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## DRUMS

## RON OTIS

By Derek Shaw

Ron Otis is one of the most established sidemen in contemporary American jazz. The Detroit-based drummer is renowned for his versatility, improvisation and impeccable timing—incorporating syncopated rhythms and funky accenting. Having toured with guitarist Earl Klugh and pianist Bob James for over a decade, Otis usually plays alongside bassist Al Turner.

“Bob and Earl are living legends who I grew up listening to, so having them welcome a no-name guy like me into their world was humbling,” Otis said. “A lot of cats think being a sideman is a horrible thing, but I feel you can’t lead unless you know how to be a true team player. I always had songs in my head and wanted to write, and this year the opportunity finally presented itself.”

His first solo album, aptly titled *Upfront*, focuses the spotlight on Otis’ compositional and arrangement skills. The instrumental full-length CD is playfully melodic and quite daring for a debut record. Call it contemporary, nu or smooth; this is modern jazz in its purest form: all chops, few frills and no lead vocals.

Otis’ supporting band consists of Klugh, James and Turner as well as local talent from Detroit, including brother Theo Otis, bassist Darrell “Peanut” Smith, guitarist Tim Bowman, keyboardist Brian O’Neal, pianist Charles Scales, trumpeter Rayse Biggs and saxophonists Randy Scott, Dave McMurray and Darryl Wakefield.

“During the recording process, there were times I wished I had more experience on keyboards to articulate my ideas and solidify the melodies,” Otis admitted. “Also, being an independent artist, it took longer than anticipated to complete the project. Despite the challenges, I have truly enjoyed the journey.”

Otis has no immediate touring plans, but he looks forward to pursuing his solo career while maintaining his sideman responsibilities.

For more information on Otis, or to purchase his new CD, visit [www.myspace.com/ronaldotis](http://www.myspace.com/ronaldotis) and [www.cdbaby.com/cd/ronotis](http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/ronotis).



## DRUMS

## Salute to Sidemen

## Carl “C-Man” Anderson

**Performed and/or recorded with:** Art Sherrod Jr., The Drifters, Matt Marshak and others

**Discography:** *Starting Out*

**Website:** [www.c-manproductions.com](http://www.c-manproductions.com)

## David Bedell

**Performed and/or recorded with:** Jay Soto

**Website:** [www.myspace.com/dreadsondrums](http://www.myspace.com/dreadsondrums)

## Curt Bisquera

**Performed and/or recorded with:**

Elton John, Mick Jagger, Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers, Celine Dion, Morris Day & the Time, Queen Latifah, Johnny