

DRUM CHANNEL[®]

LEARN FROM THE BEST™ NEWSLETTER
MAY 2024

ELIAS VASQUEZ

DC RESIDENT INSTRUCTOR SHARES
HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR DRUMMING
AND MORE!

KAZ RODRIGUEZ

8-LESSON COURSE COVERING
GROOVE, SONG STRUCTURE, SOLOING,
VOCABULARY, AND PRACTICE

ON THE AIR

LESSONS, PERFORMANCES, INTERVIEWS

DC FEEDBACK™

PLAYALONG CHART

KAZ RODRIGUEZ - "LUMIX"

COMING SOON

CAMILLE BIGEAULT, VIRGIL DONATI,
THOMAS PRIDGEN & BAND, JACOPO VOLPE,
JIMMY DEGRASSO, JIM KELTNER



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FOUNDER'S DOWNBEAT



When it comes to talking to you in my Founder's Downbeat, I want to make you aware of new features, cool shows, and lessons.

We've been working on several things that are all coming together and will launch over the following months. The goal is to help you in all three areas we focus on at Drum Channel - teaching you what to play, how to play it, and why.

When you scroll down, you will see that this month, we are introducing DC Feedback featuring one of our staff instructors, Elias Vasquez. We all know that playing drums is a physical instrument. Having us correct the way you are using your body to do things can be life-changing, and the information and methods we have on Drum Channel are proven by legendary teachers who have taught many of the best drummers in the world. In learning how to play correctly, you will learn how to play effortlessly, with the great bonus of not hurting yourself as the years go by.

Drum Channel Feedback is available to you if you are a member. If you're not a member, you should subscribe now.

In addition to Elias, our other staff instructors, Al Velasquez, Adam Kuns, Antoine Fadavi, and Chris Grainger, have opened up their private teaching schedules to offer DC Feedback to you. We can accept a limited amount of feedback videos each month, so if you have any questions we can answer, send them in.

Don Lombardi

Drum Channel Feedback™ is HERE!

Get personalized feedback from a professional drummer right where you practice!



Imagine having your own private instructor whenever and wherever you play. With our new feature, you can send in a video of you playing or asking questions, and one of our DC staff or Contributing Artist Instructors will send back personalized answers to help you improve. It's the next best thing to having a private instructor right by your side, guiding you toward your musical goals. Click on the video and show us how you're doing so we can help you get the most out of your practice time.

MAY 2024

NEW WEEKLY PLAYALONGS

Wed, May 1
[La Grange](#)
by ZZ Top

Wed, May 8
[The Pretender](#)
by Foo Fighters

Wed, May 15
[Put Me Thru](#)
by Anderson .Paak

Wed, May 22
[Funky Drummer](#)
by James Brown

Wed, May 29
[Three Little Birds](#)
by Bob Marley



ELIAS VASQUEZ

Elias Vasquez is a Drum Channel Resident Instructor and seasoned professional drummer and percussionist. He's here talking about turning his childhood drumming passion into a career and how learning never stops.

When did your interest in drums begin?

At 13 years old I was inspired by my cousin who was a drummer. I bought my first drumming VHS, Back To Basics ft. Dave Weckl and the rest is history. I've been playing for over 15 years and am now playing professionally.

What was your drumming educational path?

I became more serious about drums while playing in a band in middle school. At that time, I began studying with Al Velasquez Jr., who became my mentor for the next ten years. He prepared me for college and introduced me to Gregg Bissonette, whom I studied with during college. I started playing all sorts of styles - rock, reggae, everything. I also love everything from metal to country, and I always had the mindset that you need to be well-versed to play professionally.

I graduated with a BM in Jazz Studies from Cal State Northridge, where I had the privilege of playing and touring with the Jazz A Band. After graduating from college, I had the incredible opportunity to tour with London-based pianist Anthony Strong. Since then, I've been lucky to work with amazing acts like Big Bad Voodoo Daddy, Cody Simpson, Postmodern Jukebox, and MIYAVI.

I continue to study and take lessons with Alex Acuña and others to this day! The journey to continue learning drums never ends, and I'm always striving to push forward.

What do you do at Drum Channel?

I've been with Drum Channel for over five years, assisting with production, but I actually started doing drum transcriptions for the website. I got called to do that, and I did the entire website when we redid it. That was a cool opportunity.

I also teach at Drum Channel and give private lessons outside of Drum Channel. Whenever anyone signs up for a Drum Channel membership, I receive the questionnaire that they fill out about their drumming experience and goals. From there, I send them suggestions for lessons on Drum Channel that match up with their drumming goals, answer any questions they have, and give lessons if that's something they request.



ELIAS VASQUEZ

You mentioned transcriptions. Is reading music imperative for a drummer?

I believe it's another tool in your toolbox that can, in many situations, help you digest music faster and more efficiently. At the beginning of my drumming career, I would always transcribe my favorite licks or whatever I was working on and then try to learn it that way. Then I would flip it around, mess with it, go deep into one idea, etc. I don't believe that reading music is necessary for every gig, but it has greatly helped me in my career as a musician. It's allowed me to land various gigs, including working with Drum Channel.

What is a great course on Drum Channel for anyone interested in learning to read music?

How To Read Music ft. Joe Porcaro, Ralph Humphrey, and Greg Bissonette.

How do you get a gig? What is your best advice for up-and-coming drummers?

I think the key to getting a gig is when opportunity meets preparation. Also, it helps to be a good person — someone others want to be around and can rely on. Honestly, the more you can focus on building people skills in addition to drumming skills, the better off you will be!

SPEED ROUND

Most memorable gig?

Hollywood Bowl for the Playboy Jazz Festival

Traditional or matched grip?

I love both, but I play matched primarily.

What have become your drumming strengths? What are you known for?

Multi-Stylist, Sight-Reading Music, Dynamics, Time and Groove

Drum heroes?

Elvin Jones, John Bonham, Darren King, and Alex Acuña

Dream collab?

Anderson Paak, Gilad Hekselmen, Royal Blood, Dua Lipa

Book recommendations?

The Little Book of Talent, Atomic Habits, How To Win Friends and Influence People.

Words of wisdom?

In order to succeed, you must fail many times first — it's an important part of the art of learning. Just learn from your experiences, adapt, be persistent, and believe. Over time, you will get anywhere you want in life.

Favorite Movies?

Rocky 1, Interstellar, Dune



ELIAS VASQUEZ + THOMAS LANG **LIVE!**



PLAY ALONG WITH **ELIAS**

Check out a few of Elias's favorite songs to play along with, complete with video breakdowns, transcriptions, and the ability to play along with or without the original drum part!



KAZ RODRIGUEZ

FEATURED COURSE



Kaz Rodriguez is an internationally acclaimed drummer and composer currently working with Josh Groban. He has also worked with artists like Sinead Harnett, Jessie Ware, and Cirque du Soleil. Kaz has influenced drummers worldwide with his drum-less albums and has written tracks for Anika Nilles, Chris Coleman, Aaron Spears, Robert "Sput" Searight, and many more.

Kaz stopped by Drum Channel to perform and deconstruct his song, "Lumix." He showcases his method for playing a fundamental groove while analyzing the song's structure in basic and advanced modes. He delves into his approach to navigating both modes, shedding light on their similarities and differences. He also covers some soloing techniques and ideas for constructing a musical foundation. Kaz talks about vocabulary, practicing paradiddles, and exploring different variations. Prepare to be inspired by this 8-part course, exclusively on Drum Channel!

CLASS IS IN SESSION! 



PRACTICE ROOM



Course

Kaz Rodriguez Breaks Down "Lumix"

Lesson 3: Similarities & Differences

Note: Kaz feels these particular grooves in double-time, as written below. Playing and feeling this in double-time will help create a forward momentum/driving feel.

1 "Lumix" Main Groove

© 1:15

Musical notation for the main groove of "Lumix". It is written in 4/4 time with a double bar line and repeat sign. The notation shows a series of eighth notes and quarter notes on a single staff, with 'x' marks above the notes indicating drum hits. There are accents (>) over some notes. The time signature is 4/4.

2 "Lumix" Variation Groove

© 5:19

Musical notation for a variation groove of "Lumix". It is written in 4/4 time with a double bar line and repeat sign. The notation shows a series of eighth notes and quarter notes on a single staff, with 'x' marks above the notes indicating drum hits. There are accents (>) over some notes. Above the staff, the letters 'R L R R' are written with arrows pointing to specific notes. The time signature is 4/4.

Lesson 4: Learning The Chorus

1 Pattern 1 (Main Chorus Groove)

© 1:37

Musical notation for the main chorus groove. It is written in 4/4 time with a double bar line and repeat sign. The notation shows a series of eighth notes and quarter notes on a single staff, with 'x' marks above the notes indicating drum hits. There are accents (>) over some notes. Above the staff, the letters '1.' and '2.' are written with arrows pointing to specific notes. The time signature is 4/4.

2 Pattern 2 (Variation)

© 5:34

Musical notation for a variation of the chorus groove. It is written in 4/4 time with a double bar line and repeat sign. The notation shows a series of eighth notes and quarter notes on a single staff, with 'x' marks above the notes indicating drum hits. There are accents (>) over some notes. Above the staff, the letters 'R L R' are written with arrows pointing to specific notes. The time signature is 4/4.

PRACTICE ROOM

3 Pattern 3 (Ride & Tom Beat)

R L R R R B R L R L R R B R L R L R R B R L R L R R B

© 6:46

Lesson 5: Solo Section Pt. 1 - Breakdown

1 Reverse Paradiddle Groove

L R L L R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L R L R R

© 6:05

Lesson 6: Solo Section Pt. 2 - Practicing Paradiddles & Special Lick

1 Paradiddle Roll

R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L

© 1:01

2 Special Linear Fill

R L R L R L L F R L R L R L L F R L R L R L L F B

© 4:41

Note: Practice the inverted paradiddle by itself first. Once you can play it comfortably, proceed to voice it around the kit creatively and create your own voicings.

3 Inverted Paradiddles Around The Kit

R L L R L R R L R L L R L R R L

© 6:11

Lesson 8: Closing Notes

1 Outro "Trap" Groove

© 3:02

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