
MODERN DRUMMER®

DARRIN PAYNE OF LAREAU

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Hey, everyone! This is Darrin Payne, drummer for the band Lareau. This is such a cool thing to have a forum for drummers to post their thoughts. I, like most of you, grew up with *Modern Drummer*. Thanks to them for allowing me to talk a bit about my music and myself. I think this is the best age EVER for being a drummer. There are so many talented drummers out there today, and modern music tends to be a lot about an intricate groove. Gotta love it!

We just released our first CD, *Changes*, on Warrior Records. Check it out. It was a blast to record, and I met a lot of great people in the process. Lareau's first single, "Changes," has been on the airwaves nationally since early this July, and we appreciate the support that it has been receiving. It's been fun following my first single on the charts, which I co-wrote with our lead vocalist, Larry Lareau. Thanks, everyone, and we hope to see you in your town sometime soon! Visit us on www.myspace.com/lareau or at www.lareau.net, and let us know where you're at and where you go to see bands in your area.



I've been playing many forms of percussion for two decades now. I had some very talented instructors, and I've tried to combine aspects of all the styles I've been exposed to, into my pop, progressive, and metal playing. I started with big-band style jazz, orchestral percussion, and field band, and then moved on to rock, progressive, metal, and pop. On *Changes* we used a lot of percussion in addition to the drumkit, things like djembe, congas, bongos, shakers, guiro, triangle, and tambourine. I've always considered myself first and foremost a performer. I'd hit any stage, any time, anywhere, as long as I had a drum and an audience. Lareau has been a blast and a great opportunity.

Lately I've been digging the recording aspect of being a musician and have spent countless hours recording with some great musicians in many varying styles. Nothing hones your skills quite like an intense studio session (not to mention sitting back and listening to yourself). Young drummers, get your butts into the studio every chance you

can. Show up well rehearsed and, by all means, be able to play to a click track! I've seen so many drummers not be able to do this. You won't always *have* to, depending on style of music. But if a drummer can't play to a metronome, then I don't know who can. Man, when I was playing field band percussion with ten snare drums, six bass drums, quads, etc., we had a metronome *pumping* through a bass amp for all to hear. Especially in today's digital recording formats—know your time signatures and tempos in advance, and you will have a hugely better product in the end. It gives the producer and engineer so much more to work with. We all know that a good recording starts with the drums, and you can't polish a turd...right?

Also, spend some time learning how to tune those piggies! Experiment with different heads and tuning ranges, and know your kit inside and out. I prefer very "open" toms with no muffling or dampening. Studio engineers these days know how to work their gates. Let those toms sing! I like a very simple DW-style custom pillow in the kick, with the batter head tuned as low as possible without getting floppy. Crank that snare head where you prefer, but make sure that head is in tune with itself, and don't over-tighten the bottom snare head or the snares. Use a thin "Zero Ring," sit back, and enjoy the beauty. God, I love drums!

I think almost any drum can be made to sound good, but I use DW drums. My anniversary DW birch kit kicks in the studio! I use an 18x22 kick, usually 8x10, 10x12, and 14x16 toms (8x8 and 12x14 also, to taste). And I have a load of snares (don't we all?) including a Witt Percussion Solid-shell maple I had custom-made. This sounds great live and in the studio. My DW Edge snare seems to be everyone's favorite snare on recordings, and it's what you will hear on most Lareau tracks. (Don't hold me to that.) I used five different snares on the CD. But all the new stuff I've been doing is exclusively the Edge. Get one! Loud, sharp bearing edge, maple *and* brass, best of both worlds.

I was really into progressive music growing up, like Rush, Kansas, Styx, Genesis, and Yes. I strived to play every Neil Peart and Nicko McBrain lick I could on my first Premier Royale double kick drumset. But lately I've noticed that the most influential drummer—and overall musician and songwriter—from my childhood was Phil Collins. I always respected his "all inclusive" credibility as a drummer, singer, songwriter, and performer. As I got into songwriting, I realized that that type of dynamic approach to drumming—without overplaying—can lend itself to any style of music. Man, can he hit those piggies hard! And other times the drums are almost whispers in the mix. I like to think of the song and how I can complement it and leave my own signature without drawing attention away from the song structure. Check out plenty of old Genesis if you want to hear dynamic playing. (Kudos have to go out to Chester Thompson too, for being Phil's drummer and for being a great player in his own right)

Hey, thanks, everyone for letting me talk drums with y'all. Love to hear from you, anytime.

Darrin Payne