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CD audio examples performed by Rich Lackowski.

The Path

I remember the first time I heard the famous double-kick pattern that Lars Ulrich played on Metallica's "One." I was at my close friend's house, and deeply rooted in the music of Van Halen, Led Zeppelin, and Rush at the time, but the moment I heard those kick drums fire their rounds at me, I felt a whole new level of heaviness and saw a whole new kind of way to play the drums. Those six kick hits between each snare crack had me wide-eyed and begging my parents for a double-kick pedal. The pedal eventually came one glorious day, and I embarked down my metal drumming path.

Thanks to my incredibly supportive parents, I was fortunate enough to hook up with one of the best drum teachers in town. The lessons provided an important and structured way of learning to play the drums, and I hung on to every word my teacher said, learning all I could over the many years of lessons that followed. But much of the unspoken, and maybe *real*, learning happened when I got home, threw down those books, and tossed on the headphones to play along with my metal drumming heroes.

It didn't take long for me and my close friend down the street, who was also learning to play the drums, to combine our kits to create one "monster drumset" that began to approach the arsenal of sounds we needed to emulate the drummers we were listening to. We would get together every chance we had and take turns playing along with tracks from the drumming gods. This continued for years.

One album at a time, and often completely by luck, I would come to discover band after band with an incredibly inspirational drummer that belted out new and exciting grooves and solos, keeping me chained to my drumset until I could at least fake my way through the more interesting parts. I remember thinking each time I made one of these musical discoveries how lucky I was to stumble onto such exciting drumming. And it made me wonder how much else was out there that I was missing.

This book attempts to structure and accelerate this process of discovering and learning from the legends of metal drumming by providing a roadmap of the metal path, or style, that's labeled with vital landmarks, or drummers, along the way. I hope it accelerates the discovery process so you can spend more time listening and learning, and less time wondering where to find more insight and guidance into the metal genre.

Two of the greatest gifts of our drumming community are the ever-growing pool of inspired musicians who inject new innovations into our craft, and the ongoing discovery of the legends that shaped our collective drumming history. It's impossible in the scope of just one book to cover every musician who has made an important contribution to metal drumming, so if you see some of your favorite drummers missing, know that I have favorites missing too, and I plan to explore them in upcoming writing endeavors. But what you will find on the following pages is a vital exploration of a dozen legendary drummers analyzed in detail, complete with lessons that will teach you how to play their most defining drum grooves and solos. So, get ready to turn the page and start your journey on the beaten path!

One more thing: As you read through this book, know that it's impossible to perfectly emulate another drummer. The drummers in this book were chosen because each is a legendary artist with a unique gift. Their playing is constantly evolving, fueled by the things they've heard, the things they've seen, the things they've felt, and the experiences they've lived through. Rather than learning a few of each artist's unique licks, really try to absorb the bigger picture of what's happening. Listen to the beats in their original context. Go out and buy the songs if you don't already have them, and listen to *how* these masters play as much as to *what* they are playing. By internalizing their "thing" you will add it to *your* unique set of circumstances and use it to develop your own individual style. Then when you play, play it honest, and make a statement by channeling all you've learned from the masters of the drums, process it through your unique set of circumstances, and play with a voice that is uniquely you.