VERSATILE THOMAS LANG
FROM AUSTRIA TO AMERICA
INTERNATIONAL EDGE 1.0

Welcome to the very first edition of Edge Magazine International. To put it bluntly, this idea is long overdue. We’re fortunate to have one of the best international artist rosters in the industry and have been waiting for the right opportunity to expose these accomplished players to the world. Well, the time is now. In these digital pages, you’ll find articles and features that we hope will entertain and inspire you and in coming issues, we’ll be featuring artists from other European countries, Asia, South America and everywhere on the globe. Thanks for reading and, as always, thanks for making us “The Drummer’s Choice.”

Scott Donnell – Director of Marketing, Drum Workshop, Inc.

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From Austria to California, nothing is impossible.

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Authentic sound in whatever he plays.

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Known for his fast feet and intense licks.

For more on his Collector’s Series kit and DW Custom Shop Shell Technology, log on to www.youtube.com/drumworkshopinc.

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custom shop=custom sound
Mega-selling alternative rockers Snow Patrol are fueled by the beat, big drum grooves and fat, organic drum sounds. When their stickman Jonny Quinn needs a certain vibe, he knows there’s only one place to call, the DW Custom Shop in California. Whether he plays his Collector’s Series rig or this versatile Jazz Series™ setup, he knows that producers and front-of-house engineers will be floored by the full-tonal spectrum and resonance that he gets from his DWs.

www.dwdrums.com
First, there was vL t, or vertical Low Timbre, shell technology. These were all-maple shells that were laminated utilizing short grain to put less tension on the shell. The result was shocking, a much lower fundamental tone than traditional 7 and 8-ply DW shells. Then there were X shells, another foray into the science of grain-orientation, but this time we went diagonal, and the note went even lower still. Most recently, we unveiled vLX, a combination of vLt and X technology that yields the most fundamentally low and beefy sound to date. It’s perfect for floor toms and kicks. All of this grain-oriented shell making technology has advanced sonic customization dramatically, but at the end of the day, it all seemed very confusing. Drummers really wanted to know which specific shell configuration was suited for each tom size and how they could use this to create the sound they’d always been hearing in their head. Combine that with other shell features such as ESE (Enhanced Sound Edge), reinforcement hoops, or not, and even alternate woods, like birch, and the whole thing seemed undeniably exciting, but somewhat overwhelming.

To make things easy to figure out, we introduced SSC. It’s the culmination of years of Custom Shop shell technology all wrapped up in one kit. So what is SSC? Put simply, it stands for Specialized Shell Configuration and it’s the recommended DW shell selection. For instance, if we’re talking about a 7-piece drumset with 8” through 16” toms, that would include an 8” X shell, 10” and 12” vLt shells, 14” and 16” vLX floor toms and a vLX kick. Snare drums are always completely subjective, but it’s hard to top a straight-up 10-ply vLt snare, meaning no reinforcement hoops. I know what you’re saying now, then how is this new SSC thing custom? The DW Custom Shop will still make shells however you want them, but this is the default shell selection, the one that we’ve seen work time and time again for artists like Neil Peart, Terry Bozzio and others. Remember, we’ve been doing this a while so DW artists have already tested vLt, X and vLX on some major tours and in some of the world’s top studios. You’ve probably already heard it and thought, “Those drums sound killer!” Now, you know the secret.

We almost left out the best part; SSC doesn’t cost a cent more than any other Collector’s Series kit. It’s all about you telling us exactly how you want to sonically customize your set and we’ll do the rest. We’re a custom shop, we live for this stuff! If you’d like to learn more about the science of grain orientation with Neil Peart and John Good, visit: www.dwdrums.com/ssc

Many custom drum companies make some pretty visually unique drum sets, but how many of them can customize sound? At DW, we’ve made it our mission to give drummers the tools to build their dream drum sound from scratch.

Marco Minnemann
Collector’s Series® Vintage Steel
Classic looks for state-of-the-art players.

www.dwdrums.com
PREMIUM QUALITY ACCESSORIES

A cutting-edge line of drums, pedals and hardware deserves a cutting-edge line of innovative accessory options. That's why we created DW Factory Accessories. Not your average add-ons, DW accessories are thoughtfully designed to give drummers more custom options and flexibility with their set-ups.

From a myriad of clamps and arms, to DW Coated Clear and Clear Edge drumheads, True Tone Snare Wires, replacement parts and so much more, DW offers premium-quality accessories for the most discriminating drummer. Take, for example, our new 101R rubber and 101W wood 2-way beaters. Both are based on our popular selling 101 plastic and felt beater design and offer 2 new ideas to help drummers create new sounds and find their dream bass drum tone. Also new is the 2141X, the perfect way to easily and securely mount a folded hi-hat stand to a double-bass rig. “Metal and rock drummers always appreciate a new way to solve and problem,” explains DW Director of R&D, Rich Sikra. He continues, “Older clamp designs were bulky and hard to adjust, this one uses an integrated claw-hook clamp to more efficiently attach to the counter hoop from both sides, avoiding slippage and the need to clamp to nearby cymbal or tom stands.”

Now, DW Factory Accessory brand parts are available to buy online at:

www.dwdrums.com/factoryaccessories

Find everything you need to customize or repair your kit in one place!
all from around here. I joined their band practice once and listened to them play. When Udo said to me, “If our drummer ever breaks his leg, I will call you”, that was a strong hint, in a way. When I was 17, Udo finally called me. I had already been a huge fan and I knew how to play all of their songs by heart. That’s when I got the job. Then, Peter Maffay saw me at the German Museum in Munich with Udo and he hired me right away. Since then, I’ve mainly been playing in these two bands.

**Edge:** You mentioned that you have been playing in these two bands for 34 years. Are there any new challenges?

**Bertram:** There are challenges with Peter Maffay in particular. We have done so many projects, i.e. a children’s project called “Thomas”, featuring a small green dragon. That was more than just a musical. Then, we had a project called “Begegnung”. In the course of this project, we worked with seven or eight different nations that naturally played a totally different style of music than the one I had been used to for so many years. I adapted to that and I had to keep all of the pieces together which was a challenge, of course. What was special was that Peter Maffay was the fact that we didn’t have always the same cycle of tour, album, song writing. We always did something different. And working together with Udo has always been interesting because he often worked with other people. Yet, I wasn’t involved in each of the album productions. Nevertheless, I was involved in the live segment and that’s where I had to learn and be able to play the music that was created by others. And that was also a challenge to play pieces live that were created by others. My musical life has always been very interesting. From the 1990’s until the beginning of 2020, I was dealing with a lot of foreign acts. I played with Robert Palmer, Joe Cocker and Bruce Springsteen in Berlin. The beginning of the 2000’s was really great. From the 1990’s until the early 2000’s, I was really busy night and day. At the age of 12, I had my first band and it didn’t take too much longer, because I practiced all day and all night.

**Bertram:** I was busy night and day. At the moment, I’m the door-opener to become a producer for other people. We had simply composed a lot of songs for others and it didn’t feel like one, because he simply didn’t like what we had recorded and then asked us if we could produce his songs. It was like an audition, an audition process. Maffay heard it by chance, he really liked it, that’s when I got the job. That’s when I got the job.

**Edge:** Everything’s really a fusion of earlier styles. Young acts play like Led Zeppelin or Free and Bad Company did in the 1970’s. They mix things with hip hop, techno or electro, which are modern, but they also contain influences from the 60’s or 70’s. It was a great time of invention for me. Those are the acts that I grew up with. I tend to pull important things from this time, which has given me my basis. What I mean is that drummers such as John Bonham, Ian Paice, Mitch Mitchell, they are all from the 1960’s or 1970’s. They are young guys who live in 2010, but they have managed to transport a lot of influences from that era.

**Edge:** How did you learn these skills and how do you eventually decide to become a producer?

**Bertram:** I was asked by Peter Maffay if I could produce songs with my colleague, Carl Bertram. He was the band’s guitarist. Peter had heard some songs that we had recorded in our spare time. We had simply composed something, a ballad on guitar and me on keys. We played it at practice and when Peter was so into it, he asked me if I wanted to do it. That was in 1989, we had just produced “14 Jahre” and that’s when he heard our songs. It was like an audition, for a producer that didn’t feel like one, because he simply asked for the songs in the recording studio. He then asked us if we could produce his titles in the same way.

**Edge:** What to extend has drumming equipment changed in the last 30 years?

**Bertram:** I believe that the hardware section has changed, especially. In particular, the area of cymbal holders, pedals and their manufacturing. I believe that the hardware section has changed significantly in the last 30 years.

**Edge:** How would you say that the sound has improved significantly?

**Bertram:** Well, the best sound is with my DW Drums. I have been playing DW Drums since 2006 and I have definitely noticed that this is the best sound for me, compared to all other companies that I used to play. I have always wanted to play DW but it somehow just never worked out because I had been involved with other companies. One day, I met John Good at the Messe in Frankfurt and I could finally play the Rolls Royce of drums and luckily get an endorsement (laughs). There are, of course, some differences between the drum sets that I play now. The best sound for me in the “Cadillac-Mint” set that John built for me back in 2008. With this set, John specifically catered to my style; he observed my moves and hits and put together the configuration after: If someone who builds drums knows you well and has observed you play, that’s a determining advantage. Up to now, this is definitely my best sounding kit and I’m about to receive a new one, just in time for the next Maffay tour. They also built me a starter kit for the next Maffay tour. They also built me a starter kit for the next tour. They also built me a starter kit for the next tour. They also built me a starter kit for the next tour. They also built me a starter kit for the next tour.

**Ed
genome: A German-Engineered Career**

**Time Machine:** ber Tram Engel

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**Edge:** How do you feel that traditional recording is much better?

**Bertram:** Yes, the traditional way to make music with a combo. This is why I’m a big fan of certain sound expectations, i.e. different rhythmic sounds and samples created by composers. It’s impossible to make such sounds with only 3 men in a room. Back in the day, this wasn’t the expectation because those sounds didn’t exist. However, there are some new bands that record garage style and for that you need the dirty feeling and the groove. Kings of Leon are a good example for this. Some elements may not sound 100% perfect, but it sounds like it did in the 1960’s or 1970’s. They are young guys who work in 2010, but they have managed to transport a lot of influences from that era.

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Sometimes, I like using completely different instruments, or perceiving them from a different perspective. For example, the keyboard player’s perspective: harmonic drumming is different because I see it from that angle. Naturally, my Bertram: Yes, because I see the big picture.

I developed it with my wife. We had auctioned an hour with me via eBay for a foundation called, “Reporters Ohne Grenzen” (reporters without borders). It was a charity thing: simply play the drums with Bertram Engel for an hour. I thought, “Wow, someone paid 800 euros to spend an hour with me and my wife.” My wife said, “We should do this more often. You could try and pass on what you’ve learned in 34 years.” So, I tried it out at the Drums and Percussion Festival in Paderborn, Germany. It went really well. Later on, I held a rhythm seminar in Markkleeberg in 2008. It was successful and I really enjoyed it, too. Most recently, I was at the Drums and Percussion Festival in Paderborn with Uli Fritsch. It was a one-week recording workshop and you meet a lot of people, many world-famous drummers such as Simon Phillips and Steve Smith.

So then, my wife had the idea to do something on top of that. At the same time, we’re looking for names and at some point, we had the following suggestions: “Rhythm and Blues and Rock ‘n’ Roll” and “Rhythm and Art.” We googled it and it didn’t exist yet. “Rhythm and Art”, that sounds great, we had to do it! “Art and Rhythm” was the second choice, but I thought that wasn’t taken yet. We secured the domains first and then started looking for a location because we thought it would be a Rock ‘n’ Roll Fantasy Camp they have in America. You can play with the stars. I also offer individual lessons if someone is interested. Certainly not from 9 to 5, as it would be the case in a music school, yet on demand, that’s the way it is. At the same time, we’ll sell artwork by musicians. On September 3rd, we start with Udo Lindenberg, then we host Wolfgang Niedecken or Helge Schneider, Frank Zander, Herman van Veen (a Dutch artist) and internationally, Ronnie Wood from the Stones, Bob Dylan, Tico Torres from Bon Jovi, Minka Kelly, and many more. There are many international music artists who also draw. They do it out of passion and they don’t even sell their paintings.

Edge: What advice would you have for someone trying to follow your career path?

Bertram: If you love music and your instrument so much that you don’t care about money, you want to go for it. You won’t play your instrument as a job, but more because it’s your calling. It has to be a calling. Professionally it means that you make money with it, to make a living off it, yet, not everyone has this passion. There are many professional musicians who simply play because they can make money with it, therefore they found a job that earns them as much money as being a carpenter or a painter. He knows how to build great drums and there are others who see it as a product, who mass produce and manufacture in factories. That usually means that the drums aren’t that good. Everyone should do his job because of his calling. Even my drumtech does his job, even with the stones, even with the Stones, Bob Dylan, Tico Torres from Bon Jovi, Minka Kelly, and many more. There are many international music artists who also draw. They do it out of passion and they don’t even sell their paintings.

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Most of the time hand-foot combinations sound stiff and boring because the amount of notes within a group sets the note value, i.e. a group of 3 is always a triplet and a group of 4 is always 16th notes. Here are 2 little exercises to help you develop fill and lick ideas in different note values.

The first exercise is a group of 4 notes, meaning right-left-foot-foot. It moves up and down in the note value and therefore I called it a rhythmical pyramid. The idea is to play the exercise with a quarternote pulse stepped on the hihat by your left foot. So you make sure you hear both, on the one hand the hand-foot combination on the other hand the pulse. Now you are able to play groups of 4 in 8th notes, 8th note triplets and 16th. Once you feel comfortable, add more values, like 16th triplets, 32nd notes or odd values like quintuplets. Then start orchestrating it on the drumkit to find your very own licks with that.

The second exercise is the same idea but in a group of three notes, meaning right-left-foot. Be aware of the crossrhythm in the 8th and 16th notes. It takes 3 bars to resolve. This is what makes groups of three interesting playing even note values.
We sat down with the international drumming phenomenon to find out why he’s often misunderstood and what he’s doing to change his stereotype. There’s no doubt that Thomas Lang’s unique chops and powerful persona have taken the drumming world by storm, but it’s his hardworking, calculated and thoughtful approach to playing that has kept him in the spotlight. As a music fan, he likes everything under the sun and as a drummer he’s versatile enough to play it all. As he graces the cover of this prestigious issue of International EDGE, we discover what makes everything in Thomas’s musical world work out.

EDGE: Before we talk drums, we’d love to know what’s in your iPod.

Thomas Lang: I’m a fan and thankfully, I’m working in the field of music. It’s a big plus. I have a very eclectic mix of stuff in my iPod; it’s a wide range of all styles and eras. Recently, I downloaded the new Deftones, the new Alice in Chains, the new Avenged Sevenfold, a lot of Electronic, R&B and Hip Hop, too. I’m pretty much into anything that’s hip on the radio right now. I try to be informed at all times about what’s happening on the charts because I also write and produce music. So, I listen to a lot of stuff on the radio and download a lot of stuff that I like. I think in the end, all music is good music, and I find inspiration in pretty much everything that’s out there.

EDGE: How do you find the music? Do you actively look at download sites?

LANG: I listen to a lot of radio, there’s always something that I like. I put it in my iPhone and there are also little pieces of paper lying around with new artists that I like written on them. I also have alerts on iTunes, so I’ll go to the store which come up if an artist has a new release on iTunes, so I’ll go to the store and get it. I listen to a lot of samples on iTunes and I’ll write down and actively search for stuff that I might be interested in.

EDGE: Is it hard to play a gig you’re not musically into?

LANG: Well, I try not to do those gigs at all. There’s a lot of stuff that I could potentially do, or I get offered to do, but which I’m just not interested in musically. For me, there are always three reasons to do a gig, or not: it’s the music, the people, and the financial job that aren’t enjoyable. But it’s something that I do, it’s still good; I’m still playing music for a living and I still enjoy what I do very much. So, what, maybe I don’t like that song, but everybody else does and there’s always an audience. They like it and they deserve to be treated with respect and I can pull myself together and just pour my whole heart into it, even if I don’t love it that much. I feed off of the energy of the audience and the band, and that always works for me in the end. Even during the times when I had to play music that I didn’t like very much, I’m still playing music that’s real good, it’s still a very satisfying job.

EDGE: What would you do if you weren’t drumming?

LANG: I think I’d either be a physicist or a carpenter; polar opposites, but I like both. I like the simplicity and the productivity of carpentry. It uses such natural material, it’s such a hands-on job; very immediate and very satisfying. I like the natural aspect and it requires a lot of skill and experience. I’m also very interested in science. I was dabbling in physics for a while. I find it very intriguing because there are mathematical systems that work and that can be applied to anything. There is such a massive system, a logical approach to describing the world, which ceases to exist at one point.
EDGE: Part of what defines you is also your Austrian heritage. Do you feel that moving to California has changed your drumming?

LANG: Yes. It’s easier to be more disciplined and focused, and how to be disciplined and focused, and how to practice correctly.

EDGE: Do you feel that you, as a player, learned more from practicing by yourself or by playing with other musicians?

LANG: I think playing and practicing alone is a lot different than when you interact with each one of my drummers, influences the other. They cannot exist without each other. You cannot achieve the same technical level if you haven’t done it yourself. I think that the left hand on the fretboard is doing something completely different than the right hand when it’s drumming, but together, the two hands make music. They’re two different activities and two different mindsets are required for either practicing or playing, but doing the right amount of both creates the perfect balance. There is a saying that goes, “Never play when you practice and never practice when you play” which underlines that you can’t do the one without the other.

EDGE: Do you feel that you’ve been stereotyped in any way?

LANG: Yes, in the drum world, I’m known as a technical clinic guy, or a technician. That’s a part of my actual career. I understand that many drummers are only focused on drumming, and that’s it.

EDGE: Do you like drum solos?

LANG: No. It’s a very different world, and I don’t think there’s anything else in it. My approach to instructional products is to pack as much information in there as possible and that type of information is strictly technical. So, when there are performances that demonstrate these technical exercises, a lot of people think it’s my musical identity, or this is who I am, but it’s not.

EDGE: If you were to pick your band, Stork, and play with some crazy music, would you do it?

LANG: That’s a very different question. I would come up with a bunch of amazing players, like Schwarzenator, not thinking about music and join some crazy, fun bands like Schwerkots, independent from the location. It allows me to be more selfish, more artistic and a little more creative again with playing, maybe that was the result of moving away a newfound discipline that they can’t seem to have.

EDGE: Let’s talk a little bit about your drumming boot camps.

LANG: I’ve played many drum clinics and have worked in the drum world for a number of years, and it all started to become a little less satisfying for me, I wanted to stop doing a lot of gigging in London. I lived there for almost fourteen years and I did a lot of session work there, working with many, many different artists, touring with them, recording with them. I deliberately left that pop scene because I get bored with the music and the whole vibe. Quitting those kinds of jobs and sessions has had a great impact on the way in which I approach the instrument. Now I have this time and the luxury to just sit back in my studio here in California and write whatever comes to mind. I got my drum machines, I fill gaps in the schedule with these camps. I may already be in that city or have some time off, so I can organize and host a camp at the moment. I can take my camp to the people because it’s a small guerilla operation.

EDGE: How do readers find out more about it?

LANG: Well, there’s a website: www.thomaslangdrumcamp.com where you can register for the camp and find out about camp schedules. You can even register and pay online. It’s very expensive. I charge much less than I would charge for a private lesson. So, I think it’s a very good value for the money. We offer hotel packages and travel packages, the whole deal.

EDGE: Do you think that people take away a newfound discipline that they can’t experience elsewhere?

LANG: I know it for a fact. I get emails from a lot of the students who have attended other camps, but they say this one has completely changed their approach to practicing and to playing in general. They’ve made huge improvements, because they have experienced what it takes to do this, and how to be disciplined and focused, and how to practice correctly.

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EDGE: That whole thing exists in the guitar world, too. They have guitar heroes and we have drum heroes.

LANG: I’m flattered and proud to be considered that in the drumming world, but at the same time, it makes me smile because it’s not exactly who I am. It has become a valid business aspect in my career, but in regard to my real ambition and my actual musical identity, it’s only a tiny part.

EDGE: You just attended a DW event with a bunch of amazing players, Thomas Pridgen, Derek Roddy, Alex Acuña, a long list of guys. Talk a little bit about the experience and being part of the DW family.

LANG: I had a ball! It was a great afternoon and a fun hang. It was great for me to really meet a bunch of the guys from my new family in person, not only to hang and snack on the food, but also to play and jam and talk drums. I had a great time meeting everybody and playing the new Performance drums. I was blown away by the quality of the sound and I think it was a very smart thing to do; to get everybody into a room. There was such a variety of different players from so many different styles of music and it was wonderful for me, not only to hear everybody play their very unique and individual style, but also to hear the drums like that. It really showcased the versatility of that kit in a way it works in all styles of music and the way it speaks in all languages. I was amazed at how different the kit sounds, depending on the player’s personality. Every drummer sounded different on the same kit, but it sounded awesome every single time. The kit seemed like it would assimilate and adjust to the drummer’s style so well. It was projecting and translating to whatever we did very, very precisely and uniquely.

EDGE: What do you see yourself doing musically in the next couple of years? Will you take the gigs as they come?

LANG: Well, I’ve avoided long tours for a number of years now because of my kids and I was concentrating more on projects, but now they are in school and it’s all good. Now, I’ll be able to tour more, and I’m always writing and producing and working with my own band. Of course, I’ll continue to do session work as a side thing. It is not my main focus now, but I do a fair amount of sessions.

EDGE: This is the last and the most important question: Have you heard any good jokes?

TL: (laughs) Yes, I have heard a few good jokes, but I can’t repeat them! (more laughter) How do you know when a violin is out of tune? When the bow is moving.

What’s one of the least frequently heard sentences in the music industry? Is that the banjo player’s Porsche out there?

What do you throw at a drowning guitar player? His amp.

What’s the difference between a drummer and a drum machine? With the drum machine, you only have to punch in the information.
**PDP Product News**

**Mainstage Snares, M5 Drumsets & 500 Pedals**

M5 Drummers rejoice! Our newest PDP’s M5 kits are tailor-made for gigging players just like you. This is no beginner’s set up, not by any means. This is an all-maple lacquer kit packed with pro features like STM (Suspension Tom Mounts), True Pitch tuning, F.A.S.T. (Fundamentally Accurate-Sized Tom) and Remo drum heads. You can even pair up the rig with durable new DW 3000 Series pedals and hardware, making this a set up you can play for years to come. Check out the complete color spectrum and learn more about M5 at: www.pacificdrums.com/drums/m5

500 Series Pedals These days, drummers push the limits of their instruments and their pedals. Our new racing-inspired 500 Series single and double pedals are designed to provide speed and velocity via a dual chain-and-sprocket drive train. A sturdy steel base plate gives ample support and a newly-designed 2-way beater is punchy with any head combination. Not to mention, they have a striking silver and grey monochromatic look with a retooled footboard. Sure, there are more expensive pedals out there, but the PDP 500 has all of the right features, durability and feel to take your playing to the next level.

Mainstage Snare Drums Every drummer knows that you can’t have too many snare drums. It’s the easiest way to change the personality of any drumkit and tailor a sound for each unique musical situation. Mainstage snares are a super cost-effective way to add a steel drum to your palette. The thin shells are bright and responsive and are available in 3 sizes: 5x14”, 6.5x13” and 6x10”. As a main or side snare, you can’t go wrong for the money.
For this inaugural issue of International Programming is an important aspect of getting hands-on experience with technology. It's honest and gracious. He has long said that Michael, and most recently, Leona Lewis. The world's most influential and iconic music legends have allowed him to work with some of the kind of career that drummers can only dream about. Not only has he been Beverly Knight's drummer of choice for the last 12 years, but his music and personal skills were allowed him to work with some of the world's most influential and iconic music legends, including: Eurythmics, George Michael, and most recently, Leona Lewis. Carlos credits his success to hard work, developing his natural talent and being honest and gracious. He has long said that getting hands-on experience with technology and programming is an important aspect of any modern drummer's approach and his rig is fused with electronic togs of all kinds. For this inaugural issue of International Edge, we caught up with Carlos to talk about touring and so much more.

EDGE: Have you got a few days off at the moment?
Carlos: I am self-building, a garage off the house and teaching a bit at the moment. I always wanted to work in a warehouse. I knew I really wanted to play the drums, so I decided to use my savings to go to Music College in New York, where I had family. I auditioned for the Brooklyn College Conservatory of Music and that was the real start for me. Those were the first intensive lessons. I learned a bit of Jazz, piano, vocals and also some music theory. This was the time when I realized that if I wanted to make playing the drums my profession that I had to be professional. So, I had no dreams, necessarily about staying in New York, because I'd met a lot of good players there who couldn't get work. I knew that England would be the place where I could make a living.

EDGE: So you came back to the UK. How did you get into your first professional gig?
Carlos: When I went back to England, I started an original band. It was hard getting work, we just kept hoping we would get signed; every guy's dream, I know! We did this for a while, well you know how these "sliding door" things happen, the band decided to do a showcase for some agents to try to get ourselves some more work. It worked. We were接到 the band on the same bill that weren't using a drummer, they were using sequenced drums. They saw me, and asked me if I fancied doing some shows with them. I said, "Of course, it's work, why not?" At that time, I didn't realize the function sequencing, they were doing. I thought it was maybe 3 or 4 times a week, up and down the country and abroad. I know that kind of cut my teeth with them. I was able to track sequence and a click to play along to.

EDGE: Really? So, a very professional band.
Carlos: It was a really professionally functioning band. They were working a quite a lot, so it was an apprenticeship. Then, I got a call from a friend whose friend was the bass player and MDing C Lewis, asking if he wanted to audition. I down, auditioned, and got that one as well. That was my first real pro gig in the early 90's and it all spiralled from there.

EDGE: How long have you been with Beverly now?
Carlos: 12 years.

EDGE: So, what was that first gig like? It must have been a good challenge.
Carlos: Oh, it was, it was on a Friday, it was hairy because on Thursday, they decided the bass player they auditioned on Wednesday wasn't suitable. So, they brought another one in on Friday, and he had only one day, so he scored his part, went on stage and the gig's all turned out really well, and that was the beginning of it all, really.

EDGE: Talk us through what you had to do on that gig?
Carlos: Yes, it's all about whether people can read for you. I was on an agent's book for absolutely ages, and never got any work. Then, I didn't really care, I thought it was more about the music. They had a gig the next day and he had only one day, so he scored his part, went on stage and the gig's all turned out really well, and that was the beginning of it all, really.

EDGE: How long have you been with Beverly now?
Carlos: 12 years.

EDGE: Are you still playing with her live?
Carlos: Yes, we have some shows coming up in August. She's not as busy as all of us would like, but it's one of my favourite gigs. I love it, I'm there probably aren't many gigs where you get that much musical freedom. She is very, very up for whatever you want to do, and if it sounds good, it's in. That's all she cares about.

EDGE: That was the opposite for George Michael wasn't it?
Carlos: Yes, exactly.

EDGE: I think you had to play exactly what was on the record.
Carlos: Absolutely, George has got this, he has the license, if he can't do it right, so by the time he has decided it is good enough to go to the public, that he is happy with it, he wants the live gig exactly as he thinks it should sound.

EDGE: How did you get the George Michael gig?
Carlos: Well, that was a good story as well. I was a session guy at that time, and came to George through the classical quartet, Bond. It turned out that production half of the band was George's band and production team. Unbeknownst to me, I auditioned for the George Michael gig when I was on tour with Bond. The tour went really well, it went great and they were happy. I never even thought about it, because the seat wasn't available at the time.

EDGE: So, you were first call when the tour came up?
Carlos: Yes, basically they didn't audition anyone else. It was a case of, come down and meet the guys, and as long as everyone is happy with you, it's yours.

EDGE: Talk us through what you had to do on that gig, because I know that was a lot of playing to loops, and that sort of thing.
Carlos: Yes, it was very, very difficult. As a session guy, I'm always intrigued by new things. This was a very different gig, in the sense that I had never before relied so heavily on electronics. I had never really thought so much about trying to reapture sounds, playing things very much like they were originally recorded. For instance, with George and "Careless Whisper" it really changes things. The drums parts are synonymous with that track and a lot of fans know that song and inside and out. It's strange, because you wish that you had to play as it was recorded. The whole experience was a good discipline. Even if sometimes you didn't get it right, you got it close, and that's one thing that you have to remember, that song has been in existence for 20 years. It really made me think about subtle things, things that were a half beat or a beat long, some little snare fill, or a kick drum hit, or a crescendo, splash cymbal stuff, that kind of thing.

EDGE: So, just keeping the groove, but perhaps with some slight additions to it?
Carlos: Very small embellishments that
different emotionally, as well. Most gigs you went, "Wow, what a show!" It was the playing along to. You could actually see what you were screens, so it was only when they were in the sense that you were part of a show, noise, that you could hear, but you couldn't really. Well, don't count on it. That was a little bit surreal in the sense that you were part of a show, but I'm most likely you were like the pit at west end show. On top of that, you couldn't see the screen, because we were behind the screens, so it was only when they were running some video at a sound check that you really could see what you were playing along to.

EDGE: It must have been really weird.

Carlos: When the DVD came out, we all went, "Wow, what a show!" It was the first time we actually got to see it, which was really bizarre. The gig was also very different emotionally, as most gigs you play, you are very exposed; very much part of the show. With this show, you had to deal with your ego because you weren't as much part of the show. You are playing your part audibly, but visually adding very little.

EDGE: What was it like working with Annie Lennox and Dave Stewart?

Carlos: Oh, that was fantastic! I have to say, that has been one of my best experiences, just because they are gods in their right. Annie is such an iconic figure and fantastic person, and Dave Stewart is very eccentric and extremely clever. He is one of those genius people. He knows the sounds, how to put it together, and all that stuff, yet he has the energy of a 10-year-old boy. He was fantastic.

EDGE: What did you actually do? Was it a tour?

Carlos: No, we hoped it would end up like that, because it was kind of a reunion, but we did some very iconic things like the American music awards and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and some other American TV. It wasn't a very long period, but it was significant.

EDGE: I saw you recently on the Leona Lewis tour. How was that experience?

Carlos: That was brilliant, as well, actually. We really had a lot of fun on that. I think that was the first time I ever really got to see the whole tour, because I had a gig and I had a kick trigger so I could kick some sub-woofer sounds and a couple of pads, etc. Yet, still every drum kit I use these modern times with everybody using so many sampled sounds, big, weird and interesting sounds, you need to be able to do that.

EDGE: How do you change your kit between all these different gigs?

Carlos: If I'm on a big gig with a big tour like that, which I was on the George Michael tour, I would have laid down in the industry. I was on that tour, and he wanted them put together, and all the parts of it. But, you know, in the end I did with Beverly. Beverly actually did very little with the electronic stuff that was on the album, so I could play it. I played the kit as live as possible, and I had a kick trigger so I could kick some sub-woofer sounds and a couple of pads, etc. Yet, still every drum kit I use these modern times with everybody using so many sampled sounds, big, weird and interesting sounds, you need to be able to do that.

EDGE: Use the other kit. The kits are pretty much the same; the only variation is the cymbals.

CARLOS: I have never been involved in a show where the band was so visual. You could be seen at all times, you could be flashed up on the screens at all times, and you really had to consider that there were aerials. I had done a show with dancers but not the full aerials; all that was going on, it was massive! In the early stages, you had to learn to ignore it because it was distracting and you could miss cues. The thing I had never seen before.

We all rehearsed in our own little bubbles, and then they put us all together to do the show. The first time you see it all in dress rehearsal it's a huge distraction. You had to start to go through it all. Next, the boss comes in and decides what stays and what goes. That's really the work. So, you go in and get the new samples and new versions that you need. Then, we start to go through it all. Next, the boss comes in and decides what stays and what goes.

EDGE: Have you met Cora?

Carlos: Oh, that was fantastic! I was sitting back stage with Travis Barker and his new wife, who had just made a TV programme. Then, I was in the dressing room and Shakira came and sat next to me, and to the other side of me was Carmen Electra, and in front of me and there's Woody Harrelson, Willow Smith from Will Smith and Eurythmics, and the response that they get from such a star-studded audience reminds you of the significance of what they have done down in the industry. I was on stage playing for them, thinking, "Oh my God!" Yeah, I was, and I enjoyed him talking to one of the production guys. He had asked him who I was. Yeah told him my name and what I'd been doing. He said he had heard of me and went on to say he had been watching me for the last couple of days and thought I was great. I was sitting there thinking, "Wow, who would have thought at 17 years old this is where I would be?"

EDGE: Is there anyone who you haven't worked with that you would like to?

Carlos: Loads. The ultimate, I think, would be the Prince gig.

EDGE: Have you met Cora?

Carlos: No, Beverly did a support tour with them and they did some of the U2. Funny enough, I was on the George tour and I missed it. Otherwise, that would have been my gig and I would have been rubbing shoulders with the man. They even played with the sax on some of the other after show parties he likes to do. He loved Eury, took her back to America with him to do some recording, so that would have been a fantastic experience. I know of Cora, she's a great player.

EDGE: Do you have any tips for anyone that would like to become a session drummer?

Carlos: That was crazy! I was sitting back stage with Travis Barker and his new wife, who had just made a TV programme. Then, I was in the dressing room and Shakira came and sat next to me, and to the other side of me was Carmen Electra, and in front of me and there's Woody Harrelson, Willow Smith from Will Smith and Eurythmics, and the response that they get from such a star-studded audience reminds you of the significance of what they have done down in the industry. I was on stage playing for them, thinking, "Oh my God!" Yeah, I was, and I enjoyed him talking to one of the production guys. He had asked him who I was. Yeah told him my name and what I'd been doing. He said he had heard of me and went on to say he had been watching me for the last couple of days and thought I was great. I was sitting there thinking, "Wow, who would have thought at 17 years old this is where I would be?"

EDGE: Do you have any tips for anyone that would like to become a session drummer?

Carlos: It's harder out there, I would say. I don't know if being a session drummer is necessary these days. When I'm working on my music career, I never thought about being a session drummer. It kind of evolved that way. I wanted to be a drummer in a band. If there are young guys out there trying to be the next Coldplay, or whatever, that would be far more lucrative for you and let you live the rock and roll life. The session thing is a bit more of a 9 to 5 job, a bit more hard graft; you've really got to know your stuff. If you do decide that it's for you, or that your time has passed for the rock band, then I would say you have to try and play all sorts of different music so you can sound authentic at whatever you play. You don't have to know it all inside out, because you are going to be very much a jack of all trades. There's every type of music, especially in England, that will pay your bills all year round. Maybe some really big rock bands might keep you busy for a year or two, but on the whole, if you're a session player, chances are you'll simply be going from one thing to another. You need to be able to play a few styles fairly competently, so you have to hone those skills. Then, I think the rest of it is people-skills, more than anything else, being a good person on the road. When you're on the road you have to remember that you only play for an hour or two, and that's it. It really is about how you behave off the stage, as well. You need to have people skills for people to want to be around you. If you take George's show, for instance, there were about 200 people in the crew. You have to get on with all of them. Every venue has a new set and every hotel has staff, you have to be aware of all of this and think about how you behave. Even if you're the best drummer in the world, if you can't have an attitude, people will begin to think, "You know that, this guy doesn't respect you." They'll take someone who is a lesser player, but easier to get on, even if you're a brilliant 23
Edge: Tell us what’s going on at the moment.

Bodo Stricker: Currently, I’m playing some shows with my band, Last One Dying, and we released an album last September. In between playing shows, we’re writing new material to record another album soon. Along the way, I am doing a little project called Whyteboy, which is sort of along the lines of Kid Rock and Methods of Mayhem. We played a couple of showcases for labels and booking agencies and stuff like that, but that’s just a little side project right now.

Edge: How did you come to join the DW family?

Bodo: That’s quite an interesting story, actually. I believe it was one of the trade shows in Frankfurt, probably six or seven years ago. I was playing DW pedals for way longer than that. I think I bought my first 5000 series double pedal with a single chain about ten years ago. So, I was playing at the trade show in Frankfurt with one of my bands and I just wanted to go by the DW booth and thank the guys for creating such a good pedal. So, I spoke to John Good and we hit it right away. We decided to stay in touch and he gave me his business card. We kept seeing each other at these trade shows and stuff like that, but that’s just a little side project right now.

Edge: How long have you been playing drums?

Bodo: I’ve been playing drums for about half of my life now, so about fifteen years. I’ve never had any lessons, I’m completely self-taught. I just learned by listening to CDs and trying to figure out what the drummer was doing.

Edge: What’s the most interesting show you’ve ever played?

Bodo: The most interesting show would probably have to be a festival that we played in China. I did this little 3 week tour with a band called Final Virus. It was sort of like Frank Zappa, with trombone players and keyboards, jazz and metal all mixed into one. We had the opportunity to go to China as a part of a cultural exchange program. They brought a Chinese orchestra over to Europe and a band from the pool of this cultural exchange was sent over to China. We were lucky that it was us! So we played this festival in front of about 80,000 people, and since it was one of the major events in China every year, it was nationally televised. They said there were almost a billion people watching it, so that was quite something.

Edge: Do you feel any pressure playing to larger crowds?

Bodo: To me, it doesn’t make that much of a difference because my workspace is always the same. If I was a singer and had to fill big stages like that, an enormous and entertain people, it would be a different thing. Personally, I prefer playing the smaller shows, like club shows up to 1,000 person capacity, because you have much more interaction with the audience, whereas if you play big festivals with big stages and security in front of it, you kind of feel a little isolated from the audience. I like the smaller shows because you can get in touch with the audience and get that kind of feedback.

Edge: Talk a little more about being self-taught.

Bodo: Mostly, I was just listening to records and playing along. At the time when I was learning to play, there was this show on TV, called “Superdrumming” featuring Billy Cobham, Simon Phillips and Louie Bellson. So, you got to watch them play and then you were like, “OK, this is how that works and maybe I can try this out.” And there was this guy named Gary Brown who had all these stick-twirling moves and stuff like that, so that was quite interesting. I think the visual aspect is very important when you are learning drums, because if you’re just listening, it is sometimes hard to figure out exactly what they’re doing. If you actually see them play it’s like, “Ah, alright, now I get it.” Then it’s just practice from there on.
Edge: Why did you end up being more of a “metal” drummer?

Bodo: When I started drumming, I started out playing jazz and fusion and that sort of thing. I didn’t have a double bass drum pedal until I had played for five or six years. I think it had a lot to do with the music that I was listening to at the time. I shifted my interest towards the heavier music when bands like Pearl Jam, Alice in Chains and Soundgarden were really popular. A friend of mine turned me into Primus, which was one of my major influences; Tim Alexander, a great drummer! By listening to some of the other stuff like Faith No More, that’s how I got in touch with the heavier stuff. Then I played in a little cover band that was called Absurd and we did Primus covers. The guitarist in that band gave me a CD from Meshuggah and that’s when I said, “Alright, I’m really going to start practising double bass drumming now” because the stuff I heard on the CD was just so phenomenal. I wanted to play like that guy.

Edge: How did you develop your double bass technique over the years?

Bodo: When I first started trying it, I found it really easy that if you have to play the both of my legs were sort of floating in mid air. So I took the drum kit and set it up left-handed. I put the bass drum on the left foot, the hi-hat with my left hand, the snare with my right hand, completely the opposite of what I would usually play. That helped me to develop the strength in my left foot which I needed for the difficult stuff that I wanted to play. Nowadays, there are these people who have tutorial videos on how to do the flat foot technique and the heel-up or heel-down technique. When I first started practising double bass, there was no youtube.com to look at all of these things up and you didn’t know what anything was called. You just did what was necessary to play what you were hearing in your head. The hardest part about it wasn’t learning the technique to move your foot fast, but the endurance to play for extended periods of time. It takes years of practice with a metronome to build up your muscle groups. A lot of kids ask me “How do you set up your pedal? How high is the spring tension on your pedal?” and I can tell you exactly what I do, but that doesn’t necessarily mean that it will work for you. You are gonna have to try it yourself and work out what is best for you really. “Oh, this is what you have to do to become really fast with the double bass pedal” because everyone has to do it their own way.

Edge: Could you imagine living without social media platforms, such as Youtube, and Facebook in the music industry today?

Bodo: I think I would have trouble being a musician without Facebook. You can see what people are doing and you can find out about new bands. It’s a great promotional tool, especially for smaller bands that people don’t know about yet. A smaller band can be friends with a famous band and then people are like, “Ah, they are friends with them, maybe I’ll check them out.”

Edge: How do you develop your double bass technique over the years?

Bodo: The set-up that I have right now, I’ve been playing that for about six years. I have experimented before and this is what I always come back to because it feels the most comfortable to me. I like to have three toms above the bass drum because I always use a lot of splash cymbals and cymbal bell for little accents, and if you play faster fills it’s much easier to play the rolls if you have three toms above and don’t have to move around that much. So either play 3 up, 2 down or 3 up, 2 down. Right now, I use 2 floor toms, which I just recently went back to. I had some drummers come in and they just couldn’t play with a click and were fighting with the click and stuff like that, so it really helped me to practice with the metronome alone from the beginning. It wasn’t that I was feeling uncomfortable, but it sure is different when you play something that you’ve only played with the X-Shell construction. The 14 floor tom sounds as deep as one of my old, old kits. Every time DW comes up with a new shell thing, I want to try these out because you know it’s going to be great. I’ve got one of these kits right now, which they sent me. It’s a totally new type of drum and very different from playing live. You kind of feel a little bit isolated, because most of the time you feel that you’re the one playing. But why not?“Don’t try reading sheet music and I’m always kind of scared of teaching people something wrong. For me, it’s always about the music and playing with other people. I’m not a solo drummer, so I’ll leave it to the people who can do that kind of thing.

Edge: Have you imagined leaving Germany to play drums somewhere else?

Bodo: Of course, wherever there is a cool job to play drums or a good tour, I am willing to go. As I said, we did tours to China and all throughout Europe and we would love to go to Japan, so sure, no problem.

Edge: You are also playing hockey in your free time. Aren’t you afraid of hurting yourself?

Bodo: Of course, my wife has been playing hockey for sixteen years now and we are both golfers so, naturally, we have a little more protection and padding than the rest. They don’t have the full face mask and stuff like that. You don’t really worry about hurting yourself out there. Mostly, we play for fun and we play for the same team, so we get to go to a lot of tournaments. She was actually trying to convince me to go on the ice with her for the longest time and I always said, “No, I can’t do that, what if I break this or I sprain my ankle?” The boys will be mad at me if I can’t play.” And then I actually did break my right arm in a really stupid accident at a showcase. I just walked down a loading ramp that was apparently a little too steep and I slipped and broke my right wrist fifteen minutes before stage time and we had to cancel the show. After that, I was like, “You know what? If I can break my bones by walking down a stupid loading ramp, I might as well play hockey.” So, I’ve been playing hockey for a while now and nothing bad has happened yet.

Edge: Any advice for young, aspiring drummers?

Bodo: First of all, practice, practice and practice! Use a metronome early on, so that you get a steady groove going and won’t have trouble in the studio playing with a tick-track. Also, try to be listening, don’t just focus on only one thing. If you are just a doppleganger drummer, then it will be hard to find a job in that industry because there are so many good drummers that can play everything. Try to play with other people and, most importantly, listen. I know so many musicians who are amazing at their instrument, but if you sit them down and say, “Alright, now play a song and play along with this person,” they just do too much, they can’t listen. So, as a drummer, it’s really important to listen to what’s going on around you; listen to what the guitarist playing, listen to what the bassist is doing and just get different ideas into your skills, it’s about playing what’s right for the song.
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