

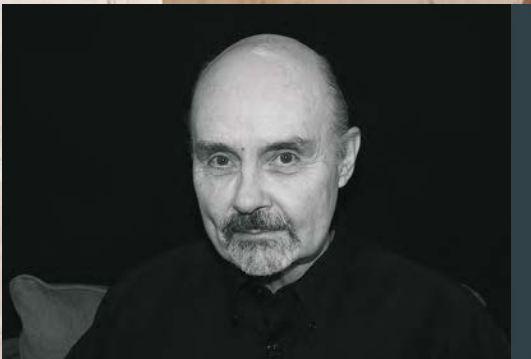


alphatribe

WORLD OF MALE FETISH



courtesy of Lucas Entertainment



46

JACK FRITSCHER

Alphatribe talks with the man who's magazine pioneered our way of life.

ISSUE 5

ALPHATRIBE MAGAZINE / ALSO IN THIS ISSUE: DANNY WATTS - CHECHNYA - 200 MILE HIGH CLUB
LEATHER IN VENICE - THE HOIST - PREP DIARY - THE BULLWHIP - ON CHEMSEX PART 2 - ALTERNADUDES
HANKY CODE, FETISH FITNESS - CLONE ZONE - INTERNATIONAL MR LEATHER - NEW RECON MOVIES - ...

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HI,

Issue 5 is here and it is loaded! A huge scoop, unique articles and the support of one very important man.



JEROEN VAN LIEVENOOGEN
SENIOR EDITOR

Jeroen is publisher of Alphatribe and Cerebral magazine and organises Leather & Fetish Pride Belgium.

Alphatribe is doing well. Readership goes up, stores need bigger supplies, more pages are added each time and more and more contributors find their way to this community magazine.

It was a great honour to learn that no other than Jack Fritscher congratulated us with the last issue of Alphatribe. He thought it was very attractive, informative and very reflective of its readers, exactly what

made Drummer a success. Jack was publisher of Drummer magazine, dating back from 1975. He literally pioneered the way for a magazine like Alphatribe. It's an honour to be able to step into his footsteps and we will do our best to serve the community. Make sure to read his article on page 46. Jack will be stopping by regularly as an Alphatribe guest writer.

The scoop we have for you this time is the story of Danny

Watts, a professional racing car driver from the UK who recently came out of the closet. In Alphatribe he is doing that for the second time while he reveals his passion for rubber. It's not only racing cars that shine!

Enjoy issue 5. Feel free to send us any feedback:
info@alphatribe.com

Jeroen

ALPHATRIBE MAGAZINE NO. 5

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ARCHETYPES OF OUR ARCHETRIBE

HOW 1970S DRUMMER PIONEERED THE WAY WE ARE TODAY

By Jack Fritscher

Fetish history: Drummer magazine

One of the core principals of Alphatribe is to document our fantastic fetish history, inform and educate about our incredible fetish forefathers, and the great people whose leather-boot prints we step in every single day. Drummer was in effect Alphatribe's father – breaking down barriers, entertaining its readers, and making history along the way.

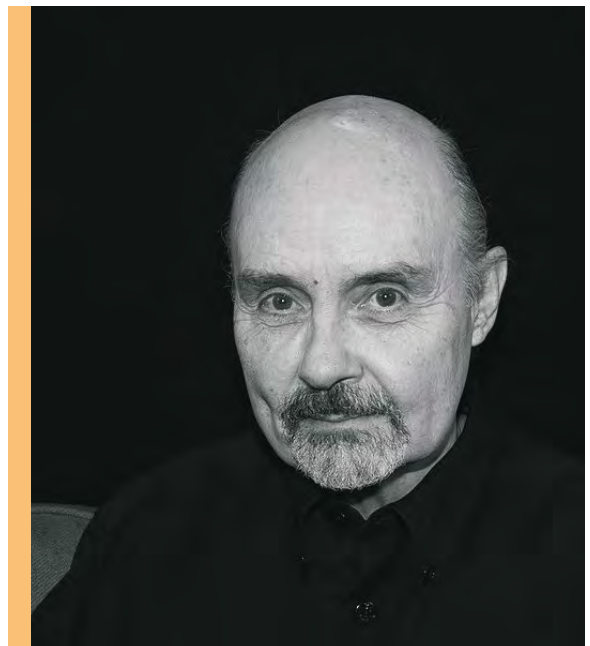
Jack Fritscher is a massively successful writer whose subject is our fetish origins and past. Alphatribe is honoured to welcome Jack as a regular contributor to our quarterly tome. Jack doesn't write about our history, he was there living through it. We can't think of anyone better to help us appreciate what most of us now take for granted in our fetish lives. Jack will also ensure that our community's incredible trailblazers are remembered and acknowledged by a whole new generation. In that way, they will be kept alive forever.

Jack's latest book, *Gay Pioneers*, will be published this summer ahead of the important Folsom Street Fair celebrations. In his first exclusive piece for Alphatribe, Jack gives a brief outline of the life of Drummer magazine – a publication he started editing more than 40 years ago.

"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away." Henry David Thoreau (author of 'Walden' – 1854), quoted in every issue of Drummer.



Drummer is a living history of leatherfolk, written in human blood, tattooed on tribal skin...



Jack Fritscher - pic by Steven Dansky

This week a baroque-back leather cowboy from the 1970s asked me what his complete collection of 214 issues of Drummer magazine was worth. I told him it was priceless and recommended he donate it to a proper gay archive like the European Leather and Fetish Foundation. From 1975 to 1999, Drummer created the archetypes of our archetribes and helped invent the very homo-masculine leather culture we're living today. Drummer notably saved the failing Folsom Fair by anchoring it with its wild Mr Drummer



Contest, and by inviting its national and international subscribers to fly in for the kinky naked street orgy.

Forty years ago, good fortune got me hired as founding San Francisco editor-in-chief of this international juggernaut. Its impact was epic, bigger than any of us — including Tom of Finland and Rex and my lover Robert Mapplethorpe — who filled its tasty pages with hot writing, cum-creamy drawings, and finger-licking photos designed to give readers and government censors boners.

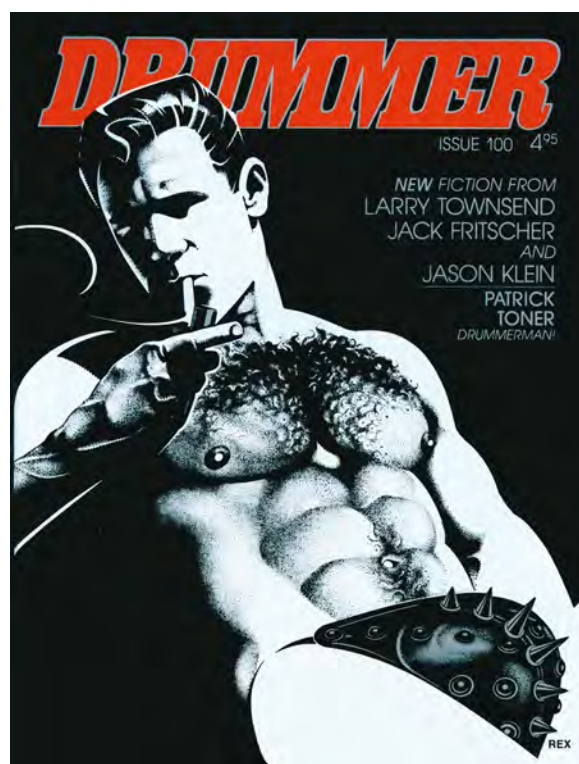


Erotic writing begins with one stroke of the pen and ends with many strokes of the penis.

Drummer was a revolutionary idea in motion. In our leather archetribes, Drummer dared portray our desires, to organise our thoughts, to inform our practices. It was a first draft of leather history. This fearless politically-incorrect sex magazine was the leather bible that in the 'Titanic' 1970s, before the iceberg of AIDS, brought the emerging gender of masculine-identified men out to claim an identity equal alongside other genders, and to balance the dominant drag culture round Stonewall. At Stonewall in 1969, gay character changed. At the founding of Drummer in 1975, leather character changed. In 1976, the Los Angeles police (LAPD) freaked out over the debut of masculine queers they couldn't dismiss as sissies. Deploying 65 cops, one helicopter, and one bus to the festive Drummer slave auction fundraiser, the LAPD arrested 42 staff and subscribers. That event caused Drummer to flee disaster in LA to destiny in San Francisco.

Drummer features and fiction were written to cause masturbation. The magazine pioneered, popularised, and validated daddies, bears, muscles, scruff, fetish sex (leather, boots, cigars, pups), and the BDSM alphabet soup of TT, CBT, VA, WS, and FF. Drummer prepared the way for you to be OK with the perversatility you enjoy today. Drummer was the autobiography of us all, or at least a lot of us, written and drawn and photographed by many of us to entertain the rest of us. Editing the monthly Drummer daily in real time was for me a wild existential ride in gay pop culture when readers demanded authenticity, truth, and leadership in reporting the emergence of BDSM identity, rights, and rites. In 1979, by more good fortune in the snake-pit of gay publishing, I had somehow edited half of the Drummer issues in existence.

A stack of 214 issues of Drummer is a coffee-table sculpture just over a metre tall (3.5 feet) and weighing almost 55 kilograms (120 pounds). Laid flat, top-to-bottom, Drummer stretches almost 60 metres (64 yards): two-thirds the length of a football field. At a rough 90 pages per issue, Drummer comprised a total 20,000 pages of advocacy journalism created by hundreds of writers, artists, photographers, and designers, including even more thousands of hot sex-ad profiles written by dirty-minded subscribers seeking hook-ups. (Drummer was the Grindr of its day.) It took a village to fill Drummer, and it took Drummer to inspire the 1977/78 pop-tart creation of the Village People. A group photo of every dude who helped create Drummer would rival the cover of Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band.



With 42,000 copies of every issue in the 1970s, and with a pass-along rate of at least a 'plus-one' reader in addition to each subscriber, approximately 80,000 people handled each monthly issue of Drummer. Over 24 years, that totals nearly twenty million people. In gay book publishing, 5,000 copies sold is considered a bestseller.

Drummer pioneered the serialisation of erotic manuscripts that could have been books, and helped invent modern gay publishing as we know it. First came the magazines in the 1970s, and then the book publishers themselves in the 1980s. More eyes have likely read one issue of Drummer than have read any

one book by any deeply established LGBT author on the top hundred list of bestsellers in the gay literary canon, including John Rechy, Edmund White, and Larry Kramer.

Drummer was an erotic leatherman's handbook and guide. For thirty years, among the millions of leatherfolk in North America and Europe, there was hardly a player alive who had not heard of or read Drummer. Years after the internet killed Drummer, readers continue to report that as teenagers they had managed to find Drummer, even in Bumfuck, Florida, and that the assertive primer that was Drummer had mentored, shaped, and emboldened their gender and kink identities. There was political empowerment of homo-masculine gender identity in erotic representation. So much so that the Tom of Finland Foundation, headed by Durk Dehner, recently declared that: "Drummer, ground-breaking for its time, set precedence for all homo-masculine representation to come."

Masturbation is magical thinking. So, initially, what we did to make Drummer pulsate hard was add realism and availability to the 'spank bank' fantasies of one-handed readers who wanted a virile and virilising magazine that made the frontiers of newly liberated sex seem possible, accessible, and boundless.



Jack Fritscher with his partner Robert Mapplethorpe on 1978

Drummer was a reader-reflexive magazine whose stories and photos featured actual leather players you could meet rather than porn-studio models you could never touch. What readers wanted they found in the homo-masculine media image of themselves as newly minted leathermen and tough customers come alive in the cinema vérité stories, and the reality-show photos and drawings which reflected what gay males really did at night.

Neither courting nor condemning the legitimacy of effeminacy in the gay civil war around gender, Drummer changed the straight homophobic stereotype which dismissed queers as sissies, into the Platonic ideal of the new masculine-identified gay man. That archetype of the new label 'Leatherman' went viral in international popular culture, fashion, and films like Cruising.

The liberal beauty of Drummer was its social permissiveness anchored in the idea of marching to one's own drummer. Self-reliance was the Drummer philosophy. Drummer was descriptive, not prescriptive, about leather behaviour. Descriptive Drummer was non-judgmental in simply reporting how grassroots leather lives were actually lived without commandments. Even though the Drummer editorial voice was a 'Top' seducing subscribers (who mostly liked to read from a deliciously overpowered 'bottom' point of view), Drummer was no domineering Dutch uncle demanding "Thou Shalt" or "Thou Shalt Not." Drummer never prescribed that there was a politically correct way to live leather because, while there may be rules around sex, nobody's sure what they are.



Drummer was never old guard or new guard – Drummer was always Avant Garde

Because of its passionate readers, Drummer survived 24 years of stress from bad business management, censorship, politics, plague, and trauma. That trauma included that one early plot twist of bad luck becoming good luck, when the LAPD busted the infant Drummer when it was only ten months old. But that's another story.

By the way, I can't blame that baroque-cowboy wanting to sell his collection of Drummer. In 2017, a single issue of early Drummer was listed on the internet at US\$99.95! Who knew!

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Jack Fritscher is the author of 20 books including Leather Blues, Gay San Francisco: Eyewitness Drummer, Gay Pioneers: Drummer, and Some Dance to Remember: A Memoir-Novel of San Francisco 1970-1982.

Visit www.DrummerArchives.com