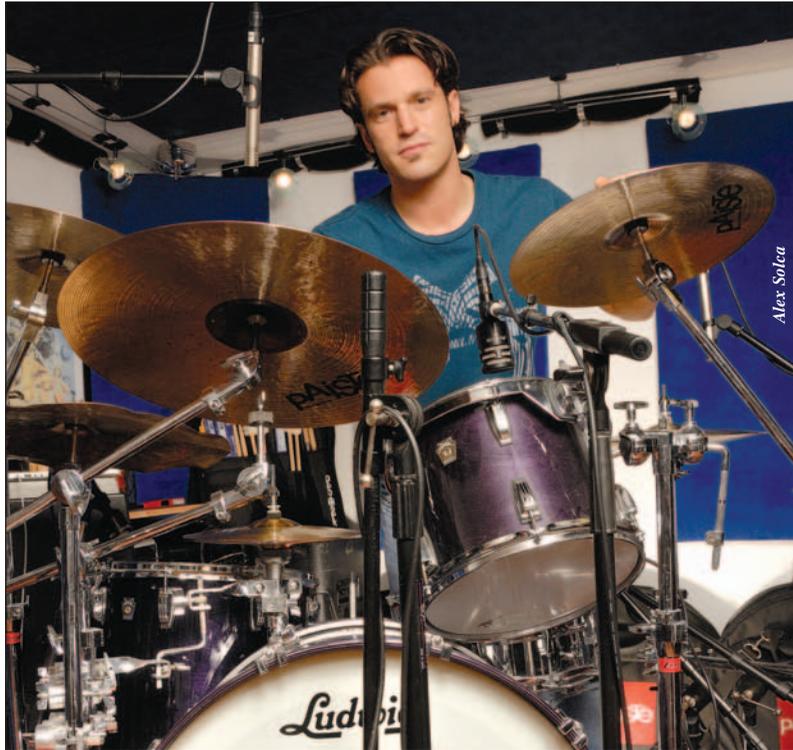


SESSION/TOURING DRUMMER

RYAN HOYLE

Quick Practice And Tuning Tips



I really enjoyed your Woodshed article in the November 2009 issue of *Modern Drummer*. You seem to know a lot about recording and how to get the best tones out of your drums. I checked out some of the audio samples on your Web site, livedrumtracks.com, and was impressed by how big and fat your different kits sound. Can you share your secrets to getting a great tom sound? Also, do you have any advice for how to take my drumming up to the next level?

Thomas C.

I'm glad you enjoyed the article, Thomas. And thanks for checking out my Web site. When someone asks for my best tip for becoming a better drummer, my answer is to go to Wal-Mart and buy a cheap full-length mirror. Many people fall in love with drumming because they've watched some really impressive players. For me, it was Steve Gadd and John Bonham. When I saw them on the drums, that was it. It was the most beautiful combination of movement and sound, aggression and finesse, tension and release, athletics and sportsmanship. When you watch yourself playing your drums, your brain will start to recall those images of greatness, and they will start to come out in your own playing. Be sure to change the perspective every once in a while, by putting the mirror off to the

right, to the left, out in front, or on the ceiling.

Regarding tom sounds, I don't tune my rack and floor toms the same way. I like my rack tom to sound gooey, like a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. But if I were to tune my floor tom using that same ratio—same heads, same tuning—it would ring so out of control that it would start humming even when I wasn't playing it.

I tune rack toms for a more resonant approach, with the bottom head a whole step up from the top. I often use Remo coated or Smooth White Emperors, coated CS Black Dots, or clear Pinstripes on top and clear Ambassadors on the bottom.

I use a different bottom head on the floor tom. My current favorite is a Remo Powerstroke 3, to control overtones. I will generally tune the bottom head lower than the top.

When I sing tom sounds to myself, I hear a gentle pitch bend down from the rack tom. When I sing a floor tom, it's more of a bark, and I want it to sound like it's resolving. Plus I don't want the floor tom to be slow and make my fills sound like they're dragging. Tuning the bottom head lower helps prevent that.

Ryan Hoyle has been a member of Collective Soul and Paul Rodgers' band and has recorded tracks for, among others, David Cook, Carrie Underwood, Deborah Gibson, Kenny Wayne Shepherd, and *Guitar Hero 5*.

