

each, are positioned directly behind the beater head and can be popped out quickly once the head is removed. With all four weights in place, the beater has a very balanced feel and a powerful response. I preferred the feel of the Control Beater this way; it produced a powerful throw and a strong, punchy tone plus plenty of speed. Removing one or more weights gave the beater a lighter feel and a quicker response.

The flat felt head produced a great all-purpose tone with a dense, smacking attack and balanced low-end punch. The round felt head had a slightly softer yet more focused attack, and the plastic head provided the most extreme attack, clarity, and precision. The self-aligning beater head worked perfectly to ensure that it struck the drumhead as flatly as possible each time, and it never drooped or drifted off alignment throughout our review. List price: \$29.99.

### DWSM110XL Control Beater XL

This beater has the same design and features as the Control Beater, only with a longer shaft (8.15") and a pair of oversized beater faces (rectangular wood and rectangular felt). It was designed in collaboration with studio great John "JR" Robinson, who's widely known for having incredibly powerful, accurate bass drum technique. The beater faces measure 1.5"x2" and can be quickly swapped out by hand. The brass weights add power and acceleration to the throw, and the larger faces increase the volume and punch of each stroke. Both faces produce a huge sound with a punchy attack and maximum tone, with the felt face drawing out a slightly warmer timbre and the wood face providing extra clarity and articulation. This would be an ideal beater to use on larger drums (24" and up) and in situations where you want to achieve the biggest, fullest tone possible. List price: \$29.99.

**Michael Dawson**



# CooperGroove

## GrooveGrip Performance Drumsticks

Crosscut grooves in the grip facilitate a more relaxed technique.

**CooperGroove drumsticks feature** a modification of traditional stick design with the intention of improving grip, stimulating pressure points, decreasing fatigue, and helping players who drop sticks due to sweaty hands. The namesake of these new tools is Chicago-area drummer Carlo Cooper, who decided to cut grooves in his sticks' handles after growing tired of sanding and taping sticks and wearing gloves to deal with grip slippage.

CooperGroove sent us a few pairs of 5As and 5Bs with acorn- and oval-shaped tips and a few with dipped handles. Models with ball-shaped tips and a larger marching stick are also available, as are double-cut sticks with twice as many crosscuts in the handles.

Aside from the twenty crosscut grooves in the handle, the first thing I noticed about the CooperGroove was the oversized bead. The acorn tip on the 5A model was much larger than the tip on a Vic Firth Extreme 5B or a Vater Power 5B, for example, which might be a turnoff for those who like a smaller stick tip. The American hickory used in CooperGroove sticks is high quality and had a consistent weight. The sticks are finished with a water-based lacquer.

I don't usually get sweaty hands when I drum, and I've never had a need to use tape or wear gloves to keep from dropping sticks, but I could see how the notches cut into the CooperGrooves would help players with those issues. I consider an occasional dropped stick as a sign that my grip is too relaxed.

But recently I've had some playing issues caused by a somewhat lazy grip, and I can attest to the fact that the following claim from CooperGroove's website is true: "The grooves provide sensory feedback; know where your grip is at all times." I feel that these sticks would also be great teaching tools, in that the grooves foster a heightened awareness of grip, which is crucial in the early stages of drumming. A sampling of customer reviews online points towards increased relaxation and a decrease in fatigue and dropped sticks. At \$19.95 a pair, CooperGrooves are priced higher than most, but they do come with a money-back guarantee, which should make it easier for those who might be skeptical to try them out. To learn more, go to [coopergroove.com](http://coopergroove.com).

**Stephen Bidwell**

