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Bill Summers

THE CURE's Boris Williams

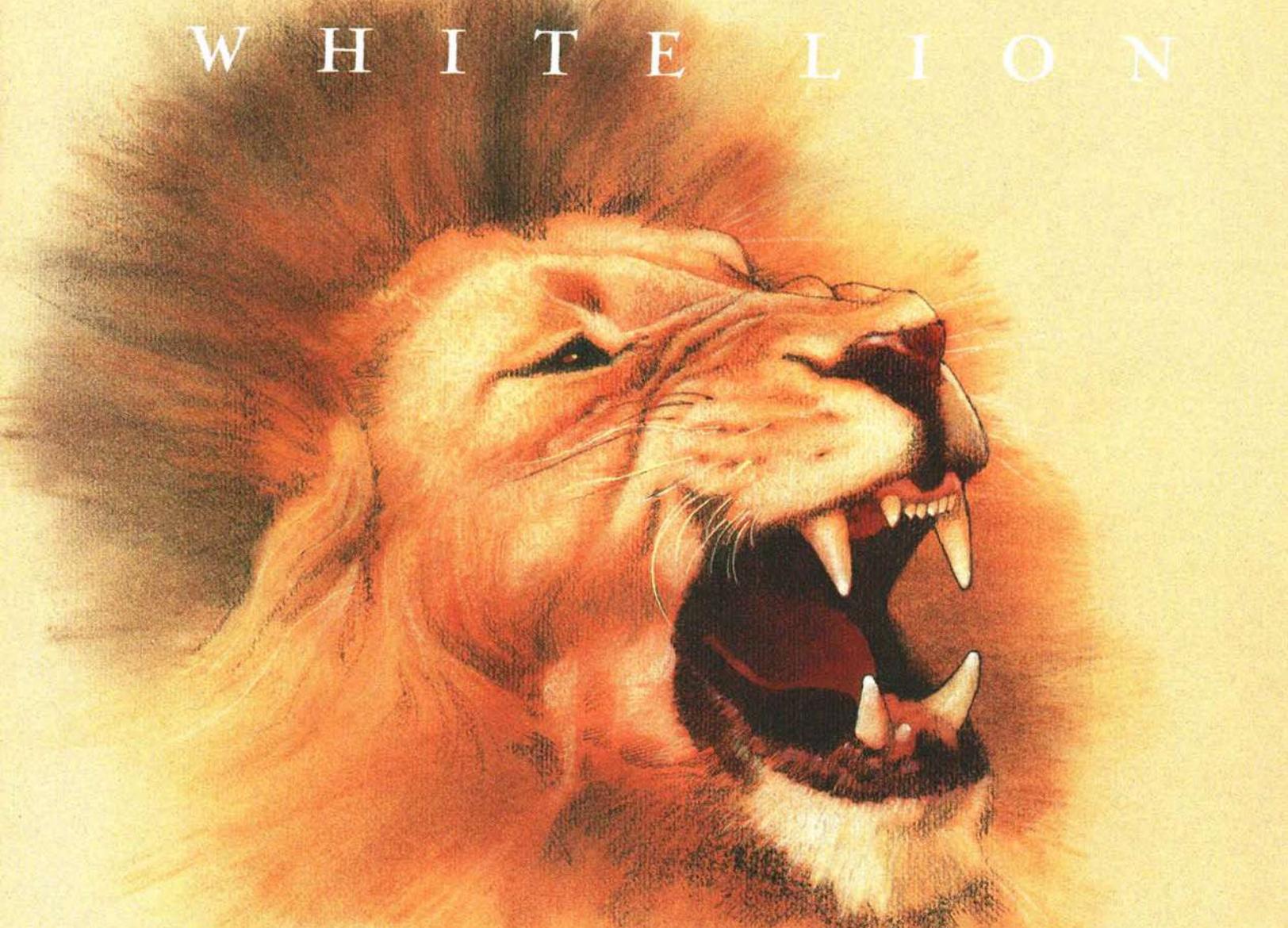
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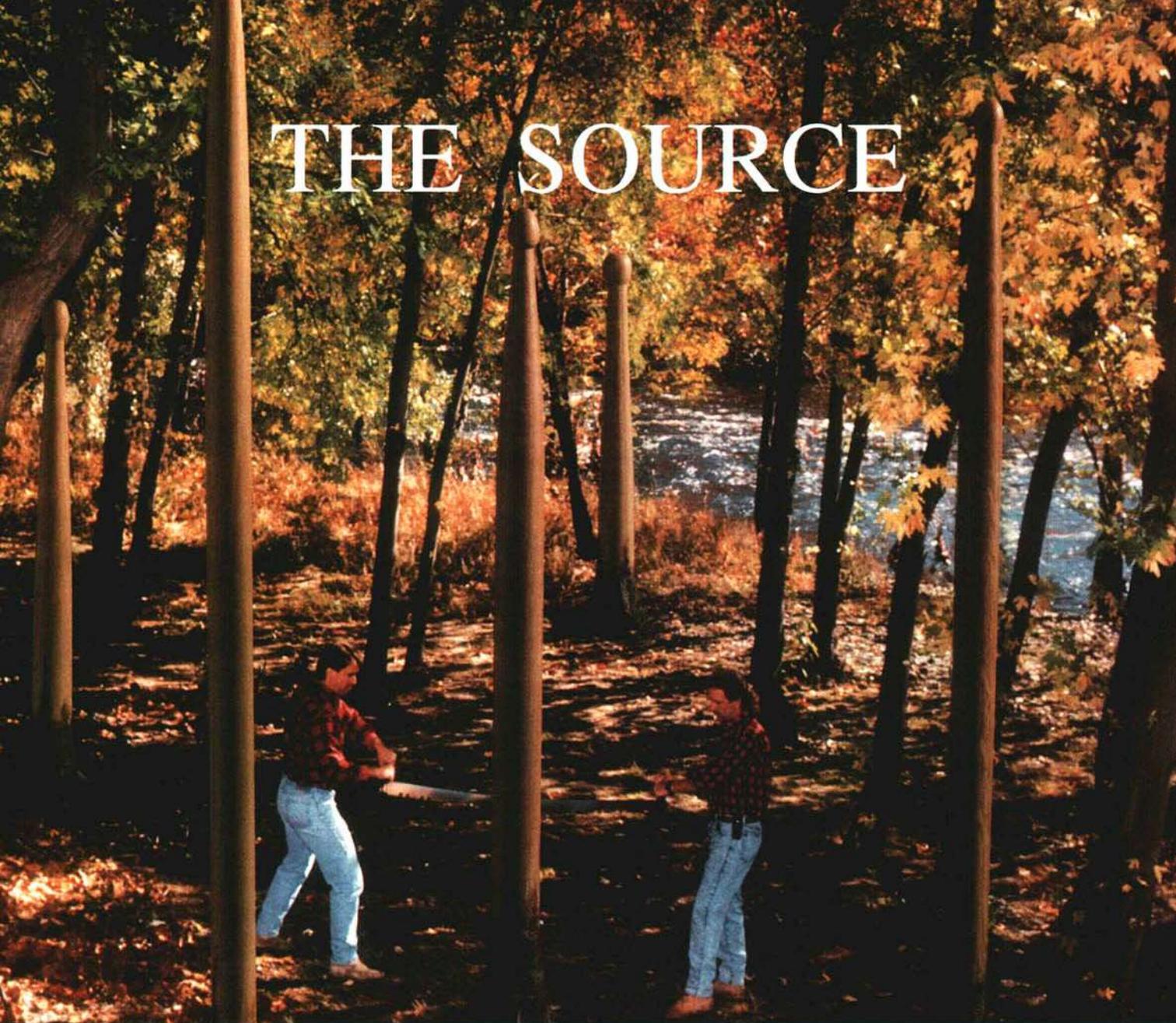


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Photo by Mike Jachles

18 TICO TORRES

The last time *MD* spoke with Tico Torres, Bon Jovi was an opening band and had to go without soundchecks. Five years later, their albums go platinum tenfold, and they headline tours that last 18 months around the globe. Here Tico talks about what has and hasn't changed in the past half decade, and how his newfound popularity has affected his drumming.

by Teri Saccone

24 BILL SUMMERS

Ever since his tenure with Herbie Hancock's Headhunters, Bill Summers has been one of the most in-demand and prolific percussionists in the business. Here Summers discusses his interest in Afro-Cuban culture and sounds, his somewhat unusual introduction to Hancock, and his work with artists such as McCoy Tyner, Quincy Jones, and Sonny Rollins.

by Robyn Flans

28 BORIS WILLIAMS

The diverse and creative music of the Cure requires the talents of a similarly inventive drummer. Boris Williams discusses what's involved in handling the Cure's drum duties, how he dealt with the "mechanics" of the Thompson Twins, and why fusion is no longer his musical style of choice. Plus, a sidebar of Williams' Cure drum beats.

by Adam Budofsky

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Ned Ingberman, owner/operator of this unique drum business, discusses the fascination and appeal of vintage drums, and how his mail order system has brought a little bit of drumming history into scores of drummers' lives.

by Rick Van Horn

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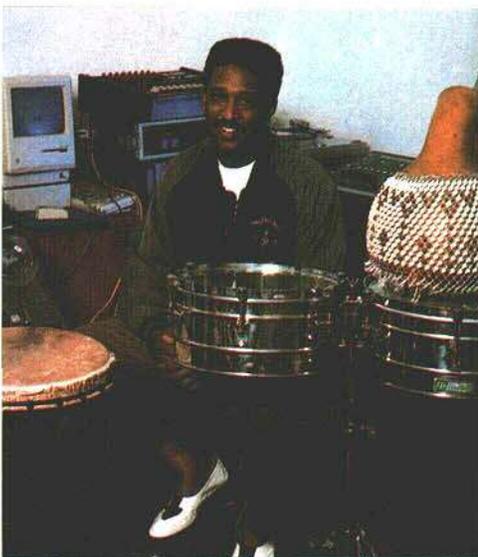


Photo by Rick Malkin



Photo by Edward Ajaj

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EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

A Friend Moves On

Fourteen years ago I received a letter from a guy in Kentucky named Rick Mattingly, in response to an ad we were running for free-lance writers. I recall responding to that letter, encouraging him to write for the magazine, and being impressed with what I received.

And so it went for several more years, until Rick popped in the office one day after moving to New York, to advise me of his availability to do even more writing for *MD*. Shortly after that meeting, the Features Editor position opened up at *MD* and I promptly offered him the job. It was probably one of the smartest moves I ever made, for it was the start of a fine working relationship that's lasted close to nine years.

Rick Mattingly has contributed more to *MD* than I could possibly mention in this column. As Features Editor, and later Senior Editor, his primary responsibility was to coordinate all feature article material and edit the writing of others, a task always superbly executed. But Rick has always been more than just an *MD* editor. In fact, he's always been one of our finest writers, interviewing a host of major drumming figures. In the 100 or so issues we worked on together, I don't recall ever once being disappointed with a Mattingly story. The depth and insight he's extracted from even the most difficult subjects is proof of his ability as a skilled interviewer, and has resulted in some of the most enlightening and enjoyable reading in the magazine.

Of course, there were numerous other contributions along the way, such as *Modern Percussionist*. As Editor of that magazine, Rick ultimately produced one of the best periodicals ever published for the serious percussionist. Likewise, every entry in the *MD* Book Division has been under his meticulous editorial eye. And I might also mention that some of the finest photography in the magazine was the result of his innate photographic talents.

As the years passed, Rick and I somehow grew beyond the basic employer/employee relationship. We actually became good friends with great respect for one another, sharing the common goal of producing the best drum magazine we could possibly produce every month. Over the years I learned to count on him as a high-level advisor on numerous matters. Interestingly enough, even when you were certain you had accurately sized up a situation, Rick would help you view it from a different perspective. From a major personnel problem to simply suggesting I reconsider what I planned to say in this column, I could always count on his insightful thinking.

Late last year, Rick Mattingly resigned as Senior Editor of *Modern Drummer*, returning to Louisville, Kentucky to pursue new interests. But on a positive note, I'm happy to report that he will be staying on as *MD*'s Contributing Editor, and will continue to write and remain as involved with *MD* as possible from his new home base. All of us wish Rick and his family the best of luck, and though we'll certainly miss having him in on the day-to-day operations of *MD*, I'm personally delighted by his decision to remain a very active member of the *Modern Drummer* team.

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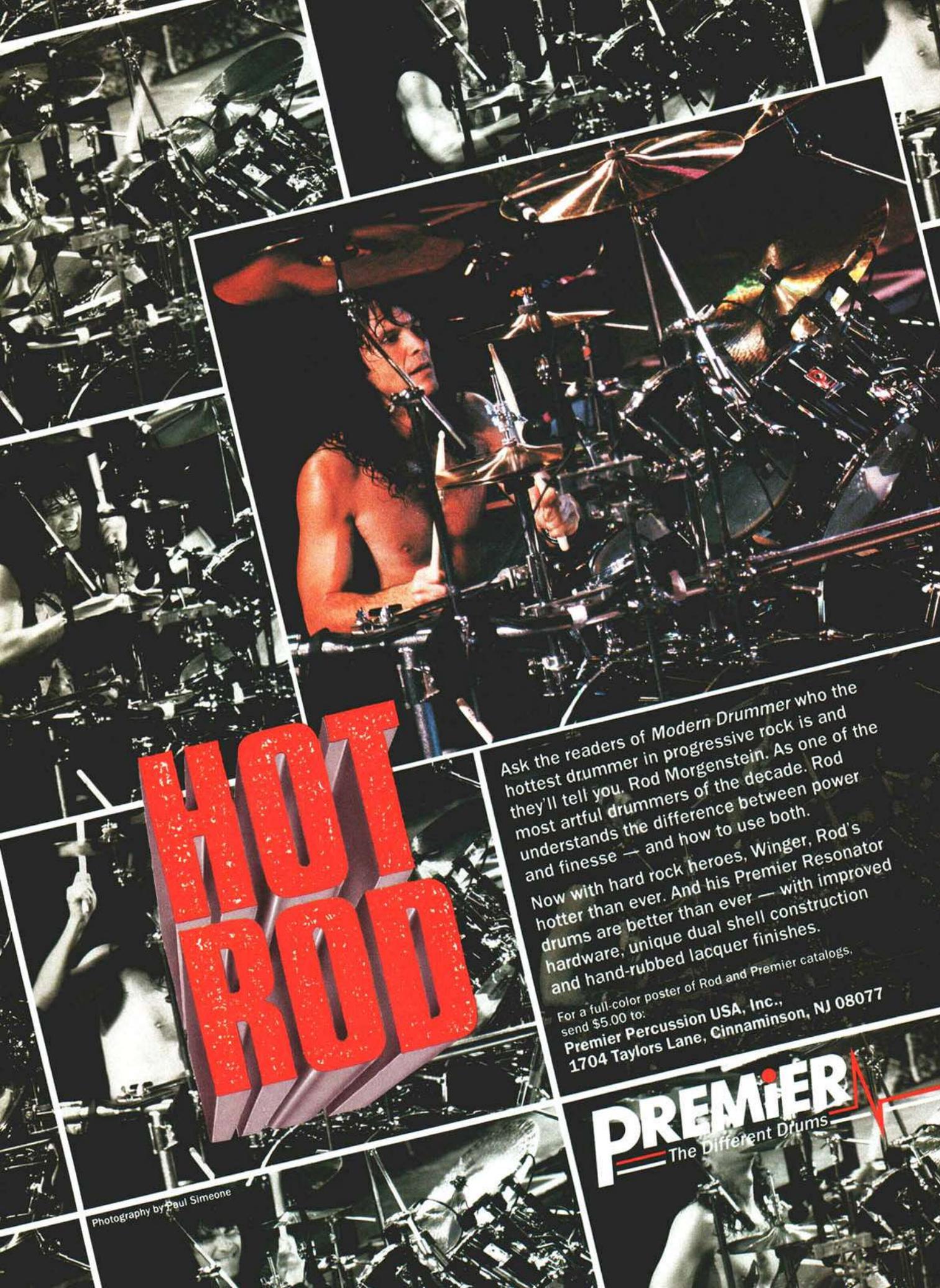
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READERS' PLATFORM

NEIL PEART

I have waited five long years for another interview with Neil Peart, and I would sincerely like to thank *Modern Drummer*. After all the negative letters that appeared in your *Readers' Platform* after the last interview [April '84 MD], I feared there would never be another one. I enjoyed the last one, and I also enjoyed this one!

Five years ago, I had just started playing drums. Like a lot of other young drummers, I admired Neil's playing. After I read that first interview, at 16 years of age, I felt changed and inspired in the way I thought about playing drums. I also found myself very interested in the literary ideas that Neil talked about. At that young, impressionable age, Neil's playing and ideas helped me into the larger world of ideas. Thanks, Neil.

The December '89 interview by William F. Miller answered many questions that I had after reading the earlier one. I think he did a wonderful job getting right to the heart of one of rock drumming's most imaginative players.

Andrew Olson
Seattle WA

I greatly enjoyed the interview with Neil Peart [December '89 MD]. It's nice to know that he is still the same intelligent, well-spoken man—even after all the success and fame. I must, however, take exception to some of his comments regarding earplugs. To call wearing earplugs in a "ridiculously loud" situation "stupid" is, to me, ridiculous.

I play loud, and I wear earplugs. It's not because I absolutely need them, nor do I feel that I'm "bludgeoning" anyone else with my music because I wear them. I don't feel as if they make me lose touch with my drums, either. (Nothing could do that.) Less

volume will never replace feel.

Ear damage as a result of loud noise has been well-documented, and is nothing to mess around with. Anyone who has experienced the pain of tinnitus knows what I mean.

As much as Mr. Peart would downplay it, he is an icon to a lot of young drummers, and he knows it. Part of being a role model is knowing how to handle it responsibly. By making those comments, he is, in essence, discouraging a lot of young drummers from wearing earplugs. I see this as contributing to a lot of pain for a lot of people later in life.

Earplugs have never lessened the thrill or enjoyment of drumming for me. Rather, by protecting my hearing, they have increased the thrill and enjoyment of everything else in my life.

Chris Kirshbaum
Tempe AZ

JONATHAN MOVER

Hats off to Jonathan Mover for telling it like it is: the ups and downs, good and bad, realities and misconceptions [November '89 MD]. I learned a great deal about many areas of this business that are usually padded or overlooked.

I was lucky enough to see Jonathan perform twice last year with Joe Satriani, and each time was left stunned and speechless wondering what had just happened to me. Witnessing such an incredible combination of technical chops and passionate feel was very inspiring to say the least.

My thanks to *Modern Drummer*, to Teri Saccone, and to Jonathan for being so open, honest, and up-front. I waited a long time for this article, and believe me, it was worth the wait.

Jim Gaynor
New York NY

AGREES WITH JACK

I fully agree with the statement made by Jack DeJohnette in your October '89 issue, that far too many drummers today get all hung up on that lame "formula" drum sound. In my opinion, jazz drummers are the only ones that still have a true, "live-sounding" kit these days!

Get back to the sound of "real drums," people; all this high-tech stuff just doesn't make it. Just consider that some of the best drummers in history used real, acoustic setups and real technique to create their original sounds. The bottom line is, "play drums, not buttons."

C.B.V.
Cleveland OH

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The sound of different drummers.



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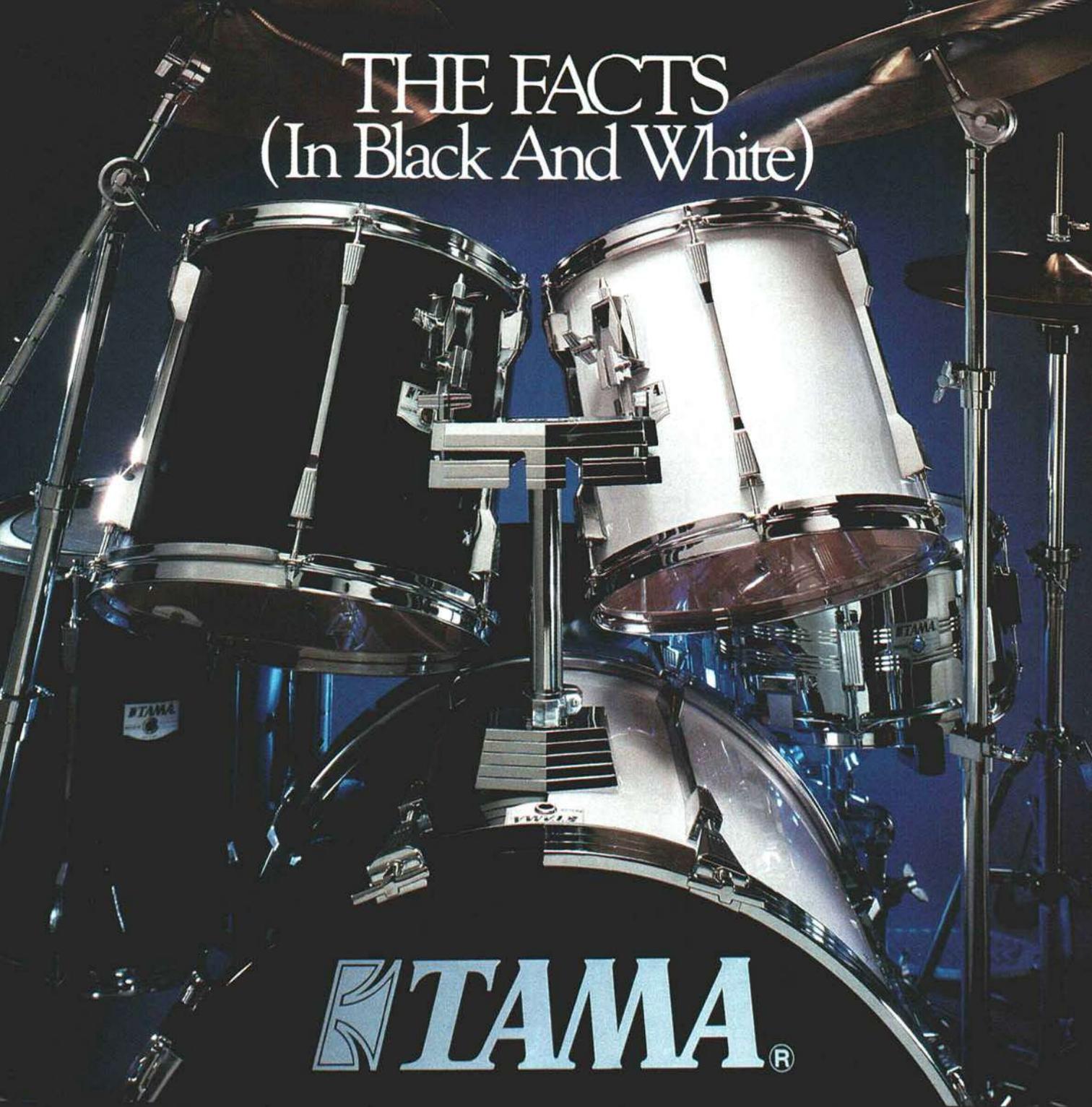
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Ron Riddle



Ron Riddle's 1989 was spent mostly on the road. After composing, arranging, co-producing, and playing keyboards and drums on the Burns Sisters' CBS record a few years ago, Ron couldn't pass up a tour offer to join Don Roeser (aka Buck Dharma), Allan Lanier, and Eric Bloom in a revamped Blue Oyster Cult.

"It's an interesting band because all three of the original members have a lot of different opinions. One person might be more into a Blue Oyster Cult song historically and want the same part that's always been played, and the other two might say, 'Please make up your own part; I can't stand that part.' Basically, I would take all this information I got from them and play it the way I felt it. If there was some sort of real problem and someone said, 'I really miss this fill there,' I'd say, 'Okay, I'll put it in.' I try to make everybody happy, plus play the material with my own personality.

"The material is very demanding physically because we do a two-hour show, and I play with a lot of high energy. There are also a lot of different feels going on in the music, and there's a lot you can do with it. A tune like 'Cities On Flame' is a real challenging tune to play. It's almost like a medium to slow tempo, half-time heavy rocker, and there's a lot of triplet things you can do with it with double bass drums. 'Red And The Black' is a real uptempo tune, about quarter note equals 155 beats per minute. I do some double bass drum playing in that as well. It's real demanding, par-

ticularly at the end of the night. Then there's always 'Godzilla,' which has the big drum solo and which is, of course, probably my favorite because I get to ham it up.

"In a drum solo it's important to show the maximum amount of things you can do and the minimal amount of things that you can do," says Riddle. "I usually start out the solo fast—just a blur of notes. Then I bring it down, usually into a 6/8 beat with double bass drums and a lot of fills, and like a polyrhythmic thing over that. Then it usually goes into a Latin kind of thing. I utilize a lot of triplets between the left and right hands and just the one bass drum. At the end of that section, I usually get the audience involved with either some sort of chanting thing, or usually the big thing is I'll hit three beats and then yell, 'BOC,' and hit another three beats and the audience picks it up from there, and it goes back and forth. Then I usually build that into a frenzy at the end for as long as I can possibly stand it."

Currently, Roeser, Riddle, and the other newer Cult member, John Rogers, are working on another project. "It's all new music," Ron describes, "and it's actually a little more geared to the radio. I get to utilize my abilities more as a composer in this trio and use a lot of musical styles I've picked up over the years."

—Robyn Flans

John Patterson



A year ago, John Patterson was a drummer in one of Memphis, Tennessee's most popular rock 'n' roll club bands. An A&M

Records deal and a highly acclaimed debut release later, Patterson and the other three members of Tora Tora are still in the club scene. "The main difference between me and other club drummers is that they have time to practice," Patterson says. "All my ideas used to come from just sitting in my room and practicing. But I don't have the time to do that anymore. My practice now is pretty much every show and soundcheck we do.

Before hitting the country's tour trail in mid-July, Patterson got his first taste—a somewhat bitter one—of the recording studio. He calls Tora Tora's self-released five-song EP "junk," but said the effort helped immeasurably in both landing their recording deal and with the quality of musicianship on the group's subsequent, nationally released studio effort.

"That first recording taught me a lot," he says. "Before we went into the studio, each guy was doing his own thing and not really paying attention to what everybody else was doing—kind of like four guys doing solos. I didn't know anything about grooving or locking into the bass player or anything like that. But Steve Hauth, who produced our EP, helped me and the bass player [Patrick Francis] get tuned in to each other and get a groove going. And with the kind of music we play, the groove is everything."

Patterson said laying down a shuffle beat in time to a click track was his toughest chore in the studio, citing cuts such as "Love's A Bitch" and "Walkin' Shoes" as examples. "My timing was a little bit off on the EP, and they were even thinking about getting another drummer to do the album," he said. "That got my ass into gear, and I worked real hard at improving my time. It didn't get me mad at all, but it inspired me to really work at being a better player, a better timekeeper."

Patterson seems to be taking all the steps up the ladder to stardom in stride. "When we first hit the road, we did the whole eastern seaboard in a van with the back seat ripped

out so we could pile our equipment in. I had an old, beat up set, and now I've got brand new drums and we're touring in a big bus. Some people complain about having to sleep night after night on a tour bus, but to us it's heaven! We're not playing in front of thousands of people every night, but the crowds have been real wild. And starting out playing the clubs has been good for us, too. We get to really see the people we're playing to, and it's giving the band a chance to get tight before we start playing the arenas. But I can't wait 'til that happens!"

—Matt Peiken

Fred Young

The Kentucky Headhunters' Polygram LP *Pickin' On Nashville* has created quite a stir for a debut album—a little surprising for Nashville, since, as drummer Fred Young explains, it's really rock 'n' roll with country vocals.

"We grew up playing rock. We kind of know where not to step out of bounds and what not to do, though. Live, we might go off into a Cream thing or something, but we were careful when we went into the studio. We were real calmed down on the first eight tunes," says Young in a very thick Kentucky accent of the initial eight tunes the group recorded on their own. When they put together a showcase in Nashville, they attracted label head Harold Shedd, who as Young describes "is hip on taking chances," and then went into the studio to add two more songs ("Smooth" and "My Daddy Was A Milkman") to the already recorded eight.

"We were leary what it might be like after we signed, because Harold was going to be producing it. He came in one day, and these double bass drums were set up, we had all the lights pretty faded, and we had incense burning, and he just smiled and waved and said, 'You all just keep on doing what you're doing.' He really helped us do our own thing and create.

Young says his set is based on two big influences,

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Carmine Appice and John Bonham. "They played one tom-tom and one floor tom, but mine are marching snares with all of the snare hardware removed, with wooden hoops. They're real light drums with little bitty hardware on them. One's a Ludwig and one's a Leedy. It's a shame they don't make those big bass drums anymore. It comes from the school band where I went to school. My snare drum is the cheapest Ludwig snare drum you can buy with six lugs. That's the closest to the John Bonham sound I can get."

Touted by his publicist as the world's first naked drummer, Young laughs, "I'll tell you where I got the idea from. I saw Terry Bozzio play with Zappa back in '77, and when he came out, there he was just barefooted with a pair of black underwear on; that's all he was wearing. One night we were playing, and it got real hot in this club, so I just stripped all my clothes off and played, and the audience loved it. It seems like everything we do that doesn't seem commercial, turns out commercial."

Robyn Flans

Chuck Bonfante



Chuck Bonfante, drummer with New York area band Saraya, emphasizes that although the group is fronted by female lead singer Sandy Saraya, the five-piece is a legitimate band effort. "This is a real band, not a group backing up a girl singer," says Bonfante, a veteran of the New York band circuit. "We're not

the typical 'hair band,' with a chick out front in high heels, and we try hard not to be perceived that way."

Saraya hadn't formed long before the day they headed into Bearsville Studios last year to record their debut album, *Saraya*, which spawned the hit single "Love Has Taken It's Toll." But the recording effort proved to be a pleasant and productive experience. Says Chuck: "We recorded with Jeff Glixman, who told us, 'I know you all can play really well, so just go in there and do what you did in rehearsal. I'll be on the other side of the glass making sure that it goes to tape. Don't kill yourselves trying to get the magic take first or second time out.' So he kept it really loose, but he assured us he would capture the killer take working this way.

"The first couple of days working up there felt a little strange," he continues, "because it almost felt as if we weren't working hard enough. I had done a lot of recording before, a lot of sessions with local bands on Long Island, but I had never done an album on a major label with a respected producer. So I expected that it was going to be a lot harder work. I know some producers can be real slave-drivers, but Jeff's the opposite. We'd work for a couple of hours, and then he'd call it quits for the night and wouldn't let us do any more. Even though it didn't feel like we were working strenuously, after five days, we had all the basic tracks in the can. When we listened back, we felt that we had everything just the way we wanted it."

Chuck also found that Glixman produced with a keen ear for drums. "He's from the old school," Bonfante asserts, "because 90% of what you hear is from room mic's, not close-ups. That's how you get that big, airy sound, that Bonham sound, and that's the sound he likes to go for. We set the drums up on this drum riser that's on wheels, and the drum room up there is tremendous. They get your setup together and mike you, and then they wheel you

around the room to see where the drums sound best in the room. This way, you just move the drum riser, finding a spot that sounds best."

Saraya has been actively touring America and Europe for most of 1989, but Chuck still manages to find time for his drum students. "Whenever I return from the road, I contact my students, and it's great, because they get excited about coming back for their lessons," he says. "I've been teaching as much as I possibly can and making time for everybody who wants to come, and they've been really supportive whenever the band does New York-area shows."

Chuck adds that the band is planning a lot more touring in 1990 on the critical and commercial strength of the first album and the second single, "Back To The Bullet." "We'd like to do an arena tour, but they're pretty much sewn up at the moment. We might go out and do a three-band package tour instead, which is being logistically and financially worked out. Being a new band, we're spending money every time we turn around. We're not as concerned with making money, but we are inspired to break new audience ground, because we're in it for the long haul. We'd like to still be around in ten years."

—Teri Saccone

News...

Jimmy Clark with Deborah Harry.

Denny Fonheiser on albums by Steve Wyn, Johnny Van Zandt, and Marti Jones.

Tris Imboden on a couple of tracks on Steve Vai's solo LP and back on the road with Al Jarreau.

Wally Ingram on the road with Timbuk 3, and can be heard on Kevin O'Neal's solo Chameleon single.

Eddie Bayers recording with Eddy Raven, Hank Williams, Jr., Alabama, Lorrie Morgan, Brenda Lee, Conway Twitty, Jill Hollier, Kenny Rogers, Earl Thomas Conley, Suzy Bogguss, Steve Wariner, David Lynn Jones, Sweethearts of the Rodeo, and James Taylor.

Mike Terrana on Beau

Nasty's debut album and tour.

George Perilli on drums and percussion on John Tesh's LP *Garden City*, as well as on NBC's NFL theme.

Percussionist **Sue Hadjopoulos** on new Laurie Anderson and Michael Monroe albums.

Butch Miles on the road with the WDR Radio Band.

Denny Carmassi on new Heart album.

Dean Lopes filling in for Prairie Prince on recent Tubes tour, and will be touring shortly with Area Code.

Tony Verderosa, Jr. is now a regular member of the Yamaha MIDI Band, and Tony has recently recorded a new album with Pat Martino.

Marc Cohen is currently on tour with Epic/CBS recording artist Russell Smith.

Jonathan Mover has left Joe Satriani's band and is now on a world tour with Alice Cooper.

Jim Harris is currently recording and touring with Scarecrow, featuring ex-Twisted Sister guitarist Eddie Ojeda. Jim can also be heard on new albums by Burning Starr, Untamed, and Jack Starr.

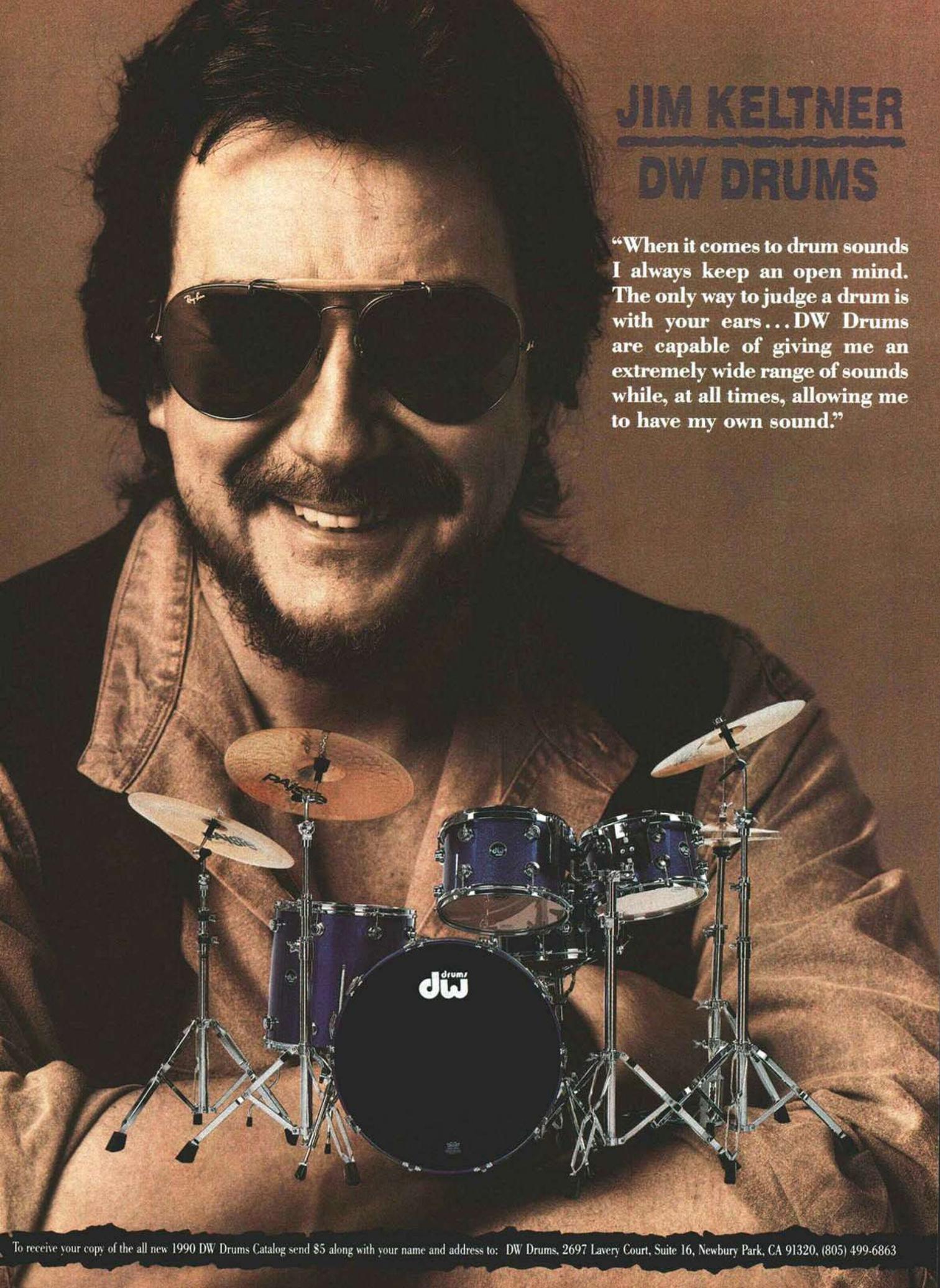
Frank Colon on albums by Collette Michaan, Tania Maria, and **Airto**.

Barry Keane has been recording with Anne Murray, Carroll Baker, and Dan Hill. Barry's also recording the TV soundtracks for *The Jim Henson Hour* and *Sesame Street*. He has also started a tour of the U.S. and Canada with Gordon Lightfoot.

Jeff Hamilton touring with the Gene Harris/Phillip Morris Superband. Jeff will be traveling worldwide with stops in Poland, Hungary, Egypt, Turkey, the Soviet Union, and Japan, with stops in Africa as well.

Paul Leim has been recording album projects in Nashville and L.A. with such artists as Randy Travis, the Bellamy Brothers, Barry Manilow, Eddie Rabbitt, Kenny Rogers, B.J. Thomas, the Oak Ridge Boys, Dan Seals, Tanya Tucker, Ronnie Milsap, and Bette Midler.





JIM KELTNER

DW DRUMS

“When it comes to drum sounds I always keep an open mind. The only way to judge a drum is with your ears...DW Drums are capable of giving me an extremely wide range of sounds while, at all times, allowing me to have my own sound.”

DAVID BEAL



Q. I've listened to the *Unchain My Heart* album by Joe Cocker, and I enjoy your playing very much. Could you explain how you achieved the snare sound? Was it a wood or metal snare drum; what type of heads did you use; what effects (if any) were used; and, finally, how did you tune it?

Arturo Sanchez
Turlock CA

A. The snare drum was a Premier 2005, which is an 8"-deep birch drum. The batter head was a Premier model 8314 heavy, which is a coated head with a coated dot. The snare-side head was a Premier SD Thin Snare. The batter head was tuned pretty

tight, and the snare-side head was tuned loose enough to allow the snares to vibrate without giving the drum a sloppy sound.

We miked the drum with two Shure SM57 mic's out of phase; one was approximately 3" above the top head, the other 3" below the bottom head. We used a Pultec EQ to bring out the warmth in the bottom end and the 10K range in the top. We used a Neve EQ for the mids in order to lessen frequencies around 600 Hz and to boost frequencies around 3K. Also, there were two Neuman U87 mic's positioned at the opposite end of the room at ceiling height. They were tightly gated, and the gate was being triggered by the snare drum.

BILL BRUFORD



Q. I just got home from your Anderson, Bruford, Wakeman, Howe concert, and all I can say is: absolutely fantastic! Your precision and tasteful use of electronics amazed me—especially on the piece you did with Tony Levin. My question is: On your extreme left you had what appeared to be a 16" crash cymbal that was probably the best-sounding cymbal I've ever heard. What was it?

Chuck Frank
Norfolk VA

A. Thanks for your encouraging comments. The cymbal in question was a 16" Fast Crash from the new Paiste line simply called Paiste.

Q. I have been playing drums for around nine years, and I must first say that you are probably the most exciting drummer I have ever had the pleasure of seeing and hearing. When the ABWH album came out, I was probably among the first to purchase it. After listening to it, I could only think of one thing: This is the best new album I have heard in many years. Your drumming

sounds like you feel at home with your former Yes-mates. I wonder if you could tell me how you achieve such a good snare sound. Is it acoustic or electronic? Anything else you feel might be of interest or use to me would be greatly appreciated.

James Lipscomb
Hamilton OH

A. I'm glad you enjoyed the album. A good drum performance on tape usually comes from being comfortable behind the set, with a good headphone balance of the other instruments, a reasonable idea of what it is you're about to play, plenty of time to try and practice possible alternatives, and a bit of reverb to make things sound good. A good producer (in this case Chris Kimsey) will set you up with this and let you get on with it. I was replacing—or, in some cases, playing along with—some drum machine parts and figuring out my own parts simultaneously with Tony Levin on bass. There was, finally, enough information on the track to give me a good sense of the orchestration and "size" of the music at any given moment. All in all, I had ideal condi-

SIMON PHILLIPS



Photo courtesy Tama / Hoshino Gakki

Q. A recent Tama ad you did stated that you played with Frank Zappa. When did you work with him? Are there any Zappa recordings available on which you play?

Brian Mikulich
Golden CO

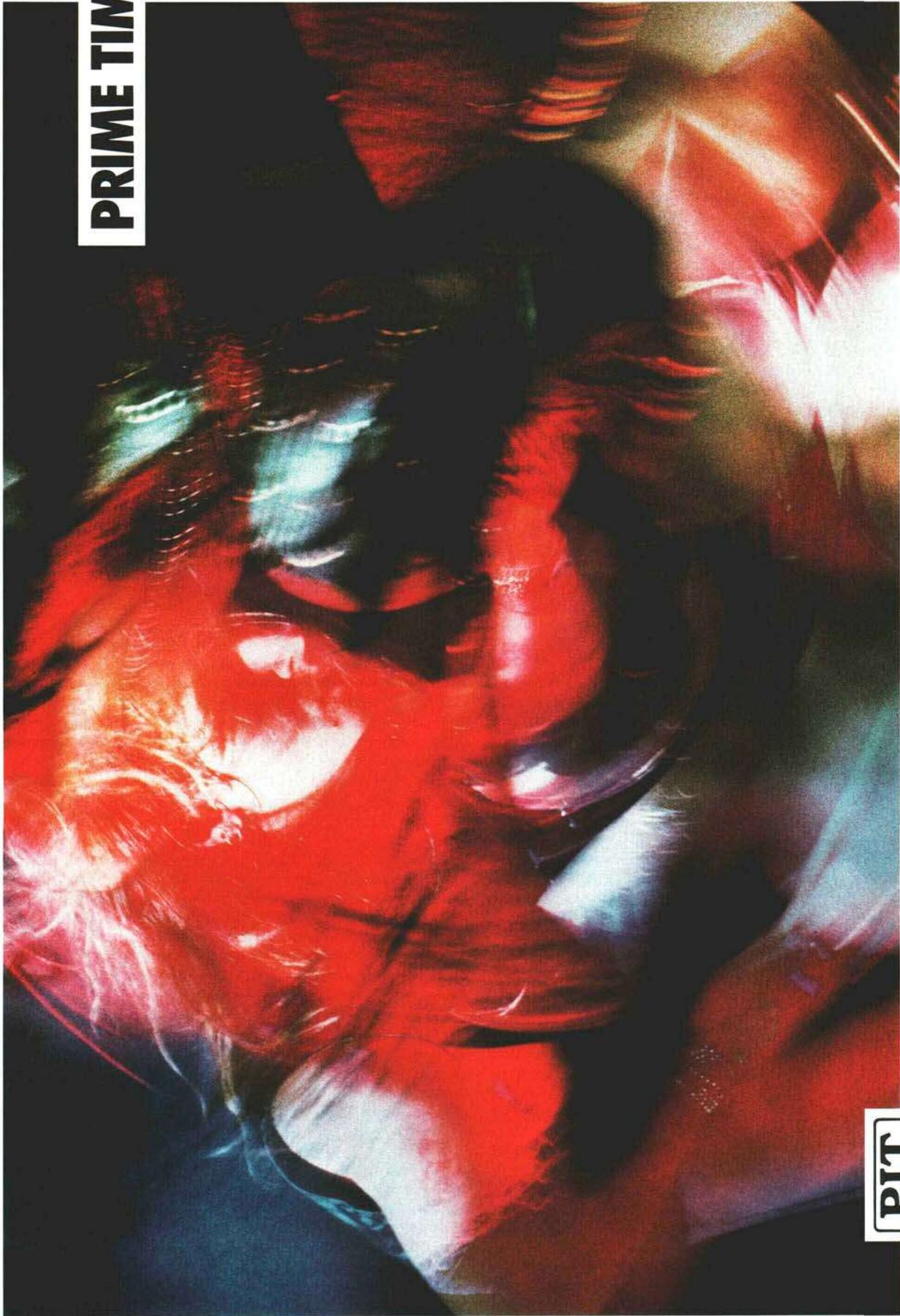
A. I worked with Frank on two recordings by L. Shankar. They were released in 1979, and were entitled *Touch Me There* and *Leatherette*. I believe they're out of print now; you'd have to check with a record store that specializes in hard-to-find albums to obtain a copy.

tions to record under. Oh, and the studio was in the Caribbean!

The snare drum was usually electronic, from the Simmons SDX computer-based system. The pad fires very clean digital samples that "sit" well in the track and respond well to processing devices.



PRIME TIME



PIT

Percussion Institute of Technology



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Q. I'm torn between two bands: One is a jazz quartet and the other is an oldies rock act. Both have work, and both have amiable personnel with few ego problems anywhere. Which to choose?

I love the rock material; it gives me a chance to extend my power and "play out" at high volume levels, be flashy, and have a partying time on the kit. I also love the jazz stuff. It's challenging and sensitive, and my reading chops have greatly improved. The crowds are a bit subdued, but they seem more appreciative of the product.

Help! Gigs are beginning to conflict as the jazz band moves from the "dinner music" gigs to real club dates. What do you advise?

F.A.

Seattle WA

A. Most drummers would kill to have a problem like yours! While many do have to choose between bands or gigging styles, such choices often fall into the "lesser of two evils" category, or between "economic benefit" and "musical integrity." Your choice seems to be between the "better of two goods." Since you mention that both bands are working, and all other considerations (personal enjoyment, musical satisfaction, member interaction, etc.) appear to be equal, you have the enviable luxury of being able to choose which band would simply be the most profitable (for the short term) or would offer the greatest career-promotion potential (over the long haul).

Q. A spring '89 edition of your magazine mentioned a recording session taking place with Dave Weckl, Anthony Jackson, and Steve Khan. I am currently studying "Jazz And Contemporary Music" at Leeds City College of Music, and have chosen Steve Khan and Eyewitness as the subject for my final year dissertation. Therefore, any information you could send me regarding this session would be greatly appreciated.

I.H.

Leeds, West Yorkshire, England

A. The recording session mentioned in that issue resulted in a Steve Khan album entitled Public Access. It's on GRP records, and features Steve along with Anthony Jackson, Dave Weckl, and Manolo Badrena on percussion. We contacted Steve, who told us that hard-core drum and percussion fans will want the CD version, since it contains all of Dave and Manolo's solo work; the cassette version is somewhat edited. (There is no LP.) The album was released January 23, and the CD catalog number is CRD9599.

Q. I have recently graduated from college with a B.A. in business administration. I am also an avid drummer, playing in a number of bands over the past few years. My question is: How should I go about locating business career opportunities in the music industry? I have thought of such possibilities as sales representative or manager for an instrument company. However, I am unsure of where to start. Any information, advice, or contacts would be appreciated.

J.C.

Kent WA

A. To obtain a position in the sales force of any musical instrument company, your best approach would be to send a resume to the national sales manager (for larger companies) or the owner/president (for smaller companies) of those you are interested in. You can obtain a list of addresses for most of the companies involved in the percussion manufacturing industry from the Manufacturers Directory in the 1989-90 Modern Drummer Equipment Annual. You can obtain additional information by writing to the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM), at 5140 Avenida Encinas, Carlsbad, California 92008-4391.

Q. Is it advisable to stuff the lugs on my drumset with cotton wool? How would this affect the sound of the drums? And if it is benefi-

cial, why aren't lugs insulated by the manufacturers?

C.F.

Milton, Ontario, Canada

A. The purpose of "stuffing" lugs (or, more accurately, the lug casings) on a drum is to prevent noises that can be caused by retainer springs, loose swivel nuts, or even sympathetic vibrations between the shell and the hollow metal casings themselves. These sounds can be incredibly aggravating in a studio or live situation when drums are being close-miked, but are very difficult to do anything about on short notice—hence the reason for taking preventive steps in advance.

Some companies do stuff their lug casings, although not with cotton. These companies use a polyfoam insert cut specifically to fit inside the casing, thus effectively muffling any errant sound. However, stuffing the casing is not the only way to prevent lug noises. Some companies have replaced internal springs with short lengths of plastic tubing to hold the swivel nuts in place.

If the lug casings on your drums are not stuffed or treated in any way to reduce the risk of noises, it's a simple matter to treat them yourself. If you wish to stuff the lugs, remove them from the drum, and fill their cavities with a substantial number of cotton balls (available at any drugstore or supermarket.) Be sure to use plenty, and pack them in fairly well, because cotton balls are full of air, and can flatten out or lose their mass over a period of time due to dampness from condensation.

If you currently have springs holding the swivel nut in place within each lug casing, you might simply wish to replace the spring with a piece of plastic tubing (such as used for aquarium air hoses, fuel line tubing, etc.). Be sure to obtain a substantial length of tubing that is very close in diameter to the springs you are replacing. Then cut short lengths from the tubing to fit into each casing. The short piece should be just long enough to support the swivel nut in its proper place, and should allow the lug bolt to turn freely through the nut and into the casing.

Q. I have a 1940 Leedy Broadway series snare drum. After having gone through about half a dozen sets of Snappy Snares, I noticed that the roller that the snare cord passes over is bent on one side, causing uneven tension on the snares. What can I do? Will a Ludwig P-85 snare strainer fit my drum? The holes on the bottom are 2 1/2" apart, and the top hole is 1 1/2" up from the bottom.

J.D.

Newton IA

A. We checked with Dick Gerlach, who is the product specialist at Ludwig's Monroe, North Carolina factory. He informed us that the dimensions you give for the holes on your drum match up exactly to those used for the Ludwig P-85 throwoff, and so you should be able to mount it on your drum without any trouble.

Q. I recently purchased a Sonorlite drumkit in a natural Scandinavian birch wood finish. The drums look and sound like nothing I've ever seen or heard; they're absolutely gorgeous. My question is: The shells appear to have no finish (lacquer, varnish, etc.) applied. How is the wood protected from humidity and weather changes? Will the wood eventually dry up? I paid a hefty price for these drums and want to protect them the best I can. Also, what about cleaning them?

S.G.

Carteret NJ

A. We checked with Sonor's Karl Dustman, who informed us that your drums do have a coat of sealant lacquer. It's a subtle, protective finish, rather than several coats of high-gloss lacquer. But it is more than adequate to protect the wood; you don't have drums with open-pored wood subject to moisture absorption. This same sealant lacquer is applied to Sonor's bubinga and ebony kits. You can clean the drums with any good spray dusting cleaner; just don't overuse the product. Spray your cloth, not the drums.



Tico Torres



Photo by Raul Otero

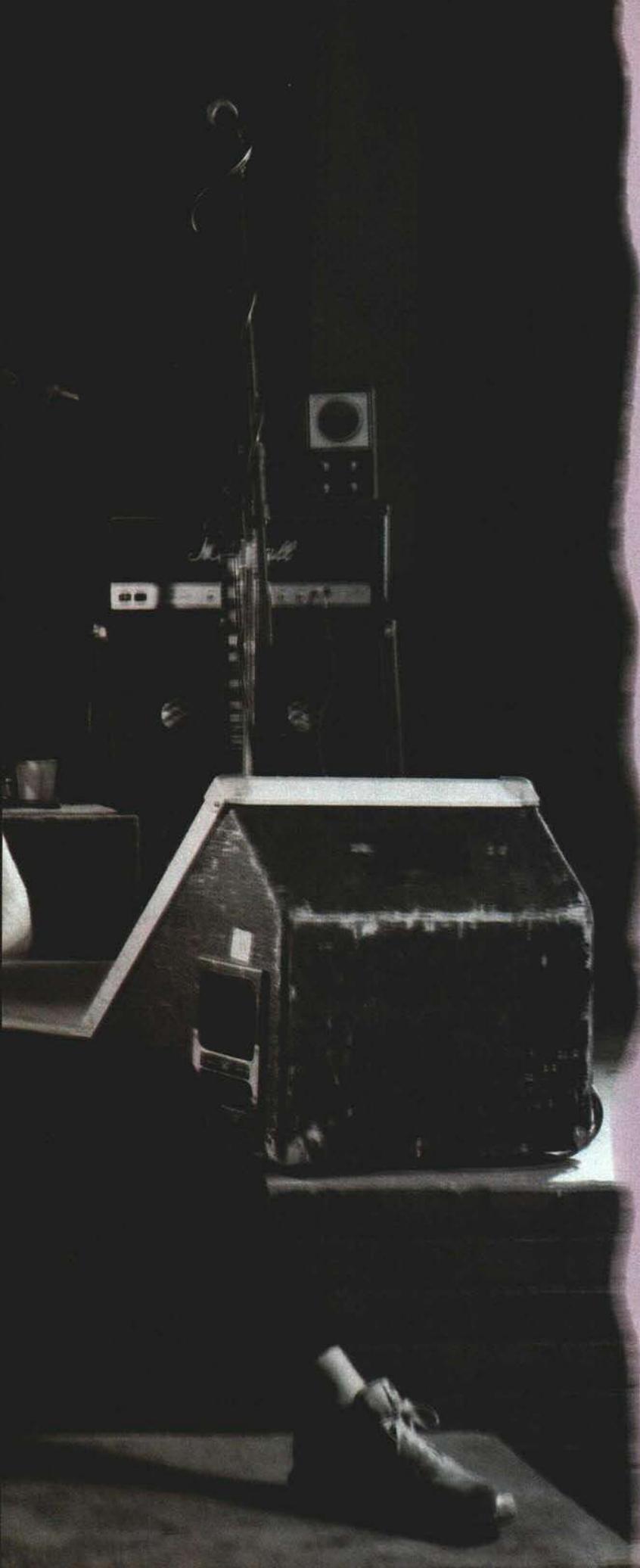
spe'cial•ist

1. one who has acquired specific knowledge on a particular subject.

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TICO TORRES



Photo by Raúl Otero

Has success spoiled Tico Torres? The answer is a resolute "No," judging by a comparison between his first MD feature back in '85 and today's. If anything, Tico seems more relaxed with himself and his career, more rooted in his values, while his drumming has grown richer.

That question may be regarded as an unconventional way to begin, but the idea is relevant considering the band he's in, Bon Jovi. As success stories go, Bon Jovi typifies the American dream: Rising from suburban New Jersey turf just six years ago, the band sold in excess of 15 million copies of their third release, Slippery When Wet, and became one of the biggest acts of the decade—certainly the best-selling metal band of the '80s.

Throughout all this, Tico's visibility remains high, and adulation becomes almost routine. But perhaps because he's a veteran club musician and he knows what it's like to struggle to get out of that scene and gain notoriety, he's basically the same humble, unaffected Tico. He's always maintained a

positive attitude about himself and just about everything else that touches his life. As far as he's concerned, there are no negatives for him: He's enjoying every bit of what he's earned.

The last couple of years have served to galvanize Bon Jovi's popularity and appeal with the release in 1988 of New Jersey. In his first MD feature, Tico expressed his belief in the inextricable connection between emotions and

"I've always thought it was better to aspire to be a musician's musician than to be a drummer's drummer."

creativity, one of the cornerstones of his playing that has not fluctuated over the last several years. As he puts it, "Playing is still one helluva rush for me." When he plays, Tico plays it the only way he knows how: with pure emotion, first and foremost. That's a virtue worth preserving.

by Teri Saccone

TS: You seem to have earned more legitimacy among drummers over the last few years, perhaps in spite of Bon Jovi's immense popularity.

TT: I've found that musicians who are heavier players—outside of rock 'n' roll—won't buy the videotape I did, because it's by "Bon Jovi's drummer," and Bon Jovi is the only thing they have to refer to when it comes to my playing. But this year, I've gained a lot more notoriety, which is great.

TS: You've been doing lots of clinics, too, which helps that.

TT: I was fortunate to have done one with Chester Thompson, Omar Hakim, and Larrie Londin. All we did was solo—each drummer went up and did a 15-minute solo—and then we all played together at the end. I'm glad I went first [laughs] because those guys were just awesome. The song we did at the end just tore the house down. It was a lot of fun, but I admit, I was scared. I'm not used to being up in the front, and we did it in a club in L.A. with 1,200 drummers packed in there. We drew straws to decide who went first, and I was lucky because I got the first draw. I started out my solo with brushes and mixed in some Latin stuff that the crowd never expected me to do.

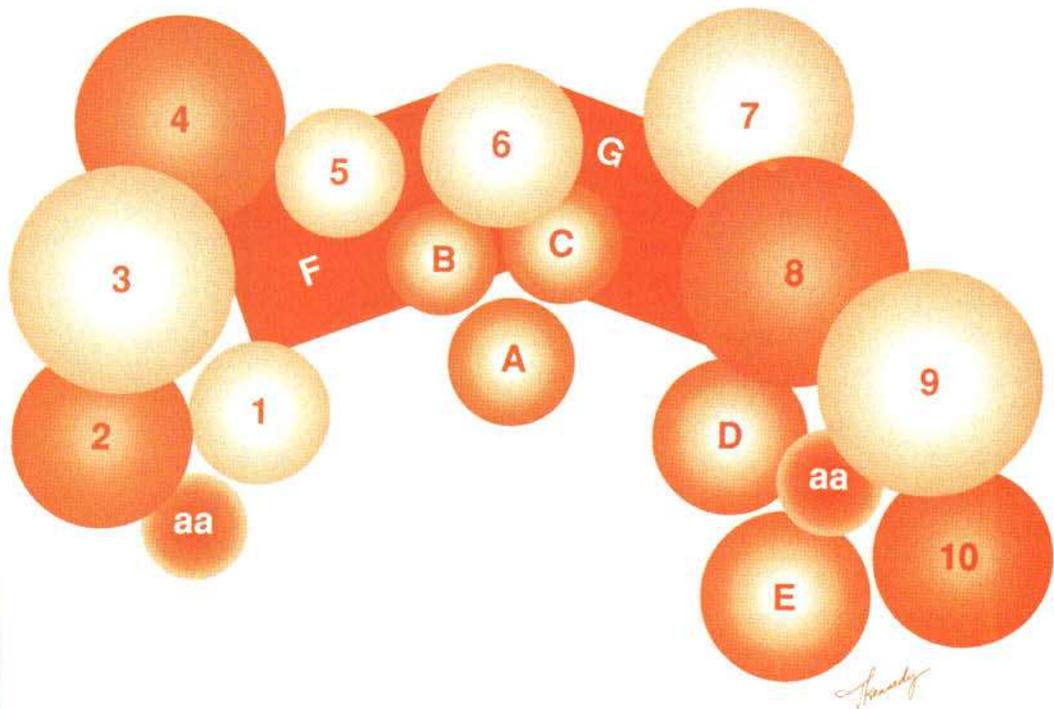
TS: Do you find that it's a struggle to gain credibility in such a commercial entity as Bon Jovi? You've seen both sides of it, having done the jazz thing in clubs.

TT: Well, it used to be that jazz musicians hated rock musicians and vice versa, but it's changed. Music is music, and I don't think it matters any more. We are commercial, although we don't intentionally go for commercialism. Jon's songs are just more acceptable to the majority of people who buy records.

TS: Are your artistic impulses satisfied in this?

TT: I think it goes back to that 4/4 philosophy: It's *all* important. And a song like "Wanted: Dead Or Alive" will probably be a classic song; it's timeless, it's a signature. We've never gone out to make a hit record, we just go in there and do our best.

Photo by Mike Jachles



We've recently done some stuff that's really out of left field, and that's the direction we'll be going in—a lot more musical but just another side of us. We recorded 22 songs for the last album, but we only used half of them. Those yet-to-be-released songs are our other side, the deeper side of our music, which may grab the other people who don't relate to our commercial side. People have never heard that other side of

us, but this band is capable of it. It wasn't a good idea to throw those ideas on *New Jersey*, but we think it's a good time now. The direction is not too far away from where we are now, and we still have a lot of years to grow. Every musician's dream is to have this kind of popularity. You have to think, now that you have it, do you want to let it dwindle or do you want to see it grow and have your fans grow with it, while also

Tico's Gear

Drumset:

Customized Pearl *MLX* series.

- A. 8 x 14 brass snare
- B. 11 x 13 tom
- C. 12 x 14 tom
- D. 16 x 16 floor tom
- E. 16 x 18 floor tom
- F. 16 x 22 bass drum
- G. 16 x 22 bass drum

Cymbals:

Paiste Signature series (except for hi-hats and Novo China).

- 1. 14" Heavy hi-hats
- 2. 18" Power crash
- 3. 22" China
- 4. 20" Power crash
- 5. 14" splash
- 6. 16" Power crash
- 7. 20" Power crash
- 8. 22" Heavy ride
- 9. 22" Novo China
- 10. 18" Power crash

aa. Pearl electronic pads

Hardware:

All hardware, including hoops, are 24-karat gold plated by Pearl. Bass drum pedals are the DW 5000 *Turbo* model.

Heads:

A Compo S3YC on the snare drum batter with half of a *Deadringer* used for muffling. All toms have Remo *Pinstripes* on top (with tissue paper attached for muffling) and Remo *Ambassadors* on bottom. The bass drums have Remo *Pinstripes* on the batter sides and custom-painted *Ambassadors* on front (with half of a feather pillow placed inside the drum for muffling live).

Electronics:

Pearl *DRX-1* pads, an Akai 5900 sampler, and a Hill audio mixer.

Sticks:

Custom-made for Tico by Beato.

own soundchecks these days, or is that the job of your roadie?

TT: We do soundchecks every show. It's the only time we really get loose, other than going to a club and jamming with someone. But we do a lot better show when we soundcheck, plus it's helpful to the soundman.

TS: On the subject of the staggering success of Bon Jovi, have the opportunities that have been afforded to you in the last few years changed you as a musician in any way?

TT: I don't think it's changed me as a player, but I think it's made other musicians more accessible to me. The whole echelon of people you come in contact with is on a totally different level. You get to jam with people like Jimmy Page, Elton John, Tony Levin, Little Richard, and you don't get to do that when you're playing cover tunes in clubs. Everything is more open to you, and it's great to be able to sit and play with that level of musician.

TS: Instead of the success inhibiting you from going out and playing small clubs, you seem to take advantage of those situations when you're out on the road.

TT: We try to, as often as we can. Even as "Bon Jovi" we try to book in clubs to fill in between. When you're out on the road for 14 months, it gets very tedious, so you have to do something else. It's really a breath of fresh air. I mean, we do change the set around every day, but after a while there are only so many ways you can change it. So when we get the chance to get out and play other tunes, or the blues, or just with other people, it's great because we get to flex those other muscles we're not normally using.

TS: One of the characteristics of your playing is your use of subtle touches that work effectively. For example, going back to the last record, *Slippery When Wet*, you do a bass drum riff softly accented by two little cymbal bells on "Wanted: Dead Or Alive."

TT: They're Indian finger bells. I always have been into percussion. I'm just getting to use it

more. On *New Jersey*, I went into the studio for a couple of days and just loaded the tracks with percussion. I get stopped at customs a lot because of all the percussion stuff I buy.

TS: What are some of the more exotic pieces you've picked up?

TT: I picked up a didgeridoo, which is made by aborigines. I actually had to smuggle that out of Australia, because it's a plant.

It's something you blow into. It sounds percussive and it vibrates. A lot of the stuff I pick up is handmade, and I also make some of the pieces myself. It's not necessarily store-bought percussion. The stuff you find laying around can make the most interesting sounds.

TS: You actually use that kind of stuff for recording?

TT: Yeah. I used a hammer against a steel ashtray on "Living In Sin." It's at the end and it's what complements the cymbal. It's just enough, it just adds a little something to the track. Of course, I can't bring it out on the road with me.

TS: To what extent are your percussion and effects sampled when you play live?

TT: I play most of the stuff by hand: chimes, woodblocks, bird sounds. But there's not a whole lot I can play by hand because most of my concentration live is obviously on the kit.

TS: How do you compare your drum sound on *New Jersey* to that of *Slippery When Wet*?

TT: It's definitely different. I think the whole album is a little different, mix-wise. On the last record the drums changed a little more sound-wise from song to song, while this one was a little more consistent. I think the snare sound was more prominent on *Slippery than on New Jersey*, but *New Jersey* is a different group of songs, so I don't mind the change.

TS: You mentioned earlier that on the next project, you and the band plan to extend yourself further stylistically. What do you have in mind for the drums?

TT: I'd like to incorporate more percussion and even some electronic drums. That's an area I'd definitely like to explore. Now there are machines that are almost limitless as far as what you can do. I think it's better when the drummer uses the machine rather than the keyboard player, because a drummer can approach a drum machine as only a drummer would. There are a lot of sessions—especially dance music sessions—where the producers won't get a drummer in to use the machines, but instead they'll bring in a keyboard player, and that's why sometimes they sound so mundane. Prince, on the other hand, programs his own machines himself, but he's a great drummer. So when you hear those beats, you're hearing them from a drummer's ear, not from a keyboard player.

TS: It's kind of ironic that at this stage of the game, where, to a degree, some players are beginning to move away from that technology, you're just starting to embark upon it.

TT: Maybe that's why I want to get into them.[laughs] But I want to use them differently, and I'll always be an analog drummer first.

TS: You don't record digitally?

TT: I don't think you can record a good drum sound in digital; it's too thin. The drum track sounds great by itself, but after you put the rest of the tracks over it, the drum sound deteriorates.

bringing in new listeners that you haven't reached? So we're gonna take a break from the populace, recharge, and then come back with something special.

TS: The last time we sat down for an interview, you were the opening band on your tour. You had to make do without the luxury of soundchecks, and you had about a 40-minute set. Things have taken a huge turn since that time. Do you even do your

TS: One of your strengths is your time-keeping.

TT: You can have good time, but you can lose it, too. When I started playing, a friend of mine who was a drummer in the '30s and '40s told me that in his heyday, the drummer was known as a timekeeper. That was at a time before you were expected to be elaborate and play a little more. If you couldn't keep time, you didn't work much. So when I was a kid, that was number one, and everything else followed with that. I've always been concerned with my time.

There actually was a period where I lost it—when I was with Frankie & the Knockouts, which was a seven-piece band. The keyboard player would say, "Speed up," the bass player would say, "Slow down," and the singer would say, "It's cool." They were all telling me to change tempo. I got so confused that my time just blew. So I went to Gary Chester—who had done just about every rock 'n' roll record in the days before they put names on them—and he showed me my time again by making me play backwards and forwards with a metronome. He had this 12-point exercise that I did for about three or four months, which brought me back. I haven't lost it since. But I lost it because I was trying to listen to everybody's requests to the point that I wasn't sure how it should be.

The hardest thing when playing live for any drummer is that when a band is used to playing a song as much as we do, they tend to want to speed the songs up because of familiarity. Your job is to convince everybody to bring it back down. It may feel slow, but it'll sound better.

TS: You've proven your ability to play some pretty far out time signatures in bands like T. Roth. With Bon Jovi, you tend to have to remain in the more pop-oriented time signatures. Do you find it challenging to be creative within those confines?

TT: I think it's just as hard to play 4/4 as it is 7/8. To get that simplicity—and to me, simplicity can be genius—to lay that straight beat in is the basis of every time signature. Playing 7/8 is really just playing 4/4, but you're stretching it, adding a few notes. I think it's all important, and it's all down to what you put into it.

I also think it's hard to play 4/4 if you don't feel it, so it's going to be hard to play in 11 or 7 or 6/8 if you don't feel it. I mean, if you consider the Brubeck song "Take Five," and you sit there and try to count



Photo by Mike Jachles

"one, two, three, four, five," you'd go out of your mind. But if you really listen to the melody, you can find the time in that. I'm into melody, and that's what gets me into the rhythms. So 4/4 is the basis, the foundation, and from there, you can go anywhere you want.

TS: When you work out the tempos for songs, what are you drawing on and how did you learn what would be appropriate?

TT: I think it's listening. There's no formula, in my opinion, for any kind of song. It's a feeling. If it feels good to you, you're naturally going to portray it the way you hear it. And you have to figure that what you play is going to last with you for the rest of your life, good or bad. But it's also the way you feel at that moment in time. Music is emotion, and you have to capture that emotion, which is hard to do on record.

TS: Does letting the emotion take over in the studio prove to be an efficient way of working?

TT: Yes, but only if you're very well-rehearsed through pre-production. I like to think of the Spencer Tracy theory: He knew his lines inside and out, and when it came to showtime, he did his scene in one, maybe two takes. He knew his stuff so well that it just flowed. I like to take that same approach in the studio: I like to go in there and do it in no more than two takes—if possible.

TS: What type of situation would give way to it requiring more than a couple of takes?

TT: On *Slippery When Wet*, the band couldn't decide what was happening with the tempos. For "Raise Your Hands" we did five takes. After a couple of takes I just said, "Hold it a minute. You guys decide what tempo you want, and I'll go get cof-

fee." That was the only time I used a click track. Music's gotta breathe; it's almost a human element. It should slow down in certain spots—not drastically, but here and there—and that's the emotion. It's the wave of it, like the waves in an ocean: You've got big and small waves, but it still makes one ocean. So it's important that the drum track does breathe. When I have played with a click track I've had to learn to lay back or play on top of the beat so it does sound musical, not regimented. Some songs sound good with the click, like dance songs. If a singer yells and croons, that's an emotion, and the rhythms have to be as emotional. So I prefer not to use them.

TS: Do you have a clear vision of what you will be playing prior to recording a drum track?

TT: For the most part. There's a lot of stuff that's spontaneous. But from beginning to end—from the intro to the verses, choruses, and solos—that's all mapped out fairly well. Fills aren't worked out, and certain other things just happen naturally. Sometimes, something will work well with the vocal in rehearsal, so I'll decide to go with it.

TS: There are a few players who lay their drum tracks down after everything else is completed. Would you ever want to work that way?

TT: I'd rather have the band play to me than me play to the band; that's why I think the drums should be first. It goes back to the old saying that the drummer is the foundation, and you can't build a house without a foundation. Sure, you can record a million different ways, but you can also get too critical and over-analyze. With [producer] Bruce Fairbairn, it's a matter of him approaching it, saying, "I get the tones,

Listeners' Guide

Q. Which recordings do you listen to the most for inspiration?

Album Title	Artist	Drummer	Label/Catalog #
Bad Company	Bad Company	Simon Kirke	Swan Song 8501-2
Colosseum	Colosseum	Jon Hiseman	N/A
Crash Landing	Jimi Hendrix	Allan Schwartzberg	Reprise MS-2204
Layla	Derek & the Dominos	Jim Gordon	RSO 823277-1
Brothers In Arms	Dire Straits	Terry Williams, Omar Hakim	WB 25264-1
Led Zeppelin	Led Zeppelin	John Bonham	Atlantic SD-19126
The Beatles	The Beatles	Ringo Starr	Capitol SWBO-101
Live At The Lighthouse	Elvin Jones	Elvin Jones	United Artists BN LA015-62
Bitches Brew	Miles Davis	L. White, B. Cobham, J. DeJohnette	Columbia Jazz Masterpieces J2C-40577
Sunflower	Milt Jackson	Billy Cobham	CTI/CBS ZK-40800

you play it," which I prefer. He's a great guy to work with, and at times he'll push me to get better things. I'm used to working this way.

There's one track from the *New Jersey* sessions—it will be released later—where he asked me to do a drum solo. I never would've thought of putting one in there, but I did something very sparse, creating an aura for the song that makes it sound different. Like I said, I would never have thought of that, but that ear that he has is important. He's not so involved in it that he can't see it from a further distance. That's why we work well together. And *Little Mountain* is a good studio to record in. It's in Vancouver, British Columbia. It's quiet, plus there's a loading bay right next door. So we open the doors and put mic's out there, and that's how we get the big drum sound. Sometimes you hear trucks go by, [laughs] but that's what adds spice to the track. Ever since we started recording there, a lot of bands have followed, and they get the same huge drum sound partly because of the loading bay.

TS: You mentioned a bit earlier that your producer basically gets the tones and you play them. How much do you involve yourself with obtaining your actual recorded sound?

TT: Sometimes my involvement is with tuning and mic' placement. I like taking a small part in miking my kit. This time I used a lot more mic's than I did for the last record, and I tried a different padding technique on the bass drum: I used ripped up papers as opposed to the last album, when I used towels. I took ripped up newspapers and layed them down about an inch and a half thick. They move when I hit the drum, and that was the actual sound that I wanted.

TS: That idea just popped into your head?

TT: Yeah, I mean, over the years people have used so many different objects to muffle the drums. I discussed some of those techniques in my instructional video.

TS: You received a pretty favorable response for that.

TT: Well, it was my first video, but I think I

got a lot of things across that I wanted to show. There's a lot more to drumming than just getting up there and playing. I think the most important thing is tuning, especially in the studio.

TS: You play double bass live, is that what you play in the studio?

TT: I play single bass with a double pedal in the studio because it's a lot easier tuning-wise, and I use fewer drums than I do live, so there's less leakage. I try to do it all on five drums. If I want to do a special roll and I require some *Octapads*, then I'll throw 'em in there, but our stuff doesn't really call for it. I've got the double pedal setup with just my snare, two rack toms, and a floor tom. The two toms are mounted, but they're mounted away from the bass drum because I didn't want any leakage.

TS: You're very flexible in studio situations, it seems, concerning your attitude toward the producer.

TT: It's like going in to do a session: If I come in and argue with a producer, I'll be out of work. When you do a straight session, a demo, or somebody's record, you can make your suggestions, but you also have to be able to play any rhythm you are asked to play. I learned from watching Paul Shaffer back in '77 doing "Native New Yorker." The producer sat with Paul for an hour for a two-bar passage, just working him to death until he got the passage he wanted. Afterwards, I realized it was the same passage Paul originally had played, but he changed it a little bit.

So I learned that when you're working with a producer who you tried everything with but who wants something totally different, and you're thinking, "I've tried everything I know," you can go back to the part that you felt originally worked best, disguising it a little bit. The producer will usually say, "That's it!"—probably because he's heard it before but doesn't realize it. That's how you get along in that situation without making waves.

I'll usually come up with three or four executions for a certain part so that when I go into the studio, I'm not lacking for an

idea. I'll have a few things right there, and if they're not working, I'll just change things slightly. I'll always have something in reserve. At \$200 an hour, you have to be quick. You're paying the studio bills, and you have to be as competent and prepared as possible before you get in there.

TS: You arrange some sections of the songs yourself?

TT: Mostly, yes.

TS: Sometimes guitars and keyboards will drop out, and there will be just vocals and drums for a few bars.

TT: I think it's important to consider the melodies

when you work with a lead singer, because you're backing him and you've got to complement what he's singing. For instance, bringing out a chorus: The right entry, the right roll that you do, is really important to set up that chorus. Those are the little parts that are actually really important in all songs.

The guys come in with a song on acoustic guitar, and I have to make it a complete song: Put an intro on there, set the verses in, get from the verse to the choruses smoothly—which doesn't always work out. We've had many songs that didn't work because a certain chorus couldn't be put with a verse, and you're looking for that bridge to link them. Sometimes you get them to work, sometimes you don't.

TS: The opening track on *New Jersey* kicks off with an extended drum intro: a slow, swelling buildup of tribal rhythms that's very dramatic.

TT: That's another one of Bruce Fairbairn's great ideas. He said, "Let's start this out with drums," which immediately got me thinking about ideas to try out.

The way we did "Lay Your Hands" was to, of course, do the initial beat on the drums, but then Bruce brought in Guoin "Dido" Morris, who was definitely into African rhythms. He brought in a slew of exotic drums—a van full—and we just started jamming and came up with a polyrhythm for that, and then we got everybody in the studio playing that same rhythm on different drums. From there, that animalism—that jungle feel—started flowing. Laced between that we placed little percussion sounds.

TS: On "Bad Medicine" you do a pretty cool fill: eight notes on the snare, eight on the bass drum: Very simple, very basic, but it goes over really well.

TT: It works. When I heard the vocal line I thought, "This is going to work here." It was really natural to play; I didn't have to think about it. I heard the lyrics, and the rhythm was syncopated right with the vocal. It was one of those things that was just

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The first thing Bill Summers said to me when we sat down to do this interview was, "I feel I have a great responsibility to present something of substance." After spending a couple of hours with him, it was evident that it wasn't possible for him to do anything but that. He thinks about life and music with a conscience, always addressing himself to history, culture, and the black experience, as well as the making of music for spiritual reasons versus commerciality. His life has been a quest for knowledge, a thirst that was not always quenchable in conventional ways.

"When I was 19," Summers recalls, "I saw the African Ballet from Guinea, and I went backstage and talked to the performers. They agreed to take me under their wing, so for as long as they were in the California area, they took me with them and taught me everything they knew. At the same time I was getting involved with all of this, I knew other people like me who were interested in learning more about the music of African cultures, so we formed our own group and just kept getting more and more information. I attended several concerts from visiting artists to learn more about the music. I also went to the library to do research. It didn't matter what language it was written in; whatever information I could get, I would get it translated. I would also get any kind of photographs I could find. The pictures were a tremendous aid to me, because just hearing the music on record wasn't enough. I'd hear this thing in the music and say, 'What is that?' Then I would find out the name of that instrument and say, 'I need that.' Then I'd ask, 'Who plays it?' I'd go out and find out who played it best. It was that type of process."

Summers' musical training began at five. He later attended the Detroit Conservatory of Music for five years, and then the Michigan Conservatory for another six years. He is largely responsible for creating an ethnomusicology major at U.C. Berkeley, and after six years with Herbie Hancock, Bill launched his solo career in 1977, to date having recorded nine of his own albums. During all this activity, he has recorded with McCoy Tyner, George Duke, Freddie Hubbard, Stanley Clarke, Jerry Garcia, Stanley Turrentine, Hubert Laws, Sonny Rollins, and Quincy Jones. It is Jones who was responsible for involving Summers in the composing and recording of some of the music for the award-winning films *Roots* and *The Color Purple*.

Bill's life has been a series of ups and downs and, as he puts it, learning the art of making lemonade from lemons. Yet throughout it all, a positive attitude and a daily ritual of learning about and making the music most important to his musical and spiritual growth got him through: "Everything that I didn't want to happen did happen, but I said to myself, 'There's something to be learned from this experience, so try to make the most of it.'"

BILL SUMMERS





Photo by Rick Meakin

by Robyn Flans

BS: My musical training started when I was very young. We lived in a very depressed area of Detroit called the North End. My parents had migrated from Louisiana, where they had been brought up in a rural community with a lot of tradition. People were trying to improve themselves and their children, so it was, "Here we are; we're in the ghetto, but that doesn't mean our children can't have exposure to this and that," and at the same time they didn't inhibit our freedoms. They let us do everything we wanted to, and music was something we were interested in. We started with classical piano, and there was never a day when we didn't have to practice. I hated it, though. It wasn't the music I grew up with.

I was drawn to music that had percussion, and at the time there was not too much black music that had any real percussion in it. Basically only the Latin American music did, with people like Mongo Santamaria. But I started gravitating towards percussion, listening primarily to jazz. My uncle was a jazz enthusiast with a lot of albums. I was about eight when my brother and I would do piano recitals, which I hated with a passion. I wanted to play some other kind of music to make me feel good about what I was doing, so I bought some sheet music for a tune called "One Mint Julep," by Ray Charles. My music teacher looked at the music, which I had just spent money on, folded it up and said, "Listen, you have time for this later. Learn this first." Even at that young age, I felt deeply about that.

At the conservatory where we were studying, there were no black teachers, and very few black students. My parents really had to put forth a tremendous effort to get these lessons for us. I resented the instructor's reaction to the point where something flashed in my head that said, "I don't know anything about black music. I'm playing Tchaikovsky, Beethoven, Bach, Mendelssohn, Wagner—but I don't know any African musicians." I started thinking that way, and at the age of nine or ten, I started to play percussion. At the time, I also studied the saxophone and the flute, which I continued. I also continued the piano lessons.

RF: Ultimately, has learning the classical instruments helped your percussion?

BS: Immensely.

RF: Even the Tchaikovsky?

BS: Oh yeah. It wasn't until later that I found out how strong that helped me out. It wasn't so much that it was Tchaikovsky; it was the discipline. In many cases, percussionists don't have a strong Western music background because they've concentrated on the art of playing percussion. There are two kinds of percussion—legitimate percussion, and the other stuff, which is basically everything else. I play the other stuff.

Let's define what I consider a percussionist. A percussionist, to me, is a person who plays a wide variety of percussion instruments and at least dabbles in the legitimate and "illegitimate." He has some knowledge of some other cultures—maybe not playing the instruments common to them—but he knows how they fit into the whole fabric of what's happening in the percussion world. The thing that I learned in the conservatory situation was that I had to find a musical experience that culturally belonged to me. I appre-

ciate Tchaikovsky, but it was important to find out what *my* musical roots are. So I took my time to really digest that thoroughly.

RF: What were the steps you took to find out your musical heritage?

BS: I started researching it to the best of my ability. I must say that a lot of my initial motivation came by way of Cuba, because Chano Pozo was one of the first percussionists who came to the United States who was a master of the hand drum.

When the slaves came over here, one of their primary means of communication and worship was through drumming. With most of the Africans, part of their daily worship and ritual was accompanied by the drum. When the English brought the slaves over here, they really stripped them of that practice. My heritage is from Louisiana, so I retained a bit more than the average black American did.

It's interesting to think about how the drumset came about. The African bata drum, which symbolizes the mother, is called the "iya," and it has the biggest mouth. It plays fewer notes than the other drums in terms of the basic patterns because it's lower. So the bass drum on a drumset was a substitute for the mother drum. The father is the middle drum called the "itotele," and it is like the toms on the lower end and the snare on the higher end. It answers the mother. The smaller drum, called the "okonkolo," is the child, and it plays a very simple, basic pattern that keeps the family together. The okonkolo is like a bell of a cymbal or a cowbell. It plays a basic pattern that the other drummers listen to for the time. They have another instrument called the shekere, which would be the hi-hat. In order to learn to play these drums, you have to commit to memory maybe 200 rhythms, and each of these rhythms has conversations, so the drums are actually speaking the language—not like Morse code—but actually talking the language. So this kind of drumming was a very integral part of the daily worship and social practices of black people. Since the slaves weren't allowed to play these drums here, they took the European marching drums and incorporated the African rhythms, so it could all be played by one person. This can be attributed to people like Chick Webb and others from New Orleans who put that together.

RF: How did you actually learn to play percussion?

BS: I learned, number one, from listening to records. There was a guy who lived around the corner from me who played bongos, which was my first experience with actually touching a drum. It was extremely rare to see conga drums in black neighborhoods until the early '50s. I went and bought some little dinky bongos and started playing them, and as I went along, little by little, I started hearing them more and more in music. In high school there was a band that played some Mongo Santamaria stuff, and I got a little more into that. Still, my musical experience was basically from the piano and from the saxophone. Up until I played with Herbie Hancock, in every band I played in, I played saxophone and flute and woodshedded the percussion. The percussion stuff wasn't respected at that time; it wasn't even part of the music. That didn't happen until *Bitches Brew*, until Airtio and those people came on the scene in the late '60s and early '70s.

RF: So you went from bongos to...?

BS: ...playing congas and then to playing bata and djembe and Brazilian instruments like the berimbau, atabaque, quica, and agogo.

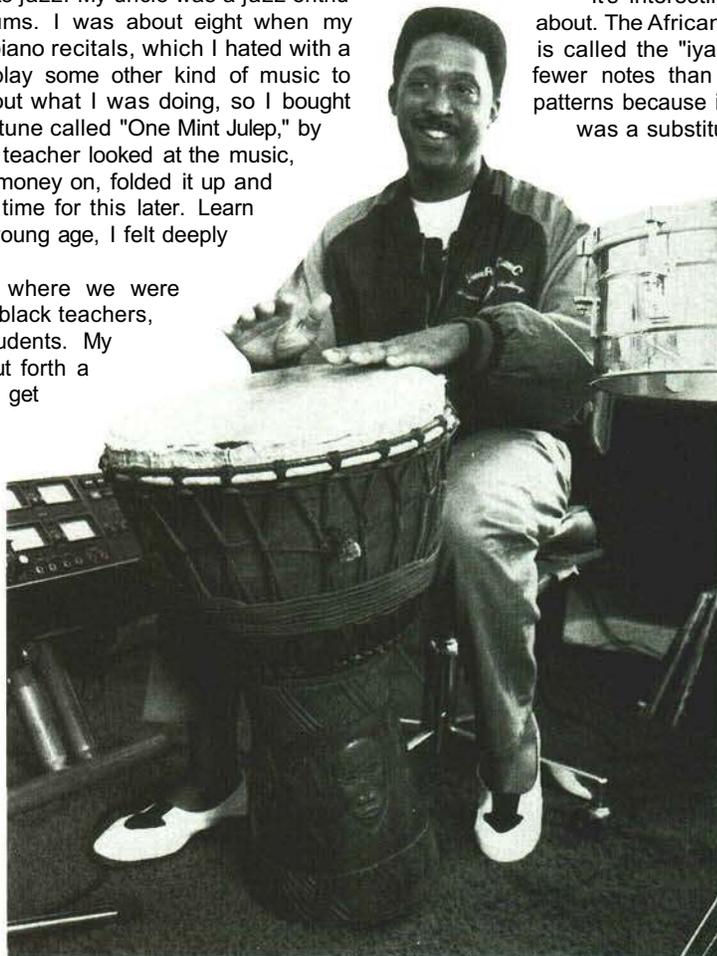


Photo by Rick Malkin

RF: Where were you accumulating these instruments from?

BS: I make most of my instruments. I'd see pictures or I'd hear records, and like for the bata drum, I chopped the tree down and carved the drum out. That's the only way to get it. These are very special drums.

I've had formal training from different people, like Zak Diouf, who was with the Dance Ensemble from Senegal. I met him in 1970 and convinced him to move from Africa to here. I was living in Berkeley, so he came to live with me and he taught me the djembe drums. On the Brazilian instruments, my teacher was Jose Lorenzo. My teacher on bata is Pedro Orta. A master drummer from Senegal, C.K. Ladzekpo, taught me the stuff from Ghana. In order to learn the berimbau, I went to Nana Vasconcelos and Dom Um Romao.

Probably the most influential experience I had, though, was when I went to a ceremony in New York where they played the bata drums. I had never in my life heard anything like it before. If you go to Brazil, that music is all over; it's a daily thing. And in Trinidad, in Jamaica, it's no big deal—but not here. Here, it's like taboo. They took this culture and turned it into garbage. It took me years to find the true music and what it's really about.

RF: How did you learn it?

BS: I learned it from watching these people and getting records and books, and I have films of people playing this stuff, so I got involved in what they got involved in. You can't just go to a book and get it. You either jump in and deal with it with the negativities and the positive aspects of it, or you don't at all. I had a lot of negative stuff fed to me about what this African stuff was about, so I had to shed all of that.

RF: Where was the negativity coming from?

BS: Let me ask *you* a question. When you would see someone playing some African drums in a movie, how would it be depicted?

RF: The only memory of that sort that I have was seeing an incredible scene in *Zulu* when I was very young.

BS: Well, that was one of your better ones. That was real. The drumming in *Zulu* was filmed on location with actual people from that tribe playing. It's funny that you remember that one. In most movies where you'd see any kind of African drumming, it would be in *Creature Features* in a voodoo scene or in a Tarzan movie where it's all Hollywood: "Here are some drums, paint your faces, go for it." You don't get a very good image associated with African religious practices.

RF: Why did you go to the university if you were able to get all of this information on your own?

BS: That was basically a means to an end. My academic training in grade school and high school was extremely poor. In fact, I was a high school drop-out. I always really wanted to go to college, but I knew because my grades were so bad and since there was no free college, for me it was impossible.

I was working at a race track and won a daily double, so I took that money, bought an airline ticket, and came to California. After about two weeks, I found out that if you were a resident of California for a year and you had your high school equivalency, you could go to a junior college without paying. So I went to a junior college in Oakland, spent a year there, and got my grade point average up, and then I applied and got accepted to Berkeley.

At Berkeley I knew what I was going to major in: music. However, there was no ethnomusicology department there. That was an independent major; I had to petition for that. I had to go to the music department and get a professor to agree to be my advisor, fill out a statement of intent, put the entire curriculum together for the entire four years, and then take all the other requirements for graduation. They didn't have any black instructors, and they didn't have any ethnic music happening, so my job was to raise enough

hell in the music department for them to hire a guy named Olly Wilson. He and I developed a black music course, and we sent for C.K. Ladzekpo.

RF: When you were going to school, what were you thinking you were going to actually do with all of that? What was the goal?

BS: I had a goal, which I don't think about now as much as I used to, but I have this property in Louisiana where I want to build a multi-ethnic institute of the arts. I even tried to talk to Stevie Wonder and Bill Cosby about it, but I never got so much as a response. So for now, I meet with musicians here, as opposed to having an institute. I have seven or eight guys who come here every day at 9:00 in the morning to study bata for three hours a day.

RF: Is that your specialty?

BS: It is my personal specialty; it's the thing I want to completely absorb. The thing that drew me to this particular instrument and said, "Get that down," was that it taught me about myself and my culture. It's made me proud of my culture. It's just like anybody else. Jewish people are proud of their culture, Indian Americans, Italian Americans, Mexican Americans, we all have our own cultures. I am an African American. The bata drum is the only instrument that I have been able to have complete contact with. The Cubans who play it and who were willing to share this information with me were my closest step from here to Africa, in learning the real tradition.

RF: You've said that your main goal was to perpetuate your culture through your music. What made you get involved in the commercial side of music?

BS: During my time at Berkeley, I was still playing sax and flute in soul bands in Oakland and San Francisco, but I had a group called Bata Koto, which did traditional music from Haiti, Jamaica, several Latin American countries, and Africa, and we opened for Herbie Hancock at U.C. Berkeley. After the show, Herbie asked if I would come up and sit in with him in San Francisco. So I brought my instruments and set them on the side of the stage and waited for Herbie to come. I didn't want to set them up because I didn't want to be too presumptuous. He came in, saw my stuff on the side of the stage, and said,

"What's all that shit?" And he went into the dressing room. And while he was in the dressing room, I slid over there with my tail between my legs and took all my stuff out of the club and left. A year later he came to U.C. Berkeley to give a lecture in Olly Wilson's class, for which I was the teaching assistant. I had to meet Herbie on the campus to tell him where to come, and as we were driving to the class, I wouldn't have said anything, but he said, "Man, where do I know you from?" I didn't even want to talk about it. He kept saying, "I know we've met before," so after the class he brought it up again and I finally said, "Okay, I'm going to tell you what happened." And he said, "Oh man, I did that? Why don't you come sit in with me tonight." So I went and sat in with him, and about a week later, he called and asked if I wanted a job. He said he was going to put a new group together to do a recording, which turned out to be a record called *Headhunters*.

You asked me what made me go off on the commercial side and go on the road and all that. While I was at Berkeley I met and worked with a dancer, we fell in love, and got married. My wife got killed in an automobile accident six months after we were married, and Herbie said, "Come on, go out on the road." I would never have left my family situation to go out on the road, because I was going to do the school thing, and my wife and I had a nice strong basis for getting something substantial happening with her dancing and my music. That really is what got me on the road.

RF: How long were you with Herbie?

BS: Seven years.

RF: Was that the ideal commercial situation?

"They took this culture
and turned it into garbage.
It took me years
to find the true music
and what it's really about."

BORIS

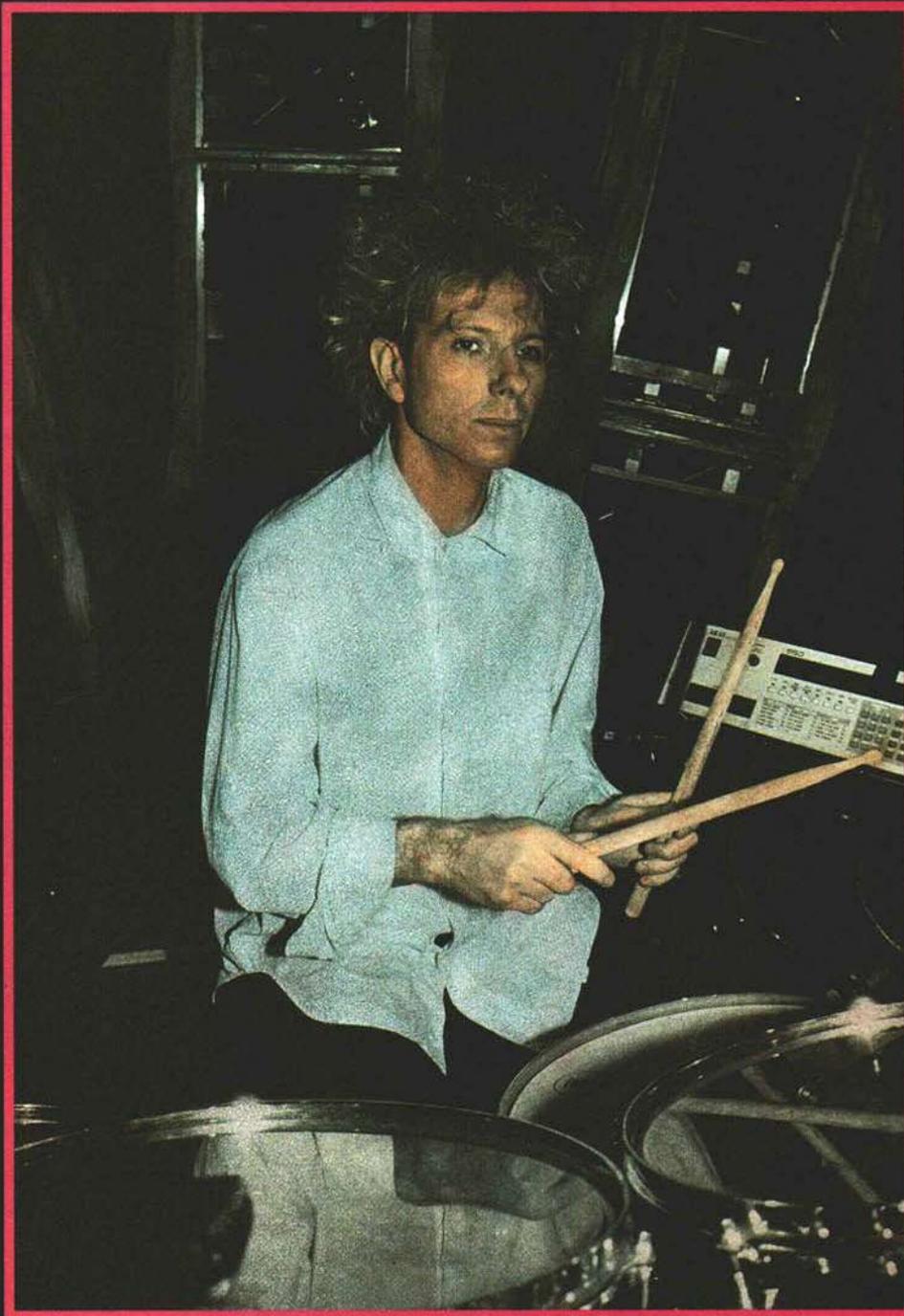


photo by Ernest Aky

by Adam Budofsky

WILLIAMS

Boris Williams might be all but hidden at Cure concerts due to the band's ever-present smoke machines, but his presence live and on record during the past five years has been considerably felt nonetheless. Boris's first album with the Cure, *The Head On The Door* (recorded in 1985), was a turning point for the band. The album provided them with their first hit in America, "In Between Days," and started a string of increasingly sophisticated, creative, and popular records, including 1987's *Kiss Me Kiss Me Kiss Me* and last year's *Disintegration*. Their last tour of America saw the band headlining stadium and arena shows across the country, a somewhat ironic turn of events, since *Disintegration* features the most somber and "non-pop" collection of songs the group has recorded since 1982's *Pornography*.

Though Boris describes himself as not being a very technical player, that description is a bit misleading. All he means is that he never displays his chops as a means to an end. That kind of playing wouldn't work in the Cure anyway. What is apparent from his recordings is that he is very adept at coming up with *the* right percussion part for the song. Boris's background playing fusion in London clubs has provided him with the facility to play the parts he thinks up; one never gets the impression he's playing the part because that's all he can play. Every part has meaning; every part is played that way for a reason.

From their debut album in 1979, *Three Imaginary Boys*, through eight subsequent studio records of constantly shifting styles, Cure founder Robert

Smith is often given credit for steering the band toward the course of his fancy. Yet the other band members also have quite an effect on what the music eventually sounds like. As with *Kiss Me*, for *Disintegration* the band brought into the studio their individual ideas and constructed songs that would make up the album. "We all got 'round together and compared notes," explains Williams. "We get these little notebooks like school books, and we listen to everybody's cassettes and write down what we think of each one, and mark the ideas on a scale of one to ten. For this record we then demoed about 35 songs on 16-track. None of them at that point had any lyrics or vocals; it was just instrumental stuff. From that we cut the actual album."

Before the recording of the album, Williams got together with Cure guitarist Porl Thompson, and the two of them worked on parts together. "We live in the same part of England, in the west country," Boris says, "and he's set up a little studio in his apartment. I would be downstairs with a drumkit and he would be upstairs in the studio playing guitar. We were joined up by headphones, and we just played around with things and came up with ideas. He had a few ideas for melodies, and we constructed parts out of that."

On some of the Cure's slower numbers, Williams comes up with linear patterns, which fill space and keep the song moving along. Robert Smith's and Porl Thompson's guitar parts often require relatively few notes in these cases, and often sound like they are built around a preconceived drum part. An example of this is on the song "If Only

Tonight We Could Sleep," from the *Kiss Me* album, where echoey guitars and sitar-like sounds weave in and out of muted, Indian or Middle Eastern-sounding percussion. Was this a case where the song was built around the drum part? "No," Boris replies, "it wasn't, actually. That was one of Porl's songs. On *Kiss Me*, he did everything at home with a drum machine, and it had a drum part that had that kind of feel to it. But it was a completely different pattern from what eventually ended up on the song. I just played around with it to find something that was more comfortable to play. I really like to play that drum part live because it's got so much space. One of the sounds on that is a tambourine with a head on it in place of the snare drum. I put it on a snare drum stand and hit it with sort of a rimshot with a stick. It sounded kind of like a small, ringy snare drum, with bells on it, basically. And the other parts were done with toms, bells, and cymbals. When we were doing the *Kiss Me* tour we played that every night in the main part of the set."

Rather than having a tambourine set up on a stand on stage, though, Boris chose to sample the sound, along with other sound sources that would be impractical to lug around on tour, and reproduce them via a pair of Simmons pads. "On this past tour I used the two pads," says Williams, "but I don't use the Simmons brain any more; I use an Akai S950 sampler, because obviously the quality of it is a lot better; there are things on it like chimes and a *Mark Tree*, which need high quality. When we were rehearsing we tried lots of different things. First I was triggering an

Emulator III, but it was just too complicated to get it to work, and there was a delay. The setup I'm using now is very simple to use. You just press a couple of buttons and you've got the sounds you want to use on the next song. I don't really like being bogged down with a lot of technology. I try to keep it to a minimum and only use it if I absolutely have to," he laughs. "Fewer things go wrong."

Boris describes the Cure's attitude toward keeping a touring and recording schedule as, "We don't plan album/tour/album/tour like a lot of bands do. It has to feel right." Yet there was perhaps not quite that air of non-chalance when he initially joined the band. The Cure were in the middle of a tour for the album *The Top*, when drummer Andy Anderson left the group. Psychedelic Furs drummer Vince Ely was called in on short notice, but couldn't stay because he had other commitments and "really wasn't that much into it at the time anyway," according to Boris. ("He's kicking himself now," Williams jokes. "Every time I see him, he sort of wishes I had a car accident or something.") While on holiday from a Thompson Twins tour, Boris was staying in California, and got a call from the Cure's bassist, Phil Thornally, who Boris knew because Phil had engineered

Thompson Twins records. "So I joined up," he says. "I rushed out and bought all their albums and tapes and listened to them. We had two soundchecks, and then we did a gig. So I sort of jumped in the deep end."

"They sent me a tape of all the songs they were performing," Williams continues, "but the set they were doing was very limited because there were certain things that Vince wasn't happy about. He hadn't been playing drums for a long time; he'd been producing. So they had to cut the set down a fair amount. And then when I came along, we did one soundcheck where Vince was there, and Phil said to me, 'Come on man, you can do the gig tonight; it sounds great.' And I said, 'I think I'd rather have one more rehearsal.' It was a matter of getting a lot of the endings. The most difficult thing was getting the tempos; they wanted me to kind of administrate from the word go. I kept an idiot board next to me with little drum notations so I could remember where the beat was. And now in Europe we're doing three hours every night. I don't think I could do this set like that in those days. I think it was a lot looser then."

Boris's association with the Thompson Twins was quite different than his relationship with the Cure would be. The

Twins' main members at the time—Tom Bailey, Alannah Currie, and Joe Leeway—basically recorded their albums, and then recruited musicians to play with them on tour. Boris might overdub hi-hat parts or cymbal crashes, but the basic tracks were all done on drum machines. Williams elaborates: "It was more than just a session band in that we were there all the time and did every tour. It wasn't like, 'You'll do this tour and next time we'll get somebody else.' But I didn't really have that much involvement in the music personally. It was a good experience for me, though, because I had never toured in America before. When we came over we were playing clubs, and then it grew."

Despite the Thompson Twins' growing popularity, Williams was becoming disenchanted with the band's over-mechanized ways of working. "When I got off that and did the Cure," he relates, "quite honestly, financially there was no comparison at all; the Thompson Twins paid me a lot more. But just doing those last few shows during the last two weeks of the tour with the Cure, I remembered how much I really could enjoy *playing*. I really had taken playing with the Twins for granted so that it was like, This is a job, and ifs

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MUSIC KEY

Open	⊙	R.C.	⊗	Splash	⊗
H.H.	⊙	T.T.	⊗		
S.D.	⊙				
F.T.	⊙				
B.D.	⊙				
		Add'l Tamb.			
		T.T.			

CURE BEATS

This first beat is from "Close To Me," from *The Head On The Door*. Though Robert Smith's lyrics still feature trademark themes like dread and suffocation, the music is actually quite playful. The bass drum in the first bar follows along exactly with the bass guitar line, adding

to the simple feel of the song, and Boris's opening hi-hats in the second bar add a bit of light-hearted jazziness to the tune.

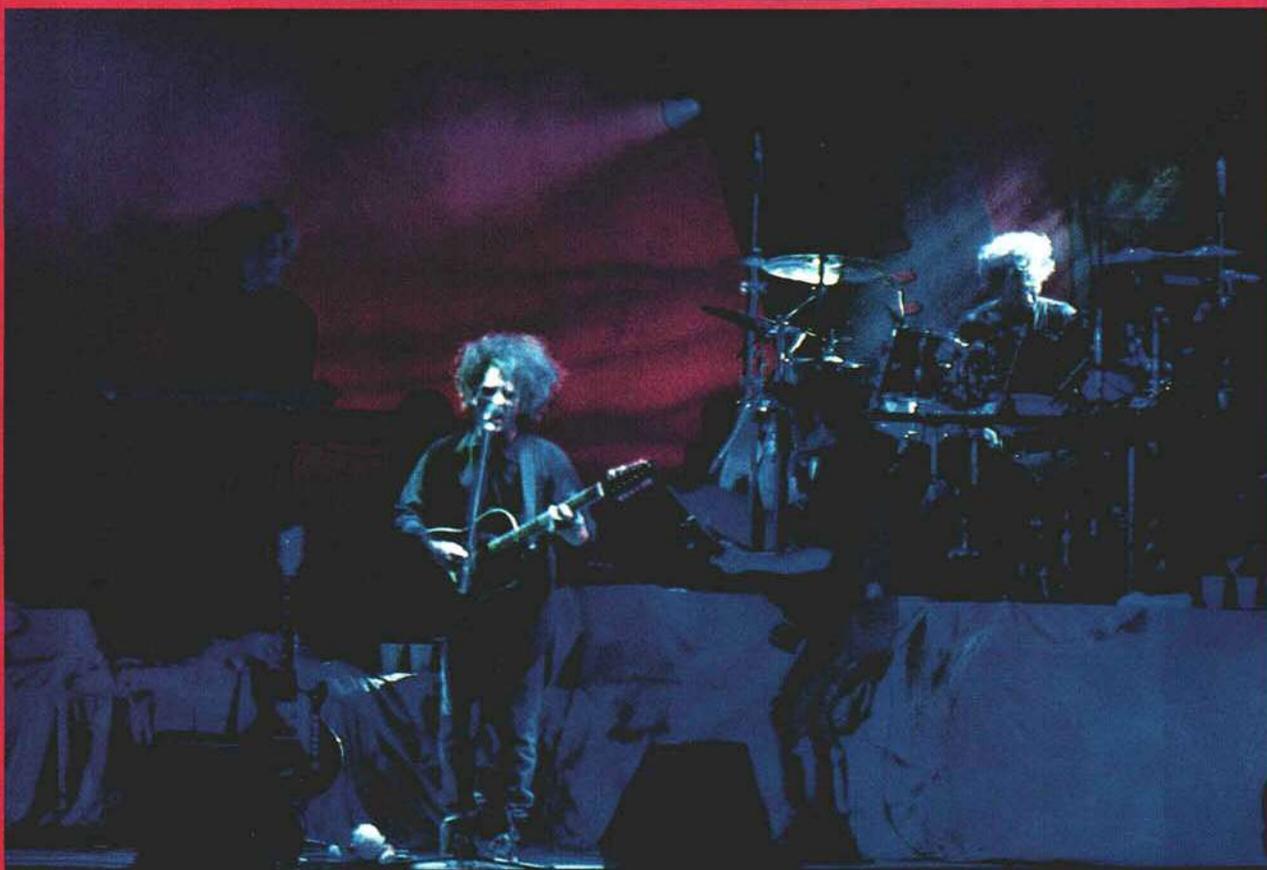
$\text{♩} = 186$

This next example is from "Six Different Ways," also from *The Head On The Door*. There's some interesting and subtle mimicking going on here among the hi-hat and bass drum parts and the song's piano line. Overdubbed rim clicks and timbale fills are also clever touches.

$\text{♩} = 98$

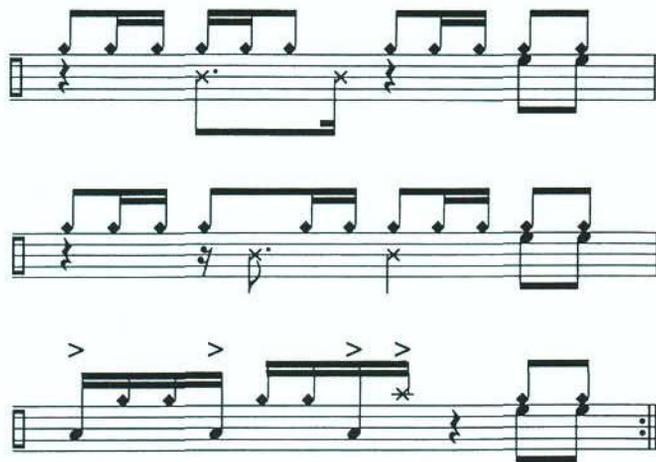
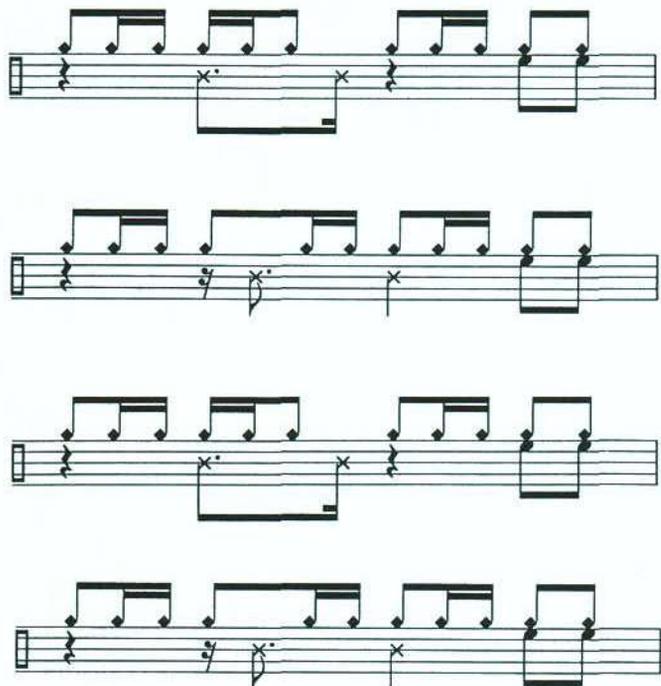
Here is the eight-bar beat to "If Only Tonight We Could Sleep," from *Kiss Me Kiss Me Kiss Me*. This is the tune Boris described where he used a tambourine with a head in place of a snare drum. Note the shifting tambourine pattern and the neat little turn-around in the last bar.

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Photos by Eder Roberts

"I think the more accomplished someone is technically, quite often the less personal a style they have; they can fall into anyone's shoes."

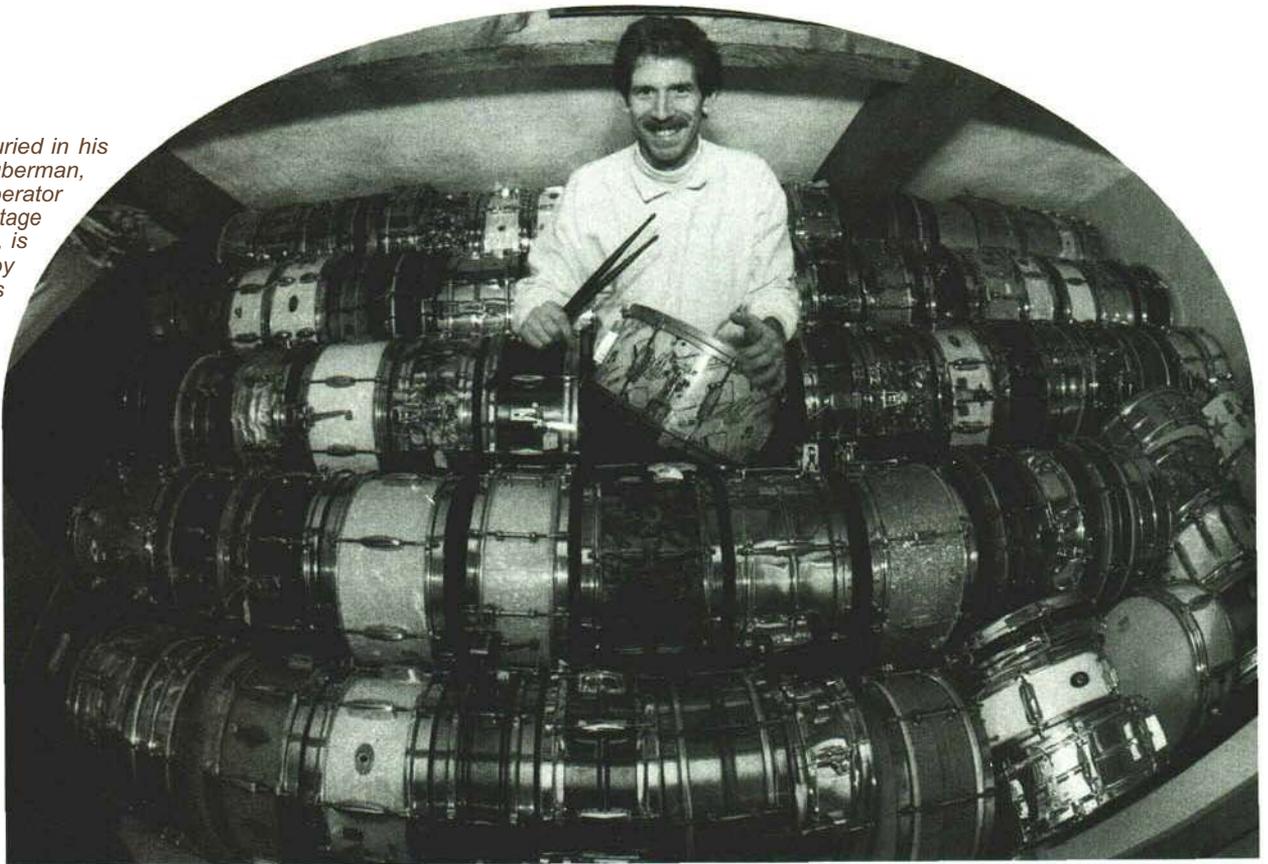


Here are the first two bars of what is actually the eight-bar beat from *Disintegration's* "Last Dance." A good example of something Neil Peart spoke about in his recent feature, Boris makes slight adjustments to the basic beat, making the challenge not so much physically playing the part, but remembering a rather long, subtly varying pattern. Bars 1 and 2 basically repeat, except that in bar 4 the small tom is replaced by a snare hit, and in bar 8 both tom hits are replaced by snare hits. These are not arbitrary variations, either;

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INSIDE Vintage Drum

Literally buried in his work, Ned Ingberman, owner and operator of the Vintage Drum Center, is surrounded by snare drums dating from the early 1900s to the mid-1960s, including rare drums from Gladstone, Leedy, Duplex, Slingerland, Ludwig, and many other notable drum brands.



About 90 minutes south of Cedar Rapids, Iowa is the town of Mt. Pleasant. Hang a right onto highway 34 and go another 30 miles or so, and you've reached Fairfield—a picturesque little farm town that epitomizes heartland America. You'd expect to find a Sears catalog store here, along with a John Deere tractor dealership and a Purina Chows feed supply store—and you would. You probably wouldn't expect to find a thriving drum business. Yet there's one of those here, too.

Actually, it's a few miles out of town—out in the genuine farm countryside. It's Vintage Drum Center, a business that deals exclusively in rare and hard-to-find drums. Vintage Drum Center is the brainchild of owner Ned Ingberman, who is quietly making a name for himself in the international drumming community for the work he is doing in this super-specialized field. (Previous customers include J.R. Robinson, Jim Keltner, Anton Fier, Chicago Symphony percussionist James Ross, Brooklyn School for Musical Performance director David Kovins, and many other notable drummers and percussionists.)

The operation isn't large; until recently Ned was the entire staff. He's since added

someone to help with the administration and paperwork. But Ned still does the selling, buying, cataloging, repairing, grading, shipping, and everything else pertaining to his ever-expanding and ever-changing inventory. He took time out from this exhausting task to talk with MD about his unique business.

RVH: How exactly would you describe the difference between Vintage Drum Center and other drum retailing operations?

NI: Vintage Drum Center is a rather unique and unconventional animal. First of all, it's mail-order, and second of all, virtually all our equipment is vintage. We don't handle any new equipment. I don't think there are any other retailers that exclusively market vintage drums. A few shops around the country offer an inventory of vintage drums. However, that's to supplement the already existing business of new equipment that they do. And there are collectors around the country who do trade and sell vintage drums, but they are not set up as businesses per se.

RVH: Why do you feel there is a need for a business such as yours?

NI: I've seen a real upsurge of interest in

vintage drums over the past couple of years. Some day, I think, the market for vintage drums is going to get as active and widespread as vintage guitars are now. Drummers are just starting to appreciate the collectibility of vintage drums as a hobby; it's rewarding, it's satisfying, and it's fun to do. You never know where a vintage drum will pop up. It might be in a newspaper, or at a garage sale.

RVH: The next logical question is, why are vintage drums more desirable than modern drums? What advantages do they offer over drums being made today?

NI: One thing about a vintage drum that automatically sets it apart from new drums is its historical significance. Some people want a vintage drum just because it has that charisma to it—that collectibility value. A new drum can't compete with that—not until it actually has a chance to grow some vines.

Some of the people who buy vintage drums are collectors, some are combination collectors/players, and some are just players. Some of my customers tell me that they can't find the sound they want from a newer drum; they can only get it out of a particular vintage drum. That's not to say

Center

by Rick Van Horn
Photos by Bob Stone

that there aren't a lot of fine quality new drums being made; it's really just a matter of preference in the sound—what a drummer likes or doesn't like. It's a very individual thing.

Some drummers—particularly studio drummers—are looking for a very specific type of a sound for a very specific purpose. They're real meticulous, and some of them are very heavily into vintage drums. I'd like to add that vintage drums are being used in all styles of music: classical, rock, jazz, country & western, and pop. There is such a variety of sizes, shapes, shell constructions, etc. that if a drummer is really serious about finding the right drum to suit his needs, then he can find it.

Some types of instruments get better with age. It's a well-known feature of violins, like the Stradivarius. I think the drum is one of those instruments. Maybe the wood mellows or gains some deeper value of resonance over a period of years. Some drummers are tuned into the characteristic sound that they will get from an older piece of equipment.

There is also definitely something about playing a vintage drum that transcends the drum itself. Some of them go back to the Beatles and the '60s. Others go back to Gene Krupa's days: the '40s—the big bands—and some go back to the Roaring '20s. It is just an inspiring feeling to be playing such an instrument. Somehow, you get the sense of being connected with the great musicians from that era. For a musician, the feeling you get inside while you are playing your instrument is a basic element of the whole creative process. So, if a particular drum can stimulate that process and set it flowing, then it is an important thing to have. That's my personal view on it.

RVH: Let's step back just a bit and get some background information. How did you get into the vintage drum business in the first place?

NI: I had a retail drum business in Queens, New York. I started it around '82, and did it for about a year and a half. I started out part-time and found that I could just continue to buy and sell more drums. I ended up with a warehouse, handling mostly used sets, stands, and cymbals. Once in a while I would run into a vintage drum, and it would sell quickly.

After a while, my wife, Carol,

and I wanted to move out to Fairfield, Iowa to participate in a transcendental meditation super-radiance program that was sponsored by the Marishi International University. We had both been practicing TM for some 16 years or so. In 1983 we participated in the First World Peace Assembly, as it was called. We felt we wanted to contribute to the world, and we moved out here to do that.

Well, I never got the drums out of my blood. I was trying to figure out how to get back into it and make it work from a tiny town in Iowa where there wasn't a thriving musical community happening. I took a job with another company and worked a while. But I just couldn't forget the feeling of being my own boss and working for myself. I couldn't let go of that dream. I decided to try selling part of my own vintage drum collection as an experiment. At first there was only marginal interest, but some people did buy some of the drums. From there it just grew. It taught me a lesson: that you can actually do what you love and be successful at it. It's a good thing to find out that it can and does happen.

RVH: Is all of your business exclusively in snare drums?

NI: We do regularly handle sets and toms and singles. But most of what I find is snare drums. I think there are more loose snare drums around than complete sets. Your average drummer usually has more than one snare drum; it's an interchangeable flavor in a kit. From a metal piccolo to a deep wood, you are going to have a whole different story out of it.

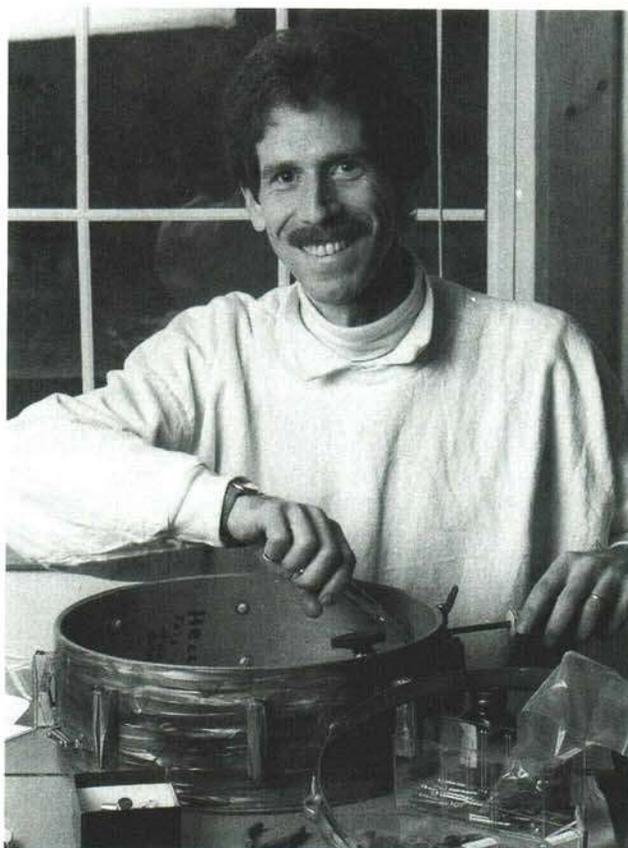
RVH: Since you operate on a mail-order basis, your customers don't have a chance to hear a given drum before they order it. Do you personally have a handle on the quality and characteristics of each drum in your inventory? It's one thing if someone calls up and says, "I'm looking for a 1932 *Black Beauty*." If they already have that knowledgeability, then you are miles ahead. But suppose they say, "I'm looking for a drum that is going to give me a certain quality, and I think it ought to sound like this...." Can you say, "Okay, if you want a deep tone, that would lead you to a *Radio King* rather than a metal *Super-Sensitive*." Can you guide a customer in that sense?

NI: I'm glad you asked that question. When you are buying something over the telephone, sight unseen, you are going to want to be dealing with somebody who speaks the same language as you. I've had years

and years of experience as a professional musician, and so I have that to offer to the customer. I've played in over a hundred different bands in all styles of music under all kinds of conditions—including various acoustical conditions, which is interesting. You can take a drum that will sound one way in one room with a certain amount of people in it, and it will sound like a totally different instrument in another room. There are a lot of variables involved. I do have a good working knowledge of drums and drum sounds and have a lot to offer in the way of advising prospective customers on what will do the job for them. I ask a lot of questions. I find out what kind of music they are playing, what they're going to do with the drum, and how hard they play—what, specifically, their needs are. Musicians vary quite a bit in the way they play and what they expect and need from a drum.

RVH: How can people find out what drums you have to offer at any given time?

NI: I send out flyers that list my current inventory on a regular basis. All anyone needs to do is give



me a call or write me a letter or postcard requesting the list. Vintage Drum Center is predominantly a mail-order company. Any time you are selling musical instruments through the mail you have to instill confidence in the buyer, because that person is making a serious investment in something he or she hasn't had a chance to hear or play before purchasing it. That's the main reason why I offer a guarantee. If the customer doesn't like a drum, he or she can return it for a refund. This allows the customer to feel more comfortable and confident about going ahead with the purchase. I try to make the whole buying process as pleasant and comfortable an experience as I can.

RVH: Describing your drums accurately must be a key factor.

NI: It is a major consideration. I had one customer ask, "How do I know my description of excellence is the same as yours?" So I try to be conservative in grading drums and make sure it is a realistic representation of what the drum is. I would rather undergrade a drum than overgrade a drum. This way someone will be pleasantly surprised, as opposed to being disappointed.

RVH: On what do you base your knowledge of vintage drums? How do you assess their value, how do you learn about their history?

NI: The first thing is that I'm a drummer myself, and have been since 1966. It's a basic qualification needed for anyone in sales helping drummers select the right equipment. I attended Berklee College of Music and also taught private drum instruction. Over the years, I've been in a hundred bands, as I mentioned before, and played all different styles of music. I had first-hand involvement in what the drummer goes through on the gig. It's been real valuable experience and enables me to get a realistic assessment and feeling for what the customer actually needs.

As far as how I come up with the pricing of the vintage drums, I seem to have a natural sense of what used things are worth in general. Of course, it takes more than just that. Other elements include being in continuous touch with the marketplace, knowing what the supply and demand are, and knowing what the items are selling for around the country. After buying and selling and trading several thousand used and vintage drums over the years, I've had a lot of solid, practical experience in pricing the value of the drums. Besides, if I'm really off, I will hear about it by way of feedback from my customers. From what I see, our prices are competitive. The number of drums we are selling confirms this. If you overprice drums, people won't buy them.



Vintage Drum Center handles complete drumkits as well as individual drums.

RVH: You are also being helped by the fact that in today's snare drum market, many production drums are pushing \$500, while premium specialty snare drums are priced in the \$750 to \$1,000 range. If people are willing to spend that kind of money for a new drum, then \$375 to \$500 for a drum with a historic character and a unique sound isn't at all unreasonable.

NI: Another reason why people buy a vintage drum is the investment aspect of it. If you go out and buy a new snare drum for \$1,000, and six months to a year later you try to sell, you may take a considerable loss on it. If you buy a vintage drum for the same price, chances are you will get your money back or even make money on it. Over a longer amount of time, you'll make money. I even hear from some customers that they like the craftsmanship on the older vintage drums more than that of the newer drums. Of course, I don't think they are comparing to the new premium drums coming out. Those are constructed very, very well.

When it comes to gaining expertise about vintage drums, the learning experience never ends. I learn something every day. I learn from my customers and vintage drum catalogs, and I learn something from drums myself.

RVH: Have you been able to amass a collection of catalogs and literature as well as the drums themselves?

NI: I've developed quite a drum catalog library. I haven't counted them, but there must be over 150 different vintage drum

catalogs, from the early 1900s through the '60s, and some '70s. When someone has a drumset to sell I ask if they also have any catalogs that they want to trade or sell. Just like the drums, they come through that channel. I find them very entertaining to read, real educational, and irreplaceable for reference.

RVH: When you are negotiating with someone over the phone for the purchase of a drum to add to your inventory, what questions do you ask? There are a lot of old drums out there that, unfortunately, are not vintage drums: They're just old, they're junk. How do you avoid getting burned on a situation like that?

NI: What I try to do is avoid the problem before it even happens. I carefully screen the condition of the drum before I actually tell the person to send it. Sometimes I require photos, sometimes I don't. When we agree on a price for the drum, the seller ships it. Once it is here and I've actually had a look at it, then I send the seller the money. It's a different situation when I'm dealing with a retail store. Some of them don't ship anything unless it's C.O.D. But that generally works out okay. I feel more

comfortable and confident about sending money to somebody in advance if I know they are an established business, rather than a private individual. There is enough suspicion in the world as it is; we don't need more of that.

I'm using every bit of experience from my past involvement with drums in order to run this business efficiently and successfully. I know drums extremely well. I know what to look for and what to avoid. I have a good sense of what people want—what the demand is. Running a vintage drum business is totally unlike running a conventional retail music store. There you can pick up a phone and call the Ludwig or Gretsch company and order such and such. You can't do that with vintage drums. I have to keep searching and beating the bushes in order to keep up with the demand and keep my inventory up. We offer a huge selection. I like to let drummers know that there is a place they can go to exercise a choice in their investment in a vintage drum, rather than having to settle for something.

RVH: You also offer drummers who might have vintage equipment to sell a place where they can get a price that corresponds to its real value, rather than what they might get at a used drum shop.

NI: Used drum shops haven't really developed a special clientele. So when they get a vintage drum, what often happens is that it just sits for years in their back room, until they wind up selling it as a second-hand

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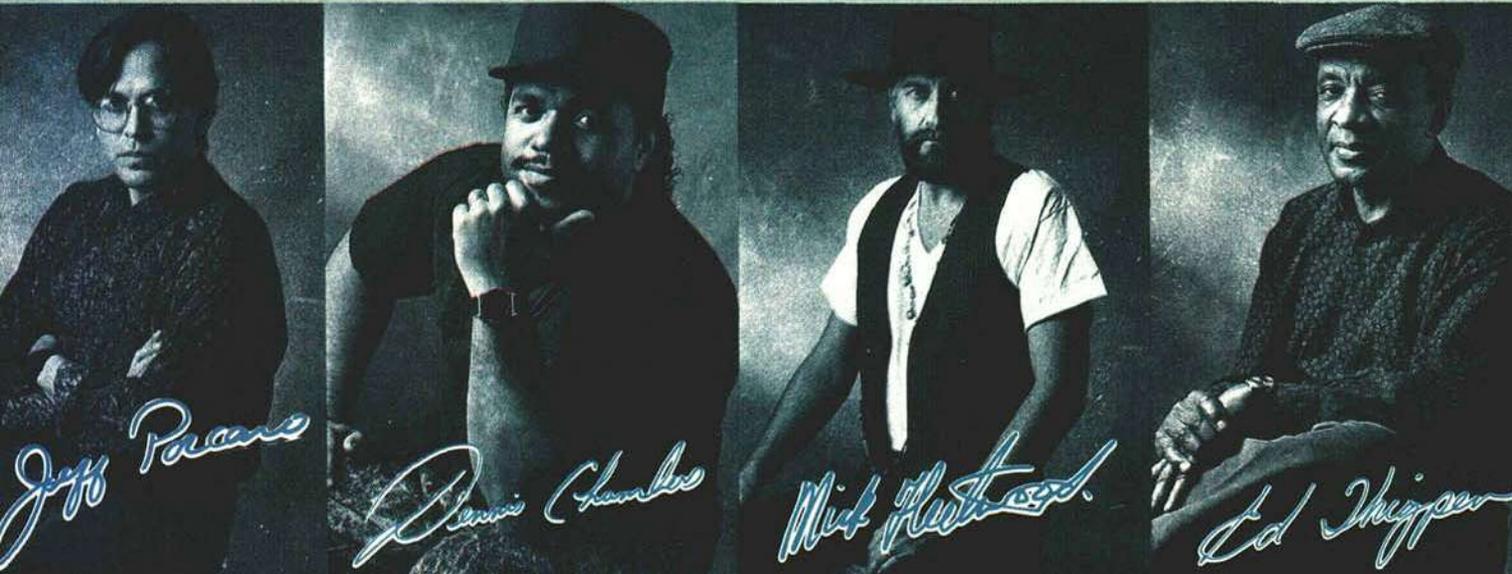
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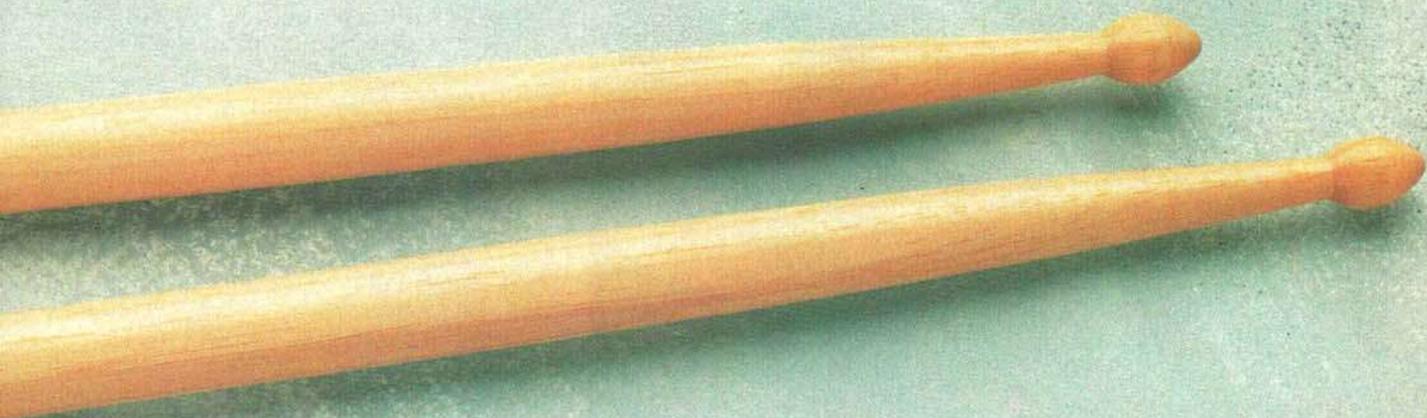
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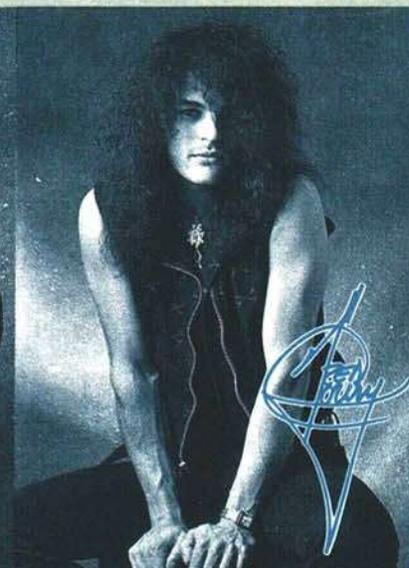
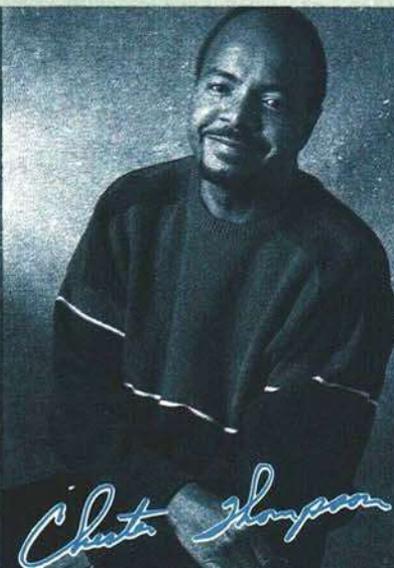


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Zildjian Scimitar Bronze Cymbals



Photo by Rick Mattingly

Zildjian's new *Scimitar Bronze* cymbals represent a significant change in that company's product line, replacing Zildjian's previous mid-price *Amir* series. The cymbals are created of sheet bronze, which simply means that they are not cast in the way Zildjian's A, K, or Z series cymbals are. Rather, they are created from disks that have been cut from a rolled sheet of bronze. These disks are pressed into the basic cymbal profile, then hammered and lathed in a special process designed to give them (according to Zildjian's promotional literature) "fast response, quick decay, and clean overtones—qualities demanded by some professionals, but until now found only in certain expensive European-made instruments."

Those are high claims, indeed, for a line of "affordable" cymbals. I tested a group that included a 20" ride, 16" and 18" crashes, and a pair of 14" hi-hats. (Although not in my test group, an 18" ride and an 18" *China Boy* are also available.) I used the cymbals on both low- and high-volume gigs, and also tested them in a "lab" situation where their every nuance could be discerned. Here are my findings.

General Characteristics

To save some time, let me give you some characteristics that were present on each of the cymbals. Generally speaking, I found them to be a bit on the heavy side—even though Zildjian considers the ride to be of

"medium" weight and the crashes to be "thin." They also tended to have a rather flattish profile (consistent with the "European-design" concept), and did not have particularly deeply-lathed tonal grooves. This tended to keep them very clean and dry, with very little of the "shimmer" associated with cast, heavily-lathed cymbals. Whether this would be a positive or a negative acoustic feature would be up to the individual drummer, but it was consistent throughout the line. All of the cymbals were finished to a high gloss. And for those to whom it is important, the *Scimitar Bronze* logo is stamped only on the top of each cymbal; only the large "Zildjian" logo is on the bottom.

The Ride Cymbal

The 20" ride cymbal I tried was definitely the outstanding member of my test group. It produced—just as Zildjian said it would—a very clear, clean, dry sound, with a quick, cutting "ping" sound and plenty of stick attack. (As a matter of fact, I've heard a number of much more expensive ride cymbals that were designated as "dry rides" that didn't sound nearly as good.) The bell was not as powerful as some I've heard, due to its comparatively small, flat, "European-style" profile. But it was certainly more than acceptable.

This may be a mid-priced cymbal, but I think it would appeal to a large number of pro drummers on the basis of its strong,

clear sound. If it had any flaw, that might be that it didn't have that "shimmer" I mentioned earlier, and as such might not be the best cymbal for *strictly* low-volume work where a bit of ride-cymbal sustain is often desirable. Otherwise, this ride could be a real bargain-priced gem.

Hi-Hats

The hi-hats are described by Zildjian as having "a brilliant, controlled sound with a crisp, metallic 'chip' sound. Great projection live with a good, fast decay—ideal for studio work." I agree with most of that; I did find them to give excellent projection, and they did have a metallic "chip" sound when played with the foot. I wouldn't call them "brilliant" though; to me that connotes a high pitch, and I actually found the pair I tried to be a bit dark—especially when played partially closed. They also weren't particularly sensitive—in terms of quick response to funky sticking patterns—but I attribute this to the weight of the top cymbal. On the other hand, members of my band commented that they sounded "meaty" when I played a rock ride pattern on them. They were very musical, and blended nicely with the rest of the cymbals. My overall impression was that they would be acceptable hi-hats if priced in a pro-line range; they are excellent for mid-priced cymbals.

Crashes

I found the crashes to be the most limited of the cymbals. They were a bit thick to be all-purpose cymbals, which I discovered when I tried to use them in a low-volume situation. They just did not respond to a light touch; they needed a fair wallop to get them going. However, given that wallop, they spoke out with authority. Zildjian states that they have "A sharp, high-pitched attack and colorful, yet fast decay." The 16" crash certainly fit that description; it cut through the amps in a fairly high-volume situation with good results. The 18" crash sounded a little "gongy" from where I was sitting, but my bass player liked it a lot; he said it sounded "big and throaty" from his position across the stage from me. It certainly had plenty of initial power, although it did not respond quickly. In fact, playing the 18" crash was like flooring the accelerator on a big, powerful car: It didn't leap out instantly, but once it got going,

Pearl MLX Jazz Kit

There's no denying that rock music is a dominant style today, and so it isn't surprising that most drum companies have been designing their drumkits to appeal to rock drummers. This usually means larger sizes of drums—especially bass drums. A 22" drum is now the generally accepted minimum size, and they go up from there.

Pearl is no exception to this rule; they offer a wide variety of oversized drums, and are well-known as a brand that appeals heavily to rock drummers. With that in mind, it's a pleasant surprise to see Pearl also offering something to jazz drummers: a kit configuration in their high-end MLX series that offers small toms and bass drums!

MLX jazz kits are available in six configurations. The four-piece set offers an 8x12 rack tom, a 14x14 floor tom, and a 5" deep wood snare combined with either a 14x18 or a 14x20 bass drum. The five-piece adds a 13" rack tom; the six-piece adds a 10" rack tom. All of the drums feature six-ply all-maple shells and full-length high-tension style lugs. Pearl sent the complete six-piece package kit with both bass drum sizes, so I had lots of combinations to work with. The drums featured Pearl's Liquid Amber natural finish; Piano Black Lacquer is the

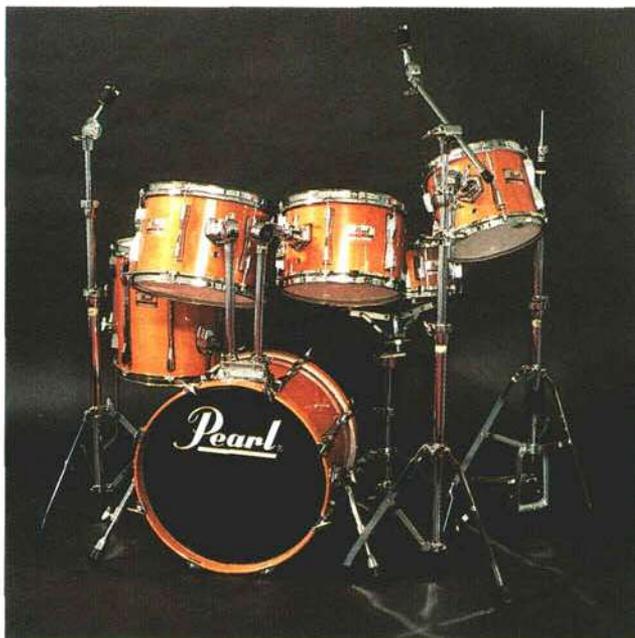


Photo by Scott G. Bienstock

only other available finish. The drums were fitted with Pearl's *Super Hoops*, and the snare drum featured a very small, simple throwoff that was pleasantly inconspicuous, yet worked just fine. The kit was supplied with single-braced stands from Pearl's 800 series, in keeping with the concept of a lighter-weight overall set.

I decided to test the drums first in what might be considered a quintessential jazz

arrangement, using the 18" bass drum, the 12" rack tom, and the 14" floor tom, and playing all the drums with the coated *Ambassador* heads they came with. In terms of pitch, it was a pleasant surprise to discover how well the 18" drum provided the foundation for the kit. When tuned with care, and keeping a good interval between each drum in mind, there was absolutely no lack of "bottom" from the kit. Obviously, the entire "scale" of the kit was up a bit higher than a set comprised of bigger drums would be. But the relationship between each drum allowed for a very musical, and completely satisfying "ensemble" sound. Simply from the point of view of maximizing the extremes, I replaced the 12" rack tom with the 10", bringing the upper end of the scale even higher. This four-inch differential between the toms gave a very nice, melodic range

to the kit. Overall, each of the toms was very responsive, giving a full sound at low to moderate volume levels.

Substituting the 20" bass drum for the 18" did precisely what you might expect: It added a bit more bottom. The 20" also produced a little more overall projection, owing to its greater volume. It was, however, a bit trickier to tune than was the 18".

continued on next page

look out!

Zildjian is absolutely right about one thing: These crashes do decay quickly. A bit too quickly, I feel, when used in a strictly acoustic situation. This is another characteristic inherent in "European-design" cymbals, with their flatter profiles and smaller bells. There was certainly no lack of initial volume with either of the crashes I tried, but I did wish that they would hang around just a little longer, to give a bit more body to the drum-and-cymbal crash combinations I played.

I'd have to assess the crashes as best for rock playing, due to their need for a solid strike and their resulting volume. This is probably fine, considering that the majority of drummers shopping for mid-priced cymbals today are likely to be young players interested in rock. But I would caution semi-pros (who might be looking for affordable cymbals for a club-date set) and parents of young drummers (who are likely to be practicing at home) that the *Scimitar Bronze* crashes would not be as control-

lable, versatile, or simply as quiet as some other types of cymbals might be.

Miking

Since Zildjian mentioned studio work in their promotional literature, I thought it would be a good idea to try the cymbals in a miked-up application, using a Zildjian ZMC-10 miking system. Here again, the generally "dry" characteristic of the *Scimitar Bronze* cymbals came to the fore. The ride and the hi-hats, due to their lack of overtones, came through the mic's very cleanly, with a minimal amount of EQing necessary to get a good sound. The crashes were a bit explosive, and so had to be controlled very carefully. I found a bit of a low undertone in the 18" crash that I compensated for with a little high-end EQ. My general conclusion here was that for a rock player who felt the need to mike his or her cymbals, a set of *Scimitar Bronze* cymbals would be a very good way to save a bit of money that could be applied to the purchase of the necessary miking equipment. In fact, I know

of some top pro drummers who would probably prefer the *Scimitar Bronze* cymbals over higher-priced lines when it came to miking, due to that very fast decay I mentioned earlier.

Conclusions And Prices

Compared to the *Amir* cymbals that they are replacing, the new *Scimitar Bronze* cymbals sound better, are generally more versatile, and cost less. It's hard to find anything to dislike about that. Considering them on their own merits, they offer sound quality that would make them appealing as a possible alternative choice for any professional, and an absolutely outstanding value for the entry-level or budget-minded player.

The 20" ride I tested retails for \$129; the 16" crash sells for \$95; the 18" crash (and the available 18" ride) is priced at \$107; and the 14" hi-hats go for \$148 per pair. The 18" *China Boy* sells for \$139.

Rick Van Horn

I should point out that I was using both bass drums with front heads on and no muffling in the drums. I added a felt strip taped to the batter head of each drum to control the overring.

There was one characteristic of the *MLX* drums that seemed questionable to me. The drums were finished with a thick, high-gloss lacquer that made them absolutely beautiful to look at. But this finish was also applied to the *insides* of the shells. Generally, maple-shelled drums are noted for their warmth and depth. But the hard, reflective surface created by this inner finish made the Pearl drums very bright, sharp, and cutting. Whether this characteristic is desirable or not would, of course, be up to the individual player. But bright, sharp-sounding bass drums and toms are not consistent with those normally heard in an acoustic jazz situation. (On the other hand, the snare drum actually benefitted from this characteristic. Its sound was crisp, bright, and penetrating.) I experimented with heavier, twin-ply heads on the bass drums and toms in an effort to get a mellower tone, but I only got a "boing-ier" sound, as the round sound of the heads bounced off the reflective inner surfaces of the shells.

I certainly could not argue with the re-

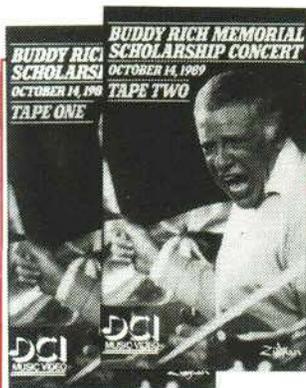
sponse and projection of these drums; they were all anyone could ask for. But I do think that if Pearl wants to appeal to jazz purists—or even to drummers who just want smaller, quieter drums for general low-volume applications—they may want to consider reducing the amount of lacquer applied to the interior of the shells.

Having said all of the above, let me add that I found a certain application in which the bright, cutting sound of the *MLX* drums worked just fine: my rock gig! After testing the kit in a traditional jazz setting, I decided to see how these small drums might fare on a moderate-volume club gig with my rock band. Since I had both the 18" and the 20" bass drum available, I created a down-sized "hard rock kit" comprised of both basses, the 10" and 12" rack toms, the 14" floor tom, and the snare. Owing to the small overall size of this kit, I was able to get it all on my 5 1/2"-square riser!

Since I was playing in a fairly small club, I started out with the kit unmiked. I was impressed by the way the drums cut through the amps, and at how well the 20" bass drum (which I used as my primary drum on my right) supported the band. There's no denying that the pitch wasn't down where my 16x22 bass drum would have been,

but it was low enough to get the job done, and certainly had enough punch to be heard through the first couple of sets. The snare and toms also carried well, with the *Am-bassador* heads producing a good, clear crack that my band commented favorably on.

Knowing that we would ultimately get too loud for the acoustic kit alone, I had set up a miking system, and I put it into play for the third and fourth sets. The bass drums sounded amazing! Again, I was using them with their front heads in place, and only a bit of felt taped to the batter heads to reduce the ring. The drums were incredibly punchy, and with a bit of added low-end EQ, gave all the bottom anyone could ask for. I also added a touch of low-end to the toms, just to add to their presence, but their natural cut came through the system as well as it had come through live. (Steve Smith used to swear by smaller tom sizes for this very reason when he played with Journey.) The snare needed no help at all; I just ran its mic' flat, and the drum sounded great. For rock drummers who have to do a lot of one-nighters (and the accompanying shlepping that goes with them), it might be something to consider: a small kit that plays as hot 'n' heavy as a big one, but is a heck



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of a lot easier to set up and move around.

It was when I was on my club gig that I made a few discoveries about the physical nature of the *MLX* jazz kit. On the positive side, the bass drum spurs are excellent. They held both drums firmly against heavy impact—which is very important with smaller, lighter drums, which can slide easily. On the negative side, the very small diameter of the 18" bass drum makes it impossible to get mounted rack toms up very high. That's inescapable, of course, unless Pearl were to provide an extremely long down post on one of its tom-mounting arms.

But while there is a valid reason for limited rack tom height, there is *no* excuse for the short floor tom legs. I sit with my stool at about 23" high, which is higher than many players do, I admit. But I'm not the tallest guy in the world, and I know of players who like to sit even higher than I do. With the floor tom legs extended as far as they could safely be, I could just barely get the floor tom up to a comfortable playing level. If I had wanted to tilt the drum in toward me by extending one or two outer legs, it would have been impossible. The floor tom is fitted with Pearl's very handy hinging leg brackets, and the legs are fitted with memory locks. One would think that

with all this attention to innovation, the legs themselves could be made a few inches longer.

I don't need to say much about the hardware; Pearl's hardware is excellent and has been for years. The inclusion of the 800 series pedal, hi-hat, and stands makes sense, since they are the lightest (and I use that term advisedly) of Pearl's pro-quality lines. Each drumkit "package" contains the pedal, snare stand, hi-hat, one straight cymbal stand, and one boom.

All in all, the *MLX* jazz kit has a lot to offer to both jazz and rock drummers. The inner finish is a judgement call. I think it makes the drums a bit too bright for most jazz players, but if you are one of those, you should listen and decide for yourself. For rock players: Don't let the small size scare you; these drums offer a unique sound and appearance that just might set you apart from all the behemoths out there.

The package prices for the *MLX* jazz kits are as follows: A four-piece kit with an 18" bass drum lists for \$2,460, a five-piece is \$2,820, and a six-piece sells for \$3,170. With a 20" bass drum, the prices are \$2,480, \$2,840, and \$3,190, respectively.

Rick Van Horn



MD's Sound System

For the purpose of product reviews involving drum and/or cymbal miking, MD employs the following equipment:

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- Zildjian ZMC-10 Cymbal Microphone System
- Seck 722 12-channel stereo mixer
- Shure M268 mixers (2)
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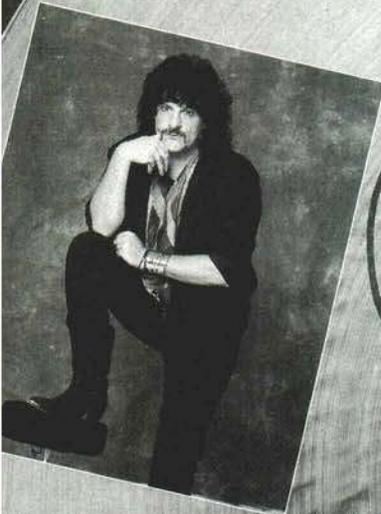
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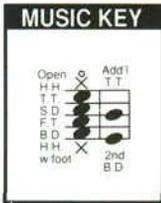
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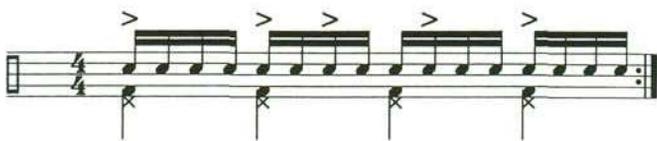


If a band has a great drummer who can play a drum solo that's musical and exciting, I say, "Let it happen!" A band should use their talent as effectively as they can to create the best show possible. A great drum solo can only be an asset to a live show.

When I perform a drum solo, I base it on three basic steps: 1. I know how it's going to start; 2. I know how it's going to develop; and 3. I know how it's going to end. If you outline your drum solo, it will help you to have some organization and direction. It will also help you be consistent and confident night after night. These guidelines make it possible for you to improvise and be creative within a basic organized structure. It's always good to know where you are in a solo, where you've been, and *especially* where you're going. If you have to think too much when you're playing a drum solo, you'll lose your spontaneity and your natural creative flow.

How To Begin

A good way to start a drum solo is to relate its opening to the beat you were playing leading up to the solo. For example, when I started my drum solo at the end of the song "The Wheel," which I performed on tour with the Jefferson Airplane this past summer, the beat I started with was the same beat I had been playing right up to my solo. It made sense musically because the solo related to the song I was playing. It's so simple, because as soon as the band stops playing and you keep going, you're soloing. This was the opening beat that I was using to begin the solo:



Developing A Solo

Once you've established your solo, you want to develop it and take it somewhere. A good thing I always try to do while soloing is keeping a steady groove or beat going that people can relate to. I try to think in terms of people dancing or tapping their feet. This is something I always admired Gene Krupa for: You could tap your foot or dance to the beat of his solos.

During "The Wheel," I played quarter notes with my kick drum and hi-hat continually, and when I started my solo I kept this pattern going with my feet:



From there, I wanted to play all kinds of patterns and rhythms on top of the steady quarter-note groove I was playing with my feet. The first thing I did to develop my solo was move the pattern I had

been playing on my snare drum to my tom-toms.



My plan was to develop my solo by improvising and playing variations of the original beat, while keeping a solid groove going with my feet. I added crash cymbals and played many different rhythmic patterns on my tom-toms and snare drum. I used 16th notes as my main source for rhythmic ideas, but as I began to develop my solo, I also added 8th-note and 16th-note triplet figures. I combined all of these ideas and used accents to create polyrhythmic off-beat rhythms. Meanwhile my feet kept the groove going, so no matter how "off-beat" I played with my hands, people could still dance to the tapping of my feet playing solid quarter notes. Here are a few measures of some of the types of things I would play.



Some nights I would change the patterns I was playing with my feet to a samba-like figure, and this would give me all sorts of other ideas to try on top. I would be playing this with my feet:



and something like this on top:



by Kenny Aronoff

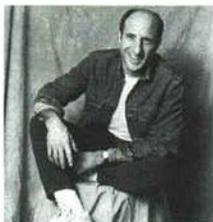


Photo by Rick Melkin



Some nights I would sing the choruses to "The Wheel," and that would keep my solo really related to the melody of the song. Eventually I would stop singing and turn my solo into its own little song with rhythmic melodies.

The Big Finish

While I'm developing the middle section of my solo, I start thinking about when I'm going to start its finale. It's very important to know how you're going to end your solo, because that's what people will remember the most. If you blow the ending, you will have messed up your entire solo. It's very reassuring to me to know how I'm going to end my solo, especially when I know it will be effective. Some nights I feel stronger and faster, so I make the ending longer and try out new ideas, but as long as I know how I'm going to end my solo, it will work out every night no matter how I feel.

At the end of my solo in "The Wheel," I changed the pattern I was playing with my feet from quarter notes or sambas to the classic 16th-note double bass drum pattern:



I've tried different ideas for the ending, but this 16th-note bass drum pattern is still one of the most powerful and exciting things you can play to get people excited. The way you can be unique with this 16th-note foot pattern is by coming up with something different for your hands to play on top. For example, at the end of my solo, I played a simple rhythmic pattern around my snare drum and tom-toms over the 16th-note figure with my feet. It was like a new theme that made the ending its own thing. I developed this theme by playing more rhythms, faster and faster, while adding cymbal crashes. I basically created a "wall of sound" and built it up as loud and as powerful as I could make it—and then I just stopped playing—BLAM!

This is only one approach to soloing, but I hope I've inspired you in some way to create your own solo, or helped you to be more prepared for that moment when someone says, "How about a drum solo?"



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Chris

Ask Replacements drummer Chris Mars who his primary influences are, and he might name surrealist artist Salvador Dali or Pablo Picasso rather than a drumming legend. It's not that Mars isn't enamored with drumming, it's just that he's an accomplished artist with a very promising second career in his future; he readily admits art is his first passion.

Not lagging far behind in priorities, though, is Mars' drumming, and, at the moment, that career is on the upswing due to the popularity of the Replacements' current release, *Don't Tell A Soul*. Once considered a post-punk, quasi-hard core band (formerly calling themselves *Dog Breath* and later the *Impediments*), the Replacements are now breaking away from the confines of college to a more commercial viability.

The Replacements' jangly, raw guitars, straightforward, in-your-face drumming, "informal" stage presence (chaotic might be a better description), and humorous, insightful, and occasionally self-deprecating lyrics make this Minneapolis-based foursome an inviting and unique rock 'n' roll experience. They may never join the leagues of the Top-40 format players, but this band has clearly not made that a requisite. Like the Stones, to whom they have sometimes been compared, the 'Mats are still basically a great garage band. It's just that now they play to a (fairly) big audience.

At 28, Mars has been a member of the band since its beginnings ten years ago. A fair amount of the material dictates a sans frills (sans fills, at times) approach for this stripped-down format. Mars provides a huge drum sound that cuts through the raucous guitars. He may rather be painting when he's on stage, but when you watch or listen to Mars play, you'd never think he's any-

thing but a drummer.

TS: How would you describe your drumming style overall?

CM: I would say I'm from the simplistic, Charlie Watts school of drumming: a basic drumkit, just keeping the beat, and the odd fill here and there. I grew up on a lot of '60s music because my older brothers laid a lot of those records on me. Keith Moon, John Bonham, and Charlie Watts made the biggest impression on me.

TS: Paul Westerberg [vocalist, guitarist, and driving force behind the Replacements] has said that you're a versatile player.

CM: I think I've always wanted to play like that in a band, and a group I've always admired for their versatility, N.R.B.Q., have always done that. The Replacements are the same way in that there's always the chance to try something else besides straight rock 'n' roll. Paul's a versatile songwriter to begin with, so that helps when you're working on a song.

TS: On some songs, like "Kiss Me On The Bus" [from the album *77m*], you don't play any fills for the duration of the song. Is that how the song is structured when it is composed, or is that just you taking a straight approach?

CM: That song does have a lot of little subtleties that change as far as my playing goes, but you have to listen really hard. There are fluctuations, and at first, it sounds like it's just an even beat across. But the subtleties, for me, are more important and are what make the changes in the song happen. For instance, by just changing the kick drum beat around, it can make a chorus and a verse sound different. If you're listening to the guitar or the snare, you wouldn't notice that kind of thing. So even if it sounds really simple, there is something going on there.

TS: Your music sounds as if the band records as a unit. It has a very informal, spontaneous feel.

CM: In the past, we would go into the studio and just slam it out. The melodies were worked up by the band and the lyrics were, of course, written by Paul. As far as recording the songs, early on we would practice them as a band and then just bash them out the way they were rehearsed, with very few overdubs. It was real live back then. The last two records were more pieced together, more thought-out than the previous ones were.

TS: Do you have a preference for either approach?

CM: Sometimes I do, sometimes I don't. I think *Pleased To Meet Me* had a combination of both. It was more of that go-in-and-let-it-rip approach and only partly a well-thought-out process. This last album was mostly a thought-out project.

TS: I guess the preparation for recording—the problems with the producer, changing studios, etc.—might have affected the way you worked.

CM: That was an aspect that kind of jolted us a little bit. At first we were ready to go with it, then there was a big delay. If we had stayed up in Bearsville, I think it would have changed the outcome of the record somehow. [The group eventually recorded in an L.A. studio.]

TS: Do you and Tommy Stinson [bass] go in and do your rhythm tracks first?

CM: Mainly, but on this last one, all four of us went in and did as many takes as necessary to find one that seemed to flow all the way through. The producer, Matt Wallace, would be listening for the drums first, and if the guitar and bass would be happening on those takes, then we'd leave them on, too. This way, we were getting a basis for the songs, but everybody was in there playing, so it would still have a live feel. But *Don't Tell A Soul* had more overdubs with the guitars and things, although it had the live feel and the approach of listening for the drums first. We've been playing together for so long that we need to be in there together [laughs]—to give each other a bad look or a smile when someone needs it.

TS: Do you stay involved for the mixing?

CM: Oh yeah, sure. I'm there up until the very final mixes. After that, it's up to the performance. If the performance is there, I can trust them. I'm usually there for all the overdubbing and basic mixdowns. But I tend to leave before the final mixes because I like to be surprised at the final outcome, and if you hear the track too much, you can't be all that objective.

TS: On the track "Darlin' One," from *Don't*

Mars

Tell A Soul, your drum sound was distinctively aggressive, more up-front than on the rest of the album.

CM: That one was more live, recording-wise and idea-wise, than the rest. It was more of a group effort. We came up with that song live, on the *Pleased To Meet Me* tour. A lot of times when we go into the studio, we go in there cold, whereas on this track, the feel is different because we had worked it out live a little more. I'm pleased with that one myself. That and "We'll Inherit The Earth" are my two favorites.

TS: Your drumming favorites or your song favorites?

CM: Both, really. And there's just more of a live spirit on "Darlin' One."

TS: When you collaborate writing-wise with the band, how do you contribute?

CM: If we're working out a song and something doesn't flow or doesn't feel right, then I'll suggest a change on how to make it work: chord-wise or arrangement-wise. Early on, we would all collaborate more on the melodies. These days, I have less of an active role in that.

TS: Speaking of the early days, the Replacements were once very much a hard core, post-punk band. Do you like the more diverse musical path that you've steered towards recently, or do you prefer playing the more thrashy drum style of the old days?

CM: I like fluctuations with songs. I've always liked the heavy, hard-hitting ones, and I think I always will. But there's a lot to be said about playing a really straight ballad or even a more pop-oriented song. There's actually a lot of fun in all of it, so I don't think I favor any one particular style.

TS: It sounds as though you enjoy playing a song for the song it is, not the drumming challenge.

CM: Yeah, it's more of a team thing. I don't want to be a hot dog or a flash guy. When we play a song live, I hear the whole thing; I'm just one piece in the puzzle.

TS: Do you find that you're watching the guys out front? They're very animated performers.

CM: Oh, I watch them a lot. Sometimes I die laughing. I'll be sitting there trying to keep a beat, just laughing so hard I'll practically drop my drumsticks. For all the craziness, it's a joy to be watching it all, having them in front of me.

TS: You've been together for about ten years. I guess you've noticed a lot of developments on a musical level over that time span?

CM: Whether it's consciously or subconsciously, you tend to pick up a feel for each other's playing. Over the years, off and on,

we've played in several offshoot bands, and when you play with these other musicians—no matter how good they're considered to be on the scene here in Minneapolis—you can feel something's missing. When I played in a band called Spider Bite—which I did with Tommy—sometimes there would be a different spirit to it in comparison to when he wasn't there. We know each other and we're familiar with each other's little moves from growing together over the years. It's a

CM: It's a Ludwig, which I've used for over ten years. For cymbals I use both Zildjian and Paiste. When I'm recording, I use whatever they bring in.

TS: You don't get too worked up about what you use for recording?

CM: No, but live I tend to care a little bit more. It's just a different thing live; there's more wear and tear on the drums, and you want equipment that's gonna hold up. In the studio, it all comes down to using things



Photo by Ebet Roberts

subtle thing, but it's there; we definitely feed off each other.

TS: When this band first got its legs, Tommy was just 12 years old. Did you have reservations when he walked in to audition?

CM: No, no, he was a really bright kid. I didn't think he was too young at all. If he could do his part, then he was all right by me.

TS: This band had quite a reputation for cutting loose on stage—sometimes being completely trashed and going wild during the shows. It seems as though you've gotten a bit mellower with time.

CM: I think we've gotten a little bit mellower at home, but as soon as we get on the bus, the four of us are the same. We don't always get trashed on stage anymore, but we have a good time. I think everybody does. Of course, we've had that image for a long time, and we're probably not half as bad as most bands, but we're stuck with it because we played it up too much when we were younger.

TS: What kind of kit do you play?

that sound good. Live, I think you can make a trash can sound good.

TS: You're an accomplished artist. Do you recognize a connection between your art and music at all? Do the two feed each other?

CM: No, I would tend to think not. When I'm home, I concentrate on my art. When we're here [in Minneapolis], we don't rehearse at all. We'll get together maybe once a month for practice, and if we have a gig coming up, we'll practice once a week only for the two weeks before the gig. We play so much on the road that we don't take practicing too seriously at all.

When we're on the road for an extended period, I find music distracting from my art. I find that it's hard to draw a doodle sometimes. I mean, I can doodle in my hotel room after the gig, but I need time to concentrate and just move from the playing to the drawing. It's hard to settle into the art when you're playing every night.

TS: Were you an artist before becoming a drummer?

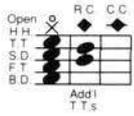
continued on page 92

Transcribed by Vincent DeFrancesco, Jr.



Tico Torres: "Born To Be My Baby"

MUSIC KEY



This month's *Rock Charts* features the heavy playing style of Tico Torres on the hit single "Born To Be My Baby," from Bon Jovi's *New Jersey* album (Mercury 836 345-1). On this particular chart Tico lays into the hi-hat, which in several places is played partially open. One thing you'll notice about the drumming on this tune is that Tico is driving the band throughout; there's no doubt where the groove is.

$\text{♩} = 130$

The musical score consists of seven staves of drum notation. The first staff begins with a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 130$. The notation includes various drum symbols: HH for hi-hat, SD for snare drum, and BD for bass drum. There are several measures with hi-hats marked as 'loose hi-hat'. The score includes sections labeled A, B, and C, and a double bar line with a '2' indicating a second ending. The notation includes accents, dynamic markings, and repeat signs.

Musical staff 1: A single staff of music with a treble clef. It contains a sequence of eighth notes and quarter notes, some with accents (>). There are two repeat signs (//) in the first and fourth measures.

Musical staff 2: A single staff of music with a treble clef. It contains a sequence of eighth notes and quarter notes, some with accents (>). The final measure features a hi-hat pattern indicated by 'x' marks and the text "(loose hi-hat)".

Musical staff 3: A single staff of music with a treble clef. It contains a sequence of eighth notes and quarter notes, some with accents (>). The first three measures feature a hi-hat pattern indicated by 'x' marks. A double bar line with a '2' above it indicates a second ending.

Musical staff 4: A single staff of music with a treble clef. It begins with the instruction "D.S. Al Coda" and a repeat sign. The first measure has a circled 'D' above it. The staff contains a sequence of eighth notes and quarter notes, some with accents (>).

Musical staff 5: A single staff of music with a treble clef. It contains a sequence of eighth notes and quarter notes, some with accents (>). The first two measures are bracketed and labeled "1.", and the next two measures are bracketed and labeled "2.", indicating first and second endings.

Musical staff 6: A single staff of music with a treble clef. It contains a sequence of eighth notes and quarter notes, some with accents (>). The final measure features a chord indicated by the letter "E" above it.

Musical staff 7: A single staff of music with a treble clef. It contains a sequence of eighth notes and quarter notes, some with accents (>). A double bar line with a "2" above it indicates a second ending.

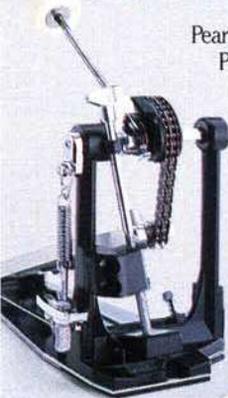
Musical staff 8: A single staff of music with a treble clef. It contains a sequence of eighth notes and quarter notes, some with accents (>). The staff ends with a repeat sign (//).

Vincent DeFrancesco, Jr. is the president of Drum Charts International.



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by Roy Burns

Left Hand Problems

Many young drummers are what I call "very right-handed." Their left hand really does have trouble keeping up with their right. This seems to be true with drummers who use the matched grip as well as those who use the traditional left-hand grip.

When I first started teaching, everyone played with the traditional grip. Power and speed were almost always a problem. The left hand could rarely match the right hand. With a lot of practicing, some right-handed players managed to overcome the limitations of their left hand, although most did not.

The traditional grip came from marching drumming. Before the invention of the leg rest (or drum carrier), the marching drummer carried the drum at a severe angle, from left to right, with the high point of the drum to the player's left. The traditional grip was developed to compensate for the extreme angle. In fact, practice pads were designed to have the same severe angle.

In the 60's, many teachers—both rudi-

mental and symphonic—decided that the traditional grip was the culprit when it came to left hand problems. Their feeling was that if the left hand were held in the same manner as the right hand, the inherent left hand problems would be automatically overcome. Teachers such as Don Cannedy at Southern Illinois University reasoned that since all other percussion instruments were played with matched grip, the same grip ought to be used for marching drumming and drumset. It was a very good argument, and it makes a lot of sense, especially for the all-around percussion player.

Around the same time, an English drummer by the name of Phil Seamen was making a name for himself as the best session and jazz drummer in the U.K. Phil played matched grip. As a result, the jazz drummers in England began playing matched grip—due to Phil's influence—in the early 60's, before rock 'n' roll had really taken off. So the movement to matched-grip playing seemed to come from a couple of sources.

A funny thing happened, though. Although drumset players could achieve more power with the left hand using the matched grip, the left hand remained a problem for many, many drummers.

Today, due to the influence of players such as Steve Gadd, Vinnie Colaiuta, Dave Weckl, Steve Smith, and others, the traditional grip has made a comeback in popularity. In fact, a lot of players use both grips, depending on the music. Usually, the traditional grip is used for jazz music, and the matched grip is used for rock and funk music.

I have some students who use matched grip, some who play almost exclusively traditional grip, and others who play both ways. I feel it is up to the player to decide which is most comfortable. However, matched grip or no, left hand problems remain.

There are several reasons for this. One problem is due to today's music. Playing the back beat relentlessly with the left hand is somewhat like being the catcher on a baseball team: "It's a dirty job, but someone has to do it." The result can be a loss of flexibility with the left hand. Also, most young players who play a lot of rock have a heavier-sounding left hand compared to their right hand.

Here are some suggestions for improving your left hand. These ideas will work with either grip.

If you are comfortable with your right hand, practice in front of a mirror. Try to do exactly the same things with your left that you do with your right. If you are playing

matched grip, try to get it to look exactly the same. Play a pattern with your right hand and then play it with your left.

If you are playing traditional grip, watch the tips of the sticks in the mirror. The height of the sticks should be the same. If the left hand is consistently higher or lower than the right hand, adjust the height until the tips are the same. Practicing single strokes at a moderate speed will help you to determine if one hand is consistently higher or lower.

For power, practice at a moderate speed, but play higher off the drum or pad. This will increase velocity, because the stick is covering a greater distance. This will produce more volume with less effort. If you use only strength for volume you will most likely create a lot of tension. Certainly strength is needed, but by using distance to increase velocity and power, you should be able to retain flexibility and avoid excessive tension.

Take about 5% off of your volume level if you are in a loud group. No one will really notice. The sound men can turn you up a bit, if necessary. Also, that 5% reduction in effort will eliminate a lot of tension. You may surprise yourself by not only achieving enough volume but also getting a better sound from your drums.

"No pain, no gain" is a great saying for weightlifters and professional athletes. However, music is not an athletic event. Sure, you must be in shape and you must practice. But be considerate of your body. There are many small muscles in your hands and fingers; treat them with respect. Playing *harder* is not always playing *better*. To play hard, with control and without straining, takes time. You must work up to it; you can't do it overnight.

I recently attended a Vinny Appice clinic. When it comes to power drumming, Vinny is one of the best. During the clinic, Vinny explained how he took drum lessons, and then applied what he had learned to develop more power. He also stressed that the time has to be steady. Some drummers will rush when they try to play extremely hard.

Last, but not least, whatever your style and whichever grip you use, devote some special practice time each day to your left hand. The wrist turn is often the problem, so practice alternating between quarter notes and 8th notes, using just the wrist, no arm. Warm up the left hand for a few minutes before using your right hand. If you are using an effective approach, your left hand should catch up to your right hand over a period of time.

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there. What else would you put in there? [laughs]

TS: You do a triplet on the snare after Jon's scream on "I'll Be There For You," which is a nice effect. Is that a one-handed or two-handed pattern?

TT: It's two-handed. The scream he did is very intense, and it just gave me a chill in the studio. That triplet is a very simple thing that just seemed to complement that scream and bring it back into the song. Instead of doing something more elaborate, I thought those few beats were important. It's funny because Max Weinberg commented on that particular part, where I come out of the solo and turn the beat around. But because

that scream is emotional, that roll should be, too. Those are the things that, live, when the lights hit and those beats come in, they just take your breath away.

TS: Do you find that you have to feel that intensity yourself in order to convey it?

TT: On yeah, definitely. Sometimes it's just, "Wow!" It's like magic. That's hard to do on a big stage where everything's isolated monitor-wise. You have to rely on your monitors, and eye contact is from 30 feet. In a club it's much easier because you're next to each other and you can hear better, plus you can see everyone in the audience.

TS: Speaking with you last time, we talked about showmanship being a priority. That

aspect of your live performing has changed.

TT: I used to really get into twirling when I was younger; I was into being really flamboyant. Right now, my concentration is focused on playing and just hitting more precisely. I'd rather have people hear my thunder. At the end of songs I may occasionally jump off the stool. And I do like to dance on the drums. I like to move my body and not just my arms and legs. I might move my torso along with the rhythms. I don't know if it's because I'm Cuban, but it's real natural for me to do that. Sometimes I'll look at the tapes and laugh about how goofy it looks, but I don't think about it, I'm just dancing up there.

TS: You never crowd a melody, you go for a real open beat in a song. It would seem that you have a songwriting background.

TT: That really comes from listening to music, plus I played guitar before I played drums, so I've always been melody-conscious. Melody and rhythm should complement each other. I've always thought it was better to aspire to be a musician's musician than to be a drummer's drummer. I mean, I don't go out to a club or a stadium to hear a drum show. Who's coming to hear that? A clinic is different, but live you need to feature all the facets to make the show happen: the melody and the rhythms and everything in between.

If I were to overplay, I'd crowd the vocals and the melody. I'd rather enhance it. When it's my turn in the solo during "Let's Make It Baby," it's my turn to shine. But it's not really an actual drum solo, it's my hi-hat going on four, and I'm playing all different time signatures real sparsely, creating a mood. It's musical, not a display of chops.

TS: Another effective thing you do is start out "Living In Sin" with an interplay between the hi-hat and bass drum. Then that beat changes and goes straight.

TT: That happens in the middle of the song, too. The song needed an intro, so I decided just to accent the two notes on the bass drum, although live I wrote a different part

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for it. Live, it has almost a Genesis vibe to it: tom and snare drum with the bass drum going like a march. I start the song that way, then we do part of the verse that way, and at the end, we fade it out. I changed it because the way I play it live is a lot heavier and a lot more effective, and if I had thought of that in the studio, I would have done it like that. If we do a live album, I'll do it that way.

TS: Another characteristic of your style is that you tend to use flams when you go into cuts (stops). Is that something you picked up from studying with Joe Morello or observing Elvin Jones?

TT: Well, the flam is a good way to start and a good way to finish. It's precise, it's

simple, but I don't know exactly why I use it a lot. It may be from listening to all those James Brown songs where the drummer did a roll and then just cut it as if to say, "That's it." Maybe that's why it's inherent to my playing, although I never really thought about where it came from.

Sometimes I play things that later on I can't emulate. I'll do something on a recording and say, "How did I do that?" It could have just come out, and I won't know how it was done. I've tried to work those things out by writing them out, but I find that I lose the feeling that way.

TS: Your accents are very rhythmic and can be an infectious part of the groove of the songs.

TT: It has something to do with what you listen to, I think. You hear a lot of flams in Latin music, which I'm into. And watching Elvin Jones, his dynamics go up and down, and he's got a certain way of accenting. When I spent a lot of time watching him, I'd try to understand *why* he played something rather than so much *what* he played. Like, why was he playing with the sax line? What exactly would possess him to play a certain figure? That's what most interests me: What's making him create? I'd listen to McCoy Tyner or Buster Williams and see just why Jones would be playing something and where and who he's getting his ideas from. I get my ideas from the melody line, the vocalist, the guitar, the keyboards,

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TS: Bon Jovi tours with very few breaks for as long as 18 months at a stretch. How do you keep the "familiarity" you spoke of from turning into boredom when you and the band have to play the same songs for that long?

TT: I have to look out in the audience and find that one kid to connect with. You can't see all those faces, so I try to find that one person, and that's what makes me want to play, no matter how tired I am. I usually pick a kid that's not into it, and I try hard to get him into it. I have to find somebody in the audience that I've got to play for. I play to the whole audience, but I key in on one face. That keeps me going.

TS: Monotony is never a problem after a year and a half on the road?

TT: The monotony comes from being away from home and having to travel all of the time. As far as the playing goes, I may play the same thing every day, but it's always played with a different emotion. We also change the songs in that we try to take them somewhere else.

TS: The changes are made right there, on the spot?

TT: Right on the spot. Maybe Johnny will go into a different song, or in the middle of something we'll just break into a jam. That's the kind of spontaneity that keeps it alive.

TS: Has your setup been modified much since your last interview?

TT: I've taken away two drums. Instead of having four toms up front I use two mounted and two floors. The cymbal setup is the same except I'm using the new Paiste line, which is fantastic. The new kit I have is 24-karat gold.

TS: Did you design it?

TT: I told them I wanted a gold drumset, and I figured they'd make it brass or paint it gold. I never expected the real thing.

The drums were hand-painted by a buddy of mine, Wayne Turback, who's an artist, and he painted all the "hit men" on there—Edward G. Robinson, Al Capone, Bogart, James Cagney—and it's a real pretty set.

TS: What do you have coming up after the tour is completed this spring?

TT: Who knows what will come up? Last time between tours, I went down to Australia to record with Jimmy Barnes, which was great. Frankie & the Knockouts plan to get together to do an album, so that's coming up. This situation does give you the opportunity to get in and play with some of the people that you look up to. I've known Miles Davis for a few years, and we hang out together and talk every now and then.

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I'd love to do something with him someday. This situation does open the doors.

TS: You're involved with a band called Uncle Funk [which includes bass player Tony Levin]. How did that come together?

TT: All the guys are from Woodstock, and one day we all just jammed in this little farmhouse up there, then we started doing gigs. We never rehearse. We just pick out songs up there and it just takes off.

TS: You do all the funk standards?

TT: Everything from King Curtis and James Brown to Tower Of Power and the Beatles. We'll even throw in a Deep Purple number. We just do it as we feel it, no rehearsals. We're just with each other, following each other, and we've played a lot of gigs that way. We have a lot of fun.

TS: When you get the time from your respective prior commitments, do you all plan to pick up Uncle Funk where you left off?

TT: Yes, and I also would like to do some recording with Tony; I plan on doing my own thing soon.

TS: What have you got in mind?

TT: I'd like to do my own record when we get off the road. We'll have a long hiatus after this tour—which I think is good because people can get Bon Jovi-ed out after 18 months. So some of us want to do our respective solo projects. I've got something in the back of my mind I want to do.

TS: Would that project also have its roots in funk?

TT: Yes, and also rock and a little bit of Latin—a compilation of all my influences—where the nucleus is good rhythms. And I don't want to think of it as my "solo album"; I want it to be a project where a lot of people will be involved. It requires a group effort to make a great record.

TS: Playing with Levin would be a challenge for any drummer, I'd guess.

TT: He's so melodic; he plays around rhythms, and he's classically trained. The most fun I've ever had in a band was with him, and he'd be involved in my project. I was with Gadd a couple of weeks ago, and I'd like to invite him to play on it, doing double drum things together.

TS: What are some of the highlights for you over the last few years?

TT: Doing a roll on David Letterman, [laughs] Also, when I go into a store and moms come up to me and say, "I know the band you're in." That's cool.

But there have been so many highlights, musically speaking, that it's hard to remem-

ber them all. I guess the biggest was playing Giants Stadium last June. To be home and to do that kind of massive show was a real highlight. Going to Russia was a highlight. I think the whole thing is a highlight in my life. Since *Slippery When Wet*, it's been a big whirlwind, and it's nice to be along for the ride.

TS: Since you struggled at periods in your career, success this big must taste especially sweet.

TT: To be able to play drums and have so many people hear you, and then to eventually be able to do your own thing because of it is so gratifying. I plan to be a working drummer for a long, long time.



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BS: It was beautiful. Actually, looking back on it, it's the best musical experience I've had to date in a commercial sense.

I'd say another good musical experience I had was my association with McCoy Tyner. I did an album with him, which I would say was one of the premier musical experiences of my life. It was a three-day session at Fantasy Records with Freddie Hubbard, Benny Maupin, Jack DeJohnette, Bobby Hutcherson, Stanley Clarke, and Hubert Laws. It was three days of recording live, with really no overdubbed stuff. The record was called *Together*. Just the experience of being in a room with all these guys at one time was incredible. I had grown up listening to

"The tree that these drums came from was 150 feet high. I carved drums for a year out of that tree."

these guys because I was a jazz enthusiast. I have played on at least 300 albums, and

that session is one of the more memorable ones.

I must say, though, I recently had an experience that might have topped *Together*, and that was working on Quincy Jones' new album, called *Back On The Block*. Every time Quincy does something, it's a monumental event. He re-did "Birdland," which was written by Joe Zawinul, who I had just gotten off the road with. Just while I was there, Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie, James Moody, Gerald Albright, and Chaka Khan came in. There was a rap thing that Kool Moe Dee came in and worked on. This project surpassed anything else I've done because of the participation of the cross section of cultures it involved.

Last year, Cafe De Silva, who was the percussionist with Roberta Flack, approached me before I went on the road with Anita Baker about making him some bata drums, so if you walked in my room while I was on the road with her, you'd see these three drums I was carving. I carried this stuff around with me from city to city. It's an integral part of my life. I have one foot in 500 B.C. and one foot in 2000 A.D. **RF:** Along with working with other artists, you have had many solo recordings. How difficult is it to lead a group being a percussionist?

BS: It can be difficult, and I've had some hard times. For instance, in 1984, I went to Europe with my band. I had just completed a brand new album that was to be released on MCA Records. I took seven people to Europe with me and picked up three or four people there, and we traveled around. I was trying to get other companies there to release my record—not import it, but release it. The week my record was released, the record company fired its press person, I lost my record deal, and things got worse from there. While I was in Europe, I bought a Mercedes bus for the band to travel in and a car for myself, and I figured, if anything went wrong, I could sell the stuff and get round-trip tickets for everybody. I was taking the chance of my life. My hotel bill in Germany was about \$2,000. I owed the musicians money, and we had gigs canceled because nothing was happening with this record that was supposed to be out. But I figured I wouldn't give up, it was going to work out.

We had a gig booked in Germany at a big weekend festival. We went to the first night of the weekend and watched the other group, and the whole setup looked great. When we showed up the next day, the promoter was hiding, the sound people were tearing down the sound system, and the stage people were tearing the stage

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down because the promoter couldn't pay anybody. This was the money that was supposed to be paying all of our bills! At 6:00 the following morning the bass player tells me that he just turned the bus over with all the equipment in it! By the time I got on the airplane to come back home, I had 25 cents to my name. So when I came back here, I had to regroup. I had lost my record deal, my storage bill was something like \$2,200, I had no car, no place to live, very few instruments—zero. I decided to get away for a while, so I went up in the woods in the redwood forest. I took this time to chop a tree down and carve some drums. That was one thing I had always promised myself to do: Chop a tree down and carve some drums out in the traditional way. While I was up in the woods, I met a computer wizard by the name of Dan Ryman. He actually showed me how to chop a tree down. The tree that these drums came from was 150 feet high. I carved drums for a year out of that tree.

One day Dan said to me, "Bill, I have this computer that you should come and check out," because he saw what I was into. It took Dan six months to get me to even look at the computer because I had said, "There's no way in the world you're going to get me to sample my instruments into this machine. The next thing I know, my sounds will be on the street." I also thought I would be jeopardizing the authenticity of what I was about and the things I was trying to preserve. When he finally got me to come over to the house, it blew me away what I could do with it. He taught me everything about his computer, so I started sampling all of my sounds. What I would do is sample all the different sounds you can make with one drum with different techniques. I took all the little intricacies of everything I learned—djembe, conga drums, etc.—and sampled every little nuance I could play on a drum onto a disc. Then I took the disc and put it into the computer and assigned the sounds to any note on the keyboard I wanted to. Since I've had this classical training, I can play my percussion stuff with keyboard technique, as opposed to having *Octapads* and playing sticks on a pad or something. I have ten fingers, so why not play my percussion that way?

RF: Doesn't that tamper with the cultural experience?

BS: Not really. The computer can be helpful. For instance, say a guy came here and had some rhythms that he wanted to teach me. I could program his rhythms with the actual drum sounds in the computer so I could later go back and give these rhythms out to people in my own group. I wouldn't

want it to take over real instruments, but it's a valuable tool.

I did a series of discs for E-mu Systems that have ethnic percussion sounds on them. Say a producer needed to score a film and he wanted ethnic music, but he didn't have a budget to pay a tribe of people to play some African music. I have all these discs of traditional music in an ensemble format. It can help in the authenticity of the music for a movie. Every time I see a movie with anything African or Carribean, they take very little time to make it authentic. So that was another thing that appealed to me. I could put out a series of discs with traditional music on them that would better represent my culture.

RF: The *Roots* project must have been some-

thing near and dear to your heart.

BS: Yes, it was. Quincy called me and asked if I wanted to come and work for him. I didn't know what *Roots* was—*nobody* knew what *Roots* was—but he explained the project and said, "I understand you have great knowledge about African music. We've been working on this movie for a while. We have some stuff, but we want the rest of it to be even more representative." So I went down and worked for him for a month. Zak Diouf was from the exact area that the character Kunta Kinte was supposed to have been from, so since he knew the traditional music of that area, I convinced Quincy to bring him in. Unfortunately, by the time they got to us, a lot of the material had already been done, and we had to try to go



Luis Conte, Carol Steele, Martin Cohen and Roger Squitiero backstage at the Bottom Line, NYC.
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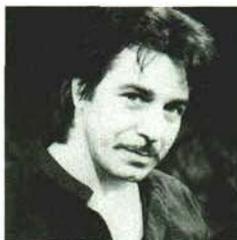
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over some of those things and rectify them.
RF: Were you consulting about the instruments, or were you actually composing?
BS: I was playing and composing, which was the same situation with *The Color Purple*. They let me see the film and said, "Here's what we got, and here's what we need." On *Roots*, there were some people who were critical and said the music wasn't as authentic as it could have been. I thought that was unjust because up until that time, they didn't do any kind of critiques on the *Tarzan* movies that were coming out, so why pick on this?
RF: Back to your time in the woods. You were rehabilitating and getting your spiritual self back together again. How long were you there?

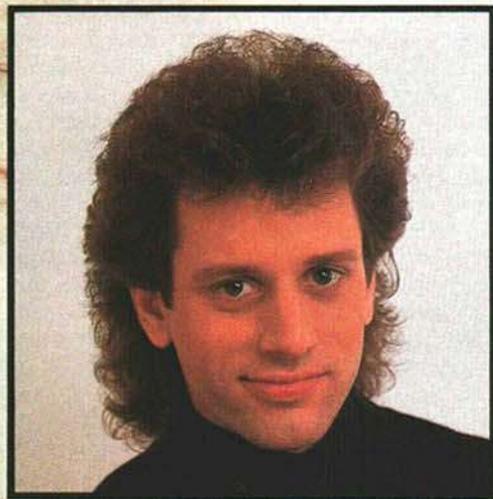
BS: I stayed for a year and learned the computer. I had said to Dan that I was worried that my sounds would get ripped off, and he said, "Just do it for yourself; then you won't have to have four or five other guys all the time to play with." It made a lot of sense. One day he called me on the phone and said, "Bill, I'm at the music store, and a guy here asked me if I had heard the new *Emulator Percussion Discs*, and it's your stuff." We realized they had copied my samples. We didn't live far from the factory, and Dan would take his computer to them for service. He would go and talk shop with the guys, and he had left them some of my samples. When they asked if they could copy them, he said no and then left to get something to eat. He left everything there, and they took the disc and copied it, and my stuff ended up on the market at \$18.00 a disc. There was my worst fear realized. Dan was really hurt because he knew how much it hurt me.

They sent a representative of the company out to talk to me to offer to buy me off, but I figured out what I was losing on the disc by them having my stuff on the market—how many sessions that would mean to me. So I got my case together. I found a computer crimes expert from the police department, who also gave me a copy of the penal codes they had violated and the fines they would have to pay if found guilty. There was also imprisonment for what they had done. I figured everything out logically, and when they sent the representative out, I said, "Here, why don't you read this, and *then* we can talk about it." They began to realize I was someone they'd have to reckon with. So rather than go to court, they settled with me by giving me a job; I've been doing stuff for them ever since. It's like changing lemons into lemonade. So I got an *Emulator*, I got a computer, they gave me a job, and they hooked me up with Casio Japan, so it actually worked out to be a good experience.

RF: How did you get back into the playing scene?
BS: I got my disc stuff together and I packed my bags. While I was in the woods, I did an album that I financed myself, but I had been away from the scene for ten months, so I had to re-establish myself. I packed a

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truck with all the instruments that I had accumulated and moved to L.A. Then I began to climb the ladder again. *The Color Purple* was the first substantial work I got that made me feel I was back. George Duke called me for the Anita Baker job, and I really thank him for that. In a way, working with Anita Baker has been like the Herbie Hancock situation in that when I worked with him, it really helped launch a new movement in music. Anita Baker is similar in that she is a pioneer in bringing jazz to a level that pop music is on.

RF: What was your setup with Anita Baker?

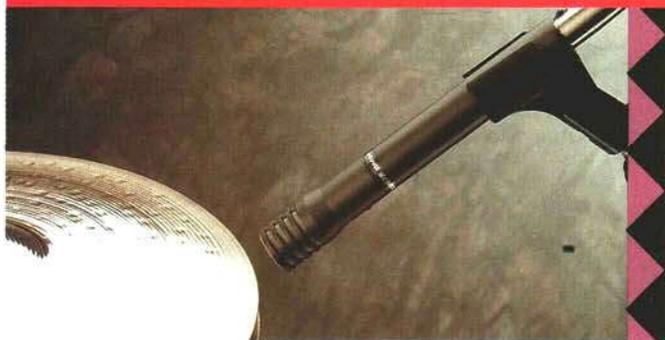
BS: The band was offstage because the concerts were done in the round. It's really difficult to have a band on a circular stage that moves because of cords and cables and all of that, so the band was on the floor. For her, I used a combination of electronic and acoustic percussion. In front of me, I had three conga drums, and right above them on a stand I had a set of bongos. To my left I had timbales with a full complement of wood blocks and different sized bells. Above that, there were some windchimes and cymbals. Behind me, I had a percussion table that had various hand percussion instruments, and to my right, I had an *Emulator II*. Under it, I had an *SP/200* and an effects rack with various electronic effects like digital delay. With my left hand I played bells and timbales, and with my right hand I played congas and bongos, all at the same time. In between, if there were certain instruments I needed to play, I'd reach over to the keyboard, which was MIDI'd to the *SP1200* drum machine. My setup enabled me to play as a percussion ensemble.

RF: I never thought of Baker's material as lending itself to so much percussion.

BS: It's not really on the records, but live it worked out great. In fact at one point she asked the sound man to put my stuff up louder, which made me feel good. It let me know she liked what I was doing. I didn't do anything like she had on the record, except for the few things that were actually integral parts of the music. For the most part, though, she gave me a free hand in doing whatever I wanted to do.

RF: Is that the same setup you used with Joe Zawinul?

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BS: Basically. Over the seven months I was with Anita I was able to really hone this concept. With Joe, I was also an integral part of the onstage thing, plus it was instrumental music as opposed to a vocal thing, and I had a pretty big solo spot in there.

RF: What is your soloing like?

BS: Whenever I get an opportunity to do a solo spot, I use just the shekere, and I sing with it. When I was with Herbie, I had a 15-minute solo spot every night playing the instrument, so I developed a solo that I still use now. It works every time. I really don't like solos, though. To me, percussion playing is more of an ensemble situation. It's hard to play a samba by yourself.

RF: What is the project you're doing now?

BS: I'm working on a project right now with a few select musicians. For the past three years since I've been back in L.A., I've been trying to acquire another recording contract. With the prior recording contracts I had, I basically had to play a certain type of music in order to maintain the contract. I started off by doing a lot of ethnic and commercial things together, but little by little it got to be more commercial. Someone came to me recently, though, and asked me what kind of music I would really like to do, and I said I wanted to do jungle music—the music I've known the best but that I've never been able to record. Hopefully this project will be the debut of the black American surfacing with this neo-African cultural music.

RF: What is your goal?

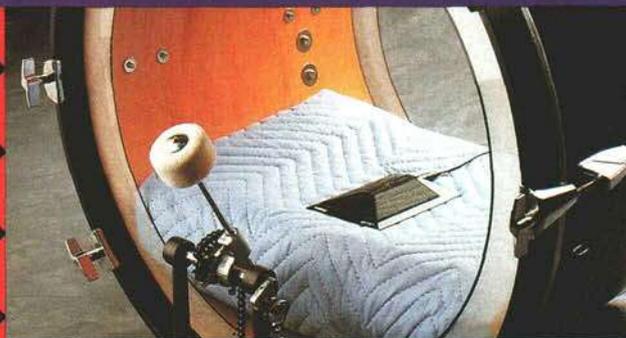
BS: To me, everybody has a purpose on this planet. I have, for a long time, been involved in trying to uplift my people, as my parents did. The major goal in my life that I have set up for myself is that institute I mentioned earlier, in an effort to bring cultures together.

RF: You've been through incredible ups and downs.

BS: I've been through it all, so there's nothing that can happen to me that I'm not ready for. I'm a percussionist; we're the last ones hired and the first ones fired. It's very unusual for a percussionist to have a record deal, so I've been fortunate. I had nine albums out in eleven years. I can't complain.



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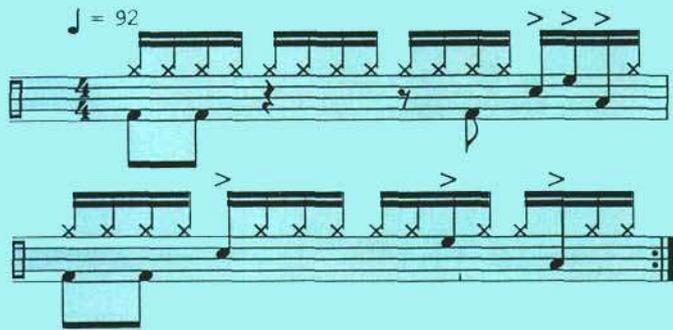
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CURE BEATS continued from page 31

they move the song along and add a degree of tension. Another challenge is obviously keeping the groove going on such a slow, uncluttered beat.



Disintegration sees the band leaning even more toward longer songs with slow tempos and often lengthy intros. A good example of this style element is "Fascination Street," which features the following four-bar beat. The song's almost oppressive nature is benefited by Boris's unyielding snare drum pattern. The hi-hat is fairly low in the mix and seems to fade slightly in and out, giving just a hint of movement to the otherwise static beat.

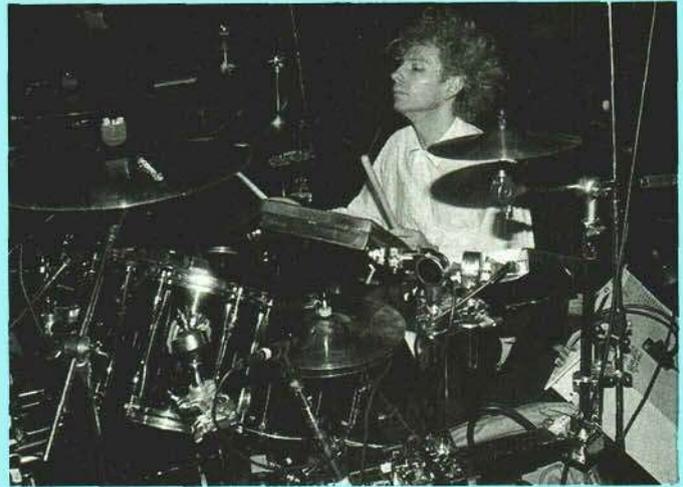
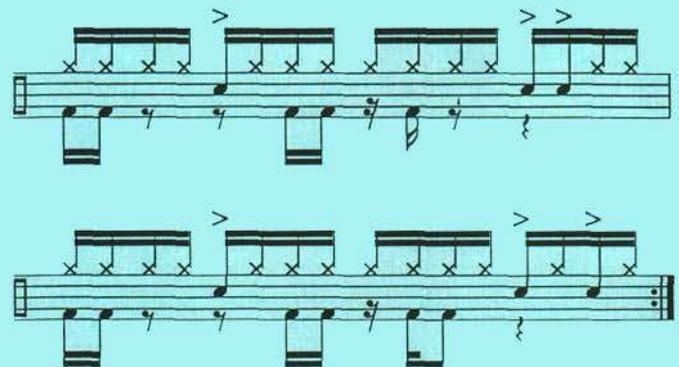


Photo by Edward Ajaj



Transcribed by William F. Miller

WILLIAMS continued from page 30

alright'; I didn't really get that much of a buzz out of it. The Cure was such a change in atmosphere, from feeling like you were an employee to instantly...! mean within two days I was feeling like I was part of the band. We were in the dressing room once, and there was a photographer that wanted to take pictures of the band, and everyone got up and I just sort of stayed seated there. And Robert said, 'Come on, man, we're doing a photo.' I said, 'They don't want to photograph me, I'm only doing two weeks,' but he said, 'No, come on, you're in the group.' It was really refreshing.

"When we got home," Williams continues, "Robert asked if I was interested in playing on the next album. At that point I suppose I was a bit worried about security, because I knew that the Thompson Twins were paying well. And the next album for the Cure looked a bit up in the air. But I went to Paris to have a chat with the Thompson Twins. Basically their manager did me a big favor. I tried to put the ball in their court, saying, 'I'd carry on with you if I had more involvement'—like if I was involved in playing on the album. I think maybe Tom would have gone along with that, but the manager insisted in having a meeting with me first on my own, which I

thought was a bit strange. And then Tom came along, and the manager said, 'Oh, well, Boris has decided he's leaving. There's no point discussing it; we've just got to get a new drummer.' And I thought, 'You bastard; that's not what I said.' So I was really depressed about it. I left and drove back to England and thought, 'Oh shit, *that's* decided anyway. At least I won't have to worry about that side of it.' So then I had a meeting with the Cure's manager and I just insisted, '[I know you'll probably offer me more money for the album than this, but I want one point, even if it means I get less money]—just because I wanted the involvement in feeling that what I did had some say in the band. So he grudgingly agreed to it," Boris laughs.

Boris's timing turned out to be perfect, as his little joke before about Vince Ely suggested. The album that "looked a bit up in the air" before Williams joined—*The Head On The Door*—turned out to be more successful than any previous Cure album and broke the band on American commercial radio with its single "In Between Days." *The Head On The Door* actually opens up with the short drum-fill intro that Boris revs up "In Between Days" with—a nice introduction for Williams to Cure fans. "Yeah, I enjoyed playing that part," Boris recalls,

"because it was fairly ragged, and I think we did it in one take; it was just really quick. *The Head On The Door* was such a different album than *The Top* or obviously *Pornography* and the rest of their previous stuff. It was funny, because when we were doing it, I was thinking, 'Well, there's no single on this album,'" Boris laughs, "because I really didn't think there was. And then when they picked up 'In Between Days' I thought, 'There's not much chance of that doing anything.' And then it did really well, considering what the band was like then, and the album did *incredibly* well."

Before he was involved with the Cure or the Thompson Twins, Boris Williams was doing session work. "I wasn't doing much musically at the time at all," he confesses. "I was in real doldrums. I was doing a few sessions here and there, but I was getting fed up with it, most of the time playing things I didn't really like. One day I got a phone call from a friend of mine who's a keyboard player, and he told me about the Thompson Twins. That used to be a seven-piece band, a real hippy sort of thing, and then that split up and Tom, Alanah, and Joe decided to form a new group with just them as sort of a real pop band.

And my friend said, 'I think you should give them a call; they're looking for a drummer, and I think you'd be ideal for it.' So I called up the bass player that they'd decided to recruit, Mark Chaplain, and it was really strange because my audition was just to audition with him. So I went to the studio and we just started playing together. He was a really good bass player and we got on really well, and he said, 'Well, as far as I'm concerned, you're ideal for it.' I still hadn't met any of the rest of them, so I thought, That sounds a bit off.' Two days later he phoned me up and said, 'I've just been offered to do a tour with Kim Wilde, and it's more money, so I'm gonna do it.' So my only sort of link with them had gone, and I thought, That's it, obviously. They'll probably get somebody else if the bass player has left.' But they called me up anyway and said to come down to the studio. This was in 1983; they were recording their first album as a trio, *Quick Step & Side Kick* [known as *Side Kicks* in America]. They also had some other musicians in the studio, and while they were mixing we were actually in the main part of the studio rehearsing the songs. We rehearsed probably for three days without them even listening. I still didn't know whether I was actually doing the gig." Boris chuckles, recalling his confusion at the time: "I was thinking, 'Don't they want to know what I play like?' Then one day I was just thrashing around in there, and they must have gone out of the control room and into the room next door to have something to eat, and they just walked in and said, 'Welcome aboard; we really like your playing.' And that was about four days after I'd gotten there."

If we flash back a little farther into Williams' career we'll see him gigging around London with fusion bands—a far cry from groups like the Thompson Twins, or especially the Cure, whom Robert Smith still speaks about in the terms of the punk movement. "That was a long time ago," Williams admits. "I actually had a group with Roger O'Donnell, who's playing keyboards with us now in the Cure. We did a lot of pub gigs and stuff like that. He was into Herbie Hancock, and I really liked Weather Report. I went down that road for a while, but I got fed up with it. I decided I didn't want to just work on my technique all the time. I'm lazy anyway. [laughs] But I decided you can just carry on doing that type of thing. I mean, a lot of drummers really concerned with technique feel they need to sort of use it up in the context of the group or whatever gig they're doing. And I think most of the time it gets in the way. I'd rather play something that fits in with the meaning of the song. Though I really used to like the Mahavishnu Orchestra. And I still enjoy listening to Weather Report; they're a brilliant group and they've done some good albums that stand out. But most of that kind of music ended up sounding completely bland to me.

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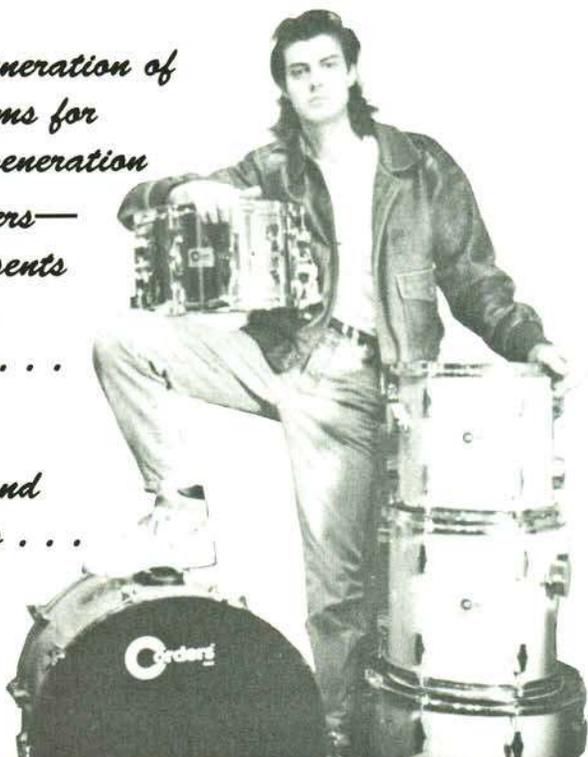
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and then I stopped listening to the drums and started listening to the music, and I thought, 'This is absolute shit.' It was like, 'I might as well be in an elevator.' As a listener, you only get involved in the technique and saying, 'Oh, he's brilliant.' You actually lose touch with the fact that it's supposed to be something that is trying to communicate with people."

Anyone familiar with either the Thompson Twins or the Cure might wonder if and how Boris's fusion chops would eventually play a part in his playing with either of those groups. "I suppose most of the time I'm playing underneath my technique," Williams ponders. "It's not that I think everybody should; I do think it's good to stretch yourself. The only time I really stretch myself is if we're doing a soundcheck. But I am glad I played that sort of music, because it's all come in handy. Everything you learn is a bonus, even if you don't actually use it directly."

Though Boris says that his drift away from chops-oriented music was fairly gradual, playing with the Thompson Twins is what really got him thinking. "The Thompson Twins' attitude in a sense was so completely opposite to mine. I mean, they cheated, if you like, so much," he laughs, "by using sequencers and drum machines on stage. I used a click track because I used a hell of a lot of tapes on stage. That was a really good discipline for me in a way, though; to play live on stage with a click track isn't easy because you've got so much noise going on. First of all, I had the click track on this big floor monitor, and it was just bashing out, because I was so worried about losing it, not being able to hear it. And the click wasn't very well-planned. What they actually did was mix down the hi-hat, bass drum, and snare drum from the album and emphasized all the high and mid frequencies, and just used that as the click track to all the songs. So the click track was the drum machine parts on the album."

Was this method confusing to play along with for Boris? "It was sometimes," he replies, "because there were bits where there were gaps, and you had to drop out and start back in in places; there was nothing tying it over. But after a short time I began using my own little monitor box, which was at about ear level. Most of the time I couldn't hear it, but I knew it was there. Maybe once or twice I lost it when we were playing a particularly noisy hall or when the monitors went down. Suddenly I would hear it, and I would be playing one beat off from the tape—and everyone followed me. Mainly the tape was effects and keyboard parts and backing vocals. But the weird thing was it was very difficult for me to know whether I had to catch up a beat or lose one. That was quite interesting. The other funny thing was that quite often the tape would break or the machine would break down, and we would just have to carry on on our own. Suddenly the music would get a lot better, I think; it got livelier."

The worst thing is that the tapes were inevitably affected by heat and whatever, and they'd slow down terribly. And we used high-quality machines, but it would still slow down. All you could do was follow it.

"The worst time," Williams continues, "we were playing in London, and it was right at the end, during 'Hold Me Now,' which was a big single then. So it was at the peak of the show, and the tape started slowing down more and more and more; and of course everything that we were actually playing—the actual live parts—were completely out of tune with what was on tape, and I was thinking, 'Please turn the tape machine off.' They did eventually."

Another aspect of the Thompson Twins' drum setup that Boris would eventually be glad to part with was a reliance on a purely electronic pad setup, save for an acoustic snare drum. Aside from the previously mentioned pair of Simmons pads, the kit he is using now with the Cure is all acoustic. "I use a Yamaha 9000 kit, and it's got 10", 12", 13", and 15" rack toms and a 22" bass drum. The 15" is in a floor tom position, but it's on the Pearl rack. I use Zildjian cymbals. At the moment I use a couple of 18" crashes, a China, and two splashes. I use two hi-hats, a remote on my right side and a regular one in my left, and they've got K Zildjian tops and *Quick Beat* bottoms. They're both connected to pedals. I was using a Pearl, but I just got this new Yamaha, which is brilliant; it's got a nice feel, exactly like a direct hi-hat. I'm using that because it just gives me a lot more freedom not having my hands crossed when I'm bashing around on the toms and the Simmons pads while I'm playing ride things with my right hand. I don't use a ride cymbal, so I use that hi-hat sort of like a ride in a sense."

Since a lot of the patterns Williams plays are linear patterns, where his left hand would be moving around a lot, one might think the extra hi-hat would be ideal for those types of longer, more complicated parts. "Actually, the simpler songs—the sort of straight rock kind of songs—are really nice to have that on the right side for," Boris says, "because then you can really lay into the snare drum a lot more. Even on songs like 'Boys Don't Cry,' I can really pound into the snare drum. I just like the feeling of having my arms apart rather than crossed over. I tend to mainly use the normal hi-hat when I'm playing 16th notes with both hands on the hi-hat and hitting the snare with the right hand. But when I'm playing with only one hand on the hi-hat, I tend to use the other one."

And what about snare drums? Is there a particular one Williams prefers? "The one I've been using for all the Cure tours is a 6 1/2" deep Noble & Cooley. It's a really good snare drum. I like it because it's a wooden shell, which has a nice depth to it, but it's also got a lot of power and a lot of top-end crack. I don't play with the snare drum heads that tightened up. I have a lot of problems; I have to keep fiddling with it all

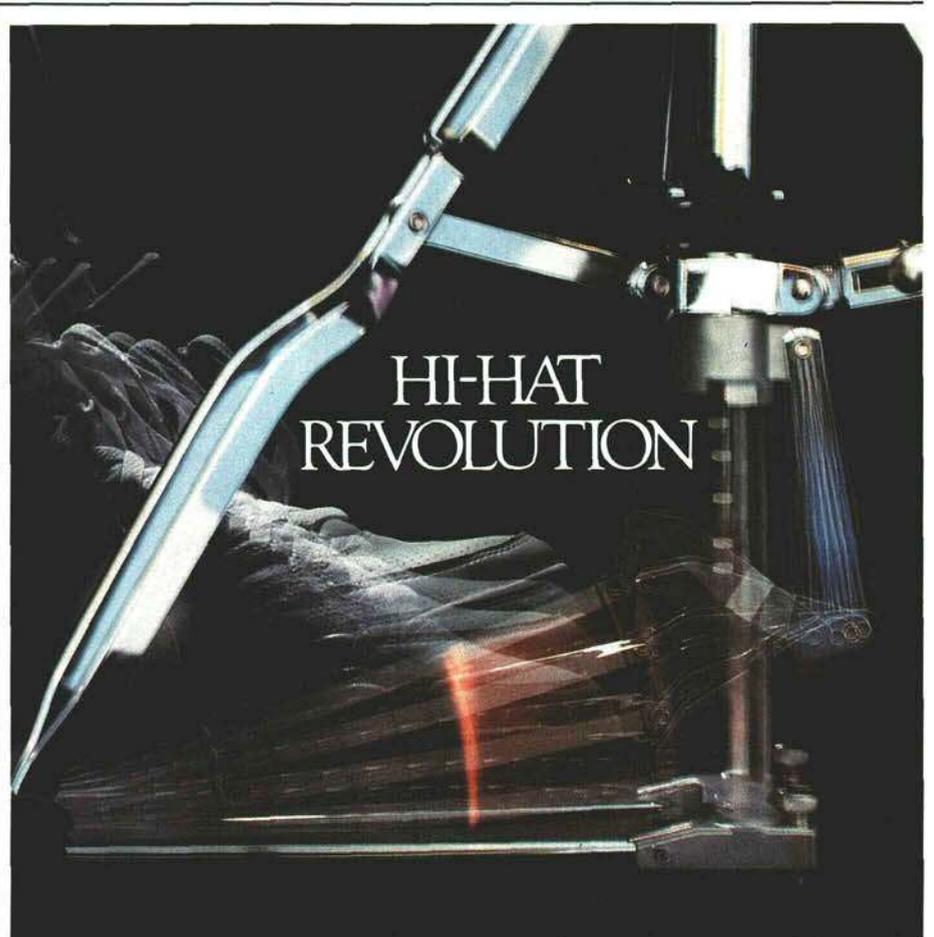
the way through the show to sort of keep the tension up, because I end up with a huge dent in the middle of the head by the end of the show. But the alternative is to have it so tight that it doesn't have the depth that I like."

And with a lot of the songs being slower, too...

"Yes, with the slow songs it just works so much better. Ideally it would be nice to have a button you could press, and for the faster songs you'd have a cracking high-sounding snare, and for the slower ones you'd have a deep boomy one."

The Cure's quest for stylistic diversity over the past five or six years reached a pinnacle with the *Kiss Me Kiss Me Kiss*

Me album, and studio and sound experimentation was one method used to attain those ends. On *Kiss Me*, Boris's drums got in on the act in a big way: "We decided to have as many different sounds as we could on that record. We actually had three different drumkits set up. I had one kit set up on a riser in a big concrete storeroom next to the main part of the studio, and it was deafening in there. I mean, if somebody walked in and I hit the snare drum, they'd rush out holding their ears. It was a fantastic sound, though. That kit was used on the more aggressive, thrashy sort of songs. Then in the main part of the studio—a huge wooden room—we had the regular drumkit set up, which was mostly undampened. But it's not a very live room; it's fairly dry-



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sounding. And then we had another kit set up in one of the booths to the side, which was incredibly dead; it was carpeted all around. We ended up not using that kit too much, because we found we could get as much of a controlled sound as we wanted out of the normal kit just by using the close mic's and not using any peripheral ones.

"Every song was approached like that," Boris continues. "'Hot! Hot! Hot!' was approached like, 'Let's pretend we're somebody like Chic.' But it was kind of tongue-in-cheek, if you like. I remember I tuned up the snare drum really high for that. We really worked on the drums on that record. It was a chore, because it's a double album anyway, and we recorded a lot more than ended up on the album, as well. We were doing a track a day; actually, by the end

we were doing two tracks a day because we were running out of time. But when you have to actually change the drum sound every day and start fresh, you can't just go in there and check that all the lines are working and then do the song. I really hate getting drum sounds because you're just sitting there going "bang, bang, bang" for half an hour at a time. But we had to do it every day, because with each song we wanted a specific drum sound, which meant completely retuning or using a different kit or different mic's."

When it came time to record *Disintegration*, things were a little bit different, with the aim being a more unified sound. "Oh, yeah, *Disintegration* was a completely different approach. I mean, it was like I said, 'Please, let's use the same drum sound on

this," Boris laughs. "No, it wasn't *that* much of an issue. But it did work into it because we just used one drumkit and kept it as uniform as possible—the tuning and everything. We did a bit of changing, but it was much more consistent."

Speaking of consistencies, the use of splash cymbals has been a noticeable facet on Cure records since *Three Imaginary Boys*. And China cymbals were also prominent before Boris's arrival. Yet both these sounds are a big part of Boris's personal sound. Was the Cure's previous work a big influence on Williams' current setup?

"When I did my first tour with the Cure," he says, "I just sat behind somebody else's setup, which was already there. And there was this big China cymbal—I mean, I had Chinas of my own as well—but there was this really noisy one, and I used it and liked it. I like the idea of splashes, too; they're nice little accents, and you can use them within rhythms. With the Chinas, sometimes I think, 'Oh, that's really overkill,' because it's one of those sounds that are so distinctive; you *can* have too much of it. But I think it works with the music really well."

Especially on *Disintegration*, the Cure employs a lot of very slow tempos. In fact, on their recent tour, some of the older songs they played were actually slowed down, allowing them to fit in with the newer material more smoothly. (Looking around at the show, you'd notice some of the fans dancing in double time when the tempos wouldn't quite lend themselves to bodily gyrations—a pretty clever bunch, Cure fans.) As most drummers discover early on, slow tempos can be just as difficult to play as fast ones. Did Boris ever have any problems playing these almost funereal meters?

"Not really," he responds. "I feel fairly comfortable playing slow tempos. They *are* more difficult than fast tempos to keep the time correct. Obviously you can get away with a lot more on a song that is fast; if the beat falls too far one way or another it's not that noticeable. But if you drop behind or push with a slow song it is much more noticeable. When we were recording *Disintegration* we used click tracks on every song, partly because things just fell into place like that. On *Kiss Me* it was about half and half. We only used it when we felt like we should use it. On *Disintegration* we planned to do the same thing. But then I'd walk into the studio in the afternoon, and the producer would have already set up the click track: 'Click track's ready!' So we just fell into the routine of it."

"I think on slow songs it's good to have a click track," Williams continues. "Sometimes I think it's not necessary for the fast ones, though; it's good to be able to push the time a bit. But it was practical because most of the time when we were laying down the drum tracks, it was either me on my own, or it would be just me and [bassist] Simon Gallup playing together. If it was something like a repetitive pattern, I'd just play completely on my own to a click track, and maybe have a keyboard player come

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in when there was a change coming in or something, then that was it. I don't know, though; sometimes when we did the demos, we were all in one room playing together, and it was brilliant, it was really nice. But I suppose going into the studio and sort of wanting it to be perfect, it's easier for Robert listening in the control room than playing along, because he can be objective and say, 'Yeah, that was really good' or 'That was shit' or whatever."

How about live? "No, we never use click tracks live; I wouldn't do it," Williams laughs. "After the Thompson Twins I've had enough of that. But I don't really need it; I mean, I'm aware of when I'm pushing it, and I do it on purpose sometimes. But I think I've got pretty good time, so I don't feel I need it."

One of the advantages of playing in a close-knit group of musicians for an extended amount of time is that as the band's style and sound and familiarity among its members develops, so can each instrumentalist's individual style become more defined. The Cure's tempos, sound, and arrangements, Robert Smith's lyrics—all these are very recognizable and potent style elements, and Boris's playing doesn't just react to them, it also instigates them. Williams also sees other factors as having an effect on his own personal style. "I feel I have a personal style because I'm somewhat limited technically," he explains. "I think the more accomplished someone is technically, quite often the less personal a style they have, and because they can play anything, they can fall into anybody's shoes. But I actually like musicians who have limitations. I like instruments that have limitations to their sounds also. I think that one problem with things like synthesizers is that, when you have a synthesizer in front of you—especially digital ones—you can play *any* sound. And I think you can get bogged down with that, because you end up using it all. I think it's good to have some sort of limitation; groups that I really like have been limited in some way, and those limitations have come out as bonuses to them. So I don't consider myself a very technical drummer. I don't think I've got great technique. But it doesn't really worry me that much, because I think I've got other strengths. I think I've got really good time, and I've got a good appreciation for fitting in with a piece of music. I'm not interested in getting my chops off in a song; I'm more interested in the whole song sounding really good, and I think the other musicians appreciate that."

Though Williams has for the most part concentrated on his main gigs while in the Thompson Twins and the Cure, he has been asked to do a few side projects. During one break with the Thompson Twins, Boris was asked by the bass player who had previously auditioned him for the Twins to go out on the road with Kim Wilde. Soon after, Phil Thornally called and offered work with various projects he was doing. Though his session schedule began to get busier, "Sud-

denly I thought, 'Why am I doing this? I'm not really enjoying it—going back to doing things that I don't really like.' So I decided I wouldn't do any more sessions unless it was somebody who I really liked as a musician or as an artist, or somebody I didn't know but whose tape I heard and liked. So since then the only thing I've done, just before we went off on tour, was Ian McCulloch's new album, Ian's from Echo & the Bunnymen, and he's gone off on his own. I really like him, and I really liked the Bunnymen; I think they wrote some brilliant songs. So I did a couple of songs from his album, and one of them is actually the new single, which I'm very pleased about.

"But I am 100% involved with the Cure," Boris emphasizes. "I mean, particularly the shows on this tour in America, I've enjoyed

playing more than I have in a long time. A lot of the European tour was hard work. It was a long tour, and about halfway through I started getting into this rut in my playing that was very difficult to get out of. I started having real problems with my comfort at the kit. I kept feeling like I wasn't comfortable. I kept changing seats, and saying all the time, 'This seat's really uncomfortable; it's not straight or it's wobbling around or it's leaning over'—when of course it was just because we were touring for so long, and it was all in my head. I got out of that, though, and this tour I'm really enjoying playing; I'm feeling very comfortable with it. And the band is playing better than I think it has ever played before. I think that everyone else feels that way as well." 

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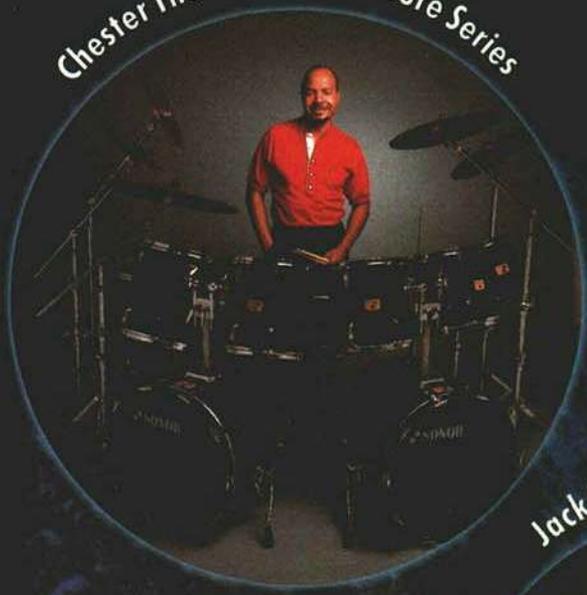
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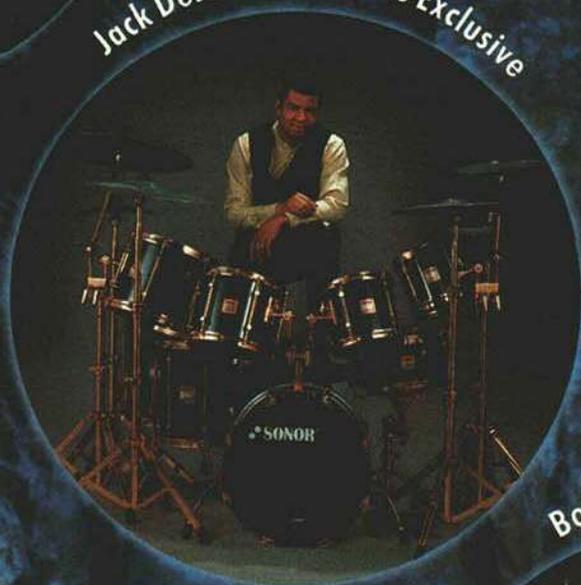
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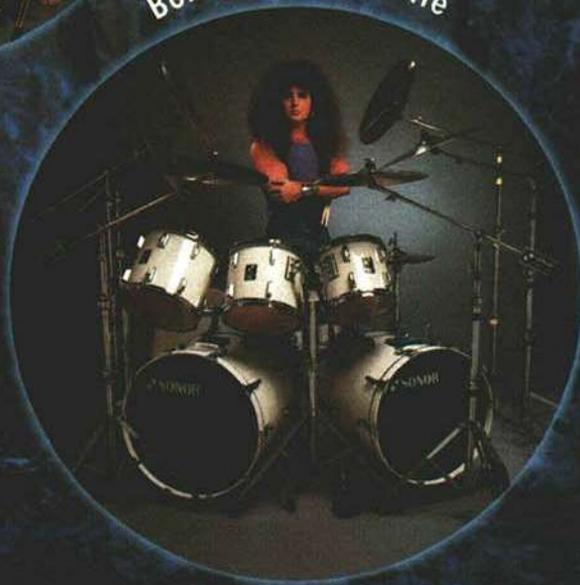
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Exploring Abstract

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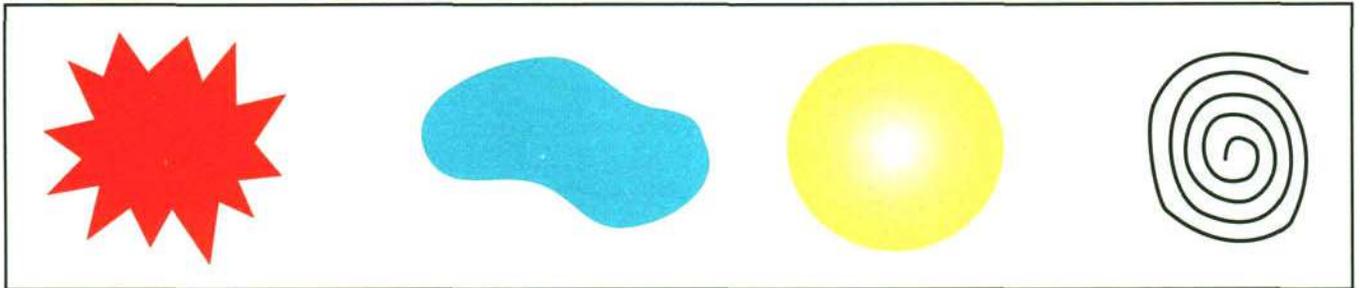
is the purest, truest form of artistic expression. Without them there is nothing—just a lot of noise.

Throughout musical history, an artist expressing a new and different idea was taking a chance. Those who dared to be very different were often labeled "avant garde." This newness was sometimes accepted by the masses, and sometimes not. Those who weren't accepted were usually branded radical and rebellious, and cast into social obscurity. In its earlier days, jazz was considered to be the devil's music, to be played only in illegal establishments by people of less than proper social standing. The point is, something new is

plained intensity was happening, bringing everyone and everything alive—where a certain *magic* was flowing. You know the feeling. However, when it was all over, if you sat down with each individual player and asked them what they were playing, they probably couldn't tell you much, other than the fact that whatever they were playing fit in with what everyone else was playing. And the music sounded and felt terrific!

It's important, if not essential, for every musician to have their own concept and style, their own unique way of approaching their instrument and expressing their emotions through it. Developing this is *not*

Figure 7



expressions.

Have you ever seen a band live and could tell there was tension and conflict between the members? With even minimal observation, you could almost zero in on the individuals involved. From day one, my teacher could always tell if something was on my mind when I came in for a lesson. He always knew if I was angry, worried, or elated—not because of anything I said, but by the way I approached and played the drums. I'm sure you've had those memorable (or forgettable) nights, when you thought you played your butt off, and nothing happened! Or when the whole band felt dead or out of gas no matter what anyone tried to do. *Emotion and feeling*—a piece of music played with both

going to cause a reaction. Be it positive or negative, *something* is going to happen.

A new idea is a result of listening to what's going on around us. As musicians, we all have our own beliefs as to how things should be played or interpreted. To create a feeling or mood with others involves *listening*. We must listen in order to gain an awareness of other musicians' concepts and ideas so that they can be blended with ours. Even today's most avant garde music is an example of musicians listening to each other's concepts and molding them into a whole expression of emotions as a group.

I'm sure we've all experienced either being in or listening to a musical situation where everything was just right. An unex-

easy. It is, however, practical. In most cases, it takes years for a serious player's style to emerge. You must listen to everything and react to all that occurs around you, and draw from it. It takes an understanding of what others have done to make your own statements. It takes players with strong individual concepts, positive and open attitudes, a unique approach, and sensitive ears to fit in well with the concepts and musical ideas of others.

Experimenting With Abstracts

I'd like to give you some ideas to try. Granted, they're a bit abstract, but hopefully you'll open up to something different and play what you're feeling and reacting to. Playing a specific concept takes imagi-

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Concepts

nation, sensitivity, action and reaction, and a willingness to let your creative energy flow in a specified direction. Technique, licks, tempo, barlines, and time signatures are of relatively little importance here.

If you sit at your drumset and look around, you'll see a vast array of sound sources: drums, cymbals, stands, mounts, rims, bells, shells.... Each source has its own unique timbre, pitch, and texture when struck with various types of sticks, brushes, or mallets. Even the smallest, simplest kit has enormous sound possibilities. As you sit, focus your attention on a *single* emotional feeling. Let's try anger. Imagine you're very angry at a situation you're in, or reflect back on an event that got you all riled up. Key in on this feeling and try to transfer your reactions through your drumset.

A common reaction at this point is, "I don't know what to play." As a suggestion, anger could be splashes of cymbals, snare drum cracks, or a barrage of multi-rhythms on low toms. Use your imagination. Think about how you react when you're angry. Do you come out swinging?

Do you shout? Do you get depressed? Do you get in the car and drive like a maniac? The trick is not to *think* about what to play. Just think about the feeling or mood you're trying to express. Think about what is affecting your heart, and then use all the textures in front of you to bring those feelings out. Try this idea with other emotions as well. Try playing in an anxious mood, a

happy mood, or even a depressed mood. Again, technique is irrelevant.

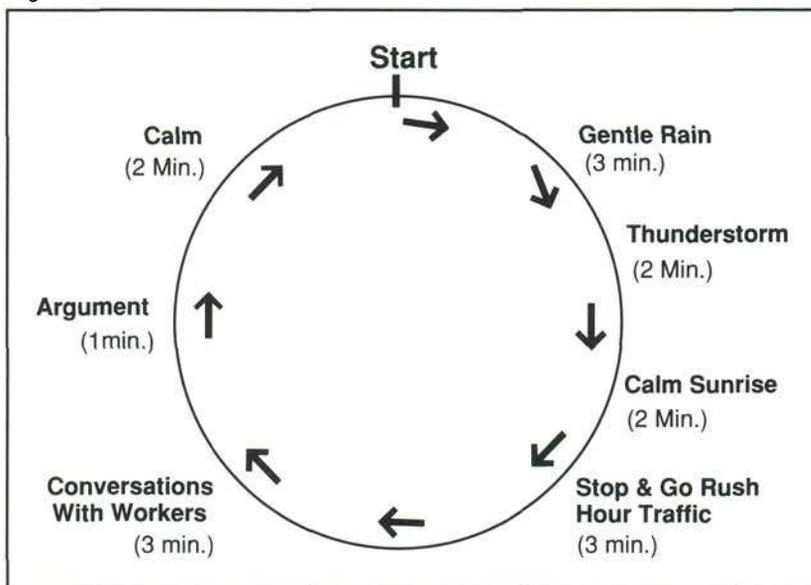
It's a known fact that colors in our environment affect our moods and perceptions. It's evident in our offices, cars, the walls of our homes, the colors of our clothes, the usage of club and stage lighting. Certain shapes can also create mental images. As an example, whenever you see *%\$#@ in a comic strip, you get a clear message as to what all that typographical goop means. If you were to transfer that mental image to the drumset, it might come out sounding

wise. As you come to a specified concept, try to express it through the instrument for the suggested length of time. (The time limits are simply a rough guide.) As you near the end of the time span, move along to the next concept, molding the tail end of the first idea to the beginning of the second. Continue around until the whole circle of concepts has been expressed. Learning to transfer abstract images to a musical medium is imaginative, different, sometimes deep, and often difficult. Don't be put off by the challenge. *Try it!*

Just as our spoken language has adjectives that describe things, our musical instrument has words too. Drums can speak with soft sounds, hard sounds, splashes, thunderous roars, crashes, bangs, explosions, clangs—all useful "words" to describe what's going on. A drumset is a limitless musical instrument. And you, as much as (if not more than) any other instrumentalist, need to recognize this so you can draw as much feeling as possible out of the entire instrument. It's up to you to play with as much feeling and expression as anyone else in the band. And the only way to accomplish that is to keep

your ears wide open. Play with an awareness of what's going on around you, and you'll open up a variety of musical and challenging avenues for yourself. Remember, no matter what you're playing, *feel it*. Play it because it comes from the heart.

Figure 2



quite aggressive and explosive. With that idea in mind, try to create some of your own musical images to the shapes and colors in *Figure 1*.

Another idea to try is a concept called the "circle piece." This involves playing ideas or events in a progression. Look at *Figure 2* above. Begin by starting at the top of the circle, and follow it through clock-



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SOUTH OF THE BORDER

"A Caballo"

by John Santos



"Caballo" is the name given to a rhythm most associated with the dance known as "pachanga," which was introduced in New York City during the latter half of the 1950s. The Cuban orchestras known as "charangas" (flute, violins, bass, piano, conga, timbales, guiro, and vocals) popularized the rhythm that was a derivative of the lesser known "merecumbé."

"A caballo" means literally "by horse" and refers to the irresistibly danceable gallop and swing that this rhythm inspires. The basic Afro-Cuban origins of this rhythm can be traced to several sources; however, the Congolese influence seems to be the strongest—specifically, the Afro-Cuban rhythm and dance known as "makuta."

You will also find the caballo and its components to be very adaptable and versatile in non-traditional applications. The examples in this article are written for a right-handed player. The following symbols appear in examples 1 through 4: S = slap, O = open tone, T = tap (fingers), H = heel (full palm).

Examples 1 and 2 are the basic rhythm played on one conga drum. The only difference between them is the hand sequence.

1 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

S T T H S T O H S T T H S T O H

2 R L L L R L R L R L R L L L R L R L R L

S T H T S T O H S T H T S T O H

Examples 3 and 4 are variations for two congas. These examples, along with examples 5 and 6, are two-measure phrases, meaning that both measures are not identical. It is important to realize that they are written in "2-3" clave, although the conga parts are often reversed.

3 R L L L R L R L R L R L L L R L R L R L

S T H T S T O H O O H T S T O H

4 R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

S T T H S T O H S O T H S T O H

Examples 5 and 6 are for timbales. Traditionally, a small, high-pitched bell is used (played with a stick of course), while the left hand plays open-handed (without stick) on the low timbal (the larger of the two, usually placed on the left for right-handed players). In this application, two sounds are derived from the low drum: *open*, allowing the head to ring fully, and *muted or muffled*, achieved by pressing the fingers into the head. The following examples contain these symbols: O = open (mouth of bell), X = closed (butt of bell), M = muted (press fingers into head).

5 O X O X X O X X O X X

M O M O

6 O X O X X O X X O X X

O M O M

Examples 7 and 8 are for the guiro (gourd scraper). The only difference between them is the accent pattern. The letter "D" notated in the following examples indicates playing downstrokes on the guiro, while the letter "U" indicates upstrokes.

7 > > > > > > > >

D D U D D U D D U D D U

8 > > > > > > > >

D D U D D U D D U D D U

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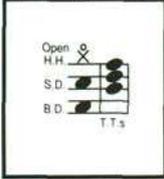


RICK ALLEN
DEF LEPPARD

by Rod Morgenstein

One-handed Fills

MUSIC KEY



This month's column deals with an interesting way of playing simple fills without stopping the natural flow of the beat. Most of the time, when we play a fill on the toms, we inadvertently interrupt the repetitive 8th notes or quarter notes on the hi-hat and the 2 and 4 on the snare. If we allow the snare hand to stay on the snare playing 2 and 4 continuously, and move the hand playing the hi-hat between the hi-hat and the toms, we can effectively play fills with a continuous flowing beat. Also, the newly created broken-up hi-hat part will add personality to the beat.

In the first five examples, I have omitted playing the hi-hat on the 8th note preceding the tom fill and when the snare is an 8th note before or after the tom fill. This is a personal preference of mine. It gives you time to comfortably get to the tom or back to the hi-hat, and it makes the overall feel smoother.

The next two examples use the toms in both measures.

To dress things up, you might try opening the hi-hat in select spots.

Playing 16th-note fills gets a little trickier but can add a new dimension to this technique. The resulting sound can be very syncopated. Try the following examples.

The idea of using the hi-hat hand to also play the toms is just another tool to file away in your chest of ideas. Perhaps it will come in handy for you someday. It sure has for me.



BLACK BEAUTY'S BACK



When talk turns to snare drums, the name "Ludwig" invariably rises to the top.

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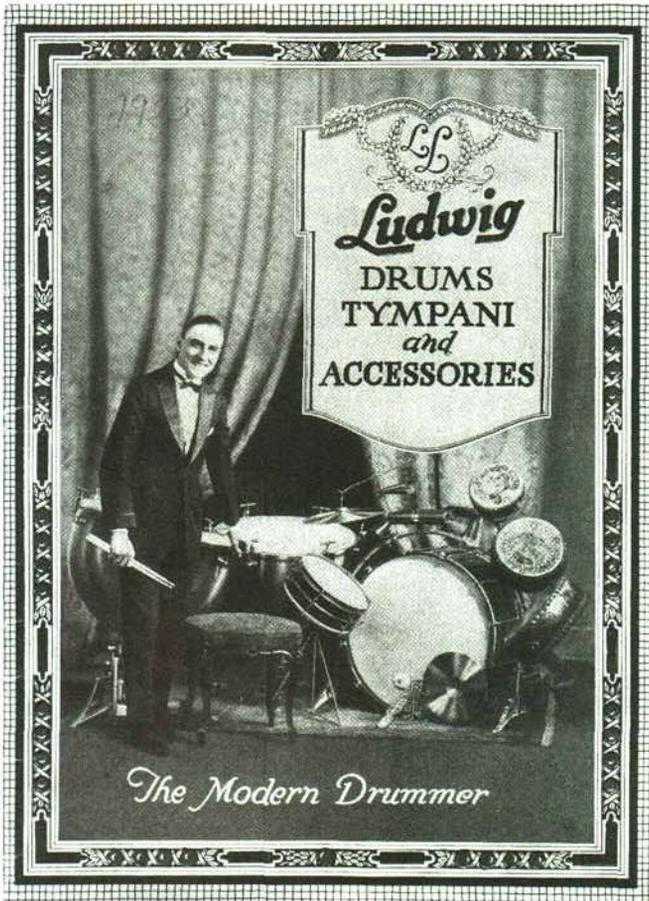
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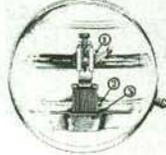


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3

The name *Black Beauty* conjures a picture of the "perfect" snare drum. The engraved brass shell with the gold-plated hardware has a mystique all its own, and since the early '20s the *Black Beauty* has been one of the most sought-after drums ever made. When it first appeared in the 1923 Ludwig & Ludwig catalog, it was called the *De Luxe* and was simply an engraved and plated option package offered on the company's top-of-the-line *Ali-Metal* snare drum. Ludwig did not use the name "Black Beauty" in their catalog until 1932.

There are many reasons why the *Black Beauty* became so popular. The fact that it has been reissued twice points to its ability to generate new followers. The shells, lugs, hoops, snare strainers, engravings, and platings that have been combined to form the different models of this great drum are each factors in the *Black Beauty's* success. The shell of the *Black Beauty* was the same as that used on Ludwig's *Ali-Metal* snare, with the exception of the plating. They were both two-piece shells with a solder joint in the middle of the drum where the reinforcing bead was located. The top and bottom halves of the shell both had beads, which were overlapped and soldered to make each shell. The top and bottom bearing edges were bent over at approximately a 45-degree angle into the drum. The lip that this formed was curved down into the shell and was bent again at a 90-degree angle, which brought the edge back out to the outside wall of the drum. It was then soldered to the outside wall. With the edges completed, the only thing missing was the snare bed. Snare beds were

This page from the 1923 Ludwig & Ludwig catalog describes the De Luxe model drum. The 1923 list price was \$42.50.

produced by denting or crimping the shell on either side of the drum about 1/2" from the bottom. This caused the bearing edge to draw up at that point, and the bed was shaped by bending the bearing edge up slightly, creating a 2 1/2"-wide bed. With all the bending and soldering, the shell was considerably heavy. This added to the overall resonating potential of the drum and its ability to project.

The first Ludwig *Black Beauty* model made in the '20s came in a wide variety of sizes. However, the 4 x 14, 4 x 15, and 5 x 14 were the most popular configurations. According to catalogs, the *Black Beauty* was also made in 6 1/2 x 14, 5 x 15, and 6 1/2 x 15 shell depths.

The design of the *Black Beauty* shell remained the same until 1936. Because most of the drum companies were offering a brass shell with tube lugs and a rounded center bead, Ludwig changed the center bead to a half hexagon shape. This coincided with the 25th anniversary of the Ludwig & Ludwig drum company and the introduction of the new *Imperial* lug casings. The bearing edges, snare beds, and construction methods remained the same, with the exception that the shell was changed from a two-piece construction to a single piece of spun brass. The "spun brass" shell was actually introduced in 1934. The shell design of the *Ali-Metal* snare was continued with nickel and chrome finishes as standard

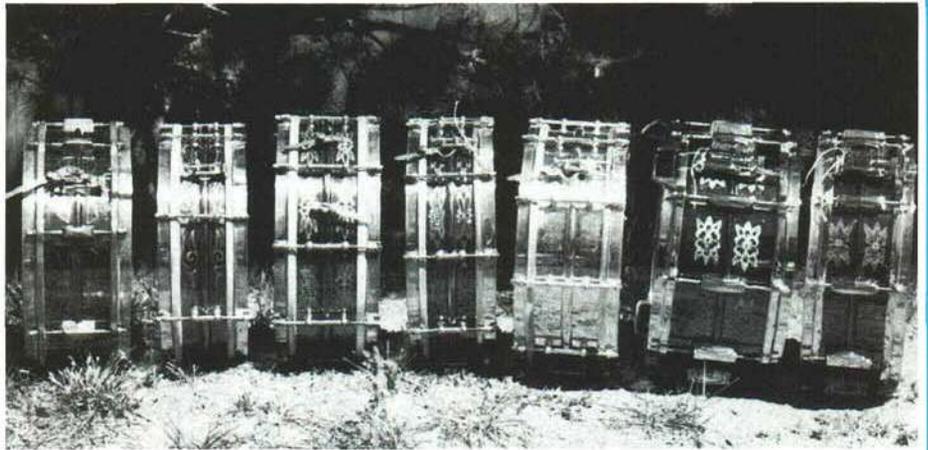
Beauty

by John M. Aldridge

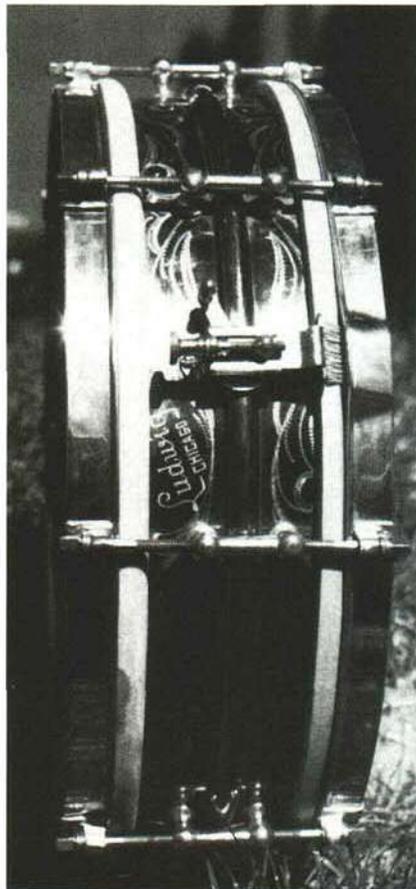
features and black engraved shells as an option until the beginning of World War II.

Due to popular demand, the first reissue of the *Black Beauty* occurred in the late '70s. By this time, the *All-Metal* model had been changed to the *Supra-Phonic 400* and was no longer made of brass. The shell of the reissued *Black Beauty* followed the same designs as the *Supra-Phonic*, with the exception that the shell was constructed of spun brass, which produced a seamless shell. The final bend, which was soldered to the inside wall of the shell on pre-war drums, was omitted from the bearing edge, and the exposed edge protruded inside the drum at a 45-degree angle.

As with all of the Ludwig drums made after the late '50s, the snare beds on the '70s version were widened to 8". When plastic or Mylar drumheads became popu-



The author's collection of Ludwig Black Beauties (and one Leedy Elite.). Left to right: Leedy Broadway Elite, circa 1933; Ludwig 1923 De Luxe model; 1929 New Era Sensitive Black Beauty; 1932 ten-lug 4x14 Black Beauty. 1932 Black Beauty, shell polished down to brass, floral engraving; 1979 6 1/2 x 14 Black Beauty, hand-engraved; 1979 5x14 Black Beauty, machine-engraved.



This drum (circa 1923) was originally marketed as a De Luxe model. It featured a 4x14 shell with eight tube lugs, a P-84 strainer, and a paisley scroll engraving pattern. It was the predecessor to the Black Beauty.

lar in the late '50s and early '60s, it was discovered that they would not flow smoothly over the narrower snare bed without wrinkling like a calfskin head would. The snare beds were widened to accommodate this new development. The center reinforcing bead was also changed. After WW II the rounded bead was adopted again instead of the hexagonal bead used on the pre-war drums.

The '70s *Black Beauty* was released without engraving. Engraving was available, but was machined and cost more. However, the shell was the same in structure with or without engraving. The reissued *Black Beauty* was available in 5 x 14 and 6 1/2 x 14 sizes.

The current reissue of the *Black Beauty* has a seamless spun-bronze shell. The shell is not available in an engraved model as yet and, according to sources, Ludwig has no

plans to add engraving in the future. The design and materials of the shell are the same as the Ludwig bronze *Supra-Phonic*, with the only difference being the black chrome plating.

The original lugs on the *Black Beauty* were comprised of two threaded studs connected by a tube. The ends of the tube were threaded to accept the tension rods, and the tubes varied in length to fit the different shell depths. Tube lugs were invented in the Ludwig factory around 1910 and were the industry standard for the next 20 years. They were used with minor variations by Leedy, Slingerland, Stone, and many other lesser-known companies. The Ludwig tube lug can be distinguished by the protruding stud, which actually goes through the shell, necessitating cup washers on the inside of the drum.

By the early '30s, almost every drum manufacturer was producing tube lugs. But at the same time, schools were buying more drums and discovering how easy it was to cross-thread tube lugs. In an effort to distinguish their drums in the eyes of the drummers—and also to alleviate the problem of cross-threading—the Ludwig company designed a new drum casing to replace tube lugs on their premium drums. The tube lug was forsaken in favor of the more distinctive-looking *Imperial*-style lug around 1935. The first *Imperial* lugs looked much like today's lug on the *Supra-Phonic 400*, with the exception of lug nuts. The threads were tapped directly into the casing instead of having a swivel nut. It wasn't until drummers discovered that these lugs were even easier to cross-thread and strip than tube lugs that the swivel nut was added. The swivel nut had been developed by George Way of the Leedy Company, and was already in use on Leedy drums. Ludwig added the lug nuts and a spring to hold them in place to their 1936 version of the *Imperial* lug. The lug casings have become a little fatter and shorter as the years passed, but the overall design of the *Imperial* casing has remained the same since 1936.

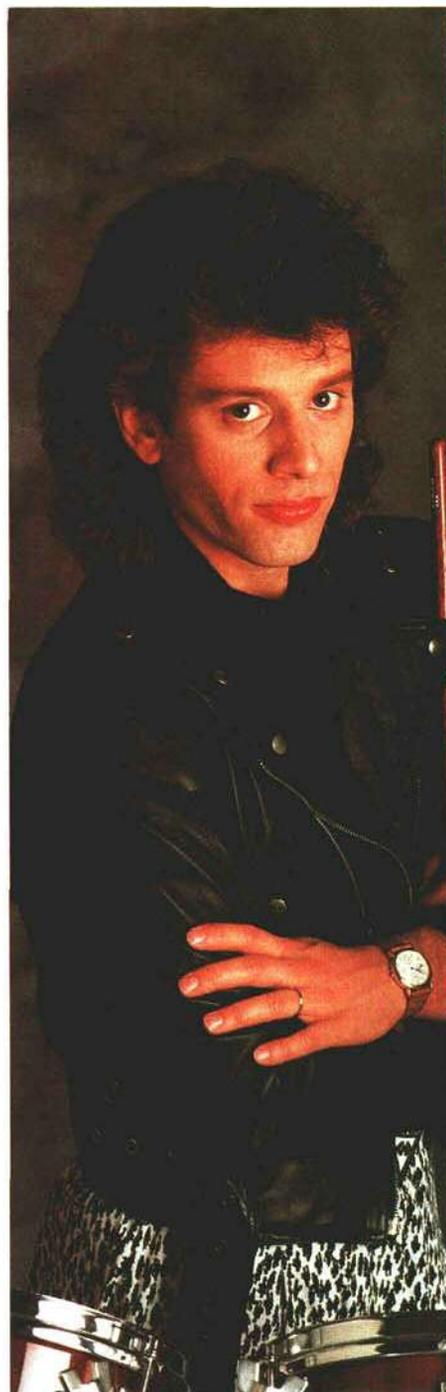
Hoop designs have gone through four stages of development in the Ludwig *Black Beauty*. The first hoops used in the early '20s were "flat band" hoops. These were made of flat steel, which was rolled out to the proper length, bent into a circle, welded, and plated. The next stage of development was the single-flanged hoop. These were made of brass and were pressed or rolled out in

much the same way flat band hoops were made. The only difference was a flange, or bend, on the bottom edge of the hoop. Collar hooks were used to attach these first two types of hoops to the drum. These were stamped out of sheets of brass into a hook shape that passed over the top of the hoop. There was a hole in the outer part of the hook that the tension rod passed through. These hoops were the only part of the drum bearing the Ludwig logo in the first Ludwig drums. In 1920, Ludwig began stamping their logo in the side of the shell just to the left of the strainer. Of course the name was engraved in the shell as part of the design on the *Black Beauty*.

The next development in hoops was the addition of another flange, which went down to cover the outside edge of the head. At the same time that the flange was added, protrusions in the outer ledge were added, with holes for the tension rods to pass through. Once again, Leedy provided the model for these hoops. Their *Multi-Model* was the first drum to utilize double-flanged hoops with holes for tension rods, and the other companies simply followed their lead. Triple-flanged hoops were developed after WW II when the *Black Beauty* was no longer in production. These hoops were the industry standard when Ludwig decided to reissue the *Black Beauty* in the late '70s.

Snare strainers were in a constant state of evolution in the early '20s, and Ludwig is the perfect example of this. The early snare throw-off/strainers were not very reliable and didn't really release the snares far enough to get a tom-tom sound. The Ludwig *P-84* was one of the first practical strainers to be put on a *Black Beauty*. This mechanism had a short lever with a knob that came out of the side of the strainer. In appearance, it is the same strainer as the "piccolo" strainer on the late '70s 3x13 snare drum. The only difference is that the "ears," with which the strainer was attached to the shell, were bent to the outside top and bottom of the strainer. The more modern version has ears that are bent in toward the inside of the strainer. It was the only throw-off offered on the *Black Beauty* until the development of the *Super-Ludwig* in 1924. The *Super-Ludwig* was the first Ludwig strainer to offer parallel throw-off of both sides of the drum, and it is still available today on the *Super Sensitive* model snare drum. The *Super-Ludwig* was also the first mechanism to offer individually tunable snare strands. The actual strands were available in variations of coiled wire, wire-wrapped silk, and gut. In 1928, the *P-84* strainer was modified with the addition of an extension lever that could be raised or lowered by the use of a thumbscrew. This also changed the appearance of the strainer substantially by converting the side throw to a top-throw motion. The extension lever allowed the drummer to locate the strainer easier and to operate the throw-off with the tip of a stick. In the 1929 Fall Edition of the *Ludwig Drummer*, this new strainer was combined with the top snare mechanism from the early *Super-Sensitive* to make the *Standard Sensitive* model snare drum.

Probably the most sought-after model of the *Black Beauty* was furnished with the *Super-Sensitive* snare mechanisms. Unlike the modern *Super-Sensitive*, the original had an extra set of snares underneath the top head. These snares could be used separately from the bottom snare unit or in conjunction. This "miracle drum," as it was called in the 1932 Ludwig catalog, was offered until 1936. The rarest snare unit on a *Black Beauty* is the *New Era Sensitive*. This mechanism utilized two of the inside snare units from the original *Super-Sensitive*, one under the top (batter) head, and one on top of the bottom (snare side) head. This produced a unique situation of having both of the snare units inside the drum. It appeared in the 1929 *Ludwig Drummer* flyer and was never listed in a catalog. It appears that only a very few of these drums were ever made as *Black Beauty* models. There are correspondingly few of the unengraved *New Era Sensitive* models, which points to a generally unreceptive response from drummers of the day. The rarity of this particular model could also be attributed to the stock market crash of 1929, as well as the sale of the Ludwig company to the Conn company in that same year. At



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any rate, only one *New Era Sensitive Black Beauty*, a 5 x 14, has been documented at this time.

All of the previously mentioned features were available without the engraved shell and special platings. However, the unique character of the *Black Beauty* was provided by the engraving on the shells. The first *Black Beauty* was engraved with a "paisley" or "ocean wave" design. Between 1925 and 1926, the style of engraving was changed from the original design to a more standardized "sunburst" or "floral" pattern. This pattern was used until the drum was discontinued around 1936. Up until Ludwig sold out to the Conn company in 1929, all of the engraving was done by hand with each engraver's individual style showing in the finished product. When the Conn company took over the Ludwig brand, the descriptive phrase "hand engraved" disappeared from the catalog and the engraving became more standardized. The drums were still being hand-engraved, but the catalog failed to mention it. This helps to explain why there are so many different-looking engravings that give each drum its own "fingerprint" and make it that much more aesthetically pleasing. Also, the name *Black Beauty* was dropped from the ad copy in 1934—even though the optional black engraved shell was still offered.

The plating on the shell of the early *Black Beauty* was referred to as a "gunmetal finish" in the 1923 catalog. That year Ludwig also offered gold, nickel, and the "Ludwig De Luxe Finish that resembles real gold" as lug, hoop, and strainer plating options on the *Ludwig De Luxe* model (as the early *Black Beauty* was called). The *Inspiration-model* was also a gunmetal-finished brass shell, but had real gold plating on all hoops, rods, lugs, hooks, and strainers. This was the unengraved *Black Beauty* of 1923. In 1932, the Ludwig catalog listed chrome plating as the newest boon to drummers. It was offered on all of their drums, including the *Black Beauty*.

An interesting note about the popularity of the lug design and platings of the early *Black Beauty* is that modern manufacturers such as Sonor, Tama, and Noble & Cooley are producing similar-looking lugs with and without swivel nuts. Copper plating on hardware in combination with black finishes is also becoming popular once again. The resemblance to the *Black Beauty* is striking. It is also interesting to note that a 60-year-old drum, which can draw a price anywhere from \$200 to \$2,000, depending on the condition and model, is more in demand than comparably priced models of today. While this may seem exorbitant to the average drummer, keep in mind that "They don't make them like that any more."

This brings us to the point where you might begin to wonder why Ludwig ever discontinued such a popular drum. According to William F. Ludwig, Jr., in the early '30s vaudeville and silent movies were being replaced by "talkies." Since most theaters employed drummers and other

musicians to accompany silent films, it stands to reason that many drummers lost work when silent movies were replaced. Also, the economy was not exactly booming in the early to mid-'30s. These factors led to the discontinuation of the *Black Beauty* in the late '30s. When the drum was re-released in the late '70s, brass shells had already been discontinued by most manufacturers because of the expense. Bronze, aluminum, stainless steel, and ferromanganese were a few of the metals and alloys being used because of their cheaper cost. When Ludwig released the new *Black*

Beauty it was the only brass-shell drum in their catalog. Apparently, with drummers being more concerned with cost in the early '80s, the idea of a more expensive model didn't go over too well, and Ludwig was forced to withdraw the *Black Beauty* again. Drum collectors and studio musicians are largely responsible for the new-found popularity of the *Black Beauty*—and possibly even for the third reissue. Or maybe, just maybe, drummers have finally realized that the sound of a *Black Beauty* is worth the price.



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drum. Frequently it falls into the hands of a drummer who isn't necessarily looking for a collectible drum and is just using it as an ordinary drum, not knowing what he or she may have. I do get a lot of calls from people who have a drum and they want to trade it in and get something else, or just want to sell it.

RVH: That's one way you would find new items for your inventory. You also said you have to "beat the bushes." How do you do that?

NI: I do that by putting out the word that I'm looking for drums, through advertisements and by word of mouth. Many, many drummers know what I've done here, so when they find something, they call me. Sometimes my own customers sell me drums. Having been in the business for a while has established me as a known entity in this specialized area of drums.

RVH: Suppose I call you up and say, "I have a drum that's been in the family for generations. My grandfather played with John Phillip Sousa. I'll sell it to you for a reasonable price in its present condition; I don't want to re-condition it. If you want to re-sell it, you are going to have to work on it." Assuming that you purchase the drum, where do you take it from there?

NI: Well, first I should point out that it's not always necessary that we re-condition or have all the parts on a drum before it is sold. There are some people who have parts for drums, or who might be willing to search out and find the missing parts once they had the drum. Once in a while we sell a drum to such a person in "as-is condition." The price is adjusted accordingly.

On the other hand, I have some parts here that I collect and save for drums that come in needing them. I do a considerable amount of repair work, getting drums back in shape and into working condition. I enjoy working with my hands and the challenge of getting a "handicapped" drum into perfect working order. There is a sense of fulfillment and reward from putting an obsolete, dejected old drum back into circulation and giving it a new life—kind of resurrecting it.

RVH: What constitutes a vintage drum? What will you look for, and what is not in your area? Suppose a drummer calls you, saying, "I'm trying to fill out this 1963 Ringo Starr kit. I need one 8x12 oyster pearl tom." Will you try to find it?

NI: My business is based mainly on what the demand is. About the Ringo Starr drums, there are definitely high demands for those drums. I'm finding that people into vintage drums for either collectibility or sound value

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are mostly interested up to the year 1970, except for the Ludwig reissued *Black Beauty*. Again, the way I stay in business is that I give people what they want. I don't get many calls for late- or even mid-'70s drums, unless maybe they are Slingerlands. Somehow, when a drum company goes out of business it makes their drums more collectible. On the other hand, Ludwigs are very popular, and they're still in business. I have a lot of Ludwigs.

RVH: How's your track record on finding specific drums for people? Have you been able to meet every request so far?

NE: No, unfortunately. But when someone calls and I don't have what they are looking for in stock, I put them into an index file of "wants." Eventually, I'm going to be publishing a "want" list along with our price list. It's a great feeling to call someone up and say, "Guess what? You know that rare drum that you have been looking for? We've got one!" Sometimes people look for years for a particular drum to fill out or add to their set. It gives me a great sense of accomplishment to be able to fit that piece of their puzzle.

RVH: It looks like you've got your business organized, you know what your goals are, and you enjoy what you are doing.

NE: I've put a lot of tender loving care into it. In the last several months it has become much more predictable. Volume has been increasing at a steady pace, our customer base is extending, and we're getting a larger percent of referrals. I'm very happy to see it come to this point. Our business comes from all over the U.S., Europe, and Canada. Last week I shipped to a man in Tokyo, Japan. He got a birdseye maple finish *Radio King* and a Gretsch *Broadkaster*. I get to talk to people all over the world—and not just collectors or super pros, but also average players or professionals just interested in the investment of a drum. We have a wide range of customers: executives of corporations, doctors, sanitation workers, machinists—you name it. Occupation-wise, there is a huge variety of backgrounds. I would have never imagined this common love of drums. It's kind of novel to be able to talk to a lawyer about drums. I connect up to a lot of people this way. I really enjoy that about the business.

I love what I'm doing; it's like a huge extension of a hobby that I started. And it seems to be the right thing for me to be doing. I've gotten a lot of very positive and supportive response. A lot of people come back. Once they buy a drum they come back and order another one. That always makes me feel good.



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by Roy Weinberger

The Oldies Circuit

Last night I played Boston with Joey Dee of "Peppermint Twist" and "Shout" fame. It was an outdoor concert, and the threat of rain limited the crowd to 12,000. Now I've got a few days off at home in New York City, before leaving for Des Moines to play the Iowa State Fair for three days. Then there's a day off for the band, which will be spent driving to our next gig in Vermont. Such is life in my particular brand of backup band.

I've been working with Joey Dee & the Starlites on this circuit for almost two years. We travel with and accompany Joey, as well as back additional artists on the classic oldies rock 'n' roll circuit. Alas, Joey doesn't fly, so we almost always travel with him. We've covered over 75,000 miles and 19 states in two years, with eight people in a customized van. Fortunately, the van has color TV, a VCR, four captain's chairs, a bed that comfortably sleeps two, a radar detector, a CB, and a four-way stereo. We travel from city to city in 150-mile driving shifts.

Traveling requires several conscious considerations. First, of course, comes basic hygiene, which can include having a toothbrush handy for those 20-hour rides. And please no *Waffle House* chili if you're sitting next to me! Next, a pair of comfortable foam or rubber ear plugs to minimize annoyances. And don't forget the proverbial *Walkman* with an optional cigarette lighter adaptor, plenty of audio and videotapes, and over-the-ear headphones for better isolation.

The specifics of this particular position combine a fairly unique blend of characteristics. For starters, the travel is most reminiscent of a big band's itinerary. It's also quite similar to working with a small circus troupe. In both, you enter a town usually devoid of friends or acquaintances, relying on your bandmates for company. Usually within a day or two, you're off to another city. The performance angle of the job, combined with the lifestyle, requires you to always be in top playing condition and good general health. I always carry plenty of vitamin C.

The reality of this gig often involves a long drive with little sleep, an early afternoon report, set up and soundcheck, and then a long night. We have only one roadie and no drum tech, so knowledgeable stage hands are usually a big help. Many times stage gear is provided. That can be a blessing or a curse. I almost always have my own seat, cymbals, bass drum pedal, and snare drum handy to improve on comfort or sound. Sometimes you have to share a

drumkit with a second or even a third drummer. In these cases, it pays to be flexible and compromise about your usual setup preferences. It saves on the pace of the show, and the promoters are usually most appreciative.

Our soundchecks can take anywhere from 20 minutes to two hours, depending on the expertise of the soundmen involved and the complexity of the room and the system. Traditionally, the drummer's mic's are tested and balanced first. Usually it's kick, snare, rack toms, floor toms, and hi-hat, followed by ride cymbal, crashes, overheads, and finally a balance on the whole kit. This is usually followed by the whole band jamming on a few tunes. This is a *critical* time, in that it's here where you get the chance to introduce, or reintroduce, yourself to the kit, do your fine tuning, check out your sight lines to band members, musical directors, or other acts, and generally get accustomed to the sounds of the room and your mix.

This is also the perfect opportunity to create a good rapport with the house soundman, and perhaps the monitor soundman. This can have a dramatic effect on the outcome of the performance. I always try to learn the soundmen's names, whether or not we might ever work together again. I have a strong kick drum and bass guitar in my mix, followed by snare, hi-hat, keyboard or guitar, and lead vocal. This combination allows me to play relaxed at all volume levels and tempos, and still groove with the rest of the band. If there are horns or add-on musicians, I might adjust my mix to include them. It depends on whether I need to hear them as much as they need to hear me.

The backup-band side of my work is similar to Catskill resort or even cruise ship work. You usually meet an act for the first time in the afternoon, rehearse, take a break, then do the show. You may not work together again for a week, a month, a year, or ever. Certainly all of the good or bad feelings you can have about an act, which include their degree of preparedness, quality of performance, temperament, and level of professionalism, can be established on this circuit.

Of course all of the trials and tribulations of rehearsals are found too, like tardiness, acts that don't adhere to their charts, unreadable charts, or *no charts at all!* Some of the best lines I've heard are: "Don't worry, it'll be fine," "Just follow me," "No problem, you know my tunes," or, "Oh, I brought a tape; listen to it...but it doesn't go like that anymore!"

Needless to say, it's always helpful to have some music paper with you if you need a dummy page, or a set list with a few choice notes about tempos, cuts, and endings. Also, if there's no drum chart, you always have the option of searching out an extra bass or horn part. Either way, you need to keep a pencil ready.

After rehearsing up to seven acts, you're ready to break for dinner, play the entire show, wait an hour for the house to change over, and then play the entire show again. On the larger shows, each act does anywhere from 15 to 40 minutes, depending on their placement in the show and their overall status.

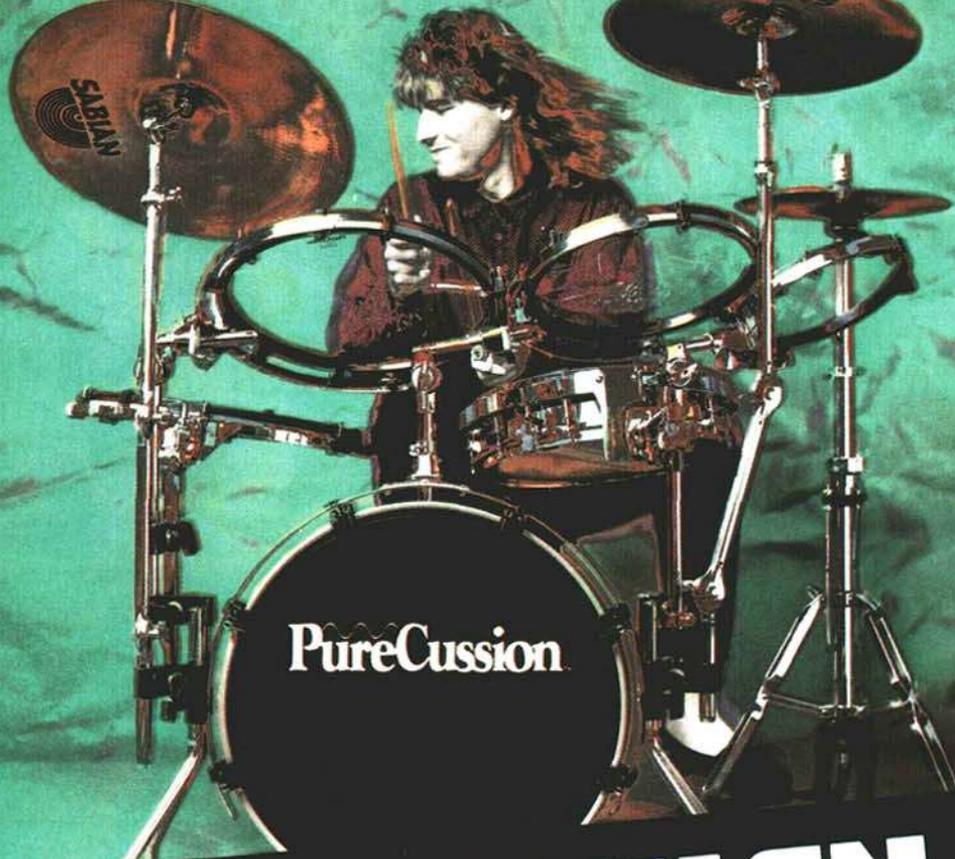
Of course, there's always the joy of meeting and playing with the rock 'n' roll legends who are still out there working. Some of them are in their 40's like Little Anthony ("Tears On My Pillow," "Hurt So Bad"), some in their 50's, like Dee Clark ("Raindrops"), and a few others are in their 60's, like Bo Diddley ("I'm A Man," "Who Do You Love"). I had the honor of working with Bo on his 60th birthday last December. In total, I've probably backed over 40 of the hitmakers of the late '50s through '60s. This, I admit, is the aspect that first lured me into this particular line of work.

The hits that these stars had would comprise an index of any rock fake book. One night, while watching TV in some motel room on the road, a commercial came on for one of those tape offers with rock 'n' roll hits from 1961. As they named the artists, it began to sound like a recitation of my date book! I had worked with nearly two-thirds of the stars from that particular year, as well as many other years subsequently covered on other advertisements. I have indeed been afforded the *privilege* of meeting and working with rock 'n' roll history.

These gigs certainly do build character. You know you've done something really special at the end of one of these nights. Many of these "oldtimers" love to rock out. Don't be fooled by the sound on some of their original recordings, or by your image of their advanced years. They want the best possible feel for their music, and that usually means a *good groove* and a *big backbeat*.

All in all, it's a fun gig. I can only suggest that if you ever get the chance to work with one of these classic rockers, be prepared, enjoy yourself, and pack plenty of vitamins. *Anything* can happen on the oldies circuit!





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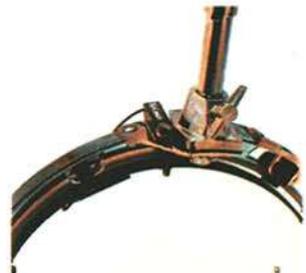
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The Student/Teacher Relationship

The whole matter of the "chemistry" between people is a curious one. Why is it, for instance, that some people seem to get on well together when others don't—without any common bond on the one hand or apparent cause for antipathy on the other? Why is it that the behavior of a certain person can cause irritation in another person but admiration in a third? The reasons for this are rooted in the complexity of psychological influences that make up the character of each one of us.

As civilized people, we have to do a great deal of adapting—usually without even being aware of it: If we need to deal with a particular person, we will usually contrive to do so, regardless of personal feelings. When a teacher in school is confronted by a class, that teacher is going to have to adapt to dealing with a variety of personalities—which will be easier with some than with others. Similarly, the different pupils in the class are likely to react to the teacher in different ways. The teacher accepts the need to adapt to this situation as being part of the job. The pupils, perhaps less willingly, accept it as part of belonging to a particular group of people. In the one-to-one situation of the individual instrumental lesson, we would hope to find a mutually satisfactory relationship, but still the complexities arise. How do we define such a relationship, and how do we achieve it?

We tend to accept whoever we get in the way of class teachers when we are in school or college, because we generally have little or no say in the matter. But we like to imagine that when we have freedom of choice in the case of a private teacher, we have the scope to exercise that choice. In reality, when it comes down to availability, suitability, and a willingness to take on the necessary commitment, the choice is generally limited. And unless we live in a densely populated area that has a lot of musical activity, the choice of teachers is likely to be *quite* small. If we are willing and able to spend time and money traveling, the possibilities increase. However, the law of diminishing returns enters the equation: The more time and money we spend just getting to lessons, the fewer lessons we are likely to be able to afford. So if there is a conveniently situated teacher who also meets our needs, we are fortunate.

The success or failure of the student/

teacher relationship depends largely on the expectations with which the respective parties enter the relationship and the extent to which those expectations are satisfied. The pupil is in the role of *customer*, while the teacher offers a service in return for payment. It is reasonable, therefore, that the pupil should have the expectations and the teacher the responsibility of fulfilling them. However, the teacher can also expect the student to be punctual for lessons, to cooperate with the teacher's methods, to do the appropriate amount of practice and study between lessons, and to make payments as and when agreed.

Ego shouldn't enter the formula, but it sometimes does. There are students who don't really want to *learn* anything from the teacher; they just expect the teacher to praise them and reinforce their own good opinion of themselves. Even worse are teachers who like to exercise their superior knowledge and ability to boost their own egos. By its very nature, the instrumental lesson involves a teacher passing on knowledge to another person who is usually younger and invariably less experienced. The pupil needs to be guided by the teacher, not made to feel inadequate by the teacher's superiority. However, a degree of omniscience in the teacher can be helpful in establishing confidence. A teacher who is too diffident about his or her approach can undermine the value of the teaching by not giving it enough weight.

Everything depends on the attitude with which the instruction is presented. For example: "Watch me, and one day you might be as good as I am" stinks! On the other hand, "This is the way I do it; if it suits you, fine, if not, you'd better find another teacher" is honest, and might suit certain pupils. This attitude clearly indicates that the teacher believes in and is comfortable with a certain method, and if you are studying with him or her this is the way to get good results.

I actually prefer a more flexible approach: Give firm guidance to get people started at any particular level of endeavor, but allow for flexibility and change as the student develops. Too many options too early on can cause confusion. Students need to be guided in a particular direction, with the proviso that the particular path that they are on is going to divide to offer a further choice of directions.

In order for a student to feel that a teacher has something worthwhile to offer, it is reasonable for the student to expect to be impressed with a teacher's playing ability—but this needn't apply in all departments. Without necessarily being in every way a better drummer personally, it is possible for an experienced player to act as a *coach* for a less experienced one. A wise teacher doesn't *have* to be able to demonstrate anything and everything; it is possible to *understand* what the student needs to do to improve and to communicate these ideas verbally. The teacher can do this without losing credibility, just as long as he or she isn't trying to deceive the student as to his or her own ability.

Being a great player doesn't automatically make you a great teacher. The important qualities are the communication skills to put the message across in a way that will suit a particular student, and the patience to allow the student to digest this and apply it. A teacher has to be sensitive to the personality and ability level of the student in order to understand a pupil's difficulties. A brilliant drummer who has forgotten what it is like *not* to be brilliant is unlikely to have much sympathy for struggling pupils. A teacher must be able to sense just how hard to drive a student. Some pupils can find an intense approach stimulating and invigorating, while others can find it discouraging. After all, not everybody aspires to be the next Gadd or Weckl; some people regard making music simply as a form of relaxation.

Some students see their teacher as something of a role model. Their heroes on TV and records are not accessible to them; their teacher is. So the teacher has a responsibility to come across in a positive way, and not to appear like some sort of low-life character. (The father of a pupil, referring to another drummer he had seen, once said to me, "I don't want my son to turn out like *that!*") So a teacher must always remember to be a credit to drumming and the music business.

The student can reasonably expect the teacher to be on his or her wavelength in musical matters. This doesn't mean sharing identical tastes, but the teacher who dismisses music that the pupil enjoys as "rubbish" is putting up a barrier and alienating the person he or she is trying to influence.

continued on page 94

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- 1) Submit 3"x5" or larger postcards only: be sure to include your name, address, and telephone number.
- 2) Your entry must be postmarked by April 2, 1990.
- 3) You may enter as many times as you wish. Each entry must be mailed individually.
- 4) Winner will be notified by telephone. Prize will be shipped promptly.
- 5) Previous *Modern Drummer* contest winners are ineligible.
- 6) Employees of *Modern Drummer* and the manufacturer of this month's prize are ineligible.

HEAVY METAL MIXED BAG DRUM EDITION

by Howard Fields

Publisher: Cherry Lane Music Co., Inc.

P.O. Box 430

Port Chester NY 10573-430

Price: \$16.95

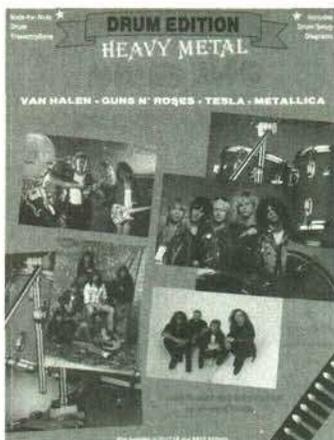
Heavy Metal Mixed Bag is a collection of three books that contain charts of twelve songs—three each by Van Halen, Guns N' Roses, Tesla, and Metallica.

In addition to the drum edition, there are bass and guitar editions of *Mixed Bag* that contain the same songs as the drum edition, making it very handy for bands interested in covering any of these songs.

For the drum edition, author and transcriber Howard Fields has included easy to understand, well-laid out charts, background information and black & white photos of the drummers, analyses of their individual styles and of particular patterns and fills, and diagrams of their basic drum setups. (The setups are only for the actual drums used on the recorded versions of these songs; therefore, they might not be representative of each drummer's touring setup.)

Heavy Metal Mixed Bag, Drum Edition contains some other nice touches, such as lyrics, quotes by some of the drummers, a heavy-duty glossy cover, two tables of contents—one in alphabetical order by song title, the other by page number—and separate diagrams of musical figures of particular interest. A good idea and a nice package for anyone interested in heavy metal drumming.

—Adam Budofsky



Any band director or conductor should have a book like this, and composers and orchestrators could probably pick up some tips about the instruments themselves and the proper notation thereof. It would also be a good book for first-year percussion majors to have, in order to have an overview of the total spectrum of percussion.

If there is any fault to be found with this book, it's that the author tends to be somewhat wordy, with the result that you sometimes have to read quite a few pages to find what you are looking for. The author also devotes considerable space to his philosophies of teaching, many of which are based around concepts found in books such as *The Inner Game Of Tennis*. And I have to question some of the historical information—not that it's incorrect, but simply that it's so abbreviated as to be of questionable value.

And yet, considering that each chapter subject could warrant a book (or books) of its own, one must accept that a book of this type cannot be the last word on percussion, but merely a good starting place. And *Teaching Percussion* is a very good starting place. One of its best features is the inclusion of detailed reference listings in each section, directing the reader to specific method books, videos, and compositions dealing with particular subjects. The book also includes a good glossary of foreign names and terms relating to percussion instruments, and several pages of orchestral excerpts. There are even detailed lists of music shops that specialize in percussion, as well as percussion manufacturers and publishers. I dare say that anyone interested in percussion would find something of use in this book.

—Rick Mattingly

RHYTHMS AND ACCENTS

FOR DRUMMERS

by Gordy Knudtson

Publisher: GK Music Publishing

P.O. Box 7540

Minneapolis MN 55407

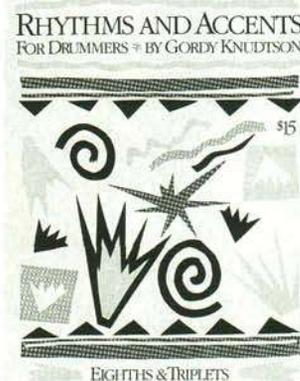
Price: \$15.00

In this book, the author uses rhythmic permutation to compile a "complete listing of all possible rhythms and accent patterns based on one bar of the following: 8th notes in 4/4 time, 16th notes in 2/4 time, 8th-note triplets in 2/4 time, and 8th notes in 6/8 time." The use of mathematical equations in

writing rhythmic exercises is common. However, this text is unique in its presentation. The 96 pages of exercises are literally split down the middle. On the left, the rhythm is written in, as the book calls it, a "simple form," and on the right, the same rhythm is written in a more complex form. Each entry consists of an accent pattern written above the line and an equivalent rhythm written below the line. The user can choose to play one or the other line, or both lines in combination. By flipping either the left or right side of the page, over 1000 16-bar solos are possible in the 8th-note and 16th-note sections, over 250 four-bar solos are possible in the 8th-note triplet section, and 250 eight-bar solos are possible in the 6/8 time section!

Obviously, this book presents an abundance of practicing material. It can be very useful for beginning to advanced drummers. The challenge here is to create practical exercises that are fun to play. I tried accents on toms for fills and solos, jazz independence (using the lower written notes for the snare drum and bass drum while playing time), rock independence (using the lower written notes for the bass drum), big band reading (using the written lower notes as brass cues), and I'm *still* thinking!

—Glenn Weber



TEACHING PERCUSSION

by Gary D. Cook

Publisher: Schirmer Books

Macmillan Publishing Co.

866 Third Avenue

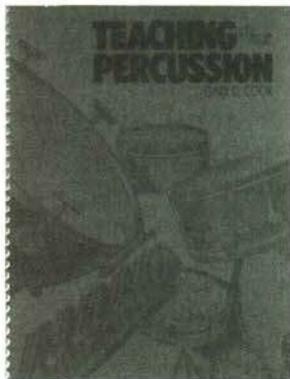
New York NY 10022

Price: \$32.95

Given the diversity of everything that comprises "percussion," the idea of having a single reference work on the subject, written by a single author, is fraught with problems. Too often in the past books of this type have been written entirely from a marching band viewpoint—which might suffice for teaching potential high school band directors in a college percussion methods class—but it has very little relevance to anyone else.

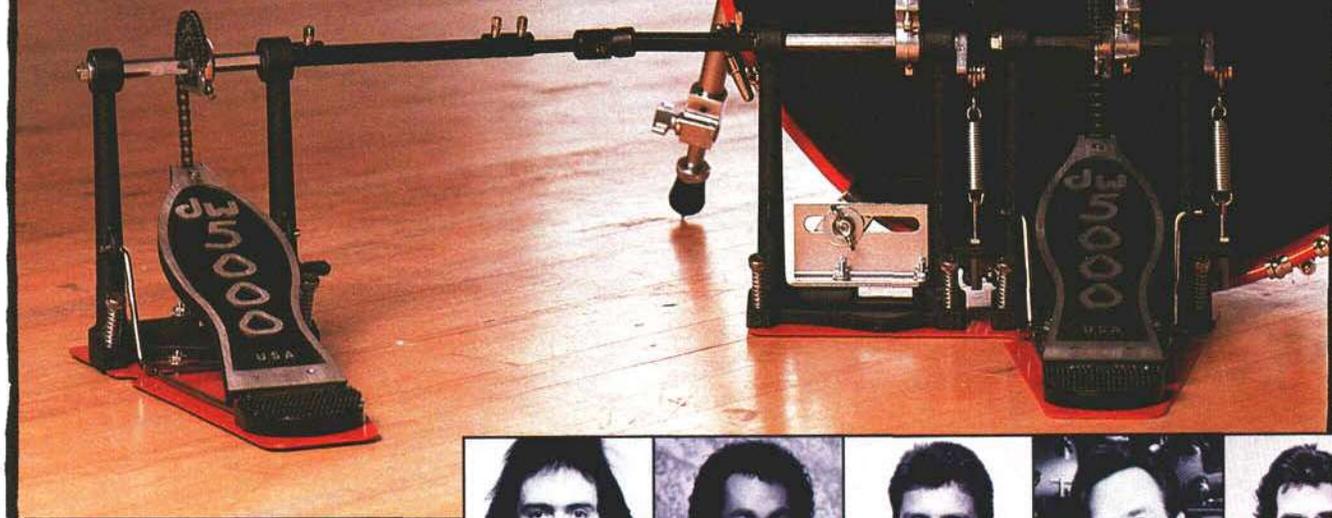
Gary D. Cook, head of Percussion Studies at the University of Arizona in Tucson, has attempted to remedy this situation with *Teaching Percussion*. This 553-page book is primarily aimed at percussion methods classes, but Cook is obviously aware that school music teachers are dealing with a lot more than marching bands these days, and so he has extensive chapters in his book on concert, orchestral, keyboard, and Latin percussion, as well as marching percussion material. He also covers drumset, and although he doesn't go into a lot of detail about electronic percussion and MIDI, he at least recognizes their existence and importance. Given the ever-changing nature of electronic instruments, it's probably wise that he *didn't* discuss specifics.

There is a lot of good material in this book that would be relevant to people besides those in percussion methods classes.



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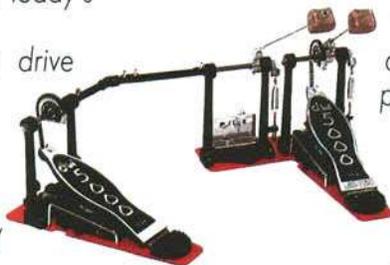


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Modern Drummer is now gathering information on drum teachers around the world. We'll be using this information to produce a **Drum Teachers Listing** that will encompass all styles of drumming. The listing will be presented in a future issue of *Modern Drummer* as a special service for all MD Readers.

If you teach drumming and would like to be included in the MD Teachers Listing, please fill out the profile below (or a photocopy) and mail it in on or before February 15, 1990.

**Mail your Profile to: Modern Drummer, 870 Pompton Avenue, Cedar Grove, New Jersey 07009
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Other Teaching Locations Available Yes No

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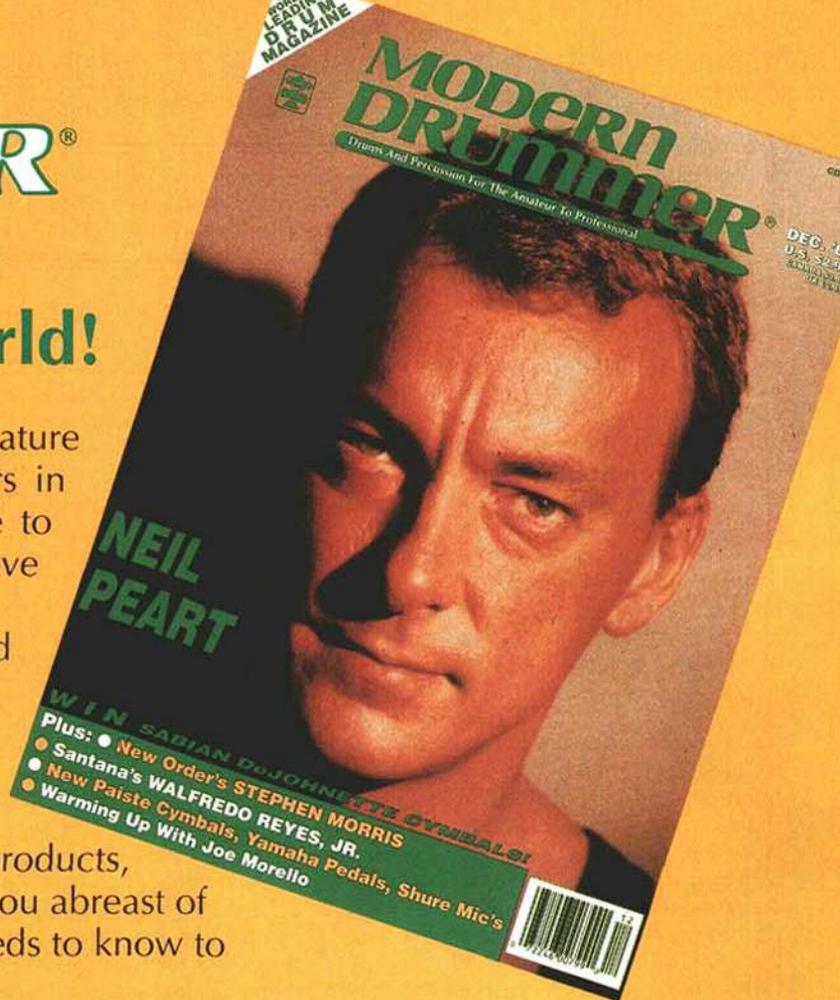
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PLUGGING SHELL HOLES

During a recent drum refinishing project, I ran into a problem finding suitable dowelling material to repair a few holes left in a maple-shell snare drum by a former muffler. I'd like to share my economical solution: maple drumsticks. They will retain the resonant qualities of the maple shell and can easily be cut to size, whittled down, fluted, or tapered to suit your specific need. Some examples of maple drumsticks are Vic Firth SD 1 *Generals* or *SD4 Combos*, but check other brands for the availability of maple sticks as well.

Curtis Gannon
Phoenix AZ

NON-SLIP PEDALS

My drum tip has to do with wet, slippery shoes. I'm sure many drummers playing in clubs and bars have had to play their kit with wet shoes. This usually occurs when people at the club spill half of their drinks on the floor—or on you as you walk through the crowd to the stage. I used to keep a towel on my drum riser to keep my shoes and pedals dry. But this method was never 100% successful; even after wiping the soles of my shoes they were still somewhat wet. As a result, they tended to slip on my bass drum and hi-hat pedals.

Recently I had the idea of putting "skateboard grip" on my pedals. It's a rough, grainy, sandpaper-like material with an adhesive backing, and is available in 30"x30" sheets. It sells for around \$6.00 in most skateboard shops, and comes in almost any color you could think of. (You might check with the clerk at the store about any scraps laying around that you could buy.) I covered two bass drum pedals and a hi-hat pedal for \$1.00. All I did was trace the shape of the pedals and cut out the material to fit. Then I just peeled the backing from the material and placed it on the pedals. It's been working fine for me!

Doug Meola
Bethlehem PA

NON-SQUEAKING PEDAL SPRINGS

I've found that stuffing about three cotton balls inside the spring of a bass drum pedal almost completely muffles the annoying squeaking sound often found on inexpensive (or even expensive) models. To do this, remove the spring and, using a pencil or other thin rod, stuff the cotton balls inside, one by one, until they hang out each end a little bit. In a pinch, paper towels, napkins, or even toilet paper will work.

Eric Emrey
Gaithersburg MD

WEATHERPROOFING CASES

I have been applying two coats of Thompson's *Water Seal* to all my fiber cases for several years. The sealer dries after several hours, leaves no smell or residue, and really seems to strengthen the material. Occasionally, my cases will get set outside on wet ground during loading. The sealer has been a reasonably inexpensive way to help protect both the cases and the drums.

Bill Lowe
Charlottesville VA

CYMBAL CLEANING IDEAS

Nothing dulls a cymbal's sound more than dust, cigarette film, and the endless fingerprints of curious patrons—not to mention those of the drummer. This is especially true when the cymbals are left set up on long-term club gigs. I have some tips pertaining to cymbal cleaning.

Don't throw away your old toothbrushes! When used along with any good-quality cymbal cleaning product (being careful to brush with the tonal grooves and not across them), it's surprising the results one can obtain. Toothbrushes are particularly good for the inside of the bell.

As a real labor-saving device, invest in a large fingernail brush. Somewhat similar in design to a toothbrush, a fingernail brush is larger and stiffer, and thus more suitable for use on larger cymbals, such as rides.

Finally, save old towels that would otherwise be consigned to the trash. Use one damp and one dry to rinse the cymbal free of all cleaning product and buff it to a brilliant finish.

Robert Dore
Holloway Head, England

MORE RESONANT FLOOR TOMS

To get a more resonant floor tom, I wrap foam rubber around the bottom of the legs of the tom. I then duct tape the foam to the legs. The drum is then resting on the foam, rather than on the floor, and the transmission of vibrations from the drum into the floor is reduced.

Doug James
St. Paul MN

IMPROVING TRIGGER RESPONSE

If you have recently purchased an electronic kick drum or pedal apparatus and, for some reason, it does not trigger your electronic brain properly, try this "fix." Open the pedal unit and check the connection on the XLR or stereo output jack for a small resistor. If it has one, remove it. Cut it off carefully so that if the fix fails, you can solder it back into place. Now, try the pedal.

I have learned that when these pedals

were initially marketed, the resistor was a must. On some of the newer brain models, however, more sensitive triggering can be achieved when the resistor is removed. This worked especially well for me when using a Yamaha *PD-80* in combination with a Simmons *SDS1000*. I hope it helps some of you.

Paul Yowhan
Queens Village NY

ENHANCING CYMBAL SOUND

I have a suggestion concerning cymbal bushings. These are the black felt washers that go under and/or over the cymbal on the cymbal stand. These serve to protect the cymbal from contact with the stand and the wing nut holding the cymbal to it. Unfortunately, they also tend to muffle the brilliance of the cymbal.

While not as much a factor on rides or very large crash cymbals, smaller crashes, splashes, and hi-hats can be heavily affected. A move that can make an extreme difference in clarity is to replace these felt bushings with smaller, thinner, harder ones made of materials such as nylon, *Mylar*, *Teflon*, or similar synthetics. Most hardware stores carry a multitude of such washers varying in size and thickness as well as hardness. You might need to drill the center hole of the washer a bit larger in order to fit it on the shaft of the cymbal stand.

I've found the biggest improvement using these washers has been with hi-hat cymbals. The clutch on the top cymbal can be as tight or loose as desired, and the cymbal remains bright. I'm sure that after a little experimentation (at minimal expense) drummers will soon find how easily the sound of their cymbals can be enhanced by making this simple change.

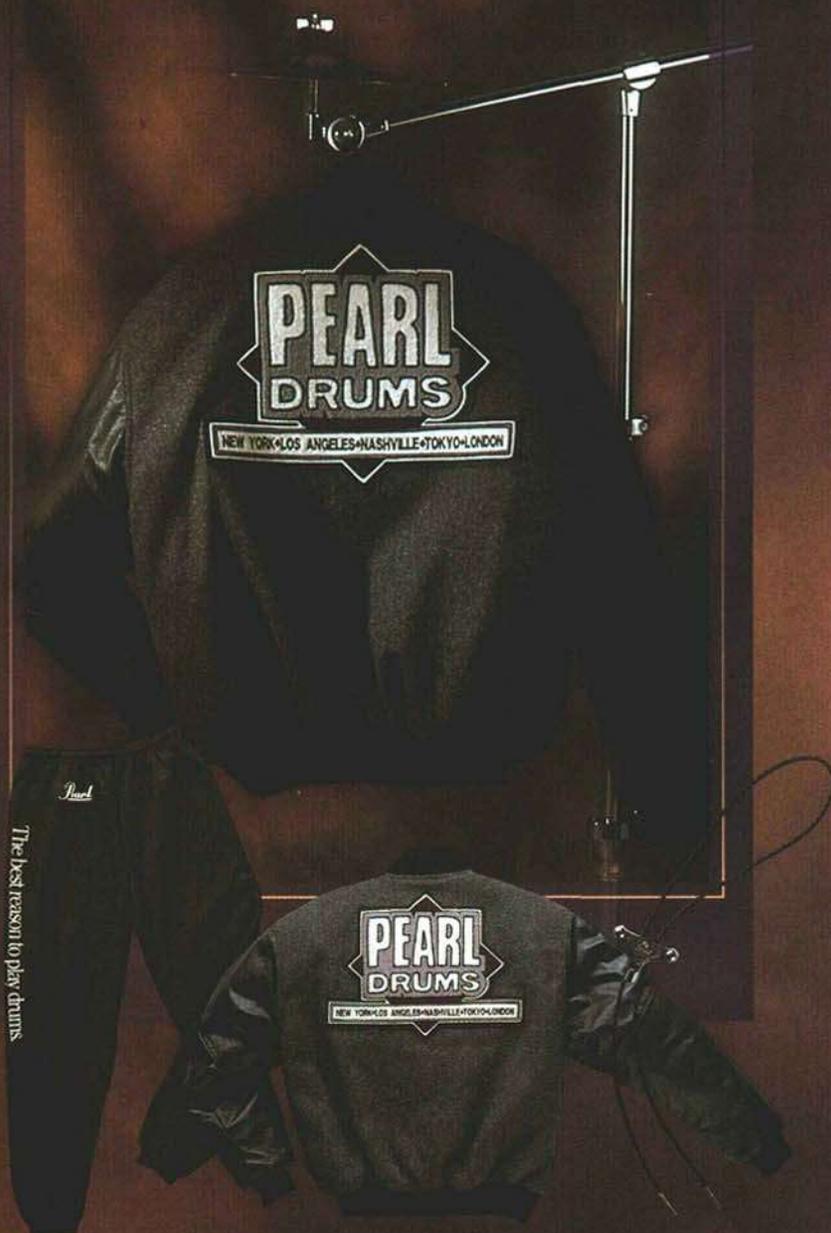
Marcus Loureiro
Taunton MA



Note: The tips presented in Drumline are suggestions based on the personal experience of individual drummers, and are not necessarily endorsed or recommended by Modern Drummer Magazine. Modern Drummer cannot guarantee that any problem will be solved by any Drumline suggestion, and cannot be responsible for any damage to equipment or personal injury resulting from the utilization of any such suggestion. Readers are encouraged to consider each suggestion carefully before attempting to utilize any Drumline tip.

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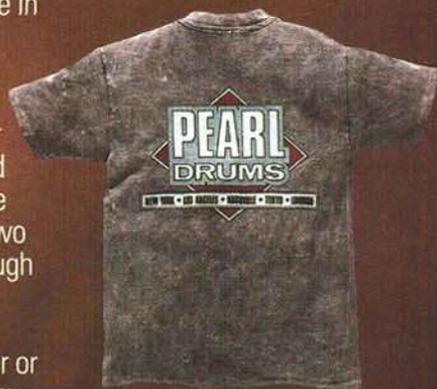


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PORTRAITS continued from page 45

CM: Yeah, I always was into the art thing, ever since I could barely hold a pencil.

TS: What's the medium in which you work?

CM: Lately, most of my work has been in pastels, because that's getting me to understand another way in which colors work together. But I'm starting to move into oils because the pastels aren't rich enough, and you can get bored working with the same thing.

TS: So how does a young, budding artist become a drummer?

CM: Art and music go hand in hand; I hear that all the time. But I guess for me it started when I was younger, listening to my older brothers play music, getting turned on to the radio. There's sort of an immediate reaction you can get from music that you can't get from art. I think that's why I started to play—to get a reaction from people.

When I started out I was 11, and I played a cheap, Snoopy-type drumkit. Actually, I think it was a Sears model. It wasn't real—the rims were held on by springs I think—but it was my first set.

TS: You must have destroyed that in a matter of days.

CM: At first I was real careful with it because I didn't want to ruin it, but by the end of the summer—I only had it for a summer—I beat the hell out of it. Then I wanted a real drumkit, so I got a semi-real one—another Sears model—but this had a

real snare.

TS: Did you have any band experience outside of the Replacements?

CM: I didn't actually join a band until I met the Stinson brothers when I was 17. [Tommy's brother Bob used to play lead guitar in the Replacements.] I had always thought about joining a group but I never did. I had quit playing when I was 14, and then I took it up again at 17 and joined them. Although Bob is gone, the Replacements are still the only band I've really been in. To tell you the truth, I never thought it would go anywhere.

TS: So you're surprised that you're moderately successful?

CM: Yeah, although when Paul joined, I knew he brought a direction to us that we didn't have. We did have this reckless abandon that he was also looking for in a band, so I think it was the right combination.

TS: Where do you want to take it? Will you stay with it?

CM: I love it. Even though I get more out of art, I still love the immediate feedback you get from this, and once that's in your blood it's hard to leave it. Besides, Paul's a great songwriter, we all get on real well, and after all these years we're still together—whereas most bands fizzle out after that amount of time. I see no reason to give it up.



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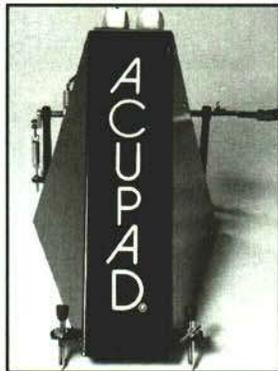
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The teacher who knows nothing of the type of music that the student is involved in is in a very weak position with regard to helping the student to develop in the direction the student wants to go. There can be exceptions to this: The rock drummer who goes to a classical snare drummer specifically to improve his rudimental playing won't expect the teacher to be versed in rock techniques as well. However, as a general rule—particularly at entry level—the teacher needs to have an understanding of the music that the student wants to play. This certainly shouldn't imply pandering completely to the tastes of the student, which are likely to change anyway; it's simply a matter of awareness to promote mutual understanding.

There is more for the teacher to offer than pure instruction in playing the instrument; there is the benefit of *experience*. I have a 12-year-old pupil who, after a relatively short period of study, was good enough to play in the band for his school's production. He told me that it all went well until he dropped a stick and had to play one-handed until someone picked it up for him. "What?!" I said. "Didn't you have any spare sticks with you?" This made me feel quite ashamed; it was such an obvious thing to me that I just hadn't thought to mention it. Any useful hints that the teacher can pass on to the pupil are likely to be valuable. I hate finding out that a pupil has made an unwise choice when buying equipment. I always tell them to contact me first; a teacher should always be available to offer advice, regardless of any inconvenience.

Advice that a teacher is called upon to offer can extend beyond the realms of drumming, drums, and musical matters. If a pupil is still at school, it's possible that the only adult he or she gets to talk to at any length (apart from parents and school teachers) is the drum teacher. So the teacher can find him/herself also acting as a counselor. This can be quite a responsibility, but it's one that shouldn't be ducked. If the pupil feels unable to discuss certain matters with parents or school teachers, the drum teacher is a likely alternative choice. This might seem to be irrelevant at the time, but when the student is prepared to take the teacher into his or her confidence, it indicates a trust and respect that can only be helpful when it comes to the primary task of helping that person to become a good musician.



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STUDENT SEEKING ADVICE

I'm a jazz drummer, male, age 33, from West Berlin, Germany. I want to come to New York City soon for several months in order to improve my jazz drumming abilities. I'd like to start a correspondence with someone who could inform me about general life in New York and who would eventually (once I'm there) help me find a place to live and get accustomed to the "Apple" way of life. Anyone, regardless of sex, color, or instrument, who feels like meeting a new friend from overseas is invited to write to:

Lutz Bauer
D-1000 Berlin-West 19
Nehring-Strasse 4a
Federal Republic of Germany

NOTE FROM SPAIN

As a subscriber to *Modern Drummer*, let me tell you that I have found the magazine to be a most interesting and enjoyable publication. I am a 26-year-old percussion student from Cordoba, Spain. Presently, I am attending percussion courses at the Conservatorio Superior de Musica here in Cordoba, and I also play in a local jazz combo. I would very much like to communicate with fellow drummers from all over the world. Please feel free to write to me at the address below.

Pablo Alvaro Jordano Barbudo
Avenida del Gran Capitan, No. 21, 5o
14008 Cordoba
Spain

INSPIRED READER

After enjoying so many incredible issues through years of your magazine, I just had to say thanks. The depth of learning and inspiration I've gained from *Modern Drummer* is unmatched. From Baby Dodds to Neil Peart to Buddy Rich, you have consistently showered your readers with the magic of music and drumming.

I've played drums for 15 years in classical, jazz, and rock. To quote Jonathan Mover's comparison of drumming to Shoeless Joe Jackson's line in the baseball movie *Field Of Dreams*, "I feel the same about drums as that character does about baseball. I love the feel of the sticks in my hands, the feeling of hitting the drums and creating the sounds and textures. I could never do anything else." It couldn't have been said *any* better.

I just returned from the Buddy Rich Memorial Concert in Los Angeles, and that show is the catalyst for this letter. The magic of that event found a place in my heart for *all* that drumming and music means to myself and so many others. After the show, a cassette tape that featured a tribute to Buddy narrated by Armand Zildjian and Lennie DiMuzio was handed out. The two of them, along with Buddy's music, walked the listener through this incredible era of drumming. The day before Buddy's death, Armand thanked Buddy at his bedside for the best musical times of his life. Every one of the great drummers who had the honor

of playing in that show received a standing ovation! I thank them and I thank *Modern Drummer* for some of *my* most memorable musical experiences. I also thank Buddy Rich and Louie Bellson for finding their way to my town through the years and playing shows I'll always remember. It's drummers and the people who support them that make the drumming family such an incredible thing to be a part of.

Most of all, my thanks to *Modern Drummer* for supplying the core, the network, and the platform for drummers around the world to communicate! Any drummers who'd like to get in touch with me, please feel free.

Mike Starkey (drummer - Broken Ties)
136 Ridgeway Avenue
Santa Rosa CA 95404

PERFORMING FROM THE HEART

In 1979, when I was attending my first concert (Cheap Trick) along with 13,000 other people, I came to the realization that nothing would be more thrilling than performing for the rest of my life. Whether you're a beginner or a professional, you can never let the bad times get in the way of your performing. So, whether you're performing on stage or in your garage, you must always remember that you can only look forward to more rewarding achievements in your life. Most important of all, you must remember from the start that the only way to the top is from the bottom of your heart.

Jon Provost
Worcester MA



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Another feature of the snare is a re-creation and improvement of the original *Pioneer* snare strainer. This lightweight strainer is manufactured from stamped steel and brass and uses a lever

throw-off action. The butt plate and strainer plate allow the use of either cord or tape for attaching the specially designed 13" wire snares. These models also feature heavy-gauge batter and snare hoops and use Ludwig *Ensemble* 13" medium coated batter heads and 13" Resonant snare heads as standard.

According to Ludwig, the new drums are designed for the session/studio drummer, jazz/fusion drummer, and symphonic snare drummer, but are also ideal as auxiliary snare drums for rock drummers. **Ludwig Industries, P.O. Box 310, Elkhart IN 46515-0310, (219) 522-1675.**

NEW LP BRUSHES

LP has made two significant changes to their *Pro Brushes*. First, an O-ring has been added to the bristle end to control unwanted rattling, and second, the counterbalance on the shaft has been altered to give the brush more of a stick-like feel. LP *Pro Brushes* are available in two models, a light (*LP-CCL*), and a heavy (*LP-CCH*). **LP Music Group, 160 Belmont Ave., Garfield NJ 07026, (201) 478-6903.**

DCI BUDDY RICH MEMORIAL CONCERT VIDEO

DCI Music Video has announced that the Buddy Rich Memorial Scholarship Concert is available on video. The concert, produced by Cathy Rich and the Avedis Zildjian company, was taped live at the Wiltern Theater in Los Angeles on October 14, 1989. (*For an in-depth report on the concert, see this issue's Industry Happenings column.*) The program has been released in two segments featuring world-class drummers in performance with the Buddy Rich band. Tape One features playing and soloing by Gregg Bissonette, Louie Bellson, and Dennis Chambers, and includes a drum trio performed by all three drummers. Tape Two spotlights performances by Vinnie Colaiuta, Dave Weckl, and Steve Gadd, including another drum trio. **DCI Music Video, 541 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10011, 1-800-342-4500 (in New York State, 212-691-1884).**

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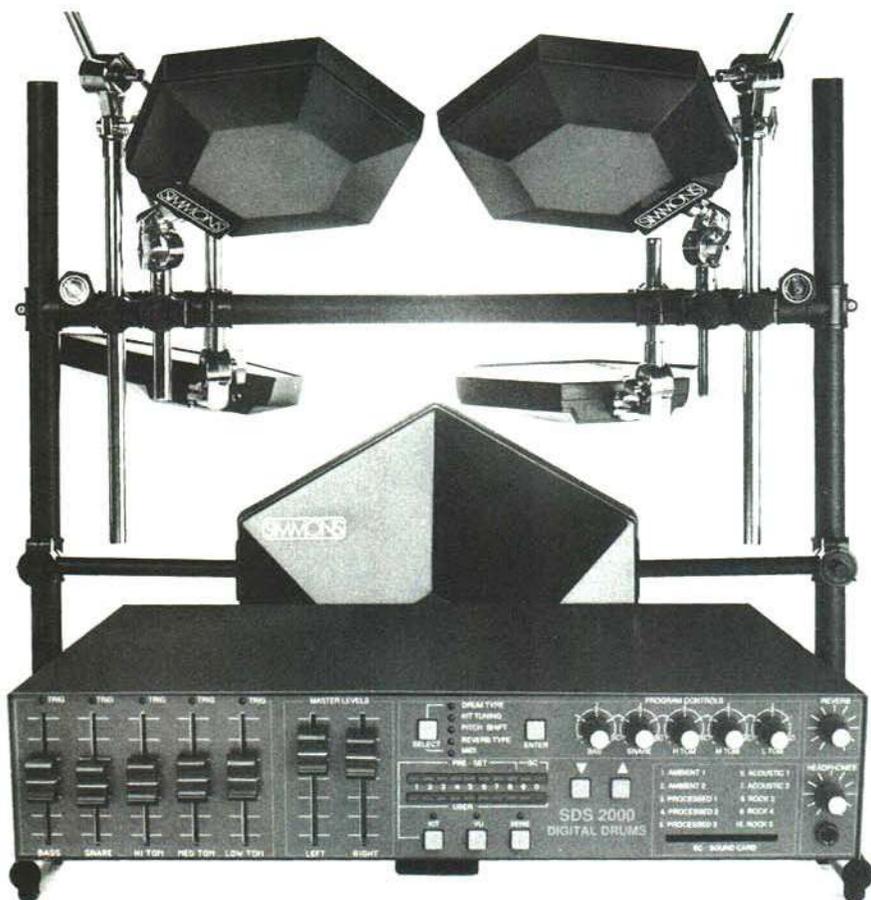
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Jopa Rock Cans

Paul Real Sales has announced its distribution of Jopa percussion products—all hand-made in the United States by a family-operated company with generations of experience in authentic Latin music. Jopa offers an extensive selection of ethnic percussion, but they consider their 12-model cowbell line as their premier product. The *Rock Bell* is made of heavier-gauge metal than the other models, is available in two sizes with distinctively different pitches, and is made with fully overlapping seams. The Jopa

Cowbell Clamp holds any cowbell securely to any holder or cymbal stand. The clamp and the welds on the cowbells are guaranteed for life to the original owner.

Jopa also makes agogo bells, ganzas, triangles, reco recos, African boat bells, cuicas, panderettas, and tamborims. In addition, Jopa offers their new *Rock Cans*—a pair of tamborims mounted on a bracket that attaches easily to a cymbal stand tilter. *Rock Cans* have the sound of timbales, but take up only one third of the space, making them ideal for the drumset player who wants a different sound. **Paul Real Sales, 1507 Mission St., South Pasadena CA 91030, (818) 441-2484.**

REVISED KAT MIDI PERCUSSION CONTROLLER

KAT has announced shipment of a revised version of the KAT MIDI Percussion Controller. According to President Bill Katoski, the new mallet controller uses a redesigned force-sensing keyboard with a wider dynamic range and a smoother response curve, making it more consistent from note to note, more responsive, and more durable. A new triple-footswitch, the

KF-3, is also available for use with the KAT and drumKAT. **KAT, Inc., 515 Washington Ave., West Hempstead NY 11552, tel.: (516) 481-3004, FAX: (516) 481-8467.**

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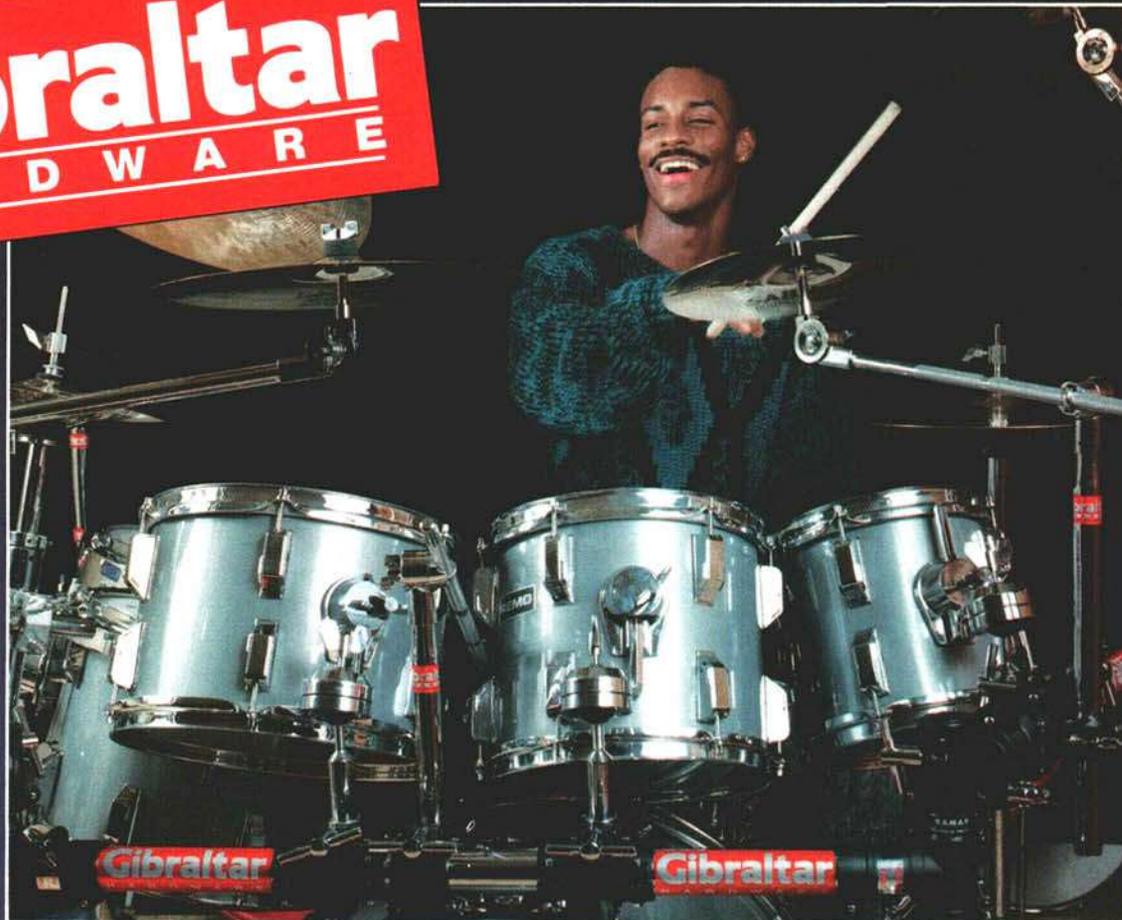
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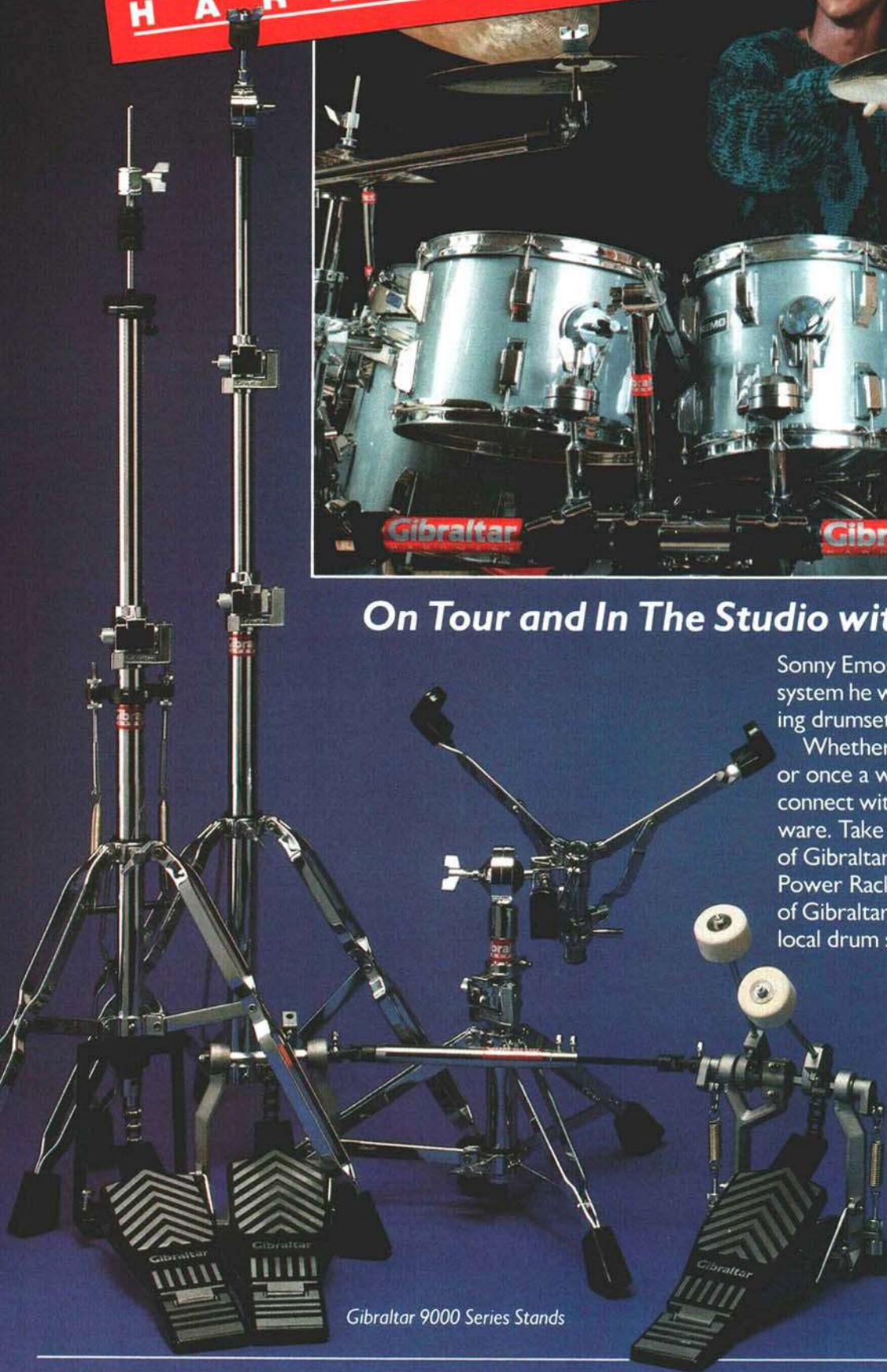
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The XR possesses all the functionality of the standard *Proteus*, but with four times the number of user presets. Based on customer feedback, the number of user (RAM) presets has been expanded from 64 to 256. Combined with the factory (ROM) presets, the *Proteus XR* has a total of 384 presets. (For more information on E-mu's *Proteus*, see the September, 1988 MD New And Notable column.) **E-mu Systems, Inc., 1600 Green Hills Road, Scotts Valley CA 95066, (408) 438-1921.**

JEANIUS RUSSIAN DRAGON



Jeanius Electronics has introduced a device that allows drummers to visually determine how far ahead or behind the beat they are playing. The *Russian Dragon* employs a series of 25 LEDs, with the middle light symbolizing where the beat should be. When a signal from a kick or snare drum is made, one LED lights up on either side and lets the drummer see where he or she is playing in relation to the beat.

The *Russian Dragon* has two inputs—one for a click, and the other for the snare or kick signal. The *Dragon's* sensitivity can be set to measure timing errors anywhere from one half of a second to 80 microseconds. The unit can also be used to investigate and correct triggering delays or MIDI timing errors. **Jeanius Electronics,**

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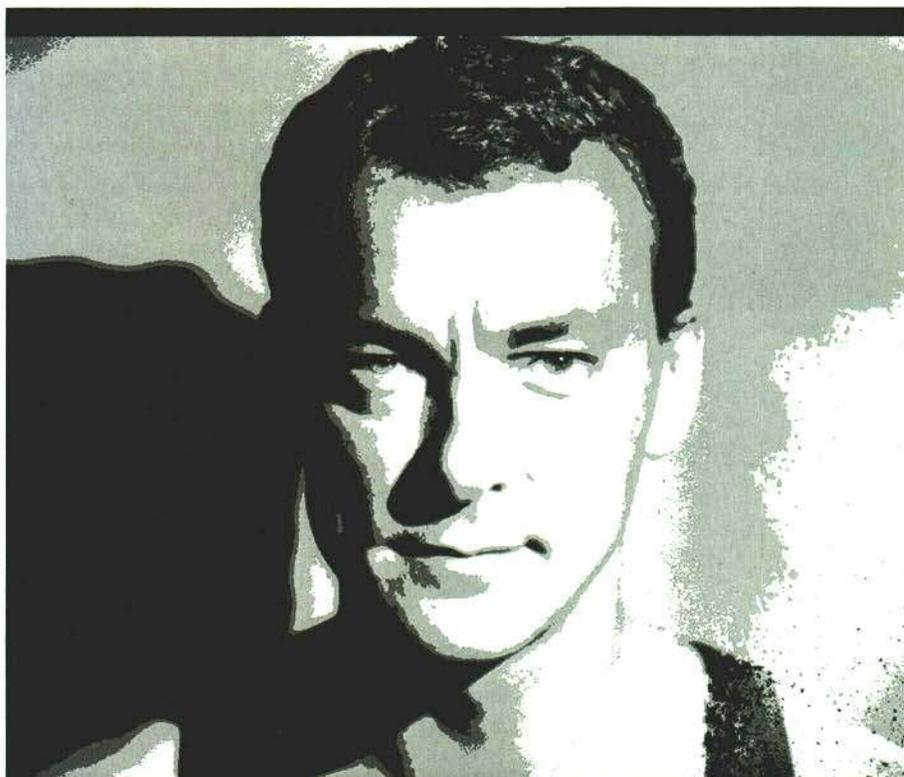
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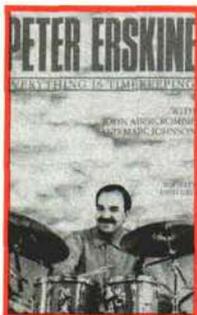
Some of the best, most practical tips for drummers often come from typical working players—drummers just like yourself. To help pass along those tips to drummers who can benefit from them, *MD* will soon debut a brand-new department called *DrumLine*.

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We ask that you keep your *DrumLine* tip to 150 words maximum. Photos or drawings are fine, but they cannot be returned. Send your tip, along with your name and address, to *DrumLine*, c/o Modern Drummer, 870 Pompton Avenue, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009.

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DCI MUSIC VIDEO



PETER ERSKINE EVERYTHING IS TIMEKEEPING

A wealth of ideas and information plus incredible performances featuring John Abercrombie and Marc Johnson. Peter demonstrates and discusses the jazz ride pattern, ride cymbal technique, basic jazz independence, improvisation and composition on the drumset and more. Booklet included.

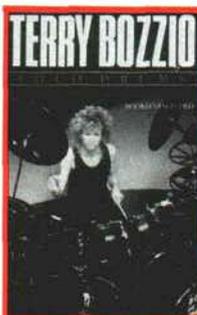


DAVE WECKL BACK TO BASICS

Dave concentrates on time playing, constructing a groove, beat displacement, (playing backwards), cymbal technique, phrasing, creating a drum part, playing in odd times, and soloing. This video also features three songs from *Contemporary Drummer + One*, a latin groove, and some fantastic solos.

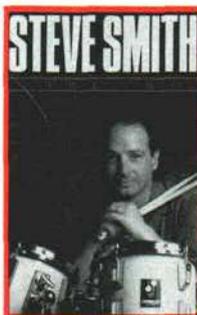
BACK TO BASICS

Dave outlines his philosophy and technical approach to the drums, covering stick control, foot technique, brushes, and independence. He also performs with several tracks from *Contemporary Drummer + One* and plays some explosive solos.



TERRY BOZZIO SOLO DRUMS

Terry presents his overall approach to the drum set starting with an incredible solo that he breaks down section by section, explaining each technique used. He also covers double bass drumming, hand technique, 4-way independence, and offers a study of his drum part for *U.S. Drag*. Booklet included.

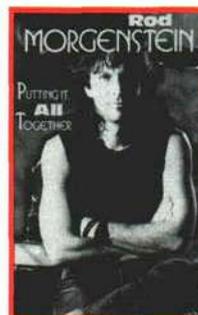


STEVE SMITH PART ONE

Steve describes methods and demonstrates methods for developing time and meter and his basic approach to rock and jazz. This video also includes some incredible solos and performances with Steve's group Vital Information. *Best Music Instruction Video of 1987* (American Video Awards). Booklet included.

PART TWO

An exciting follow-up with invaluable tips on double bass drumming, developing creativity, soloing, and creating a drum part. This video includes rare in-concert footage of Steps Ahead, plus great performances by Vital Information. Booklet included.



ROD MORGENSTEIN PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Rod discusses how to develop versatility, creating a drum part, techniques for playing in odd time signatures, and his approach to ghost strokes and double bass drumming. On-screen graphics included.



STEVE GADD IN SESSION

Presents 90-minutes of incredible music and dialogue by Steve Gadd with Will Lee, Eddie Gomez, Richard Tee and the late Jorge Dalto. This classic video will give you a behind-the-scenes look at masters at work as they arrange tunes, work on grooves, and play funk, latin, reggae, shuffles, and ballads.

UP CLOSE

Steve discusses his influences and demonstrates some of the classic drum parts that he has played on hit records like "Fifty Ways to Leave Your Lover." In addition to playing some great solos, Steve shows how he applies rudiments to the drumset and demonstrates his bass drum technique.

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BUDDY RICH MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP CONCERT

The first annual Los Angeles Buddy Rich Memorial Scholarship Concert was held on Saturday, October 14, 1989, at the Wiltern Theater in Hollywood. Co-produced by Scabebea Productions and the Avedis Zildjian Company, the show presented six of the world's top drummers performing with the Buddy Rich Band (under the direction of Steve Marcus). The evening was co-hosted by comedian/drummer Jeff Altman and Cathy Rich.

After a historical film clip of Buddy from the early big band era, Jeff Altman opened the show on drums—as he put it, "Fulfilling a fantasy that every drummer has had: pretending to be Buddy Rich." Jeff then introduced Cathy, who greeted the audience and thanked them on behalf of her father, and then introduced Louie Bellson, who sat in on an opening number to spotlight the band.



Photo by Lissa Wales

Dave Weckl

The first solo artist to appear was Gregg Bissonette, who delighted the audience with his swinging talent on "In A Mellow Tone," and then astounded them with his dynamic range, soloing ability, and fluid double-bass work on a high-energy rendition of "Time Check." Comments from the many rock-oriented drummers in attendance attested to their surprise at Gregg's incredible versatility.

Next up was Dennis Chambers, wearing a jaunty black beret (which he had exchanged for his ever-present baseball cap) to accompany his tuxedo. Those who knew Dennis only for his funk and fusion chops were impressed by the solid swing feel he imparted to "Sister Sadie." But he served up the power and fire he is famous for on an absolutely flying version of "Dancin' Men," featuring rapid kicks with the horn section (who must be credited with keeping up with Dennis's intensity) and crowd-pleasing



Photo by Lissa Wales

Left to right: Dennis Chambers, Louie Bellson, and Gregg Bissonette

cross-hand cymbal crashes.

The inimitable Louie Bellson returned to perform his own "Carnaby Street" with the band, opening with a lengthy solo passage that featured the rudimental styling and tasteful dynamics that he is so famous for. As the only drummer on the bill who regularly performs in a big-band format, Louie was completely in his element, and obviously delighted in showing what the style was all about to younger members of the audience who had not had much contact with it. More than one young drummer was heard to exclaim, "Wow! This guy can really play!"

Following Louie's solo appearance, Gregg and Dennis returned to the stage, and the three drummers closed the first half of the show with a trio performance, trading fours and eights and eliciting cheers from the crowd as they went for ever-more-challenging patterns. The spirit was one of fun for all three drummers; there was no sense of "cutting" involved. The audience jumped to its feet as one at the conclusion of this exciting act.

The intermission was almost as exciting for the audience members as the show, since many of drumming's top personalities were on hand to honor Buddy's memory. Peter Erskine, Jim Keltner, Ian Wallace, Ginger Baker, Ed Shaughnessy, Alan White, Myron Grombacher, and many other drummers mingled with industry notables such as Armand



Photo by Lissa Wales

Vinnie Colaiuta

Zildjian, Lennie DiMuzio, Pro-Mark's Herb Brochstein, Remo Belli, Tama's Joe Hibbs, and Steve Ettlson and Jim Coffin of Yamaha. It was a golden opportunity for autograph-seekers and drummers who "just wanted to shake hands" with the legends of drumming.

Dave Weckl was the first performer of the second half, opening with a funky rendition of "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy" and then introducing "Bugle Call Rag" with a solo built on a rudimental "marching snare" theme. His technique and intensity brought cheers from the audience at several points.

Jeff Arnold returned to introduce Cathy Rich on a vocal number with the band entitled "I Got The Lord" (featuring Cathy's husband, Steve Arnold, on drums). This was followed by a dance number performed by Cathy's five-year-old son, Nicholas, who did a creditable Michael Jackson routine to "Bad."

The presentation of the Buddy Rich Memorial Scholarship was next on the agenda. Cathy Rich explained how entrance videotapes had been screened by the editors of *Modern Drummer*, producing a group of five finalists. The tapes of these finalists were judged by the six artists on the concert bill, and a winner was determined. That winner was Ronnie Manaog, a talented young drummer who,



Photo by Lissa Wales

Steve Gadd

Coincidentally, lives and attends school in the Southern California area, and so was able to be on hand to receive his award personally. Ronnie received a \$5,000 scholarship in Buddy Rich's name to help further his musical education.

Following thanks to the various sponsoring companies and an individual introduction of the Buddy Rich Band members, Cathy introduced Armand Zildjian, who presented the Zildjian Company's Lifetime Achievement Award to Louie Bellson. Armand stated that this award was presented in recognition of Louie's "40 or more years of drumming excellence." The audience rose to its feet again in agreement with this honor.

The excitement continued when Vinnie Colaiuta took the stage, to perform the easy-groove swing classic, "Big Swing Face," which featured dramatic dynamic shifts, and an up-tempo rendition of "Ya Gotta Try," which included many exciting fills and punches with the band. Wearing a suit and tie styled somewhat in the spirit

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of the '40s, Vinnie seemed to embody the classic spirit of the big band drummers while epitomizing the best of today's talented players.

While every drummer on the program received a standing ovation at the conclusion of his performance, Steve Gadd was the only one who received such an accolade upon his *entrance*. Steve returned this obvious respect with an outstanding performance, locking down the groove for a good-time shuffle rendition of "Keep The Customer Satisfied" (featuring a brief but tasteful solo in the classic Gadd tradition) and kicking the band into a swinging "Just In Time."

Steve was joined by Vinnie and Dave for yet another trio outing. Each drummer opened with a bit of free-form soloing, and then a samba/march feel was established. The three players traded solos, demonstrating the individual qualities that have placed them at the top of their field. The evening concluded on an incredibly high note, as all the performers gathered on stage for a well-deserved bow. The event is planned to be an ongoing one, to help support future Buddy Rich Memorial Scholarships.

—Rick Van Horn

SABIAN OPENS NEW OFFICE FACILITY



Standing in the midst of Sabian personnel, local politicians, members of the press, and several Sabian dealers, Robert Zildjian officially opened the new Sabian office building on October 12. "This is another success for Sabian," Zildjian said, "and it is very much part of our Canadian Thanksgiving celebration. I thank God for the people who are here today and for the employees in the plant next door."

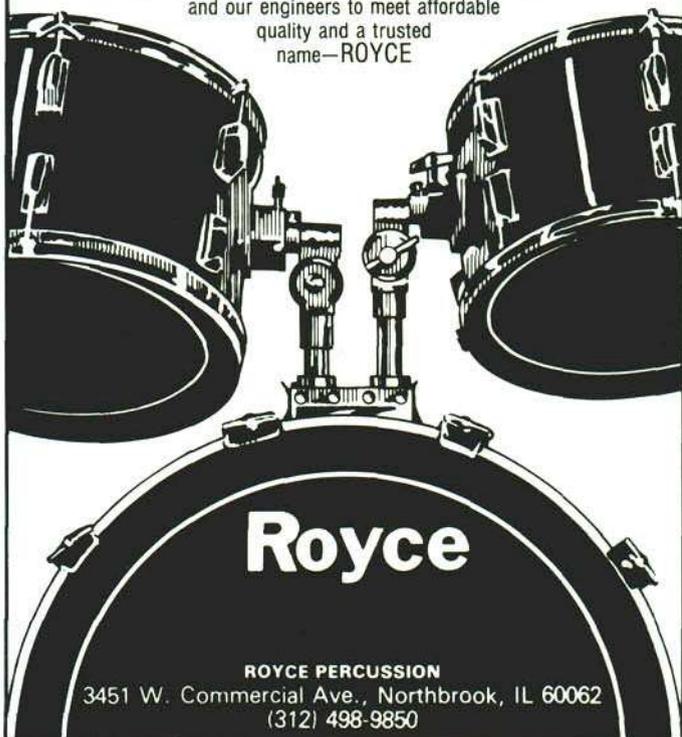
The new Sabian offices are housed in a log-cabin type structure overlooking the St. John River in Meductic, New Brunswick, Canada. The building is just a few

feet away from the Sabian factory, which had previously housed the administrative offices as well as the manufacturing operation. "I used to feel like the referee, sitting in the middle," Zildjian laughs. "I'd have a marketing guy talking on the phone on one side of me, trying to sell cymbals, and a production guy on the other side trying to get a quote on 100 tons of copper. Everyone was shouting because of the noise from the factory downstairs. We had to get out of there. Now, with marketing and administration in this new building, they will be able to work more efficiently. Also, it opens up more room in the other building for R&D, which has been taking on a more profound position here. We've got two of the best R&D brains in the business—Danny Barker and Nort Hargrove. The world hasn't seen everything these guys can do yet, but it's coming down the pike."

David McAllister, Vice-president, Marketing, sees the new facility in a double light. "For those who have been working hard the past few years to get the company to where it is today, this building is the culmination of a lot of hard work. But at the same time, being able to work in a facility like this is about the future, and what we have yet to accomplish. We

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are very thankful for what we've been able to do, but we're also looking at the horizon and the achievements that are yet to come."

—Rick Mattingly

PROSOUND DRUM COMPETITION

Celebrity artists Peter Erskine, Gregg Bissonette, and Aynsley Dunbar were on hand to judge the Drum Wars competition sponsored by ProSound Music Centers of Colorado, in conjunction with Zildjian

cymbals, Pearl drums, and Evans drumheads. Also on hand to judge the competition were Steve Jacobs and Ken Austin of Pearl, Mike Morse of Zildjian, and Bob Beals of Evans.

For the competition, about 100 drummers sent in three-minute audition tapes. The field was then narrowed down to 12 finalists—six in the 16 and younger age group, and six in the 17 and older age group. The finalists then appeared live on the ProSound Music Center stage for the final judging to determine the overall winners, who were Chip Leh, 16, of Sterling, Colorado, and Darrin Johnson, 17, of Denver, Colorado.

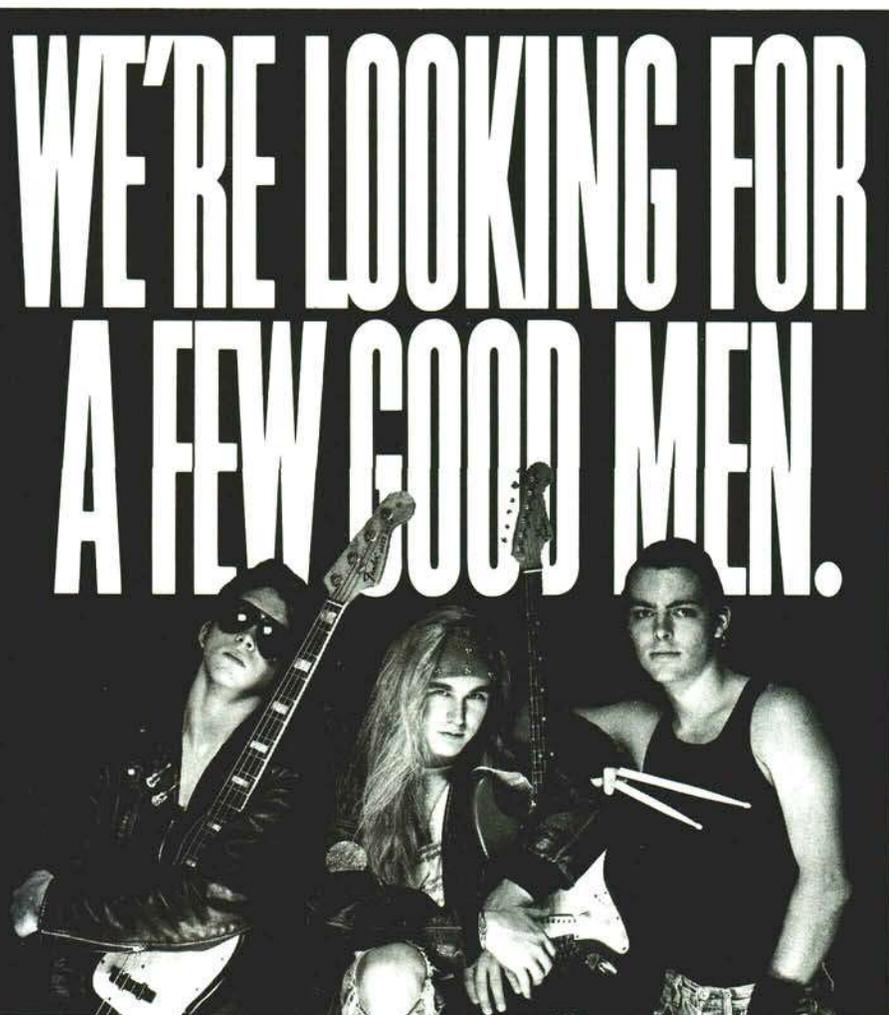
The Drum Wars competition was then followed by a Drum Bash party held at a local nightclub. Special guests Erskine and Bissonette played for about an hour each and then answered questions. The night's finale featured a drum jam with Erskine and Bissonette.

PEARL MOVES HEADQUARTERS

Pearl Drums is moving their Nashville-based corporate headquarters to a new, custom-designed complex. The facility will feature 70,000 square feet of office and warehouse space in the Metroplex Office and Industrial Center near the Nashville International Airport. "In an effort to better accommodate the market, Pearl's Nashville facility has to be expanded, modernized, and technologically streamlined," stated Tak Isomi, president of Pearl. The facility will be equipped with computerized climate control for product protection, a computerized shipping system assuring next-day shipment, a new telephone system with additional WATS lines and 24-hour order-entry capabilities, and a sound studio for product demonstration. Pearl's west coast office in Los Angeles and the southwest office in Dallas will be closed in the consolidation effort. Pearl's east coast operations will remain intact.

SANTAMARIAS CONGAS CLOSSES SHOP

Citing financial difficulties, owner Jose Garcia has announced that Santamarias Cuban-style congas is going out of business. Santamarias were endorsed by conga master Mongo Santamaria.



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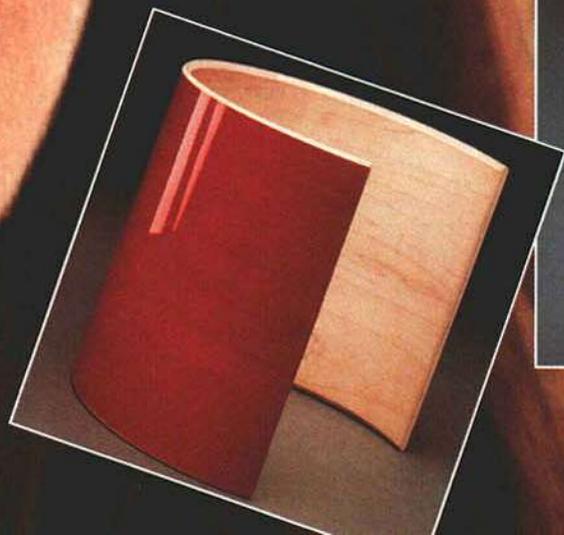
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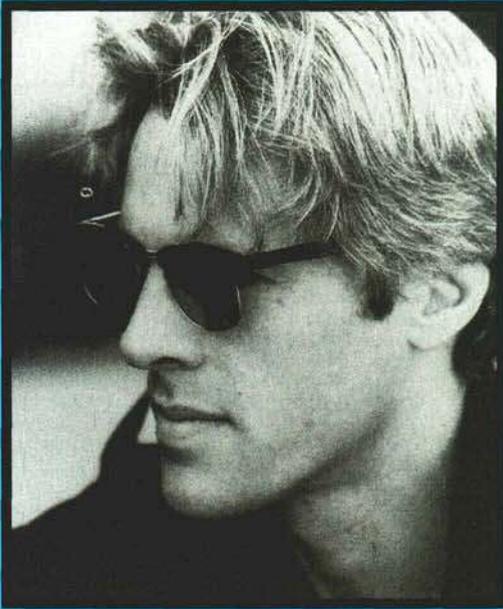
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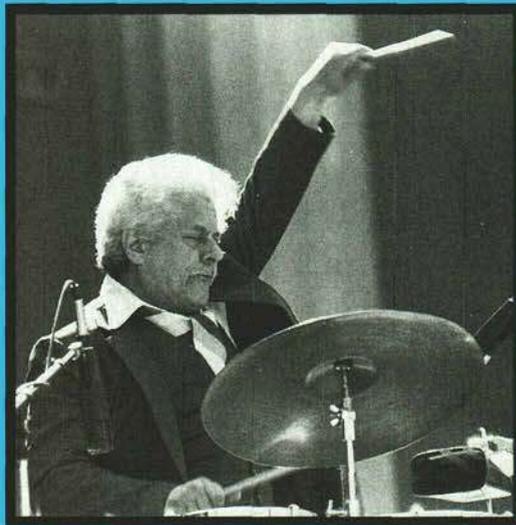


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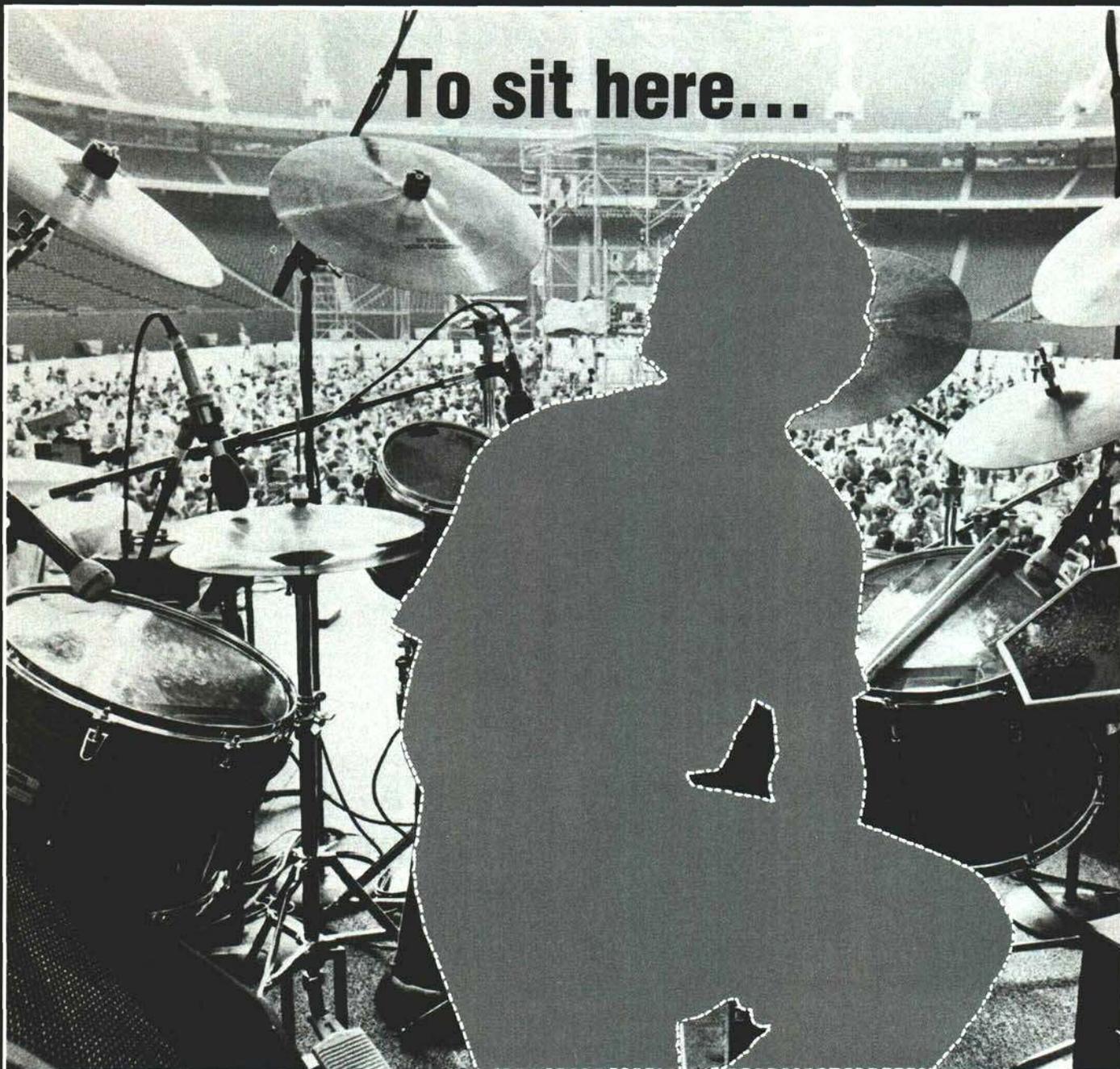
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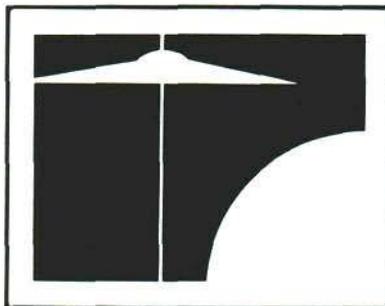


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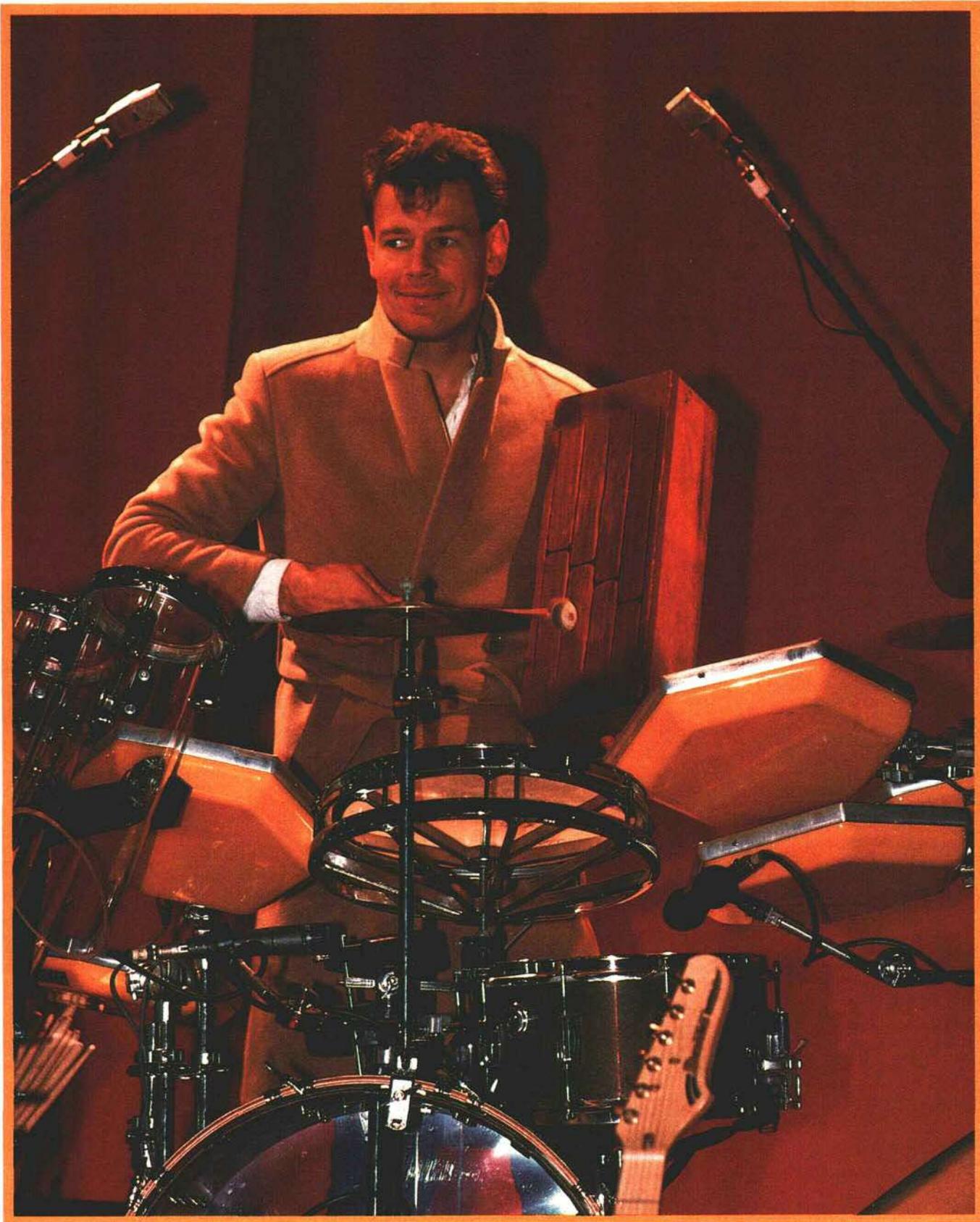
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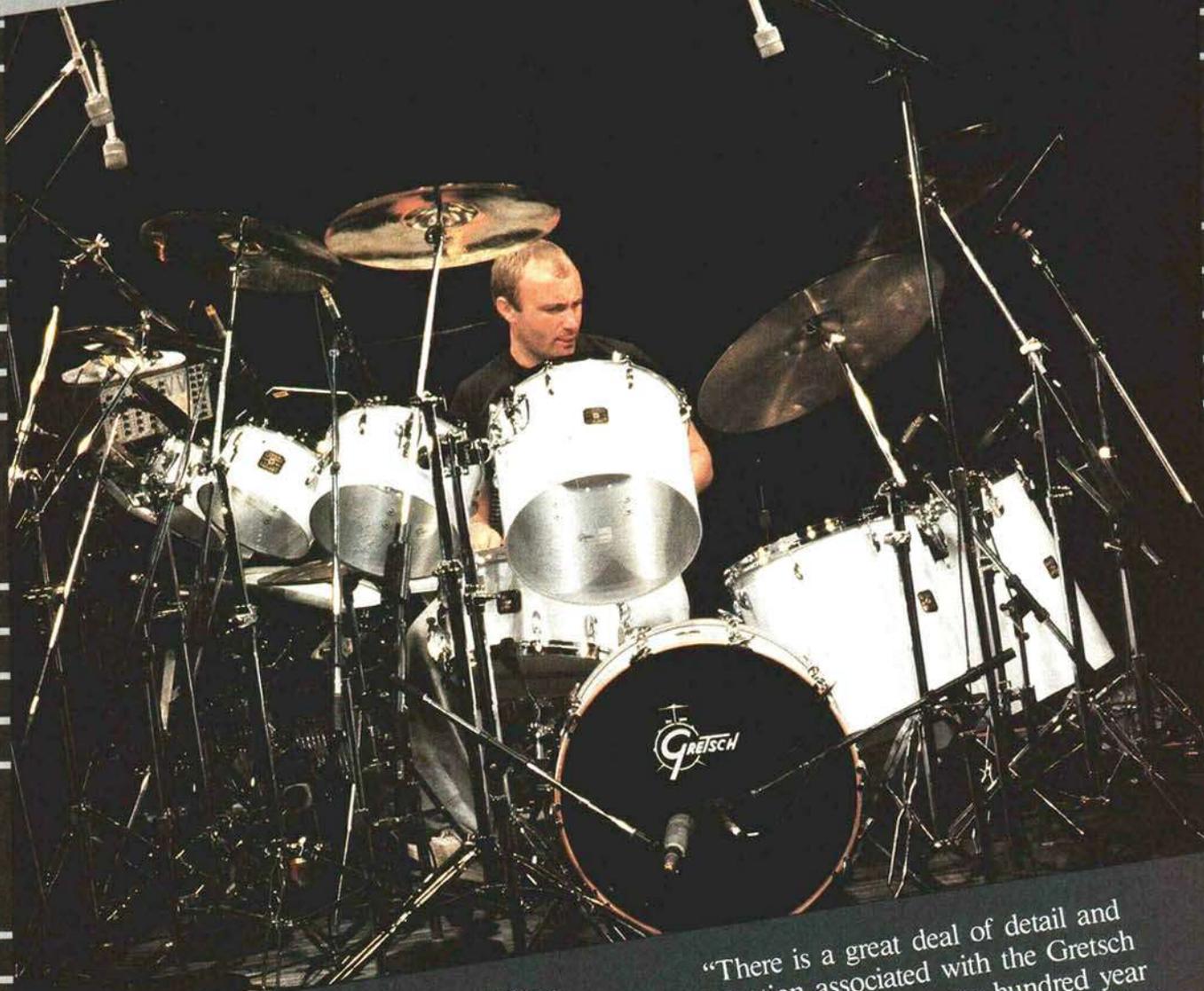


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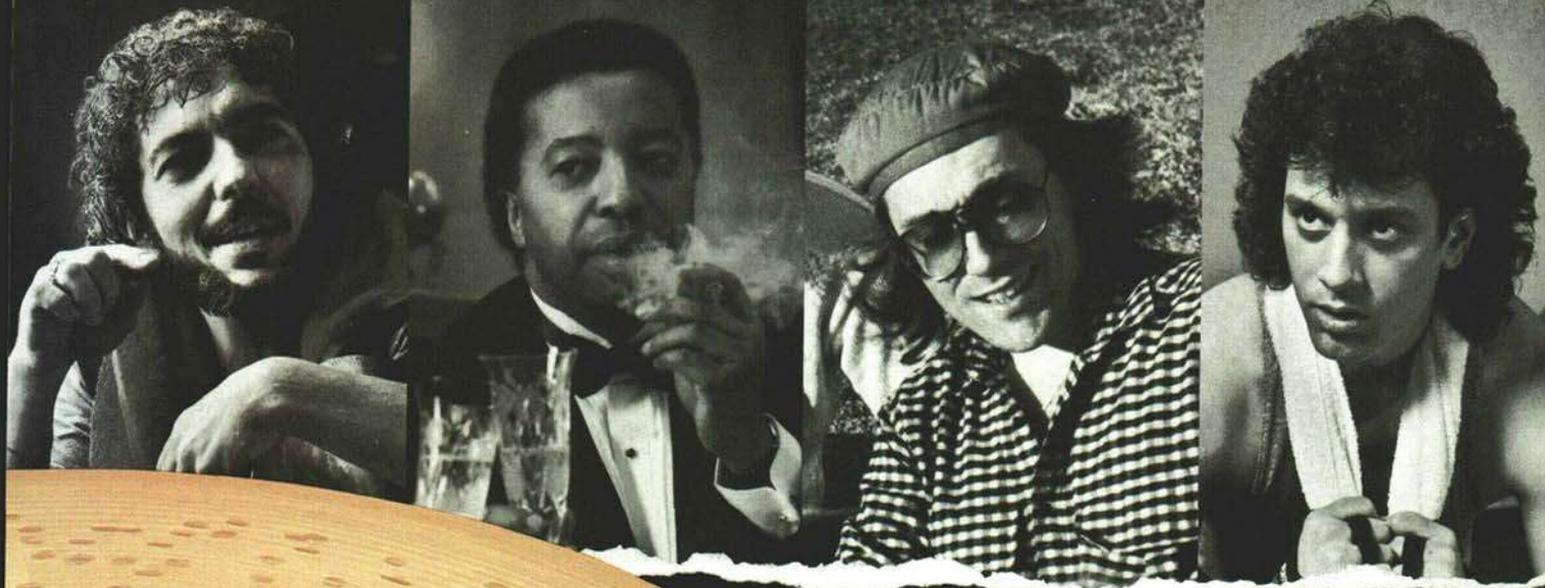
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