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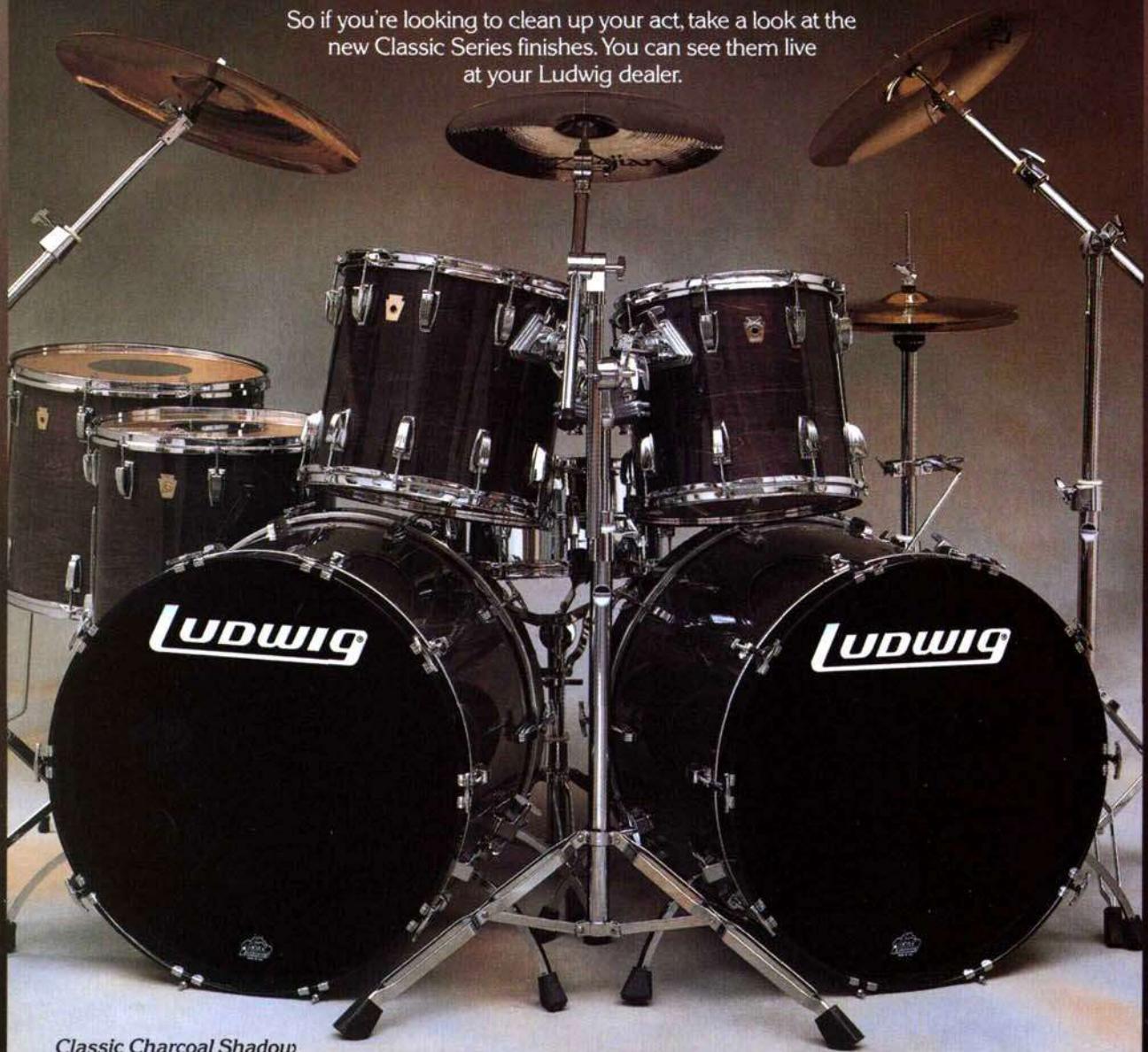
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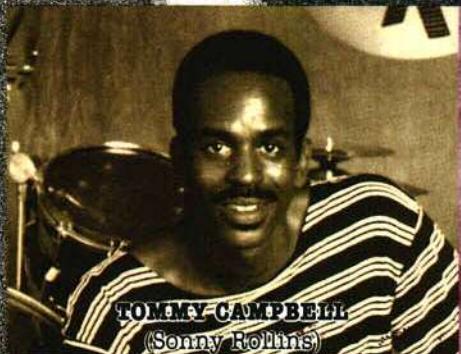
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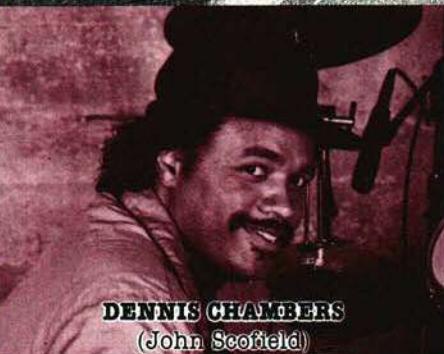
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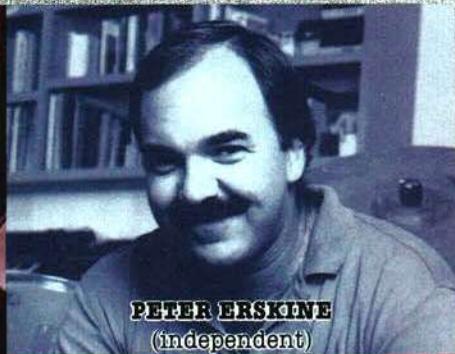
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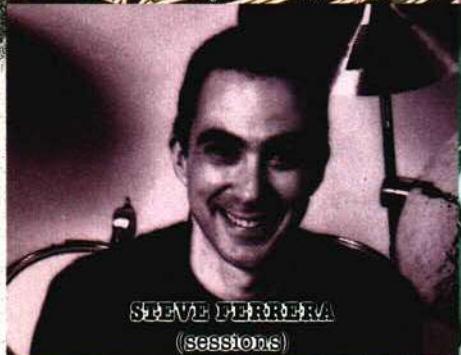
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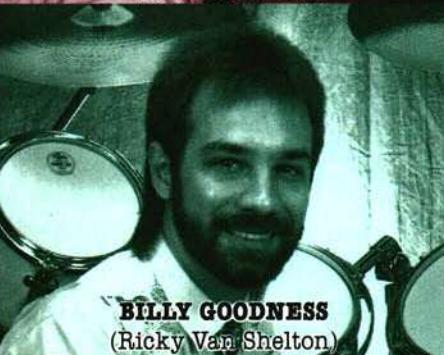
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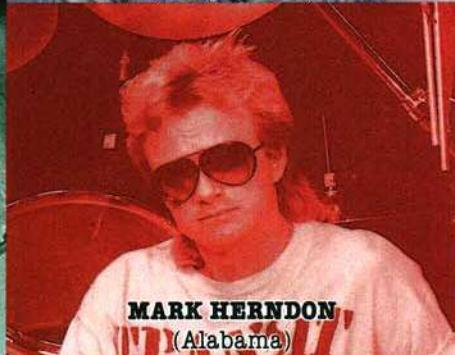
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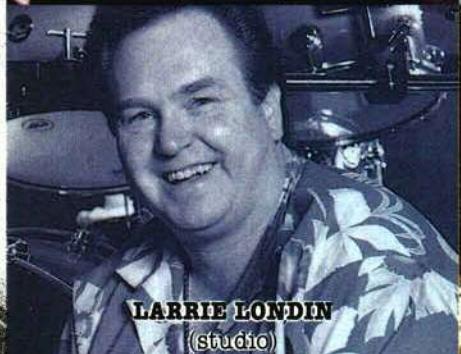
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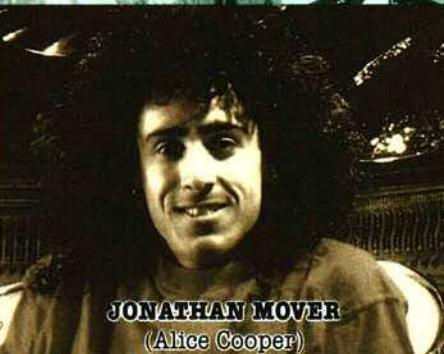
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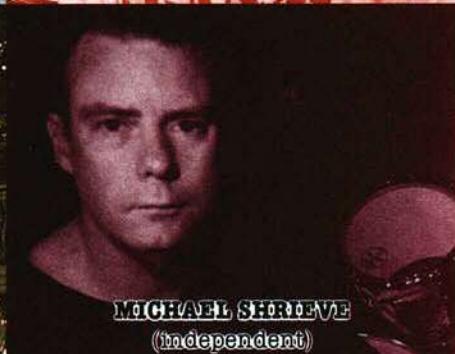
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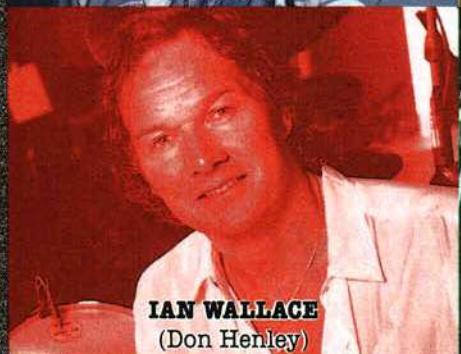
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Photo by Robert Knight



Photo by Jack White



Photo by Lissa Wales

18 TERRY BOZZIO

Working with Jeff Beck's new trio project, Terry Bozzio has a lot of room to stretch his many-faceted creativity. In this *MD* exclusive interview, Bozzio talks about this latest gig, the fall of Missing Persons, why it's sometimes nice *not* to work with a bass player, and his on-again off-again relationship with the electronic world.

by Robyn Flans

24 DENNY FONGHEISER

Denny Fongheiser has become one of the most prolific drummers on the L.A. studio scene, working with the likes of Tracy Chapman, Trevor Rabin, Cock Robin, and a host of others. He also has kept his traveling shoes shiny with artists like Belinda Carlisle and Starship. Here Denny recounts some of the situations that have put his flexibility to the test.

by Robyn Flans

28 PAT TORPEY

When Chris Blackwell broke his wrist in the middle of a Robert Plant tour, Pat Torpey was asked to fill the drum chair on a moment's notice. Now Torpey is the beat behind Mr. Big, featuring bass master Billy Sheehan. In this feature, Torpey discusses his rise to the big time.

by Albert Bouchard and Deborah Frost

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Canadian drum manufacturer Ray Ayotte has been involved in just about every aspect of drumming. Lately his hand-made custom drumsets have created quite a stir among those looking for the ultimate acoustic drum sound. In this interview, Ray talks about what is involved in making a high-quality musical instrument from the ground up.

by Rick Van Horn

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EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

The Clone Syndrome

Last year, the editors of *Modern Drummer* were asked to screen videotapes of drummers for the Buddy Rich Memorial Scholarship committee. We were assigned the task of narrowing all the entries down to five, and the final winner was selected by Louie Bellson, Gregg Bissonette, Dave Weckl, Dennis Chambers, Vinnie Colaiuta, and Steve Gadd at the tribute concert in Los Angeles.

Most of the tapes we reviewed were submitted by serious young players, many of whom demonstrated exceptional playing skills. Nevertheless, we couldn't help but notice the considerable number of tapes from drummers who've modeled themselves closely after a select group of prominent players. It's what we refer to as the *clone syndrome*, with Dave, Steve, Neil, and Buddy among today's "most likely to be cloned" group. Interestingly, many of these imitations were not only of playing style, but of equipment setups as well. In some cases they were exact replicas. Apparently, some are under the impression that they'll sound even *more* like their favorite player if they utilize duplicate equipment configurations.

There's never been anything wrong with admiring a particular artist and loosely emulating a style you're attracted to. Most of us are particularly influenced by one drummer or another during our career, and that influence tends to seep into our own playing. The leading players even admit to borrowing concepts from others prior to establishing their own discernible style. However, the one thing that stands out among all the great players—past and present—is that they've all contributed something *unique* and *original* to the art, and each has brought something of themselves to the instrument.

The danger of the clone syndrome in younger drummers lies in becoming obsessed with one player, and then failing to see or hear anything else. It also means literally taking on someone else's musical identity. And although it's fine to absorb ideas and gain inspiration from someone you admire, it's another thing when your primary objective is to look and sound just *like* that someone. When you clone another player, down to the precise placement of every cymbal, or the attempted duplication of every lick, you restrict your own personal musical maturity. It's difficult to develop an individual style and approach if you're spending *most* of your time trying to be someone else. And to top it off, we know that no one ever really takes a carbon copy that seriously anyway—no matter how well they play.

A great drummer once said in an *MD* interview, "You don't want to be like anybody else if you're serious about your talent. You want to be like you and evolve into what *you are*. To like someone to the point where you imitate him is cheating the public. Because all you are—no matter how *good* an imitation—is an imitation of an original." I think it's interesting and ironic that those words were actually spoken by Buddy, the very man we honor through the Memorial Scholarship. Buddy not only left us with a lifetime of precious drumming memories, he also gave us something rather important to think about.



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READERS' PLATFORM

TICO TORRES

I guess you could say that I was among the drummers Tico Torres described in the opening of your interview with him. [March '90 MD] His playing with Bon Jovi was the only thing I knew about, and, frankly, I wasn't too impressed. After reading your interview, however, I have gained a greater regard for Tico as a thoughtful person and a dedicated drummer. I still may not dig Bon Jovi's music, but I certainly do relate to the attitude Tico expressed. I also appreciated all of the studio-related information Tico shared, since I'm just getting into the studio with my band. Maybe if I take some of Tico's attitude in with me, we'll get the same kind of breaks Bon Jovi did!

Ernie DePhillipis
St. Augustine FL

I would like to make a correction regarding Tico Torres' equipment. Tico plays Aquarian drumheads exclusively. The cover photo and pages 20 and 22 clearly show Aquarian drumheads on Tico's kit. Tico uses the *Studio-X* on the top of his toms and *Classic Clear* on the bottoms. On the snare drum, he uses the *Mega-Rock* drumhead, which was developed especially for Tico's hard-hitting style. He also uses Aquarian's *Hi-Performance* snare drum head with the safety spiral in some situations, depending upon the acoustics. On the bass drums he uses the *Studio-X* with *Power Dot*. Aquarian is proud and happy to welcome Tico to our *Signature Series* line of drumheads.

It was a fine article on Tico. Keep up the good work.

Roy Burns
Aquarian Accessories Corp.
Anaheim CA

DEEN CASTRONOVO

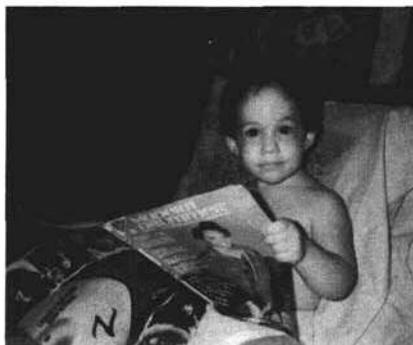
I was so happy to finally see something on

Deen Castronovo. [February '90 MD] I've been a big fan of his for quite some time now. I found the interview to be quite informative, and I'm happy that Deen is getting the recognition that he truly deserves. Thanks, MD, you made my day.

Abe Tabish
Brooklyn NY

SHARING HIS ISSUE

Let me start out by saying that I've been a subscriber to your fine magazine for years. I've also had the great pleasure of attending all the fantastic MD Drum Festivals. Which brings me to the subject of this letter: I thought you might like to see MDs future.



This is a picture of my two-year-old son, Michael. There was a time when I had the latest issue of MD all to myself. Now I have to beat him to the mailbox. (Luckily, I'm still a little quicker than he is.) But I really don't mind sharing it with him. If he grows up to be a member of our fine profession, I will be very proud. I just wish he would share the issue with me!

Philip D'Angelo
South Plainfield NJ

BILL SUMMERS

I never fail to be surprised at the diversity of your publication: the inclusion of female drummers, the honorable number of percussionists, the usual blend of jazz/rock/pop/whatever drummers, etc. I was really blown away with the March '90 interview with percussionist Bill Summers. Bravo!

I applaud *Modern Drummer* for being one of the best magazines ever written on the subject of drumming. Not only for its insights on technique, feel, relationships, listening, business... (the list goes on), but also on development. This particular aspect of drumming is most crucial to us young drummers (myself being 17). Keep it up!

Paul Beaudry
South San Francisco CA

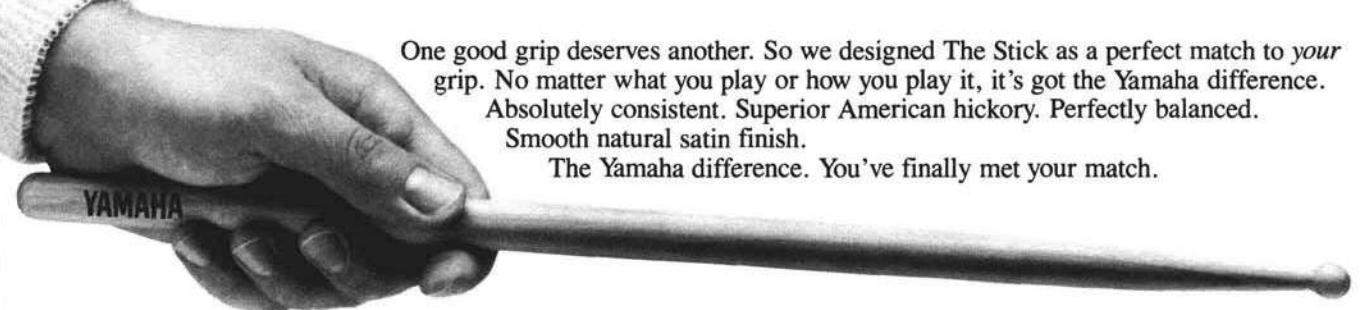
ZILDJIAN LEGENDS

I would like to protest the Zildjian cymbal ads in recent issues of MD. Some of the endorsers in these ads hardly qualify as "legends." I refer to the ads with Steve Cadd, Tony Williams, Vinnie Colaiuta, Dave Weckl, etc. These are excellent drummers, and I have the utmost respect for all of them. I am sure that some of them will, indeed, become legends. But "legend" is a very big word. When I think of drumming "legends," I think of people like Art Blakey, Elvin Jones, Max Roach, Roy Haynes, and Louie Bellson—just to name a few. I think Zildjian is misinforming the readers of MD—especially the young ones. We must not forget our drumming heritage.

Richard Lester
Raleigh NC



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UPDATE

Casey Scheuerell

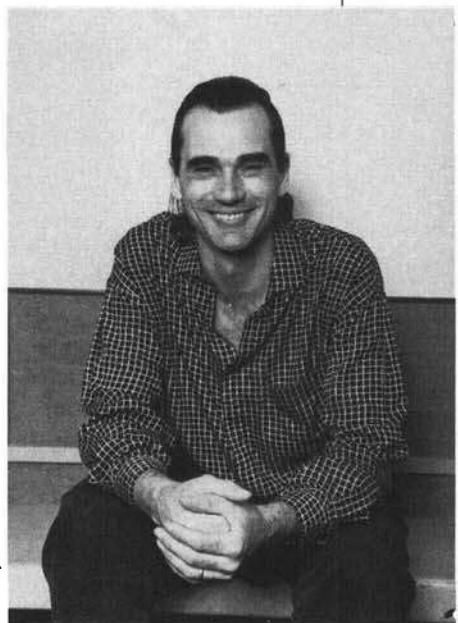


Photo by Rick Mankin

Between touring, recording, and teaching, it's been a busy year for Casey Scheuerell. Currently Casey is on a world tour with Japanese synthesist Kitaro, a departure from the usual jazz or rock contexts he has been previously involved in. "This is more like film score music to my ears," says Casey. "It's challenging in that I play a lot of colors and percussion, which I don't get to explore on a regular basis. We have a massive percussion setup, including a full set of Japanese taiko drums, timpani, and gongs. At times it's almost like an orchestral gig, and at others it reminds me more of Pink Floyd or Phil Spector. Everything's in half-time with mega backbeat!" Watch for the PBS special *Kitaro In Concert*, featuring extensive interviews with the band members and a very realistic portrayal of life on the road.

Casey's recent recordings include singer/songwriter Bill Gable's album, *There Were Signs* (Private Music). "Bill's music is a wonderful combination of African, Brazilian, and American influences," says Casey. "We co-wrote the tune 'Who Becomes The Slave,' which was a first for me. It's inspired me to work on writing more. I'm realizing that drummers often overlook this val-

uable source of expression and income."

Other recording projects for Casey included the soundtrack for the feature film *Communion*, music by Allan Zavod (a former bandmate of Casey's from Jean-Luc Ponty days). "The source music in the movie covers lots of jazz stuff, from Monk to Ornette Coleman; some of it was pretty outside, a lot of improv."

Recently Casey also played on guitarist Jeff Richman's record *People Like Us* (ITI Records), and violinist Steven Kindler's first solo record on the Global Pacific label. He's also done live shows with Ben

Vereen and Suzanne Sommers.

When not recording or touring, Casey teaches at The Percussion Institute of Technology (P.I.T.) in Hollywood. "The school's been great," comments Casey. "Teaching has helped me develop a curriculum pertaining to drumset, which led to me putting a book together. I'm hoping to have it out soon." Recently Casey played with John Scofield in a performance clinic at the school. "Playing straight-ahead jazz has become a kind of avocation for me. When you play standards with musicians as good as Scofield, who come out of the jazz tradition, you find out quickly how you're doing at developing your craft. It was a real high point for me."

Casey says his main focus this year is getting Secret 9, a band that he has been involved with for the past two years, signed to a record label. "It's nice to have a forum to try any music you feel like playing. We've been gigging around L.A. and are getting a little following. It feels real good."

How is all this activity affecting Casey? "It's great to be involved in all these projects, but the real news is that my wife Laura and I are expecting our first child. It really puts things in perspective." Casey says he

has already sampled the baby's heartbeat. "It sounds like some funky, up-tempo shuffle!" he says enthusiastically. Guess there's going to be another drummer in the family!

—Laura Arthurs

David Uosikkinen



David Uosikkinen says that one of the Hooters' foremost ingredients is change. "When our first album, *Nervous Night*, came out, everyone looked at us as a pop sensation. I love pop music, but we knew in our hearts that we were going to get into other things. On *One Way Home*, our second record, we started experimenting with some of the sounds that we heard touring the States, like New Orleans and the cajun stuff, and we started getting more into the accordian.

"On our new record, *Zig Zag*, the songs are more socially and politically oriented. I think that's just from being touched by things that go on around the world. Playing together for ten years, I think you have to make a commitment to growth, or else it gets old real quick."

The band began *Zig Zag* in Philadelphia, and then "we recorded at the late great Record Plant in New York," says David. "Studio B was one of the greatest rooms to record drums. Of the last seven tracks we recorded there, I think six made the record."

"It was a fun record to do," he continues. "When we first went into the studio in Philly, we would just cut live tracks. For instance, for 'Always A Place,' we just went in, set up

the equipment, and played. Towards the end of the record, we got into this thing where Eric would walk out with an acoustic guitar, and we'd put on a click track and program a little beat in the Linn machine. Then he would play the song and do the vocal, and Fran and I would go in and cut the track. That was a great way to record, actually. I would like to do a whole record that way. I think what really dictates that is the song itself. Working with writers like them, they change a lot of the songs as we're doing them. I've cut tracks that were completely rewritten, yet they kept the original track."

Besides changes in the Hooters' music, there have been a lot of changes in David's life, also. He's been sober for three and a half years, and is just recently married. "Being sober has really made a huge difference in my life," he says candidly. "I've been out on the road a bunch of times since I've been sober, and it's been quite different. I was scared the first time—I'm not going to lie—but now I've gotten a few tours under my belt, and I know what to do as far as keeping my sanity and staying away from that kind of thing. And I find that my playing is so much better; I love playing now."

When off the road, David and his wife have been living in L.A., and David says he is looking forward to tapping into some of the local talent when he's not out with the Hooters.

—Robyn Flans

Matt Sorum

With his talent for playing many drum styles, it's no surprise that California-born drummer Matt Sorum ended up playing with the diversified British band the Cult. Witness what Matt was told after he had auditioned for the band over a year ago: "You've got the finesse of Mark Brzezicki [who played on the band's *Sonic Temple* album], you can play kind of straight and raunchy like Les Warner [*Electric* album and tour], and you can play real slick in the studio, like Mickey Curry [*Sonic Temple* album]. So, you've got the gig!"

When Matt was a young drummer, he "started out hit-

ting the drums real hard," he recalls. "That's where I got my power. I learned the technique later, studying with Roy Burns. I learned all the rudiments, then got heavily into fusion drummers like Lenny White and Billy Cobham." Matt was also taking three band classes a day: jazz ensemble, marching band, and wind ensemble, where he had the opportunity to play percussion. Matt still plays percussion, and live does an impressive duet (on timpani and a giant gong) with Cult bassist Jamie Stewart at the beginning of "Sun King."

Matt's emergence into session work began in 1981, after moving to Los Angeles, including sessions with producer Michael Lloyd for the likes of Belinda Carlisle, King Solomon Burke, Eric Carmen, Gladys Knight, Stacey Q, and the Breakfast Club. Obviously, Matt didn't tour much with his heavy session schedule. But that is something that he has made up for with the Cult. It has been quite a challenge, though, since he only had two and a half months before the band was to open for Metallica in Canada and the U.S. for almost four and a half months. They then had a couple of weeks off before opening for Aerosmith in France, Germany, Holland, and Sweden. Finally, with one day in between, Matt and the Cult started a U.S. headlining tour. That tour kicked off last November in the U.K. (it also hit Canada) and continued through to March. But Matt says that despite the busy schedule, he still loves touring. "I like to change what I play every night," he says. "Drum fills come out that I don't even know about!"

Though electronics were very important when Matt was sessioning, with the Cult, it's completely the opposite. "I don't mess around with any now," he stresses. "Basically I slam the skins and play real simple. I tried using a click track, but the band didn't dig the idea of being tied down with a sequencer. We'd rather be more like the old school of rock bands—just get up and play. If we feel like jamming, which some nights we do, we have the freedom to stretch out."

—Claudia Cooper

"Doctor" Gibbs



Leonard "Doctor" Gibbs spent most of the past couple of years playing percussion on tour with Al Jarreau, with an occasional gig with Bob James.

"My approach remains the same, though," says Gibbs, "and that is to provide the spice to the music I'm playing. Jarreau likes a lot of the 16th notes on the shaker. With Bob it's more of the interacting with other musicians that's important. There's no vocalist in his band, so it's more about the individual musicianship. He's into soloing and the person really being able to blow on their axe. My solo approach with Bob is African-oriented. I get to solo with Jarreau too, but it's different because he's a vocalist, and I've got to play parts because we're doing the same songs every night, and they don't change. With Bob, we'll play the base of the song the same, but the solo can go in any direction. When my solo spot comes, I like to use the shakers, and maybe sing in an African chant. But sometimes I'll take a solo and try to play all of the instruments I have up there."

According to Gibbs, it's very important for a percussionist to know about the history of an instrument. "A saxophone player can talk about Bird or Coltrane, and a trumpet player can talk about Wynton and Miles," says the Doctor. "But as a percussionist, I have got to know about the roots of the instrument, so it's important to convey that information to people while I'm playing and make it look like it's easy. But

they've also got to say, 'How is he playing those two parts and making them sound like that? How can he sound like two or three guys?'

While he knows he would record more if he lived in L.A., Gibbs prefers the cultural base of his home in Philadelphia, where he is also involved with an African dance company called Jaasu Ballet. Aside from that, Doctor Gibbs is currently working on his own music in his spare time.

—Robyn Flans

Max Weinberg

Max Weinberg, the driving ex-drummer of the E Street Band behind Bruce Springsteen, has recently been turning his attention to the study of law. "I am preparing to go to law school in the fall," Weinberg says. And though he is not sure at the moment where he will be studying, Weinberg, 38, says he just recently finished undergraduate work in communications at Seton Hall University. Max says that he hopes to go into the practice of entertainment law.

Asked if all this means that the music business will lose him, Weinberg replies: "I think performing will. I am going to go into the other side of the music business. For 30 years I have been on this side of the drumset. By going on the other side, hopefully I will be able to make a contribution to people who have problems and need them solved."

—Robert Chancellor

News...

In the past year and a half, Jeff Porcaro has been recording with the likes of Natalie Cole, Stan Getz, R.E.O. Speedwagon, Lionel Richie, Burton Cummings, Belinda Carlisle, Paul Brady, Melissa Manchester, Larry Carlton, Madonna (including her music for the film *Dick Tracy*), Whitney Houston, Laura Brannigan, Brenda Russell, Rod Stewart, Brandon Fields, and Michael McDonald.

David Kemper is on Kimm Rogers' Island Records debut and the new John Hiatt album, and he's also doing live gigs with the Jerry Garcia Band.

Alvino Bennett on some

tracks for Tim Heintz, as well as Jetstream's album, and still doing live dates with Sheena Easton.

Andy Peake now with Sweethearts of the Rodeo.

Lynn Williams can be heard on Russ Taff's current album, *The Way Home*, released a few months ago, and on a record by Kim Boyce.

Percussionist Tom Roady on records by the Gatlin's, Baillie & the Boys, Beth Chapman, James Taylor, and Mac MacAuley.

Vinny Appice has left Dio and has joined a new band called War & Peace.

Michael Blair producing Victoria Williams.

John "Vatos" Hernandez on the road with Food For Feet in support of their self-titled debut EP.

Bias Elias on Slaughter's debut Chrysalis LP, *Stick It To Ya*.

Drummer Scott Crago on Venice's Modern/Atlantic debut LP.

Earl Palmer can be heard on the soundtrack from *The Fabulous Baker Boys*, as well as on the soundtrack and on camera in *Two Jakes*, Jack Nicholson's sequel to *Chinatown*. He can also be heard on Willie Dixon's recent Grammy-winning LP, and has recently been in Japan with the Percy Faith Memorial tour.

Carl Allen recently on tour in Hawaii with Freddie Hubbard.

Gordy Knudtson has been in the studio recording tracks for Ben Sidran's new album, *Cool Paradise*, Ricky Peterson's debut album, *Night Watch*, and Leo Kottke's as yet untitled new release.

Larry Spivak drummed for "Up Against It," a new show with words and music by Todd Rundgren, at the Public Theatre in New York City.

Glenn Symmonds is featured on the Eddie Money *Greatest Hits...The Sound Of Money* album, and on the road with Eddie as well. Glenn is also planning on playing a few clinics around the country.

Danny Gottlieb is currently in the studio with Mark Egan, recording a new Elements album.



INNOVATION IN STEP WITH MUSICIANS AND THEIR MUSIC

"I never heard anything like this! These sounds are hypnotic, it's a big mystery."

—TERRY BOZZIO

"I've waited for a long time for a cymbal like this."

—ALEX VAN HALEN

"The new cymbals give more response and have more attack than anything I've played before."

—LARRY MULLEN JR.

"I am impressed by the dynamic range. I can play soft and bring out the actual beauty of the cymbal. I can play loud and it does not sound harsh but just like a big wall of sound. Usually you can not get both out of a cymbal."

—STEVE JORDAN

"It's like when they went from black & white to technicolor. These cymbal sounds generate the same step."

—RONALD SHANNON JACKSON

"Amazing instruments. They are like an orchestra. Very lovely."

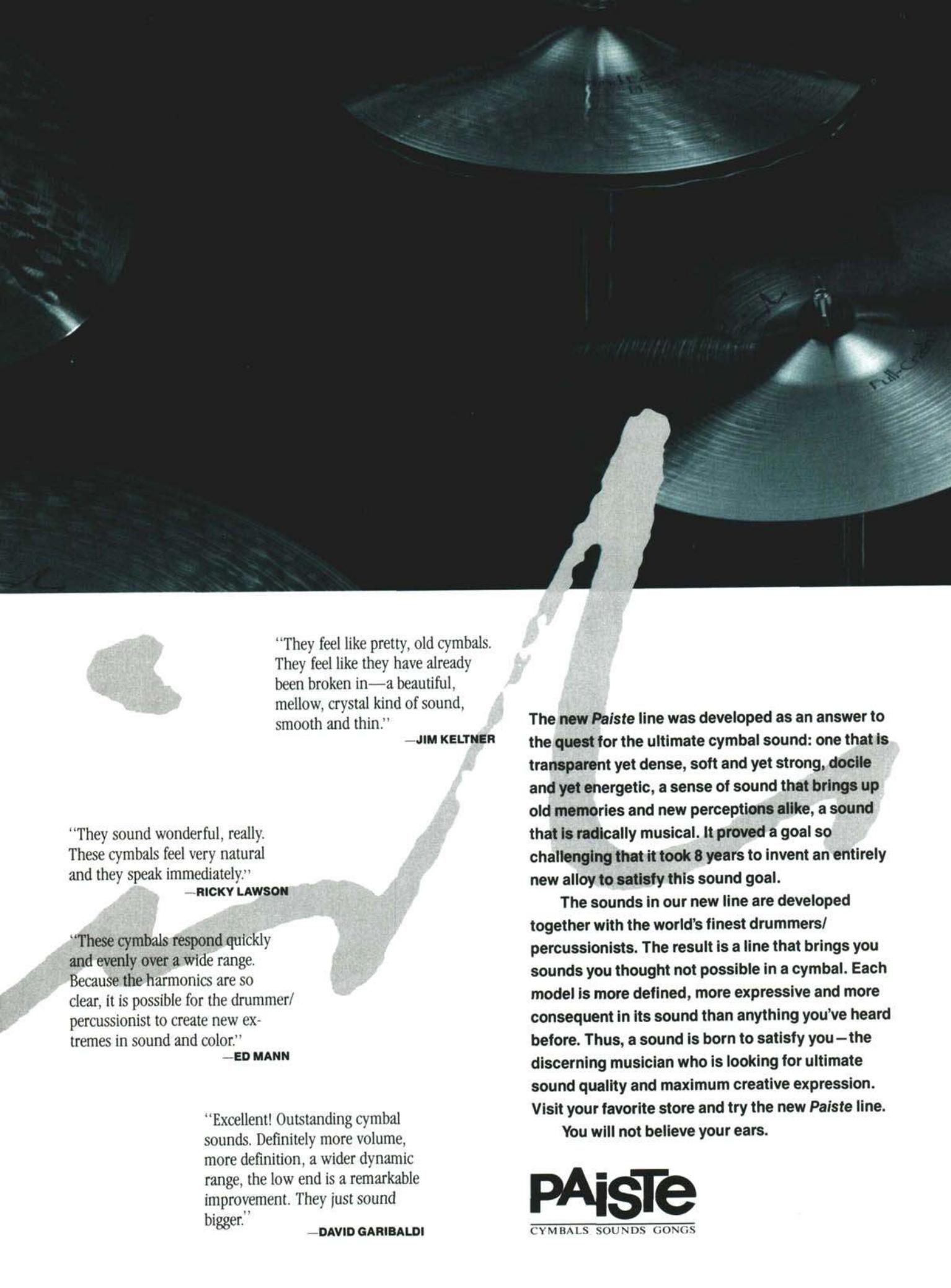
—BILL BRUFORD

"Congratulations! It's got to be the fullest range of sound I've ever heard. Now there's an even wider set of tonal colors to choose from."

—DANNY GOTTLIEB

"These cymbals speak immediately, and have a brilliant shimmer at the very top end of the sound. I have never heard such beautifully rich sounding cymbals before."

—CHAD WACKERMAN



"They feel like pretty, old cymbals. They feel like they have already been broken in—a beautiful, mellow, crystal kind of sound, smooth and thin."

—JIM KELTNER

"They sound wonderful, really. These cymbals feel very natural and they speak immediately."

—RICKY LAWSON

"These cymbals respond quickly and evenly over a wide range. Because the harmonics are so clear, it is possible for the drummer/percussionist to create new extremes in sound and color."

—ED MANN

"Excellent! Outstanding cymbal sounds. Definitely more volume, more definition, a wider dynamic range, the low end is a remarkable improvement. They just sound bigger."

—DAVID GARIBALDI

The new Paiste line was developed as an answer to the quest for the ultimate cymbal sound: one that is transparent yet dense, soft and yet strong, docile and yet energetic, a sense of sound that brings up old memories and new perceptions alike, a sound that is radically musical. It proved a goal so challenging that it took 8 years to invent an entirely new alloy to satisfy this sound goal.

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You will not believe your ears.

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TROY LUCKETTA

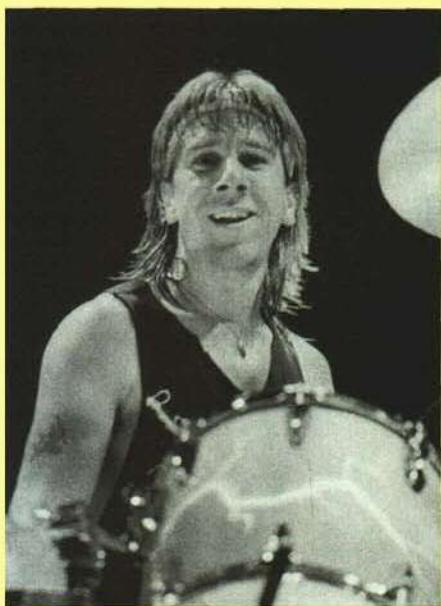


Photo by Rick Gould

Q. First, let me say that as a drummer in my own band, it's your drumming that inspires me to play. You are one of the best rock drummers around today. I have three questions. First, what cymbals and drumheads do you use? Second, do you have any plans about an instructional video? Third, does Tesla have any plans to play in the Boston area soon? I'm attending school there now, and I'd love to catch you live.

Chris Pelesky
Boston MA

A. Well, let me say that as the drummer of Tesla, that is one heck of a compliment! To answer your questions in order: The cymbals I use are Zildjians. They include 14" Rock hi-hats, a 22" Platinum China, a 12" Platinum splash, a 19" Platinum crash, a 20" Z Power Ride, a 20" Platinum China, 14" Platinum hi-hats (on a remote), an 18" crash, a 20" medium crash, a 19" Rock Crash, and a 10" splash with an 8" splash

mounted above it. I also use a 12" Rancan China-type cymbal by LP, a set of LP chimes, and a 48" gong. My cymbal configuration changes from time to time.

As far as drumheads go, I use a Remo coated Emperor on the snare batter head, and an Ambassador snare-side head. I use clear Emperors on the top of the toms as well as the batter side of the bass drum. I have clear Ambassadors on the bottoms of the toms, and a custom-painted Emperor on the front of the bass drum.

I can't say that I have any plans at this time on doing an instructional video. However, there are a lot of great videos available. As far as coming to Boston any time soon, there are no definite plans at the moment. However, there is talk about doing six weeks of summer shows in the "sheds" (outdoor amphitheaters). We'll have to wait and see.

I hope I've covered everything. Thanks for taking the time to write.

DENNIS CHAMBERS



Photo by Rick Naukin

understand that you are pretty much self-taught; how would you suggest that someone begin learning to play in the linear style that you have mastered? Are there books? Are there specific players to check out? And finally, do you do clinics or teach?

Peter LaCasse
Brighton MA

Q. You are one of the most powerful, articulate drummers on the scene. I saw you perform with the Mike Stern/Bob Berg band last September in Boston, and was floored! Your work with John Scofield is also truly tasty and inspiring.

My first few questions mainly concern your choice of equipment. I know you play Pearl drums, but in what configuration? What size and model Zildjian ride cymbal do you use to get that bright, cutting bell sound that has become one of your trademarks? Do you prefer nylon or wood-tip sticks? What type of head combinations have you found most satisfactory on the various drums?

In terms of technique, do you favor the heel-up or heel-down bass drum style? I

A. My Pearl drumkit is the MIX series, which features maple shells and lacquered finishes. The rack tom sizes are 8", 10", 12", and 13" in standard depths. I use 14x14, 16x16, and 16x18 floor toms, and a 22" bass drum. My snares vary with what I'm doing.

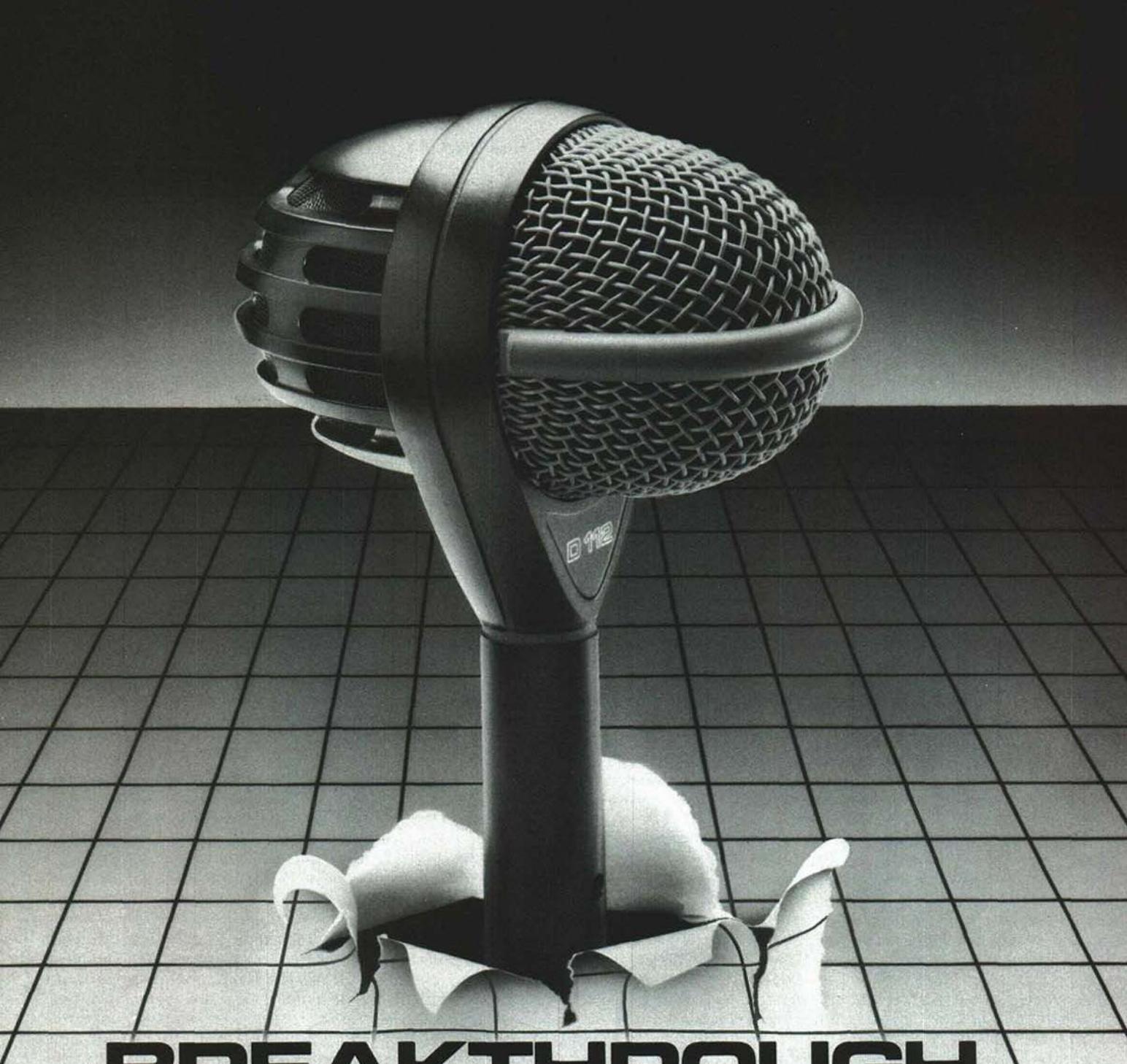
I use a 22" Brilliant Earth ride at the moment. At the time you saw me with Mike Stern, I was using a 22" K Custom ride with two rivets in it. My drumsticks are Regal 8A wooden tips. I use Evans drumheads, with Resonant heads all the way around on the bottoms, and Uno 58 or STs on the tops. I've recently been experimenting with their new Genera EQ bass drum heads.

I play my bass drum pedal with my heel

up, but not very far up. I play on the ball of my foot, and I sit pretty low. I am self-taught, and I started developing my style by first learning how to play a groove, and that's what I'd suggest to anyone else getting started. Just play 2 and 4 first; all the other stuff comes later. A lot of beginning drummers want to play in 19/4, then they wonder why they can't get gigs after they perfect that. They can't support themselves because they don't know how to play grooves. I didn't use any books, because I don't know how to read music. But that hasn't been an impediment to my career, because I play grooves. When I play, I try to support the music and make sure it feels great. I also developed good ears so that I can pick up things very quickly.

I don't practice with metronomes—in fact, I don't practice much at all. But when I do, I do it with drum machines. It's the same principle as a metronome, but offers more musical variety and weird rhythms to work around and play off of.

As far as players to check out, I recommend Vinnie Colaiuta, Jeff Porcaro, Billy Cobham, Tony Williams, Elvin Jones, Gary Husband, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, Jeff Watts, and Trilok Gurtu—and that list goes on. And to answer your last question, I do clinics and I do teach privately. My teaching schedule is limited by my traveling, but when I'm home I teach at Professional Percussion, in Baltimore, Maryland. Call Keith Larson at (301) 488-8616 for more information.



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beating and still deliver. The D-112 is so distortion free that today's test equipment can't measure it. (Computer analysis we've done indicates virtually zero distortion all the way up to 168 dB!)

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IT'S QUESTIONABLE

Q. I own a set of Pearl Export drums, and I'm quite pleased with them—with the exception of one thing. I purchased my set in December of 1988. In January of 1989, Pearl started manufacturing "pro-style" one-piece lug casings for the Export Series. I was wondering if there was any way I could "trade" my two-piece lugs for the one-piece, or purchase a kit to "retro-fit" my existing hardware. I understand, from a review on the new Exports in a past issue of *MD*, that the new long lugs are actually two-piece lugs with a rectangular piece connecting them.

E.K.
Southfield MI

Q. I have a nine-piece Pearl Export drumset. I've owned it a little over one year, and I'm having a problem with the covering material on the toms. The material has developed a wrinkle above all of the lug casings on all of the toms. The bass drums are the only drums that have not been affected in this manner. Is there a way, other than recovering, to repair these drums? I seem to be getting some buzz from the loose material under miking situations.

T.H.

St. Joseph MI

A. We contacted Pearl's Ken Austin in regard to both of these questions. Here are his responses. "To E.K.: The new Export Series lug casings are, as you said, actually three separate pieces. This high-tension-style casing is not available as a 'retro-fit' item, as you put it. It is only available as original equipment on the new model Export Series drums. It is, however, not out of the question that Pearl may offer the high-tension-style lug as a spare part in the future."

"To T.H.: If the covering on your Export set has wrinkled, take it back to the dealer you purchased it from and have them contact our Customer Service Department. Our warranty on such problems is one year. However, it sounds as though the problem began prior to the expiration of your warranty period. We would need to see the affected drums to know if they need recovering or can be repaired."

Q. I have some ethnic drums that need reworking. Could you direct me to two kinds of suppliers: (1) a source of goat or donkey skins, and (2) a supplier of drum parts (tuning mechanisms and rings for drumheads, in particular). Perhaps some bodhran makers out there could help me on locating the first supplier.

F.O.

Bonnes Mill VA

A. A new company called Lark In The Morning is specializing in a variety of rare and unusual imported instruments, including bodhrans and other Northern European instruments, as well as drums and percussion items from the Middle East and Far East. They should be able to help you in your search for heads and parts for ethnic instruments. You can contact them at Box 1176, Mendocino, California 95460, (707) 964-5569.

Q. For quite some time, I've been seeking a floor tom stand with wheels attached. I saw this setup on a kit once. Do you have any information on such a device?

B.D.

Monterey Park CA

A. We know of no production stand for a floor tom that incorporates wheels. It's possible that the setup you saw was a custom-designed piece of equipment. Tama lists a rolling stand for its Gong Bass Drum as a special-order item, and this might be adapted to suit your purposes. Contact a local Tama dealer, or write Hoshino USA, 1716 Winchester Road, Bensalem, Pennsylvania 19020 for further details.

Q. Doesn't anyone sell drum parts? I'm an apprentice craftsman and enjoy restoring vintage as well as badly abused drums. But I can never find parts—or at least not parts that are reasonable in

cost. No one seems to have things like lugs, lug screws, mounting brackets, etc. Could you please give me any information on sources of drum parts of all makes—but especially Ludwig?

J.S.

Snellville GA

A. All drum manufacturers carry spare parts for current models, which can easily be ordered through your local drum dealer or by contacting the company directly. It is very difficult for these companies to stock parts for older drums, however, due to limitations of space for storage and tooling to manufacture "new" parts for "old" drums. Obviously, the longer a drum has been in a company's catalog, the better chance you'll have of finding parts for it.

Your best bet for locating parts that are no longer being manufactured is to contact drumshops that specialize in repairs, collectors, and even individuals who are craftsmen like yourself. Watch the classified ads in *MD*'s Drum Market section, as well as the regular ads for shops that include references to repairs or vintage drums. You may need to do a little networking in order to find what you seek, but the effort should be worth it.

Q. I own a set of Sabian B8 Rock cymbals consisting of a 16" crash, 14" hi-hats, and a 20" ride cymbal. Although I really can't complain about the sound of these cymbals, they are very heavy and deep—particularly the crash cymbal and hi-hats.

I have access to someone with an engine lathe and the skill to use it with great precision. I was wondering whether or not it would be a good idea to actually make the cymbals thinner, in order to produce a better, lighter sound. Is this advisable—or even possible? Will the cymbals' life (as far as cracking is concerned) be significantly reduced? Are there any other specifications I should be aware of before I make the cymbals thinner?

G.R.

Long Island City NY

A. We put your question to the folks at Sabian, who provided the following reply. "At some point, most drummers discover that a particular cymbal they've selected is...well, not quite what they had in mind. However, unlike drums—where a desired sound can often be attained via head selection and tuning—cymbals are designed to create specific sounds, and the sheer nature of their fabrication does not lend them to modifications. As its name implies, the B8 Rock series was designed with the harder-hitting, louder drummer in mind. Your situation is unfortunate, however we recommend that you do not attempt to correct it by modifying your cymbals. The lathing you suggest having done by your friend—regardless of how skilled he may be—will, without the necessary knowledge and special tools, render your cymbals unplayable. Lathing does appear to be a simple stage in cymbal-making. However, there is much more involved than simply shaving the cymbals of excess metal. Any attempt at such a modification would also void your warranty."

"We recommend that you consider selling/exchanging your present setup toward a selection of lighter-weight (and similarly priced) B8 Plus cymbals—or possibly AA series models which, though somewhat more expensive, include sounds for virtually every possible application."

"To assist players in selecting the cymbals most suitable to their needs, we will be happy to send our catalog, Sabian And You, and a new cymbal-selection and maintenance tip sheet by Liberty DeVito. Interested drummers should contact us at Sabian Ltd., Meductic, New Brunswick, Canada EOH 1LO."

Q. I have a problem I can't seem to resolve. My snare drum's tuning lugs constantly work themselves loose. During a live performance, this tends to get on one's nerves. I have tried those little plastic numbers that slip over the top of the lug, but my drumhead still seems to go out of tune. Could you give me some helpful ideas—besides buying a better snare drum—toward resolving this

continued on page 98

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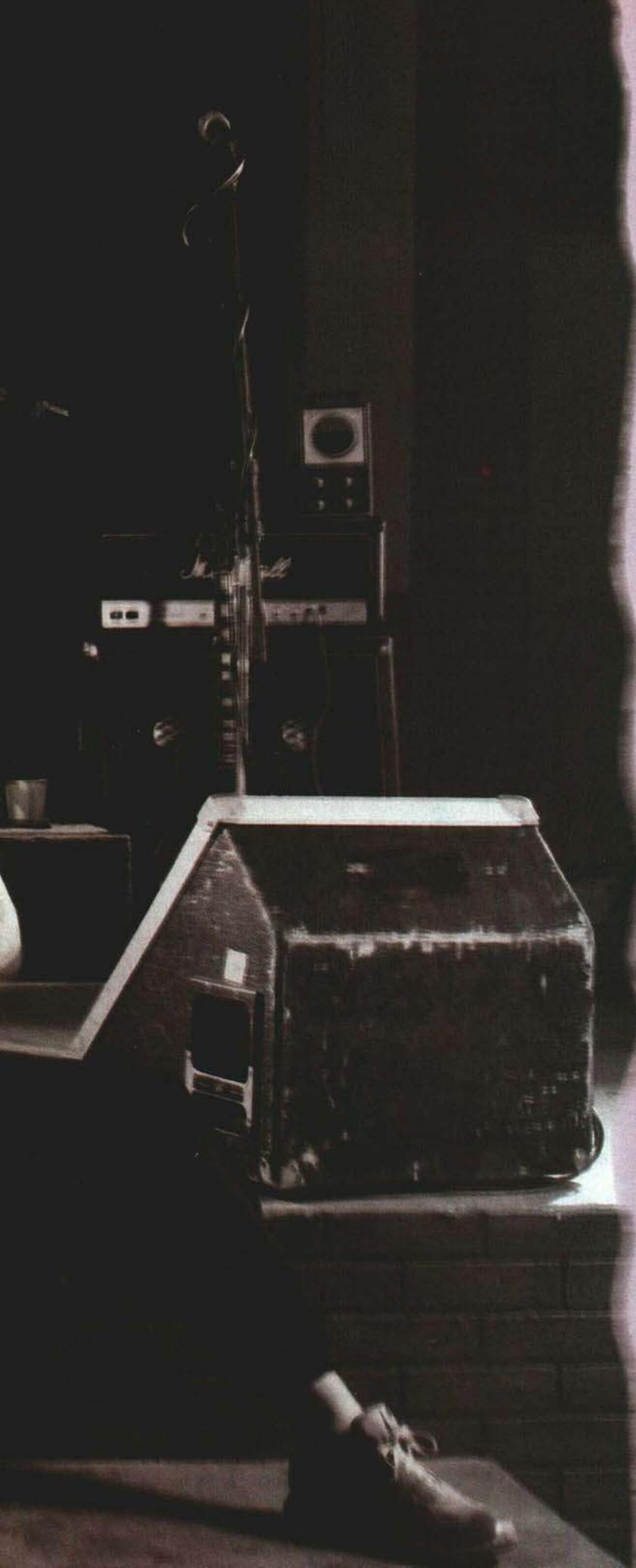
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The best reason to play drums.



Terry Bozzio

There's something distinctly artsy about Terry Bozzio. Even if you didn't know he has played with the ambassador of art, Frank Zappa, or with such progressive projects as UK and Jeff Beck's latest band, you couldn't help but notice his constantly changing hairstyles or the multiple earrings in his ears—not to mention in his nose. Or if you walked into his apartment with the huge picture window overlooking L.A., you couldn't help but be struck with the black and white decor (down to the checkerboard bathroom floor). Or, if you had never seen him, but had only read articles in which he

espoused his views, you would know that his philosophies, imaginings, and methods are ever-changing as he strives for the creative and innovative. While in Missing Persons he experimented with the extremes of electronics on one album, and then stripped down to the bare acoustics for the next. Before MIDI was a household word, he poured a tremendous amount of time and money into rigging the setup of the future. In fact, today Drum Workshop is marketing two items that are some of the fruits of his labor: the TBX-3 (a cost-effective, multi-zone drum pad), and an electronic pedal he invented with

Wayne Yentis.

When Missing Persons ended in 1986, Terry had his heart and mind set on doing a solo project. When that didn't pan out, he stepped into a very challenging situation with Jeff Beck and Tony Hymas, in which he has been enjoying the involvement of a very creative team-player circumstance. But don't be surprised if, when you next hear of Terry Bozzio, he's doing something completely different. In fact, you can count on it. He's continuously on the move in active pursuit of his artistic goals; he thrives on and lives for that unpredictability.

by Robyn Flans

RF: During your last MD interview, you had just finished the second Missing Persons album, *Rhyme & Reason*. You said, "Who knows, maybe the next album will be all acoustic," and indeed it was. What happened?

TB: At the time, people were saying to me, "You're such an incredible drummer, but a lot of what you do gets diminished by the electronic kit." I started to think about it, and at the request of a couple of people—my producer and my manager—I thought I'd give the acoustic drums another try. As soon as I

did, I just went, "Wow! This is so loving and forgiving and so spontaneous." I realized how completely obsessed, bogged down, and stuck I was building my own electronic drumkit—although I was breaking a lot of new ground. Now you have MIDI and all the other things that are available, and you can do what I was attempting to do. But those things were really hard to do back then. I was spreading myself too thin, and I realized, "Hey, I have to be a musician again. That's my real calling. I've taken this a little too far." When I

went back to playing acoustic drums, I realized how much playing in this restrained, constricted style actually had helped my playing. Electronic drums are so unforgiving that you learn to overcompensate, so I got much more accurate and faster.

RF: Can you be a little more specific?

TB: If you pull the time a little bit with electronic drums, it's very obvious, because you're triggering sounds that the ear is used to hearing a machine play. So when you have a human playing those sounds, it sounds like a

me. When I sat down and played the acoustic drums again, I found that all the speed I had gotten from playing these real light electronic bass drum pedals was transferred to the acoustics.

RF: So when the third album came out, what happened?

TB: In the early days, Missing Persons was really like a family thing, and I saw myself as the head of the family. I was the guy who had the most experience, and I wrote most of the music. The others in the group really helped me, because they had creative ideas and they really believed in me, which was a hard thing for me to do for myself at the time. So it was a good team, and we did some great stuff. Then what began to happen was I was jealous of Dale, because she was getting all the attention, even though I was writing all the music, and I was kind of the brains behind the thing. Then Dale and Warren [Cuccurullo, guitarist] began to resent me always being the one who said which way the band was going to go. It became a horrible situation. Then our producer took six weeks to mix one of our songs, which put us in debt for \$750,000. We put the album out and nobody really cared about it. Then Dale decided to quit the band, which was actually a relief; I was ready for it by then. So I decided to do my own solo thing.

That week I started doing sessions for Andy Taylor and different free-lance projects. Then David Bowie asked me to play for his *Class Spider* tour. But I figured everybody already knew that I was a great drummer, so why just do a visibility thing like that? I did that ten years ago with Zappa. The next step for me was to be more of a contributor, which I was able to do in UK, and then the next step was to form my own band, which I did successfully. I wrote tons of songs in various forms of completion. I did two demo projects—one for Warner Bros., which was five songs, and one for Virgin. I was hoping, once again, that somebody would see the potential. I thought, "I've been with Zappa and in UK, and I know people in the business; somebody will be able to hear it." But they weren't interested. Now I'm at the point where I have my own studio. I'm buying a board, I have a 16-track two-

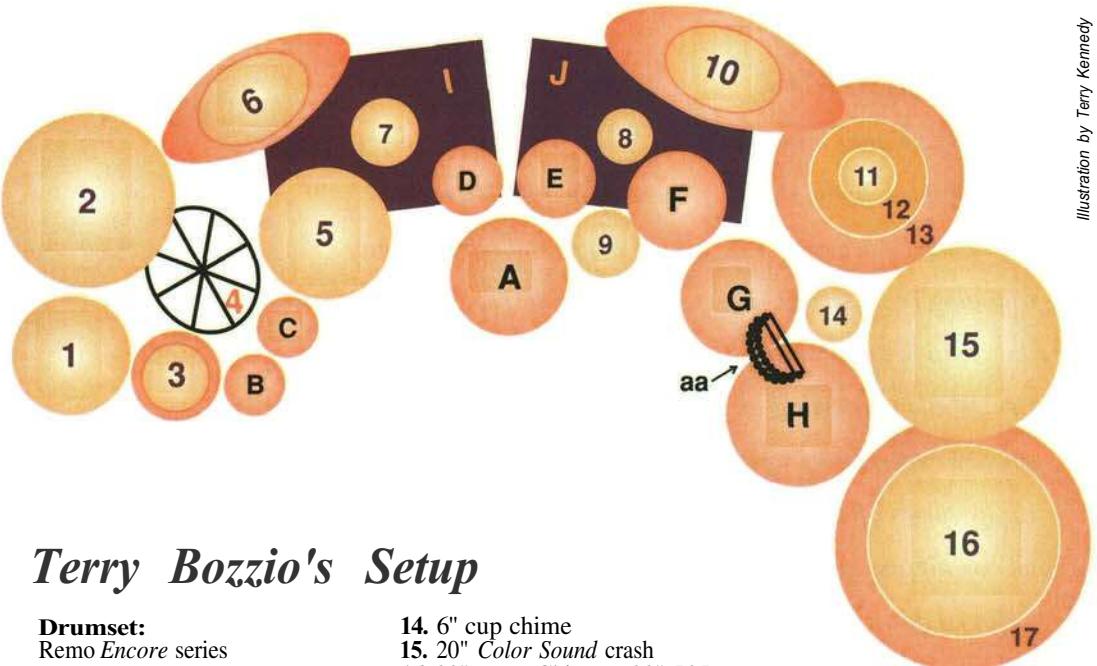


Illustration by Terry Kennedy

Terry Bozzio's Setup

Drumset:

- Remo Encore series
A. 6 1/2 x 14 snare
B. 6x6 tom
C. 6x6 tom
D. 8x8 tom
E. 9x10 tom
F. 11x12 tom
G. 14x14 floor tom
H. 16x16 floor tom
I. 18x22 bass drum
J. 18x22 bass drum

Cymbals:

- Paiste
1. 14" Color Sound crash
2. 18" Color Sound crash
3. 8" cup chime over 10" bell
4. Remo Spoke hi-hat
5. 15" Color Sound hi-hats
6. 18" China with 14" 404
hi-hat cymbal inside (touching)
7. 8" bell
8. 6" bell
9. 8" Rude hi-hats
10. 20" China with 14" 404
hi-hat cymbal inside (touching)
11. 5" cup chime
12. 14" Color Sound hi-hats
13. 20" China on top of 20"
crash (touching)

14. 6" cup chime
15. 20" Color Sound crash
16. 20" Novo China on 20" 505
ride
17. 26" Sound Creation gong
aa. mounted Rhythm Tech
tambourine

Hardware: Hi-hat and bass drum pedals by Drum Workshop. All toms mounted using PureCussion RIMS. Gong mounted on three-point stand of Terry's own design, manufactured by DW.

Heads: All Remo heads, including an Ambassador snare-side head, with a coated Falams K on batter of snare drum. Clear Emperors on tops of toms with ebony Ambassadors on bottoms. Ebony CS. heads on bass drums, with ebony Ambassadors on front heads.

Sticks: Pro-Mark 707 oak model with wood tip.

machine gone wrong. As a drummer whose time has always been pretty loose anyway, I was thinking, "I've really got to get myself together."

RF: You think your time is loose?
TB: Yeah, though it's improving all the time. I think because of the amount of music that is heard with drum machines these days, everyone's sense of rhythm has gotten a lot stronger. Before, I would listen to bop and Elvin Jones and Tony Williams, and to pull the time was to put expression in the music. It was almost like a classical thing: When you play a piece of classical music, you retard or speed up to emphasize the music. That's the school I learned from, so that rigidity never came into the picture until rock and disco imposed those restrictions on

inch professional machine, and I've learned a lot about electronics and engineering, so I'm going to make my own records. It's like what Missing Persons did. No one in the record business liked what we were doing, so we just took it to the radio ourselves. We pressed our own records, and I'm willing to do that again.

RF: During that time, you also appeared in a Mick Jagger video. How did that come about?

TB: Roger Davies, Mick Jagger's manager, called and said Mick Jagger and Jeff Beck were out at the Country Club, and they wanted me to jam with them and maybe do a video with them the next day. Jeff had tried to get in touch with me three times before, but I was always busy doing something else. He was always one person I felt I would still really like to work for—even when I formed Missing Persons and said I'd never work for anybody again.

So I went over to the Country Club, and they had this hire kit there from S.I.R., which came with the obligatory one pair of hickory drumsticks, which are not my kind of sticks. I didn't think about bringing drumsticks, because they said they had everything there. So we start playing, and it was burning. Before I knew it, both the drumsticks were trashed; one was like it had been ripped, it was unuseable. Most of the butt of the other one was useable, but the tip was completely gone. So there I was, playing "Little Red Rooster," which I used to idolize in front of the hi-fi, with Mick Jagger and Jeff Beck, my other idol from childhood, and me with one drumstick on a hired kit. It was hilarious. Of course they eventually sent someone out to get drumsticks. I did the video for "Throw Away" the next day. It was really a lot of fun, and they gave me a lot of coverage on the video. I was grateful for that exposure and to be able to work with a Rolling Stone.

That situation finally brought me to meeting Jeff, so we got together and worked on the album for over a year and a half. Jeff said he had this vision of what he wanted to do. He was like, "Picture walking down a hallway and hearing some band rehearsing in a room with the

door closed, and it's so incredibly exciting, so fresh and new, that you have to burst right in there and go, 'What is going on here?'" He said, "Jungle rhythms—screw this backbeat garbage you hear on the radio. I want to do something that's shocking." I said, "Yeah, yeah, sounds great. I'm up for it." We talked about a lot of things, like how I was a little gun shy about working with other people because of my experience with Missing Persons. I said, "On the one hand, I want to be credited, and on the other hand, I'm not trying to take anything

three of us. I have a little hi-hat next to my snare drum with permanently closed Rude cymbals. When I hit the hi-hat hard enough, it would open up the gate on the echo that was on the snare drum mic'. So I got this great sound out of the hi-hat, and the whole thing was this breathing, gated, on-off kind of throbbing, pulsing drum beat with eight beats to the bar. It just felt good.

RF: On some of the really heavily gated reverb stuff, does that affect the way you play at all? Do you have to compensate for that?

part, I find that the only time gated things don't work is in songs that are really fast and constant, like "Sling Shot." There are so many notes and it's so fast, consistent, and relentless that it would keep the gates open all the time, and you'd just have this mishmash.

RF: What about choices in sound?

TB: For the most part with the digital reverb and those kinds of things, you can get those sounds real easy. "Guitar Shop" and "Stand On It" have two of the best drum sounds on the record,



away from you." Jeff is like a self-professed non-writer, but it was great as a collaboration, with me and Tony Hymas. Tony is a brilliant classical composer and jazz player with phenomenal technique—plays Prokofiev every morning preparing for recitals. He's written ballets, symphony music; the guy is incredible. And you can hear it on the album.

RF: Let's talk about the songs from the album.

TB: The groove for "A Day In The House" was this sort of Bo Diddley-ish rhythm that Jeff and Tony had already worked out. There was a drum machine groove on that one, but it was similar to what I played, and ultimately what happened was this live throbbing thing between the

TB: Well, you have a sound that's responding to what you're playing, and it's consistent, it's a given. It doesn't shorten up its gates when you play real fast, and it doesn't open up its gates when you play real slow, so therefore, you have to play to the sound and do what's appropriate.

RF: But when you use that gated sound, don't you have to be careful not to play too many notes?

TB: You play a bunch of things and experiment, and go with whatever comes out. Then you go back into the control room and listen and go, "Obviously this doesn't work, this busy stuff sounds like garbage. More space should be applied." For the most

I think, and they were done with a *MIDIVERB*, a \$250 digital reverb, just a seriously gated sound. You have to have a master like Leif Mases engineering. He was a great co-producer/engineer. He kind of kept the thing together and was a real sound master. Principally it was his mixes, but I would say musically it was a real collaboration between Jeff, Tony, and me, in all kinds of different ways. There are a lot of melodies and things that I suggested that are on the album.

RF: Can you be specific?

TB: Parts of "Where Were You." "Big Block" was the best collaboration, because we said we wanted to do a blues, but we didn't want to make it a normal

blues. Tony and Jeff had this idea to kind of make it this Mahavishnu, turn the beat around kind of thing by adding a 2 at the end of a 12/8 kind of a groove. I thought it was a bad idea to do anything that smelled remotely of fusion. So we started to hash it out, kind of working on the bass line and working out the false beginning, and I sat with a set of Octapads and some sampled sounds. Tony sat with a DX7 or something, Jeff sat in the studio, and we pieced the whole thing together. Jeff would go, "I don't know what to do next," but then he'd do something and I'd say, "Wait a minute, that's great," and it

would go from there.

On other things, Jeff and Tony had worked something out, like "Two Rivers," where Jeff had an idea of playing a melody on harmonics, and Tony sat him down and harmonized each section and said, "Yes, then what? How about this?" They pieced the whole thing together and had this beautiful harmonic structure, which at first sounded like this loose acoustic piano/guitar duet. We even thought that's what it would be, but then I began playing a linear groove to it, and it immediately became this trap that you could just step into, this ambient space, and we

woulds. They wrote them on 24-track. It was like a demo, and then they would make a slave. Then I would do my part, and we would chop or cut and paste. That was an odd way of working for me. Sometimes I was frustrated, thinking, "If it was my record with my friends, we would have made six albums in the time we spent doing this one." It was just a real long process. Everything was done live, though.

RF: But in sections, cut and pasted together?

TB: There's only one drum machine part on the album that is an integral part of a beat, which is on "Guitar Shop," and

overdubbed all the guitar parts and I overdubbed the voice, and it just became something that worked, to the amazement of all of us.

RF: Which other songs did you put drums on after the fact?

TB: "Stand On It" had one of those demo situations where I just went out into the studio and played to the drum machine and the rough chords and melody lines that were down. "Sling Shot" was another. "Big Block" was a situation where we worked it out in the studio with me on Octapads. Once we had the arrangement totally solid, Tony and I just played through it. Jeff played to it as well, but then he overdubbed the guitars with bigger sounds and solos after the fact.

"A Day In The House" was basically a live track, as was "Savoy." "Behind The Veil" was a live track with the three of us playing. That was the reggae number, and we had a whole different set of changes. It was like this very minor key thing with much more space, a much darker groove. Tony was sort of stuck in the overdub of it, and he kept going to this one place, which was from this other piece of music he wrote, so he ended up going, "Look mate, I'm just going to stick this whole piece of music on there," and they did. At first I was a little shocked and I thought, "I don't like this; it's not what I intended to do," but now I really love it. It's a drum track that was done to a completely different piece of music, and they did a real good job at constructing the sections of the piece that Tony had previously written onto this drum track. The only thing that got saved was this drum track, and it's a beautiful, spacious reggae drum track. It's got fills in places that I wouldn't have played them in, because that music wasn't happening when I played them.

This project was looser than anything I've ever done in my life. But I really had a good time. It's like the fantasy when you're in high school where you think, "Wouldn't it be neat to have some farm to live on where there would be a barn with all the equipment set up in a studio, and we could sleep all day and get up and go there." Another thing was that his project wasn't entirely my responsibility, which made me feel like a



Photo by Robert Knight

*"Tony and Jeff
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I thought it was a
bad idea to do
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of fusion."*

left all the air. Tony kept doing takes after overdubbing, and I would go, "Stop, stop, stop, don't play another note." Those kinds of things in the way we worked were really great. It was just a great collaboration. Everybody really put their two cents in and made the thing happen.

Three other songs Jeff and Tony were working on were "Guitar Shop," "Stand On It," and "Sling Shot." I was off doing the Mark Isham album *Castalia* and his tour, and then Jeff, Tony, and I came back together and developed them to the way they are now. Those three tracks already had music on them, so I played the drums to them after-

wards. They wrote them on 24-track. It was like a demo, and then they would make a slave. Then I would do my part, and we would chop or cut and paste. That was an odd way of working for me. Sometimes I was frustrated, thinking, "If it was my record with my friends, we would have made six albums in the time we spent doing this one." It was just a real long process. Everything was done live, though.

RF: But in sections, cut and pasted together?

TB: There's only one drum machine part on the album that is an integral part of a beat, which is on "Guitar Shop," and

lot of pressure was off, but in a lot of respects, a lot of it was my baby.

RF: It's really being touted as a trio.

TB: It is. With this situation, everything that I am was utilized in one way or another—lyric writing, conceptualizing, producing, composing—just in this weird kind of way where nobody had a concept. The way I conceptualize this band is three completely diverse, disparate individuals—the classical genius, the archetypal guitar rock star from the '60s, and me—however you would classify me.

RF: How do you classify you?

TB: Your Readers Poll would classify me as a "progressive" drummer. I'll accept that label begrudgingly, because I hate labels. Nobody likes being labeled because really, spiritually, we're more than what people label us. But for a frame of reference, I'll accept that. At least it's something that can't be pinned down. But "progressive" smells a little of fusion to me, which for a long time I've been anti. It's something I played and learned from, but it's been beaten into the ground so much.

RF: Back to the record, you said sometimes you used a click and sometimes you didn't.

TB: I think "Savoy" ended up having a click; at first it didn't. "Two Rivers" definitely didn't have a click and neither did "Big Block," "A Day In The House," or "Behind The Veil."

RF: What prompts your decision either way?

TB: It's an intuitive thing. If you don't get results one way, you try something else. If the muse says to use a click track, you use a click track. If the muse says let it flow, you just get out there and do it, and if it's a little bit wild, that's okay, because the results are so much better than if it were restrained. The original version of "Savoy" was a little bit wild and was probably unacceptable, but it had some magic moments to it.

RF: Why was it unacceptable?

TB: Because the time pulled. It's one of these things where you're playing this constant four-on-the-floor bass drum thing, and you go for a fill or do something. Maybe you're just a little off balance, but who's counting, because it was the early days when we were still just working

the stuff out. It had all the energy, all the inspiration, all the freshness, but it wasn't focused.

RF: What about the fact that there is not a traditional bass player in the unit? How does it change things?

TB: To me, that's like home. I love not playing with a bass player. That was Missing Persons, and Tony Williams' Lifetime, which was a major, major influence in my life. Not having a bass player changes things in that you don't have an instrument that is down in that low to mid register interfering rhythmically with what you're doing. If you take that statement out of

Peter Gabriel just blows my mind. I got to play with him in absentia on Robbie Robertson's album, on a song called "American Roulette." That was a finished track that they had me put the drums to, and I turned off the click track and the rhythm machine and just played to Tony's thing; it was just burning and I loved it. It was a lot of fun to record that.

I haven't felt a presence like Robbie Robertson since I worked with Zappa. They're two completely opposite characters with different vibes, but there's a strength I feel from Robbie that I feel from Zappa. I

this point in my life, that's more important than technique.

RF: You never finished explaining why you prefer to work without a bass player.

TB: I wouldn't say I prefer it, but it's great. As a drummer, I have to look at each situation. I had a real ball playing with Mick Karn and Mark Isham. Mick plays these bass lines that have these big holes in them that sound like they're backwards, and I can make up my linear sort of Bozzio beats, and try to go to the conceptual place that is part of my playing, and let that come out. They're very conceptual beats, beats that for sure are not

Listeners' Guide

For readers who would like to listen to albums that best represent your drumming, which ones would you recommend.

Album Title	Artist	Label/Catalog#
Jeff Beck's Guitar Shop	Jeff Beck with Terry Bozzio and Tony Hymas	Epic OE 44313
Heavy Metal Bebop	Brecker Bros.	Arista AB 4185
Who I Am	Gary Wright	Cypress/A&MYL-OIII
Spring Session M	Missing Persons	Capitol SN-16460
Rhyme & Reason	Missing Persons	Capitol SN-16359
Color In Your Life	Missing Persons	Capitol ST-12465
Sheik Yerbouti	Frank Zappa	Out of print
Live In New York	Frank Zappa	Discreet/ Warner Bros. 2D 2290

Which recordings do you listen to most for inspiration.

Album Title	Artist	Label/Catalog#
Rite Of Spring	Stravinsky	Any Recording
Firebird Suite	Stravinsky	Any Recording
The Surgeon Of The Night Sky...	Jon Hassel	Intuition CI 1H-46880
Ancient Dreams	Patrick O'Hearn	Private Music 2002-1-P
Titles	Mick Karn	Virgin (import) OZET 91
Appalachian Spring,	Aaron Copland	Any Recording
Billy The Kid, or The Red Pony		
Opus Dei	Laibach	Waxtracks 030 (CD)
The Mind Is A Terrible Thing	Ministry	Sire/Warner Bros. 26004
To Taste		

context, I'll kill you. [laughs] It's not to say everyone does that. Some of my favorite bass players are Patrick O'Hearn, Tony Levin, and Mick Karn, who is the bass player with Japan. I played with him with Mark Isham. I consider Patrick my best friend in the whole world, and I can't even talk about him just in terms of technical things.

All the stuff Tony Levin has done with King Crimson and

hadn't gotten that feeling of "I'm with a guy who knows what he's doing" in a long time. The thing about it I liked was it was very conceptual. It was, "Sit back and think about this, talk about the concepts, talk about things." I did several tracks, although only two ended up on the record. It was a great experience; I learned a whole lot doing that record. If I can play something and have a sonic personality, at

going to have your typical time-keeping functions covered and your typical instruments in certain places, like the backbeat always on 2 and 4, the bass drum always on 1 and 3. I can play these interesting kinds of beats with him, and I love that; I love making up those kinds of demented grooves. People like Mick bring that out of me, so it's my privilege to play with some-

continued on page 74



L.A. Studio Journeyman **Denny**

"I really believe that drummers who are recording and touring aren't necessarily better than anyone else, it's just that it happened for them. And it can happen for anybody. A lot of times even really great players just don't 'get it'; they can't translate it into music and playing a song. They can sit down and play their asses off, but when it comes to

making music, it just doesn't happen. I've seen guys sit in at the Baked Potato who play chops I never thought were possible, but then when someone like Jeff Porcaro sits down and just hits a drum, it reaches me instantly. That's everything. The other guys are the people who go, 'Man, he's only playing 2 and 4.' But there are a million ways

of playing 2 and 4: We haven't even touched the surface on how many feels that can create."

Such are the sentiments of Denny Fongheiser, who, if anyone can, will explore the full million ways to play 2 and 4. He lives to be creative, and is finally enjoying becoming extremely successful at making his dreams come true.

From the time he was in the seventh grade, growing up in San Leandro, California, Denny began taking lessons from his older brother, Rich, who he emulated. Rich would give him a lesson before leaving on the road, saying, "Learn this before I come back." When Denny found himself without his brother too often, he began taking

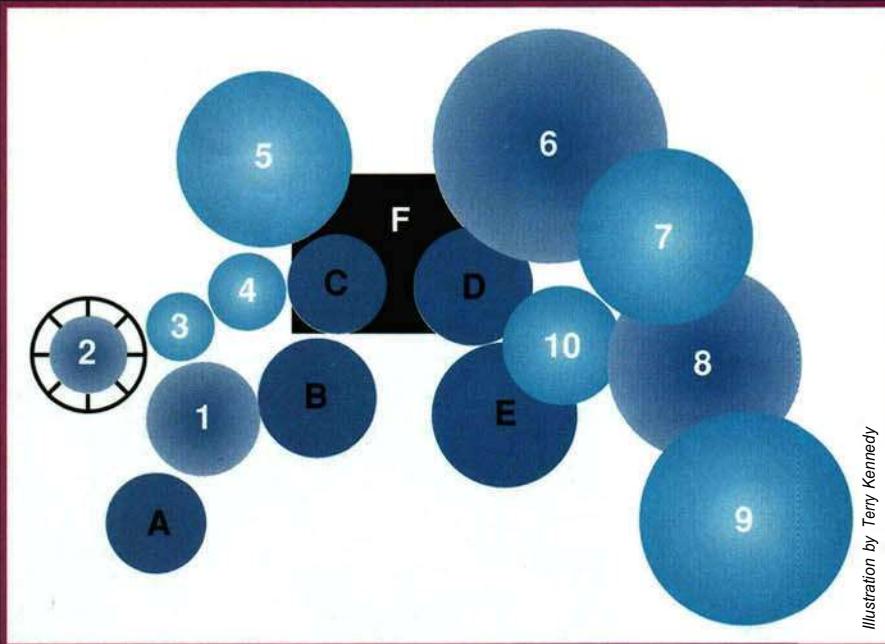
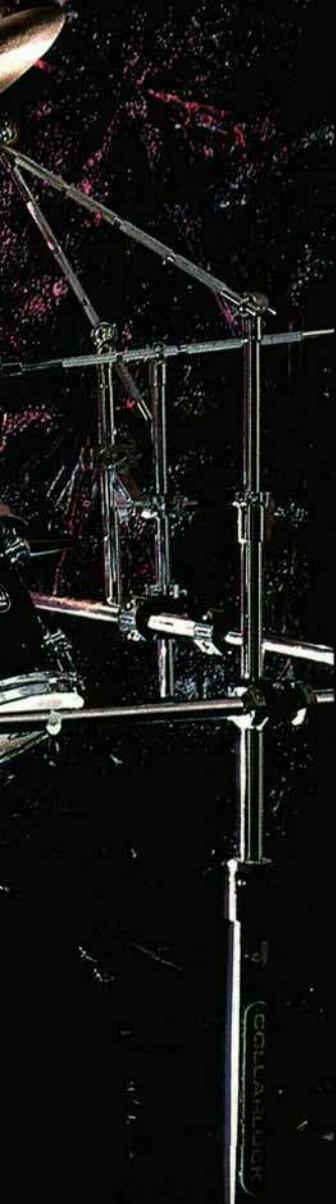


Illustration by Terry Kennedy

Denny's Setup

According to Denny, his setup can change drastically with each situation. However, the following setup is his most common configuration.

Drumset: Drum Workshop in Superman's Hair finish (custom finish in black with blue highlights).

- A. 4 x 12 custom wood snare
- B. 5 x 14 snare (or any of 10 others!)
- C. 10x12 tom
- D. 12x14 tom
- E. 14x16 tom
- F. 18x24 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian.

- 1.13" K/Z hi-hats
- 2.10" splash inside a 14"

Remo Spoxe

- 3. 8" splash
- 4. 10" splash
- 5. 18" crash
- 6. 22" ride
- 7. 18" crash
- 8. 19" China
- 9. 21" China
- 10. 14" hi-hats

Hardware: Drum Workshop hi-hat and remote hi-hat stands, as well as a DW bass drum pedal, snare stand, and cymbal arms. A Collarlock rack system sup-

ports the kit.

Heads: Remo Ambassador

or Diplomat bottom on snare, coated Ambassador on batter side of snare, with very little muffling (a little tape, if anything). On toms, clear Ambassadors underneath and either clear or coated Ambassadors on top. Some muffling is used on heads with tape, where only the ends of a piece of tape are touching, leaving the cen-

ter section off the head. The bass drum has a clear Ambassador batter head with an ebony Ambassador front head, with a Levis jacket used for just a little bit of muffling.

Electronics: Denny has an involved electronics setup detailed in the article.

Sticks: Dean Markley 8R and 9R models with wood tip. Denny also uses Pro-Mark Multi-Rods.

Fongheiser

by Robyn Flans

lessons from Rich's teacher, Bill Nawrochi, who taught Denny how to read. He got involved in his school jazz band and began playing with the junior high musicians, while devouring the music of Tower Of Power, Blood, Sweat & Tears, and Chicago.

During family vacations to southern California, Denny knew he'd eventually make his

home in Los Angeles. At 21, he fulfilled that goal when he moved there with a band called St. Regis, dreaming of one day making records like those he grew up listening to. When he left St. Regis a year later, the band's bass player convinced him to check out another band. Denny recorded with them, and the engineer recommended him

to someone else. The sax player on that date, Richard Elliot, suggested Denny to an artist by the name of Lisa Nemzo, and Denny ended up recording three albums with her. While his career was slowly mushrooming, Denny did whatever it took to make a meager living, playing Top-40, subbing on gigs, even working as a delivery boy.

"I remember going into the record companies, and it was horrible," he grimaces. "Bobby Colomby had seen my band, and here I was at Capitol Records delivering a package—and Bobby was in the elevator with me. I remember trying to hide the package. It was terrible."

Denny auditioned and won the gig with ex-Free bass player

Andy Fraser, whose band spent three months opening for the Fixx. It was the first tour of that size that Denny got to do. After that, Eric Presley, the bass player with Lisa Nemzo, recommended Denny for a gig with an artist by the name of Todd Sharp. Sharp's live engineer then mentioned Denny's name to producer Don Cehman, who was looking for someone to record Brian Setzer's solo record.

Today Denny's schedule thrills and astounds him. In the past few years he has recorded with the likes of Tracy Chapman (both her albums to date), Cock Robin, Trevor Rabin, Tom Cochrane & Red Rider, Boy Meets Girl, E.G. Daily, the Burn Sisters, Marti Jones, Don Dixon, Marshall Crenshaw, Danny Wilde, and Millions Like Us, and he tries to maintain a balance of live playing with such artists as Belinda Carlisle and Starship.

Right after Christmas, 1989, when we got together for the first time at his home in the San Fernando Valley, Denny's schedule went something like this: Saturday night, Denny begins working on Fox TV's Comic Strip Live, where they play grooves of contemporary songs before and after the commercials. Monday morning, he leaves for Nashville, where he rehearses and records with Johnny Van Zandt for a week. The following Monday he leaves on a 6:30 a.m. flight, arriving in L.A. at 11:30, and goes directly to a studio where he works on Steve Wynn's record for three days. The day after that is completed, Friday, Denny begins tracking the song he and Eric Presley wrote for the film Side Out.

And so it goes, a couple of weeks in the life of a very busy, conscientious, caring individual.

RF: Besides with your brother and Bill Nawrochi, have you done any other studying with anyone?

DF: The only other studying I did was with Narada Michael Walden in my first year of college. He was actually the one who encouraged me to come down to L.A. I was going to eventually, but I thought I needed a couple of more years, but he really pushed me to do it.

RF: How long did you study with Narada?

DF: Just a couple of months. Narada had us start out doing some rudiments on a pad, just

to warm up. He had two drumsets facing each other, and we'd each sit at a set, and he would start playing and I'd have to copy him. Narada's whole thing was attitude. He'd be yelling, "Attitude, attitude." He'd start playing something fairly easy, and then add something else with his left hand. Once I'd get that complicated pattern, he'd go out on top of it, and I'd have to go out. He was really into

became aware of all that. I'll never forget the first time I played to a click track. It's unfortunate a lot of guys don't get into it. When a lot of bands go in to do a record, because their drummer hasn't played with a click track, sometimes he doesn't end up doing the record. He's not used to it and there's not the budget, the patience, or the time for everybody to teach him.

they're very unmusical to play with. Even just hearing a side-stick is more musical, because at least it's an instrument. But it wasn't good. I went home and stayed up for days and practiced with a metronome. I would practice with a metronome as a kid, but this was on a different level. It was when drum machines came out, and you couldn't just play around it; you had to nail it and play right on it. I got that together real quick. The important thing is being able to nail the click to where you don't even hear it; you're right on it. Then you have to take it another step to where you can move around the click, but not make it feel like it's moving—like picking it up on a chorus, and maybe pulling it back on a fill into the verse. But it all has to flow and not feel jerky. Nowadays, that's what people want. Now, over 50% of the sessions I do are without click tracks. Tracy Chapman is a perfect example of that. No clicks, live tracking—like how things used to be recorded. She sang and played guitar, Larry [Klein] played bass, and I played drums, and the stuff had to move. If I kept really good metronomic time, it didn't work; it stiffened her up, because she's used to playing by herself and having things breathing a certain way. We had to find what that was, know where to pick it up and slow it down—control it, but really make it move.

RF: I read an interview with [producer] David Kershenbaum where he said she really lead the time. How did that affect you?

DF: It was difficult at first because I was thinking it wasn't right, I should be keeping time and not letting anything rush or drag.

RF: How do you let the artist lead the time when that is normally the drummer's function?

DF: There were auditions to do her record, and most of the people went in with the intention of doing just that, laying down the groove and keeping time with her. The tape I got of her was just her guitar and vocal, and I felt that my job with her was to color around her, to support her, but not get in her way. That's why there aren't a lot of big snare drums on the record, only in certain sections, but she's right up front. Her gui-

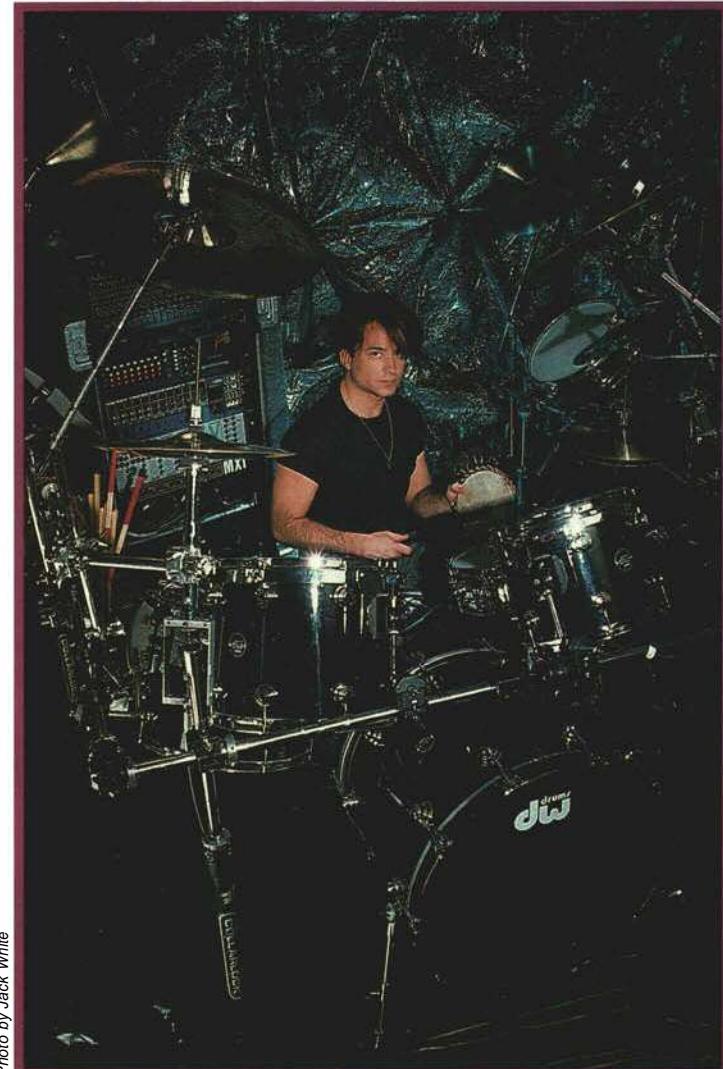


Photo by Jack White

playing 5/4 or 7/4, for fills, to make it interesting. Another thing that was really great was that he'd apply the rudiments to the drumkit rather than just use them as warm-up exercises. He'd also have me find five grooves I liked on a record and learn those, and then do five variations of each groove. It was really great.

RF: Did you do anything to work on time?

DF: I would play to records and with a metronome a lot. When I started doing sessions I really

RF: Tell us about that first time with a click.

DF: The sessions I did up North weren't with click tracks, but I was doing a demo down here. It was a ballad, which is rough, and it was live keyboards, vocals, and drums. I didn't know enough to get the mix I needed in the phones, or to ask for a certain kind of rhythm for the click track. I didn't know because I was inexperienced at it. I think it was just one of those digital clicks, which I still hate. They don't cut through, and

tar is very rhythmic, so I couldn't get in her way. I had to play with her guitar and kind of weave around it.

RF: You knew that going into the audition?

DF: I took a chance. The kind of groove I played was kind of a reggae-ish, real light kind of groove, while everyone else was playing 2 and 4 stuff. Luckily it worked.

RF: What was that audition like?

DF: It was strange for me, because when I got home from the audition, there was a message on my machine to call them back. They said they wanted me to play with bass players the next couple of days, but when I got there, there were drummers and bass players coming in, mostly like partners. It was pretty uncomfortable for those two days. David would send the drummer out and then I'd go play with that drummer's bass player friend. Then he gave Larry Klein a call, and he came down, and it just worked for what she was doing.

As far as auditions are concerned, if you don't get a gig, it doesn't mean that you weren't good enough. And if you do get a gig, it doesn't necessarily mean that you were the best player; it just means that you were the right person for that gig. There could have been a lot of people technically much better than I was at the time, or even more experienced, but they just weren't right for that situation. And I could have gone next door and auditioned for something else and not have gotten it.

RF: So your need in that situation was just to complement her.

DF: Right. Her pocket was a little bit on the top side of the beat, and I would kind of sit on the back side of it. Larry was right in the center, so it created a real wide groove. I think that's why it worked. She can do what she does, but I'm right behind her, kind of following her. It's constantly kind of floating a little bit. I learned a lot with that, because before I went in there, I was into playing like a drum machine. That's what everybody needed you to do, and you couldn't work unless you did

that. So it was a good learning experience.

You have to be able to do both—make it feel good when it needs to float, and also to nail it when it needs to be perfect. A situation where that was the case was when I was doing the Boy Meets Girl record with Arif Mardin. He's amazing. He comes up with incredible ideas and just makes you feel good. We cut this track where I was playing with machine percussion and sequenced bass. After the take he said, "That was great, it was right with the click, really good time. Let me just check it." I'm used to people

shows his ability to conform. You would think that would be a sterile way of approaching it, but when you hear that record, you know it was right for that record. He knew what was right and he did a great job.

After I finished my four tracks, which was on a Friday evening, on Saturday I flew to North Carolina to work with Don Dixon on Marti Jones's record *Used Guitars*. They picked me up from the airport, and we talked about how we were going to do the record. I asked what Don had for a click track, and he said, "I don't use clicks; I hate them. I don't think anything

story, where she said she didn't want his "studio time," only she was a little more insistent than that. Have you ever had anything happen where you had to stand up for yourself?

DF: Thank God nothing like that, but I am definitely not the kind of person to go in there and say, "Whatever you want, give me the money and I'm out of here." I have tried to create a career where hopefully I get called to do something other than just be a machine or just because they need a drummer. Hopefully they'll want me to bring in my own ideas. I definitely suggest things. To me, the

artist comes first. It's their career and they've worked their lifetime to get this record deal, and I feel really lucky that I get the opportunity to share it with them. So I want to do what they want, number one. But if it's a situation where they're asking me to do something I don't feel is right, I will definitely say something, because I get very depressed if I feel it's going to be something that isn't going to be good or correct. I'll definitely say, "I really don't think this is right," and 99% of the time, they'll agree, maybe not at that minute, but eventually they will agree.

There's a story about that. I was doing the Cock Robin record *After Here Through Midland*, and we were doing the track "The Biggest Fool Of All." Peter Kingsbury's description was that he wanted it to be like Anne Murray's "Snowbird." Then he mentioned

"Boys Of Summer," and it started to click that he wanted that upbeat feel; he wanted the "&s" exaggerated. So if you listen to it, that's the whole hi-hat pattern. Then we tried the bass drum pattern on all fours. I was playing the snare on 2 and 4, and he wanted the snare on the upbeat, which ended up being a great idea, actually. But when he first said how he wanted it, I really disagreed with a lot of it; I felt it should groove more. I let it go, and we kept working on it, and finally I had to stop and say, "I don't feel this is right. I really feel this should be done a different way." He just looked at me,

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Listeners' Guide

For readers who would like to listen to records that best represent your drumming, which ones would you recommend?

Album Title	Artist	Label/Catalog#
Tracy Chapman	Tracy Chapman	Elektra 60774-4
Victory Day	Tom Cochrane & Red Rider	RCA 8532-2-R
EEE	Don Dixon	Enigma 7733-56-2
Any Kind Of Lie	Marti Jones	RCA 2040-2-R
Millions Like Us	Millions Like Us	Virgin 90602-2
Danny Wilde	Danny Wilde	Geffen 924241-2
After Here Through Midland	Cock Robin	Columbia CK 40375
Steve Thompson	Steve Thompson	Phonogram (Europe) T81044

Which recordings do you listen to most for inspiration?

Album Title	Artist	Drummer	Label/Catalog#
Face Value	Phil Collins	Phil Collins	Atlantic 16029-2
So	Peter Gabriel	Manu Katche	Geffen 24088-2
any recording	The Police	Stewart Copeland	A&M
The Flat Earth	Thomas Dolby	Clif Brigden	EMI ST-12309
East Bay Grease	Tower Of Power	David Garibaldi	Atlantic SD 204
Songs From The Big Chair	Tears For Fears	Manny Elias	Mercury 824300-1
Talk Is Cheap	Keith Richards	Steve Jordan, Charlie Drayton	Virgin 90973-2
Hymn Of The Seventh Galaxy	Return To Forever	Lenny White	Polydor 825336-1

maybe putting up all the drums and the click track, or the drums, bass, and the click track. But he soloed the bass drum alone with the click track, and then the snare drum alone with the click track. At that point I just went, "Oh no. Should I leave now?" because you really hear every little mistake that way. He was sitting there going, "Great...great...great...oh, gotta get that one...gotta get that one, too."

RF: That's interesting, because he comes from an era of producing people like Aretha and the Rascals, when that kind of machine time was anything but standard.

DF: I was surprised too, but that

feels good with a click." I laughed and shook my head and said, "You've got to give me a few minutes to adjust," and I told them the story of the day before. We started recording, and we did a track, and when I came back into the control booth he said, "That sounds great, but the time is too good. Can we speed up those choruses a little bit and slow down the verses? At the end, kind of pick it up a little bit." It was a completely different concept from Arif's, but he was also correct. For the record he was making, that was the way to do it.

RF: That reminds me a little of the Jeff Porcaro/Ricky Lee Jones



Making it **BIG** • —

Pat Torpey

**Pat Torpey specializes
in power drumming
with a relaxed,
confident groove,
managing to radiate
strength without
pounding or bullying
his drums.**

**The Cleveland-born,
Phoenix-bred Torpey
has achieved his
professional reputation
primarily as a quick
study and team player
on several major-
league tours.**

**But as the backbeat of
Mr. Big, the heavy-
weight band featuring
super-bassist Billy
Sheehan, guitar wun-
derkind Paul Gilbert,
and vocalist Eric
Martin, Torpey may
well become as
familiar on radio and
MTV as he is on the
L.A. session scene.**

MD: What made you want to play drums?

PT: When I was young, my parents would go to a park on Sunday afternoons, and there would always be a band. I could sit on a railing behind the drummer. He was only a kid, maybe 20 years old, but looking down at him, I was just mesmerized. Eventually I think I got one of those \$20 snare drums from the Sears catalog for Christmas and just banged on it. In high school, I played in marching band, dance band, and orchestra. Someone must have said to me at a very young age, "Learn to do everything; some of it you won't use, some of it you will, but it's good to have it all." I'm not really a reader, but when I was in high school, I could sight-read anything. After high school, I had a band in Phoenix called Be that played the clubs in the Southwest. We did some originals, plus some Led Zeppelin and Aerosmith.

MD: What were you into? Were you a Zeppelin fanatic?

PT: For a while. And I had my jazz fusion period—Billy Cobham, Tony Williams. Then I thought that those guys had to come from somewhere, so I started listening to older drummers, like Roy Haynes and Connie Kay, who had this amazing, very pristine sound. I was just thirsting for drum knowledge.

MD: What about other kinds of knowledge? Did you go to college?

PT: When I graduated from high school, I was going to go to Arizona State University to study to become a math teacher. Math was something I was always good at. But I said, "Mom, I want to be in a band." I always felt I had enough determination to make it. When you're 18 years old, you have that "If I don't get a record deal by the time I'm 21, I'll kill myself" attitude. Then you're 21, and you say, "If I don't get a deal by 25...." But after a while I realized I wouldn't be happy doing anything else.

MD: Was there a good music scene in Phoenix?

PT: Be was the big Phoenix band, but I realized we'd gone as far as we could. I wanted to go to California. It scared the hell out of me, though. My girlfriend at the time actually had a lot to do with me saying, "Well, ohhh-hh-kay, let's go," because it was intimidating—just to jump out there. I had no job. I was only in L.A. a short period of time, then I went up to Monterey and auditioned for a band with backing—you know, money! It

was a progressive kind of rock thing, and I was really into that. I was the drummer and lead singer of the band. We moved back down to L.A. and eventually broke up. Then I just kicked around for a while. I was in a band with the bass player from Giuffria and House Of Lords, Chuck Wright, who also did the first two Quiet Riot albums. He and I had a band called Exposure, another labor of love. We put this band together, and we were determined to make it. We got real close to getting a deal.

It's funny how some people break into the whole scene in L.A. I met a lot of people through playing softball. A lot of musicians play softball out there. I heard about this entertainment softball league, so I joined that. I was on Neil Geraldo's team; he's Pat Benatar's husband. I was the catcher and ended up tearing up my knee and having to get a knee operation. I realized maybe I shouldn't take this softball stuff too seriously.

MD: Who else played?

PT: Myron Grombacher used to come out, the guys in Toto, Fee Waybill, Matt Bissonette, Gregg's brother. And Gregg came out a couple of times.

MD: So you got your breaks in the music business through softball?

PT: Well, I became really good friends with Rick Phillips, who used to be in the Babys, and now is the bass player in Bad English. He hooked me up with a couple of things. When I ended up getting the John Parr gig, Rick was the bass player. That was the first major tour I did.

MD: Did you record with John Parr?

PT: I didn't even know John when he did the album. He came over to do some promo and he was going to be on *American Bandstand*, but he didn't have a band. Rick Phillips had some connections who said they needed to get some guys up there to lip-synch. So Rick called me. I didn't see John for about six months after that. I was in the house band for this W show, a kids' show with a David Letterman vibe, and John Parr was a guest. I said, "Hey, remember me?" He said, "We're auditioning drummers because we're going to be opening for Tina Turner." So I went down. Next thing I knew, I was in England rehearsing.

MD: During this time in L.A., did you have any other jobs?

PT: I always had a job. I worked at record

by Albert Bouchard and Deborah Frost



'Every little move you make over your career has to be a move forward. Because when you're not moving forward in this business, you're falling back.'

stores. I managed a rehearsal studio in North Hollywood. Guys would come in, like Warrant—they were just little kids—and tell me to set up the microphones. And now they look at me and say, "I never knew you were a drummer." They always thought I was just some lackey. But I'll do what has to be done. I'm not proud. If I have a bill, I'll go out and work to pay it. I have a pretty good work ethic. I've been lucky the last couple of years in not having to have a daytime job. It took a while to get to that point.

MD: So it's not as if you arrived in L.A. and the next day you were touring with Robert Plant.

PT: Absolutely not! But what got me out of that rehearsal job was an album I did with Jeff Paris, his first album. He was auditioning a zillion drummers. I got the job, and by what I made from that album, I was able to quit the rehearsal studio and put a lot of time into beating the ground. I started doing a lot of TV shows, a lot of lip-synch stuff. I got a really good connection at Atlantic Records, and they would use me. I did shows with Mike & the Mechanics, Roger Daltrey, Marilyn Martin, Bob Geldof, Melissa Manchester. And it led me to get the gig with John Parr. Every little move you make over your career has to be a move forward. Because when you're not moving forward in this business, you're falling back.

MD: How about auditioning? A lot of people find that difficult.

PT: It is difficult. But it's something you have to learn how to do. It's not just how you play. I think a lot of times, with auditions, your playing ability is a given. I mean, they figure you can *play*, or you wouldn't be there. It's how you act, your personality, how you get along with the people. And how you look—that's just as important. And it's really hard when there's five guys waiting in front of you, people you hang with, friends. You feel like, "I just want to get out of here." In L.A. it seemed like all these drummers would come into an audition—375 guys or whatever—and they'd just call Mike Baird. He's gotten a lot of those gigs. A lot of guys were like, "Why audition all these people, why not call him in the first place?"

MD: Why do you think they do that? Are they trying to find somebody cheaper?

PT: I admire Mike Baird for his success. He's a very active player and he definitely has what people want. I'd like to find it myself! Not that I'm going for that kind of thing anymore. Recently, I was at my Sunday softball game, and a drummer buddy of mine had just auditioned for Cher. He was telling me, "Yeah, this guy was down, and this guy..." all the guys I know. And I was thinking to myself, "Boy am I glad that I'm out of that." It was just a relief to be in a band where you know you're wanted.

MD: Do you think it's particularly hard for drummers? Drummers are generally not the people who write the material or front the band.

PT: There are a lot of jokes that go around, like there's four musicians and the drummer. There's such a heavy guitar mania. I mean, it happens with our guitar player, Paul Gilbert. He's an amazing player, and deserves everything he gets. Billy Sheehan, also. But I don't think there are as many drummer heroes as there used to be. The way a song is perceived is that you have music and lyrics. Something I would like to see changed is for drums to be considered *music*. When Mozart wrote a symphony, he didn't write all the music and then say, "In the drum section, oh, you guys improvise." He wrote the drum parts down. So, when a guy comes in with a guitar and says, "Here's my song," and the drummer sits down and actually gets creative with it, it's just as much a part of the music. A lot of drummers don't get credit for that. I really don't think Jimmy Page told John Bonham what to play, actually I know he didn't, because I talked to Robert about it.

MD: To get back to your own history, you toured with John Parr....

PT: We opened for Tina Turner, and we opened for Heart. It was great, very educational. But when that got finished, John became kind of inactive. In the meantime, I was trying to survive. Belinda Carlisle was auditioning drummers because she was going to tour with Robert Palmer. So I got the gig, lucky me, and toured with her. When that ended, at the end of '86, I joined the re-

formed Knack. We did the soundtrack for some odd little movie, made some money off that, then went in the studio with Val Garay and did a great four-song demo. But record companies were so, "The Knack—no way!" But I had a lot of fun with them. We played around Los Angeles, did a lot of clubs, and we were selling out everywhere, getting really good reviews. We almost got a deal, got very close, and then Billy Sheehan called me. I said, "Guys, I see an opportunity here, and I can't pass it up."

MD: How did you know Billy?

PT: I met him through Brett Tugle, the keyboard player from Belinda's band. He went to David Lee Roth in the middle of the Belinda thing. Brett called me when they were doing some vocal sampling for the next David Lee Roth tour. They needed background vocals to put in the *Emulator*, [sings] "This must be paradise...." And Billy was singing. Brett was saying, "Hey, Pat's a good singer, but he plays drums great, too."

MD: Did you sing in all these other situations?

PT: Yes, I always sang. I did background vocals on a Ted Nugent album and on Motley Crue's album, *Girls, Girls, Girls*. Anyway, Billy had a meeting after the session, and that was when David Lee Roth and he parted. It was kinda funny: The day I met him, he left. Then I didn't see him until the NAMM show in Anaheim, when he said, "I'm putting a band together. Would you be interested?" So I ended up playing with him. I really liked the situation, and it moved really fast. We did some showcases up through the summer of '88, and Atlantic became interested. One Saturday morning in October, I got a phone call from our manager. He said, "Pat, Robert Plant's drummer, Chris Blackwell, broke his wrist. You have to go to Chicago." I said, "What about Mr. Big, aren't they going to get mad at me?" He said, "Don't worry about it, we're in negotiations. You'll be done in the middle of December, the papers will be ready to sign, and we'll start our album."

Chris broke his wrist on a Friday night, and Sunday evening I was auditioning. I got there first, and they went, "All right, you want to do it?" I was like, "Oh yeah, sure," and inside me fireworks were going off. I had three days to learn a two-hour headlining show, and it was the hardest three days of my life. I went back to the hotel and thought, "I can't do this, there's just too much music to learn." It wasn't just the songs, it was all the improvisation they had developed over a year, like extending endings. So I was scared to death. I underestimated my learning ability. I mean, I was so freaked out. I didn't sleep for three days. I was going on adrenaline. I lost about 15 pounds because I couldn't eat; I couldn't keep anything down. I was the only American; everyone else was British, including the crew. But they took me in their arms like a buddy, and I became one of the band. When the tour was over, I had tears in my eyes. It

was a great experience for me.

MD: How did you approach the Zeppelin songs? Did you try to do what Bonham did?

PT: When I was younger, I was a real Zeppelin fanatic. I was just like John Bonham to the T. I bought a 26" bass drum, grew a mustache, did the whole thing. So when I played with Robert, there were just some things I considered sacred in some of those Zeppelin tunes. Chris Blackwell, who was still there—he played percussion, so we were both on stage—had a little different attitude. He wasn't trying to be as exact about it; he approached it in his own way—like the way we did "Nobody's Fault But Mine." Chris was doing a 16th-note pattern on the hi-hat. I wanted to do 8ths, because that's what John Bonham did. Chris would do more of his own kind of fills too. Some of the cymbal work he would vary. I kept more to what Bonham did, because I thought some of his cymbal work was brilliant. Cymbals can do so much. They're the subtlety of drumming. Even on our album, *MR. BIG*, I try to do things with cymbals that will stand out. There are things you can do that will sit above the music but not be obtrusive.

I also played a different kind of kit than Chris, a single-bass Tama kit. I play two toms, but I don't put them on the bass drum. I have the ride cymbal low and a tom stand moved to the side, an influence I got from Roy Burns. I love Chris's playing on Robert's album, *Now And Zen*. He's got a sharp, very tight snare, and a great tom sound. When we did those songs, I tried to stay close to what he did. I did infuse some of my own licks; I couldn't help but do it, there are things I do naturally. But I learned things from Chris. He's left-handed and plays a left-handed kit, but he leads with his right, so he plays his kick drum with his left foot—very unorthodox. There were a couple of moves, like in "Billy's Revenge," where I thought, "Wow, this is gonna be a book." Because the hi-hats's going, the kick drum's going, it's a 6/8, 6/4 rockabilly pattern. That was the strangest one for me. And Chris just did it so naturally. I had to work to get the kick drum down.

MD: Did he use double bass?

PT: Double pedal. I also used a double pedal with Robert, because there were some moves where he wanted it. I've always played a single kick drum until Mr. Big. Now I'm playing double bass. I used the double pedal on "Addicted To That Rush," in one little passage in the middle. Here's why I ended up using double bass, though: When David Lee Roth was looking for a drummer, he auditioned everybody in L.A. I got a call, but I heard they wanted someone who played double bass. I couldn't even fake it, because I had never even done it. So I was intimidated and didn't go down. About a week later, I started thinking to myself, "Boy, what an idiot I was. Why not learn how to play double bass? Why have to pass up a gig just because you've neglected something in

your left leg?" And in a lot of ways, I had this attitude about it: "Hey, I play single bass drum," when that's like saying, "Hey, I play guitar, but I only use five strings." Why just forget about an appendage if the technology's there? And you don't have to motorboat all the time. I mean, Simon Phillips uses it brilliantly. So I called Tama to get a double pedal. I have a practice pad kit and I just went in there and woodshedded.

MD: How long have you been endorsing Tama?

PT: I got with Tama when I went with John Parr. I called up all the drum companies. Most of them wouldn't even talk to me. But Tama did. What's nice about Tama in general is that they were interested in me as a person—how I conduct

myself and so on and so forth—not in the gig that I had. I'll always remember that. I've been with them since '85. Cymbal-wise, I'm a Zildjian endorser. They're great to me, too, and they're a great company. And the same with Pro-Mark.

MD: What was it like to work with Robert Plant?

PT: Obviously, Robert Plant is one of my heroes. I was walking around in a daze. I mean, every time I would see Robert Plant, I'd be looking at him out of the corner of my eye, thinking, "That's Robert Plant; I'm sitting here with Robert Plant." Really, it was hard to get over that. It took me about a week before I was able to settle down.

MD: Did you ever see Zeppelin?

PT: Twice. I talked to Robert about all this too. I saw them do a show in Phoenix when he was really sick, and he remembers the show. And even though he was sick, I didn't care, I couldn't believe those guys were on stage in the same building as me. I thought they must be from Mars, aliens or something, they were so good. Robert is a very personable, normal guy, and can be very self-effacing. He doesn't have this "Hey, I'm the rock star legend" attitude or anything. He's always got time for his fans, signing autographs, talking to people. He's a very gracious human being.



Photo by Rick Gould

MD: So when the tour ended, you went back to work with Mr. Big.

PT: The tour ended December 16, '88, and on January 3, Billy, Eric, Paul, and I were in pre-production, making sure everything was together. The beginning of February, we went up to San Francisco and recorded our album in record time. And we came in under budget—because we did a lot of preparation.

MD: The Mr. Big record not only sounds like people playing together, but the time is right on: It doesn't sound mechanical.

PT: It's not stiff. When you're listening to a click track, you do adjust. I used a click track on a couple of ballads, like "Anything For You." I don't consider it there just to make sure I'm keeping it all together, it's the guitar, everybody. Our producer, Kevin Elson, understood the kind of band we wanted to be, and that's a band where we go in and play. There are two songs on the album that are first takes, right off the bat—"Addicted To That Rush" and "Take A Walk." The only thing that was weird was that I said, "Kevin, I want to try a piccolo snare." It was a Tama brass piccolo, and it sounded good, so we ran the track down and didn't even listen to it. It's great. I just love the way it sounds. Obviously we did some vocal overdubs, but

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Inside Ayotte

If you live in the U.S., you may have just begun to notice ads for Ayotte drums in *Modern Drummer*, or you may have seen the name on the drumkits of touring drummers from Canada.

If you live in Canada or Europe, you may already be familiar with this line of uniquely designed drums from Vancouver, British Columbia. In any case, you might want to get familiar with the name, because Ayotte drums are quietly making their mark in the field of top-quality musical instruments.

To appreciate Ayotte drums, you have to appreciate Ray Ayotte, because the drums are unquestionably a reflection of his personality and philosophy. Ray is a professional player, a major drum retailer, and the president of a custom drum company—simultaneously. This extensive background has given Ray some very strong opinions—about the way drums should be crafted, how a drum company should operate, how drums should be marketed, and many other aspects of the drum business—that he isn't the least bit reluctant to share.

Ray graduated from high school in 1965. At that time, he was taking drum lessons from noted Canadian teacher Jim Blackley, who owned Jim Blackley's Drum Village in Vancouver. In 1966, Jim hired Ray to teach beginners on Saturdays, which led eventually to Ray's going to work for Drum Village full-time. He left in 1969 to start a drum shop and teaching studio within a general music store. From 1969 to 1972 his main occupation was as a drum teacher, and he also played big band, jazz, and rock gigs around Vancouver. Then, in 1972, Ray decided to open his own drum shop.

"It was probably the bravest thing I've ever done," says Ray, "because Vancouver already had several major music stores with drum departments way bigger than mine. But I went ahead, and I called it Drums Only. It took me less than a year to get enough of the market to enable me to buy Vancouver Drum Company and Drum Village. Within about three or four years we had literally 95% of the drum retail business in town."

But as things got bigger, they got more precarious. As Ray explains, "By the time 1980 came along, I was doing a million dollars a year in business—

the largest drum store anybody had ever heard of. But that year the business changed; there was a real turning down. I had dedicated a significant segment of my operation to the school business, and that business crashed and burned in British Columbia. Budgets were cut to zero, and I got stuck with tons of inventory.

"Since 1972 I had operated on the premiss that Drums Only would be service-oriented. If it had anything to do with drums, we'd do it. Our philosophy was: 'Never say no.' That got me into lots of trouble, because I'd say, 'Sure we can do it' to the customer, and then wonder *how* after he had left.

"At that time, a lot of major rock acts based in Vancouver—Loverboy, BTO, Prism, and others—were clients of ours. They all needed customized gear to go out on the road with: tom holders, spurs, custom stands, and so forth. Mark Gauthier worked at Drums Only for ten years before he started his Collarlock company, and a lot of the stuff that he developed was innovated while he was working for me. So we had a lot of hands-on experience custom-building and designing stuff for professional players."

But how did Ray expand from being a major drum retailer to actually making drums? He replies: "I got my first taste of the manufacturing side of the business when Michael Clapham, who had bought Drum Village from Jim Blackley in 1967, developed the Milestone line of fiberglass drums. I was involved with that line for some time. But my personal interest in manufacturing grew out of my dealings with Camco. In the late 1970s, Tom Beckman owned the Camco drum company and manufactured drums in Los Angeles. We bought them literally by the hundreds of individual drums, and then we'd create drumsets out of them—adding tom holders and other hardware ourselves. So I would go down to Los Angeles to see how they were making their drums. I also visited the Rogers, Ludwig, and Slingerland factories—just to see how they were doing what they were doing—because it really helped me in my repair work at the shop.

"My interest in manufacturing evolved naturally over a long period of time. I didn't just wake up one morning and say, 'Hey—I'm going to make drums!' It can't happen that way, unless you have a ton of money and you're really stupid. Even if you have the money, who's going to decide what to do? First of all you need a drummer who's sensitive to the needs of drummers. But where is he going to learn the manufacturing techniques? Are you going to hire someone who worked making Brand X drums? Of course not, because he only knows his own little part of the job. How did Bill Ludwig, Sr. come to be what he was? By a natural evolutionary process, starting with nothing. Through trial and error he developed the Ludwig drum company.

"Look at how people like Remo Belli, Joe Calato, the Ludwigs, or the Zildjians came to be where they are. None of it happened overnight or by accident. It all happened as a result of developing one thing and letting it grow naturally. I use these people as role models, I guess. But I like to think that everything we do is a little bit



Ray Ayotte

different. The concept of building custom drums the way we do is totally original to us; no one else is doing this anywhere else in the world. No one else has even *thought* of doing this to the extent that we do. There's almost nothing that we can't make, in comparison to what other people have to offer. We put the customers' needs and wants first, and that's our insurance policy that they'll come back again."

Ray started making drums in his Drums Only shop in earnest in the early 1980s, and went into business as the Ayotte Drum Company in 1983. But even that step called for serious consideration.

"I had a number of different names that I wanted to use," Ray comments. "It was really a difficult thing to use my own name. For one thing, the spelling is very unusual. [It's pronounced Ay-yot.] Also, I didn't want to be accused of embarking on an ego trip, because for a drumshop owner to actually enter the drum manufacturing arena took audacity enough as it was. Besides, in 1983, everybody was going *out* of business. Slingerland was out of business, Ludwig was being sold, Camco was gone, Gretsch had changed hands three times—and I was going to make drums? Remo Belli told me that I had picked the worst time in history to make drums. But I told him that I wasn't really making drums. And I'm still not really a drum manufacturer; I'm a custom builder. I build to order only; I don't build any inventory whatsoever. I don't have a production line, with 300,000 square feet and 150 people who have to be taken care of. I don't have to think about stuff like that, and I don't ever want to be in that kind of situation. But I *do* want to have, in the long run, the reputation for making the finest drums on the market, because that reputation alone will ensure that I always have a market for my drums."

Ray's desire to make the finest drums is reflected in every element of his drums' design and construction. Many of the production processes involve one-of-a-kind machines designed by Ray and his team of craftsmen, along with woodworking and finishing techniques unique to Ayotte.

The drums start life as cylinders of hard rock maple from eastern Canada and the U.S. "Maple seems to be the wood of choice for most drummers," says Ray, "and that's partly based on history. Maple was originally used to make drums because of its abundance and its finishing properties; people neither knew nor cared about acoustic properties. Drummers became used to the sound of maple drums, and that became the desirable sound. We like maple because it's a brighter-sounding wood than others used in drumshell construction, such as birch. Maple's relative density and higher resonant frequencies allow us to make a fairly thin shell that is still very bright-sounding, as opposed to going to a very thick shell."

Even at this early point, Ray stresses a difference between Ayotte drums and those of other brands. "You'd be surprised at what people call 'maple,'" he says. "Various companies use several different varieties of maple, and some of them get very soft. There are also some inexpensive softwoods that look just like maple, and are used as fillers in lots of shells that

are called 'maple shells.' Our drumshells are made out of 100% hard rock maple, and our specs are very stringent. Oftentimes we reject as much as 60 to 70% of what comes in, for various reasons. Obviously, when you're dealing with a natural product like wood, there's no such thing as perfection. That's what makes wood a great material for making musical instruments. It's the most complicated material that you can use, and the only one that will give you an infinite range of overtones. You can't get that out of man-made materials. They simplify the sound, make it less complex, less interesting."

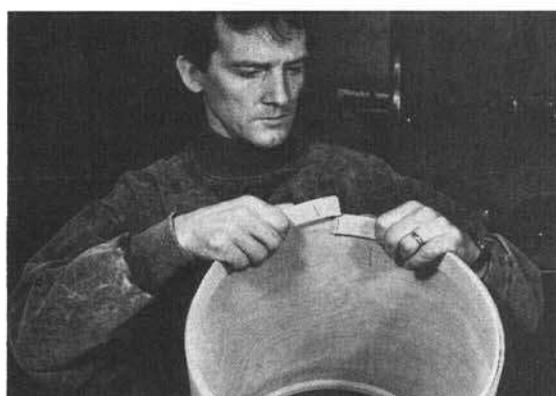
"We make 80% of our drums from the six-ply, cross-laminated cylinders that come in our back door, in diameters from 6" to 28". The balance we make by hand. All of our multi-ply snare drums are made by hand—up to 50-ply—as well as our 36" and 40" concert bass drums. We do any shell length, as well. For example, in 12" drums the shortest we usually make is 8"—although I've had a guy order a 7"—and the longest is 14". Beyond that the sound starts to back up on you. As far as we're concerned, it has to be a viable musical instrument for our name to go on it."

As far as the craftsmen who create Ayotte drums are concerned, every operation involving the drumshells has to be perfect, because the shells themselves aren't. According to Ray, "We always assume that there is no such thing as a round shell, and that we have what looks basically like a corkscrew. So we average the shell and make it as square as possible. That means that if the shell is slightly out of round, it doesn't throw us out. If you put a drumshell that's slightly out of round up against a machine that assumes it's dealing with a round cylinder—and cuts a bearing edge according to that assumption—you end up with a shell that's cut on an angle. And that shell will never sound good. If you take a look at high-production drums from any maker and look at how round they are and how square their edges are, you'll see that the result is not what the manufacturer intended. So we just assume the worst and optimize each shell so that it's as round and square as it can possibly be."

Once the shells are cut and squared, reinforcing rings are installed. These rings are called "sound rings" by the Ayotte team because they have found that the size of the ring—in terms of its depth within the shell—affects the ultimate sound of the drum. Consequently, different sizes of rings are used to produce different sounds—as per the customer's specifications.

The process of inserting the rings is one of very careful fitting, checking, sanding, and re-fitting, until a perfect fit is made. Each ring is custom-fitted by hand; no templates or machine gauges are used. Hard rock maple block molds are used to glue the reinforcing rings into the shells and at the same time encourage the roundness of the shell itself. The glue dries within an hour or so, and the shell is ready to undergo machining and finishing.

Ray describes the next steps: "After the shells come out of the molds with the sound rings installed, we level them again. We make the rings a bit bigger than they need to be to begin with, because of this later shaping. It's



Ken Dahl carefully measures, adjusts, and hand-fits a sound ring into a shell.



Jerry Hamilton cuts an internal bevel on a sound ring, using a table shaper.

Inside Ayotte

much better to have the ring fit against the shell perfectly—and then cut and shape it after it's gone in—than to try to force it into a shape that it won't comfortably go into. Otherwise, you're putting tensions and pressures into the shell that shouldn't be there,

and that will ultimately make the drumhead vibrate strangely. We try to have no impediments to the sound, and this is the only way to do it: by hand. If we had a machine press to just bang things together, it might force the ring into the shell in a shape that we wouldn't like. What we need is a hundred little gnomes to do this part.

"Even making the molding blocks that we use in our gluing operations is a hell of a job, because they, too, have to be perfect. The outside diameter of the shell, of course, is different than the inside, so we can't cut the same cut on each molding block. We have to take the thickness of the shell into account. Ours is a high-tech operation, but not in terms of machines; it's high-tech in terms of craftsmanship."

After the shells have been shaped on their outer edges, the inner edges of the sound rings are given a beveled edge. This is another detailed step not taken by many other manufacturers. As Ray explains, "The reason that we do this is twofold. One, we can define the size of the reinforcing ring inside the shell. The ring length—meaning how far the ring goes into the shell from the edge of the drum—changes from diameter to diameter. A smaller-diameter drum will have a shorter ring than a larger-diameter one. The second reason for this step is to clean up the inside joint where the bottom of the ring meets the shell. This gives us a smooth contour on the inside of the drum, so that when we apply the lacquer, we end up with a really nice, smooth finish. This is always a major problem area with other manufacturers. Some leave beads of glue; others don't even bother cutting the bottom edge of the ring off, because it's too difficult. I remember going to the Camco factory in Los Angeles years ago, toward the end of their manufacturing. They had a guy whose job it was to *scrape out the dried glue* left over from the installation of the reinforcing rings, because they couldn't cut that part of the inside. I told myself that I would never allow that to happen with something that looks this good. Why allow the glue to bead up and dry and have to scrape it out with a knife and gouge away at your wood—and then just spray lacquer on top of it—when it should really be a machine operation addressed at the woodworking stage? Some companies solve the problem by just cutting all their reinforcing rings the same size and then spraying that grey speckled granitone finish all over the insides of the shells to cover any flaws. Those kinds of things are chintzy, as far as we're concerned."

Bearing edges are another area where Ray's team applies a specific philosophy—and a lot of attention to detail. Ray outlines the process:

"Even before the sound ring goes in, an outside chamfer is put on the shell; that establishes the outside shape. Once the ring is in, the bearing edge is squared as much as possible to the sides of the shell. Once we've got that part done, we cut an inside 45-degree chamfer with a router. We put a very different face on the chamfer of tom-toms than on snare drums; you can barely tell that any wood has been removed on the outer edge at all. There is more head-to-shell contact on the toms, and it makes the head behave differently. The snares normally have a sharper edge, with a 45-degree outer chamfer that goes deeper into the edge. Of course, there are customers who have specified the snare type of edge on tom-toms, and others who've wanted the tom-tom sort of chamfer on the batter side of a snare drum. We have done all that, and these changes have different effects. But generally, our drums have edges as I described earlier."

As usual, Ray has a specific reason for his choice of bearing edge angle. "I've seen some 60-degree stuff," he comments, "but that just takes away too much wood. The more wood you take away, the lower the resonant frequency, and the less penetrating the sound. A 45-degree edge is nice because it takes away enough wood so that there's room for the head to move, but not so much that it reduces strength. You have to take a common-sense approach."

Some drummers might find Ayotte's attention to shell design a bit puzzling, in light of Ray's position that, as he puts it, "The drumshell—in and of itself—does not act like a marimba bar to produce a sound. The star of the show, front and center, is the drumhead—in terms of what actually produces the sound of the drum. The shell is definitely not passive, however, because without it you wouldn't have a drum sound. All of the different characteristics of the shell—its size, its thickness, its wood type, the shape of the bearing edge, and the way the shell vibrates—will have an effect on the way the drumhead vibrates, and thus on the sound that you hear.

"Let's take two 10x12 tom-toms," Ray continues, "one with a thin shell and one with a thick one. We'll assume that the heads are tuned the same on each drum. The fundamental note that you'll hear from the drumheads will be the same, but the overtones that you'll hear from the shells will be different. The thin shell is going to have a lower resonant frequency, and thus promote the lower tones of the drumhead. The thicker shell will produce the same fundamental note from the drumhead, but you'll hear the higher resonant frequencies more clearly. The drumshell acts as the 'graphic equalizer' for the drum."

"We look at a thin shell as being able to produce nice, full, rich, warm sounds in the lower register, and a thick shell as being able to produce high frequencies that aren't absorbed. What we've tried to do is get a combination of those two things in our toms and bass drums by putting our sound rings in at either end of the shell. In the final product we get a drum that produces a nice, full, rich, warm fundamental tone, but that projects the higher frequencies as well due to having a thicker bearing edge area. It's sort of the best of both worlds."



Specially designed blocks and clamps are used to form the shell of an 18-ply snare drum.



A lacquered shell is machine buffed by Cordon Wilson. This same "sanding lathe" is used to sand the raw shells.

This discussion leads naturally to the theory behind Ayotte's hand-made, multi-ply snare drums. Ray explains, "For years, the ideal snare drum sound was produced by a metal shell, because a metal shell is very hard and tends to promote high frequencies. Over the last few years, we've found that people have started to acquire a taste for wood shells in snare drums, mainly because they don't like the 'twang' that you can get in a metal shell. Wood is a much more complex material, so you get a warmer sound with more complex overtones—especially in the low ranges.

"We make snare shells from a 6-ply up to 30-ply, and we've experimented with a 50-ply drum. We've found that a thinner wood shell has a nice warm sound, but is a little deficient in the higher end—particularly when you strike the drum hard. A thicker shell still has that complex wood characteristic, but has some of the properties of a metal shell, due to its greater density.

"Another important factor with snare drums has to do with strength. When you hit a snare really hard, you're putting stress into the shell. That stress translates itself into a drumhead that won't vibrate properly. As a practical result, our 6-ply drum will work very well as long as you don't hit it too hard. If you took a run at it with a 3S stick, it would tend to distort. Most drummers would call it 'choked,' which just means that the drum has been hit beyond its ability to produce a drum tone. To solve that problem, we started making thicker shells. The thicker the shell, the harder you can hit it. Take a 30-ply snare drum: It doesn't matter how hard you hit it; it sounds like you could hit it even harder. It doesn't have that boxy effect of the thinner shell. The rule of thumb is, if you want a drum that you can hit really hard and that will produce a sound that's rich in high frequencies, thick shells are best. If you want a drum that you can hit softer and that is rich in overtones in the lower frequencies, then you want a thinner shell. Our 18-ply shell is right in the middle, and seems to satisfy people who want a warmer sound and still want to hit hard."

Once the shells are fully constructed, they undergo a rigorous finishing process, starting with sanding on a unique sanding lathe custom-built by the Ayotte team. The same machine is used to both sand and buff each shell, in a process that is true to plus or minus two thousandths of an inch. As Ray puts it, "They don't make metal products that true."

Once the drumshell is sanded, it gets one base coat of lacquer on the inside and two on the outside. Regarding the decision to finish the insides of the shell, Ray comments, "I've heard lots of silliness about finishes on the inside of a drum. A shell should be finished on the inside for the same reason that it should be finished on the outside: because you want to seal the wood against the elements. You don't want moisture to attack the inside of the shell, because it will expand tremendously in moist situations and contract tremendously in dry situations. Our bearing edges get lacquered too, for this reason. There's not one spot on our drums that's not sealed. But, at the same time, we use very, very little lacquer."

When it comes to lacquering the shells, the Ayotte craftsmen again take a "worst case" approach. Ray explains, "We assume that when you spray lacquer on a drum, it goes on in little drops, and the finish ends up being like the worst orange peel that you've ever seen. Of course it doesn't look like that, but if you assume that it does, you're going to take quite a different ap-

proach to how you handle that lacquer. So at every stage the lacquer is sanded to accept the next coating."

"About 30% of our drums have stain applied directly to the wood before we basecoat. With maple, the large part of the grain is softer than the smaller part, and absorbs more of the stain—making the grain reverse itself. Our painted finishes can range anywhere from transparent to opaque lacquers. We do several finishes where we apply a clear lacquer mixed with a dye over the basecoated drum. It's just like taking a piece of transparent colored plastic and putting it up against the wood and looking through it. As a matter of fact, one of the things that we do for our customers is let them look at raw shells through a swatchbook of lighting gels. They tell us which gel produces the effect they want. Then the finisher can take the same gel, look at the drum through the same light source, and see what the customer wanted. We go to great lengths to match things up."

"Once we get the color on the shells, we line all the drums up, because once you've sprayed all the shells you're going to notice that some are a little darker than others."

We use an additional mist of color to even all the drums up, and then let them cure for about three weeks. Then we sand again. Then we apply a clear coat over the top, and one coat on the inside. We let that cure for another week, and then we wet-sand, by hand. Then we polish and buff, and the shell is finished."

The buffering operation requires yet more special skill. Once again, the sanding/buffing lathe is used, and Ray describes the process. "The operator actually operates the buffering machine like you'd fly a plane, doing several different things at once. When we're buffering the finished shell, quite a bit of heat is involved. So our operator constantly feels the surface of the shell as he buffs. He monitors the amount of pressure there is on the buff against the shell using two levers; he controls the speed that the shell rotates, he controls the amount of the buffering 'grease' he applies, and he controls the speed at which the machine advances. Every aspect of this process is controlled in the same way it would be if he were working with just a piece of sandpaper in his hand, except that he has the advantage of speed and mechanical pressure."

"A good finish is a mirror of what's underneath, in terms of a smooth sanding job on the shell. That's especially important when you consider that most of the lacquer that's applied gets sanded back off. The amount of lacquer that's left after we polish is minute, because every layer gets sanded. And there's quite a different operation when you use a catalyzed polyester, like we do. North America uses primarily nitrocellulose lacquers. They are very easy to use, cure very quickly, and are easy to sand because they're soft. But after curing for three weeks, catalyzed polyester has to be treated like gemstone. We have to be very aggressive with the polishing process to get all of the sanding scratches out. But it's a rewarding thing to do, because the drum comes out looking very rich; it has that gleam that comes



Ed Young marks a finished shell, using an indexed turntable, prior to drilling the holes for hardware assembly.



Attaching the Ayotte badge is the finishing touch. Note the unique TuneLock tensioning system, and Ed Young's image in the highly reflective lacquered finish.

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A Look At New

Gellentec Skinhead



Gellentec's *Skinhead* is a "second skin" for snare drums, designed to increase the life of snare drum heads. The *Skinhead* is basically a 16"-diameter piece of fabric/plastic (Gellentec says the material is made of "super-tough hitech and duron") that fits between a snare drum's batter head and rim. You can install a *Skinhead* in the time it takes to change a head.

Gellentec claims a *Skinhead* can at least double the life of batter heads, and I wouldn't doubt this. What you're doing when installing a *Skinhead* is actually adding a couple more layers to your batter head—but without any significant difference in sound. We installed a *Skinhead* on a 5"-deep metal snare and experienced no real dip in pitch. Of course this is hard to scientifically test, since you do have to remove your top lugs to install the *Skinhead*, thereby detuning the batter head. Yet we had no problem tuning it back up to its previous pitch, without loss of sensitivity or "positive" overtones.

The only drawback I could see would be for those drummers who are particularly picky about what their equipment looks like. The nature of the *Skinhead* dictates that there must be a certain amount of overlap past the bottom of the snare's top rim. (Otherwise you would have nothing to grab onto to pull out the slack when installing it.) This gives a bit of a sloppy, "skirt" effect to a snare's appearance, but in reality this would hardly be noticeable to even the most eagle-eyed observer out in the crowd.

Skinheads come in nine colors (white, black, yellow, mauve, red, orange, green, purple, and blue), and will fit any sized snare drum. White *Skinheads* cost \$15, all others cost \$17 (U.S. dollars, including postage and handling). They are available directly from Gellentec at Suite 10, 181 Bigge St., Liverpool N.S.W. 2170, Australia.

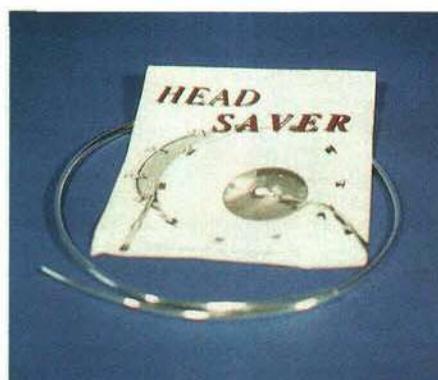
lia, tel: 61-2-602-3756, FAX: 61-2-602-9550.

—Adam Budofsky

The Head Saver

Here's another product designed to protect the hole in a front bass drum head from tearing, as well as give the head a more finished, professional look. The *Head Saver* is made of poly vinyl chloride, a bendable material. It comes in a long single strip that is "U" shaped and fits over the edge of the hole in the head. Inside of this "U" is an adhesive material that holds the strip against the head.

According to the manufacturer, the



Head Saver can fit onto holes anywhere from 4" to 14" in diameter. I placed it on a 6" hole, and it worked okay. I found it a little bit difficult to bend it around the 6" hole, but I did, with some awkwardness, make it fit. I think it would be very difficult to fit it on a hole any smaller than that. I would say that the larger the hole, the easier it would be to affix the *Head Saver*, and since there are no other products on the market for protecting larger holes, this gives the *Head Saver* a definite edge.

The adhesive inside the "U" holds the *Head Saver* tight against the edge of the hole, and I was quite pleased to find out that there were no rattles from the front head when the drum was played. I only had one criticism of the *Head Saver*: Because it comes in a strip, there is a seam where the two ends of the strip butt up against each other. You have to be very careful to make that meeting point look

neat, but it takes time and is a bit of a hassle.

Overall the *Head Saver* worked pretty well. I would especially recommend it for people who like larger holes in their heads. In that way the bend would not be as severe. The *Head Saver* comes in both chrome and gold finishes and retails for \$9.95. For more information, contact The Drum Guys, 16220 Territorial Road, Maple Grove, MN 55369, tel: (612) 420-4515.

—William F. Miller

RB Rotationally Balanced Drumsticks

Most new drumstick designs introduce a different tip shape, a different taper, or a different length. But the RB Percussion *Rotationally Balanced* drumstick incorporates a change in the fundamental physics of how a drumstick operates.

RB's theory is that in order to maximize rebound action, a drumstick should be held so that the fingers control the stick right at the point where it wants to rotate naturally—its balance point. Unfortunately, a traditional drumstick tends to have its rotation point somewhere just a bit toward the butt from its center. (Balance one of your sticks on the tip of your finger, and you'll see what I mean.) If you were to hold a stick so that your fingers controlled it at this point, you'd be choked up quite a bit, with a lot of the stick extending past your palm and much less than usual pointed toward the drum. As a result, drummers don't hold their sticks at the rotation point; they hold them much closer to the butt end—well below the rotation point. This gains impact power, but sacrifices that quick rebound.

RB's solution is to insert a weighted plug into the butt end of their sticks, thus artifi-



cially moving the balance point back closer to the butt end. (Tape a couple of dimes to the butt end of your stick, and you'll see the effect.) This puts the point at which the stick wants to rotate naturally just about where one would normally expect the stick.

Accessories

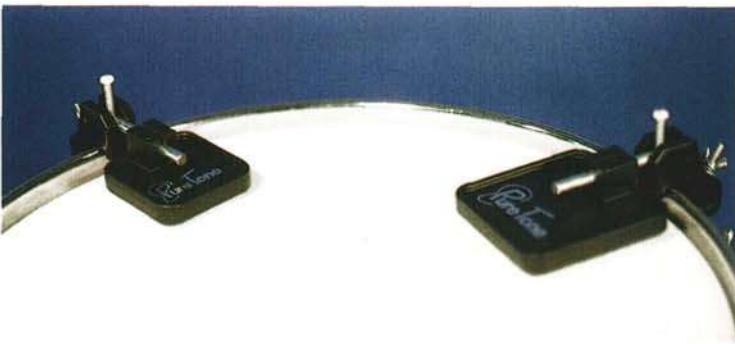
Voila! Dramatically improved rebound, without sacrificing power.

Early experiments with putting weights into hickory sticks created sticks that were too heavy overall, so RB is now using hickory only for Jazz models, while 58 and 26 models are made of maple. An attractive glittered cap is used to cover the weight at the end of the stick, but enough wood is left around the butt to play the sticks reversed (which, by the way, creates an impact equal to much larger traditional sticks.)

These are the first sticks I've ever used that actually provided a mechanical assistance to my playing. I found them comfortable to play with, incredibly fast, and altogether a legitimate innovation in drumstick design. The sticks I used were wood-tipped; nylon-tipped sticks will be available shortly. Currently, the suggested list price is \$12.95 per pair, in selected retail stores or from RB Percussion, 3747 McMillan, Suite 103, Dallas, Texas 75206, tel: (214) 823-2523.

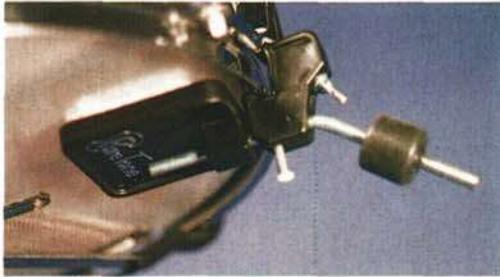
—Rick Van Horn

Pure Tone Drum Resonance Eliminator



The difference between this item and standard clip-on external drumhead muffling devices is that it is, in fact, *not* a drum muffler. The Pure Tone Drum Resonance Eliminator actually works more like a mechanical resonance gate. The Eliminator is equipped with a hinge that allows the pad section to bounce off the drumhead when the head is struck. Since a hinge is used—rather than a clamp—your drumhead will not be pressed down in any way by the Eliminator. The result is a head that is muffled—but only *after* an unaffected (only shortened) tone is allowed to ring out.

The Resonance Eliminator attaches to drum rims in a similar manner to standard muffling devices, and features a screw that allows you to adjust how far off the head the pad sits. (This screw also allows you to lift the pad completely off the head, if so desired.) The pad area is unique in that it



resembles a rug-like material, perhaps the thickness one might find on a bathroom mat. The pad is attached to the rest of the device via a short metal pipe, which allows the pad to be adjusted further from or closer to the hinge, which affects the speed of return of the pad.

In theory the Pure Tone Drum Resonance Eliminator sounds like a great idea—and in practice it really is! When tested on tomtoms, we found it to truly control resonance adequately—but without choking the drums or lowering pitch. When a particular tom-tom wasn't being cooperative with its overtones in a mixed situation, it became more than manageable when fitted with one of these pads—yet still retained all its best tonal qualities.

Pure Tone also offers a very similar device called the Bottom Line. The basic principle of this device is the same as the Resonance Eliminators, but the Bottom Line attaches to the bottom rims of toms or snare drums. An adjustable counter-weight sits at the opposite end of the pipe that the pad sits on, providing the bounce-back action.

On snare drums the Bottom Line doesn't completely eliminate snares rattle. According to the company, this would not be an advisable aim anyway. Snares, after all, were meant to buzz, and completely suppressing them would be self-defeating. Yet with the model that we tested, there didn't seem to be a terribly significant decrease in rattle, either. However, the company says that they

already discovered this to be the case, and are going to add another inch to the length of the pipe, in order to allow the Bottom Line to reach further into the head, thereby pressing down more toward the middle of the snares. By experimenting with our hands pressed to the snares, we found that this does seem to be the direction to go toward decreasing rattle even more.

Resonance Eliminators come in 2" and 3" pad sizes; the Bottom Line's pad is 3". For pricing and availability, contact the Pure Tone Company at 29504 Dover, Warren, MI 48093, tel: (313) 751-2097, FAX: (313) 751-2730.

—Adam Budofsky

Pro-Mark Natural Drumsticks

Pro-Mark's Natural drumstick is supposedly an answer to those drummers who have requested a stick free of varnishes and lacquers, and that's exactly what it is. The company says that they have given the wood a "special treatment" that enabled them to leave off lacquers of any kind, but whatever this treatment is, it's not noticeable. All you feel when you pick up a Natural is wood—and maybe a few splinters. (No kidding—that's how rough these sticks are. Luckily I got them third-hand, after a couple of my colleagues "removed" a few stray pieces of hickory.) Actually, after a little bit of playing (or sanding), the sticks do smooth out a little, and really do work as they are supposed to. Check out a pair at your local drumshop and see how they feel to you.

The Natural is available in 5A, 56, Rock-747, and 26 models, at \$7.85 for wood-tips and \$7.95 for nylon tips. Pro-Mark, 10707 Craighead Dr., Houston, TX 77025.

—Adam Budofsky



by John Alcamo

Billy Lavorgna

James and Jenny Lavorgna became the proud parents of a baby boy on June 3rd, 1934 in Paterson, New Jersey. Billy (baptized Biasio) grew up in a loving environment—even though the harsh reality of poverty hovered over his and many other families at that time in America. Billy's father was a barber, and his mother worked in a silk mill. Together they shared the dream that their son would one day have a better life. But when Billy took his first drum lesson in 1944, I'm sure that even his parents never imagined that one day their son would perform before the president of the United States, the queen of England, and other royalty throughout the world.

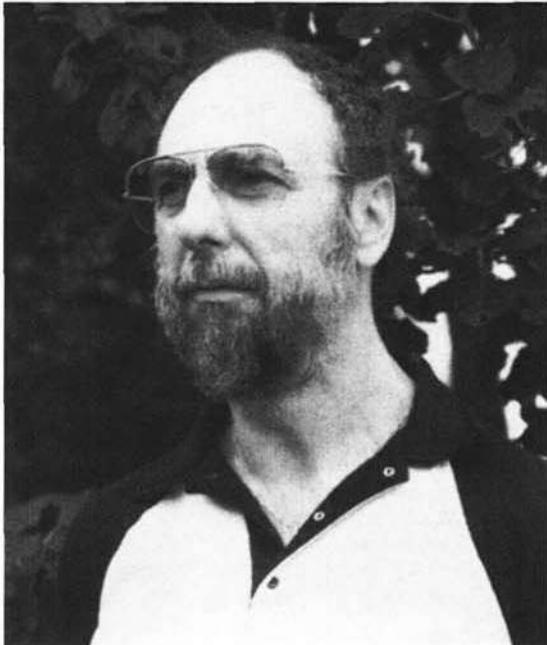
As you read this interview you will discover how diversified Billy's musical career has been. (I know of no other musician who has worked with Dizzy Gillespie, Paul Desmond, Roy Eldridge—and Pat Boone.) After traveling with Judy Garland during the early '60s, Billy went on to become one of New York's premier studio players, playing with people like Pat Williams, Jack Sheldon, Don Sebesky, The Four Seasons, Kenny Rankin, The Lovin' Spoonful, Neil Diamond, Richie Havens, Judy Collins, Simon & Garfunkel, and the Happenings.

Billy and I first crossed paths in New York City around 1969. I was pushing my trap case out of an elevator at Omstead Studios, and Billy almost became the victim of a hit-and-run accident! In the studio they were playing back the recording date that Billy had just done, and the drum part was still on the music stand. Looking at it as I listened to the playback, three things entered my mind: (1) Reading a drum part is one thing, (2) interpretation is everything, and (3) what's the quickest way back to Jersey?!

A few months later arranger Artie Schroeck introduced me to Billy. I've wanted to do this interview with him for over a year, but the timing has never been right. When he's been in Atlantic City, I've been in New York. He's in New York, I'm in Atlantic City. He's in Morocco, I'm in... well, you get the picture. Late last year I finally got my chance. Billy was in town with Liza Minnelli, for whom he has been playing and conducting since 1976.

JA: When and where did you take your first lesson?

BL: I was 11 years old, and my first teacher was Tom Brino, who has since passed away. He taught me how to subdivide the meters,



subdivide from the components of the meter, and to read extremely well. It was a great foundation—strange as it may seem for a little music store in Paterson, New Jersey.

JA: Did you study with anyone else?

BL: When I was a teenager I studied with Irv Kluger, who played with the Stan Kenton and Boyd Raeburn bands.

JA: Did you attend college?

BL: I have a bachelor's and a master's in music education from N.Y.U. I went to college mainly to please my father; at the time I just wanted to play. But now that I'm working with Liza I finally have the chance to utilize my education, because I get a chance to write and conduct.

JA: Do you remember your first gig?

BL: [Laughs] Oh yeah. During World War II, I played the U.S.O. shows. I was about 12 at the time, and I would play these dumb drum solos.

JA: How about your teenage years?

BL: When I was 16 Irv Kluger got me the gig with Jerry Wald's big band.

JA: When you were studying, what drummers did you listen to?

BL: I was studying all the legitimate aspects of percussion playing in school, but my first love has always been jazz drummers. Every drummer in the world is impressed by listening to Buddy play, God rest his soul. Buddy was really nice to me and a very dear friend. But one of the guys that really knocked me out was Max Roach. I

was a big fan of Max's and got to know him real well—and I guess I was about his only pupil. He said something I never forgot: "In this country, if someone wants to sing a song, they go find a piano player. But in Africa, if someone wants to sing a song, they go get a drummer." What I was doing with Max was more than just rat-a-tat-tat-ing on drums. I was learning about playing on the form of the music. We talked about playing a phrase on a drum solo and making it breathe, and about playing a song and actually playing the bridge. Being a guy who knew a little bit about music, it really made a lot of sense to me. I could hear the changes. I hear the changes all the time when I'm playing. Through Max I got to know Art Blakey real well, and he's one of my favorite drummers. Philly Joe Jones was another one of my favorites. My favorite band drummer was Tiny Kahn. He just used to kill me with his simplicity. He played so musically.

He played the song, not a lot of fills. When he smacked something he really meant it. Whether it was a quarter note cymbal out in the clear, or if he knocked the wall down playing a big fill, it always made a lot of sense. He was a very musical drummer.

JA: How did your professional career get started?

BL: During the Korean War I toured Europe for 21 months with the army jazz band. When I left the service I started scratchin' the walls, playing here and there.

JA: Club dates?

BL: No, I never really played a lot of club dates—mostly gigs. I was working with Roy Eldridge at the Cafe Bohemia when I got a call to go on the road with Pat Boone. I had never heard of Pat because I had just returned from Europe, and I hadn't been listening to rock 'n' roll. It's funny how things happen. Mort Lindsey was conducting for Pat at the time, and had called Don Lamond first. Don wasn't available, so he told Mort, "There's this new kid in town—Billy Lavorgna." Well, Mort called Tony Rango instead. Tony wasn't available either, and he told Mort, "There's this new kid in town...." If Mort hadn't called these two cats in a row I would never have gotten the gig. Don and Tony were very good to me. So I went to Indianapolis to do three or four days with Pat. He liked the way I played, and he hired me. That got the ball rolling. From Pat, I went on to work with a lot of singers, including Bobby Darin, Joanie

continued on page 94

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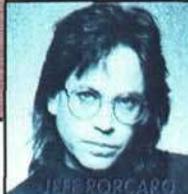
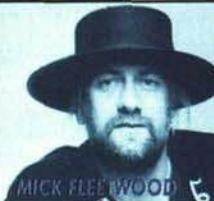
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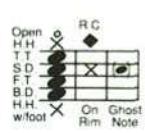
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Rudiments

MUSIC KEY

Arguments often arise among drummers concerning the value of applying rudiments to the drumset—whether using them for fills, or as the basis for basic grooves. This controversy should virtually never occur, though, since most drummers inevitably use some form of at least one of the 40 P.A.S. International Drum Rudiments—whether consciously or not—while performing on drumset. How many times have you heard or played a tom fill around the set using the sticking RLR...and so on, or struck the snare drum and a crash cymbal at the same time, or played a groove similar to this?...

Well, whether you are aware of it or not, each of these sound combinations incorporates a very common drum rudiment.

Ever since attending a Ludwig percussion symposium in Knoxville, Tennessee in the late '70s and witnessing Alan Dawson masterfully apply rudiments to the drumset, I have always intended to see for myself how I could effectively apply to the drumset the rudiments I had been studying. Some ten years later, what I have come up with is a number of exercise/grooves that, of course, incorporate many different rudiments, but that also use some newer techniques that have more recently been applied to modern drumset performance.

The first example incorporates a series of single and double strokes that, when combined, reveal two traditional Paradiddles followed by two Paradiddles that have their sticking displaced by a 16th note. Practice the following sticking alone on the snare drum first.

Now let's separate the individual sticking of each hand by playing all of the left hand notes on the hi-hat while leaving the right hand on the snare drum.

You may now want to start coordinating the bass drum part with your hands. Notice that the bass drum notes always occur with a left hand stroke.

Lastly, incorporating the popular "linear" technique, play the right hand on the prescribed drums. This results in a funky-sounding groove that demonstrates a simple use of common Paradiddles.

The next example is a samba-like groove that utilizes the sticking of an inverted single drag tap. First, let's get familiar with the basic single drag tap. Again, play this just on the snare drum.

By inverting the rudiment, placing an accented note before the tap, they can be combined into a series of inverted drag taps, resulting in this next rhythm. (The playing of the accents is very important.)

Once you are comfortable with the sticking combination, add the feet.

Our last step is to place the accented notes (the taps) on different drums while playing the unaccented notes (the drags) on the rim of the snare drum. The resulting groove should sound like a typical samba rhythm, but with an added flair. (Try this pattern with the snares turned off.)

The next example is quite involved and will surely test your overall coordination and ability to make the applied rudiments groove smoothly and not sound rigid or "rudimental." The setup

& Rock

by Dean M. Gottschalk

required to perform this rhythm is based on the suggested setup illustrated in Gary Chester's method book *The New Breed*, which utilizes an additional floor tom placed to the immediate left of the hi-hat. The need for this additional drum will become more apparent when the final rhythm is to be performed.

This groove involves three different rudiments: the flam accent, the flam tap, and the flamacue. As before, become familiar with each rudiment by practicing them individually.

Flam Accent

Flam Tap

Flamacue

Now, let's take two alternating flam accents, two alternating flam taps, and a single flamacue, and combine them to result in this rhythm:

Before we separate each hand, let's go ahead and add the rhythm for the feet. Play the following bass drum and hi-hat pattern along with the previous rhythm.

Now separate your hands, placing them on any instrument you like. The resulting rhythm for each hand should be this:

Right Hand

Left Hand

The last step is to distribute the stickings to the prescribed instruments, resulting in the rhythm with all the parts grooving along.

As illustrated, the effective use of many traditional rudiments can be easily applied in constructing numerous interesting and challenging drumset rhythms. Good luck with these, and I hope they will inspire you to incorporate rudiments into your own drumset performance.



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by Roy Burns

Keeping Hope Alive

The legendary actor Kirk Douglas once said, "Actors are in the rejection business." One could say the same about *all* performers. For example, a famous heavy metal drummer recently left an internationally famous metal group. News travels fast, especially when a well-paying gig with a big-name group becomes available.

The audition for the group was done cafeteria style. That is to say, 27 drummers were lined up, waiting in the hallway for their chance to audition. It was one drummer after another.

A young friend of mine called to tell me that he had done well at the audition and had won the job. Since he happened to be an Aquarian endorser, we immediately made plans to do some advertising on him. We prepared flyers and ads in which his name and that of the group were included.

We were all happy for this young man. He had been playing in local bands in southern California for several years, and was highly regarded as a solid, skilled, and powerful rock drummer. He and his wife were excited; after a lot of sacrifices and hard work, their dream was at last coming true. National fame, big money, world tours, endorser contracts, interviews, and possibly clinics were now within the grasp of my young friend.

However, after three months of rehearsals, the producer of the band wanted a more flamboyant, flashy type of drummer. After all this work, all this anticipation and belief that he had finally made it, my friend

was told that another drummer had been hired for the group.

When he called to inform me, he said, "Roy, this is the toughest phone call I have ever had to make. Cancel the advertising, because I lost the gig." To say that he was disappointed would be an understatement. He was devastated.

Six months later, we were setting up the Aquarian booth at the NAMM Show in California. Suddenly, I saw the young man walking by. "Jimmy," I yelled, "what are you doing here?" He said, "I'm working for the convention center—moving crates, helping to set up booths, and working the various conventions that come in."

What was amazing to me was that Jimmy had a big smile on his face. He said, "The money is good here, and I'm playing weekends. I'm also rehearsing in a new band that we all feel has real possibilities. We want to make a demo tape soon and approach some record companies."

I was impressed so much by Jimmy's attitude. He never mentioned the rejection he felt when he lost the "big gig." He found a way to support his family, found a weekend gig, and found a new band to rehearse with that was serious about their future.

I wish I could tell you that the new band was a success, but it wasn't. Nothing ever happened. Jimmy, however, kept plugging away. I talked with him just a few days ago. He's relocated to another state, and is playing and doing well.

I asked him, "Does the group you're with now have any real possibilities?" He said, "Who knows? But I can always hope." His attitude really impressed me. He had not lost hope. However, he is also a realist, which is why he said, "Who knows?" But at least that answer leaves the door open. It may be a long shot, but stranger things have happened.

At some point in our lives we may begin to realize that not all of us will become stars in drumming. There are only so many top groups, so many films, so many TV shows, so many club gigs, and so on. And there are always more drummers than there are gigs. How do you keep hope alive when you realize that you may not be one of the lucky few who reach the top levels of our profession?

One approach is to set many small goals that are achievable for you. If you set the "one big goal" that is at best a long shot, you may be frustrated all of your life. But if you keep setting—and reaching—small ones, you'll feel more confident and more fulfilled.

Another approach—and the one I personally prefer—is to concentrate on improvement, rather than specific goals. I just go at everything that comes my way as hard as I can. I make every effort to do my best, no matter what the situation might be. As long as I am learning and improving, I let the goals take care of themselves.

This is not to say that goal-setting is in any way bad. I'm only suggesting that sometimes goals must be adjusted in the face of cold reality. Also, sometimes you may set goals for yourself that are unrealistic. However, you never know until you try. If you keep trying and you are not getting close to the "big goal," try setting some more realistic ones!

You don't decide to be a star. Life does that! For some extremely talented people, success seems to come easy. However, the successful people have their troubles as well. Many a famous musician has gotten carried away when the money comes too fast and too easy. Drugs, booze, and irresponsible behavior have been the early downfall of people who would seem to have it made. The only thing harder than achieving success is keeping it. It is hard work and it requires self-discipline. To hang on year after year at the top requires great dedication. To people who have been unable to realize their dreams, this may not mean so much. They may feel, "Just give me a chance to be famous. I could handle it." And in many cases this may be true.

Life does funny things. You can't predict what will happen, and you can't make life come to you on your terms. So what to do?

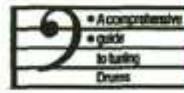
Do like my friend Jimmy: Just get on with it. Find a new band. Buy some new albums. Go to some concerts. Enjoy the fact that you have experienced the gift of music. It can affect your whole life. When you are too old to perform, or sick, or out of work, or depressed, play some music. Put on your stereo and enjoy to your heart's content.

And keep playing. Try to organize your practice time a little better. Decide to learn one new rhythm every week or so. Take a drum lesson from a famous teacher. Concentrate on improving.

Each time you feel you have improved, there is a little "rush" of accomplishment. Keep concentrating on learning and improving, and let the chips fall where they may. And, like my friend Jimmy, you may get a chance. As Jimmy says, "Who knows? Stranger things have happened."

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By Larry Holly



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Understanding Sound

Are you intrigued by your band's sound system? Do you feel stupid when you don't like your drum sound, but can't tell the sound technician how to fix it? Would you like to understand the singer when he asks if there's enough "moisture" in his voice? Fear not; all of these subjects (and more) will soon be yours to command.

Learning about PA systems can be very useful to the drummer in a band. If you know how it works, you'll know how much control you can have over your (amplified) drum sound. It's also good to know how to set up as much of your band's equipment as possible, in case someone's late to a gig and can't do it themselves. (See Rick Van Horn's *Club Scene* column in the October

voice, since the other instruments will drown it out otherwise. This system is pretty straightforward: Sound goes in the microphone on the left, gets amplified, and comes out of the speaker on the right. Amplifiers are necessary because the electrical signal produced by a microphone is much too small to power a speaker. If you hear a band member talking about power levels in the PA ("We've got 600 watts"), he's talking about the power produced by the amplifier(s).

Many bands that are just starting out are forced to plug the singer's mic' into a guitar amp. This will work, but will sound pretty horrible, and it's not an acceptable solution if you want to play in front of anybody else.

sound halfway decent.

Monitors are important for a number of reasons. First of all, they give you an opportunity to hear what the audience is hearing. If you have your main speaker "stacks" pointed outwards toward the audience, you won't know if the instruments and voices are mixed properly, or if they have the right amount of "effects." (More on these in a later article.) Most important, however, is the need of the singer to hear himself (or herself). If the singer can't hear himself, he will eventually scream himself hoarse—even if the soundman assures him that he's loud enough. Psychologically, it is almost impossible to sing with assurance if all you can hear is blaring guitar and cymbal



Figure 1: A simple PA system.
"A" stands for amplifier, "S" stands for speaker.

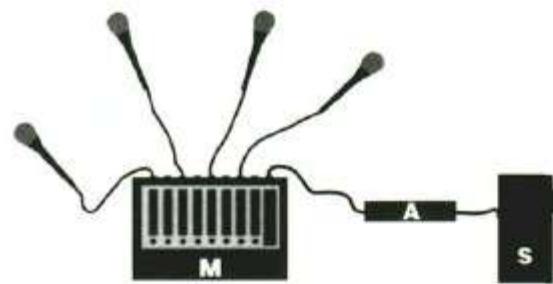


Figure 2: A multiple-input PA system.
"M" stands for mixer.

'88 MD.) Last but not least, you'll probably play better if you're not constantly being intimidated by your band's gear. We've all run into the "three musicians and a drummer" stereotype, and one of the best ways to fight it is to learn as much about the band's gear (and music) as you can. The more knowledgeable you become, the less you have to sit in the background while everybody else makes the decisions. Consequently, you'll feel more relaxed, and your playing will probably improve.

This article will introduce you to the major parts of a typical PA system. Subsequent articles will focus on each section in greater depth. In order to make things easier to learn, we'll start with a really simple system, and work upwards in complexity. At some point we will probably cover a system that closely approximates your own.

Referring to *Figure 1*, we see the most basic PA system possible. "PA" stands for "public address"; its most basic function is to provide amplification for the singer's

Figure 2 shows us a more complex system. Now there's more than one mic' being used. Note that the different signals from the mic's are mixed together by a mixer before they're amplified. Each mic' input has its own volume control, so that each mic' can be emphasized or de-emphasized in the mix. Mic's are used in this diagram for convenience, but they don't necessarily have to be used only by singers: Your drumset or other instruments could be mixed, or you could even have other instruments plugged directly into the mixer without using a mic'.

For the next few diagrams we'll only show one mic', although others could still be present. *Figure 3* shows the beginnings of a PA system that's acceptable for gigs. Although still very simple, it contains a monitor system. This generally requires the use of another power amplifier, although not necessarily as big as the first one. Getting to this setup is where you'll spend most of your money, but you'll need at least this much to

crashes. People in these situations usually burn out their voices trying to overcompensate. Proper pitch also becomes a problem, since very few people can tell if they're singing in key without hearing their own voices. If your music has a lot of melodic singing or harmonies, never underestimate the importance of the monitor system.

Now we have a pretty good PA system going, with all of the necessities. From here, a lot of extras appear, in various combinations. The more money you have, the more features you can buy, but there are some that are pretty much standard. Most of these features will be incorporated into larger pieces of equipment, in various combinations.

The central piece of equipment in a PA setup is the mixing board. This is the one that looks the most exciting, since it seems to have thousands of intriguing knobs and buttons. It's also the most intimidating, for this same reason. Mixing boards vary in size and complexity, but once you under-

Systems: Part 1

stand their main functions, all the rest falls into place.

In *Figure 4* we've expanded the mixing board, (within the dotted line) to also indicate the input controls. Each mic' input (or "channel") has its own separate set of these controls.

The input controls are most of the buttons and knobs contained in each channel on the board. Although they look complicated, they're really pretty simple; they're the "EQ" section, and a few minor switches that choose which type of mic' you're using on that channel. The "EQ" section is just a fancy name for controls that you're probably familiar with already. These allow you to tweak the sound coming in

the whole board licked. Next month's article will focus strictly on mixing boards and how to use them, so we won't get into them too deeply here.

Most of the PA systems that you see will probably have three main parts: the mixing board, the speaker stacks, and a rack or two of other stuff. Racks are an industry standard; they provide an easy way to cart all of your electronics around, while keeping most of your controls together in the same place. It's also often possible to keep all of the cables and plugs in place from gig to gig. Most PA equipment is manufactured so that it will fit into one of these racks.

Figure 5 shows the addition of our rack

sound from the mic's, and sends the whole thing to the amplifier. It's set up this way so that the sound technician can control how strong the "effect-ed" signal is; there's usually a separate volume control on the mixing board for the incoming "effect-ed" signal.

Well, that's all of it. PA systems are really quite simple to understand—especially if you break them down into their basic components as we've just done. Although some systems are more complicated, for the most part they're just variations on what's been presented here. *Figure 5* shows a typical PA system, good enough to play nightclubs, weddings, or casuals.

Next month we'll begin to examine each

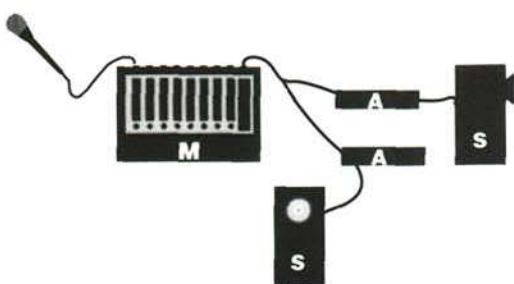


Figure 3: A PA system that includes a monitor.

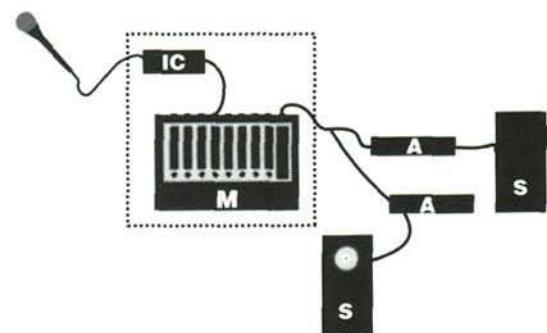


Figure 4: A PA system using a mixing board (shown by dotted line). "IC" stands for input control.

from the mic', and are essentially the same as the "bass" and "treble" controls on your home stereo. ("EQ" stands for "equalization," in case you're curious.)

Mixing boards are usually designated by the number of "channels" they have; thus, a mixing board that can mix the sounds from four mic's is a four-channel. Boards run from only a few channels all the way up to those monstrosities in recording studios that seem to go on for miles. You'll notice, however, that the controls for any one channel on a mixing board are duplicated for each channel. Thus, a four-channel board with 32 buttons and knobs doesn't require you to learn 32 separate functions. If each channel has seven buttons, once you've learned their functions, you know what 28 out of the 32 controls do, since all four channels work the same way. From there, it's a simple matter to learn the rest of the board (in this case, four buttons), since these are usually simple things like volume controls. Pretty soon you'll have

gear. We've now added some "effects" to our PA setup. These vary from band to band, but you've probably heard of them already: echo, chorus, flange, reverb, delay, etc. We'll focus on these items in a later article, but for now remember that you can use them to give the band a full sound, a weird sound, or a whole bunch of other possibilities.

The setup shown in *Figure 5* is a common way to use the effects. The mixed sound from the mic's is fed into the effects box, which then goes back into the mixing board. The mixing board then mixes the "effect-ed" sound in with the

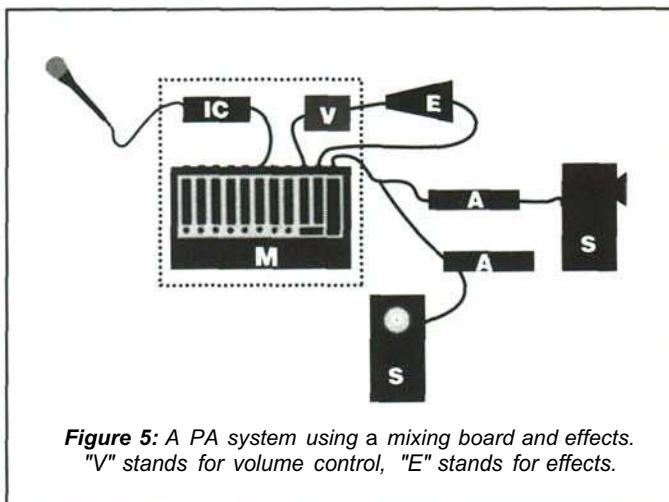


Figure 5: A PA system using a mixing board and effects. "V" stands for volume control, "E" stands for effects.

Illustrations by Terry Kennedy

"building block" of the PA more closely, starting with the mixing board.

by Jonathan Mover

More Subdividing And Regrouping Time

**MUSIC KEY**

In my last *Rock 'N' Jazz Clinic*, I discussed and demonstrated a few different ideas on the subject of how to subdivide and regroup time based on a common rate. Now, as a follow-up to that article, I would like to expand on that technique by taking it a step further and demonstrating a few other ideas based on a new rate—a triplet rate.

This will be done using a two-step procedure. We will start with the main time feel, move to the new triplet time feel, and then subdivide and regroup those triplet notes.

The main time feel for this demonstration will be a one-measure phrase of 4/4 time with an 8th-note "rock" feel. The total number of 8th notes being played in this phrase is eight, as shown below.

The first step in this procedure is to move from the main time feel of straight 8ths to the new rate of triplet 8ths. So, remembering that two 8th notes equals three 8th-note triplets, we will now have twelve 8th-note triplets to work with in the same one-measure phrase.

Now for the second step to this procedure. Let's take this new rate with 12 8th-note triplets, shown above as four sets of three-note groupings, and subdivide them into two sets of six-note groupings.

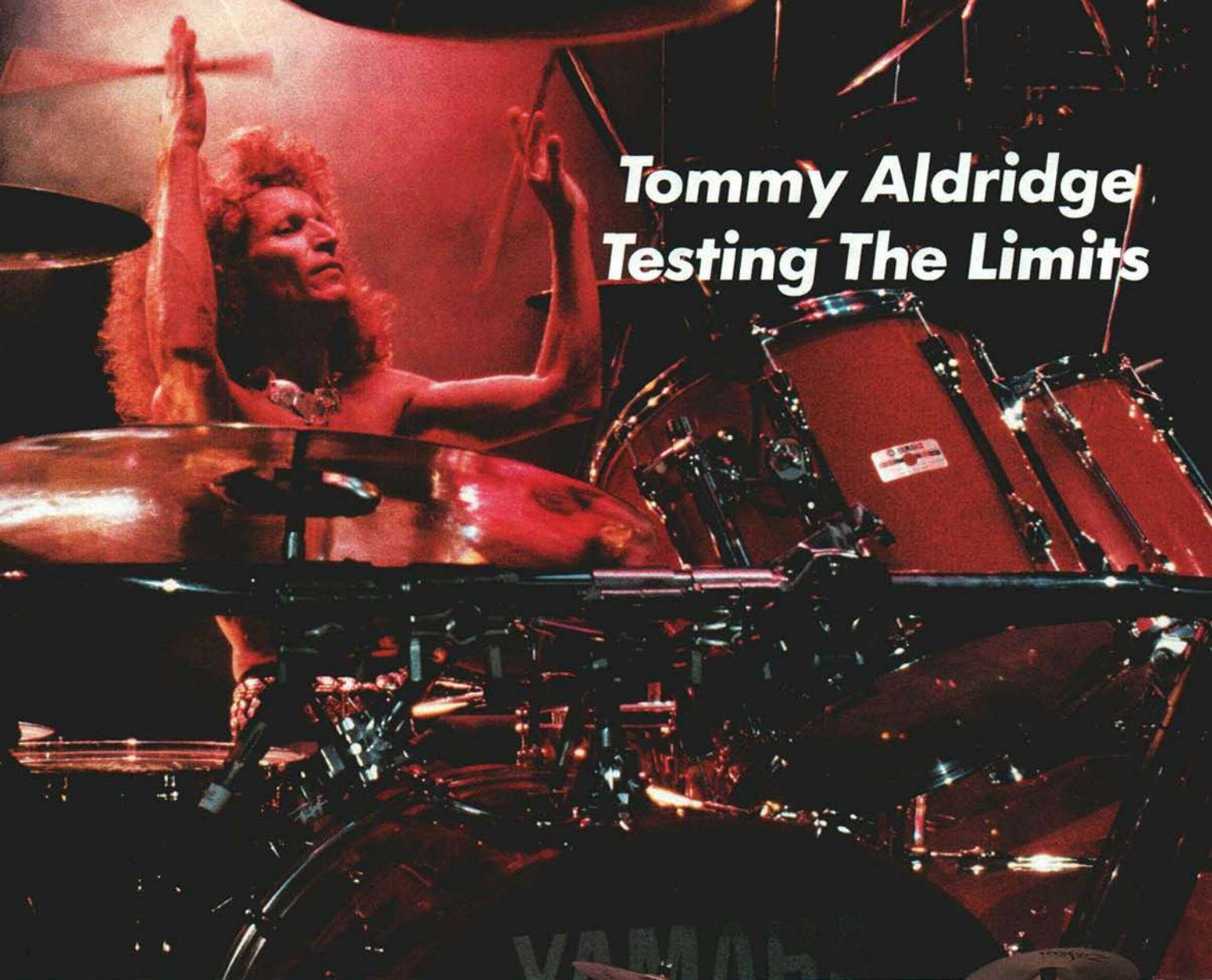
The next example subdivides the 12 8th-note triplets into three sets of four-note groupings, based on a half-note triplet.

Our next example subdivides the 12 8th-note triplets into three sets of four-note groupings, only now with a different accent line.

Our final example is a two-measure phrase. This will give us 24 8th-note triplets to regroup. We'll group them into three sets of four-note groupings and two sets of six-note groupings, placing them in a 4, 6, 4, 6, 4 sequence.

To practice this technique and these examples, I suggest you use the following four-measure format. Start by playing the main time feel for three measures, and the equivalent triplet-rate feel for one measure. Next, when you feel comfortable moving from one to the other, play the triplet rate for three measures and the new subdivided and regrouped triplet feel for one measure. In the end you should be able to move directly from the main time feel to the regrouped triplet time feel in one step.

Also, please keep in mind that at slower metronomic speeds the use of quintuplets, septuplets, etc. can be applied to the same formula and procedure. You'll find that the possibilities are endless.

A dynamic black and white photograph of Tommy Aldridge, a shirtless man with curly hair, intensely playing a large Yamaha drum set. He is captured mid-motion, with his arms raised and drumsticks in play. The lighting is dramatic, creating strong highlights and shadows on the drums and his skin.

Tommy Aldridge Testing The Limits

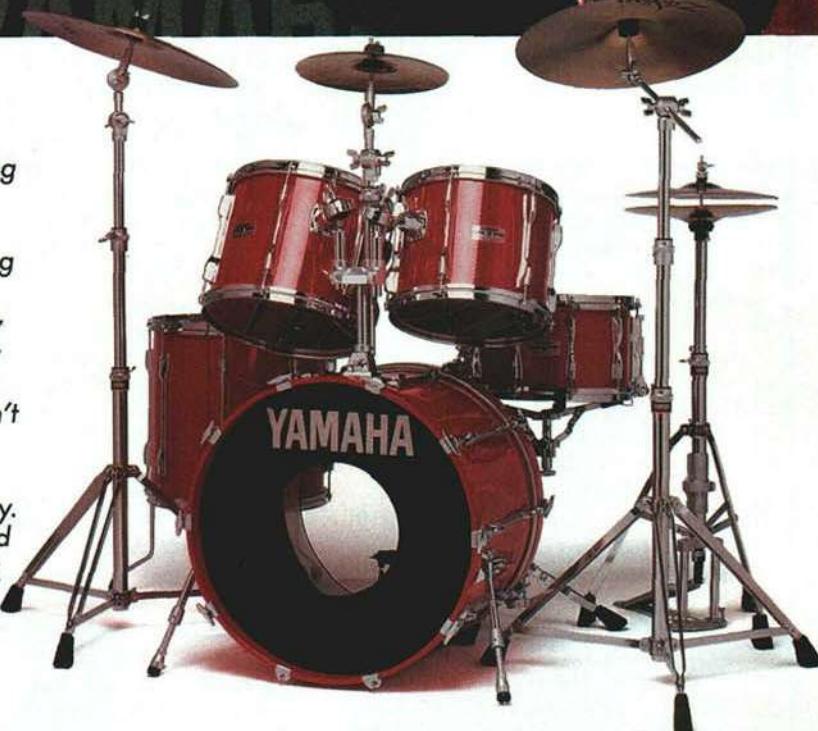
Tommy's signature: a rare compound of power, technique and feel. His sound, instantly recognizable with Black Oak, Pat Travers or Ozzy Osbourne. Now his energy and precision drive Whitesnake to the cutting edge of modern metal.

Whitesnake's signature: modern rock with intensity, range and chops that few bands can equal. Every song tests the limits of the players and the equipment.

Tommy plays Power Recording Custom because they cut it — every song, every style, any volume level. Any drum can sound good if you hit it once, he says. But when the music gets complex and loud most drums can't pass the test. They limit your playing.

The Yamaha signature: maximum articulation no matter how intense the music gets or how hard you play. Tommy says it's the 6 ply birch shells. "They're thin and resonant, but really strong. They take the kind of stress I give them.

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Alan Dawson:

A Conversation With A Master Teacher

*Alan Dawson is one of the deans of drum education. He has touched many aspiring drummers through 18 years of teaching at the Berklee College Of Music in Boston, and through two successful books: *A Manual For The Modern Drummer* and *Blues And Odd Time Signatures*.*

Although noted primarily for his teaching, Alan is also an innovative, world-class performer, having recorded with such greats as Jaki Byard, Clifford Brown, Dave Brubeck, Al Cohn, Booker Ervin, Dexter Gordon, Lionel Hampton, Hank Jones, Quincy Jones, and Phil Woods.

Today Dawson continues to nurture many drummers through his work as an international clinician, and through an active private practice at his home studio in Lexington, Massachusetts.

AS: How did you originally get into teaching?

AD: I didn't make a conscious decision to teach, although as I look back, I was pretty much on the road to becoming a teacher without realizing it. Guys would say, "How do you do this?" and I was only too happy to say, "Oh, it goes like this." I was always going to someone's house to play, and people were always coming to my house.

One day, Tillmon Williams came to me and said, "I want you to hear something." He took me to his house, and there was this little ten-year-old kid sitting behind what looked like a 28" bass drum. Tillmon said, "I want you to teach him." A couple of months later, Malcolm Jarvis came by and had his son play something on the pad for me. That's actually how I got my first two students: Tony Williams and Clifford Jarvis.

Clifford had great chops, but knew nothing. Tony had good instincts about time and meter, but no chops. Neither one of them could read. I worked on giving them the fundamentals of chops, reading, and rudiments. I would also cajole them a bit by saying, "If you get this lesson down, I'll give you a special little lick to work on."

AS: What led you to Berklee?

AD: I was playing at Wally's Paradise in the late '50s, and a lot of the students from

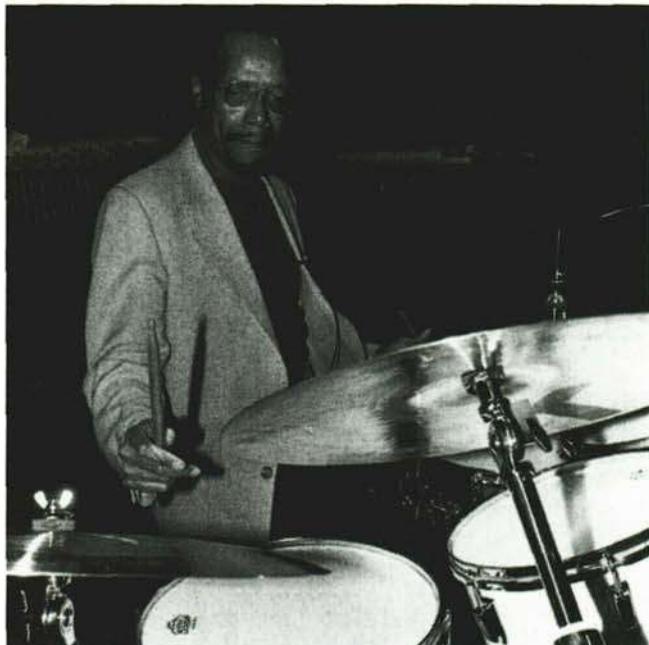


Photo by Lissa Wales

Berklee would catch the group and sit in during the Sunday jam sessions. Many of them would say to me, "Gee, I wish you taught at Berklee." Months later, I got a call from [Berklee founder] Larry Berk, and I started teaching there in 1957.

I began teaching the way I was taught, by reading through a series of books that went from elementary, to intermediate, to advanced. Then as my students became more advanced, I started working with drumset things. I also used the *Stick Control* book, basically the way it was set up to be used for hand development. But as time passed, students would say, "What can I do to develop my bass drum foot?" So I developed an approach for substituting the left hand notes with the bass drum.

Students who had been at Berklee for a couple of months would say to me, "You know, I'm in this ensemble, and I don't know what to do." That's when I started giving them exercises that dealt with the drumset right away. I developed various approaches to Ted Reed's *Progressive Steps To Syncopation For The Modern Drummer*, which helped students interpret syncopated figures on the set. A kind of evolution took place in my teaching out of necessity. Chances are I wouldn't have wound

up teaching the way I do if I hadn't been affiliated with a jazz school.

AS: What common problems have you found among beginning students?

AD: One of the most common is with speed of execution. I'll show a beginner an exercise and stress that no particular tempo is required. I'll insist they do it as slowly as necessary to do it right. Invariably, they'll come in with it completely wrong—but fast! One of the biggest problems is to get the students to slow down and listen to what they're playing. It's amazing; you would think that anybody should know to listen to what they're playing, but most beginning students don't. In fact, some intermediate students don't.

I record assignments for students so they have evidence of how the lesson should sound. Occasionally I get impatient, especially with

adult beginners who feel they should be progressing faster than young students. I remind them that age is not as much a factor as the amount of time and concentration you've put into it. Some students want me to put a time limit on practicing, so they can say to themselves, "Alan said I should practice an hour; I've done that, and now I'm finished."

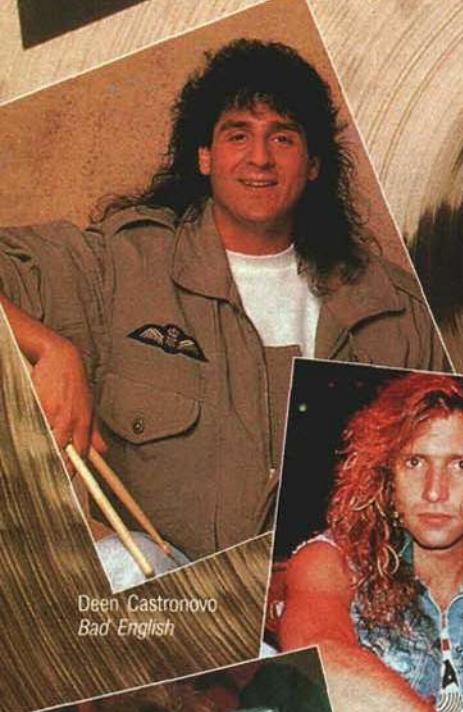
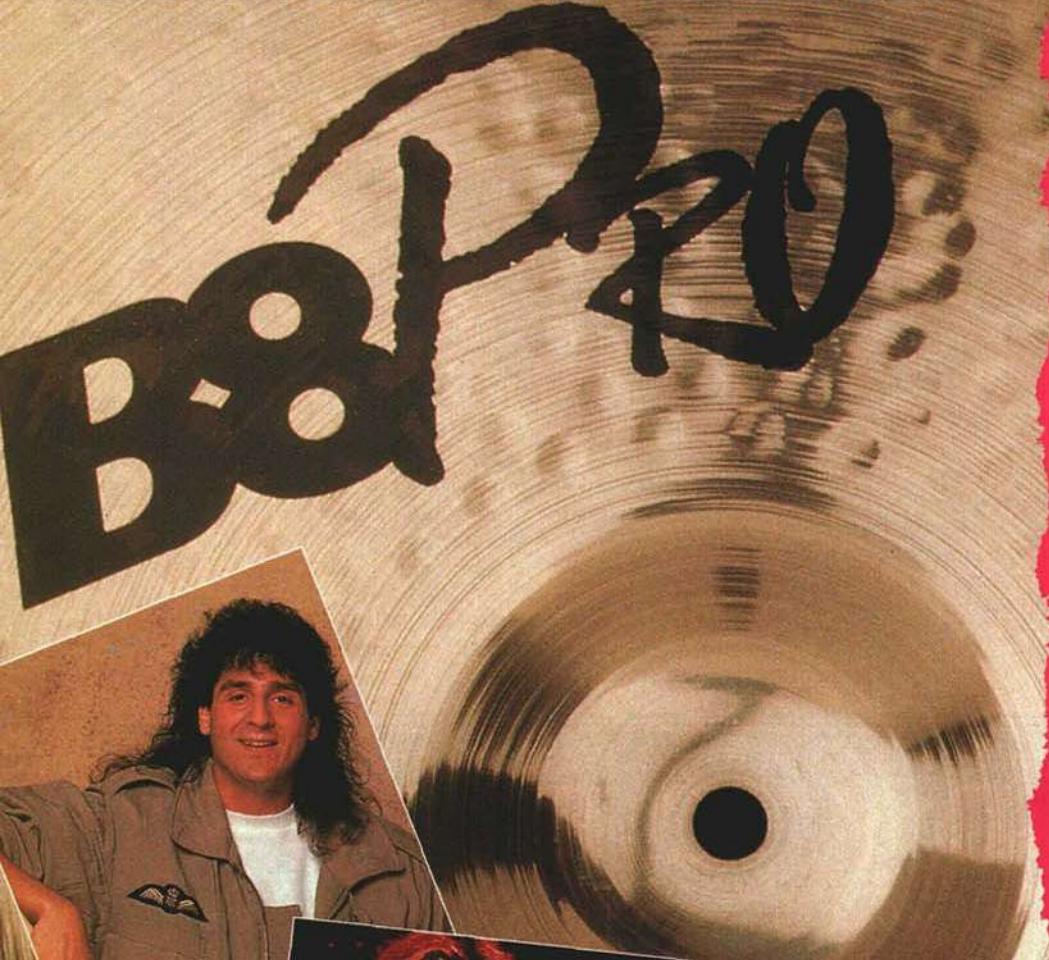
I've also found that a lot of students in the past 25 years have been more concerned with how *loud* they can play than with how *well* they can play. Sometimes when I play vibes along with them, I can't hear a thing. I'll say, "Could you hear me?" The response is usually, "No, as a matter of fact I couldn't." When I suggest they play softer, they'll say, "Well I can't play soft. When I play this tempo I have to play loud." You see, that's a problem with dynamics.

AS: What problems have you noticed with advanced students and professionals?

AD: I find that some advanced students and professionals may not have put enough study into the rudiments. You know, some people say that if you took all the rudiments and boiled them down, there would only be two: single and double strokes. And that's true. But you have so many pos-

continued on page 100

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by Joe Morello
Transcribed by Keith Necessary

Rhythmic Rudimental Progressions:

Part One: Five-Stroke Rolls



Photo by Rick Mattingly

The purpose of the following exercises is to be able to play odd roll groupings continuously, using 8th notes, then 8th-note triplets, then 16th notes, then 16th-note triplets, then 32nd notes. The difficult part with these exercises is that the accented rolls may or may not line up with the downbeat of the rhythmic figure. This will help develop your ability to hear and play odd groupings over a quarter-note pulse.

The trick to making these combinations work is playing the five-stroke roll rhythms in five-bar phrases. It is a *must* to practice these exercises with a metronome. Start somewhere between 60 and 72 beats per minute. Be sure to practice tapping your foot when using a practice pad, or use the bass drum or hi-hat if you are at the drumset. Don't be afraid to take one rhythm at a time, like 8th-note triplets, until you can hear how the rhythm repeats. Be patient and play relaxed.

Other Ways To Practice These Exercises

1. Play all the exercises with brushes. Playing doubles with brushes is a great exercise for wrists and fingers. It will help a great deal to develop the muscles and reflexes and will improve your control with sticks.
2. Play these exercises on the drumset. Play unaccented notes on the snare drum, accented notes on the toms or on a cymbal/bass drum combination, and four on the hi-hat with your left foot.
3. Try playing the exercises without accents.
4. Try playing the exercises backwards, starting at the end and working back to the beginning.

If you have any questions regarding this column, you may contact Joe through Modern Drummer.

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by Casey Scheuerell

Motivation

Maintaining an intense desire to work hard is one of the most difficult tasks we, as drummers, are faced with. Like the engine on our captain's ship, motivation is the power that kicks us in the behind every day. It gets the job done when all else fails. Although we can't get by on desire alone, we still need our chops and our musical training to back it up; without them we would have no reason to get out of bed in the morning.

How do we get this motivation? Where does it come from? Let's take a look at some reasons why we might play drums in the first place.

Big Bucks

First of all, music is a terrible career choice if our goal is only to make a lot of money. Although there is always a possibility that we could get that big-money gig, the percentage of musicians who really make the "big time" is very small. Even if that does happen, the money usually flows in for a short time, and then it's back to business as usual: "At liberty, good drummer looking for good band!"

As far as money is concerned, Grandma was right when she said, "You'd be better off becoming a doctor or a lawyer!" Being a good musician takes just as much dedication and hard work as those careers, but there is no guarantee for success, only the satisfaction derived from doing something you believe in. I know I would be very unhappy working a 9-to-5 job. Music gives me freedom of expression and a strong sense of identity, but it doesn't always pay that well for the amount of hours I put in. (Just add up how many hours you spend practicing, rehearsing, traveling, studying,

and doing business, and you'll see what I mean!) This is not to say that you can't make a decent living playing the drums. You can! If you're smart, have good business sense, and are talented, there is no reason why Junior should ever have to go without new shoes. Just keep in mind that music has a very high risk factor when it comes to employment.

Suppose you do get lucky and make a million dollars? Then you can buy that Ferrari and the big house with the studio you've been dreaming about. But be careful! While a little hunger for life's finer things can make you work harder, greed can destroy you. You may find yourself spending all your time with your new toys instead of your drumset. You'd better get your discipline together if big bucks are coming down the pike. Having all the money in the world won't make you a better drummer. Only hard work can do that. As you can see, we still need other motivating factors.

To Be The Best

Music is a highly competitive field, and it seems like only the best can survive its challenges. True, we will have to give it a 100% effort if we are to compete, but if being #1 is our only motivation, when we get there, we won't have anything left to achieve. As they say, staying on top is much harder than getting there. There is always that next drummer lined up, ready, and waiting to take your place. No matter who you are, being #1 is only a temporary position.

While a true competitor will thrive on the challenges his peers give him, he realizes that the real challenge is within himself. This is healthy competition, very different from destructive competition, which only serves to feed the ego and hurt the other guy. A "me against them" self-serving attitude makes for a very lonely existence when you do reach the top.

Healthy competition helps everyone go beyond their expectations. Have you ever noticed that great athletes consistently play their hardest when challenging their best opponents in a close game? Similarly, musicians must play better when new standards have been set. Through this process we improve our individual performance levels. Seeing others play great inspires me to work harder and set new goals. For this reason I hope the guy in front of me at an audition plays his tail off—then I'm chal-

lenged to give my best performance in order to be fairly judged, and the guy after me will have to do likewise.

As drummers, we need to give each other moral support. I love to hang out with drummers. When I go to hear them play, I go to encourage them, to dig them—not to tear them apart. They are some of my best and most supportive friends. When I hear one of them burning up a gig, it brings a smile to my face and sends a little shiver down my spine. I'm happy for them and thankful for the new incentive to work just a little harder.

Fame

Now here is one motivator that is very misunderstood. People think being famous is so great. Really, it appears to be more of a problem than an asset for people once they get it. There are added pressures, loss of privacy, and new responsibilities that come with it. Everybody seems to want something from you when you're famous. While it's nice and necessary to be recognized for our work, being *famous* is a very elusive thing. One week you're on the cover of *Rolling Stone*, and the next week people are walking all over that same issue at the subway station, or using it to wrap up their frozen fish.

So what is true motivation? It has to come from inside you. It's a burning desire to be the best that you can be, to realize your fullest potential. It's that relaxed feeling of playing "out of your mind" when anything you try works. It's striving to be loose and free, really grooving every single time you sit down at the drums. It's the satisfaction of knowing that when your life has ended, you did everything in your power to make the most of the talents you were given. Unselfish motivation is something you do for your own self-respect. As Art Blakey once said, "Respect is the most important thing in the world today, because that's the only thing that follows you to the grave. You never find an armored truck following a hearse!"

As musicians, we must strive to keep our motives clear and not mix them up with all the worldly trappings. Luckily, music is something we can do until we are 90 years old. We can never know all there is to know about drumming and music. We must always keep an eye on the horizon and set new goals for ourselves.

Photo by Rich Malent



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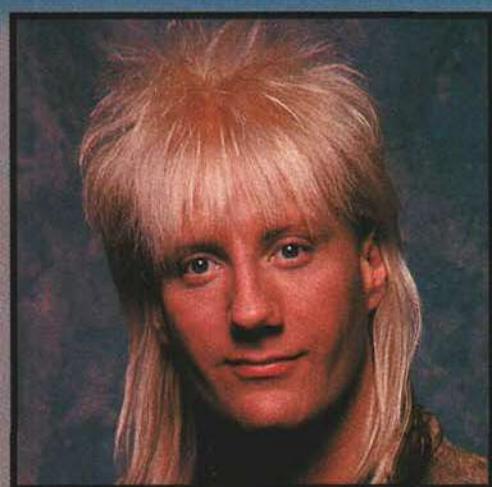
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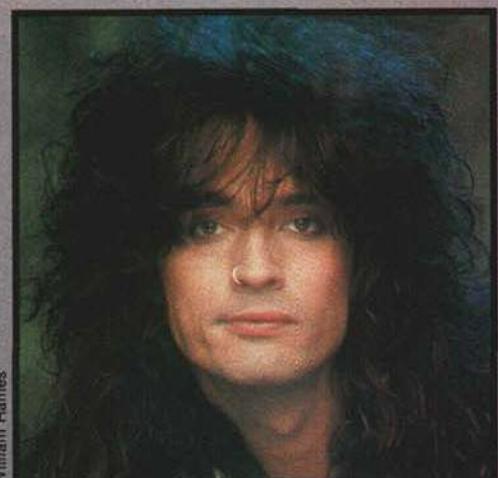
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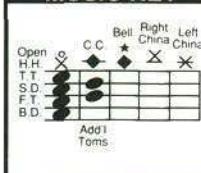
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Terry Bozzio: "Words"

MUSIC KEY

This month's *Rock Charts* features the unique drum stylings of Terry Bozzio, on a track from the Missing Persons album *Spring Session M* (Capitol SN-1 6460). On "Words," Terry doesn't crowd the track with any complex fills. Instead, he plays it very straight and powerful, yet he still adds his own creative ideas to the part. For example, check out the pattern Terry plays at letter D. By incorporating these different metallic sounds between backbeats, the groove becomes much more interesting.

Many of Terry's performances on record can be very difficult to play along to. This track is a little bit more straight-ahead, so you should be able to play along to it by at least keeping the groove going. Then go back and work out any of the trouble spots you may have had. By analyzing a chart this way, hopefully some of Terry's brilliance will rub off!

Heavy $\text{J} = 138$

The sheet music consists of five staves of drum notation. The first staff starts with a bass drum (B.D.) followed by a series of eighth-note patterns. The second staff begins with a bass drum, followed by eighth-note patterns. The third staff starts with a bass drum, followed by eighth-note patterns. The fourth staff starts with a bass drum, followed by eighth-note patterns. The fifth staff starts with a bass drum, followed by eighth-note patterns. Various symbols like 'x', 'o', and 'z' are used to indicate specific drum hits. A circled 'A' is placed above the third staff. The notation is divided into measures by vertical bar lines.

The image displays six staves of musical notation for a solo instrument. Each staff uses a single line with vertical stems. The stems have either an 'X' or an open circle at their top. Horizontal strokes (ticks) are placed on the stems to indicate pitch and rhythm. Measure numbers 1 through 6 are positioned above the staves. Staff 1 starts with a fermata over the first note. Staff 2 includes a dynamic marking 'p' (piano). Staff 3 is labeled with a capital letter 'B'. Measures 4 and 5 contain grace notes. The final measure, 6, ends with a fermata.

This image shows six staves of snare drum notation. Each staff consists of two horizontal lines representing the snare drum's surface. The notation uses various symbols to indicate strokes and rests.

- Staff A:** Features a single vertical bar line. The first half consists of a series of eighth-note strokes (x) and rests, with a 'z' symbol at the end of each measure. The second half consists of sixteenth-note strokes (x) and rests.
- Staff B:** Features a single vertical bar line. It consists of sixteenth-note strokes (x) and rests.
- Staff C:** Features a single vertical bar line. It consists of eighth-note strokes (x) and rests.
- Staff D:** Features a single vertical bar line. It consists of sixteenth-note strokes (x) and rests, with a 'z' symbol at the end of each measure.
- Staff E:** Features a vertical bar line with numerical markings: '4', '8', and '12'. It consists of sixteenth-note strokes (x) and rests.
- Staff F:** Features a vertical bar line with numerical markings: '4', '8', and '12'. It consists of sixteenth-note strokes (x) and rests.

 The notation includes various dynamic and performance markings such as accents (^), grace marks (circles with dots), and 'z' symbols. Measures are separated by vertical bar lines, and measures within a staff are separated by vertical tick marks.

E

F

G

H

(Ride on slightly opened hi-hat.)

Repeat & Fade

ON TRACK

GARY BURTON

PAT METHENY MITCH FORMAN

WILL LEE

PETER ERSKINE



DIGITAL MASTER

GARY BURTON—*Reunion*. GRP GRD-9598. Gary Burton: vb, mar. P. Metheny: gtr. M. Forman: kybd. W. Lee: bs. Peter Erskine: dr, perc. *Autumn / Reunion / Origin / Will You Say You Will / House On The Hill / Panama / Chairs And Children / Wasn't Always Easy / The Chief / Tiempos Felice (Happy Times) / Quick And Running.*

I've been known to complain about leaders who have a group of (usually young) players they work with live, but who then hire established "name" players when it's time to record. Sure, I understand that an artist would want an album to feature the best possible musicians and performances, but how are young players going to learn to record if no one uses them in the studio? I don't have the answer yet, but, quite frankly, an album such as this one makes me less interested in the question.

In fact, Gary Burton has often made albums with the same young sidemen that he uses live. But, in all honesty, those recordings pale next to this one. The primary catalyst for this session is Pat Metheny, who was a young Burton sideman himself several years ago, and who has become an important leader in his own right. From the quality of the playing here, you can't help but think that Metheny was out to impress his former boss, and that Burton, in return, wasn't about to let his former sideman upstage him.

But however much Burton and Metheny may have inspired each other to new heights, it goes beyond just the two of them. Even when Burton was using young bands, he usually had another seasoned musician to work off of—most notably his long-time bassist Steve Swallow. But on *Reunion*, the entire band is made up of experienced

pros, and the depth pays off. Peter Erskine knows how to respond to soloists without merely mimicking them. Also, because Burton is such a dominant musical personality, drummers often use a lot of their energy just keeping up with him. Not so Erskine. He leads the band through energetic tempos with a relaxed confidence that keeps the music sounding spirited without ever sounding rushed.

It's great to hear Burton working with a guitar player again, especially one whose playing he knows as well as Metheny's. When you combine that with the fact that Will Lee is the most acoustic-sounding electric bass player Burton has had since the aforementioned Swallow, and that Erskine's maturity as a player evokes memories of recordings Burton made with Roy Haynes, you have the makings of an album that is destined to stand as one of Gary Burton's best.

—Rick Mattingly



CECIL BROOKS III—*The Collective*. Muse MR 5377. C. Brooks III: dr. G. Thomas: tn sx. G. Osby: al sx, sp sx. G. Allen: pno. L. Plaxico: bs. *The Sketch Is The Key / We'll Be Together Again / Ace Boy (Little Cece) / Sunshine / Are You Real / West Coast Blues / Temptation.*

A young Pittsburgh native, Cecil Brooks has been building a name for himself over the past four years in New York's straight-ahead jazz scene, working with such roots purists as Jack McDuff, Groove Holmes, and Terence Blanchard. And as a steady member of the Houston Person/Etta Jones band, he has proven himself to be a swinging, solid force. *The Collective* is Cecil's premiere recording in the leader's chair.

Brooks has chosen as his side-

men some of the best of the young firebrand bebop-rooted players. The playing is traditionally rooted, yet undeniably modern. The group is tight, yet retains its rawness, making for an exciting in-the-room sound and spirit evocative of '60s Blue Note recordings. Osby's hard-edged bop number, "The Sketch Is The Key," is the disc's centerpiece, and gives Brooks a chance to stretch out with a cooking, aggressive drive. On "Are You Real" he takes an alternate approach and seems especially at home propelling the band in a swinging uptempo with a more relaxed, cool cymbal ride.

Several short, tasteful drum breaks pepper the disc, and "West Coast Blues" features an exceptional example of Brooks' talent for unified, thematic soloing. The cuts cover a diversity of feels and grooves, making the disc a good showcase for Brooks' impressive abilities. *The Collective* is a very promising first outing for this up & coming keeper of the flame.

—Jeff Potter



THE CREATURES—*Boomerang*. Geffen M5G 24275. Budgie: perc. Siouxsie Sioux: vcl, perc. P. Thorns: tbn. G. Barnacle: sx. R. Tomasso: trp. M. McCarrick: acdn. A. Partida, R. Cancelo, D. Ortega, I. Ortega, E. Ruiz-Verdijo, N. Fernandez: flamenco dancing, clapping. *Standing There / Manchild / You! / Pity / Killing Time / Willow / Pluto Drive / Speeding / Fury Eyes / Fruitman / Untied undone / Simoom / Strolling Wolf / Venus Sands / Morrina.*

Though there are several musicians listed as playing on *Boomerang*, all the writing and most of the playing here is handled by Siouxsie & the Banshees mainstays Budgie and Siouxsie Sioux. Unencumbered

by the roles of keyboards, bass, and guitars, Siouxsie and Budgie have taken advantage of their "limitations" and have created a moody, spacious, and deep collection of percussion/voice-based songs.

One might anticipate a rather un-melodic affair from the instrumental line-up here, but that is hardly the case on *Boomerang*. Though Budgie uses all sorts of percussion to enhance the rhythms, it is really his mallet parts that make the whole thing work, particularly his marimba ostinatos and steel drum patterns. Budgie's lack of formal training on these instruments is apparent—but not due to an absence of finesse. Rather it's his habit of staying away from preconceived styles that make these songs unique. (In this case, steel drums *don't* automatically conjure tropical parades.) And since the songs are based on strong arrangements—nothing new for those familiar with Siouxsie & the Banshees—the word "noodling" never comes into mind.

From the flamenco dancers on "Manchild," to the thunderous tom riding on "Standing There," to the tender, childlike steel drums on "Pity," to the layers of mallets on "Willow," *Boomerang* is filled with unusual and effective touches. By simplifying the setup of the Banshees, it seems that Budgie and Siouxsie have loosened up a little, allowing their imaginations to really run free. Highly recommended.

—Adam Budofsky



CHET McCRAKEN—*Flight To Moscow*. Voss VCD-72902. R. Grossman: bs. D. Pelfrey: sx. C. McCracken: dr, perc, kybd. J. Flaeder, C. Pinnick: gtr. R. Strom: Chapman Stick. Brad Dutz: perc, elec MIDI mallets. *Pair Of Diddles / Big City Ches-*

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ter / Flight To Moscow / That Girl Next Door / Velvet Touch / Solitary Rage / Solos' Samba / Bruford / Jamaica jump / Life's A Beach / Windjammer / It's Good To Be Home.

If you were to compare Chet McCracken's drumming on this collection with the playing he did with the Doobie Brothers during their heyday, you might not think it was the same person. On *Flight To Moscow*, Chet's first solo album, his drumming throughout is tasteful and groove-oriented—like his work with the Doobies—but there are also moments of fire and sheer chops you might not have expected.

All 12 tracks on *Moscow* were either written or co-written by McCracken. Chet describes his music as "jazz-rock," but a more accurate description might be "instrumental music with a backbeat." The songs are relatively short, without too much stretching out from the band. However, each player does have his moment, and Chet anchors the whole band nicely. Some of the best performances here are on "Pair Of Diddles," with its solid groove and 9/4 section, "Big City Chester," an uptempo number that Chet plays some extended drum solo/fills over, and my personal favorite, "Bruford," a unique tune with all sorts of interesting things going on, such as a unison guitar/drum riff that is pretty "out."

Chet's drum sound on this collection is also nice, with his snare drum, as well as his toms, tuned down. And his bass drum sound is huge, which adds a strong, solid foundation for the rest of the instruments. *Flight To Moscow* is a good first effort from Chet, and you might be surprised at both his drumming and his composing.

—William F. Miller

STEVE KHAN—*Public Access*. GRP GRD-9599. S. Khan: gtr. A. Jackson: bs. Dave Weckl: dr. Manolo Badrena: perc, vcl. *Sise / Blue Zone / Kamarica / Silent Screen* (CD only) / *Mambosa / Butane Elvin* (CD only) / *Botero People / Dedicated To You / Mama Chola*.

Having been familiar with Steve Khan's *Eyewitness* band when Steve Jordan was the drummer, I expected the new version of the group to sound a lot different, given the fact that Dave Weckl and Jordan have very individual styles. But while one would never mistake Weckl's playing on *Public Access* for Jordan's, the overall sound of the band hasn't changed all that much. I take this as a testament to both drummers' ability to serve the demands of the music without losing their own identities.

What this band has done for both drummers is expose a looser, jazzier side of their playing. The music of *Eyewitness* often calls for drumming that is based around maintaining a pulse rather than a repetitive groove. Within that pulse, the drummer can be free to accent and color. Also, given the instrumentation of this group, there is a lot of room for subtlety from the drums and percussion, which do not have to compete with thick keyboard textures. And Khan is a more "spacious" guitarist than many, giving the music even more room to breathe.

For Weckl, then, this band gives him a chance to be a little more delicate and coloristic than he is in the louder Elektric Band setting. For once, I wasn't overtly aware of Dave's technique; the feel and musicality dominated these tracks. (Not that Weckl doesn't pull off some slick licks at the appropriate times.) Badrena adds just the right amount of spices to the music, to the point that you are often not consciously aware that he is even playing (in marked contrast to his performance with the group at the MD Festival Weekend, where he was considerably busier). If you're an *Eyewitness* fan from before, you will probably enjoy the different flavor Weckl brings to the drum chair. And if you are a Weckl fan, you'll enjoy the

change that *Eyewitness* makes in him, as well.

—Rick Mattingly



CLAUDIO RODITI—*Slow Fire*. Milestone M-9175. C. Roditi: trp, flghn, vcl, perc. Portinho, Ignacio Berroa, Akira Tana: dr. Rafael Cruz, Thiago DeMello, Portinho: perc. D. Finck: bs. D. Freiberg: syn, el pho. D. Perez: pho. J. Ashby: tbn. R. Moore: tsx. *Slow Fire / Papagaio (The Kite) / Feel Good / Molambo (Vagabond) / Feitio De Oracao / Annette's For Sure / Carolina / Brazil, Infinity / It Was Nice Before, In The Rain / Lullaby For Kristen*.

The recent popularity of Brazilian influences in pop and jazz has brought forth a wave of recordings steeped in the hybrid rhythms of Afro/Island/Latin music. Some results are forced cross-cultural attempts, while others are more authentic. Brazilian-born New Yorker Claudio Roditi is a trumpet/flugelhorn master with deep roots in both bebop and the rhythms of his breeding, and he intimately understands both worlds and the natural bridge between them.

In order to make his compositions and concept work, Claudio clearly has to choose drummers also grounded in both musical worlds. His primary choices for *Slow Fire*, Portinho and Ignacio Berroa, are two of the finest examples of drummers who fit this bill. Both drummers have found the key to authentically incorporating Latin rhythms into straight-ahead jazz drumset work. And they have realized the art of simulating the sound and feel of Latin multi-percussion parts condensed into a one-man job. Both are featured on cuts that highlight their artistry, from uptempo samba smokers to sensual, loping bossas.

Akira Tana, a New York drummer long deserving greater recognition, contributes his superb talents on two tracks, most notably his beautiful and sensitive brushwork on "Lullaby For Kristen." With three great drummers aboard and several fine guest percussionists, *Slow Fire* has a lot to offer drummers from all musical roots.

—Jeff Potter



LUIS CONTE—*Black Forest*. Denon CJ 74100. L. Conte: perc, vcl. Orestes Vilato: perc. Jeff Porcaro, Carlos Vega, Alex Acuna: dr. A. Laboriel, J. Haslip, J. Johnson: bs. D. Witham: kybd. M. Coldenberg, J. Harrah, M. O'Neil, B. Coates: gtr. W. Fowler, G. Herbig, L. Klimas, J. Peskin, B. Fields, H. Kim: brass and woodwinds. J. Weber, D. Reeves: vcl. S. Croes: Synclavier. *Do The Shrimp/Working In The Coal Mine / I Can Take You There/Black Forest/Susarasa/Polo/Mere Wotimbo / Krimson And Khaos / Yoruban Paradise / El Solar*.

Feel is one of those things that you can't describe, but you know it when you hear it. You hear plenty of it on *Black Forest*. Luis Conte and former Santana percussionist Orestes Vilato come from the Cuban tradition, which means that their playing tends to be based more on playing a specific groove and making the music feel good than on playing a lot of different colors and soloing a lot. Combine that with drummers Porcaro, Vega, and Acuna, who are also known as groove players, and you have the makings for an album that would make just about anyone want to dance.

The entire album has a Latin flavor, with some tunes being total authentic Latin music and others being more popish or funkish with a Latin influence.

continued on page 99



Kenny Aronoff



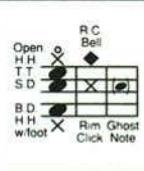
**MORE OF THE WORLD'S GREAT DRUMMERS
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Myron Grombacher



by William F. Miller

Salsa Patterns For The Drumset

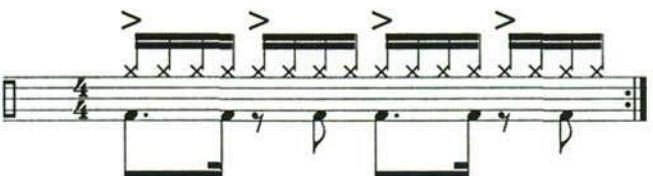
MUSIC KEY

Adapting Latin rhythms to the drumset can be one of the most enjoyable things about playing set. If you've been following John Santos's *South Of The Border* columns in *MD*, you've seen a lot of great information about Latin music, its history, and even instruction on many of the instruments inherent to the music. This column is going to focus on the drumset and on one style of Latin music: salsa.

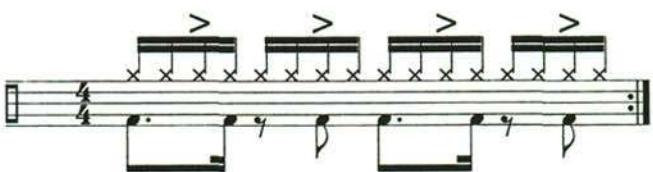
Let's jump right in and look at some specific patterns that you can use when playing a salsa. You'll find that most of these patterns sound pretty good on the drums, and aren't too difficult to play. The first thing to look at is the bass drum pattern, which really is the deciding factor that separates a salsa from other Latin beats. The salsa bass drum pattern, which is the bass drum pattern for all of these exercises, looks like this:



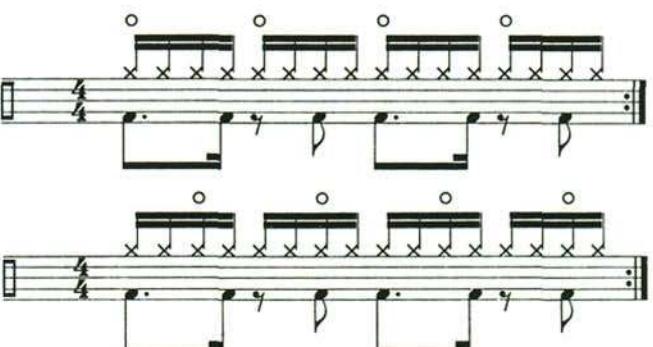
If you're familiar with Latin music at all, I'm sure you've heard this feel many times. This bass drum part rhythmically resembles the part that a bass would play during a salsa. An easy pattern to play for a salsa would be alternating 16ths on the hi-hat over the preceding bass drum pattern, accenting on every beat:



Once this is comfortable and you start to get a feel for it, change the accents on the hi-hat to the "&'s" of the beat:



Here are two patterns that use an open hi-hat to alter the beat:



Now that you have some ideas of what to play on the hi-hat for a salsa, let's come up with some ways of using the ride cymbal. Before we can work with the hands, we have to get the feet

happening. Here's the pattern you should play with your feet: You'll notice that the rhythm of the bass drum part has not changed; we have just added a hi-hat "chick" with the left foot:



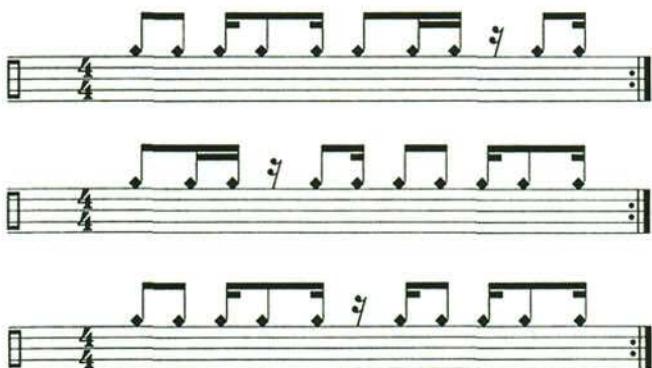
The next thing you need to get down is the left hand part. Your left hand moves back and forth between the snare drum (playing a rim click), to a tom-tom. The rhythm, which is meant to imitate a conga drum part, looks like this:



Now, taking it slowly at first, combine the bass drum/hi-hat part with the left hand part. It looks like this:



Once you get that down, you're finally ready to play the ride cymbal with your right hand over the previous pattern. I've written out a few traditional cowbell parts that you can play on the bell of your ride cymbal with your right hand. Once you're comfortable with these, you can come up with some variations of your own.



Here's one more pattern that can be a bit challenging if you're not familiar with ghost notes. They are notes that are played much softer than anything else in the pattern. In this case, the notes in parentheses on the snare drum are ghosted, and should be played very softly. This pattern can be very exciting because you are filling up a lot of the space with notes on the snare drum, which really propels the beat.



Omar Hakim



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HOLES IN YOUR HEAD

To put holes in a front bass drum head, I use a metal lid for a cooking pot. I put it on the element of the stove to get it very hot. Then I ask my girlfriend to hold the head out flat, front side up. When I have decided where I want the hole, I lift the lid from the stove and drop it flat on the head. (Do not hold or push the lid; its weight combined with the heat will do all the work. The hot lid will drop to the floor, so don't do this over a carpet.) Now there is a very clean hole in the bass drum head.

W.A.
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

Here's a tip for those who have trouble cutting round holes in front bass drum heads. Take a coffee can, bend out the top lip with a pair of pliers, and heat it over the stove for about a minute. Then set it 2" to 3" in from the hoop, and presto! A perfect bass drum head hole.

Ted DeLeo
Philadelphia PA

RESONANT FREQUENCY SOLUTION

On a low-volume gig in a very reverberant restaurant (art-deco ceiling, lots of wood and glass, etc.), all of my snare drums sounded very harsh, loud, and tinny—no matter how softly I played. Different tunings and muffling devices didn't work, either. The room had a natural resonant frequency that made any snare drum sound like a pistol shot, drowned out the band, and annoyed the patrons and management. (I've noticed this same problem in other live rooms, such as churches and rehearsal rooms.)

In order to play harder and with the fat R&B snare sound that my band was accustomed to, I came up with the solution of lining the inside of an 8"-deep wood drum with a 1"-thick by 6"-wide hoop of foam rubber. This left a 1" space between each head and the foam, and the lug screws held the foam in place. The volume of the drum was reduced by half, and the offensive upper-mid-range tone was gone. Though a little snare sensitivity was sacrificed, the drum sounded great in that particular situation. Several drummer friends even asked how I achieved a "processed studio-type snare sound" in such horrible acoustics!

George Lawrence
Jackson MS

QUIET, EFFICIENT PEDALS

Keeping bass drum and hi-hat pedals operating cleanly, quietly, and efficiently seems to be an ongoing battle. I've found that

products like WD-40 and Three-In-One Oil tend to "gunk up" the works after a while, and actually impede the proper motion of the pedals—not to mention the extra clean-up work required before a re-application can be considered. My solution has been to use a Teflon-based product such as Break Free or Tri-Flow. These two can be found in gun or bicycle shops. The Teflon constantly re-cleans and re-lubricates itself as the pedal is worked, making it a very effective solution.

Phil Bloch
North Hollywood CA

BASS DRUM IMPACT ENHANCER

Here's a great tip for those of you who'd like to obtain a cutting—but still deep and warm—bass drum sound. Simply place a large coin with a piece of broad tape covering it at the place where your bass drum beater hits the head. This will give your bass drum a "clicky" sound, and you can still play fast tunes with the head tuned extremely low. This has proved to work especially well in live miking situations.

Jonas Wetterlo
Visingso, Sweden

CPR FOR A CHOKING SNARE DRUM

I recently purchased a Pearl brass Free Floating snare drum. After hours of experimenting and fine-tuning, I had it sounding great, except for a small problem with airflow. The drum only comes with two small holes in the bottom rim assembly, causing the sound and feel to choke when the heads are pretty tight. This was especially noticeable when I played flams and ghost strokes.

Rather than drilling a hole in the shell, I cut one out of the bottom head. I outlined a dime with a marker, about 3" in from the rim and under the area I play on the most. Then, with a razor blade and a flat piece of wood underneath the head, I slowly cut out the hole—being careful not to leave any snags that might tear later. Now the drum not only sounds better, but the feel is dramatically improved as well.

Eric Scherrer
Corpus Christi TX

ECONOMICAL STAND CASE

For those of us who can't afford the latest trap or hardware cases—or are tired of lugging around an old footlocker or trap case loaded to the max—a nice way to go is an old golf bag. I bought mine for \$5.00 at a yard sale. I use it for my cymbal and Roto-Tom stands—most of which can be left at playing height with just the legs folded up. Not only do I save set-up and tear-down time, but, more importantly, I save my back.

The heavy-duty shoulder strap and handle make it very easy to lift and carry the bag. My trap case now has room to carry less cumbersome items, such as accessories, mic's, etc.—which makes it easier on the old constitution!

Donald Novak
Mather PA

SIMPLE STEPS TO TRIGGERING

Want to get your sound out front in the mix? Try these suggestions using triggering and miking. They are helpful for the working drummer who is always experimenting for a new or better sound.

When triggering, keep these points in mind: Before removing the adhesive backing on the sensor, find the optimum point of vibration on the head or shell. Use some duct tape to stick the sensor on different parts of the head, then remove the adhesive backing and place the sensor on what you've determined to be the "sweet spot." Also, remember that head thickness is a factor. A thinner head will activate a sensor slightly better than a thicker one, because it will vibrate slightly more.

When miking, you can create some big sound effects by using these tricks: If you have a tunable sound source (i.e., a drum machine), try tuning the triggered sound slightly higher than the acoustic drum to create an even wilder sound. Put some medium-sized reverb on the acoustic drum for a cutting, yet warm, acoustic sound.

Don't forget to be patient when getting started. Try some different combinations of sound sources, pickups, and heads. Work with your sensitivity and pickup placement. Good luck!

Albe Bonacci
Salt Lake City UT



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. Headers are encouraged to consider each suggestion carefully before attempting to utilize any Drumline tip.

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Jim Wetherbee: Drummer In Space

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COLUMBIA: "We're ready to rock 'n' roll."

MISSION CONTROL: "Alright, Wex. You have your drumsticks out?"

COLUMBIA: "The fastest drumsticks in the world. Mach 25!"

The voice from the Space Shuttle Columbia is that of astronaut Jim Wetherbee, pilot of the orbiting vehicle, and the first drummer to go to space. Wetherbee, a 37-year-old Lt. Commander in the U.S. Navy, was one of five astronauts aboard the space shuttle for a record-breaking 11-day mission this past January. In the most complex shuttle mission since the Challenger crash four years ago, the astronauts launched a military communications satellite into space. They also retrieved LDEF, the Long Duration Exposure Facility, an orbiting laboratory that may unlock the secrets to future space station construction.

In his spare time, Jim Wetherbee plays drums with a five-member rock 'n' roll band made up entirely of astronauts. "I'm not sure we are good enough for anyone else to come and pay money to hear us," says Jim. "But it's a lot of fun, it's a diversion. I enjoy playing the drums, and I think the other guys really enjoy making music."

The astronaut band is called Max-Q, which, in the engineering jargon used by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, stands for "maximum dynamic pressure"—the point about 60 seconds after launch when the greatest stress exists against the space vehicle. Wetherbee was one of the founders of Max-Q, which originated soon after Jim reported to astronaut training at



Photo courtesy of NASA

Astronaut Jim Wetherbee practices his drumming in the Space Shuttle Columbia while orbiting 175 nautical miles above the earth. Sitting in the right hand pilots' seat of the Shuttle cockpit, Wetherbee is using a shuttle operations manual for a practice pad.

youngster, "playing with the pots in the kitchen, upsetting my parents. Luckily, though, I was steered in another direction," he says, "and I ended up in this business."

While many people stand in awe of space flyers, Wetherbee is in awe of professional musicians. "I really respect professional musicians who can get up on stage and do what they do best in front of people."

Astronauts are routinely allowed to take along mementoes for their flights, and not surprisingly, Wetherbee chose to take two

NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston in 1984

When Columbia rocketed away from Cape Canaveral January 9, 1990, Jim Wetherbee became the 223rd human, and 134th American, to go to space. To the best recollection of NASA officials and unofficial space historian James Oberg, Wetherbee is the first space traveler who is also a drummer.

Others on the flight, designated STS-32, included Dan Brandenstein, the mission commander, and mission specialists C. David Low, Bonnie Dunbar, and Marsha Ivins. During their 173 orbits around the planet, the crew covered 4.5 million miles, and their 10-day, 21-hour stay in space comprised the longest flight yet experienced in the shuttle program.

Born in Flushing, New York, Jim Wetherbee received a degree in Aerospace Engineering at Notre Dame before becoming a Naval aviator. He has logged 2500 hours flying, and 345 landings aboard aircraft carriers—125 of them at night. He served as a test pilot before joining the space program.

Wetherbee has wanted to be an astronaut since he was a ten-year-old, holding a portable radio to his ear in a classroom as the pioneering Mercury astronauts made their solo space flights. Yet Jim says he also once considered music as a career. He has been drumming since he was a

by Robert Chancellor

pairs of space-ready drum sticks. ("They were covered with a fire-proof cloth," says Jim, "for safety reasons.") One set of sticks had a history even before space flight: They were used by Max Weinberg, drummer with the E Street Band, for the final concert of Bruce Springsteen's *Born In The USA* tour in 1985 at the Los Angeles Coliseum.

Weinberg and Wetherbee are friends, drawn together by mutual interest in aeronautics and drumming. "I met Jim when we played Houston in April, 1987," Weinberg says. "Someone arranged for three or four of us, those interested in space flight and aeronautics, to go to the Johnson Space Center for a tour. I met Jim on the tour, and he showed us around the facility and told me he was a drummer. Naturally we got to talking drums."

The two have kept in touch since. "We talk from time to time," Weinberg says. "I am very interested in space flight, and he is very interested in drums, so it's a good relationship. We answer each other's questions. I just think it's great when people who have expertise in different areas can get together and share what they know."

Weinberg describes Wetherbee's interest in drums as intense.

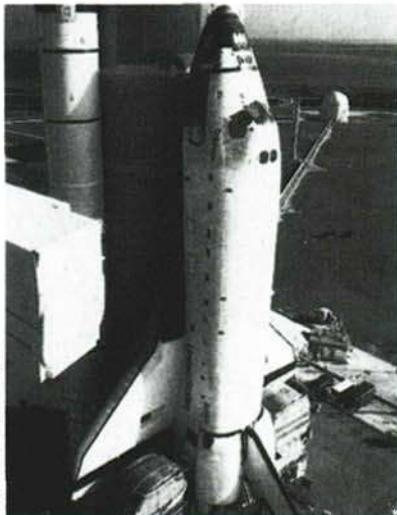


Photo courtesy of NASA

"He is really into the drums. And it's not just something he does casually; he really studies it. He's very interested in learning about it, and he's always asking me technical questions."

As a result of their friendship, Wetherbee invited Weinberg as an official guest to the launching of Columbia at Cape Canaveral. According to Weinberg, "The launch was spectacular. We were three miles away from the launch pad, and the whole event was just

incredible." Among Wetherbee's gear were two music cassettes put together by Weinberg's wife, Becky. "I think we started out with 'Telstar'—you know, space-oriented themes, and then a lot of Jeff Beck and blues—lots of blues."

The drumsticks carried by Jim Wetherbee traveled for nearly eleven days at Mach 25—25 times the speed of sound, or about 18,000 miles per hour. As Jim says, that makes them the fastest drumsticks in the world. Of course, that would make Wetherbee the fastest drummer in the world—although with typical astronaut modesty, he probably wouldn't want to claim that title.



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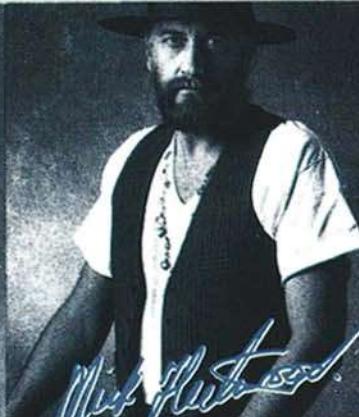
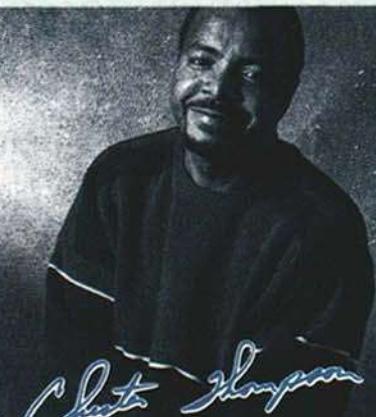
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Mel Lewis:

Often, when Mel Lewis was playing with his Jazz Orchestra, he would break into this little smile. It wasn't a "showbiz" smile like the one Joe Jones had, and it wasn't like Louie Bellson's enthusiastic grin, which seems to be there whether he's playing or not. Mel's was more subtle. You had to be very close to see it, and a lot of it was in his eyes. It was a look of total peace and contentment—the kind of look you might see on someone sitting in an overstuffed chair in front of a fireplace. For Mel, the drums were his easy chair and the band his hearth. He was the fire.

But it wasn't a fire of bright, dancing flames. Mel's fire consisted more of glowing embers that provided a permeating warmth—a cozy fire, but one with enough flickers of flame and pops and crackles to give you a start now and then if you started getting too comfortable. You never really worried about this fire getting out of control, but still, you wanted to keep your eye on it. It could surprise you.

Mel Lewis was known as a person who wasn't afraid to speak his mind. He could come across as abrasive, especially in print, but when you got to know him you realized that there was nothing malicious in anything he said. He was just calling it the way he saw it, and there was often a twinkle in his eye that suggested he was being feisty on purpose. He loved music so much that he couldn't let certain things go by without saying something that might cause others to give a little more thought to what they were doing. "Mel could be cantankerous," Danny Gottlieb said on the night of Mel's death, "but he had a good heart."

That came through in his playing. Mel had a completely original approach to big band drumming, and the only reason he got away with it was because he played with such a sense of conviction. He knew he was right, and he made you believe it, too. He wasn't necessarily saying that other approaches were wrong, but because his was based more on supporting the band than on spotlighting himself, he was sometimes forced to prove that he was playing his way out of choice, not because he lacked ability. Granted, he would be the first to admit that a lot of drummers could wipe him out in a technique contest. But he often won on a more subtle level; next to him, many drummers came off looking obnoxious for playing too much.

Mel often complained that to most people, "chops" meant "speed." Mel could handle fast tempos just fine. But he was never one for blazing fills around the drums.

For him, "chops" had to do with control of the instrument, a sense of color, and above all, the ability to swing. "I learned that the power of the drums was in this smooth glide of rhythm," he once told Stanley Crouch. "It wasn't the volume." Mel could play loud when the situation called for it, but he could also play very softly. A frequent comment about his band, and one that he was very proud of, was that they played with a wider range of dynamics than most big bands.

Mel had a knack for choosing just the right cymbal to play behind each soloist, and he could get an amazing variety of sound from each cymbal as well. "I got my love of cymbals from Mel," says Gottlieb, who was highly influenced by him in his formative years. Mel, for his part, had the highest regard for Danny. I was once in a room with Mel and Buddy Rich, and Rich was saying that most of the rock drummers he knew of wouldn't be able to sit in with a band like his or Mel's and know what to do. "I know a couple of guys," Mel responded. "Danny Gottlieb, for one. He can play that rock stuff, but I sometimes hire him to sub for me, and the guys in the band love him. He can play all the styles." Buddy nodded. "That's what you're supposed to be able to do if you want to call yourself a drummer."

Mel could certainly play all of the styles, and as consummate a jazz musician as he was, he didn't have an "attitude" about dance music. He was perfectly happy to play a wedding—ethnic dances, hokey-pokeys and all. "Playing for dancers is great training for a drummer," he told me. "It really teaches you to be consistent."

Jazz, of course, was his greatest love, and he always had a standard question for me when we spoke: "You got any jazz drummers coming up in your magazine so I'll have something to read?" But it was obvious that he read all of the articles, because he would often comment on something that a non-jazz drummer had said in an interview. And he had a more open mind than most people gave him credit for. A few years ago, in a *down beat* interview, while speaking of the importance of swing, Mel said that he heard a lot of swing in James Brown's drummers. This past October, Max Weinberg arranged for Mel, Joe Morello, and Danny Gottlieb to attend the Rolling Stones concert at Shea Stadium and pay a backstage visit to Charlie Watts, whom Mel had first met when the Charlie Watts Orchestra played in New York. And Mel himself did some rock dates in the '50s and '60s when he was doing studio

work. I was amazed to discover that he was the drummer on "Alley Oop."

But as open-minded as he was about some things, on other matters he could be extremely inflexible. He absolutely refused to believe that anyone could swing using matched grip. He thought that electronic drums and drum machines were the worst things that had ever been invented, not because he was against technology, but simply because they put real musicians out of work. In fact, in an *MD* cover story in 1985, he went so far as to suggest that the company that made *LinnDrum* machines should be blown up. I couldn't resist calling Mel when I heard that Linn had gone bankrupt. He took the news in stride. "That's because they were making something that should never have been made," he said.

Mel's own taste in equipment tended towards the traditional. He stayed with calf-skin heads till the very end, going to considerable trouble and expense to obtain them. He loved old K's and would lecture to anyone who would listen about what was wrong with modern cymbals. (Briefly, they were too heavy.) His choice of equipment was so linked with his way of playing that it was sometimes difficult to separate the two. I remember speaking with Peter Erskine a few days after he had subbed for Mel at the Vanguard. "I hadn't intended to try to sound like Mel," Peter said, "but as soon as I sat down behind his drums and cymbals, a certain 'Melness' started coming out of me."

Mel loved young drummers and did a lot to encourage them. But he never gave lessons as such. "I teach every Monday night at the Vanguard," he often said. He would, however, invite young drummers over to his apartment to listen to records and discuss the music, or he would go with them to pick out cymbals, or do anything else he could to help or advise them with their careers, such as hiring them to fill in for him at the Village Vanguard whenever he went to Europe. And from time to time he would call me at *MD* to suggest that I keep an ear open for some young drummer who was starting to play around New York. Danny Gottlieb, Joey Baron, Kenny Washington, Adam Nussbaum, Jim Brock, Dennis Mackrel, and Barbra Merjan were just a few of the many drummers that Mel did his part to spread the word about. He was definitely a father figure to many of them.

He treated this journalist the same way. Once, when he had asked me the usual question about upcoming jazz drummers in *MD*, I replied that I was hoping to interview Buddy Rich soon, but that I was hav-

1929-1990

ing trouble getting in contact with him. "I think he's in Europe, but that would be great if you could do an article with him," Mel responded, and the discussion went elsewhere. A couple of weeks later, Mel called me. "I just spoke to Buddy and told him that you want to interview him. He said that he'll be in New York at the Bottom Line in about three weeks, and he'll talk to you then. Is that soon enough?" "Uh...of course," I replied, my mouth hanging open.

Not only did Mel arrange the time and place for the interview, he even accompanied me when I went to do it. Although I had been interviewing drummers for several years by that time, I was intimidated by the thought of confronting Buddy Rich. But having Mel there put me at ease. The interview went great, and I'm sure that it was in no small part due to Mel having paved the way for me.

Buddy obviously had great respect for Mel. "Mel doesn't sound like anyone else," Buddy said, "and that's the best thing you can say about any musician."

Mel Lewis, whose real name was Melvin Sokoloff, was born in Buffalo, New York. He began playing professionally at age 15, and worked with the bands of Lenny Lewis, Boyd Raeburn, Alvino Rey, Tex Beneke, and Ray Anthony. He joined Stan Kenton's band in 1954, which brought him national attention, with several reviewers crediting him as being the first drummer to make the Kenton band swing. It also gave him a setting in which to develop his "small group approach to big band." Mel wanted to play more like the bebop drummers of the day, using ride cymbal more than hi-hat, breaking up the time, and dropping occasional "bombs." That didn't fit in with a lot of the swing/dance bands that Mel first played with, but it was perfect for Kenton, with whom Mel worked for three years.

Mel moved to Los Angeles in 1957, and worked with the big bands of Terry Gibbs

and Gerald Wilson, and with pianist Hampton Hawes and trombonist Frank Rosolino. He also co-led a combo with Bill Holman. In 1962 he made a trip to Russia with Benny Goodman.

He returned to New York in 1963 and worked with Ben Webster and Gerry Mulligan. In 1965, he and trumpeter Thad Jones (Elvin's brother) formed the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Big Band, which began a steady Monday-night gig at the Village Vanguard in New York City in February '66. They also did a lot of recordings and tours, including a trip to the Soviet Union in 1972. In 1978, Jones left the band to move to Europe, but Mel kept the group going, calling it the Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra.

One of the most distinctive features of the band was its emphasis on soloists, who were always given plenty of room to stretch. Hearing the group live was often like hearing two bands in one. "It's only a big band when everybody is playing together," Mel told me once. "When someone is soloing, then it's a quartet."

A couple of years ago, Mel was diagnosed as having melanoma, a form of cancer that tends to turn up in various parts of the body. It started on his arm, then hit his lungs, and eventually went to his brain. But whenever I spoke to Mel over the past two years, he was always optimistic. On



several occasions he declared that the worst was over and that he was on the road to full recovery. He joked about looking like Kojak when chemotherapy treatments caused his hair to fall out, but whenever the treatments ended, he would boast that his hair was starting to come back, and that doctors told him it would be thicker than before.

Mostly, he was determined to keep playing, and he did. He made several trips to Europe during the past two years, and did a number of recordings. At the first Buddy Rich Memorial Scholarship Concert held on Long Island, New York in April '89, Mel received the first Buddy Rich Lifetime Achievement Award. The following October, Mel was honored at a concert by the American Jazz Orchestra. This past January, he did a clinic and performed with his band at the NAJE convention in New Orleans—against his doctor's advice. "I have to show those people what a *real* band sounds like," he told Adam Nussbaum. It was his final performance.

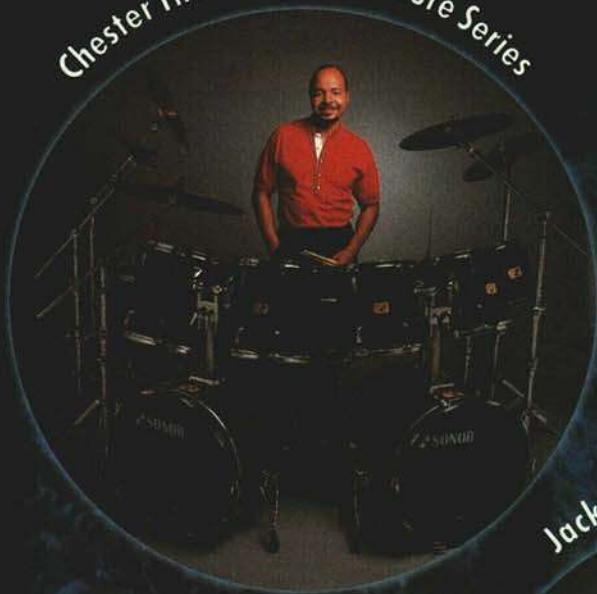
His gig at the Village Vanguard on Monday nights was the most important thing in the world to him. The last time I spoke with him, in December, he had just come out of the hospital after a relapse, but, as usual, he predicted that the worst was behind him. "I'll be at the Vanguard Monday night," he told me. "I'm not sure if I'll feel like playing, so there will be a sub on hand. But I'll be there." He died on February 2, just a few days before the band was scheduled to mark its 24th anniversary at the club.

When Village Vanguard owner Max Gordon died last year, many declared that it was the end of an era. In many ways it was, but as long as Mel Lewis was there on Monday nights, it wasn't completely over. Now it is.

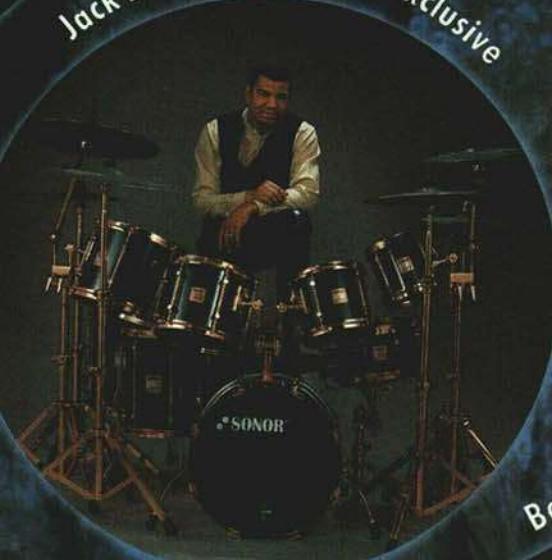
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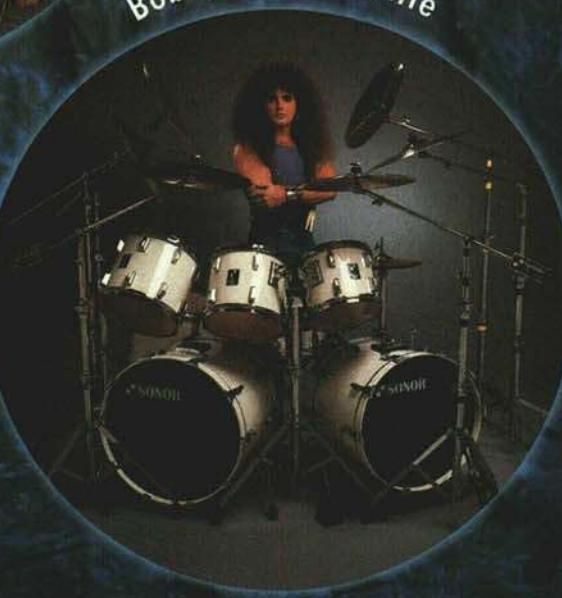
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one like him.

In the situation with Jeff Beck, it was simply that Tony is a composer, so therefore Tony covers many functions himself. When Jeff doesn't play, Tony and I are the whole band; I just play the drums and Tony plays everything else. That kind of situation gives me an opportunity to do things; the drums can sound that much bigger, and the throb element can come solely from the drums. And I gladly took that responsibility. On stage with this band, it's just three guys who can really play well, and there's nobody getting in their way. That's not to say that had we had a bass player it would have been bad. It just would have been different.

RF: Let's talk about equipment a little bit. As far as the equipment you use in the studio, how scaled down is your set from, say, the one in your video?

TB: My kit on the DCI video is the kit I use for everything I do unless I get one of these odd jobs where a producer wants otherwise. Whether I use the double bass or not on a particular song, it's always there. A lot of times I'll just use double bass in a fill. I don't do the constant riding on the bass drums.

RF: By the way, what's the spring tension like on your bass drum pedals?

TB: They're real loose and real close to the bass drum heads. I have DW custom-drill my pedals. They have this little triangular plate on the side of the pedal that adjusts how far the beater ball is from the head, and I have them drill a hole just behind the one that's

"If I can play something and have a sonic personality, at this point in my life, that's more important than technique."

closest to the head so that it's halfway between the first and second closest positions to the head. It's as loose as I can get it without having to work too hard if I'm playing harder, where it wouldn't bounce back fast enough. For me, the least resistance is the least tension on your foot, and your pedal would therefore go as fast as your foot could—or faster than your foot if you hit it and jerk it to get a double. You can hit it fast, and then as you're bringing your foot down, the pedal rebounds back. So in essence, it's like doing a double stroke with your foot; it's one foot or leg motion controlling the rebound to get two strokes.

RF: During your video, you go into the subject of soloing. How does somebody get a start on playing something as free form as that?

TB: Listen to nature, number one, which is where it comes from, and people who are tapped into nature. Where I heard that was

from jazz players like Rashied Ali and Jack DeJohnette, when they were playing free.

RF: What about your approach to polyrhythms?

TB: That all comes from Afro and Latin things I've heard and jazz, because jazz is polyrhythms.

RF: What are you thinking about when you're playing like that?

TB: I'll tell you how it worked for me. I was a rock drummer until I heard Elvin Jones and Tony Williams. Then somebody told me that that kind of playing wasn't just random. Maybe you'll count eight-bar phrases, and the tension mounts and mounts, and then the release is on 1. Or there will be four-bar things, and they'll release on 1, or long ones that stretch for 16 bars, where it just keeps on mounting, and you realize there's more and more tension happening, and suddenly—*BAM*—it's all on 1. So the eight-bar phrase is the unwritten law, the given. Whether they said that or not, those were the rules. I'm talking about the John Coltrane Quartet—Elvin Jones, Jimmy Garrison, McCoy Tyner. Those guys would just go off, and that was their little structure. That was the thread that let them into an astral project and then back into the body. When I heard that, that's what I did. I listened to those records and I just counted all the way through, and I was amazed that it all added up. After a while you start to feel that, you absorb that. What happens is you go through the process of absorbing, then emulating,

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and then kind of throwing those things away and replacing them with your own ideas or understanding conceptually what is going on and choosing to utilize those concepts—but in your own way, which is what I did with Tony. Tony is basically the guy who taught me everything I know about how to play the drums. He's probably sick of me saying this if he's read any of my interviews, but Lifetime's Emergency and the stuff he did with Miles is a textbook of what can be done on a four-piece drumkit. He did amazing things that broke so much ground.

RF: I recall reading that you had very hefty practice sessions as a kid.

TB: Six hours a day, and I had teachers. I was real disciplined for a while. I only slept about six hours a night, and I'd get up and practice for two hours before I'd go to school, and I'd learn music and theory. In the summers I'd practice six hours a day if I could—an hour on stick control, an hour on reading, an hour on rudiments, an hour on my feet, an hour on coordination, and then maybe an hour of playing the drums. My mom was ready to go nuts by then.

RF: Sometimes when somebody does intense solo practice sessions, when they get into a band, it's hard to integrate with the other musicians.

TB: I wasn't in a band then, and my time was probably terrible. I was constantly trying to do things I couldn't do. I was lucky, though, because the playing situations I had in those days were with Pete Maunu and Mark Isham, guys who were the forerunners of Group 87. Those were the local guys I got to fool around with. Talk about being in the right place at the right time. Those are the guys who taught me. Pete was a classical violinist, first chair with the California Youth Orchestra, and he played guitar amazingly as a high school kid. Mark Isham was a brilliant trumpet player, keyboard player, and composer even then, and would always have the latest Miles Davis album. He was always showing me the people who were to be the influential musicians in my life: Miles, Coltrane, all the people who played with those guys. So when we would get together, we would play something a la whatever the latest Miles or Weather Report album was. So I was with guys who were stretching, too. They knew I was a rock drummer, but they always said that I had this loose thing like Elvin, so they liked that. And I was a rock drummer then trying to learn how to play

jazz, which was really scary. Having to play soft, having to play with control, having to play something more complicated, having to play something that utilizes the intellect and integrates both sides of the brain is a hard thing to do.

RF: You've said that at that time you got a very precious attitude about jazz and became very close-minded about other kinds of music.

TB: Oh yes, I had that stinking jazz attitude, the smirk and the one shoulder lower than the other.

RF: What changed that and made you more open-minded?

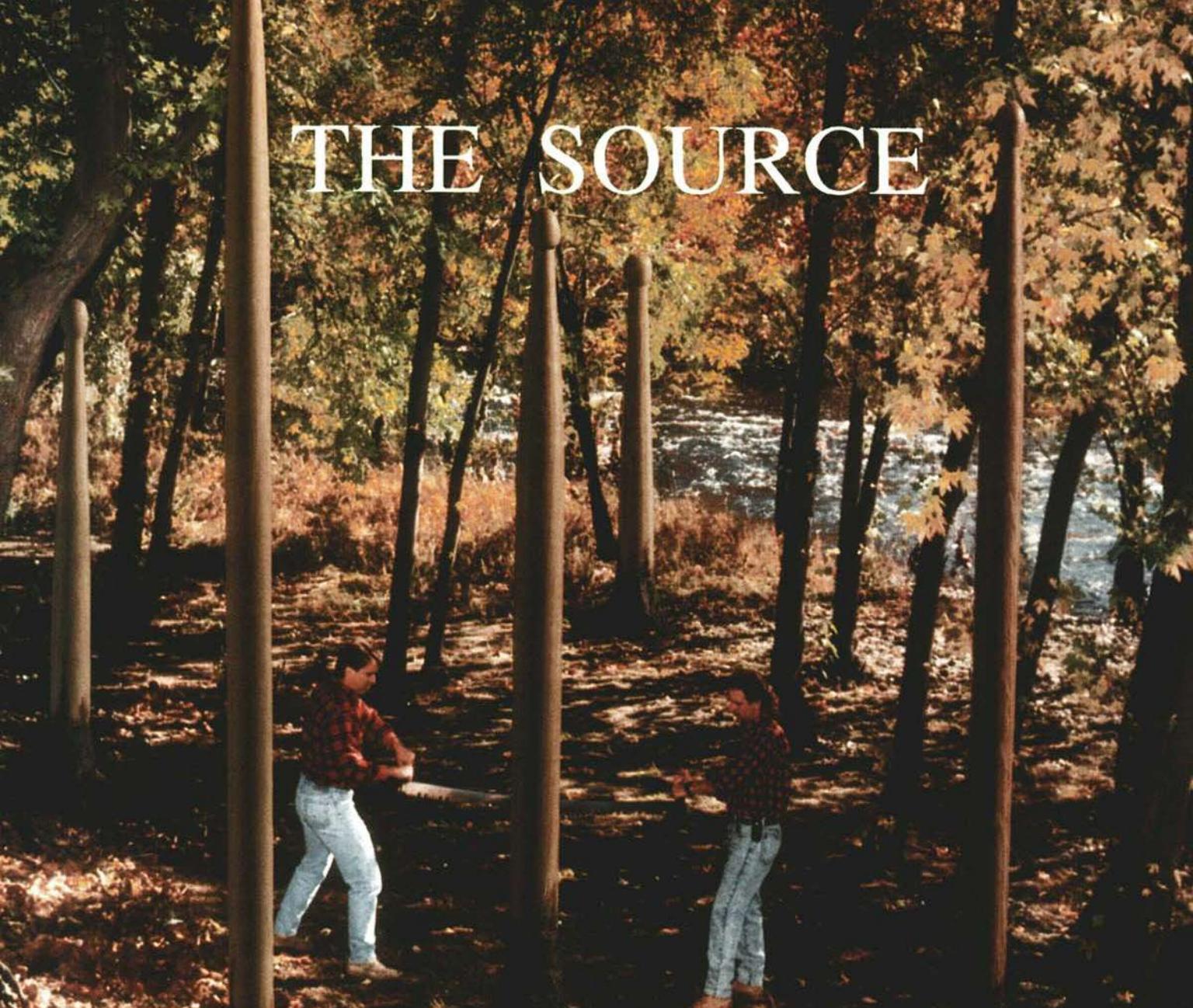
TB: It was a gradual process. I think this attitude is something that is necessary in order to establish one's identity: "I am not this, I am this." That's real important in order to define and etch what is going on. Then what happens is life experiences come into play, like getting out of school, having to work, and having to do other jobs like play a rock musical or a casual.

RF: So you had to drop that pretentious attitude in a big way.

TB: I still had it. Well, what was my attitude then? It was one of utter and sheer respect for the people who were playing, the Billy Cobhams, the Lenny Whites. And what I did

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was compare that to whatever else was around then, which was your Elton Johns and your David Bowies. Musically, I missed that whole era. I just missed it because I didn't think there was anything musically going on. After Jimi Hendrix and Cream, what happened to rock 'n' roll? In the early '70s, there wasn't that progressive kind of thing. I think the business got more structured and record companies got big and they knew what to do in order to get a hit. Not to take anything away from Bowie or Elton, but for a drummer or a musician, there's not a lot to listen to there. It's the words and the songs.

So that's where I was at, and who comes along but Zappa, who bridges all the gaps. It was like being sucked into a vortex of anything you wanted, anything you could do, things beyond what you thought you could do, things beyond what other people were doing. It was amazing. On the classical level, it was way beyond what I was beginning to get into, like reading notes on tom-toms and having to read real music. I wasn't much of a vibes player in school. I studied a bit of that, and I usually worked out anything I had to play by ear. I could slowly sight-read it, but when it was at tempo, I could never look at the music; I played it by rote. Learning that kind of stuff with toms was a difficult thing, playing those melodic phrases that he writes for drums was difficult. So there was a great challenge there. I felt like I was going to the Zappa School of Music, the University of Frank. It was great. Then there was the rock 'n' roll thing, which got to unleash the wild Terry Bozzio, got to play for the girls and do all that stuff.

RF: What you said in your last interview was that you got really acclimated to the difficulty of things like "The Black Page," and after that it became easy in a sense to figure out where he was coming from.

TB: I would say it had reached its highest level of difficulty. That's about all you could do. After I left the band, "The Black Page" became immediately passed up by things like "Mo And Herb's Vacation," and what you had there was not so much more difficult music, but more music. So if you were going to learn that sucker, you had to learn five or six pages, whereas "The Black Page" was just one.

RF: After that, is there anything that is hard for you today?

TB: There are lots of things that are hard for me today. The kinds of things that are on the video are hard for me, and you can always make up more of those. Just pick anything. The latest one I've been working on is playing double strokes with my feet on double bass. I've never done that. I've always played single strokes. My left foot cannot really do double strokes. Just from stomping on a bass drum or stomping on a hi-hat, which is a different technique, I never developed the sort of bounce-off technique that my right foot has. So I've been messing around with a pattern where basically I hold down a double-stroke roll, but polyrhythmically in triplets,

and then I solo over the top of that. I can't really do that yet.

RF: So you still woodshed.

TB: I'll tell you, I used to say that I never practiced, but now occasionally I do. When I get an idea and I don't have the chops to pull off that idea, I practice. Usually the pressure of doing a drum clinic or a drum video makes me start thinking about drums again as opposed to songwriting, and things start to come to me where it's, "That's an interesting idea," and I start to pursue it. Before I know it, I think about it in my head and visualize it almost into completion. Then I sit down and play, and sometimes I'll find it's really hard.

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can hear it in my head, and I go through these phases of learning how to do it.

I remember there was one thing I was working on, I think it was one of those ostinati where I played one beat with my hi-hat and then three beats with my right foot on the bass drum, and soloed over that. The way you learn to do that is to practice all the different permutations of rhythms over that, so you can be prepared to play anything. Then you work this thing out and trance it: The beat is going, and you're trancing, and you're just working out all these things, but it's sloppy. You get to the point where you break through, and you can actually feel yourself doing it. You go, "Oh my God, I'm actually doing it," and as soon as you think that, it falls apart. Then you get back into it, and maybe you slow the tempo down and look at it another way, working through that barrier, breaking down that wall. Then you get to the point where it's, "Wow, I'm just on it," and you can't miss and you know you have it, so you stop, get up, go get a drink of water, and come back 15 minutes later, and you have to start all over again. This is the process. It's a process of integration, and the integration process has its own mind and its own pace; it just happens when it happens. Some people can memorize and absorb really fast. For me, it takes doing it over and over and trancing and psychologically knowing I spent enough time on it that I'm confident enough to pull it off.

RF: What are your goals?

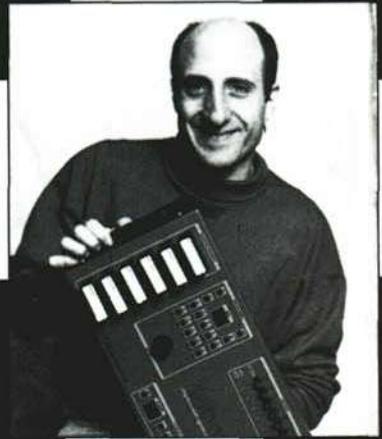
TB: My short term goals are to buy a house and this mixing board I've been looking at, and then soundproof the garage of my house, so that for the first time since I lived at my mom and dad's, I can actually set up a drumkit and record and do professional work at home. That's my goal, to be, in essence, like Frank Zappa or Robbie Robertson or Patrick O'Hearn and be able to sit at home, and when the inspiration comes, jump on it, be able to do it on a professional level and see it through without having a record company or that pressure. And if I can't get anybody interested in the results, I'll press the records and sell them by mail order or something. I feel real good about that now. I've let go of having to be signed and all that. I'm 38 years old, I'm a big boy, why don't I make my own record? If I sell 500 records on mail order and I get ten dollars a piece, that's \$5,000. I'd only get \$500 if I were doing it through a record company. That's the pipe dream. Just to be able to make all kinds of amazing music. I'd love to make instrumental music, vocal music, drum music, have my friends come over and put things down or do things by myself—create. I would be a happy man to just be able to feel a part of the creative process and enjoy the people I am working with. I don't think I'd ever stop doing those sorts of things, even if I became very successful at my own music.



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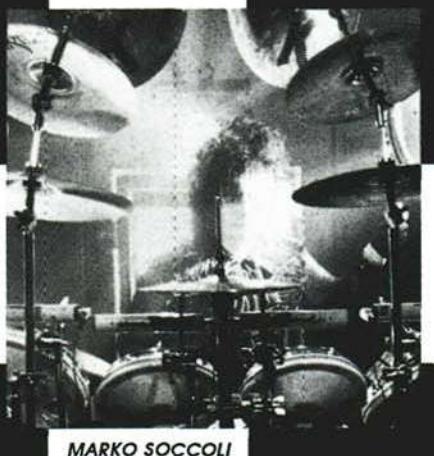
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the basic tracks were first takes. If you listen to Zeppelin albums, you hear them in the studio. You hear the people breathing, what is going on. That's why we left little tags and funny things on.

MD: With all of the sampling today, they still never manage to take the sample of John Bonham and make it really sound like him, the actual human being leaning into the drums.

PT: What's weird is that in "commercial" music, for lack of a better adjective, music that people listen to on the radio, they're getting more used to hearing sampled sounds or a drum machine than real drums. So when they hear real drums they immediately go, "What's that? That's too heavy. That's heavy metal." A real snare drum doesn't go [makes sound of sampled, gated snare]. You lose all the subtleties, all the grace notes. Drum machines are fine in some cases. They serve a purpose. I love it when a band combines real drums with a drum machine, like using a machine for percussion. For instance, on Robert Plant's "Ship Of Fools," there's a drum machine pattern with Chris playing along with it. I love the way that sounds. But when it replaces the

drummer, when it's, "Yeah, get a guitar player, we'll just use a drum machine..." it's one thing for making demos, but now they're making records, million-seller albums.

MD: Do you own a drum machine?

PT: Yes I do, a Roland 707. But I use it to practice with, to work on my time. I don't need it for anything else. To play a slow groove with a drum machine, what I do is have it play for four bars, then sit out for four bars. I hold the beat and see where it comes back in. I'll do that for a half hour. You lay back a little bit and you realize you've laid back a little too much. After a while you get that feeling. It becomes second nature. I try to get to where the time is something you can forget about. Because when you think about time, that's when you have problems. I pity young drummers who have these guys saying, "Hey, your time, your time!" It only makes them worse. I want to be able to just forget about the time when I play. I work on it a lot.

MD: It sounds like you practice.

PT: I'm still heavily into working on my faults. I'm constantly frustrated. I have a practice pad kit in my apartment. My neighbors are real nice people, and they don't mind that dull thud. In fact, I went out of town and the woman who lives above me said, "What happened? I'm used to hearing that sound. I can't go to sleep!" [laughs] And two or three times a week, if we're not active, I go sit at my drums and blow it out. The practice pad is one thing, but sitting at a

kit—that's when it's real.

MD: Traditionally, the drummer's supposed to play with the bass player, but in Mr. Big, you're working with a phenomenal bass player who plays like a lead guitarist. Does that skew things?

PT: The first time I played with Billy and Paul, it was different, because Billy approaches things differently than other bass players. He's got this enormous sound. It covers a huge area of our sound. He'd go up the neck and some of the bottom would drop out, but he'd come right back and be right on. He's got perfect time. He is a guy who's put more of his waking hours into his bass than not; he lives with it. And it shows in his playing. When it comes to just laying down an AC/DC hard rock groove, Billy can do it like nobody's business. And I love his aggressiveness on the bass. In a band where there's just three instruments, you need that big fat thing, and he can definitely do it. Paul Gilbert is really young, but he's also a great player. He's not just, "Hey, look how fast I can play." I didn't know Paul before this band. I just wasn't in that scene of Racer X, the band he was in in Los Angeles, and I was expecting this cliché' rock god guitar player. I walked in, and there was this normal, nice, intelligent young guy. I talked to him and thought, "Wow, he's really got a lot on the ball." Then I played with him. It's easy to see why Billy and Paul have gained the reputations they have—especially from my point of view, because I see them every day. They're

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real people, but they're real dedicated people. They put a lot of time into it. It's something they live and breathe. I've been in a lot of bands where a lot of people come up and say to me, "You're great, man, what are you doing in this band? These guys, they're okay, but you're great." You get sick of hearing that. I wanted to be in a band where everybody was great. In this band, I have to keep up with Billy and Paul! They make me strive for perfection. And I see no end in sight. Hopefully, we'll be doing our 25th anniversary in the year 2015 or something; it's the last band I ever want to be in.

MD: At this point, would you say you're more accomplished as a live performer than as a recording artist?

PT: Hopefully, I'll gain a recording reputation from the *MR. BIG* album, and from our next album, and so on and so forth. What I'm hoping for is, sometime in my career, to come up with a song that starts with drums, and the minute it starts, like "My Sharona" or "Mellow Yellow," every time you hear that, you know exactly what it is. That's a goal for me. Then you're really being musical, as opposed to just playing licks and trying to outdo everybody.

MD: Do you write?

PT: I've never written a song without collaborating. I can play a little guitar and a little keyboards, but my biggest tool, writing-wise, is my voice. With your voice, it's all there. I can hum a melody, I can describe something musically to somebody. For instance, the

song "Wind Me Up" was a lick Paul came up with, and I suggested how to structure it, and then the melody came.

MD: What about doing more singing?

PT: Eric is our singer. I'm happy being the drummer. I used to have people saying, "You know, you should give up the drums, be a lead singer." Drums are just something I love. And what would I hide myself with? Eric and I sang the backgrounds with Sammy Hagar at the BAMMIES, and we had to stand up there. I felt like my pants were down: "They can see me!"

MD: Are you working on a second album?

PT: Right now, we're just out promoting the first one. We did some shows with Winger. Then we started headlining our own shows. We've sold out every single one of them. We've had incredible shows. The audience is on their feet from the first note. Winger would have us come out for their encore. I'd play Rod's kit, which is left-handed. I had to think about that.

MD: Do you have any thoughts of consciously trying to come up with singles that might expose Mr. Big to a bigger audience?

PT: We just do what we do. It's funny, some people think we weren't heavy enough. Other people think it's too hard rock. So basically, we just have to think, "What do we like?" I like all kinds of music—a Beatles melody as much as crunching AC/DC rock. I just want to sell a zillion records, because that's always fun.

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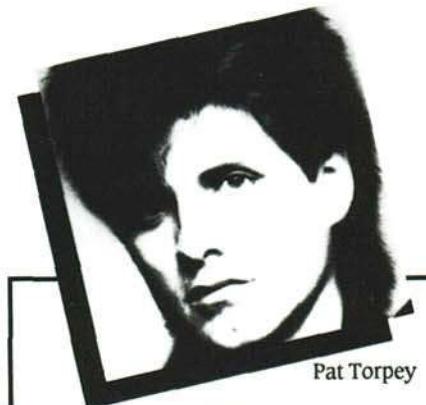
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then he looked around, and finally said, "Do you like the other stuff we've done?" I said, "Yes, I just feel this would feel much better if we would turn it around a little," and he said, "Okay, go for it. Play what you feel." So we used that "Snowbird"/"Boys Of Summer" feel on the hi-hat, the upbeat kind of thing, and the pulse from the bass drum, so you really didn't need a 2 and 4 at that point. We just settled on where the accents should be, not always on the snare, but between the tom and the snare.

We just experimented for a long time, going back and forth, and it ended up work-

ing out great. A lot of it was agreeing on the right placement, where the bass drum accents would be, etc. Our approaches started out being opposite, and we met somewhere in the middle, and the song ended up being one of the most creative ones on the record. You have to say something, though. Number one, you're ripping them off if you don't. It's their career, and you're not going to feel good about it if your name is on it. Actually, before we changed it, I told Peter I would do it the way he wanted, but not to put my name on it.

That record was a lot of fun, though,

because I played live into a Synclavier with pads. We also tried all kinds of different triggers, and we did a lot of experimentation. Then I replaced all the Synclavier hi-hat with real hi-hat, and did some live percussion and some machine percussion, too. The reason why we mess with triggers is that on the Simmons pads themselves, the voltage on the triggers wasn't hot enough to go through the Octapad and turn it into MIDI information and trigger the Synclavier. So we got these Mark electronic triggers, and they worked great. We attached those to the pads and used those. Peter played the keyboard, and we played to the click on the Synclavier. Actually, we had a cassette deck with SMPTE on one side, and that would follow the vocal on the other side, which would follow the Synclavier. He would play keyboard bass, and I would play the drums, and the Synclavier would record everything we did. We'd keep what we liked and re-do what we didn't like. Then we could edit or do all different kinds of things within the Synclavier.

RF: People seem to glamorize working in the studios and what they don't realize is that it's a lot of hard work, a lot of dealing with personalities, egos, and being a psychologist.

DF: All those things are very true. No matter how many records you do, every new situation with new people is like a beginning. When you walk into a situation, you really do have to see everybody's personality, and the mood everybody is in. There's a lot of money being spent on studio time, so you have to make the most out of that time. If I have an opinion, I have to approach it carefully. It depends on the person, but with some people you have to be very aggressive and "I really think that's wrong, we shouldn't do it that way," and they respond to that. But that attitude might block another person off, and then no creativity would happen. Maybe with them you have to do what they want and then, as you're listening back, say, "You know, I think this is good, but it might be better if we tried this," and come in through the back door.

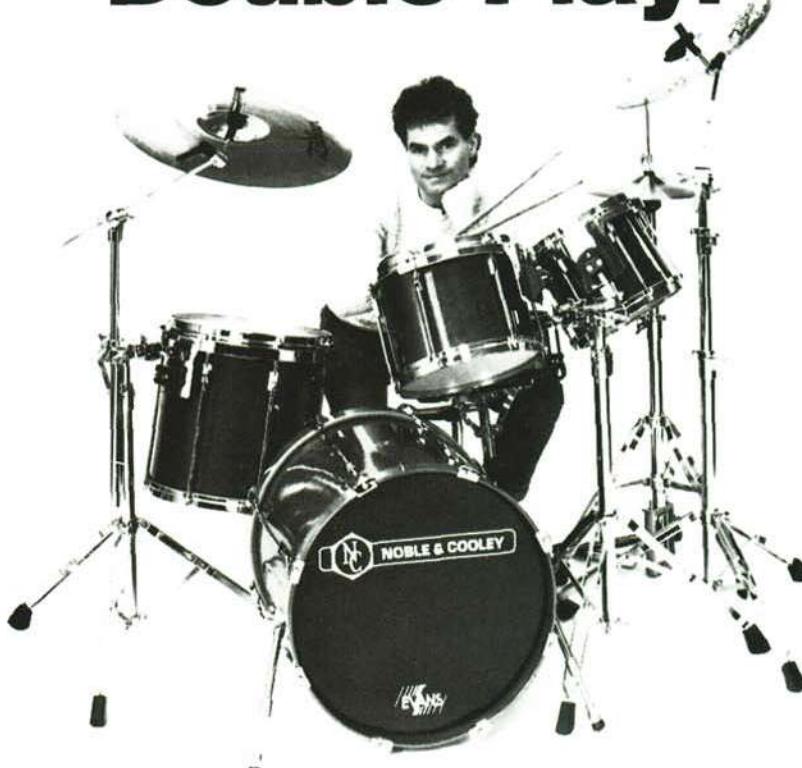
RF: What happens if you're hired for a job and you're not right for it?

DF: If I knew I wasn't right for something, I would say so; I wouldn't take the gig.

RF: What if you don't know until you get there?

DF: You dig in real quick. There have definitely been situations where I've been called

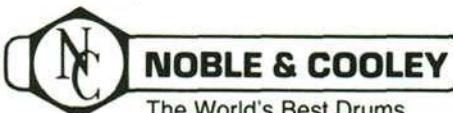
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in that I wasn't sure about. I did a rockabilly song for Marshall Crenshaw's record and the stuff for Brian Setzer, and I had never played rockabilly before. I think what you do is you just listen to it and you put yourself into it. You know what that feel is because you've heard it. Especially with rockabilly, a lot of it isn't straight 8th notes or a shuffle; it's an in-between feel, and there are a million places in there where you can place the shuffle feel. It's just locking into it. If it's something I've never done or I'm not good at, I just give it everything I can possibly put into it, and it usually works out. People can do pretty much anything they want if they put their mind to it. If someone called me to play on a bebop record, I wouldn't be right for it. I played that a long time ago, but I haven't done it in years. If they wanted to take a chance, I'd love to try it, but I'd definitely let them know.

RF: Maybe we should define some of the roles: the artist, the producer, the engineer, and the musician.

DF: The engineer basically is working with the producer to get the sound he wants. The musician can suggest. A lot of times the producer will say, "What are you hearing here?" All three of you talk it over, with the artist also. It can be frustrating if the producer hears it the way you hear it, but the engineer doesn't. You have to be very diplomatic in suggesting something to the engineer, especially if it's an engineer who isn't very open-minded. "That's the same mic' I use on everybody's snare drum, so it must be right." To me, there are no rules. You should listen to what everybody says; nothing is in stone. Every room is different, every drum is different. There are so many variables. You have to be 100% open-minded—always! When someone suggests something, I never, ever get offended. I always try to let people know to tell me if they like what I'm playing or not.

As for producers, there are a lot of different kinds. There's a producer who is good at putting the right group of musicians together for the artist. Then there's a producer who is more of a musician/producer who does everything—all the sequencing, maybe plays keyboards, and maybe has certain people come in to do other things. Then there's the producer who is really good at working with bands and getting all their ideas together, weeding them out and getting the best performance on tape. Then there are other producers who are great engineers and who get great sounds on tape. But no matter what, the great producers listen to everybody's suggestions. With Don Gehman, David Kershenbaum, or Don Dixon, I can suggest something, and they might not even respond at that point. But an hour later, or maybe the next day, they'll turn around and respond to it and say, "That's a good idea, we should try it," or "I don't think it will work because of this and this," but they will have heard it. A lot of producers have a strong idea of what they want, and other producers pretty much let you do what you want to do.

RF: It sounds like you like the mixture,

because you were saying you want to be called for your ideas, but you mentioned Arif's great ideas.

DF: I love that. The number-one thing is to get what they want, but if I leave a session and feel I didn't give them what they want, I'll get very depressed.

RF: Have you felt that?

DF: Yes, I have. But I think there is something that is important for people to know: No matter what, not everybody is going to love what you do. Someone is going to prefer using somebody else. It's almost harder going into a situation when they know what

you've done, because they have really high expectations of you. That's really difficult. There's also the person in there who is saying, "What's the big deal about this guy?" That happens a lot. Luckily the producers I've worked with are really great.

RF: We were talking about the individual roles in the studio. Who determines, say, the tuning of the drums?

DF: It depends. Sometimes they'll totally leave it up to me, but I also like to work closely with the engineer. I like an engineer to talk to me and say, "There's a certain ring here," because he might hear things I'm not

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hearing. Or maybe he'll suggest a different snare drum because it might sound great alone, but in the scheme of things with the bass and guitar up, it might not work.

One of my all-time heroes is Phil Collins because, to me, he orchestrates everything—the drum parts into the machines, the drums, the sound of the drums. I really like approaching things that way rather than just playing through a song. I like coming up with an arrangement—not only part-wise, but coming up with the sounds. I'll do anything. On Tracy's stuff, I originally played on a fiber

drum case with brushes—I think on "Born To Fight," although I think we ended up replacing it. When we re-cut it, I played a hi-hat, sidestick, and bass drum. With Arif, we tried a trigger on a RotoTom, although I don't know if we ended up using it. We got the attack of the RotoTom and the sound of the snare drum, and triggered some Simmons SDS5s. I also enjoy stacking sounds.

One time on a Steve Thompson record that David Kershenbaum was producing with Bob Marlette, I put about six different Remo Spoxe up on cymbal stands, and I also had

them on the hi-hat. The second engineer was spinning them all while I was playing. It really sounded great, and it was a lot of fun. We orchestrated the whole beginning of that record. I had a big marching bass drum that I was playing with a mallet. Bob sat at the set playing an 18" floor tom, and we both played a particular rhythm. We did that groove for four minutes or so. Then I had a cymbal in one hand that I was hitting against the floor, and I had a stick in the other hand, and I was hitting it on a case and on the side of the metal bar of my rack. Then on a different overdub, I was holding a China cymbal, hitting it and then choking it for a kind of white noise sound. Then I overdubbed tom fills to it. A lot of times you'll go back and double fills with different toms, and you'll change the speed of the tape machine. You'll do a pass, then slow the tape machine down, then another pass, and speed the tape machine up. You'll have something like five different passes, and that creates a really great sound.

The "proper" way to play to get the best sound of the drum is right in the center of the drum, but there are times when you have to dig into the drum because you want that different sound. On the Danny Wilde record, we wanted a certain ring out of the snare drum, and the best place where that ring came out was on the edge, so I was playing maybe two inches in from the edge of the drum. Sometimes I think if some drum teachers came in, they'd be shaking their heads, but you have to do whatever it takes. Sometimes your technique might look really bad, but that's what you have to do to get the feel. We wanted something that was ringing and pretty high-pitched. I wanted the bass drum deep and low, the snare drum high, the toms right in the midrange, and very bright cymbals on the very top end. The cymbals didn't have a lot of midrange or lows, so they didn't get in the way of the toms, the bass drum, or the snare drum. On that and the Tom Cochrane record, on some choruses I'd go to a second, higher-pitched snare drum, just to lift up the energy and give it a little bit of a change without having to change parts. I'll do the same thing with hi-hats, where I'll change hi-hats on the chorus, to lift it. When I go to a session, I bring about four bass drums, 12 snare drums, a set of toms, about five sets of hi-hats, ten different crashes, about three different ride cymbals, and a lot of percussion stuff like Spoxe.

RF: Can you tell us about some of the trends you've seen in the past few years in the studios? Are they using electronics less these days?

DF: About four or five years ago, I remember getting sick to my stomach because I bought my first Simmons kit. I took a loan out; I didn't have any money. My wife, Angela, pushed me; she's always been amazingly supportive. When the electronics thing came in, a lot of drummers didn't work because they didn't get into it. Their attitude was that it was a fad. But I learned every machine that came out. I would go to a music store and

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check it out just so I could do it if the opportunity came up. Probably for about a year, three quarters of my work was programming. If I played, it was replacing a snare drum or crash cymbals or hi-hat, never a full kit. Everything was individual because they wanted the sound of the drum machine and they didn't want any snare rattle in the bass drum mic's. Then right around when I started working with Tracy Chapman, it felt like things were going back a little to acoustic. That record was totally acoustic. I spent tons of money on my rack, and I use all the stuff, but since I really got the rack put together, I've used it on records maybe eight days in a year and a half. I have a Roland mixer, which is just for me to monitor things, I have an SPX 90, and a Forat F-16 sampler, which is amazing. It triggers very quickly. I like triggering after the fact, doing the track and then stacking things around it. You're going to want to enhance it, and it triggers great off the tape. It tracks all the dynamics; it's really great. I have the SDS7 for white noise stuff and the SDS5 to add some analog sounds. I have an MX1, which I use especially when I work with Kevin Smith, David Kershenbaum, or Bob Marlette. We use the triggers on the toms, and it goes through the MX1. This way there is no leakage. It sends non-dynamic pulses to the control board, which is hooked up to the gates. When the pulse hits the gate, it opens, then it closes. Sometimes it's faster and easier to do it that way, because if you're just setting it with mic's to open and close the gate, if you start playing really hard on the snare drum, more than likely the mic's are going to start opening up. You end up having to tighten the gate too tight, so it won't open. I also have an Alesis HR-16 drum machine, a Roland 808, and a Roland 505. Plus I have a patch bay and a snake that goes through the drums and triggers any of the units—I use Fishman triggers—and I have an Octapad. I want to get simpler, though.

RF: What's the most complicated you've gotten on a session?

DF: Anywhere from triggering toms, kick, and snare and programming at the same time.

RF: Like with whom?

DF: I did it with the band Millions Like Us, on their tune "Ideal World," which was produced by Hawk Wolinski over at Cherokee. It was R&B, blue-eyed soul kind of stuff. The track we did there was live drums against programmed percussion and programmed bass. I didn't have my rack then. That was one of the first times I was actually triggering. I think I triggered the SDS7 and maybe the SDS5. Then when I was on the promotional tour with Cock Robin, not being part of the band, I had a couple of days off in England, and Millions Like Us were co-producing their album with Bill Bottrell. They wanted the song "Chain" half programmed and half live, so they sent a Linn 9000, Octapads, and a few other things over to my room. I programmed it there and took it to Townhouse Studios—which I wanted to go to because

Phil Collins records there. I laid it down there, triggering different sounds. Then I played live hi-hat and crash cymbal over that.

On the Tom Cochrane stuff [*Victory Day*], we rehearsed for a few days, and they had some programs down in their Mac. I redid some of the parts to where I felt they were a little better, and programmed stuff on the Alesis, and I think we triggered the F-16 on some stuff. We laid down the percussion stuff, got all the effects, printed some of the effects, and then I played real drums on top of it. On that record, I used two snare drums

a lot.

RF: And then on the simple end of things it would be Tracy Chapman.

DF: On that first album I used my old Rogers kit, which is the kit I used up until two years ago, when I went out with Belinda [Carlisle] and got my DW drums. We may have triggered some stuff in the mix here and there, but it was very acoustic, very natural-sounding, not a lot of room ambience at all. I'll tell you, it was great to track with her vocals in the headphones. It was amazing. For two days I heard her play the same two songs while she was auditioning musicians, and

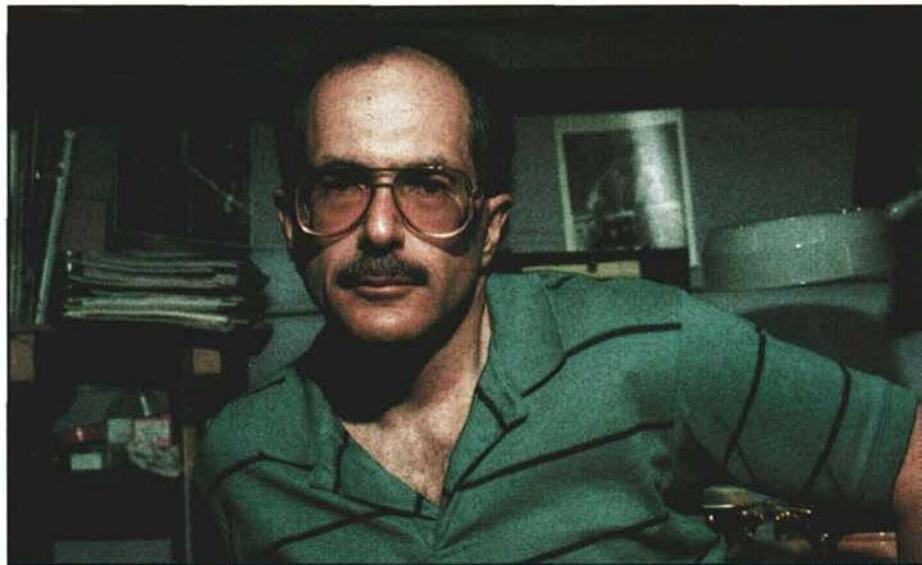


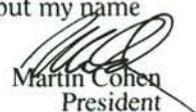
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every time she played it, it was with the same consistency as the time before.

RF: So they were auditioning for the record. That's a little unusual.

DF: David is good musically, but he's also really good at picking the right people and putting the right record together. David was really smart by making her the focus, with everybody else just as embellishment

RF: You're accomplishing one of the dreams you had, but you're a sideman. Is being in a band a goal?

DF: I remember hearing Jeff Porcaro say that he could never just play ten songs for the whole year, and I agree with that. I have to play with different people, different kinds of

music and songs. I would love to do a band, though, because then *everything* matters. On tour you care about everything, how the people react; it's your own thing. Also, it's great to do something that is creatively yours from the writing, to the bass drum sound in the mix, to the bass parts, to the guitar parts, the keyboard parts, vocals, melodies, lyrics; it's a group effort, but it's a part of you. That would be amazing. That would be another level of the feeling, if you heard that on the radio.

RF: Do you ever get points on a record by any of these people you work with?

DF: No. I have been offered to join the band to get points, like with Cock Robin, but not

just to do the record. The thing about that though, is because of a record like Tracy's, you get a lot more work and your price can triple at that point, so that's where it helps financially—which is another thing about having a band: If you have any of the publishing, that's something for your grandkids.

RF: Let's move to the live arena for a moment. If you use different sets and different sounds from song to song on a project, and then you go out on the road, how do you recreate that?

DF: Some producers like to get one sound for the whole record. Some producers like different ones, even within one song. Recreating it live, it depends. I'd trigger and use samples. I like to make it sound somewhat like the record. A lot of times artists aren't interested in making it like the record, though. They feel, "This is live; we're not creating the record, we're creating an energy." With Belinda, on part of the tour I triggered a kick and snare, but most of it I didn't. I had just gotten the DW drums, and I loved the way they sounded. That was fun because I used an 18x24 bass drum and a 4x12 snare drum, so it was pitched as high as possible. It was a nice variance between the low end and the high snare. With Starship, I played to a lot of percussion parts that I programmed. We triggered the snare drum every once in a while, but we really didn't get into it heavily.

Playing live is totally different than playing in the studio; you need different chops, different endurance. There's an energy from the first downbeat until the end, and you're playing one song right after another, so you have to be able to get each tempo, one right after another. The Starship set was great, with old stuff like "Laying It On The Line" and "Jane," which is really rock 'n' roll. In fact, they had a lot more energy on it than I would have expected from the records. Some of the stuff was more R&B. There was one song, "Tomorrow Doesn't Matter Anymore," that had a keyboard solo where I did a Tower Of Power groove. It's been about eight years since I've been able to do that. It was really fun. Then there were the ballads, so there was a big variety of music in two hours.

RF: How did the Starship gig come about?

DF: I just got a call to go up and play with them. They listened to a few other people, and they called me back to play with them. It was a crazy time. I was doing a record here with a band called Trixter, and I ended tracking with them on a Sunday afternoon. I picked up the equipment to take up to San Francisco Monday morning, flew up there to rehearse for a week, then came back and rehearsed with Belinda for a week, had Thanksgiving Day off, did the *Tonight Show* with Belinda on Friday, and left with Starship on Saturday. We did eight shows, and it was a lot of fun. I really want to do a variety of touring and studio work. It's hard to go out on the road, because if it's a long tour, that really hurts you when you come back. Even if you're going out for a week, three months from now someone will say, "Why don't we give Denny a call?" "He's out on the

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road"—even if you go on vacation, [laughs] But I went over to Europe for a promotional tour with Cock Robin, and I did Belinda's tour last year, as well as some shows with Don Dixon, which was fun because the Uptown Horns played, and he had a percussionist.

RF: What about the Don Dixon stuff you recorded [*EEEEE*]?

DF: When we track with Don, we always track with percussion and drums, which is really fun. It's very interesting because it just makes you approach things so differently. There's much more going on rhythmically.

RF: Does that free you up to lay back a little more?

DF: Maybe a little bit, but it also makes you play more rhythmically. You don't have to play as solid time because there's something else doing that too. Don really likes to try to get something different, feel-wise. On "Love Gets Strange," he sang a feel. The owner of the studio used to play drums, and he had a little 18" bass drum that had a front head on it. There was no padding; we just set that up for something real boomy. I played that on beats 1 and 3. I also had a piccolo snare drum that I took the snares off of, plus another snare to my right that was deeper. I took the snares off of that too, and I had a floor tom and a hi-hat, and then I stacked two small cymbals on top of each other to my right, and we just started playing this groove. We messed with it for a minute, Don started the song, and that was it, that was the take.

Then "Dark End Of The Street" was an old song, and that was amazing; it felt incredible and we were going, "How are we going to top this?" It was just a straight-8th kind of a feel that we turned into a 6/8 kind of feel. It was an exercise in trying to create that feel through the whole thing; there were no fills or anything.

RF: You tune by ear, don't you?

DF: Yes, and to the track. Sometimes on the bass drum, I really feel that the decay of the drum is part of the groove. If it's a slower tempo, the decay should be longer. Even on the bass drum, I'll let out the padding to get a little more air and more decay. On bass drums in general, I don't pad too much. I use my Levi jacket in my bass drum on most of the stuff. I have double heads, and I'll put the jacket or something about that size inside. It leans up against the head to just kind of soak up some of the bad overtones. But I like to keep it boomy. Sometimes with Tracy, we deadened the drum quite a bit, because it needed to be smaller and not take up a lot of space.

RF: What about your bass drum technique?

DF: From the time I was three years old until I was about eight years old, I took tap dancing, and the kind of technique I use with my right foot is just like tap dancing. It's with the heel up, but the ball of the foot rocks across the bass drum pedal. When I'm doing 16th notes, I'll rock back and forth for different dynamics. I always pull the pedal out of the drums because in tap dancing, you're always pulling up the foot after whatever pattern

you do. That was another thing that I copied from my brother.

RF: How much reading do you actually do in the studio?

DF: Hardly any. If you do a lot of jingles or movie dates, that's where the reading comes in. For making records, I'd say in the last three years I've had to read four or five times, and that was probably just chord charts. Usually it's just listening to a demo or to the artist play the song. I write out my own charts just with the intro and the verses; I put how many bars each is and a quick notation of what the beat should be in that section, and maybe the bass drum pattern. I'll write out any accents, but I won't really

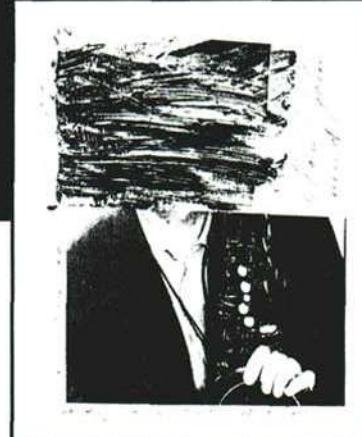
read it, I'll just glance over to it to see what's coming up.

The one thing I'm adamant about is knowing what the melody is. People will say, "Play this kind of a groove for eight bars," but to me, how do you know what to play and what not to play just from that? The melody is everything, that's what I feed off of. Again, it goes back to the fact that you're in this because you love music and you want to be creative. If you unfortunately get in a situation where you start losing that attitude, it's not a very creative atmosphere, and then you start watching the clock and thinking about the money. If that becomes the only reason you are playing, in four or five years

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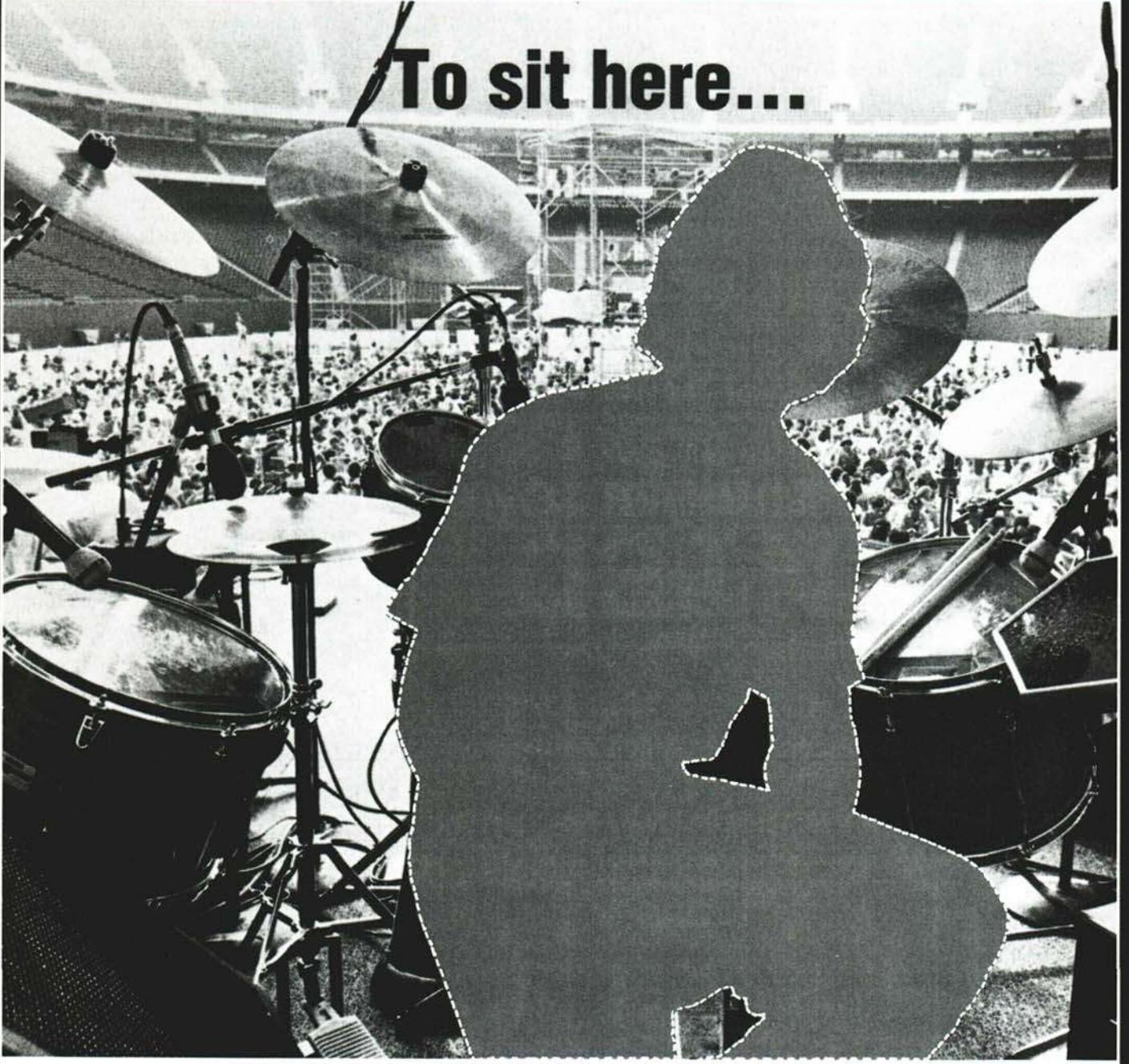
RF: What advice would you give to the young up-and-comer?

DF: I remember when I was in school, I had tons of support from my parents. I remember a lot of my friends didn't, and a lot of them didn't continue because of that. My mom used to read *Modern Drummer* all the time, and I really think that's very important, because it really gave her an understanding. Maybe some of the kids can get their parents to do that also. And my wife, Angela, held my hand while I got the Simmons and let me do whatever it took to get to the part of the career I wanted. I don't think it would have happened without her. I credit a lot of it to her.

I remember about four years ago, I made maybe \$100 a week; it was pretty grim. Then I got offered a gig with Mac Davis in Las Vegas for \$1600 a week. I turned it down, and she was 100% supportive of it. I'll never forget that, because if I had done that, I would have either ended up just doing those things, which I didn't want to do—I wanted to make records—or I would have done it for a year or two and then come back to L.A. to nothing, because no one would have known who I was. It would have taken me that much longer to get things going. Doing that gig would have given me a salary, but it wouldn't have done anything for my career. It's important to choose what you want to do and go for what you want to do, because there are so many aspects of this business. You really need to focus yourself on what you want to do. I wanted to do records and tours. I want to write and produce and have a band and do all that, too, but you have to focus on each thing as you're doing it and pick the right time to pursue it.

Another important thing—and Don Cehman taught me this—is knowing when it's time to take a break. I know, for me, if I work every single day for a couple of months, I'll peak, and then I feel my playing starts to go down. I drain myself, and I need to take a rest to restore myself and feed myself so I have something to say again. I'm just starting to be able to do this, because I always thought if I took a break, I'd never work again, but it's really important. Or when you have a break, take advantage of it and maybe not play at all, but listen to music a lot and feed yourself. Listening is the best thing you can do, not only to the drums, but to all the instruments around them and the moods and the feels and why things are happening the way they are. Then you can call on all that at some point.

I think the most important thing to getting where you want to be and staying there is to have an open mind as a player to people's suggestions. And the thing you did yesterday may not work today; this is a different day and a different song. Have an open mind towards change.



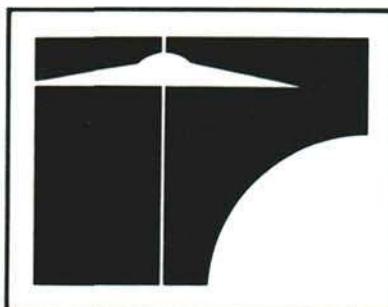
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Inside Ayotte

when you polish jewelry."

Once a shell is finished, it goes into assembly. Here again, Ayotte's system is completely different from anybody else's. Ray explains that difference.

"When doing repairs of other drums in the retail store," he says, "we found that a lot of tuning problems were due to misalignment of the lug casings around the shells. They could vary as much as 3/8" from A to B and B to C. Most of the indexing systems that drum manufacturers have for drilling the holes for their hardware depend on each drum being exactly square and perpendicular, and having exactly the same circumference from drumshell to drumshell. But as I said, there are no such things as shells that are perfectly round and exactly the same size. So a machine may turn out a drum that's absolutely perfect the first time, but it can't maintain that quality when it has to turn out a couple of thousand drums.

"We have an indexed turntable. On it we can place a drumshell of any diameter, line it up with the appropriate marks, and have any number of holes subdivided for that shell. We designed the table to be accurate to within half a millimeter. All of our marking is done by hand, and every

mark is double-checked. You won't find that kind of accuracy with any production drums.

"It's very expensive for us to screw up at this point, because if we do we have to replace the shell—and by the time a shell gets here it's already undergone ten weeks of woodworking and lacquer finishing. But we don't let anything go out second-grade, so obviously we do everything in our power *not* to make errors."

In the Ayotte machine shop, specially adapted lathes and other machinery create dozens of parts that are found only on Ayotte drums. This is an expensive and time-consuming process, and seems especially unusual in light of the fact that virtually every other drum manufacturer brings in most or all of their hardware from overseas. Why does Ayotte choose to make its component parts in-house?

"There are a lot of reasons," Ray responds. "For one, 13 individual parts made exactly to our specifications go into our snare strainer. We've dealt with Taiwan a lot, and I would be dreaming if I ever thought that I'd be able to get all these parts there and have them fit together. The chrome plating that they do is sub-standard as well, and we have no control over that.

"There is a concept of manufacturing called JIT—meaning 'just in time.' You want every component delivered just in time to make your final product; you don't want to

have to stockpile parts because that uses up space and money. Well, the first problem you have with Taiwan is that JIT doesn't exist; their lead times are not dependable. So imagine that I order a thousand pieces each of these 13 items. What do I do if they back-order one item? I've got 1,000 snare strainers minus a key part! Or what happens if I get these 13 parts and one of the pieces isn't perfect and doesn't fit? God help me, because I'll wait three months to get the problem straightened out. Meanwhile, no drums go out of here for those three months. That's a much bigger price to pay than saving a little bit of money on the hardware.

"The other thing is that if I want to deal with Taiwan, I have to deal with a large number of pieces—probably a lot more than I can handle. Getting back to JIT, it's more important to me to have small quantities delivered on a timely basis than it is to get a boatload of stuff that's going to last me five years. What happens if I want to make a tiny change in something, in response to my customers' suggestions? It's going to take me two years to go through the existing inventory of parts before I can make that change. But if we make things here, if I have a problem, I can fix it *right now*.

"We take the philosophy that designing drums and parts for them is an evolutionary process. Our snare strainer is a prime example. The first ten that we made cost

First we zigged. Then everybody zigged.

us about \$500 each; the next ten cost us about \$250 each; the next 100 cost about \$100, and so on. Now we're looking at making around 250 of them, and we hope to get the price down from there. But it's still cheaper for us to do it this way than to go to Taiwan.

"We could take an approach like some companies do: get our shells from one place, send them to another place to be cut to size, then send them to another place and get them finished, then send them to another place to get them drilled and assembled, and then send them over to our shipping department to have them put in boxes and sent to the customers. But we wouldn't have control over all of these different parts of the operation, and we wouldn't be able to deliver custom-made drums."

That "custom" philosophy extends to the way Ayotte drums are assembled. Ray outlines the details of the assembly process.

"On shells that are over 24-ply in thickness, all the hardware is attached from the outside with stainless-steel tapping screws; there are no holes on the inside of the shells. We also use nylon washers and nylon-filled nuts—the very best fasteners. We even go to the trouble of mounting all the screws onto a board and polishing them so that the heads gleam like chrome. Our labels are also made of stainless steel. They are etched with acid, and then the etched part has a black epoxy applied to it. The

serial number is stamped on, and then we polish the label and attach it with screws—which means it is removable; the drum can be refinished without damaging the shell. The label will last forever, so you don't have the problem where ten years down the road the label is falling off and the drum looks like a piece of garbage because it no longer has its identifying badge and serial number. Of course, that's drumshop-oriented stuff that comes from the retail side of our business. Manufacturers don't see what happens to their drums after a few years. But we see it all the time, because we repair them. Being a drumshop, we have quite a different attitude towards drums and what our responsibility is to the individual as a maker of drums. We don't want somebody coming back to us ten years from now—or going to somebody else, which is even worse—and saying, "What am I going to do now? I want to add another drum, but the label doesn't match" or "I want to add another drum, but the colors don't match." That happens all the time. There's not a manufacturer out there who hasn't disappointed a lot of customers by making the stuff that they make obsolete before its time."

Along with their departure from traditional manufacturing techniques, Ayotte drums feature some radical departures from traditional designs in hardware. Other companies have failed with this approach in the past, due to the resistance with which

they were met in the marketplace. Regarding this, Ray comments, "What happens with radical departures in drum designs is that you end up with something that often-times doesn't perform as well as what's already on the market. Don't forget, current designs in drum equipment didn't happen by accident; there have been people who've spent countless hours over decades trying to figure out a simpler, better way of making the same thing. Our challenge here is to be so *completely* different that you can't even compare what we do to anything else that you've seen, and yet it has to work better than anything else on the market. That's a hell of a tall order."

The most obvious difference on Ayotte drums is their unique *Tune-Lock* tensioning system. Ray explains the genesis of this design.

"I started developing our *Tune-Lock* tensioning system in the 1970s, and it took over five years. We made lists of all of the things that a drummer could possibly want out of a tensioning system. Every desirable mechanical or musical aspect was included. Then we had to temper that list with certain realities. For example, the tension rods had to be 12/24 in thread size. We saw that when Sonor tried to introduce their drums in the North American market with metric tension rods that were slotted, everybody hated that. And it still creates problems for them. There are just certain standards you have to adhere to. I also wanted a tension-

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ing system that would last forever, so that if we went out of business tomorrow, our parts would still work a hundred years from now.

"First of all, the bracket is solid. There's no cavity or spring there to produce or add any weird sound to the drum. The gaskets between the brackets and the shell are made of ABS plastic. It's far more expensive for us to make them from that material—which must be carved to shape on our overhead router—than from rubber gasket material that can easily be cut or stamped out. But ours is not an insulating gasket; what it does is make the tension bracket part of the drumshell, so that the mass of the shell is added to by the bracket. If you take a soft rubber or vinyl insulator, what you're doing, in effect, is grabbing the shell and choking it—just like you were pressing with your fingers. Our system actually raises the resonant frequency of the shell and makes a much brighter sound."

"Tensioning systems on virtually all drums today basically involve nothing more than a die-cast box that doesn't do anything but hold a nut. Yet tensioning systems create very serious concerns for drummers. One is mechanical: being able to remove and replace a head quickly. The other is musical: You don't want a drum that goes out of tune before you've ended a song, but you don't want a system for keeping the drum in tune that makes it difficult to change the head. You can take a conventional tuning lug and put it into a nylon-filled nut—making it very difficult for the lug to turn back

due to vibration. But it will also take you forever to get the head off. What you've done is solve one problem by creating another one. We wanted to address both of those problems, and *Tune-Lock* did that."

"Our tension rods thread into a steel cylinder, which, in turn, is held in place by the claw shape of the tension bracket. Inside the cylinder, fed from one side, is a nylon plug. An adjustable screw allows you to set the amount of pressure applied by that plug against the tension rod. What you want, ideally, is enough pressure to keep the tension rod from backing out of the cylinder during playing, but not so much that you can't tune the drum or change a head easily. A nice side-benefit of this design is that by feeling how far the rods protrude below the cylinders with your fingers, it's possible to get the drum into fairly even tension without needing to play it. Of course, fine-tuning should still be done, but our system allows a drum to be tuned instantly to a point that's often better than many people can get a conventional drum to in half an hour of fiddling with it."

"Changing a drumhead is just a matter of backing each tension rod off enough to allow the cylinder to slip out from the tension bracket and release the rim. The rods and cylinders stay with the rim, so you just have to pop the new head on, put the rim back, fit the cylinders back into the brackets, and tighten the rods back up. The neat thing about this is that you don't have to chase any nuts or bolts. You can do this in the dark; you're not going to lose anything."

Besides being uniquely designed, Ayotte tensioning brackets are assembled in a unique manner, as well. "Everyone else's die-cast tension bracket has threads threaded into the back of it," says Ray. "When you take it off the shell and put it back on again, the chances of cross-threading the screw are very good. If you do that, of course, you destroy the tension bracket, because die-cast material can't be re-drilled or re-tapped very many times. So we designed ours with stainless-steel machine screws going all the way through from the outside of the shell, and a nylon-filled nut on the inside. You can take the whole drum apart and put it back together without worrying about whether it will go back together again."

"The permanent-service aspect also applies to the cylinder that acts as a nut for the tension rod. It's not complicated, like a swivel nut is. You can make a *Tune-Lock* cylinder, if you really have to, with a hack saw and a drill press. We guarantee our entire tensioning system for life, and will replace any problem parts for free. So far, our replacement cost has been virtually zero."

"Our snare strainer is virtually indestructible," Ray continues, "yet is very simple to operate. It's designed to have a very solid, positive feel, with controlled release and a lockable tension adjustment. About half the parts are stainless steel, and the main connecting link is a heavy, machine-chain link pin. It fits on any drum from a 3 1/2" piccolo up. So far, no one else has really developed

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oped a suitable strainer for a piccolo, when you think of all the things that people have to do to fit their strainers onto their piccolos. Our strainer also has more drop—"than any other. So the snares are really free and away from the bottom head when they are released, and can't snap back."

When it comes to drum design and manufacture, Ray says, with obvious conviction, "There's a calculated reason for everything we do. Nothing is done simply because it's part of the tradition of drum manufacture. Because we don't have an assembly line and we aren't dedicated to making a given product, we have the opportunity to change what we make any time we want. Everything that we do—every process that we have—is constantly re-examined, almost on a day-to-day basis. I'm constantly down there with the guys saying, 'Are the reinforcing rings holding? How can we make things stronger? Is it easy to machine? How are the tools lasting?' We're constantly looking for better ways to make a higher-quality instrument.

"On the other hand, a lot of manufacturers today—and we're talking about the biggest guys who are the most successful—unfortunately are making changes too quickly: cosmetic changes that really don't have anything to do with the sound, quality, or mechanical usefulness of the drum. They introduce the model 1990-X drumset, only because it isn't 1989 anymore and maybe they'll find more market share by introducing a new color or a new shape of tension bracket. But they haven't really done

anything for the musical instrument. You're not going to find us making any changes for the sake of the change. They have to be made for a good, mechanical reason."

When it comes to selling his drums, Ray has very carefully established dealer/representatives in major cities around the globe. But so far, he has consciously chosen to exclude the single largest drum market in the world, namely the U.S. Why is that?

"I suppose the best way to answer that question," replies Ray, "is to try to identify what the U.S. market really means. What it is to us is our future. I'm a little afraid of getting there too soon, because, let's face it, it's the most important market in the world. I guess I just haven't felt ready. As a matter of fact, I've always turned down interviews like this, because if we have *Modern Drummer* readers finding out about Ayotte custom drums and bombarding me with mail, what am I going to do? I may have to disappoint a lot of people.

"I get phone calls every day from guys in the States who want to represent our drums—some huge distributor operations. That's all very nice, but I can't do it. What am I going to do...take an order for a thousand drumsets to be delivered tomorrow? That's not what we're in the business of doing. What I can do is slowly improve our production capacity, so that at some point in the future we'll be able to take a good hard look at getting maybe a handful of dealers in the U.S. I will be very judicious in how I choose them. They're going to have to be people who care about the qual-

ity of work that we do and about the customers' needs—and put those things ahead of profit motivation. Obviously you have to make a profit or you go out of business. But we're not hammering out product; we make fine musical instruments."

Ray Ayotte obviously believes very strongly in what he is doing, and feels that he has good reasons for doing things the way he does. But he is neither arrogant nor intractable about his opinions. "I don't want to come across like a 'myth de-bunker,'" says Ray. "I want to make sure that people understand, when I'm talking about things, that I don't really like to 'make up' solutions to problems if those solutions aren't right. I've been directly involved in drums for 30 years. I'm 43 now, and I started playing and getting paid for it when I was 13. From that point until today, there has never been a lack of opportunity for me to learn something new every day. And the more I learn about drums, the less I know. It's very humbling. I am willing to change my mind tomorrow about anything that I've said to anybody in my life, if what I believed turns out to be incorrect. I'm happier when somebody says I'm wrong than when they say I'm right. What I already know isn't helping me any; it's what I'm going to learn tomorrow that will help me."



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James, Robert Goulet, Eddie Fisher, Steve & Edie, and, of course, Judy Garland.

JA: When did you start working with Judy?

BL: Around 1960 or 1961. Mort Lindsey hired me to do three concerts with Judy. The first one was in Washington D.C., and the second date was her famous Carnegie Hall concert, when they recorded the album *Judy Garland Live At Carnegie Hall*. That album sold a zillion copies.

JA: Were there a lot of rehearsals?

BL: Not really. The first time I saw the book was in Washington. We had a rehearsal in the afternoon and then did the concert that night, and then did the same thing at Carnegie Hall. Judy liked the way I played, and she paid me some really good bread. I stayed with Judy for a couple of years and ended up in California doing television things. Judy did a couple of big specials, including one with Sinatra and Dean Martin.

JA: All live shows?

BL: Oh yeah: big band, down the middle, one shot. I moved to California because the show had moved there, but I was very unhappy. I just didn't like California. So when things got going very good for me, I bought a house in Kinnelon, New Jersey. The next thing you know, I started making some records. I had been going around banging my head against the wall. But when you make a hit record—a million-seller—suddenly everyone thinks you can play. I mean, it's like you learned to play overnight.

JA: Do you remember your first record date?

BL: There was a piano player who used to write the music for the Mickey Spillane movies. His name is Stan Burdy. He's a good jazz player, and we did a jazz album together. That started a 14-year run of studio work.

JA: Fourteen years is a long time.

BL: The record business has been very good to me. I think I've done over 10,000 records.

JA: You were that busy?

BL: Oh yeah, I was roarin'. I would sometimes turn down 20 dates in a week. And that's not ego, that's just the way it was. Now there aren't 20 dates in New York for anybody. That's a tragedy, because there are so many great young players on all the instruments, but there's no place for them to play. It upsets the hell out of me.

JA: Speaking of young players, do you listen to many young drummers?

BL: I'll tell you what upsets me the most about drummers today. When I was a kid, I could hear a drummer play four bars, and I knew exactly who it was. I knew the kind of time he played, I knew what his cymbals sounded like. Today they all play very, very similar. Their drums are tuned the same way. They have the same attitude in playing, the same kind of time feel, the same sound—even their fills are very similar. I remember the blindfold test in *down beat* years ago, when great musicians would listen to something and they would say, "I think that's so-and-so on tenor, and so-and-

so on bass, and so-and-so on drums...." But now it's very, very hard. It's a tragedy for me because drummers have lost their individuality. And I think that's why drum machines got very popular.

JA: Could it be that studios are more technical now?

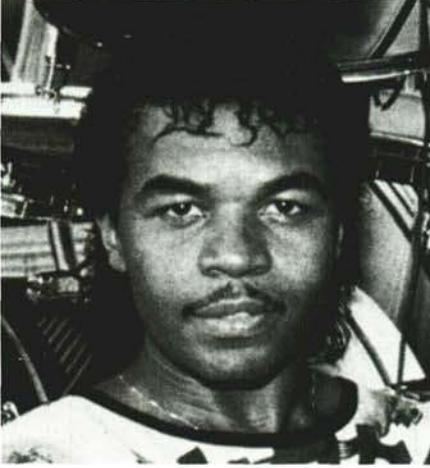
BL: You've got to understand that I saw this business go from 2-track to 4-track, then to 8- and 24-track. Then all of a sudden some engineer said, "Let's overdub the strings." The first time I heard that I said, "What the hell are you talking about?" He said, "Let's put the rhythm section and the horns down first, and then we'll overdub the strings and get a cleaner sound." The next thing you know, they're overdubbing the woodwinds and the brass section. The next thing I know, I'm going into a studio with a rhythm section and playing band hits when there's no damn band. It was aggravating, and it changed the complexion of the business. When I made records, there had to be a complete take, or else there was a penalty to be paid—a tracking fee. It had to be a complete orchestra track—background vocals, finished vocal—it had to be everything in one shot. And we made some exciting records that way.

JA: You got a better concept that way.

BL: Of course, because you could hear the total picture. Now let me go one step further. I'm in a studio, and they are going to overdub this and overdub that, and an engineer says to me, "I'd like your snares to go in a different direction, away from the

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microphone." I say, "What the hell are you talking about? You don't even know what makes a snare drum resonant or how a snare drum functions. It doesn't matter what direction the snares are in." All of a sudden the engineers are in charge. Then the next thing you know, they are asking you if you can play this way or that way. They made us very stilted for their convenience—for their *technical electronic convenience*. I think that's how the whole thing got started with the machines.

Here's another bit of history about the transition of the business. I made a hit record with Dick Hyman called *The Moog And I*. That was the first time I heard a drum machine—a synthesized drum. Dick didn't even know how to program the thing; somebody had to program it for him. We made another hit record called *The Electronic World Of Dick Hyman*—just Dick and me. In the headphones I was hearing, "dic-a-dac-a-dic-a-dac-a." So I said to Dick, "What the hell is this, man?" Dick said, "Just play with it." And we made a hit record—two cats. So that's part of the transition.

JA: Do you own a drum machine?

BL: No. I don't even want to learn how to turn one on. Liza had a couple of big dance numbers in her act where a drum machine was used. I said, "You'd better get someone to program this, and then I'll play around it or write around it." I just don't want to get involved with it. I'm not putting it down; it's just that I'm not interested.

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JA: Have you done many dates with a click track?

BL: Lots of jingles and motion pictures. I don't mind working with the click at all, because it plays perfect time, and some string player on the other side of the room who refuses to play with the rhythm section is forced to play in time. So I can play as free as I want to, and that guy has to play with the rhythm section.

JA: Do you recall your first click track date?

BL: I went out to California to do a film called *Cat Purr-ee*. I had never been near a click track before that date. I remember having dinner with Shelly Manne, God rest his soul, and I said, "Hey man, you won't believe what happened to me today. They put this click track in the headphones, and it was banging in my ear." Shelly said, "Welcome to the club." It was strange...so mechanical...so stiff. But it doesn't have to be, because once you get used to it you can swing your ass off.

JA: What other movies have you done?

BL: I did *Lenny*, which had a great jazz score. I think that won an award. I also did *Joe, New York New York, Midnight Cow-*

boy, and *You're A Big Boy Now*. I know I'm forgetting quite a few.

JA: Do you remember any studio dates that were particularly challenging?

BL: Some of them were very challenging. Some of the interesting ones were the Pat Williams dates. They were a drummer's dream: five trumpets, five bones, four French horns, a tuba, plus a rhythm section with guys like Hank Jones or Dick Hyman playing piano. Sometimes a jingle would be very challenging.

JA: In what way?

BL: They would sometimes change the meter signature against the click track—change the unit in reality so that the music would fit the continuity of the picture. For example [clapping his hands in tempo], here's the click, and it's the quarter note. All of a sudden you've got two measures in 12/8 time. Now the click is the dotted quarter note. Then you might have a measure in 7/8 time. Now the click is the 8th note. The click is constant, so what you are subdividing by changes by the unit. You have to do the computing in your head instantaneously. I also did a lot of odd-meter things live with a little band I had called Straight Life, with George Young, Lew Soloff, Chip Jackson, and Ben Arlof.

JA: Was there someone you always wanted to play with but just never got the chance?

BL: I wanted to play with Duke's band, and I wanted to play with Basie's band.

JA: Did you miss any record dates that you

now regret?

BL: I missed a Bill Evans album because of a misunderstanding. Mickey Leonard told me that he called my service and was told that I refused to work on Saturdays. I would have worked Saturday, Sunday, *any day* to do that album.

JA: Fourteen years of studio playing is quite an accomplishment.

BL: One of the nice things about playing in the studios all those years is that you got to play new music every single day. I learned more about playing the drums in a studio than I did anywhere else, because I heard myself back every day. You get a whole other concept of playing by listening to yourself on a playback. It's a great way to learn.

JA: After 14 years in the studios, you are now on the road again. When did you start working with Liza?

BL: In 1976, Liza called me to do 10 dates with her—and here I am, 14 years later.

JA: With Liza you play, conduct, and contract the band.

BL: I also help in picking out the material.

JA: Do you do any writing for the band?

BL: Ninety percent of the time when the charts come in, we end up making changes. We might take out or change a figure, change a horn voicing, or make a key change. Since I don't write every day, to write a chart would take me a long time. I'd rather sketch out the arrangement and explain it to an orchestrator who does this

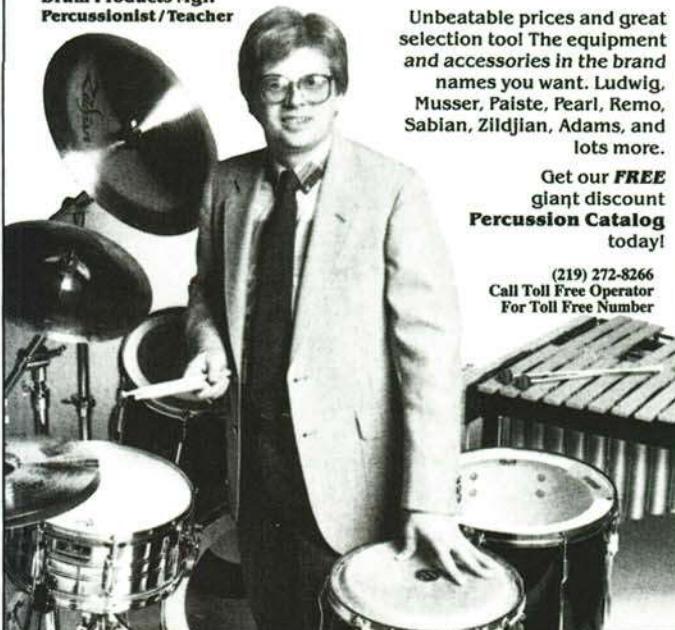
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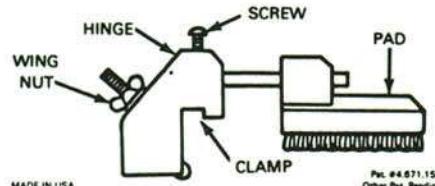
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JA: Does conducting from behind the drums create any problem?

BL: It's a difficult technique, because to play the drums you are using both hands and feet. You have to be able to take the snare switch off, pick up the brushes, and still cue the strings. But I've been doing it long enough so that now it feels comfortable. Our show isn't that difficult, but we do have some 20-minute medleys that have left turns all over the place.

JA: Liza did a tour with Sammy Davis, Jr. and Frank Sinatra last year.

BL: That show went all over the place. Sammy opened the show with his own drummer, then I played and conducted for Liza. Sinatra followed us with Irv Cottier on drums, then I went back on stage to play the closing medley with Sammy, Liza, and Frank. Irv passed away recently, God rest his soul. During the tour, he got a call and had to go home because of personal reasons. So I had to jump in and play Frank's book, which is not well-marked. When we were in Ireland, Larry Mullen, Jr., the drummer with U2, came to see the show. Larry said to me, "How long have you been with Frank?" I said, "This is my third day." He said, "What do you mean, your third day?" So I told him that I was subbing for Irv. Larry said, "Well, how do you do that?" "Well," I said, "the book is written, and I just play the book." "But how can you do

that?" Larry must have said that six times. I said, "Hey look, I'm not a miracle man. There are a lot of guys who can do this." For him it was inconceivable that somebody could just walk down, open this book, play the music, and make it swing. He said, "I saw Sinatra in Vegas, and the drummer's the thing with Frank; it's a real important chair." He just couldn't believe it. He happens to be one of the better rock players, but he just kept saying, "Well, how do you do that?"

JA: Most of the younger players today won't get the chance to play in a big band.

BL: To play a big band chart like the one we played tonight, "When The Sun Comes Up," a guy from North Texas State or Berklee can do it because of the experience he may get in school. You have to know how to play the time, play the fill, and lead the band in.

JA: What advice would you give to a young player today?

BL: I used to say when I was a kid that I'd never be even a half-assed player until I was 35—and it's the truth. To really be a mature player when something hits the fan...to make the band come up or down...to get the people to dance every time...to be exciting every time—it's hard. But I'd suggest to play as diversified music as you possibly can—any place, any time. That's how you learn to be a player.

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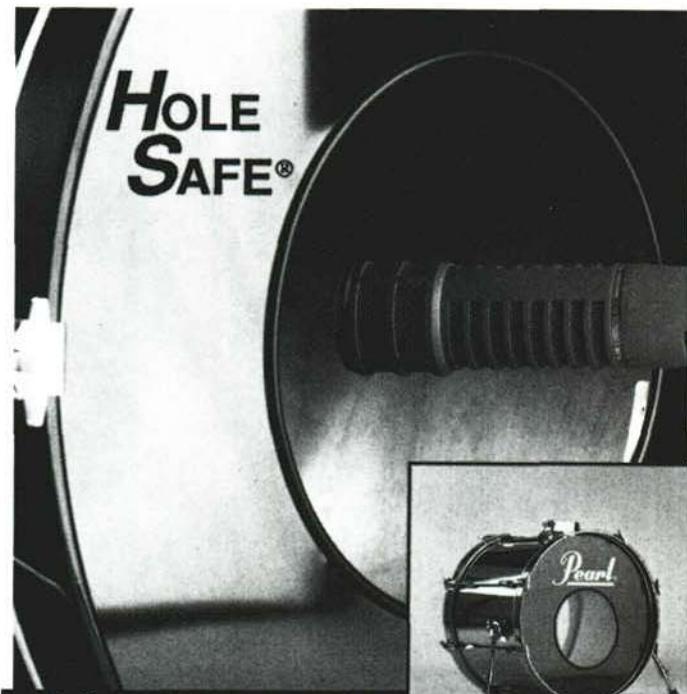
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However, if lugs in other positions around the drum are loosening, it might be that the

threads of the lug bolts, or the threads of the swivel nut inside the lug casing itself, are worn. Worn threads do not make for a firm grip. Identify which lugs are loosening, and examine the threads carefully. If they look worn (flattened, chipped, or reduced in overall diameter), replace them.

Assuming that the lug bolts and swivel nuts are in good shape, try threading two 12/24 nuts onto the lug bolts between the top of the lug casing and the underside of the drum rim. Tune the drum, then tighten these nuts up against the underside of the rim. The locking action of the nuts against

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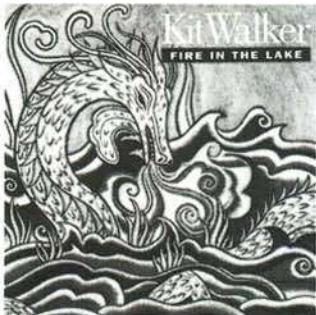
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One problem I have with a lot of drummers who play modern fusion/new age music is that all of the emphasis seems to

be on color. Everything sounds delicate and ethereal and...aw hell, the drummers sound like wimps. That's not to say that there is no place for sensitivity, but drums need to have some authority as well. The drummer shouldn't sound as if he's merely playing along with the other musicians and coloring what they do. He should be blazing a rhythmic trail for the others to follow.

That's why I like Steve Smith's drumming. His jazz background gives him all of the finesse and delicacy anyone could ask for, but when it's time to smack a backbeat, Smith can really SMACK the sonuvabitch. He lays down a rhythmic foundation with the confidence of a heavy rock drummer (which he is) but blends it with the subtlety and shadings of a jazz drummer (which he also is).

For fans of Smith's own group, Vital Information, this album makes a nice complement. The bands sound very different, due to the instrumentation, and on the whole, the Walker album leans more towards jazz than the more rock-based Vital Information. But both settings allow Smith to utilize all of the aspects of his playing in such a way that you can't really label him as a "this" kind of drummer or a "that" kind. Just call him a drummer, and put him in any situation you want. He'll do the job.

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sible combinations. An analogy would be to say that Tolstoy's *War And Peace* is only made up of the 26 letters of the alphabet!

It's necessary, as far as developing finesse with the hands, to be able to play a variety of sticking patterns, whether you're going to consciously use them or not. A lot of people haven't developed control of the feet and hands dynamically. I've heard people play at full volume, then bring the volume down with the hands for a bass solo, but the feet continue at the higher volume. Reducing volume and holding the intensity is a challenge.

AS: How do you handle students who want to work on complex techniques and bypass the basics?

AD: I'm sure there are people who are more diplomatic than I am. I just flat out say, "You're not ready for this. This is what I'm going to give you." I know some teachers are in circumstances that are different from mine, since I don't really have that many young students. By the time they get to me, they have an idea of what it takes. And I think they have an idea of where I'm coming from.

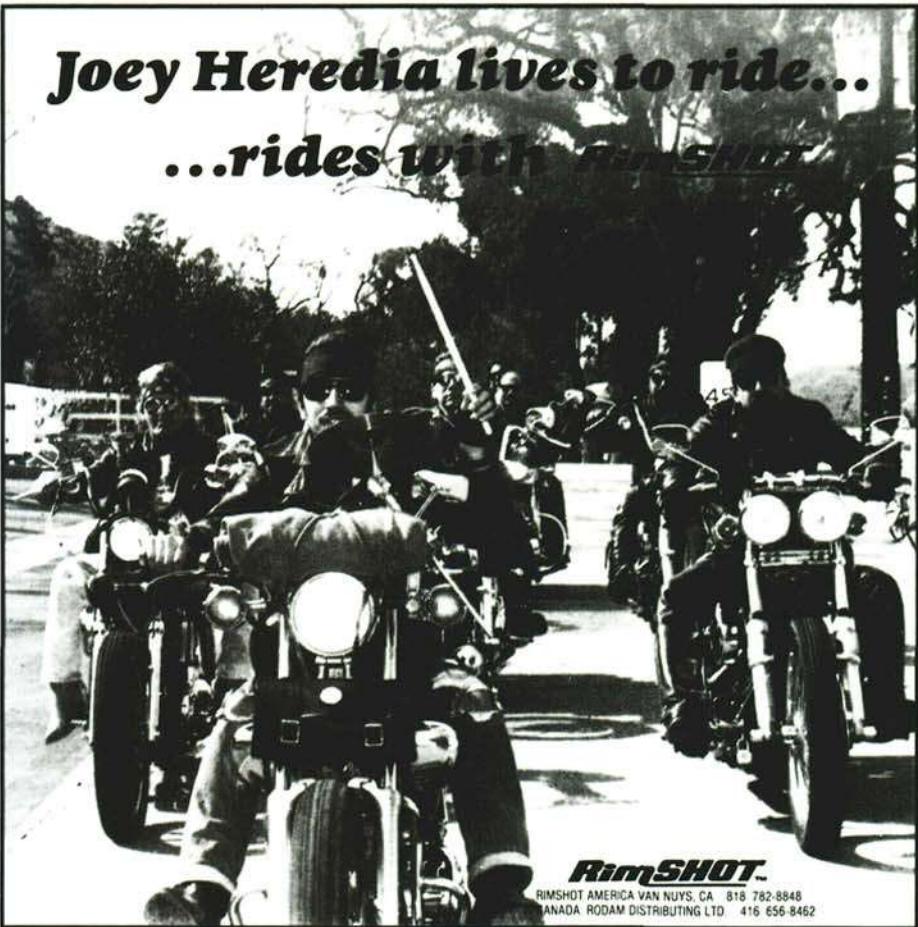
I'll occasionally get a student who doesn't have single and double strokes down at all. That usually means they don't know how to read either. So I'll write out quarter, 8th, and 16th notes—two measures apiece. We'll do single and double strokes and Paradiddles long enough for me to start working with rudiments. I don't want to compromise on that. I don't want somebody out there talking about playing in 5/4 or 7/8 who can't play very basic things.

If you're dealing with young children, you've got to find a way to make it fun for them. The worst thing that can happen is for a student to be turned off to music, regardless of whether they'll become a player or not. I can't imagine a world without music. The person who doesn't have that enjoyment of music has been short-changed. At the same time, the student must realize that there's a certain amount of work involved. It's not *all* fun, although some of it can be. Invariably, anyone who stays with me for any length of time finds lessons that they enjoy. It doesn't have to be painful all the time. But you can't eliminate the pain completely either. It's like life!

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INDUSTRY HAPPENINGS

REMO HONORS THREE PERCUSSION EDUCATORS



Left to right: Kay Carlson, Cloyd Duff, George Caber

Remo, Inc. has named three of the nation's leading percussion educators as recipients of its EPPI (Excellence in the Profession of Percussion Instruction) Award: Kay Carlson, Cloyd Duff, and George Gaber. "Remo is proud to honor these distinguished members of the percussion profession," said Lloyd McCausland, vice president of Remo, Inc. "Each has not only achieved the high-

est level of percussion artistry, but each has also given back so much to music and to their students."

Carlson was recognized for her 30 years of teaching drumset and percussion. Currently on the faculty of Loyola Marymount

Music Festival. He was elected to the Percussive Arts Society Hall of Fame in 1977.

Caber, distinguished professor emeritus and chairman of the percussion department at Indiana University School of Music, was honored for his 50 years as master percussionist, teacher, lecturer, and performer. The former timpanist and principal percussionist with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra has also performed with the NBC, ABC, and CBS orchestras, and has performed throughout the world.

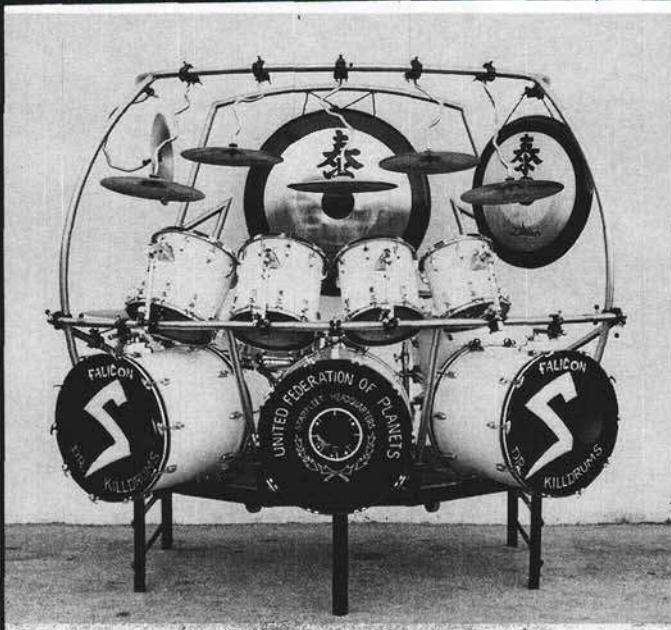
McCausland said that this marked the first time since the EPPI Award was established in 1986 that multiple honors were given.

EVANS/PETER ERSKINE CLINIC

Ronnie Scott's club in London has become a popular venue for clinics by American star drummers—almost too popular, judging by the way drummers were packed in like sardines to see Peter Erskine this past January. This event was sponsored by Evans drumheads (a first of its kind for them), and was organized by Andrew Brooke-Mellor of FCN Music, Evans' U.K. distributor.

At a Peter Erskine clinic the emphasis is

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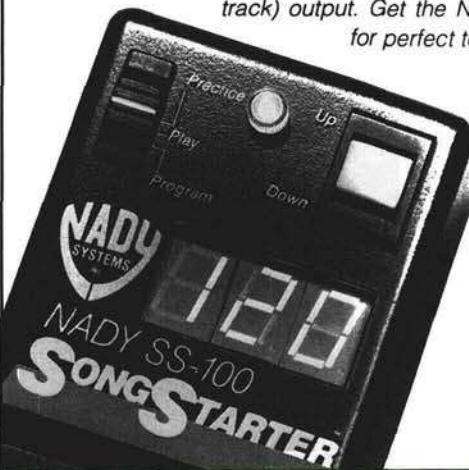
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well and truly on musicianship. This was underlined by the onstage presence throughout the proceedings of John Abercrombie (guitar) and ex-Bill Bruford's Earthworks man Mick Mutton on double bass. During the afternoon, Peter, John, and Mick played some remarkable trio jazz, which on its own would have made the occasion worthwhile.

If the theme of the clinic was "Musicianship," it could have been subtitled "The Quarter-Note Pulse." It takes some drummer to keep a few hundred fellow drummers interested by simply playing quarter notes on a ride cymbal, but Peter Erskine can do it. Peter described the quarter note as being the "primary pulse," stating the importance of playing these notes accurately and consistently. He demonstrated how quarter notes on their own can make a group swing. He also explained that within any musical context, it is the subdivisions of these notes that give it a particular character. And it is the swung 8th notes between the quarters that give a particular drummer the "signature" to his or her time playing.

Next Peter moved away from the swing feel, and played a calypso with the trio. The number started with some beautiful brush work. The quarter notes were there too, played on the bass drum and underpinning the double bass part. The effect-

tiveness of this simple device came as a surprise to many of us who use this type of number to introduce syncopated patterns with the right foot.

Justifying his occasional use of drum machines, Peter adapted a quote from the movie *The Godfather*. "Keep your friends close, but keep your enemies even closer." He then played a solo over a light samba rhythm from the machine, demonstrating the use of space in drum solos.

Back with the quarter-note theme, Peter demonstrated the amount of space that is available between the beats of a measure in a ballad, and discussed ways of using space tastefully. He used brushes to show the ways in which double-time and half-time feels can be implied. Talking about rock and funk playing, he demonstrated how the 8th notes between the quarter notes, and the 16th notes between the 8th notes, can be played with different dynamics to make a piece of music swing.

It's a common experience to come away from a drum clinic thinking, "That was great. I could never play like that; but then I don't need to." After a Peter Erskine clinic, though, it's more like, "I ought to be able to play like that; I wonder whether I can?" Peter Erskine has that ability—to make drummers strive for higher standards within their usual terms of reference.

—Simon Coodwin

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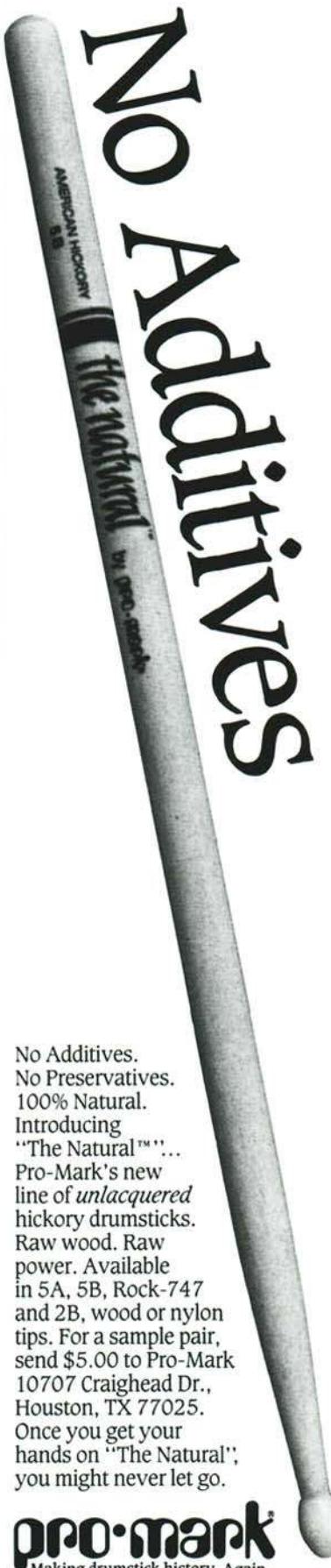
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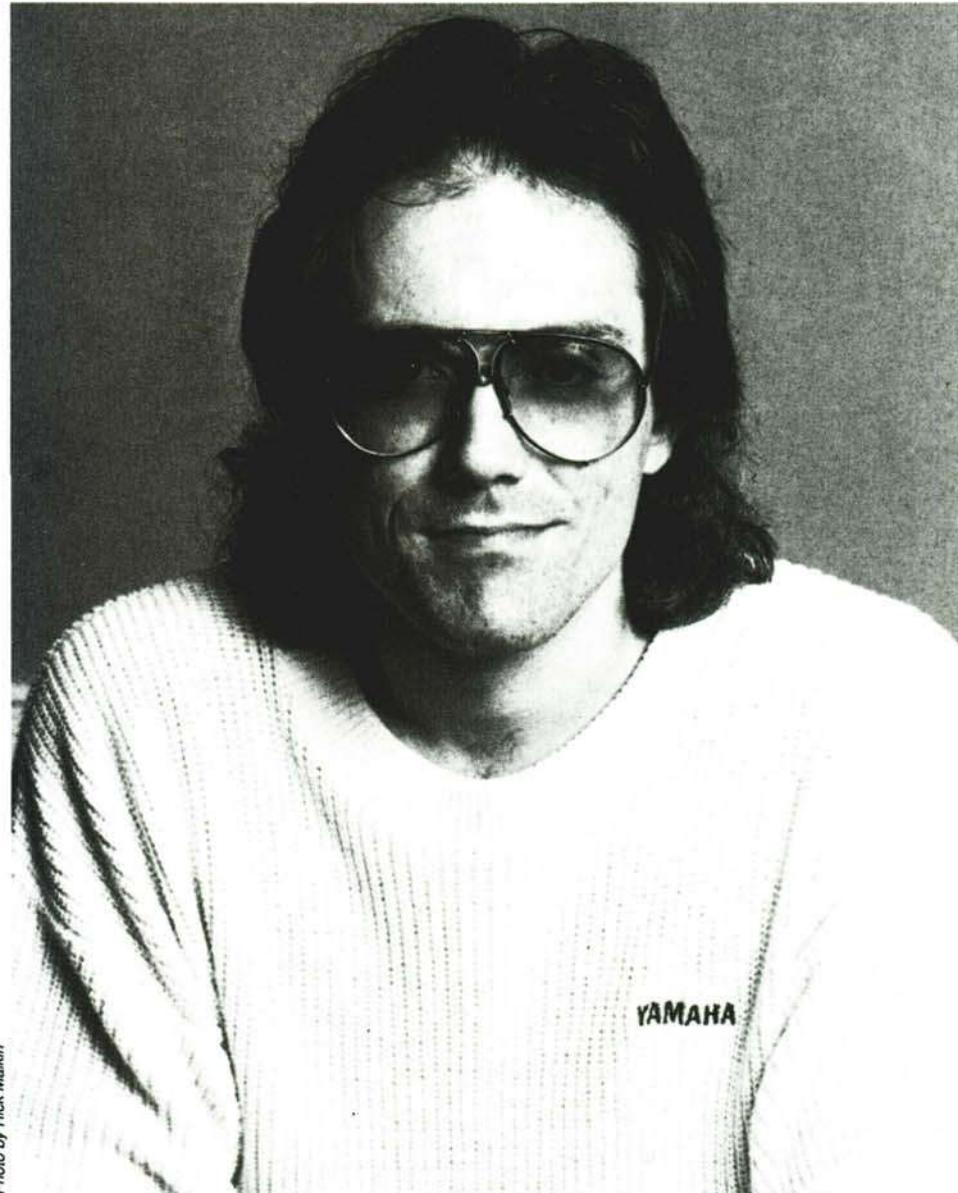


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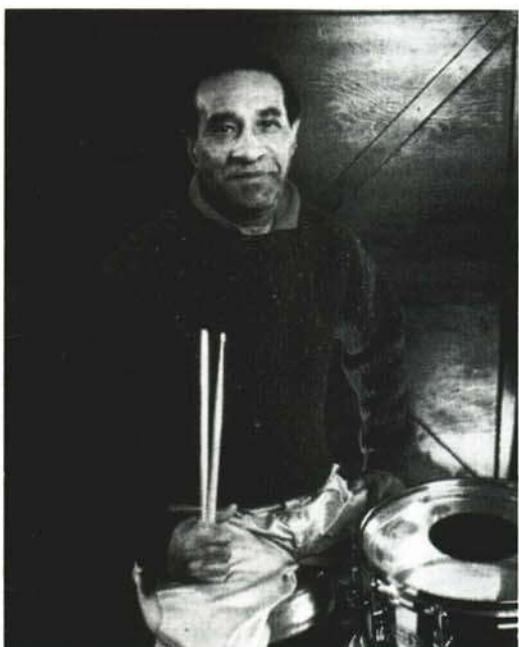
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MAX ROACH HONORED



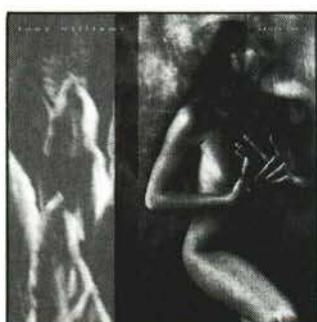
Max Roach's *Music For Brass And Percussion* will be premiered by Roach and Penfield High School musicians on Friday, April 27th at 7:30 p.m. in the Penfield High

School Auditorium in Rochester, New York. *Music For Brass And Percussion* is the 50th commission written for the Penfield Music Commission Project, which was founded in 1982. During his visit to the Rochester area, Roach will also receive an honorary doctorate from the Eastman School of Music. Rochester Mayor Thomas Ryan and Monroe County Executive Thomas Frey will present proclamations to Roach at Rochester's Hochstein Music School. The Rochester Area Black Communicators will also pay tribute to him, at events scheduled for the Pyramid Art Gallery, and Rochester City School officials will honor him during the evening of the performance of his *Music For Brass And Percussion*.

PRO-MARK HOTLINE

Pro-Mark has announced the creation of a toll-free hotline to assist drummers who can't find Pro-Mark sticks and accessories at their local music stores. According to company founder and president Herb Brochstein, "Some music stores are unaware of the wide variety of products that we offer, or

Tony Williams



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This set features six new WILLIAMS compositions including the hypnotically lyrical title tune, the urgent percussive "City Of Lights," the playfully funky "Juicy Fruit," and the spare, rapid-fire modernism of "Two Worlds." The extraordinary solo percussive piece, "Liberty," is a Compact Disc bonus track.

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DRUM CENTER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNER

At the end of each year, the Long Island Drum Center presents their Drummers Achievement Award. This year's honor has gone to Bill Messinetti, whose 1989 included the following accomplishments: landing the drum chair with the New York band Blue Suits; writing his nationally syndicated *Electronic Drum Beat* column for the *Music Paper*; becoming manager and director of the Long Island Electronic Drum Center; entering into an endorsement agreement with Sabian cymbals and Vic Firth sticks; and continuing an active teaching, clinic, and recording schedule.

The Drum Center award is given to drummers from Long Island who have achieved international acclaim. Past winners include Billy Cobham, Rod Morgenstein, Dom Famularo, Joe Franco, Tom Brechtlein, Greg D'Angelo, Al Miller, and Rudy Richman.

SFA PERCUSSION SYMPOSIUM

The second annual SFA Percussion Symposium, sponsored by Yamaha Corp. of America, will be held June 23rd through 29th, at Stephen F. Austin State University, and will feature 11 artist/faculty members. Programs will include high school total percussion camp, band director's workshop, collegiate/professional timpani and percussion seminars, drumline camp, Mexican marimba ensembles, and drumset MIDI percussion workshops.

Returning faculty include Steve Houghton, Mexican marimba virtuoso Zefirino Nandayapa, timpanist Jim Atwood, and drumline specialist Jim Campbell. Joining this year's Symposium will also be electronics/MIDI specialist Phil Bloch, Denver Symphony Percussionist Terry Smith, and marimba virtuoso William Moersch. For additional information, contact Dr. Larry Kaptain at (409) 568-1235.

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ENDORSER NEWS

Joeham Eric, Skid Row's **Rob Affuso**, and **Tears For Fears' Jim Copley** are now using Pro-Mark sticks.

Tommy Lee has switched over to DW drums.

Danger Danger's **Steve West** is playing Sonor *HiLite* drums.

Chester Thompson used Beyerdynamic mic's on a recent Bee Gees tour.

Yamaha is pleased to announce that the five top-ranking bands at the America Grand National Championships all used Yamaha drums.

Shenandoah's **Mike McGuire** is using Shure mic's.

R.E.M.'s **Bill Berry**, **Steven Riley** of L.A. Guns, and **Bobby Chouinard** of Billy Squire's band are now using Zildjian cymbals.

Neil Peart, **Larrie Londin**, and **Richie Hayward** are all playing Solid snare drums.

and Remo U.S.A.

In other Berklee news, the school recently purchased three buildings near its campus in Boston's historic Back Bay area. The buildings are being used for student housing, and have the capacity to hold 283 students, bringing the school's housing capacity up to approximately 1000 students, or one third of its student body. The buildings include space for isolated practice units and student lounges.



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BERKLEE NEWS

On Tuesday, February 20th, Louie Bellson performed at the Berklee Performance Center with a select group of Berklee faculty and students. The concert was sponsored by Berklee, the Avedis Zildjian Company,

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NEW AND NOTABLE

NEW YAMAHA GEAR



Among a batch of new equipment Yamaha has recently introduced is their *Monster* cymbal boom stands, which feature longer boom arms and massive counterweights. Wide-opening tripods and heavy-duty pipes allow the use of heavier cymbals.

Also "Monstrous" from Yamaha are their *RTC* (*Rock Tour Custom*) drums, specifically designed for hard-rock and heavy-metal playing. They feature mahogany and birch ply shells: Snare and toms have eight plies, bass drums and floor toms have eleven. Other features include a phenolic resin sheathing on the outermost shell plies



(to help produce maximum volume), the use of one-piece, high-tension lugs, and ten-lug snare drums.

In Yamaha's orchestral line, their new *Concert Series* timpani are available in four sizes (23", 26", 29", and 32"), and feature bowls made of fiberglass-reinforced plastic and price tags aimed at school budgets. Also new is their *Acoustalon-Lite* xylophone (which the company states has a tone similar to that of rosewood) and an extended 2½-octave set of marching bells.

In the mallet department, Yamaha has introduced a complete line of timpani mallets, and has expanded its existing line of keyboard mallets. Timpani mallets feature hard rock maple shafts; keyboard mallets come with either black birch or rattan shafts, and offer 22 varieties of heads.

In addition, Yamaha has introduced sev-

eral lightweight drum cases made of high-density molded plastic and featuring heavy-duty straps and hardware. Also available is a new trap case made of heavy-duty fiber and measuring 25" x 10 1/2" x 22 1/2". Other new accessories include snare drum ring mute sets, a concert bass drum cover, a leather stick bag, and a marching tom mallet holder made of scratch-resistant vinyl. Yamaha Corp. of America, PO Box 6600, Buena Park, CA 90622, tel: (714) 522-9011, FAX: (714) 527-0155.

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A second collaboration between the Zildjian and Noble & Cooley companies has resulted in another snare drum, this one a 4 5/8 x 14 model, again employing Zildjian's bronze cymbal alloy for its shell. New features include the smaller depth, which the companies state creates the feel of a piccolo drum, but with the power of a full-sized drum. Also new are Noble & Cooley's new Cam-Action snares, a new snare bed design, and symmetrically positioned multiple air vent holes. Further, the drum's eight-lug tuning system was designed to allow coarser tuning for more volume, density, and a fuller tone.

Zildjian has also come up with three

new additions to its K cymbal line: a 19" Dark Crash, a 14" Dark Crash, and a 14" Mini-China. In addition, the company has introduced a new cymbal cleaner, their *Professional Cymbal Cleaning Cream*, made from an oxidizer formula that chemically deep-cleans cymbals by dissolving tarnish, oxidation, dirt, and other types of grime. **Avedis Zildjian Co., 22 Longwater Dr., Norwell, MA 02061, tel: (617) 871-2200, telex: 924478, FAX: (617) 871-3984.**

AQUARIAN HEADS AND HOOPS

New drumheads from Aquarian include their *Performance II* two-ply heads, available in sizes 6" through 24", and their *Hi-Energy* snare drum head, which employs a very thin layer of *Power Dot* material bonded to the head's Mylar. According to the company, this combination produces a lively and sensitive head with heavy metal durability. It is available only in a 14" size.

Aquarian's *Mega-Hoop* features a square, solid steel ring inside of a heavy-duty aluminum hoop. No holes are punched in the head, and no epoxy is used inside the hoop. The company claims that the *Mega-Hoop* makes break-in time unnecessary. *Mega-Hoops* are standard on all Aquarian

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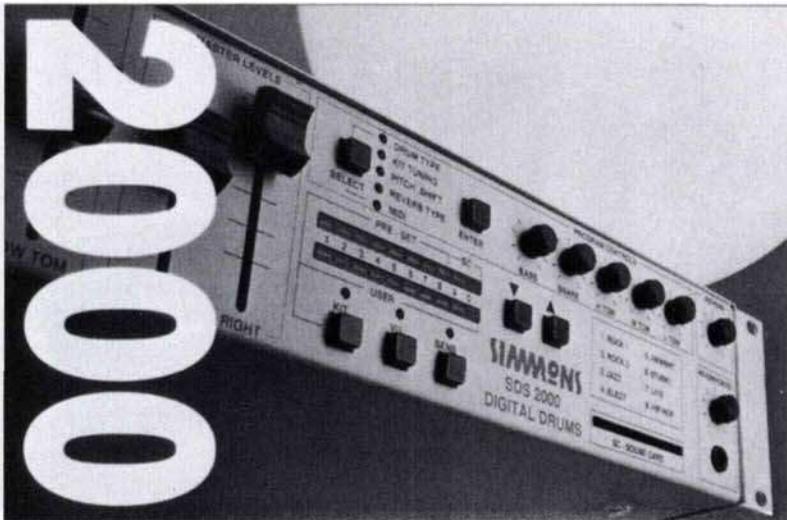
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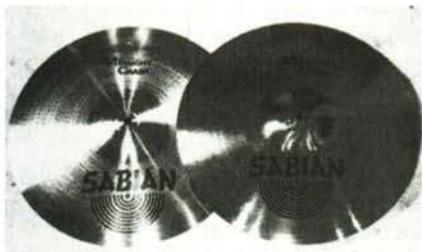
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24-strand ferro-manganese wire snares.

The HiLite HD 512 soprano snare drum is 5 x 12, and features a 9-ply maple shell, eight chrome tubular lugs with rubber insulators, and chrome hoops. The HD 512 also has the fast-action Sonor cross-stick strainer with fine-tension knob, plus 18-strand wire snares. For more information, contact Larry DeMarco at Korg U.S.A., 89 Frost St., Westbury, NY 11590, (516) 333-9100.

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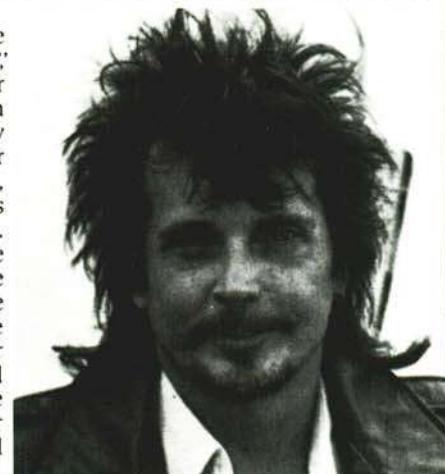
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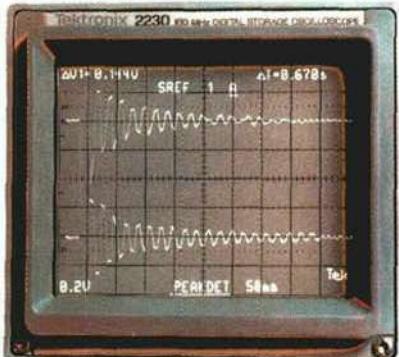
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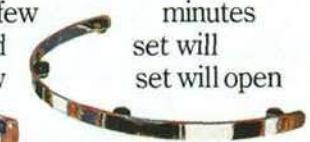
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The *midi K.I.T.I.* provides an interface of LEDs in a bar graph layout to enable drummers to easily see and modify triggering and MIDI parameters for each trigger. A "train" button allows the user to train each trigger input for the specific drum being used by simply hitting the drum. The "train" button also allows selection of MIDI note and channel by simply pushing the appropriate button on the drum machine.

The KAT *KDT-1* drum trigger and *KST-1* shell-mount trigger were designed specifically to work with the *drumKAT* and *midi K.I.T.I.* controllers to provide reliable acoustic triggering. Both the *KDT-1* and *KST-1* use a super-sensitive piezo sensing element that the company says produces a clean, reliable signal from acoustic drums. According to KAT, the shell-mount is most effective on tom-toms and has the advantage of remaining on

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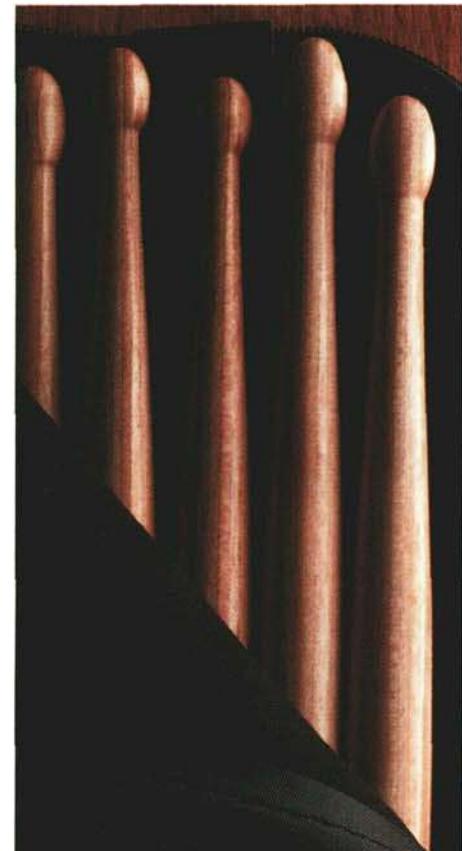
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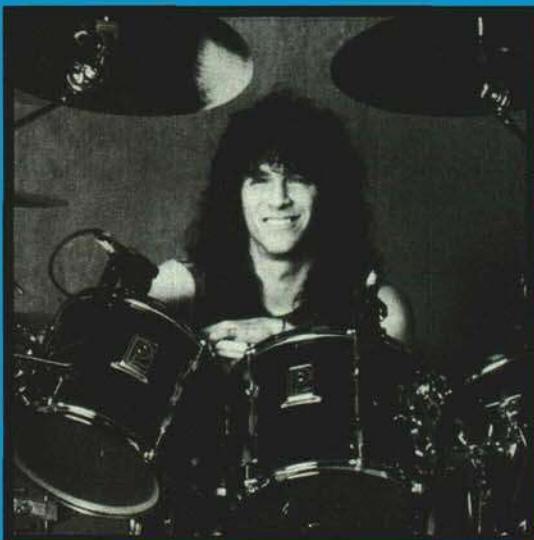
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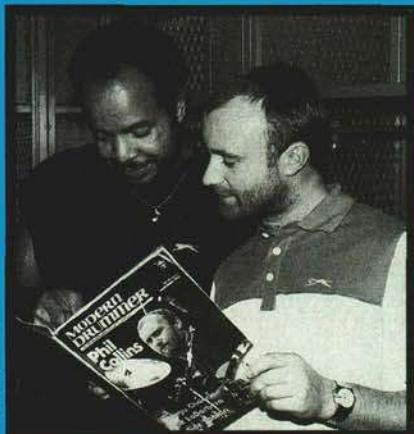
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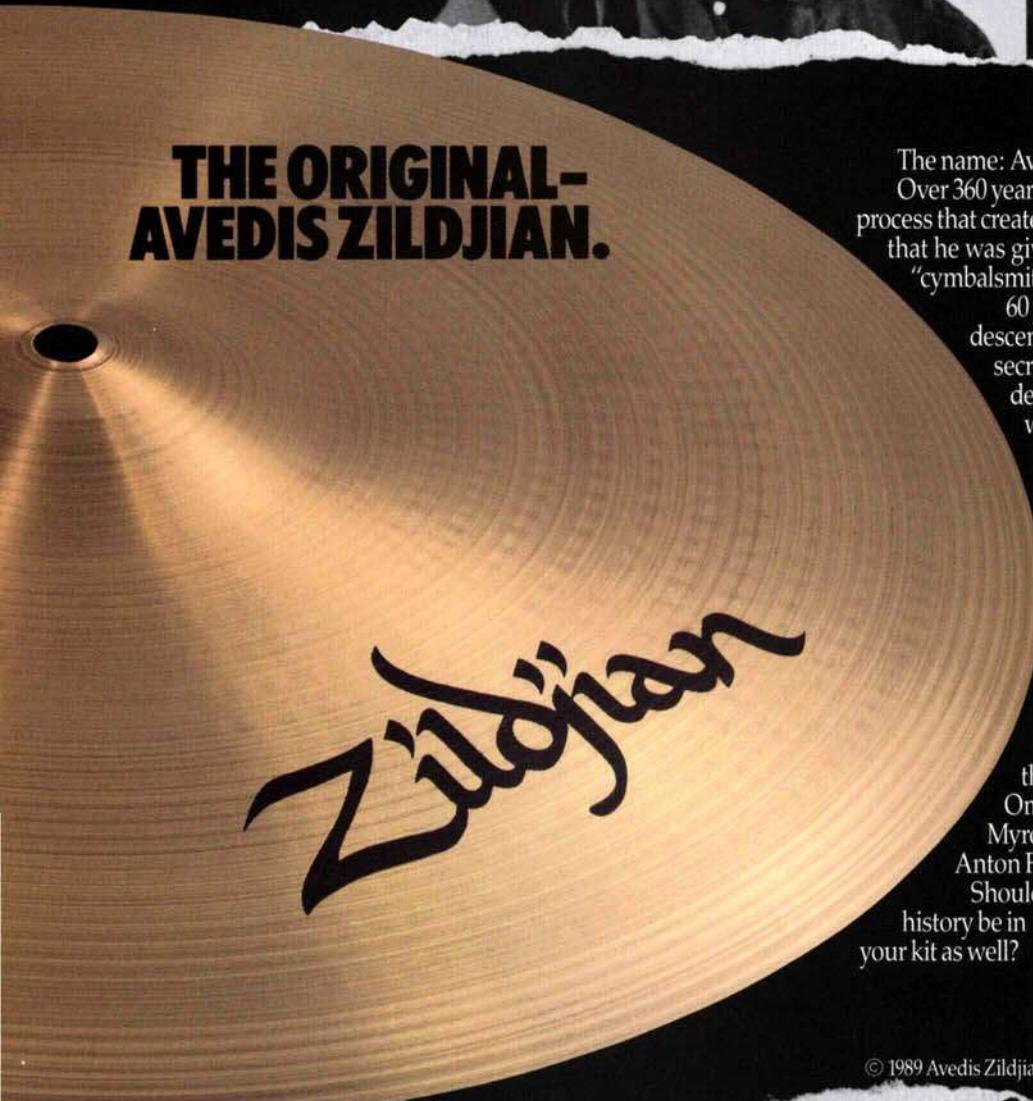
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