

Dom Famularo Part 1

Interview by Sean Mitchell // April 04 2016



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<https://youtu.be/Dt-exz2JmDU>

Most people say you're animated, Dom, but truly, you're embarking on a project where you are actually going to be animated. Let's talk about Musimations.

It doesn't get any greater than this, Sean. that's for sure. (laughing)

There is a wonderful drummer, recording engineer and cartoonist - his name is Craig Shook, he's from Oklahoma. He had this idea for these teaching lessons/enthusiastic cartoon, in all of his surfing the web, when he came across myself and my voice, my way that I speak, he said, "This is the exact person I need, to have be the main character of the particular series" (which is called Tappy Pappy). So he contacted me and said, "Dom, you are the guy to do it."

We actually recorded this four-minute segment of a demo that we put together. He mapped this out and now he's selling this to a variety of different people who are very, very interested in it.

When we recorded the demo he said, "It's got to be a dry room and dry sound." So instead of me going into a studio, I said, "I can probably record this here at my studio." I tested it in my studio but my studio's too lively of a sound, but I had an idea. I literally set up the microphone and all the equipment in my walk-in closet in my bedroom. We actually recorded Skype while he was watching me record these and coaching me along the way how he wanted each sentence to sound. My wife was working the actual mixing of the board; I was standing up there with the microphone in my closet with clothes hanging all around me. It was the absolute perfect sound. We did it, it worked out well and there's actually some Skype of that recording on YouTube.

We actually have a reader question. Mark Magoc comes to us from Facebook and asks: Dom, what is the most fun gig you've ever performed?

What a great question. Obviously the answer to that is every gig I do is fun 'cause I squeeze the most out of every performance, but I do have one to answer. In 1995, the Grey Cup in Canada was held in Regina. I was asked by CBC Television to be the host of the opening ceremony on the Wednesday before the Grey Cup opened up to be held in Regina in the Agridome which holds about seven- or eight-thousand people. They said, "What would be your ultimate percussion event that you'd like to put together?" They told me to think about it as money's no object.

If that was to happen, I would want to have a percussion line, a drum corp line. I'd want to have people from South America; I'd want to have North American natives playing drums; I wanted to pull out all these different ideas from drum corps and Taiko drumming from Japan. I had this big list of what I'd like to see. I'd have everyone playing individually, then everyone playing together even with modern drum set. Maybe even an electronic drum set there so it just shows all the areas of percussion. So I gave them this wish list and we left. A week later, I got a call and they said, "Dom, we're going to make it happen." And they did.

Actually if you go to YouTube and type in "heart beat world rhythm" and my name it will come up - the show of that event. Then what they did after the event happened, live in the Agridome, they brought me back a few months later and they edited it down for a TV presentation. It was an hour show that was done on CBC and it won top educational show for like three years in a row. It was put up on YouTube. It was so much fun because we had every possible connection of artist there. We had Danny Gottlieb, who's there on the electronic drum set, and he was able to trigger an actual person that when he played the drums the person danced on these two big 20-foot screens on either side of the stage. Gartley was playing the solo while this character was dancing in time to what he's doing. We had six year old Steven Sing perform - he tore the house down. Taiko drummers up there playing with the big drums - it was completely out of control!

We had every area of percussion there and then we played together with a finale. The ultimate end of the finale, which you'll see on this recording: during the rehearsal and during everyone playing, I would count "3, 4" and then "cut" and everyone would stop - complete silence. I'd count them back in; they'd come back in. So I've got this wall of sound then I'd stop and come back in.

While we were rehearsing, some guy sitting up in the ceiling of the Agridome slides down a rope to come down and say, "Hey guys, I have an idea. Dom, when you stop the percussionist session - at that point where it's dead silence - I've got some fireworks I could set off in the ceiling of the Agridome during that silence." We made it happen, so yes, that was the most fun I've ever had in my life!

Probably the most fun any drummer's had, if the truth were to be known (laugh).

Dom, you do a lot of interesting things. Two things I really admire you for is your giving to the industry and your ability to always be upbeat. Let's talk about The Sessions - that's such a great project that's going on. What is it and how can musicians, and artists, for that matter, benefit?

This is a woman by the name of Jules Follett who put together a book called Sticks 'n' Skins. It's a large coffee-table book that has got over 500 drummers in there - it is dedicated to drummers and there had never been a coffee-table-type book devoted to drummers. The book now is in the Smithsonian Institute, the Nashville Hall of Fame; it's in the Opryland Hall of

Fame; it's in the Grammy Museum. The book has been acknowledged through all of these great historical events to acknowledge the drumming community.

At a meeting one day she said, "Dom, what do you think the next step would be that we can do to help musicians worldwide?" So the team of people - myself, Lib Devitto, Joe Hibbs (who unfortunately just recently passed away) - were a part of the brainstorming session forming what we put together called The Sessions. It's an actual panel of top industry people that we bring to universities all around the world. It is funded by a not-for-profit organization so we go to the university free of charge. All the university has to supply is a stage, an auditorium, a power point screen and a projector, a table for us to sit at and deliver the students. She flies us all in and we talk about a power point presentation of industry - things that are important to be successful: understanding how to market yourself, understanding social media, understanding what it takes to manage yourself, what are the skills that it takes to really be involved in a successful career in the music industry. It's an absolutely wonderful event. We've done these in several countries around the world. We do about 10 of them a year. We've just recently started what's called the Legend Series. They asked me to interview the top musicians in the field - drummers and non-drummers - throughout the world to put together 20 to 30 minutes of an interview that is on the sessions.org. At the NAMM show recently in January I was able to interview several people. For example, I interviewed Leland Sklar, who is the top bass player who plays with James Taylor. He's now on the road with Toto - great guy, great experience.

I get to interview them; interviews are different. I'm able to step into their world of what inspires them. How did they get started; where does their fuel their passion come from?

Then I interviewed Benjamin Wright; he is the string arranger for Quincy Jones and the first album that he worked with Quincy on was Off the Wall with Michael Jackson. And if you listen to the tune "Don't Stop 'til You Get Enough," that's Benjamin Wright's arrangements of how he devised the strings to play rhythmically, so the strings are almost a part of the rhythm of the tune as opposed to just being coloring above the vocals - a brilliant, brilliant man.

Then I interviewed Bruce Sugar; Bruce Sugar is the number-one recording engineer in California who records everybody - Ringo Starr, Paul McCartney, The Eagles, Michael McDonald. He came in, I interviewed him for the Legend series of the Sessions. Then I interviewed Simon Phillips; Steve Smith; Steve Jordan, who rarely does interviews; and Jim Keltner, who never does interviews. It was great to have these guys in a room for an hour. It's edited down to about 30 minutes of action packed interview so that's what The Sessions is about. It's about delivering to the musical world information needed about the business of music to be successful to pursue your dreams.