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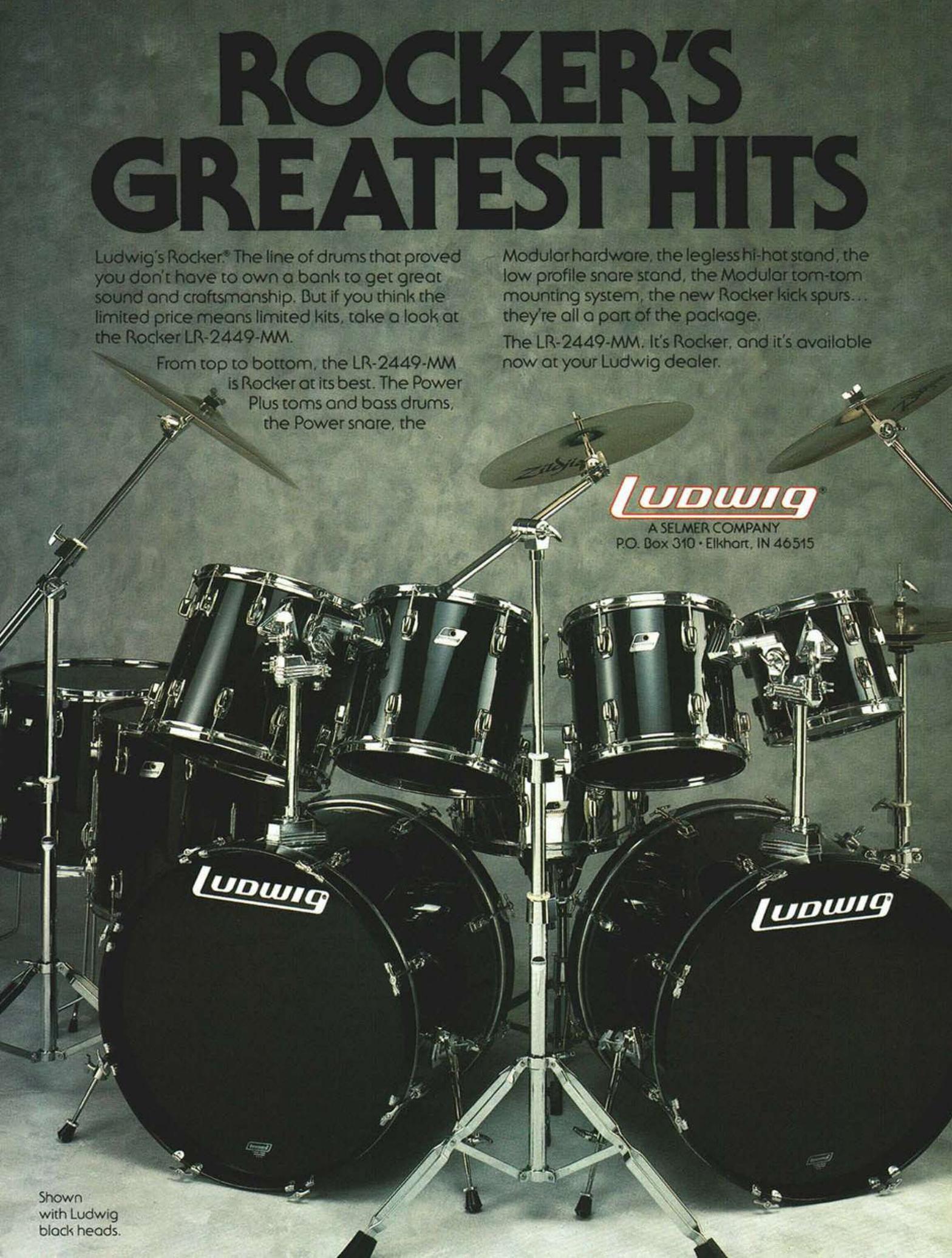
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TOMMY ALDRIDGE

His work with Black Oak Arkansas, Pat Travers, and Ozzy Osbourne established Tommy Aldridge as a role model for a whole generation of heavy rock drummers, and his current gig with Whitesnake is spreading his influence even further. Here, he happily gives away his "secrets of success."

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RALPH HUMPHREY

His mastery of odd time signatures came in handy on gigs with Don Ellis and Frank Zappa, and Ralph Humphrey is now sharing his expertise with others as a teacher at P.I.T. He discusses his career and his current work with Free Flight.

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LUIS CONTE

With credits ranging from Madonna to Al DiMeola to *The Tonight Show*, Luis Conte has proven that players with feel will always be in demand. He talks about the requirements for making a living as a percussionist, and explains the differences between Cuban and Brazilian instruments and rhythms.

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Investing In The Future

The current technology in electronics has given drummers more options than ever before in the history of the instrument. Electronic sets, drum machines, sequencers, samplers, and the whole incredible world of MIDI offer mind-boggling potential.

Once upon a time we could all stay on the cutting edge just by keeping abreast of the latest in drum and hardware design, cymbal innovations, and a growing list of accessory items. But the scope of the industry has widened *drastically* over the past five years. Unfortunately, along with our widened horizons comes concern over both expense and obsolescence. The technology can put a serious financial burden on any drummer wishing to maintain state-of-the-art status. Let's talk about expense first.

The positive side, for those who can't afford to get involved right now, is that prices will probably, in time, come down. If you bought a VCR five years ago, I'm sure you can recall spending over \$1,000. An improved version can be purchased for as little as \$250 today. Of course, you have to be willing to wait for prices to decrease, and waiting can present its own set of problems.

There's also the option of buying used. There's nothing wrong with searching out a good deal in the used equipment market, if you can't afford the latest item right out of the box. It's a sensible way to get in on the action without going into serious financial debt.

Another obvious concern is obsolescence. "New equipment comes out so fast. How do I know that what I buy today won't be outdated tomorrow?" is a comment I often hear. It's a valid

concern, and yet there's not much we can do about it in any area of high-tech merchandise. The truth is, if you're determined to sit back and wait for the ultimate version of an item, which does *everything* it will ever do, you're probably going to wait forever. Engineering and design teams are paid to develop new products and improve upon past models—and improve they will. It's not a plot against the consumer. It's simply technology on the move, and it will always be that way. So waiting often becomes a futile endeavor.

Making an initial investment is certainly a gamble of sorts, as is everything in life. What needs to be determined is, if you're really serious, how long can you realistically afford *not* to get involved? You could be losing a lot more than your initial investment in terms of hands-on product knowledge, valuable experience, and long-range income potential.

What's the answer? My suggestion would be to purchase that which you can reasonably afford, if only to keep up on what's happening. The entire field of electronics is moving much too quickly for any musician to run the risk of being left behind in the dust. I honestly wouldn't be concerned with the obsolescence factor. That's a battle none of us can win. Why should we expect anything we buy today to equal what will be available in five years?

It's difficult to find a place where the old adage "He who hesitates is lost" rings more true than in the area of drums throughout the '80s. He who hesitates too long will surely lose out in the long run. It's your decision to make—and a most serious one at that.

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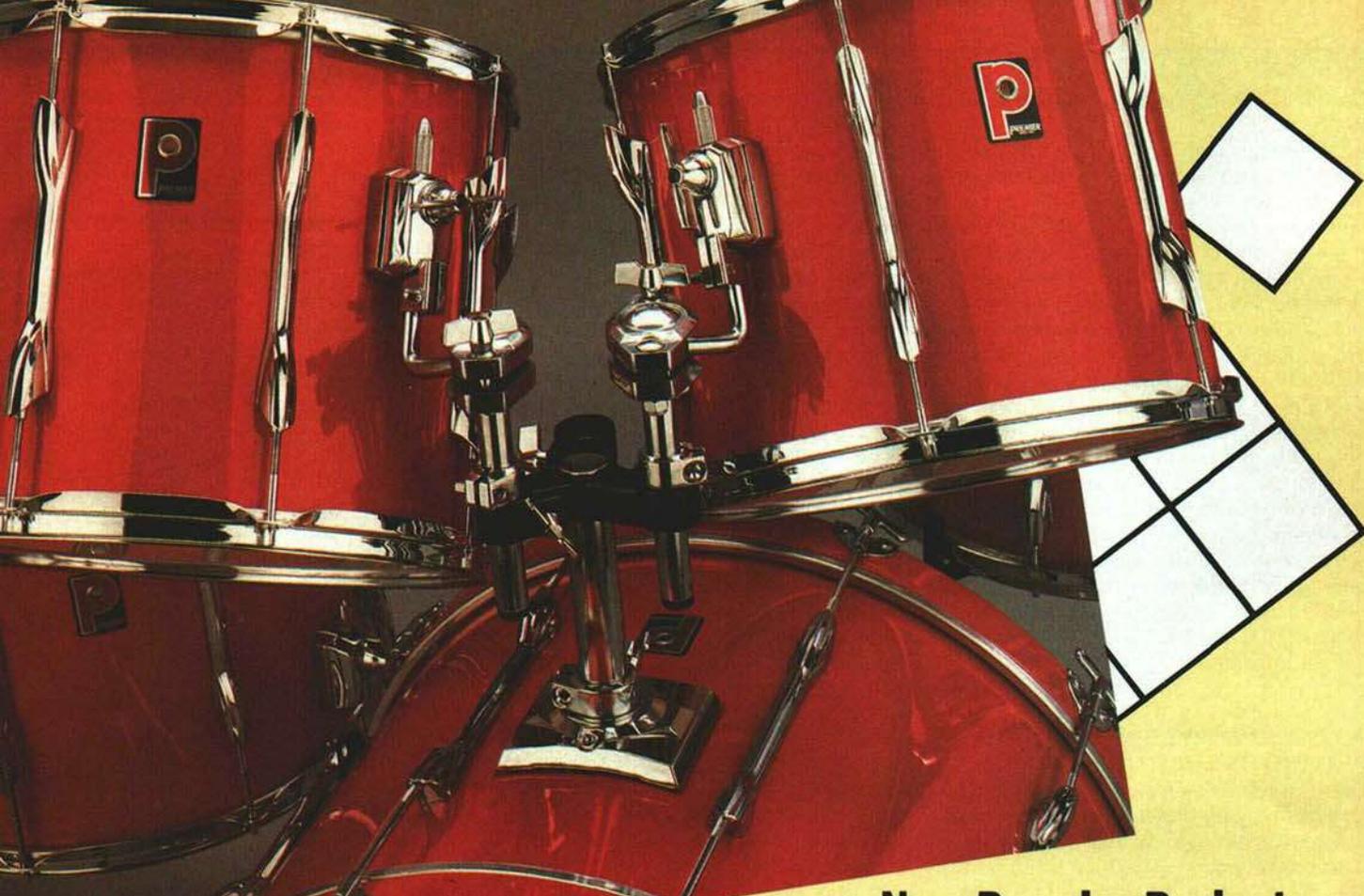
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MODERN DRUMMER Magazine (ISSN 0194-4533) is published monthly with an additional issue in July by **MODERN DRUMMER Publications, Inc.**, 870 Pompton Avenue, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Second-Class Postage paid at Cedar Grove, NJ 07009 and at additional mailing offices. Copyright 1988 by Modern Drummer Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction without the permission of the publisher is prohibited.
SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$24.95 per year; \$44.95, two years. Single copies \$2.95.

MANUSCRIPTS: Modern Drummer welcomes manuscripts, however, cannot assume responsibility for them. Manuscripts must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.
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MUSIC DEALERS: Modern Drummer is available for resale at bulk rates. Direct correspondence to Modern Drummer, Dealer Service, 870 Pompton Ave., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Tel: 800-522-DRUM or 201-239-4140.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Modern Drummer, P.O. Box 469, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009
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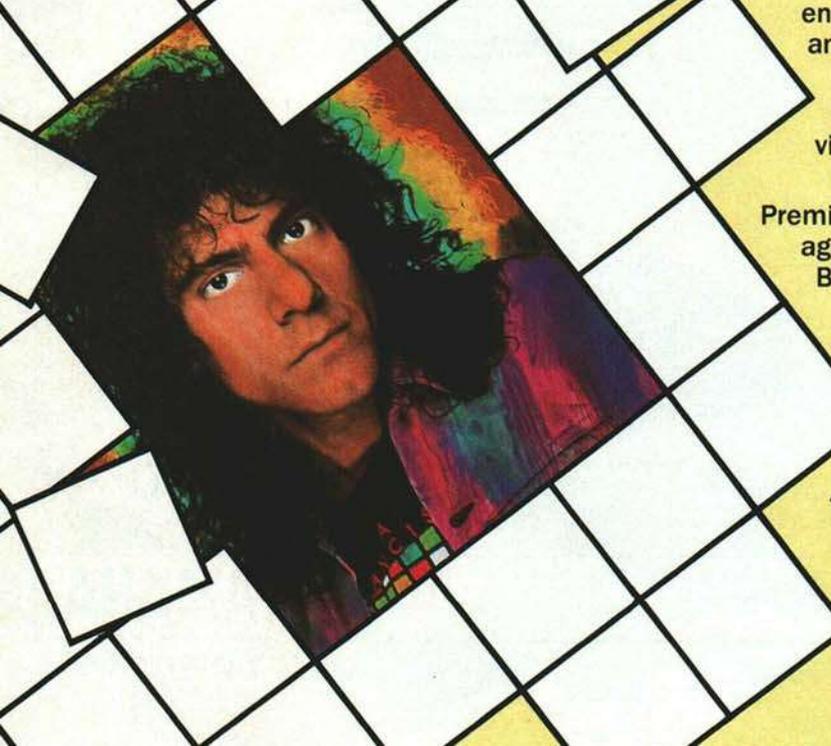
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READERS' PLATFORM

RICK ALLEN

I got through about 3/4 of Teri Saccone's interview with Rick Allen in your March '88 issue when I realized that I *had to* let you know how the article touched upon my emotions in such a powerful way. Congratulations go out to Teri for the wonderful job of letting Rick tell the entire story and handling such a sensitive issue. The article expounded 100 times farther than any of the current rock magazines could even imagine. Rick's tragedy and subsequent comeback should teach us all about the old cliché, "When the going gets tough..." Not only did Rick make me more determined to succeed as a drummer in a very tough local rock scene, but he also taught me to never give up on anything in life. Congratulations to *MD* for a job well done, and thanks, Rick, for a lesson in life worth its weight in gold.

Frank Levesque
Quincy MA

BEATING DISABILITIES

Every month I look forward with anticipation to my copy of *MD*, because there's always something new and interesting to catch my attention. The March '88 issue was no exception. I was especially looking forward to the feature on Rick Allen, which was very inspiring. Then you followed it up with the article on drummers with disabilities, which *really* hit home. I caught polio in 1950, when I was about 10 months old, and it affected my legs. But I've loved the drums since the age of four, and actually started playing around 11 or 12, and have continued ever since. I always felt it was God's way of giving me something back. I'm not the greatest drummer in the world, but I can hold my

own, and I've never let my disability stand in my way.

It can be tough on a kid growing up with a disability. But being a drummer gave me a lot of courage; it was something I could do that most people couldn't. Once I started playing out with groups, people didn't think of me as "Joe, the guy with a handicap," but as "Joe, the drummer." I've been so happy that I am able to play the drums that I've never had the time to feel sorry for myself, and I thank God for that.

There are thousands of stories of disabled people who have excelled as musicians or in some other field, and I thank you once again for showing us a few. As for Rick Allen, the fact that he was able to come back after the total loss of a limb is amazing—even to me! It's tough enough when you have all four. I congratulate Rick; it really says a lot for the human spirit to succeed so well in the face of such adversity.

Joe Rossi
Auburn NY

I found Teri Saccone's interview with Rick Allen and Adam Ward Seligman's "Beating Drums, Beating Disabilities" both truly inspiring. I am epileptic, and suffer both Grand Mal and Petit Mal seizures. Petit Mals are momentary lapses in which I stop doing whatever I'm doing for a couple of seconds and then come back to it. As you can imagine, it's difficult trying to keep good time with this condition! However, I can truly say that I'm very lucky, because I'm not missing any limbs, and my epilepsy can be controlled by medicine. And though I've missed gigs because I can't drive a vehicle to haul my kit around, like all the fine and

inspiring drummers in your articles, my love for drums will never die!

Manuel Gonzalez
Allentown PA

TAMA/ULRICH AD

First, thank you for consistently putting out such a quality product. Your magazine offers a wealth of information, wisdom, and personal insights. You have given young artists coverage (myself included), and have exposed younger drummers to the older masters of our craft.

The amount of information a player starting out today has at his or her disposal through your magazine is amazing! I remember buying specific record albums as a kid, just because the drumset was visible on the cover. Record jackets, along with drum catalogs, gave some of the only opportunities to see drumkits. Still today, I rush home with the latest *MD* with some of that boyish excitement, eager to see other players' setups and the equipment ads.

It came as something of a disappointment, then, to see the new Tama ad on page 5 of the March issue. Regardless of one's religious affiliations or beliefs, musical tastes, or views on drinking, this advertisement is simply and completely in poor taste. The "off-color" print copy, along with the open beer bottle, promotes an aspect of the business that—granted—is very real, but should not be a reason for purchasing drums (or even playing them). Drummers do enjoy their fun, and no one is an angel. But who and what is this ad appealing to?

Make no mistake, I have no problem with Lars Ulrich, Metallica, or metal music

continued on page 75

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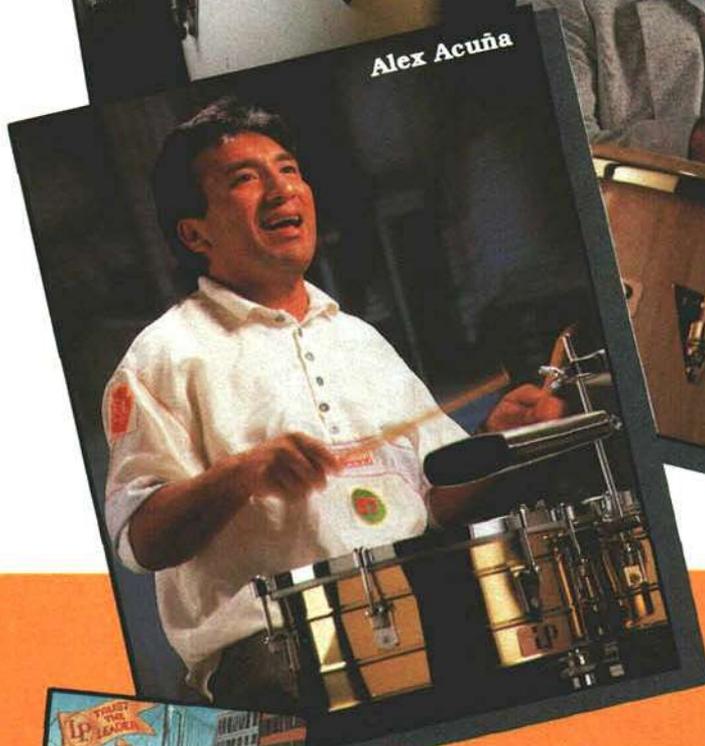
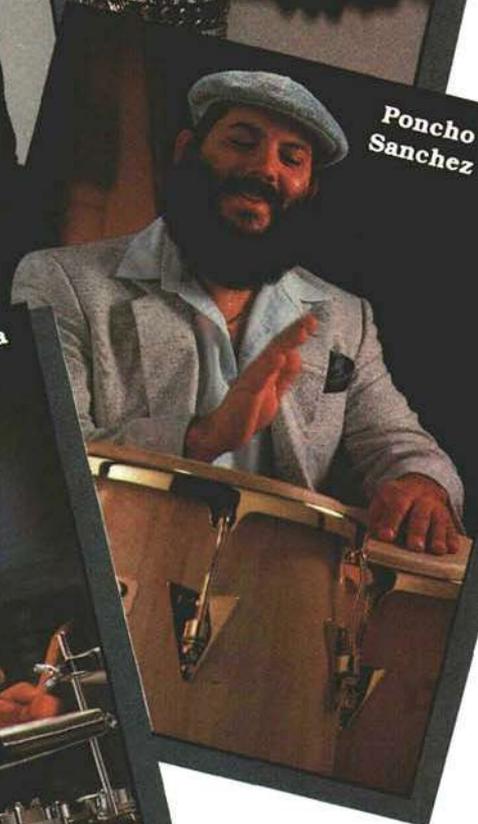
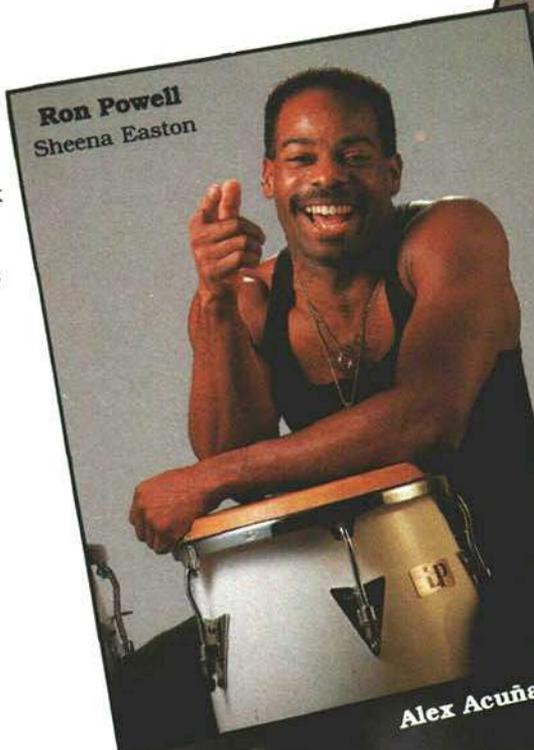
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Photo by Rick Malkin



Bud Harner has been enjoying the best of both the rock and jazz worlds. At the end of 1985, Bud and three other members of Barry Manilow's band began getting together twice a week just to play for fun. The fun turned into Uncle Festive, and producer Jeff Weber recorded them. While their recently released third album, *Young People With Faces*, was a 32-track digital recording, both their first album, *Money's No Object*, and their second, *Say Uncle*, were digitally recorded live to two-track.

"There's no mixing and going back to overdub or fix anything," Harner explains. "Everything you hear on the

album is exactly how it went down. It's pretty scary doing it that way, although, doing it live, it burns more.

"I think of all the music I've ever played, this is the most fun. All of us grew up with a jazz background, and we were all into the rock scene too, so I guess it was natural for us because it's a combination. We have the modern sounds and technology of today's rock music, plus the improvisation and stretching out of jazz."

In the meantime, Barry Manilow, for whom Bud has been Music Director since last summer, is in complete support of Uncle Festive. "This was all talked about with Barry before we went back on tour with him," Bud recalls. "He had been hearing the group on the radio, and he asked if we wanted to come back. As long as we were able to promote our records while we were out on the road, and do radio interviews and maybe a gig on an off night, it was great with us. It was fine with

him, and when we went to do some tracks on *Swing Street*, he credited us as Uncle Festive on the album, which was really great. He announces us in the show, and we do a little snippet of our stuff during the show. His show features a lot of jazz stuff, so even though it's in a little different idiom, it's really working hand in hand.

"This has probably been Barry's most fun and most challenging show," says Harner, who is in the midst of a two-year tour. "I'm using a lot of electronics. There's programming, drum machines, sampling and triggering, and all this stuff. I did that on the last tour, too, but this one has a lot more. What we didn't do on the last tour that we're doing on this one is sequencing between, say, a drum machine and keyboards, so everything is locked in. We don't do that the whole show, but during maybe three or four of the big numbers. So I have to always keep switching programs on the drum machine and turning the elec-

tronic drums on and off, plus I'm playing the Dynacord *Rhythm Stick*, which is another triggering device. Before I go out on stage, I've got to switch this MIDI patcher in my rack and make a couple of volume and sensitivity adjustments real fast. When I come back, I have to switch it all *back* real fast because I have to start playing the drums again. Then that song ends and I have to go over to the drum machine and switch the program on *that*. So it's a lot of stuff like that. On some of the tunes, there are sequenced keyboards but no drum machine. I'm playing live, so I have to wear headphones and hear a click in order to lock in with the sequenced stuff. That makes it challenging."

Bud is also spending whatever spare time he has these days writing, and is thrilled that a song he cowrote, "Diamond Dreams," is on Michael Johnson's new album, *That's That*.

—Robyn Flans

Photo by Ebet Roberts



The Cars recently broke up after being together for more than a decade, and **David Robinson** cites some of the changes he experienced over the years on the road, most evident on the recent *Door To Door* tour: "I simplified my drums quite a lot, which made things much easier. I used to do a lot of switching, but it became too much to contend with because in between songs I'd have two or three seconds to change eight settings in the dark. And the more electronics I brought in, the more problems I had. So

on this tour I had a rack off stage that the drum tech did all the changes from. I didn't have to touch anything. I just kept playing.

"Another thing is that I wanted everything to be fresh for this tour. So I got all new drums, all different sizes, set them up differently, and I almost looked at this tour as though I had never played drums before. I even turned the sticks around to the correct end to play. It was like I wanted everything to feel really different, even though we were playing most of the same songs. Having a different drumset in front of me—one that looked different and sounded different—made it refreshing for me."

Amazingly, Dave hadn't played drums in three years before embarking upon the tour (with the exception of the Live Aid performance in '85). How did he go about working the kinks out? "I just played a little before the whole band got together to practice. It

wasn't hard to get back into it at all," he says. "Also, I had worked out a lot during that time, so I was a lot stronger, and I think that helped a lot. I never really noticed how much of a difference having more strength made until I began to play, and then I realized that I wasn't getting as fatigued."

Outside of The Cars, Dave has always had a strong interest in soundtracking, and he mentions that doing a project of his own could now be a possibility. "I'd like to do something at the little studio I built at home, and once I really get to know how to work all that gear, I'll see where that leads."

Robinson is also a songwriter, but his style is somewhat of a contrast to that of the standard Cars sound. "The songs in The Cars were so distinctly Ric's [Ocasek]. If any of us wanted to write a song, we would have to write one that sounded like his. We didn't want to do that, so it

was pretty much left up to him."

How would Robinson describe his own style of composing? "Well, up to now, all that I've written is instrumental theme music, which sounds like soundtracks for movies," he answers. "I guess it might be sort of new age music with synthesizers and programming."

"On the first Cars album," he continues, "the drums pretty much guided a lot of the rhythms, but we kind of dropped that approach over the years, and the drums were put in the background a lot more," he explains. "And we never played a dance-concious track, which is something I'd like to pursue a bit more. It would be nice to let people know who I am and that I've got another side to my playing, but it was kind of hard to put that across on Cars records. Maybe now that might change a little bit."

—Teri Saccone

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In the past couple of years, **Doane Pery** has learned that it is hard being in two groups at the same time. Although he has successfully managed to juggle both Australia's Hunter and England's Jethro Tull, there have been times when his commitment to one has affected the other. In 1987, Hunter did a three-month tour, opening for Tina Turner,

then Jethro Tull spent three months in the U.K., Europe, and the U.S.

While he is on a good portion of Tull's *Crest Of A Knave*, Doane says that some songs were written after the album had supposedly been finished. Since Doane was already gone with Hunter, Gerry Conway finished the album, but Doane insists that

In March, **Gregg Bissonette** began an eight-month tour with David Lee Roth in support of the new album, *Skyscraper*. "I had a really great time recording the album," Gregg says. "We had been on tour for a year, and it was fun to get the chance to go into the studio to record after the tour. I'm really honored that my brother Matt and I got to write a tune called 'Knuckle-

bones.' Billy Sheehan left the group, so my brother Matt is playing bass in the band. We've played together since we were real young, and while I loved playing with Billy, it's fun getting a chance to play with Matt again.

"For this album, everyone demoed up the tunes at home," Gregg continues. "Steve [Vai] and Brett Tuggle, our keyboard player, and Matt and me demoed up feels of

make it onto the album.

"Tull has a very strange way of recording rhythm tracks: There are no lyrics, so I am doing all the tracks to forms that we're playing," Doane explains. "There is no melody line and no words. Sometimes Ian [Anderson] will sort of hum something in my ear so I know what I'm playing to. It's very strange because I'm pretty song-oriented, and he works backwards. Trying to imagine something is very hard. I would have played certain things a lot differently if I had heard the words at the time of the recording.

"The live show is a middle ground between some of the older Tull music and some of the new music. The newer songs didn't seem to catch on very well with some of the older fans because they are very synthesizer-oriented. It kind of pushed the band into a

different area. *Under Wraps*, the '84 album, was the one we toured behind when I first joined the band. Ian's solo album was very modern—some people thought too modern. I think people expect Jethro Tull to have songs about elves and goblins, which is certainly a small part of the music, but a lot of people have focused only on that. The new stuff is somewhere between some of the older-sounding music, in that maybe some of it is more blues related, and some very modern stuff, where there are sequencers."

Doane is now ending a much-needed break, during which he spent a lot of time working on his writing. Soon he'll be gearing up for the summer festival tour with Tull, which will also celebrate the group's 20th anniversary.

—Robyn Flans

tunes, chord changes, and the entire instrumental part of the tune, and Dave wrote all the hooks and all the words. He's really an incredible song crafter, the way he shapes it from an instrumental tune into a song. I went in and recorded all the drums first, and then we built everything else on top of that, which is a real cool way to do it.

"One of my favorite songs off the album is a real fast dou-

ble bass tune called 'The Bottom Line.' I had a chance to use a ton of different toms on it. During one section of the tune, Steve Vai and I do a real fast triplet eight-bar duet where I play from the 20" floor tom all the way up to the 6" tom. It's really cool and it was a lot of fun," says Gregg, who is also enjoying singing background vocals on nearly every song.

—Robyn Flans

Louis Hayes has been doing dates with McCoy Tyner. **Craig Krampf** has relocated to Nashville. Lately he's been working with the Forrester Sisters and Kim Carnes. **Tris Imboden** played drums on a Julio Iglesias/Stevie Wonder duet, as well as going to Japan with Kalapana recently. Following a European tour with Count Basie Alumni from April 11 to May 10, **Butch Miles** plays the Odessa Jazz Party in Odessa, Texas from May 16 to 22. **George Lawrence** recently played live dates with Mose Allison, the Semmes-Blurton Big Band, and Chemistry, and has played on recent albums by the Jackson South-

emaires, the Square Root Of Now, and the Pluto Gang. **Vince Barranco** recently played live and on TV dates with Mark Gray. **Jerry Kroon** on records by Moe Bandy, Vern Gosdin, David Slater, Billy Joe Royal, Charlie Pride, and Don McLean. **Scott Kaufman** on the road with Dan Seals. **Terry Chimes** on the road with Black Sabbath. **Vic Mastrianni** on the road with Reba McEntire. **Stu Nevitt** on tour supporting Shadowfax's new LP, *Folk Songs For A Nuclear Village*. Marimbist **William Moersch** recently performed a solo recital in New York. **Mike Fink** is currently playing with Ron Wood and Bo Diddley. Mike also

played on Showtime's *Classic Rock 'n' Roll Reunion*, featuring Jerry Lee Lewis, Wilson Pickett, and Ben E. King, among others. **Chuck Behler** has replaced **Gar Samuelson** on drums in Megadeth. **Mike Mixter** doing dates with John McEuen & Runaway Express. **Richie Morales** in the studio with Spyro Gyra. **Michael Crizzlin** is currently drumming for the Tommy Shaw Band. Michael has also been working on an ongoing recording project with Eddie Jobson. **Clyde Brooks**, who is on Kenny Rogers' recent "Twenty Years Ago Today," has been playing with and coproducing Lynn Anderson as well as working with John

Brannen and Bob Van Dyke. **Roy Martin** recently worked with Israeli rock artist Shalom Hanoch and on an album by Daryl Canada (for Japan). He has returned to his native England (after living for a few years in New York), and is hoping to work with Hanoch in Israel again this summer. **Harry Stinson** has a couple of songs on a new album by J.C. Crowley, and also plays on it. **Jim Blair** on the road with Ray Parker, Jr. **Pete Holmes** is on tour with Black N Blue, supporting their recent release, *In Heat*. **Andy Newmark** working live dates with Paul Carrack.

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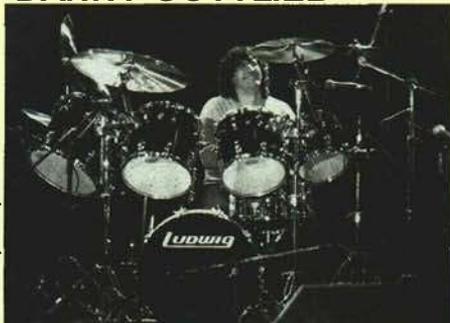


Photo by Bobby Lewins

Q. Let me first say that you are one of the most musical drummers in the world today. I am speaking specifically of your work with Pat Metheny. Your playing on the *Travels* album is especially inspiring to me. I loved the sound of your drums in that live situation. This brings me to the reasons for my letter. I would like to know what kind of drums you used on that album, the sizes of the drums, what types of heads were used, and the sizes and types of the cymbals (in other words, everything you can tell me about the setup). Thanks again for your musicianship.

Vince Harris
Chattanooga TN

A. Thanks a lot for the compliment and for taking the time to write. Whenever someone mentions "musicality" in relation to any of the things I'm doing, I always feel a responsibility to credit two of my most musical influences: Joe Morello and Mel Lewis. While I've also been influenced (as we all have) by the other great drummers from the jazz tradition, I studied with both of those gentle-

men while in high school, and they always pointed me in the right direction. I still try to spend as much time as I can with both of them.

The *Travels* album was recorded over a span of 16 concerts or more, and the final album was made up of what Pat picked as the best assortment of songs from all of those performances. I was always experimenting, changing drum sizes and combinations (and driving the roadies crazy), and I'm not sure exactly what drums are used on what particular cut. The overall sound, however, used in all of those concerts was fairly consistent, and I can describe the basic setup and instruments.

In general, I used a combination of Ludwig drums and some fames shells (handmade by Joe MacSweeney in Boston) fitted with Ludwig hardware. To the best of my recollection, the drums I had on the road were as follows: fames 14x20 12-ply bass drum; Ludwig 8x12 and 16x16 Classic toms; fames 6x10 9-ply tom; fames 8x12 and 16x18 12-ply toms; Ludwig 5x14 hand-hammered snare drums (one standard, one Super-Sensitive); fames 5 1/2 x14 Mastermodel 15-ply snare drum. From these components, the set I created was a basic five- or six-piece kit, with a few experimental variations—such as putting extra toms to the left of the hi-hat for an attempt at different textures. The heads on the toms were Ludwig Silver Dots on top and clear Rockers on the bottom. On the snare, I alternated between Ludwig clear Silver Dots and Remo coated Ambassadors. The bass drum heads were generally Ludwig Silver Dots or

clear heads, with an occasional Remo Pinstripe.

I found that I got the best results tuning the snare fairly high. The top heads of the mounted toms were tuned fairly low, with the bottom heads a bit higher. The floor tom heads were tuned as low as possible without a rattle. They would growl a little bit, but worked great on a song like "As Falls Wichita..." I always tuned the bass drum very low, and put some type of deadening material inside, such as a pillow or blanket.

As far as cymbals go, they were all Paiste, but again, I don't remember exactly what setup was used for what song. The main ride cymbal was always a 602 22" Medium Flatride. I also remember using a second flat, placed on the left side above the first mounted tom, for a stereo effect. This was usually another 22" Medium 602 with two rivets in it. I generally used a 16" 2002 crash, 17" and 18" 2002 Mediums, a 20" 2002 China-type, and 14" Sound Creation dark hi-hats. I think I might have had a few Rudes in there as well—most likely 14" and 18". I also used a set of Paiste cup chimes and a few splash cymbals to augment some of Nana Vasconcelos' great percussion instruments. (By the way, this record was done before the introduction of the Paiste 3000 line. Please don't confuse this list with what I'm now using, which are mostly 3000s.) In addition to these cymbals, on stage next to the drums was a Roland percussion computer, a talking drum, a Casio keyboard, and a set of Ludwig bells that I played a few times during the set. I think I even played autoharp along with Lyle Mays on one song.

NEIL PEART

Q. Congratulations on an outstanding performance during your 1987 *Hold Your Fire* tour. Your solo was quite impressive. My question is: At a point in the solo where you were playing more or less in a "big band" fashion, you triggered your Simmons pads to make a somewhat trumpet-sounding section. Is that a pre-programmed sound that comes standard with your set, or did you create it yourself?

Kevin Ripley
Plaistow NH

Q. First, allow me to tell you how much I enjoyed seeing Rush's *Hold Your Fire* concert! During the show, you would hit your cymbals and a synthesizer sound would be heard. It was a great technique, but how in the world was it done? Also, did you use triggers on your acoustic toms?

Jeff Davis
Roswell GA

A. Well, let me say "thank you" to both of you for your appreciation. I'm truly glad you enjoyed the shows. The part of my solo to which both of you refer is, indeed, the "big band" section—a part of my thematic approach to a "concise history of percussion." (Or a gratuitous excuse for playing everything I want!) When I hit the cymbals (as Jeff noted), I was also hitting a series of Simmons pads (as Kevin noted), which triggered digital samples of horn shots in the Akai S-900 sampler. I acquired the actual sounds from a friend of mine, and I believe they might have originated on a Count Basie CD.

This is part of the morality of sampling about which I have expressed reservations before. I think if I were to use these sounds on a record, I would feel obligated to make my own, either synthetically or with real horn players. But live...I don't know; it seems okay. One of my

secret wishes was always to play behind a steaming big band, and now I have Count Basie backing me up every night!

As to the second part of Jeff's question, I don't use any triggers in my acoustic drums, and that is kind of where I draw the line. Both acoustic and electronic instruments have their beauties and their uses, but I don't see the point of mixing them up. I see the purpose, but not the point.

I do, however, have a little trigger mounted between my acoustic toms. It's a device called "Sydney" that my drum tech, Larry Allen, the folks at The Percussion Center in Fort Wayne, and I have perfected over the past few years. Now it is fully shock-mounted, easy to place, and gives you great access to electronic sounds without compromising the space that acoustic drums need. Somebody should really get "Sydney" on the market!



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Q. I recently purchased a set of Remo RotoToms to add to my Rogers four-piece kit, and I'm having great difficulty trying to get them in tune with the rest of my set. I do not expect them to sound as natural as would the rest of my kit; obviously, that would defeat their original purpose! I would, however, greatly appreciate any recommendations you would have as to how I may tune them to the best degree. Currently, the heads I'm using are *Pinstripes*.

A.T.

Wrentham MA

A. Remo's Rick Drumm offers the following advice: "I would suggest that you use a thinner drumhead, such as an Ambassador or clear Emperor, which should give you more resonance from your RotoTom. Also, be sure to tune your RotoTom head evenly to itself before adjusting the drum to the desired pitch."

Q. How can I find out where drum clinics are being held? I would love to attend some, but I have no idea where to look.

G. K.

Capac MI

A. This is one of the questions most frequently asked by MD readers, and one that we have answered just as frequently. There are several ways to obtain information about drum clinics. Since clinic tours may be sponsored by major manufacturers, it is often possible to get in touch with those manufacturers directly to ask about the schedules for their clinicians. It's also important to watch for ads promoting these tours.

In addition, drumshops and music stores often sponsor clinics. They will promote these events in local advertising and through their own flyers, mailing lists, etc. Watch the ads in whatever

local "music newspapers" are distributed in your area. In addition, you should get on the mailing lists of as many stores as possible within a reasonable traveling distance from your home. In that way, you will be notified when a drum clinic is about to take place in your area.

In some cases, it is possible for MD to publish a notice concerning an upcoming clinic or clinic tour. However, due to our advanced publication deadlines—and the manner in which the schedules for clinics often change at the last minute—it is difficult for us to offer timely and accurate information regarding such events before they happen. Your best bet is to rely on more immediate local information as outlined above.

Q. I am a senior in high school. I have applied to, and have been accepted by, the P.I.T. division of Musicians Institute of Technology for the fall term, starting in September of 1988. I will need some financial aid, and would like to know if you know of any grants, scholarships, or any other form of assistance available. I have been interested in drumming for nine years, and plan to pursue it as my career.

S.L.

Pine Bluffs WY

A. Modern Drummer offers the Shelly Manne Memorial Scholarship for promising drum students at P.I. T. The application process and requirements are administered by the financial aid office at the school; a selection committee at MD chooses the recipient from among candidates presented by P.I.T. For further information, you should contact the financial aid office at the school directly.

Q. I currently use all Zildjian cymbals. I have had a problem with cracking them. In the past two years I've cracked three cymbals: two 16" medium-thin crashes and an 18" swish. They were all relatively new when they cracked, and Zildjian replaced both crashes. (I still have the swish.) I talked to a dealer near me and he suggested cymbal springs. Not only do I find them unattractive, but my cymbals are positioned close to each other and I don't really want to move them. I'm afraid that the use of the springs would promote scraping. Could you advise me what to do about my problem?

C.F.

Miller Place NY

A. It sounds like something has to give somewhere. You don't elaborate on what type of music you're playing, but one must assume that you are hitting your cymbals pretty hard in order to crack three in two years' time. Perhaps you should consider upgrading to heavier, stronger cymbals. Medium-thin crashes and most swishes are not designed for heavy impact—especially in small sizes like 16". On the other hand, if you are not playing with heavy impact and your cymbals are still cracking, you might want to examine your technique; perhaps you are hitting your cymbals in a perpendicular manner instead of striking them a glancing blow. Such technique can be deadly for cymbals, even at moderate impact force.

In terms of mounting the cymbals for better protection, before you make any changes, examine what you are doing now. Are the cymbals mounted on sizeable felt washers, and protected by a cymbal sleeve over the threads on the filter? Do you keep the wing nut loose, so that the cymbal is as free as possible to move in response to stick impact? (Many drummers have a tendency to clamp a cymbal down into an immobile position. This forces the cymbal itself to absorb much more of the impact force.) Perhaps some changes could be made in this area.

In fairness to cymbal springs, there's no doubt that they absorb a great deal of impact force, and could very well offer

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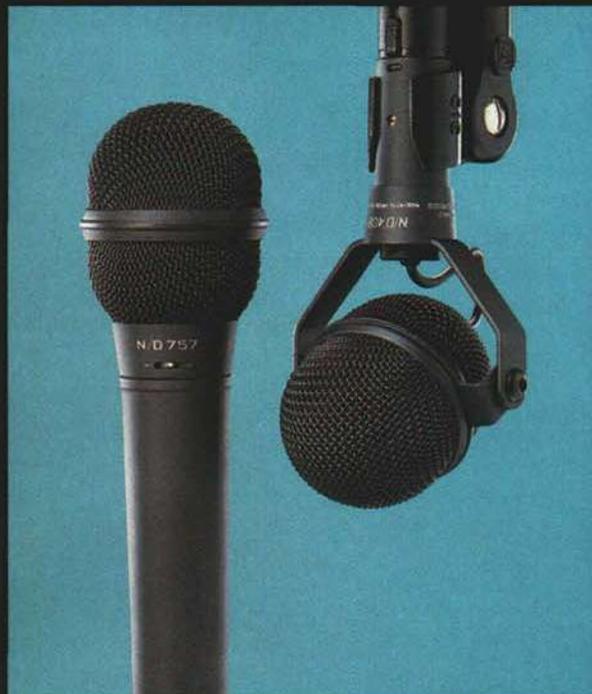
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continued on page 103



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Sound Engineer, Def Leppard

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Photo by Eberl Roberts

Years from now, when the annals of rock history are chronicled/ a select group of musicians will be dutifully acknowledged for their contributions to the era. And although the few recognized won't likely be of the drumming persuasion, one drummer who should not be ignored is...

by Teri Saccone

TOMMY

ALDRIDGE



Ever since he first caused a commotion in the '70s as a member of Black Oak Arkansas, Aldridge has been virtually impossible to overlook. His catalytic intensity and the fervor he puts forth on his instrument have made audiences, fellow drummers, and critics embrace his playing. Quite simply, Tommy is the role model for a generation of heavy rock drummers the world over.

Consistently emerging at the vortex of the sound in his musical involvements, Aldridge's appeal also lies in his being such a demonstrative player—setting the standard for heavy rock visual expressionism. He's had countless disciples, with his impact being so influential that it might be said that if he had never existed, a drummer such as Tommy Lee would probably be a different type of drummer today.

Throughout his tenure as the premier hard rock drummer of the decade, Aldridge has played with a diverse cross-section of artists in the rock 'n' roll idiom (Black Oak Arkansas, Pat Travers, Gary Moore, Vinnie Moore, Ozzy Osbourne), several of whom have been notoriously difficult to work with. Now, having been a member of Whitesnake for more than a year, Tommy is openly elated about the personal and professional excellence within the band, maintaining that the close interrelationships and apparent lack of egos elevate the experience both on and off stage.

"It's like a dream come true," he says contentedly, in his laid-back manner. "Not only are the guys in the band accomplished musicians, but their personalities are likewise. It's hard to believe that they play as well as they do, because they are all such great individuals. There's this insane belief that you have to be an asshole to play well. That's not the case with this band. The closeness is what really makes the difference on the performance level. When you're getting along, it flows into the music. And after all of these years, I can certainly appreciate working in a situation such as this."

It had long been the desire of Whitesnake frontman David Coverdale to recruit Aldridge as a permanent member of the group. And Tommy had been the original choice to record the multi-platinum eponymously titled LP. According to Tommy, it was just a matter of coordinating the right logistics so that they could work together. "David had approached Rudy [Sarzo, bass] and me to join the group before the LP was recorded," he explains. "But we had commitments to the Driver project, and we wanted to see it through. After we finished that album, David approached us again, and we, of course, accepted. I could kick

myself in the butt three times a day for not playing on the *Whitesnake* album, but I think Aynsley [Dunbar] did one helluva job on it."

When it came to learning the songs that Dunbar had recorded, Tommy had no problem injecting his own approach without sacrificing the overriding nature of what Aynsley had played. "Funny enough," Tommy says, "Aynsley played some things on the album the same way I would have played them. And David paid me a real compliment by telling me that he tried to get some of the drum parts to sound like my playing. Even though Aynsley is a single bass drum player, he did some double bass stuff on there, and a lot of it is similar to the way I would have approached it.

"Also, it's very drumistic music," he adds, "and it really lends itself to wild rock drumming, which I kind of think is my forte. I do try to inject things that exemplify my style, but I always remain faithful to the original. Sometimes, what I play is inspired by what I'm hearing from the rest of the guys. They'll do things right on the spot that can be very inspirational. And radical guitar parts can really lend themselves to drumming. I mean, you can hear the inspiration that Hendrix gave to Mitch Mitchell. The relationship in this band between guitars and drums really opens things up.

"I'm really enamored with this situation," he continues. "I've always wanted to work with a truly great band with a great vocalist. I mean, with all due respect to the singers I've worked with, I've definitely been shafted in the vocalist department. When Rudy and I were trying to put Driver together, we had trouble finding a front man like David Coverdale. Those kinds of dudes just don't grow on trees. It just so happened that David was looking for a rhythm section like Rudy and me. So we got our singer, he got his rhythm section, and we all lived happily ever after."

Sarzo and Aldridge first played together in Ozzy Osbourne's band, where they became close friends. Upon departing the Osbourne gig, they decided to remain a team, and put their collective energies into Driver. With Whitesnake, they are carrying on what has become a tradition.

Tommy feels that it's all of their experiences together that makes the chemistry so special. "It's the familiarity we have," he asserts. "You've heard the saying, 'Familiarity breeds contempt'? Not with us; it's just the opposite. First of all, we're really close friends, so that helps. He was best man at my wedding, and we care a lot about each other. Also, we think alike musically. Plus, Rudy is very dexterous. He can play along

"IT'S FINE TO DO SOMETHING THAT LOOKS COOL, BUT YOU CAN'T LET YOUR PLAYING SUFFER BECAUSE OF IT."

with double bass drum patterns that a lot of bass players can't play with, because he uses all of his fingers; he doesn't play with a pick. His style is very conducive to my style, and I think we complement each other very well. I've been fortunate to have played with some pretty cool bass players, but none cooler than the old 'Rude dude.' He can really play, and because we've been through so much together, we have a bond that is so unique."

Their *Project: Driver* LP was an all-out extravaganza celebrating speed, chops, and high-voltage musical insanity. It's clear that Tommy was viewing *Driver* from a musical vantage point rather than a financial one, but he admits that the end results were less than satisfying. "We starved for two years on that one," he laughs, "and we put all of our own money into it. But it was something that Rudy



Photo by Mark Weiss/MMA

and I wanted to do, and we had to get it out of our system. We were not as pleased with it as we'd hoped to be, but we saw it through."

Project: Driver unleashes some of the fastest tempos that Aldridge has documented on vinyl thus far in his career. But could the album be *too* fast, *too* heavy, and *too* hard? "Well, I *like* playing fast," he responds with an apologetic laugh. "I've never really had the chance to play that fast because, usually, you have to think of getting radio airplay.

"Maybe it was self-indulgent," he considers, "but I had the chance to do something different, and that's the way I wanted to play it—fast! But you're right; the record companies said, 'It's too heavy—too athletic.' Let's put it this way: The first time my wife heard it, she was driving the car, and going about 50 miles per hour. By the time she got halfway through the first song, she was doing 90! [laughs] But I'm glad that we got to do that, because we worked with [guitarist] Tony McAlpine, who's such a genius and who had so many ideas."

Perhaps one of the reasons that Aldridge has been so employable over the years is that he has wisely managed to circumvent all of the trends, instead building on his style and his flair for showmanship. "With drums," he points out, "there's very little that hasn't been played before. The rudiments are the same as they've always been, and they are the basic fundamentals that are taught to every drummer. As a result, I think it's much easier if a drummer has something in his style that separates him from everyone else. I've tried to approach the drumkit in a different way through some of the double bass things I'm known for and also some of the visual things.

"Sometimes," he continues, "you see drummers who look the part—who have the visual thing together—but they can't convey anything musically. Then there are some drummers who play great stuff,

but they look like librarians. The ticket is to incorporate both the musical *and* the visual. I think that has played a part in allowing me to sustain a career over the years. Plus, I enjoy what I'm doing, and it just gets more fun.

"I also think it comes down to persistence. There are a lot of great drummers out there who aren't working because, as a rule, there's a shorter life-span in this business than in athletics. You're up today and then you disappear. A jazzer can play for an unlimited length of time, but a rocker...well, you can't be up there Shakin' your bootie in front of 13-year-olds when you're 50. Let's face it: It doesn't work. Hopefully, you make enough money so that when the day comes for retirement, you're ready. Or else you should try to have enough of a foundation in your playing that you can move into different styles.

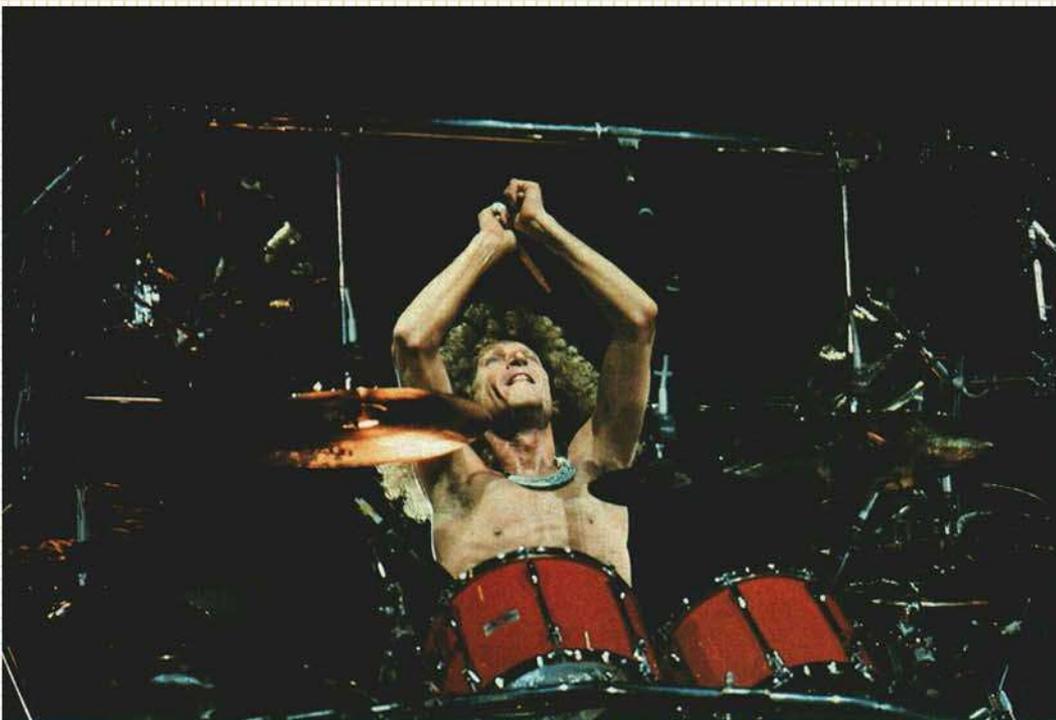
"Of course," he summarizes, "luck has played a big part in my success. I'm real, real lucky, and I can't over-stress that. I sit back sometimes and think, 'How did I end up with this gig?' There are certainly plenty of drummers who can play circles around me, but for whatever reason, I ended up with the gig. I thank my lucky stars every day."

For all of the success and gigs he's had, Aldridge acknowledges that he's had some lean years, even after he was established. "Those two years when Rudy and I were spending all of our money on *Driver* were rough," he says. "Then my wife filed for divorce around the same time. When it rains it pours, and that was a really low point.

"I had some offers at the time, but they just didn't motivate me. What got me through that time was the fact that I had survived the beginning of my career by staying with it, and I knew that I had the integrity and strength to get through it again. I always had pride in everything I did; I was never out to just make a buck."

Tommy also points out that although he had made a substantial name for himself, that didn't guarantee his future. "That's one thing I've learned in this business," he says. "You never bank on anything until you're actually doing it. And just because you've got a gig, that doesn't mean you have job security. Like when I was with Ozzy: I was paid a great salary and they were very generous, but there was always the chance that they might suddenly fire the whole band. And that has happened.

"Security is something that all of us need, and when you work really hard, you want it even more. I've always liked to work hard—not just for security, but when I have something steady, I would rather concentrate on being the best at my instrument rather than having to worry about how I'm



going to pay next month's bills. Whitesnake is a very relaxed situation because it's very secure, plus the music just dares you to be as good as you want to be."

And yet, David Coverdale has been quoted as saying that he always wants different players in Whitesnake to keep things fresh. So how permanent can this situation be? "Well," Tommy replies, "as permanent as I think anything can be, you know? I feel very confident about the future of this band as it is, but there are no guarantees about anything."

Guarantees notwithstanding, the present-day Whitesnake is a five-piece musical monolith, often cited as a heavy metal "supergroup," given its prestigious lineup of veteran players. And the material is well suited to show off the musical skills of the players. "I really enjoy this material," Tommy remarks. "'Crying In The Rain' is great for drumming, as is 'Still Of The Night.' That one is a lot of half notes and quarter notes, while 'Crying' has a lot more 8ths and 16ths. The more notes the better," he laughs. "That's how I see it as far as drums are concerned. It's also great to be playing the older Whitesnake material that a lot of Americans aren't familiar with. It's funny because some of the fans think that *Whitesnake* is the band's first album, which is not the case at all."

When he joined Whitesnake, Aldridge developed some new ideas for his drumset, coming up with a kit that is as appealing from a visual sense as from an aural one. The drums are Yamaha *Power Recording Series*, with 14", 15", 16", and 18" toms, two 24" bass drums, and an 8x14 brass snare drum. He uses Remo *Pinstripe* heads on the tops and *Ambassadors* on the bottoms, with the exception of the snare drum, which has a *CS Pinstripe* on top. His pedals are D.W. 5000 *Turbos* with Danmar beaters, and his sticks are Pro-mark SS Japanese white oak.

The most unique feature of Tommy's new kit is the rack system, which allows him to suspend his bass

begin with. Electronics do give you the advantage of a more controlled signal, but I'm really happy with what I'm getting acoustically. So rather than hassle with setting up another channel and all of the inherent problems, we don't trigger."

Aldridge did, however, start using the Zildjian *ZMC-1* miking system for his Zildjian cymbals, which consist of two 19" *K China-Boys*, a *Z series 24"* heavy power ride, two 19" *A thin* crashes, a 19" *A medium* crash, an 18" *A rock* crash, an 18" *Z Power* Crash, a 20" *A medium-thin* crash, one 10" *EFX-1* special effects cymbal, 14" *Platinum* rock hi-hats, and 13" *Z Dyno-beat* hi-hats, which are mounted closed. The cymbals all have *Brilliant* finishes. Previously, Tommy had tended to use heavier cymbals, but as he explains, "I'm using more mediums and thins because of the Zildjian miking system. I have each mic' attached right above the cymbal, so now I can use cymbals that are not quite as loud. I've always liked the sound of lighter weight cymbals because they speak quicker and respond better."

Unlike some drummers, Tommy uses exactly the same setup in the studio as he does live, without any extra muffling. "If you're getting a good sound live," he contends, "there's no reason you shouldn't get a good sound in the studio. If the drum sounds good to your ears, it will sound good to a microphone. So I set everything up exactly the same way."

"YOU'D BE SURPRISED AT ALL OF THE 'BAD BOYS OF ROCK' WHO SIT IN THEIR DRESSING ROOMS DRINKING MILK."

When recording, Aldridge leaves the drum sound up to the producer—for the most part. "As long as it's a good sound," he laughs. "I try to stay as uninvolved in that as possible. Sometimes, they want you to tune your drums in a way that you're not used to, and it can change the feeling. That often happens with the snare drum because a lot of producers want you to tune it

low. If necessary, you do it, but it's nice if you can be as comfortable as possible and play like you normally do live."

And while Tommy's playing would seem to be well-documented on the numerous albums he's played on over the years, he is quick to tell you that there is nothing on vinyl at this point that really represents his live playing. "Not yet," he says. "But I'm still looking for an opportunity to achieve a more accurate measure of my playing on record. Hopefully, that will happen in the near future."

One thing that cannot be captured on disc, of course, is the visual side

drums and cymbals. Greg Voelker designed and built the rack," Tommy explains, "and it's pretty unique. The cymbals are suspended on two levels." The rack was constructed from Sonor *Signature Series* hardware.

The kit is completely acoustic—devoid of triggering or sampling. As Aldridge's drum tech, Chris Whitemyer, puts it, "Why mess around with something that works so well?" Tommy says that he has experimented with a full range of electronics, but for the sake of keeping things simple, he does without them. "I've got all the stuff," he says, "but why take up another channel on the board when I don't need to? I'm getting such a good acoustic sound, and when you think about it, triggered sounds are usually made from acoustic sounds to

of Tommy's playing. "You can't get a stick-twirl to show up on a record," he jokes, "so the production and actual sound of the instrument is the key to the studio. I mean, look at the Led Zeppelin albums: The drum sound is so important to what's going on. A lot of times, Bonham would just be playing open, laid-back stuff, but the drums would sound so good within the overall production. So I think that's a large part of it as far as records are concerned, and I like to get a big, fat, powerful sound in the studio.

"Then," he continues, "when people come to the show, they hear that sound and see it augmented with the visual aspect. The audio and the visuals come together to form something bigger than life. Getting people through their ears is great, but if you can get them through their ears *and* eyes, then you've got them for life."

Tommy actually feels that some of his success is based on illusion—that the way he looks when he plays makes him "sound cooler" than he really is. "If you're just sitting up there playing, say, a straight 2 and 4, then that's one thing. But if you play it with the visual aspects in mind and try to make it look a bit more interesting, then it has more impact. The audience thinks they're hearing more than what is really there. It's like the art of deception. I'm not saying that I'm not playing anything, but if you embellish what you're playing with something visual, you're going to be more accepted—especially in this video age. And being such a physical instrument, drums really lend themselves to the visual. When people come to a show, they want to see a *show*. If they only wanted to hear you, they could stay home and listen to a CD. But at a show, they don't just want to be entertained with their ears; they also want to be entertained with their eyes. So I always try to encourage the visual aspect with young drummers."

But as concerned as Aldridge is with the visual aspect of performing, he is not one for elaborate special effects. "Some bands depend heavily on pyrotechnics for a show," he says, "and there's nothing wrong with that, except that what are you going to do next year when you tour? You're dealing with the same audience every time you go out, so if your show is based on special effects and a big production, you will be expected to top that with something different next time.

"Fortunately, Whitesnake is not steeped in special effects. We try to carry our pyro within the actual playing. I love a visual show, but if you try to substitute special effects for musical substance, the audience won't come back a second time because there's not that much to listen to. We've toured with bands who have



RUDY SARZO ON TOMMY ALDRIDGE

Since Tommy Aldridge and Rudy Sarzo have worked

side by side in Ozzy Osbourne's band, on the Driver project, and now in Whitesnake, it seemed fitting to get the bass player's feelings about the longtime pairing. Tommy's friend happily complied.

"I can honestly say that, in all the years I've been playing with Tommy, I've never once seen him have a bad night," Rudy said. "That's the absolute truth. Tommy at his worst is still a good show, and I have never seen him fall below his standard of playing. He's the most consistent musician I have ever worked with."

Tommy and Rudy first met in 1981 on the *Blizzard Of Oz* tour. "I was somewhat in limbo at that time," Rudy recalled, "because my style wasn't completely defined. But Tommy had already established his style, and because he had made a name for himself, he was asked to bring his distinctiveness to the band. They wanted him to be the Tommy Aldridge that audiences were familiar with."

Tommy and Rudy had the same situation with Osbourne that they now have in Whitesnake: They were hired to tour behind material that had been recorded by other musicians. "Because of my lack of identity at the time," Rudy explained, "I was asked to play the songs as close to the originals as possible. But I also had to follow what Tommy was playing. It ended up working out real well, though, because we were able to give the tunes an added flavor that wasn't on the record. Now, with Whitesnake, we were brought in to be ourselves completely. Both of us have been encouraged to play whatever reflects our musical personalities.

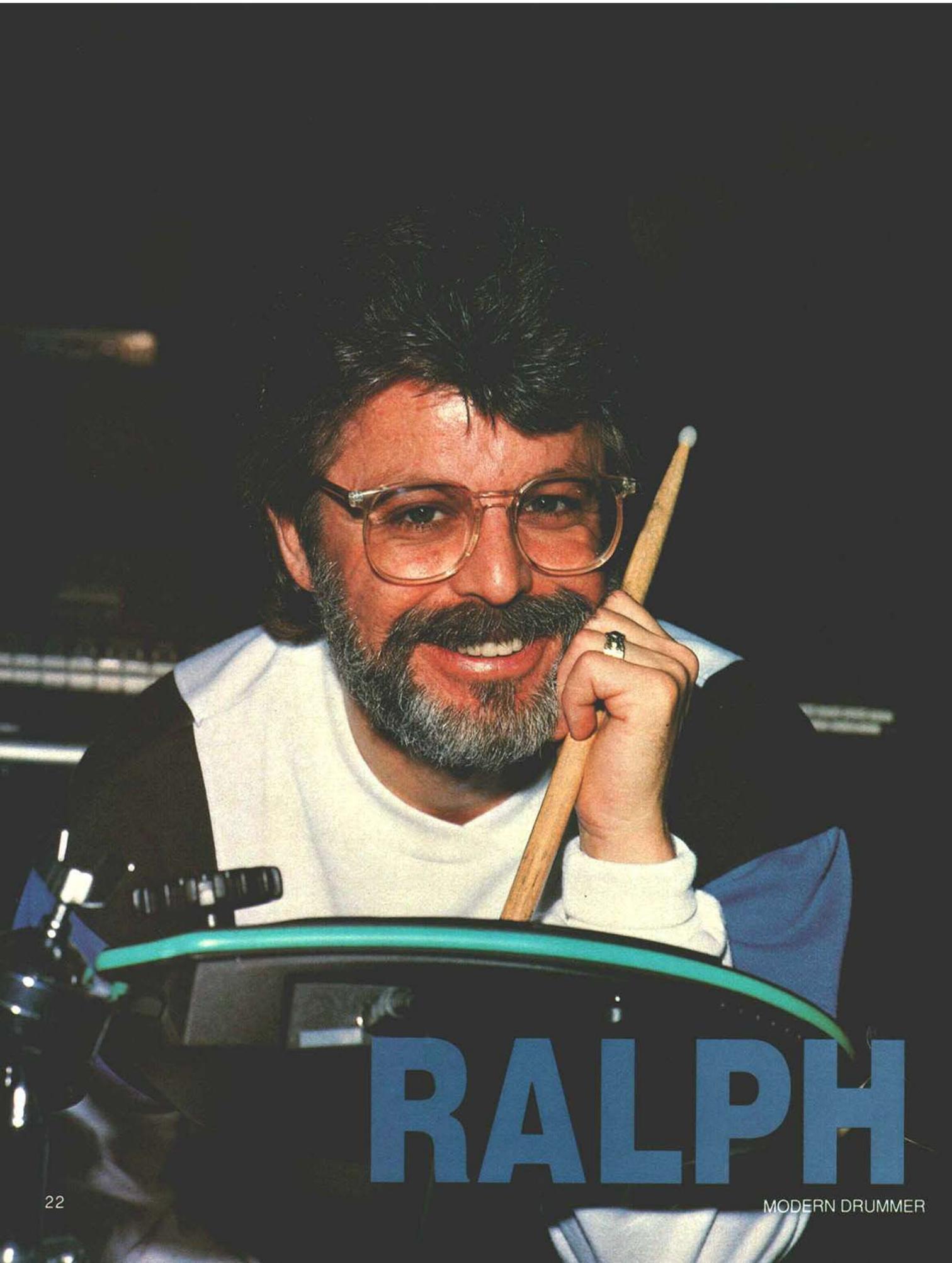
"We both approach a song with a tendency to lean forward with the groove," he continued. "Some people play ahead of the beat, others play on the beat—usually with the help of drum machines—and some people play behind the beat, such as Led Zeppelin did. Tommy will start doing 16th notes in a quarter-note type groove to open things up."

After eight years together, Sarzo finds that following Tommy is almost second-nature. "In the beginning," he explained, "I really had to listen to what he was doing, because there is so much going on in his approach. But now it's practically automatic. In fact, when I play with other drummers, I find myself playing bass parts as if those drummers were going to play the things that Tommy plays. I have to remind myself that he's different than most drummers.

"I always admired Tommy when he was with Black Oak and with Pat Travers. I felt that he was the most phenomenal American drummer in rock. Playing with him all of these years has been an inspiration to me." Does Sarzo foresee playing with Tommy for years to come? "I probably will," he replied. "After all we've been through together, I can't see playing with somebody else. After all, how can you top him?"

—Teri Saccone

continued on page 48



RALPH

Odds & Ends

by
Robyn
Flans

Before interviewing Ralph Humphrey, I wondered how he had gained his expertise with odd-time signatures. I came away wondering if some people just don't have natural abilities for certain things. It's not that he has trouble explaining the execution, because he's written a book on the subject, Even In The Odds. It's just that he doesn't seem to be able to trace his understanding of it.

One day he was a clarinet player and the next day he was a drummer. One day he was going to college in the Bay Area, where he had been born and raised, and the next day he was in L.A. playing very complicated music with Don Ellis.

Needless to say, he excelled on the instrument, drums being a much greater joy to Ralph than the clarinet, and he began a career that would be full of varied experiences and challenges. As a sideman, he has worked live with artists such as Seals & Crofts, Toshiko Akiyoshi, John Davidson, Abbey Lane, and Paul Anka. He enjoyed a year-and-a-half stint with Frank Zappa, which included touring and recording, and later recorded and toured with Al Jarreau. He has done the same with Free Flight, a band of which he is currently a member. In fact, just as we were finishing up our interview, Ralph was pleased to get the news that Free Flight would be recording its second CBS Masterworks project.

As a session drummer, Humphrey has worked with the likes of Wayne Shorter, the Manhattan Transfer, Michael Hoenig, and Pages. And he has also, along with

Joe Porcaro, designed the curriculum for the Percussion Institute of Technology (P.I.T.) in Hollywood, where Ralph teaches two classes each week, having so much knowledge to impart.

RF: Whatever possessed you to pick up the drums?

RH: When I was about 15, I gravitated toward drumming. My parents gave my younger brother and me lessons, so we both had a pair of sticks. It was obvious that I seemed to have the aptitude and that he didn't. I continued and basically learned on the job how to play. I was in a Dixieland band playing clarinet, and suddenly I was playing drums overnight. I can't really put it all together, except that I must have observed drummers playing in the stage band at school and thought I could probably do that.

RF: How did you learn the drums?

RH: I basically learned from listening and watching, and then sitting down and doing it. I took a few lessons with the high school teacher who was a drummer, Eugene Graves, and basically I got started. Then I played in his stage band and in a Dixie dance band outside of

school, and I did a lot of listening. I really didn't get the education until I was in college, studying all the other percussion instruments.

RF: Who were you listening to and playing to as a youngster?

RH: In the early days I listened to the various big bands, such as Count Basie and Woody Herman. At that time, I wasn't particularly into Ellington's band, although I was later. Mainly I was into the bands that had a great swing feel. I would also occasionally hear records by big bands out of L.A., like Terry Gibbs and Bill Hoiman. I was also into small groups such as Dave Brubeck and Shelly Manne. I was particularly fond of Joe Morello; he had a record out that Phil Woods was on called *It's About Time*, and every song title had the word "time" in it.

It's a great album. I listened a lot to Oscar Peterson records, which included Ray Brown and Ed Thigpen. I was totally infatuated with the feel of that whole group, so I did a lot of listening and playing with it. Jake Hanna was a favorite drummer of mine when he was with

Woody. I loved Sonny Payne with Basie. I was also aware of Buddy Rich and whatever records and bands he happened to be in. Later, especially in college and when I first moved to Los Angeles, I got into Tony Williams. I see him as one of the biggest influences—at that time, anyhow—on that whole school that included Miles and McCoy Tyner's band with Elvin. There were some other drummers I was fond of at the time, like Billy Hart, who was with Herbie Hancock's band, so I listened to Herbie's sextet a lot. I also enjoyed listening to Joe Chambers, who was in a variety of New York bands. They all seemed to have the same kind of thing that Tony was going for—definitely a more modern approach to drumming. I guess they would all say that Max [Roach] was the big influence on them, but I never listened a lot to Max. I know he's one of the guys who should really stick out in anybody's library, but I sort of skipped Max and went right to Tony.

RF: Where did you go to college?

RH: The College of San Mateo, which is a junior college. I went there because of the teachers, and it had a great reputation

HUMPHREY



at the time. There were two guys there who were great: Bud Young, from whom I learned a lot about theory and harmony, and Dick Crest, who had the jazz band and a few other classes. Dick had an outside band that would work all the time in the city and at various places, and I got to play in it. I started gigging and making some money while I was going to school, and playing with some really good players.

Then I went to San Jose State and studied with Anthony Cirone, who was, at the time, Assistant Principal Percussionist for the San Francisco Symphony, and taught at San Jose State. Now he's Principal Percussionist. He's written a lot of music and some method books, and has had an ensemble. I also took lessons privately with him, so I got some more formal training. I continued in the jazz band, did more studying, and got my BA and my teaching credential. I went the whole route, thinking, "If all else fails, I can teach," but never really planning on that.

RF: What was the plan?

RH: There really wasn't one at the time. In San Jose, the leader of the jazz band is Dwight Cannon, who is an interesting fellow. He liked more avant-garde music, and at the time, the Don Ellis band was on the scene. I was introduced to Don's music, and I fell in love with it. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. I thought it was the most happening thing on the scene, and the drummer, Steve Bohannon, knocked me out. I really was taken with that, and I listened to the *Live At Monterey* album all the time. The next thing I knew, Don was going to come up to perform with our college band with his drummer, so I was really excited about that. This was in 1967. He came up and rehearsed that day with the band, but his

drummer didn't make the rehearsal, so I played it. The band had rehearsed some of the music beforehand, so I was somewhat familiar with what he was going to play. He seemed to be impressed by the fact that I could play his music.

RF: That's not easy music.

RH: No, it's not, and as I found out later, Don was having trouble finding musicians in L.A. who either wanted or were able to do his band. When he actually called me back about six months later to ask if I wanted to audition with the band, I couldn't believe it. That actually was the beginning of my career as a musician, because up to that point I was in school, and I really didn't know what I was going to do. I could have gone on to become a symphony musician, because I like that music. I could have perhaps struggled in the Bay Area doing gigs, or maybe I could have gotten with a band and gone on the road; it's really hard to say. The turning point was moving to L.A. It also ultimately led to a divorce with my first wife. I think the biggest fear in my life up to that point was having to play an audition on a gig with this band. It was New Year's night at a club called Ellis Island. Don held down regular Monday nights at that club, and it was always packed because everybody was into this new kind of band. It was very unique, with about 20 musicians, including three or four bass players and two or three drummers.

RF: What was the audition like?

RH: It was unbelievable. It was a packed house, and it was really exciting. This was sink or swim on every level. Forget about the audition; here was a big band that I was sitting in with, playing very difficult music. I really did a good job of faking it. When I didn't understand what

they were doing, I just let whatever knowledge and experience I'd had up to that point carry me through the gig. Some parts I knew, but...

RF: How does a drummer fake it when you can't lay out?

RH: As a drummer, you don't lay out; you charge forward, you listen, you have the biggest ears you can, and you look at the music and try to figure out what you're seeing. Whatever I heard off the record was what I was counting on. The feel of the odd-time music was new to me; it was new to just about everybody.

RF: A drummer really has to carry the music.

RH: Sometimes you're the motivating factor behind it all. That's why I was very, very nervous on the flight down that day—more nervous than I've ever been in my life. It introduced me to the world of high pressure in this town. You're there, and you're expected to perform and do a good job. I don't know how everybody else in the band felt about my sitting there. It could have been, "Who is this green kid?" or "Uh-oh, now what's going to happen?" But everybody was really supportive, particularly the conga player, Chino Valdez, who had an awareness of the music enough to explain it—and it's not easy to explain that music. I remember sitting at the bar during the intermission, after I had played, and he gave me my first lesson. That was probably the beginning for me of a new direction in everything.

RF: You were pioneering some very heavy odd-time stuff.

RH: There were a few guys who were doing it. One in particular was Joe Morello, who I listened to a lot.

RF: Brubeck was doing stuff in five or seven, but you were doing eleven and thirteen.

RH: It was different. There were a lot of things odd about it. We can start with the leader and just the whole character of the music.

RF: I want to know how you learned to play those odd signatures.

RH: You have to discover the mechanics of it. What's the bottom line of this music; what makes it go? You have to learn and work on that.

RF: Can you be more specific?

RH: You break it down, and it's groups of twos and threes to me. Break it down to that, and then you find ways to feel the music based on the organization of twos and threes and the chord changes. How do they move? Then you listen to the bass part, see how it's working, and then you create your drum beat based on that. You create a new feel because a lot of the meters were creating new feels, at least for us in America. There are people in Greece, Bulgaria, and India who have done this for many, many centuries. What was new, though, was the applica-

tion in a Western context. Don's music was a strange combination of bebop and Dixieland, and a little bit of rock 'n' roll. Actually, if you take the rhythm away, the melodies and the harmonies were fairly simplistic. Put the rhythm to it, and it made it a whole different thing.

RF: So this was definitely a reading situation.

RH: Yes, it was. Thank God I had my reading pretty together.

RF: What precisely did the Ellis band require of you as a drummer?

RH: Number one: energy. Number two: leadership ability, because it invariably rests on the drummer's shoulders. To do that, I had to have the ability to play that music—the odd meters and whatnot. I didn't have to ask too many questions regarding it. I sort of picked it up as I went along, or I intuitively knew what I had to do. I drew upon my skills as a conductor from my college experience, which included symphonic band, orchestra, percussion ensemble, and all the classes that go along with being a music major. I knew how to read scores, and there were times the band needed to be conducted when Don was playing. So I could draw upon a lot of those skills that some drummers just wouldn't have.

RF: Had you studied a great deal of odd-time stuff previous to that?

RH: No, I hadn't. What little experience I had was from picking it up here or there, either playing a Stravinsky piece with the symphony orchestra, or doing the percussion ensemble piece that had some odd bars in it. Or maybe it was listening to Morello play with Brubeck. Those little smatterings of knowledge added up to my being able to understand this music a little bit more.

RF: You must have a very mathematical mind.

RH: I guess I do. And yet, I was horrible at math in school. I flunked algebra, although when I took it in summer school, I got an A. I think that was because I focused on it and had a good teacher and had to get it done. The structure of this music is basically mathematics.

RF: You just touched on the obvious question about this music, which is how to make it feel good.

RH: You have to learn how to do that. At the time, some of the meters we were playing were stated pretty straightforwardly. A 2-2-2-3 tended to be very rigid, very structured. It didn't have a modern kind

of flow to it. We are still talking about the '60s, and it was different. The odd music you hear today is much more sophisticated; all the awareness that everyone has gathered over the years has made it hipper. At the time, the big question on everybody's lips, including musicians', was: Can you make this music swing? There were a lot of jokes that went around, like that the band couldn't play in 4/4. The band hardly ever played in 4/4.

RF: So how did you make it swing?

RH: Well, actually, the word "swing" often refers to triplet music. That doesn't mean that R&B, funk, and fusion don't swing, but usually you say that they "groove." So how we made Don's music groove was to try to get a tight rhythm section feel, where everybody was playing in the same place at the same time and knew what they were doing.

RF: That's pretty fundamental.

RH: It's just like playing any other meter. My feeling these days is that it doesn't really matter what meter you play in, you can still make it feel good.

RF: Certainly that's an issue whether you're playing in four or eleven, but it's a little harder making eleven feel good.

RH: Especially to the lay listeners, because the lay listeners really depend a lot on something that's even, so they can hear the downbeats and the upbeats. With odd meters, those downbeats and upbeats are constantly changing, so they have a hard time picking up the groove. Sometimes you get a more cerebral thing than a feeling. Take dancing, for example. Everybody in America would have a big problem dancing in eleven, but they don't have any problem in Greece or Bulgaria, because it's tied to the folk music there. To us, it's definitely a music that's been brought in, borrowed. Most of the music in America is borrowed. Yours is a hard question to answer. Even musicians have a problem making meters feel good. I think the more you understand the way the odd meters work, and you can break them down and see the components, the better chance you have of making it feel good. That's one of the endeavors I strive for in school. I introduce the students to odd concepts that can help them with all the music they play. All of it can be applied to 4/4.

RF: What's the hardest piece of music you've ever played?

RH: If you spend enough time on something, you can learn anything. I



played some hard music in Zappa's band. It's very, very involved, and very structured. There's a lot of reading, and he's very specific about a lot of things. To play that together with the other members of the band was the difficult part—putting it together and making it happen. Given enough time, we could all learn our parts, no problem. But it was just perfecting it and getting the ensemble thing happening that was the challenge. The one shortcoming in Don's band was that it never rehearsed enough to really make those charts happen all the way. The band tended to be a bit sloppy, and I think it got a bad reputation for not quite having it together most of the time. Don would apply energy and try to make up for the fact that there were other things lacking. The band always had a lot of spirit and energy, and the times we spent on the road were some of the most memorable experiences of my career. It was really a big family, and it was great. It was a great time in the '70s.

RF: When did you come in contact with Zappa?

RH: That was next. I always thought it was a natural progression.

RF: What did you think of him?

RH: He was another eccentric. His was very, very interesting music. I have a great respect for Frank. He found me through George Duke. George and I knew each other from the Bay Area, and we had remained in contact. Then Frank

"AS A DRUMMER, YOU DON'T LAY OUT; YOU CHARGE FORWARD."

by Koren Pershing
with Brian Kilgore

LUIS CONTE

At 35, Cuban-born Luis Conte seems to have experienced as many musical milieus as are open to a hand percussionist. Last December, late-night TV viewers saw him appear as featured soloist with the *Tonight Show* band. And just during the past year, Luis has toured with Madonna and with Al Di Meola, and played on Hiroshima's big-selling album, *Co.* In March, he embarked upon a tour that included Europe and Japan with the group Toto.

The project he mentions most fondly, however, is his own album—*Luis Conte: La Cocina Caliente*—released in Japan in April and in the U.S. in June, on Denon Records. The title (in English, "The Hot Kitchen") came about, Luis explains, because, "When you're using all your toys, it's like you're in a kitchen making a stew."

This musical diversity is nothing new for Luis. However, it took some time, when I interviewed him at his suburban Southern California home, to find out everything he'd done. Speaking with a slight Hispano-Cuban accent, he told me, "This is a problem. Anybody asks me what I've been doing, I draw a blank. When I met Madonna, her first question was, 'So who have you been playing with?' I said, 'Aw, well....' She said, 'How come you play so good if you haven't played with anybody?' I said, 'Well, I have. Wait a second. Let me get this

piece of paper."

As with Madonna, Luis had to find, then consult his resume. It was well worth the wait. His past credits include (but are not limited to) work with The Supremes; Diana Ross; Lola Falana; Helen Reddy; Prince; Karisma; heavy rockers Phantom, Rocker & Slick; Boz Scaggs; Paul Anka and Bette Buckley; Herb Alpert; various salsa bands; and movies and TV—including a regular stint with the show *Fridays*.

It's an interesting road that has brought Luis Conte to this point in his career. Maybe the diversity was a part of it early on: "I played rumba in the streets a little bit, and I hung around in the carnivals. My family was a carnival family. They helped to found a *comparsa*, a carnival ensemble. It's not only playing. There's a lot of percussion, of course, but it's also dancing, costumes, choreography. It's a whole production. So I come from a dance kind of tradition."

He was brought up in Santiago, Cuba, in Oriente Province, where, as he explains, "As far as percussion playing and Afro-Cuban music go, the rawest stuff is in that province. It's still the closest to Africa. The *son*, which is one of the roots of salsa, comes out of Oriente, and the bongo was invented in Oriente. So that's my background, playing the straight *sexteto nacional*, the bongo and cowbell and guitar kind of bands."

But his mother's side of the family was from Havana, the capital. "It's more sophisticated and with more influence from the outside world," says Luis. "My parents would travel a lot, and while they were gone I'd stay with grandma in Havana. I got to spend almost half a year in Havana and half a year in Santiago."

His grandmother was an influence in other ways. "She was involved in an Afro-Cuban religion called *santería*. She would go to meetings, called *bembe*, where people dance and sing and play bata drums or congas. In Santiago, *santería* is not so popular, although there is some practice. You don't see the bata that often."

Luis tells the story of another early influence: "I'm a young kid, in junior high or something, and a friend of mine gets a letter. He says, 'Hey, man! Look at this! This friend of mine sent me this picture from a bubble-gum card.' He says, 'Look at these four guys. Look at those haircuts.' And it's the Beatles."

He goes on to explain, "You see, because of the American blockade of Cuba, you couldn't go out and buy a Charlie Parker record or a Beatles record. So my dad bought me a shortwave radio, because we wanted to hear the Beatles. We could listen to *La Voza de los Estados Unidos* [*The Voice of America*], and the BBC. So I was listening to American pop music at the same time I was hanging out at the carnival."

In 1967, the Conte family came to a difficult decision. Legally, no one was permitted to leave the country after the age of 15, except in special circumstances. Luis's father was a doctor, so it was certain that the family would not be allowed to emigrate. So young Luis, at 15, was sent to the United States to live with relatives.

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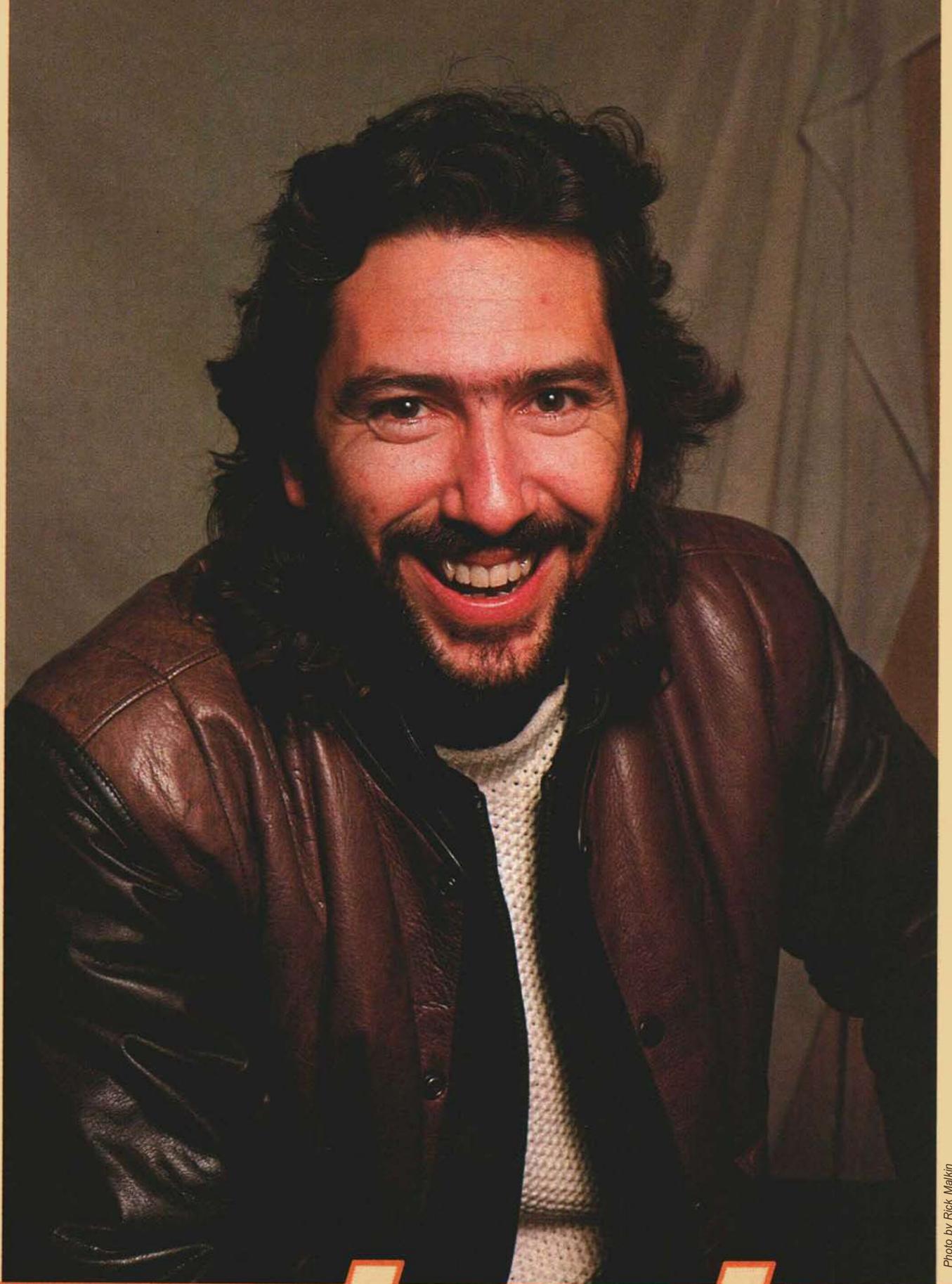


Photo by Rick Malkin

an luck

MODERN DRUMMER



Photo by Paul Jonason

Lenny Castro with Luis Conte

"I left through Spain," he explains. "In Madrid, you'd stay in a refuge run by Catholic priests until you had a visa to come over to the United States. Fortunately, if you were a minor, you could have your visa in a matter of days. It wasn't a hassle. You get to Spain, you're there a few weeks, and boom! You're here."

"Here" was Hollywood, California, where a cousin was already living. Luis immediately entered Hollywood High. He knew some English, but not much. "I could say, 'I'd like a glass of water,' 'I feel sick,' that kind of stuff. But if you talked to me in conversation, it would have been hard."

It didn't take long for him to start speaking English, though, and he gives some of the credit to his cousin's wife. "The first day, I put on the TV," he reminisces, "and I heard something in Spanish. I sat down and watched, and in about five minutes, the lady of the house came in and said, 'You will never see this in this house until you speak English.' She switched the channel to an English language station and said, 'You watch this. I don't care if you don't understand it. You'll understand it.' It was the best thing she could have done."

For a time, in high school, percussion lost out to other interests. "I played back home in Cuba. When I was six years old I had a conga drum. For carnival, the group started rehearsing about three months in advance, and starting when I

was tiny, I'd always check out the drums. So the drummers from the *comparsa* told my parents, 'We're going to make your kid a drum for Christmas.' I always liked it and I always ended up playing.

"But here I am, with this whole change of life. I'm in the United States. Wow! Hollywood! Cheerleaders, yeah! Football! So for about two years, I was just totally a high school kid."

Eventually, he met students who were forming bands. He got a guitar, and started playing rock 'n' roll for school dances. "I figured I had a little interest in music, but I still wasn't totally into it," he says. Then the band got another guitar player (Luis confesses that he wasn't that good). So in order to stay with the group, he turned to conga playing, but he still wasn't serious about it.

After high school graduation, Luis was working at a market and decided to go to night school to become an X-ray technician. The first night of classes at Los Angeles City College turned out to be a crucial event in Luis Conte's life. He tells

the story with a chuckle: "I got to the Student Center a little early, and I heard these drums. It's four black men from L.A., playing congas. When they took a break, I went up and asked if I could play. They basically said, 'Aw, man, get out of here.' When they came back after the break, I just went up on the stage and started playing the tumba part. I didn't know what those guys were playing. I was just doing my thing. But when I played that drum that night, I said, 'Well, this is what I'm going to do for the rest of my life.' That's when it really clicked."

To hear Luis tell it, it was all simple after that. "I started getting a gig here and there. I met a few Cuban guys who were playing in small salsa groups. I'd go in there and do my thing, and things just started. I was pretty lucky, because in less than a year, I was playing with the best salsa band in L.A."

The "luck" factor is something Luis mentions often, although one has the distinct impression that there must be a great deal more to his success—like skill, musicianship, adaptability, etc. Still, his next "lucky" break came when, as he tells it, "I was at the Musician's Union in Hollywood, to make one of my dues payments. I went in and this guy says, 'Hey, Luis! You play congas, right? There's these people downstairs that are looking for somebody to play percussion.'"

"So I ran home and got my drums, and I went and played, and I got the gig. It turned out it was this group called The Hues Corporation." The group had just had a big hit with "Rock The Boat" and was about to embark on a promotional tour. Luis traveled with them for nearly a year before coming back to L.A.

A few years before, he had met a man who was to be a big influence—Hector Andrade. In the Cuban tradition, musicians were specialists. "There are Cuban percussionists who've been playing nothing but bongos for 20 years," Luis explains. "And guys playing timbales are just *timballeros* forever. But Hector sits down and plays congas and he's *bad*. He plays bongo. He plays maracas the right way, and guiro. He does everything."

Andrade's versatility persuaded Luis to strive for versatility himself. But Andrade was also a help in other ways. "Besides the musical part of it, he's a very nice guy," Luis says warmly. "He'd get a call for a salsa gig and he'd say, 'Well, you have to get Luis on congas or bongo.'"

Andrade got him an audition with The Supremes, which soon led to a tour with Diana Ross, with

"MY ADVICE TO ANYBODY WHO'S PLAYING AND ISN'T HAPPY IS THAT YOU'VE GOT TO MOVE ON. THERE'S NO OTHER ANSWER. YOU'VE GOT TO MAKE A CHANGE."

whom Luis worked for about a year. And then another important influence entered his life—Walfredo Reyes, Sr. "He comes from a very famous musical family from Cuba," Luis says of Reyes. "He's a master. He lives in Las Vegas now and he still plays percussion. For years, he's been working with Wayne Newton. But when he gets a vacation, he comes to L.A. We all know he's here and we all make sure we can hook up together and play. Walfredo's always got something up his sleeve, something new. It's wild. I'm very lucky to have met this guy."

Through Reyes, Luis began working with Doc Severinson. There was almost a hitch in this connection at the very beginning, though. Walfredo called to say that Doc needed a percussionist. Luis's response was, "Great. I'd love it." But then Walfredo said, "Now the only thing is, you've got to play a little mallets."

Luis mimics his crestfallen expression as he goes on with the story. "I said, 'Walfredo, I don't play mallets.'" In an aside, he admits candidly, "It's something I've always regretted, and I still regret it now. I don't know why I never had the discipline to learn, and I could kick myself every day for not doing it. And I'll tell that to everybody, because I should do it."

Luis goes on with his tale: "Anyway, I said, 'I can't play that.' And Walfredo says, 'No, no, it's very easy.'" Luis ended up memorizing the mallet parts, as well as some timpani passages. "I was honest with Doc and so was Walfredo. He said, 'This guy is a real good hand percussionist, and I think that's what you want, because most of your show is a feel kind of thing.'" Doc agreed, and that was the beginning of a continuing association. Whenever the *Tonight Show* band needs a hand percussionist, Luis is called.

He also gained experience with the Vegas type of show, working with Lola Falana, Helen Reddy, Jose Feliciano...the list goes on.

Then, Luis explains, "In 1980, I wanted to get off the road for a minute. I'd been on the road all through the '70s." *Fridays*, a TV show patterned after *Saturday Night Live*, gave him the opportunity to come back to L.A. When that ended, after two and a half years, according to Luis, "I say to my wife, 'Now what?'" But again I was lucky, because here comes Herb Alpert."

Alpert was supposed to have gone on an extended tour. The group had rehearsed for nearly six months and was ready to leave when Alpert came down with hepatitis. Luis says with admiration, "Herb was an incredibly honest man. He called everybody to his office and said, 'I'll pay you if you're not working. If you get a tour tomorrow, please just be hon-

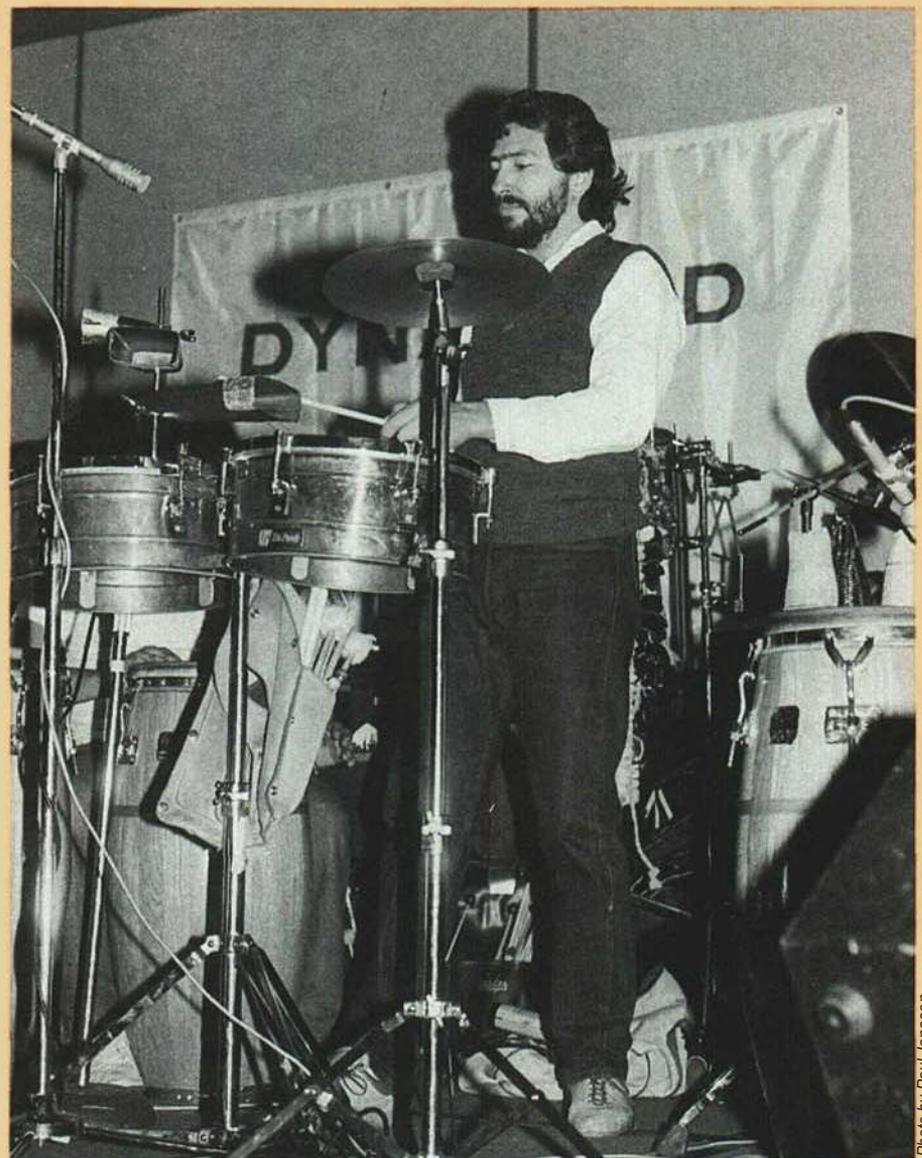


Photo by Paul Jonason

est with me and tell me that you're working. But if you don't do anything for three weeks, I'll pay you."

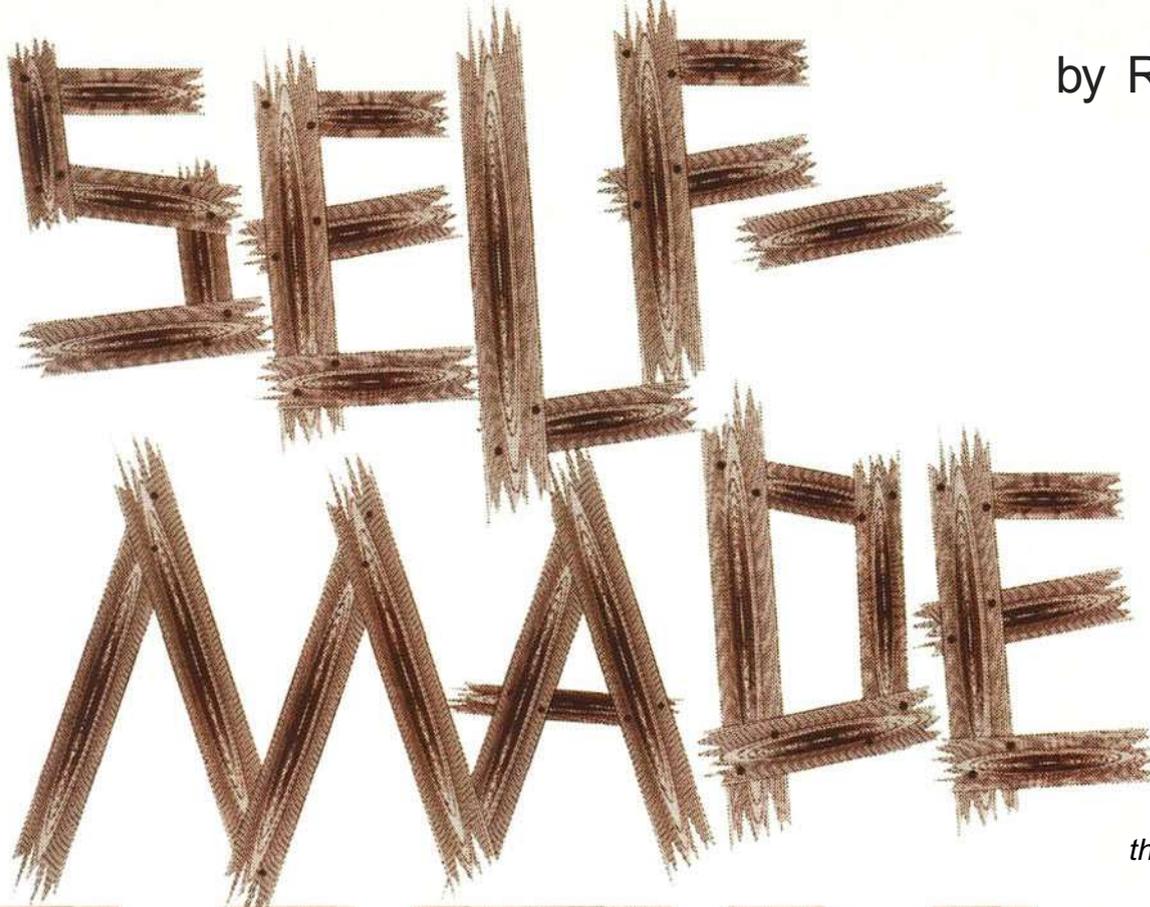
Almost immediately, Luis was busy—first with Boz Scaggs, then on a long stint with Paul Anka in a band put together by Michel Colombier, who knew Luis's playing from his work with Alpert. He stayed with Anka for almost two years. But musically, it stopped being a challenge. "So now it's two years into this gig," says Luis, "working 30 or 40 weeks a year. That's a lot of road, playing the same show. With my experiences before, what I was doing and what I liked to play, it just didn't compute. So I said, 'I'm quitting.' I left. After two years of making great bread—now I've got a house and kids—all of a sudden it's like, 'Boom! No gig.' And I'm very happy that I did it.

"So my advice to anybody who's play-

ing and isn't happy is that you've got to move on. There's no other answer. You've got to make a change. Things might go bad. It might not work out. But it's worth making that change." And things worked out for Luis—obviously. Madonna. Al Di Meola. Toto. Various recording gigs. And his own album.

I asked him what someone should do, if he or she wants to specialize in hand percussion. Do you have to arrange to be born in Cuba and come to the U.S. when you're 15? Not necessarily, according to Luis. First and foremost, he believes it's important to listen—to get the authentic feel and the rhythms in your ear. He quickly devises a possible scenario: "We're thinking of somebody now who's 18, let's say, and he can go to New York or L.A. New York might be the ideal place—although there's almost as

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MEN :

Drummers In The Business World

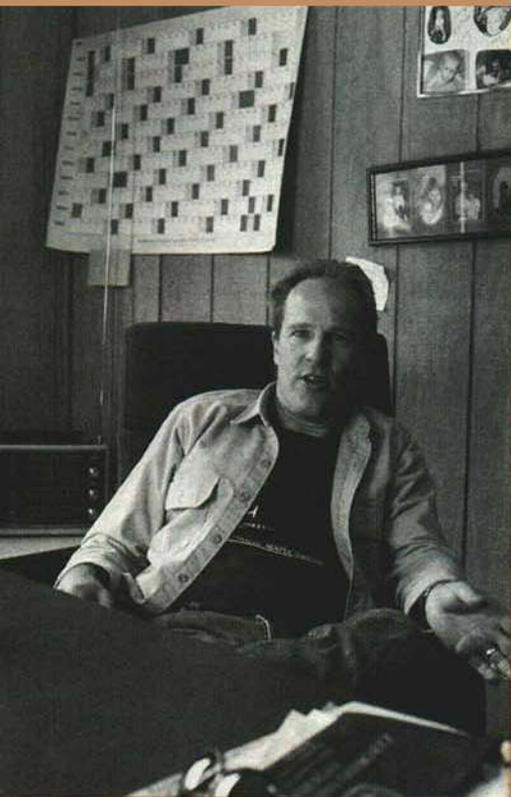
Ever had an idea for a product or service that you thought might become a successful business venture for you? Many drummers have, but most don't have any idea how to pursue their ideas. What do prospective

drummer/entrepreneurs need to learn before going into business for themselves? Where can that information be found? What kind of setbacks might be expected, and how might they be overcome?

Three drummers who have faced these and other questions—and have created niches for themselves in the percussion industry—are Mike Stobie, of Slobeat Percussion; Fred Beato, of Beato Musical Products; and Randy May, of Randall May International. Each of these gentlemen possesses a unique personality: Mike is cool and confident; Fred is outgoing and optimistic; Randy is gracious and sincere.

Each has had to deal with unique problems in setting up his particular business. But all three have persevered, learned the necessary lessons, and put forth the effort required to achieve success. In this article, Mike, Fred, and Randy share their stories in the hope that they will benefit drummers aspiring to positions in the business world.

Mike Stobie



Mike Stobie started playing drums at eight, and had a band in grade school when he was ten. That band played for shows at the "canteens" in the junior high schools in New Jersey, and Mike got paid for those, so he dates his professional career from that point. He played through junior high, high school, and beyond, ultimately moving to Los Angeles in 1972. There he did studio work, touring, and, as he puts it, "the same grind everyone gets into when they move to L.A. to make it big."

Mike is still playing actively today in the Denver area, doing at least one or two gigs a week and often more. "In Denver," he says, "the bread-and-butter gigs are either in the clubs—which I don't do unless I'm subbing on a one-night basis—or the weddings and casuals. In the summer, though, there's a lot of concert activity, and we get a little better caliber of jobs. I played a lot of 'oldies' shows last summer, opening for the Four Tops, Fabian, Leslie Gore, and

acts like that, along with playing shows with Freddy Fender. I did a lot of outdoor arena shows and state fairs, as well. I've also subbed with the Denver Broncos' big band at Mile-High Stadium. That's really a lot of fun."

Mike first ventured into business—in a somewhat unusual way—in 1978. A friend who had been an inventor and owned a plastics factory gave Mike a number of big, red, neoprene-type skateboard wheels. Mike came up with the idea of making bass drum beaters out of them, and had moderate success selling them via mail-order through the Musicians Union newspaper. That got him thinking about other products.

"I got into what became the Slobeat *Satellite* plexiglass-ball beater next. I really started out green, buying shafts from another company. They were afraid of competition, so they wouldn't sell to me direct; I had to buy them through a retail drum shop in Hollywood. I'd take them home and adapt my beater balls to fit onto them. Then someone told me, 'You know, you can buy the steel and have a machine shop turn your own shafts.' So I started doing some research. The *Yellow Pages*, man, are *indispensable*. I found a steel supply, and then I found a machine shop to cut the steel, and on and on. As time went on, I realized that if you keep looking, you eventually find out how you can do something and make money on it. The machine shops would charge 80 cents or 90 cents apiece just to cut and turn the shafts, but I found a screw-machine place that charged a quarter apiece. So then I had to get them chromed, and I found out that chrome costs too much, nickel is better, and black oxide is the cheapest. You find all that out just by picking up the phone and getting advice from anyone who'll talk to you."

Mike enjoyed modest initial success at selling his plexiglass beaters to dealers over the phone. His wife, Mary, then suggested that he find a consumable item to sell—something that would be used up and need

replacing. Thus was born Slobeat Cymbal Cleaner.

"I had been trying to find a good cymbal cleaner for a long time. I was never happy with what was available. Stan Yeager, at the Pro Drum Shop, turned me on to a metal polish that he felt was pretty good. I started with a similar formula, then added some things that I thought would make it better for cymbals. I changed some of the proportions around and made it smoother and less abrasive. I took that cleaner around to some of the shops in L.A. in the spring of '79. That's when I really began to put some effort into selling products, even though I was still living in L.A. and playing full time.

"The cymbal cleaner started to sell everywhere I took it—even though I had it in a tacky little jar with a day-glo label on it. Then, a few years back, *Modern Drummer* put out an industry directory. A lot of drum shops around the country put a little listing in there. So I got on the phone and called every drum shop that was listed and tried to sell them the cymbal cleaner. I'm still doing business with many of those people today. I really credit them for helping me get started."

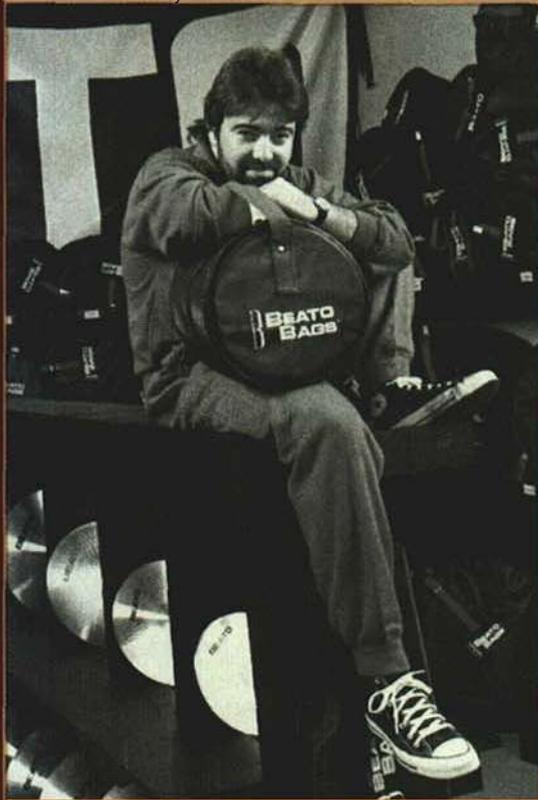
Once he "got started," Mike experimented with variations on his beaters. At the 1982 NAMM show in California, he offered not only the plexiglass beater, but also polymer and cork beaters! What led him to develop those lines?

"You go through a process of finding out what works, and what sells. For example, I found a source for plexi balls at a good cost. When I went down there, I found out that they also had poly balls, and I thought, 'Hmm, this might be interesting.' The poly balls were affordable, so I bought a few and made them into beaters. They were a little lighter than the plexi and gave a nice, flat sound. As I played with them, I discovered that they actually flattened out against the drumhead, giving an even punchier sound. So I said 'I like this; I'm going to put it out.' A lot of product success is just a matter of keeping your eyes open to oppor-

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Fred Beato

Photo by Raul Otero



Fred Beato came to America from Cuba on March 8, 1962, after the Communist takeover of the island. Forced to leave his family behind, he migrated to Miami, Florida, at the age of ten. An aunt and uncle cared for him until his mother and the rest of his family were allowed to leave Cuba in 1970. (His father, a violinist in the Cuban Philharmonic, had died when Fred was about a year old.)

As with thousands of future drummers of his generation, Fred's playing background began with Ringo Starr and the Beatles on the *Ed Sullivan Show*. "I was about 12 years old and could hardly even speak English. But after seeing Ringo on the drums, I knew that was what I wanted to play."

Fred moved to California with his aunt and uncle in late 1965. With no support for his drumming ambitions from them, he earned the money for his first set of drums by mowing lawns for a dollar a lawn. He saved \$200.00 without his family knowing

about it, and kept his drums at a friend's house.

"Then, like everybody else, I got in a garage band and we tried to be the next Beatles. At the age of 15 I formed a band called the Symbols Of Time. We entered a Jaycee Battle Of The Bands, and won for the entire state of California. We were presented with our trophy by Robert Kennedy on the day before he was killed. Later in 1968, we went to the Atlantic City Steel Pier, where we won the national championship. The prize included the chance to audition at Radio City Music Hall for all the big TV shows. But on the drive from Atlantic City to New York, some of the guys in the band tried marijuana for the first time, to celebrate our win. To make a long story short, they messed up the audition, we bombed, and the talent scouts told us, 'Don't call us; we'll call you.' It was amazing how close we came to success at such an early age, and sad how easy it was to miss it."

After leaving the group, Fred studied with Chuck Flores for three and a half years. Later, he studied with Joe Porcaro, who, he says, "is one of my heroes and has been a big influence on my life." He's been playing full- or part-time ever since.

So how did all this lead Fred to go into business for himself? As he relates it, it was a do-or-die situation.

"I worked as a social worker for the County of Los Angeles for eight years, and they were eight years of misery. I was giving out food stamps, medical cards, and welfare checks all day, and gigging six nights a week. I was unhappy and frustrated. At the age of 30, I realized that if I didn't go for something on my own, I'd never get out of this jam. That's when I decided to go into my own business. And it was a big gamble, because I had to go \$20,000 into debt."

Fred almost lost that gamble, since his first business venture was anything but successful. It was the *Rug Caddy*, a rug that drummers could set their drums up on when performing, and then pack their stands up in

when through. As Fred now says, "The only problem with that product was that I was probably 20 years late. The closer the idea got to becoming marketable, the bigger drum hardware got. It got to a point that with all the heavy-duty stands, you'd need four people to carry the rug. And since I didn't have anyone to manufacture it for me and keep costs down, it became a luxury item. The cost of the carpet alone was about \$35.00, and by the time you added on the Tolex on the outside, the buckles and webbing, and the dolly that I had to roll the thing along with, the rug had to list for around \$200.00 for me to make the slightest profit. How many drummers could afford \$200.00 for a rug?"

"But I did learn a valuable lesson from the failure of the *Rug Caddy*. And if I can offer any advice to anyone who's got an idea for a product, it would be not to put all your emphasis, money, and energy into a patent attorney. I probably spent \$7,000-\$8,000 trying to get the *Rug Caddy* patented, and all I did was throw my money away. I could have used that money in other directions instead of lining the attorney's pocket."

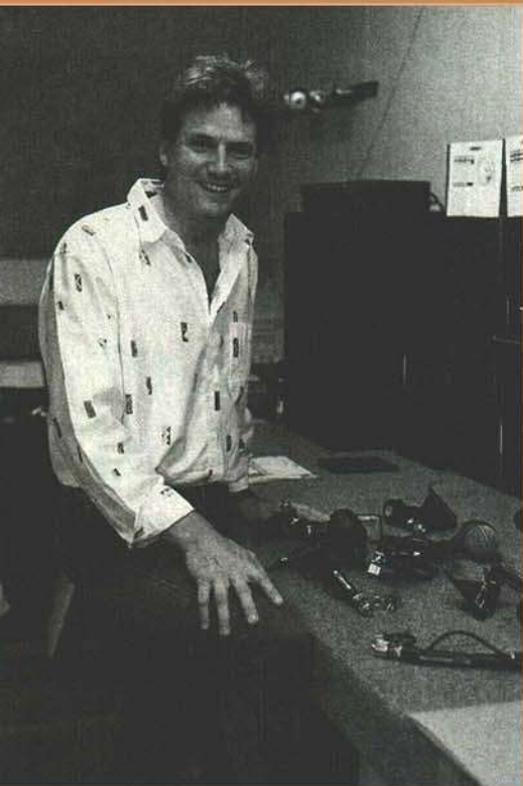
Fred's business might have ended almost as soon as it began, had it not been for the late Bob Yeager (then the owner of the Professional Drum Shop in Hollywood). Fred's regard for Bob is unmistakable and unreversed.

"I can't tell you in a few words the impact that Bob had on my life. He took a liking to me because he knew how hard I was trying—and how fast I was going to be history. He spent literally six months screaming at me, telling me, 'The name *Rug Caddy* sucks! The first thing we've gotta do is change that damn name to 'Beato'! [beet-oh] It can't be 'bay-ah-to,' 'cause nobody's ever gonna pronounce it right. 'Beato' is a natural name for a drum company: 'Swing the beat with Beato; beat the drums with Beato.'" So that's how the name 'Beato' got into the picture—through Bob Yeager."

Bob also encouraged Fred to start

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Randy May



Randy May started drumming in his native Houston around the age of ten. He studied privately and in school, and went on to play professionally in the Houston area. He did a lot of teaching, wrote a drum book, and started working regularly in the Shamrock Hilton. Because that showroom was a warm-up venue for many Las Vegas acts, Randy made a lot of contacts and played with several of those artists. He subsequently did a lot of road work, ultimately winding up touring with Morris Albert. As Randy says, "Other than his one hit, 'Feelings,' Morris wasn't a monster act in the U.S., but he was very big in other countries. That gave me a great chance to travel and learn. I played in Venezuela, Brazil, Japan, and England. I learned a lot about various cultures, and I think that's helped me in doing business with those people now. You have to understand how you're being perceived by the people with whom you're dealing."

In addition to his activities as a

drummer, Randy—whose father was an engineer—has always been a creative individual, searching for new and different approaches to designing drum-related products. Although he is known today for his MAY EA drum-miking system, his first major percussion product was *Vari-Pitch*, a concept combining a RotoTom with a phenolic drumshell that was initially marketed by Pearl drums in 1978.

"In a funny way," says Randy, "because of the moderate success of *Vari-Pitch*, I gained the confidence to attempt the MAY EA system. It's like the first time you try gambling: If you win right away, you're ready to say 'Forget working, I'm ready to roll 'em!' That almost happened to me, and I can say that comfortably now. With *Vari-Pitch*, it was almost too easy. I was only in my early 20's, so it really was almost too positive an experience right out of the gate. I developed the product, went through the legal scenarios, and then approached Pearl, because at that time I had an artist endorsement with them. I wasn't up there with the 'big boys,' but I was on their roster."

Randy sold his idea for *Vari-Pitch* to

Pearl and was paid a royalty for his invention. But he exercised no control over the final product, which caused him some distress.

"My experience with Pearl taught me a lot about the corporate end of the business: how many hands had to get involved; how many interpretations would result; how many people felt the need to make a meaningful difference in order to prove that their job was valuable. Seeing that Structure, which I had not been exposed to before, gave me enough incentive to want to try to do it on my own!

But ultimately, Randy did not try to manufacture the drums on his own. He realized that any new product needed the "push" of marketing and advertising in order to get it off the ground.

"In retrospect, I learned from that experience that you cannot be so naive as to think that an idea alone is going to make something success-

ful. Pearl had a very major part in making what success we had come to pass. An idea alone just isn't strong enough. Even if you can turn lead to gold, unless you have some money to tell people that you can do that, it doesn't mean you're going to be successful."

Randy's next major drum invention was an internal miking system for drums—the MAY EA (Electro-Acoustic) system. It was a revolutionary concept, and certainly did not meet initially with widespread acceptance.

"The idea for internally miking drums came out of a problem I ran into on tour. We were not fortunate enough to carry our own sound engineer, and the different engineers we dealt with at all the different venues had their own ideas of what drums should sound like. So even after I went to a lot of trouble to have the drums sound good acoustically, when we went to mike them, all bets were off. It was almost an invasion of my playing. But if I spoke up about it, no one would listen, because at that time the main criteria was to control the drum sound. Sound reinforcement was evolving at that time, and has come an incredibly long way. The number of channels, the amount of processing, and the electronic capabilities we take for granted at shows and concerts today were just unheard of back then. If you had strong vocals, that was considered a good sound, and everything else just had to fit."

It's one thing to realize a need, and another to invent a totally new device to meet that need. How did Randy go about that?

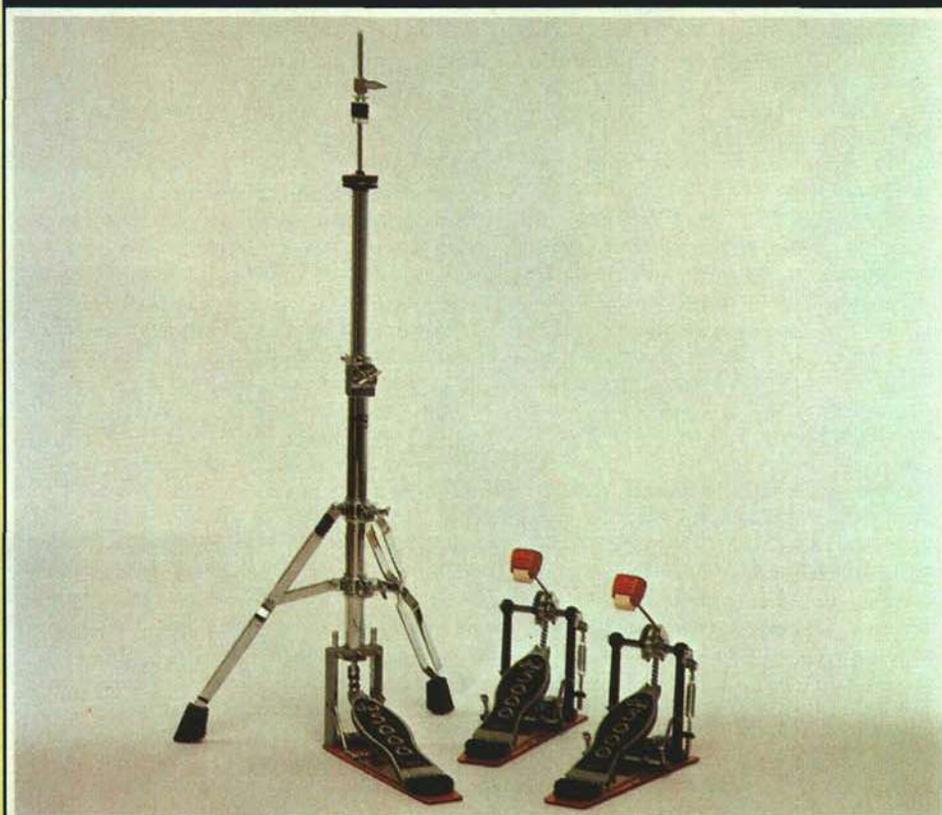
"In the beginning, I had to circumvent some of the perceptions that existed within the sound reinforcement field. When I first bounced the idea off of some sound engineers, might as well have suggested putting a bomb inside the drums. They were prejudging something that they had had no experience with. No one had put a mic inside a double-headed drum to get any information. So started doing some A/B testing with an oscilloscope to get some read-

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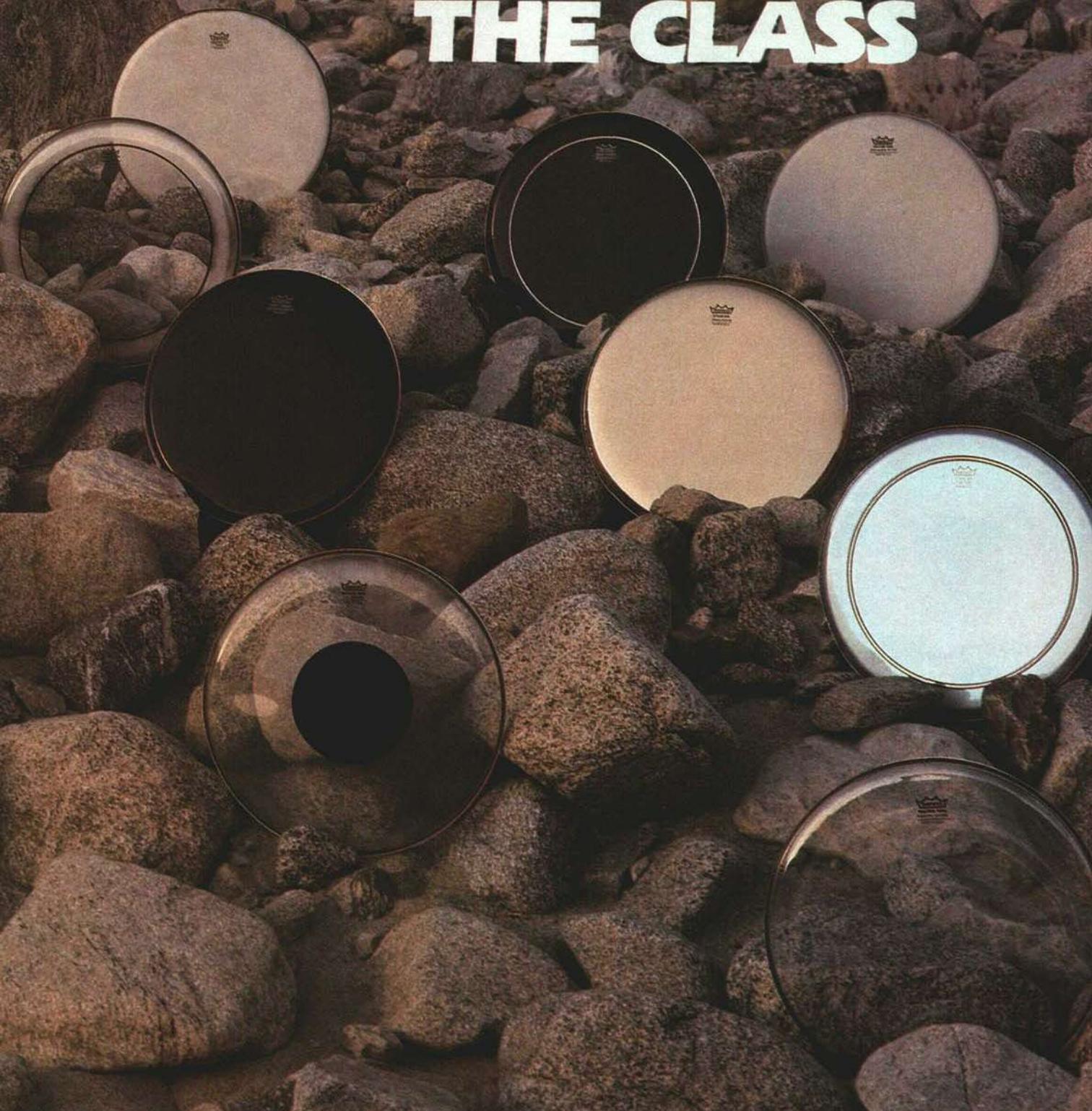
Name the drummer who once threw a cymbal at Charlie Parker, because he didn't like the way Parker was playing.

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- 2) Your entry must be postmarked by July 1, 1988.
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Threshold Of A Drum

So, you've gone out and plunked down the money for an Akai S900 sampler, a device quickly becoming a staple in pro drum racks. It samples at a respectable rate, digitally recording realistic and exceedingly usable sounds. The Akai is a complex and exciting instrument, and its trigger inputs work great. But it shares a problem with other electronic instruments when triggered from an acoustic drum.

The goal, of course, is to be able to play your own drums—keeping the feel your chops are used to and the great sound you've worked on all these years—while having access to the latest rack gear. Unfortunately, many of us who access sounds from an electronic source via pickups or mic's attached to our favorite set have found that, unless our drums sound and feel exactly like the pads we're wishing to avoid, the results are usually less than perfect. For me, this is most often a problem with the snare drum, since I play it with the widest range of speed and dynamics.

When I first started using pickups, I had trouble with my snare either causing double triggering when I played too loudly, or being triggered unintentionally when I played my toms. At that time, I was playing a 6 1/2" Pearl brass-shell snare drum with a *Detonator* pickup siliconed on the inside. To cut down on the liveliness, I bought a 6" Pearl maple-shell snare. I fitted it with a *Black Knight* pickup, which helps because the *Black Knight* doesn't touch either the head of the drum or the shell, leaving it virtually free from inadvertent triggering. This, along with a rack mount trigger interface, made up my ability to mix in Linn or Simmons sounds while playing my snare. The problem was this: I had a choice of playing softly and quickly with a small range of dynamics, or loud, not too fast, and with hardly any dynamics at all. If my interface were set too sensitively, I still risked the danger of double triggers. If programmed for strong backbeats, it wouldn't fire the quieter and quicker notes. The best solution was a compromise.

Enter the Akai S900, a device that enables any player to carry a virtually unlimited number of instruments, sounds, and effects in a briefcase. It can be fitted quite easily with an optional eight-channel trigger input called an ASK90, which converts incoming audio signals to MIDI language the S900 will understand. This unit is really a necessity for a drummer, since it not only provides eight channels of

direct pad-to-MIDI conversion right at the S900 itself, but also activates the "utility section" of the S900. I'll be talking more about that section shortly. The ASK90 works very well (especially when compared to more expensive rack gear). Even so, if you try to access a sample while playing 32nd notes on a snare drum, you will probably lose some beats, and here's why:

The utility section, which governs the input information, has a movable threshold that is graphically displayed. When the incoming signal strength crosses this threshold, your assigned sample fires (and hopefully someone says, "Wow! How'd you do that?"). Unfortunately, if the threshold is set too *high*, your soft notes may not reach it. If set too *low* and you play relatively quickly, forcefully, or both, the signal strength may stay above the threshold and the Akai won't realize that new notes have been played. Once again, the problem is: How can you make the machine appreciate your subtleties without ignoring your bombast?

Solution One: Rent a digital studio with a great engineer for an afternoon, hopefully obtain the perfect sample of your favorite snare drum, mix it in with the other sample or samples you like, and use an electronic drumpad like the trigger gods intended in the first place.

Solution Two (and the purpose of this article): Go to an electronics store and buy a 1/4" to 1/4" mono Y-cord. You want a single female to dual male model, which should cost around \$3.00. Plug the cord from your snare drum trigger or mic' into the female end. Plug the two male plugs into *two separate inputs*. You are now using two inputs for the same *input signal*. After copying the Keygroup setup for your snare, you can then set up a second trigger program with a new threshold. What you will accomplish by doing this is to program a low threshold that will "hear" those signals that wouldn't normally reach your original compromising threshold, and a high threshold that will hear the signals that do not fall below the soft threshold because of speed, velocity, recovery time, etc.

Since signal strengths differ from pickup to pickup and drum to drum, it will take some trial and error on your part to find workable thresholds for both of your programs. Another variable is the obvious fact that some of us play consistently louder (or softer) than others, thereby affecting the velocity of the signal. Therefore, a universal program probably can't exist. But I can get you in the ballpark.

(Remember that the following instructions apply specifically to an S900 fitted with an ASK90. If you are using a different sound source and/or interface, the principles may or may not apply. You'll have to read your owner's manual carefully to find out about the potential for threshold adjustment.)

Before we continue, make sure your input is on and set to the correct sensitivity for your pickup, and that your MIDI info is programmed on page two. Now set up your low threshold by adjusting your gain to 1, your threshold to 1, and for the time being leaving your capture and recovery time stock. Now tap the drum softly. If nothing happens, turn up your gain or find the softest note you should play by tapping harder. If it triggers every time, tap quickly and turn up your threshold until it stops triggering. Then back it off a notch or two.

Now go to your high threshold program. This will take a little more trial and error. Try setting the threshold at 20 and backing the gain down to an acceptable level. I started with my threshold higher but was still losing some notes whose attacks occurred between the two thresholds. My gain is now set at 20 as well, which cut down on the lost strokes considerably.

Now you can go back to page three on the soft threshold and set the recovery time as low as possible without producing double triggers. I found that the softer I play on the top end, the lower I can go with the recovery time. There is even a chance the stock values on this page will work for you.

Here's what my parameters are as of this writing: On the high side, the sensitivity is set low, the on time is 30, capture time is 3 msec, recovery time is 25 msec, the gain is 20, and the threshold is 20. On the low side, the sensitivity is low, the on time is 30, capture time is 3 msec, recovery time is 30 msec, the gain is 5, and the threshold is set at 1.

Remember that this article addresses the dynamic problems of triggering. You may hear phasing in the polyphonic output or apparent double-triggering in the mono mode, which would make this better for live, rather than studio, applications. If this is undesirable, try digitally delaying the first signal to minimize the effects. For more fun, try another Y-cord and a third threshold, or maybe different sounds on your two thresholds. Exercise your creativity.





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Music And Perfection

Musicians are eternal students, always learning, hopefully working towards a goal. A musician's career can take a virtually unlimited number of twists and turns. Perhaps the single most unifying aspect in the swirl of diversity that characterizes The Music Business is a common philosophy: A player, as long as he or she desires it, will never cease maturing. There is *always* room for improvement.

We have all known our share of perfectionists: individuals who are always looking for a better way, driven towards the idea that a given notion or object need be *perfect*. When a musician embraces this image of perfection and fastens it to his or her concept of musical expression, the possibility exists that an *impediment* to the musician's growth is being cultivated. Practicing an instrument or a piece of music, with the intention of becoming perfect, is the ultimate unfulfillable task. Students who embrace it in their methodology will actually cause retardation of their skills.

A friend of mine (who is actually quite a good pianist) once felt that great players do not make mistakes, and concluded that *she* would never be great as long as she continued to make them: "I started to aspire to a level of 'perfectionist' that I found myself uncomfortable with: to learn each piece 'perfectly' and then keep it in my repertoire 'perfectly.' I got nervous and backed away. Now I make lots of mistakes, but at least I'm not afraid to play."

A musician has to accept the notion that musicians and music can be great, *with or without* mistakes. A key to sincerely accepting this idea is the realization that once a mistake is played, it is gone. Players who, having made a mistake, allow it to remain with them by worrying about it, impose that mistake (or the concept that they *make* mistakes) on the remaining music. It is impossible to pry this insecurity away from the performance. If you *are* insecure, you will *sound* insecure. Once a mistake is played, it is *gone*. It no longer exists, regardless of who heard it, on or off stage. If you own up to imperfection and "forgive" yourself for having committed this "sin," it becomes possible to continue, unencumbered by the guilt and stress (however unconscious) associated with playing imperfectly. You can continue to play well, having accepted, and then dismissed, the mistake.

This philosophy applies to the practice room as well as the stage. Obviously, you should aim for a minimum of mistakes, and if specific mistakes recur, you

should isolate and work them out. But keep in mind that, just as you must avoid practicing too fast, it is equally important to avoid practicing *too slow*. A player who is obsessed with not making mistakes may practice a piece too slow in order to eliminate them. Burnout is inevitable, and the practice sessions will have been wasted. Practice at comfortable, relaxed tempos, without stress or tension in your hands. If increasing your speed is one of your concerns, spend some time practicing quickly, but *without tension*. Back off as soon as stress is perceived.

Practice *is* the appropriate time to ferret out, and concentrate on, eliminating one's weaknesses. But a musician who plays (or desires to play) in public must spend a certain amount of time playing practice material *all the way through*. Remember that an important part of practice is orienting oneself towards performing. Stopping to go back and correct a mistake is not considered good onstage form! The musician *must* practice "going on," regardless of mistakes or imperfection. It is an important mental technique as surely as the rudiments are important physical techniques.

(The "Syncopation Exercises" [#s 1-9, pp. 37-45] in Ted Reed's book, *Syncopation*, are good examples of technical exercises written to be played as whole, musical statements. Make an effort to practice these *without stopping*. The exercises in the *previous* pages, grouped in fours, are oriented toward ironing out rhythmical "kinks," and stopping is more appropriate.)

Great players play great—apparently without mistakes. We all have our favorite musicians and recordings we consider to be "perfect." *But*—these artists' goal is not necessarily perfection. Most likely they are more concerned with creating beautiful and expressive music than in turning in a "perfect performance."

A great player is not 100% mistake-free! But he or she *does* play with a very small percentage of error. Everyone plays with a certain percentage of error. With maturity, it grows smaller. One can work on a piece for a long period of time, and achieve only a modest proficiency. Yet upon returning to that same work one year later, those "impossible" spots are usually playable, perhaps easily so. Also, the more advanced a player is, the more quickly he or she will master new, unfamiliar music, committing fewer errors in the process. Another aspect of the maturation process is the ability to play with consistency, night after night. The smaller the percentage of error, the

more impressive this will seem. The point is that, as players grow, they commit fewer errors. But the level where one becomes "error-free" (i.e., perfect) never materializes. It simply does not exist. A certain amount of error is inherent at every level of skill.

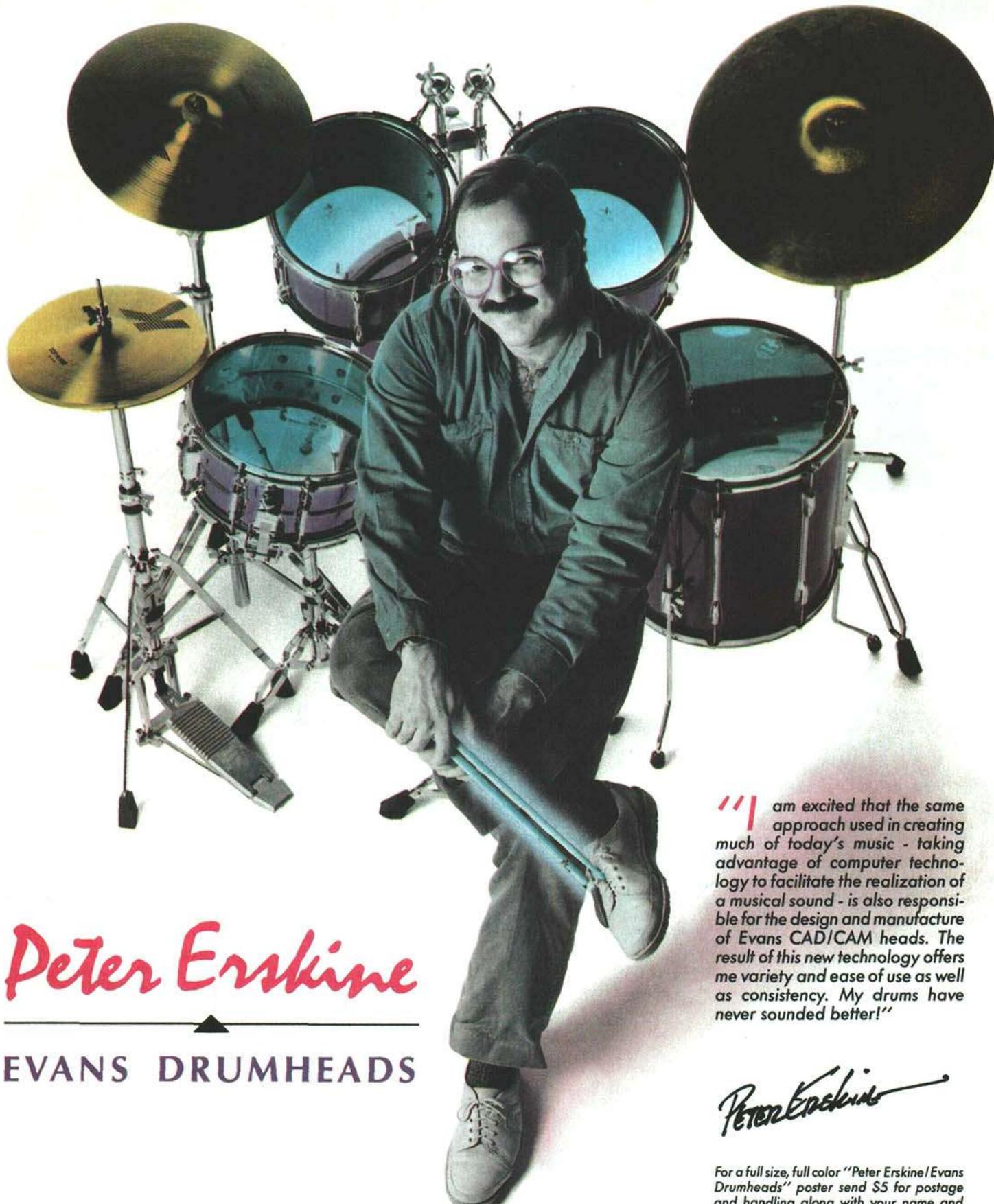
It is my belief that studio technology today is at least partly responsible for the widespread belief that music needs to be played perfectly. It *is* possible to create "perfect" music there. Quite often, the ability to play "perfectly" (read: "correctly") on the first take is praised for various reasons, most of them economic. In addition, both musicians and the general public are constantly exposed to "perfect" music. We unconsciously assimilate it as the way music should be; it is expected in live performances.

At the same time, anyone who has spent any time at all enduring the intense scrutiny of a recording studio automatically learns how to hear mistakes on an LP. They're everywhere, right down to the classic rock 'n' roll records you have heard more than a thousand times over the past twenty years. Listen for John or Paul (I think it is Paul) singing the wrong words in "Please Please Me." They didn't have the time or facility to "fix" it, and the track *felt* great. The mistakes did not affect the validity, or the greatness, of the music, so they kept it.

There has been some writing about "visualization" as a successful learning tool. George Marsh has written some excellent articles concerning this subject (*MD*, Feb. '85), as has Rupert Walden (*MD*, July/Aug. '87). I personally believe in it, and have experienced the benefits. *Visualize* yourself playing well. Do not concentrate on perfection, but on those qualities that comprise great music: creativity, expression, techniques, etc. Practice this internal technique anytime, anywhere. The *image* of your playing well will become a part of you, and *will* reflect in your performance.

Of course, musicians should not be apathetic about their mistakes. Our ultimate goal is to improve as much as possible, and never stop improving. No one *tries* to make mistakes. If you don't make them, great. If you *do*, they're *gone*. Play better and *don't stop taking chances*. This is essential for any kind of growth. All we players need to do is allow ourselves the pleasure of believing in the validity of what we're creating. Then we can relax and let perfection take a back seat to music!





Peter Erskine

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"I am excited that the same approach used in creating much of today's music - taking advantage of computer technology to facilitate the realization of a musical sound - is also responsible for the design and manufacture of Evans CAD/CAM heads. The result of this new technology offers me variety and ease of use as well as consistency. My drums have never sounded better!"

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by Bob Saydlowski, Jr.

New Remo Products

Constantly a source of new percussion products, Remo recently introduced two more inventions to the drum world. The first is a new line of drumheads, called *Falams K-Series*; the second is a new percussion accessory item called *Spoxe*. In both cases, the product is a result of taking a new look at existing technology in order to create something useful and interesting.



Falams K-Series Drumheads

With the *Falams K-Series* heads, Remo has deviated a little from the company's work with *Mylar*, and has started to produce heads utilizing *Kevlar*. (The name *Falams K* comes from FABric LAMinate *Kevlar*.)

Kevlar is a synthetic material, often used in bulletproof vests. Duraline once offered *Kevlar* drumheads, but one of the main problems with them was that the open weave of the fabric caused brushes to get hung up. Besides that, the *Kevlar* material was not weatherable. Remo has solved these problems by tri-laminating these new heads; that is, bonding the *Kevlar* between two film layers of *Mylar*. The toughness of the *Kevlar* is combined with the stability and all-weather performance of *Mylar*.

A new flesh hoop was designed for the *Falams K* heads, utilizing a steel reinforced aluminum counterhoop, and a crimp system of mounting. Remo claims that the chance of head pull-out is now practically nonexistent, which is important since the *Falams K-Series* heads were originally developed as marching heads. Today's marching drummers use extremely high tension levels, and the *Falams K* heads can be tightened to a point where they resemble a tabletop, if desired. However, the heads are also very strong and durable—in fact, almost indestructible. Given this characteristic, Remo has also chosen to market the heads to rock and studio players.

Five types of *Falams K* heads are presently available: coated, smooth white, and natural, as well as smooth and natural with a clear center dot. The heads I tested were the super-weight models, but I'm

told that medium and light weights will be produced in the future. Also, at the moment, only 14" and 15" sizes are available.

There are a few physical differences between the *Falams K-Series* and the "regular" Remo heads. The *Falams K* has a lower profile, and its collar edge forms a less acute downward angle; it has a more rounded slope. Also, the new counterhoop is shallower. These factors combine to allow the head to sit lower on the drum.

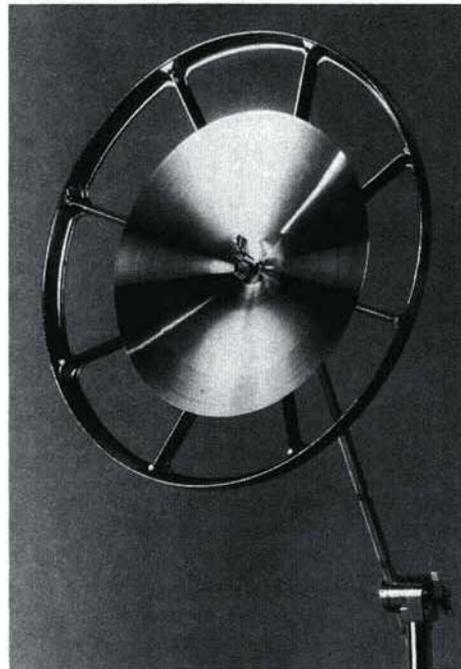
The surface of the coated white head is similar to that of other coated Remo drumheads, if perhaps not as rough-textured. I did find that the coating seems to wear off quickly. The coated *Falams K* head reacted crisply when played with brushes, and had a bright sound and good attack with sticks. I tried it on both a 5 1/2 x 14 wood snare drum and a 7 x 14 fiberglass drum, and was pleased with the resulting sound on both. The natural *Falams K* has a clear smooth film layer on both sides, allowing the *Kevlar* fabric to show through. I consider this more of a "rock" head. It had a slightly deeper sound, but still offered ample brightness and more than enough volume. The addition of a clear center dot to the natural head served to lessen over-ring and strengthen the impact area even more.

Due to the strength of the *Kevlar* material, the new *Falams K* heads resist denting, and seem to have exceptional durability. (I'm told that Ricky Lawson used the same snare batter for 18 Michael Jackson shows!) While the *Falams Ks* perform at their best in high-tension situations, they're stronger than *Emperors* or *Pinstripes*, and still have good tonal qualities—giving them a potential place as rock or studio batters. The *Falams K-Series* drumheads range from \$34.00 to \$38.00

Spoxe

Remo's newest accessory instrument is called *Spoxe* (rhymes with jokes, folks). The *Spoxe* is a round, chrome-plated metal casting, resembling the bottom part of a RotoTom. (In fact, I think it is the RotoTom bottom!) It's available in eight sizes, from 5 1/2" to 19 1/2" in diameter. When struck, the smaller *Spoxe* produce a bell-like tone; the larger ones sound like resonant chimes. They are not tuned to notes, but are extremely cutting and pure.

So now, what can you do with them? I

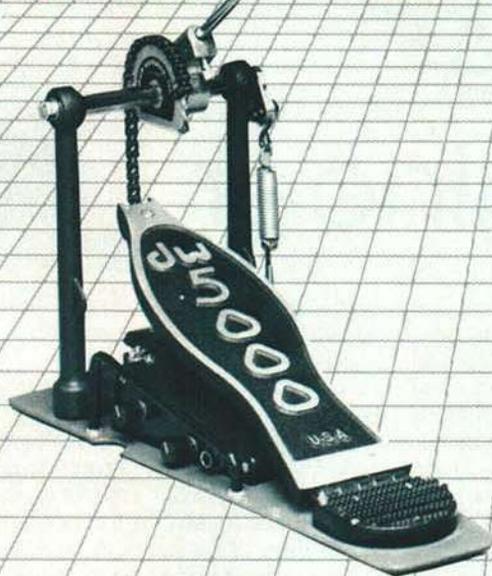


mounted a pair of 11 1/2" *Spoxe* onto a hi-hat stand, and got quite an interesting sound when played by the foot pedal—perhaps approaching the sound of huge, amplified finger cymbals. Closed, the *Spoxe* hi-hats have a pretty bizarre metallic sound. For some reason, I'm reminded of the cheap hi-hat sounds on the first rhythm boxes.

Played alone, the 5 1/2" *Spoxe* yields a great bell-cymbal sound. Striking the top edge gives a more staccato sound than playing the side, so you actually get two sounds for the price of one (and maybe more!). Since the pitches lower as the *Spoxe* diameters increase, it's possible to mount all eight sizes on one stand, creating a "tree" on which to glissando or perhaps play abstract melodies. Another use could be to loosely mount a cymbal upside down inside one, so that the cymbal reacts when the *Spoxe* is hit, or vice-versa. I found this to deaden the cymbal sound immensely, and from the "safety" aspect I'd probably only want to mount an inexpensive cymbal inside a *Spoxe*.

All this from a RotoTom casting? I wonder why it was never thought of before. Individual *Spoxe* range in price from \$18.00 to \$75.00. Remo's new idea is an interesting one, with many experimental possibilities. *Spoxe* are not for everyone, but if you want a different sound available in your trap case or percussion bag, they will certainly provide it for you.

DW ELECTRONIC PEDALS



5000TE Chain & Sprocket Acoustic Bass Drum / Electronic Trigger Pedal

APPLICATIONS: Recommended for situations where acoustic bass drum sound and pedal feel along with the simultaneous triggering of an electronic sound is required.

TRIGGERING SYSTEM:

DW's revolutionary Electro-Magnetic Sensor (EMS) provides dynamic sensitivity and an accurate trigger signal without a physical beater-to-trigger impact, thus eliminating the need for a drum mounted trigger sensor.

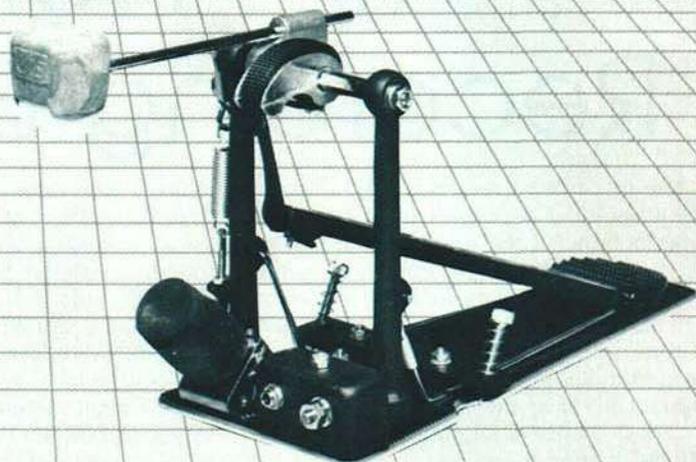
ADJUSTMENT CONTROLS:

Sensitivity and Stroke / Trigger Point

OUTPUT:

Single 1/4" jack.

(Also available: 5002TEC Double Bass Drum / Trigger Pedal.)



EP1N Nylon Strap Electronic Trigger Pedal

APPLICATIONS: Recommended for triggering situations where the speed, control and feel of an acoustic bass drum pedal are required.

TRIGGERING SYSTEM:

Spring mounted piezo-electronic element with voltage output calibrated to dynamically trigger non-MIDI drum controllers and drum machines as well as most drum-to-MIDI converters.

ADJUSTMENT CONTROL:

Sensitivity

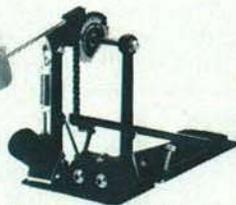
OUTPUT:

Single 1/4" jack.

(Also available: EP1 Chain & Sprocket Trigger Pedal.)

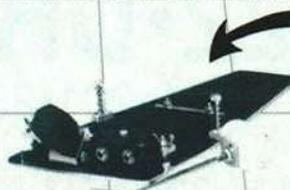
For the vast majority of contemporary drummers who prefer to use their acoustic drums and techniques to access electronically produced sounds, Drum Workshop is proud to offer a range of foot-activated devices that perform as well as DW's legendary 5000 Series acoustic bass drum pedals while efficiently triggering sounds from a variety of electronic sources.

Used and endorsed by progressive drum artists such as *Pat Mastelotto, Joe Franco, Doane Perry, Gregg Bissonette, Steve Ferrara, Paul Wertico, Danny Seraphine* and *Chester Thompson*, the entire line of DW Electronic Pedals has been designed and tested to meet today's challenging acoustic-electronic drumming realities.



EPF Special Effects Electronic Trigger Pedal

Developed for situations where the speed, response and feel of an acoustic bass drum pedal are not necessary.



EPR Electronic Trigger Pedal Plate

This retrofit pedal plate can easily convert most existing acoustic bass drum pedals into electronic trigger pedals.



by Craig Krampf

Tips From A Recording Engineer



Photo by Jaeger Kolos

"The first rule of recording says: You're only as good as what's in front of the microphone! If the drums sound bad to begin with, there's no equalizer in the world that's going to make them sound great. All it's going to do is make a bad drum sound brighter, or a bad drum sound duller. That's all an equalizer can do; it can't save *anything!*"

Those words of wisdom are from Niko Bolas, a good friend and a great recording engineer. Niko is a perfect combination of the proper and the raw. He's well trained, and is very aware of all the proper technical aspects of recording. But he never lets that interfere with the emotion, the fun, and the creative aspects that should occur in the recording process.

"The studio should be looked upon as a fun place for a band to totally get off. It just so happens there's recording equipment there to capture the performance and play it back. But it's got to play back with the same spirit, intensity, and sound in which it was originally played. When people hear your record, they should be getting that same emotional impact and delivery.

"Before I ever bring up a fader, I listen to the drummer play in the room. If you're going to record acoustic drums, you want to capture the personality of the drummer. I stand in front of his set and listen to the natural, relative proportion of the drums and cymbals. How loud does he play his bass drum in relation to his snare? Where does he fit the hi-hat into the balance? How loud are his fills and crashes? I try to get an overall picture of what this drummer's style is all about.

"When a drummer delivers a perfor-

mance, he's adjusting his levels and dynamics. I look at the microphone and the console as tools to capture that performance. When I go into the control room, I should hear the same impact and balances I heard when I was standing in front of the drumset. When a drummer decides the bass is supposed to kick you in the face, it *should* kick you in the face! When you hit the bridge, and the whole song is supposed to hush up, you've got to be able to capture those light dynamics. The engineer should be aware of how the drummer plays."

I asked Niko what happens when he's listening to a drumset in the room and he doesn't like what he's hearing. "Without a good-sounding kit that's well-tuned, there's no way to get a truly great drum sound. A drummer shouldn't feel that somebody is going to save his drums. They're your drums, and you have to take responsibility for them! It's up to you to show up with the best-sounding kit possible. The set should be ready to go, with new heads, and hopefully well-tuned.

"Let's assume we're dealing with a young band, and the drummer hasn't had that much studio experience. In this situation, there's a strong possibility that the walls, the equipment, the lights, and all the stories he's heard will tend to intimidate him. His drums may be his only source of security. They're *his*, and he's been playing them for a long time.

"There's a little psychology needed here. It's actually more of a producer's job, but a good engineer should realize it as well. It's important to make this young drummer feel comfortable quickly. I'll

usually sit down and ask him what records he likes, what drummers, what kind of drum sounds. I remind him that it's my job to capture what I hear—all the spirit and sound that's happening in the room. I'll tell him about guys like Porcaro and Marotta—how their drums are always ready, what kind of heads they use, etc. If we have to fix his setup, we'll do it then. It'll actually save time in the long run, and make everybody happier.

"If the budget allows, I like to get an inexperienced drummer into the studio a day ahead. This way he doesn't have to deal with the rest of the band hanging around impatiently. If there's a problem, he can look at you and admit that he doesn't know what to do. That's hard to do in front of your friends. Once again, depending on budget, that's the time to call in a drum tech and figure out the problem. Remember, the engineer and the drummer are there for the same purpose, and nobody should be trying to prove *anything* to anybody."

I questioned Niko on how the acoustics of a room affect the drum sound. "If it's a strange room and the set is great, but we're still having a problem, I'll have the drummer set up the bass, snare, and hi-hat in every corner of the room, facing different directions. I'll have him play time and watch how he gets off. If he's getting off, it's probably a good-sounding spot. The drummer is the one who generally feels and hears that spot *first*.

"If you take a favorite snare drum, and hit it in a carpeted dead room, it's got to sound like a great, dead snare drum. Take that same snare and play it in a live, ambient room, say the back room at Record One, Cherokee, or A & M, and it'll rip your head off. All the reflections of the sound are different. What cancels out and what gets bounced back are all affected by the room. If you can't find a good spot anywhere, change rooms!

"You have to give yourself the best possible chance at getting a great drum sound, so the drums have to be as good as they can be. They're your drums, not the engineer's! Take responsibility for them, and don't ever forget the first rule of recording: *You're only as good as what's in front of the microphone.*"



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Pearl HARD ROCK H102SN

Pearl HARD ROCK H102SN

Pearl HARD ROCK H104N

Pearl HARD ROCK H104N

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Pearl RECORDING H10R

Holistic Help For Drummers' Injuries

by Jan I. Stromfeld, D.C.



Drummers frequently develop pain and physical ailments from extended periods of practicing and playing. Traditional doctors often tell them the only cure is to stop playing, and the drummers choose instead to endure the pain. However, there are better answers, special techniques to help musicians, and ways to learn to play without problems.

I am a holistic chiropractor practicing in Manhattan. Many drummers come to see me, usually on the recommendation of another musician. Their treatment begins with a thorough questionnaire on their health history and habits. This is followed by a three-part examination: neurological (concerning the nerves), orthopedic (examining the joints), and chiropractic (studying the spine). The next step is a kinesiological evaluation, during which I have the patients mime performance. I test their muscles both at work and at rest. On the basis of these tests, a course of treatment is decided upon.

Jim, an experienced drummer who plays in a jazz band and also does studio work for commercials, felt that his hands were weakening. At times, he had trouble holding the drumsticks. His physician told him that he had to stop playing to regain his strength—a frightening prospect for someone who earns his or her living from drumming.

After an examination, I determined that the problem was that Jim's extensor muscles were overpowering his forearm flexors and reducing his grip strength. I used manipulation to balance the strength of his flexors and extensors. (Manipulation is the specific movement of bones in order to relieve pressure on the nerve roots of an affected area.) To maintain the balance, I taught him warm-up exercises to do before playing. His normal grip strength returned, and he didn't have to take a break from playing.

Mark, a young rock drummer, was practicing intensely to get his new wave band ready to record their first EP. He experienced shooting pains in his left hand, which he stoically ignored until he couldn't play anymore. Examination determined that a ligament in his hand had actually torn away from the bone. I employed microavulsion work to reinsert the ligament into its bony attachment site. This technique is also used when strands of tendon, which attach the muscle, pull away from the bone. This

often causes a feeling of forearm weakness in drummers, but it can be easily corrected with microavulsion work. (A microavulsion is a microscopic tear in the tissue of a tendon or ligament. Tendons and ligaments throw off hair-like "roots," which can be pulled out of their attachment site in much the same way as the roots of a plant can be pulled out of the soil. The purpose of microavulsion work is to carefully reinstate the roots back into the attachment area, and encourage their re-attachment and healthy growth.)

Not only the arms and hands can suffer from drumming. Ricky, a drummer in a New Jersey bar band, had developed the habit of hunching over his drumset years ago. He recently began experiencing neck, shoulder, and back pain. To relieve his neck pain, I employed craniosacral therapy. The cranium is the skull, and the sacrum is the lowest portion of the spine. Although it is difficult to see, the two work in conjunction every time you breathe in or out. This is what is termed "craniosacral motion," and it serves to keep the cerebro-spinal fluid that bathes and nurtures the nerve roots circulating properly. When this pumping action is interfered with, the circulation process "stagnates," and the nerves do not receive the nutrition they require. Craniosacral therapy involves evaluating the amplitude, rate, and quality of the craniosacral motion, and then applying gentle pressure in a specific direction. The result is a release and often a permanent, positive structural change.

Ricky's back and shoulder pain were caused by poor posture creating subluxations: a condition in which the vertebrae are out of alignment, leading to impingements (or "pinching") of the nerves running between the bones. Subluxations can cause not only pain and tension, but also malfunction of the organs, muscles, and glands served by the obstructed nerves. I used chiropractic manipulation and adjustment to realign Ricky's spine, allowing for a natural flow of energy and a return to pain-free playing.

Drummers often develop calf problems from working the bass drum and hi-hat pedals. In these cases (and also to help back, neck, and shoulder pain), I use myofascial release technique. The fascia is the connective tissue that surrounds every muscle, organ, and gland in the body, down to the cellular level. The fas-

cia can bind down, and adhesions can develop, creating a twisting and torquing effect. By applying specific pressure to the deep layers of the fascia to release and untwist it, pain is eliminated, and the range of motion is increased.

My practice is a partnership with my patients, and teaching preventive measures is an important part of this relationship. I can create a strong and balanced structure, but it's up to the patient to help maintain it. Drummers should warm up before and cool down after playing. Roll down slowly and hang over the legs to stretch the back and calves. Stretch the calves gently in a lunge position. Rotate the wrists and shake them out. Flex and extend the fingers, stretching them fully, then completely relax them. Study some gentle hand and forearm massage techniques that you or a friend can apply.

While playing, sit up in a relaxed but straight posture; don't lean over your drumset. Point and flex the foot to stretch out the calf. Take a five- to ten-minute break every hour, at least. During your break, concentrate on relaxing your hands.

If you feel pain, don't ignore it. As soon as possible, stop playing and go to see an experienced practitioner who understands musicians' injuries. If you're injured, it's especially important to eat properly and take vitamin and mineral supplements to speed up healing.

If your injury requires taking a break from playing, don't dwell on the pain or frustration. Instead, use the power of your mind to achieve a quick recovery. At a quiet moment during the day and before you go to sleep at night, meditate on your body being healed and functioning perfectly. Visualize yourself in excellent health, sitting in a good posture, and playing well without pain.

Dr. Jan Stromfeld is a holistic health-care specialist and modern chiropractor who maintains a private practice in New York City. He specializes in treating drummers and other musicians.



SDS1000M

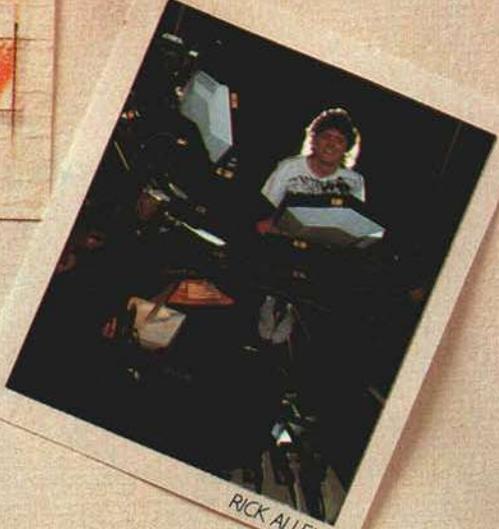
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RICK ALLEN

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Whitesnake has been spending plenty of time on the road proving that they can play, and all of those nights on stage have provided an added benefit. "When you play the same tunes day in and day out," Tommy says, "it becomes like second nature. That leaves you open to experiment and try different things each night, which adds spontaneity. So I like knowing the material very, very well. Once I have it ingrained, that's when I really start having fun with it. You can't be sitting up there trying to remember what you are supposed to be doing in the next bar. That takes away your concentration and prevents you from doing a great live performance. You can't be a showman at the expense of your playing, so you have to know the music well enough that you can open yourself up to other things, such as being spontaneous. We always try to keep things interesting so that we don't sound like we're following a flight pattern."

Aldridge continued from page 21

done all of their stage stuff in the first ten minutes, and after that it's all downhill. A rock show shouldn't be that way. It should start with a real punch, then build to a crescendo, with a few peaks and valleys along the way.

"I don't think kids today have enough

good role models. Too many kids are looking up to musicians who are all image, rather than looking up to someone who can really play and who also happens to look cool. I know that Whitesnake is an image band, but we can *play*. All style with no substance doesn't make it very far with thinking people."

One of the elements of Whitesnake's show that always comes across as interesting is Tommy's drum solo. It's one thing to captivate other drummers with a drum solo, but it's not so easy to impress an entire audience with one, as many people are unresponsive to such displays. Tommy, however, has an uncanny ability to hold an audience in near rapture during his solo. How does he structure it?

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"Well," he answers, "in rehearsals before a tour I work up a basic solo. I try to stick to an outline because I have to remember that there is a lighting guy who is trying to follow me, so I try to have some basic cues that he can follow. That way, he knows when I'm going to do certain things—like the section where I play with my hands—and he can make changes in the lighting. But within that basic framework I like to make changes so that each solo is never exactly like the previous one. Over the years I've found certain things that are effective, but I'm always combining those with new things. I try to keep it as concise as possible, but sometimes I do get carried away," he smiles.

It should be noted that the aforementioned hand technique was not copied from John Bonham. Tommy was playing with his hands long before he'd ever heard of Bonzo or Led Zeppelin. "I started playing that way when I was a kid," Tommy recalls, "because my father did not approve of my drumming. In fact, I had drums out back in a storage room for years before he even knew about them. When he came home, I practiced with my hands so that he wouldn't hear me. So this was before Led Zeppelin even existed. Bonham was definitely a big influence on me, but he had nothing to do with me playing with my hands."

Known for an aggressive style, does

Aldridge ever worry about crossing the line between "liberal expression" and "overplaying"? "Well," he laughs, "I've been accused of being a busy player, and I don't know whether that's good or bad. What I try to do is establish a good groove, and once I've accomplished that I elaborate on it to keep it interesting, rather than just slamming away at 2 and 4. Obviously, there are some things that require restraint, and I try to practice that when it is required. But I enjoy playing a lot of notes, and who knows? Sometimes I might overplay. But I try to keep it down to a chaotic minimum.

"Strangely enough, at some of the clinics I've done, drummers have told me that I underplay! Some of them feel that there are times where I'll be just keeping a groove when I could be doing a fill. It was really hard for me to learn to play what was best for the song, because when I was growing up, I would only listen to things that had cool drums on them. When you have that kind of attitude, it's hard to learn to play for the song. But if you want to get airplay, you are almost forced to rely on simplicity. But to be perfectly honest, some of the most complex stuff I've ever had to play has actually been the most simplistic. It's easy to play a lot of notes, but it's harder to keep a groove if you have to play half or quarter notes at a mid to low tempo. It

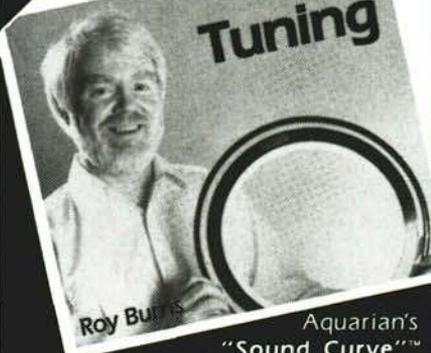
takes a lot more discipline to play like that."

When it comes to double bass drums, Aldridge helped set the standard, as he began experimenting with them back when Ginger Baker was just about the only double bass role model in rock 'n' roll. "I definitely started playing two bass drums before it was in vogue," he says. "Basically, I wanted to play more complex parts than Bonham was playing. He was just playing two notes—like doing grace notes with his other foot instead of with his left hand. It was the same thing that the jazz guys had been doing for years; he was just doing it on a different drum. It was creative for him to do that, but it was still a basic thing that had been done before. I wanted to get into multiples of threes and fives, and things like playing five-stroke rolls with three notes on the bass drums and two with the hands. And you can't do that with one foot; I don't care what anybody says. I've been doing clinics for Yamaha and Zildjian, and I've had people say, 'I can play on one drum what you play on two.' Well, that's *total* bullshit. I'm sure that, if he could, Bonham would tell you that it's impossible to play everything on one drum that you can play on two. On the other hand, there are other aspects of the drumkit that are important as well. You have to learn to play the hi-hat first; it's



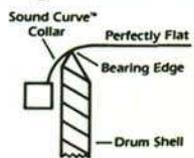
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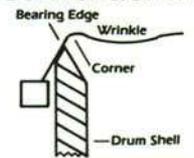
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very important and you can't ignore it. When I got heavily into two bass drums as a kid, I completely ignored my hi-hat, and I got into some bad habits.

"In just about any area of music you can think of, you can employ double bass drum in some cool ways. So I have relied heavily on that over the years. And I've had some really prodigious drummers approach me about what I'm doing. I like that—especially when they're jazz drummers. You see, if you can play them fast, people will say, 'Wow, what are you doing?' And then when you slow it down and show it to them, they say, 'Is that all you're doing?'"

Aldridge uses a lot of 16th-note double bass patterns in his beats as well as in his fills. "They're all single-stroke rolls," he explains, "and I incorporate them wherever they feel appropriate. It depends on the song, because I don't want to be playing radical double bass drum figures when a more subtle approach is called for. I just keep trying to find ways to employ double bass drums in ways that haven't been done. A lot of people are using those kinds of patterns on rap and funk tunes, but a lot of that is played on drum machines. They play it with two fingers, which makes it a little bit easier," he adds, dryly.

"In clinics," he continues, "people ask me if I lead with my left or right foot. Although I can lead with either one, it doesn't matter because it sounds the same out front. It's like practicing the rudiments with your hands—doing paradiddles to develop a balance between your left hand and right hand. You have to develop that same dexterity with two bass drums. I'm basically a right-dominated person, but what hand I lead with depends on what direction I'm moving. When I move from left to right, like when I go around the drums from the small toms to the large ones, I lead with the right. But if I go from right to left, like from the floor toms to the small toms, I lead with my left. But that's because I'm dealing with a direction and with different pitches. With double bass drums, it doesn't matter which foot you lead with, as long as you're comfortable."

Tommy tunes both of his bass drums to the same pitch, but that pitch is arbitrary. "And I don't tune them real tight," he adds. "Initially, I'll tune them tight to stretch the wrinkles out of them, but then I bring them down. It's not really a note, because there's a Remo Muffl' around the edge of the back head. All of the other drums are open, and you can really hear the notes, but the bass drum is more of a thud."

One of Tommy's tendencies is to play 8th notes on the bass drums while playing quarters on the ride cymbal, which is opposite from the way a lot of drummers would do it. "That goes back to what I

said earlier about everyone learning the same basic rudiments that have been around for years. With a basic rock pattern, it's common to play 8ths on the ride, quarters on the bass drum, and half notes on the snare. Well, you can play the 8ths on the bass drum and the quarters on the snare, just for a change. Try it. Even though it's the same pattern, you're assigning one section of the pattern to another instrument. Playing things on different drums gives a different type of inflection that can surprise people sometimes."

Aldridge also has a tendency to choke cymbals with the same hand that he plays them with—a habit that he maintains grew out of necessity. "I started doing that because I had cymbals set up way back on my left side, and it was hard to reach across my body and grab them with my right hand. So I got to where I could choke a cymbal with the same hand that I'd just hit it with. And it just happened to be visually appealing, too!"

A self-taught musician, Tommy learned to play drums by practicing 14 hours a day, listening to records, and pouring over rudiment books. "As I mentioned before, when I was in my formative years I wouldn't listen to any music unless it had cool drums in it. And that's how I learned—from the radical dudes who were around at the time. The first thing I learned was the Joe Morello stuff on the Dave Brubeck album *Time Out*, which had 'Take Five' on it. I'd kill myself trying to work up all those odd times, like 5/4. Because I was self-taught, it would take me weeks to figure out what he was doing on each drum and cymbal, and then develop the independence to do it all at the same time. Most drummers at that point would have been working out the rudiments on a practice pad. So I didn't have a planned approach, but I did use rudiment books and applied that to the drumset. So from doing that and listening to different styles, I came up with a potpourri."

Although Tommy had the discipline to practice without the guidance of a teacher, he doesn't advocate the do-it-yourself method of music education. "It's too subjective," he advises. "There are still areas of my playing that are iffy because of the way I learned. I mean, I have a pretty fundamental background, but I would have been better off if I'd had a teacher to guide me. But teachers were in short supply where I lived in Florida, and unless you wanted to wear a stupid uniform and march around with a snare drum in the school band, you were out of luck. So I got a rudiments book and went with that. But you can only go so far without some kind of guidance, so whatever shortcomings I have are from not having a planned, educated approach."

Were there any specific areas that he

found tricky to master? "The most difficult thing was getting my left hand as developed as my right. And for those who want to switch from single bass drum to double bass, that's what you have to develop, too. The hardest thing for a lot of drummers who switch to double bass is strengthening your leg, because the hi-hat has a completely different action. So you have to do some woodshedding before you can jump into it, even though you may have the parts in your head. Getting those parts physically translated to the drums is another thing.

"Another hard thing for me to learn," he continues, "was how to play loud. Now that might sound ridiculously simple, but I started out playing more finesse-oriented stuff with traditional grip. When I gravitated towards rock, I had to learn to play loud and hard for extended periods of time. I got cramps in my fingers, and it was real challenging.

"The problem was that I was starting my strokes too close to the drum. To get more volume, you have to start farther away from the drum, and that changes your timing. I also switched to bigger, longer sticks, and that gave me a longer stroke. It's like in boxing: You can hit somebody hard with a six-inch punch, but you have a better chance of knocking him out from twelve inches.

"So learning to play loud was a challenge. It was gratifying for me when I accomplished it, but it was frustrating for a long time because you don't get immediate results. You improve gradually over a long period of time—no instant gratification. So I went through a lot of frustrations learning to play, as I'm sure every drummer does."

Tommy says that a vision he held in his mind helped him battle the bouts of frustration and self-doubt. "You think to yourself, 'I'll never be able to do this.' But I had this mental picture of how things were going to be when I got it together, and as I played, I tried to remain faithful to that image. That's what kept me going. Now I want drummers in the audience to think, 'How the hell did he do that? I'll never be able to do that!'"

Of course, the truth is that Aldridge will go out of his way to demystify his playing, as he does in his *Hot Licks* video, *Rock Drum Soloing & Double Bass Workout*, and at numerous clinics. "Unlike other musicians, drummers will share their secrets," he remarks. "I've never been hesitant to show anybody anything I do. I'll break it down for somebody and explain it. Drummers are a fraternity, and we have to stick together. There are only a few of us blue-collar workers out there with callouses who have to *work* for a living," he adds with a laugh.

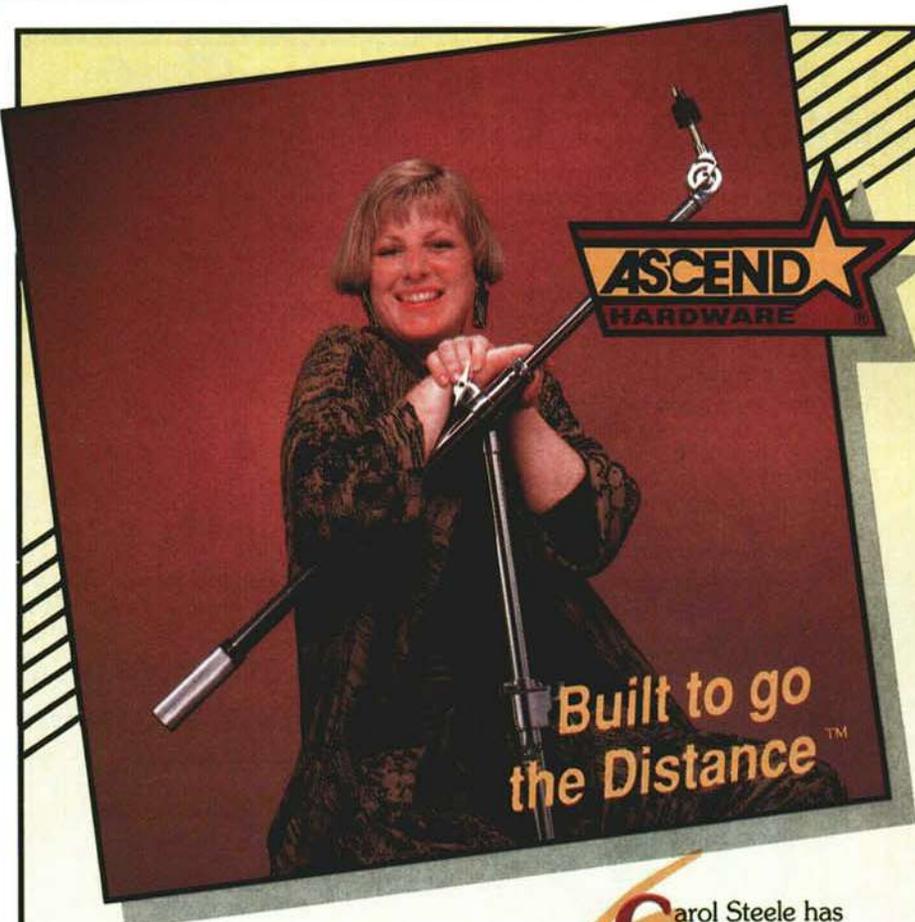
Although Aldridge tends to slouch over his kit, he reports no back problems at all.

"Balance is real important," he says, "particularly when you are playing two bass drums. You never have more than one foot down at a time, so you have to have a good center. But the most important thing I've found is breathing. We play hard for long periods of time, and do a lot of uptempo stuff, and sometimes I find myself forgetting to breathe correctly—something a lot of drummers don't think about. You often tense up a lot when you're playing—not from nervousness, but from the adrenalin. I have to remind myself to take a deep breath occasionally. It relaxes me, and it's very important in rock drumming because it's so physically demanding. With jazz and some of the other styles, it's more wrist action and

not so physical. But if you're up there flailing away doing uptempo 16th notes on the bass drums and everything is going full force, you have to breathe occasionally. Breathing is an involuntary thing, of course, but breathing deeply is something that you should remember to do. I never hear rock drummers mention that, but it's really important."

As for generally keeping in shape, Tommy rides a bicycle whenever he can fit it into his schedule. "I love it—next to drumming—and it's so good for you," he says. "It does so much for your playing, especially if you have a physical style. It can totally improve your cardiovascular system.

"So many drummers lead such seden-



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tary lifestyles," he continues. "I know I did when I first started playing. You're playing four or five sets a night in a club, and you're crawling into bed around 3:30 in the morning. You don't especially want to get up the next day and go ripping up and down hills on a bicycle. But as you get older, you start looking for ways to improve physically. And the best way I've found is to keep my whole body toned through cycling. I play better that way because if I feel good physically, I feel like I can pull anything off. Plus, I can smile more because I don't have any pain or discomfort from not being in shape. So playing is even more enjoyable.

"But when it comes to drumming itself," he adds, "the best exercise is to

actually play the drums. I know that there are people who squeeze tennis balls, and I guess that makes them great at squeezing tennis balls. But the thing that makes your playing great is *playing*. I don't grip the sticks hard, either, although most people think I do. I grip the sticks lightly and use a little bit of rosin to keep my hands dry. You need a certain amount of looseness to play properly. If you've got a real cast-iron grip, you're not going to have the finesse that you need." When asked if he ever uses drum gloves, he says, "With the twirling and stuff I do, a glove would be an encumbrance no matter how thin it was."

On the subject of twirling, he feels that the most important thing to remember is,

"To incorporate it in a way that is appropriate. Twirling is the first thing I learned to do—even before playing. I thought it was the coolest thing. A few months ago, at a clinic, a guy came up on stage and did a really radical-looking twirl, but it took 15 seconds from start to finish. If you're just standing behind the drumkit, that would look great, but you also have to *play*. I asked him how he used it, and he said that he hadn't actually found a way yet. I try to use practical twirls that I can get in and out of very quickly. Like I said earlier, it's fine to do something that looks cool, but you can't let your playing suffer because of it."

As he also mentioned earlier, Tommy used to envision a mental picture of his playing coming together. Does he remember the moment at which he felt that he had broken through, and that he was playing the way he dreamed that he would? "The actual turning point for me," he responds, "was not so much getting it together, but when I decided to do this as an occupation, and when I was psychologically ready to give whatever it would take to make it. I'm not the best drummer in the world, but I'll tell you this: I've got a lot of determination. I don't give up on what I want.

"This is the most lucrative business in the world, and yet it's less populated than any other business in the world. Only a handful of people really do well at it. It's the kind of business where a young person can make it really big, but it has its underside. There's the drug problem, which is so prevalent. Now, because rock has been around for a while, good musicians are realizing that you can't have a decadent lifestyle. Even the bands with the bad-boy images—nine times out of ten they have the image but not the lifestyle. You'd be surprised at all of the 'bad boys of rock' who sit in their dressing rooms drinking milk and who run ten miles a day. I mean, rock is steeped in rebellion, but at the same time, you've got to be healthy enough to rebel, you know?" he laughs.

For the time being, Tommy is not looking beyond Whitesnake. "I'm so pleased to be here," he smiles, "and it just blows my mind every day. Musically, I think I'll be even more satisfied when we get in the studio and start slamming down a record, and I get the most deadly drum sound known to mankind!"

Besides his enthusiasm for playing in Whitesnake, Tommy has also been celebrating his recent marriage. "If things get any better, I don't know what I'm going to do," he jokes. But when reminded that he's struggled hard for his success, he responds, "Yeah, but there's no amount of work I could have done to get all of the good fortune I'm having right now. I feel so lucky to have been given this reward, and I count my blessings every day."

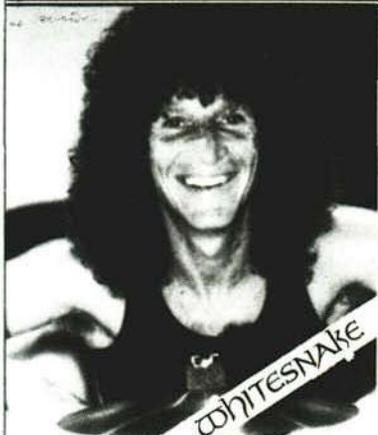
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Paiste introduces the Sound Edge Hi Hat—a design to prevent air lock and add extra projection to Hi Hats. Patent is granted.

1967

Over the years, Paiste is the only cymbal company to invent new types of percussion instruments—like the chromatically tuned set of Tuned Discs in 1971 or the RotoSound and the Sound Plates in 1980. Today Paiste offers 74 different types, shapes, and sizes of Bronze percussion instruments.

1971

Paiste introduces a complete new range of cymbals, the 3000 and 3000 Reflector, the 2000 and 2000 Colorsound, the 1000 and 1000 Rude, the 400 and 400 Colorsound, and the 200—uniting all of the innovations in Paiste's history and a new generation in the hand manufacture of cymbals into a grand new scheme. Together with the 2002 Everclassic, the Sound Creation, and the Formula 602 Paiste now offers the most extensive range of products ever offered in the cymbal market—as a matter of fact, a staggering 534 different models.

1986

Paiste is the only major cymbal company to offer a wide variety of truly defined and musical Gongs—today Paiste makes 107 different Gongs ranging from 6 to 80 inches in diameter.

1949

Paiste first uses a new Bronze alloy to create a cymbal for Rock Music—the Giant Beat series.

1967

Paiste begins to supply Therapeutic Institutions and Universities with their Sound Creation Gongs. This area promises to open new horizons in healing people.

1978

Paiste introduces yet another line of cymbals—the 2000 Sound Reflections—featuring the warm, brilliant sound of the 2000 and the same striking, reflecting look as the 3000 Reflector—bringing the number of models up to 570.

1988

Paiste starts developing its international network of Drummer Service and is thus a forerunner in seeking international communication with and feedback from Drummers and Percussionists.

1959

Paiste introduces the first Flat Ride—a cymbal with extreme sensitivity, yet far reaching projection. Patent is granted.

1968

Paiste introduces the Rude cymbal line—offering a new approach to the frequency textures in the music of that time paired with a completely new look.

1980

It is no coincidence that Paiste has been voted "Most Innovative Cymbal Company" in a recent Modern Drummer Poll.

Naturally, there have always been those who have tried to copy us—few have ever come near us. But there are some things no one will ever copy: the ingenuity, artistry and innovativeness of Paiste Engineering in Cymbals, Sounds and Gongs.

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CYMBALS SOUNDS GONGS

Roland PM16

Mention the words "Roland" and "electronic percussion" to most drummers and studio people these days, and you're likely to receive the response "Octapad." The *Octapad*, if you're not familiar with it, is a self-contained pad-to-MIDI converter with eight small, built-in pads. When it was first introduced, it opened the door to MIDI for a number of percussionists. Today it's one of the most popular MIDI/drum interfaces on the market. As nice as it is, however, I always wanted a "supercharged" version with a few extra features. It was with great interest and anticipation, then, that I spied the news of Roland's latest entry, the *PM16*. The *PM16* will undoubtedly be compared with its older brother, so let's point out the major differences.

First off, don't think of the *PM16* as an *Octapad* update. While the units do share a number of similar features, the *PM16* will not do everything the *Octapad* does, and vice versa. In a nutshell, the *PM16* contains 16 pad inputs that can be used to generate standard MIDI messages, such as "note on." The unit is rather small physically, and features nine large patch/bank buttons on its top surface. These buttons are recessed, and easily actuated with the press (not a strike) of a stick. Above this is a two-line LCD readout (alpha-numeric) and an "alpha dial"-style programmer, such as is found on many of Roland's keyboards. At the back edge we find a row of sensitivity switches and knobs, one for each pad input. The *PM16* is not designed to be rack mounted, but can be fitted to stands and drum cages with Roland's *All Purpose Clamp* set. System power is derived from a small AC adapter.

Unlike the *Octapad*, the *PM16* has no built-in pads. Instead, the unit is triggered from outboard drumpads or from audio tracks (drum mic's, triggers, or whatever you happen to be interested in). The *PM16* seems much better suited to non-pad triggering than the *Octapad*. As is typically the case, dedicated pads will tend to give the best trigger signals. The *PM16* also features a MIDI IN jack along with its MIDI OUT, and a set of jacks for patch shift foot-switches. One of the very nice features of this machine is that the MIDI IN/OUT jacks can perform a merge function (as on the *Octapad* and a few drum machines), or they can act as typical (non-merge) jacks. I find the merge functions to be very handy when working with multiple controllers. The unit also stores a total of 64 patches in eight banks of eight each. A memory-card

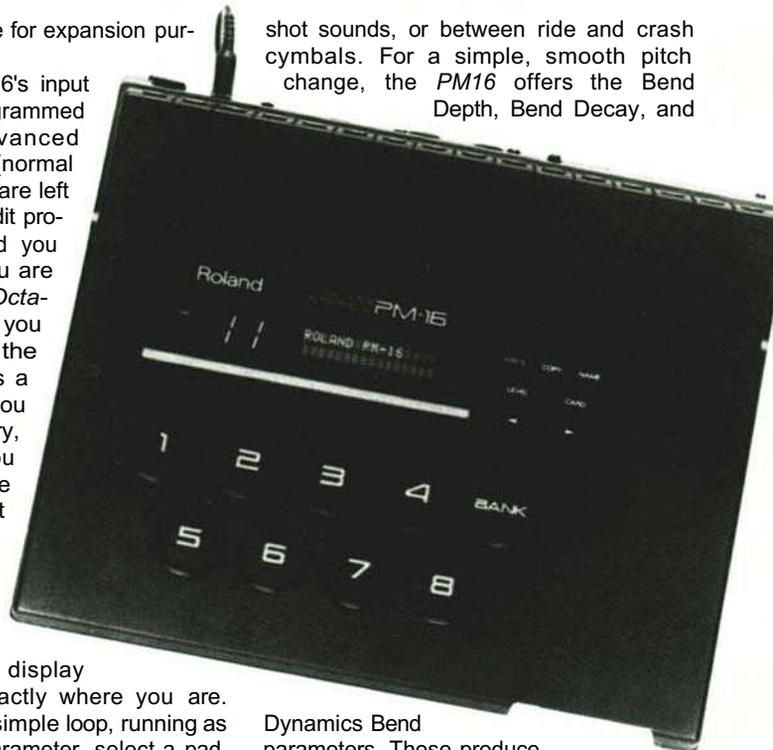
slot is also available for expansion purposes.

Each of the *PM16*'s input jacks may be programmed individually (advanced edit), or as a group (normal edit). Certain items are left out of the normal edit process to help speed you on your way. (If you are familiar with the *Octapad*'s edit modes, you are familiar with the *PM16*'s modes. As a matter of fact, if you fall into that category, I suggest that you move directly to the advanced edit mode to check out the spiffy features.)

The sequence of programming events is straightforward, and the display informs you of exactly where you are. The sequence is a simple loop, running as follows: Select a parameter, select a pad, adjust the parameter, and repeat until finished. The "select a pad" section is optional, and makes it easy to set up your parameters one pad at a time. While this technique is not perfect random access, it is quite speedy when used with the alpha dial. Each pad input can be programmed for MIDI channel, note number (pitch or sound played), gate time (sustain time, maximum of a few seconds), threshold (minimum trigger level, which aids in avoiding false triggers), dynamics curve (five available, ranging from compression through expansion, and used to help customize the "feel" and responsiveness of the pad), and minimum velocity (sets lowest allowable note-on velocity, i.e., volume). These parameters are the same as those found on the *Octapad* and other interfaces, and offer a reasonable adjustment range.

The *PM16* adds further parameters such as Dynamics Pitch, which will alter the note-on number in accordance with the intensity of your strike. Harder hits can produce either higher or lower pitches, with the maximum pitch change being controllable. This can vary over a plus or minus 24-step range. When used with a drum machine or sampler, these altered "pitches" can produce entirely different timbres. For example, this can be used to switch between ordinary snare and rim-

shot sounds, or between ride and crash cymbals. For a simple, smooth pitch change, the *PM16* offers the Bend Depth, Bend Decay, and



Dynamics Bend parameters. These produce pitch shift via the pitch wheel. Depth controls the maximum pitch shift, Decay controls the speed of the shift (how long it takes to go from nominal to shifted pitch), and Dynamics controls pitch shift in relation to strike intensity (on or off). These parameters can produce some nice effects, particularly from the more static synth patches. But be advised that the MIDI pitch wheel is an all-or-nothing affair. If you play a couple of notes together, they *all* shift (the last note's settings take priority).

The *PM16* also allows you to layer sounds together. This means, for example, that striking pad four could also trigger pads ten and eleven. This can be used for making very thick sounds (and for playing five-handed parts). You can layer either one or two inputs onto your present input. My major gripe about Layer is that I couldn't find a way to adjust the relative balance of the sounds without resorting to altering the synth, sampler, or drum machine volumes. If your sound module doesn't have individual volume controls, then you're stuck.

Finally, each input can have its own Retrigger Limit Time. This is useful when trying to trigger from busy sources such as drum mic's or audio tracks. I tried replacing some sounds from my drum

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Roland TR-626 Rhythm Composer

It was a mere six years ago that Roger Linn debuted his *LM-1* drum machine, priced at \$3,000. Today, when we examine an item like Roland's *TR-626*, which encompasses the same basic technology at a fraction of the cost, it becomes pretty obvious how far we've come in such a brief period of time.

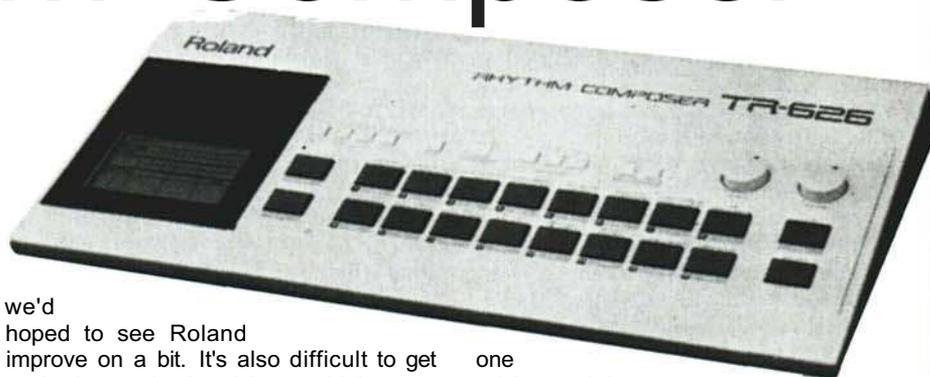
The *TR-626* represents the most recent addition to the Roland drum machine line. The unit slots neatly between the somewhat more elaborate *TR-707* and the still popular and functional *TR-505*.

The 626 offers the basic drumkit sounds we've all become rather accustomed to, along with a nice selection of Latin percussion voices. For openers, you get three different snare drum sounds, two bass drums, two versions each of mid, high, and low toms, open hi-hat, closed hi-hat, rimshot, ride cymbal, crash, China-type, cymbal cup, and handclaps. In addition, the 626 includes low and high timbale, three conga voices, claves, shaker, tambourine, and cowbell, along with high and low agogo.

All 30 high-resolution PCM samples are accessed from the 16 front panel keys. The 16 lower voices are easily changed to a second set of 14 by way of a simple shift function. The entire set can be shifted at once, or instruments can be accessed individually. So there's quite a bit of flexibility here. The LCD functions similarly to other models in the Roland line, with slight variations here and there. This design has worked well for Roland (as sales figures demonstrate), and evidently they haven't been able to find a logical reason to change it. A wise decision.

All the drum and percussion voices are really quite good. There's a fine-sounding gated snare among the three, and the bass drums are solid, with somewhat of an ambient quality about them. The ride cymbal has nice, clear definition, and the China is one of the best of the lot. Though we've all become accustomed to authentic Latin sounds by this point, it's good to see that Roland has stayed right up to snuff with its competitors in the same price range.

If there are any shortcomings at all with the voices, one would have to be with the crash cymbal, which tends to decay a bit too soon. This sample sounds identical to the one used on the *TR-505*, which



we'd hoped to see Roland improve on a bit. It's also difficult to get excited over the handclaps, which seem to lack depth and authenticity.

One very nice feature that's not always found on budget-priced units is a pitch adjustment option. The pitch of every voice of the *TR-626* can be altered plus or minus seven degrees. That's a nice, wide range, and it really expands the machine's potential. If you add 14 possible pitch variations to every sample, you'll get a better idea of what's really possible here. With a bit of experimentation on the snare drum alone, you can go for that fat, 8" depth, or obtain a high-end "crack" at the other end of the spectrum. Likewise, cymbals can sound large and heavy, or small and thin. As a final test, I ran all the *TR-626* voices through Roland's *DEP-3* effects processor, and the results were quite impressive, to say the least.

Despite the overall excellent performance of this unit, it was not without some minor areas that could use improvement. For one, the main keypads tend to lack sensitivity anywhere other than direct center. Move slightly off that point and the pad may or may not react. This can result in those annoying missed notes in tap-write mode—unless, of course, you're set up to run your patterns in from another source. It would also be nice if Roland would give some thought to enlarging the mode and pattern control keys. On a unit that measures nearly 16" across, surely some of that blank plastic could be utilized to enlarge the main programming buttons, which would certainly improve visibility and control.

The *TR-626* has 96 available patterns: 48 are factory presets and 48 are user-programmable. The presets are well-done, and include just about everything

one might need, but unfortunately they're set in concrete. You can't erase them, nor can you add or delete information, unless you transfer the pattern to a user-programmable slot and do your modifying from there. The availability of 48 user-programmable patterns may be fine for entry-level programmers or non-drummers, but I seriously question how sufficient that amount is for drummers who really want to dig in and create some intricate, above-average tracks. Now, if we could have total, easy access to all 96....

The *TR-626* comes with all the usual goodies that are now commonplace in the world of drum machines. Those features include programming capability in real or step time, an accent key, measure forward and back, insertion or deletion of track measures, pattern copy to other locations, and chaining patterns together. You can also program flams, which is a new feature that can add a nice touch of realism to fills in particular.

Track programming operates basically the same as the other machines in the Roland line. A 114-page user's manual (which Roland has obviously made a sincere effort to improve) spells out everything you need to know in direct and simple form. Patterns can be assembled into song form on a total of six tracks that can handle a maximum of 999 bars—more than double the capacity of the 505. The unit will quantize to 32nd notes, and tempo ranges from 40 to 240 bpm.

There are a few other interesting features on the *TR-626*. One is the inclusion of eight individual multi-out jacks on the rear panel for separate processing of snare, bass drum, low, mid, and high toms, hi-hat, crash, and ride cymbal. But

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Roland PM16 continued from page 54

machine with sounds from my sampler, and the results were reasonable. As usual, sharp, short sounds are preferred for triggering. Particularly tough cases may require outboard equalization and/or compression.

The PM16 has a few other, more global features as well. First, the unit responds to Program Change commands from other MIDI sources. Since the PM16 uses the "eight patches in eight banks" approach, there is some muddying up of assignments. Roland is nice enough to give you a chart in the owner's manual in order to show the exact match-ups. Also note that the expansion card patches are accessed as the top 64 patches, for a total of 128. The PM16 can also send one Program Change command per patch, which is very convenient. In addition, the unit can copy parameter settings to other locations for quick patch setups, and can also perform bulk data dumps. You can also alter the unit's Base Channel.

One especially nice feature of the PM16 is a software VU meter. When you strike a pad, the display shows a real-time bar graph, and indicates the velocity number of that strike. This can be handy in setting up the individual channel sensitivities.

I tested the unit with Roland's PD11, PD21, and PD31 pads, as well as my own homemade pads, and had no difficulty

with its payability. The PM16 also seems to be quite good at isolating its input triggers. I had no problem with cross-triggering, even when using small pads on a common stand. The only time I received cross-triggers was when I ran the unit from Roland's PD31 pad, which contains three rim sensors as well. It was very important that the PD31 be very securely fastened to its stand.

One item that grabbed my attention was the fact that the first two inputs are designed for kick drum pads. Yet, when I tried placing kick drum pads in other inputs and tom pads in the first two, everything seemed to work just fine; I didn't notice any large difference between them. I also cascaded my Octapad with the PM16, and experienced no difficulty.

As far as construction is concerned, the PM16 is certainly not flimsy, but it's not exactly built for drop-kicking, either. It's small, light, and easy to set up. If you avoid spilling drinks on it and don't smash it with your sticks, you shouldn't have any problems.

One very nice "feature" of the PM16 (that is often overlooked by other manufacturers) is the owner's manual. Roland has spent some time here, and it shows. The instructions are in an easy, step-by-step format, and include a host of assisting diagrams and graphs. And to further assist you in getting started, the PM16 contains

a number of pre-programmed factory patches. These patches are designed specifically with Roland's drum machines in mind (including the TR505, TR707, and TR727), but can be over-written, if desired. (They can also be recalled after you've over-written them!)

My major complaint about the PM16 is its sensitivity adjustment. It has a wide range and includes a line/mic switch, but it isn't programmable! While the Octapad has a narrower adjustment range (or so it seems), it is programmable. I have discovered that many instruments produce sounds with differing levels, even though they have received the same MIDI message. This creates a real problem for me, because while pad A may be triggering a drum machine on patch #1, on patch #2 pad A may be triggering a sampler. With an Octapad, I can set up two different sensitivities for the two patches, but with the PM16, I have to do it manually (ugh—that word!). Of course, the PM16 does a whole lot more than the Octapad in other areas (like offering 64 patches instead of 4). Like I said, the PM16 isn't meant to be an Octapad update, so it's best to examine your particular needs and decide from there. In my case, I'd like both of them. (But then again, I'd like a Ferrari CTO as well.) Overall, I give the PM16 a hearty thumbs up. Retail list price is \$675.

—Jim Fiore 



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you cannot assign different drums to different outputs, and none of the Latin voices can be processed individually. This is not necessarily a drawback, if you consider how often you *really* need to process more than a few voices individually. It's even more understandable when you take into account the price of this unit.

What the 626 may lack in processing capability, it certainly makes up for in MIDI implementation. The whole ball of wax is here, including song position pointer, sync signals for start, stop, and tempo, level and pitch data, song select, timing clock, and Note On/Note Off data. The 626 also has System Exclusive options, and each sound can transmit over its own channel. Pretty thorough for a budget machine.

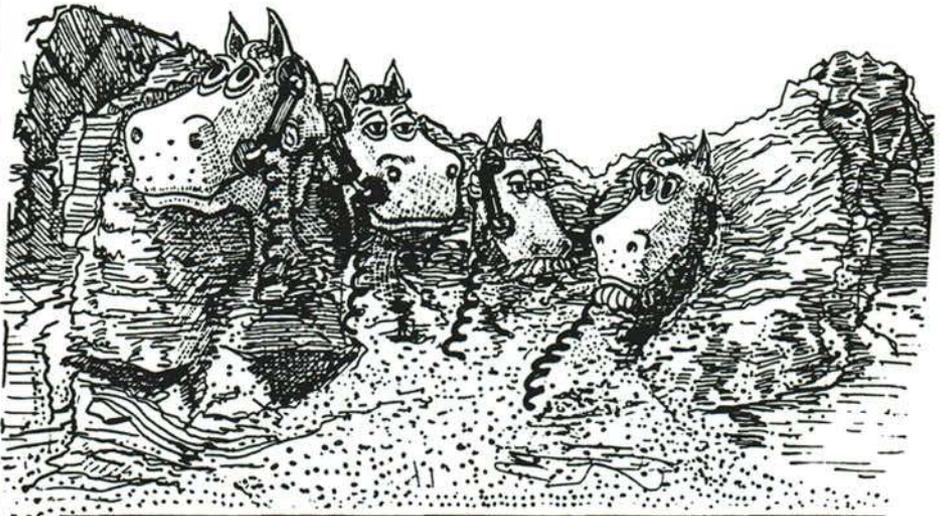
Roland has also included a Trigger Out jack (so you can trigger other sound sources), tape sync capability, a start/stop footswitch jack, and a novel little ditty called the *M-128D* Memory Card. The *M-128D* is a credit-card-sized interface that slips into a slot on the rear panel, enabling you to store and retrieve track or pattern data rather painlessly. It also increases storage capacity to 18 tracks. The Memory Card option is an attractive feature, not only in terms of increased storage, but also because it's much more convenient and a lot *safer* than dumping to tape. Plus, it places the 626 into the "highly practical" category in live performance situations. The Memory Cards do not come with the 626.

The unit operates either on six 1.5-volt batteries or on a 9-volt power supply. The batteries are included; the power supply is not (you'll need an additional \$19.95 to buy it). No big shakes, but we would like to have seen it included in the box.

All things considered, Roland's *TR-626* is a goodly amount of drum machine for the \$495.00 list price. You've got good sounds for the most part, nice programming flexibility, adequate storage, and sufficient MIDI capability. And though it might not be the be-all and end-all of what's out there on the drum machine market, the design and performance are right in line with the budget price. This is one company that refuses to let any grass grow under its feet, producing a line of electronic equipment drummers might want to keep a serious eye on. The *TR-626* is certainly no exception.

—Mark Hurley 

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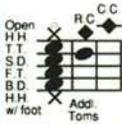
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Transcribed by James Morton



Tommy Lee: "Wild Side"

MUSIC KEY



This month's *Rock Charts* features a cut from heavy metal's premier group, Motley Crue. "Wild Side," the opening salvo from their current album, *Girls, Girls, Girls* (Elektra 9 60725-4), displays drummer Tommy Lee hammering out two distinct patterns: a two-handed 16th-note pattern that continues throughout 4/4 and 6/4 phrasing, and a hard shuffle. The transitional points between the two disparate rhythms are very interesting. Note the two measures before letters C, D, and F.

This page contains ten staves of musical notation for a drum set. Each staff is written on a five-line staff with a treble clef. The notation consists of rhythmic patterns of eighth and sixteenth notes, often grouped into beams. Many notes have an accent (>) above them. The patterns are complex and multi-measure, with some staves containing rests. The time signature is 6/4, and there are several measures with a 4/4 time signature indicated by a slash and the number 4. The notation is arranged in a vertical column, with each staff starting on a new line. The patterns are consistent across the staves, suggesting a single rhythmic exercise or piece. The notation is clear and professional, suitable for a music book or instructional manual.

The image displays ten staves of musical notation for a drum set. The notation is organized into three sections: C, D, and E. Section C (measures 1-16) features a complex pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes with triplets and accents. Section D (measures 17-24) is a 6/4 time signature section with a pattern of eighth notes and accents. Section E (measures 25-28) is a 2/4 time signature section with a pattern of eighth notes and accents. The notation uses standard drum set symbols: 'x' for cymbals, 'o' for tom-toms, and 'f' for snare drum.

This page of drum notation consists of ten staves of music. The notation is written on a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The music features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Dynamic markings such as accents (>) are used throughout. Specific instructions include "choke" and "cym bell". Time signatures change from 4/4 to 6/4 and back to 4/4. The notation includes many triplet markings (3) and accents (>).

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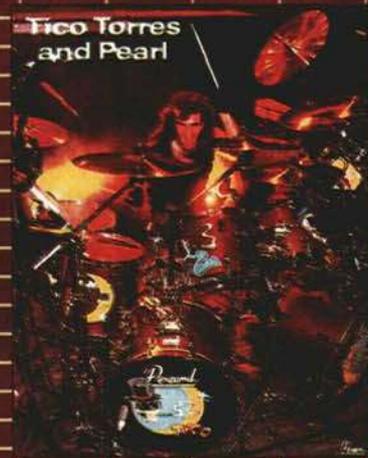
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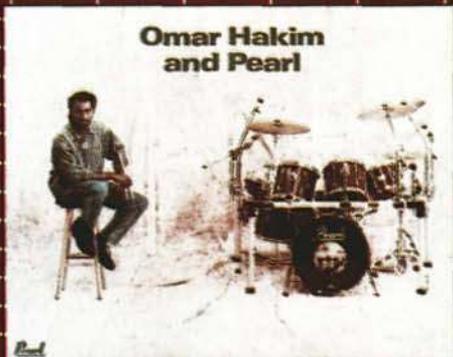
Pearl Posters

Humphrey continued from page 25

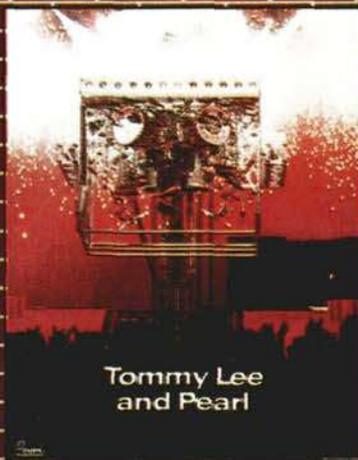
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Tommy Lee
and Pearl



was holding auditions for a new band. I guess he had gone through a number of drummers, so George gave me a call or I got a call from Frank's office. I auditioned, and Frank offered me the job at the audition. I did some reading, we played some tunes, and I think we did something in odd meter.

RF: Only one thing in odd meter?

RH: A lot of Frank's music is actually written in 4/4 and 3/4 with all the weird stuff happening in those meters. He does do odd meters too. We played fast sevens, and the band could virtually play anything. "Frank wants it; okay, we'll play it," was our attitude. The reading was intense because we were reading a lot of artificial groups. That means that, in a measure of 4/4, instead of playing four quarter notes in that bar, he would like you to play eleven notes, evenly spaced. He goes inside more standard beats to make his odd-feeling things. It makes the music sometimes sound like it has no meter, and yet there is still a basic pulse happening. Getting that stuff to be played together by the group took many rehearsals. I just think about Ruth Underwood on marimba or xylophone and some of the angular lines she would have to play on that instrument. That's a difficult instrument and we were playing at very fast tempos. We're not talking about your regular major scale; we're talking about the strangest intervals in the world and leaping from one end of the instrument to the other. She would just nail it. She was a fine musician and able to play Frank's music very well.

RF: How long were you with Zappa?

RH: Just about a year and a half.

RF: How come so short?

RH: I think we both felt it was time. I joined the band, and we went to Australia and Europe and played in America. We recorded *Overnight Sensation* and *A-Pos-Tro-Phe*, and then the band changed again. Frank likes to do that periodically. So we added a drummer, Chester Thompson.

RF: What was it like working in that double drum context?

RH: I had done double and triple drumming with Don.

RF: Triple drumming?

RH: In the end, Don started playing drums too, much to the band's dismay. He was like a little kid wanting to play drums. I've got to give him credit; he practiced really hard, but he lacked a basic aptitude for the instrument.

RF: I would think that would be a drummer's nightmare: three drummers playing, one of who doesn't know how.

RH: It was a band nightmare. There was one evening I remember specifically, though, when Don played a solo where he really put something together—and it was great.

RF: How do you feel about double

drums?

RH: I think it's fine, as long as the players understand what's happening.

RF: What was the double drum relationship in the Ellis band and then between you and Chester?

RH: With Don, I played second drums for a short period of time to Steve Bohannon. Steve was going into the service; he was killed in a car crash at 21 years old. I was nailed on that one because I admired the guy so much. He was also a great keyboard player and had all this major talent. He had an incredible aptitude for Don's music, and I learned a lot in the brief time I spent with him. I went to first chair fairly rapidly, and there were other drummers under me, so I had the lead hand in Don's band.

RF: Explain the lead hand in a two-drum relationship.

RH: It would depend. Sometimes we'd play things in unison, and sometimes we'd play different parts. The second drummer would have his part, and the first drummer would have his part.

RF: Was that all charted?

RH: Some of it was charted, some of it was just worked out verbally. The same thing occurred with Frank's band. Frank had some ideas about what he wanted the two drums to do. The first thing was that Chester's drums were all tuned about a third higher than mine. We both got these massive drumsets with two bass drums and eight tom-toms. We were ready to go, drums to the wall. What had to be done next was that Chester and I had to learn how to play together, because we were definitely coming from two different places. Chester was a feel player with lots of funk and R&B stuff, and I was more of a white element. It took a little bit for us to adjust to each other. It wasn't the most natural thing, but it ended up working fine.

RF: Can you explain the process of learning to play together?

RH: The process took place while rehearsing Frank's music. What each of us did intuitively created a disparity in the feel of the music. I felt I had to try to figure out where he was coming from, and I'm sure he was trying to figure out where I was coming from. Without talking about it, it just started happening. I had to sort of lay back more and think of just pocketing the music. Chester has the tendency to be really solid with that, but it's his feel.

RF: Were you ever frustrated that you weren't *it*? Doesn't a drummer want to be *the* drummer?

RH: Yes and no. Frank didn't ask me what I thought about having another drummer; it was just one day Chester was there. You've got to go with the flow. Either you stay and say, "Okay, I can handle this," or you say, "See you later."

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RF: But what did you really feel?

RH: It was a little bit of a bruise. I was thinking, "How come?"

RF: But you knew Frank was an experimenter.

RH: He probably didn't hear certain things in me that he wanted to hear in the band. I think ultimately both Chester and I offered to Frank the things he wanted to hear. Chester had to also learn some things that he had never experienced before. It was a great experience for both of us, and that band that toured was a great band. *Live At The Roxy And Elsewhere* is a good representation on record. I really loved playing a lot of Frank's music. "Uncle Meat," for example, is a great piece.

RF: You just got this far-away look in your eyes. Why?

RH: It's just a great piece of music. He put together this medley with one tune leading into another, and finally we got to "Uncle Meat." I loved it with the march beat in three. I always enjoyed playing and listening to it. I often think about which composers from the twentieth century will be remembered, and Frank is going to be one of them along with Stravinsky. His music says a lot, and because I'm a music lover, I can appreciate music—not just be a player in a band and endure whatever it is. I suppose that if you don't understand difficult music like

that, you just never quite get it. And the other side of Frank is his unbelievable humor. Everything is a social commentary. Night after night he would come up with new stuff that would be funny.

RF: What did you do after Zappa?

RH: I was trying to get some things happening in town. I had a desire to do studio work, and I felt I had the talent. I could read, I could play the styles. It was just a matter of making the contacts and getting the first calls. I had done a few things, but nothing on a regular basis. That takes time to build up.

RF: How did you get the calls?

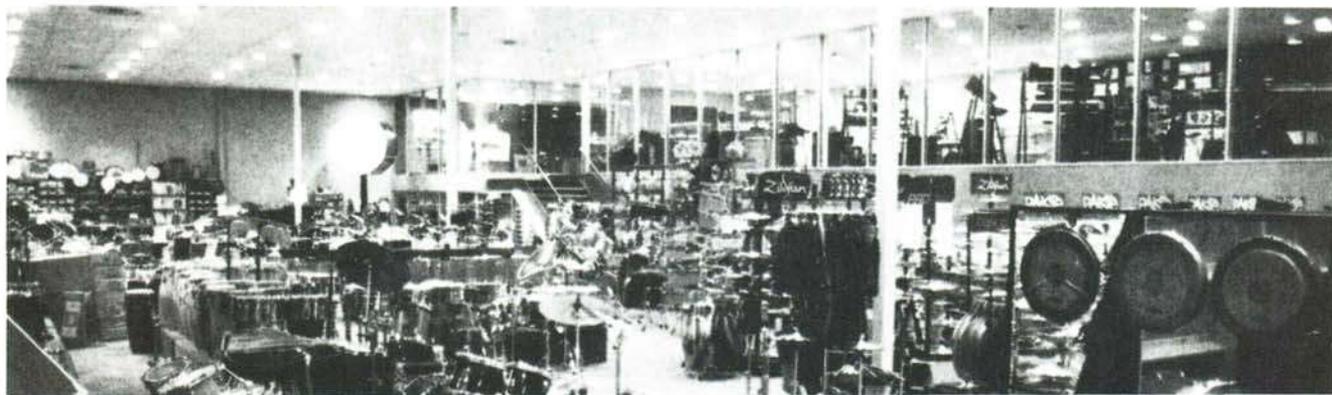
RH: Probably through recommendations from friends and whomever I met at the time. I started doing some work, some of which was records. One producer I worked for a lot was Jay Graydon. He and I were in Don's band together, and he was starting to get into producing. Then I played with various bands around town like Larry Carlton's band, some big band rehearsals, and small group rehearsals. That's one way to get people to know who you are: Start doing everybody's music. It was actually fun to be able to play all kinds of music with all kinds of people. People hear what you do on the gig and they remember that; so I started getting some work. I just made sure that on every gig I played, I did a good job. That's a very important

thing. Everything counts. Whoever you meet, and doing a good job no matter what you think of the situation, count. A lot of people have gotten into trouble because they either have bad attitudes or, because they don't like the music, they don't play it as well as they should. I've always been good at adapting to new situations—trying to understand what the situation is and doing a good job. I think I'm able to give anybody in this business what they want. That's one of the things I endeavored to do, and I remember thinking about how important it is to learn as much about all the music out there as possible. So I took some Latin gigs down in East L.A.—not a hardcore Latin band, because most hardcore Latin bands don't have a drumset player. But this was with a drumset, and I was playing with Latin musicians. Learning that was fun, and getting that experience was helpful. I was definitely into Brazilian music, and I played with Moacir Santos for a little bit. I played a lot of bebop because jazz was really my first love. I still enjoy doing that.

RF: At this point you were making a living gigging and doing a few sessions?

RH: Right. I was doing records, a TV thing here and there, some jingles, and I was teaching privately. I did a lot of that when I was not on the road. I don't remember how that started either, but I guess I started getting some calls

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because people knew what I could do, and they'd say, "Can you help me?" There was some interest from certain musicians about the odd rhythms or reading or whatever. Eventually that evolved into my trying to put together a book on the whole subject. I started writing it when I was with Don, and I don't think it got published until 1981, so there was a good ten-year span. I'd leave it for six months and then work on it a little. There was a lot to learn about how to put it together. It's called *Even In The Odds*—a little play on words. It took a real long time to organize and to make sure I wasn't missing anything.

RF: What happened next?

RH: I basically have been doing that kind of work since then, although nowadays records are not as they used to be. There was that period in this town when there was a lot of work, and a lot of musicians were making a lot of money. The money was flowing from the record companies. I was sort of on the fringe of all that, not right in the middle of it. It would have been nice to have been a part of that, but I just missed it. There were about six years between the time I left Frank and the time I started working with Jarreau, and I did some other odd gigs on the road like Seals & Crofts, Toshiko Akiyoshi, John Davidson, and Anka. I think I've done just about every kind of music—

show drumming, jazz, big band, and rock, although I was never really in a rock band. I learned the rock end of it in the studio and by playing a few club gigs.

RF: How did you feel about those years of road work as a sideman?

RH: It was getting other experiences. The Seals & Crofts gig was the first pop thing I started doing on the road. It was enjoyable doing their gig. I always liked their music. It was a very class act, and it was another challenge because Jimmy Seals was a stickler for tempo. He liked things very, very precise, but at the same time, he would change from night to night, so I just had to read him every night. That's typical of a lot of leaders, though, and the drummer's job is to make the leader happy. So that's what I did, and for the most part it worked out great. Some of the other road gigs ended up being almost just for the money, although, at the same time, it was a challenge. For example, when I first did Paul Anka's gig, he wanted to hire me full-time. Sometimes it's tempting because of the money, but then you have to think, "If I'm gone all that time, I can't do anything else." I like doing a lot of things, so I've always been sort of non-committal to these people, which probably frustrates them.

RF: You did do some live work with Al Jarreau.

RH: That was in '81, and I did two or three tours with him. This all happened after I had recorded an album called *This Time* with him, which Jay Graydon produced.

RF: What did you like about playing his music?

RH: He's a musician's kind of singer. There are singers, and then there are singers who are musicians. He's one of the musicians. He's a natural at what he does, and he's not really taught.

RF: How does that affect you as a drummer?

RH: First of all, I don't have to be fighting the singer or having to compromise because of the singer. I can play and he'll know exactly what's happening, and then he'll relate to it. He can improvise. He knows how to be flexible, and he lets things happen. So there's a constant interplay, and every show doesn't have to be the same. He doesn't get locked into licks, and I don't have to get locked into licks, so in that respect, he's like a horn player, except he uses his voice. Plus, the material was always fun to do. It tended to be real pop/R&B/jazz, and the musicians in the band were always great. We played nice venues, stayed in nice places, and were treated very well.

RF: I'd like to talk about some of your studio work. For instance, you did a little work with a band called Pages.

RH: To me, that band is primarily Richard Page, who writes great music. It's easy to play great music. Sure, you want to think about the arrangement, you want to think about the parts, but it makes it a lot easier if the music is there to begin with. A lot of music you hear has a regular beat to it; that's what you keep, and you don't worry about anything else because the music has two chords to it. All you're interested in is getting a good beat, keeping it steady, and getting a good sound. But with Pages' music there was much more than that. There were dynamics, there were sections, and you wanted to change up.

The studio thing has gone through a cycle. It used to be where you'd get rhythm sections together and you'd do a track, most of the time without a click. You'd get a feel and put it down. Rhythm sections got reputations for being able to do certain things. There was the L.A. Express rhythm section with John Guerin. Then there was your David Hungate/Jeff Porcaro rhythm section. They'd get great grooves and get called all the time because they were good players. Then there was the disco era, and I think every player hated it, especially drummers. It took away the joy of playing drums. That's when the click really came into play all the time. Everybody was used to it for TV soundtracks, where you had to match to video or film. But for records, people weren't used to doing it. Some

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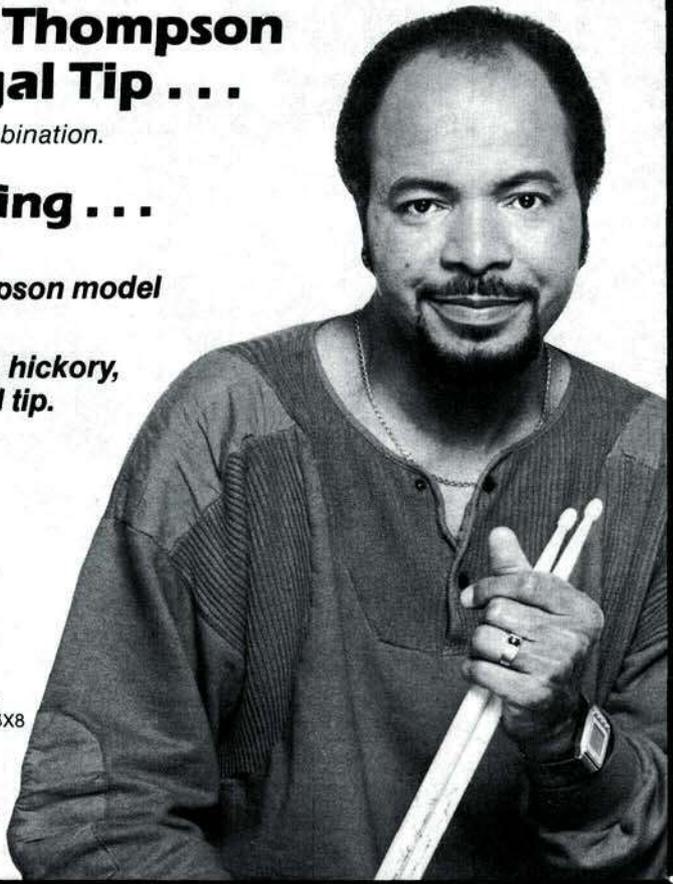
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players did it well and some didn't.

RF: How did you feel about it?

RH: I didn't have a big problem with it. I could hear it, I could relate to it, and I could play to it. It does point out any flaws that you might have with your time, so you learn quickly about those things. You also learn by hearing playbacks. You learn about how you're composing a piece yourself, how you're executing your part, what you sound like, how your drums sound, and how they're being recorded.

RF: When did you first get recording experience?

RH: I guess my first experience was with Don Ellis.

RF: What did you know about the studio?

RH: In terms of the experience of doing it, nothing. I just basically played the parts and had enough wherewithal and professionalism to pull it off. The studio mentality is not for everybody. There's a lot of pressure. I happen to like it; I like the feeling of doing a good job in the studio, especially when the music is happening. A lot of times, you leave the studio and you forget the whole situation immediately. A lot of TV and film music is like that. It's very incidental and you don't really get a chance to do that much playing. A roll here, a little bit over here, thank you, goodbye. You don't remember those things. But there are a lot of experiences you do remember, and even some film work has been very rewarding.

RF: When did Free Flight come to be for you?

RH: In 1982 or '83. I was sort of pulled into that band from Milcho Leviev, who was also in Don's band. He was in Free Flight with Jim Walker and Jim Lacefield. They had gone through a variety of drummers, and I came aboard and decided to hang with them a while to see what it was all about. At the time, it was Milcho's music that I had played before and knew how to play, and the music Jim Walker wanted to do was sort of pop/classical/fusion/jazz.

RF: What is your role in that context?

RH: At the beginning it was as a sideman. Milcho, being the composer he is, wrote most of the music, and he adapted certain classical pieces in a sort of jazz fusion way.

RF: Then you became more involved.

RH: I felt that if I were going to hang in the band, I wanted more of a say. I hadn't really done any composing, but I had a desire to, and I felt I had an ability to. A problem had developed in the band, especially between Milcho and Jim Walker, where it was becoming impossible to work. Sometimes a group just doesn't work. There was a question as to whether it could continue without Milcho, because he was such a strong factor in the band. I decided to stay to see if the band had a chance of going anywhere.

Plus, it was always intriguing to me what the band was trying to do, which was like nothing anyone else was doing.

RF: What exactly was it doing that was unique?

RH: It was trying to play music that was a little more challenging. I always like challenges in music. The band tries to reach for certain things; a lot of times it's successful, and sometimes it's not. But these are the chances we have to take, because we are playing difficult music some of the time. Mike Carson joined the band, and compositionally he's very prolific, but he is completely different than Milcho. So it changed the band, and

I think the band tried to become more accessible. Some people say that was the ruination of the band.

RF: How do you feel about that?

RH: I don't know. It's hard to say.

RF: Did you feel you were compromising your musical abilities or desires?

RH: Maybe a bit. No band is perfect, so if you're going to be in a band, certain things go along with it that you put up with, you deal with, and try to work through. As long as you keep that attitude, you can keep something together. As long as you keep seeing that there's success happening, there's a build, there's an audience out there. A band has

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RF: When did you get involved with P.I.T.?

RH: Probably 1980. It's funny, when I came down to audition with the Ellis band, I played a few charts on the second drum chair, and then I played a few charts on the first drum chair. The second drum chair was played by Joe Porcaro, who was leaving at that time, but who is my partner at the school. He was just about the first person I met, and I'm still hanging with the guy. We just stayed in touch. For some reason, Joe has the ability to be a father figure to a lot of people. He's a very warm guy, so we just maintained that relationship, Joe Porcaro and Emil Richards had been approached by Pat Hicks, the director of P.I.T., to put together a percussion program, which, at the time, was full percussion. It ultimately ended up being drums and maybe some hand percussion. I don't know what happened that Emil was no longer a part of it, but Joe felt he needed a partner, and he knew me from a long time ago. He also knew I was a good teacher, so he called me and said, "Let's go talk to Pat about this."

RF: What is your role there?

RH: The title is Co-Director of Curriculum, so Joe and I put together the curriculum. We wrote a lot of it, and we had some other people do some writing, but

the concept of what it should be is Joe's and mine.

RF: What is the concept?

RH: We knew we had a one-year program as our framework. But how much can be said in one year? So actually we probably say too much in one year. We'd like it to be a two-year program, but it's a one-year vocational school, and we offer a complete curriculum.

RF: What is the focus?

RH: Technique, reading, and styles. Basically, it's five core classes a week, or one core class a day with the rest of the day filled up with practicing in the lab, playing with ensembles, meeting with instructors one-on-one and in a group, and rehearsing.

RF: How active are you with P.I.T. on a day-to-day basis?

RH: I'm there twice a week teaching classes. One class is called Contemporary Drumming. It's a vague description because it's sort of a catch-all category. By that, I mean I try to keep the class into what I feel is contemporary. That means it can change. It used to be called Odd Rhythms Fusion, but that's already too specific because we talk about other things. The bottom line of that class is rhythm and showing rhythm in various aspects, one of them being the study of odd rhythm and how it's applied to all music. The other class is Studio Drum-

ming Techniques. We talk about the studio environment, and we look at, read, and play studio charts from record sessions, TV sessions, and jingles. Guitar players, bass players, and other players come in, and we'll play with a click and set up a mock studio situation. We work like this because one of the main weaknesses in students is being able to read and play and make something happen. Students forget how to play when they're reading; this happens all the time. And then there's the click. So we try to show them what they're in for. More and more players are having to play with the click, a drum machine, or a sequencer, so it's important to know how. Not that every student that goes to P.I.T. aspires to be a studio musician. But the exposure is important, and it helps them in their live playing. We are currently trying to put together an electronics course.

RF: That was my next question. You mentioned to me before this interview started that your feelings about electronics have changed in the past few years.

RH: They've had to. It was hard to say what role they'd have in music in the beginning. Recording procedures have changed, and people's thinking about music has changed. The word "sampling" and the instruments that are capable of doing it pop up in conversations all the time. Using those instruments instead of the real instruments with the real players has affected people's work. In the beginning, it was the keyboard players who manipulated the drum machines, and the drummers were being left out. Now the drummers have gotten hip and have gotten their own machines, which is also important to the students at school. It's important to stay up with what's happening and to be current, because technology changes so quickly. So as far as electronics is concerned, I have my rack of stuff that I use in the studios a lot.

RF: What do you have?

RH: I have a Yamaha setup that's very sophisticated. It's a whole MIDI system, and it's expandable. Any instrument that's MIDI can be tacked right on. It doesn't include a sampler yet, but it has a drum machine in the system that has sampled sounds, so I trigger those sounds a lot. What I like about the Yamaha system is the FM synthesis, which means you can get sounds that are truly dynamic. It's not a sample, but the blending of that with sampled sounds is nice because the sample offers the punch that the other doesn't. It also offers the dynamics and the expandability of the sound. It's a nice, rich sound. Electronics has also opened up a door for my composition, because the setup I have has a lot of melodic application; it's not just drums. Anything a DX7 can produce, I can produce. Plus you can sample anything with a sampler, which I'll be adding to the system shortly.



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RF: So what do you want to do now?

RH: My wife asks me that all the time. "What are you going to do when Free Flight doesn't exist for you anymore, or the studio work slows down?" I think what I want is an outlet to play live. I think that's important, still. And I also want to continue doing work in the studios. It's rewarding, and I feel I have something to offer. I'd like to offer more on the production and composition levels, too. That means getting more into composition, which could lead more into production. It's hard to suddenly say, "I want to be a producer," but there are ways to get into that. I feel I can compose, and I feel good about myself. And I'll use the electronics a lot, probably because I like harmony, melody, and rhythm. When I hear something, I hear all of it, not just the drums. That's a goal of mine. In 1988, I've got to make more time to compose.

As far as production, we'll have to see. Sometimes it's just a matter of putting the word out that you want to produce, and that will get the ball rolling. There is another drum book floating around in my mind, which would be a supplement to the one I've already written. Sometimes doing only studio work can lower your visibility. There are great players in the studios who nobody has ever heard of. It's a choice a person has to make. My feeling is that that scene is not going to be there forever; it's changing.

If you want to make a statement artistically, you're taking your chances. But there's something important about making that statement. My wife is an artist, and she will not compromise on any level. She's not trying to reach a mass audience, and she's not trying to be commercial, but everything she touches is art.

I admire that quality in her, and it helps me to reflect on what I'm doing. I think, "Am I making the kind of statement I'd like to make? How far do I have to go to make that statement?" I'm fairly practical, and I have a family, so it's important to make a living. I can't check out and say, "I'm going to go do this now." So I try to balance it, and what that usually means is that there's not enough time to do things I'd like to do. But I've got to find a way to squeeze it in somehow. It's hard to predict what it will be in five or ten years. The music business is not secure, but I don't know that any business is secure anymore. You take your chances, though.



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According to John Santos, there were errors in his January '88 and March '88 *South Of The Border* columns. In John's January column, "The Merengue," the corrections are:

1. The music key only applies to examples 5a, b, c, and d.
2. In examples 1 and 2, the left hand plays the notes on the upper space, while the right hand (with stick) plays the lower space.
3. In examples 3a and b, the notes on the upper space are played with the left hand, while the lower space contains the notes for the right hand.

The author also suggests that the hi-hat part for the foot in example 5b is optional.

In the March column, "The Mozambique," the corrections are:

1. In example 3, the correct rhythm for Bombo B is:



2. In example 9, the first two notes in each of the three groups of 8th notes should be tied.
3. These are the correct spellings of the following names, record label, and groups: Conjunto Libre, Changuito, Estrellas, Rumba, Los Van Van and Juan Formell.

We apologize for these errors.

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J.C. Heard: Jazz Veteran With A Messa

"It all boils down to one thing: If you say you're going to be a drummer, you're supposed to be able to do it all, man!"

J.C. Heard is speaking about a lifetime of drumming, and when he speaks, it's time to listen up. Playing professionally since he was ten years old, nurtured under the colored stage lights of vaudeville, burlesque, and carnival road shows, J.C. has little time for drummers with no ear for experience.

In his 60-year career as a dancer, entertainer, educator, and master percussionist, J.C. Heard has come to epitomize an American musical tradition: the drummer as composite journeyman performer—one part sophisticate, one part showman, and one part vagabond. He's the kind of drummer who administers to the needs of a large orchestra, skillfully backs the intricate vocal stylings of a Sarah Vaughan, and then supplies the foundation for a kicking chorus line or an old soft-shoe.

While many legendary voices of modern drumming are now stilled, at 70 years old J.C. is still swinging a twelve-piece big band in Detroit. When Dizzy Gillespie hits town, it's always J.C. he wants behind him. "J.C. Heard—he's the painter. He paints layers and layers of sound behind me." Miles Davis has been quoted as stating that J.C. Heard is one of

the best living drummers today.

MD spoke with J.C. about his own career and the changes in drumming he has been witness to since the late '20s. But be forewarned. This is no rocking chair reminiscing. It's what it is.

JCH: I was born in Detroit in 1917. I got into tap dancing as "The Child Wonder" when I was about five, and then I got involved with vaudeville in the late '20s and early '30s. I taught myself how to play drums, starting at around ten years old. I loved the rhythm—the beat. I'd listen to different drummers, and I could tap their beats with my feet. I figured I could do it on drums, and it worked out alright.

DC: What was your first show?

JCH: Well, there was this old man who was drumming in a vaudeville show where I was doing a song, dance, and drum act. This was around 1927, and vaudeville was happening! We had showgirls and dancers. The old man got sick and they didn't have a replacement for him. So I said I thought I could play the show. I was only about ten years old, but I had been hanging out with the drummer every day. I liked him; he was like a father to me. So "Butter Beans," from the dance team "Butter Beans and Suzie," said "Give him a chance. Let's see what the kid can do." Man, they started that show and I played the hell out

of it! I knew everything the drummer was doing and I even dressed it up a little bit. The tap dancer in the show told me, "If you're in doubt, the first thing you do is follow the trumpet, because he's got it. As soon as the conductor drops his hand, just roll for about two or three bars until you hear that tempo the trumpet's setting."

DC: What were the main demands on a drummer in those days?

JCH: The main thing they expected, like I tell everybody today, was for you to keep time. It's the basic thing: know how to play some time. The drum is a rhythm instrument. You should know how to back each soloist—complement them. They'd tell me, "Just give me some tikka-boom, baby." And that's all you need.

DC: What happened after vaudeville?

JCH: I started playing around locally in Detroit. My shot came when I went with Teddy Wilson to New York in 1938. That started the whole thing with big bands. After Teddy Wilson's band, I went with Benny Carter's band, Coleman Hawkins, Louis Armstrong, Benny Goodman, Cab Calloway, Woody Herman, Duke Ellington, and Count Basie.

DC: In the early '40s, when bop changes first made an impact, did this affect the development of your own style?

JCH: I fit right into that, because I'd always been listening. So I was doing the same thing. Big Sid Catlett, Jo Jones, and I were all good friends. I was a little younger than them, but we all came up in the same era. I met Klook [Kenny Clarke] after I got to New York. He was working with Teddy Hill's band, playing more swing stuff then. He got into more progressive things as time went by. It's the same as when I saw Charlie Parker in Kansas City with Cab's band in 1941. Charlie was playing like Benny Carter. Benny was his idol, then he formed something else later. It's hard to be original, because everybody's got influences they're coming out of, you know. Chick Webb was my idol. He did things on the drums I never saw anybody else do: his conception, the way he would accent, the way he'd phrase licks in those big bands, and his solos. Buddy Rich and

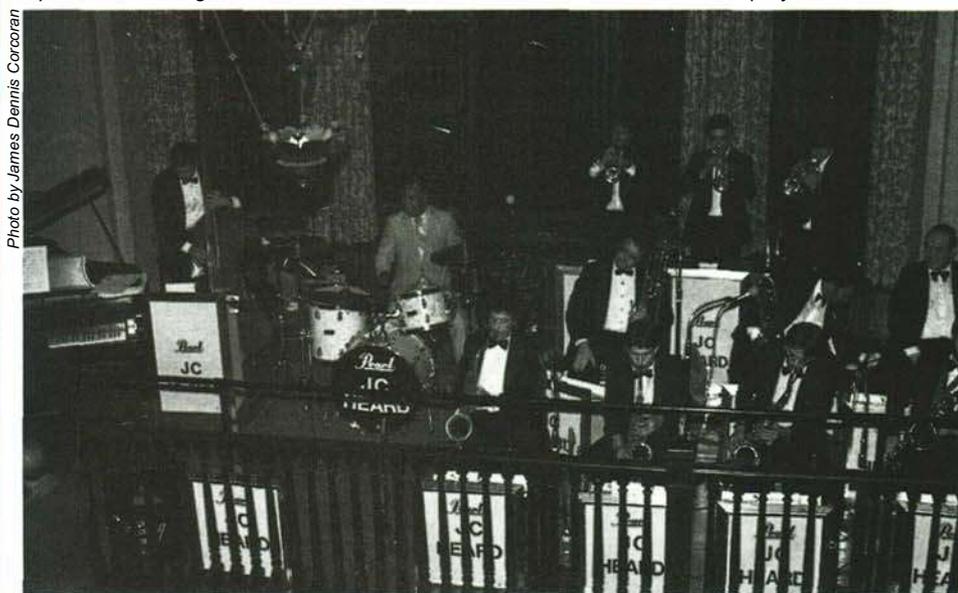


Photo by James Dennis Corcoran

by James Dennis Corcoran

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Gene Krupa used to come up to see him play and learn something. Oh yeah; this man was fantastic!

DC: So the distinction between bop drummers and big band drummers wasn't actually as sharp as many jazz histories imply?

JCH: Right. If you can play one, you should be able to play the other. It really didn't start with Klook. They say that, but all of us were around New York at the same time. We used to jam at Minton's, play with Thelonius Monk, J.J. Johnson, and everybody. I came up through that same time. But in those days, you *had* to play with a big band if you wanted to make any kind of rep. So that's where Klook started out, too. Shadow Wilson, too; he went with Lionel Hampton for a while, then with Tiny Bradshaw and Lucky Millinder. Then Klook stayed around New York and played combos, along with Max [Roach] and a number of cats. They started playing different kinds of licks up at Minton's, and the next thing you know, it's labeled "bebop." They were playing this and that, trying to get away from traditional swing, but they could never leave it because, really, swing is always what drumming is about.

But in those days, if you couldn't play in a big band, man, they would write you off. It was different days than what it is now. Today, guys start in, and they want to play lots of solos and different things—start right on the top. You say, "Let's play some time," and they just look away. I say, "Hey, play me eight bars of time, and don't break it." They say, "That's nothing." And I say, "Can you do it? Don't criticize something you can't do." I remember that when some of the boppers came in, they didn't want to play the sock cymbal. That was obsolete—old fashioned. The sock cymbal is what locks the band in. If you don't believe it, listen to Art Blakey. You can hear his sock all through everything. He's another drummer who came up through those big band days. To me, in a big band the drummer is the driver of the car baby! If he turns the corner, they're all going that way. If he stops, they stop.

DC: What about your own experience

with smaller groups?

JCH: With Billie [Holiday], at Cafe Society in New York, we had six pieces: Joe Newman, Dicky Harris, and Budd Johnson on horns, Jimmy Jones on piano, Al McKibbin on bass, and myself. I played the same way. I never change my style depending on the size of the band, because I don't care what the horns do; if the drummer swings it'll come out alright. That's unless you want to play free-form—play solos while the soloist is playing too, forgetting about time. A lot of guys are still doing this today. In a small band, you have to really work. It's like a little act when you've got five or six people—everybody's really got to do it! In a big band, you've got a lot of ensemble work; it's an orchestra. In small combos, everybody takes solos—fours and eights—and we just go! That's good! That way, you establish yourself as an individual star. That's how Max, Roy

Haynes, and those guys primarily made a name. Art Blakey has had the Messengers now for about 30 years. This is really where they stood out. *But* I made a name as a big band drummer, as did Big Sid, Shadow, and Papa Jo, too, even though we all worked with small combos. You have to do it all and learn it all to be good.

I learned how to play brushes fast with piano players: Teddy Wilson, Earl Hines, Nat Cole, Art Tatum, and Oscar Peterson. I had a trio in 1948 at the Three Deuces: Erroll Garner, Oscar Pettiford, and myself. Man, Erroll swung! His left hand was like a guitar: all off-time and lots of stuff, but he was swinging! Then Oscar: "Open that tempo!" But they helped me. I used to get a lot of recognition around New York because I could play brushes with piano players. In those days piano players wanted brushes; they didn't want sticks. Later on, stronger piano players like Erroll and Oscar didn't mind you

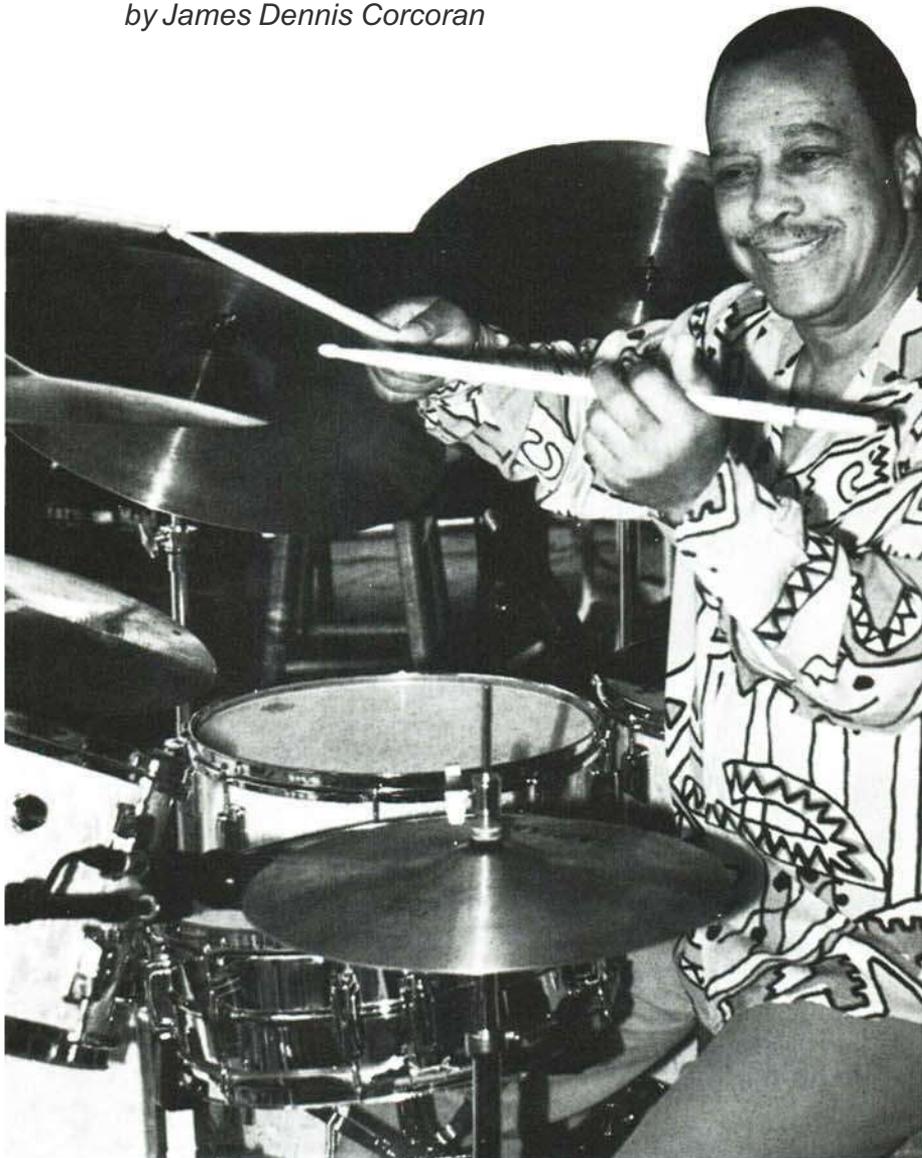


Photo by James Dennis Corcoran

using sticks, because they played *heavy*. They'd *roll* on those keys! There were boogie-woogie piano players, like Meade Lux Lewis, Pete Johnson, and Albert Ammons. I played with all three of them. We used to play together in Cafe Society, with Al McKibbin on bass. But brushes are still very, very important. They're tasty, but you don't see many guys playing them today. A lot of people push them aside as too quiet, but that's a lot of bull. There are tunes we do in my band where I use brushes with brass licks, in ensemble work, and it sounds real good. Today, a lot of kids don't want to fool with brushes because they don't bounce like a stick; you've got to do it yourself. Brushes don't play you, you have to play them! Everybody's looking for an easy way. There's no easy way, man.

DC: Is that where your advice for drummers starting out in the business today would begin?

JCH: Well, it depends on the kind of gigs you're trying to get today. Since rock is more prevalent than anything else, it's hard for me to explain to drummers going after that what they should be doing. But if they want to play well, they should get into jazz as well as rock. They should learn how to read, and maybe work into studio drumming or theater work, so they can last until they're 90

years old and still be playing. All of these things help. If they just want to play rock, they'll go just so far, because so much of these things are trends. But good, steady drumming, and knowing how to read, keep time, and complement soloists—these things are going to last as long as music lasts.

I'm talking about *playing too*, not technique. The number-one thing you've got to think about when you're playing in a band is that you're playing a *time* instrument. Even if you're playing in a rock band, it's got to be a time thing. Whatever comes out, everybody's got to know where "one" is. If you don't know where "one" is, you're in big trouble. I remember that, when bebop was around, cats used to try to play so much in a four-bar solo that they'd run into five and throw the band over. They weren't concentrating; they were only concerned with how many things they could do. After a while you realize that simplicity is it. You don't need to do a whole lot of things at once. Whatever you do, make it *count*—make it *meaningful*. If it don't mean nothing, what's the sense in it? Guys get up on a set, and they can play a drum solo for half an hour. Man, that's a lot of bull. Unless you know how to phrase, unless you have some ideas about presence, conception, and attitude, then your solo's just going to be a bunch

of noise! You're going to be repeating a lot of stuff, not playing different things all the time. A lot of guys get away with it today because they've got 20 tom-toms up there, all tuned differently, and they're hitting each one to get that sound.

DC: So you feel that the emphasis on solo work is taking away from a drummer's responsibility to ground the whole band?

JCH: Hey, you've got to learn to be a part of a rhythm section. I just listened and learned how everybody else did it. That's what we all did in those days; we studied each other. And still today, I listen to a lot of different types of players. It all boils down to one thing: If you say you're going to be a drummer, you're supposed to be able to do it all, man. Whoever you're backing, you're supposed to understand what they're doing so you can accompany them. That's the main thing. The way I look at it, the bass and drums are the foundation of the band. If they're together and they're swinging, the whole band will jump. But if the rhythm section's no good, the band ain't going to be *nothing*. I don't give a damn how great a soloist you've got in there, it's not going to move.

DC: Except for yourself, your current big band is comprised of all younger musicians. Is this a conscious choice?

JCH: Well, I try to keep younger men in my band. I wouldn't mind if I had a couple of older fellows with experience, so long as their minds weren't warped, still wanting to live 40 years back. A lot of old musicians are in that kind of groove today. It's hard for them, because they're set in their ways.

DC: So you don't see your band as a revival idea, or as nostalgia?

JCH: No. I might play some Basie or Duke Ellington tunes, but these guys aren't going to interpret it like the original guys did. There's no Johnny Hodges or Paul Gonsalves in this band. When I play a Duke or a Basie tune, I try to give them the idea of playing what their own feeling of the tune is—what it's worth to them now. Most kids today want to do a Wynnton Marsalis type of thing: play fast, show how much technique they've got, fly like a bird. Everybody's going, but nobody's *settling*. When they play a ballad today, they don't play it slow and pretty, they're running with it! [laughs] Each tune has its own theme and meaning, and you have to bring it out, through your conception of it. That's why I like singing, because you can really convey a feeling.

DC: In this sense your band has certain parallels with some of the big bands of the '40s, like Earl Hines' band and Billy Eckstine's: It's also a school for musical training.

JCH: That's right. These are young minds; they're not old people. Hey, that's why you have youth! Everything always

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comes in stages, like with a baby crawling, then standing, then walking. It's the same thing in music: Everything's got steps. There's got to be a bottom, an in-between, and a top. My guys have all been to college and have good ideas. But the *experience*, the *feeling* of things...this you've got to give to them. It helps when they're good enough to listen when you speak! A lot of players don't listen; they just get up on the stand and do what the hell they want to. It doesn't even fit, although *they* think it does. You tell them about guys like Lester Young, Sonny Stitt, or Coleman Hawkins, and they say, "Oh yeah, they were alright," as if it's just old hat. They were the *pioneers*, man—the guys who made it possible for you to be blowing your horn today. What I like about this band is that they're all young; they're like my sons. My trumpet player does most of my writing for me. He appreciates the older styles in jazz, like Dizzy, as well as Freddie Hubbard, Clark Terry, Woody Shaw, and Miles. He sees something in all of them.

DC: Who are some of the drummers you listen to now?

JCH: Jeff Watts is a good drummer. He reminds me of Tony Williams when Tony was with Miles; the conception is similar. Drummers like that always know their piece and how to make it fit. I think it's beautiful. Elvin Jones is another one. He's playing a lot of polyrhythms and stuff, but he knows how to place it to make it fit. A lot of guys don't know how to do that. They think they're doing it, but they're not. Elvin, Jeff Watts, Tony, and these cats: They know what the hell they're doing. It's just like when Max, Philly Joe, and those cats came up. Guys would try to imitate what Max was doing and get all twisted and messed up. [laughs]

Then there's Art Blakey. Where that man finds all those good trumpet players...it's amazing! What he does is nothing but lay down strong, good rhythm. That's really what he does! Art's not a great technician. What he does is good, you know—but he's a swinger. He *pushes*. He *drives*. He's had all these modern guys play with him, and he just lays back and drives them. That's why I

tell people, "Lay a foundation with the drums and the horns can do what they want to do. If the drummer is trying to do the same thing they're doing, there ain't going to be *nothing* swinging." The drummer has to know how to complement anything that comes up with the right time. You can study in school, but you still have to get out and apply what you've learned. The greatest school in the world is the school of experience. When I give a lecture, I'm selling experience, not what I learned from books. I learned from hard knocks out here...dues, [laughs]

I did a clinic up in Lansing one time for about 45 kids. I asked how many of them owned a pair of brushes? Nobody raised their hand. I said, "Nobody taught you about brushes? That's another part of your tools, like a carpenter's got a screwdriver and a hammer. You can't do everything without all your tools." Then I asked, "How many of you know about a bossa nova beat, clave beat, tango, rumba, meringue, or cha-cha? These are all different kinds of rhythms." They all went, "Yeah?" I said, "Yeah! You're not in contact with it because you're playing the same rock beat as your friends, and they put you down if you're not doing that. Don't let your little buddies distort your mind. You've got to learn the fundamentals of *everything* if

you're going to be a finished product." Music's got changes, but the basics never change. You've got two things in music: a beat and a melody. If you don't have these, you've got no music.

DC: It's a matter of keeping your mind open to all the sounds and sources that eventually give you the fundamentals.

JCH: This is it. I learned things from all the different bands I played with. Around 1936 or '37, I worked with Don Redman in McKinney's Cotton Pickers for a while. I also worked with Benny Carter. Both of those guys would write parts for the drums—which was completely unheard of at the time. I learned how to read with them and to understand conception. Then I played with Cab's band. He wasn't so much a musician as he was a showman. He had dancers, comedians, showgirls, and all kinds of stuff, and this was another bag altogether.

I learned that, in a big band, a drummer should be able to accent in there. If you can't read it on paper, you just listen until you feel it, and then you do it. That's what I mean by a conception of what you're doing. You set them up in there instead of letting them hit it all by themselves. A lot of drummers will just keep on in the groove while the band is hitting it. They don't want to be listening to what the other musicians are doing on the bandstand. That's no damn good. You've got

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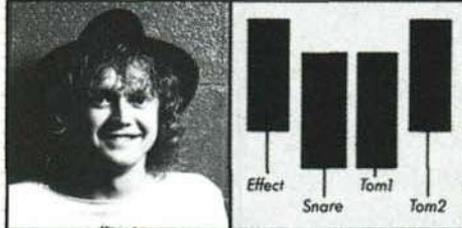
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to be listening! I sit up there with my band, and people smile and say, "Everything is falling into place. How do you...?" I say, "That's because I'm listening to everybody on that bandstand, baby!" Don't get the idea that, even though I'm feeling good, smiling, and the band's popping, I'm not checking on the trumpet player. I've got three trumpets, three trombones, four saxophones, and the rhythm section up there. I know when any one of those cats ain't saying what he's supposed to be saying. They can't fool me, and they know it. I try to have discipline in the band. When they don't give me 100%, I don't scold them on the stand like some bandleaders I know about used to do. I get them aside later and say, "Hey, baby, what was going on up there? Come on and play! What's the matter, you feeling bad? What's happening? If you've got some problems, leave them off the stand." There's never one monkey's going to stop the train from rolling, baby. Nobody's indispensable. You might miss people sometimes, but you get over it. Look how many changes Basie had before he died—or Duke. Whatever the problem is, you don't see the same people up there all the time. Harry Carney was with Duke Ellington for 54 years. Johnny Hodges was with him for about 40, off and on. Freddie Greene started

with Basie and was with the band until he died some 50-odd years later. Man, that's a rarity. I've had ten changes in this band, and it's going on six years old now.

DC: What drums are you currently using?

JCH: I've been using Pearls for the last six years. I've had Ludwigs, Slingerlands, Rogers—different drums. For a small combo I tune them so they don't open up too much. You don't need it ringing over everything if you only have two or three horns. I like everything to be compact. I've got one mounted tom and two on the floor: a 16 x 16 and a 16 x 18. With that difference I can get that "dom-damdom" sound. You don't need more than that, really. I can *play* all of those. If I had four more tom-toms and two bass drums, how the hell would I *play* all of them? Having two bass drums has been a novelty from time to time. It's okay, but mostly for solos. You can't keep time with two. What're you going to do with the sock cymbal? If you're swinging the band, you can't have two bass drums going. It's just for effects. There are some bass drums today—they call them power drums—that mostly rock guys go for. Instead of 14 x 24, they'll be 16 x 26. Very deep. But years ago we used to have 28" or 30" bass drums. Shadow Wilson used to like a real deep bass drum; he had real fast feet, and the longer bass

gave him a particular sound he was after. Buddy was using a 26" before he died, but it was a 14 x 26. Guys today are going to 16" or deeper bass drums.

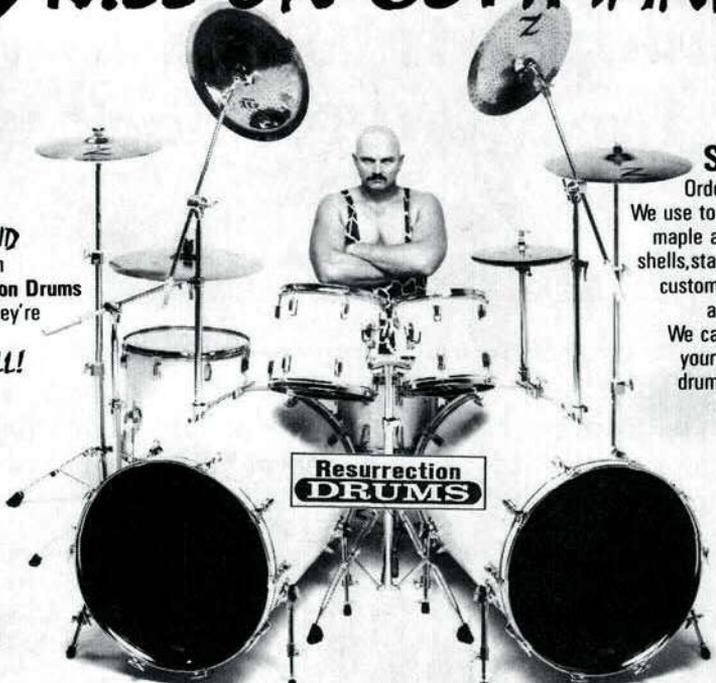
A lot of drummers hit their bass drums too hard, and take the heads off, going after that bigger sound. In rock, the drum's supposed to make a dead sound—not sharp like you want for jazz. A lot of rock drummers even have the snares dead. It's okay if you're only playing rock, I guess, but for jazz I think a snare is supposed to sound sharp and crisp. The bass drum's supposed to sound like a note. I mean, you're playing with a bass fiddle.

I'm aware that in the last few years, the whole scene has changed over to electronics. But there's nothing like the pure, natural sound of an acoustic piano. No electric piano in the world sounds like a baby grand. In the same way, no bass drum or snare drum sounds can be reproduced as well as when you've got them tuned right, with the heads on, and you get "that sound." On the bass drum, you control that sound with your foot. If you want to bring it out loud, you can hit it. But hit it with some kind of presence so that it *means* something and it's not just "bam!"

It's like I tell my guys when we rehearse a tune. After a couple of times through, when they've got the notes under their belts, I say, "Okay, now lets make the notes come to life." They look at me and say, "Yeah, we just played it." So I hum the same notes to them, but showing how the feeling's supposed to go. Then they say, "I see what you mean." Your music is only a guide when you play, because you cannot write *feeling* on paper. You have to have imagination in music, a feeling and a conception—like a singer has with lyrics. Sarah Vaughan takes a lyric and *melts* that son of a gun. Louis Armstrong could do it with that gravelly voice he had. Billie Holiday, Nat King Cole, Dinah Washington: I listen to these people, and that's how I can play in jazz. I like to sing myself, so I know how to play behind singers. Too many musicians today just pick up their instrument, read, blow, and that's it. Where's their imagination, their presence? You've got to have the whole scene you're in *covered*. Plus, your attitude's got to be good. If you've got a bad attitude, the music's going to come out that way when you play. If you've got a nice attitude toward what's happening and toward your surroundings, and everything's on the happy side, it'll come out good. Then everybody gets on the same channel without saying a word. And man, that's communication through music. 

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in general. I have occasionally been spotted backstage at Stryper and Van Halen shows. But Tama could and should have put their message and pitch across in a more tasteful manner. And you, MD, have shown poor judgment in running this ad. Shame on you both! You both have done better, so let's get back to it, folks!

Joe Smyth
Sawyer Brown Band
Nashville TN

I must object in the strongest of terms to the ad appearing in your March, 1988 issue depicting Lars Ulrich to be a foul-mouthed, beer-swilling endorsee for Tama drums. For years I have been trying to convince both parents and students that this stereotype is not the true picture of the lifestyle of most successful musicians. But more than that, to those of us on the front line in the battle against drug and alcohol abuse, the message of this ad comes through loud and clear: "I'm Lars Ulrich, a rock 'n' roll superstar. Be like me and play Tama drums, use filthy language, and never be without your favorite brew."

For the past five years my wife and I have volunteered hundreds of hours as counselors for local teenage drug/alcohol rehab centers. We have manned teen suicide hotlines, given freely of our time and money to produce programs for juvenile detention centers, and have taken into our home children from broken homes. In short, the frightening truth is that many of our children and young adults are in deep trouble, and anyone who doesn't realize this has been living on another planet. What we *don't* need is more nationwide advertising telling kids that this lifestyle is okay!

Please be aware that your publication is highly regarded and respected by thousands of young, impressionable minds, and that one picture is worth a thousand words. I ask of you, if you cannot be part of the solution, at least don't be part of the problem.

Ken Humphrey
The Drumshine Shop
Cincinnati OH

I've been a loyal subscriber to your excellent magazine for eight years. I think your taste and professionalism in journalism have set new standards in music publications. I do, however, feel the need to respond to the Tama ad in the March issue.

I personally think it's a tasteless way to promote drum equipment. Why does Lars Ulrich have to be holding a bottle of beer? And what's with the "censored" profanity? I'm not trying to sound like an over-protective parent, but a lot of young kids read MD. After seeing that ad, I began to realize why some parents aren't

supportive of their kids' ambitions to become full-time musicians. They think musicians are womanizing party animals who should find real jobs. (Let me point out that I am *not* suggesting that Lars Ulrich is such a musician.) Let's be honest: Most musicians do take their craft seriously and are decent people. But an ad like that does nothing to bridge the gap between serious musicians and "pessimistic parents."

Brian Mikulich
Golden CO

THANKS FROM P.A.S.

As the President of the Percussive Arts Society, I want to thank you for your excellent pictorial coverage of the St. Louis Percussive Arts Society International Convention (PASIC '87), which appeared in your March issue. Lissa Wales is to be congratulated for capturing a broad spectrum of the activities that took place.

John Beck
President, P.A.S.
Urbana IL

THANKS FROM ALAN

Thank you, *Modern Drummer!* I received a call at work informing me that I had won the Tama *Swingstar* kit offered in MD's Trivia Contest in the October '87 issue. I immediately called Joe Hibbs at Tama. He not only confirmed the call, but told me that I had a choice of colors! I received the drums within two weeks. They sound excellent, and the dark red color was perfect. Thanks to everyone at MD, and to Joe Hibbs and everyone at Tama.

Alan Stott
Anchorage AK

DENNY AND HARRY

I have been a reader of MD for about three years, and I must say that your February issue was the best yet! I enjoyed the article on Denny Carmassi, but the story on Harry Stinson really blew me away. To find out that the "drummers" who have been influencing me the most

over the past eight months are all the same person is really great. I hope Harry keeps playing for quite a while.

Kelly Yager
Cleburne TX

RELATIONSHIPS

As a professional drummer, drum teacher, and public school music teacher, I have come to appreciate your magazine immensely. It presents in-depth coverage of every aspect of drumming and drummers like no other publication has ever done. I look forward to every issue and read it from cover to cover. Recently, however, you ran an article that not only I could relate to, but my wife could as well.

I'm referring to Robyn Flans' story on personal relationships between male musicians and their wives. This is a very real part of any musician's life, and I'm glad you published it. Prior to this, no one else has.

Although I haven't achieved the status that the people in your story have, my wife and I *can* completely understand what they deal with, since ours has been just about an identical situation. All of your participants had interesting and very human things to say, but I was most impressed by Steve Smith's wife. She seems like one sharp lady!

Nick Puin
South Euclid OH

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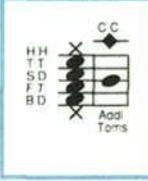
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Nothing can be more confusing and mind-boggling to the beginning drumset player than fills. The truth is that good pop and rock fills can be very easy to play, and you're about to find this out from the pros. Every fill in this column has been gathered from familiar recordings made by big-name artists and played by big-name drummers. These pop and rock drummers have

played long enough to know that simple beats make the best beats, and so do simple driving fills.

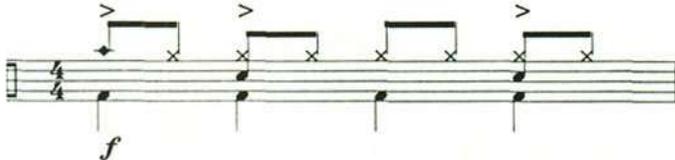
First, a major misunderstanding about fills has to be straightened out. Far too often the word "roll" is used to describe a fill. A "roll" is the method a drummer/percussionist uses to make a note "sound out" for its full time value. A fill *can* be a roll if it meets *these conditions*: The fill must be comprised of multiple bounces, double bounces, or single strokes that are evenly alternated between limbs. So, when calling a fill a "roll," make sure the fill meets the conditions of a roll.

Snare Drum Fills

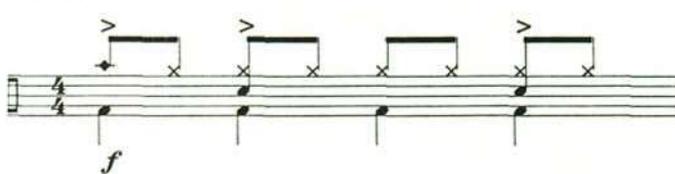
The single-stroke roll (alternated single strokes) is actually used a great deal in drumset fills. U2's Larry Mullen, Jr. gives us a good example of a fill that's also a single-stroke roll in the song "Pride (In The Name Of Love)." It's played on the snare drum and leads into the beginning of the song, as well as into all of the choruses:



To practice this fill, and all of the fills to come, use this "power beat":



Combine one measure of this beat with the measure that contains the fill to form a two-measure phrase. Maintain a steady bass drum on all four downbeats of *both* measures. Don't stop the bass drum when you come to the fill! For example, here's how you would practice the Larry Mullen, Jr. fill, bass drum included:



Remember also to start with a slow metronome setting (quarter note = 60), and to increase the speed only after the slower speed has been mastered.

The 16ths-on-the-snare idea from the last example is cut in half by Graham Broad on the ABC song "When Smokey Sings." (The slash marks are used to abbreviate the basic beat. One slash equals one count, so for each mark, play one count of the basic beat.):



Subtract a 16th note from the front of the last fill, and you now have the fill Narada Michael Walden uses at the beginning of Whitney Houston's "I Wanna Dance With Somebody":



When in doubt, play a short fill rather than a long one. Short fills are effective because they don't take the listener's mind off the melody and lyrics, and they don't spoil the solid beat you've worked so hard to establish.

At the beginning of Bon Jovi's "Livin' On A Prayer," Tico Torres doesn't use a lot of notes. But listen to the power he unleashes with this fill:



Tony Thompson is one of the most respected drummers in today's recording world. He plays on many of Madonna's songs, and on these songs he practically gives a clinic on short snare drum fills. Listen to "Like A Virgin" for this fill, especially prominent at the beginning:



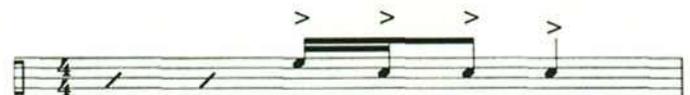
Tony uses the following fill to kick in the first chorus of "Material Girl":



Adding The Small Tom

When you decide to include the toms in your fills, you *don't* have to use them all. Excellent fills can be crafted by using just the snare and small tom. The small tom is an easy drum to reach, and because it is so close to the snare, interplay between the two drums eliminates lengthy reaches to other drums in the set. Almost any drum rudiment can be turned into a fill, simply by placing one stick on the small tom and the other stick on the snare, and then using the same sticking pattern normally designated for the snare.

Tony Thompson modifies the fill played in the intro of "Like A Virgin" later in the song by using the small tom in place of the first snare note. Here is the result:



This is a prime example of the creation of a variation from a theme. The original theme is played on the snare early in the song; the variation, which comes later in the song, uses the same *rhythm* as the theme, but is played on two drums.

If you're ever stuck for fill ideas, try the theme and variation format. First, play a simple rhythmic idea on the snare only. Then experiment with the same *rhythm* by playing one or two notes on the small tom and the rest on the snare. Expand on this idea by adding a medium tom (don't change the original rhythm yet), and if you're feeling really creative, add the large tom.

"Born In The U.S.A." by Bruce Springsteen contains three good examples of theme and variations, powered by drummer Max Weinberg. This first example is used to bring on the full band right after the song's intro (in this case the bass drum is part of the fill):



Later in the song, the bass drum from the first example is replaced by two 16ths on the snare, and the following two 16ths are played on the small tom instead of the snare:



The third example is rhythmically the same as the first, and, like the first example, only the snare and small tom are used. Max just changes the way the rhythm is alternated between drums:



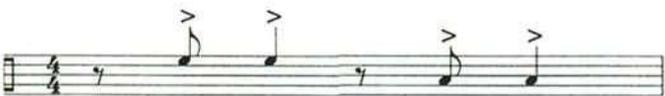
Here's a one-measure fill from "Born In The U.S.A." that again uses the snare and small tom:



Adding The Larger Toms

When you include the larger toms in your fills, the rhythmic and melodic possibilities become endless, and sloppy fills can result. Mass confusion can be avoided if you remember these two things: When you're first learning, keep the bass drum going on every beat of the fill (1,2,3,4), and try to keep your fills short—no longer than one measure.

Narada Michael Walden uses a lot of synthesized drum sounds on Whitney Houston's recordings, but the sounds can be transferred to an acoustic set with no loss of power or feeling. This fill from "How Will I Know" lasts a whole measure, but because it consists of only quarter and 8th notes, it retains its power:



Here is a very solid fill from "How Will I Know" that also derives its strength from quarters and 8ths:



Boston is a band known for its hard-driving, innovative drumming. "More Than A Feeling" may be the band's most popular song, and it is rich with good drumset fills. Sib Hashian played this two-count fill after the first verse:



This two-count fill takes the band out of a chorus:



Sib introduced the first verse with this one-measure fill:



Mel Gaynor pumps out so many indestructible beats for his band, Simple Minds, that it can be easy to overlook the great fills he plays. In "Sanctify Yourself," Mel's beat explodes into this 8th-note masterpiece a few times:



Bill Gibson drums for Huey Lewis And The News—another beat-oriented band. But Gibson, along with so many other "beat drummers," is a fine fill artist. Bill likes to work the bass drum into his fills along with the rest of his drums, as demonstrated by this masterfully simple two-note fill before the guitar solo in "Jacob's Ladder":



He expands on the theme of the last fill when he fits this one in during the repeating choruses at the end of "Ladder":



Here are two more fills from the same song. Again, each fill employs the bass drum.



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SD	■
BD	■

In my last article, we created beats in several different time signatures by omitting 8th notes from beats in 4/4 time. To come up with larger time signatures, like 13/8 or 15/8, there are several modes of attack. For starters, let's begin with a simple pattern in 4/4, and progressively add 8th notes. Be sure to remember that: (1) 4/4 and 8/8 are equivalent time signatures, (2) In time signatures based on quarter notes, 8th notes are counted 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &, and (3) In time signatures based on 8th notes, 8th notes are counted 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

is equal to:

By adding an 8th note, it becomes:

is equal to:

which becomes:

is equal to:

Time: Part 2

by Rod Morgenstein



which becomes:

is equal to:

which becomes:

is equal to:

Notice how this last example consists of two identical measures of 4/4 and two identical measures of 8/8. One measure of 4/4 plus one measure of 4/4 is equivalent to one measure of 8/4. Along those same lines, one measure of 8/8 plus one measure of 8/8 is equivalent to one measure of 16/8.

With this in mind, a second method for creating new time signatures is possible. By taking two measures of a 4/4 beat (or two measures of an 8/8 beat) and working backwards, and removing 8th notes, new time signatures are created.

is equal to:

By subtracting an 8th note, it becomes:

Musical notation for 15/8 time signature. The top staff shows a sequence of 15 eighth notes grouped into seven pairs (1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14) and a final single note (15). The bottom staff shows the corresponding drum pattern with eighth notes.

Musical notation for 7/4 time signature. The top staff shows a sequence of 7 groups, each consisting of a pair of eighth notes followed by an eighth rest (1 &, 2 &, 3 &, 4 &, 5 &, 6 &, 7 &). The bottom staff shows the corresponding drum pattern.

is equal to:

Musical notation for 14/8 time signature. The top staff shows a sequence of 14 eighth notes grouped into seven pairs (1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14). The bottom staff shows the corresponding drum pattern.

which becomes:

Musical notation for 13/8 time signature. The top staff shows a sequence of 13 eighth notes grouped into six pairs (1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10, 11-12) and a final single note (13). The bottom staff shows the corresponding drum pattern.

Musical notation for 6/4 time signature. The top staff shows a sequence of 6 groups, each consisting of a pair of eighth notes followed by an eighth rest (1 &, 2 &, 3 &, 4 &, 5 &, 6 &). The bottom staff shows the corresponding drum pattern.

is equal to:

Musical notation for 12/8 time signature. The top staff shows a sequence of 12 eighth notes grouped into six pairs (1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10, 11-12). The bottom staff shows the corresponding drum pattern.

which becomes:

Musical notation for 11/8 time signature. The top staff shows a sequence of 11 eighth notes grouped into five pairs (1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10) and a final single note (11). The bottom staff shows the corresponding drum pattern.

Musical notation for 5/4 time signature. The top staff shows a sequence of 5 groups, each consisting of a pair of eighth notes followed by an eighth rest (1 &, 2 &, 3 &, 4 &, 5 &). The bottom staff shows the corresponding drum pattern.

is equal to:

Musical notation for 10/8 time signature. The top staff shows a sequence of 10 eighth notes grouped into five pairs (1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10). The bottom staff shows the corresponding drum pattern.

which becomes:

Musical notation for 9/8 time signature. The top staff shows a sequence of 9 eighth notes grouped into four pairs (1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8) and a final single note (9). The bottom staff shows the corresponding drum pattern.





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A Chorus Line

by Hank Jaramillo

A musical contractor calls you to do an original Broadway cast album. Broadway cast albums are usually recorded on the day of the week that the show is not playing—usually a Sunday or Monday. Starting time for this type of session is normally about 9:00 or 10:00 in the morning, and recording will run until about 10:00 or 12:00 at night. If more time is needed, you will be asked to return the next morning to finish up.

In New York City, Broadway shows are recorded in giant studios. These studios normally do not have drumkits, so in most cases drums will be rented for you. You may wish to use your own set, but why bother? The musical instrument rental companies supply you with excellent equipment, delivered to the studio.

When we recorded *A Chorus Line*, I looked around the studio in disbelief and said to myself, "I didn't know we were going to record the *Grand Canyon Suite!*" The room was the size of an airplane hangar, three or four stories high, and with acoustics very similar to that of a high school gym. I grabbed a set of headphones to get an idea what the room sounded like miked, and what I heard was the past, the present, and the future—all at the same time!

Once you know what type of room you're dealing with, the next factor to consider is how the engineers want to record the drums. They may want to set the drums out in the open, surround them with sound baffles, or completely encase them in a drum booth. I love drum booths because I can play as loud as I like without any problems, such as the drums leaking into other microphones. If you're not in a booth, it could mean trouble. In this situation you have to be able to play strong but easy; lead the band but at the same time follow. In other words, you have

to lead but follow and play loud but soft. Nice, huh?

One thing to remember in this type of situation is that your time has to be steady, but also remain flexible. One reason for playing this way is that, while you will be wearing headphones, some of the other musicians may not. You can hear them, but they can't hear you. Under these circumstances you may decide to follow them—within reason, of course. In this situation, the goal to keep in mind is making the 30- or 40-piece orchestra sound so tight that anyone listening would swear that the group has been together a long time. This is not an easy task, especially for younger, inexperienced drummers, but it can be done. It is somewhat like the sport of archery: You have to contend with many factors, like wind, distance, weather, etc. But the bottom line is that you either hit the bulls-eye, or you don't. And in the recording studio, the final track either sounds great, or it sounds mediocre.

The following chart is the opening number from *A Chorus Line*. Since it is nine pages long, your first concern is how to turn the page while you are playing the drums. Luckily, there are no problems with that here. The music copyist put rest measures at the bottom of the pages to be turned. Bless you, copyist! It is best not to turn pages while playing. If necessary, use more than one music stand, or open up the music and tape it to the microphone stands.

The Roman numerals you see on this chart are cut marks. You jump from numeral II to numeral I, skipping all measures in between. Just follow the arrows. The music here is well-written, and you can pretty much trust it. However, don't fall into the trap of playing every note on the page. Concentrate on the groove, and play only those accents that complement the music. When reading a chart down with a band, use your ears to tell you what to play.

In measure number 381, you are asked to use brushes on the hi-hat. However, I would stay with the sticks. The brushes would not be heard, since the sound man would have your sound level set for sticks. Also, the term "cross stick" is indicated at measure number 381. A cross stick is played by laying the stick across the snare drum with your palm slightly off center, and striking the rim of the drum. It should sound like a sharp, but soft, rimshot. I hope these tips will be useful to you. Go out and get those jobs!

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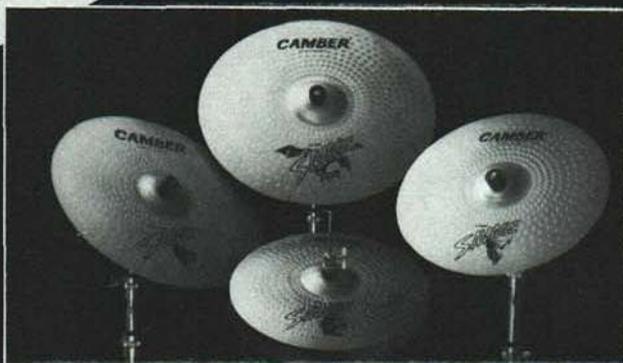
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94 95 96 97

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98 99 100

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101-104

VAMP TILL CUE

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115-120

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131-134

4. **OPENING**

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CUM. (LIGHT)

5. **OPENING**

183-184

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218-221

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3

Brian Slawson

Ask any of the numerous session pros who played on Brian Slawson's second LP for CBS Records, *Distant Drums*, what kind of a percussion player he is, and you'll probably get as many answers. But everyone will agree that Slawson is a visionary. His background in rock 'n' roll, jazz, and classical music, and the fact that he's been an accomplished drummer since early childhood, have kept his musical influences wide open and, at the same time, under the control of his own good taste and artistic instincts. Having developed his own prowess as a drummer before leaving the throne to seize mallets, Slawson has all the more perspective on other drummers. And there is no doubt that his ability to establish a definitive rhythmic structure within a tune gives him more control over that track from any capacity, be it performer, producer, or composer.

Slawson's rhythmic sensibilities came to life at a tender age, when he attended a community playhouse minstrel show in his Connecticut hometown. That fascination with drums became a fixed direction that he's followed ever since. "I knew at that point what I wanted to do," he explains. Slawson beat on pillows until he received his first pair of sticks at age seven. At that point, Slawson recalls, "Joining a drum corps seemed the only feasible way to learn to play." It certainly helped young Slawson build up his chops in the three-year interim before he received a real kit. Working with the small fife & drum corps gave the youth a chance to perform and compete. He entered several solo competitions and did well enough to convince his parents to buy him a Lyra kit. "That was enough to get started on. Then I saved my money and gradually added toms and cymbals." Thus equipped, Slawson was ready to roll.

Most young drummers who came out of the last wave of the baby boom fixated on Ringo as a primary influence, and Slawson was no exception. Ringo was to remain a dominant force in Slawson's sound and style, as were the latter's Ludwig drums, chosen for their Beatle-esque association. "A lot of kids my age wanted to play Ludwigs, because that's what Ringo played," he says.

Armed with a professional kit, Slawson worked his way into the ranks by playing in high school bands, local playhouses, and by working with the *Music Minus One* record set featuring drummer Jim Chapin. (In later years, Slawson would

find himself working with Chapin's son Steve, with whom he coproduced *Distant Drums*.) Club dates in his teen years helped to round out Slawson's development: "I wasn't *just* playing rock 'n' roll; I'd also do show tunes, which made me more flexible."

By the time his junior year of high school rolled around, Slawson knew he wanted to attend a music conservatory. He also knew that his entrance would hinge on such factors as mallet technique, which, up to that time, was not part of his repertoire. The world of vibes opened its doors to Slawson when the 14-year-old heard Milt Jackson play with the Modern Jazz Quartet at Carnegie Hall. "That was a great inspiration," he recalls. "I went backstage and met Milt that night. Hearing him play opened up a whole new world for me." But that world didn't become manifest until Slawson spent two weeks at a Hartt College music camp to prepare for conservatory entrance exams. "I knew that, to get into a conservatory, I'd have to have training on mallets," he remembers. But that training didn't come easy. "It was a bitch. Most of the students at Hartt had been playing mallets long before me. They had a distinct advantage. It was real hard for me, just starting out—one of the hardest obstacles I've had to overcome."

But aspiring percussion players take note: Slawson did not give up or lapse into apathy when faced with his more experienced colleagues. He simply took his work in stride. "Even though mallet technique was the most difficult thing in the world for me, I wanted to learn," he stresses. During his senior year of high school, he rented a set of vibes from a local music shop and learned to play with four mallets. "I was also taking piano lessons, which helped," he recalls. "I was learning about pitches, and recognizing certain keyboard keys became a psychological exercise that gave me a more positive approach to the vibes. I developed a feeling for chords, harmony, and theory that has helped my musical work to this day." Despite the rigors of a new instrument, Slawson "always saw light at the end of the tunnel, even on days when I'd think 'This will *never* happen.'" Because, of course, it did happen. A year after graduating from high school, following continued studies at Hartt, Slawson's audition impressed the Juilliard faculty, and the percussionist began his studies there with New York Philharmonic timpanist Saul Goodman.

But don't get the idea that Slawson locked himself away with his mallets exclusively. In high school and at Hartt music camp, he picked up much more than mallet technique. "I started buying Herbie Hancock, Freddie Hubbard, Jack DeJohnette, and Ray Barretto records, and then worked back to bebop and blues, where jazz roots can be found." Slawson found a correlation between his favorite sport, baseball, and drums. "Having played a lot of baseball in high school and even before, I saw how important timing was. Playing drums every day made that timing even more crucial. I realized at a young age that there's a timing, a rhythm to almost everything—to mailing a letter, to walking down the street. You can actually feel the beat of the planet; by practicing drums and loving music, I realized that I could be in the woods and hear the leaves crunching, and be able to use that as a vehicle for expression." Thus Slawson incorporated the universal pulse into his own idea of rhythm—an indication of his acumen not just for drums and percussion, but for understanding and deriving the source of music itself.

At an age when many of his drummer colleagues were still entrenched in rock 'n' roll, Slawson's passion for melody helped him expand his repertoire. His diversity and ability to enjoy and play in various genres helped his transition and progress from drummer to percussionist, and from performer to composer and visionary. "I've always loved melody as much as rhythm," Slawson reveals. "I've been intrigued by melody for as long as I can remember—in the way a string can sustain, for instance. There's no specific 2 and 4 groove in a symphony orchestra. There are textures that you don't find in any other kind of music." Slawson found a freedom in the textures of symphonic music that let his instrument be more expressive: "It was a kind of creative ability to let my instrument say more, and not merely punctuate some other statement. I found I could make a marimba sing! I could make it sound like a string instrument or a wind instrument!"

Up to the point where Slawson discovered the infinite horizons of the symphonic format, his function as a drummer was quite specific—"It was just 'hit the drums.'" Even though the closest he got to classical music in his home was Perry Como (courtesy of his parents), a music appreciation course in high school enriched the young drummer. "I realized

by Brooke Sheffield Comer

there was a whole new world out there that I'd never heard, and it was nice to know there was so much to discover. I started out discovering twentieth-century composers like Bartok and Stravinsky, whose work had a lot of percussion and bombastic stuff. Then from there I delved into more purist music—Beethoven and Bach and Mozart." That ability to diversify his tastes had an impact on Slawson's growth as a performer.

If Slawson had stayed exclusively in the classical mode, *Distant Drums* might never have been made. And his studies at Juilliard were certainly conducive to a classical career. At that point in his life, Slawson wanted to be a symphonic timpanist. The size and power, and "more than anything else, the function that the timpani serves in the orchestra" were among the top deciding factors, according to Slawson. "The timpanist is a conductor from the rear, as Mahler once said. And it's basically true. You get to drive the band and play a lot of literature where no other percussion exists. Mozart didn't write for the snare, yet there *is* timpani in almost every one of his concertos and symphonies. My love for the literature and the repertoire helped to create my love for the timpani."

Working in an orchestra was a "big, new thrill" for Slawson. But working in children's theater, opera, and playing with country bands and in other musical genres gave Slawson a variety of work that intrigued him. "That's when my goals started to change," he says. "I was only playing Bach back in my purist stage, and I wasn't interested in doing anything else." Maybe if Slawson hadn't had to work his way through school, he would be a symphonic timpanist today. But desperation breeds innovation; thus Slawson diversified: The percussionist took to the streets.

One day while walking through Washington Square Park, Slawson noticed a steel drum player raking in profits while simultaneously working up his chops. "I figured I could work on my mallet technique and people would throw me quarters," he explains. Slawson set up shop in the street, and not only accumulated spare change, but began getting demo work. "People would ask me to play on their sessions. It became quite a vehicle for making connections!" On an afternoon when Slawson was enjoying the great reverberation he got under the Washington Square arch, Chevy Chase (of *Saturday Night Live* fame) dropped



\$20 in Slawson's basket and asked the percussionist if he'd like to be on TV. "He gave me the name of someone to contact at NBC and told me I'd need a video to audition." The video project looked hopeful, when Slawson was invited to be part of a street music project, *Stars Of The Street*. "They helped me put the video together, and yet, when NBC asked me if I'd consider doing anything other than Bach, I said, 'absolutely not.'"

Slawson laughs today at how that answer symbolizes his feelings at that time. But as he started his third year at Juilliard, he began to tire of symphonic projects. His own work was beginning to diversify, and as he gained strength in different genres, Slawson wanted to be

done with school and symphonies, and make his own record.

Slawson used his street money to finance studio time. "I'd been on the sidewalk doing solos," he explains, "then I went home, turned on the tape recorder, and played to it. Then the idea clicked! I tried it on the street, and people liked it. I kept overdubbing and wound up making the biggest music box—the biggest marimba—that anybody had ever heard." Bigger music bred bigger money, so Slawson booked time in an 8-track studio in SoHo, carrying his marimba, in enormous boxes, up the steep steps of a four-floor walk-up. One day, while he caught his breath at the top flight, he overheard a woman's voice on the studio phone.

Slawson recalls, "She said, 'John Hammond likes your work, and I think we can get you a record deal.'" Far from being intimidated by his proximity to someone of such industry clout, Slawson turned his street smarts to his advantage. He approached John Hammond's assistant, Mikie Harris, and informed her that he, too, would like a record deal. "She told me to send her a tape, which I did. And even though she later told me she loved my work, she said she was most impressed by the way I carried my equipment up the stairs! She told Hammond, 'Whatever this kid wants, he wants bad!'"

Even though Hammond received Slawson's tape and gave it a listen, he mitigated his praise for the percussionist's technique by debating the project's validity as an entire LP. "He wasn't that fond of the marimba as a total instrument," Slawson reveals. "But he felt I had talent." Hammond opened the doors at Columbia Masterworks, and Slawson walked in. But he didn't walk out with a cash advance—far from it. "They said, 'Let's hear more,' and I said, 'Give me some coins.' They replied, 'We don't finance developing artists.'" Undeterred by the financial impediment, Slawson set about raising funds for his first LP. "It cost more and more," he recalls. "They liked the first arrangement, which sounded like one massive marimba, and suggested that I add vibes and a gong. At first that sounded silly to me, but I thought, 'Why not bring it up to date?' So I added tambourine, raised more money, and did another demo." Even though Columbia Masterworks never gave Slawson a cent, once Hammond opened the door for him, the record company continued to express interest in the percussionist.

When Slawson began to lay down tracks at New York's Media Sound, Hammond himself came down to see the percussion player at work. "His insights," says Slawson, "were fascinating. My tendency, from playing on the streets and from being a drummer, was to rock to the Bach and put accents on certain parts. He'd say, 'Get those damn rock accents out of there!' He wanted me to be more fluent and get it to swing more. He knew nothing about overdubbing at first, and was completely against it. But as he watched the process, he saw how I could construct a whole part, play, and have the ultimate control and ability to play every track exactly the way I wanted them played. There is no way I could have brought in 20 marimba players and have them play *exactly* the way I wanted them to play; it would be impossible to get them that close." Slawson handwrote all the arrangements in order to get inside the work "so I knew it inside out. It would be tough to have to teach other players to do that." By the time Slawson got up to the tenth track, Hammond realized that

the percussionist's way of making music was viable, indeed, and he became more receptive to the notion of overdubbing.

Slawson's dealings with Columbia Masterworks engaged his fascination with the business end of the music industry. He received a recoupable advance for *Bach On Wood*, his completed LP. But despite the "dream come true" of finally having a record out, Slawson says, "I was disappointed that I had to give it to Columbia. Even though they didn't sink a nickel into it, *Bach On Wood* sold well—40,000 copies! To Columbia, that's a hit in the classical department." But despite sales figures, when Slawson went in to pick up his option ("I was signed to a two-record deal at their option") he found that the record company had no intention of picking up the other half. "That was my biggest professional blow."

That blow was tempered the following week by the news that Slawson had been nominated for a Grammy for Best New Classical Artist. "That gave me something to work with," he explains. "The people at Columbia who'd said 'no' to my option were shocked and embarrassed." Columbia's subsequent offer of a \$15,000 contract didn't convince Slawson to sign; *Bach On Wood*, after all, had cost upwards of \$25,000.

Bach On Wood remained high on the Billboard classical and crossover charts for over a year; CBS Masterworks' Light Classics division knew that if they didn't renew his contract at a more favorable figure, Slawson would shop elsewhere. Meanwhile, the percussionist was enjoying media renown, appearing on *The Tonight Show*, *Entertainment Tonight*, *CBS Morning News*, and on Japan's Fuji Television Network, *We See The World*.

Meanwhile, Slawson was pursuing other avenues. "I figured that my record would be a good vehicle to generate employment," says Slawson, who took *Bach On Wood* around to studios. "I got a great response. Session pros like Will Lee and Steve Gadd don't play classical themselves, but it's a chop they respect." Slawson played with Lee and Gadd on a session, gave them tapes, and they both called him immediately. "They told me they loved the tapes, and I told them I'd love to work with them." Guitarist Elliott Randall, another session-mate of Slawson's, was instrumental in booking the percussion player on dates. "Being appreciated by people you've listened to all your life is the biggest payback of all," Slawson observes. His rapport with Lee and Randall, as well as other session pals, grew. When he was ready to make record number two, Slawson brought many of his pro friends onto the project.

Slawson's second LP with CBS Masterworks gave him plenty of options; his first LP was a coproduction with Mikie Harris, and *Distant Drums* was copro-

duced by Slawson and Steve Chapin. Slawson chose the Edison Studios as his production site because its environment impressed him. "It's a big room," says Slawson, "and there's just something special about the sounds that come out of it." Slawson chose Chapin to coproduce *Distant Drums* because, he says, "By this time, I'd been working with Steve in the jingle biz for seven years. I knew that his versatility, flexibility, and orchestrative wit were particularly suited to my needs. Working with Steve was everything I hoped it would be and more. The guy's got the ears of an elephant!"

Both Chapin's and Gary Chester's (the latter engineered *Distant Drums*) fathers are widely known as great contributors to the art of drumming, and Slawson welcomed such rhythmic progeny. "Gary has a great sense of time; he can take rhythm section tracks, and no matter how well or poorly executed they may be, he'll find a balance that makes the piece move. He can do his salsa shuffle and those fine-tuned grooves, and really make it flow. It's amazing how, by changing certain balances, you can make a groove sound very clumsy. Gary can make it sit in the pocket, and you'll want to dance to it. He had good things to say about the material and orchestrations, but I found his knowledge of rhythm most impressive. He could hear lumps in the track and know where to duck certain things!" Chapin and Chester lent instincts that helped round out the total percussive quality of *Distant Drums*.

Bach On Wood was seven years in the making, and *Distant Drums*, though completed in a much shorter time frame, was hardly an overnight phenomenon. Slawson cautions aspiring percussionists of the perils of impatience: "It's not enough any more to be great at playing your axe. If you happen to be a schooled classical player looking for work in an orchestra, I'd say you have a better chance than in other areas, because you're being good at what you do, and you don't have to be a great businessman on the side." There are heavy, time-consuming responsibilities involved in taking care of business, as Slawson well knows. "Especially when you're involved in session work," he points out, "you have to be on the ball."

Is session work for percussionists declining as a result of the synth explosion? "I'm busier than I've ever been," Slawson notes, "but I could see it getting harder to find work." One of the hardest aspects of doing dates, ironically enough, was the fact that Slawson was often called upon to "undo" the techniques he'd so painstakingly acquired at Juilliard. "Often you're forced to make sounds that aren't musical. If you're fresh out of a conservatory, and you're in *that* frame of mind where you worry about every A-flat you have in a Mozart symphony, and then

someone asked you to make that timpani sound like you just dropped it out of an 18th story window...well, you just give it a whomp and try to get that sound." Slawson stresses the importance of remembering who you're working for and making them happy. "That's the important thing; you shouldn't feel insulted about doing things that seem to counter your improvement on the instrument." In countering his own "acquired improvements," Slawson revolutionized his own style, opening himself up to a more diversified and commercial market. He can still sell himself into a symphony, but he can also sell orange juice, dish-washing detergent, and records.

Is Slawson so entrenched in the personality of playing his own instruments that he's opposed to electronic and computerized percussion sounds? "Certainly, more percussion instruments are being sampled. But," he points out, "percussion in itself is usually a luxury. Producers will usually hire a third back-up singer before they'll spring for a percussionist. I'm not really sure why that is; good, versatile percussionists are worth their weight in gold." Rather than hire a percussion player, though, it makes more financial sense to use sampled sounds or a DX7. "Electronics companies have gotten mallet sounds to imitate a xylophone, a marimba, or a vibe. And the same keyboard player can trigger them." Slawson and his percussive peers know that there's a different consistency to *real* mallet sounds. "Even if you sample every single note on a marimba, a marimba *never* responds the same way twice. A keyboard player has been trained to play with a whole different approach to the instrument; the best a keyboardist can do is to try to imitate the way he thinks a percussionist would approach his or her marimba."

Have years of percussion expertise had any impact on Slawson as a drummer? "As much as I love to play timpani and mallets, I have the most fun playing drums," he says. "I consider myself a percussionist first, but I'm definitely a drummer. It would be redundant to talk about how earthy an instrument the drums are. It always hurts me to hear young hotshots talk about how Ringo couldn't play drums, because he had some very innovative beats. He obviously wasn't a technical drummer, but he did a lot in the studio with George Martin to get new sounds, and he was a great composer in the context of the pop tune—within the format he was given. I've heard Ringo talk about drummers with ego problems, but I don't think he went that far. He seemed to understand and respect his position within the idiom."

Having gotten away from drums in his move towards percussion, Slawson has a fresh perspective on drummers that he

can use to improve his own work when he takes the drumstool, which he regrets he doesn't have much time to do these days. "I have lots of arranging and writing to do, so I have to be at a keyboard. I feel that my writing should be approached from an instrument I play, so I do that around a marimba. I think it's nicer writing around my hands and technique as a player than just thinking of the chords and melody on a regular keyboard axe and adapting it." Slawson used his writing tactic to compose most of *Distant Drums*. "At first, I figured it wouldn't be practical to compose something unless it was knocking me in the head." But after *Bach On Wood* came out, Slawson felt the knocks coming, began doodling, and before he knew it, he was writing. "There were notes lying all over that I was putting into tunes," he relates. "I took them back to CBS, knowing I had something to work with, and as a result, most of the compositions on *Distant Drums* are my own."

And what does Slawson think he'll do now, having survived the complex idiosyncrasies of the record industry, and having installed himself in New York's competitive jingle scene as a first-call percussionist? "I'd like to develop my live performance, paying special attention to the use of percussion in set design. I think choreography can be very important." He'd also like to produce. He got

his first opportunity to work in such a capacity when he was called to produce a track for educational TV last year. "I must say that I really enjoyed the experience. Even on a low-budget scale, it was good for me. I'd love to be able to eventually produce other acts. It seems like such a practical thing to do."

Slawson's heart lies in a greater scheme than merely self-interest or perpetuating his own image as a musician. He's happy doing jingles, still too young to be trapped by the mundane formulas that sell sensations. Slawson's motivation is inspired by his own excitement, not only at working and developing his own craft, but at helping younger percussion players and drummers develop their own style. "Don't worry about drum machines taking over," he advises. "They're a big vehicle for home demos, but in the wrong hands, especially in dance music, you can get really sterile grooves. People prefer to hear a live drummer, and the combination of the two can be fascinating if it's done right."

Slawson's optimism is justifiable, given his hard-won respect and support in the music community. He's happy to work at home amid his timpani, marimbas, acoustic and electric vibes, bells, pitched gongs, and the rest of the arsenal. And he's happy to do jingles too. "You have to admit," he sighs, "it beats driving a cab."



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much happening here. But the good thing about New York is that everything's in one little spot. You can just go to Central Park on Sundays and see a lot. I went to Central Park one Sunday and saw a Brazilian band and a very happening Cuban rumba; I could have been in Cuba. You meet these guys and they take you somewhere else and they're playing bata. Or you could get into Indian drumming."

Luis goes on, warming to his topic. "Actually, there are two things, if you're going to be a hand percussionist, that you have to research deeply. There's the Brazilian and the Afro-Cuban."

As Luis explains to his students at the Dick Grove Workshop, where he teaches, "There's this boat that came from Africa. It was a Spanish boat that stopped off in Cuba and the other islands. And then, it changed to a Portuguese boat when it went to Brazil. But it was the same black people, from the same places. In Cuba, that tradition mixed with the Spanish melodies and songs. In Brazil, it's different melodies and songs, maybe more of the Indian tradition, because in Cuba, the Indians were annihilated in a matter of years. But the rhythms come from the same root.

"In Brazil, it's African and some Indian stuff—like all the whistles and the forest sounds. When you see Airto play surdo and pandeiro, that's Africa. When he does the exotic sounds, that's Indian."

The main difference rhythmically between the Cuban and Brazilian traditions, as Luis explains it, is that in Brazilian Carnival music, there's a strong emphasis on the beat. In Cuban carnival music, it's syncopated, strong on the upbeats.

"Also, Brazil doesn't have clave [*not only the instrument is meant here; the term also refers to the traditional rhythmic pattern*]. It's more just a one-bar kind of feel. The Cuban's more a two-bar feel."

The instruments themselves differ slightly in the two traditions. According to Luis, "The Brazilian percussionist is more a master of the small hand-held instru-

ments: pandeiro, tambourim, agogo, quica, shaker. The Cuban tradition has the clave, congas, timbales, bongo."

Actually, most instruments have counterparts in both cultures. "Some instruments are popular in one country, some in the other," Luis explains. "In Cuba, the quica is not a popular instrument, but if you go to a cult called *palo—palero*—there's a guy who hides behind a curtain during a ritual, playing an instrument much like the quica, called *kinfuiti*.

"The berimbau is popular in parts of Brazil. Normally, you never see it in Cuba, but in one of the provinces is this instrument called *tingo-talango*. It's a berimbau."

In Cuba, Luis goes on to explain, there are influences from three African groups—the Abacua from Dahomey; the Bantus, from the Congo; and the Yorubas, from Nigeria. "The way I like to think about Cuban music is that the clave comes from the Abacua—from the bell part. The rhythms come from the Yorubas, playing bata in religious ceremonies. And the drum comes from the Bantus. And then you add a guy with a guitar who comes in with a Spanish song."

The three elements never mix in the authentic cultures, especially in bata, which is kept extremely pure, but they do become intertwined in popular music. Luis amplifies, "It's just like what happened here with the blues in jazz. All of a sudden, you've got it all coming together in popular music."

Luis finds the bata tradition especially fruitful. "It's probably the biggest influence on the Cuban tradition. In salsa, all the rhythms you hear can be traced back to bata rhythms. There's really a beautiful tradition with bata. The drums are played in sets of three. There's the little drum, *okonkolo*, the baby. The middle drum is the father, *itolele*. And the large drum, *illa* or *iya*, is mom. There's a great correlation to the Yoruba religion, because in that religion, the mother is a very holy person and in the set of drums, the *iya* is the boss, the one that gives all the signals, the calls, and all these intricate things."

So fascinating did I find Luis's discussion of the various traditions that he had to remind me that we were supposed to be discussing how someone goes about learning to be a hand percussionist. Back on track, he suggested, "First go to New York or L.A. and have that experience. Find out what to listen to. Tape stuff. The most difficult thing is soloing. Quinto is the solo conga drum in the rumba, or you can solo on *repenique* in the Brazilian samba. [*The repenique looks like a quica, but has no stick and is double-headed*. But if you try to play quinto or *repenique* with a group right away, they're not going to let you. You're not going to be able to do it. So you just lis-

ten and memorize these licks. It's like transcribing a solo, only transcribing it mentally.

"You have to be really into it. It's not going to happen if you're into it for an hour one day and then you go listen to David Lee Roth, and then you spend another 20 minutes another day."

As far as technique is concerned, Luis says, "The first thing I tell my students is that if it hurts—if it seriously hurts—to stop. Right at that moment, take a break. Playing congas is not about pain. Unfortunately, because of television and show biz, you've seen people with millions of tapes on their hands and fluorescent tape that glows in the dark and all this stuff. You don't need any of that stuff. There's a thing about hitting the drum, just like a karate guy. You can hit it a certain way with not that much force and get the brick broken or whatever you're trying to do. Same thing with conga. There's a certain touch to it. I tell everybody, 'Don't bang the drum. Don't kill it. Don't beat the drum.'

"The conga has to come across the middle of the hand, so the edge of the drum is right on the love-line. And you curve your hand a little bit to get a slap. Probably that's more painful, because you have to grab the drum at first."

He also emphasizes to his students: "One of the things is to be relaxed, not to open your hands up like a web. Keep your fingers together, not squeezing, but together. And don't over-hit. It's not supposed to hurt, it's supposed to feel good."

To illustrate his point, he gives an example: "There's a group in Cuba called Los Papines. These guys are incredible street conga players who have a great groove and a great show. They're great players. You see these guys' hands and they're probably softer than mine. And they play all the time. *All* the time. They enjoy what they're doing. They're not over-hitting.

"Once you play it for a while, if you have that concept of not overpowering the drum, that sound will happen with very little effort."

Another bit of advice he gives his students: "Don't wear tape when you don't have to. I'll wear a *Band-Aid* if I'm really having a lot of pain. Because you *will* hurt. If I take a bunch of conga solos, my hands will feel it. And sometimes calluses split. Now, if that happens, wear a *Band-Aid*, but don't over-tape your hands for no reason. Because what you're doing is not letting your skin breathe, so that's going to turn into a cut. It'll get all moist."

Luck comes into the conversation yet again, and in this respect Luis does seem to have been fortunate. "Some people's hands sweat, and some don't. I'm lucky. My hands don't sweat that much, but I don't have very dry hands either. If you

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have very dry hands and you're starting to play congas, I advise you to use cream—not when you're playing, but to keep your hands moist at other times.

"Then again, if you have real sweaty hands, that's terrible," he continues. "Because you start playing the conga and it goes out of tune in a minute. It's hard to get a good sound because your drums are always moist. So you've got to be in the middle."

Luis is firmly against specializing too early. "Even though I don't know mallets—and I still kick myself for not knowing it—I think you should grab everything. It's very important to play drumset. You have to play with the drummer, so it helps to play a little drums. And definitely you should study mallets. Not only is it a whole other axe, but you're dealing with notes and chords—all the stuff you should know if you're a musician."

And then, he says with extra emphasis: "So, if you want to be a hand percussionist, then make that your specialty, but don't leave those other things behind."

Luis then points out that one of the problems he had when he first began working in the pop music world (as opposed to playing in authentic salsa bands) is a fairly common one. "Not everything authentic will fit. That's where you have to be very careful. I've seen

that happen to percussionists who come from the real traditional way and don't seem to be able to adjust. To be honest with you, I had problems with that at first. I remember going to a session and the producer would say, 'Okay, play something.' So I would play a very basic conga rhythm and the guy would say, 'Yeah, that feels great, but it's too much.'

"If you've learned from a conga player, he's told you that the unaccented parts of the rhythm are just as important as the accents. And they are, in a Latin band, because you've got no drummer. There's no hi-hat; you're the hi-hat, bass drum, and snare. Now I've been hearing this all my life, and here I'm in Hollywood and I'm going to record for this big record company, and the producer is telling me it's too busy. And already I'm playing the simplest thing you can play, in the authentic style. What he means is that he doesn't need to hear it all, because the drummer's taking care of part of it. So you have to be flexible and adapt."

I asked him what the advent of the MIDI world and electronics has done to the career prospects of a hand percussionist. He feels, if anything, the new technology has created opportunities. On the one hand, he says, "Even with programming or electronics, I think peo-

ple are realizing that you have to have someone who really plays the actual instrument. That gives you the concept. If you've never done it acoustically, the concept is going to be all wrong."

Luis himself has added electronics to his many bags of tricks. On the Madonna tour, he used sampled cabasa in order to keep the volume high enough to be heard. "Also, I could do combinations of things," he says. "I'd be playing congas and I'd be able to add something else on the *Octapads*, say, a sampled cabasa part or a vibraslap."

He appreciates the variety possible through sampled sounds. "If a producer asks for a metallic sound, I may own 20,000 cowbells, but he may not dig any of those. But I may have a cowbell on a floppy disk or in a drum machine, and that may be the sound they want. They can tune it; they can put something else on top to make it sound completely different. Who knows? But I like the versatility you can have."

Luis Conte, the versatile hand percussionist—the man who has done so many different things and who keeps adding new experiences to an already varied resume—draws a deep breath and smiles. "But you've still got to be able to play the real thing. I still think the main thing is, you have to play."

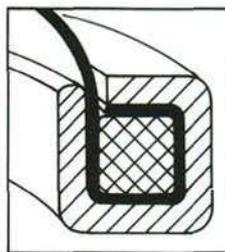


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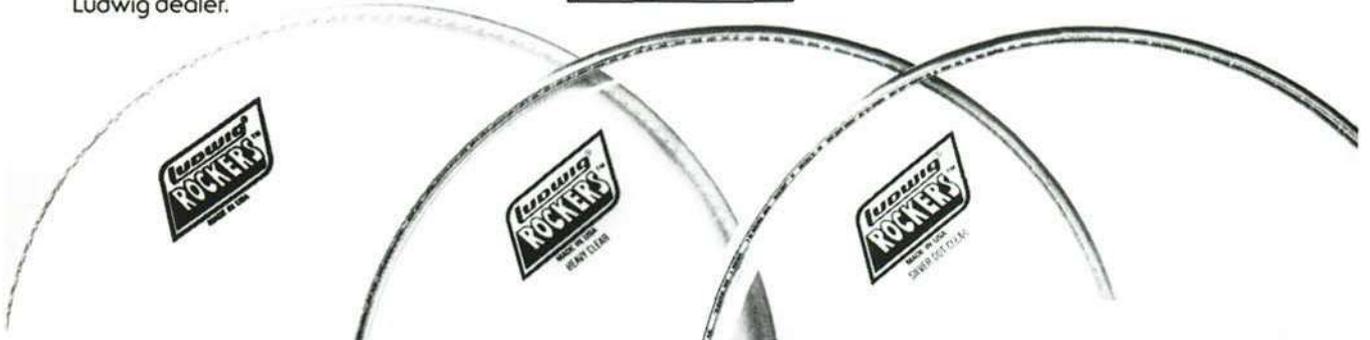


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by Dennis DeLucia

"Who Are These People, Anyway?"

I thought it might be interesting to present a profile of the percussionists who join and participate in drum corps today. I conducted a two-part survey among 26 members of Star of Indiana's percussion section. Part one, a written questionnaire, was done prior to the 1987 season, and part two, a taped interview, was done in August, 1987 at the DCI Championship. The sampling is way too small to be accepted as scientific, but I think you will find the results interesting and fascinating, especially if you harbor the mistaken notion that corps drummers are untrained, unmusical Neanderthals who are obsessed *only* with flam-taps! Here are the replies of the 26 people who responded to the pre-season questionnaire.

How old are you?

Age	Number
16	2
17	4
18	6
19	5
20	5
21	4

At what age did you start playing drums?

Age	Number
3	1
5	2
8	2
9	1
10	4
11	7
12	4
13	2
14	1
15	2

Currently, how many of you:

a. attend high school	9
b. attend college	16
c. work	1

If you attend college, what is your major?

a. music	8
b. business	2
c. theater	1
d. psychology	1
e. art	1
f. television	1
g. ROTC	1
h. architecture	1

How many of you participated in the following groups?

	High School	College
Marching Band	24	13
Concert Band	24	12
Orchestra	14	3
Jazz Band	21	7
Percussion Ensemble	5	10

How many of you have played the following instruments?

marching snare	22
bells	17
timpani	22
multi-toms	18
xylophone	18
cymbals	24
drumset	17
vibes	10
berimbau	0
timbales	14
marimba	16
shekere	2
congas	12
piano	12
voice	1
concert snare	22
brass	3
violin	1
woodwind	4
African drums	1
guitar	2
tabla	1

Which grip do you prefer?
(Star plays traditional)

Traditional	4
Matched	12
Both	9

Of the following styles of music, which do you enjoy listening to and/or playing?

Enjoy listening to	Enjoy playing
25 Drum Corps	26
17 Marching Band	20
16 Concert Band	23
20 Orchestral	14
7 Heavy Metal	7
24 Pop/Rock/Funk	17
5 Country	3
15 Latin	8
23 Combo Jazz	15
21 Big Band Jazz	14

In the second part of our questionnaire, I asked the members of Star of Indiana's percussion section to respond to several questions in writing. As the season drew

to a close, I conducted taped interviews with many of the same people. Here are their responses to some of those questions.

What influenced you to join a corps?

- Drum Corps Percussion is the *state of the art!*
- My friends were involved in corps.
- I enjoy marching and playing.
- I *love drum* corps!
- I enjoy performing/entertaining.
- We had these "super-human" images of people who were good enough to be in a major corps.
- Seeing the professionalism displayed by the various corps.
- It looked like great fun!
- I thought it would be a great way to meet people.
- It was a really big deal in my high school to belong to a corps.
- After watching my first competition, I knew it was my destiny.
- I wanted to learn how to play clean rolls.

Perhaps the two best quotes came from bass drummer Mike Krekeler, age 17, and quad-leader Andy Hall, age 18. Mike said, "I've received so much pleasure from watching and listening to corps that I wanted to participate so I could give something back." Andy said, "There's something special about a group of drummers playing and feeling difficult material in *exactly* the same style and with such a high level of intensity, concentration, and musicianship. Nothing can compare to a great corps drum line."

What did you hope to gain from your drum corps experience?

- To improve as a drummer/percussionist/musician.
- Personal growth and development.
- To learn about perseverance, achievement, and greatness.
- To learn to deal with diverse people on a daily basis.
- To play great charts cleanly and musically.
- Lifelong friends.
- Discipline, self-confidence, and self-pride.
- To extend my marching/playing experience.

- i. To learn about writing charts.
- j. Prestige.
- k. Travel.
- l. Enjoyment, fun, memories.

Perhaps this question can best be answered in one sentence from Scott Ebenkamp, a charter member of Star who, at age 21, would be aging-out in '87: "I hope to gain the confidence and desire to excel that makes someone give 100% all the time."

Now that you've been in Star for at least one season, what have you gained?

- a. Decided improvement as a player,
- b. The ability to deal with people and problems,
- c. Friends.
- d. I've learned how to write a chart and teach a drumline.
- e. Maturity: I've learned to be responsible to myself and to those around me.
- f. The ability to work hard and to focus on the task at hand,
- g. Rehearsal and performance techniques.
- h. The importance of establishing realistic goals and then trying your hardest to reach or surpass them.

My favorite quote is from Holly Gerken, who, at age 21, had just spent

her first and last year in drum corps. She is an exceptional mallet player (from Ohio State University) who said that "the reality of being in Star has more than met my expectations. It's more than I ever thought it *could* be. I'm only sorry that I waited so long to join, because I've met so many people from backgrounds that I'd never been exposed to before, and I've learned to appreciate and respect them in ways that even surpass my college experience. Also, I've learned so much from the staff and corps members—intellectually and musically. This summer has been amazing!"

Well, there you have it—a profile that hopefully answers the question "Who are these people, anyway?" Drum corps, as an art form, has matured dramatically in the past 10 to 15 years. As an activity, it has provided the opportunity for thousands of our most talented and dedicated young people to explore the fascinating world of music, movement, and competition in a manner that does not exist elsewhere. It has also established a unique outlet for percussion arrangers to explore their souls, a vehicle for teachers to impart their wisdom, and an incredibly rewarding journey for those who choose to take it. There is a very special bond that exists among drum corps people, and I hope that this article will shed some light on it.



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All That Jazz

MUSIC KEY



One thing is certain—modern technology will never replace the fine artistry of the best jazz drummers. However, technology has enabled us to produce reasonable facsimiles of the style. Clever programming is nevertheless still required to produce the relaxed swing that characterizes this popular musical avenue. This article aims to provide you with the information required for effortless jazz programming.

The swing element mentioned above is created by quantising the drum machine to 1/12—that is to say that each memory location within the machine is set up ready to accept patterns consisting of 12 divisions (or steps).

Most traditional jazz revolves around a cymbal pattern known as the "jazz ride beat," which is played near the bell of a ride cymbal. Most modern digital drum machines have this sound preset lurking within their digits. Program the following, then replay at a medium tempo:

This distinctive cymbal pattern will form the basis of each of the following rhythms. The hi-hat isn't redundant during these patterns, though. Instead of it being struck with a stick in the normal way, it is "chicked" with the foot. Consequently, the sound produced is quite different. The latest digital machines have a setting to emulate this. It is normally labeled HH FOOT, or something similar. If available, select it now.

In the following patterns, behind the sometimes intricate snare drum figures, the "jazz ride" cymbal pattern reigns supreme and unchanged throughout, keeping the rhythmic pulse pinned firmly down:

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You Can Make Music

The familiar backbeat occurs on beats 2 and 4 of each of these rhythms. But in the next examples, the emphasis has been shifted to the first and third beats of the bar. At first these rhythms may sound strange, but you'll soon find them very usable.

Patterns with a jazz flavor demand carefully matched fills. The ones that provide the best marriage are those that revolve around triplets. These work effectively because they divide easily into 1/12s, like the jazz rhythms themselves. Try the following:

In one of my recent articles, I discussed the 12-bar format. We can use this here to illustrate some rhythm/fill combinations in a practical way.

Assuming that you have entered patterns 1 to 11 into your machine in order, then enter song (or pattern chain) mode and arrange for the patterns to appear in the following order:

- 2, 2, 2, 10, 3, 3, 4, 4, 6, 6, 7, 11

If you can play a pitched instrument, try the following chord progression along with the completed drum track:

C7 C7 C7 C7 F7 F7 C7 C7 G7 F7 C7 G7

The results prove that machine jazz is possible. Listen to as many of the jazz greats as you can, then, with your machine quantised to 1/12 and set to real-time write, try to directly input the rhythms you hear. In this way you are still in control and using the drum machine as a creative, useful tool. These machines are good friends to have around, not threats to your musical existence!



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MKT-13

by Peter Erskine

Composing And Improvising

MUSIC KEY



Drum books, and most drum articles in drum magazines, are full of examples of licks and patterns to play, beats and transcriptions to learn, and fills for most any occasion, be it the big band or heavy-metal double bass drum genres. I've felt strongly for a long time now that, instead of seducing and encouraging the young and learning drummer to practice, among other things, funk-rock beats in 7/4, odd-time sambas (!), or other *marginally* important aspects of the craft, the young drummer should be encouraged to *think*. To play *creatively*. To *compose* on the instrument. In other words, to play what you hear and imagine, not to play just what your hands might know.

It is important for the creative musician to compose when he or she plays. By this, I mean that you will exercise creative choices on the instrument: rhythmically, tonally, and texturally. You will respond to the music in a musical way, and not churn out something that just the "hands know" (but not the heart and mind). For example, the lick learned off of an album is something that was played by a particular drummer, for (hopefully) a particular reason, at the particular time that selection was performed and recorded. To regurgitate it time and again, in whatever context, is uncreative.

Fills, and more distinctly, solos, are where a musician's lack of creative training can really show. Here is one system for developing your composing sense on the drums.

First, we will want to establish some sort of *ostinato* upon which to build our improvisatory ventures. (*The Harvard Dictionary of Music* defines "ostinato" as "A clearly defined phrase that is repeated persistently, usually in immediate succession, throughout a composition or a section.") A drum machine is perfect for this. Program in a rhythm that is not too busy, but that will give you space, as well as a constant, on which to work.

Here's a Latin beat (basically a guaguanco) that you can program into your drum machine (try it at a tempo of approximately half note = 96):

The Yamaha RX-5 is particularly great for something like this, because of the other instrument sounds available on it (electric bass, marimba, percussion, etc.). You could add something like this to the above pattern:

Or you can work with no machine at all. Create an *ostinato* pattern yourself. Here's one that I like to use (a variation on the Brazilian baião).

C

Whichever way you go with the ostinato, the next rule applies: *Discipline yourself*. Start with a simple set of note choices to work with. By limiting your rhythmic and tonal choices, you can concentrate on the music you are actually making—otherwise, the tendency is always to play "licks."

Improvise, starting on the small tom-tom, and then add another drum, say the snare drum. For now, *no rolls!* Play only combinations of quarter- and 8th-note rhythms (and rests), utilizing accents and dynamics. "Tell a story."

D

As the fixed-pitch instrument player has basically 12 tones to deal with, the rhythmic improviser has a relatively plain and simple palette, too. You've got whole notes, half notes, quarter and 8th notes, 16th notes, and dotted variations thereof. You've got triplets, rests, and the infinite combinations of all of those.

As played along with a drum machine...

E

By exploring the effectiveness of the simpler combinations, I believe you can get a glimpse of what rhythmic creativity is all about. Don't just be fast and fancy. Use space, use taste, and use your ears, not just your feet and hands. I hope that, instead of feeling limited and constrained by this suggested regimen, you will start to feel liberated! The tools of improvisation and creativity are in your (mind and) hands.

Addendum: In the December issue of *MD*, my article "Fast And Slow Tempos" failed to give a tempo indication for practicing a *slow ride* cymbal pattern. Try the quarter note equalling around 32-40. Or slower! And, in the January issue of *MD*, something in my article "Meeting A Piece Of Music For The First Time" made me quite uneasy when I saw it. The transcription of the drum part to Don Grolnick's tune "Pools" could have been written in a much simpler manner: By doubling the note values, as well as by indicating the "ghosted" snare notes, you get a cut-time, or "2" feel, with the music—as well as a sense of the tune's space. In the article, it looked like a big mess of notes (and I was talking about playing simply!). Apologies.



Buying Used

Whenever you're buying an item that's been used previously, there's always the danger of things *not* being what they seem. Bearing in mind the punishment soaked up by an average drumset, it's wise to be cautious before parting with what may be a considerable amount of money. Now this doesn't mean you should approach your local music shop as though they were going to deliberately sell you drums that'll disintegrate after a couple of nights. On the contrary, most dealers want you back again as a happy customer, so it's in their best interest to deal with you fairly. However, unless it's a specialist drumshop you're dealing with, it's unlikely they'll be expert on all the instruments that pass through their hands. The areas highlighted here are important and not always subject to examination, and can result in problems at a later date.

The Finish

Assume you've decided on the style, if not the make, of the outfit you're looking for, and you are standing in the store. What strikes you first on any outfit? Color obviously catches the eye. All drum companies offer great finishes, including some special designs and limited-edition items. So check these out. If the outfit you choose has a color or pattern that can no longer be obtained, this makes expansion and replacement difficult, and in some cases impossible. There's nothing wrong with buying such an outfit, *provided* you know about the situation. As a general rule, such drums will be for sale at a lower cost due to this fact.

Next, you want to take a good close look at the finish, since this is a good indication of how the drums were treated by previous owners. Be prepared for a slight scratch here and there as normal ravages that occur no matter how careful you are. But, like most things, this is a matter of degree. If there are bad marks on shells, dents in bass drum hoops, and a general air of neglect surrounding all the drums, *forget it*. You can be pretty sure that closer examination will reveal such things as bent tension bolts, distorted counterhoops, rust, and other damage that could have you tearing your hair out.

The Hardware

Having found something that has aroused your interest, and assuming it has passed the first two tests, determine if the hardware is current, and if not,

whether it is still available. Sadly, we've lost quite a few drum makers in recent times, and a lot of their drums are still around, and will be for many years. Again, there is nothing wrong with buying them, but do check for problems in replacing wearable parts such as tom holders and spurs. Even if the original equipment is unavailable, it's possible in many cases to satisfactorily substitute these components with modern hardware, and without too much butchering of shells. But make sure before you buy.

You've now reached a point where an outfit pleases you visually, with fittings you're happy with. Next, it's essential you examine each drum closely to establish a few rather critical points. First, those distorted counterhoops I mentioned earlier. Numerous factors, ranging from very uneven tensioning to weak metal, can result in a hoop being out of true. So take a close look down the edges of the drumheads to make sure the counterhoop follows the exact curve of the shell. It's easy to see any irregularity, as the drumhead hoop will be more visible in that area. A bad hoop must be replaced or you'll never get even tuning, and heads may split. While you're doing a closeup inspection, look for those bent or corroded tension bolts I mentioned earlier. These also must be replaced if you can't turn them easily.

Make sure the hardware will do the job for which it was designed. Put the bass drum spurs in position, and check for wear on the dial ratchet teeth or other tightening mechanisms. The spurs should hold the drum firmly, without any rattles or play. Look at the tom-tom mount socket, and make sure there are no undue signs of wear. When you've done likewise with the tom-toms and the fittings in between, hang the toms in playing position, and see if the parts that should grip in fact do so. Simple, gentle hand pressure will establish that all is well, or otherwise. This same examination can be extended to floor tom legs, and any other fittings needing similar treatment.

Internal dampers can also be a source of irritation if any part is loose or missing. Make sure that when you strike the head, you don't get back a horrible rattle in return.

The Snare Drum

Obviously, the snare tensioning assembly is the first target in assessing

this most important of drums. On a conventional single-lever mechanism, all is usually visible and straightforward. The lever and its various moving parts should work freely in bringing the snares up against the drumhead. This doesn't mean it should have a loose or sloppy feel, which is a sure sign of wear. It's supposed to lock in the on-tension position, which you may feel when the lever goes past a certain point in its travel. I always place such a drum on a stand and play, using rimshots near the lever. If it's going to jump off, this will pinpoint that weakness. When not under tension, you have a good opportunity to check that the snares don't curl up, or have strands that are stretched and damaged.

Parallel actions take a little more time to look over. Internal rods should not be loose, nor joints out of alignment. The lever should snap positively into place when brought into tension. And as with the single lever, be sure that pins and other fastenings have not worn, making for a loose, inefficient action. Fine adjustment of the snare tension is available on both sides of this unit, so check that it's both smooth and positive on each adjuster.

With drums all but fully examined, there are only a couple of parting suggestions I have regarding fittings. First, it's a good idea to try turning every tension bolt while looking over the drum. This will reveal any that do not seem to have an effect on tuning. The most usual cause for this is failure of the threads in the tension lug insert. Being of a softer material than the bolts, the insert is more prone to stripping, and although not a major disaster, it does necessitate removal and replacement before you can even *consider* tuning. Finally, it should not need saying that one does not accept a bolt or similar item that has obviously been forced into a lug insert. Sadly, too many sights such as this are still to be found.

Look Before You Leap

It's only after you've stated a serious intention of buying, that it can be reasonably expected of a store owner to grant the following request before you hand over your money. Examination of the shell interiors is a *must*, but certainly you can imagine the chaos if every time-waster had shop owners tearing drums apart, only to be left standing in a heap of shells, heads, and hoops!

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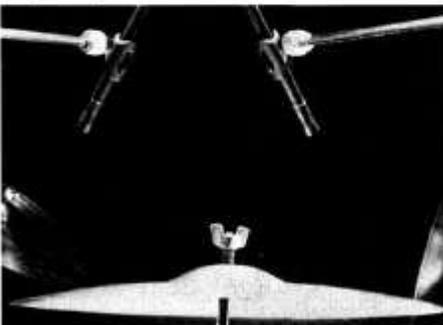
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tom-toms, along with the front head from the bass drum. Remember, although this may be a double-headed outfit, the question is whether it has *always* been used in that fashion. I've seen many outfits with bearing edges in a state of total disintegration due to being played as a single-headed set. The owner may have been blissfully ignorant of the effects of sliding drums along concrete surfaces. When heads are refitted for selling purposes, the damage is easily covered up. The top bearing edges should be alright, provided the drum is of good quality and hasn't been messed around with. You may, of course, think differently and insist on seeing both ends of the drums. Indeed, this may be a prudent action. It's your decision.

After the bearing edges, your eyes could do worse than take a journey around the internal hardware fittings. Look for signs of shells splitting at points of stress, like tom-tom and spur mounts. Notice whether all bolts and washers are in place, and request replacement of any that are missing.

This covers the main points that are possible to look for in a store environment, *before* walking out as the owner of a used drumset. The condition of drumheads and other minor areas have been left out deliberately, as they fall into the category of "things to haggle over." The main objective is to tackle the important, structural aspects, since disappointment is most likely in these departments.

Without delving into a heap of old cliches, "You get what you pay for" is a pretty fair statement, perhaps needing the addition of "provided you look first." If you decided on a private deal, rather than through a shop, these tips still apply. You might pay less than to a dealer, but you also could have less legal protection on a private deal, without the backup service any decent retailer should provide.  Anyhow, good hunting!

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some "insurance" against future cracking. You may not find them attractive, but how attractive are cracked cymbals? Cymbal springs do not add more than an inch or so to the dimension of a stand, so repositioning your cymbals should not involve great distances. They are relatively inexpensive—especially when compared to replacement cymbals—and might be worth trying to see if they will help you solve your problem. If you don't like them, you can certainly remove them again and put things back the way they were.

Q. I've been drumming for ten years now, and have been through a series of concert and recording situations. I'd like to know the advantages of both "top" and "bottom" miking of toms and snare drums live and in the studio. Also, the recording engineer I work with currently uses only one or two overhead mic's. My cymbals generally record fine, except for the 20" Paiste 2002 China-type, which doesn't come through too well. I love that cymbal and wouldn't change it, so how can I effectively record it?

M.G.

San Jose, Costa Rica

A. Modern Drummer has done several articles on the subject of live and studio miking of drumkits. You might want to check into a feature entitled "Audio Engineers: On Miking And Recording Drums" (Parts 1 and 2) in the December '82 and January '83 issues, along with the following columns from our In The Studio department: "Rock Drumming In The Studio" (July '86), and "Introduction To Drumset Miking" (February '86). Some of Craig Krampf's recent columns in that same department should also prove helpful.

To try to address your specific questions briefly: Top-miking a drum is generally considered best if only one position can be used, since a mic' in that position can get all of the attack sound of the drum, and a good portion of the tone. There is some risk of bleed-through from other drums if several are miked in close proximity. Bottom-miking (assuming double heads) is generally used only in addition to top miking, to capture the resonance and tone that are contributed by the bottom head and the drum-shell. Again, bleed-through is a risk, and a mic' on the bottom of the rack tom closest to the snare drum can easily pick up snare buzz.

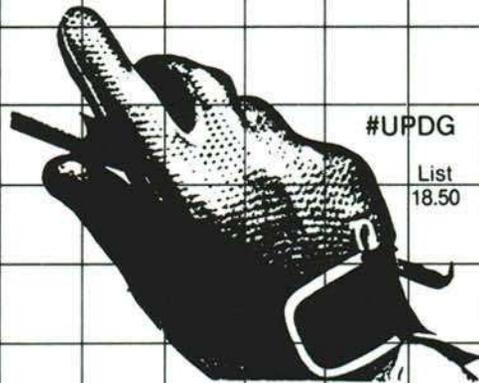
A compromise is often achieved by removing the bottom heads of the toms and placing the mic' up inside the drum. This picks up the attack sound clearly, gains some depth and tonality from the inside of the shell, and helps to prevent bleed-through by physically isolating the mic' within the drum. However, there is no escaping the fact that a single-headed drum sounds different than a double-headed one, so that has to be a consideration. A good deal of experimentation with internal miking of double-headed drums has been taking place among artists, both in live and studio applications. Several systems are on the market to facilitate this.

The same "top vs. bottom" principles apply to snare drums as to toms, except that bottom-miking is more often used (in combination with top-miking) on snares, in order to capture the crispness of the snare sound. In most professional applications, this mic' is gated to prevent sympathetic "snare buzz" from being picked up when the toms are struck.

If your current cymbal-miking setup works well except for the loss of one particular cymbal, you might try directing one of the overheads more toward that cymbal, or even positioning the entire stand a bit closer to it. If that still does not produce the desired results, a mic' dedicated to that cymbal—or at least more specifically to that area above the kit—would be your next logical step.



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tunities. I'm a drummer myself, and I talk to drumshop owners—most of whom are also players—so we speak a common language. They liked the plexi ball, so when I said 'Try this poly ball,' they were willing to. The cork did not sell real fast, and I finally discontinued it.

"I realized that I should always have something to sell the customer when I got on the phone. If he wasn't going to buy cymbal cleaner, I could sell him *something* that would pay for the call. My line began to branch out because of that concept. I started with the plexi, the poly, and the cork beaters, and then added felt and wood to complete the line."

But not every attempt at expansion can

succeed, as Mike learned early on. As he explains, "After I put out the beaters, I had a brief fling with *Satellite* tom-toms. I was custom-making acrylic drums, and selling them by mail-order. I had been reading a lot of mail-order books, and what I was doing was against every rule for the success of mail-order sales—and it *wasn't* successful. I sold a few sets, and then a major drum shop in the Midwest called me up and threatened to sue me, saying that they had a patent on using 1/4" plexi tubes for drumshells. I wasn't at a point where I wanted to get involved in any kind of lawsuit—and the toms weren't going over anyway—so I discontinued them."

Mike's business evolved on a very limited budget. He'd make a few items at a cost of \$50.00, then sell them and get \$100.00 back. At that point, the "business" was still Mike's sideline; his real income came from playing full-time.

"It was just a matter of getting on the phone a couple of days a week, selling more and more products. As more money came in, I expanded my operation. In the music industry, you really don't go out and get start-up capital from a bank, because a musician is considered a poor credit risk. I bought a bottling machine to put the cymbal cleaner into the jars—which I had been doing by hand with a funnel and a spoon up to that point. All of a sudden, my capacity for putting the cleaner out became gigantic. At that point I could start calling on wholesalers to carry it in quantity. Then I hired a guy to help me on the phone, and we literally called every music shop in the country about the cleaner."

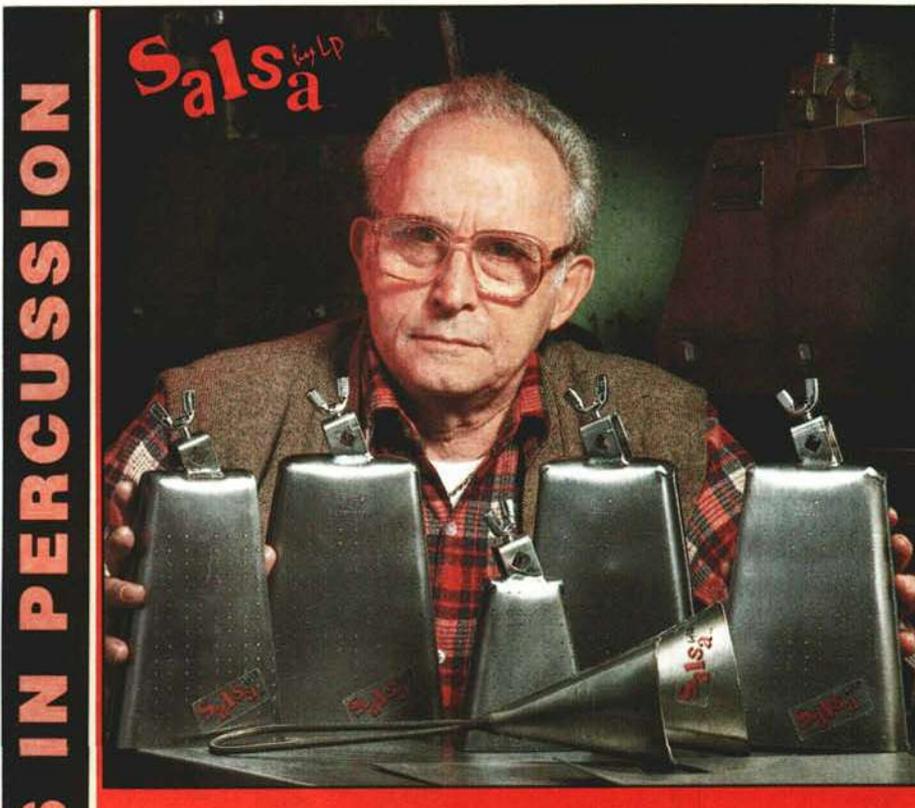
From that point on, development was just a matter of finding new products to offer. Mike was the first wholesaler in the country to carry *Noise Husher* disposable foam earplugs. They became the first non-percussion item Mike sold, and, as he puts it, "They've been in the catalog ever since. They're a nice, high-profit, consumable item—perfect."

In 1983, due to a severe asthma condition, it became necessary for Mike and his family to leave Los Angeles. Luckily, he had designed his business to operate on the phone.

"I figured that as long as I could be near a city where I could get local phone lines and good UPS service, I could probably conduct my business anywhere. We decided on Colorado because my wife's parents are here. It was then that I started looking into doing the business full-time, because I knew I wasn't going to be able to play full time in Colorado, and Slobeat was at a point in L.A. where I was pulling a salary out of it. So we came to Evergreen, Colorado in October of 1983, and I decided to give Slobeat a shot."

Slobeat Percussion started out in half of one small room and the garage of the Stobie home. Within six months, operations had to be moved to a separate location. The company is now in its third location, and has already taken over twice as much space there as it began with a year and a half ago. Some small manufacturing operations take place there, along with the distribution of products made by other manufacturers. Mike explains that the distribution business came about as a process of evolution.

"When I left L.A., I realized that I had to make a little bigger 'go' of it in business, because I wasn't going to be working as steadily as a player. So I called Roy Burns at Aquarian and said, 'Look, I'm going to be out in the Rocky Mountain area; can I



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sell your sticks for you out there?' He said, 'Sure, no problem.' From then on, as I was able to sell one product, that manufacturer could help me out by passing the word to someone else. That opened up new lines for me to carry. I just looked for what was available, and called people up. Most of the manufacturers I called were willing to give me a try as a distributor. Everything was C.O.D. anyway, since I didn't have any credit.

"I hired a salesgirl and a part-time helper in the shop. Along with myself, that was Slobeat. Originally, we used to get everything out in a week. We'd call all week, Monday through Thursday. Then all day Thursday and late Thursday night we'd bottle cymbal cleaner for however many orders we had. Friday morning we'd pack it up, and by Friday noon we'd be at UPS with 60 boxes of cymbal cleaner. Then we'd spend half the day filling out the UPS tags. When we got into this present location, it got to a point where we could get the stuff out within a day. People like that fast service. Now we do everything on a one-day basis; we don't go home until everything is out. I think I'm the only one who does that, and I'm able to do it because we're still a relatively small operation.

"Getting back to the history a bit, when I realized that I was really going to do the business, I figured that I should sell everything in percussion that I possibly could. So I brought in Vic Firth, Pro-Mark, and Regal Tip sticks, along with Evans and Remo heads. With those major lines, we became 'legitimate' in the eyes of the dealers we were trying to sell to. Every time I got a new line, that opened up a thousand new people to talk to, because people who wouldn't sell cymbal cleaner would sell drumheads. If they didn't sell Vic Firth sticks, they would sell Pro-Mark. It became a matter of meeting needs. If you call four or five shops who say that they want to sell a certain thing, you go out and get that thing to supply them with. The single most important lesson I've learned is to keep my eyes and ears open, and pay attention to what people say on the phone. I've personally called on many shops, but that's not the thrust of the business; our business is conducted on the phone."

As Slobeat got more and more into distribution, Mike started importing items made by overseas manufacturers. Importing is a major area of business unto itself, involving tariffs, customs, international shipping, and many other unique considerations. How did he learn about it?

"Every nation, and almost every big city, has some sort of trade group, like the Chamber of Commerce or some similar organization. I called the Los Angeles office of the Taiwan Trade Association and asked them to send me a list

of all their suppliers. They sent me a long list, and from that point I started writing letters, saying that I was in the music business, and I was interested in.... This goes with any product; if you want anything from French wine to Nepalese camel dung, you can find *somebody* who can supply it if you contact the Chamber of Commerce or its equivalent. It's just a matter of making enough calls. The main library in Los Angeles has a whole room just devoted to business. They have every *Yellow Pages* directory in the United States. The sources are there to use, if you're willing to make the effort necessary to take advantage of them.

"Taiwan is a unique situation. It's an unimaginably huge supplier of manufactured goods to the rest of the world. As a result, there are a lot of Taiwanese trade organizations out there to contact. And since they make so much drum equipment already, it's really pretty easy to find what you need. You find out who has it and call them up. It's sometimes difficult to understand what they say, of course, so sometimes you have to call them and write them a letter, too. They'll usually tell you their terms in their reply letter: 'Here's our catalog; we demand X amount of orders,' and so on. Then you go back to the *Yellow Pages* and find a customs broker. A good one will tell you that there are many different ways to import a given product. For example, a drum throne can come in as a piece of furniture, an accessory, or a musical instrument. There are different duties on different classifications, so a smart broker can tell you that if you bring it in a certain way, you'll pay one point less on customs duties. Then, if you have a bank account, you call your banker for financial advice.

"It wasn't as easy as I'm making it sound. I wrote an awful lot of letters before I got any results. But the info is all there; you just have to dig to find it.

"Anyone who wants to get into the business should get into a NAMM show somehow. See what's happening, and talk to people in the industry. Nine out of ten people who own their own business in the drum industry are drummers. Paul Real, Don Lombardi, Frank DeVito, Roy Burns, Vic Firth, Joe Calato, Herb Brochstein, Remo Belli, myself—we come out of this 'drummer tradition.' Most of these people are pretty warm, and will talk to you. The other end of the business involves the people who represent big corporations. These are the guys with suits and ties and MBAs, who don't know anything about drums or musicians. I don't know how open they are to giving advice to a newcomer; I don't have any experience with them. But from the looks of a lot of them, they couldn't tell you what to do anyway. It's the guys who

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started from scratch because they were drummers and wanted a better product—which was my main motivation for getting into business and still is today—who can really give you some meaningful help. You just have to take advantage of it. *Everything* that I have learned, somebody helped me with."

Slobeat's history has generally been one of slow, successful growth. But it wasn't all successful along the way. In addition to the *Satellite* toms, Mike was involved in creating a cable hi-hat, which ultimately did not succeed for him—although it apparently has for other companies. How did he deal with those setbacks?

"The cable hi-hat episode was just a matter of not having my eyes open to what I could and could not realistically do in the environment I'm in. If I had stayed in LA., things might have been different. I went into the hi-hat a little hastily. At that point, I had been doing the business on a full-time basis a little less than a year. I basically didn't know what I was getting into, and it failed. Part of the problem was that the guy making it for me got involved with drugs after he built the first one. I went down to his shop the day before I was scheduled to leave for a Chicago NAMM show, to pick up 20 units that he was supposed to have ready for me. Well, he had one ready, and some

parts for a second one. I had to work on them in order to have two, and one fell apart at the show. It was a very valuable learning experience for me."

Mike's experience illustrates the important point that, while it's certainly possible for drummers to go into business for themselves, that business may not enjoy a smooth ride all the time. There will be setbacks and problems, and how they are dealt with will have a great deal to do with whether or not a business moves forward. Mike is philosophical about it now.

"You have to look at every failure as an opportunity for growth. I was bummed out about the cable hat for a few months; at one point I felt like I had been ripped off by a lot of people. It was the only time I've ever lost sleep because of my business. But that doesn't get you anywhere. I'm still in business; I'm doing well. And while it's fun to point fingers and try to put the blame for a failure on other people, I dissected the thing every way I could and came to the conclusion that it was basically my mistake. If I had known then what I know now, I would have done things differently, or perhaps waited until now to get into it."

But how does an individual who is really "green" in terms of business sense avoid such pitfalls? Where does a drummer go to seek advice?

"In my case, I talked to anyone who would talk to me. The late Bob Yeager, at the Pro Drum Shop in Hollywood, was just a beautiful guy. I could always take something that he said with me. Roy Burns also gave me a lot of time, as did Joe Voda. If you'll just pay attention to *anyone* who has been in the business longer than you have, you'll get something out of it. None of these things are hidden secrets; they're all standard business principles. But if *you* don't know them, they might as well be secrets. When you're playing your drums, you're basically concerned about playing the gig, getting paid, and making the new audition. There's a whole other mind-set that you have to get into in order to succeed at business.

"One lesson that I learned, and something upon which I have strong opinions, is the situation regarding patents on new products—especially small-ticket accessory items. It's silly—there's no other word to describe it—to go out and worry about patenting something that's going to sell for \$5.00 or \$10.00 retail. That's the big mistake that everyone makes: They get into business and they think they've got to patent something. It's the magic word. If you see a sign on an advertisement that says "Patent Pending," that means there *is* no patent, and they can't *get* a patent. So they put that

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statement on there, hoping it will protect the product against being copied. At least, that's been my personal experience within the drum business. As far as I'm concerned, it's better to just get your product done, get it out there, and get on the phone and sell the darn thing. Of course, it helps to be the first one out with it.

"As an example, there are several companies that put out copies of my *Trap Bag*. I could have gotten all freaked out about it, but it's just not worth worrying about. The *Trap Bag* has a big share of what is a limited market, anyway. Now, there was a case company in the East that came out with a bag that they called a *Trap Bag*. I had my lawyer write them a letter that said, 'We don't care what you make, but the name is ours; get your own.' I thought that was fair. And they did, in fact, change the name.

"With the cable hat, I had a patent search, and I'm sure everyone else who has a cable hat out there now looked into it, too. They all saw mine at the NAMM show that year, and they all acted like 'Mike, you're my best friend. I like you. Let's get together,' and that's the last I heard from them. If I had any real strong advice for drummers getting into business with a product, it would be to not worry about the patent—just get off your butt, get out there and hustle."

From its modest beginnings in the Stobie home in Evergreen, Slobeat Percussion now boasts six full-time employees and a 1987 gross of around a million dollars. Currently, the company's own distribution operation is all domestic, but the cymbal cleaner is sold overseas through Calato Manufacturing's distribution system. So what is the outlook for the future?

"We are now expanding into full-line musical product distribution. I'm in kind of a unique position in Denver; it's a big city in the middle of nowhere. There isn't even a McDonald's between Denver and the nearest big city in Kansas, which is over 400 miles away! It's a huge amount of space with a small number of people, and it gets a bad rap from manufacturers—especially in the East. But music dealers here take their business as seriously as those on 48th Street in New York do. So since that need is here, our immediate goal is to get a full-line wholesaling operation established. It's a whole new thing for me to learn about: reeds, guitar strings, amplifiers, and even small instruments. But everything we carry can be shipped via UPS. I doubt that we'll get into anything that requires truck-mode shipping until we expand again and move into the city, which may be in five years or so.

"So for the immediate foreseeable future, what we'll be doing is the music 'jobber' or middleman kind of stuff. When that is a little more solid, I think

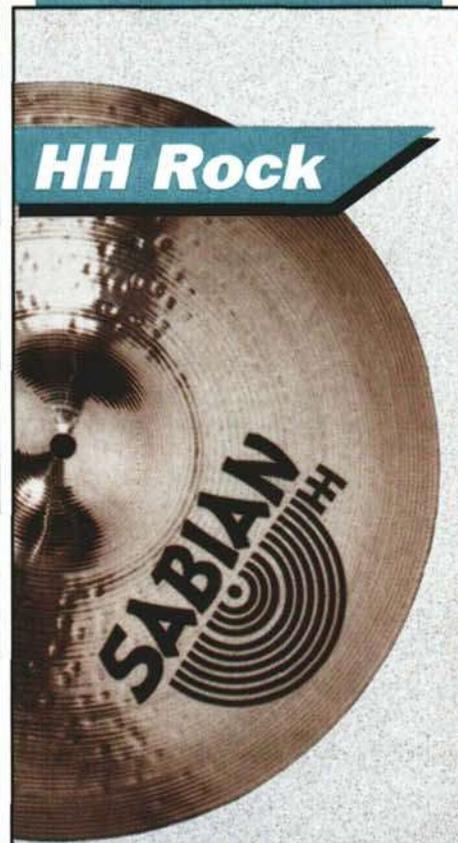
we'll finally be able to do some more drum- and percussion-related manufacturing. I'm not sure, though, what that's going to be. Right now everybody's into the MIDI thing, so it's a real crowded market, which is a problem. The trick is to find something that everyone else doesn't have; you don't put something out just to put it out.

"I would like to offer a few suggestions to any drummers considering starting out in business. It's easy to get distracted, and lose your priorities about what we're in business for as players in the music industry. It's really important to try to maintain good relationships with competitors—or anyone else. Some people take the whole thing *too* seriously. They can't have friends among the industry because they see everybody as potential competition. That makes it unpleasant to do business, which is really useless. You won't have a long life, and you won't have any quality to your life anyway.

"My advice is to keep everything in perspective. If you have an idea, just go with it. Give it some time, in spite of setbacks. You can't wait three days and decide it's not happening because three people on the phone wouldn't buy your product. Keep hammering. If you call about 50 times, eventually they'll buy something just to get you off the phone. I've gotten a lot of business that way, and some of those people have since become very close friends. But it's amazing how tough this business can be. It's very small, and there are a lot of egos involved, due to the number of ex-players in it. It can be tough and it can be disheartening, but you just have to do it anyway.

"Sonny Bono once said something about show business that I apply to the music business: The first word is 'music,' and the second word is 'business.' You have to treat it as a business; you have to make money. It's fun to hang out with the musicians and all that, but it basically comes down to feeding your kids, and you need to keep that in perspective.

"The first thing is, when you start a business, don't expect to live on it. Keep doing whatever you're doing for an income, and start the business part-time, on Saturdays, before or after work—whenever. Don't take a cent out of the business for anything; put it all back in. Then get yourself an ad in *Modern Drummer*. The one thing that's real good about the percussion business is that most of us can put an ad in *Modern Drummer* and get some kind of results. After I ran my *Trap Bag* ad—which I did myself—I went to five different ad agencies, all of whom had differing comments about why it wasn't a good ad. But the point is, that ad had phenomenal results, and I've sold thousands of those bags. Even if the ad wasn't good, it showed me



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that there was something out there that people wanted.

"There are books you can buy in any business store about creating ad copy and laying out artwork. There are more books on selling. Read those books, and you'll find that there are a few basic rules of selling that you can incorporate into your ad. Most towns have printers; you can get someone to lay it out for you and draw it up. Look at the ads in *MD*, and get yourself an ad that looks like one you think is effective.

"An investment in a 1/4-page or 1/6-page ad is not cheap, but it's not unaffordable, either. Anyone who wants to go into business should realize that they're simply going to have to come up with \$500 or \$600 somehow, if they seriously want to get something started. My grandmother left me \$1,000 when she died. With that, I put out my flyer for the *Satel-lite* toms, and the first few ads. And although the toms were not a hit, I got the money back, and maybe ended up with a little more than I started with. It's a risk, of course, but it's a necessary one. Do your ad yourself, or get someone to help you do it. That way, you know what's going on.

"There are two different ways that I see people starting out with a product. Some are doing it through mail-order, and others are going through the shops. I don't

recommend doing it both ways, because dealers don't like seeing a list price in a magazine ad.

"You should also do a lot of research into making your product as inexpensively as you can without sacrificing quality. That means that you've got to make a lot of calls. And then, ultimately, the only way you're going to find out about your product's potential is just to put it out there. You may get absolutely no reaction, or you may get some. And in the beginning, even if you talk to a lot of people and they all say it stinks, if you really believe that you've got a happening thing, you should do it anyway. Of course, there are some variables there, but that would be my basic advice. It was like my cymbal cleaner: man, *who cares* about cymbal cleaner? And yet the stuff is good, and I sell *huge* amounts of it. I couldn't retire on it, but if I didn't have the rest of the business, it would still pay for my kids' Montessori tuition or something. That may be the entire level that you get to with your product, but it's still something that you're doing, and it's filling a need."

Even as Slobeat expands, Mike remains active as a player. He sees this as essential to both his business and his personal well-being.

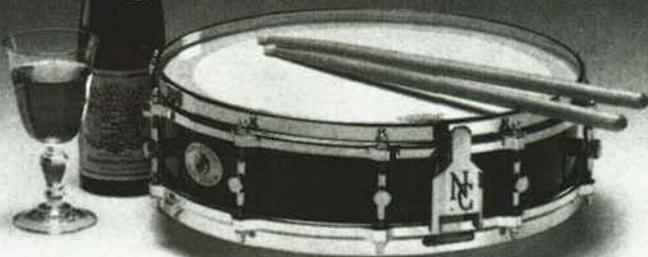
"One of the ways that I've been successful, I think, is that I can speak knowl-

edgeably to a dealer about new products. Everything in my stock that is percussion-oriented, I have used personally. Based on that experience, there are a few products that I won't sell—even though I could probably make pretty good money on one or two of them—because I just don't like them. The fact that there are a lot of drummers out there buying those products should probably override my opinion—from a purely business standpoint. But, as a player, I just don't want to get involved with them.

"Of course, I can't pursue drumming as heavily as I used to when the business was part-time. But I still get some pretty neat stuff here in town—things that are exciting and fun to do. However, with the kind of money that the distribution business can begin to generate, I need to have my finger on it. The gig thing is something I no longer do for money; I do it for fun.

"I also want to be able to devote some time to my family life. During our expansion, I was here 12 hours each weekday and half of most Saturdays. My wife knows that we don't need the money from my playing, so it's hard to sell her on the fact that I need to go out and play a wedding when the kids don't know where I've been all week. So, for the time being, I'm not playing a lot. But I'm not planning on retiring real soon, either. I

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still consider myself a drummer first, and a businessman second."

Fred Beato *continued from page 32*

distributing consumable accessory items that could be moved quickly, which led Fred to offer drum gloves. As he says, "There was a need then, and I still believe there's a need now, for something to help today's drummer hold onto the drumsticks. Ironically, I don't use them when I play, because we're in a club doing bossas and sambas. But I see so many drummers out there in the rock clubs five and six nights a week, with bleeding hands from bashing 2 and 4, that I know there is a need for drum gloves. Bob and I discussed this potential, and we got the right channels operating to have people make drum gloves for us overseas. If they were made in the States, the retail cost would be over \$30.00 per pair."

Of course, you don't just pick up the *Yellow Pages* and say, "Give me a Korean glove manufacturer." How did Fred learn about the business of importing foreign products?

"Well, you learn as you go. The more times you get hit over the head with a baseball bat, the better you get at ducking. We started with a company that was actually supplying golf gloves to the States. The more we got into it, the more we thought about making the gloves better. We were always open to suggestions from drummers. One of those was that the leather should be black. The original golf gloves had been white. They got filthy after a couple of days and looked bad. Another comment was that the original mesh ventilation design allowed the mesh to curl around so that eventually the stick was against the mesh instead of the leather. Yet another was that the kid leather we were using got brittle after getting wet and then drying. So it was back to the drawing board for us. We had thought our first leather was the answer, but we were proved wrong. And when we came out with gloves made of a better leather, we ran into a problem making them black. There is no black leather; there is brown leather that is dyed black. We had no idea that if you don't clean the inside of the leather, the dye bleeds! So the first batch of the new gloves was another nightmare. We had people calling to tell us, 'Hey, the gloves feel great, but what am I going to do about my black hands when the gig's over?' These were the trials and tribulations you have to go through."

Fred rectified the problems with his gloves through design changes and additional steps in the dying process. But his experience illustrates how putting out a product is not a one-shot deal, but rather an evolutionary process that can take several years. And even then, the ulti-

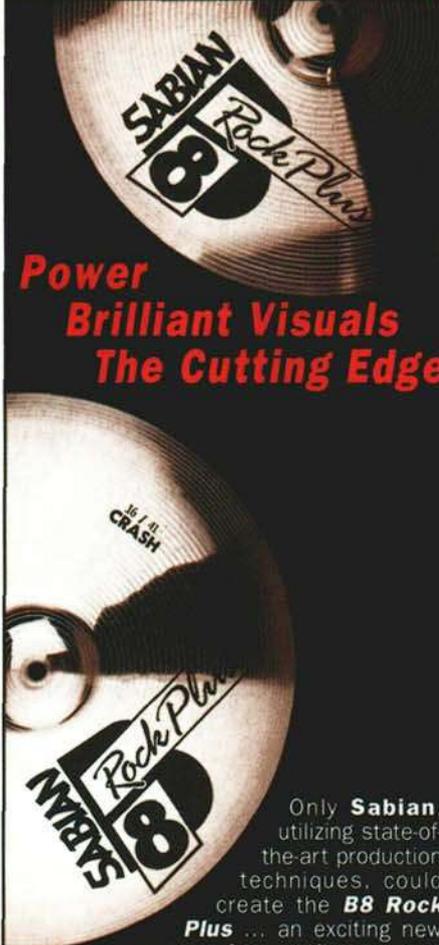
mate success or failure of the product can depend on other factors—such as supply.

"It's frustrating when we're doing the best we can all the time, and yet we have to rely on other people to make things come through for us. The gloves do come from overseas. Sometimes we place an order and are told that the gloves will be here by March 1—but we get them July 2! That really puts our credibility on the line. What I've had to do is learn to outsmart our suppliers by knowing that when they tell me March, they mean August or September. The political scene overseas has also entered into the picture more dramatically in recent months."

The drum gloves were introduced in 1982, and went through a three-year developing process. In the interim, Fred added additional products to the line.

"A friend of mine, who had an opportunity to take over his uncle's failed instrument bag-making business in California, came to me with an offer. He said, 'You have the "alligator mouth" and can sell things. I can make my uncle's business work. Why don't we come out with your own line of bags?' I told him, 'It's got to be a *different* bag, because bags are a dime a dozen: They rip up in two weeks, the zippers come undone, etc.' This was in the days when bags were still mostly of canvas, except for expensive leather cymbal bags. And drummers really thought of drum bags as obsolete, anyway. They had been brainwashed into thinking that they needed fiber cases or even ATA-type road cases. But being a drummer myself, I realized that 95% of drummers are gigging locally at the Holiday Inn, Elks Lodge, or even the local recording studio. I believed that there really was a need for a good quality bag. What was required was a bag that protected both the instrument and the inside of your car, was waterproof and rip-proof, and was flexible enough that all the bags from your kit could be stuffed together inside the bass drum bag while your drums were set up.

"We used a new material called *Tolex II*, which gave the bags the durability they needed. We started with a cymbal bag, then went to a stick bag, and ultimately to drum bags. And there again, the learning process was a nightmare. For one thing, we hadn't really realized how many sizes of drums were on the market. If we made 14x22 bags, people needed 16x22s. If we had 16x22s, they wanted 18x24s. I have to admit that our delivery time was very shaky at the beginning. But I was blessed by the fact that most retailers, instead of screaming, were very supportive. They said, 'Get it together man, we're behind you. We can sell them if you can deliver them.' We started with 12 different sizes, and now we're up to 30."



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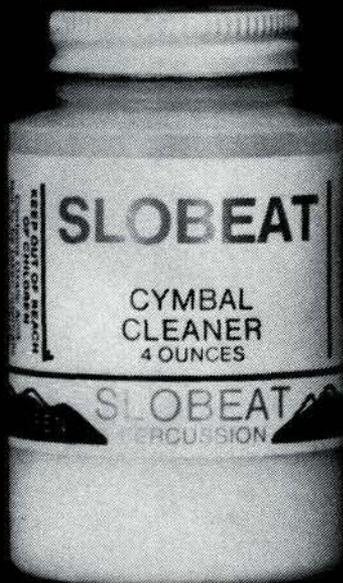
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Along with an expanded size range, other improvements were made in the bags, including a color change. As Fred explains, "A retailer told us that if we made the bags in black, we could quadruple our sales. At the same time, we got a call from the company that makes the *Tolex* material, telling us that they were discontinuing the silver. At the time, I thought, 'Another nightmare! Here are all my bags in silver, and I'm losing my supply of raw material!' So we went to black. That was the same time that we changed the name of the company from 'Rug Caddy' to 'Beato.' It was incredible; the minute we went to black and changed the name, the orders just poured in. These are just the kinds of things that you learn by doing, not from anybody else."

After the bags and the new company name became established, Fred expanded even further. He introduced Beato Tips. These are little surgical-rubber tubing tips for sticks that allow them to be used for silent practice, as mallets on drums and cymbals, and for more comfortable playing on electronic pads. Then he got involved with drumsticks.

"I learned another lesson here: You can expand too far, too fast, and run into unforeseen problems. In a nutshell, I started out with one supplier of Canadian maple sticks, in Canada. Just about the

time I thought I had a market going for the sticks, that gentleman died, and I couldn't meet the orders I had. Then, the original owner of that same company took it back over, promising us a steady supply. So we took orders again. But they couldn't make it go, and again we looked bad. Then we went to a different Canadian supplier altogether, who also defaulted on us. All these business agreements were done over the phone—which taught me that that's not the way to make business agreements. You should do it face to face, because you've got your credibility on the line. When your suppliers don't deliver, you look bad to your customers. Then there was freight and duty to deal with. I was about ready to quit carrying sticks altogether. Fortunately, we've now found an American manufacturer who will be able to duplicate the design of the sticks in American hickory. But the entire episode took two years—not turning a dollar profit, and facing a new problem every time we thought we had the old one solved! This is something a person in business should be aware of: You can face problems like this even if you've got a good product that will sell! It wasn't a question of a dog product. We had orders we couldn't fill!

"But we also had a little help from upstairs. After all, how many times can you let a retailer down and still have him

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tell you, 'Alright, Fred, we'll try it one more time. Let's get it together'? They knew what I was going through, and I'm very grateful for their support."

So after two years of not turning a profit on drumsticks, Fred recently started at square one again with a new line. But what about products that are tried out, worked with, and finally just determined to be losers? At what point does Fred draw the line between having faith in a product and cutting it loose?

"I'm kind of stubborn, so I probably draw the line a lot later than some other people would. A classic example is what is happening with my cymbal line. When I went to the big European music show about five years ago, I saw the quality cymbals that the Italian companies were making. I thought I was going to come back to the States and just let Zildjian and Sabian and Paiste know that the Italians had *landed* in America! It was very frustrating to see that I couldn't make any headway *at all*. I was competing with great companies who make quality products and have been around for a hundred years. It's very hard to break into that. I'm not going to kid myself or kid you and say that sales are up. Sales *ain't* happening. But I also think I have a duty to the drummers out there. If I can somehow get them to see and hear these cymbals, and compare prices, then we have a chance. But there again, how do you inventory 25 different models of cymbals when they're not moving? It's very hard to do. So what I'm planning to do with them, until the demand increases, is stock the Chinas—which are very good—and the hi-hats—which are superb. I'll put them up against anybody's at any price. And if I get even a *part* of the market, just from people saying, 'The Beato hi-hats are happening,' I'll be happy."

An aspiring businessman quickly learns that deciding whether to stay with something or cut it is a constant process—and there are often several considerations involved in that process. Profit and loss, is, of course, a major factor. But there are also musical integrity, personal taste, and other intangibles. Fred Beato is, at this point, a businessman first and a drummer second—in terms of his career. But not necessarily in terms of his heart.

"Oh no, man. Once you have the bug, you're stuck with it. A true, hard-nosed businessman would have cut those cymbals after the first losing year. But I just can't look at things that way. Because not only are they quality cymbals; the people who make them are wonderful people. Maybe it's a weakness to let my emotions get involved, but I feel like I still have a little more energy to give them. They've been making cymbals in Italy for a thousand years; why shouldn't they have a chance in this market? This is America!" [laughs]

Fred started his business in 1980. How has it grown in the past eight years?

"We're coast to coast in the U.S., and we're now starting to ship some products overseas. We're concentrating on the gloves, because we can ship 300 pairs of gloves in a ten-pound box. But our business is mainly in America, and it's been growing at a rate of about 20% per year."

This growth has naturally restricted Fred's drumming activities. Does the "high" he gets from running his business replace what he loses in other areas? Characteristically, Fred replies optimistically.

"I don't think I can ever get the bug out of my system, and it's a constant turmoil that I have to put in perspective. My love for drums is very intense, and yet I believe that you cannot do it unless you're going to give it 2,000%. But I'm a dreamer, and one of my dreams is someday to have 40 people working for me so that I can have the time to go to my gigs on the side. People have told me I'm crazy, because I put in ten hours a day on my business and then go out and play a wedding reception. But if you love what you're doing and you're a real musician, you can't put it away. I just want to have the time to be able to take care of my wife and family, run my business so that it keeps growing, play as many gigs as I want, and be able to take lessons from Joe Porcaro for another year. That isn't too much to ask, is it? After all, I've already realized one of my dreams. And the fact that a Cuban refugee can have a dream and make it come to reality in a reasonably short time is proof that this *is* 'America the Great.' That sounds corny, but it's the honest-to-God truth. I am so fortunate, and so proud, to be an American citizen and part of this great experience."

Randy May continued from page 33

outs. In the beginning it was very crude, but I was convinced that the fundamental of a drum is best represented internally. I also did a little homework into the basics of how a microphone works. I came to understand that a microphone in a close-miking situation hears only a very small portion of what a drum really is. A drum isn't a speaker, projecting a single sound that's already been processed. A drum creates a total spectrum of sound, and a mic' needs to be in a position to hear that total spectrum. When you put a mic' outside the drum and right on top of it, it's only hearing a small portion of that total sound.

"I started looking at different hardware ideas, including shock-mounting and the concept of rotating the capsule to isolate different frequency responses. I found that even though the fundamental of a drum stays symmetrical as it moves lin-

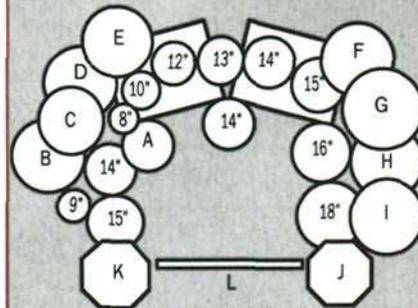
BOBBY ROCK (Vinnie Vincent Invasion)



Photo: Mark Weiss

Best known for his thunderous drumming, Bobby Rock is a multi-faceted individual whose strict self-discipline, talent and sheer persistence have led to early success with the hard rocking Vinnie Vincent Invasion. With the new 'All Systems Go' destined to emulate the success of their self-titled debut album, it looks like this is the year for Bobby to make his mark.

Bobby stresses ... "My desire to master my instrument led me to study all styles ... Jazz, Funk, Latin and Classical ... but I am a rock drummer! I use body-building to develop the strength and stamina to play harder and faster. Rock drumming is about attitude. It's about 'letting the animal out.' It's about power, energy and conviction. Whether on the road or in the studio I'm continually making my statement."



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| C - 18" AA Chinese | I - 20" AA Rock Crash |
| D - 20" AA Rock Crash | J - 18" AA Rocktagon |
| E - 19" AA Rock Crash | K - 18" AA Rocktagon |
| F - 20" AA Rock Crash | L - 40" Gong |

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early through the drum, if you can isolate any portion of that fundamental, the sound will have a characteristic change. The rotation of the capsule, to me, was the real hook, because it allows the drummer to get that particular color—or portion of the fundamental—that he or she wants to hear."

Randy felt that his product could succeed in the marketplace. But he also felt a need to retain control over its design and construction, in order to maintain the quality he felt it should have. Consequently, instead of selling the idea to a major company, he decided to manufacture the miking system himself. But he was also realistic enough to realize that he would need help with distribution and marketing, and a solid, consistent buyer.

"The first company I approached declined it—not on the basis of lack of merit, but more from a marketing point of view. They didn't feel that it fit into their line; they weren't in the business of selling microphones. So I went to Slingerland. What I needed the most was purchase orders to help us at the bank. Sales projections are fantasy; purchase orders are reality—at least to the bank. In addition to the purchase orders, Slingerland could also give the miking system exposure through their large advertising budget, lend a certain amount of credibility to it by the association with their established

name, and market it through their extensive dealer network."

Although the MAY EA mic's sold by Slingerland did well, the drum company was suffering financial distress. As a supplier of products to Slingerland, Randy was caught up in its difficulties. He is reluctant to discuss all the details, since the Slingerland company has been sold and re-sold in the ensuing years, and none of the people involved in Randy's difficulties are associated with the present Slingerland company. Randy also doesn't believe in dwelling on the past. But he does feel that the experience provided him with "an education" that he is willing to share with other drummers in the hope that they might avoid similar problems.

"What went sour was simply money. Not a lack of ours, but a lack of their ability to pay their bills to us. Everything that we supplied them sold; there was nothing collecting dust in inventory. But it came to a point where the only way we'd get paid was to hold up their shipments. Things lasted just a couple of months past a year, until it reached a point where we had to say 'That's it; we cut you off.' And then there was a major trauma. All of a sudden we were sitting with raw materials on hand and purchase orders for more that we had to honor, and now we didn't have sales to generate income. It was a real horrendous

experience.

"On the other hand, it's important to know that you're going to survive. That was a real scary thing. We had a young child, a fledgling business, and there were—for us, at least—some absolutely huge dollars involved. I mean, we had payables out against sales checks that started flying back. We would look at checks every day as they came in, just wondering if they were going to cover what we had to put out. And when we finally got over that crunch, we had to consider where we were going to go from there—where our new market was going to be. But even though it was so stressful, we had to stay calm; we had to say, 'We're going to get through this.' We didn't know *how*, but we were determined to do it.

"Now I'd like to say something that might be of particular benefit to somebody else. If there's one thing that you have to always hold on to, it's maintaining your own integrity and the credibility of what you did in the first place. Those two things are what got us through the bad times. Everywhere we turned, we had help—not because people pitied us, but because our track record was very clean. We exercised business in a manner that we would want people to do with us—the 'Golden Rule' as applied to business. I never abandoned that idea, as

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much as I felt we were being defrauded, swindled, and cheated. I still always addressed the parties concerned very politely, pointing out the fact that the scales were out of balance.

"But there was a positive side to all of this. I had been worried that all the problems Slingerland was creating with a product that bore my name—along with a marching carrier that didn't but that most buyers knew I supplied—was going to destroy my chance for setting up my own business. I was afraid that if we did survive this crunch and I picked up the phone to call a dealer, there wouldn't be any credibility left. But I found that the majority of the dealers of significant size knew exactly what was taking place. And they offered me encouragement, saying that the products were sound and viable, and that we had to find a way to continue with them. That meant an awful lot.

"It's scary to realize that a situation that has nothing to do with music can literally destroy a product—regardless of whether the product itself is viable. Most musicians have a tendency to feel that if a product exists, it does so to fill some void. Conversely, they tend to feel that if a product leaves the market, it must not have been a good product. But we learned that that isn't always the case. Our product didn't do anything wrong, we didn't do anything wrong, and yet we were almost removed from the marketplace."

Once the association with Slingerland was terminated, Randy had to establish his company as an independent business. Aside from informing dealers that they would now be dealing with him directly, Randy's first task was a simple one: he had to keep his company alive!

"We operated on a pretty basic philosophy: If our products were as real as everybody was telling us they were, we had to find a way to stay around to have the opportunity to prove it. My wife went to work for someone else, and I worked a lot in the shop by myself. We simply didn't spend 15 cents more than was necessary. One thing that we had to do was put

all development on hold. Development puts capital at risk, and we didn't have any capital to risk. There was also a lack of advertising based on little or no budget for it. Our main thrust was to stay on top of the payables. In addition, we had to run the business on a day-to-day basis, including making out the checks, taking orders for sales, creating price lists—all without any employees. Life was pretty tight for a while.

"But you know, there's always a bitter-sweet element to every story. I would never want to go through that trauma again, but what I did learn was that with every week or month that would go by, the phone kept ringing. It was like we were out on a raft in the middle of the ocean at times, but somebody was sending us food and water—in the form of orders. It made me believe that if we could just get healthy again, we had a chance to really get back to where I would like us to be. Since that time, it's just been a matter of slow, deliberate growth, along with the addition of a few new items to the product line and some carefully placed advertising."

Today, Randall May International is on solid financial footing, and its products have been visible in the field and in ads for a while. Are there any obstacles that Randy feels he still needs to overcome?

"Yes! Most drummers have the perception that miking is strictly for volume. In reality, my system was developed to capture the real acoustic sound of the drum. Because an internal mic' hears more of the total drum, there is a better representation of what that drum sounds like internally than externally.

"At one time, there were plenty of people who said that man didn't need an automobile. And today, there are plenty of people who say that they don't need to mike their drums. But if drummers can replace the concept of 'miking for volume' with the thought that they are miking for *displacement* and *quality*, then they'll realize that they *do* need to mike their drums. The quality of sound they want to project shouldn't be limited to a

'WILD' MICK BROWN (Dokken)

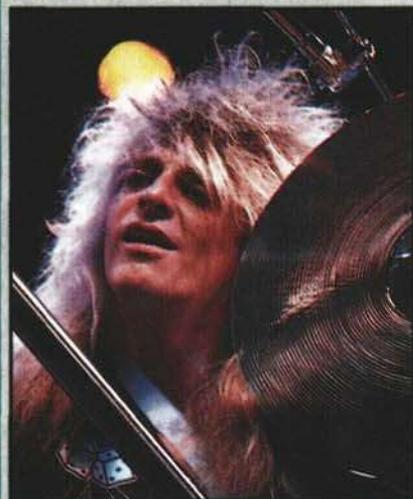
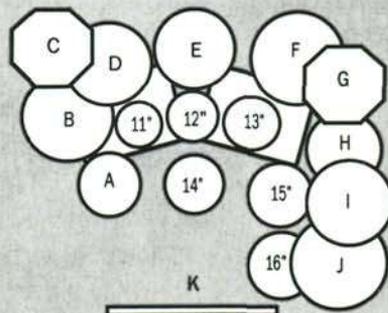


Photo: Pat Rodgers

With the platinum successes of their albums 'Tooth and Nail', 'Under Lock and Key' and their latest hit 'Back For The Attack', drummer 'Wild' Mick Brown and his bandmates in Dokken, have firmly established themselves as one of rock's most enduring and successful acts.

Heavily influenced by the likes of Keith Moon and John Bonham, Mick has been the big beat for Dokken over the past seven years and freely admits to being a wild, hard-hitting player. Flamboyantly driving the band from within his 'cage of rage', Mick tells us... "Sabian cymbals are the most durable I've ever played, cutting through those screaming guitars and delivering the clean, punchy sounds I need for both studio and stage."



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| C - 18" AA Rocktagon | I - 20" AA Medium Crash |
| D - 20" AA Rock Crash | J - 22" AA Chinese |
| E - 19" AA Rock Crash | K - 48" Gong |
| F - 22" AA Heavy Ride | |

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"Another problem I'd like to eradicate is that when people see our system, they think that they have to mike every drum. That should not be their focus. What they're playing 90% of the time is kick and snare, so that's where all the presence should be in their drum sound. If the floor tom doesn't have a cannon sound, the song lives. But if the kick and snare are suffering, the whole thing is suffering.

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"I realize that my system is not going to be applicable to all drummers in all situations. Drummers who don't mike their drums at all because they play exclusively in very small rooms, or drummers who play in bands that mike only their vocals and have smaller sound systems, will probably not benefit from my system. There's no sense in miking a kick drum if you're going to be hearing it through an 8" monitor speaker, because you're not going to get very much in return.

"Another thing I'd like to get my end users to think about is that they can trigger electronics from MAY EA mic's. The manuals for a lot of electronic drum brains state that the units can't be triggered from *external* mic's without interface devices. And they're right. But when you mike *internally*, you can do it. I don't want to alienate anybody here, and I'm not knocking anybody's interfacing product. But while you may not be able to trigger as well with internal mic's alone as with external mic's and interface devices together, you can do it well *enough* that you have to make the judgment call as to whether or not it's worth \$1,000.00 to do it *a little bit* better. And my answer to that would be no."

No product design, no matter how good, is ever flawless. Randy admits to one unforeseen—and almost catas-

trophic—error in his initial design for the MAY EA system.

"When we first launched the product, I have to admit I missed one point *big-time*: Drummers were put off by the need to drill holes in the drums in order to mount the mic's. For me, drilling a couple of holes in the drums to get all these wonderful benefits just didn't register as any sort of impediment or obstacle. That was probably a lack of understanding—on my part—of the personalities of the people who were going to be my market. We addressed that problem by creating the non-drill adapter. One of the sacrifices that must be made with the non-drill adapter is the fact that you have to remove the head to reposition the mic'. Also, the additional hardware involved adds a bit to the cost. But keep in mind that someone going into miking for the first time would most likely have to buy both a mic' and a stand, and our non-drill adapter is inexpensive when compared to a boom stand.

"Elaborating a little further on the 'mistakes' we made, there was another, and it goes back to Slingerland. I didn't realize how many people would perceive the MAY EA system as a *Slingerland* concept of miking drums. When Slingerland first took on the distribution, we had virtually no major artists endorsing the miking system. We were new, and we figured

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that the bigger name would carry more weight. Who knew this MAY EA guy? But it was all perceived as a *drum company's* interpretation of how to mike drums—and what do drum companies know about miking drums? At the time, we only offered the Shure SM57, and although that's a fine mic', many engineers were attached to their AKGs and Sennheisers. They saw one microphone that was supposed to apply to every drum in a set, then saw the name 'Slingerland/ and it just didn't work. There are probably a lot of people out there who still think it was Slingerland's creation.

"Compounding that problem, when the MAY EA mic's were first launched, they were placed on some Slingerland drums with slots at the top of the shells. That was something that really had nothing to do with the miking system. It was an interpretation of how to play around with the acoustics of the drum by allowing it to 'breathe' symmetrically. That's something you're not going to get anybody else to agree on; it's my opinion. But because I liked it so much, that was the way I originally showcased the product to Slingerland. They, in turn, liked it a lot, and we launched the miking system that way. Unfortunately, it was then perceived that the drum had to be vented in order for the miking system to work! And since Slingerland was the only drum company making those vented drums, the further perception was that, if drummers wanted to use the MAY EA system, they *had* to buy Slingerland drums to use it in. The first ads for our system actually looked like ads for Slingerland drums offering the *option* of internal mic's. That was a terrible mistake, and we took it away very quickly."

As Randy's company has developed, he has diversified. He recently introduced the *TAP Key* powered tuning tool, a device he feels is useful to drummers at any level of the business.

"Tuning drums is something that drummers do every day, almost from the very beginning of their careers. Every drummer needs a tuning tool. I put it in a category with sticks and heads. The key element to the device is the clutch mechanism that disengages the drive shaft so that it stops turning at a certain torque rating. A shortcoming of the *TAP Key* is the fact that, because it is small and compact, the battery pack on it is very shallow. But it was designed to be pulled out of a trap case to do one, two, or possibly three heads. If you've gone through three heads on one set, you need more than a *TAP Key*! You're going to have to re-think your whole approach to what you're doing."

Randy does have a *Tap Key II* for those who need a more powerful tool. But that device also has a major limitation, which

Randy is aware of.

"The list price on it is around \$130.00. Now where is the market? That product really only exists underground for roadies, drum companies, repair technicians, etc., who are very often changing a lot of heads at a time. If I was convinced that people would spend \$100.00 for *TAP Key II*, I'd introduce it on a full-scale basis."

Since going into business full-time, Randy has not continued with his playing. Does he regret that?

"I don't regret it, but I miss playing. But there's no way I can do both. To do the type of playing that I was fortunate enough to have a small taste of takes a total commitment—even more so today. I feel very fortunate that I was able to do a little bit of both, in that the playing level was high enough that I could leave the stand, go back to my hotel room, and start brainstorming on developing some of my product ideas. But I think it would be very difficult to maintain the conflicting personalities necessary to be both a performer and a businessman, because you have to be able to turn off the appropriate button at the appropriate time. When you wear the 'performer' hat, you have to approach that stage with a certain self-esteem, because you're putting a lot on the line. It's called 'having an attitude.' Athletes use it all the time. You can't walk onto a playing field thinking that you're going to get your ass kicked, because then you will. But if you take that same 'attitude' into a business meeting, it creates the opposite situation from what you desire. It comes off that you're not willing to come to the party with anything.

"A lot of drummers have come to me with new product ideas, but have also come with their 'prima donna' attitudes. They have the idea that the innovative inanimate object is so powerful, it will revolutionize the industry. That's the biggest myth that exists today. No matter what any slogan may say to the contrary, *nothing* is good enough to sell itself.

"But I must admit, when touring drummers come down to our shop today and start talking about what they've been doing or what they're about to do, I do get caught up in the memories. Just for a moment or so, I get a little urge, thinking, 'Wouldn't it be nice if I could just time-capsule into one little concert—be a mini-pop-star for one show—and then get the hell out!' I still get a charge out of hearing the excitement of the other drummers. It's fun to share their euphoric feelings about music and what they're doing. And when they can do that with something that we supply them, that provides us with a lot of satisfaction."

JON FARRISS (INXS)

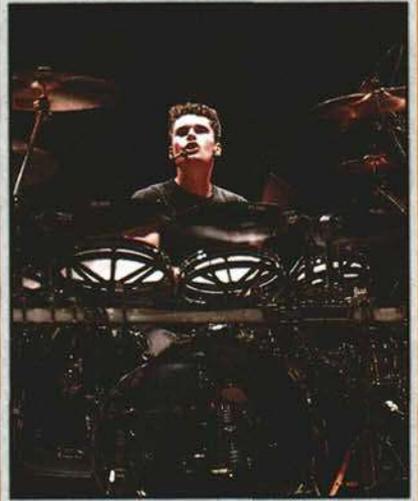
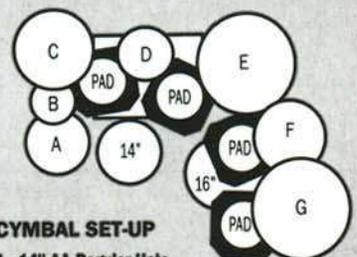


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The Whole Package

A number of recent coincidences have once again led me to examine my feelings toward the use of electronics in club drumming. I did a column on the subject back in May of 1982, when "electronic percussion" meant a couple of *Synare 3*'s added to your kit. I touched on it again in May of '84, when I discussed the use of drum machines in conjunction with live drumming on club gigs. But technology has advanced an almost inconceivable amount since then, to a point where it now seems as though the question isn't "Should I get into electronics?" but rather "How should I go about getting into electronics?"

The latter question, at least, is the one I get repeatedly from *MD* readers and from drummers that I meet in the clubs. As Ron Spagnardi points out in this month's editorial, it's a question that is on the minds of a lot of drummers these days. But I believe it's *especially* important to club drummers who make part or all of their living from playing popular music. Electronics seem tailor-made for drummers in club bands whose appeal often depends on their ability to recreate the wide variety of hit songs on the pop charts at any given moment. I recently had occasion to speak with representatives of most of the major electronic product manufacturers, and they all felt that, even though many drummers perceive electronic percussion devices as high-ticket items suitable only for studio drummers or concert artists, it is really the Top-40 and wedding-band drummers who stand to benefit the most from them. That position certainly makes sense when you consider that you might need to play Whitesnake's "Here I Co Again" and Los Lobos' version of "La Bamba" back-to-back some night, to say nothing of the rest of the styles and sounds that make up Top-40 music.

Based on all of the above, I'm in complete agreement with the *concept* of incorporating electronics. But as Ron also points out in his editorial, a major consideration has to be expense. When thinking about "getting into electronics," drummers need to be aware of everything that that phrase entails. In other words, they need to consider the whole package.

Let's start by assuming that you have decided to add some electronic sounds to your kit. You've done some preliminary research, and have made your choice in terms of what sound source you're going to use (drum machine, electronic drumkit brain, etc.) You are

"into electronics."

But wait a minute. How are you going to activate those sounds? Will you use triggers attached to your acoustic drums, or separate trigger pads? Then there is the matter of cables going from your triggers to your sound source. These often come at extra cost, but no electronic system can function without them.

Okay, you've obtained the triggers and cables of your choice, and you're ready to generate sounds from your electronic sound source. The question now is, what are those sounds going to go through to get to your audience?

That question can best be answered by asking another: How are the acoustic drum sounds reaching the audience now? If you are currently miking your drums, the likelihood is that your band has a pretty substantial sound system. To mike an entire drumset requires P.A. speakers large and powerful enough to handle the low-frequency transient peaks produced by kick drums. The P.A. must also have the high-frequency capability to reproduce cymbals clearly and accurately. These requirements may not pose a problem for a lot of club bands today, since many such bands own large, sophisticated P.A. systems, or play exclusively where house systems are used. Generally speaking, systems of that nature can easily handle electronic drum sounds.

But what if your band uses a smaller system to mike only the vocals? Very often, speaker systems that are perfectly fine for vocal-only applications are not powerful enough to handle the "push" from even an acoustic kick drum (when miked up). If this is the case, the potential for speaker damage from even more powerful electronic sounds is very real.

If you are in this position, you have several options. The first is to convince the band to buy more powerful speakers. In some cases, this may not be as hard as it sounds; bands often need "just one more reason" to make an equipment upgrade that they had been considering anyway. On the other hand, if the other members of the band do not mike their instruments, they may see no reason to upgrade a perfectly adequate vocal amplification system just to allow for electronic drum sounds. In that case, your second option is to purchase an electronic compressor or limiter to reduce the strength of potentially damaging signals before they reach the speakers. This will, of course, also affect the sound of the signal. Your third option is

to go entirely self-contained, amplifying the electronic drums through your own amp/speaker combination in the same way that guitarists and bass players do. Of course, this requires another substantial investment in additional equipment on your part.

Even assuming that the band has P.A. speakers that can handle electronic drum sounds, how about the mixer? How many channels are available? If the drums are already being miked through the board, it's likely that several channels are already dedicated to them. Are there more available for multiple electronic signals as well? If not, what options do you have to solve *this* problem?

One solution may be provided by your electronic sound source. Many provide both individual outputs for each channel *and* a stereo output that can be mixed right on the device itself. In this way, you can mix the electronics yourself, and you'll require only two channels at the board. (It might even be possible to go down to a single, mono mix, if necessary.) But if your machine does not have such a capability, or if you want to retain individual control over each different electronic signal, you'll need to come up with an outboard way to mix your electronics before they go to the main board. This means another investment: a mixing board. Most drum machines or electronic brains offer at least six output channels; many offer more. So you can figure on needing at least a six-channel mixer. These come in console or rack-mount models, from very basic configurations right up to memory-programmable units. But none of them come cheap, and you'll want one with enough control parameters to help you get the best sounds possible out of your electronic sound source.

Let's back up just a moment, and assume that your band does have both the proper speakers and enough mixing channels to accommodate whatever electronic system you create. That takes care of what the audience hears. What about what *you* hear? You can't use electronics effectively if you can't hear what they sound like. You must also be able to hear them in relation to the sound of the rest of the band, in order to achieve proper balance control. This requires monitors.

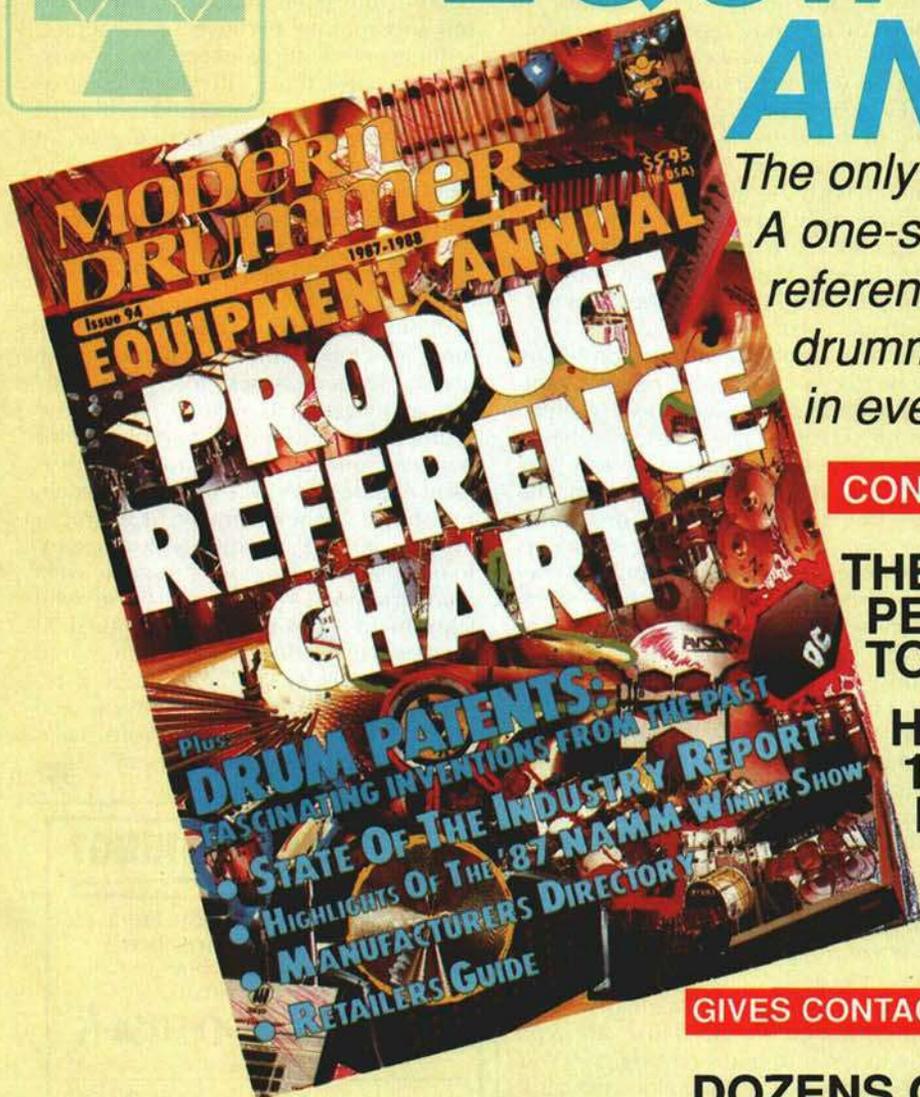
Once again, if your band has a sophisticated sound system, and especially if you do some singing, you probably have a pretty decent monitor system already. In this case, just make sure that your monitor speakers—which are generally

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smaller than most house speakers—can take the "impact" of an electronic kick drum.

On the other hand, you may very well be used to much smaller monitor cabinets. With stage space at a premium, many club bands employ the Hot Spot type of monitor that is often seen mounted atop a mic' stand. You should be aware that the small speakers in these monitors are not likely to be able to take the kind of abuse that electronic drums will give them. (I recently discovered a similar problem when I tried to mike my acoustic bass drum and monitor it through a Gallien-Krueger 200MV monitor amp. The 6" speakers "flapped" precariously with the impact of the sound, and I was afraid that their magnets were going to come flying right through the front of the speaker cones.) Even if your monitors have the necessary power and durability, they may not have the fidelity to reproduce low-end signals faithfully. Consequently, your kick drum sound is likely to be very "clicky," rather than full-bodied and solid.

The only solutions to these problems may be to employ sizeable monitor cabinets—such as the typical "floor wedge" seen on concert stages—or to use headphones. The first is expensive and may present a space problem—given the stage limitations that club drummers often have to deal with. The second is certainly less expensive, but may or may not be desirable, based on how much you move when you play, whether or not you sing, and any number of other factors.

Let's assume, at this point, that you've been able to get everything you need together in order to create a basic electronic setup. You now have a sound source, appropriate trigger devices, either a mixer/amp/speaker system of your own or the necessary equivalent in mixing/protection equipment to run through the P.A., and an adequate monitor system. Are you ready to perform?

Well, yes and no. You've just invested a couple of thousand dollars into delicate electronic equipment. How are you going to get it to and from the gig? You can't very well carry it around in the cardboard boxes it came in. And once you get to the gig, how is the equipment to be set up in order to make it convenient to use?

As I mentioned earlier, much of today's electronic equipment is designed to be rack-mountable. This could very easily include your sound source, your mixer, your compressor/limiter, and even your monitor amp (if you're running your own). You'll need a road case, fitted with the appropriate rack-mounting hardware, to carry everything safely, and to put it all on stage within easy reach. If your sound source is a console-type drum machine—as many are—and your mix-

ing board is also of the tabletop variety, you may need separate cases or covers for them, and you'll need to find a way to place them near enough to you for easy control. You'll need patch cords to hook all the equipment together, and one or more multiple AC-outlet bars (the type with a circuit breaker installed) to power everything without the need for a lot of extension cords.

Whew! Okay, now you're ready to incorporate electronics into your club drumming. And once you get proficient with the basic system I've outlined, you'll be able to expand into MIDI, and possibly incorporate the use of samplers, sequencers, multiple effects processors, etc. Of course, they'll all have to come as additional investments, and will also require appropriate supporting gear. (If this keeps up, you may need to consider investing in a larger *vehicle!*)

It may appear to some that the tone of this column is anti-electronic. I want to stress that this is not the case. There is no one who sees the potential for musical, economic, and career-oriented improvement for club drummers inherent in the use of electronics more than I do. But I feel an obligation to make sure that those drummers interested in exploiting this potential understand the total involvement required. We all know that a certain investment in equipment that is appropriate in style, size, and quality is necessary in order to play a given gig. I simply want club drummers—especially those who support a family on their musical income—to realize that "getting into electronics" is, in fact, a "package deal" worthy of serious consideration and research. So consider the *whole package*, and then make your decision.



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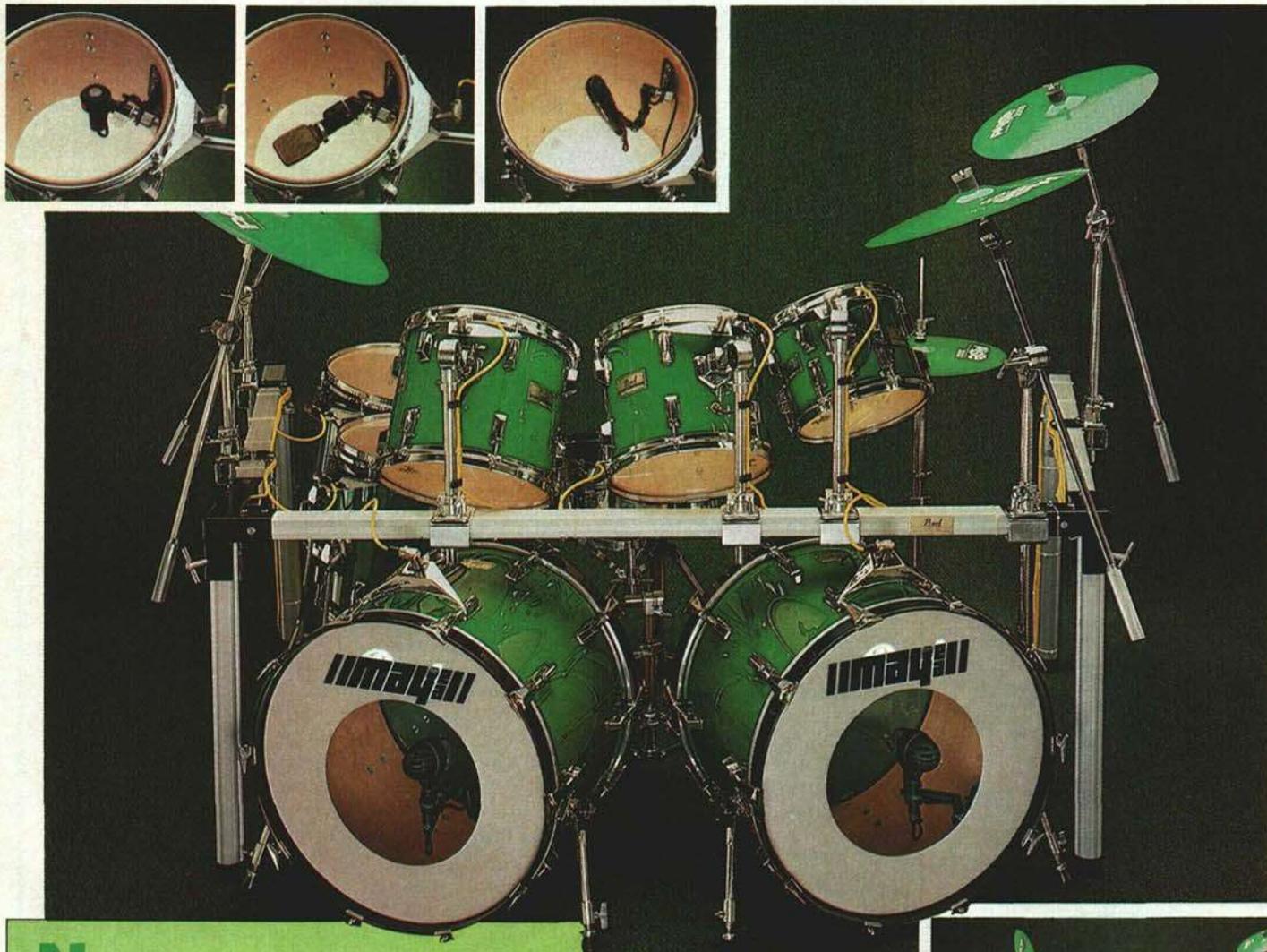
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The inset photo shows the drumset with the same mikes on individual floor stands. Isolating the mikes inside each drum results in more efficient sound reinforcement, recording, processing and triggering with less leakage, crosstalk and ambient interference, not to mention a noticeably cleaner appearance. Shown at top, left to right: MAY EA 57R, 409R and 421F.



by Roy Burns

Time

Drummers live by "time"; it is so important to all of us. The dictionary defines time as it pertains to drummers: "Keep time—to maintain the tempo or rhythm." But there are other references to the word "time" that also apply to drummers. There is, for example, "Time signature," without which reading music would be impossible.

Musicians will often say things like, "Is this guy on time? We don't want a drummer who is always late," or, "Can this drummer keep time?" or, "This drummer is a great timekeeper."

The word "timing" indicates a good sense of rhythm and coordination. Then there's the term "double-time," which means to double the tempo. And "time-out" is a phrase that we all like.

There was a drummer by the name of Joe Timer. I've always loved that name; *that's* a name to instill confidence. "Relax! Joe Timer is on the gig." There is also a famous bass player who has a great name for a rhythm player: Joe Comfort. I had the opportunity to play with Joe, and his name is well-deserved. Joe Comfort

is a "comfort" to play with.

Drummers talk about time and time playing. When criticizing another drummer, the old expression was, "To him, 'time' is a magazine. This would indicate that the drummer in question had little or no sense of time.

"What time does the rehearsal start? What time do we go on stage? Do we have time to change? Don't let the time lag on the second song. We were on time all the way." These expressions are taken for granted. *Time* is taken for granted. Drummers with precious little experience will criticize a famous drummer's "time feel." Time is a subject that drummers discuss, worry about, argue about, and often disagree on.

During a tough recording session, the drummer might lean over to the bass player and ask, "Was the time okay on that last track? Did the time pick up, or is it just me?" Drummers are concerned about time—and rightly so. Your reputation as a time player will determine, to a great degree, how many jobs or auditions you get.

Other musicians sometimes expect a drummer to be a human metronome. They seem to think that, no matter how much the bass and lead guitar rush or drag, the drummer should maintain a perfect tempo. This just isn't the case. Time is everybody's business. Your time is as good as the people you play with. For example, from my own experience, I've found that playing with college bands as a guest artist can be tricky. Young players get excited, and often the tempos wander more during the concert than at the rehearsal. However, whenever I play with Jeff Berlin or Ray Brown on bass, there is never a problem.

Once we get past the point of being able to keep reasonably steady, metro-

nomic time, we get into the area of "time feel." This separates the pros from the amateurs. "Time feel" requires experience and a knowledge of the music being played. At this level of playing, metronomic time is not enough; it must also "feel" right, it must "fit" the style, and it must be appropriate for the arrangement. "Time feel" is also very personal. A drummer might have a great rock feel and yet not be so good at jazz, and vice versa.

Ed Shaughnessy probably has the toughest job in the business when it comes to "time feel." Ed never knows what to expect when he goes to a *Tonight Show* rehearsal. It might be a rock number, a bossa nova, something in 7/4 time, something extremely fast, or a very slow ballad. Ed has to adjust, and he has very little time in which to do so. He has limited rehearsal time and a lot of music to rehearse. Yet, every night, Ed comes up with the right "time feel" for each song. This is no easy job; Ed just makes it *look* easy.

At long last, Steve Gadd has made a solo album called *The Gadd Gang*. Joey Farris and I were listening to Steve's album recently, and Joey said, "Man, *that's* time. What *great* time." I heartily agree. Each tune on the album has its own "time feel," and each feel is perfect for the tune. Everyone plays well on the album, but that *time* is always alive and always in the pocket. It is almost as if Steve had thought, "It's about time to remind everyone what we are really here for." He never plays one extra or unnecessary accent; he always plays the music. I think Steve's album should be required listening for drummers of all ages and styles. He shows us, in very clear terms, that drummers are the "keepers of the time."

Steve also plays some very interesting fills and short solos, but this album is about getting back to basics and laying down an irresistible groove. You can't keep your feet still when you listen to it. Steve can play a lot of stuff, as we all know, but you can tell he *loves* to groove.

That may be the point. Most drummers *love* to play the drums, but some especially love to play time and lay down that groove for the rest of the band. To one degree or another, I think all of the great drummers, past and present, share that special quality; they love to play time. Steve Gadd's album is a vivid reminder to all of us that "time is where it's at!"



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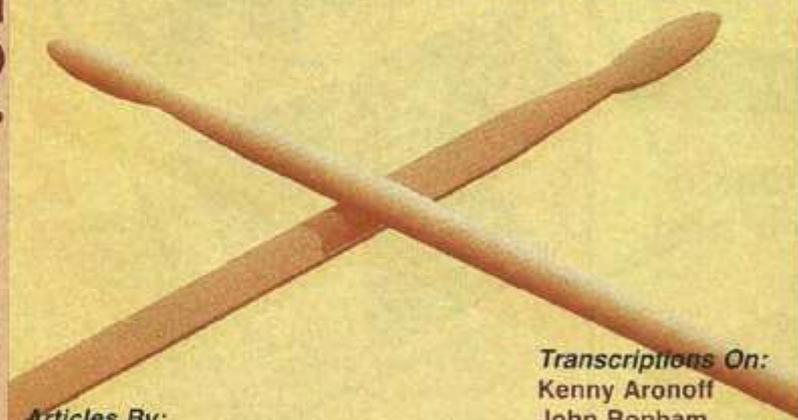
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IN MEMORIAM—RAY BAUDUC

Jazz drummer and composer Ray Bauduc died on January 8 of this year. The veteran of the early jazz and big-band era was 81 years old.

Bauduc played with Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey in a seminal 1930s group called the Wild Canaries, and later gained fame as the drummer for Bob Crosby's Bobcats. While with that group, he collaborated with bassist Bob Haggart to write "South Rampart Street Parade" and "Big Noise From Winnetka," both of which were million-sellers for the band when recorded in

the late '30s. Ray was also the author of *150 Progressive Drum Rhythms*, which was published in 1940.

During World War II, Ray was a member of an elite army band that toured military bases around the world. After the war, he continued his career as a player with other notable bands, including the Jimmy Dorsey and Jack Teagarden bands, and small Dixieland groups he co-led with Nappy Lamare. Ray retired from full-time playing in the late 1970s.

GADD AND COREA JAM AT NAMM

Steve Gadd and Chick Corea, playing together for the first time in years, performed an impromptu jam at the Drummers Collective booth at the NAMM Winter Show. Steve backed Chick—along with

additional keyboard masters George Duke and Patrick Moraz—on snare drum, in a musical performance that drew a sizeable and appreciative crowd.

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MD TRIVIA WINNER

Modern Drummer and Yamaha Drums congratulate Kurt Schramer, of Bellingham, Washington. Kurt's card was drawn from among those having the correct answer to the MD Trivia Contest question in the January issue. The question was: "Name the drummer who once made a solo album titled *Blues For Dracula*." As a surprising 99% of those responding correctly

stated, the answer is jazz great **Philly Joe Jones**.

For his winning answer, Kurt will receive a Yamaha Limited Centennial Edition *Power Recording Custom Series* drumset, one of only ten distributed in the U.S. with a special Red Sapeli finish. With the included hardware, the prize is valued at over \$5,000.

INTERNATIONAL MARIMBA SYMPOSIUM

The Leelanau Enrichment Programs recently announced the First Annual International Marimba Symposium of the Americas, to be held July 3-8 at the Leelanau Center for Education in Glen Arbor, Michigan. In cooperation with Marima Alta/KORI Percussion, Dr. Laurence Kaptain will conduct the performance-oriented symposium covering the marimba ensemble literature

and traditions of Mexico (Chiapas), Guatemala, and North America. All activities will be geared towards collegiate/adult marimbists. Advanced high school students may apply and will be evaluated for acceptance into this program. For further information, write or call: Leelanau Enrichment Programs, Glen Arbor, Michigan 49636, (616) 334-3072.

ROB. THE DRUMMER OFFERS ANTI-DRUG MESSAGE

Rob Gottfried, better known as *Sesame Street's* "Rob, The Drummer," recently made several appearances in the Houston area under the sponsorship of Pro-Mark Corporation. Rob's presentation, "Arts: The Original Alternative To Drugs," has been performed all over the world. During his visit to Houston, the performance was videotaped for broadcast on the nationally syndicated *Kid's World* television program.

Pat Brown, Pro-Mark's National Sales Manager, coordinated the appearances. Says

Pat, "Rob is able to entertain his audiences in such a way that, once their defenses are lowered, he can pitch his message without 'lecturing.' The kids really respond to his mix of philosophy and hands-on participation in the musical part of his program." Pat further states that he will be happy to put anyone interested in a "Rob, The Drummer" performance in touch with Rob. Contact Pat Brown, Pro-Mark Corporation, 10706 Craighead Drive, Houston, Texas 77025, or call (713) 666-2525.

ENDORSEMENT NEWS

Carl Palmer has been touring Europe doing clinics for Remo, while new artists **Mickey Hart, Bob Moses, Pete Magadini, Mickey Roker, and Mike LaCotta** have joined the Remo roster....**Sonny Emory**, chosen to tour with the re-formed Earth, Wind & Fire, is now a Sabian artist....Calato Manufacturing, makers of Regal Tip drumsticks, recently announced the addition of **Ron Tutt, Bud Harner, Mike**

Kennedy, and Doug Huffman as endorsers....Zildjian states that its **ZMC-1** Cymbal Microphone System is being used on tour by **Neil Peart, Kenny Aronoff, Alan White, Joey Kramer, and Rikki Rockett**, while **Gregg Bissonette, Alex Acuna, and Steve Smith** have been using it in the studio and in rehearsals. In addition, **Anton Fig** has been using the system on the *Late Night With David Letterman* show.



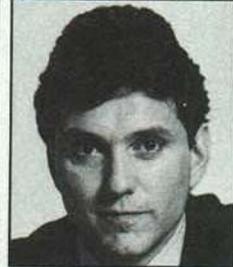
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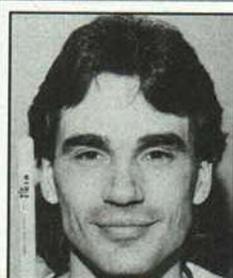
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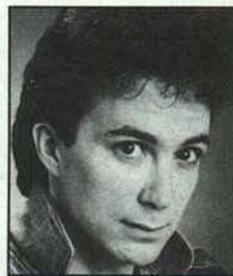
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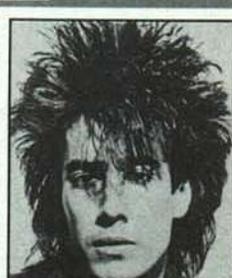
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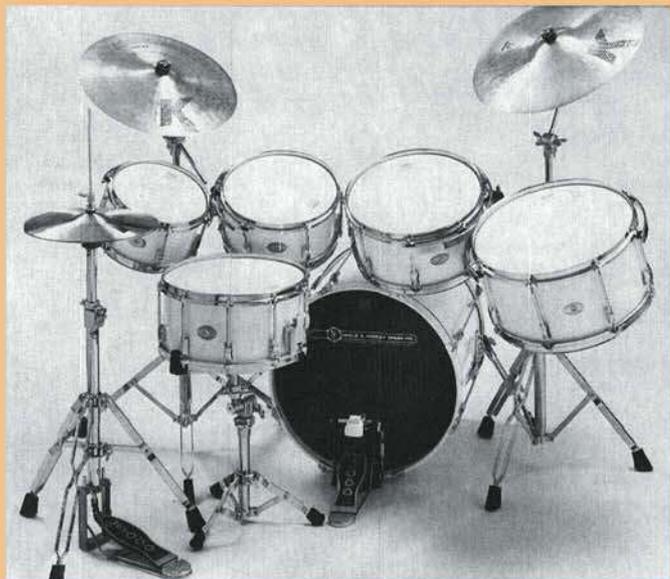
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maximize shell vibration and add the necessary mass for a cleaner, denser sound. Yet the toms are smaller than generally recognized sizes. The *Star* kits offer 6x14 or 7x14 snare drums, 6x10, 6x12, 6x13, 7x14, and 8x16 RIMS-mounted toms, and 16x18, 16x22, 16x24, or 18x20 bass



drums.

Also new from Noble & Cooley is the 6x12 *Drumbali*, which the company states is "part snare, part timbale." Its small dimensions give it the acoustic qualities of a piccolo snare when used with the snares on, while its 6" depth gives it the depth to function as a dynamic, resonant timbale with the snares off. The throwoff is the same as is used

on all N&C snare drums.

All Noble & Cooley drums feature die-cast chrome rims and polished-brass triple-chrome-plated tension casings. Finishes available include white, black, red, or blue catalyzed polyurethane, and clear or honey maple. For further information, contact Noble & Cooley, Water Street, Granville, Massachusetts 01034.

TRUELINE STICKS

Trueline Drumsticks has expanded its distribution area so as to offer its sticks to drummers world-wide. In addition, the company has added special sizes to its model line, including *Heavy Metal 58* and *28 (1/2"* longer than standard *56* and *28* models, with a fast-tapering shoulder for extra wood at the point where conventional sticks break), a *58 Rocker (3/8"* longer than conventional models and also beefed up at the neck), and an extra-strong drum corps model called the *18-20 Special*.

Trueline sticks offer four tip variations: wood, nylon, double-butt end, and "NW" (said to offer a full sound between nylon and wood). In addition, certain models are available with the specially-lathed "Trueline Grip" for increased wrist flexibility during hard, fast, high-energy matched grip playing. For more information, contact Drummers' Network, 25971 Adelanto, Mission Viejo, CA 92691, (714) 770-7760.

LP PERCUSSION TABLE



Latin Percussion recently introduced a portable, collapsible Percussion Table, designed to mount or support

a multitude of percussion instruments. The two-tier upper structure is of tubular construction to accommodate multi-clamps and accessory booms holding cymbals, mic's, etc. A total of 28 cowbell posts can be mounted around the perimeter of the table and across the two tiers for mounting bells, triangles, tambourines, chimes, etc.

The table's top is covered with a rubber material that cuts unwanted noise and creates a "choked" cowbell effect (desirable for recording/performing). Overall size is 20" x 26". The table can be adjusted in height for both sitting and standing applications, and breaks down without tools into a package 20" x 26" x 3" for transport. LP's Percussion Table comes with the two-tier setup, six cowbell posts, three triangle holders, and a carrying bag. For more information, contact your local LP dealer, or write Latin Percussion, 160 Belmont Avenue, Garfield, New Jersey 07026.

POWER PUTTY

Zimmco Marketing is distributing a new exercise material known as *Power Putty*. A flexible Silicone rubber compound, the material can be squeezed, stretched, and pulled. Its flexibility allows the user to isolate and strengthen specific areas of weakness for smooth, even dynamic levels of play. According to the manufacturer, *Power Putty's* versatility "makes it the only system capable of working the hand and wrist in all directions for optimum dexterity and coordination." The material is available in four color-coded resistances (soft, medium, firm, and hard) to suit individual needs for improved conditioning, development of the weak or awkward hand, and general warm-up exercises. The system includes *Power Putty*, case, and exercise instructions. For more information, write Zimmco Marketing, 1315 Trestle Glen Road, Oakland, California 94610.



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Profiles in Percussion

Manu Katché

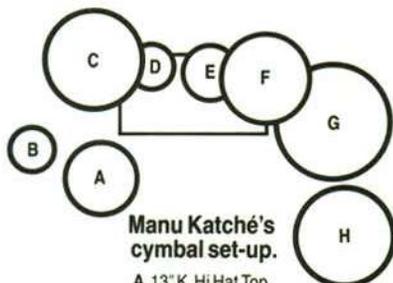


Manu was the number one studio musician in Paris, France before coming to the attention of Peter Gabriel.

His playing was a major contribution to the feel of the "SO" album and certainly was the heart of the sound of the hit single "Sledgehammer."

Manu's approach to the drums is refreshingly creative and unaffected by any technical preconceptions.

Now his unique sense of time and groove is getting him noticed by top artists and producers around the world. Between tours with Gabriel, he has recorded with Joni Mitchell, Robbie Robertson and most recently with Sting.



Manu Katché's cymbal set-up.

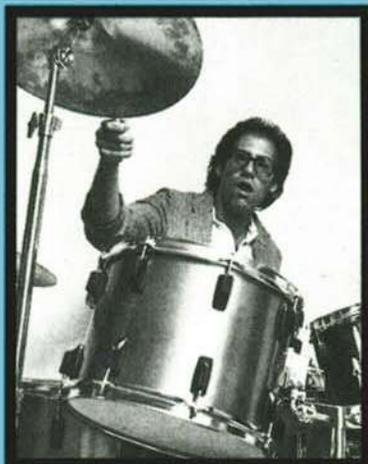
- A. 13" K. Hi Hat Top
- 13" Z. Dyno Beat Hi Hat Bottom
- B. 8" K. Splash
- C. 17" K. Dark Crash
- D. 8" A. Splash
- E. 10" K. Splash
- F. 16" K. Dark Crash
- G. 20" A. Medium Ride
- H. 17" K. China Boy Brilliant

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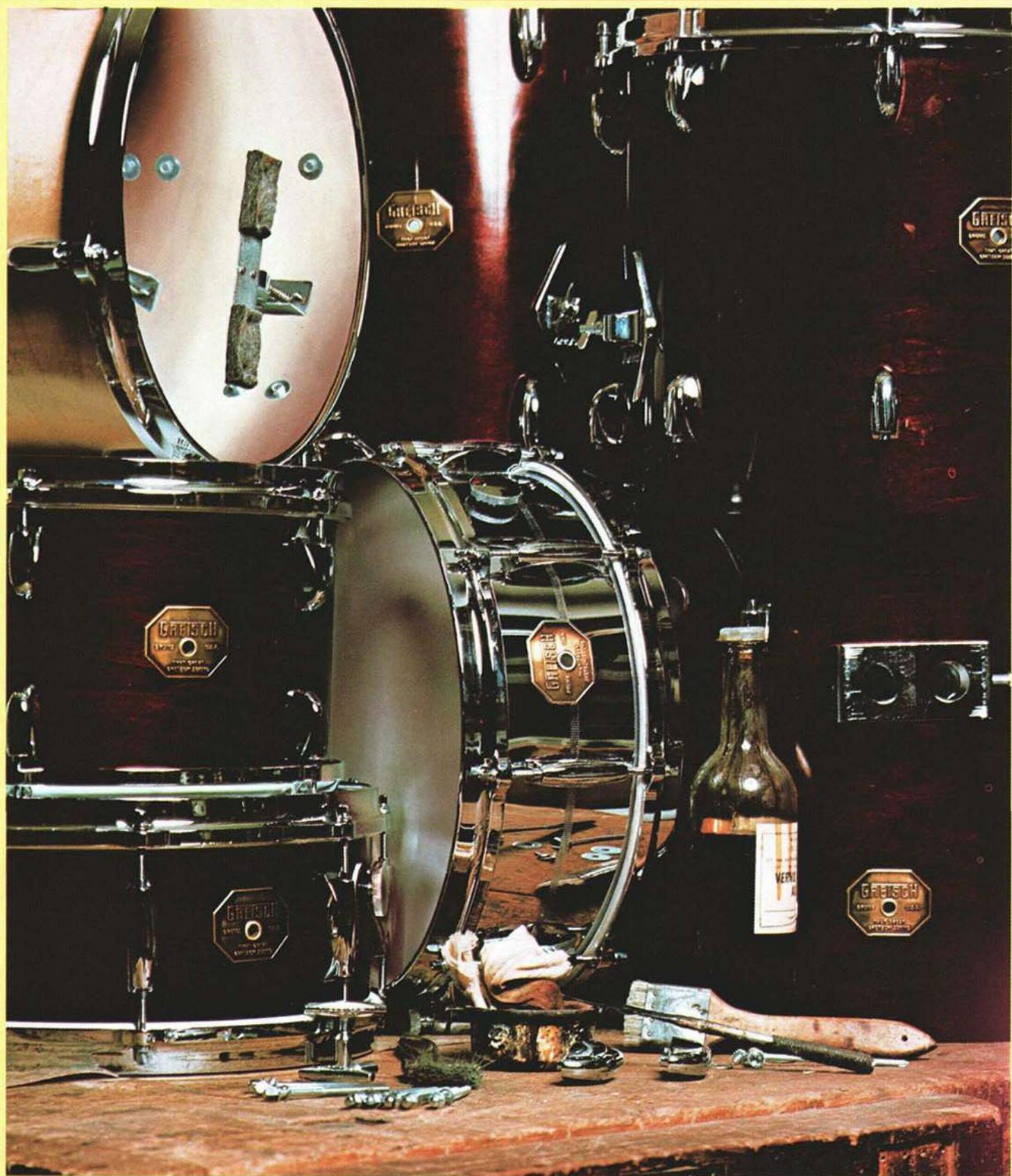
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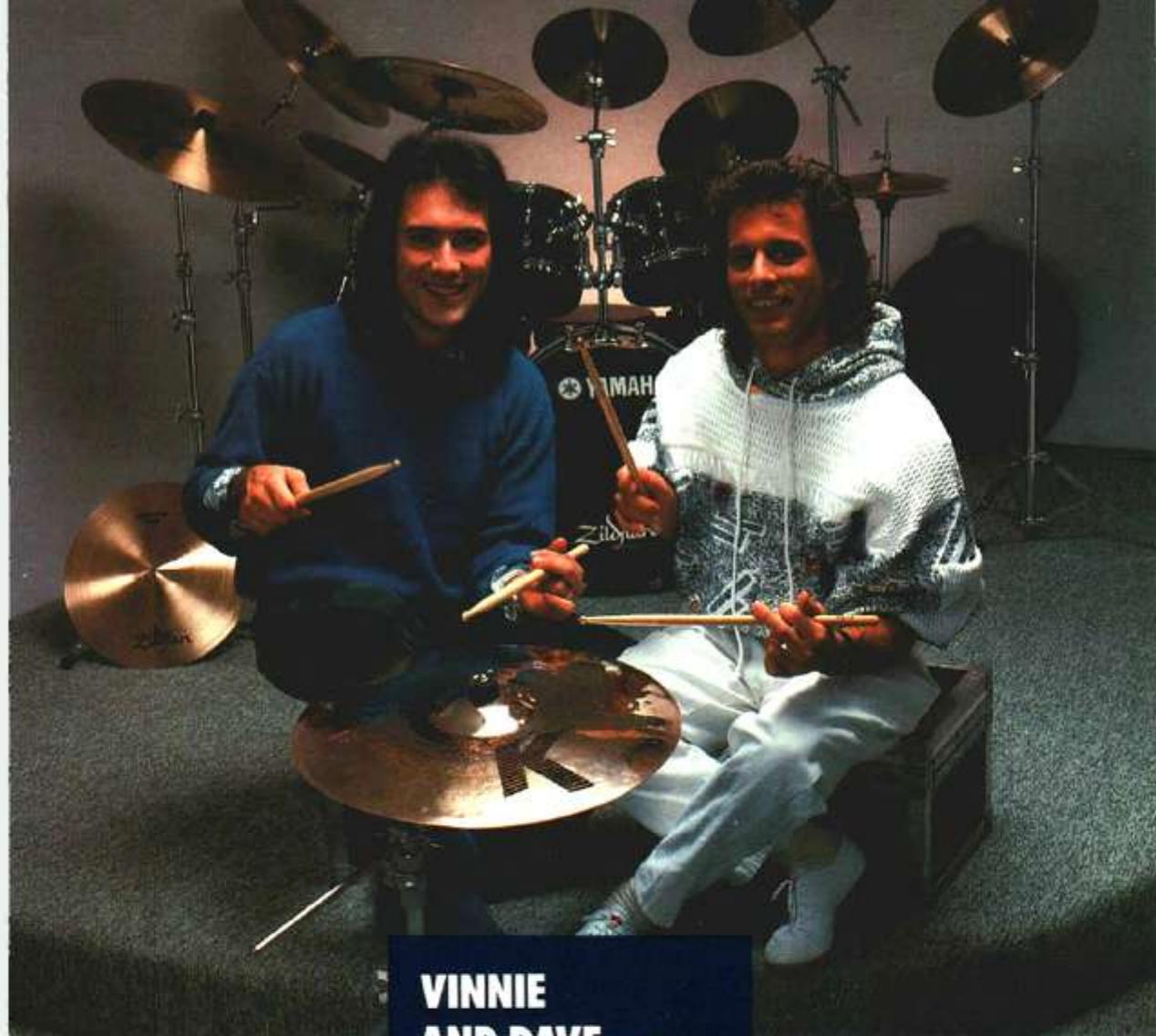
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"Zildjian is really tuned in to the needs of the drummer. Their people are out in the field listening and doing research, asking drummers what they want in cymbals," says Vinnie Colaiuta, L.A. studio drummer who's played with Frank Zappa, Joni Mitchell, Gino Vannelli, Tom Scott, Chaka Khan and The Commodores.

Dave Weckl, currently with Chick Corea, explains. "I told Zildjian I wanted the perfect ride cymbal for all occasions. One that had just the right amounts of brilliance and attack, but not too pingy. Sort of a dry definition that would allow me to carry out the emotion of the music."

"So I actually worked in the Zildjian factory, experimenting with new designs. We combined "A" machine hammering and "K" hand hammering, no buffing and buffing. The result is what is now the K Custom."

"The K Custom is a nice, warm, musical ride cymbal with a clean bell sound, yet it's not too clangy. I can turn

around and crash on it without having to worry about too many uncontrolled overtones. It blends perfectly," says Colaiuta.

Zildjian continues to play an instrumental role in shaping the sound of modern music—by working closely with leading-edge drummers like Vinnie and Dave.

"I'm always looking for new sounds and so is Zildjian. In fact, that's how we came up with the idea of mixing a Z bottom and K top in my Hi Hats. The K gives me the quick, thin splash characteristic I like. And the Z provides that certain edge. They really cut through," says Weckl. "Which is important because of all the electronics that I use."

"Zildjian's really hit upon a winning combination in terms of delivering new concepts. They're creating cymbals that have a musical place and make a lasting impression," claims Colaiuta.

"Zildjian is as sensitive to the needs of drummers as the drummers are towards their instruments," concludes Weckl.

If you'd like to learn more about Zildjian A, K or Z cymbals, stop by your Zildjian dealer. And discover the virtue of listening.

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