

2005 Montreal Drum Fest

The 2005 Montreal Drum Fest, held this past November 12–13, reiterated its status as one of the world's top gatherings of percussionists and drummers. Held in downtown Montreal, Quebec, Canada, this year's festival was integrated with the Montreal Music Show, held a couple of subway stops away. There, on Friday, November 11, clinics were hosted by **Rick Latham**, **Robby Ameen**, **Bruno Roy** and **Mario Roy**, **Dafnis Prieto**, **Memo Acevedo**, **Paul Brochu**, and **John Blackwell**.

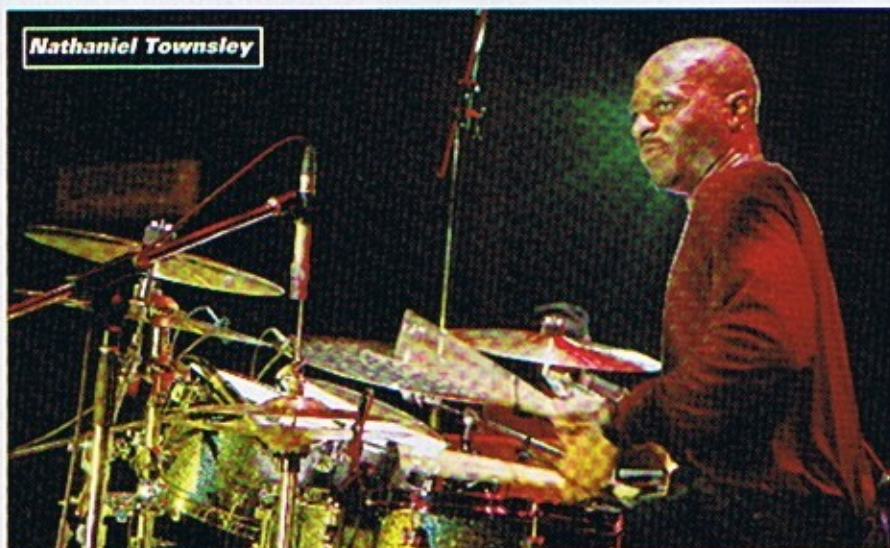
The Drum Fest itself got underway on Saturday with the now-traditional Yamaha Rising Star Showcase, presenting top student drummers culled from regional competitions in the Montreal area. They were followed by **Franklin Vanderbilt** (Stevie Wonder's drummer), who had the audience's attention from the downbeat. His visuals were as compelling as his relentless groove. **Nathaniel Townsley** then demonstrated exquisite dynamics with his trio, after which **Robby Ameen** flexed his considerable AfroCuban drumset chops.

Canada's own **Magella Cormier** reaffirmed his status as a fusion icon. Next up, **John Blackwell** nailed the groove with acrobatic flare. The day ended with a nimble performance by Latin drummer/composer **Dafnis Prieto** and his band.

Sunday's show awoke to Quebec legend **Michel Bernard**'s musical brand of drumming. He was followed by Germany's slick **Benny Greb**, who was all surprises, and Canadian rocker **Shane Gaalaas**, who was all power. Next, **Akira Jimbo** and **Hiroyuki Noritake** (performing together as Synchronized DNA) gave a stunning example of acoustic/electronic drumming symmetry. **Keith Carlock** was funky and swinging, while managing to breathe John Bonham with every stroke.

The Bisquera Brothers Band—with **Curt Bisquera** on drums and **Rich Mangicaro** on percussion—closed the show. Their groove-based repertoire included an audacious version of Jimmy Webb's classic "The Wichita Lineman." For more information, visit www.montrealdrumfest.com. For additional photos of the event, go to www.moderndrummer.com.

Story by **T. Bruce Wittet**
Photos by **Heinz Kronberger**



Nathaniel Townsley



Curt Bisquera



Rich Mangicaro



Dafnis Prieto



Benny Greb



John Blackwell