

Take a Seat: A Collection of Exercises, Grooves, Etudes & Solos for the Cajon by Arizona-based percussionist/composer Josh Gottry is a method book on playing the cajon as a surrogate drumset. At 28 pages and \$20.00, I found this item a bit pricey, but there are free YouTube demonstration videos available and audio files downloadable from the publisher's website.

The organization of this book involves 13 grooves and six solo pieces with a few introductory exercises. The groove section includes half-page examples of rock, shuffle, two-beat, funk, swing, New Orleans second line, samba, soca, rumba (guaguancó), festejo, reggae, bossa nova, and Afro-Cuban 6/8.

Where this book succeeds is in its attempt to detail more timbres available on the cajon outside of the typical bass and slap. There are exercises that incorporate timbres in-between these two and the pitch bend or "foot slide." Where this book falls short, in my opinion, is that it doesn't stress the need for percussionists to adapt drumset grooves in a linear fashion. To play a rock groove on a cajon, one can simply play a bass timbre with one hand and use the other for a slap/snare, but this isn't as successful as when a percussionist uses doublings and ghost notes to fill out the groove. In that way, the feel of four limbs on a drumset comes across better when using only two on a cajon. Gottry does include ghost notes in the notation key, but only a few grooves make use of them and those aren't explained well (sticking indications would help).

Of the six solo compositions, which are presented as "festival and recital appropriate works," I found most to be more suitable as technical etudes for learning the particular idiosyncrasies of the author's approach to cajon. As stand-alone pieces of music, I found them lacking a certain musical depth as full recital compositions, much in the way a drumset player demonstrating a groove with variations would be received if presented as a "composition." For percussionists completely new to the instrument and wishing an introductory overview of drumset adaption to cajon, this book may serve its purpose as a starting point.

—N. Scott Robinson

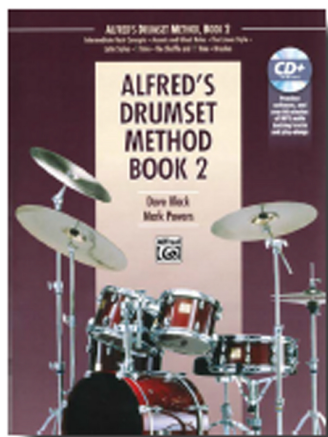
DRUMSET

Alfred's Drumset Method Book II-IV
Dave Black and Mark Powers
\$19.99

Alfred Publishing

Web: [audio and page samples](#)

Many percussionists learned to play the snare drum through the use of *Alfred's Drum Method* (Books 1 and



2). Utilizing both short exercises and full-page musical examples, these books allowed students to succeed in concert and marching bands. Likewise, *Alfred's Beginning Drumset Method* gave students the tools to excel in jazz bands, pit orchestras, and rock bands.

This new offering is the continuation of the series. It aims to take the student to the next level through the use of cymbal variations, open hi-hat concepts, and linear time playing. Ghost notes and accents are also explored, giving the patterns a dynamic contour (and the drummer a mature sound). Styles such as shuffles, 12/8 blues, bossa nova, and samba are introduced. Jazz independence exercises in 3/4 and 4/4 are also examined. Cutoff time is explained and adapted to rock, Broadway, and country styles. Cross-stick techniques and brush patterns are introduced, providing the reader with additional sonic possibilities. Also included are full-page play-along charts in the styles of rock, blues, bossa nova, samba, and jazz.

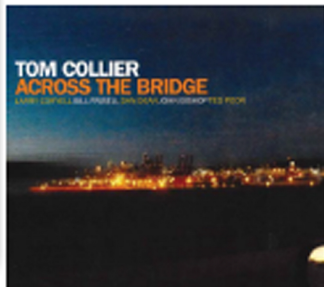
The book is truly a collaboration of talented individuals. It is co-authored by Dave Black and Mark Powers, with beat and fill audio examples performed by Steve Pidyk. The play-along charts are taken from Cristiano Micalizzi's book *The Drummer's Play-Along*. The mp3 CD includes audio examples as well as tracks for each play-along chart (with and without drums). The disc also includes software that allows the reader to slow down the audio tracks without changing the pitch. This book is an excellent addition to the *Alfred Drum Method* course of study. As with the other books in the series, it will definitely help students transition from the practice room to the concert stage!

—Jeff W. Johnson

RECORDINGS

Across the Bridge

Tom Collier
Origin Records



Vibraphonist Tom Collier performed his first concert at age five in 1954. Sixty some years later, Collier's nine original compositions on *Across the Bridge* reflect on his youth on the other side of the West Seattle Bridge. Collier pairs up with famed jazz/fusion guitarists Larry Coryell and Bill Frisell. Produced by Dan Dean, who also plays bass, the album also features drummers Ted Poor and John Bishop.

The album literally hits the ground running with the soaring fusion tune "The Junction," which features Coryell on electric guitar and a blistering vib solo by Collier. Youthful energy permeates the whole project, especially with Collier at the helm. His playing is roaring right along with the electric guitars and bass. "Genesee" is the lovely lone ballad, which is the most heartfelt and sentimental reflection on the album. Don't miss this album. It is a rollicking and spirited good time!

—John Lane

...The Ayes Have It, Vol. 1 (Self Portraits in Percussion)

Randy Gloss
Orenda Records

Web: [audio samples](#)

The fact that he is one of John Bergamo's most astute students is evident throughout the album as Randy Gloss's performances and ideas exude homage to the great American percussion master on this debut solo recording. The recording is available as a CD, digital download, and double-gatefold vinyl LP from Orenda Records with detailed liner notes on each piece. My only criticism is that the colors and fonts chosen for the cover and liner notes are difficult to read in hard copy.

That said, the album is worthy of much praise as not only do we hear Gloss in an impressive assortment of performances, but one can finally hear solo performances by this outstanding musician who for much of his career has been heard in ensemble and soundtrack con-

texts (which I have always found to be as equally impressive). The recording quality has a humble clarity to it that makes you feel as if you are attending a private solo concert by Gloss, who possesses an unassuming quality coupled with a deep talent to express musically that I have long admired. His varied background in jazz drumming, Western percussion, and a variety of world percussion traditions offers the listener an engaging kaleidoscopic musical experience, and this album delivers impressively in the technical aspects of his performances and the creative genesis of his compositional style.

The album begins with the improvised introduction "Warmer Waters" for Chinese and South Korean gongs, water gongs, and water timbres. Gloss's ever-impressive pandero playing is featured in three solos in five beats each on "From McBean to Hasley Cyn Parts 1-3." A more light-hearted approach and a nice choice in variety are the improvised pieces "The Hang" for handpan and caxixi and "Experiment on the Nature of Water #1" for electronic drumset featuring an array of digital percussion soundscape timbres. "Prelude to the Onion" is the densest piece on the album in 33 beats (in three cycles of 11 beats in Raag Malkaus and a quote from John Coltrane's "A Love Supreme"), featuring Gloss overdubbing himself on drumset, Paiste melodic gong set, and kalimba in a grooving and swinging showcase that at times made me feel like Elvin Jones had been channeled. "Suburban Desert Oasis" (dedicated to John Bergamo) is a solo on an 18-inch Cooperman tar in seven beats in three sections each requiring a different grip (freehand, lap style, and hand-held, respectively). There is at once an original style to Gloss's frame drumming in his use of Bergamo techniques with the Persian rta and Carnatic rhythmic cadences. "In a Cycle of Nine" closes the album with a tabla solo in nine beats with tabla, tamboura, and swarmandal accompaniment. For percussionists, this album is an opportunity to hear one of America's great percussion virtuosos in a solo context in which Randy Gloss quite literally brings you a percussion world-view few have to offer.

—N. Scott Robinson

Contemplating Weather

Paul Lansky
Bridge Records

This recording features chamber music of Paul Lansky and contains splendid compositions and performances. The piece "Contemplating Weather," set to the poems of Jonathan Greene, is performed by the Western Michigan University Chorale along with Birds on a Wire (the WMU New Music Ensemble). Next up, and of special interest to percussionists, is the Meehan/Perkins Duo performing