

PETE LOCKETT'S CAPE BRETON TOUR DIARY



UK percussion sensation Pete reports from the world-famous Canadian drum festival on working with kids, eating breakfast with Purdie and his performances

Wednesday 19 May

The piercing shrill of the 5am alarm clock, a scruffily-prepared half-slice of toast and a cup of tea set me on the road for this next adventure. The taxi to the airport offers no respite as the piercing voice of the taxi driver keeps me awake for the hour-long ride to Heathrow.

Numerous security checks and annoying travel procedures later I find myself aboard the flight to Halifax, Canada on my way to perform at the annual Cape Breton International Drum Festival run by drummer Bruce Aitken and his wife Gloria. It is only when you board the tiny propeller plane at Halifax that links you onwards to Sydney, Nova Scotia that you realise you are going to somewhere totally different.

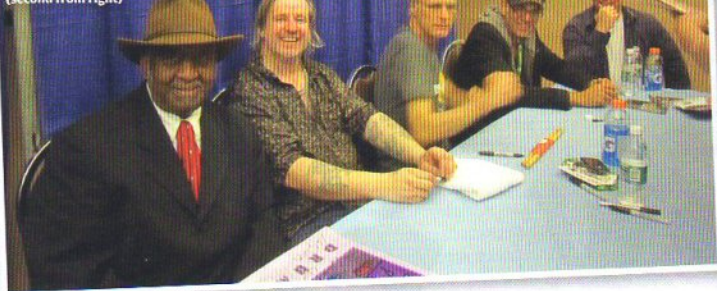
Many drum festivals happen in some metropolis or other, surrounded by modernity and skyscrapers. CBIDF on the other hand is on one of the most picturesque islands in the world and really makes you feel like you have got away from it all. Of course, following the flights, connections, early morning, taxi drivers and time difference, now is not the time for sightseeing and so it is straight to the hotel bed. Luckily I have got a great suite on the eighth floor with stunning harbour views. It is not always like this, trust me!

Thursday 20 May

Besides my scheduled performance at the festival, I have come to the island a couple of days early so I can work with a group of local youngsters and put together a piece for them at the festival. Drums made from found objects, shakers, rattles and all items based on bangability will go to make up this 'crash bang opera' as we have called it.

The festival has a number of legendary names on the bill, from Billy Cobham and Chad Wackerman to Liberty DeVitto, Michael Shrieve, Alan White and

Pete with Bernard Purdie (left) and Liberty DeVitto (second from right)



many more. Aptly called the 'Year Of The Legends' it represents the 10th anniversary of the festival and it is really important to give youngsters the opportunity to be involved directly in a performance capacity alongside these greats.

Besides some basic workouts with the youngsters I also get the chance to get the soundcheck for my solo set out of the way. The crew are really among the most efficient and professional that I have ever come across in any festival setting. It is my third time performing at the festival and I never fail to be impressed.

Friday 21 May

Head down to the breakfast room and immediately start bumping into old friends. First up is Denny Seiwell. We sit scoffing eggs with a rare Airtro Moreira album blazing out from his laptop, drowning out the lift music in the room. Soon we are joined by Troy Luccketta and Bernard Purdie. One of the great things about these festivals is the cool 'hang time' you get with lots of other drummers and also all the people that attend the festival and stay at

the hotel. Today is my soundcheck day and so, after another session with the group of youngsters in the percussion group, I head off in the car, the five or so miles to the venue in Glace Bay. A few hours of mic scratching, monitor lifting and feedback wincing later, it is back to the hotel where there are a couple of informal clinics held by Troy Luccketta and Jerry Mercer. Needless to say, the bar became packed with the gradual inward flow of drummers to the fest.

Saturday 22 May

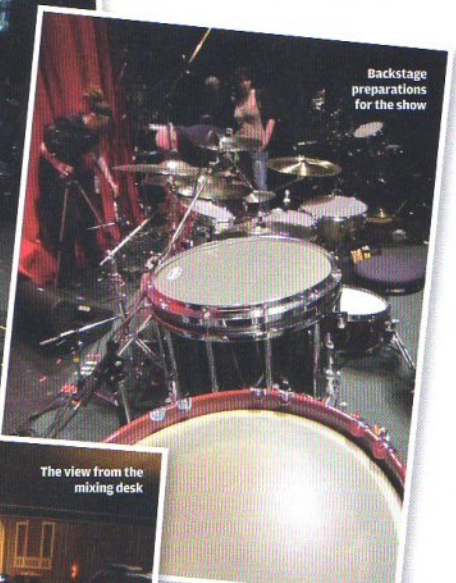
Eggs and bacon in the room to kick off the day. I have my solo set mid-afternoon and also a duo with Michael Shrieve. I have worked with Michael before and am really looking forward to that. He is really a great master of dynamics and feel-good groove. The journey to the venue is always interesting as you end up travelling with different drummers each day. Today I share the ride with Carmine Appice and Paul Wertico. Always interesting stories told, many of which could not be published!

This is the first day of the festival proper and is action packed, including Liberty DeVitto, Bernard

Michael Shrieve
and Denny Seiwell



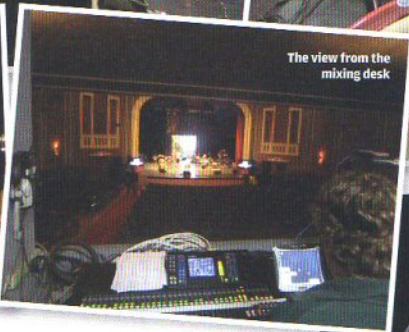
Backstage
preparations
for the show



Pete performs
with Denny Seiwell



The view from
the mixing desk



Pete in full
percussive flow



Purdie, Michael Shrieve, Billy Cobham and me. Cape Breton does not know what has hit them!

My slot is sponsored by Remo, Zildjian and Pro-Mark and features a mini World Tour of percussion, from Kanjira and doumbeks to bongos and vocal percussion. I like to mix in some electronics and sound design which really fattens out the whole presentation. Following this I do the duet with Michael Shrieve which is a real trancey electro beat thing, over which we play drumset and tabla. It is a totally full schedule and for the first time in the history of the festival they run an hour late.

After all this and a quick drink in the hotel bar it is off to the 'Sticks And Skins' dinner which features literally all the drummers in the festival. I really felt sorry for the drummer in the house band that night seeing all these guys walk in and sit down!

Sun 23 May

Sunday morning but I still need to be up early

to get to the venue to sort out the mini kids show I have put together. It is a great opportunity for them to get up on stage and have a blast and it goes down a storm. It opens the day on another action-packed programme featuring Dom Famularo, Chad Wackerman, Denny Seiwell, Carmine Appice and many others. I have a couple of guest spots with Denny and also Scott Atkins, a master snare drum champion. With Denny I play a really interesting free improv with kit and bongos. It is really great to play with such a great old-school player. His feel is off the scale. The thing with Scott was completely different and was a tightly arranged unison marching band piece at a ridiculous tempo. Darabouka and snare drum in unison. Really interesting! It is wall to wall drums and builds up to 'the concert of the stars' where all these guys play one song that they are famous for, with a house band. I get to sit in on percussion with such luminaries as Billy Cobham, Liberty DeVitto and Carmine Appice. Quite something!

The hotel bar is buzzing after the show. It is booked out just for us with a big spread of food and an endless supply of drinks. I try not to hit it too late as I have a 6am flight to Winnipeg to start a clinic tour of Canada. Eight hours to get to Winnipeg. Man, Canada is huge. At least I can get some sleep on the plane! 📌

From left: Chad Wackerman,
Alan White, Pete Lockett,
Carmine Appice, Paul Wertico,
Michael Shrieve, Bruce Aitken



About the festival

The Cape Breton International Drum Festival began in 2001 and was the brainchild of Bruce and Gloria Jean Aitken. The Festival takes place on the beautiful island of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada. The Festival is non-profit, with the motto of 'Education Through Performance', highlighting a variety of percussive areas from a wide range of high profile artists. Previous Festival performers have included Billy Ward, Ndugu Chancler, Mike Mangini, Derek Roddy, Curt Bisquera, Gil Sharone, Gary Husband and Bill Bruford.

www.capebretoninternationaldrumfestival.com