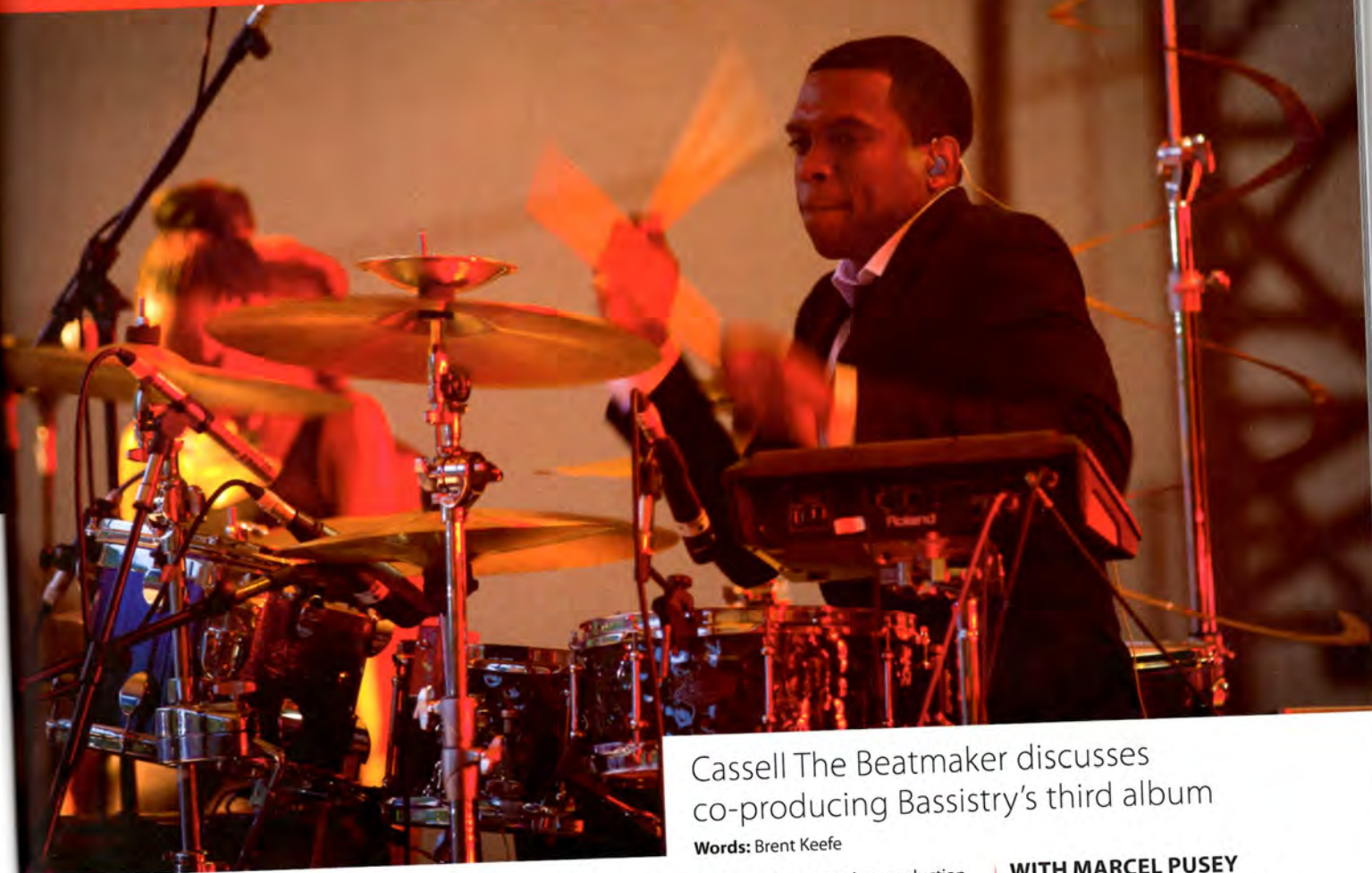


# DRUM 'N' BASSISTRY



Cassell The Beatmaker discusses co-producing Bassistry's third album

Words: Brent Keefe

Since his September 2012 *Drummer* feature, Cassell The Beatmaker, who is possibly best known for his work with Plan B, has kept himself busy with a range of drumming, writing and producing projects. One such job was co-producing the third album by Marcel Pusey's Bassistry, *What The Hell Do You Call This?* Cassell updated *Drummer* on his recent activities and his approach to working on the Bassistry project.

## WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING SINCE YOUR LAST DRUMMER INTERVIEW?

I have been very busy. My major work has been drumming and co-producing two albums for an A-list French/Canadian artist called Garou, who is signed to Mercury France and has been appearing as one of the main judges on the French version of *The Voice*. Both albums have done really well, with the first going double platinum and the second going triple platinum. I also co-produced, wrote and recorded drums on two

tracks for Jeff Beck, played drums on tracks for Duffy and co-produced and played drums on tracks for Natasha Bedingfield. The Jeff Beck tracks have only been released in Japan at this point, while the Duffy and Natasha Bedingfield projects are on-going, but the tracks should be on their next albums. I have also been in various writing sessions with artists like Will Heard, MNEK, John Newman, Jacob Banks, Mahalia, Ady Suleiman, Tigger Da Author, Claire Maguire, Lz7, Rizzle Kicks and Daniel James.

## YOU HAVE CO-PRODUCED BASSISTRY WITH MARCEL PUSEY AND ROBERT LOGAN. WHAT DO YOU FEEL YOU CONTRIBUTED TO THE ALBUM?

I co-produced the whole album. I began by taking the live recording and rearranging tracks, adding parts, and programming drums, taking the electronic elements Robert added and rearranging and making them a real key factor. I wanted to create a unique

freshness, incorporating production ideas and techniques that I would normally use for more commercial orientated projects, allowing the music to have a crossover appeal.

## DID MARCEL HAVE A STRONG VISION OR CONCEPT OF HOW HE WANTED THE ALBUM TO END UP OR WAS HE LOOKING FOR DIRECTION FROM YOU AND ROBERT?

Marcel did have a vision, but he also wanted the music to evolve with the direction of Robert and myself.

## DO YOU LIKE CO-PRODUCING OR DO YOU PREFER TO BE THE SOLE PRODUCER?

I enjoy both roles. Initially it was beneficial to have extra ears and expert eyes to create a new freshness.

## DID YOU HAVE ANY DIFFERENCES OF OPINION

## WITH MARCEL PUSEY AND/OR ROBERT LOGAN OVER ANYTHING DURING THE RECORDING?

We discussed everything as a team and came up with the best solutions to fit the context of the album.

## HOW IS YOUR TIME SPLIT BETWEEN DRUMMING AND PRODUCTION?

It varies between live work and studio work and it's been great that, so far, I've been able to play drums on most of the projects that I have been involved with. Production also gives me more options to work in a live setting and I am hoping that this year I will have a balanced flow of touring and studio work.

## SAM BLUE AGARD AND PHILIPPE D'AMONVILLE BOTH PLAY DRUMS ON THE NEW BASSISTRY ALBUM. WERE THEY ALREADY A PART OF BASSISTRY WHEN YOU CAME ON BOARD?

Both Sam and Philippe have been part of Bassistry from the beginning and I also played drums on two tracks on the album: 'Behind These Eyes' and 'The People'. Marcel asked me to play on those tracks as he thought my style of playing would fit them best.

**WHAT WERE YOUR CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING PHILIPPE OR SAM FOR ANY PARTICULAR TRACK?**

I've known both Sam and Philippe for a while and they are both talented drummers who have their own unique way of playing, which worked great for the album. Sam was great for the busier groove and more rhythmic playing, while Philippe complemented the Latin feel perfectly. We have all worked as drummers in previous Bassistry projects: Philippe played on the first album, *Bassistry*; Sam played on the second, *In Time*; and I co-produced and played on the EP *Try This*. All of the percussion was played by Jamie Trowell. The combination of all of us coming together to play on the new album gave it a lot of scope, I think.

**GEAR BOX**

**Drums: Premier**

- Elite Series – maple in purple sparkle fade
- 22"x20" kick drum
- 16"x16" floor tom
- 14"x14" floor tom
- 12"x9" quick tom
- 14"x8" snare
- 14"x5" One (limited edition) snare

**Cymbals: Zildjian**

- 13" K Custom dark hi-hats
- 14" K Zildjian Constantinople hi-hats
- 8" K splash
- 9.5" ZIL-BEL Large
- 16" A Custom EFX
- 16" Dark crash
- 16" Z Custom EFX
- 18" K dark medium thin crash
- 18" A Custom EFX
- 18" FX Spiral Trash
- 20" Crash of Doom
- 20" K Custom dark ride

**Heads: Remo**

**Sticks: Vic Firth**

**Electronics:**

Roland and NI Maschine Studio

**AS A PRODUCER, DID YOU HAVE MUCH INPUT INTO THE DRUM PARTS?**

Yes. I did the arrangements and the additional programming, but Sam and Philippe did a brilliant job in embracing the initial patterns and making them their own.

**HOW DID YOU PRESENT THE TRACKS TO SAM AND PHILIPPE? DID YOU USE CHARTS OR DID YOU SEND THEM PROGRAMMED DEMOS?**

A mock demo was played to them both and they subsequently attended a rehearsal where they ran through the parts, adapting them to their style of playing.

**WERE THE BASIC TRACKS RECORDED LIVE WITH A RHYTHM SECTION?**

Yes. The basic tracks involved the rhythm section playing the song as they would do in a live show performance, then we took the files and used them as our base ingredients to produce the record.

**WHAT'S COMING UP FOR YOU IN 2015?**

I'm currently working in the studio, producing, writing and drumming on projects with Pixie Lott, Natasha Bedingfield, Lz7, Mahalia, Akala and Chad Van Meter. My first production release for this year is a single release, entitled 'So Lost', for Ady Suleiman. I also play drums on the track. The single was released on 8 February and an EP I co-produced came out just after that. To keep up to date with my latest projects and activities go to [www.thebeatmakers.com](http://www.thebeatmakers.com).

