

Future

THE MAGAZINE FOR DRUMMERS

MAY
2015 | 241

RHYTHM

Zildjian, Sakae,
Roland and Sonor
gear reviewed

EXCLUSIVE
VIDEO
DRUM LESSON
WITH
MIKE!

From rock star to tuition pioneer

Mike Johnston

Fusing tradition & technology to
make you a better drummer

MINI KIT REVOLUTION

Expert advice on small set-ups

Master essential Big Band drumming techniques

MOONIE, RINGO & KELTNER

Inside The Who
drummer's solo album

PLUS

Bill Stewart **JOHN SCOFIELD**

Josh Macintyre **MARMOZETS**

Ali Richardson **BLEED FROM WITHIN**

LEARN TO PLAY

WEATHER REPORT 'BIRDLAND'
SWINGING A GROOVE
ONE-HANDED DISCO
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HELLO!



Cover image: Robert Downs

The future of drum education is here...



Every month *Rhythm* is packed full of interviews with, and features on, drummers that we love playing at various levels of musicianship and success. These drummers fall into two camps: those who are self-taught, learning by ear from their heroes and evolving their personal style, and the players who swore by lessons, seeing great value in the one-to-one learning environment, having their playing unpicked by educators with a keen eye and honing their technique before taking what they've learned in their own direction. Neil Peart, Vinnie Colaiuta and Steve Smith would regularly visit world-renowned educator Freddy Gruber and the work clearly paid off.

Cover star Mike Johnston never felt like a naturally gifted drummer. Still, he forged a successful career as a rock drummer, but his enthusiasm was for teaching - identifying areas of development in a drummer, and fixing them. This led him to harness the power of the web and start teaching a global audience. It's been a long time since there's been a name that can comfortably be uttered in the same breath as Gruber or Chapin but, as technology has morphed the traditional drum lesson format, Johnston is taking the torch forward and making thousands of better drummers in the process. We got his inspiring story and his predictions for the future of drum education, and Mike even found the time to shoot an exclusive video lesson, just for *Rhythm* readers!

We also have interviews with Josh Macintyre (Marmozets), Bill Stewart (John Scofield) and Ali Richardson (Sylosis/Bleed From Within), plus Alan Clayson takes you inside Keith Moon's only solo album and Pete Cater continues his Big Band drumming series.

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THIS MONTH'S EXPERTS



CHUCK PARKER

Chuck is an LA-based freelance drummer/writer. His long-held passion for drums extends to playing, teaching and writing about drums. This month Chuck met drum educator Mike Johnston, and learned about Mike's teaching philosophy and passion for making better drummers of us all (p26)!



ALAN CLAYSON

Pop historian Alan has written around 30 books including *Backbeat* - subject of a film about the Beatles. This month Alan relates the story behind *Two Sides Of The Moon*, Keith Moon's only solo album, on which Moon roped in the likes of Ringo and Jim Keltner for drum duties. Turn to page 48.



PETE CATER

UK drummer/bandleader Pete Cater has been firing up big bands since the late 1970s. Pete is best known for leading The Pete Cater Big Band, and he also teaches and appears regularly at clinics and drum shows. This month he presents part 2 of his Beginner's Guide to Big Band Drumming (p44).

PLAYLIST PUMPING ON OUR STEREO...



FUTURE USER

#STEROIDSORHEROIN

New project from Rage Against The Machine bass beast Tim Commerford. It's politically charged, heavily electronic, and the programmed beats are fat. 'Mountain Lion' is an office favourite.



MARK KNOPFLER

TRACKER

Another fine slice of drumming from session ace Ian Thomas. Lead single 'Beryl' has a Straits feel to it with Thomas laying it down in style.



HALESTORM

INTO THE WILD LIFE

We're big fans of Arejay Hale here and this is his most assured drum performance yet. Check out a full interview next issue...

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The story behind his only solo album



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BILL STEWART
The US jazz star on his technique and sound



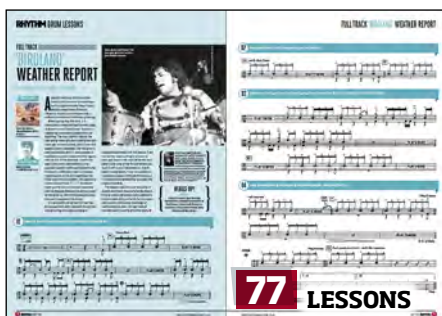
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BUYER'S GUIDE
The 10 best bespoke 'Super League' kits



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77 LESSONS



95 GEAR REVIEWS



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Peter Erskine



"Why TAMA? Why now?"

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TAMA STAR is, in my opinion, the finest drumset being made today. STAR sound. STAR sing. They make me play differently: more relaxed, yet more exciting. Happier, more confident and adventurous. STAR makes drumming fun.

These drums are THAT GOOD."

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visit tama.com



BEAT!

PEOPLE | MUSIC | GEAR

HIGHLIGHTS



9 WELCOME BACK
Shannon Forrest returns as Toto's touring drummer



10 TOOLKIT
Incorporating double-strokes into your time playing

TEMPESTA'S NEW FAMILY

Cult drummer joins Anthrax man for Motor Sister

■ To mark the occasion of Scott Ian turning 50, the Anthrax guitarist and his wife Pearl assembled a group of friends to play songs by their favourite band Mother Superior at Scott's party.

Mother Superior's guitarist and singer Jim Wilson joined Scott, Pearl, Armored Saint's Joey Vera and The Cult's John Tempesta in resurrecting Wilson's old repertoire. "It went so well, we were like, this is so cool, we had so much fun, we should do a record," says Tempesta. The result is the album *Ride* by the newly christened Motor Sister.

"Within a few weeks we were in the studio and we recorded a live record in two days, 12 tracks. You can't even get drum sounds in two days!" says Tempesta. "I've been there before, 'God, how long does it take to get a freaking drum sound?' People just spend too much time and waste too much money. When you get capable people that know what they're doing, they should be able to knock it out real quick, such as Jay Rushton who did the record and is extremely talented."

The aim was to capture the live energy of the five musicians playing together the way they had at the party. "It was full force," says Tempesta. "We're just feeding off each other. It was such a great vibe, really magical." Tempesta used his Tama Starclassic maple kit. "It's a Bonzo set-up, 24", 13", 16", 18", my snare, ride, hi-hats, a few crashes and that's it, man," says the drummer who battered his Tama JT Signature snare in the studio. I used the Remo Emperor X head, it sounded so great the more we played it, we didn't change the head once. The whole session, 12 tracks, a couple of takes for each track, we didn't change it. The producer was like, 'Don't change that head! It sounds so good!' It also gives you that real fatness out of the drum."

Unusually for this day and age, there were no click tracks on the session. "There are songs on the record which speed up naturally, which I dig," says Tempesta. "When you listen back to the old-school stuff, you're capturing the feel and that's what we went for. We ran the songs first - okay, we've rehearsed it, let's just go." It always helps to have a great bassist too. "I love Joey, he falls right in the pocket, such a groove player," he says. "When we're jamming we look at each other and just smile. When you lock in the bass and drums like that, there's nothing better." **R**

MOTOR SISTER LIVE

Although everyone involved is busy with their regular gigs, Motor Sister made their live debut in New York in February. "We had one rehearsal in LA and then one in New York. We just went for it," says Tempesta. "The crowd was amazing. I couldn't expect anything better than that."



Motor Sister with John Tempesta (right)



"When we're jamming we look at each other and just smile," says John of playing with Motor Sister



20 REVIEWS

New stuff from Ringo, Steve Gadd, Halestorm and more





Eddie Throver (second from left) with Lower Than Atlantis

LTA HIT THE ROAD

UK tour and 1D sessions for Lower Than Atlantis drummer Eddy Throver

■ It's been quite the journey for Brit rockers Lower Than Atlantis since drummer Eddy Throver last graced the pages of *Rhythm* back in 2012.

They've scored their highest-charting album, 2014's self-titled Sony debut, for starters. Today, as the band prepares to go out on a long-awaited headline UK tour, Throver tells us he felt a weight of expectation recording the album. "We had a lot to prove, mainly to ourselves. We rushed the previous album [2012's *Changing Tune*] and we weren't happy with it and a lot of stuff went on. [On the new album] we didn't want to pigeonhole ourselves, when we were writing, if it sounded good we went with it. It's all worked out, 'Here We Go' has sold more copies than any of our other songs put together."

The album's success has coincided with

some serious globe trotting. When *Rhythm* speaks to Throver he's just back from the band's mini-trek on Australia's Soundwave festival. Before heading off Down Under, LTA also managed to squeeze in a support slot with A Day To Remember which took them the length and breadth of the UK.

"We were a bit sceptical about that tour because they're a lot heavier than us but I think the magic of LTA is that we can play with lots of different bands. We toured America with Asking Alexandria and Emmure, that was pretty ridiculous! In LTA we love the fight, we love the thrill of winning people over. It makes you perform better and keeps you on your toes. We hadn't supported anyone for a long time before the ADTR tour so it was refreshing to go out and win people over."

Throver also reveals that he's facing another fight - breaking into the cutthroat pop session world.

"About a year ago I did a couple of

LTA ON THE ROAD

Lower Than Atlantis' UK tour kicks off in Cardiff and runs until 23 April. They're also set to play Slam Dunk festival in May and Nass and Boardmasters festivals this summer.

sessions for 5 Seconds of Summer and I did some for One Direction as well. That was really good to see how different producers work. I was recording everything separately - kick, snare, hats and all of that stuff. It was strange. I love a natural feel when I play and recording like that takes that away a little, but it was wicked. I've done some sessions for film music and other artists as well, I love it.

"The producer might not even play you the whole track, they'll play you half the track and you're expected to know what's coming and what to do. It's on a new level that I haven't experienced before, you've got to be on the ball and if you're not they'll get someone else in. That is refreshing and makes me want to get better as a drummer. It's relit that fire, I love practising every single day. I met Travis Barker a couple of years ago and he said he still practises a couple of hours a day. If he's still practising then there's no excuse for anyone not to practise!" **R**

WEL.COME BACK

SHANNON FORREST TOTO

Nashville ace and Toto's new touring drummer

How did you get the call for the Toto tour?

"That one goes back quite a while. Being in Nashville I met up with David Hungate [*Toto* bass player] in 1993. He and I worked on and off over the years and have always had a great relationship. The guys from Toto were inducted into the Musicians Hall Of Fame and through David Hungate I was asked to sit in Jeff Porcaro's spot for that induction. So that was the real official meeting when we played together and that was in 2010. From that I did some recording with Boz Scaggs that David Paich was involved in, so we kept that door open. One thing led to the next and there we were."

Have you had to learn a lot of Toto's music for the gig?

"Because Jeff Porcaro was my favourite drummer growing up and still is, I know most all of the music that he played just because it was such a part of my development and my youth. I'm familiar with a fair amount of the stuff they did with Simon [*Phillips*] but I don't know it quite as deeply. They give us a good idea

of what the set is going to be before we go into rehearsal, so I'm not privy to that yet but I know the hits are going to be there and a few songs off the new album, one of them being their single 'Orphan'. I want to leave the rest to be a surprise. I'll get a heads up.

"It's not like I have to know 200 songs front-to-back. I don't even think the guys know the entire catalogue if they were asked to play them but we do go through things at soundcheck. They have people in and they take requests so there is an expectation that you have familiarity with the full body of work that they've produced, but I don't have to know every single twist and turn thankfully, because their music is pretty sophisticated and it's a tall order if you were expected to know every single song."

Is it tricky playing Jeff's famous half-time shuffle in 'Rosanna'?

"It's really funny - having played the sessions that I've done in Nashville, for a long time that was a limited musical scope of what you would run into. When



Shannon Forrest is stepping into some big shoes with Toto

ON TOUR

Toto are touring the UK in May, visiting Glasgow (21 May), Manchester (25 May) and London (26 May).

I was a kid, those half-time shuffles were my favourite thing to play, and I've probably played them in the recording studio about five times in 25 years. It just doesn't come around very often. Songs have to be written around that groove. The beauty of playing with Toto is that I'm finally getting to play it."

What reception is the band receiving on tour?

"We were sharing the stage last year, it was a co-headlining thing, and the reaction to Toto was fabulous. Man, the Toto guys get people up out of their seats every single night. It's just amazing the response to the guys and those songs, it transcends the audience." **R**

THIS MONTH AT RHYTHMMAGAZINE.CO.UK

Highlights from the online home of the UK's best-selling drum magazine

STIX ZADINIA

Steel Panther's larger-than-life drummer took some time out ahead of the band's sold-out UK tour to share the secrets of packing out venues.



EDM DRUMMING

Want to know the tricks of drumming for an electronic dance outfit? Here, EDM drum guru Andy Gangadeen plus Beanie from Rudimental, Nathan 'Tugg' Curran and more tell you how.



THOMAS LANG

Bamboozled by stick tricks? Then check out this lesson from Thomas Lang as the session ace shows you how to twirl your sticks.



TRAVIS BARKER

The classic albums that have shaped the career of one of the drum world's brightest stars - from pop punk to hip-hop via solo records and more.

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DRUMMER'S TOOL KIT

DOUBLE-STROKE GROOVES

Incorporating double-strokes into your time-playing



YOUR TUTOR

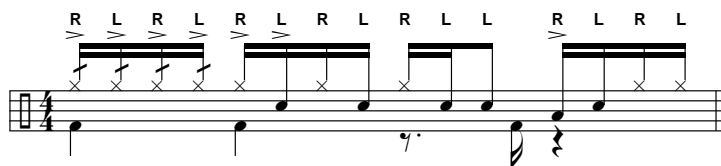
PETE RILEY
p.riley@mac.com

Example 1 begins with a 10-stroke roll on beat 1. It's worth remembering that any roll, in its basic format, will begin with the double-strokes and end with either a single accent, in the case of odd number rolls (5, 7, 9 etc), or with two accents in the even rolls (6, 10 etc). Example 2 features a six-stroke roll on beat 1 while Ex. 3 uses five-stroke rolls which move hand-to-hand; these work well in conjunction with the bass drum which follows the accented notes.

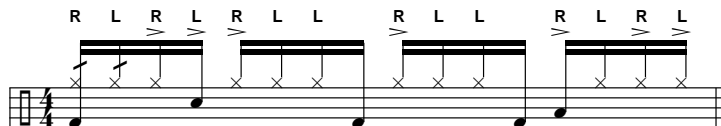
When practising double-strokes it can be effective to develop some dynamic contrast between the volume of the double-strokes and the accents so that the accents jump out. Playing cleanly articulated double-strokes will require the second note in each hand to be played by snapping the stick back into the hand using the fingers. Otherwise if reliant solely upon the stick bouncing after the first note, the second note will be quieter resulting in a sloppy sound. **R**



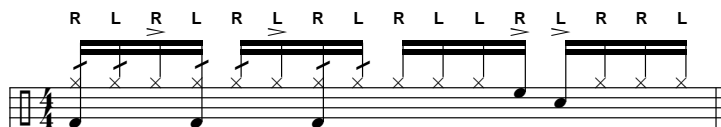
01 A 10-stroke roll on beat 1 with the first of the accents played on the hi-hats and the second played on the snare.



02 Example 2 uses a six-stroke roll on beat 1, again with the first accent played on the hi-hats and the second on the snare.



03 Hand-to-hand five-stroke rolls played on the hi-hats. Notice how the bass drum follows the accented note in either hand.



There are plenty of chances to see Jason Bowld live at clinics and on the road with PWEI this year.

Busy Bowld

RHYTHM TUTOR HITS THE ROAD FOR CLINICS AND MORE

■ As if being a *Rhythm* expert tutor wasn't enough to fill up his time, Jason Bowld is looking at a jam-packed 2015.

First up he has a brace of clinic dates this month. Jason will perform at Cirencester Primary School, Gloucestershire on 9 April. There he promises an evening filled with high-energy drumming and plenty of useful, educational tips and detailed handouts of some of the styles that Jason plays. These include metal, drum'n'bass, linear approaches and world rhythms.

Tickets for the show cost £8 and are available by contacting timd-hdrums@hotmail.co.uk or 07886 037014.

From there, Jason, who made his name at the kit for the likes of Pitchshifter and Bill Bailey, will then perform a free clinic at the Access To Music event on 11 April. Held at Drill Hall in Lincoln, the day will also feature music workshops, DJ masterclasses and student performances.

And that's not all for Jason. He also has more, as-yet-unconfirmed, clinics in the works for the year ahead and he heads out on the road with Pop Will Eat Itself in May. The 10-date tour kicks off in Leicester on 22 May and runs through Manchester, Newcastle, Derby, Bristol, Southampton, London, Norwich and Leamington Spa. **R**

Classic track

KILL THE GUY WITH THE BALL STEVE VAI

Deen Castronovo remembers tackling a tough track

Was it tough recording 'Kill The Guy With The Ball'?

"Oh my god, what a task that was! And Steve [Vai] was so patient with me; thank god that he has that kind of patience. Since I don't read music, he told me repetition is the key, here's the song, take it home and keep listening to it. I listened to everything he wanted me to do. He said, 'I want this crash with this splash cymbal, and I want this floor tom right here.' He would have me do things and go, 'No, that wasn't right, try it again.' That was the hardest track I've done in my life."

Where did you record?

"It was Steve's home studio. He's got a smoking studio in West Hollywood. I did that in '92 or '93 I think, it was a while ago. We'd go up to his house and take an entire day to do a song. Pop songs are simple, I can do those all day long. I can do those

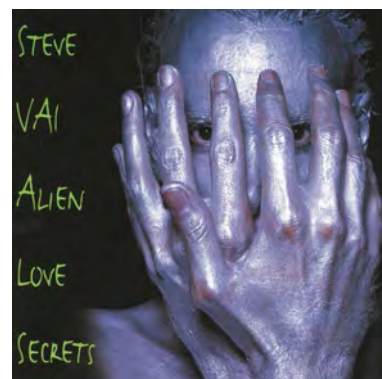
watching TV. This one, I had to really focus and Steve's a genius. I used a Sonor kit, I don't remember the actual model, it's been so long."

Did Steve give much direction in terms of the sound he was after on the track?

"Oh yeah, he had that vision and I had to do

"Since I don't read music, Steve Vai told me repetition is the key, here's the song, take it home and keep listening to it"

my best to not just find the vision, but envelop myself in what he wanted. I could have done it a certain way, which is hi-hat, snare, and double bass, but he had certain colours that he wanted on each hit. He's worked with Terry Bozzio many times and I think that's what he was looking for, the



way Terry colours things. I did my best and I think it came out amazing but boy was that tough!"

Did you record it in pieces or go for a full take?

"I would learn what he wanted in sections and then put them all together. But once we got it down we went in and tried to do it in one take and I think we got it in one after about seven hours, it took that long. When I got the finished copy of it, I was mind-boggled. It was like, man, I did that? Once it was done, I saw what he was looking for and the colours he was looking for and it all fit. It was right." **R**

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■ With a deluge of talent flooding the mighty Donington Park this year, Europe's biggest rock and metal festival Download will once again host some of this summer's most electrifying live music - and you can be there as we have tickets to give away.

Metal heavyweights Slipknot will storm the stage in all their masked glory on Friday, while stadium rock giants Muse will make their Donington debut on Saturday.

Closing the show, Kiss will reignite their long-standing love affair with Donington, and that's just the tip of the iceberg. Across the three-day extravaganza all kinds of drumming talent will be on show. Friday hosts Judas Priest, Clutch, Black Stone Cherry, Hellyeah and more. On Saturday it is the turn of Faith No More, A Day To Remember, Marilyn Manson and Black Veil Brides. The final day sees a bill featuring Mötley Crüe, Slash, Lamb Of God and many more.

We have two pairs of weekend tickets up for grabs. All you need to do to stand a chance of winning is head over to <http://bit.ly/downloadcomp> and answer a simple question. There you will also find full competition terms and conditions. The competition closes 4 May 2015. Check out www.downloadfestival.co.uk for line-up updates and more info on the festival. **R**

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FULL DETAILS ON P74



© Anna Webber

"The only way to develop your ear is to get in a room with other players and create music," advises Matt

MY TOP 5 TIPS ON...

JAMMING

By Matt Abts (Gov't Mule)

1 HAVE A JAZZ MINDSET

"On our first record there is a song called 'Trane' influenced by John Coltrane and it's improvisational. Jazz players were the original jammers in that there was a lot of improvisation involved and that's what we wanted to do in Gov't Mule. We were big fans of John Coltrane and I was influenced by a lot of the great jazz drummers like Elvin Jones and Tony Williams. I didn't necessarily have to play like them but had to have their approach."

2 START WITH A SONG

"Gov't Mule was started on a premise, we wanted to have good songs but without being too structured, so that when we played them live we could take them to different places every night. Warren [Haynes] and Woody were in the Allman Brothers so we tried to take that approach. There are some bands that do a lot of jamming but there is not much of a song. It should start with a song and then take it from there."

3 MOVE AS A UNIT

"You have to listen to everybody very closely and move as a unit, which is easier when there are only three players. The trio format is very good for jamming. We learned very quickly how to improvise

together. It was part of the chemistry of Gov't Mule to begin with and it fell together very quickly. We all followed each other, it didn't necessarily mean that one person was leading and you were following. We did it as a unit."

4 DEVELOP YOUR EAR

"To develop your ear, you have to play with musicians in a live setting. That was how we all learned growing up. These days there is not that much going on with younger people. A lot of people do things on the computer and they trade files and they are never actually sitting in a room face-to-face with another player. The only way you can develop your ear is to get in a room with other players and create music."

5 FOLLOW YOUR INSTINCTS

"Warren and I have been playing together for so long, over 20 years, everything is almost second nature. We don't do a lot of pre-production. You can overanalyse it, but we run on the assumption that the first idea is the best and go along with it and just use your musical instincts to guide you. Once we take those songs that we recorded and do them live, anything can happen. We don't draw lines on what we can't do." **R**

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NEW FX CYMBALS

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Zildjian introduces five new effects cymbals to satisfy all of your stacking and effects needs. The new 10" and 12" fx Spiral Stackers are paper thin and stack well with practically any other cymbal to get all those quick attack/quick decay sounds you've been looking for. Or check out the fx Oriental China "Trash" in 8" and 10" sizes and the 7.5" Volcano Cup Zil-Bel, and create your own signature sounds.

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On their entry into the market back in the early 2000s, Chinese company Stagg were seen by many as just another budget brand. A decade-and-a-half on and they have proven to be much more than that, as can be gleaned by taking a look at our review of their Sensa line back in our January issue. Back then we were wowed by the range's versatility and quality at budget-ish prices, and it looks like they're following a similar theme with these intriguing additions to the Sensa family.

The Orbis range is Stagg's major addition for 2015, and after hearing them in action it's easy to see why. The Sensa Orbis cymbals are immediately attention grabbing thanks to the holes which pepper this set of six. And those holes aren't just for

cosmetic value, not a chance. They help give the cymbals their distinctive yet intriguing sounds.

Play any of the three crashes in the Orbis line and you'll be treated to a beautifully explosive sound, truly trashy and china-like. Okay, so if the crashes are china-like, what are the chinas like?! The three Orbis chinas are a joy to the ears, raw and fast, but also deeply musical and versatile.

The last decade or so has been a period of great growth for Stagg, and we reckon 2015 is shaping up to be a big year thanks to these new beauties. **R**

SIZES

The Orbis range is made up of three crashes and three chinas – 16", 18" and 20"

PERFORATIONS

Each cymbal in the Orbis range features eight holes

PRICE

You can add Stagg's Orbis crashes to your set-up for £97, £134 and £191 respectively for the 16", 18" and 20" cymbals. The chinas, meanwhile, will set you back £110 (16"), £179 (18") and £249 (20")



DRUMFORGE

\$279 (approx £180) www.joesturgis.com/drumforge

■ Drum libraries and sample packs are a dime a dozen right now, with new products released on almost a weekly basis. So to stand out you have to be pretty special. Drumforge certainly has a CV to pique our interest. Developed with Asking Alexandria producer Joey Sturgis, this program is compatible with Trigger, Drumagog and the latest versions of Kontakt and features dozens of pre-built kits. You can also put your own together from a stunning array of tom, snare and cymbal choices. These options include kits from the '40s right up to today, so there's something in there for everyone.

PROTECTION RACKET AAA DELUXE CYMBAL VAULT

£174.99 www.protectionracket.com

■ The guys at Protection Racket know all about how important it is to safeguard your cymbals - after all, your beloved metals can be eye-wateringly expensive and are potentially susceptible to damage on and off stage. Enter the Protection Racket AAA Deluxe Cymbal Vault. The case features eight internal fleece compartments, ultra-durable zips, waterproof luggage tags and ProGrip handles. So there is absolutely no excuse for damaged cymbals ever again.

FIREFLY DRUM KEY

£14 www.brdistribution.co.uk

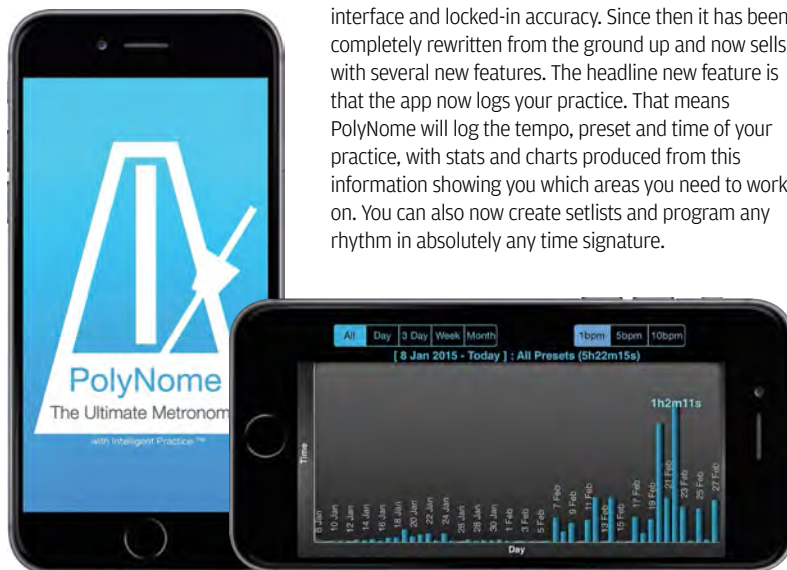
■ When it comes to tuning drums there are two factors that are absolutely paramount - speed and precision. But how can you have both? Well, the new Firefly key aims to deliver just that. The key's silent ratcheting system allows players to dive into the intricate nuances of tuning their drums, while its ergonomic handle aids speedy adjustments. Thomas Lang is a big fan, saying the key is the best and fastest way to tune his kit - which is not a bad endorsement at all.



POLYNOME

£1.49 www.polynome.net

■ We reviewed metronome app PolyNome back on its release in 2012 and were impressed by its no-frills interface and locked-in accuracy. Since then it has been completely rewritten from the ground up and now sells with several new features. The headline new feature is that the app now logs your practice. That means PolyNome will log the tempo, preset and time of your practice, with stats and charts produced from this information showing you which areas you need to work on. You can also now create setlists and program any rhythm in absolutely any time signature.



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We Are Harlot. He is drummer Bruno Agra (left)



© Travis Shim



INTRODUCING...

WE ARE HARLOT

Big expectations and bigger choruses from hotly tipped transatlantic rockers

When singer Danny Worsnop left metalcore stars Asking Alexandria to front a new band playing classic hard rock, eyebrows were raised. But drummer Bruno Agra is ready to prove that We Are Harlot deserve all the hype surrounding their arrival. The sticksman spent three years with sleaze rockers Zodiac Mindwarp And The Love Reaction and cut albums with Finland's

the same way. Genius drummer, straight shooter. Big fat groove, ton of personality and huge sound. I try to have that sort of approach not only when I'm drumming, but also when I'm writing or producing. No second thoughts, just follow my instincts."

The album was recorded with producer Kato Khandwala. "He loves what he does and understands classic rock'n'roll, and the guy is a hell of an engineer too. If I'm a good engineer, he's James Bond." Agra wasn't content to find just one kit sound for the album.

off, tune up, tune down... whatever we needed to do to get the right sound for each track."

Inspired by his musical heroes, Agra always strives to serve the song. "All the music giants, all the classic rock bands - Beatles, Stones, Who, Queen - their legacy remains because it was always about the song," he says. "We don't get stoned and jam three chords for hours and hours. That's just tunnel vision stupidity. It doesn't matter what the guitar is playing, or what's the drum groove. If you can't tell a story, you shouldn't even be playing in the first place."

The band will hit the UK this summer at Download. While they may be raising hell on stage, Agra uses a click live, a holdover from years of playing sessions. "It's like I'm tracking at the studio because I have the click on, but at the same time I have thousands of kids screaming in front of me. It's a trip because I can't hear much of what's going on outside with my in-ears on, that's why I usually snap the left one off. I want to hear all the wildness. I want to feel that high energy. That's what it's all about." **R**

"It doesn't matter what the guitar is playing, or what's the drum groove. If you can't tell a story, you shouldn't even be playing in the first place"

Revolution Renaissance before moving to the States where he met Worsnop. With guitarist Jeff George and bassist Brian Weaver, they set to work writing We Are Harlot's self-titled debut.

Agra picks Keith Moon as his drumming idol, saying, "He was that guy that only sees green lights on his way. Pedal to the metal. No fear. Every gift comes with a curse, he just couldn't find his balance. Bonham was

"We treated each song differently. I hate prefabricated drum sounds. So does Kato. There was no 'sweet spot'. Every song had a different sweet spot. We moved kits, changed bass drums, snares, cymbals; tape on, tape

Sounds like: Buckcherry, The Darkness, Crazy Lixx **Key kit:** Tama drums, Sabian cymbals, Vic Firth sticks
Download: 'Flying Too Close To The Sun' **Go to:** www.weareharlot.com

STONEGHOST

Old school sounds meet modern groove metal

Battering the drums for London's groove metal merchants Stoneghost, Cris Finnis was inspired to pick up the sticks by Mudvayne's Matt McDonough and Tool's Danny Carey, who he calls "the daddy of drums, his use of African rhythms and originality are awe-inspiring". Stoneghost's debut, *New Age Of Old Ways*, was produced by

music," he says. "The pedals can sound quite clicky these days, I wanted more of a powerful thudding sound. Russ was very helpful and willing to work tirelessly on creating the sound we were looking for. You don't want to listen back and regret anything."

Last year saw the band make their Bloodstock Festival debut. "The atmosphere was incredible," says

"Danny Carey is the daddy of drums in my opinion. His use of African rhythms and originality are awe-inspiring"

Russ Russell, who has worked with Napalm Death and Dimmu Borgir, but Finnis wanted a rockier kit sound.

"A lot of metal music is in some ways over-produced and it takes away from that classic sound that I loved hearing when I first got into heavy

Finnis. "It was easily the biggest and best stage we've played and at the time it was incredibly daunting, but the adrenaline manifested into excitement and passion. I would love to play a stage like that every day! There's nothing like it!" **R**

Sounds like: Mudvayne, Gojira, Lamb Of God
Download: 'Faceless Ghost' **Go to:** www.stoneghostband.com



Stoneghost with drummer Cris Finnis

© Will Ireland



Brandon Burghart and The Midnight Ghost Train

THE MIDNIGHT GHOST TRAIN

More powerful than a steaming locomotive!

■ Rolling out of Topeka, Kansas, The Midnight Ghost Train is a rumbling riff machine driven by heavy blues grooves on brilliant new album *Cold Was The Ground*. The trio (Steve Moss on vocals and guitar, bassist Mike Boyne and drummer Brandon Burghart) took their

name from a Hank Williams song and sound like Tom Waits getting in a bar fight with a stoner rock band. Moss was inspired to start the band when his best friend died in 2007. Their music is alternately menacing, uplifting, damned, and redemptive. **R**

Sounds like: Clutch, Tom Waits, Kyuss
Download: 'Foxhole' **Go to:** www.themidnightghosttrain.com



Nervosa with drummer Pitchu Ferraz

NERVOSA

Metal thrashing madness from sunny Brazil

■ The flame of classic thrash metal is burning bright in Sao Paolo, Brazil thanks to ferocious female power trio Nervosa - singer/bassist Fernanda Lira, guitarist Prika Amaral and Pitchu Ferraz on drums. Ferraz studied music at the Conservatório Musical Souza

Lima and rips into the technically demanding arrangements on their debut, *Enemy Of Yourself*. The band is a fast-rising fixture on the hugely dedicated South American metal scene and will be launching their first assault on Europe this summer. **R**

Sounds like: Testament, Exodus, Coroner
Download: 'Twisted Values' **Go to:** www.nervosaofficial.com

MUSIC.DVDS.BOOKS

THE BEST NEW RELEASES REVIEWED



Ringo is joined on kit duties for the album by his regular All-Starr drummer Gregg Bissonette

RINGO STARR

POSTCARDS FROM PARADISE

★★★★★ CD

Ringo's All-Starr return to record is a bit of alright



Ringo still tends to divide opinion. To some, still clinging to that famous urban myth of Lennon's put-down, he wasn't even the best drummer in the Beatles; to others he's the perfect all-time drummer, the reason they picked up sticks... Equally his

post-Beatles output has been either a) underwhelming or b) undervalued. But who doesn't like 'Photograph'? *Goodnight Vienna* was pretty good too; and go take a look at a list of those with whom he's collaborated musically over the years. If he's not a musical genius, he must be one hell of a muse.

Even now Ringo can command album sessions like a general mustering a mighty army. So here we have an album polished by the likes of Todd Rundgren and Toto's Steve Lukather with guests as accomplished as Peter Frampton, Joe Walsh, Benmont Tench and Dave Stewart.

The album itself kicks off (not brilliantly) with a wistful reminiscence of his pre-Beatles days, 'Rory And The Hurricanes'. It's jaunty but rather plodding pop with a nod to '60s Merseybeat complete with drum break. Things get a little deeper for 'You Bring The Party Down' as Lukather lets rip on guitar in typical style, and Bissonette's drums keep a deep, latin-tinged groove behind Ringo's Wilburys stylings. The title track has an infectious groove and Bowie chorus; there's blues-jams like 'Right Side Of The Road'; second-line funk on the fun 'Bamboula', even a touch of reggae on 'Island In The Sun' - it genre-hops, but it never feels contrived. Throughout, aptly, the drums serve the songs with finesse and skill, and Ringo's voice has never sounded better. Above all, he's having fun. And, frankly, he's earned the right. (CBU)

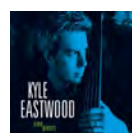
Download: 'You Bring The Party Down'
Go to: www.ringostarr.com

KYLE EASTWOOD

TIMEPIECES

★★★★★ CD

A timeless homage to hard bop



Where Kyle Eastwood's previous albums have covered a broad range of jazz styles, for *Timepieces* his focus is firmly on hard bop. Making his first appearance on an Eastwood album, drummer Ernesto Simpson has the Latin chops for 'Caipirinha' - named after a Brazilian cocktail - but grooves through the infectious 'Prosecco Smile' and swings beautifully on Horace Silver's 'Blowin' The Blues Away'. 'Peace Of Silver', a tribute to the late pianist, is simply gorgeous and Simpson's solo over the vamp is a polyrhythmic delight. While it may be inspired by the jazz of the 1950s, *Timepieces* delivers a vibrant, thrilling experience. (DW)

Download: 'Peace Of Silver'
Go to: www.kyleeastwood.com

HALESTORM

INTO THE WILD LIFE

★★★★★ CD

US rockers come of age



On album three Halestorm make the jump from 'ones for the future' to genuine stars.

Even better, drummer Arejay Hale powers the record from the off. Opener 'Scream' is full of syncopated toms, 'Sick Individual' is led-in by a mini drum solo, and there's plenty of out-of-the-box thinking as Arejay pummels a 32" kick on 'I Like It Heavy' and smashes a sweet-sounding china stack throughout 'Apocalyptic'.

It's not all pedal to the metal though, Arejay carries the mid-tempo 'New Modern Love' and 'Bad Girl's World' with laid-back grooves that prove he can sit in the pocket when required. (RC)

Download: 'Apocalyptic'
Go to: www.halestormrocks.com

CLASSIC ALBUMS FEATURING... Stewart Copeland

1 REGGATTA DE BLANC (1979) THE POLICE



Rim clicks and sweet hi-hat patterns embellish the title track; pop reggae never sounded so cool as on 'Walking On The Moon', replete with tight snare crack and delay. 'Message In A Bottle' has hi-hat triplets, crashes on upbeats and machine-gun fills; it's double tracked to make it sound trickier!

Key Track: 'Message In A Bottle'

2 GHOST IN THE MACHINE (1981) THE POLICE



Stewart embellishes his grooves with all manner of accents; 'Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic' is magic, with a constantly varying hi-hat rhythm made fuller with delay, and intricate ride-bell over the top, a real feat of independence.

Key Track: 'Every Little Thing...'

3 THE GRAND PECKING ORDER (2001) OYSTERHEAD



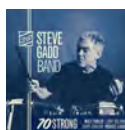
Intensely groovy and sometimes bonkers fusion-y funk metal, with slippery grooves and polyrhythmic beats; Copeland clearly relishing his chance to spar with bass maestro Les Claypool and bring his trademark cymbal skills.

Key Track: 'Little Faces'

STEVE GADD BAND 70 STRONG



Session legend's versatile quintet return



Let's take a moment to honour Steve Gadd, 70 this month. With this follow-up to 2013's *Gadditude*, the drummer-leader offers the sort of faultless, tasteful display that made him the world's most revered session king. It's a cliché to say about drummer-led albums that the emphasis is on showboating for other drummers, but Gadd has nothing to prove and true to form he'll happily play a whole track without a single fill ('Blues For'). This is an instrumental group effort where Steve's multi-talented session pals are

all encouraged to shine: Michael Landau (acoustic, electric guitars), Larry Goldings (Hammond B3, Wurlitzer, Rhodes, accordion), Walt Fowler (trumpet, flugelhorn) and Jimmy Johnson (bass). Gadd chooses his stand-out spots carefully - the typically 6/4 Latin-funk of 'Sly Boots' contains the only drum 'solo'. 'Oh Yeah?' glowers intensely with particularly strident guitar work and brutal backbeats. 'Freedom Jazz Dance' has hip snare grooves, coolly interactive inventions which show Steve still developing new ideas and seeking novel textures. Elsewhere he effortlessly makes the groove so joyfully comfortable, often with brushes, as on 'De Volta Eo Samba', and 'Elegant Squares', which bounces along jauntily in another wholly distinctive Gadd fashion. (GN)

Download: 'Freedom Jazz Dance'

Go to: www.drstevegadd.com

MATTHEW BROMBLEY & DAVID FLETCHER AMBIENT DRUM MICS



Give yourself miking options



I've done a bit of research into drum miking before and found a lot of the info out there goes over my head. This book was able to break down the different overhead and room techniques in a clear, easy to understand way, clearly explaining the benefits and drawbacks of each technique. Plus giving a bit of history on them as well. If you have ventured into recording you'll probably know that close mics are the easy bit, now you have some great starting points for the other mics. The book is interactive with video and audio, unfortunately this means that it's an Apple store ebook only - a shame as I could see it being really useful for the new generation of YouTube drummers and anyone interested in recording drums. Would have been a 4-star book if it was available on multiple devices. (KC)

Extras: N/A

Go to: www.ambientdrummins.com

GAVIN HARRISON CHEATING THE POLYGRAPH



Prog and all that jazz



Five years in the making, *Cheating The Polygraph* sees Gavin Harrison and bassist/arranger Laurence Cottle take music from Porcupine Tree's progressive rock repertoire and adapt it for a big band. This isn't one of those albums where someone takes a rock song, sticks a swing beat underneath it and adds some horns in the chorus. This is a bold new take on this music that is both daring and challenging. The melodies are still there, but they exist in entirely different contexts - the sombre menace of 'The Sound Of Muzak' becomes bold and brassy, while the heavy crunch of 'The Pills I'm Taking' sounds like the impossibly hip theme for a '50s TV cop show. Cottle's arrangements are dazzling, the production is flawless and Harrison swings through the hairpin turns of the demanding compositions. Play this loud. Minds will be blown. (DW)

Download: 'The Pills I'm Taking'

Go to: www.facebook.com/drummergavinharrison



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INBOX

WHAT'S BANGING YOUR DRUM THIS MONTH...



WRITE IN & WIN!

The writer of the Star Letter each month wins an Evans Level 360 drum head and Pro-Mark sticks



UK metallur
Ali Richardson

TIME TO GET EXTREME!

Having been an avid reader since 1994 I can honestly say I've loved every edition, and have learnt so much from your pages.

However, whilst so many styles and genres have been featured over the years there seems to have been a bit of a neglect for the big players in the UK extreme metal scene. Of course this type of music isn't everyone's cup of tea but I'm sure we could all learn a great deal from these guys with an open mind.

People like Nick Barker, Danny Herrera, Ade Stokes and many many more have brought so much to drumming and it would be great to hear from them, hear about their gear, tips etc, etc... Apart from the metal round table a good 10 years ago there seems little you've featured on these guys.

So come on *Rhythm*, I'd like to challenge you to get these guys in editions of the UK's premier drum magazine. They're all playing a fair bit so can't be too hard to track down and interview in your hallowed pages. Here's hoping!

Dan Danby, via email

Thanks Dan - you're right, we may have been remiss in our coverage of some of the undoubtedly fantastic drummers on the extreme metal scene. A few years

RHYTHM IN LYTHAM

Eureka! I've got *Rhythm*! Scouring the shelves in WHS looking for an interesting read I came across *Rhythm* (March 2015). The lead Dave Weckl article, an interview with Clash drummer Topper Headon, plus drum lessons on CD sealed the deal. Back home with a pot of coffee and feet up, I read every page of *Rhythm* 'til my eyes hurt and worked through the CD 'til my brain ached.

I'm not your stereotypical novice drummer - wrong side of 60, female, no tats or piercings! One of my retirement projects was to learn to drum. Two and a half years down the line I've progressed from a practice pad to a cheap and cheerful electronic drum kit. I went on a shopping expedition to Manchester last week and with uncontrollable excitement await delivery of my new Roland TD15KV any day now.

Anton Fig's Top 5 tips on Longevity (March 2015) are pertinent to young and not so young new drummers: "Work hard... keep doing it and keep doing it," and "Keep growing... you need to listen to new guys and you need to want to learn new things." Fig's words of wisdom are so true, and they were echoed by Weckl: "You need 'seat time';"; Tugg: "I'm really open minded. I think it's good to be into everything,"; Topper: "When I started playing the drums it was my new addiction... and I just played every spare moment I could." Interestingly, none mentioned the importance of drum lessons. I believe lessons with a professional are vital to development. I'm indebted to Richard Pells, my first drum teacher in Leicester and, since moving to Lytham St Annes six months ago, continue my drumming education with Glenn Armitage. Two skilful and accomplished drum tutors who have challenged and encouraged me in my pursuit of a level of reasonable skill and competence. Lessons, daily practice, embracing all genres of music to appreciate the diverse talent of drummers out there play a massive part in the learning process.

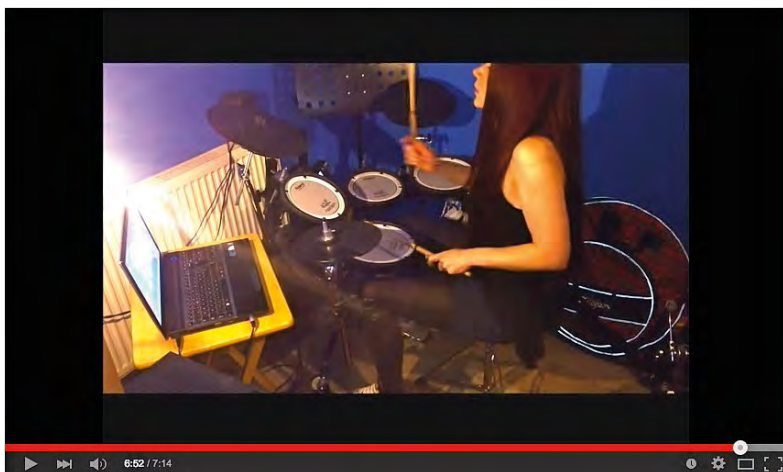
Anyway, must dash - got some dropping-the-accent paradiddles to practise before my next lesson - Glenn's a stickler for rudiments! Already looking forward to next month's issue of *Rhythm* - I feel a subscription coming on!

Sue Massey, Lytham St Annes

*That's just so awesome to hear, Sue. It's truly what drives us here - to provide a mag that drummers of all levels, abilities, ages, etc love to read from cover to cover. And you're right, all of those drummers have truly inspirational things to say and great advice to pass on... all we can say is keep reading for more interviews with great drummers, tuition, gear reviews, etc that we strive to bring you every month. And if you haven't already done so, you can get some great deals on subscribing to *Rhythm*, with print, digital and print-and-digital packages so you need never miss an issue! Check out <http://bit.ly/rhythmmagazine> - and above all, keep up the enthusiasm! - CBU*



Star Letter



Reader Jamie at work playing her cover of Rush's 'Headlong Flight'

ago, we covered quite a few of those guys on a regular basis, and to be honest it felt like we over-did the metallers (you can have too much of a good thing). But as you say it may be time to get in touch with some of the new guys on the scene and see what they have to say for themselves. If it's any help, this month on page 62 we have UK metal star Ali Richardson, who's holding down the drum seat for not one but two top UK metal bands - Sylosis and Bleed From Within. But watch this space, we'll try to bring you some more names at some point soon. - CBU

RUSH COVER SPECIAL, PART 1!

Hello! I'm a female drummer from Scotland, and I was wondering if you'd please share my drum cover of 'Headlong Flight' by the awesome Rush? <http://bit.ly/rushdrumcover1>. Thanks!

Jamie Dunleavy, via Facebook

RUSH COVER SPECIAL PART 2

My name is Federico Maragoni and I would like to bring to your attention this version of 'YYZ' played by two Italian female bass players, Anna Portalupi and Cecilia Nappo, me, Federico Maragoni on drums and Thomas Rocca, keyboards. <http://bit.ly/rushdrumcover2>.

Federico Maragoni, via email

Awesome stuff Jamie, you really nailed it - and sounding good on that TD-4! Judging by the other (also great) covers on your YouTube, you're something of a Neil Peart super-fan! We'd recommend our readers check them out! Good stuff, keep it up! And nice work Federico and

pals, some awesome musicianship all round. I'm sure the Rush boys would be impressed by all your efforts, we certainly were! Keep sending your links to your covers, guys - we're always keen to check them out and share! - CBU

YOU'LL BE GLAD ALL OVER...

I see online there is a magazine *100 Drum Heroes* available for purchase through your magazine. Does this include Dave Clark and an article about him?

Deborah Turner Thomas, via Facebook

Sadly Deb we did not have room to include the fantastic Dave Clark in our 100 Drum Heroes bookazine - though we'd highly recommend you check it out anyway for the ton of greats we did include, with interviews from the pages of Rhythm and some cool photographs of those players! You can still pick it up in print and digitally from <http://bit.ly/rhythmmagazine>. But, some good news! We have a Rhythm Interview with Dave Clark coming in Rhythm next month (June issue), so keep a look out for that - it goes on sale on 5 May! - CBU

TROUBLE BREWING

Thanks for the Troubleshoot Your Drumming issue last month, guys! Some awesome tips from some really cool drummers, particularly loved the stuff by Pete Riley on independence and Pat Garvey on grip, as well as watching the great Drumeo vids on YouTube. One problem - it's going to take me a while to work through this, the more I read it the more I realise areas of my own playing really need some work!

Chris Harris, via email

GET IN TOUCH

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Or send it the old way: The Editor, Rhythm Magazine, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, Somerset BA1 1UA

ON TWITTER

Kit dressed to kill



@RhythmMagazine this is my custom made kit I use in #dressedtokill all my own work mirror ball finish. @MattBlakout

Awesome kit, KISS tribute dude! Matt is the drummer in fantastic KISS-alikes Dressed To Kill, and we're loving his Eric Carr 'Fox' look - and the kit is just beautiful.

Seat of Power



Playing w/Tower of Power on the Journey, Steve Miller Band Tour... @Huckabuck

We love Herman Matthews' pic from the drum seat; he's currently touring with funk legends Tower Of Power.

ON FACEBOOK

We asked: What drummer would you most like to have a lesson with?

Scott Campbell: "Steve Gadd, he wouldn't need sticks or a kit to teach a lifetime of knowledge on playing music."

Mark Connolly: "Bernard Purdie so he can help me perfect that amazing shuffle groove."

Kyle Cullen: "Ash Soan. I'd be happy just watching groove for a couple hours with a notepad and video camera."

Kev Rogers: "Joe Morello, Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa, Louie Bellson, just to have a conversation with these guys would make the ultimate lesson."

Rich Ellis: "Vinnie C... Tony W... Marco M... Dave W..."

WIN! A VK SNARE DRUM WORTH £599!

Up for grabs this month we have a 14"x6½" aluminum shell snare drum from VK Drums. You might recognise it from the cracking review over on page 102.

The drum is hand-built in Sheffield by VK's master craftsman Alan van Kleef and features solid stainless steel turret lugs (20 of them, all made by hand), 4mm-thick single-flanged hoops and a beautiful brushed finish.

Absolutely everything on the drum bar the snare wires and heads are made by Alan. The drum usually sells for £599, but this month we've got one to give away to one lucky reader.

HOW TO ENTER

All you have to do to stand a chance of winning this very special prize is head to <http://bit.ly/vksnare> and answer the question, below:



WHERE IS VK DRUMS BASED?

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- B) Liverpool
- C) Bristol

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Under 18s must obtain parental consent to enter this competition. Answers must be received between 01/04/15 and 04/05/15. The winner will be selected at random from all correct entries received between the relevant dates and will be sent the prize free of charge. Winners will be notified within 28 days of the closing date and will be required to supply details of a UK delivery address. By entering this competition, you consent to us using your personal details to send you information about products and services of Future which may be of interest to you. For full terms and conditions visit www.futurenet.com/futureonline/competitionrules.asp




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COVER FEATURE

MIKE JOHNSTON





MIKE JOHNSTON

MIKE JOHNSTON HAS FOLLOWED A ROUNDABOUT PATH FROM ROCK DRUMMER TO INNOVATIVE EDUCATOR. THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND MIKESLESSONS.COM REVEALS HIS PHILOSOPHIES ON TEACHING AND HIS VISION FOR THE FUTURE

WORDS: **CHUCK PARKER** PHOTOS: **ROBERT DOWNS**

Mike Johnston may not be a household name like many of the drummers that feature on *Rhythm's* covers, but that is changing. His passion for drums and education started at an early age and he pursued the usual path of playing in bands, working and teaching at the local music store and taking private lessons. This led to some success in the rock world with a gold record, world tours and the opportunity to work with other artists. Although he was "making it," something just didn't feel right.

One of his tutors pointed out how passionate Mike was when talking about teaching and education and with that insight, he followed his intuition and transformed himself into a new

version of one of the classic musical archetypes, the drum teacher. It all started when he began posting personal videos he made for his students on the then-fledgling internet site, YouTube.

There can be no question that the way drums are learned and taught has changed radically over the past several years. The advent of new technology combined with the internet has created a rabbit hole of social media and sharing sites for drummers to give to and take from. A vast array of knowledge and material can now be had at our fingertips. The amount of material can be overwhelming. Can *Syncopation* and *Stick Control* still be standards in a new world of streaming services, websites with downloadable content and BluRays with enhanced features? Will there be someone to pick up the torch left by educational icons like Freddy Gruber

and Jim Chapin? Mike was at the dawn of this new medium and his goal is to be that guy.

Even though he is tapped into new technology, he is also tapped into an old-school, personal approach and acknowledges the value of enhancing the new teaching mediums with a touch of tradition and personal one-on-one tutoring. It is the combination of these characteristics that Mike wants to achieve with his site, mikeslessons.com. Traditional, personal instruction with a modern technological twist. He is also just as passionate when he's the one doing the learning. You can be guaranteed that whatever topic is being covered, he has put in the time to exhaustively research and master the subject matter. Mike makes it a point to share that nothing about his drumming came naturally for him and uses this in his teaching

COVER FEATURE

MIKE JOHNSTON



methodology and as a positive example to encourage others. He truly believes that anyone can learn to play if they apply themselves and uses himself as proof. The ability to offer personal, live lessons, with the feature to shop from a wide array of specialised topics in single or group packages are the site's main features, but he wants to be more than that. *Rhythm* met up with Mike at the recent NAMM convention in LA and sat down for a chat in which he tells us about his past, concerns for the present and thoughts on the future.

Tell us about your personal background and exposure to drums and music growing up.

"Drums for me started when I was five or six. I started in school band, playing clarinet. It wasn't working out so well, so I got moved back to the drums. I played bass drum for a year. I was jealous of the girl who got to have drum sticks because I just had a mallet. She got to play suspended cymbal

and snare drum. So, I asked my mom for drum lessons so that I could work my way up, away from the bass drum, and actually have drum sticks. Then, from there I became obsessed with how difficult it was for me to get better. For some reason, I love that I wasn't a natural at it. Nothing came easy, even as a little kid. I had private lessons and my teachers would always say that I wasn't practising, but I was practising four or five hours a day! They just couldn't recognise that I was rhythmically challenged. When you're a kid, you don't know what 'suck' is. You don't know what it's like to be bad at something, you just know if you enjoy it. As bad as I was, I really enjoyed it, so I stuck with it."


Were formal lessons always in the mix?

"Yeah. I started taking lessons when I was five or six. I never stopped until recently, because I didn't have enough time. It was local drum instructors from my home town, Sacramento, California. I had

a great guy named Matt McClain. He introduced me to everything that had pulse and felt good. He was my first 'Yoda'-style teacher, where it was bigger than just showing up to the music shop. That was when I was 13 or 14. My first teacher that I sought out specifically, and decided I wanted to spend five or six years fellowshipping under, was Pete Magadini. He wrote all the books on polyrhythms. I already had a record deal and was having a career in drumming, but if I wanted to do this the rest of my life, I needed some legitimate guidance."

What was your band experience growing up?

"I got in my first band around high school. At 17 years old, I got my first job at a music store. That turned into me teaching at that shop. When I was 21, that band eventually got a major label record deal. They were called Simon Says. We had a three-album deal with Hollywood Records. Through that, that led to me being able to play with Filter on



Mike: "My first YouTube videos were for students. They exploded. I was like, 'Why would 60,000 people want to watch that?' I just taught a paradiddle variation..."

"IF IT DOESN'T RELATE TO YOUR DREAMS, THEN I DON'T WANT TO TEACH IT TO YOU"

percussion. I spent six years touring. I had to leave my teaching position to do the touring thing. I was teaching several private students at the time. That was a great experience for me to know that teaching is what I wanted to do with the rest of my life! The whole six years I was touring, I thought about teaching. That's all I wanted to do."

Was there anything specific that made you decide to focus solely on teaching?

"I've been a teacher since I was a kid. In class, I'd look at the kid next to me, I could see he was confused. I would re-teach what was being taught and I'd watch the lightbulb go off in his head. I would get the biggest thrill out of that. I didn't think of it as teaching drums, I just wanted to explain things to people. I was touring and every time we had a break, I'd come home and take my lessons with Pete Magadini. At some point he was like, 'Look, you're a good drummer, but when you tell me anything, or try to show me anything, you light up with a whole different passion than when you play this instrument. You should really consider being an educator.' At the time, I had the dream. I had a record deal, we were touring, getting paid to play. Even though I wasn't happy, I thought, 'This is

everybody's dream, so it should be mine.' I just couldn't figure out why I'm not happy doing it. I couldn't tell anybody that this wasn't fun for me. It was like hiding my true identity. I also thought, all of our teaching idols are fairly old, you know? It's Jim Chapin, Ed Thigpen. I thought, 'What if there was a young, hip teacher, that could teach as well as these guys, but had a little more connection to the youth. I wanted to be that guy. That was when I was 26.'

What are some of your teaching philosophies?

"One is, if it's private lessons, I make sure that every student is their own adventure and I have my own plan for that person. When I would go to my lesson as a kid, I would hear something being played by whoever was before me. Then I'd go into the room and I would have to do the same thing. I thought, 'That dude before me was 37 and I'm six. Why are we working on the same material?' Clearly, it was the teacher's weekly plan. I wanted to do the opposite. When I was doing more private lessons, I'd have an eight-year-old and then right after that, a 52-year-old. You have to adjust. You can't teach the 52-year-old what you taught the eight-year-old. Everything has to be applicable. Every time I meet a student, the first thing I ask is, 'Who is your

favourite band?' or, 'If I was a drum genie and could grant your wish, what would it be?' Tell me all your desires so I can formulate a plan. Yes, we have to learn paradiddles. But there's no reason we can't learn paradiddles along to Animals As Leaders instead of a metronome. I want you to feel like you know that I care about your future. If it doesn't relate to your dreams, then I don't want to teach it to you. I can't even start teaching until I know what your dreams are. That's the second thing. From there, it's letting them know the harsh truth of teaching, which is, I'll never be mad at you, never yell at you, never even be upset with you, but, whatever effort you bring, I will equal that with my teaching. So if you don't practise and you don't care, it's no big deal to me. I'm totally okay with it. We can just jam during your whole lesson. But, if you really care, then I'm going to go home and think about your future, your next lesson. I'm going to be obsessed with what's next for you."

You were one of the pioneers in online video lessons, with mikeslessons.com.

"I'd love to take more credit than I can, but it would be lying. Steve Jobs was the one that did it, because really, the first Mike's Lessons was a complete copy of iTunes. I was getting used to getting my music digitally through iTunes and thought, 'If he [Jobs] can deliver songs for 99 cents, why can't I deliver drum lessons for 99 cents?' Media is media

COVER FEATURE

MIKE JOHNSTON

whether it's audio or video. That's where I started. I thought, 'I'm going to make iTunes for drummers.' There was no concept of live streaming. I was making YouTube content, that had just started. I wasn't making that for YouTube, I was making it for private students. When I'd leave town for a tour, I'd make a video and put it on YouTube and give them the link. My first YouTube videos were not for YouTube, they were for students! Then, they exploded. I was like, 'Why would 60,000 people want to watch that?' I just taught a paradiddle variation. That was a light bulb moment. Then, I thought, 'If people do want this, then maybe I could sell it for 99 cents.' My first videos were so tiny they fit on the iPod Nano. It was like a thumbnail video. Nobody had the bandwidth to even download content. I saw what iTunes was doing and wanted to replicate that, and wanted to do it for drummers."

What do you think set you apart from others attempting the same thing?

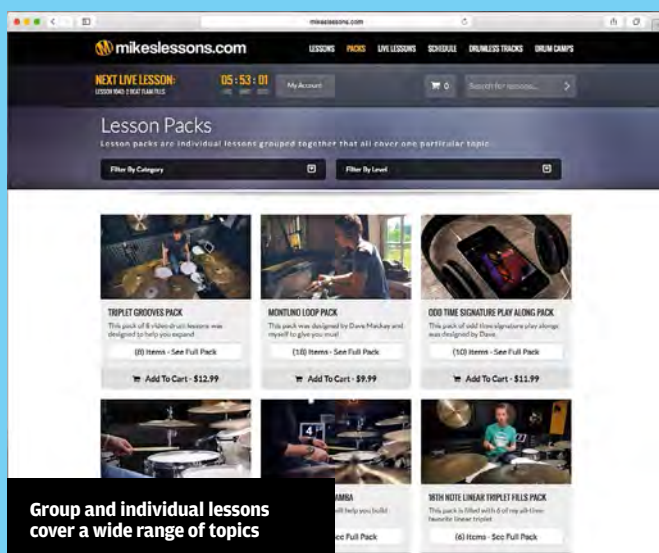
"Not being a natural. I watched my drum gods and I remember which ones were tangible and which ones were not. Because I'm not natural at the drums, the way I teach is the way that I have to learn, which is a very 'break it down' philosophy. I have to write it out a bunch of different ways to make my brain understand it. But, when that process is done, I own it. I can teach it to somebody. I can break it down for them if they're not understanding it. I can play it slow, fast, I can swing it, I can play it straight. I try to make a big difference between, 'Can I do something, or do I own it?' Own it means, all styles, tempos, genres and volumes. The other thing is, I knew

Mike: "I try to make a big difference between, 'Can I do something or do I own it?' Own it means, all styles, tempos, genres and volumes"

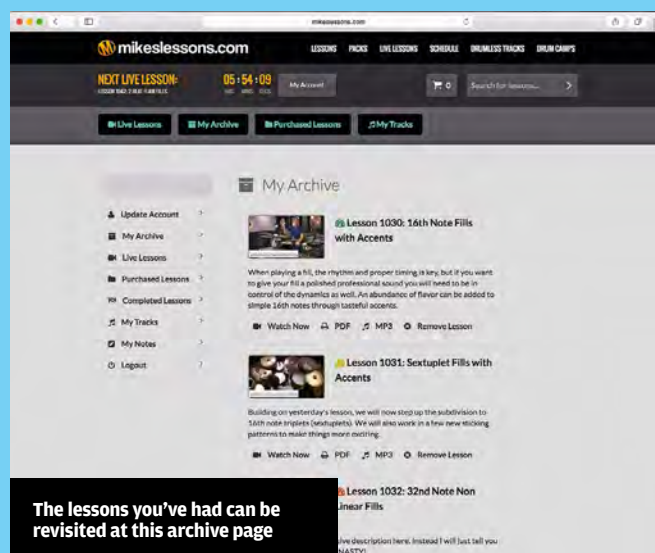


RHYTHM SAMPLES MIKESLESSONS.COM'S MENU

WE TOOK A LOOK AROUND MIKE'S SITE AND LIKED WHAT WE SAW



Group and individual lessons cover a wide range of topics



The lessons you've had can be revisited at this archive page

Always keen on researching our subjects, *Rhythm* was able to get a "guest pass" to mikeslessons.com. Besides the various single lesson and group packs, there are several archived live lessons to choose from. These can be saved in your profile and there are PDF and sound files to go along with most lessons. This is an excellent learning

tool because not only do you see Mike demonstrating it visually, but you have the transcription to follow along with and a sound file to listen to. As Mike mentioned, having a bar to compare yourself to is crucial to honest self-analysis. Individual and group lesson packs included those with the titles 'Freedom Over

The Samba' and 'Odd Time Signature Play Along Pack' while other subjects included developing ghost notes, 16th-note linear triplet fills and triplet grooves. *Rhythm* had a personal taster of Mike's lessons on 16th-note fills with accents, sextuplet fills with accents, Baiao grooves and some tricky 32nd-note non-linear fills.

ANIKA NILLES WORKSHOPS UNITED KINGDOM 2015

May 04, Gateshead
Drumshop

May 05, Sheffield
9Drum

May 06, Cardiff
Drum Depot

May 07, Fareham
Graham Russell Drums

May 08, London
Bell Percussion



Anika Nilles at the



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COVER FEATURE MIKE JOHNSTON



“I BELIEVE YOU HAVE TO PAY FOR EDUCATION TO VALUE EDUCATION AND I BELIEVE TEACHERS HAVE TO CHARGE FOR EDUCATION TO VALUE THEIR TEACHING”

▶ from day one that YouTube was global. Knowing that I have to deal with eight-year-olds who speak English as a third language. I have to teach on a global level. Even if you barely understand English, I get the point across.”

What are some of the differences between your online service and your YouTube videos?

“On my service, we have student reviews. We have our own channel on mikeslessons.com. As far as the general stuff, the real key is teaching topics that apply to everyone and making that lens a person. When I look in the camera, I don’t see a camera, I see a person sitting on the other end on their computer working really hard to get better. That’s who I’m talking to. I can’t teach stylistically specific things on YouTube. I can on mikeslessons.com

because you’ve chosen to learn that subject. I think of something like the paradiddle. No matter what, you have to learn it. Now, you can play it between a stacker and a loud snare drum and make it a metal thing. You can swing it and make it a jazz thing. But, the paradiddle is non negotiable, you have to learn it. So, I try to think, if the paradiddle is vegetables, how do I turn it into dessert? How do I make people think, ‘Ooh, I would totally eat that!’ Now that you’ve seen the light at the end of the tunnel, let’s go back to our vegetables. If you just keep chewing on them, they may taste like chocolate cake. If you watch any of my YouTube videos, they always start with the end product. Our main two services on mikeslessons.com are prerecorded content and the live lessons. Those are live broadcasted Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. I know the career I have is

MIKE’S GEAR

DRUMS

Gretsch Brooklyn in Creme Oyster Finish: 18”x22” bass drum, 10”x7” tom, 14”x16” floor; 14”x5½” snare; 14”x5” side snare

CYMBALS

Meinl Byzance: 14” Extra Dry Medium hi-hats; 18” Extra Dry Medium crash; 21” Signature Transition ride; 20” Traditional Extra Thin Hammered crash; 20” Vintage crash & 18” Jazz Extra Thin crash stack combo

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Aquarian Drum heads - snare & toms: Response 2 Coated on top, Classic Clear on bottom; kick: Force 1 Clear or batter head, Force 1 Coated on reso head; Vater 2451 Mike Johnston Signature Sticks

because of my YouTube fan-base eventually taking a chance on my paid service. I make no bones about it. I believe you have to pay for education to value education and I believe teachers have to charge for education to value their teaching.”

What are the cornerstones of learning drums, especially in the modern age?

“I think the first cornerstone would be patience. ▶



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COVER FEATURE

MIKE JOHNSTON

Mike: "I thought, what if there was a young, hip teacher that could teach as well as [Chapin and Thigpen] but had a little more connection to the youth?"



"I DON'T SEE A CAMERA, I SEE A PERSON SITTING ON THEIR COMPUTER, WORKING REALLY HARD TO GET BETTER"

I watch so many people quit because they didn't understand how long term this instrument is. This instrument is literally golf. You see 60 to 70-year-old men playing golf and they're horrible, and they play everyday. This is a long term thing. It's about small, little victories. I think the biggest cornerstone would be to judge yourself against yourself, not against anyone else. People who judge themselves against me, the first thing I ask is, 'What

was your life like?' They say, 'I got a drumset when I was 16.' Let's stop there. I got a drumset when I was six. That's different. Did your parents pay for lessons? 'No.' Well, mine did. They totally supported me. I had a drum room that we built in the garage so I could play at all hours of the night and not bother anybody. How can you compare yourself to me when we didn't have the same life. I was so lucky. I'm not natural at this instrument, but I had

every opportunity to become great, which I'm still getting. If you know specifically that you were at 93bpm on double paradiddles, don't judge that against Virgil Donati. That's going to be so disheartening. Judge yourself at 95 and 96. If you're 1 percent better every single day, then in 100 days, you'll be twice as good as you were. It's not that hard, but it's very hard when you pull up a video of Virgil, or Dave Weckl or Thomas Lang, and you've only been playing for four years, you think, 'I'll never be that good.' Go back in time and see them when they've only been playing four years. Maybe that would be more relative."

Is there a drawback to having too much content at your fingertips?

"The scariest thing right now is the overload of information. Even on mikeslessons.com we have a huge flaw; we don't help you get better. We're like an information supermarket. Come in, buy what you want. That's bad. I want to fix that. I want to say, 'Are you interested in rudiments?' Then let me walk you through this plan. Yes, there's 40 international rudiments that we're going to work on. But, even in P.A.S. [Percussive Arts Society], they're not in order correctly. They're in order by groupings. You have your flam rudiments, your paradiddle rudiments. Well, I can't play a patafalfla if I don't already know how to play single strokes and flams. I want mikeslessons to take you through the proper course. I want to turn it into courses instead of just, 'Go ahead and shop.' We're never going to take that away though, because some people really do know what they want."

More of a sequential, methodical approach?

"Exactly! Right now, it's more like an encyclopedia. Here they are alphabetically. We have meters that say advanced, intermediate and beginner, but still. Someone needs to be helped. I really want to do that. We go really far out of our way to make sure we're not that 'Sham-Wow' late-night TV commercial. We never shove anything in your face. We want the world to know this exists. If you want it, come and get it. If not, no big deal."

What does it take to really improve on the kit and take your playing to the next level?

"The first thing would be a vision of what I call a 'Desired Result' technique. Do you even know your desired result? Because sometimes people really don't. They're like, 'Yeah man, I'm trying to get faster hands.' I would ask, 'What for?' If you were playing ballads with John Mayer, you wouldn't need faster hands, so you should know what the desired result is. If you said, 'I really like this band, and I physically can't play the songs,' that's a great reason to have faster hands. Why are you trying to build this specific skill set? Then, the next thing is, is it a skill set? What are you trying to build?"

"Sometimes, like if it's improvising, that can be done with your hands and knees sitting on a park bench. You don't even need a kit for that. It's your brain being able to get that language out of you naturally and just improvise. So, those things are really important. The next thing is the instruction. That could come from

Mike's new Groove Freedom app is available to download now from the Apple App Store



A LESSON WITH MIKE GROOVE FREEDOM

Imagine this... You walk into your first rehearsal with a new band. It's the dream situation, a group that you have wanted to play with for as long as you can remember. The MD/ band leader says "on this song I want you to play a halftime shuffle in the style of Jeff Pocaro." You think to yourself, "No problem, I know 'Rosanna' note for note. I own that groove." The MD counts the song in and you start. After a few bars the director stops you and says, "The feel is great but I need your bass drum to lock with the bass player." PROBLEM! You don't have 'freedom' in this groove. You only know it as an exact replica of Jeff's groove. As soon as you have to change one little thing about a groove that you know by heart, everything falls apart.

This happened to me enough times to realise that I needed to do something about it. It was a huge weak link in my drumming armour and it needed to be fixed. I decided to adapt ideas from books that I grew up with like *Future Sounds* and *The New Breed*, as well as modern books like *The Language of Drumming* to come up with a simple permutation system that would help me overcome my lack of true freedom with all of my grooves.

The concept is simple. Start with the constant, an ostinato (repeated pattern) between your hi-hat and snare. Then add the variable, in this case the bass drum. The kick will go through three different permutation cycles, shifting over one 16th note every measure. The first exercise will be single-note bass drum permutations. One measure with the kick on the downbeats, one measure with the kick on the 'e's, one measure with the kick on the '&'s and one measure with the kick on the 'a's. Ex. 2 follows the exact same permutations, but this time it will be with two 16th notes. Ex. 3 uses three 16ths on the kick.

Watch Mike demonstrate this lesson at <http://bit.ly/mikejohnstonlesson>

Groove Ostinato: 8th note hi hat with syncopated snare drum

▶ all of the unaccented snare notes should eventually be played as ghost notes

70 bpm

easy/difficult

COVER FEATURE

MIKE JOHNSTON

video lessons with me or somebody else. It could come from a book. It could come from an inspirational video, where there's no instruction. Have a desired result. Know what you're trying to build, whether it's a technique or a chop, lick or whatever. What is the big picture here? After that, who's helping you get there? There has to be something inspirational to measure yourself against. When I watch Jojo Mayer play a specific groove, that becomes the measuring stick. I can keep going back to that groove. Do I have it? Did I get it? I think that's really important. That's where video-taping comes in. I video-tape myself every day for work, but I video-tape myself a lot that nobody ever gets to see because it's for me. I have a reference point and tomorrow night, it will be better than what it was today."

Do you think with the advent of all this technology there is still a need for one-on-one personal instruction?

"Absolutely! I never talk numbers, but I know I could triple my cost. It's only \$20 a month. I could triple my cost and lose very few students. But, what would happen, I would make a bunch of money, but those students then wouldn't have enough money leftover for private drum instruction. The reason my price is \$20 a month is so that you can afford private drum instruction also. You can take my material to your teacher and say, 'Hey, I'm working on this thing from Mike's site, can you be in the room and stare at my limbs and listen to my dynamics? Even if you make a video for me, depending on your recording gear, maybe I'm not hearing your dynamics properly. If you're using your phone and it's clipping the whole time, I can't tell much. Private drum instruction will always be needed. If you notice, mikeslessons is not a home for beginners. We don't teach anyone how to play drums. Once you can play drums, we teach you how to improve. I still do private lessons, it's just not as frequent as I used to."

Do you have a referral service or network of people that you recommend for local instruction?

"I do. Right now it's through my site. We have a lot of advanced to pro level players on our site. That's something I would love to build in the future, like a mikeslessons.com affiliate program."

Do you think anyone can learn to play drums or do you have to have an innate ability?

"Oh yeah! I am the proof! I am the one-note-at-a-time guy. If you show me anything right now, I'll tell you to slow it down and I'll write it out, one note at a time. I definitely think that some people are natural at it. That's totally different. I think anyone can learn. I'm the proof of one end of the spectrum. Then there's the other end of the spectrum, the Thomas Langs and Virgil Donatis, where if you do have a natural knack for it, it can be taken to some god-like places."

Is there something that you've learned now at this point at 38 that you would go back and tell your younger self?

"Being positive was something that had to be



Mike: "I try to think, if the paradiddle is vegetables, how do I turn it into dessert?"

learned. That's not who I was as a kid. That's not who I was as a teenager. I had somebody very influential in my life let me know, 'There's no reason to be as rude and cocky as you are, and especially as competitive.' It was all from me being insecure, that I would make fun of other drummers. Everybody that I watch play now, I think, 'Can I find anything positive?' Even the most rudimentary, basic drummer will have something more natural to them than what I have."

What are your plans for the future?

"For me, it's always developing mikeslessons.com. That's my obsession, is getting that website to help more and more. There's things going on in the next year where we really are looking to leave the educational industry in the dust. I just want

people to get better because of this. Those are my walking business cards. If I have 10,000 students that are horrible, my business won't last very long. I want to make great drummers that I can be proud of.

"I'm also putting together a drum camp in Ireland with Music Maker where we're renting out a castle. It's going to be myself, Aaron Spears and Mark Guilliana. We're going to do a 20-person drum camp for a week and then on the last day we're going to open up the castle to the public and do a huge clinic. The goal of the camp is that we pick one topic per day, and then you get two hours with each of us on that topic. I chose Aaron and Mark because one, they're great human beings and two, I couldn't find two drummers more different than each other or myself. That's in September." **R**

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POWERSTROKE **3**
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- REDUCED 7 MIL INLAY RING TO REDUCE OVERTONES.
- 5 MIL CLEAR TOP CENTER DOT FOR ADDED DURABILITY.
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- AVAILABLE IN COATED, SIZES 12"-14"



BASS DRUMHEAD

- ONE PLY OF 10 MIL FILM WITH A 10 MIL INLAY RING.
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- PRODUCES A LOWER NOTE FUNDAMENTAL ON ALL BASS SIZES AND SHELL TYPES.
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INTERVIEW
JOSH MACINTYRE



JOSH **MARMOZETS** MACINTYRE

Rhythm catches up with the drumming superstar behind fast-rising alternative Brit rockers Marmozets

WORDS: CHRIS BURKE PHOTOS: JOBY SESSIONS



When it comes to spotting new drum talent, we like to think we're on the money. But while many great new drummers grace our pages each

year, it takes a special talent to get the *Rhythm* team down *en masse* to a show to witness a drummer with such a perfect combination of technique, showmanship, thrilling drum parts and hard-hitting power as Marmozets' Josh Macintyre.

Marmozets are Britain's most talked-about and exciting new alternative rock band, playing music that is powerful, angry, melodic, intricate and catchy in equal measure. Josh's drumming is adroit with the shifting time signatures, angular riffing, metal power and sublime pop sensibilities that make Marmozets such a joy live and on record.

The GoPro cameras *Rhythm* has been allowed to clamp onto Josh's kit will later add

INTERVIEW

JOSH MACINTYRE

testimony to the energy, skill and power of his playing; though Josh himself, it transpires, was not so happy with his own performance on that gig. "With my drumming I'm never 100 percent happy," he had already confessed to *Rhythm*. "I'm very, like, OCD with my drumming and how I do things. I can be sat at the side of my drum kit for half an hour just fiddling with the height of a cymbal."

Crammed between the cast-iron support pillars that are an irksome feature of Bristol's former sheep-auction room, The Fleece, Josh is sat at his kit when we arrive, evidently doing just that. We adjourn from this draughty barn to the relative warmth of the dressing rooms, where Josh's sister and awesome Marmozets vocalist Becca is busy making herself a sandwich, to discuss the 20-year-old's growing status as Britain's most exciting new rock sticksman.

Born Young And Talented

It all began, not so very long ago, when an uncle with cool records and a drum kit first inspired young Josh to pick up sticks. After a while bashing on pots and

JOSH ON HIS PERFECT/ IMPERFECT SET-UP

"It's [a relatively simple set-up] because that's all I've had since I was younger. I had a really simple kit, just been blessed with what I've been blessed with - even having a drum kit was enough. So I've always kept it that way. I've got two 24" rides, K Light rides, two of them the same. One of them's cracked and it's got a little hole in it so it makes it sound more trashy now! That's the thing about Zildjian, they still sound really good even when they're cracked!"

"OUR KIND OF MUSIC IS VERY MUCH ABOUT BEING TIGHT, I DON'T WANT TO SHOW OFF. FOR ME IT'S ABOUT THAT ONE GROOVE"

pans and, when he could, on his uncle's kit, the mostly self-taught youngster found himself in a band with siblings Sam and Becca.

"We were about 12, 13 at the time," recalls Josh of Marmozets' origins, "it was like a [school] house competition, a music competition, and they had to put a band together. At first there were about 20 people in the room to do this band and then everyone started dropping out, and it got down to me, Bec, Sam, a friend called Joe, and Jack [Bottomley, Marmozets' guitarist]. We won the competition, we did two covers, and then after that the teacher was like, 'You guys are really good, you should start practising after school. Then we used to go round to Jack's after school and jam there.'"

One Christmas, Josh finally got a drum kit, where previously he'd only been able to get on the kit at whichever venue the band were playing.

"It was second-hand from a charity shop, £50. It was the best thing ever. And I remember they took me to the kitchen and it was all set up, it was like my biggest dream ever, to get my own kit. I remember getting told off by the neighbours though because it was [Christmas] morning!"

The band fully formed when their guitarist friend Joe left for University, at which point Sam Macintyre swapped from bass to guitar, and Jack Bottomley's brother Will was brought in for four-stringed duties. A band made up of two sets of siblings could either be a blessing or a constant battleground. Luckily, it seems both families are

pretty harmonious within Marmozets.

"It's cool 'cos we've all grown up with each other," says Josh, "so we've always connected with each other, it just flows really well in rehearsals and stuff, we just feed off each other really. We know each other inside out so we know how to work with each other. I think it's a big bonus. People always ask, do you argue? Everyone argues. What family doesn't? What friends don't argue? Everyone argues. But it definitely helps being a family, you're always sticking with each other and wanting the best for each other."

Growing up in Bingley, a quiet West Yorkshire town, it wasn't easy for the underage band to get gigs in the big cities of the nearby Leeds/Bradford conurbation.

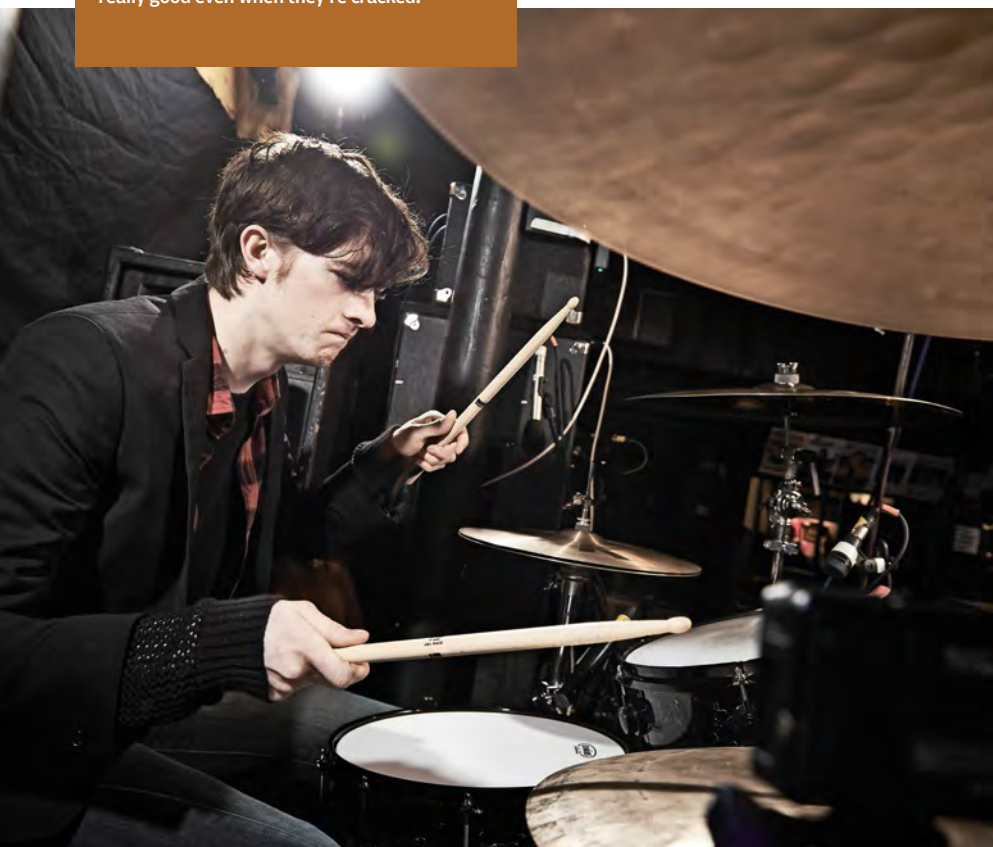
"Bradford was the first, the 1 In 12 Club, it was about 100 capacity, we used to play there a lot when we started. But Leeds, it wasn't till later on when Will joined, because some of us were getting older - it used to be 18-plus and some of us were still 16, 17, so we used to get rejected a lot of the time. But it was the Well, used to be called Joseph's Well, that first took us as a family. I'd seen a lot of cool bands there like And So I Watch You From Afar, and so we started playing Leeds a lot more. And Keighley we played a lot of times, they've got some really cool venues there."

The five Marmozets had varied musical backgrounds, with the Macintyres brought up on the Christian music of Keith Green and Hillsong United, with the aforementioned uncle bringing some Foo Fighters and Nirvana into the mix, while the Bottomleys' dad "was really cool, he was into Big Black and all of that stuff, and bands from the '90s". But drums-wise, young Josh didn't necessarily look to the usual star drummers for inspiration. "My uncle first showed me drumming, he has always been my biggest inspiration. When we've been doing these shows I definitely think of him and thank him for showing me it."

Captivating Us

Marmozets' debut, *The Weird And Wonderful Marmozets*, landed at the end of 2014. It's an astonishing first record, packed with hooky, melodic rock tunes with some mind-bending time signature changes alongside head-banging accessibility; rhythmic complexity and musical skill combined with youthful, punky energy. A rare feat to combine all of that in a genuinely non-contrived way - that they pulled it off in style is due in no small part to Josh's seemingly innate ability to lay down exactly the right groove for each track, whether it's a tom groove, angular rhythms with odd-time stabs or intricate snare work serving the songs' more vocally-led moments.

"For me it's literally just feel," explains Josh. "Feel, you can't, pen and paper, learn. You can but you can't, it's like a process. I think once you've been with a band for so long, and you know each other inside out, that's definitely helped me. It helps me now





Josh: "For me it's about the feel, and it's years of practising and playing with other people and listening to music"

when I'm jamming with other people, you just know how to feel it. And it's years of practising and playing with other people and listening to music. There's so many things you can put down but you know it's right when you're looking at the band and they're going like, 'That's the one.' Feed off the people you're playing with, that's the most important thing, that relationship with your band or whoever you're playing with."

But there's no doubt that for all the groove and feel evident in Marmozets music, there's also a fair bit of maths to be done too.

"When I get people asking me the time signature, like maybe they want to learn the songs, I always say I really have no clue - it's always been felt. Some songs, when it's like the really crazy ones like 'Vibetech', I just kind of play it and then when I get to band practice I'll say, 'I've got this beat,' and the guys will try and nail it first time. And if it doesn't [work] maybe we'll count it out then; and then literally after that there's no counting, everyone's just learned it.

"Jack and Sam are really good at making stupid time signatures," he adds. "like, instead of coming in

on the '1' you'll come in on the '&' of '4'. I've got used to it now. There's only so many time signatures you can do - it's more like the rhythm that you play. I think once you know your '1's and '&'s you're pretty set."

Josh has recently landed a sweet endorsement deal with the mighty DW and taken delivery of a beautiful DW Collector's series kit. "I've always dreamt of playing DW, but it's always been out of my reach," says Josh. "I've tried loads of other kits, not been endorsed but just experimenting, but it never really worked for me. Then DW, one of the guys at a festival just came up and my stomach just dropped, I was like no way! They were saying, 'We've been watching you and it'd be really cool, we're just helping out with Queens Of The Stone Age right now...'"

Josh is in genuine awe that he's mentioned in the same sentence as Josh Homme and co, but there's no doubt that Marmozets are on a meteoric upward curve. The shows are getting bigger (by the time you read this they will have just finished up a run of dates supporting Muse), which means that Josh can no longer on a whim take his entire drum kit into the crowd, as he has been known to do.

"I think I'll have to be a bit more careful with it!" he says, the thought of risking his precious new DW clearly a troubling one. "We used to do it because we'd be on support with other bands, it wouldn't be sold-out shows so it'd be really easy to put it in [to the moshpit]. But I remember one time we played a festival and I made the mistake of trying it and it was full, packed, and it literally took me 10 minutes to get the kit in the crowd. The promoters were like, 'Come on, seriously? You're running over time!'"

The crowds might now be further away, but there's certainly no less energy up on stage.

"It's been weird recently, these sold-out shows on a drum riser. I think it's only tonight [in Bristol] there's no drum riser so it will be really cool, no barrier. I sometimes feel I'm a little bit away from everyone, but to be honest I'm always just in my own little world anyway so I still go crazy, I still enjoy it just as much. Up close and personal it's really nice, but the big ones it's just cool because there's that amount of people there to see you, and you still feel connected. And the band are the best, it's never changed. Whatever size of stage they're still running about like kids doing their same thing."

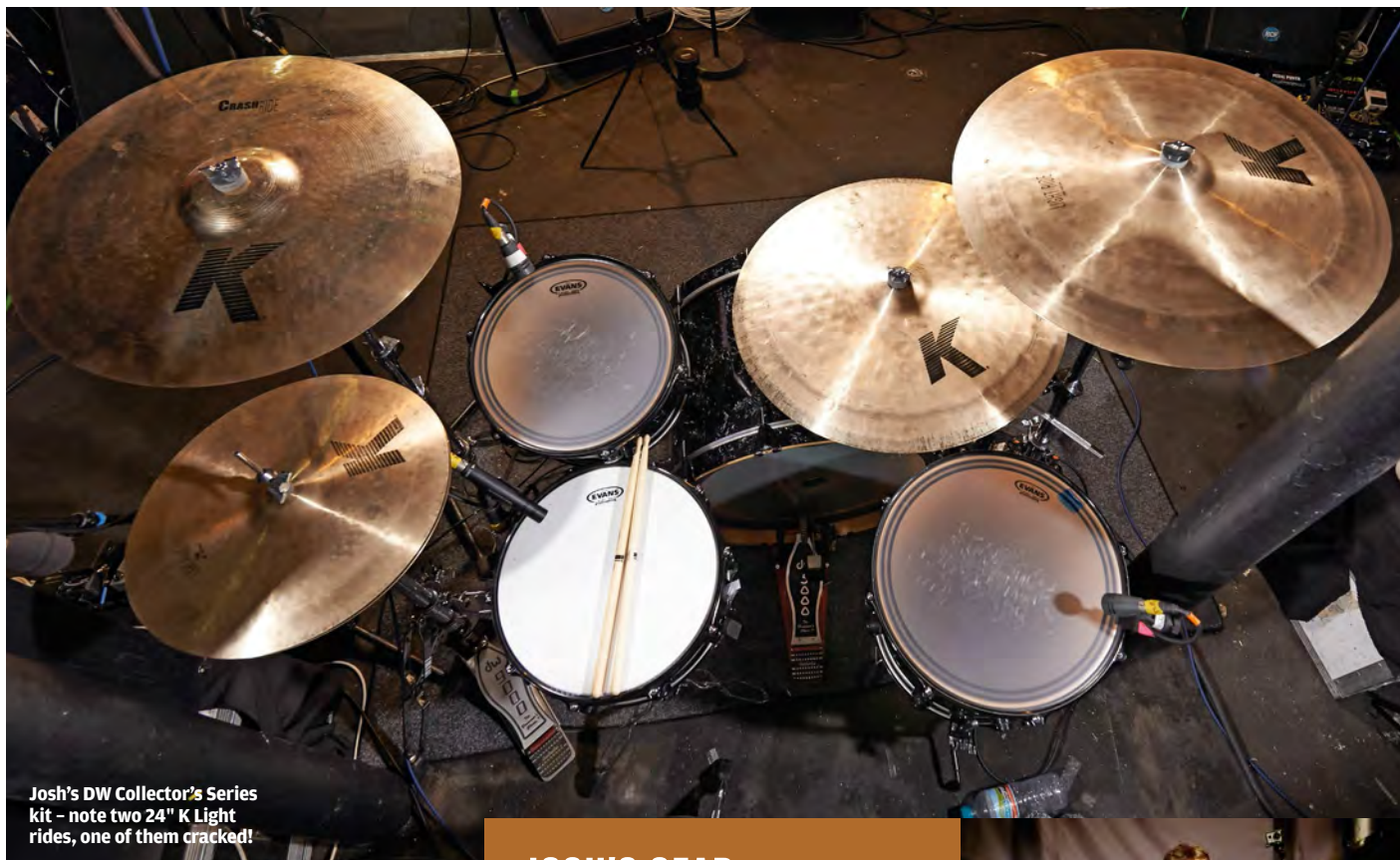
Hit The Wave

The band have toured almost relentlessly since going in to record their album a year ago, and Josh is quick to acknowledge that all that time on

"THERE'S ONLY SO MANY TIME SIGNATURES YOU CAN DO. I THINK ONCE YOU KNOW YOUR '1'S AND '&'S YOU'RE PRETTY SET"

INTERVIEW

JOSH MACINTYRE



Josh's DW Collector's Series kit – note two 24" K Light rides, one of them cracked!

the road has made the band even tighter. "I always seem to recognise that we've got tighter when we've finished a tour and go back to practice. We're twice as strong. With music or with any job you have, you always learn more. Even the greatest ever drummers in the world, you always want to add more, there's always something you can learn. I think it's definitely showing in this tour." Having played that material so much live since, is there anything, we wonder, that Josh would go back and do differently?

"I'm definitely still really happy with the way it turned out," he says. "I think there'll always be things like, 'Maybe there's something I could have added,' But even from last night [*Marmozets' London show at Camden's Electric Ballroom*], it's probably our biggest headliner we've ever done, there was like 1,300 people, sold out - we've got like six sold-out shows [*on this run*]. I definitely walked off stage the happiest, like, 'Wow that many people want to come and see our shows! And I appreciate that, but I've got to get myself in a mindset before I play. But I'm happy with how [*the album's*] done and I like playing it live. Maybe one fill... but I'm more excited with what I've got to show next, on the next record."

Speaking of which, it seems as though Marmozets have written so much material already that there's no 'difficult second album' looming; rather there's a sizeable editing job to be done.

"I WANT TO BE SOMEONE THAT HELPS AS MANY DRUMMERS AS I CAN. I HAVE RESPECT FOR EVERY DRUMMER, ANY DRUMMER"

JOSH'S GEAR

DRUMS

DW Collector's Series: 24" kick, 13" tom, 16" floor tom ("I normally use an 18" but today's venue is quite small,"); DW Collector's snare 14"x6½" snare

CYMBALS

Zildjian: 16" K Light hi-hats; 20" K Custom crash/ride; 2 x 24" K Light rides

PLUS

Evans heads; DW hardware; ProMark sticks



Watch Josh's video kit tour here: <http://bit.ly/marmozetsrigitour>

"We've already got a stack of songs," confirms Josh. "If we had a Macbook and it had the biggest hard drive in it, you wouldn't be able to get it all on! So many different songs. Ones that are dusty on the back shelf that will probably never be touched... but we've already got an album on the way, and we definitely want something out by next year. We want to take our time with it, not just like let's bring out another album because this one's doing okay - we're very delicate with what we write. A lot of thought goes into it. And the stuff we're writing I personally think blows the first album out of the water. Myself with the drumming, it's got a lot more groove. It's definitely really cool, keeping it tight, keeping it fresh, doing what we do."

In fact groove is something that Josh is very keen

to stress is his priority. And despite, or perhaps because of, the rhythmic complexity of Marmozets' music, there is assuredly a very solid groove behind the songs - importantly, you can happily nod your head to even the odder-time tracks, and the kids can still mosh like crazy to them.

"I guess it's 'cos our kind of music is very much about being tight, I don't want to show off. But I may show off in the one fill I do in a song. You have these drummers that do fills galore every two bars and for me sometimes that gets so boring because I've seen so many of these amazing drummers that are so fast or know every paradiddle, and it's mind blowing but after a while you're like, 'I've seen that chop done a hundred times.' For me it's about that one groove. Like Darren King, Mutemouth's drummer, he'll just play like literally the same groove within a whole song or maybe just change it onto a ride or put one different little snare hit in - then when he does that one fill you can tell it's a fill he's really thought about. And that's what makes some of the greatest drummers so great, when you hear them you know



Josh: "I'm excited with what I've got to show next on the next record"

it's them. You can hear them from the next room and be like, that's *that* person. And that's what I like about a drummer, they can do that one fill and you know it's like, oh, that's Dave Grohl."

Back To You

The world of the Marmozets is certainly a weird and wonderful place to be right now; the band are on a meteoric rise, on their way to conquering the US tour-by-tour - and undoubtedly they'll be once again blowing festival crowds' minds this summer. The band are also signed to legendary metal label Roadrunner, and for a band so young, they seem to have avoided those much talked-of music industry pitfalls.

"It's been quite crazy," admits Josh. "I just try and enjoy it and just stay who I am - my mum taught me that. Stay humble, stay yourself. There's been a few years when it started to get crazy when I was young, and you can be stupid and do crazy stuff and learn from it, but I think some of the best testimonies are from the people who've stayed strong the whole way through; never had to have this testimony like, 'I did drugs for 20 years and I've only just realised I don't need it.' For me I just want to be the best I am.

"The music industry's a weird one," he considers. "The whole world's messed up in any type of industry, it is, you've just got to do what you want to do and make the best out of it. People always ask me when I'm home, 'It's a crazy business, isn't it? You'd best be watching out for yourself, are you sure you should be doing that? You're gonna be like the rest of them, doing drugs.' And it's just like, 'Be quiet!' I wish people in this world would be a bit more positive about stuff. That's the best thing about my mum and

my family, they know the consequences out there, we've been in it quite a few years, even how young we are. They're like, 'Be careful,' but they always tell me, 'You're there for a reason and you're going to change people's lives, you're gonna help people,' and that's the thing for me."

There's no doubt that Josh is a fantastic example to young drummers, one of the reasons *Rhythm* has championed Josh and the band since we made him one of our 'drummers to watch in 2014', over a year ago. Since then he was voted third in *Rhythm's* Best New Drummer poll at the end of last year, coming in just behind Royal Blood's Ben Thatcher and Prince drummer Hannah Ford.

"Thank you for that," he enthuses, "absolutely incredible, I found out about that when I was in America and I couldn't believe it. Something like that I never thought... even being in a magazine. I used to flick through and see drummers and go, 'Wow that's so cool, maybe one day I'll be in there.' You always have those dreams. And then seeing myself in there and being awarded that. And especially seeing my great friend Ben coming second, he's such a great rock drummer, so tight, and he's such a good dude. The support's been incredible and I'm so excited for my drumming career. And personally I want to be someone that helps out as many drummers as I can and brings the drums forward. Whenever I see someone covering our songs or finding a new drummer from a band that's maybe on tour with us, like, man I love it so much! It's cool. I have respect for every drummer, any drummer. So thank you very much. Such a good finish to 2014, and already been an amazing start to 2015 with you guys supporting me. For me it's very surreal and I'm very thankful and feel very blessed." **R**

**QUALITY
YOU'VE
NEVER
EXPERIENCED
BEFORE**

FEATURE

BIG BAND DRUMMING



Louie Bellson: the father of the modern drum solo

© Refiners/Getty Images

THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO BIG BAND DRUMMING

PART 2

Key Techniques #1

So, you've got your kit sounding just right, now it's time to play it with authenticity. Big Band maestro Pete Cater guides you through some essential techniques...

WORDS: PETE CATER

This month in The Beginner's Guide to Big Band Drumming we are going to take a more in-depth look at some of the key elements of timekeeping required for big band drumming.

The most important element of all is that you should have a good, strong, compelling time feel which 'drives' the big band at the same time generating that all-important quality of 'swing'.

We know that the evolution went from snare drum press rolls to swinging hi-hats and eventually to the vast majority of our timekeeping being centred on the ride cymbal. The ride cymbal, together with the stepped hi-hat, is what the other musicians are listening to in order to feel the pulse so the big band can play together cohesively. The ride cymbal should be the dominant sound coming from the kit and should not be overwhelmed by snare or bass drum.

Irrespective of the style of music you choose to play, I firmly believe that the path to authenticity comes through having the right internal balance of dynamics between the hands and feet. Visualise four faders on a mixing desk when you want to vary your internal balance. It's a really important

skill to be able to vary the dynamic levels of each to make the overall sound of the kit 'sit' as nicely as possible. I teach this concept and call it 'Independence of Dynamics'.

Jazz ride pattern and feathering the bass drum

In Example 1, below, you will see the jazz ride pattern notated three ways. Watch the video to see all of the examples in this lesson demonstrated (print and iPad editions only).

There is a lot of debate about which interpretation of the jazz ride pattern is correct. The fact of the matter is that all three of them are applicable, and it is the tempo of the music that truly determines which interpretation you should opt for. The general rule of thumb is that the faster the tempo the straighter the eighth notes on beats 2 and 4 should be. If I hear a jazz drummer playing a very fast ride tempo with too much triplet it creates a sensation of 'stop/start', and can sound very stilted. Experiment with playing the jazz ride pattern at a variety of tempos and consciously alter the degree of 'swing' on beats 2 and 4.

Now let's look in a little more detail at how we're going to apply the left hand and the bass drum. The

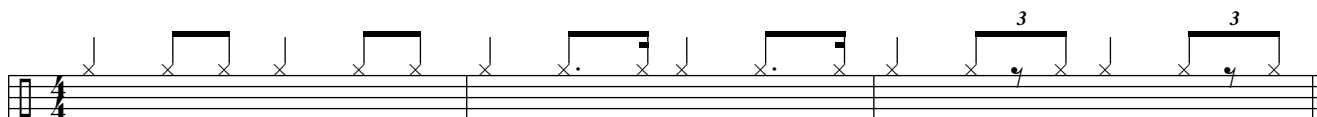
ABOUT PETE CATER

The UK's number one big band drummer/bandleader Pete Cater has been firing up big bands since the late 1970s. Drawing inspiration from the legendary masters of the art he continues to develop and evolve by mixing contemporary concepts with the traditional big band style and techniques. Although active as a sideman with a broad range of big bands, Pete is best known for leading The Pete Cater Big Band. Pete teaches privately and at the London Centre of Contemporary Music, appears regularly at clinics and drum shows, and is a trustee of the National Jazz Archive.

bass drum is the foundation of the drumset in the big band rhythm section, and the ability to play a light four-in-the-bar (usually referred to as 'feathering') is an absolute must. The quarter-note bass drum should be at such a low dynamic level as to be unobtrusive. It should support the 'walking' four-on-the-bar from the bass player and not clash or overwhelm his lines.

Debate has raged about the feathered bass

01



FEATURE

BIG BAND DRUMMING

YOU NEED A GOOD STRONG, COMPELLING TIME FEEL WHICH 'DRIVES' THE BAND AND GENERATES THAT QUALITY OF 'SWING'

drum for years. Whether or not to use it is entirely to do with the context of the music being played; for 'old school' big band charts (for example, Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman, early Count Basie, Duke Ellington etc), four-on-the-floor is an absolute prerequisite.

Where more contemporary material is involved you might want to use the bass drum solely for comping in the rhythm section and accenting horn figures. The bottom line is to use your ears, know your music history and listen to what is going on around you. In order to be a fully-formed big band drummer this bass drum technique is something you absolutely must master, and then decide when to use it.

Comping with your left hand

A lot of drummers forge glittering careers by playing very little more than a solid '2' and '4' in the left hand. In the world of big band and jazz we have rather more to do.

A big band makes a big sound when the whole ensemble is playing *fortissimo*, so just to play ride cymbal alone, without support from the left hand and bass drum, might not generate sufficient energy to kick the whole band when required.

The left hand has many tasks, the first of which is to support the ride pattern to enhance the energy and forward motion of the music. This we refer to as comping. To develop our left hand comping skill we are going to play each swung eighth-note in turn until it feels really comfortable (Example 2, below). Once you feel comfortable with this repeat the exercise but with the individual eighth notes on the bass drum.

Next, in Example 3, we are going to take two consecutive swung eighth-notes and move them

through each possible placement in a single bar of 4/4 time as above. As before, repeat this exercise on the bass drum.

Finally for this month, let's take the left hand to the next level and work on groups of three (Example 4). The groups of three should be relaxed and flowing. Allow the rebound of the drum to work for you. With all of these exercises repeat each bar at least four times before proceeding to the next.

Let's improvise!

Now the fun really starts. Having done the four previous exercises, start to improvise mixing up snare drum and bass drum, either individual notes or groups of two and put them anywhere in the bar. It's important to do this very slowly to begin with, as you need to be able to think about which notes you are going to play in the moment that you play them. It's vital you resist the temptation to just play memorised 'licks'.

In Example 5 we have a few bars of improvised left hand and bass drum suggestions. The interaction between the two sounds should feel conversational and melodic. This notation does not specify the sound source, it is for you to assign the notes as you wish.

Next month we're going to build on our swinging rhythmic foundation and take a look at phrasing and filling. **R**

CATCH PETE LIVE

The Pete Cater Big Band will be doing a special concert to mark its 20th anniversary. This takes place at Cadogan Hall, London on Monday, 20 April. Expect Buddy Rich classics and rarities together with music from the movie *Whiplash* and more besides. Box office: 0207 730 4500 or book online at www.cadoganhall.com.

USING A CLICK IN PRACTICE

I am frequently asked about the benefits of practising with a click. Undoubtedly this is something that will sharpen up your sense of time and help you to internalise key points on the metronome - a great skill, which is lacking in far too many musicians. However my recommendation is that you spend half your practice time working with a click and no more.

As drummers we need to be able to take charge of the pulse of time, and whilst a click will undoubtedly enable you to hone your skills it is important that you can play strong, confident and consistent time without any assistance. Work with the click, but don't make the mistake of becoming reliant upon it. For the exercises this month I would recommend starting with a tempo between 100bpm and 120bpm. Once you are confident in this range start working on other tempos, both faster and slower.



VIDEO LESSON

Watch Pete guide you through these examples at <http://bit.ly/guidetobigbandpart2>

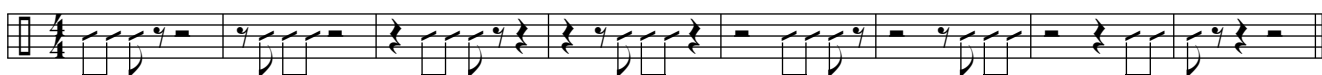
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BIG BAND PIONEERS

Swing and Beyond

Big band and swing music has progressed right up to the present day, so throughout this series I'm going to nominate great big band players from all the eras and endeavour to explain what it is that made them great, and recommend recordings for you to check out. There are many compilation recordings available which give you the opportunity to compare and contrast a whole range of players. The 'Jazz Drumming' series on Fenn Music is especially recommended



Buddy Rich (1917-1987)

Often misunderstood and underestimated particularly by the self-appointed jazz intelligentsia, Rich

had spectacular facility, which was matched by a capacity for creativity. That his musical mind was every bit as fast as his hands is self-evident and for me it is this virtually unique quality that separates him from his contemporaries. Take a look past the chops and check out what a swinging accompanist he could be too. Whilst there is much essential listening in his work as a sideman in the '30s, '40s and '50s, for me it is the recordings with his own band from 1966 onwards which epitomise his mastery.

Key tracks: *Swinging New Big Band*, 'Readymix'; *The New One*, 'New Blues'; *Very Alive at Ronnie Scott's*, 'Time Being'



Louie Bellson (1924-2009)

In terms of speed, clarity and facility Louie was second only to Buddy Rich,

and often a very close second at that. Have a look on YouTube for a video of him at the Cork Jazz Festival with his big band in 1980 and you will see what I mean. Furthermore Louie excelled as a composer and arranger. He was truly an all-round musician with a skill-set that would be extraordinary even by today's standards, and yet he was doing it all as long ago as the 1940s. He will of course be remembered as the pioneer of double bass drum playing, but for me, and perhaps more importantly, I consider him to be the father of the modern drum solo; whereby a drum solo becomes a standalone composition with a beginning, middle and an end. Duke Ellington once described him as, "The world's greatest musician," and he may well have been right. An extraordinarily

gifted man whom I was proud to know.

Key tracks: Duke Ellington, 'Skin Deep', 'Conversations with B, L & K'; Louie Bellson Big Band, 'Concord Blues for Blue'



Shelly Manne (1920-1984)

In an era where jazz drumming was almost completely dominated by Buddy

Rich and Max Roach, Shelley Manne broke through and achieved national stardom alongside these two heavyweights. Universally respected for his time, creativity and musicality he achieved international prominence on joining Stan Kenton's band in 1946. Manne was very much a product of the Dave Tough, Jo Jones school of playing and whilst a capable soloist his priorities lay elsewhere. He was a pioneer in many ways. He was one of the first of the drum stars of the big band era who went on to forge a career in the Hollywood studio scene, and at the same time maintained a prolific recorded output as a jazz player, being a first-call for the West Coast movement and even ran his own jazz club. Check Shelley out in both big band and small group settings.

Key tracks: Stan Kenton, 'Artistry In Percussion'; The Big Shorty Rogers Express, 'Tale of an African Lobster'; *Shelley Manne Live At The Blackhawk Vol 1*, 'Poinciana'



Don Lamond (1920-2003)

Very much in a similar groove to Shelley Manne, Lamond's place in drumming history is as one of the great modernisers

of the style. It's been said that when Lamond came to prominence in the late-'40s even Buddy Rich updated his approach. Lamond had the unenviable task of succeeding the legendary Dave Tough in Woody Herman's band, which he did to memorable effect. An early adopter of bebop concepts in the context of big band music, his 1947 recordings with the Herman band are notable for a much lighter, ride cymbal-focussed groove than was the case in Krupa's heyday 10 years previously, and he also started to 'drop bombs' with the bass drum, to use the parlance of the era. Lamond's calf head bass drum sound on these recordings is without doubt one of the best. Like Shelley Manne, in later years he went on to forge a successful career as an in-demand studio player.

Key tracks: Woody Herman, 'Keen And Peachy'; Ted McNabb and Company, 'Mountain Greenery'; Quincy Jones, 'Birth Of A Band'



Ed Shaughnessy (1929-2013)

Recognisable to millions of Americans on account of his decades of service in

the house band of Johnny Carson's *Tonight Show*, Ed Shaughnessy had one of the best regular gigs in the world, which he thoroughly deserved. Ed managed to keep his playing up to date without ever losing contact with his swing era and bebop roots. In his time off from his TV gig he was also a very able small band jazz drummer (big band drummers aren't always, and vice versa!) as well as an articulate and informative clinician. Ed had the perfect blend of groove and chops and constantly dispelled the nonsense about these two qualities being mutually exclusive. Check out Shaughnessy's legendary drum battle with Buddy Rich on YouTube. Ed gets about as close as anyone ever did.

Key tracks: Jimmy Smith, 'Walk On The Wild Side'; *Tonight Show Band Vol 1*, 'Shawnee'; *Broadway Basie's Way*, 'Everything's Coming Up Roses'



FEATURE
TWO SIDES OF THE MOON

LOOKING BACK AT TWO SIDES OF THE MOON

Forty years after its original release, we chronicle and reassess *Two Sides Of The Moon*, Keith Moon's only solo album

WORDS: ALAN CLAYSON

Roger Daltrey's 1973 track 'Giving It All Away', his biggest smash under his own name, was the most conspicuous indication that the post-Woodstock Who were growing apart. That same year, John Entwistle issued his third solo album - while Pete Townshend was embroiled in adapting the group's *Tommy* rock opera for a movie, and planning to take a year off to give his daughters paternal attention.

Time, therefore, hung heavy for Keith Moon, now dwelling on a different continent to John, Roger and Pete, having settled for three-in-the-morning bar-hopping and late afternoon grogginess by the swimming pool of a well-appointed ocean-side chalet on Stone Canyon Road in smart Santa Monica, beneath the cedared sweep of the Hollywood hills. He rented it with Ringo Starr, Harry Nilsson and, briefly, John Lennon. Omnipresent there too was Mal Evans, The Beatles' road manager and general runaround. He, likewise, was embroiled in marital difficulties and a correlated desire to behave like a teenager again as the lads and their hangers-on sauntered into topless bars; gatecrashed parties and local radio shows; raced by moonlight to the Malibu surf, and kerb-crawled in Lincoln Continentals with deafening sound systems. It wasn't unusual for any one of them to stir with the mother of all hangovers in a strange bed, unable to recollect the circumstances that had brought him there.

In the Stone Canyon Road living room, a portrait of the assassinated John F Kennedy gazed reproachfully at junk food leftovers, empty liquor bottles, overflowing ashtrays and stoned layabouts. The house that had once belonged to his family was open-house for its present incumbents' circle, among them Bobby Keys, Jesse Ed Davis, Jim Keltner and like former-friends of Delaney & Bonnie; personnel from Rick Nelson's Stone Canyon Band, The Flying Burrito Brothers and others who drank from the same then-fashionable country-rock pool, and more fabled callers such as Alice Cooper, ex-Monkee Mickey Dolenz, Phil Spector and Peter Frampton. Fanning dull embers for Beatle watchers, Paul McCartney and, more frequently from a Beverley Hills pied-à-terre, George Harrison popped by too.

Moon would often greet this human driftwood in a black velvet monogrammed dressing gown after washing down breakfast with Buck's Fizz from a mug. Within an hour of dressing, he'd punish up to four decanters of spirits "just to get things moving". Most of his subsequent escapades were harmless enough not to warrant much media approbation, even when Keith splashed out on a sky-written 'Happy Birthday, Ringo!' across Tinsel Town's rind of smog for Starr's 34th. Such extravagance tended to provoke laughter rather than censure, as did Moon's predictable frenzy of explosives, self-harm and unclothed cavortings.

TWO YEARS LEFT

Much of the music created by Keith and his mates was reflective of such conduct - and the attitude that



Vinyl cover had a cut out revealing either Keith and friend or, on the flipside of the inner sleeve, Keith's bum

rock'n'roll couldn't be done in any other way or with any other people than that self-absorbed elite whose only contact with life out in Dullsville was through dealers, gofers, managers and bodyguards. This was epitomised by Nilsson's slovenly *Pussy Cats*, an LP that encapsulated at its most loathsome the disdain of the 'superstar' for the paying customer.

Other efforts were, nevertheless, more focussed, among them Starr's *Goodnight Vienna* - and, while as intrinsically vainglorious as *Pussy Cats* (not least because of him displaying his naked buttocks on the back cover), Keith's *Two Sides Of The Moon*, completed during block-booked weeks at the Record Plant, conveniently close to the Stone Canyon Road abode. With its jacuzzi and rest rooms too, it was more inviting and hygienic than being shuttered likewise in most other metropolitan complexes.

Moon had dismissed suggestions of a collection centred on drum solos, always tedious to him anyway. Besides, Cozy Powell, fresh from The Jeff Beck Group, was already filling what was deduced to be a market void for a Sandy Nelson of the 1970s with 'Dance With The Devil' in the British Top 20 over 1973's Christmas sell-in. Instead of trying to compete against Powell, therefore, Keith decided he was going to be lead singer.

This was among hurdles that no less than four successive producers of the album - and further

tracks from the same period - had to jump. Indeed, so lacking in tonality was Moon that sometimes another sang along in unison out of microphone range or over the headphones, and the more suspect notes were veiled in reverberation or smothered in grandiloquent orchestration like that washing over 'Don't Worry Baby'.

'One Night Stand' was a virtual duet with Rick Nelson. Into the bargain, much of Keith's vocal style was borrowed. 'Crazy Like A Fox' could have been from David Bowie's *Aladdin Sane*, and Moon overplayed his hand as the effete Englishman in the mannered monologue of 'Solid Gold' - though, towards the fade, it mutated into a vague hybrid of Grandpa Munster and Robert Newton's Long John Silver. He bordered the same area for 'Teenage Idol' by coming on, perhaps appositely, as the polite, inhibited and too gentle pre-Merseybeat British rock'n'roller.

On many selections, he chose to be backed by drummers other than himself. An excuse rather than a reason for this was that a recently injured wrist was yet to heal, but more plausible was it cut corners, particularly as Moon's time-keeping had been suffering - to the degree that, on 1971's *Who's Next*, a click-track had been necessary to keep him on the beat - because of the stimulant abuse that was to bring about his body's final rebellion after years of violation. His head thrown back with laughter at some vulgar joke shared at the Record Plant console, how could Keith have known that he had only two years left?

He was also hoping perhaps to enhance his emerging standing as an 'all-round entertainer',

OFTEN ROARING DRUNK IN THE VOCAL ISOLATION BOOTH, MOON WAS THE FOUNT OF NUMEROUS NEEDLESS RE-TAKES

FEATURE

TWO SIDES OF THE MOON

Ringo Starr, Harry Nilsson, Micky Dolenz and Keith Moon partying in Hollywood



What with his four summer weeks as presenter on a 1973 BBC Radio One programme entitled *A Touch Of The Moon*; garbed in a nun's habit as 'Pamela' in *200 Motels*, Frank Zappa's only major movie; a cameo in *Son Of Dracula*, a horror flick overseen by Ringo and also featuring Nilsson, and - also in the early 1970s - more substantial roles in *That'll Be The Day* and its *Stardust* sequel. Yet, alluding to *Two Sides Of The Moon* as his "first - and possibly last - solo album", Keith was to shrug it off in a US radio commercial featuring excerpts as a "collage of crap".

Most contemporary critics agreed. However, the presence of up-and-coming acts - like, say, Jim Gilstrap, then on the crest of his 'Swing Your Daddy' hit - as well as some of pop's elder statesmen was among the trace elements that helped forestall an immediate tumble into the bargain bin. Witness 'King Of The Surf Guitar' Dick Dale's cameo on 'Teenage Idol': biting, heavy-gauge arpeggios and his old staccato fretboard dive-bombing, emulated by a string section later in the song.

A total 'Dick Head', Keith had stumbled upon his hero at the Whisky-A-Go-Go in 1974. "I was in the middle of a song," related Dick, "when he walked up on stage with Mal Evans. Grabbing the mic right out of my face, he said, 'Dick Dale, I'm Keith Moon of the Who! Who?'" Dick Dale had never heard of The Who,

"but he told me - and everyone else - that he'd got John Lennon and Ringo on his solo album, and if Dick Dale didn't play on it, he'd junk the whole project."

BEHIND THE KIT

Dale was to remember his hand in *Two Sides Of The Moon* as pleasant enough - as it was for others too, as long as they overlooked either the cancellation of many sessions or their degeneration into a narcotics-fuelled party with the attendant shenanigans. Often roaring drunk in the vocal isolation booth, Moon was the fount of numerous otherwise needless re-takes and drop-ins. There was plenty of further scope for errors from all the similarly plastered pals. These associates hovered round the mixing desk, distracting engineers who, themselves, may have wanted to collapse, screaming with laughter, onto the carpet as Keith - tottering dangerously in front of a uni-directional microphone - attempted 'In My Life', The Beatles' introspective meditation from *Rubber Soul*; or 'Don't Worry Baby', which co-writer Brian Wilson once considered "the most perfect pop record of all time". Though, give him credit, Keith didn't remove The Beach Boys' hot-rod references as most other covers did.

Though apparently present, Wilson requested not to be mentioned on the sleeve. In attendance too were Jim Keltner and others with first refusal on all

LA studio dates. Then there was Klaus Voorman, an old mate of Ringo, plus four other bass guitarists. One of five keyboard players, Jay Ferguson hammered Jerry Lee Lewis-esque '88's for 'Back Door Sally', which encompassed some ascending "aaaaaahs" from Flo-and-Eddie (alias Howard Kaylan and Mark Volman, sometime vocalists with The Turtles and then The Mothers Of Invention).

From out of the sub-cultural woodwork too, Keith had drawn Spencer Davis. For those who remembered his Group with Steve Winwood, Spencer Davis on acoustic guitar looked well in the credits for 'Crazy Like A Fox', *Two Sides Of The Moon*'s opening salvo. Elsewhere, so did John Sebastian, guitarist Joe Walsh of men-of-the-moment, The Eagles, and the entire personnel of all-female Fanny (on 'Solid Gold', penned by their Nicole Barclay).

As well as Fanny's Cam Davis and Moon himself (on just three tracks), behind the kit too where appropriate were Ron Grinel from country-rock 'supergroup' The Souther-Hillman-Furay Band; curly Smith of local one-hit-wonders Jo Jo Gunne (with Jay Ferguson); Flying Burrito Brother Mickey McGee and Miguel Ferrer, scion of a Hollywood showbiz dynasty, who was in another parochial outfit, The Jenerators. As it was with the more-involved Jim Keltner, without exception, they ministered unobtrusively to overall anchoring effect, serving as still, small voices of percussive reason while others ran around too often like headless chickens.

Ringo Starr was waved in to drum unremarkably on 'Together', the album's finale, penned by Ringo, Nilsson and Moon. However, it had been beyond Keith to come up with another composition of his own to break up a selection of wall-to-wall non-originals. He found time, nevertheless, to figure

MOON HAD DISMISSED SUGGESTIONS OF A COLLECTION CENTRED ON DRUM SOLOS, ALWAYS TEDIOUS TO HIM ANYWAY, AND DECIDED HE WAS GOING TO BE LEAD SINGER



Insert your own "Now, where did I park the car?" gag here

out a new arrangement - embracing his succinct pitter-patter drum solo (the only one on the album) - of 'The Kids Are Alright' from The Who's early portfolio (of which he knew most marginal US fans of The Who wouldn't be aware).

Lyrical, it addressed a moral generosity that had been so at odds with Keith's own character that it was thought prudent to conceal from him that his girlfriend had once been romantically involved with Skip Taylor, the producer who replaced Mal Evans at the behest of Moon's anxious record company, MCA. In this respect, Moon was at one with John Lennon whose post-Beatles 'Oh Yoko', 'Oh My Love', apologetic 'Jealous Guy' and further ditties of uxorious bent had been written before he left Yoko in 1973 for his 15-month 'lost weekend'.

NEEDLE TIME

Remaindered from his *Walls And Bridges* album in 1974, 'Move Over Ms L' was perceived as a dig at his estranged spouse. Yet, fearing it would upset the volcanic Yoko, Lennon tossed what was not his finest hour as a tunesmith to Moon (though a new Lennon recording of 'Move Over Ms L' was to B-side his 'Stand By Me' later in 1975). Such a gift, however trite, was all grist to MCA's publicity mill as the label derived what gain it could from the mere 10

© Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images

AND ON DRUMS...

The drummers who helped Keith out on *Two Sides Of The Moon*

RON GRINEL

The drummer with country-rock 'supergroup' the Souther-Hillman-Furay Band played on the John Lennon-penned raucous rock'n'roller 'Move Over Ms L'.

CAM DAVIS

Fanny were one of the first all-female rock bands, and their drummer Cam Davis backed Keith's oh-so-English monologue on 'Solid Gold', with music written by Fanny's Nicky Barclay.

JIM KELTNER

The session star, then best known for helping out on the various Beatles' solo work was on hand for much of Keith's album, drumming most notably on the '50s-styled 'Teenage Idol'.

MICKEY MCGEE

The Flying Burrito Brother who'd also backed

Linda Ronstadt and Jackson Browne, lent a sweet country-rock shuffle to 'One Night Stand'.

CURLY SMITH

Smith, of LA scenesters Jo Jo Gunne, provided the beats to 'Crazy Like A Fox' and 'Back Door Sally' and is credited, alongside Keith, on a version of 'The Kids Are Alright'.

MIGUEL FERRER

The future *Robocop* (the classic 1987 one) and *Iron Man 3* actor makes a pretty decent job of the Beach Boys-esque 'Don't Worry Baby', co-penned by Brian Wilson.

RINGO STARR

Keith's Fab Four best mate was on hand to play on the album's finale 'Together', a track which Ringo had also had a hand in writing, alongside Keith and Harry Nilsson.

FEATURE

TWO SIDES OF THE MOON

Tracks, all around the two- to three-minute mark, that gave short weight, even by the needle-time that was the norm of US album pressings.

Unsurprisingly, *Two Sides Of The Moon* struggled in the lower reaches of even regional charts, and “I don’t know. What do you think?” was the spirit that pervaded MCA’s weekly board meeting after Keith thought aloud about a second album. Yet studio time was allocated, and Steve Cropper of Booker T and the MGs, who picked guitar on *Goodnight Vienna*, was entrusted to organise a small, hand-picked crew to accompany Moon, and anchor the antics of special guests such as comedian Peter Cook – who had pop star aspirations – and the faithful Ringo. Of all people, Kenney Jones, available during a week’s gap in his Faces’ final tour of the States, contributed too. Slightly over three months after Keith’s death, Kenney was to join The Who, remaining with them for three albums. Incidentally, among Who stickmen who came after Kenney was Zak Starkey, Ringo’s son, for whom Moon was the god of percussion, ‘the very best in the world’.

Among extant items from these sessions are Randy Newman’s sardonic ‘Naked Man’, and Steve Cropper’s own maddeningly catchy ‘Do Me Good’ – which would have been more suitable for Starr, along with ‘Real Emotion’ in which a jogalong melody is layered with a wah-wah’d fretboard obligato and verses about a couch potato slumped in front of afternoon television. Yet, for reasons connected to his Who commitments and Moon’s worsening alcoholism, the project was abandoned. The master tapes, such as they were, were not erased, however, but stored until put to monetary use as bonus tracks on a turn-of-the-millennium CD reissue of *Two Sides Of The Moon*.

As late as 1978, there was discussion about a second Moon album to be produced by British music business jack-of-all-trades Kenny Lynch, and embracing compositions by Steve Gibbons, the Birmingham singer-songwriter who had supported The Who on a recent world tour. “I came up with ‘Long Live The Moon,’” recalled Steve, “and ‘Bye Bye Blues’ – nothing to do with the Bert Kaempfert number – which I taped and played to Keith in a hotel room somewhere in the States. He liked it enough to ask me to come to his flat in London to play it to his girlfriend as soon as we landed in Heathrow when the tour was over.”

A deal was negotiated with a Japanese outlet – possibly because worthwhile interest could not be kindled in any UK or USA companies – but Keith’s death intervened, and *Two Sides Of The Moon* remained his only solo testament (unless you count his ‘When I’m Sixty-Four’ on the film soundtrack of 1977’s *All This And World War Two*), an album that most consumers of today’s cultured ‘contemporary’ rock have brought their children up to consider as a mistake, a faux pas and, at best, a product that was almost *meant* to be “crap”.

SENSE OF FUN

In retrospect, however, it was halfway bearable, even worthy of praise. If nothing else, *Two Sides Of The Moon* was freighted with an overall sense of fun hinged on English humour, as opposed to North American humour – even if, say, Keith and Ringo’s ‘crossover’ routine (a centre-stage comedian



Keith and friend on location for the album cover-shoot

© Jim McCray/Redferns/Getty Images

IT HAD BEEN BEYOND KEITH TO COME UP WITH ANOTHER COMPOSITION OF HIS OWN, BUT HE FOUND TIME TO FIGURE OUT A NEW ARRANGEMENT OF ‘THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT’

constantly interrupted by another) over ersatz-reggae in the ‘Together’ finale, palled on replay, as recorded comedy often does. Moon was also effective enough as the funnyman-being-serious on wracked ‘I Don’t Suppose’, taped but not selected for *Two Sides Of The Moon*. He made a fair if console-aided fist too of ‘Don’t Worry Baby’, even managing a falsetto on the take earmarked as *Two Sides Of The Moon*’s first spin-off single. Wisely, however, he did not try to hit that high G coda of ‘In My Life’, electing instead to half-recite it.

A Pavarotti-loving fly on the studio wall may have blocked its ears when Keith strayed outside his central two octaves, but, in context, his humble vocal endowment was not unattractive, even ingenuously charming – as it had been on The Who’s version of

Jan and Dean’s ‘Bucket T’, buried on side two of 1966’s *Ready Steady Who* EP, but a chart-topper when issued as a Scandinavian A-side.

In any case, who wanted Keith Moon to be a Pavarotti when he stood a better chance of carving as deep a niche of true individuality as, say, Jimmy ‘Schnozzle’ Durante (luminary of 1940s musical comedy) with his semi-spoken nasal twang? Let this discussion conclude with George Bernard Shaw’s comments about an actress with whom he was infatuated: ‘You will tell me, no doubt, that Mrs Patrick Campbell cannot act. Who said that she could, and who wants her to act? Who cares two pence whether she possesses that or any other second-rate accomplishment? On the highest plane, one does not act, one is.’ **R**

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SONORDRUMTUBE 

INTERVIEW
BILL STEWART



© Jimmy Katz

BILL STEWART

WORDS: GEOFF NICHOLLS

One of the most highly-regarded contemporary American jazz drummers stuns *Rhythm* with his boundless creativity and reveals some key ingredients of his crisp sound and extraordinary technical range

Originally from Des Moines, Iowa, son of musician parents and college-trained, Stewart established himself on the New York scene during the late 1980s. He flexed his funk chops with Maceo Parker and James Brown, but soon proved himself a jazz natural with guitarist John Scofield and saxophonist Joe Lovano.

Simultaneously he began making albums as a leader/composer, adding classical and free jazz influences to his mastery of hard bop. He has since worked with pianists Bill Carrothers and Kevin Hays, guitarists Pat Metheny and Lage Lund, saxophonists Chris Potter and Michael Brecker, plus umpteen others.

Throughout he has sustained a flexible trio with organist/pianist Larry Goldings (James Taylor, Madeleine Peyroux) and guitarist Peter Bernstein (Joshua Redman, Brad Mehldau). It was with these two that *Rhythm* caught Bill at Ronnie Scott's club in January. Unquestionably one of today's most musically intriguing drummers, he is characterised by an exceptionally sharp technique and dynamic

awareness. His distinctive woody-clicky ride tone is decorated with the occasional splang from the stick shoulder, a sudden wake-up clacking on his snare and womping of his floor toms. Always maintaining a driving swing, he crosses hands, rhythms and meters while picking out melodic riffs on his bell-like toms.

Bill, watching the Larry Goldings Trio last night, you guys are so at ease with one another.

"Yeah, I've been playing with Larry and Peter Bernstein since late 1988 in New York City at a bar called Augies (today the jazz club, Smoke). Back then we'd pass the hat to get a little extra money. And that's how we got started. But we have kept playing - some years more than others, because we are all busy doing other things. It's a co-led trio, everybody has songs in the repertoire."

On 'Jive Coffee', with your big 5/4 drum solo, the audience would have been happy if you'd gone on all night!

"I was hoping not to overstay my welcome!"

No, it was mesmerising and the fresh ideas kept coming. Many drummers just string their practice room licks together.

"That's right. I try not to do that. I like to take a few ideas, work with them and develop variations on them. Instead of the thing many drummers do where they get to their solo and throw the kitchen sink out there, one idea after another they've been working on. And come their next solo they have to play the same stuff. So it's better to conserve your ideas and make more out of them. And it is usually more musical that way too, rather than just a bunch of licks strung together. So I may take one thing that is a lick but find different ways to work with it - change the meter, change the orchestration on the drumset.

"I can take an idea and play it forwards, backwards, on a different part of the set, whatever, to keep it sounding like it is evolving during the music. And also that way you get a sense of motivic development. And it's good to save something for the next tune... and something for the next gig!"

You have a distinctive way of riffing around your three toms while vamping.

"I will play with the left hand on the toms and make a solo out of that. So I am sort of a rhythm section for myself. I'll play the ride in a more or less traditional jazz way, and then my left hand is more the improviser. I get into

"I AM SORT OF A RHYTHM SECTION FOR MYSELF. I'LL PLAY THE RIDE IN A TRADITIONAL JAZZ WAY, THEN MY LEFT HAND IS MORE THE IMPROVISER"

INTERVIEW

BILL STEWART

▶ accompanying myself and then I can do melodic things with toms against the cymbal. This comes from working on that both in the practice room and on actual gigs. Also I feel like that fills up the space in a nice way where I don't have to play a lot of busy stuff on the drums, whereas if I wasn't accompanying myself on the cymbal I would feel like I needed to play more on the drums to make it sound full, not incomplete."

It's musical and there's always a sense of the groove moving forward, whether you are soloing or not. You don't stop and go, "DRUMS!"

"I don't want the groove to stop at the drum solo. If it's swinging, why should it stop at that point? If anything I want to get deeper into it."

I went home last night thinking I'm gonna tune my toms up! Your three always cut through, on recordings and live.

"And without any mics on them. In a club like that you don't need much [close] miking anyway, so overheads are great. Live, mostly I like a couple of overheads and maybe a bass drum mic. We can't afford to bring our own sound man, so with mainly overheads I feel I can control the balance of what is projected."

Do you tune to specific notes?

"No, but I bet they are about the same each time I tune them. On tour I encounter a different drum kit every day, hopefully in the same sizes, and I am used to tuning them up pretty quickly. I usually start with the bottom head on the mounted tom. I tap it, hear

where it's at pitch-wise and tune it up to where it needs to be. Then tune the top head. I go round all the drums without hitting them with a stick and I can pretty much get them in the zone. It's possible on one gig they are a half step off from the gig last night, but they do come in pretty close to set pitches, except that I am not really going for a B-flat or F or something. Occasionally a drum might not resonate in a certain pitch range, in which case if it resonates better a step away I might do that. But I have an optimum pitch zone and if it's a good drum then I think I put them in a similar place each night."

Is the bottom higher than the top?

"Yes, the bottom is usually about a whole tone higher on the toms, and on the snare and bass drum, a little bit wider range than that, but the same principle."

Your far right cymbal is a flat?

"Yes, a prototype Zildjian came out with called Light Flat Ride. I heard some at a thing they do in New York where they have a get-together for drummers and new products - like a cocktail party with cymbals! I asked [Zildjian R&D director] Paul Francis to send me a really trashy one. A lot of flat rides don't have a crash, or they sound polite. This one really opens up and I use it more as a colour cymbal and to crash, more so than a ride. But it rides nicely too."

And I noticed your hi-hats are parallel.

"I don't like tilters, I always have that bottom cymbal flat. I pick cymbals that go well together. They're not a matched pair - the top is a Zildjian prototype from 10 years ago, a bit on the heavy side. The bottom is

lighter, a Special Dry 14", actually a top cymbal which I use on the bottom... somebody may give me a ticket for that [laughs]!"

Your use of matched grip still raises some eyebrows in jazz.

"I started out playing drums when my uncle bought me a set when I was about five. My parents were musicians and my dad [Steve Stewart] was an excellent jazz trombonist and a band director in schools. He probably showed me matched grip because matched was taught a lot to beginners and my dad was teaching kids who were 12 or 13 in Junior High. I did see others play traditional early on. One of dad's best friends was a drummer who played traditional. But matched was easier for me to get into and once I got going with it, old habits are hard to break. They do have different sound tendencies and with my matched grip I try to approximate some things about traditional in terms of sound."

Matched can imply an all-round classical percussionist's approach as well. On (pianist) Bill Carrothers' album, *Duets With Bill Stewart* (1999), I love your impressionistic and free playing, like on 'Vito's Dream World', and the unexpected contrast of you rattling away furiously behind the calm balladeering piano on 'I Apologise'.

"Ahh, juxtaposition, yes, I know the one you mean!"

So you studied classical percussion?

"Not much. Just in college at the University of Northern Iowa and it was all pretty new to me. For one year I studied, on an alternating basis, snare drum, timpani and marimba."

In your own compositions too, like 'Four Hand Job' (Bill Stewart, *Incandescence*, 2008) I hear European avant garde, while 'These Are They' (Bill Stewart, *Telepathy*, 1997) has a modern classical piano interlude. Is this from your own piano playing?

"It's from a few things. I do listen to a fair amount of 20th Century classical music - Stravinsky, Bartók, Messiaen, Berg, Ravel, Satie. I also like [19th Century] Brahms a lot. I studied theory a little in college. In my writing those influences creep in a bit. But also you may have heard Bill Carrothers improvising something that maybe I didn't write, because he is also heavily into that."

Still you always intended to be a jazz drummer?

"I think that was the way I was leaning, even by the time I got to college. I knew I could work, because at high school I played with a top 40 band in Des Moines with musicians who were much older than me. But I didn't know how specialised I could be, because jazz drums is fairly specialised and there are many who would like to do it, but only a few can, for a living. When I was 18 I went out to the East Coast for my second year, which was a very important move. In Iowa I wasn't meeting many people my age who were into the specialised music I was into. I needed to be around more musicians with something in common, and Paterson College [New Jersey] had teachers I knew about from hearing them on records. I never would have had contact

"IT'S BETTER TO CONSERVE YOUR IDEAS AND MAKE MORE OUT OF THEM. AND IT IS USUALLY MORE MUSICAL THAT WAY TOO, RATHER THAN JUST A BUNCH OF LICKS"



Bill has maintained a flexible trio, taking turns to lead, with organist Larry Goldings and guitarist Peter Bernstein, ever since graduating from college in 1988



"I can take an idea and play it forwards, backwards, on a different part of the set, whatever, to keep it sounding like it is evolving during the music"

Bill Stewart Montreal
Photo © T. Bence

with them in Iowa - and also I met students who were playing at a higher level."

Almost like in the movie *Whiplash*. Have you seen it?

"No, musicians who have, have told me it's terrible!"

Absolutely. The message seems to be that bullying pays off, and that great jazz is playing stupidly fast and getting blood on the cymbals! Still, you could have been that single-minded ingénue, arriving at college in New York. Was it ever like that for you?

"No! I never found the process of learning and studying music in college and coming to the East Coast gruelling or difficult. Don't get me wrong, I worked hard at it. But it didn't feel like something I didn't want to do. It was something I was really into. So I practised a lot. I guess I knew I had some talent, but I also could hear things I needed to do to get better. I can still hear that [laughs]."

Well you're hugely accomplished now, but do you recall any scary moments coming up?

"Not scary, but I was on edge when I was playing with Maceo Parker's band and he got a call to play with James Brown on an HBO Special [1991] that involved MC Hammer. James had just got out of prison and we rehearsed and taped the show that

night. Four classic tunes: 'Cold Sweat', 'Please, Please, Please', 'Get On The Good Foot' and 'I Got The Feeling'. You had to watch for cues - moves with his hands and feet. Also, I was kind of star struck, I was about 24, and maybe partly because in that style I didn't feel quite as confident as I do playing more open, interactive jazz. I felt I had to play the gig the way it needs to sound. No Bill Stewart thing at all. So that was a time I felt edgy. You had to be alert."

Pretty soon though you were turning heads with John Scofield. I remember being hooked the moment I heard 'She's So Lucky' (*Hand Jive*, John Scofield, 1994) with that sleazy-funky group of four eighth-notes. Are they flams?

"Yes, I think so. I play buzz rolls with both hands and so I can take any rhythm and play it with a buzz. I can play a paradiddle or flam with a buzz on each stroke. Either both ways, or it might all be left-right flams. But I will play any rhythm with that, either with one hand or with both hands to make a buzz roll, so if I play left-right really quickly as a flam it has a length to it and sounds fat. I have heard other people, like Roy Haynes, do similar things with buzz rolls and he is a big inspiration."

I always assumed that you went back to New Orleans?

"Scofield has a New Orleans influence in his music >

ASK BILL

DRUMMER AND BILL STEWART FAN, STEVE SMITH, ASKS:

I dig Bill's ride cymbal time and his endless flow of interesting ideas while playing time and while soloing. Bill has an unusual grip that seems like it's based on getting a clear 'knock' from the ride cymbal. How did that develop?

Bill: "A lot comes from the first finger and thumb - and the other fingers I use for support, to propel the stick and control the bounce. I can play with more of a closed grip on some things, a little tighter or looser, which affects the sound. The wood sound comes from where the hand is in contact with the back of the stick. Not from the tip of the stick hitting the cymbal. If I put my ear right next to my hand when riding, the wood click would be extremely loud in my ear. My first year on the East Coast I bought an old thin 20" K Zildjian I had to learn how to play. To use it as a main ride I had to really work at getting a defined sound and projection, so I practised it a lot. I tried subtly different things with my hand to control the sound and focus it more. Once I learned how to play that one if I went to another cymbal with better definition and projection it helped me on that too."

Bill plays Gretsch drums and Zildjian cymbals, preferably teamed with a Ludwig 14"x6½" Hammered Brass snare with tube lugs



© T Bruce Wittet

"I MAY TAKE ONE THING THAT IS A LICK BUT FIND DIFFERENT WAYS TO WORK WITH IT - CHANGE THE METER, CHANGE THE ORCHESTRATION ON THE DRUMSET"

» and I think he wanted something in that direction. Previously, my first record with John [*Meant To Be*, 1991], had a track called 'Chariots' [search on YouTube: *John Scofield Quartet Chariots Live 1991*] with a similar thing - a quasi-New Orleans snare drum with snare and bass drum played like it's two different players. A vague marching band concept, but I didn't really check out any specific New Orleans tracks for that. I did what I thought might work. It's possible it came out better for not being authentic. First thing, it has to have a groove, and some of those figures I lay back a little and catch up later."

Your drumming has continued to mature and evolve alongside Scofield (every drummer should check out *En Route LIVE!*, 2004). But you've also made five albums under your own name.

"The sixth album is out in the Fall. It's a quartet

with Seamus Blake on tenor and soprano saxophones, Bill Carrothers, piano and Ben Street, bass. It was done in New York and will be out on Pirouette Records."

Is being a leader the most important of your roles?

"The most important is probably my gigs as a sideman, because that is mostly how I make a living. I could probably do more as leader, but I would have to make that a priority and it would be a bit more of a struggle in terms of making a living playing music. I have plenty of work as a sideman for various people. And I have also always done my own projects where I try to do exactly what I want to do, because in other situations I can't always do that. It's my opportunity to express something and to play my own compositions." **R**

BILL'S GEAR

DRUMS

Gretsch USA Custom drums: 12"x8", 14"x14", 16"x16", 18"x14"; Ludwig 14"x6½" Hammered Brass snare with tube lugs and regular, simple strainer ("I prefer the Ludwig metal drums, I like the silver [chrome] ones and the Black Beauties. The one I play at home is the Hammered Brass.")

CYMBALS

Zildjian: left side, 20" Dry Complex ride; main ride: 22" Dry Complex ride; far right: 20" Prototype K Light Flat ride; hi-hats: "Top is a 14" Zildjian prototype from 10 years ago, a bit on the heavy side. Bottom is lighter, off the shelf, a Special Dry 14" top cymbal which I use on the bottom."

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WORDS: RICH CHAMBERLAIN

For the past 30 years, *Rhythm's* all-knowing experts have cast their eyes over just about every piece of new gear that has hit the market, each innovation and tweak to tried-and-trusted products has been evaluated, meaning that we're perfectly placed to offer advice on the gear that you need to know about. Each month our Buyer's Guide is a handy run-through of essential gear, everything from the best high-end kits to the most reliable sticks, and everything in between. This month we investigate the best in quality in the world of super league drum kits: seriously top end, where your only restrictions are your imagination and your bank balance.

HOW TO BUY... SUPER LEAGUE KITS

Where to go when you want more than *just* a production line pro kit? Well, you have to enter the world of the super league drum kit. These are kits carved from the very finest materials, with all kinds of customisation options on offer. While the woods used for pro kits are limited to a handful, here you can pick from dozens of exotic species to personalise the finish and sound. The temptation is to show off the exquisitely figured grain like antique furniture, but you could alternatively opt for a startlingly tasteless, personalised, elaborate hotrod/surfing-style graphic - or anything else you can think of. Many companies also offer a dazzling array of finishes and size options. Whatever sizes you've always craved, however mad the finish on shells or hardware, it's all possible. Copper kit in jazz sizes with a silver sparkle finish? Double-kick kit with eight toms? Done.

By the time you have this sort of money you should have an accurate idea of the sound you're looking for. But the manufacturer should also be able to guide you in choosing the right shell materials, composition and construction to get the particular nuances of timbre you've hitherto been denied.

At this end of the market you'll need a hefty wad of cash, but you can end up with something truly stunning, whether it be jaw-dropping maple kit or something forged from woods discovered in the Aussie outback, there's some serious fun to be had.



1 DW Collector's Series SSC

In a marketplace populated by an ever-growing number of custom drum builders, DW drums still stand out. The company's reputation has been built on its quality of workmanship, level of innovation and willingness to react to drummers' needs. The SSC (Specialised Shell Configuration) kits are that little bit extra special, mixing DW's Collector's Series shell options to create the ideal kit. By chopping and changing the production and construction methods across individual drums, DW is able to offer exactly the sound and tone that you want.

www.dwdrums.com



2 Sonor SQ2

Sonor really kicked the whole modern designer trend off back in the 1980s and the SQ2 is the culmination. Always wanted a 16"x20" X-ray acrylic kick with gloss white hoops, American Walnut inside veneer, gold plated claws and chrome spurs? Er, well you can! www.sonor.com



3 Pearl Masterworks

Opt for a Masterworks kit and you can choose everything from the wood and shell construction used, right through to the colour of your hardware, as well as lug and hoop design, bearing edges and plenty more. www.pearldrums.com



4 Tama Star

Available in maple, walnut and bubinga, these kits are another step towards drum heaven. Incredible quality, and a raft of innovations, like Tama's Super Resonant Tom Mounts and the Quick Log memory bracket. Earns its place through sheer quality. www.tama.com



5 Brady Walkabout

Aptly named, as the company's founder Chris Brady heads out into the Aussie outback and returns having handpicked a range of rare, indigenous woods you will find nowhere else. What does he do with these woods? He makes killer drums from them, of course. www.bradydrums.com.au



6 Craviotto Solid Shell

Plenty of options are available in each and every Craviotto line, such as their Solid Shell kits, each of which is handcrafted to the exact specifications that you request following a consultation with the US drum-makers' main man himself, Johnny Craviotto. www.craviottodrums.com



7 Premier One

Each kit off the Premier One production line is individual, a complete one-off. Crafted in the UK by Premier's master builder Keith Keough, these drums offer supreme levels of customisation and feature a classy Premier pewter badge. www.premier-percussion.com



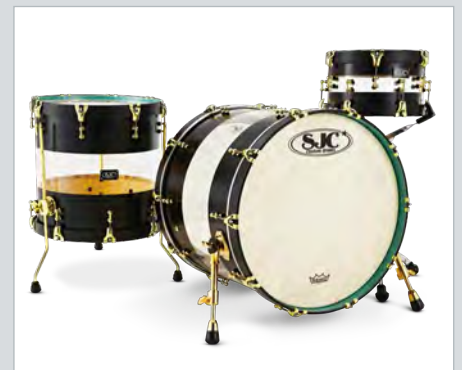
8 Q Drum Co Copper kit

Founded by craftsman Jeremy Berman, the Ilan Rubin-backed company are modern masters producing today's 'must have' drums. Q can offer a myriad of shell options in maple, mahogany, brass, copper, steel and acrylic. Something for every taste. www.qdrumco.com



9 Gretsch USA Custom

More than 75 different size options and 60 finishes on offer - from Black Glass to Vintage Oyster White. There's also the matter of picking hardware finishes (chrome, gold or black) and styles. Basically, there's enough choice to make your head spin. www.gretschdrums.com



10 SJC Custom Hybrid

SJC can offer a stunning array of sizes - from 8" to 30" drums in maple, birch, mahogany, carbon fibre, brass and more - but its never-ending choice of finishes is truly jaw dropping. You can work with SJC to create the perfect look for your kit. www.sjcdrums.com

ALI BLEED FROM WITHIN/SYLOSIS RICHARDSON

The Scottish metal star talks to *Rhythm* about stalking his hero Vinnie Paul, balancing the demands of playing in two fast rising bands, and finding his perfect drum sound in a big glass room

WORDS: DAVID WEST PHOTOS: JESSE WILD

Tearing it up with Scottish metal band Bleed From Within and now providing the power behind Reading's death metallers Sylosis, Ali Richardson is reaping the rewards of a decade of dedication to metal drumming. But the drums weren't even his first instrument. "I actually used to play clarinet before I was a drummer," says Richardson, who grew up listening to his brother's Queen records. "I always thought I was a ginger Roger Taylor," he says. "But at 13 I heard Pantera for the first time and that's what drew me to the drum kit. That changed everything, so I went from being a clarinet player to a drummer."

He learned to play on a cheap electronic kit his parents bought him to see if he was serious, before finally getting his hands on a Pearl Export at 14.

"As soon as I got the kit I was like, that's it, I'm a real drummer now. I went straight down to the local youth centre, 'Right, I've got a drum kit, who needs a drummer?', selling myself to anyone who'd have me." Bleed From Within formed in 2005 but really broke out from the metal pack in 2013 with their third album *Uprising*, their first release after signing to Century Media. When Bleed From Within were out on tour with Sylosis in 2014, Richardson filled in for their drummer Rob Callard who was unavailable for those dates. Then when Callard announced his departure from the band after recording their new album *Dormant Heart*, Sylosis offered the job to Richardson permanently. Now he's balancing two of the UK's hottest metal bands, teaching drums and practising when he's home in





Glasgow. "It's quite amazing what you can learn about your own playing when you go back to basics," he says.

You had a great, natural drum sound on *Bleed From Within's Uprising*...

"I think in metal music especially there are a lot of overproduced drums. I don't think there is enough expression behind the kit. There are a lot of drummers who have picked up the sticks and said, 'I just want to be the fastest player I can possibly be.' I think modern music today lacks dynamics and expression. Me personally, that's something I want to bring into my own playing and hopefully that can help my bands stand out in what could be considered an oversaturated, overproduced metal scene. That's not to say every drummer plays like that. One of my favourite drummers, Mario [*Duplantier*] from Gojira, that's a prime example of someone who is playing extreme music but the drumming is so creative and it feels like he's putting his voice on the music through his kit. He's a very inspiring player to me."

Is Pantera's Vinnie Paul still a big influence?

"Damn right. I met him once at a nightclub in London, he was talking to Rob Flynn from Machine Head for about two hours and I just sat there and stalked him, waiting for my opportunity. Rob Flynn went to the bar, I'm like, 'Vinnie!' I've got a *Cowboys From Hell* tattoo on my right arm, I showed him the tattoo, 'You're the only reason I started playing drums.' He was like, 'Hell yeah, brother.' He's

INTERVIEW

ALI RICHARDSON



such a cool guy. He's the main reason I put down the clarinet, so I've got a lot to thank him for."

Vinnie is always groovy no matter how heavy he plays.

"That's another thing I think is missing from a lot of modern metal music, it's something I think is overlooked, but groove is the heart of everything. Again, Mario is one of those guys. Dirk Verbeuren – we toured with Soilwork a few years ago and Dirk's playing is incredible. If you take the guitars out and just listen to the drum tracks, you're like, is that a metal song? What's going on here? Groove is the centre of it all."

How did you approach recording drums for *Uprising*?

"The first couple of albums, they sound very overproduced, especially the second release, *Empire*. I was happy with it at the time but as I've grown older and listened back, it's not really what I wanted to get from the kit. Going into the studio for *Uprising*, we worked with Romesh Dodangoda, a good friend of mine. I'd spoken with him about doing a metal album because I always thought he could harness the actual sound of the kit and the energy that's there when you don't overproduce stuff. So he suggested Monnow Valley [studios], which I hadn't actually heard of. He sent me some photos of the studio and it just looked insane. He's like, 'Honestly Ali, this is the best place for you, the best place for your kit.' The kit seemed to sing in there. Behind where the drummer sits there is a big glass room almost like a conservatory. It basically provides you with loads and loads of natural reverb. You can pull shutters across to control how much reverb you're getting and there was a mic in the centre of that

room and then two room mics in the back corners. As soon as we started tracking, I listened to the first couple of takes, he was bringing the fader up on the mics in that glass room, I was like, 'Oh my god! This is the sound I've been looking for all these years.' It sounds big but it's still tight, it's natural, it's punchy as hell. That's what I was really going for on *Uprising* – it still has to be metal, it has to be tight, it has to have the clicky bass drum to help bring the guitars out – it was big and natural and it had life to it. That's what I'll continue to try to find throughout the rest of my career. I hate things that are like, 'Oh, we can record it anywhere because we'll put some samples over it.' It's not the way things should be done. What's the point? You get this lovely drum kit, you spend hours tuning it and then you might as well program it, mate."

Is it tough to manage your schedule playing in two active bands?

"Right now, it's working out pretty nicely. Sylosis have just released their new album, *Dormant Heart*, on the 12th January, so their touring schedule is starting now throughout March and April and then we've got festival season and we're potentially going to Japan at the end of the year. This is their cycle picking up. Bleed From Within, on the other hand, we're just writing at the moment and we're looking for a release at the end of this year, so I think I made the right decision to join Sylosis when I did. Their album is coming out at the start of the year, Bleed's is at the end of this year, so next year Sylosis is quieting down as soon as Bleed From Within starts to get busy. It's definitely something I've thought about – how is it going to be in the next couple of years? – but I saw it as an opportunity to travel more and it's an excuse to play my drum kit more. I couldn't say no."

"I WAS SWEATING, THERE WAS SWEAT IN MY EYES, MY STICKS WERE SLIDING ABOUT, I TOOK A DEEP BREATH AND SAID, 'BUCK UP, THIS IS HAPPENING'"



Ali manages to balance two of the most in-demand gigs in metal, Sylosis and Bleed From Within

Does it help you develop as a drummer having more than one project on the go?

"Yes, I've definitely noticed a change in myself and my playing. I am playing the drum kit more because I have to. Like I said, we're currently writing a new Bleed From Within album so we're in the studio two or three times a week writing but then I'm up there on my own maybe two days learning Sylosis' material, tracks they're potentially going to have in the set-list. I didn't play on the new Sylosis album, I joined after the drum parts had been recorded, so I'm going through the album, learning stuff and getting a feel for how they put stuff together.

"We are going to write a new album. Josh [Middleton, Sylosis vocalist/guitarist] is really excited to get started on some new material that we can work together on, I can put my sound to the Sylosis sound, but I don't want to change anything too much, if that makes sense. They've got a sound that they've made and Josh is very particular about how that is. It definitely helps having more than one project. If I wasn't in Sylosis then I've got the teaching as well, but I'd be looking for something in Glasgow, a little thing on the side. You need to keep yourself busy, exercising the mind."



How much can you put your own stamp on the Sylosis music?

"Rob the original drummer is a really good friend of mine, I was gutted when I found out he wasn't going to make the tour but when they asked me to fill in, I was like, 'I will do my best to learn these parts but Rob is a machine. This is going to test me as a drummer, definitely.' To someone who doesn't listen to a lot of metal music then Bleed From Within and Sylosis could be considered quite similar but Bleed From Within is quite modern metal and Sylosis, while being modern, has a bit more of a traditional approach. Drumming-wise, Bleed From Within, my style of playing, I'm very stoppy-starty, quite fidgety I guess behind the kit, whereas with Sylosis there'll be a consistent, solid double-bass part, 200bpm for 16 bars with no fills. I would usually break up something like that with a fill in the middle just to keep the consistency and the power. I learned a lot about myself as a drummer and I realised I could push myself. With Sylosis it's a very different ball game."

Do the drums play the same role in both bands? Are you always locking in with the guitars?

"Slightly different. Sylosis is a very guitar driven band. When I was learning the songs there were

parts when the drum kit wasn't following the guitars and I was just having to refrain from following what the guitars do because in Bleed From Within that is very much the base, that's how me and Goonzi [Craig Gowans] have always written the songs. Goonzi comes up with a lot of ideas rhythmically for the drums, so he'll maybe think of a rhythm in his head and then make a guitar part around it. 'Escape Yourself' on *Uprising*, I wrote three minutes of drums and then the guitars were written around that. Bleed From Within definitely works the way with the kick drum in perfect synchronisation with the guitars whereas Sylosis I'd say is a little different. The guitars are so prominent in Sylosis, they can carry it percussively almost."

What drums are you playing on these gigs?

"I'm actually playing Yamaha at the moment. They got in touch with me in 2010, Bleed From Within were about to head out on tour with All That Remains and Soilwork. Somebody mentioned my name to them and I ended up getting a phone call and they offered me the Rock Tour Custom. What a kit! It's amazing. Mahogany shells but no one can believe the sound I get out of these toms and especially the kick drum. The kick drum weighs

ALI AND THE PANTHER

"My snare drum is a Black Panther. I must have had this for about eight years. They don't make them anymore, they've made the Blaster snare and it's the one they based the Blaster on, so it is quite old.

"It's a 13"x6" cherry walnut. I play Evans drum heads and I've got the Hybrid head on the top and a Hazy 500 on the bottom, so quite a thick head on the bottom. It gives it that boxy sound. It's compressed. It sounds almost like it's been through some audio processing when you hear it live.

"Again, it's something I get so many compliments about. People think that it's a custom snare. 'How much did your snare drum cost you? It must have been a thousand pounds!' It only cost me £220 when I got it. It's lasted me for years. I've never changed the snares on it. It's still got a 42-strand snappy snare on the bottom and I can't replace it because I can't find anywhere that sells it even.

"I've spoken to Evans directly, 'Do you have a 13" 42-strand snare?' They're like, nope. Surprisingly it's still got a lot of life left in it."

INTERVIEW

ALI RICHARDSON



Ali's set-up has seen a lot of wear and tear gigging with two metal bands

"[DRUMMING IN SYLOSIS] I LEARNED A LOT ABOUT MYSELF AS A DRUMMER AND REALISED I COULD PUSH MYSELF"

next to nothing, it's like a paperweight almost, and everyone who has picked it up is like, 'Is the drum even in this bag?' Then we set it up and start playing and everyone's like, 'What triggers are you using?' I've never used triggers. Triggers can work for certain styles of music and depending on what speed you're playing at but I totally believe adding some dynamic live, even in metal music, is essential to the groove of a song. The kick drum needs to be big, natural, it can't be that thin, electronic sound. I know people that have blended the two of them together and get quite a good sound, you can have a D6 mic on the front of the kick so you get the balls, so to speak, and then mix that with a triggered sound, but two mics on your kick, you can't go wrong."

What are the most challenging moments in the sets for each band?

"In Sylosis it's probably the fastest songs, I need to take a deep breath before they start like, 'This is going to kill me.' Especially the gig we played last

week. We played for just over an hour, and I don't know why I agreed to the set list but the last five songs were the fastest songs in the set. I remember looking down at the set list seeing 'Eclipsed', 'The Blackest Skyline', 'Teras', 'Empyreal', 'Altered States', all the fastest songs. The venue was so hot you couldn't breathe, I was sweating, there was sweat in my eyes, my sticks were sliding about, I took a deep breath and said, 'Buck up, this is happening.' In Bleed's set, the end of a song called 'Leech', it took me hours to get it down in the studio. I literally sent everyone else out of the room, 'I need half an hour to tighten this up and get this.' It just taunts me. I can play it now, it's fine, I've practised it endlessly, but there's a break in the song before it kicks in and I'm like, 'I'll get you!' I kind of look forward to it, even those challenging parts, those are the bits in the set where I'm like, 'Right, I will nail you.' They're usually the tightest parts because I'm concentrating so much, usually the rest of it I'm having too much of a good time to process what's going on." **R**

ALI'S GEAR

DRUMS

Yamaha Rock Tour Custom in Matte Grey: 22"x18" kick drum; 10"x7" & 12"x8" toms; 14"x13" & 16"x15" floor toms; 13"x6" Mapex Black Panther Deep Forest Walnut snare

CYMBALS

Sabian: 16" AAX Metal crash; 14" HHX Groove hats; 11" AAXplosion splash; 19" AA Rock crash; 16" AAXtreme china; 10" AAX Air splash; 18" HHX Power crash; 22" HH Power Bell ride; 21" AA Bash ride; 21" Vault Holy China

PLUS

Evans heads - Hybrid or Genera Dry snare batter, Hazy 500 on snare resonant, EC2s on tom batters, G1s on tom resonant side, EMAD on kick batter, EQ3 kick resonant; ProMark 2B American Hickory drumsticks; Roland SPD-SX sample pad; Yamaha hardware and HEX rack system; Tama Speed Cobra and Malleus Pedals; Peavey PV10 mixer with ACS Custom T1 triple driver IEMs; Protection Racket cases and drum carpet



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Bobby learned pipe band drumming from his father who played with the Royal Scots

The **RHYTHM** interview



"TOO MANY FAST TRICKS AND THE PUBLIC DOESN'T GET IT, SO FOR ME THE ANCHOR IS TO KNOW THE TUNE YOU ARE PLAYING. STICK TO THE FORM"

Bobby Orr

On the occasion of Bobby Orr's 85th birthday, Geoff Nicholls talks to the great Scottish jazz and session drummer whose career now spans seven decades

WORDS: GEOFF NICHOLLS PHOTOS: PRESS

The Scottish tradition of pipe band drumming, with its attention to rudiments and precision, has always ensured a steady flow of excellent players. Bobby Orr's father John played with The Royal Scots and passed on the tradition to his son. However, Bobby actually began his professional career playing trumpet in the band of the fabled drummer Basil Kirchin before circumstances forced him to abandon the trumpet in favour of drums. Having made a name in Scotland he came to London and was soon making waves on the fast evolving 1950s jazz scene with Joe Harriott, Tubby Hayes and John Dankworth. Then, as drummer at Ronnie Scott's first club, he backed American stars Zoot Simms, Al Cohn, Milt Jackson and Dizzy Gillespie.

From here Bobby played countless sessions for TV, movies and shows. As the '60s progressed Bobby found himself playing pop sessions, although he paid little attention, seeing them as a distraction from the

serious business of playing jazz. Thus Bobby is on songs by Donovan, Dusty Springfield and so on, but he does not remember which.

As a top-name session drummer, Bobby and his fellow countryman Andy White launched the Ajax NuSound drum series in 1966. And at the height of his career Bobby had the distinction of being the only UK drummer to tour and record with the King of Swing, Benny Goodman. He also accompanied other musical giants of American showbiz, Bing Crosby, Sammy Davis Jr and Billy Eckstine.

Last August Bobby celebrated his 85th birthday and on a beautiful summer day Chris Wright of the DrumWright shop in Reading invited a bunch of Bobby's old musical friends to lunch, including drummers Clem Cattini, Pete Cater and Bob Henrit amongst many others. *Rhythm* took the opportunity to look back on Bobby's long career.

Your father got you playing from an early age?

"My dad, John Orr, was a drummer through the First World War in the Royal Scots. He worked in the Clyde

Works as a furnace man, [making] those big long nails you get for railway sleepers. He was drum major in the local pipe band and had me playing rudiments when I was three. He had a band playing local dances. If he had a double date he would send me out with two accordion players, playing jigs and reels, for half a crown: 2s/6d. I was eight or nine, in short pants.

"Later, I'd get dressed up with the kilt and get a tram into Glasgow to go with the [pipe] band. But around 17, I was more into learning jazz on the trumpet - Louis Armstrong and Harry James. So as soon as we finished I would rush home and pick up the trumpet to do a little gig."

When you left school did you intend to be a full-time musician?

"Not really, I was keen on woodwork. I became a carpenter, working on local houses, ended up in charge of a housing scheme in Blantyre, where [Scots doctor, explorer and missionary] David Livingstone was from."

▶ All the time gigging on trumpet?

“Yes. I got a chance to join the Bert Tobias band at the Locarno, Glasgow [in 1948]. He was a famous ex-tenor player from Oscar Rabin’s band. And I played trumpet in a band called the Beavers - my great friend Andy White, who would play on The Beatles’ first single in 1962, was the drummer. I left to audition with Basil Kirchin around 1952. He was in the Fountainbridge Palais de Danse, a Mecca ballroom, in Edinburgh.

“Basil was a great drummer. We played every afternoon and evening. The lead alto left, and I got a mate in, Ronnie Baker. Then the tenor player left and I got another mate in, Duncan Lamont, so there were three Scots in the band. Then we went to the Plaza in Belfast, but my embouchure went. I gave up and

came home, I wanted to get a teacher to correct it, but it didn’t happen.”

That must have been a great disappointment, but it did give the world a great drummer!

“Andy White and I started a big band in Glasgow and rehearsed every Sunday. Andy was working in Ayr with Andy Curry’s band, making a name for himself, so he left to join Vic Lewis. That was when I was with Basil Kirchin and lost my trumpet chops. So I auditioned on drums and I stayed with Andy for two or three years. Then Malcolm Mitchell, the guitar player, started a band down in London.”

And that is when you came south?

“Two or three mates had joined Malcolm and they

got me in. Bill Eyden had left and I got the call to join around 1954. Then I got offers to join both Jack Parnell’s band and Johnny Dankworth’s. I always liked Jack’s playing so I took that offer and was there for three years [1956-58]. We did TV, but I left because I wanted to try all kinds of other bands, mainly jazz. I was playing the jazz clubs and I got an offer to join [Jamaican-born saxophonist] Joe Harriott’s Quintet and did about six years with him.”

Who were your drumming inspirations around this time?

“Phil Seaman, Jack Parnell, Basil Kirchin and Tony Crombie, another great drummer. They were all on the scene before me. Ronnie Scott started his first club when I was with Joe. Ronnie’s drummer, Jackie Dougan, left for Australia and Ronnie called me. But then things happened - [pianist] Stan Tracey left, Colin Purbrook took over and was great. But when Stan came back Ronnie called me to say that Stan felt our two styles didn’t work together. So I went back to Joe Harriott. That’s the way it goes, everyone has a different feel and [sometimes] you don’t fit. Stan Tracey copied [Thelonius] Monk and I would play along with him, elaborate, and [apparently] that was ‘wrong’. Being inventive yourself, you do things and sometimes you suit and sometimes you don’t, and that is experience.”

But you were busy anyway?

“This was the early 1960s. I toured with Tommy Steele and was making a name as a session drummer. You go where the money is. You get offered a gig and you can’t do it because you’re doing a show or something, you have to move on, something else comes up. The music business was always a bit of a rat race!

“There was a period when I was doing TV more. 6-5 Special had three bands and I was with the band

“You get offered a gig and you can’t do it because you’re doing a show, you have to move on, something else comes up. The music business was always a bit of a rat race!”



Bobby and Andy White with their Ajax NuSound drum series in 1966



© Pictorial Parade/Getty Images

MY PROUDEST MOMENT...

■ “Playing with Benny Goodman. [Guitarist] Bucky Pizzarelli transcribed my ‘Venus HB’ pencil solo from the record! He’d done a Dizzy Gillespie trumpet book, so I have something on a par with Gillespie!”

with Ronnie Scott, Harry Klein and Lenny Bush. Tito Burns was the agent, we did three weeks and then I had to go to Tito's office for my money, but we all got the sack because we were too jazzy! He said, by the way, about the portorage I have been paying you - 10s/6d - it should have been 10s. Oh, so I owe you 1s/6d [laughs ironically]? Yes. And he took it!"

You mentioned your UK heroes, but what about Americans?

"My first influences were Benny Goodman and Harry James. And a big influence on my hearing and picking up things was Charlie Parker."

And drummers?

"Oh, so many. I loved Art Blakey's power. I went to New York with the Johnny Gray Quartet [1958]. The fixer, Harold Davison, said stay over and you can join up with the Vic Lewis band who are coming over. So during that middle week off I'm staying in the President Hotel when Roy Bradley phones, a trumpet player friend who had been on the [Atlantic crossing] boats. We went to hear Art Blakey And The Jazz Messengers at Café Bohemia. This lady photographer came up and said do you want your picture taken? Sit in front of the band. And minutes later she came back with the pictures. They had a break and Max Roach was in the club! He went up and did a stint. I was over the moon.

"The photographer had told Blakey that two [top UK] musicians were in, so she brought him over and he said, 'Hey, man, get up and play. I said no! [but Blakey insisted], so I started playing and the first cymbal I hit was awful. I went onto the other one and it was worse! So I went back to the first and after the first number I got up to leave and the bass player said, 'Stay there!' So I finished that set and the photographer took another picture of me playing with them.

"Afterwards Blakey took me to the Five Spot Club and Pepper Adams was playing with Philly Joe Jones. I was scared stiff! Blakey wanted me to do an album for Blue Note. But it was all happening too fast and I couldn't take it in."

That is so modest of you though, because you must have been playing great.

"I thought I was okay. I had a lot of experience. Even when I was playing trumpet with Basil I used to play on the relief band's drums and Basil and I did a double drum thing. So my hands were always up to it. Later, back home, I gigged at the Bull's Head in Barnes with Pepper Adams when he came over."

At the same time you were doing pop sessions, playing straight eighth-notes?

"I was never into talking about rock'n'roll and straight eighths, I just played. I did rock sessions - I did one of Dusty Springfield's early records. But Clem [Cattini] did much of her stuff. Clem used to come for lessons. Andy White and I started the London Drum Clinic in St John's Street, Islington. It only lasted 18 months - we started to get busy on sessions. Andy is in New York now. He used to play for Marlene Dietrich when she came over and he married her make-up/dresser girl.

"I was never prominent as a pop drummer, it was too simple to me, I was more into jazz, small groups,

Bobby has accompanied Benny Goodman, Ronnie Scott, Billy Eckstine, Sammy Davis Jr and Bing Crosby



"After the show Benny [Goodman] came up smiling and said Gene[Krupa] never played it like that. Now I didn't know how to take that. He was maybe expecting the toms"

with Ronnie and Tubby Hayes and Jimmy Deuchar. But I did big band as well. Carmen McRae came over and we toured with her in Ronnie's big band. I left that band and went into studio work - the good money was often made in TV."

In the 1970s you achieved the honour of being the only UK drummer to tour with Benny Goodman. To put that into perspective it would be like today being the only UK drummer to have toured with, say, Michael Jackson.

"We had a week's rehearsal at a big pub in Acton. He would rehearse the horns but he never bothered much with the rhythm section. I used to fool about with a pencil in my teeth, playing 'The Flight Of The

Bumblebee'. That got a laugh and eventually we went away on tour and in Stockholm, in the interval, Benny sent for me. I thought, oh no! But Benny said, that thing with your teeth, put it into the second half before 'Sing, Sing, Sing'. So I did Mozart's 'Turkish March' and brought the house down.

"Then I had to go back onto the drums and start 'Sing, Sing, Sing'. Now I was not a tom tom lover and I had not played 'Sing...' previously, so I did it my way. Bob Efford, the tenor player, said when you are playing for me I'd rather you did the cymbals not the toms. So when it came to accompanying the soloists, including Benny, I stuck with doing what I liked. And it was fantastic. After the show Benny came up smiling and said Gene [Krupa] never played it like

that. Now I didn't know how to take that. He was maybe expecting the toms. I was more into being a pipe band drummer - the snare drum was always the first option to me."

And you have this razor sharp style.

"That's right. That's the sound I like. But having a musical ear because of playing trumpet, I always think of tones on the drums. I always have a key and secretly adjust the toms. Even now when I play at Merlin's Cave in Chalfont St Giles, when it comes to soloing, the bass player, Pete Hughes, says, 'Oh, he's playing the melody again.'"

Would that be your advice on soloing?

"Too many fast tricks and the public doesn't get it. So for me the anchor is to know the tune you are playing. Stick to the form. [For example] my favourite fast tune to play is 'Cherokee' - [Bobby grabs his pad and sticks] you can practise playing R-RLR-R R-RLR-R [Bobby plays this figure fast and sings the tune]. Then you do your own solo based on the tune."

You obviously still have great hands, but you don't get to play much these days?

"Well, I did Ray McVay's Glenn Miller big band for many years, up till around 2004. I can't drive far and not at night, so I'm more or less a recluse now [laughs]. All I do now is play on a Sunday lunchtime down at Merlin's Cave. I was there recently with Roger Nobes and Jack Emblow and I have another gig in a couple of weeks with a brilliant young trumpet player, Quentin Collins. I've been playing trumpet [as well] in recent years and valve trombone. But every day I get up and sit with the pad, loosen up, see if the hands are working." [At which Bobby plays on his pad and sounds great.]

Looking back again, you also worked with Sammy Davis Jr and Bing Crosby!

"Well, Sammy Davis was at the Prince of Wales Theatre with his own drummer, Michael Silver, but the Musicians Union had to fix a British drummer. So I had to sit in the band and I'd take the trumpet along and practise, but I was still getting paid. The only time I played the drums was when they wheeled the kit out for Sammy to play. I would go on the kit and Michael Silver would go to the front and play on a chair. We'd swap fours. Later on I accompanied Billy Eckstine on the same tour as Sammy. In Germany some of the audience booed. They wanted Sammy!"

And Bing?

"I was the last drummer to record with him, his last gig, a broadcast from Maida Vale with the BBC Radio Orchestra with the Gordon Rose band [11th October, 1977]. Two days later he went over to Spain to play golf and he died over there [14th October].

"I remember one other session we did and in the interval I went to the toilet and Bing walks in and we were standing there together and I said, 'Bing, I have to tell you, my sister's little girl told me this story, I hope you understand, it's in Scots lingo: 'What's the difference between Bing Crosby and Walt Disney? Bing sings and Walt dis'nee.' He laughed his head off. He got it, he was great." R



Bobby Orr double drumming with friend and fellow '60s session drummer Andy White



BOBBY ORR'S RECORDING CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Many of the records Bobby Orr made are now hard to find. There are a few clips in existence on YouTube that give some idea of the scope of his brilliant career, and so as well as suggesting some key listening we've found them out on YouTube for you.

1958-1964

THE JOE HARRIOTT QUINTET

During the 1950s and 1960s Jamaican-born saxophonist Harriott mixed Caribbean influences with bebop and from around 1960 was a pioneer of free jazz. Bobby recorded five acclaimed albums with the Joe Harriott Quintet, including *Southern Horizons* (1960), *Abstract* (1962, 50/50 with Phil Seamen), and *Movement* (1963). Two tracks from *Southern Horizons* can be heard on YouTube - search 'Joe Harriott Tuesday Morning Swing' and 'Joe Harriott Quintet Count Twelve'.

The drums are up-front, incisive and driving, changing texture and tone as each musician takes a solo. Powerful stuff and trademark Bobby in his heyday.

You can also find the complete 1963 album on YouTube if you search 'Joe Harriott Movement'.

1970S

GEORGE CHISHOLM

All Stars (1972)
During the '70s Bobby made several albums with hugely popular fellow Scot, trombonist George Chisholm (aka Chisholm MacChisholm, the Steaming Celt from *The Goons* radio show). Bobby says, "A lot of the good music I played was with the George Chisholm band." *All Stars*, recorded live at the 100 Club in 1971, is still available.

WITH 'THE KING OF SWING', BENNY GOODMAN

Benny Goodman In Concert (Recorded Live In Stockholm, 1971)
Bobby can be seen on YouTube with the King of Swing, clarinetist Goodman - search 'Benny Goodman Louis Stewart Rose Room' and 'Honeysuckle Rose'.

Bobby gets busy on the furiously swinging 'Honeysuckle Rose' with top UK musicians kicking Benny's ass! Prodding, kneading, crisp snare and tasty bass drum work... fantastic.

BOB WILBER BIG BAND

Search YouTube: 'Oh Baby - Bob Wilber Big Band'
On Bob Wilber's tribute to Goodman

Bobby shares the drumming with Jack Parnell. Jack starts on brushes, then Bobby takes over on sticks and controls the orchestra, swinging subtly for the dancers with exemplary big band playing. Brief double-drumming breaks at the end.

BARBARA JAY

Just Friends (2000, but recorded in the 1980s).

On YouTube, search: 'Stomping At The Savoy', Barbara Jay. Yet more Goodman-inspired music. Bobby's relaxed, vocal-accompanying performance with neat set-ups and snappy fills is tasteful and expert.

BRUCE ADAMS AND ALAN BARNES QUINTET

Side-Stepping (1998)
Bobby playing as well as ever, his immaculate rudimentary technique ensures brisk cuts like 'Toot Toot Tootsie' are clean and precise.

HELEN SHAPIRO

'Walking Back To Happiness' (1961).

An international Number One pop hit for the teenaged Helen Shapiro. "There was a video of that period at Abbey Road - me coming down the steps with a heavy bass drum case, smiling."

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RHYTHM

EXCLUSIVE VIDEO & AUDIO DRUM LESSONS



WELCOME...

Cloudy with a chance of cool grooves

When it comes to jazz-rock fusion, the band behind this month's playalong track are amongst the finest purveyors of the genre. We have Weather Report's 'Birdland', featuring the fantastic Alex Acuña on drums, fully notated for you over on page 78. Elsewhere, Pat Garvey looks at creating licks by dividing up a bar of 16ths into different groupings. In this month's Go Figure!, Jason Bowld looks at 7/8 grooves, while Erik Stams continues to explore Brazilian rhythms on the drumset. In Foundations of Drumming, Kyle Cullen shows you how to swing a groove, while Colin Woolway continues his 8-bar Challenge. Colin also presents a fantastic Teaser for you this month - a one-handed disco groove. Finally in my solos lesson, I'll be looking at applying rolls to grooves. Enjoy!



PETE RILEY *Rhythm CD Editor*



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YOUR RHYTHM TUTORS



PETE RILEY
Rhythm's CD editor also has a number of instructional books and a DVD entitled Technical Difficulties under his tutorial belt.



MIKE STURGIS
Mike is a long-time *Rhythm* contributor and has worked with numerous artists including A-ha, Asia, and Bob James.



COLIN WOOLWAY
A professional drummer for 30 years, long-standing *Rhythm* contributor Colin is originator of the Drumsense teaching system.



PAT GARVEY
As a busy freelance drummer, Pat has played on hundreds of recordings and on TV. He is now Head of Drums at BIMM in Brighton.



JASON BOWLD
Rock School contributor Jason is drummer for metal supergroup Axewound. He also recently did sessions for Killing Joke and PWEI.



ERIK STAMS
Erik built up an impressive résumé studying and recording in NYC. He is now Head of Drums at Tech Music School.



KYLE CULLEN
Kyle Cullen is a Bristol based drum teacher, session drummer and the author of tuition books *Paradiddle Creativity* and *How To Practise Drums*.

STANDARDISED DRUMSET NOTATION KEY

Snare Drum	Bass Drum	Tom 1	Tom 2	Tom 3	Ghost Stroke	Closed Hi-Hat	Open Hi-Hat	Hi-Hat w/foot	Ride Cymbal	Crash Cymbal	Cowbell	Rimshot	Cross Stick
•	•	•	•	•	(•)	x	o	x	x	*	▲	▲	●

All our Drum Lessons contributors are using what is increasingly being regarded as the standardised system of drum kit notation, as outlined by Norman Weinberg in his *Guide To Standardised Drumset Notation*. This book is published by the Percussive Arts Society, and is available from www.pas.org. To gain a full understanding of all aspects of the system, we recommend you check out this book.

FULL TRACK

'BIRDLAND' WEATHER REPORT

Elegant jazz-fusion grooves

TRACK INFO



From the album:
Heavy Weather (1977)
156bpm



YOUR TUTOR

MIKE STURGIS
mike@mikesturgis.co.uk

Alejandro Neciosup Acuña (aka Alex Acuña) is the drummer extraordinaire on this popular Weather Report track, and his unique blend of musical influences inspires a performance that is endlessly creative and relentlessly grooving.

When approaching this track, it is important to remember that the wide range of dynamics used should never interrupt or impede the momentum created from the beginning. The main pattern features the contrasting voices of a disco-style hi-hat with 'openings' on every upbeat, and a cross-stick played on every downbeat. The kick drum is used sporadically, with its main purpose to emphatically accent various rhythmic figures with the rest of the ensemble. Used in this way, its function is not dissimilar to the approach used by traditional big band swing drummers. Additionally, there are random improvisations on the kick underneath the hi-hat and cross-stick pattern. This approach is reminiscent of how **BEBOP** drummers might use the kick to create an improvised internal dialogue between the various voices on the drum kit, which simultaneously keep time and complement the soloist.

It is also worth noting that the chart has an unusual form, with several of the sections only occurring once and also being of

Alex Acuña laid down the complex grooves on this jazz-fusion classic



© Tom Cop/Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images

unconventional length. For this reason, it will be vital that your counting is accurate to keep your place in the chart. While the basic pattern and some of the fills are written out, much is left to your interpretation. Due to space considerations, it was not possible to include every aspect of the performance, so it is highly recommended that you study the original recording.

The flawless execution and musicality of Acuña's work here shows why he has been a first-call session drummer and in addition to his formidable skills on the kit, he is a master percussionist with a deep knowledge of South American music. His vast body of recorded work is worthy of further study. **R**



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HEADS UP!

BEBOP

A style of acoustic jazz featuring harmonically complex improvisation at fast tempos. It was made famous by musicians such as Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie and Max Roach.

01 Keep the sound of your cross stick consistent; this can easily slip.

INTRO
♩ = 156

Cross Stick

A + + + + +

B + + + + +

PLAY 14 MORE

PLAY 3 MORE

PLAY 4 MORE

FULL TRACK 'BIRDLAND' WEATHER REPORT

02 Play quietly here, but hit a massive accent into letter D.

C Ad lib Kick Drum

PLAY 17 MORE

D

03 Note the use of snare drum and crash cymbal for accents in this section, including the brief half-time feel.

PLAY 3 MORE

PLAY 8 MORE

E1

PLAY 23 MORE

PLAY 3 MORE

04 Keep counting here as this section is an unusual length - don't miss the DS.

Half time feel

(Last time) **F**

Play 6 times

PLAY 15 MORE

PLAY 19 MORE

F

D.S. al Coda

CODA

Play 8 times **E2** Start quietly and build - ad lib fills / patterns

PLAY 8 times

E2

1-14

15

Fine

GET CREATIVE WITH

7S & 9S

Creating licks by dividing a bar of 16 semiquavers into different groupings



YOUR TUTOR

PAT GARVEY
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A bar of 16 semiquavers, which are typically divided up into four groups of four, can be divided into different groupings, eg: it could be a group of 4-7-5, or 5-8-3. It still adds up to 16 and each beat should still remain in its natural place in the bar, but what this gives you is endless phrasing options. It's also a fantastic way of finding linear phrases that work in the context of grooves and **LICKS**. By taking those four groups of 4 and turning them into one group of 7 and one group of 9, we create a two-bar lick by orchestrating it

differently in each bar. Remember, as with everything we do, it's very much about the space between the notes. How well you're able to control that space in terms of the musical flow will define how smooth and musical it is and how able you are to use these types of phrases. Don't let your ear run away with the phrase(s) it creates - make sure you're counting and practise it with a click and against a stepped quarter note on the hi-hat so that you always know where you are in the phrase and bar. Be careful where you use these types of ideas - it

HEADS UP!

LICKS

Essentially a lick is same thing as a fill, but generally speaking a lick is something that is less improvised than your average fill, eg: this month's study.

should always be to a musical end. They're fun, yes, and they sound cool, yes - but they don't sound very cool with the wrong musical application. Note: practise the examples slowly and work on the space between the notes! **R**

01 Accenting the first note of each phrase so you can hear how the pattern works around the pulse.

♩ = 40

02a Orchestrating the phrase - work it slowly and don't neglect that left foot.

02b Orchestration two - again, work it slowly and try not to let your ear take over!

03 Putting those two orchestrations together to form a nice little two-bar lick. Take this slowly and follow the stickings, go for accuracy and watch that space between the notes.

04 Putting it in the context of a groove. I've used two examples here, one slower with a simple groove and one a bit quicker with a different groove. This is all about musical application so get it cooking within a few different grooves, at different tempos and with different feels, eg: swung.

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GO FIGURE! 

ODD FREEDOM

Creative building blocks in 7/8



YOUR TUTOR

JASON BOWLD
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Class 7/8 as one of the more groovy, polite odd time-signatures. Repeating the same bar can create the illusion that every alternate bar is different. This is because our westernised, 4/4 ears are playing catch up with the 'dropped' eighth note every bar which has the displacement fooling us!

This month utilises this approach using a dotted figure over an eight-bar sequence. The accents show the figure throughout the eight bars and in Example 1, you'll see kick/crash accents following it with a short 'lead-in' fill at the end of bar 2. Example 2 then shows various, inverted six-stroke rolls played on the snare, occasionally accenting the figure with crashes. Ex. 3 then launches into a neat 7/8 groove using 1st and 2nd endings for variety in the alternating bars. The core, groove, backbeats played on beats '3' and '6' stay the same throughout the four bars - it's what happens around these and the kick drum accented figure that changes. Bars 1 and 2 pepper the groove with small **RUDIMENTARY FRAGMENTS** played on the snare and hi-hat, whilst bar 4 shows a very powerful linear fill that still complements the figure of course. **R**



HEADS UP!

RUDIMENTARY FRAGMENTS

These refer to the small embellishments in a groove, eg: a double might be played on the hats or snare breaking up the regular eighth notes forming a mini-diddle!

01 Kick and crashes accent the figure. Both bars are pretty much the same and it's a good time to embed the figure in your head.

Ex 1
Target tempo **115** bpm

02 Intense six-stroke roll combos. Triplets swing the feel but you can distort the sticking to ensure the figure retains its straight feel.

Ex 2

03 Groove mode now! And it's a good opportunity to allow the hypnotic figure to come through in those kick drums as both these and the backbeats played on '3' and '6' stay consistent over the four bars.

RHYTHM CONCEPTS

BRAZILIAN RHYTHMS ON THE KIT (PART 2)

Further exploring the rhythms of Brazil on the drum kit



YOUR TUTOR

ERIK STAMS
www.erikstams.co.uk

This month we will be further exploring Samba rhythms on the drum kit. In particular we will focus on layering and embellishing the tamborim pattern over the traditional **SURDO** ostinato played on the bass drum.

Keep in mind that these rhythms are generally performed by an ensemble of musicians in 2/4 meter with an emphasis on beat 2. Drummers have adapted them over the years for the drum kit. Example 1 shows the snare drum or caixa playing a lilting, accented 16th-note rhythm over the bass drum pattern. The right hand plays and emphasises the tamborim pattern while the left hand ghosts the unaccented notes. Authentic Brazilian rhythms have a natural pull towards a triplet feel. I have played them fairly straight for these examples, but to capture a truly authentic feel listen to Maria Bethania, Sergio

Mendes and Airto Moreira. Example 2 shows the right hand playing the tamborim pattern while the left plays syncopated notes with cross-stick. Example 3 illustrates the same rhythm with stepped hi-hat on the off-beats. Focus on maintaining good posture and balance.

Although Brazilian rhythms don't adhere as rigidly to the concept of clave as Afro-Cuban rhythms, the idea of rhythmic tension and release is the same. The order of bars tends to be dictated by the melody. In Example 4 the sequence of bars is reversed, creating a 'reverse clave' effect. In other words, we play the second bar first. Example 5 shows the hands playing the tamborim pattern in unison over the ostinato in the feet.

In the 1960s innovative Brazilian drummer Edison Machado recorded and performed with Sergio Mendez,

Antonio Carlos Jobim and The Bossa 3. Example 6 illustrates a Machado-style groove with broken 16th on the hi-hat against syncopated cross-stick notes on the snare. Don't let the syncopation interfere with the pulse. Example 7 introduces the stepped hi-hat pattern. Focus on posture and balance. In Example 8 we apply the reverse clave concepts again, putting the more syncopated bar first.

The examples presented here are merely a taste of the rich rhythms of this style. Mastering these rhythms requires a lifetime of study. **R**

HEADS UP!
SURDO
A surdo is a low pitched-drum used to create the pulse of samba; a tamborim is a small, hand-held, single-headed drum played with a stick.

Tech
MUSIC SCHOOL

01 Tamborim pattern over the bass drum ostinato with stepped hi-hat.

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

02 Tamborim pattern in right hand, cross stick pattern in the left.

03 Add the stepped hi-hat. Focus on posture and balance.

04 Reverse 'clave'. Reversing the sequence of the bars changes the order of tension and release.

05 Right and left hands play tamborim pattern in unison.

06 Syncopated Edison Machado-style groove.

07 Add stepped hi-hat. Focus on posture and balance.

08 Reverse 'clave' - play the second bar first to reverse the order of tension and release.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF DRUMMING

HEADS UP!

TRIPLET

Eighth-note triplets are three evenly-spaced notes in place of two eighth notes. They are notated with a '3' above them which makes them easy to spot. You can get triplet versions of all 'regular' note values.



SWINGING A GROOVE

Reading straight notation in triplets



YOUR TUTOR

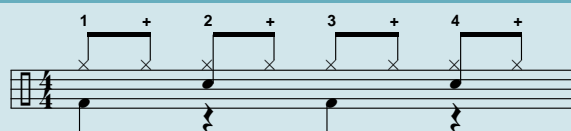
KYLE CULLEN
kyle@kylecullen.com

I'm a big fan of playing swinging tunes in different styles including blues, jazz, r'n'b, New Orleans Second-line. They all have different ways of grooving, the common theme is taking a groove and playing it in TRIPLET feel. Sometimes when reading music you'll see notation which is written with straight eighth notes but you're expected to play it swung. A lot of jazz charts are written like this.

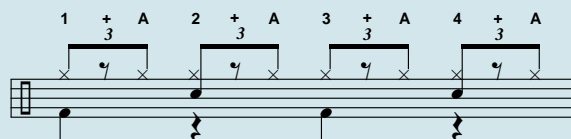
To 'swing' eighth notes you need to play eighth-note triplets with the middle part rested. This turns a basic rock beat, Example 1, into the familiar bounce of a blues beat in Example 2. The '&'s when counting straight-eighths have now become the 'a's in the triplets. A similar technique is used on the 16th notes in Example 3 to create Example 4. This time the 'e's and 'a's in the straight groove are the notes which get moved over to create the right feel. The hi-hat part will stay the same in the straight and swung version.

It's important to listen to the music/musicians you are playing with as different music swings in different ways. **R**

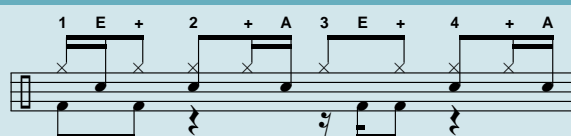
01 This is a straight basic rock groove with eighth notes on the hi-hat.



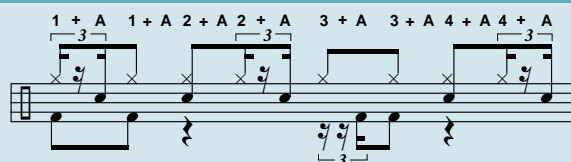
02 Now we have put the above eighth-note rock groove into triplet time to create a shuffle groove.



03 This exercise is a straight groove with 16th notes added in.



04 Now we will move the 'e's and 'a's to create the swung triplet feel.





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BEAT BUILDER

8-BAR CHALLENGE PART 6

Mixing it up with a jazzy feel and some familiar orchestrations



YOUR TUTOR

COLIN WOOLWAY
colin@drumsense.com

Here we go with another variation on the 8-Bar Challenge, which is all about 'building beats' with a variety of techniques and orchestrations. This month we are calling on a template and a technique that we have already used.

Last time we played the eight bars on the snare drum with our left hand, against a jazz rhythm on the ride cymbal with our right

hand. So this month we're going to use "Technique 1" (from the first article, Dec 2014) and play the eight-bar pattern on the bass drum.

For starters, Ex. 1 is the eight-bar pattern itself; make sure you can play this comfortably. Then, Ex. 2 is Template 5 (from last month's article) which is the jazz rhythm with the hi-hat stepped on '2' and '4'. Now,

let's add Technique 1, and Ex. 3 shows you the first two bars which you should get used to before you try the rest as this is the basic "onbeat and offbeat" techniques that you will need. Finally Ex. 4 shows you the whole eight bars; as always, take care with bars 5 and 6, and in this case in particular bars 7 and 8; work hard to maintain the rhythm on the ride cymbal. **R**

01 The basic eight-bar pattern

02 Template 5: play Jazz pattern on ride cymbal, left foot hi-hat on '2' & '4'.

03 Technique 1: play eight-note pattern on bass drum.

04 Eight-bar pattern with Technique 1 applied to Template 5.

ONE-HANDED DISCO BEAT

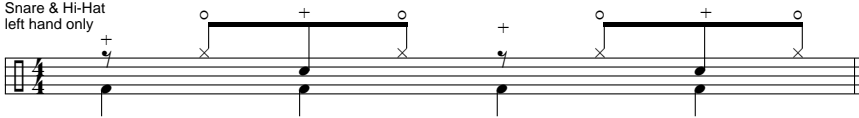
A neat disco beat that leaves one hand free to embellish the groove

This month's Teaser was inspired by a drummer called Phil Aldridge, who I saw do this many years ago, and the late great James Blades who once

boasted to a composer that he could play a cymbal roll one-handed. The composer then wrote him some more music to play with his spare hand! **R**

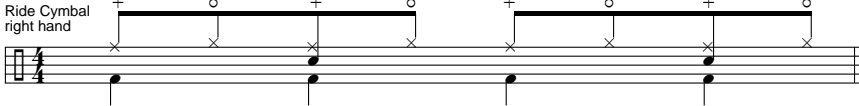
01 Classic disco beat, played with the left hand.

Snare & Hi-Hat
left hand only



02 Add right-hand downbeats on ride bell.

Ride Cymbal
right hand



03 Add this mambo ride pattern over the top.



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DRUMMING ESSENTIALS

What you need to know before you start

01 MATCHED GRIP

Both hands hold the sticks in the same manner: thumbs on the side of the sticks; forefinger opposite the thumb; middle, ring and little fingers curled under the sticks; palms held down, facing the floor.

02 TRADITIONAL GRIP

The right hand is as matched grip, but the left-hand stick is held differently (vice versa for left-handed players). The stick is lodged in the fleshy bit between the thumb and forefinger and the fore and middle fingers curl over the stick, while the ring and little fingers curl under to support the stick.

03 QUARTER NOTES

Also known as 'crotchets'. If a standard bar of music is regarded as a 'whole', then four evenly-spaced notes within that bar are regarded as 'quarters', hence the term 'quarter note' (in other words, four beats in a standard bar).

04 EIGHTH NOTES

Classically referred to as 'quavers'. If a standard bar of music is regarded as a 'whole' and four evenly-spaced notes within that bar are regarded as 'quarters', then eight evenly-spaced notes within that bar are regarded as 'eighths',

hence the term 'eighth note' (in other words, eight beats in a standard bar).

05 EIGHTH-NOTE TRIPLETS

The musical definition of a triplet is 'three evenly spaced notes occupying the same space as two evenly spaced notes'. In the case of eighth notes, two would be replaced by three eighth-note triplets.

06 OSTINATO

An ostinato is a repeated pattern, usually not very long, often three or four notes played over and over again. The most famous drum ostinato is the snare drum pattern in Ravel's 'Bolero', but contemporary drummers often refer to 'bass and hi-hat' ostinatos.

07 16TH NOTES

Also known as 'semi-quavers'. If a standard bar of music is regarded as a 'whole', then 16 evenly spaced notes within that bar are regarded as '16ths', hence '16th note'.

08 CROSS-STICK

Played on the snare by holding the stick at the tip end, laying it across the drum and striking the rim with the 'butt' end, keeping the tip in contact with the head.

09 RIM SHOT

Played by striking the head and the rim of the drum at the same time. It makes a loud, sonorous sound, good for accents in a snare pattern or heavy rock backbeat.

10 HEAD TYPES

The 'batter' head is the drum head you strike and the 'resonant' head is the head on the underside of the drum that gives it a full and resonating sound.

GETTING STARTED

Sitting behind a drum kit for the first time can be a daunting thing. However, once you get to grips with the basics you'll be playing in no time. And if you've never picked up the sticks before we can help you. Head to the links below, and you'll find the following content just for beginners.

- Take your first steps into reading music with our guide to drum notation - <http://bit.ly/147icL1>
- Find your way around the kit with our anatomy of a drum kit guide - <http://bit.ly/WGLM7R>
- Five video drum lessons covering basic rock, funk jazz and the shuffle - <http://bit.ly/15p0Gx9>
- Video guides to accompany the drumming essentials above - <http://bit.ly/ZJHOZU>

IMPROVE YOUR SOLOING WITH... 

SIX AND NINE-NOTE STICKINGS

Creating phrases using permutations of six and nine-stroke rolls

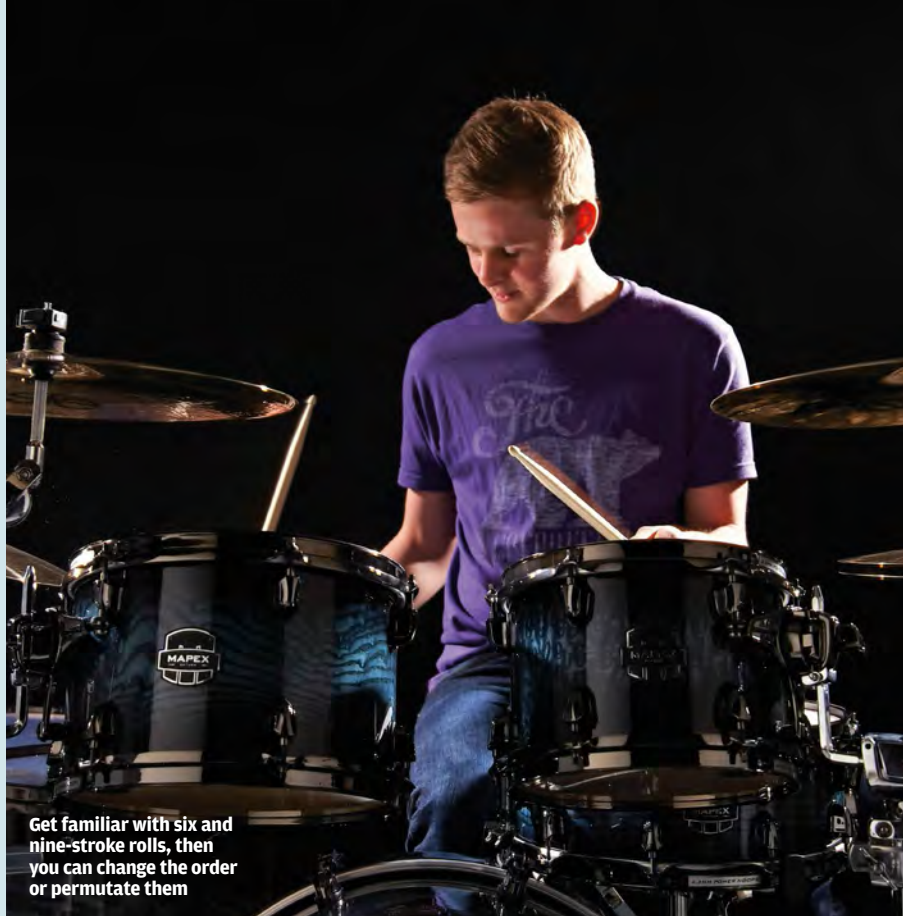


YOUR TUTOR

PETE RILEY
p.riley@mac.com

In this issue's Toolkit (page 10) we're looking at applying rolls to grooves and this drum solo has a similar theme only this time we're making some adjustments to the stickings. In Toolkit I mention that in their traditional formats rolls are played with the double-strokes preceding the final single or double accents.

Obviously once familiar with the rolls we're then free to interpret them and change the order of notes or **PERMUTATE** them. And that's exactly what we're doing here with our six-stroke roll, which we're playing with one accent at the beginning and one at the end and a nine-stroke roll where we're playing its single accent at the beginning. The other final and important element is the fact that we're no longer differentiating between the note values of the accents versus the double-strokes,



Get familiar with six and nine-stroke rolls, then you can change the order or permute them

with everything being played with the same value.

The exercise/solo uses the same format twice, with lines 1 and 3 being made up of a 9/9/9/9/6/6 combination and lines 2 and 4 using 9/9/6/9/9/6. The only remaining difference is that lines 3 and 4 then replace the last one or two notes of the six and nine stickings respectively with the bass drum. **R**

HEADS UP!


PERMUTATE

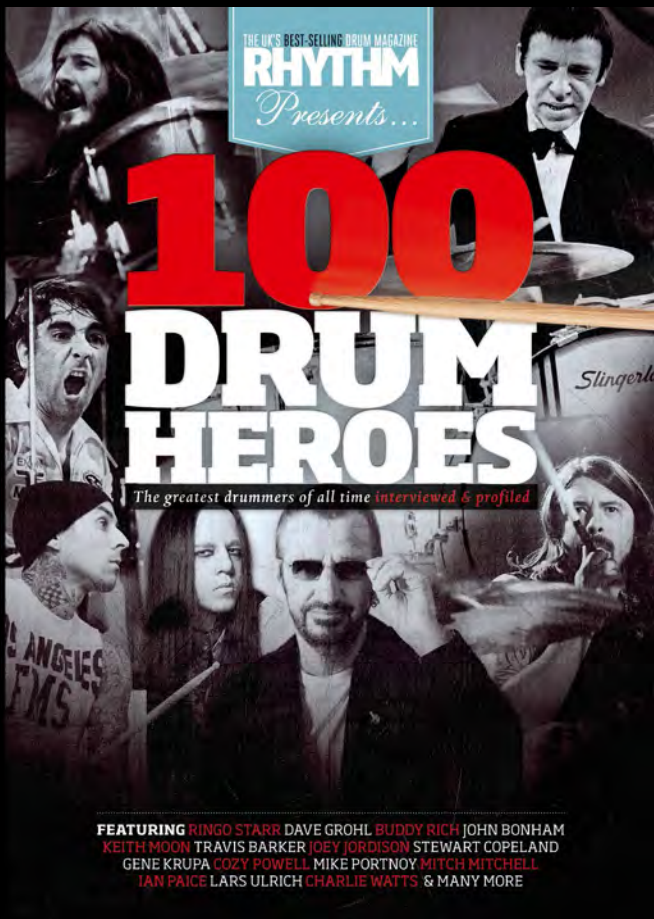
Permutating a sticking or pattern is a straightforward enough process involving starting the example at a different point. This can drastically change the sound of a groove or sticking. As an example try playing a single paradiddle starting with the double-stroke RRLR, LLRL.

1 
R L L R R L L R R L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L

5 
R L L R R L L R R L R R L L R R L L R R L R L L R R L L R R L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L

9 
R L L R R L L R L L R R L L R L L R R L L R L L R R L L R L L R R L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L

13 
R L L R R L L R L L R R L L R L L R R L R R L L R R L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L



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Welcome!

An almighty performer

This month we welcome the latest work of the flourishing Sakae, the suitably beefy Almighty kit.

Following on from the Trilogy and Celestial kits reviewed in previous issues, the Almighty continues the trend of supreme craftsmanship from Sakae. Adam Jones takes a look over on page 96.

We jump from a muscular beast of a kit to a teeny rig as we move from the Almighty on to Sonor's Martini kit on page 104. This car-friendly kit, the latest in an ever-growing line of diminutive set-ups that have become increasingly popular over the past few years, is small enough to be packed away with the

minimum of fuss and comes in at almost pocket-money prices.

A couple of months back we told you all about a brand new sample pack recorded at famed Headley Grange featuring the playing of Chad Smith, Roger Taylor and Andy Gangadeen. Well, this month we got to try out the Spitfire Audio pack for ourselves. Our electronics guru Stu Williams has a look at The Grange on page 100.

Elsewhere this month we also take a look at a stunning handbuilt snare from UK company VK, marvel at Zildjian's Project 391 cymbals and test Roland's brand new RT-30 triggers. See you next time!

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STAR RATINGS EXPLAINED

During the review process we investigate three key areas in detail

Build quality Is it consistent? Are components up to the task? Are shells round? And so on.

Playability Does the product convincingly do the job it was designed for?

Value for money Does the price reflect the product fairly, and how does it compare with competitors?

Each area receives a star rating out of five. These ratings are then collated to arrive at an overall Rhythm Rating.

POOR: SUB-STANDARD PRODUCT
 AVERAGE: ACCEPTABLE BUT UNINSPIRING
 GOOD: ABOVE AVERAGE
 EXCELLENT: SUPERIOR PRODUCT
 OUTSTANDING: IMPOSSIBLE TO FAULT



Look out for these

The Rhythm Recommends award is given to those products that score four out of five. These are products that, although not scoring top marks, are strong products in their field. The Rhythm Star Buy is awarded to those products that score five out of five for design, construction, function and value.



96

SAKAE
ALMIGHTY DRUM KIT



NEW GEAR

LOOKING FOR A PARTICULAR REVIEW? CHECK OUT OUR HUGE ARCHIVE OF REVIEWS, ROUND-UPS AND BUYING GUIDES AT WWW.MUSICRADAR.COM

104

SONOR
MARTINI DRUM KIT



108

ZILDJIAN
PROJECT 391
CYMBALS



SAKAE ALMIGHTY MAPLE KIT

£2,700 High spec all-maple kit from Japanese brand with big aspirations

WORDS: ADAM JONES

Sakae's 90-year history of drum production includes a four-decade stint spent building Yamaha's top lines. First introducing its own name kits in 2009, it ended its association with Yamaha in 2013.

The Almighty series is one of the first Sakae ranges from 2009 and is available in either all-maple or all-birch guises. Both options are identically priced and share the same multitude of finish choices; Sakae actively encourages mixing and matching birch and maple drums to suit your taste. The Almighty shell-pack sent for review is an all-maple variant.

Build

Sakae chose the title Almighty for the range as it felt that the finished drums had a powerful tone and it wanted the name to reflect this. The review kit is made up of a 22"x18" bass drum, 10"x7" and 12"x8" toms and a 16"x14" floor tom. An alternative shell

plies are thicker than those on the rest of the drums (1.3mm plies making a shell thickness of 7.8mm compared with 0.9mm plies and 5.4mm shells on the toms and floor tom). Familiar diagonal seams are visible inside the straight-sided shells and the bearing edges are cut sharply at 45°.

Sakae's air vents are oversized at 15mm and on the bigger drums are found in increasing numbers - three on the 16" floor tom and four on the bass drum.

A huge array of lacquer finishes - identical across both Almighty Maple and Birch - is available and the Silver Sparkle of the review kit has to be seen in the flesh to really appreciate its quality. The size, number and brightness of the metal flakes buried within the lacquer gives the finish a depth and radiance that provokes audible gasps from anyone clapping eyes on it. The first location that I played the kit in was a dingy windowless rehearsal room; simply setting the kit up



FLOOR TOM LEGS

The floor tom legs feature retractable spikes to anchor the drum on the slipperiest of stages

IF IT SHINES LIKE A FULLY-DECKED CHRISTMAS TREE IN SUCH GLOOMY CONDITIONS, UNDER STAGE LIGHTS, SUNGLASSES WILL BE REQUIRED

pack featuring a 22"/12"/13"/16" layout is also offered for an extra £50, while a truly comprehensive selection of diameters and lengths for each drum can be ordered on an individual basis.

In price terms, Almighty sits between Sakae's flagship maple/bubinga Celestial line and its vintage-themed Trilogy series. This places it firmly in pro territory, where quality trumps affordability. While the kit is reassuringly expensive, there is nothing lightweight about it. Picking up any of the drums reveals a level of solidity that's on a par with a rugby team's front row; each component seems to have been engineered for maximum strength and then built without compromise.

The shells are 6-ply and made from premium grade North American maple. While the number of plies is consistent across the kit, the bass drum's individual

seemed to double the lighting wattage, bringing illumination to corners accustomed to perpetual darkness. If it shines like a fully-decked Christmas tree in such gloomy conditions, under stage lights a set of sunglasses (or possibly welding goggles) will be required to get anywhere near it.

The chrome-plated shell hardware is of an equally high standard and the triple-flanged 2.3mm Righty Halo hoops and cast bass drum claws are clearly strong enough to cope with a 2B-wielding Neanderthal. Meanwhile, the bass drum spurs are of such proportions that it would take something akin to a dray horse to persuade it to shift.

While many manufacturers are shrinking lugs for minimal contact, Sakae takes the opposite view. It believes that heavier lugs make for better vibration transmission to the shell edge, leading to deeper lows and increased sustain. The resulting Transmit

FINISH

The depth and radiance of the Silver Sparkle lacquer has to be seen in the flesh to be truly appreciated

TRANSMIT LUGS

Sakae believes heavier lugs make for better vibration transmission to the shell edge



Essential spec



SAKAE

PRICE

Sakae Almighty Maple shellpack (22"x18"/10"x7"/12"x8"/16"x14"), £2,700

SHELL MATERIAL

Maple

CONSTRUCTION METHOD

Ply

NUMBER OF PLYS

6-ply: 7.8mm (bass drum) and 5.4mm (toms & floor tom)

BEARING EDGES

45°, sharply cut

FINISHES AVAILABLE

33 different lacquer finishes available, including Silver Sparkle (pictured)

HOOPS

Flanged 2.3mm Righty Halo hoops; 9-ply / 8mm maple hoops on bass drum

SHELL AVAILABILITY

Bass drums: 18", 20", 22", 24" & 26" diameters; toms: 8", 10", 12", 13" & 14" diameters; floor toms: 14", 16" & 18" diameters (all drums available in variety of depths)

SUPPLIED HEADS

Sakae/USA Remo - bass drum: Powerstroke 3 clear batter and ebony front head; toms & floor tom: Emperor clear batters and Ambassador clear resonants

NUMBER OF LUGS PER DRUM

22" bass drum: 20; 10" & 12" toms: 12; 16" floor tom: 16

TOM MOUNTS

Sakae Cradle mounts, bass drum mounted

CONTACT

Soar Valley Music
0116 230 4926
www.sakaedrums.com

They say...

Shunsaku Tsuji Product Designer, Sakae Drums



Why the name Almighty?

"We tried and succeeded to bring out the best sound of the material. When you hit maple it sounds like maple, but there is something more; a strong and powerful sound, as opposed to other drums. That is some kind of power of the Almighty."

The Silver Sparkle is absolutely stunning - how difficult is it to apply a finish that looks this good?

"That is not an easy thing, but we have a rich knowledge and technique that has been built in a long history and we have a hothouse that can educate and grow the craftsman. We spread many layers of lacquer to make our beautiful colours. It takes approximately a week for the painting process; that of course needs a lot of skill and experience."

The Transmit Lug is interesting - how and when did you arrive at the design?

"We had lots of ideas going on in drum making history and the idea of lugs arrived before we launched the Sakae brand. Now we can embody those ideas into our original brand drums."



SHELLS

6-ply shells are expertly made in Osaka from North American maple

KICK SHELL

The bass drum's plies are thicker than the rest of the kit, 1.3mm plies making up a shell thickness of 7.8mm

Lugs (as Sakae has named them) make a refreshing bucking of the trend and also feature in Sakae's unique Cradle Mounting System, in which the mount slots into a bracket clamped directly to two lugs at the bottom of each drum. This system is also fitted to the floor tom, employing six of the eight lugs at the resonant-head end of the drum. While the

It's deep - very deep - but not dark or lacking in focus. Considering the amount of low frequencies it pushes out, the drum is superbly defined - rather than lingering into throbbing sustain it decays rapidly, leaving a breath of bottom end. Each stroke is the dictionary definition of authoritative and I struggle to imagine a backline loud enough to render it inaudible.

INDULGING IN A TRIBAL PATTERN AROUND THE TOMS IT FEELS LIKE A WRATHFUL DEITY IS WREAKING HAVOC WITH MY SENSES

term 'over-engineered' is often used as derogatory, the impression here is of a kit designed for almost any eventuality; even the floor tom legs have retractable spikes fitted to secure the drum in the slipperiest of circumstances.

Hands On

Rebadged USA-manufactured Remo heads are fitted as standard - a Powerstroke 3 combo for the bass drum and clear Emperor batters and Ambassador resonants on the toms. Surprisingly, undrilled bass drums are only available by request (though at no extra cost). The tom mount present in the bass drum doesn't prevent it from thumping out a colossal note, big enough to create ripples in any glass of liquid in the vicinity.

The toms take their tonal cue from the bass drum and deliver full, saturated notes. Each individual drum is capable of such profound depth that it sounds more like the next diameter up (with the exception of the 16" floor tom which goes one better, putting in a convincing impersonation of a 20" bass drum). Listening to the toms in isolation (tricky as they invite repeated playing) the quality of tone is apparent - they are rounded and expansive, overtone-free and gloriously resonant. Indulging in a tribal pattern around the toms it becomes clear why Sakae called the kit Almighty - it feels like a wrathful deity is wreaking havoc with my senses. Though I didn't get an opportunity to record the kit, the strength of signal that each component and the set

Also try...



1 YAMAHA ABSOLUTE MAPLE HYBRID

We say: "Extending boundaries on several levels, this is a beautifully designed, versatile sounding kit that exemplifies Yamaha's pursuit of excellence."



2 PEARL MASTERS PREMIUM LEGEND

We say: "Pearl's expertise is all over this solidly-constructed, great looking and exquisite-sounding kit."

as a whole produce suggests that it would be utterly at home in the studio (for further evidence listen to the audio clips on Sakae's website).

The kit is staggeringly powerful; within 15 minutes of my first encounter with it my ears are ringing and I have to resort to my earplugs. Bizarrely, I find myself wondering if these drums are too efficient, almost clinical in delivering such a huge sound and the addition of the odd flaw would make the package more human. In a way, it's a bit like driving a modern car but missing the character of something older and less well built. But, to continue the analogy, if you're clocking up the miles day-in day-out, the modern car - with its more advanced design, comfort level and all-round reliability - is clearly the better option. So it is with this kit; it's a serious tool for the serious musician, robust enough to deal with life on the road whilst offering a refined, polished voice in the studio. **R**

VERDICT: Uncompromising in design, build, looks and sound, Sakae's Almighty Maple is appropriately named. It's an unambiguously pro spec kit and the level of quality it offers justifies the asking price.

BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★
PLAYABILITY ★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★
RHYTHM RATING ★★★★★

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SPITFIRE AUDIO

THE GRANGE

VOL ONE



£199 Unique Bonham-inspired samples that'll place you in the stairwell to heaven

WORDS: **STUART WILLIAMS**

Ask anyone what their favourite recorded drum sounds of all time are, and we'd put money on the words 'When The Levee Breaks' being the first few to come out of their mouths. Bonham's huge drum sound was captured in the stairwell of Headley Grange, a stately home in Hampshire that also played host to the likes of Genesis and Fleetwood Mac.

While recording Led Zep *IV*, Bonham and engineer Andy Johns were struggling to achieve the thunderous sound that was in their heads. During tracking, a new kit was delivered - and left in the hall by the stairs. The rest would be history, except Bonham's intro has appeared scores of times since on

free Kontakt Player (it'll also run in the full version of Kontakt), and makes for an exciting proposition for anyone using an e-kit at home.

We were supplied a download - and given the size of the collection, it understandably took quite a while to arrive. Once downloaded, the installer file unpacks the compressed samples, meaning we were waiting a couple of hours from starting the installation to picking up our sticks.

Once it's installed, The Grange's kits are accessed via a menu of preset sounds, all saved as Kontakt Instruments. Separate instruments are supplied for close mics, overhead and ambient mic positions, which can be sent into your recording

CHAD'S SAMPLES ARE PROBABLY CLOSEST TO WHAT MOST BONHAM FANS WILL BE LOOKING FOR, GIVING TWO MEATY-SOUNDING ROCK KITS

tracks by Eminem, Björk, Aphex Twin, Massive Attack and Dr Dre. Headley Grange has been a private residence since the '70s, with no drums being recorded in that infamous stairwell until now - and the best part is, you can own them.

Build

In June 2014, Spitfire Audio gathered three different, yet revered drummers - Roger Taylor, Chad Smith and Andy Gangadeen - and set up at Headley Grange to create a library of unique, playable drum samples. Recorded over three days, each drummer has recorded multi-layered samples of their kits. The finished product is a massive 55GB, each drummer creating two kit variations, with every sample captured from an array of microphone positions onto tape, then assembled into playable instruments. The whole thing runs using Native Instruments'

software as single tracks for ultimate control over your mix.

Hands on

The easiest to use, however are the Mix presets. These present you with a pre-designed set of mic placements for each kit comprising a balance of close, mid and ambient mic setups, with overall volume sliders available for each position.

We've played plenty of these sorts of libraries here at *Rhythm*, and while there are some mind-blowing examples already available, The Grange offers something different. All of the samples are lively, with a processed-yet-raw sound that stands out from the pack, even when you remove that fabled ambience from the picture. First are the Roger Taylor kits, giving you the biggest range of tom sounds (six in total), and are essentially the same kit samples for both

Also try...



1 TOONTRACK EZDRUMMER 2

We say: "It remains the most diverse and affordable way to record drums from your e-kit."



2 TOONTRACK SUPERIOR DRUMMER 2

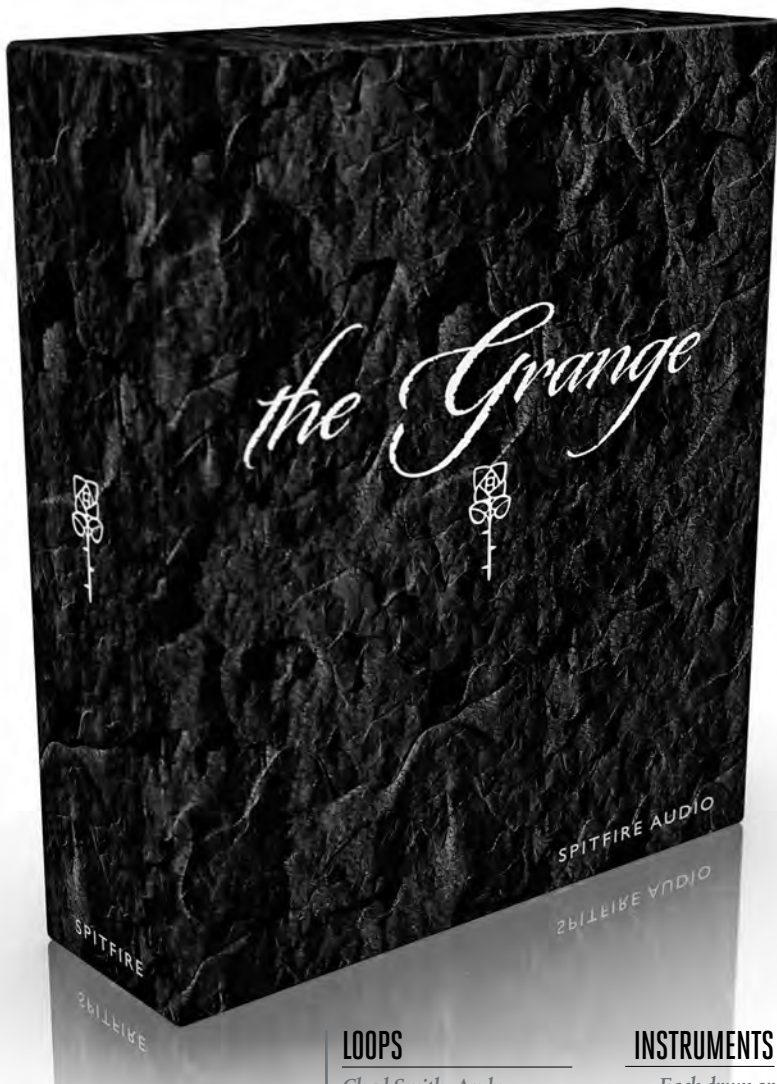
We say: "You can enjoy the sound of a high-end, expertly tuned kit recorded in a great room using expensive studio equipment."

set-ups. Kit one triggers hi-hat Performance mode, opening the hi-hat a touch when triggered at the same time as the snare drum, just like Roger does. The second kit does away with this feature, and Roger's kit gives you the most 'open' sound of all of the kits. Chad's samples are probably closest to what most Bonham fans will be looking for, giving two meaty-sounding rock kits, each with a different snare. The first is a drier, slightly lower-pitched snare sound; crank the ambience up and you'll find it hard not to pull out your best Bonzo impressions. The second snare is tuned up. Play some Chad-a-like ghost-note grooves and you're rewarded with Chad's funky sound to a tee.

Perhaps the most characterful and different though are the Andy Gangadeen kits. Kit one is sampled with brushes, great for anything from jazz to country, or even more experimental live-over-electronics beats. For us, Andy's second kit is where the fun really starts. There are two snares - the first of which includes a sidestick sample that'll have you imitating the slow grooves and analogue clicks of Massive Attack's *Mezzanine*. Switch to the second snare, and you've got a thumping, de-tuned and damped snare that provides a huge dub/drum'n'bass backbeat. **R**

VERDICT: The Grange isn't without its quirks, and nor is it cheap, and the Kontakt interface will require the casual e-kit user to really get their hands dirtier than normal in order to get the best out of these sounds. That said, Spitfire Audio has embarked on an ambitious project here, entering hallowed ground for drummers everywhere; to get it wrong would be sacrilege. Thankfully, they've nailed it.

BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★
PLAYABILITY	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
RHYTHM RATING	★★★★★



Essential spec

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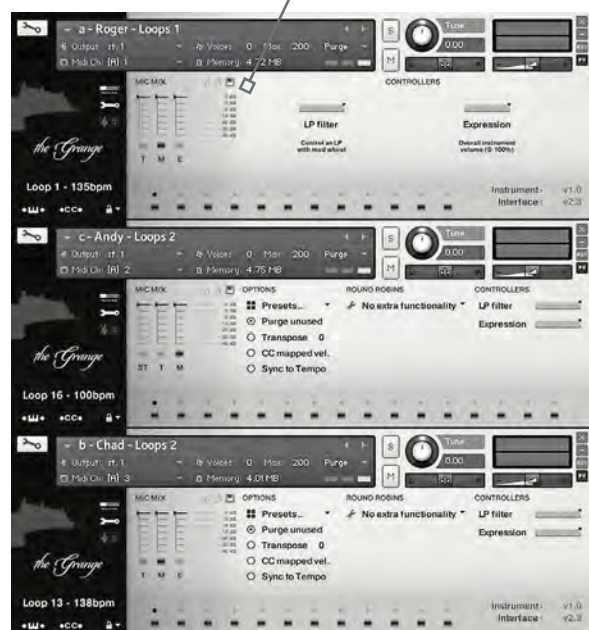


LOOPS

Chad Smith, Andy Gangadeen and Roger Taylor have each recorded a series of loops and fills

INSTRUMENTS

Each drum or cymbal can be selected and assigned from the central frame



MIC PLACEMENT

Various mic set-ups can be selected such as for the famous 'Levee' stairwell



GEAR REVIEW

VK DRUMS ALUMINIUM SNARE

£599 At VK Drums 'handbuilt' really does mean handbuilt...

WORDS: ADAM JONES



From his adopted hometown of Sheffield, Alan van Kleef hand builds drums, constructing from scratch just about every component required. Currently the only parts he buys in are heads and snare wires... and he has plans to manufacture wires.

Build

Here we have a 14"x6½" Aluminium shell snare. Formed from a 2mm single sheet of high grade 1050 aluminium, it is laser-cut, rolled and then TIG welded; the weld is polished out so finely that the only evidence of it is just visible on the inside of the shell. Along with all VK metal-shelled drums, the bearing edges are cut directly into the edge of the shell (as opposed to being folded over) and are rounded with a 1mm radius. The completed shell sports an elegantly simple brushed finish which is sealed with a coat of protective clear lacquer.

Twenty solid stainless steel turret lugs - individually made by hand - are fitted to the

shell, each one so perfectly finished that you can't help but admire the level of skill. Equally impressive is the stainless steel VK007 throw-off which is again designed and built in entirety by Alan. Tucked away within the snare release is a VKey drum key (silent, ratcheted and a near perfect marriage of form and function); 4mm-thick single-flanged 'stickchopper' hoops top and tail the drum, adding a retro touch which suits the look of the aluminium.

Hands On

Putting stick to head, the drum responds with a full, throaty crack; fairly dry but not lacking in volume or depth. Hit dead-centre it produces a backbeat big enough to power a foundry. Moving away from the middle, the note spreads and the decay lengthens. Here, at more relaxed tunings, the drum really comes alive, allowing fuzzy-edged buzz roll figures to be incorporated into stickings - perfect for New Orleans-style funk. Rimshots are an absolute joy; those straight-edged

hoops serve up old-school blasts of ripe, pealing energy. The hoops also make it possible to flick in semi-rimshots, not quite the real thing, more snappy metallic accents that don't sound like miss-hits. Higher tunings find some of the drum's natural power reined in - it just doesn't sound quite as comfortable pitched up - but back in its optimal zone it manages to be both commanding and expressive. **R**

VERDICT: Alan van Kleef is clearly a seriously talented man and it's remarkable to think that this drum is the work of just one individual. While it's not the most versatile snare drum I've encountered, its presence and depth of character more than compensate.

BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★
PLAYABILITY ★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★
RHYTHM RATING ★★★★★

Essential spec



PRICE

VK Drums 14"x6½"
Aluminium snare, £599

SHELL MATERIAL

Aluminium

CONSTRUCTION METHOD

Single sheet; cut, rolled and TIG welded

NUMBER OF PLYS

One, 2mm thick

BEARING EDGES

Cut directly onto shell, rounded over; accurately cut

FINISHES AVAILABLE

Brushed (as pictured)

HOOPS

Single-flanged stainless steel hoops, 4mm thick, 18mm deep

SUPPLIED HEADS

Evans coated G1 batter and Hazy 300 snareside

LUGS PER DRUM

20 stainless steel turret lugs

SNARE STRAINER

VK007 stainless steel throw-off and butt-end

SNARE WIRES

Puresound, 20 strands

CONTACT

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SONOR MARTINI SPECIAL EDITION (SE) KIT

£398 Budget compact kits are all the rage, but does Sonor's Martini take miniaturisation too far?

WORDS: GEOFF NICHOLLS

Easily portable, undersized kits are increasingly popular and in 2014 Sonor introduced three options in its Special Edition (SE) series. There's the Safari (a budget counterpart to the Select Force Jungle) and Bop with 16"x16" and 18"x16" bass drums respectively, and this tiny Martini with a 14"x12" bass drum. Then just this year Sonor has added the Players kit with a 20"x12" kick.

Although starting as Special Editions, the popularity of these kits has led Sonor to keep them as ongoing product lines.

Build

The Martini comes packed into a single box, 83cm x 41cm x 45cm. There's the diminutive bass drum with tom mount and pedal lifter, 8"x8" mounted tom, 13"x10" floor tom and 12"x5" steel snare drum. All drums except the bass drum have their heads already mounted, so setting up is straightforward.

Shells are the same as those found in Sonor's cheapest series, the Smart Force: nine-ply poplar, 7.2mm thick. Bass drum hoops are maple veneer, which is a classy touch. The glaringly white poplar wood is pretty well finished - the insides have a slightly rough nap, yet follow Sonor's inner vertical ply tradition. But at such a bargain price don't expect this to be the best quality wood. It won't take hard knocks kindly. Edges are 45°, again good for the price, being accurately level, while the shells are pleasingly round.

Although extremely low priced for a Sonor, the Martini doesn't look it on the outside. The Red, Gold or Turquoise Galaxy

Sparkle wrap finishes are eye grabbing, the chrome is smoothly polished and the hardware is particularly rugged. The mallet logo lugs have Sonor's Tune-Safe feature which grips the tension bolts to ensure tuning stability.

Hands On

At 14"x12" the bass drum is so small it comes with a bass pedal riser, a simple but strong steel bracket that slots in underneath the shell and lifts the drum off the floor. Your bass pedal can then clamp to it (sparing those tasty wood hoops) and strike the drum roundabouts the centre. The drum is stabilised by the splendidly heavy duty spurs with huge rubber feet. Ditto the floor tom giraffe legs and excellent bracket clamps all round. Equally impressive, the small tom's bass drum mount has no less than three memory-locks making the whole thing wobble-free.

Now Sonor's blurb for the Martini asks, "Small car? Small stage? Small apartment?" Evidently the idea is that this is a super-compact kit which a grown-up player can use. The length and strength of the tom holder and floor tom legs means that an adult can indeed adjust the kit to a comfortably normal elevation. The inference is that this could be a secondary practice, or small gigging kit for a player who already has snare and cymbal stands, plus pedals, since none of these is included in the shell pack. But a kit this small would also be ideal for a pre-teen youngster.

What about the sound though? The joker in the pack is the 14"x12" bass drum. Inevitably it goes 'boink'. You can fiddle about, apply the supplied felt strip damper,

Also try...



1 GRETSCH CATALINA CLUB MOD

We say: "It's destined to appeal to younger drummers with punk-metal heroes who are mostly not awash with dosh. The snazzy finishes, staggered lugs and black hardware all add to the feeling you're getting something a bit different and exclusive."



2 LUDWIG QUESTLOVE BREAKBEATS

We say: "An affordable kit that lives up to its design, this kit will suit any style of 'groove' player and is even a great quality set for kids."

adjust tensions back and front, but it is what it is. There is no way you're going to get the sort of depth associated with a more standard bass drum. But there are situations such as world music, folk, light jazz, street performance, drum'n'bass, etc, where this hard knock sound might be just the ticket. And if not, there are always the Bop, Safari or Players kit alternatives.

The six-lug steel shell snare has a basic but good-sized generic throw-off, the one obviously non-Sonor fitting. This is the cheapest looking Sonor drum I have ever seen, but no matter, it's crisp and voluble with a fat tone. Fun to play.

As for the toms, a 50-50 verdict for me. The 13"x10" is surprisingly gutsy and versatile, but the 8"x8" has the narrowest of tuning ranges. The square size seems out of place, jarring a bit with the other three drums. Half a turn up or down from the sweet spot (once you've found it) and the drum either flaps, choked (low tuning) or blimps (high tuning). For consistency why not, for example, have an 8"x6"? **R**

VERDICT: In a world where space is premium the mini kit is king. With its tiny bass drum, the good looking Martini will appeal to drummers looking for a particularly compact kit.

BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★
PLAYABILITY	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
RHYTHM RATING	★★★☆☆

ALTHOUGH EXTREMELY LOW PRICED FOR A SONOR, THE MARTINI DOESN'T LOOK IT ON THE OUTSIDE



TOM MOUNT

Sturdy tom mount reaches a good height for adult players and has three memory locks for secure positioning

HARDWARE

Sonor's well designed hardware - brackets, lugs and legs - is particularly impressive as always

BASS DRUM HOOPS

Tiny 14"x12" bass drum has natural maple wood veneer hoops which adds a touch of class and warms the sound

Essential spec



PRICE

£398

SHELL MATERIAL

Bass and toms: poplar wood; snare: steel

NUMBER OF PLYS

Bass and toms: nine plies, 7.2 mm thick.

BEARING EDGES

45° with 45° outer round over. Accurately level

FINISHES AVAILABLE

Red (as pictured), Turquoise or Gold Galaxy Sparkle wrap

HOOPS

Bass drum: natural finish maple veneer wood hoops; toms and snare: triple flanged steel

SHELL AVAILABILITY

14"x12" bass drum, 8"x8" tom, 13"x10" floor tom, 12"x5" snare drum

SUPPLIED HEADS

Remo (China) UX Coated Batters and Clear Resonants.

LUGS PER DRUMS

Bass drum: 12 single-ended; small tom: 10 single-ended; floor tom: 12 single-ended; snare: six, double-ended

SNARE STRAINER

Generic, side-lever throw off

CONTACT

Sutherland Trading Co Ltd
02920 887333
info@sutherlandtrading.com
www.sonor.com

GEAR REVIEW

ROLAND RT-30 TRIGGERS



From £45 Roland helps us get trigger happy with a helping hand into the wonderful world of hybrid drums...

WORDS: DAVE HOLMES

Once the preserve of Stadium Gods, as the cost of the tech decreases, the fusion of acoustic drums with electronics is now within easy grasp of the semi-pro player - welcome one and all, to the world of the hybrid. The advantages of a hybrid set-up are clear; you can play your beloved acoustic set while also producing electronic and 'real' sampled sounds - any sound you can possibly imagine - and combining them with your acoustic kit. How exciting is that?

Build

We have all three of Roland's brand new RT-30 triggers which now replace their decade-old RT-10s. While the new models have a sleeker appearance, they are not only reduced in size but in price too. There are many refinements including a more reliable clamp which allows the triggers to fit a wide range of hoops including those with an inward-facing top flange such as the S-Hoop. Also, each unit adjusts automatically to the distance between sensor and drum head - no tweaking necessary, simply plug and play!

Roland has now suffixed the new RT-30s with an H for 'head' (single trigger) and HR for 'head' and 'rim' (dual trigger) - making it clear that both triggers are suitable either for toms or snare. However, the RT-30K (significantly deeper than the other two), is specifically designed for the kick. This features "mistrigger cancel" technology which prevents double triggering by utilising two piezo transducers in a similar way to Roland's BT-1.

Hands On

For review purposes Roland has kindly included the TM-2 trigger module. I am using my usual acoustic set and testing with a selection of snares having different hoops, including the S-Hoop. Initially I have the RT-30HR attached to my brass snare (which is fitted with a die-cast hoop) while the RT-30H goes onto one of my toms. This has a triple-flanged hoop. However, the clamps are so quick to swap over that I'll be doing plenty of experimenting.

Initially the set-up strangely draws me to



BASS DRUM TRIGGER

The RT-30K uses two piezo transducers to prevent double-triggering

DUAL TRIGGER

RT-30HR dual triggers work on the head and rim of the drum, suitable for snares and toms

try a 'Heavy Metal' kick sound mixed-in with my snare which, though outlandish, gets me thinking about the immense possibilities. Next, something more 'sensible' with the 'Dance HiLo' snare sound for the head and a simple clap for the rim. Without the electronics, the snare almost appears lifeless but when slowly bringing it into the mix, it seems to transform the drum.

With inspiration from the TM-2, I am layering two sounds on my acoustic kick - the previously applied Heavy Metal kick and a tambourine element (not the whole sound, just a snippet), both of which trigger each time I strike the drum. The kick drum is punchy and massively powerful and happens to sound as if there has been some compression applied - clever stuff.

Even on my comparatively slack toms, I am impressed with the response from both the H and HR triggers. On the snare drum, even when hammering away as fast as I possibly can, the triggering appears to be accurate with no noticeable latency - impressive. **R**

VERDICT: The vision of reliably transforming an acoustic set into a fully fledged hybrid has now become a cost-effective reality - the best of both worlds just got better.

BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★
PLAYABILITY ★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★
RHYTHM RATING ★★★★★

PRICES

RT-30H Single Trigger, £45; RT-30HR Dual Trigger, £49; RT-30K Kick Trigger, £55

CONSTRUCTION

Fibreglass reinforced ABS

TRIGGER TYPE

Piezo

HOOP FITMENT

RT-30H and RT-30HR - rim height (max): 13mm; RT-30K Kick Trigger - rim height: 30-36mm, rim thickness (max): 12mm

ACCESSORIES

3.5m Stereo Cable

CONTACT

Roland (UK) Ltd
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ZILDJIAN PROJECT 391 LIMITED EDITION CYMBALS

From £155 Zildjian's first B15 bronze cymbals straddle the gap between budget and high-end pro in this bold limited edition set

WORDS: GEOFF NICHOLLS

Time simply won't stand still, even for Zildjian, that most venerable of percussion companies. In 2014 it was 391 years since 1623, the date recognised as the start of the Zildjian dynasty in Constantinople. Hence the 391 of the series title. But what justifies highlighting this hallowed landmark?

Well, Zildjian has always employed B20 bronze (80 percent copper, 20 percent tin) for its pro cymbals. And, much more recently, lower tin content B12 (ZHT) and B8 (ZBT) alloys for its budget cymbals. There always seemed to be a big jump from these 'sheet' bronze cymbals to the 'individually cast' professional level 'A's and onwards. But the success of European companies Paiste and Meinl in developing pro-quality cymbals using B8, B10 and B12 bronze has created an expanding market sector which Zildjian has perhaps under-exploited.

Build

The 391 Sound Lab cymbals are designed to bridge that gap between the rather shrill ZHTs and the more refined As and A Customs. And in order to achieve this Zildjian has for the first time turned to B15 bronze alloy with its higher (15 percent) tin content. Zildjian's Director of R&D, Paul Francis, says, "We purchase the B15 alloy from an outside supplier who casts it into a coil and then rolls it down to our thickness specifications. This is then put through a press to stamp out discs which we craft in the same way as our professional series 'A' or 'A Custom' cymbals."

What also distinguishes the 391s is a special two-stage lathing process, initially similar to that used on the A Customs but which then entails polishing and re-lathing on

Also try...



1 MEINL SOUNDCASTER SERIES

We say: "Professional cymbals made from B12 bronze, in brilliant yet warm Custom and dual-lathed Fusion models."



2 PAISTE SIGNATURE SERIES

We say: "Similar B15 alloy as the Zildjian 391s, but more refined, extensively worked, and generally more expensive."

the bottom and top "to provide the smooth glossy sound of a brilliant finish cymbal with the bite and cut of a regular finish".

On review we have a 22" ride, 16" and 18" crashes, and 15" hats. There is a full range, but Paul affirms this is "truly a limited run. Once they are all gone Zildjian will not produce any more with this alloy".

Hands On

The 15 percent tin content sits right between the eight and 12 percent of the ZBT/ZHTs and the 20 percent of Zildjian's major output. It's an intriguing alloy, made famous by Paiste in its Signature line, and I'd venture these 391s are closer to the Paiste sound than Zildjian has approached previously. It's a departure that Zildjian fans might question, but is surely just a smart move, simply expanding the palette Zildjian has to offer.

All the 391 crashes are available in one weight, between medium-thin and medium, which gives them depth to balance out the brightness. Starting with my favourite here, the 18" crash, it is dazzling yet extremely smooth. There is that glassy purity which recalls Paiste's Signatures. Okay, some of the latter have rather more complex timbres, but then they cost considerably more.

The 16" is similar but inevitably lacking some of the beef of the bigger cymbal. Both crashes cut through, but you don't always have to wallop them as being medium-thin

they respond sweetly at low volumes too.

The more aggressive side of the 391s emerges with the 22" ride. It has a rather thin initial stick sound with an electro-metallic zing. But it fattens up nicely if you use a thicker, heavier stick and play it



BOTH CRASHES CUT THROUGH, BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO WALLOP THEM AS THEY RESPOND SWEETLY AT LOW VOLUMES TOO

hard. This way a deeper, more balanced undertone is revealed, with full sustain and a darker wallowing crash. Overall the vibe is brash on top yet warm beneath. The bell I found unremarkable - you need to catch it just right to get a clear ring.

Being on the large side the 15" hats again have volume and warmth. When closed the stick-tip sound is soft, not aggressive. You only get that edge when you open them up and smash them around, or

play with your stick tip on the open top cymbal (as on the ride). This inherent softness also affects the pedalled 'chip' sound, which is rather muted when played in conjunction with the decidedly more piercing ride.

Although Zildjian suggests these are professional cymbals for loud rockers, I would say the crashes and hats at least have wider applications, being clean, musical and warm. **R**

VERDICT: A departure for Zildjian, a step up from the ZHTs, the professional level 391s are clean looking and sounding, more Euro-style cymbals which fill a gap in the Zildjian inventory.

BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★
PLAYABILITY	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
RHYTHM RATING	★★★★★



PRICES

16" crash, £155; 18" crash, £185; 22" ride, £249; 15" hi-hats, £275

MANUFACTURE

Pressed and stamped discs from B15 bronze coil. Machine hammered and lathed

ALLOY USED

B15 bronze: 85% copper 15% tin

FINISH

Double lathed and brilliant polished

DIAMETERS AVAILABLE

8" to 22"

MODELS AVAILABLE

Splashes, crashes, rides, chinas, hi-hats

COUNTRY OF MANUFACTURE

USA

SUITABLE FOR

Pop, rock and mostly heavier styles

CONTACT

Headstock Distribution
0121 508 6666.
www.headstockdistribution.com
www.zildjian.com



TWO STAGE LATHING

Sound Lab 391s undergo a two stage lathing process, initially similar to that used on the A Custom series

B15 ALLOY

For the first time Zildjian has used B15 bronze alloy in the manufacture of the 391s

LIMITED EDITION

Once they are all sold, Zildjian says it won't be making any more Project 391s

VINTAGE GEAR

CAMCO KIT IN ALICE COOPER WHITE

Circa
early-mid
1970s

Los Angeles era-Camco played by Jeremy Stacey on sessions with Sir Tom Jones, Gary Barlow and Ethan Johns

WORDS: GEOFF NICHOLLS PHOTOS: JAMES CUMPSTY

This is the second of High Flying Birds drummer Jeremy Stacey's Camco kits. Last month's psychedelic Blue Moiré stunner was a product of the original Oak Lawn, Illinois, period (from 1961 to 1971). Thereafter Camco moved to Chanute in Kansas before finishing up in Los Angeles, between roughly 1973 and 1977. This kit bears the final LA badge.

Early Camco drums have thin three- or four-ply rock maple shells with reinforcing rings and white painted interiors. In LA they eventually went to six-ply. Jeremy's kit evidently is an early LA model with clear interiors. Jeremy says, "It's a classic early 1970s kit with maple three-ply shells and maple glue rings, plus steel, not brass, hoops. Sizes are 12"x8", 13"x9", 16"x16" and 22"x14" and the shells are slightly undersized. I wonder if that is where the character of Camco comes through a little bit? Inside it is like the late 1960s/early 1970s Ludwigs and Slingerlands, which also

have three plies with glue rings. Anyway, the Chanute and LA badge drums have a similar sound and I absolutely love them. They are probably my favourite of all vintage kits."

The kit also has an eight-lug 14"x5" Aristocrat snare drum, and Camco also made a 10-lug version. The intriguing finish is called Alice Cooper White and was played by Cooper's drummer Pentti 'Whitey' Glan. There was also an Alice Cooper Blue finish.

Jeremy continues, "I got the kit off eBay in America. In London I also have maple finish and White Marine Pearl Camcos with LA badges, and a Chanute badge kit in maple.

"I also have an Alice Cooper White 24", 14", 16" and 18" with a 6½" snare out in LA which I played on Ryan Adams' *Ashes And Fire* (2011). I was hoping that would match with this one, which I'd bought a while back, but for some reason the white was not exactly the same. This one is darker, more mustardy. It is one of my favourite colours, a gorgeous finish. So I brought it home to London, but I sort of regret that now

because I only have a 20", 12", 14" and the big 24", 14", 16", 18" in the States. I don't have a Camco 22" in LA.

"This Camco has had a lot of use on quite a few sessions including with Gary Barlow, Ethan Johns, and Tom Jones. To be honest I am always mixing drums up when recording - mixing this Camco bass drum with lots of different toms, or whatever.

"I have drum storage in LA because when I have worked there I haven't particularly enjoyed hiring-in drums. I keep a load of kits out there now so that I know I will have something that will do what I need." **R**



FLOOR TOM LEGS

Wide Spread legs were introduced in later Camcos, giving greatly increased stability

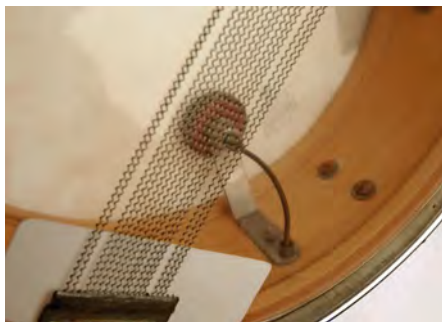
"CHANUTE AND LA BADGE CAMCOS HAVE A SIMILAR SOUND AND I ABSOLUTELY LOVE THEM. THEY ARE PROBABLY MY FAVOURITE OF ALL VINTAGE KITS"

OWNER JEREMY STACEY



TOM MOUNT

Double swivel tom holder mount Model 18 is a simple but effective design with square cross-section arms for stability.



SNARE DRUM INTERIOR

Interior reveals maple ply with maple ply reinforcing rings and neat internal damper design.



TURRET LUG

Circular castings have solid brass inserts and Camco's PosiTune tension system.

CLASSIC KIT

■ FINISH

Alice Cooper White lacquer has matured to a mustardy cream on this LA badge kit

■ SNARE DRUM

Aristocrat 14"x5" maple-shelled snare drum has eight lugs although there was an option for a 10-lug snare also



Need to know



LOS ANGELES

Camco drums were finally built in Los Angeles before the company was eventually split up between DW and Tama.

CAMCO

Camco drums were played by Doug Clifford of Creedence Clearwater Revival, the Beach Boys' Dennis Wilson and 'Layla' drummer/composer Jim Gordon.

ALICE COOPER WHITE

This lacquer finish was featured by Cooper's drummer Pentti 'Whitey' Glan. There was also an Alice Cooper Blue finish.

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GEAR REVIEW

Peter Erskine's DW Frequent Flyer has a retro 20"x12" bass drum



RHYTHM GEAR GURU GEOFF NICHOLLS BASHES OUT YOUR KIT CONUNDRUMS

ASK GEOFF



Hi Geoff,

I read with interest the recent *Rhythm* review of the DW Frequent Flyer. My question is, when will a manufacturer make a compact budget kit based on a 20"x12" bass drum? I teach young learners using a variously upgraded Pearl Rhythm Traveler, but when I'm asked to recommend a first kit I find it hard to do so. Ninety per cent of budget kits are variations of full-size rock kits with a 22"x18" bass drum. These are often too big for the nine-to-13 age range, louder than needed, and occupy a huge area. 20"x12" brings toms lower and knocks 6" off the depth of the usual kit.

Alastair Mackenzie, Ross-Shire

Hi Alastair,

The Frequent Flyer does have a retro 20"x12" bass drum, which was originally requested by Peter Erskine. Problem is, as you say, it's expensive.

The Rhythm Traveler is a good teaching kit, it's compact, lightweight and cheap. But it does have the air of a practice kit. The same applies to the Flats Lite and Traps A400 kits which are virtually shell-less. But all these kits are surprisingly loud, you can gig with them and the bass drums are 20" diameter.

There are cheapo generic junior kits, but they are really Christmas toys. Then, as you say, we're off into budget versions of

remain gratifyingly cheap. The trend was started by the Jojo Mayer-inspired Sonor Jungle back in 1996 and soon followed by Yamaha's HipGig. Just recently they've been joined by Ludwig's Breakbeats 'Questlove' kit with 16"x14", and Gretsch's Catalina Club Street with 16"x12" bass drum.

Sonor has recently updated its offering in this sector with the budget Special Edition (SE) kits - Safari (16"x16" bass drum), Bop (18"x16") and Martini (14"x12"! See my review on page 104 for more on this).

It seems this sort of bass drum size - where diameter is decreased while retaining a sizeable depth - has up until now been seen as hipper. But there are indications this is changing, with shallower bass drums on the way back.

Premier choice

In fact there is a budget alternative by a leading manufacturer along the lines you suggest and this is the Premier APK. Premier previously offered a compact kit in its Artist Heritage (Club) line which had a 20"x8" bass drum. These can occasionally be found on eBay, etc.

Premier replaced this with a selection of small APK kits with 16"x14" (Microbop), 18"x14" (Bebop), or 20"x10" (Club Ace) bass drums. The APK Heritage Club Ace 20 has a 20"x10" bass drum, with 10"x6½" standard tom, 13"x11" floor tom and 13"x5½" snare drum in wood or steel. This is a superb little kit and great value for money. Shells are 7.5mm-thick birch ply, finished in a choice of four sparkle wraps.

However, with Premier changing the APK for its new Inception series, a narrow bass drum may not survive. Meanwhile, stop the press: Sonor has just added the SE Players kit to its mini-kit line-up and this has a 20"x12" bass drum (although with metal inlaid hoops where the APK's are wood), with 10"x8", 14"x12" and 14"x5" snare.

So, Alastair, Sonor and Premier (for the moment) both offer the sort of drum you're looking for at a budget price.

UK oldies

As an afterthought, British-made budget kits with 20"x12" bass drums, which have

SMALL COMMERCIAL KITS CAN BE OF DECENT QUALITY AND YET REMAIN GRATIFYINGLY CHEAP

grown-up kits with 22"x16" or 18" bass drums, etc. Loads of them to pick from.

In the Jungle

Other small commercial kits tend to go the breakbeat/jungle route by combining mini toms and snare along with a 16" bass drum, which is basically an up-ended floor tom. These kits can be of decent quality and yet

been knocking around since the 1960s and 1970s, are still to be found. Such kits by Rose Morris, Carlton, Autocrat, Ajax-Edgware, etc have been featured in Vintage Gear, and the most widespread were made by Premier in its budget Olympic line. These kits have top-class shells and fittings although the mounting hardware may be outdated. **R**

DO YOU HAVE A KIT QUESTION FOR GEOFF?

Big or small, there isn't a gear query that *Rhythm* expert Geoff Nicholls can't grapple with. Email askgeoff@futurenet.com

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