinkling, throw on a wallet for muffling, tighten up the wires, and there you have it! I don't think you could get a sample to sound better than what this drum put out naturally.

Golden Beam

This mammoth 8x14 drum offers some serious bling, sporting a bright and shiny spiral finish cut with surgical precision and careful attention to detail. It has ten lugs and gold-finish hardware (including the tension rods and twenty-strand snare wires, plus a special gold-color Remo Smooth Ambassador batter head).

Like the Five Stars, the Golden Beam was a versatile drum cloaked in a specialized appearance. What was most impressive was how sensitive and responsive the snares were, given the 8" depth. Tune it tight, and you'd swear you were playing a shallow 5x15 aluminum snare from a James Brown



Five Stars



Golden Beam

record. Loosening it to a medium or medium-low tension, you'll get a power "smack" followed by singing overtones that cry out for your best John Bonham impression. Again, this drum was most impressive in the low range, where it emitted a larger-than-life, deep punch that would make famed Def Leppard producer Mutt Lange proud.

Poppin' Chiiko Blue

This nearly square 9x10 snare has a striking spiral hand-cut finish, sixteen-strand snare wires, six lugs, and a Remo CS Coated batter. The opposite of versatile, the unique drum is designed to produce specialty tones that range from the sped-up/tuned-up coffee-can-like ping of drum 'n' bass snares to the tight splat heard on countless hip-hop records via classic drum machines. It was more sensitive than expected, and the deeper shell kept it from bottoming out when played at higher volumes. If your gigs demand that you reproduce loops and samples for breakdown sections and intros of songs, then this drum would come in handy as an auxiliary option. Just be aware that you'll need a stand that can go lower than normal, or consider using a clip-on tom mount, in order to get the drum into a comfortable playing position.

Check out video demos of these drums at modern drummer.com.

Michael Dawson



Poppin' Chiiko Blue



Blue Hummingbird Microphone

An agile small-diaphragm condenser with full-range capabilities.

Founded in 1995, Blue Microphones focuses on providing state-of-the-art electronic circuitry and cutting-edge designs based on the classic mics of the mid-twentieth century. The company offers several models that work great for drums, including the Dragonfly and Mouse large-diaphragm condensers with rotating capsules and the small-diaphragm condenser that we have for review this month, the Hummingbird. This model is made for use as an overhead or a spot mic for snare, toms, hi-hat, and all types of percussion.

The Hummingbird is small and nimble, but it's not as thin as most pencil-type condensers. Its greatest attribute is a 180-degree rotating head, which allows the mic to be placed in tighter spaces while still aiming its capsule at the instrument. The rotating head also allows for quick and easy angle adjustments during use as overheads.

For tech-heads, the Hummingbird is a pressure-gradient condenser with a frequency response of 20Hz to 20kHz, with a gradual low-end roll-off that starts around 80Hz and a high-end roll-off that starts around 15kHz. There are slight bumps in the 3–4kHz and 7–14kHz ranges. The polar pattern is a fairly tight cardioid, which means the mic rejects off-axis sounds well to give it a focused, clear response. This came into play especially when using the Hummingbird as overheads in an XY position with the capsules placed close together, angled 90 degrees and pointing at the left and right sides of the kit. The separation between the signals from the two mics was exceptional, which translated into a very clean, clear, wide stereo image of the kit when panned left and right. The separation was so nice that I ended up adjusting the panning of the mics a bit closer to center (around four and eight o'clock) to keep the kit from sounding excessively wide in the mix.

Compared with my standard stereo large-diaphragm condenser

overhead mic, the Hummingbird excelled in every category. It captured a more natural sound from the entire kit, including extra fatness from the toms and a complete range of overtones from cymbals. Drums sounded bigger and fatter, the attack was cleaner and punchier, and cymbals sounded crisper and fuller.

In fact, I could get a complete spectrum of sounds from the entire kit using just the Hummingbird and a bass drum mic, even in an aggressive modern-rock mix.

The Hummingbird excelled as a spot mic as well, whether used on the snare top or bottom, toms, hi-hats, ride cymbals, or any type of percussion, including congas, bongos, tambourines, and shakers. It captured the high-end detail and clarity that you'd expect from a small-diaphragm condenser, but with a much fuller and more complete sonic picture. It won't be long before the Hummingbird becomes a staple in every recording drummer's arsenal. The list price is \$299.99 each.

Michael Dawson





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Brian Frasier-Moore

When the world's greatest pop and R&B stars decide to hit the road, the list of drummers who are considered for service is not very long. Brian Frasier-Moore's name is usually among them, and often is the one to beat.

Story by Billy Amendola
Photos by Alex Solca

After *Modern Drummer* last featured him, in the November 2008 issue, lock-it-in-the-pocket drummer Brian Frasier-Moore bounced right from Madonna's Sticky & Sweet tour to travel the world on Justin Timberlake's sold-out 20/20 Experience jaunt. It's a pattern that's kept up since Frasier-Moore's first big trek, back in 1996, with the popular Philadelphia R&B duo the Whitehead Brothers. In between, his groove-machine beats and powerful chops have been on display with Aaliyah, Ginuwine, Ciara, Janet Jackson, Patti LaBelle, Babyface, Backstreet Boys, Usher, and Christina Aguilera—pop icons all.

The musical world Frasier-Moore travels in can be a funny one when it comes to playing live versus recording. Even the busiest of first-call touring musicians can get frustrated by the invisible walls that often prevent them from being hired for record dates by the superstars they support on the road. The forty-three-year-old drummer from the City of Brotherly Love, however, takes things as they come, preferring to stay practical, and optimistic. "Politically, I don't feel one way or another about it," he says. "I would like to [play on more recordings], but I'm patient."

And let's be clear, it's not as if Frasier-Moore doesn't have his share of studio credits within and outside the gospel scene that he cut his teeth on. Albums by religious-music greats like Richard Smallwood (*Rejoice*), Michael Scott and Outreach Choir (*Lord I Want to Be Effective*), Ernie Sanders (*A New Beginning*), Bruce Parham (*Sing Bruce*), and Steve Middleton and the Unity and Praise Choir sit beside secular credits like Babyface (*Playlist*), Eric Benét (*Hurricane*), Christina Aguilera ("Soar" from *Stripped*), Adam Lambert (*Beg for Mercy*), Dontae Winslow ("Chrysalis" from *Enter the Dynasty*, featuring Chick Corea), and the theme song from VH1's *Single Ladies* show.

Not one to slow down, Frasier-Moore fills much of his downtime—what there is of it—with BFM Consultation Services, mentoring upcoming musicians and anyone else with dreams of making it in the business. But when *Modern Drummer* spoke with Brian for this, his first *MD* cover story, we found him once again preparing for the role he's best known for, touring the world with Madonna. As we chatted, he was looking at three months of rehearsals for the singer's Rebel Heart tour. By the time this issue hits newsstands, he'll once again be on stage, showing all those aspiring musicians exactly how it's done.



MD: What's an average day like for you?

Brian: I wake up and thank God for another day. Then I call my wife, Brandi, and say, "Good morning, Sunshine!" After that I go for a two- or three-mile run, come back, take a shower, get a massage, and then we rehearse, rehearse, and rehearse some more. After that, it's back to the hotel, where I get some food and call my wife again—sometimes I do both at the same time. Then I thank God for another day, fall into a coma-like sleep, and repeat it all the next day and the day after that.

MD: How do you prepare for touring in terms of your drumming?

Brian: I basically have a format for every tour that I'm involved with, no



matter who it is. I listen to the record [to analyze] the songs, the vibe, the instruments, the vocals, the lead lines, the synths.... As I listen, I've got a composition book, a Sharpie, and my Pearl RedBox sound module with my Tru Trac heads on my kit, and I write out everything that I need to know for each song—"intro 8 bars, accents at bar 7, verse 1 is 16 bars, beat in, stop at 8, etc."—being authentic to the beats and knowing *every single thing* about every song.

This helps me when I'm learning the songs at home, and later in rehearsals as well, when arrangements and sounds are changing.

It's better for me to be able to see what's coming up next than to spend my nervous energy on trying to remember everything that's flying around in rehearsals. While I'm in the verse, I'm reading what's going to happen in the pre-chorus, and so on. This is especially helpful if they're recording; this way you can listen to a strong take instead of one of you trying to figure it out.

MD: What's different about working with Justin Timberlake versus Madonna?

Brian: As we all know, they're both incredibly talented, hard-working, and professional, and they know exactly what they want.

The difference is in the interpretation of their music. For Justin, I trigger snares and kicks, but the approach is more on the soul, gospel, funk, and R&B vibe, and I have to express [those feels]. Madonna is more electronic, rock, salsa, anthem, world vibe, with a little R&B. And with her I trigger the acoustic drums in my main kit as well, but I also have the Tru Trac drums and Roland PD-8 pads within my setup, as well as a Novation Launchpad to my right. I also have a full Tru Trac kit to the right of me.

I'm honored to be able to play with these artists and within their genres of music. I enjoy the challenge of becoming that expression and taking it to the next level. As far as their concerts, they both do *long* shows with moving stages, video walls....

Performance-wise you never know what's going to happen with artists like these two, but you know *something* is definitely going to happen!

MD: How did growing up in Philadelphia affect your playing?

Brian: My early years in Philadelphia had a *huge* affect on my playing, my [approach to] production, my business choices, and my musicality. Growing up around legends such as DJ Jazzy Jeff, James Poyser, and Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff, who were responsible for creating the "Philadelphia sound," had such an amazing effect on how I took music in at that time—listening to everything that's going on in a song, feeling the mood and the way a particular song moved, being unselfish with what I add or contribute to that piece of art. I was also blessed to be able to learn a lot of life lessons in the music business, from so many greats. So, a shout-out to all of the amazing musicians in Philly, then and now.

MD: Was there anyone in particular who inspired you to play drums?

Brian: Initially I got interested in playing drums from

watching my uncle Robert Fuller play at the church we went to. [Brian's father was the church pastor.] I'd also watch Garfield Williams and Anthony "Spike" McRae—just about all of Philadelphia's legends.

I also have to thank my mom for believing [in me]. She's the biggest

influence on me wanting to play drums. She took me to see Amy Grant on the Straight Ahead tour when I was a kid of eleven, and it completely blew me away. I was like, "Look at all those drums! Look at all those people!" I think at that point I knew I wanted to be a drummer. And I think my





Brian's Rebel Heart Kit

Drums: Pearl Reference and modified Export series in piano black finish

- A.** 6x10 maple snare
- B.** 6x10 Tru Trac tom
- C.** 6x14 Reference snare (20-ply)
- D.** 7.5x10 Reference Pure tom
- E.** 7.5x12 Reference Pure tom
- F.** 16x16 Reference Pure floor tom
- G.** 10" Export Tru Trac tom (no bottom heads or lugs)
- H.** 12" Export Tru Trac tom (no bottom heads or lugs)
- I.** 14" Export Tru Trac floor tom (no bottom heads or lugs)
- J.** 18x22 Reference Pure bass drum
- K.** 16x20 Tru Trac bass drum

Cymbals: Sabian

- 1.** 14" HHX Legacy hi-hats
- 2.** 18" HHX Evolution O-Zone crash
- 3.** 16" HHX Evolution O-Zone crash
- 4.** 12"/14" Max Stax
- 5.** 13" HHX Evolution hi-hats (remote)

Percussion: Pearl 28x14 djembe, 3x13 timbale, bongos, and tambourine with head

Sticks: Vater Brian Frasier-Moore signature model

Heads: Evans Level 360, including Onyx on snares, Black Chrome on 10" and 12" toms, Hydraulic on 16" tom, EMAD Onyx on 22" bass drum, and J1 on timbale

Electronics: On kit: Roland BT-1 Pole Trigger, PD-8 pads, and V-Pads, Boss foot pedals, Native Instruments Maschine MIDI controller, drumKAT Turbo. In rack: Yamaha 01V96i mixer, Monster Pro 2500 Power Conditioner, Akai Z8 sampler, Radial SW8 DI, Focusrite Scarlett 18i20 interface, ButtKicker amp, UPS battery backup. Miscellaneous: Swann video camera, talk-back mic, Marshall 7" monitor.

Hardware: Pearl D-2500 throne, S-1030 snare stands, H-2000 hi-hat stand, Gear 88 series tom holders, CH-1030 cymbal boom stands, Eliminator P-2000C bass drum pedals, and RH-2000 remote hi-hat stand; Gibraltar custom rack and 12x16 percussion table

According to James "J.R." Newkirk of J.R. WorldWide Backline Rentals, a variety of Gibraltar clamps and bars, including adjustable right-angle clamps, Quick T-Lep clamps, Road series Super multi-clamps, and Rack Shock microphone mounts, are used to give the impression that Frasier-Moore's kit is "bowing out" to the audience. "Different bars had to be cut down for everything to fall in place where Brian is comfortable playing it," Newkirk tells *Modern Drummer*. "Curved chrome bars were also used to mount cymbal boom arms, drumKAT Turbos, and Roland electronics. Straight chrome extension bars played a part in this process as well."

mom knew then as well that all I wanted was to be a drummer.

MD: Did you have any formal training?

Brian: No, sir. I never had a formal drum teacher. I was strictly a church boy. The only formal training I knew about was our organist [Alexander Ingram] banging his hand on the side of the organ so that I could follow the time. He was a human click track.

Most of my training came from being in situations where I didn't know exactly what to do and either called and asked someone or figured it out on my own. I was self-taught up to a certain age, and then my practice routine came from choir rehearsals, Sunday service, broadcasts, choir recordings.... It was a different time back then. We had no Internet, Instagram, or Facebook to be able to do the wonderful things we do

today. Back then it was just *go time!* You had to be ready and prepared. That's something that has stuck with me.

And I learned a lot from my OGs; they gave me a lot of advice that I couldn't really understand back then—but I do now.

MD: Like?

Brian: Always play the authentic beat, and play it even. And don't speak over others musically while they're talking—if you

VATER

PERCUSSION
USA



Brian Frasier-Moore
MADONNA /
CHRISTINA AGUILERA

Brian Frasier-Moore Model



BUZZ KILL

#SWITCHTOVATER

VATER.COM

"I totally enjoy practicing, because I look forward to correcting my mistakes."

must say something, help them say what *they're* saying. A proud musician is a poor musician.

MD: Who are some of your drumming influences?

Brian: Alexander Ingram, Garfield Williams, Anthony "Spike" McCrae, Joel Smith, John Roberts, Vinnie Colaiuta, Gerald Heyward, Dave Weckl, and Chick Corea,

to name a few.

MD: What advice can you share with our readers about practicing?

Brian: When I practice it's always a fun, eye-opening experience, because I try to lose myself in expression and then find myself in that same expression. If I mess up something, I'll stop at that point and figure it out. It could be grooves, triggering,



BFM's Grooves for Life

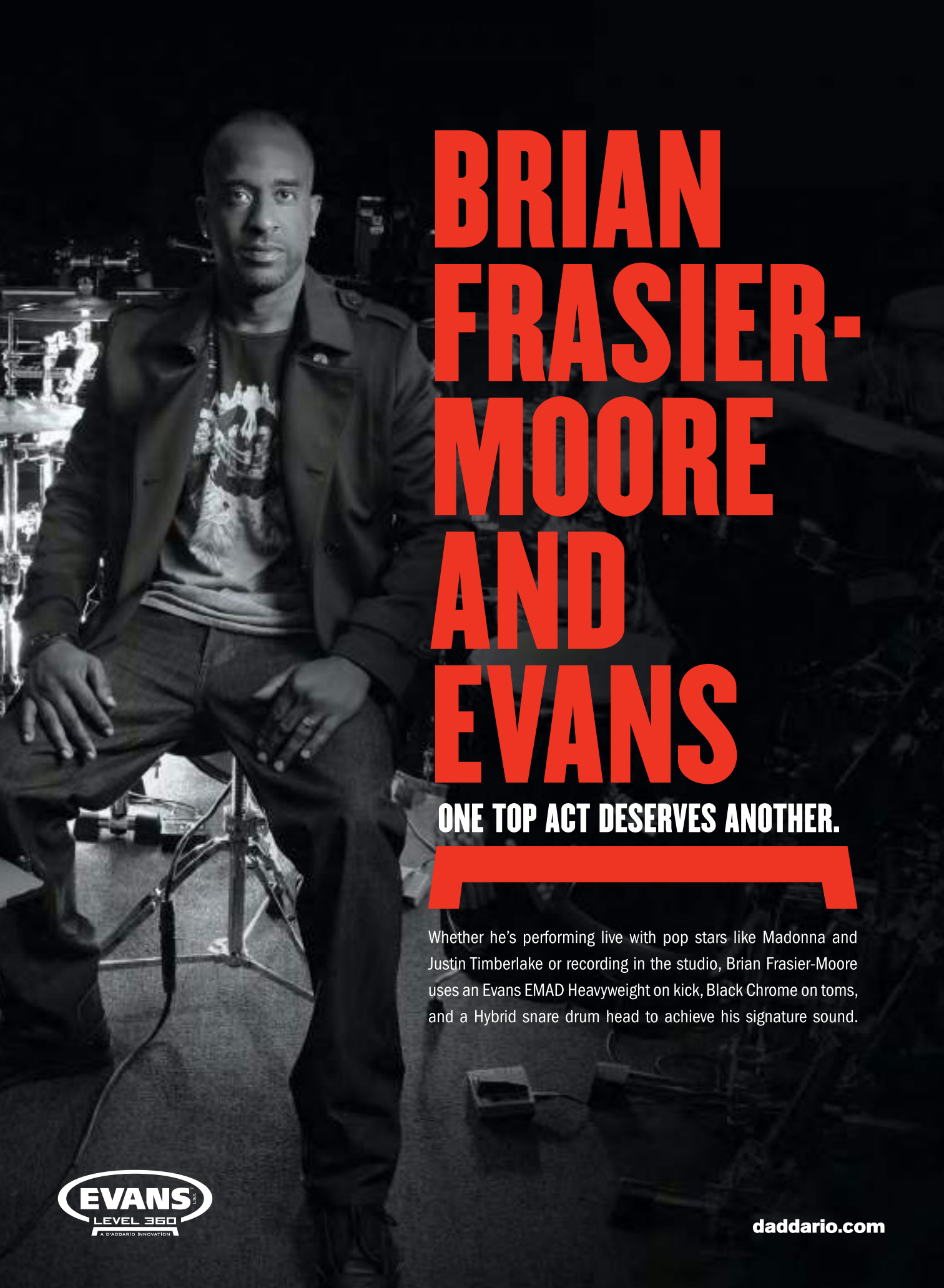
In 2009, on the advice of Madonna musical director Kevin Antunes, producer and engineer David Frangioni, whose credits include Aerosmith, Bryan Adams, Ringo Starr, Ozzy Osbourne, Sting, and Phil Collins, approached Brian Frasier-Moore about contributing to his drum sample library. Grammy-winning engineer and producer Roger Nichols, renowned for his work with Steely Dan, Frank Zappa, and many others, was brought on board, and in 2012 *David Frangioni Presents Brian Frasier-Moore, Vol. 1* was released to the public. Sadly, Nichols passed away in 2011, before the project hit the shelves.

"I'd seen Brian play with various artists and was always impressed with his groove," Frangioni says. "At that point in my career," Frasier-Moore adds, "it was a no-brainer to take advantage of this incredible opportunity with David. His knowledge and expertise, mixed with my experience and vocabulary, made the project complete. The wealth of content on the CD can be applied to all genres of music—country, pop, R&B, rock..."

After deciding on a selection of groove types, drum sounds, and tempos, Frangioni, Nichols, and Frasier-Moore entered Village Studios in Los Angeles, where they recorded hundreds of loops. "I purposely wanted the different tempos to be performed rather than time-stretched," Frangioni says. "When you have a player like Brian that has all the nuances in his groove, hearing him play the different tempos takes the library to a whole other level."

"Brian played for two solid days, nine or more hours a day, until his hands were literally bleeding," Frangioni adds. "Amazing passion, effort, and endurance on his part."

For more info on *David Frangioni Presents Brian Frasier-Moore, Vol. 1*, go to modern drummer.com.



BRIAN FRASIER- MOORE AND EVANS

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Brian Frasier-Moore

tuning, placement, soloing, etc. I feel that practicing should always be challenging to your *real* challenge, which is being comfortable with making mistakes and being eager to fix them on the spot. I totally enjoy practicing, because I look forward to correcting my mistakes.

MD: What kinds of things do you work on in your practice routine?

Brian: I practice the basics: singles, doubles, triplets, and paradiddles. But whatever rudiments you practice, just make sure you break down that barrier that says, *Okay, this is good enough*. Keep those rudiments clean, and keep them tight—no matter what the tempo is. The faster you go, the more relaxed you become. There's nothing worse than a drummer with amazing ideas but his anxiousness intensifies. This makes it almost impossible to perform to your best ability.

And [working on] your time is very important. Timing, timing, timing. After all, this is the job of every drummer. And practice with a metronome—I know you've heard it a million times, but this is a *must*. And once again, getting rid of *Okay, that's good enough*. No, it has to be great! Make

sure you're comfortable playing at all tempos, then play to songs. This gives emotion and diversity to your playing—all your rudiments and grooves and expressions can now be put to good use. And stay calm when it's time to play a fill. This will help with your timing. When it's time to do a solo to a click track, this method will help with your timing *and* patience.

MD: Tell us about BFM Consultation Services.

Brian: It started from me wanting to get more involved with clinics back when I was on tour with Justin Timberlake. I began to promote myself and made the connections to schedule clinics two or three times a week during an eleven-week run. Needless to say, I was cooked. But it felt amazing to be able to share with others. It quickly turned into people asking things like, "How do you get the call?" This introduced the seminar/consultation idea. I developed detailed programs for inquiries by specific types of musicians—guitar players, keyboardists, bass players, drummers, percussionists, singers, front-of-house people, Pro Tools operators, DJs, poets, etc. Everyone wanted to know the same thing:

"How can I get hired?"

So while I was touring, doing clinics, and conducting private lessons after the clinics, I was also doing a phone and video consultation program, where the client can speak to me about whatever it may be. It's a bit like being a music-business psychologist. I'd help with tuning drums, playing with the click, working with triggers, retention, getting a sound, electric bass versus synth bass, stacking keyboard sounds, guitar effects, getting a good vocal blend, pitch, vocal training—all topics that I can help with in terms of getting you where you want to be. It became encouraging, fun, exciting, and challenging for me.

I get testimonies from every client, and to hear that they are so motivated and more confident in their craft and art is the best thing for me. They leave with a new goal that's obtainable, and with the knowledge of what industry expectations are. And they leave having some sort of idea about what musical directors, A&R people, and artists look for.

This industry can be complicated and discouraging. My team and I can help you get the results you want, in a comfortable



environment. We offer guidance with auditions, presentation, image building, branding, demeanor, working connections for the best results, advertising, and being the best you can be while capitalizing and growing. It's my way of giving back and helping build the next generation of great musicians.

And I'm still learning. I did a clinic with Omar Hakim, Thomas Lang, and Dom Famularo. I was so nervous! [laughs] But they sat me down after my clinic and gave me so much love and support and encouragement. It was an amazing feeling. They also gave me the best advice ever. They explained about branding, books, seminars at colleges and music schools, lessons, and studio sessions. So I thought it's time to go one hundred percent into giving back to help others as well as branding myself. It's the best of both worlds. It gives me astonishing joy to experience the journey with all my clients. It reminds me every day of the struggles I went through in my career and life. I want to inspire them to be the best. And they do the same for me.

MD: Can you offer some specific advice for

success in the music business?

Brian: If you're trying to become a musician for hire—getting paid to play someone's music—look at it this way: The artist you're playing for, or hoping to play for, spent countless hours in the studio with those drums that they either programmed or had someone play. And now, further down the road, they're going on tour and hiring you as the drummer for that tour and possibly more—studio work, songwriting, etc.

First you have to know what to do: Learn the music completely, and not just the drum part—you should know that inside and out already. Listen to all the [recorded] sounds, and figure out how to match the sounds of the drums and the vibe of the drums on your kit. That may involve triggering some sounds so that you can have acoustic drums mixed with the sounds of the record. And always be on time for shows, sessions, and rehearsals—and remember that image and personality is just as important as anything you play.

Second, know what *not* to do. Don't go in thinking that this is your chance to show the world that you're the man and that your chops and groove are the best. Chops that

the artist is not familiar with don't fly, because they're used to what they wrote and heard in the studio. Don't be arrogant, demanding, and unapproachable. Don't go in not thinking about the instrumentation or the sound of what you're playing—for example, hearing a finger snap or handclap as the main hit, but playing it on a 14" metal snare drum. Watch what happens; you most likely won't be asked back.

MD: What's some other good advice you've gotten in your career?

Brian: Pay your taxes and keep your credit in order. Musicians don't talk enough about what it means to have a career—the necessary things we must handle in life to be successful, like paying taxes, having credit, making long-term plans for security, being self-contained, and realizing your worth. All these things are a necessity in your career and your life.

And stay with your faithfulness to God and to your craft. I believe we're all blessed with a talent given by God, and opportunities will come. Stay humble and appreciative—I can't preach that enough. Be an example.



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Robert “Sput” Searight

Snarky Puppy’s soul sender has seen tears of joy in the eyes of fans who’ve been starving for the band’s adventurous spirit, meticulous arrangements, and generous vibe.

**Story by Ken Micallef
Photos by Marco Hammer**

When Robert “Sput” Searight signed up for his entrance audition at the University of North Texas in the late 1990s, he saw that none other than big band and jazz drummer extraordinaire Ed Soph was the person assigned to determine his fate. Instilling both fear and respect in his students, Soph didn’t suffer drumming fools gladly.

“Ed Soph taught me two lessons about the value of dynamics,” Searight recalls. “His auditions were very old school. You got the idea that he’d seen a hundred drummers before you. And he’s sick of it! So he tells me to play for thirty-two bars and, ‘Play as much as you can, improvise.’ So I start swinging and soloing, and when I look up he has his fingers plugging his ears! He was in total agony. He asks, ‘Can you play all of that three volume levels lower?’ So I try again. Here I am, this nineteen-year-old kid struggling to play

everything at a lower volume level. I finally look up and he’s not paying any attention—again! He’s literally reading the newspaper.

“I left that room feeling like, *Ed Soph is an asshole*. But I’ve got to tell you, if I saw him today I would hug him and kiss him on the cheek and tell him how much he helped me. Because now I’m him! I’m the guy that if it’s too loud I plug my ears.”

A joyous large ensemble that draws on jazz, fusion, funk, and rock, Snarky Puppy has achieved a level of success once thought impossible for a group of jazz-trained musicians from the University of North Texas. Typically recording live in front of an audience, the group brings crowds of all ages to their feet with incredible solos and ecstatic grooves. This year’s *Sylva* finds Snarky Puppy collaborating with the Dutch big band and symphonic outfit the Metropole Orkest. It’s still funky as Sly Stone, but with symphonic



“The energy and interaction with the audience is always the most important thing.”



MD: Snarky Puppy explores so many different styles, and the players get to freely improvise. How do you hold it all together?

Sput: We've been playing together for nine years. That cultivates a lot of chemistry. From there, [bandleader and bassist] Michael League's compositions are so complete and through-composed, we essentially just learn the compositions. I learn the keyboard melodies and the harmonies as well as the rhythms. Everyone in the band aspires to learn all the parts even if we can't play them. We want to be able to *think* them. After I learn the composition and figure out the arrangement and play through it, I'm just being creative.

MD: You learn *all* the keyboard parts?

Sput: Yes, I learn the melody and the harmony of the songs from Michael's demos. So by the time I get to the drums I know everything. That makes it easier to come up with parts. And when you play the part, everybody knows if it works or not. You don't even have to have a conversation about it.

MD: Do Michael's demos include drum parts?

Sput: Very seldom. Michael leaves that up to us. Though I didn't play drums on *We Like It Here*, I did write most of the drum parts, including "Shofukan," "Lingus," and "What About Me?" So I'm on the record in spirit.

MD: If you wrote the parts, why aren't you on the record?

Sput: At the time *We Like It Here* was recorded I was on the road with Marcus Miller. I couldn't do both. It was kind of a drag! But it's great to have a guy like Larnell sub for me.

MD: How do you and Larnell divide duties?

Sput: We recorded the upcoming *Family Dinner 2* together, and [we'll both do] the next Snarky Puppy record [*Empire Central*], which we'll record in New York. It will be a studio record instead of live. For *We Like It Here*, Larnell learned seven songs in three

strings and big band brass to heighten the atmosphere.

The forty-year-old Searight appears on six albums by Snarky Puppy, which now also includes drummer Larnell Lewis, who tracked 2014's *We Like It Here* and subs in the band when Sput's calendar gets jammed. Searight has also performed road duties for Snoop Dogg, Justin Timberlake, and Erykah Badu. And he's worked extensively on Dallas's gospel scene, tracking drums for the Clark Sisters, Tamela Mann, Twila Paris, and Kirk Franklin, with whom he won a Grammy for the 1997 hit single "Stomp."

Snarky Puppy is Searight's current home, his soulful, ecstatic, blitzkrieg drumming combining with the twenty-five-member-strong Puppy machine to produce progressive yet moving music that recalls such '70s flashbacks as the Headhunters, Frank Zappa, and Weather Report, with a heaping helping of Parliament Funkadelic.



days. If I need to take a date off, he jumps right in, and I also sub for him. We're just one big family. Three guitar players, four keyboard players, multiple horn players, four or five percussionists, two drummers, and one bass player.

MD: What is your process for creating a drum part?

Sput: We play through the song until we find the right parts. Usually we get a good stretch of rehearsing and playing live to test the songs at shows. We feed off the crowd reaction. If the audience reacts to a certain part, we'll embellish that part. Or they might not react and we'll adjust the part. The energy and interaction with the audience is always the most important thing.

MD: Do you write out drum charts?

Sput: We don't use charts at all. We've grown accustomed to the format of listening and learning and internalizing the music. We don't play anything arbitrarily. It's definitely structured. Things open up in the solo sections. As the drummer I can dictate or control the vibe in those sections.



Tools of the Trade

Searight plays a Tama Star Walnut kit, including a 5.5x14 snare, an 8x12 rack tom, a 9x14 "baritone" snare, a 15x16 floor tom, and a 15x22 bass drum. His auxiliary snare is a Tama 5.5x10 Metalworks steel model. His Meinl Byzance cymbal lineup consists of a 20" Extra Thin Hammered crash/12" Classics Custom stack, a 22" Vintage Sand crash/ride, 16" Extra Dry Medium hi-hats, a 10" Extra Dry splash, an 18" Safari ride, a 21" Mike Johnston Signature Transition ride, an 18" Vintage crash/12" Generation X Filter China stack, and a 20" Extra Dry crash. Sput's bongos, cowbells, shakers, claves, and tambourine are made by Meinl Percussion. His Evans heads include a Power Center Coated Reverse Dot batter on the Star snare, a G1 Clear on the Metalworks snare, a Hybrid Coated on the baritone snare, G2 Coated tom batters, and an EMAD 2 Coated bass drum batter.

MD: What drummers are your reference points for playing this through-composed, Weather Report-meets-Zappa style?

Sput: Chester Thompson, Lenny White, Mike Clark, David Garibaldi. Those drummers really infused funk and fusion in jazz. I grew up listening to the James Brown guys, John "Jabo" Starks and Clyde Stubblefield. Ramon "Tiki" Fulwood, the drummer who played with Parliament Funkadelic for years, he played a lot of interesting fills, like crashing off the 1. After him, Dennis Chambers with Parliament. Dennis was one of the first drummers who could play everything you can play inside of the bar. And I love to hear Prince play the drums. On his record *For You* he plays drums on every song. The way he accented the songs, his feel was perfect. He's so talented, he can play what he hears in his head instead of explaining it to someone else.

MD: After *Family Dinner, We Like It Here* was more of a player's album. *Sylva* is like symphonic Snarky Puppy. How did you approach this record?

Sput: I remember flying to Holland for the concert and not having a clue of what we were getting into. Michael had sent us two songs, and they were definitely different from what we're used to. He programmed drum patterns this time. Because there was an orchestra, the demos had to be through-composed and specific. That was challenging. Michael wrote things that sounded great, but I had to figure out how to play them!

MD: Which song is an example of that?

Sput: "Atchafalaya," where Michael programmed a New Orleans pattern. But the way he wrote the ride cymbal part, there was no way I could play a snare and bass drum pattern and play that ride cymbal idea too. I had to dissect it to make it fit with what I could actually play. Other songs didn't have programmed parts, so I

created a part.

MD: It sounds like you're replicating electronic drums with acoustic drums on "The Curtain."

Sput: In the groove part of that song, where the bass solo happens, I'm playing a huge World War I-era 16" field snare drum. It has this gothic sound. I doubled that sound with a splash on the snare drum to create the nastiest backbeat ever.

MD: The snare drum on "Gretel" sounds sampled. Or is that a cymbal on the drumhead?

Sput: I used a 12" splash on the main snare. My idea is to create a handclap sound without using electronics. You can get so many sounds from hitting the splash on the snare drum. You have to hit the cymbal, then stick it. Don't let the cymbal vibrate on the drum after you hit it. You hit it and hold it so it doesn't bounce up. That gives you that electronic sound. I've been doing that for years, so I've figured out how to get different sounds from it as well.

MD: Where do you play the right-side 14" "baritone" snare drum?

Sput: That's really a 14" floor tom with snares on it. I turn the snares on when I want that deep snare drum sound. So it's dual purpose. It's tuned in tandem with the mounted toms to be the floor tom. That's what you're hearing in "Gretel."

MD: Also in "Gretel," the drums sound electronic while the cymbals sound acoustic.

Sput: It's all manipulation. Ideally, everything electronic is something acoustic we've sampled. [Percussionist] Nate [Werth] and I are always looking for sounds to create the samples. And we never trigger from the drums, not one time.

MD: Given that Snarky Puppy's records are usually recorded live, are you playing to a click?

Sput: It depends. Recording *Sylva* with the Metropole Orkest, we



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did use a click. Everybody had in-ears. The orchestra needed it, but when we [usually] record live we don't use the click. But sometimes we could use it! As humans your adrenaline gets pumping and shit speeds up.

MD: Do you have a favorite recording that you'd recommend people check out to hear your drumming?

Sput: If I had to pick one, it would be the one that we did in the studio and that I coproduced, *Bring Us the Bright*. It was when the band's music started changing. The

that to my students. What makes someone a real musician is not always the talent, it's the ability to have discipline within that talent or gift. I've seen guys who play all around the drumkit but don't understand the concept of playing with dynamics, or how to play to the sound of the room, where you might use a different texture of cymbals or muffle the drums. You learn from experience. And you need the wherewithal to apply it.

MD: Snarky Puppy is wildly popular. Is it the tunes, the combination of players, the

Larnell Lewis

This rhythmic ringer, who hails from a long lineage of music makers, feels right at home with Snarky Puppy's family vibe.

MD: What is your background?

Larnell: My family is of Caribbean descent, and that's had a big influence on my drumming. My great-grandfather was a guitarist—he came from Santo Domingo. My grandfather and all my uncles played a variety of instruments. My dad is a multi-instrumentalist, and my brother plays drums for the Weeknd. My Caribbean family background influences how I interpret the beat. Coming from that background, you draw on a lot of knowledge to play the music. It's not a simple one-drop reggae or soca calypso pattern. Through jazz I was able to combine all of that within my own interpretation. I also played in the Pentecostal church tradition in my native Toronto, which is steeped in Caribbean culture.

MD: What is your Snarky Puppy setup?

Larnell: In Snarky Puppy I'm playing Yamaha drums, Zildjian cymbals, Evans heads, and Promark sticks.

MD: How did you learn the material so quickly?

Larnell: They asked me to join them on stage at the Rex in Toronto the first day they saw me play. They taught me the song "Intelligent Design" on the break. It was fun, but a challenge. They told me where to be dynamic, the shape of the drum solo, and the last few ending cues. Other than that I would do my homework, then, when they came through town, I hoped they'd call the songs I learned. When I didn't know the song, I would watch Michael for cues. A year later, they asked me to sub for Sput in Toronto. Then Michael sent the demos for *We Like It Here*. The hang behind the scenes is what makes Snarky Puppy so great. It's as you see it—it's exciting, it's fun.



record after that, *Tell Your Friends*, was very different. I also played keyboards on *Bring Us the Bright*.

MD: What do you practice?

Sput: Listening. New music, new genres. I'm into Brazilian, Afro-Cuban, and Afrobeat drumming now. I read about different cultures and do extended research. When you internalize it, everything comes out. I practice on the road by listening. But when I come home I get on the drums, and I also teach, which teaches me as well. It's school all over again for me. That's the humbling thing about being a musician: You might forget the fundamentals when you're playing a lot. But you still have to practice.

MD: Thanks to Ed Soph, you're a master at playing dynamics.

Sput: I love that by using dynamics I can control people's emotions with the stroke of a drum. It's a lost art, and I try to teach

energy and camaraderie...?

Sput: It's a combination of all that. We really enjoy playing this music. But it's also the energy of the music, and the melodies are emotion provoking. We have more women coming to our shows than ever; I've seen ladies crying at our shows. And I've seen guys get emotional. The music is positive, and that's inspiring for people who want to be positive. There hasn't been any music in the last twenty years that's like the music we play. Music today in every genre has been programmed to sound a certain way. So whenever you find music that doesn't fit any of those boxes, you're getting back to the art of creativity and the true artistry of expression. We've brought some fresh air to the music community. I see how little kids react to our music at shows, and that makes me really happy.



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Jeremiah



Green



Rabid fans of Modest Mouse were relieved to see the band return with a new album and tour in 2015. The drummers among them got an especially big bang for their buck.

Story by Stephen Bidwell
Photos by Paul La Raia

Twenty-two years is a long time to be part of any group activity, let alone something as intimate and demanding as a rock 'n' roll band. Jeremiah Green, who met singer/guitarist Isaac Brock while he was still in junior high school, is now thirty-eight years old, which means he's been working with his Modest Mouse bandmate for more than half his life.

It's been a productive and unpredictable journey. Green founded Modest Mouse while still in high school, and by the late '90s his largely self-taught timekeeping skills had powered the band out of obscurity and into college-radio notoriety. By the mid-2000s Modest Mouse had become not only that rare band that can enjoy the perks of being considered critical darlings while having chart-topping albums, but one that can also recruit a legendary musician like Smiths guitarist Johnny Marr as a full-time member.

This year Modest Mouse released the highly anticipated album *Strangers to Ourselves*, its first in eight years, which was recorded in a new studio built by the band members. Layered into the music were enough percussion and sonic textures to warrant taking not one but two additional percussionists on tour. It's as detailed and wide-ranging a percussive onslaught as you'll find in modern rock.

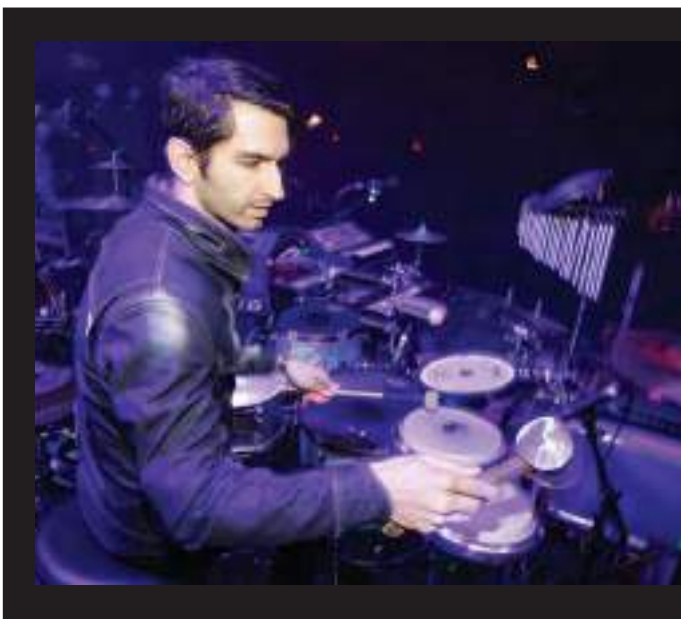


Jeremiah Green was born in Oahu, Hawaii, while his father was stationed there in the army. He spent his early years in Moxee, Washington, and in 1989 he and his family moved to the Seattle area. The drumming urge seemed to be present from the start.

“My family was not super-musical,” Green recalls, “but it was a given that you had to take up an instrument. I think I just always wanted to play drums. I got a ukulele when I was a kid, but I played

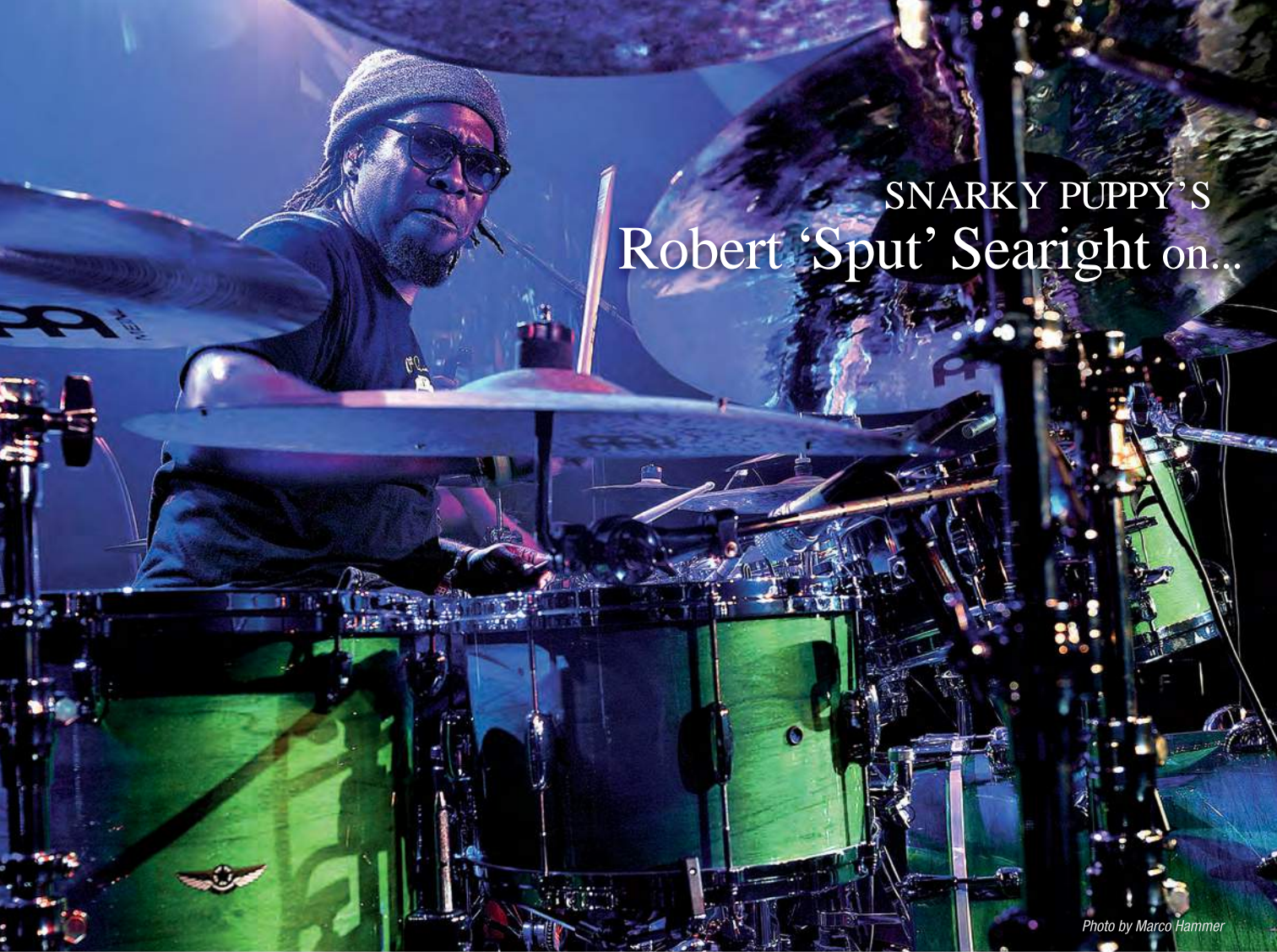
it like a drum. I didn’t want to really play the piano [either]; I’d beat on that thing too. By the time I was twelve or thirteen I was like, ‘I want to play punk rock.’ I didn’t have the patience for studying. I did for a moment—my mom made me take lessons—but I had no fun. I didn’t have a very good drum teacher when I started; he wasn’t inspired and I could tell.”

Green’s lessons lasted only three months, but immersing himself



Davey Brozowski

Davey Brozowski initially came to Modest Mouse as a drum tech, but he was asked to fill in last minute—unrehearsed—at a show in New Zealand in 2011. Readers may have heard his drumming with the Washington bands the Catheters, Black Whales, and Tall Birds; he’s also recorded drums and percussion for upcoming releases by Cayucas and Ra Ra Riot. “A Modest Mouse show is never the same,” Brozowski says. “Isaac is the conductor, Jeremiah is the engine, and those two have been playing together for almost two decades, so their ability to read each other is uncanny. Jeremiah’s playing is incredibly dynamic and explosive, and he usually plays the same thing night after night, but rarely is it delivered in an identical manner as the night before. It’s a skill not all drummers have. It forces me to focus not only on what he’s doing but how he’s playing, his mood—is he behind the beat or pushing it?—and so on. I have to play with enough force to be present, but delicately enough to not step on toes. And sometimes it flips. There are songs where I can see him lean on me for a solid 16th-note tambourine part to bring things together, or lay down a loop with drum samples for him to play to. That interaction is what makes the layers of percussion work together.”



SNARKY PUPPY'S
Robert 'Sput' Searight on...

Photo by Marco Hammer

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Ben Massarella

The son of a Chicago jazz DJ, Ben Massarella has been around music his whole life and has an impressive résumé outside of Modest Mouse. He first encountered Jeremiah Green and Isaac Brock when his band Red Red Meat shared bills with Modest Mouse in the late 1990s. Some members of Red Red Meat later formed Califone; that band built a studio where producer Brian Deck worked with Modest Mouse on the releases *Night on the Sun*, *The Moon & Antarctica*, and *Everywhere and His Nasty Parlour Tricks*, and Massarella was tapped to play percussion on a few tracks. He also appeared on Iron & Wine's *Kiss Each Other Clean* LP and toured with that group for four years.

With Modest Mouse, Massarella travels with nearly ninety percussion instruments, many with pickups and contact microphones run through a chain of effects pedals. (See Tools of the Trade sidebar.) Ben describes his role as "adding the icing and the sprinkles...it's a lot like painting. With eight to ten players, there's plenty of melody and rhythm already, and you need to respect the space."



in the Seattle music scene served well to prompt his growth. "I joined a band and just started playing and listening to music—going to shows at night and watching people," Jeremiah says. "Back in the day I'd go to pretty small shows, and I could fit behind the drummer and actually see what he or she was doing physically. When you're only listening to music, you don't know what kind of movements people are doing."

Regional bands like the Treepeople and Hammerbox had a big impact on Green, as did the D.C. punk legend Fugazi and the British alt-rock institution the Cure. "Fugazi was probably my biggest influence as far as wanting to start a band," Green says. "It was really great music and just sounded like something I could possibly do. The Cure was my first favorite band, though. The drumming on records like *Pornography* is pretty awesome."



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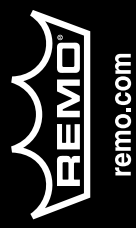
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Jeremiah Green

Green was still in high school when he began his touring and recording career in earnest—in fact, he got course credit for it. “I went to what they would now call a charter school,” he explains. “Anybody who was kind of odd went there, and I chose to go. I wouldn’t have done well at a regular high school. I was in a band called Red Stars

Theory and I was also in one called Satisfact. They actually let me out of school for like a month at a time. I know that sounds totally crazy.”

With Modest Mouse, Green showed an interest in incorporating percussion and electronics early on, and both have had a steadily increasing presence in the group’s



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Jeremiah Green plays a C&C Player Date II set, including a 14x24 bass drum with a walnut outer ply, a 9x13 rack tom and 16x16 floor tom with wood hoops in yellowtail abalone finish, and an 8x14 black-chrome-over-brass snare drum. His Istanbul Agop cymbals include 16" Traditional hi-hats, a 22" Traditional Medium crash, a 22" Traditional Dark crash, and a 24" 30th Anniversary ride. He uses a Roland SPD-SX sampling pad and Ableton Live software, Promark 747 and Super Rock Shira Kashi oak sticks, Remo heads (including Clear Powerstroke 4s on his toms, a Powerstroke 3 black dot on his bass drum, and a Coated Emperor on his snare), and DW hardware.

Ben Massarella describes his array of acoustic percussion this way: “I have eighty-seven percussion instruments that I travel with. They include a Bison snare drum, a Ludwig floor tom, Paiste cymbals and a variety of broken cymbals [by other makers], a ribbon crasher assortment mounted on a Rototom frame, a set of five woodblocks, African double cowbells, wicker shakers with bells and beads, sleigh bells, tambourines, cowbells, maracas, shakers, pots, pans, buckets, metal sheets, goat hooves, guiros made of horns, jingles, noisemakers, a ton of found objects, wooden tongue drums, a propane tank with six tone bars cut into the top, a kalimba, and a smattering of other toys.”

Massarella’s non-acoustic instruments include a Keeley phaser and White Sands Luxe Drive, a Malekko Spring Chicken reverb and Ekko 616 analog delay, a Catalinbread Belle Epoch Tape Echo, a Boss digital Space Echo (“I used to bring a Roland analog Space Echo on tour, which I still use in the studio”), and a Boss RC-20 Loop Station. “All of the instruments with contact mics go through an Alesis six-channel mixer to the pedal chain and through a Magnatone amplifier,” Massarella adds.

Davey Brozowski plays a C&C cocktail kit in satin duco finish, a 16x16 Player Date II floor tom/bass drum with wood hoops, an 8x12 Player Date I tom with wood hoops, and a 6x14 C&C maple or 6.5x14 Keplinger six-lug stainless steel snare. His Istanbul Agop cymbal setup consists of 12" Turk hi-hats, an 18" Xist Ion crash, a 16" Trash Hit, 6" Traditional and Alchemy bells, and an 8" Mini China splash. His DW hardware includes 6000 and 7000 series stands and a reversed 5000 series bass drum pedal. His percussion includes an LP mounted tambourine, black and blue Jam Blocks, and Compact bongos, plus vintage bar chimes, a Remo cowbell, Keplinger’s “the Thing” Rototom Crasher and Open Air cowbell, a 12" brake drum, Englehart agogo bells, and miscellaneous metal plates, goat hooves, and bells. His electronics include a Roland SPD-SX sampling pad run through Space Echo and tremolo pedals and an Index Drums Shoebox.



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Jeremiah Green

sound. Early recordings reveal Green executing Moe Tucker–esque patterns, employing shakers and tambourines on toms, as on “Custom Concern” and “Beach Side Property” from 1996’s *This Is a Long Drive for Someone With Nothing to Think About*. Some dub trickery can be heard as early as the Calvin Johnson–produced K Records releases, like *The Fruit That Ate Itself* and *The Lonesome Crowded West*, both from 1997. And electronic percussion is an important part of the mix on tracks like “Fire It Up” and “Missed the Boat” from the 2007 album *We Were Dead Before the Ship Even Sank*, the group’s first to debut at the top of *Billboard*’s album chart.

Big-label budgets meant more polished recordings, but, just as important, more money allowed for more time to dabble in experimental sounds, particularly in terms of percussion. Building a studio between the last two records led to greater experimentation, like the layered thumb pianos on the outro to “The Ground Walks, With Time in a Box.”

“Five or six of us got in the studio,” Green recalls, “and we tuned all the kalimbas to the same key. Isaac, [Strangers to Ourselves engineer] Darrin Wiener, and I have a bunch of these electric kalimbas made by David Bellinger. He came by our studio recently and we bought a few, but he’s not making many right now, because he had a stroke. His website isn’t up right now, but Darrin and I are going to try to help get it back up.”

As the role of percussion in Modest Mouse has increased, so have the challenges of pulling it all off live. “We’ve always used a lot of electronics [in place of percussion in concert],” Green says, “but at one point we were like, ‘We should just try to re-create this shit live.’ It sounded cooler, and we also wanted to bring extra friends with us on tour. That was Joe Plummer for a while, and now it’s Davey Brozowski and Benny Massarella. Davey plays piano on a couple of songs and handles the electronic drum parts and loops on Roland sampling pads, and we can sort of move around and speed up if we need to.”

With all that percussion and three or four multi-instrumentalists out front, one wonders what Green’s monitor mix must be like. “I have the guitars and bass,” he says. “I don’t usually put the percussion in my monitor. I hear it a little bit, but I mainly play along with Isaac and [bassist] Russell Higbee.”

Though Green can’t recall playing along to records much during his formative years,

today he finds himself shedding with electronic music and drum machines when he’s not on the road. “I listen to a lot of electronic music—that’s pretty much *all* I listen to these days,” he says. “I like A Tribe Called Red and Cashmere Cat. Those guys program some crazy stuff, which is impossible for me to play, but I guess that’s why I like a lot of it. I don’t play along with a regular metronome, but I like to play along with a drum machine. My favorite is the Zoom Streetboxx. It’s kind of cheesy, but it’s simple and cheap, and the sounds are just as good as the fifteen-hundred-dollar drum machines they come out with.”

Green’s interest in electronics has also come to light in the experimental psych-pop project Vells with Tristan Marcum and Ryan Kraft—which Green began while on hiatus from Modest Mouse around 2003—and a subsequent collaboration with Marcum, the more electro-oriented *Psychic Emperor*. And for about fifteen years he’s worked with Darrin Wiener in World Gang, a sound design company that produces music for television and film and which has put out a handful of releases, including one built around Green’s breakbeats, appropriately titled *Drums*.

Despite all of these diversions, Modest Mouse remains Green’s focus, and a close look at the band’s catalog presents the clearest picture of his growth as an artist. “The biggest difference between [when Modest Mouse started] and now is that we’ve gotten more comfortable on our instruments, the way you naturally would if you’re self-taught, like we all are,” Green says. “I was in tenth or eleventh grade for that first full-length record, and I honestly didn’t know what I was doing at that point.

“Sometimes,” Green adds, “I feel like I was better when I was eighteen and didn’t know what I was doing. I listen to some parts of those records, and they’re kind of sloppy, but I think I was maybe more creative because it was all new to me.” This could be a matter of the changing nature of memory over time more than actuality; you can decide for yourself by listening to the exclusive Jeremiah Green playlist we’ve compiled on *Modern Drummer*’s Spotify page—and by keeping up with future releases from the ever-inquisitive musician.



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Scarlett Stevens

She adds a number of vital elements to San Cisco's deceptively sunny sound, including lead vocals and drum parts that can catch you by surprise with off-the-cuff wildness and well-thought-out weirdness.

by Arminé Iknadossian

Two bars into the hit song “Fred Astaire,” from San Cisco’s self-titled 2012 debut release, most people would have trouble not tapping their feet or wiggling their bum. Yes, it’s pop. And yes, it’s indie. And yes, there’s an audience call-and-response part, a keyboard solo, and rhythmic clapping. But to quote Jordi Davieson’s vocal hook, “it’s a common misconception” that pop this sweet has to leave you with a toothache.

On San Cisco’s sophomore album, *Gracetown*, the band’s alternately sincere and tongue-in-cheek persona and retro sounds continue to keep things light and tight. But it’s a strong bet that the young band from Fremantle, Australia, is no flash in the pan, and a prime reason is the presence of drummer Scarlett Stevens.

MD is chatting with Stevens by phone as she’s sipping a fruit smoothie and making her way south toward Mexico City to perform in the annual Vive Latino festival. Her charming Aussie accent is the kind that immediately lightens the conversation, even when she’s talking about the health status of bassist Nick Gardner, who suffered severe foot injuries after a hunting rifle accidentally went off in a car in which he was a passenger. Gardner had to stay home for this leg of the U.S. tour, but Stevens is clearly relieved that the mishap didn’t turn out a lot worse.

The child of music-industry professionals, the twenty-three-year-old Stevens is wise beyond her years in terms of how the biz works, but she maintains a healthy outlook on the pressures of staying relevant on today’s scene. “You can get caught up in thoughts like, *Is my band going to make it? or Am I going to be able to do this forever?* and forget that what you’re doing is making an

impact on people,” she says. “That’s one of the beautiful things about music and [working in] the music industry.”

Stevens, who’s been drumming since she was ten years old, says that she’s “chuffed” when young girls come up to her after shows—like at a recent in-store gig at Amoeba Music in Los Angeles—and proclaim her influence on their own musical journeys. Though many take the stance that they simply want to be thought of as drummers, not *female* drummers, Stevens says, “Gender does come into it. For young girls there is something really empowering about seeing another woman on drums.”

No doubt one of the songs that make the girls *and* boys take notice at a San Cisco concert is one that Stevens herself chooses as among her favorites to play, “Wash It All Away.” Featuring lots of fun and fancy fills—including the savagely stunning one that kicks off the tune—“Wash It All Away” is a drunken track in need of a



Lisa Businowski

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Stevens plays DW drums and Meinl cymbals.



hair of the dog. Eventually it succumbs to massively distorted guitars and a classic “tumbling down the stairs” drum fill, but not before Stevens has her way with its slow, slinky groove and long hi-hat swoops.

Another highlight from *Gracetown* is its leadoff track, “Run,” with its unforgettable, breathy “mouth percussion” and jaunty four-on-the-floor disco beat. It’s aggressive and sexy but still pure pop, full of perky fills and dramatic pauses that highlight the tragi-romantic lyrics. “Josh [Biondillo, guitarist] came up with the bass line and the drumbeat,” Stevens says, “but I knew things had to change for the chorus and pre-chorus. I had to make it more funky and more groovy. That’s kind of what I try to do: pump up the beat or make it half time, which the boys tend to like.”

Stevens says she particularly enjoys playing “Run” live due to its copious but well-placed fills. “For the recording,” she explains, “I completed different fills and then called on producer Steven Schram to edit various ones together. That’s the really cool thing about working with Steven—I’d never think to play it like that. Then I’ll play it that way for the live show. It’s fun bouncing ideas off the producer, and I think I’m learning more.”

Much of the band’s artistic process is similarly collaborative. “We always come up with a really grand idea for a song,” Stevens says, “and we’ll talk and talk about it: ‘What gear do we need to get to make it happen?’ And we procrastinate a lot. But then we all get in the room and jam it out, and it all comes together.

“I do think that you can get really caught up with how things are recorded,” Stevens warns. “There are songs on the album that I thought would be really easy to play live, and songs that I thought would be really hard...but you [eventually] feel it, and you come up with cool new parts as well.”

Behind the drums, Stevens appears loose yet confident—her timing is solid, her posture strong but relaxed. So it’s a bit

surprising when she says, “In school I didn’t want to do music as a subject. I just always treated it as a hobby. I never really put pressure on myself to be this amazing drummer. Now I’m actually getting back into learning songs on piano, which is really fun.”

Like Scarlett herself, San Cisco’s music is so upbeat that you might forget how grueling the band’s day-to-day activities can be. The group has done some serious international touring over the past five

years, which, as every traveling musician knows, can wear on even the youngest, most fit bodies. Stevens has benefitted from diligent yoga practice, which also helps her maintain correct posture and breathing during performances. “It helps keep my stamina up too,” she adds. “It’s hard on tour, because it’s not just the drumming—you’re lugging gear around. Relieving that stress is really important. It’s important for the mind as well.”



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Wilco's Glenn Kotche

Interview and photos by Miguel Monroy



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- 3. 22" Kerope Medium ride
- 4. 19" K Custom Dark crash (or 18", depending on venue)
- 5. 22" prototype pang

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Hardware: Sonor 600 series stands and Giant Step bass drum pedal (with Drum Perfect Grip Peddler traction pad), Roc-n-Soc manual-spindle throne

Sticks: Promark Glenn Kotche Active Wave 570, Hickory SD7 Heavy wood tip, Hickory SD5 Light wood tip, MT3 multipurpose mallets, PM Lightning Rods, PM Broomsticks, B400 customized nylon brushes, TB3 Jazz telescopic wire brushes, DFP640 xylophone/bell mallets, DFP250 xylophone/bell mallets, custom drumset mallets, PSBD3 gong mallet, PSBDR gong/bass drum mallet

Handheld percussion: LP, including Session shaker, Rock shaker, One Shot shaker (small and large), Egg shakers, Finger Shots, finger cymbals, Jingle Sticks (brass and steel), Twist Shakers, Qube (Jingle and Live versions), maracas (Fiber, Salsa, and Pro series), Pro series castanets, sleigh bells, Vibra-Slap, Ching Chok, Flex-a-Tone, and One Handed Triangle

Mounted percussion: LP Cyclops tambourine, Cyclops Jingle Ring (steel and brass), Click hi-hat tambourine, and Mambo cowbell; Promark Cymbal Sizzlers; shaman bells (mounted with hi-hat clutch); Keplinger Ching Ring and Cymbal Stackers; bicycle bell

(mounted to hi-hat stand); Zildjian prototype frying pans (stacked and mounted with hi-hat clutch), crotales (high and low sets), and 40" gong

Electronics/accessories:

DrumKAT sampler triggering Battery3 via MacBook with Apogee Duet 2 Interface, Yamaha DT-20 triggers (attached to all drums and gong) running through Schroeder distortion/modulation pedal and then into Radial stereo direct box, plastic tubing inserted in floor toms to attenuate pitch when blown into, DrumDots mufflers, PureSound Custom series twenty-strand snare wires, assortment of springs, dowels, putty scrapers, wood skewers, dull knives, and homemade mallets and sticks

Glenn Kotche has one of the most distinctive setups in the industry, with more sticks and homemade percussion trinkets than we could list fully. We caught up with Kotche during a Wilco show at Louisville's Iroquois Amphitheater, where he was using a Sonor ProLite drumset. "It's a beautiful maple kit, kind of based after the old vintage drums with thin maple shells and a little reinforced hoop," he says. "They sound beautiful. Nice and dark, just the way I like them, but they are able to project in these outdoor amphitheaters with no problem."

"Typically, I like changing tom heads once a week, maybe

twice, to keep them in best form," Kotche continues. "But I'll go an entire tour, sometimes an entire few-month stretch, without having to touch the kick or snare head. These things are so durable, and they sound amazing. They have a lot of sensitivity, but they hold up to a lot of bashing as well."

"I've got the K Custom Dark Thin hi-hats here. I'm actually using two tops today. Sometimes I'll go with a top and a bottom, and sometimes I'll go with two tops, because I like that old vintage sound. In the studio I still use some Zildjian A cymbals from the '60s and '70s that I love. That's just the sound I gravitate toward, and these are a great replication of

that sound for a live setting, but with the durability so that I'm not going to be cracking and breaking them."

Kotche was also sporting a new Kerope Medium ride from Zildjian. "It's a little heavier than the initial ones that were released," he says. "This cymbal is beautiful. As soon as I brought it to the band, everyone on stage noticed. I get more questions and compliments on this cymbal than anything on my kit. It's got a lot of spread and a lot of warmth. The bell is kind of old school. It sounds a lot like those classic rock bells you hear from the '50s, '60s, and '70s, and it has a lot of wash when I need it."



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Starting (or Advancing) at Any Age

No More Excuses!

by Russ Miller



I have the privilege of meeting players from all over the world. I also meet many people who are interested in taking up the drums but are torn about it. Many of the excuses for not starting to play are the same excuses for not working on progressing in drumming. The most common are discussed below.

“I should have started at an early age.”

This is one of the main excuses for not learning to play. I also hear a lot of players use this as an excuse for their current state of development. The point I’m trying to make is that there’s often a tremendous amount of time wasted at the beginning of study.

“Though no one can go back and make a brand-new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand-new ending.”

—Carl Bard,

Scottish theologian, writer, and broadcaster

This is especially true when the student is very young. Lack of focus and diligence is common at younger ages. You can actually progress much faster in adulthood than in childhood, especially with solid organizational skills and commitment.

“I don’t have anywhere to practice.”

This is a valid issue. But the industry has put quite a bit of focus on practice scenarios when designing instruments. On the market are silent mesh heads for the drums, low-volume cymbals, electronic pads that mount right to your drums, electronic kits, and practice drumsets. These are all alternative options to full-volume playing.

I would recommend using low-volume cymbals, like Zildjian’s Gen16, over electronic cymbal pads. Learning to coax various tones from actual cymbals is very important, and you cannot do this on electronic versions. Using silent mesh heads or electronic pads is fine, but the cymbals should be actual instruments.

“It costs too much to start playing the drums.”

Money constrictions are relative to your current financial state. But the cost of drum equipment has lowered significantly over the years. When I was thirteen years old, after playing on a pad and then a snare for five years, I sold my *Star Wars* toys at a yard sale and bought my first drumset. The bass drum, tom, and floor tom cost \$400 and came without any hardware. These days you can buy a name-brand, five-piece, great-sounding drumset, with hardware, for \$500. This is less than the price of a smartphone, eight video games, or four months of daily stops at Starbucks.

Also, if you have the discipline to start the correct way, with a practice pad and private lessons to get you developing proper technique, the initial financial output will be reduced dramatically. Work up to getting a full drumkit after you’ve acquired some basic rudimentary skills on a practice pad.

“I’m just too busy.”

I understand this as much as anybody. Family, children, employees, aging parents, travel schedules, and daily business responsibilities

don’t give me a whole lot of time to practice. I have a system for practice that I recommend in my online classroom. It involves breaking your time into three sections. First, play your drumset for fifteen minutes. Play along with your iPod and just have fun. Use this time to work out the “I feel like playing” energy.

Next, spend a focused thirty minutes working diligently on your current lessons. This is your concentrated and deliberate study time. Take notes and log your progression. Organized and deliberate practice is the key to development on any instrument.

In the third and final section of your practice, play with music or solo for fifteen minutes. Have fun so you can walk away from the drums feeling positive. This way, if you were working on difficult things in the middle section, you won’t leave the session thinking, *I stink at this*, and end up not wanting to come back the next day.

Just an hour of practice, with the proper guidance, can be very effective. What usually hinders progress isn’t time constraints—it’s ego. As I’ve mentioned multiple times before, everyone needs a coach. Online lessons make it very easy to gain information on your time as well. Just make sure you’re getting information from a reliable source. One approach is to seek out a player who has done or is doing what you want to do and ask for some guidance or lessons.

In last month’s column I wrote about the nice environment that a great drum shop can create. Shops often offer lessons that not only further the ability of students but get them into the store once a week, which helps them stay inspired. Students get to meet other players, test new gear, and be exposed to educational materials such as instructional DVDs and method books.

I grew up in a small town in northeastern Ohio, and the local drum shop, Zampino’s, was owned by one of my first teachers, Phil Zampino. Later, another one of the teachers, Scott Grewell, purchased the store. My earliest memories of Zampino’s include taking lessons, attending clinics—the great Roy Burns was my first one—watching instructional videos, and performing recitals. There was always a great vibe at the store. I bought all of my gear there. I ended up teaching at the shop and working there part-time while I was in high school. I remained invested in Zampino’s until I moved to Miami for college.

The first thing I did when I got to Florida was to seek out local drum stores. I ended up teaching at and eventually managing Resurrection Drums. I actually hired its current owner, Jeff Lee. There I learned about building drums, tuning, and the differences between various brands on the market. Those experiences prepared me to develop my various signature products over the years with Yamaha, Zildjian, Mapex, ProLogix, and Meinl Percussion. The time I spent in these drum shops did so much for me. I was inspired, became a better player and more educated in the world of drums, and even got my career going by teaching and subbing on gigs for my teachers.

You can be a drummer just for fun, you can become a part-time musician, or you can even switch careers and become a full-time professional. It’s all up to you!

Russ Miller has played on recordings with combined sales of more than 26 million copies. For more info, visit russmiller.com.





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Falling Rocks

A Primer on One of Drumming's Most Powerful Fills

by Rich Redmond

MUSIC KEY

C.C. *
 T.T. ●●●●
 S.D. ●●●●
 F.T. ●●●●
 B.D. ●●●●

B.D. 2

The term “falling rocks” refers to a very powerful fill concept made famous by legendary rockers like Carmine and Vinny Appice, John Bonham, Cozy Powell, and Tommy Aldridge, and it’s often used by contemporary metal, prog, and fusion drummers. The phrasing is dense and articulate, and it creates an overwhelming sound reminiscent of an avalanche.

Although these exercises can be played with a single pedal, they take on a more powerful character with a double pedal or two bass drums. Be sure to practice very methodically with a metronome and gradually speed up as you become more comfortable with each phrase. The quick bursts of two-note groupings in the feet should be played cleanly and at the same dynamic level. Four-note groups in the hands are voiced on the snare, rack tom, and floor tom. Exercises 4–8 create an over-the-bar feel because they comprise streams of six-note groupings (four with the hands and two with the feet). Be sure to keep track of how the overall accent pattern lands against the quarter note so you can maintain a steady pulse. Have fun!

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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.

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Closed Roll Studies

Exercises for Developing Control of Multiple Rebounds

by Jeff W. Johnson

The closed roll, aka buzz roll, is a mystery to many drummers, and for good reason. This type of roll attempts to imitate the long tone that other instruments, like trumpet or violin, create by sustaining a single pitch. Long tones on drums are mimicked through the use of multiple rebounds.

The desired sound of a closed roll should be smooth and legato. Some liken it to the constant swish of water running out of a faucet. When I studied with the legendary jazz drummer Joe Morello, I asked about his philosophy regarding the closed roll. He recounted the advice that was given to him by his teacher George Lawrence Stone. Stone understood that most drummers initially make the mistake of trying to achieve a closed roll by pushing the sticks into the head. This produces a series of short, scratchy buzzes. When each buzz is short, you have to move your hands very quickly to create a smooth roll.

Stone taught the concept of the roll being made in the air. He understood that it's the space (or air) between the rebounds that allows the roll to breathe while the hands remain free of unnecessary tension. Stone taught that the closed roll may be played in a very open manner, using as few as three rebounds per hand. More rebounds could be added later to produce a denser sound.

First try getting just three rebounds per hand. Begin practicing without worrying about a specific tempo or rhythm. Very little hand pressure is required.

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R R R L L L

Now practice the rebounds within a rhythmic sequence. Play each slashed note with three rebounds. Practice the exercises slowly at first. Also try playing the exercises with the snare wires turned off. This will eliminate the white noise from the wires, allowing each rebound to be heard clearly.

2

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

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

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

To make the roll a little denser, practice getting four rebounds per hand without worrying about a specific tempo or rhythm at first.

3

R R R R L L L L

Bass Drum Development

4 Focused Exercises for Building Raw Speed

by Mike Johnston

MUSIC KEY

	C.C.
H.H.	✕
T.T.	✕
S.D.	●
F.T.	●
B.D.	✕
H.H.	✕
w/foot	

One of the most common questions I get asked in clinics is, “How did you develop your foot speed?” And that is often followed by, “What pedal do you use?” I can promise you this: Bass drum speed has almost nothing to do with the pedal and everything to do with you. *You* have to put in the work, *you* have to maintain focus on your goals, and *you* have to be the one to stay motivated while practicing what can seem like boring, repetitive exercises. If you can do all that—if you can finish your vegetables—then the dessert will be that much sweeter.

Let’s first try to understand speed. There are two types of speed when it comes to drumming, and without proficiency at both you most likely won’t be able to reach your speed goals. The first type is raw speed—how fast your limbs can currently move. Think of it like this: If I asked you to play right, left, kick, kick (RLKK) as fast as you could, that would give me an idea of your raw foot speed. But if I asked you to play RLLRKK, most likely your foot speed would decrease drastically. Even though there are still only two kicks in a row, the hand pattern preceding those two kicks might be a bit foreign to you, which makes your mental hard drive work much harder, thus causing you to slow down.

That brings us to the second type: pattern speed. Pattern speed is required to play any combination of notes that doesn’t flow out of you naturally. Maybe you can play singles and doubles with ease at fast tempos but you feel as if you’re starting over when working on the double paradiddle. It’s just

a combination of singles and doubles, right? Your raw speed is plenty fast to play the double paradiddle, but your pattern speed is not. The way to develop pattern speed is through mid-tempo repetition. Allow your brain to memorize the motor function by playing at 60 to 70 percent of your maximum speed for long periods of time.

Below are four of my favorite bass drum exercises for building raw speed. Play each exercise with a timer for at least five minutes a day, and your foot speed will increase immensely before you know it.

Goal tempo: 220 bpm

1

R R R R R R R R

L L L L L L L L

R L R L R L R L

* * * *

Goal tempo: 120 bpm

2

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

Goal tempo: 90 bpm

3

Goal tempo: 120 bpm

4

R R R R R R R R

Mike Johnston runs the educational website mikeslessons.com, where he offers prerecorded videos as well as real-time online lessons. He also hosts weeklong drum camps at the mikeslessons.com facility each year.

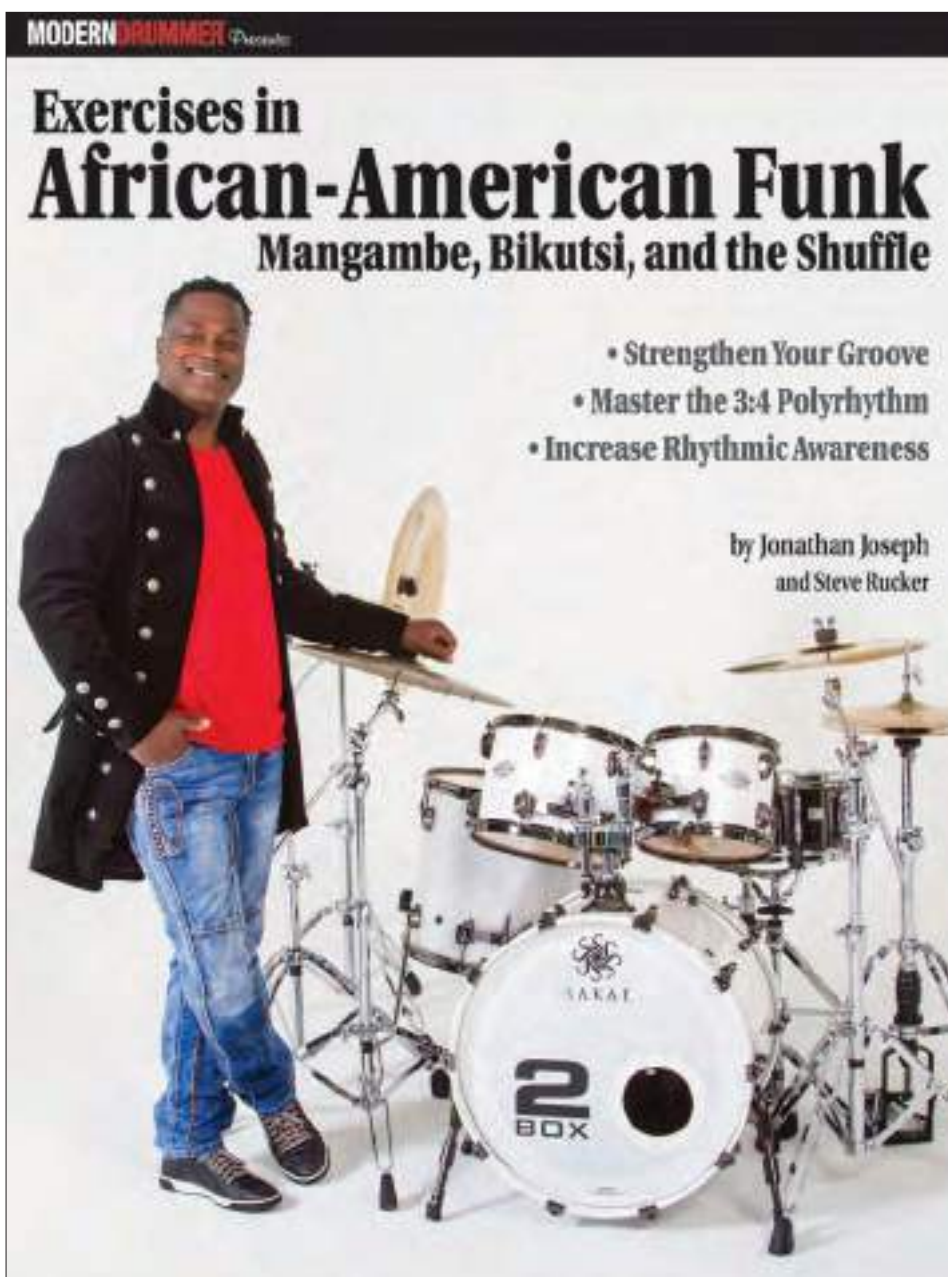
For a video demo of these exercises, visit moderndrummer.com.



New from MODERN DRUMMER®

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

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



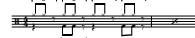
Chapter 4: Half-Time Shuffle-Funk

In this chapter, we move the backbone of the shuffle groove over to beat 2. What this does is transform the shuffle into a half-time, triplet-based funk groove, which we'll call "shuffle-funk."

The *Parade Shuffle*, made famous by the legendary R&B drummer Bernard Purdie, is one variation of this type of groove.

The first hand pattern contains no ghost notes. The grooves become more and more dense as we add ghost notes. As in the previous exercises, the ghost notes should be played extremely soft. The primary focus of the groove is on the bass drum and the hi-hat.

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



Although these exercises are written with 16th-note triplets for consistency, you might also conceptualize them as 10th-note triplets. The tempo marker would put the beat on beats 2 and 4 of a bar of 4/4. In Hand Pattern 2, you'd look like the following:



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

Hand Pattern 1



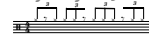
Here are some exercises that use Hand Pattern 1 with different bass drum variations.



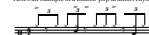
Chapter 6: Bikutsi

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

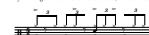
The characteristic rhythm of the bikutsi is a grouping of triplets in four-omit patterns. The themes of this chapter are directly related to Chapters 1 and 2. If you aren't clear on the 3:4 polyrhythm, please review those chapters.



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



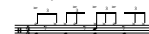
By moving the snare accent to beat 2, we can create a simple bikutsi shuffle-funk pattern.



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



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



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



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

Swing Style 101

Part 3: The Most Common Song Forms

by Justin Varnes

If you've practiced the exercises in the first two "Swing Style 101" articles, you should have your syncopated comping ("accompaniment") and basic swing feel together. To finish out the series, we're going to prepare you for when it comes time to play some jazz tunes on the bandstand, by discussing the most standard forms used in this style. Understanding these forms is the key to turning the exercises into music.

In popular music, there are some common ways to identify song sections such as the verse, pre-chorus, chorus, and bridge. As drummers, one of our jobs is to shape these sections. Maybe you do that by going from a hi-hat/rimclick pattern in the verse to a hi-hat/snare groove in the pre-chorus, and then for the chorus you go to the ride cymbal. The same basic idea happens in jazz, but within slightly different forms and with different devices to shape the sections. First let's identify the four most common song forms used in jazz.

Blues

This is most often a twelve-bar structure using an AAB format. The blues form is very common in American music, including jazz. The jazz blues form isn't noticeably different from a standard blues. It's just played with more of a swing feel and with some fancier chords. The AAB blues form comprises a four-bar melody (A) that gets repeated (the second A) and then concludes with a different four-bar phrase (B), which is often referred to as the turnaround.

Here's an example of an AAB blues form using lyrics sung by the great Joe Williams.

You're so beautiful, but you gotta die one day. (A)
Baby, you're so beautiful, but you gotta die one day. (A)
All I want's a little lovin', before you pass away. (B)

AABA

The second most common jazz form is AABA, which is often a thirty-two-bar structure made up of four eight-bar phrases. Here, an eight-bar melody (A) gets repeated and then followed by a contrasting section (B), often called the bridge, before returning to another statement of the original melody (A). Sometimes the B section contains a new melody, and sometimes it's the original melody played in a new key.

ABAC

This is another thirty-two-bar structure with four eight-bar sections. The difference between ABAC and AABA is that songs using ABAC feel as if they have two halves. This form comprises an eight-bar melody (A), a different phrase that doesn't feel resolved (B), a repeat of the first melody (A), and a variation of the B section that has a resolution (C).

AB

This structure is also referred to as a short form, because it's usually only sixteen bars long, with two eight-bar sections.

Tunes in this form have two halves: an eight-bar opening melody (A) and a contrasting eight-bar phrase (B).

There are slight variations on all of these forms. For example, sometimes the last section is extended for four bars, and sometimes the sections are sixteen bars long instead of eight. But if you know how to identify the four basic song forms, it will be obvious when they've been slightly altered.

Listener's Guide

Here are some common jazz tunes broken down by form. Listen to classic versions of them recorded by the greats, and be able to identify the forms and the changes to new sections. A lot of these songs have lyrics. Learning the words is a great way to keep track of the form. You can also find sheet music for the tunes, which may help as a visual aid. But don't become dependent on the chart. Memorize the tunes!

Blues: "Freddie Freeloader," "All Blues," "Now's the Time," "Sonnymoon for Two," "Footprints"

AABA: "Take the 'A' Train," "So What," "Cherokee," "There Is No Greater Love," "My Funny Valentine"

ABAC: "Fly Me to the Moon," "Our Love Is Here to Stay," "There Will Never Be Another You," "On Green Dolphin Street," "All of Me"

AB: "Giant Steps," "Blue Bossa," "Summertime," "Tune Up," "Doxy"

Shaping the Form

One you've studied the tunes and memorized their forms, the next step is to get on the drumset and practice using comping, fills, and orchestration ideas to shape the structures.

The most common ways to do this:

1. Play a fill when the form repeats back to the beginning. (Each repetition of the entire form is called a chorus.)
2. Play a fill to mark the top of the B section in an AABA tune or the second half in an ABAC or AB form.
3. Change to a different cymbal to keep time during different sections or when there's a new soloist.
4. Tell a story through your comping over several choruses, changing the material you play thematically with each repetition of the form.

Additional Practice Tips

After you've memorized the suggested songs and forms, and you've experimented with different ways to outline the structure of the tunes, put on headphones and play along to the classic recordings. Try coming up with your own comping ideas and fills leading into the different sections. Compare your playing with that of the drummer on the recording. After a while you'll internalize the timing of when to fill, as well as when not to, and when you should change up the feel or the ride source.

Justin Varnes teaches drumset at Georgia State University and online at Jazz Drummer's Resource. He has performed with Mose Allison, Kenny Barron, Earl Klugh, and Phoebe Snow. For more info, visit lessons.justinvarnes.com.



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Progressive Drumming Essentials

Part 5: Incorporating Odd Groups Into Grooves and Fills

by Aaron Edgar

One of my favorite things to do with quintuplets and septuplets is to create syncopated, angular-sounding grooves. Exploring this unusual territory can lend itself to establishing unique feels with a lot of rhythmic tension.

Last month we discussed how to count and feel quintuplets and septuplets. In case you missed it, I use an Indian counting system. There are many variations of this, but the syllables I like to use are “ta, ka, din, ah, gah” for quintuplets and “ta, ka, din, ah, ge, na, gah” for septuplets. When you’re working on these rhythms, make sure your internal pulse stays rooted to the quarter note (“ta”).

Let’s take a look at a basic quintuplet fill using single strokes. It’s a good idea to anchor the quarter-note pulse with your foot on the hi-hat. Go slowly and start by playing the fill one note at a time while counting out loud. Once you can play the fill comfortably, turn on the metronome and use the fill within a musical context. Try playing it with your favorite 16th-note-based groove.

1

R L R L R L R L R L

Another way to use single-stroke quintuplets is to turn them into a groove. Starting with the bass drum on quarter notes, play singles between the hi-hat and snare. This naturally places the backbeats on the snare on 2 and 4. Lay into the bass drum with a solid stroke, which will help you feel the quintuplets more convincingly.

2

Experimenting beyond singles is a great way to start embellishing your subdivisions. Using sticking patterns that are the same length as your subdivision gives you an easy way to keep track of where you are within the odd-note grouping. A great sticking for quintuplets is RLRRL. Let’s use that to create a fun fill that leads out of a 16th-note paradiddle groove.

3

You can use the same idea with septuplets. Here’s an example of how to apply the sticking RRLRLRL to a septuplet fill. Make sure all your left-hand notes are played as subtle ghost strokes.

4

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

You don’t necessarily need to play all of the notes from the subdivision. You can put rests anywhere you’d like. In Examples 5A and 5B, we’re playing every other note of the quintuplet to create a five-over-two polyrhythm. Pay special attention to your quarter-note pulse, since you aren’t always playing on the downbeat with the hands. Bob your head to the quarter note or play a loud bass drum stroke instead of the hi-hat if it helps you keep the time steady.

5A

Ta (Ka) Din (Ah) Gah (Ta) Ka (Din) Ah (Gah)

5B

The five-over-two polyrhythm works equally well as a groove. Let’s revisit Example 2 and remove the ghost notes and add some hi-hat accents. Make sure the accent pattern on the hi-hat doesn’t affect your pulse. In order to get a feel for this, try playing the ghost notes (from Example 2) on your leg and hitting the accents on the snare.

6

Let’s take a look at some sticking patterns that don’t fit evenly into our subdivisions. Example 7A is an accent pattern based on the inverted paradiddle (RLLR, LRRL) spread across quintuplets on the snare. Example 7B is the same pattern orchestrated on the snare and toms. The right hand accents on the floor tom, and the left hand accents on the rack tom. Be sure to count along, which helps you form a deeper understanding of exactly where each accent goes. Dynamics are especially important here. The more you accent the toms and keep the snare quiet, the more effective this type of fill becomes. Experiment with playing bass drum/crash hits instead of the toms as well.

MUSIC KEY

R.C.	bell	C.C.
H.H.		
T.T.		
S.D.		
B.D.		
H.H.		
w/foot	Ghost note	Add'l T.T.

7A

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

7B

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

What's particularly cool about Examples 7A and 7B is that their accent patterns create a five-over-four polyrhythm. Let's see what happens when we try another sticking that fits unevenly into our subdivision. We'll use a three-note pattern over septuplets, orchestrated on the ride, bass drum, and snare.

Example 8 looks far more frightening than it is. The first step is to count septuplets out loud while tapping "right, left, foot." You'll need to count three full septuplets before you cycle back to having your right hand land on beat 1. Once you have a feel for the pattern away from the drumset, play it on the kit as noted below. The ride bell phrasing creates a seven-over-six polyrhythm by placing seven equally spaced notes across the six pulses of the two 3/4 measures.

8

While these examples may not fit into every musical situation, they're inspiring tools that can add a bit of uniqueness to your playing, and mastering them will do wonders for strengthening your internal clock. I encourage you to dig deeper into these concepts. There's a whole new world of rhythmic possibilities just waiting to be explored!

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

For a video demo of these examples, visit moderndrummer.com.



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Hybrid Drumming Basics

3 Contemporary Scenarios That Meld Electronics and Acoustics

by Donny Gruendler

Many modern record producers have replaced the acoustic drumkit with programmed electronic textures from various physical and virtual drum machines, like the Akai MPC, Native Instruments' Maschine, and Logic's Ultrabeat. While the result of that change in direction helped resurrect the clean, cutting, synthetic, and thumping tones heard on classic pop/R&B tracks from the New Jack Swing era of the early 1990s, it also put into question the need to hire a live drummer.

But have no fear! The music business still needs live acoustic drummers. Many of today's most successful pop and hip-hop artists are using the sampled production textures heard on the recordings alongside a live drummer whose responsibility is to augment and add excitement to the stage show. These players are being asked to

trigger samples from hybrid drumkits that incorporate acoustic and electronic elements. This article will help you understand the pieces most often used within different contemporary hybrid setups.

The Components

A hybrid drumkit combines acoustic drums and electronic elements in one cohesive outfit. This can involve electronic pads and triggers, which are attached to either a multipad (sometimes called a percussion pad) or a drum module. Additional trigger pedals are often utilized within these kits as well. Let's take a look at each item in detail.

A **drum module**, also referred to as a brain, is a digital musical instrument similar to an electronic keyboard that contains a memory of sampled drum, cymbal, and percussion hits, both electronic and acoustic. The device interprets the incoming signal from triggers or pads and then plays a corresponding sound from within its memory.



A **multipad** combines a drum module with several playable rubber surfaces. Most multipads have inputs on the back to allow you to connect triggers, additional pads, and pedals.

A **signal trigger** is a type of sensor that fastens to an acoustic drum. This device converts each strike of the drumhead or rim into an electrical pulse, which is sent to the drum module or multipad via an instrument cable. Some triggers attach to the drumhead with adhesive, while others come with a plastic or metal housing that clamps to the hoop. The bass drum trigger is usually positioned at the top of the head, and the snare trigger should be placed so that it doesn't interfere with rimshots or rimclicks.



Some players also add **remote trigger pedals** to provide more sound options for the feet.



In addition to signal triggers, many hybrid setups incorporate **electronic drum pads**. These are synthetic surfaces that are usually made of rubber, mesh, or silicone. Each type of pad has a slightly different feel, so it's a good idea to investigate to figure out which fits your playing style best.



Now that you understand the various components of a hybrid drumkit, let's take a look at a few options for different musical situations.

Pop/Dance Band

This setup is designed for a pop band that requires a thumping kick, a cracking snare, an electronic snare, and various percussion sounds. Signal triggers are placed on the acoustic kick and snare, and there's a synthetic trigger pad for a secondary electronic snare option. A multipad is added for the various percussion sounds. When a kit of this type is miked up, you're able to perfectly blend the acoustic and electronic elements into one cohesive sound.



Hard Rock

In this scenario, signal triggers are added to each tom so you can blend acoustic or electronic samples with those tones in your mix. This setup allows for dynamic playing while still achieving a very powerful and cutting sound via the drum module.

EDM

In electronic music, it's common to use multiple kick and snare sounds. Therefore this setup is a full hybrid configuration that employs signal triggers on the acoustic kick and snare, a second acoustic snare in the floor tom position (also with a signal trigger placed on it), two electronic pads, two kick drum trigger pedals, and a multipad.



Think Big but Start Small

If you're looking to get into incorporating electronics, you may be wondering how you should get started. Rather than taking out a loan or maxing out a credit card to buy everything listed in the setups above, we suggest that you either seek out new entry-level gear from a prominent manufacturer or find some older modules and triggers on the used market. When you've gotten the most out of those, and you've learned the ins and outs of how to make electronics work with your acoustic kit, a larger investment in some of today's more advanced products may be warranted. Enjoy the journey!

Donny Gruendler is the director of performance programs at Musicians Institute in Los Angeles. He has performed with DJ Logic, Rick Holmstrom, John Medeski, and Rhett Frazier Inc. For more info, visit donnygruendler.com.



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sabian.com/hh



Mike Balter Steve Shapiro Vibe Mallets

Mike Balter has developed Steve Shapiro mallets, designed for vibraphones that have pickups or are miked for performances. The mallets are said to allow the player to get a full tone without an overly percussive attack. Medium-hard (34R) and medium-soft (35R) versions are available and list for \$66 per pair.

mikebalter.com

Evans 16" Bass Drum Heads and Reso 7 Bottoms

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sonallpercussion.com



Zoom Q8 Handy Video Recorder

The Q8 Handy Video Recorder combines a high-definition camera and a high-resolution four-track audio recorder in a compact fixed-lens format. It's an easy-to-use solution for recording performances, practice sessions, and lessons.

Equipped with Scene and Auto Gain presets that adapt to various lighting and acoustic conditions, the Q8 utilizes a system of interchangeable mic input capsules that can be swapped out for different situations.

The Q8 has an F2.0 aperture/160-degree wide-angle lens for capturing video in a variety of formats up to 2034x1296 pixels (3M HD), with frame rates of up to 60 fps at 720p. It provides support for audio up to 24-bit/96kHz, comes with a detachable stereo X/Y microphone, and works with other Zoom input capsules (excluding the Dual XLR/TRS). The Q8 has a built-in tripod mount and is supplied with a three-prong action camera mount adapter, allowing it to be used with a variety of third-party mounts. Up to four tracks of audio can be recorded simultaneously and either integrated into MOV files or stored as separate AAC or WAV files for synchronization in postproduction. List price: \$399.99.

zoom-na.com



Low Boy Online Bass Drum Beater Customizer

Low Boy Custom Beaters recently launched the Beater Builder online customizer. The site gives drummers the ability to design and purchase custom-finish and laser-engraved wood bass drum beaters that are shipped direct from Low Boy's shop in Denver.

With nearly thirty paint and stain options to choose from, drummers have the potential to design thousands of unique color combinations. Laser engraving is available in a monogrammed shield with the drummer's initials, and custom text, images, or logos can be added as well.

Each model is built using Low Boy's standard two-way maple beater head. Designed to give a drummer the advantages of the increased attack of wood without the added weight of traditional wood beaters, each Low Boy model weighs just 3.25 ounces.

lowboybeaters.com



Benson Music Strap Drum Accessory

Created by inventor/performer Gary Benson, the Strap solves the problem of bass drum creep by securely attaching to the bass drum via a foot pedal clamp and hooking to the center post of the drum throne.

"I can't count how many times I've showed up at a club or bar with cement or tile floors," Benson says. "With the Strap I never have to be concerned. I can play on any surface with no worries about bass drum creep. I have been using the Strap for over two years and have found it a necessity. Never again will my lead singer have to hold my bass drum with his foot." The Strap features steel-plated hooks and an adjustable length.

bensonsmusic.com





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Ronn Dunnett

From Bike Parts to Bonham Reissues

by Jason Sutter

Ronn Dunnett is one of the most prominent custom drum builders in the game right now. Best known for his versatile, innovative, and unique Dunnett Classic snares, he has also made a name for himself with his metal drumsets and innovative R Class accessories, and by reviving the George Way brand. A passionate drum enthusiast with an outspoken, honest personality to match, Ronn has a big presence in the drumming community, and he's a staple at trade shows and drum events worldwide.

Consistently challenging the norm and experimenting with new designs, unusual alloys, and his own take on edges, Dunnett is on a lifelong quest to provide the modern drummer with the tools to create his or her own true "custom" sound. I was fortunate to spend some time with Ronn at his booth at a recent drum show and get some insight regarding how it all began for him and what he's been up to recently.

Jason: How long have you been making drums, and how did you get started?

Ronn: I've been making drums since I was about fifteen. I was living in a group home in Canada and had to choose between martial arts and drumming. I chose drumming because that meant I could leave the house on weekends. The set I had was a lousy blue-sparkle Sears starter kit, and it was ugly, so I started trying to improve it. It all kicked into production when I was mountain biking and a bar fell off the bike, hitting the concrete and making a cool sound. It was made out of titanium, and I wondered what it would be like to make a drum from that.

Jason: What was the first drum you produced?

Ronn: My first drum was actually a stainless steel snare. I gave it to Kurt Dahle when he was in the studio with New Pornographers, and he said, "If it sounds like shit, I ain't playin' it!" He took the drum into the studio, and when he came out he ordered one, and so did the engineer, the producer, and the studio. So I made four more, and the rest is history.

Jason: What are some of the different alloys and options for metals for your drums, and how do they affect the sound?

Ronn: I've worked with every metal I can get my hands on, except for beryllium, because it's poisonous. I've managed to narrow it down from the lightest metals, like titanium, aluminum, and magnesium, to the heavier metals, like brass, bronze, copper, stainless steel, and mild steel. The weight of the shell works like that of a cymbal. If you have a paper-thin crash, the fundamental will be low and the cymbal will be more versatile, like a thin drum shell, as opposed to a big, heavy cymbal, which will give you a super-high frequency that only does one thing very well.

Jason: How would you say the different alloys affect the tone from drum to drum?

Ronn: I once did a test where I hung the different raw shells from a clothesline and hit them, and titanium was the lowest and had a unique inherent dissonance in the metal, like a chord. Copper is acoustically stillborn, meaning it has no note or tone—it just goes "clank." Bronze has a note. For the most part the lower-frequency shells were titanium, brass, and bronze, and the higher-end were steel and mild steel. Magnesium was on the low end and was like a hybrid of titanium and copper in terms of pitch.

Jason: Who are some of the drummers that you've made drums for over the years?

Ronn: When we were hanging out with Bun E. Carlos the other night, I had forgotten that he had been to my shop, so it's hard to remember half of who has what. I've given some drums to Neil Peart. I've made drums for you, and Billy Cobham has bought a couple over the years, as have Carter Beauford, Vinnie Colaiuta, Dennis Chambers, Matt Cameron, John Tempesta, Tré Cool, and Abe Laboriel Jr. A lot of drummers endorse other drum companies, so I hesitate to mention them.

Jason: That's a great point, but part of the reason for writing this column is to showcase how custom builders like you provide an alternate route for drummers



Author Jason Sutter (left) and Ronn Dunnett with a prototype 2N-A snare

to further customize their sound regardless of endorsement affiliations.

Ronn: I guess the coolest drum I've ever made for someone was the one for the original chief, William F. Ludwig II. I got to hand it to him at a Chicago Drum Show. That was a great moment.

Jason: How long does it take to make a drum?

Ronn: It's about four to six hours for a standard stainless steel, and if it's something custom or a wood shell, it takes a bit longer. Not everything happens in my shop. I've learned that the smart guy is the guy who knows who can do something better than he can. Things like lacquering...I didn't need to be the guy spraying the paint on, so I have someone for that. I apply that concept to everything, in an effort to end up with a high-quality instrument.

Jason: What are some of the more unusual drums or crazier requests or experiments you've made?

Ronn: One of the more interesting drums was a sealed dual-walled drum that you could dump a liter of water in. It was a way to change the density of the drum. You could pour water in the shell, and, depending on the amount of water poured in, the pitch would change. I've also had Daniel Johnston, a fine artist, draw on drums directly, and James Michael, an aboriginal artist, has carved some of the shells. I've had drums custom done by metal guitar builder James Trussart and master engraver John Aldridge.

Jason: Have you ever been a drum tech?

Ronn: Well, I can say I am one of two people who know how to set up Neil Peart's set. I got a call by Neil's tech, Lorne

Wheaton, and he needed insurance, so I came down and learned the setup. It never happened, but that was as close as I got. I was flattered to have been asked, and I was ready to step up.

Jason: I'm always amazed that your drums are in more shops in more countries and obscure places than probably any other independent drum builder out there. How would you say you've accomplished this exposure?

Ronn: Honestly, I am genuinely humbled by it. It's hard work. You have to want it. Don't give up, and don't get frustrated if you offer something that's unique. I just never took no for an answer, and I made more good decisions than bad ones.

Jason: You specialize in building unique metal drumkits. How did that come about, and what are some of the options available?

Ronn: I think drums are made out of wood because it's cheaper than metal, and they sound okay. But I think the pure consistency of a titanium drumset is something to behold, and it's nice to know that there are options. Unfortunately, the idea of metal kits hasn't been completely accepted. I made all the stainless steel kits for Ludwig, and I make them under the Dunnett brand in stainless, titanium, and mild steel.

Jason: Are the metal kits custom-order only?

Ronn: No, it's "anti-custom." I prefer to make them in traditional sizes, as I think drums in those sizes are extremely versatile. I made a stainless steel drumkit for Taylor Hawkins for Gretsch in standard sizes, with a 14"-deep bass drum, that I was really excited about.

Jason: What are some of the finishes available for the metal kits?

Ronn: In the stainless there is a #4 raw finish and a #8 polished version. I can do coatings. I did titanium in matte black for Drumeo. My favorite is the raw titanium, as it patinas naturally and that's kind of my trademark. They have "living finishes," so they aren't lacquered.

Jason: Is there a drum that you haven't made yet?

Ronn: I've made cast drums out of iron, but I would love to melt down an actual bell and pour it into a mold and make the first real bell brass drum, because I have no idea what drum companies are talking about when they refer to "bell brass" drums. I want to be the first to use an actual bell!! [laughs]

Jason: You've made drums as specialty items or limited runs for some of the biggest companies. Can you discuss some

of those?

Ronn: The best part of this industry is the people, and through my associations I've had a lot of unique opportunities to work with other companies. I've made drums for Ludwig, Gretsch, and DW, and for Slingerland a long time ago. The John Bonham reissue stainless steel kit was an idea I brought to Ludwig. I took my first stainless kit to the Chicago Drum Show. I set it up right in front of the Ludwig booth and said, "What do you think?"

I also created the first beaded-shell titanium snare and offered it to Ludwig. That became the "the Chief" and was dedicated to W.F.L. II. I was honored to be a part of all that because of the love I have for that company and for all the years I spent with their old catalogs. It was a great drum, and it was the first Ludwig that had a custom strainer.

I made a titanium drum for DW, and it was a new direction for them, as it was their first to have tube lugs—only eight—and die-cast hoops. There were only 130 of them, and they are highly collectible.

Jason: As an inventor, can you describe the creative process? And what are some other ideas you've been working on besides drums?

Ronn: I get asked a lot about how I come up with stuff. I work with a pencil and a pad and modeling material. I just think, *I wish I had this*. I recently came out with the R Class components line, which consists of the eKee drum key/USB drive and a triple-flange hoop clamp that's part of a conversion kit that allows you to convert a floor tom to a bass drum. I've been working on a bass drum pedal for years, and it *will* happen, even if it's the last thing I do. [laughs]

The R4 throw-off is recent, and there's the R4-L that retrofits beaded drums like Ludwig's. That specific throw-off is how the newest additions to the Dunnett Classic snare drum line came about. I needed to offer a drum to fit it, and thus the 2N-A was born, which is a beaded drum made out of aluminum with a patented flanged top edge and a straight snare-side edge.

Jason: What has been the most rewarding part of being a drum builder for you?

Ronn: That's easy: the people. I could build a million beautiful drums and park 'em and look at them, but if you don't have anyone to get excited about them or to share them with, then it's wasted time. I know it sounds cliché, but it's true. I've met so many great friends and talented drummers in this business, and I'm always like, *How cool is this?*



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The Aristocrats *Tres Caballeros*

A bona fide studio effort from rock-fusion's newest masters.

With no demands to record in a strictly organic trio format, this time around the Aristocrats—guitarist Guthrie Govan, bassist Bryan Beller, and drummer **Marco Minnemann**—make full use of the studio with interesting overdubs on yet more wild instrumental material that's occasionally hilarious but always technically brilliant. The music is ADD Theater in the best sense. So much is flying at you (notes, ideas, next-level chops) that if you blink you'll miss the group moving on to the next thing. Minnemann rocks hard on the double-time sections of "Texas Crazy pants" and throws in all sorts of snare ghosting, hi-hat lightning, and tom flurries during the Zappa-esque guitar feature "Pressure Relief" before bringing it down with unparalleled dynamic control. These guys get better after every tour, but now they've learned to really craft their sound when the red light is on. Included here is a bonus DVD featuring a documentary with live and in-studio footage, outtakes, and demos. (Boing! Music) **Ilya Stembkovsky**



The Word *Soul Food*

Cody Dickinson propels this gospel-jazz supergroup's long-awaited sophomore effort with strong, well-conceived beats.

On opening track "New Word Order," drummer **Cody Dickinson** foreshadows the kind of fun to come, with a move to open-and-shut hats and then a shift into gospel double time as Robert Randolph's pedal steel screams. This is Southern-fried funk at its best, recalling the heyday of the Capricorn Records acts Sea Level and the Allman Brothers Band (with MMW keyboardist John Medeski playing the role of Chuck Leavell). "Come By Here" has a raw feel, with Dickinson pumping a big-time rock groove and playing the spaces. He answers the guitar solo, lets it get free, and turns the beat inside out. The drummer again reverses the beat on "Play All Day," sparring with the steel guitars, while his smooth syncopation on Medeski's "Swamp Road" sounds like something off MMW's *Shack Man*. From the country jam "Chocolate Cowboy" to the psychedelic rock ballad "The Highest," Dickinson nails it all. (Vanguard) **Robin Tolleson**



Heartless Bastards *Restless Ones*

The remarkably strong fifth album by this rootsy rock band gives lie to the idea that playing for the song means...you know...not playing much.

Drummer **David Colvin** thinks of the whole kit in his energetic alt-rock beatmaking, leading with toms, ride, hat, or snare, his strong kick always in close touch with bassist Jesse Ebough and his Heartless bandmates. In a treat for indie-rock drumming fans—and surely for Colvin—producer John Congleton turns him absolutely loose from the downbeat of album opener "Wind Up Bird." The drummer delivers a number of impressive flourishes over the slow 3/4, subdividing and double- and triple-timing with bold dynamics, stretching the time. On track two, "Gates of Dawn," you'll want to get lost in his dark, fat snare sound, but make sure to pay attention during the guitar break at 2:30; Colvin and his cohorts get tricky with the timing of their reentry, enjoying the kind of rhythmic fun you rarely hear in indie Americana. There's no such messing around on "Hi-Line," just more tasteful switches from straight rock to a funky half-time groove, then some super-feel-good 8th-note snare riding in the bridge. Another highlight on an album featuring many, "Into the Light" finds Colvin using sonic space to give the impression of physical size, splattering his sounds all around and using syncopated beats as fills. Emotionally stirring and technically impressive. (Partisan) **Robin Tolleson**



Royale *...As Long as the Money Lasted*

We're not sure what the "sci-fi yacht metal" tag is supposed to mean, but one thing we do know is that the band rocks.

Forget the cute descriptor of this Chicago group's debut album; what we've got here are beautifully arpeggiated guitars, moody vocals, and a big, at times bombastic sound that owes a bit to Smashing Pumpkins and Queens of the Stone Age. Drummer **Nate Bauman** swims with the heavy current, throwing in some huge tidal-wave fills when it matters. Bauman isn't shy about blurring the 1 a couple of times in opener "Close to the Vest" and playing hip, spacious ride bell accents on "Cosmonaut Romance." Also check out the way he switches back and forth from an understated rims-and-rimclick beat to a weightier toms-and-snare flam groove on "The November." Interesting arrangements and an excellent drum sound beg for repeated listening. (thebandroyale.com) **Ilya Stembkovsky**



Fresh Cut Orchestra

From the Vine

Hip arrangements and a go-for-it attitude pervade this large band's studio offering.

At times reminiscent of Steve Coleman's groups, Fresh Cut Orchestra indeed offers a modern perspective on big band ensemble writing, as well as a chance for each player to shine. On "The Mothers' Suite, Movement II: Mother's Love," drummer and co-leader **Anwar Marshall** slowly opens things up with the full palette of his kit, subdividing bars over an insistent pulse. On "Movement III: Ritual of Take," Marshall and



percussionist **Francois Zayas** engage in a hi-hat/bongo duet before an electric guitar vamp takes hold and the drummer solos on just his cymbals, moving to his snare and toms to display some killer chops and control. Marshall's own composition, the closing "Sanguine," is a kinetic buggy ride with trumpet and bass clarinet solos set to programmed rhythms with live kit on top but no drum pyrotechnics, so go figure. Commanding but with a great touch, Marshall knows when to pick his spots. (Ropeadope) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

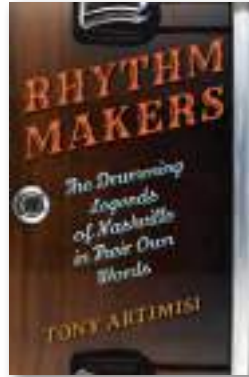
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●●●●●
The Melodic Snare Drummer
 by Ron Tierno

This volume might initially appear to be yet another collection of dry rudimental snare études marked with stickings. But author Ron Tierno, a busy New York City teacher and performer who has backed top artists and helmed many a Broadway hit, offers something much more fun and musical. In his earlier shedding days, Tierno sought a way to spice up his routine snare practice. So he composed play-along rudimental solos that interlocked with the melodies, solos, and rhythm-section grooves of existing instrumental tracks. Rather than merely overlapping with the tracks, the smartly designed solos create propulsive "duets." Users will gain a heightened sense of phrasing, melodicism, and swing within the book's combinations. (Check out Tierno's demonstration at maxwelldrums.com.) The solos

are matched with several classic George Benson tracks of varied feels and grooves. Helpful execution tips and alternate application suggestions further enhance the book's long-term value. Here's a wrist workout that ultimately yields *music* rather than cadence-like exercises. (\$16.95, prodrumshop.com) **Jeff Potter**



●●●●●
Rhythm Makers: The Drumming Legends of Nashville in Their Own Words
 by Tony Artimisi

In *Rhythm Makers*, author Tony Artimisi explains the famous number system—the simplified reading method used in Nashville studios—and features interviews with five difference-making Music City drummers. Eddie Bayers Jr. discusses his evolution from piano to drums and the influence of Larrie Londin. Jerry Kroon gets into the etiquette of being a sub on a gig and the idea of wanting a session to sound as good as possible. Kenny Malone describes a life-changing event in the military and the realization that he was overplaying when he arrived in Nashville. Tom Roady recalls sessions in St. Louis, Muscle Shoals, Los Angeles, and then Nashville, easing percussion into country rock. And Tommy Wells talks about learning to play jingle sessions, musical versatility, and business savvy. Anyone looking for insight into the Nashville scene or studio musicianship in general should check out this unique book. (Rowman & Littlefield) **Robin Tolleason**



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In Memoriam

Jim Coffin

Sitting in a restaurant in Tokyo in the mid-1980s with executives from Yamaha, Jim Coffin noticed that people at an adjoining table were pointing at him excitedly. He asked one of the Yamaha guys what was going on. After a quick conversation with the people at the next table, the Yamaha exec told Coffin, “They think you are Colonel Sanders [of Kentucky Fried Chicken fame].” Coffin was quite willing to play along. “Ask them if there’s anything they want,” he replied. After another conversation, the Yamaha person reported back, “They want the KFCs in Japan to have drive-through windows.” Coffin looked over at the next table with a big smile and gave them a thumbs-up.

Coffin’s sense of humor is only one aspect of the man that will be greatly missed in the aftermath of his death on April 9, 2015.

Coffin was born in Waterloo, Iowa, in 1931, and received bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Northern Iowa (UNI). After playing professionally in Los Angeles, he returned to Iowa and taught high school starting in 1956. In 1964 Coffin joined the UNI faculty, where he instituted the jazz and percussion programs. He was the author of *The Performing Percussionist I & II* and *Solo Album*, published by C.L. Barnhouse. As a clinician, soloist, adjudicator, and

conductor he appeared in forty states and five Canadian provinces. One of his many honors was being noted as an outstanding university jazz educator in Duke Ellington’s autobiography, *Music Is My Mistress*.

In 1972, Coffin joined the Selmer Company, where he managed marketing, education, and artist relations for Premier. Ten years later, he joined the Yamaha Corporation and was responsible for the development and marketing of its percussion products until 1993.

One of the Yamaha endorsers he worked with was Peter Erskine. “Jim bridged the worlds of the music school and the music business more effectively than anyone else I’ve known,” Erskine says. “He was an inspiring and authentic educator at the University of Northern Iowa as well as a pioneering force for Yamaha Drums. Both institutions still resonate and thrive thanks to his passion and vision. He was also a fun-loving and generous man who proved to be an integral part of every Yamaha drummer’s career and life during those halcyon days when Jim was at the helm of Yamaha Drums in the USA. His passing marks the turning of a very big page. We will all miss him—his wisdom, his wit, his patience and impatience, that sparkle in his eye plus his infectious laugh—but, like all good souls, he lives on in our memory.”

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Coffin was often spotted in the company of two close friends, Lennie DiMuzio of Zildjian and Lloyd McCausland of Remo, and Jim coined the term JEWOPS (“junior executives without power”) to describe the trio. He helped DiMuzio write his memoir, *Tales From the Cymbal Bag*.

After retiring from Yamaha, Coffin was a contributor to *Drum Business* magazine, editor of the drumset column in the Percussive Arts Society journal *Percussive Notes*, a marketing consultant, presenter of music business seminars sponsored by NAMM, secretary of the PAS executive committee, and a published fiction writer. He played on and produced a CD, *The Seasons of Our Lives*, and was interim symphonic band conductor at California State University in San Bernardino.

Outside the music business, Coffin was an avid Sherlock Holmes fan. He wrote and edited a newsletter for a branch of the Baker Street Irregulars that he founded, which was made up entirely of drummers. The group was called the Frenzied Hands (a phrase from one of the Holmes stories), and its members included Peter Erskine, Ed Soph, and Ed Shaughnessy.

In 1999 Coffin received the President’s Industry Award from the Percussive Arts Society, and in 2005 he received the Outstanding PAS Supporter Award.

“Jim was a renaissance man,” says Ed Soph, who endorsed Premier drums when Coffin was at Selmer and then followed Jim to Yamaha. “He was a player, an educator who wrote a foundational percussion methods text, an astute businessman, and a Baker Street Irregular. Jim instilled trust by simply being



himself—a good person with a wonderful sense of humor, genuinely devoted to promoting a product without pandering to the lowest common denominator. Jim upheld standards of educational excellence and integrity that are still the benchmarks for those lucky enough to have known him.”

Rick Mattingly



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Benny Goodman

The Famous 1938 Carnegie Hall Jazz Concert

It was the floor tom heard round the world, Gene Krupa's call to revolution: "Drummers to the fore!"

By January 16, 1938, the time of this Benny Goodman Carnegie Hall concert, Gene Krupa had already introduced the extended drum solo to jazz, and his star status had helped elevate the role of drummers. But this famed performance truly sealed the deal. Krupa's dynamic solo on "Sing, Sing, Sing (With a Swing)" and band-driving command throughout the night remain landmarks in drumming history. More important, the concert marked a turning point, a confluence of historical firsts that opened doors for the future of jazz itself.

Today it's difficult to comprehend a bygone attitude that questioned the notion of a jazz performance at Carnegie. But seventy-seven years ago, many dismissed the event as a publicity stunt, while hardened purists hissed "Sacrilège!" The hallowed hall, they contended, was a firmament for the likes of Toscanini and Horowitz, not brash "dancehall bands." Before Goodman's appearance, orchestra leader Paul Whiteman had incorporated jazz elements into his formally arranged pieces. But Whiteman's music was a staid affair, sans improvisation, bearing no comparison to the vital jazz that Goodman, "the King of Swing," brought to the hall.

That evening, Goodman strode onto

Hot Stuff

"Sing, Sing, Sing" The granddaddy of drum features. Krupa's trademark visceral, syncopated floor tom beats rock the bowels of Carnegie. At the finale, his snare power triplets provide a setup to the outro brass shouting—but Krupa surprisingly keeps it up, explosively triplet-ing right over the brass lines.

"I Got Rhythm" Driving the quartet, Krupa starts with breakneck-tempo brushes and builds to a raucous ending, goading Lionel Hampton and Teddy Wilson in a percolating game of chicken. Krupa underpins the bass-less group with his speedy feathered bass drum.

"Sensation Rag" In a medley outlining jazz history, Krupa is caught in a rare instance performing Dixieland style, playing on rims and laying down rudimental street beats.

the stage, resplendent in tails, and his big band swung into "Don't Be That Way." Initially the ensemble seems a tad reserved. But most likely they're intentionally building suspense. Krupa swings smoothly and slyly prods the band, dropping unexpected bass bombs during the verse. On his first big drum break, Krupa suddenly unleashes fast, straight 16ths on the snare, and the audience reacts with excitement; the sold-out house is clearly raring for the band to let it rip. After a repeated ensemble decrescendo, Krupa sets up the outro with blazing force and brings the band home hard with four on the floor. From there, the concert steams up and Krupa emerges a hero.

Throughout the diverse program, Krupa leads the way with various ensembles, igniting a calfskin Slingerland kit that boasts a bass drum painted with "BG" and his own "GK" shield—a reinforcement of his central role. In addition to the orchestra numbers, Krupa is featured with Goodman's famous trio, including pianist Teddy Wilson, and quartet, with vibraphonist Lionel Hampton. Also included is an extended jam segment featuring members of the Count Basie and Duke Ellington bands. Krupa accompanies the guests and defers to Basie's elegant piano style, approaching the kit with an appropriately smoother, subtler edge.

The so-called "killer diller" finale, prompting two encores, is reserved for "Sing, Sing, Sing." Goodman understood that Krupa would bring the house down, but the stickman does more than that: He launches the night straight into the history books.

Amazingly, the recording wasn't issued until 1950. Promotional releases explained the delay with a sugary fabrication, telling tales of tapes forgotten in the closet and later discovered by Goodman's daughter. But the reality involved roadblocks from tangled contractual dealings with inter-label guest musicians and union complications. When the album finally hit the market, it generated more firsts: the first double LP and the first million-seller (plus) for Columbia.

Following its original release, the



The Famous 1938 Carnegie Hall Jazz Concert

Don't Be That Way • Sometimes I'm Happy • One O'Clock Jump • Sensation Rag • I'm Coming Virginia • When My Baby Smiles at Me • Shine • Blue Reverie • Life Goes to a Party • Honeysuckle Rose • Body and Soul • Avalon • The Man I Love • I Got Rhythm • Blue Skies • Loch Lomond • Blue Room • Swingtime in the Rockies • Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen • China Boy • Stompin' at the Savoy • Dizzy Spells • Sing, Sing, Sing (With a Swing) • If Dreams Come True • Big John's Special

Benny Goodman and His Orchestra, Benny Goodman Trio and Quartet, with Gene Krupa on drums, plus guest artists (original recording produced by George Avakian, 1999 reissue produced by Phil Schaap)

recording was shamelessly sliced, diced, and sonically messed with for decades. Jazz scholar/producer Phil Schaap sought out the original acetates and restored the entire concert for 1999's Columbia/Legacy two-CD release. Schaap wisely chose not to suppress surface noise in exchange for maintaining the original ambiance. It's a scratchier listen but far more authentic and alive. Plus you can hear the drums better!

Following the famed concert, jazz bands, having been acknowledged with the "legitimacy" they deserved, regularly graced Carnegie Hall and similar institutions. Some say Krupa sat at the intersection of history. But more accurately, he helped *make* that history. Less than two months after that night, Krupa left Goodman and formed his own successful big band. His mother-of-pearl "BG" Slingerland kit is on display at the Smithsonian.

Jeff Potter





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The Gremlin



“My friends kept teasing me that my kit was so big that it should have its own Facebook page,” Ronnie Lee of Windham, Maine, says, “so we made it happen. The kit took me four years to complete.”

“The Gremlin” sits on an 8'x8' riser and consists of twelve drums, fourteen cymbals, four e-drums, and three e-cymbals. The centerpiece of the rig is a Pearl Vision Birch kit and Sabian cymbals, on a Pearl Icon rack.

“What makes the Gremlin unique and actually very playable,” Lee explains, “is that if you stripped away the left and right sides and the back, it’s basically just a standard Bonham-ish kit—one up,

two down. That’s what I started with. I just ended up building all around it to create what it is today.”

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