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DRUM MAGAZINE
MARCH '89

MODERN DRUMMER



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Dave Mattacks

MANHATTAN
TRANSFER'S

Frank Colon

INSIDE
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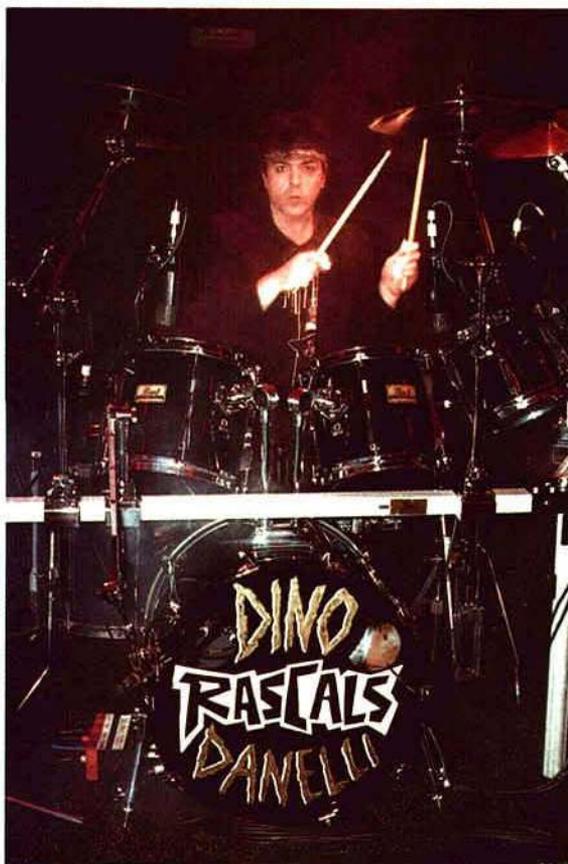


Photo by Lissa Wales

18 DINO DANELLI

As drummer for the Rascals in the '60s, Dino Danelli brought a fresh approach to rock—one he based on big band jazz drumming. During a recent Rascals reunion tour, Dino reflected on his career, including his work with Fotomaker and Little Steven & The Disciples Of Soul.

by Robyn Flans

24 DAVE MATTACKS

After joining Fairport Convention, Dave Mattacks played a big part in merging a sense of groove with English folk music. He discusses the overshadowing of English music by American music, and talks about his work in the studio with such artists as Jimmy Page and Elton John.

by Simon Goodwin

28 FRANK COLON

Although he is often called upon to perform as a Brazilian percussionist, Frank Colon's background is actually in the Salsa tradition. He explains the differences between the various Latin cultures that make it difficult for musicians to cross over between styles.

by Robert Santelli

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With the advent of the CAD/CAM hoop, Evans drumheads have taken on a whole new life. We spoke with Bob Beals, who traced the history of the 30-year-old Evans company and explained recent advancements.

by William F. Miller

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Win a set of Paiste cymbals autographed by Carl Palmer.



Photo by Lissa Wales

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EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

A Reader Profile

Every two years, *Modern Drummer* conducts a readership survey. The purpose of the study is twofold: First, it helps the editors maintain a clear focus on the primary interests of our readers and offers us an opportunity to monitor the changing needs and wants of the readership. The second reason for the study is to supply our advertisers with information on reader preferences, income, and buying habits, among other data, which they use in structuring their advertising campaigns. Here are a few interesting points that emerged from our most recent reader study.

As expected, the overwhelming majority of readers are male with a median age of 25, and primarily drumset players performing at the semi-pro level. Most are employed full-time and have graduated or attended college. An impressive 22% have been playing between 10 and 14 years, and their musical preferences fall in the areas of rock, jazz, heavy metal, R & B, and fusion, in that order.

Of great satisfaction to *MD* editors was that most readers found our feature articles informative and well-written. The majority felt that our editorial balance was on the money, though a significant percentage requested a bit more emphasis on new-product reviews. As a result, steps have already been taken to beef up our coverage in this department.

The rating of *MD*'s columns remained pretty much in line with previous survey results. *Ask A Pro*, *Product Close-Up*, *Concepts*, *It's Questionable*, *Rock 'n' Jazz Clinic*, and *New and Notable* were on top of the list with most readers. And among our artist/columnist roster, Rod Morgenstein, Peter Erskine, Kenny Aronoff, and Craig Krampf scored highly with the largest percentage of readers.

The majority of the readership claimed that we've been covering electronics in accordance with their current needs. Requests for additional information were mainly in the areas of miking, amplification, triggering, and sampling. The survey also re-emphasized the fact that most of you *do* read music, and find the examples and exercises very helpful and well-balanced. Our name-artist *Sound Supplements* and the *MD Equipment Annual* also drew extremely favorable ratings.

A few miscellaneous facts also surfaced, which I'm delighted to report: 61% of our readers look through their copy of *MD* six or more times; 96% save each issue for future reference, and 73% have ordered equipment or sent for further information after reading a manufacturer's advertisement. Finally, 95% consider *Modern Drummer* the most informative and entertaining of all the magazines they currently subscribe to, and number one in helping them decide on important new equipment purchases.

The reader survey was conducted by an independent research firm affiliated with the University of Maine. The research team had complete control over all facets of our study. My thanks to all those readers who participated in *MD*'s survey by responding to our somewhat lengthy questionnaire. Hopefully, the information we've gathered will ultimately benefit everyone in the world of drums and percussion.



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READERS' PLATFORM

JEFF PORCARO

Outstanding cover story on Jeff Porcaro! [November '89 MD] The best element of the interview was how it revealed Jeff as a very *human* drummer—not like many people's concept of a studio musician as sterile, mechanical, or disinterested. Jeff plays from the heart obviously because that's where he feels things. I would have given my favorite *Radio King* snare drum to have been in the studio during that first Ricki Lee Jones session!

William Piltner
Chicago IL

Thanks very much for the informative interview with Jeff Porcaro. I found it especially enlightening when Jeff described the trials and tribulations of being in a touring band—especially the financial ones. I also was gratified to read that Jeff still feels compelled to go on "playing out" even though it might not make him rich. My hat is off to a guy with this kind of talent who savors the fun and emotional feedback of live playing as much or more than the admittedly lucrative environment of the studio. I've always enjoyed Jeff's work with Toto, and I'm glad to know that Jeff does, too!

Cynthia Billings
Butte MT

RAYFORD GRIFFIN

Thanks for the long overdue story on Rayford Griffin in your November issue! This guy has been a monster for years, yet nobody seems to have been aware of his incredible talent. I appreciated the insight that Rayford shared regarding his differing attitudes toward pop and fusion. He's been there with both, and he really knows what he's doing. William F. Miller asked some

good questions, and Rayford had the answers. The musical sidebar was a treat, too. Nice job!

Tom Verlaine
Baltimore MD

RIKKI ROCKETT

I was all set to scream and yell about your putting Rikki Rockett in your magazine. I mean, Poison is nobody's Rush, and Rikki is anything but an exemplary drummer—especially when compared to the company he was in in the November issue. But I must say, I was pleasantly surprised by his attitude. He may not be a *great* player, but he seems like a *serious* one; he knows what is required of a drummer in an image-oriented band like Poison, and he conscientiously seeks better ways to go about meeting those requirements. I don't particularly like his band or their music, but I can still respect the guy for expressing himself in an intelligent manner and approaching his job in a professional one. I have a feeling that only a magazine like *MD* could have brought out this side of Rikki; most fanzines would have played up the bad-boy, macho-pucker image instead of concentrating on Rikki's approach to his job and his instrument.

Paul Bleyer
Redding CA

INFO FROM ED

Many drummers around the country have asked me for some years now how they could get a copy of Buddy Rich and myself in a "drum battle" on the *Tonight Show* in 1978. I recently played the S.S. Normandie "Jazz Cruise" week, and met the man who is the best source for videos on drummers from past TV shows, movies, etc. Interested drummers can buy the Buddy Rich/

Ed Shaughnessy drum battle by contacting G's Jazz, c/o Gary Alderman, P.O. Box 9164, Madison, Wisconsin 53715. Gary's phone number is (608) 274-3527. He has a great listing of Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa, and other clips for drummers and fans, and will make up a video of your choices! Thanks for helping me pass this info along.

Ed Shaughnessy
Woodland Hills CA

LP RESPONDS

I'd like to address a personal response to M.B., of Mt. Pleasant Hills, Pennsylvania, who wrote to your *It's Questionable* department in the December '88 issue regarding a problem connecting the snares on a Cosmic Percussion snare drum. To M.B.:

Having read your question in *Modern Drummer*, I wanted to write and thank *MD* for their professional and informative answer. I also wanted to offer a suggestion of my own. Having been a drumtech for some major drummers—and a hard hitter myself—the one thing I found that solved the problem for me and other drummers that I've worked for is plastic-coated aircraft wire. The Hinger Drum Company used this wire both to affix the snares to the drum and for the snares themselves. I'm sure that if you check your local *Yellow Pages*, you could find a wire distributor who could be of help to you. If you continue to have trouble, please feel free to write to me at LP Music Group, 160 Belmont Avenue, Garfield, New Jersey 07026.

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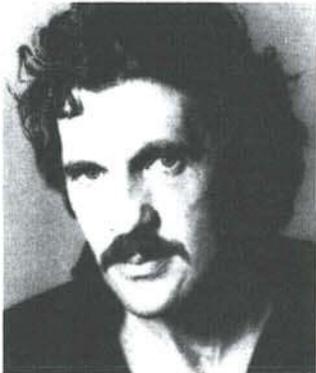
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Jim Capaldi



According to drummer/artist Jim Capaldi, *Some Come Running* is his best solo effort to date. Why does he think that? "I'm getting much better AOR radio response than ever, because of the songs," he states. "That and maybe having a lay-off and recharging the battery."

Capaldi says he had two of the songs completed over a year before the album's release, and actually had no intention of putting the album out on Island Records. He was pursuing a production deal with Island when label head Chris Blackwell, upon hearing the completed record, insisted Capaldi re-sign with them.

"At the same time, I was getting offers from some other labels. But having spent most of my time with Traffic on Island, it was always a strange thing going out into the wilderness, so to speak. It never really gelled somehow, so now it's back home, and I think I have the best album I've ever made. It's just incredible how everything has turned around."

Jim says that, apart from the first single, "Something So Strange," his favorite cuts on the album are "Some Come Running," "Take Me Home," "Voices In The Night," and especially "Oh Lord, Why Lord." "That's the one with Eric [Clapton] and George [Harrison] on it," he explains. "I think it's the most dramatic track on the album. George played the arpeggio and slide guitar, and I have him swapping licks with Eric in the solo, which is beautiful. They didn't intend it; it's just that George's second lick didn't work out and Eric's first one wasn't so hot either. Yet they fit perfectly side by side. It was

beautiful. Then I got Eric to play the end, which is a big dramatic play-out, and it's a vintage Clapton solo. I would love the song to be a single. I think it could be a smash because it's the sort of single you don't hear every day."

For the most part, *Some Come Running* was recorded with programmed drums. "It was done on 16-track, and the basic shape of the songs was so good that we wanted to keep that feel. Then we went to a digital 32-track and had to re-program and write out the parts. As it turned out, the way we programmed it sounded very good for the songs as they were. So I wound up triggering the snares and bass drums, and playing fills and cymbals on top of the rhythm tracks. Usually in the past I played drums with a click, but it just seemed to work better this way."

Capaldi hopes to be on the road as soon as possible, and plans to have a Phil Collins-like situation, with two kits and him alternating between one of the kits and the front of the stage. He says he's quite at home taking the lead, since he was a singer before a player, and he never felt restricted by the title of drummer.

"There aren't too many successful drummer/artists, but I think that proves that if you do it and it is good, it really does come across. I wouldn't say I was an out-and-out drummer who did nothing but drums and sessions. My drumming was always based on feel. On stage I'm quite comfortable in front, and then I can go back and play the kit. I just want to give a good evening's entertainment, lay some really good grooves down, and really get off and see the people get off. That's what it's all about."

—Robyn Flans

Cozy Powell

Last year was prosperous for Cozy Powell. He made seven albums, did a film soundtrack, and is now in the midst of producing a new band. This flurry of activity—and the enthusiasm that Powell radiates in recent conversation—follows on the heels of some rather precarious career moves.

Cozy explains: "I had two really disastrous years. After the E.L.P. demise, I had to turn down a lot of work because of some business problems. I got caught in the middle of a mess through no fault of my own. Next came the John Sykes project [ex-Whitesnake guitarist]. I spent more than six months on that, only to be disappointed by what came about after he was signed to a record deal."

Cozy was then brought in to play on the latest Cinderella album. "Andy Johns was producing the LP at that time, and he's got definite ideas of how he wants drum tracks to sound," offers Powell. "After I came in, he also brought Tony Thompson and Denny Carmassi in, so I don't know what's mine on that album. I don't think any of us do."

Cozy also worked with Jack Bruce, although that project never made it past the record execs. "Jack, Pat Thrall, and I did a demo together earlier this year, which we thought was very good, but the record company who brought us together passed on it because they felt it wasn't 'commercial enough.' What do you expect when you put guys like us together? Too bad it fell on deaf ears."

Another project, which Powell just recently completed, was his work with the ever-evolving Black Sabbath, a turn of events that surprised a lot of his fans. "I got into that as part of the rhythm section for the new LP," he quickly points out. "Then I got more involved; I had a hand in the writing and the production. Just forget about the name of the band and check out the album."

When we spoke to Cozy in England recently, he had just finished the new Gary Moore



album, which promises to be the most likely vehicle to bring the drummer to America in 1989. The two had worked together on Cozy's solo albums several years back, as the duo make a striking combination in the studio. "What's interesting is that Gary has been working with drum machines in the studio for a while," he comments, "so it's gone full circle at last. Gary and his producer had programmed the whole LP, but Gary felt it needed more feel. So he brought me in initially to do just one track. I ended up doing six. When I heard the machine parts I said, 'If I can't do better than a machine, then I may as well retire.' We just gave the tracks a blast, and they did sound better than the machine." So has Cozy cured another guitarist of that nasty habit of using computers instead of drummers? "You don't want to let these guitar players get away with too much, otherwise drummers are gonna get walked all over," he laughs with a wink.

Will '89 be the year that Cozy comes back to the States to play some long-overdue live dates? "I don't attempt to predict what will happen to my career anymore," he responds cautiously. "The minute I say I'm going to do something, something crazy happens. I will say that '88 was a good year, and '89 will be even better because I will definitely be out on the road with Gary [European and Japanese dates have been confirmed for the spring], which will be an explosive tour, to say the least."

—Teri Saccone

Steve Riley



These days, Steve Riley has

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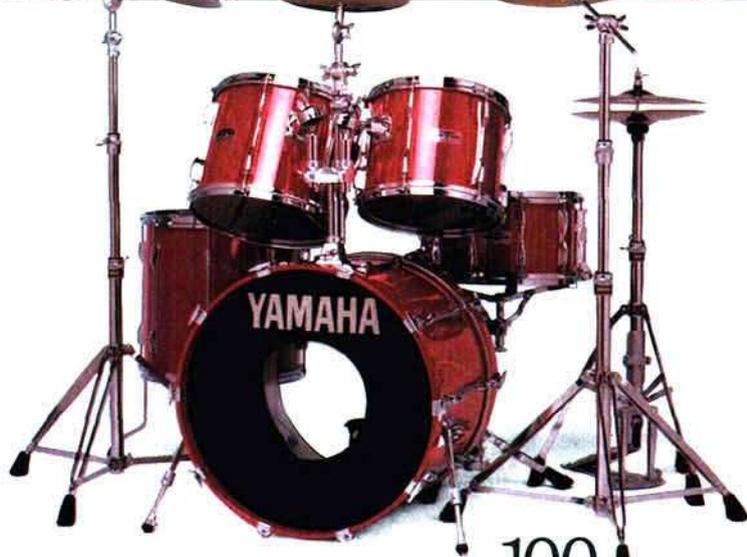


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settled in with L.A. Guns—the latest entry in the whole L.A. "sleaze movement," which favors grit, almost punk guitars, raspy vocals, and thrashing backbeats over production-conscious "corporate rock." Steve was once part of W.A.S.P., a group for which he doesn't exactly hold fond memories. "Around the time I left W.A.S.P. a couple of years ago," says the Boston-born, Los Angeles-based Riley, "I had been looking for a way out. And when Blackie [Lawless, leader of W.A.S.P.] wanted to go solo, I knew it was time to make the break."

How did he fall in with the Guns? "I started doing sessions again as soon as I was out of W.A.S.P., and one day when I was at S.I.R. Studios, the band was also there. I had known Tracii Guns for a couple of years, and he invited me to go out on tour. They had just let their drummer go after recording *L.A. Guns*, so they needed someone to fill in. I came in as sort of like a mercenary—I've done that before—and when there's a space that seems to fit, I just go for it.

"This is not as pretentious as W.A.S.P.," is how Steve describes his present band of gypsies. "It's a little bit more realistic, whereas W.A.S.P. was more of a novelty act, especially towards the last year I was with them. We'll see how things work out with this band, how far they are willing to take it. I think it will have some longevity and I think the next album—we've got a really big-name producer for this—will surprise a lot of people."

When he is reminded of his jazz background and asked if playing with his recent acts is satisfying, Riley replies, "First and foremost, I'm a drummer, not a 'rock drummer.' I never even listen to rock when I'm not playing it; I'm strictly a jazz fan. The problem is that I've got to make a living, and

that's why I go where I'm needed and just adapt. I've been at this for so long that I can easily switch to any format. I played fusion for a while in the mid '70s, and it was a real blast, but I couldn't make a living from it. Sure, I like to play music that's more challenging than rock, because rock can be really one-dimensional. But when I play rock I add my personal touch while playing exactly what the songwriter hears in his mind. The secret is to get total satisfaction out of the *drums*, if not the music."

—Teri Saccone

Bill Ward

Bill Ward laughs as he says that working with Black Sabbath was easy in comparison to recording his first solo project. "I had 28 guests on the album; just the footwork alone in trying to find Jack Bruce was incredible. In the end, I found him through Charlie Watts. But the project was a real good experience for me. I wanted to see what I was capable of doing outside of Sabbath and see what my limitations were and how far I could take it.

"It was an area of frustration for me as well, though," he admits. "I don't know if it's my perfectionism, but everyone else seems to like the album. I'm in the middle of it, and until I really reach the place where I want to go, however many albums that might take, then I guess I'll just say it was a good beginning for me.

"I learned a lot, actually," he continues. "I filled the tracks up a lot, and sometimes it worked. Then I'd take the tracks back out and like the simplicity. I wanted to see what the effects would be of just holding one note on the keyboard, for instance, and there were people in the studio saying, 'Bill, we just can't do this kind of stuff,' and I said, 'Let's do this kind of stuff.' We did it, and it turned

out really well—just droning notes, holding them and piling stuff on top of that. There's one track, called Tink Clouds An Island,' that Ozzy's lead guitar player heard

and ended up wanting to play on because he liked it. There were things I wanted to do in Sabbath that I was too timid to do, so it was great being able to say, 'I think this is going to be okay,' and having other people say, 'It worked!'

"I don't even know what my music is," says Bill. "It doesn't necessarily have to be hard rock. It comes out of me the way it comes out, so this album encompasses blues, jazz, and just about everything. Recording-wise, I wanted to focus on a lot of low ends. I love a lot of bottom stuff, so I filled it with a lot of cellos and bass—anything with a lot of depth."

Not only has working on this project been a thrill for Bill in the past year, but so has the fact that the Englishman finally got his green card, allowing him to live legally in the United States. "I had been trying to live here for eight years, but when I was young, I got arrested for possession of drugs, so the U.S. didn't think too kindly toward me. I fought it, though, and I'm really happy to be here. There was really nothing for me in England. I love the country, but all my family is gone, and I wanted to live here. I have kids in school, and these last two to three years have been the first time I have really gotten into knowing what a home life is. I even know the postman and the water man. I never knew this kind of life existed, and to tell you the truth, I like it a lot. I've been in hotels for over 20 years. I knew what the inside of a hotel and a bloody airplane looked like, but I never knew what it was like to have a real proper family life."

In his spare time, Ward writes children's books. He is also enjoying studying drums for the first time in his life. "It's taken me 33 years to finally get to the point of saying, 'I think I'm going to learn how to play drums.' So I've contacted Roy Burns, and I figure that's a good start. When I write my music, I know what drums I want to put there. However, when I'm playing sessions, or simply as a drummer, I find myself somewhat inadequate. I know where to put the stuff

and I can feel the song, but one of the things I've learned from working with so many different people is that I want to talk the language as well. I figure that if these guys can talk the language, why should I be so damn different? I think there's been a lot of ego on my part and also a lot of laziness, so I've taken the plunge!"

—Robyn Flans

News...

Frankie Toler is playing drums with the Gregg Allman Band while **Chaz Trippy** is on percussion...

Drummer/percussionists **Reggie Nichol森** and **Bobby Sanabria** recently returned from performing at the Salfelden Jazz Festival in Austria...

Tiffany Smith is the drummer in the house band on Arsenio Hall's new TV show...

Tommy Wells on albums by Ronna Reed, Deborah Allen, Foster & Lloyd, Jay Patten, Jo-EI Sonnier, and Squire Parsons...

Chad Wackerman on Ed Mann's new LP...

Pat Torpey winding up a tour with Robert Plant...

Jonte on drums with A Flock of Seagulls...

Michael Blair in the studio with Laurie Anderson, Eric Anderson, and Haiimi Misoguchi. He can also be heard on the new Disney tribute LP; he and **Jim Keltner** play on "Stay Awake"...

Vinnie Colaiuta doing a variety of recording, including two films—*Hunchback Of UCLA* and *Beaches*—records with Wang Chung and Klaus Ogerman, and an overclub on one cut of Julian Lennon's newest.

Live, he has been doing a smattering of performing with Lee Ritenour, some fill-in gigs with Allan Holdsworth, and one gig with Chick Corea. Around the L.A. area you can catch him playing in a trio with Alan Pasqua and Chuck Domanico...

Sandy Gennaro has joined Joan Jett & The Blackhearts, replacing **Thommy Price**...

Kenny Aronoff recently did a short tour with Richard Thompson...

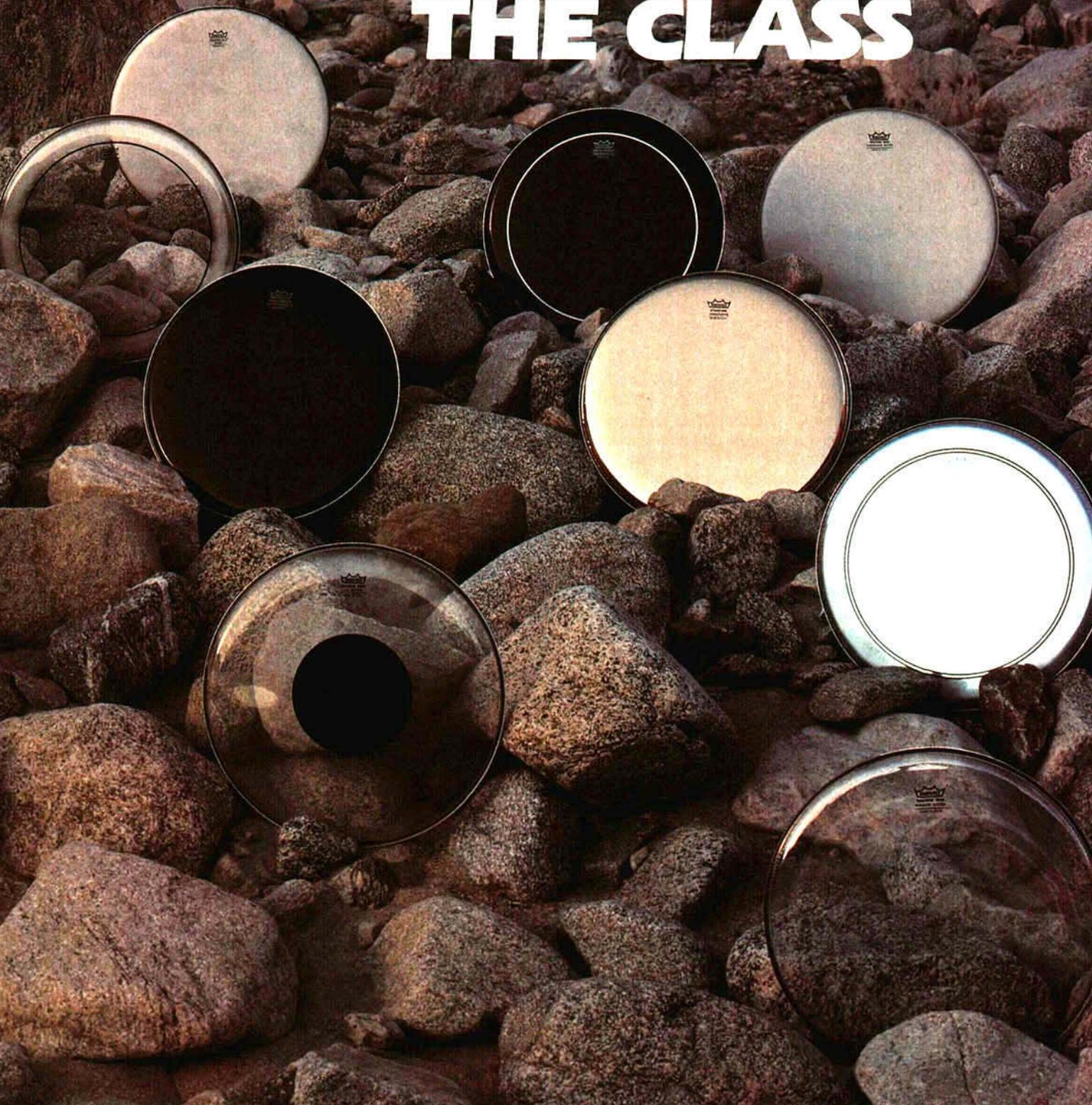
Zoro recently touring with Bobby Brown...

Earl Bennett recently on tour with Saved By Grace.



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Q. I am interested in purchasing the Neary Drum Torque tuning tool, but have been unable to locate a source. Could you provide some information?

R.H.

Mt. Home AFB ID

A. The Neary Drum Torque is distributed in the U.S. by Herco Products, 135 W. 29th Street, New York, New York 10011. They are a wholesale operation and do not normally sell to consumers, but you should be able to contact them to obtain the name of a retailer near you that handles the Drum Torque. If it turns out that there is no such retailer, then it's possible that Neary Products might be willing to ship you a Drum Torque directly.

Q. Could you tell me what positive or negative results a drummer could get out of a weightlifting program? I'm just interested in working out to tone up my muscles—not to get big and bulky. Does weightlifting slow down a drummer's speed?

A.S.

Turlock CA

A. Generally, a weightlifting program can be beneficial to a drummer, by increasing hand, wrist, and arm strength, overall stamina, and—as you suggest—general muscle tone. The key to success is a program tailored to achieve those ends. Obtain a good book on weightlifting and/or seek the assistance of a qualified instructor, and map out a program of exercises with appropriate weights and numbers of repetitions for toning the muscles rather than building them up. Check out the Modern Drummer feature "Weightlifting And Drumming" in the Dec.'80/Jan.'81 issue. You may obtain a copy of that article by contacting MD's back-issue department.

Q. I recently bought a set of two-headed drums of an unknown brand, and I noticed that the shells don't have the vent holes usually seen on quality drums. Should I drill them myself? If so, where? Should the hole size vary with the shell size? Will the size of the hole affect the sound?

I've also noticed that the wood grain of the shells runs perpendicular to the bearing edge instead of parallel—as in quality drums. Is this a drawback? Will it affect the sound?

H.C.

Buenos Aires, Argentina

A. Vent holes are placed in double-headed drums to allow air compressed by the impact of the drumsticks on the top head to escape from the shell. Without this feature, the heads are prevented from moving properly by the trapped body of air inside the drum. This results in a very "choked" sound from the drum. To maximize the sound of your drums, you should put such a vent in each shell.

There is no scientifically determined "proper" size for a vent hole, but most major drum companies drill a hole approximately 1/2" in diameter. You can do this yourself quite easily with a standard hand or electric drill, but be sure to start with a smaller-diameter pilot hole, and work up to the final diameter in perhaps two or three steps. This will help to prevent the shell from splitting when the final hole is drilled. It would also be a good idea to place several layers of masking tape on either side of the shell, to further protect the inner and outer surfaces from damage during drilling.

The vent hole in a drum is normally placed at a point that is centered between the top and bottom edges, and also centered between the tuning lugs on either side. (The exception to this is some bass drums that feature the hole opposite the tom-tom mount, and thus a bit closer to one edge than the other.) A metal grommet is generally installed in the vent hole to protect the edges and give a finished look. You can contact a hardware store for the proper size and type of grommet to fit.

A different size hole is not required for different sizes of drums. It may be a practical matter when it comes to drum manufacturing—one drill bit size for one operation—but drum companies seem to use one size of vent hole for all the drums on a kit. As long

as the hole is large enough to allow the air to escape sufficiently, sound should not be affected.

While it is not unusual to have wood grain plies running perpendicular to the bearing edges of a drum, it is unusual to see those plies on the outside. Most drum companies arrange the plies in such a way that the inner and outer plies run parallel to the bearing edges. This allows the inner and outer edges to be machined more easily. While this method may not affect the shell's strength, it is possible that the plies may be more likely to split or chip if the bearing edges are reworked or handled. Be sure to protect those edges as much as possible during head changes, and seek skilled help if you plan to have any work done on them.

Q. Could you please give me information as to where I may order videos on Afro-Cuban percussion?

T.S.

Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada

A. A new instructional video on Afro-Cuban percussion entitled Latin-American Percussion features European percussionist Birger Sulsbruck. It is available from DCI Music Videos, 541 Avenue Of The Americas, New York, New York 10011. MD reviewed this video in the January '89 issue.

A performance video entitled Babatunde Olatunji And His Drums Of Passion is available from Video Artists International, Inc., Box 153 Ansonia Station, New York, New York 10023. The video features Olatunji and a group of African drummers/singers/dancers in a 1985 concert, and was reviewed in the August '88 issue of MD.

Another performance video, entitled The LP Jazz Ensemble Live At Montreaux, features Tito Puente and Carlos "Patato" Valdez. This video is available directly from Latin Percussion (LP Music Group), 160 Belmont Avenue, Garfield, New Jersey 07026.

Q. In the past, I have consistently turned to Modern Drummer for advice and have always found the publication very helpful and inspirational. There is one issue, however, that I would like you to address directly, and that is: How can a reasonably talented and dedicated drummer like myself move on up into the more serious music world? I feel that I am ready to join the ranks of drummers who are involved recording albums and touring. How does one hook up with other good musicians? Does it involve relocating to another, more music-oriented area? What are some of the "roads to success" for a ready and willing drummer? Any suggestions or guidance on these subjects would be greatly appreciated.

J.B.

Potomac MD

A. There is no sure-fire formula for success that we can pass on to any drummer. As you will find from reading the interviews of various artists featured in MD, the "road to success" has often been very different for different drummers. However, MD has presented articles offering suggestions from people who have achieved success as artists, and from successful music business personalities. Check out Sandy Gennaro's "Your First Big Break" in the Sept. '84 issue, Michael Stevens' "Guide To Full-Time Employment (Parts 1 and 2)" in the Sept. and Oct. '86 issues, and Karen Pershing's "Breaking In" in the Dec./87 issue.

You might also want to consider getting help from a personal manager. If so, check out the article "Neil Appel: Manager On Management" in the November '84 MD. Contact our back-issue department for the availability of specific articles.

Q. I'd like to know why Ludwig and Fibes stopped making clear acrylic drums. Was there some problem with the sound or the material?

J.C.

Oak Ridge TN

Continued on page WO

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KAMAN

TERRY BOZZIO

Q. I recently spoke with someone about rimshots in studio drumming. I was told that engineers disapprove of such playing. Based on your recording experiences and training, how should one play the snare drum in the studio, as opposed to live playing? In light of your answer, how do you position your snare drum?

Dwain Hamilton
Tallahassee FL

A. I think out of all the work I've ever done, I've only been in two or three situations where engineers have told me not to play rimshots. Basically, I think it's the engineers' job to make your playing sound as good as possible.

It's the drummer's job to play what's appropriate for the music. Other than in jingle situations, or the kind of sessions where I was asked to kind of bend into another mold, I was always asked to bring my personality into it, and that involves pretty loud bashing. I almost constantly use rim-



shots on the backbeat, because I like that extra "crack" that it gives the sound. I haven't had anyone "disapprove" of that in at least the last ten years. But then again, if you're playing a lighter sort of music, and you want more of a beefy sound without the crack, you should play appropriately to

achieve that.

In terms of playing in the studio as opposed to live, I think I play a little less "destructively" in the studio—in other words, lighter and with a bit more control. Normally, in a live situation, I use Remo Ebony black dots, which are pretty thick, because they're the only things that will last through a show for me. But in the studio I always use Ambassador or Emperor coated heads, because they have more resonance and more of a crack to them, and they record better for me.

I position my snare the same way whether live or in the studio. Because I've always played matched grip, I tilt the drum slightly towards me. I sit pretty much with my thighs parallel to the ground or slanted down slightly, so I don't have my snare set particularly low. It's about at waist level. It's mainly a matter of what's comfortable, and it varies sometimes. If I find that I'm constantly hitting the rim instead of the head when playing backbeats (or hitting only the head when I want to hit rimshots), I'll adjust the snare level accordingly. I want the drum to be where my stroke naturally ends.

RICHIE MORALES

Q. A few years ago I had the chance to see you perform with Spyro Gyra. That concert was more inspiring and musically exciting than any other form of music I had been into before! I'd like to ask you what it's like to work with two other dynamic and talented percussionists. I could tell that the concert was very well-planned; musically, it moved well from the drumset, vibes, marimba, and the congas and percussion accessories used by Manolo Badrena. Do you first create the basic solo and let the other players continue building on that foundation? I'd also like

your comments on the contrast between the studio work involved in making an album and the freedom you and the rest of the band have on stage.

Todd White
Oregon WI

A. Thank you for your compliments and enthusiasm. It's always gratifying to know that someone out there is listening to and enjoying our music. Before I deal with your questions, I feel obligated to bring you up to date on Spyro Gyra, personnel-wise. Manolo Badrena is no longer with the band; we've been performing and recording without Latin percussion for over a year now. I miss Manolo's spirit and musical input; however, I greatly welcome the musical

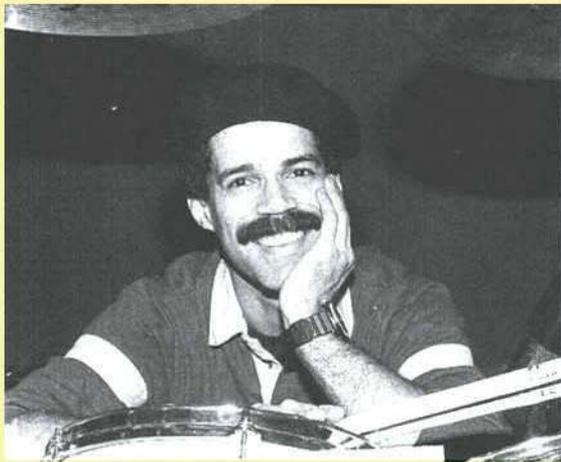


Photo by Rick Malkin

challenge and additional playing room his absence has created. The band is burning more than ever; I hope you get a chance to check us out soon!

Working with two other great musicians like Dave Samuels and Manolo was a great experience. Sharing the responsibility of keeping time and maintaining a vibrant, swinging pulse between three percussionists could be sheer pleasure or total chaos, depending on how well we heard one another acoustically or through the monitors. We also had to respect each other's rhythmic and harmonic space by listening. Although Spyro's shows always have the same basic format, there is room for creative expression on the part of all the members,

so parts are always evolving—especially within the percussion section.

As far as the percussion solo went, Manolo and I would draw from our common knowledge of Afro-Cuban rhythms—such as songo, mozambique, or 6/8—as a starting point. We then would stretch as far as possible, ending on a prearranged musical cue or unison break. I always likened this part of the show to walking on a tightrope: incredibly exciting, but also potentially dangerous if one should slip! Fortunately, we generally pulled it off.

The biggest contrast between studio work and live performance—generally speaking—is that in the studio you have a sterile, controlled environment with a producer in charge who has a very specific goal in mind. Through studio technology (MIDI, overdubbing, isolation booths, etc.), the producer can set about attaining his or her goal in a very meticulous fashion. In a live context, there are lots of other stimuli that make a band play in a different way. You're trying to put on a show, the crowd is screaming (hopefully), and the adrenaline level is high. These factors combine to make for a looser, more exciting feel. You know you have only one chance to get it right—to go out there and "kill it."

When contrasting studio and live situations, you're basically talking about two separate disciplines. To develop proficiency at either one requires a lot of time spent in that environment. I enjoy both types of work very much, and my personal goal is to become equally adept in both areas.



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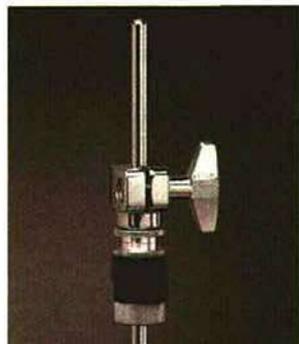
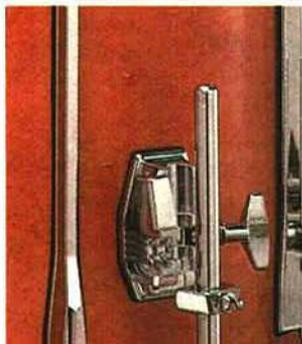
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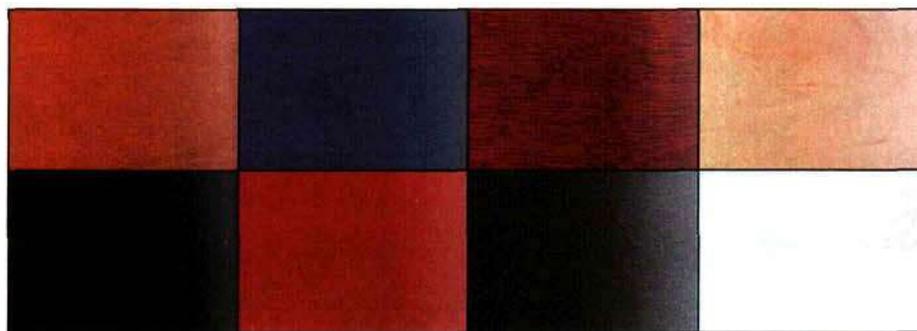


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DINO

by Robyn Flans

I couldn't wipe the silly grin from my face as Dino Danelli twirled his sticks in the rented rehearsal hall in Nashville. The Rascals were my favorite American group when I was growing up, and I had been very aware for many years that a lot of people were trying to get the group back together—but I also knew how unlikely a reunion would be. After the band had enjoyed such hits as "Groovin'," "Good Lovin'," "How Can I Be Sure," and "People Got To Be Free," a reunion had been the subject of dissention between the two lead writers, Felix Cavaliere and Eddie Brigati.

But here they were in front of me, Brigati—guitarist Gene Cornish, organist and vocalist Cavaliere, and drummer Danelli, along with auxiliary musicians, to bring the sound from the '60s into the '80s. I had run into Danelli a few years back when he was touring with Little Steven & the Disciples of Soul, but seeing him in this context, playing these songs—

still so poignant in our troubled times—it seemed to make an almost inexplicable sense.

As we talked after rehearsal, it was obvious that musical progression was of utmost importance to him. Twenty years had passed, and he was no longer the same kid who had appeared on The Ed Sullivan Show in 1967.

DANELLI

Dino's musical evolution began around 1958. Being the resourceful youngster he was at age 12, he cleaned out the coal bins beneath his Jersey City apartment house, set up a stage with a speaker and his drums, and played to records, calling it "Dino's Casino." As the kids in the neighborhood began to frequent the "club," Dino offered two sets a night until the place was raided and closed by the police. At the next place he played, a dive called The Transfer Station, he met Ronnie Speakes, with whom he joined and played rock 'n' roll for the first time. Playing the Metropole with Speakes was a thrill for Dino, who had spent many a night standing outside its doors listening to his idol, Gene Krupa. In fact, the people who ran the club remembered Dino and took him under their wing, so much so that they allowed him to live upstairs in one of the dressing rooms.

It was during this time that Dino became interested in art, at first because museums simply were a place to keep warm and hang out for hours. Dino's interest in art became more serious in time (he went on to be involved in the design of Rascals album covers), and he discovered such artists as Marcel Duchamp and other Dadaists, whose attitude he adapted to his playing: Anything goes.

It's with this same philosophy that Dino attacks music today—always staying open and current. Going over the old recordings, it was fun to talk about where he's been and where he's going.

RF: Max Weinberg talked about Dino's Casino in his book, but it doesn't seem that how you learned to play drums has been covered anywhere.

DD: I was totally self-taught. I used to get the old big band records—Benny Goodman, Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich—and I'd play along with them and learn all the licks. You really learn by doing that. I learned all jazz songs, so when Dino's Casino came along, I was into all that.

RF: You never had a lesson?

DD: In the Metropole days I went to this guy who was a drum teacher from the old days and kind of an eccentric character. I went to him about four or five times.

RF: What did you learn from him?

DD: I learned that you shouldn't go to people who try to sell you all these books that they've written. I'd pay five dollars for a lesson, and he would try to sell me like \$40.00 in books. I didn't learn anything about playing at all.

RF: How old were you?

DD: About 16.

RF: And you were how old when you actually started?

DD: About 11 or 12.

RF: What made you start?

DD: I saw Krupa and Rich on TV doing one of those drum battles. I was really a street kid, into all kinds of gangs and stuff. Jersey City was happening in those days with that kind of thing. And I remember I was getting ready to go out that night, standing there in my little leather jacket, and these two guys came on with their drums set up right against one another. They started playing, and I said, "This is what I want to do!" I was so turned on by that. Krupa and Rich together were great. I wish there were video tapes of all that stuff.

RF: Did that change things for you and give you a direction?

DD: It changed my life. If it hadn't been for that, I definitely would

have wound up in jail, because I was hanging out with a lot of older kids who were stealing cars, and they would have led me down the path of drugs, violence, and whatever.

At that point, I was having a lot of trouble in school. I was one of those kids who would stay in the hallway during the day. My father and mother had broken up, and even though there was a lot of love in our family, a broken home can't help but affect you.

My mother had been a jazz freak when she was younger—a bobby-soxer who would go see Frank Sinatra at the Paramount—so she was really into it when I said I wanted to play drums. She knew all about Gene Krupa and Benny Goodman and told me these stories, and she was really encouraging. I guess she was thankful that I had found something.

RF: Benny Goodman is a far cry from "Groovin'," so where did you learn how to do that sort of thing?

DD: That was all just evolution. When I first started playing in bands, I was playing jazz. I started playing with King Curtis, and he was playing kind of rock 'n' roll/jazz stuff. I was never really

hip to R&B until I went to New Orleans.

RF: What brought you there?

DD: After the Metropole, I heard about this gig down there, the Dream Room on Bourbon Street, which was supposed to be happening. I got a band together and went down there, and we got the gig. It was just amazing. In those days, there were no tourist shops; it was all strip, burlesque, funky, funky music that never stopped. It went around the clock; there was no curfew. So we would go from 9:00-4:00 at the Dream Room. At 4:00 the Dream Room turned over and became this black, funky place, and a guy named Danny White came in. He was an old-time guy like Ray Charles and Bobby Blue Bland, with this big orchestra that played incredible funk,

and they had singers. So we would stay up and watch his set until 8:00 in the morning.

RF: What was your band like?

DD: It was cross-over Top-40 stuff, whatever was popular. There wasn't any Beatles yet, so it was Fats Domino, Roy Orbison, Elvis Presley. We did all cover tunes. They liked us, so I stayed down there for close to a year. We played some other little clubs on off nights, and I just stayed there to get into what I was hearing.

RF: What did you learn?

DD: I learned everything about R&B, about Fats Domino, about Clarence Frogman Henry; there were just unknown guys that were...forget it! There were drummers whose right foot was incredible! I had never heard anything like the off-time things they were doing, and I just soaked it all up. I never wanted to go home.

RF: Did you practice the stuff you were hearing? What did you do with it?

DD: I would steal everything I could get. I would meet them all, and they would teach me stuff. They were guys who had like 18 kids and who didn't want stardom or anything; they just wanted to make a living and groove. And it was fabulous. I learned all kinds of stuff—rhythms and approaches—and I put all that black stuff into the white music we were playing. We played black music, too. We were heavily into James Brown. I had a couple of horn



Photo by Lissa Wales

players—a saxophone player and a trumpet player. Ray Charles was happening in our band, so it was a combination of things. But I had never utilized all of that stuff that they were doing, so once I heard all that, our music was changed immediately and it became much, much more R&B.

RF: What was your aspiration at this point? Was there a game plan?

DD: The only game plan was that I wanted to make it. In those days, being a star meant getting to Las Vegas with a band, making a good salary. Recording was foreign to me at that point. I had done a little bit when I did some work with Little Willie John, and I had done some sessions at King Records, which was the hot black

label. I was at the Metropole, and I was working free-lance around New York. Agents would call and ask if I wanted to do this gig or that: "Here's the money; get four guys together and do it." It was a whole different world in those days. Sometimes they would say, "You can't have four guys tonight, you can only have two," so I would call up an organ player, and it would be the two of us. When you're so young, it's all just wild to you; everything makes sense. You have a goal; I wanted to be Gene Krupa, I wanted to be Buddy Rich, I wanted to be on that TV show and do the same thing myself. Nothing was going to stop me from doing that.

RF: When you get famous, does the joy of doing a gig change?

DD: It's a whole different world. I liked *trying* to get famous better than being famous. I like it now better than when it was happening. I like trying to get back better than being there.

RF: Why?

DD: I like the challenge. It's new and fresh and it still brings me joy. When I play, I still get off. Our thing now is just made for what I'm feeling.

RF: When did you meet Felix?

DD: I always went back to the Metropole; that was my home base. Felix had heard about me, and I had heard about Felix, who was supposed to have this incredible "black" voice. We used to hang around with

the same clique, but we had never met. So he came down to the Metropole, and we hit it off immediately. At this same time there was this woman coming through town who had a gig in Las Vegas and wanted a youngish band to back her up. She was auditioning everybody around the city, and Felix and I made it. It was pretty weird because this girl would do imitations of Zsa Zsa Gabor and Mae West with all these costume changes and stuff, but she gave us a song or two to do in the show so we were cool.

While we were in Vegas, the Beatles arrived, and we just said to one another, "We have got to do something like this. Let's get a couple more guys and do something." So we made a pact that that was what we were going to do. Felix got drafted, so he had to leave. When he got back home, he found Eddie and Gene, and he called me and said, "I've got the guys. Come back."

RF: What was that first time playing with them like?

DD: The four of us were in Felix's basement, and we learned like 50 songs in four hours. Eddie and Felix sang gorgeous together, Gene fit in like a glove—these great little rhythms he was playing—and I was all over the place. It just worked. It was special.

RF: When did the original material start coming into the picture?

DD: Not until after a couple of hits. We had "I Ain't Gonna Eat Out My Heart Anymore," which was written by Pam Sawyer and Laurie Burton, and "Good Lovin'," which we found in a record shop. Felix and I used to go out and find all these cover records like "Good Lovin'" and "Mustang Sally."

RF: Was the cymbal part in the original version of "Good Lovin'" the same as the part you played?

DD: Oh no, nothing like it. The drum part from that song came from "What'd I Say," by Ray Charles. It's different than that, but it's the basic idea—the cymbal and tom-tom.

RF: How was that song brought into the band and molded?

DD: I loved it the moment I heard it. I said, "We could do this, but we have to change it." We did that with everything. Felix and I both had the jazz background, and we would just screw with things. It was, "Let's slow that down," or "Let's put this little jazz thing in here." One idea would hit off another, and all of a sudden we had something.

RF: You started at a time in rock 'n' roll when there really wasn't much history and nothing to really emulate, so you were really in on the ground floor.

DD: My style came from Lionel Hampton and Sonny Payne. Sonny Payne was the most incredibly flashy player who ever lived, bar none. Unbelievable. I never missed him whenever he played. I took all his jazz stuff and made it rock 'n' roll—the bass drum accents, the way you hit cymbals, and the way you move your sticks and throw them up. All of that stuff melted right into rock without any problem at all.

RF: What was it like recording the first album?

DD: We had met two producers, Tommy Dowd and Arif Mardin, who were just incredible. In our contract they gave us an incredible situation: The studio was free, and we could have access anytime we wanted to rehearse or play. And Arif and Tommy, to their credit, knew the rawness we had, and they wouldn't screw

with it. They could have made us slick and could have been the kind of producers who wanted to put their own mark into it, but they let us be what we were. That takes a lot of wisdom and patience. They guided us great; I'm not saying they didn't add anything.

RF: Your contract said that you could produce your own albums. That was amazing for back then. You were just four kids.

DD: We were four kids but we were co-producers. They were the experienced people with all the knowledge of how to get things down. So we worked hand-in-hand, and the ideas would just flow around. You couldn't say that anybody really told us, "This is the way it's going to be" and had us play it. It was a creative process. It's the same exact way that the Beatles did it with George Martin. It was a real collaboration that was beautiful.

RF: I listen to the first album and I think to myself, "How did these guys get a deal?" Someone obviously had the foresight to know what you were capable of, but I wonder if it's obvious on the first album.

DD: Well, "Good Lovin'" was on it. In those days, one song made an album. Even "Slow Down," as crappy as it was, had a raw

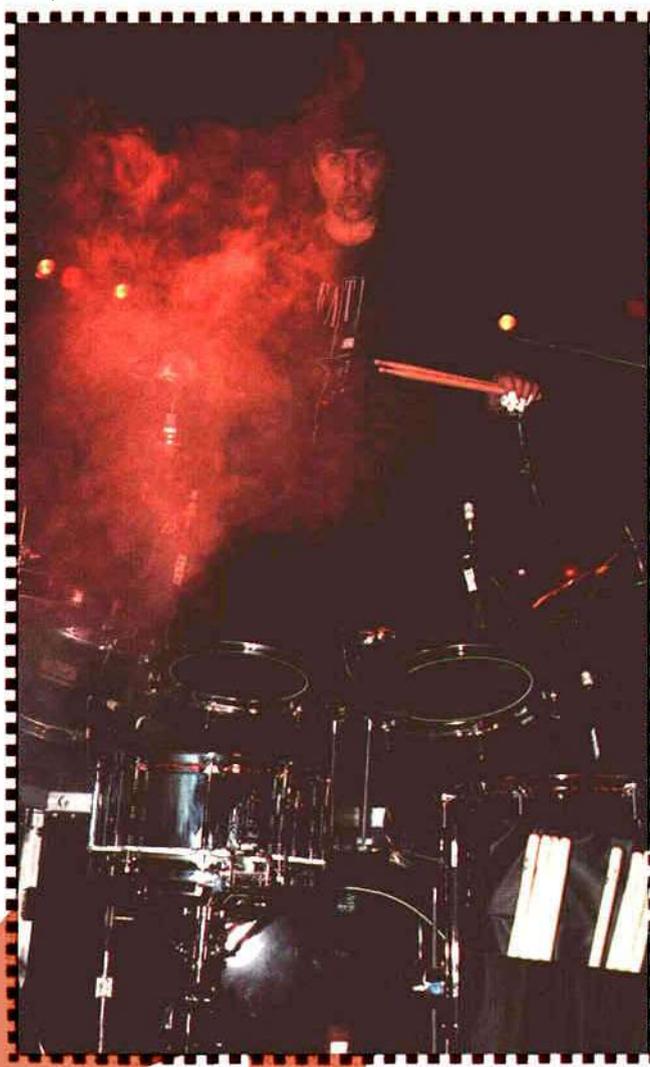


Photo by Lisa Wales

ergy that, in those days, was happening. "Do You Feel It" had the same kind of thing, as well as "Mustang Sally" and "In The Midnight Hour." I would give this band a deal. In those days, it was happening. Today it might not be.

RF: I was noticing the other day, at rehearsal, how hard you hit, and wondered if you always hit so hard but you just can't hear it on the records.

DD: In those days it couldn't be captured. I've played like that from day one, though. Sonny Payne and those jazz guys who kicked big bands in the theaters smacked the hell out of the drums, and I did the same thing. You have to remember—and this is not in any way to play down the importance of Eddie and Felix's writing—we didn't get signed because we were a writing band, we were signed because we were an incredible *live* act with great voices. I don't want to sound conceited, but we were a *killer* rock band. There was nobody around at that time who could touch us live. On the record you don't hear it, because it couldn't be translated in those days, but live you had to dance and move.

RF: You're playing brushes on "I Believe"?

DD: No, I played mallets on tom-toms on that song. You want to know why? Because it looked great. I had these big white mallets, and nobody was playing like that. It was different to begin with; it was a ballad and this big production thing. I've always been impressed with people who played timpani and things like that. It had that inspirational kind of feeling to it. I wanted to make it sound like timpani, so why not use timpani mallets? I was a ham; I really was. I don't know how we started doing that song. Eddie had this background where everybody in his family had great voices and sang in church.

RF: It's weird to look back at some of the songs he did on the albums, like "More."

DD: Now *that* was different. That was our Eas Vegas thing. We tried to make it sound like a big production with four people playing it. Felix tried to be an orchestra with his organ, I tried to be an orchestra with my drums. "I Believe" is as weird as "More."

Eddie just sang those songs great. You know what's funny? When we go out now, the show almost has the same elements. There are a lot of different things in the show. It's all our music, but there's "See" and "Ray Of Hope" and "Good Eovin'," which are three bizarrely different songs. But they're all together in this show, and it's working.

RF: How did your style accommodate all those different things?

DD: Because I had a feel for all those different styles.

RF: Did you have a preference?

DD: My preference was R&B, but when "More" came about, my preference immediately went to big band jazz. "A Girl Like You" was always the fly in the ointment to me, and I thought about it this time and wondered, "How can we possibly do that song? There's no groove to it. It's gonna be like a big band arrangement, and what the hell am I going to do?" I tried to change it and make it like a real funky rock thing, and after I toyed with it a while, I thought, "I'm going to do this like a big band song again, like I approached it 20 years ago." And I'm doing it now, and it's rock 'n' roll and it's got a funk feel to it, but it's a big band arrangement.

RF: Tell me what that means from a drummer's standpoint to approach it that way.

DD: You figure out what you want to do with it—how you want it to feel. "More" was a pop-show kind of song, and I thought, "I want to approach it like Sonny would with Count Basie, but we're a rock 'n' roll band, so I have to make that work." And you just figure out things. You play a feel, and all of a sudden, there's a little space, so you do a big band riff and then come back to your feel. "You Better Run" happened like that. I don't know if there were any songs like "You Better Run" before we did that.

RF: Can you explain what that was?

DD: Starting it out, we were playing the groove, which was a

straight feel, and all of a sudden there was a place for a break. I had the habit of changing the feel of a song when a break would come. It shouldn't work; it should be stupid, but it worked. We went into a shuffle, and Tommy said, "What the hell is that? That's great." He was so open and so positive, and he just loved it. If somebody had said, "Man, you can't do that," maybe that song wouldn't have happened like that.

RF: So many of the songs had two or three distinctly different parts to them.

DD: Records aren't made like that anymore with the advent of drum machines and perfect time. You don't jolt people out of their seats like that, and you don't change the rhythms on people who are dancing. People recording nowadays won't take those kinds of risks.

RF: "How Can I Be Sure" is a waltz. How did that come about?

DD: The melody dictated it. I remember them singing the melody and Felix playing it, and it had to be a waltz, although it could have been 6/8, which is how I'm playing it now. I don't play the waltz anymore, even though the waltz feel is there. It's just one of the things that doesn't work for me now. I like the 6/8 feel now.

RF: Were you the one playing congas on "Groovin"?

DD: Oh yeah, it's some of the most amazingly bad conga playing. I had no concept of how to play them. I just smacked them really. There are no drums on "Groovin" either. The concept of the song was that everybody works all week long, and the only day they have to spend with their girlfriends is Sunday, so they go to a park,

and it's groovin' on a Sunday afternoon. There are always drums in a park, people playing little congas or bongos or timbales. So we thought, "Let's get a pair of congas." [DJ] Murray the K was instrumental in that song. Atlantic didn't want to release that song, and Murray lobbied for us on it. We were this raw-energy kind of band, and all of a sudden here was something else. And Atlantic said, "Don't mess with the formula."

RF: And it was a #1 single. What about "Mickey's Monkey"?

DD: "Mickey's Monkey" was a Motown song, and again, that was my Ray Charles/"Good Lovin'" thing—cymbals and tom-toms and a Bo Diddley kind of thing. There are a lot of influences there for that one.

RF: "Too Many Fish In The Sea" is almost a Latin kind of thing.

DD: That's Motown also. There was a little Latin influence there, but all of that stuff had it. "Good Lovin'" was Latin, and Ray Charles' "What'd I Say" was Latin, and that's where I got all that stuff.

RF: You co-wrote a song, "1956."

DD: Oh yeah, that was me and Gene just playing around in the studio, having a good time. It was just one of our rehearsals, and we wanted to write some lyrics. Eddie and Felix were writing, so we wanted to write.

RF: The way you describe the creative process in the studio, it seems that all four of you should have had writer's credits for creating.

DD: It's a funny thing about that. Some people say that that's not really writing, but it's arranging. Some people say it's much more of a creative process than arranging. We felt that all that was shared in publishing anyhow, and it was an equal situation. The writers were Felix and Eddie. No one could take that away from them; no one would have wanted to. But publishing was something lucrative we could all share. Everybody was aware of what everybody else was creating. My contributions to some of those things were very, very important, so no one ever said, "We don't want to share publishing." As far as everyone sharing when you're all creating like that, a part of me says yes, that's part of writing, and another part of me says no, it's not.

RF: Are there songs that you can recall where you might have had more of an influence over how they turned out, either because of a part you played or an idea you had?

"I LIKED TRYING TO GET FAMOUS BETTER THAN BEING FAMOUS."

DD: Sure, "You Better Run," which we've already talked about, was one in particular, because that dictated the whole song. I was a very forceful player, and where I went, they would follow. It's hard to say which ones I was more responsible for, though, because we jammed so much in the studio. Everybody was so much a part of all of them that it would be unfair to say that I was stronger than anyone else in any of the other songs. When Chuck Rainey was involved with us, he and I would play around with so many things on the bottom end of all the songs, turning them around and coming up with things that would dictate other parts—like rhythmic things that Gene would play. It was such a collaborative thing with us.

RF: Speaking of Chuck Rainey, live you didn't have a bass player, but in the studio you did.

DD: In the studio we had to, because Motown had changed the bass world forever. Luckily Atlantic had access to these incredible bass players like Chuck Rainey—who our bass player now, Steve Mackey, learned from. Will Lee worked with us later on. If there's one thing that holds up musically on our records, it's the bass. Those lines are incredible.

RF: Did that change the way you approached things in the studio, as opposed to live?

DD: Having a bass player definitely changed things, because I would work with the bass player. Felix always played bass with his organ pedals, but it was a whole different feel. It was a much more open kind of thing, and we were always in and around each other's patterns—me with my foot and him with his foot. It wasn't such a dominant factor in the music, so it worked. But on record it was crucial to be articulate with what the bass and bass drum were playing. Chuck was great. The grooves he would get into were incredible. I would do something and he would follow, and it was great.

RF: *Once Upon A Dream* was your concept album—your *Sgt. Pepper*, with all the little intermission things and the weaving together of songs.

DD: The Beatles really influenced us. The psychedelic era was happening, and that's where all that came from. We just did our interpretation of what the hell was going on at that point.

RF: Was there a period you remember as being more creative than any other?

DD: Not really. This band was creative from the day we got together at Felix's house, whether we were writing our own songs or not. Look what we did with those things. You don't have to agree with what they sound like, but we did wild things. That process was always there. We just went to the height we could go to. Drugs led us different ways, and people started thinking different things, and that was the beginning of the end.

RF: *Freedom Suite*. Where did the technology changes come into play?

DD: Again, we were so influenced by what the Beatles were doing. I remember when we used to wait for their new singles to be debuted on the radio, and every time we heard one, they would have done something different with technology. We'd hear the tape going backwards or some kind of echo we had never heard before. So we'd try to do little things like that. Technology was moving ahead, although it wasn't like the '70s explosion. Arif and Tommy knew a lot about that stuff, and we did some of it, but

some of it was just silly. We weren't in control of it like the Beatles were. They had a handle on that stuff; we were copiers. I can't remember one record that we did technology-wise that was great.

RF: You once said that you weren't as comfortable with that aspect as much as the other things.

DD: I loved Jimi Hendrix when he first came over. The night we played Central Park with Jimi was like the turning point of everything. He had never really played America yet. I had jammed with him years before at the Scene, which was a club in New York where you hung out late at night, and whoever was there would get together and play. There was a real camaraderie among people. I'd play with Jimi, and I remember Buddy Miles coming in, Rick Derringer, Jim Morrison—everybody. And we just all jammed. I remember Jimi, although he wasn't Jimi then. I don't remember what he was calling himself then. I don't know what happened; he went to England, and this other guy came back. What was he doing?

He opened the show for us at Central Park, and how do you follow him? When he finished the set, the place was on fire—

literally, too, because he used to set his guitar on fire and do all that stuff. The sounds coming from his amplifier while he was biting his guitar and playing it on his head—this was the beginning of something else. Some of the shows we did at the Fillmore West with the Doors were pretty wild, too. We played with the Doors and Santana, and it was just incredible.

RF: Compared to that, you guys were mom and apple pie.

DD: But it fit and people loved it. Don't forget, we played songs like "Cute," which is like a jazz/rock/psychedelic wild combination of music. It was all rhythmic structures of rock 'n' roll into jazz. It was a musical odyssey. We did

it in California at the Wiskey A-Go-Go, and Iron Butterfly used to come watch us, and I know "Cute" definitely inspired those guys.

RF: Were any songs on *Freedom Suite* particularly creative for you?

DD: From a drumming point of view, it was the only record I did a solo on, on the song "Boom." I had been influenced a little bit by Max Roach. He used to do these melody things that were really nice on drums, and I really picked up on it, so I did one on "Boom." It was really long, the kind of thing you'd want to listen to once and never listen to again.

RF: Did you do a solo live?

DD: I don't think I ever did that. I was never into long drum solos. I thought they were boring.

RF: So why the indulgence on vinyl?

DD: Because there was room for me to be a writer on this record. "A Ray Of Hope" is also on this record, which was a reaction to all the terrible things that were happening in the '60s, trying to get positive energy across.

RF: What about "Nubia"?

DD: "Nubia" was from *See*, which was the beginning of the decline. Felix and Eddie were into all that Eastern stuff. It's jazz, but there's that Eastern flavor to that, too.

RF: We forgot to mention "Satva" off of *Once Upon A Dream*, where you play tablas.

DD: Yeah, it was all the Ravi Shankar influence of the time.

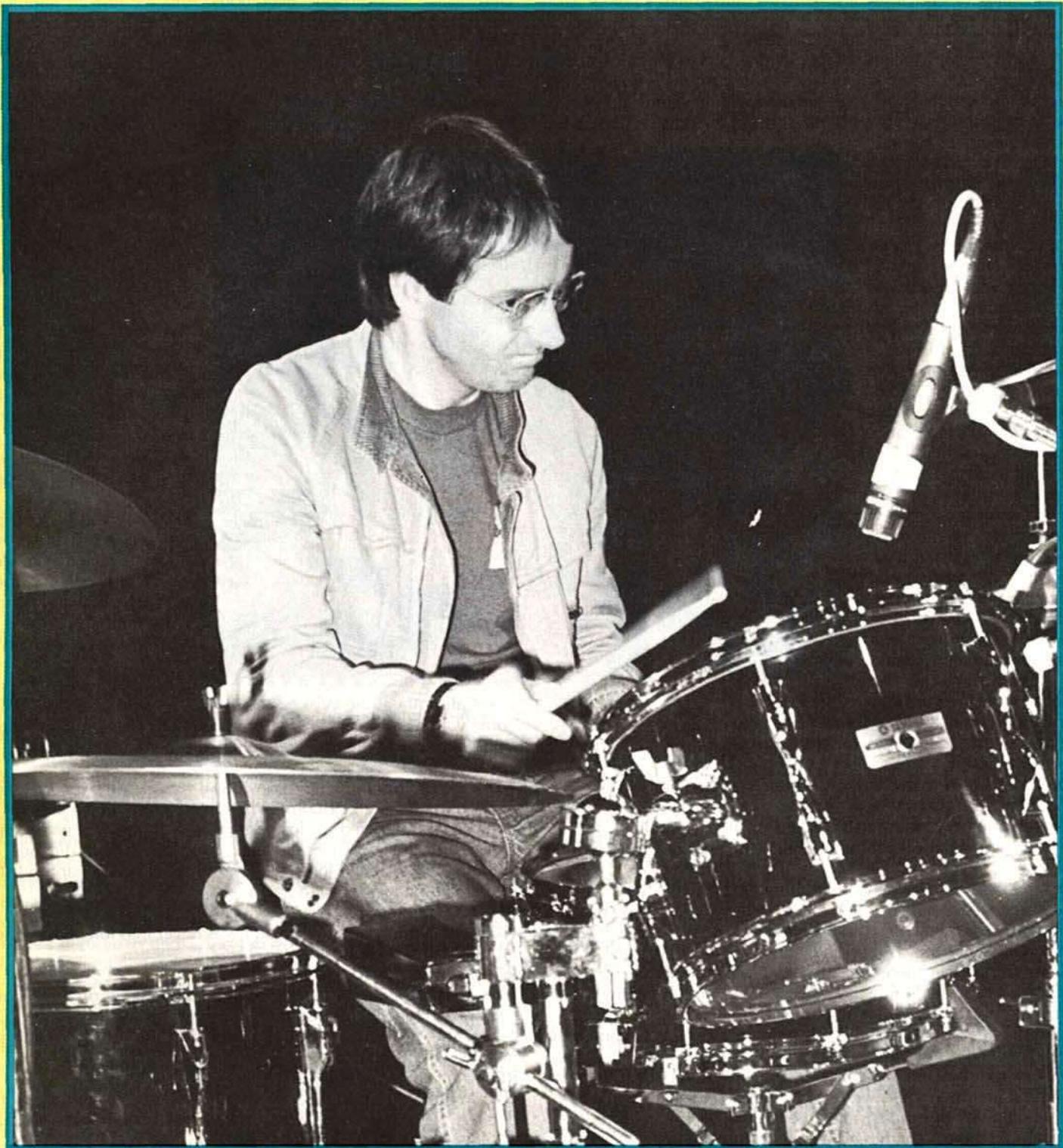
RF: What did you know about tablas?



Photo by Lissa Wales

continued on page 66

♩ Dave Mattacks



The English Beat

Dave Mattacks is a drummer whom I have wanted to interview for some time: not least because he comes from the same part of the world as me, and we have a few mutual friends. One of these, a fellow drummer who could at times have been accused of being something of a "Mattacks bore," was often saying things like, "Forget Rich and Cobham, and listen to what Dave does on the new Fairport Convention album." There wasn't the least suggestion here that Mattacks was outplaying the great jazz drummers in terms of technique; what I had to listen to was the freshness of Fairport's music and the beautiful taste and inventiveness that Dave brought to it. And I'm glad I did. You see, Fairport Convention developed their own unique musical style: a blend of rock music and English folk music that came to be known as electric folk, folk/rock, or English country rock; and although there have been other bands who have used a similar blend of influences, it is Fairport that always springs to mind first in this context.

Dave Mattacks' success away from Fairport, as a free-lance and studio player, indicates that he would certainly have made a name for himself with or without Fairport. However, the event that happened to give Dave his first step up the ladder was a tragic road accident in May '69, in which two people traveling in the band's van were killed. One of these was the original Fairport drummer, 18-year-old Martin Lamble. It was the reformed band that included Dave Mattacks and violinist Dave Swarbrick that settled on the style of music that made Fairport famous—but not rich! Although they became almost a household name, and had many passionately dedicated fans, their supporters were in a minority when it came to buying the records and the concert tickets, so the financial rewards were not there. The lineup of the band was constantly changing. When Mattacks left in 1974, he was replaced by ex-Joe Cocker drummer Bruce Rowland.

That wasn't to be the end of Dave's involvement with Fairport; but after pioneering the drumming end of a new style of music, he went on to become one of an elite group of "hot" studio players in London. Here are just a few of the things he has done over the years: It's him you hear with Jimmy Page on the soundtrack of *Death Wish 2*; he's on Paul McCartney's "The Long And Winding Road" from *Give My Regards To Broad Street* and on tracks on his *Tug Of War* and *Pipes Of Peace* albums; he appears on Elton John's *Ice On*

Fire and Leather Jackets albums, including the single "Nikita"; he has also played with George Harrison, Joan Armatrading, Alison Moyet, Greg Lake, Nick Hayward, Rick Wakeman, Chris Rea, Loudon Wainwright III, Brian Eno, Peter Green, Chris Spedding, and many others.

Fairport Convention split up in 1979. Three years of annual reunions generated so much interest that it seemed worthwhile for them to reform on a regular basis. So now there is a regular Fairport again. The only original member is guitarist Simon Nicol. Other "senior" members are Dave Mattacks and the bass player, Dave Pegg. They are joined by a new generation of Fairport members, violinist Rick Sanders, and multi-instrumentalist Martin Alcock. Dave Pegg has also been a member of Jethro Tull for some years (Fairport supported Tull on their Fall '87 tour of Europe and America), and more recently, Martin Alcock has also been drawn into the Tull fold, which means that the two bands now have two members in common. This increased exposure has given fresh impetus and optimism to a band that was originally formed 21 years ago.

SC: Could we begin by discussing the nature of English electric folk music, and perhaps giving the reasons, as you see them, why it has remained something of a minority taste?

DM: I think we can link both parts of that question to the media explosion over the past 50 years or so. As American-style music and its derivatives have come over to this country, it has become so ingrained in the British psyche that there has been a loss of understanding of what the indigenous music is. American music kind of sat on English music, to the extent that, from the '20s and '30s onwards, English musicians just copied American musicians and the American form. There wasn't anything English about it. So in the '60s you would find that bands who were considered to be "typically English," like The Who or The Kinks, were actually English bands playing music with an American form.

This isn't any kind of sad xenophobia on my part. It's just that American music, from blues to jazz, is so strong that it has tended to obliterate other musical forms. Because of this, people are used to hearing a type of singing, a type of chord change, and a type of melody line that has its roots in American music. So when they are confronted with people who don't sing in American accents, and whose music doesn't have American-style chord changes, it's a little hard for them to take. Even when you

by Simon Goodwin



modernize it, the way Fairport did, it is still difficult for many people to relate to.

An obvious facet of this is the typical English rock singer, the geezer who talks like, "'Ow's it goin' then, mate?" Get him behind a microphone and it's all "He-ey Ba-aby"! Things that are sung in an English way become almost novelties.

SG: A couple of points that strike me about this: One is that American country music has its roots in British country music. Also, there has been a successful "marriage" of American music and Latin music, so couldn't it have happened in a similar way with English music?

DM: I agree about American country music. It developed out of British music, and is now more widely accepted in Britain than British music is. It's sad that there isn't more acceptance for the British equivalent of American country music; but mention "country music" to the average Englishman, and he'll immediately think of Nashville, rather than East Anglia.

I consider Latin music, and all its offshoots, as being fairly closely related to American music. It's not literally related, but it's a lot closer in form to American music than English music is. There's something ostensibly "un-hip" about English music. It hasn't got a *groove* in the same way that American music and Latin music have.

SC: But there *is* a groove in the type of electric folk that Fairport play, and *you* were

largely responsible for pioneering that style of playing.

DM: [laughs] I liked something that Peter Erskine said about being a pioneer: They are the people with the arrows in their backs! I wasn't consciously setting out to be a *pioneer*; I was putting rhythms on the drumkit to songs that were in the English folk style. The groove, if we want to call it that, is difficult to describe in words. I suppose you could call it a fairly basic feel for the stuff that's got an even number of beats—an obvious example being the dance tunes, the *reels*. When Dave Swarbrick first played these tunes to me, I realized that there were two possible places for the backbeat: There was the more folky feel on the "&'s" between the beats, and there was the standard rock feel on 2 and 4. I decided to emphasize the faster folk beat with the hi-hat, while playing the rock backbeat on the snare drum. I wasn't the first person to combine these two beats, but I was probably the first to do it in this particular context.

SC: But it was never a case of finding a formula and sticking to it. There are the jigs, which are in some sort of compound time. And then there are numbers like "Cat On The Mixer"; I couldn't even work out what the time signature is, but it has an obvious folk flavor and it rocks along beautifully.

DM: Whatever time signature we are dealing with, the tune, the song, the lyric takes

precedence. The first thing I think of on hearing a tune is, "How can I make the drums complement this, so that we've still got whatever makes this a good tune?" What we are talking about is a gentle reinforcement. It might mean playing nothing for three quarters of the song and then sticking two bass drum beats in; it might mean playing cross-stick all the way through and no drum fills; it might mean doing some semi-flashy syncopation. It's whatever makes it sound *right*. The format, for me, is every-thing.

If you take that example of "Cat On The Mixer," there isn't a bar of 4/4 anywhere in it. It's got fives and sevens and threes and tens and eighty-threes in it. [laughs] I don't think there are more than two consecutive bars with the same time-signature in the whole thing. The way I approach something like that is to look at the tune in terms of bar lines, and once I have an idea which way it's going, I ignore that and listen to the tune in terms of the melody line. I then support the melody line, as opposed to saying, "I'll play a bar of three, a bar of six followed by a bar of..." and putting bass drum beats on every downbeat. That can be nonsense when it has got nothing to do with the tune, or the way the chords are going.

SG: Something that sums up Fairport Convention's style to me is "Matty Groves." There is a very folky melody with a storyline lyric, which sounds medieval, but you are driving it all along with a very strong rock beat.

DM: "Matty Groves" is definitely one of the old favorites. It's strong because it works so well as a piece of music, *and* of course there's that great lyric. It's a powerful number, and the powerful beat does, I hope, enhance it. It could seem incongruous having that heavy beat in a song like that, but musically and dramatically it fits.

SC: Can we talk about your own entry in Fairport? You have been quoted as saying that you knew nothing about folk music *at* the time. But Fairport wasn't originally a folk band. It developed slowly up to *Liege And Lief*, by which time you were in the band.

DM: Well, Fairport was a good band. In '67 and '68 they were doing their own material, but they were also doing covers of other people's stuff. There was a feeling that when it came to doing the American stuff, they weren't as good at it as the Americans were. They had Sandy Denny in the band, and she had a folk background. There was a conscious decision to make an album with electric guitars and drums, but all English material. They were taking some of their own material and some traditional material and marrying the two. It wasn't dissatisfaction with American music; it was a feeling that Americans do that better, so



why don't we come up with something of our own, which owes something to English music. And it worked. *Liege And Lief* was a moderately successful album.

SG: How did you fit in, at this stage? From reading other interviews of yours, it seems that you joined Fairport because it was a job.

DM: Absolutely. Before I joined Fairport I was playing in a Lawrence Welk-type of dance band. Like most young musicians, I had aspirations to do better things. The dance band was alright, but it wasn't exactly what I wanted to do. I was interested in jazz and rock, but when I got the job with Fairport I approached it in a semi-literal way. I would listen to the music and come up with a beat that was appropriate. It wasn't like, "I'll do this, but I'd rather be playing jazz." I did it to the best of my ability and tried to come to the music on *its* terms. I was able to come up with suitable drum parts for the songs, which worked. But aesthetically I wasn't really aware of what they were about until almost 18 months later. It dawned on me what they were trying to do—the whole thing about English and American music. That completely changed my outlook on my playing, and turned me around as far as my approach to music was concerned.

SG: Many people, myself included, thought of Fairport as a folk band who went electric, but they actually were a rock band who went folk.

DM: Yes—or *found folk* music and decided to marry the two. That's always been a bit of a problem. People think of us as being very folksy, but I like to think of us as a rock band that plays folk-influenced music with a respect for lyrics. It certainly isn't a *folk group* as such; and it always bugs me that it has that folk tag.

SG: You left the band in '74. Was this due to the lack of any real commercial success?

DM: It wasn't just the lack of success. We were having horrific management problems. Also the band wasn't adult enough to behave responsibly when problems occurred. So it wasn't all the fault of management. There was an attitude of, "We're just gonna play our music, man"; and then before you know where you are, you've got these huge debts. There was a combination of that and the feeling that things were going sideways: There was no lift; we were continuing on one level. I wasn't enjoying it anymore, and this was crucial. I was so *worried* most of the time about things like the gate receipts, whether we were going to have enough money for a hotel that night, whether the new record was being promoted. *The last thing* I was thinking about was music.

Also I was starting to do some sessions. I'd just roll up and someone would say, "This is the music. This is how it goes," and

all I'd have to do was play the drums. I thought it was fantastic; I didn't have to worry about anything, I just had to play. And I would get paid more for half an hour doing that than I'd get in a week with Fairport.

SC: You seem to be criticizing an attitude in people who are still your friends and colleagues. Has this attitude changed as people have gotten older?

DM: Absolutely. Everyone has grown up now. Although it wasn't entirely a case of us being immature before; it's just that old thing about *you have to go through a whole bunch of crap before the good stuff starts happening*. Like with all musicians the whole world over, you have to have one or two bad things happen: a bad management deal, a crooked contract, you're let down by a promoter. Something bad has to happen for you to come to your senses and decide not to let anything like it happen again.

These days the band pretty much runs itself. Dave Pegg and his wife, Chris, have a lot of control, and there are about half-a-dozen outside people who we know very well and trust. It's great because we take charge and assess our own risks as we go along. I think it's illuminating to see that many of the younger musicians have got the business side of things together earlier in their careers, probably because they saw what happened to people like us. We learned the hard way. The negative side to all this is that you have to be part player and part businessman; and that can be a drag. Musicians tend not to be business-minded, but if you don't get the basics together, you are going to lose out—*unless* you have people you can really trust. And I don't think there are that many trustworthy music business people around.

SG: The recent albums have come out on the band's own label. Are these financed by the band?

DM: Yes. We financed *Gladys' Leap* and *Expletive Delighted*, and there's another one on the way. The recent live album, *In Real Time*, was done as a one-off deal with Island Records.

SG: That's the one you produced.

DM: Yes, I produced that one, and I play keyboards on three of the numbers.

SC: To the exclusion of drums?

DM: Two of the numbers with keyboards don't have any drums, and Dave Pegg plays drums on the third.

SG: This brings us to the subject of your career as a studio musician. A lot of people finding themselves dissatisfied with the band they were in wouldn't be fortunate enough or good enough to switch to sessions. What qualities do you think you had at the time to enable you to do this?

DM: It's a difficult question, because I would have said that the reason I was able to

"It's good to lean towards a particular style. There's too much emphasis on the idea that you have to be able to play everything from a polka to AC/DC."

continued on page 70



COMMUNICATION



Photo by Lissa Wales

Colon

You have to believe that if Frank Colon had his way, the world would be a better place to live, thanks to the bonding power of music, particularly percussion. "Look at history," he says, sitting in a midtown Manhattan recording studio on a gray autumn afternoon. "Music has played a major part in most societies. Music brings people together. And percussion makes people more aware of the vastness of music. Its most basic sounds are sounds that have been around a long time."

Colon, the percussionist for the Manhattan Transfer, knows what he's talking about. Few contemporary musicians who have not been academically trained in the history and philosophy of music are as knowledgeable or as passionate about percussion and its relationship to culture as Colon. To chat with him about his views on percussion is to learn a few things. Here's a musician who's logged time with Weather Report, Pat Metheny, Flora Purim & Airta, Olatunji, Milton Nascimento, Gato Barbieri, and Wayne Shorter, to name just a few.

by Robert Santelli

Colon has also played the Montreux jazz Festival and performed in an HBO special with Harry Belafonte. A few years ago he participated in an historic recording of Yoruban religious music with mentor Julito Collazo's Afro-Cuban Drum Ensemble. The performance was commissioned by the National Foundation of the Arts and the Smithsonian Institution's Music Archives.

Colon says he plays percussion with melody in mind. "When I play, I establish and maintain the rhythmic pulse, creating a platform for the music, while at the same time constantly expressing myself in relation to what is being projected through the melody of the tune." A listen to any of the albums he's played on reveals that Colon is true to his words.

"Too many people today approach percussion playing as setting up a table full of bells, shakers, and rattles,

RS: Is that healthy?

FC: Well, musicians from countries far from the States or Europe now have the same opportunity to get the latest advancements in technology and equipment. I'm all for spreading information. The exchange of information is a big issue in South America. Information down there is a commodity that is highly prized.

RS: But how does all this effect the "primal" part of "techno primal percussion"?

FC: I'm very, very interested in the roots of drumming, right down to the basic concepts of skin on skin. This comes from the hand drummer having direct contact with the skin of his drum. So "techno primal percussion" is about the interaction of roots drumming with the very latest technology. I'm blending the old and the new. I'm marrying the two, if you will, and producing an offspring that has traits of both parents, but also has its own identity.

RS: It's a fascinating concept. But you're one who has studied many percussive styles as well as the culture and history that have given birth to percussive instruments. Do you find the world of music less exciting now that it's gotten smaller and more homogenized?

FC: Well, I really believe that percussion the world over has hardly been explored. Even though the world is smaller, there is still so much to learn. There are thousands of percussive sounds out there yet to be discovered and explored. So, from one side, I take the technology that's available to me and control volume, textures, and the beat of the sound projected. But from another side, I take the primitive aspects of percussion and incorporate them into my performance. I need to do this because if I rely solely on contemporary sounds, I find that I often wind up with a very clinical sound.

RS: Did you ever feel threatened by the onslaught of technology over the past decade? There have been many drummers and percussionists who felt absolutely overwhelmed

with the advances made in electronic instrumentation and digital sound. After all, these were musicians whose instruments had changed very little in the past.

FC: Yes, at one time I felt a little blown away by computers and their capabilities, and by the opening up of new sound frontiers. Most important, though, with the introduction of drum synthesizers and sampling, people other than drummers now had the ability to create percussive sounds. That was scary. Let's face it, with sampling, someone could take the sound of a drum played by me or a prominent drummer and utilize it in a very musical way. And it would come out sounding very precise within a musical structure. That was threatening, but only for a while.

RS: What did you do to alleviate the fear and the threats?

FC: Well, I'm very much into computers now. I use a Macintosh to do a lot of writing—and not just music writing. I'm working on a couple of books. So, basically, computers don't scare me. I understand how useful they can be to a creative person. Also, by studying tai chi chuan for the past 20 years or so, I've been able to build confidence within myself and achieve the goals I want to achieve in life.

RS: Is your interest in tai chi chuan somehow related to your interest in the Brazilian martial art form, Capoeira?

FC: Capoeira is more musical than tai chi chuan. Tai chi chuan doesn't go with music. It's an internal martial art in which the student strives for inner peace, relaxation, and a harmony among all things interacting in one's life. I

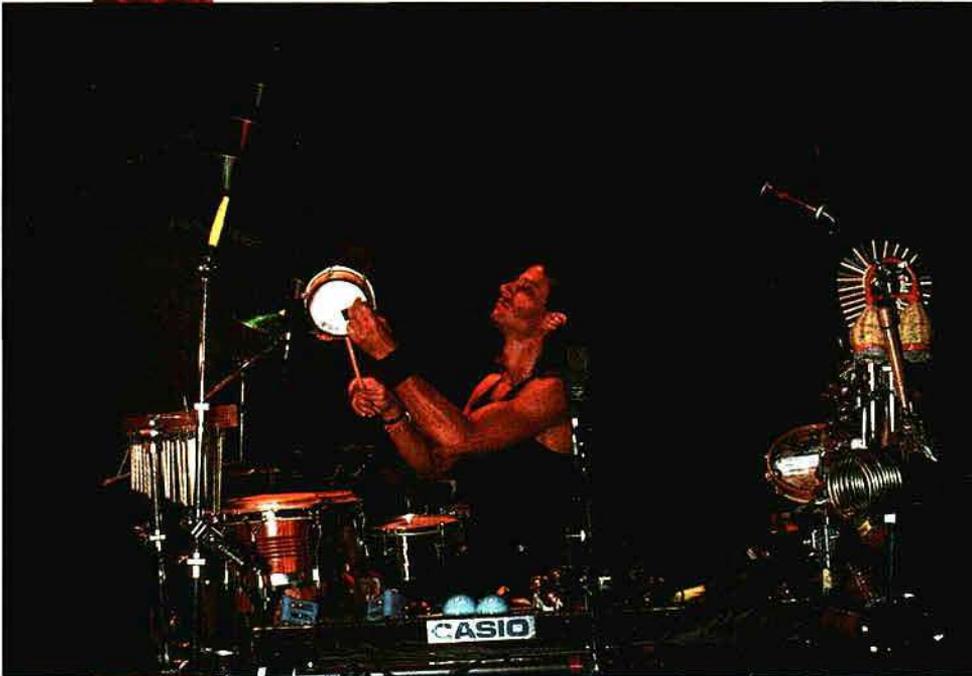


Photo by Lissa Welles

and simply making different noises whenever they feel like it," Colon continues. "Before you attempt to play and interpret percussion, you must first have full command and complete ease at playing a drum, whether it be traps, congas, or timbales. It doesn't really matter which one it is; what does matter is that a percussionist must first know and understand skins."

Colon speaks from experience. A meaningful apprenticeship years ago under the guidance of Julito Collazo ignited his fascination, and continued study into the world of drums and percussion keeps Colon a perpetual student of music. "I'm fascinated with sound," he says. "There is so much of it out there in the world. It's pretty exciting to explore it and try to incorporate it into one's own view of music."

RS: The term "techno primal percussion" is one you've used to describe your approach to percussion. Could you explain precisely what the term means?

FC: With all the technology that's available to musicians these days, music is becoming homogenized. The differences in equipment and sounds are becoming less and less every day. The barriers have been broken down. When I travel to Australia, for example, I find that musicians there have available to them the same kind of digital equipment and technology that I have available to me here in New York City. The same is true when I go to Brazil—or almost anywhere else in the world, for that matter. The result is that the musical world is becoming smaller.

apply the concepts of tai chi chuan to my music and my performance. It also helps to keep me in shape. The sense of balance and precision that tai chi chuan teaches is also crucial for a percussion player.

RS: And what about Capoeira? I know you've studied that as well.

FC: Yes, I have studied Capoeira. Capoeira has to do with an instrument called a berimbau. This form of martial art, which was taken from the Angolan slaves who were sent to Brazil, was married to the musical function of society. Going back to traditional societies, you have to remember that music had a specific function. It wasn't just a means of entertainment. There was music for marriages, for funerals, for preparing for war, for births—you name it. Music was used to cure sickness. Anyway, Capoeira was married to music by the slaves to hide its martial art nature. Slaves were not permitted to practice fighting techniques, so they had to disguise them. They did that by incorporating music into the form. They would sing and dance and play a berimbau, which is a stringed bow with a gourd attached to the bottom, and at the same time, they would practice their fighting techniques or even settle a score.

RS: It's interesting that you've taken the time and effort to dig into all this.

FC: I think it's very important to know what has come before and what has influenced you and your music. It's good to have a sense of history. All that knowledge can only enrich you and your ability to create. It also gives you the authority to push on into the unknown and to explore previously unknown sounds and sound ideas.

When I began playing percussion, I was practically obsessed with finding out as much about the instruments I was learning to play as I could. I even took it to the point where I learned how to build my own instruments. In my youth I carved a bunch of drums myself. I just had an incredible appetite to know as much as I could about what I was doing and where I was going, musically speaking.

RS: That's a great philosophy. It's a pity more musicians don't adopt it.

FC: Well, it brings up a lot of points about drummers. Like in the Caribbean we have the bata drummers who are originally from Cuba, via Nigeria. We consider some of the most intricate drumming to be shared among individuals. You don't get any more intricate than Indian tabla drumming, in terms of rhythm, tonality, and personal expression by one guy with two hands. So many sounds come out of the tabla player. And like the bata drummer, a tabla drummer has to be able to sing the whole rhythm before he can play it on the drum. Sometimes it takes an entire year just to learn one complicated rhythm. Then, what you've learned with your tongue, you transpose into your fingers.

RS: And this same tradition is found among Caribbean percussion players?

FC: Yes, among conga players and more so among the traditional bata drummers. Actually, there's a whole system of apprenticeship a bata drummer must adhere to. He starts off caring for the needs of the drum. Essentially, that means being the first person at the gig and the last one to leave. Then you care for the needs of the senior drummers. All through this period, the drummer who has chosen you as his student is teaching you vocally in private sessions. You see, this form of drumming isn't taught to everyone. It has a societal and religious purpose. So you learn it vocally and then you learn it

physically. It's a tonal drumming that has to do with the Nigerian language. There's no improvisation. It uses the same rhythms that have been used for 200 years or so and in their primitive state. All the drum rituals are those the great, great grandfathers back in Nigeria used to know.

RS: You're a bata drummer. Did you go through this apprenticeship early on?

FC: Oh, yes. I worked and studied with Julito Collazo. I was his last apprentice, actually. We met in Washington, D.C. when I was going to the American University. Believe it or not, I studied political science and wasn't really involved in music at all, except as a sort of sideline thing. But I used the library resources in Washington to dig into the ethno-musical thing. Anyway, I'd travel up to New York whenever Julito called me. I went up for



Photo by Lissa Wales

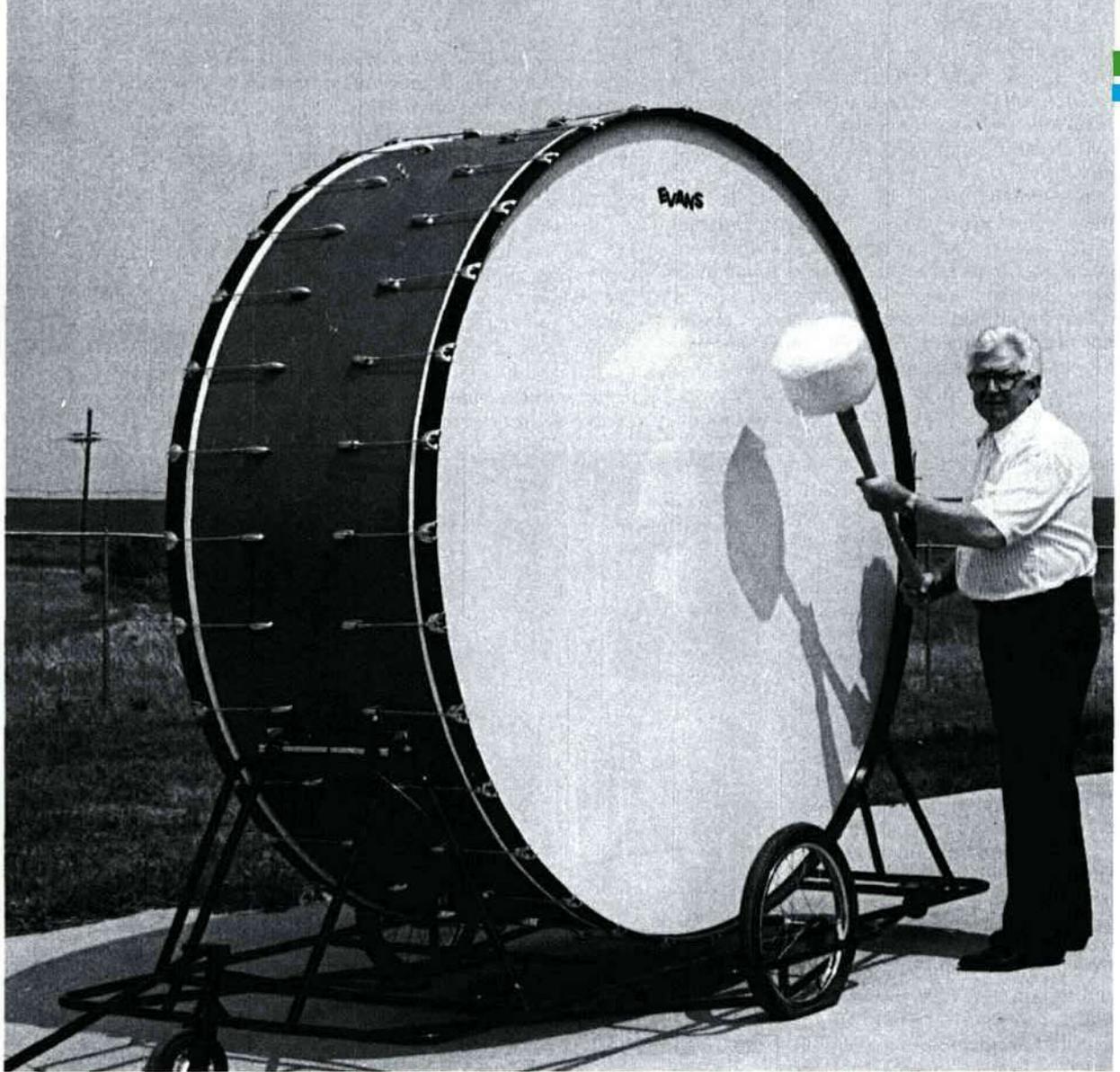
lessons, which were highly valued. I was willing to make all the sacrifices, and I did. Then one day he said that he needed another player in the band. He asked me if I was ready and willing to move to New York. Of course I said yes. So I went back to D.C., packed up everything I owned, and moved to New York. He got me an apartment in his building. We worked for about four and a half years together, basically doing bata drumming.

RS: I'm curious about the secret nature of the bata drumming techniques. Can you expound on them further?

FC: Well, there's a thing between conga players and the bata drummers about releasing these rhythms to the general public and reproducing bata rhythms on other drums that are not sacred. These cats would feel guilty if they did that or let it happen, whereas after studying the folklore of the drum and gathering information in places like the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., I found out that, because of the hierarchy situation, drummers were of the highest order. A lot of them felt that they could do whatever they wanted to. It's like they went so far right that they were allowed to cross over to the left from the right side. That's why and how I was able to incorporate the philosophy and principles of bata drumming into my musical behavior. Some people may think I'm a renegade in a sense. I don't abuse that sense of authority I have, but I apply the concept and the sense of time I learned every time I play.

RS: What sort of stage setup do you need to get the

continued on page 6



Evans owner Bob Beals with one of his large bass drums.

INSIDE EVANS

Story and Photos by William F. Miller

Dodge City, Kansas. Yes, it's that Dodge City, one of the most famous towns in American history. The home of western folklore, where thousands of heads of cattle were once brought via the cattle drive along the Santa Fe Trail, and then shipped by rail across the country. Where men with names like Wyatt Earp and Bat Masterson once shot it out with outlaws, and cleaned up the town. Many of these badmen were "buried with their boots on," up on Boot Hill.

Today, Dodge City is a modern community, but signs of the old west are still there. Part of old Dodge has been preserved, and Boot Hill is still there. And, on the outskirts of town, thousands of heads of cattle still graze. It seems a bit ironic, then, that one of the first synthetic drumhead companies got its start in this city over 30 years ago.

The Evans Drumhead Company is located only about a mile from Boot Hill. The gentleman responsible for Evans drumheads, and one of the original co-founders of the company, is Bob Beals. During my short stay in Dodge, it became clear to me that Bob Beals is the kind of man who takes pride in his community. He showed me around the town and gave me quite a history lesson. Bob also showed me that he is the kind of man who takes great pride in his work.

As he took me on a tour of the factory, I was amazed at the extremely high-tech operation Bob has been developing at Evans over the years. What was also amazing was Bob's in-depth knowledge of machinery and electronics. While he walked me through the steps of putting together an Evans drumhead, Bob explained the different processes and machinery (much of which he designed himself). His enthusiasm and love for what he does came out as he explained the inner workings of the factory.

Bob Beals is also responsible for one of the most exciting new innovations in drumhead design: the CAD/CAM hoop. Over the last year, Evans' CAD/CAM hoops have been receiving rave reviews from many drum experts and publications, and many heavyweight players have jumped on the Evans bandwagon since the CAD/CAM hoops were introduced. Players like Peter Erskine, Mark Herndon, Steve Ferrera, and Neil Peart have all been attracted to the resonance, brightness, durability, and overall quality of the heads with the CAD/CAM hoops. In the following interview, Bob tells how he came up with the CAD/CAM design, and gives us an interesting overview of the history of drumheads.

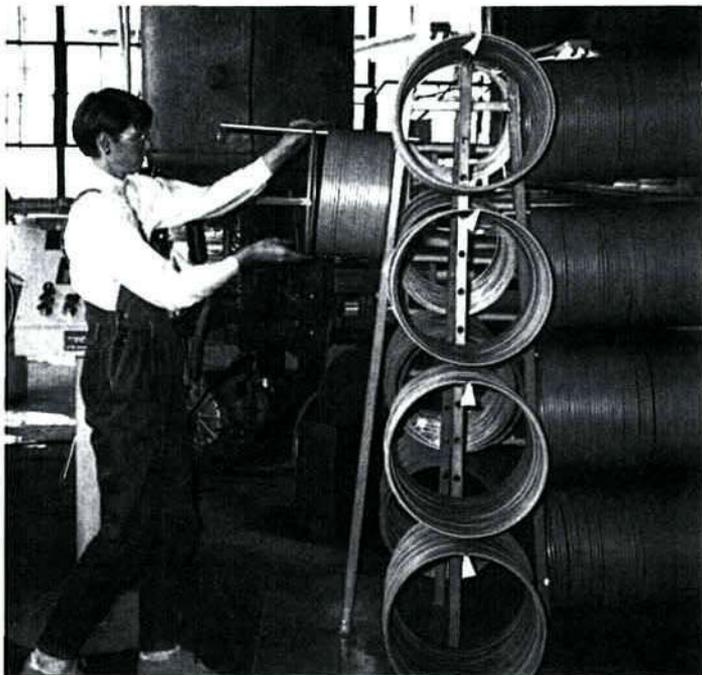
Before we get into the interview with Bob, I'd like to relate a story that he told me, which I think tells a lot about the man. Years ago, Bob was approached by the director of the McDonalds Marching Band to use one of Bob's large bass drums. (Over the years, Bob has constructed large bass drums for marching bands as sort of a hobby.) McDonalds wanted to use Bob's 7'-diameter drum for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. However, since the date was too close to Thanksgiving for any professional movers to guarantee on-time delivery, Bob decided to rent a truck and personally deliver it across country to New York City. How's that for service!



Bob Beals



Bob Beals, with long-time employee and Sales Manager Sue Vogel, outside the Evans factory.



The CAD/CAM hoops are stacked after being formed on specially-designed machinery.

WFM: How did Evans get started?

BB: Originally, we started with four people. The originator of the plastic head was M.L. "Chick" Evans, who was an itinerant drummer from Santa Fe, New Mexico. I first met him through a representative of Ludwig, a man by the name of Sandy Belfield, one of the old-timers. Belfield first brought the heads to me and said, "If you're interested in doing something in manufacturing, this is a new innovation. This guy [Evans] has developed a new type of synthetic drumhead, and we should do something about it." That was the first time I'd seen anything of this type. So, the four people involved in the beginning were Chick Evans, me, a local insurance broker by the name of Larry Drehmer, and my brother, Harold Beals, who was at Purdue working on his Ph.D. He took a leave of absence to come out and work for about a year. He's now at Auburn University, where he's in the wood-products lab. I still go to him for research on scientific things. We started Evans, Inc. here in Dodge City, December 1, 1958.

WFM: What prompted you to start a drumhead company?

BB: I was in the retail music-store business at the time we started the company. My background was in machinery and watchmaking. We did quite a lot of business repairing instruments, which I found I was well suited for. I was always interested in the drums, and the whole concept of the synthetic drumhead really interested me, especially after having tucked hundreds of skin heads. I knew there had to be a better way than calf-

skin heads. When the idea of the synthetic head came about, I knew it would be successful.

Over the years, all of the original founders of the company pulled out. The first man to leave was Chick Evans, next was my brother, who went back to finish up his degree at Purdue, and that just left Larry Drehmer and me. I eventually bought Larry Drehmer's interest out. I've had it ever since.

WFM: Any particular reasons why certain people pulled out and why you stayed?

BB: Drehmer pulled out because he had other business interests. As for me, I felt there was a unique opportunity here. Remo actually began one year

ahead of us, as far as setting up a business. However, Evans was the originator of the type of head that is being used in the world today, using Dupont's *Mylar*, or polyester film. There were other synthetic-head manufacturers, but Evans was the first.

WFM: Why didn't you change the name of the company from Evans to Beals, considering Chick Evans left so soon after the company was started?

BB: I guess I wasn't enough of an egotist to put my name on it.

WFM: Now it's been too long; you can't



Heads being stamped with the Evans logo.

change it.

BB: After 30 years, it's pretty well known throughout the world.

WFM: What were the original heads like that you made?

BB: The original product was made with a reinforced fiberglass hoop. Evans, in his experiments back in the early days, had made metal-hooped heads. In fact, some of the first heads were actually made with a wood hoop, very similar to the wood hoops that the skin head used to be tucked onto. We would split those hoops, and then roll the film around them and tack it on, which was a very laborious job. Looking back on some of those heads now, they were quite primitive.

The way we promoted our heads in the early days was interesting. We would go into a music store and pour a glass of water on our drumheads. We would then beat on the drums or stand on the drum. This was unheard of because no calf head could stand up to that kind of treatment. If, let's say, a marching band would get caught in the rain, the calf heads would just lose their pitch and get soggy. So we came up with the term "all weather," which placed the emphasis on the waterproof, moisture-proof properties of the synthetic head. That was the biggest improvement about our heads over calf. Today, nobody even thinks about it.

WFM: Has the material that your heads are made out of changed over the years?

BB: Yes, there have been different types of materials used. *Mylar*, as everyone refers to it, is Dupont's trademark. The generic name for *Mylar* is polyester film. And actually, Dupont is paying homage to other people, because they didn't invent it. It was actually developed by a firm in England called ICI—Imperial Chemical Industries. There

were other manufacturers that we used film from. We now use film from about four different sources.

WFM: Do you get the same type of film from each company, or do you use each company's film for different applications?

BB: We use them for different types of heads. There is a difference in strength and brittleness and softness. The blue film, which we're probably best known for, has the closest "feel" to a natural skin of any polyester film. It gives a little bit more and it's softer.

WFM: What else can you tell me about the first heads the company made?

BB: When we first started out, every head we made was white and had a coated surface for brush playing. We were trying to emulate calf heads; we couldn't sell a head unless it looked like a calf head. The heads also had to have the feel of calf, especially when played with brushes. To make that coated-surface effect, we sandblasted the material to rough out the surface.

The brush surface on the calf is where the hair has been removed from the hide. So we would simulate this surface on the synthetic heads. It's always been a compromise deal. Today, we have a surface that's far more practical, more durable, more consistent, and better sounding than any calfskin head. It's been long years of development and experimentation.

WFM: What made you decide to start manufacturing the colored heads?

BB: Actually, the first kind of colored heads produced were what we called sparkle heads. The clear heads evolved from them.

WFM: What were sparkle heads?

BB: The sparkle was metal flake, which was actually anodized aluminum sprayed onto the surface of the head. We had to have clear heads to make the sparkle heads. Sparkle heads proved to be a disaster, but they were unique. It was the beginning of the psychedelic era. We also made heads called "psychedelic heads," which had a swirling effect on them. When the sparkle heads died, they *died*. We ended up with thousands of pounds of clear film left over. We had to come up with some way to use the film, so we made some drumheads that were clear. Those originated back in the '60s.

We gradually got into the first unusual heads, the metalized heads, which we call the *Looking Glass* heads. I think the first big exposure we had with those heads was when the drummer in Alice Cooper's band used them, back when Alice was in his heyday. Kiss was another band to use the chrome heads. From the chrome heads the different colors just started to evolve. I think we've been known to have more colored heads than anybody.

The black heads were a problem in the beginning. The film was extremely expensive. The dyeing process was very involved, and because of this I held off a year and a half before producing them. I didn't think anybody would buy them because they would be too high priced. When we finally brought them out, they proved to be a success, regardless of the cost. Then other manufacturers followed our lead. I think we started a few trends in drumheads.

WFM: While we're talking about different colored heads, why is there such a difference in the sound produced by, let's say, a red head and a black head?

BB: That film starts as a clear film. In the dyeing process, the tremendous heat that it takes to dye the film changes its physical properties. This is why they sound different, and there's not a whole lot we can do about it. So the coloring is not just a cosmetic thing. I think this benefits drummers because this gives



Evans employee cleaning and inspecting the heads.

them a wider selection of sound options.

WFM: How did the two-ply head come about?

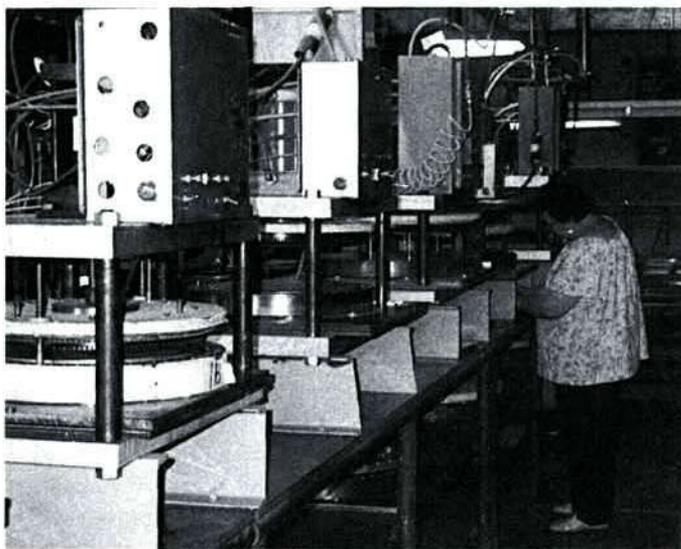
BB: It developed from the point that we needed a heavier head to eliminate pocketing. In the early days, the film was not as strong as what we have today, and we had a lot of problems with pocketing. So the two-ply heads came about by various combinations of the thickness of film. One of the easiest ways of explaining this is by comparing a two-ply head to the leaf spring on an automobile. With a leaf spring, you have multiple layers of steel, and this gives you strength and flexibility. It holds the weight of the car and allows it to move up and down. There is a similar thing with the two-ply head. The strength of the film is mainly in the surface of the film—not in the thickness. So, for example, take a two-ply head with each ply having a thickness of 700-gauge film. Since we have four surfaces on the two-ply head, the four sur-

faces gives the head a little over 30% more strength than you would have with a single piece of 1400-gauge film. Also, you have the flexibility, and you don't have the stiffness. If you have a single-ply head with a thickness of 1400 gauge film, which we've tried, it's like beating on a steel drum. That surface is extremely hard. With the two-ply head you get the flexibility.

We have a head that we make called the *Super Tough*, which is a different type of film. It's a white film that has the ability to stick together on its own very tightly. In this process you can hardly tell it's a two-ply head. We have players who are convinced it's a single-ply head, and I've had to cut heads open to prove it.

WFM: Another original invention that you came up with was the oil-filled head. Where did that concept come from?

BB: We had a customer years ago in Kansas City who was making transparent drums, and he was using our two-ply blue heads on them. This guy mistook the oil-like appearance of the head for what he *thought was* oil between the plies of the head. Actually, there is a light refraction that occurs when two layers of film are together. You get a breaking up of the color spectrum because of light refraction, and the scientific term for this is "Newton's Rings." It gives the effect of oil between the plies, just like fuel oil on a river. This company in Kansas City was actually writing an article about it, and saying our heads had oil in between the plies. We started getting quite a bit of publicity about it, but it was something that was not true. But, this prompted me to experiment, so I stuck some oil between the



This machinery bends and forms the film into Evans' uniquely-shaped profile.

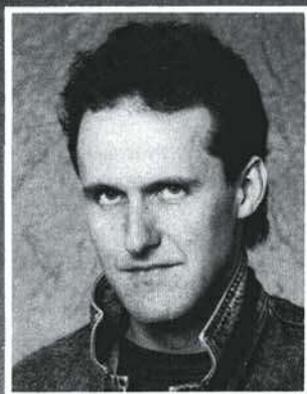
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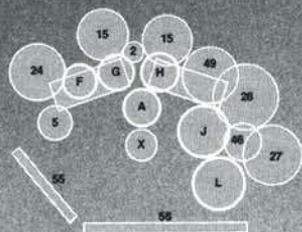


PLAYING PAISTE 8 YEARS



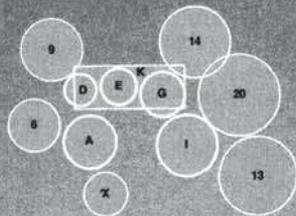
There are five quality control points at our factory. Yet, the final one is in the hands of the artists. These drummers and percussionists could play anything. But they have made their choice with Paiste. We'll let Carl, Charlie, Jeff, Russ, Terry, Bill, and Chad tell you in their own words.

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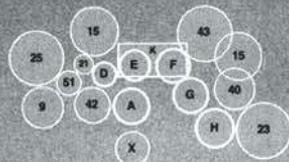
CARL PALMER

... (I choose to play Paiste) because of the variety of change that goes throughout the company... each year there seems to be something new that's happening from a sound point of view... I think (Paiste's) prime consideration is the actual tonal quality, the sound in other words, and from that point of view, I think that musicians will stay with the company...



CHARLIE MORGAN

...the 3000s, which I use are the ideal blend of clarity of sound and also cut... I think a lot of thought has gone into the new ranges of cymbals from drummer feedback... to sum up Paiste cymbals, I think they have a consistency of quality without compromising the nice aspect of the different variations from one cymbal to another...



JEFF PORCARO

... Paiste products provide me with the versatility of sounds that I need for my playing, and they are constantly consistent... consistent in sound, consistent in satisfying engineers... Paiste quite frequently comes up with new sound and new cymbals that are always interesting and one can always add to their arsenal of tools that they need for their playing...

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- 6—3000 14" hi-hat
- 7—3000 14" sound edge hi-hat
- 8—3000 14" thin crash
- 9—3000 16" crash
- 10—3000 16" power crash
- 11—3000 16" thin crash
- 12—3000 17" thin crash

- 13—3000 18" china type
- 14—3000 18" crash
- 15—3000 18" power crash
- 16—3000 18" thin crash
- 17—3000 20" flatride
- 18—3000 20" heavy ride
- 19—3000 20" medium ride
- 20—3000 20" power ride
- 21—2002 7" cup chime
- 22—2002 15" sound edge hi-hat
- 23—2002 20" china type
- 24—2002 20" crash
- 25—2002 20" heavy crash
- 26—2002 20" medium w/rivets

- 27—2002 20" novo china type
- 28—2002 22" crash
- 29—2000 COLORSOUND 6" bell & swivel plate
- 30—2000 COLORSOUND 10" bell
- 31—2000 COLORSOUND 12" splash & 15" spoxe
- 32—2000 COLORSOUND 14" hi-hat & 2002 6" cup chime
- 33—2000 COLORSOUND 15" hi-hat & 11" spoxe
- 34—2000 COLORSOUND 18" china type w/404 14" hi-hat top inside
- 35—2000 COLORSOUND 18" power crash & 8" cup chime

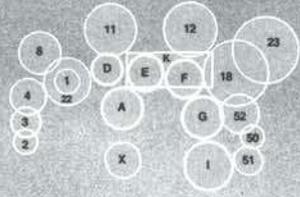
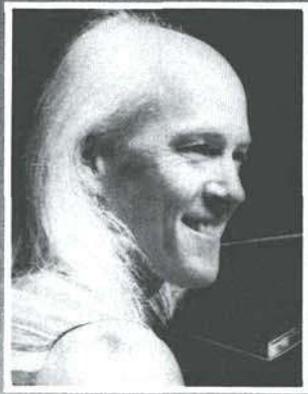
- 36—2000 COLORSOUND 20" china type w/404 14" hi-hat top inside
- 37—2000 COLORSOUND 20" crash & 2002 7" cup chime & tambourine
- 38—2000 COLORSOUND 20" crash & 20" china type combination
- 39—2000 COLORSOUND 20" novo china type w/505 20" crash below
- 40—2000 SOUND REFLECTIONS 16" crash
- 41—FORMULA 602 13" heavy hi-hat
- 42—FORMULA 602 14" heavy hi-hat
- 43—FORMULA 602 20" medium ride
- 44—SOUND CREATION 18" dark crash & 404 14" hi-hat top stacked

PAiSte
CYMBALS SOUNDS GONGS

CONTROL TEAM

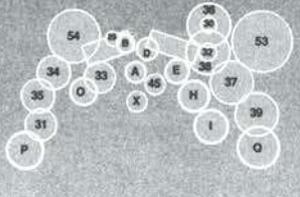
Russell Kunkel

PLAYING PAISTE 6 YEARS



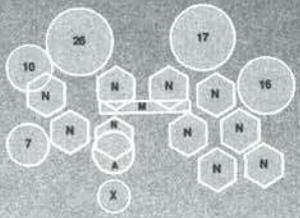
[Signature]

PLAYING PAISTE 9 YEARS



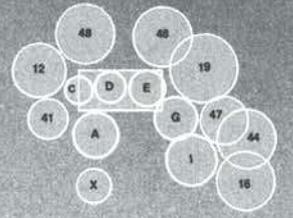
Bill Bruford

PLAYING PAISTE 20 YEARS



Chad Wackerman

PLAYING PAISTE 6 YEARS



RUSS KUNKEL

...I think we've really come to a new era with the new formulas, I think they're great... the 3000 at present is my favorite... there is a whole company behind it... when I go out on stage or I'm in the studio, it's not just the cymbals I'm playing, I'm representing a whole lot of other people and the time and care that they put into making the cymbals...

TERRY BOZZIO

...2000 Colorsounds have a lot of low end and I like that... I like that roar... I like my cymbals to obliterate everything else... I like the variety in the different sounds and sizes, the different colors and timbres, and the textures you can get with using all the different products, from gongs to bell cymbals... I mean, what other company makes as many different varieties as Paiste?...

BILL BRUFORD

...I do like the 3000s... I must admit, I think they are very lovely, really lovely... and I have always liked extremities of sound, rather than all-purpose sounds... Paiste doesn't just make cymbals, they also make very weird cymbals, and gongs and things... Paiste just has a much wider range of sound, and I am a sucker for all the weird stuff...

CHAD WACKERMAN

...one of the big reasons, why I like Paiste so much: the frequencies for each cymbal seem not to conflict as much... if you would have a 14" or 16" Crash, they would sound very different, the pitch is very specific, very defined... besides the endorsement, they are my favorite cymbals... having the choice, I would be playing Paiste anyway... I just like their whole catalog of sounds...

- 45 - RUDE 8" splash hi-hat & swivel plate
- 46 - RUDE 14" hi-hat
- 47 - RUDE 15" hi-hat
- 48 - RUDE 18" chime
- 49 - COLORSOUND 5 20" power ride
- 50 - 505 8" splash
- 51 - 505 10" splash
- 52 - 505 12" splash
- 53 - SOUND CREATION GONG No. 3 (26")
- 54 - SOUND CREATION GONG No. 6 (24")
- 55 - SYMPHONIC GONG 30"
- 56 - SYMPHONIC GONG 60"

DRUMS & OTHER INSTRUMENTS

- A - 14" snare drum
- B - 8" tom tom
- C - 9" tom tom
- D - 10" tom tom
- E - 12" tom tom
- F - 13" tom tom
- G - 14" tom tom
- H - 15" tom tom
- I - 16" tom tom
- J - 18" tom tom
- K - 22" bass drum
- L - 20" bass drum on stand

- M - electronic bass drum pad
- N - electronic pad
- O - 13" spoke hi-hat
- P - 13" & 17" spoke
- Q - 19" inverted spoke & 9" spoke
- X - drum throne

The statements in this ad are based on interviews conducted with the artists on their playing, cymbals, sounds, and on Paiste. Write to us at Paiste America, 460 Atlas St., Brea, CA. 92621, and ask for the ones you'd like. Mention Dept. USA2. Please include \$3 for printing, postage and handling.

Sonor International Drumkit



Though the vast majority of Sonor drums are made in their Aue factory not too far from Frankfurt, the *International* sets are made under license for Sonor in Taiwan, by a company called KHS. It's amazing that, though the sets are shipped from the Far East, they still arrive at their destination at a more attractive price than if they were actually produced in the Federal Republic of Germany. This gives drummers the opportunity to buy one of these more affordable kits at "entry level." Sonor's hope is that, having been well and truly hooked, the embryonic player will move on, in the fullness of time, to one of the company's much more up-market—and presumably more profitable—products.

The *International* is a five-drum set that comes complete with a straight cymbal stand, snare drum stand, hi-hat stand, and bass drum pedal. It uses the usual "power" sizes for this type of set: 10x12, 11x13, and 16 x 16 for the toms, 16x22 bass drum, and 6 1/2" deep metal-shell snare drum. The shells (apart from the snare) are made from six plies of what looks like Oriental mahogany (but will probably turn out to be an Indonesian wood called nato). The interiors are sealed with a very thin coat of emulsion-looking white paint, though I understand that there's a possibility Sonor might revert to the spotted porta-

fleck finish (like you see in the hallways of apartment buildings) they used to use. The bearing edges are a great deal better than those frequently seen on cheaper Taiwanese drums. They're set at roughly 45 degrees, and are smooth and almost totally free of the imperfections that normally characterize these products. The main reason for this is that Sonor is adamant that, even though the *International* is a low-price drumset, it still has to be made properly. They simply won't sacrifice manufacturing techniques. This, of course, has meant a certain amount of coming and going between Germany and Taiwan. But the results seem to be well worth the trouble. On first sight of the *International* kits amongst several German-built ones, I wasn't convinced that I was actually looking at a Taiwanese product!

The Bass Drum

The *International* set's bass drum features 20 of Sonor's internally sprung nut-boxes (which are actually manufactured in Germany, then shipped out to Taiwan). They're made slightly shallower than the ones fitted to Sonor's normal German drums in order to allow for the fact that the Taiwanese-built drums are ever-so-slightly larger. (For some years now Sonor has made an undersize shell to create a timpani-type

head seating where the rim doesn't come into contact with the shell at all.) Inexpensive bass drums don't normally have as many tensioners as this, but Sonor's attention to detail demanded it. The drum is equipped with "T-handled" tension rods and pressed steel claws, and is fitted with metal hoops inlaid with plastic. The spurs revolve on a cast boss that contains a sprung ratchet, and are telescopic—with an optional rubber- or spike-tipped end. Reasonably large wing bolts set the length of the spur and its angle of incidence to the floor, and the whole thing was pretty stable. The company puts a strengthening plate behind the spur block, just as they do for the double-tom holder mounted to the bass drum and the single receivers mounted to each of the smaller toms.

The double-tom holder is fixed conveniently close to the front of the bass drum for comfortable, close-together tom positioning, and is surprisingly well-made. It's cast, of course, with a pair of jaw-type clamping systems where one end is held by a drumkey-operated screw with a spring, while the other has a "T-bolt." It's a tried-and-tested system that works. The actual tom holder bracket itself consists of a pair of tubes (one short, one long) with one part of a cast ratchet at one end. These ratchets lock securely together with a medium-sized "T-screw." Memory clamps are fitted to each tube. These lock with a standard square-headed drumkey. Square-headed lugs are also used on the bottom four tension rods on the bass drum, and the bass drum pedal must also be adjusted by them. This is inconsistent with German-made Sonor drums, which use all slotted screws for tensioning. And since the other drums on this kit do use the slotted style, I don't understand why Sonor chose to use any square-headed screws at all on the set. But to be fair, they do supply the owner of the set with keys to fit both sorts. The bass drum with the set I played was fitted with a simple felt strip damper that just took away the booming edge of its sound. These aren't standard, but Sonor tells me they'd send you one if you asked for it specifically.

The Tom-Toms

Three "power" toms come standard with this set, although other sizes are also available. The ones I played were a 10 x 12, an 11 x 13, and, of course, the ubiquitous 16 x 16. The two smallest drums were mounted to the bass drum, and each had 12 of Sonor's slightly shaved nut-boxes. The floor tom had 16 of them. All the toms have medium-gauge, pressed-steel, triple-flange hoops and Sonor's usual screwdriver-slotted tension screws. No dampers are fitted, so the interiors of the shells are clean and uncluttered. The receivers bolted to the toms have the same clamping mechanism as used on the bass drum to locate and lock the tubes of the holder arm. The leg blocks on

the floor tom have an eye-bolt inside to locate and lock the double-bent leg in position. (The legs aren't exactly massive, and neither are the rubber tips fitted to their bottom ends. But they're knurled for extra grip where they enter the block, they get the job done, and the eye-bolt can, of course, be changed if its thread strips.)

The Snare Drum

At one time, Sonor used to ship German-built, bent and joined metal shells out to Taipei to be fitted with a foreign snare mechanism and hoops. (I understand that this was because they weren't happy with what they could get in the Orient at the time.) However, all this seems to have been resolved now, and they're satisfied with what they're getting from Taiwan. Basically, it's a medium-gauge steel shell with four centrally located strengthening beads and an inverse, slightly rolled flange set more or less at 45 degrees. A dip in the bottom bearing edge allows the snares to touch evenly over the whole head. The drum comes with triple-flange hoops, an internal damper made from spring steel with a felt pad, 20-strand snares joined to a side cam mechanism by plastic strips, slotted tension screws, and ten double-ended Sonor nut boxes. Not many "cheapo" snare drums have ten tensioners per head, nor do they have such a positive snare throw-off. (The lever of the strainer itself is rubberized, as is the thumbscrew that controls tension on the snares. The butt-end clamp, where the other end of the snares locate, is made from the usual pressed steel.)

The Heads

The set I took apart was fitted completely with Taiwanese-made heads, but this could change. Both sides of its toms and the batter of its bass drum had double-ply heads, which were glued for the first inch or so around their circumference, similar to a Remo *Pinstripe*. The snare drum had a brush-coated medium-thick head, while on the front of the bass drum was simply a shiny black plastic head emblazoned with the Sonor logo. I was surprised by the toms, because I've never felt that double-ply heads fitted at both the top and bottom works. Such a setup has always given too little response for my taste, especially on an extra-deep drum where you need a thinner head below to return the vibrations quickly. However, the system worked just fine in this case, and gave a clear and strong sound. (This leads me to believe that the two plastic plies being used must be thinner than usual.)

Within the limitations of "you-get-what-you-pay-for," the snare drum was also reasonably good. It had a tight, bright sound without too much "zonk," and was as good as I've heard in this price range. I mentioned that the bass drum's sound was given more definition and less ring by the felt

strip damper. However, its overall sound was still thumpy, round, loud, and most acceptable. (I said earlier that the standard heads on this kit could change, because I discovered recently that Sonor is now making their own heads in Germany from *My-lar*. It might just be that they'll eventually be fitting these to their *International* series drums.)

The Accessories

All the stands have double-braced legs that are made from not particularly substantial steel. In a gallant effort to make them more stable, Sonor has spaced the two halves of each leg further apart by using a plastic washer on each side of the strut that joins them to the collar fixed to the very bottom of the lowest tube. These tubes are not mammoth either, but they're what you'd expect to get with a budget kit, and do have a couple of useful refinements. The height-adjustment points on all the stands have an internal, wear-resisting plastic/nylon ferrule where they touch the tubes and a quick-release lever mechanism that sets the height (and may be fine-tuned by way of a knurled thumbscrew). A drumkey-lockable memory clamp not only recalls the height you set it at last time, but also—by virtue of its shape—remembers the position it's supposed to be in relative to the player. This is handy, since it ensures that the cymbal, hi-hat, or snare drum playing angle will always be the same (providing the leg position is consistent).

The straight cymbal stand has three stages, with large rubber feet for its legs and a cast, sprung, splined ratchet tilter with a reasonable collection of felts and washers and a smallish wing nut.

The hi-hat has the same tripod legs and height adjustment as the other stands, with the shaped quick-release lever to lock its height. There's an inverted "U"-shaped cast framework beneath the bottom tube, and it's here that the non-adjustable center-pull mechanism joins—via a motorbike-type chain—to the two-piece, sand-blasted footplate. A reversible flat spur is also joined to the framework where it touches the floor. To be activated, it needs only to be flipped over and locked with a drumkey. The footplate is joined to the center of the hi-hat by a bent rod stretcher. The bottom cymbal cup is adjustable in angle, though not particularly large, and the typically Taiwanese cymbal clutch is slightly bigger and better than most others of its kind. In terms of playability, even though this hi-hat isn't adjustable, it still felt okay.

The snare stand was a bit more of a problem. Even though it boasted all the refinements of the other Sonor *International* stuff, it didn't seem to be as stable. Maybe its legs weren't widespread enough. The angle adjustment used a larger-than-usual sprung ratchet tilter mechanism (with one part joined to the down tube and the other

to the adjustable basket mechanism). The locking action of the basket arms is adjusted by a capstan nut that tightens a steel collar beneath the basket. Obviously the snare drum stand, too, comes under the heading of "you-get-what-you-pay-for." Slightly wider tubing and thicker-gauge steel for the holding arms would help. But it wasn't that bad. It did what it was supposed to do and certainly shouldn't put you off buying the drumset.

The only other thing to mention is the bass drum pedal. It's a twin-post job with a single adjustable expansion spring, a two-piece footplate to match the hi-hat's (complete with toe stop), a chain link (although it's not a chain drive), twin spurs tapped into the framework, and a rather large, cast beater retainer block that fits to the steel rod axle. A pair of drumkey-operated screws fix the position of the retainer on the axle. These don't just tighten *against* it; they're actually tapped *into* it too. For a moment I thought that this would mean you couldn't change the beater's angle of stroke relative to the bass drum head, but this was not so. The accelerator cam, fixed to the end of the shaft (to which the expansion spring attaches), has alternative holes in it so that the spring can actually be moved—thus putting the beater closer or farther away. The height of the beater is adjustable in the usual way. This pedal, although inexpensive, actually wasn't a bad piece of gear and was very usable.

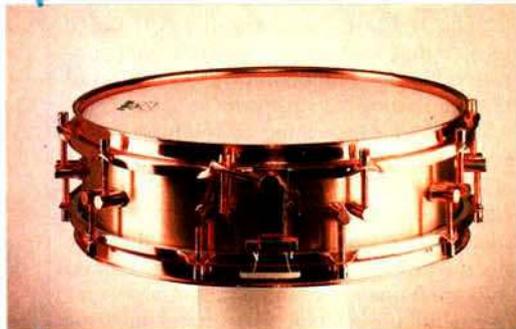
Because the *International* really is an "entry-level" set, and the chances are that the proud owner may well want to add to it, Sonor offers an expansion package. It's comprised of 9x10 and 12x14 toms, a double stand to support them, and a cymbal boom stand, and sells for \$495.00. A second bass drum is available for \$385.00.

Many Taiwanese-built drums feature the same nut-boxes and fittings, simply because there's a single factory there that makes a great many of these things reasonably well (and, presumably, very cheaply). But this has resulted in all Taiwanese drums looking more or less the same. Sonor has not fallen into this trap. Aside from certain obvious items—like toms holders and spurs—they seem to have their own "look" together on the *International* series. The appearance of the set was much better than that of an average Taiwanese kit, and looked not too dissimilar to a German-built set. (The only thing that gave its origins away was the chroming. In Germany, the article to be plated is always polished before it goes into the solution, and it shows.) The *International* kit is available in four plastic finishes: black, white, wine red, and midnight blue metallic. The suggested retail price is \$1295.00.

—Bob Henrit

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Sonor And Remo Piccolo Snares



Sonor HLD593 Signature Bronze Piccolo

Sonor recently unleashed what could be termed "the world's most esoteric snare drum" with their new *Signature Series Bronze* piccolo snare. The *Signature Bronze* is a 4 x 14 drum, with a one-piece cast bronze shell. All fittings (hoops, lugs, rods, etc.) are copper-plated to give the drum a golden appearance. This all makes for one weighty drum; the *Signature Bronze* is probably the heaviest snare I've ever lifted!

The drum has 20 lugs (ten per side), with the standard Sonor slotted rods. Heavy-gauge flanged hoops are used for more effective tuning and a solid sound. To dampen the drum, Sonor includes a matching copper-plated clip-on external muffler.

A stick-shift lever cross-throw strainer is mounted to the shell. The butt end contains the fine-tension knob to adjust the snare wires. Cording is used to hold the 24-strand snares (which, by the way, have chromed ends, clashing with the drum's golden look. Call the Fashion Police!) The strainer works extra-smooth, and is virtually silent, with no snare "rap" when switching on or off.

The drum I received to test came with a coated *Ambassador* batter and a transparent *Ambassador* snare-side head. Even without a thinner *Diplomat* bottom head, the piccolo managed to present an extremely sensitive, crisp sound. Any delicate passages played were perfectly audible. During heavier playing, the drum didn't choke up at all, and had good volume. Rimshots were solid-sounding and rang right out. Latin-style rim clicks were round and not boxy-sounding. In every situation I tried it in, the drum's sound was clear, undistorted, and distinguishable.

I'll keep this short and simple by saying that the *Signature Bronze* piccolo is of the utmost professional quality, engineering-wise and cosmetically, with top-of-the line sound characteristics. Unfortunately, though, it carries an equally professional

(read: high) price tag, which, without a doubt, is out of the spending range of many players. The drum retails at \$1,300.00. (If you really want to go all out, Sonor is also producing a copper-finish *Signature* snare stand, with a hinged tripod leg base and lever-operated basket, at \$430.00 retail.)



Sonor D420 Piccolo

Don't despair from what you've just read, because Sonor hasn't forgotten the "poorer people," and also offers a 3 1/2 x 14 chrome-finish piccolo snare, made of ferro-manganese steel. The *D420* piccolo also has 20 lugs with slotted rods, and the same strainer as the *Signature* (but chrome-plated). Practically all other design specs are the same as the *Signature Bronze*, except of course for the plating and shell material.

Being a half-inch shallower than the *Signature*, the *D420* sounded a bit higher than the 4 x 14, as one would expect. The steel-shell drum still retained its sensitivity, and maybe even has a touch more volume. It was more "open"-sounding than the bronze-shelled *Signature*, and perhaps livelier. But it still had the capability of a delicate response when needed. Sonor is renowned for its high standards; the *D420* is certainly no exception. Retail price is \$490.00.



Remo MasterTouch Piccolo

Remo's new *MasterTouch* line includes the company's first 3 1/2 x 14 piccolo snare. Like all other Remo drums, it has an *Acousticon* phenolic shell, and *Quadura* covering. The drum has ten double-ended lugs, a single venthole, and no internal muffling. A newly-designed strainer throws off from the center via a large thumb lever. Both

sides of the strainer have fine-tension knobs. When released, the throw-off lever drops the entire assembly to an almost 90 degree angle, to fully drop the snares. The strainer is extremely simple, but worked quite smoothly and didn't bind up. Twenty-strand wire snares are used, and are held with plastic strips. The drum I tested came with a coated *Ambassador* batter and an *Ambassador* snare-side head.

The *MasterTouch* piccolo had good volume, with an alert, snappy response. It wasn't too thin-sounding and was capable of a reasonably wide dynamic range. In fact, I was content to use this piccolo as my primary snare drum. With the snares off, it gave a tight, timbale-like sound. *Diplomat* heads would probably enable the drum to be tuned up to a higher pitch and "pop" more.

A mirror-gold *Quadura* covering was on the drum I played; other Remo colors may be available by special request. Suggested retail list price is \$224.00.

—Bob Saydlowski, Jr.



Zildjian Piggyback

In recent years, it has become popular to mount two cymbals together, producing a dry, short sound best described as a "splat." Terry Bozzio mounts various combinations of cymbals in this manner, and Dave Weckl has a China mounted over a crash, which he uses for punctuation. But there has been no particular standard in terms of what cymbal combination produces the best results.

Zildjian has attempted to standardize things a bit by introducing a cymbal specifically designed to be used in conjunction with another cymbal: the *EFX Piggyback*. The cymbal is 12" in diameter, has a China-type profile, and is very thin and lightweight. Its size and shape make it ideal for a variety of mounting applications. You can mount it right side up on ride or crash cymbals, or you can invert a ride or crash and mount an inverted *Piggyback* inside of it. You could also mount a larger cymbal over the *Piggyback*, or mount a small splash inside an inverted one.

There are no hard and fast rules when it comes to matching a *Piggyback* with another cymbal, and experimentation is definitely called for. Generally, when mounting two cymbals together, you'll get that basic "splat" sound, but within that you can get some variation. The pitch will be affected by the cymbal that you are using with the *Piggyback*. We tried a *Piggyback* inverted inside an 18" A Zildjian crash as well as inside a 17" K Zildjian. While the overall character was the same, the pitch was significantly different.

We also found that the sound could be varied quite a bit by how tightly the cymbals were held together by the wing nut. We experimented with an inverted *Piggyback* mounted inside an inverted 17" crash. When angled and screwed down tightly, there was very little sound. When mounted fairly flat with little or no tightening of the wing nut, the cymbals would vibrate against each other for a couple of seconds. Various degrees of tightening the wing nut produced various effects, ranging from a fairly nice sizzle effect to a rather annoying rattle. There were also differences in sound depending on whether we struck only the edge of the 17" or both cymbals together.

We had interesting results when we mounted a *Piggyback* underneath a 20" K Light Ride. By placing a very thin piece of felt between the bells and angling the cymbals just a little, we were able to get just a hint of a "trash" sound when playing on the ride cymbal. I must mention that it took quite a bit of experimenting on our part to determine the optimum thickness of the felt and the right amount of tilt on the cymbals.

We encountered one potential problem. We borrowed three *Piggyback* cymbals for review, and one of them was slightly warped. That was only a problem in certain applications, where we were trying to get one cymbal to vibrate evenly against the other (as in the above example of the *Piggyback* mounted under the ride). Given the thinness of these cymbals, it's easy to see why they could be prone to warp, so you might want to check for that before you make your purchase.

Zildjian's promo for this cymbal states that it can also be used as a small China. The *MD* editors who tried it felt that it was too thin and high-pitched for that use, and preferred it in combination with another cymbal. But that's not to say that someone else wouldn't be able to use it by itself and be pleased with the sound.

The *EFX Piggyback* has a list price of \$164.00, which is comparable to what you might spend on a 17" crash. Considering that the *Piggyback* can be used in several different ways—depending on what you mate it with—it might not be a bad investment if you're looking for something different.

—Rick Mattingly

Holz



Here's a nifty little accessory device that can improve both the sound and the cosmetic appearance of your bass drum. A *Holz* is a plastic reinforcement ring designed to fit into the front head of a bass drum where a sound hole has been cut out. The major function of the *Holz* is to reinforce the edge of the head where it has been cut—thereby preventing damage and improving the sound. The *Holz* also improves the overall appearance of the front head by giving the sound hole a finished appearance, rather than the exposed edge of the drumhead—which can often be somewhat ragged-looking if the cutting job was not done well.

The *Holz* unit is comprised of two plastic rings that fit on either side of the drumhead, sandwiching it in between. The side that faces front is rounded and smooth, and contains eight small bolts that extend back into the drumshell. The backing ring is flat, and has eight holes to receive the eight bolts. Plastic nuts, shaped like the tops of tuning lugs and operated by a drumkey, hold the two rings together once the device has been placed.

We tested both the 4" and the 6" models of *Holz* under a variety of playing applications. They were easy to install, and certainly did give a finished, professional look to the bass drum head. (A choice of flat black, chrome, or brass finish is available for cosmetic variety.) We did find that we had to be very careful when tightening the plastic nuts onto the metal bolts. It was very easy to strip the inside threads of the nuts, thereby rendering them useless. Yet it was very important that the nuts be *secure*, since the *Holz* had a tendency to rattle if the two halves weren't firmly joined. (As a matter of fact, we had problems with rattling on a couple of the devices, no matter *how* we tightened them.) This made us a bit dubious about how many times a *Holz* could be taken apart and used again before the nuts would become totally useless. (But then again, how often does one need to change the front bass drum head?) In fairness to the makers of *Holz*, they do provide very specific instructions for installation, and those instructions include clearly indicated cautions regarding overtightening the nuts. (Personally speaking, I might

opt to use small metal nuts that would fit the existing bolts.)

In terms of sound, the *Holz* added solidity to the heads at the cutout, where an unreinforced head can sometimes sound weak and "flappy." This situation can often become worse if the edges of the hole are wrinkled or torn due to impact with microphones or hands adjusting muffling inside the drum. *Holz* prevent that wrinkling or tearing from happening, thereby giving the acoustic impression of a single vibrating body—closer to that of an uncut head.

A cutting tool, called a *Speedcutter*, is also available from the makers of *Holz*. Although it's certainly not a necessity (many drummers cut perfectly fine holes in their bass drum heads quite regularly), it does make cutting a neat, round hole quick and easy. It's basically a compass-like device, with a movable point (adjustable for different hole sizes) and a cutting wheel. You stick the point into the head at the desired location, spin the device around a couple of times, and—voila!—you have a nice, clean hole of exactly the desired diameter. The *Speedcutter* is designed to cut either 4" or 6" holes, in order to correspond to the existing *Holz* sizes, and lists at \$7.95. If you aren't expert at cutting holes in drumheads, this device might very well be worth the investment. (A high-tech version that cuts holes from 2" to 22" is available as well. Useful for drumtechs, drumshop service people, and others who might be doing a lot of hole cutting, this device is available for \$99.95.)

The existence of *Holz* is not, in and of itself, a reason to cut a hole in a bass drum head if you would not normally do so. But if you *do* normally cut such a hole, or if you have been considering doing so, the addition of a *Holz* could very well give you a stronger, more attractive look and sound. Suggested retail price for *Holz* is as follows: 4" black, \$14.95; 6" black, \$15.95; 4" chrome or brass, \$18.95; 6" chrome or brass, \$19.95. For further information, contact Holz, 2370 S. Redwood Road, Salt Lake City, Utah 84119, or call 1-800-223-3208.

Rick Van Horn 



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by Rod Morgenstein

What's In A Note: Part 3

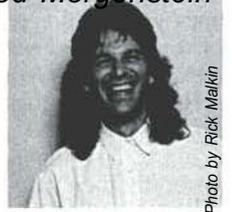
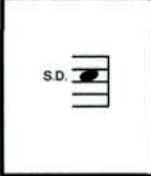


Photo by Rick Walkin

MUSIC KEY



In my last article, we played exercises that combined various 16th-note patterns followed by exercises that involved broken-up triplet patterns. Let's see what happens if we play 16ths and triplets back-to-back. The first two examples present the basic differences in feel between triplets to 16th notes and triplets to 8th notes. Your job is to be able to comfortably subdivide each beat into the respective note-value. Remember, be sure to either tap your foot to quarter notes or use a metronome.

The following six examples are tricky in that the 16th-note patterns and the triplet patterns may end up sounding the same, when in fact, they should not. When you subdivide the 16ths and triplets with conviction, you will experience two very different feels.

The next few examples consist of random 16th-note and triplet combinations.

The following examples differ from the previous ones in that they begin with triplet figures.

The next example contains 16th-note and triplet patterns lasting for two beats each.

The last example is a random mixture of 16ths and triplets, with each pattern lasting only one beat. In this exercise, you will find yourself having to subdivide 16ths or triplets (back and forth) on almost every beat.

The focus of this three-part series has been to develop the split-second ability to play and hear the many different note/rest combinations. Understanding the difference in feel between 16ths and triplets will greatly improve your command of time, while at the same time enhancing your drumming.





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by *Kenny Aronoff*

Being Creative

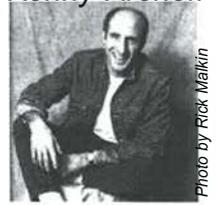


Photo by Rick Malkin

MUSIC KEY

Cym. Bell C.C.
R.C.
T.T. S.D. B.D.
Cross Add I Ghost Stick T.T. Note

When I play the drums, I try to apply the concept of "less is more" to the music I'm creating. I've talked about this before, but I can't stress the point enough. Instead of detracting from the music by overplaying, I try to support the song by playing just enough. Lots of flashy licks do not necessarily help a song. A drummer needs to supply the basic foundation to a song by playing the right beat, keeping solid time, making that beat feel good, and finally, by adding creative ideas. These creative ideas should add excitement and interest, without distracting or taking away from the song. Creating a simple, perfect beat can be just as challenging and difficult as mastering a complex one.

I recently recorded a song called "The World We Love So Much," for an album by a new artist, Gregg Alexander. The basic beat to the song was a 1 2/8 or triplet feel that went like this:

I tried to be creative with the basic beat throughout the song, in a way that would support the music from beginning to end. I experimented with playing fewer notes at the beginning of the song and adding more as the song developed. This song started very softly with few instruments, and then continued to build throughout until it reached a climax. The song began with Gregg playing guitar and singing the first verse alone. Then the drums and bass entered for the second verse. I played a simplified version of the basic beat of the song, in order to leave room to build. I played this beat for eight measures and then added a cross-stick part on the backbeats.

I then began to add creative ideas to the beat with my bass drum and ride cymbal.

I tried to play with more intensity, building to a fill that finally brought me to the basic beat of the song. For the rest of the song, I tried to add creative ideas to the basic beat in a way that added excitement, but didn't detract from the beat, feel, or concept of the song.

Here is an example of some creative ideas that I played on the song:

finally...

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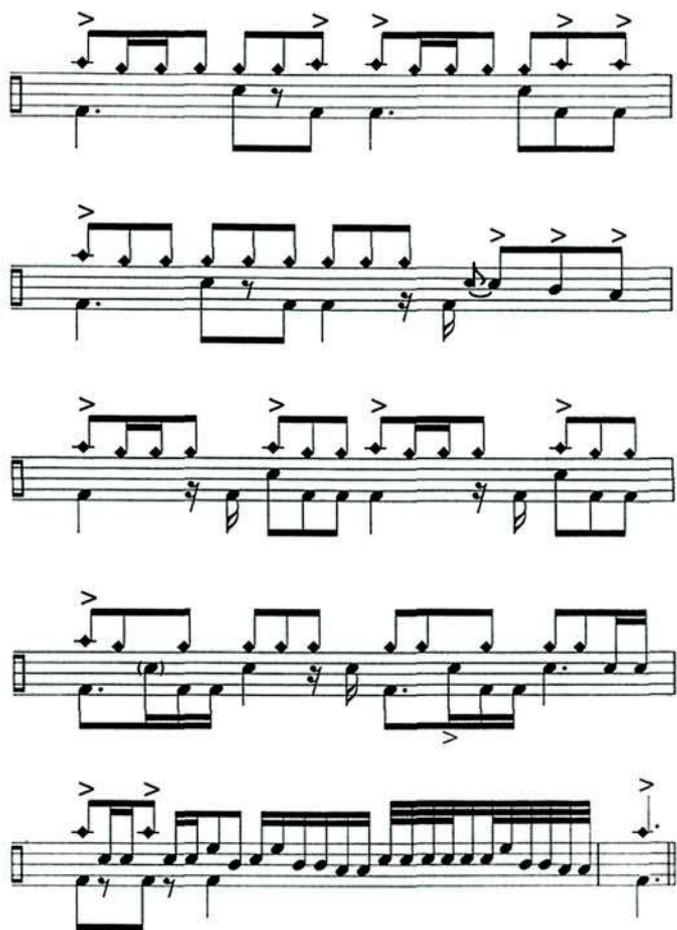
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Practice Routine

1. A good way to develop your ability to be creative with a beat is to first pick a beat and play it for five minutes relentlessly, without altering or changing the beat. The desire to add something to the beat will be great, but focus on playing just the beat itself. This is important because you are developing the foundation on which you are going to be creative, the same foundation you should establish when you're playing a song. To help concentrate while playing for five minutes, try singing a melody to yourself as you play.

2. After five minutes, start to add creative ideas with just your hi-hat or ride cymbal, while keeping the rest of the beat the same. Do this for at least five minutes and continue to sing a melody.

3. Next, go back to the original beat. Play it for a short while, and then start experimenting with just the bass drum for another five minutes.

4. After that, return to the original beat and play it for a while. Experiment with just the snare drum for at least five minutes as you keep everything else steady.

5. Finally, start combining all of your ideas. Be creative with your hi-hat or ride cymbal, bass drum, and snare drum all together. Be sure not to lose focus of the original beat. Keep singing the melody and start adding fills.

When you're playing the drums and making music, everything is based on what kind of song you're playing. The song will determine what beat you play, and also what creative ideas or fills you can add to the beat. Hopefully, this short lesson will help you develop this important concept.



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Joey



Photo by Aldo Mauro

Some drummers are known for their signature strokes. Billy Cobham's double bass drum pumping is unmistakable. Joe Morello's brushwork is like no other's. Steve Jordan's tight, crisp snare crack is his calling card. There's Tony Williams' signature tom fills, Bill Bruford's tone, Stewart Copeland's precision, Steve Gadd's patented hi-hat/snare/bass combinations... the list goes on and on.

Joey Baron has no signature sound or patented lick. Yet there is a quality to his playing that does distinguish him among his peers. All the people he works with these days—guitarist Bill Frisell, saxophonists John Zorn and Tim Berne, trumpeter Herb Robertson, cellist Hank Roberts, pianists Bill O'Connell and Fred Hersch, guitar great Jim Hall, and harmonica ace Toots Thielemans—all point to one thing as Joey's distinctive trait: his creativity. He can always be counted on to come up with something fresh, something clever, something wholly unpredictable. He listens and he reacts. He's a thinking, feel-

ing drummer who is constantly seeking ways to enhance the environment he's thrust into. In short, Joey Baron is an artist as opposed to a craftsman.

I once saw him play a copy of the New York Post in a duet performance with Frisell. He flipped through the newspaper, ripping each page in time as a backdrop to Frisell's acoustic extrapolations. On another occasion, during a solo performance, he did a piece that was based solely on belly laughs. At times with Frisell's quartet, he has es-

chewed sticks in favor of the hands-on-drumheads approach of a conga drummer. He'll play with fingers on the cymbals, windup toys on the snare, or whatever it takes to keep things interesting. Or, if in the service of singer Carmen McRae or guitarist Jim Hall, he can provide entirely egoless, uncommonly sensitive, and relentlessly swinging accompaniment.

BM: Can we talk in general about your approach to drumming?

JB: Sure. I never really related to the technical side of the instrument. When I first started playing, I didn't have a full set of drums. I had one little snare, and I'd pretend that different areas of the snare were different parts of the set: The edge would be the cymbal, the side would be the bass drum, and so on. And that kind of attitude has carried through to my playing today. My basic concept now is to get the most out of the least. I feel much more at home on a very simple set than I do on an elaborate kit that has everything you'd ever need right there in front of you. So basically it doesn't really matter what I play on. When I play tours in Europe, I never carry my own drums. Within the past two or three years I've begun to move in that direction. And it's taken me over 20 years to finally work through all the stereotypes that drummers have always had to work through—being dumb, being insensitive, being crazy, or whatever—to get to this attitude I'm at now. And part of the reason was that I started to connect with people who encouraged me to do what I liked to do.

BM: Kindred spirits like Bill Frisell, for instance?

JB: Yeah, he's a major figure for me in that department. Playing with him is so great because there's no judgment, there's no expectation, there's no...

BM: Cliches?

JB: Right. I mean, we all have our little things that we rely on from time to time, but it's not a major issue when we sit down to play. We just really relate to each other through our instruments. And that's what I've always wanted to do—to be able to work with the best people in that context.

BM: What is it that you enjoy about playing with Frisell and musicians like Tim Berne and John Zorn?

JB: That it's such a liberating experience. With those guys, you can bring

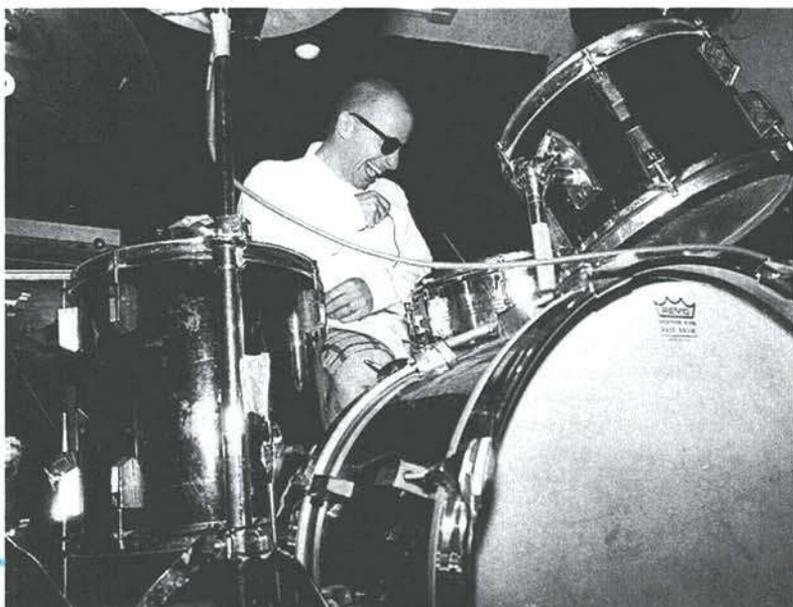


Photo by Aldo Mauro

Baron

your background experiences to the situation, and nobody is going to judge you for it. We all have a background in traditional jazz, and yet we don't play by those rules. In a straight-ahead setting there are certain rules you must abide by. You violate the rules and you're out of line. And for a drummer, that's a real tough issue. People like Max Roach did so much to knock those walls down, but today in the late '80s I feel that the walls have been built back up.

BM: By what?

JB: By stereotypes and just by the way things are run. Drummers, for the most part, still have to be some superstar or be in political fashion somehow before getting accepted on their own as leaders or instigators of a certain direction. I think a lot of it's got to do with the physical aspect of it; guitar players get to move around, they stand up, they're up front. Drummers are always sitting down, always in the back, and people kind of take them for granted. And that's why I really admire people like Max and Jo Jones and Han Benick—people who bucked the system and tried to say something else.

BM: How did you arrive at this very liberated attitude?

JB: I'm sure it's got everything to do with my background. I come from a real working-class Jewish family. We just dealt with what was in front of us. I'm from Richmond, Virginia, born June 26, 1955, and when I was nine, my father got two drumsticks and showed me a real crude press roll. I would practice on furniture and things, and then one summer I saved up, cut grass for the neighbors, bought a snare drum, and started playing along with the radio and television. Some of my earliest drum influences came from the shopping market ads I'd hear, where they would have somebody playing brushes in a quick swing tempo and a voice-over would be talking in rhythm about what was on sale that week. No music, just brushes and voice—"Turkeys for sale...20 cents a pound...fat and juicy...golden brown." It was actually pretty hip, like swing rap or something. So I'd hear that and stuff like *The Wild Wild West* theme song on TV, things on the *Ed Sullivan Show*, records by Sandy Nelson, Booker T. & the MG's, Mongo Santamaria, Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*—just a weird mixture of things that filtered in. I'd go from one to the next and never put any judgment on anything—that this was Latin music and this was Dixieland and this was Jewish music or whatever—I just soaked it all up.

BM: What about rock?

JB: Yeah, Hendrix, Cream. Richmond is in the Southern belt so I could turn on the



Photo by Aldo Mauro

radio and hear a lot of Sam & Dave, Ray Charles, Booker T., and organ groups like Jimmy Smith, Don Patterson, and Jimmy McCriff. I took all of it in. I was never told by somebody, "Hey, this is jazz, this is rock, this is ethnic music...." It was all just music and fun to play to. And because it was fun for me, I never thought of playing drums as being hard. I just loved the drums so much—I focused all my attention on them from the age of nine—that I didn't realize how hard I was working to assimilate the things I was hearing on records, which is basically how I learned to play.

BM: You've never had any teachers or mentors?

JB: I've had teachers, but what I've gotten from them has mostly been from a technical point of view—the rudiments of how to hold the sticks and read rhythms and that sort of thing. But in terms of relating to people on a small group level, interacting, and feeding people ideas, I was getting that on my own from records and from playing gigs.

When I was 16, in the summer of 1970, I did attend Berklee's summer program in Boston. It was a great experience, not so much because of what I learned about coordination and other technical matters,

but just being in an environment where other kids were thinking about drumming and listening to the same records. One of my most inspiring experiences there came from playing with this bass player named John Nebbs. We'd hide out in the school after they'd lock up and just play all night long. Nobody knew we were in there. John was the first upright player that really encouraged me to interact beyond the technical point of playing drums. I read all the books on the rudiments, but I got more inspiration and learned more about my own playing from just taking chances and doing what I really felt.

BM: What professional experiences did you have following that Berklee summer session?

JB: I started playing in rock 'n' roll bands and Dixieland groups around Virginia before I went to Berklee. When I came back to Virginia after Berklee, I wanted to drop out of high school and devote my full attention to playing. So I finished high school a year early, moved back to Boston, went back to Berklee for about a semester and a half, then went on the road with a lounge group that played all over the country. We were in Denver when we decided to break up. This was in the early '70s, and at that

time my really big goal as a drummer was to play with Carmen McRae. I would've done anything to work with her at that point. So a friend of mine, a bass player named Chip Jackson, told me he heard through the grapevine that Carmen was looking for a drummer. I got all excited and sent her a telegram. But the weird thing was, she thought I was somebody else—some jerk she had met in a club the night before with a similar name—so she never returned my calls or my telegrams. But I was determined to get this gig.

I ended up going to LA. to seek Carmen out. I didn't know a soul out there. I was living in a room about the size of two tables. Eventually I got so desperate I started calling people out of the union book at ran-

dom and introducing myself. Through that, I met people like Donald Bailey, who I became very close with, and Frank Severino, who has since passed away. Both of those guys were great drummers and great people who helped me a lot when I first came to L.A. in 1975. And through them I met people like Hampton Hawes and Art Pepper and Blue Mitchell, but my goal was still to play with Carmen.

Eventually the word got out that I wanted to work with her, so one night she came to this club I was playing in. We made a connection, and she invited me to her house for an audition. I was so nervous. I knew all her arrangements because I had been listening to her since I was 15, but I was still really nervous about it. So I drove up

to her house in Beverly Hills, looking kinda weird with my long hair and beard. The Beverly Hills cops must've thought I was weird too, because they followed me up to the door like I was going to burglarize the place. Carmen comes out, the cop looks at me, then looks at her and says, "You know him?" She looks me up one side and down the other, looks back at the cop, and after a long pause, she says, "He's okay." The cop leaves, and I'm shaking as I'm loading my drums from my van into her house. I mean, I'm freaking out! This is one of my big idols, and I'm in her house! So I set up, and I don't know the bass player or the piano player, and she calls off "Clear Day." We start playing, and she cuts the tune off after four bars. And, man, I'm thinking to myself, "I must really suck!" And she's standing there staring at me, her head tilted and her tongue in her cheek, and finally she says, "You got the gig." I couldn't believe it. It was one of the happiest days in my life. I jumped off the chair. She must've thought I was nuts.

BM: Was it a satisfying gig?

JB: It was one of the best gigs I ever had because I really wanted to be there and was ready to please her. We had a great relationship, and I got a real insight into the thing I wanted to get at that time—complete discipline. At that time everybody was into Mahavishnu and Headhunters and funk. And I grew up with that, so it never seemed that hard to get that kind of groove going. To me, the swing thing was the real challenge. How could these guys play four quarter notes and get it to feel so full? So it was my goal to really investigate that, and I got the hands-on view of it from working with Carmen.

BM: How long did that gig last?

JB: Two and a half years. We went all over the world and did a record that Dizzy Gillespie played on [*Carmen McRae at the Great American Music Hall*, Blue Note], which was another big thrill for me. When I listen back to it now, I wish I could go back and do it all over again. I got a chance to play with her last year. She did a gig at Michael's Pub here in town that her drummer couldn't make, so she called me. I hadn't played with her in ten years, but it was just like home—really fun. We had a ball.

BM: What happened after that stint with Carmen?

JB: I had a trio with Andy Simpkins on bass and Dave MacKay on piano, but it didn't work out. So I free-lanced around. I subbed on the Merv Griffin show sometimes when Nick Ceroli couldn't make it, and when Jake Hanna couldn't make the gig over at Dante's, he'd send me over to play with Herb Ellis. So I got to play with a lot of guys during that period. Then Al Jarreau called me. I worked with him for three years, but for Al it was a period of transition. He was changing direction, and the band was slowly being manipulated out of the picture. I never got to record any albums with him, but I did appear with him

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on a PBS special, *Up From jumpstreet*. I continued free-lancing after that and eventually met guitarist Lenny Breau in L.A. That was a real valuable experience for me; he was another kindred spirit. We formed a trio with floating bass players, and we'd play a club there every week. He was just a beautiful player.

BM: Looking back, how would you sum up your experiences in L.A.?

JB: I spent seven years out there, and that's when it started to hit me that something was wrong. I needed to have more support for what I wanted to do. I needed more of an outlet than just working other people's gigs functionally. I liked doing that for the first few years, but later I was trying to do something else and I didn't know what. The whole studio scene in L.A. has such a strong influence on a lot of players that everyone seems to stress craftsmanship. There are incredible players in L.A., incredible craftsmen, and their only outlet is that of a craftsman.

It slowly dawned on me what was missing for me; I needed to be around people who had a different perspective, people whose main thing was to maybe do something that was a complete experiment, that they didn't know if it was working or not but still went ahead and tried it. And the real kick in the pants out there for me was Carl Shroeder, a pianist who had played with Sarah Vaughan for many years. He had been involved with Free Life Communications back in the '60s with cats like Dave Liebman, Steve Grossman, Bob Moses, and Wayne Shorter—that whole loft jazz scene happening in New York then. He really lit the fuse for me to try and get me going, thinking about things in different ways. He has such a philosophical approach to playing, almost like a Talmudic scholar. We had a trio with bassist Bob Magnusson and we did a tape that nobody was really interested in at the time. But working on that project kind of gave me what I had been looking for and had been frustrated without. So I started to feel that maybe I should leave L.A. and come to New York, where more people played music with this approach.

BM: What adjustments did you have to make in going to New York from L.A.?

JB: I don't want to get into saying "better" or "worse"; it's just different. I had to go through the ropes, start at the end of the line. I remember calling people, begging them to play a club date. I had to beg this guy to hire me to play a gig in a catering hall out in Jersey.

BM: Didn't your reputation in L.A. carry any weight in New York?

JB: Not really. It's weird, but I never seemed to get in groups where I was in a visible position. Over the years I've had people following me or enjoying what I do, but I was never on a "hip" gig. Some gigs are just built-in; no matter who the drummer is, you're automatically on the front cover of every magazine. Weather Report is a gig like that, or Chick Corea's gig. I would

sometimes get frustrated that I didn't have that, but I was on the job because I wanted to play the music, and if it was with Lenny Breau in some small club in North Hollywood, who cares? I got to play with Lenny Breau! And that was worth a million bucks to me. Same with Carmen. So my rep was with some of the musicians in town like John Scofield and Joe Lovano and some of the older cats, but I was never on the tip of everyone's tongue.

BM: Who did you first hook up with in New York?

JB: First it was strictly club dates. One of the first gigs I did was with bassist Marc Johnson and pianist Fred Hersch at Griffis on the East Side. And right after that, Lew Tabackin and Toshiko Akyoshi moved here.

I had played with them in L.A., so they asked me to join their East Coast band. Then there was a period where I hung out a lot at this place called 55 Grand, where a lot of musicians came by. I played with a lot of people there—Scofield, Emily Remler, Stanley Jordan, Mike Stern, Kenny Kirkland, Harvie Swartz, Daryl Jones, Steve Slagle.

BM: What were some key hookups for you at that time?

JB: Red Rodney and Ira Sullivan. That was the first gig I had where I felt really encouraged to play the way I felt within that bebop idiom. Ira is basically a frustrated drummer himself. He's really into drums. And every night he would just sit back and go, "Yeah, play another one." He'd really listen to

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what everybody was doing. And when you have that kind of attention on you when you're creating, it's the best thing in the world. That's what I've always valued, which is probably why I've never gotten into the studio scene. I think I could've done that. I have the skills to. I can read and all that, but giving people something and getting an immediate reaction from them—that's what I really want. If they hate it or love it, I feel I've done what I really wanted to do. For instance, I just did a gig in Germany as part of the Avant Garde In New York Festival. I did a solo piece, and right in the middle of it I began hearing this chanting from the audience. I found out later they were yelling, "Go back to New York!" and I kind of liked that because they were reacting to what I did. But Ira was a real confidence builder for me. He would turn around and go, "Yeah, more, more!" That was around 1982, and it was a kind of start for me of bringing that risk-taking quality to my playing on the gig.

BM: How did you meet Bill Frisell?

JB: It was at a recording session for Kenny Warner, with a cast of thousands. I was playing one tune with Kenny, Marc Johnson, Tim Berne, and Frisell, and it just wasn't going anywhere. It was supposed to be this real kind of sensitive thing, and right in the middle of it I just figured, "What am I here for? I wanna play what I think should be played." So I just hit this real obnoxious backbeat. I looked up and noticed that Frisell was across the room staring at me, smiling. After the session we took each other's numbers, and later we got together and just played duo a lot. We have a lot in common in that we grew up listening to a lot of different types of music and we feel comfortable playing many kinds of music.

BM: The solo thing is something you've just begun developing. What does that represent to you as an artist?

JB: It represents being able to take my past and channel it in a way that I can't do in any other situation, and to hopefully create something that's musical with it, yet not so extremely serious as solo gigs tend to be. It's just the way I hear drums a lot, and sometimes what I hear doesn't belong in other contexts, but fits in the solo context. And I'm trying to develop that to where I become a musician playing music rather than a drummer playing by himself without a band.

BM: And the solo thing also allows you to deal with triggers and delay loops and keyboards.

JB: I'm fascinated by being able to create a wash or a sustaining sound, and have that to build on without tying my limbs up. And the electronic system allows me to do that. I have a really crude setup. All I use are sensor pickups attached to the cymbals. They pick up the overtones, and the processing that I do is really elementary. The signal goes through a Digitech 8-second delay pedal. I don't try to set up patterns and play over them, like a sequencer or something. I like the randomness of it, and

I try to tie it in with the acoustic sounds. So I use that plus some weird programmed sounds on a basic Casio 101, and I'm basically just reacting to the electronics, taking a possible disaster and sculpting it into something to propel the music forward, to get to the final point of making a statement. And, hopefully, what I'm doing with these solo performances may inspire some young kid to see that there is something other than the big rock star drummer trip. I want to make visible an alternative direction. I'm not creating the direction, really. Solo drumming has been around since Baby Dodds. But the way I put it together, I feel like I'm getting in touch with making it personal.

BM: Like the laughing piece.

JB: That basically came from when I was nine years old. I always laughed a lot. I remember my brother had this little reel-to-reel tape recorder, and I would record about three minutes of laughter. I don't remember what I was laughing at, but I would play this tape back to my dad and mom. I always loved to make them laugh. They had a pretty hard life, and it made me feel good to see them laugh. So in this new laughing piece, I'm going back and reclaiming something from the past. It's funny how when you go through a period of getting really involved with jazz, as I did, sometimes you tend to close off other influences. Now I'm wide open to all my past influences—country & western, society club-date music, whatever it is. So it's real interesting and challenging to use that and not be ashamed of it.

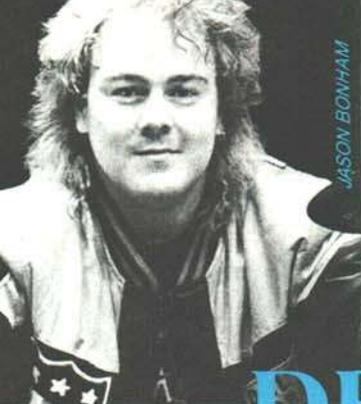
BM: What current projects are you focusing on?

JB: I'm mainly concentrating on the stuff with Bill Frisell's band, the solo stuff, and the group Miniature, which is a cooperative band with alto saxist Tim Berne and cellist Hank Roberts. I also play occasionally with Berne and John Zorn, doing the music of Ornette Coleman, and I have an ongoing relationship with Jim Hall and with Toots Thielemans.

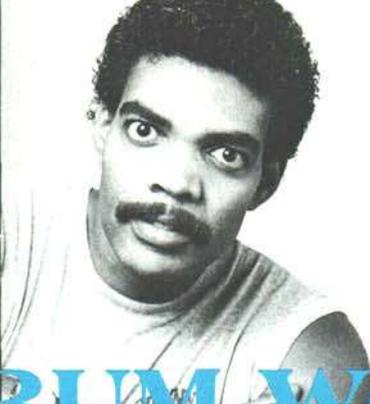
BM: Can you detail your kit?

JB: Sure, it's an old Sonor that I got back in 1978. It has an 18" bass drum with both heads on it, a 14 x 14 floor tom, and a 5 1/4 x 14 snare drum. My cymbals are made by a really good friend of mine, Roberto Spizichino, who I met a few years ago in Italy. They're pretty odd, a prototype model that I was going to throw out. I have a 16" ride, a 16" crash, 14" hi-hats, and a 16" sizzle, which is kind of a pseudo Chinese swish cymbal. When I travel, I don't take the cymbals or anything. I'm trying to make *what* I'm playing the focus rather than the sound of what I'm playing. I mean, as long as the cymbal is not cracked, I'm very happy. And I'm also happy not to be lugging 70 pounds of cymbals on my shoulder through airports. So I concentrate on drawing the sound out of what I have to deal with. It's a weird challenge that I enjoy.

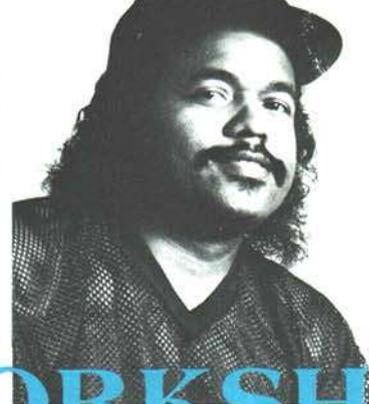




JASON BONHAM



GERRY BROWN



DENNIS CHAMBERS

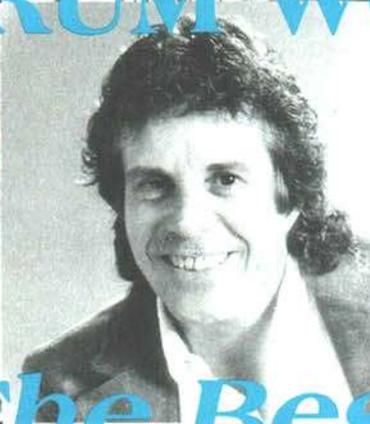


VINNIE COLAIUTA

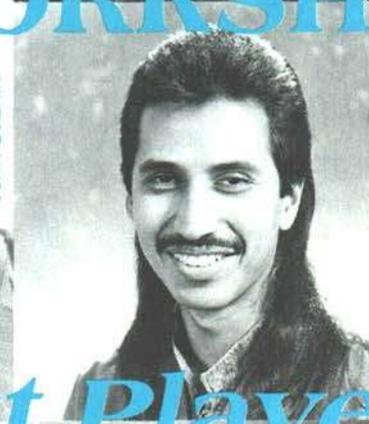
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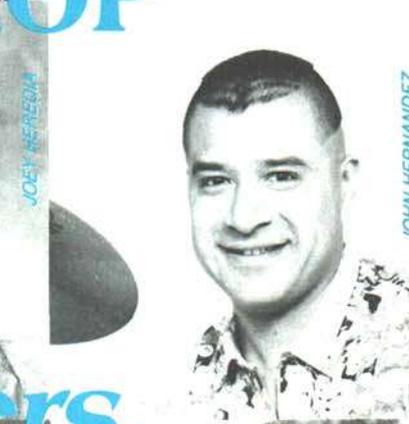
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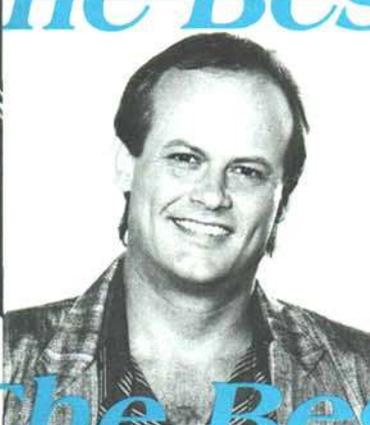


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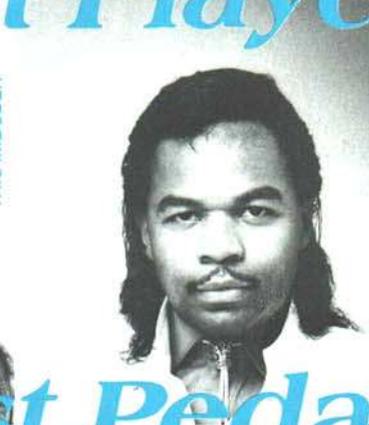
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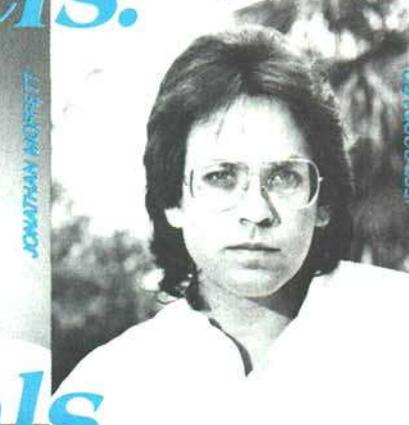
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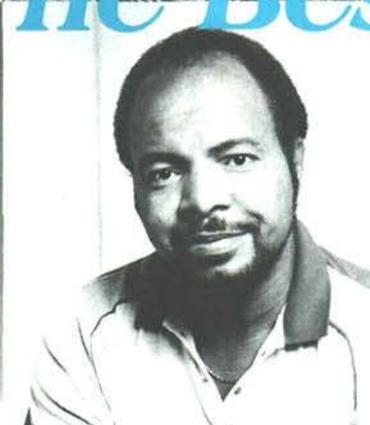


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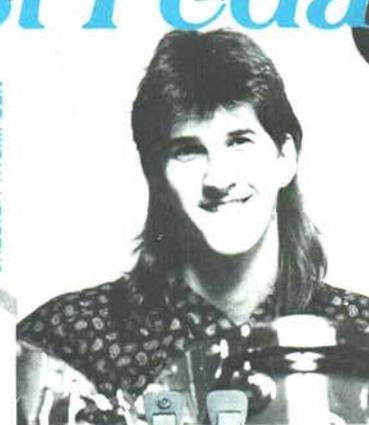
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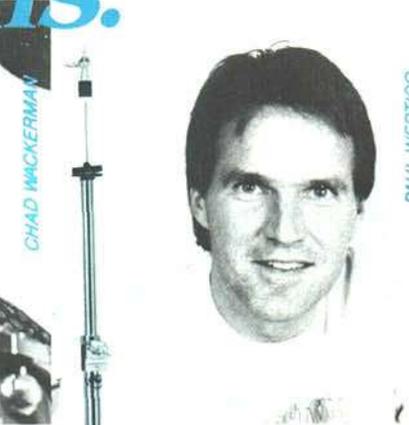
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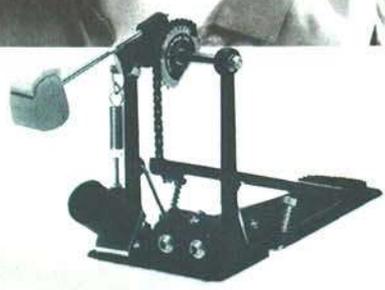
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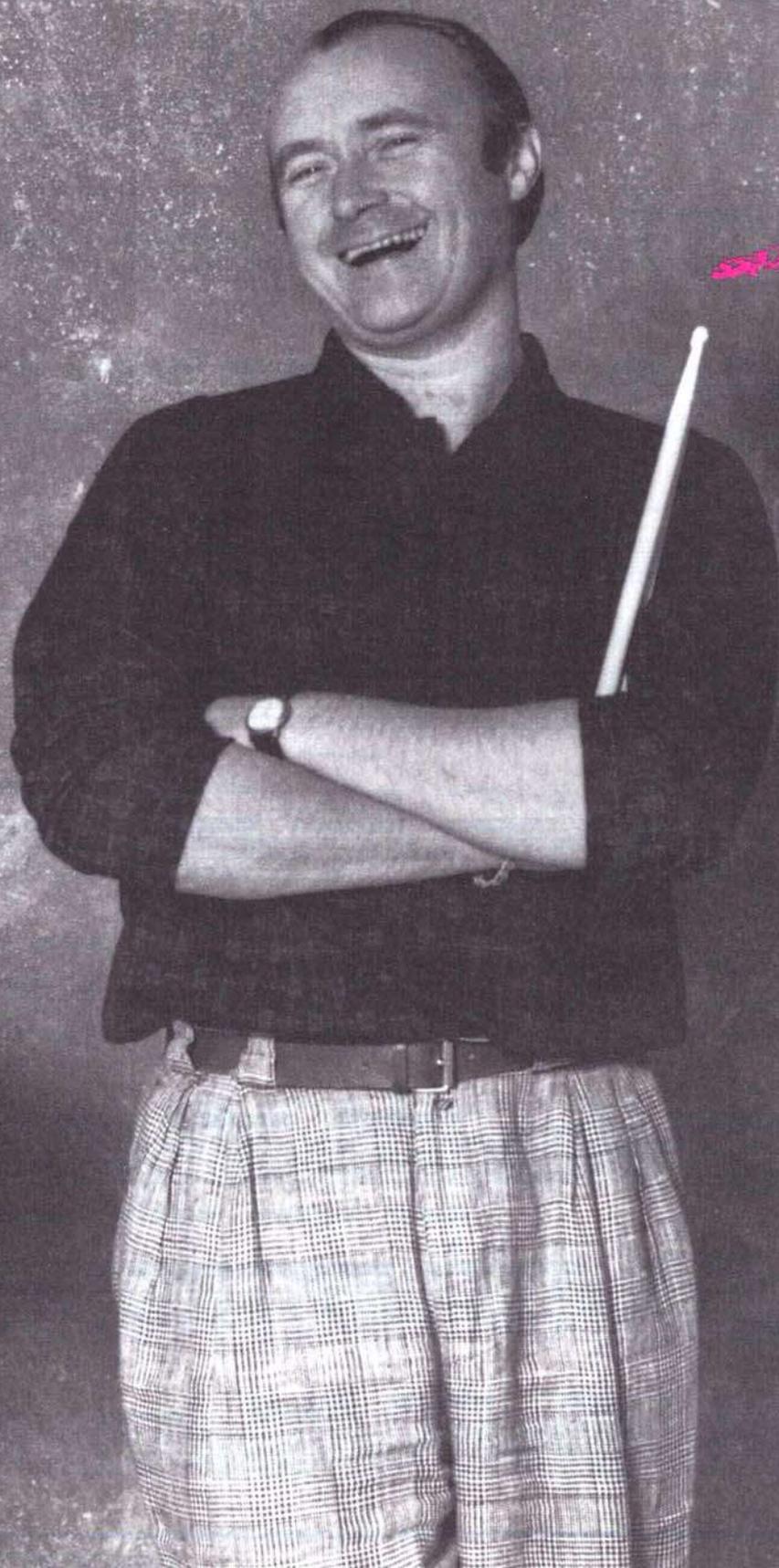
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Carlos Vega: "Oasis"

MUSIC KEY

Open	R C	C C	Cow
H H	X	X	bell
T T			
S D			
F T			
B D			
H H			
w/foot	X	Add'l	Ghost
	T T	Note	

This month's *Drum Soloist* features ace session drummer Carlos Vega, playing on a recording called *C.R.P. Live, In Session* (GRP Records, CRP-A-1023). The song is a Latin-flavored piece entitled "Oasis," and on it, Carlos plays some tasty licks. He incorporates the cowbell with some syncopated Latin-funk riffs, and his fills include a healthy dose of technique. Carlos does some good playing on the album, and a great job on this solo. The drum solo begins near the end of the tune, following the piano solo.

This page contains 12 staves of musical notation for a modern drummer. The notation is complex, featuring a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Key features include:

- Staff 1:** Features a series of eighth-note patterns with asterisks above the notes.
- Staff 2:** Continues the eighth-note patterns with asterisks and accents.
- Staff 3:** Shows a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with accents.
- Staff 4:** Features a series of eighth-note patterns with accents.
- Staff 5:** Continues the eighth-note patterns with asterisks and accents.
- Staff 6:** Shows a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with accents.
- Staff 7:** Features a series of eighth-note patterns with accents.
- Staff 8:** Continues the eighth-note patterns with accents.
- Staff 9:** Shows a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with accents.
- Staff 10:** Features a series of eighth-note patterns with accents.
- Staff 11:** Continues the eighth-note patterns with accents.
- Staff 12:** Shows a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with accents.



Building A MIDI

Arthur C. Clarke once said that any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic. Seeing how much progress has been made in the technical sophistication of musical instruments over the past ten years (and how few musicians hold electrical engineering degrees), me-thinks there's quite a bit of magic out there. Did you ever look at a MIDI drum interface and wonder how the thing figures out how hard you hit that pad? Or, for that matter,

how a digital reverb unit simulates an acoustic space? Yeah, I know what some of you are thinking now: "Who cares? Might as well be a circuit made with lime Jello for all I care, just as long as it works!"

There is something to be said for "getting in a bit deeper." Usually, the extra knowledge gained can help you get the most out of your existing equipment. You might avoid a repair bill or save a few bucks by creating something useful on your own. The do-it-yourself route often has unseen benefits. For example, if you happen to be the person who built a given circuit, chances are you're not going to be too timid about taking it apart and repairing it if it happens to break!

There are typically two false starts people fall into when attempting build-your-own projects. First, some people bite off more than they can chew. (An RISC-based graphics workstation, for instance, is not a good first project.) The second false start is not starting at all. Some people are just a tad too fearful of failing, and say things like, "I can't do that technical stuff; I'm an Artist." Hogwash. If you mastered the physical dexterity needed to play an instrument, wielding a soldering iron should be a piece of cake. (No, your first solder job won't be perfect. But then again,

would you expect a novice to grab some of Bill Bruford's drum parts at first listen?) What's needed is a confidence-builder—a nice, simple (and preferably *useful*) project to get started on.

A MIDI THRU box fits the bill. If you've been following along with some of our past discussions, you know that a THRU box is the MIDI equivalent of the audio Y-chord. In essence it is a signal splitter—a digital version of a distribution amplifier. THRU boxes are used whenever a given controller needs to feed a number of different voice units simultaneously. While this can be accomplished via a daisy chain connection in most cases, the THRU box approach is more versatile and allows a larger number of units to be serviced.

MIDI communicates via an "optically isolated current loop." This is considerably different than the sort of interface that exists between, say, a mixing board and an effects device. The opto-isolated current loop approach is reasonably easy and inexpensive to implement (one of MIDI'S chief goals), and is less susceptible to certain kinds of interference. This construction also eliminates most problems with ground loops.

The heart of the MIDI IN is a device called an opto-isolator. This device uses the input current pulse to produce light, which is picked up by a light-sensitive transistor. This transistor can then be used to drive other circuitry in the normal fashion. (Actually, a number of devices other than

the transistor can be used for the conversion.) Our circuit, then, must have an opto-isolator at the front end. Optos are graded by speed and a current transfer ratio (essentially a measure of efficiency). We need a device that is sufficiently quick and efficient. Typical optos for MIDI use are the Sharp *PC-900* or its compatible brother, the *H11L1GE*. There are a number of other suitable devices around, but these guys are very easy to work with.

Once we apply power to our opto-isolator unit (it wants 5 volts) and hook in our two MIDI wires, a replica of the MIDI signal will appear at the opto's output. (Yeah, I know the cable has five pins, but

TABLE 1

- IC1 PC-900 or *H11L1GE* opto-isolator
- IC2 4050 CMOS non-inverting buffer
- IC3 78055-volt regulator (*JO-220* case style)
- D1 *1N4148* or *1N914* signal diode
- C1 470 uFd, 25-volt electrolytic capacitor
- C2 1 uFd, 15-volt tantalum capacitor
- R1-R14 220-ohm, 1/8-watt carbon film resistor, 10% tolerance
- J1-J7 5-pin DIN chasis jack
- S1 SPST power switch

For onboard power supply:

- T1 120 VAC primary to 9 - 2.6 VAC secondary, 200 milliAmps
- D2-D5 N4001 rectifying diodes

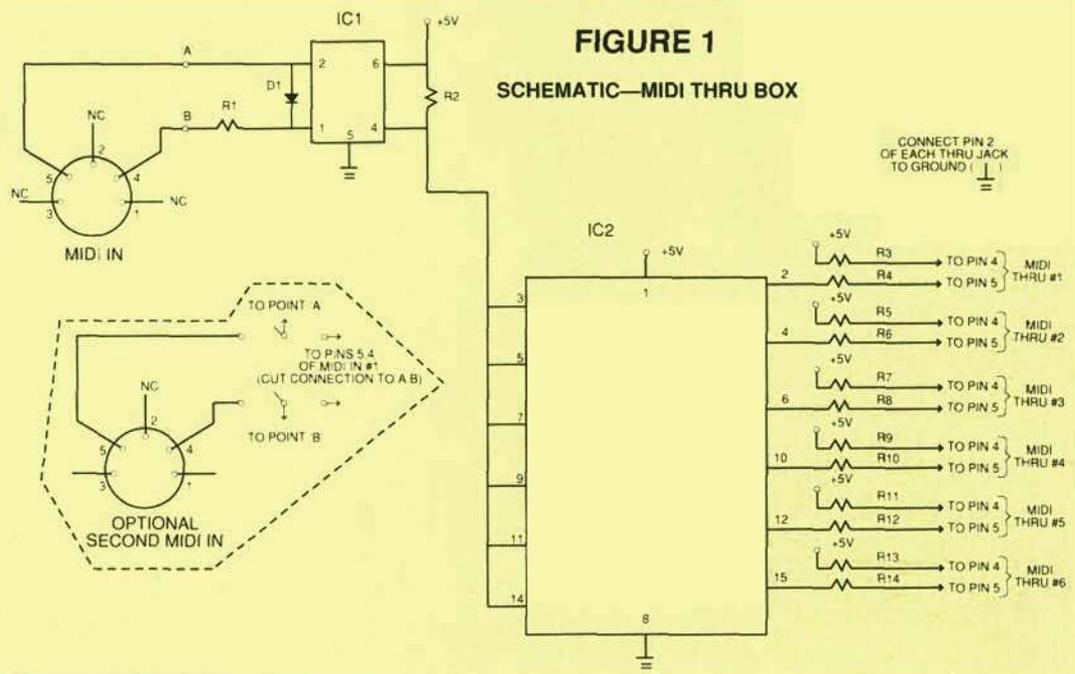
If a dual input is desired:

- J8 5-pin DIN chasis jack
- S2 DPDT switch

Other:

Case, fuse holder, misc. hardware, wire, sockets for IC1 and IC2, AC power cord, etc.

FIGURE 1
SCHEMATIC—MIDI THRU BOX



THRU BOX

by Jim Fiore

only two are used for the current loop. One more is used for the ground shield, and two simply aren't connected to anything.) What we need to do now is split this signal into a bunch of different paths, each with its own output jack. This is very easily done by attaching the opto's output to the inputs of a hex buffer (a chip with six little digital buffers on it). A buffer simply serves as an isolation device; its output signal looks just like its input signal. The output of each buffer leads through a pair of 220-ohm current limiting resistors (as defined in the MIDI spec), through the jack, and up to the 5-volt power supply. That's all there is to it. In order to get a nice, stable 5-volt power supply, we'll use an industry-standard voltage regulator, the model 7805. This circuit's sole reason for existence is to smooth out supply variations. It can be driven from a simple 9-volt DC "battery eliminator," or from a simple AC-to-DC transformer/rectifier/filter. (If you've never fiddled around with 120-volt AC before, use the battery eliminator.) You can use a 9-volt battery, but life expectancy isn't very long for a fully loaded system.

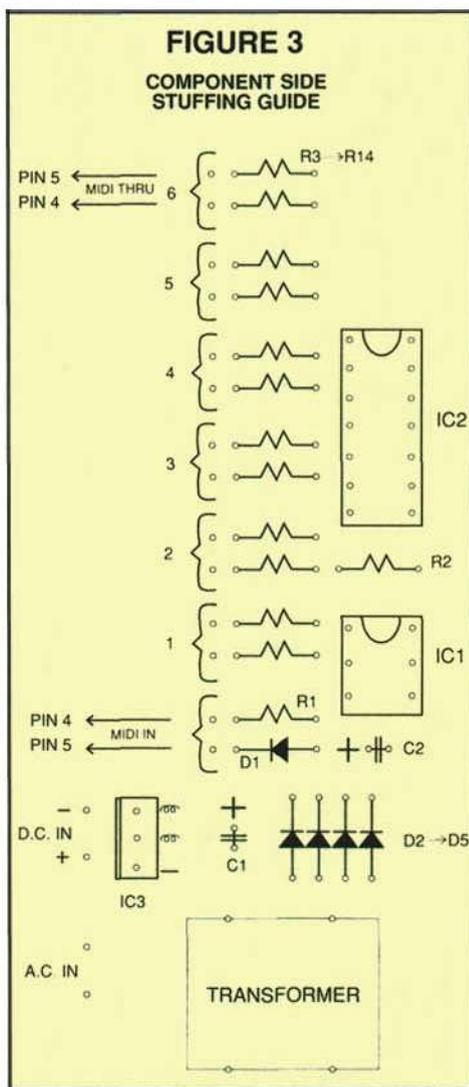
Figure 1 shows a detailed schematic drawing of our complete one-input/six-output MIDI THRU box. If you'd like, you can add a second IN jack and a DPDT switch in order to flip between two different controllers. For those of you with access to printed circuit board fabrication equipment, a solder-side artwork pattern and associated stuffing guide are shown in Figures 2 and 3, respectively. If you don't have access to this equipment, you can make the circuit on a perf-board (like the ones they sell at Radio Shack). Make sure that you

obey the polarity markings on the diodes, the capacitors, and the two ICs. (Resistors are not polarized and can be inserted into the circuit in either direction.) I recommend using sockets for the two ICs.

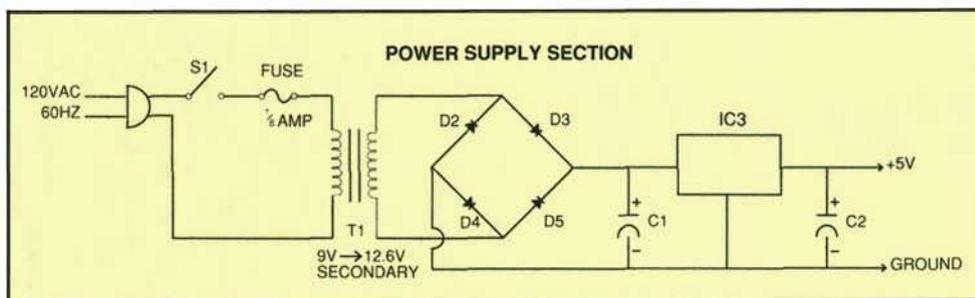
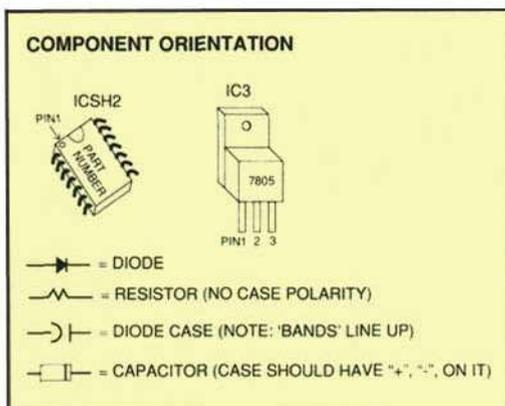
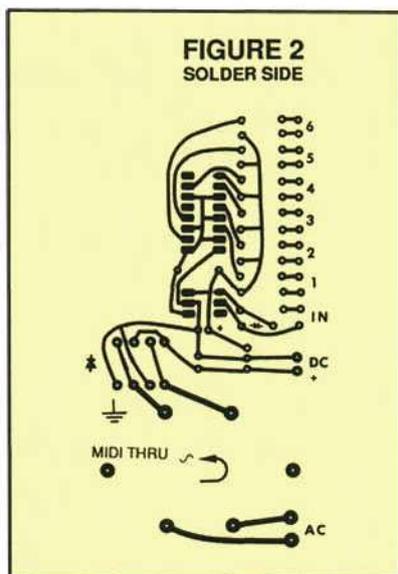
Table 1 lists all of the components that you'll need. All of these parts should be available at your local electronics store. If you can't find them locally, try one of the many mail-order houses like Digi-Key (dial 1-800-DIGIKEY and ask for their catalog). The one that might be a bit tricky to obtain is the PC-900 opto-isolator. If you have no luck locally, try Xerbitron, 5644 Kearny Mesa Road, Suite R, San Diego, California 92111. The H11L1GEmay be ordered from dissidents, 730 Dawes Avenue, Utica, New York 13502. Check with both companies for price and ordering info. (Ready-made PC boards for this project were under development by dissidents as of press time. Check with them about availability before you get started.) By shopping around, you should be able to get everything you need (electronic parts, case, etc.) for around \$25. To put this in perspective, a typical commercial unit may run three times as much.

Be sure to use a low-wattage (15-25 watt) pencil-type soldering iron and a good quality 60/40 rosin-core solder. Also, if this is your very first project, I suggest that you enlist the help of a friend who has done this sort of thing before (and who just happens to have the tools that you'll need). In any case, a good reference for the beginning do-it-yourself electronic drummer is Craig Anderton's book *Electronic Projects For Musicians*. It contains a good bit of introductory material on component identification and rudimentary soldering technique, as well as safety precautions.

So there it is. I wish you the best with it, and have fun! Remember, the sooner you start this project, the sooner you'll be THRU. (I just love bad puns.)



Computer Art by Terry Kennedy



Working For Stars

by Roy Burns

Working for "stars" can be very rewarding—especially financially. However, the experience can be quite different than working in a group where each member makes a contribution. When you work for a star, there is one leader, period! And that is always the star.

Stars can be bandleaders, comedians, TV show hosts, or singers. Singers are, in most cases, the most temperamental. When you work for a singer, it is generally made clear that you are there to support the star. You are to play your part exactly the same way each night. You are not to experiment or stretch out.

One of the advantages is that these gigs often pay very well. Usually the travel expenses are paid for, and you stay in quality hotels and eat in good restaurants. The job

security is also above average. Since these gigs pay well, you will usually be working with good players. Most singers travel with a rhythm section, and often a conductor as well. (Occasionally a singer will employ a horn section, but in most instances the orchestra will be made up of local musicians plus the conductor and the rhythm section.) The opportunity to work with a conductor and the experience of playing with a big band or an orchestra is another benefit to this type of playing. It can be very valuable if you have the desire to do studio work at a later date.

The insecurity of the "star" can be one of the more difficult things to deal with. For example, there is a famous jazz singer who instructs her pianist to "Just play chords behind me. No single-note fill-ins or runs of any kind. I don't like piano players to show off!" In other words, do not do anything that might take attention away from the star. I guess the rule is "Play good...but not *too* good."

The great bandleader and trombonist Tommy Dorsey (so the story goes) used to polish the bell of his trombone until it was like a mirror. This way, he could see what the band members were doing behind him when he was playing a solo. In that same band were Frank Sinatra and Buddy Rich. Sinatra and Buddy had some famous arguments, because Buddy would make faces while Sinatra was singing. Although they wound up becoming friends later on, their disagreements were well-documented.

"Nose-picking" is a term used to describe someone in the band doing something to distract the audience from the star. (It's not hard to figure out how the expression came into being.) Some singers are paranoid if someone in the band moves or turns a page of music at the wrong time. To be fair, these things can disturb the mood of a soft ballad. So, it is best to try to conduct yourself in a professional manner. As they used to say in big bands, "Just play your part and keep your mouth shut!"

You never win an argument with a star or bandleader. (If you do win the argument, you lose the job.) If you disagree strongly about something, you must learn to be tactful and diplomatic whenever possible. For example, when I was on Benny Goodman's band, I quickly learned who was boss. If he said "Play brushes," I played brushes. One did not make suggestions on Benny's band. Benny knew what he wanted, and you played it the best you could. If he didn't like it, he would tell you so!

We used to play a sextet number on concerts, and Benny liked brushes on that tune. However, the late, great tenor sax

player Zoot Sims said to me, "Roy, play the sticks. You're up by the trumpets, and we're way down in front by the piano. We can't hear a thing. We're walking on eggshells down there." I had such great respect for Zoot that I started to play sticks on the sextet number. After a few days, Benny caught me in the hotel after the concert and said, "What are you playing on the sextet number?" I replied, "Sticks, but very softly." Benny said, "Why are you doing that?" I replied, "I thought it might hold things together a little better since we're sort of spread out on stage." Benny said, "No, you don't need to do that. Just play the brushes." I said, "Sure." I felt that Zoot was right, but I wasn't about to argue.

After a few more concerts, Zoot began to complain again. So, I went back to playing sticks. Sure enough, Benny caught me in the hotel after the concert and asked, "What are you playing on the sextet number?" I said, "Sticks, but very softly." Again Benny inquired, "Why are you doing that?" This time I said, "If you remember, the last time we talked, you said play sticks, but keep it soft." Benny's eyebrows went up, and he said, "I did?" I responded, "Benny, you *know* I wouldn't change anything unless you said to do so." He smiled and said, "That's good, kid. Keep up the good work."

To say that I was relieved after this exchange would be an understatement. I had had a close call, believe me. I learned that my job was to please the star, not necessarily the other members of the band. Zoot was great, but Benny was signing my check every week. He was also signing Zoot's check every week.

Avoid people in the band who make fun of the job or belittle the star. Just remember this thought: How many people would show up if only that band member's name was on the sign in front of the concert hall? Not too many! I found out very quickly who the star really was when I left Benny's band. Although I got a lot of attention when I was in the band, I got very *little* when I left. The phone just didn't ring. I realized at the tender age of 23 that stars are stars for a very good reason: People want to see and hear *them*. They work under a lot of pressure; your job as a drummer is to help them by playing well, having a positive attitude, and being as professional as possible. Don't create problems.

Remember, if you get tired of playing the same music the same way every night, you can always leave and look for another job. However, as long as you accept the check, give it your best. That's what being professional is all about.

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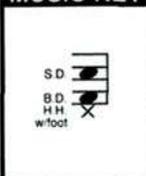
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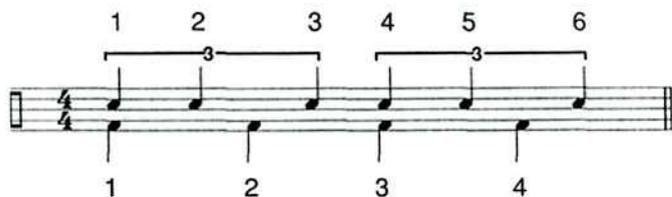
MUSIC KEY



Some time has passed since I wrote my first book, *Musician's Guide To Polyrhythms (Vol. 1)*. I began the book at the end of the summer in 1965. I had just graduated from the San Francisco Conservatory Of Music in the spring, and I had gone on to study a summer of tabla drumming with Mahapurush Misra, the North Indian tabla master. This great musician taught a summer course as part of an Ali Akbar Khan summer music program in Berkeley, California.

One of my instructors from the San Francisco Conservatory, composer Robert Erickson, told me about the East Indian music program. He knew of my interest in all kinds of ethnic drumming and drummers. Before enrolling in the Ali Akbar Khan program, my total experience with polyrhythms and layered meters was limited. It was while studying with Mahapurush Misra that I began to fully understand the limited knowledge I had about rhythm in general. Fortunately for me, I was allowed to stay after school, and the gracious master, Pandit (learned one) Misra, would give me some extra time to sit with him after class and play. Pandit Misra would open up on the tabla, and then I would repeat what he played on a drum pad. There was no way I could get together with him on the tabla drums. The class was still learning how to make the drums speak with one clear tone. From that experience, I came to realize that I knew very little about the possibilities of rhythmic improvisation, and that there was a whole new world of rhythmic expression waiting to be explored.

The first thing I learned about polyrhythms was that I loved exploring the different possibilities of one time over another. I also learned that understanding polyrhythms was not that difficult, as long as I could hear and understand what the rhythmic mathematical ratio was of the two meters being played. For example, one of the first rhythms I began to explore and really understand was 6 over 4, translated meaning 1 1/2 beats to 1: The bottom rhythm would represent four beats to the bar, the top rhythm would represent the quarter-note triplet. Both rhythms, when played at the same time, accommodate exactly the same space between bar lines. Simply put, we identify the rhythm as a quarter-note triplet over four beats, and it looks like this:



This is called either three over two or six over four:



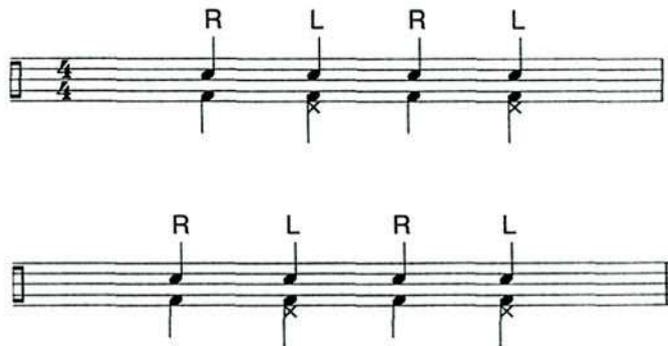
Subsequently, I learned that the most simplified way of understanding, counting, and performing polyrhythms is to *learn the mathematical ratio of the top rhythm as it applies to the bottom rhythm*. Then, write that rhythm so you can visualize it. At this point, all you have to do is learn to play the two rhythms together so you can hear them.

Even today, most drummers who talk to me about polyrhythms miss the point, because they fail to separate the two rhythms from each other. Many drummers, and various other musicians, think of polyrhythms and polymeters as a subdivision of the basic pulse, and not two separate entities. Others seem to be confused as to the difference between polyrhythms and odd meters, and still others seem to feel that playing polyrhythms means throwing in odd rhythmic patterns whenever they think about it. Understanding polyrhythms is none of the above. What I hope to do with this series of columns is explain exactly what polyrhythms are, and how to learn to use them. I have come up with a system that is an easy way to learn how to add the concept of polyrhythms and polymeters to your musical vocabulary, one step at a time.

The First Step

The first requirement when learning polyrhythms is to have a solid understanding of how to read and count in 4/4 time. By refreshing this area, you already benefit from the study of polyrhythms, in that you get a chance to sharpen your basic 4/4 reading skills and perhaps add to your knowledge as to exactly how 4/4 works. This may seem basic at first, but it is important to understand this fully before getting into the more complicated areas of polyrhythms. One other attribute to looking over 4/4 is developing a steady time feel, or, as Dave Weckl puts it, an "inner clock." Polyrhythms, in order for them to work, require a solid foundation.

Let's begin this re-evaluation of 4/4 time with some exercises to sharpen your sense of time. First, evenly play and count the following exercise. Play exact, perfect time, and use a click track or metronome to check yourself. Play this at a variety of tempos.



The previous example demonstrates the one-to-one concept of mathematical ratio. This concept is the relationship of one beat to another, which I consider the foundation of this polyrhythmic study.



thms: Part 1

Next, count and subdivide each quarter note in 4/4 in the following manner:

Quarter notes to 8th notes

Quarter notes to triplets

Quarter notes to 16th notes

Quarter notes to 16th-note triplets

While it may seem that some of these basic subdivisions may not need reviewing, I suggest that you go through them anyway and practice each exercise until you are confident that you know it. We will be using all of this material for our polyrhythmic studies.

Practice playing and counting the following mixed exercises, which are again in 4/4 time. Be sure to count when playing these exercises. Knowing how to count rhythms is an important tool when learning how to use polyrhythms.

These are just a few examples of counting and playing in 4/4 time. I also suggest that you continue to sharpen your understanding of 4/4 playing and reading skills on your own. Understanding 4/4 (one to one ratio) will enable you to have a much easier time of developing and working with polyrhythms.

Once again, I emphasize the fact that it helps to understand our notation system and how it works when learning how to read (and then hear) the polyrhythmic combinations. This does not mean, however, that you must be a good reader to learn how to hear and play polyrhythms. That can be done by hearing them first and then discovering how to apply them later. Next month we will focus on understanding and playing polyrhythmic ratios.



by Steve LaCerra

Syncing Drum Machines To Tape

Drummers who own a drum machine may have noticed that their unit has a feature known as "sync to tape." This mode of operation allows the machine to record a sync tone onto a tape. By playing the sync tone back into the drum machine, the machine will run a program while being "driven" by this tone. This makes it possible to print only the sync tone on one track, use all the remaining tape tracks for other instruments, and never actually put the drums onto the multi-track master tape. Through use of the sync tone, the drums can be recorded "live" into the two-track mix. There are advantages and disadvantages to this approach, and they must be known to the drummer/programmer *before* using this technique.

Why would one not want to just record the drums in the first place? If you are working in an eight-track format, the drums may be allocated only one or two tracks. This means that once the balance and equalization between the individual drums is recorded on tape, it cannot be changed. That can be a big problem if, for example, the snare drum is not loud enough in a certain section of the song. Also, what if you're not sure about how loud to make the tom fills? Remember, if the drum program is laid down first, as it must be under normal procedures, you will not be hearing the other instruments for comparison. You may also be faced with percussion sounds (i.e. shaker, tambourine, etc.) and gated reverb sounds. If the gated reverb on the snare drum is recorded too short or too long, it cannot be isolated and changed without changing the rest of the kit as well. Even if you're working with 16 tracks, the band may only be willing to give you two or three to work with.

If you own a drum machine with only

two outputs, but are working with 16 tracks or more, "sync to tape" will help you get the individual drums on separate tracks. On the first pass of the tape, you can record the kick and snare drums only, on separate tracks, by panning one left and the other right and pulling the other drumkit components out of the drum machine's stereo mix. Since the machine locks to tape in musical time, on the second pass you can pan the toms left to right, pull the kick and snare out of the drum machine's stereo mix, and record only the toms on two more tracks. You can do the same for the cymbals or whatever else you have. You now have six or seven tracks of drums from a drum machine that has only two outputs. You can process these sounds with EQ or reverb as you are recording them, or you can print them dry and process the sounds in the mix.

Before discussing exactly how to sync to tape, there are some disadvantages that must be mentioned. First, playing the drum machine live to the mix means that the studio must have a recording console with enough inputs to handle all the tape tracks, all the "live" drum tracks (i.e. individual inputs for kick, snare, tom 1, tom 2, tom 3, hi-hat), and all the outboard gear (delays, reverbs, and processors). But that really shouldn't be a problem, since even small studios are often capable of handling 32 or more inputs on remix in this MIDI age.

Another consideration is outboard gear. At this point, the drums are coming off the machine dry. You will want one reverb unit exclusively for the snare drum, at least. You will probably also want a different reverb for the toms; and don't forget the other instruments. For the best sound quality, use each reverb unit for as few sounds as possible and avoid putting any vocals through a reverb unit that is handling drums.

The whole process that follows may or may not be time-consuming, depending on how prepared you are with the program. If you have been hired to write the program in the studio, you can print a repeating two-bar pattern, record the other instruments, and then write your program *last* and tailor it to the song.

There are two ways to actually drive the drum machine from tape. The first is to print the machine's internally generated tone on a tape track and then play it back into the machine to drive the drums. The other way is to use a SMPTE-to-MIDI or SMPTE-to-clock converter, such as the

Roland SBX-80, which is becoming a standard piece of gear in recording studios. Although using the SBX-80 takes a bit more time than the drum machine's internal sync, the SBX-80 is dead accurate. It locks up *exactly* the same *every* time you run the tape. With the drum machine's internal sync tone, I cannot promise you that it will lock up the same, time after time, since these internal clocks have a tendency to drift somewhat. Let's take a look at how the SBX-80 operates.

The SBX-80 generates and reads SMPTE and "clock in" or "sync in" on the drum machine. Adjust the SBX-80 clock knob to the same pulse number that your drum machine can read. Even using the clock interface, the lockup of the SBX-80 will still be accurate. You can then print the two-bar pattern temporarily and record the other instruments to this reference. *Do not* record drums on the track next to the SMPTE track or you will have problems driving the drum machine. If the song is to be worked on over a number of days, save the SBX-80 program using its cassette interface.

You do not have to *record* a reference drum track. You can simply drive the drum machine live while doing the overdubs. However, it is easier *not* to have to deal with starting and stopping the drum machine when punching in on a bass track, for example.

When all the empty tracks are used up, you can erase the reference drum track and finish overdubbing with the "live" drum machine. At this point, there is no need to get involved with equalization and reverb. A rough mix from one output of the drum machine will do nicely.

All this extra effort allows you more control in the final product. Since the drums are not printed, you can wait to hear what the bass player has done and then lock in your kick drum pattern to the bass. You can also change a drum fill easily. Using the "SMPTE offset" function of the SBX-80, you can even put the "drummer" a hair ahead of or behind the beat, if the feel of the song dictates it.

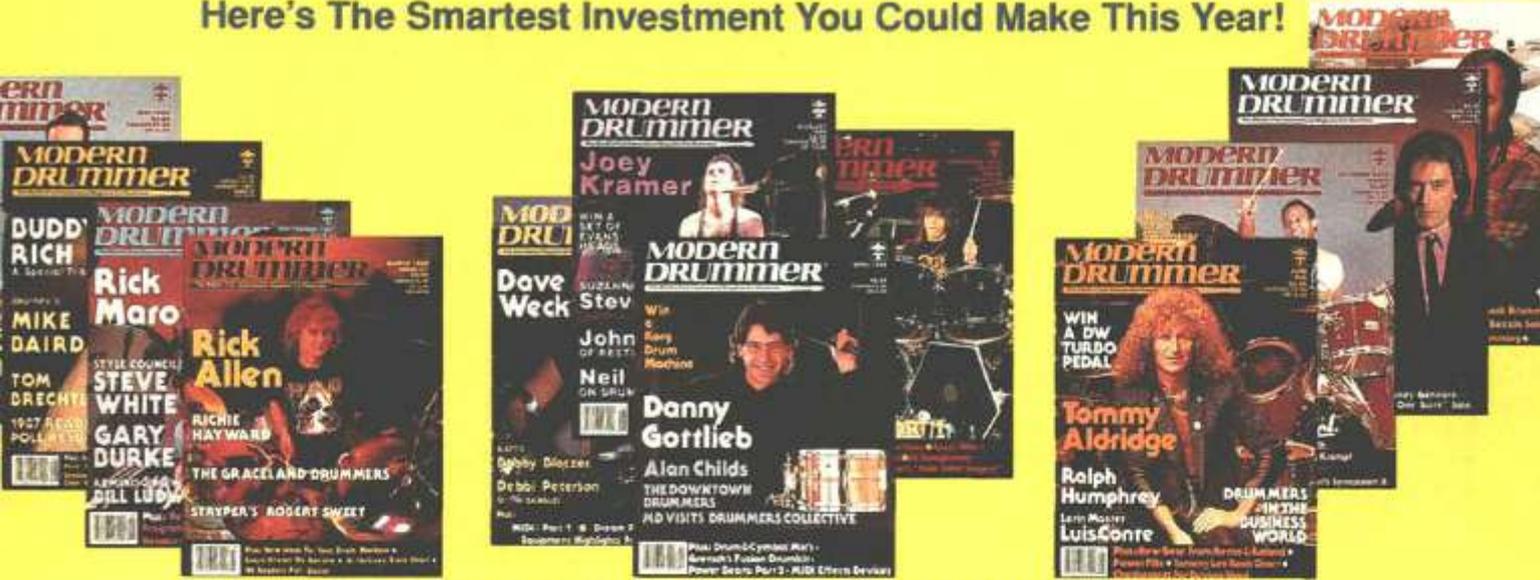
Now that the whole band is recorded, you can go for the perfect equalization and reverb settings for the context of the song, without guessing. In addition, the drum sounds will naturally have more punch, because they are skipping a generation of tape recording (the multi-track master) and are being played directly into the mix.

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DD: Absolutely nothing. I went to someone who used to play with Ravi Shankar and tried to learn as much as I could in as short a period of time as possible. I did it to whatever degree I could, just like I approached the congas, which I knew nothing about. I watched the guy for three or four concerts, got some tablas, and I just did it. If you listen to it, it's pitiful.

RF: Who did the hand percussion on the tunes in the studio?

DD: I think I did some of that finger-cymbal stuff, and Eddie would do things on maracas and tambourines.

RF: When we started this conversation, I asked you how your attitude toward playing might have changed when you became famous. At this point you were famous. Were you enjoying it?

DD: I was enjoying it, but not in the same way anymore. The pressure of, "Make your hit records, go on tour, play the 20,000-seaters, do interviews, do television," was immense, and everything was all planned out. There was no spontaneity anymore, and there was no room to leave things to chance. The curiosity I still had towards music just wasn't able to realize itself, because there was no time anymore.

RF: Was the later stuff creative for you with the new players and slightly new direction?

DD: Oh yeah, Felix and I had a ball doing those two albums, *The Peaceful World* and *The Island Of Real*. The story of how we left Atlantic and how Eddie left and then Gene left is common knowledge by now. Clive Davis then signed us to CBS Records, expecting us to write Rascals songs and do Rascals music, and Felix turned it around and put together all these jazz guys. We didn't want to do the Rascals anymore; we wanted to do something different, and we were still heavily influenced by jazz. We did two records, but there was just no audience for that. It wasn't the band anymore. Eddie and Gene were gone, and once one guy is gone from something like what we had, it's over. I can't look at it like one guy isn't that important, like a lot of people do. They played down Ringo's importance in the Beatles. Forget it. The guy is phenomenal. First of all, his style is great, but while he was maybe the least musically creative person in the band, without him it would have been a different band. If you look at our band and look at,

say, Gene, he was known as a great rhythm guitar player, and people might have said, "If he left, okay." But that's not true, because he had his own way of doing things, and we would not have been the same band without him.

RF: Let's talk about the musical direction of the current focus.

DD: We're staying pretty close to the arrangements that existed. You've got to think about the audience that's coming to see you. I don't want to slight those people at all. They're going to expect to hear certain things, and there are drum signatures on certain songs. If I give them 65% of what they are used to and maybe 35% of a fresher approach, I think they'll buy it.

RF: Speaking of a fresh approach, you did something in rehearsal the other day that I've never seen anybody do. You took both your hands and bashed a cymbal on the complete other side of you.

DD: I got that from Jimmy Connors. That's how he plays tennis. He was one of the first guys to use that double-hand thing, and I saw him and thought, "Wow, what if I do that on a cymbal? That would be wild and would look great." Yeah, those are the kinds of things I'm going to try to come up with. The "anything goes" approach.

RF: How did you feel about playing all the old stuff again?

DD: At first I wasn't thrilled because I don't approach music that way anymore, drum-wise. When I played with Little Steven, it was much more simple and more dance-oriented, with not as many fills. That's how I would play with most anybody nowadays. Now The Rascals are coming back together, and those records are a little bit busier, so "How busy am I going to be?" became the question. Actually, it became fun when I started putting it all together. I can be a little bit open and I won't play as many fills on this song, but when it comes to that one, I'm known to maybe do a certain thing, and people will expect that, so I'm going to do it. Like with "A Girl Like You," I'm going to have the guts to approach it like a big band thing, but with a funk kind of groove to it, the funk groove being a more modern approach to the song. It's an open kind of feel with a triplet hi-hat thing that I never played; I played a swing feel on the cymbal in the old days. Now I'll play it more like a dance version. The two feels create old and new together, which makes the song work. I'm trying to do that through-

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out our whole set and still be a little flashy here and there, because people expect that.

RF: So are you telling me that drumming styles changed or that you changed?

DD: Both. There are parts of the past that still hold up for me, like the rhythm structure on "Good Lovin'." There are three or four songs that I can listen to on the radio and not get turned off, even though technologically they sound bad to me. But "Good Lovin'," as bad as it sounds, still works because of the magic of the rawness. It almost sounds like a punk record.

RF: What else do you like?

DD: I can listen to "Groovin'" and "People Got To Be Free" and "Lonely Too Long." Those are the ones I can deal with. "How Can I Be Sure" is still gorgeous to me, but when it comes to that middle section where Eddie and Dave [Brigati] are singing together, it's so loud in the mix that I lose it and I have to turn it down.

RF: What equipment are you using now?

DD: I'm using all Pearl equipment and some Simmons stuff. I'm not playing electronics much at all. I'm pretty much staying to an acoustic kit. The guys like that. I played nothing but electronics for the past four or five years. I said to myself, "I'm going to try to do this acoustic, because that's what they like, and I think that's what the people who are coming to see us are going to relate to, so I won't be too wild or space-age as far as my drum approach. Let me be a little bit traditional." As long as my hands hold out, I'm fine. It's just that process of getting the calluses.

RF: You went machine-crazy for a little while with Little Steven.

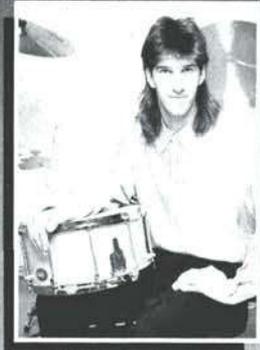
DD: Well, *Steven* went machine-crazy. It wasn't my choice. He got into machines so much that it obliterated his whole band. I hope he goes back to the live players again. We had a ball, though, when we were together. That was a conglomeration of musicians that was really wild—one of the guys from the Plasmatics, me, Steven from Bruce Springsteen, one of the guys from Rainbow, and the bass player from Adam Ant. We had a good time.

RF: Bulldog, the band you put together after the Rascals, didn't do too much live playing, did it?

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DD: No, we did two records, although one didn't get distributed properly. We had the song "No," which was a Top-40 hit, but it didn't work out. The people in that band didn't really gel, so we didn't stay together. Fotomaker came closer, but we were out of time. We were doing something like an English pop band. I liked Fotomaker and thought it was a hot band. It had all the elements, but we didn't stick it out. It was costing us money to do it.

Then I started another project in the late '70s. I had heard English ska music in my travels overseas and I loved it. I had this wild idea to do what the Police were doing. They married reggae with rock 'n' roll, and I wanted to marry ska music with rock 'n' roll. It never did materialize. We were on our way to go out and showcase when I met Steven and got swayed. It was a wild band, though, and I created a whole different way of playing in that band. I hardly played drums at all; I played bass drum and rims, and I miked the rims and the shells of my drums and would play on the shells with all these weird stick things—a lot of reggae things, but rock 'n' roll beats and rhythms combined. It was very unique, and I was really onto something that I could have made work if we had stayed together.

RF: Was this your needing to find new creative ways of doing things?

DD: That was a large part of it, sure—new approaches. I'm always into that.

RF: Like your attitude about art: Anything goes.

DD: Anything goes. Yes, that's the beauty.

What can you think of and make work? Curiosity is the thing. If this works this time out, it's not going to remain the same. I'm going to change it.

RF: What do you want from this reunion?

DD: I want this to be the best reunion that has happened, and I want people to have a good time hearing this band again. Once that works, I would like to work with Felix and Gene in the studio and do some new music.

RF: What are your current goals?

DD: I kind of take it day-by-day. I always look forward to what's coming around the corner, although one never knows *what's* coming around the corner. I just try to keep really open to everything and continue to learn all the time, and I try to get better at everything I do. When I stopped playing with Steven, it was the first year I stopped in 25 years, and it was a year that I guess I needed, because I came back with a renewed vigor. It just so happened that the Rascals thing started up again right when everything had settled down, and I got back into playing again and came back really strong. I got into practicing and working things out, and exploring new approaches and new music. That's what I want to continue to do.

I don't know what is happening as far as the Rascals go, but there are so many things we can do with it. I would love to make some new records if we could get the people back together who could make the thing happen. I'm still hopeful that somehow things could be worked out with Felix and Eddie so the vocal trio of the Brigati brothers and Felix could happen again. I think we'd come out with some really interesting records. Plus, I'm looking forward to working with Steven again if that happens and putting together another band. As far as one specific dream, I kind of don't have that anymore. I just live daily and stay positive and make any situation the best I can possibly make it.

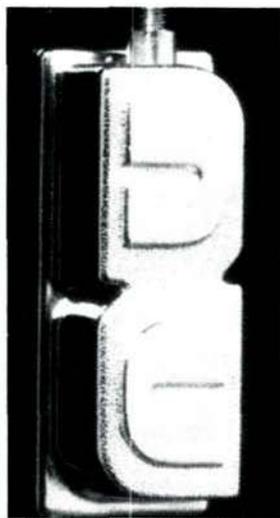
RF: It's got to be difficult to go from having stardom to not having it anymore.

DD: That was a once-in-a-lifetime thing. A person is lucky to have that happen once. Even if I were to be with a big successful band, I couldn't see it happening in the way the Rascals happened, because it was a different time and a different time in my life. You look at things differently when you're 40 years old than when you're 20. When you're 20, you know everything. When you're 40, you realize you know hardly anything. You hopefully get a little bit wiser. It's that "eyes of a child" kind of thing that Picasso had. Those artists always see the innocence of everything, and it's important to me never to lose that. It's so easy to become jaded by so many years in the music business, but I will never let that happen to me. People always say it was better in the old days, but I never see it like that. There's always more. You just have to dig to get the beauty out of it. There's always beauty if you look for it.

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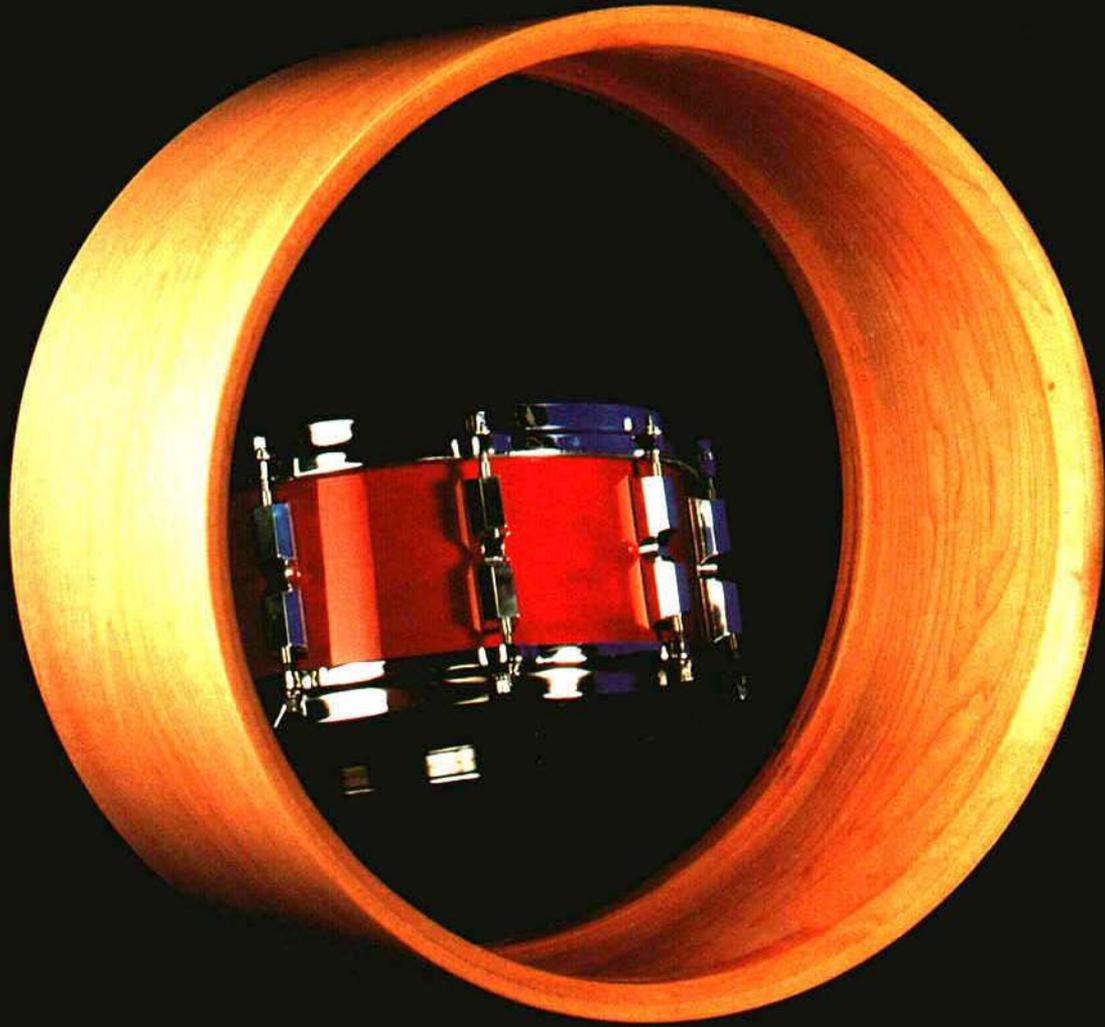


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make headway was that I put the song first, as I had done with Fairport. But in every interview I read these days the person says, "I'm a *song* drummer. I put the song first." So if everyone is doing it, what's so special about me? I don't know. Perhaps I'd developed some sort of musical character. You see, I don't think that artists or producers ought to approach finding a drummer for a session by saying, "We need some drumming on this. Who can perform the function?" Some do, but the sensible approach is to say "We'd like to have so-and-so; he can put a certain character that we like into the song."

I suppose I've got something to offer that other musicians and songwriters appreciate. I'm certainly not a "drummers' drummer." There's this "Who's got the crown at the moment?" attitude; it's the state-of-the-art approach to drumming. I love these people; they are wonderful, wonderful players. But it just seems to me that young players coming up often want to play like that for the wrong reasons. These state-of-the-art drummers are great *musicians*, but all the fans see is the chops. Drum clinics are not about music. They are about being impressed with the person on stage and maybe learning some licks. The sort of questions that get asked are never, "How do I play in this situation, when there's a bass player who's doing such and such?" It's always, "Can you play the thing in 19/16 that you did on such and such a recording?"

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SG: You were obviously at the Vinnie Colaiuta clinic in London this year.

DM: Yeah! And I'm sorry, but I thought the questions were absolutely pathetic. I would like to have asked him about the wonderful Jennifer Warnes album he did, *Famous Blue Raincoat*. The 19/16 thing is great because he does it so well, but I'm sure he'd be the first to tell you that that's not the point. I love hearing Vinnie playing like that, because at that level it's so musicianly. I can't do it! But you can get someone like Vinnie on a ballad, something straightforward, and he'd play that beautifully too. Many drummers are not so interested in that, though.

SG: That 19/16 is famous by now. You say you couldn't play it, but "Cat On The Mixer" contains similar complexities.

DM: Yes. That is fairly complex, but it hasn't got Frank Zappa's name on it. [laughs]

SG: Your keyboard playing knowledge must help you to bring a wider musical understanding to things than if you were "just" a drummer.

DM: Well, I don't mind being "just" a drummer, but the keyboard knowledge is helpful. I understand where a song is going and why all these things happen.

SG: Which came first, the keyboards or the drums?

DM: The keyboards came first. I learned piano before drums. But I never really pursued the keyboard thing. I don't think Gary Husband's got anything to worry about! Now, *there's* a drummer who can call himself a keyboard player, too. What I do is really only in a supportive role. The lure of the drums was too great for me to get particularly involved in keyboards. It goes back to seeing Tony Meehan behind his Gretsch kit.

SG: Picking up your earlier point about a player's character: It's interesting that Joan Armatrading has used both you and Richie Hayward. One would normally think of your "characters" as being quite different.

DM: That's down to Joan. She is able to influence the people who play with her. I'm not saying that it comes out the same whoever does it, but you make these almost imperceptible changes in your playing to suit the artist. You hardly realize you are doing it; you just respond in a particular way.

Richie Hayward is a great player. It was interesting for me to see him on a TV show playing "Love And Affection." I had played on the record, but what he was doing was completely different. What he did was great, but it was a different approach to the song.

Joan Armatrading is very broad in her outlook. She hears a lot, and appreciates different styles. It's interesting, she was one of the first people I worked with on a freelance basis, but for a fairly long tenure. I did an album and then about nine months on the road. At the end of that she said she wanted to change the lineup for the next album, and I was *terribly* hurt! But Joan said to me, "Look, you free-lance, don't you? You can go off and play with different

people, and you like it that way. So you shouldn't expect me to keep the same band all the time, because the only way I can get to play with other people is to have them play with me." And ever since then, if I work with someone and they don't call me the next time 'round, obviously it's disappointing, but I just tell myself, "They want to work with someone else. That's okay." And actually, Joan has called me again. I've done some tracks on a new album, which will be out when this interview appears.

SG: You mention imperceptible changes in style. Do you tend to notice this happening more in retrospect, when you listen to things later?

DM: Yes, definitely. When I heard what I did with Jimmy Page for the soundtrack of *Death Wish 2*, I could hear myself playing what I thought I ought to have been playing. It still sounds like me, but you adapt to your surroundings. The album I did with Bill Nelson, *Red Noise*, was very quirky; I sounded different on that. You have your own character and approach, but other people can sit over you. This isn't in an oppressive way, but it makes you think, "Now, if they're doing this and I'm doing that, and if they're leaning this way and I'm leaning that way..." and you add it all up and hope that something good comes out.

SG: To state the obvious example: You don't think, "This is Jimmy Page, so I should sound like John Bonham"?

DM: There was definitely an element of that, because Bonham was such a strong musical personality. But I realized that I wasn't going to be able to play like him and sound like him, so I concentrated on making it sound strong. This didn't mean trying to get the Bonham drum sound or anything like that. I tried to get a clearly defined sound, with some push behind it. Another point is that if Jimmy Page had wanted as close a facsimile of John Bonham as he could find, he wouldn't have used me. There are other people around who are much closer to being Bonham clones than I'll ever be.

SG: There is the question of balance between having your own musical character, which might imply specializing in a particular style, and being adaptable and versatile.

DM: I think it's healthy for drummers to be encouraged to *listen* to as many different types of music as possible, take it all in and be aware of the styles. But I'm not convinced of the merits of trying to cover all those things. There are some excellent all-'round players who really can cover everything, but they are in the minority. Specialist players are used within their own specialist fields more than all-rounders: If a country artist is recording a country album, he's more likely to call a country drummer than an all-'rounder; if a jazz saxophonist is going to make an album, he's more likely to call a jazz drummer than an all-'rounder. There are exceptions to this rule, but I think the divisions you get are clear from the

categories in the *Modern Drummer* poll. There are more and more categories: Electric jazz, Fusion, Metal, all these things. And all these people who win are really good in their own style. They sometimes cross over a little bit, but you don't often find an all-rounder winning different categories. There are not too many Vinnies, Dave Weckls, or Steve Gadd's around; they are in the minority.

Sure, learn to be adaptable, learn different techniques, learn to read, but I think it's good to lean towards a particular style that you feel comfortable with and enjoy. Don't try to fight it and say, "I must ignore my favorite music while I concentrate on developing," and learn African polyrhythms, and when you've got that down you switch to Japanese music. You could go on forever. I think that there's too much emphasis on the idea that you have to be able to play everything from a polka to AC/DC. Yes, it can all be useful, but I like players with character. Give me a Jim Keltner any day.

SG: As a teacher, I find that most teenagers are only really interested in heavy metal. But they need to be encouraged to be adaptable, because their taste and their musical requirements are likely to change.

DM: Yes. I'm talking about a later stage in a player's development. I'm not talking about the guy who's been playing for three years and thinks that Metallica are the greatest thing since sliced bread. Having a blinkered view of things before you have had a chance to explore all the possibilities—that's not healthy! For instance, John Bonham knew a lot about other styles. He was a big Al Jackson fan. He really dug all the Stax and Motown stuff. So I think that it is *after* you have become aware of the various possibilities, and have developed some musicianship, *then* you can channel your energies towards the style that suits you.

You see, Zeppelin for me were something of a paradox. I have always thought they were great musicians. I've got all the albums, and they cover so much. There's one thing they did in 9/8, "The Crunge," and I asked John to show me how he counted it. He sat down at his kit and demonstrated, and he lost me after two bars. They were tremendous players, but they also gave birth to this *terrible monster* at the same time. [laughs] A lot of the kids today who are into heavy metal don't even know who John Bonham was, let alone players in other styles!

SG: Can we talk about the equipment you use? You seem to have quite an assortment of drums.

DM: I've got quite an assortment of *snare drums*, but the main drums I use are all Yamaha. I've got two live kits and two studio kits. For the live playing there's one Yamaha 9000 series kit and one 8000 series. They are both fitted with the RIMS tom-mounting system and the May EA internal miking system. The studio kits: There's one "deadish"-sounding one, and one that is a bit more open and "live"-sounding. That one has got bigger drums with less of

a contained sound. But I try not to make too many rules with them. In other words, the live-sounding kit can be closed down and slackened off, and I can go the other way with the deader kit.

You can tune a drum in a way that you wouldn't normally tune it, and you hear it back and it sounds like a million dollars. So you decide to try to get all the drums sounding that way. All your usual parameters go out of the window, and you get to work on retuning the rest of the kit. Then you find that they all sound rubbish, except the original one. So you change them all back. Then you say, "I wonder if they'd sound better with a thinner head on the bottom," and *that* doesn't sound any good. It's endless; but we all go through it. I used to have clearly defined ideas about tuning drums, but I find that the older I get, the less I know. These days I'm always prepared to break my own rules, and I'll look at other peoples' rules and the ways they might break them too. The only rule I stick to is to make sure that the head is tensioned evenly on the drum to start with. There are so *many* things that affect your approach to tuning: the type of heads, whether you are playing live or in the studio, if live are you miked up, and in what way, the place you are playing in and its acoustic properties.... If you have rules, you must be prepared to adapt them.

I think it's easier to get a good drum sound today than it was ten or more years ago. If you're playing acoustically, there

are so many really well-made drums with a much greater choice of heads; and when you're working with a sound engineer, there's such a wealth of technology at his disposal. All you have to do is to give him a good drum sound to work with.

SG: You mentioned just now about experimenting with tuning, and finding that you can't get all the drums sounding as you'd like. Another problem with changing things is that you can get more snare rattle when you play the toms.

DM: Yes, that's a problem, too. You can never get away from it completely. It's in the nature of acoustic drums that you're going to set up sympathetic vibrations. When I'm involved in soundchecks and we are testing the drums one at a time, I always leave the snares in the off position while I do the toms. I switch them on when they ask me for the whole kit. If they then say that the snares are rattling, I say, "See what it sounds like when the other instruments are playing; if it's still a problem I'll change it"; but I hardly ever need to, because the rattle gets lost in all the other sounds.

There's a trick I sometimes use if the snare rattle is worrying me: Bearing in mind that it is the smaller toms that make the snares rattle—because they are on a similar frequency to the snare drum—simple fills 'round the toms can often be played with the right hand on its own. I can rest the tip of the left stick on the snare drum batter head, with a little pressure. That

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damps the snare drum and cuts down on the rattle considerably. It isn't something I do all the time, but it is useful occasionally.

SG: Apart from your May EA system, what other electronic gadgets do you use?

DM: Well, I've got a Dynacord ADD-one and Yamaha RX11 and RX5 with interface. I'm working on triggering the Dynacord sounds off the acoustic kit at the moment. I'm finding out what the best pickups are and the best interface and so on. I don't really want to get into 12-foot high racks and all that sort of thing. All I'm interested in is having a really good sound source, a really good drum machine, an interface, and some outboard gear—and that's it. You can have multiple sound sources, but how many can you drive at once? You can put a lot of sounds into something like the Dynacord and bring them up as you need them. There's a limit to the number of things you can trigger at any one time.

I don't get asked for electronic sounds that much, so I don't need to get too heavily involved. The studio people who are always doing programming and electronic things—like Jimmy Bralower, in America—they are the ones who have the use for a lot of electronics. Then there's Bill Bruford, and the way he uses it; but that's a different thing again. I love what he does, but I don't do anything like it myself.

SG: We haven't mentioned drum sizes, although you said that you have two studio kits with different-sized drums.

DM: I use whatever size of drum seems to suit the job I'm doing at the time. I've got 20", 22", and 24" bass drums—only using one at a time, that is—and my tom-toms range from 10" to 16". They are all RIMS mounted. I use three or four tom-toms at any one time, depending on the range of sounds we need.

Snare drums? I've got, I think, around 25 at the last count. But I don't collect them for the sake of collecting them. They've all got their own sounds, and I find the heads and the tuning that will bring the ideal character out of each drum. Then I can use whichever drum is appropriate; but there are some standard ones that I find myself using for most things. The wood-shell Yama-has cover a lot of ground. I normally use a 5 1/2" or a 7"; the 8" is a little bit deeper than I need for most things. Another regular snare drum is a 5 1/2" brass-shell Gretsch—one of the old ones with the round badge. I've taken off the cast hoops and put the triple-flanged type on. That's because I play all my backbeats with the rim, and I find it sounds too boxy with the cast hoop. I like the old Ludwig *Black Beauty* too—not the new ones; they're made of bronze, not brass.

SG: Does it make *that* much difference if it is brass or bronze?

DM: There's definitely something warmer about brass. There are less overtones. It depends on what you want: If you want a really ringy, Kenny Aronoff type of sound, then you'd go for a steel shell with something like a *Diplomat* on it, and play it off-

center to get a lot of overtones. But for conventional work, there's something about a brass shell. I *tried* the Ludwig bronze-shell drum, and *for me* there was a bit too much attack. I *love* the sound of a brass shell. I'm waiting for the deeper Yamaha brass drums to be available in England. I've used the piccolo, and that's really great.

SG: I sometimes wonder whether the fashion for piccolo snare drums has something to do with manufacturers saying to themselves, "We've sold everybody a deep snare drum; what can we get them to buy next?"

DM: [laughs] I wouldn't really agree; I think it's more to do with the influence of records. A specific example would be Alan White's snare drum sound on Yes's "Owner Of A Lonely Heart." Trevor Horn, who produced that, told me that he got a hell of a lot of flak about it. There were people from the record company phoning him up in the middle of the night to say that they were worried about the snare drum sound. But Trevor said, "Actually, the *only* way we could get *that* drum sounding good at the time was to wind it up tight." That was one of the first of a whole run of hit records with a high-sounding snare drum.

SG: What about your taste in cymbals?

DM: It's Zildjians all the way. I owned a great many Zildjians before I was fortunate enough to get an endorsement deal with them. I haven't got a particular cymbal setup; it really is a case of a different cymbal for every occasion. I've got some lovely old Zildjians as well as some of the newer ones. I really love thin crashes. That was something that Kenny Clare turned me on to. Ages ago I asked him, "How do you get that crash cymbal to produce a choked sound like a splash cymbal?" and he got out a 15" extra-thin crash and bent it almost double. That was a revelation for me. I've got some of Kenny's old Zildjians now. There's everything from nice bright sweet pingy ones to trashy ones with lots of overtones. It's the whole gamut.

SG: Kenny Clare was something of a friend and mentor?

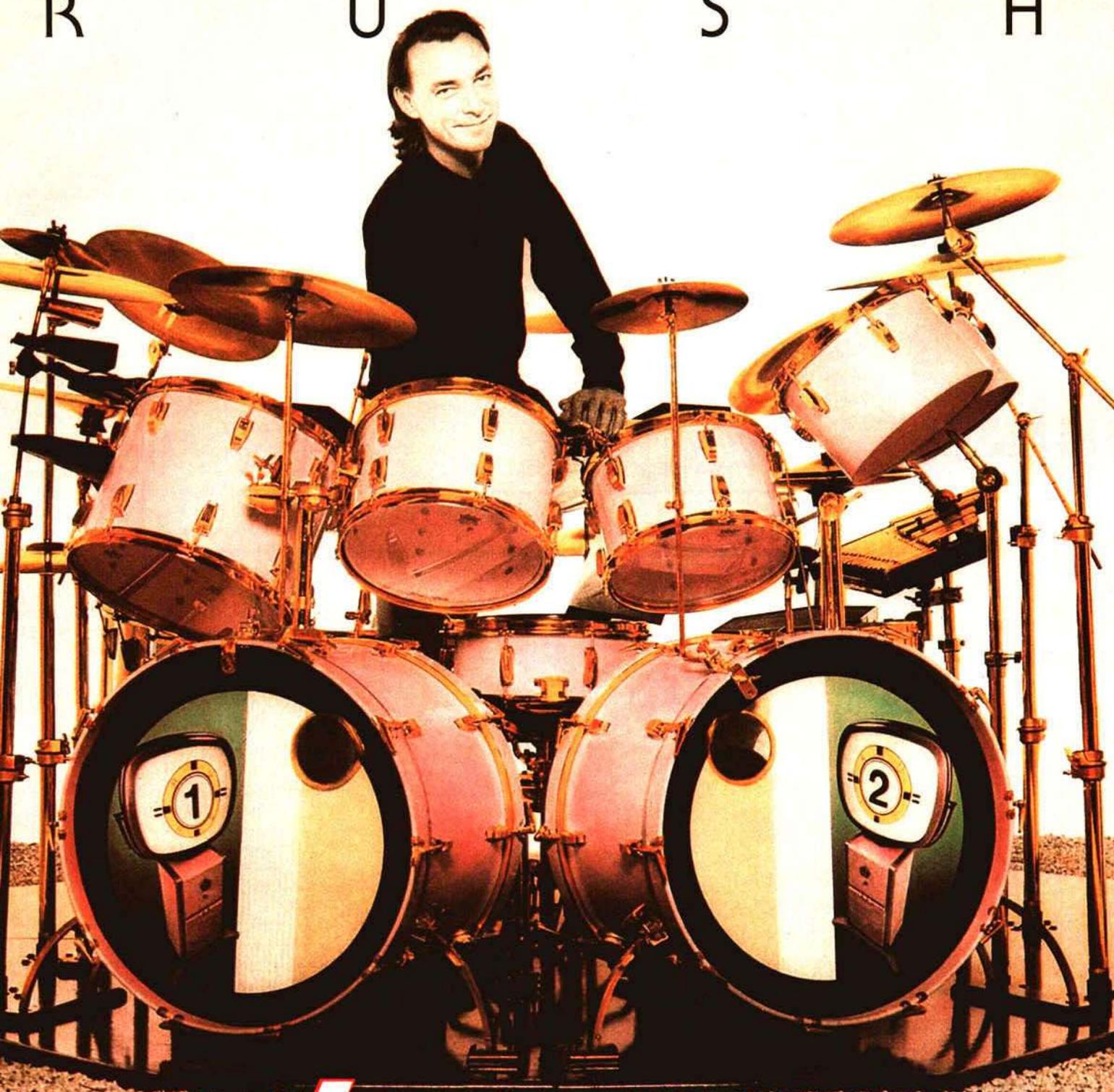
DM: Yes. He and Johnny Richardson were big influences on me when I started out. Johnny was manager of Drum City in London, when I worked there in the '60s. He's still playing in and around London. He's a wonderful player; but not only that, he has some really good ideas about the drumkit and tuning, how to set it up, choice of cymbals.... He's really musical. I owe him and Kenny a lot.

SG: Can you cite any other influences?

DM: Well, there are masses of favorite drummers, but for somebody to be an influence you need to analyze what that person is doing and allow it to affect your own playing. This isn't a matter of copying licks, it's being influenced by a player's approach. Steve Gadd is often quoted by people, and I'm no exception. To understand why he's so great, you have to look beyond the chops and hear how sympathetic he is to the music that is going on around him. Like everybody else, I loved all the Chick Corea stuff,

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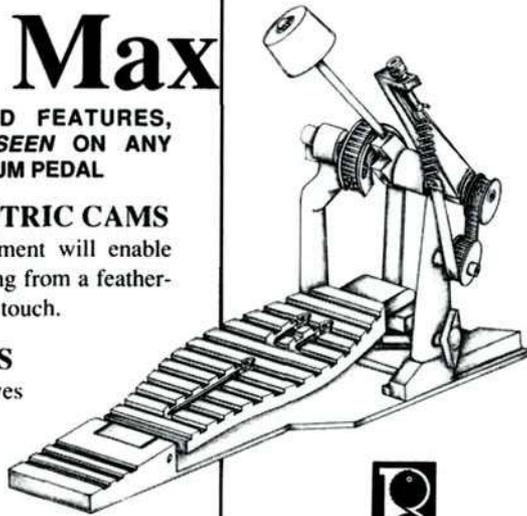
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but then there's the album he did with Dionne Warwick, *Heartbreaker*. Now that really is simple, but I'd say it's *depth of groove*. That's what he gets just right every time. Other drummers whose playing affects me in the same way are Andy Newmark and Levon Helm. They combine the technique with the groove. Then there are some marvelous players who are not known for their technique at all, like Ringo, Charlie Watts, and Neil Young's drummer, Ralph Molina. There are some great jazz drummers who never let their superb technique get in the way of good tasteful supportive playing; among my favorites are Shelly Manne and Mel Lewis. There's also a British jazz player called Tony Oxley. He plays a lot of avant garde, but he has this quality, too. There's the ECM drummer Jon Christensen, but my all-time favorite has to be Jim Keltner, for the *character* we spoke about earlier. On that level I also admire Bill Bruford, who I see as a sort of "contemporary jazz" Keltner.

One other English drummer, who is sometimes overlooked, is Gerry Conway. He was with Sandy Denny's band, Fotheringay, and he played with Jethro Tull and Cat Stevens. He's done all that, but he can play well outside the "English" thing, as well. His time is absolutely wonderful; he's got great feel.

SG: For obvious reasons, I'd like to finish with something about Fairport Convention. You seem very happy with the way things have been going since you rejoined in '82.

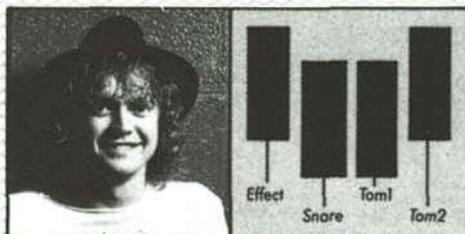
DM: It wasn't exactly a case of rejoining, because there wasn't a band to join. They were doing annual August reunions at Cropredy, and I joined in with the other drummer, Bruce Rowlands. All that was happening was that once a year we would get together and play for a bunch of people, but that event got bigger and bigger so that there was a move to come up with some new material and try to take it a bit further. This coincided with Bruce's moving to Denmark and more or less giving up playing; so when we did *Gladys' Leap*, I was the only drummer. The reaction to that album was so good that we decided to start it up again and see what happened. From there, the band started working again fairly regularly. So now the reunions are no longer reunions; it's an annual festival, featuring Fairport.

One of the things that really pleases me now is that we still get a lot of the old fans, but on all the gigs a good third of the audience is young kids of 18 or so. They don't know about the old days and the history of the band; they just come along because we are a good band. When they get into it, they might go back and say, "What's all this old stuff, *Liege And Lief* and so on?" People do that when they discover something new. But this is good, because we are not trading on memories; it isn't a nostalgia thing. We're growing with a new audience, and that's healthy for us.

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sounds you do when you perform live?

FC: For a normal performance or a typical gig, say, in a club in New York City—not a gig with the Manhattan Transfer—it used to be whatever I could fit into a cab. But nowadays I have a pretty standard setup. I use a table, which I face toward the audience. I usually set up two congas and bongos on stands, and cymbals on the right and left of the table. Also on the left of the table I'll put a woodblock and cowbell and some chimes. To the right of the congas would go some timbales. Behind would be a drum computer. I might have along my own P.A. system, depending on the venue I'm playing that night. On the table are instruments that deal with sound colors and hand effects. On the floor might be some instruments for Brazilian accents, like

Latin scene.

RS: Is it difficult for a percussionist like yourself to move from a Brazilian slant to an Afro-Cuban one?

FC: The "system" used to dictate that everything had to be set up in one vein. I can remember Airtó telling stories about when he first came to New York and wanted to sit in with Latin salsa players. They couldn't relate to his array of sounds and instruments. This still happens; sometimes it happens in reverse. Sometimes salsa players want to sit in with a Brazilian band, and they meet the same dead end. All South Americans and Spanish-speaking Caribbeans are Latin, but there's a difference in the background information pertaining to music that other Latins have in contrast to Brazilians. Plus, the pulse of each country

is different. I know Brazil has a different pulse than its neighbors. The Brazilians' clave consciousness is a whole different thing. In the Caribbean, we often accent with space. The absence of a sound actually impulses the beat, while in Brazil, things are played on the downbeat, and musicians there don't relate to anything but that. They don't relate to an accent coming in between from nothing being played. The language has something to do with that. Brazilians like to think they understand Spanish, but they really don't. A lot of Spanish words have totally different meanings in Portuguese [the official language of Brazil]. So, going back to your question, it's usually not a smooth transition when you go from musical culture to musical culture.

RS: How did shekeres become your trademark?

FC: It's the instrument I like the most. It works great during international types of musical presentations. I also like the berimbau. But I'd incorporate shekeres into my style even before it was in vogue to do so in the

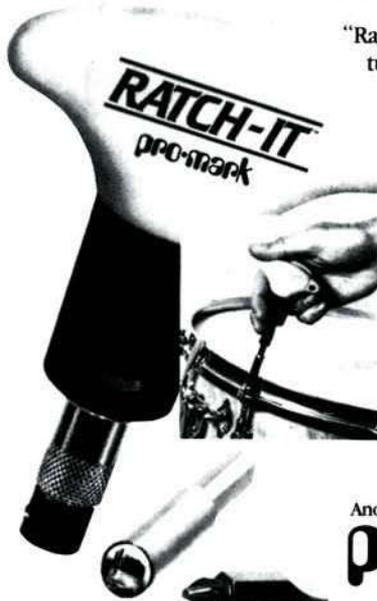
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RS: Where do you see yourself in all this? I mean, you're Latin, yet your Brazilian experience isn't something to take lightly.

FC: I think I see myself as an international progressive percussionist. On the stage, I don't usually reflect where I'm coming from. My delivery is, very often, a blend of all my influences. I can do a strictly Brazilian gig. And many people say I'm the non-Brazilian who plays Brazilian better than many Brazilians. I also have full command of Portuguese. I've been married twelve years to a Brazilian. That's helped, as has my natural curiosity. Plus, I lived in Brazil for many years. I did a lot of recordings down there, commercial and otherwise. I worked with Milton Nascimento, who is the avatar of contemporary artists from Brazil. We did a lot of work together, including three al-

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bums.

RS: And what about your salsa background?

FC: Well, I haven't recorded that much in the salsa vein, but it's in my blood. Salsa is my roots. You can't get closer than that. I mean, the conga came from the bata and the Afro-Cuban ritual in its totality. But all this has been blended within me with the latest computer technology and sampling possibilities, and the result is something that is really very difficult to define.

RS: Were you born in Puerto Rico?

FC: No. Many people think that I was, though. I was born here in America—in Washington, D.C., to be exact.

RS: But you are of Puerto Rican descent?

FC: Yes. If you see the Manhattan Transfer show, because they found me in Brazil, they announce that I'm from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. I don't mind. I'm not about that. I'm about the music.

RS: Do you see yourself as a percussionist who is, perhaps, breaking new ground and helping to set new standards?

FC: I think so. I think it comes from my philosophy and from my freedom in performance more than anything else. A lot of critics have commented on the physicality of my performance. The truth is that the music just takes me. That might sound weird, but it's true. Most of the time, I don't even realize there is an audience out there. I throw myself into the music. It's a 200% thing. I usually lose between two and three pounds a night from all the energy I burn and the emotion that goes into the music.

RS: Do the physical attributes of your performance have a direct impact on your music?

FC: Yes. The movement very definitely contributes to the musical output. I'm not a dancer. People have come up to me after a show and said, "Oh wow, I love your dancing." The music makes me move, and that's it.

RS: But surely you must be aware of the visual impact you have on your audience.

FC: Oh, sure. That can't be helped. But today, people want you to move and be affected by the music. They want to see and hear that total commitment. If you give yourself totally to your music and your audience, you're going to get the feedback you deserve. And that inspires you the next time you step out onto a stage.

RS: It's no secret that the '80s has been a monumental decade for drummers. Not only has drum technology and equipment increased in leaps and bounds, but the drummer has rejected the old connotation of merely being the guy in the back of the band with little else to do but keep the beat. Do you see the role of the percussionist in contemporary music expanding and taking on new shape much like the role of the kit drummer?

FC: Yes. Percussion adds that "danger" to music. But more important, percussion isn't something that you can sample and always be successful with. Some percussive sounds work with sampling, and some don't. Percussion is not all hits, where something is

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striking something else and producing a sound that is rather short. I can show you drums that are not struck; instead they're rubbed. There's something called friction percussion. The kinds of sounds these and other percussion instruments create are not the kind that are easily reproduced. Percussion is about fingers. Plus, there's still a multitude of sounds out there. There are nature sounds, which are vocal percussion. There's a lot of virgin territory. How far can we go forward before we're

"Percussion adds that danger to music."

forced to go back to the roots? I mean, there are still birds we don't know about. There are plenty of insects in the world that make sounds and produce light and create heat, which affects the air like music does. This is why I like David Van Tiegham so much. In his own right he is showing that the percussionist can also be a serious composer in both the classical and pop sense. And then there's Airtio. Every percussionist owes a lot to him. He's opened very many doors and helped define the percussionist's place in the music world.

RS: If I asked you to pick a series of songs that best represent your most creative work, which ones would you choose?

FC: There are a handful of things that show

different sides of myself. Some of the work I did with Milton Nascimento is a good representation of my percussive style. I think the *Missam dos Quilombos* album is very good. That album was Milton's interpretation of a black mass. The inspiration came from the interior of Brazil, not the coast, where Rio is located. The musical roots of the interior of Brazil are really quite unusual. There are a lot of European influences, plus heavy African. It's not about samba at all. The work on that album saw a marriage between my Afro-cultural background of the Caribbean and this thing from Brazil. Again it was a union of Caribbean ritual drumming, which I represented, and ritual drumming from three different sects of religion. We also had a fifth drummer on traps for that album. A lot of the stuff that we actually wanted to include on the record didn't work. I had to do a lot of patching up in the studio.

My work with Tania Maria on her live album is, I think, a good example of the fusion of the modern Brazilian elements and the New York Latin scene. Work that I did recently on Wayne Shorter's new album, *Joyrider*, reflects a totally different thing. Music critics have viewed the record in terms of Weather Report and that band's musical accomplishments. I don't exactly agree with that. But that's the way it is. Wayne and I would see percussion as strategically placed sounds and strategically placed feelings within a semi-jazz/classical

composition. Wayne just doesn't do eight-bar blues. His compositions are like a broad painting. His style is more symphonic than you might first expect.

RS: What artists might you be interested in working with someday?

FC: There are definitely a few contemporary artists that I'd love to work with. Some of them might surprise you, like Eddie Van Halen. I'm very much into the kinds of sounds he gets out of his guitar. You know, I grew up listening to rock in Puerto Rico. There used to be a stigma about rock musicians. It would be that they played too loud or too crazy. Nowadays, a lot of rock artists, including Eddie Van Halen, are first class, international musicians who are good on any stage and in any setting, and they consistently produce good music. I'd love to work with Sting someday, too. I really look up to him for the way he's treated percussion in his music. He's given it some importance in the way he places it in the context of his music. Bruce Springsteen is another one I wouldn't mind working with. I admire his music, especially for its intensity.

RS: What about fusion? Do you ever see yourself returning to that mode of music? Your time spent with Weather Report must have been rewarding.

FC: Yes, it was. And yes, I'd like to do more work in the fusion field. A band like Spyro Gyra is pretty interesting. Recently in Brazil I was working with Wagner Tiso. We did a project that dealt with Brazilian classical music. I wasn't even aware of the music until I got involved with the project with Wagner. At the time we were both part of the Milton Nascimento Band in 1981 and 1982. Wagner sort of grew up listening to Milton. His technique is fantastic, and his sense of modern harmony is just fabulous. Wagner turned me on to Villa Lobos, who at last count had some 7,000 catalogue compositions. Second to him is Aaron Copland with about 3,000. Villa Lobos must have been the original sequencing composer or something, because what he did with percussion and the available melodic instruments of the time, which was about 100 years ago, was simply amazing. He interacted traditional Brazilian sounds from all parts of the country. You have to understand that Brazil is like India. Each state has its own distinct personality and musical flavor. People dance and sing to different kinds of beats. What you hear from northern Brazil and what you hear from the Amazon region is much different from what the typical music listener knows of Brazil, namely samba and bossa nova. Villa Lobos managed to get musical pieces of every single place in Brazil and put them all together with world classical compositional knowledge.

RS: Has Villa Lobos had an important impact on your development as a percussionist?

FC: Oh, yes. Absolutely. I admire the man for the vast amount of musical knowledge he had and the way he put everything to

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gether so that it really seemed like it belonged together.

RS: Do you write music?

FC: Yes, I'm a writer.

RS: Should we expect a solo project from you someday?

FC: It's quite possible. Actually, it's in the making now. I've done some tracks down in Sao Paulo in Brazil. I'm also working on some music up here. I'll start to write something with a drum machine, believe it or not. I'll work with that until I get another idea and go to the keyboards. From there I'll pull one of my friends into the studio with me to work on some harmonies. When we feel good with what we have, then we'll call in other musicians.

RS: For years, too many music fans viewed percussion as strictly a supplemental addition to the music. Are audiences becoming more educated when it comes to the value of percussion and the presentation of percussive sounds?

FC: I think so. I say that from all the experience I've had playing all over the world. I think people are becoming acutely aware of percussion and what it does to music. I think these people also expect something of a performance from percussionists as opposed to those musicians who must remain stationary. I think some people sense a sort of musical danger in what percussionists play.

RS: You use the term "musical danger." Can you explain that a bit further?

FC: Well, I work off a road map, which is a musical chart. But not all the hits are written per se. I'm expected to incorporate my impressions as a percussionist. Of course there are accents that I'm required to do within the framework of the whole band. So I'm keeping a beat or a pulse, but within that I'll try to inject elements of surprise.

RS: And how do you do that?

FC: By sounds, of course, but more important, by where they are placed and what sort of impact they make. I like when my audience hears something, and when they look for it again, it's no longer happening. I like to be unpredictable.

RS: But there must be some sort of risk you take by being "musically dangerous."

FC: Musical unpredictability can bring on problems. If what I play is placed awkwardly, it can, in a worst-case situation, destroy the entire performance that night. But I take this approach to percussion because it is what I instinctively feel is right for the music. I believe it enhances the music, or else I wouldn't attempt it. But I must be careful, because if I make the band look bad, I've done a great disservice to the other musicians on stage. If you make the band look bad more than once, chances are you won't be playing with it too long. But you know what I like to inject into the music? Humor. It's very effective in making the performance come across sympatico. The best thing I can do in that capacity is put a smile on people's faces. There should always be an element of relief in the music; I really believe that. I think people

appreciate that.

RS: You're obviously a serious student of percussion. When you're off the road and you're not in the studio, what's an average day like? Are you so immersed in the world of percussion that you rarely leave it?

FC: I love what I do very much. I'm very appreciative whenever I have the chance to perform. I try not to take gigs for granted. I try to be thankful whenever I can relate to my profession. The reason why I feel this way is because 20 years ago my profession didn't really exist—certainly not the way it exists today. When I'm home, I read about percussion. I study the masters. I read all the magazines I can get, and I'm always taking books out of the library.

RS: Do you practice every day?

FC: I rehearse every day. But I don't practice the same instruments every day, although there are times when I'll concentrate on one instrument for a period. I want very much to keep my chops up. Plus, I try to get a lot of my percussion ideas down on video. I'm working on an instructional percussion music series.

RS: And when might we see the results of that?

FC: Hopefully soon. I'm in contact with some companies that distribute instructional videos. They've expressed interest in some of the ideas I have, which is encouraging. I need to edit all the material I have into a form that people can grasp easily. I also have a strong desire to put something together for children. I'd like to make them

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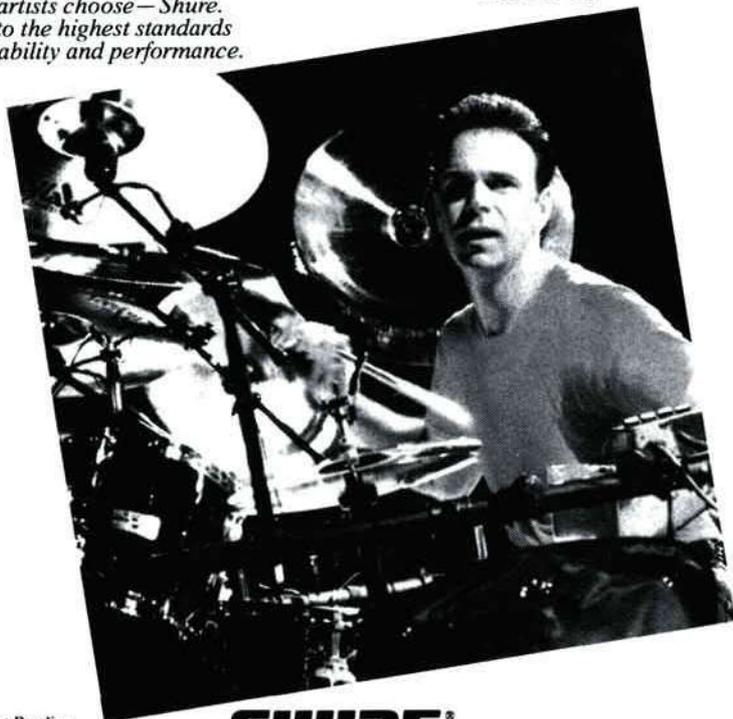
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sound-conscious before they get into music appreciation. They need to be made aware of the sounds all around them: the sounds of the city, the sounds in their apartment—sounds they can use in a constructive way to relate musically. The rhythm of daily life is something they should be aware of.

RS: Where does Frank Colon want to be five years from now? What are your most important musical goals?

FC: I think I can answer that best by describing what I think I am and always hope to be: a communicator. More than that, I want to continue to break down cultural barriers when it comes to percussive communication. I see music as my first language. Idealistically, I hope that my music brings people closer. Another part of me is Buddhism. This is reflected in my desire to want to use music to bring people closer together and show how sound affects the world in a positive sense. As Buddhists we chant with the belief that sound will be impeded in a direction that will cause some good and bring world peace. So, I see myself as a producer of sounds that affect people in a positive way and bring cultures closer together. Other musicians are involved in the same sort of thing, although they might not be fully aware of it. Music is a unifier. The global village is getting smaller and more peaceful, and I think musicians should take some credit for that.



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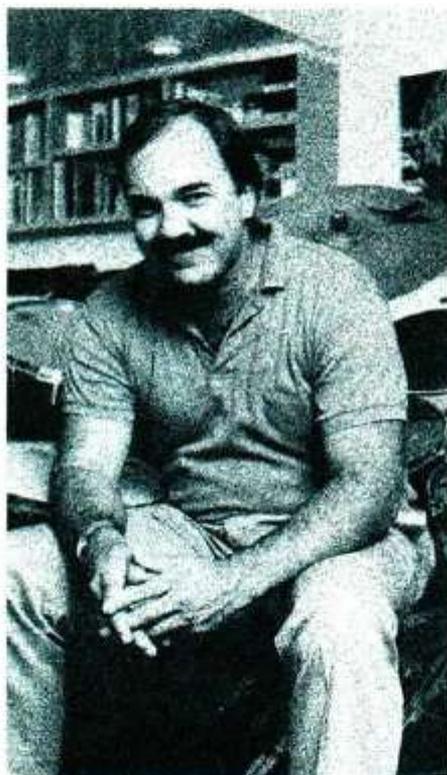


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A dedicated team-player, over the years Mark has shared in Alabama's numerous Grammy's and other country music awards while individually placing among the top players in Modern Drummer's annual Reader's Poll; proving that success and popularity are based on equal amounts of commitment and durability.



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plies, and it worked! The oil changed the whole characteristic of the head; it killed the overtones.

I think the first fame we had with those heads was in France, where they started using them in the studios. Drummers didn't have to tape up the heads and put an overcoat in the bass drums. The engineers thought it was great. Now we've had advances in electronics to the point that the studios can handle the brighter types of sounds, with more overtones and all. The whole trend has changed because of this. We still have a lot of customers who love that dry sound, and probably some of our biggest sales are still in *Hydraulic* blue heads. Some people love that dead, funky sound. So, it really wasn't any great re-

search. It was kind of an accident and it just developed. We still produce the blue heads, the red heads, and the glass heads in the *Hydraulic* series.

WFM: I'd like to talk a little bit about the flexible hoop, the white hoop that you used on your heads for years before the CAD/CAM was developed. Explain how the flexible hoop was developed and why it was designed.

BB: The flexible hoop was a reinforced fiberglass composite hoop. I think there was a time when drums were not as standardized as they are now. You see, the heads were always made far more accurately than the drums. Once we made a die for, say, a 14" head, our 14" heads did not vary, because this die was made by certain me-

chanical standards, certain tolerances, and it didn't change. But we found that the drum manufacturers, for economic reasons, would take the same shells for natural finish drums and place pearl coverings on them, which made the shell diameters too large. Also, the bearing edges of drums back in the '60s and early '70s were absolutely atrocious, never consistent. The flexible hoop allowed the head to conform to these irregularities of the shell. You could put on an Evans head with our flexible hoop and tension it up above the pitch you would normally play, and let it sit overnight. Then you would back it off, tune it, and that drum would sound good. The head would actually conform to the shell.

WFM: Are there other places where the flexible hoop is appropriate?

BB: Yes, out-of-round drums for instance. And the flexible hoop will settle into the shell of the drum that has bad bearing edges. We also found that, with the fiberglass hoop, we've had drums in millimeter sizes where the heads didn't fit. Drummers would actually cut a piece out of the hoop and, without even fastening it together, put it on the drum—and it worked. So, for some drummers, the flexible hoop is one way of dealing with these problems without having to replace the drum.

WFM: How does a fiberglass hoop affect the sound of a drum, or does it have any effect on the sound?

BB: Oh yes, it affects the sound. The fiberglass hoop, because of the mechanicals, has the tendency to roll in towards the shell and make contact with it. This deadens the sound. This, too, adds to the dryness of our heads with the flexible hoop. Our CAD/CAM hoop's design and construction allows for greater resonance.

WFM: I think most people have thought of Evans over the years as the company that makes the "deader"-sounding, studio heads. Then, over the past couple of years with the CAD/CAM line, you're covering the whole other end of the spectrum now. Everything's resonant. I read an article by Neil Peart where he talked about how he loves your heads because they're so resonant.

BB: Well, we've always made single-ply heads, which were a bit more live sounding, but we never did push them. Everybody refers to us as the *Hydraulic* head company. Now that things are changing, we're trying to cover a broader scope of the market with the *Uno 58* line, which is all single-ply heads.

WFM: You're selling more single-ply heads than ever before.

BB: Yes, we're selling more single-ply heads now, mainly because the trend has changed. The drummers want a brighter sound. They want a more resonant sound. We have come out with the *Resonant* head, which has been quite successful. We have a trademark on the *Resonant* name, which is a good, catchy name. It's designed for the bottom of the tom-toms and the front of the bass drum.

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WFM: Let's talk a little about the specifics of the company. How many employees do you have?

BB: We're not labor intensive. This is because of the machinery we have. We're continually developing and installing new equipment for automation. We're doing this not to eliminate workers, but to have more consistent quality of the product. Hand-crafting is fine in a lot of things, but in manufacturing and production, when you're making thousands of items, it's very hard to get precision in repeatability.

WFM: How much of the process of the making of the head is done here, at your factory?

BB: Just about all of it. We buy the film, with the majority of it slit to the width we want for different diameters of heads. Some of it we have to slit ourselves. We buy the aluminum for the hoops and slit for the widths for the different drums. We buy the aluminum already painted with the polyester coating that is applied at 500 degrees, which gives it a very tough finish. We buy the resin for the various blends that hold the film. We buy the raw material and we mix the coloring ourselves. We do not dye film—that's a very involved process—and we don't metalize the film. But everything else we do here. We have designed and made about 85%-90% of the specialized machines we have here.

WFM: How involved are you personally in the design of this machinery?

BB: I lay out the design and specifics for

what I want done, and then we have an engineer who custom-designs the machines. I was fortunate to find a man who was an expert in the bending of metal. The design of the dies is very crucial. For instance, I went to about four different manufacturers to show them what I wanted in a hoop design, back when I was coming up with the CAD/CAM idea. They all said it couldn't be done. The design I had for the hoop was too complicated to shape.

No other drumhead manufacturer was producing anything near the quality of metal hoop that I wanted. Their machines for shaping the metal for the hoops is very primitive. I had visualized something that was a vast improvement, but I was having trouble finding an engineer who could help me design the machinery I needed. I finally found an engineer with a lot of experience in aluminum, and he designed a machine. He worked with us until we got the finished product. It was a long and difficult process, but I wanted to make the best drumheads possible, so it took a lot of time.

WFM: What is your position in the company?

BB: I'm Chief Executive Officer, but in a small company, you wind up wearing a lot of different hats.

WFM: What are your different responsibilities? Give me some examples of what you do.

BB: In the development of a new product, I'm involved in the designing of the product and some of the machinery, and the

actual production. I'm also involved in sales. However, most of our sales are handled by our sales manager, Sue Vogel. She's been with us 20 years. But, as for me, those things I mentioned are what I spend most of my time doing.

WFM: That covers a lot of ground.

BB: Well, I guess that's the only way it can happen. In large companies, they hire the specialists for each particular department. I think it can become very inefficient that way, though. I think we can develop new products and get them out on the market a lot faster and cheaper than the real big companies.

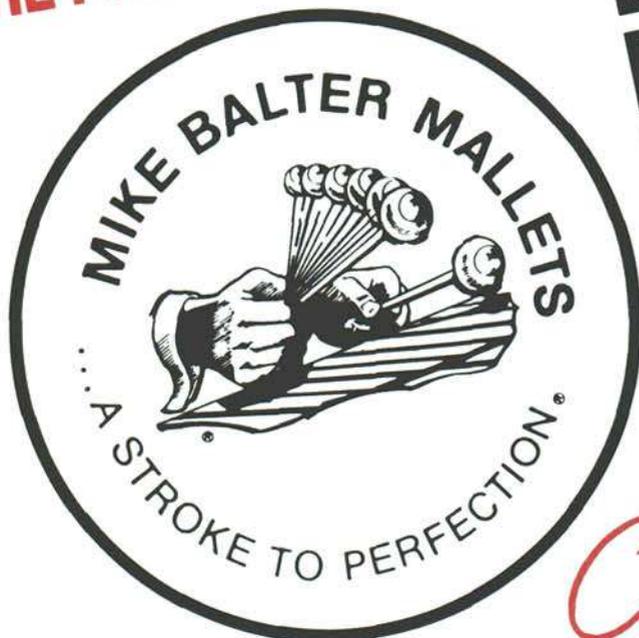
WFM: It sounds like you personally have the ability to do just about everything here if you had to.

BB: Well, I think that's probably possible. I wouldn't do the job as well as some of my employees, but yes, I guess I could do most of it.

WFM: Do you think that's a plus?

BB: That's probably a plus for a small company. It may not be a plus for a developing company. Maybe I'm the type of individual who can't run a big company. I have to be able to do it myself. I think any company reflects the personality of the person running it. And in the music business traditionally, many businesses have been developed by individuals. We had Bud Slingerland from the Slingerland Company, Bill Ludwig from the Ludwig Company, and Fred Gretsch from the Gretsch Company. These were individual and dedicated men

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who put out their products with their companies, and they cut through a lot of red tape to get something done. In a large corporation, no one person can make these decisions and get things done. I think it makes a big difference.

WFM: I'd like to talk about your background briefly. You said you were a watchmaker and you somehow got into the drumhead business. What is it about making drumheads that is satisfying?

BB: I started out with a retail jewelry store where I was a watchmaker. Then I got involved in the music business through the repair shop. We started out by repairing instruments, and then we started selling musical instruments. It was called Dodge Music & Jewelry.

For me, one of the satisfying things about this business is developing the machinery. Designing and building intricate mechanical machinery and electronics is really the challenge to it. I want to have an efficient factory to the point where we're repeatedly making high-quality products.

I've also been involved in music, but I'm not a performer myself. I'm not a drummer, so I have to depend on other people who are experts in that field. But I think I have abilities that make up for my not being a drummer, and I am fortunate that some of the greatest drummers playing today are involved with Evans, like Peter Erskine. These drummers are helping me and advising me. But for me personally, the satisfaction of this job comes from producing goods that I think are the best—products that we

can be proud of.

WFM: Let's talk about CAD/CAM. How did the whole thing come about?

BB: Well, we made the decision to do some market research a few years back. It came about because of a slowing down of drumhead sales when the electronic drums were introduced. They started out selling great, and it really began to affect our business—mainly because the drumshops were investing so much money in electronics. They neglected to inventory other accessories that they really made money on, like drumsticks and drumheads. They let their inventory drop down, which obviously affected us.

As I saw it, drumshops would be trying to sell a \$3,000 set of electronic drums. Then the supplier would come along and say, "Hey, I've got a great new set of electronic drums that just came out. It'll do 50% more and is 30% less in price." The guy in the shop would say, "Yeah, but what do I do with the old one?" Traditionally, drumshops were not used to dealing in volatile merchandise like this. If they had a couple of sets of acoustic drums in their shop for a year, in most cases, at the end of the year it would probably be worth more money than when they bought it. So they were never really concerned about turnover of this type of merchandise. However, with electronics, many of them got into deep trouble. They were tight on money and got in trouble, which affected their drumhead purchases. That affected us.

When things began to clear out, as far as electronic drums were concerned, we be-

gan to see the trend changing to brighter and more resonant sounds in acoustic drums. We had various people telling us that we should produce a head with a metal hoop, and not the flexible hoop that we had been producing for years. We felt that we had to come up with something that would be more readily acceptable with the new trend. Drummers wanted a brighter sound. So, with various research, we decided to make a mechanical, vastly superior product, and a better looking product.

So I started out designing a hoop that I felt would be better all the way through. I carefully examined all the different hoops on the market, looking for flaws and problems that I wanted to overcome. Then, as I mentioned earlier, I had to go out and research and find out how it was going to be made. We ran into problems, but we just kept at it. Inflation has drastically increased the price of aluminum—from \$1.47 to \$2.64 in one year. But now that we are behind this product, we are becoming more firmly established in the drum world as a superior product—not only in sound, but in mechanics. Because of its design, the CAD/CAM head is very consistent and is very easy to tune. It's been very exciting to see how it has caught on.

WFM: Besides the new hoop design, are there any new designs in the heads?

BB: Yes. We have some new film that we have found is harder. Essentially, though, the total line is the same as it was with the flexible hoop, which we are now referring to as the *Classic* hoop. With the creation of

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the CAD/CAM hoop, the characteristics of the heads have changed dramatically. They all have become brighter, and they have become more responsive.

Now we are in production on our CAD/CAM bass drum heads. When we started the CAD/CAM, the machinery could not accommodate the larger bass-drum-sized heads. Six months ago, we finally were able to produce the CAD/CAM heads in bass drum sizes, and since then the response we've gotten has been tremendous. We have been getting calls from name drummers who have tried the bass drum heads, and they've been telling us how amazed they are at the difference in the sound.

WFM: CAD/CAM—what's the whole idea behind it? How is the computer involved?

BB: CAD/CAM, of course, means "computer-assisted-design computer-assisted-manufacture." The design of this hoop is laid out with the CAD system. The engineer also put it on his CAD system. So the design of the hoop was actually laid out with a computer. As far as computer-assisted-manufacture, the machinery is completely controlled by computers; it handles the actual construction of the hoop, as well as maintaining the machinery itself. For instance, it even indicates when it's time to oil the machine. Today, we have very exciting things that can be done, which physically were almost impossible five years ago.

WFM: How long was the research and development of the CAD/CAM heads?

BB: I would say it took a little over two years before we actually made anything.

We very laboriously made some solid metal hoops made by hand on a lathe. If you're talking actual time, these prototype heads cost about \$500 to \$600 apiece, which is a pretty expensive drumhead. But it was necessary before we could come up with the final design of the machinery.

WFM: What is it that people like Peter Erskine and other drummers find so interesting about the CAD/CAM heads?

BB: Well, I think it comes down to the fact that these people are looking for something different in the sound and performance of a drumhead. A plus that the CAD/CAM head has, which I have been told about by many drummers and is something that has been documented in reviews of the heads, is that the CAD/CAM heads are very easy to tune. Also, the heads are so precise in size that they fit very well on the drums.

I'd like to talk about the forming of the head, which is something that is done differently on our heads than by other manufacturers. We form the head before we put it into the hoop. You will notice on our heads that there is a distinct bend at the edge of the head, before the film reaches the hoop. In the bending process, the film has to be placed in such a way as to make it pull evenly into the hoop. Thanks to the computer design, the film is placed into the hoop in a very orderly fashion. By looking at any of our heads you can see the evenness of this design, and this consistency really gives the head a great look besides making it a good functioning head. Our competitors' heads have a very uneven fold-

over of their film into their hoop, which is an inconsistent design that you can easily see just by comparing their heads with ours. And if you look at their smaller heads, like the 6", 8", or 10" sizes, that point where the film meets the hoop is very bad. What that means is that those smaller drumheads that our competitors manufacture are impossible to tune! We avoid those problems with our heads.

Another plus to our heads has to do with the internal clip that holds the seam of the hoop. It's designed so there is nothing to gouge the finish on the shell of the drum. All this means is that the heads are easier to tune, and they stay in tune longer, and they are more durable. I know that's a long answer to your question, but I guess those are some of the reasons why drummers have been getting excited about our heads. It's very gratifying to me.

I recently received a patent on the CAD/CAM design, which I'm very proud of. So the system and design is unique.

WFM: What's in the future for Evans drumheads?

BB: Well, we're starting to break out of that image people have of us as a sleepy little company. We've been doing a lot of advertising to increase people's awareness about us, and we're definitely going after a bigger piece of the market share of the drumhead business. We want to do this by producing the best drumheads that we can—the type of heads that will help musicians enjoy playing more.



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Oil City

Hundreds of laughing participants are giddily twirling about, dutifully doing the hokey-pokey as the band eagerly directs their every move. One of the band's members, they are told, is a champion hokey-poker. The setting is a "recital" at the Oil City High School gymnasium. Institutional brown folding chairs are lined in rows over the floorboards emblazoned with the school logo. Above, colorful streamers decorate the rafters and unlit scoreboards hang silently waiting for the next bout with school rivals.

On the makeshift stage, a middle-aged woman in a pink prom dress and bouffed-up hairdo beams behind the drums. As the hokey-pokey ends, the crowd cheers and collapses back into their folding chairs. The band sighs, tickled that they have pleased their audience. After the band performs some original numbers, such as "Beaver Ball At The Bug Club" and "Ohio Afternoon"—a ballad that sings the praises of that ever-humble state—the crowd is brought to a standing ovation. The drummer emerges from behind the kit for her final bows, her left foot in a pink high-heel and her bass drum foot in a floppy white Reebok. As the audience files out, the band is waiting in the lobby to serve them punch and cookies. After refreshments and exchanged greetings, the audience swings open the lobby doors—onto the bustling streets of Greenwich Village, New York City!

The imaginary theatrical oasis of Oil City High School is a delightful world created by, and starring, four talented New York actor/musicians: Mike Craver (synthesizers and vocals), Mark Hardwick (piano, accordion, and vocals), Mary Murfitt (violin, flute, sax, and vocals), and Debra Monk (drums and vocals). An Off-Broadway hit, the show has been playing to delighted houses and strong press response since its New York opening (November 5, 1987) at the Circle in the Square Downtown Theater.

Debra Monk's character, "Debbie," is a slightly dizzy—but lovable—isolated, small-town homemaker whose part-time passion is cutting loose behind a kit. The "Oil City Symphony" is, we learn, a band formed 20 years ago in high school, and this show is their reunion recital. Each member had been a star music student, personally

coached by Miss Reeves, the band's teacher and guru of musical happiness, grooming, and good manners. Oil City High is a place where, perhaps, Andy Griffith and Don Knotts might have visited in pressed sheriffs uniforms and gleaming badges to deliver crossing guard safety speeches to students. Although the show features very "hip" humor, it manages to retain that Mayberry element. We never laugh at the characters, but rather come to truly *like* them, thereby opening ourselves up to enjoy the characters' innocence. The result can miraculously bring some of the most jaded New Yorkers

split a gut. For drummers, watching "Debbie" behind the set is a riot. Debra Monk not only knows about the timing needed to play drums, but is also a master of comic timing. She has the drumming background necessary to handle the music, but it is ultimately her acting and comic experience that makes her drumming/musical satire successful. Much like a stand-up master who knows how to deliver a good punch line, Ms. Monk knows just where and how to misplace an accent or misjudge a dynamic to make an audience howl. Her approach is constantly clever and never over-obvious. Whether it's her grandiose orchestral mallet work on toms and cymbals in the curious quartet arrangement of "Exodus," or her over-serious approach to copying the "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida" drum solo, each musical selection holds witty moments of physical/aural comedy that could only come from a sharp comic talent who also *understands* the fabric of music.

One particular multi-percussion method that is probably a world first—a total innovation on "Debbie's" part—is something you most likely won't want to try in public. "Beaver Ball At The Bug Club" portrays an animal party, and Debra's use of squeaking toy hammers in place of sticks creates an oom-pah-pah-squeak texture that simultaneously suggests busy beavers and drives the listener nuts.

I must commit a cardinal sin of journalism by using the phrase, "It's hard to explain; you just *have* to see it!" Because, in *Oil City's* case, it's true. This also explains why the show was so hard to sell to producers when it was first co-

created by the four gifted collaborators. "We love it, but it will never work in New York," insisted several producers. The show first evolved when Debra, Mark, and Mike began composing and playing zany arrangements of cornball pop tunes for their own enjoyment. Debra was called to sing in a benefit show, and, in an inspired moment, suggested that her "band" appear. "We had *no* idea what the reaction would be," recalls Debra. The oddball group arrived at the benefit, which took place in a New York club, and performed a four-song recital in mock seriousness. The

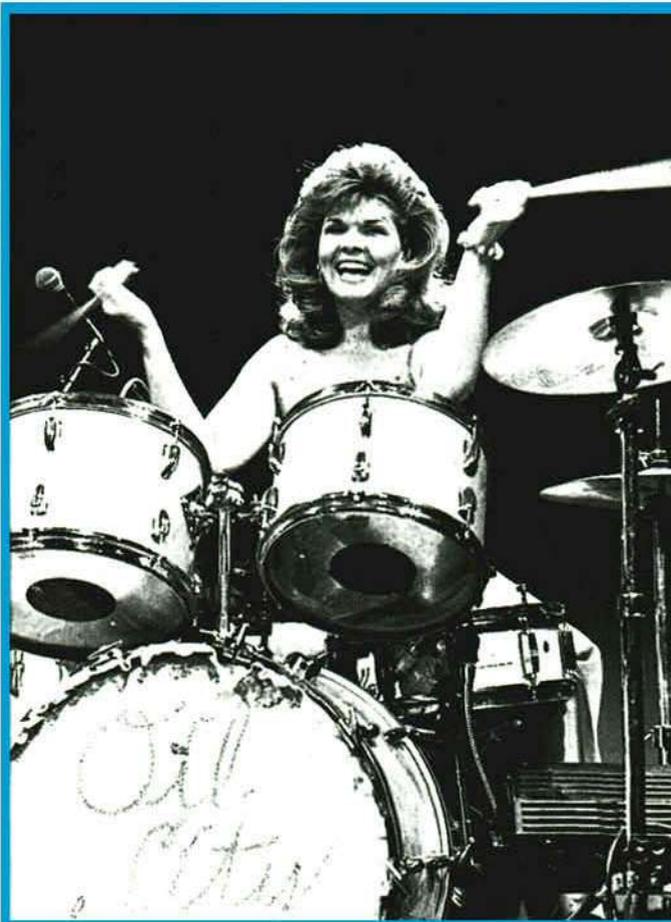


Photo by Steve Singer

to shed their big-city defenses at the entrance. After all, what else but manipulative brilliance could bring New Yorkers to their hokey-pokeying feet?

Satire of small-time performers has been attempted many times before, but has too often been smarmy in this *Saturday Night Live*-influenced generation. In contrast, the members of the "Oil City Symphony" truly *want* to serve you punch and cookies. The show is extra-delightful for musicians. The arrangements and lyrics are often so skillfully misdirected as to make a musician

Symphony

audience was taken by surprise. "They screamed; they were hysterical," recalls Debra. "At that point, we decided, 'This is going to work.'" And the beginnings of the notorious Reebok? "I actually tried playing in heels, since it was part of the costume, but it wouldn't work. So, I decided I would wear the heels, then quietly change into the sneaker so nobody would see. I got so excited about this recital that, when we finally took our bow, I came running out with my one tennis shoe on. I was mortified! Everyone laughed and I thought, 'Maybe I should keep this in.'"

Sensing that their curious creation had potential, the quartet mounted their show for a two-week run at the Westside Arts Theater, a small venue in New York where they showcased for possible backers. A long struggle for producer interest ensued, and finally enough money was raised to give the show a trial run in Dallas. It was during this run that the group evolved the concept into a whole show and perfected their individual characters. Presenting the show as a reunion recital was a key development in the show's evolution. "We realized that, if you set up who these people are and why they're there, then the audience will accept why this music sounds the way it does and be able to enjoy it," explains Debra. "Before that, they were sometimes nervous about laughing because we approached it so realistically." The work in progress moved on to a run in Baltimore before finally being given space at the Circle in the Square. "We were all terrified," recalls Debra. "Nobody knew what was going to happen. Luckily, we got wonderful reviews all across the board. They really got it; they understood that, even though we were 'making fun' of these characters, it was not for the wrong reasons. They got the point that we really loved these characters."

Although Debra is the first to admit that she doesn't play like "a serious pro," she certainly handles her job well, and her onstage enthusiasm proves that her love of the drums is very much real. "Having a middle-aged woman in a prom dress playing drums wildly was already pretty funny," she says, "but I really do love the drums and I wanted to be a good drummer. So, even though there was a comic element in

my character, I didn't want playing *badly* to be the joke. I wanted to play as well as I could." Recording pro Luther Rix helped Debra sharpen up on the kit. "When Luther came to see me, he appreciated that he should leave what I do alone but help me facilitate my technique. He also became the drum teacher for my understudy."

When Debra was involved in casting the "Debbie" role for understudies and future productions, she discovered that drummers who were loaded with technique and had a preconceived "legitimate" idea of playing drums were usually not right for the

how hard it is, this might sound strange. But it *is* a specialized role. Both of the girls who are doing the part are like me: They love the drums; you can see it in their faces."

Oil City Symphony gathered strong word-of-mouth audiences and went on to win The Outer Critics Circle Award for best off-Broadway musical, and the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Ensemble Acting. A summer company was set up in Rochester, and an album is to be released soon on DRG Records. Openings are also in the works for companies in Chicago, Boston, and San Francisco.

Debra had previously co-authored and appeared as singer/actress in the hit show *Pump Boys And Dinettes*, which she nurtured from a small workshop presentation to a Broadway hit nominated for a "Best Musical" Tony Award. *Pump Boys* has since run all over the U.S., Europe, and Australia and has the distinction of being the longest-running musical in Chicago. It was during the *Pump Boys* years that Debra developed her drumming as a side interest. Having always been fascinated by drums, she realized that a theater space posed the perfect opportunity for practicing. She made a routine of arriving early when the theater was dark to kick around on a kit. As her interest grew, she studied with Sue Evans. By the time *Pump Boys* had a post-Broadway run in St. Louis, her contract specified that the theater must keep a rented kit on the side for her practice. She eventually played drums on some New York club gigs with an offshoot *Pump Boys* band, and also performed with Harry Chapin in a benefit concert. Finally, her husband—studio bassist John Miller, who acts

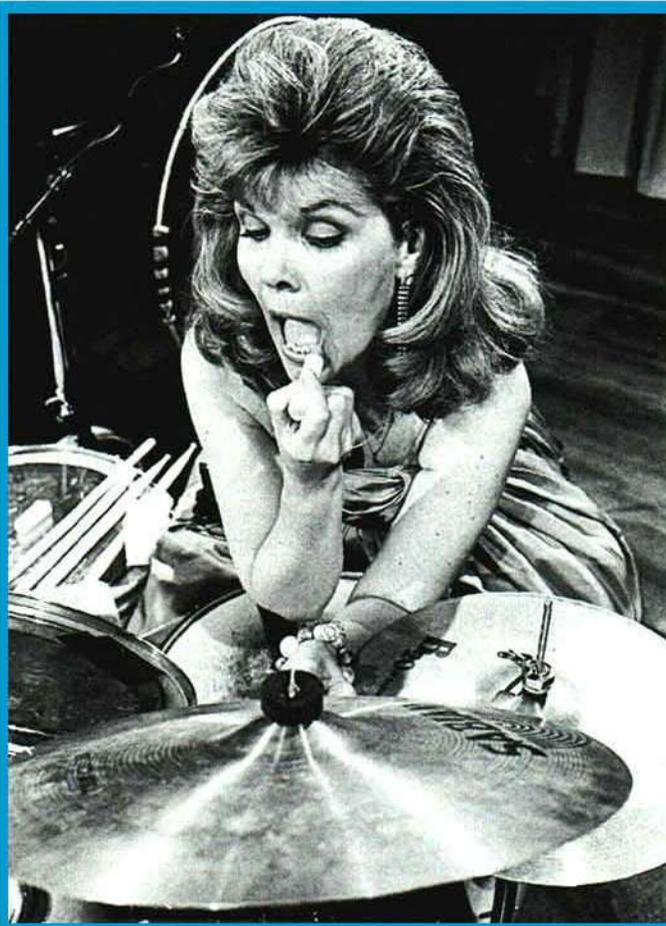


Photo by Steve Singer

role. "Asking some of the more trained drummers to do some of these things was abhorrent to them. I was so jealous when I heard many of those good women drummers play. But we ended up casting people who had perhaps played in high school or had very little drumming ability; then they studied to learn what they needed for this role. This character has to be a sort of hostess for the evening, so it's really important that she can handle the crowd and speak to them. For all those wonderful drummers who studied for years and years and know

as Musical Consultant for *Oil City*—planted a kit beneath their Christmas tree. From that day, *Oil City* was inevitable. Debra's three loves of acting, singing, and drumming converged into her ideal vehicle in this offbeat, unique theater piece. Although most artists would bathe in the prestige of co-authoring a hit, Debra's first comment on her good fortune is, "I still can't believe I get to play drums every night!"

From the tight, close, a Cappella harmonies of "Count Your Blessings" that opens the show with its heartfelt message, to the

"Debbie" On Drums

I thought it would be fun to do an MD-style interview with "Debbie," Debra Monk's stage alter ego. Ms. Monk agreed, and the following interview excerpt is from her totally improvised answers to my questions. Instantly, Debra assumed "Debbie"'s voice, gestures, and mind-frame. "Debbie" speaks in a fast, high-pitched patter with quickly rising and falling tones that carry a hint of a Midwest/Southern hybrid accent. She is confident, comfortable, disarmingly unpretentious, and certainly never apologetic about her small-town place in this big world. Even when she may sound simple, her words usually hold wisdom.

JP: During the song "Introductions," Mary reads off of a card that tells about your background, while you stand at attention before the crowd. Could you reiterate some of that?

D: Well, I studied drums in high school with Miss Reeves. She taught all of us together. Between the time I graduated from high school and now, I've been working professionally as a drummer with The Melody Shoppers. That's a band that plays every Saturday afternoon at the entrance to Sears. It's four women, and we dress up in different outfits; Sears gives us the outfits to wear. We also model in between sets, so it's sort of a double thing. We get to keep the outfits for a discount—10% off at Sears.

JP: When you say "double thing," do you mean like a double-scale job?

D: No, it's not scale. We just get the outfits, which is all we really want. They've got some cute things there. They've got this new Christy Brinkley line that's really nice. That's my most professional gig. I have a set of drums in my basement that Bucky set up for me.

JP: Who's Bucky?

D: Bucky's my husband. He's a very successful dentist. Sometimes Mike and Mary and Mark come over, and we practice in my basement. We got a real *Coke* machine there.

JP: Does Bucky encourage your music, or does he worry that music might take you away from the home?

D: Oh no, no, I'm a very good housewife; I have a daughter, Tammy. She has a little baby drumset set up right next to mine and she plays, too. In fact, she has all the same outfits that I have. It's real cute; she wears the same outfits, and we play the drums together.

JP: It's good to see you're encouraging your daughter. There are too few female drummers. When you were young, were you ever discouraged from playing a traditional "male" instrument?

D: I think so. I think people thought it was unfeminine. To tell you the truth, I really think the reason was that women were afraid to wear dresses and sit behind the drums because you have to sit with your legs apart, and that was thought to be un-

ladylike.

JP: Like the cello.

D: Yeah! Exactly. The cello thing always bothered me. I didn't like that because you could actually see their knees. But behind the drums, you really can't see that, so it doesn't bother me as much. I'm always very careful about the outfits I wear. I think you have to be a lady no matter what you do.

JP: But you must turn some male heads when they see you handle some pretty macho tunes like "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida."

D: Oh, I love that "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida." That's really one of our favorites. That was a song that we played in high school, and we won a big contest—the choral meeting in Oklahoma City.

JP: Miss Reeves seems to be a big influence on the whole band. How did she help you grow as a drummer?

D: Miss Reeves is great. She was a *professional!*, she had worked with a band that had played in a Holiday Inn near New York!

JP: Near New York?

D: Yes, I think it was in New Jersey or something. So, she was, like, the biggest thing to hit town. She taught us to be professional. We learned about bringing our own equipment. We all had to set up our own equipment; we never relied on people for those kinds of things. Also, she just taught us that *all professionals have fun*. You can't really think about making a lot of money as a professional in the music business. But if you have a lot of fun, that's what being professional is really all about. We just embraced that to our hearts. She also taught us about clothes and what to wear. She said it's important to have colors that don't clash—that are in our color palettes—and to always have a theme. So in this particular recital, we did pink and purple, which are the school colors.

JP: Tell me about the kind of equipment you use, including your choice of sneaker for best pedal action.

D: My sneaker is Reebok. It's the running shoe with the real big fat end, because when you're hitting the bass drum, there's an impact so you really have to get something that's solid. I don't tie it too tight so that I can slip it on and off. I polish it once a week with that nurse's polish to keep it nice and white. My drums...I always pick white drums, with that pearly thing in 'em, you know? I clean them with *Fantastik*. Once, I had red drums, and they just didn't sound right. My cymbals...I like to polish them and keep them nice and shiny. I don't like when they get too dark.

JP: Why shiny?

D: Well, to tell you the truth, I'm on stage the whole time, and I don't have time to check my appearance. So I like to be able to look into those cymbals and make sure that my lipstick is right and my hair is not sticking up and stuff.

JP: How do you tune your drums?

D: Oh, I just sort of hit 'em and they usually sound just right. There's a couple of knobs on them I twist a bit here and there. But mostly, I have pictures of Tammy that I paste on the drums. On my tom-tom, I have a little baby picture, and on the next biggest tom, I have one when she was in second grade—you know, one of those school pictures. There's something about the tape and the sizes of the pictures that just makes the tuning right. If I take those pictures off, it doesn't sound right.

JP: So, it's for muffling and tuning—but also like having family pictures on your work desk.

D: I like having her there. I don't *hit* her; I put her up on the side where I won't hit her in the face.

JP: I imagine there aren't many talent scouts coming through Oil City. Do you think that if the band had evolved in some larger city that you would have had a shot towards the big time?

D: I think so. Everybody in high school thought we were going to be big stars. For example, we would have been great on Perry Como Christmas specials.

JP: You have a ritual of serving punch and cookies at every show. Do you think that brings the audience closer to you and your music?

D: Oh yes, I think it's really important. For one thing, it's a recital, and that's one thing we *always* did. Miss Reeves said food and music go hand-in-hand. I agree with her, because it's a party—a gathering together. Of course, I baked those cookies too. I bake them every night.

JP: What if you *did* make it to the big time? Would you continue that ritual?

D: Oh, I think we'd have to do that too, no matter where we were. I mean, if we were at Radio City Music Hall, we should serve punch and cookies. I think it's really important.

JP: That's a lot of baking.

D: It's a lot of baking, but I have some friends. The women at the church help sometimes. I tell you what, if we needed that many cookies, *we'd come up with them!*

JP: You've probably seen some of the new technology in drums. Have you thought of using electronics?

D: Gosh, I don't think I could do that. I have trouble plugging in a toaster. We don't even own a VCR or a microwave. I just don't like that new stuff. You know, I *sweat* when I get nervous, and with all those electronics around me, I'm afraid I might get electrocuted. The drums are not electrified, and I like that. I have a fear of electricity. I think you're foolin' around with nature when you add these things. God gave us skins and frames to play on. With this other stuff, you're pushin' something. Like, when they start making bombs? It's just like that.

JP: Are there any drum machines in Oil City?

D: Oh, gosh, no, there are few machines of

any kind. We're old-fashioned here. We feel that you should work hard and work up a sweat to get things done. If you have machines do everything, you get lazy. I make Tammy do everything in her room. I make her clean, I make her dust...

JP: How are you able to keep up home-maker and mother chores and still find time for practice?

D: I get up early. My day is: I get up at 7:00. First, I always put a load of wash in. Then I get Tammy ready for school and Bucky off to work. By that time, the wash is done. Now I can put the wash in the dryer and set that timer for 30 minutes. Those 30 minutes are for me and the drums. The washer and dryer are right next to the drums in the basement. And it's like a *rhythm* that happens with that dryer! It goes da-dun-da-dun, and I play with it.

JP: Sort of like a metronome.

D: Exactly! I play with the dryer for those 30 minutes and it's just amazing. It has really helped me. Then I take a break and fold up the laundry; it gives me a chance to get my wrists relaxed.

JP: Who are your drumming influences?

D: I always watched Johnny Carson, if I could stay up that late, and I *loved* when Buddy Rich would be on there. He was great. And you know what I saw that I never thought I would go to see? I'm sort of embarrassed to tell you this: I went to see that Prince movie and saw that Sheila E. play? She's *great*. I don't like what she wears; it's too skimpy. It's sort of—suggestive! I think if I could talk to her and get her to be just a little more feminine... Also, I saw James Taylor and I like Russ Kunkel. I like the fact that he's really on the beat every time.

JP: Do you have any advice for young drummers out there who are trying to learn drums and form their own groups?

D: First of all, you've *got to get permission*. Because it's loud. This can be a problem. I had very understanding parents. They put me up in a garage and I was able to work out there. Get permission, get a good teacher, and practice. We were blessed by having a great teacher. Miss Reeves taught us so many things about manners, about clothes, and making sure your drums look good. You want to have a good appearance. And I think there's *no reason* why you can't be a nice person. You do not have to be mean. I think you should be kind to your elders and *think about the kind of people you're playing for*. You may not like all the music you play, but you gotta play it. The reason you're playing is *for other people*. You've got to learn some tunes that maybe you just don't like but that maybe your parents would like. After all, they're paying for all the lessons and they've put a lot out there! Make 'em feel good. When I play drums, I just feel like I don't want to leave them. I think this is really important: If you really love the drums, then *you, by God, should play 'em*.

rollicking "My Old Kentucky Rock and Roll Home" finale, the show reminds us of simple, homespun pleasures that we may have forgotten. It is especially eye-opening for us competitive musicians. *Oil City Symphony* reaffirms for us the wonderful folk-art message of musical gatherings: Music belongs to us all. "When auditioning drummers," says Debbie, "I have had all kinds of people come in—little prissy women, old women—and you can see it in their eyes: 'God, I just love to get behind the drums!' I had this vision of doing a workshop: getting 60 sets of drums in a big hall, and having these women come away from their husbands and children to get behind the drums for a while—and just bash the hell out of them!"



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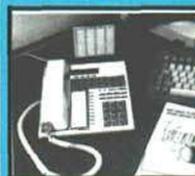


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by Anthony J. Cirone

Portraits In Rhythm: Etude #17

To some students, rhythms with constant mixed-meter changes such as Etude #17 can be a nightmare. Most of our early training is with 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4 time. When something other than these standard meters is presented, it looks very difficult. I am in favor of teaching mixed meters to very young musicians. What students learn when they are young will stay with them always.

Without early training in mixed meters, music such as Etude #17 may look unplayable, when in fact it should be no more of a challenge than 2/4 time. I encourage all students, especially those not previously familiar with mixed-meter time, to make a thorough study of this etude. The following are a few basic rules for counting mixed-meter time.

1. The bottom number of the time signature determines which note-value will be counted as the main beat. For example, in 4/4 time, it will be the quarter note; in 3/8 time, it will be the 8th note. In the case of this etude, which is in 3/16 time, it will be the 16th note.

2. Always count the proper number of beats as determined by the top number of the time signature. In 3/16, there will be three counts, in 5/16, five counts, etc.

3. Use the counting relationship between quarter notes, 8th notes, and 16th notes with other note values. For example, in 2/4 time the counting is:

In 3/8 time, we use the same relationship; that is, the 8th note gets the main count, the 16th note is counted as an 8th note, and the

32nd note is counted as a 16th. For example:

In 3/16 time, the 16th note gets the main beat, the 32nd note is counted as an 8th, and the 64th note as a 16th.

Etude #17 only uses time signatures in 16th time—that is, 2/16, 3/16, and 5/16. Therefore, the relationship in counting the rhythms will be constant. The 16th note gets the main count, and the 32nd note is counted with the use of "and." Also, remember that an 8th note gets two counts and a dotted 8th note gets three counts. I hope that by following these rules the mystery of mixed meter will be simplified and no longer seem unusual.

Observations

1. Between measures three and four in the first line is the symbol 16th note = 16th note. This is telling us that the speed of the 16th note in the 3/16 measure is the same as the speed of the 16th note in the 2/16 measure. When the note values are equal, as these are, the relationship between the note values are the same. In future etudes, we will deal with mixed-meter with differing values.

2. In line eight, notice the roll is not tied into the last measure of this line. Since the last measure begins with a flam, the roll must be separated so that both hands can set up for the flam.

3. Beginning in the second measure of the last two lines is a series of 32nd notes. Notice the accents are not always lined up with the division of the notes. For instance, in the 5/16 measure, the notes are divided into groups of three beats and two beats, yet the accent comes in the middle of the group of three. This is written so a feeling of syncopation will result. However, if the performer beats his or her foot on the accents, this feeling will be lost. Therefore, I suggest the following pattern for tapping the foot so the proper syncopation can be felt.

Interpretations

1. The first four measures make up one phrase, which is then immediately repeated. Therefore, the natural accents should fall on the first note of the first and fifth measures. Another way to effectively bring out these phrases is to think of the four measures as one subtle *diminuendo*. The following would be a more accurate way to notate this.

Allegretto ♩ = 72

2. At the end of line three, there is a series of short rolls with a dot over each roll. This normally denotes a crush roll. However, in this case, my intention is for the performer to place a subtle accent on each roll, thereby providing a fresh attack.

3. Following these rolls in line four is a series of 32nd-note rhythms that should be played near the edge of the drum and phrased according to their groupings.

4. There is no such thing as one way to "stick" any given passage. However, I do like to follow certain rules when performing in an orchestral manner. For instance, beginning with the last measure of line six, I would suggest the following sticking for a right-handed player. This sticking follows the basic rules of alternating into flams and leading with the strong hand.

5. The final measure has a *fermata* over the rest on the first beat. This is strictly for dramatic purposes, and the length of this *fermata* is left up to the performer. What this accomplishes is a moment of silence before the final roll. If the *fermata* is too short, the roll will not stand out. If the *fermata* is too long, the dramatic effect will be lost.

Allegretto ♩ = 72

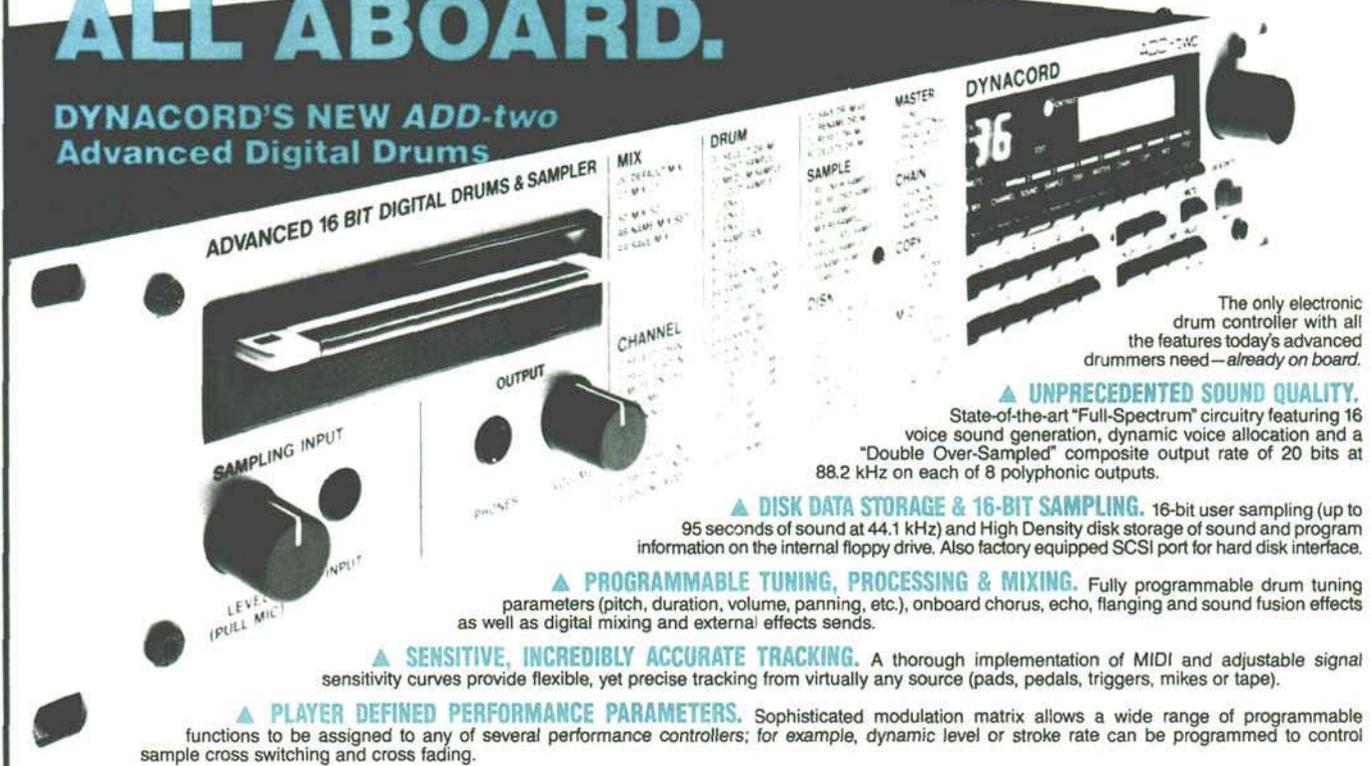


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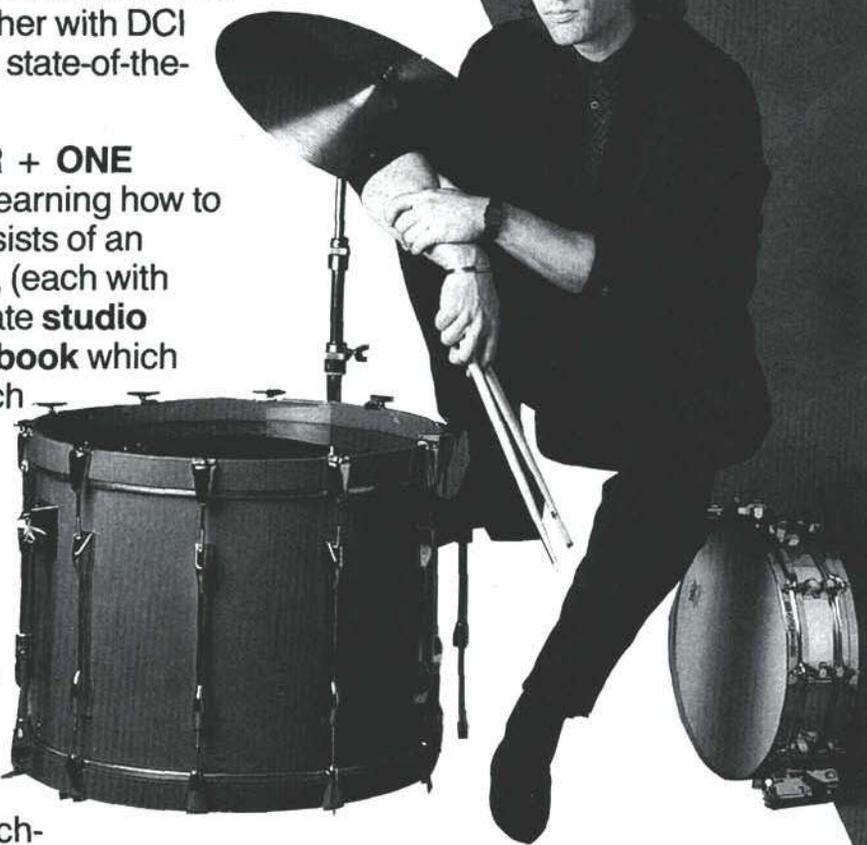
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by Rick Van Horn

Apples In An Orange Crate: Part 1

Playing in a club band can be one of the most comfortable gigs in the entire music business. That's because club bands generally perform in rooms for which their music is appropriate, their performance fits the requirements of the room, and their own personalities are compatible with those of the clientele. And because club bands often work the same rooms for extended periods of time or for multiple repeat engagements, a certain sense of "homey-ness" can often come with the gig.

That is, of course, until you get a booking for which all the wonderful characteristics listed above don't apply. This doesn't happen often—thank goodness—with full-time, professional club bands, because they generally have a pretty good idea of their own musical and visual image, and either book themselves into appropriate rooms, or rely on agents who share their understanding and will do the same. Unfortunately, weekend bands, or club bands just getting themselves off the ground, may not be so organized, and as a result may encounter inappropriate bookings with alarming frequency. The nasty thing about that is, a pro band is more likely to have the experience necessary to cope with such a situation; a semi-pro or newly-formed band may be really thrown by it.

I've been playing in clubs for almost 25 years now. And I mean *all kinds* of clubs, with *all kinds* of bands. I've played in situations that weren't to my personal liking any number of times. (That sort of goes with this business.) But fortunately, I've only been in situations where the *whole band* felt like "apples in an orange crate" a very few times. Some were humorous, some were quite serious—but all of them were learning experiences. I thought I might share some of that learning, in the hope that I may help you to avoid having to get it "the hard way."

The Show Must Go On...?

In 1975 I joined a theatrical show called Bonnie & Clyde & The Hit Men. It was an act that was born in an environmental dinner theater, where the show's characters were "on" from the moment the audience came in the door until they left. In other words, it was "showtime" all evening long. When this act was taken "on the road," however, it was booked into hotel lounges trying to promote themselves as nightclubs.

We did two shows a night, opening with three band numbers, and then bringing on the two "front" artists for the next 45 minutes or so. Our first booking was a tremendous success, and we were elated, since this was the first time any member of the act had ever been "on the road."

That elation was short-lived, however. At our very next booking, the manager informed us that he was happy to have the two 45-minute shows each night. Then he asked what sort of music the band did during the dance sets in between shows. *Dance sets!?* Who said anything about dance sets? We were a *show act!* We weren't prepared to do anything "between shows." Needless to say, there was a bit of consternation as a result of this unforeseen development. Should we insist on doing things our way, and perhaps lose the gig altogether? Or should we swallow our pride, woodshed like crazy, and see how many songs we knew between us that could be whipped quickly into a couple of acceptable dance sets? Economics won out, and we did our best to come up with the dance music.

I wish this story had a happier ending, but it doesn't. The fact that we hadn't gone out prepared to do both dance music *and* our show turned out to be a fatal flaw. Although we struggled through that one gig, we were unable to get any further bookings within a short enough time to keep us solvent. Consequently, we had to return home and disband. This was a simple situation of taking too much for granted, and not being prepared to react to unforeseen situations. Had we communicated better with the various employers at the time that our bookings were lined up, we would have understood their requirements and could have taken steps to meet them. At the very least, we could have informed them in advance that we did *only a show*, and discussed each booking further on that basis.

However, the experience was not without educational value. Eight months later, I got a call from the leader of the Bonnie & Clyde show. He had put together a new band—complete with dance material—and had updated the show, as well. Bookings were already lined up across the country, and things looked great. Would I come back out on the road under those circumstances?

I did, and we had a wonderful time for the next ten months—generally speaking.

As long as we performed in reasonably "classy" rooms where theatrical-style shows were familiar—or at least comprehended—we were very favorably received. But we learned another lesson on this second "tour," which was that sometimes a room can be too casual to accept a polished show, (Or, perhaps, your presentation can be too slick for its own good. It all depends on which side of the stage lights you're on, I suppose.)

We left a tremendously successful engagement at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in downtown Denver, and were rejoicing at the fact that our next booking was only a little over 100 miles away, in Colorado Springs. (We were used to 14-hour treks between gigs; specialty acts are sometimes hard to route.) The club we were to move into was called "The Godfather's," and we thought that sounded like a good omen, since we had a gangster theme to our show. It wasn't to be.

When we arrived at the club in mid-afternoon, we found it all but deserted. The stage was adequate in size, but the only source of illumination was two floodlights dangling from the ceiling by their cords. And they were yellow! The club itself was large, and probably would have accommodated a large crowd of dancers and/or seated audience members—were it not for the four pool tables placed directly across the dance floor from the stage. As a matter of fact, from stage level, we were looking not at our audience, but straight into a row of imitation Tiffany-style pool table lamps emblazoned with *Coca-Cola* logos.

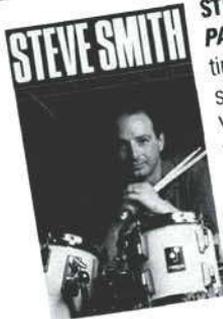
Undaunted—well, *almost* undaunted—we set up our equipment (which included a great deal of stage decoration and props) and prepared for the evening's engagement. We were told that the crowd liked fairly loud rock music, which was okay with us, since the band was now prepared for that. What we were not told was that the "crowd" generally consisted of a dozen or so hardcore pool players and their dates, two or three passing truck drivers, and five "regular" ladies—who turned out to be topless dancers from the go-go bar down the block. None of these people had ever seen a nightclub act before.

We opened our first night with an optimistic outlook. The band played every rock tune we knew, and seemed to go over well enough. Nobody *danced*, but we did get a

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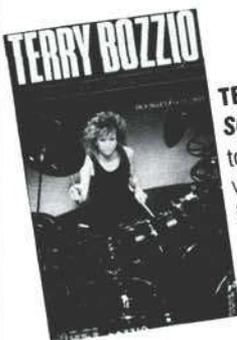


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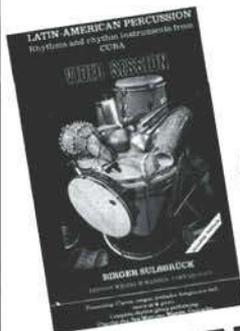


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certain perfunctory acknowledgement from the patrons that we interpreted as approval. When it came time for the first show, we asked the manager how we could turn out the lights over the pool tables and direct the audience's attention more toward the show. He looked at us as though we'd asked him for directions to Mars.

Suffice it to say, we played the rest of the engagement to accompanying *whacks*, *clicks*, and *thunks* from the pool tables, and pretty much to the backs of our "audience." If they understood that we were trying to do a show, they were keeping that understanding to themselves. We took our leave at the conclusion of the week, secure in the knowledge that we had failed to raise the cultural level of Colorado Springs. But we had also learned an important lesson, which was that our booking agent needed to understand the nature of the clubs he was putting us into a good deal better before signing us up.

The Little Band That Wasn't There

Following my experience with the Bonnie & Clyde show, I took some time off at home. Then in 1976 I joined a Top-40 trio, consisting of acoustic and Fender Rhodes piano, bass, and drums. We all sang, and we could cut a surprising variety of material quite well, due primarily to the talent of the keyboard player and a certain cocky confidence that we all shared. Basically, we were willing to attempt almost anything, putting our own arrangement to it and coming up with our own sound.

Owing to the small size and musical versatility of this group, it should have been fairly easy to book us into small to medium-sized hotel lounges. And that proved to be the case—except in one instance. As

can happen at any time in a band's career, a booking fell through at the last minute. Now, when you're at home and can just sit tight for a week, a situation like this generally is inconvenient, but not disastrous. However, when you're out on the road, as we were, it can be catastrophic, since you have to put yourself up at your own expense on top of not making any income. As a result, one tends to jump at any lifeline that is offered.

Our "lifeline" came in the form of an 11 th-hour offer from a club about 100 miles away from where we were (which happened to be Yakima, Washington). Our agent informed us that it was a small club in a lumbering town called The Dalles, on the Columbia River, in Oregon. He couldn't tell us too much more about it, except that it wasn't attached to a hotel, and we would have to put ourselves up in a motel while we played there. He did know that they had a trio performing in the club at the present time that had been "held over" for a second engagement. That sounded encouraging—and besides, we were a little desperate. So we agreed to take the gig, even though it wasn't exactly what we were used to.

We closed our Yakima gig on a Saturday night. The club in The Dalles ran bands Tuesday through Sunday. So we had the opportunity to drive to The Dalles, check into a motel, unpack, and go out to the club to catch the departing band's last night. (This was quite a novelty for us, since we were used to coming into a new room "cold," after the previous band had left.) I'll never know what beneficent spirit was watching over us and made that situation possible, but I'll be forever grateful.

As I said earlier, we were a lounge trio. We did not use synthesizers, we had no lead guitar, and we put our vocals through a Shure *Vocal Master RA*. system—not exactly mega-wattage or stadium volume. We played rock music, to be sure, but it was lounge-oriented rock, tempered by tasty arrangements and polished presentation. We were nobody's hard rock band.

When we arrived at the club, the first thing we noticed was the number of motorcycles parked in front of it. They stretched, side by side, for the better part of two blocks. From where we parked, at the far end of that two-block distance, we could hear the band. Clearly. As clearly as though we were standing inside the club. We were almost afraid to go inside the club, but we did.

Our agent was right: There was a trio playing there. But having three musicians in the band was where their resemblance to us ended. You could hardly see them behind the mountains of equipment they were using, including a P.A. system that would do justice to a 5,000-seat arena and synthesizers stacked to the ceiling. We entered at the end of an ear-splitting, pre-break closing number—just in time to hear a burly patron shout from the dance floor: "Hey, can't you guys get heavy?!"

As we scurried into a booth in the rear, one of the band members spotted us. Recognizing the panic in our eyes, he came over to our table, and asked if we were the incoming band. When we said—weakly—that we were, he replied, "Thank God! We thought we'd never get out of here!" When we commented that we thought his band had been held over, he told us that they had been "requested" (in no uncertain terms) to stay when the band booked to replace them had taken one look at the club and kept on driving. He went on to say that if we were smart, we'd do the same.

He informed us that the "clientele" of this club consisted of two factions: white lumberjacks and Indian lumberjacks. Most of them were "bikers," and all of them hated each other. He also warned us against trying to make polite conversation with any woman in the room, since, as he put it, "Every woman here has a husband, an ex-husband, a boyfriend, and an ex-boyfriend. And they're all here, too!" As a matter of fact, the keyboard player had had his bath interrupted one night when his motel room door was kicked down and three massive individuals stormed in with a greeting that went something like: "Stay away from my woman if you want to stay alive!"

Our newfound friend's story was interrupted when a scuffle arose on the dance floor. Someone broke a bottle, threatening a patron with the jagged end. It turned out to be the *manager*—a lady who looked as if she did this regularly—putting a rowdy customer out of the bar! Somehow, we knew that our first-set opener of "Java Jive"—and probably our last-set closer of "Free Ride" as well—wasn't going to make it with this crowd. We thanked our musical compatriot for his sage advice, and quietly left the club. We returned to our motel, packed and checked out, and drove 100 miles toward Seattle. Only then did we stop and call the club to let them know that we could not accept their booking after all.

This was the only time in my career that I, or a band in which I was a member, literally walked out on a booking. But the prospect of a week's stay in that threatening environment seemed to justify our decision. In this instance, we learned that "desperation" is a relative term, and that even though we were desperate for a source of income, we weren't desperate enough to risk our personal safety for it.

Not all bookings that turn out to be different from what the band expects are as dire as this last one. Not all are negative experiences that result only in lessons learned "the hard way." In fact, some even offer opportunities to overcome a challenge and emerge victorious. In my next column, I'll relate the story of such a booking that my current band played recently, and how we were able to turn what could have been a very unpleasant weekend into a successful and enjoyable gig. See you then!

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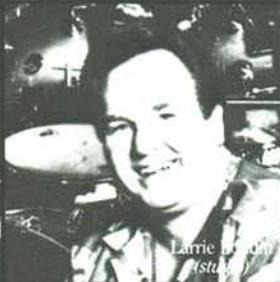
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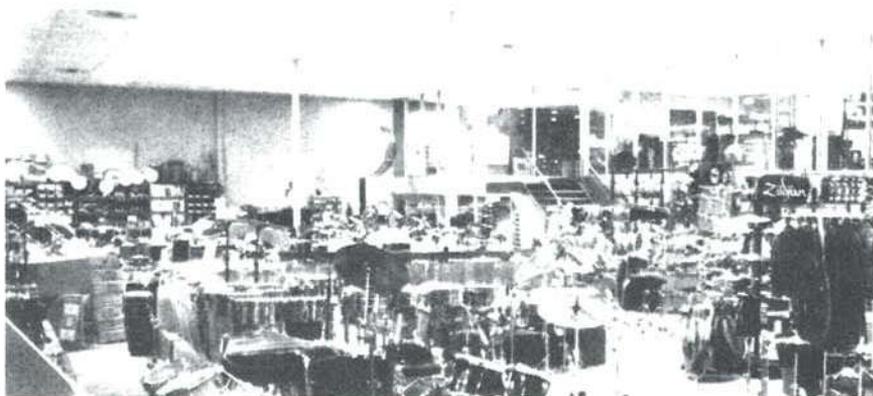
IT'S QUESTIONABLE *continued from page 12*

A. There were several reasons why acrylic drums went off the market—mostly related to economics. Acrylic drums tended to be somewhat "trendy," due to their non-traditional appearance, and as such were subject to the whims of fashion. When the novelty wore off, drummers tended to return to the more familiar look of wood shells with lacquered or covered finishes. Acrylic drums also gave a very loud, bright, high-projection sound. This was popular for a while, but lost its appeal in the mid-'70s when the flat, wet, "studio sound" became the norm. At that same time, petroleum prices went sky-high (remember the gas shortages of 1973?), and products that were petroleum-based—such as acrylics—became very expensive to produce. With diminished sales and increased manufacturing costs, Ludwig and Fibes found it impractical to continue production.

The only problem ever attributed to the acrylic shells was the possibility of cracking. The material was quite brittle, and could be damaged by rough handling, overtightening of lug screws, etc. However, care and precaution could avert this problem, and many of the clear (and colored) acrylic sets are in use today. In recent years, a demand has arisen for the sets since drummers are once again seeking "different" sounds and looks from their drumkits.



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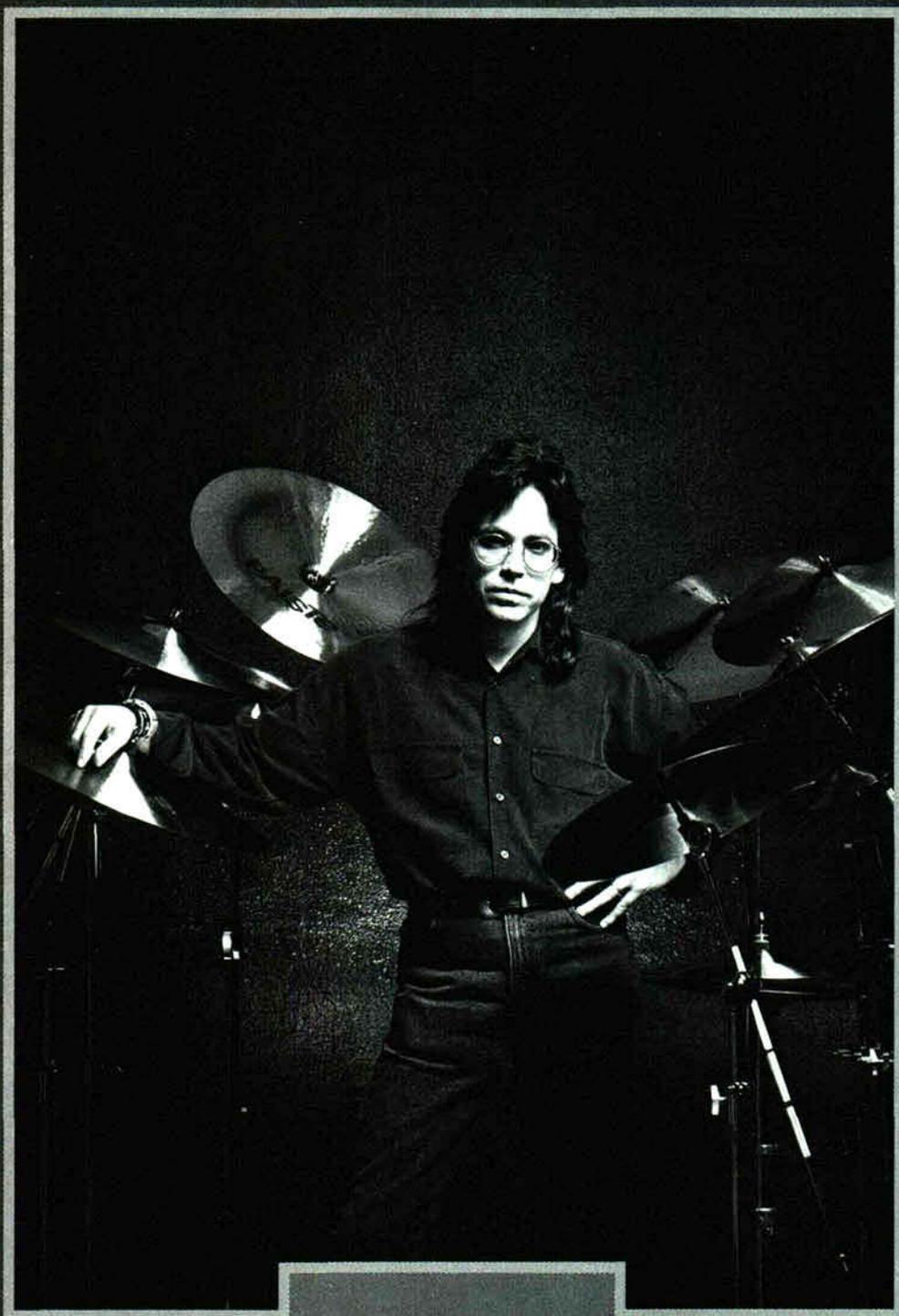
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PEARL EXPANDS MARKETING DIVISION



(Left to right): Pam Haynie, Ken Austin, Tak Isomi (President, Pearl International), Karl Dustman, Bob Morrison, Terry West. (Not shown: Ray Tregellas and Eric Hall.)

Pearl International recently announced the arrival of Karl Dustman as new Director of Sales and Marketing. Dustman is well-known and respected within the percussion industry, having previously held management posts with Ludwig, Gretsch, and most recently HSS, Inc.

Ken Austin will undertake the responsibilities of Marketing and Public Relations Manager, which includes direction of the Pearl Artist Relations program. The Regional Artist Relations management team will now consist of Pam Haynie (corporate headquarters, Nashville), Ray Tregellas (Pearl East Coast, Fairfield, New Jersey), and Eric Hall (Pearl West Coast, North Hollywood, California). Terry West is Advertising and Art Director, while Bob Morrison will handle marketing for Marching and Educational Percussion. Both are based in Nashville.

ZILDJIAN AND BERKLEE

Armand Zildjian, president of Avedis Zildjian Cymbal Company, was recently awarded an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Music by Berklee College of Music president Lee Eliot Berk. The award took place during Entering Student Convocation ceremonies at Berklee's campus in Boston. The award was presented to Mr. Zildjian in recognition of his contribution to the field of percussion and to percussion instrument manufacturing.

In a return gesture, Armand Zildjian recently hosted the members of Berklee's Percussive Society at the Zildjian factory in Norwell, Massachusetts. Long-time Zildjian artist/endorser Louie Bellson was also on hand as a guest host. Over 50

Berklee students, along with percussion department chairman Dean Anderson and faculty member Skip Hadden, were treated to a tour of Zildjian's manufacturing facility. They were shown all aspects of the cymbal-making process, from the artisan nature of the hand-hammering used in making the K Zildjian range, to the state-of-the-art sophistication of the computer hammer that shapes the sound of the Z series. The day finished with Louie Bellson performing on the drumkit in Zildjian's cymbal selection room, impressing the students with his outstanding soloing abilities and ably demonstrating the sounds of Zildjian's extensive range of cymbals.

PRO-MARK NAMED EXCLUSIVE U.S. AGENT FOR TEMPUS INSTRUMENTS

Tempus Instruments, Canadian-based maker of professional fiberglass drums, has appointed Pro-Mark as its exclusive U.S. agent. In announcing the appointment, Tempus President Paul Mason said, "We're very excited about this new arrangement. Pro-Mark has an excellent reputation for marketing quality products and, as percussion specialists, will help give us the increased market penetration we've been looking for."

Pro-Mark President Herb Brochstein added, "Tempus Instruments is a young and aggressive company. They are building drums of exceptional quality. The sound is rich and pure. Discriminating musicians will recognize and appreciate the extraordinary nature of these drums. We know Tempus will complement our established lines of drumsticks and percussion accessories."

Mason concluded by saying, "Tempus Instruments has enjoyed steady growth over the last three and a half years because we offer the customer a real value at reasonable cost. Our shells are covered by a lifetime warranty and are guaranteed to be perfectly round. Since they are almost totally unaffected by temperature and humidity changes, tonal inconsistencies become nearly non-existent. Collarlock hardware and RIMS mounts are available as standard equipment. We will also supply our customers with shells that have not yet been drilled for mounting. They can then select their own mounting hardware. Finally, because the US/Canadian dollar exchange rate has remained extremely stable, our prices have not increased like those of other drum makers. For more information on Tempus Instruments, contact Pro-Mark, 10707 Craighead Drive, Houston, Texas 77025.

PROSOUND'S DRUMLAND ANNOUNCES 5TH INT'L DRUMMER MEETING

Prosound's Drumland, of Koblenz, West Germany, one of Europe's largest percussion-oriented retail operations, recently announced its fifth International Drummer Meeting. A day-long series of clinics and performances by world-renowned drummers, the event will be held February 5, 1989. The following address is given for the venue: Kulturfabrik, Mayer-Alberti-Strasse 11, 5400 Koblenz, West Germany. Artists already confirmed include Chester Thompson, Sonny Emory, Jojo Mayer, and Alex Sanguinetti; other artists are yet to be added. (Previous drummers who have participated include Alex Acuna, Simon Phillips, Gerry Brown, Louie Bellson, Vinnie Colaiuta, Billy Cobham, Bill Bruford, Roy Burns, Jon Hiseman, and many other world-class performers.) For further information, contact Prosound's Drumland, Andernacher Strasse 90, 5400 Koblenz, West Germany. Prosound's phone number is 49-261-83011; their FAX number is 49-261-83020.

BOSTON UNIVERSITY ALUMNI BAND TOUR YUGOSLAVIA



Photo by Boston University Service

(Left to right): Frank M. Toperzer, Jane Mahoney, and Lloyd McCausland, members of the Boston University Alumni Band percussion section.

Frank M. Toperzer, President of Drums Unlimited, Inc., in Bethesda, Maryland, and Lloyd McCausland, Sales and Marketing Vice President of Remo, Inc., recently participated in a six-city tour of Yugoslavia as members of the Boston

University Alumni Concert Band. The band, which plays a range of concert music, performed in Dubrovnik, Sarajevo, Split, Opatija, Bled, and Zagreb, in celebration of the band's ten-year anniversary. The members of the band are graduates of the university's School of Music who reunite quarterly to present concerts primarily to University and Boston area audiences. Many, like Toperzer and McCausland, are either professional musicians, music educators, or members of the musical instrument industry.

STANDARD FILE FORMAT DEVELOPED FOR MIDI SEQUENCERS

Lachlan Westfall, President of the International MIDI Association, recently announced that the *MIDI Files* standard file format is now part of the MIDI 1.0 Specification. The format, originally developed by Dave Oppenheim of Opcode Systems, was ratified recently by the MIDI Manufacturers Association.

According to Westfall, "*MIDI Files* allows MIDI sequencers, music printing programs, or composition software to easily share data with other programs. *MIDI Files-compatible* programs allow the MIDI user to greatly expand the scope of software-based performance or composition. No longer does a user need to be tied to a single program to compose, edit, transcribe, or perform MIDI sequences. Through the use of *MIDI Files*, music can be written in one program, edited in another, transferred to a printing program for transcription, and sent to yet another for playback. The universal nature of MIDI has finally been extended to MIDI software.

"Since *MIDI Files* was originally developed for use with Apple Macintosh-based software, the first companies to jump on the bandwagon (Opcode, Intelligent Music, Passport, Digidesign, Southworth) have done work with the Mac. However, many companies that focus on other computers, such as Hybrid Arts (Atari) and Voyetra Technologies (IBM), are planning to support *MIDI Files*."

For more information, contact the International MIDI Association at 5316 W. 57th Street, Los Angeles, California 90056, (213) 649-6434. The official *MIDI Files* specification is available from the IMA for a slight charge.



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NEW BEATO BAGS



Beato Musical Products has expanded its line of musical instrument bags with the addition of a totally new series called *Pro II*. The new bags are made of the thickest, heaviest vinyl available, and feature the same elements of craftsmanship and detail as the company's original *Pro I* series, but at 40%-50% lower cost. Sizes for all standard and power toms are available, as well as cymbal and stick bags.

Also new from Beato are conga bags in the original *Pro I* series. Made of *Tolex II* and padded with half an inch of cushioning material, the new bags are available to fit congas, tumbas, and quintos. The bags are black with red webbed handles and double-reinforced zippers.

Finally, Beato has introduced *The Gig Pouch*, a belt-style zippered carrying pouch for keys, wallet, accessories, etc. For information on any Beato product, contact your local dealer or contact Beato at P.O. Box 725, Wilmington, California 90748, (213)532-2671.



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BOSS MIXERS

Boss has recently introduced three compact mixers, the *BX-80*, *BX-60*, and *BX-*



40, of interest to drummers with multiple instrument setups, self-miking systems, samplers, and drum machines with multiple outlets. The three stereo mixers are lightweight, multi-purpose units in an affordable price range.

The *BX-80* features eight inputs with separate controls for input gain level, bass and treble EQ, panning, and volume. Two master level faders control left and right channel volumes that can be monitored with the seven-segment LED level meter. An effect send and return offers a separate effect level control for each channel. For private monitoring, a headphone jack with a level control is provided.

The *BX-60* offers six inputs with a gain control, effect send, panpot and volume control for each channel. Master volume controls permit individual volume adjustment for the left and right channels. An effect send and stereo return are also available for stereo effect processing without using up additional channels. Peak indicators notify users of an overload condition.

The *BX-40* has four channels with an attenuator switch on each for choosing microphone, line, or instrument input levels. A peak indicator warns users of overload, making the unit useful for keyboard mixing, home recording, or submixing. For more information on any of these mixers, contact RolandCorp US, 7200 Dominion Circle, Los Angeles, California 90040, (213)685-5141.

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According to their manufacturer, Rythmes et Sons, of France, *Polyblocks* are an innovative percussion instrument made of synthetic materials, which give the percussionist more power and sound stability than traditional wooden temple blocks. Said to be unbreakable, the blocks are designed to be used in all kinds of music. Sets of five, six, or nine blocks are available, as are stands and carrying cases.

Claude Walter, who set up Rythmes et Sons, has long been the technical director of Les Percussions de Strasbourg, one of Europe's premier percussion ensembles. Rythmes et Sons specializes in the study and production of new products suited to the present requirements of musicians. Further information on *Polyblocks* or on Rythmes et Sons can be obtained by contacting the Alsace Trade Office, 6380 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1608, Los Angeles, California 90048, or calling (213) 651-4741 and asking for Terry or Luc.



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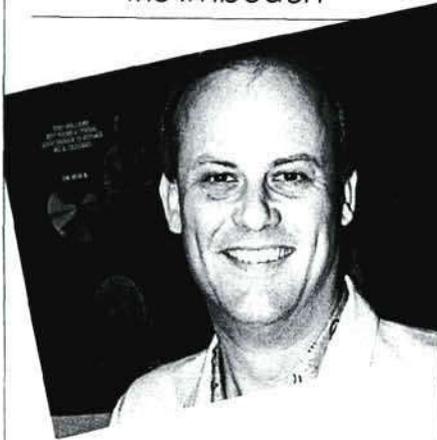
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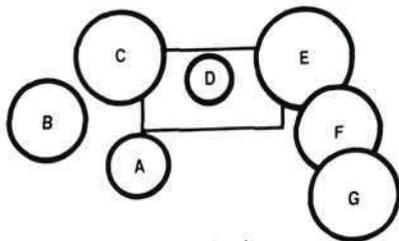
Tris Imboden



Tris Imboden is truly a veteran of the L.A. music scene. Since 1970, Tris has appeared on record and on stage with such diverse artists as Chaka Khan, Burt Bacharach, David Foster, Howard Hewitt, Neil Diamond and Brian Wilson.

In 1977, Kenny Loggins chose Tris to fill his drum chair, where he stayed for over 9 years. Tris is currently on the road and in the studio with Al Jarreau.

When we asked Tris about his Zildjians he just smiled and replied, "There is no other cymbal to my mind, and it's been that way since I was ten years old."



Tris Imboden cymbal set-up.

- A: 13" Z Dyno Beat Hi Hats
- B: 16" A Medium Thin Crash Brilliant
- C: 18" A Medium Thin Crash Brilliant
- D: 10" EFX #1
- E: 20" A Ping Ride Brilliant
- F: 17" A Medium Thin Crash Brilliant
- G: 18" A China Boy High Brilliant



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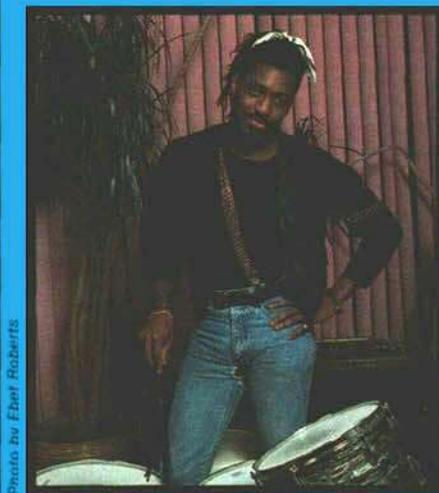


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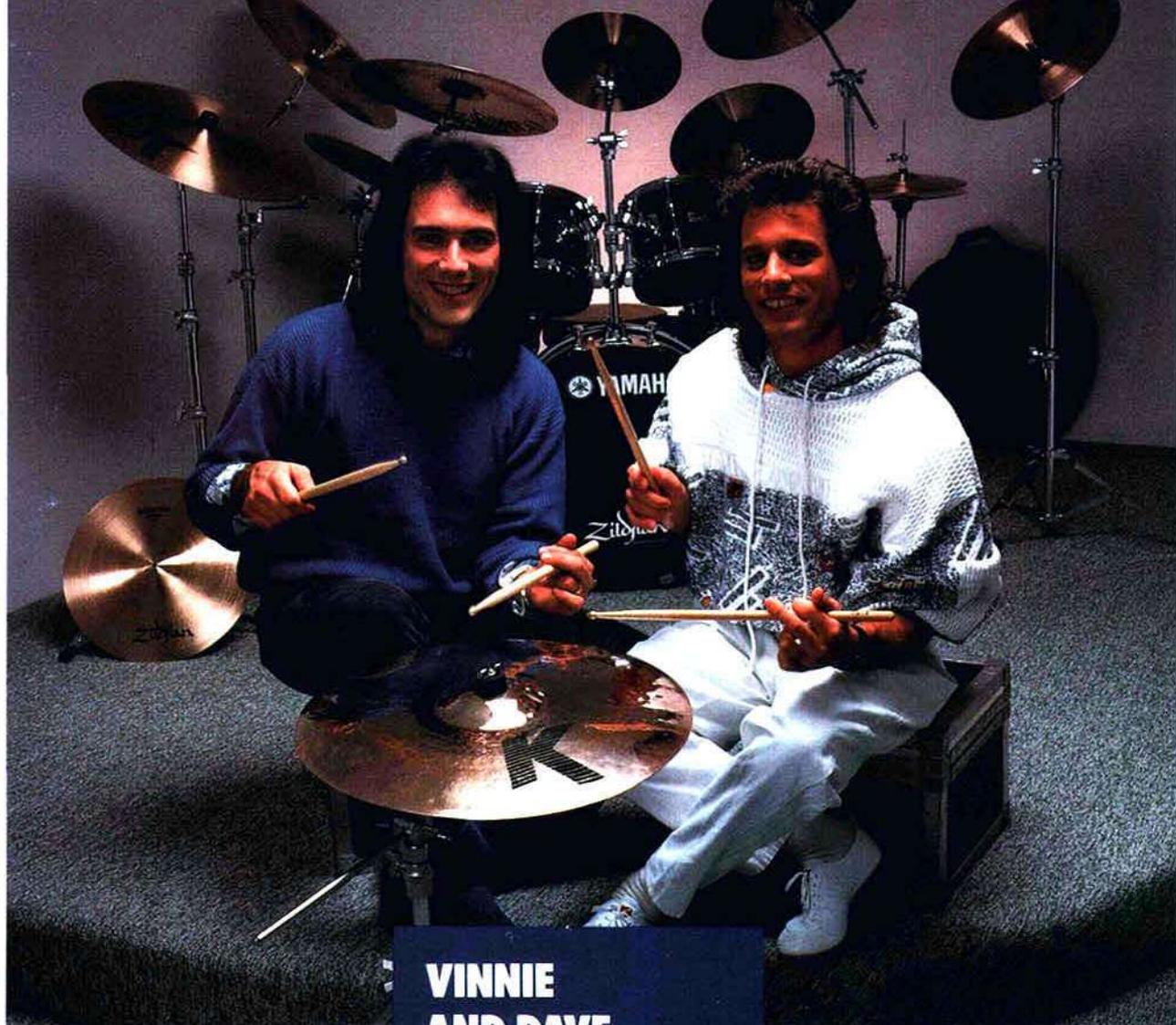
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"Zildjian is really tuned in to the needs of the drummer. Their people are out in the field listening and doing research, asking drummers what they want in cymbals," says Vinnie Colaiuta, L.A. studio drummer who's played with Frank Zappa, Joni Mitchell, 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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