

The DEAD
WEATHER's

Jack White

by "Pistol" Pete Kaufmann

Richard Sibbald

Yes, *that* Jack White. The frontman for **the White Stripes** and **the Raconteurs**, the killer guitarist, singer, producer, writer, and engineer...well, he's a drummer too, **and a great one at that.**

Jack White doesn't need much of an introduction. He's *the* Renaissance man of his musical generation, hands down: a rock star with brains, skills, opinions, style, taste, and an uncanny ability to master every aspect of music making. Even the drums.

Some people might be surprised by or suspicious of White's latest role as drummer in the Dead Weather. But be assured, this is no star maneuver; Jack played every lick on the band's debut album, *Horehound*, and he stays behind the kit live. And to those familiar with his backstory, or those who noticed his awesome drumming performance on "Another Way To Die," his duet with Alicia Keys from the James Bond movie *Quantum Of Solace*, the drummer/leader role almost seems to be what his career has been leading up to. In fact, White started playing drums as a teenager before he began playing guitar, and his first professional tour was drumming in the band Goober & The Peas. So this is not unfamiliar territory for him.

MUSIC IN YOUR D-N-A

DRUMS FOR THE EARS, EYES, MIND, SOUL-AND BUDGET FEATURING:

- ★ 9-PLY SELECT NORTH AMERICAN MAPLE SHELLS
- ★ HAND-RUBBED SPARKLE LACQUER FINISHES
- ★ RIMS-MOUNT POWER TOMS
- ★ LOW MASS/LOW PROFILE LUGS
- ★ MAPLE BASS DRUM HOOPS
- ★ HEAVY-DUTY HARDWARE INCLUDED
- ★ 45° PRECISION-V BEARING EDGES

PEACE DNA SERIES
Joey Scott (Lizzy Borden)

peace

Peace Drums & Percussion | www.peacedrum.com

USA: info@peacedrum.com | 626-581-4510

International: peacemusic@seed.net.tw | 886-4-26819619

The Dead Weather comprises White on drums and vocals, Alison Mosshart of the Kills on lead vocals, Dean Fertita from Queens Of The Stone Age on guitar, and the Raconteurs' Jack Lawrence, aka Little Jack, on bass. *Horehound* is as rock 'n' roll as it gets: dirty, raw, groovy, and driven by heavy distorted guitars and open-sounding drums reminiscent of the old days of bluesy rock. White's drumming is powerful, musical, fluid, and creative. And he switches gears with ease—one minute channeling Led Zep's John Bonham on "Treat Me Like Your Mother," the next reminding us of Sabbath's Bill Ward on the Bob Dylan cover "New Pony."

The album's first single, "Hang You From The Heavens," opens with a funky, broken-up, syncopated drumbeat with open hi-hat barks almost as raunchy as Zigaboo Modeliste's famous grooves with the Meters. And White's swinging funk feel on "I Cut Like A Buffalo" and dirty surf-rock rumba on "Rocking Horse" are ridiculously creative and grooving.

You can also hear Jack's influence oozing out of *Horehound's* production. The album was recorded in White's new studio, Third Man, and he worked extremely hard at getting the right drum sounds. MD had a chance to catch up with the Jack of many trades on a rainy day in New York City while the Dead Weather was in town for a show at the Bowery Ballroom.

MD: Many people are unaware that you started off on drums. You've come full circle.

Jack: Yeah, and I'm so glad. I grew up doing nothing but wanting to be a drummer. I started out when I was fourteen. I got a 4-track reel-to-reel, and I needed to play drums to something, so I taught myself how to play guitar. I learned about recording techniques through that process as well.

MD: Well, the production on the album is great; it sounds like what rock 'n' roll was originally like—dirty. And you can hear the natural tone of everything.

Jack: Thank you. I'm glad you think that because we were really aiming for that. I designed the studio from scratch. It has everything I've wanted in a studio for the last decade. I have the microphones I want, and the Neve board is incredible. We only used eight tracks—and no computers. It just feels so soulful, and when we play things back it sounds exactly how we want it to sound. The acoustical techniques that I designed into the framework of the building are lending to it as well.

MD: The drums definitely have a '60s/'70s rock 'n' roll vibe.

Jack: In my mind there's an arc of where the sound on records changed from the '60s to the '70s to the '80s, when all the digital technology came in.

I can't help but rewind and say, Okay, when did music sound the best? I mean, is there a guitar amp that sounds better than a blackface Fender Twin Reverb? Is there a better-sounding microphone than a Neumann U 47? Not really.

And it's not about trying to be retro or trying to re-create something that happened on some record I had when I was twelve years old. All I want is for the tones to be as soulful and rich as possible. As opposed to when I was ten or twelve and literally using drums I found trash picking, now I'm blessed with the opportunity and the ability to design the studio myself and design from scratch a drumset for live performance and for recording, which I did with Ludwig. It was so cool for them to allow me to design this unique set with all these components put together in one kit. This kit is just so *full* sounding to me.

MD: I love the sound on "Will There Be Enough Water?" The bass drum sounds so open, like a jazz kit. And you don't put the bass drum in till much later; when it comes in it has such personality.

Jack: If you withhold the bass drum, it's like not bringing the bass guitar in until the second verse—you think it's already there, but when it enters you're like, Holy hell, now the song is just exploding! Also, a lot of old records have that

Jack's Dead Weather Kit



Drums: Ludwig Classic Maple in black oyster. 16x26 kick, 5x16 snare with Millennium strainer and Vibra-Band mount, 12x14 marching snare with P-87 Classic strainer and gut snares, 7x16 rack tom with Vibra-Band mount, 14x16 floor tom, two 16x16 floor toms. The kit also has a matching 12x22 Seat Case throne and a matching 16x18 second bass drum that White has dubbed "the jazz cannon."

Cymbals: Paiste 2002. 24" crash (16" Signature fast crash alternate), 24" ride, two 16" crashes as hi-hats.

implied bass drum that you can't really hear—like Little Richard, Chuck Berry, even Rolling Stones records where you're like, Is there a kick in there?

This whole album was recorded with either two tracks of drums or mono on one track. Nobody's doing that anymore—mono drums. We did that with Patrick Keeler's drums on "Steady As She Goes" from the first Raconteurs album. You'd never think that was mono. The funniest thing, we licensed the song to a video game, and we had to send them stems on each track [to split for the video track]. They were like, "Where's the drum stem? It's not stereo—it's just one track. We don't get it!" [laughs]

MD: Does producing from behind the kit change how you look at things now?

Jack: Of course! The scary thing is, I'm preferring it. As the producer, it's almost like I'm finally getting to conduct the orchestra. As the songwriter you always give direction to the drummer, like, "Here's the tempo." With the White Stripes I'll write on piano and think, *We'll make it electric when I get with Meg.* And then she brings that really childlike cavewoman thing to the song and it takes on this whole new life. The structure becomes really guttural, so that becomes in control of the song, which is great.

But I love being the drummer and being so hands-on as a producer. And I gotta tell you, this kit really has unique tones. I have a 16" snare drum instead of a 14", and in front of it I have a shal-

3 Drumsticks
**MORE
STICK FOR
YOUR MONEY.
NOT BUDGET STICKS,
BUT STICKS FOR
EVERY
DRUMMER
ON A BUDGET.**



3 Drumsticks
are an everyday value. For slightly more than a traditional pair of sticks, you get a triplet of pro-quality, select hickory, precision-matched lumber.

To see the full line of professional quality, all-hickory 3Drumsticks visit:
www.3drumsticks.com

©2009 Drum Workshop, Inc.
The 3 logo is a trademark of Drum Workshop, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

JACK WHITE

low 16" rack tom. So they're both sort of the same drum—one with chains, one without. It's almost like I'm hitting a snare without chains on it, but I lower the pitch so it sounds really deep. And I have a marching snare—that's the really high snare sound on "Cut Like A Buffalo." Then I have two 16" floors and a 14" floor, so I have three and three. With the 26" bass drum, I had split the front head when I was trying to put a hole in it, so I put one on with no hole. All the subwoofer elements of the drum came out, and that changed the tone of the whole kit in the studio.

MD: Your version of the Bob Dylan song "New Pony" almost sounds like a Black Sabbath jam. Your drumming is so loose and so fluid, like Bill Ward.

Jack: That was wild. That was done totally live, including the backup vocals, and it was the first take. It just had so much energy to it.

MD: How about "Hang You From The Heavens"?

Jack: That's us playing at different speeds. I played the high-pitched marching snare drum at a slow tempo,

so when we sped it up it sounded twice as high. And we did the opposite with the other snare, recording it at a high speed and then slowing down the tape. We did that as overdubs, but I mimic that when we rehearse and play live.

MD: "Heavens" is really funky, especially when the drum breakdown comes in. The high-pitched sound in the background is almost like Clyde Stubblefield's snare on James Brown records.

Jack: Oh yeah, and we accidentally erased those drums. The tape was at the wrong spot when we pressed record, so I had to redo all those drum overdubs. But we topped it—we came back with something better. That's something you don't get with Pro Tools; things don't actually get erased, so you don't have to force yourself to come up with something new. You just recall it.

MD: Your drumming is so earthy, it almost sounds like Levon Helm or some old R&B drummer. Who were your influences?

Jack: When I was younger I was in love with Gene Krupa—listened to the Carnegie Hall concert all the time. Then

I got into Ian Paice when I was a teenager, then Stewart Copeland, and then I fell in love with this drummer called Crow from the Flat Duo Jets. He pretty much had this one rockabilly beat, but it was such a good beat you could listen to it all day long. That got me back into the older drummers from the rockabilly and surf eras, and then back to big-band drummers, like Lionel Hampton.

MD: Your pocket is the first thing I noticed when I heard *Horehound*. It doesn't sound like someone who just started playing drums again. It sounds like someone who never stopped in the first place.

Jack: That's good to hear, man. What's great is that I'm working with Little Jack on bass; he's been in so many projects with me, and I'm finally in the rhythm section with him for the first time. But I said, "Look, I gotta tell you, like I do with the White Stripes or when I perform live, I get so into it that I start playing things fast." There aren't other musicians to keep us in time, like there are in the Raconteurs. Though with the Stripes, the more you get into it, the more the audience feeds off it, and you can feel that energy from the crowd. If we always played it like the album, some songs would feel dead.

MD: Speaking of the Stripes, I saw you play, and once when Meg hit the cymbal I watched you catch it. It was very loose and organic; there was no real set list. I got a similar feeling with "60 Feet Tall" from the Dead Weather album. It progressed into blues changes later in the song, and it sounded like Alison wasn't aware that you guys were going into that section.

Jack: Yeah, that's what happened. That was done live. We just went through it once or twice—nothing written down. There was no discussion ahead of time about playing louder or softer in different parts of the song. That long space in the beginning when I play that fill was completely unplanned. That's why we wanted that to be the first song on the album; it just sort of spelled out what we want it to be about.

Cymbals are born from the Earth's Elements;
copper, tin, fire and spirit.

Why not give them back when they are done?

GO Green!

Recycle **ANY** and **ALL** of your bashed, smashed & cracked old cymbals with the
1st Annual
"Cymbal Recycling Program"
from
Dream Cymbals & Gongs

Contact an Authorized Dream Dealer for details and find out how you can
turn that pile of busted bronze* in your corner into a credit, that you
can use towards your DREAM cymbal set up!

dream
Toronto ON, Canada
877-933-7629
info@dreamcymbals.com - www.dreamcymbals.com

* True Bronze cast cymbals only! Sheet Brass and other inferior metals are not eligible. ©

