

The busy Dresden Dolls drummer, who's also recently worked with Nine Inch Nails, the World/Inferno Friendship Society, and the Cliks, says: You want it? **Go out there and grab it.**

1 THE DRUMS ARE AN EXTENSION OF YOU. Think of them as another voice. When you sit down to play, make 'em talk. Infuse them with your personality, feelings, and ideas, and complement the other voices in the group. Don't feel intimidated by others' dizzying displays of chops or speed. Focus on what you can say with the drums. The drumset carries such immense musical capacity; let your creativity shine through with power, passion, and eloquence.

2 KEEP YOUR EARS OPEN. All sorts of music can be an influence. Sounds, voices, phrasing, moods, dynamics, imagery, etc. Explore all kinds of music, find what speaks to you, and incorporate it into your own unique voice. You never know what kinds of ideas you might unlock within yourself.

3 WARM UP. Hit the stage hot and ready to go. There have definitely been times on tour where I'm tired or think I feel fine, but I always, without fail, have a better show when I take time to stretch, warm up my hands, and get into the right headspace to perform. It gives you and the audience a strong opening from the first song. When I think about it, if I was in the audience, would I want to see the band come out ripping, or would I want to see them spend the first fifteen minutes of the show dogging it because they weren't ready?

4 PRACTICE DISCIPLINE. Develop a strong work ethic. You get back what you put in. If you have a musical vision, have the discipline to hone it, refine it, and lay it down solid. Seek out new challenges. Don't be afraid to push yourself hard or ask questions along the way.

5 BE RESOURCEFUL. Whether you're hustling your group or you're running solo, you need all the help and resources you can get, especially at the beginning. Put the word out and help each other out. Use what's around and set goals for the next step. Think creatively to solve problems, treat those around you with respect, and keep your word along the way. You never know what doors could open up next for you.

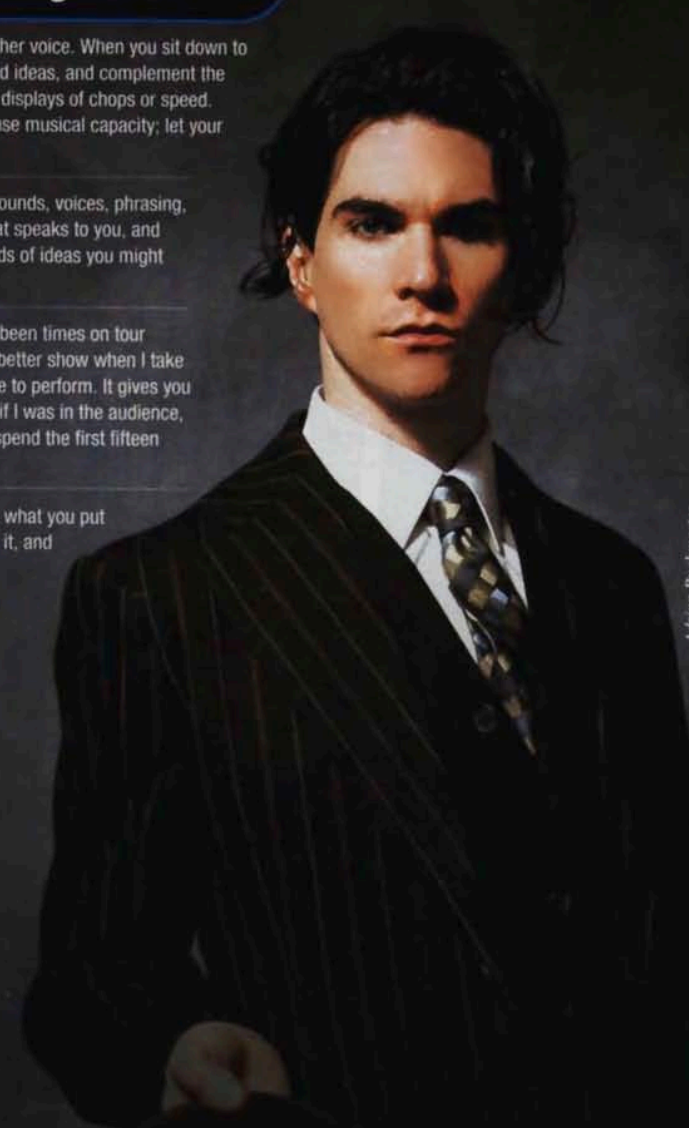
6 GET OFF YOUR ASS AND JAM. Don't be afraid to try new things musically. If you hear something in your head, trust your instincts and explore it. Take advantage of making music with other people when you can, folks from all different disciplines. You can learn a lot just by working with people and exchanging ideas; you'll gain a wealth of experience to draw from.

7 BODY = MACHINE. The cleaner you keep it and maintain it, the better it's gonna run. The more garbage you pour into it, the faster you'll destroy it. When I play, I want the music to flow through me without anything clouding it or getting in the way. So I stay away from drugs and booze on stage because I don't want anything to dampen that experience.

8 TAKE IT STEP BY STEP. When learning something new, start slowly and build up your endurance and consistency, and let the speed, fluidity, and nuance stem from that. It feels easier to play things faster, but when you slow it down and make every hit deliberate, you gain a much deeper level of control over how you execute what you play.

9 GROOVE, FROM THE RUDIMENT THROUGH THE GIG. Feel the pulse in what you play. No matter how simple the pattern, make it musical. It's easy to get bored with practicing sticking exercises or rudiments if all you view them as is clinical movements. Try to make them groove while you practice, or come up with a bass line in your head to go along with them. Put on some James Brown or something with a tight feel and play along, incorporating the exercise into the song.

10 COMMUNICATE ON STAGE. Musically and through body language, have fun in the moment while performing, and stay present. The most powerful experiences I have seeing music is when the band expresses as one entity. To really listen to what's going on, to serve the music in that particular moment—that can help draw things out of the musicians on stage and take the music to a new level.



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