

NARADA MICHAEL WALDEN, THE DRUMMERS OF NEW ORLEANS & ROGER WATERS' DRUMMER: GRAHAM BROAD

# EDGE

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DRUMMING NIRVANA  
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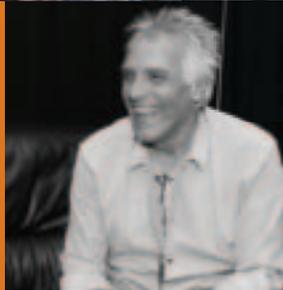
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## >PRODUCT FOCUS

### DW EDGE SERIES SNARES

WITH GERALD HEYWARD

*Over the years, the Edge snare drum has become a popular choice for so many touring and studio pros. What did drummers do without it? What did we do before the patented Edge was invented? It has such a unique sound, the bite of 5/16" solid brass Edge rings, the warmth of 10-ply North American Hard Rock Maple. What a stellar sonic combination. Aside from the industry accolades and the unique sound quality, the Edge is simply a must-have custom drum for any serious drummer's snare drum arsenal. R&B and Gospel godfather, Gerald Heyward, swears by Edge snares for his signature sound. We caught up with him recently and asked him why the Edge is his 'go to' snare.*

**DW:** What exactly do you like about the Edge?

**GH:** It's very versatile and performs well, tuned up or tuned down. It's the most versatile drum I've ever played.

**DW:** You've used them throughout your

*playing career. Why?*

**GH:** It's very consistent. There's really no other snare drum that I would want to play. I am not looking for another sound. Y'all came up with the concept and I made it famous.

**DW:** Which Edge will you choose next?

**GH:** Whatever has the Edge concept is what I will be using. It's the be-all and end-all, the alpha and the omega. It's the beginning and ending of all snare drums. When I'm renting gear and the Edge shows up, it's a wrap. I rely on that drum; I live on the Edge.

Best part, they're so uniquely customizable. Want die-cast counter hoops? Fine. Delta ball-bearing throw off? No problem. 24 karat gold Edge rings? Sure. There are just so many options; you can build an Edge snare drum that literally no one else will have.



Then, there are the shell options. The Edge comes standard with a 10-ply maple center, but a birch, Super Solid, or any other Custom Shop shell configuration can easily be substituted. Did we mention there are options? A May shock-mounted microphone system can even be factory-installed. So, for any drummer in the market for a boutique, one-of-a-kind snare drum, the "Drummer's Choice" might indeed be the perfect choice.

Hold on, before you make a decision, there are some newer Edge models on the menu worth mentioning. For example, there's the recently released Top Edge. It includes the same heavy-gauge brass ring at the top for attack and sensitivity and an X shell at the bottom for meat and body. DW Executive Vice President and Drum Designer,

John Good, comments on the snare's sonic qualities, "This drum is our best-kept secret right now. We have so many snare drums to choose from and the Edge is such a popular choice for many of our artists that it's easy to be overshadowed, but this drum can really deliver the goods. Compared to our standard Edge, it actually has a little extra bottom-end and warmth that many drummers prefer." The drum can be ordered in various depths and can be customized in any DW Custom Shop finish. The Top Edge has more overall volume and cut than a standard wood shell and is a great choice for live and recording applications; definitely worth checking out. Also new to the DW snare palette is the Super Solid Edge, an all-wood snare featuring proprietary Super Solid molecular compression technology. That means the wood is many times denser than a typical steam-bent solid shell. The density offers a very warm, articulate sound with lots of nuance; perfect for recording applications. John Good explains, "We designed this drum to be the ultimate solid shell drum. Not only is it a Super Solid, but you can mix and match wood species. You want a maple center and walnut edges? No problem. You want a cherry center with maple edges? Fine. You want to mix maple, walnut and cherry in one drum? You can do that too. You can also customize the look in so many different ways, although I always like natural because this wood is gorgeous!"

To see and hear the Super Solid Edge, Top Edge and Edge log onto to Kitbuilder 2.0 and [www.dwdrums.com](http://www.dwdrums.com) or visit your nearest authorized DW drums retailer.



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*Pacific Drums and Percussion has announced a major upgrade to their best-selling In this crazy economy, Drum Workshop is more focused than ever on bringing drummers exceptional quality and value. With Pacific Drums and Percussion we can offer drummers of all ages and skill levels the chance to play quality gear they can actually afford. Sure, we can push the envelope when it comes to high-end professional drums, pedals and hardware, but we always need to keep the entire drumming community in mind, and never has affordable pricing and innovative thinking been so important. PDP drums are designed by drummers who are always striving to raise the bar and PDP's latest kits, snares, pedals and accessories are no exception.*

Case-in-point, the turn-key Mainstage kit; it's everything a drummer could need in one box. It's a quality all-poplar wood kit with a durable metallic wrap. Included is a 700 Series hardware pack with stands, pedal and even a throne. But we didn't stop there. We partnered with Sabian to add in a 3-piece SBR cymbal pack. Mainstage is the perfect choice for students, parents and beginners that want a "real drumset" not a toy.

PDP has also recently added the price-conscious Mainstage and all-maple Blackout snares to their line-up. Mainstage steel snares are a great bang for the buck, with steel shells, side-to-side throw-off, Remo heads and more. The stealthy line of Blackout snares feature an all-maple shell of optimal tonality and warmth, black lacquer finish with custom-inspired black hardware. Both Mainstage and Blackout snares can be easily upgraded with higher-grade heads to give drummers an inexpensive way to increase their snare selection. To see Brain (Primus, Guns and Roses) demo the complete line of PDP snares, visit [www.pacificdrums.com](http://www.pacificdrums.com)

# PDP PRODUCT NEWS MAINSTAGE, SNARES & PEDALS



Next up is PDP's racing-inspired 500 Series pedals. Available in single and double models, 500 pedals are built on DW's reputation for pedal performance. Features such as a sturdy steel base plate, spring rocker assembly, dual-chain, offset cam, new footboard and more, make these pedals a solid choice for any style of music.

Last, but certainly not least, PDP has revamped its entire line of accessories from the ground up. From bass drum beaters to cymbal arms, clamps, wood hoops and more, PDP accessories are designed to take affordable replacement parts and add-ons to the next level and DW innovation and know-how makes it all possible. 

To see the complete line or to purchase these items, visit [www.pacificdrums.com](http://www.pacificdrums.com)

# > TIME MACHINE

## NARADA MICHAEL WALDEN: MUSIC'S RENAISSANCE MAN

BY RICH MANGICARO



He's been inspiring us since the early 70's, has helped jump start the careers of some of music's biggest names and still to this day, continues to re-invent himself as an artist and creative force. He's played on some of the most influential recordings in modern music and is a multiple Grammy Award recipient. Beginning his career in the Jazz Fusion world, Narada performed and recorded with the giants of the genre including the Mahavishnu Orchestra, Weather Report and Allan Holdsworth. From there, he embraced the Pop/R&B market, developing the careers of such legends as Whitney Houston and Mariah Carey and was also responsible for soul queen, Aretha Franklin's Song of the Year Grammy. Most recently, he's returned to one of his early gigs, touring with guitar virtuoso Jeff Beck.

Michael Walden was given the name Narada by his spiritual guru (teacher) Sri Chinmoy. It was a path he chose after being inspired by his relationship with John McLaughlin. The definition of Narada is an ultimate nomad or one who searches for the life of people, a fitting name for an artist and producer that has crossed over so many genres and affected so many important musical careers. He is a true journeyman and for all intents and purposes, a musical nomad.

DW: Narada, I hear you're back on the road with Jeff Beck?! Full-circle for you, right?

Narada: Yes, my career is flowing, like in the 70's! I'm touring with Jeff again and it's been real busy...14 shows in the last 17 days, 25,000 seat venues and also the New Orleans Jazz festival, which I've never done before. I get so much energy hearing the drums outdoors and I'm hitting hard to reach the people in the back...it's taking every bit of my fiber! Then I come home and gotta deal

with my studio and everything back there, so it's non-stop.

"I first met him (John McLaughlin) at a venue in Harford, CT. I watched him blazing, his body rockin' back and forth, with Billy Cobham just goin' at it. They were playing things I'd never seen before, actually, no one had ever seen before!"

DW: Where were you when you first started playing?

NMW: Kalamazoo, Michigan. My Dad bought me an album when I was 3 or 4, with Buddy Rich and Max Roach. At Christmas, he gave me a toy drum set, which was such a highlight. A bit later, I studied with a guy named Tom Carey, who was the first to help me with my left hand. I was about 9 and saw for the first time, a guy rockin' his left foot back and forth on the hi-hat, while playing around the kit and it was my first exposure

photos by Rob Shanahan  
to independence. I realized how important that was and then met another guy named Harold Mason, who was a great Jazz player; he later went on to play with Stevie Wonder. He taught me rudiments out of the Jim Chapin book. Then in high school, I played marching snare, timpani and was even the drum major; I realized I liked leading!

DW: You were not long out of high school when you went to Florida, right?

NMW: Yes, I was 19 and that's where I met Jaco (Pastorius), Cliff Carter, Hiram Bullock, Steve Morse, all those cats. We had a band down there, which prepared me for playing with Mahavishnu. Our band then moved to a farm up in CT that had a barn, which we converted into a full-on recording studio, drums all miked up, ready to go. It would be January, freezing, but we'd be out there playing.

DW: Talk about that first meeting with John McLaughlin.

NMW: I first met him at a venue in Harford, CT. I watched him blazing, his body rockin' back and forth, with Billy Cobham just goin' at it. They were playing things I'd never seen before, actually, no one had ever seen before! They played in various time signatures, from 13, to 17, to 19 and then stop on a dime, and begin again. It would go on for so long. Completely incredible, the accuracy, the rhythms were staggering. And it was completely spontaneous, which was even more mind-blowing! You looked around and the audience's mouths were dropped, you could hear a pin drop in there. At that show, I saw a guy dressed in white



**Search You Tube for Narada with Mahavishnu at the Montreux Jazz festival in 1974 to watch a blazing, inspiring live version of “Wings Of Karma”. Another must see – Narada with Weather Report performing “Black Market”...listen to the way Narada accompanies brilliantly during Wayne Shorter’s solo...this is true drumming artistry! For a more recent killing clip, check out Narada with Jeff Beck, a February 18th, 2010 show at Madison Square Garden in New York, just tearing up Jeff’s “Led Boots”!**

and I knew he was a disciple of Sri Chinmoy. I introduced myself and asked if I could meet Mahavishnu (John’s spiritual name). He took me back stage and I was euphoric, after hearing all that music they’d just played. John poked his head out and asked me to wait a bit. When he came back, I said, “I’m Michael Walden and whatever it is you’re doing to enable you to play that way, I want to do it too.” He told me it was largely due to his prayer and meditation practice and that he was going to see his Guru in the morning. I knew about his practice as I had gone to a center in Florida and also read his album notes. John said he would tell the Guru he met me. It then hit me that he was talking about that morning. We were in Hartford, it was already 1:00 am and he was going to

drive to Queens, all night, after what I just saw, to be there by 6:00 am! I then realized just how serious this guy was. I gave him my phone number and within a week’s time, he called me and said that he wanted to bring me to meet the Guru, who was going to be in Norwalk. When I got there, it was in a basement of a house and there he was, singing and playing the harmonium and immediately I sensed that same power I saw with (the band) Mahavishnu.

*DW: How long after that experience, did you begin playing with John?*

NMW: Not long...we jammed across from the meditation hall once, just him and me. I also went to see him perform again

in Massachusetts and that’s when I met Billy Cobham. Billy is a phenomenal cat. I was familiar with his playing and had been listening to him. After that show, he wanted to come to my house so we could play together and asked me to drive him in his car as he slept, about 2-3 hours away, unbelievable! I walked in and told the guys who were with me in the car and they couldn’t believe it. Then he walked in.

*DW: Who were some of your early drumming influences?*

NMW: Early on, it was Art Blakey. I heard him play a backbeat in a Jazz tune and that was it! Later, it was Mitch Mitchell, Buddy



Miles and of course, Elvin Jones. Elvin was just so raw and if you listen to Mitch Mitchell, you know he was just tryin' to get down with what Elvin was playing. I also love Jack DeJohnette, John Bonham and now in retrospect, Keith Moon. So much passion and power, he just gets to me. I also have to say, charisma-wise, Ringo Starr. He was a star. That's when I learned that you could work it, that you can reach the audience from behind the drum set. Then from the R&B side, Zigaboo from The Meters and Greg Errico from Sly and the Family Stone, just one of the best bands in the world!

DW: What came after Mahavishnu?

NMW: I worked on Weather Report's *Black Market* album and brought Jaco Pastorius to that band for a track called "Cannonball". Joe asked me to join the band, but I didn't want to be in a fusion band, I wanted to go Rock and Roll, so I joined Tommy Bolin's band. I still did some fusion records with Allan Holdsworth and Roy Buchanan. I was also getting my own first album together. It took another year, but I finally signed to Atlantic and did *Garden of Love Light*, which featured Carlos Santana, Jeff Beck and Eddie Gomez. I'm so proud of that record to this day.

"I worked on Weather Report's *Black Market* album and brought Jaco Pastorius to that band for a track called "Cannonball". Joe asked me to join the band, but I didn't want to be in a fusion band, I wanted to go Rock and Roll."

DW: What was your first production project? Let's get into that world.

NMW: The first project was Don Cherry. Commercially though, it was an album I did for Stacy Lattisaw. We rehearsed a lot, so we could be really tight and we were able to cut the tracks very quickly. We came in under budget and had some hits, so that's how I

moved in the production ranks.

DW: Did you know at that point that you wanted to move in that direction?

NMW: Not really 'cause I wanted to be a drummer and a solo artist, but Quincy (Jones) called me and encouraged me. He told me, "You write songs and people need producers, so you might want to think about that." Quincy was really my mentor and he was right.

DW: When you write, what's your starting point? Do you begin with a melody or a certain rhythm or do you start on piano?

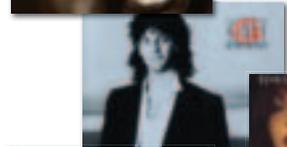
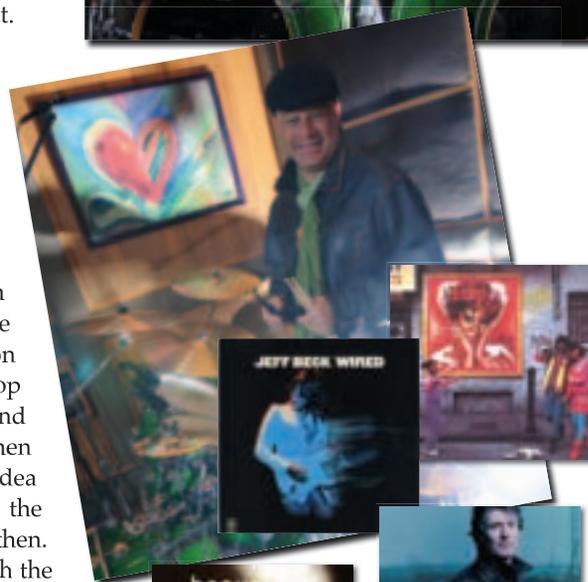
NMW: I go to piano usually. I like a piano chord-inspired melody. Sometimes I'll get a drum groove right away while I'm by the piano. Lately, I get a beat going on the Triton (synthesizer), develop the chords and then get a mic and establish the hook. I love it when someone gives me a title or an idea of one, it gives me a place to go; the verses and melody come easy then. I'm a chorus guy, I like to establish the punch line, then I can find out how to weave my way into it.

DW: How did you meet Aretha Franklin?

NMW: Through Clive Davis. He'd known my previous work with Dionne Warwick which, by the way, later taught me how to produce Whitney Houston. Clive came to me and said, "How about Aretha?" I of course, said yes. I called her and we talked for a while. I actually taped the conversation 'cause I didn't want to miss anything. I wanted to hear how she talked... so important later, when I put the music together with her. How one phrases their words in conversation tells you so much about a person.

DW: You were capturing the person's essence, not just the words. Really, what they're all about.

NMW: Yes. A producer is like a boxing coach...it's a psychological thing. You gotta know how to talk to somebody before you get into all the technical stuff in the studio. Lay down a comfort level and know what they're all about. You want their personality to shine. That's why every time I produce a record I feel like I'm starting from scratch. The artist's personality will dictate how I'll start the process. It's always fresh. 



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- Starship / *Do You Love Me*
- Aretha Franklin & Elton John / *Duets*
- Al Green / *Your Heart's In Good Hands*
- Elton John / *Duets*
- Al Jarreau / *Heaven And Earth*
- Shanice Wilson / *Strictly Business Film Soundtrack*
- O'jays / *Emotionally Yours*
- Lisa Fischer / *So Intense*
- Regina Belle / *Stay With Me*
- Gladys Knight / *License To Kill*
- Clarence Clemons / *Hero*
- Whitney Houston / *How Will I Know*
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**DRUMMER: CURT BISQUERA**  
**ARTIST: SARAH MCLACHLAN**  
**TECH: JOHN ORESHNICK**

*In this installment of Tech Tips, we talk touring. More specifically, how to get a kit road-ready and how to make it as travel and tech-friendly as it can be. For those gigging drummers out here, this is valuable information.*

*John Oreshnick owns Angel City Drum Works and techs for some of the most notable names in the biz including: JR Robinson, Peter Erskine, Brendan Buckley and our good friend, Curt Bisquera, among others. We recently paid a visit to Angel City to see how he and Curt are preparing for the next leg of the Sarah McLachlan tour and we learned a few important tips.*

*DW: How do you guys work together and come up with what you're going to do? Does that usually come from the artist?*

*Curt: It usually comes from me, but I always try to run it by John to see what he thinks because of his vast knowledge of drums. You know, live versus studio, whatever; he's just a great guy to bounce my ideas off of. And he'll say, "We'll use this head combination" or, "These drums are cool" and, "If you use these drums, use this type of snare drum with it." So, John is pretty hand-in-hand with me, both live and in the studio, in terms of figuring out what kit will work best for every situation.*

*DW: So, for this particular gig with Sarah you knew you were going to be playing a certain style of music with a very specific dynamic range. How did that factor in?*

*way of the piano or the vocal, because that's ultimately what people want to hear, but it was still a rich, nice warm drum tone underneath was she does. So, that was the best kit for the gig.*

*DW: So, John, you get a call from Curt and he's got this tour and he says, "I'm hittin' the road and this is the kit I want to play," then you spring into action? What happens then?*

*"There's a nice vintage ambience with these drums and a nice overall warm tone."*

*John: Well yeah, we decided to go with old school sizes and an old school look. If you're gonna do it and you're going for the vintage vibe, then just do it to the nines. We went with Black Diamond Pearl wrap. And I mean, the kit looks like it could be 40 years old. You know, like it was kept in a time capsule.*

*DW: So, do you decide on head combinations together? I'm also guessing you send him out on the road with extra heads, as well. How does that work?*

*JO: Yeah, we send a ton of extra heads, but not really different kinds of heads. When*

*you find the heads that work for that kit and that situation, you go with it. We'll just fool around in the shop here beforehand and figure out which head combination will work best. Because you know what works on the old drums and it's just like, "Let's see if we can go for that exact sound." So we did the coated bottoms as opposed to the clear bottoms.*

*Curt: And what's cool about Angel City, is being able to come here and have as much time as I need. You could take the whole day or two days, or however long you need to figure out the right combination, because it's so drummer-friendly. It's only drummers here, so we could set up 3 to 5 kits if we wanted to, and just go crazy. Not that I did that for Sarah's tour, but it's just an opportunity to try out different combinations; head combinations, drum combinations, snares... so, it worked out great. And John was really instrumental in helping get my tour cases together because there's a carne manifest that needs to be filled out for tour when it gets sent out of the country, when they're checked into customs. So, John and I wrote out a very detailed inventory of the drums. And these drums have to be weighed and they have to be described on a special spreadsheet that shows the size of the drum, the color, its value. So yeah, that's kind of labor-intensive and time-intensive to fill all that out.*

*DW: And John, you work with a lot of drummers here at Angel City Drum Works. If we name-drop, you have Erskine, JR, Brendan Buckley and Craig McIntyre; lots of guys who are constantly touring, and so you're dealing with this sort of thing on an ongoing basis. How do you decide on spare parts and things? What specifically goes out on the road with them besides their kit and their cymbals?*

*JO: Some guys like Brendan and Craig have techs assigned to the tour and that's more their job I guess, but with JR especially, I*

at the number of days they'll be gone or number of dates they're going out for and just figure, "Ok, I now know how many heads JR is going to go through per show," and then you figure above and beyond.

DW: Do you send extra pedals?

JO: Yeah, there are always extra. There are always back-ups to everything mechanical and there's always a spare cymbal stand or a spare snare stand or whatever, just in case.

DW: Do you have a "spare parts kit" that's your standard thing?

JO: Pretty much. With the DW stuff, it's easy because you guys have all that stuff already prepackaged. It's all ready to go. It's all like, "Ok, I'll take six of those extra felt packs." And you know, even the pedal hinges, they come ready to go. With a lot of other manufacturers it's not so easy to get.

DW: Kirkee mentioned that he may take out that new Jazz Series kit on the next leg of the tour with Sarah McLachlan. So, will you guys go through that same exercise all over again, like you did on the last leg?

Curt: Yeah, we'll go through that same exercise. We'll figure out what heads will work. Like lately, I've been into pinstripes, so maybe pinstripes might be a good thing. And because it's a winter tour with Sarah, it's all theaters and casinos. Lilith Fair is all outdoor venues, all 5-10,000 seaters, so my Jazz Series will have more projection. Meaning, I'll probably want to go with more of a sound that's a little bit louder than the Classics that I'm using now. So, I'll probably take these out for summer. Plus, they're done in a beautiful finish crafted by our master painter at DW, Louie Garcia. A white pearl over white, which is close to the Lexus white but without any of the rainbow colors in it. It's just pure pearly white. White is perfect for the stage because it reflects any color light.

John also highly recommends a Finish Ply or wrapped kit for the road. He says especially if you're a first-time touring drummer and don't have flight cases, "You'll freak if the lacquer starts chipping, and it will." He also says a really good molded plastic case is best, "And get them without the foam, that can degrade over time. If you really want to protect your kit, get soft bags and order plastic cases an extra size bigger. Put the bags inside the plastic cases and you'll really protect your investment." 



# THE DRUMMERS OF NEW ORLEANS



**Stanton Moore**

*These days, DW drums are becoming the drums of choice for so many notable New Orleans cats, guys like the incomparable Zigaboo Modeliste (The Meters), Johnny Vidacovich (Professor Longhair, John Scofield, Astral Project), Willie Green (The Neville Brothers), Raymond Weber (Dumpstaphunk, Harry Connick Jr., Trey Anastasio) and Brady Blade (Emmy Lou Harris, Daniel Lanois). We asked New Orleans drumming ambassador, Stanton Moore, to connect with his fellow players, so we could learn more about the scene and their love and admiration for fellow funkster, Zigaboo Modeliste. He kindly agreed and so we present to you, the Drummers of New Orleans, Edge Magazine style.*

In New Orleans there is a long standing tradition of collaboration within the music community. This is especially true amongst the drummers who hail from the Crescent City. Perhaps this collaborative spirit can be traced to the drum and dance circles that happened for years in Congo Square. African people were unfortunately forced to migrate to America via the slave trade and New Orleans was the only city in America to let the African people play their indigenous instruments and music on American soil. These drum and dance circles happened up until the time of the Civil War in the French Quarter's Congo Square, now called Louis Armstrong Park. This is where drummers would play together and share ideas. The African rhythms kept alive in the in the square eventually started to blend with the European marches being played on snare drums and bass drums for the Funeral processions that were roaming through the streets of New Orleans. If the body and the hearse were the "first line," the band and the family and friends who followed were the "second line." This unique collaborative spirit of Congo Square still thrives today. Drummers from New Orleans often sit in on each other's gigs, get together to practice and often share

ideas over a drink at the end of the night.

I know from personal experience that Johnny Vidacovich has always welcomed young drummers into his home and welcomes them to sit in on gigs. I was always encouraged by Johnny to sit in and others were too, including Brady's brother, Brian Blade. Johnny's open door policy has given many drummers a platform to learn and develop their skills.

SM: Johnny, I recall you telling me to go see the great Smokey Johnson.

JV: I'd go see Smokey in the early 60's at the

"If you want to claim that you are from New Orleans, you have to have spent some time with Zig's playing, you just have to."

Mason's Club on Bienville, right by Allied Music. It's been right across the street from Johnny's house for the last twenty years. They'd have these kid teenage dances and Smokey played with Irma Thomas when Irma was a young girl, working gigs. It was always real hot, so I would go outside to the patio to see the drums through the window. I got to know Smokey from seeing him around town. I was playing with Al Belletto, and he was playing with Clarence "Frogman" Henry. I would see him on Bourbon Street and I'd ask him questions. He'd hear me play and make comments, "I like the way you're doing that, you're doing that right." He was always doing some stuff that would turn your head around, something off the wall. We never talked about anything serious, just all social.

I'd also see David Lee play with Tommy Ridgely. David Lee was playing with Willie Tee and Earl Turbington before he played with Dizzy (Gillespie). We talked about tympani and classical

music. He was very much in the style of Max Roach. He was very interested in compositional and melodic style. At the time, I was studying tympani so he'd be asking me questions. I spent a lot of time with David Lee.

SM: You and Zig are roughly the same age. I know Smokey was a big influence on Zig as well. Did you ever bump into Zig at Smokey's gigs or any other gigs when you guys were growing up?

JV: Not that I recall, but I know Zig was listening to a lot of Smokey. Everybody was playing Smokey licks back then.

SM: When did you first meet Zig and what were your first impressions of him?

JV: On Bourbon Street, we all started playing gigs down there in '66. He was playing really loose funk, syncopated, constantly changing patterns. They were playing swing tunes like "Autumn Leaves" and shuffle-type tunes. They were the house band at the Ivanhoe when I was at the Playboy Club with Al Belletto.

SM: Would you guys get together and work on things?

JV: We'd bump into each other casually, on breaks or on the street, or at Tipitina's maybe. We'd play gigs together, double drummers with Sam Rivers at the Contemporary Arts Center when it was funky, before it was remodeled and made all pretty.

When Lou and Charlie's got started it was more of an integrated scene. I started hanging with James Black and different drummers from around town, we'd hang out a lot...a lot of hangin' going on. When James and I would talk it would be more about music than about drums. He didn't really have a lot to say about the drums.

I used to go to Mason's (VIP Lounge) on Claiborne, a hotel with a bar. That's where all the bands used to stay: (Count) Basie, Duke Ellington, Dizzy (Gillespie). I'd go into the bar all the time and hang with those drummers. Candy Finch,



Roy McCurdy and June Gardner used to let me sit in. I also got to sit in with James Moody. At the first experimental New Orleans Jazz Festival, I got to be in the rhythm section that backed up Dizzy (Gillespie) and Bobby Hackett. I had long hair and a beard. I was about 19 or 20 years old. There was a lot of hanging out, there really was.

Willie Green is the long-standing drummer for the Neville Brothers. A powerful force of nature behind the kit, Willie is also known for his affable, fun-loving personality and he's a great cook! He has a well-appointed drum room and visitors are always welcome to come by and see what's cooking, both on the stove and on the kit.

*SM: Willie, the theme of this piece is the community vibe and collaborative spirit that New Orleans drummers share. Were there any guys you were checking out when you came up?*

WG: I had people looking for what I was doing more so than me going to guys to look to be tutored. Everything for me was God-gifted. But when I lost my hearing, I lost 50% of my performance. (Willie lost a substantial amount of his hearing from an excruciating sonic blast caused by monitor speaker.)

Everything Zig did, I broke it down and I converted it so I could make it into my signature, instead of Zig's signature. I converted it for the next generation. I was lucky to be in a band that gave me an outlet to do that.

*SM: Were there any places you would go to hear music and learn when you were coming up?*

WG: I'm from Shrewsbury (a neighborhood in New Orleans). I used to go sit in with Sammie Ridgely's band. There was a guy named Larry, he was the first guy that taught me how to play with the tip of my toe, I went home and practiced the f--- out of that. But he would never go into the city to challenge other drummers. Then I got with Sammy Berflect, he took me into the city. Then I got with Tavasco, a Temptations-type group. I'd

hit things with them, hits that went with what they were doing. Nick Daniels (long-time bass player for the Neville Brothers) was singing with them, not playing bass.

*SM: I've heard Zig and Russell Batiste (drummer for the Funky Meters now) mention Stanley Ratcliff. Did you used to go check him out?*

WG: I heard rumors that Zig stole a lot from Ratcliff, but his playing didn't really provoke me to go do stuff, to come up with new beats. That was the 60's, the Meters came out in the 70's and the Neville Brothers came out in the 80's. That (Ratcliff) was a different generation. Every generation has a generation gap. Zig had his generation, Earl Palmer his and Smokey his. I came down after Herman Ernest. It's all about what you want to listen to. Uptown drummers don't care about the downtown drummers and the downtown drummers don't care about the uptown drummers. Same with the (Mardi Gras) Indians; "Pocky Way" is strictly uptown. The Indian thing is all about the bass drum. It's never been a set of drums, it's always the bass drum that separates the uptown rulers and the downtown rulers. The Dirty Dozen (Brass Band) were my favorite band, they invented a whole bunch of stuff that other bands copied.

Galactic is the only band that I don't need to call up and say I want to come sit in. I know I can come in there and you'll always say get on up here.

Raymond Weber plays with Ivan Neville's Dumpstaphunk and has played with everyone from Harry Connick Jr., to Joe Sample and Trey Anastasio. Raymond's pocket is deep and wide like the Mississippi river and at the same time incredibly focused.

RW: I've got a cousin, David Lee, so I was under his wing for a second and my uncle Jack (Weber) and he schooled me on playing pop music. He schooled me in a lot of different stuff.

*SM: Did you see Stanley Ratcliff at all?*

RW: I knew who he was. I listened to some of some his stuff. But for me it was Junie Boy and Earl Palmer because he (Earl) was on all the records. Of course, I was into Smokey, too.

I used to catch Smokey all the time playing with Fats (Domino), and then playing with other configurations around town, but my dad knew Fats and he used to take me around to check out those guys rehearsing. My dad (James Weber) is a musician and he played bass. He had about five other brothers, so there was always something goin' on!

*SM: I know you and Russell (Batiste) are about the same age. Did you guys ever get together when you were coming up?*

RW: Yeah! Me and Russell used to hang out in our high school years. He was section leader at St. Augustine and I was section leader at Warren Easton. He used to come by every evening and challenge me! Some days he'd kick my a-- and the next day I'd kick his. We'd change gigs. He'd get fired off of one gig and they'd hire me.

And of course, I was checking out Zig. Zig's the one who kind of influenced me to play DW. We did something in Austin and I played Zig's drums and I dug the drums and he spoke real highly of all the people there. After Katrina I lost everything. I called up DW and they came through for me.

Brady Blade was born and raised in Shreveport, Louisiana but has lived and spent plenty of time in New Orleans. Brady has played with everyone from Daniel Lanois, to Dave Matthews, to Emylou Harris. Brady is a versatile, musical player who always plays for the song.

*SM: Brady, growing up in Shreveport, were there any drummers you'd seek out and learn from?*

BB: There was a drummer, Paul Griffith and there was (a venue) Humphrey's. A lot of bands came through Humphrey's. I used to stand behind the kit and see Zig when I was a kid. Plus, there were lots of touring bands. My Uncle was the stage manager at the Hirsch Coliseum; I'd see The Barkays, Rick James, The Commodores, Van Halen and AC/DC. I'd get on the side of the stage and check them out, lots of talent coming through. Also, Chuck Edwards at my dad's church (Brady's dad is the pastor of the Zion Baptist Church in Shreveport). The other side of my family is down in New Orleans, so I was down there a lot. That's how my brother (Brian Blade) got introduced to Johnny Vidacovich.

*SM: Did you and Brian get together and work on things together?*

BB: Our house was very musical and our parents were very tolerant. All of my bands and my

brother's bands would get together and practice at our house. I had punk bands and a funk band. I'm five years older than my brother, so on Saturday mornings he'd get together with his jazz groups. My parents always knew where we were.

We'd be listening to Philly Joe Jones, Elvin (Jones), Clyde Stubblefield; we'd put on records and practice to that. I was listening to a lot of Elvin and I was listening to a lot of punk rock too. We were trying to put that energy into the Elvin thing and the church thing as well, but not the broken up side. My father had an extensive record collection. Once we started making our own money, we started spending all our money on records.

*SM: Was there anyone you were checking out when you came down to New Orleans? I think you and Russell (Batiste) are about the same age. Did you see him much?*

*BB: I love Russell's playing! I see him any time I can. I became aware of him in college, '81 or '82. I went down to New Orleans to go to Dillard University, that's when I got hip to the Dirty Dozen (Brass Band). When I moved to New Orleans in '94, Russell was playing a lot with The Funky Meters. For a while, I lived a block away from the House of Blues (in New Orleans). My brother and I would go to the House of Blues and see Russell from the side of the stage.*

I first met Zigaboo at a clinic in New Orleans for PASIC in 1992. It was a joint clinic with Johnny Vidacovich and Zig. I was there early, with bells on, and Johnny introduced me to Zig afterward. With Zig's endorsement, Johnny gave me his number. I called Zig the first time I made it out to San Francisco with the New Orleans Klezmer Allstars. Even though I was a young kid and Zig barely knew who I was, he came out to the gig and showed his support. We've developed a long friendship since that time.

From that clinic, I remember Zig talking about checking out Stanley Ratcliff on Bourbon Street. He stated that he took Stanley's two-handed approach on the hi-hat and developed that into "Cissy Strut." This was an eye-opening experience for me and has influenced my playing ever since.

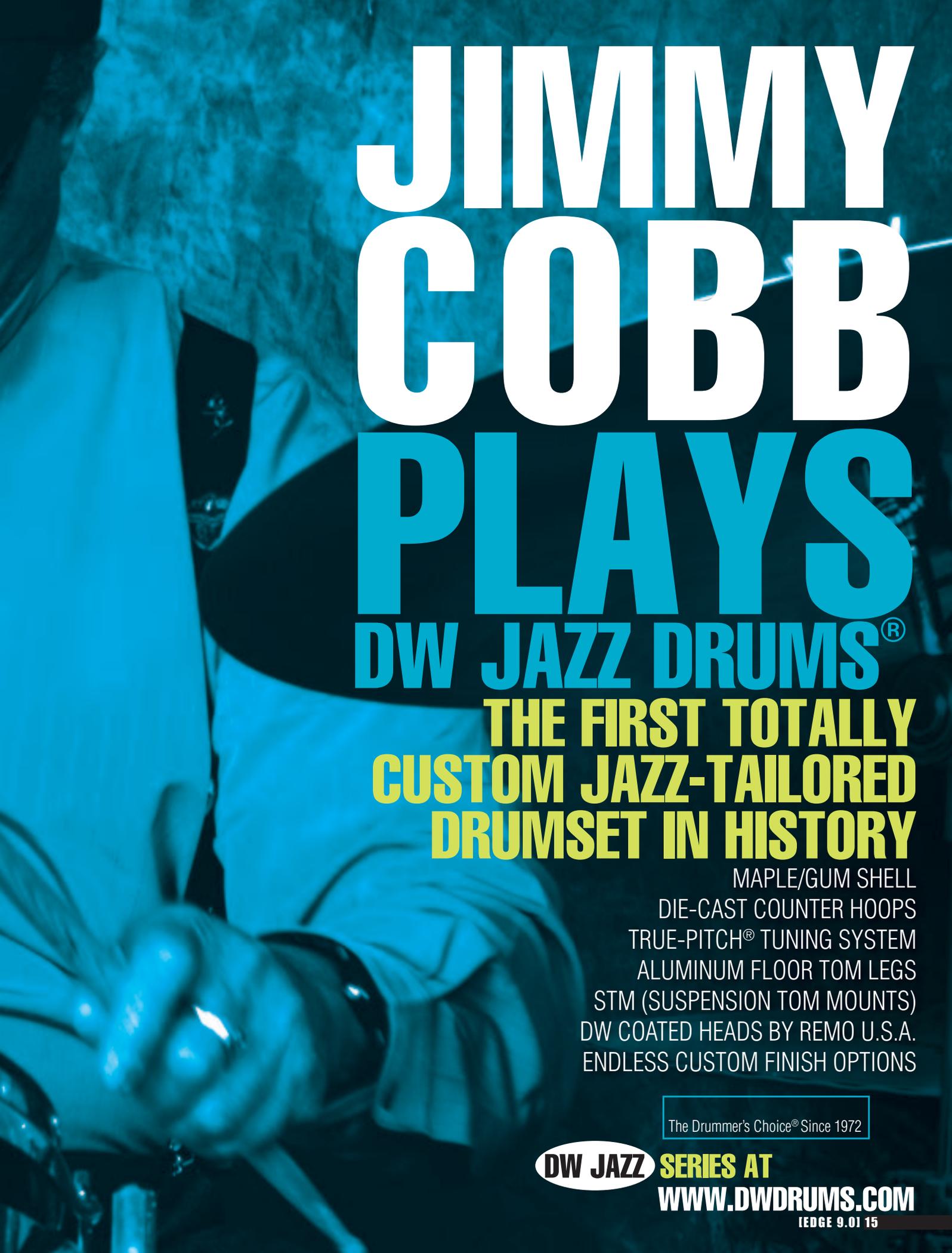
As you may have noticed from everyone's comments in this article, all New Orleans drummers have the utmost reverence for Zig. If you want to claim that you are from New Orleans, you have to have spent some time with Zig's playing, you just have to.

To us, he's the High Priest of New Orleans funk and was also the first New Orleans drummer to develop a relationship with DW. Zig has lead the way for us in many ways.

New Orleans drummers (in my experience) have always been down to get together with one another, either formally or informally, to share ideas and information and enjoy the art of playing the drums. That's part of why New Orleans is such a great, fun city for drummers. That's also why Johnny Vidacovich says, "Man, New Orleans is a drummer's town!" 



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# REACHING DRUMMING NIRVANA

*Photos by Lisa Johnson*

DAVE GROHL IS A DRUMMING ICON. HIS WORK WITH NIRVANA IS TIMELESS AND HIS SO-CALLED "COMEBACK" WITH THEM CROOKED VULTURES HAS PAIRED HIM WITH ZEPPELIN'S JOHN PAUL JONES, CREATING A RHYTHM SECTION FOR THE AGES. WE ASKED ANGELS AND AIRWAVES STICKMAN, ATOM WILLARD, IF HE WOULD CHAT WITH HIS GOOD BUDDY AND HE KINDLY AGREED. WE LOVE WHEN TWO DRUMMERS GET TOGETHER TO GEEK-OUT, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT'S THESE GUYS.

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DAVE GROHL



I've known Dave Grohl for over 15 years. In that time, he's taken my bands on tour; he's had me and my girl over for dinner parties, costume parties, birthday parties, and drinking parties. He's even

### Atom Willard

sung me happy birthday, but he's never EVER told me he loves disco drumming, and that's how this conversation began. I don't really want to call it an interview, because it's more of a mission statement to me: how to make rock and roll do just that. Dave talking about music and drumming, and doing it the way he always does, with humility and humor, and it's more of an honor to be a part of that than anything else. To hear Dave tell a story is to be there, and sometimes it's just about friends or his kids, but no matter what, you find yourself smiling the whole time. I hope you can feel the energy that was in the room. I mean, I can tell a story, but not like Dave.

Dave Grohl: Drum interviews are always funny with me, I don't know what I'm talking about.

ATOM: *C'mon dude, whatever, I'm just gonna get into it. Okay, my favorite thing about your playing is that you always seem to find this perfect balance between playing stuff that's really really fun for drummers to listen to and fun for drummers to play. And you do it without ever taking the song out of the groove or get away from what the song is doing, where it's going...*

DG: You know, I think there are a few genres where the drummers are totally underrated, one of them being disco.

ATOM: *What?!?*

DG : And the other one being punk rock.

ATOM: *I did not see that coming.*

DG: Well yeah! I've always been a huge fan of disco drumming.

ATOM: *Really.*

DG: For Sure! Gap band, Tony Thompson/Chic drumming, Jr. Robinson, Micheal Jackson drumming, like real groove drumming. I've always been a huge fan of it, as I've always been a huge fan of programmed drumming too. Like Liam Howlit from Prodigy, how he programs dance beats is great because it doesn't necessarily have to be the focus of the song, it can just be the groove. It'll make you move as you focus on a lyric or it'll make you move as you hum a melody or something. It's so effective in its simplicity that you don't have to raise your hand and go, "Hey, I'm the drummer..."

Yeah, and at the same time, I have a lot of respect for the real masters. You know, the drummers who take control of a song, anyone from Krupa, to

Buddy Rich, the greats.

ATOM: Neil Peart...

DG: Well yeah, the first time I heard Rush was the first time I really noticed the drums in a song. When I was a kid I listened to the Beatles, rock and roll, classic rock and AM radio was huge for me, I loved all the AM radio.

ATOM: Like all the news stations...

DG: Yeah, the traffic reports (makes traffic alert sound) and like Helen Reddy and Carly Simon and Phoebe Snow and Gerry Rafferty and 10cc and all the real melodic '70's AM rock music. I loved that stuff because of its melody, but it wasn't until I heard 2112 that I really started to notice the drums, as like the focus of a song or a drummer that was really kind of charging the track. At that point I really hadn't gotten into The Who yet either.

ATOM: Were you playing drums then?

DG: No, I was playing guitar, but I always kind of understood what drummers were doing, for whatever reason. I always knew that, like this foot is the kick and my left hand was the snare, right hand is a cymbal, I always knew that from watching the Woodstock movie when I was like 8 years old. My first drum lesson didn't come from a teacher. One the first things I learned with independence was from the movie score from Halloween.

ATOM: WHAT?

DG: Well, there was this one scene where she's being chased through the house, and there's this piano, dun, dudun, dun, dudun...and then this synthesizer comes in going din din din din... (he starts to play this and sings) and I spent an afternoon trying to get my hands to do that, and when I figured that out I was like holy crap, I could be a drummer! This is great!

ATOM: You're so funny.

DG: HA! Yeah, so anyway, I've always been a groove person, and you might not think that because of the kind of music I'm known for playing.

ATOM: But I definitely DO think that, and that's what I'm saying, you still make it so there's always the groove or part, it's interesting for drummers to listen to and want to figure out what you're playing. And for me it's not about flash or chops, it's just finding that balance.

DG: I don't know what it is; I mean no two drummers are the same. Everyone has their signature fingerprint or their sound, the way they play a drum set. I feel like so much of it has to do with your hands. It's easy to think that a drumset would sound the same with different people playing on it, when in reality, it's all in your hands

and balance.

ATOM: Well it kind of goes back to what we were talking about in my truck, when you were saying everyone should play and record themselves with one microphone, and adjust their hands to make it sound good, sound right.

DG: Yeah for sure! It's good! It's like getting a tune up. I mean, once I discovered Led Zeppelin records, I got really into the natural sound of the drumset. A lot of albums I had at the time, the drums didn't sound like drums to me, they sounded like mics on things you were smacking.

"I don't like to play the drums when there's no other musicians around to play with. I don't like to play by myself in a room, I like to play with other people."

Each tom and cymbal was separated and made to sound its own way. So once I heard Led Zeppelin, it sounded like a drummer in a room with a band. Then once I learned mic placement and some basic engineering, it only made sense to me, in order to get that sound you had to play it that way. I would record myself with just a few mics in a room and to try and capture the sound of the drums. It really comes down to your own personal equalization of what you're doing, rather than relying on a mixer to do it for you.

ATOM: I want to back up a little bit, you hit on something that I am really interested in, and that is that you really do have your own sound. You have a signature style and a recognizable sound and I think there are only a handful of rock drummers who can say that.

DG: You know it's funny, I always considered myself to be a combination of all the different drummers I grew up worshiping, so there are things that I've lifted from Jeff Nelson of Minor Threat, Tony Thompson, Reed Mullin from C.O.C., John Bonham...

ATOM: Which era Tony Thompson was your favorite?

DG: Just him, just his big flams, his drumming. I got to meet him once and I said, "Hey I don't want to sound like a total douche, but if it weren't for you" ...and I don't think I got to even finish what I was saying and he was like "I know man, it's cool".

ATOM: (laughing)

DG: (laughing) There was one day in a studio in L.A. about 8 or 9 years ago, we had a big room at

Conway to ourselves for the day and we thought, let's run tape and invite a bunch of our friends over. So we invited Josh from Queens of the Stone Age, Krist Novoselic was there, Matt Sweeney the amazing guitar player was there and I was like, let's call Keltner. So I called up Keltner and said, "Hey man come down, we're gonna mess around and roll tape." He's a legend you know, his meter, his vibe, he's a real vibe player you know. So he comes out, sits down behind a drumset, and does everything sideways, and backwards. And as we're jamming, I look over and he's got a stick and a shaker in one hand, and a brush and a frying pan in the other and he's playing the snare with his foot or whatever. It was f#%-ing crazy what he was doing, but it had this sound. And I watched it and I thought, THAT is messed up! And then I listened to it, and I thought, "THAT is genius!" And then I realized, people call Jim Keltner because that's what Jim does, he plays like Jim Keltner. And for years whenever I went into a studio to play with anyone I'd be really self conscious like, "God I hope I'm doing what they want me to do, I hope it sounds right, I hope I'm playing well." And after watching Keltner do that I thought, "You know what, from now on I'm just gonna go in and play, like I would play." I think it's important to do that. You know, I never took any drum lessons so honestly, I don't know much about what I'm doing. I can hear it in my head, and I can play most of the things I can imagine in my mind or hear in my head, but I don't know what's right or what's wrong, so I don't have any boundaries.

ATOM: You're not restricted by any rules.

DG: Not at all, so I think that's what makes people do their own thing, when they don't feel like any one thing is wrong, and you just do what you do. But at the same time, I listen to myself and think I'm just a super middle of the road generic drummer.

ATOM: That's cute.

DG: It's true! What I'm doing isn't any different than what Rat Scabies was doing in the Damned. He was washing his cymbals and beating the \$#!^ out of them and playing 8th notes on the kick and swinging his snare going through a rock song.

ATOM: But at the very least, you are aware of what it is that makes it what it is, and a lot of people just gloss over that stuff.

DG: Well, I also think it's different things like where you place a stick on a drum, where you hit the snare drum. I think most people without even thinking about it, just hit it in the same place all the time. That's gonna make your drums sound different, that's gonna make your playing sound different. Where and how you play a cymbal, where you land your kicks, mine are usually behind. You know, all of those things together are what make you sound the way you do. And I think it's important that people appreciate that about their own playing. I know some drummers



**I NEVER TOOK ANY DRUM LESSONS SO HONESTLY, I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT WHAT I'M DOING. I CAN HEAR IT IN MY HEAD, AND I CAN PLAY MOST OF THE THINGS I CAN IMAGINE IN MY MIND OR HEAR IN MY HEAD, BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S RIGHT OR WHAT'S WRONG, SO I DON'T HAVE ANY BOUNDARIES.**

who wanna do everything right, players that want to play perfectly, and I think a lot of times that cripples your individuality, it takes away that feel. I've heard people talk about feel for hours and I don't think it's something you *should* talk about.

*ATOM: It should just happen.*

DG: You should just have it or, yeah, it should just happen.

*ATOM: Well, I guess what I want to know is, was there ever a point when you acknowledged what you were doing as yours?*

DG: When we made the Vultures record, there were times when Josh (Homme), who I love and who is a brilliant player and producer and an awesome engineer, would push me to do things that I wouldn't normally do. Typically, what will happen in the studio is if you push someone hard enough it will dead end and they will say, "You know that's just not what I do." I've said it before, I've heard people say it before and that's a cop out. I think I was all about that on the Vultures record. There was one song called Reptiles, and Josh wrote the song and programmed the drum beat in Garage Band in his hotel room one day, and it was the most insane drum beat I'd ever heard, it sounded like a fax machine, it was completely random. And he said, "Here, learn this." And I'm like...L...L...it's like if you asked me to read you a paragraph in Japanese or something, I just can't do it. And I struggled with it, I struggled with it. I can't read music, so I have to memorize everything I play. I tried, and it was so bizarre, just arbitrary random bulls#!, and I wanted to give up ten times, and then I got it. And I was like, "That's my favorite thing I've ever done!" Because, it doesn't sound like anything else I've

ever done, and that's what I like about it. So, if you don't throw away any of those dead ends or walls that you run into, it helps you grow a lot. I love that song now, it's insane!

*ATOM: It's hard to play is what it is...*

DG: It's totally hard to play. I blew it live many a time. Also, you know the Vultures record was really nice because the type of music we were making was different from anything else I had done before. The closest thing was probably the Q.O.T.S.A. record. I hadn't played drums on an album in a long time, so I was totally starting from scratch. So, I played differently and it's was great.

*ATOM: Do you notice that if you haven't been playing drums for a while, that when you come back things are different, some things are easier and some are harder?*

DG: S#!^ yes! When we're on the road, there are drummers everywhere and I can tell you who is sitting down at what drumset within 15 seconds. Because most drummers sit down, they adjust their seat and they do the same damn roll they do every time just to get comfortable. And it's understandable, I do it too I think. But it's nice to get away from your instrument and forget everything for a while, because then when you come back to it you have this fresh perspective, clean slate. You might approach it differently and you might come up with some new tricks, without losing all the old ones.

*ATOM: You don't practice when you're not...*

DG: Honestly dude, I've probably practiced... and I'm not saying this because I'm proud of it...I don't like to play the drums when there's no other

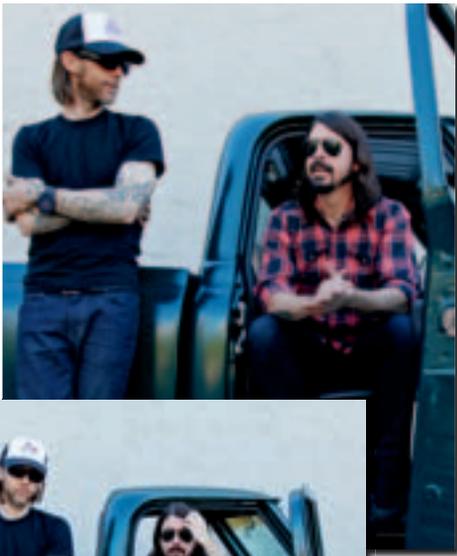
musicians around to play with. I don't like to play by myself in a room, I like to play with other people. I probably should (laughs) sit down and learn some stuff. About 3 or 4 years ago I bought a little pad, a practice pad. I wanted to learn how to bounce my sticks (laughs). I don't know how to do that, so I sat there trying to do press rolls, and I gave up after two hours going, "This is bulls#!^ That ain't gonna be loud enough!"

*ATOM: You've always written songs, and over time you've, I guess, honed your skills as a song writer. I mean, now you are a Grammy award winning song writer. So, have you noticed your approach to drums parts has changed?*

DG: Yeah, I think so. I don't really know how much.

*ATOM: Do you ever listen back to recordings and go, "Oh, damn!" Like, would you do it differently now, knowing what you know?*

DG: I think I've always put focus and emphasis on pattern, composition and arrangement, even when I was playing hardcore, but that was mostly out of the basic need for structure. It's so we could all keep the song together; this drum roll means we're about to go into the chorus, this drum riff means the song is about to stop...and I would just do it every time so that the band wouldn't mess up, and I've always had a great appreciation for the songs that make you want to air drum. I think it's cool and also kind of funny to see drunk mother\*\*\*\*ers in a bar air drumming to 'Back in Black' or 'Abacab'. That's important to me because what happens is, you have people who are listening to drum riffs, so write one of those riffs. To have a classic drum riff is every drummer's dream; to have that one part, where that guy who



doesn't play the drums does it when the song comes around.

*ATOM: He's just listening to music, he doesn't know why he's doing it.*

DG: He doesn't know dick about the drums, but he knows that one drum break in "You Shook Me All Night Long". So to me, that's a good example of drumming as song writing. That sort of composition, that simple ear candy becomes a hook. So, I started taking that into consideration more and more as the years went by; you know, I don't really make acid rock; I don't really make spacey 10 minute long Yes songs. I grew up loving Buddy Holly and the Beatles; the two and a half or three minute sweet songs, and Nirvana was the same way; just to keep it simple and make it so that there's stuff that's really memorable and effective. So, I started using that in a lot of drum arrangements too.

When I did the Q.O.T.S.A. "Songs for the Deaf" record that made a big difference, it changed a lot for me. It was the first time I'd made an album where the drums and the cymbals were separated. So we did the basic tracks first, guitar, bass and drums live in a room, no click track.

It was just the three of us, I had no cymbals, I had these cymbal pads and I knew that I had to go back and overdub all of the cymbals, so I really had to focus on what I was doing, because I had to remember what I had done over a week and a half. Eric Valentine, who's a great producer, he really worked with me on building a lot of those

parts.

A song like "No One Knows"....the first drum roll in the chorus...the second drum roll in the chorus...the third drum roll in the chorus, it's meant to build like that, but also, everything was patterned so that I wouldn't have a hard time overdubbing the cymbals later. That's when it really hit home that for that type of music, writing those parts and trying to make those hooks really makes the song even bigger. It's the same thing here, when we're making a Foo Fighters record, we spend a lot of time trying to construct a good pattern that builds from the beginning of the song to end with Taylor's drumming. Taylor has a great sense of composition, and when I come in with a song, it's usually really easy to say, "It should go from here, point A to point B, build up or break down here and here," and then it's just a matter of dynamics.

*ATOM: Is there a favorite thing you've played on a recording?*

DG: Well, Nirvana's Nevermind, I still listen to it now. I'm a high school dropout, but I'd imagine that it's the same feeling as the last day in High School. I look at it like, we were kids and it was fun and easy to do, and it was really simple and I wouldn't change a thing. It's, you know, such a simple record, I think maybe the easiest record I've ever made in my life. I'm not kidding! It was so simple! I listen to it now and it's like looking at a picture of yourself when you're like 19 or 20 you can see in your face like, god, I was such a dumb kid having a blast!

Then there's the Vultures record. I listen to it and I'm really proud of the drumming. Well, I'm really proud of the record because I got to play with \*\*\*\*ing John Paul Jones of Led Zeppelin!

*ATOM: Did you ever just trip or have moments of clarity like, what am I doing here?*

"I've always had a great appreciation for the songs that make you want to air drum."

DG: Oh dude, every night! Oh yeah, on the bus in the morning, on stage, on planes. The Vultures record was a blast to make because I got to play with John Paul Jones and I felt like we had connected, and had become a rhythm section. He's really good (laughs)...he's pretty good...

*ATOM: Did he inspire you or encourage you in any certain direction?*

DG: Well yeah, apparently John would be the

guy who would stay in the studio after Zeppelin would record a song and help the engineer and edit the drum parts together. Hard to imagine Zeppelin had to do any editing at all. But they did, and John, because his meter was so great, he just knows when it's right.

Oh god, there was this one song that we didn't release, it was such a bitchin' drum track it was really groovy, like maybe the grooviest thing on the whole album...and it went: (sings and plays this long phrase that is sick..I wish you could hear it too...ATOM). It was bitchin...it was so cool, but to get it, we played it a ton. You know, John could play it once and it would be amazing, but for me to really get it tight and in the pocket and right in the groove with John, it took me a while. It was like ten or fifteen takes, until finally I was like, "I think I got it...I think we got it...should we listen?" And John says, "Yeah let's listen," and I'm listening to it and I'm like, "Yeah, yeah I think I got it!" I'm like, "Oh \$%#^ this is it!" And it sounds great and I turn around and look at John and he's kinda scratching his chin, looks at me, and he just shook his head and says, "You didn't get it" (laughter). So, if you're lucky, in your lifetime you'll get to play with a bass player that makes you sound better. I don't know who was following who, it just fit and clicked, and if I was ever in a place where I needed someone to help me out I would just turn to John and watch him. And there were also times when we would jam and he would throw out some crazy African \$#!^ at me.

*ATOM: Idea-wise?*

DG: Just like time. He'd show me a riff and we'd start playing it and hitting accents, and usually live we would just jam. There was song structure, but there was a lot of room for the two of us to just jam and goof off. And there were times when I would just look at him and go, "I don't know what you're doing right now." There was one jam in the studio and he was doing some African crap and I don't know what it was. I just stopped and said, "I haven't the slightest clue what you're doing" and I stopped!

*ATOM: That takes some confidence too, to just say, "I don't get that."*

DG: Honestly, before we went in to make that record, of course I was a little nervous, I have Zeppelin tattoos! You know I've listened to his records forever and then I realized, he's already played with the greatest rock and roll drummer of all time, so I don't have to walk in there and try to be his favorite drummer, I'll just go in there and play the way I play. I'm not gonna be the best drummer he's ever played with, I'm not gonna be his favorite drummer in the world, so I'm just gonna do my thing, and it worked out really well that way. That's not to say that I wasn't terrified 9/10ths of the time, but it was f\*\*\*in FUN to play with John. I've never experienced anything like that before. 

# > GEAR GUIDE DW FACTORY ACCESSORIES



## DW HEADS AND TRUE TONE SNARE WIRES

*DW Factory Accessories might well be the most trusted name in the biz. From a massive selection of clamps and arms, to the highest-quality DW factory-approved replacement parts and add-ons, FA products are meticulously engineered and manufactured to customize any set-up and keep even the most demanding pro drummers outfitted on the road and in the studio.*

Today, we're exploring the topic of heads and snare wires. We've enlisted DW Executive Vice President and Drum Designer, John Good to explain the benefits of these proprietary DW products. "We designed DW heads to enhance the sonic characteristics of our drums and there are some specific reasons why I think this is true. First off, we went with a crimped flesh hoop, rather than a glued hoop on all of our heads. This allows the film to vibrate freely within channel. The collar design is a rounded shape which accepts the bearing edge profile, allowing vibration past the bearing edge, as well as the obvious center of the drum. There's a significant amount of area when you take into consideration the circumference of the drum. We've always been mostly concerned with the vibration that takes place in the center of the drum, however this shape really allows for maximum vibration and resonance. If you take a pebble and drop it into a still pool of water you will see the rings spread from the center to the outer edge. This is very much like clear Mylar, which has a tendency to shiver at the end of the vibration cycle. By putting a coated ring just before the outer Edge on our Coated Clear heads, we can control the shivering and produce a pure tone. We also have the opposite drumhead called the Clear Edge. Many drummers prefer the attack and bite of coated heads, yet when the coating is applied all the way over the bearing edge, the coating tends to mute the head slightly producing a more mellow tone. In the spirit of trying to keep things resonating as long as possible, we leave the edge of the head clear, allowing it to vibrate longer."

DW Coated Clear heads come standard on Collector's Series drums and Clear Edge heads can also be factory installed if so desired. DW coated heads are standard equipment on DW Classics and Jazz Series Drums. All DW Heads are manufactured to DW's exact specification by Remo USA.

DW's high-grade True Tone snare wires are

standard equipment on all DW Custom Shop and Performance Series Snare drums. These wires have been designed to give drummers exceptional response, snap and unparalleled sensitivity. John elaborated on their design, "True Tone wires are produced with a brass clip on either end. Brass is always a very musical material, and tension of the wire is the name of the game. These snare wires are painstakingly tensioned to be completely even from one side to the other. The proprietary wire material provides the ultimate combination of volume and sensitivity. **dw**

All DW FA products can now be purchased online at [www.dwdrums.com](http://www.dwdrums.com)

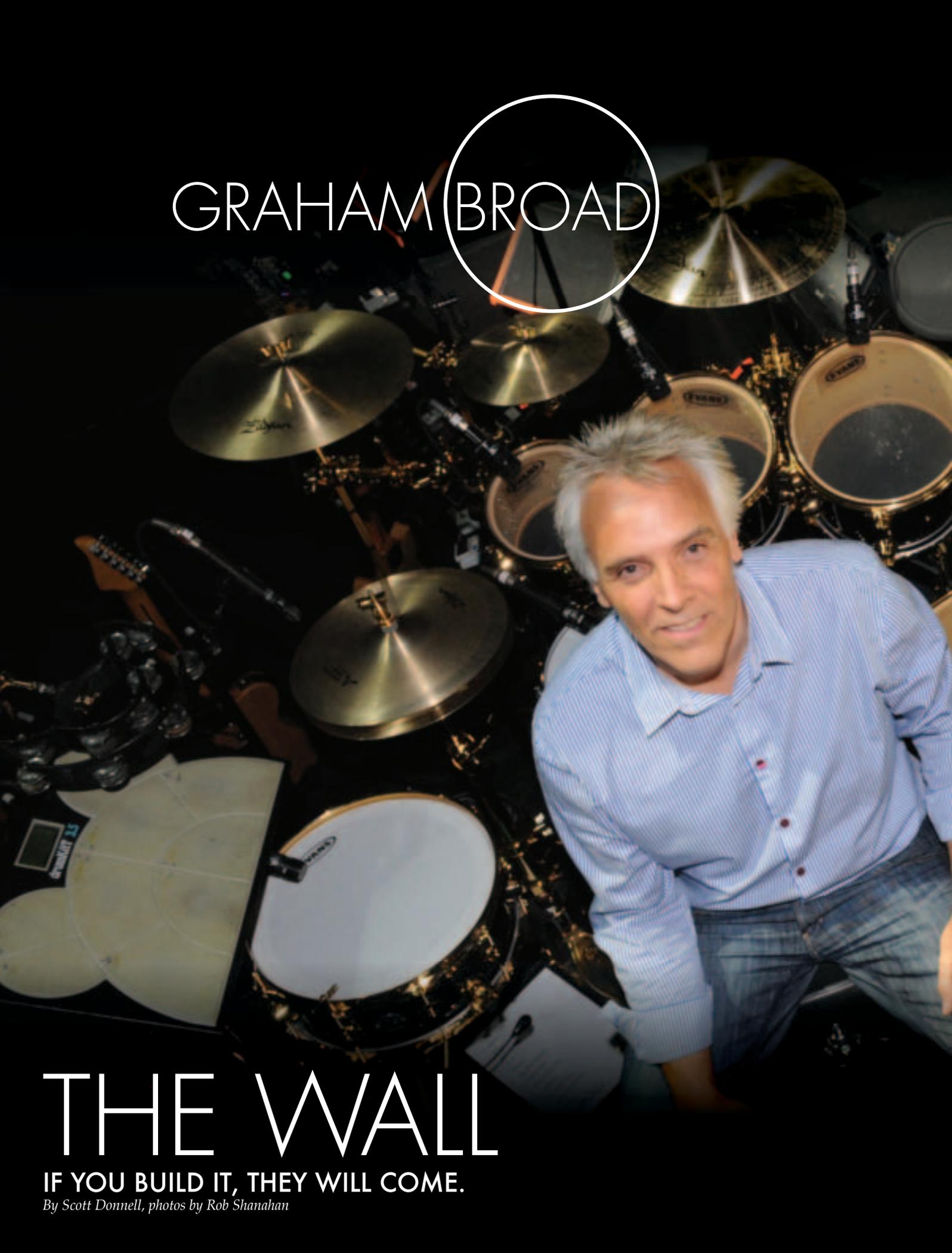
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GRAHAM BROAD

# THE WALL

IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME.

*By Scott Donnell, photos by Rob Shanahan*

## WANNA SEE MORE?



[www.dwdrums.com/thevegawall](http://www.dwdrums.com/thevegawall)

Roger Waters performing the classic Pink Floyd opus, *The Wall* is undoubtedly one of the biggest tours of the year, both literally and figuratively. It's a mammoth stage production that has drummer Graham Broad not only holding the band together, but also a massive crew, automated light show and all of the visual wonderment that makes this concept album a stage show reality. We visited him at their Las Vegas show to find out exactly how he manages to "comfortably drum" amidst the madness.

Driving through the Mojave Desert from Los Angeles to Las Vegas is an interesting experience to say the least. As far as desert landscapes go, it's fairly stereotypical: Joshua trees, rocky terrain and the occasional burned out gas station or rest stop. When you leave the urban sprawl of Los Angeles you feel as if you've arrived on another planet. Suddenly, Las Vegas rises out of the desert like a proverbial mirage. DW Artist Relations Manager, Garrison, DW photographer, Rob Shanahan and I arrive on the strip in Rob's 56 Chevy Nomad like a reject scene from Scorsese's *Casino*. Smack dab in the middle of the action is the MGM Grand hotel with its gleaming marquee reading: 'Roger Waters-Tonight' in that all-too-familiar Pink Floyd/*Wall* font.

We met up behind the venue with legendary drum tech, Eddy Butler. He welcomed us and swiftly guided us backstage. The band was already mid-soundcheck and we had to hurry if we were going to have quality time to spend with Graham. As we meandered through the narrow pathways of steel rigging, twisted cables and road cases, we became immediately aware of the immense scope of this show. Eddy explained to us that the massive wall constructed of a modular steel frame and white cardboard bricks were to be built on stage during the first few songs, so there are two drumsets on stage, one in front of the wall and one behind it. Until then, we hadn't really considered the implications of a band playing behind a giant corrugated wall, but with only fifteen dates left on the tour, Eddy and Graham had experienced these challenges intimately (more on that later).

Leaving the backstage area and heading into the empty venue, the band was soundchecking "Run Like Hell," an instantly recognizable song and one of the most upbeat on the record. Even with no bodies in the arena, the sound was pristine. Graham's kit was sonically massive. Garrison pointed out that this was only a 20" bass drum and Graham later explained that it was one of his older studio kits. He'd had it for a while so it was broken in, and he felt very comfortable bringing it on this tour. No sooner had we sat down to enjoy this rare opportunity, when Eddy appeared once again and summoned us to the backstage area once again. This time, we would see the band's "behind-the-wall" set-up. This kit was much larger and Graham seemed to really be enjoying the trademark, grandiose drum fills that Nick Mason made so popular on just about every Pink Floyd record. The 8-piece kit was painted in custom Red Mirra Lacquer Specialty and included Graham's initials painted on each drum. This kit also



sounded immense, even though we were only listening through wedges from about twenty feet away. Remember, there is a giant cardboard wall directly in front of Graham, so you can only imagine what this does to the acoustics. Eddy explained to us that each kit had two distinctly different head combinations, and it was for this very reason. "We had to move to 2-ply heads on the big kit because it was just sounding too thin. We needed more volume and attack. We go through heads much faster, but we had to do it," added Eddy. Roger seemed to be working on a guitar part that wasn't feeling exactly right to him, mind you, this was already deep into the tour, but Graham said this sort of thing is commonplace. Apparently, Roger is a perfectionist and watches video of each night's performance as he winds down. I suppose this is like an athlete or coach watching game footage to make sure the team is in sync. According to Graham, he'll work on musical details from time to time; it doesn't matter if it's the last show on the tour.

As the soundcheck concluded, we followed the guys down to the dressing room where we could talk about the details of the tour and how they prepared for such a major undertaking. I began by asking Graham about his history with Roger. After all, twenty-four years with one artist is fairly uncommon for a working drummer. Graham commented, "Yeah, definitely. I mean, I get on with him really well." He continued, regarding their creative process, "At first, you could play absolutely anything you wanted. That was because Radio Chaos was almost a commercial product. It was so totally different from anything that Roger had done. So he was letting the producers have the reign of it. I mean, if you listen to it, it's quite busy and it's a sequencer thing. It's so unlike Roger, you know. Then, we started to go on tour

and went off to start to do the Amused to Death album. On Radio Chaos there was already a band and I just came in as a drummer on my own. The tracks were almost finished on Radio Chaos, but on Amused, we were starting from demos. Do the demos then do the masters, you know."

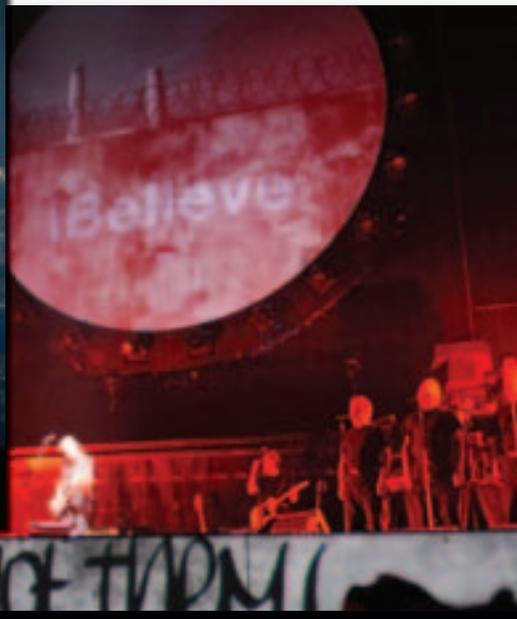
I was really curious to know if Graham has ever been a Pink Floyd fan. Maybe it was just a paying gig that he grew to love. Graham enlightened me, "No not at the time I wasn't. I became a huge Pink Floyd fan after being with Roger. And understanding it, you know. So I went to do the set up for my first session with him and I'm turning up to this great big house thinking, "This guy must be someone pretty big' ya know." There were no albums up on the walls, nothing. There was nothing to do with Pink Floyd in his studio at all. So, we start the session getting drum sounds, but then I have to go to the toilet. So, I go to the toilet and in the toilet there are these pleading letters from fans, "Oh gracious lord god Roger, how I love everything you did and I love Dark Side of the Moon." I went, "Wait a minute, that's Pink Floyd. This is Pink Floyd!" So anyway, I went back to get drum sounds and it was the craziest session I'd ever done because Roger kept looking at his watch all the time. Then he said to the producer, "You fancy to go see a movie?" And I was thinking, "I don't want to see that." So he said, "I did all the score for it and we could go down and get a preview of it." So in the space of five minutes, there's a car waiting for us outside. We all bowl in this car, we go down to the preview place. I'm now sitting there eating a three-course meal, cut glasses, you know, the whole bit. It's just the craziest thing. It was When the Wind Blows, an animated film. We finish the meal, get in the car, go back to the studio, then Roger turns around and goes, "What are you

doing tomorrow?" I said, "Well, I'm really busy tomorrow." He said, "Well, what about the next day?" I said, "Well, I've got the morning free." He said, "Do you want to leave this until then?" He said, "I really don't fancy doing it now." I said, "Well, ok then." And that was it! That was the very first time I ever met Roger.

So I had to ask, "How does one prepare for a tour of this magnitude?" Graham eagerly answered, "I mean the thing is, we're not Pink Floyd. And fans are getting used to the way that we play it now. And that's what Roger said to me at first, "I don't want to hear you playing any Nick Mason. And because you're Graham Broad and this is now my band, this is how I feel it should be."

"It's very hard to tell you if you could pick me out, but I've had lots of people pick out obscure records that I know I've played on and they've turned around and said to me "You played on that didn't you?"

Graham elaborated, "I have totally listened to how Nick plays things and I've taken flavors of Nick because they have to be kept. It's sort of nice to have that freedom. I'm not a great lover of being strict. Years back, when I first started doing sessions, I was doing all reading sessions and usually it was the keyboard player writing



**EVEN WITH NO BODIES IN THE ARENA... THE SOUND WAS PRISTINE. GRAHAM'S KIT WAS SONICALLY MASSIVE.**

the parts and they were not good drum parts. I would just sit there and think, 'I wish I could just...' Eventually, I got so fed up with impersonating someone else; I'd start listening to what the band was trying to do, bands like ABC, George Michael and all those things. I'd listen to how they put those things down and get some understanding of what they wanted without them telling me."

On that particular topic, I asked if he had his own signature sound. There was a long pause and a little head scratching, "It's very hard to tell you if you could pick me out, but I've had lots of people pick out obscure records that I know I've played on and they've turned around and said to me, 'You played on that, didn't you?' And I've gone, 'yeah, that's right!'"

After our sit-down, we had quick dinner with Graham and Eddy in the crew's commissary and wished them a good show. Heading to our positions, Rob to the photo pit, Garrison behind the front-of-house soundboard and my seat, to the far right of the stage, we prepared ourselves for an aural and visual onslaught. After the first song, it was apparent this was unlike any rock show I had ever seen. I'd never had the good fortune of seeing Pink Floyd live and nothing could prepare me for such a vicious assault on the senses. The music was performed flawlessly and seemingly effortlessly. As he had explained, Graham added his own flavor to these iconic songs and it all worked. The band and visuals were seamless. The wall served as a giant projection screen as psychedelic animation from the original Wall film helped bring the story to life. Inflatable characters were raised from cables, robotic planes and pigs soared above the audience, and sophisticated lighting automation and pyro all made this a rock spectacle worthy of such critical acclaim. While watching this technological majesty, I'm reminded that behind this big machine is Graham. All of the studio sessions, rehearsals and nearly 24 years of playing with Roger have all come down to this. One man is playing to a click in his headphones and that click holds this whole circus together. Who says the drummer is just another brick in the wall? **dw**



Eddy Butler and Graham Broad

Eddy Butler is a legendary drum tech. He's worked with some of the greatest acts in Rock and this tour is one of his biggest productions to date. We asked him about Graham's kits for this tour, how he prepared and how he adapted.

*DW: Eddy, tell us about getting the drum kits together for this massive tour.*

Eddy: October of last year, for an August start of this year, we started getting our heads together. We based it mostly on what we already had learned the last time we were at the DW factory with Garrison and John Good. They showed us the new X Shells and other new things. We decided to go with the X shells and maybe different sizes on the toms. We were very influenced by Neil Peart and his latest kit. At one point, there were going to be two drummers and a total of four kits on stage, and then it turned out to be just Graham and two kits.

*DW: Do you have an interaction with the front-of-house engineer each night and change things up, or are things fairly dialed-in?*

Eddy: I change the tuning a little. I mean, if there's a problem up front, Trip, the sound engineer, will let us know and we try and rectify it. What we have is a good enough drummer to make it sound different without having to change the snares or anything; just play it differently and get a different sound from the same snare. What can I say? It's just been a process, an organic process really, of starting with a this new set of drums and getting to where we are now.

*DW: How about dealing with the acoustics of the wall?*

Eddy: We had to change heads. We started with single-ply Evans G1s, and then switched to G2s on the big kit. The wall was just soaking up all of the sound. The G2s have more volume and attack. I have to change heads far more often, but it works. The smaller kit in front of the wall still has single-ply heads as it sounds great. That kit has a 20" kick and smaller toms, but it sounds big, especially that bass drum, sounds bigger than a 20".

## GRAHAM'S SMALL KIT

### Toms

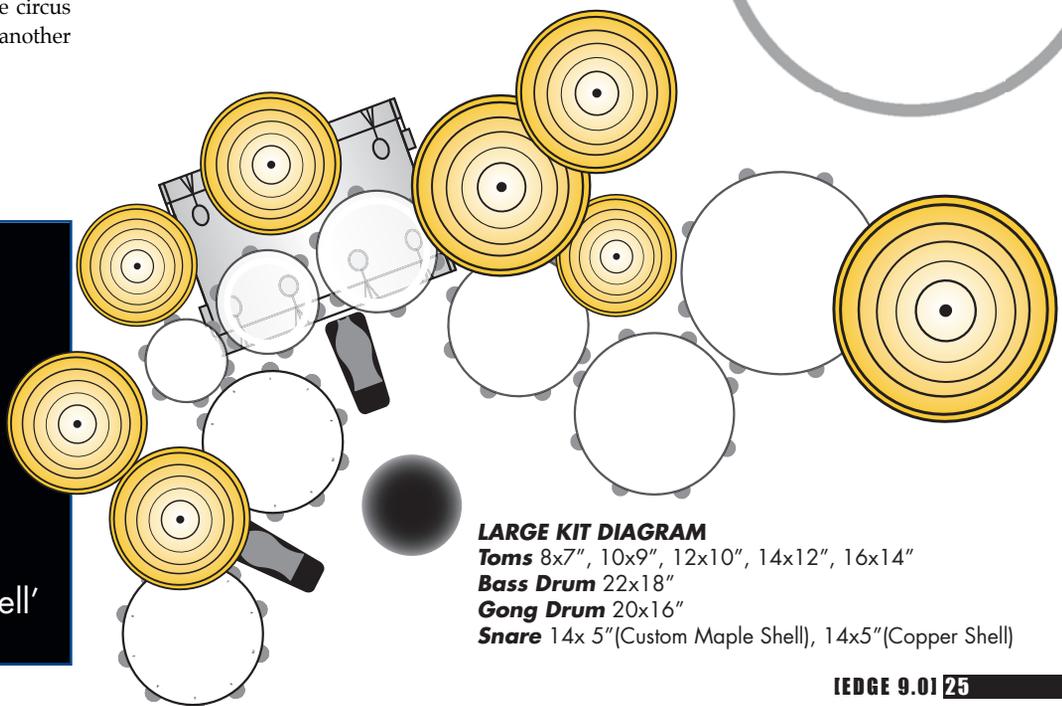
8x6" • 10x8" • 12x9"  
14x12" • 16x14"

### Bass Drum

20x18"

### Snare

14x5" 'Classic Maple Shell'



### LARGE KIT DIAGRAM

Toms 8x7", 10x9", 12x10", 14x12", 16x14"

Bass Drum 22x18"

Gong Drum 20x16"

Snare 14x 5"(Custom Maple Shell), 14x5"(Copper Shell)

# DRUM CLINIC

## DYNAMIC LINEAR PHRASES

BY MIKE JOHNSTON



ED. DEPT.

**dy·nam·ic** - *adjective*: pertaining to the range of volume of musical note  
**lin·e·ar** - *adjective*: no two limbs play at the same time  
**phrase** - *noun*: a short division of a composition

I am constantly asked by my students about specific licks or grooves and my answer is always the same: "How about I teach you the concept behind the lick or groove and then you can create your own?" It's great to be inspired by an amazing drum part, but what we do with that inspiration is equally important. This lesson will focus on doing just that. It's a concept that I call Dynamic Linear Phrases and it will show you how simple it can be to create your own interesting fills from a few short phrases.

$\overline{\text{R}}$ L   K  3 note grouping	$\overline{\text{R}}$ L   K   K  4 note grouping	$\overline{\text{R}}$ L $\overline{\text{R}}$ L   K  5 note grouping	$\overline{\text{R}}$ L   K   K $\overline{\text{R}}$ L  6 note grouping
--	--	--	--

Above are the building blocks for this concept. Feel free to create your own 3,4,5 & 6 note phrases once you have mastered these. The concept is simple. We have to create a one measure fill in the subdivision of 16th notes out of the Dynamic Linear Phrases above. Below you will see a few examples to get you started. Learn the pattern first without the dynamics. Once you are comfortable with it bring in the accents.

3-3-3-3-4	$\overline{\text{(1 2 3)}} \quad \overline{\text{(1 2 3)}} \quad \overline{\text{(1 2 3)}} \quad \overline{\text{(1 2 3)}} \quad \overline{\text{(1 2 3 4)}}$ 
4-5-4-3	$\overline{\text{(1 2 3 4)}} \quad \overline{\text{(1 2 3 4 5)}} \quad \overline{\text{(1 2 3 4)}} \quad \overline{\text{(1 2 3)}}$ 
6-4-6	$\overline{\text{(1 2 3 4 5 6)}} \quad \overline{\text{(1 2 3 4)}} \quad \overline{\text{(1 2 3 4 5 6)}}$ 
4-6-3-3	$\overline{\text{(1 2 3 4)}} \quad \overline{\text{(1 2 3 4 5 6)}} \quad \overline{\text{(1 2 3)}} \quad \overline{\text{(1 2 3)}}$ 

## Step 2: 16th Note Triplets (Sextuplets)

In step 2 of this system we will be taking the same Dynamic Linear Phrases that we used in step one, but now they will be felt as 16th Note Triplets (sextuplets) rather than 16th notes. This will completely change the feel of the fills that you create. It will also change the math behind the system. In part 1 our goal was to create a fill consisting of 16 notes by combining our four linear phrases. Since our subdivision has switched from 16th notes to 16th note triplets we now need to create fills that are twenty four notes long. Below are the original four Dynamic Linear Phrases written as sextuplets.

3 note grouping      4 note grouping      5 note grouping      6 note grouping

Below are a few examples to get you started. Make sure that the sextuplet feel lasts through the entire second measure. If you have trouble keeping that feel going while playing the linear phrases then turn on your metronome, set it to 100bpm and set the subdivision to 8th note triplets. Most metronomes don't have a setting for sextuplets so this will give you an easy way to hear sextuplets at 50 bpm.

3-3-6-3-3-6

3-4-3-4-3-4-3

6-5-4-3-6

3-5-3-5-3-5

Now that you have the system down you can create your own fills or solos based out of this simple concept. You can also start over with your own Dynamic Linear Phrases. Just create small groupings of notes that contain one or more accents, one or more bass drum hits, and a sticking pattern. Remember, I give you the blueprint but you have to build the house.



Mike Johnston began studying the drums at the age of 5. He spent the next 15 years studying privately with some of the greatest educator/drummers of our time including Pete Magadini & Steve Ferrone.

At the age of 21 Mike received his first major label record deal with his band Simon Says (Hollywood Records) and spent the next 5 years touring the world. He received a gold record for his contributions to the Varsity Blues soundtrack and has appeared on The Late Show with Dave Letterman as well as on MTV's Fashionably Loud.

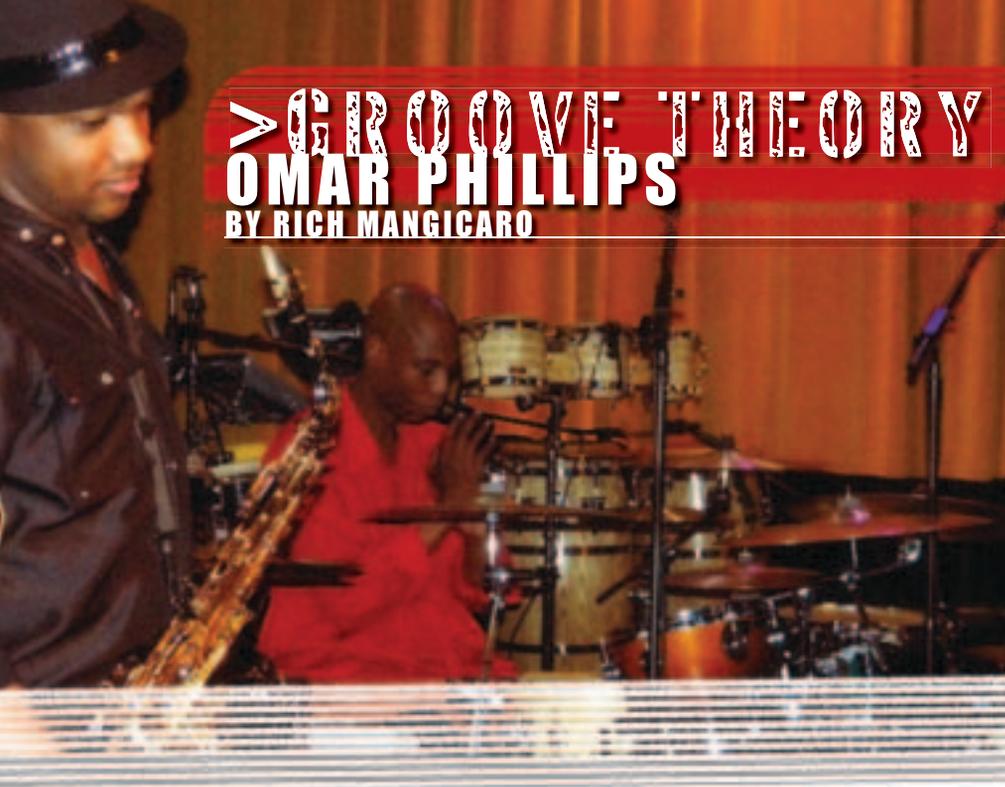
Mike currently runs the educational website [www.mikeslessons.com](http://www.mikeslessons.com) where he offers pre-recorded video drum lessons as well as "LIVE" online drum lessons. The mikeslessons.com facility in Sacramento CA hosts week-long drum camps throughout the summer. There are 8 camps per summer. Intermediate & Advanced camps are offered.

For more information about online drum lessons & summer drum camps visit [WWW.MIKESLESSONS.COM](http://WWW.MIKESLESSONS.COM)

# > GROOVE THEORY

## OMAR PHILLIPS

BY RICH MANGICARO



Omar Phillips' approach to drumming is all about groove and pocket. Recording for artists like Outkast, Arrested Development, Big Boi, Donnell Jones, Usher and Mary J. Blige, Omar builds the groove with a strong foundation and rock-solid time. His ability to deliver the beats keeps him in constant work with top producers like Tricky Stewart, an upcoming Outkast album and a new project called 7th Octave, featuring members of Public Enemy. We wanted to know how he makes it happen.

DW: What's your approach to locking in with the bassist?

OP: I think from the bottom up. It's something I learned from Jonathan Moffett when he was gigging with Cameo. Building a good foundation and creating a relationship with the bass player is what I strive to do. With the upcoming Outkast record, bassist Preston Crump is a quality versus quantity-type player, and where he places those few notes is key.

DW: As you've experienced, some guys play behind the beat, some a bit ahead. How do you manage to keep everyone together, given their personal interpretations?

OP: Well, I have to thank the almighty click track for that. There has to be some reference and it's my job to make it feel natural and solid. You just develop a sense of feel, depending on the song and what should be ahead or behind the beat, while of course, still locking with the click. Another thing I'll do, when appropriate, is place the kick on four to make sure we all land on the one.

DW: Talk a bit about creating and playing with loops:

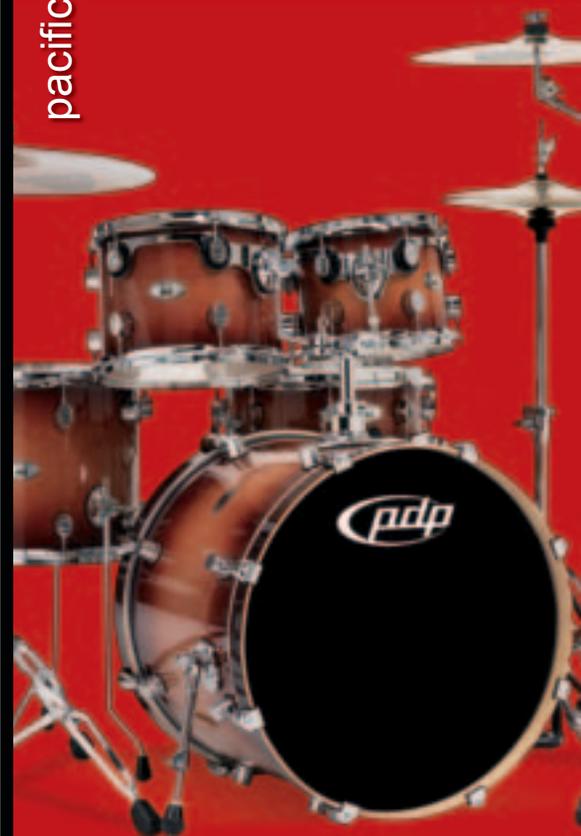
OP: A good example of that is Arrested Development's new album, *Strong*. I created a 16th note triangle pattern and a straight cowbell pattern, and then the bass and drums just locked into a vibe. With Rihanna's, "Umbrella," Tricky programmed the rhythm, but used my live drums to create the loop. The only thing I played live with the loop was my hi-hat pattern. Tricky has such a great sense of feel, as well as being an excellent drummer himself. I think that's why we work so well together and what makes that track feel so good. 

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DRUMMER Magazine (UK)

# TALKING DRUMS

## COOL TEMPERED SHELLS

WITH JOHN GOOD



The Custom Shell Shop in sunny Oxnard, California is where Executive Vice President and drum designer, John Good and master shell builder, Shon Smith design DW's latest shell technologies. From sonic innovations like X, VLT and VLX grain orientation technologies, to highly-cherished exotic wood veneers from around the globe, these guys are always pushing the envelope on behalf of the entire drumming community. Their goal is to produce cutting-edge shells that make drummers everywhere look and sound better.

Their latest breakthrough is much more practical. After much trial-and-error, John has devised a way to cure shells and maintain their structural integrity like never before. The new method is called Cool Tempering and we visited John in his prized shell shop to witness the process first-hand.

*DW: What exactly is a Cool Tempered shell?*

JG: A Cool Tempered shell is a shell that has been molded through a process of heat and pressure, and then immediately cooled down through a process involving cool temperature and the same high pressure.

*DW: What lead you to develop this new technology?*

JG: There were so many shell failures due to our old ambient air cooling methods. What I mean by this is, we simply made shells under 2600 lbs of pressure at 200 degrees for 5.5 minutes, took them out of the molds and put them on a cold cement floor to cool down. We manufacture in Oxnard, where one day there are hot, dry Santa Ana winds and the next day there's fog and moist air coming off the Channel Islands. These shells react favorably and unfavorably to these environmental conditions. In the past, we've had to destroy so many shells due to warping. To prevent this, it became

obvious to me that we needed to control the cool down process. Therefore, I decided that we needed to capture the shell after it has been cooked and place it directly in to a cold press under pressure until the heat dissipated from the shell and the glue had crystallized. This typically takes 3-4 minutes. After that amount of time, the shell has stopped moving and is very hard, and as round as we can humanly make it. A rounder shell is an easier shell to tune. A harder shell is a more resonant shell.

*DW: How long did it take you to get from the R&D phase to actually applying it to the production process?*

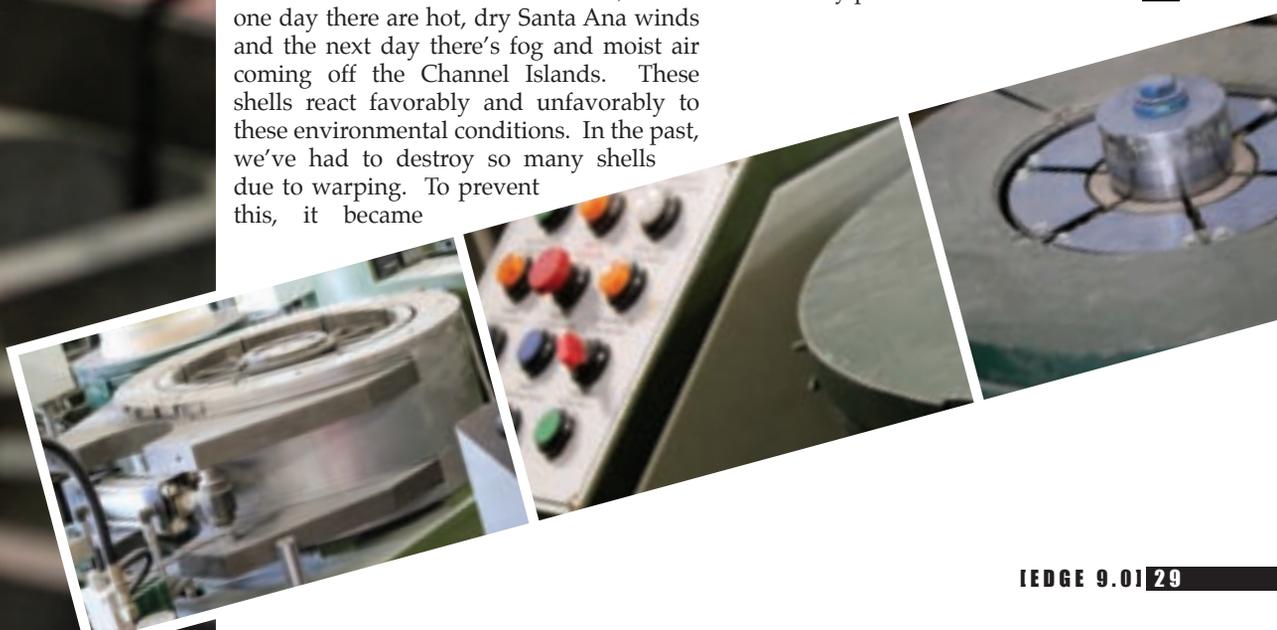
JG: From conception to fruition took roughly 3 months and there were many failures along the way. We had to learn the right temperature, how much pressure and how long the process would take.

*DW: How has this improved shell making overall?*

JG: I'll never make another drum shell any other way. We've greatly alleviated waste and in the process produce a much more consistent instrument.

*DW: Do you think the Cool Tempering concept will be adopted by other drum manufacturers in the future?*

JG: As a German journalist recently said to me, "This is one of the most significant steps forward I've ever seen in drum shell technology." It's a patented process and we're very proud of this achievement. **DW**





# DEREK RODDY

## Q&A

**"STAY IN SCHOOL, BECOME GREATER THAN YOU THINK YOU CAN BE, AND ALWAYS PLAY."**

*Photo by Matt Horton*

*DW: What gets you up in the morning and makes you want to play drums?*

Derek Roddy: Life does. I get so much inspiration from living, everything from nature, life circumstances, doubt, achievement, failures. These are the things that make me get up and want to learn more about my craft.

*DW: Do you feel pigeon-holed as a "blast beat" drummer?*

I don't feel that way because I know my own abilities, but yes, I feel other people pigeon-hole me because I'm known for that. When they actually see me play, then the story changes. I think that's the biggest issue, actually giving me a chance to show what I can do. I'm more than just a blast beat player. It's funny though, I'm known for playing really fast music, but that's nowhere near my biggest passion. My biggest passion is to play what needs to be played. If it's fast, so be it, but if it's 25 BPM that's cool too. I personally have no boundaries when it comes to playing and learning new styles.

*DW: Talk a little about that unusual grip you use on your left hand when you play blast beats.*

DR: That grip has nothing to do with my real grip! When playing blast beats, the snare needs to have a certain attack, a certain force before it can be called a blast beat. A lot of guys who aren't familiar with playing blast beats don't realize it's not just about the amount of notes being played, but how they're being played. That's the most important thing. For instance, why play a blast beat if it sounds like a mouse running across the drums? Sure it's fast, but is it what's needed to really make a blast beat be what it's supposed to be?

I noticed that when I put my finger on top of the stick (muting the drum stick), that the snare note became much more "pointed" and pronounced. A different sound is created and it becomes more forceful and powerful. So, these are the types of things I try to discover about my own playing, the things that make my playing unique. After all, isn't that what gives us our drumming identity? Its all about discovering what works best for each individual and applying that particular method. Would Steve Gadd have been the innovator he was if he didn't have a drive to achieve his own sound? And while some people accuse me of having "bad technique" for doing that, it's only because they are following someone else's rules, and

not thinking for themselves. I make my own rules when it comes to drumming, as well as borrow from the greats.

*DW: If you could give up-and-coming drummers just one piece of advice, what would it be?*

DR: Stay in school, become greater than you think you can be, and always play. Be universal, meaning learn as much as you can about life. I hate it when someone says to me, "Music is my life, I don't want to do anything else." Well, why is that? Why don't you want to learn another skill, another set of rules? What's wrong with doing it all? I find that younger players limit themselves. Think about it, who is going to take a better path through life, someone with multiple skills, or the dude that "only wants to play music"?

So, learn a bunch of skills and run with it. If your path in life leads you in the direction of playing, great, but if it doesn't, there's nothing wrong with that. Nobody is telling you that you can't play drums. This playing drums/playing music thing isn't a one way street, it will always be there, no matter what you happen to be doing in your life--and THAT'S the beauty of it.



## THERE IS NO COMPARISON, SON! SERIOUSLY, NO OTHER KIT HAS THE MAN HOURS THAT MY COLLECTOR'S KIT HAS.

*DW: What's in your iPod?*

DR: Everything I can get into it! Haha. I have such a wide spectrum of listening, I can't even begin to single anything out. Everything from all the 60's and 70's stuff (Fusion, Country, Jazz, Classic Rock) to 80's Pop music (Duran Duran, A-HA, Depeche Mode, Tears for Fears) 90's stuff (Extreme Metal, Thrash, Rap, Hip Hop), to world music (love a lot of stuff on Peter Gabriel's label, Real World, and Gabriel himself. I've been getting into the Indian stuff, thanks to Gabriel, Steve Smith and Pete Locket. Like Reggae too, Dead Can Dance is one of my favorite musical experiences. Love Lisa Gerard's stuff, all of it. Then, there's Zappa, Kiss, Genesis, Donna Summer (YES...Donna Summer!) Of course, lots of drummer related stuff, meaning most every recording from my drummer friends. The question should be, what ISN'T in my iPod?

*DW: Compare your new DW Collector's Series kit to other sets you've owned in the past.*

DR: There is no comparison, Son! Seriously, no other kit has the man hours that my Collector's kit has. What I mean by that is, there is more human time put into DW drums than any other drum being produced today. There isn't one other company spending the time to match shells, to make sure that the

sonic spectrum is equal from drum to drum. John Good spends a good deal of time matching shells for customers, to ensure the drums are what that customer wants. In my case, I told John that I wanted a kit that tunes as low as possible. Between the VLT/VLX and X shells, John was able to put together a drum kit for me that tunes almost half an octave lower than any of the other drum kits I've ever owned. This is great for Metal, and for all the styles I play. He spent the time to make exactly what I wanted, just as he does for every DW Custom Shop customer.

The finish is by far the richest and deepest I've ever seen on a kit, and the overall consistency is mind-blowing. It goes to show that when you have that human care and time invested in making something, the end result can usually be trusted. The hardware design is the best in the industry, period. The Dog Bone clamps and amount of set-up combinations that can be achieved is astonishing. Plus, it's simple and it works. I've been able to mount six toms and ten cymbals on only four tripods!

*DW: Are you a snare drum collector?*

DR: Yes, I'm an overall drum collector, but snares are my weakness. Although, since I've been playing my Collector's 6 x 14" Bronze, I'm finding myself packing up other snares and putting

them in storage. I'm not searching as much for sounds these days. That drum does everything I need it to do and more. I've always been a wood guy, but bronze drums are the exception for me. They seem to have the warmth I like with an amazing top end that you normally wouldn't get out of a wood drum (without EQ, comps, etc). In fact, they have a pre-compressed type of sound, naturally. I love that quality.

My other favorite is a 5 x 14 Super Solid that John picked for me. He said, "Derek, you have to hear this drum" and as usual, he was right. This drum has an amazing sonic spectrum, words can't even describe it. So, between those two drums, I have everything I would want in a "main snare."

*DW: Where do you think Extreme Metal is headed these days?*

DR: Hard to say. It seems like most every disk I put in, although the playing is really killer, sounds like the same song, ten times in a row. The only riff I can remember is the one in every tune. Why write a record with every song in the same key, tempo and feeling? It seems like the newer bands are just going through the motions, without feeling the emotion. Everyone wants to be faster, more brutal than the last band, but it doesn't seem to me that they are concerned with having those songs say

anything. They need to take you on a journey and leave you with something other than, "that was brutal." I guess you could say that it's become "cookie cutter" and predictable, and the feeling of hearing this style music for the first time will never happen again. That's why it's so important that these new bands pay attention to things like dynamics, textures, color of sound, so the genre can move forward again without rehashing what's already been done for the last twenty years, just faster.

DW: Who are some drummers/bands you've noticed lately?

"This playing drums/  
playing music thing  
isn't a one way street,  
it will always be there,  
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happen to be doing in  
your life--and THAT'S  
the beauty of it."

DR: Well, for the reasons above, I'm not really much in the Metal scene anymore. Of course, there are the bands that are still going strong, but overall, I'm spending most of my musical time in my own head these days. First reason, I'm writing a lot of music these days with my band, Serpents Rise, and I want my ideas to be just that, my ideas. So, I've cut myself off from the outside musical world for the last year or so, only focusing on what I've created myself. Plus, I get influenced by everything around me, the sky, ocean, animals, people, the weather... I can draw musical influences from any number of things. It gives me an opportunity to be more creative in a musical environment, without being overly influenced by specific songs, musicians, etc.

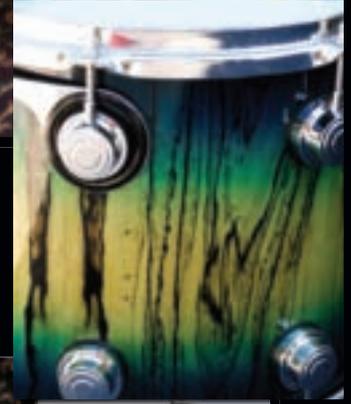
DW: Triggering: friend or foe?

DR: Does there have to be a choice? It's a necessary tool for certain types of sounds. There is simply no way to make kick drums playing at 220BPM or above sound distinct in an acoustic environment at 110db. It doesn't matter how hard you play. The principles of sound require triggers if you want your kick drum heard in those sonic situations.

There's also the argument that it makes it easier to play faster. Not the case. I would say it does create a more consistent volume. Okay, so you now have consistent volume with triggers, but now you have articulation, which means you have to play dead on with triggers, unless you want to sound like flip flops in a dryer. Those without triggers those can hide behind a wall of mud and say they were nailing it, and nobody would ever know the difference because you can't distinguish the actual notes.

DW: Ever play to a click?

DR: Most of the time I play to a click when I'm recording. When I'm doing clinics and I have my play-along tracks, I generally don't play to a click. This forces me to listen and pay attention to the song and it keeps me from getting distracted. I don't live, unless it's needed for a sequence for instance. I like having that natural control over the band. 



it's not just a  
**CUSTOM** kit  
it's a  
**DW.**



scott travis | judas priest



**custom shop=custom sound**

To drive Metal Masters Judas Priest takes a kit that can deliver big time volume in arenas and project over stacks of amps and crunching guitars. When heavy hitter Scott Travis needed to take things to the next level, he called the DW Custom Shop. We offered up our latest cutting-edge shell technologies to give him the low punchy kick sounds and full-tonal spectrum, from the highest concert tom to the biggest 18" floor tom. Scott feels like he finally has a kit that can fire up the band and it doesn't hurt that it looks cool, too.

[www.dwdrums.com](http://www.dwdrums.com)

For more on his Collector's Series kit and DW Custom Shop Shell Technology, log on to [www.youtube.com/drumworkshopinc](http://www.youtube.com/drumworkshopinc) 

# > PRODUCT FOCUS DW PERFORMANCE SERIES

The all-new Performance Series was born from a pretty simple formula: offer drummers DW quality, innovation and performance at a more affordable price. Why didn't we do this sooner? As it turns out, creating a custom-inspired, professional-quality drumset isn't as easy as it sounds. We met with Executive Vice President and Drum Designer, John Good to discuss the challenges of designing a no-compromise, state-of-the-art kit that's also more affordable.

*DW: John, why Performance? Why now?*

JG: Actually, this is a project I wanted to do many years ago, but our focus was truly on Custom Shop drums and their features. Obviously, economics dictate the timing on a project such as this. We felt that our audience demanded that we broaden our spectrum of sound and options. We spent over a year in development getting all of the details right and felt this was precisely the right time to introduce an instrument that could be utilized by a wider audience.

*DW: Tell us about this new HVX shell technology.*

JG: Through experimentation and implementation of our Custom Shop shells such as standard construction, VLT (Vertical Low Timbre), X shell technology (diagonal opposing grain) and VLX (a combination of the two), we were able to predict the actual frequency response we were looking for. Knowing what we know about grain orientation allowed us to blend all of these technologies into one shell, hence HVX (Horizontal, Vertical, X). This shell provides the mid-low timbre we wanted to achieve.

*DW: Talk about some of the other Performance Series high-end features.*

JG: This is a more price-conscious kit, but we absolutely didn't want to cut any corners. So, we started with the redesign of the lug, which is reminiscent of our classic turret lug, only a quarter the size. The thread pitch is still 5mm, so there are no cutting corners there. That also goes for the shape and size of the bass drum lug, only scaled down, as well. The snare drum lug was a completely new design that I'm personally quite fond of. Having a new-sized lug requires a modification of the STM (Suspension Tom Mount) system, as well. We chose five

lacquer colors to cover the spectrum of what players would want. You should have seen me walking the halls of DW showing off one creation after another, and sometimes getting shot out of the sky, but we finally arrived at what I feel are really appealing color choices for all tastes.

I also had an idea to modify the logo...talk about getting the troops riled up! That's a very sensitive subject around here; we're very protective of our logo. When everyone finally saw what we were up to, it was unanimous that the silhouette logo added a nice touch of class.

*DW: What's the difference between Performance Series and DW Custom shop drums?*

JG: With Collector's Series drums, the sky is the limit. You dream it, I'll build it from the myriad of different shells that we can offer, and by the way, I'm making variations available on all of our shells. Whereas, HVX is the only shell available in Performance Series. Not to downplay Performance Series, but there are no exotic woods available there. Where, with Collector's, there's the stock Exotics and the never-ending gallery of woods. All of these drums are delicately timbre matched for optimum intervallic consistency. That said, with Performance Series HVX shell construction, the timbre is less of an issue.

As for hardware, Collector's Series comes with a choice of chrome, satin chrome, black chrome, black nickel and 24 karat gold. Performance is only available with chrome.

With regards to finishes, Performance Series is available in five lacquer colors. Collector's Series is offered in endless lacquer choices, bursts, fades, Graphics, Hard Satin (our matte lacquer finish), Satin finishes (I can literally match any color you can dream up), not to mention all of the Finish Ply options that are available.

What size and configuration do you want your drums to be? We can do that on the custom side, too. Bottom line, Performance is a really high-quality, professional-sounding kit, but there are limitations. This is the kit you take to the gig. Maybe we're giving too much drum for the price, but it's just not in our nature to make something half-way. 





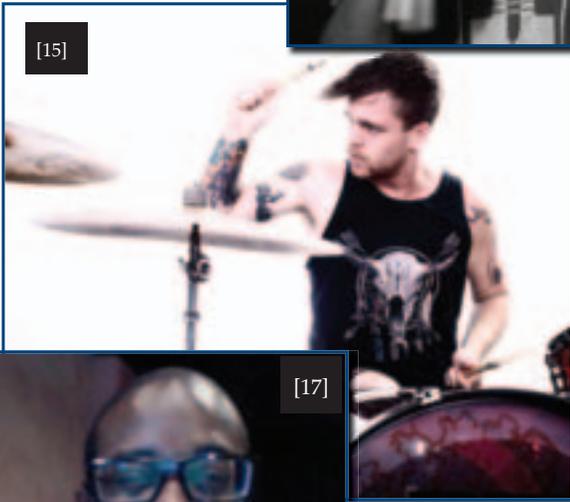
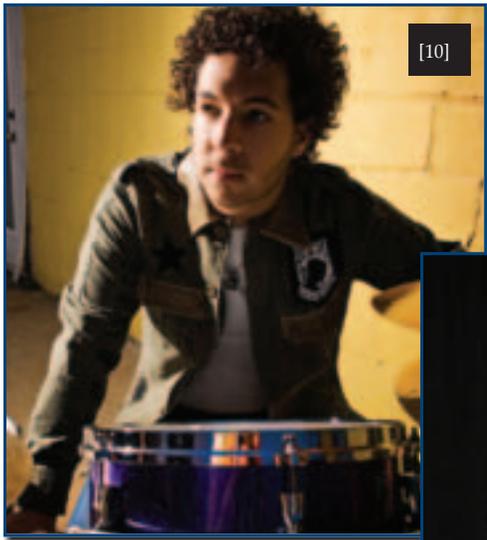
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# NEW ARTISTS



D = Drums, Pedals & Hardware  
P = Pedals  
PH = Pedals & Hardware

(1) **ATOM WILLARD** | ANGELS AND AIRWAVES D

\*(2) **JAMES WORMWORTH** | CONAN O'BRIEN SHOW D

(3) **CHAD SZELIGA** | BREAKING BENJAMIN D

(4) **MATT TRAYNOR** | BLESS THE FALL D

(5) **DEREK RODDY** | INDEPENDENT D

(6) **THOMAS LANG** | STORK/INDEPENDENT D

\*(7) **VINCENT GARD** | MONA D

(8) **DUNCAN PHILLIPS** | NEWSBOYS D

\*(9) **WOODY** | MADNESS D

(10) **STEVE SINATRA** | LITTLE BIG TOWN PH

\*(11) **CHRIS PRENDERGAS** | THE KOOKS D

\*(12) **JEFF FRIEDL** | PUSCIFER/ASHES DIVIDE PH

\*(13) **AMADEUS** | TREY SONGZ D

(14) **ADAM TOPOL** | JACK JOHNSON PH

(15) **TANNER WAYNE** | CHIODOS PH

\*(16) **JEROME FLOOD** | MUSIQ SOUL CHILD PH

(17) **BRADY BLADE** | INDEPENDENT D

(18) **JASON BONHAM** | BLACK COUNTRY COMMUNION D

(19) **TAYLOR HAWKINS** | FOO FIGHTERS PH

\*artists not shown

# all new KitBuilder™ 2.0



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we made KitBuilder™ better.