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FT WEEKEND MAGAZINE - PLEASURES PURSUED: Puritan Pleasure - Drum's the word

By Claire Roberts, Financial Times
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After failing to make progress with clarinet lessons at school, I have not been tempted to take up another musical instrument. But when I recently listened to Green Day's "American Idiot" my limbs began to twitch and the desire to play the "air drums" became impossible to ignore. An idea began to percolate: could I, at the age of 32, resurrect my early musical career?

So it is that I find myself surrounded by hip young things in Camden's Planet Drum, nervously awaiting my first lesson. Felipe, my tutor, approaches. As he leads me to the soundproof studio, he asks what sort of music I like. I have prepared for this question and have the names of many suitably cool bands ready to trip off the tongue, yet, somehow, the words "George Michael" emerge. I am horrified but Felipe doesn't turn a hair - perhaps 25 years of drumming have affected his hearing?

Filipe hands me a pair of drumsticks, and I sit at the practice pad, obediently keeping time to the metronome. "Relax," says Felipe, noting the tension in my shoulders, "try to enjoy it."

After half an hour, we turn to the drum-kit proper, and I maintain a nonchalant air to disguise the excitement I feel.

I experimentally tap the high hat and the snare. Playing the drums is a lot harder than it looks: quite apart from keeping time and counting bars, both hands and feet work independently of each other. But by the end of the first lesson, in the parlance of Planet Drum, I am "feeling the groove". I am sent home with a DVD and workbook, and instructed to practise on the Yellow Pages.

That night I watch Led Zeppelin's "Moby Dick", which features a 25-minute drum solo. Later, I fall asleep and dream of John Bonham.

Planet Drum, London NW1, 020 7428 9012. Lessons £35 per hour.
www.planetdrum.co.uk

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