Ask him to play something besides Ludwig, and Myron Grombach gets nervous.

Pat Benatar’s Band live is full-contact rock, and Myron Grombach throws a lot of the punches. He doesn’t play drums, he attacks them. And the assault comes from every angle—behind, beside, in front of, and on top of his kit.

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Get nervous is also something Myron Grombach would do if you asked him to play drums he couldn’t depend on. That’s why, on stage and in the studio, Myron plays Ludwig six-ply shell drums and Ludwig heads.

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APRIL 1983
Observations Of An Industry

We’ve all witnessed it. Those of us who’ve been around this business for some time are particularly impressed. I’m referring to the technological revolution in the drum industry. So much has happened in the world of percussion over the past ten or fifteen years: multi-drum setups, improvements in hardware design, a diverse selection in cymbals, every imaginable accessory item, electronics—even computers.

Is this an indication that, despite the nation’s economy, everything in the drum business is better than ever? Perhaps that depends on which side of the fence you’re on.

You’d probably answer yes, if you’re among the group that can afford top of the line, and afford to experiment with the wide array of innovations now available. Not so, if you’re not among that group. Likewise, business hasn’t been especially thrilling if you’re a leading manufacturer, wrestling with the fact that there’s been a substantial decrease in the number of drummers who can afford the staggering prices on new gear, and even less who can afford to experiment with state-of-the-art technology. This has resulted in an industry that’s made remarkable technological strides, while a huge segment of the consumer group it serves struggles to keep up with it, thanks to a recession-plagued economy.

Obviously, poor sales have forced many manufacturers to apply the brakes, at least temporarily. The situation has also prompted many to shift gears in search of the budget-minded and beginner market. Unfortunately, a floundering economic climate has had an equally adverse effect on this market, as well. Nonetheless, what we’re witnessing is the inevitable reaction to the above, as everyone scrambles for a piece of the economy-level pie. Low-end market share has become very important to a lot of people. Look around, and you’ll see it everywhere: Ludwig’s Standard, LP’s Cosmic, Gretsch’s Nighthawk, Pearl’s Export, Rogers’ R-360, Zildjian’s Amir, Remo’s PTS – each chasing a market which we should never have lost sight of in the first place.

This is not to suggest that an industry such as ours shouldn’t strive to cater to the high-end through progress in technology and design. Those looking to maintain leadership positions need always concern themselves with research and development. However, in the rush to satisfy the pro market by being first with the biggest and the best, many seemed to forget about the opposite end of the spectrum. To lose sight of an entire segment of the market by ignoring it, or worse, pricing oneself out of it, can be a dangerous and unhealthy practice.

The question is, have we learned anything from all this? First, I’d like to think that this recession has taught us that considerable thought must be devoted towards maintaining the strength of our industry at both ends of the marketplace, and through good times and bad. Basically, that boils down to quality products at prices we can all afford.

I think we’ve also learned how strong we really are. The simple fact that we’ve continued to progress as an industry despite recession, inflation and dramatic shifts in market emphasis, is indisputable evidence of that strength. And though business may not exactly be “better than ever” at this particular point in time for everyone in our industry, we certainly can be proud of our accomplishments in light of the problems that confront us.
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WHERE'S ANIMAL?
MD has always made an attempt to article all drumming talents! Artists like Buddy Rich, Louie Bellson, Neil Peart and Simon Phillips have all been well-written, very informative articles on themselves. But, I believe, as drummers, we’ve overlooked perhaps one of the most entertaining and admired drummers in the American television industry: “Animal” of The Muppet Show. Little or nothing has been written about Animal’s history, influences, equipment or his brilliant technique. His ability to cope with all musical styles is evident, just by watching him perform on the show.

I feel an article on Animal would be informative, comical and very entertaining. After all, drumming is supposed to be fun, isn’t it?

Randy Taylor
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada

Editor’s Note: Correspondent Simon Goodwin has submitted an interview with Ronnie Verrell, a.k.a. “Animal.” Look for it in a future issue of MD.

LIBERTY DEVITTO
I enjoyed your bit on Liberty DeVitto. Not only is he a truly inspired drummer, but a cool guy as well.

Mark Evans
Austin, TX

ELVIN JONES: BRAIN FOOD
In the Elvin Jones interview I was truly stimulated by his scope of what and where drumming comes from. One of the finest articles ever printed. Also encouraging are some scientific facts concerning part of his diet. Elvin says, “If I’m on the road and I miss my meal at the restaurant, I can go in a grocery store and buy a can of sardines, a box of crackers, an apple and a pint of milk. I can get as much energy as if I’d had a steak dinner.” In fact, the sardines are very good for an energetic drummer, and might help explain why Elvin is the way he is.

DMAE (dimethylamino Ethanol) is a natural amino alcohol and a precursor to choline and acetylcholine in the brain. DMAE occurs in the more “fishy” tasting fish, such as sardines. During the past few years DMAE has become popular as a safe, natural brain stimulant. Results from the use of DMAE have been remarkable. It elevates mood, increases intelligence, improves memory and learning and extends lifespan. Sounds to me that this should be added to any drummer’s diet. Thank you Elvin Jones.

Bongo St. Louis
West Palm Beach, FL

JONES & ERSKINE
I must express my enthusiasm with the Elvin Jones and Peter Erskine interviews. They were truly inspiring. Both artists captured the essence of improvised music, along with the social and commercial obstacles of their career development. As a player/teacher, I’m glad to see MD is maintaining a responsibility to portray these and numerous other artists. In this period of media hype, high-tech music—such role models of musical integrity are vital to future generations of musicians. Elvin and Peter both conveyed a genuine feeling of dedication, sensitivity and responsibility to music. Their love for playing is a great message to student and professional alike.

Adam Ginsberg
Toronto, Canada

COLAIUTA, ERSKINE, THOMPSON AND MORGANSTEIN
There was much celebration when I discovered that Vinnie Colaiuta had at long last been recognized and put on the cover of MD. I followed him when he was with Zappa, and I sensed his excellence for a long while. Also, thanks for the Erskine interview, and Chester Thompson too! It seems like you guys pick all of the performers I would pick to interview. You might do Rod Morganstein though. Enough praise. Here’s a question. What do all of your Advisory Board Members actually do?

Greg Crowl
Stillwater, OK

Editor’s Note: The Advisory Board Members help us in many ways. Primarily the MD Editors refer to the Board Members for technical answers and advice. Each Member has his own area of expertise. They, in turn, keep a close eye on MD and stay in touch with us, from time to time, with suggestions and ideas.
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**SIMON PHILLIPS**

Q. What exercises do you use to build up coordination for double-bass drum playing? I've heard that you play rudiments on your bass drums. Is this helpful?

John Lahman
Terrell, TX

A. Yes, very helpful, e.g. paradiddles. Anything really to gain coordination with your feet. Just treat them like another pair of hands.

---

**CARL PALMER**

Q. What kind of churchbell did you use on the Welcome Back My Friends live album, and where can I purchase one?

Matthew Montalbano
Staten Island, NY

A. The churchbell was, in fact, one of a set of eight bells installed in a church. The particular bell I used was tuned to E, but is actually slightly out of tune. I really don't know where you could buy one, but you could try to trace the foundry who made it. The name is the Allgate Bell Foundry.

---

**BILL BRUFORD**

Q. Your snare drum sound, long your trademark, has changed considerably since Crimson's rebirth. What are your thoughts on this? Has Robert Fripp had any say as to the difference in sound?

Dave di Risio
Wilkes Barre, PA

A. Yes, I suppose my snare drum sound has changed to a more "normal" sound recently, particularly on the Beat album. Somehow, I detect in myself a decreasing interest in such tedious percussive items as "snare drum sounds." If Robert Fripp has noticed this at all, he probably couldn't care less. All drum sounds are changing fast and becoming less identifiable—the thing making the "bass drum sound" may not be a bass drum at all. The "bass drum sound" may change 10 times in as many minutes, or not at all for an hour. Great! Let mayhem reign and may all observers of "bass drum sounds" be endlessly confused.

---

**RUSS KUNKEL**

Q. Your drums sounded fantastic when I saw you in concert with both Joe Walsh and Dan Fogelberg. What kinds of drums and heads are you using to get that sound?

Rick Baier
Omaha, NE

A. On the Walsh tour I used a Sonor kit, and on the Fogelberg tour I used my favorite set of drums, which are Gretsch. For both sets, the snare that I was probably using was a Ludwig Black Beauty. It's hard to beat that sound. All the drums have clear, Remo Diplomats on the top and Diplomats on the bottom.

---

**SHEILA ESCOVEDO**

Q. In the MD December issue, you tell of the torture hands go through while playing congas. Is it safe for a kit player's hands to play both drum kit and congas?

Michael Clark
Owensboro, KY

A. It depends on how you play the congas. If you're relaxed and play with your wrists and not your arms, you'll be okay. Swelling is caused by playing too hard. I use mic's when I play in clubs and this helps me not have to overplay. I play three drums and the mic's are placed between the first and second, and second and third drum.

---

**PAUL HUMPHREY**

Q. What type of ride cymbal did you use on the Steely Dan song "Black Cow"?

Richard De Carlo
Los Angeles, CA

A. Back then I was using a Paiste 2002, 20", medium-heavy ride. It came from a special selection that a friend, who was with the Hayman Drum Company, sent me, long before this particular line of cymbal was on the market. I liked this cymbal because the sound cut through with a definite stick attack and not much overtone. I used it in all kinds of situations, live and on record, jazz and rock, and it always sounded good.
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David Garibaldi

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PAISTE
CYMBALS SOUNDS GONGS
Jack DeJohnette can fool you. His outward appearance is often in contrast to what is going on underneath. Take his drumming, for example. Jack is totally relaxed behind the drumset. His movements are conservative, and he often doesn’t work up much of a sweat. But don’t be misled. Jack’s manner while playing contains an almost total mystery. His instrument is a great deal of power, and complete control of that power. His intensity is channeled into the music, rather than being wasted on physical flamboyance. Visually, only Jack’s facial expressions reflect his intent. But forget the visual music is to be listened to, and you can hear the intensity in every note Jack plays.

When speaking with DeJohnette, a similar contrast occurs. Soft-spoken and unpretentious, Jack’s manner belies the depth and seriousness of what he says. Jack knows exactly who he is and what he stands for, and this knowledge gives him a self-assurance that doesn’t demand an overbearing personality. Jack DeJohnette’s laid-back demeanor may indeed fool you at first, but beneath his mellow exterior there is an intense fire burning, fueled by knowledge, experience and integrity.

RM: In a down beat article about two years ago, you said, “The way I see it, music and the music business are in a terrible mess.” How do you feel about that now?

JDJ: It’s about the same as it was when I made that statement twelve years ago. It went up for a while, and there was a sort of false feeling that there was some real money to be made with the crossover music and the so-called “fusion” music. The record companies thought they could package it and make jazz sell a million copies an album. With certain kinds of it they did. People like George Benson and Herbie [Hancock] made that crossover, and the companies thought they could do that with jazz all the way down the line—mainstream jazz and so forth. But it didn’t happen the way they thought it would, and a lot of artists were dropped. The jazz musicians had decided, “Well, if the rock ‘n’ roll cats can make 75-thousand dollars a night, so can I.” And even when some of the musicians did make some really good crossover records, they were in competition with the already-established rock groups. So they may have cut into a little slice of that audience, but the return was not the same. American record companies really got nervous. They couldn’t maintain a consistent level of accessible jazz.

It’s getting harder and harder to keep this music accessible to people. There are a few commercial radio stations that are trying to do it, but they are having trouble. The public radio stations and the college stations have more or less kept the music on the airwaves in America. But the pressure is on these stations to get funding; to get people to send money to keep them on the air. And the record companies—the economy is really forcing the serious issue of survival of the fittest. That’s what we’re all up against right now. I suppose the people who are well-established won’t be hurt by this, but for the people in the middle, and the ones just starting out, it’s really an uphill battle. We just have to hang in there until it levels out. I’m not saying it’s going to get better, but it has got to level out at some point. Then we’ll have to start all over again and be more careful about what we’re doing. So right now, you just have to have a strong sense of dedication, as you have always had to have with this music. You have to persevere with it and determine how much you really need to make a living. You may have to take a regular job, or try to do other things besides music, or take gigs you wouldn’t normally take. I feel that’s the only way you can survive in it, because that’s the decision I made. I just don’t take one area and run it out all the way. I like to keep a diverse mixture all the time so that I’m free to keep things moving. But in that freedom of movement and diversity, there’s consistency.

We Americans have been sort of spoiled to have anything and everything without really valuing anything. We have to look at everything and make wise choices about what we’re doing so that we can make everything count without wasting anything. I think the music industry needs to support the artists through these rough times, instead of giving up on them if they don’t make it right away. That’s what’s wrong with this country: they want everything right away. Instant gratification. You know, with jazz—like anything of quality—you have to start somewhere and build it and work with it and nourish it and try to keep it going. You have to know that it’s a long-range investment and not an instant overnight success. The problem with overnight success is that a lot of times, you’re not ready for it.

RM: One thing that I have seen changed over the last few years is the number of smaller record companies—such as ECM and a lot of the independent labels—who do seem to be committed to the artists and to the music.

JDJ: Yeah, there are more records out now than ever. That’s a big problem in itself. There are so many records out now the market is being saturated. European companies are distributing here; Japanese companies are distributing; there are small American labels; there are people doing their own records on their own labels—everybody’s making records. The competition is very stiff. There are outlets for people working on small, limited budgets, but they are going to have to take serious precautions to put their money where they can get the most out of it, instead of just putting it all over the place. You have to make very serious decisions about what your priorities are. People who are seriously committed to persevering with their art in spite of the recession will be forced to make those decisions.

RM: A lot of people who try to keep high artistic standards in the face of the economic realities get frustrated and depressed. How can one deal with all of this in a positive way?

JDJ: Well, you just have to be realistic about it. You have to work with a concept, keep a small budget, and strive to make that concept grow. Like ECM has a concept, and I think that’s one of the things that grabbed the listening audience and made ECM stand out from the rest of the jazz labels. And one of their main objectives was to maintain a high level of creative output with the people they dealt with. I’ve always been of the belief that if the other jazz labels had had a similar concept, they might still be in business today.

You have to keep your perspective. When I decided to pursue the avenues of music that I wanted to deal with, I just asked myself: “How much do I need to make to survive and be in a position where I’m not under any pressure to play a certain type of music for financial reasons?” Fortunately, the times were right and the company believed in that type of thinking and supported it. I think that’s the kind of attitude you have to have, but not everybody feels that way. The general attitude of most people is that jazz, in its purest form, is something that only a few select people can understand. So it got to the point where musicians were saying, “It’s not jazz; it’s ‘people’ music.” When you identify what it’s for, then there’s a market.

RM: Some musicians have said, “I don’t want to talk about my music; I just want to put it out there.”

JDJ: The reason we have to talk more about the music now is because of competition and advertising. We’re in such a media age right now. There’s stuff coming at you...
all the time. Look at all the ads you have in your magazine; there's all kinds of stuff. So when you are selling a product on the market, you have to tell the people why they should be interested in that product. You really have to be specific and clear about what it is you're doing, what you're presenting, and why it is important that your way is something that people should check out. If you want them to come to something, you have to reach out and give them a reason to come. They have to feel that you're trying to communicate with them, and that you're not talking down to them, or that you feel that what you're doing is above them. So these things are important. You have a product—music, art—and you are trying to sell it. And hopefully, when you sell that, there will be an interaction going on. You will share the music, and it will be an experience. It's important that the people go out with something not only in their heads, but also in their hearts, emotionally. That lasts a long time, and will make them come back again and remain fans of yours.

**RM:** When jazz musicians do achieve a certain amount of success, a lot of people in the "jazz establishment" start putting them down, and saying, "That's not really jazz." I often wonder if there's a form of self-fulfilling prophecy going on with these people who are convinced that jazz is never going to be successful.

**JDJ:** There's that whole attitude that a jazz musician has to be scuffling, scraping pennies, not part of the mainstream of life, and yet maintain artistic integrity. And so any of us who have ever played with a more commercial sound have felt a pressure to defend it. There was this conflict between maintaining a so-called "jazz-mind-set consciousness" and compromising the music to make a better living. The musi-
Jazz runs a whole gamut, you know. There is Latin jazz, funk, soul, straight-ahead, avant-garde—we have all these terminologies which people use to identify what they’re talking about. But the term “jazz” can fit a whole lot of different categories. We get into debates about whether some music is pure jazz, or if it’s just watered down music. But if there is some improvisation in it whatsoever—no matter how simple—then it’s still a form of jazz. Some artists’ music is not as adventurous as it would normally be, and so they call that commercial jazz. So you can sell 10-million records and still be considered jazz. But then Miles and Coltrane each captured a huge audience, and they didn’t need to compromise their music because it was so strong and so powerful. But, you know, when you put your music out there, you’re subject to criticism. We all know that. But the artist has to make a choice about the music he is going to play, and then he has to live with it.

RM: One of the decisions you have made is to blend a lot of different elements into your music. How do you go about merging an outside element into your own concept?

JDJ: Let’s say I’m pursuing a reggae piece. I research the reggae totally, because I know there are people who are going to check to see if I’ve done my homework. Even if I’m going to take the reggae feel outside of its normal context, I still want to pay respect to that feel, and show that I respect that type of music. It’s like the Sketches of Spain album that Miles and Gil Evans did. They extended the colors but still paid tribute to the tradition of the music. As long as you take care to keep some kind of connection with that underlying tradition, you can communicate the extension of it. That’s what we’re doing: extending previous musics that have gone on before us. We’re extending them and recycling them; giving them a new suit of clothes to make them come out differently. You can attract people’s attention to a particular direction by drawing on other things. But you have to have a clear idea of how you can communicate in different directions so that the public will still know where you’re coming from.

So based on those kinds of things, you try to research and do something that will grab at the public’s tastes. You have to know what’s out, and what’s doing well and what’s not. For instance, when the first Special Edition album was made, that was a period of time when there was a lot of nostalgia going on. “Zoot Suit” had that sort of ‘30s and ‘40s big band feeling, and right away, people began to notice it. Even though the music was an extension of that feeling, it gave people a point of reference they could relate to right away, and it turned out that that album drew a lot of attention. It made Special Edition a more sought-after group than the other groups I’ve had. So I’m just trying to keep my finger on the musical, sociological and political pulse of the world. You’ve got to be part of the world. You have to deal with it, one way or another, and I try to deal with it.

RM: To go back to your analogy of giving the music a new suit of clothes, I can still tell that it’s you wearing the clothes. But with some people, it’s more like they are wearing a costume, complete with mask, and you can’t tell who or what is under it. How do you respect a style without losing yourself in it?

JDJ: That’s a hard thing to talk about because it’s an intuitive process. You have to know how far to go with it. The two things you have to be aware of are knowing what the composition is saying, and knowing what direction you want the improvisation to go. Basically, you’re talking about feeling. You have to trust your intuitiveness, because that’s one of the things that made people like Miles or Ahmad Jamal as great as they are. They knew how far to take it out, and then when to put the brakes on. People are given that gift, and they have developed it. In that spirit, I’ve tried to get a balance. Sometimes it’s better to be a little imbalanced to get the concept across of what you’re trying to do. To get your ideas out, you sometimes have to go out beyond the limits. Other times, you might have to do the opposite. It’s a highly individual approach.

RM: Doesn’t it also have a lot to do with having a strong sense of identity? If you know who you are, then you know how to use influences and make them part of you.

JDJ: You have to have some sense of where you are in relationship to the world, and how you fit into it. Writers, painters, musicians—anybody in the creative field has to have that to give that personal stamp to whatever they do. It’s also that sense of knowing when you’re on to something; that automatic radar that tells you, “This is it.” That’s the magic that happens in all creative people. Some have it in higher doses than others, but there’s that thing that tells you that you’re on the right track. Of course, you get feedback from other people, and you use it as a gauge. Some people don’t need that, but I’m sure other people wouldn’t bother playing if they didn’t have that feedback.
RM: How does one develop a sense of self awareness?  
JDJ: I think all the great musicians heard things they liked, and tried to emulate them. Copying the people you look up to is a good way to develop as long as you know it's a transitory stage. You're using that as research; studying the solos to see how a person did something. Some people can pick it up just by listening; others have to go to the books. As long as you know it's to help you get more a sense of yourself—to help you find what you're looking for—then it's okay. But a lot of people stop there, and they become imitators. That's the danger of copying. You should just use it for research; check it out and then move on.

When you say you've been influenced by someone, it should mean that you took certain things from that person's style to help you find your own direction. It's a chain that goes on, and you can't avoid it. Nobody can come through here and say that they didn't come from somebody else. It's just totally impossible to say that you came from nowhere; that nobody influenced you. We're influenced by everything. It's how we grow; how we develop. We can't get away from it.

I once heard a recording of Roy Haynes, who was such an individual that a lot of people didn't understand what he was doing sometimes. A lot of what Elvin played was influenced by what Roy played, like turning the beat around and not playing the hi-hat on "2" and "4" all the time. Roy has a lot of finesse, control and imagination. Then Tony [Williams] came along with a combination of Elvin, Roy, Max, and a little Alan Dawson. After hearing Alan play, I think he and Tony influenced each other. And then of course Max was a pioneer of the drums. He was able to play and spell out clearly the composition, the form, everything. And then Art Blakey, of course. The swing man. Always hard driving and in control of the music. These are all people who are still involved with the art, and they are all complete musicians. If it weren't for them, I don't think I'd be where I am now. We have to learn from them; pass this legacy on. We carry it on, recycle it, redefine it, and keep breaking new ground with it.

RM: I remember an analogy I once heard: The words we are speaking are the words we learned by imitating our parents. But we can then use those words to express our own thoughts.

JDJ: Right. That's good. You see, you need analogies like that to make it clear to people who have an intellectual concept of music. They get so caught up in the thinking process, they lose sight of the feeling. So you have to give answers that will lure that intellectualism and pull it down to the realm of the intuitive. Finding your own direction is hard to describe, but it's a process of finding out that you have something to offer, and then putting yourself in the right situations. You have to work hard to develop it and give it room and space to develop in. It's usually your peers and the public who sort of give you that confidence to continue on. You don't just do it for yourself; you like to do something that can relate to more people than just yourself. It's a circle—you give something and get something back. But you have to believe in yourself that you have something to offer. You have to find out if you do, and it's usually the people in your field who will point that out. It can also be a listener who doesn't have any technical knowledge about music, but likes it because of the mood it creates. So again, it's all based on feedback. You need feedback to know how the music is communicating. Most people don't do things solely for their own benefit. We don't hear about people who are tremendous but who turn their back on the public at large.
Master Lesson

by Jack DeJohnette

If you are a beginner, you should start out by learning the basic swing beat and adding the basic coordination, independence, and playing the hi-hat on two and four. There are still a lot of drummers who play the traditional ride cymbal rhythm with little variation, and it doesn't necessarily sound outdated. It's how one plays it that matters.

As you start to listen to more contemporary drummers, you will notice that the ride cymbal pattern changes. Changing the rhythms or the accents is just another way of coloring the time without breaking the swing, or the groove. And each person who plays that way—changes the cymbal rhythms around—does it differently. Even if two people read the same notation, their feeling will interpret that, and it will come out differently. And that's the beautiful part about it: You can take a concept and give it to a group of musicians, and each one will interpret it a different way. Each way will be as different as the individuals are, and yet will be based on a similar concept. So there are a variety of ways you can turn the rhythm around. It's challenging. The following cymbal rhythms are taken from the beginning of the piano solo of the piece "Moon Germs," from the album Moon Germs, by Joe Farrell. (CTI 6023)

After learning to break up the swing on the cymbal, the next step is to then break up the rhythm between the hands and feet, again, without breaking the groove. The idea is that you don't have to keep the swing strictly on the cymbal. You can shift from the cymbal to the bass drum and let it take over the groove, or you can play something between the snare and the tom-tom and let them take over. As long as you keep a connection of swing, you don't just have to stay on the cymbal.

I always try and think of the drumset like a piano, with the cymbals being like the sustaining pedal. You can hit the cymbals and let them ring while you play something on the drums. And when you listen to a drummer, you can focus on the player's left hand, or right foot, or whatever, but you're hearing the whole set. It's just like with a piano—you can focus on the left hand or the right hand, but you hear the whole instrument. In other words the whole is made up of many, just like the body is made up of lots of little cells. It's the same thing with the drumset, so when you break up all these patterns around the set, you're just shifting the emphasis, or the tonal color. But there is always a connection, no matter what you are doing. There is a rhythm going on somewhere in the complexity. By breaking up a basic rhythm between the different parts of the set, you can create a different color and that helps to keep it from getting boring. The following examples show how a basic rhythm can be divided among the different parts of the drumset.

The idea is to utilize all of the traditions. Sometimes you will want to use the more traditional swing rhythm on the cymbal with the hi-hat on "2" and "4." Other times you will want the more abstract style with shifting cymbal accents and rhythms split between different parts of the drumset. It's all according to what kind of music you're playing and where you think it fits.

by Scott K. Fish and Paul T. Riddle

The name Artimus Pyle conjures up the image of a guy in cut-off jeans all sprawled at the ends, hair hanging down the middle of his back, tucked under a wool hat, and a long, long beard that hides half a face and frames a pair of very intense eyes. In short, Artimus Pyle looks crazy and nasty. This was the Artimus Pyle we saw with the Lynyrd Skynyrd Band. And it was with hesitation that I interviewed Art. I took along Paul T. Riddle for security, and because he’s been Art’s friend for a long time.

I was right and wrong about Art. He isn’t nasty, but he is crazy in that he’s out of the ordinary. He moves like a thoroughbred itching at the starting gate, impatient to run the race. His intense eyes are windows to a thunderstorm. And it seems like the only time that thunder is released is when he’s behind the drumset. Yet, I’ve seen Artimus in the calm eye of his storm.

Paul, Art and I were sitting poolside, conducting this interview. Art was telling us the story of the plane crash that cut short his career, but mostly took the lives of people he loved. And he started to cry. That was the eye of his storm.

In East of Eden, John Steinbeck wrote a philosophy that Artimus might agree with: “It seems natural and good to me to ask myself these questions. What do I believe in? What must I fight for and what must I fight against?”

“Our species is the only creative species, and it has only one creative instrument, the individual mind and spirit of a man. Nothing was ever created by two men. There are no good collaborations, whether in music, in art, in poetry, in mathematics, in philosophy. Once the miracle of creation has taken place, the group can build and extend it, but the group never invents anything.

“And this I believe: that the free, exploring mind of the individual human is the most valuable thing in the world. And this I would fight for: the freedom of the mind to take any direction it wishes, undirected. And this I must fight against: any idea, religion, or government which limits or destroys the individual. This is what I am and what I am about. I can understand why a system built on a pattern must try to destroy the free mind, for this is one thing which can by inspection destroy such a system. Surely I can understand this, and I hate it and I will fight against it to preserve the one thing that separates us from the uncreative beasts. If the glory can be killed, we are lost.”

Artimus, this free-spirited individual touched me in many ways. One evening Artimus called my home in New York City from South Carolina so I could hear his new Pearl drumset. For 10 minutes I held the phone to my ear while Art was saying, “Now, this is my 20” floor tom-tom. Listen to this. “BOOM! These are the three mounted toms.” BOOM-BOOM-BOOM. And I know that if I were in a situation where I had to fight ten guys with bats and chains, Artimus would be right there with me even though he knew we hadn’t a prayer just because he was my friend.

SF: Can you pinpoint a person, place or thing that made you decide to be a professional drummer?

AP: My father, banging on the dashboard of a 1950 Ford to Glenn Miller, Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey—Les and Larry Elgart—all the old big bands. This was in Tennessee where I was raised. That kind of got me into it, and I’d start banging on Mother’s Oats boxes; anything round that looked like a drum. I didn’t actually get a drum, per se, until I was about nine years old and I got a set of bongo drums.

In a way, I’ve never really taken it too seriously. I can keep a beat, but I’m not what Dad’s banging on the dashboard, the bongo drums and all the different influences—Gene Krupa, and Joe Morello was an influence later, but I’d heard about the guy and I knew he was a monster.

My Dad pushed me up on stages. “Hey, my son plays drums. He’s going to jam with you.” I’d get up there and play, and mess up and turn the beat around. After so many times of embarrassing yourself like that, you get to the point where you really think about what you’re doing. You think, “Well, I’m going to play this right. There’s a wrong way and a right way and I’ll try to come out the right way.”

The Artimus Pyle Band is a lot of fun because I’m able to write my own parts. By no stretch of the imagination am I saying I’m a writer! I used to read music in concert band, but my background has basically been whatever comes natural. The hardest thing I’ve ever tried to do was copy another drummer’s lick. I get a mental block. When I first got with Lynyrd Skynyrd they had had two previous albums and I had to learn Bob Burns’ parts. It wasn’t natural. Up until that point, in all of the songs I’d played in copy bands, I would approach the drum parts similar to the song. But I would never really try to copy the part exactly. With Skynyrd, that’s what they wanted. They wanted songs like “Sweet Home, Alabama” and “Free Bird” cut and dried the way it was on the album. I could see their point. That taught me a lot about song structure.

In this group now, I play whatever comes out of my mind and whatever fits. Afterwards I trim it down a little bit be-
cause the first time around on a tune I over-play. One of my influences was Keith Moon. He's just like Mr. Roll. Listening to cats like Paul putting parts into songs that he was instrumental in coming up with, helped me a lot. Now I'm freed up a little bit and I trim my parts down; I can play them without even thinking about it because I came up with the part.

SF: What kind of reading did you do in the school concert band?
AP: It was snare drum on one line. Bass drum on another. Cymbals. You go along and count 32 measures and then play a cymbal crash. I'd get to about measure 29 and forget where I was and throw in the cymbal crash anywhere I felt like it! The band director would stop the whole band. "Now, Mr. Pyle? Mr. Pyle, uh . . . that's wrong." I'd get demoted from snare drum to bass drum; then from bass drum to cymbals; then they'd put me on woodblock. Every once in a while we'd play "Western Skies," and I'd have a woodblock part.

SF: You did a lot of bouncing around as a kid.
AP: I was born in Louisville, Kentucky in 1948 and moved to Tennessee. My father was a builder/constructor. He followed the building boom in the '50s that went north. We got as far as Columbus, Ohio and that's where I graduated high school. Then I went to college at Tennessee Tech University for about a year. I studied pre-law but I made terrible grades. I was never a good student. I have to pick it up natural or it's not happening. I don't retain things too well when I read them. I stayed in school about a year and then the Dean of Men called me up one day and says, "Why are you here? All you do is ride your motorcycle in front of the girl's dormitory and drag your wing tips with the heel taps and make sparks! What's wrong with you?" So I went home, I left that school in Tennessee and was going to join the Navy. The Navy Recruiter said, "With a name like Pyle, you ought to join the Marines!" So I said, "Screw you." And I walked across the hall and joined the Marines. I got out as Sergeant. My father was killed in a mid-air plane collision in Albuquerque, New Mexico while I was still in the Marines in '71. They let me out on a hardship discharge. They gave me a big break. They let me out like three days early. I really realized at that point that drums was what I really enjoyed doing the most. It wasn't just because it came easy. It was because I did have some real magic moments and it felt good. So, I got in a band called The Next Voice. We went up to Martha's Vineyard and played three months and then went down to New York and recorded a little. Then the band went to five different states, and I came to South Carolina.

My wife, Patricia, had gone to school with some of Paul's constituents from the Marshall Tucker Band, and introduced me to a couple of guys.

PR: Artimus used to come by our house. My wife, Holly, and I had a house in town before we moved out to the country. Artimus would always come by close to the weekend in his Volkswagen van, with his drums in the back. I'd give him a pair of new sticks if I had some.

AP: Or he'd leave them on my doorstep. I'd open up my screen door and there'd be whatever I needed that I didn't have.

PR: And he'd never ask for anything. But, he'd come by every weekend on his way to Atlanta. He'd go down to all the clubs that were happening in '72 and '73 and knock on doors. He'd walk in there and say, "My name's Artimus. My drums are in the car."

Meanwhile, Ronnie Van Zant asked me after Skynyrd had been on the road with Marshall Tucker for a while — "I'm having troubles with my drummer. Man, I need a drummer." I said, "I got a guy, I swear, man, there's a guy that'd be here tomorrow with his drums on his back!" Just give him a shot. I think he's exactly what you're looking for. This guy is a strong player. He's a man.

AP: That's the kind of support I had. One day I was working construction and Tommy Caldwell [original Tucker bassist] called me up and says, "Charlie Daniels is looking for a drummer." I called Charlie in Nashville. He said, "Meet me in New Orleans and I'll audition you." I put a new clutch in my Volkswagen and drove on down. Charlie is one of the finest cats in the business. He had two drummers and the
"MY CAREER AS A DRUMMER HAS NOT BEEN BASED AROUND A TECHNICAL APPROACH. IT'S BEEN BASED AROUND BEING GIVEN OPPORTUNITIES TO PLAY WITH SO MANY DIFFERENT TYPES OF GROUPS WITH DIFFERENT STYLES."

drummer that was going to quit decided not to. I said, "Charlie, what's the deal?" He said, "It's exactly this. I'm in the middle of promoting an album. The drummer that was going to quit didn't quit. If I had to take the time out to train you and work you in, it would really hurt my album sales and really hurt me right now. But, I do know of a band that needs a drummer." And he gave me the numbers for Lynyrd Skynyrd.

This is the clincher: Paul invites me to this big jam in Atlanta with Wet Willie, Marshall Tucker, Lynyrd Skynyrd and the Allman Brothers. The Tucker Band was going to drive their bus in; I was going to follow them, and Paul was going to introduce me to the Skynyrd boys. I got down there and all the guys from Skynyrd had just been in a treacherous fight in San Francisco. Ronnie had two black eyes. Billy Powell had a big gash. They were a mess. Ronnie says, "Alright. Y'know we've got five drummers. We're going to audition all five drummers." This big deal. I says, "Cool." I think on the strength of Paul's backing, Tommy, George McCorkle, Charlie and everybody — I got a call three days later from Ed King. He was the original guitar player in The Strawberry Alarm Clock. He wrote "Incense and Peppermint" and he also wrote "Sweet Home, Alabama." He said, "Come to Atlanta."

I packed my drums up and drove down there. My bus broke down a block from the gig. I stopped right in the middle of Peach Street, turned on the emergency flashers, took out all my drums and put them on top of my trap case and was rolling them down Peach Street. I made two trips. I just left my bus there.

PR: I told them, "I've got a guy that'd bring the drums on his back." And that's exactly what he did.

AP: I auditioned with Ed and Leon Wilkenson. I got the gig on the basis of a lot of cats getting behind me. Nobody had really heard me play that much! But, I guess they felt, "Well, this guy's nuts enough. He's hyperactive enough and he's got enough adrenaline pumping. He might be a good drummer." I worked out. For a year it was hard for me trying to learn song structure.

SF: You had no concept of the AABA form.

AP: Right. And how to keep it in context. For a year I turned the band around a couple of times while trying to keep my parts. Also, if I would play a 16th-note roll where Bob Burns had played an 8th-note roll on the record, the whole band would turn around and look at me. "Oh, my God! He's jamming!" And I was a jamming fool. But, it took me about a year to really learn how to play in proper perspective with that group, and to see what a great band I was playing with. Those guys were everything and they were called a lot of different things. But, they were one thing. They were a World Class rock 'n' roll band. My favorite record of the band is their first, Pronounced. And I didn't play on it. It was an absolute masterpiece.

I gave the band as much of my energy as I could. But, I felt a lot of times I could've been a lot better. My meter is erratic sometimes. I love playing and I take it serious times. I love playing and I take it serious enough to try to approach it like a pro — whatever that is — but, I'm not like one of those really steady cats. I have my un-nights. It's just not consistent. I could be, but if I get going or I'm excited or I'm really into the show, or something is happening — I'll speed up.

PR: Artimus taught me more about playing rock 'n' roll than anybody. He showed me a way of playing it tastefully. He always said he's my favorite rock 'n' roll drummer.

AP: But, I picked it up from cats like Charlie Watts.

PR: You're a great rock 'n' roll drummer. You play tastefully and you're not a banger.

AP: I am a banger!

PR: It helped me a lot listening to those Skynyrd records and listening to Art playing live. It used to be that I couldn't play that stuff. I didn't feel comfortable playing it. I didn't know how to go about laying it down.

AP: Ronnie and the band always wanted me to be aware of space. Tom Dowd, our producer, would come in and help me a lot with that. But, when the guys wanted me to rock steady, Ronnie would always say, "Play like Simon Kirke would play, man. Play like Simon." He's with Bad Company. I'd say, "Okay. Now I know what you mean."

SF: How were you making a living prior to Lynyrd Skynyrd?

AP: I'm a carpenter. I was working construction. Also, I was working in Oak Aviation in Spartanburg Downtown Airport. Then the fuel crunch came and the airport laid me off.

I was working construction when Tommy Caldwell called me and gave me Charlie Daniels' number. It's some of the greatest memories of my life when I was just going for it at that point. When I did

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THE PROS:

Certain reader questions seem to repeat themselves. Several of them involve the ins and outs of bass drums. What size? What kind of heads? How do I tune them? Do I use a single head or double heads? Should I muffle it? Should I mike it? How can I get my bass drum to project better? What kind of bass drum pedal should I use? What kind of beater? Should I use a heal-to-toe method or a heel-up method? Would it be better to have tight or loose spring tension on the footpedal? Should my beater hit the drum dead center?

DANNY GOTTLIEB

I use different bass drums for different kinds of music. For the last five-and-a-half years with Pat Metheny, I tried a variety of different bass drums: an 18", a 20" and a 22". The last couple of tours I used the 20"—an in-between size—that worked pretty well. The 18" tended to give a tighter, more compact sound and the 22" tended to get a deeper sound. With Pat’s music it was such a cross-section of styles, I needed a bass drum that was as versatile as possible, that sounded a little like both the 18" and the 22". I was always attracted to the Tony Williams sound, or the more modern jazz sound, which is very open with no padding. But it didn’t seem to work for most of the music that we were playing. So, I ended up padding even the 18" bass drum. Then I realized that I needed something with a little bit stronger sound, and I was going to end up padding it anyway.

I used a blanket laid against the bottom part of the beater head and put a weight in front of the rug. I'd say the blanket covered 1/3 of the head. I was just sticking the rug in there, trying to get sort of a dead sound. Nothing specific. I ended up also using one felt strip a little bit to cut down a bit of the ring. In other words, if you took the blanket out, it would be slightly dead already from the one felt strip. There was no moleskin pad. I got a little more attack without that moleskin pad.

I ended up using Ludwig clear heads with no dot. For a while, I was using Ludwig Silver Dots. It was an interesting sound and also seemed to provide a bit more protection for the head.

I always used the same bass drum sound for concert or recording. I found that what

MAX WEINBERG

Tune the bass drum similar to the way you tune the other drums. Make it equal tension all around. Not tight, not loose, but a little bit more than when the flabbiness is out of it. I like to use either an Emperor heavy head, Evans Black Diamond or the Fiberskyn IL.

You can muffle it with a piece of foam rubber to fit in between the head and the front. For rock playing, I’d take the front head off because it’s too boomy the other way, and you’re not going to get any definition unless you mike it.

PAUL T. RIDDLE

Basically I always use a 22" bass drum. Most of the time I use an Evans Looking Glass head on the batter side, which is a very, very thick head. It takes out a lot of ring and gives you a lot of snap as well. On the front head I normally cut a medium size hole. The padding I use is dependant upon the hall, playing live, or the tune, if you’re in the studio. Usually with the Looking Glass head on the batter side you don’t need any more muffling.

I have a friend who has a double-headed bass drum with a real little hole cut in the upper left quadrant. He stuck a mic’ right in there and it sounds great!

Basically, you don’t want the head too tight. If you can get used to playing without any muffling, it’ll be a little louder, but the feel is a little different. You’ve got to

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I decided to call a broad spectrum of drummers for their opinions. The results are very interesting. The drummers themselves cover almost every kind of music involving a drumset, and they are all active in the studio and/or in live performing. I tried to stay clear of "specialized" drummers, so that the reader would have a broad, general overview on bass drums.

**JIM KELTNER**

I do so many different things with bass drums. Last night I finished working on a new 22 x 20. They're normally 22 x 14. My preference now is a 22 x 16. That's the most average normal size. Pure, natural wood without any kind of covering on it for the studio—that always seems to be the best sound. My head preference is generally the head that comes with the drum. That's what I've been using for years. In the studio they generally take the front head off. I've found that it's better to take the whole head off, rather than cut a hole in it. Cutting a hole in it is okay for the stage, but taking the head off gives you more of what they're looking for in the studio. The batter head I use is a Pearl, which is the same thing as a Remo coated Ambassador. I prefer that one, although the Remo CS black dot heads are nice in certain cases, and also a calf head. I go between those three. I like to keep the white coated heads tuned slack in the studio. Live I like a punchier, tighter sound. Maybe use two heads and a little hole in the front for the mic' to fit in. I'm using May EA microphones installed in one of my bass drums right now. My plan is to try to have both heads on with no hole and do some acoustic messing around on the inside with some foam or something. I just tune the heads until they sound good.

To muffle the drum I use a blanket on the inside, touching the batter head. You can put more blanket in for more of a "tick" sound or flat sound—which is desirable for some songs—and you use less blanket to have a rounder sound. It depends on the song and what you want. Felt strips are useless for me generally. If I couldn't use microphones on the bass drums, I use the muffler that comes with the Sonor bass drum. You can screw it on and off like the Gretsch internal bass drum muffler. I don't have the muffler touching the skin. I have about a half an inch of space between the muffler and the skin so the skin rings long enough, then reaches the muffler and stops. The ring doesn't run into the other drums but it rings long enough to get a round tone. That's what I do for tone. I don't usually use any miking with my group. I use double skins on the bass drum; Remo Ambassadors. If I'm doing an outdoor concert they usually mike the bass drum in front around the center of the head about one to two inches away from the skins. My feeling is that I'm the one that's playing the drums, so the sound men have to get the sound that I want. I don't have to get the sound they want. I haven't really been in situations where I need a "rock" sounding bass drum. I've played on some single-headed drums with pillows stuffed in it. I don't really like that sound. I shave a hard-felt beater so that part of it goes flat against the skin, so you almost get a "stick" sound. That also makes it project more. I don't think head tension matters for projection. I think tension gets the "kind" of sound you want. I keep both heads at equal tension to get the same note from the front skin to the back skin. I tune the bass drum in some kind of melodic sequence with the rest of the drums.

**BARRY ALTSCHUL**

I use the muffler that comes with the Sonor bass drum. You can screw it on and off like the Gretsch internal bass drum muffler. I don't have the muffler touching the skin. I have about a half an inch of space between the muffler and the skin so the skin rings long enough, then reaches the muffler and stops. The ring doesn't run into the other drums but it rings long enough to get a round tone. That's what I do for tone. I don't usually use any miking with my group. I use double skins on the bass drum; Remo Ambassadors. If I'm doing an outdoor concert they usually mike the bass drum in front around the center of the head about one to two inches away from the skins. My feeling is that I'm the one that's playing the drums, so the sound men have to get the sound that I want. I don't have to get the sound they want. I haven't really been in situations where I need a "rock" sounding bass drum. I've played on some single-headed drums with pillows stuffed in it. I don't really like that sound. I shave a hard-felt beater so that part of it goes flat against the skin, so you almost get a "stick" sound. That also makes it project more. I don't think head tension matters for projection. I think tension gets the "kind" of sound you want. I keep both heads at equal tension to get the same note from the front skin to the back skin. I tune the bass drum in some kind of melodic sequence with the rest of the drums.

**JAIME JOHNSON**

I play a 14 x 18 wood Gretsch bass drum. I use an Emperor white coated head on the batter side, and a white coated Ambassador on the front. For muffling I use the Gretsch internal muffler. It's just a slice of felt. I can turn the tuning rods and make the drum sound like a 20" to a 22" in between songs. Then there's always the 18" sound. I play it tuned more like a 20" than an 18". Basically, I tune the bass drum the same way I tune all my drums. The batter head is the looser side. I used an 18 x 20 Slingerland bass drum that I made for orchestra work. All of them work alright when you've got a microphone in front. Since I've been playing jazz with Earl Ford and T. Levitz, I found that 18 x 20 doesn't project any more than that 14 x 18 when you stand out front and listen to it. So I'm going back to the 14 x 18 Gretsch. And I still use the mic'. When you're using a microphone you might as well use what you like best. I haven't found anything that sounds better than that 14 x 18. I got that drum in 1970. The 18" Camco I used on the last Allman Brothers tour sounded alright as long as it was miked. Without that microphone it's the worst sounding drum in the world. That's a 16 x 18. The 14 x 18 Gretsch is one of the old Elvin Jones models. Brown mahogany.

I had my bass drum set up the same way when I recorded with it. I took the front head off one time and it sounded like a cannon. What amazes me is that they want the bass drum so loud and then they stick a pillow in it. If you want it loud, take the head off the front of an 18" Gretsch bass drum and don't put anything in it. That damn thing will drown out the auditorium! I've never heard anything so loud! I finally put the head back on and cut a hole in it the size of a quarter in the center so they could stick the mic' in. I eventually cut a hole about 3" or 4' and that's where I left it. That was on a jet-black pearl 18" Gretsch bass drum. The drum sounded like it died.
DAVID GARIBALDI
I prefer a 22" bass drum, although I've used a 20" bass drum on occasion, and I've done a lot of records with a 20". But, a 22" is a real good, all-around drum. It's got a lot of depth to it. I think it's great for live playing and the studio.

I use a Pinstripe head on the batter side and I've got a head on the front that's got a sound port so that you can put a microphone in it. It lets the sound escape a little bit better and you still get that single-headed sound. A lot of guys are playing with double heads. I've not experimented with that. I have that single-headed type sound. I use a Rogers felt beater that they dyed black and it made the beater harder. It's not like wood, but it's not like felt either. It's very, very hard and you get more of a "whack" out of the bass drum.

I tune my bass drum fairly low, and inside I have either a pillow or a thick blanket up against the batter head, not to where it chokes all the sound. You should still get a little bit of a ring with the drum, but the padding doesn't interfere with the attack of the drum. You don't have anything touching the point where the head is being struck. That seems to give it a pretty wide open kind of sound and still retains the real "thud" sound.

ROY BURNS
In a general sense, the 22" bass drum is the most versatile size if you're doing a lot of different kinds of playing. The 22" can be used in a large group or a small group. If a drummer is going to use a larger bass drum, my experience is that once you get past a 24" drum, the larger the head area, the slower the drum responds. Even though you start to get more volume, the bass drum tends to respond more slowly. Also, the larger the drum, the lower the pitch. If the pitch gets too low, it's going to be hard to mike it.

Bernard Purdie made all those Aretha Franklin records with an 18" bass drum. They just miked it and it really popped through. If you're going to mike it, I think a 24" drum is probably as big as you need. If you're getting to the volume level where a 24" drum won't do it, then you've got to mike stuff. Even if you go up to a 28" bass drum, to get to where you've got to match the volume of that drum with your cymbals, you're going to start breaking cymbals.

There seems to be lot of different ideas on muffling. If you can, avoid over-muffling the bass drum. There's going to be a teeny bit of ring even if you put a pillow in it. If you take all the ring out you wind up defeating yourself because you've muffled the drum so much that you can't get any sound out of it. There's a balance; a trade-off point. If we're talking about double-headed drums, usually most drummers use the felt strips and then they will loosen the playing head, particularly the top two tension screws. That'll get a flatter sound.

BARRY KEANE
I've only had experience playing bass drums in miking situations. I've had the most luck with a 20" single-headed wood-shell kick drum with Remo Ambassador coated heads. In order to get rid of a little bit of the undesirable smack that you get from the beater against the head, I stumbled onto Dr. Scholl's moleskin pads. They work great. They don't wear out. It's a thin cloth that covers the beater side of the head and takes away just enough of the attack. It's a pleasing result, and you wear through the moleskin and not the bass drum head.

I use a wood cube beater called World Beaters. I don't think they make them anymore. I scooped up four or five of them ten years ago. One attack side is wood and the opposite side has a thin foam covering. The beater swivels on the rod. For studio, and some club use, these things have been really handy. You definitely get two entirely different sounds. For some of the really soft ballads that Gordon Lightfoot plays, if you play a kick drum too softly with the wood side, you really get an undesirable sound. I turn the attack side to the foam, and play it with just about the same intensity and it's a rounder, warmer sound.

My spring tension is about medium. I've been using a blanket to muffle the bass drum, maybe four to six inches up against the head, with a weight inside the drum to secure it, but not so it pushes against the head. Some engineers want to push that weight up against the head and it takes all the tone right out of it. But, you do need something to secure that dampening.
BARBARA BORDEN
I have a 20" Gretsch bass drum that I've had all my drumming career. It's about 20 years old. I prefer that all-around. If I had my choice, I'd probably have an 18" for jazz gigs, a 22" for funkier things, and the 20" for anything I wanted in between that. My preference is to have heads on both sides when I play jazz. I have a Fiberskyn on the outside and a Pinstripe on the inside. There's no big reason why I have that; it just worked out that way this time.
I only use the Gretsch internal mufflers when I have both heads on. Then I put a piece of moleskin where the beater hits the head. That's to soften the sound a little and protect the head a little. I use a felt beater unless I'm playing something where I really need to cut through. Then I use a wood beater. I also have a polyurethane beater. I'd only use that for some very heavy rock thing that I usually don't do, so I don't use that one too much. I like the felt and wood because they're light and I like the accent that I can get out of them.
I tune the bass drum to correspond to the tones of the toms. I don't really tune any of the drums to any special intervals. I just tune them to where my ear likes them. I tune the bass drum batter head to the tension that I like and then I use the outside head to get the tone that I want.
I have a quick stroke on the foot pedal—which is especially effective in jazz—and the beater does not stay buried in the head. When the beater hits the drum it immediately bounces back off the head. That gives it more of a tone.

MARK CRANEY
I prefer two different size bass drums. On the road I prefer a 22 x 16 and a 24 x 16. I'm real sold on the deeper bass drums. In the studio I use a 20 x 16 and a 22 x 16. All the bass drums are Gretsch. I like a bigger, boomier sound live. It gives me more to work with. In the studio I like the smaller, poppier sound. Gino is into the philosophy that in the studio, the smaller the bass drums, the better. On Brother to Brother I think I used an 18" and a 20". All I ever use are the clear Ambassador heads front and back. I'm using double heads and recently I've been cutting a small hole off to one side of the front head, so I can stick a mic' in and get more of the double head sound. But I haven't tried that in the studio much. Usually in the studio there's about an 18" hole cut in the front.
I keep the front heads pretty tight. A lot of the bottom end comes out of the front tuning. I like to keep the back head fairly loose with an internal muffler, and then I usually put a pillow in there too, although Buddy Rich would probably make fun of me! When I don't have mic's I loosen it a lot and get the sound from the whole drum. Live, you have to go with the engineer and the studio. By the time they get a bass drum sound, with a blanket over it, there's not much left as far as your ear.

ARTIMUS PYLE
I've always had trouble getting a good bass drum sound. I have Slingerland bass drums, and I don't think it's really the drums' fault. I think it has a lot to do with miking. I've used the same drums a lot of times with different mic's in them. One time it sounds great and one time it doesn't.
One of my bass drums is 26" and one's a 22'. The Pearl drumset that I have coming, the left bass drum is a 28" and the right one's a 22".
I never had the miking problems when I was with Lynyrd Skynyrd. The guy who was doing our sound with that band was Kevin Olson, who's working with Journey now. He always used to get a real good sound on my drums.
I liked the Evans Looking Class heads. They seemed to be the ones that I got the most "rubbery" sound out of and that's the kind of sound I really like. I used them front and back, but usually I cut a hole in the front heads—a large hole, maybe 10 inches. It seemed to get a real good resonance.
I used to put about two inches of foam all the way around the inside of the drum to muffle it, so that it just barely touched either head. It got a pretty good, strong sound that way.
Writing The History of Rock Drumming opened a Pandora's Box. I knew it would. Researching the existing volumes of rock history made it clear that there was a shameful lack of recognition for the drummers' contributions to this music. I had to begin writing with a clean slate that sometimes seemed like a freshly dug grave. The MD reader response was mostly favorable, but a few wrote in to correct some omissions and errors. I appreciate that. But, there were two oversights, in particular, that haunted me on one account and excited me on the other. That I left out Roger Hawkins haunted me. I don't even have an excuse. Roger's been an incredible genius of rock 'n' roll drumming and continues to be. Anyway, I've phoned Roger and apologized and he was gracious enough to let me off the hook!
In early September I received a letter from Gary Chester, chastising me for "slighting" him and "the entire East Coast recording scene in the '60s." The letter went on to list afew of the hits Gary had played on. They included "Twist & Shout" by The Isley Brothers, "Loco-Motion" by Little Eva, "Bad, Bad Leroy Brown" by Jim Croce, "Rocky Mountain High" by John Denver, "Town Without Pity" by Gene Pitney, "Mr. Bass Man" by Johnny Cymbal, "Out of My Head" by Little Anthony & The Imperials, "He's So Fine" by The Chiffons, "Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head" by B. J. Thomas and "Downtown" by Petula Clark.


Among the writers at that time, Gary worked for Phil Spector, Carole King, Gerry Goffin, Cynthia Weil, Barry Mann, Teddy Randazzo, Howie Greenfield, Jeff Barry, Ellie Greenwich, Van McCoy, Barry Manilow and the team of Bacharach & David. All in all, Gary Chester has done about 14,000 dates. In other words, Gary is real good! That I left his name out of The History of Rock Drumming was because Gary's always kept a low profile. Everybody knows the hits he's been on, but very few people know his name.

This interview was done at Gary's home in upstate New York. He lives down a common dirt road in a serene setting. There are dogs running around the yard barking, a horse grazes in a fenced area in the back yard, and nearby are a couple of gardens that Gary loves. Max Weinberg says that Gary reminds him of Charles Bronson. He's a short man with intense/sensitive eyes, half-hidden behind tinted glasses. What it is, is that Gary has a heart of gold, and to protect it, he's developed a rough exterior. I learned to respect this man for his contribution to drumming, but moreso as a human being. Gary Chester isn't afraid to take a stand and I respect that tremendously. Here then is an afternoon with Gary Chester.

SF: We're here to shed some light on your contribution to the New York rock 'n' roll scene. How did you get to do 14,000 sessions?

GC: Well, you know how the business is. First you do club dates, weddings, Bar Mitzvahs, opening delicatessans, stores . . . whatever! A fiddle player named Julie Held asked me if I'd ever done any record dates. I said, "Yeah, a few." At that time I was doing maybe 50 a year with different jazz players. I had a couple of TV shows and I was working club dates and a couple of steady gigs in New York, but I was strictly a jazz player. Julie asked me, "Would you like to do a record date?" I said "Sure." He said "Okay. Leiber and Stoller have a date." And he told me the studio.

At the session, Bobby Rosengarden, Panama Francis and I were playing drums. At that time, Panama Francis was the king of rhythm & blues and probably the king of rock 'n' roll. He had to leave at five o'clock for another date. When he left, Mike Leiber and Jerry Stoller, who were the producers, asked me if I'd play drums. I said, "Yes. But, not like Panama. He's the king." Up until that point I'd hardly listened to rock. The date was LaVerne Baker and the song was "Saved," a gospel tune that became a hit. Next thing, I was recording with people like the Drifters and Ben E. King. Everybody wants a winner. That's how I got to be in demand—in one year 165 leaders called me: Gary Sherman, Stan Applebaum, Phil Spector, Carole King, Bedford Hendrickson, Quincy Jones, Hugo Winterhalter, Don Costa, Barry Mann & Cynthia Weil, Donny Kirschner, just to name a few.

I became a recording drummer overnight. It's scary to change that fast, especially coming out of the club date and jazz field. I was into another thing and I was making it, but I didn't really know anything about it.

I became the first white drummer to work with all the black artists in New York. First at Scepter Records with Jerry Butler, The Shirelles, Dionne Warwick, Dee Dee Warwick, and Cissy Houston. Then Atlantic Records got hold of me and made me house drummer for them. Whatever black act came in, I'd play the date. Decca was thinking of going black, and I did a couple of dates with Louis Armstrong and Jackie Wilson. It all happened pretty fast, but that's how I got into the record business.

It was a refreshing change from commercials. I'd been doing a lot of these for a jingle company run by Phil Davis. We worked maybe seven or ten hours a day doing commercials before I got into recording. It kept getting bigger and bigger. While I was getting more work, I was still playing club dates because of the insecurity of the whole thing. It hit me so fast that I was afraid it would evaporate if I stopped to take a breath. It's tough to handle success; my ego started getting the best of me. I'd never turn down a gig. I started thinking I was the greatest.

I never listened to any other drummer. I had my own style and I didn't want to mess with it. But I respected them all. The other hot drummers in those days were Buddy Saltzman—we did an awful lot of double dates—Jimmy Johnson, and Herbie Lovelle. Bernard Purdie came a little later. There was Al Rogers who's now a Wall Street broker. He couldn't hack it anymore. Then Billy LaVorgna moved in. He's now contracting for Liza Minelli. The feeling in those days was friendship. If I couldn't do a date I'd call Buddy. There was no jealousy. It was really a happy situation.

SF: You didn't have to worry that if you turned down a session, you might not get hired by that contractor again?

GC: That never happened. We were all always professional enough to never be late; to always be on the job and do the job the best we could. That's the whole thing in this business. It's not enough to play well. You've got to go in giving the man more than he's paying you for. Since I was so busy, people started to ask me to contract...
the dates—that way they could be sure to get me. But I knew nothing about contracting. All I knew was how to play. But I learned.

SF: What does it mean to contract a record date?

GC: It means getting the players, renting the studio, getting the rentals. Pretty soon, I had my own rhythm section. It was like a family. All the musicians that I worked with in those days were very compatible. Being a contractor's a funny thing. You start getting presents from people and it's start getting presents from people and it's a job. That stinks.

SF: I've heard that one reason why Burt wrote so many odd measures in his songs was because he couldn't keep time.

GC: That's not so at all. He wrote those odd times because it allows the lyrics to breathe. Take those times out of context and sing the lyrics. You'll notice how Hal David's lyrics just roll. There's space for breath; space for consideration. Those are written in music. There's a reason for everything he does. Burt used to call me at four o'clock in the morning. He'd say, "Gary, I wrote a tune. Tell me what you think." I'd put the phone to my ear and he'd play the tune and say, "What do you hear?" Then we'd talk about it long distance for half the night. He'd bounce ideas off me and sometimes he'd incorporate my suggestions into his work. He was a great guy. I worked with him for 14 years. Then it was time to move on. When I decided I didn't want to work for Burt anymore, I was crying when I told him. I said, "I can't make you anymore. I can't do this music." He said, "Okay. I understand."

I was in the hospital one time with a slipped disc. I contracted about 25 dates from the bed! The nuns were contracting my dates for me. This was 1969. I had given up. I already had my wheelchair picked and the size pencils I was going to sell. I was finished. I hired a nurse, a mas- sese and I just prayed. All of a sudden I got a call from Artie Butler. He said, "Gary, I got a date for you at RCA." I said, "Hey Artie, I can't play." I'd lost every muscle in my right leg. When they put me in traction it just pulled the muscles out. You know those fat old ladies with the fat under their arms? That's what my leg looked like. I was crying like a baby. Artie said, "Don't worry about it. You can play percussion." My wife drove me down and I walked into the studio on crutches. Another drummer was there. I sat in front of
him playing tambourine, conga, bongos and shaker. When I play percussion on a date, I don't consider myself a true percussionist—to me a percussion player is a highly trained musician who plays maracas, timpani, bells and even some sound effects, plus all Latin instruments and also reads treble and bass clef and can play some piano. So the word "percussion" really isn't used the right way a lot of times. I couldn't stand the drummer's time; it was driving me up a wall. This was a date for The Archies, which was not really a group, just some studio musicians. The idea was conceived by Don Kirschner and produced by Jeff Barry. These same people also did The Monkees. Anyway, I finally said to the drummer, "Let me play the next one. If I can't play—you cover me. I've got to find out if I can play anymore." The first tune was "Sugar, Sugar." Afterwards, I knew that I hadn't lost that much, and that after 35 to 40 years, it was okay to take a 32-day break. But I still had to build all my muscles back up again. I enjoy playing because I make it creative and innovative—for instance, I started putting the tambourine on the sony cymbal, without a head, after LaVerne Baker broke it when she was using it on a date. That gave me a jingly sound when I closed the hi-hat. I even played ashtray on a lot of tunes—one of the ashtrays with sand in the bottom of it. I found mine in a doctor's office. If I wanted to take a 32-day break, I'd pinpoint the mistakes in the band. When you're conducting a band, especially when you've written for it, you haven't got time to hear a cello player make a mistake. You don't hear everything.

I was in the control rooms more than I was in the studio. If I didn't like anything, I would mention it. A lot of times it was as if I was producing the date. Every date I did, I felt like part of. I did it because I took pride in what I did. Some of the guys resented me for being a perfectionist. I would kill a lot of time. I'd pinpoint the mistakes in the band. When you're conducting a band, especially when you've written for it, you haven't got time to hear a cello player make a mistake. You don't hear everything.

I was the first drummer to use "cans," or earphones, in the studio. The reason I did was because as a kid we had nobody to play with so we had to play with the radio. They had a jazz show and I used to sit in back of my father's barber shop and play for eight or nine hours a day with these bands. When it was loud enough I felt like part of the band. The studios scared the hell out of me. In order to feel comfortable, to feel enclosed by the music, I insisted on wearing "cans."

SF: No previous drummer ever wore headphones?

GC: Right. You didn't have to worry about it because you only had one or two mic's and nothing was that loud. When everybody had their own mic—I got lost in the shuffle. I wanted to hear everything. I'd ask the engineer, "Can I have the whole mix, please?" I didn't get only drums. I had to find out where I belonged in the arrangement. When I put "cans" on, I could hear what I was doing to the band. I could feel if I was pushing the band or hanging the band up or whatever.

SF: When I was writing The History of Rock Drumming, it was a real challenge finding out certain songs that a specific studio drummer played on. In many instances two drummers would claim that they were the only drummer on a song. Is there often more than one drummer?

GC: What happens is that sometimes we'd record four or five rhythm instruments and everything would be fine. Then the artist would put overdubs on. It might change what's needed in rhythm and they might call in somebody else. Let's use Paul Simon as an example. Say we finish a track in New York—Simon would then take the track out to California to overdub himself, or maybe he heard something else that he wanted put on. When he listens to the track he thinks, "If only Gary would've cut that." Something that wasn't there at the time. So he says, "Well, let's call Hal Blaine to cut it for us." Hal Blaine would either do my track over, or he would overdub in just a certain spot on the record.

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Gary Chester playing for Gene Krupa at the Krupa Drum Contest in 1938.
I've done that a million times.
SF: Who gets credit on the record?
GC: There are no rules about who gets the credit. It's up to the artist, the producer. I never bothered me if I got credit or not. I did my job and got paid for it and that was that. I remember producers coming over from Italy with a recording of the Milan Symphony. They took the singer off and put an American singer on it. Then they wanted to take the drummer off too. They told me, "I want you to be put on the track." Now, the recording had no rhythm section; just strings and voice. It took me six hours because the time wasn't there. Time is the whole essence of playing. If you've got the feeling, you can keep time on anything. I once got a call from Quincy Jones. He had a lawnmower in the studio and I had to keep time with the lawnmower while we were playing this date! I was known as the Human Metronome in the business. I studied time. Dave Tough, Nick Fatool and Morey Feld—these guys are not soloists, but their time is so gorgeous, I love time.
SF: I know you lived with Dave Tough. Did you ever talk about time?
GC: We used to sit and play brushes all night.
SF: With a metronome?
GC: No. Just between ourselves on a cardboard box. What grooves we used to get! That's the trouble with the younger generation. They don't know time as well as they should.
SF: Did you ever practice with a metronome?
GC: No. I work with a click track with all my students. I never had to play with a metronome because God gave me something inside. I have a born-in quarter note. When I went into records there was no click track. It was just the pulse of the room. I don't think you can show me a record that's acceptable, where it starts and ends in the same tempo. Just for fun, though, I can groove my butt off on a click track by playing around it. I look at it as a great bass player. The trick is, don't let it confine you. It's no good for records. For commercials and movies it's fantastic because you've got to worry about frames. Everything's got to be right on the button. If we finish a take and the guys say it timed out perfect, I don't fool with it. But if he says, "We ran over," I say, "Don't touch it. Let me take care of it." Say it's a 60-second spot and we run 63 seconds. There are three ways of doing this. Either you play behind the beat, on the beat—which is what the arranger is counting on—or on top of the beat. I always play on top or behind the beat. I'll play 1/32 above everything. If everybody plays that way for enough bars, we're in.
SF: How did you develop the ability to play ahead of, on top of or behind the beat?
GC: First you've got to know where the beat is.
SF: Can that be learned?
GC: I think you could understand it. I don't think anybody can really do anything unless they really understand it and make it part of their life and lifestyle. To me, everything is rhythm. I have my students playing four-way coordination that's really scary. On top of that, they have to sing their quarter notes while playing all this. It's very, very difficult. I've got them singing the top line, which is what they're playing on the sock cymbal. Then they sing the bass drum line. Then they sing the line that they're playing. The trouble with most drummers today—not the good ones, but the kids who are coming up—is that they look at drums as separate objects. They haven't thrown themselves into the instrument. They don't sing what they play, like Al Jarreau. I'm very much into Al Jarreau, George Benson and Erroll Garner.
For some unknown reason, only the drummers who understand what they're doing can sing a solo. Most drummers aren't even brought to their solo by the band. They can't wait for the drum solo. They're so egotistical that they put their mother, the kitchen sink and the toilet in a one-bar solo! That's not what music is all about. Once you really appreciate what time is and what a quarter note means to you, the whole thing takes on a different coloring. The band has to be more important to you than your solo. Even so, the drummer's got to be inspired. After all, you're all by yourself back there. A drummer gets in a room and that's it, man. He's stranded! The only way he can hear what's going on is with "cans." That's the only communication he's got with the leader and the engineer. So in order to be inspired you've got to learn how to listen.
SF: Have you spent a lot of time studying melodies?
GC: I sing. Scat singing. I enjoy playing an instrument and knowing where it's going musically.
SF: It seems that one of the secrets of having good time and being a good listener is having a thorough knowledge of melody and lyrics.
GC: Yeah. Lyrics are awfully important. I remember when we backed Aretha Franklin. She was in the isolation booth and I was on the bandstand. The rhythm section was right in front of me. We were recording "Rockabye Your Baby (With a Dixie Melody)" and for some unknown reason, Aretha started to scat sing. I started playing along with her. It was crazy! She was such an inspiration that I was able to play the exact same scat she was singing. Then we both stopped. It was dead silent for a moment. It was the most sensational feeling in my life. I never knew her before that, but musically, we were married at that point.

"... UNLESS YOU'RE A LISTENER, UNLESS YOU'RE SENSITIVE—I DON'T CARE HOW GOOD YOU PLAY—UNLESS YOU'RE AWARE OF SOMEBODY ELSE'S PRESENCE AND WANT TO GIVE TO SOMEBODY ELSE, THEN YOU AREN'T GOING TO MAKE IT."
Back in those days we'd usually play a fill to bring the singer in after she'd gotten through singing. There was a way of playing a fill. You don't jump on a lyric. But, this one time Aretha sang off meter, and I went right along with her. It was a great feeling.

If I work for you, you're the king. My job is to make you look good. Today, a lot of musicians are playing for themselves. There's no unity.

The good players, for some unknown reason, stay by themselves because they're tired of the bullshit players. A lot of the kids today are party kids. Party, party, party. It's not a party! It's a business. Most drummers nowadays can do what you want, but can they do what you want? Many of them aren't schooled and have no desire to learn. A lot of my students have trouble learning because they think they're artists. Great artists. They'll say, "I want you to teach me how to do your coordination, but I don't want you to screw up my style." I have to break the news to them: "Buster, you ain't got a style! In fact, if you do, you don't belong in the record business." It takes a while before a drummer realizes he's a drummer. Up until that point, he's just kicking the hell out of the instrument. It takes years before he takes that set of drums and makes them a part of him. If you talk to a kid in high school, all you can talk to him about is the high school level. Talk to a kid in elementary school, and all you can do is talk to him on the elementary level. The trouble with a lot of musicians today is that they're working out there and you've got to talk to them on the elementary level. Whatever happened to the high school, college and professional levels? Many have no idea of professionalism. SF: How did you learn professionalism?

GC: You just learn it over years of experience. You start at the bottom of the business—club dates, weddings, Bar Mitzvahs. You have to have these to pay your dues. You also have to have demos to make records. You learn that nobody really gives a damn about you. You learn that nobody really gives a damn about how fast you play. It's, "What can you do for me?" Once you start realizing that you're just a cog in a wheel, then you're learning professionalism.

SF: You spoke about having to learn to deal with success. I find that that's as important to learn as is four-way coordination, for example.

GC: I do too. I want my students to feel inside like they're the greatest drummer in the world. But I teach them to be humble on the outside. I do a lot of lecturing in my studio. Sometimes the kids don't even play drums. I tell them that's right and wrong in the business. I teach them attitudes. I spend time talking about publishing and management. I tell them about organizing a band and financing a band. How to deal with tough situations, like if the bass player gets pregnant and can't do a date— that blows the whole band. But if you write charts or tunes, then you've got a book, you can get another bass player and you've still got a band. A lot of people don't do that. It's that party attitude. "Look Ma! I'm in a band." It's the same reason why some kids go to college—to get away from home and to have fun. But that's ignoring the future. When he gets out of college, he's a clone!

SF: Like the multitude of Steve Gadd clones?

GC: Well, if you're going to model yourself on somebody, Steve Gadd is a damn good choice. Steve is a mature innovator and he puts himself into whatever he's playing. Steve is a very quiet guy. He's very much withdrawn within himself; a heavy thinker. When you see him play, you know that this guy knows what's good or bad. I saw a TV show where the interviewer was speaking to some of the greatest actors in the world. He asked one great actor, "Do you know how great you are?" The actor said, "I'm not great. I'm an actor!" The interviewer responded, "No. You're great. Everybody worships you." The actor said, "If I ever thought I was great, I would shoot myself. That would be the end of it." In other words, you've got to believe that you can improve. To yourself, you're not great. You're only great to somebody who can use you to be greater for themselves. That's the name of the game. Once you decide that you're the greatest, you're in trouble.

Steve Gadd got to be busy and it's true, everybody started to try to sound like him. But they can't sound like him because they're not him. There are no two drummers in the world who play the same way. Everybody thinks differently. Everybody sees colors differently. Everybody sees problems differently. You've got to respect Steve for what he's done and for the maturity in his playing. There's only one other guy who thrills me as much when I hear

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I always feel depressed about two a.m. At this time I'm usually back at home after drumming, getting ready for bed. As I sort out a bundle of sweaty shirts and towels which I've accumulated during the evening, I mentally recapitulate the performance. Not too many mistakes, good crowd—we had 'em out on the dance floor all night long!

Then, wham! My mental bubble bursts as an overpowering stench grabs my attention. Cigarettes. The odor on my clothes, mixed with the perspiration, is as appealing as rotten eggs. I consider feeding the shirts to the garbage disposal, as one would normally do with rotten eggs, but instead opt to hang them up to air out. Suddenly I notice that I smell just like the clothes! Another two a.m. shower—and wet hair as I curl up under the covers.

I've always considered myself a non-smoker. However, as I drum night in and night out, I'm beginning to think that maybe I am a smoker. Now please don't misunderstand me—I don't actually smoke cigarettes at all, but in many of the nightclubs, bars, banquet rooms and halls my band plays in, the smoke is noticeably visible. And we play night, after night, after night. My exposure to cigarette smoke, and possibly yours, is consistent just like a smoker's exposure. I used to believe that my exposure to "ambient" smoke (diluted, room cigarette smoke) was in no way as harmful as someone who directly smoked. Unfortunately, I was wrong.

The smoke-filled air musicians breathe regularly while working has been proven harmful to your health—even if you personally don't smoke. So if you value good health, you should begin to work with your employers to improve working conditions.

THE HARMFUL EFFECTS

The fact that cigarette smoking is harmful has been well established ever since the Surgeon General's landmark report in 1964. What is not so clearly understood or universally accepted is that ambient smoke is also health hazard. Perhaps more precisely, experts differ as to what degree ambient smoke is a hazard.

In nightclubs, ambient smoke is derived from two sources: sidestream smoke, which enters the air directly from the burning end of the cigarette; and mainstream smoke, which is exhaled by the smoker. Of the two, sidestream smoke is the most dangerous.

A cigarette smoker inhales—and exhales—mainstream smoke eight or nine times with each cigarette for a total of about 24 seconds. But the cigarette freely burns for 8 minutes and pollutes the barroom continuously with sidestream smoke. Cigars and pipes burn even longer, and the pollution lingers long afterward.
Besides contributing more smoke to the room than mainstream exhaling does, substream smoke also contains higher concentrations of noxious compounds than mainstream smoke. Over two thousand gases, liquids and particles have been identified in cigarette smoke. No wonder my clothes stink after drumming! Obviously, you are being exposed to a great many toxic materials if you drum in smoke-filled rooms.

"It's disgusting," says Gary Wilson, Director of Public Education for the American Cancer Society in Sacramento. "So many facts relate secondhand smoke to cancer, but we're still stuck breathing it. Musicians are in a very precarious position because of their working environment—what worse place is there for cigarette smoke than in a nightclub?"

Lynn Robie, a Prevention Services Coordinator for the American Lung Association, voices a similar sympathetic opinion: "There really are no regulations on private business, although many businesses are volunteering to set up "no smoking" sections. The information is just breaking out linking secondhand smoke to something as serious as lung cancer. For musicians, that's really scary."

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless gas created by incomplete combustion. It is of particular interest to physicians because it is present in ambient smoke in large quantities.

"There is no question that non-smokers can develop toxic levels (of CO) in smoke-filled rooms," stated Dr. Raymond Slavin of St. Louis University. CO in sidestream smoke was first reported as being harmful in the Surgeon General's 1972 report, which cited studies showing that CO in smoke-filled rooms could rise to almost twice the federal OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) guideline of 50 parts per million. CO in this quantity can produce a slight deterioration in attentiveness, produce a drop in cognitive function and in psychomotor tests. If the bar you're drumming in combines a low ceiling with poor venti-
Playing groups of 5’s can create rhythmic tension at slow or medium tempos. It also makes moving from drum to drum easier at fast tempos.

Start with 8th notes as in Example 1. Then progress to the groups of 5 shown in Example 2. Accent beat "1" with the right hand and beat "3" with the left hand. Then reverse.

Groups of four

Example 5 is a combination of Examples 3 and 4.

If you have two mounted toms, practice this.

This one uses cymbal crashes on beats "1" and "3."

Here are a few more practical ideas for using 5’s with drum to drum patterns.
The last two lead with the left hand. Example 11 is a cross pattern for two mounted toms.

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DeJohnette continued from page 12

there’s another one. Check him out.” So you have to be in the environment, and basically, the Mecca of all of this is New York City. No matter whether it’s music, art or whatever, all of the best people live in the Northeast. It still is the nucleus. So whether they live there for the rest of their lives or not, everybody has to deal with New York when they need to. I realize it’s expensive to live in New York. After you’ve paid your dues you can make your decision about whether you want to stay there or not. If you’re successful, you can work from anywhere. So many musicians don’t live there anymore. They live in the suburbs, or in another state, and only come to New York when they need to. I realize it’s expensive to live in New York, but all of us, invariably, had to come to New York because we were serious about wanting to be the best we could be. And the best musicians still reside in New York. You have to find out how really serious you are about it before you get into it and find out that it’s not easy. And now it’s harder than ever for musicians. So you have to find out if it’s what you want, and you have to decide about things such as having a family and travelling on the road—these kinds of things. You have to think about other people than yourself. When you are getting your thing together, it’s a very selfish kind of situation. You have to take a lot of time to practice and research your instrument, and you just really don’t have time for anything else. Once you get it to a point where you can get involved in other things than music, then that’s something else. Then you have room to bring these other things into your life. So these are serious considerations, and you have to find out about them.

RM: I’ve heard people contend that for every successful musician, there are ten equally talented musicians who never made it. And the only thing that set the successful player apart was that he got a “break.” Do you think that’s valid?

JDJ: Like I said before, you put yourself in the nucleus of the environment, and then you find out if you are good enough to warrant “breaks.” Nobody’s going to give you anything just because you look great or whatever. It’s about your abilities. It’s as simple as that. Some musicians know how to be political and they know how to talk to people, and so you say they got a “break.” But they worked at it. They made a connection, but the bottom line is having the talent to back it up. If you’re serious about work, you call people up and say, “Look man, call me if you need a drummer.”

RM: Your name is well established; you always do well in the polls. Some people might look at that and figure you have it made; all you have to do is answer the phone and you can work as much as you want.

JDJ: [laughs] I don’t work that much, actually. Part of it is by choice, and part of it is because it’s difficult to get decent work in America. Most American musicians will tell you that’s why they are in Europe so much. They make better money in Europe because there’s an audience there that appreciates the music and supports it, as opposed to here. I’d like to see it broadened a bit more in America. It’s very difficult because, as we talked about earlier, if not for the college and public radio stations, the music wouldn’t manage to survive even on the thread that it’s managing to exist on now. The hardest thing with this music is to set up college concerts. All the budgets are being cut back at the colleges, so they’re being a little more picky. But at the same time, they’re trying to get a little more quality. Somewhere in an intermediate price range they can get three or four good groups for what they used to spend on one rock group. One rock concert would completely wipe out their entertainment budget.

So I don’t work that much in America. I try to make at least one cross-country tour a year, if it’s possible. Sometimes I’ve had to cancel a tour because financially, it just wouldn’t make any sense. This Spring we have a new Special Edition album coming out, called Inflation Blues, which is apropos. I don’t want to speak about it because I think it will be a surprise. It came out real good, and I’m curious to see how it does. So anyway, we are planning a Spring tour, and hopefully, we will go across the country. I would like to keep Special Edition visible because that’s one of my priorities, and everyone’s really committed to the band at this point. I realize what’s going on with the economy, and with the realities of this music, but the group has so much potential. If the funds would allow it, I would use three horns, but the economy is such that I have to rotate one or two horn spots. David Murray did the last tour of Europe with us, and he played fantastically. And Howard Johnson has been working with us. I would like to use David, Howard and John Purcell together, because I think highly of all three people. So I’m in this dilemma; there are a lot of players I love, and I want to be able to play with them, but I have to be realistic as to what’s really possible financially. I try to keep things flexible so I can get to play with all of them, and I think everyone understands the situation.

Sometimes the situation works out where I can use three horns. I used three horns last December in New York at Fat Tuesday’s. I don’t appear in New York clubs too often, so I decided to do a week there to let people know I’m still around and still serious about my music. If people don’t see you, they wonder what’s happening with your music. You don’t have to be
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come and hear me live because they know...from the records, even though we may...statement send out waves. I make it a point...on the scene all of the time, though. It's...of care. If my wife and I go to hear a...thought. It's a special kind of happening. When they come to hear the group, there's a great care to make sure that people feel...it will be a special occasion. I'm taking...the material live so that people will want to...better to make a statement and then let that...There really has to be special care taken...If you have a presentation, people...guys having a jam session. But at Tuesday's, I was really im...dressed with the way that you would...pride myself with the ability to keep shifting...to be played behind a soloist, it was tailor-made for that soloist. Care was taken so that each time a different soloist played, the color of the piece changed. The listener didn't get bored from hearing just the same ensemble riffs in back.

I like to keep that kind of diversity going on. So each time another soloist starts, Rufus [Reid] and I shift to get into the mood of whichever soloist is playing. I'm like a designer, you might say, and each soloist requires a different design. So it's just being sensitive that each player is different and needs a different sort of backup; a different kind of support.

We don't always have everybody solo on every tune, but I don't mind every soloist soloing if they can be interesting, and people are not yawning. When soloing, say what you've got to say and then get off of it. Move on and let somebody else have it. Don't overindulge. In that way, you keep it interesting and people don't find themselves thinking about how many soloists there are. I'm well-aware of the pitfall of having more than two people solo, but I pride myself with the ability to keep shifting the moods, as opposed to keeping it consistent all of the time. Even if there's a basic mood underlying, I try and keep that while embellishing other rhythms, moods and colors on top of that basic pattern.

The other thing we have that is interesting, I think, and keeps people from getting bored, is that the instrumentation is always changing. Sometimes it might be three clarinets; sometimes it might be a clarinet, an alto and a baritone; sometimes it's tenor, trumpet and alto. That way, we have a lot of contrasts and colors. So Special Edition has the capability of changing its clothes all the time.

RM: You've neglected to mention one of the group's most obvious assets: the ability of the leader to play keyboards as well as drums.

JDJ: [laughing] Oh, of course. I was so wrapped up in the other aspect, I forgot. Right, keyboards—acoustic piano, a Casio MT70, which I use sometimes, and the electric Melodica. So between all of those, it's hard to get stuck in one thing. There is a basic sound, but there are a lot of different shades to that sound. And so I'm trying to keep developing in the area of shadings, to keep ourselves, as well as the audience, constantly interested in what we're doing.

Let's face it: even with a drummer-led band, the emphasis is really on the music—the presentation of the music; the compositional aspect of it. Because no matter how great you solo, people can't walk out of the club humming your drum solo. I want people to go out saying they enjoyed the music. The drumming, of course, is part of the music, but the whole thing is very important. And so it's important that when you're a drummer leading the band, you have to present a program that's enjoyable. Art Blakey is very much aware of that, and it's one of the things I'm trying to do. Of course, I want people to enjoy the drumming, but I want the people to remember that they enjoyed the compositions and the presentation, so that they come back to hear Jack DeJohnette's music, not just the drumming. I try to direct the music so that I blend into my band, rather than dominate it. I think maybe I do dominate it, but I dominate it by infiltrating it in a way that nobody is overshadowed. That's a lesson that a lot of drummers have to learn.

There are only a few drummers I know who make hits with drummer-led bands. One of them was Cozy Cole with "Topsy," in the '50s. He was one of the...
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JDJ: I had to learn how to be a leader. I think I was sometimes guilty of overplaying because I felt the musicians needed a boost, or if there was a space there, I felt that I had to fill that space. But when you have musicians who know what they’re doing, you don’t have to be so aggressive. And then with the soloists, you let them set that up. But you’re there, wherever they go. Then they feel like they’ve always got somebody supporting them. They don’t have to overplay, and you get more out of them. Everybody benefits. But you’ve really got to have top quality people to be able to do that, or at least people who have the potential to develop to that level. That’s how it was in Miles’ band. He’d set the pieces up and we’d just play them. There would be no discussion about it, other than how the piece would be conceived and how the form should be played.

RM: Earlier, you discussed your goals for a live performance. What are your goals when you record?

JDJ: It’s the same concept. You take time and preparation to put your best foot forward. You have to take care to make sure that the sound presentation represents what you’re currently doing at that point. Each record documents your growth and development—or non-development, [laughs] We always hope it’s for the better, but sometimes it doesn’t work out that way. But I try to keep a consistent level of quality to each record or performance.

I like to hear records where you can tell that the tunes were really put together, and the soloists were really concentrating, and the musicians were playing as though this might be the last time they ever got to play. That’s something you don’t hear a lot because it has become so easy to make records. Because of multi-tracking, you can go in and lay something down, and three months later you can go in and do it over again. In the early days of recording, you just did it. You had the pressure of having only so much time to do it, and you couldn’t go back and clean up this and that. Multi-tracking can be good artistically if you know how to use it, but a lot of people spend too much time doing something over and over. Usually, if you have to do it more than three times, you’ll never get it. If it’s a written part where everything has to be perfect, that’s when you use it. But as far as getting a feel or a mood, that should be together enough so that even if there’s a slight mistake, it’s okay. Especially if that mistake adds a little something special to it.

RM: Listening to your music, I wouldn’t guess that you do any overdubbing.

JDJ: On this new one we did. With the multi-tracking we had the freedom to create something bigger with fewer people. We had two people overdubbing parts to get a big section sound. So I have nothing against multi-tracking. I like it, but I think it should be used with the utmost discretion.

RM: So you were just using it in the section parts?

JDJ: Right, the arranged parts.

RM: But not in the places that required interplay, such as the solos.

JDJ: Even if you overdub a solo, you are interacting with someone.

RM: Except it’s only one way. You can respond to what’s on the tape but the tape can’t respond to you.

JDJ: Well, yeah. But if you have a track that has a great feeling on it, you might not
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get that feel again. I think it's good to strive for a better solo. Maybe you were a little out of tune, or you flubbed a couple of notes, or maybe it just wasn't what you had in mind. So that's where multi-tracking is useful. At least you can salvage the parts that were good.

**RM:** You play with a great deal of intensity, and yet you always seem to be relaxed.

**JDJ:** That's the key to doing anything that requires some exertion. You have to concentrate on keeping a balance between tension and relaxation so you don't burn yourself out. All the musicians who do that are able to extend themselves beyond the limits and play for hours and hours.

High intensity doesn't necessarily mean it's loud all the time. No matter if it's a ballad or a fast tempo, it can have an intensity underlying the music that gives it a presence. And you get energy and intensity from having an intent with your music. Intent, coupled with the concentration of focusing your energy, is very important. Anyone who has that kind of control will tell you that you have to be relaxed so you don't cut off the blood flow to your muscles. Some people do it naturally, but others have to work on it because the tendency is to tense up when the music becomes emotionally charged. So you have to work at calming yourself down. Listen to the music outside of yourself, removing yourself from it as a player and becoming a listener. You can take off a lot of the tension by doing that. Also, you can use a mirror to watch yourself practicing and see where you are tensing up. Make yourself relax. Each person is made different, so you have to see at what point you get tense, because that cuts off the circulation. When you're relaxed, you can let all of the energy and intensity carry you, instead of you being a prisoner of that intensity.

**RM:** One of my teachers proved that to me. One of my teachers told me to start dancing to it. Then he told me to continue dancing. Within a few seconds, I was able to extend myself beyond the limits and play for hours and hours.

**JDJ:** One of my teachers proved that to me. And when you make a record, you capture that fraction of a second that the spontaneity happened. But consequently, if the record becomes successful, the solos and everything become like classical pieces. People start singing the solos the way they are on records. And that's when you can say that jazz is one of America's true classical musics. It is a music to be respected, just as the European classical music. There are a lot of creative contemporary composers for classical music, and the so-called “avant-garde.” And a lot of the creative people in that field know about the improvisational aspect, and they write compositions with space for a soloist. And then you have people like (violinist) Itzhak Perlman who has done some things with Shelly Manne; musicians who know about different musics and do not want to be confined to just one area. People who are not afraid to take chances.

We're playing world music more than jazz. Music, to me, is world music. It's man who separates it and tries to isolate it and confine it to certain areas and certain definitions. Musicians like myself, or Chick, or Keith, or Miles, look at music as a world music because we're interested in the improvisational aspect, and they write compositions with space for a soloist. And then you have people like (violinist) Itzhak Perlman who has done some things with Shelly Manne; musicians who know about different musics and do not want to be confined to just one area. People who are not afraid to take chances.

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LEARNING TO PLAY THE DRUM SET DOES NOT TAKE TIME

I have announced that I can teach a qualified drummer to play better in six weeks. I have stated both in print and at interviews in my New York studio that when a drummer plays in public with a group, or at home with his stereo, he will feel this improvement in five ways: (1) he will experience a general relaxation; (2) his sense of time and feeling for rhythm will improve; (3) he will be able to pay attention with less effort; (4) he will find it easier to remember arrangements; (5) his ears will start to open up in unexpected ways.

If you read such an assertion in print you may feel some scepticism. The reason for that is nothing to do with my assertion, but rather has to do with your belief that your drumming is just fine. Yes, a few things have to be polished here and adjusted there, but you know, (or do you believe) that you will be getting better. You don’t know what you have to accomplish for the improvement, and that you will take or are now involved in an approach that will lead you to your goal. But of one thing you are certain: to get to that goal is going to take TIME. And now a strange drum teacher is telling you that it does not take time. One of us has to be off-the-wall and it certainly cannot be you.

I think the first thing we must discuss is what do we mean by time? The problem is that there are three different kinds of time and I’m operating in one kind of time and you are operating in, of course, correct time. Let’s look into it.

The first kind of time is mechanical time. That is measured by the clock. The day is divided into twenty-four parts called hours and each hour is divided into sixty parts called minutes. You look at the clock and in all seriousness call it real time. I look at it and call it mechanical time.

The second kind of time is psychological time. Psychological time is when you and I think about what we should have done yesterday and what we’re going to do tomorrow. Today we do nothing because all we are interested in doing is sitting around and thinking of the past and the future. When we sit around and think about what we should have done and what we are going to do we believe and identify with these thoughts as if we were actually living them now. We call that kind of imagining real life. When I get involved in this kind of psychological “living” I catch on faster than most that I am involved in it and I know what to do to stop the nonsense.

The third kind of time is real or actual time. When we watch the sun set, when we play games, when we play music or listen to music, when we are in a relationship with a friend, we are in real time. In real time, clock or mechanical time and psychological time immediately and completely come to a stop. In real time there is no awareness of time. This is not profound philosophy. All I’m describing is what we all have experienced.

You are sceptical about what I say in respect to obtaining results in six weeks because you absolutely believe that it is necessary to first go through mechanical time and psychological time in order to get to real time. I say that I have the educational trip to get you into real time immediately. Now, if you say that mechanical time and psychological time are absolutely necessary in learning music and life, and wish to pursue that, I will not stop or try to influence you. After all, it’s your life and not mine.

A drum authority was asked how long it takes to become a really good drummer. He answered: “This is an easy one. All your life.” His problem is that he views drumming as a skill based upon knowledge and experience. I see drumming as a state of being based upon talent and the capacity of the individual to stay with that talent. The drum authority expects that, with skill, knowledge, and experience developed in the present, one may expect to unexpectedly bump into this state of being in the future without looking. “Look Ma, I’m playing the drums with no hands.” My position is that if you approach drumming as skill, knowledge, and experience, it is something you will not learn in this life time and you will not learn it in ten life times or 1,000 reincarnations. Please note that the drum authority has no difficulty himself in taking a shortcut through time to tell you it is really all about a long-cut—namely, all your life.

The drum authority is actually stuck in mechanical time in more ways than one when he tells you it takes all your life. It is the evidence that one can never get to real time if you begin with the belief that it is necessary to first pass through mechanical time and psychological time. When he tells you that it takes a life time he feels that he is expressing modesty and humility. When I hear what he is saying, I can only tell him he is confused, frustrated and bored.

The drum authority has not presented any evidence to a grand jury that a crime has been committed, nor has anyone been asked to stand trial before a judge and jury of one’s peers. But our splendid drum authority has given you and me a life sentence of hard labor getting our rocks off in mechanical and psychological time.
Musicians don’t really like to give their music a name, but unfortunately, the industry likes to have classifications. So we have to deal with that, but at the same time, maintain the freedom to explore different areas of music.

RM: Traditionally, music is defined as being made up of three elements: melody, harmony and rhythm. Drummers are often accused of only knowing about the rhythmic element.

JDJ: I think there is less of that today. Most of the young musicians that I meet tell me that they are studying marimba, or guitar, or piano, or theory, or something. One should look at the whole spectrum of percussion. You should play an instrument that deals with harmony and melody too, such as marimba or timpani. If you are going to say that you are a percussionist, you should be able to play those instruments.

Even when you’re playing drums, you’re playing melody, harmony and rhythm too. You have tom-toms, you have cymbals—you have colors to play. You are playing tonalities; you’re playing harmonies. I still hear stories where people say, “This guy doesn’t know a thing about music. He’s just banging away.” But the drumset is an instrument just like guitar or piano. Sometimes, drummers get carried away and they tend to dominate through volume. When they do that, they destroy the musical professionalism of the whole piece. So if a drummer is really concerned with playing music, he has to be in balance with what’s going on musically and dynamically. But that takes time, experience, working, listening, and getting constructive criticism.

RM: Some people feel that drummers are more concerned with technique than musicians who play other instruments.

JDJ: I don’t think that’s true. I think that can be a problem on all instruments. Young musicians coming up now are looking at people like John McLaughlin and Al DiMeola, and there’s a lot more emphasis put on going to the schools and more emphasis being put on technique. You should only have as much technique as you need to play what you hear conceptually. Otherwise, you have a lot of technique but nothing’s happening. You must have a sound; a touch, or tone, or feeling about phrasing. Yes, there’s all kinds of technique. There’s technique for speed and there’s also technique involving one’s ability to feel the music and be concerned with the sound of it. That’s what made Louis Armstrong, or Miles, or Coltrane, or Elvin, or Bill Evans recognizable. They each had a distinctive touch, or tone, or feeling about phrasing. That’s what gives music so much variety. That’s something one has to develop through life experiences. You can play all the great runs and fills, but if the feeling’s not there, something is missing. You’ve got surface technique, but nothing to back it up with. No depth.

RM: I know that you’re involved in various educational activities. How did you get involved with that?

JDJ: When I was going to college, I was going to major in music. But I was so turned off by the way they taught music education in the university, that I completely gave up on it. After that, I didn’t even think of teaching; I was more into playing. But eventually my wife, Lydia, suggested that I try it. So I took a couple of students, and once I got into it, I saw that I had a certain feeling for teaching an aspect of the creative process, in terms of trying to feel the music through a basic knowledge of form. Also trying to develop a total concept. I did that by playing electric piano—bass lines with the left hand; solos and chords with the right—creating a playing situation for the drummers. Mainly I worked with drummers who had been through books, but who came to me because they wanted to learn how to play. Books can’t teach you to play; you have to experience it. So that’s something I tried to provide.

Then I did some things at the Creative Music Institute at Woodstock, and I found that I liked working with the energy in a workshop of 20 to 30 people. The more I got into it, the more I developed a concept of how to do it. Consequently, I started doing some residencies around the country. My workshops would cover such things as composition, improvisation, solo forms, group interplay, and ensemble work.

So from the years of doing those kinds of things, I thought it would be interesting to try and do some instruction on tape. Lydia and I started a company called Multi-Directional Music, and this is something I’d like to see developed to its full potential. We started out with three tapes: I did one on the art of accompaniment; Dave Holland did one dealing with contemporary techniques and improvisational studies for bass; John Abercrombie did one for the intermediate guitarist who wants to deal with improvisation. Each artist comes up with their own concept, and the tape becomes a personal statement. This is a new area, and it’s one that has to be devel-

continued on next page
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oped, but we're real excited about it and once it catches on, I think it will be sensational.

**RM:** The thing I liked about your tape was the lack of dogmatism involved. You show the drummer what some of the options are, and how each one will sound.

**JDJ:** That goes back to the multi-directional concept. You have choices. That's the whole beauty of it—you don't have to be locked into one thing. If you have knowledge about these different things, then you can do whatever the situation calls for. Or you can mix different things together. So the whole idea of the multi-directional concept is to give options to people, because they usually don't have options given to them. All of the artists who are doing tapes are trying to give a broad scope—a perspective—on trying to deal with the creative process.

You have to realize that in the last ten years, we've had another generation of kids come up, who may know a lot of things technically, but who are not necessarily sophisticated. That's why there is a great effort with jazz educators and musicians like myself to convey the traditions of this music. So much is available to these kids. On the one hand, it's great because they have so many choices that they will be well-rounded and able to go into different areas. But on the other hand, it's a problem too, because in order to be well-rounded, you still have to be able to specialize in any of the areas that you deal in. So that takes a lot of experience and knowledge.

**RM:** I know that this company, Multi-Directional Music, is not the first time you have been involved in handling your own business. Artists used to never get involved in business, but over the past few years, I've seen more and more artists become involved with it.

**JDJ:** There's a lot of work involved, and you have to know what you're doing. If you don't know the language of law and business, you can make very costly mistakes. There has been a trend in the last few years for musicians to own their own publishing, or even open their own businesses and record companies. They see both sides of it, but it's a lot of pressure. You're worried about playing the music, booking the gigs, writing music, running the business, and it really pulls you. I've seen musicians try it, and then give it all to someone else to do. When you do it yourself, you realize what you're paying for when you hire someone else. But you always feel that if you do it yourself, you will do a better job because you know exactly what you're presenting. With someone else, there's the danger that they will not represent you the way you think you should be represented. So you have to weigh those things.

My wife Lydia has been my business guide and partner through all of this. Some people can do it all by themselves, and handle it. But I'm so wrapped up in the art that I need somebody to keep me in balance with the reality of the music business, and Lydia does that for me. Without her, I'd be in big trouble. She has been helping me make decisions about my career for years, and I'm so appreciative about, She's really great, and I love her immensely. We're a good team together.

It's a lot of hard work, and it never ends. There's a lot of work involved, and it never ends. There are a lot of people who have supposedly made it, but it depends on what you mean when you say "made it." If you can pay your bills and stay out of debt, I would say you're doing okay. If you see the realities, you will appreciate the music more when you go out to perform it. When we play the music, we realize what a privilege it is to have that opportunity to perform. Each time I get a chance to play, I realize that it's a real treat to be able to do something that people want to see and hear, and to be able to make a living at the same time.
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Bonus fun: Omit the diddle and substitute a single stroke on the tom-tom of your choice. See you next time!
get a break. I worked real, real hard at it and tried to deserve it. Now as I get older — I don’t deserve nothing! Now I’m having to work for it.

My wife has always been totally behind me. She has never complained one time. I’m serious. She has never one time bitched about 25 dudes spending the whole weekend at the house, eating everything out of the house; making noise 24 hours a day. She’s always been behind me. She’s great.

Now at this point, with the Artimus Pyle Band, nothing goes on the pass. You’ve at least got to always keep reproving that you deserve to stay in the business. I’m still supported by Pat. My friends are still behind me. It’s not going to be like, “Okay. I’m Artimus Pyle. I played with Lynyrd Skynyrd. Hand me my stuff.” It’s not like that. That’s something I found out. I really wasn’t thinking. “Well, I’ve got to do is slap my name on this band and we’ll be tight.” I never thought that one time. But, I think in the back of my mind, I thought, “It’s going to be step by step, but it’s going to be easy.” It’s not easy. It’s starting all over again. All I have to do is maintain my self and this band will be fine. I’m the weakest link in the band as far as keeping my shit together. I’m playing with some strong people. All you’ve got to do is stick it out and stay together long enough to prove to somebody that the band is a real band; that it’s not going to stay together eight months and break up. Darrell Smith, our lead singer, was in The Next Voice. John Bursner, our readheaded guitarist, was also in that band. I go back with Steve Burlington, my bass player from the first time I came down to Spartanburg. He’s my strength. He keeps a positive attitude. When I’m bitching, he keeps me together. He was into jazz/fusion. A lot of his original pieces have real “out” time signatures. Now he’s writing more in context for this band. He wrote a tune called "The Road Never Ends" off our first album that’s an absolutely beautiful tune.

My career as a drummer has not been based around a technical approach. It’s been based around being given opportunities to play with so many different types of groups with different styles. Paul and I get together and talk about every drummer. We talk about jazz. We listen to cuts of “out” stuff like Elvin Jones. Then, both of us are in totally different kinds of bands. My drumming is just something I picked up. Sometimes people think that I’m putting myself down. I’m not. I’m just being honest. I’ve stolen, picked up or copped licks from every drummer that I’ve ever listened to. Even from cats who aren’t drummers. All the guitar players in our band play a little drums. I’ll pick up a little technique from their nimbleness. Even Karen Carpenter! She’s incredible. From Joe Morello to Ginger Baker.

I’ve got a ten-year-old son who’s a monster drummer. Christopher Chapel Pyle.

To show you what I think about the Marshall Tucker guys and Charlie Daniels — I named my youngest son Marshall Daniel Pyle! But, I’ve picked up licks just watching Chris play. I’ve never tried to teach him anything because I’m not a good teacher. I’m not the kind of guy who could go out and give somebody a clinic on drum technique. But, if I ever let anybody give my son lessons, it’s going to be Paul Riddle, because he’s patient and he has the background and knowledge of the drums.

AP: And he charges less than anybody else in town!

AP: He charges a lot less than other guys and besides, he gives me drumsticks! I’m not going to make Chris be a drummer. He already is. He can use it if he wants to. He can shave his head and be a fullback and go into sports or do anything he wants to. But he loves music. And Marshall is going to be the singer of the family.

SF: Have you experienced anything — particularly on the road — that you would caution your son about?

AP: At the right time, I would like to say to my son, “Man, excess of drugs and alcohol is nowhere. It is absolutely nowhere.” I’ve never put a needle in my arm. That’s the one thing I can proudly say. I’m an extremist. It’s either all or nothing for me, which can be very, very dangerous. Cocaine, amphetamines, downers—all that stuff can really screw you up and make you lose perspective of what you are doing.

Then you get to a point where you’re in concert, playing your music, looking out into the audience and seeing the majority of the audience so out of it. You know they’re not enjoying the music. You know they probably won’t get home safe. But how can I stand onstage and say anything? Somebody who does not practice what he preaches? I do stay away from those things, but that doesn’t make any difference because other people are other people.

I’m doing real good because the drugs, the exposure and the temptation is always there. But, when I get onstage and I’m not able to play my best, I still want to be able to play as good as I can. I’ve gone out to play a few times and not really been able to. It sucks and it’s a bad feeling. That would be the only thing I would tell my son if the time was right, and it wouldn’t sound like, “Do as I say, not as I do.” The road has so many other pitfalls and pratfalls but it also has much beauty. I love to travel and I’ll probably always be into the road. The road never ends!

PR: I’m enjoying the road more now than I ever have. I guess I’m comfortable with me more than anything else. So, that makes the road better.

AP: That’s another thing. Not only have I been influenced by Paul’s drumming, but also as a good friend. Paul’s been through it all too. He’s not been into any heavy thing, but he’s experienced all the bullshit...
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of the road. He looked at it and said, "This is the best way to do it." That's been helpful to me too. There's a wrong way to do it, a right way, and there's an in-between way. But that in-between doesn't leave very much room for good performances.

SF: You were in a major motorcycle crash and a major plane crash. Was there ever a time when you asked yourself, "Maybe I'm doing something wrong"?

AP: I've had about eight major car wrecks. The only thing I have left is if I'm laying on top of an Amtrak and a helicopter drops a rickshaw on my face. I'll tell you what my final analysis was. I was taking things for granted, I suppose. I lived through the plane crash and was able to walk out of it. I walked out of about two miles of swamp. We landed in the middle of a Mississippi swamp. Pine trees tore the plane completely limb from limb. The biggest piece of the plane left was what I was strapped into. I fought to get out of it because all I could think of was, "Okay. The plane's going to catch on fire." Little did I realize when we spiralled in from 9000 feet that we had run out of gas. We were 60 miles from Baton Rouge and we'd just left Greenville, South Carolina. Ironically, that's where I played my first gig with Sky-nyrd in front of about 6000 and the last gig in front of 5000 or 6000.

We had taken on 400 gallons of fuel in Greenville, but we didn't top off the tanks. Our old pilot told our new pilots to never trust the gauges on an old aircraft. Always take a wooden pole and stick it down in the fuel tanks and check the fuel level. We were groovin', man. We had a gig to go to. We had our own plane with our name painted on the side. We didn't ask questions. That's where we made our mistake. We asked for it as much as anybody. The pilots paid the price. They screwed up badly and they were inexperienced and that cost the lives of some other people. But, I don't hold it against them because we were just as blind. We should've been more aware of our transportation situation.

I think God let me walk out of that because . . . out of twenty-six people on the plane, twenty people survived, which was a miracle. The plane was just completely torn to pieces. I got out of the wreckage and looked around and saw that there was just one thing that was needed: Medical people and bucker bars to pull metal apart.

I could see that that was the only thing that was going to help, and that they needed it right NOW!

There was no fire and it was just at dark. I saw a Coast Guard helicopter way off. Going down, we were sending in a may-day. This Coast Guard chopper was looking for us. The whole time I was walking out of the swamp there were two things going through my mind. One was to get to someplace so I could lead people back to where the wreckage was. The other thing was that I'm down here in the darkness in the swamp, looking up through the canopy at this damn chopper who was hovering, frantically looking for us, but couldn't find us because there was nothing to see.

I got out to a field and I saw all these cows. I jumped the fence. In the wreckage my shoes had come off from the impact. It took us about ten seconds to stop from about 250 miles-an-hour at a forty-five degree angle. When I got out of the wreckage I looked back through the trees and saw the angle that we came in, because we just sliced right through. I saw the angle and the last thing the co-pilot said was, "We're headed for a highway or a field." So I knew that they were headed for civilization somewhere. I got my bearings and the pilot and the co-pilot were the first ones I found. They were definitely dead. And I just yelled out as loud as I could to whoever could hear me, "I'm going for help. I'll be back." A couple of the guys were wandering around out of the band crew. These guys were telling me, "I can't do nothing man." The guys were really battered. I said, "Go sit down by that tree and hold your wounds and cut off your blood vein. Do a tourniquet." There were a couple of other guys there and I said, "I'm going." My socks were like six inches over the edge of my feet! So, I couldn't walk too good through the briars and the brambles.

I found a farmhouse and the guy thought I was an escaped criminal because I was covered with blood. He came out with his shotgun. He was protecting his family. He came out and fired a shot into the air. I yelled as loud as I could, "Plane crash." I couldn't yell too loud because all the cartilage in my chest had been ripped. The guy goes, "Is that what it was?" He threw his gun down and he ran and he embraced me and I said, "Back to the corner!" I threw his gun down and he ran and he embraced me and I said, "Back to the corner!" I walked into the house and I went right to his telephone and dialed direct to Pat. I said, "Pat, there's been a terrible plane crash. I'm someplace in Mississippi. There's been people killed. I don't know who yet. Don't call anybody. I'm okay. Goodbye." About that time highway patrol cars started sliding up and all kinds of people started coming in. There were about fifty cars there. They had just rehearsed for a disaster! It was incredible. All these people started coming up, medical people and it was the best feeling in my life when I took them back to the corner.

We busted through fences with this whole entourage of ambulances and trucks and pickups and four-wheel drives and I took them right to the point, and the highway patrolman says, "Now, where are they?" I said, "Okay. If you take a baseball and throw it about as hard as you can ten times — go pick it up and throw it again, you'll be right on top of them." Right there, about seventy people with flashlights just went right through the woods. It was the greatest feeling. Then they threw me in a

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Rick Marotta

YAMAHA

of drum and took me to the hospital. The point of the story is that I feel like I was spared for that reason.

Then I got kind of cocky. I thought, “I’m Mr. Vegetarian Superman. I can live through anything.” I didn’t really think that or say that. But it must’ve been on my mind. At that point I got on an ego trip. I had to have me a Harley-Davidson. I had to be a big, bad asshole. I had the biggest bike that Harley-Davidson made. I bought it two days before Rossington Collins was going to start. I was going down the road and a drunk pulled out in front of me. I hit him going about 80 miles an hour. I tried to miss him. He lurched forward and I hit him, broke my leg and splattered myself. At that point, that really taught me, “Look man, you can be hurt. You can be slapped down.” And that slapped me down for a couple of years.

That was my breaking point. The doctor wouldn’t prescribe anything to really take the pain away. So I started going to street drugs. I stayed numb a lot. I used to take a lot of Quaalude. Anytime somebody would give me a toot of coke, I’d take it, because it would kill the pain. At that point, for that period of one year, it took me more than a couple of years to really get back to where I could walk—I had to relearn how to walk. I had to relearn how to play drums.

I lost a lot of speed in my right leg. But I think my left leg got smarter. I think my hands got smarter because my right leg was busy going “ouch.” I wasn’t too hard on myself for my physical addiction at that point because I was in intense pain.

I think my doctor had a master plan. He wasn’t going to say, “I’ll give you anything you want. Stay numb.” It was like he was saying, “You’re going to have to bear the pain. You’re going to have to know where you hurt.” I like to know where I hurt now. I like to know where the pain is so I can concentrate my energy there. But, for a while I was in a pretty low state. I was a pretty disgusting human being. I still do get disgusting at times. My children were going through a period. Marshall was freaking out because he just didn’t know what his Daddy did for a living. Chris knew because I’d taken him on the road with me.

All of a sudden I started getting back into drumming again. My Godsend is my band. These guys have stuck with me. Because I’ll get outside and talk some bullshit and they’ll still keep with me. At least they have so far. It’s given me something to really get back into. Not to mention Doug Gray, George McCorkle and Jerry Eubanks, the present team of cats that got behind this project. I’ve just got to play drums, do good and the thing is going to be successful.

SF: Were you the first-choice drummer for the Rossington Collins Band?

AP: We were going to start Rossington Collins. After the plane crash it took Gary and Allen two years—at least—to heal up. It only took me about a year. I started a band called Studebaker Hawk that had Darrell Smith on lead vocals, Steven Burlington on bass and Barry Harwood on guitar. I was also doing an album for Mercury records called Contraband. The name of that band was Alias. Gary and Allen came in and produced it and Barry came in and played guitar.

At that point, Gary and Allen saw what a monster Barry Lee Harwood is. We decided to start the Rossington Collins Band. I bought the motorcycle. We finished the album and I drove the bike up to the mountains. Two days before I was going to start rehearsing with Rossington Collins, I hit the car. The whole band flew up to see me in the hospital. Leon couldn’t make it because he was in Miami having surgery on his arm from the plane crash. The band said, “We’re going to wait for you.” I told them, “You cannot wait on me, man! You’ve got to get another drummer. Get Derek Hess. Barry Harwood had a band with him down in Florida. You know he’s good. You guys have been waiting for two years. You can’t afford to wait anymore. Go ahead!” They said, “No. We’re going to wait on you.” They were using me as an excuse. I said, “Don’t wait.”

Six months went by. My leg was still splattered in twelve places. No real healing had taken place in that period of time. I had a special cast built with a heel plate so I could move it a little bit. I was trying to play bass drum and hi-hat with my left leg. I arranged a rehearsal up at Bat Cave, North Carolina. It was perfect. We had the whole Rossington Collins organization. Fourteen of us for nine days. The crew and everybody.

I saw that I was not inspiring the band at all. I was saying, “Boys, you’re using me as an excuse.” That’s when I really freaked them out. I didn’t care. I said, “Man, y’all ought to get another drummer, and I’ll see you down on the road.” But no.

A weekend came up and the whole band drove to Florida. I called Allen about a half hour before they were leaving to come back to the Bat Cave for rehearsal. It was like the hardest thing I’d ever done in my life. I said, “Man, I quit.” He says, “What do you mean you quit?” I said, “I quit. Read my lips.” He said, “Can’t we talk about it?” I said, “No, man. I quit the band. I’ve got other things to do. Call Derek Hess right now or you’re nuts!” And I hung the phone up and just sat there and cried. Allen told me that half an hour later they called Derek and started rehearsing.

As soon as Rossington Collins got their material together they went and recorded their album. I could see that the band was kind of scared to see what the public was going to think about them. The public loved them! The unfortunate thing about
it is that Allen Collins’ wife died under very unfortunate circumstances. It tore Allen up just terrible. It tore the whole band up. I think that was the main downfall of the group and it was not their fault. There was just too much tension. Too many mind things. I wish them all the success with their new bands.

**SF:** Were you contemplating putting together your own band?

**AP:** All I could do was lay in a hospital bed and heal up. After I got on my crutches and Rossington Collins had recorded their first album, they came to the Superdome in New Orleans with Willie Nelson, Jimmy Buffett and Crystal Gayle. I couldn’t play at that point. I couldn’t even walk! But, I wanted to be around my boys. They had two warm-up gigs in Florida. I went to the gigs and started feeling a weird attitude. Something in the air. The soundman told me, in so many words, that I wasn’t welcome. I picked up my crutch and was about ready to wrap it around his head and he just walked off. I was getting these weird vibes like there was something that I wasn’t being told.

I went to the gig in New Orleans. The band was talking about me coming back in when I could play auxiliary percussion. I said, “Yeah. I can do that even before my leg completely heals.” I was getting really excited about it.

After the New Orleans gig I got in my car and drove 20 hours towards home. The band had already flown into the studio in Atlanta. I vectored through Atlanta and had three more hours to home. I’d been driving all night and day, and I was really tired. I’d been partying at the Mardi Gras. I’d seen the band play. I was proud of them, man. They were some scared dudes when they went out on that stage.

So I stopped by Studio One. All I wanted to do was put my leg up a little bit, kick back and just rest my eyes so I could drive home. I’m sitting in the studio and Billy Powell comes up to me drunk. He said he wanted to talk to me. I got my crutches and walked outside. Billy says, “Artimus. I hate to tell you this, but the new drummer for Rossington Collins Band is Derek Hess.” I said, “I know that. I turned you on to him. What are you telling me?” He says, “The only drummer for Rossington Collins is Derek Hess.” I says, “What are you talking about, man? I won’t even be able to play for a year! Is the popular consensus that I’m hanging around trying to get my gig back?” He says, “Well, everybody’s been kind of feeling like …” I said, “Hold it! Man, and I’m barreling from the studio?” He said, “No, man. It ain’t nothing like that.”

I got on my crutches and kicked the studio door open. I was seeing red because I’d been told all this stuff in New Orleans about auxiliary percussion. I’d mentioned it a couple of times to a couple of band members, and they’d taken it like I was scheming to come back in the band and kick Derek Hess out. I had made a sacrifice when I quit the band. It hurt me badly to have to do what I just did to get them off their asses. Then they’re turning around like I’m intimidating them. I went into the studio and saw this champagne bottle, took my crutch and shattered the thing. I said, “I’M GOING TO KICK SOME ASS!”

I busted into the control room and Allen and Gary jumped right into the corner. Two security guys got me and put my arms up behind me. I pushed them back and jumped across the damn control board. I said, “You sons of bitches. You guys tell me one thing and lie to me and then tell me another. You hurt my feelings.”

I got in my car and I was so tired and bummmed out. I put my little diesel on autopilot and woke up the next morning about 30 miles from my house, sitting in the middle of the road, not even in my lane, in the middle of a two-lane highway. The car was in park. The diesel was just purring. I’d put my seat all the way back and fell asleep. I’d airlocked the car completely. I must have been asleep a couple of hours before the heat from the sun woke me up.

I drove home and got on the phone and called the President of MCA records in L.A. I said, “MAN, I DON’T WANT NOTHING TO DO WITH THOSE CREEPS. I MIGHT BE DOWN NOW AND I CAN’T PLAY AND MY LEG IS SCREWED UP, BUT BY GOD, I’LL BE BACK SOMEDAY AND I’M GOING TO HAVE THE BEST DAMN ROCK ’N ROLL BAND YOU’VE EVER SEEN. YOU JUST WAIT, GODDAM IT!” He says, “Okay, Artimus. Okay.”

When Cathy Collins died I went down for the funeral. I went up to the limo that the whole band was in. I didn’t say a word. I just stuck my hand in and shook Alien’s hand. He told me later that that meant a lot to him. We just had eye contact and that’s where we made up. Because I love those cats. I miss them badly, but at that point it was just a very freaked out time in all of our lives. There was just so much confusion.

**SF:** What were the biggest challenges in getting the Artimus Pyle Band to where it is today? Where do you see the band heading?

**AP:** We have a five year, seven-album contract with MCA. Including maybe a live album and a greatest hits if that ever comes to pass. I see us fulfilling that obligation. I can’t tell you how hard our triple threat production team of McCorkle, Gray and Eubanks have worked. When we went into the studio, each one of them took a facet. It’s out of my hands now. All I have to do is sit back and play drums and be a good boy. I mean, I’m 33 now. If I don’t know how to control myself, I need to just cash my little wimp ass in, and go ahead and check on out. continued on next page

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I'd gone into the studio with Darrell and did some demos. Doug Gray picked up on the tape and liked the music. The tape got pushed on through. You've got to push a tape. It's not just all based on, "God, these guys are incredible musicians! Listen to that music! It's unlike anything I've ever heard." No. It's just music. It's just more tunes. They start. They stop. They get fast and slow. They're loud and they're soft. It's just like any other band. We're not that much different. There's nothing incredible about it. It's just that there are not that many people that do it. There are a lot of bands. But the number of people to be entertained and the number of entertainers—I think the ratio is more correct than people think.

I've been very, very fortunate. The right people at the right time. Making sure I was at the right place at the right time. It's not just happenstance. Like Paul told you. I used to carry my drums in the back of a van, ready to make a fool of myself anywhere.

AP: You're still ready to embarrass yourself?
SF: I'm ready to embarrass myself anytime, anywhere and make a mistake and drop a stick. If I can learn from it, then I've picked up a lick. Right now we're having to start over again. That's the hardest thing about it. There are so many facets of this past ten years with all these incredible bands. I've gone places I never dreamed I'd see, due to people, and not just my talents. There's guys who play like me under every rock. There are incredible guys. I know you know this. I'm not telling you anything that you don't already know. There are cats on every corner who are just as good as me.

SF: How come you're where you are and they're still under rocks or standing on corners?
AP: Maybe because they're happy hammering nails or building or doing another gig.
PR: It's because you had the balls to jump deep. That's the truth.
AP: I really feel like there are cats who know how to play just as good. But they don't know that they know. I know how to play drums a little bit and I took it. I can run a bulldozer, fly an airplane, wire a house, or plumb a damn toilet. I can do anything you want. But what I really wanted to pursue was the drums. I feel like I'm being allowed to do what I want, which is to play and stay in the business. I feel like I went to college. L.S.U. Lynyrd Skynyrd University. Professor Van Zant and his boys. I learned a lot. I would hate to take that knowledge that I've learned from all these people and just sit on my butt at home, feeling sorry for myself, complaining and doing drugs.

SF: Did you pick up anything about being a bandleader from Ronnie?
AP: No. A leader I'm not. Ronnie was... Ronnie was the man in that band. We went to Fist City a few times because I didn't agree with some of his approach. I could disagree with him 24 hours a day, but it was his band. But, when he started abusing the other members of the group he would literally just punch them out. He was just like anybody, man. He was a street fighting dude. When he was straight he was a gentleman. And he was a real good person. But when he was drunk it was Jekyll and Hyde. He was just vicious. He would tear into somebody in the band or start browbeating them, or smacking them around. I'd jump in there. I wouldn't allow that to happen. And he'd go for me. Me and him would go around and around until we saw blood. Then it would snap both of us out of it.

But, I did have a lot of respect for that cat. We were two different people. I think he had a respect for me too. We were kind of a check and balance for each other. I think that's why he kept me in the group, because I wasn't the greatest drummer in the world. I made mistakes. I forgot parts sometimes. I'd screw up. I'd start tunes backwards.

SF: Who's the leader of the Artimus Pyle Band?
AP: I'm the leader, but it's democratic. I learned from Ronnie that there was a happy medium. It's not a happy situation when everybody's having to browbeat or beat physically. But, in Skynyrd sometimes Ronnie had to. Sometimes that's what the guys needed to snap them into reality. Because my boys were wild in that band. I started off on an even keel. About the last year there were two things I did if I wanted to get back at the band. I'd take LSD and go onstage and play and jam my butt off. Ronnie always told me, "Man, if you're going to adlib—go for it. But, don't miss!" Then I stopped doing it. I never did a lot of it. About the last six months, if I wanted to fight back I'd walk into the bar where we were staying after the gig and say, "Give me two triple Tequila Salty Dog's and two Heinekens." In about ten minutes I'd beshiftfaced, and I'd be on their level. Then I could relate to all of them.

In the very last, our New York manager pushed very much the image of alcohol and Jack Daniels. I can't even talk about him because of his ruthlessness.

SF: Was there a time when you stopped beating yourselves and started being what you thought other people's image of you was?
AP: In Atlanta during the torture tour of 1975—the end of 88 cities in 92 days—we were staying at the Omni. Our manager was there. He never showed up at any of the bullshit gigs. Only the big gigs where he could be seen.

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The bottle to Ronnie. "Ronnie, take a couple of swigs of this and get it on your breath." Ronnie says, "Sure." He takes a couple of swigs and our manager goes and brings the interviewers in. Ronnie's sitting there with a half-empty bottle of Jack, maintaining with it on his breath. That was the image.

I called our manager right after the plane crash. Our crew was having trouble getting money for doctor bills. I said, "Can you help me get some advance money on my royalties into a fund that the guys can draw from?" He said, "Hey Artimus. Lynyrd Skynyrd is yesterday's news. I've got other things to do." That was about a month after the crash.

SF: What's a drummer's role in a band?

AP: In my band I'm freer than I was in Skynyrd. I don't try to exceed my bounds by saying, 'I'm the drummer and this is my band and I'm going to play drum solos between every tune.' I hate drum solos unless they're tasteful. My solos would be more or less a freight-train-coming-through-the-middle-of-a-house effect.

But, I hate drum solos by drummers like me. I'd like to get more into singing. I love to sing and I get a chance in a couple of songs.

SF: Is it hard for you to sing and play simultaneously?

AP: Levon Helm is a monster at that. I'd love to have the knack of singing lead and playing drums like he does. But, I've got to be playing in 4/4 or I can't do it.

SF: Give me a rundown of your drums and cymbals.

AP: The drums are Slingerland. I have a new drumset ordered from Pearl and I ordered new cymbals too. I used to use a lot of Paiste cymbals. I broke two full sets because I set them up real high. Now, my main ride is a 22" Zildjian. I'm into the Pangs. I bust them. I used to use 15" Zildjian hi-hats, but now I'm using 14" Paiste Sound Edge hi-hats. My cymbals are just a potpourri of whatever I can get.

SF: When did you start using double bass drums?

AP: I was in the Marines and a Captain had a set of drums that his son was selling. I bought them. Then I got out of the Marines and picked up the same style kit in Spartanburg. I put the two kits together, stripped them and covered them with red, white and blue crushed velvet. I called them my Buck Owens set. I had two 24" kick drums, two rack toms and two floor toms. Then I bought a set of jazz/rock Slingerlands that were silver chrome. I was influenced by Ginger Baker. I really didn't have a correct approach or training on the double bass drums. I'd just use them for volume, especially with Skynyrd. Now I use my bass drums a lot more for intricate "in-the-tune" playing with APB. In Skynyrd, I'd use them at the end of a tune for volume, for a big rise, especially on "Free Bird." I like a hot rod kit though; a little small kit. On the demos for our record deal with MCA I used Paul Riddle's little hot rod kit he built for the studio. I used one bass drum, and for the double bass drum parts I'd play them on the floor tom. We actually had the album done before we even got the deal. We never had to ask MCA for anything except support, which we were going to get maybe.

With Skynyrd I went from nothing—not even having mic's for my drums—to a World Class band. That was a wild experience. Going from no manager to supposedly the hippest dude on the continent. Going from not making a cent to making a living. But, the main thing was I got to watch some monstrous bands—Edgar Winter, Johnny Winter, The Allman Brothers. All these different cats all over the place. Foreigner. Journey. I watched those guys go through their stages before they made it. Journey used to open up for us. Foreigner used to open for us. Meeting Aynsley Dunbar, who I used to love with Zappa. It's given me an opening into the world I wanted to be in. I'll never forget that heritage and I'm going to use it. My name is Artimus. If they say, "Artimus Pyle, formerly of Lynyrd Skynyrd," that's okay, because that's a fact. I was the drummer for the band and I'm proud of it. I'm not ashamed of it. I'm not going to deny it. But, I don't like it to be overly used to try to bring people in.

I walked into a club one time in Tennessee and they had little 3 x 5 cards that said, "Artimus Pyle and his new band. Sole surviving member of the tragic Lynyrd Skynyrd plane crash." We packed up our shit and left. Now I don't like to do that. I know people got hurt because they wanted to come and hear the band. But, I wasn't going for it.

Recently we played this place and I was advertised as "Former lead singer for Lynyrd Skynyrd." I said, "Where do these people come from?" Why don't they just open any magazine and check it out? And Lynyrd Skynyrd's always spelled wrong. It's a weird spelling, but all they have to do is a little research. That's all the negative side. It's really been a good experience. I love music and I've always wanted to meet all these different cats. That's why I'm not going to get out. Maybe my inspiration was when I couldn't play and people were telling me, "Hey, you won't be able to do this anymore."

SF: After you were laid up in the hospital, did you become more aware of the spiritual side of yourself?

AP: Yeah, man. I think about that a lot. After the plane crash a guy walked up to me at the hospital and he looked right in...
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my eyes, right through me, and he says, "I want you right now to get down on your knees and thank Jesus Christ, man, that you're still here. You're here for a reason, man." This guy laid a heavy, heavy trip on me and I had just about ten minutes earlier found out who had been killed in the crash. I was in a lot of pain but I got up and walked outside and this guy was out in the parking lot. He says, "Get down on your knees." The sequence of things just blew my mind. I said, "I know I'm lucky to be here, but I'm not getting down on my knees." I always remember that because—well, you're talking about the spiritual side of it and do I think about it. I think about it a lot. Then I think, "Well, damn, man. I'm still screwing things up a lot in my own life." I love my family more than anything else in the whole world, but sometimes I go off on a binge or something. Over the past few years of all the accidents I've been through. I'll get depressed and go off on a binge and they don't understand. See, I was so stupid I used to think, "Yes, I can drink Tequila and eat a handful of Quaaludes and feel no pain and really be grooving and drive a car because I'm Superman." It took me three car wrecks to prove to my stupid self that I cannot do that. That I was going to kill somebody, if not myself. That's a stage of my life that I can proudly say is behind me. The intense side of it has long since gone. But, for over a year I couldn't go for more than two or three seconds without it feeling like somebody was stabbing 25 ice picks in my leg. Everytime I took a breath. Everytime I pumped blood into my leg it was intense. Poor little me. I was trying to numb myself out completely. It took me a long time to get out of that syndrome.

I'm a negative person in many, many ways. Especially under the influence of some kind of bullshit. But, basically I really believe deep down that I have good intent. I would like our music to portray that. A lot of people have misinterpreted Ronnie Van Zant's tunes. Kids come up to me all the time and say, "Yeah, man. Needle and The Spoon." Take a trip to the moon. Snort coke. Shoot it up." I say, "Listen to that tune. Listen to what he's saying. He's saying, 'Maybe I did it. Maybe I've experienced it. Maybe it's gone down. But, I'm not advocating it. I'm not saying go do it.' " The smell of death is a monster, man. That was Ronnie's last epitaph.

He was coming right out and saying, "Look here! You want to be a fool? You go ahead and do all this shit. Go ahead and do it all and do it until you die . . . because you will." A lot of people think it was a decadent, negative thing. I got a positive feeling about it. Ronnie was a very negative person too under the influence of alcohol. But, actually he had a touch and a gift. He was like the Merle Haggard of our peer group, man. He could put down in simple terms, maybe raw terms, that there is a real negative thing there if you want to get into it.

But, in this group I don't want to pound anything down anybody's throat. I just want to come out with the music. Like "It Ain't The Whiskey, It Ain't the Wine, It Ain't the Cocaine." It's saying it ain't this that really makes you feel good. It's really true love. It's really a good, good positive thing. That's the kind of representation I want the band to have. I don't want anybody spitting blood. I don't want the whole negative trip. I don't know if any good will come of it. But there is the black and white of it all.

I want to write a book someday called The Best Seat In The House, because from where I sat it was like I observed the band. For a long time, all the guys in Skynyrd would get mad at me because I referred to the band as "you guys" and "they," and "Y'all had a good night tonight" and "you were good." They'd say, "What do you mean? It's us! You're in the band too." But, I sat at my drums and had the best seat at every concert because I could watch the band, the audience, and the stage. The whole thing. It always used to gratify me so much to switch from that slow part in "Free Bird" and hit the clutch and go into second gear. I watched the people and it would never fail to send the energy level sky high. In Japan, Germany, France . . . they didn't even understand what we were saying, but it was all smiles. "Free Bird" is a beautiful, beautiful tune. "If I leave here tomorrow/ Would you still remember me/? For I must be traveling on now/ 'Cause there's too many places I've got to see./ And if I stay here with you, girl/ Well, things just couldn't stay the same./ 'Cause I'm as free as a bird now./ And this bird you'll never change./ And this bird cannot change./ Lord knows I cannot change."

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In August of '82, Mattel Electronics released their first electronic musical instrument—Synsonics Drums. Synsonics is a small electronic drum kit enclosed in a two-pound hard-plastic case. The unit can be played two ways: with sticks or fingers on four mounted pads, or via push-button keys.

The keys for snare drum, tom-tom 1, tom-tom 2, and cymbal are grouped into threes. Each sound has three rhythms: straight 8th-notes, 16th-notes, and 32nd-notes (roll), obtainable by pressing the corresponding key. By pressing different combinations, four auto-beat patterns (rock, offbeat, shuffle and 3/4) are also available for each sound. The cymbal can be made to sound like a closed hi-hat by pressing the Accent key at the left of the panel. To produce open/closed hi-hats, the Accent key is released when the open sound is desired.

A key for bass drum produces a metronomic pulse which is variable via two tempo keys marked Slower and Faster. Mattel states that the tempo can be set anywhere from 25 to 300 B.P.M., but I couldn't get it past 120. The bass drum can also be user-played by simultaneously pressing both tempo keys.

The drum keys are a bit restricting, and that's why there are also four round pads on Synsonics, set up like a drum kit for snare, cymbal, and two tom-toms. Each pad has a corresponding LED which flashes when the pad is struck. There is also an LED in the middle of the pad group which flashes the bass drum pulse. The pads are touch-sensitive and are firm enough to give good rebound, but the sensitivity is not adjustable. At times, the pads need a good whack to produce a sound.

The two toms have Syndrum-like sounds. Tom-tom 1 is tunable over five octaves via a wheel mounted on the side of the unit. The snare and cymbal both use noise generation for their sounds. The snare is passable—a loose sound—but the cymbal doesn't really make it. It definitely needs a brighter, more metallic sound. The bass drum sounds like a tight studio-tuned drum, though, sometimes, it just sounds like a click.

Synsonics can also be user-programmed. The unit has three 16-beat memories. Each memory can handle as many separate notes as you are able to play within a four-bar time frame. Pressing the 32nd note key throughout a memory loop would give 128 notes. The cymbal keys also function as memory selectors, and there are separate keys for record, playback, and stop memory. The memories can be layered indefinitely, but sounds cannot be stacked for a doubled sound. Memories can only be played back one at a time. Synsonics will record both pads and keys. When playing the bass drum manually, its sound cannot be programmed into a memory, but the tunable tom 1 can be brought down to bass drum pitch. Since the tune wheel only affects output, the tom cannot be tuned back and forth with a memory and be expected to play back those different pitches. When the unit is switched off, all memories are erased. The on/off wheel also serves as the volume control.

Synsonics is high impedance, and runs on six "C" batteries, or an AC adaptor, not included with the unit. There are jacks for headphones (also used for connection to a guitar amp), and for phono plugs, which are included; so Synsonics can be played through your home stereo. The left and right output jacks allow stereo panning of the unit: snare and tom-tom 1 = left channel; cymbal and tom-tom 2 = right channel, bass drum = left and right channels. A foot pedal controller will be coming soon for foot operation of the bass drum.

I found it lots of fun to create patterns using the memories. Synsonics can be used by drummers and non-drummers alike. It's great for introducing young children to rhythmic concepts, and for the pro player, it could be useful in live performance to set up a background pattern for accompaniment.

With its $150 price tag, Synsonics is not as sophisticated as the Linn or Oberheim machines, though it was not designed for those purposes anyway. Mattel Electronics has been synonymous with fun, and that's exactly what Synsonics is.

MXR: THE KIT

MPC Electronics of England is manufacturing a four-pound drumset synthesizer called The Kit. It's distributed by MXR Innovations in the States.

Four touch-sensitive pads are used for snare, bass drum, hi-tom and lo-tom. Brass switching pads function as cymbal, open hi-hat and closed hi-hat. Each pad has its own level control. Decay and sensitivity of each pad (except hi-hats) can be adjusted via trim pots on the underside of the unit. The cymbal pitch is also adjustable, and there is a control knob for cymbal tone.

The Kit features an automatic, metronomic hi-hat which is capable of 18 different patterns in either 4/4 or 3/4. Tempo of the hi-hat is adjustable, as is volume. A visual downbeat is given by an LED. The auto
hi-hat patterns can be deviated from by pressing the brass hi-hat pads to open or close the hi-hats.

The unit is low impedance and has separate outputs for each sound, allowing EQ for each drum if desired. There is also a mix output. Jacks are available for a hi-hat/bass drum foot switch, and for external device triggering. MPC has three accessories available: Synkit (giving Syndrum sounds), Handclap (claps and noise effects), and The Tymp (electronic timpani effect). The unit operates on a 9-volt battery or AC adaptor. As a battery saver, the unit is only turned on when a plug is inserted.

The hi-hat and snare sounds on The Kit are tighter than Syssonics. I found them to be a little closer to the real thing. I guess cymbals are the hardest to duplicate, because the cymbal sound here has quite an electronic twang to it. The two toms approach pitched sounds, but still, they leave something to be desired. The drums cannot be user-tuned, and the The Kit is not programmable.

At times, the tom-tom pads produced a little distortion when hit hard. I do wish the pads were larger. The largest pads are approximately the size of the dot on an 8" C.S. head.

The manual states that The Kit is not intended for use with drumsticks; fingers do the job instead. Personally, I find it a bit disheartening to throw out years of practicing with sticks in order to play with fingers. Hand percussionists may be able to use The Kit in their set-up more readily than a set drummer. But perhaps some drummer will find a way to hang The Kit around his neck and step out in front while still playing, alongside the Moog liberation players. Retail: $350.00.
Warren Cohen:
Under the Big Top

SF: What does it take to become a circus drummer?
WC: You have to be familiar with every style of music and drumming. Latin, rock, shows, marches, contemporary, disco. You have to have all those in mind and be comfortable playing them. What seems to be most unusual are the tempos involved. Some of these tunes weren't originally written to be done that way. The music is so personal to each act. As much pride as they take in their act, they feel their music is just an extension of themselves.

SF: Does each act choose its own music?
WC: Sometimes. There are times when they'll bring us music that isn't written too well and we'll have to beef it up. Or we might just suggest an alternation. Certain acts might tend to fall into a pattern through the years. Usually a juggling act tends to fall into Latin tunes. Traditionally the trapeze acts used a lot of waltzes. But, the act we have now is a younger American style of music and drumming. Latin, rock, shows, marches, contemporary, disco.

SF: What does it take to become a circus drummer?
WC: Yeah. They used to call him "Sticks." His real name was Asbury Middlebrook. He was an old-time black drummer who played a lot of the black circuits. He's passed away. But, he was a wonderful gentleman. He used to take the time to talk to me and explain different things. He had polio and he had crutches and it was a real struggle for him to get up behind the drums. At that time he was probably in his late 50's or early 60's. Once he got behind the drums it was like he was a different person. You'd see him scuffling on the crutches and maybe people would look at him a little funny. But when he got behind the drums he commanded respect. There he was in his tuxedo. He had this big smile on behind the drums. It seemed like he was in charge. There was the drummer kicking the show. The singer would acknowledge him and he'd be laughing. He'd take on a whole different image. He was a strong influence on me at that time.

SF: My impression is that you must have had a very schooled or academic background on drums.
WC: I can't say I was a strong rudimental drummer. I had a good deal of formal training. Right before I graduated high school was when I decided I wanted to become a full-time musician. At that point I thought I was lacking something. My drumming was just based on what I'd been listening to, and maybe from picking up tips from drummers like "Sticks." I had no formal training and I'd been playing about four years. I did shows in the Catskills and got some experience playing, but, I felt like maybe I needed to know more. My reading skills were just things I'd picked up. I got through shows in the Catskills that weren't, obviously the most demanding in a reading sense. I felt that training would be better.

So I studied with John Bock in Elmsford, NY. John had studied with Henry Adler. John really worked on my technique a lot right away. The first thing that bugged me on the first day was that he didn't like the way I was handling the left stick. It irked me because I'd been playing for money at that point, but he kept on bugging me about that. We worked a lot on technique, using different exercises based on the rudiments. I'd say the bounce was the crucial turning point. John felt that the bounce was the foundation for good technique in drumming.

It seemed like it was never going to happen. Then one day, everything that he was talking about fell into place. I was sitting there practicing these exercises and thinking about what he'd said: "Let the stick do the work. Feel the bounce off the drum." It fell into place and seemed like it released a tremendous amount of technique all of a sudden. He also worked with reading a lot.

After that I went to Berklee College of Music in Boston. One of the main reasons I went to John was because I felt I'd be inadequate at Berklee if I didn't. When I got there, I found that the only thing I lacked mostly was my reading. But, a lot of guys didn't have the experience that I had. It was an awkward situation. The theory and all the other classes were good, but from a playing standpoint I wasn't getting what I wanted out of it. They put you in ensembles on your reading ability. My reading wasn't up to par, but my playing was on a different level than my reading. It was a good experience and I got more knowledge as a musician out of it.

SF: Do you feel that a drummer should definitely attend a music school in order to become a professional?
WC: I think a good teacher is crucial, especially in the beginning. A good teacher can keep you from bad habits and give you direction. But, it has to be someone who you respect. Also, playing any kind of gig that you can play will help.
SF: Did you graduate from Berklee?
WC: No. I just went one year. I was anxious to play. We had an original jazz group up there. It was kind of a wild experience. It was a band where I never had to listen to a record; where I never had to listen to how another drummer played. The keyboard player would play what he thought and ask, "What do you think will fit?" We tried different things. It was really wild to be in a situation where you could play free like that. That was my first chance to play long drum solos, which was interesting. I think I really enjoyed doing that.

SF: How did you get the circus gig?
WC: I was living in Orlando at the time so I was down in the area where Ringling Bros, had the park that they built. They had a permanent base for Circus World. I was just looking to do something different, so I spoke to the bandleader. I used to work at this Dixieland club in Orlando on Sunday nights and he was there. I spoke to him about the possibility of going out there. He told me to come out. I went and was just blown away by what they were doing. You'd never think of what was involved in playing the show and how demanding the drumming spot was. I really got a bug to do that. I taped the show and observed it two days. I came in the next day to listen to it. I'd been listening to the tape in between the sets on my gig every night and tried to get everything settled in my mind. What awed me was how quickly it went from one tune to the next. You might be doing the "Theme From S. W. A. T." for 24 bars. Instantly there'd be a cut and it would zip real fast into a 2/4 mambo or something. Then it would zap into something else. It impressed me that in each act there were so many different styles and drastic tempo changes.

I came in to listen the next day—and I didn't know if he was pulling my leg—but the drummer said that his stomach bothered him. He got real sick. He said, "Do you think you can play the show?" He caught me off guard. I said, "I think I kind of have the grasp of it, but I can't say." He said, "I don't think I can play. You'd better get up there." So I got thrown right into it. Maybe that was good. And they didn't have any music at that time at all.

SF: You were playing the show by ear?
WC: Yeah. Since that time I've made up cheat sheets. I have each act listed and at least each tune, what style and tempo and what meter. At least someone would have a rough idea if something ever happened like that. I got up there and just had to wing it. The opening was a two-feel. The drummer gave me the okay sign and snuck off the bandstand. He didn't even stick around to help me through it. That's how I fell into the gig. After that they gave me the job as his sub a couple of days a week. Finally the other guy left and they offered me the job. I've been there ever since.

SF: Were there any aspects of your playing that you needed to brush up on for the gig?
WC: Playing rolls for an extended period of time was a little strange. On a dance gig you wouldn't necessarily do that. There could be a roll that would normally take 30 seconds. If it's a situation like an animal act, you can never tell if the animal is going to want to perform—if the bands made their cut, the roll just goes on and on. In a trapeze act if a guy does a triple, sometimes they have it just cut to a roll. If he misses it, you have to keep rolling until they set it all up again. You could be playing a roll for two or three minutes, or even longer. You never know. You know that there are 2400 people out there and all they're listening to is a drum roll, so you surely want it to be nice and smooth. You can't hide behind the band at that point.

SF: I would've assumed that there would've been precise charts written for a circus show.
WC: More recently there's music coming in with the newer stuff. Some of the new arrangements are coming through with drum parts. But, the main problem is that
it would be very hard to sit up there and read—even if the whole thing was written out—because your eyes have to be completely on the act and the conductor. He determines the tempos. The bandstand is in more of a rectangular shape. The drums are all the way on the left side facing the audience. The conductor is in the middle, sort of. Technically, he’s totally to my right. To watch him, I have to almost turn my head straight with my shoulder. But the act and everything else is straight out in front of me. You’re caught with your head making an unusual movement back and forth. I’m almost to the point where, looking straight ahead, I can see the conductor out of the corner of my eye.

**SF:** If a trapeze act, for instance, has new music for their act, does the band rehearse it alone and then perform it with the act?

**WC:** Usually we’ll play it ourselves first. We’ll get familiar with the piece. Then the act usually listens to us. If they think they like it at that point, then we’ll try to work it out. I’m almost to the point where, look—act usually listens to us. If they think they decide to try to write it straight out. It has spots where it builds so it will fit the trick. There’ll be a high point of the chorus and that will fit perfectly with when the trapeze artist is doing his trick. The end of the act has a timpani 16th note buildup to a high point with a big chord at the end which fits beautifully. The problem is, that in dealing with any kind of an act there’s always room for error. That’s where the fun comes in. One day the artist might be feeling his oats and he’s moving a little quicker. The conductor will set the tempo where he thinks it’s right. All of a sudden the act will be ahead of where the music is. We have to either speed up or slow down. It really gets to be hairy.

**SF:** Is there an historical tradition of circus drummers?

**WC:** Name drummers? I would think there might have been, but I didn’t really travel that route. I wouldn’t say I’m an historian of the circus. The guys I idolize would be mostly from the jazz and rock veins.

**SF:** Do you still practice any particular routines?

**WC:** I still do those same exercises that I learned from my teacher. The bounces with and without accents on a pad. I used to do religiously for a half hour every day. In the last year it’s fluctuated some because I might be working days and nights. That gets a little hectic. I don’t know if it’s psychological or physical, but when I do practice, I feel real loose and have the confidence that I’m going to have all the technique or endurance that I’ll need to get through the show.

**SF:** How about practice routines for your feet?

**WC:** When I’m practicing the bounces I keep my feet heel down. Sometimes during the show I’ll play with my toes on the bass drum. But, when I practice on the pad I’ll just be keeping my heels flat and I’m doing stuff with my feet as if the hi-hat and bass drum pedals were there. That’s just for a warmup.

**SF:** You don’t feel it’s essential to practice on a drumset?

**WC:** I would always, in the past, swear to anybody that the best practice was on a drumset. I still do. When I first started to play I would spend hours on the drumset. Even my teacher would say that the thing that always irked him was that when someone learns a trumpet, do they give him a rubber trumpet to start with? Why should a drummer not start on his instrument? Sometimes if I want to work something out I’ll do it on the drumset.

**SF:** What drum setup do you use on the circus gig?

**WC:** A 24” bass drum. I use double-mounted toms because that’s the setup I always used. On my own set at home I had an 8 x 12 and a 9 x 13 for 15 years. But for the circus it seemed that a little bigger was better. So I have a 9 x 13 and a 10 x 14 which seem to have a little more quality and presence. The floor tom is an 18” which seems to give a deeper, richer tone over the 16”. It also simulates more of a timpani sound. I usually use two crash cymbals. I find that a 18” thin or medium-thin cut real good. A lot of the stuff is happening so quickly that if the conductor wants you to zap that crash for the chord, I like the response to be instant. The thin crash cymbals give that. I’m also using 14” hi-hats and a 5 1/2 x 14 snare drum. I prefer that over the deeper snare drums because I like a real clean snare drum sound. The whole set is Slingerland. All the drums are wooden except for the chrome snare. Before we got this new set, I was using a Ludwig Black Beauty snare, which I really liked a lot. The feel was great and the sound was real clear and crisp and clean.

**SF:** Why did you stop using it?

**WC:** I’m just giving the new Slingerland set a chance. We don’t really have an endorsement with anybody.

**SF:** Are your drums miked when you play?

**WC:** Yes. It’s a pretty good size arena and it can be a problem making sure what you sound like on the bandstand comes through to the house that way. There are also monitors facing the bandstand. It’s a 12-piece band that really cranks and it’s all brass.

**SF:** So you don’t have to play ratchets, whistles and other sound effects?

**WC:** I have a woodblock and a cowbell which I use a lot for effects. Within the drums I try to use a lot of effects. The lead trumpet player is big on all that stuff. He’s played circuses for years. He has a whole barrage of stuff and usually works it out so that if he isn’t playing trumpet, he’s throwing in a lot of the ratchets and whistles. On the day that he’s not in, all that stuff is missing. No one else is filling the void. But I try to pretty much dictate all the effects.

The clowns totally depend on the drummer for all the effects they’re doing. They have their impression of what they’re trying to create to the audience. I might hear a guy tripping and when another guy steps over him, the floor tom-tom might be right. Maybe a cymbal. It depends. It sounds silly, but if you see the clowns do their act without any drum effects it’s like night and day.

**SF:** Are any of the clowns drummers?

**WC:** There’s one clown out there who’s a drummer, but most of them aren’t. They pretty much go along with what I recommend. The main thing to them is if there are no effects, they feel like they’re out there naked. Here’s the guy hitting him over the head with a hammer—a rubberized hammer—so to the audience it’s just silent. You have to hit the crash or the tomtom, or sometimes the cowbell gives a good effect. You could be in awe of their act and what they may do, but to them they’re looking for the drums to accent everything they do. It funny how if a clown does a triple somersault, let’s say, if it’s done silently the audience response is totally different than it is with the drums. The roll is creating the attention to attract ev-
Everyone's eyes to it, the suspense. You build the roll as the guy's in the air and it adds to it. The thing is the timing. It's funny how you get locked into these things mentally. It seems like you can almost time it after seeing the act enough. You can feel when they're going to reach the climax. I hit it and they look at me with a big smile on their faces. A lot of times they use hand gestures to acknowledge the crowd after they do something. I'll try to give a cymbal crash everytime they do that. Sometimes I almost know when they're going to do it.

SF: Have you ever blown it?

WC: Oh yeah. With the clowns, each one tries to do the gags with their own individual style. I have to be aware and watch who is doing the act. Let's say they're going to hit a guy over the head with a hammer. One guy will bring the hammer back and bring it down evenly. The next guy will hesitate in bringing it back and bring it down slowly. That's where you can get caught with your pants down. You don't want to give the cymbal crash while he's still got the hammer in the air. Usually they only burn me once.

SF: Do the clowns ever try to screw up the band on purpose?

WC: Yeah. I think sometimes they do. Ninety per-cent of the time you're prepared for it. But, something that adds confusion to the whole thing is that you don't have the luxury of sitting there catching the crash, cowbell or whatever. While you're doing that there's a whole piece of music going on. There's a whole arrangement and syncopated band figures. Sometimes you have to syncopate a band figure while catching a clown hitting a guy over the head three times with a hammer. You have to keep the time going and catch the hitting of the hammer which is totally out of meter with the tune. Yet you don't want to send the band down the toilet.

Two other people I studied with are Jim Chapin and Don Lamond. Jim's technique of independence helped me on the drums in the circus. There I'd be playing the "Theme from S. W.A.T." with all this syncopation going on, and all of a sudden I'm playing a roll and then trying to accent somersaults in the air and keeping the time going! It's difficult. There was no one there to teach me this so I had to come up with things that I thought helped. It's like if you're playing a syncopated funk rhythm and all of a sudden you've got to go to a roll. If you just go to the roll the whole bottom is going to fall out. So I'm keeping the bass drum pattern going and trying to keep the sock cymbal either on a strong "2" and "4," or if it's an 8th-note rock tune, I might keep an 8th-note feel with the hi-hat and keep the funk feel with the bass drum. But, then I'm also keeping the roll steady and accenting with my hands. My feet are kind of keeping the time.

SF: Do you have a next goal set after you leave the circus?

WC: I enjoy the circus a lot. It's always a challenge and it's always demanding. I can never get up there and say I don't feel good and just lay back. It's always physically demanding, and demanding from a drumming standpoint. But, I also have aspirations to do other things. I've been kicking around the idea of putting a band together. I thought that maybe going out with a name act again would be something I'd like to do. I've played with some semi-name acts in the past and there was a lot of excitement involved in it. I'm in the process of trying to put together a contemporary group, and—like a million other people—maybe cut a demo. I'd like to recreate the hooah that Krupa had in the '30s, in contemporary music in the '80s.
Primer For the School Band Drummer

The young, school-band percussionist often overlooks the fact that band and orchestra percussion instruments, like other musical instruments, need care and attention to keep them in good working order. In this article we'll look at several groups of percussion instruments and suggest some tips for proper care and maintenance. Keep in mind that all percussion instruments should be cleaned periodically, cleaned and lubricated where necessary. And like all other musical instruments, they must be stored in safe places when not in use, away from extremes in temperature and temperature and unauthorized personnel. Let's look at each major group individually.

TIMPANI

Timpani bowls, particularly in the school-band situation, will invariably become dented after a period of time. When this occurs, remove the head and hammer out the dents with a hard rubber hammer. Work from the edges to the center of the dent. Check the timpani base for security. Be certain all screws, nuts and tension rods are both secure and lubricated, replacing worn parts as needed. The tension spring on the timpani pedal should also be adjusted and lubricated.

Occasionally, timpani heads need cleaning. A mild soap and warm water should be used on plastic heads. Lukewarm water only is best for calf skins. In both cases, keep the water (and soap) away from the hoop.

When installing a new timpani head, remove the old head and rub the rims of the drums with steel wool. Then apply a light coat of paraffin on the shell rim and remount the head. Be sure the wire snares are kept tensioned when the drum is not in use. The shells can be kept clean by occasional waxing.

Use a sturdy snare drum stand at all times and avoid forcing the support arms or leg braces when folding the stand for storage. See to it that all nuts, bolts and screws are secure. Be sure the support arms are in their proper positions before placing the snare drum on the stand. Never rest the drum on the rubber-tipped ends of the support arms. This is the fastest way to break the snare head.

Bass drums should also be regularly checked. Use a sturdy bass drum stand, and cases or covers for transporting or storage.

CYMBALS

One of the most important items to check are the leather straps on hand cymbals as they do wear out with continued use. Suspended cymbal stands should be checked for missing screws and bolts on a regular basis. Consult with a professional, or write direct to the manufacturer for further information should the cymbal develop a crack. Cymbals should also be cleaned at least once or twice each school year. A mild solution of oxalic acid applied with a soft brush works well. Be sure to scrub parallel to the tone grooves. Rinse and dry with a soft cloth. It’s also wise to avoid storing cymbals in cramped places where they are under pressure and susceptible to bending. Much better to store them in a pouch, trap case, or on a safe shelf in the band room.

SNARE AND BASS DRUMS

Plastic snare drum heads are unquestionably recommended for the school percussion section. The head must always be evenly tensioned for the best tonal response. To clean the batter head, remove it from the drum and clean with a mild abrasive. Then rinse and allow it to dry. Apply a thin coat of paraffin on the shell rim and remount the head. Be sure the wire snares are kept tensioned when the drum is not in use. The shells can be kept clean by occasional waxing.

Use a sturdy snare drum stand at all times and avoid forcing the support arms or leg braces when folding the stand for storage. See to it that all nuts, bolts and screws are secure. Be sure the support arms are in their proper positions before placing the snare drum on the stand. Never rest the drum on the rubber-tipped ends of the support arms. This is the fastest way to break the snare head.

Bass drums should also be regularly checked. Use a sturdy bass drum stand, and cases or covers for transporting or storage.

MALLET PERCUSSION

Xylophone and marimba bars can periodically be cleaned and waxed with a thin coat of paste wax. Damaged bars should be sent to the manufacturer for precise replacement. A great deal of damage occurs to mallet percussion instruments when they are not in use. Therefore, it’s essential to keep the instruments covered when they are not being used, and never set anything on top of them. Resonators can also be waxed occasionally and care should be taken to avoid denting delicate resonators.

With vibraphones, check and oil the motor according to the manufacturer’s instructions. It’s also wise to check for worn cords, malfunctions of the damper pedal, and defective electrical cords and end connections.

MISCELLANEOUS PERCUSSION

Tambourine: To aid thumb rolls, treat the head with string bass rosin. Check all jingles and tacks, and be sure the head is covered when stored.

Triangle: Do not use anything other than a metal triangle beater. Have a specific place to store the triangle and the beaters.

Woodblock: An occasional coat of furniture wax will help to maintain the woodblock’s appearance.

Temple Blocks: Use soft mallets to avoid denting the wood. Fine furniture wax can be used here as well.

Gongs: The importance of a sturdy gong stand cannot be overly stressed. Suspension materials, such as nylon rope, should always be checked on a regular basis.

A little bit of care, common sense, and preventive maintenance can go a long way towards preserving and protecting the instruments of your percussion section. When in doubt about anything related to care or repair, check the manufacturer’s instructions and suggestions.

“I find when choosing a kit, the two main things to keep in mind should be sound quality (of course) and durability. No matter what your budget, make sure that you’re pleased with the sound of what it is you’re buying. After all, this instrument is your medium for musical expression. Also, keep an eye out for construction. With the kind of gigging most players are doing today, a set has to be able to handle abuse. You don’t want to find yourself in the middle of a set and discover that your kit is falling apart. That’s the reason I’d recommend Tama drums to anyone looking for a set. Tama makes full sounding, well built drums in a variety of models and prices within the limits of just about anyone’s budget.”

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Endorsements: Good or Bad?

There are so many rumors in the music business regarding endorsements that young drummers don't know what to believe. There are stories about drummers receiving thousands of dollars for agreeing to play a certain drumset.

It can be confusing and disappointing to go to a concert and see your favorite drummer using equipment he doesn't endorse. For example, he might be using a different pedal, snare drum or cymbal than the ads proclaim. Who is at fault, the artist or the company? It's hard to say because each situation is different.

Bob McKee is an excellent drummer and teacher living and working in Cleveland, Ohio. Many years ago, Bob helped to field test Rogers Drums. At that time, Rogers was owned by the H. S. Grossman Company, also located in Cleveland.

On the cover of the Rogers catalog at that time was a picture of Bob McKee taken as he was playing a drumset. The picture was taken from the back, sort of over Bob's shoulder. In other words, you could not see his face.

While traveling and doing clinics, I ran into many young drummers who asked, "Do you know who is on the cover of the Rogers catalog?" In most instances, before I had time to reply, the drummer would say, "That's my teacher," or "That's my friend."

In every instance the name given was never Bob McKee. In order to impress the student, the teacher or friend had told them, "This is me on the cover." Since the face was not shown, a number of people used this trick to impress others. Actually, it was more than a trick. It was a lie! The moral is: don't believe everything you hear.

Another trick to impress young drummers is to proclaim, "I get all of my equipment free." In most instances the drummer doing the bragging has bought and paid for the equipment, even though a company may be running an ad featuring him.

Endorsements

Most companies will provide a big-name artist with free equipment in return for advertising the artist with their equipment. Usually, the companies that are interested in improving their products will ask the artist to field test equipment before it is manufactured and offered to the public. This practice serves the artist, the company and the consumer because the result is better equipment.

Some companies just want to use the artist's name and couldn't care less about improving the product, just as long as it sells. It is this group of companies that is experiencing the greatest difficulty in the present economy. However, I should add that most companies do want honest feedback and do want to make good products.

Artists

Most artists feel that the publicity obtained by an endorsement is valuable to their career. Others see it as a status symbol. "I have really arrived; I am getting a lot of publicity." There is some truth to this. Companies want to advertise artists who have established themselves.

However, an ad will not make you a star. You have to do that yourself. Your reputation is based upon how well you play, with whom and how much exposure the group gets on records, concerts, TV, etc.

Artists who become publicity hounds and endorse virtually anything just to get their picture in a magazine do everyone a disservice. When the artist loses credibility, his endorsement means nothing. His endorsement could even hurt a product.

The only way to tell if an artist is true to himself and the equipment he uses is his track record. If he tends to stay with a certain product for a long period of time, he must really like the product. If he continually uses the same equipment on tour that he advertises, then one could assume he believes in the product.

Business

Sometimes an artist will leave a company because of the management. Large corporations are, as a rule, the most difficult for the artist to deal with. Giant corporations that buy music companies unfortunately have a record of alienating artists, cheapening their products and raising prices.

The communications breakdown occurs when a company elects people to high positions who are not sensitive to music and musicians. All they care about is profit. These companies come off as unfeeling, stupid and arrogant. And indeed, they often are just that.

The companies who do well year after year have key people in management who like music, musicians and the music business.

The Other Side of the Story

Some unscrupulous artists will promise anything just to get as much free equipment as possible. There are genuine horror stories about artists selling equipment that they were given for their own personal use.

I have actually seen more than one artist endorsing two different drumsets in the same magazine. This hurts all of us.

The worst one of all is when an artist says, "I don't really like this stuff all that much, but they pay me to use it."

When companies have been burned in this way, they tend to have less faith in artist endorsements and in musicians in general.

Two-Way Street

When entering into an agreement with a company, it is important to discover the company's reputation for dealing with artists. Ask questions and talk to artists who have had experience with the company. Talk to the people in the company and ask them what their program is. Talk to the local drumshop and get their view of the company. Talk to a lawyer if you feel it would be helpful.

Make sure that you really do like the equipment and intend to use it. Don't sign up just to get your picture in a magazine. Develop a reputation for being truthful and for keeping your agreements.

Remember: it takes years to develop a really good reputation and only minutes to develop a bad one—and bad news travels fast.

Changes

Times, music and equipment are always changing. In corporations the management changes every few years. The artist may also be changing. He may be in a different musical situation and honestly require new and/or different equipment. He
may hear a new instrument and decide that he prefers it over what he has been using. These are all valid reasons for changing companies and products.

Integrity

If you decide to leave a company, for whatever reason, do it with style. Write a letter to the company and explain that you have decided to play another product. If you have any products “on-loan,” offer to return them. Thank the company for providing you with advertising, products and for supporting your career.

Whenever you leave a company (or a band), there will be someone who says something bad about you. People like to blame the other guy to save face.

However, if you consistently operate in an ethical manner, things will work out for you. You will be respected as a person, as an artist and as an endorser. You will also have respect for yourself.
Watching Sue Hadjopoulos on percussion and Larry Tolfree on drums, one would think they'd been playing with Joe Jackson for eons, and certainly working together for even longer. Neither of the above assumptions is accurate. Tolfree has been working with Jackson for only two albums in as many years, and Hadjopoulos has been a group member only since March, 1982 and one album.

Their backgrounds are as different as night and day; Larry born in England with little formal training and Sue a New Yorker with an extensive musical education. Sue was initially classically trained on flute, taking private lessons for six years. Her father, however, was a drummer, and she became so interested in the drums that she lost interest in the flute. At 17, she played her first professional gig as a drummer and shortly thereafter, she bought some congas, then timbales. While attending Columbia University, where she obtained a BA in anthropology and ethnomusicology, she studied music privately and immersed herself in the salsa business. She hooked up with Latin Fever, a 14-piece woman band and finally went to Mannes School of Music for a music curriculum. While primarily doing session work, Sue answered an audition call that required knowledge of salsa music. She had never even heard of Joe Jackson.

"When I came in, I had no idea what they were going to do because none of the albums prior to that had any percussion. He played the demo of his new stuff, which of course, was very syncopated and percussive and immediately my ideas started going. So he said, 'Let's listen to a few of these things and why don't you play along with the band? I want you to put in what you think you would want to hear on these songs.' So we proceeded to play the songs and I threw in what I had immediately thought I had heard. Apparently they liked it."

For Larry, there was no formal audition. He grew up in Jackson's hometown, so both musicians had been aware of one another for some time. Larry has been playing for 15 years and is self-taught, "by playing to Stones records and all that. I knew I wanted to be a drummer years before I was 18, but my parents didn't allow me to have a drum kit because we lived in a close community and they felt the noise would make them unpopular. At 18, I was able to get enough money together to get a kit, which is what I did. I said, 'I'm bringing some drums home whether you like it or not. I'm of age now.' And that was it. I worked a normal job and each night, I came home and sat in my bedroom and practiced rigorously, as well as all day Saturday and Sunday. I did that for six months and I had the police up all the time."

After six months, he began playing in bands. He worked on a cruise liner, five hours a night, six nights a week, dressed to the hilt, including bow tie, in 100° weather. He also worked in a band called Linx, containing two drummers plus percussion, and Planets which had minor success in England.

"I wish I had training, quite honestly," Larry admitted, and when asked whether he ever did anything to work on his time, he replied, "No, and I wish I had. It shows sometimes because I can be inconsistent in my time."

That's debatable. The precision with which he plays Jackson's successful 'Steppin' Out,' which was done with a drum computer in the studio, belies that statement.
by Robyn Flans

Sue & Hadjopoulous

everything as your main instrument. My forte is Latin percussion, but I want the mallet training for versatility, so I've been taking lessons. The biggest difference there is that you have to learn special orientation. It's very frustrating, because as a musician, I can read, I know the notes and that's not the problem. The mallet instruments you don't physically touch except through a stick. So if you're going to play an octave, you have to learn what an octave feels like through space. It's a whole different thing. I had to stop the lessons to go on tour, though, but I'll resume them as soon as I get back."

"If I ever have a son and he wants to play drums, he will be taught properly," Larry said, ending the discussion.

The women's plight is indeed of concern to Sue. "It's not as hard for a percussionist, but for a trap drummer, there is still that attitude that a woman can't play that strong and be that backbone of a band. The way you get gigs as a freelance artist, which is what I really am, is by recommendation. When you are first starting out, it's very hard to get work because no one will hire you, but once you get in on that lower level, it seems that you don't have to be quite as good because of the mere fact that you're a woman. They don't expect as much from you and then they don't take you seriously. I had an experience where I was actually sitting with my drums and equipment and somebody said to one of the other musicians standing nearby, 'Oh, are those your drums?' Another time, I was with some guys and we were going to a rehearsal. I was playing traps at the time and we met three others at another house. Introductions were made and one of the guys said, 'John, where's the drummer?' The next place we went, someone said, 'But we're missing one person.' You are thought to be a girlfriend or just somebody there. Who knows who you are? You can't possibly be... That outward kind of stuff doesn't happen as much anymore because there's a circle of people who already know me. I think, though, if I were a guy, I would have been on a different level immediately. I'm certain of it. It takes women a lot longer. It's hard for guys too because there's just too much competition out there, but there's always talk about 'this phenomenal guy.' Well, there are phenomenal women out there too. I just want to be a musician. The fact that I am a female is unfortunately taken by some in a positive or negative way. People don't say, 'Here's this 14-piece male orchestra.' We've got to get past all that to the actual playing, I just want people to consider me a good player.

"I'm mostly talking about the musicians, although the audience does cat call sometimes. I used to get really angry about it, but now I really laugh. I have stories that I can tell at parties that make people absolutely hysterical."

There are many interesting elements that comprise a Joe Jackson show. First, Joe makes no secret about the fact that he doesn't like audience response during the show. With that energy contained, how does that feel to the musicians? "That's Joe," Sue smiles warmly. "He wants them to only applaud if they really appreciate what he's doing and he wants them to really hear all the nuances in a song and the music. But people come in there excited and they're interested. They are loving it, but they just want to applaud and yell and scream and I think that's good too. I like people having a good time. I don't want them to throw things, but I do want them to react. Sometimes if they're too quiet it does make you wonder."
The sheer diversity of the music keeps the interest for audience and players alike. Jackson touches on the blues, new wave, rock, swing and Latin in the course of a show and Sue and Larry particularly enjoy that aspect.

"I like the variety and with this particular band, he wrote the last album with percussion in mind, so we had that salsa trip. By the way, I'm going to say this now for all those people out there who criticized Joe for doing that material. I am half Puerto Rican and half Greek and I was brought up loving salsa music and I know salsa music. Very often, if people don't see a Spanish name, they'll put it down saying, 'Well, now he's decided to do Latin music. Isn't this pretentious?' And yet, he did a lot of research and I resent people saying things like that without their knowing what they're talking about," Sue said, then getting back to her original point.

"This has been great for me because I had to interpret the material from previous albums where there was no percussion. It's great when I get to play a wide range of instrumentation during the show. I don't get bored for a minute."

"Neither do I," Larry agreed.

Larry, however, does not have the free reign to create as Sue does.

"It's the discipline that Joe has in his music," Larry explained. "He knows exactly what he wants from everybody."

"But he doesn't tell us what to play," Sue interjected.

"He tells me what drum rhythms he wants and if I want to put fills in, okay, providing they're tasteful, of course," Larry clarified.

"Well, he doesn't tell me what to play," Sue said.

"Well, he doesn't tell me what to play. I have a lot more freedom," Sue said.

"Well, that's fine because that's what percussion is all about," Larry commented. "The drums have to be a certain way and I'm quite happy to do that because I enjoy listening to everyone around me. I like the music and the simpler you play, the better it feels, hopefully."

"I think it's basically just working together as a unit; as a band," Sue summarized. "You have to listen to what's going on around you and you have to play within that framework and be aware of what's happening. I most definitely have to work with the drummer, in not just fitting in, but we have a rapport. It's really horrible when you have a drummer who's not going to listen to what you're doing, because then you're just playing all over each other, on top of each other. A lot of drummers don't know how to work with a percussionist and vice versa. A drummer who is not used to working with a percussionist might overplay in spots where a percussionist might play. Larry and I really worked out well. We've worked out parts and I'm a spacy player too. What you don't play is as important as what you do play. So we work out rhythmic patterns that interlock."

"It's nothing we've really thought about," Larry said.

"Yes we have," Sue argued. "I've thought of patterns."

"Well, you more than I, being a percussionist. I'm just playing straight."

"We haven't sat down and said, 'Okay, this break is yours and this break is yours,' because we're both professional musicians," Sue explained. "He'll have a certain rhythm he'll pick for a song and I'll just integrate a lock-in type thing."

"But basically," she continued. "I work with the band. Generally I wait for the band to have the song down and then I work with the drums and bass and work within that framework, but, of course, with the total band surrounding it. It depends on what I'm doing. In this band I'm primarily a rhythm section player, so I'll work that way. If I were to be doing color, sometimes I like to hear a vocal on it because I might have to add little bells or triangles or something. It really depends on exactly what I'm doing on percussion."

The two worked together to create an exciting bit of theatrics during their solo section in the tune "Look Sharp." The idea was formed years ago when Larry was with Linx, and it developed further with Larry on timbales and Sue on congas.

"It was a good idea to go down from fours to twos to ones. It was good because it was more of a cadence type thing and it really gets them going," Sue said.

"It does because everybody feels the competition," Larry suggested.

"And then we do a big theatrical thing like we're irritated at each other," Sue laughed. "I throw my sticks and he jumps up and we really get the stage act going. That's what is fun about the live thing."

How she chooses the appropriate instrument for the specific moment is a question that is difficult to answer but the crux of
“Shure's Headset Mic keeps us great drummers from annoying us great singers.”
Keith Knudsen—Doobie Brothers

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the PROS go
"New World Man"

This month’s Rock Chart is the latest hit by Rush, "New World Man," from the album, Signals. The sound of Rush is a blend of heavy metal and thoughtful lyricism. Neil Peart's contribution to both is obvious. As a first-rate drummer and a sensitive songwriter, Peart's talent and musicianship have been a major factor in Rush's success. No doubt, Neil Peart will be a musical force for years to come.
MAKING MONEY MAKING MUSIC
by James W. Dearing
Publ: Writer's Digest Books
9933 Alliance Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45242
Price: $12.95
Many musicians aim for the top, but in reality, most of the working musicians — and most of the money — can be found in the "middle," that is, on the local level of clubs, restaurants, receptions, and so on. Jim Dearing's book explores the many opportunities that can be found within one's community, and then gives practical advice on how to get those jobs. He explores such subjects as bookings, publicity, finances, equipment and rehearsing. He also offers advice on related areas such as teaching, home recording, becoming an agent, and songwriting. Some of the information is superficial, and will be obvious to anyone who has ever been in a band. But Dearing does bring up a number of topics that one may not have considered, and in these economic times, everyone needs to check out every possible option. Jim Dearing's book is a good place to start.

Rick Mattingly

PROGRESSIVE APPROACH TO COMMERCIAL ROCK DRUMMING
by Kenny Zail
Publ: Belwin Mills
Melville, NY
Price: $5.00
This is a meaningful book, despite the fact that the title may be a bit deceiving. An understanding of just what this book is, and what it isn't, is vital.

This is not a rock-rhythms book designed for direct musical application, as much as it is a systematic study to aid in the development of coordinated independence in the rock drumming idiom. There is a difference.

Zail builds his text on the logical premise that independent coordination is developed by working numerous, carefully graded snare and bass drum figures against a repetitive cymbal pattern, in this case, quarter notes, straight 8th and upbeats. Six etudes round it off, nicely summarizing much of the material which precedes them.

One should be forewarned, however, that this book is very similar in concept to the Chapin book, in that coordination exercises are not meant to be randomly lifted off the page and dropped into any musical setting. Zail's book is simply a means to an end, and perhaps "Progressive Approach To Rock Coordination" might have been a more clearly defined title.

Mark Hurley

JAZZ AND ROCK BEATS FOR THE NEW DRUMMER
by James Morton
Publ: Mel Bay Publications
Pacific, MO
Price: $2.95
Mr. Morton's approach is basic and logical: from stick grip, to kit set-up, to unambiguous instructions and musical admonitions, to foundational rock, jazz, and brush patterns. The book is well organized for the beginning drummer.

Books of this "first rock beat within thirty minutes"—type are inherently superficial. But an imaginative and musical teacher can easily impose some musical structure on Mr. Morton's exercises. By musical structure I mean dynamics, accents, tempo markings, etc.

Mr. Morton has devised a system of boxes, representing beats, and abbreviations within those boxes, representing which part of the kit is played on what particular beat, to aid those who cannot read drum notation/notes.

In summary, this is a good introductory pattern text for the beginner who needs the important self-confidence of accomplishment.

Ed Soph

FUSION DRUM STYLES
by James Morton
Publ: Mel Bay Publications
Pacific, MO
Price: $5.95
Here is a meticulously organized compendium of current drum licks in the styles funk, reggae, Latin, fusion, and odd time. There is also a short section of "One Measure Solo Fills." There are more patterns composing stylistic "tributes" to Cobham, DeJohnette, Gadd, Garibaldi, Mason, and Tony Williams. The final section of the book consists of short charts with which the student may try his or her skills of interpretation and reading.

The strength of Mr. Morton's book is in the introduction. Here he discusses, briefly yet provocatively, the "Demands of Today's Drummer," the "Role of Today's Drummer," "Primary Facets of Drumming Musicianship," and "Types of Coordination."

Such facets of musicianship as dynamics and tempo markings are left to the discipline of the student or the imagination of the teacher. If you look hard enough you will find some accents. Yet, if the ideas of Mr. Morton's introduction are understood and assimilated, the exercises can become musical, rather than simply mechanical patterns.

Ed Soph
CONTEMPORARY SOLOS FOR VIBRAPHONE AND MARIMBA
by Gitta Steiner
Publ: Belwin Mills
Melville, NY
Price: $3.00
This is a collection of eleven solos for either the vibraphone, marimba or combination of the two. While I would rate the collection advanced, the music is not as difficult, nor of the same caliber, as some of Steiner’s earlier compositions, such as the Three Pieces for Solo Vibraphone. This is a good collection for advanced undergraduate-level musical and technical concerns. The solos could also be used for recital material on that same level. Most require four mallet technique with the remainder requiring two. All selections are of short duration and concise form with each solo concentrating on a specific musical style or ambiance (scherzo, ragtime, gigue, night music, etc.). A larger, more comprehensive selection/exploration of these various styles, as opposed to one short selection per style, would have been of better educational value. Nevertheless, these solos would make a good addition to the daily practice routine of the serious mallet student.

Donald Knaack

CONGA, BONGO, AND TIMBALE TECHNIQUES
Live And In The Studio
by David Charles
Publ: Marimba Productions
487 West End Avenue
New York, New York 10024
Price: $15.00
This book is presented in three sections. The first section deals with the primary techniques of playing congas, bongos, timbales and claves. There is extensive text which gives pertinent facts about each instrument as well as the proper method of playing. Pictures, which illustrate hand position and ways of obtaining the variety of sounds which come from “hand” drums, are included in the text. Notational practice exercises are included for each drum. These exercises help to develop control of hand movement and accuracy in producing open tones, slap, muffled tones, finger roll, et al. The basic rhythm for each drum and for claves is given: the Tumbao (basic conga pattern), the Martillo (basic bongo pattern), the Cascara Rhythm (played on the shell of the timbales), the Abanico (also played on the timbales) and the Clave Rhythm (the heartbeat of the music).

Section two deals with improvisation in an easy to understand way, using a variety of rhythmic examples. The section concludes with a Quinto solo in six-four time which illustrates the approach to soloing in a very concise manner.

Section three gives insight into recording studio performance, and includes miking techniques, chart interpretation, working with a click track and more.

This book is very well presented and provides information about the authentic playing techniques of these drums. Anyone wishing to begin the study of bongos, congas and timbales would benefit from this book. The book includes a soundsheet, which allows the student to hear what the drums should sound like.

Glenn Weber

18 RUDIMENTAL SNARE DRUM DUETS
by Joe Lambert
Publ: Mel Bay Publications
Pacific, MO 63069
Price: $2.95
The 18 rudimental duets contained in this book use all 26 Standard American Drum Rudiments, Swiss Rudiments and a number of compound strokes and variations. In addition to the commonly used 2/4 and 4/4 meters, the author has added duets in 5/8, 3/4, 7/8, 9/8, 38 and 12/8 meters. The “odd meter” duets are interesting and add a contemporary flair to the rudiments. Each duet has a specified tempo which makes them even more challenging.

This book can be used by intermediate and advanced students and contains material suitable for performance or “just plain fun.”

Glenn Weber

CYMBAL COORDINATION
by Ralph C. Pace
Publ: Drum Book Music
White Plains, NY
Price: $5.95
This is not a new book, but thanks to a distribution deal with Columbia Pictures Publications, the book is back in print, after having been unavailable for several years.

The majority of these studies are devoted to playing quarter notes on the bass drum and snare drum, against the standard jazz ride-cymbal rhythm. There is a short section on brush beats, and then different cymbal rhythms are presented, which can be applied to the original exercises. The book then has a section devoted to dotted 8th and 16th rhythms on snare and bass against the jazz cymbal rhythm. The book concludes with a biography of Louie Bellson, and a short interview with him.

Mark Hurley
Analyzing Style

Question: What do Stewart Copeland, Steve Smith, Keith Knudsen, Steve Gadd, Dennis St. John, Jeff Porcaro, Charlie Watts, Liberty DeVitto and Max Weinberg all have in common?

Answer: You ... if you're playing in a top-40 club band. And if you take your job seriously, you can face a tremendous amount of frustration trying to meet the musical standards set by those gentlemen, and the dozens of others whose work you are expected to present to your audience. After all, you might be an exceptional player in your own right, but you're faced with an impossible situation. Stewart wouldn't be expected to sit in with the Stones and lay it down like Charlie; Max might feel uncomfortable playing the funky syncopations of Keith or Jeff. And I doubt if Dennis and Steve would enjoy changing places. But night after night, your group is performing music by each of these great players. How do you handle it?

Let's examine the problem. You are paid to do a job, and that is to play competently and entertainingly in a variety of popular styles. Besides the top-40 music featuring the drummers I've mentioned, you're likely to pull a couple of country tunes out of the bag, and maybe even a swing tune or two. Disco is still popular in a lot of places, along with soul and various Latin styles. Throw your own personal musical tastes and influences into this melting pot, along with the original licks you cherish, and it's hard to figure out what to play, what not to play, and how to go about deciding who you are as a musician.

As I've talked with players in other club bands about this situation, I've come across two recurring approaches to solving the problem:

1) The total duplication approach: a virtually transcribed version of each part for each individual song. I don't like this approach for two reasons: First, you can't honestly hope to achieve total duplication, since you're not the original artist, nor are you performing under the same conditions as the recording. Even the recording artists themselves don't duplicate their original parts note for note when performing live.

Second, when you try to re-create someone else's work, you're not doing any creating yourself, and music is a creative art (even in a top-40 format). If all you do is try to play other people's parts, then you're using other people's imaginations, and denying your own. You are using skills you've probably worked hard to develop, but using them only to copy, not to originate. Picasso didn't spend his life making "paint-by-numbers" pictures. Why should you perform "play-by-numbers" musical parts?

2) The, "To-Hell-with-the-original, we're-going-to-do-it-our-way!" approach. I don't wholly subscribe to this theory either. We have to realize that club bands are hired to play songs that are familiar to the audience due to repeated radio airplay. If you're going to play top-40 (and this goes for popular country, soul, or any other style), it's self-defeating to make the songs too different from the original versions. All you'll do is alienate your audience. You owe it to them to keep the tunes recognizable so they'll be comfortable with them, and thus with you. If you can't live without being totally "off the wall" with each tune, then restrict yourself to original material, or go into a show format where fresh arrangements are what make the show appealing.

I think there's a way to reconcile these two different approaches, through what I call the character analysis of any given tune, or any particular drummer. Rather than transcribing the song note for note, concentrate on the unique character of the playing; how the music is structured and where the emphasis is placed. If you're studying with a teacher, work together on this. Listen to a song you wish to perform and compare your impressions of the song's key elements. A trained, objective ear can often hear qualities or nuances you might overlook. In some cases, it's easy to get a basic concept for a style of music, which can then be applied to several songs, even if they are by different artists. Disco is a classic example. A very heavy, four-beat bass drum pattern, solid back beat on "2" and "4," and either a doubled 16th-note hi-hat pattern or an open/close pattern on the "and" of each beat, and you pretty much sum up the character of the standard disco beat. From there on, any variations or fills are up to the individual player. With hard rock, you might want to note how the hi-hat is played half-open and ringy, usually with just straight quarter or 8th notes against a heavy back-beat. This heavy ride might carry over to the bell of a cymbal or a cowbell. Power fills tend to be triplets or 16th-note patterns across a wide range of toms.

These are, of course, oversimplifications. But if you approach a song or a style in this way, it gives you the means to establish a recognizable structure to keep the audience happy, while giving you that structure as a foundation upon which to build.

You can apply that same sort of analysis to the playing of individual drummers. What is it about Steve Smith that differentiates him from other rock drummers? How does he use his toms and ride cymbal to keep a steady rhythm while still creating a varied melodic pattern? Listen to "Don't Stop Believing" for an excellent example. Keith Knudsen's use of syncopation between bass drum and snare is a fundamental feature of the Doobie Brothers' later style. You don't have to duplicate his patterns, but you should be aware of what the patterns are made up of, so you can create your own in a tastefully similar (if not identical) manner. With Stewart Copeland's playing, a strong reggae feel is present in his basic patterns, but the liveliness of his fills reflects his jazz influences. His tuning and dynamic snare attack are also key elements that make his playing recognizable. You can incorporate such elements into your performance without sublimating your creativity. When it comes to Charlie Watts, the great key is his simplicity. If you can capture the way Charlie uses space to allow the rest of the music the room it needs, then you have the character of the Stones' playing.

The trick is to play with understanding, as well as with technique. And the most important thing to remember is when and how to apply the analysis you've made. In music, as in any art form, it's true that contrast and shock value can work as a special effect. It is possible to put a Buddy Rich fill into a Bruce Springsteen tune for such an effect, but you wouldn't deem it appropriate to play like Buddy throughout the tune. If you're a fan of one particular style of music, or one drummer's playing, you run...
the risk of over-incorporating that style into any and all music you perform. This is the most difficult piece of musical discipline to master, because you are working against your own enthusiasm, your own tastes and your own personal enjoyment. But remember, you might otherwise be working against your source of income, because you won't be a desirable commodity to your band if you can't control your desire to shine personally, in favor of your ability to support the entire band's performance. Be aware that if you're playing David Garibaldi funk beats in a Bob Seger rock tune, the audience isn't going to care whether you've got them down perfectly. All they know is, it doesn't fit the tune, and it doesn't move them to dance.

Take comfort in the fact that you actually enjoy an advantage that most recording artists don't—you get to perform with variety. I've interviewed several major drummers who have expressed a certain boredom with the music they've been playing in concerts over the past few years. They aren't really allowed to stretch out, because their audiences expect to hear their hits over and over. You, at least, are playing the hits of many different groups, so you do get to stretch out. Take advantage of that, and work to achieve a thorough understanding of each style of playing, as well as the highest possible degree of creativity within each one. In this way, you can keep your audiences thrilled, keep your band happy with your work, and keep yourself sane and satisfied.

Too often, brushwork has been ignored as much as possible by students and teachers alike. Naturally, this has resulted in some pretty bad brushwork in this day and age. Ed Thigpen has called upon his vast knowledge and written a book that should be included in every drummer's library, be he student or teacher, novice or professional. It's time someone wrote a definitive book on brushes and I believe that Ed Thigpen has done just that! Thank you, Ed!

Butch Miles

After speaking to Ed Thigpen and listening to the accompanying cassette tape, I've come to the conclusion that this book, *The Sound of Brushes*, is an essential element in everyone's educational library. Put it in the section marked Percussion, Drums, Contemporary. Try it! You'll like it!!

Billy Cobham

I would like to endorse your book and feel that it is a great teaching aid I would use for students. Brushes are totally ignored by so many young drummers today that I feel your book is even more valuable and should be exposed. Good luck with it and I hope it's a hit!

Harvey Mason

Ed Thigpen's *Sound of Brushes* book is a must for every serious drummer who wants to become a well-rounded musician in the music business.

Jack DeJohnette
Concerning *Rhythm Analysis and Basic Coordination*: Thanks to Ed Thigpen for giving us a book with a definite approach towards developing the creative aspect of modern drumming.

Max Roach

Send M.O. or Check in U.S. $12.95 + 2.00 postage for The Sound of Brushes and $4.95 + 1.00 postage for Rhythm Analysis and Basic Coordination to Donald Meade/Action-Reaction U.S.A. 617 East 83rd St., Chicago, ILL. 60619.

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Leroy Street / In Statu Nascendi / E.S.P. / Change of Mind / All's Well That Ends / My Ship / Coyote Blues.

We've been referring to this album as "Peter Erskine's Jazz Messengers." For those who are worried that mainstream jazz is a thing of the past, this record will reassure you that jazz is alive and well—and growing. There is strong jazz tradition on this record, but there are also contemporary influences. The musicians play with a combination of mature concepts and youthful enthusiasm. Good show, Peter!


You've Got To Have Freedom/Easy To Remember/Blues For Santa Cruz/Pharomba.

Wow! This quartet takes off like the Space Shuttle from note one until the end of the record. Idris Muhammad is a model for small group jazz drumming.

COREA, VITOUS & HAYNES


This trio recorded some classic sides for Blue Note a few years ago. Reunited again in the studio, they mix it up between free music improv and the music of Thelonious Monk. The Monk sides, in particular, are tremendous examples of trio interaction.


After You've Gone / Boogie Blues / Up And Atom / Samba Rioja / More Than You Know / Drum Boogie.

Slightly updated versions of Krupa classics, but Miles doesn't try to imitate Krupa. This is a swinging tribute to a master by one of the keepers of the flame. Write to Harry Lim Productions, 141-10 Holly Ave., Flushing, N.Y. 11355.


Burton has always utilized good composers, and he continues to do so here with tunes by Michael Gibbs, Chick Corea, Carla Bley, Charles Mingus and group member Odgren. In addition, Burton has favored "busy" drummers, and accordingly, Hyman doesn't loaf. Overall, this represents the top quality one has come to expect from Burton and ECM.


Side 1 of this album is a solo tour-de-force by Hutcherson; Side 2 finds him in a quartet setting with very distinguished associates. Either side could have been expanded into an entire album—the level of playing would certainly justify it—but by combining the more introspective lyricism of the solo side with the mainstream swing of the quartet, two different, but complementary, sides of Hutcherson are presented. Both are equally deserving of attention.


One side features the Marsalis family. The other side features the Freeman crew. Super straight-ahead jazz. DeJohnette has a brilliant solo on side two. An excellent opportunity to hear the amazing James Black. Buy it!
MUSIC AND RHYTHM—
PVC Records PVC-201. This is a benefit double lp for A World of Music Arts and Dance (The Womad Festival). It features music by The Beat, Drums of Makebukoko/Burundi, David Byrne, Lonesi Chewani & Joni Hetara, Vic Coppersmith-Heaven, Holger Czukay, Alhaji Ibrahim Abdulain & his Dagbamba Cultural Group, Ekome, Peter Gabriel, Peter Hammill, Jon Hassell, Nusrat Fateh Alik Khan & Party, Alhaji Bai Kante & Malamini Jobate, Prince Nic M'Barga & Rocaful Jazz, Morris Pert, Rico, Shankar & Bill Lovelady, Mighty Sparrow, Pete Townsend, and XTC.

An excellent album. Highly recommended.


Next time somebody writes MD and asks how to tune a drum, how to play with intensity, how to swing and how to be sensitive—I'm going to recommend this lp. There are not many people who can make you cry (in a good sense) through drumming. Blackwell's one person who can.


Beautiful communication between two master musicians. Khan plays incredible tabla. There's much for all drummers to learn in terms of sensitivity, fluidity and application of odd meters.


Concentrating on composition, Hoggard and friends perform a nice mixture of ensemble and improvisation.
Metheny preferred a light bass drum because notes tend to go—any one of the records he played on, especially the Hold Out Jackson Browne album and anything of Linda Ronstadt. I have a 24" Ludwig bass drum. I'd say use a 22" or a 24" for heavier rock playing. You can get a smaller bass drum, but you're going to get a higher sound and it won't be as loud. I'd say anything above 24" is a waste.

It's also very important to hit the bass drum consistently, because notes tend to drop out. Develop a consistent beating pattern. The arc of my bass drum beater is not particularly long. My pedal spring tension is real loose. I like to do the work myself. Tight spring tension is good if you're playing with your heel down. But, unless you're just playing straight four beats on the bass drum, to play in a loud rock band, it's almost impossible to play with your heel down. If you want to play with your heel down, you have to wear a boot with heels, believe it or not. For years I couldn't play with my heel down because I wore sneakers. I had a conversation with Buddy Rich about this. He said, "How can anybody play in sneakers?" If you look at it, you can't get the leverage. Use the heel as a lever. That's why I'm wearing boots now. If you like to play with my heel down and it gives me more control. Heel down, more control. Heel up, much more power. It's important to stress that you should keep equal dynamics on the bass drum. You've got to develop consistent dynamics, or else the bass drum gets lost. The simpler, the better. That goes for everything, but particularly the bass drum.

Another real important thing is that most drummers expect that you tune your drums and go from one room into another room. The drums sound terrible, and they wonder what's wrong! You have to tune your drums that ring a lot. If you end up playing a beat or a pattern that uses the muffled bass drum and the tom-toms that ring, sometimes they tend to be out of balance. That's something you have to work on as well. I went to hear Elvin Jones recently, and his bass drum sounded very much like a tom-tom in terms of texture. A lot of drummers do that and it works very well for certain types of music.
those drums for the room you’re in. I have to tune my drums for every concert hall and every arena I play in. Nothing ever stays the same, even though they’re mic’d. If the drum doesn’t sound good at the source, it’s not going to sound good mic’d. My drums sound basically the same whenever you’re right next to them as they do from the back of a big hall. They’re just a bit softer. It’s in the tuning. It’s not in the volume. I didn’t realize this for a long time. I thought that if you tuned them up and they sounded good in one hall, then they should sound good in another. That’s not true.

Experience tells you that sometimes your drums will sound good to you, but they’ll sound terrible out front. You have to know how to make them sound good out front. You have to trust someone’s judgement that the drums are getting the sound you want out front. If someone comes up to me and asks, “When did you stop playing the snare drum?” I know something’s wrong! Or, “Didn’t you use to play cymbals on that part?” People have done that in past tours years ago. People would say, “You guys were great, but you can’t hear the drums at all.” That’s why when you’re playing anywhere, the simpler, the better. Just keep the beat. You’ve got to learn to tune for the audience. That’s who you’ve got to please. You’ve got to make those drums sound good out front and sometimes that means you’ve got to suffer with the sound that you get for yourself. Sometimes what sounds good to you sitting behind the drums, might sound terrible out front.

You’ve got to tune for whatever room you’re in. That’s why I carry a couple of snare drums that are all tuned differently. I tune my drums “live” sounding. Your bass drum will be louder if there’s no muffling in it. And use a wood beater. Also, it’ll be louder if, when you hit the bass drum, you release the pedal and you don’t dig the beater into the head. You’ve got to pull the sound out. That takes a lot of control and control takes discipline, and a lot of rock drummers don’t have that.

Keltner continued from page 18

Kevin, our engineer, basically uses the same mic’ set up in the studio and live. He uses a Sennheiser 421. He starts out as a rule of thumb—both in the studio and live—with an EQ of +2 at 5,000 cycles, -12 at 400 cycles, +2 at 50 cycles. Basically what he’s doing here is adding a little high end, taking out some mid-range and he’s adding a little low end. Depending on the hall, or the song—if you’re in the studio—he may change it a little bit either way.

If I was playing in a club with no microphones on my drums, I’d have the bass drum tuned and set up the same way. But, I would not put any padding inside the bass drum. I’d use the same Looking Glass head and I’d maybe use Deadringers on the inside of the drum—not on the head itself—where it would touch the head just a little bit to take out that extra ring. I’d use just a small hole in the front head so it would be a little more punchy. But, it wouldn’t be as dry without the padding in the middle. I think that’d kick a club’s ass.

I use the ugliest, hardest pedal you’ve ever seen. It’s an old Rogers pedal. I can hardly even practice with that pedal. I like the pedal to feel top heavy. I play it with heel to toe and with the ball of my foot. I like for the beater ball to feel heavy, where it’s almost got a slingshot feel.

Keltner continued from page 19

I used a Caroline pedal for the second one. I used a Caroline pedal for years. I think Ronnie Tutt and I were the first guys to use Caroline pedals when they first came into Southern California. Then I found out it was too heavy, so I went back to the DW 5000, which was the Camco pedal prior to that. That’s where my heart’s always been and that’s where it’ll be. I saw Elvin Jones play with the Coltrane Quartet about 1962. There are absolutely no words to describe watching Elvin play. I noticed that he had a Gretsch pedal which was the same as the Camco. From that point on, I started using that pedal.

I’ve been playing with the spring tension on the pedal fairly loose. I may start experi...
I think the pearl finish had a lot to do with it. When you put pearl around drums it makes them flat sounding. Any drummer who doesn't believe that—tell them to take the pearl off the drums, tune it up and they'll see.

If I was playing without mic's I'd take the muffler off the bass drum and play it wide open. See, when I don't use a microphone I tune the drum lower so it will sound like it has a pretty solid bottom on it. When I use a mic' then I can tune it the way I want to tune it and still have the highs that I like on a bass drum and the bottom too.

Now I'm using a Tama King Beat pedal. The spring on it is pretty tight compared to the way other drummers use their pedals. Most drummers play with their toes. I play both ways. Eighty per-cent of my playing is with my foot and twenty per-cent is with my toes. By tightening the spring all you have to do is touch the pedal, and it has not quite as much power as using the toes. But, if you can't play with your toes you can get a lot of power with your flat foot by using a tight spring. The pedal does the work instead of your leg. It's the same as tuning your drums high instead of tuning them low. When they're real low you're doing all the work. When you tighten them up to where they cut through then the drums do all the work.

I use one microphone on my bass drum—sometimes two—on the front about two feet from the bass drum. That gives you a natural drum sound. The ringing that they supposedly can't get out of the bass drum—by setting the mic' back two feet from it, you can get the ring out of it. You've got to move it around and test it.

The bass drum sounds on records can be real deceiving. A bass drum can sound like absolute crap in person, and an engineer can just work wonders with it through EQ. Kids are trying to copy the sounds of drummers on records and they don't realize that the man has got close mic's all over his bass drum, and try every kind of head combination that you can try. It's a little expensive, but how else are you going to know?

The bass drum sounds on records can be real deceiving. A bass drum can sound like absolute crap in person, and an engineer can just work wonders with it through EQ. Kids are trying to copy the sounds of drummers on records and they don't realize that the man has got close mic's all over his bass drum, and try every kind of head combination that you can try. It's a little expensive, but how else are you going to know?

The reason the damn thing rings is because they want to stick the mic' up in the bass drum. Why is it that some guy who runs a P.A. system—with his genius mind, has got a $250,000 P.A. system in front of him with gold inlets so that there won't be no shorting in it—has to come up to a drummer and ask him to take the front head off? If they would set those mic's far enough away from the drums so that they still picked them up then you'd get a natural sound, rather than that crazy sound you get when a drummer takes a solo and all of a sudden it sounds like the building is coming down! That's from sticking the mic's all over the drums. The guy's sitting at the P.A. thinking he can control it. How can he control it when he doesn't know what the drummer's thinking? He's not a drummer. There are musicians on the bandstand who can't figure out what the drummer is doing. Other drummers can't figure out what the drummer is doing. And a cat thinks he can sit there with those knobs and bring your volume up and down. He should set those knobs at a certain level, set the mic's away from the drums so that they pick up the natural sound, and let the drummer control the volume.

I use a hard felt beater. I try to find those old Rogers beaters because they're real large. But Rogers has stopped making them large. The throw distance is about 4" or 5" for accenting and heavy stuff. Normally it's about 3".

If you're moving your drums around a lot you should check the tuning on them before it's time for you to go onstage. If you're doing a week or two in a club, once you've tuned them up they're pretty well set. Check them if you hear anything that sounds funny. They can get loose after playing awhile. As they're getting loose you'll go with the sound. The sound will change without your knowing it and it'll sound good at the same time. But, by checking that sound you'll know that it's not the sound you started off with even though it might be the sound you like. I find that when you position your drums where you don't really like them to be, it causes you to be offset. It could cause your leg to be tired.

One reason drummers who play a lot of shows do that is that they can loosen those top two and get a fairly funky sound, then tighten them up for the next tune, which might be a Count Basie chart.

The other possibility is to cut a hole in the front head. I find that to be quite effective, halfway between a double-head sound and a totally flat sound. If the hole gets much bigger than a 45-rpm record, then it's the same as taking the front head off. That's based on my own experience. The whole point is to keep a little air moving inside the bass drum so you'll get a fuller sound.

I'm surprised that so many drummers use felt beaters when they're after volume. They should put some kind of protective
pad on the bass drum head and use either wood, plexiglass or a harder bass drum beater. It's just like if you hit a tom-tom with a timpani mallet, it doesn't have nearly the same projection as it would if you hit it with a large drumstick. That's why for years, all the famous big band drummers—who are probably stylistically closer to the rock drummer than the small group jazz drummer—have used the wooden beater. I use a plexiglass beater because it's perfectly round and I always get a good angle on the head, no matter what kind of bass drum I'm playing on.

I've played a lot of different kind of bass drum heads. The Pinstripe heads are pretty good, or the clear heads, or just the Ambassador white head. They all sound pretty good.

A lot of muffling pads on the market may affect the sound of the drum too. You can get leather or something more durable, or you can go the less expensive route and use Dr. Scholls 3" x 4" pads.

There's still this misconception that the pedal spring has to be unbelievably tight in order to play quick or loud. It just has to be medium. But, if the stroke is longer, and the beater rodded out longer, then you get more power with the stroke because the head of the beater is traveling a greater distance. Also, if the pedal is set up this way, you have a better chance of hitting near center of the bass drum. As the beater gets nearer the center of the bass drum, you get a fuller sound. You can argue about whether it should be dead center or not. But, if the beater gets too far away from the center—which happens with a 24" or 26" drum—then you lose an awful lot of sound. So, there's no point in having a 26" bass drum unless you have a pedal that's set up so that you can hit fairly near the center of it.

**Borden continued from page 21**

The spring tension on my bass drum pedal is tight. I use a Camco pedal and I like the pedal to go with my foot. The beater sits back at about a 75-degree angle to the floor when it's idle. I like to use the split-footboard pedal. If I was into rock I might consider a solid footboard. I'm really into playing with my whole foot on the surface of the pedal, playing from the heel.

**Craney continued from page 21**

with these Gretsch pedals. Sonor makes some Signature pedals that I had for a while. They were almost so smooth that I couldn't get used to them. But, I like a real smooth pedal. I always use felt beaters. I have a long beater shaft, and the throw distance to the bass drum head is a pretty good distance. I go for as much throw as I can get, because my technique is always on the toe. No heel down. I like the spring tension looser. I figure I get my weightlifting while I'm out mowing. I can't stand a real tight pedal. It's an instrument, and you've got to play it that way.

**Pyle continued from page 21**

way I set them up before I got mic's! And I was getting a real good throw with it. Then I put the mic's on there and it just enhanced it. The way I play, the audience is going to hear my bass drums. I'm going to make sure of that, even if I have to stand up on the drums.
Phrasing is an integral part of modern drumset playing, in that drum phrases create the groove which sets the mood you want. They are as innumerable and original as your own imagination and creativity. Let's continue the application of the paradiddle in a musical context. Transpose the original pattern into a 12/8 time feel. Three equally displaced accents over four are formed (polyrhythm). This is used a great deal in Afro and jazz rhythms.

Original Pattern:

Convert this into the 12/8 time feel as in Example 1. Play as written. Add the bass drum on every dotted-quarter note and the hi-hat on 8th notes.

\[
\text{M.M. } \frac{3}{4} = 80, \text{ then, proceed to } 120.
\]

Examples 2 through 6 further vary the sound sources and displace the accents of the original patterns for continued hand and feet coordination, independence and a gradual mental development towards phrasing in 12/8. Play the patterns as written. Follow the stickings for all five examples to facilitate hand positions for speed playing phrases and for correct articulation.

Play Example 3 first without splashing the hi-hat. Then, play as written, splashing the hi-hat.
Play Example 4 as written. Note that the combination of the bass drum and hi-hat is providing a four-way coordination in a 12/8 time feel.

4.

Play Example 5 as written.

5.

continued on next page
First, play Example 6 without splashing the hi-hat. Then, play as written, splashing the hi-hat.

In Examples 7 and 8, the polyrhythm is obtained by playing the three equally displaced accents on a crash cymbal (or other cymbal source) over the four beats played on the hi-hat with the foot. Play these as written. Note that the accent is supported by the bass drum in Example 7. In Example 8, the accent is reinforced by the snare drum, giving a different sound and effect.

For additional study along this vein, play four measures of jazz time and four measures of one of the preceding exercises to get the feel of trading fours and phrasing. Experiment with other patterns demonstrated in this article to develop your own ideas on phrasing in a musical context. Remember the importance of writing down the music as it’s developed. A drummer who writes music certainly knows what he’s playing and is a better reader. The industry needs drummers with creative phrasing. So be sure to do your homework. There is no time for doing homework on the job.
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The next generation is going to have a lot of trouble because they don’t want another Steve Gadd. They’ll want somebody better than Steve Gadd. It was like that when I stopped recording. It’s typical for the business. First you’re hot, then you’re not! Like: “Get Gary Chester for every date” then: “Get Gary if he’s available. If not, get someone who plays like Gary,” and then finally, “Who’s Gary Chester?” If you’re lucky, this span can cover maybe twenty or so years, but your time is always eventually over. If you’re the greatest innovator, people will still copy from you and that’s just a fact of life. But it’s the truth—you’re only as good as what somebody can get out of you. “You make me money, man, you’re a giant.” That’s not how you judge yourself, but how the music business judges you. And believe me, it is a gigantic business.

SF: Your wife touched on the difference between drummers who are “personalities” and studio drummers. Can you explain that?

GC: Here’s a perfect example: Buddy Rich, Billy Cobham, Alphonse Mouzon, Joe Morello, Jimmy Chapin, Roy Burns and Joe Cusatis are all fast they’re all tremendous—but none of them are studio players. Studio players are making a living in the studios and it’s a whole different world. You’ve got to be able to read fly-sheet, but reading isn’t enough. Sometimes you walk into a studio and all they hand you is a lead sheet. The word is not reading. It’s sensitivity. The drummers I just named are terrific performers, but they’re a different breed. They’re great soloists, very independent and are celebrities by choice. They are in the public’s eye and they enjoy it. I’ve always liked to be very low key. In the studios, I got my satisfaction from playing whatever was needed, making the producer happy and creating within the limitations of the requirements for the specific dates. I had a student I’d been teaching for seven years, gearing him for the studio. I teach studio technique and all the disadvantages of being in the studio. I have a four-track studio. I teach them what sounds they’re playing in the room and how it relates to mic placement. I overdub them on their own drum track to make sure they know if their time is screwed up. I found that this particular student didn’t want to bend. He wanted to play fast. He wanted to play speed. He cooked—but only fast. Slow? He couldn’t play. The hardest thing in the world is to play soft and slow. The easiest thing is to play fast and loud. Finally I said to him, “I’m going to have to drop you because you’re not doing me any good.” I’ve got to have someone out there representing me. That’s why I’m a serious teacher. I have no room for lemons. I won’t take kids who aren’t flexible enough to learn what I’ve got to teach. That doesn’t mean I’m only turning out session drummers. I just level with my students about where they’re headed.

I said to this kid, “You’re never going to be a studio player. You’re never going to make good money. But, you’re going to be happy. That’s all I’m concerned with.” I love the kid. I said, “You’re going to be a very happy drummer. But you’re not going to be able to read well. You’re not going to be able to play any kind of music. You’re a fusion player and that’s what’s going to happen.” So I started teaching him speed and related things. He’s the fastest drummer locally, and he’s building a reputation as a fusion player.

Every year I have a party for my students. The party we had the year before this we called an “emotional experience.” I had my students group into five drummers per group. There were four groups. They tell me an emotional feeling they have—it could almost be any kind of feeling, like hatred, love, the world sucks, whatever. Then, they have to write a piece on it for five drummers. I did that to try to get the drummers to realize that it’s not just a set of drums. I want to hear you cry...
on the instrument. I want to hear you resent. You should've heard what I got! Absolutely fantastic. It was really scary because out of 40 students I think I got to 20 of them. I want to be the greatest teacher in the world, and you don't teach by playing for the students. You teach by talking and listening to the students.

SF: How long have you been teaching?

GC: About six years. I couldn't teach when I was busy all day and night in the studios, but the studio has taught me what not to do. Sometimes you get producers who actually come up and ask you, "Can you play this?" You look at him and say, "No, I can't play that." He says, "Well, you're supposed to be able to play that, schmuck! You're a drummer! I'm not even a drummer!" I say, "That's why you can play that." Then they'd want the impossible on the date. So I'd have to write it out first and say, "Alright, give me 10 minutes so I can practice it so we can cook. I can't play anything that I don't understand." I'd get it, write it down and put it in my safe. I gathered a lot of this crap, man. You just can't play it because it's drumistically impossible. That's what my system's all about. I make you do things that you would never be able to do before. Playing the impossible.

Then there are other problems in the studio. I just finished doing ten spots for Miller beer. Years ago, we never had to raise our foot to play. I never played heel up. I always played with my foot flat because the engineers had ears! You're not going to fight 50,000 watts of power. I never had to play loud. I played loud enough that the engineer could get a clear shot at me, but not to the point where I was distorting my sound. These kids in the studio now don't know what distortion is. They come in with these Mack trucks full of amps. When they play a note the whole place shakes. You can't fight that.

The engineer that I did the Miller commercials for put my drums through a limiter immediately. That cuts my sound way down. I had five minutes of this and got off the drums thinking, "I don't have to take this." I called the engineer over and said, "What are you trying to do to me? This is all against musical theory. It's an easy piece. Why do I have to bang so loud?" He said, "Well, I want to get a good kick back." I said, "You can get that later in a mix, Buster. You're not going to break my legs." That made me realize that times have really changed.

SF: It seems like all the engineers and producers want all of the drummers to sound identical. It wasn't like that in the '50s and '60s. Do you remember when that started to change?

GC: I was the only drummer who stayed with calfskin heads because I'm a brush player. My whole set was calfskin. As soon as I started to record I used plastic. I had three sets of drums. When I was hot, two of them were stolen. I had one set for rock, one set for "white" music—which is Robert Goulet, Perry Como or the Jack Armstrong All-American trying to be rock 'n' roll. All the sets were Ludwig. I wouldn't use anything else. They gave me a $1500 set in 1963 and I never bothered them for another set. I don't need a new set. I love what I've got. The old vintage drums are the greatest. The change you're talking about was in '74, '75, '76. Around in there the snare drum was lost. There were no highs on the snare anymore. Some guys muffled it down so bad or took the snares off it so it sounded like a tom-tom. That originated in Philadelphia with the "fat-back"; "2" and "4" played really "fat." But, there was no texture. No coloring. No emphasis. No highs on any of the playing. That's what I miss. The drums now sound like a set of five tom-toms. That started with a couple of screwball engineers.

Years ago it was completely different. The engineer's job was to hear the music, record the music and shut up. Those guys never got involved in production. Then you got these young guys who are really frustrated musicians. They start producing. That started about 1971 where half the engineers were producing side groups of their own on studio time, trying to make a hit, which is fine. But then it got to where an influx of producers came in who didn't know what they were doing. Then the engineer would be a great help to them. It just got out of hand. They went on a supreme ego trip where they wanted to take part in the record, and some acts let them. Sometimes they got a hit. Sometimes they didn't. As a producer, I would be resentful. There are a lot of good engineers out there. You've got to have good ears and it does help to read music. But, it doesn't help to read music when you've got groups that don't read!

One thing I try to impress on my students is that wherever you first make your mark, that's probably where you'll stay. If you're with a group and you're doing an original, and you go into the studio and you're lucky enough to get a hit—stick with the band. You're not going to move from that group to studio work. That group goes in as a whole; they die as a whole. You're not going to step out of that group. Look at Santana. Look at Graham Lear. Great drummer. He's stuck with groups. Mark Craney with Gino Vanelli. He's stuck with that. If you want to be a session player, don't get tied to a group.

Another trick is: Don't worry about money too much. If you worry about money it interferes with your playing. I made more money by mistake than I did trying to make money. I didn't even know how much money I made and I didn't give a damn as long as my family was okay. Sometimes you've got to find yourself. Play with a group. Realize you made a mistake and try to break into studio work where you can really make it.

Then your problems just start because then there's the attitude of studio playing. There's consistency. There's one takers,
two takers and half-hour takers. If they're going to do a three-hour session and two sides, you've got time to experiment. But when you get into commercials, it's Chart—Read—Out. That's it! You get hooked on that because of the money. The most boring years of my life were doing commercials. I hated playing a 60-second spot and having to go in and wail. Then you listen back and as you're wailing your butt off an announcer says, "Prudential Life Insurance. I've got a piece of the rock."

SF: We were speaking earlier about a time in your career when you were very successful and you started drinking heavily. Why did you get into that and how did you get out of it?

GC: It was a question of feeling sorry for myself. I'm not a sociable drinker. I'm not a sociable guy. Let's face it. I don't like everybody.

I used to hang out at bars to eat. I never drank between sessions and I hardly ate between sessions. When I came home I'd sit in the kitchen by myself with a fifth of Scotch, trying to relax. I was the type of studio musician who'd do a date and never know what I did. Out. Next. My wife wasn't allowed to call me on a date. My registry wasn't allowed to call me. I gave my soul when I worked.

I'd come home every night at maybe three or four o'clock in the morning and I'd have to get up at nine in the morning. I couldn't sleep because I was so worked up from playing all day. My first drink would knock me on my ass and I'd be drunk. Then I'd drink the whole fifth. I never had a hangover. I'd get up the next morning and go to work. I considered that being a pro; to kick the hell out of myself and then go back to work.

Then I started getting very, very salty and very insulting to my family. I wasn't a good father and I was a lousy husband. I was a lousy human being. That was the greatest hurt I ever had—realizing that I could be that bad. Six years ago, on July 13, I said, "That's it. I'm not going to do that anymore. I don't want to drink anymore. Why put everybody that I love so much through all this, when it's only showing me how inefficient I am?" So I quit.

SF: Did you substitute anything for the drinking?

GC: I think I substituted my teaching. I love my teaching. A lot of people say, "How can you do that?" I became a completely different human being. I like people now who are listeners. I like to be able to share my experiences. I don't just teach. It's a whole philosophy. It's a way of life for me. I want to be the greatest teacher in the world, and the only way I can do that is by getting the greatest pupils in the world.

SF: Are you finding that your students have challenges that you didn't have?

GC: Yeah. We were innovators. We had drummers to follow and we were smart enough to not only jam the blues. We'd jam on different tunes, like "How High The Moon," "Cherokee" and all that stuff. And everybody played differently. A lot of these kids are locked into cover versions. I went over to one cat's house and they were jamming to the Pepsi Cola or Dr. Pepper commercial. Now, that's a shallow way of life. When you play exactly what's on the record, that doesn't require any creativity. It's like doing nothing. Although that's a way of life for some kids, I'm hoping that someday they'll realize that they're only spinning their wheels. They're not getting anywhere. I'm positive that everybody in the world has something to donate; something to say. I blame it on the educational system in America. And I blame it on parents. The kids go out and get high because they've got no strong fathers and mothers.

I'll give you an example of the deficiency in the schools. There was a little town in the Midwest, giving tests to the school kids. The PTA noticed that the teachers were misspelling a lot of words on the tests. One PTA member said, "Why don't you retest your teachers?" They did and found that a good percentage of them were functional illiterates. They could barely read or write English.

I see the results of the school system in my teaching studio. A lot of my pupils come to me thinking they can just get by without working. But I'll be a son-of-a-bitch—when I give a lesson, you're going to play it! And I'm going to keep your ass on it until you play it right! There's no last-minute cramming. But they're not used to that. One college kid said to me, "Gary, you're giving me a hard time, man. I'm not used to the concentration you're asking of me. I'm not used to the discipline you're demanding of me. I'm not used to listening
to somebody as much as I have to listen to you.” I said, “Well, man... that’s your problem! What are you? A clone?” It’s sad. That’s what you’ve got out there. It’s all over the world.

I’m trying to tell my students that unless you’re a listener, unless you’re sensitive I don’t care how good you play—unless you’re aware of somebody else’s presence and want to give to somebody else, then you aren’t going to make it. Maybe you’ll make money, but you’ll never be happy.

SF: I’ve been told that “spirituality” has nothing to do with drumming.

GC: It has everything to do with drumming. I’d be as big a clone as anybody else if I hadn’t taken God in as a partner in my life. He’s sitting right here. I tried to kill myself a lot of times from depression until I found God and myself. Now I’m not afraid of anybody. I’m very, very religious. I don’t cheat. I don’t lie. That’s why I can be as honest as I am, because I’m really not afraid. I’ve got Him right there. I thank God constantly that he gave me such a damn good musical career. A little love of God will give you the security of not being afraid to express yourself. It’ll also give you the discipline to try new things and to practice what you’re learning. It’s a much more relaxed understanding of yourself and other people. I don’t care if you’re a Buddhist or anything. But, to live without religion, to live without belief—that’s living without hope. And to play without some sort of security within yourself is hopeless.

SF: Do you discuss spiritual topics with your students?

GC: Yes I do. I know when a kid is confused. If I can’t help him I get him professional help. I send some kids to psychiatrists. When I was young I used to talk a lot with two very dear friends: Pee Wee Erwin and George Wettling. I was always trying to learn something. Not only about music. Music was my first love, but, I figured I can’t play unless I’ve got something to say. And I ain’t going to have nothing to say if I’m ignorant!

I had no education. I ran away from home when I was young and spent 10 to 12 years on the road. I lived by myself. I’m a self-made guy. I won the Gene Krupa contest when I was 14 and traveled with Gene for a little while. I couldn’t stand the way he played but he was a nice guy. Then I did most of my work in the Midwest. I spent half my life on the road. In a way, I was the same as these kids today. Party, party, party. But, to me, a party was playing. Not getting high. Not picking up chicks. I had all the chicks I wanted. Any drummer can have a chick.

People are so celebrity conscious. They kneel to you because they think you’re somebody and they’re not. That can get to you. You feel like King Kong; like you’re really something. But, meantime... you ain’t nobody.

There are all types of people who thrive on knowing you because you write for a magazine. Or knowing me because I was with Burt Bacharach. I feel sorry for them. You’re doing your job and I’m doing mine. They don’t realize that. I visited a guy one time and he asked me, “Did you bring your drums?” I said, “No. You’re a garbage collector. Did you bring any garbage?” Why don’t people realize that the only way this world will work is that you’ve got to have bridge builders, people who build big buildings, plumbers... you’ve got to have everything in the world. Everybody who’s doing what they’re doing is helping.

SF: It’s scary when people identify themselves as “drummers” instead of human beings who play drums.

GC: That’s the whole word. I’ve had hundreds of offers to be interviewed. But, at a very young age I realized that drums is what I do best. That’s a very private thing, that’s for me. Leave me alone and let me live my life. That’s another reason why I never allowed myself to be put in front. You have to have enough within yourself. Drumming is a way of expressing how you feel. If you’re ignorant, it’s going to show in the way you play. If you’re smart, that will show too. Being a good drummer is not just banging. Being a good drummer takes everything you’ve got, including attributes like sensitivity and the desire to please. That’s a drummer.
Flam Rudiments Around the Drumset

The use of flam rudiments around a set of drums can be a challenging study; a useful tool to pull out of your bag of tricks while soloing. The 19 exercises I have listed are the exercises that my students seem to enjoy most, particularly the ones with crossovers. Remember to start each exercise slowly at first. Once you are familiar with each exercise, speed can be obtained through practice.
Double Flam Paradiddle

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Smog continued from page 29

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inhalation, CO levels can jump sufficiently to induce acute CO poisoning. The signs and symptoms are easily recognized: headache, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, drowsiness, and collapse. (This means that the next time you lose the beat, you can blame it on the carbon monoxide!)

When you pack up and leave after drumming, the CO goes with you. Unlike oxygen, which is breathed in and then out again in minutes, CO doesn't dissipate rapidly. Even after four hours, half of the excess CO is still in the bloodstream. But agreement on "what level of excess CO is safe," hasn't been reached. The American Heart Association (AHA) summarizes that, "the safest level of CO exposure is the lowest level which can be achieved." This isn't a very reassuring statement when you're exposed to CO night after night.

One of the biggest factors to consider is that drummers are exercising while breathing in the CO, nicotine and two thousand other chemicals which constitute cigarette smoke.

"It's my opinion," says Marla Clarkson of the American Heart Association, "that inhaling smoke while exercising would outweigh the advantages of the exercise, and in fact, be detrimental to the heart."

Although most people agree that smoke inhalation is associated with "shortness of wind" and impaired performance, until recently there has been little scientific evidence to support this view. In January 1981, however, the AHA reported on CO's influence on exercise performance: "In normal individuals, with concentrations of approximately 18-20 percent COHb (oxygen deprived blood), there is a reduction in the oxygen consumption during high levels of exercise, a higher than predicted cardiac output, and abnormally high concentrations of lactic acid." What this ultimately means is that a great deal of physical stress is being placed on your cardiovascular system, thereby increasing the risk of atherosclerosis, heart attack and stroke.

**WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

First of all, let's start with how you live. Many factors besides cigarettes facilitate the formation of lung and heart disease. Since you can't completely control the air you breathe, altering some personal habits is an easy way to protect your health.

*Live naturally.* Try to avoid other contaminants in the air, such as heavy smog or industrial pollutants. Are you exposed to dangerous chemicals at your job? Avoid breathing strong-smelling chemicals. Eat basic, fresh foods with a minimum (or absence) of additives and refined sugar. Ingest drugs only when necessary.

*Live moderately.* Do not smoke cigarettes! Certainly don't smoke while drumming, and remember that pipes and cigars are worse yet. Limit your alcohol consumption to occasional, moderate drinking. Stay on a diet that is low in animal fat, high in fiber, and low in calories from simple carbohydrates so that you will maintain your ideal weight. Exercise regularly (besides drumming in smoke-filled bars).

If you don't have time to diversify your exercise routine, practice a cardiovascular exercise such as brisk walking, jogging, racquet ball, dancing or swimming. Avoid consistent emotional stress.

*Live cautiously.* Investigate possible cancer-causing substances that are part of your work life if you have an industrial job; wear proper safety clothing; use proper safety equipment when your work calls for it. Question emissions, wastes, and by-products that are emitted from industry near you. Avoid known cancer-causing substances such as asbestos, cutting oils, vinyl chloride, neoprene, tars and soot. Make sure any health x-rays are absolutely necessary. Don't hesitate to question your doctor about issues you don't understand, and have annual physical checkups which include heart and lung evaluations.

Some states have succeeded in passing bills limiting public smoking. In fact, since 1973 more than 30 states have enacted such laws. Minnesota's Indoor Clean Air Act is probably the toughest in the nation, because it bans smoking in all public places and public meeting places except in designated smoking areas. It requires that restaurant owners set aside at least 25 percent of their tables for non-smokers. This regulation could help to clean the air for some Minnesota musicians. Arizona bans smoking inside theaters and concert halls. California passed its Indoor Clean Air Act, but coverage does not extend to private businesses such as nightclubs.

Ambient smoke has posed a problem for OSHA because they haven't been able to classify it as "leading to injury or illness." This may be changing. According to a 14-year study by Dr. Takeshi Hirayama, published in a 1981 issue of the British Medical Journal, secondhand smoke has now been clearly linked to lung cancer. A 1980 study reported in the New England Journal of Medicine found that non-smokers exposed to tobacco smoke in the workplace suffer lung damage equivalent to that of persons who smoke one to 10 cigarettes a day. It is conclusive evidence like this which will eventually strengthen OSHA worker standards.

In a nightclub filled with tobacco smoke, even healthy people complain of eye irritations and distress. Reactions such as nasal symptoms, headache, cough, wheezing, sore throat, nausea and hoarseness are all commonplace among people in bars.

"It is our responsibility to protect the worker's health," says Industrial Hygienist John J. Seabury, a field consultant for Cal/OSHA (a state branch of the national OSHA). "I've gone out to investigate more complaints of harmful levels of cigarette smoke than anything else, but we really haven't found any substantially high concentrations. We take instruments out to a bar, for example, and run tests looking for harmful amounts of about 350 chemi-
To give you back your job, or compensate for injuries or illnesses you suffer, we can force him to keep confidential so that your job will not be endangered. Even if the employer suspects you and fires you, we can force him to tell you stuff in your ear.

"Every employer is required by law to provide a safe and healthful workplace and work conditions for employees by identifying possible job hazards and correcting them before they lead to worker injury or illness."

"Employers must allow workers to watch monitoring or measuring of worker exposure to hazards or substance regulated by OSHA standards."

"Employers must allow workers or their representatives to see accurate records of worker exposure to potentially toxic materials or harmful physical agents and medical records."

"Employers must tell any worker who has been, or is being, exposed to toxic materials or harmful physical agents in concentrations or at levels which are higher than the limits for exposure set by occupational safety or health standards; and tell this worker what is being done to eliminate harmful exposure."

But are musicians covered by these standards? Seabury says it depends on your contract.

"We would cover employees of a nightclub but usually not the musicians, because most bands contract with a club to perform. This means that in a strict sense you are not an employee of the club, but rather an independent contractor."

The line between an independent contractor and an employee is thin, however. "It depends on the contract and its wording. Most contracts are an agreement. Are you under direct control of the owner? Is he truly a superior to you, as in a normal hiring situation? If you answer 'yes' to these questions, maybe you are actually an employee—not just a contractor."

What about musicians who have long-term contracts with a restaurant chain, for example?

"Your chances of being considered an employee are better than someone hired for a three-night stand. But there is a way that even the contractor is protected by us. If you call your local OSHA office with a complaint against a bar, we'll come out free of charge to investigate. Your name is kept confidential so that your job will not be endangered. Even if the employer suspects you and fires you, we can force him to give you back your job, or compensate you.

"We will inspect a premise for an independent contractor, like a band, as long as we can justify that other employees—waitresses, cooks, bartenders—are also being exposed. If the owner is the only worker besides a contracted band, then we really can't do anything."

Seabury knows from experience that most nightclub owners are uncooperative and defensive when approached about smoke levels. "It's tough to get anything accomplished, but it is possible. Most owners will tell you to stuff it in your ear."

The culprit for smoky barrooms is often poor ventilation. Seabury said that there is a trend in designing clubs toward installing electro-static precipitators, which are air filtering systems. They suck up dusty air, filter it, and send the same air back into the room. Filters trap dust particles well, but gases (CO) go right through the filter to recirculate in the room. A better type of ventilation system is one which pulls fresh air into the club while sending out the polluted indoor air. Unfortunately, these systems are comparatively expensive to operate since the fresh air usually must be cooled or heated.

Often times, just telling an employer of your concern will clean the air. Going into a discussion with a no-compromise, defiant attitude will alienate him. Try to satisfy both him and yourself fully. Can a back door be left open? Maybe you can get a friend to watch the door to make sure no one uses it. Can the ventilation system be turned up so that it will work faster? Maybe the band could pay the owner five dollars a night to cover extra energy costs. Has anyone got a fan they can set up in front of a window? Search for creative solutions. Sometimes members of the audience will smoke less if you privately tell them of your concern (It's bad for the vocals!). If you would feel comfortable doing so, talk to the owner about having OSHA come out to monitor smoke levels. Many times they can suggest simple ways to alleviate the smoke. If OSHA isn't available, try your local Environmental Health Agency, the owner's insurance company, or the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration & Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE). The variety of advice and helpful suggestions will be truly refreshing.

Whatever you do, try not to jeopardize your relationship with employers. We need to work! Approach each situation tactfully. Tell the employer that the band's performance can depend on how well they feel in the club, and that you appreciate his help. Some of these conflicts are hard to solve.

There is one club in particular where I hate to drum. It is built underground, so windows are nonexistent. The structure is very old, so the ventilation seems woefully antiquated. The club was once a wine cellar, so the ceiling is low, room is small, and there is no stage door to swing open. The owner is a great guy, and very understanding, but we just can't seem to clear out the smoke. So it's time to get drastic. I foresee myself as the first "gas mask drummer," complete with rip-away, disposable clothing. What the hell, it'll probably improve my stage presence.
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*by Bob Saydlowski, Jr.*

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Q. Over the summer, I wrote to you in distress, telling you that I was feeling suicidal. Although you didn’t answer my letter, I read other letters that were written to you and observed how you personally answered them. I appreciated your answers and, if I may say so, you have lifted me out of my depression and helped me resume my drumming career. Thank you for giving me confidence in myself, my life and my drums.

R.H.

W. Hempstead, L.I.

A. Sorry to hear that you felt suicidal for a while, but thank God, you’re over that nonsense. Somehow, it looks like I did not receive your letter. You must remember that I get hundreds and it’s possible that your letter was lost in the mail.

If you’ve been reading the columns and taking the advice that I’ve given the other guys in the same situation, you know that I’m right. There’s nothing better than music to help you in the long run. But don’t let music consume you, 24 hours, every minute of every day. Find other things that will please you. And there are other things out there. Let music inspire you to find a balance, where you can look out and enjoy music over here, sunshine over there and a good night’s rest over there. Think of it that way and you won’t be down anymore. It’s good to hear that you pulled yourself out of that sewer of depression. When I was fifteen years old, I also thought about suicide. It’s not the way to go. I’m really glad for you now.

Q. Things are kind of hard right now. I’m having problems with my girlfriend, but I’m still practicing everyday. To me, drums are a special friend. I’ve played for eight years and now my brother and I are starting a Christian rock/contemporary band. I’m getting a 10-piece set and I don’t know if I can play it all or not. Lots of people from school tell me I’m not good on drums and my parents don’t give a hoot about my natural talent. I’m a straight person and will remain so. My friend was a very good drummer, but got onto drugs. Thanks for your answer.

A. I’m sorry to hear you’re having trouble with your girlfriend. All those things will straighten out. We all go through these things every once in a while. You say that you’re a very straight person. I’m very happy to hear that. Stay away from drugs and alcohol. As for the band, that’s fantastic. Christian music is getting very popular. I’ve been fortunate enough to do a bunch of albums with some of the Christian people, like Richard Roberts. I’ve also been fortunate enough to work at Oral Roberts University, a thrilling, wonderful place.

There’s no reason why you can’t play a 10-piece set. You can only get better with more stuff to do, more instruments to play. It gives you a bigger range.

As for people not liking you—someday they will. Not everyone was crazy about some of the biggest people in the world, when they were a particular age. Give it some time. Perhaps you’re showing off too much or giving them an attitude of, “I’m better than you because I’m a drummer.” You’re not. That’s the wrong attitude. You want people to like you for you, not because you’re a drummer or a good looking guy or a Christian. You want people to like you for all those reasons.

Your drums will be your friends for a long time, but don’t let the drums consume you. They can do that. They will do that. If you’re in a Christian band, let God help you a bit. Spend some time with the Lord. Spend some time with your drums. Spend some time with yourself. Every once in a while, clear your head. In the long run, people will enjoy your drums more as they enjoy you more.

Q. I am a 20-year-old prisoner and I’ve been doing time since the age of 15. Before prison, I used to play drums in the elementary school band and junior high school. Now, I see disappointment every day and the thought that I’m doing a life sentence doesn’t help. But when I sit down at my kit, everything brightens up. I growl at the thought that I’m doing a life sentence doesn’t help. But when I sit down at my kit, everything brightens up. The drums are my only escape from the pressures of everyday. When I can’t pick up new licks, I get back to the pad for a week or two and, next thing you know, I’m coming up with all kinds of new stuff. I believe that I have an advantage over drummers on the street, because their world is bigger than mine, with obstructions that pull them away from dedication to the instrument. My world is music and that’s all that matters, next to regaining my freedom.

I’m taking your advice to rest, relax and think and live music—at least for a while. Meet other musicians and you get to talk, knock people on their ear. Much good luck to you. I hope you keep your head together.

Q. I’ve always wondered about the endorsements drummers and other musicians make. Just what percentage of drummers are paid for the endorsements they make?

T.B.

A. Very few drummers are paid for endorsements. I know that I, personally, have been approached by most of the drum companies who wanted to give me drum equipment. I’ve told them all that I don’t need drum equipment but, if they want to hire me as an ambassador or as bona fide salesman for the company, I’d be happy to work for their outfit, providing there is a good salary involved and providing I can sell some drums for them. I can’t, obviously, I won’t have the job very long. But I think I could sell some drums for any of the companies that might be interested. Sort of a personal plug for myself, if you will.

Q. I am 14 years old and have been playing drums for four years. I have had a variety of experience playing different styles of music. I have been thinking about going to the Interlochen Arts Academy and dedicating myself totally to music, in an attempt to go professional. The only thing that has kept me from going to this school is the thought that I won’t make it. Can you tell me what you think I should do and what the odds of making it today are?

D.H.

A. I think you absolutely have a chance to make it in music. In today’s market, it’s a matter of practice, being contemporary by listening to your contemporaries, hanging in there, and lots of study plus practice and recreation. I think the decision is your own, but there’s nothing like music school and education, coupled with practice. I know that music school offers a certain camaraderie that’s real good for people. You meet other musicians and you get to talk, think and live music—at least for a while. Just remember to balance it out with plenty of play.

by Hal Blaine

A. I must say that your situation is unique in my experience. It sounds to me like you could be doing shows for some of the other guys. Have you thought about giving drum lessons or forming a band in there? If security allows, maybe you could do some of those things and provide a great service to a lot of guys who are sitting around going bananas. Who knows? You guys may come up with a fantastic sound that’ll

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Dealer Inquiries Welcome
Q. I am a rock drummer who plays vigorously. In recent months I've cracked two 18" crashes, two 16" crashes, a 20" ride and the top of a 13" hi-hat. I've tried cymbal springs, and Zildjians' hitting techniques. The music that I play is Rush and Kansas. I don't wish to change my style, but my expenses are too high. Do you have any suggestions?

D.B.
Huntington Valley, PA

A. This is a problem shared by many rock drummers when the style of the music they play requires magnitude force. Unless you apply lessforce to the cymbal stroke, there is really no way that we know of to avoid breakage. Kansas drummer Phil Ehart told us that he has broken over 100 cymbals "easily." When he was playing in clubs, he would use a cracked cymbal until it broke off the bell completely, leaving the cymbal on the floor, encircling the stand. Phil now keeps at least two sets of cymbals which he rotates every night, thereby increasing the life of each cymbal. He used Brilliant on a recent 60-date tour and, for the first time, had no cracks in any cymbal. Breakage also depends on such factors as the weight and density of the stick you are using. If you're using baseball bats, you can expect a shorter cymbal life. As Phil said, "If the guy doesn't want to change styles, I understand completely. He'll just have to face the fact that it's going to be expensive."

Q. I've just purchased some Roto-Toms, 6", 8", and 10" respectively. I would like to know where I can get cases to protect my investment.

J.A.
Atwater, CA

A. Remo offers two different models to choose from. Model CA 3 can hold a 6", 8" and 10" tom and floor stand. It retails for $115.50. The other case available is model CA 2, which is, essentially a trap case with a tray. This model holds, according to Remo, a wide range of sizes and stands and retails for $98.70.

Q. I have the annoying problem of blisters on my fingers that stay with me for a long time. I also have the problem of heavy perspiration on my hands making it impossible to use bandaids. What can I do?

P.W.
Royal Oaks, MI

A. You might consider trying a glove. Many drummers use variations of batting gloves, golf gloves, and Ray Caddy has come out with a specially crafted Drum Glove. This particular glove has leather palms and is fully ventilated. It serves the dual function of keeping your sticks from slipping due to perspiration and prevents blistering due to the abrasion of stick against bare skin.

Q. I was wondering if playing on soft material, such as pillows and beds, builds up speed and endurance?

D.A.C.
Ewa Beach, HI

A. To paraphrase Roy Burns, practicing on a pillow is fine, if you want to learn how to play pillows. The idea that practicing on a soft surface builds endurance has been around for many years. Playing on a pillow will prevent the stick from bouncing back, automatically forcing the wrist and fingers to complete the upstroke in preparation for the next downstroke. However, the feel of a stick on a drumhead is what you want to work with in terms of control, touch, dynamics, etc. We suggest you speak to an experienced teacher about practice routines specifically designed to include a musical approach to speed and endurance on drums.

Q. I recently purchased a 1968 5 x 14 Ludwig wood-shell snare. The inside of the shell is coated with what appears to be a beige, paint-like substance. I think this was done in the factory. The Ludwig date is stamped inside, on top of the coating. What is the coating and what's it for? Is it possible to remove it? It seems to subdue the tone of the drum somewhat.

D.M.
Ann Arbor, MI

A. It was done in the factory and it's there to protect the drum from moisture. It shouldn't change the sound of the drum. What might be "subduing" the sound of the drum is the shape of the bearing edge, where the head contacts the drum. If you want to brighten the sound of the drum you might steel wool the inside of the shell, to clean it up, and polyurethane it, inside. This will help bounce the sound off a slightly harder surface. The big thing is, the steeper the angle of the bearing edge, the less wood touching the head, the brighter and bigger the sound.

Q. I'm in a new band and everyone is complaining about my time. When I listen to the rhythm guitars, they're not exact. I zero in on the bass, but I suspect they're listening to my top rather than my bottom. Would this have an effect on the time? It seems to me it's more the feel of a new member than the time that's the question because I really concentrate on the time when I play. How can I find the problem?

R.R.
No Address

A. Record yourself playing with the band and listen carefully, especially to your fills, turnaround and the ends of phrases. Most players, including drummers, naturally tend to rush band figures. See if you can get all the members of the band to listen to the tape together, to see where the time gets loose and who it is that's doing what. Time is not solely a drummer's concern. Your time might be pulled or pushed by any or all of the other band members. Keep in mind that no one has perfect time music breathes and the object in making music is to stay within certain parameters of a time feel, without radically slowing or accelerating the pulse. If your "top" and "bottom" are different, then you should, with the aid of a metronome, work on bringing your hands and feet into line, so that other musicians can listen to either, and have a clear idea of where the pulse is. Record yourself playing time in a variety of feels and analyze where your strong and weak points are. As for the issue of time versus feel, you do have a point. Your feeling may not be the same as theirs as regards time different, not wrong. Some people play together more easily than others, just as some people get along better personally, and for the same "chemical" reasons.

Q. What effect does weather have on the sound of a cymbal and on the metals used in construction?

D.M.
Milwaukee, WI

A. It would take temperatures so extreme as to be dangerous to human life to noticeably affect the temper and sound of a cymbal. We spoke to Dan Backer at Zildjian who reminded us that in the manufacture of cymbals, extremely high and low temperatures are employed. He suggested that if you leave your cymbals in a car overnight where the mercury might reach 20° below, you should let the cymbal warm to room temperature before any serious playing. Bob Nelson, also of Zildjian, said that as far as he knows, there have been no studies done on the relationship between temperature and cymbal sound. He feels that when playing within the normal range of temperatures, no discernable differences in sound quality can be detected.
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May EA is also available through Slingerland Drum Company on all catalog drums.

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Willie Wilcox has had a very busy several months. Last summer provided one of Willie's highlights when he was invited to be the house drummer for a New York event called Music Court. Participating in what he described as a big jam session, were such acts as Santana, Meat Loaf, Joe Cocker, Nona Hendryx, Commander Cody and Utopia. And he got to play with Max Roach did a spot by himself and then Willie and Max teamed up to play with Santana. "That was a real thrill, to be side by side with the person who was your whole world when you were a child. When you're really young, you have the imagination and financial and social freedom to be whatever you want to be, and I was a drummer. I used to walk around singing Max and then Willie and Max teamed up to play what he described as a big jam session, and Willie's highlights when he was invited to music. Part of big band drumming is dynamics as well, and I think maybe in my weaning, it just happened by osmosis. Kenny's music is so dynamic anyway, that sections of pieces just demand more sensitive treatment than others. The music just requires that sort of approach."

About working with an artist whose instrument is his voice, Tris says, "It is much like a jazz approach, in that the interplay that goes on is probably much more than your standard pop music where things seem to be more or less the same from night to night. Because of Kenny's incredible vocal prowess, he will change phrasings and subtly throw different things in. It's hard to keep up with that and play accordingly, I really dig that. We never play the same song the same way twice. There's that ear to improvisation. It's much more challenging and there's much more freedom as a player."

This month you can catch Butch Miles at the St. Louis Jazz Festival. He's had a very busy summer, including an album called Butch Miles Salutes Gene Krupa and Hall to the Chief, a tribute to Count Basie. He also worked on Hooked on Swing with Larry Elgart, Bechet Legacy On the Road with Bob Wilber, Ode to Bechet with Bob Wilber and Vic Dickenson, Alberta with Alberta Hunter, Secret Love with Glen Zottola and new albums with Richard Sudhalter, Dolly Dawn and Larry Elgart, in addition to countless commercials. On Labor Day he played at the Dick Gibson Jazz Party in Denver, he did the Midland Texas Jazz Party in October and the Paradise Valley Jazz Party in Arizona last month. In late November of last year, he was in Ireland, England and Wales with Bob Wilber. With as many different places as he plays, you should have the opportunity to see Butch, and if you're in New York, you shouldn't have much trouble, as he is constantly playing in a variety of clubs when he's home.

Carlos Vega on Don Felder's upcoming release. Look for Maynard Ferguson's new album recorded in February with Greg Bissonette on drums. Greg is also finishing up a four-month tour with Ferguson. Brian David Willis has joined Quarterflash and will be heard on their upcoming second album. Pablo Cruise drummer Steve Price lent percussion to the current Alex Call project, out now. Supertramp's Bob C. Benberg goes to Europe next month and in June, the band starts a tour of the States. After the Crosby, Stills & Nash tour, Joe Vitale, along with co-members of the rhythm section, formed a band called Joe Joe and the Chocolate Waddies. Look for the album they recorded on Catalina Island.

Larry Anderson on drums on Ray Manzarek's A&M spring release. Louie Demex with the Business, presently recording. Steve Ferrone on Jeffrey Osborne's upcoming release. Jerry Koon on three MCA releases: George Strait, Wayne Massey and Terri Gibbs. Eddie Boyers on John Conlee's current album. James Stroud on Lee Greenwood's upcoming album. Dick Ross on Joe "King" Carrasco's new release. David Brown with new MCA act Sound Barrier. Jerry Jones with Auto-matix. Lenny White on drums on Chick Corea, now on tour. Billy Cobham recently produced a TV project with Herbie Hancock in Zurich. Described as not quite a documentary, the show will explain various aspects of contemporary culture. Ed Mann is quite excited about the upcoming album he did at the beginning of the year with Frank Zappa in London. A project Zappa has wanted to do for years, the record consists of five of Zappa's orchestra pieces recorded with the London Symphony. Ed says one of the major differences between this and other orchestra material is that it is so percussive.

by Robyn Flans
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CARMINE APPICE SYMPOSIUM

Text and Photos by Elizabeth Shaw Green

A big feature that Appice feels made the symposium, which was held December 27-30 at Long Beach City College in Long Beach, California, unique was the presence and support of a number of different companies which manufacture drum equipment: Slingerland, Zildjian, Syndrums, Oberheim and Remo. Appice hoped that workshops presented by a variety of different companies would provide a broader spectrum of information for the students attending the symposium.

Similarly, Appice sees no reason why drummers who are aligned with different companies shouldn't be teaching together: "I don't think drummers should be barred from being in any open symposium just because they don't endorse a certain company. Slingerland supports that idea, and really got behind me when I invited other drummers to participate. Apparently, the students agree. "It's been intense! If I could do this for a year, I'd be fabulous!" enthused 24-year-old Gigi Gay, drummer for Luna, a rock 'n' roll band based in Los Angeles. "The best part is hanging around with all these players who were right there when rock 'n' roll started. And getting to check out—firsthand—new equipment brought in by the companies is a real advantage."

Gay was one of 15 of the symposium's 65 students that attended the symposium on a scholarship.

"I've learned a lot of stuff I wouldn't have gotten on my own. I've really been able to pick the brains of all these guys," said 21-year-old Lionel Barton of Redondo Beach, California. "The thing I like most is that we're able to ask the pros how they did certain licks on particular tunes. Especially Carmine. He doesn't keep any secrets—he'll tell you how to do any lick he knows, if you want to know how to do it."

Gerard Dumesnil of Montreal, Canada, who's played drums for 11 of his 26 years, spent four days on a train from Quebec to Long Beach in order to attend. "This is the first time I have been to a drum clinic. But I am glad I came because there was a lot of attention paid to electronics, which is what I am really into."

During the symposium's four days, student drummers heard opening remarks by Slingerland president R. J. Richardson, and were invited to attend seminars like "A Touch of Percussion," presented by Brian Zsuniak for Syndrums and featuring a hands-on demonstration of Syndrum equipment; Rab Zildjian's "The Inside Story," an audio-visual presentation exploring the manufacture of Zildjian cymbals; "The Pre-Tuned System," a hands-on look at Remo Inc.'s new PTS drums presented by Lloyd McCausland, the firm's national sales and marketing manager; "Digital Drums," a demonstration of the Oberheim DMX Digital Drum Machine and Performance System presented by Oberheim's "artist in residence," Danny Sofer; and "What is My Future in Drumming," a seminar exploring opportunities for the drummer as-businessperson, presented by Phil Hulsey, West Coast Sales Consultant for Slingerland. During the early afternoon hours of each day, the students were treated to demonstrational "master classes" with drummers Appice, Derosier, Gary and drummer Jocco Marcellino, and joined together playing counter-rhythms in a ten-minute drum-a-thon in which each student was given a part of a dismantled drumkit to play.

"It could have cost me thousands of dollars to put this on," Appice remarked, noting that the drum companies present had absorbed some of the costs, such as advertising. "But I figure that, with a little help from all the companies—and the music press—maybe we can keep building an educational symposium network.

"Drummers have that extra energy—they want to do all these crazy things. And I think that people really love drums. So who knows? If we can keep programs like this going, maybe we'll see a drum battle ten years from now in Madison Square Garden!"

Some drummers might have mistaken it for nothing new. After all, Carmine Appice had been doing annual drum clinics for Ludwig for the past 15 years. But this four-day clinic, billed as "The First Annual Carmine Appice Rock Drum Symposium" and offering classes as diverse as "Body Intonation" by Yogi John, and a two-hour-plus master session with former Heart drummer Michael Derosier, was special. For one thing, it was Appice's first drum clinic as a representative of the Slingerland Corporation. And above all else, it was a modern drum symposium.

"We're concentrating on rock-oriented things that are happening," according to Appice, who, with manager Alan Miller, put the symposium together. "In the past, my clinics for Ludwig were just a part of a one-week broad-based percussion symposium. I'd do a rock clinic, maybe Joe Morello would do a jazz clinic, and so on. When the bell rang, you had to go to the next class.

"But this one's a lot looser. We don't keep a strict rein over when stuff is happening. I've approached this symposium with what I call my Mivingroom vibe—I crack jokes to keep the mood light, and I try to attend all the workshops to keep that vibe going. I've been personally involved with everything."
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The hammering of Ludwig copper kettles works to harden the material for a more rigid and stronger bowl, while creating a more tempered parabolic bowl for greater resonance and projection. Available on Professional Model timpani only.

The new tuning gauge is pedal operated and fully adjustable. A direct linkage to the footboard combines with a gauge located in front of the player, provides for precise tuning and adjustment of gauge letters as well as fine tuning swivel linkage. Tuning gauges are available as an add-on feature to existing Professional Model or Standard Model timpani. This new gauge can be ordered factory installed on new timpani or added on at a later date. Available in all kettle dimensions, 20” through 32”.

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For more information contact David Gaston, 3563 Orange Ave., Long Beach, CA 90807.

**ZILDJIAN PAPER THIN CRASH CYMBAL**

The Avedis Zildjian Company has announced the addition of a new Paper Thin Crash Cymbal to its Avedis Zildjian Cymbal line. “Our objective is to provide a thinner, quicker-responding cymbal to studio and drumset players, orchestra musicians and percussionists,” said Armand Zildjian, company President.

With a cup size similar to the present Zildjian Thin Crash, the Paper Thin Crash is slightly flatter, with a fluid taper. It has a somewhat smoother finish and large amount of shimmer.

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**20TH ANNIVERSARY THUNDER TIMBS FROM LP**

Rafael Irizarry, New York City timbalero, is shown with his new 20th Anniversary Thunder Timbs from Latin Percussion, Inc. (The bells shown are new Esoteric ES-1 and ES-2.)

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### MAY'S MD

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**Plus:**  
**Terri Lyne Carrington**  

**EARL PALMER**  

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STEVE GADD.
HOT ON ZILDJIAN.

The man is hot! And he should be. No less than Chick Corea put it this way: "Every drummer wants to play like Steve Gadd because he plays great. He plays everything well. He could very well go on to become one of the greatest drummers the world has ever seen." As you can imagine, between his touring and recording, Steve's not the easiest guy in the world to pin down. But he did stop for a breather the other day and we got a chance to talk with him.

**On Practice.** "I've been playing since I was a kid. As long as I keep my muscles loose, I don't have to practice a lot every day. When I do practice, I just sort of let things happen naturally and then later on try to work it into my playing. Like on '50 Ways to Leave Your Lover..." I used my left hand on the high hat for the whole section - it was a little thing I'd been practicing and it just worked out."

**On Control.** "Sometimes I use light, medium and heavy sticks to do the same drills because the sticks affect my muscles in different ways. You have to use your hand and arm muscles differently to control your playing. It's a subtle thing but it helps me tremendously."

**On Effects.** "After I graduated from Eastman, I played in a rock 'n roll band. It was keyboard, bass, drums and a lot of homemade stuff. I bought 6 big artillery shells, sawed them into different lengths and hung them on a rack that I built. I'd use them for the free sections in the music."

**On K's.** "Art Blakey gave me my first set of K. Zildjian's a long time ago. I love the feel of them. There's something about the way the stick reacts to the surface... it almost becomes part of the cymbal. They're not cold or edgy. They have a very warm and deep feeling. They've got real character. I use a 20" Ride and an 18" Crash Ride with 14" Hi Hats for recording and live sessions."

**On A's.** "I love to use A Zildjian's when I play rock 'n roll. When I want to play louder, I add a 16" Thin Crash and an 18" Crash Ride for a full crash sound. The bells on the A's really project the sound in a clear natural tone."

**On Zildjian.** "Zildjian to me is the foundation. I play Zildjians because that's what's in my heart. I love the sound, the feel, the history... I love the quality and the status of a Zildjian." If you're a serious drummer, chances are that you, like Steve, are already playing Zildjians. For 360 years, they have been the overwhelming favorite of drummers worldwide.

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For your copy of the Zildjian Cymbals and Accessories Catalog, along with a Steve Gadd poster, send $3.00 to Dept. 16
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