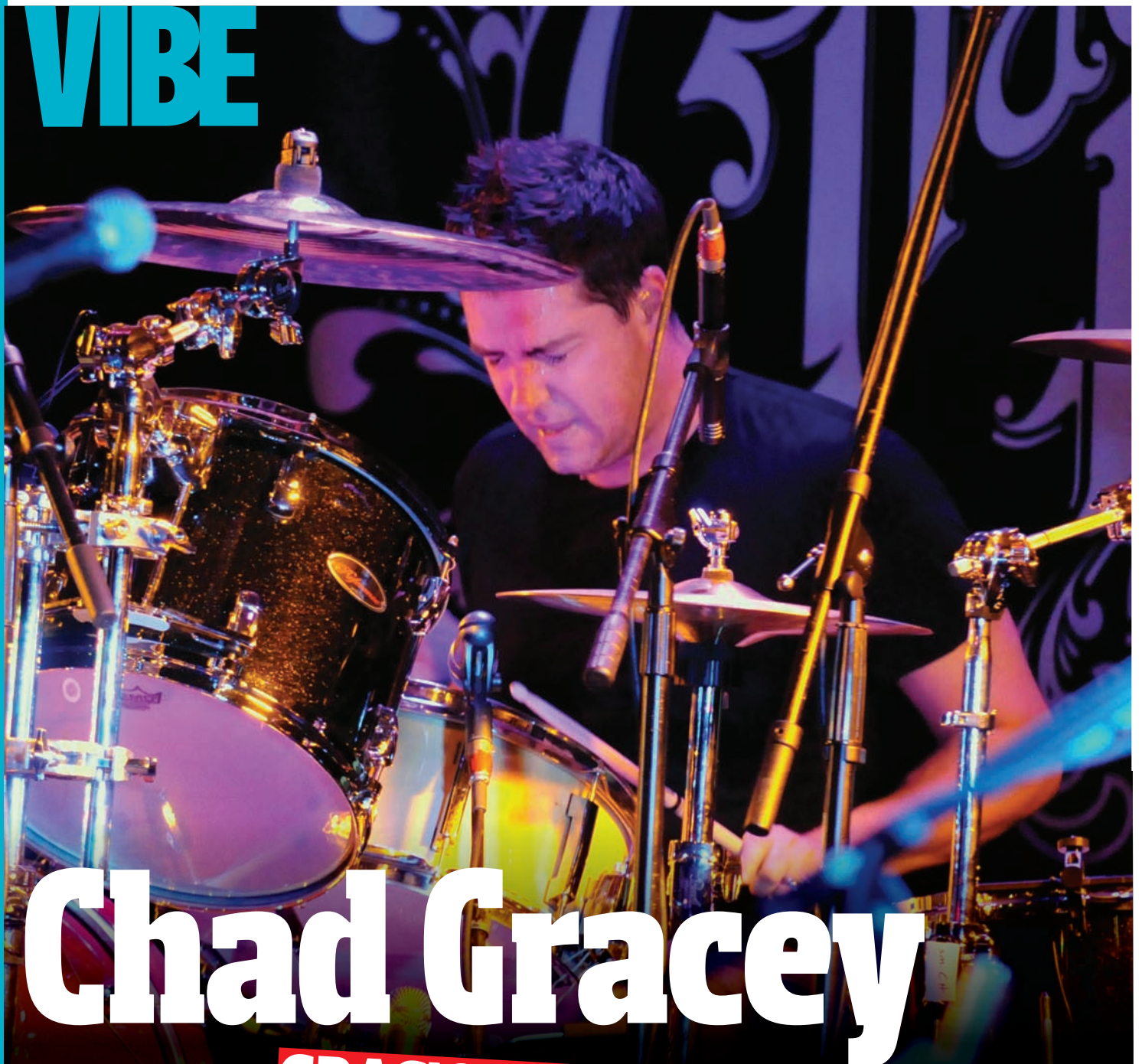


# VIBE



# Chad Gracey

## GRACIOUS TO BE OUTTA LIVE

By Andrew Nusca

**C**had Gracey breathes in. He takes a deep one, inhaling until the rushing air begins pushing against his diaphragm, expanding his chest and prompting the rise of his muscled shoulders.

He shouldn't, really — standing on this street corner in New York City's bustling Midtown business district, there's nothing to breathe in but the thick exhaust of roaring commercial trucks and the pungent fumes from the hot asphalt beneath his feet, glistening in the midday summer sun.

But Gracey can't help it, and he grins. He's thinking about last April, when he had an epiphany.

That's no small word to use in passing conversation. But Gracey insists that when he walked into a sweltering warehouse in York, Pennsylvania, after a year's hiatus from acclaimed alternative rock band Live, he had the sudden realization of the larger meaning of his life's work.

That was when he picked up a pen and, for the first time in years, wrote a song.

He had help. Joining him was bandmates Chad Taylor and Patrick Dahlheimer, both feeling a bit scorned after a falling out with frontman Ed Kowalczyk.

A few weeks earlier, Taylor discovered that Kowalczyk had signed a "hidden" contract in 2005 that formalized his gradual takeover of songwriting for the band. "Ed was able to stab his three best friends from middle school in the back," Taylor would later write in a blog post. "This act was far down the line from typical rock star ego."

## QUICK LICKS

Transcription by John Natelli

### “The Rest Of You”

Gracey’s rollicking intro to “The Rest Of You” helps to make it one of the standout tracks on The Gracious Few’s debut album. Although fully feasible, its unusual orchestration helps to give this pattern a particular “over-dubbed” or “layered” sound, and with the right hand traveling back and forth between hi-hat and floor tom at the rate of eighth-notes, it even feels new and unusual to play.

♩ = ca. 97  
@ 0:00

R R L L R L R L R L R L R etc. R L R L R L

R L R L R L

Feeling dejected, the rest of the band found itself lingering in a warehouse without air conditioning 100 miles from Philadelphia, itching to play — partially to blow off some steam, partially to *just play*.

“[Patrick and I] had Chad come and hang out. No pretense, no preconceived notions,” Gracey says. “Let’s get a room and see what happens.”

What happened was a four-minute scorcher called “Honest Man,” the lead single from what would become The Gracious Few. And by picking up that pen, Gracey realized that he could be a working musician with or without Ed Kowalczyk.

The only problem: The band lacked a frontman, and they weren’t too keen on welcoming more trouble.

A friend recommended Candlebox singer Kevin Martin. The jaws of all three hit the warehouse floor.

“We all went, ‘Holy s\_\_t, yes,’ ” Gracey says. “We had a shortlist of guys, but no one of Kevin’s caliber.”

By November, the group — with Candlebox guitarist Sean Hennesy in tow — found themselves writing and recording in the studio. Much to his surprise, Gracey found in Martin

less a frontman than a fellow drummer with an impeccable skill for song craft.

“The early days of Live were truly collaborative — we all sat in a room and bounced ideas off each other. So we got back to that process,” Gracey says. “But Kevin has a musical IQ of ... well, it’s ridiculous, the things he can draw from.”

The first ground rule for The Gracious Few? No songs that sound like Live or Candlebox.

“Ed writes to a certain rhythm. We really wanted to get away from that,” Gracey says. “That was part of my rut. I had to play to a certain strumming rhythm at all times, starting probably around the record V. We agreed that we couldn’t use that rhythm. That really gave me a new spark to work.”

The new self-titled album is, in a word, blistering. It’s powerful, meaty, and exudes the confidence of five veterans playing completely in the pocket, and completely free.

“It’s definitely harder than Live or Candlebox,” Gracey admits. “It’s a little more dark than those two bands. The first track, ‘Appetite,’ is very Led Zeppelin to me. I don’t shy away from that. When I was in the studio, I picked up a Them Crooked Vultures record. Dave Grohl is a monster and a master. He is my favorite modern drummer. I tried to use a few things from ‘New Fang’ and sneak my version of them into the songs.”

The band tried to keep things simple in the recording studio, and record each song as stripped down as possible. Gracey says 90 percent of what listeners will hear is the original basic tracks.

“We stood in the room and played all the songs down live,” he says. “We recorded the first two or three Live records that way. It was nice to get back to that.”

If the studio is freeing for Gracey, the stage is pure, unadulterated abandon. The band has a world tour in the works, and Gracey’s excited to get back on the throne.

“The leash will loosen up as we’re touring,” he says. “We’ve only done three shows together. Literally, we’re still trying to get to know each other in a live setting as musicians.”

And the name? The product of an off-hand comment from the band’s booking agent, Jon Levine.

“[Jon] booked The Grateful Dead, and he said, ‘You need a name like that, one that describes how you feel about what you’re doing.’ And Kevin said, ‘We’re all gracious about what we’re doing.’”

## INSIDE TRACKS



### The Gracious Few

*The Gracious Few*  
QUESTIONABLE ENTERTAINMENT

Freedom and power: These are the yin and yang of jazz and rock drumming, respectively. For many players, too much of one detracts from the other: Skittery bebop snare patterns can snap at the groove with finesse but little muscle, while backbeat bangers might bludgeon effectively but artlessly. Chad Gracey has made it his quest to pull the strengths of both schools together — he did so with consistent success for Live, and on this debut disc he maintains the excellence of his commitment. True, there are moments where he might be accused of copying John Bonham a little too literally, as on “Closer,” but with the content of the central riff, the guitar tone, the production quality, and even vocalist Kevin Martin’s squeals and falsetto glisses, it might be argued that that was their mission on this one track. Elsewhere, Gracey plays in a style all his own, with a restlessness and urgency that keeps even a sludgy slow-core trudge like “Appetite” on its toes.

Robert L. Doerschuk

## VITALS

**BAND** The Gracious Few

**CURRENT RELEASE** *The Gracious Few*

**AGE** 39

**BIRTHPLACE** York, Pennsylvania

**INFLUENCES** Larry Mullen Jr., John

Bonham, Dave Grohl, Matt Cameron

**WEB SITE** thegraciousfew.com

## GEAR

**DRUMS** Pearl

**CYMBALS** Zildjian

**STICKS** Pro-Mark

**HEADS** Remo

**HARDWARE AND PEDALS** Pearl