THE DRUMMER'S JOURNAL

AN INDEPENDENT DRUM MAGAZINE

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an independent drum magazine

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Issue Two, February 2013

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THE FIRST FURLONG

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Second album syndrome is a clichéd affliction that you've most likely heard of. It's also probable you've heard it in practice too. The great debut album, written and conceptualised over a period of years, is followed by the sophomore, written and recorded in a matter of months. The result is, usually, inferior.

When the first issue of The Drummer's Journal arrived, it was the culmination of almost a year's preparation, construction and conceptualisation. In many ways, it was a total stab in the dark. What could we offer that the other myriad of magazines currently do not? Would anyone like it? Would people even read it? Is it possible to create something, on little or no budget, that will have a meaningful impact on its readers? Most worryingly, has the drum set already gone beyond any sort of meaningful existence which can be documented beyond the realms of the repetitive?

It's still early days, and we're not expecting to answer such questions yet, if at all. But, we kept them in mind as reports began to filter in. People were letting us know what they thought, and the reception was overwhelmingly supportive. In another sense, regardless of whether the feedback was positive or negative, the manner which it adopted was exactly what we'd hoped for - argumentative, auspicious and engaged. People were actually sitting down to read the articles and forming an opinion. For this, we could ask no more.

From the first issue another question arose, one, quite remarkably, that had remained unaddressed. Could we keep going? Furthermore, can we keep going in a manner that is not simply a token accompaniment to what has gone previously? This we can answer. Yes. There is no second issue syndrome here. Welcome to Volume 1, Issue Two of The Drummer's Journal.

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"MY
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LAST LONGER,
AND REACT THE WAY
I NEED THEM TO."
CHRIS ADLER
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A TOPICAL APPLICATION

Grant Hutchison

Words by Tom Hoare

If I'm completely honest, I was slightly apprehensive about meeting Grant. He has a tendency to look rather gruff in some of his band's promo shots. On stage, his performance is nothing short of fearsome, and despite the enticingly folky and poppy nature of Frightened Rabbit's songs, he beats the living shite out of his kit with a demonic expression that even William Peter Blatty would struggle to envision. He's tall but well built, and has the kind of facial hair which has an emasculating affect on those (such as myself) who can never aspire to achieve such comprehensive growth.

His band haven't done too badly either. After three studio albums, Sing the Greys, The Midnight Organ Fight and The Winter of Mixed Drinks, the band's fourth instalment, entitled Pedestrian Verse, is set to be released this February via Atlantic Records – their first major label foray. Whilst, musically at least, this is inconsequential, it does mean if you haven't already encountered Grant's ability to make a drum resonate with emotive overtones, you soon will.

You're playing in Selkirk, your hometown, soon, right? Though I suppose when people read this you'll have already played…
We're playing there on Monday, yeah, for the first time actually.

I don't think I've ever actually been to Selkirk despite having lived relatively close to it for a while. I'm surprised you've never played there before though.
You've never been to Selkirk?! (Looks genuinely offended) Well, I suppose you're not missing out. It's a pretty typical Borders town, small population, one high school, lots of rugby. I'm not heavily into that - I was never very good.

So this gig must be a pretty big deal right?
Absolutely. We've wanted to do it for a really long time. There's not really a venue in Selkirk, just the town hall. No bands play there, apart from really local ones. Growing up, you have to go to Edinburgh or Glasgow to see bands. It's not exactly on people's touring radar. I'm not saying us playing there will put it on the radar, but it might make people notice it is possible to put on a show there at least.

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"They'll always say, 'my great great grandparents are from Stranraer, do you know them?' Scotland's not that fucking small a place!"

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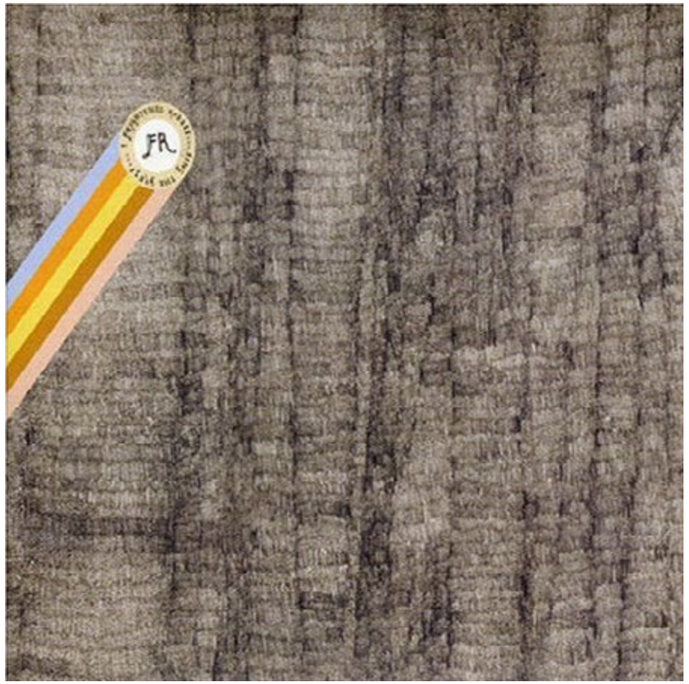

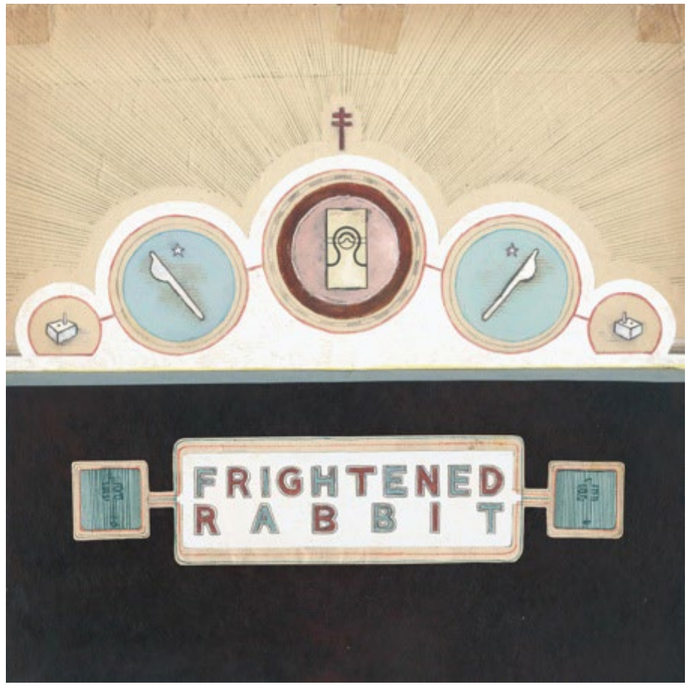

Sing The Greys - 2006
The Midnight Organ Fight - 2008
The Winter of Mixed Drinks - 2010
A Frightened Rabbit EP - 2011
State Hospital - 2012
Pedestrian Verse - 2013

I've been reading the reviews. You haven't had a difficult album yet, and the reception in America has been pretty welcoming.
In the US, I'd say the last album was quite a difficult one. Pitchfork didn't exactly like it.

I wouldn't say they disliked it.
Well, the way we felt about that review was that the person who wrote it hadn't really listened to the record. But, you've always got a great head start coming from Scotland and playing in America, because everybody in the US thinks that they're from Scotland or Ireland. They'll always say, "my great, great grandparents are from Stranraer, do you know them?" It's not that fucking small a place – come on! I think also, because we started off on Fat Cat, a small indie label, we got a name for ourselves by touring and I think people appreciate doing it that way round where you have to put in the hard work.

What I noticed is how a lot of the reviewers actually paid attention to the drums as an expressive instrument, which is particularly unusual. Reviewers tend to go into poetic detail about the guitars, melody and vocals but when it comes to the drums, and because most of them probably aren't drummers, they think, "fuck, how do you describe drums?" So it's usually some cop out like "the drums are solid."
I've always felt the drum set is very expressive and it's great that people have picked up on that. We started as a two-piece so, from the beginning, the drums have been an important part of the music and the structure of things. I'm not very good at hearing – Scott gives me a song and then I need to sit with it. I don't instantly think of something, like "that's that part." A lot of the time you can hear when people do that. "Oh, that's in 4/4 so generic rock beat it is." But with the instrumentation and the way Scott writes, it allows me to be very expressive. Especially on the last album, we did a lot of overdubs, layering the drums up, which makes it nearly impossible to play live, but when it comes to recording, we always record what we want and then figure out how to translate that into a live setting.

So they're very much separate entities for you then?
For us, definitely. You should record the record how you want to and then sort out the live show after. We usually just cross that bridge when we come to it.

> "Of course, at the end of the day it's a live show. If you want to hear songs as they appear on the album then just turn the album up loud in your house instead."

Your live playing is pretty expressive in itself…
Of course, at the end of the day it's a live show. If you want to hear songs as they appear on the album then just turn the album up loud in your house instead. I think seeing a band play passionately, almost in a way that as if the crowd isn't there, is really important. I see a lot of drummers who sit there quietly and play with their wrists. I know that's how you're supposed play, but I play the drums with my whole body – it's the way I've always played. I see a lot of drummers who look disinterested and that annoys me a lot.

On the records, the drum sounds are always texturally rich. Were you using samples?
Not really, no. With this new album, we played the majority of it live as a five piece which was really interesting. We wrote this album more as a band so it was important that we recorded as a band. Previously, Scott's written and recorded all the guitar, keys and vocal parts. This time we all chipped in so playing it live felt a lot more natural, more appropriate.

How much attention did you pay to the sounds?
This time round, we paid a lot of attention. We had an engineer called Chad Blake who has worked with a lot of people like The Black Keys, and he was there because of the drum sounds he could get. So we focused a lot on that, where as before it was more a case of taking what we could get – a few close mics, a few room mics and just seeing what happened. But he treated each song differently and tried to give the drums a sound appropriate to that song, whereas previously it was a blanket sound. Generally, I'm not a big fan of drums that sound very tight, I like the openness and roomy sound of drums, so you're standing there listening and they sound like they're being played.

Not having the shit compressed out of them?
Exactly, we felt on the last record there was maybe a bit too much of that. When it was mixed, it was overly compressed. Instead, you can get some of the best drum sounds in hallways and other ambient places, not in acoustically dead studios.

Sing the Greys came out in 2006, how do you think your playing has changed since then?
The playing on Sing the Greys was two-piece noise; we were trying to sound like a three-piece trashy indie rock band. Back then I thought about the whole recording process far less. No overdubs. But, gradually, with each record I've tried to make the drums more interesting and include stuff that non drummers would notice so it's more like – "oh, something's changed there." Before, it was more like bash it out, just with a kick snare and hat. Our aim was to be the loudest two-piece in Glasgow. I think we managed it.

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"It's important to help out where you can, without crossing the line into Bono territory. It's not something we'd put on the front of a CD or preach about on stage."

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Has your outlook with what you've wanted to do with the band changed? Or what you wanted to achieve with the drum set?
I've always wanted to be a drummer, and we've always wanted to play in a band as a career. We've always known what that entails. To do it as a living you need fans and you have to constantly reach new people. Each time you record an album you have to move forward somehow but not necessarily change. With us, our shift from an indie label to a major label sparked a bit of "here we go, they're selling out." But with this new record, we've been given absolute freedom to do what we want. We haven't had to change anything.

To maintain a career in it, especially now when people aren't buying records, is especially difficult. I think my attitude towards it has changed a lot. Playing in small bars, when you first start out, you're like "this is what I want to do, I don't ever want to play massive venues," but when you get to a certain stage it's not exactly practical.

Is there any of your playing you're particularly proud of?
I love the kick drum, it gets people going. You can change the course of a song by simply changing the kick pattern and it's such a good feeling to hit the kick. It works, and it works really well. I'm particularly proud of the way I play live, it's where I come into my own.

Do you still practice?
Time is an issue, so is space. When you live in a flat in Glasgow - it's hard to have a kit and not piss off your neighbours. It's difficult. So no I don't.

Is there anything you want to learn?
There's nothing in particular, I'd just like more time behind a kit on my own. All I play is Frightened Rabbit at the minute. Don't get me wrong, it's not that terrible, but I really should do more rudiments. But, on the other hand I'd be aware of doing too much of that. When you're self taught you develop a style. The real technical virtuosos tend not to play in great bands but sit behind the kit for Katy Perry or Britney Spears. I'm not dragging down on those guys but that's not for me at

all. I'd never want to be a session drummer. I think it's important for young drummers to find their own style. That's the best way to improve your playing. Don't feel you need to get rigidly stuck in the drive for technical perfection.

The band have done a lot of work for charity.
Yeah, we worked with Invisible Children on the last tour. They do a lot of work with child soldiers in Africa, specifically Uganda, against the LRA.

They're involved with the Kony thing?
Yeah. They make films and things like that. The way they do it really gets into people's heads.

Well, a lot of people know about Kony now.
Yeah, I mean there was a bit of a backlash against that video. The guy who made it had a breakdown because of it, but what they were trying to do was, on the whole, a good thing. If you get to a stage where your voice is being heard then you should use that for other things besides promoting yourself. There's a charity which directly affects our family called Cystinosis Foundation, so we do a lot for that as well. We're going to have a set of cards made up where our favourite songwriters draw their favourite lyric. It's been over a year trying to get this all together. We've got Matt Berninger from The National, Ben Gibbards from Death Cab and Craig Finn from The Hold Steady. It's important to help out where you can, without crossing the line into Bono territory. It's not something we'd put on the front of a CD or preach about on stage.

What about your gear set up?
My kit's from C&C Drums, a small American company. I mean, there's no contract, they just approach artists they like. It's great. I've got a 14x16 tom. 22x16 kick, 16x18 floor tom and a 18x18 floor tom. I got it to have the two floor tom thing, but it's difficult as fuck to tune. It's too big, man, it's like a timpani - seriously. Still a beautiful drum though. I don't have my C&C snare yet though, I'm going to try some of them out and see what works.

How's your product knowledge?
Pretty terrible. If some one was to sit down with me and go "this is a cherry wood kit, this is maple, this is poplar, see what you think" then that's great, but it doesn't happen like that. Generally, I'll speak to the guys at C&C because they know more than I ever could about drums. He knows my style and what I'm looking for.

Is that tattoo something to do with your eczema?
It is yeah, it's the chemical formula of the steroid in my eczema cream. It's called Elocon.

I'm more of a Betnovate guy.
Betnovate! Nice. Elocon's a bit stronger. I use it really infrequently. I got it one time from the doctor when my eczema was really bad, but because it's on my file, each time I go back I end up just getting reissued that. It lasts, like, two years because it's so strong. I don't use it on my face. I use Eumovate on my face. It's a bit more of a mild one. I was gonna' get 'Elocon' tattooed on me but then it's chemical structure came up on the Google image search and I thought "that's pretty cool."

It's pretty unique.
(Laughs) yeah. I doubt anyone else has got it.

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"I GOT IT TO HAVE THE TWO FLOOR TOM THING, BUT IT'S DIFFICULT AS FUCK TO TUNE. IT'S TOO BIG, MAN, IT'S LIKE A TIMPANI - SERIOUSLY."

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THE PROOF TESTS

Mike Clark

The night is cold. Stood stationary on the corner of 86th street in east Manhattan I can feel the air stinging my throat as it's drawn into my lungs. Even at 8pm the street is busy with people, all moving quickly to get home and into the warmth. My loitering affords me suspicious glances from those passing, as does my facial expression which mirrors the growing feeling of apprehension in the pit of my stomach.

Am I late? I motion to check my watch when my phone begins to ring. "Hello?"

"Across the street," a voice instructs.

I look up. Separated by a flowing stream of yellow cabs stands a man whose face is mostly obscured by a large green Parka. The traffic ebbs and I cross over to join him. "It's this way," he states, gesturing down the street towards a large apartment block. I follow him into the building and we take the lift to the seventh floor. The doors open and we step into a long corridor. "Have you been practising?" he asks. "Yes," I lie, becoming conscious of a low hum emanating from the door at the end of the hall. Walking closer, the noise becomes clearer. Voices - all chanting together in a deep baritone, constant and unbroken.

Reaching the door, the man knocks and removes his jacket. The combed back hair emphasises his deep set features and toothy grin. "Relax," he advises, eyeing the unnatural rigidity of my posture. "You'll get into it."

Words by Tom Hoare

By his own admission, Mike Clark has been around the block. “Look at my face,” he remarks, lowering his sunglasses and gesturing to the bags beneath his eyes, “I’ve been there.” With a career spanning 60 years, something tells me not to doubt him.

His time with the Headhunters earned him a reputation as one of the greats. For many, his playing on Hancock’s Actual Proof is as innovative and inspirational as drumming gets. Mike is also among the few who may claim to have legitimately revolutionised the way the drum set is played to the extent where entire genres of music, let alone specific percussive styles, have been born from his playing. Known both as the godfather of linear funk and one of the most sampled drummers of all time, it is difficult to overstate the significance of Mike’s musical contributions.

Yet, though undoubtedly proud of his achievements, both these titles bear a quieting discomfort to Mike. Unlike many others who have been equally influential in rock or pop, Mike has not retired to a penthouse apartment on Park Avenue, nor does he drive a car of equivalent value. Instead, he continues to spend his evenings earning a living playing in New York’s plethora of jazz clubs and bars. This is mostly due to his passion for music, but also because those aforementioned honours became the bedrock on which his existential block was built.

The Prodigal Son

Mike is such a likeable person that this alone would be a legitimate enough reason to dislike him. His voice has an inherently gravelly nature that glazes his words with experience and insight. He laughs, regularly, in a loud booming fashion that would frequently startle passers-by as we sat outside a coffee shop near his New York apartment.

As his dog, Conchita, slept in the sun, Mike talked about his childhood and becoming a drummer. I’d heard that the day after retrieving his father’s old drum kit off the attic, he was playing in a local club with a family friend’s band.

“A child prodigy?” He says grinning. ”I don’t know ‘bout that, but I was playing from a real early age - from the time I was five years old. My whole childhood was focused around jazz and drumming, it was kind of wild. My dad worked on the railroads so

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“Please, that motherfucker? No, you’re safe in saying I was not a Mitt fan.”

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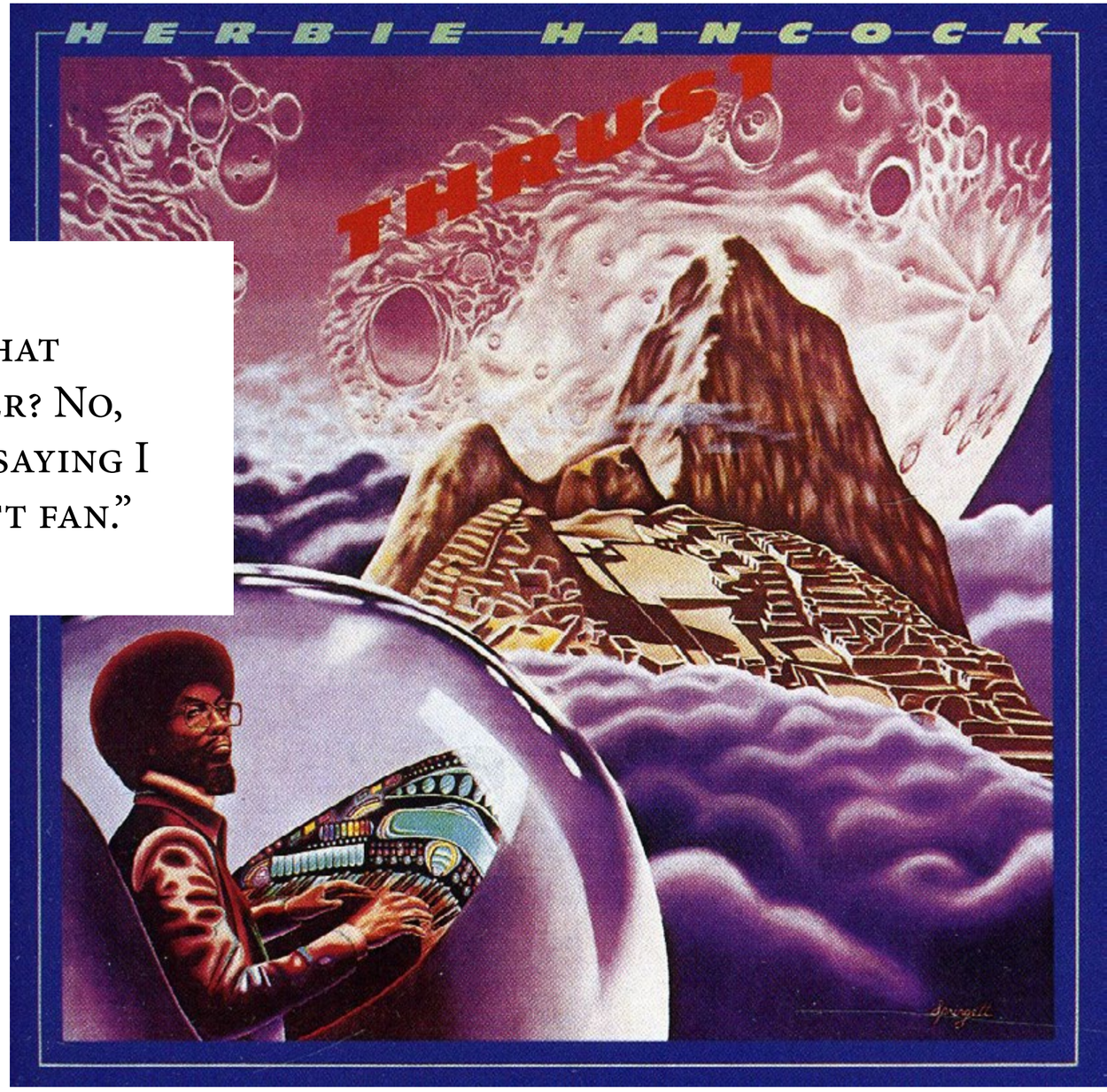

Herbie Hancock, Thurst [1974]. Actual Proof, Track Two

I moved to a new school in a new state for all of the 12 years I was in school. That was pretty difficult. The other kids didn't have anything like that going on, so I liked being around them because their lives were different to mine. I found it interesting that they would just stay home and play baseball."

Mike's childhood wasn't quite your average. By the time he was in high school, he had coveted gigs most ageing professionals would have sought to bag, playing with Sly Stone and Albert and Freddy King to name a few. Living in places such as Dallas and Sacramento coupled with regular visits to New Orleans immersed him in jazz and blues, his knowledge and appreciation of which runs more than skin deep.

You need only talk to Mike for a matter of minutes to realise his memory is incredible. He can recall events, even from his childhood, with amazing clarity. He's a good storyteller too, and would frequently interject his own narrative with "that reminds me - there was this time when me and (insert famous musician) were playing in (an unusual location) and (something unforeseen and humorous) happened. Not only does it make for entertaining listening, it opens your eyes to just how much stuff he has done. In his own words, he's very much "a jazz cat" and his time with the Headhunters amounts to a fraction of his other achievements.

This is why I had been keen to talk to Mike. For me personally, I knew him solely because of his work on Actual Proof. I wondered how, being only 26 at the time, such success had affected his post Hancock career as he sought to move away from funk and gain similar recognition among the jazz community. As you'd suspect, given that this year will mark his 67th birthday, he's come a long way since 1974, as has his reputation.

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"When I see something I perceive as an injustice, it makes me crazy inside. I think one of the problems is that nobody is speaking up, so I speak up the best that I can."

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Paul Jackson & Mike Clark

Evolution/Revolution

"What a stroller!" Mike exclaims, as a woman passes pushing a particularly lavish pram, "that thing is incredible!" "Thank you." She smiles, as the child within returns Mike's wave. "Sorry" he continues, turning back to me - "what was I saying?"

One of Mike's intriguing qualities is that he has always, and will most likely continue to speak his mind. Quite rightly, he is particularly proud of this fact, and is never shy about expressing an opinion.

"You arrived in NY just after the election, right?" he asks, as the stroller disappears round the corner. "Man, you must have thought that was some crazy shit." I divulge that I'd actually spent the election night going through his Twitter posts in preparation for the interview to which he responds by laughing. "Yeah, I've tried to cut back on it a bit to be honest. I'm more into Facebook now." "You weren't a fan of Romney then?" I ask, unable to keep the grin from spreading across my face as I mentally recall some of Mike's impassioned, anti-republican opinions. He throws his head back and laughs loudly. "Please, that motherfucker? No, you're safe in saying I was not a Mitt fan." I confess to knowing very little about American politics, but that I had noticed it was a very different scenario to election night in the UK.

"Well," he responds, adopting a more serious tone, "that's because, here, the people are aware of how bad they're being ripped of and lied to. And that's not paranoia – it's right on the money. There's a lot of ignorance and hatred in our country that's really unnecessary. America has a very barbaric history - there's cause and effect and right now we're feeling the effects. But when I see something I perceive as an injustice, it makes me crazy inside. I think one of the problems is that nobody is speaking up, so I speak up the best that I can. You shouldn't be afraid to make your voice heard if you see something you think is not right."

Back in the 1960s, after moving and settling in Oakland, Mike became friendly with Paul Jackson, a bassist and organist who would eventually introduce him to Herbie Hancock. Mike and Paul would become one of the most in demand rhythm sections in Oakland, pioneering the bay area funk sound for which they would become renowned. Music, however, wasn't the only thing undergoing a revolution. Oakland was the home of The Black Panther Party, a revolutionary civil rights movement that sought to end oppression and discrimination of African American people in the US. Founded in 1966 by Bobby Seale and Huey Newton, they would stage rallies across the US to promote their ideals and recruit new members.

"We played a lot of those rallies – me and Paul. He'd say 'hey, we've got a gig', and the next thing I know we'd be on the back of a flatbed truck playing at these rallies. I heard Angela Davis and Jesse Jackson speak, and we lived in the neighbourhood that Huey Newton and the Panthers were in."

"Were you involved with the politics of it?" I ask, tentatively. Mike takes a long swig of coffee. "Not directly, but I was definitely concerned. I've been politically aware for a long time and my parents were too. Back then, it was a crazy time – there was a lot of heavy unrest in our country. Injustices against African Americans, the Vietnam War; that compressed all this emotional activity which went off like the big bang. One of the results was that a lot of great music came out of the bay area at that time, and I'm proud to have been a part of that. In that respect I was involved on a lot of levels. I was young and energised – I could leave my house at 11pm and come home the next morning at 9am and be fine.

"I'm actually on a record with Bobby Seale, it's coming out in February I think. I'm very proud to be on a record with him because we share that understanding from that Oakland time period. In that area, through my friendship with Paul, I learned what was going on in our country. I'm eternally grateful for that."

The Purist

From here, the conversation turns back to blues and jazz as Mike recounts records he's most fond of. The way he talks about music is particularly interesting, and he regularly refers to it as possessing linguistic and communicable qualities.

"I've played several times all throughout Russia on State Department tours and I'm maybe getting ready getting to go again. I love playing in Russia, they really love jazz music and they come out to hear it. It feels like they need it. I think music has a positive influence on people; it talks to them. I see music and drumming especially, just like an assortment of different languages. We all have our own languages that we speak in, so if I speak only fusion but I'm talking jazz it's not going to sound right. It's exactly the same as if I went to Japan and couldn't speak Japanese, it would be difficult for me to get by; it's the same idea."

"So what is it that defines your musical vocabulary?"

"Your roots. For me it was the blues. You see, the blues, dating way back, is the foundation, the breadbasket - the mother of the whole

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"If you listen to The Rolling Stones you ain't going to hear no blues."

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thing. So much music is rooted in the blues, including jazz. I'm amazed the first thing people often learn to play is rock. If you're not armed with a good understanding of the blues, no matter how much schooling you've had, you'll never cut it."

I enquire as to whether this education should include British blues music at which he looks confused. "British blues?" "Yes," I reply, "like The Rolling Stones or…" Before I finish the sentence I notice Mike seems to be making a choking noise before eventually spluttering "The Rolling Stones?! Blues?! If you listen to The Rolling Stones you ain't going to hear no blues. If they play a three chord blues that ain't the blues. I'll tell you - I opened for The Stones, The Byrds, Cream – a whole bunch of those guys and I was seriously not impressed. It was just loud. It sounded like dinosaurs stuck in the mud. There was no groove, no swing."

"So you're not a fan then?"

Mike grimaces. "In all honesty, I think that stuff destroyed the blues. I don't mean that the blues is no longer good - it depends on who plays it. But when it got mixed with all these rock guys from England…" He pauses for a second and sighs deeply.

"I suppose at the time, mid 60s, all I was playing was straight ahead jazz. We'd be working seven nights a week constantly, and then when the English explosion happened, a lot of guys who didn't know a lot about music, who couldn't really play or were writing songs with three chords began taking up a lot of the gigs because it was popular. So a lot of guys grew their hair long in an attempt to look that way and started playing that type of shit. So I avoided it.

"Also, I was never sure what rock beats did. I liked the soul drummers because those grooves made you dance. I never saw anybody dancing at a rock gig. It was a lower level style. It was playing simple, tepid beats. I truly think there are some great rock drummers but because I hate the music it's hard for me to appreciate. To me, John Bonham sounded like a regular rock drummer. I knew a million guys who sounded just like that. But as I said, it's not his drumming I have a problem with. It's more that when rock became a million dollar industry and people were beaten over the head with it night and day, only then it became a style that you had to learn."

Considering his words, I explain the inherent dangers of bad mouthing Bonham based on my experience of reading angry and opinionated letters in other magazines written by those who consider such words blasphemous. "You asked so I'm telling," he laughs. "Don't think I don't know that I could be shot for saying these things!"

Free Samples

"Is it true Prince was the only guy to send you a cheque?" I ask, referring to the extent to which Mike's beats have been sampled by prominent rap and hip-hop artists.

"Not the only guy, but the only guy who sent a significant one. There are very, very famous rap artists who've never sent me a dime, and it's not just my beats, I wrote some of those tunes so I have the publishing rights on those songs. They never okayed it with me or said thank you or anything. To me that's disrespectful. If you can't find Middle C on a piano or you can't play music, and you're going to sample those who have spent their lives learning to play then pay us. All of these rap artists I hear, a lot of their lyrics are complaining about being ripped off. Well if that's true, don't rip me off. I don't hate rap music, some I actually like – I've worked with Snoop Dogg and others – but the fact some of them can't play a chord pisses me off. I'm not bitter about it, but like any situation, if it's not right I'm going to say something. It's not right to use people's music and not

The Headhunters, 1974

pay them - I don't care what the lawyers say."

Despite not wanting to, Mike does sound bitter, which, considering the amount of money many have made at his expense, is fair. I wondered if it was any consolation to him that his samples have, despite his lack of financial recompense, generated substantial cultural worth. A lot of early hip-hop and its associated sub genres, especially breakbeat, are rooted, in part, in Mike's playing, as are the influences of a generation of drummers now taking programmed rhythms and bringing them back on to the kit. Jojo Mayer is a notable example.

"Do you see any positives to the sampling thing though, to offset the negatives?" I ask.

"In what respect?"

"Such as what has been created culturally. Didn't you take lessons with Jojo Mayer recently?"

"Yeah, I took one lesson from him because I had tendinitis real bad in my left hand. He's a nice cat so he showed me how to hold and move the stick in ways that wouldn't hurt my arm. Within two days I wasn't in any more pain."

"Ok, so Jojo's influences, in part, most likely stem from music influenced by your samples."

"I suppose – he did say, actually, when I called him about the lessons, 'Mike, of course I'll help you, you're part of my nervous system.' I died laughing."

"So that's got to be a good thing right? It's kind of come full circle now?"

Mike thinks for a second before delivering his response. "If you want to give me props just send me a cheque, how's that?" He lets out another booming laugh and a small dog tethered outside the coffee shop is startled awake.

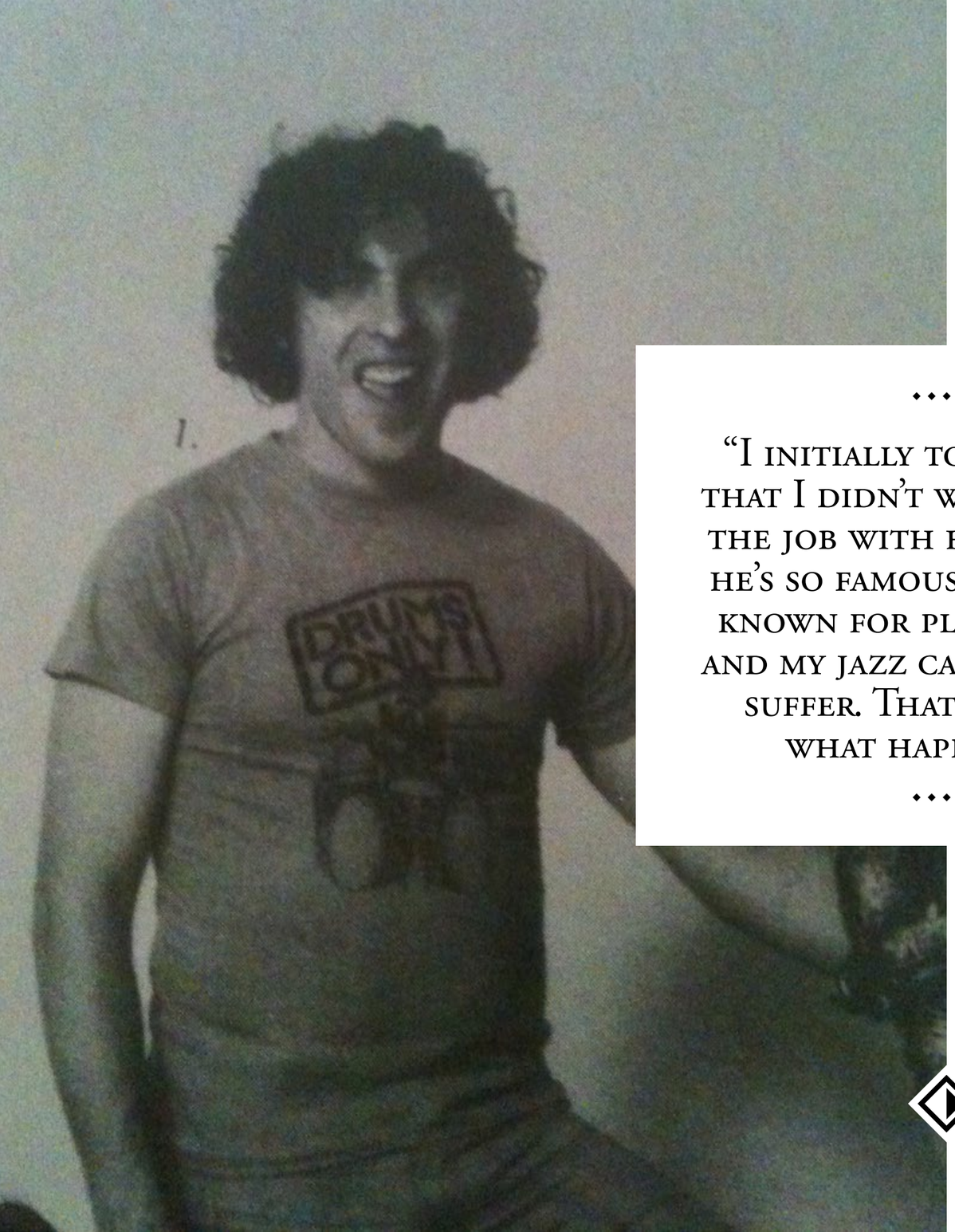
Actual Proof

In 1962 British novelist Anthony Burgess published a novella entitled A Clockwork Orange. Having since been remade into a film by Stanley Kubrick, it is widely regarded as one of the most important literary works of the 20th century. For Burgess, having written several other major works he considered far superior, it was a source of much frustration that this short novel, written in a matter of weeks, would be his most famous.

"I know where you're going with this," states Mike, "so just ask me." I feel slightly embarrassed about my drawn out analogy and the potentially offensive overtones it carries. "To be clear," I continue, "I'm not asking if you're bitter about your time with Herbie – far from it, but because the recording of Actual Proof was such a career defining moment for you, did you have any worries about becoming type cast?"

Mike takes another drag of coffee, draining the cup. "I'm still very proud of what I and the Headhunters accomplished. There were no rules so we made up the stuff pretty much right on the spot. Hancock was really loose. In those days, when you worked with him, there were no charts and whatever you played became the arrangement. It was a very natural way of playing. On Actual Proof, all I was doing was transposing jazz ideas onto these 8th and 16th note funky patterns, and improvising around them. Because I was into Philly Joe

Jerry Stucker, Mike
Clark & Tony Adamo



Jones, Papa Jo Jones, Max Roach, Elvin Jones, Tony Williams, Roy Haynes; that's where my inspiration was coming from. So what made Actual Proof a milestone track, in terms of my own contribution at least, was that I brought the jazz history into that track. I've always been a drummer who's had my own voice, but I'd take parts from each drummer I liked and try and do it my own way. Like Michael Wolff always says, 'when you hire Mike Clark you get Mike Clark, not anybody else – good or bad.'"

"But, yes it did create problems. I initially told Herbie that I didn't want to take the job with him because he's so famous I'd become known for playing funk and my jazz career would suffer. That's exactly what happened. That record, Thrust, sold a hell of a lot. I'm glad I did it, but the trouble was, when I was finished with that career I then had to translate it into a be-bop and post-bop career. I'm still doing that now and it's taken a hell of a long time. People weren't calling me for jazz gigs but for funk gigs – not the innovative stuff but the type with a singer and a horn section. I turned a lot of that stuff down, which became a problem.

"I still think the tune Actual Proof is the most interesting thing the Headhunters did when I was with them. The other stuff was fun to play, but it was kind of pedestrian, there was not a lot of interaction and I was mainly keeping time. One of the reasons for this is because the Headhunters' first record, which I didn't play on, was making good money and so Herbie's producer thought if we simplified it more it'd sell better. So in that respect I was lucky to get Actual Proof across the plate, in terms of my own contribution. On the other tunes I was told what to do. I still made up my own beats but I had to stick within the boundaries, so to speak. Anyway, the problem was that I've been a be-bop and post-bop musician since I was a child."

"So that's why you moved to New York, to be a jazz musician?" I ask. "Absolutely" he replies. "Absolutely. I've been here ever since."

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"I initially told Herbie that I didn't want to take the job with him because he's so famous I'd become known for playing funk and my jazz career would suffer. That's exactly what happened."

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Enlightenment

Mike hasn't exactly been struggling since living in New York - it's treated him well. As an educator and a clinician, he's regularly in demand performing at colleges across the country. As a performer, Mike's release entitled Blueprints of Jazz Volume One was voted among the top jazz records of the decade by Downbeat. His own band, The Wolff and Clark Expedition, played the iconic Iridium club in NY to a sold out house. As he talks about his schedule of gigs and tours, there are no hints of slowing down or retirement.

It's quite difficult to describe how much jazz music seems to mean to Mike. In many ways, it's shaped the entire direction of his life, and also, shaped him as a person. In preparation for the interview

I'd come across some articles that seemed to portray Mike as struggling to get the recognition which he deserved from the jazz community having been labelled as a funk drummer. If this was the case, I assumed he'd overcome these issues.

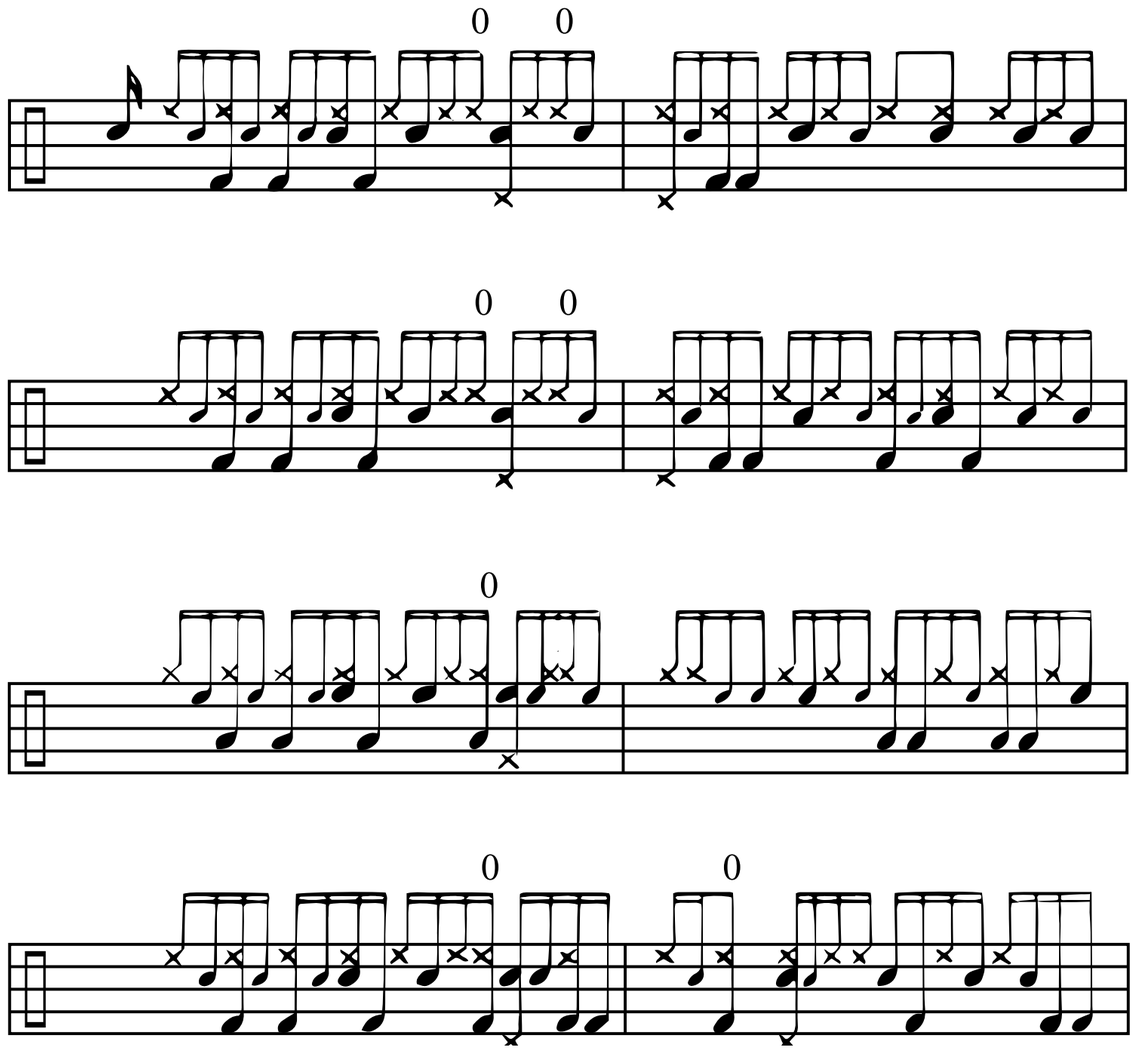
I ask Mike how he feels about his upcoming releases. Usually, it's a banal question, serving only to allow people to plug their latest projects. I don't know if it was because he'd already mentioned his latest releases elsewhere in the interview but his response took me by surprise.

"In terms of making a living and playing with the best players I've done very well for myself. I'm pleased with that. Yes, I'm a well known drummer…" he pauses momentarily, "but I still feel like I've got more to achieve. I'm trying to make a name for myself as a bandleader like Art Blakey and Elvin Jones. I want to be touring on a regular basis and playing all the big festivals like my heroes did – that's always been my goal and now, finally, I'm getting closer to doing that.

"I've been a Buddhist ever since I was 20, and I'm going to be a Buddhist until I die. I've had some real bad experiences where I've been in car wrecks and I should have died. And I've had tremendous fortune – getting gigs that I've wanted and that sort of stuff. It's not magic, it comes from inner reformation. You undergo the human revolution and change the parts of your life that aren't working through chanting. And chanting actually changes the bad shit in your life. So what you see in your daily environment is a direct reflection of what's inside you, both good and bad, and by focusing on the areas that are not so good, that's when you make a change right away. It's what Buddhists call Actual Proof. There's a meeting on 86th street in a couple of days – you should come along."

Mike's beliefs were something we hadn't really talked about up until this point, and were also the reason I came to be,

Mike's peformance on Actual Proof [01:10]



quite nervously, standing alongside Mike outside the door of a local Buddhist chanting meeting two days after the interview. My nerves were simply due to my lack of knowledge about Buddhist practice and my worries about being viewed as the 'ignorant journalist'.

Mike is a Nichiren Buddhist, the practice of which involves the chanting of the words Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo as a form of verbal mediation. Roughly translated, it represents a vocal devotion to the Wonderful Law of the Lotus Sutra; a Sanskrit treatise regarded as the culmination of Buddha's teachings.

Ultimately, I had wondered what had driven Mike to reject a prosperous career in funk to the extent he had been prepared to completely change the direction of his life to pursue jazz. Watching him chant, it was clear that his spirituality is not solely expressed via his religious beliefs but is also strongly associated with his passion for music and playing drums. His passion for jazz is strongly associated with this too, which is itself rooted in his childhood. At the time he was recording Actual Proof, terms such as 'linear' or 'Oakland funk' didn't exist - it was something completely new. Mike might say that, for him, it was a second language, but one in which he couldn't express what he felt he needed to.

After the meeting is finished, a number of small envelopes are handed out to the regular members. They contain personal goals, written 12 months previous, that each member had sought to fulfil. Mike opens his. "How'd you do?" I ask. He doesn't show me the paper, but grins. I got most of em' but there's still a few on there I'm working on." I imagine it won't be too much longer before he works them out.

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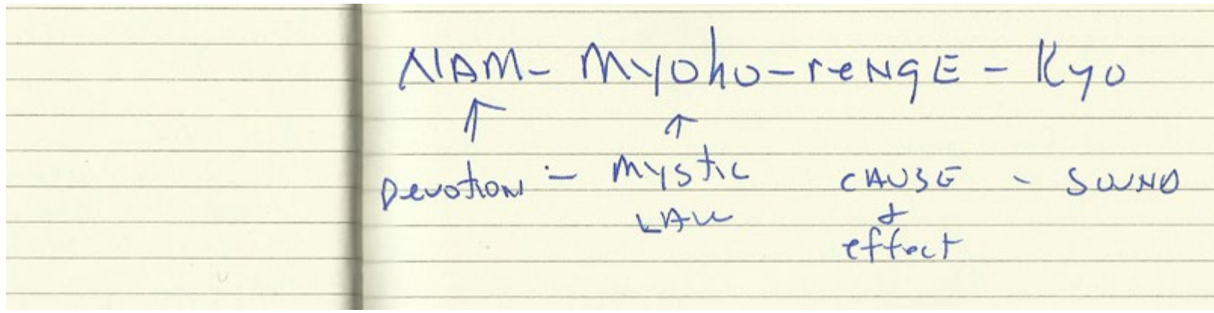


Revision Notes:
Nam Myoho Renge Kyo

AN INDEPENDENT DRUM MAGAZINE

THE DRUMMER'S JOURNAL

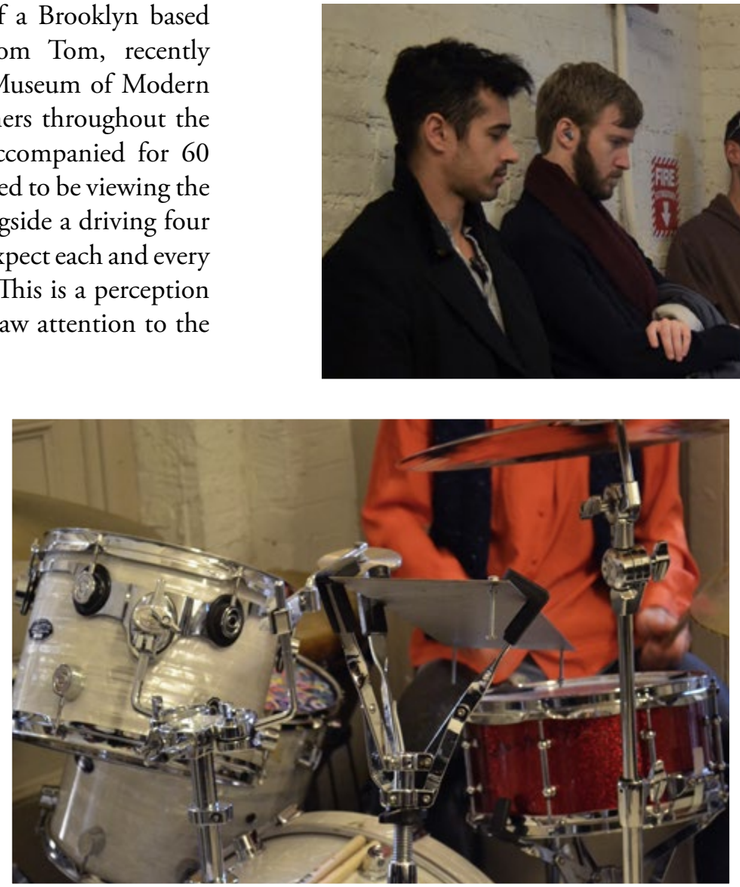
an·independent·drum·magazine

THE FEMALE WORD

A Conversation with Mindy Abovitz

Words by Tom Hoare
Photography by Kate Darracott

Mindy Abovitz, the editor of a Brooklyn based drum magazine called Tom Tom, recently curated an event at NY's Museum of Modern Art. It involved staging seven drummers throughout the Museum to play non stop and unaccompanied for 60 minutes. If, that day, you hadn't expected to be viewing the works of Rembrandt and Picasso alongside a driving four to the floor groove, you'd also seldom expect each and every one of these drummers to be female. This is a perception Mindy wants to change, aiming to draw attention to the fact the drum set is not solely an instrument played by men, despite being underpinned by an industry which seems to believe it is. She was one of the seven drummers spread throughout the museum, and has dedicated her life to encourage more women to take up the drums and become involved in music.



The Drummer's Journal: Could you explain the inspiration behind the event? I'm not sure I could do it justice!

Mindy Abovitz: Sure! It was officially called the Oral History of Female Drummers. We set drummers up, all women, in different parts of the museum and let them do their own thing for an hour. I enlisted a world famous beat boxer, Ashley 'Saywut?!' Moyer to be our oral historian. During those 60 minutes whilst we were all playing, she would visit, in turn, all the drummers located around the museum and engage each one in a conversation via drums and beat boxing. Ashley and the drummer would interact together for five

Stairway E: Chloe Saavedra

minutes, then she would move onto the next drummer located in another room.

So, the idea was, with each and every drummer she visits, Ashley would be subtly affected by the drummer she talked to previously. In that sense she is telling the history of this drummer to that drummer. At the end of her journey through the museum we all stopped playing and met in the centre room. Here, we were silent and she told all our stories through the rhythms and beats she had heard.

There were a lot of people there, how was it playing what is, effectively, an hour-long solo for total strangers?
Having an audience was absolutely great. Part of me thought, "no one is actually going to come to this – who is going to give a fuck?" But somehow, people found out about it. Playing, I felt like people were just watching me in my practice space. When I wasn't having that interaction with the beat boxer, there was still 55 minutes of playing to do. A lot of people told me afterwards that they really enjoyed just being able to listen to drums on their own because you never really get to hear them that way.

Your drummers were super-talented. What were your own experiences of learning to play?
My brother gave me a bass guitar when I was 15 and getting in to Riot Grrrl. I kinda knew that wasn't my instrument but I didn't really have access to anything else. Then I went to college and started playing my friend's drum kits. For my 21st birthday my best friend scraped together enough cash to buy me a Percussion Plus drum set. The truth is we were kinda fighting at the time and it was her way of patching it up. I was 21 and pretty much only playing music with other girls.

"This is a political and passionate project for me – drum companies don't advertise towards women in any way."

Stairway A: Sean Desiree

Why only girls? Was that a politically conscious choice?
It's a comfort thing not really a political thing. I felt like I wanted to play with people who were my peers and who would encourage me, and those people were other women who were also learning their instruments. So that's how my life evolved; pretty much all my bands over the last 20 years have featured women only.

In your own experience, why do you think the drum set is an instrument predominantly played, or at least viewed to be played, by men?
OK. I'm going to equate drumming to football. Essentially, women are socialized differently to men. We're not encouraged to play football. We're not encouraged to drum. There's a lot of other things were not encouraged to do but for the purposes of this interview, we're not encouraged to drum. We're also not really encouraged to do anything in the band other than sing. Drums are specifically masculine. It can be aggressive and you need to be confident. There is an illusion that you need to be physically strong. In terms of playing, this is untrue and the only real strength you need is to carry the hardware. Also, you sit with your legs open; you're very much straddling your snare. Women are still taught to be demure – you should always cross your legs, not to do so is unfeminine.

So the magazine and these events serve to challenge those notions?
The mission for the magazine is to cover as many female drummers as possible because they are so under represented. This is a political and passionate project for me – drum companies don't advertise towards women in any way. There's a statistic that says that five to ten per cent of drummers are women. A lot of the large drum manufacturers choose to completely ignore this with regards to their marketing because, in their eyes, they're

Stairway B: Linnea Lamon

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"How is it as a female consumer within the drum industry?"

"Pretty much the shittiest scenario you can imagine."

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only missing 10% of the market at most. My intention with the magazine was to increase the female drummer population so companies will market towards us, and build or manufacture products with us in mind. This is only beneficial for them as then they'd be able to profit from us. It's not really about gender; it's about inclusiveness.

How is it as a female consumer in the drum industry?
Pretty much the shittiest scenario you can imagine. How does a guy feel when he goes into a lingerie shop? That's the best example. A women walking into a music store and then going to the drum department? It's like the guy in the lingerie shop picking up a lacy pair of underwear. Instantly the shop assistant assumes "these are for your girlfriend, right?" But you reply, "no, they're for me." Imagine the look the shop assistant gives you. Everything you've ever been told is that you're not supposed to be in that shop buying these for yourself. Even if you went in and said, "listen up! I've been wearing lingerie for 10 years bitches, I know how to pick out my own fucking lingerie!" You'll still have to prove yourself every time you go in there.

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"One show I played, I was setting up my stuff before the gig and the engineer comes over and is like 'I give drum lessons - you should get in touch with me.' This is before I've even played! In my head I was like 'fuck you. Fuck you!'"

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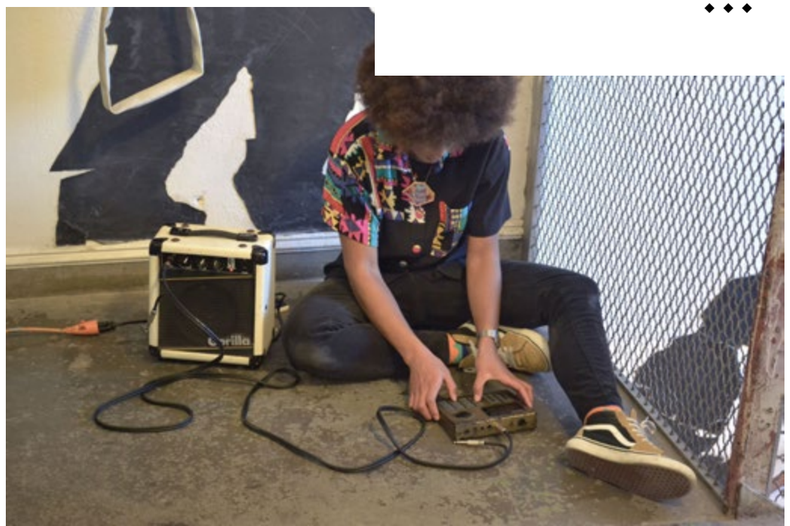
Lobby: Kristin Mueller

I've been playing for 12 years, I run a magazine about female drummers, I've even worked in a drum shop, and when I go into a music store I still feel that way. Imagine an eight year old girl going in to a drum shop. Let's say she knows what she's doing, she knows her shit big time; can you imagine what the reaction to her wandering over and testing out different types of drumsticks would be? People aren't going to take her that seriously.

And how about as a performer?
Right, so the other element to it is playing shows. Imagine it; you get to the club. And you have you're gear. And you're about to set up.

And there's a sound guy.
And there's a sound guy, exactly. One show I played, I was setting up my stuff before the gig and the engineer comes over and is like "I give drum lessons - you should get in touch with me." This is before I've even played! In my head I was like "fuck you. FUCK YOU." Then after the show, he came up to me and was like, "oh, maybe you don't need lessons after all." What are you supposed to say to him in that scenario?

Do you feel like sexism in the music industry is diminishing, or is it getting worse?
When I was a teenager I was a really angry feminist when it came to music. When Riot Grrrl came out I thought that it was ground breaking and they were going to solve all the problems. After that, I wanted to become a musician so I started playing and didn't really think about the wider



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"I'd been assuming humans evolve and get better, but I realised this wasn't the case. I was going to have to work really hard and dedicate my life to instigate a change."

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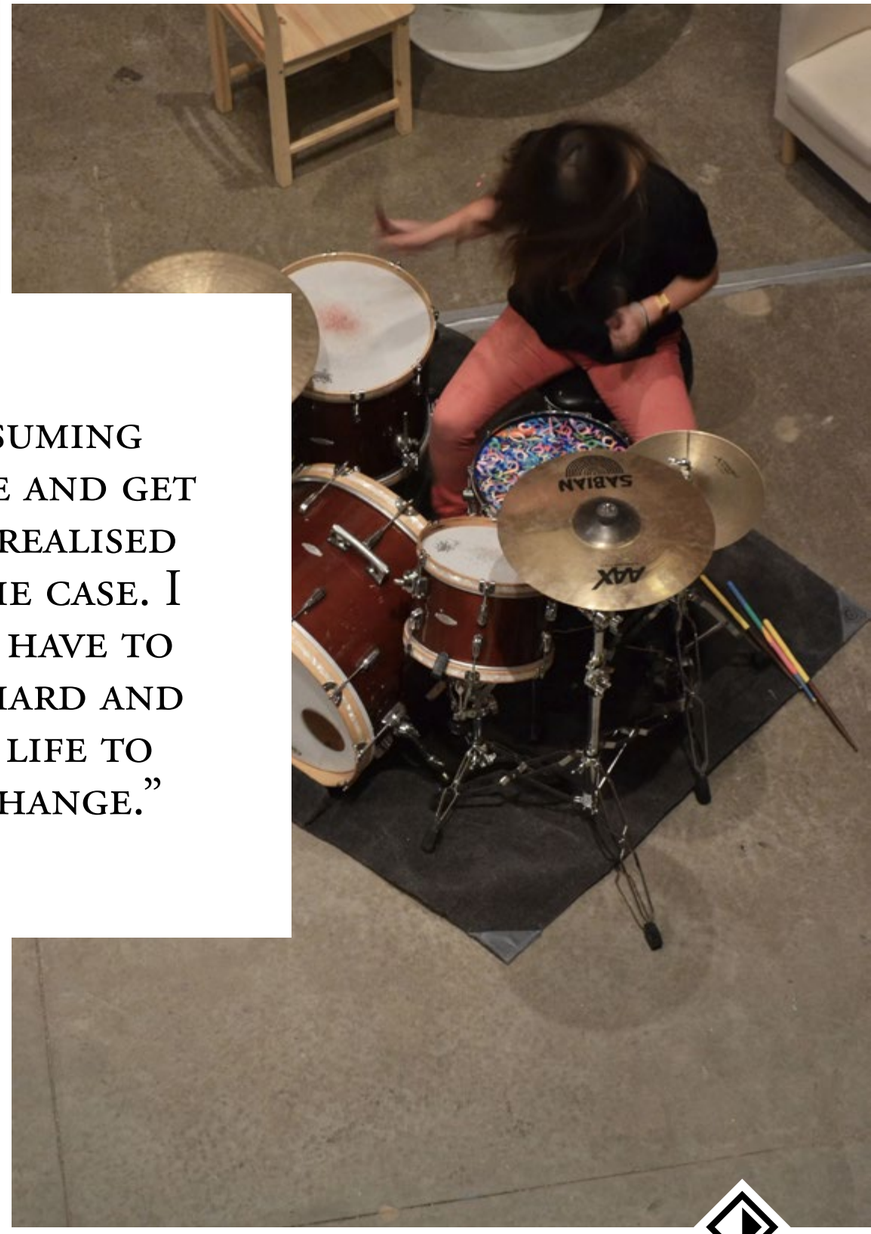

situation any more. I just played. I moved to NY and played some more. Then I started working in the music industry; radio, teaching, doing everything I could. It was only by the time I was 29 that I stopped for a second and realised that nothing had changed. In fact, it was worse.

Maybe I'd been assuming humans evolve and we get better, but I realised this wasn't the case in regards to this particular field, and that I was going to have to work really hard and dedicate my life to instigate a change. I don't want anyone else to go though that experience, realising that, from when they were a teenager to when they are an adult, no more female drummers exist. At the end of the day, I want to hold the industry responsible, and I only ask that we can be acknowledged too.

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THE DRUMMER'S JOURNAL

AN INDEPENDENT DRUM MAGAZINE

an independent drum magazine

THE LONELY REVOLUTION

Ben Johnston

Words by Tom Hoare
Illustration by Kirsty Cassels

Inside New York's Bowery Electric, 200 people are packed wall to wall. For many, it'll be the first time they get to hear, let alone see, Biffy Clyro perform tracks from their latest album, Opposites. With no support bands, lighting rigs or pyrotechnics; this is a musical road test for the impending arena tours.

Anticipation is high. You can tell because, at the bar, the average density of people per square foot is substantially lower than usual. Instead, people are already crowded round the stage at the other end of the room, watching as strings are tuned and mics are checked. Beside me, leaning on the bar, two men are deep in conversation.

"What if Opposites turns out to be a Lulu?"

"A what?"

"You know – Lulu, that Metallica and Lou Reed album – everyone thought it was going to be amazing but…"

"Nah, no way – it's not even comparable."

"I'm just sayin', pressure's on to deliver here dude."

There's a slight element of truth in these words. Following the commercial successes of Puzzle and Only Revolutions, Biffy Clyro have a reputation to uphold. It's not uncommon for the weight of expectation to quickly become a burden and, sure enough, the British press became awash with whisperings that Only Revolutions' two year touring cycle had taken a severe toll on the band. The reality was that things had indeed got pretty grim, but as the band take to the stage, there's little lasting sign of fracture. Ben's playing is characteristically animated and impassioned, and some of the new songs are punishingly heavy. As it turns out, Opposites and Lulu stand never to be mentioned in the same sentence again.

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Ben Johnston: Thanks for coming along to the show last night man, it was a good one.

The Drummer's Journal: Thanks for having us… but wasn't it a slightly smaller venue than what you've been getting used to recently?
Nah, we've been a band since we were 14 so we're used to playing little shows. Regardless of how often we're doing arena shows, we're usually in some little venue somewhere within a couple of weeks. People often say it's a good test of a band if you can still hold your own in an arena. I'd say it's the opposite, if you're truly any good you have to be able to hold up the little shows as well.

The new material you played from Opposites was well received.
Yeah, thanks man. It's always great playing the new stuff.

Have there been any significant developments as to how you personally approached this album?
Yes, quite a few. With Puzzle, I wanted to change up drum sounds from song to song as much as possible, but we ended up with a kit that sounded great and we used it on pretty much every track. Then, Only Revolutions came around and I was even more keen to mix it up - I ended up with two different kits on the whole album. This time, with Opposites, I thought "not a fucking chance" so I really put my foot down and it paid off big time. We used about four or five different types of shell, five different kick drums, 10 different snares and countless cymbal set-ups. We were even changing kits mid song, changing the room mid song; all kinds of stuff. We used a lot of vintage kits too. You've got to bear in mind that our producer, Garth Richardson, makes power records so I really had to put my foot down and say 'listen, I don't care if you think these drums sound weaker than they should, this is how I hear them. We're going to use a loungey, Ludwig kit and we're going to mic it with two mics and nothing else.' I'm glad that I stuck to my guns because what we ended up with was a really nice mixture.

What about your playing? Are you at peace with it or does it still frustrate you?
I'm never frustrated when I'm gigging, bizarrely. When I've written drum parts that I know I can play well and I'm up there performing, I feel content – I don't feel any of the parts I've written or recorded are crap. But, if I just sit down to practice, I realise that my technique sucks. I still can't even do a smooth drum roll to this day and I can't play jazz for shit. I'm not particularly good at any one style, I just try and play for the song. I guess I'm a fucking modern day Ringo Starr in that respect. I'm not a drummer's drummer if you know what I mean. I never practise drums on their own really - horrific I know. I'm definitely not saying that's the way to go but, generally, the drum parts I write are bounced off Simon's guitar riffs; it's only then that I'll decide on a drum part. I'll even wait until I've heard the vocal line too; I want my drum parts to compliment the song and nothing more. That's something that took a lot of getting used to because when I was younger, particularly on the first three albums Blackened Sky, Vertigo of Bliss and Infinity Land, I'm trying to show off by overplaying so I've tried to strip it back a bit.

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"IT'S A FANTASY WORLD I LIVE IN – I JUST GET USHERED AROUND AND TOLD WHAT TO DO ALL DAY. IT'S A PERPETUAL STATE OF ADOLESCENCE."

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If I'm honest, I'd disagree. I think overplaying is when you actively detract or bring down something that would be otherwise good – is that how you feel about your contribution to those first three albums?
Well, put like that… no. Ach, it's more just the odd part, don't get me wrong - I'm still very much proud of them. Sometimes when I go back and listen to the older stuff I'm like 'holy shit how did I do that?' A lot of it I'd struggle to play now because they're so busy. Thinking about it, I suppose I'd never go back and change anything, but there are a few cases where, maybe, I repeat myself a bit much. I'd use the double kick when I didn't have to; I use it a lot more sparingly now and try to be more inventive with it. I'm certainly not rubbishing what I've done. I'd hate it for anyone to listen to those albums and then hear me rubbish them, that's absolutely not what I'm doing. I am still proud of them, but I was a kid when I wrote those parts.

Do you change any of your parts when you play live?
I'm a firm believer that you should try and keep it true to the album as possible. We went to see Sunny Day Real Estate who were, and still are, a massive influence on us. Anyway, William Goldsmith had changed a bunch of parts and taken out all the wee eccentric bits that really made the songs - like hitting the bell of the ride in a really awkward place. We went back to their place afterwards and I grilled him about it. I was raging. There's a bit in eighths where he's playing the hats and it's totally awkward. I love it. Live, he changed it to fourths so I went through him. I was like (actually shouts) "dude, I love how awkward that bit is, why didn't you keep it like that?"

Are you ok? You obviously feel quite strongly about that…
(Laughs) I guess what I'm trying to say is that you shouldn't worry about what you've done previously. If people like it then you've done something right.

I think what's particularly impressive is you're playing material

[L - R] Simon Niel, Ben Johnston & James Johnston

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"You have to understand how many different people make money off us. There're all these people round the world who take a cut and, unfortunately, the band's health is often the last thing that gets thought of."

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off what is now your sixth studio album alongside songs that are from your first ever EP. Is there an emotional or nostalgic element to that?
It means a lot to me that those songs still stand up in their own right. I've never really thought about the fact that it was 1995 when our first EP came out. Jesus. 1995 - now that freaks me out – it's not far off 20 fucking years!

Last night we played a song called Hope for an Angel which is from an early EP, yeah. I think it shows a side to us that we had, and that we still have. The element of surprise in that song, it'll always catch you off-guard. To listen to it's challenging and awkward. Simon's deliberately trying to play as quietly as possible so people start talking and are unsure what's going on, then, BANG! We used to love playing that back in the day. You'd always hear a glass smash because the barmaid would drop the pint she was pouring as the heavy part had given her such a fright. Seriously, every single time, I kid you not (mimics noise of breaking glass).

I've always loved those little eccentric things we do. Black Chandelier, the next single, goes into a stupidly heavy middle eight part; I'm just so fond of daft things like that.

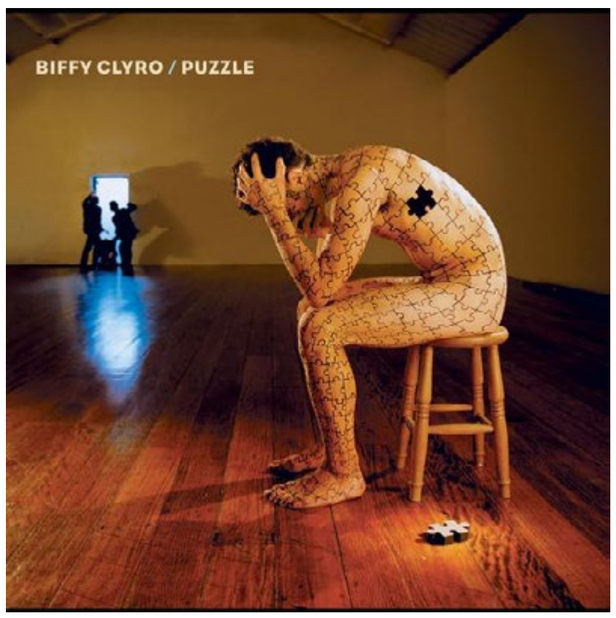
People often say Puzzle was a point at which the band's profile began to significantly escalate. Was it, in any other ways, a departure from what you'd done previously?
It wasn't departure, more of a natural evolution as cheesy as that sounds. We certainly never wanted to repeat ourselves; that was one thing which was clear. On Infinity Land we thought we had reached our peak in terms of what we were trying to achieve since Blackened Sky.

What were you trying to achieve?
We just wanted to be able to merge really angular, abrasive, awkward music with pop melodies and pop sensibilities. Kind of like Weezer and Ben Folds Five; bands with hooks and tunes. We felt like we did that on Infinity Land, so Puzzle was the next step. Also, because of the subject matter, Puzzle was a really grief ridden album and the lyrics were so important that if the music had been any busier it would have shat all over the words. It was way too important to ruin with overplaying – letting the music speak was crucial. That did bring in playing stuff that, in some senses, was slightly simpler. But I still find the whole sell out thing hilarious when you get Biffy fans who say 'they've gone so straight and sold out.' Just listen to the first song on that album, it's the most proggy song we've ever had.

I read that the gap in between releasing Only Revolutions and Opposites has been the longest in your career…
Yeah, it was the longest time we've had between releasing records. That's not due to a lack of material; it was just purely down to the success of Only Revolutions. When you've got a good album, you've got to tour it. More and more countries want to see us play now so the tours get bigger and the promo trips are more expansive. Everything becomes more time consuming and you're getting pulled in a million different directions at once. You don't want to let people down, so if there's a country where people are willing to come and see you play then you've got to go. So, we've had to spend more time in America, Japan Australia and mainland Europe. It takes two to three years to do an album campaign now, and this double album certainly wont be any less that that. I'm going to be an old man by the time this one's done.

You've spoken about the touring cycle for Only Revolutions taking its toll on you and the band. Do you feel like you're in a better place now?
Definitely - without a doubt. Things got really bad. We toured ourselves into the ground. What I've learnt from

Blackened Sky - 2002
The Vertigo of Bliss- 2003
Infinity Land - 2004
Puzzle - 2007
Only Revolutions - 2009
Opposites - 2013



this is to say no to things; the older you get you start to realise your health is very important. The same can be said for maintaining some sense of home too because it's a fantasy world I live in – I just get ushered around and told what to do all day. It's a perpetual state of adolescence. It's weird. We toured so hard and spent way too much time with each other. It's not healthy to spend that much time with anyone. I started taking the band for granted, and now I realise I was definitely drinking too much.

I stopped just before we started recording this album and that's one of the best decisions I've ever made. It made me get back the passion and the drive. I was able to actually get up in the morning and remember what happened the night before – that was a real blessing. Without the drink I can grab things by the scruff of the neck and put the hours in. Being alcohol free has been fantastic and it's really shown the boys how committed I am to the band. Everyone's changed as a result of it and, ultimately, we're now heading in a much better direction. I mean, we did all the drum tracks for Opposites in 10 days, we just banged them out. I'm incredibly happy how much effort we put into that and how well I played. I played harder and better than I ever have. When I do try and learn new stuff now it takes me half the time. Life in general is just a lot easier and I'm so thankful for it.

How do you feel about what's ahead?
I feel we're starting on the right foot. We've learnt the importance of communication and not letting people push you too hard because, at the end of the day, it's us who know how far we can be pushed. You have to understand how many different people make money off us. There're all these people round the world who take a cut and, unfortunately, the band's health is often the last thing that gets thought of. So that'll change, definitely. Again, I can't stress the importance of going home. If you don't, it can really fuck with your personal relationships.

Did you get married recently too? Congratulations!
Yes, thank you! We did the first half of the album in Santa Monica,

"Things got really bad. We toured ourselves into the ground. What I've learnt from this is to say no to things."

then we went home and did a coupe of festivals and I got married. It was such a great day. But, I was married for less than a week before I had to leave again. No honeymoon, I just had to leave. So that's it; the life I lead.

Is the US becoming a second home?
Yeah, I suppose in some ways. We recorded Opposites in a studio called The Village which is between Santa Monica and LA. I didn't miss it at first when I went home, but the weather and the lifestyle is quite a lot of fun. We're flying out there tomorrow actually because we're doing a gig in LA. It'll be good to get back and see some of our pals anyway. And I've still got my medicinal Marijuana card in my wallet.

Really? You can get them if you're a non-resident?
Ah man, it's a piece of cake – you just go and see a doctor and he actually gives you a list – a fucking list – of symptoms for you to choose from. So I was just like, 'aye; Insomnia, loss of appetite,' I paid $100 and now I can legally smoke in California. Not that I'd ever do that, of course.

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Biffy Clyro - A Day Of
[0:00 - 0:10]
220 BPM

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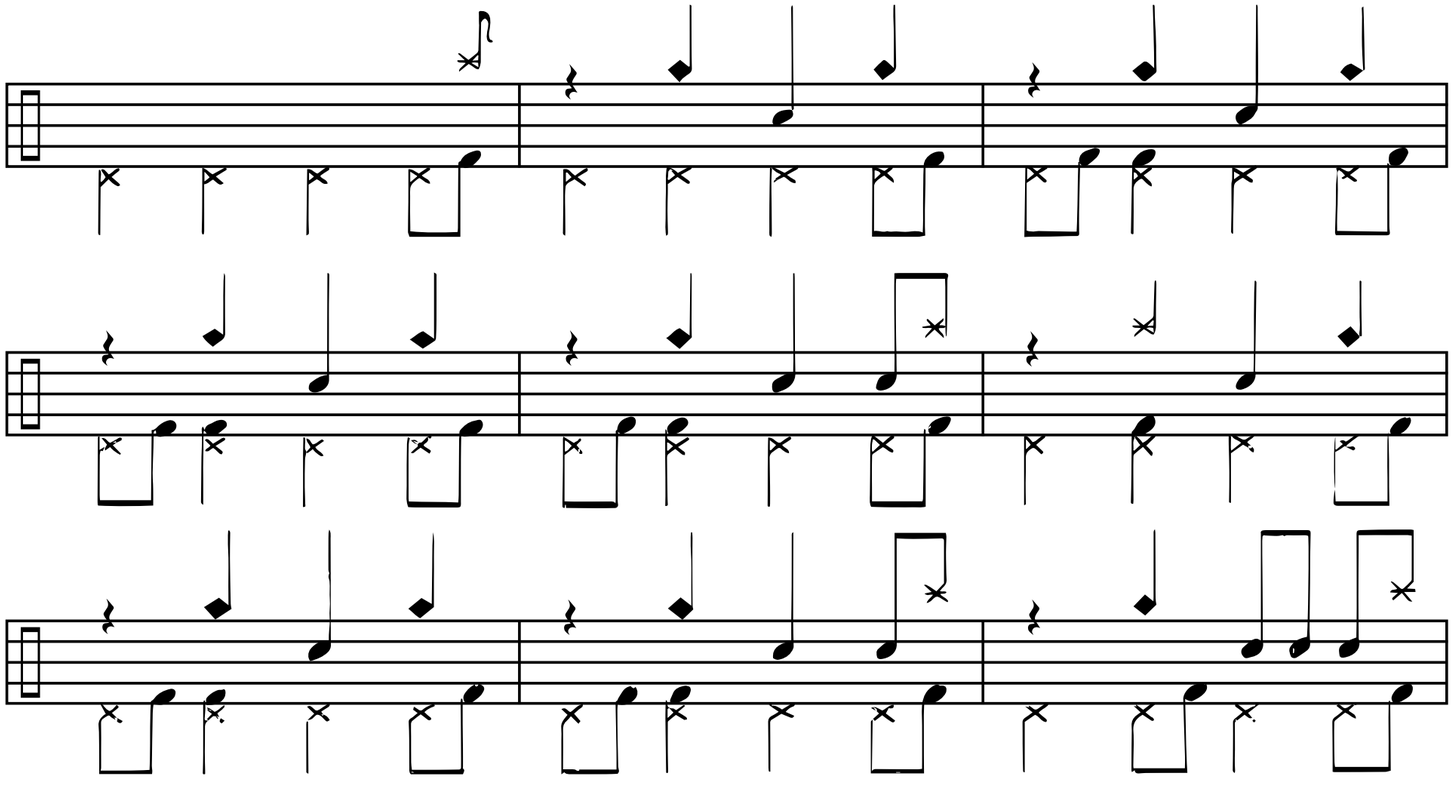

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ANIMAL

A conversation with Carl Gavins

Words by Tom Hoare

In 2006, Carl Gavins began making drums in a small workshop in Wakefield, West Yorkshire under the name Animal Custom Drums. The UK has seen somewhat of a resurgence in bespoke drum production, with the market place becoming increasingly crowded. Having recently undergone some quite significant changes to their product lines, we spoke to Gavin about Animal's ethos and ideals.

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How did you come to develop an interest in drum construction? Was it something that was self-taught or did you have a more formal history in design and manufacture?
My route into drum making was probably similar to most. I've played drums since I was a teen and started doing modifications to my own kits, learning as I went through school projects. Mostly, though, it was trial and error. To my knowledge, there are no formal training courses on anything close to drum building. Carpentry and cabinet making would be the nearest thing I imagine, although I've seen Tiki Drums drum building workshops advertised which seem pretty cool.

For me, it was a hobby then a side business, eventually turning into a fulltime career. My formal qualifications and background prior to fulltime drum building are in Civil Engineering.

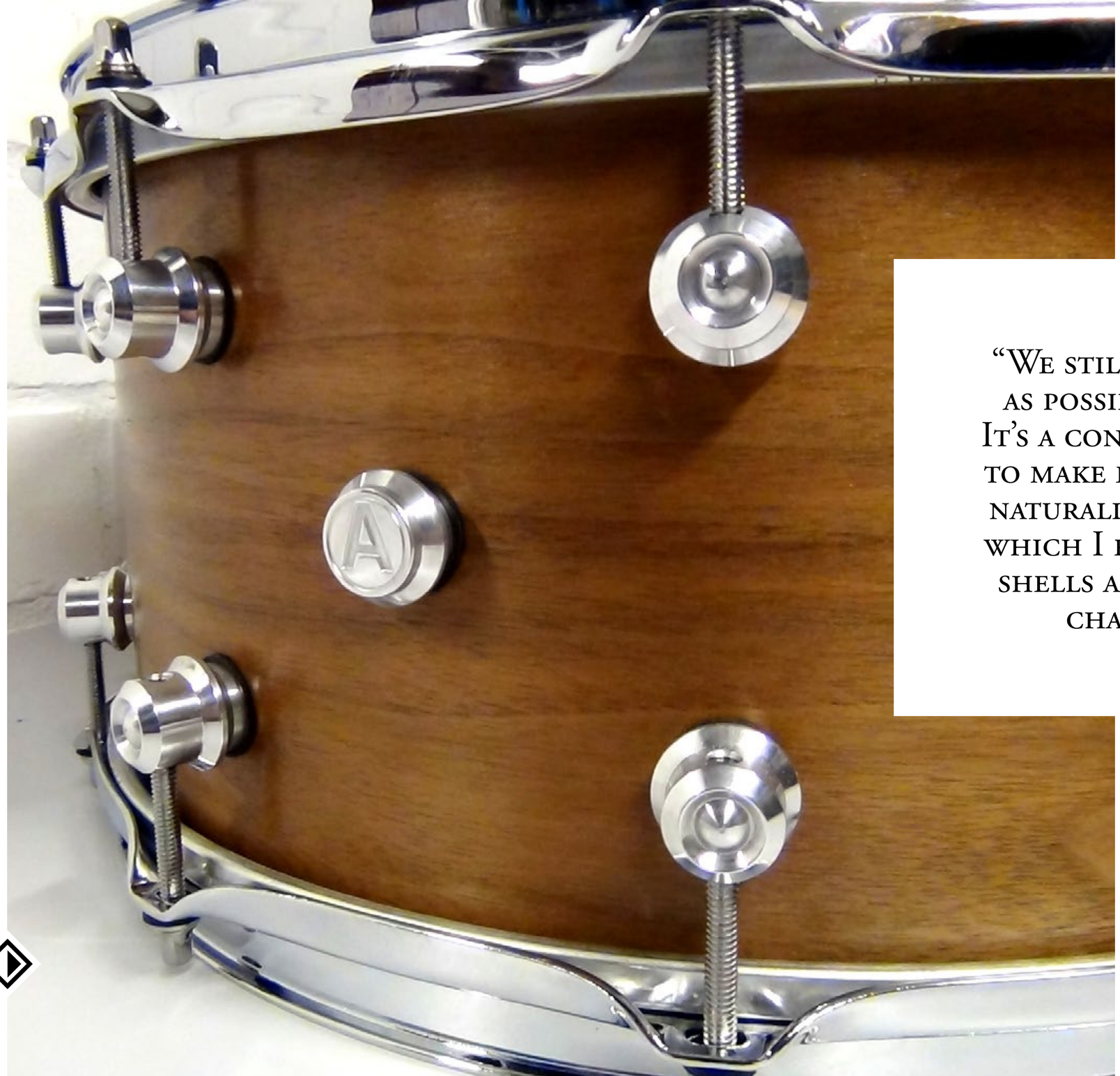
So do you still consider yourself an engineer?
I haven't really given myself a formal title as I fulfil alot of roles. I have to really because we're not a big company. I'm a drum maker, finisher, administrator, general dogs-body and office clown.

The 2012 series 7-piece kit: 22×18 Bass Drum, 8×6, 10×7 & 12×8 Rack Toms, 14×12 & 16×14 Floor Toms and a 14×7 Snare

Shells are moulded with an inner and outer Walnut veneer and a Birch core, then finshed with a hard satin wax

That seems quite a lot to fit in during a days work.
It is, so my days certainly have structure given so many aspects of the business to deal with on my own. Structure and organisation is key. The morning is spent usually shell building to keep a stock of standard sizes, then the rest of the day is spent working on specific orders. The evening is spent on admin; quotes, ordering stock, website updates and the like. It's is by no means a nine to five job!

When you started, you did quite a lot of custom and bespoke work. In terms of moving on and deciding to focus on your own products, such as the 2012 series, did these earlier experiences help inform what you did and did not want to build, and the direction and identity Animal should adopt?
When I started my main goal was to simply make it to the next year. When I did that, I aimed to do the same thing again. To



do so meant I took up most of the commissions I was offered to ensure financial stability. During this time I certainly got a feel for the direction I wanted to go and certain elements I wanted to steer away from completely. The 2012 series is the start of that concept.

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"We still do as much as possible by hand. It's a conscious effort to make everything as naturally as possible, which I feel gives the shells an individual character."

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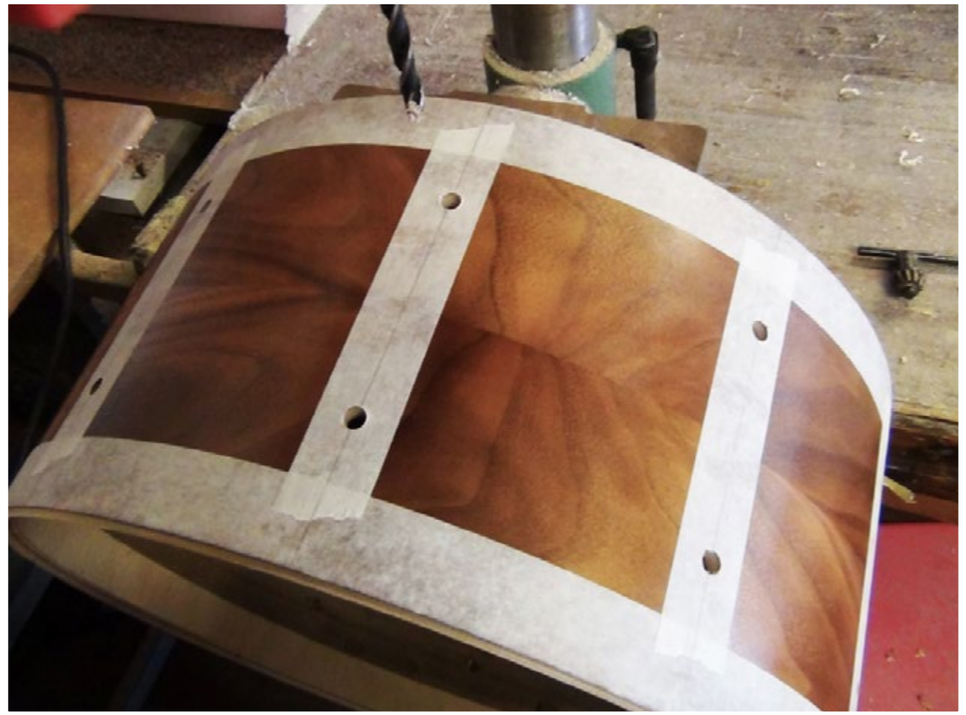
Animal strikes me as being quite unique in several respects. You have distaste for mass manufacture and are looking to phase it out of your production process. What were the main reasons for deciding to do so, as it must have meant an increase in production costs?

It's true I'm not a fan of mass production, certainly in my business. It's incredibly hard to avoid but I'm taking steps to eliminate it as much as possible. It does increase production costs which I've tried to minimise in terms of sale costs but I have increased the pricing of our new range. Saying that, we're still in line with most other custom and high end production kits but with the added bonus of a more unique product. This is the main reason for steering away from mass produced parts, there are so many custom companies operating now and I want a product that looks different, a product that is recognisable as an Animal kit without having to look at the badge.



Machined Aluminium lugs are designed and made in the UK, they are light weight and don't require inserts. A rubber gasket sits between the shell and outer lug

In general terms, mass production is quite engrained into the practices of the larger multinational drum manufacturers. Some might say this has lead to more affordable, accessible products. Would you agree, or are there more negative than positive aspects regarding the tendency for drums and hardware to be mass produced?

Mass production has certainly allowed the large drum manufacturers to offer affordable products, and that's a good thing in my opinion. A lot of the multinationals cover both options, having mass produced Far East made kits together with a flagship range made in house. It's just a personal preference at the end of the day.

Has the way you manufacture drums changed drasticlly?

Not particularly. The moulds we use to make the shells have been upgraded several times over the years. Originally, they were wooden but now we have metal ones which also have opening mechanisms to make shell removal easier. We still do as much as possible by hand, however. It's a conscious effort to make everything as naturally as possible, which I feel gives the shells more of an individual character.

Lastly, I read that only two people in the world know the recipe for Irn Bru and they never travel on the same plane together. Is the drum production process at Animal a tightly guarded secret too?

Our moulds have taken years to develop, the details of which I wouldn't be too keen to make public. Other than that we use traditional techniques which have been around for decades, nothing revolutionary or top secret.

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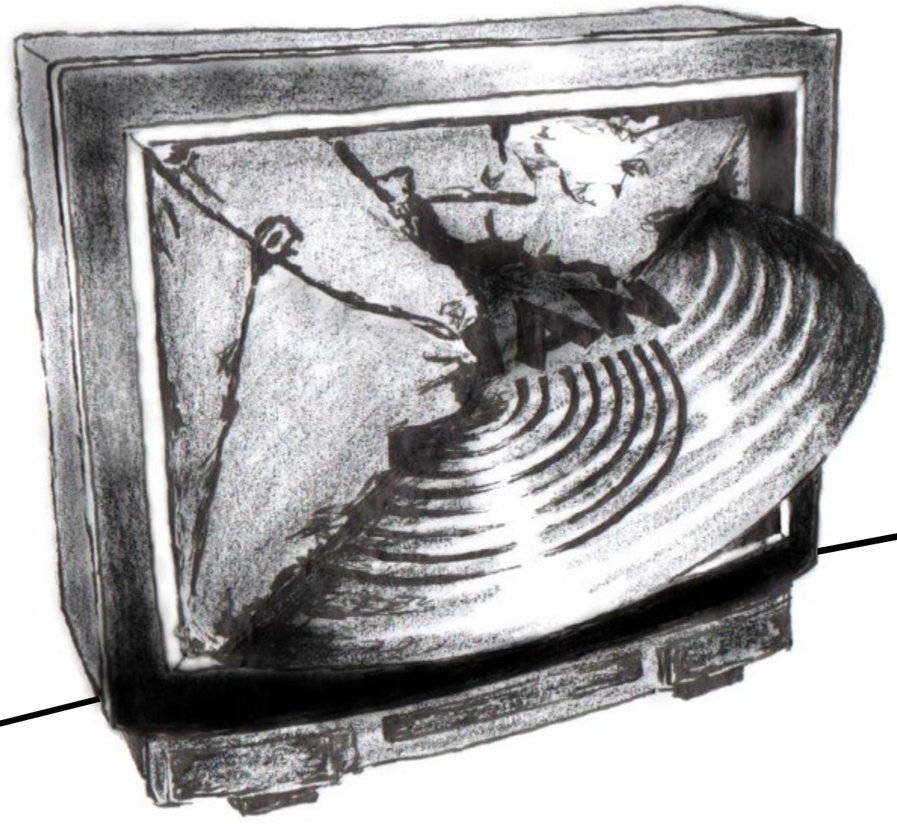


THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE UGLY

The Drum Set's Uneasy Relationship with the Silver Screen

Drummers, fictional or otherwise, seem to occupy a particularly uncomfortable onscreen residence. I came to this conclusion after watching several of Hollywood's best efforts at portraying the drummer, quickly finding myself lost in a dense fog of confusion.

Why were these particular films so bad? Surely the drum kit's on screen legacy can't solely reside in such fickle depictions? So began a perilous voyage, a voyage predominantly driven by curiosity and self reassurence; other films about this instrument and those who play it must exist, they can't all be bad.

There were some necessary ground rules to establish. Documentaries and mockumentaries about bands didn't count, nor did tuition DVDs. A drummer, or drum set, had to be the central character. Other than that, anything committed to film was fair game. Here's what we found.

Words by Julia Kaye
Illustration by Kirsty Cassels

Beware of Mr Baker (2012)

This documentary, chronicling the eventful life of Cream's Ginger Baker, opens with the man himself using his walking stick to deliver a forceful blow to face of the filmmaker he has just spent the last two weeks with. Yet, to say this sets the tone for the rest of the film would be an understatement. As one of the most infamous drummers in the world, Ginger's life has been one of immense fortune set alongside reoccurring patterns of self destruction and alienation. Currently broke and living in a secure compound in South Africa with his fifth wife, this film follows Ginger's life from his childhood to the present day with no sordid details omitted.

This was fascinating viewing on a number of levels. As a drummer, you can't help marvel at Baker's talent and skill behind the kit. He was definitely one of a kind, and much of what rock drumming has become owes its heritage to Baker's early playing. Drummers such as Neil Peart, Lars Ulrich, Charlie Watts and Chad Smith all feature prominently to testify to Bakers talent. It must be noted,

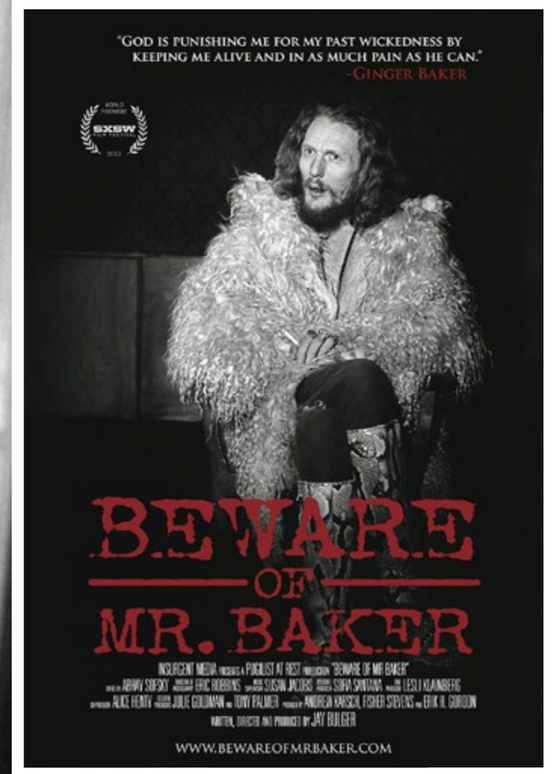
Ginger Baker (Right) with film maker Jay Bulger

however, that his successes as a drummer also serve to highlight, at times, his appalling failings as a person.

The majority of the film's narrative comes, begrudgingly, from Baker himself and is interspersed with excellent animation to illustrate what archive footage or eyewitness accounts cannot. Previous band mates, wives and various family members also feature heavily, which at times, makes for painful viewing as they begin to describe Ginger the person, as opposed to simply Ginger the drummer. The effects of his unrelenting heroin addiction are a prominent theme throughout, as is his multiple losses of fortune.

The hardest parts to watch are segments featuring Baker's own children, some of whom hold their father in absolute contempt. Clapton's role in the film is also intriguing, as he talks openly about what it was like working with the tempestuous Baker as well as emotionally detailing their current relationship.

Ultimately this is a profile of a man whose gift led to a life of unbridled excess and the consequent alienation of nearly every person once close to him. Despite this, there are some genuinely humorous and heartfelt moments but, as the credits rolled, I was left feeling slightly confused given the huge respect I have for him as a drummer, and the lack of it I have for him as a person.



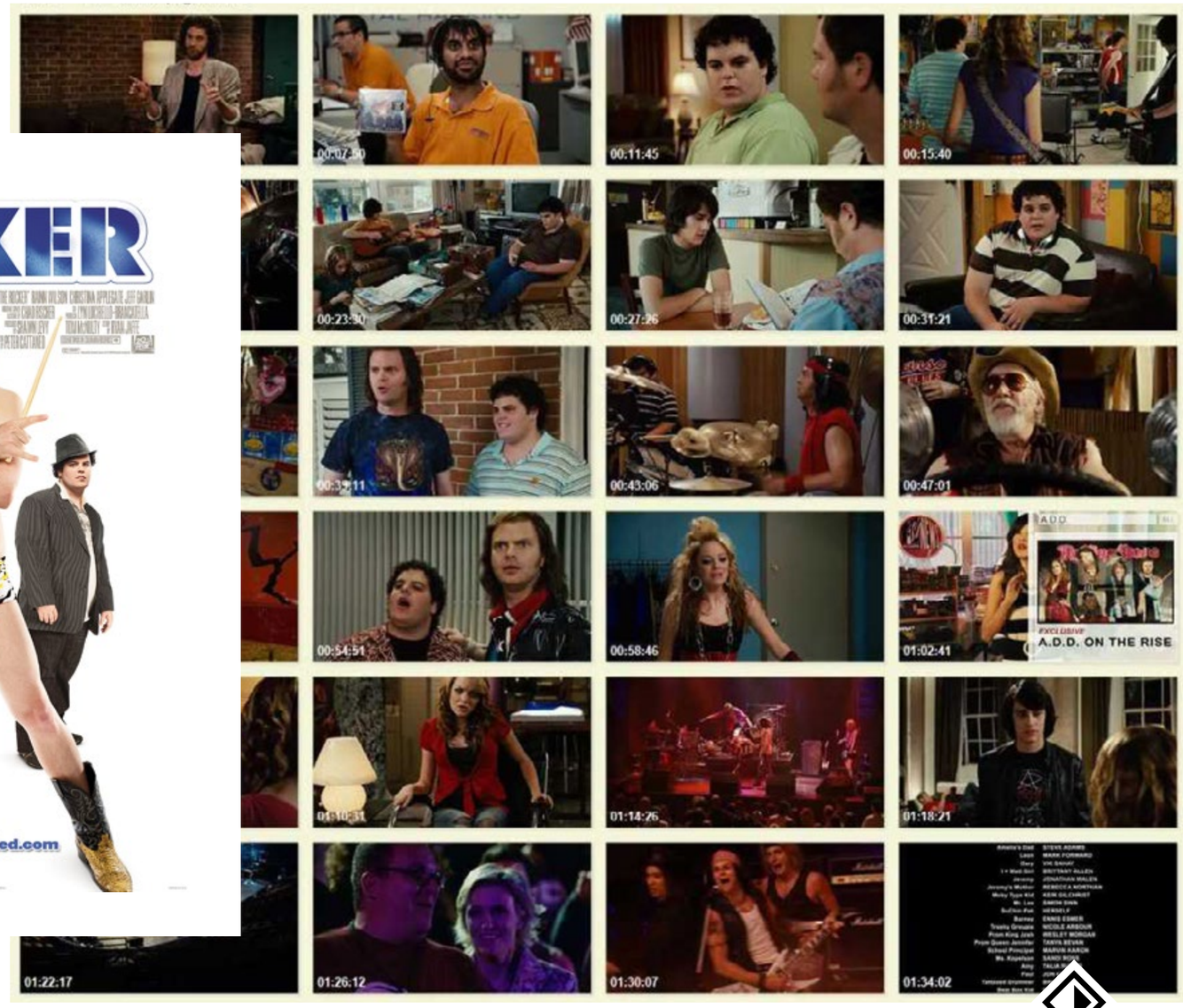
Ginger Baker,
animated still

The Rocker (2008)

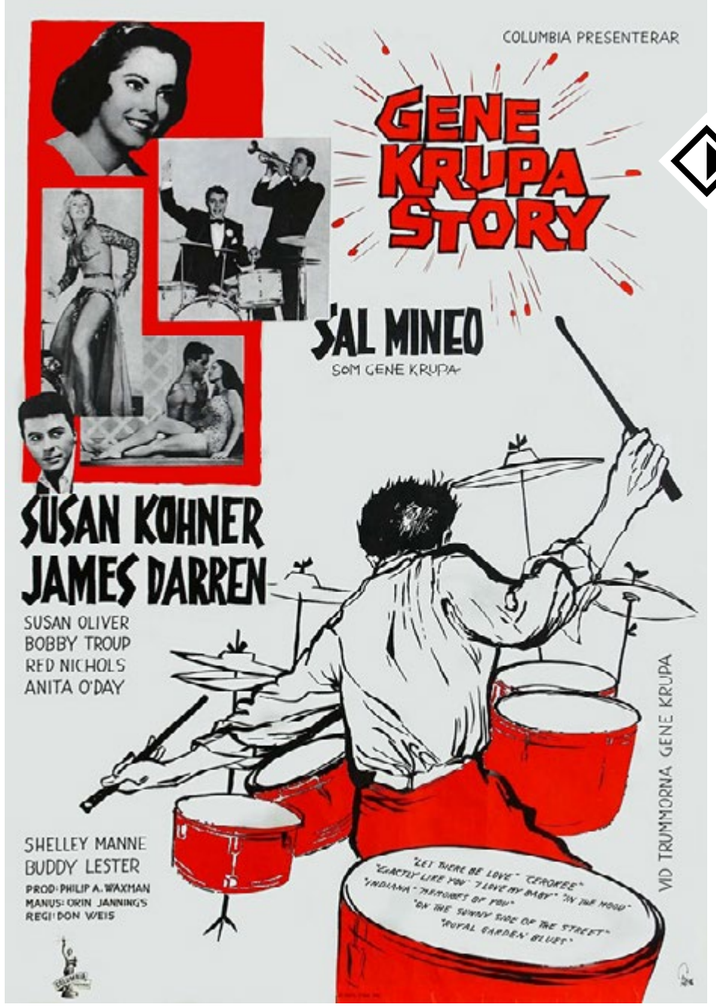
I deliberately put off watching this. I did so because I knew exactly what was going to happen, and I knew I'd be left, as the credits rolled, contemplating what else I could have done in the hour and 40 minutes that I'd never get back.

Look at the cover. Substitute The (US) Office's Rainn Wilson for Jack Black and a guitar and you've pretty much got School of Rock. The film's fundamental premise is pretty much identical too. The chief protagonist, drummer Robert 'Fish' Fishman, is unceremoniously dropped from 80s hair metal band Vesuvius in favour of the record executive's son. Twenty years later, Fish, now working a dead end job in a call centre, is still haunted by the sustained success of his former band. After losing both his job and girlfriend, he is forced to move back in with his sister, whereby he ends up joining his nephew's band 'A.D.D' to help them play the school prom. Typically, Fish delivers an over zealous performance culminating in a drum solo during the prom's finale, the slow dance. Disgraced, Fish vows to make amends by getting A.D.D another gig, and from here, with the power of montage, the band embark on the road to success.

Whilst being pretty light hearted and child friendly, The Rocker, unlike School of Rock, absolutely bombed at the box office, recouping barely half of the $15,000,000 it cost to make. Given the previous successes of many of the cast, its downfall is that it's overwhelmingly mediocre in nearly every respect. As a comedy, it's only discernable value comes from the repetition of slapstick style elements that eventually wear thin. Musically, it's pretty weak too, rarely deviating from cheesy teen angst ridden indy rock.



If you consider that this movie was, in part, based on the story of Pete Best - the drummer famously dropped by The Beatles in place of Ringo Starr - it should have been a lot better.



The Gene Krupa story (1959)

Gene Krupa was one of the world's first superstar drummers, and it shows as his life gets the Hollywood treatment in this 1950s biopic. Sal Mineo stars as Gene Krupa himself, chronicling the rise, fall and resurgence of his career. Mineo's portrayal of Krupa is particularly impressive, mostly because he is able to, quite convincingly, drum along to much of Krupa's actual playing. Various shady sources seem to indicate that, to do so, Mineo spent two years studying with Krupa himself before filming began. If he did, it paid off because he mimics Krupa's playing style and facial expressions brilliantly. This alone makes it worth watching.

Slightly disappointingly, much of what happens in the film is far from factual and it makes little attempt to remain true to its 1920s to 1940s settings. On the whole, Krupa is portrayed as someone who is self centred, single minded and ambitious, which was actually contradictory to the good guy image I assumed the film would flaunt. This is quite strange seeing as Krupa himself was involved in the production of the film, presumably having no qualms about the type of publicity he received.

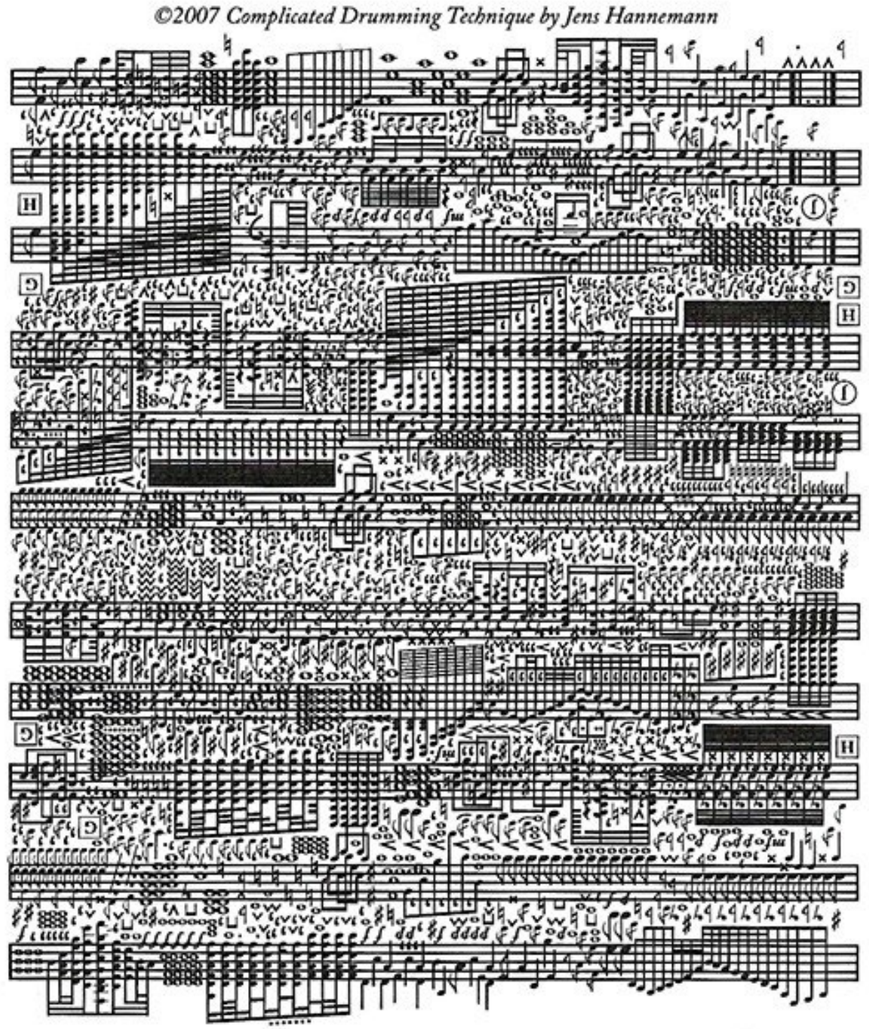
Apparently, Krupa was so impressed with Mineo's playing he gave him one of his own drum sets to keep. Tragically, he was murdered in 1976 near his home in Los Angeles. Given Mineo's popularity as an actor at the time, John Lennon allegedly put out a substantial cash reward for the conviction of his killer. A 17 year old boy was convicted of stabbing him to death during a botched mugging and is rumoured to have been released from prison sometime in the 1990s.

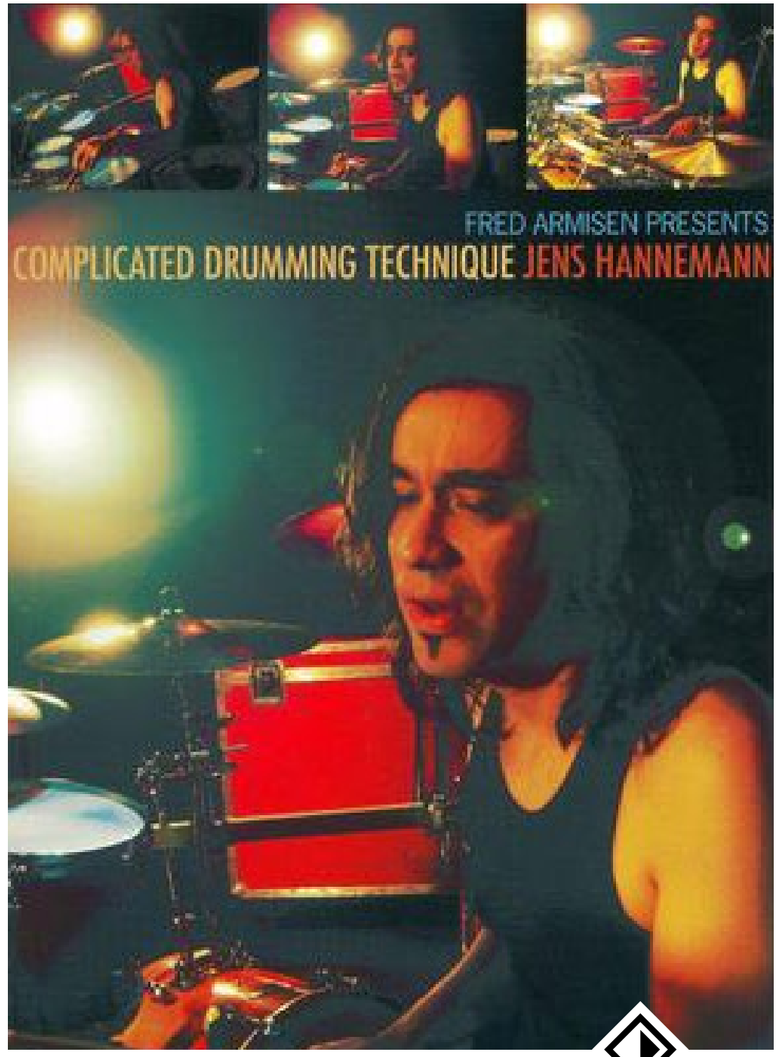
Jens Hannemann: Complicated Drumming Technique (2007)

A spoof educational DVD from Saturday Night Live's Fred Armisen, fictional technical virtuoso Jens Hannemann aims to better your ability to play ridiculously complex patterns. A nod to the likes of Marco Minnemann's Extreme Drumming, as well as the prevalence of questionable You Tube drum lessons, Jens imparts tongue in cheek advice with a few astute and humorous observations.

At 30 minutes long it does eventually begin to wear thin, but it is genuinely funny more often than not. Guiding you through rudiments such as the paradiddleoddledoodle or the paradiddleellagram, you'll be comfortably playing in 29/3 in no time, as well as orchestrating nice '50s style' thunderous rolls around your 50 piece kit.

It's by no means for everyone and, admittedly, the comedic values of virtuosity only stretch so far. It's maybe best to check out a few clips on the internet first to test the water.





Perng Mang: Glawng Phee Nang Manut (The Haunted Drum, 2007)

Quite stupidly, I decided to watch this whilst eating lunch giving little thought to what a Thai horror film about a haunted drum might entail. Needless to say, I quickly lost my appetite.

This was a weird one. The version I watched had been infuriatingly dubbed from Thai to Cantonese, with English subtitles occasionally appearing to help demystify a series of quite confusing events.

As far as I could tell, a young and aspiring musician called Ping joins a traditional Thai band, lead by a talented musician referred to as Master Duang. Ping discovers Master Duang is the owner of a mysterious ancient drum called the Perng Mang. After swearing an oath of devotion to the band, some of the students' commitment starts to waiver, whereby they are gruesomely killed in mysterious circumstances. Ping comes to realise that the Perng Mang, rumoured to be made from the skin of a beautiful young women, is host to a vengeful spirit intent on preserving the band's honourable legacy at any cost. With a rival master musician trying to lure some of the band members away, Ping must master the instrument to ensure his and his compatriots survival.

Though much of the bloodshed is quite graphic, it's pretty weak as a horror film. If there wasn't a scene where one unfortunate deserter is beaten to a bloody pulp with various floating CGI drums, I'd have been tempted to stop watching. That said, there are some quite nice cinematographic depictions or rural Thailand and musically, it's a pretty interesting insight into 19th Century Thai tradition.

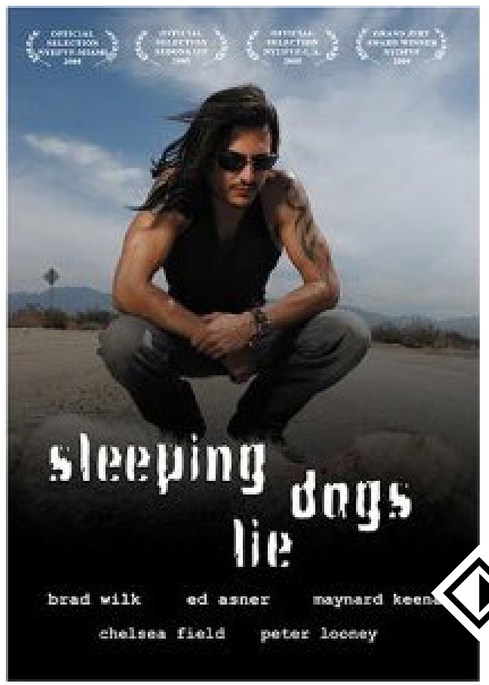
It performed very badly at the box office and has since fallen into relative obscurity. If you do fancy trying to get hold of a copy, I'd advise getting one where you can follow the dialogue.

Sleeping Dogs Lie (2005)

This was the onscreen debut of Rage Against The Machine's Brad Wilk, who alongside Tool's Maynen James Keenan, delivers a pretty convincing performance in this independent short. He plays Jeff Hannan, a guy from Cincinnati who receives a mysterious package in the mail that contains information about a murder which happened 25 years previous in a small town in Texas. He then sets off to inform the local authorities about his discovery, only to become embroiled in the mystery himself.

The film does well to deal with quite a grand story in only 30 minutes and is nicely pieced together. It's not exactly riveting, but simply interesting enough to amble towards a somewhat predictable conclusion. To my knowledge, Wilk hasn't done any acting since, but it would be interesting to see him take on a longer, more challenging role.

Be sure to not make the mistake, which I originally did, of beginning to watch a comedy of the same name about a woman who confesses to her husband she engaged in bestiality at college with her dog. Not cool.



Drumline (2002)

Drumline follows the story of Devon Miles, a talented drummer who, having recently graduated from a Harlem high school, is awarded a scholarship to Atlanta A&T University as a drum major. Arriving at college, he immediately clashes heads with the drumline's existing captain who takes a dislike to Devon's cocky attitude. Devon struggles to adjust to his subordinate status before realising that his talent alone won't take him to the top.

Drumline received a lot of mixed reviews and most of the negative ones centred on the formulaic plot. Devon, a fish out of water, is forced to overcome a series of internal and external struggles in order to undergo a personal revolution and achieve his goals. This does make the film pretty predictable, but it's not exactly the type of subject matter that lends itself to the M. Night Shyamalan treatment.

The standard of playing and musicality, however, were the source of much praise, much of which is heaped upon the final drum battle between the two rival colleges.

In the drumming community, given that this is probably the most well known drum related film, people seem to either love it or hate it. It's worth considering that Drumline was produced in an era where the box office was dominated by teen, college themed comedies such as American Pie and Road Trip. Whilst it's nothing like as brash as these films, it does begin to drag slightly in places (sorry) and my initial worries that two hours of line drumming, no matter how impressive, might not be overly engaging were somewhat confirmed.

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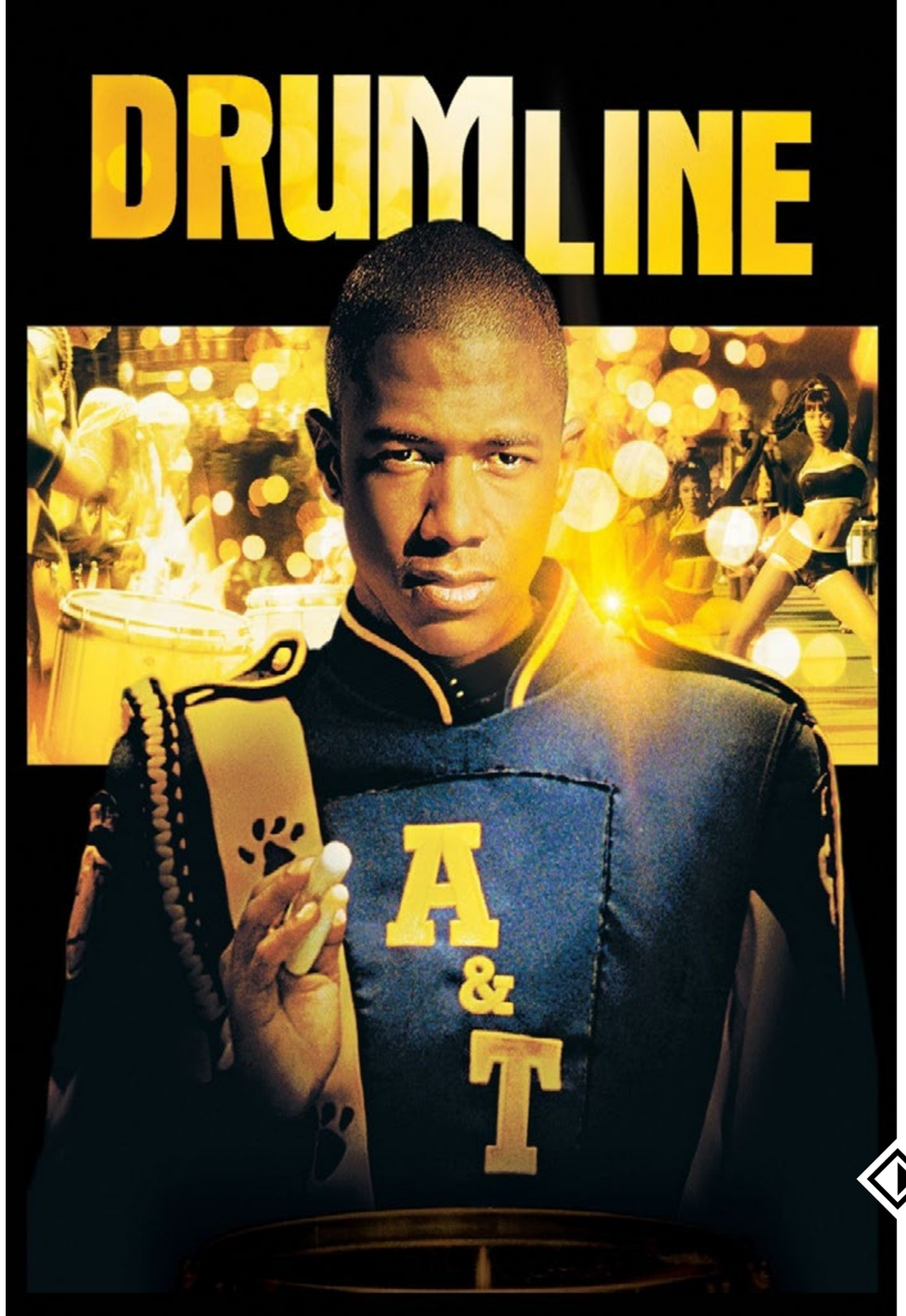

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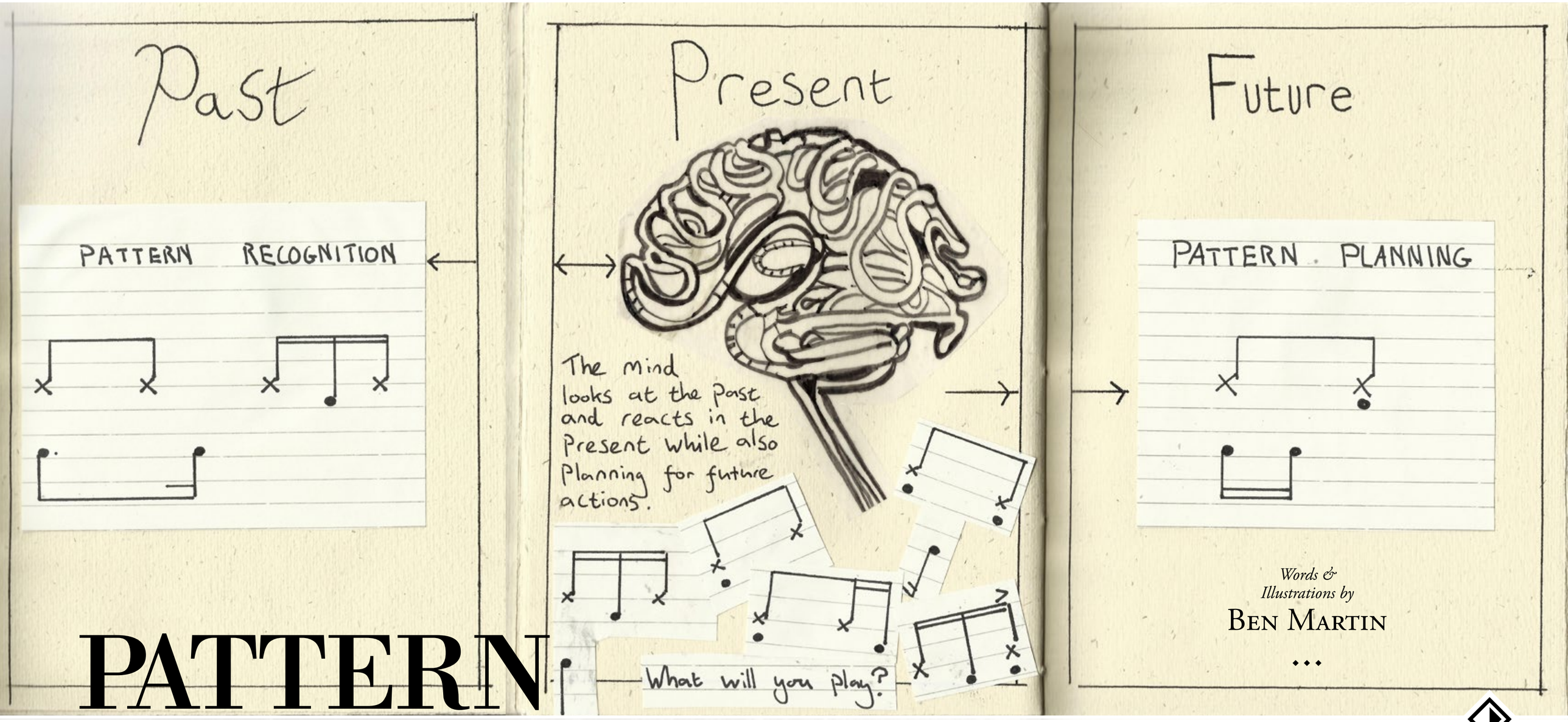

PATTERN RECOGNITION

Can developing your brain's natural ability to recognise patterns help take your musical creativity to new places?

Music is, in essence, a formulation of sounds and patterns which are either pleasing or displeasing to the ear. These patterns, and the extent to which we find them agreeable, have been shaped and filtered by our own particular cultural memes for countless generations. Rhythmical patterns in particular, can not only pinpoint a certain style or musical movement, but form the contextual and historical backbone on which the music itself is supported. By pushing our pattern recognition skills in new directions and developing rhythmic ideas based on what we discover, we can generate new ideas which will help to spark the imaginations of our fellow musicians.

We tend to think of a drummer at the peak of their musical potential as someone who is technically well versed whilst being able to draw on creative and improvisational ideas. This manifests itself as an acquired instinct, allowing us to react on a momentary basis making creative and technical decisions on the fly. To be able to do so, a drummer has to develop a momentary awareness of their past, present, and future musical phrasing. The drummer is then aware that they are acknowledging a constant series of patterns; reacting in the present to what they have just heard or played in relation what they are expecting to play in the next instant. If we can develop an intuitive understanding of our cognitive processes whilst performing, then we can start to find ways to use these to fuel creative, and not habitual, playing. Here are some suggestions:

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Play With Your Eyes Closed

The idea here is that hearing beats without the visual cues may help to increase your level of concentration and increase your ability to focus on the feeling of playing and also on the immediate sounds. Your concentration takes on a different quality with closed eyes.

Play In Slow Motion

Pick a relatively complex pattern that you know you can play well and slow it down to around 30 or 40 bpm. This can be quite a challenge at first as it can be difficult to keep the style and feel of the groove at such a slow pace. The initial sensation of playing at a super slow speed also tends to lead you to fill in gaps that weren't previously there.

What I hope you will notice is that when playing in slow motion and keeping the beat steady (as it is originally played) you have much more time to become mindful of what you have just played and what you are about to play. Notice how when sticking to the allotted pattern your mind fills with countless possibilities as alternatives to what you are intending to play. Try extending your set pattern from one bar (un-changing) to two, three, and four bar progressions.

Once you have mastered the ability to stick to the intended pattern while being more aware of the rhythmic qualities and possibilities of your playing, you could continue to improvise at a slow tempo. Here you will notice that your ideas are easier to edit and that you can play patterns that you perhaps wouldn't think of playing at a faster rate. Once you have mastered a few new patterns speed them up again. I hope that at faster speeds you will begin to notice that your awareness of the patterns you play is more complete, allowing you to open up new possibilities from moment to moment.

Play and Think Backwards

Starting with a simple groove, think about how you would play it in reverse, i.e. starting on the last hit and ending on the first. Once you have thought this through go and play it on the kit. Don't be tempted to work it out on paper first, just play it as you think it should go. Gradually increase your repertoire by building up to more complex patterns in reverse. Keep playing them over and over until they sound good, perhaps adding dynamics and accents into the mix. Don't be tempted to play them forwards just yet. Once you have a beat or two rehearsed, write them out or record them if you can. The process of recording an idea can help to solidify it further.

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ENDEMISM

Brad Weber

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Words by Josh Pothier

Brad Weber is living the life every artistically minded drummer wishes he could live, myself included. After some years of playing around Toronto with various projects, he was approached by Dan Snaith of Caribou to audition for his live touring band. Snaith had been taken by Brad's playing over a year and a half earlier, when Weber's group Winter Equinox had opened for Caribou in Hamilton, Ontario.

Anyone who has seen Brad play live will instantly understand why he stuck in Dan Snaith's memory. His playing is frenzied and organic yet you never feel like he's showing off, even when he's doing things most drummers couldn't envision, let alone perform. He's not a particularly large man, but behind the kit he's a totem - when he raises an arm high in the air you feel it's not so much a visual cue as it is an attempt to strike the kit as hard as possible and drive it through the stage.

Caribou have crafted a career from their musically innovative albums and 'insider cool' aesthetic. After a decade of releases (several of which were under the moniker Manitoba) it seemed like Caribou would continue to release albums that registered just below the radar of commercial success. That is, of course, until the release of Swim in 2010 and Caribou found themselves curating All Tomorrows Parties and touring the world with Radiohead.

What I've always found most interesting about Brad is his own approach to writing and arranging music. I first saw Brad not with Caribou, but with his own electro-psych-rock-multi rhythm juggernaut Pick a Piper. Brad builds melodies and loops around huge rhythmic compositions that resonate deep within and put you in sort of a drum coma. While mostly a quiet and humble man off the stage, Pick a Piper is a chaotic sonic window into Brad's mind where he seems almost more comfortable communicating in rhythms than in words. With the release of their EP in 2009 and their forthcoming album in 2013, Pick a Piper are slowly making their mark on the Canadian musical landscape, earning Brad accolades not only as a performer, but as a songwriter and arranger.

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When we spoke for the first time, Caribou had just released Swim and you were getting ready to embark on the initial tour promoting it. How have things changed over the last two years?
Things have gone further than I could have ever imagined; it's been an incredible ride. We went from playing to 200 people to over 2000 at times. At festivals, it was in the tens of thousands. But it's not so much the size of the crowds as the overall excitement that has been exploding in front of us. I feel like Caribou "the band" is the best it's ever been. The energy I feel between us and the energy emanating from the crowd is exhilarating to say the least. It's been a really inspiring time as well. I've been introduced to a lot of new music and people that have changed my life in the best way possible. This has transferred over to my own song writing and producing, which I feel wouldn't nearly be at this level if it hadn't been for these experiences. I just feel really blessed and I'm enjoying things as they come and try to never take anything for granted.

You've spent most of the summer and fall living a drummer's dream traveling on tour with Radiohead, how did it feel to get that phone call?
It all started with Thom asking Dan to remix a Radiohead track. Then he asked him to DJ with him in London. At

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that point he asked what our interest would be to support them next year (it was late 2011 at this point). Of course we said yes, without hesitation! Initially we thought it would just be a pair of shows in Mexico City, but they kept asking us to do more and more. I think we did almost 30 gigs together in the end. It was totally a boyhood dream come true since I've been listening to them since I was 13 years old. Probably the most inspiring aspect of the whole tour was how real they were as people. Everyone, both band and crew, were really warm and down to earth and incredibly welcoming. It's nice that musicians at that level can be sincere and genuinely grounded people.

Creatively, do you find it more inspiring or intimidating to be in the company of people like Dan Snaith and Thom Yorke? How have these last couple of years shaped the way you play and write music?
Inspiring for sure. Dan has always been a huge inspiration because of his incredible work ethic and desire to always push forward and challenge himself. The same can be said for Thom and the rest of Radiohead. They work their asses off on a daily basis. We'd show up at four or five in the afternoon and they would often have been rehearsing on stage for an hour or two. That happened all the time. They certainly don't take their success for granted. It totally shows in the longevity they've created.

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After being exposed to so much different music and constantly playing festivals with different bands, are you finding it harder to draw inspiration from your peers?
I think I've become pickier and pickier with music as time goes on. I don't think it has anything to do with playing festivals and touring with tons of bands. I just think the more you hear, the harder it is to become excited by new music. That said, there's a lot of amazing music being made at the moment and a lot of it actually is coming from my peers, which is totally inspiring. I think local inspiration never ceases to exist. There are always exciting things happening, no matter where you are.

It's been a long time since you've started working on a new Pick a Piper album, what was it like trying to make your own album between Caribou tours?
There were many days cramped in the van working on beats on my laptop. Lots of the songs on the new Pick a Piper record started out as an idea I made on an airplane or airport gate. Whenever we'd have time at home, I'd try to get together with as many people as possible to flesh out these ideas before heading out with Caribou again. I ended up working with a

lot of different friends. For the first time I wasn't restricting song writing contributions to the members in my band. I would get various friends over to record a whole bunch of ideas, which I would then cut up and use or not use as I saw fit. It was kind of like sampling my friends! This approach continued for about two years and eventually culminated into the first Pick a Piper full length, which I'm really excited to show the world. It should be out early next year.

Do you feel the live band version of Pick a Piper will take on a much more expansive, changing role to accommodate the new material?
It already has! The new material is tighter and less tribal, but that doesn't mean the live show doesn't still maintain some of our classic characteristics. The new show is somewhere in between where we've been and where we'd like to go in the future. We've added a trombone and sax player and have noticeably more synths and less guitar this time around.

Considering your experience both with live drums and electronic loops and software, do you feel there is anything limiting drummers besides their imaginations at this point?
I think there are no limitations but your mind. It's a great time to be making music, but I find it can also be really helpful to set certain limitations or criteria on yourself from time to time, because the limitless nature of everything can be paralyzing too.

What are some drummers and bands you feel have really been shaping the way you play recently?
I've been listening to so much dance music lately that it's hard to think of drummers. But that sense of creating a loop and grooving out on it for long periods of time has certainly shaped my drumming in many ways. I've pulled back quite a bit and am trying to focus more on the feel I put into a beat. It's fun to just play a repetitive hi-hat pattern for 10 minutes and think about the little nuances you are injecting into that pattern. I think this way of thinking fits in well with my other current inspirations, which are African drummers, notably Tony Allen. His beats have incredible feel and are rarely complicated. But if you sit down and actually try to play them, you'll be surprised at how much you suck at it! I've been sitting

down with a lot of afro-beat and highlife music, trying to figure out how to improve my feel and groove overall.

African drumming saw a peak in interest over twenty years ago when artists like Talking Heads and Paul Simon started to incorporate expansive, multi layered percussion into their songs (in part due to Tony Allen's playing with Fela Kuti's influential Africa 70 project). Now, given that with electronics it's possible to create that experience in concert without the aid of a full percussive ensemble, do you think it will have a kind of resurgence in popular music?
I feel like we are seeing a bit of change in the way pre-recorded loops and backing tracks are used in live shows. Certainly five to eight years ago, it was just one solid track that you'd "play along to" and the crowd wouldn't necessarily have any issues with the fact that no one was triggering any of these parts. Now I feel like you have to be careful with too much acoustic content in backing tracks and too much automated content in general. I think it's more exciting to a crowd to have humans triggering off and affecting loops and not have such a set backing track live. I guess this doesn't exactly answer your question, but I do see a certain element of cheese in tons of acoustic percussion that is pre-recorded. It's always more exciting to have it be live. That being said, I've been guilty of this myself... it's pretty tempting!

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"I DO SEE A CERTAIN ELEMENT OF CHEESE IN TONS OF ACOUSTIC PERCUSSION THAT IS PRE-RECORDED."

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Have you put any thought into what comes next after the initial Pick A Piper release?
We are going to tour lots in the spring, summer and hopefully autumn as well. I'm also working on a lot of new music at the moment, so hopefully 2013 can be the year where we play lots of shows across the country and also finish up a new record that could be ready to go for whenever I have some time off again. But really, I have no idea what will happen this year, but that's why music is exciting!

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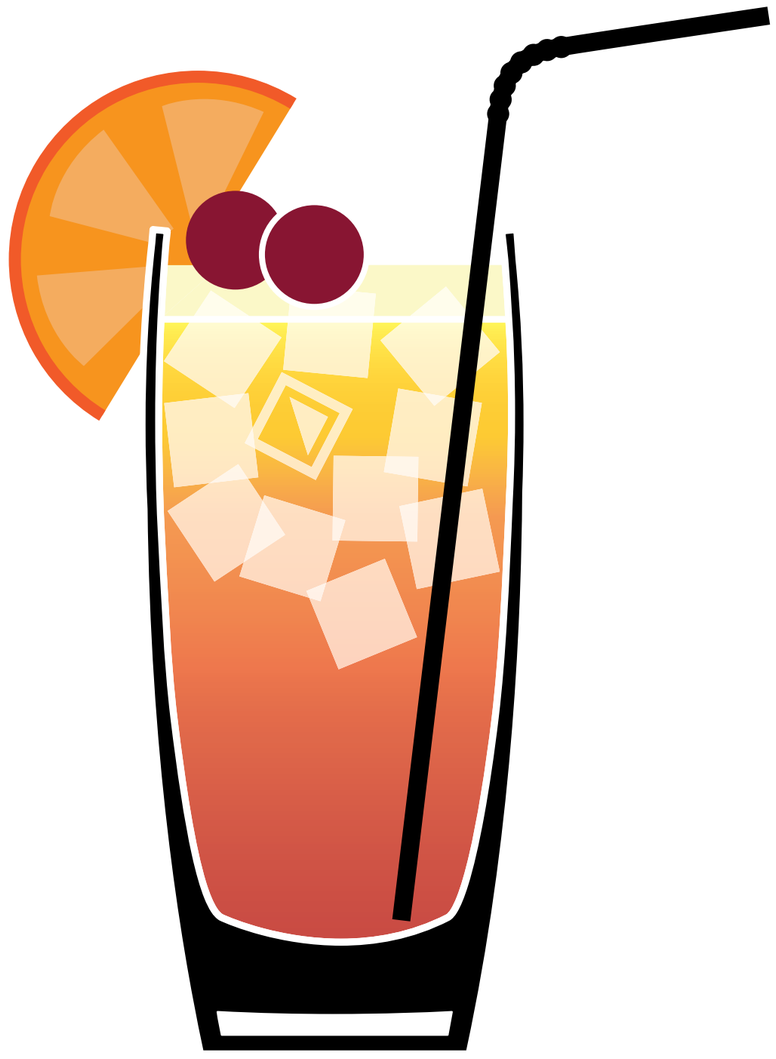

SINGAPORE SLING

[According to The Drummer's Journal]

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Ingredients:

1.0 Part Grenadine

1.0 Part Cheery Brandy

2.0 Parts Gin

2.0 Parts Pineapple Juice

4.0 Parts Soda Water

Serve unstirred over ice, with
Cherries & Orange