

NEW YORK STATE OF MIND: SHAWN PELTON



When did you commit to taking drumming seriously?

I grew up always banging on things. It was a trip where I grew up, this small town in Missouri. They had a required music class starting in the 5th grade, so you had to be in band or orchestra. To be in the band you actually had to buy an instrument, but if you chose the orchestra they would provide you with a free one. So, everybody chose the orchestra for the cheapest way out, but man I

got to tell you cello sucks compared to drums. So I bailed as soon as possible to the drums. I was running around doing gigs at 14, which was a great situation, actually be in a band that young. The sooner you start making music with other people the better.

Who are some of your favorite drummers?

I have so many favorites. Everybody I've seen play has given something to draw from. A feeling of something, whether it's working or not. Early on I was totally into jazz; Blakey, Elvin, Tony, all the usual suspects. I loved Billy Higgins. His presence and smile would light up the whole room. I was a student of Kenny Aronoff for several years and also had the privilege of hanging with Alan Dawson for a couple of summers. So I had a really wide range of influences that have helped me survive as a player in a lot of different playing situations. Man, I love so many cats, Earl Palmer, Keltner, Purdie, Al Jackson, Rick and Jerry Marotta, Steve Jordan, Levon Helm, always loved how soulful Gadd can be.

I've always been drawn to drummers who have magic in their feel, cats who can play the simplest beat but somehow the walls are just sweating. I could go on forever about drummers I love and it's abroad universe from Dave Grohl, to Ed Blackwell, to Keith Moon, to Yogi Horton.

What made you decide to move from Indiana to NYC?

I was lucky enough to come to New York with a gig. It was an artist on Columbia who was kind of a Springsteen clone, but it was a real eye opener as to how crazy the major labels can be. The record came out on Columbia with no support, and the artist was dropped. We were then signed to Elektra by the president of the label. I watched a half-million dollars go into a record that never even came out. It was a real wake up call to how harsh the record business can be. Luckily, I had begun freelancing around New York, which led to an audition for the Saturday Night Live Band when Matt Chamberlain split.

What's the studio scene like in New York these days?

The studio scene in New York is really a shell of what it was in its glory days. I moved here in '89 and was lucky enough to start working in the studios in the early '90s. Since then, a lot of the mid-level places have closed down because of the home studio revolution. There are still some great drum rooms in New York, but the rise of hip-hop shifted a lot of the studio priorities away from live tracking. Session work has become really fragmented, ranging from major label record dates with cartage so I can bring in my DW stuff, to demos and jingles where you sometimes have to make

music on some of the worst house kits imaginable. I always had this fantasy that if I was recording in New York it would always be top-shelf conditions, but the reality is sometimes it's more like guerilla warfare.

New York can be such an intense hang in both good and bad ways...the logistics of being a drummer in New York and just getting your drums to a gig or having a place to practice...all of the day-to-day stuff is really intense.

You've been playing on SNL for years now. How has the unique experience of playing on live television shaped your playing?

It's been a real thrill. I feel very fortunate and thankful to be there. The one thing about live TV is that it makes you get your act together. The focus is to nail it when the red light is on. There are no second takes. Being there since '92, I've seen a lot of wild moments from Sinead O'Connor ripping up the photo of the pope, to U2's Bono jumping off the stage during the live broadcast and running through the studio totally bringing the house down.

Which do you prefer, the road or the studio?

Striking some kind of balance between the two is really the best for me. I loved being out with Sheryl Crow and having the chance to make a live DVD. Physically, getting to play two-hour shows for big crowds is much different than being under headphones all day. Getting the chance to have recorded with some of the artists I've worked with has been a dream come true. The studio is a whole different trip, as far as coming up with parts and getting the right sounds. Both experiences feed each other, so having a balance is really the answer.

Do you have a favorite snare drum?

DW has such an awesome range of killer snare drums. The Edge has so much personality and the Solid™ shell drums are incredible. DW is so passionate and committed to making the best sounding and looking drums in the world. The flexibility and strength of the hardware, the incredible pedals and all the innovation at DW is a real inspiration to me as a musician. I couldn't imagine using anything else.

What would you say is the most important factor in landing a big gig?

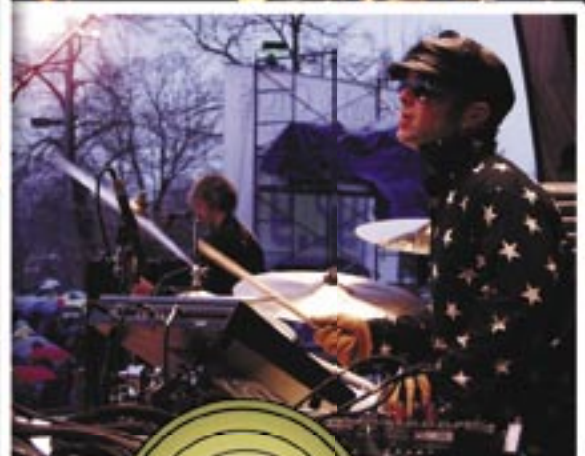
Getting gigs has always been about word of mouth and people recommending you. It is so important to get out and meet people and work in as many situations as possible. Developing a great feel, showing up on time, being prepared, having a good attitude and the ability to put yourself in the shoes of the person you are working for are also important things to remember. Having a career as a sideman means working in lots of different situations with all kinds of personalities. Really having the ability to take direction without freaking out, and a sense of humor doesn't hurt either. Hang in there, a drumming career doesn't happen over night. Any successful drummer that you look up to has worked hard to get there.

Where do you see your career heading in the coming years?

Man, I just hope to keep working and making music. I have my own project called House of Diablo that's a lot of fun. It's a wild, greasy mixture of organic groove stuff with the whole noise/abstract loop thing. You know it's awild time to be a drummer with so much programming and machines heard on the radio today, but there will always be a place for the human touch, excitement and soul of a great-feeling live drummer.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Sheryl Crow	C'mon C'mon
Shawn Colvin	Whole New You
Shawn Colvin	Few Small Repairs
Edie Brickell	Picture Perfect Morning
Elton John	Aida
Michelle Branch	Hotel Paper
Celine Dion	Let's Talk About Love
Roseanne Cash	Rules of Travel
Five for Fighting	Battle for Everything
Hall & Oates	Marigold Sky
Original Score	S.W.A.T.
Vanessa Williams	Star Bright
Bruce Springsteen	Tracks
Carly Simon	Anthology
Jeff Golub	Soul Sessions



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Collector's Series® Maple drums in Broken Glass FinishPly™

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5500TD Delta Turbo Hi-Hat Stand

9999 Single Tom/Cymbal Stand

9700 Straight/Boom Cymbal Stand (x2)

9300 Snare Drum Stand

9100 Drum Throne

