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## FEATURES

### LOUIE BELLSON

Terms like "legendary" and "historical" certainly should come to mind when discussing Louie Bellson. But they don't tell the whole story. Louie's drumming brings the class of the past and the ingenuity of the present together—the result is something completely original. This time out, the master describes the process in words rather than music.

•by *Rick Mattingly*

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### DAVID BEAL

Drums, samplers, cymbals, soundtracks, triggers.... At a relatively young age, David Beal has mastered these and many other musical tools with people like Joe Cocker, Julian Lennon, Little Steven, and Michael Shrieve. Learn how Beal has balanced the skins with the buttons in his widely diverse career.

•by *Ten Saccone*

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### ROB AFFUSO

Banging out 2 and 4 with metal monsters Skid Row hasn't exactly dulled drummer Rob Affuso. In this interview, Rob explains how there's a lot more to his playing than a simple backbeat, and a lot more to life than fame.

Plus an Affuso setup and listeners' guide.

•by *Teri Saccone*

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### MD'S 15TH ANNIVERSARY SCRAPBOOK

Not to pat ourselves on the back or anything, but a lot of great stories, photos, and columns have found their way onto MD's pages in the past 15 years. Here are some of the highlights from the magazine's first decade and a half.

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## EDITOR'S OVERVIEW



# An Anniversary Issue



It's rather hard to believe that 14 years have come and gone since I sat down to write my very first *Editor's Overview*. A grand total of 133 issues of *Modern Drummer* have crossed my desk since January 1977, and this issue marks the beginning of our 15th consecutive year of publishing.

Obviously, this is a special occasion for everyone involved with the magazine. And for readers who may not go all the way back to the beginning with *Modern Drummer*, we've put together a special *MD 15th Anniversary Scrapbook* in celebration of this landmark. The whole story starts on page 32 for those interested in how it all began and progressed.

I always feel a strong need to mention that MD's growth from a 32-page quarterly magazine that reached 3000 readers, to an international publication (now including the Soviet Union) seen by nearly 250,000 drummers each month, wouldn't have been possible without the help of a great many people. It's taken literally hundreds of talented writers and photographers, an industry of responsive and supportive advertisers and music dealers, and a marvelous in-house staff to pull it off. They've *all* played a vital role in our reaching this milestone, and my sincere thanks go out to everyone involved. You know who you are.

Needless to say, the *MD* readers have always been the essence of our success throughout the years. No magazine in existence can stand the test of time without the support of a loyal, devoted readership. We thank you for always being there for us, supplying feedback whenever we requested it, keeping us well-aware of your needs as players, and for staying with us all these years. *MD* always has been and always will be for *you*, and we hope you'll hang around for what we feel is the "Best of *Modern Drummer*" yet to come.

We've made some great strides over the past 14 years. And I like to think we've shared a wealth of valuable techniques and concepts with you through *MD's* pages. But perhaps the most satisfying aspect has been the role *Modern Drummer* has played in bringing the brotherhood of drummers a little closer together. We've been given the opportunity to open up a line of communication between manufacturers and consumers. Students and teachers. Rock drummers and jazz artists. Superstars and aspiring pros. Young drummers and old. Maybe we *all* relate just a bit better to each other now than we did prior to MD's existence. And as far as we're concerned, that's been the most enjoyable and enriching aspect of it all.

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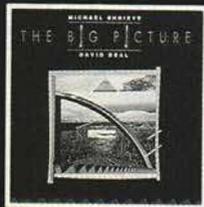


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# READERS' PLATFORM



## Alex Acuna

It's great to see the world's finest drum magazine feature a talented artist such as Alex Acuna [Oct. '90 MD]. I didn't know much about Alex before MD's interview. The first thing I realized when reading the article was that this man is very knowledgeable on his profession. I'm a drummer who has recently started exploring percussion. After reading Alex's article I have a real positive attitude for my journey into percussion playing. I wish Alex much success with whatever project he may take on next, and I thank MD for a great interview!

Scott Elia  
Yorktown Heights NY

## Eric Singer

Finally! A brilliant article on a brilliant drummer who is often overlooked. Teri Saccone did a fantastic job in conveying what Eric Singer is all about in the October issue. I've been an avid follower of Eric's career since he was with Black Sabbath. His playing continues to mature and *dazzle* me. He's one of a rare breed of rock drummers who plays with great technique and style, yet delivers from the heart. I'm proud to list him as a major influence, but I'm even more proud that I can consider him a friend. Good luck, Eric, and thanks a million, MD.

Rusty Lewis  
Bel Air MD

## Point That Finger Elsewhere, Please

*Editor's Note: In the August Readers' Platform, Alan Watson wrote a letter criticizing MD for putting Don Henley on the cover of the May '90 issue. Mr. Watson's letter began, "First Phil Collins, and now Don Henley. Who's next—Mickey Dolenz? (Well, maybe that's unfair; at least Phil and Don were important drummers once.)" Mr. Watson's basic argu-*

*ment was that MD should restrict its coverage to active drummers.*

Dear Mr. Watson,

I felt I had to reply to your strange letter in the August issue. Perhaps you are not aware that I actually *still play* the drums! I regularly play with Genesis (a rock group), my own band (all kinds of music), Eric Clapton, and anyone else who asks me. Whether I *should* be interviewed is up to those who decide on who's HOT and who's NOT, but don't try to hit me with the "He doesn't play anymore" routine.

Whether I was ever "great" is up to those that listen. Both myself and Don Henley have developed from just playing drums to writing and singing as well. True, Don only plays occasionally; that's not my business. I make sure I play as much as possible. I'm not afraid of drum machines or other drummers playing my stuff if I've got to play piano (a percussion instrument, remember!). I even start my show playing drums!

Cool out, Alan, and keep your ear to the ground.

Phil Collins  
England

## Hearing Loss

Until reading your article in the October issue, I had been wearing a pair of shooting earmuffs while playing. They worked pretty well to muffle the drums, but so much bass poured in that I couldn't hear the snare or the cymbals. The muffs trapped the sound, and it bounced around inside. When I read your article, I was puzzled that you didn't mention anything about muffs. I thought that it was just because of looks, until I bought a pair of foam earplugs at a grocery store. They blew me away! The snare was crisp, and the bass was perfect. Thanks to your article, I'm a happier drummer!

Justin Alderman  
Ft Myers FL

## Alternative Therapy

Thank you for the timely and informative article by Susan Alexander dealing with carpal tunnel syndrome [Sept. '90 MD]. Today it is important for all musicians to adopt a preventative and pro-maintenance attitude toward health care. As an alternative health care provider, I am encouraged by articles such as this one.

Too often, problems are left until there are few options remaining in their treatment and management. Conditions such as carpal tunnel syndrome, tendinitis, and loss of joint mobility often occur because of overuse and abusive stresses; they are conditions that present early warning signs. If a musician adopts an active role in his or her own health care, disability can often be prevented and performance optimized. To this end, chiropractic is one of several types of health care available. Another is massage therapy. In fact, they often work hand in hand.

Massage therapy can relieve the pain and discomfort of muscular overuse by decreasing inflammation. It increases nutrition to the affected area by increasing local blood flow, which improves the body's ability to repair the micro-tears occurring in the tissues. Increased lymphatic and circulatory flow will optimize the removal of toxins from the body. Body awareness—which naturally occurs as a result of massage—certainly will help the musician to recognize limitations and overuse as they occur.

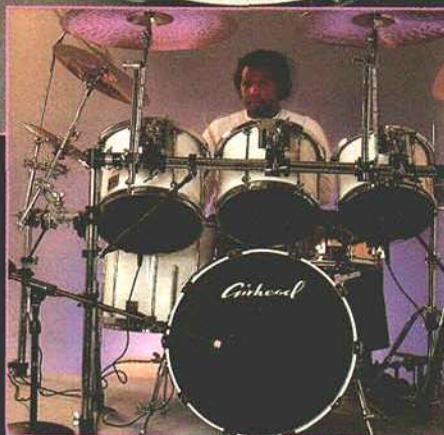
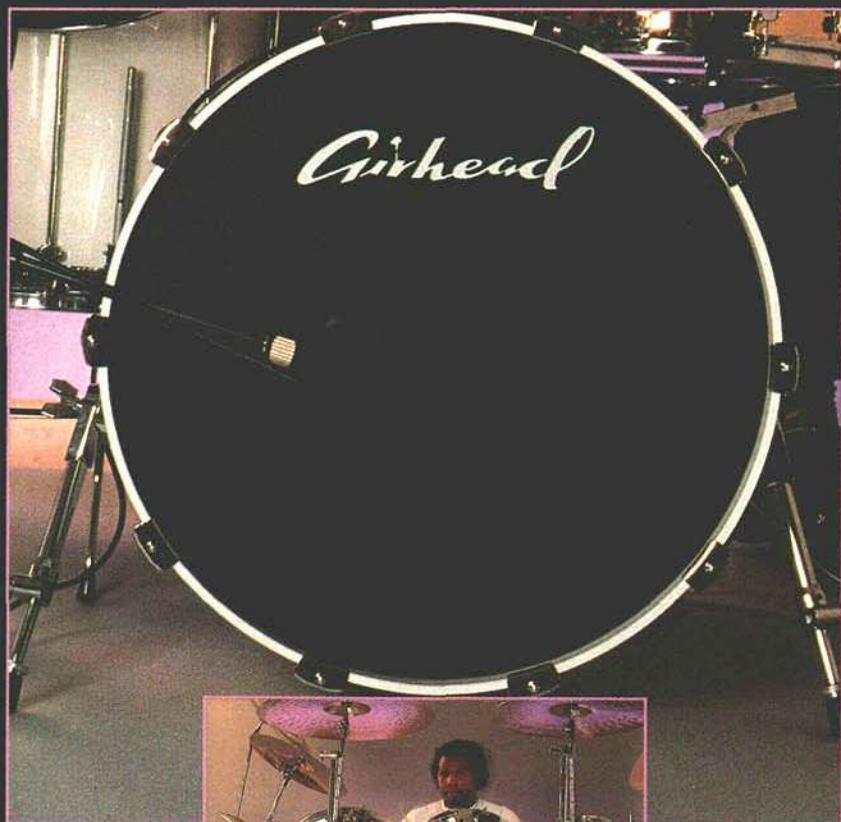
As a practicing massage therapist I can certainly encourage any musician to explore and utilize the various alternative health care options there are. The important thing to remember is to deal with the causative factors (stress, overuse, nutrition) before there is permanent loss of function and resulting disability.

Desiree F. von Myre  
New Westminster, BC, Canada



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Larry Bright

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Thanks Keith Larson



## CARL PALMER

"I've always enjoyed playing songs, and being back with Asia, I get the chance to play some good ones," says drum superstar Carl Palmer about his reformed '80s band. "I don't get off playing jazz/rock instrumental music—not because I can't play it, because I *can* play it incredibly well. But it just doesn't suit me. What inspires me musically is to play melodic, tuneful, pull-on-your-heartstrings songs."

Asia's new release, *Then & Now*, is a combination of six of the band's greatest hits with four new

tracks. At this point, the album's first single, "Days Like These," is doing well on the charts. But after a five-



Photo by Rick Malkin

year break, how did the band get back together? According to Carl, "I was talking to John [Wetton] the summer of '89, and we realized that with Asia, we were musically compatible—we'd broken up too soon. So we got together for a couple of weeks of rehearsal, and went out on a tour opening for the Beach Boys in Europe. It was sort of an odd combination, but the response we received from the audience was fantastic—we had no idea! So from there we decided that we should keep going, and it looks like it's been a good deci-

sion."

Carl is hopeful the band will be touring and recording into the future, as he is very happy at the moment. "We're basically starting over, trying to build a foundation from the ground up. It looks like we're getting off to a good start, and I'm looking forward to getting back on stage."

Finally, fans of Carl's previous success, Emerson, Lake & Palmer, will be happy to hear that a three-CD set is in the offing. According to Carl, "What we've decided to do is combine selected classic ELP numbers on disc, along with some new material—not group material, but two songs from Greg, some film music from Keith, and a percussion concerto I have completed. Look for it later this year."

• William F. Miller

## JOHN DENSMORE

The names "Jim Morrison" and "the Doors" may hold mythical status to some, but Doors drummer John Densmore hasn't exactly been a couch potato counting "Light My Fire" royalties since the band's demise. Densmore's writing, acting, and playing have kept his creativity very much alive and in the present.

In several cases, John has been able to mix his talents: He portrayed big band drummer Davey Tough in the play *Bad Dreams And Bebop* and a heavy metal drummer in the movie *Get Crazy*, and played drums opposite a dancer in an avant garde stage production.

In one scene of *Bad Dreams* John had to act out an epileptic fit. "It sounds terrible," Densmore says, "but to feel the audience get a little scared while I was

doing it was a little like playing on stage with the Doors—getting that feedback. I liked playing that part because Davey was a bit like me: He didn't like playing solos. I'm no Ginger Baker either, but I loved spurring Ray [Manzarek] and Robbie [Krieger] during their solos, and Jim, too."

*Get Crazy* was...well...not quite the serious dramatic experience *Bad Dreams* was. "It was a stupid movie," John says, cutting straight to the chase. "So I thought I'd mock the whole thing and play with turkey drumsticks, hit the cymbals with my head.... I did a solo, and they sped the film up to make it look like a cartoon character."

Back to reality, John also wrote a one-act play, acted in a Sam Shepard one-act, and worked as an advisor and actor in Oliver Stone's upcoming movie about Jim

Morrison. Densmore's most important project lately, though, has been promoting his excellent book *Riders On The Storm*, John's account of his life with Jim Morrison and the Doors.

Among the many interesting musical insights in *Riders On The Storm* is the story of how the Doors were a more democratic outfit than many may have thought. "Jim had suggested that we all split the publishing," Densmore explains. "I had already had a lot of musical training, and I knew about things like song structure. And since I was an equal member of the group, I felt like I could do anything musically as far as my playing and arranging went."

*Riders On The Storm* is in bookstores now, and the Jim Morrison movie will be out this spring.

• Adam Budofsky

## JACKIE SANTOS

Jackie Santos is excited about the instructional video he recently released. Called *Drum School, Pan I*, the video features Santos and three player friends discussing various aspects of drumming.

Santos has also been enjoying a variety of work in the Northeast. While John Cafferty & the Beaver Brown Band's regular drummer, Kenny Joe Silva, is on a leave of absence, Jackie is filling in. "I had to learn 25 tunes in two rehearsals, but I like that kind of challenge," Santos laughs. "There were a couple of concerts near Boston, and that was neat, because in the afternoon I was in jeans and a T-shirt playing rock 'n' roll, and then in the evening I was doing a jazz gig in a hotel. When I'm in town, I usually work with the Steve Soares Trio on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. It was like two different worlds.

"The Beaver Brown situation demands that I go in and slam it hard on 2 and 4," Jackie continues. "But then again, they wanted me to put my own stamp on their music, so I came in with a little different attitude."

In July Santos played a date with Chuck Berry. He's also been doing some jingle dates, he's been in the studio working on Butch Tavares' solo album, and this fall he reunites with Tavares to do a tour. Along with all of this, Jackie has been doing several drum clinics in the Northeast. And finally, he recently became the proud father of a baby girl, Kelsey Brook.

• *Robyn Flans*



## TED KIRKPATRICK

Ted Kirkpatrick, drummer for Christian progressive thrash metal band Tourniquet, says their most recent *Stop The Bleeding* album took about two months to record. For Ted, however, the work really began about three months prior to the recording.

"I just played four or five hours a night. I also got a *Stairmaster*, and for double-bass drumming, that helps immensely. Nine of the songs from the album have double bass on them, and some of it is really tiring. During my practice sessions, sometimes I would literally move the snare drum and sticks away and say, 'I'm not going to touch drumsticks for an hour. All I'm going to do is work on my feet to build up endurance.' The trick to this kind of music is that if the bass drums aren't right on, it sounds like garbage."

Ted points out that a lot of his inspiration comes from classical music—and not necessarily just from the percussion parts. This makes a certain amount of sense when you realize that he does a lot of the band's writing. "I wrote four of the songs on the album," Ted explains, "and I write all the guitar parts. I played five songs on bass as well."

Kirkpatrick says that some of his favorite tracks from the record are the instrumental "Whitewashed Tomb" and "Harlot Widow And The Virgin Bride." "In 'Harlot Widow,'" he says, "there's not only just the freight train double-bass drumming, but there's also some weird double bass drumming. Sometimes people hear the words 'thrash' or 'heavy metal' and think, 'Well, there goes the technical part of it.' But you can be melodic and incorporate all kinds of things like polyrhythms and extended phrases in this music. In those particular songs, there are a lot of broken phrases and things that go longer—or shorter—than you would normally expect. And there are a lot of rhythm changes, which is one thing Tourniquet is known for."

While the band has been playing live, they are readying their next album, which they will begin recording in February.

• *Robyn Flans*

## NEWS...

**Vinnie Colaiuta** recording with Rick Astley, Marilyn Scott, the Rippingtons, Jeff Richman, Randy Waldman (his Christmas album), Martika, Wishful Thinking, Ivan Lins, and many assorted jingles. And that was Vinnie on the *Air America* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* soundtracks. He also recently worked live with Sadao Watanabe (with **Lenny Castro** on percussion), and in a trio with Brian Bromberg and Jeff Lorber.

**Chad Wackerman** is on Andy Summers' recent release, as well as on a new album by Ed Mann. He is also planning to tour with Summers.

**Alvino Bennett** has left Sheena Easton and has been touring with Soul II

Soul.

**Matt Chamberlain** is on a solo album by G.E. Smith.

**Shannon Ford** is on Danny Gatton's album and is still working with the Gatlins.

**Tal Bergman** on tour with Billy Idol.

We made a big boo-boo a few months back—**Kenny Aronoff** didn't back Bruce Springsteen at Farm Aid, but Bruce Hornsby. Kenny's been busy doing tracks for *Metamora*, a new act called the B-Force, James McMurtry, James Reyne, Marshall Crenshaw, Hall & Oates, Jim Beard (sharing with **Dennis Chambers**), and Elton John, and he did the Bonnie Raitt/B.B. King duet for the soundtrack of *Air America*.

Wait, there's more. Kenny also did

work on the Indigo Girls' LP, Jon Bon Jovi's "Blaze Of Glory" for the *Young Guns II* soundtrack, tracks for Kathlene Wilhoite, and two tracks for Gary Busey, and he produced and played on four songs for the Breakdown.

**Clarence Oliver** was recently on tour with Najee, and his own band, Pops, recently released a new single.

**Stewart Copeland's** opera, *Holy Blood And Crescent Moon*, will be performed by the Fort Worth Opera in an extensively revised version.

**Glenn Symmonds** has completed nine tracks on Eddie Money's latest album. Also, congratulations to Glenn and Desre Buirski, who recently tied the knot.



## ASK A PRO



### Gary Husband

**Q** Regarding your "effect playing"—as you referred to it in your January '87 interview in *MD*—there are some fills you do at times on the high-pitched rack tom. Is your sticking "one-sided," such as:



or alternated, such as:



In either case, the fill is very effective, and makes one "sit up and take notice," as you say.

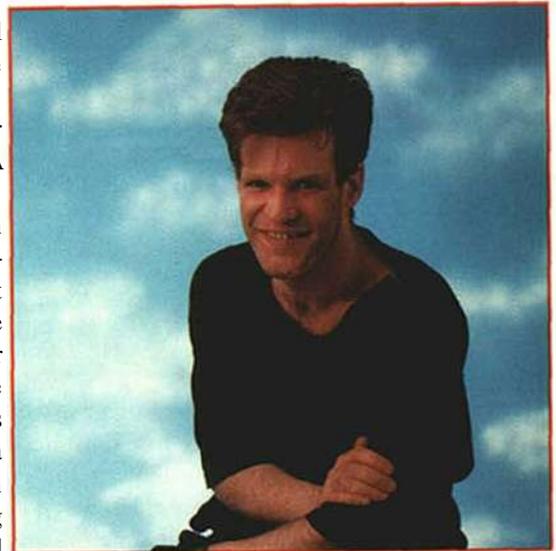
The method in which you approach the drumkit has been very inspirational to me, and I thank you for that. Are you

planning any instructional videos, clinics, or concerts in the States?

Mark Beecher  
Broomall PA

**A** Thanks for writing in and for your nice comments on my playing. I just about always approach the kind of fill you refer to with an alternate sticking. This has sometimes proved a little tricky when splitting up phrasing of this type around the set, but I have since found (with setting my toms up in a funny new order) that these ideas are more and more attainable.

I have absolutely no intentions of working on a drum video, but I have conducted a number of clinics out and about recently. I like clinics, simply because they are two-way and personal, whereas



with a video it always seems like one guy "telling it like it is"—for him!

I feel pretty confident that I'll be back in America with Level 42 in '91 supporting a new album that might even feature Allan Holdsworth on guitar. I also look forward to making my own album, when I can find an interested company.

### Paul Leim

**Q** Your playing on the *Lyle Lovett And His Large Band* album was just outstanding. Your drive, tasty fills, and super groove really added class to the record. I love the sound you got on your toms! Would you mind sharing what drums and cymbals you used on that album?

Frank Spindle  
Greenville TX

**A** Thanks for the letter and the compliments! Being a studio "chameleon" like I have to be is always full of surprises. I was never more surprised than when Lyle said he wanted to open the album like a concert, with "The Blues Walk." Lee Sklar and I had not worked with Lyle before and were thrilled that it took that direction.

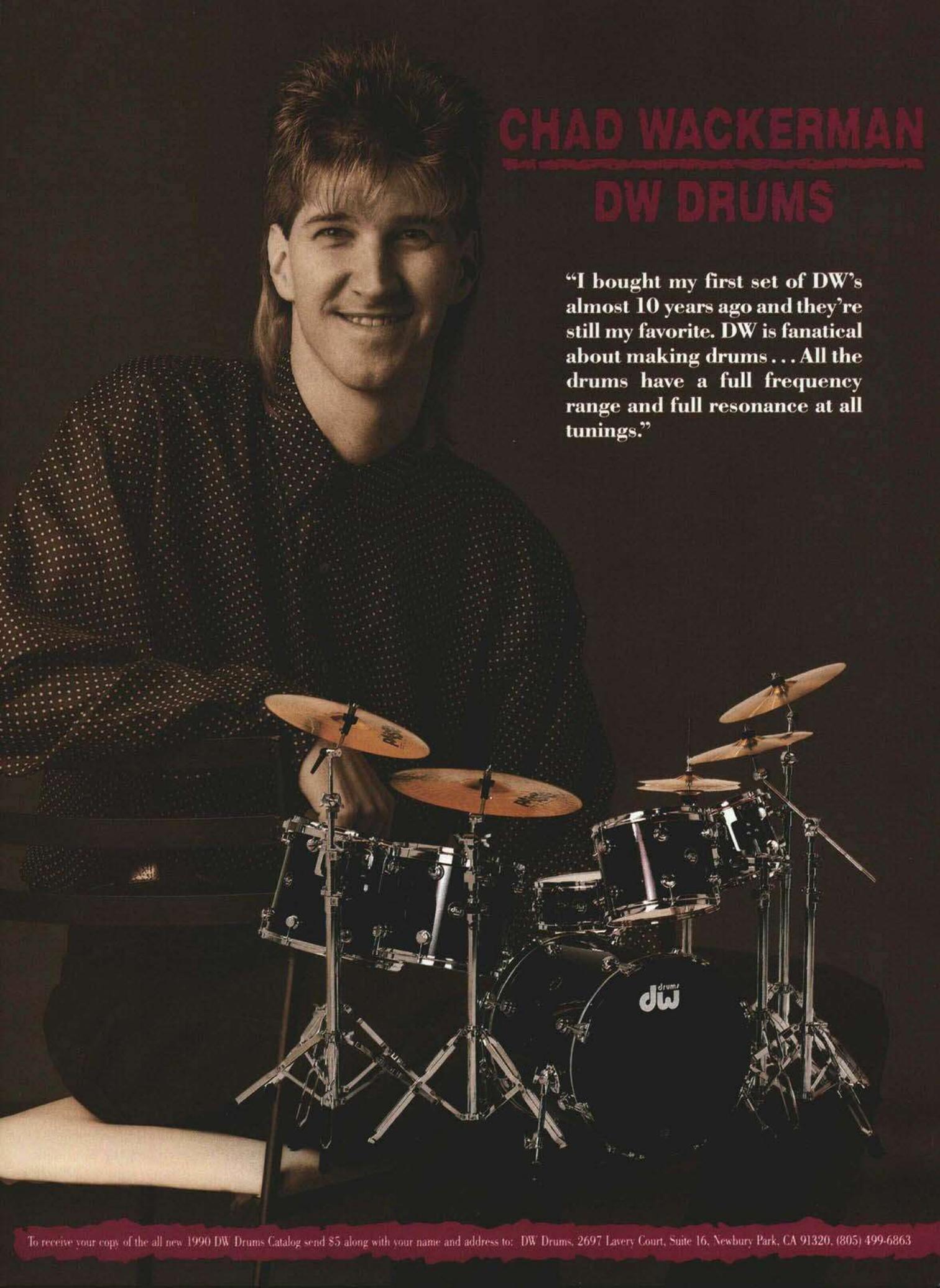
Neither the label nor the producer (Tony Brown) tried to limit Lyle to a "country album" at all—although it did win a Grammy in the country category. To do big band and blues tracks out of Nashville was a real kick. Before I moved to Nashville from LA., my only reservation had been that there wouldn't be the variety of music in recording like there was in

LA My fears were relieved when we started on Lyle's record, and I haven't been disappointed one week since.

My tom sounds change a lot. On Lyle's album, the engineer (Chuck Ainlay) and I decided to use triggered drums, but to heavily favor the acoustics, mix-wise. With Randy Travis it's almost totally acoustic. With Amy Grant and Michael W. Smith we heavily favor samples with drums and for percussion effects. With Dan Seals (on *Love On Arrival*) and Eddie Rabbitt (*Fersey Boy*) it's about 50/50. On the last Kenny Rogers record, I programmed some things (like "Planet Texas") and played others (like the duet with Gladys Knight, "If I Knew Then What I Know Now"). The drums on Eric Carmen's "Make Me Lose Control" were about 75% samples and 25% acoustics; the percussion was all samples.

You can see I change for every situation, but my basic acoustic set is a Yamaha *Recording Custom* set with 10", 12", and 14" power rack toms and a 16x16 floor tom. The cymbals on Lyle's album were Paiste 3000 Series: 10" and 12" splashes, 17" and 18" medium crashes, a 20" medium ride, and 14" *Sound Edge* hi-hats. I have since switched to the new Paiste Signature Series cymbals. Every engineer that hears them says they are the best recording cymbals they have ever heard...period!





# CHAD WACKERMAN

## DW DRUMS

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## IT'S QUESTIONABLE



**Q** I use a 22" Evans *Hydraulic* (oil-filled) head for the front of my bass drum. My question is whether you know of any safe way to cut a hole in the head without losing the layer of oil. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Andy Bishir  
Pittsburg KS

**A** We contacted Bob Beals, president of Evans Products, who told us that there isn't any practical way to cut a hole in a *Hydraulic* head. The oil has been inserted as a film between the two layers of the drumhead, and in order to seal the hole and prevent the oil from leaking out, you'd have to be able to clean the edge of the hole and apply some sort of adhesive to the two layers of drumhead. Since it would be almost impossible to remove the oily film from the heads, and since adhesives don't stick well to *Mylar* drumhead material anyway, Bob's recommendation is to choose another head for the job—perhaps a single-ply *Resonant* head, which can be ordered with a hole pre-cut at the factory. Bob also wonders why you would use a *Hydraulic* head—which is designed to muffle beater impact, rather than to project drum resonance—for a front head on your bass drum in the first place. If you are trying to deaden the sound of your drum, it would be more effective to remove the head and put pillows, blankets, etc. inside. If you are looking for the resonance and projection that a front head on a bass drum promotes, the *Hydraulic* is not the head to use.

**Q** Two years ago I purchased a new set of Gretsch drums with a rosewood stained finish. These drums look good and sound wonderful. The problem I'm having is that the finish is developing several cracks. Last summer, my rack tom cracked in several places due to severe heat exposure in my car. Since then, I've been very careful where I keep them. Last month, I noticed several cracks starting on my bass drum. As I've been careful with

where I keep the drums, I don't understand what the cause is. Do you have any suggestions on how I could avoid any more damage? Are there any preservatives I could use?

Fred House  
Rutland VT

**A** Gretsch's Ken Kramer provided us with the following information: "There are several reasons why lacquer finishes can crack or check on drums. The first is too much of a hardening agent in the lacquer. This tends to make the lacquer very brittle and causes the finish to crack like a road map. But this does not sound like your case. The second cause of lacquer checking is due to the improper curing of the lacquer. This is caused by a wet coat of lacquer being applied on top of another coat that has not properly been cured or dried. This method will cause severe checking around the drum. Again, this does not sound like the cause of your problem. The third cause (which is the most common) comes from changes in the environment. Wood will absorb moisture from the air if the humidity is high, which causes swelling. Conversely, wood will give off moisture if the humidity is low, causing the shell to shrink. A sudden change in conditions will also cause the finish to check, because the change is more rapid than the finish on the shell can adjust to. I believe this may be the cause of your problem.

"There are no preservatives that can prevent lacquer from checking. The best method is to not keep the drums in an extremely warm or extremely cold place for any length of time. If this can't be helped, then a slow adjustment to surrounding conditions should be observed."

**Q** I've been a John Bonham/Led Zepelin fan for years, and I'm still wondering: What was John's cymbal setup, including sizes and models? Also, could you tell me which of these specifically he used in "When The Levee Breaks" on their

fourth album?

Chad McHenry  
Palmyra MI

**A** John Bonham used a fairly small cymbal setup, given the intensity with which he played. He varied his cymbals a bit, and was legendary for breaking them with great frequency, but his basic, most often-used setup consisted of Paiste 2002 cymbals in the following sizes: 22" or 24" medium ride, 18" and 20" crashes (and sometimes an additional 16" crash), and 15" *Sound Edge* hi-hats. He most likely used this same combination to record "When The Levee Breaks."

**Q** I have a Simmons *SDS V* electronic drumkit with pads that are equipped with the rubber gasket-like material on top to soften the pads' surface. Trouble is, when I strike the pads fairly hard, they clip, causing a fairly unpleasant sound. I'm playing through an average sound system and have a signal processor and compressor. Am I hooking the system up wrong? Am I striking the crystal in the pads too hard, or are the pads and brain becoming defective? I've tried keeping the sensitivity down, but that doesn't help until it's set way too low for a decent sound. Perhaps I've got the input levels on some of the other devices (small mixing board, compressor, signal processor) set too high. My setup has both acoustic and electronic drums. What should I do to stop this clipping?

Jay Johnson  
Southport NC

**A** According to Simmons, the levels of your signal processors might be compounding the problem, but it sounds as if the basic problem is a signal-strength mismatch. It sounds as if you are overdriving the input on your "small mixing board." If the board has only mic'-level inputs, this is the crux of the problem; the Simmons pads are designed to go into line-level

continued on page 114



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Pearl's CZX Series is available only in #300 Champagne lacquer birdseye maple finish. For more information on the CZX Custom Series or any of Pearl's Professional Series Drums please write for your free catalog Pearl Corporation, Dept. FCO, 549 Metroplex Dr., Nashville, TN 37211. Or see your local authorized Pearl dealer.

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maple shell, 6 ply,  
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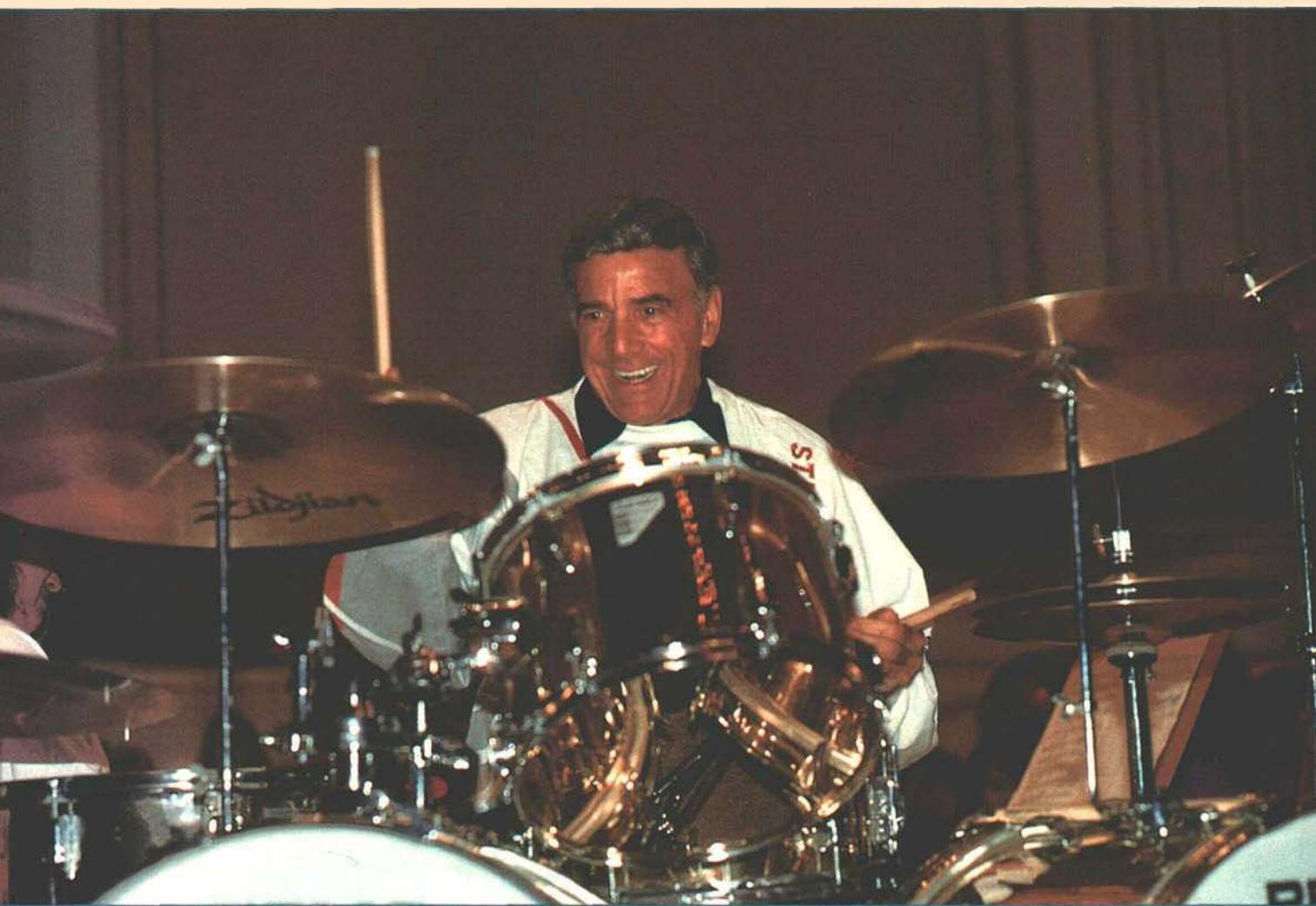
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# LOUIE BELLSON



*Photo by Ebet Roberts*

BY RICK MATTINGLY

## "I'd like to do something different this time,"

Louie Bellson told me over the phone a couple of weeks before we were scheduled to do this interview. "Usually," he said, "I talk about how I grew up, and who I played with, and all the stuff I did. But I've talked about myself enough. I'd like to do an interview where I discuss all the drummers I learned from: Chick Webb and Jo Jones and Big Sid, right up to Steve Gadd and Dave Weckl, because I'm still learning things from those guys. What do you think? Can we do an interview like that?"

"Sure," I answered. Having read a lot of interviews with Louie over the years, I had no particular desire to cover ground that was already well-documented either. And I was especially eager to discuss some of the drummers that I had never been able to hear live, and whose records are often very difficult to find. So I looked forward to hearing Louie reminisce about the players who were prominent when he was coming up, as well as getting his comments about his own generation of players and the ones who have come along since.

Being an organized type of person, I made up a list of drummers, grouping them by age and era. I figured that we would start with the drummers Louie learned from and then progress, decade by decade, right up to the present.

But when we got together in Cincinnati—where Louie was performing with his wife, Pearl Bailey, and the Cincinnati Pops—the interview didn't go exactly as I had planned. He was happy to talk about all of those drummers, and he did at length. In fact, he had made his own list of players that he wanted to be sure to include. But as far as following any type of historical continuity, it didn't quite work out that way. From time to time Louie would focus in on a particular drummer or type of music, but suddenly he would be drawing comparisons between, say, Joe Morello and Vinnie Colaiuta, and the next thing you knew we would be talking about the recent Buddy Rich tribute concert. And just as suddenly, Louie would be reminded of something Gene Krupa once said, and the conversation would be back in the swing era.

A few weeks later, I poured over the transcript of the interview, wondering if I should try to reorganize it. But as I read through it, I realized that it was already in a logical order. Even though the "sequence of events," so to speak, were not necessarily chronological, everything flowed quite smoothly.

Just like Louie's drumming.

When Bellson performs, you can hear the early swing that was predominant when he was coming up. You can hear the more refined swing that he and his generation perfected in the heyday of the big bands. You can hear the bop that flourished in the '40s and '50s. You can hear modern rock and funk. But you don't hear them isolated, one after another. Those influences are all present at the same time, and they give Bellson's playing a remarkable depth. He is simultaneously traditional and contem-

porary as all of his influences come together as one.

This conversation was like that. Louie doesn't categorize drummers by style or date. To him, they are all part of the same thing. Baby Dodds and Gene Krupa are as alive and vital to Louie as Dennis Chambers and Peter Erskine. And with his unabashed energy and enthusiasm, Louie Bellson might be the most vital of them all.

"My mentors," Louie says, "were Jo Jones, Chick Webb, Big Sid Catlett, Baby Dodds, Davey Tough, and Gene Krupa. I don't include Buddy in there, even though he was one of my favorite players, because Buddy and I were about the same age and were brought up together listening to all those marvelous drummers I just mentioned. In fact, he and I agreed that if we had to choose one favorite drummer, we couldn't do it, because we listened to everybody. But finally, we were doing an interview together in Japan, and we were asked that question. So Buddy turned to me and said, 'You go first, Lou. What guy would you pick?' And I said, 'Well, I'm sure you'd pick the same guy: Jo Jones.' And Buddy agreed."

Just what was it about Papa Jo that made such an impression on these guys? "When Jo came out with the Basie band," Bellson answers, "he had that drive, but he didn't have that sort of 'chunky' feel that previous drummers had. In those days, you had to play four to the bar on the bass drum, and the drummers would really get going on the snare drum. To me it always sounded kind of choppy. But Jo had a very fluid drive. Watching him play with that tremendous Basie big band was like seeing a championship ice skater where you could just sit back and admire the gracefulness, and yet the power and intensity were there.

"I asked Jo about this one day and he said, 'Well, first of all, I've got a different kind of grip than most drummers.' He showed me how he often gripped the stick way back with the third finger instead of with the index finger. I could see that stick just wobbling around in his hand because of being way back here, but that's how he got some of those different sounds.

"Jo was such a great example of how to play with intensity without choking the muscles, maintaining that wonderful ease that gets you through three or four sets a night. In those days, by the time they got to the third set, a lot of drummers were wiped out. They used to get charley horses from playing the bass drum. Jo said that should never happen. The third set should be the best one because you've had two sets to warm up. The third set should be the one where you're on fire, because the blood is flowing. That's what he used to say: 'The blood is flowing, man. Now you should really be cooking.'

"And of course," Louie adds, "Jo was a master with the hi-hat and the brushes. I've never heard anyone since Jo play the hi-hat the way he did. I remember one time at the Newport Jazz Festival where they had a drummer's afternoon on a Sunday, and all the guys were there: Buddy, me, Joe Morello, Roy

As we were going to press with this article, we learned of the death of singer Pearl Bailey. She and Louie Bellson had been married for 38 years, and they frequently performed together. In addition to her renown as a singer, Bailey served as a delegate to the United Nations, wrote several books, and received a degree in theology. Everyone at *Modern Drummer* offers their condolences to Louie on his—and the world's—great loss.



Photo By Lissa Wales

Haynes, Elvin—*everybody*. We each went out and did our thing. Buddy did all of his tricks, I did all of mine, and here comes Jo Jones with just a hi-hat and a pair of sticks. And when he finished we all looked at one another and said, 'Well, what are ya gonna do?' He capped it off with just a hi-hat and a pair of sticks.

"Jo is definitely one of the guys I hung my hat on," Bellson says, smiling. "He used to come to hear me play, and in between sets he wouldn't say anything. But at the end of the night he'd say, 'Okay, step into my office,' and he'd get me in a back room and let me have it. He'd say something like, 'You have to be careful when you play that Chinese cymbal so you don't overplay it.' Jo was one of the guys who could play that cymbal like nobody.

"Big Sid Catlett was another one," Louie continues. "Today, you hear a lot of guys play the Chinese cymbal and it just becomes a tremendous roar that wipes everything out. But the way Jo and Big Sid played it, you heard a lot of stick sound. Davey Tough was another one who really knew how to blend that instrument with the rhythm section.

"So those were some of the guys I learned from," Bellson says, "but even though I came from that era, I never closed my ears to what was happening as the years progressed. When rock 'n' roll came in, a lot of guys from my era said, 'These guys don't know what they're doing.' But I said, 'Wait a minute. Have you heard this guy? Have you heard

that guy? They're laying down something new.' So I always listen to a lot of the younger guys to pick up on what they're doing."

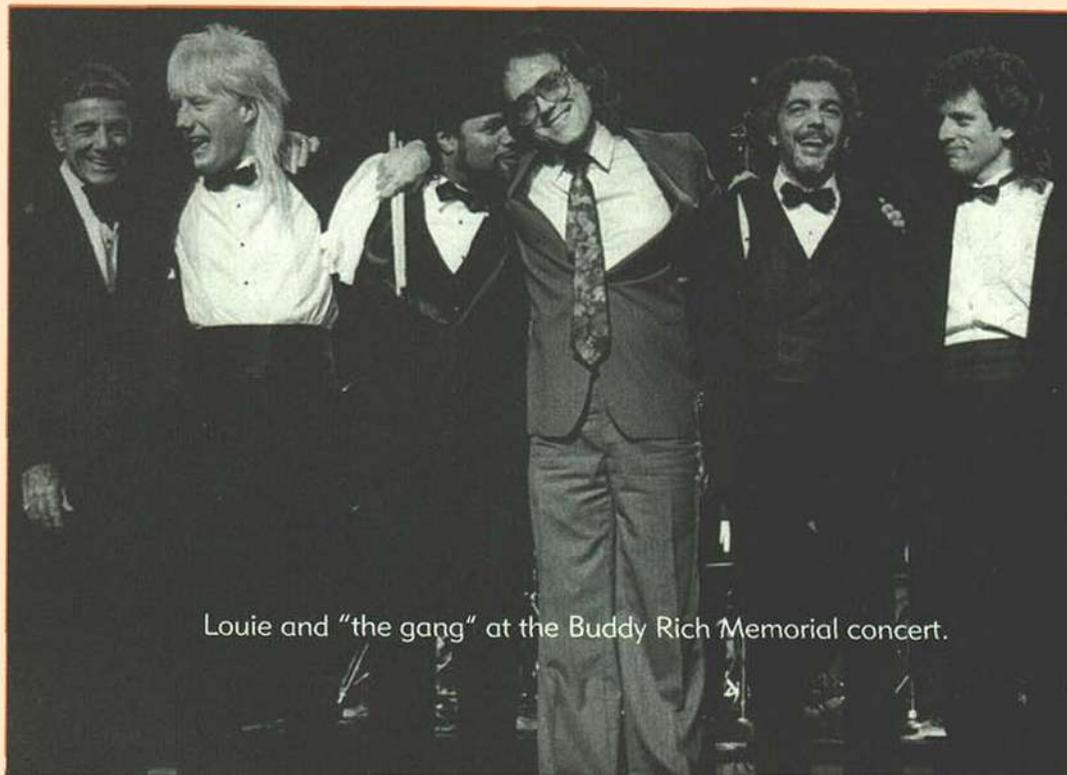
Besides being able to blend new ideas into his own playing, Bellson finds that being aware of different styles is an asset when he does clinics. "A lot of the young drummers will ask me if I've heard certain players. And I think in order to give a complete clinic you have to be up on what's happening today. For instance, Bernard Purdie was one of the first guys who got into playing funk. I heard him on those marvelous Aretha Franklin records, and then I went to him and said, 'What are you really doing on these records?' He showed me,

and then I was able to show the youngsters.

"I did the same thing with Steve Gadd when he did '50 Ways...' with Paul Simon. When I first heard that, it just knocked me out. So I went to Steve and said, 'I can hear the rhythm you played, but how exactly did you do it?' So he said, 'Lou, it's just an old march beat,' and he played it for me on the snare drum. Then he showed me how he allocated the beats around the drumset. So then I was able to show it to the youngsters, and it also kept me up with what was happening.

"I've always tried to listen to different kinds of records: rock, Latin.... I took some lessons from Humberto Morales years ago, because back then nobody really played the Latin rhythms. We played cha-chas and rumbas, but not the way they should have been played. Buddy and I used to wonder why some of the jazz

Photo By Lissa Wales



Louie and "the gang" at the Buddy Rich Memorial concert.

drummers didn't get into the real sambas and things. So I started taking some lessons from Humberto, and after that *Dizzy* Gillespie showed me a lot of the Afro-Cuban things. Then Stan Getz brought some people up from Brazil, and they started playing the bossa nova. Shelly Manne was the one who really hipped me to the bossa nova.

"So you have to keep abreast. All the guys that I was brought up on—like Big Sid—used to say, 'Keep your eyes and ears open. Keep learning.' And I feel the same way. Even though a lot of guys from my era put down electronic drums, my answer is that I think we're still in the infancy stage. I've heard what guys like Bill Bruford do with the Simmons drums. They really *use* those instruments; they really know what they're doing. So when I hear something like that, I have to say, 'This is just another facet of playing.'

"I've seen what a lot of the young guys do with drum machines: Sonny Emory, Vinnie Colaiuta, Dave Weckl, Terry Bozzio. I listen to these guys and I pick up things from them. Maybe that keeps my playing from becoming stagnant. I think you have to be able to do it all. You have to be like Steve Gadd. I

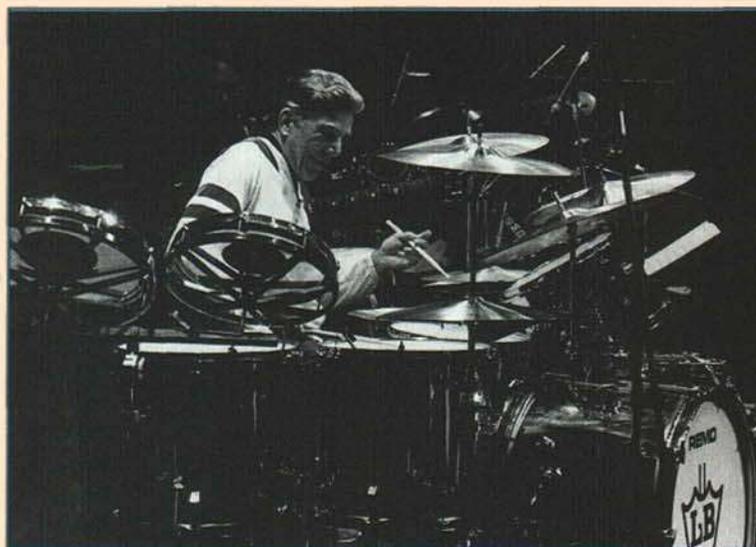


Photo By Lissa Wales

always pinpoint that young man because he does it all so well. He knows how to lock into the music, and once he starts in,

boy.... At that last Buddy Rich tribute concert we did with the alumni band, I talked to Bobby Shew, because when Steve started to play I saw Bobby take a deep breath, like a big sigh of relief. So I asked Bobby about that and he said, 'When Steve plays, the rhythm section locks in so great that the rest of the band knows right away that *there's* the authority. It makes it so much easier for us.'

"That's the way it should be," Louie says. "When I was standing backstage, I felt that intensity. When Steve came offstage, I hugged him because he swung that band so well. Steve and Peter Erskine both have a way of starting right with the first bar: WHAM. They're right into it, whether it's swing, a ballad, funk, or whatever. They get right into the music, boy, and before you know it your head is bobbing and your feet are tapping. That's what it's all about.

"Back when I was coming up," Louie continues, "all the drummers learned from

LOUIE'S

Setup

**Drumset:** Remo Encore series in gold finish.

- A. 5 1/2 x 14 snare
- B. 8" concert tom
- C. 10" concert tom
- D. 16 x 24 bass drum
- E. 9 x 13 rack tom
- F. 16 x 24 bass drum
- G. 16 x 16 floor tom
- H. 16 x 16 floor tom
- I. 14" RotoTom
- J. 16" RotoTom

**Cymbals:** Zildjian

- 1. 13" K/Z hi-hats
- 2. 17" A medium crash
- 3. 18" K ride with three rivets
- 4. 21" A Rock ride
- 5. 18" A medium crash
- 6. 22" A *China Boy* high with six rivets

**Hardware:** All Remo hardware, except for two DW 5000 bass drum pedals with wood beaters. Louie states he doesn't use boom stands; he uses "L"-shaped cymbal

stands, one on each bass drum.

**Heads:** Remo Legacy heads on batter sides of snare, toms, and bass drums. Clear *Ambassadors* on bottoms of toms.

**Sticks:** Remo *Louie Bellson* model. Louie's specialty sticks, including the *Drum Mallet*, *Stick Mallet*, *Brush Mallet*, *Stick Brush*, *Jingle Stick*, and *Brustick*, are all made by Mike Balter.

each other. I remember when Gene was with Benny Goodman's band. He was getting ready to go up to the Savoy Ballroom, where Goodman's band was going to play opposite Chick Webb's band. And Gene said, 'Well, I'm going to get another drum lesson tonight.' Because Gene learned so much from Chick Webb. Here was this little guy who played with pencil-thin sticks, and he had that affliction—that hunchback. But the way he played behind a band and made it swing! There was an example of a true, God-given talent. It was such an inspiration to hear all those guys play. Each one of those guys had their own slot, and they respected one another. Big Sid was as great as Jo Jones, and he was as great as Chick Webb.

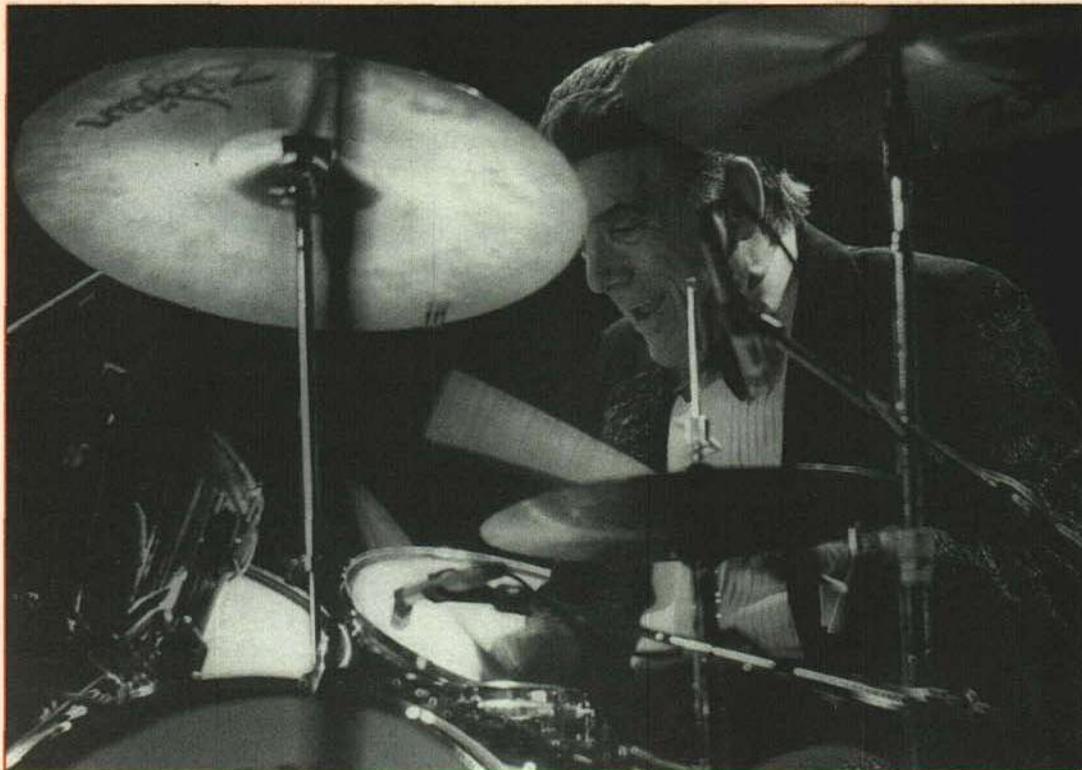


Photo By Lissa Wales

"And another thing about these old drummers is that when you heard them on record, you automatically said, 'That's Jo Jones. That's Buddy Rich. That's Davey Tough. That's Art Blakey. That's Max Roach.' And they

stressed that point. They used to say, 'Listen to everybody, but don't try to copy somebody exactly, because you can't do that.' We saw so many Buddy Rich clones for a while, to the extent where it really irritated Buddy. He used to say, 'Pick up on the beats, but when you hear a player, you want to be able to say, "That's so and so." Sure, Buddy showed me a lot of things, and I showed him some things. But we always knew that identification was an important factor.

"What impresses me about Dave Weckl," Louie says, "is that he's got identification. When you hear him play, you know it's him. And I always stress that point. Yes, pick up on things, but there will only be one Peter Erskine, one Steve Gadd, one Tony Williams, one Elvin Jones. Go listen to them and pick up on things they do, but then do it the way you do it. You may have something wonderful inside you, but when you get up on the bandstand all you can think about is Buddy Rich or Steve Gadd. That's a no-no. You have to be yourself.

"Look at Elvin Jones," Louie says. "What a talented man. There's another example of someone who has an identity. I'll never forget an experience Buddy and I had. We were in London, and we both had a night off. We found out that Elvin was at Ronnie Scott's with his quartet, so we went to hear him and we took the front table. When he came out, he saw us sitting there and said, 'Oh, it's going to be one of *those* nights,'" Louie says, laughing at the memory. "Well, let me tell you, Elvin played so great that Buddy and I looked at each other and said, 'How does he do it?' He has that earth sound. That's the best way I can describe Elvin: an earth sound.

"Elvin played a solo on a medium-tempo waltz," Louie continues. "Normally, if you're going to play a solo, you want something uptempo. But he took this old, funky waltz, and he played in such a way that we could still follow the melody of the tune.

## Louie's Listeners' Guide

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

Album Title	Artist
Big Band Explosion	Louie Bellson
Dynamite	"
Note Smoking	"
Hot	"
East Side Suite	"
Thunderbird	"
Ellington Uptown	Duke Ellington
Basie & Friends	Count Basie, Ray Brown, Louie Bellson et al.

Which albums do you listen to most for inspiration?

Album (or song) Title	Artist	Drummer
"Lisa"	Chick Webb	Chick Webb
"West Side Story"	Buddy Rich	Buddy Rich
Queer Street	Count Basie	Shadow Wilson
Drums	Jo Jones	Jo Jones
and anything from Big Sid Catlett, Tony Williams, Elvin Jones, Steve Gadd, and Peter Erskine		

Note: Several of these records were unavailable or out of print at press time. But check with your record shop to see what is currently available, and what may have been or may in the future be re-released on album, cassette, or CD.

## In The Driver's Seat With L.B.

And he came right out of it *so* that he didn't have to count the band back in. Buddy turned to me and said, 'That's the wildest thing I've ever heard.' Most drummers just play rhythmically, and when they're finished they have to count the band back in. But Elvin was playing melodically *and* rhythmically. Buddy and I were just mesmerized. There's another example of taking a drum lesson from another guy."

Some of the lessons were more formal than others. "Joe Morello knew that I had studied with Murray Spivak," Louie says, "and he wanted to know that finger style. So before I even knew what kind of player Joe was, here I was showing him a few things, not realizing that Joe Morello was already a great player. He remains today the most dedicated drummer I ever met in my life. The only guy who comes close to him is Vinnie Colaiuta. Vinnie takes a pair of drumsticks in the bathroom with him," Louie laughs. "That's what Joe did. These guys never wasted a minute."

"You know, Davey Tough wanted to take a lesson from me once," Bellson adds. "I was in New York with Tommy Dorsey's band, and Davey came to see me one weekend and asked me if I could teach him to do a snare drum roll. I said, 'Davey, you've got to be joking. You're one of the guys *I* learned from.' And he said, 'No, really, I don't know how to make a snare drum roll.' In those days, in the theaters, you played for a lot of jugglers and dancers, and you had to play a lot of snare drum rolls. Davey used to go up to the acts ahead of time and apologize, and say, 'I can't play a real snare drum roll, so please try to put up with me.' And people were amazed. 'Davey Tough can't make a snare drum roll?' But he couldn't."

"Now here's a guy," Bellson says, shaking his head and laughing, "who could swing a band.... We used to have an expression, 'Swing you into bad health.' He could do that. Davey and Jo Jones did something I've never seen any other drummers do. In those days, the final chorus was called the out chorus, and when you got to the out chorus, that was it. You were goin' home, man. Let it all hang out. Well, those two guys would play the out chorus with *brushes*, and it would be swinging *so hard*. Which proves that you don't have to play loud to be exciting."

"Those early players were the innovators," Bellson stresses. "They were the ones who

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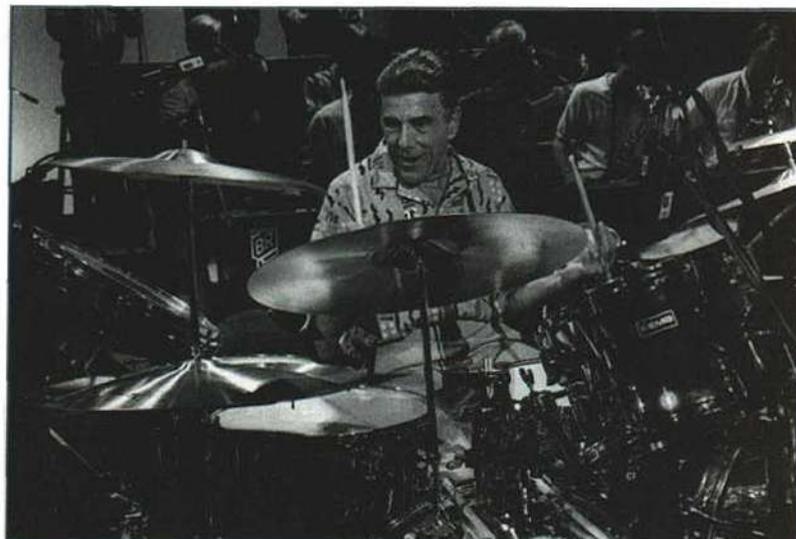


Photo By Lissa Wales

Suppose a drummer who had some experience playing jazz in small combos was suddenly asked to sit in with a big band. What are some of the stylistic considerations he should be aware of? "Assuming it's a hard-swinging band, out of the Basie/Ellington/Rich/Herman school," Louie says, "first you have to zero in on the rhythm section and make sure that it is together. But you also have to be aware of what the brass and reeds are doing."

"With a quartet," Bellson explains, "you can be a little more boppish, and maybe drop bombs with the bass drum. But with a mainstream big band playing hard swing, play four beats to the bar with the bass drum. You don't want to make it obtrusive so that you drown out the bass player, but make it felt so that the lead players have something to hang their hat on."

"Dynamically, you have to be stronger with a big band because you've got a full complement of players. Once those nine brass start hitting, you have to be able to match that. I don't mean that you have to start bashing the drums real loud, but you have to play with authority. Once the other players feel that strength, it's going to be easier for them. Basie used to say that the drummer is in the driver's seat. You've got hold of the wheel, and you have to let the band know that you are in control."

"If it requires reading a chart," Bellson continues, "and you're not too adept at chart reading, that's okay. This is where the listening power comes in. You have to be a Buddy Rich where you can listen to something the first time and grab it. Be sure that you listen to every part of the band, and especially the soloists, so that you can give them the proper backing. Don't overplay the soloists, but goose them every once in a while. Play with that kind of authority."

"Even if you are a good reader," Bellson advises, "don't bury your head in the part. Keep your ears open, and keep your eyes open, too. Set up your music stand so that it is in line with the conductor or leader, because he can give you a lot of visual cues. Also, don't catch every figure. Only accent the most important licks. A lot of drummers catch too many licks and don't rely enough on steady rhythm. Keep the time swinging, and only accent the most important brass figures."

"If you are playing a traditional swing arrangement," Bellson says, "play the 'head' of the tune, or the A section, on the hi-hats. When the tune progresses to the B section, which might be a tenor solo, switch to a 21" ride cymbal. If that is followed by a trumpet solo, change the color. I would probably go to an 18" ride at that point. If the trumpet solo is followed by a piano solo, I would change the color again, maybe going to a tight, closed hi-hat, or even brushes. For the out chorus I could go two ways: either play it on the hi-hats the same way I played the head, or go back to the 21" ride."

"If the band has an 'ensemble' section," Bellson adds, "where they are playing short, syncopated riffs with a lot of space in between at about a *mezzo piano* dynamic, that's when I would go to my 22" Chinese cymbal. It not only fills out the rhythm section, but it fills all those holes the band leaves between their riffs. It's a marvelous sound."



Photo By Ebet Roberts



▶▶▶▶ I noticed a big difference in the way people in the industry viewed me as a musician after I did *The Big Picture* with Michael. After my name appeared on the credits of the movie I started getting all these calls from guys saying, "Let's write together," or "Let's produce together." I couldn't figure out why. One of these people said to me, "Now that you're not just a drummer, I'd like to work with you." I didn't understand what he meant. I said, "Not just a

would trigger sounds to get that huge ambient kit sound live. But the main thing I use all my computers for is to be able to do all the keyboard parts myself.

I have no playing knowledge of keyboards at all. I'm trying to learn now—I'm actually studying. But this way, I can still do film scoring and other projects myself and not just work for other guys. I think we all have that in us—the ability to create our own work—but we don't do it because of limitations. I knew

how to play drums and work with sounds, so I basically assembled all these rigs to be able to do many things. The beauty of a lot of the technology is the convenience. For instance, I use read/write CDs, which are erasable, so I can record onto them and play them back immediately. I used to store all my sounds on floppy disks, but one of those floppies are 800k, which is less than a megabyte. One of these CDs is 640 megabytes. You'd use about 800 floppy disks for every one of the CDs. Now I put five of these CDs in my briefcase—and I have everything with me.

This kind of technology, along with the advent of portable D.A.T. players, is allowing drummers to be a lot more individualistic. It used to be that you couldn't capture your drum sound in the Olympic Dome or some huge stadium because you didn't have the facility to record it. I have a portable D.A.T. machine that I carry around with me, and it's really easy to use. That way, when somebody says to me, "I'm doing this heavy metal record, and I want a big, ambient drum sound," instead of using some Led Zeppelin sample, I'll use my kit, which I played in that dome. So it's a one-of-a-kind sample. That allows *your* playing and *your* sound to be your own. You're not relying on some engineer's interpretation of it.

**TS:** In an earlier conversation we had, you mentioned that you wanted to make the point that you don't rely too much on electronics, but instead you more or less use them as an enhancement of your acoustic kit.

**DB:** Yeah, exactly. I always get into that debate with guys who say, "I don't want to use a drummer. I want somebody to come in and program this to replace a drummer," or, "Do you have a machine that you can program to sound like a drummer?" You see, I'm not really into doing that. Sure, you can do that stuff nowadays, but no machine will ever sound even close to a drummer. The levels of dynamics you can get from a drum can number in the thousands. MIDI only has 127 levels of velocity.

**TS:** What do you do when you get a call for a session like you just mentioned? Do you end up playing a kit combined with sampling?

**DB:** With most producers I work with, if they want drums, then they have me play

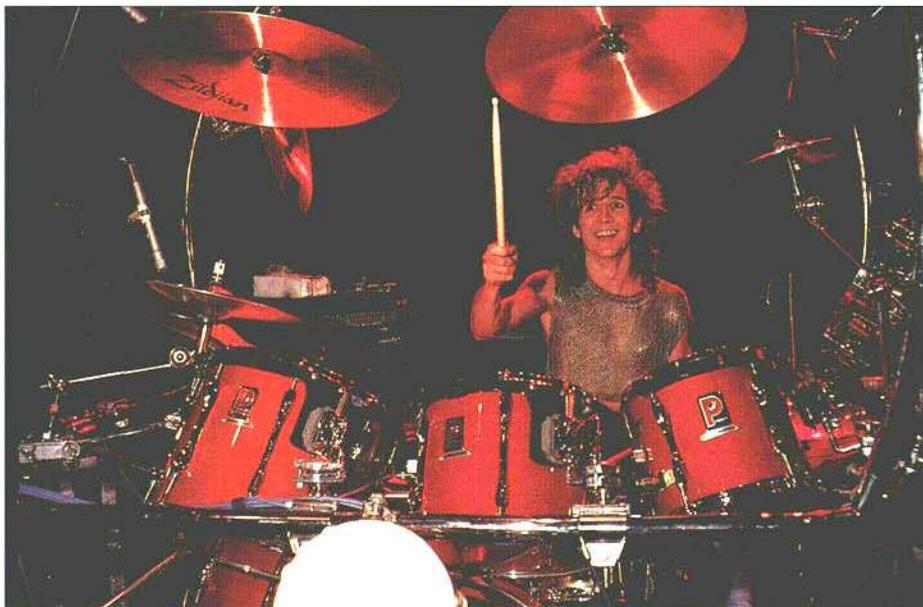


Photo by Lissa Wales

drummer'?" "Yeah, now you make *real* music. You obviously play real music because I saw your name on the front of the movie." Then it hit me. A lot of guys think that there are drummers, and then there are programmers. But I don't make a distinction. I don't use programming to replace drums. I still like to play drums. But I do use programming to be able to do all the stuff that a keyboard player can do so that I can avoid being "just a drummer"—as some people say.

**TS:** Do you play those keyboard-type parts both in live situations and when composing soundtracks?

**DB:** Yes. For instance at a NAMM show I did a band thing with Michael Shrieve, Doug Lund, Andy Summers, Mark Isham, and David Torn. I did a lot of the melodic stuff from drum pads. In my setup I had a rig that allowed me to play the melodies while standing. So that's one way to do it. Then when I was out on tour with Julian Lennon or Joe Cocker, I

**"When you trigger a sound you've created, it's a different feeling than playing a sound that somebody else created."**

drums. Then if they want some rap or hip-hop thing, I'll program that, because that's a whole different medium. That's the whole key in working with Michael on our last film: Any time we tried to use machines to do drums, we'd also use drums in ways we normally wouldn't. We'd change sounds, like make certain snare drum hits big and certain ones small. For a chase scene, I combined a trash dumpster and a sample of a run-down clock with big stadium toms. Putting those together made it sound like very gritty, metal toms.

So you're using these machines to do a whole different thing, rather than what you can already do on the drums. First of all, the time you'd spend making machines sound just like drums would take ten times as long as just playing the drums yourself. People did that for a while because they could get a better sound out of a machine since engineers nowadays generally don't know how to record live drums anymore. It's coming back, but a lot of engineers are really MIDI engineers who suddenly want to record live drums. They've recorded keyboards since the day they started engineering. The prospect of recording live drums is a scary thing for them in a way.

**TS:** Have you really encountered engineers of such ignorance on sessions?

**DB:** Oh, a lot. It used to be that to become an engineer, you apprenticed in a big studio for a long time, and that was a big room where they recorded commercials using live drums every day. Now people start out as engineers because they have an eight-track in their apartment and they got real interested in it.

Then they went to work in some MIDI studio, and *then* to some demo studio where 90% of the demos were done with machines. So the idea of getting a really great drum sound is pretty scary for a lot of them. You know, there's a lot to know about gates, miking techniques.... Miking techniques are coming back now, but it used to be that guys would set up the drums, then move the mic's around just to check the different sounds. Mic'

placement and what mic' you chose for what drum was the key. Now it's great to see magazines run articles explaining what works well on a kick drum and so forth. A lot of that was like a lost art. People just need to buckle down and learn that.

But getting back to how the technology has made things easier, now there are boxes that allow me to combine sounds,

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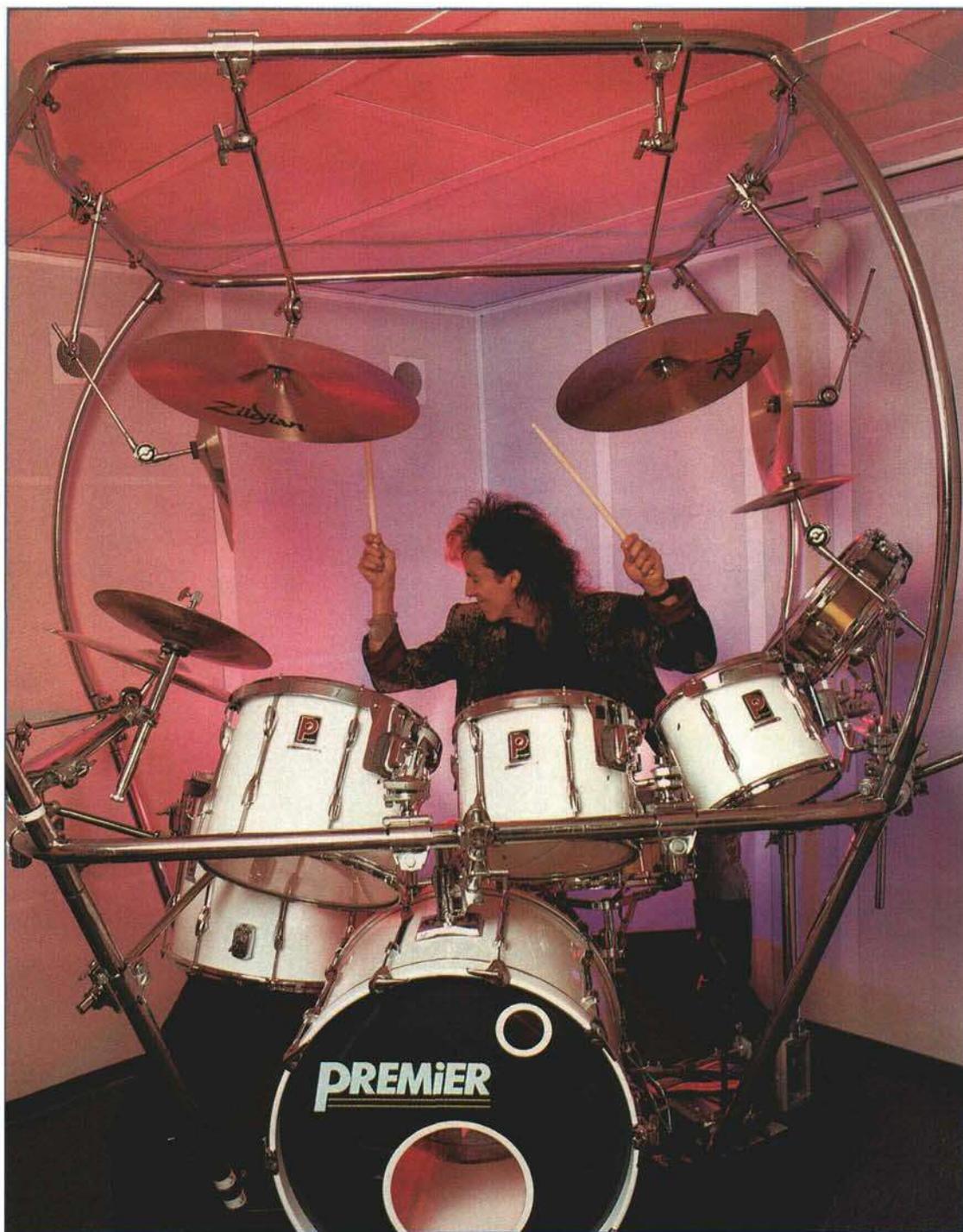


Photo by Ebet Roberts

"Heavy  
metal  
drumming  
is a lot  
of heart  
and soul  
and feel  
more than  
anything  
else."



# Skid

# Row's Rob

# Affuso

By Teri Saccone Photos by Mark Weiss

**Y**ou might know Rob Affuso as the drummer from Skid Row, that immensely popular band who play ripping, three-chord, take-no-prisoners rock 'n' roll. They are the same Skid Row whose escapades often eclipse their stripped-down sound and lyrical tales of rebellious youth.

But if there is such a thing as a heavy metal prototype, Rob Affuso isn't it. Tall and generally soft-spoken—though sometimes *outspoken*—Affuso has taken anything but the typical route to the top. He has spent most of his professional career as a progressive rock drummer. Idolizing the playing of Neil Peart, he once replicated Peart's parts in a high school band, until later creating his own complex, idiosyncratic playing for his band, Sutton Thomas. Before that, Affuso cut his teeth in high school marching bands, not the usual garage band circuit. After high school, he attended New York University, moving to New Jersey from his home in upstate New York.

This interview wasn't quite what I had expected. Affuso did discuss the workings of being a Skid Row drummer, but he also shared some of his personal ideas about other topics. Take his view on the value of the music industry:

"I think the music business can be filled with a lot of disillusion," he comments. "This goes back to the day I met one of my early drumming influences, which was one of the most disappointing days of my life. Meeting this drummer was a big deal for me. But he wasn't really interested in talking to me. In fact, he

didn't really care that I existed. [laughs] It made me start to realize that musicians who are famous can sometimes believe that they have a license to be assholes. The truth is that if just about any musician were to die tomorrow—barring artists like Buddy Rich—life would go on, and the majority of people would forget about them.

"Entertainers are great, and they make a contribution to society, but I feel there is too much emphasis put on the whole industry. It's really not all that important in the end. I think what's really important is that we have good teachers for our kids. People who hold professions like teaching—shaping children's minds—and people who work on environmental issues—they don't receive nearly enough attention from the public. It's so unfair that entertainers across the board are rewarded so much financially for what they do, while people who are really striving to change the world have to go without. I'm not saying that I'm not happy, [laughs] because I definitely am. But it seems so unfair in the end. So if you do become fortunate enough to do well in music, you should maintain the kind of attitude—at the very least—that people can respect."

**TS:** You were out on the road for 16 months in support of the first Skid Row album. That's probably the longest stretch of live playing in your career. In what areas did that strengthen your drumming?

**RA:** I definitely felt real solid by the end of the tour. I was sure of my place in the band as far as what I wanted to do, and what the band expected of me as a drummer. I knew it was my job to drive this aggressive machine, and I was real comfortable doing that. I felt really conditioned as far as my body went. It's a very physical show, and it took me a while to get into the kind of shape where I wasn't out of breath by the end of a show. I felt that my coordination and independence had come a long way since the beginning of the tour.

**TS:** Have you always had a reasonably good facility for independence?

**RA:** I think I grasped onto that pretty quickly. I think having the drumming of Neil Peart, Carl Palmer, and Phil Collins as role models made that necessary, and it just kind of fell in naturally with me. I studied books that taught that as well.

**TS:** Were there any books in particular that helped significantly?

**RA:** Ted Reed's *Syncopation* was one I studied. But you eventually get to the point where you put yourself—or parts of yourself—on auto pilot. For me, I usually put my right side and my left arm on auto pilot, where I don't have to think about what I'm playing. Unless I'm putting the hi-hat on 2 and 4, I find myself focusing on my left foot a lot. I may also put my two legs and my right arm on auto pilot and focus more on my left arm. Sometimes you don't have to focus; all this just happens. That's the best: when you don't have to think about it. Many drummers don't have to think—the ones that are well into the independence routine. They just *do it*. Sometimes I can just do it. Other times I have to think it through.

**TS:** When you're off the road and away from the studio, do you find the time to practice?

**RA:** To be quite honest, I've been so busy trying to get my home life together that I haven't been playing that much. But when I do get an idea, I'll play. I haven't played in a month, but that's also because I just wanted the break. I like doing that because it stirs up all these new ideas in me and the desire to go back full-force. I always love to play, but for me, after I'm out

there for 16 months, I want to be away from it for a little while.

Skid Row stopped everything for a break after the last tour. We agreed that if we got any ideas, we'd just hold onto them and get together in a month and a half. Not that we don't see each other, but we didn't worry about the music end of things. We occupied our time with dirtbike riding and other things. But I'm ready to get back to drumming now.

**TS:** Did you start drumming at an early age?

**RA:** As a two-year-old I liked to bang the hell out of virtually anything within reach. When I was four or five, my parents got me a Mickey Mouse kit, and I quickly destroyed that. I always had the interest. I began studying in first grade, and continued all the way through school. Once I got in high school I played in all the bands: the marching band, the jazz band, the orchestra. Then I played with a show group, which had singers and

**ROB'S GEAR**

Drums; Pear! MLX series in gloss white finish	5. 18" AA medium crash	beaters.
A, 8 x 14 Free Floating brass snare	6. 16" HH medium crash	Heads; Aquarian <i>Hi-Performance</i> on top of snare, with a Remo <i>Ambassador</i> snare head underneath, Aquarian Studio-X on tops of toms, with <i>Classic Clears</i> on bottoms. Remo <i>Pinstripes</i> on batter side of bass drums, with Pearl logo heads on front.
B. 16 x 22 bass drum	7. 22" AA Rock ride	Sticks: Pro-Mark 2B oak model with wood tip.
C. 11 x 13 tom	8. 18" HH medium crash	
D. 12 x 14 tom	9. 22" AA Chinese	
E. 16 x 22 bass drum	10. 21" AA crash/ride	
F. 16 x 16 floor tom	aa, cowbell	
G. 16 x 18 floor tom		
Cymbals; Sabian	Hardware: All Pearl	
1. 14" AA Rock hi-hats	900 and 950 series, including 950 series hi-hat stand and bass drum pedals with wood	
2. 16" AA Rock crash		
3. 18" AA Chinese		
4. 20" AA Rock crash		



dancers. I was also involved with several marching bands outside of school, which I would highly recommend for young drummers to get into. Marching helped me to focus in on all the rudiments and technique. I really developed a lot of my rudiments—that's what marching bands are all about—and I grew a lot through that. I recommend it highly. You get a lot of crap from kids at school for being in that type of band sometimes. But for some reason I was allowed to do it in high school, probably because I was in a rock band too. But it's worth the experience either way.

I did play with a jazz band in college—a swing-type band—which I enjoyed very much. And all through high school and college I played in various rock bands. One of them was a Rush tribute band. We did two sets of Rush songs—about 20 songs—and that was a great learning experience for me too. Trying to duplicate Neil Peart's parts is not an easy task, [laughs] His drumming has always made me strive to reach a little further and keep pushing and pushing until I could get what he was playing.

Neil was always one of my heroes, and I got the pleasure of meeting him on two occasions. I expected him to be this intellectual person, just sitting there, shaking his head, while I rambled on nervously. But he was actually a great person to talk to, and we discussed everything *except* drums, which was really neat.

**TS:** Did you learn most of Peart's parts through copying the albums, or through reading the sheet music?

**RA:** I did teach myself a lot through listening, but I also learned a lot from teachers. I felt that I was going to learn through any means necessary. I don't think there's one best way. I felt that any information that was coming to me I

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## Under The Influence (of drums)

These are the recordings Rob Affuso listens to most for inspiration.

Album Title	Artist	Drummer	Label/Catalog#
any	Rush	Neil Peart	
Highway To Hell	AC/DC	Phil Rudd	Atlantic SD-19244
High Voltage	AC/DC	Phil Rudd	Atco 36142
Shout At The Devil	Motley Crue	Tommy Lee	Elektra 60289
Dr. Feelgood	Motley Crue	Tommy Lee	Elektra 60829
The Dream Of The Blue Turtles	Sting	Omar Hakim	A&M SP-3750
any	Led Zeppelin	John Bonham	

# MD's 15th Anniversary

## *In The Beginning...*

To say that *Modern Drummer* was a shoestring start-up venture would be an understatement. Imagine, if you will, a small area of an unfinished basement. Visualize two wooden desks, a few portable typewriters, and a makeshift layout board. Place it all under the sparse illumination of a 60-watt bulb, and you'll have a pretty clear picture of the exact setting in which *Modern Drummer* was born.

Our objective back in 1976 was to produce a quarterly drum publication on a national level. But people with a lot more publishing experience than us said it was insane to even *attempt* it. How could we expect to make it fly with such limited resources? What did we know about magazine publishing? What assurance did we have that drummers *wanted* their own publication? If it was such a great idea, why hadn't someone thought of it before? These were the questions the experts posed. We didn't have the answers. All we had was a strong gut feeling that drummers would respond favorably. So we moved forward despite the warnings.

Actually the prophets of doom weren't far off base. Launching *MD* was quite a gamble, especially since it was more a labor of love than a well-planned business venture. And though we did eventually make it through the first year, the truth is we never were quite sure there would *be* a second, third, or fourth issue. Our limited start-up funds were depleted after the first issue, so we were forced to rely on the income from the first issue to finance the second, the second to finance the third...not a smart way to start a national consumer magazine!

Nearly all of 1976 was devoted to refining our prototype until we felt sure we had a solid editorial formula. A feature section would include interviews with the greatest drummers in the world. Articles on major manufacturers would be added, and issues that concerned every drummer would be addressed. New products, books, and records would be reviewed. A roster of columns would deal with every major phase of drumming to help readers improve their playing. Hopefully, most would eventually be written by the best players in the land. *Drummers helping drummers.*

The first issue was designed with the

aid of a local printer—an under-equipped, under-staffed shop that made up for what they lacked in technology with a sincere dedication to our project. We would ultimately spend many all-day and all-night sessions at that print shop until we had a firm grasp on every aspect of magazine production, and on exactly what *Modern Drummer* should look like.

One thing most people don't know is that *MD* was originally planned as a tabloid-size publication. Two months before the first issue went to press, a decision was made to produce it in magazine format. Though that layout style was considerably more costly, we decided to go for broke. It's a decision we've never regretted.

Along with piecing the debut issue together, we were also confronted with the task of setting up a business enterprise. A two-person circulation and distribution department capable of handling subscribers and dealers had to be structured. A one-man advertising department, prepared to deal with manufacturers who we were certain would beat a path to our door, needed to be developed.

As it turned out, there was no real need to rush on *either*. Our small subscriber list—built from the few small ads we could afford to run in other music publications—amounted to only 1,500 by the time we were ready to mail.



MD's basement office start-up, circa 1977.

# Scrapbook: 1976-1991

by Ron Spagnardi

And the first issue carried only six meager ads. Sure, advertisers were receptive to our advance publicity, but most were content to take a "wait and see" attitude. Nonetheless, we were hopeful for better things to come, and excited at the prospect.

Editorially, the first issue came together without any major hitches. Most of it was written by me and a handful of drumming associates. Other articles drifted in from a few budding authors who had gotten wind of our venture. The remainder of the issue was made up of reprints from other publications kind enough to give us permission to use their material.

But one major problem did exist. Something was definitely missing. And that *something* was a powerful cover story to really call attention to the premier issue. Ideas were being tossed about, and time was running short, when a young drummer/writer from St. Louis called to say that he hoped to interview Buddy Rich that evening. Would we be interested in publishing the article if he could get it? *Would we be interested?! Who better than Buddy to get things off to an incredible start? Thrilled at the thought, but not totally confident Buddy would consent to an interview with an unknown writer from an unknown*

magazine, we gave our novice correspondent the green light. What did we have to lose?

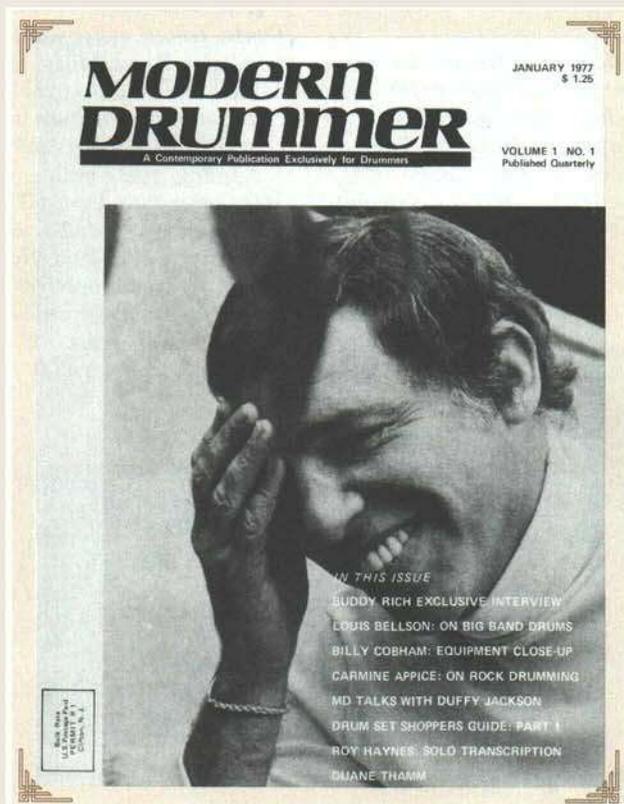
Readers who go back with *MD* that far know the end of the story. Buddy did agree, and, feeling positive about the idea of a *Modern Drummer*, even requested we send him a sample copy when it was released. The tape of the interview was express-delivered to us the next morning, transcribed and edited as fast as humanly possible, and rushed to the printer that afternoon. Buddy would be our very first cover story. The break we desperately needed had come through.

The first copy of *MD*, in all its 32-page glory, rolled off a sheet-fed press around 2:00 A.M. on a cold December morning in 1976. We worked through the night and into the next day pulling magazines off the bindery, putting labels on subscriber copies by hand, and pack-

ing shipments destined for the few hundred music dealers who had signed on. Our elation at getting the first issue out kept us from focusing on just how tired we really were—that is until *reality* set in.

Huddled on the floor near a now silent printing press, we dealt with the fact that total income from advertising had come to just a little over \$600—nowhere near enough to proceed with a second issue. Now what? The answer came during the three-month interim between issues. The positive response to the first issue brought an avalanche of new subscribers and music dealers. We'd also mailed complimentary copies to everyone in the percussion industry and his grandmother. It prompted advertisers to gradually begin calling for more information on placing ads. *MD* had started to snowball. *We were off the ground!*

In retrospect, it's always been interesting to me how that first issue, with all its ups and downs, anxiety and elation, six advertisements and limited graphic appeal, would later become the most *requested* back issue in the entire history of the magazine.



## 1977

The first full year of *MD* required more hours of hard work and cold determination than I care to recall. We knew the idea was valid from the response. But that *alone* wasn't enough to make it work.

To survive the first year, we strove to keep overhead at an absolute minimum, and to make each issue better than the one before. Looking back, this provided the greatest learning experience of all. It forced us to absorb every aspect of publishing as quickly and as thoroughly as we could. We wrote and edited manuscripts, designed layouts, composed our own promotions, sold ad space, typed invoices, and packed shipments. And at the end of the day we emptied the garbage and swept the floor! We did it *all* simply because we couldn't afford to pay anyone else to do it. It was the ultimate education and the only feasible way to keep *Modern Drummer* alive. And *that* we were determined to do.

By the second issue we had already established a small Advisory Board. There were only ten members, but each played a vital role by supplying ideas, material, and constructive criticism. The concept of a professional-member Advisory Board is still in use today.

## 1978

By early '78 the *MD* office was getting crowded. Rapid growth called for additional help. More desks, phone lines, typewriters, and people ate up *every* available square inch of space. By now we had started to refine *MD's* graphics to achieve a more contemporary look, and an average issue came in at around 48 pages. Our stable of free-lance writers and photographers had grown to a fairly acceptable number, which in turn took some pressure off the in-house staff.

By mid-year *MD's* press run had shot up to 15,000 copies. We were forced to look for a better-equipped printer capable of handling the growth. The move ultimately enabled us to more efficiently handle both the increasing production and press run requirements of the magazine.

July of '78 marked the appearance of Ed Shaughnessy as *MD's* very first full-color cover.

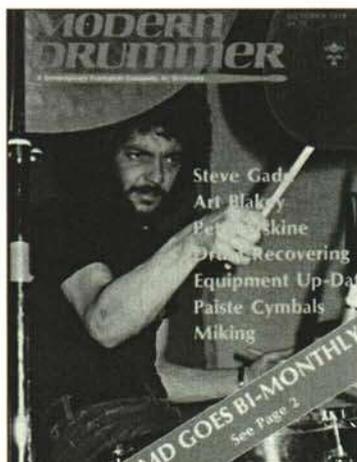


## 1979

The demand for an increase in frequency became too great to ignore. So 1979 marked our first year on a bi-monthly publishing cycle. We debuted the *Product Close-Up and Ask A Pro* columns, and an average issue grew to 72 pages. The Advisory Board leaped to 21 members, and the annual Readers Poll made its premier, eventually becoming the most prestigious honor for professional drummers around the world. The *MD Listeners' Guide*, a compilation of recommended recordings, was now available, and readers could purchase the first *MD* "Drum Power" T-shirt.

The *New York Studio Drummers Roundtable* and the *Gene Krupa Tribute* were two theme issues for the year. David Garibaldi, Butch Miles, and Ed Soph joined on as regular columnists. And Robyn Flans, who would go on to conduct dozens of major feature interviews for *Modern Drummer*, came on board in December with the Danny Seraphine story.

Bursting at the seams, *MD* finally moved to 3,000 square feet of second-floor office space in Clifton, New Jersey. We would publish *Modern Drummer* from here for the next six years.

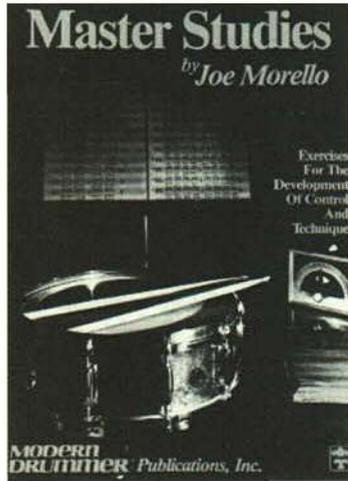




## 1983

MD went monthly with the January '83 issue. A sluggish economy caused many manufacturers to shift gears in search of the budget and beginner market. The Ludwig *Standard*, LP *Cosmic*, Gretsch *Nighthawk*, *Pearl Export*, *Zildjian Amir*, and *Remo PTS* lines showed up in ads and reviews.

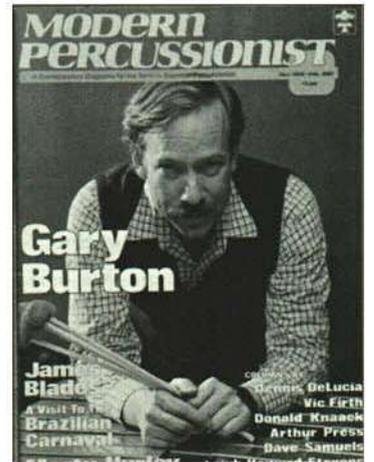
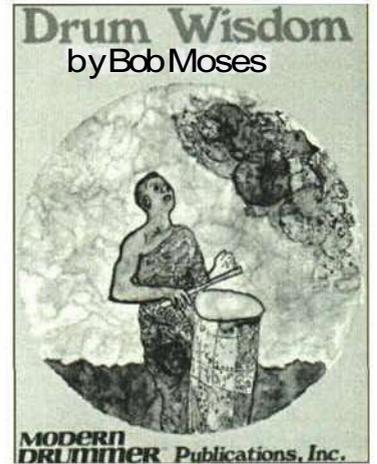
Setup updates and musical examples were incorporated into feature interviews, and music journalists like Jim Dearing, Bob Santelli, Simon Goodwin, Charles Bernstein, Chip Stern, and T. Bruce Wittet came on as contributing writers. 1983 also marked the launching of MD's Book Division with the release of Joe Morello's *Master Studies*, a classic in drum literature now in its fourth printing.



## 1984

In July MD broke ground for brand new offices in Cedar Grove, New Jersey, and a young Dave Weckl was introduced to readers as one of the year's hot "up & coming" drummers. In August the Book Division released *Drum Wisdom* by Bob Moses, now used by students of jazz drumming the world over.

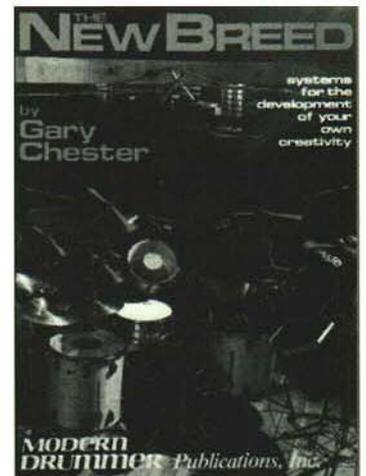
In November we presented the first issue of *Modern Percussionist*, MD's quarterly sister publication. Designed for orchestral, Latin, and rudimental drummers, and expertly edited by Rick Mattingly, *Modern Percussionist* would unfortunately meet its demise in 1987 after twelve issues due to a lack of advertising support.



## 1985

By January we were comfortably situated in our new three-level, 7,500-square-foot office building, which remains MD's homebase to this day. In June, after nearly a year of work, Gary Chester's *New Breed* was released. Helping drummers achieve greater levels of creativity, *The New Breed* soon became one of the most popular books in the MD catalog.

MD's *Second Year*, containing all the material from 1978, was made available, and the drum world was saddened by the loss of Papa Jo Jones, Nick Ceroli, and Philly Joe Jones.

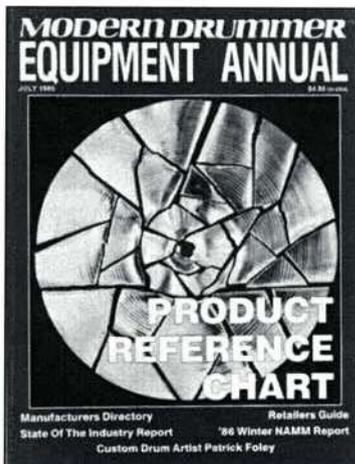


## 1986

MD celebrated its 10th Anniversary in '86 with a special issue that included Louie Bellson, Alan Dawson, Sly Dunbar, Steve Gadd, David Garibaldi, Danny Gottlieb, Omar Hakim, Larrie Londin, Neil Peart, Buddy Rich, and a ten-year equipment review. The first *Sound Supplement*, featuring Andy Newmark and Jimmy Bralower, was also introduced in that issue. Peter Erskine followed in June with his "Focus On Hi-Hat."

The first *Consumer's Poll* gave readers an opportunity to vote for their favorite companies in six categories. And MD released the first *Equipment Annual*, still published and mailed as a bonus to all subscribers each year.

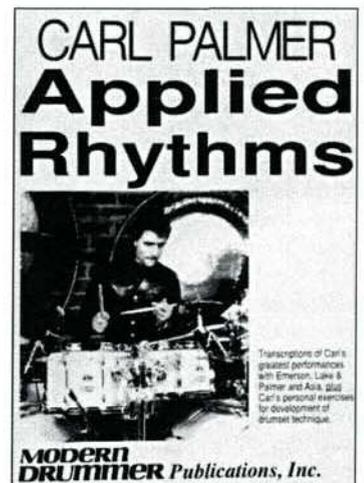
The *MD Honor Roll*, for drummers who had won in the *Readers Poll* for five years, was initiated. Steve Gadd, Neil Peart, Buddy Rich, David Garibaldi, Airtio, and Vic Firth were the first honorees. And a greater interest in electronics among readers resulted in the appearance of MD's *Electronic Review*, *The Machine Shop*, and *MIDI Corner* departments. A perfect-bound (hard spine) *Modern Drummer* became a standard feature.



## 1987

The first MD *Drum Festival* was held, bringing Kenny Aronoff, Alan Dawson, Rod Morgenstein, Dave Weckl, and Steve Gadd to an audience of 1,000 enthusiastic drummers. *Sound Supplements* were issued by Neil Peart, Rod Morgenstein, and Dave Weckl. Neil also chose to give away three drumsets that year to the winners of his two-minute drum solo contest. Over 1,700 contest tapes rolled in from drummers around the world.

In July the release of Carl Palmer's *Applied Rhythms* was announced, and October marked the first in a series of MD *Trivia Contests*. Thousands of dollars of drum equipment would be given away over the next several years.



Dave Weckl performing at Festival '87

## 1988

Rod Morgenstein, Craig Krampf, Peter Erskine, Dave Samuels, Anthony Cirone, John Santos, and Kenny Aronoff became regular column writers. And the *Sound Supplements* included performances by the Neil Peart contest winners and Gregg Bissonette.

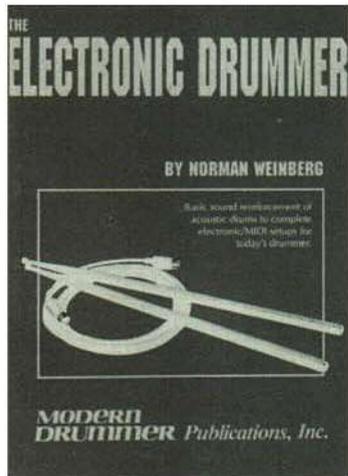
*The Best Of Modern Drummer*, a collection of 100 selected articles, was available in May, and Bill Bruford's *When In Doubt, Roll* was added to the Book Division catalog. September's *Drum Festival* featured Dennis Chambers, Peter Erskine, Harvey Mason, Carl Palmer, and Steve Smith, and readers could win Rod Morgenstein's drumset with the December issue.



## 1989

*MD* conducted the second *Consumer's Poll*, focused on electronics in the February issue, and released *Sound Supplements* by Terry Bozzio and Jonathan Mover. Editors were busy screening videotapes for the Buddy Rich Memorial Scholarship, and *The Electronic Drummer*, by Norm Weinberg, was added to the Book Division line-up.

*The MD Drum Festival* was expanded to a full weekend-long event, displaying the talents of Liberty DeVitto, Danny Gottlieb, Chad Wackerman, Dave Weckl, Gregg Bissonette, Vinnie Colaiuta, Michael Shrieve, David Beal, and Jack DeJohnette to a large number of appreciative drummers.



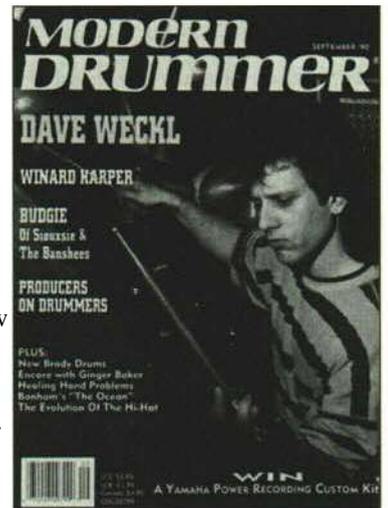
Carl Palmer receives Hall of Fame Award from '88 recipient Joe Morello during Festival Weekend '89.

## 1990

The *MD Photo Gallery* became a standard item, and *Sound Supplements* were offered by Ed Mann, Phil Collins and Chester Thompson in a drum duet, and Simon Phillips. In 1990 readers voted Bill Bruford into the *MD Hall OfFame*, and the *Editors' Achievement Award* was initiated. The distinguished honor that year went to Papa Jo Jones, George Lawrence Stone, Hal Blaine, and William F. Ludwig, Sr.

September's *Drum Festival Weekend* presented a line-up that included Alex Acuna, Anton Fig, Ed Shaughnessy, Tony Williams, Jonathan Mover, William Calhoun, Larrie Londin, and Joe Morello.

The September issue of *MD*, featuring Dave Weckl on the cover, introduced a new and much-improved look, reflected by *Magazine Week's* presentation to *MD* of their Publishing Excellence Award for 1990.



## ...Along The Way

Since *Modern Drummer's*, humble beginning in 1977, we've interviewed hundreds of drummers from every area of music, and published tons of column material by numerous respected players. We've looked in on dozens of manufacturers, shops, and schools, and presented everything from the esoteric drums of Trinidad to practical advice on what arrangers, vocalists, band-leaders, and bassists expect from a drummer.

We've glimpsed at the great products of the past, and focused in on the trends of the future. We've paid tribute to the legendary drummers, and kept an eye peeled for the best young talent on the scene. We've examined the history of

rock and jazz drumming, and the evolution of the instrument itself. We've printed thousands of bars of music, and reviewed hundreds of new products, books, and recordings. And we've supplied readers with insight ranging from opening a drum shop, publishing a book, and getting a product on the market, to the controversial relationships between drumming and weightlifting, drinking, hearing, and personal relationships.

In the process, we've grown from a handful of people to a full staff. From a 3,000-copy circulation to a quarter of a million drummers who see *MD* each month. From a basement corner with two desks to a three-level office building.

From a thin quarterly to a monthly magazine at over 100 pages each. From a sparse distribution to exposure in drum shops and music stores, libraries, bookstores, and newsstand outlets in over 70 foreign nations.

Our reward has been the overwhelming acceptance of *MD* from the world drumming community. *Modern Drummer* has opened up a line of communication between drummers that did not previously exist. If we've managed to make any contribution to our industry and art, perhaps that's the most meaningful of all. I know it's the one we're *most* proud of, and we thank you for allowing us the opportunity.



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When we introduced the Paiste Line in 1989, Paiste Sound Development had worked on our patented Paiste Sound Alloy and the Paiste Line cymbals for 8 years. We were quite sure we had developed a great cymbal line. However, the acceptance, the feedback, and the success that ensued was even greater than we could have possibly imagined. ➤ From what drummers tell us, whoever hears the sound of our Paiste Line cymbals can not forget it or ignore it. And all over the world, drummers are replacing their cymbals with our Paiste Line series. In fact, it has been a challenge to keep up with the demand, because, after all, every single cymbal is lovingly created by hand. ➤ Paiste Line cymbals come with a program we call the "Extended Care Program." As the name implies, it extends the care we use in making the cymbals to your owning them. It is free with the purchase of a Paiste Line cymbal and it covers your loss of the cymbal for one year from the date of purchase due to theft or damage from a fire. Ask your dealer for details. ➤ So, visit your favorite percussion center and listen to our Paiste Line cymbals. Enjoy.

"The new Paiste Line cymbals introduced earlier last year demonstrate quality and sound beyond expectation. When you play this cymbal, it's exactly the sound that you've been waiting to hear. Not only does it eject a perfect sound on every level, it also resembles an exciting taste in your mouth. These cymbals are unlike any other I've played." — *Mickey Dee, Dokken*

Mickey's Set: Paiste Line: 14" Sound Edge Hi-Hat, 22" Power Ride, 18" Power Crash (2), 18" Full Crash (2), 20" Full Crash & Power Crash, 18" & 20" Heavy China, 12" Splash.

"I want my drums to have tons of bottom, like thunder. The Paiste Line are the only cymbals that cut through thunder...like lightning! Sharp, crisp and precise sounds, these are BRILLIANT CYMBALS!" — *Greg D'Angelo, White Lion*

Greg's Set: Paiste Line: 18" Full Crash, 20" Bright Ride, 14" Power Hi-Hat, 20" Full Crash & Power Crash, 10" Splash, 22" Power Ride, 3000: 20" Novo China, 3000 RUDE: 14" Hi-Hat, 2000 SOUND REFLECTIONS: 18" & 20" China.

"These are very unique sounding cymbals, and they have a sound all their own. Very brilliant sounding...they're one of a kind!" — *Joe Morello, Hall of Fame*

Joe's Set: Paiste Line: 20" Bright Ride, 16" & 18" Full Crash, 13" Sound Edge Hi-Hat, 20" Flat Ride.

"When the RUDE and 2002 lines arrived, I thought, WOW, this is it, these cymbals RULE! And now I have the same feeling about the new Paiste Line. These cymbals are SLAMMIN'! Especially the Dark Crisp Hi-Hats and the Fast Crashes. When I added them to my kit, I felt my cymbal set-up was complete. They added so much more color to my sound, and my playing. This is a 90's cymbal!"

— *Charlie Benante, Anthrax*  
Charlie's Set: Paiste Line: 8" Splash, 13" Dark Crisp Hi-Hat & Sound Edge Hi-Hat, 19" Dry Ride, 18" Fast Crash, 20" Power Crash, 8" Bell, 3000 RUDE: 12" Splash, 17" Crash/Ride, 20" Ride/Crash, 3000: 18" Novo China, 3000 REFLECTOR: 18" Crash, 20" Novo China, 2000 SOUND REFLECTIONS: 18" Crash, 1000 RUDE: 14" Crash/Ride, 16" Crash/Ride.



"The new Paiste Line series projects unlimited expression, and adds a new dimension in cymbal technology. Don't go to the gig without 'em!" — **William Kennedy, Yellowjackets**

Will's Set: Paiste Line: 18" Flat Ride, 16" Fast Crash, 13" Sound Edge Hi-Hat, 8" Splash. SOUND FORMULA: 16" Full Crash. SOUND CREATION: 18" New Dimension Medium Dark Ride.

"Dual-purpose performance... that's the key for me. Like a Ferrari 275 G.T.B./4, which was built for both street and track use, these cymbals outperform all others in both studio and live situations." — **Deino Carmagn, Maze**

Denny's set: Paiste Line: 14" Heavy Hi-Hat, 13" Sound Edge Hi-Hat, 16" Full Crash, 18" Full Crash & Fast Crash, 20" Dry Heavy Ride, 18" Heavy China.

"I just used the new Paiste Line on the new RATT record DETONATOR and got the best sound imaginable. To make it short and sweet, they sound great, they look great...THEY KICK ASS!" — **Bobby Blotzer, RATT**

Bobby's Set: Paiste Line: 14" Power Hi-Hat, 16" Power Crash & Full Crash, 18" Full Crash & Power Crash, 21" Dry Heavy Ride, 20" Power Crash, 22" Dry Heavy Ride, 22" Heavy China.

"There's no better cymbal than the Paiste Line. I'm glad I can put my signature next to the top of the line, which is the "Signature" series." — **Robert Sweet, Stryper**

Robert's Set: Paiste Line: 14" Heavy Hi-Hat, 15" Mellow Crash, 16" 17" (2), 18" 19" 20" (2) Power Crash, 22" Power Ride.

## PAISTE. INNOVATION IN STEP WITH MUSICIANS AND THEIR MUSIC.

"When the woodpecker cries, the rain arrives, and it's a torrent of texture and sound. These new cymbals possess the extraordinary sound, depth and durability a well rounded drummer needs on his side. These guys are truly distinctive!" — **Prairie Prince, The Tubes, Todd Rundgren**

Prairie's Set: Paiste Line: 14" Sound Edge Hi-Hat, 10" Splash, 15" Mellow Crash, 17" & 18" Power Crash, 21" Full Ride, 14" Thin China, 3000: 20" China, 18" Novo China.

"Paiste line cymbals, for me, are a return to a more natural and real sounding instrument. These cymbals emit a sound that I relish and gain inspiration from. It would seem an insurmountable task to create a cymbal line that offers such diversity and range of tone. Paiste Line cymbals, I believe, have done just that." — **Kim Prasad, Tito-Nova, XI Drummers Collective**

Kim's Set: Paiste Line: 14" Heavy Hi-Hat, 16" Full Crash, 10" & 12" Splash, 21" Dry Heavy Ride, 20" Flat Ride.

"This must be the ultimate hi-fi cymbal. The clear tones coming off the cymbal suggest that here is an instrument developed hand-in-hand with CD technology. It almost seems a pity to spoil this perfection of sound with the clutter of the band!" — **Nick Mason, Pink Floyd**

Nick's Set: Paiste Line: 22" Thin China, 20" Heavy China, 20" Mellow Ride, 18" Mellow Crash, Fast Crash & Full Crash, 16" Fast Crash, 15" Power Hi-Hat, 14" Fast Crash & Full Crash, 8" Bell, 10" Splash.

"For me it is a dream come true. There is no other choice and there never was. This is cymbal design and manufacturing in its highest art form — and for me this is the sound of the future." — **Carl Palmer, ELP, Asia**

Carl's Set: Paiste Line: 22" Dry Heavy Ride, 18" Full Crash & Power Crash, 30" Full Crash & Power Crash, 8" & 10" Bell, 22" Thin China, 14" Heavy Hi-Hat.

**PAISTE**  
CYMBALS SOUNDS GONGS

# Mapex Orion Custom Drumkit

• by Rick Mattingly

The Mapex company has recently entered the high-end drum market with the introduction of the *Orion* series of drums, which are available in *Custom* and *Studio* models. For this review, we received a five-piece *Orion Custom* kit consisting of a 16x24 bass drum, a 16x18 floor tom, 11x13 and 12x14 rack toms, and a 6 1/2 x 14 snare. All drums were constructed from six-ply Canadian maple.

## Drums

The first drum I removed from the box was the 12x14 rack tom, and I was immediately impressed with the design of the lugs. They are the long, high-tension type that span most of the length of the drum. However, instead of the entire lug pressing against the shell, these lugs are raised a little bit, so that the only place they make contact is where they are actually screwed on. At those two points there are nylon washers, so there is actually no metal-to-shell contact at all. Mapex refers to these as *Freedom Lugs*, and it is a simple but logical

idea.

And they didn't stop there. The mounts for the two rack toms are attached to the undersides of two of the lugs in such a way that there is no shell contact with them, either. This is similar to the RIMS principle, but applied in a new way.

These lug and mount designs seem to pay off. The rack toms were especially live. They were supplied with Remo *Pinstripe* top heads and clear *Diplomat* bottoms, and I was able to get focused tones with a lot of sustain over a reasonably wide tuning range. Granted, these were "power" sizes, but they still sounded louder than I was expecting.

The floor tom sounded pretty good as well. Although the three leg mounts were attached in a more traditional way—screwed into the shell—the drum did have the *Freedom Lugs*, and the 16x18 size gave it plenty of resonance and

volume. There was a problem, however. The rims did not quite fit over the hoops of the drumheads. As a result, when mounted on the drum, the heads were bent just a bit by the rims, causing an extra wrinkle. The only way I could completely get rid of the wrinkles was by tuning the heads much higher than they should have been. When tuned to a more normal pitch, the drum did sound full and resonant, but there was a slight "flap" sound coming from the wrinkles in the head. From a distance, that flap couldn't be heard, so for loud acoustic playing it would probably be okay. But it was annoying when I was playing the drum myself, and I wouldn't want to close-mike a drum that was making that sound.

I had a similar problem with the bass drum. The hoops fit over the heads with no problem, but I had to tune both heads a little higher than I would have liked to



Photo by Rick Mattingly

get all of the wrinkles out, making me suspect that the bearing edges were not completely true. The drum was supplied with a *Pinstripe* batter and a black Mapex front head, which appeared to be a *Diplomat*. The drum had the *Freedom Lugs*, but the rack toms were resting in a large mount that was attached to the shell, and the spurs were also attached to large, shell-attached mounts. The drum sounded reasonably big, but then again, it was a 24" bass drum, so I can't really say that it sounded any louder than one would expect from a drum that size. I really think that the biggest problem was that I had to tune the heads a little tighter than normal.

I had no problems with the snare drum, however. It came supplied with a coated *Pinstripe* batter, and even though that is not my personal preference for a snare head (I lean towards *Ambassador-type* batters), it seemed to work fine for this drum. In a word, this drum was LOUD. I suspect that it would cut through just about anything. In that respect, I would only recommend it to someone who needs an especially loud drum, as it could sound a bit harsh if played softly (unless heavily muted). But if you like a snare drum that cracks, check this one out.

The kit was finished in Diamond Blue, which is a stain applied to the maple. Overall it looked good, especially from a distance. Close up, there were a couple of very black streaks, and there was a small place on the edge of the bass drum where there was no finish at all. Granted, that spot was covered up by the drumhead, but it does make one question the amount of care that is given to applying the finish.

## Hardware

I've already mentioned the most innovative features of the hardware: the *Freedom Lugs* and the rack-tom mounts. But all of the *Orion* hardware was well-designed, and there were a number of interesting and useful features.

One such item was the Mapex *Pro-Lok*

levers, which are used on the tom holders, floor-tom legs, cymbal stands, snare stand, and hi-hat stand. Essentially, this is used as the main tightening screw in places where you would most often encounter some type of wing-screw. The *Pro-Lok* lever, however, is quite long, giving you additional leverage for better tightening. In addition, by pushing the lever in you can disengage it, allowing you to rotate it to any angle. That was especially useful when I was initially adjusting the rack toms. Because of all the different components involved, sometimes the mount on the drum was in the way of the



Photo by Kick Mattingly

*Pro-Lok* lever, but all I had to do was change the angle of the lever and I could tighten it quite easily. Once you have everything adjusted the way you want it, you can also use this feature to make everything look more visually pleasing, so that you don't have levers sticking out in every direction on the kit.

Speaking of the rack-tom mount, I was able to position the toms exactly where I wanted them within a relatively quick amount of time. Basically, there were three different adjustment screws involved, but once I had those set, future setups would simply involve dropping the toms onto the L-arms and tightening one

screw each. There are memory collars to secure the height of the toms, and a slotted memory collar for the down tube that goes into the bass drum. There are also memory collars for the floor-tom legs.

The kit was supplied with two cymbal stands: a regular and a boom. The bottom and middle sections of each were identical, and featured double-braced legs with plenty of spread, and nylon collars and washers. If you remove the counterweight from the arm of the boom stand, the arm will telescope into the main shaft of the stand. This is useful when packing it up, and can also be used to convert the stand into an especially high straight cymbal stand.

The hi-hat stand was also double-braced, and the feet can be adjusted so that you either have a large, rounded nylon cap or a sharp spike. (The bass drum spurs have this same feature.) The unit has a direct-pull, double spring, and there is a wheel that allows you to adjust the tension. It has a very good range. At its loosest position, I could play the pedal with a minimum of effort. After turning the wheel a considerable number of times, I actually had great difficulty playing it. But there were plenty of settings in between those two extremes, and I would imagine that just about any player could find a comfortable tension to work with. There was also an interesting feature on the hi-hat clutch. The center of the unit—where the top cymbal sits—was recessed a little bit, compared to the threaded areas above and below it. That gave the cymbal a little more freedom, and would no doubt reduce wear on the hole in the cymbal.

The bass drum pedal featured the same wide footplate with toestop as the hi-hat. It was of a traditional, single-spring cam design, much like the old Camco/Gretsch pedal, but of heavier construction. The pedal has a heavy chain linkage, and adjustments for both spring tension and beater angle. There are also two sprung spurs that can be completely retracted. I found the pedal smooth and solid.

The double-braced snare drum stand

was made up of three pieces: the leg unit, the center shaft/tilter, and a removable "basket." As with the other stands, it was solid, and the height and angle adjustments allowed me to position the drum quickly and easily. It seemed to be awfully heavy, but given the fact that the snare drum was obviously designed for loud, hard playing, perhaps that's good.

One final hardware-related item: The bass drum hoops are held in place by the traditional T-handle rods and claws (except for the two at the bottom of each head, which are drumkey-operated). While I was experimenting with various

types of muffling for the bass drum, I realized that the rods were long enough that I didn't have to completely remove them to get the head off. I could simply loosen them enough to slide the claw hooks up and back. That makes the head removal/replacement operation somewhat faster and easier.

### Conclusion

The Mapex *MPL 54 Orion Custom* kit as reviewed above carries a list price of \$3,150. Overall, the drums did have a big sound, and were generally well-con-

structed. But for that price, Mapex needs to address their quality control, from major items such as making sure that the rims fit over the heads and that the shells are true, to little details such as making sure the finish is evenly applied and the logo badges are glued on straight. (Two of them were very crooked on our review kit.) Mapex has come up with some very innovative ideas, such as the *Freedom Lugs* and the rack-tom mounts. In general, the drums and hardware are of high quality, so if Mapex can take care of these other details, they could very well become a major contender.

## Vater Timpani Mallets

• by Rick Mattingly

The latest addition to the Vater line of drumsticks is a set of timpani mallets. There are four models: T1-Ultra Staccato, T2-Staccato, T3-General, and T4-Legato.

Starting literally with the sticks, they are made from rock maple. A primary feature that distinguishes the Vater line is that the shafts have the same diameter throughout, rather than being tapered as, say, Firth and Goodman timpani sticks are. While the weight is similar to the aforementioned brands, the balance is significantly different. Whereas tapered sticks have more weight towards the back of the stick, the Vater sticks have more weight at the top, giving these sticks a different feel. The sticks are also about 5/8" longer than Firth sticks.

As for the heads, they are of the type used by Firth and Payson rather than Goodman. In other words, the wool is wrapped around the core from the top and tied at the bottom, around the shaft of the stick. There is no seam on the playing area, as with Goodman sticks.



Photo by Rick Mattingly

The four models cover a reasonably wide range. The T1-Ultra Staccato is made from the same type of hard felt as the Vic Firth Ultra Staccato stick, and is nearly the same size, having the same diameter but being just slightly "flatter." The Firth stick has a bigger wooden core, whereas the Vater model has thicker felt. But they sound virtually identical.

The T2-Staccato model is also very comparable to the Firth Staccato model, but not identical. The Vater ball is somewhat smaller, and thereby produces a slightly sharper attack. This pair was the only one in which I detected a slight lack of quality control. One of the balls was visibly larger than the other, and they did produce slightly different sounds when

played with the same hand on the exact same spot on a timpani head. Other than that, the workmanship on the Vater sticks was of very high quality.

The Vater T3-General model falls somewhere between Firth and Goodman General sticks. It's harder and more distinct than the Firth, but softer than the Goodman. Whereas the Firth General head is almost completely round, the Vater stick is very flat, taking on more of a cartwheel shape. That, no doubt, accounts for the extra definition.

The Vater T4-Legato was closer to the Firth General. Again, it was almost a cartwheel shape, and it wasn't much bigger than the T3. Whereas the T1, T2, and T3 models were fairly evenly graduated, the T4 wasn't that much softer than the T3, and would probably fit a lot of people's idea of a general purpose mallet as well or better than the T3.

Each of the Vater models lists for \$23 a pair, which is a couple of dollars less than Firth and Goodman timp sticks. The overall quality certainly puts them in a comparable league with those other brands, and the fact that they have their own feel—due to the non-tapered stick—makes the Vater timpani sticks a genuine alternative rather than a simple duplication.

# Extrasensory Reception

The Mapex Saturn Series will take you to the limits of sensory stimulation . . .

Saturn shines like a shimmering star. Shaped by seven layers of the choicest maple and select hardwoods, then buffed to a brilliant luster, Mapex "Powershells" guarantee a professional performance with crystal-clear sound and no hint of overtones or background "noise."

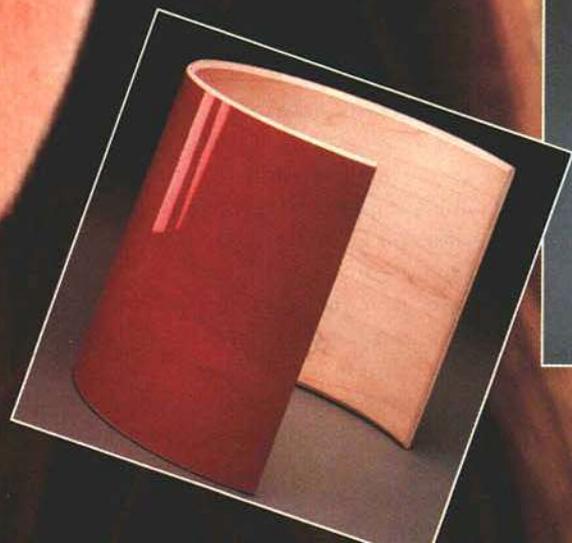
On-stage, Saturn is a proven performer making its presence known with a crisp snare that cuts through the crowd and a booming bass you can feel down to your bones. Saturn is good on its feet, too! Adjustable leg spurs on floor toms and double-braced stands with rubber boots provide maximum stability and eliminate any chance of unexpected "hat-tipping." And a new Pro-Lok system with extended locking lever offers reliability in the heat of your performance.

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# Remo Legero Drumkit

by Adam Budofsky

Falling somewhere between a Pure-Cussion shell-less drumkit and a standard double-headed set, Remo's shallow-shell, single-headed *Legero* drumset was designed with the traveling player in mind.

The concept is simple: Give this "porta-kit's" drums some shells to make it a little more drum-like than other fold-up kits, hang the snare drum, toms, and cymbal booms off of two stands, stack the toms within each other during pack-up—and *voilà!* You've got a lightweight kit that you can unload in one trip.

However, when you try to solve one problem (in this case, weight and size), you often create another (less than perfect sound and stability). Let's look more closely at the *Legero* kit and see how the good and bad balance out.

## Hardware And Construction

Step one in making a kit lighter and smaller: single-braced hardware. Great idea—within reason.

First of all, the hardware here is not only single-braced, but of a lighter-weight construction than most. Second, by the nature of this set, you've got either two toms and a cymbal, or one tom, a snare drum, a snare stand, and a cymbal all hanging off one of these not terribly beefy stands.

All of this really wouldn't be a problem if the hardware were double-braced—or perhaps a little heavier-duty. If you wiggle one of the stands with all the components hanging from it, you'll notice that the only parts that allow any give are the legs, which actually buckle slightly, then bounce back. (Double-braced stands would solve the problem, and they really



wouldn't add *that* much more weight to the setup.) The bounce can be slightly alleviated by splaying the stands' legs all the way out, and placing each component in a way that the weight of one balances that of another.

If not terribly sturdy, the hardware is very functional. The snare holder available with the *LG-1511* model hangs off one of the stands, as suggested above, and is quite easily positioned. (The *LG-1512* kit comes with a standard snare stand.) With a kit like this you probably won't be bashing away on Megadeth covers for hours anyway, but the basket still holds the piccolo snare drum that comes with the kit quite securely. Adjustments include a clamp at the base of a down tube that features two ratchets, plus another ratchet at the base of the basket mechanism. In addition, the bottom clamp is constructed in two pieces, which rotate via two drumkey-operated nuts.

The down tube also rotates and can move up and down within this clamp. The tom arms are simple but functional. They feature a ratchet angle adjustment, small-diameter tubing, and two memory clamps on each arm.

The biggest functional problem with the *Legero* kit is the bass drum legs. (We'll talk about the drum's sound in a bit.) Shaped in a slight "s" curve and covered by a pretty cheesy piece of black rubber tubing, they fold fairly flush against the bass drum via wing nuts. They are not infinitely adjustable; rather, they feature ratchet-style positioning. The trouble with these legs comes when you try to play the bass drum with the slightest power. The retractable spiked feet work adequately, but when using the rubber feet on uncarpeted surfaces, you realize that what makes the light weight of this drum appealing also makes it a pain in the neck to play.

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First of all, the rubber feet are too hard, aren't knurled, and aren't very large. Second, because of the setup design of the *Legero* kit, you don't have the benefit of a couple of tom-toms hanging from the bass drum to help keep things a little more stationary. Granted, you might carry your own rug around with you, or you could get some sort of chain or rope and sling it around your seat and through the drum's legs to keep it from moving. But this drum is simply so light that even with these steps, I'm afraid its instability is still a concern.

As far as ease of set-up and breakdown go, the *Legero* kit does what it is supposed to. After a few trials, you can probably get it down to five or ten minutes. And with the available cases (at extra cost), you really can transport the whole thing in one trip.

It should also be mentioned that all the drums in the *Legero* kit feature shells made of Remo's *Acousticon SE*, which is a lamination of wood fibrous material bonded and treated with specific resins.

### Sound

The tone of the *Legero's* 22" bass drum was better than one has a right to expect from a 6"-deep shell with no front head. The *Muffl* Remo included with the drum works wonderfully in this setting. Yet you're still stuck with the problem of lack

of depth and projection. Maybe some creative miking would help. This drum featured eight lugs and a *Pinstripe* head.

The two smaller tom-toms (4x10 and 4x13) each featured six lugs and *Pinstripe* heads and sounded like fair single-headed rack toms—you couldn't really ask for much more. I was also able to achieve an acceptable tone with a little effort. The 5x16 "floor" tom also featured a *Pinstripe* head, but had eight lugs. This drum was a little uncontrollable, and I couldn't really get an acceptable sound from it. With the depth constraints Remo has put on this kit, the larger the diameter of the shell, the less authentic the sound. Smaller sizes probably would work better—say, 10", 12", and 14" toms—but Remo probably had to go in 3" increments to make the drums stack-able.

By far the best feature of the *Legero* set is its 3 1/2 x14 *Mastertouch* piccolo snare drum. Featuring ten lugs, a super-smooth and quiet throw-off, 20-strand snares, and fine-tension knobs at both ends of the snare strainer, this is a top-quality drum. Remo included its new *Legacy LA* series batter head on the drum, which enabled me to achieve a bright but controlled snare crack with lots of volume and tone. And Remo's chrome *Quadura* covering gives the drum a very professional look.

they are well-constructed, and on further investigation, one finds that they are equally well-designed.

### Stick Bag

My first thought on seeing this bag was that I had never seen so many zippers. There are compartments all over it, in various shapes and sizes. First of all, as with most stick bags, there is a zipper around the outside that "closes" the bag when you fold it in half. This particular zipper is large and sturdy-looking, and has two "pulls," so that you can zip it from either the top or bottom. Further-

### All In All...

With a kit like this you obviously have to balance the good with the bad. It would be plain silly to expect it to perform like a standard drumkit, and Remo doesn't really claim that it does so. What you *do* have here is another alternative for the jobbing drummer who is concerned with getting through gigs swiftly (and half-way respectably), without necessarily being worried about optimal sound quality.

Though the tom-tom sounds might be questionable to some (those who actually prefer single-headed drums might not have much of a problem at all), you have to remember that 90% of what we play is on the hi-hat, snare, and bass drum anyway. With this kit, the hi-hat is your choice, the snare is better than those found on most standard entry-level kits, and with some fancy miking the bass drum *sound* might just be okay. The only major problem remaining is the less-than-comforting hardware and the bass drum with a wanderlust. Remo can at least be commended on somewhat successfully filling a void in the drum market.

List price for the *LG-1511* model as reviewed is \$695. Cases for the *Legero* kit cost \$105 each. One holds hardware, the other handles the drums, with a separate section for the snare.

more, each pull has a handle on the inside as well as the outside, making the bag reversible. The zipper takes up three of the four sides of the bag, the fourth side being the fold. So when fully zipped up, the bag is completely sealed on all sides.

Looking at the bag in the closed position, there are three zippered compartments on the outside: two on one side and one on the other. Two of the compartments are about two-thirds of the length of the bag, while the other compartment is about one-third of the bag's length. The smallest one would be perfect for drumkeys, wing nuts, felts, and

# Drumslinger Bags

■ by Rick Mattingly

A new line of bags for drummers is being offered from a company called Tough Traveler. The bags are made from Cordura nylon and feature extra-large zippers and reinforced bindings and seams. It's obvious from the start that

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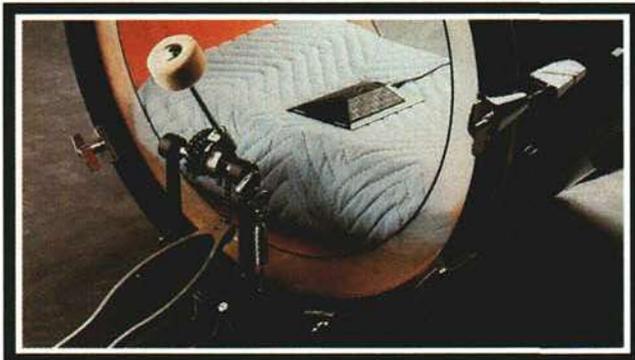
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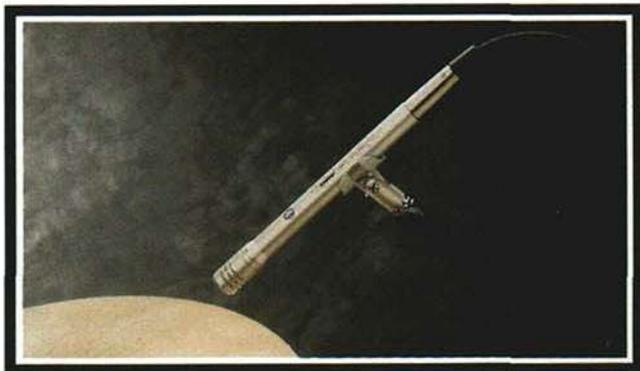
KICK: SM91



HI-HAT: SM94



OVERHEAD: SM81



TOMS: SM98



OVERALL: SM57



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other small items that drummers tend to carry. The longer compartments could hold anything from towels to tools.

When the bag is opened, each side has two pockets that run about half the length of the bag. These, of course, are perfect for drumsticks, which can be sorted into four groups. In addition, there is a zipper at the top of each side, one leading to yet another one-third length compartment, the other to a full-length compartment. I found the small one useful for items I might want to reach quickly during a gig: drumkey, ear plugs, aspirin. The full-length compartment was a nice touch. I usually carry several pairs of extra-large sticks in my bag just in case I'm playing in a place where I need some additional volume. But if I'm not using them on a particular night, it's nice to have a place to put them so that I don't accidentally grab one in the middle of a song if a stick breaks or flies out of my hand.

The bag has a loop at each top corner so that it can easily be hung over the lug nuts of a floor tom. And if you don't need the full width of the bag, this is where the reversible zipper comes in handy. You can zip the bag so that the stick pockets are on the outside, and hang it from your floor tom that way.

Once the bag is closed, there are two ways to carry it. There is a nylon handle that goes across the top-front of the bag, and there is also a detachable web shoulder strap. There is a strip of rubberized material on the inside of the strap, which prevents the strap from slipping off your shoulder—as straps tend to do, usually at the worst times. The list price is \$52.

### Cymbal Bag

The most distinctive feature of the *Drumslinger* cymbal bag is on the inside. There are six padded "spacers" attached to the bottom of the bag, which means that you can have a separate compartment for up to seven cymbals. The bottoms of the spacers are slightly staggered so that if you put your largest cymbal in the middle of the bag with the smallest ones on the outsides, the cups of the



Photo by Rick Mattingly

cymbals tend to line up pretty well, making for a better "stack." Given the thick, firm padding on the outsides of the bag and the internal pads, all cymbals are well protected. The bag will easily hold cymbals up to 22" in diameter. The zipper around the circumference has two pulls, so that you can zip it from either end.

On the outside, there are two zippered compartments. One is about 8" square, and would work well for small accessories. The other compartment is 20" long by 9" wide, and could hold a lot of drumsticks. In fact, the *Drumslinger* stick bag fits inside this compartment very nicely. (Not a mere coincidence, I'm willing to bet.)

For hand-carrying, there are two padded fabric handles, and there is also a clip-on shoulder strap. The shoulder strap has a large padded section for the area that goes directly over the shoulder, the bottom of which has the "non-slip" rubberized surface. The bottom of the bag is very well-padded, and there is extra reinforcement around the outside. List price is \$120.

### Snare Drum Bag

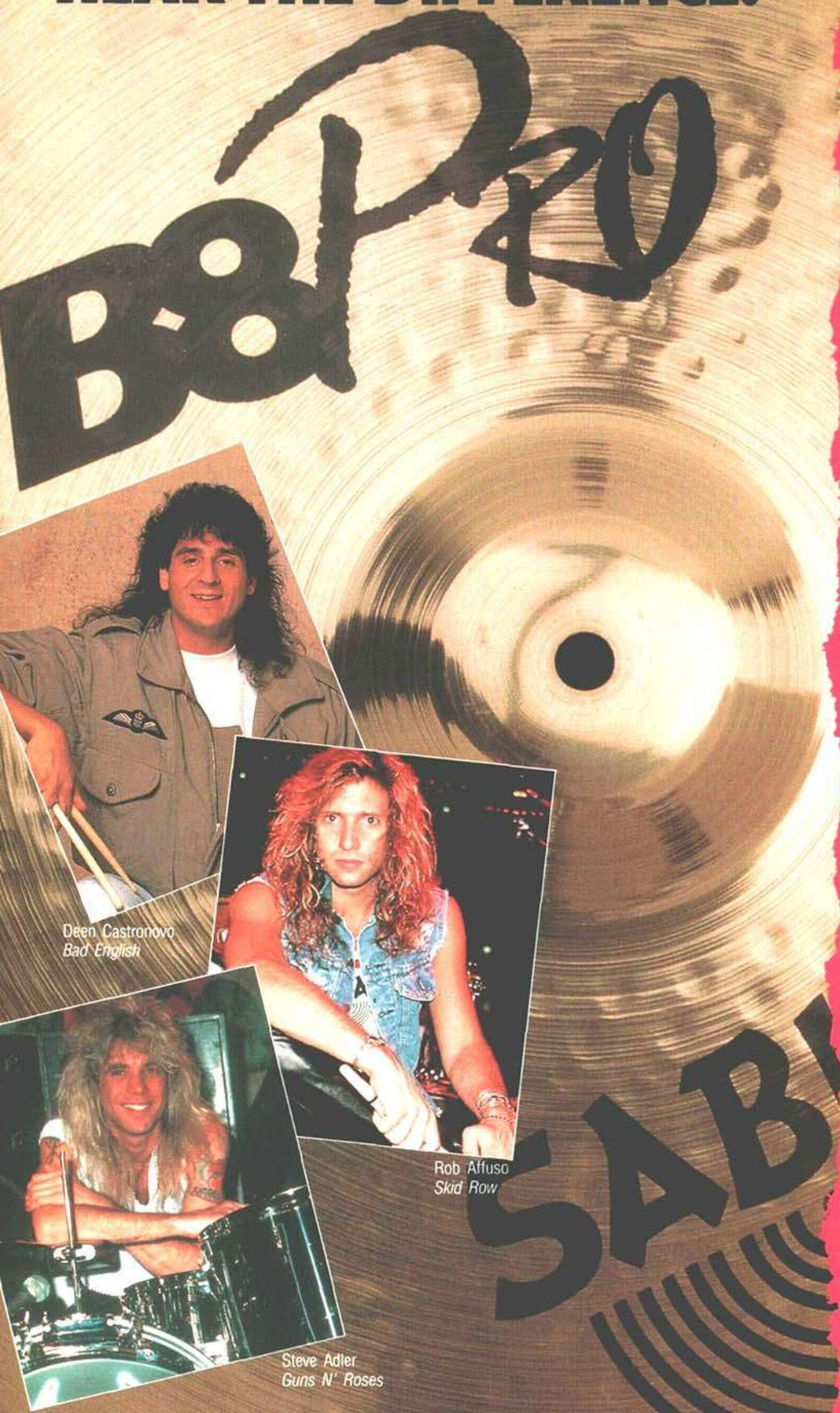
The only actual "drum" case made by *Drumslinger* is a snare drum bag. The

bag is 8 1/2" deep with a 14" diameter, and has some unique features of its own. To put a drum in the bag (or take it out), there are two zippers, one on each side of the bag, taking up about half of the circumference. The zippers are joined together by a strap, so that you only have to pull that to activate both zippers at the same time. Once the zippers are pulled, there is a "flap" that lifts off the drum. Additionally, this flap has a velcro strip attached to its end, which corresponds to another piece of velcro attached to the point on the bag where the flap overlaps. Being able to secure the flap with the velcro strips makes a big difference when you are zipping the bag. The velcro also completely seals the flap when it is zipped up.

Once you've pulled the flap away from the drum, there is another flap—this one made of corrugated rubber—that lifts off the drum. A piece of corrugated rubber also covers the bottom of the case, so that when the drum is packed, the shell is completely surrounded by this rubber.

There is a definite top and bottom to this case. One side has quite a bit of solid padding, and the snare head is meant to face this side of the case. The opposite side has virtually no padding at all. But there is a zippered compartment on this

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side, which takes up the entire diameter of the case and is perfect for storing a couple of extra drumheads.

As with the other *Drumslinger* bags, there are two ways to carry the snare drum bag. There is a nylon-strap handle attached to the bag, as well as a detachable, adjustable nylon strap, with the usual piece of rubberized material affixed to the underside to prevent slippage. The list price of the snare bag is \$76.

### Hardware Bag

The *Drumslinger* hardware bag has a couple of unique touches. The basic bag is 36" long, and wide enough to hold quite a bit of hardware. In addition, there is a compartment on the end that will hold the top of your drum stool nicely, and a zippered pocket on the end of that for small accessories.

There are a variety of ways to carry this bag. First, there are two thick, padded fabric straps on the sides, in about the middle of the bag, for one person to carry the bag horizontally. Next, there are two web straps that encircle the bag, and that could be used by two people carrying the bag (one on each end). There is also a nylon handle at the very top of the bag, opposite the end where the stool compartment is. I found that handy when used in conjunction with a luggage cart. The stool seat on the bottom provided a good base, the two straps worked well to hold the bag against the cart, and the strap at the top helped "steer" it. Finally, there is a large shoulder strap with a thick pad. The list price of the hardware bag is \$94.

*Drumslinger* bags are of very high quality in terms of materials and workmanship. But one thing that was obvious right from the start was that they were designed from a true drummers' viewpoint. Working drummers who schlep equipment around on a regular basis will quickly see the advantages of all the little compartments, all the double zippers, and all of the elements that make these bags practical for the people they were designed for: drummers.

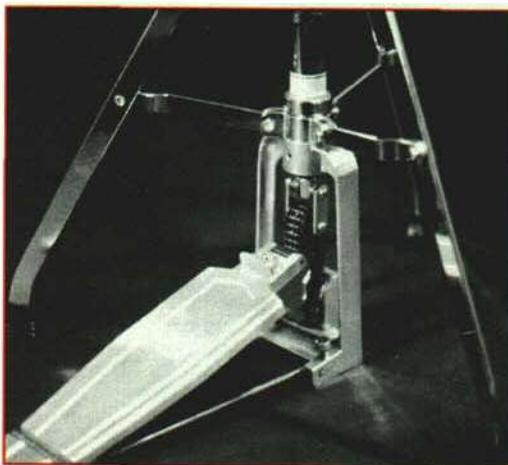
## Pearl H-880 Hi-Hat Stand

■ by William F. Miller

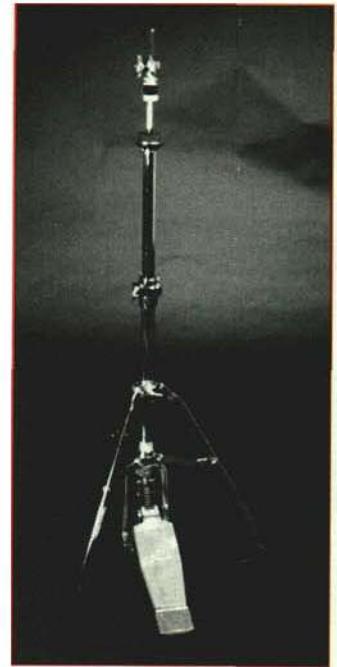
At first glance, all hi-hat stands look alike. How excited can you get about a "new" hi-hat stand? Well, with the *H-880*, Pearl has put together a couple of nice features that make this stand a bit different.

The first thing you notice with the *H-880* is the double chain-drive foot board. The double chain is attached at one end to the foot board, and at the other end to the base of the stand—in between is where things are a little unique. Pearl's "pivoting chain channel roller pulley system" (say that three times fast) is designed to "allow the pull rod to be completely independent from the footboard motion, thus eliminating any friction." That's what the company says, and I have to agree. This is definitely one of the smoothest pedals I've played. Also, this new design allows you to easily change the angle of the footboard by way of an easy-to-reach bolt.

Getting back to the important question: How does the *H-880* feel? Besides it being so smooth-actioned, the pedal has



Check out the "pivoting chain channel roller pulley system."



a slight amount of "play" in it when you hold the hi-hats together in a closed position. I think it has something to do with the more flexible design of the roller-pulley system, but I got used to it almost immediately—just something to be aware of.

One other point on the "feel": The spring tensioning device is one of the most flexible I've seen. You can adjust the spring very tight, as well as to the lightest spring tension I've ever felt. You should be able to find just the right tension for you. All of this just makes for a great pedal to play.

One other nice feature with the *H-880* is its swiveling leg design. In this era of double pedals and remote hi-hat stands, your main hi-hat *has* to have a multi-positionable tripod base. And it only takes one T-rod to change the leg position. This is one of the first hi-hat stands that offers the swiveling leg design on *single-braced legs*, which is yet another nice feature of this stand. I started this review thinking there wasn't much to say about a new hi-hat stand, but the *H-880* proved me wrong! The retail price of the *H-880* is \$150.



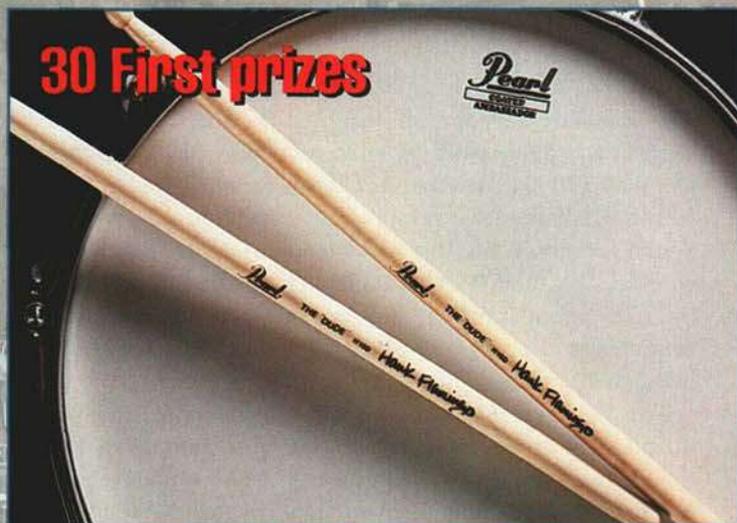
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# Ensoniq EPS And Sound Library

■ by Paul M. Van Patten

The Ensoniq Corporation designed their *EPS* performance sampler as a music workstation, combining a 16-bit digital sampler with a 61-note keyboard. It boasts an extensive list of other features, not the least impressive of which is its own custom Sound Library. While this review could easily span many pages covering only the *EPS's* capabilities, we will instead focus upon the *EPS* Sound Library, and its usefulness to the electronic drummer and percussionist. But first, let's get the technical highlights explained.

The *EPS* is a fully integrated, multi-functional music production tool. It features a true 16-bit mono sampler, a 61-note weighted-action keyboard, and an eight-track sequencer—combined with full MIDI implementation. For those of you who not only pursue the performance end of music but also write and arrange your own material, the *EPS* could be the answer to almost any of your needs.

## The Sequencer

The unit's sequencer features eight polyphonic tracks. Each of these tracks may use a different instrument—thereby making the *EPS* multi-timbral. Each instrument on each track also contains its own independent volume, panning, and MIDI channel assignment. For musicians who may want to trigger the *EPS* externally via a *drumKAT* or *Octapad* MIDI controller, having independent MIDI channel capability per track is extremely useful. (I'll cover more on this later.) Each track can also be set up to play an external MIDI instrument while having its own track silent—thereby expanding your possibilities even further.

The sequence size is limited only by the internal memory on hand. In its basic configuration, the *EPS* contains 480K of RAM, which is just under 1/2 of a megabyte. This memory is upgradable in increments with either 2x or 4x memory "Expander Kits"; a 2x kit gives you 896K while the 4x kit produces 2.1 megabytes.

The *EPS* also gives you the capability of adding an SCSI (Small Computer Systems Interface) port, which allows direct access to the vast storage found within an external hard-disk drive. Ensoniq originally sent me an *EPS* with the basic RAM

configuration, and later sent the 2x kit. Before installing this kit, I was unable to load many of the accompanying sound disks due to the fact that many of them require more than 480K. These memory expansion kits are relatively inexpensive, and are definitely worth the investment.

Other features of the sequencer include: up to 20 dynamically assigned voices per track, "song tracks" that allow you an additional eight tracks (for a total of 16-track recording), auto-correct quantization (up to 1/64-note triplets), auto-locate controls, and MIDI automated mixdown controls. The usual features found on many other sequencers are also present here, including: step editing, transposition, time-shifting, overdub, append,

*"With the  
EPS, your  
imagination  
is the only  
limitation."*



change of track length, merge and erase controllers, polyphonic aftertouch, key range, and program change capability. From a drummer/percussionist's viewpoint, you're probably wondering, "Just what does all of that allow me to do?" Read on and let me tell you.

First off, when all of these capabilities are combined with the sequencer's basic storage of 80,000 entries (without an expander kit), you have one very powerful drum machine at your fingertips. There is literally no limit to the selection of voices available, since you have

complete control over what voices are loaded in. For example, you could program track 1 to contain an acoustic drum part (complete with cymbals), track 2 might contain sparse conga parts used only on the choruses, track 3 might have a melodic marimba playing throughout...

Let me give you another example. Suppose track 1 contains the snare and bass drum parts, and track 2 still has those congas. But you're not happy with the toms and cymbals you originally selected, while you know that the toms and cymbals in your old conventional drum machine would be perfect. What can you do? First off, you could very easily sample those toms and cymbals off that old drum machine, and load them into track 4. Or you could program track 4 with the tom and cymbal parts (without any voices loaded), and trigger the conventional drum machine utilizing a MIDI cable. Upon playback, the toms and cymbals would be triggered on the drum machine from track 4, while tracks 1 through 3 played the *EPS's* internal voices that you loaded into them. Not happy with the overall combination of the instruments' timbres? No problem. Simply load new voices into existing tracks and custom-mix to your heart's

content. Or load toms and cymbals back into track 4 and layer them with the conventional drum machine.

As you can see, your imagination is the only limitation here. But don't forget that these disks can also contain an absolute myriad of other possible voices and sounds. The *EPS* makes composing an entire percussion ensemble or a new tune for your band a breeze—especially since this instrument is so user-friendly. For those of you who do write your own

music on a regular basis, the *EPS* makes an excellent choice within the keyboard-workstation marketplace.

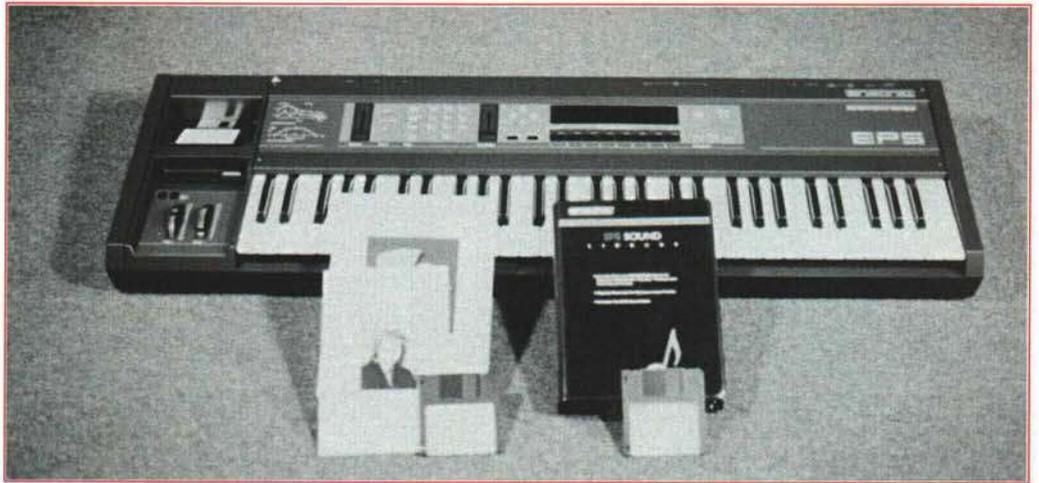
The *EPS* can store up to 80 sequences within its internal memory, and each sequence can be up to 999 bars in length. However, the available RAM is shared by both the sequence memory and the sample memory. Simply stated: The more voices loaded into RAM, the less available space for sequences, and vice versa. With this in mind, I highly recommend the use of either the 2x or 4x memory expansion kits. Since you now have a good idea as to the capabilities of the *EPS* sequencer, let's move on to the *EPS* sampler.

### The Sampler

For the more technically inclined individuals, here we go. The sampler on board the *EPS* features variable sampling, with 40 selectable sample input rates ranging from 6.25 kHz to 52.1 kHz. It is true 16-bit mono sampling, with a full 20 - 20,000 Hz frequency response range. There are three playback modes that determine how high the frequency response range will be, as well as how much voice polyphony is allowed. At a 15-kHz rate you have 20 voices available, at 19 kHz you have 16 voices, and at the full 20-kHz range you have 12.

There are a variety of digital processing commands, including: wavesample copy, truncate, mix, merge, splice, volume smoothing, fade in, fade out, five kinds of cross-fade loops, multi-sampling, and "Expert System" auto-looping.

One very important feature on the *EPS*, which correlates directly with sample playback, is the use of the "patch select" buttons. These buttons are found on the left side of the *EPS* front panel, and when depressed, they yield variations on the current sample(s) loaded into memory. If neither button is selected, the primary sample will be heard. With either the left or right patch select button selected—or both depressed together—you get variations on the primary sample. There are no consistent rules as to what each type of variation will pro-



duce, as each disk may contain its own unique variations. And some disks may not contain any variations at all, due to the large amount of RAM the samples may take up.

One other feature that deserves special attention is the ability to play currently loaded samples while new samples are being loaded in. This is invaluable during live performance, since it will significantly decrease the amount of down-time between songs as you load new samples.

### The *EPS* Sound Library

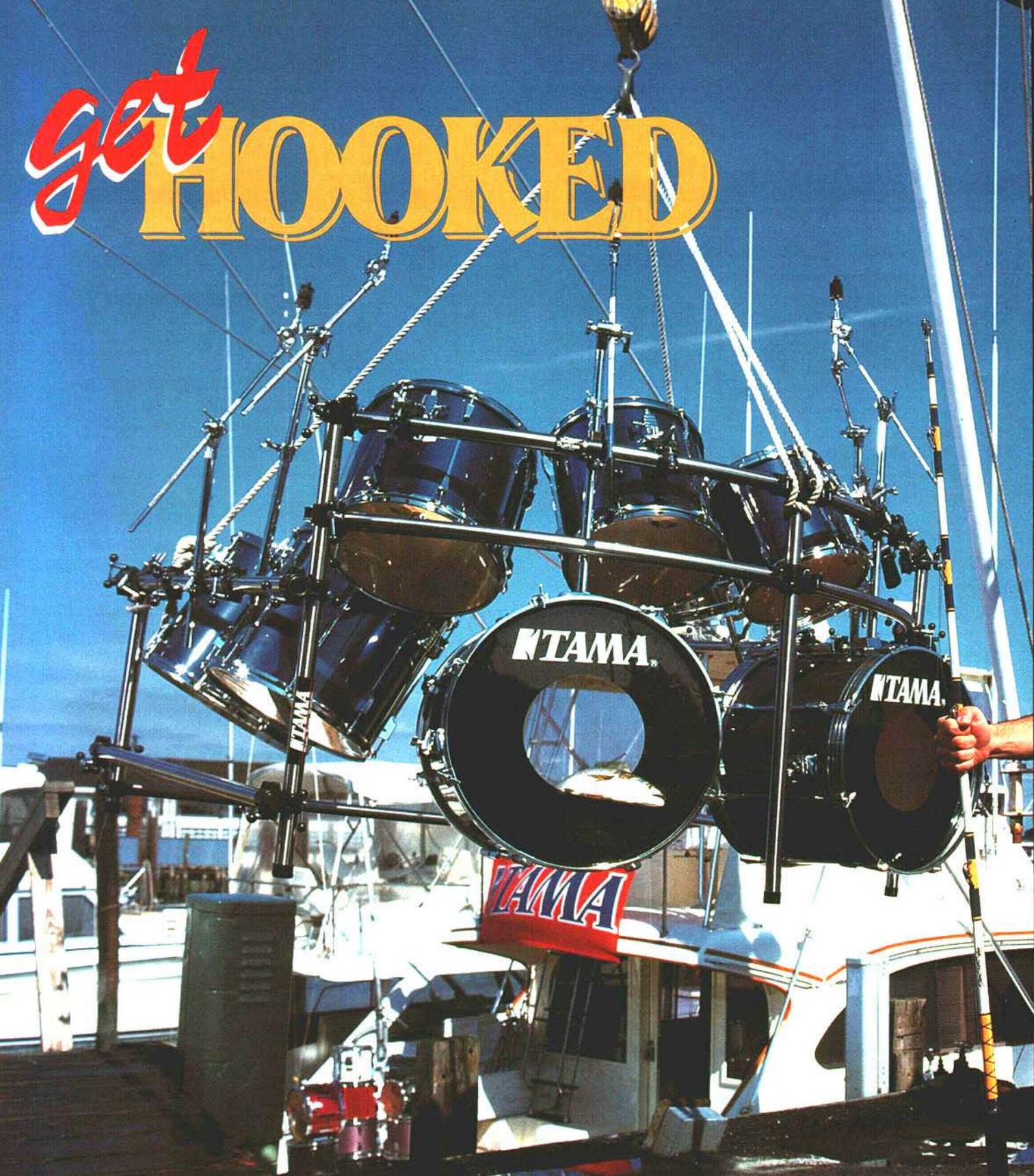
But just what does all of this translate into for the user? Simply put, the *EPS*'s technical specifications directly translate into two words: great-sounding samples. For the do-it-yourselfer, sampling with the *EPS* is designed to be quite easy. For those who do not want to concentrate on making their own samples, Ensoniq has created a large selection from which to choose. Read on.

Included with every *EPS* is a selection of disks called "The Essential Sounds," as well as the operating system disk. Here we have ten disks that cover a wide range of instruments, including: a concert grand piano, a full string section, a full brass section, a complete drumkit, bass, a vocal "pad," sax, acoustic and electric guitar, and a synth voice. The drums and guitars were made for Ensoniq by a team of third-party developers; the remaining samples were created by Ensoniq's in-house team. Since I have approximately 60 disks full of samples to tell you about, detailing each and every sample in depth would be impossible during this review.

The majority of instruments included on the "Essential Sounds" disks were very realistic and authentic-sounding. The only minor criticisms I have are about the acoustic guitar and cymbal samples. The overall sound of the acoustic guitars did not thoroughly convince me. The cymbals on the "Power Drums" disk were not bad—but not terrific either. They seemed to lack high-end clarity and crispness. The crashes

continued on page 124

# get HOOKED



When real pros head out, they only go after the best. That's why Liberty DeVitto (Billy Joel) and Charlie Benante (Anthrax) hooked up with Tama. Everything else got thrown back.

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E IN DRUM



# Hitting Hard: Part 2

by Kenny Aronoff



Photo by Rick Malkin

**MUSIC KEY**

- R.C. ◆
- S.D. ●
- B.D. ○
- H.H. X
- w/ foot

In my last column (September '90) we looked at some exercises to help develop your ability to hit the drums with more power and consistency—while keeping control of the time and groove. We focused mostly on pumping your legs in order to slam your feet into the hi-hat and bass drum pedals.

This month, let's continue with this concept, but also focus on how to use your fingers, wrists, and arms together to get more power. When I started practicing these exercises, I found that they helped develop coordination between my wrists, fingers, and arms. I realized that the harder I played my drums, the more I used my arms with my wrists and fingers in one flowing motion.

When I hit a drum with power, I raise my arm up, then continue that upward motion with my fingers, wrist, and forearm until my fingers are sticking up straight. Then I use my arm to throw my wrist and fingers down onto the drum, as if I'm throwing a baseball.

I use this same approach with my feet and legs. I raise my legs up, lifting the heels of my feet off the bass drum or hi-hat pedals, but leaving the balls of my feet on the pedals. Then I pump, or throw my legs down, which slams my feet down onto the pedals.

Playing hard takes time and patience. You're going to develop new muscles and basically learn a new technique. It's like a coach trying to teach an athlete a new technique in order to help him or her perform more efficiently. It's awkward at first, but once you develop the new technique the results are very gratifying.

In this month's column we'll work on more exercises to help you develop your power and coordination in the flowing motion I described above. The following exercises are meant to be an extension or a continuation of the exercises from Part 1, so be sure to go back and review those exercises before beginning this article.

The following 15 exercises are a few more beats to practice while incorporating what we've discussed about playing hard. Play hard, but stay relaxed.

# MODERN DRUMMER

IN GREAT BRITAIN

12

13

14

15

Once you're comfortable with the previous exercises, try them again with the following cymbal patterns.

Once you can play all of this month's exercises, combine them with the exercises from Part 1. Good luck!



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INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

# Tony Doughty:

## The Head Man At Premier Percussion

■ by William F. Miller

*Over the last four years Premier Percussion has made drastic improvements in quality, both in products and service. The list of artists eager to play their drums has grown, and the attitude about Premier by the general drumming public is that this company, with a heritage dating back to 1922, has some happening things going on today.*

*Much of the renewed excitement over Premier can be traced to one man, the company's chairman and CEO, Tony Doughty. After taking over the reins in late '86, Tony has been largely responsible for restoring Premier to its former place as a manufacturer of fine percussion instruments. A lot has happened to Premier during the last four years, and it seemed a good time to talk to the head man and find out how and why Premier is enjoying a bit of a rejuvenation.*

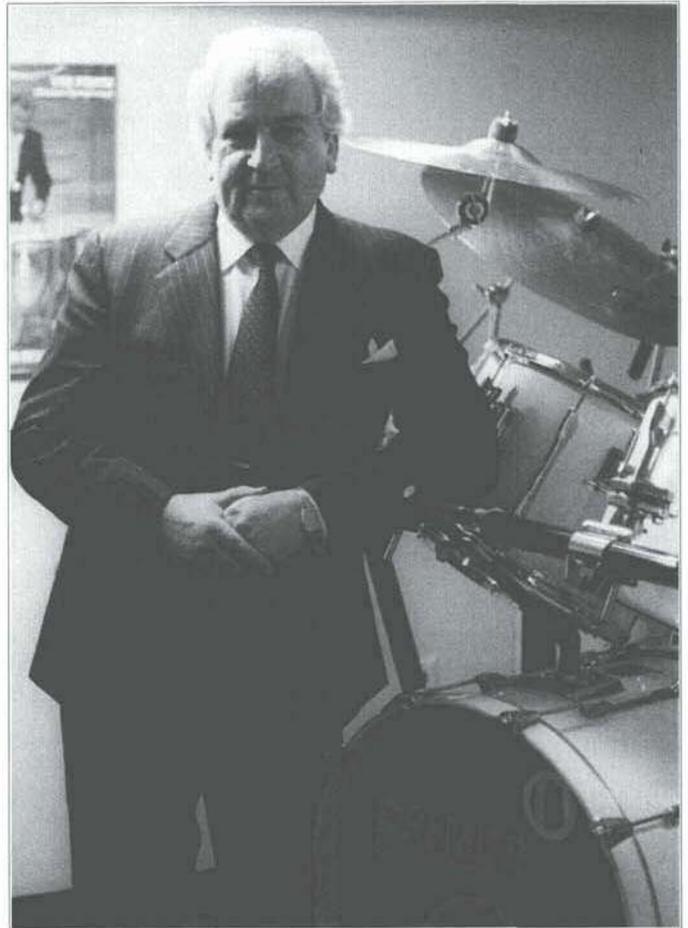
**WFM:** What are some of your responsibilities as chairman and chief executive officer with Premier?

**TD:** I think one of the problems with a position such as mine is that as chairman I'm mostly concentrating on policy—and as chief executive I'm mostly concentrating on the *execution* of that policy. In many companies, where there is one individual for each position, the two tend to be able to play off each other, whereas I get the whole thing to do. On the other hand, I'm fortunate; I've got a deputy chairman, and I've got a board of directors, and the way that we operate is to divide the responsibilities down fairly clear lines. I'm concerned with the longer-term strategy and the planning of the business. My particular interest—the thing that I devote most of my time to—is the marketing operation.

**WFM:** How does one achieve such a lofty position as you have with this company?

**TD:** It's not a lofty position. In the music business, the size of the corporations involved are not as massive as, say, the IBMs of the world; it's a smaller industry. As to my having the position, well, I'm 57, and you've got to go *somewhere* as you get older. And maybe the logical thing is to go upwards.

The story really is that I was going to be a professional sportsman when I was 18—in the English national game of



cricket—and I went into the Air Force at that time. It was compulsory to go into one of the three services, and I spent three years in the Air Force learning a lot about life and playing a little sport. When I came out, I got involved in business, and over a period of time I ran a number of quite large companies and got involved in acquisitions in the U.K. I finally reached a stage, I suppose around 1985, when I really had had enough. So I started my own business as a consultant, and I spent time working in Sweden, America, Italy, and the U.K.

I was called in by the banks to look at Premier at that particular time, and that's how I first got involved with the company at the end of 1986. I fell in love with Premier in the space of 11 weeks, during which time we had produced what was then necessary—a survival plan for the company. I was asked by the people who were financing the business to take on the job as chairman, so having started my own business I then went against my own inclinations and came back into working in a big company. And I've never regretted it from the first day.

**WFM:** What was it that attracted you to the company?

**TD:** At that time Premier was like a very attractive old lady. It had been around a long time; it obviously had had a lot of experiences. It was a real character business, especially the people in it—on the shop floor and all the way through. And whether

they had 30 years of experience or a lot less, they all had special characteristics about them. And it wasn't just the music *business*, it was something to do with a blend of history and association with music. My own interests were music and business, and so it was an ideal opportunity to combine those two. I found a ready reception for the sort of things that I thought I would like to do, and we've been able to develop a very good team from that beginning. Over a period of four years, the changes and progress have been highly visible in the marketplace. It gives us a great deal of satisfaction.

**WFM:** Did you have a clear game plan from the very beginning of how to get Premier moving in a forward direction?

**TD:** The company had gotten itself into the position it was in for a whole host of reasons. I'm not somebody who believes that you can make a five-year plan, put everything in shape, control everything to budget, and suddenly it all happens. The plan really was fundamentally to get the right people in the right place to do the jobs. There were also some pretty died-in-the-wool convictions about which way things should be done, because that's the way they had *always* been done. But there was a need for some new approaches, and some vitality.

The company had taken a hell of a beating, so people were...not demoralized...but less than confident. So there was a need to put that confidence back in. And sure, planning was based on investment levels, on new model concepts, on the correction of situations that existed in product, organization, service, and so on. But very broadly, the plan was to reinstate the service level, first of all, because that is absolutely necessary. Having gotten the service situation back, we then had to look at the commercial structure of the company. Are you really in the business or are you just *trying* to be in the business? Are you having to discount or promote or do whatever to get your product across? And gradually I think a policy evolved. Since 1987, when we became part of the Yamaha group, our planning and approach to the market became more sophisticated, and of course we're much more backed now by a heavier investment level. But getting the people right and in the right place, and getting the feeling of being able to work together—that was the first thing on the menu.

**WFM:** What are some of the goals of Premier, both in the long term and the short term?

**TD:** I don't think our goals change whether they are long- or short-term. And that is to produce very high-quality musical

instruments for the people who want to buy them, to enjoy what we do, and to make a profit from what we do. I think that's fundamentally what any business is there for. I'm not going to get into the area of whether we should be number one or whatever in the marketplace. That to me is never truly a goal. I think you must do what you want to do within your own thinking, within your own framework. If you worry too much about the positioning of other people in the marketplace, I think you just get caught up in this whole concept of what the market is.

The goal for Premier is to increase and stabilize our share of the market to a point where we are successful both on a commercial standpoint and on product recognition. Rightly or wrongly, we feel that what we do is slightly different, both from a product point of view and from the way we approach the marketplace. Within the company and with our associates, we exchange our views a great deal. We talk a lot very directly to our dealers and to our players. I think my personal goal for the company is to take it forward at a pace where-by Premier gets back to a high degree of recognition from people who play percussion, thereby giving a lot of satisfaction to those people who work in it and work with it.

**WFM:** What would you say are some of the differences between Premier and other companies in the drum business?

**TD:** I think what's different about what we do is the fact that we work very much as a unit—a group of people. We don't just have a development section that develops a product and says to sales, "Hey guys, here's something you can go out and sell." And we don't have a marketing department that says, "There is a hole in the market for this particular product, so please go away and design it." What we're trying to do is create a product that the young drummer is going to get a good sound from, and that he feels good about because he's playing it. We're also trying to create a product that a top professional is going to play and is going to feel will express his talent superbly. I think at Premier there is a fundamental belief that we can produce an instrument that is individual—and so can be individual to a person—rather than just a mass-produced product.

**WFM:** That has to be a challenge if you want to keep the quality consistent and at a certain level.

**TD:** There's a couple of things that have consistently come up in product meetings. One thing that sticks in my mind is the consensus that we want to build a musical instrument, not an appliance. Some drumsets and some musical instruments are actually appliances. You know, they do a specific job and that's

*"The way we overcame our problems was by listening to people. A company is at its worst when it stops listening."*



continued on page 129

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# Filling In The Holes On The Hi-Hat: Part 1



Photo by Rick Malkin

by Rod Morgenstein

**MUSIC KEY**

H.H. X  
S.D. ●  
B.D. ●

Some time ago, in a quest to come up with something sounding a little bit different from the same old same old, my hi-hat hand broke with tradition. Instead of playing a constant pattern of quarter notes, 8th notes, or 16th notes, I began filling in the holes—that is, playing the hi-hat on every 16th-note space that was not being played on the bass or snare. This approach created a very interesting and funky-sounding linear beat (linear meaning only one playing surface sounding at a time). It works most effectively when applied to bass and snare patterns that are somewhat syncopated. Take, for example, the following beat:

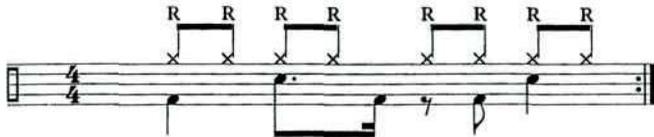
If we omit the "traditional" hi-hat pattern of 8th notes, we are left with this bass and snare figure:



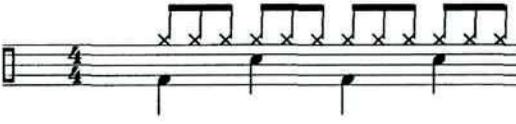
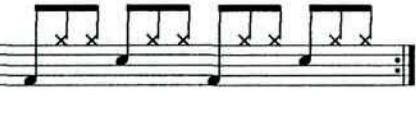
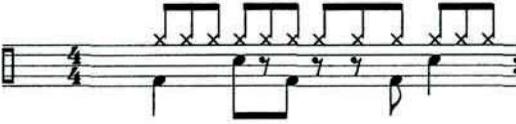
Now, fill in all the available 16th-note spaces that are not sounding on the bass or snare, and you have:



In comparing this example to the original beat, the sound and feel are quite different.



Let's follow this process with the following beats:

Traditional Hi-hat Part	Omit Hi-hat	Filling In The Holes
		
		
		
		
		

Filling in the holes on the hi-hat is a straightforward approach that can help spice up your drumming. I suggest applying it to some of your own favorite syncopated beats. Next time we'll take this technique a step further.



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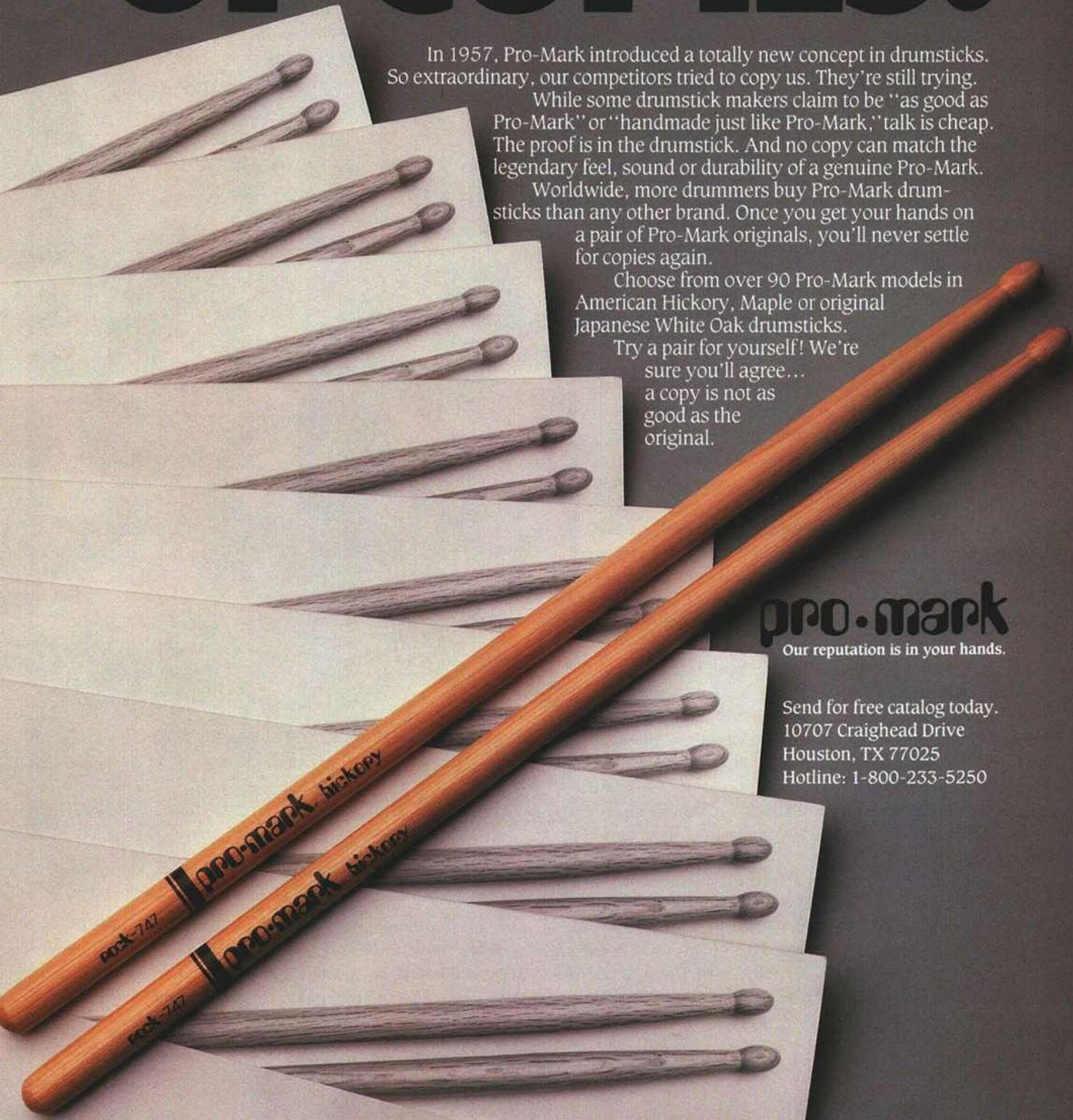
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# Basle Drumming

• by Peter Fairclough

The Old Town in the center of Basle, Switzerland is packed by an expectant crowd. At the stroke of 4:00 A.M. all of the street lights go out. The only light remaining is from brightly colored lanterns held on long poles by their bearers. The crowd cheers, the drums sound the "Morgenstreich," and Fasnacht—the Carnival of Basle—begins.

Fasnacht is one of the world's great drumming events, involving a tradition of side drum playing that dates back before 1571, the date of the oldest surviving instrument still used in the event. The carnival, which lasts for seven days and seven nights, celebrates the end of fasting and the chasing away of winter ghosts. Bands of fifes and drums march up and down the streets, alleys, and squares of the Old Town dressed in grotesque masks and elaborate costumes. To keep warm, the crowds partake of a cheese flan called "kasewaie," soup, and white wine.

By Monday afternoon there is a seemingly endless procession of bands filling the streets. Each one dresses in its own particular costumes designed to illustrate a topical "sujet." No expense is spared. Accompanying each band is a float that carries a description of the theme. From the floats similarly costumed figures throw bitter oranges, confetti, and sweets to the crowd.

Most of the bands in Fasnacht march at a steady pace of approximately 72 to 80 beats per minute. Sadly, the majority only play a small part of the traditional and contemporary repertoire. However, the unique feel of the rhythm is a constant attraction of this music, the drums seemingly lagging behind the beat whenever a roll is finished.

There are two types of bands that play at faster tempos. The first consists of perhaps 10 trombones, 10 trumpets, saxophones, sousaphones, and a drum section, which includes bass drum and cymbals. The tunes and the playing are coarse and uncouth-sounding, but this is obviously intentional and regarded by many as great fun. These are not the traditional-style fife bands. Some of the drummers do use the traditional drums, but the unique style of the Basle rhythm is absent.

The second kind of band performing faster tempos, however, is a joy to the ear. These are very tight, highly skilled, and thoroughly rehearsed outfits that have a large repertoire in the older style. One of the best of this kind is a drum corps called "dr Grieni Hind"—the Green Dogs. When this band passes by—dressed in their Green Dog masks and very

elegant long jackets and breeches—everyone stops to listen. In conjunction with the "Bajass Clique"—a fife band—they have produced an excellent CD called *Basler Fasnachtsmusik*. The performance of the music on the CD is not typical of what is heard on the street, though, but rather it's a more polished concert-style performance. But it's still compulsory listening for anyone interested in serious side drumming.

And so to the drums themselves. The best—and most expensive—are wooden-shelled. These 16x16 drums are rope-tensioned and employ gut snares. Many players obviously prefer

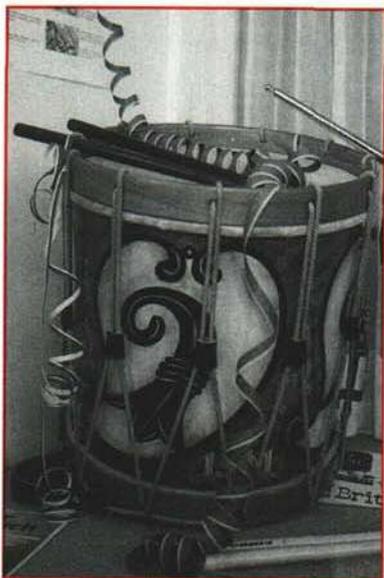


calf heads, although high-quality plastic ones (Swiss-made) are available. Some drums are imitations of the 1571 drum, which is matte red emblazoned with the Basle town emblem. Others are plain wood, and still others are chrome-finished with black and

white diagonally striped hoops.

The sticks used on these drums are similar to the pipe band sticks found in Scotland. They aren't especially heavy, but they are very thick at the butt end and have a huge bead. Their patterns and weights do vary, though. The grip used with these sticks is orthodox, except that in the right hand the stick is held way up between the thumb and the forefinger. According to one player this is because of the need to get over the drums' high rims.

The style of the drumming itself is very ornamented. It's clear that the drum part in this music is every bit as important as the fife melody. In fact, the drums alone sustain one's interest. The total effect often sounds like one continuous roll, with another part laid on top, and yet another accented part on top of that—with all three parts seemingly played by each drummer.



The rolls and triplets and groups of 16th notes are often played as a *crescendo*, the time seeming to fall behind the beat the louder it gets. It is common for the peak of a *crescendo* to be followed by an answering phrase played at a whisper. Occasionally there is a "unison impatience" to play the second beat of the bar, giving the music its special lilting quality. Accents linger and 8th notes are often given a slight skipping feel—somewhere between 2/4 and 6/8, drifting back and forth between the two.

Two of the greatest exponents of this art are Albi Melches and celebrated virtuoso Alphons Grieder. Melches composes many new marches for the drums, and Grieder's performance of "Radac Reveille" on his record *Das Basler Trommler* is an outstanding example of the craft. Also on the market are the "Instructor For Basle-Drumming" by the late Dr. F. R. Berger, plus several books of pieces. Berger was the inventor of Bergerschrift, the method of writing drum music using only one line. In this method the right stick plays the notes above the line, and the left plays those below it.

I can heartily recommend Fasnacht—the white wine, the kasewaie and leckerli, and all the other goodies. And even though the festivities are not always welcome everywhere in town—one police notice reads: "DRUMMING FORBIDDEN"—in almost every corner of town the music and enthusiasm of the event are still contagious.



Mark LeBlanc

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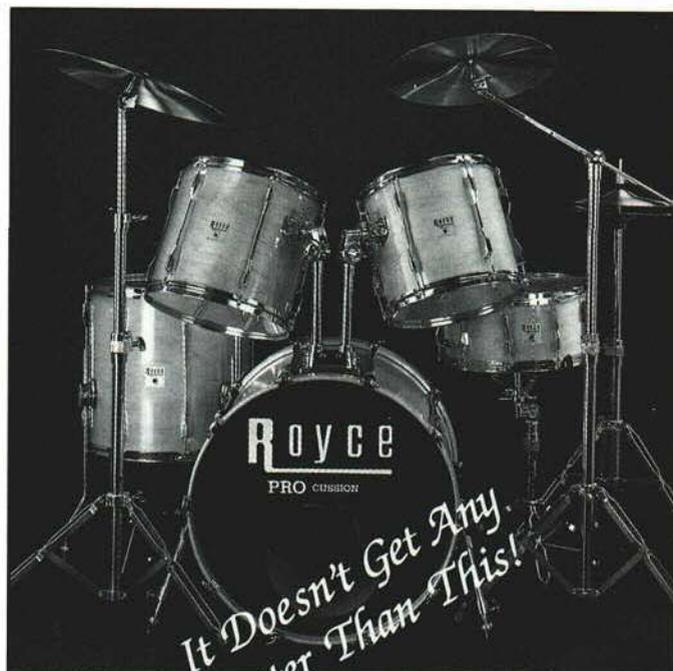
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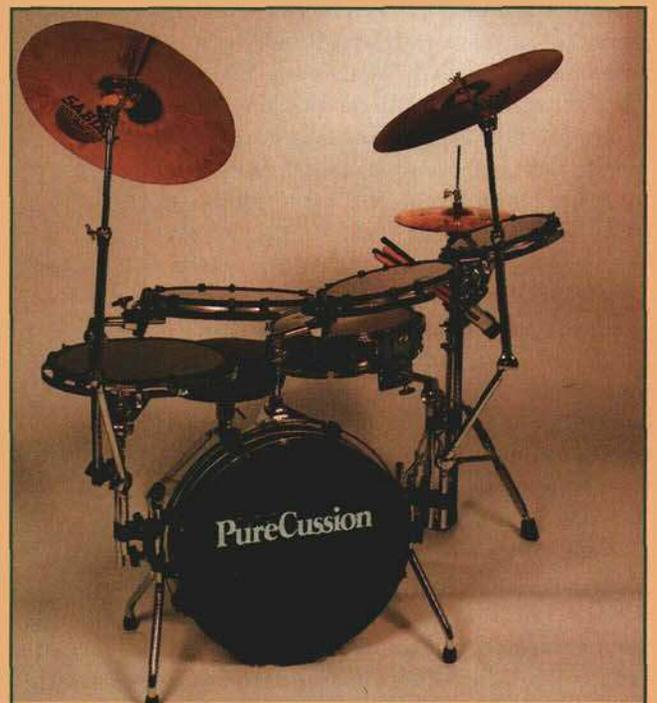
(Drumset does not include cymbals, throne,  
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## SET AND ACCESSORIES



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**Who was the drummer that, early in his career, gave up the Sonny & Cher Show for the gig with Steely Dan?**

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- 1) Submit standard-sized postcards only: Be sure to include your name, address, and telephone number.
- 2) Your entry must be postmarked by February 1, 1991
- 3) You may enter as many times as you wish, but each entry must be mailed individually.

- 4) Winners will be notified by telephone. Prize will be shipped promptly.
- 5) Previous Modern Drummer contest winners are ineligible.
- 6) Employees of Modern Drummer and the manufacturer of this month's prize are ineligible.

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# Road Warriors

■ by Michael L. Briggs

When superstars tour, they often call upon a unique group of drummers known for their expertise in handling the rigors of the road. When the stakes are high, the bucks are big, and only the *best* will do, these drummers are called. Mike Baird, Alvino Bennett, and Jonathan Moffett each have proven their abilities to play with skill, portray an image, handle the politics, and deal with the travel a major tour demands.

Sometimes called "hired guns," sometimes "road warriors," these men are part of a rare breed of musicians who've risen head and shoulders above a sea of eager faces who only dream of life on the road. They are *there* when the biggest names, the hottest music, and the brightest lights converge to create music history.

Jonathan Moffett has toured with Madonna, Elton John, and Michael Jackson. How does he feel about traveling with such notables? "It's definitely exciting for me, and I don't take it for granted," says Jonathan. "Getting to work with some of the world's finest musicians is a real privilege."

But being in demand sometimes has a downside. It can lead to some very difficult choices. Jonathan's last tour with Madonna was extended, which caused him to be unavailable for several early dates of a Michael Jackson tour. "It was a very uncomfortable position to be in," Jonathan laments. "I have a long-standing relationship with Michael and the Jackson family, and it was tough to turn down that tour. But I had an obligation to honor. Michael usually comes first, but it just didn't work out."

"It's tough being tied up when you hear about another project you'd like to do," agrees Alvino Bennett. "But in this business you're known by your commitments and how you handle them."

Alvino is all too familiar with the problem. Having toured with Sheena Easton, Chaka Kahn, and LTD, he's learned to handle the pressure that comes with playing at this level. "It can be a little scary sometimes," says Alvino, "but the big stars are just like anyone else. When you work with them, get to know them,

and find out how they grew up and what you have in common, it's cool."

Mike Baird experienced another type of pressure when he toured with Journey, which involved recreating parts that had been recorded by Steve Smith. "I had to come up to the experience and play like Steve, who's *a great player*," Mike recalls. "To give those guys what they wanted was a near impossible task—it was probably one of the hardest gigs I've ever had. I had to provide that edge, that rawness like you see in the clubs—not the schooled approach you'd use in the studio. I had to become the ringleader and get to the point where I knew I was driving the bus. That's what they were looking for."

According to Baird, there's an excitement playing live that one doesn't get in the studio. "Even though you play the same songs every night," Mike explains, "each night is a different audience.

For them it's as if you're playing the songs for the first time."

Alvino tends to agree. "I enjoy the studio, but it's incredible when you feed off the vibes of a *live* audience. The road is really a challenge because you have so many different audiences, and people are watching you up close. It's not what so many kids think it is. It's not all party—*it's work!*"

How does a drummer get ready for a major tour? "I heard about auditions for the Sheena Easton tour, and I bought her CDs to learn the material," says Alvino Bennett. "I went to the audition, played, and went home. Within a half hour I got a call saying I had the gig and rehearsals would start right away. We learned 20 songs the first two days, and then *really* hit it hard in rehearsals. When you're thrown into a situation like that, you tell everyone that you're not taking calls, and you go into your studio and close the door, make notes, and *learn the songs.*"

Jonathan Moffett says he prepares in a similar way. "When I hear about a tour coming up, I buy the tapes and study them so that I'm ready when the time comes. I want to be ready, especially when I'm hired without an audition."

Once out on tour, most road warriors agree that you have to take the good with the bad.

Alvino Bennett explains it this way: "When you're on the road, you don't sleep in your own bed, and you're forced to sleep as you travel. The food is different everywhere you go. And you may not always have friendly faces to turn to other than those on the tour. No matter how professional you are, you *can* get road-weary. But I like traveling, and I've been out on the road for quite a long time.

"I've been on good tours and bad tours," Alvino continues.

"It's not  
what so  
many kids  
think it is.  
It's not all  
party—*it's  
work!*"



"There have been tours where everything was the best—great hotels, excellent catering, first-class airfare.... But then I've also stayed in some bad spots, and the travel was less than ideal.

"But you have to take the bitter with the sweet, and you have to be a mature, well-seasoned musician to deal with some of the hardships," cautions Alvino. "When something goes wrong, you have to handle it diplomatically. I've learned how to handle things, like traveling in Japan. I'm over six feet tall, and their beds are very small. I had to get help to make the beds comfortable and to keep from hanging off the edge all the time. You have to take things in stride because you may be back someday. Believe me, it ain't all roses, but it ain't all rocks."

Jonathan Moffett shares similar feelings: "I do get under the spiritual weather at times. I get a little tired after three months on the road, and I want to sleep in my own bed. That feeling can last an hour or a day. Then I think about something exciting in the show. When I think about my good fortune, and the excellent people I'm working with, all the negative feelings just disappear. I begin to appreciate what it is I'm doing. There *are* sacrifices, but I understand why I'm making them. There's always something new and refreshing about being on the road."

Despite the glamor and experience of touring with superstars, road warriors often say that a balance of touring and recording is ideal. Some would say Mike Baird has the best of both worlds. His recording and touring with Richard Marx, Eddie Money, and Rick Springfield gives him the luxury of knowing that when he comes off the road, there'll be work to do. "When you go out for a month or two, you get all charged up and come back ready to work at home," Mike says. "But after six months you're itching to get back on the road."

One of the things that keeps that itch at bay is putting energy into other areas than just "studio drumming." "Eddie Money is starting another album soon, so we've been writing," Mike explains. "That's another thing I've been concentrating on—trying to write with Eddie and other people. And I may get involved with production this year. I just shift gears."

Jonathan Moffett also likes to stretch his talents. "I wrote and produced a song

that was in the Eddie Murphy movie *Coming To America*" he says. "And my other writing ventures are starting to take off, too. Reaping the fulfillment that comes from the enjoyment the public gets from my work is what it's all about."

Alvino Bennett takes full advantage of time off the road, too. "The success of Sheena's tours has afforded me the time to do some recording with friends, and to do some other gigs around town," says Alvino. "Time off also allows me to spend some time with my wife and daughter."

Despite their varied interests and abilities, though, there's no doubt that touring still holds a special fascination and challenge for these road warriors. The freedom and discipline of the road might be a dream for most of us. But to these three outstanding drummers it's a way of life.

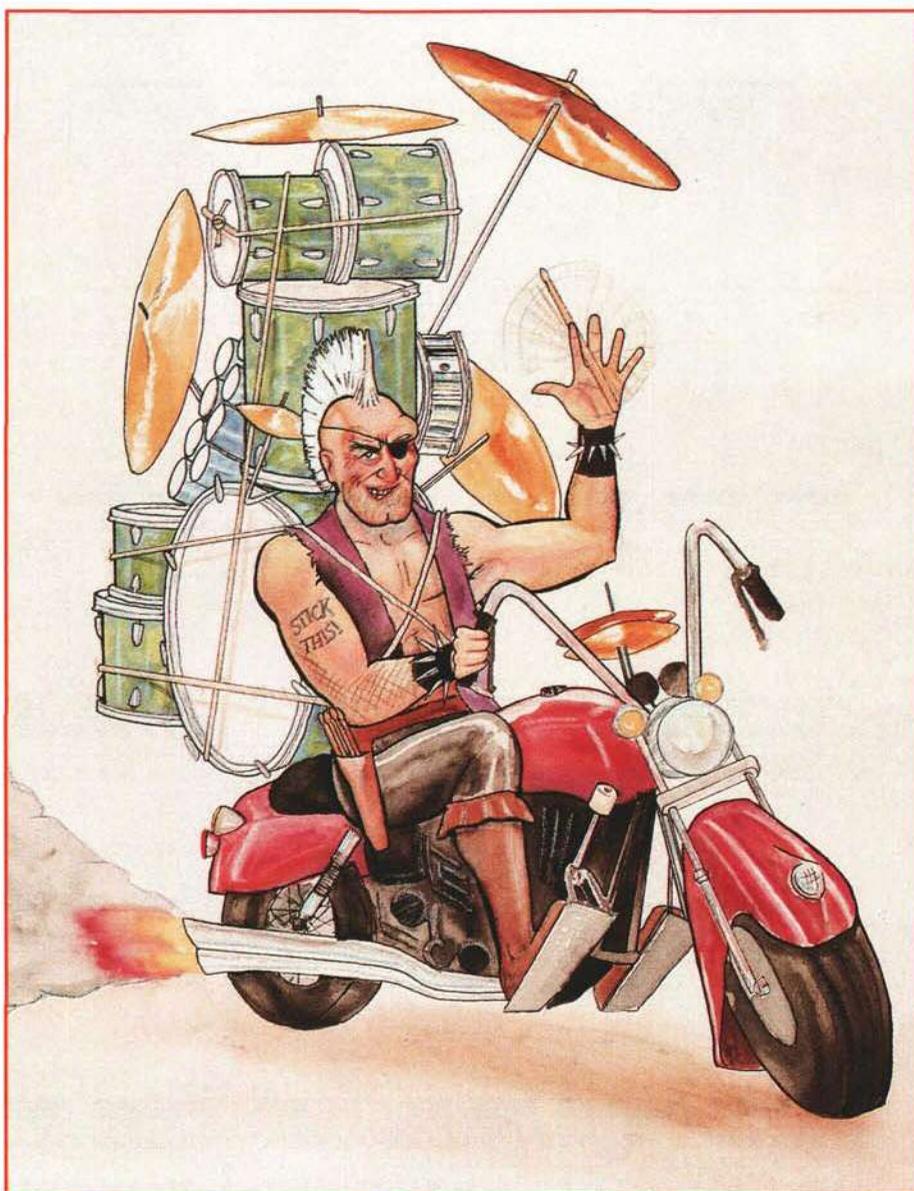


Illustration by Christopher Otazo

# Rhythmic Rudimental Progressions: Part 8: Six-Stroke Rolls



Photo by Rick Mattingly

■ by Joe Morello

Transcribed by Keith Necessary

We complete the rudimental progressions this month by applying them to six-stroke rolls. The purpose of the exercise is to be able to play six-stroke rolls using 8th notes, 8th-note triplets, 16th notes, 16th-note triplets, and 32nd notes. If you've been following this series, you should be familiar with the concepts we're covering.

Play this exercise with and without accents. Once you can play the exercises as written, try accenting the first note only of each six-stroke roll. Don't raise the metronome speed if you feel any sort of tension. Also, experiment with dynamic levels. Play everything

from very soft (*ppp*) to very loud (*fff*).

As suggested in previous articles, try playing this exercise with brushes. Also, try this exercise at the drumset. Play the unaccented notes on the snare drum and the accented notes on the toms or cymbal/bass drum combination, while playing four on the hi-hat with your left foot.

*If you have any questions about this exercise, you can contact Joe through Modern Drummer.*

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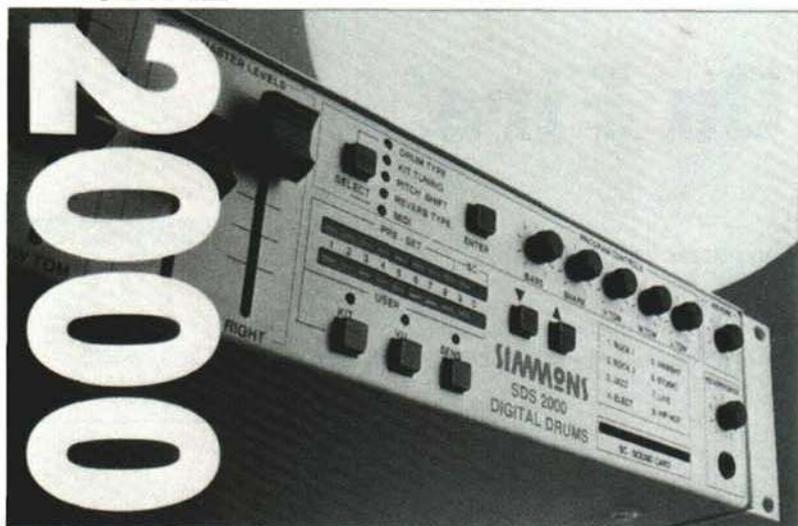
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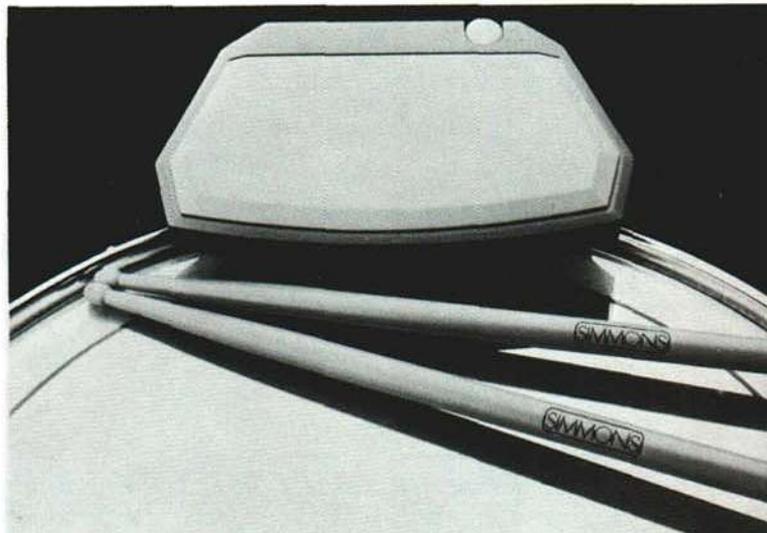
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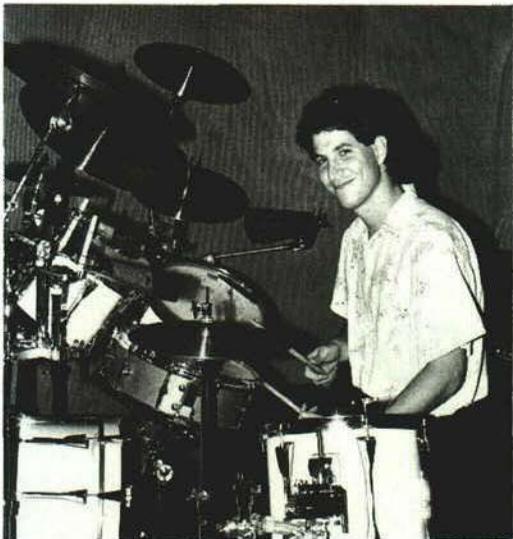


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# Joel Rosenblatt: “On Fire”

■ Transcribed by Jeff Wald

This month's *Drum Soloist* features Joel Rosenblatt on the title track from Michel Camilo's album *On Fire* (Epic 45295). Joel solos over an ever-building montuno pattern played by Camilo, and is later joined by bassist Michael Bowie—making for a solo that is truly on fire!

**MUSIC KEY**

Open	○	R.C.	●	C.C.	●	Cowbell	×
H.H.	○						
T.T.	○						
S.D.	○						
T.T.	○						
B.D.	○						
H.H. w/foot	○						
	○					Add'l Toms	○
	○					Open H.H. w/foot	○

**J = 152**



Rick Allen  
Def Leppard

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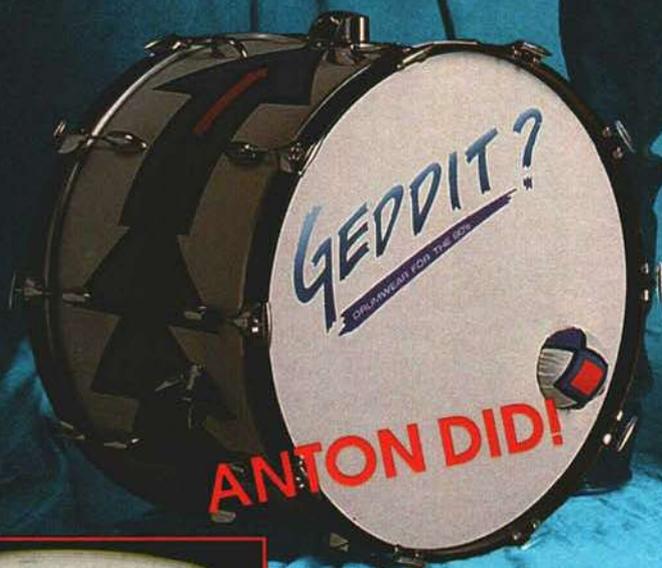
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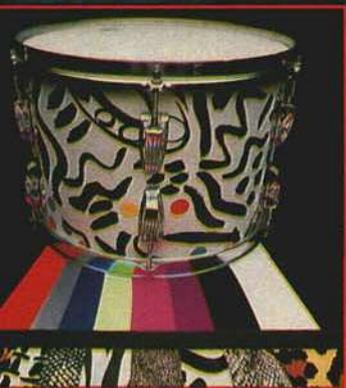
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KAMAN



## LOUIE BELLSON

continued from page 23

started it; that's why they were so great. I know that Max always said that he learned so much from Jo Jones, and then after Max, here comes Tony Williams. Each guy picks up on what went before and then takes it a little further. But those early guys were the ones who really laid down the rules. I listen to records now by Baby Dodds, and I hear shades of Buddy

Rich, of Gene Krupa, of Joe Morello. Even when I hear some of the early records by Chick Webb, I hear Buddy.

"That kind of thing just came out of them," Bellson says. "Those players didn't have a chance to have great teachers. Once they got out on the road, whatever was in them came out. But today, I tell the youngsters, 'Look, you've got no excuses. There are a lot of great teachers, you've got schools, you've got books,

you've got videos, you've got everything going for you.' But don't just sit down in your basement and see how fast you can play single-stroke rolls. That's fine; that's part of it. But once you've learned from the rudiments, learn how to transfer it to the bandstand and put it to work. If you know a bass player or piano player, get together with them three or four times a week and play. That's how you learn to think musically.

"A young guy once asked me, 'If I have a four-bar break, should I play four bars from the Jim Chapin book?' I told him no, don't think about that. That four-bar break should be something you invent right on the spot. When the time comes for the break, don't think of anything. Just let your hands and feet feel relaxed and invent that solo. And above all, don't count."

How's that again?

"That's right," Louie says, "don't count. Feel it. Guys say, 'I can't do that.' I tell them I know they can't—yet—but if they keep at it, they'll learn how to feel a two-bar phrase, or a four-bar phrase, or an eight-bar phrase. But if you count, you'll concentrate too much on counting and not on the invention of the solo itself. Learn how to feel those things.

"But above all," Louie reiterates, "once you have your hands and feet together, you have to go out and do what all the great players did: Get out there and play. Get that experience. Start paying dues. You always pay dues, and you never stop learning. That's the name of the game."

When bop came in, Louie was listening. "The first time I heard it, I liked it," he recalls. "The first bop drummer I heard was Kenny Clarke, who they call the father of bop drumming. *Dizzy* told me that Kenny was the first guy to 'drop bombs' with the bass drum. Before that time, everybody was playing four beats to the bar. But with the bop thing, they felt that it wasn't necessary. They wanted to be a little looser, to let the bass flow a little more. So the drummer would just drop a bomb with his foot now and then to accent. He would keep the rhythm going up here with his right hand."

But Bellson says that some drummers became a little too free in their approach to the new music. "I had an occasion to



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Steve Jordan



work with Bird once," Louie says. "I was at Birdland with the nucleus of Duke's band, and Bird was opposite us with his own group. At that time, he didn't have any heavyweights like Roy Haynes with him. He had some young players, and it was very obvious that these youngsters were letting bebop get the best of them. I noticed that Bird would only play one or two numbers with the group, and then he would pack up his horn and let the band

finish out the set.

"So one night I went up to him and asked, 'Why are you just playing one or two numbers?' And he said, 'Because with that rhythm section, I can't find where 1 is.' If you lose Bird, you've really lost somebody. He said he wanted to play with us, so he came back and played some entire sets with us, which was like magic. But he and Dizzy would always talk about knowing where 1 was. That's

very important, because if you don't know where 1 is, you've lost everybody.

"That was one of the things about Elvin. When he first came on the scene, I heard a lot of pros and cons about him, so I went to see him to find out for myself. He would play those earthy four-bar breaks, and a lot of people said that he was losing the time. But I said, 'No. You tap your foot to what he's playing and you'll see that he comes out right on 1 every time. He knows exactly what he's doing.'"

As much as Bellson admired what the bop drummers were doing, he wasn't able—or rather, allowed—to incorporate it into his playing right away. "I was with Tommy Dorsey from '47 through '50," Louie says, "and during that time bop was really at its strong point in New York. Woody's band was the first one that really got into the bop feel. When Davey Tough was in the band it still had the sound of the straight-ahead, hard swinging Herman band. But when Woody had the band with Don Lamond on drums, and Stan Getz and Zoot Sims, that was a real bebop band.

"I tried to do a couple of things in Tommy's band that I saw Kenny Clarke do," Louie laughs, "and the old man turned around and gave me one of those looks: 'What the hell was that?' I said, 'Well, I went down and heard Bird and Diz...,' and he said, 'Oh no. No bebop here.' Of course, later on he got tuned into it, but in the early days a lot of the band leaders didn't understand what was going on.

"But the minute I heard it," Louie says, "I figured that was the direction we were going to go. I could hear the wonderful relationship between the rhythm section and the rest of the band, and I enjoyed the complexity of the melodies that Bird was coming up with. They were really intricate patterns that demanded to be played by good players. But I knew that in order to have bebop happen in a big band, you would have to have all the players feel the same way. It would be kind of rough to have a bebop drummer and a bebop rhythm section playing with a hard swinging big band. That wouldn't make it."

Bellson recalls just such a situation. "At one point, Elvin Jones joined Duke

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Ellington," Louie says. "There were two drummers in the band for a while: Elvin and someone else. But when Elvin played alone, the band didn't really understand what he was doing. But Duke dug him. Duke was an unbelievable man anyway. He could hear a great player and understand where he was coming from. I think over time Duke could have taken a guy like Elvin and molded him into what the band was doing, without taking away from what Elvin was all about. But the band

just didn't like the idea of having two drummers with different conceptions, and they were used to that hard swing. So that's an example of what can happen when everybody is not on the same key. It doesn't work. Whereas with Woody's band, all those players were bebop oriented, and that's why that was such a great band.

"The bebop era was very important, music-wise," Louie says. "Kenny Clarke was a disciple of Jo Jones, and when he

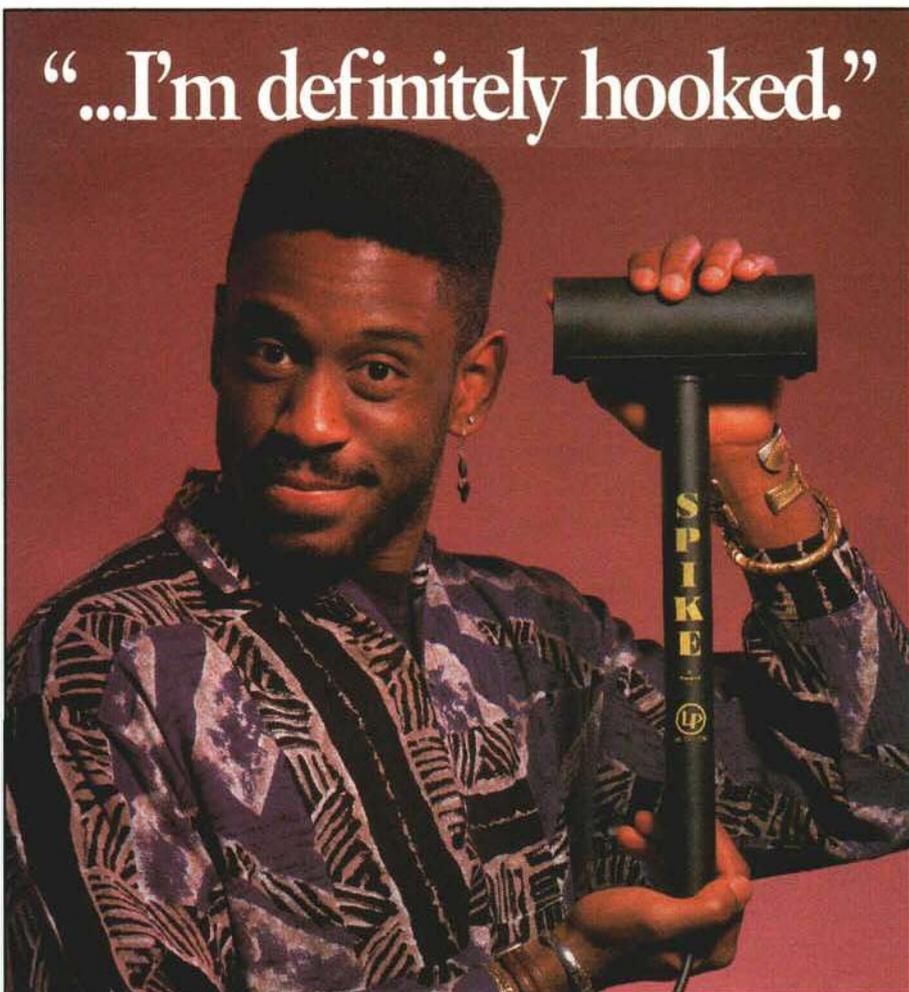
played the cymbal, it was very much like that feel that Jo Jones had. But then he did things on top of that that made him Kenny Clarke. He had that wonderful way of accenting the syncopations.

"But there again," Louie adds, "I remember him telling the rhythm section to not over-comp. At that time, you had a lot of drummers running around New York trying to play like Kenny and Max Roach and all the wonderful bebop drummers. But a lot of them were overplaying. I think that's what happened to that young drummer who was with Bird; he was playing too much, and as a result, Bird couldn't find where 1 was. And once you lose 1, you might as well get your coat and hat and go home.

"The same thing happened to Harvey Mason once," Louie says. "He was in that marvelous group with Lee Ritenour on guitar, Dave Grusin on piano, and Abe Laboriel on bass. Harvey told me that when they started out, everything was fine, but as time went on they got a little too fancy. Harvey was being a little too intricate, and so were Lee, Dave, and Abe. Even with great players like those, every once in a while you have to take account of yourself and say, 'Hey, we're getting out of hand here. Let's get back to the basics.'

"But the bebop era was a wonderful time. I still sometimes hear players who were from that hard swing school who say that bebop was bad. How can they say that? Today, you hear all these wonderful college bands, and they're all bebop oriented. To me, when something has longevity, that's living proof that something is happening. It's reached a point where people know it's got validity. It's honest. That's why great players like Jo Jones and Buddy had longevity. What they were doing was pure; it was right. Guys like Peter Erskine and Steve Gadd are going to last a long time because what they are doing is pure and it's right, and they're going to keep on doing it and keep on inventing.

"The guys that I came up with used to say, 'Don't put down something unless you know you can put it down.' In other words, always listen to something first. That's why I like to listen to a lot of young players. If they're doing something way out, some people might say, 'These guys

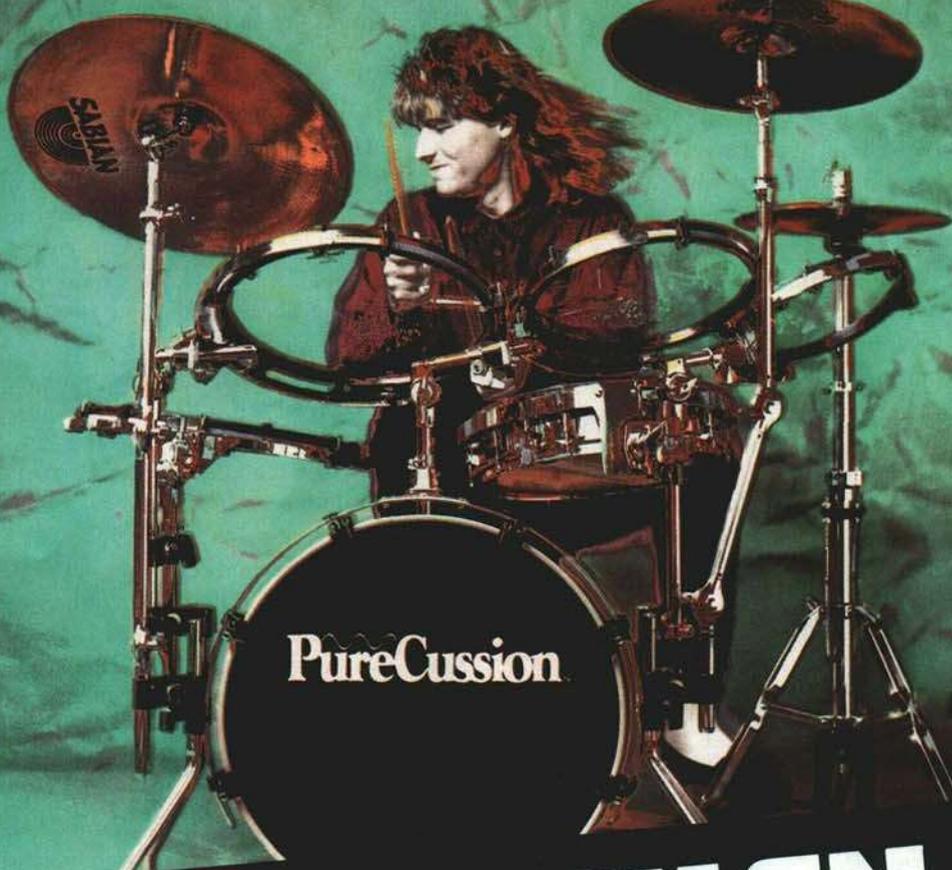


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are nuts.' But I like to go listen first, because I remember what happened to Stravinsky at the first performance of *The Rite Of Spring*. People threw vegetables on the stage and said, 'That's not music.' But today we realize that it's a monumental work.

"It's like when I hear people say that Ringo Starr couldn't play. I'll ask them if they ever saw him in person or heard the records. They say no. So how can they say

that about him? I never got to see him play live, but from what I heard on the records and saw on television, it seemed to me that he was doing exactly what he was supposed to be doing with that quartet. The rhythms he played seemed to fit the music perfectly. And that, to me, is musical."

It took Louie a little longer to get involved with rock than it did bebop.

"When I first heard it," he admits, "it wasn't really knocking me out. But my instinct was to not be too critical, because it was a new kind of music. Besides hearing something on records, I always wanted to see the players live, because the visual aspect can often mean a lot."

Louie actually had a unique opportunity to see some of the early rock close up. "I was with Tommy's band in '53-'56, when Jackie Gleason had the Dorsey brothers do some of his shows. Elvis Presley appeared on the show one week. It was only his second television appearance. So we all watched the band, and truthfully, the drummer—D. J. Fontana—was the best musician in the band. Tommy's band was kind of shocked that Elvis Presley was gaining that kind of popularity. He was a nice young man, and he came over to us and said that he had some of our records. When we heard his music, it sounded like he had been listening to some of the old, funky guitar players down south, like Leadbelly and those guys, so there was some validity there. But the music wasn't really saying much. And yet Tommy Dorsey said, 'Fellows, you're looking at one of the most phenomenal things that's going to happen in show business.' Tommy was that way; he could foresee things.

"During the '50s and '60s," Louie continues, "things weren't really knocking me out that much. But as time went on, I started hearing drummers who were really playing some interesting things. Bobby Columby, with Blood, Sweat & Tears, was one of the first. I liked what that group was doing, and man, they were *on*. Then there was little Danny Seraphine with Chicago, and later on Steve Smith with Journey, and Neil Peart. But earlier there were guys like Bernard Purdie, who I knew as a funky rhythm & blues drummer, and all of a sudden here he was playing these wonderful rock rhythms. And that excited me because I love those rhythms—anything with that kind of intensity going on with the bass drum. I went home and practiced because I wasn't used to it."

In fact, Charli Persip contends that one of the greatest contributions that rock made to drumming was restoring the bass drum to the function of timekeeper. "Yeah," Bellson agrees, "I'd go along with

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that 100%. The bass drum was always so important in music. Dizzy Gillespie used to talk about those early guys down in New Orleans who played in Dixieland parade bands, and there would be a guy playing bass drum with his hands. And the bass drum was also very important to the Afro-Cubans. So that's what impressed me about rock: the wonderful things they were doing with the bass drum, along with the hands. So I dug in and started listening to the guys who were doing it at the time. And a lot of the young guys who started out as jazz players—like Peter Erskine and Harvey Mason and Steve Gadd—were able to see the value of this new music and take advantage of it. Some of the guys who came from a certain era just closed their eyes and ears to the new thing, and I think later on they were sorry they did, because then it was too late for them to latch on.

"Today," Louie says, "if a drummer really wants to be in a groove with all the guys we've mentioned, you've got to be able to do it all. You've got to be able to get into the 8th-note progression as well as the rolling-triplet progression. It's all music, and you have to be able to do it all. If you want to be a Weckl, or a Gadd, or a Dennis Chambers, you have to be a magician. And there's no reason why you can't do it. You've got everything at your fingertips. Buddy used to say that there should be no excuses when you sit down to play. Sit down, shut up, and play. Do your gig and do it right. That's the school I come from."

"You know," Bellson says, "I kind of smile when people say to me, 'Lou, you're the last of a certain era of drummers.' Wait

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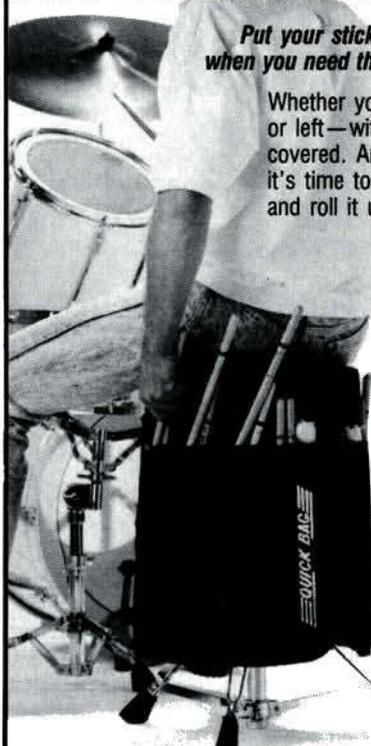
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a minute. You've got Max Roach, who's still playing like crazy and teaching. You've got Gus Johnson, who was with the Basie band and who's doing all the festivals now, playing like mad. There's Roy Haynes, Panama Francis, Jack Sperling, Don Lamond, Eddie Shaughnessy, Barrett Deems, Connie Kay, and I have to mention the oldest guy of all these drummers who is still around, Ray McKinley. Every year we play at Disneyland, and there he is with the Glenn Miller band. He's still got that wonderful fluidity. I think he's about 82 years old. No way of him stopping.

"You know," Louie adds, "they credit me with being the first one to play two bass drums, but I can remember when Ray was with Will Bradley, and he did a thing with two bass drums only. They used to do the boogie-woogie things with the 8th-note shuffle, and that's where he would do the two bass drum thing. Then I came out shortly after that using two bass drums with a complete set. But he was actually the first to play two bass drums in public, and I think he deserves a lot of credit."

Bellson suddenly breaks into a laugh. "I was one of the first to come up with such a large drumset," he says. "When Buddy first saw my set, with all those drums surrounding me, he looked at me and made a classic remark. He had his hand on his chin, like a Jack Benny pose, and he said, 'Are you having a baby?'" Louie cracks up at the memory. "It was so funny," he says, "but I told Buddy, 'You know, I use all this stuff.' I dislike going to hear a drummer with a whole bunch of tom-toms and cymbals, but the whole night he just plays hi-hat and snare

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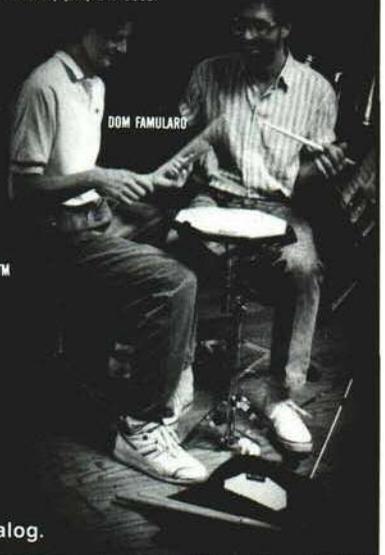
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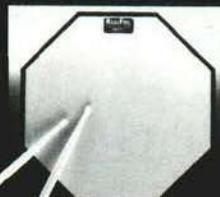
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drum. To me, a drummer like that is just trying to put on a show, but it doesn't work.

"Now don't misunderstand," Louie hastens to add. "I'm not saying you have to use a lot of equipment. One thing these old drummers taught me was that if you can't do it with a bass drum, a snare, a couple of toms, a ride, a crash, and a pair of hi-hats, you better go home. But once you can do that, if you need to add equipment to fit the music you are playing, then do it. Someone like Dave Weckl needs some additional drums because he is working with Chick Corea, and Chick writes music that calls for a variety of percussive sounds. Billy Cobham has a bunch of stuff, but he uses it. That's the important thing.

"Drummers today think they need all this state-of-the-art equipment," Louie says, "but I remember playing at the Apollo a couple of times in the early '40s, and there was this guy who used to be on the corner. I think his name was Rhythm Willie, and he played harmonica and accompanied himself with some old, beat-up brushes and a homemade pair of sticks on a battered suitcase. And this guy could make that suitcase sound better than a set of drums. There was always a big crowd around him, and he would just be swinging.

"It's like rap music," Louie continues. "People think it's new to hear some guy rapping over a drum beat. I don't put it down, but it's not new. There was a guy named Leo Watson who used to work with just a set of drums and a microphone. That was it. He was the entertainment. He would be singing and bopping and rappin' and playing drums all at the same time. He would do an hour show just by himself, and you would walk away and say 'Wow!'

"Those guys who played in the vaudeville theaters used to come up with all kinds of sounds and gimmicks. Tommy Thomas showed me how to lay a tambourine on the floor and ease my foot in so that my toes were under the jingles in the front and my heel was on top in the back, and you could rock it back and forth and play tambourine with your foot. Or I could lay two tambourines on my bass drum pedals and play two bass drums and two tambourines at the same time. I've got a picture of Tommy Thomas with

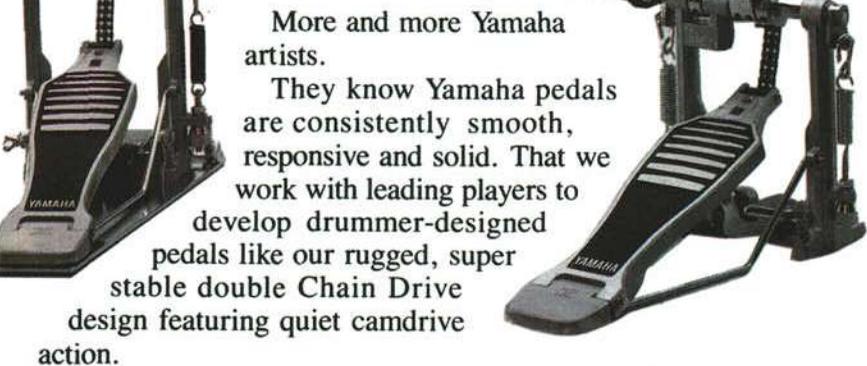
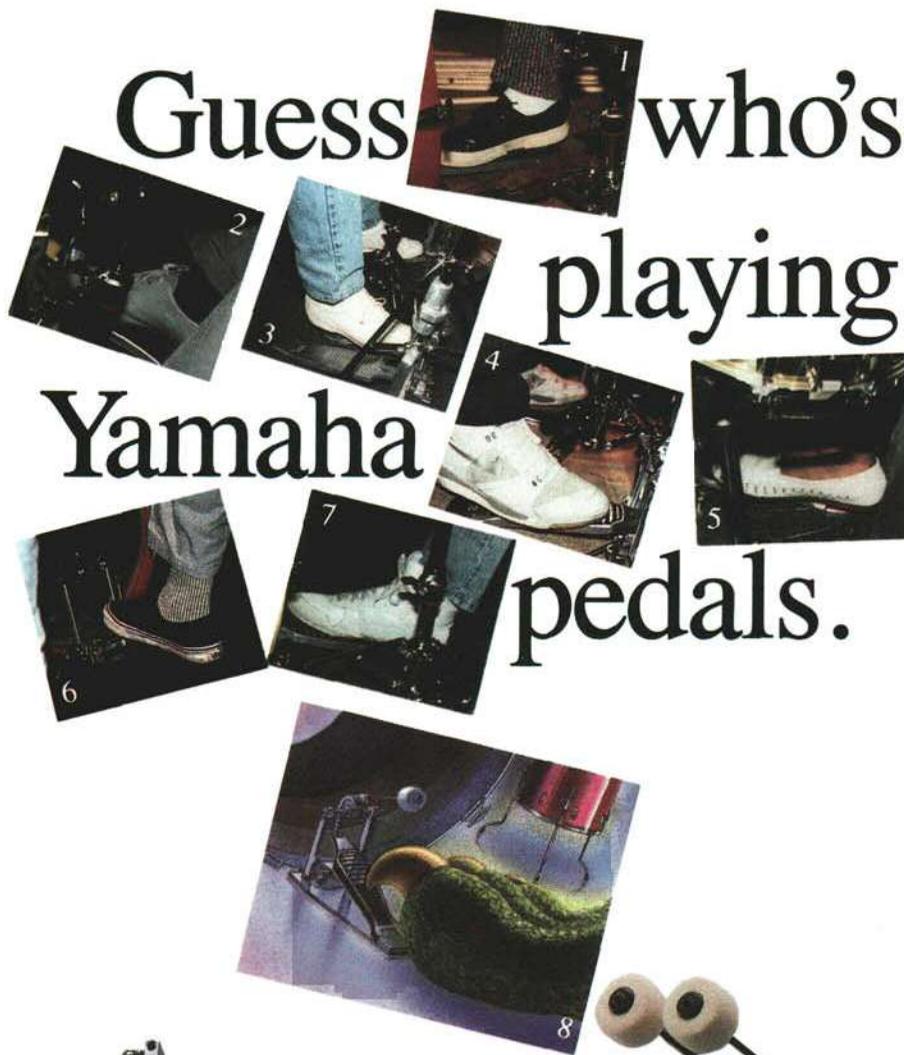
a crude model of a double bass drum beater that he had 65 years ago.

"So we keep coming up with new ideas and techniques and don't realize that these things have been done before. Maybe we're doing them a little different way, but they've been done. People think Dave Weckl came up with a new idea when he put a second floor tom on the left side, next to his hi-hat. Jo Jones did that in 1939. Billy Cobham got a lot of attention for doing a lot of things on the left side with his left hand. But the guy who did that years ago was Chick Webb.

"Back when drummers had the large bass drums, like 32" drums, they would play on the bass drum with the right-hand brush. The drums were almost up to their chins, so they had plenty of room to do that, and of course they were still using calfskin heads. So they would do a circular motion with the right hand on the bass drum head, getting a strong pulse going, and play the afterbeats of a shuffle on the snare drum with the left hand. Man—talk about swinging you into bad health! Buddy used to sometimes do things with the right stick on the bass drum. That's where he got that.

"One thing I learned from my mentors years ago was, 'Know where you came from and know where you're going.' Which means, know where you got this—who the innovators were—and also pick up on what's going on now. That's what I tell the youngsters. I'll go to a place where some of the young guys will try to put me on the spot. They'll say, 'What do you think of Neil Peart?' I'll say, 'I think he's a wonderful player.' They'll look surprised. 'You do? You mean you listen to that kind of music?' I say, 'Yeah, I listen to everything.' I learned from my father and Duke Ellington that music is music. I don't categorize it. If you want to talk about fusion, or country & western, or whatever, it's still music. And all the great players that we've talked about had that same attitude."

Now wait a minute. Surely Bellson is not suggesting that Buddy Rich was a country music fan. "No, no," Louie says, laughing. "In fact, in the hospital right before he passed away, a nurse asked Buddy if he was allergic to anything, and he said, 'Yeah, country music.' But you know, deep down, he really didn't mean that, because he was a very funny guy. I



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know that if he heard a good country band with a wonderful drummer like Larrie Londin, he would say, 'Yeah, man. I like that.'"

Louie pauses, staring out the window at downtown Cincinnati. "I really miss him," he says, softly. "I miss all those guys: Jo Jones and all of them. Buddy and I used to have so much fun together. When we were both living in New York, we used to go over to the old Professors on the West Side, where you could get a big dish of spaghetti for 35 cents, and we'd always get this creme soda, and we'd spend the afternoon talking about Jo Jones and all the players. We used to marvel at the way Mel Lewis could swing a band, or the way that Shelly Manne played. And Nick Ceroli was sort of like an extension of those two players, especially Mel.

"There are so many great players," Louie says. "Jack DeJohnette, to me, is one of the most musical drummers, because he can play piano and bass. When he plays a drum solo, he knows the changes of the tune, so he can be melodic as well as rhythmic. And then there's Tony Williams, who I first met when he was still a youngster and his father

brought him to hear Duke. I took one look at him and said, 'This guy's going to be a great drummer.' There was just something about him. There's also Billy Higgins, who can swing up a storm, and Jeff Hamilton and Terry Clarke and Alan Dawson and Ed Soph. And those last two guys I just mentioned are great teachers, too. Sometimes a guy might be a great player, but he's not the best teacher. Or sometimes a guy can teach, but he hasn't got the playing ability in back of it. But Alan Dawson and Ed Soph can home in and answer almost any question that a young player has, and they can back it up by playing. Peter Erskine is another guy who fits that category.

"But you can learn from everybody," Louie says. "When we did that last Buddy Rich Memorial Concert in L.A., I was there during all the rehearsals. I didn't want to miss anybody. And I picked up things from Vinnie Colaiuta, from Dave Weckl, from that wonderful young man Dennis Chambers, from Gregg Bissonette, and of course from Steve. I watched the way Steve did that beat with the tom-tom and bass drum, doing it fast. Dave Weckl also does that very well. It looks easy, but it's not. I hadn't been

doing that, so I started practicing it. That's the kind of thing that keeps me homed in on what's going on.

"You know," Louie says, "every day is a new process for me. I think it would be very boring if God put His hand on me and said, 'Now you know everything there is to know about drumming.' That would be boring, because I'd wake up in the morning and say, 'What am I going to do today?' But it keeps my mind and body going to know that every day I've got a chance to learn something new. I may hear a couple of drummers here in Cincinnati that will knock me out. I've got a concert coming up in New York with George Wein, and Wynton Marsalis is on the same bill. I don't know who's playing drums with him, but I'm going to be there watching and listening and picking up on what he's doing. Buddy and Gene used to say to me, 'You can learn something from every drummer. No matter how bad or good they are, you can pick up something from what they do.' So I always keep my eyes and ears open, and I think that's why you hear something a little different in my playing from album to album. I'm continually changing with the music."



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*Martin Cohen and Marc Quiñones (Spyro Gyra) discussing product development*

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continued from page 27

load them into my Forat, and trigger them right off my kit—fast, no problems. In the past, we couldn't play our drums and trigger MIDI devices without delays. The Impulse is probably the best trigger box for that. I have all the triggers built into my kit; Reek Havok put them in. But there's still a delay. It's not the same as playing the drums. But the Forat is lightning fast. It's also really expensive, but

it's a one-of-a-kind.

You see, most companies that make this kind of gear aren't that interested in drummers. Drummers have generally fought all this and haven't necessarily wanted to be involved in all the technology. So the companies just went for keyboard players right away. Keyboard players aren't as concerned if there's an eight-millisecond lag in the response, because they can slide their tracks

around so that they're not losing their expression. Whereas *the first* priority for a drummer is, "When I hit this thing I want the sound to come out, and I don't want there to be a delay." It's funny that companies have spent so long trying to make drum pads that you plug into a sampler feel like drums. Why? You might need pads to play, say, percussion instruments while you're playing your live kit; that's what they're for—not to simulate live drums.

**TS:** The equipment in your studio is all top-of-the-line, state-of-the-art technology. A lot of this electronic equipment is likely to be daunting to the average musician.

**DB:** You have to start somewhere, and I started with my first Simmons SDSV brain, which I still have in my studio. That was my first step into this stuff. One thing I'm learning now is to never sell gear that I know how to use. You buy and sell equipment and you always try to move on. People show you stuff all the time and tell you, "You've got to get into this." So I used to sell equipment and then find myself missing that stuff. It would be so creative for me to turn on an old *SP-12* and program a hip-hop thing, because I learned how to do it on that. I could program that blind because I knew the instrument so well. But I sold it and went on to a new piece of gear. Well, for what you get for selling it, it's worth keeping it around for when you just want to be creative and forget about everything else.

Now I always wait until I feel really comfortable with the new gear before I sell things. The other thing that I've been thinking about a lot lately is that people often ask me, "What sequencer should I buy?" You can look at features and compare machines that way. But now I'm looking more toward trends rather than features. I'm looking at where a company is going so that I can stay with that piece of gear for a long time. I don't really care if another one has a feature I don't have—as long as I can still make music with the one that I've got.

**TS:** Switching to your acoustic drums for a moment, you have mic's built into the shells. That's something I haven't seen very often.

**DB:** For live performance, that was by far

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the best thing I ever did. Unfortunately I don't think it caught on like the companies hoped it would. In a studio setting, if the drum sound you want to achieve is from a mic' above, then put one there. But in a live situation, when you put mic's on top of all the drums, you can't hear the difference because it's so loud. You get guitar wash and monitor wash coming into the mic's. But by having the mic's inside, you get an incredible live drum sound because the drum is completely isolated.

I had Reek put the triggers inside the drums before Julian's tour, because when you put the trigger on the top of the head, you're always putting duct tape on it when the trigger rips off. It's just a pain in the neck. This way, the triggers are just in there; all you have to do is plug a cable into it. These triggers work really well, and I used them through an *Impulse*. It simplified the whole thing and made the electronics usable on tour. And when I'm out there playing, I don't want to be thinking about electronics.

**TS:** With your involvement in so many projects, has anyone ever told you that you work *too* much?

**DB:** The funny thing is that I really love it. I didn't have the opportunity to stay in music school. Some guys stay in music school for years to really learn about what they do. I learned to survive out here. To get ahead and to make it as a session player, you have to keep on learning.

**TS:** Is that the cornerstone of a thriving session career?

**DB:** People have asked me, "How did you get this record?" or, "Why did this guy hire you?" You don't get jobs because you're the best drummer in the world or because you know so much. It's because you develop a clique and a network of people who know they can count on you. When a producer gets \$100,000 for a record, he's nervous about it too. He wants to bring in a team of people that he knows in the end is going to come up with a good-sounding record—not that you're going to play the world's greatest or fastest drum fill.

**TS:** What type of gear would be advisable to buy specifically to do sessions?

**DB:** Going back to producers, they are taking a gamble in hiring musicians that they haven't worked with, therefore they

like to hire people who are already working. So it's a Catch-22. If you want to do sessions, you have to buy gear based on covering bases: knowing what's going to be expected of you and being able to deliver that. If you want to have your own thing for a record deal, you have to come up with a setup that's unique. But if you want to do sessions, you have to get pads of some kind, and most importantly you have to get great-sounding drums. You

have to know how to get a good drum sound, how to deliver it, and how to make the engineer and producer feel good about that, because, like I said, a lot of producers and engineers have a weakness when it comes to recording acoustic drums. They don't know why they don't get the drum sound they want, they just know that it doesn't sound the way they want it to.

So I built up a couple of kits, some with

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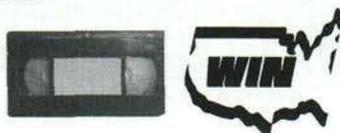
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internal mic's, some with overhead mic's for a different sound. And I did a lot of reading up on different ways to get drum sounds for different styles. It's important to not only throw out creative musical suggestions, but also to be able to offer creative *sound* suggestions—like room miking. That's very important. It's not just *what* you play. You can't just play one way and then change the sound later. You have to know in general how the sound is

going to be in the end so that you play appropriately for that sound. You wouldn't play lots of subtle licks if you're going to have this huge sound. So the bottom line is: Make sure you have your acoustic thing happening, because it's all coming back to that. You should have a collection of snare drums on hand. Even if in reality it doesn't make that much of a difference, at least the producer or engineer feels that there's an effort being

made.

There are a lot of drummers who also say they use a certain kind of drumhead. That's fine if you're in a band and it's your unique sound that a producer is recording. But if you're a session guy you have to learn what your drums sound like with different heads. And you should always have those different heads—plus different pedals and cymbals—to get the sound you want for that date.

Early on, I had a really great drummer named John O'Reilly help me tune my kit in the studio. I picked up some good tuning tips from him. On Julian's tour I had Jay Ruben there offering me other tuning tips. When you get all these different ideas on how to tune your kit, you have something that's unique. Drummers trying to break into studio work often ask things like, "What kind of pads should I buy?" They forget about the acoustic things and the basics, which are more important than the electronics.

But as far as electronic equipment for sessions, I would say that you have to have some kind of pads—just to be able to do all the percussion stuff when you get called for a demo. There's nothing like a real percussionist, but not every songwriter has the money to afford one for a demo. And sometimes some of the parts you play actually end up making it on the album. On Joe Cocker's album there was a track with congas, which I did as scratch tracks. They had one of the best percussionists there is—Bashiri Johnson—playing on the album. But in the early stages they said that they would have congas on the track, so I decided to lay some of that stuff in there against what I was doing so that we could get an idea of what the parts would sound like together. Then Bashiri would come in and replace the percussion parts. They liked the parts I played for the demo, so my tracks made it on the album.

So you've got to be ready to cover that base for the producers and engineers. In order to do that, you need a MIDI pad or something like an *Octapad* or a *drumKAT*. Then you need some kind of sound source. You can buy a sampler and a library to start you up, and then as time goes on, you can build your own library so that your sounds are unique. When you trigger a sound *that you've* created, it's a

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different feeling than playing a sound that somebody else created. Even though you lose some feel when you're playing over MIDI and with the pads, you feel good that you've created this unique sound.

**TS:** Tell me a little about your background. For starters, how long have you been in New York?

**DB:** About seven years. I never really had the intention of coming here. I had always wanted to, but I didn't know very much about New York. It seems so far away when you live in Cleveland. I went to North Texas State University for one year, where I learned some great stuff and got exposed to a lot of players. It was a rude awakening to show up at a school where there are 120 guys playing drums. [laughs] You can be the hot kid back home, but that doesn't matter anymore.

Gregg Bissonette was there at the time, and I got to take some lessons from him. He became a great inspiration for me. I was a freshman and he hadn't become a famous drummer yet; he had just graduated. But he inspired me to get my reading together, which is so important. There used to be these stories circulating that to do sessions in New York, you had to be able to read fly shit on paper—a million notes, Zappa's "Black Page." That had nothing to do with rock records or 90% of jingles. You do have to be able to read, but it's not intimidating. It's usually pretty easy, plus you usually have some time to suss it out.

Gregg helped me to come up with an abbreviated reading technique. I had a roommate in Texas who used to be in a band and who had been Gregg's roommate at one time. Gregg would sub for this guy when he couldn't play with his band. I would go and watch Gregg and say, "How do you play with this band for four hours when you don't know all the songs?" He told me that he made these charts, which were abbreviated versions, so that he could just glance at them before a tune and go, "Bang! I know the tune." And I thought, "I have to come up with a system that works for me." So now when an artist plays me a tape, I write it out in an abbreviated form as I listen to it the first time through. When we go to do the tunes, I just have to glance at my notes before we start to refresh my memory.

So I came up with my own system for using little cheat sheets. In fact, I used them last week at a big benefit show with Southside Johnny, Bon Jovi, Dan Hartman, and Jerry Harrison. I had to know so many songs, and we had no real rehearsals. Those sheets really came in handy. It also helps on a session, so that you don't have to sit there and listen to a tape twenty times before getting it down.

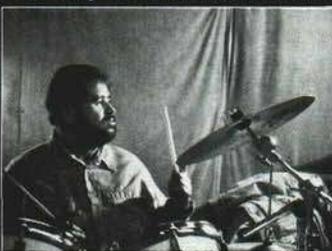
When you play with a band, you obviously

wouldn't have a need for these, because you rehearse the set and you have the tunes down cold. But I've used notes for several live situations. If you ever see the Amnesty International video—I played percussion for Little Steven on that—I had all these pads, and on each pad I had written what sound was on it. So this sort of notation also makes using the electronics simpler.

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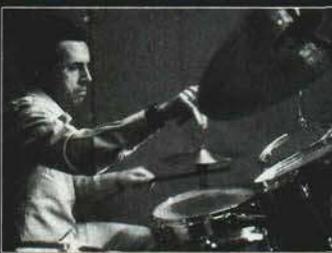
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gets, the more you have to simplify, because there are more variables that can go wrong. With my racks, people think it's overkill. I built the direct boxes in, and my drum machine is on a pull-out drawer so that it's always connected. But I do all that just to cut the variables back, because you can't afford the time to fuss around. When they say, "You're on," you're *on*. People think that when you get into a big group, you have long sound

checks. But big bands do festivals all over Europe every summer, and when you go on, you have to be able to go out and do it with no chance of a screw-up.

**TS:** Let's backtrack a little. How did you and Michael Shrieve begin collaborating?

**DB:** We met years ago at a demo for a songwriter. We just hit it off. We were both doing electronic things on the session, so we had all our equipment set up, and he said, "Maybe we should work

together sometime." He was scoring a DeLaurentis film at the time called *Bedroom Window*, and he called me from California and said, "Why don't you come out here for three weeks and do this film with me?" Michael had written the score with Pat Gleason, so I went out there with my rig and joined them at the studio. I learned a lot about film from those guys.

**TS:** It's a bit irregular for a drummer to invite another drummer to collaborate on a project, isn't it?

**DB:** You find people to work with based on your relationship with them and how you get along, just like at sessions. Michael is one of my favorite people to work with, but we also make a strong creative team. We edit each other when we work, but it's so much fun. I could easily turn to him and tell him I hate something, and he can do the same with me. The fun comes in when we're recording: When he's recording I'm at the console producing him, and vice versa. We trust each other enough to edit and critique each other's work. You do get a little attached to something you've written, but we can take criticism from each other, and that makes it a great working relationship. In the end, we've got a product that we feel is the sum of both of us. It becomes something unique: It's not something I would have done without Michael, and it's not something he would have done without me.

**TS:** Do people react to the idea that you are two *drummers* who co-write film music?

**DB:** Basically we're two drummers who are doing a lot of other things, which people don't expect from drummers. When you do sessions—especially when you're producing—you work with guitarists and keyboard players, and you have to relate to them in their own terminology and notate parts. But because we're two drummers, we don't have to do that when we work together. Also, we don't feel that we're substandard musically, just because we don't have a guitar or piano. Neither one of us really has any facility on other instruments.

**TS:** You mentioned to me earlier that most songs stem "from a groove." Is that how you and Michael compose for the most part?

**DB:** Most of the time the way we com-

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pose is to split up the cues and put a big chart up on the wall that shows which cues need to be written. We'll choose which ones we'll work on that day, and each of us will start a given one. I'll start out with a groove for one of the cues, the concept, the timing. Film scoring has to be done to pictures, so you have to watch the pictures and do your timing maps. That's actually another interview unto itself!

But getting back to working as a team with Michael, after coming up with a groove for a cue and some sounds and a bass part, Michael will work on one, and then we'll show each other our cues with the accompanying pictures and make comments. He'll overdub on mine, and I'll overdub on his. It works out great.

**TS:** Has film scoring experience changed your perception of the field?

**DB:** Oh, definitely. You see films a whole different way once you score one.

**TS:** Were you expected to understand the artistic or psychological implications of a given scene to be scored?

**DB:** In theory, that's what you're supposed to do. But in fact, Hollywood is just like the record business: It's a big political scene, because there's a lot of money involved. Even with TV movies there's a lot of money that goes down. On the film Michael and I just did, we were brought on board by the director to do what he wanted for the movie. But by the time we got in there, he was out of the picture and one of the guys at Universal had taken over. The original director had wanted a jazz-art score based on trumpet. So we set out to record a live jazz combo. We brought out guitarist David Torn and a trumpet player, and Michael played some real intricate drumming. But then Universal decided they wanted a Miami Vice type of score based on synthesizers. So that went completely out the window, and it became a synth score with just David Torn.

**TS:** Aside from the ups and downs, do you see film as the central force in your career in the future?

**DB:** I think I'll probably keep doing a lot of films, because it really gives me the chance to work for myself and write based on what I want to do. Sure, there are limitations, like deadlines. And you have to learn timings. I have this great lit-

tle program from Passport Systems called *Click Tracks*, which does all my timings. Once you get beyond the level of doing the basic timing, you get the chance to step out of bounds and be creative. That's a lot different than doing a session where a producer is paying you by the hour. But when you're working for yourself, you can *start* out of bounds. You don't have to step out. Sometimes when I start a cue, I'll take a completely wild

approach that's totally unsafe. If it bombs, sure, I've wasted four or five hours, but that just means I have to stay up that much longer that night. On the other hand, I may have the time of my life doing it, because I can stretch out a lot. So you try these things out, and they allow you to grow, and that just naturally filters back into the work that you do on other people's albums.

**TS:** If the opportunity presented itself,

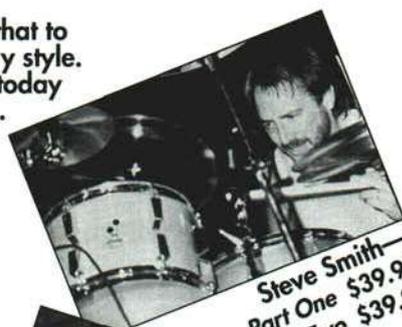
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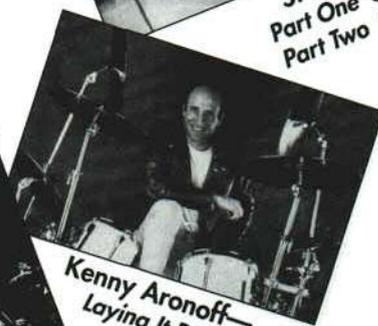
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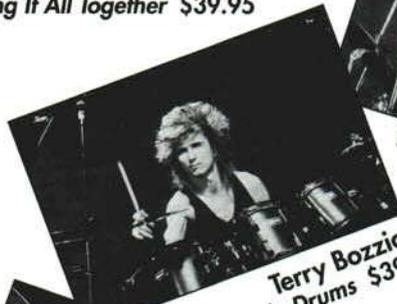
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would you work on soundtracks on your own?

**DB:** Oh yeah. Michael and I aren't against working separately, but we have so much fun working together. Films are a real strain, time-wise and politically, and half of your time is spent on the phone talking to the producer or the director or the music editor. They all get their hands in the pie, and they're faxing you timing sheets every day, so there's so much to get done. If you're doing all of it alone, it's a big stress load. The beauty of doing it as a team is that you can buffer each other, plus you can divide the tasks and get more accomplished. And because you're creating on a deadline, sometimes you have to really dig deep for ideas. The times where you haven't slept for three days and you've just spent 12 hours on the phone, it's hard to have the energy for ideas. But that's when you can bounce ideas off your partner. It's also your partner who can see when ideas are just not happening and say, "Let's just bag it and get something to eat."

So I wouldn't say we're against doing films on our own, but every time one of

us gets a film, we bring the other in on it because it's fun, it's really creative, and it's great to check out other drummers' stuff. We're very different stylistically. If I come up with a cue I might say, "Michael, play drums on this," and vice versa. When Michael and I did *The Big Picture*, we wrote, produced, and recorded it, which was great because we got to experiment and try out our chops. I've produced and recorded things before, but those were situations where I had to worry about the outcome of the product. Whereas when we did our record, it was experimentation on every level. So if I did something that didn't work, I didn't have to worry about Michael telling me that it was terrible. We simply tried something else. So we got to create a project completely from scratch without any bounds or limitations. We just went in to see what we could do with pads as two drummers. And it really showed us we could do a lot.

**TS:** Was there actually a period in your career where you did more programming than kit playing?

**DB:** Yeah, for a very short time when I first came here to New York. At that time,

machines started getting big. Everybody was involved in the "drum machines are going to put drummers out of business" war, and there was all this lobbying going on. But I never felt that way. They were relatively easy for me to program because I had a computer background in high school. Plus I always felt there was a place for both acoustic drums and machines. So just to make money when I first got here—you can't just walk in and do sessions—I started to do assistant engineering. I decided that I didn't want to go out on the road with no-name bands, and hanging out here would keep me available for auditions.

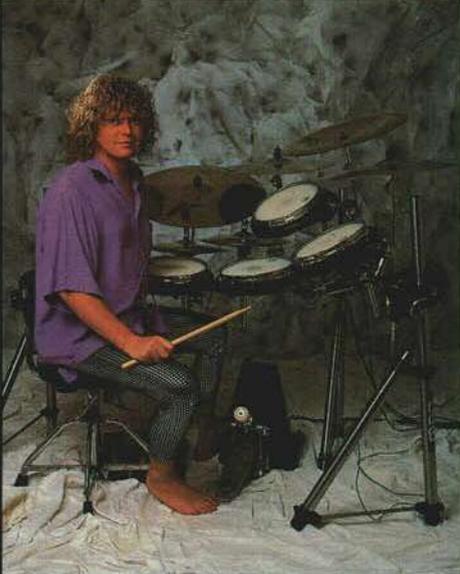
So through assisting, I met a load of people who I still work with today. Then I met a great engineer named Paul Orofino, who owned a 48-track studio. He was into live drums and would record them in his studio. I would hang out and watch him on sessions to see what he did and to meet drummers. This was about six years ago. I was really young at the time, about 20. So that was good experience at an early age.

I met my wife about a year later, and she pushed me, saying, "Go for it. Get the equipment you want and do it." So I got the machines: I had a LinnDrum at first, which I couldn't afford, so I got the studio to buy it. Then when I got a session, I would rent it from them for \$50. Sometimes I would only make \$50 or \$75 bucks on a session, so it would just be for the experience of it. Every time you do a session it's a new experience: a different studio, new people, new problems.... So the more you do the more confident you become, and when a problem comes up you can handle it because you've seen it before.

I think the turning point for me as far as being tagged a "programmer" was after programming what became a number-one hit called "Shake You Down" by Gregory Abbott. So from doing that, people suddenly said, "Oh, you're a programmer." I thought, "Wait a minute, I've been playing live drums for years." I was doing several live gigs at that time with a bunch of different bands, and I played live drums on other albums during that time that didn't hit. But because the most popular thing I did was a hit that I programmed, that's how I was stereotyped.

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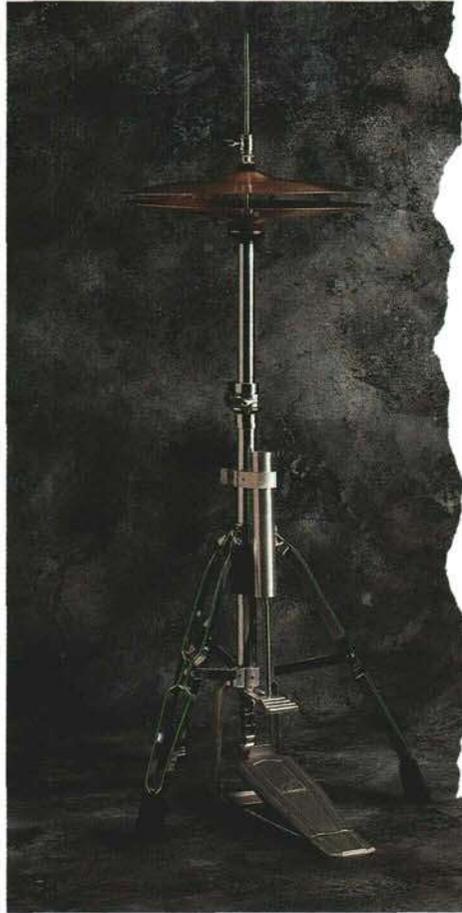
From there I started working with [producer] Arthur Baker, then I did a 12" for Madonna, and then I did Little Steven shows playing percussion. From there I did his albums *Freedom No Compromise* and *Revolution*. I played all that stuff on pads, but people still hear that and think that it was programmed. Suddenly I found myself in a real rut, although I was working like mad.

Joe Cocker was probably the gig that showed people that I could play, because Joe didn't care that I could program. We had met on a Steven Spielberg cut for a film called *Harry And The Hendersons*. When the guys who produced that song went on to produce Joe's next album, they called me up. The album, *Unchain My Heart*, did well, so that gave me credibility as a player to people who didn't even know I was a programmer. It's like two separate worlds. People will hire me as a player or as a programmer. But sometimes people like Charlie Midnight [producer, Joe Cocker] will say, "I don't know if you'll program or play on this album. We'll see how it goes."

**TS:** Would your ideal scenario be to integrate all sides of your career: drummer/programmer plus songwriter/producer/soundtrack writer?

**DB:** I was having dinner with a bunch of guys the other night who asked me, "What do you want to do with your career?" I want to do what I'm doing, you know? They said, "Oh, then you're not focused." That's because if you label yourself as an "artist" it's okay, you're "focused." But if you're a "drummer slash...", people say, "Make up your mind." I don't understand that. For people like Prince it's okay, because he's an "artist." But when you come from the standpoint of drums, you're not considered an "artist."

But to get back to the question, I think the best combination of the two—drumming and programming—was when Michael and I did *The Big Picture* material live. On one tune he's playing drums with tons of pads, and I'm playing all the orchestral stuff on pads. Then on another tune we switch things around. So that says to the world, "There are only two of us here, and we're both drummers, and everything you hear is coming from these drums."



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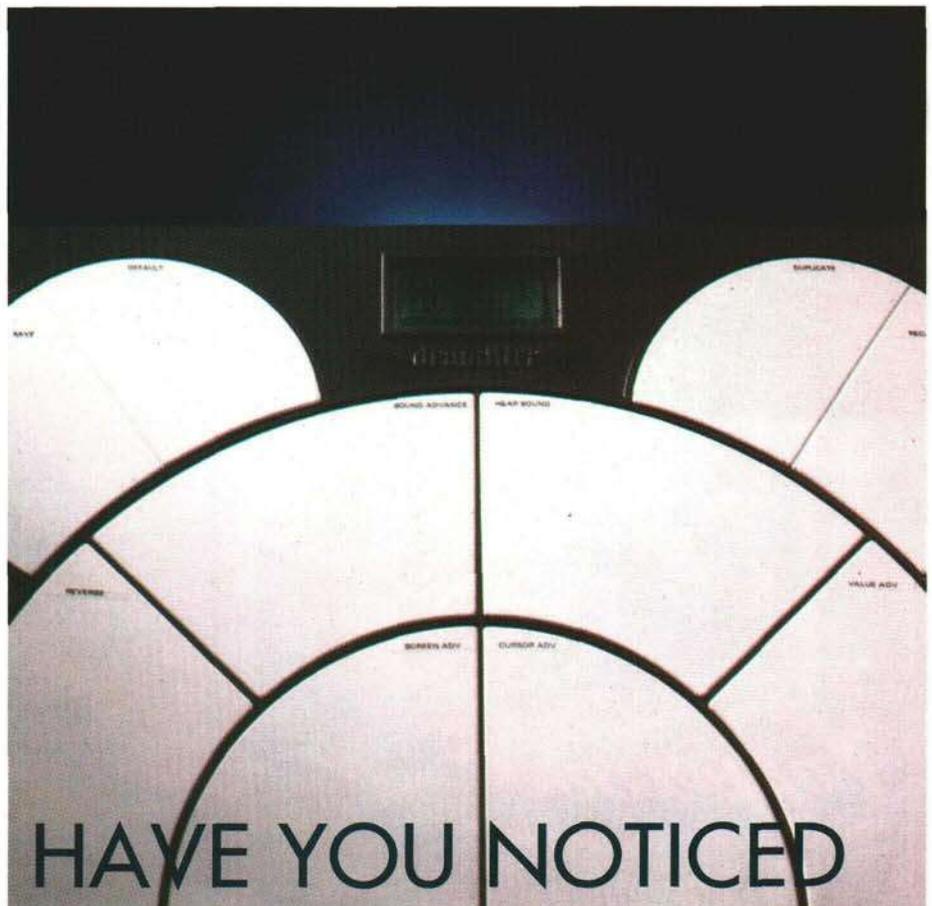
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That type of thing takes a lot of preparation. The MIDI setups are so involved, which I found out with the shows we did. We did two shows out on the West Coast, and originally we were both going to play acoustic and electronic drums, because each of us loves doing both. But it was too chaotic to figure it all out in the one week of rehearsal we had, so we decided I'd be on the electronics and Michael would be on the acoustic drums. I had a big stand-up rig, so I got to physically play, but play programmed sounds.

**TS:** Do you think that your acoustic playing has been affected by the electronic influence?

**DB:** There's a definite difference, but because you see your playing grow so much over the years, you don't know what was caused by what. When you're in college you're hanging out with so many other drummers that you're copping other guys' licks and you're learning techniques. Then you get out in the world, and that stuff doesn't really matter. It matters that you can communicate the basic idea.

But I think the first time I went out on

stage...I had been rehearsing with [bassist] T. M. Stevens, and he said, "Man, you gotta play to the back row of the stadium." That really hit me. I was like, "Yeah, but this is a cool thing that I'm playing." He said, "Nobody is going to hear that stuff when it gets out there. And your job isn't to show off your chops as a player. Your job is to entertain these people and communicate great rock music." Once you get that, it really changes your whole approach to playing.

That goes for recording, too. Every time you start out on a record, it's a clean slate, and you think, "I can do this or that, and it would be really cool." But the question is: Do you need to do that? Are you playing for the other drummers out there, or are you playing for the music? Everything that you play has to be compositionally related to the tune. Now I find that I keep myself in check every day. I love drummers like Jim Keltner, whose feel is so incredible and who never overplays or clutters up a track. He's always just laying it in there. Sometimes I catch myself when I play and think, "I didn't need to play that. It sounded good and it

was flashy, but it didn't serve the song."

I was a Santana fan long before I met Michael, but probably what I've learned the most from working with him is that we hear things backwards from each other. My 1, my downbeat is his 2. We both played kit a lot on *The Big Picture*—a lot of times we had two drumsets in one room—and I'd play something and he'd say, "That was so hip." But to me it was really basic. We didn't figure it out until we realized that we both had different perspectives on where 1 is. Also, Michael always tries something different—not so much because he avoids standardized playing, but because he hears things differently. I think that freed me up a lot.

Previously, I had been cutting records a lot with click tracks. I was trying to be very precise, because that's what it's all about: Half of the records are made with sequencers these days, so the computer is right and you're wrong. If you can't stay with it people aren't going to say, "That's one hip drummer, but the sequencers sound like shit." I shouldn't say that the machine is "right," but it's a solid ele-

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ment that does not sway. So I think working with Michael freed me up from that as far as moving around the time a little bit.

Also, I'm studying again—piano and drums. I don't get to study as much as I'd like to because my teacher's always busy too. [laughs]

**TS:** Who's your teacher?

**DB:** Gary Chaffee. I study with him once or twice a year. I wish I could do more. But Gary taught a lot of the great drummers all the linear stuff, which was something I never got involved in. I grew up playing in clubs. I was playing in clubs six nights a week when I was 15. So when I met Gary for the first time and took a lesson from him, in one day he changed my whole perspective and made it all so simple.

Gary doesn't teach you to play a beat. He teaches you how to analyze what other people have done. It doesn't matter how many beats you know. What matters is that you learn to conceptualize a style and learn to create something. This way, when you go in to do a record, you can play something that pertains to the music, not just go into your beat book and look something up. It's good for me because I've been making records for all these years *my* way, and it's nice to think, "What approach would Gary take here?" It stretches me a little bit.

I'm studying piano with one of the great players and teachers, Jaki Byard. He played with guys like *Dizzy* and *Monk*. When I went to see him I said, "I don't play piano at all." And he said, "So how do you make all these records?" I told him I play from pads, and he said, "Okay, now you play piano for me." So I'm sitting at this grand piano, and after a while I finally started playing with two fingers, playing just trash. I was so embarrassed, thinking, "This is one of the great piano players, and I'm plunking out this garbage." He sat there and listened and then said, "Great, man. Now that we know that you can play, we're gonna teach you to play better." It was so cool because it broke down the barrier right away.

A week later I was in California writing a movie score, and I had to write some legitimate piano cues—jazzy stuff—and I'm thinking, "How am I going to do this?" I figured it might take me a while,



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but I would do it. I spent a whole day on this cue, but I thought, "I can play this instrument—maybe not for a session—but I *can* make some music come out of this thing." That's a way of breaking down your own barriers.

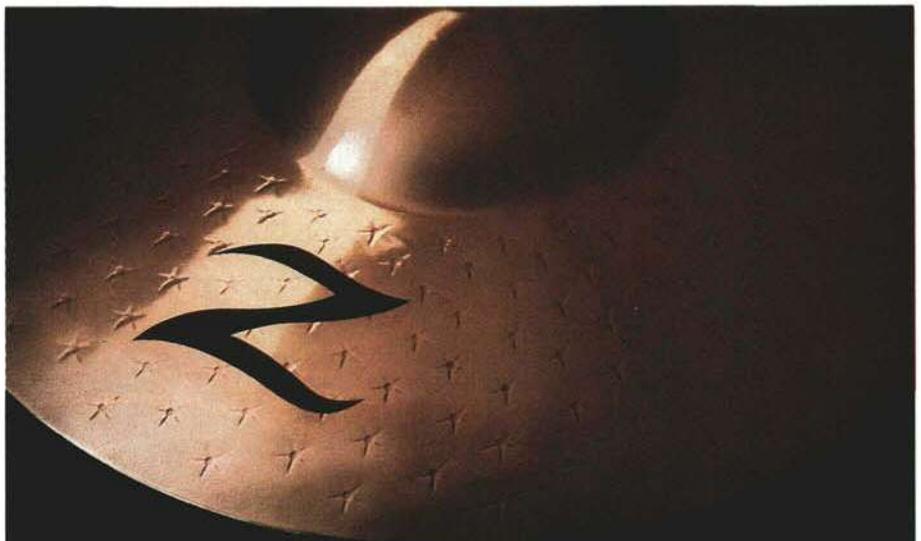
Plus, people often think that there are right notes and wrong notes, which is totally untrue. Just like people who say, "This is in tune, and that's out of tune." Well, on *The Big Picture* certain things are out of tune on purpose. We brought up these patches that were out of tune, but they sounded kind of cool on the track, so we put them in there.

**TS:** Do you ever contemplate what you want from your career, or do you just "do it"?

**DB:** Well, I think I do get into slumps, and all it takes to get out of that is doing a new project and working with other guys to get me motivated and driven. The world doesn't stop when I do, so I have to keep going all the time. Also, when you get to do big tours or you get on TV, it can also be a motivator, because that's another kind of progression: Your mom can be proud. And my parents were always really supportive and always did what they could for me.

But getting exposure in all those ways and gaining new musical experiences sometimes can leave you at a point where you say, "What's next?" Sometimes, even now at 26, I get like that. I always wanted to do a platinum album, I always wanted to produce and write my own songs and do film scores. Well, now I've done those things. I always wanted to play on television, which is different than playing in other venues. I got to do that too. But now I find that the motivation comes from playing with different people who are inspiring. When I'm in a rut and I need inspiration, I don't practice four more hours, I go out and see somebody play. Sometimes I can go to a club and see a band of 16-year-olds who will just knock me on my ass. That stuff keeps me chugging along.

To me, being successful is just making a living doing what I want to do as a player in all parts of my career. I don't think success means anything else but that—except being happy doing all of it.

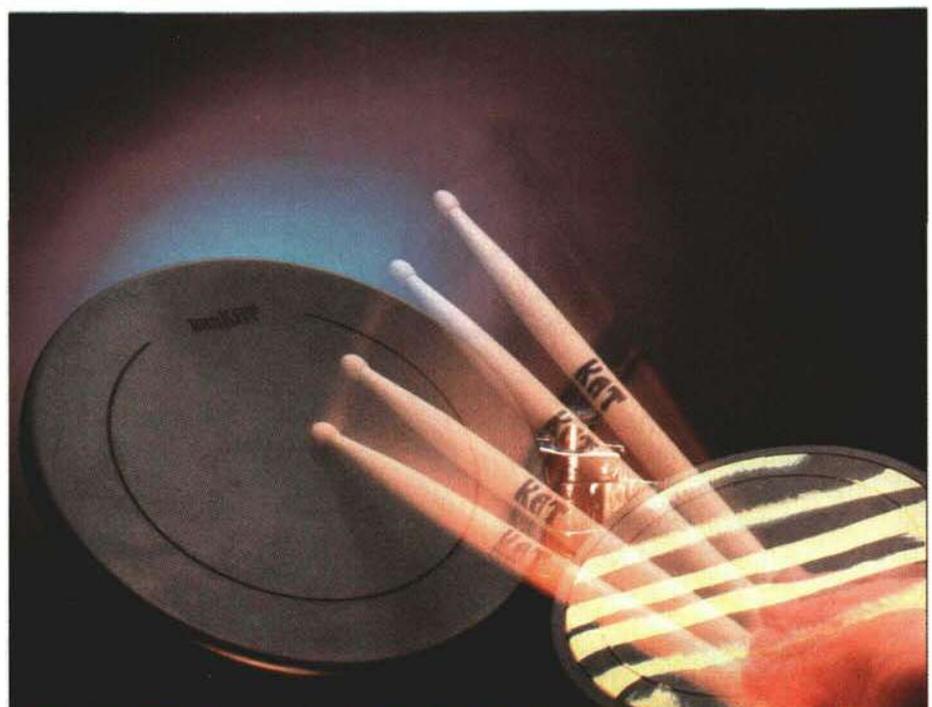
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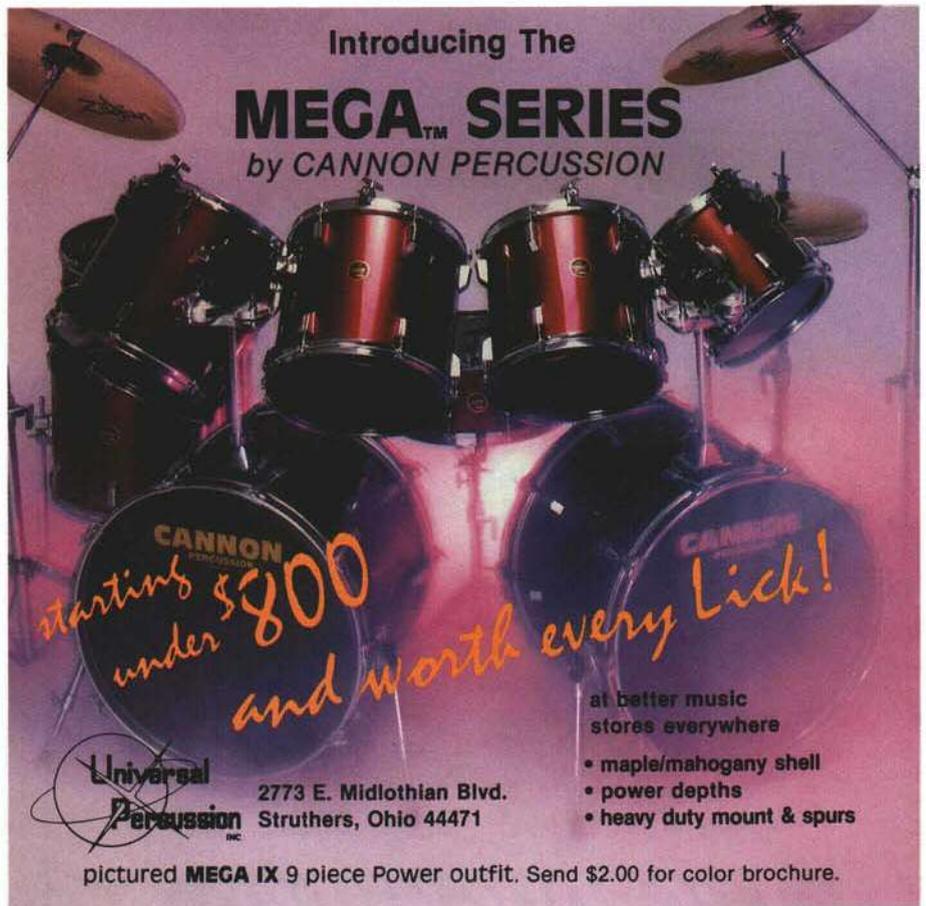
would take, process, and use the way I wanted.

When I was 19 and in college, I moved down to South Jersey from upstate New York and formed the Sutton Thomas Band with a friend. It was progressive music, and we played the club scene. In the meantime, I became friends with [Skid Row guitarist] Snake through some of the guys in Bon Jovi. When his band was looking for a drummer, I felt that I was at a dead end with my band. I couldn't get any interest from record companies—or on any level for that matter. So I decided that it was time to move on.

I decided to call Snake, and I told him that I would be interested in jamming with him. He had actually auditioned for my band three years earlier, but he didn't like our sound at all. So since he had been familiar with what I was doing, he didn't think I was the right drummer for his band, and he kept putting me off. He kept on saying, "Are you *sure* that you're gonna blow me away?" I'd tell him, "Yeah, Snake, I'm gonna blow you away." He put me off for a couple of months, and after they auditioned most of the drummers on the East Coast—I don't think they were happy with what they found—they finally brought me down for an audition. And after the first song, they asked me to be in the band. So I effectively blew them away, [laughs]

**TS:** Prior to Skid Row, had you any studio experience?

**RA:** I had been in the studio a lot, doing demo tapes and things of that nature, but nothing really important. When I went into the studio with Skid Row, I was confident because I knew the music. But then we got into the whole situation, and all of a sudden I started psyching myself out. I was thinking, "Oh my God, the world is gonna hear this, so I have to play perfectly." It really took me a couple of days before I settled down, and because of that, it took me a little bit longer than usual to do my drum tracks. I really got nervous, and it affected my playing a bit in that I was a little more conservative on the album than I think I normally would have been. But I really learned from that. You just have to go in there and do it, and



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that's what I'm going to do next time. I'm not going to get caught up in worrying. I've developed more self-confidence through the success of the band and through playing every night. You really can't help but get better when you're playing all the time.

**TS:** On a song like "18 And Life," you hold back and let the song and the tempo breathe. It's a little behind the beat. How do you hold back on that?

**RA:** That was done with a little help from [producer] Michael Wagener. He told me to stay behind the beat, so that's what I did. When we got to the choruses, I pushed the song a little bit. When I was playing it I felt that if I didn't push the chorus, it would just lay there.

This brings up the subject of grooves. I never really understood "groove" until I was about 21 years old. I was always more worried about whether I could play rolls as fast as Neil Peart, or how many drums I could hit in one phrase. Unfortunately a lot of drummers go through that stage, because they're not taught early enough how important groove and feel and timing is to a drummer.

In a nutshell, that is a drummer's job. I think that young drummers should take that into account early on and understand the concept of space and groove in music, because that's really what makes a song. A good melody without a good groove just doesn't feel right.

All this came to me one day as I was doing a demo tape. I was aware that I wasn't a really solid groove drummer, so it was something that I worked on. I had auditioned for Bon Jovi—I think it was '81 or '82—and I knew that Jon wanted a drummer like that. To prepare myself for it I listened to bands like the Babys and Bryan Adams—real solid drumming. It took a lot of work, but one day I just kind of fell on it. I did some demos, and I listened to them and thought, "Yeah, alright," because it was right in the pocket.

That is something very important to Skid Row: the groove and space, and that's what I wanted to tie into "18 And Life." The spacing in that song is what makes it groove. I think it's very important for a drummer to know when to leave space and when to push. If I didn't push the chorus like I did, it would have just

laid back, and it might have been a real boring song. It might not have been a hit. [laughs]

**TS:** Did the band play live in the studio, or did you do your drum tracks first?

**RA:** The drum tracks were recorded first, but we all played together. We just kept the drum tracks and then overdubbed the rest.

**TS:** Did Michael Wagener modify your parts or clean things up at all?

**RA:** Michael hardly did anything to the songs. He was very happy with what we had. He changed the bass drum part in "Midnight" because he felt that I was overplaying a bit. He worked on parts with everybody to a small extent, like guitar leads and phrasing on the vocals, but it was just suggestions. Unlike some producers, he didn't involve himself in the writing at all. He was great to work with.

**TS:** Do you tune your drums and get your own sounds?

**RA:** I do tune my own drums. When I was younger I always used muffling because I couldn't tune them well enough, and I always had weird tones that I thought were supposed to be there. But I don't use any muffling now at all.

I tune the bottom head just slightly lower than the top head. I don't tune my drums too tightly, either. Personally, I like the head looser; I feel it gives it a bigger sound. I still like that tonal quality, though, so I tune them loose but not to the point where they lose that tonal quality.

**TS:** Do you have a drum tech?

**RA:** Yes, I do. He didn't know the first thing about drums when I hired him, though.

**TS:** Why did you hire him, then?

**RA:** Our crew and techs are basically friends we grew up with and worked with in other bands, who basically just hauled equipment. When it came time to go on tour, we had all these guys who only knew how to move equipment; they didn't know how to tune guitars or change heads. Our management wanted to fire them and hire people who knew what they were doing. But these guys were just such great workers—and they would die for any one of us. So because of that kind of loyalty we said, "There's no way you're gonna take these guys away."

So each of us took one of the guys as a

Alex Acuna



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Fig



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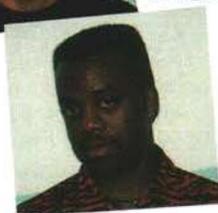
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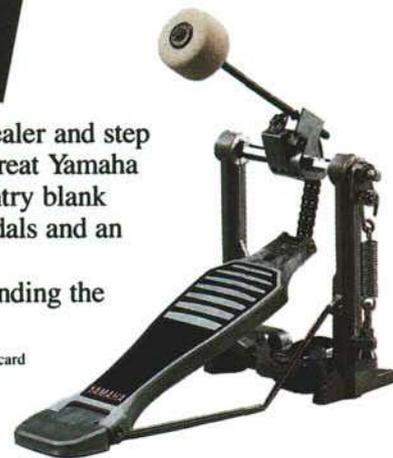
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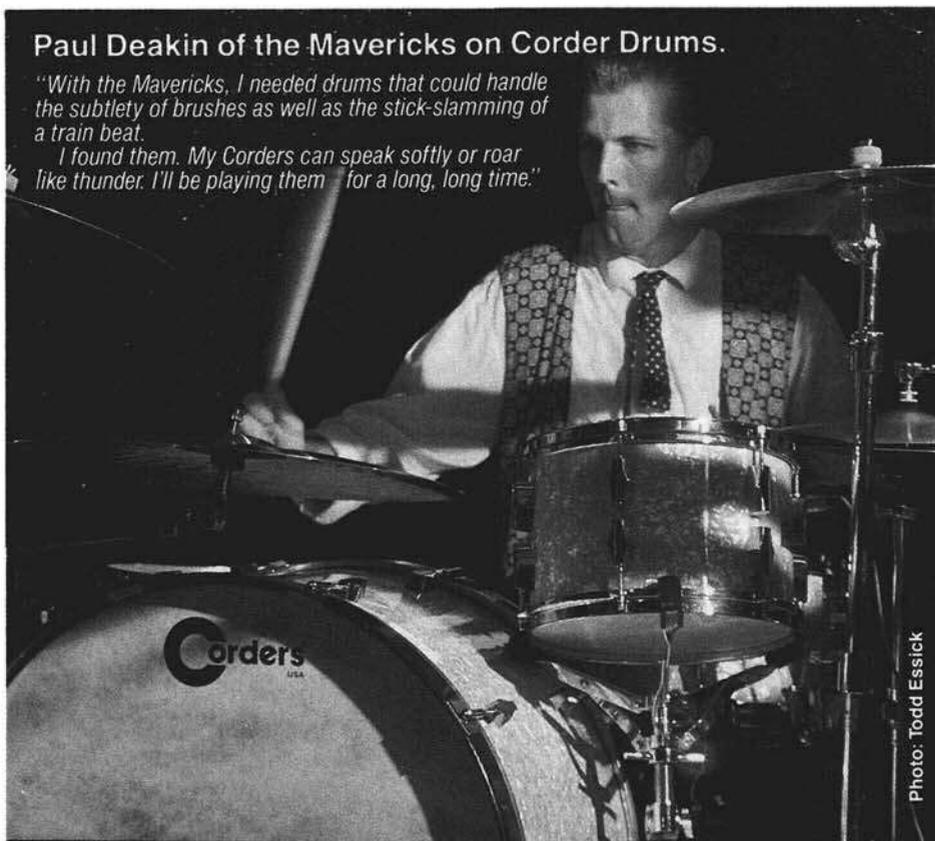


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tech. I took a guy named Chris and basically taught him everything from the ground up. It took a while, [laughs] My drums were out of tune a couple of times, but he's come a long way since then. It's not something that's impossible to learn. In fact, he can even play drums now. It was more important to me to have someone who really wanted to be there and work than to have someone who simply knew everything about the drums.

**TS:** How did the configuration of your kit change between the earlier progressive bands you were in and Skid Row, which is more of a straight, 4/4 rock band?

**RA:** I used to use a lot more drums. I had a 12-piece setup, and I used them a lot. When I got into Skid Row I cut down the number of drums because it wasn't essential for what I was doing. I had used that large setup for the first shows of our tour, and I found that it was hard for me to see the other guys on stage. Since I didn't utilize all those drums anyway, I felt it was more important to have eye contact with everyone and to feel like I was part of the party.

**TS:** You mentioned earlier that your chops were a bit rusty as far as the progressive drumming is concerned. Now that heavy metal drumming is your mainstay, do you feel completely at ease with it?

**RA:** It took me a little while to get into it when we first started rehearsing, but by the time we did the album I was comfortable with it.

**TS:** Do you think having that technical background offers any advantages when approaching heavy metal drumming?

**RA:** No, I don't think there are any advantages. I think heavy metal drumming is a lot of heart and soul and feel more than anything else. Having technical ability is always nice, no matter what you're doing. But I think that to be a good heavy metal/hard rock drummer, it has to come from inside first. It's kind of like the blues, which are so soulful. A lot of blues players aren't technically proficient, but it all comes from within, and that's more important.

**TS:** Let's talk a little about playing live.

**RA:** I love the live situation. It's just so much more spontaneous than the studio. I also love the connection between the band and the audience; I love that inter-

action. With this band, it's different every night. That's what's so fun about it.

**TS:** Are you the catalyst for a lot of the onstage spontaneity?

**RA:** I think a lot of times, yes. And a lot of times Sebastian and I will do things together. He may go into a rap or something, and I'll follow him with the drums. The structures of the songs stay the same, so the spontaneity basically comes within those structures.

**TS:** You spent a lot of your career playing clubs. Do you get a hankering now and then to go back and play in clubs?

**RA:** We missed it so much on the last tour that we actually went out and played them. We love the intimacy of the clubs, and we hope that we can continue doing that, because that's where our roots are, and we never want to lose touch with that. But sometimes it gets a little hairy security-wise for us and the audiences. We did a show at the Ritz, which was great—but a little wild. I remember reading in the paper that people were getting slaugh-

tered. We have no control over how many people a club allows in, and of course the owners of the clubs want to make as much money as they can, so unfortunately they pack the people in.

**TS:** You don't take a drum solo live. Why is that?

**RA:** The main reason I didn't take a solo on this last tour is that we like to stress songs, and we've built our reputation on that. Our musicianship is good, but there are players who play circles around all of us, and we're aware of that. But any one of the guys will tell you this: *We are stronger as a unit than individually.*

So since we do stress the songs, we like to get as many into a set as we can. Having a guitar solo and a drum solo in an opening set takes away from the time we'd rather give to songs. I'm sure we'll get to solo when we have the time in our set, because they're fun to do.

**TS:** I noticed that you don't cite the use of any drum machines on the album.

**RA:** No, we don't use any machines. We

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**TS:** Do you play to a click track in the studio?

**RA:** On the last album we did use a click track. I don't know if we will in the future. I have nothing against click tracks. Some drummers are too proud to use them, but I think that you should use whatever is necessary to get the best possible outcome. And if that means using a click track, then you use a click track. On "18 And Life," that was really hard having to stay behind and then push it in the chorus—but still keep with the click. Learning to do that is an important part of drumming, and I would recommend young drummers to work on using a click track, because someday you might have to do that.

**TS:** That's one of those learn-by-doing things that can't really be taught.

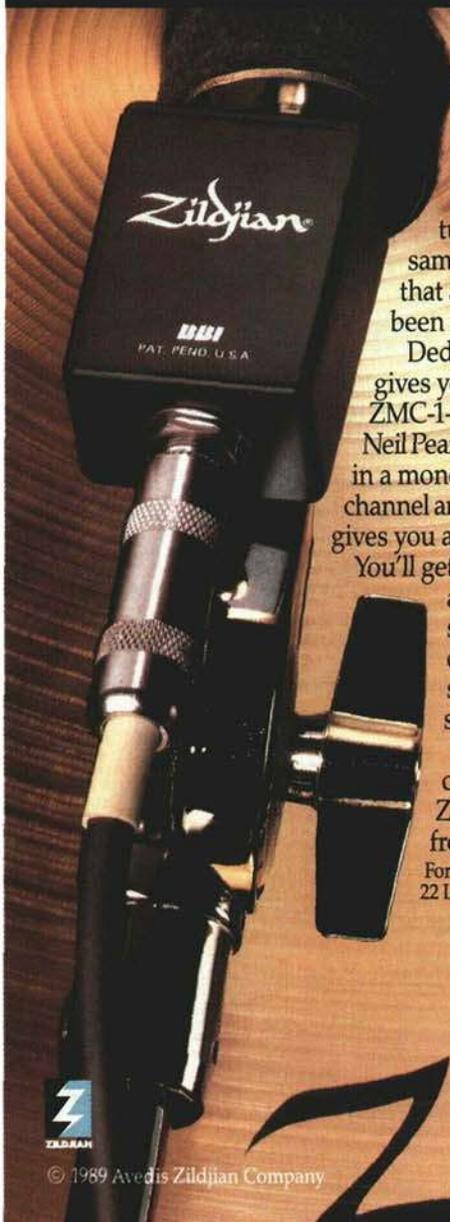
**RA:** Exactly. There's no other way to learn that than by doing it. It's difficult to play to perfect time, because when you play, you play by feel, you don't play by time. Even though it may feel right, when you record it and then play it back you might find that some parts drag and some parts speed up. Sometimes metronomes are *too* perfect. A lot of times I think you should just play along with a drum machine, which has more feel than a click.

**TS:** Looking ahead, what do you see yourself doing, career-wise, 20 years from now?

**RA:** Well, I have a real interest in show drumming. I really like the idea of working on or off-Broadway in a band for a musical. It would be great to work every single day at the one thing that I love. Plus you work daily, but you still have your home life. And some shows have really challenging scores. I have confidence in myself: I can read, and I have all the necessary equipment to do whatever I want, except maybe play jazz. But that would be a challenge to me—and I love a challenge.



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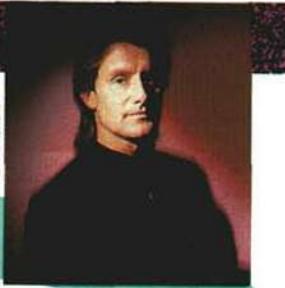


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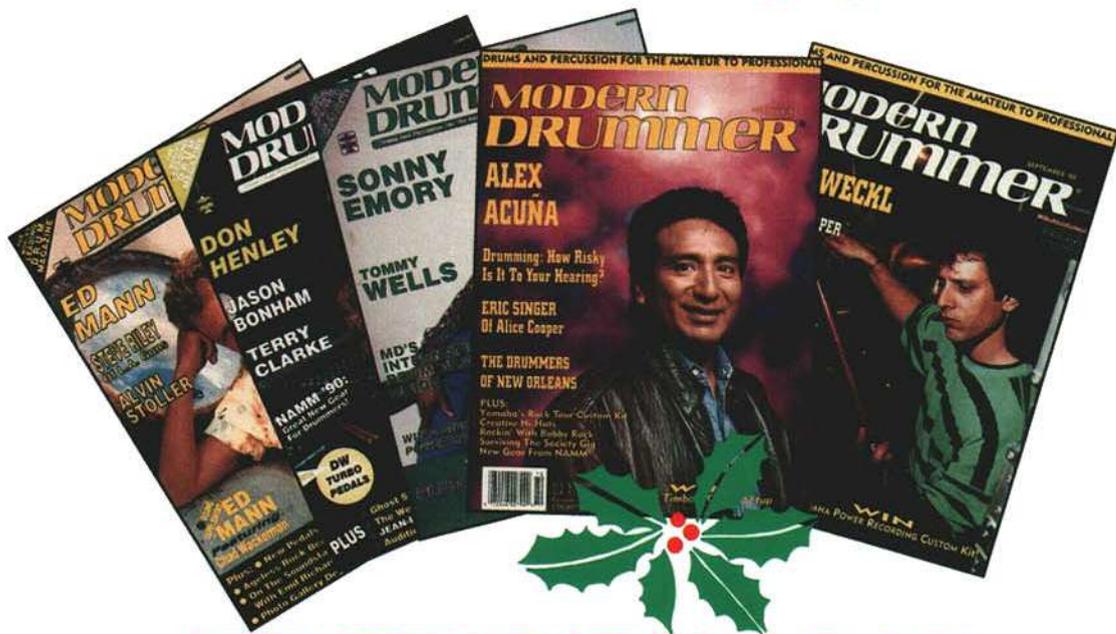
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# Playing Time

■ by Roy Burns

It's a cliché, but it's also true: Drummers who play good time get the good jobs. Showmanship, good technique, a big drumkit, and hard work might be important, but playing time is the basis for playing the drumset.

I recently attended a band camp. My job was to coach or offer suggestions to the young drummers attending the camp. This turned out to be much more work than I had anticipated. Only two of twelve drummers could read well enough to follow fairly easy big band charts. Only two could play a reasonably acceptable roll. And only three had any idea of what it was to play time.

One young drummer did impress me. He couldn't read the charts too well, but he played good time. If he couldn't read the figures, he just played through them. Although this young man wasn't the best drummer at the camp, he made the third band. He was smart enough to know that even if he couldn't read every figure, at least the band could play if the time was there.

The other two drummers who impressed me had had good instruction. Reading the charts was easy for them. I asked them about this and they replied, "After what our drum teacher has us read, this stuff is pretty easy." Both of these young drummers also had good hands and good control over the drumset, and could play funk or jazz charts equally well. They both played good, solid time, and didn't overplay. And they played the accents that were needed.

There were several basic grooves required at this camp. One chart was a

funk-oriented big-band arrangement, one was based on a jazz samba groove, there was a straight-ahead Count Basie blues at a medium tempo, a fast jazz chart with a sort of contemporary Woody Herman sound, and a ballad. This selection of styles accurately represented some of the basic knowledge a drummer should have.

Whether or not you can read music, playing a samba, a basic rock groove, one or two funk grooves, and a passable jazz cymbal groove at medium and fast tempos are all necessary. You should also know a ballad groove, which might involve brushes, sticks in a light jazz style, or a quasi-Latin or slow samba groove. If you can play these grooves with a good time feel, you can play with a big band. Add to this the ability to read, and you become a drummer who can perform well in a number of musical situations—including the recording studio.

To improve your time playing, practice all of these grooves with a drum machine. Keep practicing until you can play them easily and naturally. Also, practice with records. Match the sound and feel of the drummer on the record. Make sure to practice with different grooves and styles. I've just mentioned some basic ones; practice as many as you can.

Each practice session should have some portion set aside for playing time.

Concentrate both on the metronomic as well as the feel aspect. A major part of your practice time should employ what are called "outside time sources," which include records, drum machines, and metronomes.

Get together with a bass player and practice playing time. Set up different grooves and tempos. Play each groove long enough that both of you can really feel it. Practicing with the bass player can really help both players; you can hear each other much more clearly this way. Also, if the drummer and bass player can feel the same groove together, the band is going to feel it that much better.

Rhythm section rehearsals can be valuable, too. If the entire rhythm section concentrates on grooving and playing together, it will benefit whatever band or group they play with. After all, everything starts in the rhythm section.

When a band develops confidence in the drummer's ability to play good time, the entire band plays at a higher level. The reason for this is that the band no longer has to worry about the time. They can just concentrate on the music. When this happens, people say things like, "This group grooves hard," or "These guys are exciting."

All this starts with the drummer. You have to know the grooves, and you have to play them with authority and a good feeling. That is what "playing time" is all about. It makes *everyone* feel good!

"When a band develops confidence in the drummer's ability to play good time, the entire band plays at a higher level."



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RECORDINGS

**GINGER BAKER**—*Middle Passage*. Axiom 539 864-2. G. Baker: dr. J. Hellborg, J. Wobble, B. Laswell: bs. N. Skopelitis: gtr, baglama, coral sitar, elec banjo, Fairlight. F. Tekbilek: ney, zurna. B. Worrell: Hammond org. A. Dieng: doff, dumbek, talking dr, metals. M. Gueye: sabar, M. Fall: tama. *Mektoub / Under Black Skies / Time Be Time / Alamout / Basil / South To The Dust*.



Ginger Baker was never one to follow pop music conventions. After making his mark with Cream, Baker launched a series of adventurous (though not always successful) projects with such groups as Ginger Baker's Air Force and the Baker-Gurvitz Army. *Middle Passage*, Baker's latest album, is also no middle-of-the-road effort; indeed, it is at least as adventurous as any of his solo albums. Produced by Bill Laswell, the six tracks that make up *Middle Passage* explore Middle Eastern themes and rhythms and add up to an interesting, if not overpowering, example of global village rock.

"Mektoub," the seven-minute-plus track that opens up the album, is filled with Baker's familiar romping

drum rolls and Jah Wobble's throbbing bass riffs. "Under Black Skies" features a dazzling percussive display of Middle Eastern textures and tones. As *Middle Passage* proceeds, Baker becomes less predictable and more passionate in his drumming. "Basil" is a drums-only piece in which Baker unleashes nearly every instinctive rhythm tucked away in his brain, while "Alamout" and "South To The Dust" would sound more at home blaring out of a bedouin tent than on American radio.

In this era of pop music formats and formulas, where too many veteran rock artists have lost their vitality and ambition to explore new musical territories, Baker's *Middle Passage* is both bold and non-conformist—just what we've come to expect from him.

• Robert Santelli

**JACK DEJOHNETTE**—*Parallel Realities*. MCA-42313. J. DeJohnette: dr, kybd bs. P. Metheny: gtr, Synclavier, kybd bs. H. Hancock: pno. *Jack In / Exotic Isles / Dancing / Nine Over Reggae / John McKee / Indigo Dreamscapes / Parallel Realities*.



To many listeners, this may be one of the most accessible Jack DeJohnette albums in years, due simply to the instrumentation. Whereas

Jack's Special Edition recordings have featured horn players, this disc is primarily drums, piano, and guitar, which gives it less of a hardcore jazz sound and more of a contemporary slant.

But while the overall sound of the instruments may resemble something encountered on an easy-listening jazz radio station, the musicianship is on a much higher level. DeJohnette, Metheny, and Hancock were obviously inspired by each other during these sessions, and the playing shows it. But that's not to say that the three of them were trying to upstage each other or fight for dominance. Rather, there is a spirit of relaxed playfulness, as if the three of them knew that they didn't have to worry about the others keeping up. So they were free to go for it, simultaneously responding to the exploits of one another.

As always, DeJohnette delivers a variety of styles and feels in unique ways, whether it's straight-ahead swing or an odd-time reggae groove. Where Metheny can sometimes get a little too slick and smooth on his own records, and Hancock can get carried away with funk and electronics, DeJohnette has brought their solid jazz sides to the forefront. And in the process, he's provided himself with a new setting that serves him as well as he serves it.

• Rick Mattingly

**FORBIDDEN**—*Twisted Into Form*. Combat 88561-2014-4. C. Locicero: gtr. R. Anderson: vcl. Paul Bostaph: dr. T. Calvert: gtr. M. Camacho: bs. *Parting Of The Ways / Infinite*

*/ Out Of Body (Out Of Mind) / Step By Step / Twisted Into Form / R.I.P. / Spiral Depression / Tossed Away / One Foot In Hell*.



If Forbidden comes across live as it does on this record, fans will be treated to something that's a rarity in modern metal—tight thrash.

Drummer Bostaph can take most of the credit for lifting this band out of the pile of sound-alike thrash outfits and into an "elite" group that tempers its tantrums with tasteful arrangements.

Much like Lars Ulrich of Bay Area neighbors Metallica, Bostaph uses fluid double-bass work and precise hand-foot exchanges to keep the music pumping at full tilt. But Bostaph also throws in subtle surprises—open hi-hat accents and funky off-beat snare hits—to keep the pace from becoming monotonous.

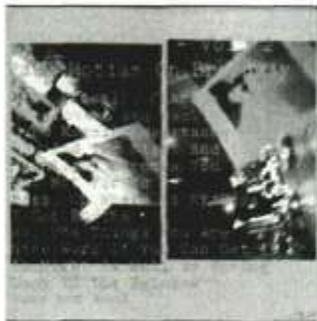
Bostaph lays fast double-bass foundations—a la Ulrich—on "Infinite" and "One Foot In Hell." But he shows more versatility and the ability to groove on tunes such as "Tossed Away," where he rides 32nd notes on the hi-hat at the intro, throws in tasteful ride cymbal work during the guitar solo, and keeps a funky feel throughout by placing some snare hits on the "ah" of 3 and 4.

His crisp call-and-response patterns between hands and feet highlight "Out Of Body," while timely open hi-hat accents and a solid beat keep the otherwise pure thrash of "R.I.P." from getting too out of hand.

Bostaph also plays a heavy role in the writing and arranging of this record, an aspect many drummers in this genre of rock are just starting to grow comfortable with. Overall, Bostaph and company shell out a dose of thrash made tasteful with flash.

• Matt Peiken

**PAUL MOTIAN**—*On Broadway*—Vol. 2. JMT 834 440-2. P. Motian: dr. B. Frisell: gtr. J. Lovano: tn sx. C. Haden: bs. *Good Morning Heartache / You And The Night And The Music / Moonlight Becomes You / But Not For Me / Bess, Oh Where Is My Bess / I Got Rhythm / All The Things You Are / Nice Work If You Can Get It / It Might As Well Be Spring / Look To The Rainbow / BodyAndSoul.*



As a master of texture and color, Paul Motian has always excelled in groups that demand spontaneous interactive phrasing and breathing. The members of this quartet seem an ideal match for Motian's concepts. The ever-fascinating Bill Frisell weaves

swelling, over-the-bar guitar chords that perfectly complement the ESP brotherhood Motian and bassist Charlie Haden perfected during their years together with Keith Jarrett.

Recording a collection of very familiar standards always poses the risk of being mired in cliché, but this band breathes fresh life into every melodic number. There are surprises and twists throughout. "But Not For Me" is an example of Motian's more "conventional" straight-ahead time playing. But even here there's a twist: Joe Lovano's sax head and solo are backed by no more than bass and drums, yet the duet support remains full-bodied, swinging, and captivating.

The group's free-breathing skills especially shine on the opener, "Good Morning Heartache," which is performed in ensemble rubato time. In the wrong hands, this chancy style can easily deteriorate into unnerving, boring wandering. But under Motian's helm, the handling of the chestnut is coherent, surprisingly fluid, lyrical, and quite beautiful. Motian is one drummer/leader who clearly understands that loose, "free" phrasing doesn't just mean more freedom; it means more responsibility.

• Jeff Potter

**DREAM BOAT**—*Manhattan Projects*. Alfa Jazz 29R2-40. Carl Allen: dr. K. Garrett: al, sp sx. D. Brown: pno. R. Hargrove: trp. I. Coleman: bs. *Dream Boat / Capetown Ambush / Misty / Depth / I Remember Clifford / The Sacrifice / Someday My*

*Prince Will Come / I Didn't Know What Time It Was / Alluding To.*



Record companies have made much fanfare lately about signing and heavily promoting what they perceive to be the new, young jazz traditionalists, the stylish keepers of the flame. Some of these touted bands are merely a rehash, while other, less-hyped groups—like Dream Boat—are truly contributors to the cause.

On his first disc as a leader, drummer Carl Allen has assembled a band of vibrant young players with a front line featuring 20-year-old trumpeter Roy Hargrove and one of today's most important new sax voices, Kenny Garrett. The material is a mixture of standards and band originals including three fine contributions by Allen. Within the tight arrangements and dynamics, the players each solo with distinct personalities, and the ensemble never treads on toes—even when they're burning full tilt.

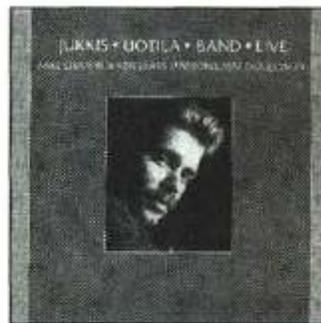
Carl's fiery composition "The Sacrifice" is a strong drumming highlight. It alternates between an African/jazz beat and swing, then concludes with a shouting good-time shuffle. The intro is a well-constructed tom and snares-off solo that proves

Carl can burn at low volume as well as high. While backing solos, Carl knows how to drive hard, then loosen and stretch out just at the right tension points, and his great chops keep every bar clean and popping.

In his eight demanding years with Freddie Hubbard, Carl Allen proved himself to be an outstanding sideman, and this disc now proves he has the right stuff as a leader. Under his musically mature guidance, Dream Boat represents the best of the *authentic* young torchbearers.

• Jeff Potter

**JUKKIS UOTILA**—*Fukkis Uotila Band Live*. Stunt STUCD 18909. Jukkis Uotila: dr. L. Jansson: kybd. B. Berg: sx. M. Stern: gtr. L. Danielsson: bs. *Till Then / Out In Left Field / Shuffle / The Individualist.*



For those who tend to think that European jazz drummers are basically ethereal-type players, more prone to coloristic cymbal playing than to hard groove and swing, this album by Finnish drummer Jukkis Uotila should break that stereotype.

Uotila has worked with a variety of American artists, both in Europe and in the States, including Dave Samuels, Randy Brecker, and

Dave Liebman. On this album, recorded live in Europe, he is joined by two fellow Europeans along with Americans Mike Stern and Bob Berg.

While the tunes are improvisatory in nature, Uotila plays with a strong rock influence. The time is coming solidly from the drums, as opposed to the cymbals, and Uotila hits hard with a lot of energy. He is also adept at dynamic and textural changes. The tunes are long, ranging from 11 to 18 minutes, but a lot of the reason that they don't get boring is because Uotila is not merely playing the same groove all the way through. He will often start off with a simple, basic pattern, which he slowly but surely builds to a busy, almost bombastic climax. Suddenly, the bottom drops out and he is back to a simple (but different) groove. It's as effective a use of tension and release as I've ever heard.

This album is available in the U.S. only as an import (through North Country Records) but it is worth looking for. Uotila is taking a hard-hitting rock approach to music that is often played with a much lighter touch. He makes it sound as though that's the only way it should be played.

• *Rick Mattingly*

## VIDEOS

### THE ART AND JOY OF HAND DRUMMING

by **John Bergamo**  
**Interworld Music Associates, Inc.**  
67 Main Street  
Brattleboro, VT 05301  
Price: \$39.95 (VHS)  
Time: 45 minutes

Rather than presenting a collection of "authentic" beats and rhythms, John Bergamo has chosen to devote his first



video to descriptions of several techniques that can be applied to just about any drum or percussion instrument that is played by the hands, rather than with sticks or mallets. Indeed, in the numerous solo spots interspersed between instructional segments of the tape, Bergamo applies the same or similar techniques to instruments such as frame drums, headless tambourine rings, congas, and Indonesian bass gongs. He even combines a Latin quinto with a sogo from Ghana, which sounds great—but which would probably offend two different sets of purists.

But no matter. Bergamo is more concerned with the similarities among various instruments than the differences. He achieves a sort of cross-culturalization by applying various hand and finger techniques—presumably from different cultures—to various instruments, and he gives a

wide range of applications, ranging from odd time signatures to paradiddles.

The tape itself is clearly presented. During the instructional segments, Bergamo's verbal delivery is clear and direct, and has the self-assurance that comes from having spent many hours as a teacher. Throughout the tape the photography is excellent, with plenty of close-up shots of Bergamo's hands executing the techniques he has described. In addition, there is a booklet enclosed that reinforces the instruction on the tape, and also gives performance notes on the solos. This is a very straightforward presentation of a fascinating subject, and one that many drummers and percussionists should be able to apply to a variety of situations.

• *Rick Mattingly*

## BOOKS

### THE NEW BREED II by Gary Chester and Chris Adams

**Publisher: Drummers Intensive Co.**  
P.O. Box 478  
200 Washington Ave.  
Endicott, NY 13760  
Price: \$12.95

"...probably the most difficult independence exercises ever written for drummers." This quote from the introduction to *The New Breed II* succinctly cuts through to the essence of this sequel to the late Gary Chester's first book, *The New Breed*. An "Important Message" within the introductory pages states, "This is a very advanced book," and indicates that attempting these exercises

without previously mastering those in the first book is not advisable.

Indeed, the two musical sections of the book are made up of a series of independence exercises that are mercilessly brutal. Along the lines of the format of his first book, Gary states numerous one-bar ostinato patterns with a part omitted for any one of the four limbs. That indicated limb is instructed to read and play from one or more of the many pages of rhythmic notation. These pages are referred to as "melodies."

The 64 ostinato patterns in section 1 stray far from the more palatable exercises found in Gary's first book. They are mind-boggling when played in conjunction with the coordinating melodies. Following the 20 pages of melodies in this section are yet a few more pages that offer almost endless possibilities and substitutions for the exercises that came before.

The second section of the book adheres to the same format, but in this case the melodies are those that coordinate with 8th-note triplet (shuffle) patterns, 16th-note (half-time) patterns, and 5/8, 7/8, 6/8, and 12/8 patterns. It should also be pointed out that the player is then further instructed, concerning all patterns and melodies, to add a fifth part by way of singing. The sung part ("Ah") can be on the quarter notes, the upbeats, any one of the parts of the pattern being played, the melody, the rests of the melody, or the rests of any one of the parts of the pattern being played. This may sound confusing, but it is clearly laid

out with the intent quite understandable. With one's singing posing as a fifth limb, an almost inexhaustible body of independence-oriented challenges is even further brought into focus.

Apart from the musical sections of the book, there are various quotes found throughout that allow Chester to bestow upon the reader his personal insights into music and the music business. Too often, though, these remarks are a bit more philosophical than necessary. Of course this may be enlightening to some, but others will be best-off directing their attention to the meat and potatoes of the book.

It should be understood right off the bat that *The New Breed II* is not a book to moderately engage in for six months and then set aside. Indeed, it is a thorough and excellently conceived process that should take even the finest drummer years to master. It is a milestone in the literature of drumming independence and a challenge that—if pursued with the dedication, patience, and perseverance that the author often refers to—can yield phenomenal results in one's musical abilities.

• Howard Fields

#### DRUM SESSIONS

**Book 1 by Peter O'Gorman**  
**Publisher: Neil A. Kjos Music Company**  
**4382 Jutland Drive**  
**San Diego CA 92117**  
**Price: \$14.95 (book and cassette)**

In the past few years, quite a few books have appeared that are aimed at starting beginning drummers off on

drumset instead of just snare drum. While each of them have had their own slant, they have all followed a similar progression: Introduce basic note values and rhythm patterns, and then show how they can be used on the drumset to create beats and fills.

*Drum Sessions* follows that basic format, but there are a couple of things that make this book unique. The primary feature of this package is the cassette tape. While a lot of books do come with tapes, most often the tape consists of a performance of the drum patterns themselves. In *Drum Sessions*, however, the tape contains music that the exercises can be played with. And there is a lot of it. Throughout the book, there are 24 "Mini Jams," which range from short 12-bar blues to 32-bar structures. Each tune is played twice: once with the drum part included so that you can hear it, and once without so that you can play it yourself. On the second version, background percussion parts are provided to help the student lock in with the time.

The music on these tapes is very professionally recorded, and the rhythm feel is excellent. Many of the drum parts that are given are very simple, but the tapes could continue to be used as the student progresses by having the student apply more advanced beats and fills to the same tunes. Most of the tunes have a sort of rock-fusion sound to them, but there are also Latin-flavored tracks and a great '50s rock 'n' roll tune.

Besides the "Mini Jams," there are five complete songs, called "Sessions." These can

be used by the student the same way as the "Mini Jams," but there is another aspect to them as well. Besides the *Drum Sessions* package, there are also versions for guitar, bass, and keyboards, and the same "Sessions" tunes are included in each. This could be put to good use in a music store that taught all of those instruments. If all the teachers used the *Sessions* books, they could form bands with the students and have some good beginning material to work with.

There was one other facet of this book that particularly caught my attention. From the very first pattern that calls for hi-hat ride with snare drum backbeats, the author recommends that the student learn

to play with left-hand lead as well as right-hand lead, and this is reinforced continually throughout the book. Students who learn to play this way right from the start will never have a problem with it, and both hands will develop more evenly.

Overall, this is one of the best-organized books I have ever seen. It is obvious that a lot of thought went into it, and everything about it smacks of quality. The book is available for \$5.95 without the cassette, but as good as the book is, it's the music on the cassette that really puts *Drum Sessions'* material into perspective, and makes this a truly musical way to learn drums.

• Rick Mattingly

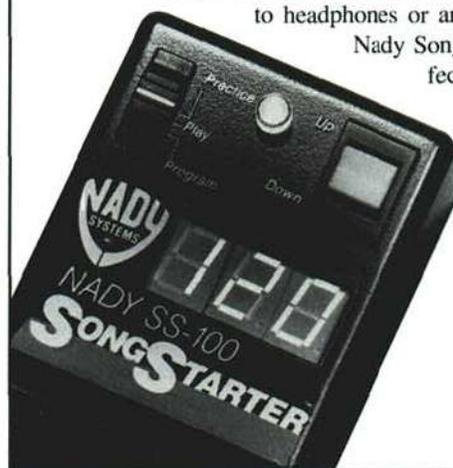


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continued from page 55

were fair, but the ride sounded cheesy in comparison to other samples in other Sound Library sets.

The alternate samples on the "power drums" disk (via the patch select buttons) give you: the same-sounding drum and percussion samples with reverb (the toms used digital delay); "rounded pitch bend" added to most samples (with the exception of the cymbals, which turned into electronic percussion); and reversed samples with special effects added. These ten disks are presented to the user as a basis for building his or her own sample library. They also serve quite well as stand-alone sounds for either live use or for composition.

### The Signature Series Library

The *Signature Series* library contains samples created in conjunction with famous people within the music industry. As of this review, there are a total of 11 volumes. I was sent three: volumes 1 and 2 of the *John Robinson Series* and volume

2 of the *Craig Anderton Series*.

### The John Robinson Series Volume 1

Volume 1 of the "J.R." series includes three disks, each of which contains a complete drumkit mapped out across the keyboard. The first of these disks is named "Rock Kit #1." This kit features a 4x14 piccolo snare and a 22" kick drum, along with four toms. All the drum samples are dry and lack any detectable signal processing. The toms are very warm, open, and round-sounding, and lack any muffling. The kick drum is also round and warm, yet is characterized as being dampened while sampled. The snare possesses a medium tuning for a 4" piccolo, yet is crisp and aggressive-sounding, with a lot of sharp attack.

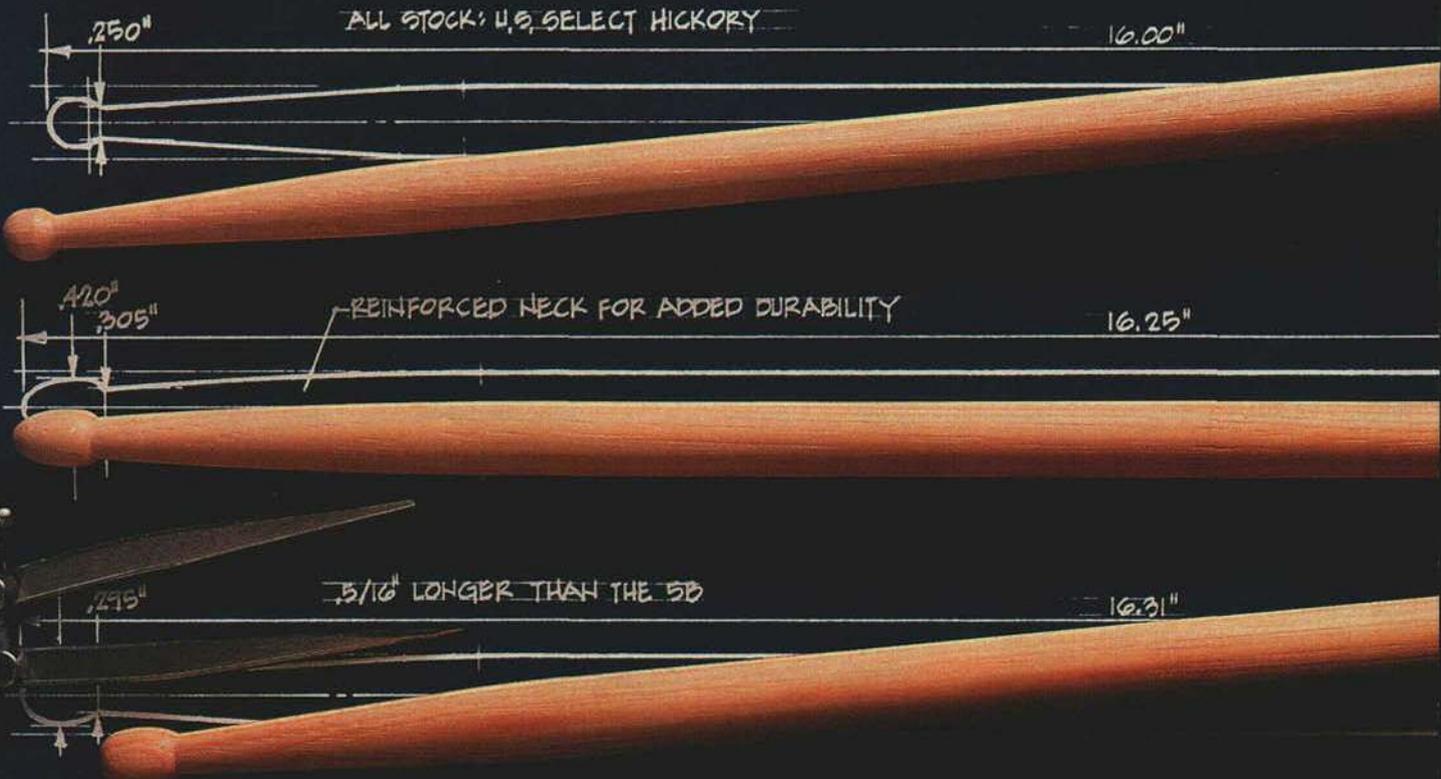
In the cymbal department, you're given a very realistic-sounding set. The ride in particular is much-improved over the ride found on the aforementioned "Power Drums" disk. It had a longer decay time, with a sharper, brighter, fuller sound, along with a richer overall timbre. The

hi-hat samples were also nice, with variations that include: a half-open/half-closed set struck by a stick, a set closed by the foot pedal, and a hi-hat bell that I found excellent for accentuating a pattern.

The first of the alternate patch selects gives you an 8x14 snare with a 24" bass drum, with both drums having an enhanced bottom end. The second variation gives you an entirely different version of the original settings. The third patch select contains an ambient-sounding kit, where the snare and kick drums have much more bite and power.

The second disk, "Ambient Kit #1," contains different variations of John's drums, mixed together with multiple signal processors used during the sampling session. The primary kit contains a deep and powerful kick drum with a good deal of attack. This sample was spread out over an octave on the keyboard, giving you 12 tuned variations. The snare sounded like a 6 1/2" wood drum, also characterized by a deep and powerful attack, coupled with a nice degree of ambiance. The three toms on this kit (high, mid, low) featured medium decay length, a rich

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overall timbre, and plenty of front-end attack. The reverse cymbal samples give you a very expressive and impressive sound effect, and were also spread out over an octave on the keys.

Version #2 of this disk (via the patch select buttons) gives you the "ballad kit," which features a very long snare decay and a smoother-sounding, long-decaying bass drum. Version #3 contained a muffled bass drum with less attack, and a snare with a sharper, more metallic overall timbre.

Remember the Steve Winwood hit a couple of years ago entitled "Higher Love"? Well, "Jam Kit #1" is on that hit! Included is a short, punchy, high-pitched kick drum that's spread out over five chromatic 1/2 steps on the keyboard. Also featured is a sharp, medium-tuned metal snare (probably a 5" drum) sampled with reverb, the ever-familiar "Higher Love" cross-stick, a smaller (probably a piccolo) wood snare, and variations on both of these drums. There are also some hybrids of the snare and rim samples that are absolutely fantastic. This disk was my personal favorite among everything that

Ensoniq sent me.

The kit includes four toms. The two highest-tuned drums contain a timbale-flavored timbre, while all four possess a flanging-type effect spread across the stereo field. The crash cymbal and ride/bell samples were excellent; both contained long, very natural decay combined with accurate and convincing timbral reproduction.

The first variation presented on this disk is a reversal of the snare and tom samples, giving you some interesting special effects. The second variation produces both explosion-like and pitch-modulated tom versions.

### The John Robinson Series Volume 2

These three disks contain more of John's drums, sampled at One on One recording studios in North Hollywood, California. This studio is famous for producing some of the finest recordings today, and the samples on these disks are certainly no exception. They were exquisitely produced, and they repro-

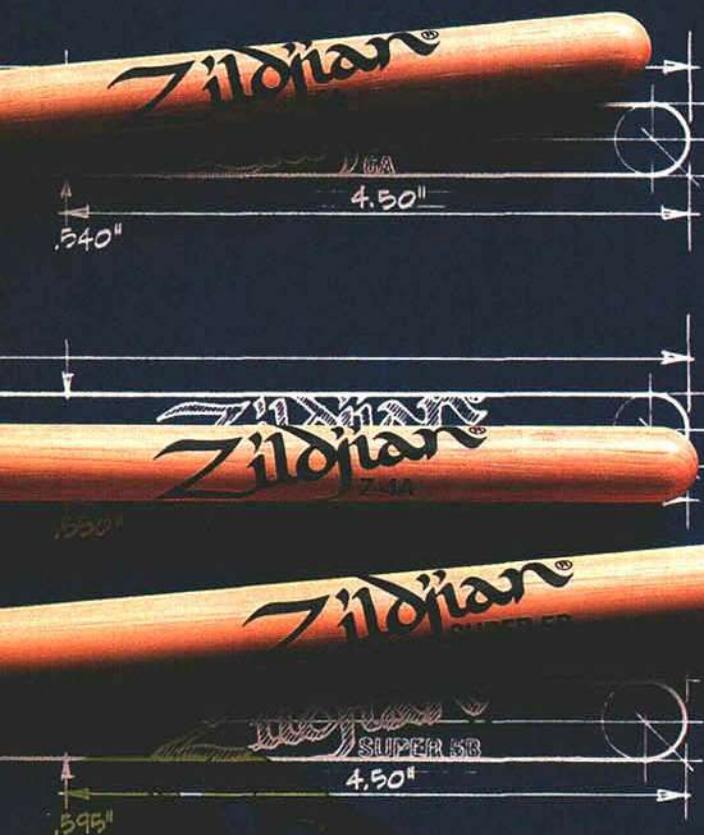
duced wonderfully on either the *EPS* keyboard or via an external MIDI controller, such as my *drumKAT*. Contained on these disks are: "Ambient Kit #2," "Jam Kit #2," and "Rock Kit #2."

"Ambient Kit #2" starts off with a kick drum that can best be described as a deep "thud." By contrast, the two primary snare samples sound absolutely brilliant.

There are seven toms in all, in two distinct sets. The first set contains four drums tuned high, medium-high, medium-low, and low. They are very acoustic in nature (lacking any electronically produced timbres), and feature a fair amount of attack, with nice overall tone. The second set contains three drums, tuned medium, low, and very low. These toms knocked me out! By adding a touch of reverb with my *Quadraverb*, they sounded so rich, deep, and beefy that I was addicted. Complementing these toms, snares, and kick are two crashes. One was high-pitched and the other was of a medium tuning. Both sounded truly authentic and realistic.

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involved here, only two out of three patch select buttons allow for variations of the primary sample. Variation #1 gives you extra dynamic control—which is excellent for triggering off of pads, where you need all the dynamic control you can get. Version #2 makes the primary samples play back in reverse.

"Jam Kit #2" goes out to all you rappers out there. This disk contains two kicks spread out over eight consecutive chromatic half-steps. The first kick sounds short and punchy; the second is deeper-pitched with a long, gated reverb. Also included is a cross-stick, a medium-pitched 6 1/2" snare, and a rimshot/5" metal snare hybrid. Both of these samples contain a good deal of "crack" on the attack portion. There are three toms: The first two are pitched low and medium (both are warm and muffled in timbre), the third is deeper and more open, and contains a sharp initial attack. There is a ride cymbal that is "functional," but did not sound very realistic to me.

For a street vibe, you're given samples containing finger snaps, multiple finger snaps, which sound almost like a roll (fin-

ger poppin'), and two versions of drumsticks being cracked together. They all are indigenous to street music, sound great, and are very expressive. Variations include the original samples containing an enhanced dynamic range and samples playing in reverse. If you are into rap and/or funk music, this disk is highly recommended.

I saved the "Rock Kit #2" disk from the J.R. series for last, since these sounds alone make the *EPS* worth owning.

I may have sounded harsh when describing previous cymbal samples as "functional" or "kind of cheesy," but one listen to the cymbals here, and you'll be blown away! These samples will let you experience just what the *EPS* is capable of producing in terms of sound quality. There are two Chinas here that are so realistic that I'll bet in an A/B comparison with actual Chinas, you'd have a difficult time figuring out which is the real thing.

The single kick and two snare samples were very clean, punchy, tight, and powerful. The first snare is a medium-tuned wood drum; the second is a high-pitched metal snare. In the tom department

you're once again given two sets, totalling seven drums. Set #1 contains three open-sounding toms, pitched very high, medium-high, and medium—all with a good deal of attack. They are a bit thin and unnatural-sounding on their own, yet merely suggest a different overall timbre when compared to the lower five toms contained in set #2. Those five drums range in tuning from medium down to very low, with each having a rich overall sound, and even sharper attack than those in set #1. While this kit is described as a rock kit (and I do agree with that), it also contains enough timbral flexibility to warrant use in almost any musical idiom where you want a strong and powerful set of drums. I highly recommend getting your hands on this disk if you either own or plan to own an *EPS*; it gets a rating of five stars.

### The Craig Anderton Series Volume 2

It's quite obvious when someone knows what they are doing, and Craig Anderton was certainly selected for the



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*Signature Series* with this in mind. For those who may not be familiar with his name, Craig is regarded as one of the most knowledgeable people within the entire music industry on the subject of electronic music technology. This Sound Library series contains three disks of Craig's efforts, covering a wide range of instruments and sounds.

In today's world of digital technology, many of the drum sounds we hear are combinations of various samples manipulated to sound huge and powerful. The drum machines of yesteryear utilized analog circuitry, which is characterized by a smoother, simpler, less aggressive overall sound. This older technology is once again being used with great popularity, since it is not only refreshing, but can provide a personalized sound without overpowering other instruments.

On a disk titled "Dinosaur Drums," Craig Anderton included several classic sounds, sampled from the "dinosaur" drum machines of an earlier era—as well as other sounds he created during 1968-1970. Included are toms, congas, analog handclaps, analog snares, cowbells, maracas, and shakers, as well as a list of special effects. All the samples sound terrific, and they triggered wonderfully off of my *drumKAT* and Dynacord pads. I loaded these sounds along with some of the J.R. Series samples and experimented with layering different combinations. The result was some incredible-sounding drumkits.

Disk #2 contains many sounds from various synthesizers, while disk #3 contains various guitar and bass samples. Although their application would most likely be suited for composition, there are certain samples here that fire well off of pads as well. "Bells," marimba, chimes, and "silicon Pluck" all worked well in this manner. I also experimented with these sounds in combination with the analog sounds on disk #1, and came up with some unique and very expressive timbres.

### The SLT Series

Speaking of unique-sounding samples leads us directly into the third *EPS* library series, the *SLT Series*. At the time of this writing, there are a total of 13 vol-

umes available, and I was sent four of these for review. I had so much fun playing with and experimenting with these disks that I had a hard time stopping.

Let's start with the ethnic-based sounds included in volume 6. There are a total of ten disks in this volume, including an 88-key grand piano, a disk full of organ samples, and two disks full of ethnic percussion samples created by Stu Nevitt, percussionist with Shadowfax. These include: FX gongs, tambourines, Buddha bells, marocca (clay drums and fra fra bells), Afrik (congas, bata and talking drums, rattles, caxixi/basket shakers), lobi balafon (African marimba), sanza (a metal-bodied thumb piano), devil bushman (rattles and bamboo tubes), and sat-tan (large ceramic pot). All of these samples sound authentic, with crystal-clear reproduction. There are also many variations available via the patch select buttons. (Also included in the *SLT Series* is a collection of disks that hold other intriguing samples, many of which would be useful for film scoring and/or sound effects sweetening.)

Volume 8 was sampled directly to DAT

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(digital audio tape) at the famous Music Grinder Studios in Los Angeles. Ross Garfield (the "Drum Doctor") and John Greenland (owner of Greenland Sounds, a sound design and film scoring company) came up with another ten disks of excellent-quality drum and percussion samples. There are six "contemporary kits" offering a wide range of drumkit sounds, and two electronic kits with special effects samples included as well. There are also five "short kits," which are intended for those users who do not have a memory expansion kit installed. These feature only the basic sounds found on a traditional drumkit, and sound quite nice.

Volume 11 also contains ten disks, five of which offer miscellaneous percussion instruments sampled by Raphael Padilla, the percussionist with Miami Sound Machine. Samples here include: repique (a Brazilian drum), shekere (a gourd wrapped with beads), tumba (a large, deep conga), snakes (rattles), cowbells, tambourim (a tambourine without the metal disks), El Gato drum (slit drum), and the toys (finger cymbals, woodblocks, cabasa, claves, agogo bells, and box shakers).

The other five disks include various samples intended more for composition: bass 1 & 2 (analog synth basses), clavinet, percovox (a percussive vocal patch), drums AZ (a hard-edged, gated, industrialized kit), Randy Jackson bass samples, and bellpad (a rich, metallic bell-type sound). They are all excellent, and there are all kinds of variations available through the use of the patch select buttons. All the samples triggered cleanly and with expression from both the keys and the drumpads, with a good dynamic range.

Volume 12 is yet another collection of percussive voices. Featured here are a "bowed gong" (literally a gong played with a violin bow, courtesy of Ross Garfield), star chimes, wind chimes, glockenspiel, hydrophone (a large metal bottle filled with water, with metal rods sticking through it), timbales, talking drum, xylophone, log drums, steel drums, and timpani/gong (a timpani with a small gong placed on its head). After some work with this volume I began to recognize sounds I've often heard on movie soundtracks, but could never identify.

## Summary

After working with both the *EPS* and its Sound Library for three weeks, I strongly urge you to check it out. It's happening! The *EPS* itself is very powerful, flexible, expandable, and easy to use. Last year, Ensoniq introduced a new rack-mounted version, called the *EPS-M*. As a sampler, its 16-bit sample clarity makes for excellent sound quality, coupled with an inexhaustible and unlimited range of voice capabilities. Its sequencer not only gives you a powerful and easy-to-operate songwriting tool, but the ultimate drum machine. And for live use, its application is almost unlimited as well.

I had the pleasure of working with only eight disk collections, out of a current total of 32 volumes! I was also informed that Ensoniq will continue to release future collections as well. Four more *Signature Series* sets are scheduled for release soon, including three volumes from Nile Rogers and one by Maurice White of Earth, Wind & Fire.

This commitment to providing the user with an ever-increasing sound library, in addition to the capability of producing his or her own custom samples, makes the *EPS* worthy of serious consideration. I know that I want one. List price for the basic, keyboard *EPS* is \$1,695. (The *EPS-M* is equipped with four times the memory, additional outputs, and SCSI, and so costs substantially more at \$2,795. The keyboard version can be fitted with those features as options, bringing it up to about the same cost.) The Sound Library volumes vary in price: the *Signature Series* three-disk volumes cost \$49.95; the *SLT* ten-disk volumes cost \$69.95.

*Editor's note: At press time, Ensoniq had just announced the introduction of an updated version of the EPS, to be designated the EPS 16 Plus. It will offer all of the features described in this review, as well as on-board digital effects, and will be compatible with all current EPS Sound Library software.*



continued from page 63

about it. But there is something else involved in a musical instrument. There's an individual character, and individuality is the thing that we're trying to build into the instruments we manufacture. It really goes into how you approach the manufacturing process, so that you end up with something that, no matter who plays our drums, they can actually feel they are contributing something to the instrument. The player *and* the product become the instrument. And that individuality is an elusive kind of thing.

I don't think high-quality products and products that have a bit of individuality about them are necessarily at opposite ends of the pole by any means. Quality for us is not a control mechanism. It is built within. We spend a lot of time with our people, in terms of quality consciousness. We don't have to have 473 inspectors on the line. I saw an article recently in *Modern Drummer* where somebody had been covering a particular

drum manufacturer, and I think the closing line was something like, "At every stage somebody is watching." Not in the Premier factory. At every stage in the Premier factory everybody is *doing*. They are doing the things that are necessary to *sustain* the quality.

**WFM:** Years ago Premier did have a bad reputation in terms of quality. Do you think you're suffering a bit from that reputation?

**TD:** I think there are preconceived notions in the marketplace about Premier that are totally wrong. It's quite a shock when I come up against either a dealer or a customer who still has the feeling that Premier is back in the '50s, or that there are still problems with certain aspects of the product. And maybe, just maybe, that's down to insufficient PR. Maybe we've been too busy working at what we're doing to have told the world enough about it. But I feel there is a much greater awareness out there that we've arrived from out of the past.

We had a very simple campaign the first 12 months I was with Premier. Every

time we came across a problem with either the product or the way the company was running, we dealt with it. And there were quite a few. So what we said was, "There's no point in just looking at the big picture and what kind of image we want to have." We had to actually deal with the individual problems, first and foremost. It is amazing when you learn to deal with it on a step-by-step basis.

The way we really overcame our problems was by listening to people—both within and without the company. A company is at its worst when it stops listening. When we have a meeting of 20 people, they're all equal, including me. Everybody gets their say. And the point of that is to stifle the old problems that existed.

**WFM:** I'd like to find out about Yamaha's acquisition of Premier and how it's affected the company.

**TD:** There are no secrets about this. I think Yamaha has made it well-known since the beginning that Premier is an autonomous company, even though its ownership changed hands. I have noth-

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ing but the highest regard for my colleagues at Yamaha. They have been supportive and have helped make the changes that have come about in the company, which have helped us to be more successful. They have made it entirely possible by the extent of their investment.

Yamaha has also helped us in terms of some technical areas where it's been needed. They of course have immense technical resources in any area you care to think about—paint treatments, finishing, mechanization—whatever. And as a result we now have the most up-to-date technology in the industry. However, I think they have also learned a great deal from us. We have been in the business for over 60 years, and that kind of experience is invaluable.

We are as independent as it was always promised we would be. And that promise has never in any way been broken. So we can present quite an individual face to the world. Our dealers and their customers can have even more confidence in our operations knowing that we've got the backing of a very large organization.

**WFM:** How is the direct competition of Yamaha and Premier dealt with?

**TD:** Obviously we've talked about it. I think our view is really very straightforward. We are both in business to do our thing. There are some things that we do jointly. It's a well-known fact that Premier makes some of the Yamaha product in the U.K. Also, it's obvious to everybody that Yamaha is using Premier as a base for the European market situation. That's a logical strategy; that's why there's always massive Japanese investment in the U.K. in all sorts of products.

As far as actually competing with Yamaha, there must be many times when somebody goes into a drum shop and wants to buy a kit and they will see Yamaha and Premier side by side. I believe it's right that those products should be judged on their own merits. There can be no conceivable point or value in us trying to split the marketplace in terms of pricing or structure to suit one product or another.

**WFM:** Now more than ever, Premier is known in the U.S. as a drumset company. But for years it was known as a full per-

ussion company. Why has that changed?  
**TD:** That's an excellent observation. It is a constant surprise that Premier is very strong as a total percussion company in all other markets *except* the U.S. But of course, our strongest competitor, as far as I'm concerned, is also based in the U.S. But we have a growing situation. It is developing, and one of our strengths of course is in the marching market, and we have been attempting to enter into the drum corps area in the U.S.

I think it's safe to say that the extent of our timpani and Latin percussion business throughout the world is probably not recognized very well. That's because it's very diverse. We export to over 130 countries. And we find our instruments ending up in the most extraordinary places all over the world. Obviously we are still, and always will be, a total percussion house. To get that to click in the U.S. means going down the route of education much more than we have been, and our plans are well-made in this area.

**WFM:** Getting back to drumkits, I'd like to know a little bit about the differences between promoting a drumset in the

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U.S. as opposed to England.

**TD:** That's something that is always changing. A few years back the message in the U.S. was more punchy, more raunchy if you like, with a certain style all its own. In Europe it tended to be a trifle academic, with an attempt to put some buzz into it, which didn't really work. We perceived this as being a problem. And so we got our people in the U.S. and England together, and we came up with a way that we felt would appeal to both markets. I think the things we have come up with, like our new catalog, have been a success. And my mind is very clear on the next stage, where I will be talking to our principal distributors in the European market and having their input as well.

When we're promoting, we're trying to think internationally, without diluting the message. We're trying to think of the common denominator getting to the drummer, overriding the national culture if we can. If it just came from the U.K., it might end up being too "stiff upper lip" and British.

**WFM:** Changing the subject a bit,

Premier is one of the few major drumming manufacturers that still makes their own drumheads. Why is that?

**TD:** It's profitable. It's also something where we can maintain our own quality standards. It's been a very successful element of the business, stretching across into marching and timpani for a long time. And of course that's a significant element of our market as well. We've been manufacturing our own heads for a long time, and it seems very sensible to continue along that area.

A number of the reviews of our competitors' drums that I've seen recently have drawn attention to the fact that, although the drums were made as entry-level or lower-priced kits, they would be improved enormously with better heads. We supply the same top-quality heads with every drumkit, no matter which line it is, from entry level to professional level.

If I could be satisfied that in every retail shop that sold Premier there would be a kit assembled where a young drummer could sit down and play before he makes his choice of a drumset, then I

would be extremely happy. To talk about better sound is neither here nor there if the kit cannot be played at the point of sale. But if this young drummer could compare the individuality of our drumkit, then I think he would make that choice much more readily. The problem is that in many different countries, drumshops have different ways of presenting things, and very often they are short of space, so the kit isn't set up. I sometimes wonder how the customers who walk into these stores actually choose a kit. Is it on someone's say-so? The salesman's? Does he say that's a great kit because it happens to sell very large numbers for him? Either way, if a young drummer could have the opportunity to sit down and play one of our kits, no matter what line, he would be impressed, and I'm sure some of that would have to do with the quality of our heads. So that's one of the principal reasons why we're very happy to be making our own heads.

**WFM:** Drummers' awareness of Premier in the U.S. has grown quite a bit in recent years. What part has Tom Meyers, your vice president in the States,



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played in the development of Premier?

**TD:** I consider that the company is more than fortunate to have the services of Tom Meyers. He has been handling Premier product for more than eight years. His loyalty to the company, his great capacity for hard work, and the way in which he has developed special relationships with endorsers, dealers, the press, and people in the music business, has been of exceptional value to the company.

**WFM:** You just mentioned Tom's relationship with endorsers. Tell me about Premier's attitude towards endorsers.

**TD:** For me, the most important thing is that our endorsers are absolutely great people. Premier's policy with endorsers is quite straightforward. We work on the basis that they play our kit, and we'll service their requirements and be there for them. Those are the guidelines everywhere.

I suppose the man I owe the most to in many ways is Rod Morgenstein. Rod is such a great player; in your own recent *MD Readers Poll* he featured in so many categories. But on top of this, he is one

of the most incredibly modest, likeable people I've met. And players like Joe Franco, Carmine Appice, David Beal, Michael Shrieve, and many others—along with being exceptional talents—are also wonderful human beings.

I'm not looking for a great big stable of drummers. Maybe that's what impresses the buying public, I don't know. But the quality of the people that we are fortunate to have is more important than just having a large roster. And remember that many of these guys have stuck with Premier through thick and thin. And we've got some new ones, too. Carmine has been on board just over a year. Deen Castronovo joined us at the beginning of last year. But some of these guys have been around for the years when things were really tough with Premier. And it's like a family situation.

I remember at the Winter NAMM show, we just couldn't move in our exhibit booth because of the number of people that were there when Rod was playing. And so many of our artists were there, all hanging out together and talking; suddenly you realize that's what

means something. It's very easy to ram it down the throat of the buying public and say, "So and so plays our drums, therefore they've got to be the best." The people we have want to play our products because we give them something different than the norm. I feel very privileged that we have these people as our friends, as well as to be working with them.

We're very fortunate that we get a lot of input from our endorsers. Not on a formal basis—we don't pull them all together in one room for three days, and suddenly out pops a brand new drumkit. But just in the normal course of dinner one evening or in casual conversation about this, that, and the other thing, we get the ideas. They're all assimilated, they're all worked in with the information that comes back from our distributors, dealers, and the working drummers playing our equipment. And that's an ongoing process. That's how we keep improving.



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## In Memoriam: Leo Spagnardi

The drumming community was recently saddened by the death of Leo Spagnardi, father of *Modern Drummer* Editor/Publisher Ronald Spagnardi. Mr. Spagnardi passed away on September 26, 1990, at the age of 74.

Leo Spagnardi, himself a professional drummer in the 1930s and 1940s, was instrumental in the origination and development of *Modern Drummer* magazine. He served on the magazine's staff from its inception in 1977 until his death—first in the circulation department, and later as mail room supervisor.

The staff of *Modern Drummer* magazine would like to take this opportunity to thank the many members of the drum and percussion industry who took the time to offer condolences on the passing of their friend and colleague.

## 1990 DCI Championship Results

The 1990 edition of the Summer Music Games returned to the Northeast for the first time since 1982, winding up the summer touring schedule in Buffalo, New York. The DCI (Drum Corps International) World Championship wrapped up the week with an exciting finals competition that managed to conclude just before the skies opened up with an anticipated rainstorm.

The week of competition (August 13 - 18) took place at Rich Stadium (home of the Buffalo Bills football team) in Orchard Park, NY. The contests of Monday and Tuesday crowned two Canadian champions: Academie Musicale (from Sherbrooke, Quebec), who won the Class A-60 title with a score of 88.4, and the Ventures, an all-female corps (from Kitchener/Waterloo, Ontario), who won the Class A Championship for the second year in a row with a score of 91.8.

On Wednesday, August 15th, the downtown Buffalo theater district hosted the Individual and Ensemble competition. These performances showcased the talents of the individual members who make up a drum & bugle corps. The Cavaliers (from Rosemont, IL) had two winners from their drum line: snare drummer Scott Kratzer, who scored a 96.5, and multi-tenor Jason Trigg, who scored a 97.0.

The "Best Individual Keyboard" was awarded to Amy Putnam from the Bluecoats (Canton, OH) with a score of 98.5. Scott Sells from the Santa Clara (CA) Vanguard won the timpani award with a score of 97.0. The expanded ensemble category featured two winners from the Santa Clara Vanguard: The "Best Percussion Ensemble" scored a 96.0, while their Bass Drum Ensemble won with a 98.0. The "Best Cymbal Ensemble" went to the Troopers (from Casper, WY), who scored a 90.0. And a mixed ensemble (featuring percussion and horns) from Orlando's (FL) Magic came in first with a score of 87.5 and the opportunity to perform at finals.

A new twist to the two days of preliminary competitions of Thursday and Friday was the averaging of the quarter-final and semi-final scores to decide the performing order for finals. The Top-12 lost two members from the 1989 Championship: Suncoast Sound (from Tampa Bay, FL), who took a year off to regroup, and the Freelancers (from Sacramento, CA), who placed 14th in the preliminary competition.

The contest Saturday evening (August 18th) began under muggy and humid weather conditions, including continuing threats of rain. The first corps in competition was Dutch Boy (from Kitchener/Waterloo, Ontario), who scored an 82.2 (15.9 in drums) for 12th place. Moving up from two consecutive 13th-place finishes in 1988 and 1989, Dutch Boy became a Canadian finalist, truly making the contest an international event. Their jazz program was entitled "A Tribute To Frank And Sammy," featuring Sinatra and Davis favorites like

"Strangers In The Night," "My Way," and "What Kind Of Fool Am I." Their slick Las Vegas-style show was accompanied by a swinging drum line that moved entirely into the pit area on the front sideline during their drum solo.

Another corps was welcomed back to the Top-12 after a one-year absence—the Spirit of Atlanta (GA). In 11th place with a score of 83.4 (17.0 in drums), Spirit returned to its Southern roots with a medley of music from the movies *Gone With The Wind* and *The Color Purple*. One of the most exciting portions of their show was the drum solo featuring African rhythms and instruments (including some authentic gourds), chanting, and a very ritualistic-style dance from the color guard. (Spirit's boosters had one of the best T-shirts of the summer: the caption on a picture of Clark Gable as Rhett Butler reads "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a flam!")

Next up were the always-zany antics of the Velvet Knights (from Anaheim, CA), who scored an 87.3 (17.0 in drums) for tenth place. They began their show with a non-traditional interpretation of "Pomp And Circumstance," complete with giant pencils used by the guard. The "Universal Hollywood Medley" featured several movie scores, including a riotous spoof of the Vanguard's bottle dance from *Fiddler On The Roof*. Percussion arranger Dennis DeLucia's influence was apparent in the drum solo featuring 16 snare drummers playing on toms. The final "collapse" of the corps on the field also brought back pleasant memories of the Bayonne Bridgemen.

In ninth place with a score of 88.7 (17.5 in drums) were the Madison (WI) Scouts. Their program was entitled "Undiscovered Madison" and included "The Lemmon Squeeze," "Remembrance," and "I Can Cook, Too." Following a trip out to California this summer, the Scouts' show had a more laid-back feel than in previous years.

Maintaining their eighth place position from 1989, the Bluecoats (from Canton, OH) scored an 89.2 (17.9 in drums). Their 1990 repertoire featured the music

of Duke Ellington, including "Caravan," "I Got It Bad And That Ain't Good," "Don't Get Around Much Anymore," and "It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing." Their jazzy snare drum line featured a very sharp-looking chrome-finish free-floating snare drum accented with black hardware. The pit also got into the swing of things with congas and a pseudo-drumset pounding out the big-band rhythms.

Climbing from 12th place in 1989, the Crossmen (from Westchester, PA) moved up to seventh place with a score of 89.6 (18.1 in drums). The corps performed music from the CD *New York Voices* by the group of the same name. The drum line found a syncopated groove in the "Baroque Samba," complete with lots of Latin percussion instruments and accessories.

Following a short break to allow PBS to begin its live telecast, the top six corps performed in the sequence determined by their preliminary finish. In a surprising turn of events, Saturday evening's performances had a major change in the final standings of third, fourth, fifth, and sixth places.

The Santa Clara Vanguard (last year's World Champion) dropped from fifth place in prelims to sixth place in finals, with a score of 94.0 (19.0 in drums). Featuring a performance of the Shchedrin arrangement of Bizet's *Carmen*, the Vanguard interpreted his score for strings and percussion on the field with brass, percussion, and a guard-full of Carmens.

The Blue Devils (from Concord, CA) also dropped, from third place in prelims to a tie for fourth place in finals, scoring a 95.3 (18.7 in drums). Their performance of the rock opera *Tommy* by the Who included a pinball background (on the field itself) representing the game's flippers. Their drum solo featured 19 mounted RIMS toms and ride cymbals rolled out onto the field for the drum line to play. The Blue Devils also had one of the largest pits of the evening, (including 11 keyboard instruments), and stretched between the two 30-yard lines.

Tying the Blue Devils with a score of 95.3 (and another tie of 18.7 in drums) was the Phantom Regiment (from Rockford/Loves Park, IL), who moved up from sixth place in prelims. Their "Dreams Of Desire" program was inspired by the works of the French composer Camille Saint-Saens. The Regiment's opener of his *Symphony No. 3* (also known as the "Organ Symphony") brought back emotional memories of their 1979 performance in Denver. Following a lighthearted arrangement of *Carnival Of The Animals*—featuring an exciting percussion solo with one of the summer's best snare drum lines—the Regiment closed with a stimulating arrangement of the "Bacchanale" from *Samson And Delilah*.

Moving up from fourth place on Friday to third place on Saturday was the Star of Indiana (from Bloomington, IN), who scored a 96.5 (19.1 in drums). Their repertoire consisted of a single work: Sir William Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*. (The epic inspired flashbacks of the Regiment's 1982 production of *Spartacus*.) Star split their pit on the 35-yard lines, leaving a center to focus on the rest of the corps. The words "purple" and "glitter" fail to do justice to their majestic performance.

The Cavaliers scored a 96.9 (19.5 in drums) to remain in second place. They have found their niche with contemporary symphonic wind music. The 1990 repertoire included selections from Nelson's *Medieval Suite* and Rutter's *All Things Bright And Beautiful* and *O Clap Your Hands*. Their pit featured several multiple-percussion setups, including a set of bells mounted above a xylophone and a xylophone mounted on a marimba. Their drum solo featured eight pre-tuned drumheads held by members of the guard and played by the drum line. The Cavies also supplied the only flag toss of the evening for an exciting conclusion to their show.

Winning a fifth World Championship with a score of 97.7 was the Cadets of Bergen County (NJ). They also won high drums with a score of 19.6—an amazing feat, considering the entire snare line removed their drums and danced with the color guard for several minutes of the production. The show was entitled "A Bernstein Celebration" and included music from *Candide*, *Mass*, *West Side Story*, and *Fancy Free Ballet*.

Finale went smoothly and retreat was almost over before the rains came. Next year's Championships will be held August 12 - 17 in Dallas, Texas. Bring your sunglasses, a fan, and a tall cool drink!

•Lauren Vogel

## New Pearl Headquarters



Photos by Rick Malkin



Pearl International recently opened their United States headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee. Among those in attendance at the facility's opening celebration were (left to right) President Tak Isomi, Ralph Miller (Vice President of Pearl Corp.), and Masani Yanagisawa (Senior Vice President of Pearl Music Group).



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Ludwig has also introduced their new *Rocker II* outfits featuring power toms. This five-piece set is made of four-ply, electric die-molded poplar shells, and employs Ludwig's *Rocker* tension casings, a traditional holder system, and disappearing spurs. As with all Ludwig outfits, the *Rocker II* power outfits are available with optional hardware packages. The drums are also available in high-gloss, scratch-resistant finishes in Black Onyx, Red Fury, and White Frost. Ludwig *Rockers* heavy clear drumheads are standard, as well as Ludwig black front bass heads.



In the marching department, Ludwig has introduced its new "Keystone" snare throw-off system for its new *Challenger Vector* marching snare drum. According to Ludwig, the patented "Keystone" throw-off ensures easy and accurate snare placement because the throw-off is at rest when the snares are engaged, rather than when they're disengaged.

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## Play It Straight T-Shirts

Featuring the black & white logo that has been seen in the drum industry's series of public service ads, "Play It Straight" T-shirts are now available in small, medium, large, and extra-large sizes. The shirts have a suggested retail price of \$12 each, with a percentage of each sale going to benefit recognized anti-drug, tobacco, and alcohol organizations and educational programs. To purchase shirts or for dealer inquiries and information on other "Play It Straight" promotional items, contact **Slobeat Musical Products, 15854 W. Sixth Ave., Golden, CO 80401.**

## New Premier APK Kit

Premier Percussion has introduced an upgraded version of its *APK* series of drumkits. The new sets now include more of the features found on Premier's more-expensive kits, such as the new



*Roklok* tom holder, an eight-lug, beaded-shell snare drum, and inlaid wooden bass drum hoops.

*APK* kits are available in five-, seven-, and nine-piece sets and in Hot Red, Liquid Black, and White Heat colors. **Premier Percussion USA, Inc., 1704 Taylors Lane, Unit 1, Cinnaminson, NJ 08077.**

## New Remo Falams Products

Remo has expanded its *Falams K* series of fabric-laminated drumheads with the introduction of two Ebony film styles in 14" and 15" diameters for snare drums. According to Remo, the new Ebony *Super Falams* and Ebony *Clear Dot Falams* combine the toughness of *Kevlar* fabric with the sound quality and all-weather stability of Remo's Ebony film by means of a patented laminating system. Remo claims that the Ebony *Falams* offer the same bright sound, extreme tensioning capability, and resistance to pull-out and breakage as the original *K* series heads.

Remo has also introduced adhesive-backed *Falam Slam* bass drum impact pads. The 4" pads are designed to extend the life of bass drum heads and produce a sharper, punchier bass drum sound. **Remo, Inc., 12804 Raymer St., No. Hollywood, CA 91605, (818) 983-2600.**

## Biscayne Student Drumset Line

Tropical Music has introduced a new student line of drumsets bearing the *Biscayne* logo. The *Biscayne 1800* is a five-piece, full-size drumset with single-braced hardware and a double tom-tom mount. The *Biscayne 1900* is a five-piece set with heavy-duty, double-braced hardware and a double tom mount. Both models are available in black and white. **Tropical Music Corporation, 6935 N.W. 51 St., Miami, FL 33166, tel: (305) 594-3909, fax: (305) 594-0786.**

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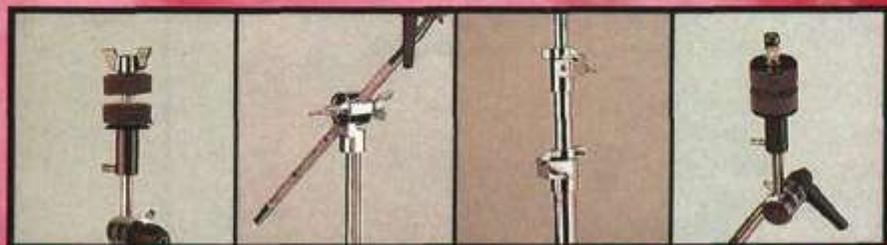
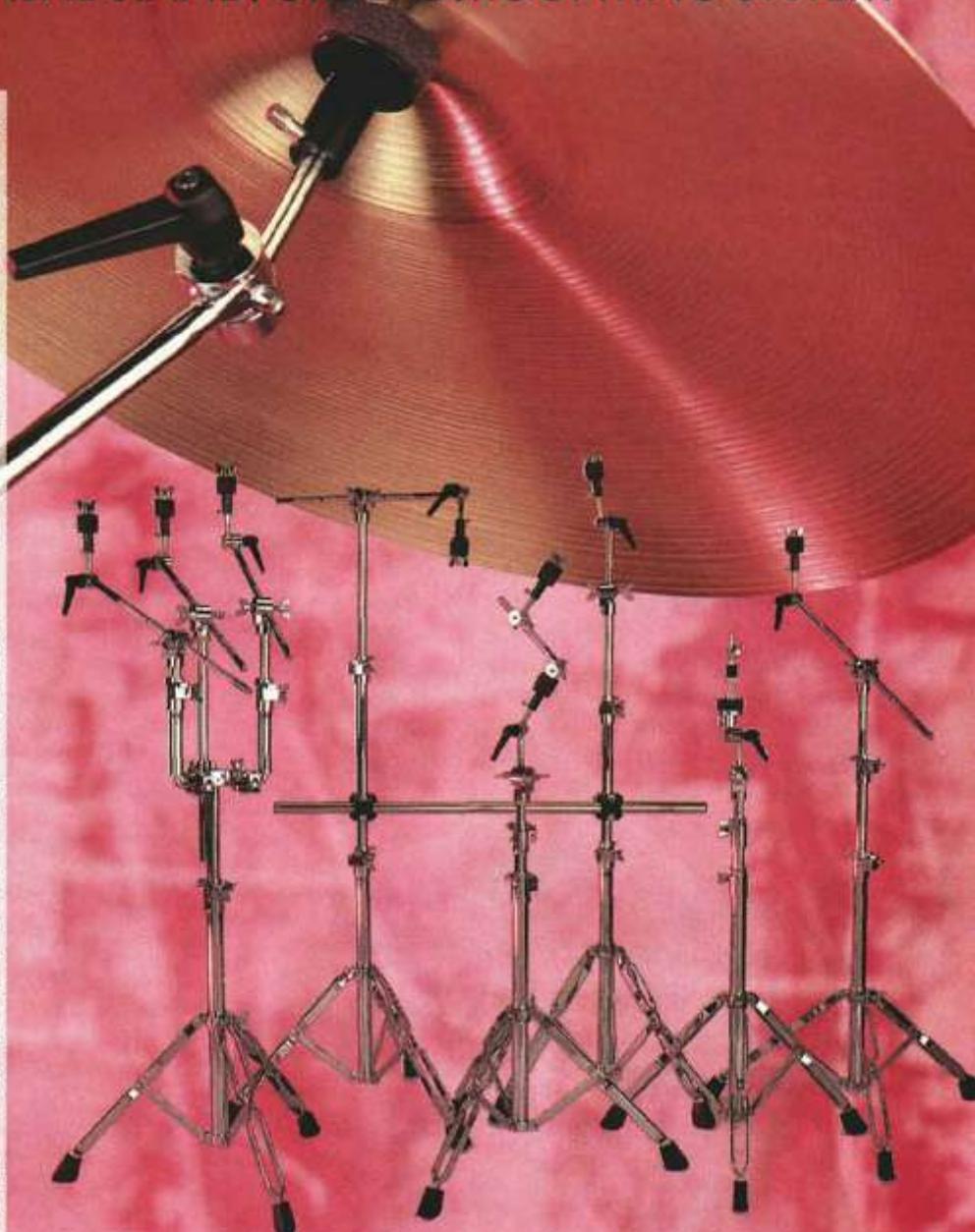
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shown above from left to right: Cymbal Space Adjustment, Straight/Boom casting, Captive wingscrew-wingnut assemblies, 975 Quick Release



## Improved Russian Dragon

The *Russian Dragon* model RD-2 is a one-space, rack-mount unit that the makers say offers significant improvements over the original *Russian Dragon*. The new model uses all precision resistors and capacitors and gold connectors, and measures time delays with an accuracy down to .1 milliseconds. A switch has been added that lets the user select the way the display is cleared. Balanced and unbalanced inputs are located on both the back and front of the unit. And as an option, the window control can be ordered as a rotary switch with detents at the seven available settings.

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## Drum And Bass Books From Alfred

*Essential Styles For The Drummer And Bassist* contains a book and CD and provides a cross-section of 30 popular styles. The book features written-out charts that indicate the basic structure (form and harmonic content) of each selection included on the CD. In addition, essen-

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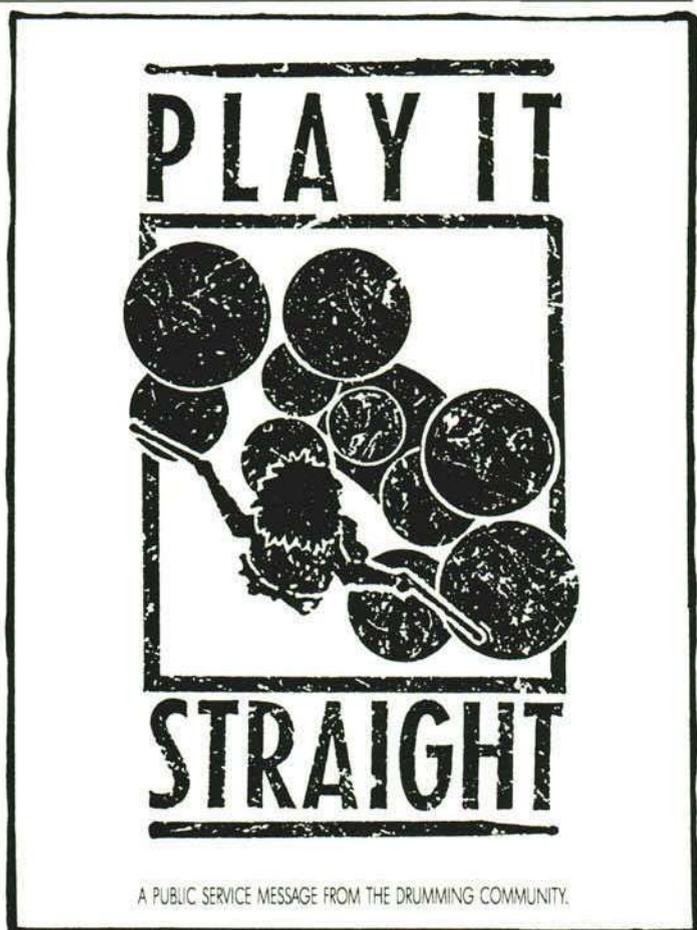
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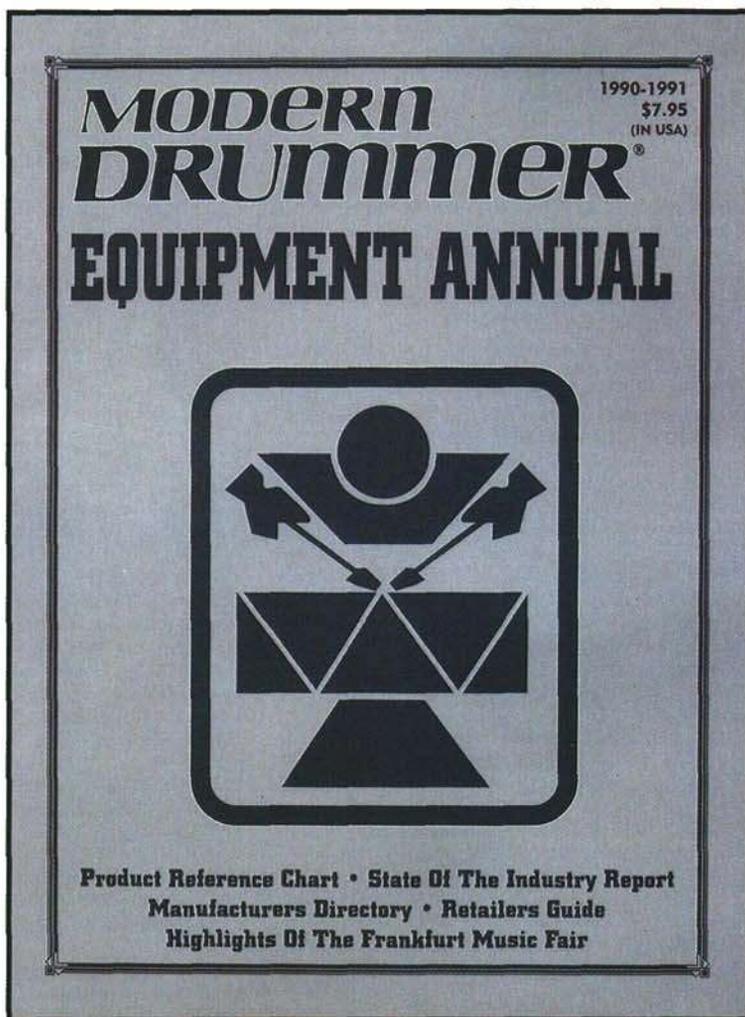
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Gary Chaffee recommends **Rick's Licks** by Rick Gratton. Vols. I, II & III- \$12.95 each. Cassette. Vol. II- \$10.95. Rick's Licks Enterprises, 2001 Bonnyede Dr. #67, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, L5J 4H8.

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**School For Musical Performance.** Specializing in Percussion: Drumset, Vibraphone and Marimba 4-mallet technique. Private instruction for all instruments, voice, theory and songwriting. Musical Director, David Kovins, B.A., M.A., M.S.M., 910 Kings Highway, Brooklyn, NY 11223 (718) 339-4989.

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**Study with drum charts!** Free catalog & sample! DRUM CHARTS INTERNATIONAL, Box 247-MD1, Nanuet, NY 10954-0247.

Professional music studio. Private lessons in all phases of drumset and percussion, including congas, mallets, timp. Playing in live workshops emphasized. Full music curriculum theory, ear training, arranging. Lessons on all instruments by qualified teachers. Two locations: NY City and 55 Webro Rd., Clifton NJ (201) 777-4323.

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Balto. Grant Menefee Studio of Drumming. B.M. Berklee College of Music, Towson State University Instructor. Drums re-covered. (301) 747-STIX.

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**Vintage Drums**—Especially **Trixon, Ludwig, Rogers, Turkish K's** and any Black Diamond finish drums. (616) 364-0604.

Need 16" toms, white marine pearl vintage, Ludwig, Slingerland, Rogers. **Trixon**, bass drumheads. 20" hand tuned timp. V.M. 2105 Wisconsin Ave., Benson, MN 56215.

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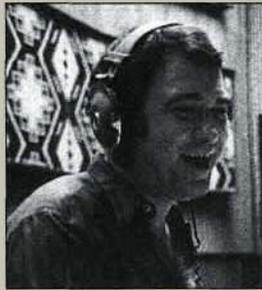
# GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

These artists were lost to the drumming community during the years since *Modern Drummer's* first issue. Each of

these drummers has added something unique to the music world. This is our tribute to them.



**Mousey Alexander (1988)**



**Nick Ceroli (1985)**



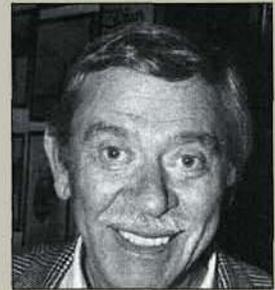
**Cozy Cole (1981)**



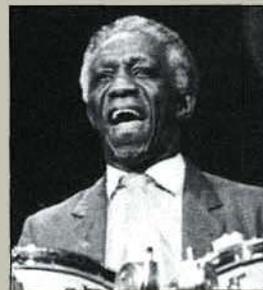
**Carlton Barrett (1987)**



**Gary Chester (1987)**



**Irv Cottler (1989)**



**Art Blakey (1990)**



**Kenny Clare (1985)**



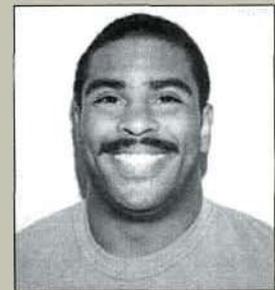
**Sonny Greer (1982)**



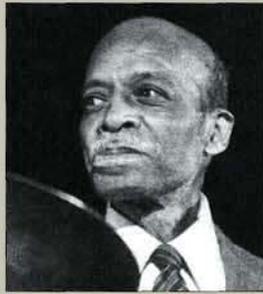
**John Bonham (1980)**



**Kenny Clarke (1985)**



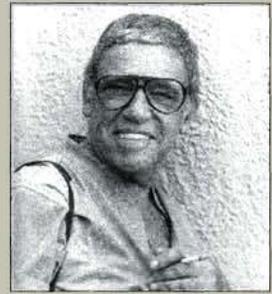
**Yogi Horton (1987)**



Papa Jo Jones (1985)



Shelly Manne (1984)



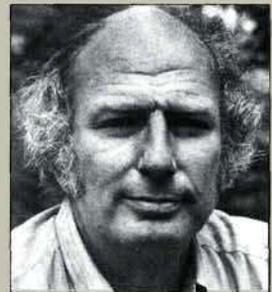
Buddy Rich (1987)



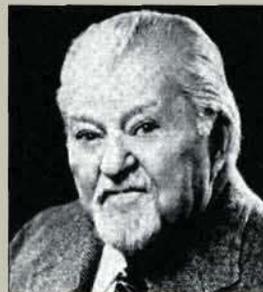
Philly Joe Jones (1985)



Keith Moon (1978)



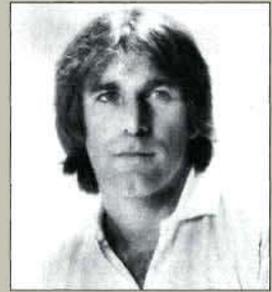
Stanley Spector (1987)



Roy Knapp (1979)



Sonny Payne (1979)



Dennis Wilson (1983)



Mel Lewis (1990)



Roberto Petaccia (1981)

Ray Bauduc (1988)

Al Duffy (1988)

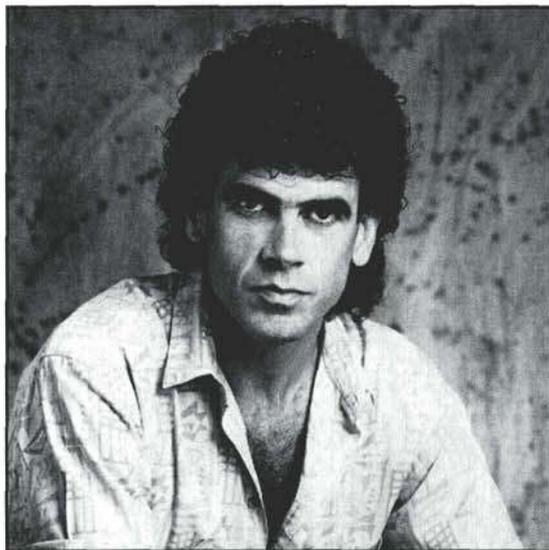
Phil Hulsey (1989)

Mickey Sheen (1987)

Frederick Waits (1989)



# DAVID GARIBALDI



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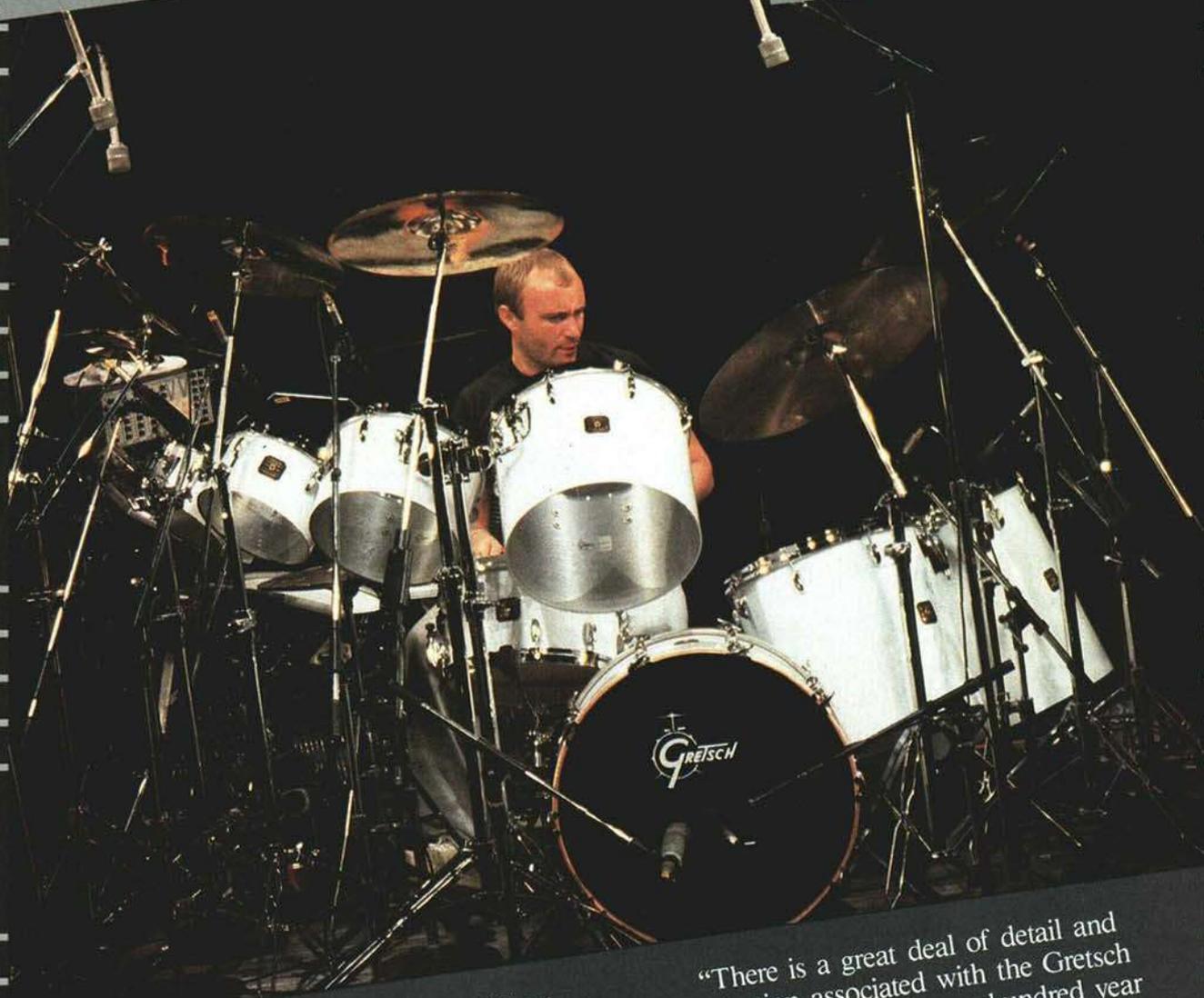
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KAT, Inc.	101,103,105	27	Tough Traveler	116	97
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# Why do I play Gretsch?

**Phil Collins**  
Genesis, producer & solo artist



"When I was about fourteen or fifteen years old, a good friend of mine who played drums in Joe Cocker's grease-band was playing Gretsch. I persuaded him to sell me his kit. From that moment, I was a Gretsch player. I still own that kit and it still sounds great today."

"Gretsch has always been 'a drummer's drum' and when the opportunity developed allowing me to play Gretsch again, I jumped at the chance."

"There is a great deal of detail and sophistication associated with the Gretsch product, name and over one-hundred year heritage. Sometimes I wish I did everything as well as they do."

"How do I like my new drums? They're beautiful in sound and looks...And most important, they're Gretsch."



**Someday, you'll own Gretsch.**

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Steve Sweet

Pat Torpey

Troy Luccketta

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