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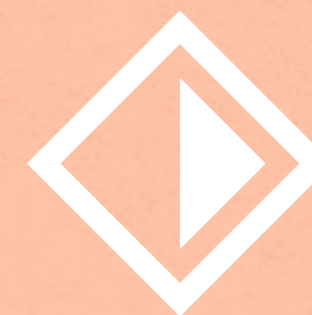




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ISSUE SIXTEEN, AUTUMN 2017

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# MASTHEAD

ISSUE SIXTEEN, AUTUMN 2017

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IF I'VE GOT EVANS  
DRUMHEADS,   
IT DOESN'T MATTER  
WHAT BAND I'M PLAYING  
WITH. THEY MAKE  
MY SOUND.

—AQUILES PRIESTER

SET THE TONE

**EVANS**  
DRUMHEADS





# SUMMER HIBERNATION

VOLUME THREE, *ISSUE SIXTEEN*

♦♦♦

The eagle-eyed among you might have noticed that we haven't released an issue for a while. There was a period of perhaps two to three months where we'd almost written off doing so, so it's nice to be able to sit here and write this and introduce our 16th issue.

That probably sounds a bit over dramatic and in all honestly, it is, but thanks to everyone who bore with us during this interim period. I'm not going to lie, it was weird.

Really, it came down to motivation. When we put the interviews for this issue together, I realised the themes reflected some of the frustrations we were feeling with the magazine itself.

As ever it's been a privilege to talk to these people. Louis Hayes, a true jazz icon, has played on

records that had huge cultural impacts in 1960s America and today are considered canonical. Ash Soan is one of Britain's most well-known session artists whose credits consist of back-to-back chart-topping records as well as a spot on a TV show called *The Voice*. Mark Sheppard is an esteemed sci-fi stalwart who started acting ultimately because his career as a drummer didn't work out, initially, I'd add. Affy Green, currently touring with *The Pet Shop Boys*, talks about how her career was almost over before it began due to the pressure to succeed and the mismanagement of mental health.

Talking to Affy put a lot of things in perspective. She went through a lot.

It's nice to be back.  
Tom.

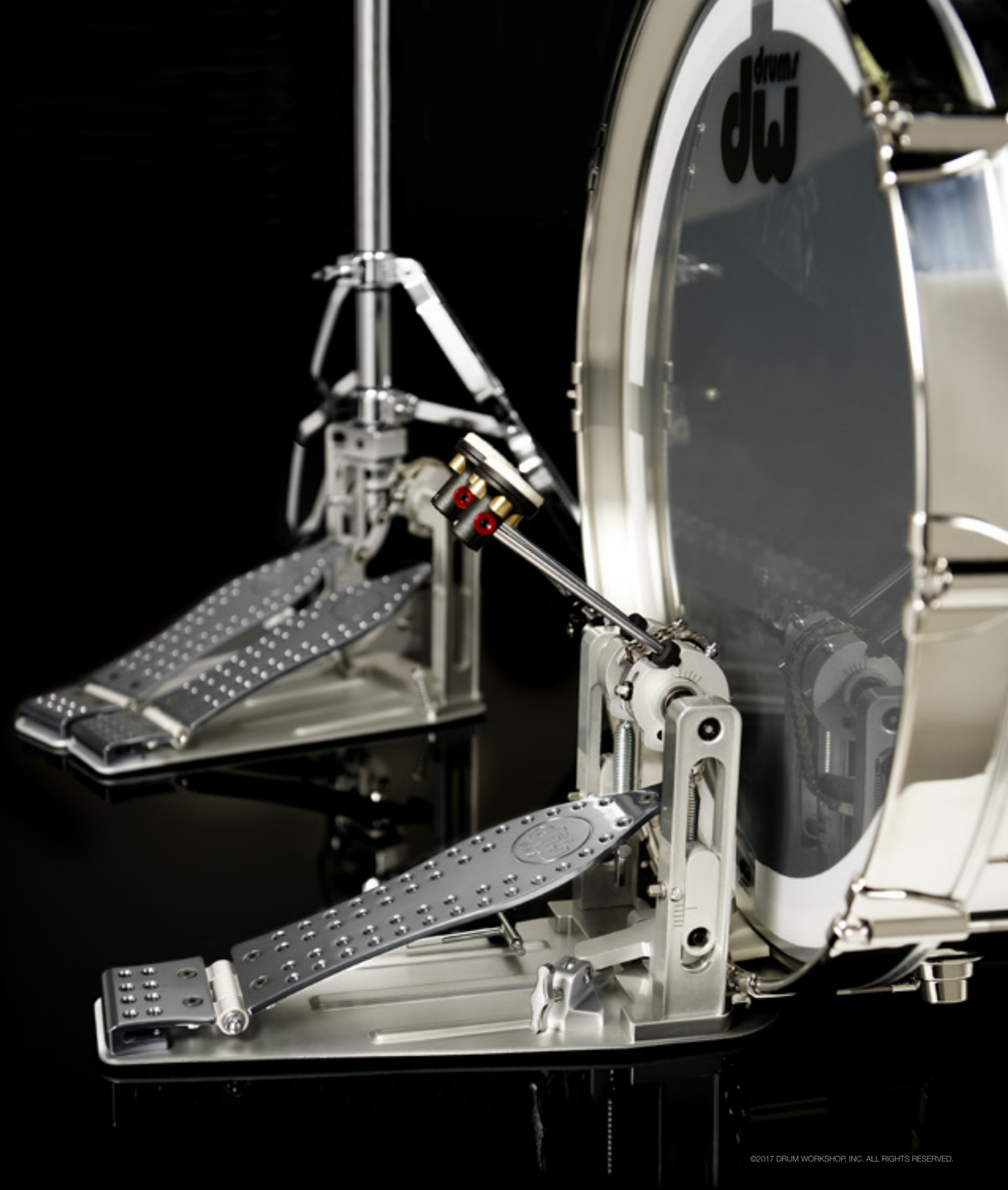






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# THE LONG RUN

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AFRIKA GREEN &  
THE PET SHOP BOYS

*Words & photography by Tom Hoare*





**1996**

When I was about nine, I went along with a school friend to one of his Saturday morning tennis lessons. I sucked at tennis. The teacher identified this immediately and, perhaps like you might treat a stray dog, gave me a tennis ball and told me to do whatever I wanted as long as I kept away from the courts.

After about ten minutes of wandering around bouncing the ball, I got bored and sat down in the car park, watching through a chain link fence as everyone else worked on their half volley.

I must have mentally checked out for a few minutes, and only checked back in when I realised my legs felt odd. I looked down and saw they were covered with large ants. As another few horrifying seconds passed, I realised that many had made storming progress up underneath my white t-shirt and, most uncomfortably, into my hair.

I did the only thing I was capable of doing at that age and ran screaming out of the car park and back onto the tennis courts. The ants, unappreciative of being transported away from their nest and probably feeling a bit like when the subway train just misses your stop entirely, also reacted in the only way they really knew how and began to bite.

Still fully clothed, I was placed in a cold shower and, pressingly, quizzed about the whereabouts of the ball I'd been given.

Since, I've had little time for tennis, and also little time for ants.

**2017**

When Affy arrived, she set up a practice pad in the garden at the front of the flat. I say 'garden', but really there are a few potted plants struggling to make the best of things and a rotting pallet which looks like it's been painted black. It hasn't.

Prior to meeting Affy, all I really knew was that she'd recently landed a gig playing drums for The Pet Shop Boys. For over 30 years, the Pet Shop Boys have remained at the forefront of British pop. On average, they have released a studio album every 2.3 years since 1986, becoming one of the most successful British pop acts of all time. They've produced songs ranging from wistful balladry to scathing political satire, selling over 50 million records in the process. West End Girls and its monotone descriptions of life in the inner cities remains one of my favourite moments of synthpop genius.

Because there wasn't a great deal out there about Affy as a player, we chatted for quite a while. I asked her a load of run of the mill questions expecting somewhat predictable answers. What she actually told me was not what I was expecting. An hour and a half later, when she'd pretty much taken me through her career, I felt a bit stunned.

We take some photos. Because the garden is tiny, I have to lie down on the ground because I can't move further backwards. Affy plays on

the pad. After a minute or so, I feel a faintly familiar sensation on the back of my legs. I then feel it on the back of my neck. I drop the camera and proceed directly to the shower, managing to subdue my internal screams for the sake of reserving some dignity.

**15 Minutes later**

Affy: Sorry about the ants. That's pretty unfortunate.

**The Drummer's Journal: Ah don't worry. It must have been the vibrations from the pad brought them all out. I still feel a bit like they're on me. Anyhow, can we revisit what you were talking about earlier? Your journey in becoming a drummer was certainly more difficult than most. Can we go from the beginning?**

Sure. So I started playing at about 13. I fell into drums by accident because I was a loner at school. I didn't really have many friends. There was a room with a cheap kit in, I used to go in every lunch time just for something to do.

**You said you grew up in Suffolk?**

That's right. It's really rural. There is no music scene. VICE did a documentary about why people fail in the music industry from where I'm from, and it's because it's a void, it's hard to break out. The plus side is there wasn't much distraction because it's rural. So I did my GCSEs then studied music at a local college. Then I realised I needed to leave.







♦♦♦

“DOING AUDITIONS  
AND NOT GETTING A  
CALL BACK, TIME AND  
TIME AGAIN. NO ONE  
TELLS YOU WHY. IT ALL  
MOUNTS UP.”

♦♦♦





**How did you realise that?**

I just knew I had done everything I could there. I was turning 18, and I was already hitting the jazz jams with the decent local players. And I was already exhausting those avenues and needed something to take me further. So that's when I studied at a music school in Guildford.

**As a student at that point, how did you feel about the prospect of being a drummer as a career? Did you feel it would be easy?**

I went into it with a bit of an immature perspective, like, "Oh, I'll just be a session drummer." My degree was two years long, and from the outset they said, "Only 1% of you will actually make it." They said that we'd be competing against each other. That's when I started getting apprehensive.

**That sounds unpleasant, though I suppose there is truth to it.**

Yeah. It wasn't until after those two years I realised just how hard it was, how competitive. I began to think, "I don't think I can do this." Doing auditions and not getting a call back, time and time again. No one tells you why. It all mounts up.

**What kept you going?**

Fear, because I didn't think I could do anything else. You know when you put all your eggs in one basket, that's what I'd done all my life since I was 13. I'd invested so much time that I thought it'd be a waste if I didn't keep trying.

**How many auditions have you done?**

Quite a few... I have no idea of an actual number.





**Can you tell me about some?**

The one that still sort of gets me is, ages ago, I got a message out of the blue from Ed Sheeran's manager. This is way before Ed was famous. He said they had a new artist called Ed Sheeran and they were putting together a band. He asked if I'd like to come and audition. I went through several stages, and got right to the end, at which point they offered me the job. It was amazing. I was so excited. I had all these tour dates in the diary. Then, at the last second, the management decided they wanted him to go solo. No more band.

**Wow. That must have been gutting.**

Yeah it was really hard. That was my first actual audition as well.

**How do you feel when you see Ed Sheeran now?**

Really annoyed. Well, not at him, I mean, it was obviously the right call. It was unfortunate, I guess. But I had quite a few things like that. Near misses. And they really knock your confidence. The industry is turbulent enough anyway. Nothing is set in stone.

**What did your parents think about you wanting to be a drummer?**

I think my mum thought it would be a five second fad. I didn't have a job so she was funding my drumming lessons, which for a single parent is quite a big ask. So to prove it wasn't a fad I got together all the spare change I had and went and bought a pair of sticks to sort of prove a point. Then I did get a part-time job. On a market, selling oversized knickers.

**Oversized knickers?**

Yup. That's how I saved up for my first kit. I made next to nothing. It took me a long time. I sold a lot of knickers.

**How did things progress career-wise for you, was it smooth?**

No. I spread myself really thin. I tried to get everywhere I could. And when it was getting towards the end of my degree, one of the tutors said the BBC have called and are looking for someone who has been through some adversity. So they gave me a call, and they were making a three-part documentary following the lives of 12 musicians all over the UK. The idea was we'd form a band and perform at Buckingham Palace for Prince Harry alongside some other famous musicians. Sheryl Crow was there. She came over afterwards and was like, "I'd really like it if you played drums for me." But, of course, she lived in LA and it was going to be quite difficult to make it work. The video from the concert got over 1 million views in a couple of weeks, and I was thinking, "Ok, this is it, this will be my big break." But for a drummer, it doesn't really work that way. I came crashing down pretty hard after that.

**Because nothing changed?**

Pretty much. I was back to working crap jobs again, stacking shelves. I started burning the candle at both ends, doing the 9-5 then going to jams or auditions in the evening. I had a total breakdown. I had to be admitted into hospital. I'd pushed myself so much, never a moment's rest. It was like the accelerator had gotten stuck on. I remember it felt like everything was sped up, and I couldn't make it stop. My skin felt like it was crawling.

**How did the hospital respond?**

I checked into a facility and they said, "You've got bipolar." That's quite a big label to give someone. I lost my car licence, I lost my job. I was overweight because of the medication. I was heavily sedated all the time. It was the worst place to be in, but I just knew I had to wait it out. I was in and out of hospital a lot. When I thought things were getting better, I'd spiral downward again. I existed like this for years. I couldn't regulate any of my emotions. It was exhausting.

**What happened to your relationship with music?**

It was a double-edged sword. Although it was helping me, it was also a big stressor because I was giving so much and getting nowhere. It was a really weird time in my life, but that's when the perseverance kicked in. And I still have to keep myself in check.

**How did you feel about the drums?**

I fell out of love with it because when you do it as a job, it changes how you feel about it. I questioned my life many times, questioning why I was even here. I wouldn't say drums pulled me out of dark places because at times I didn't even care. It was one of those things, it became, "That's something else I can't even do right." People stay in relationships because

♦♦♦

**"IT WAS LIKE THE ACCELERATOR HAD GOTTEN STUCK ON. I REMEMBER IT FELT LIKE EVERYTHING WAS SPED UP, AND I COULDN'T MAKE IT STOP. MY SKIN FELT LIKE IT WAS CRAWLING."**

♦♦♦







they're familiar as opposed to being meaningful or positive. I sort of felt like that a bit at times, and I kept doing it just because it was there. Eventually something fell in line, but even today I can't pin point what, unfortunately. I don't think it was a single thing.

**Something must have changed though?**

Eventually I was told that I'd been misdiagnosed with bipolar and that I'd been suffering from mania. I still wasn't in a great place. For six years, I pretty much took myself out of the industry altogether. I found an outhouse and just played drums. Being out of London stopped me being anxious about the competition.

**Out of sight, out of mind sort of thing?**

Yes. To feel like you're fighting for work is exhausting. Instead, I taught myself about recording and singing. I knew I needed to expand my skillset.

**Six years. Did that feel like a long time?**

You wouldn't believe. By the end I'd almost given up altogether. I couldn't face that it might have all been for nothing.

**What brought you out of that situation?**

I took a gig on a cruise ship [pauses]. It was hell on earth.

**Really? It sounds like it'd be glamorous?**

Well, the money was quite good. It was a last-minute thing, and I was going through a breakup at the time, I just wanted to get away. The cruise was around Norway.

**Ah, the Fjords.**

Exactly. Looking back now, I was definitely at the worst point in my life at this point. We played a grand total of 45 minutes per week. A lot of the time I was just sat around, but had to be wearing full cocktail attire. It was horrendous. One of the other musicians in the band told me she was moving to LA for recording work. Things were working out for her. So I asked, "What am I doing wrong?"

She put me in touch with a guy at a talent agency. I'd tried to do this before but not gotten a reply. Anyhow, this guy said he'd keep me on the books and I'd get a call if anything came up. Months went by and I heard nothing. Then, randomly, the phone rang. They asked if I could play at the National Television Awards. It was pretty much a three-minute mime but I didn't care. But I did it and took my A-game. Then I got a call from another agent asking me to audition for the Pet Shop Boys.

**That must have been a nice phone call to get.**

Yes, it was, absolutely.

**How did you feel going into it?**

It was the hardest thing I've ever done in my life. We had to learn four songs, and sing and play. I hadn't really sung in front of anyone before. I felt quite confident, but only because I felt like I had nothing to lose. But when I saw a list of the other names auditioning, I almost gave up then. We had ten minutes in total. I was pretty much the last person in. Everyone came out looking absolutely shell shocked. I didn't try to be over polite or overconfident, I just went in as myself.

Then I got an email later that night and it said I've been asked to go for a call back. A couple of days later they called and just offered it to me. The sense of relief was so much. I cried. I was so happy.

**Proper rollercoaster!**

It's been pretty full on, touring the world.

**What would you say to people struggling with motivation?**

It's resilience and bravery that'll carry you through, rather than opportunities. If you can get through that bleak phase, where you're not sure what you're doing, just keep going, because you will get through it and it will make you stronger. You probably have a lot of strength inside. So I spent years working on technical things, but also those abilities you need as a person within yourself. Recognising how you learn, knowing your own strengths and weaknesses.

♦ ♦ ♦  
 “YOU’VE GOT  
 BIPOLAR.’ THAT’S  
 QUITE A BIG LABEL TO  
 GIVE SOMEONE. I LOST  
 MY CAR LICENCE, I  
 LOST MY JOB.”









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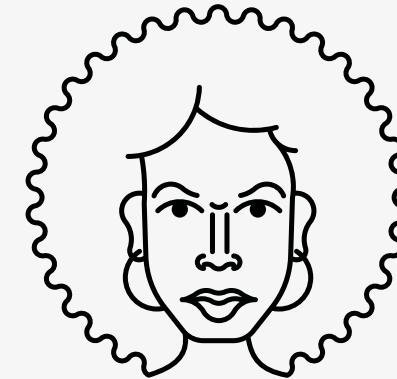
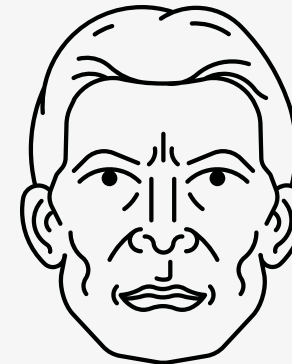
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# THE GAME CHANGERS 1/5

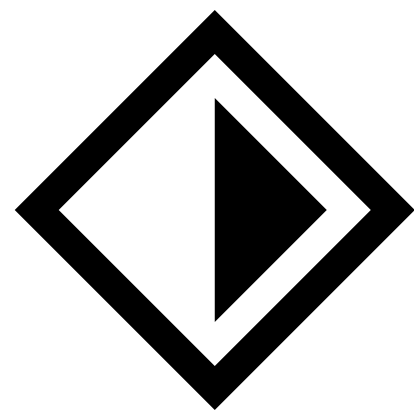


We collaborated with illustrator Arturo Liranzo to honour the game changers – the men and women who, over the years, have advanced the art form in their own way. Available now as a limited edition print.

[For the full set, see page 63](#)

*L-R: Art Blakey, Buddy Rich, Charlie Watts, Cindy Blackman*





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# JAZZ MESSENGER

A CONVERSATION WITH LOUIS HAYES

*Words by Tom Hoare*

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Louis was having breakfast when I arrived. Pancakes. He was sat in the hotel restaurant, which was empty apart from some cleaning staff and a man who was repeatedly polishing the same small spot on the bar whilst staring into the distance. Slow morning.

The hotel is old. A once glistening establishment that, as when the music industry met the internet, never bothered to refurbish its modus operandi to account for changing tastes. It goes to show you can't retrofit relevance.

I was excited to meet Louis. I wandered over towards his table and then, at the last second, diverted away from it, thinking it'd be weird to simply sit down and introduce myself whilst he was eating. Instead, I now hovered behind him, watching him eat. I realised this was now a lot weirder than if I'd just sat down. The man polishing the bar suddenly stops, and, seizing on my indecision, beckons me over.

"Are you here to see Louis?" he asks.

"Yes."

"That's him right there." He points to Louis.

"No shit," was my first thought, but as Louis turns round to see why two people are talking about him, I realise this may have been the Barman's plan from the very beginning. I mentally high five him. He winks.

"Will you sit down? You're making me nervous!" Louis states. I oblige.

I sat and listened to Louis talk about his career. He grew up in Detroit, and by 15 was playing in local jazz clubs. He was a natural talent and developed a reputation as an exciting, forward-thinking player. His career included work with luminaries such as John Coltrane and Tony Williams, but he is perhaps most well known for his work with hard bop pioneer Horace Silver.

During 1959, Horace Silver and the Jazz Messengers were pioneering a style of jazz known as hard bop. It incorporated rhythm and blues elements and steered away from the big band pomp that had preceded it. It was the music that embodied 1950s New York. Vibrant. Frenetic. It certainly wasn't being played in the conservatoires.

At the time, the Jazz Messengers had a drummer by the name of Art Blakey. He would become one of the most revered drummers of his generation. Louis, at 19, would occupy Blakey's seat when Horace Silver and Blakey parted ways. As a result, Louis himself embarked on a career that has, over 50 years later, cemented his status as an all-time great.

### **The Drummer's Journal: You grew up in Detroit. What was it like to grow up in the city at that time?**

Louis Hayes: I was born there in 1937. Family life played an important role. Music was something that was in the home. My father played piano and drums, though not professionally, and my mother played piano and sang. Before TV, music and arts, in general, were important in the neighbourhood because they gave you something to do. Drums were something I felt comfortable with because I figured

them out quite fast. I realised I could learn quickly. In Detroit, at that time, there were so many older generations who could play at such a high level. I used to get intimidated easily.

### **Were you shy?**

Yeah, I was a shy kid, on the outside at least. But I had an ego.

### **An ego?!**

I had an ego (laughs), I just didn't know it at the time. But I knew what I wanted to do by the time I was about 15. I listened to Charlie Parker and Max Roach and I wanted to play bebop.

### **Why bebop?**

By that time, the big band era was pretty much over, and I didn't want to be part of the scene where a band has a leader but the other people in the group don't matter. I wanted to be an equal, and that's what I liked about bebop. I wanted to play this art form they called modern jazz.

### **What were you like in school?**

School and myself... we never got along too well (laughs).

### **Why was that?**

I was a dreamer. I didn't have parents who pushed me at school because they were too busy trying to make money, so they didn't keep an eye on our grades. I was just drifting. I would pass barely, from

♦♦♦

“I WANTED TO BE AN  
EQUAL, AND THAT'S WHAT  
I LIKED ABOUT BEBOP.  
I WANTED TO PLAY THIS  
ART FORM THEY CALLED  
MODERN JAZZ.”

♦♦♦









one grade to the next. And that's how it went on. I made it, but only just. By 15, I started taking my playing more seriously. Even my musician friends would say, "Hey, want to come and hang out?" I would make up an excuse, then just stay home and practise.

**What was the scene like in Detroit then?**

By the time I was at a certain level, I started getting calls asking me to play in clubs. Problem was, you needed to be 21 because they served alcohol. I had a job in a major club in Detroit for a few months, and then they found out how old I was and that was the end of that.

**How did you get to know Horace Silver?**

A guy I knew called Doug Watkins from New York was appearing with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, and we got together when he was in town. Art Blakey and Horace Silver were going in separate directions, and Horace was starting his own quintet. When I met Art later on in life, he told me that Horace and himself hadn't got along too well off-stage. When they parted ways, Horace asked if I'd join his quintet. I'd just turned 19. I arrived in New York, and Horace met me at the train station. He put me in a hotel on 52nd Street called the Elvin Hotel, and I had a window looking onto Broadway. Across the street was the canopy for Birdland. At night, I could see all the people going in.

**How did that feel as a 19-year-old?**

Oh man, I was in heaven. I was that excited I set my drums up in the hotel room and started playing.

**Did you have the hotel manager knocking on the door?**

No, I actually had one guy who came round who said, "Oh I'm a drummer too!" And we became friends after that (laughs).

**Did you get along with Horace?**

Horace was very personable and I always felt comfortable around him. He wrote so well. Sometimes he'd play records for me, compositions that the new group was going to play that had been previously recorded with Art Blakey playing drums. I was very intimidated by that.

**I can see why that would be intimidating (laughs).**

He would play the arrangements and I would listen, but he never told me what to play. I had to bring my own thought patterns and technique to what he was doing. And it worked pretty well. People ask me, "Did Horace write those arrangements out for you?" But he never wrote anything. I mean, I could play, that's why I was there. Nobody was going to put up with you if you couldn't. It was a profession.

**Was it cutthroat like that?**

Oh yeah. If you can't cut it you're out the door.

**How did you deal with the pressure?**

There was a lot of pressure to deliver, but I saw an opportunity with Horace to grow as a player. I did five albums with him on Blue Note Records, but I was also recording with other artists on the scene at the time. I realised, after about two years, that I was finally beginning to develop what I felt was my own way of dealing with this art form.

**Where did that realisation come from?**

I was at the right time in my life where I could grow as a person. I was lucky enough to have a job with Horace and be able to play in a band setting where I could learn from older artists. Also, I practised a lot (laughs).

**You spent a lot of time with Papa Jo Jones. What sort of qualities did he inspire in you?**

He inspired me as a musician and as a person. With those older gentlemen, in some ways it wasn't just about music, it was how to be a man and how to conduct yourself. I learnt a lot from him about that.

**Can you remember anything specific?**

In general, with him, after 6 pm you had to have a tie on. If you didn't have a tie, that was it. He was like that. When I look back on it now, I was young and going to all these different cities and countries that I'd never been in before. I wanted to hang out and see what was happening. But Jo would say to me, "You come with me." He kept an eye on me, that's for sure.

**What would happen if you acted in a way he didn't like?**

He had a way of speaking where he could make people very nervous. He was outgoing, but he could say absolutely anything. He would not hold back and would say exactly what was on his mind. He

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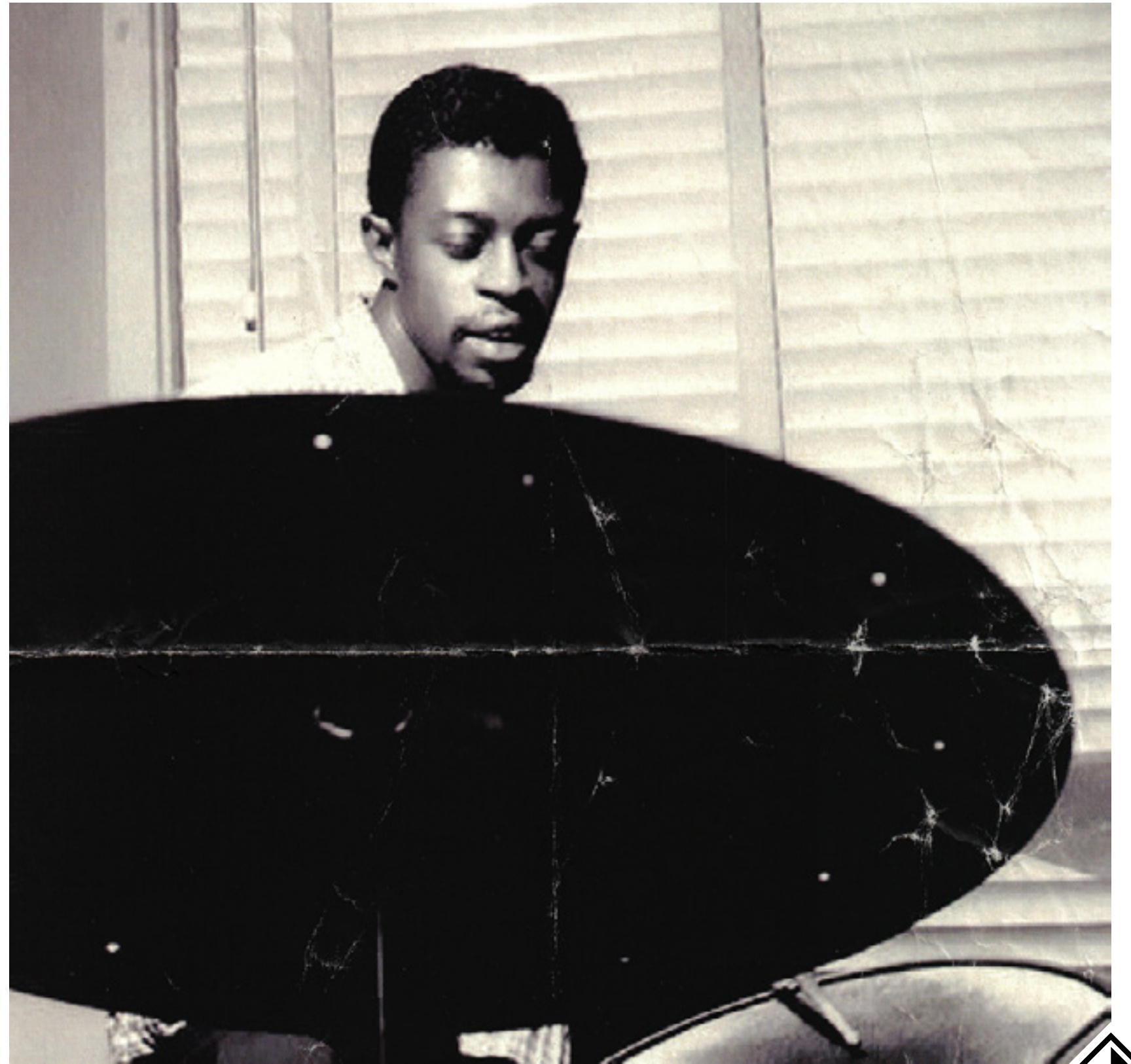
“IN SOME WAYS, IT WASN'T JUST ABOUT MUSIC, IT WAS HOW TO BE A MAN; HOW TO CONDUCT YOURSELF.”

♦♦♦



LOUIS HAYES  
RECORDING FOR BLUE  
NOTE RECORDS 1957

♦ ♦ ♦  
“I COULD PLAY, THAT’S  
WHY I WAS THERE.  
NOBODY WAS GOING  
TO PUT UP WITH YOU IF  
YOU COULDN’T. IT WAS  
A PROFESSION.”  
♦ ♦ ♦





could be very cutting with his tongue, but for some reason, he liked me. He was really the only person of his age I had the opportunity to spend that much time with.

**You spent time with many iconic players...**

A lot of these older gentlemen I had huge respect for. Max Roach was my first hero, then Louis Bellson. He was a very warm, kind man. Buddy Rich had a rep for not being a very nice guy, but during the limited time I spent with him, he was always very gracious. Gene Krupa, Buddy and Jo Jones had a great rapport together. Krupa gave me a cymbal that I still have at home. Being around all these people was wonderful.

**What would you talk about? Would you ever ask them about their playing?**

I never asked any of them how they did anything, it wasn't about that for me, just watching them play was enough. Asking them questions was out of the question. Just to be in their company and listen to them talk, how they carried themselves, and especially watching them on stage. What else can you ask for?

◆◆◆

LOUIS HAYES AND RAY  
BROWN PLAYING WITH OSCAR  
PETERSON, 1965

◆◆◆

“MY FRIENDS WOULD  
SAY, ‘WANT TO COME  
AND HANG OUT?’  
I WOULD MAKE UP AN  
EXCUSE, THEN JUST STAY  
HOME AND PRACTISE.”

◆◆◆







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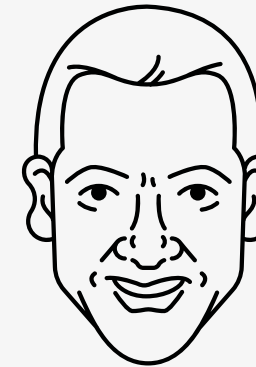
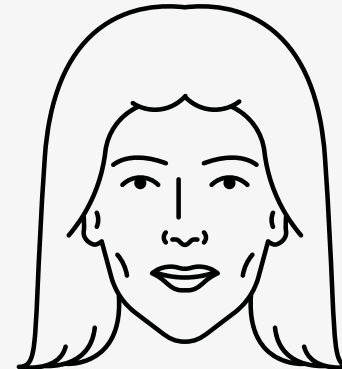


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# THE GAME CHANGERS 2/5

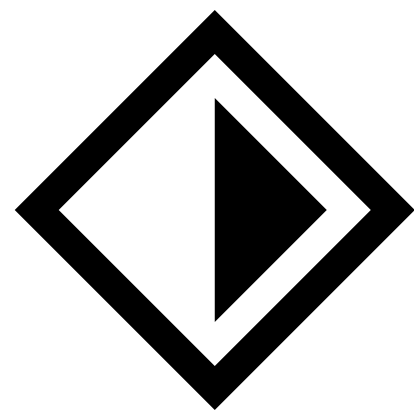


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[For the full set, see page 63](#)

*L-R: Ed Shaughnessy, Evin Jones, Evelyn Glennie, Gene Krupa*





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AN INDEPENDENT DRUM MAGAZINE

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# THE BOVINE BELL

HOW TO MAKE A COWBELL

*Words by Tom Hoare  
Photography by Jeff Ivester*



### I'll probably never forget this.

John Karpi, a New Jersey native who runs a sheet metal factory, is holding up a cowbell. He strikes it with a drumstick. Around him are three of his upper management staff.

The cowbell makes a noise.

“Clunk!”

John grimaces. His staff grimace too. John strikes the cowbell again.

“Clunk!”

The marketing manager contorts his face in disgust. “What a joke,” he says, looking genuinely offended. The factory’s operations manager snorts through his nose and shakes his head. “What a piece of junk!”

John looks at me, and asks, “What do you think? How does it sound?”

I’m fumbling for the correct thing to say. “Er... I mean, to me it sounds like a cowbell.”

There is collective disbelief at this statement. All four people look at me like I’ve just told them that New Jersey can go fuck itself.

“Tom,” John says, almost pleading, “you’ve got to understand.”

He picks up another cowbell. This one is different.

He strikes it.

“Clunk!”

Now everyone is nodding their head. “That’s more like it!”

John smiles. You see the difference? You see how it’s supposed to sound?

“... Yes”, I lie.

People seem happy for me, like I’ve just reached an exclusive plane of existence. I feel like I’ve said the right thing.

John holds the first cowbell up. “This is trash,” he says, “imported from China.” He now holds up the second bell. “This. This is how you make a cowbell.”

◆◆◆

John has been making cowbells for a very long time. Prior to my visit to his factory, I thought cowbells were pretty much just chunks of metal that fell off a production line. John said that for a lot of manufacturers this is probably true, but that the only real way to make them is to do so by hand.

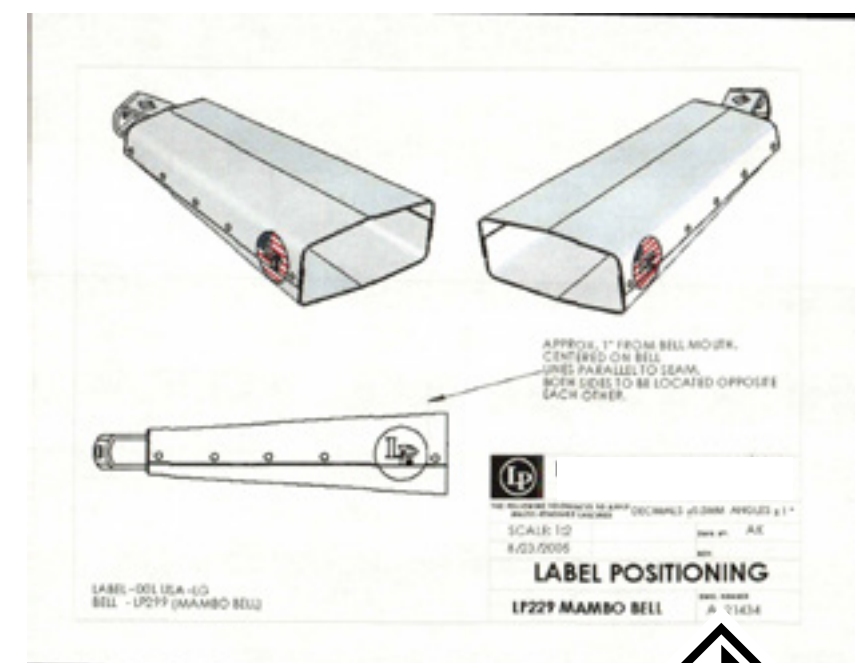
My experience of cowbells in music was when classic rock got a bit angsty. The Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin, and Jimi Hendrix, as well as

countless others, all, at some point, turned to the cowbell. What this association shows is my absolute ignorance to the nuances of Latin music. To me, cowbells were pretty much one and the same. After I’d spent a day with John, I was beginning to get a clearer picture of just how varied bells and blocks can be.

Tito Puente is probably the most widely known exponent of Latin music in the States, to the extent where he guest starred as himself on the Simpsons episode “Who Shot Mr. Burns.” It’s probably one of the best episodes of The Simpsons ever made. Yes, I know it’s a two-parter.

John is a stand-up guy. He’s kind and patient, and it’s clear his staff have a lot of time for him. Some have worked here for over 40 years. He’s a fountain of knowledge when it comes to metalworking and has very strong opinions about how the bells he makes should sound. He has a well-trained ear.

The factory is kind of what you’d expect an old sheet metal factory to look like. It’s pretty dirty, dim, and full of huge machines that are cutting, stamping and bending metal. John walked me around the factory floor, stopping to talk to people here and there, and showed me exactly how to make a bell.





**The process starts with the metal shear.** It trims large sheets of steel down to just the right amount you need to make a cowbell. In this case, that's about 16x10 inches.







**The steel is cut again, this time into an hour-glass shape.** The edges are then crimped in a press.

**The cowbell is bent into its bell shape by hand.** A mallet is then used to make sure the edges of the bell align perfectly.





**This particular bell has two seams** –one on each side– which are being welded. This is done by a pair of steady hands.





**The finishing tank is a vibrating tub of ceramic into which the bell is placed.**

This removes any sharp edges and helps prep the bell for painting.

The painters also have steady hands. They powder coat the bell, which is then hung in an industrial oven to dry.

John said he's made over a million cowbells this way. I hope he makes many more.

To watch the video we made from our visit to LP, and more TDJ content, [click here >>>](#)











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# THE GAME CHANGERS 3/5

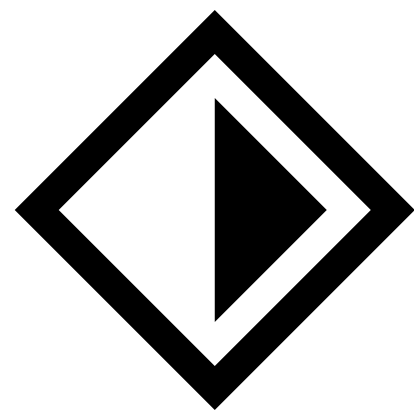


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*Left to right - Ginger Baker, Jeff Porcaro, John Bonham, Jojo Mayer*





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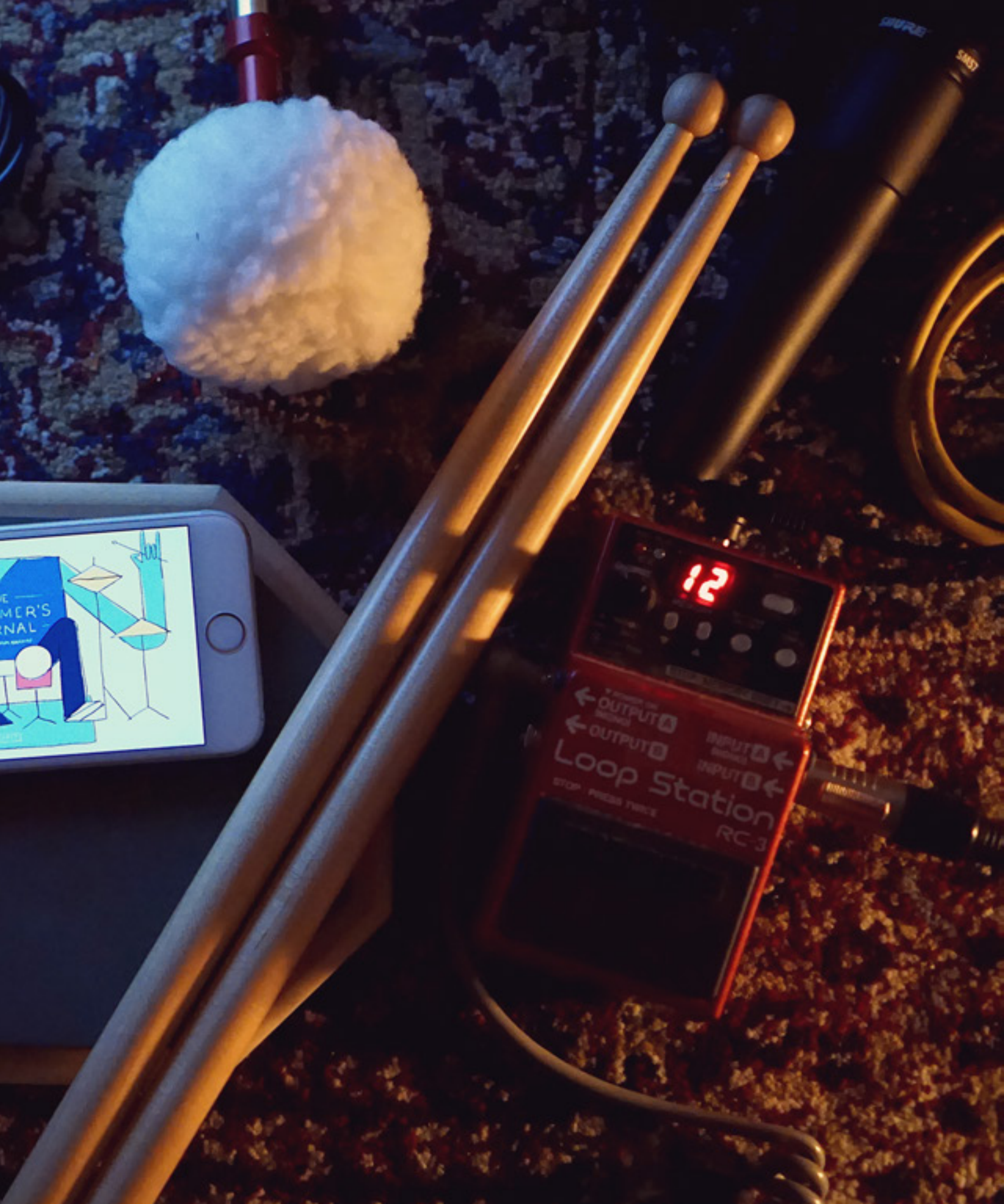
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# ACT UP

A CONVERSATION WITH MARK SHEPPARD

*Words by Tom Hoare*

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YOU MIGHT HAVE SEEN MARK SHEPPARD ON TV. HE'S BEEN A STAPLE IN SOME OF THE BEST SCI-FI SERIES OF THE LAST 20 YEARS.

JOSS WHEDON'S *FIREFLY*, *DR WHO*, *THE X-FILES*, *BATTLESTAR GALACTICA*; *STAR TREK: VOYAGER*. TODAY HE'S BEST KNOWN FOR HIS ROLE IN *SUPERNATURAL* — AN EPIC FANTASY ADVENTURE SERIES ABOUT TWO BROTHERS WHO HUNT DEMONS. MARK PLAYS A CHARACTER CALLED CROWLEY, THE KING OF HELL. IT'S A ROLE THAT PUT HIM FIRMLY IN THE SPOTLIGHT.





I was sat at home watching TV – not Supernatural, though for the purposes of this story I sort of wish I was – and I got a call from an unknown number. I never bother answering these as it's always someone asking if I need some sort of insurance for a credit card I don't have. It was late, I was tired, but for some reason I picked it up. A gravelly British voice on the end of the phone says loudly, "It's Mark Sheppard!" For the first few minutes I was convinced it was a bizarre mix up and he had the wrong number. Then I thought it was just someone pulling my leg.

Without really any prompting, he launched into this story about his former life as a drummer. When I say "former life", what I mean is that Mark didn't start out as an actor. He grew up in London and played drums in various bands until alcohol addiction forced him to stop playing all together. He didn't touch a drum kit for over 30 years until his old friend singer songwriter Robyn Hitchcock called him about a gig.

I met Mark in a place where they don't put the prices on the menus (terrifying). Listening to his life as an addict was pretty grim. Aside from the personal toll, it pretty much gutted his career in music. He was candid about it, so much so that he sounded like he was talking about personal traumas that had happened to someone he only sort of knew. I realised it wasn't flippancy, but someone who had had a life changing experience to the extent they felt comfortable enough to pull the skeleton out of the closet and put it on display.

I'm pleased he's playing again.

**The Drummer's Journal: You're most well known as an actor but you actually started out as a drummer...**

Mark Sheppard: That's right. I used to work at the London Drum Centre on Portobello Road. It was a wonderfully dodgy shop. This was '76, so this was right at the beginning of the amazing era of punk and everything else. My dad also used to lodge in a house with Woody from Madness. I used to see Woody all the time and he had an amazing record collection. He had a drum kit in the living room and I just wanted to be like him really. The only problem was that I wasn't very good. I never had lessons or anything, and on stage I'd just get very nervous, but I just wanted to do it so badly.

**What were you like at 16?**

I was very gregarious and I had a lot of anxiety. By the time I was 16 years old, I knew a lot of people in the industry. It was like anybody could make a record back then, it was just fascinating.

**Do you feel like people can't do that now?**

It doesn't have the same significance because if you sold a million albums, there was all this money that could be had and you could be a professional musician and never have to work again.

**Did that seem realistic?**

In ways, it actually did. I was thrust into this world of playing in some amazing bands. When I was 16, I started playing drums for Robyn Hitchcock. It became this wonderful opportunity, but it scared the hell out of me. It wasn't the easiest gig in the world to do.





**How did you make that happen?**

I could sell myself well and I think that led to this bizarre career. I ended up in The Barracudas, which was an extraordinary trip to be on and we ended up touring all over the world.

**So why transition to acting?**

I began intersecting with some weird London bands. Unfortunately, they were bands that were more famous their drug use than they were for making great records. My drinking spiralled out of control. I'd overlooked my own anxiety involved in making music and performing. I used drink to try and quell that. It become an all-consuming thing.

**Was there a specific incident that made you quit?**

There were some amazing auditions that were up for grabs at the time for bands like Guns N' Roses. I realised I wasn't physically well enough to even try and audition. That was the final nail in the coffin. That's what basically ended it for me. Until that point in my life I was always the little engine that could. I pretty much quit music all together.

**Sounds like a wakeup call.**

Yes, it was. I sobered up on the second day of 1990. I'm now 27 years sober, so it's a very long time.

**How did you adjust to sobriety?**

When I first got sober, I was aware I didn't have anything to keep

♦♦♦

“THERE IS THIS HUGE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING A HEROIN ADDICT AT 17 AND WHERE I AM TODAY. I WAS BASICALLY A HUMAN PINBALL, GOING FROM ONE THING TO ANOTHER.”

♦♦♦







The Station Zenith





myself comfortable, so I went off into acting and did a small play in London. That play did a lot of things for me, and I ended up in *The X-Files*. Over time, I did a lot of sci-fi, and I became a sort of go-to bad guy over the years. But I stopped playing drums, I just wouldn't do it. It was heart breaking as it was what used to define me. I never touched a drum set for about 15 years after that.

**When did you feel comfortable to start playing again? Were you worried it might make you fall off the wagon?**

I recently told a producer friend of mine that I was back playing. He was like, "Great... and you're not getting fucked up?" I said, "No, it would be the most unjoyful experience of my life to do this loaded." Now I get to experience it sober and actually enjoy it. My arms and legs are sore, but it's a magical thing.

**During those years where you cut music out of your life, how did the thought of playing again make you feel?**

I was afraid. I was genuinely afraid of playing. I'd think, "That's what I used to do." I never stopped playing in my head, I just didn't want to go through the heartbreak of being in bands and not being successful. I just buried it but I'd still be tapping on stuff here and there. It never leaves you really.

**As a 17-year old in those situations, what are the lasting impressions you still carry with you?**

Robyn was pretty much a father figure to me in a lot of ways when I was starting out, but I was devastated



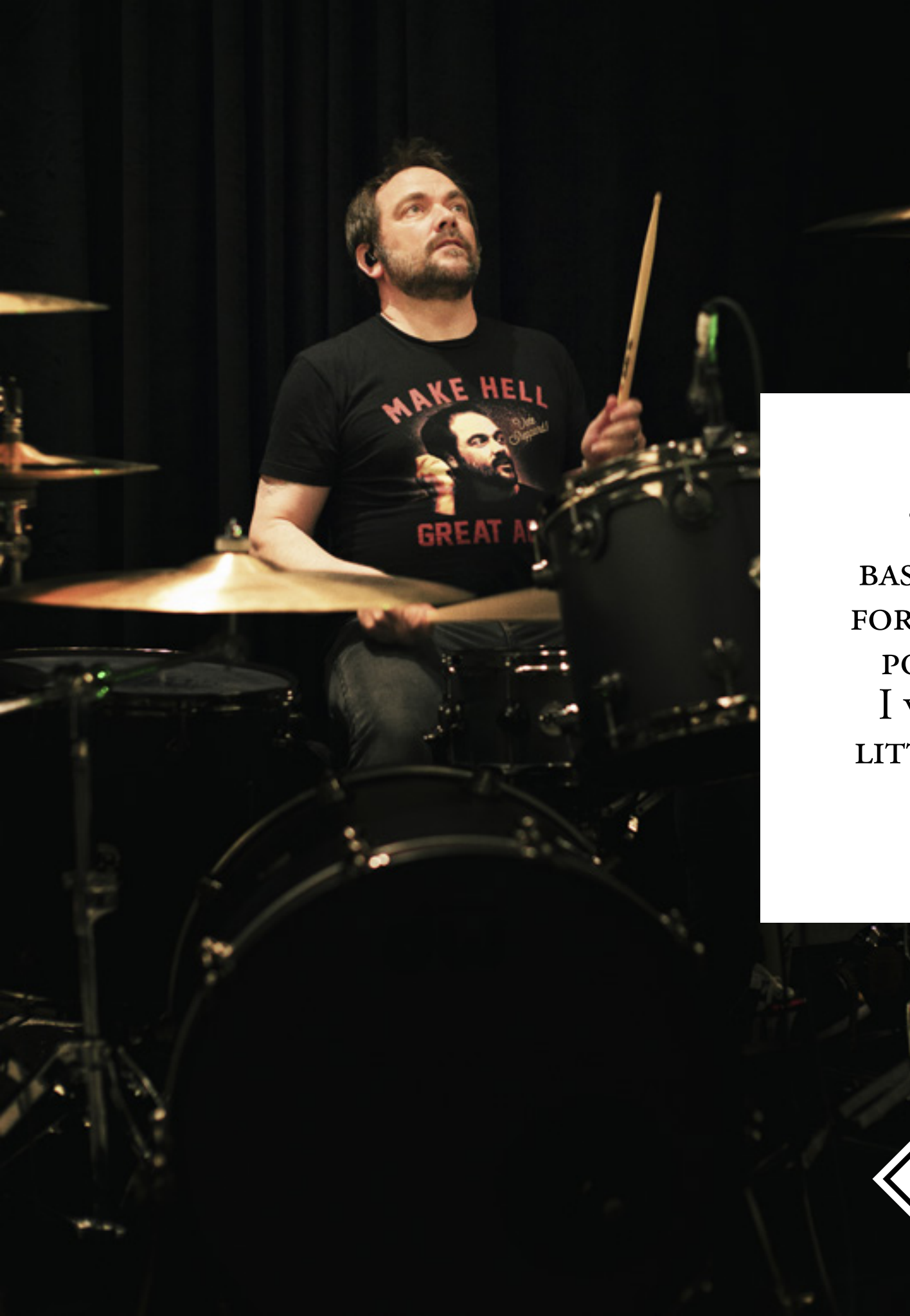
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**“I NEVER STOPPED  
PLAYING IN MY HEAD,  
I JUST DIDN'T WANT  
TO GO THROUGH THE  
HEARTBREAK OF BEING  
IN BANDS AND NOT  
BEING SUCCESSFUL.”**

♦♦♦







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“THAT’S WHAT  
BASICALLY ENDED IT  
FOR ME. UNTIL THAT  
POINT IN MY LIFE  
I WAS ALWAYS THE  
LITTLE ENGINE THAT  
COULD.”

◆◆◆

when I left that band. It altered my feelings to such a massive extent. Maybe I wasn't good enough. What I'm saying is, it took me years to get comfortable with the idea that being good enough was something that was in my hands.

**Now you have a bunch of endorsements and you're back playing in Robyn Hitchcock's band. Has it been cathartic then, in light of all that's gone on?**

It's magnificently cathartic. People have started to ask me to play on stuff, and a lot of it is to do with the public profile I have, but I've been asked to do things that require charts, which is a challenge.

**Earlier, you said, “Drums are what used to define me.” I feel like there's a tinge of sadness to that, in how you said it.**

I think you'll find that anyone who has been sober a long time, and I mean a long time, really does think of their life as two different lives. Even though I'm the same person, there is this huge difference between being a heroin addict at 17 and where I am today. I was basically a human pinball, going from one thing to another. Now, to actually be a grown man with kids feels like an achievement. A lot of the people I knew from back then didn't survive.

**Well, we're glad you're back.**

◆◆◆





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# THE GAME CHANGERS 4/5



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*Left to right - Karen Carpenter, Keith Moon, Mitch Mitchell, Neil Peart*



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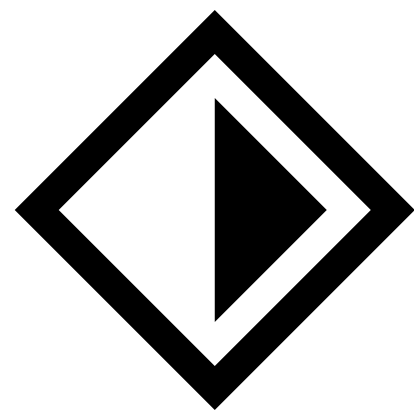
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# LISTEN UP!



## HEAD HUNTERS HERBIE HANCOCK

*Words by Tom Pierard*

If there was ever an album which, for me, defined the earliest successful fusion of funk and jazz, it would have to be Herbie Hancock's 1973 release *Head Hunters*.

From start to finish this monumental record is an all-encompassing depiction of progressive soul music in that era. The writing and performance pay homage to what came before it and what was being released at the same time, while also carving a new direction within the maelstrom of the American jazz and funk scenes of the late '60s and early '70s.







**H**ead Hunters was a key release in Herbie Hancock's career which saw his prowess as a composer and keyboardist catapulted to a new level. During his time with Miles Davis' quintet, Hancock (along with Ron Carter and Tony Williams) had begun to redefine and extrapolate on the common structure of the jazz standard - in many ways Head Hunters did the same for a new genre. Rather than using the classic AABA structure or something similar, all four of the songs on this record experiment with form. For example, Chameleon and Sly both incorporate solo sections which bear little semblance to the head section. This approach is not just refreshing but, being a listener with a criminally short attention span, I find it a particularly engaging narrative which holds my focus for the duration of the tune.

It was a golden age of musical experimentation in jazz, where synthesizers and acoustic instruments collided to create many opuses such as Sun Ra's Atlantis (1969), and of course, Miles' pivotal Bitches Brew (1970). Drums and percussion began to contribute musically on a level

which required a new vocabulary. While players like Tony Williams and Elvin Jones were redefining the role of the drumset in mainstream jazz idiom, this new style required the expressive freedom of jazz coupled with the regular timekeeping and backbeat of funk, and consequently the function of the drummer became blurred.

The opening track, Chameleon, is itself a pretty complete summary of the whole album. It's comprised of a first half, during which drummer Harvey Mason plays a heavy consistent groove, before the second in which he begins to extrapolate dynamically and improvisationally. I would consider the track to be largely driven by Mason, especially the second half - I can still remember the first time I heard it and how enthralled I was at how they'd managed to somehow morph into a seemingly incongruous new direction before deftly returning to the head (albeit a few clicks faster) for the outro. The second half (8:30 onwards) is where Mason 'takes flight'. Summers joins on congas, and as a result, Mason's sheer joy in having more freedom and dynamic headroom is more than apparent.





Harvey Mason's approach to each track is that of a highly skilled player with a holistic approach to both melody and song form. In the Sly head section, he performs the melody in unison with the band before tearing into a kind of faux-samba. His playing throughout the track grooves hard while being technically gratifying, all the while producing space which Bill Summers aptly fills with great percussion. Sly could be the track on the record which best showcases his unique approach of blending freedom with consistent groove - an approach that can be heard influencing countless rhythm sections to this day.

Percussion plays a major role throughout the album, and the natural ease of musical rapport between Mason and Summers is undeniable. Summers often switches between pocket playing and contributing textural effects (in this respect his playing closely reflects Mason's), with his tambourine playing on Watermelon Man being a good example. The drumset part in the same track is yet another example of Mason's artistry. He

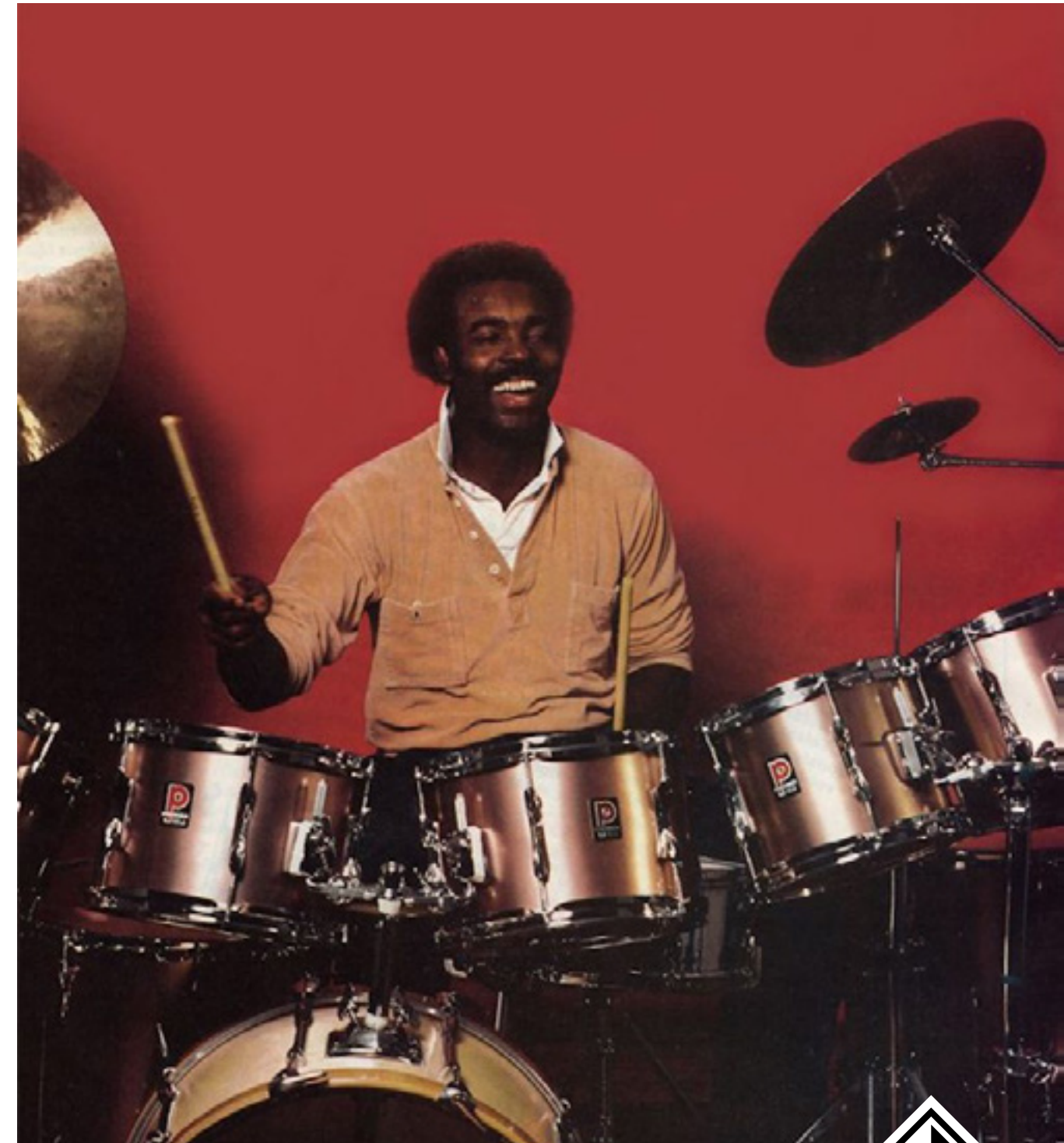
and Summers manage to provide a deep pocket groove while adding subtle inflexions and variations that aren't immediately apparent. This approach is an important, influential aspect of this record and can be heard not only in acoustic recordings but also modern loop-based music e.g. the 1995 Pharcyde track Runnin (prod. by J. Dilla) in which the drumset part (written on an MPC) performs variations on the base groove in almost every bar. Whether Dilla was referencing Head Hunters directly is irrelevant; at this point, the characteristics in Mason's approach had filtered through to drummers, producers and listeners alike on a global scale, and the effects of its influence are ubiquitous.

The closing ballad, Vein Meter, is an exercise in timekeeping and restraint from Mason, who peppers a one-bar looped phrase with nuance, drawing in the listener while creating ample space for the melodic lines coming from Hancock and saxophonist Bennie Maupin. In this current age of looping midi drums and uncompromisingly compressing

kicks and snares, his subtle technical deviations are a refreshing respite and maintain the 'human' element which is so present in the other tracks despite the pattern's lengthy repetition.

From a drummer's perspective, the lasting legacy of this record is Mason's fluid yet deeply pocketed approach to groove. His and Summers' performances are a shining example of musical symbiosis, and his skill as a support player provides a solid yet highly expressive foundation across each track. The trickle-down effect of Mason's influence transcends musical boundaries. It can be heard in almost every facet of mainstream music, and will no doubt continue to inspire and instil his own standards of excellence in fledgeling drummers for years to come.

◆ ◆ ◆







**HEADHUNTERS**  
**HERBIE HANCOCK**

STEREO  
↔

88697269991  
Side 1  
33rpm

- 1. **CHAMELEON**  
(P. Jackson / H. Mason / B. Maupin / H. Hancock) Panache Music Limited (15.41)
- 2. **WATERMELON MAN**  
(H. Hancock) (Arr. Harvey Mason) B. Feldman & Co. Ltd. (6.29)

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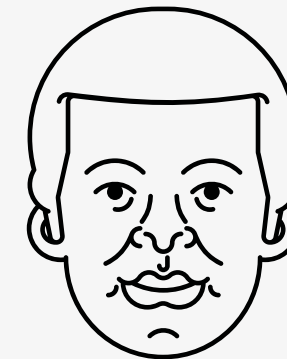
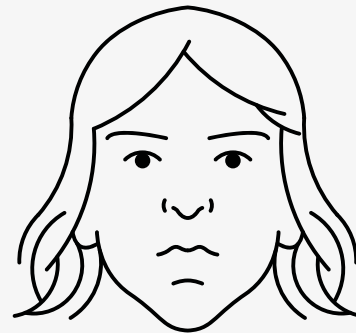
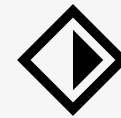
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# THE GAME CHANGERS 5/5

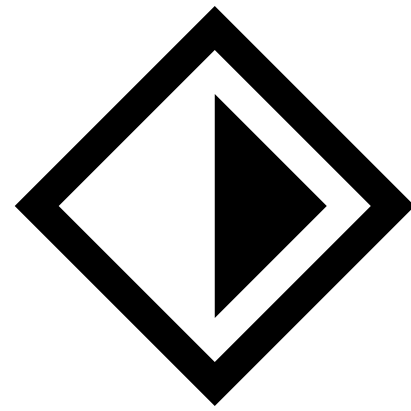


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*Left to right - Sandy West, Steve Gadd, Stewart Copeland, Tony Williams*





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# SCREEN TIME

A CONVERSATION  
WITH ASH SOAN

*Words by Tom Hoare*

**Ash Soan is one of Britain's chief session artists.**

His credits include a string of huge pop records from the likes of Adele, Robbie Williams, and James Morrison.

Trying to get hold of Ash was tricky because he's either travelling or holed up in his studio. The first few times we arranged to meet, I'd get a tentative call that was like, "I'm really sorry but this job has just come in..."

At the risk of making this sound like a report card, Ash has adapted well to changes which have made dedicated session work increasingly difficult. The decrease in recording budgets and subsequent closure of many commercial studios has forced musicians to become more flexible when it comes to finding work.



Ash built a studio in his garden. He converted the site of an 18th-century windmill so the building itself is circular with a conical roof. Inside, it's a bit like a treasure trove and the walls are covered with those presentation frames that display CDs. People call him, send over their session files and then he records the drum tracks. It sounds like a nice way to work. When it comes to making money in the music industry, the internet is presented as some sort of democratising force on the one hand, and a destroyer of worlds on the other. It doesn't really matter how you feel about this because, at the end of the day, the internet isn't going anywhere, and, unless Starbucks decide to get into the recording game, new studios probably aren't going to start springing up en masse anytime soon.

Another thing. The extent to which social media is influencing the industry is hard to both identify and quantify. After 2016/17, you could say the same is true for how social media influences society in general. Ash talked a lot about this. He has a big following and regularly puts out content. But as we chatted, he kept coming back to the idea of warped expectation. That, perhaps his presence on social media was actually doing more harm than good.

To be honest, I hadn't expected to have this sort of conversation and I was woefully unprepared. There's a point where I ask him if he's genuinely worried about the future of his profession. He said yes.

Ash isn't at all doom and gloom – far from it. He's upbeat and incredibly positive. But he's also a realist. He realises that his lifestyle is far from the norm and that its glamorisation, however aspirational that may be for others, can also paint a skewed portrait of life as a working musician. What's more obvious is how he cares, quite deeply, for others who are trying to make ends meet.

This seems like a good point for you to come in.

◆◆◆

### **The Drummer's Journal: As a session musician, how do you quantify success in your job?**

Ash Soan: Being able to support my family just by playing the drums.

#### **That's fair enough. Good answer.**

I guess in the 80s people would quantify success by how many gold discs you had, but realistically, most people, including successful people, probably quantify it in the same way, which is managing to earn a living by playing music.

#### **How about success in terms of a finished project? How do you know if you've done a good job?**

I think about whether my contribution has helped make a record successful. The reality of it, though, is that I could play the greatest drums I've ever played and a record could still bomb. I've done repeat albums with most producers I've been fortunate enough to work with. It's rare for me to do a record and then never work with the same people ever again. Getting a call back to work with someone again usually means it must have been a good job.

#### **Do you feel like you're in competition with other drummers?**

It's true there are more people now doing it than ever before, and that's because of the glamorisation of our business through social media. I'm partly to blame for that. I think companies are to blame too. And the colleges that earn money from the constant flow of young people who aspire to be pop stars or session musicians or whatever.

#### **Is it not glamorous?**

The music business, at its height, it's everything everyone says it is. But the journey towards that point, and if you ever reach that point, it's rarely glamorous. It's hard work.

#### **How do you feel about being called a session musician?**

It's the ultimate accolade. The thing I get asked about most is recording. Not a lot of people get to play on big records, and it's getting increasingly rare. It's getting rarer for me to be honest.

ASH BUILT HIS STUDIO  
ON THE SITE OF  
AN 18TH-CENTURY  
WINDMILL. HUGE FAN.









**To say you're aware that it's becoming rarer to play on hit records, does that mean you're getting less work?**

I'm very fortunate that I became successful in this business when it properly existed and when money was being spent on albums. I remember in the 90s people saying, "It's all over, the business is dead," but now, with hindsight, Jesus Christ it was amazing. The first people to get slammed when the money dries up are the musicians. The price for touring has been driven down and down because if you say no then someone else will just do it. There were fees back in the 80s and 90s that people were getting paid you wouldn't believe.

**Can you give me a ballpark figure?**

Back in the 80s, a friend of mine used to play guitar for a page three model called Samantha Fox. With all due respect, she was a comedy act really. Could she sing? It didn't really matter, they just put records out anyway. This guy I knew who toured with her was getting £1000 per week, and that's in 1987. There are bands out right now who are legitimate bands and they're not getting that. And it's been 30 years.

**Doesn't keep up with inflation, does it?**

It does not. I remember people getting £10,000 a week touring with proper bands, on a successful tour. That was the sort of money that was around. I got my break, so to speak, playing for Del Amitri because I moved to London and happened to meet him on the street I lived on. It was the greatest life change I had.

**The money, you mean?**

Yes. Now, it's not like that. I'm worried that the only people who will be able to make a living from music are people from privileged backgrounds, because they're the only ones who are able to get

bailed out by their parents when things go to shit. People from working-class backgrounds won't have that. They'll have to get a job, like most people, which will mean their music career gets hung up on the side for a bit. I've been with the Musician's Union ever since I started, and I'm trying to talk to them about how we can change this, but it's an uphill struggle. I don't fear for myself but I'm worried about the business in general. I respect anyone for just giving it a go.

♦♦♦

**"I'M WORRIED ABOUT  
THE BUSINESS IN  
GENERAL. I RESPECT  
ANYONE FOR JUST  
GIVING IT A GO."**

♦♦♦

Recently, I did a masterclass at the Royal Northern College of Music. At the end, I asked if anyone had any questions, and this guy sticks his hand up and says, "My son wants to get into the session world, so as a parent, I'm intrigued, what do you earn? £50k, £100k?"

**Cheeky bastard. What did you say?**

I said if you want your son to earn money, then the music business isn't the business he should be in. If you want to support your son because music is something he is passionate about and money isn't a problem, then this is the business. If you

want to earn money, the music business is not the business for you.

**I can't believe someone asked you that, in front of an audience.**

I couldn't believe he threw actual figures at me. And I know I'm saying there needs to be more honesty about money, but what I mean is people need to be realistic about their expectations. The reality of what the music business offers needs to be talked about. I mean, what sort of money do you need to live in London and be able to pay your rent?

**About £700 is the average rent for a room, I think.**

So if you're playing at O'Neills, for £100 a pop, you've got to do a few of them just to cover your rent.







**A lot of people in the session industry seem to think the situation is quite dire...**

Studios are closing and remote recording will grow. It saves so much money. And there are no budgets anymore to make records. Even big records.

**Can you imagine a scenario where Abbey Road doesn't exist?**

It's happening now. Well, Abbey Road is safe, although it almost got flogged about five years ago. To have a room with an experienced engineer with thousands of pounds worth of amps, it costs over £1000 a day, so you have to do a record in two or three days. Most pop artists don't spend that sort of money anymore. People want things sooner and cheaper, and better than it was last time.

**Is it true that you're only as good as your last gig?**

I've never understood that phrase.

**So, no?**

I get it, but it's kind of nonsense. I don't know. (Exasperated noises) No. I think you're as good as the sum of your work.

**Do you think it's more about who you know that what you know?**

You do need to meet people in order for things to happen, but you won't get the ear of those people unless you've put the hours in.

**Is your life as it appears on social media accurate?**

I mean, I am doing the things I post about but it's not like I'm doing them all the time, everyday. If I post a picture of me in LA at

Stewart Copeland's house, people start thinking my life is actually incredible. Everyone's posting videos of them backstage at 80k capacity gigs. No one ever shows you the dude who is loading his drums out of that terrible pub on Dalston High Street or the guy who has to keep checking his car every two minutes to check the gear hasn't been stolen.

**For the last few years, you've been part of the house band on The Voice.**  
That's right, yeah.

**What do you say to people who are critical of reality music shows?**

I am critical of them in a way, but the reality of it is that these shows are here and they will be for the foreseeable. From my perspective, I'm glad it's there because it's a gig. In a wider sense, there are only two shows on TV in the UK that have a full live band. The Voice is one and Strictly Come Dancing is the other. People can be as critical as they want, but they're employing musicians which I think is good. With The Voice, it's a great band and I'm honoured to be in it. It's hard work. To the people who think it is bullshit, if they could manage to get through one day of what I do,

and then reassess what they think of it, that'd be interesting. If you could get through a filming day and still have the same opinion I'd be surprised. Saying that, I don't want to come across as a miserable old shit.

**Why would you think that?**

I feel like I've talked about the business a lot.

♦ ♦ ♦

**"I'M WORRIED THAT THE ONLY PEOPLE WHO WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE A LIVING FROM MUSIC ARE FROM PRIVILEGED BACKGROUNDS BECAUSE THEIR PARENTS CAN BAIL THEM OUT WHEN THINGS GO TO SHIT."**

♦ ♦ ♦





**You know more about it than most.**

It's a hard line to walk because I don't want to sound like an idiot and just say, "Everything's amazing, don't worry!" because that's not entirely true. But I don't want to be all doom and gloom either. The thing is, it's just very different to when I started, I suppose. The dream is different.

♦ ♦ ♦

**“TO THE PEOPLE WHO  
THINK IT IS BULLSHIT, IF  
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♦ ♦ ♦

**What's 'the dream'?**

For most people now, the dream is being able to earn enough money to buy a house and bring up a family. It is still possible, but it's less likely now if you're solely a drummer. So my advice is that you've got to spread your talents a little further. You've got to be a good drummer. And you've got to learn about the recording process. Get Logic. Start learning about microphones. Start understanding what it is that makes drums sound a certain way. You've got to become an engineer. Start writing songs. Tour. Maybe teach. Try everything. You have to do all you can to pick up a pair of sticks every day. The thing that has kept me driving along is that you never know what might happen.

You might be playing in a pub and Keith Richards walks in. People might scoff at that but that's what happened to me. I mean, it wasn't Keith Richards, it was the bass player of Massive Attack, but still. There is always potential there.

♦ ♦ ♦







# UNLEASH THE DARK

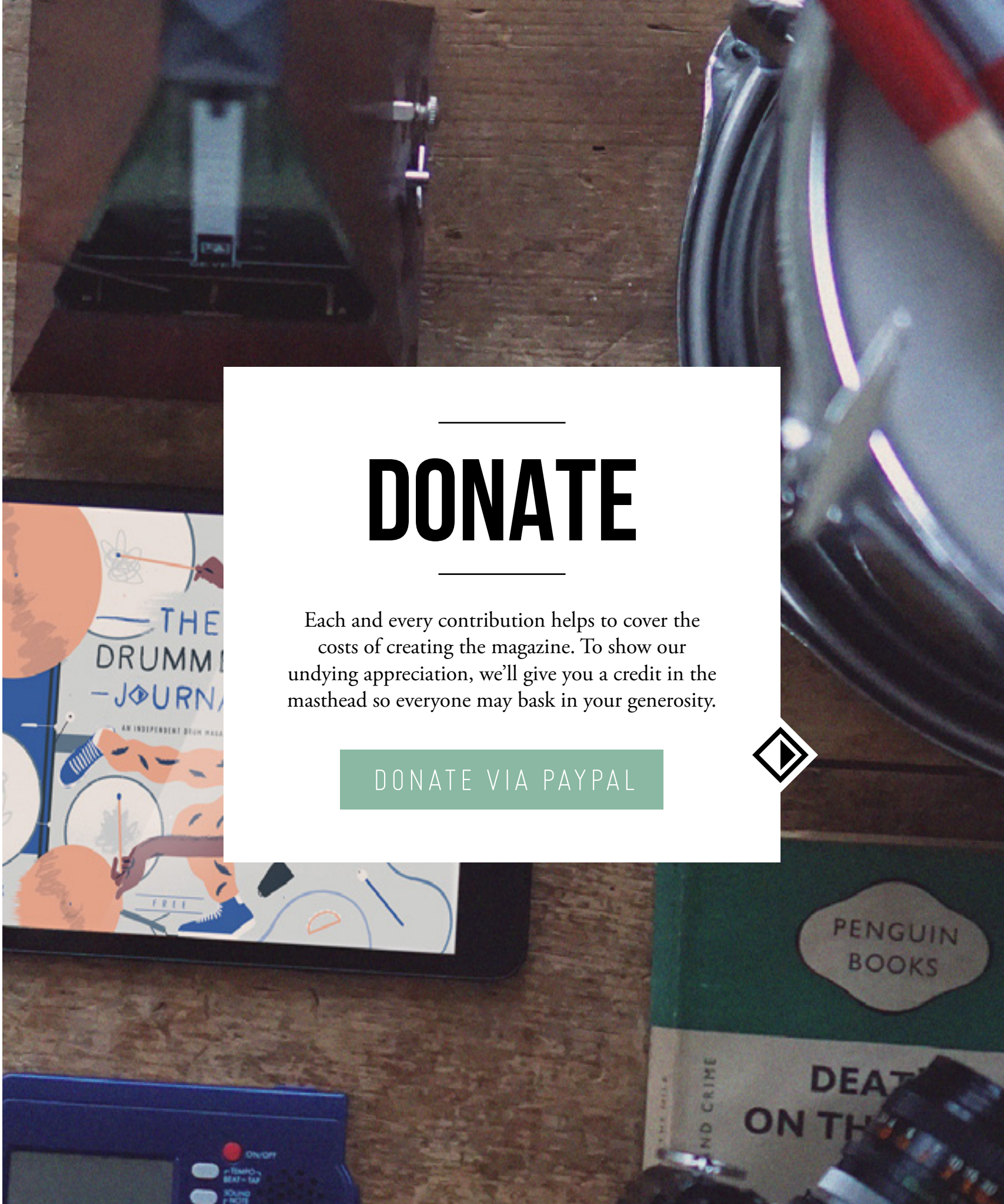
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# THE GAME CHANGERS

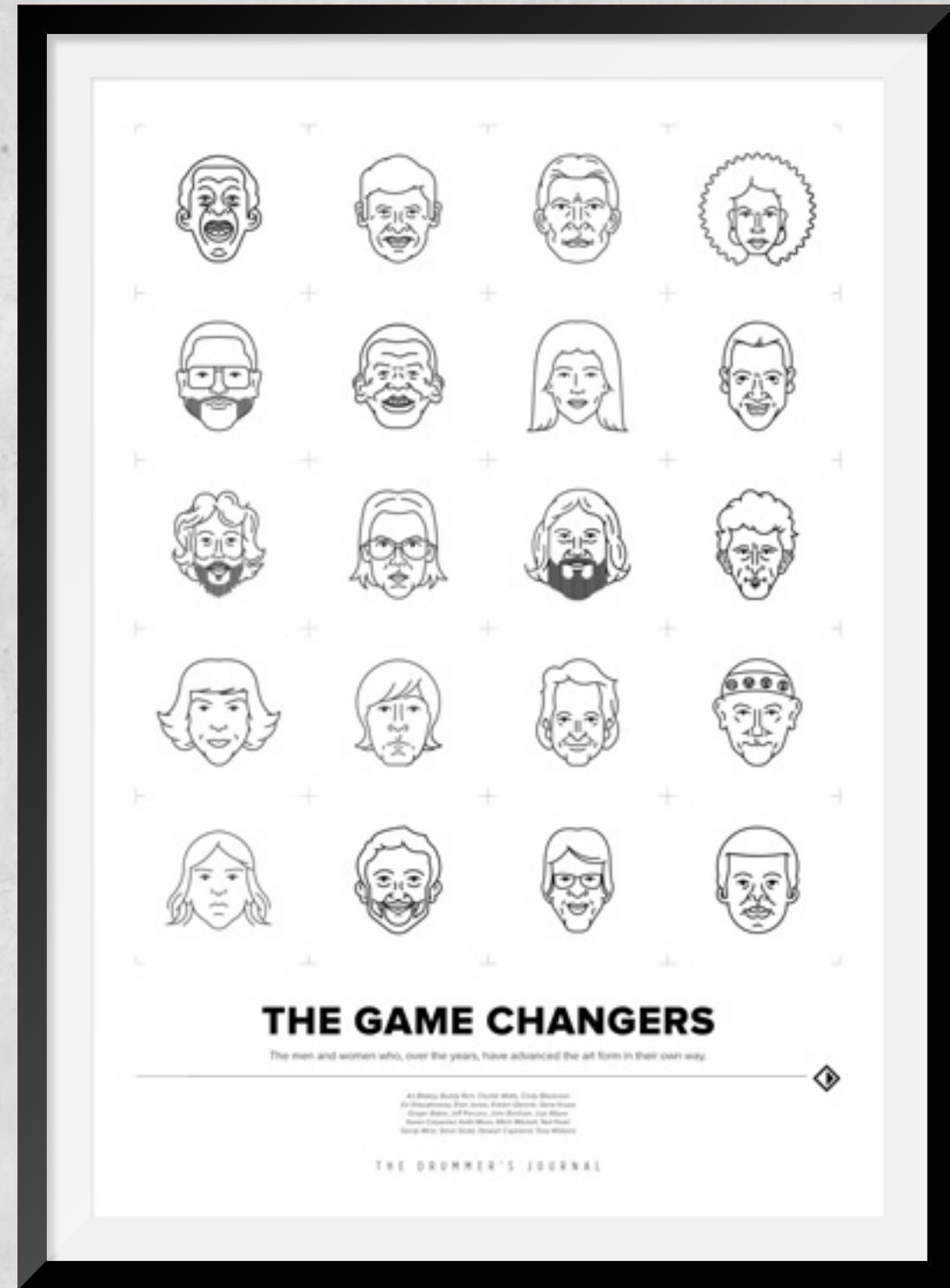
TDJ x ARTURO LIRANZO

We collaborated with illustrator Arturo Liranzo to honour The Game Changers – the men and women who, over the years, have advanced the art form in their own way.

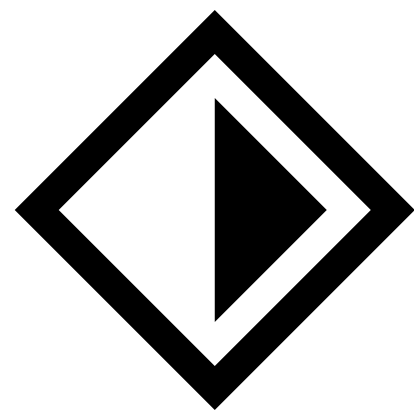
We settled on 20 faces out of 1000s of possibilities. It was not an easy task.

We've done a limited edition hand numbered print run of 100. Printed on 350gsm A3 silk card.

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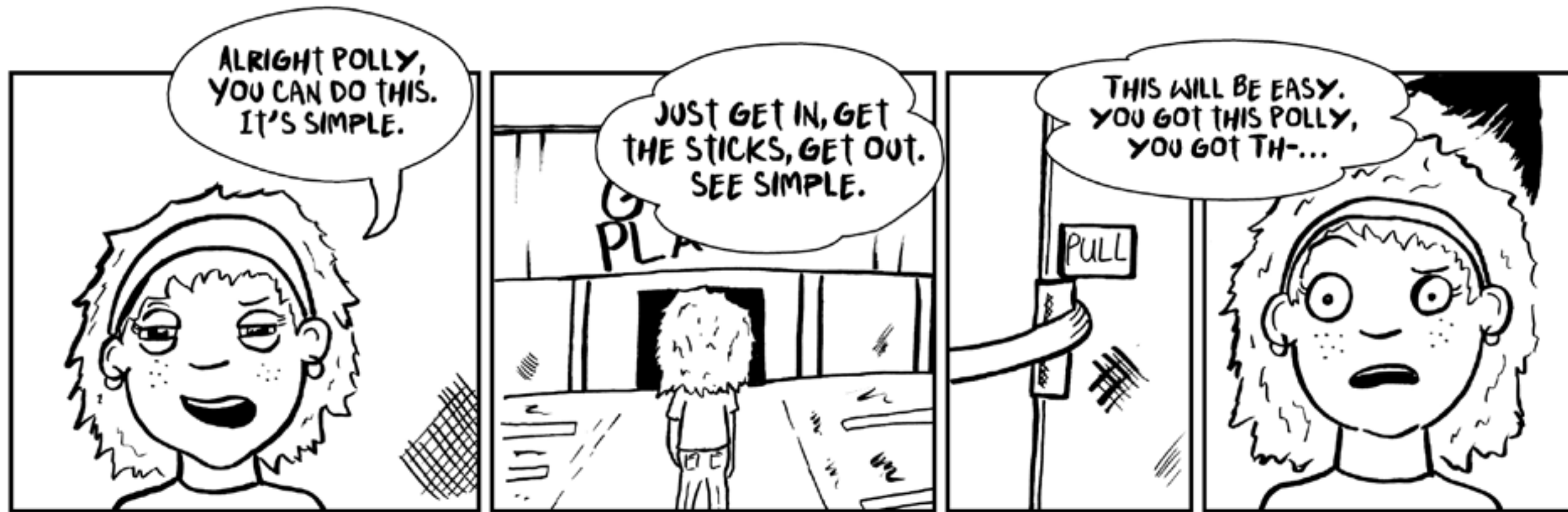


*by Reid Chancellor & Tom Hoare*

## #2 POLY VERSUS THE SALESMAN

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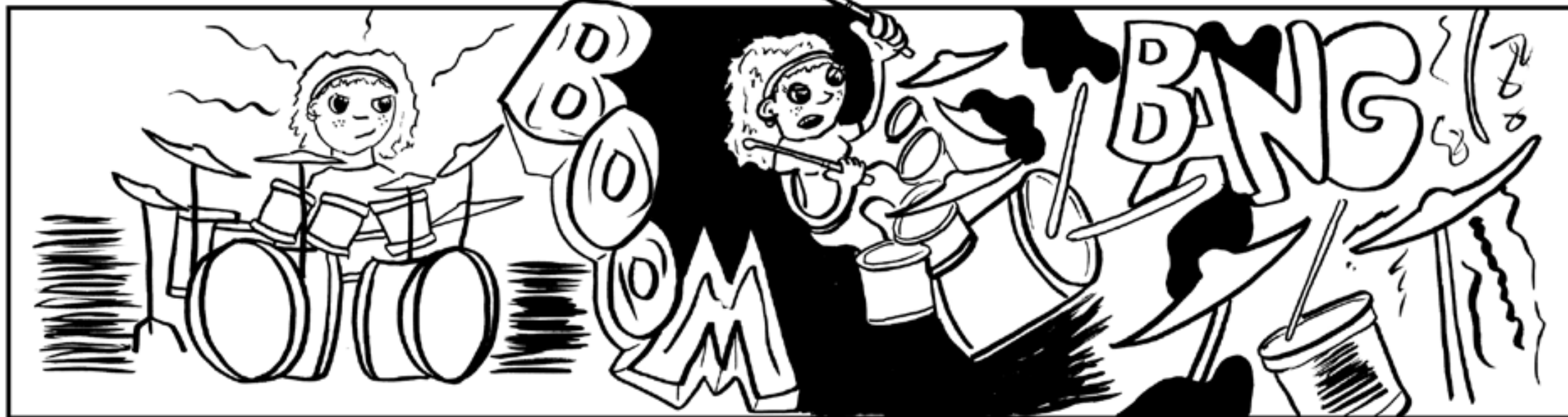








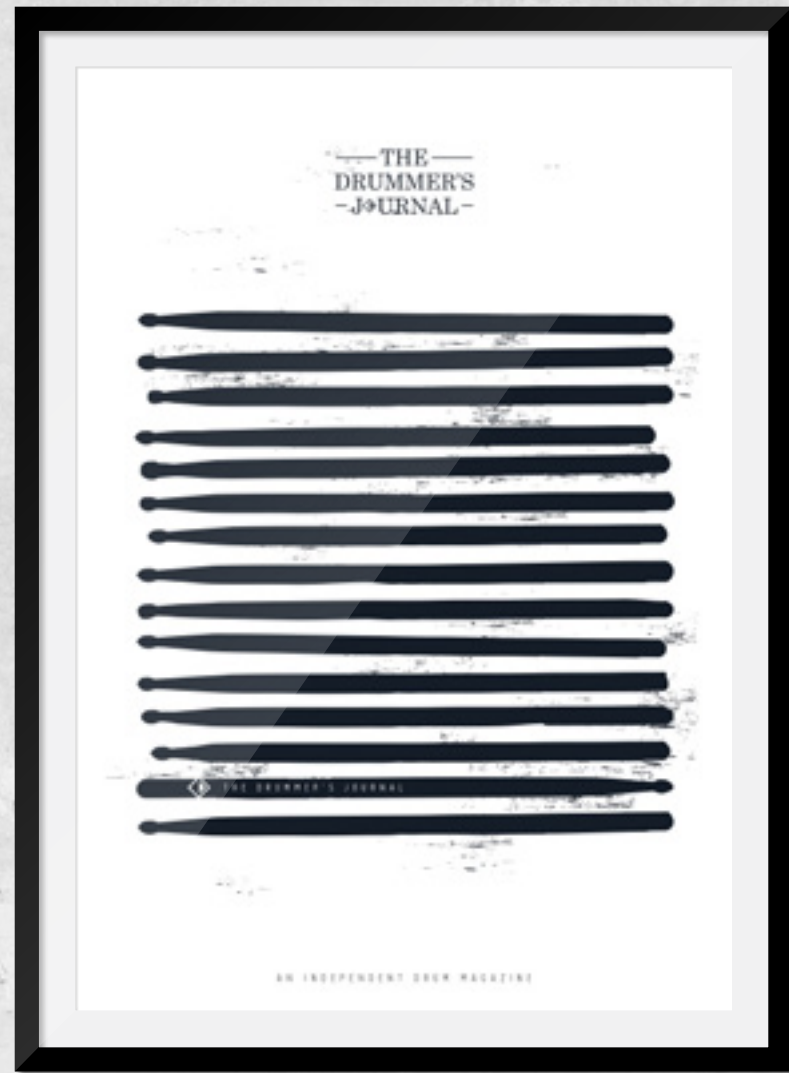












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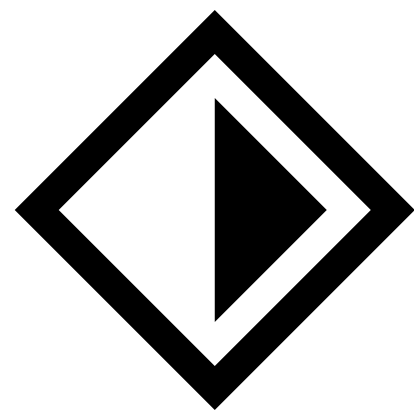


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# ROAD KILLS

VINTAGE DRUM SPOTTING  
WITH JOE COX

*Words & photography by Joe Cox*

Joe Cox is a drum restoration extraordinaire from Yorkshire. Whilst on the road as a drum tech, he scours local sales boards and listing sites to hunt out some vintage bargains. He documented a few finds for us.

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## 1930S LUDWIG & LUDWIG 'PIONEER' NICKEL OVER BRASS | 14" X 5"

I love these drums. The first one I got in the workshop was a right state. It had hoops missing, cracked tension rod claws, and parts of the strainer were missing. I gave it a full overhaul and made sure I sourced original, correct era parts to match. The nickel hardware took some cleaning. That drum went to my good friend Freddy Sheed and he regularly uses it in the studio. I can't get enough of these drums! I find the straight edge hoops let the drum sing.





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## 1937 WFL SINGLE STRAINER 'DIXIELAND MODEL' | 14" X 7"

At Joe Cox Drums I try and provide drums that aren't often seen. Often these drums have been through a lot. I find the best drums are often the ones that have been tinkered with for practical reasons. The most worn or beaten up drums are in a state because they've been gigged so much as they sound great. Obviously, there are exceptions, but collectors' drums that haven't been played for years don't always appeal. This '37 WFL grabbed my attention as you don't often see 7" deep examples of these beautiful 3-ply mahogany shells. I think these WFL mahogany shells are some of the finest drum shells around.











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1960S SLINGERLAND  
'ARTIST MODEL' IN  
SILVER SPARKLE | SOLID  
1-PLY MAPLE | 14" X 5.5"

As photographed in front of some of Green Day's trucks and buses somewhere in America. The silver sparkle on this one needs some loving, but I know it will come up good. I did a little test on a patch whilst I was away. These drums are the same shell as the historic Radio King shells, however, I find these 60s Artist Models have survived their old age much better. Keep that between us, though, or else everyone will want them!





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## 1970S LUDWIG ACROLITE | 14" X 5"

The finest Acrolite era and quite possibly my favourite drum. They have so much character and crunch. A lot of folk try get 60s Acrolites but between you and me, the 70s ones sound better! They have more bite.











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1950S SLINGERLAND  
'BOP' BLACK DIAMOND  
PEARL | 3-PLY  
MAHOGANY | 13"X4"

A seldom seen drum. I've only seen a few of these about, and I've traced it back to 1959 when the drum would have originally been sold as part of a 2-piece 'Be-Bop Combo' configuration which consisted of a 20"x18" kick and 13"x4" snare. I always like finding the rarities and then getting them back into playing circulation. I hope this is another one of those.





1959 LUDWIG  
 ‘TRANSITIONAL BADGED’  
 JAZZ COMBO IN  
 TURQUOISE AND GOLD  
 DUCO | 3-PLY MAHOAGANY  
 | 13”x3”

These are very rarely ever seen, and when they do crop up they certainly don't look anywhere as good as this example. She's a fine rare bird! The transitional badge only adds to its rare charm too. When I found this drum, I had it sent to my good friend Tim Baltes in Kenosha. I had to have it photographed at our gig at Wrigley Field in Chicago as it felt like the drum was back home in Chicago. Tim came to the show and hung out for a few days which was great. Shortly after we took the picture I threw the original wires in the sea! (I didn't really, I kept them and gave them to my buddy Joey from Wood & Weather Drum Co, who then passed them on to a super keen transitional badge Ludwig collector.)











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## 1930S SLINGERLAND PROFESSIONAL MODEL MULTI-DUCO | 14"X6.5"

Now, anyone who follows me should know I'm a sucker for duco finishes and tube lugs. So when this drum came up on the public market I had to have it. Originally, my buddy Tim Baltes bought it at one of the Chicago Vintage Drum Shows, then it ended up with a mutual friend Joseph Nicely, and then it went to Joey at Wood & Weather Drum Co. This one will be staying with me in my collection.





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## 1937 LEEDY 'BROADWAY STANDARD' IN WHITE MARINE PEARL, SOLID MAHOGANY | 14" X 5"

I sourced this drum prior to an American tour, so I sent it to Joey at W&W. A few weeks later he sent a picture of it to me and I almost tried to buy it from him, unbeknown that it was actually my drum. When I finally got my hands on it a few months later, I realised it was a solid mahogany shell, not a 3-ply, which was a total bonus. Putting the sound of it aside, I dearly love the look of these drums and still can't get over their beauty at such an age!

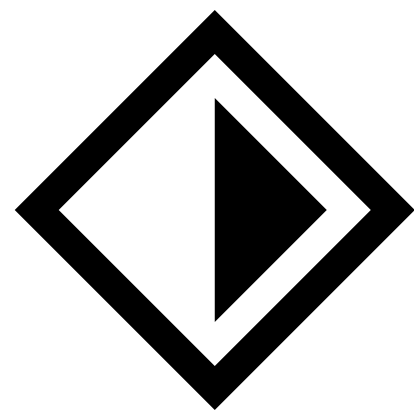
For more, I'm on Instagram: [@joecoxdrums](https://www.instagram.com/joecoxdrums)











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A close-up photograph of a firefighter's hands holding a large, polished metal axe head. The firefighter is wearing yellow protective gear and black gloves. The axe head is the central focus, showing its curved shape and sharp edge. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the firefighter's gear.

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