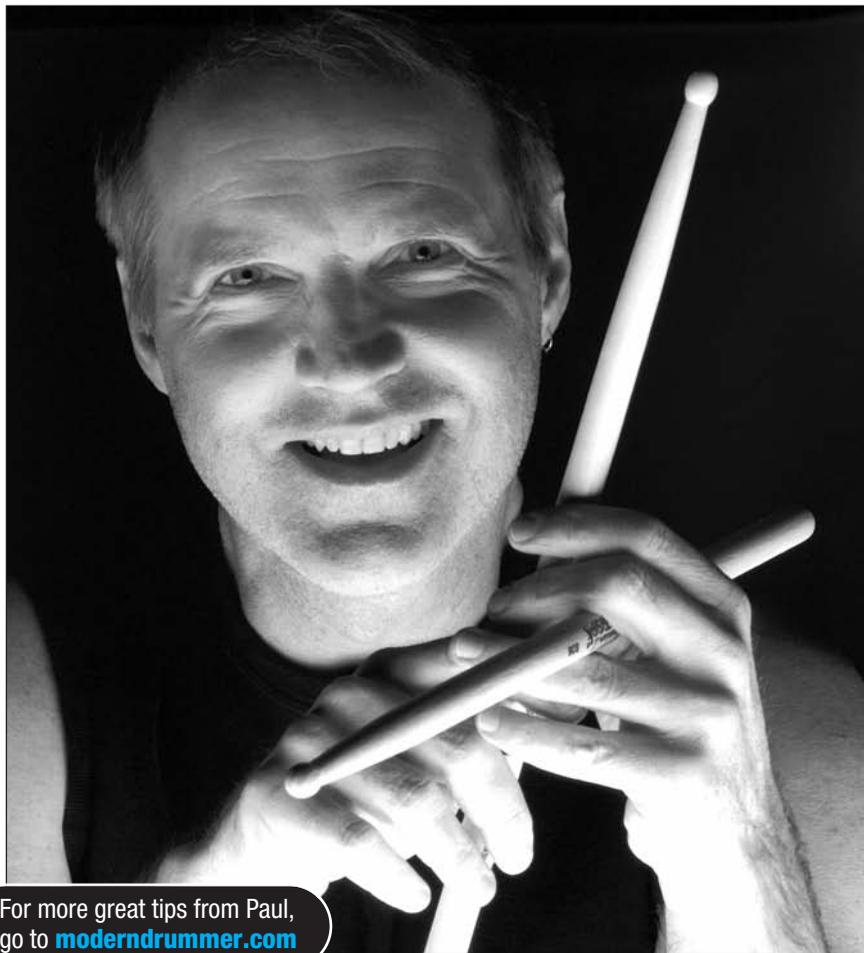


GIMME
PRACTICAL ADVICE FROM
PROS WHO KNOW

10!

PAUL WERTICO

The multi-Grammy-winning fusion drummer has made a name for himself by thinking outside the box. And he wants *you* to explore the perimeters of our art too.



For more great tips from Paul, go to modern drummer.com

1 THINK OF VOLUME IN TERMS OF PITCH. The harder you hit something, the more the pitch goes up. So if you try to visualize dynamics not only as loud and soft but also as higher and lower pitch-wise, you can actually make your playing not just more dynamic but also more melodic.

2 STICKING IS PHRASING. When I was younger, the idea of learning all the rudiments seemed like an antiquated form of needless torture. But one of the big differences between any two drummers is the stickings they use. A typical rock drummer might use more single strokes, whereas a typical jazz drummer might use a lot of double strokes or combination strokes. The more variety in the stickings that you can play, the more options you have to make any rhythm or pattern your own, as well as to change the way that rhythm or pattern sounds and flows.

3 LEARN AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, NOT ONLY ABOUT DIFFERENT MUSIC AND PERIODS OF MUSIC BUT ALSO ABOUT THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL BACKGROUNDS THAT INFLUENCED THE CREATION OF THAT MUSIC. Music doesn't exist in a vacuum. Just like a lot of art in general, it often reflects the times in which it was created. By learning not only the musical styles of any period but also how that period's conditions in the world influenced those styles, you'll give your playing much more context. Your drumming will be more emotionally connected, rather than just technically based.

2010 NEW PRODUCT HIGHLIGHT



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4 USE EVERY TYPE OF STROKE IMAGINABLE IN ORDER TO CREATE YOUR OWN SOUNDS

AND INTERPRETATIONS. There are so many ways to strike a surface, and each one creates a different sound and emits a different emotion. Drummers are often taught to play straight down and lift the sound out of the instrument. That works great if that's the sound you want to project. But utilizing other techniques and approaches, such as a dead stroke, a side stroke, a varying angle of your stroke, a tight grip, a loose grip, French grip, German grip, American grip, how many fingers you use to hold the stick and how tight your fulcrum is, how far up you hold the stick, where you place your fulcrum on the stick, and where on the surface your stroke is placed...they all have a different sound and can give you *your* personal sound through the choices you make, as opposed to what other players choose to do.

5 THINK OF YOUR RHYTHMS AS YOUR SPEECH PATTERNS INSTEAD OF JUST MATHEMATICAL SUBDIVISIONS.

Going from musical point A to musical point B, whether it's using whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, etc., or even using larger groupings of time such as two, four, eight, or sixteen measures—it all can be subdivided either mathematically or organically. Mathematic subdivisions sound precise and “proper” and are more easily transcribable, but the space between any two musical points can also be more emotional and human sounding by imitating your speech pattern. After all, isn't playing music just another form of communication? Try “talking” through your drumming as opposed to trying to play like a machine. Obviously this almost always depends on the demands of the music, but when you walk and talk at the same time, isn't your speech pattern independent of your walking pace? Try applying the same type of “independent” personal speech to your drumming—if it fits musically, of course.

6 DON'T BLAME YOUR EQUIPMENT.

Although it's always wonderful to play on first-rate instruments, the truth is that the sound is in your head, heart, and hands.



7 ALWAYS PLAY THE TRUTH! In other words, be true to *your* vision, no matter what others may say. Each of us is unique, and sometimes it's easy to fall into the habit of seeking approval from others and imitating what's already popular. That's normal, if the goal is to be open-minded about criticism and to grow and learn as a musician, but there are other times when you just have to follow your own muse and become “a different drummer.” Often, when you stop worrying about what other people think of you and you focus on what *you* honestly think about yourself and what you want to accomplish with your music, that's when good things start to happen.

8 LISTEN TO YOURSELF THROUGH THE MUSIC AND INSIDE THE MUSIC, NOT ON TOP OF IT.

Playing music in a band is a communal experience. If you take all of the responsibility for timekeeping and creativity upon yourself, it can often be a lonely and exhausting experience. But if you try to blend in with the other musicians rather than play in spite of them, many wonderful and liberating things can occur. After all, the overall sound of the band includes you *and* the other musicians, so rather than playing “on top of” the music, try listening to yourself “inside” the music. Of course, trust is a big factor in doing that, so before you can comfortably

and successfully relinquish your primary responsibilities as a drummer, you must first trust the other musicians. But once you can, and do, making music becomes a lot easier and a lot more fun. It's like the old saying goes: No man is an island.

9 FORGIVE, AND EVEN RELISH, YOUR IDIOSYNCRASIES.

Your style is based on a number of factors, including what you can and can't do, what you know and don't know, how you're wired (speed, reaction time, memory, problem-solving ability, sense of time and pitch, physical mass, and so on), and how well you can make sense out of what you hear in order to compose a part that works for the music. Try to figure out who *you* really are when you get behind the drums, and make your uniqueness a positive attribute...warts and all!

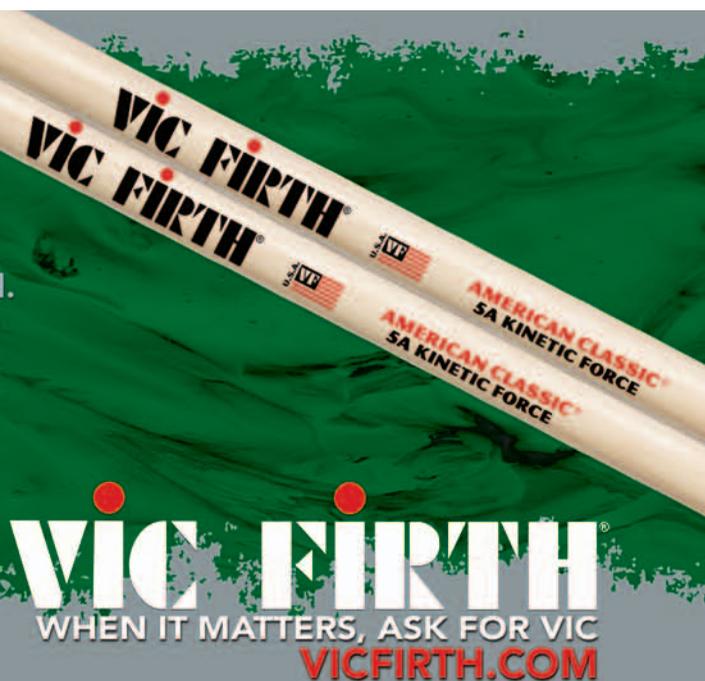
10 ENJOY THE PROCESS OF GETTING THERE.

In a society based on quick fixes and instant gratification, it's sometimes hard to remember that life is a journey. So is being a musician. True musical artists never really reach the finish line, because they're constantly growing and changing, both as artists and as human beings. That's one of the many beautiful things about being a musician. Learning is a lifelong process.

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