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Audio examples performed by Rich Lackowski.

Tracks 58, 60, 64, 70, 71, and 74 performed by John O’Reilly Jr.

The Path

Many years of random events led to my discoveries of new musical styles and the greatest drummers who played them. I remember receiving the Red Hot Chili Peppers' *Blood Sugar Sex Magik* album when I was 16 years old. I had already been playing the drums for six years and was taking my early steps down the progressive rock path with Neil Peart, the metal path with Lars Ulrich, and the classic rock path with John Bonham, regularly playing along with the music of each of their bands. But there was something new in that Chili Peppers album that I couldn't get enough of. It was the sound of Chad Smith's funky drumming that was drawing me in. So on went the headphones, and out came my first expressions of funky drumming. I had taken my first steps down the path, but I had no idea where it led. I just wanted to keep going and discover more funky music and drummers.

Now fast-forward to my college years. I was 21 years old when a good friend and band mate of mine, also a Chili Peppers fan, arrived at my doorstep holding a CD by The Meters. At last, I held the key that unlocked more vital miles down the beaten path of funk drumming! Eventually, several years later, I stumbled onto some James Brown albums and continued even further down the path. These three vital discoveries in funk, The Chili Peppers, The Meters, and James Brown, took me an entire decade to discover through the element of chance.

This book attempts to speed this process up and give you what I never had—a roadmap of several paths, or styles, each labeled with vital landmarks, or drummers, along the way. I hope it accelerates the discovery process so you can spend more time listening and learning, and less time wondering where to find more insight and guidance into a particular genre.

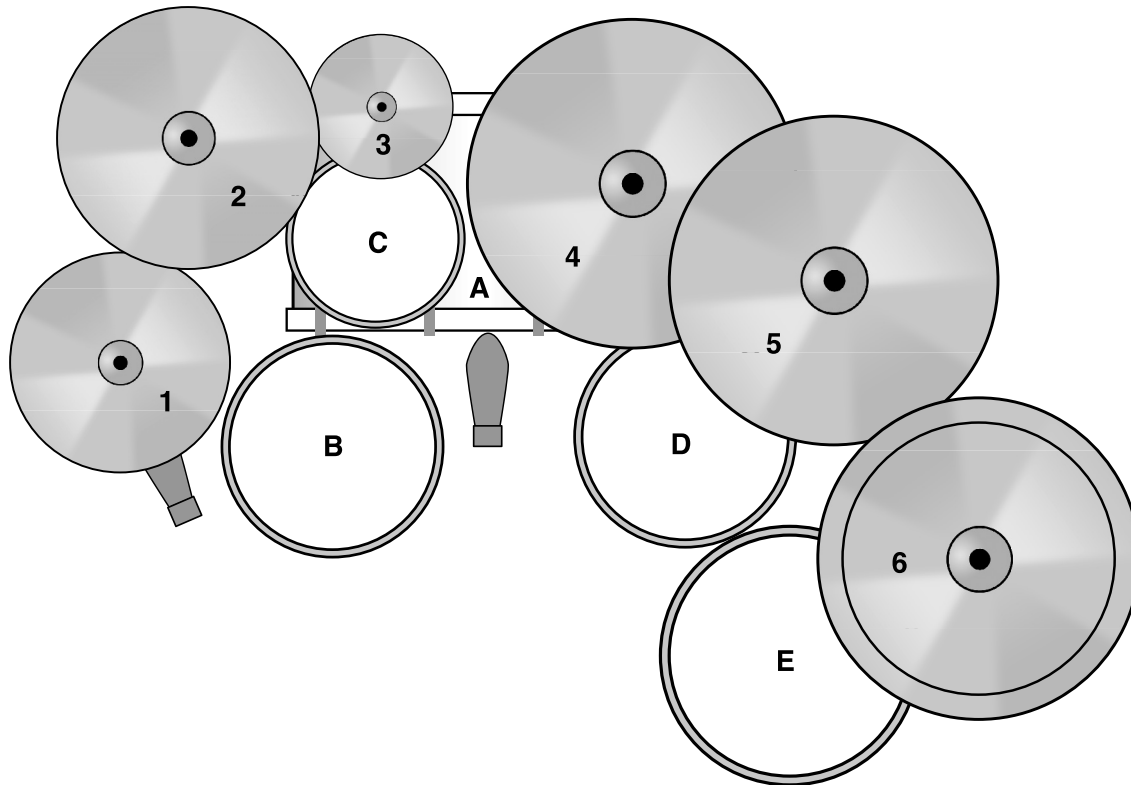
Two of the greatest gifts of our drumming community are the ever growing pool of inspired musicians who are injecting new innovations into our craft, and the ongoing discovery of the legends that shaped our collective drumming history. It's impossible in the scope of just one book to cover every musician that has made an important contribution to drumming, so if you find some of your favorite drummers missing, know that I have favorites missing too, and I plan to explore them in upcoming writing endeavors. But what you will find on the following pages is an exploration of over 60 legendary drummers, with 29 of those drummers analyzed in detail, complete with lessons that help teach you how to play their most defining grooves and solos. So, get ready to turn the page and begin your journey on the beaten path!

—Rich Lackowski

Red Hot Drum Set

Chad's first kit consisted of ice cream tubs and Lincoln Logs. Later in his life, he was listed in the *Guinness Book of World Records* for playing the world's largest drum kit (308 pieces). His standard setup falls in between these two extremes and is a more reasonable five-piece Pearl Reference Series kit. His cutting, powerful sound is largely a result of the enormous crashes, larger-sized kick and toms, and the steel-shell, mid-depth snare drums he uses.

Circa 2006



Pearl Reference Series, Custom CeeLite Finish

- A: 16" x 24" kick
- B: 5.5" x 14" Sensitone Snare or 5" x 14" Chad Smith Signature Snare
- C: 10" x 12" rack tom
- D: 14" x 14" floor tom
- E: 16" x 16" floor tom

Sabian

- 1: 14" hi-hats (Flat Hats on top, AA Top on bottom)
- 2: 18.5" Chad Smith Explosion Crash
- 3: 10" AA Splash
- 4: 21" AA Rock Ride or 21" Ed Shaughnessy Ride
- 5: 20.5" Chad Smith Explosion Crash
- 6: 19" AA Chinese

“Train in Vain (Stand by Me)”


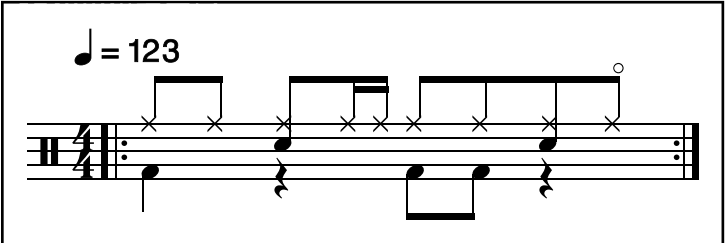
from *London Calling* (1979)

Level: Beginner

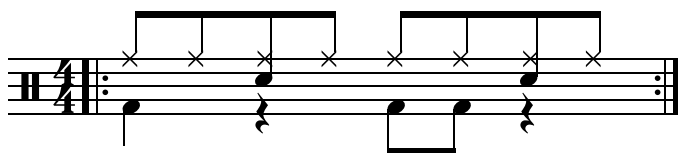
Inarguably one of the most impressive achievements by The Clash was their 1979 hit album, *London Calling*. *Entertainment Weekly* voted it No. 1 on their “Top 25 Albums of the Last 25 Years” list, and *Rolling Stone* ranked it No. 8 on their “Top 500 Albums of All Time” list and No. 1 on their “Best Album of the 1980s” list, even though it was released in late 1979. “Train in Vain (Stand by Me)” was the first top-40 hit by The Clash in the United States and became a staple song on the airwaves throughout the 1980s. Check out the bouncy upbeat groove that Topper lays down in this classic tune.

Original transcription:

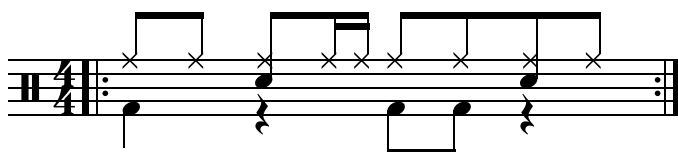
Track 17

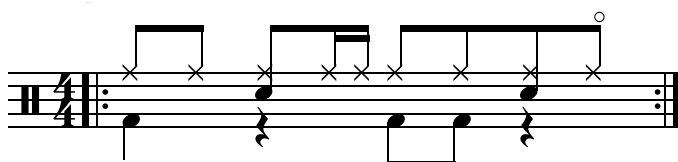
Start by playing straight eighth notes on the hi-hat, snare on beats 2 and 4, and kick on beat 1, beat 3, and the “&” of beat 3.



Now let's add the bounce to the beat by adding a hit to the hi-hat on the “ah” of beat 2. You can do this with your right hand by bouncing the stick in time. Practice this slowly at first and make sure that the hits sound nice and even.



Add in the open hi-hat on the “&” of beat 4, and you're playing the same pattern that appears on this landmark hit.



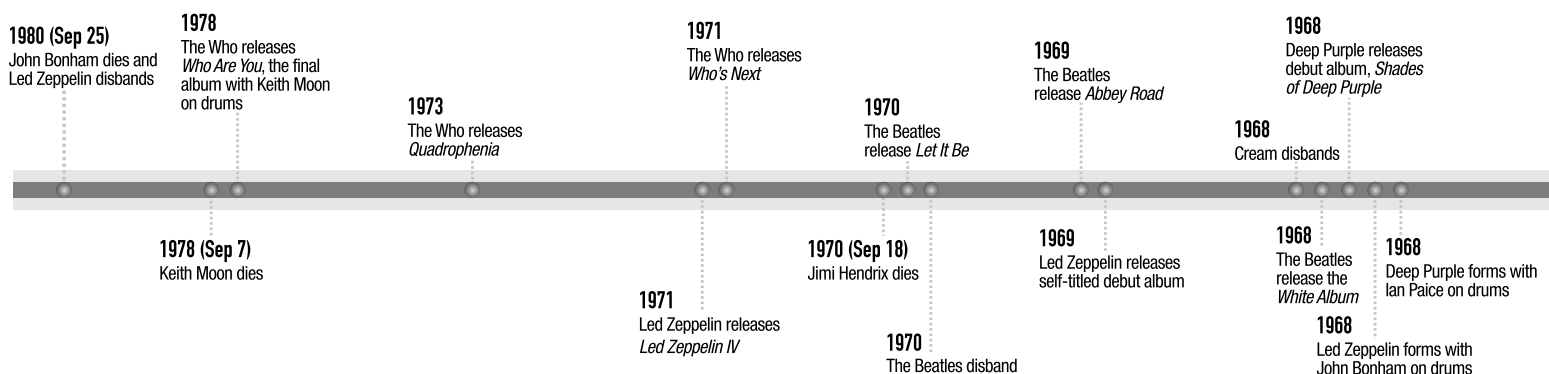
Classic Rock

Every style of rock, from punk to metal to progressive rock, can be traced back to a magical musical era that started in the early 1960s and continued throughout the 1970s. This period, commonly called the *classic rock era*, was full of passionate musical innovation and intense sonic evolution. A fresh new sound was born that beautifully contrasted the traditional foundations of jazz and relatively straightforward grooves found in very early rock tunes by pioneers like Elvis Presley and Chuck Berry. In particular, the drummers of the classic rock era led us through a bold exploration, fearlessly breaking away from traditional musical roles, and showing the world that the drums were an incredibly powerful force that could elevate music to a whole new level of intensity.

For most of us, Led Zeppelin is the first group that comes to mind when we think of the essence of classic rock. Zeppelin has sold over 300 million albums worldwide and has made a permanent mark on rock music with a legendary catalog of songs that are intimately known by musicians and non-musicians alike. At the core of Led Zeppelin is the unmistakable drumming of John Bonham. His monstrous sound and commanding style set the new standard for all who followed. Bonham's sound was colossal, and his creativity was unlike anything the world had seen. He was a master of using an enormous dynamic range to unleash the raw emotions contained within each song. To better understand the significance of John Bonham's drumming, it's important to learn what others in the era were doing at the same time, and what was happening in rock drumming prior to the formation of the band.

Formed prior to Led Zeppelin but overlapping much of its career was The Who and the wonderfully extreme drumming of Keith Moon. When songs by The Who fill the air, many people conjure up visions of Pete Townshend slamming power chords in trademark windmill fashion, or think of Robert Daltrey belting out a ferocious scream at the top of his lungs, or they get lost in John Entwistle's busy and intricate bass lines. But the thing that everyone immediately feels is the totally raw and chaotically commanding power of Keith Moon's drumming. Moon brought an unrivaled energy to the drums that had never been heard prior to his 1964 arrival on the scene. He created a wall of sound by riding persistently on the cymbals and complementing the songs with a lavish dose of solos and fills that were completely new to the rock 'n' roll experience of the time.

Formed prior to The Who, but overlapping much of its career, were The Beatles. The Beatles are undeniably the most famous and influential band of all time. The group



KEITH MOON

(The Who)

Keith Moon was born August 23, 1946, in Wembley, London, England. He originally played bugle and then trumpet in school bands until age 13 when he moved on to playing the bass drum. Jazz legend and master showman Gene Krupa was Keith's single-biggest drumming influence, and once he saw Krupa in action, it didn't take long for Moon to strap in for the ride of his life as the drummer for one of the biggest and most influential rock bands in history. Moon got his first drum kit at age 15, and three years later, in 1964, he joined The Who at age 17.

Keith loved damage! He was notorious for trashing hotel rooms, exploding the plumbing with firecrackers, and throwing furniture from the windows of tall buildings. He even drove a Rolls Royce into a swimming pool on his 21st birthday, earning him a lifetime ban from the Holiday Inn hotel chain! He destroyed his drum kits at the end of many shows, too. During a TV appearance on the *Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour*, Moon exploded his kit at the end of their performance of "My Generation."

Moon's drumming, just like his personality, was extreme, original, revolutionary, and fearless. He created a unique drumming style where he flipped the traditional role of guitarist and drummer by playing lead lines on drums while Pete Townshend kept the rhythm solid on guitar. Moon played out of control but with authority, as if he was in total command of extreme chaos.

Keith Moon died on September 7, 1978, at the age of 32, from an overdose of an anti-seizure medication (32 pills) that was prescribed by a doctor to help him quit drinking. His music lives on, though, with Mitch Mitchell, John Bonham, Ginger Baker, and Neil Peart all citing Keith as a major influence. His personality lives on as well with the ultimate tribute, Animal from the Muppets, who is so wild he has to be chained to his own drum kit!

"KEITH CAME UP AND SAID 'I CAN PLAY BETTER THAN HIM' AND HE GOT UP ON THE DRUMMER'S DRUM KIT AND PRACTICALLY SMASHED IT TO PIECES. AND WE THOUGHT, THIS IS THE MAN FOR US."

—Pete Townshend

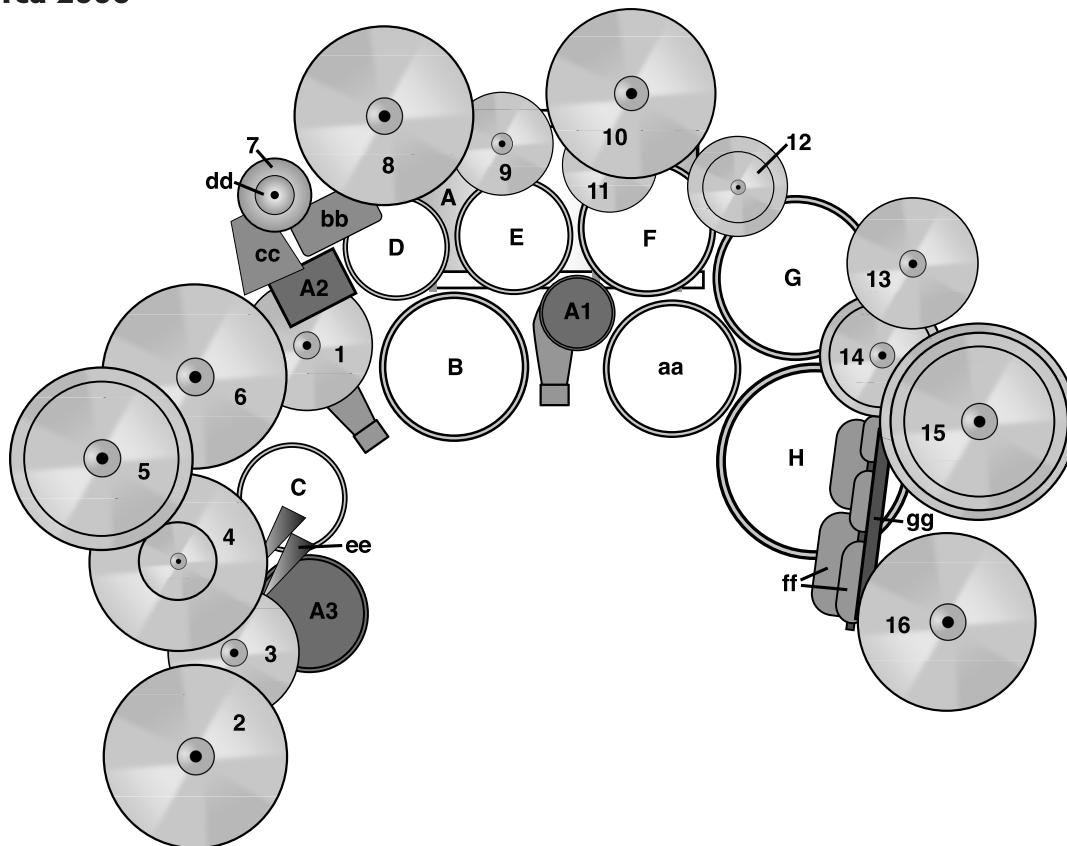
"THE ENERGY IS JUST UNBELIEVABLE. HE SOUNDS LIKE A STEAM ENGINE, A STEAM LOCOMOTIVE AT FULL PELT. HIS SPEED IS INCREDIBLE. AND WHAT ACTUALLY COULD SOUND SLOPPY AT FIRST, YOU SUDDENLY REALIZE IS AN INCREDIBLY TECHNICAL FUSION OF ALL THESE STYLES THAT HE PUT TOGETHER AND MADE VERY MUCH HIS OWN THING OUT OF THE DRUMS."

—Roger Daltrey

Crash Into Me

Beauford has upgraded his setup quite significantly since his father bought him his first kit, a Roy Rogers outfit constructed from tin and paper. He currently plays a beautiful Yamaha kit doused with nearly 20 cymbals and sprinkled with a healthy variety of percussion and electronic enhancements.

Circa 2006



Yamaha Recording Custom, Raven Black Lacquer Finish

- A: 18" x 20" kick
- B: 6.5" x 14" Carter Beauford Snare
- C: 6" x 10" Dunnett Translucent Purple Titanium Snare
- D: 8" x 8" rack tom
- E: 9" x 10" rack tom
- F: 10" x 12" rack tom
- G: 12" x 14" rack tom
- H: 16" x 16" rack tom

Zildjian

- 1: 13.25" K Custom Hybrid Hi-Hats
- 2: 18" K Prototype Crash
- 3: 14" ZXT Trashformer
- 4: Splash stacked on 20" A Custom Flat Ride
- 5: 19" K Custom Dark China
- 6: 20" A Custom Projection Ride
- 7: 6" Zil-Bel
- 8: 18" K Dark Medium Thin Crash
- 9: 10" A Custom Splash

- 10: 17" K Dark Medium Thin Crash
- 11: 9" Oriental Trash Splash
- 12: 8" A Splash stacked on 10" K Splash
- 13: 14" K Dark Medium Thin Crash
- 14: 14" K Mini China (with 4 rivets)
- 15: 19" K Custom Hybrid China stacked on 20" Oriental Classic China
- 16: 20" Oriental Crash of Doom

Percussion

- aa: 7" x 13" Dunnett Titanium Timbale
- bb: LP Jam Block (low pitch)
- cc: LP Rock Classic Ridge Rider Cowbell
- dd: Chinese wedding bell
- ee: LP Dry Agogo Bells
- ff: LP Granite Blocks
- gg: LP Whole-Tone Aluminum Bar Chimes (72 bar, double row)

Electronics—Hart Dynamics

- A1: 8" Acupad
- A2: Hammer Accessory Pad Trigger
- A3: 13" Professional Series Snare

Fusionography:

Other Fusion Drummers You Should Know

Steve Gadd

(Chick Corea, Brecker Brothers, Stanley Clarke, Al DiMeola, Steps Ahead, others)

Steve Gadd is the most influential drummer in contemporary music, and he's one of the most recorded drummers in history. His remarkable musicianship cuts across all musical genres, so much so that he could be prominently featured in any chapter of this book. (Be sure to check out Paul Simon's "50 Ways to Leave Your Lover," Steely Dan's "Aja," and the entire performance on the Steps Ahead album *Smokin' at the Pit* for some of his best cuts in other genres.) His deep pocket and technical mastery are well represented in every style of music he plays, but with regards to the fusion genre, check out his work with Chick Corea, specifically the songs "Nite Sprite" from the 1975 album *The Leprechaun*, "Falling Alice" from the 1978 album *The Mad Hatter*, and "El Stephen" from the 2006 album *The Ultimate Adventure*. Other notable highlights appear on "Night Flight" (Brecker Brothers), "Concerto for Jazz-Rock Orchestra" (Stanley Clarke), and "Casino" (Al DiMeola). Steve Gadd is, without question, one of the best drummers ever to pick up the sticks and play.

Must-Have Recording: Chick Corea's *The Leprechaun* (1975)

Lenny White

(Return to Forever, Miles Davis, Jaco Pastorius, others)

Lenny White was one of the founding fathers of fusion drumming. He played on Miles Davis's infamous *Bitches Brew* sessions (along with Jack DeJohnette, Billy Cobham, and Don Alias), spent five years with Chick Corea's Return to Forever (1972 to 1977), and played with other fusion legends including Jaco Pastorius, Al DiMeola, and Stanley Clarke. For a real treat and tons of inspiration, check out Lenny's red-hot drumming on Return to Forever's seminal fusion album *Hymn of the Seventh Galaxy*. His smokin' grooves and blazing fills around the kit showcase both his technical ability and his musical sensibility. Lenny played a right-handed kit even though he was left-handed, he was self taught, and he attributed his greatest drumming inspirations to the great Tony Williams. Lenny White has contributed head-on to the formation and development of fusion music, and his drumming has earned him a permanent place in music history.

Must-Have Recording: Return to Forever's *Hymn of the Seventh Galaxy* (1973)

Additional Fusion Recordings

Chick Corea: *The Ultimate Adventure* (2006)

Planet X: *MoonBabies* (2002)

On the Virg: *Serious Young Insects* (1999)

Chick Corea: *The Mad Hatter* (1978)

Al DiMeola: *Casino* (1978)

Weather Report: *Heavy Weather* (1977)

Jaco Pastorius: *Jaco Pastorius* (1976)

Brecker Brothers: *Back to Back* (1975)

Stanley Clarke: *Journey to Love* (1975)

Herbie Hancock: *Head Hunters* (1973)

Miles Davis: *Bitches Brew* (1970)

Miles Davis: *In a Silent Way* (1969)