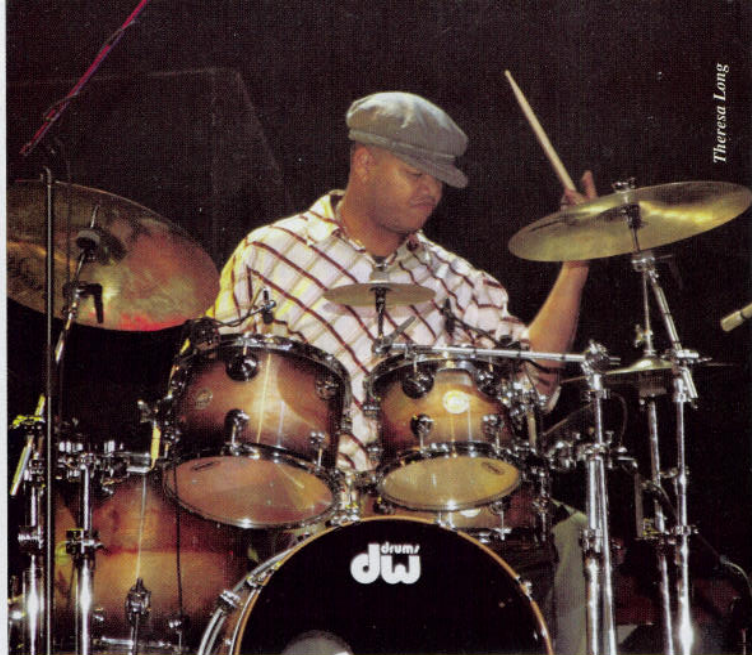


Jamil Byrom

Guitar Center Drum Off Winner

by Rick Long



Theresa Long

Jamil Byrom drummed his way into the winner's circle at Guitar Center's 2005 Drum Off Grand Finals held at the Wiltern LG Theatre in Los Angeles, California this past January 14.

Byrom, who gained the nickname "Carmel Ice" because of his smooth style on the drums, began playing at the Friendship West Baptist Church in his hometown of Dallas, Texas. His first professional gig was with the Youth Workshop Choir of Dallas under the direction of Gospel superstar Kirk Franklin. Instructor William Richardson also helped the drummer develop technique and coordination through an appreciation of different musical cultures and styles. Gospel, jazz, and R&B

were Byrom's primary interests, but he studied all genres while earning a music performance degree from Alcorn State University in Mississippi.

Byrom entered the Guitar Center Drum Off competition as one of 3,000 competitors who signed up at their local store, hoping for a shot in the grand finals. Over a four-month period, a field of six contestants from across the country was chosen for the final competition. The twenty-seven-year-old Byrom played a spirited and energetic solo that showed off his skills in a variety of styles.

MD caught up with Byrom after the award was presented to get the scoop on this year's champion.

MD: How did you develop the winning solo?

JB: Actually, I just had a few ideas that I knew I was going to stick in there at some point in time. What's been working for me so far is just letting it flow. I have a sketch of the routine in mind, but not

the whole thing worked out ahead of time.

MD: What led you to go down to Guitar Center and sign up for the drum off?

JB: I had been in the competition a couple of times when I was in high school and once again after college. This is the first year I made it past the store finals to the second level.

MD: Are there any drummers that you can point to and say, "When I saw that drummer play, I had to play the drums"?

JB: Dennis Chambers, Vinnie Colaiuta, and Steve Jordan.

MD: What is it about the drums that made you pick them over all the other instruments?

JB: Man, I think it's God and church. I've known I could play since I was a little kid. Then one night I was in choir rehearsal at church singing tenor when the director said, "Come try this." And he put me on the drums. I was thirteen years old.

MD: Are you a full-time musician?

JB: Yes, I play in a couple of different bands: a club band and a church band. I also teach private lessons.

MD: What has your life been like since you entered the competition?

JB: I've tried to make practice a daily thing. And this event has been a big motivation for me. Before college and the real world hit me, I was practicing all the time. My senior year in high school, I only needed two credits, so I signed up for band three times a day. I was practicing four or five hours before I even got home. So as far as working on the competition, I've just been trying to get back to that "all-the-time" mode.



Hometown: Dallas, Texas

Education: Bachelor of music from Alcorn State University in Mississippi

Drum Off Prize Package (Total Value—\$40,000): a Gretsch custom kit with a Gibraltar rack system, a DW Collector Series five-piece maple kit, a Zildjian custom box set and cymbal bag, one-year endorsement deals with Evans and Sabian, and a 2006 Scion xB automobile

More info: www.jamilbyrom.com

Guitar Center 2005 Drum Off Grand Finals

The Guitar Center 2005 Drum Off Grand Finals were held this past January 14 at the Wiltern Theatre in Los Angeles, capping the seventeenth annual nationwide GC Drum Off competition. The contest began with in-store preliminaries, with the winners advancing to store finals, district finals, regional finals, and eventually the grand finals. There, six regional winners competed for the ultimate prize.

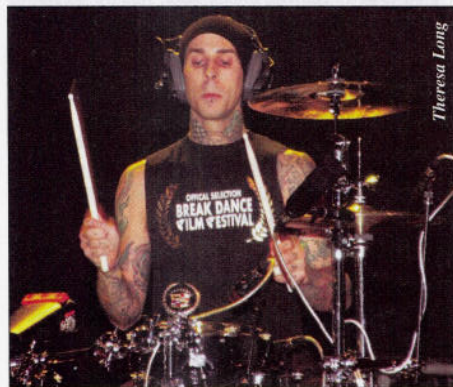
The finals event featured a concert performance by punk legends Bad Religion, a special collaborative drum exposition by **Travis Barker** (Blink-182 and The Transplants) and **Adrian Young** (No Doubt), and an opening set by Los Angeles-based punk band The Bronx.

Fourteen judges representing a wide variety of drumming styles were responsible for selecting the winner. They

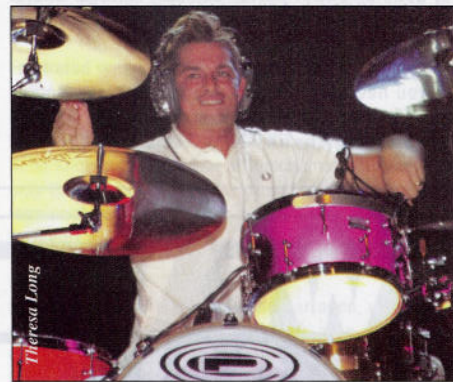
included **John Dolmayan** (System Of A Down), **Dean Butterworth** (Good Charlotte, Morrissey), **Stephen Perkins** (Jane's Addiction, Porno For Pyros), **Peter Erskine** (jazz legend), **Doane Perry** (Jethro Tull), **Billy Ward** (Joan Osborne), **Chris Hesse** (Hoobastank), **Steve Jocz** (Sum 41), **Kenny Livingston** (Sugarcult), **Alan White** (Yes), **John Tempesta** (Helmet, Rob Zombie), **Taylor Hawkins** (Foo Fighters), **Atom Willard** (The Offspring), and **Samantha Maloney** (Hole).

When the finals had concluded, twenty-seven-year-old **Jamil Byrom** of Dallas, Texas had been named the winner. Byrom set himself apart from the other five contestants with an improvised set of traditional jazz chops, seamless rolls, and unique groove playing that connected with the crowd and the judges alike. His win earned him \$40,000 in prizes. For more on Jamil, see the *On The Move* story on page 140.

Jack Sonni, Guitar Center vice president of marketing communication, stated, "Drum Off provides a platform for drummers around the country to achieve national recognition. Those drummers have the opportunity to share the stage with artists like Travis Barker and Adrian Young. This event gets our customers one step closer to living out their career dreams." Additional sponsors for this



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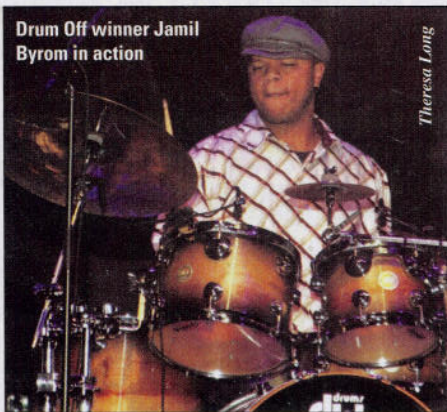
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Travis Barker (top) and Adrian Young offered special performances.

year's competition included Toyota Scion, Sabian, Remo, Drum Workshop, Gretsch, Evans, Zildjian, Tama, Pro-Mark, Kaman, and Gibraltar. *Modern Drummer* served as the official media partner for Drum Off.

Rick Long

Drum Off winner Jamil Byrom in action



Theresa Long