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INTRODUCTION

The idea for this book came to me slowly, over the course of a couple of years. Every so often, I'd feel the urge to write about a lesson I taught or an experience I had, some bit of wisdom I thought worth sharing. But I wasn't in the habit of writing much since my days studying literature in college. I'd published a couple of articles on drumming, but for the most part, I would just share these stories with some of my students during their lessons.

The longer I've been playing drums and teaching, the more I wanted to get down on paper a record of what I feel are some of the more important things I've learned—bits of wisdom that I felt would be of use to other drummers and musicians, lessons I wish I had learned when I was a young drummer.

I found that as I started to write, many of the stories and lessons tumbled forward onto the page, as if they were piled up in a closet ready to burst open with the slightest turn of the doorknob. I furiously scribbled down sketches and scraps, concepts I wanted to communicate and experiences I wanted to share that I felt were important or meaningful, or in some way had an impact on me.

Other stories had to be teased out, anecdotes or experiences I had forgotten until I shined a light on the dusty shelves of my past, some of which, I realized upon reflection, had shaped the musician, teacher, and person that I am today.

The essays herein are the distillations of many, many hours of drumming, teaching drum lessons and band workshops, performing, practicing, parenting, and living: a compendium of what I've learned so far. The more I've learned, the more I've realized how little I actually know. I believe we must always question, think critically, and strive to take our understanding to a deeper level.

I'd like to think that many of the lessons contained herein apply not just to drummers and musicians. Some of them, I hope, will resonate with anyone who pursues a passion, or hones a practice. I invite readers to pick and choose the essays that might interest them. There is no need to read the book in any particular order. In fact, I think the last several essays might resonate with more people than the content more specific to drumming and drummers. In any case, even if not all of the stories resonate with everyone, I hope some of them will at least make readers question and think, and lead them to their own truths.

In several essays I refer to BandWorks, which is a rock 'n' roll band workshop program that I started with my guitarist friend Steve Gibson in 1993. BandWorks began as an idea for us to get some of our students together to play music, since at the time (before the Internet), it was very challenging for musicians to find other people to play with. But as the program evolved and grew, we realized that we weren't just connecting musicians with one another to share in the experience of playing in a band—we were also teaching the values of listening, cooperation, and collaboration toward a common goal.

Since then, BandWorks has grown into a robust program with rock band workshops, clinics, and summer camps at locations around the San Francisco Bay Area. We've served thousands of musicians over the years, and are proud to have created a thriving, inclusive, and supportive community of musicians.

I could not possibly have written this book without so many influences that have shaped my understanding of drumming and teaching: from hundreds of hours taking my own lessons, to thousands of hours of teaching lessons, to my instructors who have tutored me in other disciplines (notably golf, archery, and baseball), and to my life instructors—my children Griffin and Evan, my

students, my friends, my Little League players, and most importantly, my wife Michele. I remain a student of the drums after 37 years of playing, and am always learning new things about teaching after 27 years of giving lessons. On we go...