

did a show and then sold them to me for an unbelievable price! I guess timing really is everything.

Speaking of timing, one thing I cannot stress highly enough is how important it is to learn to play to click. Sure, it's great to "feel" the beat, but when it comes to performing and keeping the band nice and tight, playing solidly to a click is where it's at, at least for me and some other great drummers I know. Being solid is much more important than speed or "flash."

Whatever your preference, to those of you just starting out, my best advice is to make sure you're comfortable behind the kit. My comfort drum sizes are a 22" kick, 61/2x14 snare, 14" and 15" rack toms, and 16" and 18" floor toms. I play Paiste Signature series cymbals and prefer the dark even tones they bring to life.

So of course I've got to sum this up with a shameless plug for our new album, *Your Mistake*. We released it exclusively on iTunes for the first couple of months, and you can grab it up now. You can also check out our Web site, www.stealingheather.com, where you can sign up for the fan club to gain access to exclusive content. We're always updating the site, and the fan club is how we can keep in touch with all of our fans around the world.

Take care and keep hitting the skins!

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Donny Gruendler of Rhett Frazier Inc. 2010-06-04



MD readers. It's been a couple years since I've blogged, so I'll reintroduce myself. My name is Donny Gruendler, and I am a Los Angeles-based drummer, producer, and tech head. During my formative years in Detroit, I learned to love laptops, sampling, synths, electronic noises, funky grooves, MPCs, all styles of music, and anything with an infectious beat. I also studied at Berklee and received bachelors and masters degrees. This wide range of experiences has led me to write many articles on drum loops, backing tracks, and hi-tech gear for *MD* and to teach at Musicians Institute—as well as play with Rick Holmstrom, DJ Logic, DJ A-Ski (Unique 76), and John Medeski. So I guess my gig has usually been that of a sideman: You pay, tell me where to show up and what to do, and I'll play!



You see, I have written and recorded my first release as an artist and as part of the duo Rhett Frazier Inc. (I'm Inc.) The record is titled *Escape From Dee-Troyt*, and it incorporates all of the previously mentioned electronic goodies alongside Rhett's soulful voice, real instruments, and my acoustic drums. Here is the best way I can describe it: If Al Green, the Time, and ZZ Top had a traffic mash-up on the 405 in L.A., what would it sound like? Well, *Escape From Dee-Troyt*!

The live show is quite fun and challenging. Rhett sings while I trigger the electric bass, keyboard samples, backing vocals, and drum loops from my laptop rig and a Yamaha DTX sampling pad. The loops and samples get sent to the P.A., and I send the bass tracks to a humongous bass amp. This way it sounds and feels like a bass player is live on stage with us. Then we hire a guitar player for each show to round out the sound, energy, and fun factor.

From a drumming perspective, the show is also very demanding. Not only do I have to lead the band through a form by triggering each sample at the correct time, I'm also responsible for playing my drum parts and grooving with the triggered bass tracks. So I do a ton of rehearsing on my own (prior to working with Rhett) to make it sound as relaxed, full, and DJ-esque as the record.

Rhett Frazier Inc's record was released on March 23, and we're hitting the major cities in the U.S. Please keep an eye out for us, stop by, and say hello. At least come to check out all the wires around the kit! You can also contact me on my site to say hello or to ask any questions. Thanks, and may you all have a great 2010!

For more on Donny Gruendler, go to www.donnygruendler.com and www.myspace.com/rhettfrazierinc.

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