



MIDI *in* MINISTRY

THE INFO SOURCE FOR CHURCH MUSICIANS

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5 MINUTES with Dave Owens

Dave Owens is a Los Angeles-based studio drummer whose credits range from Thomas Dolby to Peter White. Dave's been using both acoustic and electronic percussion instruments at his church and in his work with churches across the country for years. As a clinician for the Maranatha Worship Leader Workshops, Dave offers a unique perspective on bringing electronic percussion into worship services.

MIDI in Ministry: In your experience, have you noticed electronic percussion becoming more commonplace in worship?

Dave Owens: Very much so. In fact, I've been doing workshops with Maranatha in churches all over the nation and the V-drums are becoming extremely popular. Most of the churches that I've been in—probably 70-percent of them—have a V-drums kit and that's all they use.

MiM: Why is that?

DO: It's partly because drummers have a tendency to play too loud in

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COMBINING LIVE DRUMS with MIDI SEQUENCES

It's true! Combining acoustic or electronic drums with MIDI sequences can be the ultimate way to fuse talent with technology. You may recall that MIDI in Ministry Vol. 3 No. 2 featured an article on getting MIDI files ready for a live drummer. Here, we'll discuss some of the different ways in which you can supply a drummer (or any other live musician) with a click track and/or stereo mix of the MIDI sequence tracks, as well as the gear you'll need to make it all happen.

ACOUSTIC DRUMS

Obviously, the first step in getting your drummer to play along to MIDI sequences is getting him or her to hear the sequences (or click track) above the rumble of the drums. With an acoustic drum set, the best method of sending the sequences or click is to simply run a set of headphones or a single earphone to the drummer from your keyboard or sequencer.

SEQUENCE STARTS DRUMMER

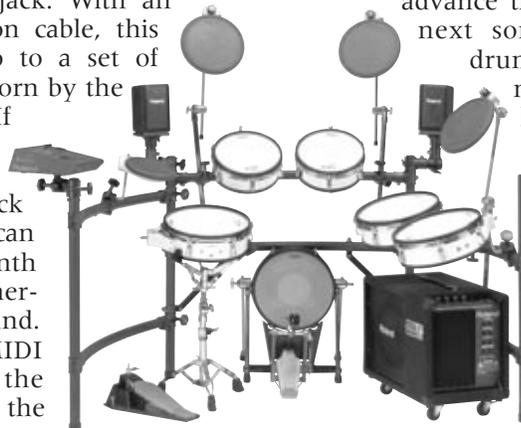
When working with a live drummer, it's best to create MIDI sequences with two bars of just the click playing at the top (see *MIM* Vol. 3 No. 3). If you're using a workstation like the Roland XP-60 or XP-80, there's a dedicated Click Output jack. With an audio extension cable, this output can go to a set of headphones worn by the drummer. If you don't have a dedicated click output, you can use a MIDI synth module to generate a click sound. Connect a MIDI cable from the MIDI Out on the

sequencer to MIDI In on the module. Set the module's MIDI channel to that of the click track in the sequence – typically Channel 10. The click sound is determined by the MIDI note number on the click track.

ELECTRONIC DRUMS

With an electronic drum kit like the V-drums, there are some options that can make playing along with MIDI tracks even easier. On an electronic kit, the drummer can start the sequencer by simply striking one of the pads. The V-drums are especially well-suited for this application because they can be connected to two FS-5U footswitches: One can trigger the sequence to start/stop; the other can advance the sequencer to the next song. This gives the drummer a hands-free method for controlling the sequencer.

As far as hearing the click goes, electronic drums make this easy as well—especially when using the new PM-3 Personal Monitor System. The PM-3



PM-3 Personal Monitor System w/ V-drums

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church (laughs), and [using V-drums] gives the sound man the real control over what's going on. I think it's sort of the wave right now; people want to do more contemporary music but they also want complete control over the volume out front. The V-drums gives them that opportunity.

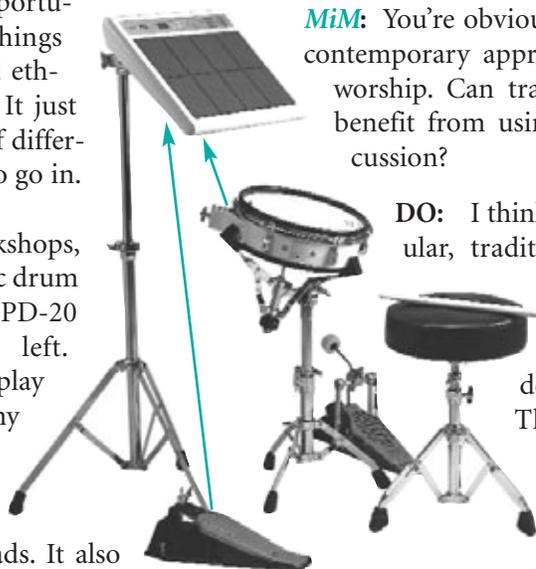
MiM: Why else do you think the V-drums work well in worship?

DO: One of the biggest things... is the fact that the V-drums are so user-friendly; they feel like drums. I think the other real reason is the versatility. Many churches are not built for [exceptional] acoustics, and [the V-drums] are adaptable to acoustic problems.

MiM: Some churches might not be ready to dive into a full V-drums kit. Is there still a way for them to use electronic percussion?

DO: At my church, I'll take the **SPD-20** [Total Percussion Pad] in with some [V-drums pads and pedals] and just use a drum set that way. It's very easy to move and easy to plug in for the sound guy. The other great thing is I've got lots of Patches on there that give me the opportunity to play things like congas and ethnic percussion. It just gives me a lot of different directions to go in.

When I do workshops, I use an acoustic drum set with the SPD-20 placed to the left. That way I can play a groove with my right hand and then congas with my left hand on the pads. It also



Pads and pedals can be plugged into the SPD-20

gives me great access to a lot of different percussion sounds like wind-chimes or different ethnic drum sounds while I'm doing a groove.

MiM: Tell us about the Maranatha workshops you conduct.

DO: Basically, a team goes out and we do a worship set. For the first class, I'll teach a drum class and all the instrumentalists will teach their own classes. The second class is a bass and drum class, and we'll get all the bass and drum players to start playing together. Then we get whole groups of people up there and they have to make music and sound good... it's a really enjoyable, educational thing.

MiM: So you've found that using electronic percussion has educational value.

DO: Absolutely. A great example is using the SPD-20 in church. You can get someone up in the platform who might not be as comfortable as everyone else—someone starting out, maybe a new percussionist, or someone that wants to get involved in the team—and give them something to do. If it's not completely together, the sound man has control up front, but that person on the platform can still hear themselves and get comfortable being a part of the worship.

MiM: You're obviously taking a more contemporary approach to music in worship. Can traditional churches benefit from using electronic percussion?

DO: I think that doing a regular, traditional service but with slightly new sounds can really open up wonderful possibilities. There's many orchestral sounds in the V-drums and SPD-20, so you could have



traditional orchestral snare drum sounds, timpani, or mallets, but right in that same unit have all these other contemporary sounds. It just opens up possibilities. [The use of electronic percussion] is a good way for any church that's thinking about some slight change to move in a different direction.

Dave Owens was recently asked to play drums in the stage production of The Lion King at the Pantages Theater in Los Angeles this October. You can also catch Dave playing live with the Scott Wilkie Band (www.scottwilkie.com) and smooth jazz guitarist Peter White (www.peterwhite.com). For information on Dave's drum workshops, visit the Maranatha website at www.maranathamusic.com or call (800) 245-SONG.



New Product News

Summer NAMM Report

Looking to upgrade your music gear or update your band's sound? Then look no further than the latest product offerings from Roland. Introduced at the Summer NAMM show, these new Roland instruments range from electronic drums to digital pianos, hard disk recorders, and more. Following is a brief overview.

Studio Set

The new Studio Set combines Roland's popular V-drums TD-8 Percussion Sound Module with our time-tested rubber pads to create an electronic percussion kit that not only sounds great, but is incredibly affordable.



VS-890 Digital Studio

The VS-890 brings 8-track recording into the 21st century with its pristine 24-bit converters, 128 Virtual Tracks, cut-and-paste digital editing, and amazing onboard effects including a Mastering Tool Kit and COSM Speaker Modeling. This high-powered personal recording studio also offers CD burning capabilities using the optional Roland CD Recording System.



MP-300 Digital Piano

The MP-300 takes the professional features of Roland's popular stage



pianos—like an 88-note hammer-action keyboard, 64-voice polyphony, and stereo-sampled piano sounds—and puts them in an elegant cabinet with black walnut finish that's perfect for the church. Sound combinations—like piano and strings—can be created using Dual mode. It has an onboard 30W stereo speaker system and line outputs for connecting to a P.A.

VGA-7 V-Guitar Amplifier

The VGA-7 is the world's first digital modeling guitar amplifier that not only simulates a variety of modern and vintage amp tones—including speaker cabinets—but also electric and acoustic guitar types, pickup types and tunings using the optional GK-2AH Divided Pickup. Of course, this 65-watt powerhouse also has plenty of onboard effects, 3-band EQ, and Preset memories for creating and storing just about any sound you can imagine.



Be sure to check out all of the above products at Roland's newly designed website, www.rolandus.com.

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has a pair of speakers mounted in stereo positions on the stand and an amplifier/woofer on the ground. It has inputs for both the V-drum audio and a separate Mix In for the stage monitor mix. This alleviates the need for a stage monitor for the drummer. Connect the audio click into the dedicated Mix In on the TD-10 module. Then, connect headphones to the TD-10 and use its mixer to adjust the levels. If you don't have an audio click source, the TD-10 can generate one internally—acting as a MIDI sound module as described earlier.

Remember, don't play the click through a stage monitor or PM-3, because in order for it to be heard by the drummer, it will probably be loud enough to be heard by the congregation too.

CAN A SEQUENCER FOLLOW A LIVE DRUMMER?

In a word, "No." Whether you're using electronics or a live kit, it's not really feasible for a sequencer to "follow" a live musician. The technology simply isn't there yet. So for now, the sequencer/click track has to be the time keeper if you want to use MIDI tracks with live musicians.

This concept may be uncomfortable to those who've never worked with a metronome. But with a little patience and *plenty* of practice, it can be a great combination. In fact, one of the benefits of playing to a click track or sequence is that the entire worship team gets tighter—even when doing songs without a MIDI track. It really forces musicians to listen to each other and to concentrate on locking into the groove.

Here's a few tips before you take the plunge into playing with sequences:

- 1 Meet with your sound team in advance so they understand what you're doing and what you need from them.
- 2 Practice starting each song repeatedly until it feels comfortable. Practice transitions from one song to the next so there's no guesswork.
- 3 Practice trouble-shooting. Try to make things go wrong in rehearsal so you'll know how to fix them live.
- 4 If you're using electronic drums, make sure the drummer is educated on the button pushes and internal operation of the kit.



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Check Out Roland's New Website!

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If you haven't been to Roland's website lately, then point that browser on over to www.rolandus.com, where we've just completed a major redesign of the entire site. It's got a whole new look, easier navigation, and more information than ever before—including audio demos and QuickTime™ multimedia presentations.

Got a question about a product? Find the answer in the helpful new online

Knowledge Base. Not sure which Roland product is right for you? Let the **Product Finder** help you find just what you're looking for. And of course, you'll also find online versions and back issues of all of our magazines and newsletters including **MIDI In Ministry**.

Surf on over to www.rolandus.com and check it all out today!