

# Practice to Performance: A Drummer's Journey to Broadway and Beyond

By Quinton Robinson

**A**s I prepare for my upcoming clinic at PASIC 2024, "Practice to Performance: A Drummer's Journey to Broadway and Beyond," I am excited to share the experiences and insights that have shaped my career. This clinic is designed to guide aspiring drummers through the critical steps needed to transition from practice rooms to professional stages. Throughout the session, I will emphasize four key principles that have been instrumental in my journey: disciplined practice, musical versatility, professional networking, and performance consistency.

## DISCIPLINED PRACTICE

The foundation of any successful musical career is disciplined practice. My journey began with a structured practice regimen that focused on technical skills, reading music, and developing a strong sense of rhythm and timing. I encourage drummers to create a practice schedule that balances various aspects of drumming, such as rudiments, groove playing, and soloing. Consistency is crucial. Even on days when motivation is low, maintaining a routine helps build muscle memory and technical proficiency.

## MUSICAL VERSATILITY

In the competitive world of music, versatility is a valuable asset. My career has spanned various genres, from jazz and gospel to musical theater and pop. This diversity has not only kept my work exciting but has also opened up numerous opportunities. I advise drummers to explore different styles and genres, learning their unique rhythms, techniques and nuances. Being able to adapt to different musical settings makes you a more valuable and sought-after musician.

For example, my work on musicals required a deep understanding of different musical styles. Each show has its unique sound, and being able to switch seamlessly between them is crucial. This versatility also extends to the ability to read and interpret complex scores quickly and accurately.



QUINTON ROBINSON

## PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING

Building a successful career in music involves more than just playing well; it also requires effective networking. Throughout my career, forming relationships with other musicians, producers, and industry professionals has been essential. Networking can open doors to gigs, collaborations, and other opportunities that might not be accessible otherwise.

I recommend attending industry events, joining music organizations, and participating in workshops and clinics. Social media is also a powerful tool for connecting with the broader music community. Sharing your work online, engaging with other musicians, and staying active in online forums can significantly expand your professional network.

## PERFORMANCE CONSISTENCY

Transitioning from practice to performance requires a high level of consistency. Performing live is a different skill set that involves not only technical proficiency but also stage presence and the ability to connect with an audience. Over the years, I have learned that every performance, whether in a small club or a large theater, demands the same level of commitment and energy.

To achieve this, I incorporate performance simulations into my practice routine. Playing along with recordings, rehearsing with a band, and even practicing in front of a mirror can help prepare for live shows. Recording practice sessions and critically reviewing them can also identify areas for improvement. Additionally, understanding the importance of mental and physical health is vital. Regular exercise, a balanced diet, and sufficient rest are necessary to maintain peak performance levels.

## REAL-WORLD APPLICATIONS

In my clinic, I will perform numbers from my current show, *Hamilton*, and demonstrate the principles in action. I will also discuss real-world scenarios where networking has been crucial in landing gigs and advancing my career. Additionally, I will offer tips on maintaining performance consistency, including handling performance anxiety and adapting to different performance environments.

## CONCLUSION

“Practice to Performance: A Drummer’s Journey to Broadway and Beyond” is not just a clinic; it is a reflection of my personal journey and the lessons I’ve learned along the way. By focusing on disciplined practice, musical versatility, professional networking, and performance consistency, I hope to inspire and equip drummers and percussionists to achieve their own musical goals. Whether you aspire to play on Broadway, tour with a band, or simply become a better musician, these principles will provide a solid foundation for your journey.

Join me at PASIC 2024, and let’s take this journey together.

**Quinton “Q” Robinson** is the drummer for the North American tour of the Broadway musical *Hamilton*, a role that showcases his dedication, skill, and passion for music. Q’s journey began with a natural talent for drumming, which he honed through years of practice and performance. His expertise made him a top choice for musicians and producers alike. Beyond drumming, Q is a master of Ableton Live, using the software to enhance live performances and studio recordings. Q frequently steps up as a musical director. His ability to write drum scores for musicals and lead performances with precision and creativity sets him apart. Q’s positivity, love for music, and strong sense of purpose make him a beloved figure on and off the stage. His resume includes touring with such notable artists as Avery\*Sunshine, Anthony David, Bobby Brown, and Peabo Bryson. **PN**

# DRUMSET

## ADEWALE ADEYEMI

### Drumset Clinic/Performance

#### African Rhythm, Groove And Improvisation

Rhythm is the foundation and principal component of which melody and harmony is based on in African music. Rhythm can also be found in the languages in Africa. Groove is simply an orchestration of African rhythms, which are mostly danceable, and improvisation in African music is based on concepts like call-and-response, intonation, repetition, etc.

Adewale Simeon Adeyemi, popularly known as Wale Adeyemi, studied music at Lagos State University and has been performing for three decades. He is one of the most sought-after musicians in Nigeria. Wale is a drummer, songwriter, composer, and producer. He has shared the stage with such musicians as Adlan Cruz, Onyeka Owenu, Hugh Masekela, and others. Wale is also a music educator, teaching in such institutions as the Creative Music Academy, Rhythm and Groove Academy, and others. He continues inspiring and impacting a new generation of drummers through his teaching platform, Creative Drummers Academy.

## TREVOR LAWRENCE JR.

### Drumset Masterclass

#### Versatility, Authenticity, and the Contemporary Drummer

Trevor will explain the concepts that he has embraced to be able to exist in multiple musical situations as a drummer. As technology progresses, we are losing the value of skill, and he will explain how important that is as well as musical and genre integrity.

Trevor Lawrence Jr. is a highly acclaimed drummer, producer, and songwriter who is a sought-after musician in the music industry. His production credits include Alicia Keys, Eminem, Herbie Hancock, Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Lionel Richie, and Bruno Mars, among many others. He has been a key contributor to several critically acclaimed albums and live performances, including touring the world with Herbie Hancock and performing at the 2022 Super Bowl halftime show with Dr. Dre and Snoop Dogg. He earned Grammy recognition for his work on Eminem’s *Relapse* album along with various works he contributed to as both songwriter/producer and drummer. Trevor is also a respected educator and mentor.