

DRUMMING BEYOND Time

There are drummers, and there are drummers' drummers. But is there such a thing as a drummers' drummer's drummer? If so, Manu Katché is one. The player of choice for Peter Gabriel, Sting and many others, brings to each project an unparalleled blend of intelligence, intensity and groove. He spoke with us recently from his home in Paris.

You started out as a pianist and were educated at the Conservatoire National de Paris. How did that mold you as a drummer?

It made my approach be about more than just playing a beat and keeping time. It helped me understand the importance of harmony, melody, words and atmosphere.

Hippig Jr.

Check out the new Manu Katché Hippig Jr. drum set that is designed for the beginning drummer. This complete "mini" set is the first high quality set available for young drummers. Why not start your musical experience with Yamaha quality



Which drummers inspired you?

I have rarely been inspired by drummers, though I listen to and respect them. My main influences are singers and soloists. I listened to Miles, Coltrane, Monk, and R&B singers like Donnie Hathaway, Marvin Gaye and Otis Redding.

When you're faced with a new piece of music, do you conceptualize your part or simply empty your mind and groove?

I never just empty my mind and groove. I listen carefully to the piece and search for its essence, trying to find a way to be in harmony with it. I try to figure out what the music is trying to express, and then I try to build a journey on the drums from there.

Why do you prefer Yamaha drums?

They just sound right to me. The kits are light and they look good. The hardware is reliable and I like the way you can set things up at many different angles. I used to use a Yamaha Rock Tour Custom kit, which I loved. They've stopped producing it, but I've found more or less the same parameters in the Beech Custom kit. It sounds good in the studio and onstage, is easy to tune and it has light shells, which are very important to me because of the harmonics they provide.

What were you aiming for with your signature model snare?

I wanted tight heads with lots of ring and harmonics, so it had to be metal or brass. You may have noticed that my snare is close to an old "black beauty," but I didn't copy that drum. I just dig that sort of ringing, cutting sound. Now it's the only snare I use. I love it.

Do you have any advice for aspiring drummers?

You must be confident with what you come up with on the instrument. Of course, when you are a beginner, you are anything but confident. But when your brain and your heart decide to go a certain way, that means it's right inside and no one can tell you otherwise.

Van Halen's Michael Anthony To Unveil Signature Bass



When Van Halen tours the world in 2001, their as-yet-unannounced vocalist won't be the only newcomer onstage: bassist Michael Anthony will be sporting a signature bass inspired by Yamaha's classic BB3000. Anthony is fine-tuning the specs as the group completes its 12th album, but he gave us a few clues about what to expect.

You haven't endorsed many instruments. Why now?

When I heard Yamaha was reissuing the BB3000, I wanted to be part of it. It was as if someone started building your favorite sports car again and you had a chance to be involved. I played a prototype BB3000 a lot during the early '80s. Yamaha eventually discontinued the model, but I kept playing that bass.

Why?

I liked the sound, the feel of the neck, the position of the pickups, the way it lays against my body. I eventually moved on to other instruments, but now I'm making full circle back to what I used to play.

What were some of your requests for the new model?

I'm very particular about cutaways because I like to use all the notes. A lot of manufacturers make it hard to play on the higher notes—it's like slamming your hand into a brick wall. But I had Yamaha keep cutting away until I could play all the way up the neck. The first model will be neck-through-body, though we may also do a more economical bolt-on-neck model.

What will the pickups sound like?

We won't finalize that until I have a chance to listen to prototypes in the studio with the band. I've learned that an instrument can sound great when I play it at home, but not necessarily with the band, especially since Ed Van Halen has such a fat sound. But I do know that it will have two passive pickups with two volume knobs and a tone control, plus a 3-way toggle switch that lets you combine the pickups without losing gain.

How about the look?

No gold hardware! [Laughs.] And I'm really into spicy stuff, so the fret markers are going to be chili peppers—the food, not the band. We're also working with some exciting new finishes. The first prototypes were too clean—I'm going for more of an aggressive, industrial look. It was Ed Van Halen who taught me that guitars can be too pretty. Back when I was playing the BB3000, he looked at me one day at rehearsal and said, "Man, your guitar is too clean." Then he took a screwdriver and made a big scrape down the middle of it. After I calmed down, I said, "Okay, let's go for a different look." I went home that night and did a custom hack job with a soldering iron. I still don't like instruments that look like showpieces. Don't get me wrong—this will be a classy guitar. But it's going to be tailored to my style onstage and offstage.

So who's your new singer?

I can't tell you—we're saving the announcement for the right time.

Aw, c'mon.

All I can say is, it's going to be huge. It's a name people will know.

Can we assume it's not David Lee Roth or Sammy Hagar?

[Laughs.] Don't assume anything!

BB3000MA

Michael Anthony Signature Model: Based on the original BB3000S that Michael started using 18 years ago and improvements suggested by Michael and the design team at YGD (Custom Shop in North Hollywood). We shaved down the neck and horns to improve the playability and accessibility in the upper registers. We also changed the gold hardware to nickel, increased the bridge mass (base plate), decreased the tuning machine mass (back plate), added new custom colors and custom red chili pepper inlays on the fingerboard. The introduction of the new BB3000MA signifies the renaissance of the 4-string/ neck-through body format.