



**NOT-SO-DISTANT DRUMS**  
Pete Lockett feels that "cultures are healthy only when they cross-fertilise"

Japanese, Latin and Western percussive traditions. Then there is the other long list – Bond films on which he has provided the percussive moments, beginning from *Tomorrow Never Dies* right up to the latest *Quantum of Solace*, besides other Hollywood films like *The Incredible Hulk*, *City of Angels*, *Moulin Rouge* and *The Bone Collector*. It's easy to get charmed into the galaxy of greats who have prettied up his CV – but that'll be reiterating the better-promoted side of Lockett.

The other half of him is firmly stuck in Indian music. "I realised that I'm on the right track when in 2004 I was invited to perform with Ustad Zakir Hussain in a tribute concert for the late Ustad Alla Rakha in Bombay. It was a great honour," Lockett picks up the thread once Ghosh's little son left the room and returned us to the original topic.

Based on his studies of the tabla under Yousef Ali-Khan, South Indian percussions under Karaikudi Krishnamurthy and his own experience of working with Indian classical musicians, Lockett's recently published book on Hudson Music, *Indian Rhythms for the Drumset*, is an effort to approximate the varying cultures of Carnatic and north Indian rhythmic systems and the Western drum kit. Primarily aimed at "demystifying the air of impenetrability" surrounding Indian rhythm regimes, the book takes an uncomplicated view of Indian rhythmic complexities and tackles issue of syncopation, modulation, phrase development and groove, allowing their use in a jazz, rock and funk situations. "A lot of Western musicians see Indian rhythm musicians playing across the beat, get perplexed, and immediately shy away. The book is a door for them; it can set them on the road," says Lockett.

Talisman, his co-signed album with Indian guitarist Amit Chatterjee, is a fitting example of how adept Lockett is in manoeuvring within a cultural crossover environment. In interesting portions of the album, Chatterjee induces a knotty jazz and abstract feel from his fretwork while Lockett introduces intricate and distinctly Indian rhythmic patterns and moods – a near-total role reversal by "a Bengali and a British musician" that also pokes at cultural typecasts. "I don't understand, but why can't we imagine an Indian footballer playing in the West?" wonders Lockett. It is he who provides the answer: "Cultures are healthy only when they cross-fertilise."

## Across the Beat

**Multiple albums, concerts, video shoots and a book - away from the Bond soundtracks, India is bearing fruit for British percussionist Pete Lockett**  
By Shamik Bag

**T**HE TATTOOS THAT SNAKE down his arms and the one that stretches up his left foot are an inheritance from his youth, admits Pete Lockett. The British multi-percussionist, as he talks, is rolling up his trousers to let the dragon peer out from beneath the folds of cotton-fire-breathing, ominous and a throwback to the days when the young, aspiring drummer immersed himself into the heady world of rock & roll. "I was working as a dock worker in Portsmouth and there was rock and bebop happening all around. It was a natural move for a 19-year-old," says Lockett.

Now 44, Lockett has seen off the struggling half of a three-year stint he

had promised himself to make a dent in Indian music. The turn towards Indian music happened when Lockett, at 27, heard the complex cadence of Zakir Hussain's tabla at a free concert in the UK. "The music came in with the summer breeze. Till then, I was a blinkered rock drummer living in a music world that was fairly homogeneous," Lockett says.

In Kolkata recently to firm up *Kingdom of Rhythm*, his forthcoming album on Saregama with fellow percussionist Bickram Ghosh, Lockett contends that his earlier decision to invest his time and talent on classical Indian percussive music is throwing up gainful results. Other than *Kingdom of Rhythm* and *Talisman*, his collaboration with guitarist Amit Chatterjee released recently on IndiaBeat, Lockett is involved in the creation of *Made In Calcutta*, based on tabla legend Pandit Sankar Ghosh's compositions; the *Journeys with the Master Drummer of India* album on Music Today, where ghatam ace Vikku Vinayakram is joined by the likes of Mandolin Rajesh, Bickram Ghosh and Lockett; and an album with Danish guitarist Henrik Anderson and south Indian flautist Shashank.

At Ghosh's home in the Southern fringes of Kolkata, Lockett's address in the city, we are less inclined to talk about some of the names from the music world in the West with whom he has been associated. His website, [petelockett.com](http://petelockett.com), is a veritable call-up of artists and bands like Björk, Peter Gabriel, Robert Plant, Jeff Beck, Sinéad O'Connor, Gary Husband, Amy Winehouse, Bill Bruford, Steve Smith, Afro Celt Sound System and the Verve, for whom he has recorded as a musician well-versed in Arabic,

**The turn towards Indian music happened when Lockett heard Zakir Hussain. "The music came in with the summer breeze. Till then I was a blinkered rock drummer," he says.**