

P.O.V.

Single Strokes

“WHAT’S THE MOST RECENT IMPROVEMENT TO YOUR TECHNIQUE?”

Blake Fleming



AGE 41
YEARS PLAYING 33
BANDS Independent,
ex-Mars Volta (touring)

“I’ve been working on playing over ostinatos that incorporate the hi-hat in a more engaged and syncopated manner, not just the bass drum—kind of like working on the clave for the hi-hat, but I’ve been doing my own variations of that. This has started to free up my hi-hat foot a lot more, allowing it to play more freely the way the bass drum would during improvised sections and jams. Playing a clave variation on the hi-hat while the bass drum plays a baio rhythm has been one of my favorites.”

Jesse Kongos



AGE 30
YEARS PLAYING 15
BAND KONGOS

“Lately I’ve been working on the relationship between my right foot and left hand. They’re both lazy and don’t like to work together, so I force them to get along by practicing alternating kick/snare patterns, leading with my left hand, where they land together on odd beats. I use brushes so it’s more of a deliberate workout and not relying on stick bounce. This helps build strength and make fills sound more intentional and strong, especially if most of my attention is directed towards singing.”

Xavier Muriel



AGE 45
YEARS PLAYING 27
BAND Buckcherry

“My most recent improvement to my technique is to be more fluid with my playing, not always bashing as hard as I can. It saves me from fatigue too early, and after 300 shows on one record cycle it saves my limbs!”

Chris Fryar



AGE 43
YEARS PLAYING
“Over 30”
BAND Zac Brown Band

“Playing a little lighter to gain more control, and remembering to breathe while I’m playing. This helps everything feel so much more settled and in the pocket.”



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Travis Barker

Interviewed by Rob McKinley

When we last spoke with kit-crushing mixtape king Travis Barker, the drummer was still on the mend from a devastating plane wreck he suffered in the fall of 2009. Our latest chat was under happier circumstances: the seventh annual MusInk Tattoo Convention & Music Festival, a three-day weekend of music, custom lolos and muscle cars, and world renowned skin art that Barker’s apparel company, Famous Stars And Straps, had the honor of presenting. When not playing CEO, Barker can be found trading fours with his favorite drummers, crashing the NAMM show, or sampling Austin’s best BBQ. He was gracious enough to share the details of his crazy life as he rode shotgun

to his North Hollywood studio for rehearsal with the Transplants, the headliner on Day 2 of MusInk.

INK IS FOREVER

A couple my great friends that are tattoo artists — and have done a bunch of my tattoos and were a part MusInk — wanted to get me involved through Famous or through one of my bands. And I was like, “Well, shoot man, this festival is like everything I’m about: Tattoos, skateboarding, music, cars — I’ll do whatever.” So then the next thing I know they’re like, “Will you present it?” You have a group of tattoo artists that are traveling all across the world just

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