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June 2010

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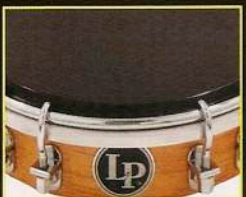
THE ROOTS' QUEST LOVE

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GEARING UP DRUMKIT DETAILS—ON STAGE AND UP CLOSE

Interviews and photos
by Sayre Berman

SHAKIRA'S BRENDAN BUCKLEY

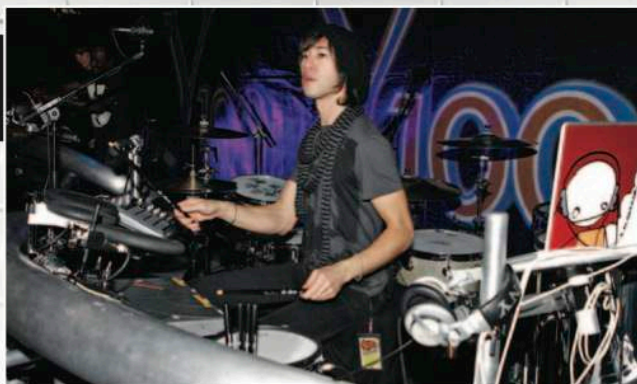
Brendan Buckley started playing the drums when he was about fourteen years old. He remembers his first drum teacher, Tommy Igoe, telling him to bring three things to his first lesson: a spiral notebook, the Jim Chapin book *Advanced Techniques For The Modern Drummer*, and a Boss DR-550 drum machine. Igoe also introduced Buckley to MIDI technology and the drumKAT MIDI controller. So, years later, when Shakira and her musical director, Tim Mitchell, asked the drummer to devise an electronic kit for their shows and recordings, Buckley was up to the task.

"Tim and I threw ideas around regarding the approach to Shakira's new material," Brendan says. "We wanted to construct an electronic setup that didn't look like an ordinary drumset but looked a bit more like a keyboard or DJ rig—something where I could sit or stand to play. It would be equipped with a laptop, a drumKAT, and an MPC. There would also be room to add acoustic drums when necessary."

"There are a few similarities and plenty of differences between electronic and acoustic drumming," Buckley continues. "I prefer acoustic drums to sound live, with ghost notes, fills, snare buzz—a bit of fuzz and grease. I like the electronic stuff to sound a bit more mechanical and machinelike—punchy and robotic. Also, I tend to manipulate the sounds differently. I like to mess with acoustic drums by detuning or cranking heads, adding a lot of dampening, or stacking things on top. I alter electronic drums by running them through effects such as delays, filters, and distortions."

So what brought about the idea for such an elaborate electronic/acoustic setup? "When Shakira decided that she wanted to go in a more electronic direction, she asked me to bring these elements into the show," Buckley says. "When we first tried some of her 'dancier' songs with traditional acoustic drums, she wasn't 100 percent convinced. But when I sampled some of the sounds from her records and used them with my electronic kit, she instantly connected with the music. The issue wasn't about the beats; it was about the actual *sound* of the kick, snare, etc. I have to give credit to Steve Sidelnyk [Madonna, Seal, Massive Attack] for being my guru in this department."

"So now I get a copy of all of Shakira's recording sessions from her producers. Then I isolate and sample each individual component. I load those samples into Native Instruments' Battery 3 on my laptop and label each sound. Once that's done, I assign each sound to a trigger pad. I create a different configuration for each song in our set. So whenever I call up a new song, everything is different. What had been a snare may now be a metal pipe sound, or a kick drum sound may now be a reverse cymbal swell. I have sixteen triggers for my hands and three for my feet. I have to memorize what sound is on each one, for about twenty songs. Luckily I haven't blanked out on stage yet. Okay, maybe once or twice." [laughs]



DRUMS: DW Classics

- A. 5x14 stainless steel snare
- B. 9x13 tom
- C. 16x16 floor tom
- D. 14x22 bass drum
- E. 5x14 aluminum snare
- F. Remo 24x20 surdo
- G. Remo 24x22 surdo

CYMBALS: Sabian

- 1. 14" HHX Groove Hats
- 2. 17" AAX Studio crash
- 3. 18" AAX El Sabor crash
- 4. 21" HHX Raw Bell Dry ride

HARDWARE: DW stands, 5002

Accelerator double pedal, and custom rack designed by Ray Woodbury (RK Diversified) and Brendan Buckley and fabricated by Erik Eastland (All Access Staging & Productions)

STICKS: Vic Firth 5AB wood-tip drumsticks, Steve Gadd brushes, T1 timpani mallets, TW12 Tala Wands

HEADS: Remo coated Ambassador batters, clear Ambassador resonant heads, Renaissance Powerstroke 3 bass drum batter

ELECTRONICS:

- aa. Apple 13" MacBook Pro
- bb. Roland PD-125 trigger V-Pad
- cc. Roland PD-8 trigger pad (3)
- dd. Alternate Mode drumKAT 3.8
- ee. Roland KD-7 kick trigger (2)
- ff. Akai MPD24
- gg. Alternate Mode poleKAT

Not shown: Native Instruments Battery 3 software, Apogee Duet interface, M-Audio Midisport, M-Audio Oxygen 8 MIDI keyboard, Alternate Mode hatKAT trigger pedal, Future Sonics in-ear monitors

