

Our Lady Peace's Jeremy Taggart On Drum Sounds And Hangin' With Elvin

I've always liked the sound of your drums. They're very low and open, and they complement the rest of the musicians in Our Lady Peace very well. I'd appreciate information on the make, size, and tuning of your kit. I was also wondering how the Elvin Jones feature in the song "Stealing Babies" came to be.

Craig Blain
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Thanks very much. It's nice to know that some people are listening so intently.

The drum tuning on Happiness depended on each song. Gregg Keplinger was on hand to get the drums singing, and my tech Arnold Lanni would tweak them to the key of the song. Then we'd burn some takes. It was a very easy and healthy feeling in the studio. Gregg is unbelievable at finding a drum's note. Early on I knew I wanted the drums to sound lower than they sounded on Clumsy. So I used clear Ambassador beads, rather than the coated models I used on Clumsy. My tom sizes were 10x12, 16x16, and 16x18, and I used a 16x24 bass drum. All of them are Ayotte drums. (They're not out of business, by the way. They're just available online now at ayottedrums.com.)

As for the king—Elvin—I met him through Gregg, who is quite close with him. I saw him in Seattle at the Jazz Alley in 1997. After being blown away by his playing, I went backstage and met him. He was very cordial and exciting to be around. We really hit it off on a personal level.

Two years later I conjured up this wacky idea. I called Elvin's cooler-than-cod wife Keiko, and asked if they would like to come up to Toronto. They were into it, so we hung out in the studio for a night and cut the track. I have a DAT tape of the out-takes, which I would love to let everyone hear eventually. There's some unbelievable stuff — about ninety minutes of gold. After that night, Elvin and Keiko sort of "adopted" me as their Canadian-born son.

This is how cool they are: I had the opportunity to hang with them at their apartment in New York last summer, and Elvin showed me all his gear. Some of the kits he has would stun any collector. At one point he opened a cymbal bag—history

was screaming out of this thing—and he said, "Take your pick." I nearly passed out.

So now I have a piece of history. But more importantly, I have a clearer insight regarding one of my heroes in life.

Thanks again for your questions. Keep playing, and be yourself And if you're ever in Toronto, when I'm off the road I teach at a cool place called Soul Drums.

Their number is (416) 225-5295.