

VIBE

BARRY KEEFER

1 VITALS

BAND Shinedown

AGE 29

HOMETOWN Colorado Springs, CO

INFLUENCES Stewart Copeland,
John Bonham, John Starks,
Clyde Stubblefield, Tony Williams

CURRENT RELEASE *Us And Them*

2 ALL GEARED UP

DRUMS Pearl

CYMBALS Meinl

HEADS Evans

HARDWARE Pearl

STICKS Pro-Mark



Anthropology Rocks



According to its web site, Lake Doctors is a company that provides a wide range of beautification services for various bodies of water. According to Barry Kerch, he's a Southern redneck who plays the drums and loves to rock out. Believe it or not, in this small world, those

two distinct entities collided.

Kerch graduated from the University of Central Florida with a degree in Anthropology, and although he did not end up digging up artifacts, fossils, and rocks in exotic locations, he did find his own rock. It wedged him neatly next to a hard place. "I was facing college debt and I

have a wife and I was trying to make ends meet," says Kerch. "At the same time I was trying to find a way to play professionally but I had to be realistic. Growing up in Florida, it's not like in L.A. or New York where there are gigs all over the place. It's much harder to get gigs here."

Alas, Kerch did find gigs. After managing a Sam Ash store and doing odd jobs, he landed a nice gig up in Jacksonville, Florida. It wasn't manning the throne for a hot rock band, but it was just as sweaty and kept the bills paid. "I was working for Lake Doctors. It was cleaning

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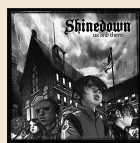
lakes and retention ponds and keeping weeds down and keeping the ecosystem going. I did that about four months."

While he mucked it up in Jacksonville, Kerch heard that Shinedown was looking for a new drummer and jumped at the chance to audition. With sticks in hand, he headed over to meet the band and played two songs – "Lacerated" and "45" – from their debut album. Although the modest Kerch wouldn't say it outright, he and the band were a match made in heaven from the get-go. "One of the things that I think they enjoyed was that I had experience playing live and in the studio, although that was with local acts and not nationally. My timing is good, I can read drum charts if needed, [and] I had taken drum courses and theory courses so I had a good enough musical background where I wouldn't freak out if they showed me a click. Personality also meant a lot to these guys," he adds. "We're all a bunch of Southern rednecks."

Armed with a new weapon in Kerch, Shinedown retreated to the studio to record its debut album, *Leave A Whisper*, which was released in May 2003. On the strength of the single "Fly From The Inside," the pack of rednecks headed out on a tour lasting nearly two years. "The

3 INSIDE TRACKS

By ROBERT L. DOERSCHUK



SHINEDOWN

US AND THEM

Atlantic

It's difficult to focus on Barry Kerch's drumming throughout *Us And Them*, partly because we kept getting distracted by how much Brent Smith's singing sounds like that of the Guess Who's Burton Cummings. I mean, just try listening to "Trade Yourself In" without thinking of "American Woman." For that matter, Shinedown bases itself on an early/mid-'70s protometal model, from the bonehead hooks to the flat, thin snarl of the guitar sound. Ditto for the drumming, which Kerch executes inerringly, if somewhat heavi-

ly. Every song seems like a maze of half-time to double-time backbeats to four beats on the snare, three-bar thumping crescendos, and other restless changes in the drum part, some of them probably not essential. In fact, on songs like "Lady So Divine," which calls on Kerch to play fills before going into the "psychedelic" B section, it might have been better to either dig deeper into the beat or to hit those fills with a little more sizzle. In an era dominated by drummers with monstrous chops, Kerch, like his band, captures the feel of a time when it took less to blow listeners away; the sense that *Us And Them* creates of not being satisfied, as if the meal had ended just before the main course, reflects on how much both players and listeners have changed since then.

first tour was 23 months. It was pretty much straight, but we had a week off here and there. We played with so many great bands. We started out with Powerman 5000, then 3 Doors Down, which also had Seether and Our Lady Peace on the tour."

Nine months into the tour, Kerch lived a childhood dream as Shinedown joined Van Halen for a leg. "I had a poster of Alex on my wall when I was a kid," Kerch gushes. "My brother and I wanted to be the Van Halens, so to be able to play with them was an honor."

Nearly two years on the road will wear out even seasoned professionals, but Shinedown had work to do and barely rested

when they got home. After a short two-week break, the band headed right back into the studio to record their second album. As exhausting as it may have been, their marathon tour was a breeding ground for new ideas, and Kerch found himself flying through the tracks. "I was done with the majority of the drum tracks in two weeks. We'd get in there at 8:00 in the morning, write a song, figure out the parts, and then I would track it. We just pushed it out. It felt very spur of the moment. A lot of the fills weren't planned out. They were off the cuff."

Having been acclimated to the band, and with national exposure in his back pocket,

Kerch settled into his comfort zone and stretched out during the *Us And Them* sessions. Though most of us define "stretching out" as playing more notes, he defines the term less broadly. "As a rock drummer, you have to play within the requirement of the song. Ninety percent of the time, that requirement is 2 and 4 on the snare and 1 and 3 on the kick," says Kerch matter-of-factly. "Anything over that, and you're screwing up the song. On a few of the songs, like 'Atmosphere' and 'LSD,' I was able to expand a little bit and show some chops that were more my style. I think on the first record, I played what

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4 QUICK LICKS

Transcription by ANTHONY GELUSO

"Lady So Divine"

Barry's throwin' down! The drums are the highlight of "Lady So Divine," with soulful grooves, stylized fills, and very soloistic drumming that runs throughout the song's interlude. Pay close attention

to measures 7 and 8, which are subdivided as shown in 7/16 and 9/16. Play all the splashes on the right and the snares on the left. Also check out measures 11 and 12, which extend over two bars.

♩=135

4:00

5

9

4:21

The image shows a drum notation chart for the song 'Lady So Divine' by Shinedown. It is in 4/4 time with a tempo of 135 BPM. The notation is spread across three staves. The first staff starts at 4:00 and ends at measure 6. The second staff starts at measure 5 and ends at measure 8. The third staff starts at measure 9 and ends at 4:21. The notation includes various drum symbols: snare (x), kick (o), and cymbal (triangle). There are also notes for 'splashes' on the right and snares on the left. The notation is complex, with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and some measures are subdivided into 7/16 and 9/16.

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they heard because a lot of the songs had already been demoed by their [previous] drummer. This time I was able to play more like me."

The new disc epitomizes the band's blue-collar way of life. "We just worked hard. We did the van tour, the RV tour, and we graduated to a small bus that we call the

'short bus.' Then we finally got a real bus with a trailer. Rock music nowadays isn't a get-rich-quick scheme. It's not hip-hop. It is what it is. It's a career, and it's something you have to work really hard for. Sometimes you have to eat crow for a while but it's worth it. Every day you get to play drums."

Kerch grew up wanting to be a rock star, and though he has reached that goal, he has never lost touch with reality. On his way up, he was always aware of the many obstacles headed his way and knew they could ultimately keep him from success. "I've always wanted to play. I've been doing it since I was a little kid, but I

also didn't want to live a pipe dream. I had to have a backup plan. I played all the way through college, and it paid a lot of my college. I've always been a drummer first, but chances are always one in a million. You got to keep working at it, and I always will but you always have to have something else."

The future remains unwritten for Shinedown, but one constant will remain — they will give their best at every gig and leave it all on the stage. The energy will always be high, and Kerch will jump off his throne and twirl his sticks as much as he can. "We just try to put on a show. If you sit there and play the song, you might as well listen to the CD. Kids pay a lot of money to come to these shows, so put on a good show. Tommy Lee is probably one of the best showmen out there and there's a reason. He's good at it and that's what you should do [as a rock drummer]. We're all going crazy trying to kill ourselves and going balls to the wall every night."

"We just worked hard ... Rock music isn't a get-rich-quick scheme"

Where once stood a wide-eyed boy in awe of his favorite drummers now stands a successful drummer influencing today's awestruck dreamers. The wide eyes remain, but now humility has replaced the astonishment. "It's probably the most humbling feeling, to have a kid come up and say, 'I really enjoy what you do, you're an inspiration.' There are still a million drummers I look up to. I can learn something from everybody. I try to spend as much time with those kids and see if there's anything I can do to help them. I tell them to look at it as a craft. When you first start off, you want to be that rock god but I try to tell them there are many different styles and try to learn them all. Learn your rudiments and learn to read music. Treat it like you would any profession. There's schooling that goes behind it." ■

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