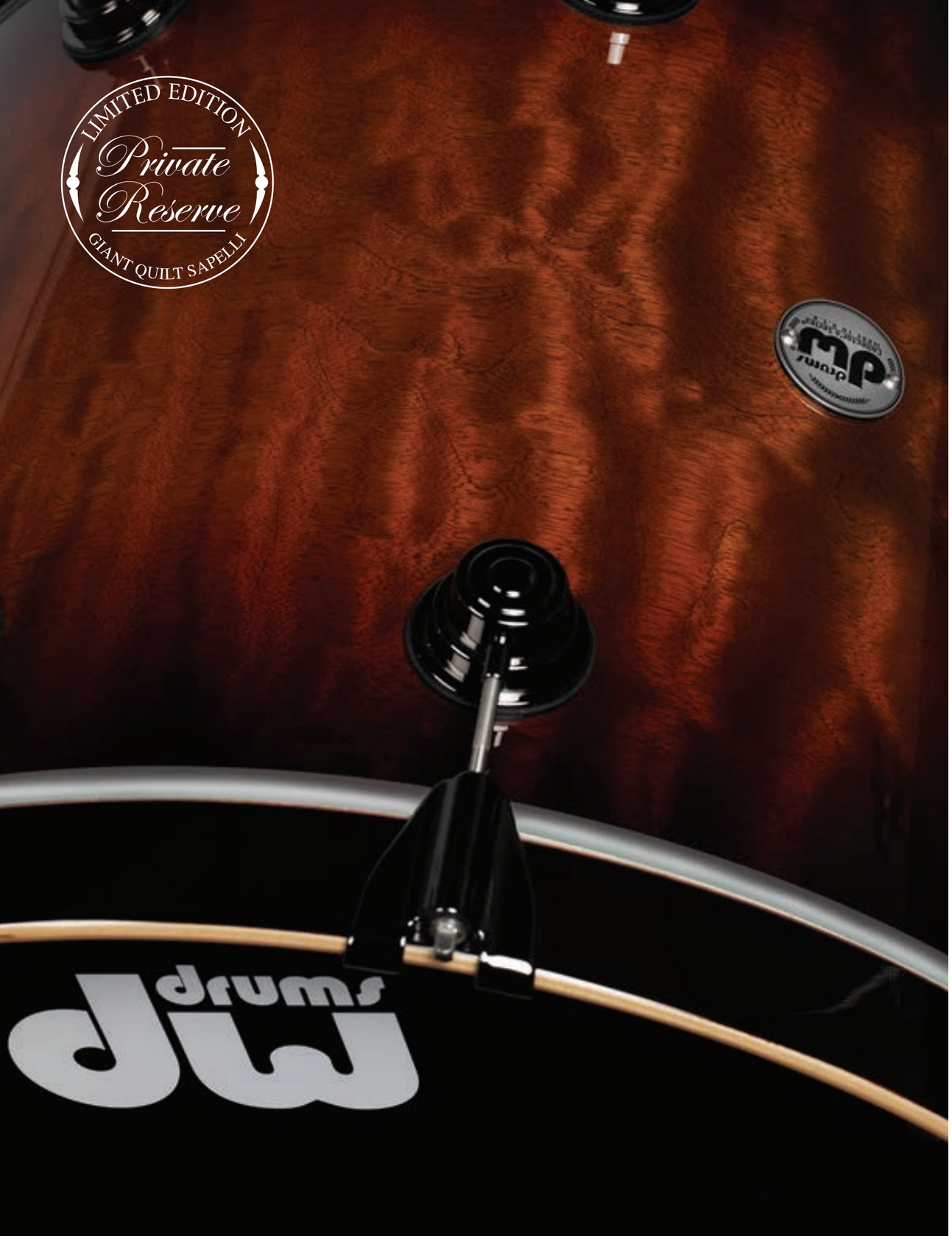
EDGE MAGAZINE

ISSUE 14 ||| 2017 ||| DWDRUMS.COM

Chad Smith
on location
Los Angeles, CA

THE DRUMMER'S CHOICE
drums dw
SINCE 1972



EDGE MAGAZINE

Editor's Notes: The Audience is Listening

The Audience is always listening, and watching, of course. What will DW do next? How far will the art of drum set design take us? In this instance, the great unknown is a beautiful thing. There really are no boundaries when it comes to living up to our mission statement at Drum Workshop. We're inspired by you to make everything that much better so you can take your playing to new, uncharted places, custom-tailor your set-up, and perform to your utmost musical potential.

You might say that we're listening too. We've spent the last twelve months designing and engineering instruments and gear to help gigging, recording, and passionate drummers everywhere realize their percussive goals. Thanks to social media we have a more direct connection with our audience than ever before. We sift through suggestions and ideas from around the globe. We pay close attention to musical trends and ask our family of artists for insight into what would make their jobs more efficient and more rewarding.

We can't really do what we do in a vacuum. It's essential that we receive input from the drumming community to make useful, purposeful advancements. It's also very obvious that you're listening to what we're up to. Your comments and feedback take us in new directions and into uncharted territory. In 2017 you'll be seeing many firsts. There will be completely new woods, shell materials, pedal drive systems, hardware upgrades, and maybe even a surprise or two.

Curious? Keep listening.

Scott Donnell
Editor, Edge Magazine

THE DRUMMER'S CHOICE® drums dw® SINCE 1972

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A 45-Year Story: *The* MAKING *of the* Sapphire *Anniversary Kit*

by Brook Dalton

In 1972, Richard Nixon was president, **The Godfather** *was setting a precedent for the future of cinema, Bobby Fisher became the first American chess champion, and in Santa Monica, California a pair of friends decided to take their love of drumming into new territories by starting a small company that would eventually affect the lives of an unimaginable amount of musicians around the world.*

Don Lombardi and John Good quickly became focused on inventing and improving upon instruments for the drumming community, while never losing sight of the concept that their innovations should always offer something new and better than what came before them. In John Good's mind, there is no endgame with the experimentation and advancements that musical manufacturing can offer. Every step forward only leads to fresh wonderment in undiscovered tonal or aesthetic possibilities. This is precisely why he wanted the drums that will represent Drum Workshop's 45th anniversary to be the realization of a new venture, while simultaneously honoring aspects from the past.

I've known Mr. Good for more than fifteen years and I've seen him depart on a myriad of 'wood hunts' in order to find new exotic veneers for DW's shell constructions. In all honesty, I've never seen him as excited and overwhelmed as he was when he returned from seeking out the woods that are used for the 45th anniversary drums. To hear him tell the story of his travels and the sublime scenery he found himself surrounded by was impressive, and it is abundantly clear that he is more energized about these drums than any that have come before them. Believe me, that is really saying something.

Through a series of meetings with well-connected representatives abroad, John began having conversations with purveyors of specialized exotic veneers about spruce and the projects it can be used for. He has always been interested in spruce because it is considered a 'tone' wood, but it can be difficult to work with due to its soft nature. They collectively realized that what John wanted to build was similar to the make-up of violins and other stringed instruments. One conversation led to another and soon John was making arrangements with Lauren Carpenter, an expert dealer of 18th century Stradivarius violins, cellos, etc. According to John, Lauren offered the possibility of "partaking in the celebration, beauty, and the magic that was Antonio Stradivari" and how he had created his coveted instruments. The idea being to follow the 'Stradivari legno' (the woods that Antonio Stradivari used) and to gather the materials from the same Italian forest which supplied the specific trees from which the honored luthier had constructed his instruments.

After many hours of flying and driving on roads that weren't designed for modern vehicles, John arrived at the base of the Dolomite Mountains in northeastern Italy. He had finally entered the legendary Singing Forest (also referred to as the Stradivari Forest) in the Fiemme Valley. According to John, "When you're there, you are truly walking through the footsteps of what Stradivari had accomplished." Keep in mind, this fabled locale is not open to the public and the proprietors are extremely protective about who they invite to explore the grounds. John was completely taken aback by the area and the overwhelming silence of the forest. He spent hours tapping on the trees in order to experience their distinct resonant tones as they echoed within the forest and surrounding landscape; a tradition which has been carried on for centuries. This was new territory, even for a man that has been tapping on raw drum shells for decades now. John explained that "the trees are 60-100 feet tall, about 24-30 inches in diameter, and they're absolutely straight-as-an-arrow sticking out of the ground." Needless to say, the most resonant spruce trees were carefully selected for the 45th anniversary project. He then drove to Slovenia to hand-pick the Croatian Sycamore veneer that will be used for the inner and outer plies of each shell.

Because of Mr. Good's visit, Drum Workshop was able to procure enough veneer to manufacture a finite quantity of instruments. The 45th anniversary drums will be limited to 145 kits and 145 individual snare drums, and that is all that will ever be produced. Furthermore, each drum will showcase a meticulously-crafted inlay consisting of Italian Grey Poplar, Black-Dyed Pearwood, with a Roman numeral '45' in Koto wood that is dyed sapphire blue, the color representing a 45th anniversary. Each inlay also includes the image of a pair of F-holes as a way to pay homage to the Stradivari woods that help make up the shells. John explained, "We included that symbol to help honor the stringed instruments that are associated with Antonio Stradivari." Each shell will also feature a quick candy black burst paint job in order to frame the inlay and the highly-figured sycamore face. The violin-like aesthetic is complemented with nickel-plated hardware on the lugs, True Hoops, MAG throw-off, spurs, etc. Additionally, there will be a special "Sapphire" badge produced that will only be used for this project. Everyone associated with creating the 45th Anniversary Collector's Series set is extremely proud and eager for them to be available to the lucky drummers that will value them. I believe that John summed it up nicely when he said, "This is a very, *very* special drum set. This will be a family heirloom passed down to generations." dw

Stanley Randolph WORLD *of* WONDER

by Scott Donnell

Photo Credits: Shante Patterson

Some players just make it look easy. Fusing facility with boundless creativity can be a tall order and only an uber-talented, upper echelon drummer can pull off such a potent combination of chops and sheer tastiness. The man that occupies Stevie Wonder's drum seat is one of these rare talents. Graceful, powerful, and rhythmically gifted, Mr. Randolph is truly a wonder to watch.

Scott Donnell: Your creativity is so fluid, it seems effortless. How do you decide what to play? Is it all from within, or is it more conscious than that?

Stanley Randolph: Well, Scott, I don't always decide what to play. The music and the vibes are all within me. I live it, feel it, produce it. It's my job to share it with the world. There are moments when I am conscious of what I'm doing, and that's usually when I'm learning, studying, or practicing music. After I study and vibe with different music, I let what's in me take over. The creativity just comes out.

SD: Do you edit your playing?

SR: Yes, I do edit my playing. I'm always recording myself playing during rehearsals or shows and I watch and listen. I like to catch the moments that really do work in my playing. This way, I know when to play it again effectively. It's kind of like producing live music. Since I started taking producing seriously, as a career, it's totally changed my mindset. Sometimes it's funkier not to interrupt the groove.

SD: Can creativity be rehearsed? What's your practice routine?

SR: I wouldn't say that you can practice creativity. I believe you become creative while practicing. My practice routine can be a bit random sometimes. I can be in a study-and-vibe mood for a while, just taking it in. Then there are times when I have to touch a drum set every day! It's like I'm a five-year-old kid that just realized they love drums. I'm tapping on everything, beating on the tables at my crib. (Laughs). I usually end up at my studio playing drums for hours on those days.

SD: Does Stevie give you free rein or does he expect you to honor his parts? Is this an unspoken understanding?

SR: It's a little bit of both. He allows me to be who I am as a character on the drums. But you gotta play the parts right. When I first got the gig, I can honestly say I approached his music from an R&B/Gospel vibe, because that's what I knew the most. So, that's what came out. After doing the gig for a while, I decided I wanted to play his music in a more authentic way. I wanted to bring that era into my younger generation.

SD: You recently joined the DW family. Talk a bit about that.

SR: I basically wanted to be part of a family that loves drums more than me and believes in

my vision and career as a professional drummer by showing their support. That's what DW is to me. Not only that, the drums are just amazing! From the finishes, to the various wood choices, to the best hardware ever created! When you're in my position, hardware can never fail during a performance. (Laughs). DW has always provided great quality drums that never fail. DW is the Ferrari of drums. Come take a ride in my Lamborghini, my Ruby Red Glass over Cherry Collector's Series drum set! (Laughs). I've definitely learned more about drums because of DW.

SD: Does your set-up strongly influence the way you play? How do you decide which gear is right for a particular gig?

SR: It definitely does. I only have a few set-ups that I use continuously. I get questions all the time like, "Do you use everything on your kit?" The answer is, "YES I DO." (Laughs). My drum set-up is designed for me to be comfortable. Whatever vibe I'm looking for, I can make it happen on the left or right side of my kit. I choose different gear based on the gig I'm doing at the time. Some music requires my drums to have a brighter attack or maybe a warmer sound. Being a drummer that wears many different hats, I need to have as many different drum options as possible.

SD: Talk about your sound. Has it evolved or changed over the years?

SR: Yes, my sound has definitely changed over the years. When I was younger I used to tune my drums higher. As I've gotten older, lower-tuned drums have become more of my sound. Also, the genres I'm playing at the moment don't require me to be a flashy drummer. I shine more by leading the band with my groove. In this way, the flashy moments definitely stand out. I use different cymbals now, too. I'm into bigger crashes, rides, hi-hats… everything bigger! (Laughs).

SD: Who are some of the young players we should watch out for?

SR: There are a few new young drummers that are serious on the kit. Devon "Stixx" Taylor is killing the Justin Bieber tour right now. There's this other young drummer, Vinnie Aguas. This kid is bananas. He's only 13 and his vocabulary on the drums is incredible.

SD: Which drummers do you admire these days? Who inspires you to play better?

SR: I look up to Brian Frasier-Moore. This dude is always on point. It's not only about his playing, though. He's a non-stop working drummer. He's always on a huge gig, his drums are always gonna look amazing, his drums are always gonna sound amazing, and he's always gonna play the record exactly how it was meant to be played. In his professional drum career, he's played for some of the biggest artists in Pop/Urban music. Because the internet is so oversaturated with new amazing talent, I feel like he's underrated sometimes. I still listen to his live performance on the Usher album to this very day. When I first moved to LA, I got a chance to meet him and we've become great friends. I saw his kit and thought it was a spaceship! (Laughs). He's a huge influence on my sound and drum set-up.

SD: What's the best advice you can give to aspiring players?

SR: I always tell drummers to shed alone more. I'm not against drum sheds and playing with the homies. I do believe some drummers play together so much that they subconsciously all start to sound exactly the same. A wise person once told me: "You've got to have a sound." People need to know when Stanley is playing. They should be able to close their eyes and say, "That's Stanley playing." He told me to practice alone, create my sound, and experiment with the drums. If you play a groove or chop and then I play the same groove or chop, what's gonna make it different? The way I'm gonna hit the drum or the way the drums are gonna respond to me will be different from how they'll respond to you. So, that's what I did. I practiced more by myself. I want to stand out. I want my own thing. I want to be a legend in this world. This way I can always live on forever. That's my advice for drummers, be different and stand out. Create your own sound and vibe. Be a legend.

SD: What are your interests outside of drumming?

SR: Producing. I have a music production company called M-Ten Music. I've been recording a lot of great new music with a few new artists The BBC, Emi Secrest, Billy Wes, Cherry Garcia, and Jasmin Cruz. All of these artists are produced by me, Stanley Randolph. Besides that, I'm a party guy. I love meeting new people and conversing, especially with beautiful ladies. (Laughs).

SD: Do you listen to a lot of music?

SR: I listen to as much music as I can. I always love hearing new stuff, as well as taking trips back to the past, and paying respect to the music before my time. I have my days where I don't want to hear anything, too. (Laughs).

SD: What do you do with your downtime on the road?

SR: My downtime is so precious to me now. I used to try staying busy, but nowadays I enjoy relaxing a bit. It helps me think of new cool ideas for my career. I get to rest my brain and wake up fresh.

SD: How important is social media to drummers these days?

SR: Aw man, social media is definitely important. This is your way to be seen. There are drummers who don't have gigs, but they still have fans because of social media. Social media is a huge marketing tool. Besides playing with an artist, it's how I'm able to reach other people all over the world. It's a huge part of today's generation.

SD: What's your philosophy on being a self-promoter?

SR: Be a character. Everybody wants to be entertained. Promote and brand yourself with grade-A quality. Keep evolving while you're in the moment. It's like reinventing yourself and making people love your work all over again.

SD: How much of your daily life is actually devoted to drumming?

SR: Right now, drumming and producing is 50/50 in my life. I have a good balance of both, at the moment.

SD: Tell us about your career as a producer. How does that creativity manifest itself? What's your process?

SR: Well, I got into producing when I moved to Los Angeles. After doing huge tours and seeing how people respond to music, I decided I wanted to make that happen too. I wanted to create music that consumers could vibe to and create memories to. I want to see that same reaction from people about a hit song I produce; that's something major to me. To see thousands of people all singing your music together in harmony, hearing that famous drum beat that makes them automatically get up and dance, that energy is unbelievable! When people hear me start Stevie Wonder's "Superstition" it's unbelievable how they react; it's a party! (Laughs). The whole arena screams and jumps up and starts dancing, all different races of people, together in harmony.

SD: How do you navigate the music business these days? What have been some of your most memorable lessons in the industry?

SR: Well, it's about staying relevant to me. The music business is all about what you are doing now. I admire all the new young homies of this generation, they keep you current. The rhythms that they're capable of creating these days on drums is just insane, I love it all! Older guys in the business should respect what the new guys are doing because it's new. And new guys respect what the older guys did before you; it's all influential. So, I navigate through the music business by keeping up with what's new and collaborating with what's fresh. Don't let fear hold you back. Take risks and invest in yourself. No idea is a bad idea. If you do get attention for a bad idea, grow from it. Make it into something positive. It's still attention on you. It's all about how you react and deal with it. Trust your dopeness. Don't let your dreams remain dreams, take action and make them reality.

SD: How would you sum up your career thus far in one word?

SR: Evolution. I'll never stop evolving and growing. I'm like a fine wine, getting better and better with time. Hard work always pays off. It's a fact. It's science. I'm Evolution! dw

Discussing THE DW CAJON PEDAL WITH RICH Sikra

by Brook Dalton

Truth be told, my office at the DW facility is located directly across the hall from that of our Director of Research and Development, Rich Sikra. For many years now, I've been serenaded by the cacophonous sounds of prototype snares, percussive gadgets, and the like. On occasion, walking by the open door of Rich's drum haven is akin to a vignette from a Batman or James Bond film. However, over the last couple of years, the tinkering calamity has evolved into a much more rhythmic and mellifluous beat, thanks to the aforementioned Director delving into the world of hand percussion, and it didn't take long for him to start creating articles of hardware that would allow drummers and percussionists to expand their musical horizons. Some of these ideas never see the light of day, while others are groundbreaking and, indeed, worthy of reaching as many drummers as humanly possible. The new DW 5000 Series Cajon Pedal is one of these magnificent new game-changers. I recently walked across the hall to chat with Rich about how this clever pedal was conceived and why it's already being embraced by the pros.

Brook Dalton: You've spent much of your career designing hardware, pedals, and other mechanical devices that drummers rely on to play their instrument. Why is the new DW Cajon Pedal different?
Rich Sikra: When designing something, I need to have solid reasons to do it. So, I always ask myself, "Why is this necessary?" And then, "How can we facilitate this?" In the case of the Cajon Pedal, we found several reasons why, including the fact that the beater tends to get in the way of your hands when playing on current models that are in the marketplace. They all hit the cajon very high on the playing surface. We find that most cajons have the best bass sound just below center. I was also certain that we could design a pedal that has a much smoother feel than the available options. Good feel is essential. Also, I wanted to offer a version of this pedal that is easily portable. We felt that this was an issue with other models on the market. Finally, we wanted it to be compact. It was important that our pedal not be bulky or get in the way of the player or other musicians.

BD: How would you say that this pedal helps to bridge the needs of drummers with those of hand percussionists?
RS: We think that the feel is the best part and that the playability can add an important stylistic element for cajon players. It's like tapping your foot on the ground. Drummers usually have no problem adapting to this pedal and a hand percussionist is always tapping their foot anyway. Now, their foot tapping can add more of a musical element to their sound.

BD: What are some of the adjustments that the Cajon Pedal offers?
RS: It has the typical bass drum pedal adjustments, such as spring tension, stroke adjustment pivoting (which changes the throw of the beater), and the beater can be positioned right-to-left to help get the optimal sound. Plus, the cable easily detaches by simply loosening two drum key screws.

BD: How has the response been so far from those that have played it?
RS: Universally positive. Of course, there are extreme players who keep us on our toes, but we always strive to please everyone. A little feedback, good or bad, goes a long way towards making a better product. For instance, we may find out that the cable is too long or too short, and that players want to have the ability to change to a different length cable for different playing situations. If something like that happens, we can work towards the goal of having the cable easily changed out.

BD: Has this innovation opened any doors to other percussion-related ideas?
RS: It seems that one idea always leads to another. We have a mini 'Lowboy' hi-hat coming out that was designed around the Cajon Pedal. It's reminiscent of the vintage sock cymbals. As a drummer who plays a cajon like a drum set, I thought it would be great to have a small hi-hat to play with the left foot. Over the years, we've had occasional requests for mini hi-hats for the drum set, but it wasn't until we saw the Cajon Pedal in action that we decided to move forward with it. It was so easy to adapt the Cajon Pedal design to create a completely new instrument. Adding this Lowboy hi-hat to a cajon set-up opens up a whole realm of possibilities for polyrhythms for percussionists. It's also very familiar to drummers; there really is no learning curve. dw

Photo Credit: Dave Phillips

ANDREW HURLEY

Going the Distance

BY ATOM WILLARD

That fact that Fall Out Boy has flourished for over a decade-and-a-half, with its original lineup I might add, is not only a testament to their fortitude, but also to the positive mindset of this Chicago-bred foursome. Andrew Hurley might not be the face of the band, but he's certainly the pulse of their driving beats and mega-hit success. You don't live to see another year, or tour for that matter, in the music business without taking a few lumps and riding a rollercoaster of highs and lows. Experiencing this in his career and his personal life, Mr. Hurley has taken the good with the bad and is determined to go the distance

Atom Willard: Let's start from the beginning. Can you walk us through what made you play the drums in the first place?
Andrew Hurley: I guess I got into playing drums because of Metallica and Slayer. Mainly (Dave) Lombardo and a lot of the bay area Thrash bands. I think I discovered Metallica when I was with my sister at a record store when I was four. *Ride the Lightning* had just come out and I was allowed to choose two records, so it was that and the first Van Halen album, but I think Metallica stuck with me more at the time. Metallica was just crazier and scarier, and that instantaneously made me want to play the drums. I remember mowing the lawn and daydreaming about playing the drums in a band. I was banging on pots and pans and things until I could join band in school and then get a drum set.

AW: Were your parents receptive to your attraction to the drums?
AH: They were. I think my mom knew I was a drummer from day one. I don't know why this happened, but I started playing saxophone in middle school while I was taking drum lessons and I really don't know why I did that. By the end of middle school I was in the percussion section, and in high school I met other kids who would introduce me to different bands. It was always Metal, and I just got deeper and deeper into it.

AW: Do you still mainly listen to Metal? Anything new?
AH: Yeah, that's mostly it. There's a band Vektor, very much like Voivod, even down to their logo. Then another Thrash band, Lich King. I've always loved the new stuff. You know, there's usually a very long list of misses too, but when I do find something I connect with, it almost feels like when I was a kid looking through magazines and listening to *any* band that had a logo that looked like another Thrash or Death Metal band I loved. When you finally find a band and music that speaks to you, it's worth it. The journey and discovery is so much fun.

AW: Aside from the school band, what was your first Rock band experience?
AH: I had a friend named Leroy who was into Thrash, but also Punk like NOFX and Rancid. We started this band called Global Scam. I wish I had a recording of that stuff now because I'm sure it was all over the place! That turned into a band called Straightforward with friends from high school. That was the first 'serious' band where we were kind of on to something. It was a great learning experience; we mainly played local shows in Milwaukee, but also some shows in Chicago. From there, I met some vegan kids and we did a vegan straight edge band called Killtheslavemaster. After that, I was asked to play drums in Racetraitor who were also from Chicago. That was the first band that toured and played shows in California and New York.

AW: What year?
AH: 1996-97 was when I joined Racetraitor. I was still in high school when we would do those week-long tours on school breaks.

AW: So, the natural progression of playing a few shows, that turned into a few more, that become actual tours, taught you how to be in a band?
AH: Yeah. Unlike today, it was a vastly different scenario to get your music out and be heard. You were almost more protected as a shitty band in high school, just trying to figure things out. Then, as we played more shows and played in more bands, venturing out further and further, our skills were evolving. Whereas today, you can post something online and the whole world can hear and see it.

AW: And you don't even really need to know how to play!
AH: Exactly. So, that's when I started playing with Pete Wentz, who was in-and-out of that band. We did several bands together until we finally met the other guys and started Fall Out Boy. Joe Trohman (Fall Out Boy's lead guitarist) had been what we called the #1 fan of Killtheslavemaster. He met Patrick (Stump) at a Tower Records while they were both looking at the same record, and that was the band. The rest is history.

AW: With that background in grassroots touring, driving yourselves to shows, etc., did you find that you had missed that type of road experience once the FOB machine kicked into gear?
AH: I still do a fair amount of that type of touring, as well. When we had a hiatus, I was filling in for friends' bands. I did an Earth Crisis tour and we were staying at crust punks' houses, where they'll stay up partying until 4 a.m. At that point, I could have got a hotel, but there's something fun about those extremes.

AW: Well, you're there for the right reasons. You're there because you love the music and you love the scene.
AH: Yeah, it's a community aspect that I appreciate. It was the social aspect which drew me to Punk and Hardcore to begin with.

AW: I know you're heavily into fitness at home. Was that always the case? Are you able to keep that going on the road?

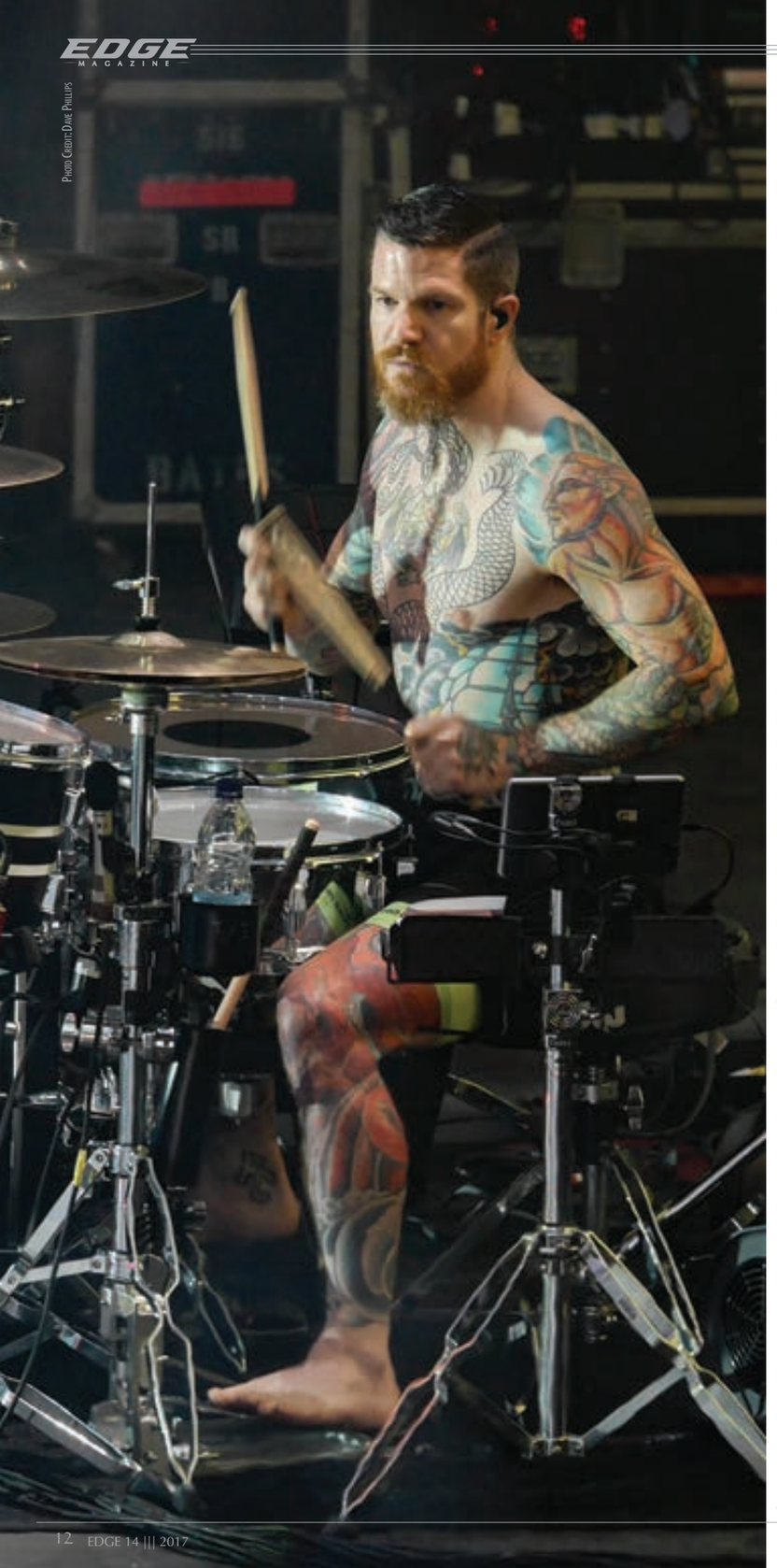

PHOTO CREDIT: DAVE PHILLIPS

AH: My fitness training came around just before we stopped working in late 2009 and I think it started at a perfect time where I could transition my focus a bit. The hiatus was a weird and very difficult thing initially, because we toured for so long and had our schedule laid out a whole year in advance. It was really depressing, lonely, and scary going from that to just *nothing*. I think it was really good that I got involved with the CrossFit stuff when I did. There's a place called Gym Jones and the guy who runs it, Mark Twight, is an old Punk Rock dude. They had a bunch of essays up on their site that really spoke to me because it was a very similar thing to what drew me to Punk and Hardcore. It was the same ethos and philosophy and it was really good for me to get into something like that. They're in Salt Lake City, so I would fly in to train with them. It's a real community thing. It's so much better than going to a globe gym where everything is awkward. Through Gym Jones, I met Rob MacDonald who was on that *Ultimate Fighter* show. He became my coach and my mentor and helped me through that initial time. He's still one of my best friends. Being vegan and straight edge, it was a natural progression getting into fitness. I was already pretty healthy, although I did tend to eat kind of shitty. (Laughs). Not that I don't now, but I train pretty hard, so it offsets it a bit. I'm more mindful of what it is I'm eating than I used to be.

AW: How do your different projects compare when it comes to the physicality of getting through a set, from Sect to Fall Out Boy, or even The Damned Things.

AH: Well FOB sets are about 90 minutes, but I could play that for 3-4 hours, no problem. With Sect, we do a 20-minute set and I'm barely making it through them, just barely hanging on, especially because we're only doing a weekend's worth of shows at a time. It's a totally different playing muscle, I guess. It's fast and there are some blast beats and some D-Beat stuff. We practice beforehand, but during the show I'm just grabbing the sticks harder. It's rough. The Damned Things is a bit slower and groovier. I feel like I could do extended sets there, too. I'd be nervous if Sect had to do even a 30-minute set!

AW: How does TDT fit in for you musically? Do you see it as a bridge from the Hardcore world to the more poppy style of Fall Out Boy?

AH: Yeah, I could say that's true. It was started as more of a Sabbath-ish/Down-type of thing before taking more of a Thin Lizzy-sort of turn. But yeah, it's sort of a missing link between the two, being much heavier than FOB but people can still sing along with it.

AW: How does your set-up vary between these three projects?

AH: It's pretty much the same. I just started adding a second floor tom on the right side for the heavier stuff, but I don't really use it that often. I like the simplicity of a 4-piece kit. No matter what you're playing, be able to master that, no matter what.

AW: Are you a double pedal guy?

AH: Yeah, I use a double pedal. It's always there; I'll either mess around with it for fills or sometimes add a straight double bass part in a Fall Out Boy song to make the other guys turn around and laugh.

AW: Is there a "looseness" with Fall Out Boy? When you're in that setting with all kinds of production, are you able to change things on the fly or are you playing along with tracks?

AH: Yeah, I'm on a click and there are some keyboards and strings on a couple of the newer songs. I would say that out of the three bands, FOB has the most potential to have something change-up mid-set. We just have so many more songs, so there's more opportunity. In fact, during our recent shows there's a part where Patrick will go out onto this other section of stage and play piano. There were some technical problems, so he just started playing these cover songs off the top of his head. None of us knew there were tech issues so we were just like, "What is he doing??" But it was really great. So FOB can be the most rigid and structured, but also has the potential to be the most chaotic.

AW: When you're writing new music with any of your projects, how do you approach the drum parts? At what point are you confident and comfortable with what you're playing?

AH: I've been fortunate enough to work with songwriters who have a pretty good idea of what it is that they want to hear. So, they'll already have some notes or they've programed ideas and there's already a template there. For me, everything is done on my off time. With Sect it's during off time from Fall Out Boy, or vice versa. And we're usually on a tight schedule to get something done, so there's not a lot of time to work things out. We're not the kind of band that will spend months in the rehearsal space writing a record. What we've been doing is have the other guys get the songs to a point where there's something ready to record, I'd say about 70% done. Then I'll come in, hear the song, and play something on it to take back with me. Patrick will give me notes for different things he's got in mind, different accents or whatever, then I'll come back and play on it for real. It all happens pretty quickly, really. Even after the recording, the songs kind of continually evolve for me. I'll record them and it's usually a 'first idea'-type of situation, which I don't mind because I think my instincts are usually not too bad.

AW: Has your drum kit evolved over the years?

AH: It's pretty much stayed the same. I have occasionally added a second floor tom, an 18" right next to my 16", but it's nothing that's been a permanent part of the kit. My kit has been the same forever. I think I'm more defined by functionality; functional things make sense to me. I've found a set-up that works for me and until I get as good as Dave Weckl, it's not gonna change…and that's not gonna happen! (Laughs).

AW: Have you stayed with the same size kick drum?

AH: Yeah, anytime I've tried something different it just didn't feel right. Shallower kicks have been coming into style lately and I've just stayed with what feels comfortable and sounds good to me.

AW: Do you have any musical goals that you'd like to reach? Anything left to conquer?

AH: I don't think so. I mean, I want to continue to do things, but if I died today, I'd be more than stoked with all of my accomplishments. Well, we were supposed to play Antarctica and be the first band to play all seven continents, but it didn't happen because of the weather. Then Metallica ended up getting there first. I'd still like to play there though, because that'd be a story. I want to play all the weird places and as many countries as I can, so that's something I still want to do.

AW: Is that your favorite part of touring, seeing things you've never seen before and going to places you've never been?

AH: Going to strange countries and seeing weird stuff while doing this thing I love, that's pretty special. I think everyone should just do what it is that they want to do. Don't be paralyzed by the fear of failure, failing is what teaches you the most. I think it's just a matter of doing it. Do whatever it is, get it out into the world, and learn from it. The things that can seem so scary at first are just moments you need to get through, and then you realize it wasn't that bad. So, do everything, forever. dw

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Big Gigs with Derrick Wright

by Atom Willard

Photo Credit: David Phillips

From the outside looking in, it would seem like playing drums with Adele would be the ideal gig, right? Well, you'd be absolutely right. In fact, you'd be Derrick Wright. After almost a decade of backing the much-acclaimed UK songstress on her rise to megastardom, the Brooklyn-based road warrior has nothing but positive things to say about his tenure with arguably the top-selling artist of this century. Our man about town, and road dog himself, Atom Willard, did a phoner with Derrick to get a glimpse inside his hectic schedule and gain some insight into touring life on a grand scale.

Atom Willard: Dude, first of all I have to say congratulations on getting, and keeping, what has to be one the world's most coveted gigs.

Derrick Wright: It's a blessing, really, to be a part of the organization and the movement that is Adele. To have been here from the beginning, playing 300 seat venues to where we are now, in like 30,000 seaters, it's amazing! She's kept her loyalty to us players, no matter how big she's become. Creating a sound from the beginning, it's just incredible!

AW: Yeah, it must be a great fit. When and where did you start up with her?

DW: I started right when the *19* album came out. She had only done a few shows before going to the US and her drummer didn't come along. I got the call after being referred by her keyboard player, and that was that. I jumped on really early.

AW: People probably don't realize that when you did sign on with her, she wasn't the big star she is today. There was a lot of growing to do, so it was really a leap of faith for you. You had a solid gig with Toni Braxton and Talia, so it was almost a step down at the time. What did you hear in her music that really struck you and got you take that leap?

DW: It was just real, you know? It was her really singing and using actual drums. Not a bunch of Pro Tools, or whatever.

AW: Was there ever a point where you were questioning whether or not it was the right thing to be doing?

DW: I always try to stay true to the music, and if I enjoy the music I'm happy. When I'm happy, I'm glad to be there playing. That's when it's the right thing for me.

AW: You're locked in with your percussion player, Aaron Draper. You guys play off of each other really well. Did that happen quickly or did it take a while to click?

DW: Well, he's family right there. We've played together in church and all kinds of stuff growing up. He could have come in yesterday and we'd be just as locked in.

AW: Is there any particular part of the show that you're excited to play each night?

DW: There are songs that I love so much. I mean, even the ones I don't play on too much are just great songs, you know?

AW: At one point, you have to travel from your main stage kit to another backstage kit during the show, right?
DW: Yeah, whenever she moves over to the B stage out in the audience, I gotta go to my B kit somewhere backstage. I'll run off the stage, and sometimes it's close by and sometimes it's not; it all depends on the building and where we have room to set up and run the audio.

AW: Is it a duplicate drum set-up?
DW: Yeah, it's exactly the same. We had to isolate the drums when she's out there because when she walks on the long runway the audio follows her. The only thing messing it up was the drums, so the band stays on stage and I have to play the drum parts where there's no bleed.

AW: I noticed that your rack tom has migrated to the right over time. What made you decide to do that?
DW: I started doing that about two years ago. Adele's music is really simple, so when I'm doing that stuff and not playing a lot of chops or anything, it's just easier having it there.

AW: I read somewhere that you reached a point where you felt you were playing too much, being too busy and, ultimately, decided to rein it in. How did that sort of maturity develop in your playing style?
DW: I got there by realizing that the fans want to hear the songs the way they are familiar with them on the records. Sometimes, when you're playing the same thing night after night, a lot of people will try to do something to stock it up, but with Adele, her singing, and those songs, that's enough right there. So, again, you have to stay true to the music. After years of playing with her, it's just about keeping it simple and playing exactly what's on the record. Those fills were put in that spot by a producer; these great producers chose that specific fill to uplift the song in that particular spot, so I was like, "Why would I try to go in and change something that's already working?"

AW: Yeah, I think that's lost on a lot of people, not just drummers, but anyone who's trying to put their own stamp on something. A lot of times it does a disservice to the song. I think one of the hardest, and also most important, things to do is play the same thing every night, but make it sound and feel like it's the first time you're playing it.
DW: Yeah, make it feel good! And that comes from playing in church! When you're playing your parts and you make it feel like, "Wow! That just uplifted the song right there."

AW: And it's everyone doing it together, not just because you landed some insane fill.
DW: And for a lot of people that are at the concert, I could play something really choppy or over-the-top and more than 80% of them wouldn't get it or appreciate it. It's not why they're there.

AW: I know that growing up and playing in church, you were around a lot of incredible players, from Gerald Hayward to Jeff Davis. Are you still influenced by these guys and their playing?
DW: I actually just saw Gerald last night and we were talking. You know, in church we are taught to be aggressive drummers, and that's a good thing to have, but you have to learn how to harness that aggression and let it come out only when it needs to.

AW: What do you mean by aggressive drumming?
DW: In church, they have a thing called Devotional Service. Anybody can get up and just sing anything. There's an organist and a bass player and you have to move that singer along, so they will follow your lead.

AW: Ah, so you have to direct them as to the feel and where to go musically.
DW: Exactly! You gotta take control, because anyone can get up, and sometimes they sing on the 1 or maybe the 3 or the 2. (Laughs). So you have to aggressively make them understand where it's got to be. Everyone there just wants to sing and rejoice, but we have to make sense of it all.

AW: I get that. You could call that assertive drumming, too. Did Gerald or Jeff guide you with that?

Photo Credit: Dave Phillips

DW: No, those are just growing pains. Sometimes, if you're not doing it right, there's another drummer right there. They'll kick you off and put a different drummer up there. (Laughs).

AW: What? Like you get tapped on the shoulder?
DW: That's the way it is. In church, it's not your gig.

AW: That's a lot of pressure, but I guess it's the school of hard knocks.
DW: Right! And a lot of the time it was my father and my brothers playing up there with me and if I didn't know, they'd just look at you like, "You don't know?? Come on!"

AW: That probably helped you, in the long term, to be ready for some of these crazy shows, or live TV, or whatever.
DW: Exactly. My second gig ever with Adele was SNL.

AW: Was that a career goal?
DW: For sure. I've met a lot of my goals working with Adele. Like, I had always wanted to play in Verona, in The Roman Theatre, or Madison Square Garden. I had done The Garden before, but never as the headliner, so playing six nights there was amazing. Also, The Grammys, The Hollywood Bowl, Royal Albert Hall, a lot of historic places. Another one was the Glastonbury Festival; headlining that event, with 170 thousand people in the audience, that was really something I had never experienced.

AW: It's incredible to get to play in those types of situations, but to get to do it with the same artist is really amazing. Have you become de-sensitized to some of these larger-than-life shows?
DW: I still get excited when I see the people getting into it. The things that they get excited about might be really simple, and we might even think they're corny. For example, playing the beat for "Rumour Has It" is so simple, but they love that! It's from the record; they hear that and then see it happening live and they are just so happy. It reminds me that people love the records, so I have to honor that.

AW: I think it's great that you're in tune with that and you're aware of what people are reacting to. What do you find yourself playing when you're just having fun or practicing?
DW: I just love music, so I'll play anything, but mostly church music. I play a lot of Gospel.

AW: Do you still play in church when you're off tour?
DW: Yeah, I usually get to play a little bit when I'm home. I get to sit in for a bit.

AW: How are you balancing your busy tour schedule with being a father?
DW: I have three children. Sometimes they come see me, like at The Garden they came down and spent time with me. I'm not saying it's not hard, it's hard for sure, and I miss my wife, too. Adele is very family-oriented; she'll have her son out there with us. My kids can come down and hang out and it's natural because everyone is like-minded that way.

AW: It seems like Adele is a pretty cool boss. From everything I've heard, she's a 'no BS' kind of lady and she's super personable with the crew and everyone involved with the tour.
DW: That's true. She's got to be one of the best bosses I've ever had when it comes to being in tune with everybody and making sure we're all comfortable. It's amazing to have a boss like that.

AW: Congrats again on all the success. Any tips to pass on to the up-and-coming drummers?
DW: Thank you. Listen to the music, stay true to the music, and sometimes 'less is better.' Learn your parts and make it feel good. Make it feel so good that you can play it every night like it's the first time. Make it undeniable! dw

PHOTO CREDIT: MATTHEW FRIED

CHAD SMITH

*Well*RED

BY ELIZABETH LANG

Red Hot Chili Peppers' spicy blend of Funk-drenched Rock, high-voltage live shows, and their obvious joy for music-making have enthralled fans worldwide for over three decades. With hit songs like "Under the Bridge" and "Californication", the band has become virtually synonymous with southern California. However, drummer, and Detroit native, Chad Smith, is still grounded by the same midwestern grit and work ethic that propelled him from Motor City bar bands to The City of Angels, landing him one of the biggest gigs in Rock. At the time that Edge's Elizabeth Lang interviewed the outspoken Pepper, the band had already embarked on their sold-out The Getaway *world tour in support of their 11th studio release. As a recent member of the DW family, we wanted to welcome him and get his take on the latest Chili Peppers album, his new kit, and inspiring the next generation of drummers.*

Photo Credit: David Phillips

Elizabeth Lang: You've been out on the road for a while now and you haven't even begun the North American leg of your tour. How's it going so far?

Chad Smith: It's going good! We started with festivals in June and we began doing our own shows in September, and we've mostly we've been in Europe since then. We're wrapping up in December and then we'll be all over the US and Canada starting in January. Everyone is in good spirits, the people seem to like our songs, and they're coming out to see us. We have a really cool kind of fancy production and light show. We also have really good drums!

EL: This is a huge tour for you guys. You've been selling out multiple nights and you've had some really out-of-the-box choices in opening acts.

CS: Yeah! We've had Babymetal on this leg, which has been awesome! We played the Fuji Rock Fest with them in July and to see them perform in Japan, people were just going crazy and it was so entertaining. We just fell in love with them and asked them to come and play with us. They're doing another leg with us in the states which, I believe, is in April. We have one more show in London and I'm actually going to play with them. They do a Judas Priest medley of "Painkiller" and "Breaking the Law". I saw a clip on YouTube where they were joined by Rob Halford and I just decided I had to get up there with them. Coming up, Trombone Shorty will be opening for three legs of the American tour. They're just a great band and they have a really well-put-together live show. They play for forty-five minutes straight and the crowd loves them. I love to go out and watch them. They're incredible!

EL: Your last six studio albums were produced by Rick Rubin, but for* The Getaway *you worked with Brian "Danger Mouse" Burton who is probably best known for his work with Gnarls Barkley and Gorillaz. In the studio, he had you lay down drum tracks first and then had the rest of the band play over them. Is that different from how you guys normally record?

CS: On some of the songs, that's right. That was the biggest change for us. We usually write all of our songs and the producer comes in and he works with us on arrangements and we go in the studio and try to get a good performance. We had some songs that were like that. We brought Brian in and he liked a bunch of them and we worked with him a little bit on those. Then, as it turned out, Flea broke his arm in a snowboarding accident three weeks before we were supposed to start recording. So, during the interim of him healing, Brian said, "Hey Chad, if you want to use me to my fullest capacity and take advantage of how I work and what I do…why don't you come into my studio and play some drums?" So, I went in and played drums by myself. I was like, "Yeah!" It was really different and we ended up using the studio as a writing tool. It's a different, challenging, creative way to write music. At first we were a little reticent, but it actually worked out great.

EL: How did laying down drum tracks first change the recording process for you personally? Was it more stressful? More creative?

CS: Maybe a little of both? Actually, I don't know that it was stressful, but it was different. It was a blank canvas. Brian and I would listen to some music together; he has a very eclectic taste in music, so we'd listen to some grooves or some weird psychedelic stuff. Then, I'd go in and do my interpretation of the inspiration and those were kind of the seeds. The stuff we recorded that spoke to Flea, or Josh, or Brian, or Anthony, depending on where they were in the process, were the ones that got worked on and ended up turning into songs. Some did and some didn't, but that's kind of how it goes in the songwriting process anyway. The songs that everybody's feeling are the ones that see the light of day. I totally surrendered to the process. I used his drum set, which was a small, vintage kit he had in the studio. I'm usually all about a big, modern Rock drum sound, but I just kind of had to let that go and play what was right for the songs and the music.

Another thing he had me do was play more quietly. Usually, I'm a pretty hard hitter and he said he could really manipulate the sound better with the placement of the mics in the studio if I played quieter. It was a little bit of a challenge to still have the intensity while playing quietly, which made me focus on it. It was really great, actually, because it's something that I wouldn't normally do. You have to go in with an open mind, trust the producer, and make sure his musical ideas are in line with what you're thinking. So we did and we just kind of let go. It was like, "Ok! Let's do it!" Almost as an experiment, you know? We know we can do it this other way; we've done it the other way forever. We didn't want to lose that thing we do, playing together in the studio, which I don't think a lot of bands do today. With Pro Tools everybody goes in and they don't really play together, and we're pretty good at that.

EL: Did playing more quietly in the studio carry over to how you play live?

CS: Not really, no. The record is one thing and playing live is another. To me, records are documents and you really want it to be something special. I do think about how the recorded grooves feel, and it's probably still somewhere in the back of my mind when we perform. But live, I'm still beating the crap out of the drums.

EL: Elton John guested on piano on the track "Sick Love" on the new album. Are there still any 'bucket list' artists you'd like to play with?

CS: Live, it would be Jimmy Page of Led Zeppelin; he's definitely on the list. I've been so fortunate that people want me to play with them on their records, I really love it. My passion for music and drumming has not dimmed in the least. If anything, it's probably grown as I play more. I always want to learn more because I'm such a student of music and drumming, and I'm so fortunate that I found this passion at such a young age. It's so rare for a Rock band to be together for 32 years, and people are still interested in what we do. I don't want to sound corny or cliché, but I'm honestly pinching myself.

EL: The Getaway ***sounds incredibly fresh yet very familiar, as Chili Peppers albums go. How do you keep going at this level after 32 years together?***

CS: I can speak for us as a band; we're always trying to get better. We're trying to be better people, better musicians, better friends, better dads, and better at whatever we're trying to do. This is life and we're

very conscious about everything. I think that comes out in our music because we're open and honest with what we do, and I think people connect with that. Some people like what we do and some people don't. You can't really help that. If you're true to yourself and where you are at that time, you're being a true artist.

EL: Speaking of getting better, do you still have time to practice?

CS: I don't have a real strict routine on the road for warming up like some of the other guys do. I like to warm up and get everything moving, but, no, I don't practice specifically. When I'm home, I have a wife and three small children and my priorities change. I can't go practice three hours a day even if I want to. But honestly, I prefer to play with other people; that's music to me. I get the practicing part because it's important for development and to keep going as a player, but I view my instrument as a real collaborative instrument. It's not a melodic instrument the way I play the drums. I need other people to make noise.

PHOTO CREDIT: DAVID PHELIPS

EL: If you had the time to practice, is there any skill you'd like to work on?

CS: When it comes to odd time signatures, I can do them, but I'm not real comfortable with them.

EL: As busy as you are with RHCP and your other musical projects, you still manage to lend quite a bit of your time to supporting music education in schools.

CS: Math, Science, and English, all those things are incredibly important, but we shouldn't diminish the importance of art and music education in schools. That's where kids can be exposed to it and it's an important part of our culture and an important part of youth culture. I just hate to see it go away because of bureaucracy and things like that. I'm very passionate about it. That's why I keep going to schools, like the show I just did at the Academy of Contemporary Music here in London. They were a very engaged bunch of students. They asked great questions and they're very interested in music. I played a big arena the night before and the next day I'm playing the drums for eighty kids. If that had happened to me when I was a kid, I would have been blown away. It's really important to me to give back.

EL: When you think of drumming, what's the first mental image you get?

CS: I'd have to say it's a mental image of the beauty of a drum set, not actually the drumming part of it. When I was a kid, I really liked stuff. When I played sports, I always wanted to be the goalie in hockey because he had the most equipment. Or in baseball, I wanted to be the catcher because he had all the cool stuff. I guess that's just part of my personality. I like stuff. I'd look at Neil Peart's drum set and think, "Wow!" Or Alex Van Halen's kit, and I'd just think, "That's the coolest freaking thing ever!" When you look at sports and positions like the goalie or the catcher, they're kind of like the drummer in the band.

EL: The goalie, the catcher, and the drummer are also the ones that don't really move around.

CS: (Laughs). That's true! I guess I like everything to come to me.

EL: This is the first tour and the first album with you as part of the DW family. How does it feel?

CS: It feels good! I have to say, I was with Pearl for many years and they were great to me. That said, I think that the DW kit I have on this tour provides the most fun I've had playing a drum set. I really look forward to sitting down to play them. They're super consistent and loud and bright, but still warm and musical. Everybody loves them. Not only aesthetically, but also the sound. Everyone from our sound man to all the guys in the band think this is the coolest drum set I've ever had. To be part of an American company just feels right. Everyone at DW is just so passionate about it. I'm incredibly fond of Don Lombardi, and John Good is such an amazing guy. Everybody at DW is doing it because they love it and I'm attracted to that.

EL: Since the beginning, DW's motto has been, "Solving Problems for Drummers" and this year marks the 45th Anniversary, so the company is focused on that, even after four-and-a-half decades.

CS: That's what I really like about DW. If you think about a modern drum set, it hasn't been around that long, in terms of musical years, and there haven't been many new major design advancements

PHOTO CREDIT: MATHIEU FIATO

outside of the introduction of plastic drum heads. I'm friends with Jim Keltner and he was always telling me that he would come up with ideas and take them to Don and John and no matter how wacky, or whatever, they were always really helpful and open to new things. That's the way it should be. That's how you find new things. Sometimes you swing and miss, but without experimenting and taking risks new things don't happen musically, or in life, and especially in art. DW is always interested in finding new ways to inspire drummers. That's what a musical instrument is supposed to do. It's supposed to inspire you to create. dw

PHOTO CREDIT: ROB SHANAHAN

Photo Credit: Tim Shanhoy

GROOVIN' IN *Odd* Times

by Ed Roscetti

This article is based on my book entitled "Drummers Guide to Odd Meters," *Hal Leonard Publishing* and my clinic titled "Groovin' In Odd Times."

"How often do you see odd time signatures in your work?" This is a question I'm frequently asked during my clinics. I've found that sharing some of my own experiences over the years has been most helpful in answering.

In the early part of my career starting out in L.A. I was recommennded for a jingle session by respected percussionist Julie Greenberg (The Simpsons). I was 20 years old at the time. The composer was jazz legend Benny Golson, tenor sax player, composer and arranger. I was already a huge fan of his work on pieces like "Killer Joe" and "Whisper Not." The session was an animated 30 second commercial TV spot for The Southern Cailfornia Gas Company. I remember arriving at the session thinking, "Man I'm gonna be playing a swingin' Benny Golson chart! Cool!"

As we waited for the music to be handed out, pianist David Garfield and I chatted back and forth…then Boom! The chart was on our music stands and much to our surprise it was the complete *opposite* of what we'd thought was coming. I found myself counting tacet measures more than I was actually playing and when I *was* playing I was navigating a mine field of style and odd time changes throughout the composition.

What saved me was my ability to read and execute the odd time changes within the chart. That facility was due to the fact that I'd been studying odd time signatures over the last two years with master teachers Joe Porcaro and Ralph Humphrey. Thank the gods for that! That's what got me through the session that day.

As the years rolled on the odd meter beast would rear its head on many occasions: replacing a drum track on a session because the drummer hadn't been able to feel a 3/4 measure turnaround at the end of a section; programming drum machine and performing over 4/4 compositions with changing meter bars of 3/4, 5/4 and 7/8 for the TV show Night Rider; a three day audition for Frank Zappa; or performing a 5/4 chart with the renowned studio guitarist Tommy Tedesco and his Quartet.

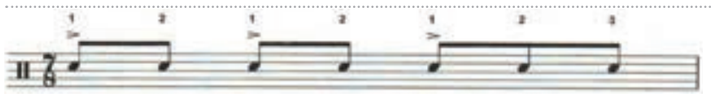
Over time I started composing, producing and arranging for records, jingles, TV and film. Throughout the range of projects, my odd time vocabulary consistently informed and brought more depth to my work. I remember writing a 60 sec ESPN auto spot with composer Jonathan Wolff (Seinfeld). The motion of the Lambergini on the curvy cliff road felt like 7/8 to me. So I wrote a bass ostinato in 7/8 and we went from there. The ad guys loved our demo and repeatedly told us, "Your composition just sounds different than all the other demos that were submitted." I just looked at them and said, "You're right. It's different." We got the job. I don't think we ever mentioned to them that the "different" they were hearing was the 7/8 time.

To this day my odd meter vocabulary serves and will continue to serve me. This is especially so when I'm subdividing odd groupings over 4/4 time to expand my phrasing. As drummers, we can find ourselves working in common time more often than odd times. So practicing the two concepts in this lesson will not only help you with your odd time playing, but will also help prepare you with superimposing odd groupings over 2/4 and 4/4 time.

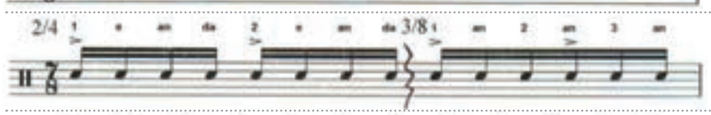
As I travel throughout the country presenting my "Groovin' In Odd Times" interactive clinic at universities, schools, events and retail venues, my primary goal is to help students at all levels, including professionals and educators to feel confident and relaxed with their odd time playing… and to groove! So let's dig in to the lesson and start *Groovin'*!

Studying and playing odd time signatures opens the mind to a variety of rhythmic subdivisions that will increase your rhythmic vocabulary and your ability to handle odd time and changing meter compositions in different styles of music. The key is to learn to interpret the group or groups of three eighth notes within any phrase. You know how to play and feel groups of two eighth notes from playing in 2/4 and 4/4 time. See examples below.

By using the two concepts in this article you'll eventually feel the subdivided groupings of two, three or one eighth notes within the phrase. This will help you to stylize them into grooves, fills, ensemble figures, improvisation ideas and solos. The first concept is The Rhythmic Guide (RG) see below and on page 29.

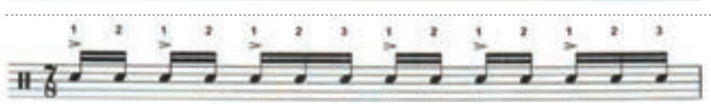


It will be the group(s) of three eighth notes that are foreign to you at first. Instead of counting 1-2-3-4-5-6-7 for 7/8 time, count the eighth note subdivision: 1-2,-1-2,-1-2-3.



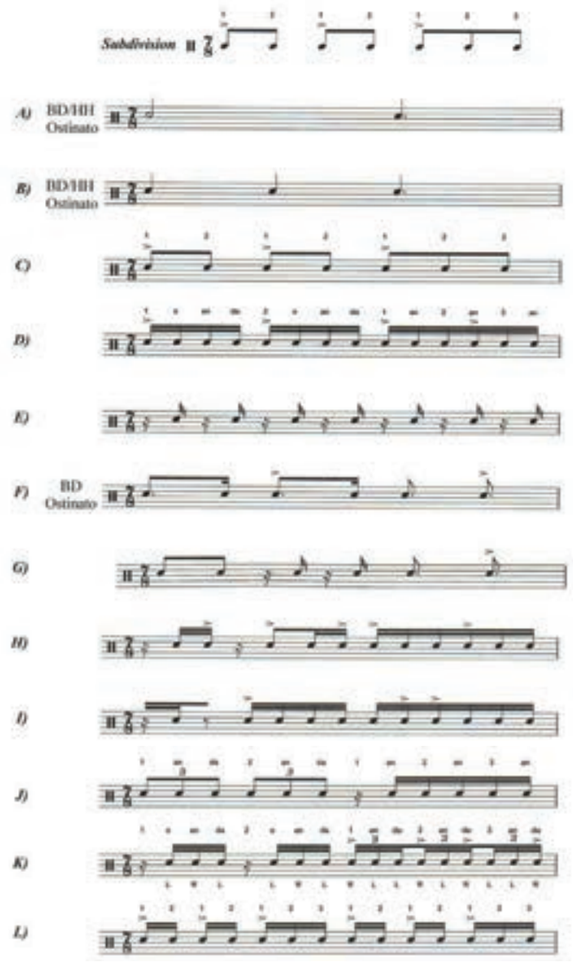
Count the sixteenth note subdivision: 1-e-an-da, 2-e-an-da, 1-an-2-an-3-an. See the imaginary barline 2/4 + 3/8 count.

Count the eighth note triplets and 16th notes: 1-an-da, 2-an-da, 1-an-2-an-3-an. See the imaginary barline 2/4 + 3/8 count.



Count the sixteenth note subdivided 7/8 measure: 1-2, 1-2,-1-2-3, 1-2, 1-2,-1-2-3

The Rhythmic Guide (RG) 7/8
is a breakdown of rhythms that can be applied to any given eighth or sixteenth note subdivision in any meter. These rhythm drills will increase your rhythmic vocabulary and independence using your hands, feet, voice and an egg shaker. You'll be standing away from the drumset at first and eventually morph over to the drumset. The **(RG)** *will also assist you with counting, the lope (forward motion) of the time feel and feeling the rhythms.* **See 7/8 RG 2+2+3 examples A - L below.**

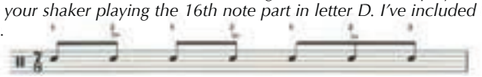


a) Stand up and **Play RG (letter D)**, *16th notes accenting the downbeat of each subdivision with an egg shaker in 7/8 time. Use your right hand if you lead with your right. Use your left hand if you lead with your left. Play the upbeats of the 16th notes with your opposite hand* **(letter E)** *following the 2+2+3 eighth note subdivision. Play the grounding ostinato in your feet* **(letter B)**. *Your feet will alternate after each measure. Lift your feet off the ground like a dance step (R, L, R - L, R, L). You're now working on feeling downbeats and upbeats in 7/8 time against your alternating feet. You can also play the ostinato with your right foot constant or left. Work on mastering this technique leading with both hands at different tempos, with and without a click. Repeat this exercise while singing the other* **RG** *rhythms against your hands and feet. Work on one rhythm at a time from* **letters (A-L)**. *Sing your rhythm for 2 bars, then sing a simple bass ostinato for 2 bars (root tone, fifth, root tone). Do not worry about your sound or pitch. The key is to make your body feel the time feel. This procedure will help you to feel the phrase and eventually stop counting. Then you can move over to the drumset.*

b) Now let's work on counting and playing the rhythms behind the drumset. Pick up your sticks and play example D hand to hand to an eighth note click. Choose a slow tempo that's comfortable for you to play at first. Count the sixteenth notes 1-e-an-da, 2e-an-da, 1-an-2-an-3-an.

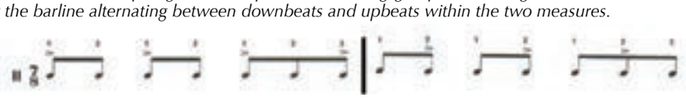
c) Play example B as an ostinato with your right (BD) or left foot (HH) while playing the other lettered examples against it. For example, play two bars of D into two bars of J and then back to D and into L. Jump around the letters. Always go back to letter D in-between. Think of D as your basic groove measure. You can also start writing your own rhythms to add or create your own **RG**. *Count the rhythms at first and then stop counting and feel the rhythms as you play.*

d) Stylize: Play the eighth notes on the hi-hat in example C. This example uses the downbeat quarter note lope in the hi-hat while playing example G on the bass drum and snare drum. The snare plays the accented notes. The bass drum plays the unaccented notes. This will give you a basic one bar funk groove in 7/8 time. Practice this with a cowbell click. Program the cowbell to play letter B, two quarter notes and one dotted quarter note. You can also practice this groove with your shaker playing the 16th note part in letter D. I've included three other eighth note hi-hat lopes below to use for this groove. The first is the upbeat lope.



The second is the push lope.

The third is the downbeat lope again, 2 bar phrase, accenting groups of two eighth notes, so it goes over the barline alternating between downbeats and upbeats within the two measures.



Work on creating more of your own grooves from the RG rhythms and from your own rhythms. Also practice the rhythms as fills and ensemble figures. See a fill example ***(right)*** *using letter I.*

See an ensemble figure example ***(right)*** *using letter L, with right hand lead sticking.*

Work on creating your own fills and ensemble figures from the RG rhythms and from your own rhythms.

The 5 Steps to Musicality
is a practice method that will help you organize and play your rhythms, grooves, fills and ensemble figures. **The 5 Steps** *are technique, time, time feel, phrasing and song form incorporating the* **RG** *rhythms.*

Step 1 Technique: (shaker, feet, hands and voice)
a) Choose a rhythm from the **7/8 RG**. *This rhythm is now called your* **Idea Groove** *rhythm. The following example is from the* **7/8 RG, 2+2+3, letter (L)**.

b) Make sure you have your **Idea Groove** *rhythm memorized.*

c) Stand up and play 16th notes on shaker against 16th note upbeats with your opposite hand. The ostinato in the feet outlines the eighth note subdivision 2+2+3. Sing the **Idea Groove** *rhythm for 2 bars then sing a bass line for 2 bars (loop).*

Step 2 Time: (snare, bass drum, hi-hat and voice
a) Play your **Idea Groove** *rhythm on the snare drum against the bass drum ostinato. The ostinato should define the eighth note subdivision on the bass drum. Make sure you have your sticking memorized and play at different tempos with a metronome and with your internal clock.*

b) Practice counting your Idea Groove rhythm out loud. Then stop counting and just feel the rhythm. Now play the ostinato with your hi-hat. You can also alternate between the bass drum and hi-hat.

Step 3: Time Feel (kick, snare, hi-hat or ride and voice
a) Select a style (Rock, Funk, Latin, Jazz, Hip-Hop, etc.) . We'll use **Funk** *as our style.*
b) Play a 7/8 basic groove in the **Funk** *style. We'll use the basic groove from the* **7/8 RG letter G**.

Basic Groove (Funk)

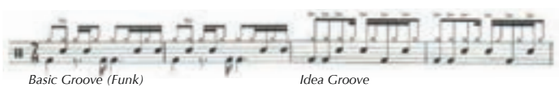
c) Play your idea groove in the **Funk** *style. Your* **Idea Groove** *should come from the same time feel as the* **Basic Groove**. *Sing the bass ostinato while playing. This will help you to stop counting.*

Idea Groove

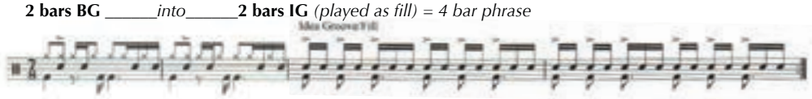
d) Loop 2 bars **Basic Groove** *into 2 bars* **Idea Groove**. *Sing your bass line as you play.*

Step 4: Phrasing/The Groove Cycle (you can use the entire drumset & voice)
a) Open up your phrasing by using the **Groove Cycle** *below to work on your* **Basic Grooves (BG)** *into your* **Idea Grooves (IG)** *- grooves, fills and emsemble figures. Run* **RG** *rhythm,* **letter L** *down the* **Groove Cycle**. *Select a phrasing length (see below). I'll use 2 bars* **Basic Groove** *into 2 bars* **Idea Groove** *as an example to get you started.*

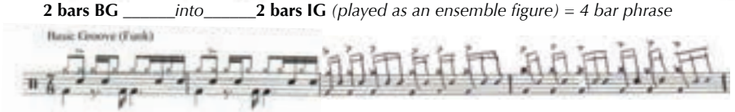
2 bars BG _____*into*_____**2 bars IG** *(played as a groove) = 4 bar phrase*



2 bars BG _____*into*_____**2 bars IG** *(played as fill) = 4 bar phrase*



2 bars BG _____*into*_____**2 bars IG** *(played as an ensemble figure) = 4 bar phrase*



Groove Cycle *phrasing lengths:*

2 Bars + 2 Bars = 4 Bar phrase
3 Bars + 1 Bar = 4 Bar phrase
4 Bars + 4 Bars = 8 Bar phrase
4 Bars + 2 Bars = 6 Bar phrase
6 Bars + 2 Bars = 8 Bar phrase
8 Bars + 4 Bars = 12 Bar phrase
8 Bars + 8 Bars = 16 Bar phrase

b) Sing a bass line while playing the **Basic Groove** *into the* **Idea Groove** *throughout the* **Groove Cycle**. *At this point you should not be counting anymore.*

Step 5: Song Form (you can use the entire drumset & voice)

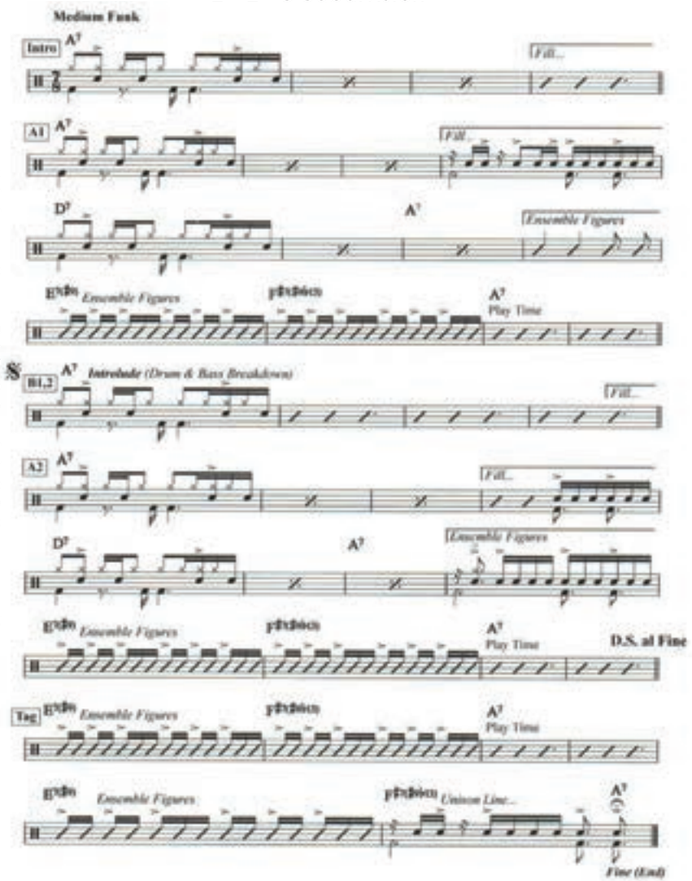
a) I've arranged the **Basic Groove** *and* **Idea Groove** *rhythms into a 12 bar blues form (see chart below) using* **RG letter L** *as a turnaround rhythm on bars 9 and 10. Although it says to play the rhythm as an ensemble figure, you can also play it as a groove or fill - mix it up. I also added a few more fills and ensemble figure rhythms that you should be able to play now after working on the* **Rhythmic Guide** *rhythms. Play two times through the song form and tag the ending. Work on singing the bass line throughout chart.*

b) Run all the RG rhythms and your own RG rhythms down the The 5 Steps to Musicality.

Keep Groovin'

Chart 7/8

2 - 2 - 3 Subdivision



For more information on the Rhythmic Guide and The Five Steps to Musicality concepts, check out the following book/CD packages by Ed Roscetti (Hal Leonard Publishing). Drummer's Guide to Odd Meters, Blues Drumming and Stuff! Good Drummers Should Know.
You can follow and contact Ed Roscetti on Instagram and Twitter @roscettimusic, on Facebook at Roscetti Music and on his website, roscettimusic.com. To Book Ed Roscetti for a Clinic, Masterclass or Event, contact him at bpmrecords@earthlink.net

Ed Roscetti is a Drummer, Composer, Author and Educator
His Hal Leonard published catalog includes: Drummers Guide to Odd Meters, Blues Drumming, Funk & Hip Hop Drumming, Rock Drumming Workbook, Stuff! Good Drummers Should Know, and Creating Professional Drum Loops. He is also coauthor of the World Beat Rhythms Series for Brazil, Africa, Cuba & USA. He has been a core curriculum author and educator for 35 years at the Musician's Institute, Hollywood (MI) and core curriculum author for MI Japan school's Odd Meter I and II and Groovin' In Odd Times classes. He has presented concerts, clinics, workshops, master classes & music camps at venues including NYU, The GRAMMY MUSEUM, PASIC, NAMM, IAJE, TMEA, AMTA, The Berklee School of Music, World Percussion Festival and continues to conduct clinics at universities, schools and retail venues across the country. His original interactive music video installation premiered at NAMM's Museum of Making Music in 2011. He has performed and composed music for records, jingles, TV and film including Fox Sports, Saturday Night Live, The 60's, Biography, The History Channel, Disney's Mostly Ghostly, WWE & General Hospital. He has worked with an array artists such as Quincy Jones, Herbie Hancock and Joe Sample and endorses DW, PDP, Remo, Paiste, Shure, Innovative Percussion (IP), Direct Sound Headphones and Pitch Slap Percussion.

20 Questions WITH JOHNNY "Vatos" HERNANDEZ

EDGE: Do you ever brag to anyone that you have starred in a movie with Rodney Dangerfield?
Johnny Hernandez: No, but people bring it up all the time. It was great meeting Rodney. His quote of the day for me was, "You're the drummer? All the chicks go for the drummer…and half of us guys!"

EDGE: Oingo Boingo was legendary for playing amazing Halloween/Day of the Dead shows. How does it feel knowing that, for thousands of people, you were the soundtrack to their holiday?
JH: It's a great holiday, and The Day of the Dead is an important Mexican tradition. A singer/songwriter like Danny Elfman's views on death make it a perfect marriage for a celebration of the life cycle.

EDGE: It must have been an incredible moment to sit in with Doc Severinsen's band on The Tonight Show. How did that come to be?
JH: In the 70's, I played with pop star, Helen Reddy. Helen would guest host on The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson. The theme and first song came back-to-back, so they were like, "Let the kid play it." Ed Shaughnessy sat at my side saying, "Yeah, kid!" It was a dream come true for me.

EDGE: What is the secret to maintaining such a well-coiffed mohawk?
JH: Ambidexterity! The right hand on the right side, left hand on the left. It's a Zen study on matched grip with mirrors.

EDGE: Do you consider your drumming style to be a product of your upbringing/community, or do you find influence from a wider spectrum?
JH: Influence comes from a wide spectrum of approaches. From rudiments, Swing, Bebop, Big Band, Rock, to R&B, Country, African, Cuban, Indian, Brazilian, Free Jazz, etc. I love musicians and most all music!

EDGE: Which bands or musical acts have you been listening to lately?
JH: Dirty Loops, Hello Scientist, John Daversa Big Band, John Beesley's Monk'estra, Bernie Dresel, Bill Evans, Bollywood dance, Stevie Wonder, and The Jazz Crusaders.

EDGE: I know that you put a lot of effort and time into writing your drum parts for Oingo Boingo, but did you ever have any 'happy accidents' that ended up being recorded on the albums?
JH: Yes! We were recording an album during Easter time and Danny said, "Let's record on Sunday." I brought up the fact that it was Easter Sunday and no one wanted to go in that day. It didn't matter. We were always given the latest keyboards from companies and we had one of the first EMU polyphonic split keyboard synths. I was not happy that day. Danny told me to scream. Little did I know, he recorded the scream. He added the phrase, "Oh wow." He said, "John, play me a driving drum ride beat." It was like a slow Merengue. He started jamming as I played. All I could do was laugh the entire time I played the beat! My brain was in this silly moment listening to Danny's crazy jam. I was practically falling down laughing and you can hear me almost falling all over the drums during the song. Then we all went home. The song was "Cry of the Vatos".

EDGE: How often do you practice drums/percussion?
JH: Not as much as I should; a few times a week. Practice is much different than playing. I play all the time.

EDGE: What's your favorite restaurant in Los Angeles?
JH: It is not fair to ask a guy who has not missed a meal in 50 years for his favorite restaurant in Los Angeles. The list is too long in this town!

EDGE: Do you feel comfortable playing behind any kit, or do you require certain pieces in order to play your style?
JH: Any kit will work. The sound is in your hands and feet.

EDGE: Do you have any drumming-related goals that you haven't accomplished yet?
JH: I have many goals that I will probably not reach. I just take one day at a time and play the crap out of it!

EDGE: If you could sit in with any band, which one would you pick?
JH: Oh, geez! There are so many! I really love playing with my band, Oingo Boingo Dance Party.

EDGE: Do you have a favorite Jazz drummer?
JH: Jack DeJohnette (living) and Buddy Rich (passed).

EDGE: Were you introduced to Danny Elfman during the production of The Forbidden Zone, or did you already know him at that time?
JH: I was a hired gun when I met Danny Elfman on the recording date for that movie. Steve Bartek hired me. About two months later, Danny and Steve saw me play shows four Fridays in a row with Toni Basil. The guys from Devo and a big bunch of crazy characters were in this production. They contacted me and asked me to join the 'Mystic Knights of the Oingo Boingo'. The rest is history.

EDGE: You grew up playing many different genres of music. How important is being eclectic to developing your personal technique?
JH: The more you know, the more you work. The more styles you enjoy playing, the more you work. People are the same all over the world. What makes a country's roots music special is what makes the people dance. The beat and the feeling of the beat.

EDGE: Do you prefer matched or traditional grip?
JH: Both, at any time.

EDGE: At this point in your career, do you prefer doing session work or playing live shows?
JH: There is never a set point in music; it's always "all of the above." When you love what you do, they both have rewards. I love it all.

EDGE: You're a big supporter of versatility within music. How much does it help your drumming to understand the instruments surrounding you (percussive or otherwise)?
JH: Voices, orchestrations, percussive and harmonic ideas smashing around a well-tuned drum set…this is how I hear and play music. All types of sound elements with correct space and time. There are only a couple of instruments that I really try to avoid at all costs: bagpipes and out-of-tune penny whistles!

EDGE: How would you describe the sound of your large 'trash' snare?
JH: A beautiful loud trash can with snares. It was an analog electronic snare drum that the band could rely on as a 'real' sound with volume, not just an electronic noise. It still kicks ass today!

EDGE: Do you have any hobbies that aren't related to playing music?
JH: No. Why?

From the RISER:

A Drummer's Perspective II

BY DAVID PHILLIPS

David Phillips, Drum Workshop's long time European Artist Relations representative is also the author of the critically acclaimed book, A Drummer's Perspective. *He has continued his photographic record of legendary drummers with the launch of his new book,* From the Riser: A Drummer's Perspective II, *which aims to celebrate the world of drumming by taking you behind the scenes and showing you drummers doing what they do best.*

For more than a decade, David Phillips has been a photographer whose unique style and classic shots of drummers have produced some incredible and iconic images of these amazing artists. To capture moments like this you have to truly understand drummers, their gear, and the art of playing live.

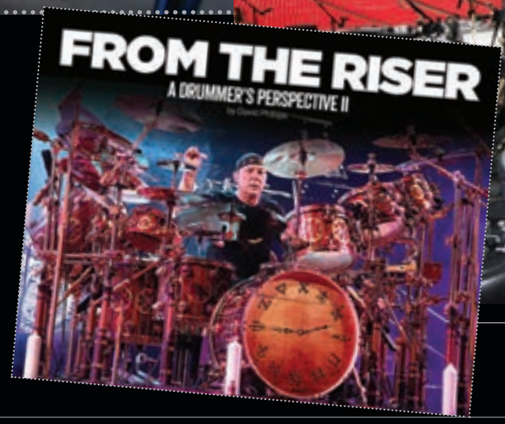
Rush's Neil Peart, who penned the foreword for the book, says, "Not many photographers have captured that performance art as well as David….one accomplishment is simply collecting photographs….but the greater gift is delivering such iconic images."

From The Riser: A Drummer's Perspective II features over 130 legendary drummers and retails for £29.99 ($39.99, €35.50). It is only available to purchase from the author's website: **www.music-images.co.uk**

ROY MAYORGA

GERALD HEYWARD

NIGEL OLSSON



DAVID PHILLIPS

ROGER TAYLOR

GINGER BAKER

GRAHAM BROAD

DW LIVE ||| DAVID PHILLIPS

SCOTT TRAVIS

JOHN FRED YOUNG

COBUS

BY DAVID PHILLIPS

Photo Credit: Zach Belcher

Steve Misamore
Country FIRST

by Brook Dalton

In addition to being an extremely affable and funny guy, Steve Misamore is also a very driven musician. From an early age, he knew that he wanted to spend his time playing the drums and after graduating college with a performance degree in music, he decided to take a chance and relocate from Houston to Nashville in order to further his goal. It was there that he met Dierks Bentley while playing in local honky tonks. Since then, Dierks has skyrocketed to the upper echelon of today's Country stars, and Steve has been the man behind the kit every step of the way. I recently had an opportunity to meet with Steve and discuss the Nashville music scene, his history with Dierks, and the gig that manifested into a dream-come-true.

Brook Dalton: You grew up playing drums in Houston. How is the Texas musical environment different than playing in other places?

Steve Misamore: Texas has a musical world of its own. It's been fun to watch it explode in past years. We've toured and have played many shows with Texas artists Pat Green, Wade Bowen, Cross Canadian Ragweed, and several others over the years and their talent and fan base are amazing. Many of these artists never even travel outside of Texas. They book their own shows, they make their own records, they do it ALL themselves and they do very, very well.

BD: How has the Nashville scene developed over the years? It's been such a hot spot recently, how has its musical landscape changed and has it affected you as a working musician?

SM: The Nashville scene has changed dramatically since I moved to here in late '93. Besides Country, it's open to many other genres, as we've seen with the success of Kings of Leon and The Black Keys in Rock, Young Buck in Hip-Hop, there's a huge Indie scene as well, and the very popular Bonnaroo Festival that we played in 2007. All of these things inspire young musicians to make the move to Nashville in order to explore the possibilities. If you love drumming, like I do, it's hard not to get inspired watching the new talent coming from our opening acts on the road.

BD: Tell us about how you met Dierks and started playing music with him.

SM: I met Dierks in 1999. He called me on a recommendation from a friend when he had a bar gig on 2nd Ave at a place called Market Street in downtown Nashville and needed a drummer. At the time, I was into old school Country with a lot of shuffles and traditional straight-time beats. Ray Price, Buck Owens, and Freddie Hart kind of stuff. He was also really into the old school/deep catalog Country stuff, as well as Bluegrass. We hit it off right away and I was able to open a few doors for him at Sony/ATV publishing where I had a part-time job archiving old demos from the '60s and '70s. A couple years later, he had a record deal, a hit song, and we were on road living the dream!

BD: Do you think it's possible to be completely relaxed behind a kit while playing intense or very soulful material?

SM: I'm not sure if it's possible to be completely relaxed in an intense song and I don't think you necessarily want to be. In our arena shows, we're playing in front of thousands of people who, hopefully, are not completely relaxed and are rocking! I want to be in the moment with them, first and foremost. If we're playing "Riser", which is slow and very intense at 81 bpm, I want to be accurate in my timing and feel, but when the chorus kicks in, I want goose bumps because the moment is slamming and I'm slamming! That's the thrill of playing live music, which I love the most. Being in the studio is very rewarding because you can do it again and get it dialed-in creatively, but on the stage there's that immediate intense feedback and vibe from a killer audience, big or small, that makes my job the best job in the world.

BD: Some of the modern era of Country music combines elements from other genres, like Rock and even Hip-Hop. When you're writing drum parts with Dierks, are you approaching the songs with more of an eclectic mindset or are there traditional beats, styles, or gear that you like to incorporate? Is the train beat played with brushes a thing of the past for you guys?

SM: It's been a few albums since I've worked on the studio stuff, but it's in good hands with the likes of Aaron Sterling, Fred Eltringham, and other studio aces. They get together with Dierks and Ross Copperman (the producer) and work out the details. Dierks knows what he wants, knows when it feels right, and he's easy to read. For our live shows, our bandleader, Dan Hochhalter, gets me the Pro Tools studio tracks, which are edited down to the rhythm section and all of the drums and loops. I will sum the loops and sounds to two or three stereo tracks for the live show or lift sounds for my Roland SPD-SX. Although the traditional 'train beat' doesn't reach many downloaded files these days, it may make an appearance in an unexpected surprise in our live show this year!

BD: Do you find yourself playing much music when you're not on tour, or do you look forward to other hobbies?

SM: When I'm home I'm usually recording or practicing on my Maple/Mahogany or maple DW Collector's Series drums. If I'm not doing that, I'm on a hike with my wife in East Tennessee and enjoying landscape photography. I also have my private pilot's license and look forward to getting

Photo Credit: Zach Belcher

back in the left seat this year after a bit of a hiatus.

BD: How often do you get drunk when you're on a plane?
SM: Wha??? HAHA!! No comment! HA!...Titos.

BD: After doing as many extensive tours as you've done, and playing huge shows on a continual basis, do you ever look forward to performing a small gig at a bar or club when you're home? How does your outlook differ when playing a more intimate show rather than an arena?
SM: Every once in a while we get a chance to play a small club and we all love it! Dierks recently booked a night in Nashville on Broadway at a bar called Legends to promote our hometown headlining show at Bridgestone Arena on January 21, which is basically across the street from Legends. We played there back in the early pre-record deal days and were fired because we didn't play any current covers! It was fun playing shuffles and some 90's Country to a much more enthusiastic audience this time around. By the way, Dierks made sure the bartenders and, in particular, the actual working band we bumped to do our set were well taken care of. As far as my mindset, it's the same approach: have fun and be with that audience.

BD: Tell us about the kit that you're taking on the road with you this year.
SM: The kit I'm playing this year is a beautiful DW Collector's Series in white with a blue iridescent finish to it that our Production Manager, Jay Ballinger, designed with some help from DW artist relations guru Scott Garrison. The sizes are 8x13", 16x16", 16x18", 16x22", a maple 5.5x14" main snare, and a 7x14" cherry side snare with a natural finish. I also play Zildjian cymbals, Evans heads, and Vater drumsticks.

BD: Why do you feel that the Maple/Mahogany shells are best-suited for your style and these songs?
SM: The Maple/Mahogany shells are best-suited for what we do for many reasons. We don't do sound checks very often. This is a testament to the amazing crew we have and a well-designed show that fits many situations. Whether it's a festival or our tour, either my tech, BJ Abner, or I need to be able to dial in the same killer sound every night for our front-of-house engineer Jim 'Pugs' McDermott. I do this with the help of Tune Bot, which I absolutely love, and the fact that the DW Maple/Mahogany shells deliver a full tone with a bit of a faster decay than maple shells. The mahogany gives it that warmer color, approaching vintage, but not too much because of the maple inner plies. The result is a great sound that has covered a lot of Country music from 2003-2017.

BD: Name one of your heroes from outside of the realm of music. Why do you admire them?
SM: My hero is my wife, Carry Ann Misamore. Last year, she went through a life-saving kidney transplant as a result of living with PKD (Polycystic Kidney Disease) since she was diagnosed at the age of fifteen. Her brother, Kelly Lambson, my other hero, was the donor. Her recovery has been nothing short of incredible and she continues to inspire me every day.

BD: Do you find that the band's European fan base is much different than the audiences from the USA?
SM: We love to play the UK, Ireland, and Australia...or anywhere overseas, for that matter. The audiences overseas enjoy Country music from all eras, the same as we do. Although we still have the best Country music fans ever!

BD: Is there a country that you haven't played in that is on your bucket list?
SM: Not really, in particular. We love all of them! Any chance we get to play in another country and experience its culture is a treat.

BD: Do you have any personal goals for 2017?
SM: My personal mantra is always to be a better player this year than I was last year. Drumming is a never-ending journey of discovery and growth. I love Questlove's quote: "Never a teacher, always a student." That really resonates with me...pun intended. dw

Photo Credit: David Phillips

MARK GUILIANA JAZZ/COMPOSER/EDUCATOR PH
ANDY HURLEY FALL OUT BOY F
NATHANIEL TOWNSLEY INDEPENDENT PH
NICHOLAS COLLINS PHIL COLLINS PH
FRANKLIN VANDERBILT LENNY KRAVITZ PH
MATT OCHOA DIRTY HEADS F
BRIAN DELANEY MELISSA ETHERIDGE PH
MARCELO NOVATI JUANES F
CHRIS HAYDEN FLORENCE & THE MACHINE PH
ALEX TANAS MAGIC! F
TITO FELIX UPON A BURNING BODY F
FRANK FERRER GUNS N' ROSES F
SAMUEL F. ALFONSO LOS VAN VAN F
MICHAEL L. MITCHELL STANLEY CLARKE BAND PH
SEAN PATRICK FULLER FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE PH
MICHAEL REID RIHANNA F (PICTURED RIGHT)
CHRIS TURNER OCEANS ATE ALASKA F
KIP ALLEN INDEPENDENT F
WILLIAM GABRIEL BARHAM SLEEPING WITH SIRENS F
PAUL GARISTO PSYCHEDELIC FURS F
MELANIE DILORENZO BILLY GIBBONS & THE BFG'S F
BERNARD PURDIE INDEPENDENT F
EDDIE FISHER ONEREPUBLIC PH
KARL PERAZZO SANTANA PH
PAUL SLOWLY UB40 F
BILLY HAWN COLBIE CAILLAT, BRETT YOUNG F
NAIMA ACUÑA RODRIGUEZ IMMACULATE FOOLS F
FREDDY SHEED THE JAPANESE HOUSE PH
ANTHONY LOGERFO NEIL YOUNG F
MARTIN CHAMBERS THE PRETENDERS F

F = FULL LINE
PH = PEDALS & HARDWARE

PHOTO CREDIT: DAVID PHILLIPS

Nick Mason Pink Floyd

by David Phillips

Nick Mason is a founding member of Pink Floyd. That's pretty much all that needs to be said. However, in the interest of doing such an important career retrospective justice and underscoring just how influential the band has been in the scheme of Rock culture, please allow us to elaborate. In a recent Rolling Stone article, Mr. Mason lamented, "From '65 to the beginning of '67, we were a really amateur band. It's funny because if I could add up the hours of actual drum playing I did between birth and 1966, it'd be, I don't know, 100, 150 hours. I didn't practice. I didn't study. I just had a drum kit and played with my friends for fun. A year later, I'd probably put in 700 hours." For a drummer that admittedly fell into an iconic Rock career by simply jamming with friends, there is no denying what he has brought to the world of music in terms of 'less-is-more' drumming and the value of a well-placed ride cymbal. Then there are the long, flam-infused drum fills that are often imitated, but seldom duplicated. There is a stylistic approach present on every Pink Floyd recording that is memorable and, indeed, timeless. Our UK man on the street, David Phillips, met up with Nick to talk about his place in the British drumming culture and look back on his storied and celebrated livelihood.

David Phillips: Ginger (Baker) was a great inspiration to you. What was it about his playing that so moved you?

Nick Mason: I think it was a couple of things; it was the first time I'd seen a Rock band where the drummer had equal billing rather than the usual 'placed on the riser somewhere behind the band.' It was such a big thing at Regent Street Polytechnic in 1966, the whole thing with the double bass drums, the weight and the power. There weren't that many three-piece Rock bands at the time anyway. It was all about virtuosity.

DP: Ginger greatly admired Phil Seamen. Were you also inspired by him?

NM: Not particularly by Phil Seamen, although I was inspired by a lot of the Bebop drummers of the period. I was more into the American drummers. When I used to go to Ronnie Scott's, which I used to do a lot, Phil was not the drummer I would normally see. It was more Bobby Orr and, in particular, Allan Ganley. There were also the Americans like Art Blakey and Chico Hamilton. Chico was a huge influence due to one particular piece, "Jazz on a Summer's Day", where he plays with mallets.

DP: I read that you bought your first drum kit from Footes in London in 1958 for £7.50. What was this kit?

NM: It was a Gigster bass drum, Olympic snare, a pair of bongos (I don't think there was money for tom toms), pedal, hi-hat, and maybe a 50p cymbal.

DP: You saved Footes from closing in 2012. Are you very involved with the shop now?

NM: I certainly am. I really want to see it survive and flourish.

DP: I know you feel that this is a great meeting place for drummers.

NM: Well, I think that acoustic instruments shouldn't be something that one buys online. It's a silly thing; you really need to hear them! It's been interesting. One of the things I did was to take a beginner's kit, a proper kit not a toy kit, and I customised it so that I could I take it into a studio myself, if I needed to. It doesn't cost much to upgrade an introductory kit to something you can do that with. It's mainly a matter of upgrading the heads, damping down the bass drum, and possibly replacing the snare. You end up with something that is really quite good.

DP: This month Pink Floyd will release The Early Years Box Set 65-72. Can you talk us through putting this together and your involvement?

NM: Well, it's been grinding on for a very long time. About ten years ago now, I started archiving as much as possible, mainly video and film. The music was not so much of a problem as nearly everything was archived by the record company, so that was far easier to access. It was then a case of having a very good researcher, Lana Topham, who had been a producer on a lot of our film stuff and who did a fantastic job of tracking down footage. This was because some of it was with American TV stations.

DP: You mentioned that some of the TV footage contained some very embarrassing miming. Can you elaborate on this?

NM: Well, I can't remember which station it was. At the time that's what you did. You went to America, not dissimilar to what happens here, and you'd end up miming to your song. In some cases it was a song that Syd had sung, but David was miming it. It was so far away from any sense of how it was actually played. In one instance, I'm playing the drums with just my hands!

DP: It must have been a trip down memory lane pulling the box set together?

NM: Yes, absolutely. Interestingly, there are some things you remember, some things you go out and look for, and other things, you think, "I don't remember anything about this, it's a complete mystery!"

DP: I read in your book that the band experimented with pyrotechnics over many years. Was it pretty dangerous to be on stage sometimes?

NM: Yes, the biggest problem was the Cobo Hall in America. It was partly bad luck but one of the stage weights that was used to hold the bin that contained the pyro had an air bubble in the middle of it, so when it super-heated, the bubble expanded. Basically, what we had was shrapnel.

DP: It was a miracle nobody was hurt.

NM: Someone was hurt, but not badly. They came back for the second set.

DP: Pink Floyd was the first band to play at The Roundhouse in 1966. Do you recall that first concert?

NM: The Roundhouse at the time was so different. The shape is the same, but that's about all. There was no light and no power. The power was brought in from a 13 amp plug from next door. The floor was packed-down earth. Being a railway turntable originally, it was then used as a bonded warehouse by Gilby's Gin for years. There was the smell of gin around. Actually, there probably still is!

DP: You're closely involved now with the Roundhouse Trust. Tell us about your work with that charity.

NM: That's the great thing about The Roundhouse, there is the performance space, but not everyone realises that underneath it there is this whole under-croft. Torquil Norman, who bought the Roundhouse, made it a charitable foundation partly funded by what's going on upstairs. Downstairs, there's a myriad of small rehearsal rooms, TV and radio studios, and the local kids all have access. They can borrow instruments and they can then get some mentoring for their band or if they're a DJ, or whatever, they can learn or rehearse there. It's a fantastic facility; I think they get about 3,000 kids a year.

DP: If you remember, DW/Gretsch donated some kits to The Roundhouse.

NM: Yes, I remember, a proper night out as well. Great event!

DP: In fact, when we met there earlier this year, I remember you saying that you wished you had taken drum lessons. Have you managed to make this happen yet?

NM: Not yet. In fact, I'm very well-connected now, so when I do decide to do it I know some very good players that can help me.

DP: In 2014, DW created the Collector's Series Icon Prism snare drum in your honor. I understand that you donated the royalties from this project to the Roundhouse Trust?

NM: Yes, that's right. I just think it's a really worthy thing. It's about doing things that you really enjoy and I loved that whole thing. I'd said to The Roundhouse some years ago that I'd been a bit bored going to black tie fundraisers and that I'd rather mess around downstairs, which they let me do.

DP: Pink Floyd had a long history of working at Abbey Road. What is it about Abbey Road that is so special?

NM: There are a whole bunch of things. Firstly, it's one of the few remaining studios from the old days. Olympic has gone, along with so many other iconic facilities. When we were there, The Beatles were recording Sgt. Pepper down the hall. And they kept that room, The Beatles' studio, more or less, as it was. It's still fairly tight in that control room. It's a combination of history and great technology. They had very high standards. It's really interesting going back to the early recordings because really, even without Dolby, Aphex, and all the digital technology, they're still high-standard.

DP: The band then built Britannia Row studios. How did that change the recording experience?

NM: There's something really nice about working in your own environment. We were never time-limited at Abbey Road,

to be honest, but the idea behind Britannia Row was that any one of us could operate it without any outside help. I think being wise after the event, the quality wasn't as good as Abbey Road, who always went for the finest of everything. We didn't have that level of equipment, but it was still a great place to work. Over the years, Britannia Row ended up with a roster of some very good people.

DP:* Dark Side of the Moon *was recorded at Abbey Road, wasn't it?
NM: Yes, Studio 3.

DP: That record is widely recognized as one of the greatest albums of all time. Why do you think it has endured for so long?
NM: I always maintain that it's for more than one reason: It's partly Roger's writing (he was in his twenties at the time) which is still as relevant to fifty or sixty-year-olds as it was to teenagers. I think the concept was new and interesting, and people responded to that. It was a very high-quality recording, thanks to Alan Parsons, and it has a fantastic piece of artwork from Hipgnosis and Storm Thorgerson, for the cover. We had enormous support from Capitol Records who had put a new President in place, Bhaskar Menon. He had decided to make it work, particularly in America. It's a bunch of stuff really; it's the music, the packaging, the sales force, it's also the word-of-mouth, it became the stereo test record. It's that whole thing that The Beatles really started, where music became something more than ephemeral. In 1967, no one considered that. I mean, whether Rock 'n Roll would last was one thing, but no one believed a Rock career would last more than three or four years.

DP: You worked with Alan Parsons on the* Drum Masters: Nick Mason Drums Sample Library. *How did you go about putting this together?
NM: I was approached to do it, and basically I just went in and played. The idea was to play the original kit I used on *Dark Side of the Moon*, which I still have, and also to get Alan, who had been the original engineer on the album, to re-engineer these sounds. It was a nice opportunity.

DP: You've done some producing yourself. I read that you were a producer for Steve Hillage, Robert Wyatt, Gong, and the charity single "Save the Children (Look Into Your Heart)". How do you feel about being the other side of the recording desk?
NM: I really enjoy it. What I really like is doing different things. I'm happy playing drums in the studio, but I also really like working with other aspects of recording music.

DP: Do you mean experimenting with the mics, production, set-up?
NM: Yes mics, mixing…the whole thing, really. For example, it was great working with Gong's drummer, Pierre Moerlen. I could suggest he do something that maybe I couldn't play myself!

DP: You had your own project in the 80's called Fictitious Sports. Can you tell us about that?
NM: This was made during the making of *The Wall*. We all had a re-worked Sony contract which enabled us each to make a solo album, if we so desired. It was an opportunity, but in fact Fictitious Sports wasn't a solo album at all; it was more a cooperative thing with Carla Bley. It was great fun and lots of great musicians came and played on it.

DP:* So was the album Profiles *with Rick Fenn (1985) your solo project?
NM: More so, but it was hardly a solo album given that Rick had done so much of it. Rick and I had worked together for a while as we'd done a couple of movie soundtracks (*Tank Malling* and *White of the Eye*) and we also knocked out a couple of commercials. I had become quite involved in music outside of the band.

DP: What was it like playing the* Live 8 *reunion concert at Wembley in 2005?
NM: It was terrific and it felt really worthwhile. We didn't have any fights on stage, which was good. Credit to Bob (Geldolf) and everyone involved, as it was a far better reason to play together, rather than for lots of money.

DP:* The Endless River *was the band's first album in twenty years. Can you talk us through how this came about?
NM: It's slightly convoluted but when we made *The Division Bell*, originally we had intended to do a double album. The idea being, we'd do an album of songs and an album of ambient tracks. We didn't have time to do that, as we were already booked to start an American tour. Basically, that material hung around for a very long time. We simply didn't want to re-visit it. It didn't feel like enough on its own to justify anything. Andy Jackson, who was the engineer on *The Division Bell*, kept telling us that we really ought to do something with this, so he spent some time on it. That raised the interest a bit. It really was over a twenty-year period with Andy, and eventually Phil Manzanera came on board and had a go and that pushed it further ahead. Then Youth came in and finally there was a sense of 'this does have legs.'

DP: How did the producer Youth shape the sound and the parts that you needed to record?
NM: Just by listening and explaining what we should do. I remember going into the studio to re-do some of the drum tracks.

DP: The dynamic and relationship between bass and drums is often discussed. How did you find playing along with Roger?
NM: Yes, that's absolutely right. I like Gary Wallis's description: "The band is a bass player and a drummer and a bunch of novelty acts!" (Laughs). It's because you actually end up having a real sense of what the other person is going to do. It's a very powerful unit.

DP: Looking back over the years, do you think your drumming has changed over time?
NM: Inevitably. As I've said, I've never had a lesson, but over forty or fifty years working, you're drumming will change enormously. The more time you spend on the stage or in the studio, you'll hopefully learn something.

DP: DW has made several drum kits for you over the years. Can you talk us through the story behind the Ferrari drum kit?
NM: Well, this partly came about because

Photo Credit: David Phillips

I'd organised with Fender to do half-a-dozen Ferrari Stratocaster guitars, which were then sold for charity. Jacques Villeneuve bought one. I just liked it as an object. It was painted in Ferrari colours, the switch plate was made of Kevlar from the race cars, Theo Fennell made silver prancing horses to go on the fretboards. I thought it seemed silly to have guitars and not have a drum kit. We actually made one for the Ferrari factory in the museum at Fiorano and another, which is mine.

DP: We also made a Fairground drum kit for you. What was the inspiration for this?
NM: I'd always liked fairground art and having always lived in North London, I was very familiar with the look of the fairground and the Hampstead Heath Fairs. I gave Louie Garcia at DW, who does the most fantastic artwork, a book of fairground art and I'd marked various pages of illustrations. Louie just picked it up and ran with it.

DP: More recently, you played drums on "Wish You Were Here" at the Olympic Closing Ceremony in London with Ed Sheeran, Mike Rutherford, and Richard Jones. That must have been an incredible concert and experience. Any recollections on that?
NM: I hadn't been an enormous fan of The Olympics but when I went down there I absolutely got it. The atmosphere was incredible. It was a hell of a production with lots of people, all of whom were really involved. That's what was nice, with so many people helping, supporting, and so on. In the end, I felt really privileged to take part in it.

DP: I have to ask, what are your favorite Pink Floyd songs to play and why?
NM: "Comfortably Numb" because I love the minimalism at the beginning of it and the lovely crash, bang, wallop end to it all. My favorite, in many ways, is really "Set The Controls For The Heart Of The Sun" from *A Saucerful of Secrets*, as I like the song and it's an opportunity to use mallets instead of sticks. I think it's got a slightly unusual feel to it, possibly a slightly lifted drum part from "We're Going Wrong" by Cream, so there's an homage to Ginger on that and there's also an homage to Chico Hamilton's, "Jazz on a Summer's Day".

DP: You played on a track on David Gilmour's solo album. Did that feel different than recording a Pink Floyd song or was it like old times again?
NM: When you play drums, you just do it as best you can. I wouldn't say it felt like old times, but it didn't feel peculiar either, any more than recording any track I've ever played drums on. Interestingly, I think the answer is: there's no difference. Whatever it is, you just to find out what needs doing, and then try to do it.

DP: Pink Floyd has an exhibition,* Their Mortal Remains*, opening in 2017 at Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Can you tell us more about it?
NM: If you've seen the Bowie exhibition, basically we are the next event. We're obviously a bit short on costumes! There's an appetite for exhibitions that are a bit more than nostalgia. What you try and do is show something about how you did things and worked in the past. I'm hoping it will be more like some of the American or kids' museums, where it's a 'please touch these exhibits' so you can really get a flavour of things. Part of it is really the story of recorded music for the last fifty years; from four-track recording to the modern digital era with endless tracks. I'm hoping people will come out and rather than saying, "I remember that" it will be, "Oh, so that's how it was done!" dw

Building a SOCIAL MEDIA Audience

by Nick Ruffini

With the Internet at your fingertips, you have an amazing tool that can help you springboard your music career, grow your business, and make connections with people around the world in a flash. The key thing to remember is that the internet is a tool and shouldn't be used to replace the human interaction that goes along with networking and playing live.

That said, growing an online audience can make all the difference in the world when it comes to your career. Audience, in this case, can be described as anyone who enjoys, follows, and supports your work through consumption or some sort of payment.

I'll come right out and say it: growing an audience is hard. I've been working on my podcast for more than three years and have interviewed most of the greatest drummers in the world, and I still find it challenging to attract new readers, listeners, followers, etc. But, if you're up for the challenge and believe in your work, growing an audience can be one of the best things you can do for both your music and personal brand.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when growing your audience:

Start Today

The best time to start building your audience is now. Far too many people wait until their website is perfect or for something else to happen before they put their content into the world. Don't do that. Don't allow a fixation on perfection or process to paralyze you to the point that you do nothing. Get your content to a place where it's 'good enough' and improve it along the way. You'll never think you're 'ready' to start, so you have to dive in and learn as you go.

Find Your Medium

That is to say that some people are better suited for specific mediums. Some are excellent writers, others are natural talkers, and still others present well on video. Decide which medium is your strength and play that up. For example, if you completely freeze up on camera but can string a sentence together in print, start writing and don't worry about the video aspect for now. That will come later; it's just going to take more effort and preparation. Once you've dialed-in one medium, you can start expanding over to others. I felt that my verbal and social skills were my strength, so podcasting made perfect sense to me. That was phase one. Now that I've got that down, I'm expanding into video content. This isn't coming as easy, but I'm working on it and improving day by day. It's just another way for me to expand my audience and I'm up for the challenge.

Be Authentic

Authenticity and transparency are both buzz words right now, but for good reason. This is key: if you're trying to build an audience, concentrate on finding the real you and expressing that genuineness. This will establish a more immediate connection with your followers. Remember, your goal is to grow your fan base, but you'll also want to keep your original supporters engaged. Think of social media as digital word-of-mouth. If people like what they see and relate to you, they'll be more likely to jump on board. People, and especially musicians, gravitate to things they can relate to, so be relatable.

Put the Audience First

Far too often, personal content can be perceived as a form of bragging. We tend to post the exciting or special things in our lives, the fancy trips, the famous people we meet, the infamous selfie, etc. While it feels good to share these things on a certain level, and it's worked quite well for the Kardashians, it could possibly alienate your audience. Private message the people who already follow you (even if you have ten readers/followers), and ask why they follow you. Do some informal market research on what's working and what isn't as effective. Give them more of what seems to be working, or at least getting their attention. Bottom line, focus on giving the audience what they want and avoid trying to feed your own agenda.

Be Consistent

Whether you have the ability to release content every day or once a month, stay consistent with your schedule or broadcast. Humans are creatures of habit and once you've developed a routine they'll expect new content to be released in-line with the schedule. For example, my podcasts are released on Monday and Friday at 3:00 A.M. EST so my European audience can listen during their morning commute, if they'd like. When my US audience wakes up, the podcasts are ready for them, too. My listeners know that every Monday and Friday there will be a new podcast released and that consistency keeps them coming back and helps to create a habitual listener.

Focus on Depth and Engagement

Likes and follows on social media give us that warm, fuzzy feeling we all enjoy, but they're not as important as you may think. Sure, it looks impressive when you see an Instagram page with 50K followers, but if the audience isn't engaged or interacting, those numbers are useless. Rather than focusing on numbers, remember that those numbers represent people and you should get to know the people behind the numbers. Ask questions. Get involved. Go deep with your audience. It has been said that an artist needs 1,000 'true fans' (see: *1,000 True Fans* by David Kelly) and in order to do that, you have to go deep, not wide.

For me, growing an audience has been incredibly challenging and rewarding at the same time. I hope I've inspired you to take the next step in propagating your work out into the world. As drummers, we are focused on our instrument, and we should be, but in today's music world, we also have to be managers, promoters, booking agents, and so much more. Develop your drumming career the way you develop your chops and it will pay dividends. You might even learn something new about yourself in the process.

Nick Ruffini | DrummersResource.com

PDP Daru Jones New Yorker

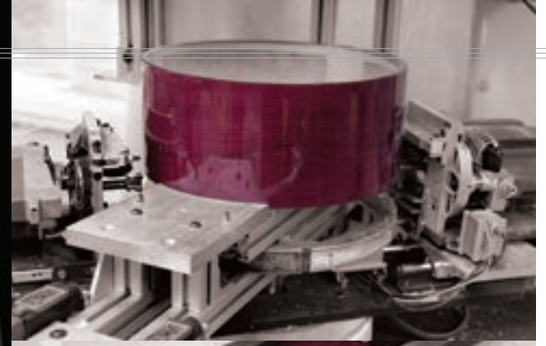
Daru Jones represents a mash-up of musical genres: Hip-Hop, Rock, Jazz, and everything else he can get his rhythmic hands on. His unique stylistic approach is always expressed on a minimalistic set-up. This is all according to plan as he focuses on the groove but, in many instances, it's far more pragmatic than that; his kit is simply extremely travel-friendly. As Jack White's drummer, he can bring whatever gear he wants on the road, but still prefers to keep it manageable with a 4-piece kit and lightweight hardware. For his smaller gigs, he sometimes strips it down to almost a kick/snare/hat rig, never inhibiting his boundless creativity or omnipresent pocket, while making life easier in the process.

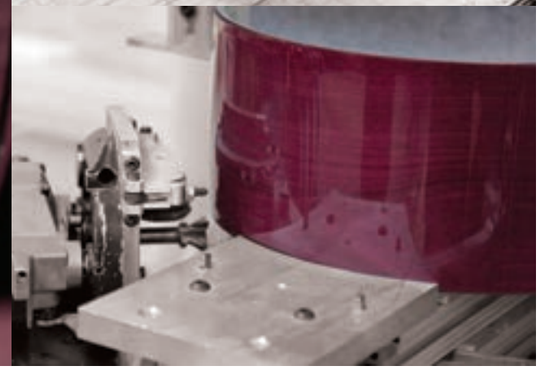
"So, what if we come out with my type of kit?" Daru expressed this sentiment to us in late 2016. "What if we have something in smaller sizes, but sounds professional and is fun to play?" Daru is a big fan of our DW 6000 Ultralight hardware and wanted to pair it up. The sizes represent our DW Custom Shop "Short Stacks" and the kit includes bags for everything to make sure drummers could easily transport it in a small car or Uber. Another beautiful aspect of this package deal is that it doesn't break the bank. From its inception, it was designed to be a really good value to go along with the functionality and quality.

The set features poplar/maple shells, inspired by Daru's DW Classics kit, and a Gold Sparkle-to-Candy Black Fade lacquer finish that was selected by Mr. Jones to help the drums "get noticed." The ratchet-style tom mount is both lightweight and easy to position. However, if no tom mount is desired, a cover plate is included with the kit. The entire set of shells fits into two bags, one for the kick and the rest are stacked (with protective dividers) into a separate robust nylon bag. Combined with the 6000 Ultralight hardware pack, it's a very portable set-up that will suit many drummers in a myriad of ways. "I'm using this kit in New York and Nashville" exclaimed Jones when he first laid eyes on the prototype drums. Now everyone can join in the fun. dw

The DJNY is available at authorized PDP dealers now.
For more info visit: **www.pacificdrums.com.**

Photo Credit: Rob Shanahan





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PURE PURPLEHEART
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What is PURE Purpleheart?

by Mario Calire

I'm a drummer, not a "woodologist", so my knowledge of various woods is pretty rudimental (ba-dum crashhhh). I do know that hardwoods are denser and generally translate to brighter drum sounds. Most of us drummers are familiar with maple, birch, oak, walnut, and maybe even bubinga when it comes to drums. Of all the kits I've owned over the years, almost all of them were either maple or birch. Outside of those fairly standard offerings, I haven't had much experience with kits made of more esoteric woods. So, of course, when I was offered the chance to test-drive a new Pure Purpleheart kit from

the wood wizards at DW, I jumped at the opportunity.

Before I get into my thoughts on the drums themselves, it is important to cover a few things about purpleheart (species Peltogyne). It gets its common name from its deep rich purple color. Purpleheart is a very dense wood that is famously hard to work with. Special blades must be incorporated when working with it, and the use of slightly dull blades or bits causes the wood to emit a resin that can damage machinery. The woodworking resources I've read recommend only using purpleheart for smaller projects. Certainly, none of them advised bending it into cylindrical drum shells!

These things considered, the new Collector's Series Pure Purpleheart drums are quite an accomplishment. Keep in mind, it's not simply a veneer applied to the outside of a standard shell, or even a couple of plies added to the mix of a maple plywood shell. As the name would suggest, it consists of 100% purpleheart wood for every ply. Years of manufacturing knowledge, skill, and attention to detail goes into the construction of these shells. I've seen it myself.

Now that we've got a little context under our belts, I can share my thoughts on the drums from a player's perspective. The kit I had the pleasure of testing consisted of a few toms, a 6.5x14" snare, and a 23" bass drum. First of all, they are visually stunning. The finish work, as always, from DW was flawless and the clear gloss lacquer really accentuated the beauty of the shells. Purpleheart is just a gorgeous wood, so it doesn't need a fancy paint job. Its natural look is very understated and can be customized with any DW Custom Shop hardware color. This kit had nickel-plated hardware.

That said, Purpleheart is not just a looker, it's an excellent tone wood for drums, as I discovered the first moment I laid sticks on them. To be succinct, these drums defied my expectations. I assumed that a hardwood like purpleheart would give me an attack-heavy and bright tonality. It was a delightful surprise to hear the amount of sheer tone and sonic complexity as I played. Yes, these shells are punchy, but they also resonate with a full tonal quality that would be really nice for studio work.

The toms projected and had a full frequency range, with every drum speaking well for its size. I had no trouble finding multiple sweet spots when tuning them. They seemed happy tuned high, low, and everywhere in-between. As fat and full as the toms were, the snare was where the hardness of the purpleheart particularly shined. Hitting the snare with a medium amount of force generated a very authoritative crack. This is a drum that takes your input and magnifies it like a great amplifier does for a guitarist. 'Tone' is the word I keep coming back to; anywhere I played on the drum, there was just so much of it. Press rolls are easy to generate on such a lively drum and the rim shots are lethal.

I'd never played a 23" bass drum, so I wasn't sure what to expect. It did indeed have the 'bigness' of a 24" but played more like a 22". Stepping into this kick delivered a gut punch of tone with a nice booming sustain. The bass drum rumbled with plenty of low-end but also stayed tight at the same time. For me, it is this combination of wide-open, yet focused, tone that defines the new Pure Purpleheart offering. These drums had DW's smooth Double A, 2-ply heads factory-installed, but I can only imagine what could be achieved if I were to try some of my favorite, tried-and-true head combos. I think these drum have the potential to be very versatile, and I play many different styles on a regular basis.

I invite you to check these drums out. If you're looking for something out of the norm, something to change up your sound and spark creativity, they could be the answer. dw

Photo Credit: Chris Jensen

Mario Calire is an LA-based, 3-time Grammy Award winning artist and DW endorser. He has worked with The Wallflowers, Ozomatli, and many others.

Photo Credit: David Phillips

Rufus Taylor

Heads Up

by David Phillips

Rufus Taylor is literally a relative newcomer to the drumming scene. As the son of legendary Queen drummer Roger Taylor, his pedigree is undeniable. Though he has enjoyed an insider's view of the Rock world and practiced his craft on some of the larger live venues in music, he's honed his playing skills the hard way and done things on his own terms. David Phillips delves into this rising star's latest gig and sheds some light on his blindingly bright future.

David Phillips: How did you land the gig with The Darkness?

Rufus Taylor: It's a bit of a Spinal Tap story; I was in Australia and I had two days left until I was flying back home when I got a phone call from Dan Hawkins explaining who he was (to my surprise). He went on to tell me they had a press gig in London at the Gibson showroom in two days' time. They were doing eight songs from the new album and asked me if I could play it. I had only two days to learn the entire set. I stayed up on the 26-hour flight back and kept everyone awake learning the songs for the gig!

DP: What are the drumming challenges in playing a Darkness show?

RT: In the beginning, it was learning so many songs in such a short space of time. As soon as I played that first show, we were straight on to the next. It's a physical show and everyone is giving it everything on stage, so you always have to feel, as the drummer, you either match it or overtake it. It was a learning process about how to play with the band. It was really easy with these guys; Dan's rhythm playing is phenomenal, and his timing is impeccable which means we don't even have to look at each other, we're just locked in! Justin and Dan have this great telepathic power (as they're brothers) of being able to read each other's playing and know who is going to take which solo. There's never a dull moment on stage with Dan, Justin, and Franky!

DP: Is there room for improvisation in the set?

RT: Yes, all of the guys have given me the freedom to make it my own. With Justin as a frontman, you never know what's going to happen next. Basically, you have to stay on your toes.

DP: Do you still jump over the kit during the show?

RT: Still do.

DP: Have you had any accidents doing that?

RT: I've had one accident; I thought I'd broken my hand at the start of the US tour. Justin always lies on the floor when I go to

jump over the kit, but this one time we were playing in Santa Cruz and Justin was lying down, but he had his Les Paul sticking up from the stage, so when I landed I smashed the back of my hand on the guitar.

DP: Can you talk us through your set-up for The Darkness?

RT: It's a DW Collector's Series Pure Maple Lacquer Specialty in Pearlescent Black with black hardware. I've been switching the drum sizes I use at the moment: 24x22" kick VLX (it's a beast!), 18" floor VLX, 2 rack toms (changing between 12", 13", and 14" all VLT) and 6.5x14" snare VLT with no reinforcement rings on the shells.

DP: Massive Rock sound with those sizes and the VLT/VLX combo! I've heard rumors about a possible Darkness documentary?

RT: Yes, this is still in progress. It's going to be about the history of the band, gathering together footage from over the years including Ed, the original drummer. It's a really interesting story, but the launch date hasn't been finalized even though it's close to completion.

DP: You mentioned that you're working on a new album. Are they the first recordings you've done with the band?

RT: I've done two recordings with them. One was for a track on the deluxe version of the last album, and the other is a recording called "Rack of Glam", which hasn't been released yet. This new album is the first full record I've been on. We've only recorded demos, so far, in Inverness, Scotland and also in Cornwall. The drums were recorded in a London studio.

DP: You've also been playing percussion and drums with Queen + Adam Lambert. How have you managed to juggle both gigs?

RT: With difficulty! I never thought it would be possible, but luckily for me all the dates have worked out well for both bands.

DP: How have the Queen shows been going?

RT: We just finished the Asian tour, including six countries Queen had never played, so the audiences were going ballistic! It started off in Tel Aviv, Israel. We played the Budokan in Tokyo three nights in a row. That was probably the most special because it was Queen's 20th gig there!

DP: What's your set-up with Queen?

RT: Two timpanis (Roger calls them the king of drums), a big china for accents, two crashes, hi-hat and DW Collector's snare, KAT for various trigger sounds, two timbales, a bell tree, and some woodblocks, shakers, and tambourines.

DP: Do you have the freedom to improvise on percussion or are the parts very structured?

RT: The parts are structured for set cues to ensure the songs aren't changed too much.

DP: You play a drum battle with your dad during the show. Is this different every night?

RT: It is slightly different every night, although I do have a routine I try to stick to. Some nights we do mix things up.

DP: What's it like using your dad's kit for the drum battle?

RT: He goes up to the B stage and I play a couple of songs on the main kit whilst he sings either "A Kind of Magic" or "These are the Days of our Lives". We then go into the drum battle and he goes back to playing the main kit and I come back to play "Tie Your Mother Down".

DP: Any particular shows that stood out in your mind?

RT: The Singapore F1, just because it was the biggest one of the tour, approaching 100,000 people. It was an unbelievable sight to see from the stage.

DP: You come from a musical family. How did that influence your playing?

RT: I realized at a young age that I wanted to play the drums. Having the opportunity to play drums whenever I wanted, and having drum kits at home kept me inspired.

DP: You later studied drums in London. How did this affect your playing?

RT: Yes, I studied at Drumtech. I enjoyed it, and it was a great experience playing with different bands every week and playing new tracks all the time.

DP: You played in the Queen's musical* We Will Rock You*, both in London and with the touring production. How is playing with a musical different than playing a live show with a band?

RT: Completely different. On the musical you're in a little box with your kit, with only a tiny screen with the MD giving you cues. I also had headphones with a click. It's all very controlled, but there are some phenomenal musicians playing in the band. All you can see is the back of the curtain, until the last song where the band is revealed. Playing with a band is a completely different experience; the interaction, the energy.

DP: Did you have to read music for this show?

RT: When I auditioned I told the MD I couldn't read music, but would learn the show from start to finish. They were a bit wary, and the first day was a bit nerve-racking, but there was this lovely guy in the band who's a brilliant percussionist, Matt Mclaughlin, and he helped me and convinced the MD that I could do a good job.

DP: You were nominated for Best New Drummer in the Rhythm Magazine Reader's Poll last year. How did that feel?

RT: I had been reading the magazine for years and seeing my heroes in it, so it was a weird realization that my name was in the magazine. It was really cool!

DP: Can you talk us through playing

Photo Credit: David Phillips

drums on the Brian May tour?
RT: It was the first big band adventure for me. That was actually what stopped me from completing my Drumtech course. My final exam was on the same day that I was due to play on the Royal Variety performance. We did a UK tour for a month when I was just seventeen. It was the first time I'd worked with him one-on-one as his drummer. It was slightly surreal.

DP: I heard you also played some shows with Jeff Beck.
RT: I played three gigs, and also did a load of studio work with him at his house.

DP: How did that come about?
RT: My dad's friend runs a festival in the country called Wintershall. It's a charity thing; Andrew Roachford, Eric Clapton, Mike Rutherford, and others have played there. My dad was headlining the festival in 2011 and was playing a 10 song set and wanted me on the kit. Jeff showed up and played the set with us. He threw "Manic Depression" on me at the last minute, and a couple of others.

DP: You played on a couple of songs with Foo Fighters. Can you tell us about that?
RT: I was in London and I got a call from Taylor (Hawkins), who is like my godfather/big brother and he said, "Do you want to come to the Leeds Festival for our show?" So I flew up with the band. Once there, I was enjoying the backstage hospitality and when it got to the encore Dave and Taylor asked me to play.

DP: So, it was literally thrown at you at the last minute?
RT: Oh yeah, it was terrifying!

DP: What did you play?
RT: It was "Tie Your Mother Down". Taylor got on the mic and introduced me quickly and said "Here's my good friend Ru on the drums who, by the way, is sh*ting a f***king brick right now!" The whole crowd was laughing. Amazing, a real dream.

DP: Any advice for drummers looking to become professional players?
RT: Don't concentrate too much on people telling you how to play. I was often told I was not playing the correct way and I found it hindered my learning. In the end, I found my own way of playing, which was much more comfortable. The most important thing is to play for the song. Don't play for yourself, play for the song.

DP: What are your plans for 2017?
RT: We're recording this new album, which is really fun, then we'll campaign the hell out of it next year! dw

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