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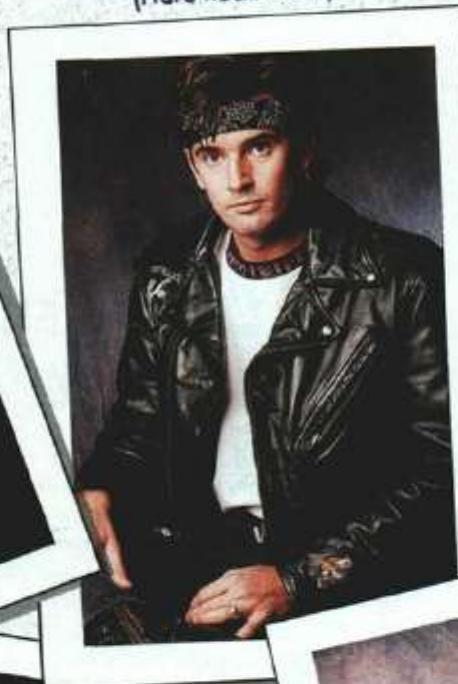
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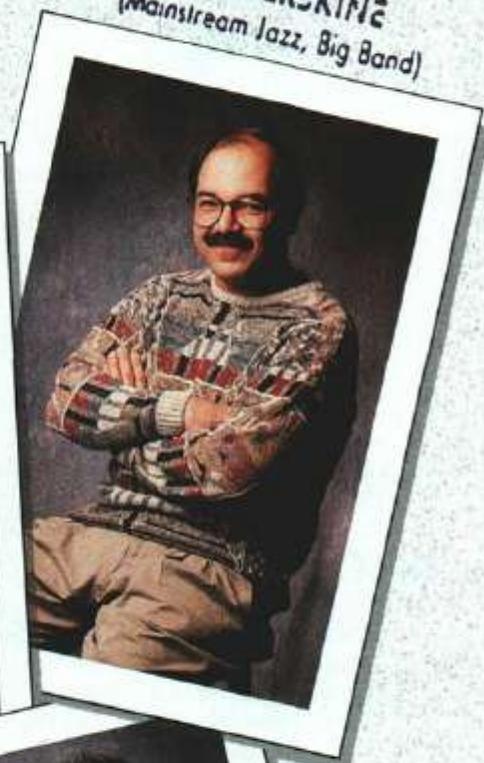
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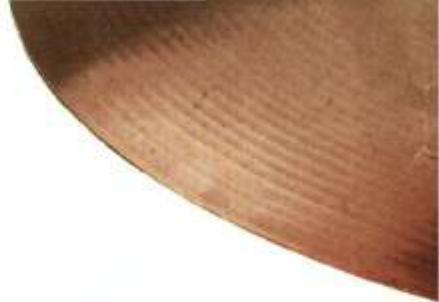
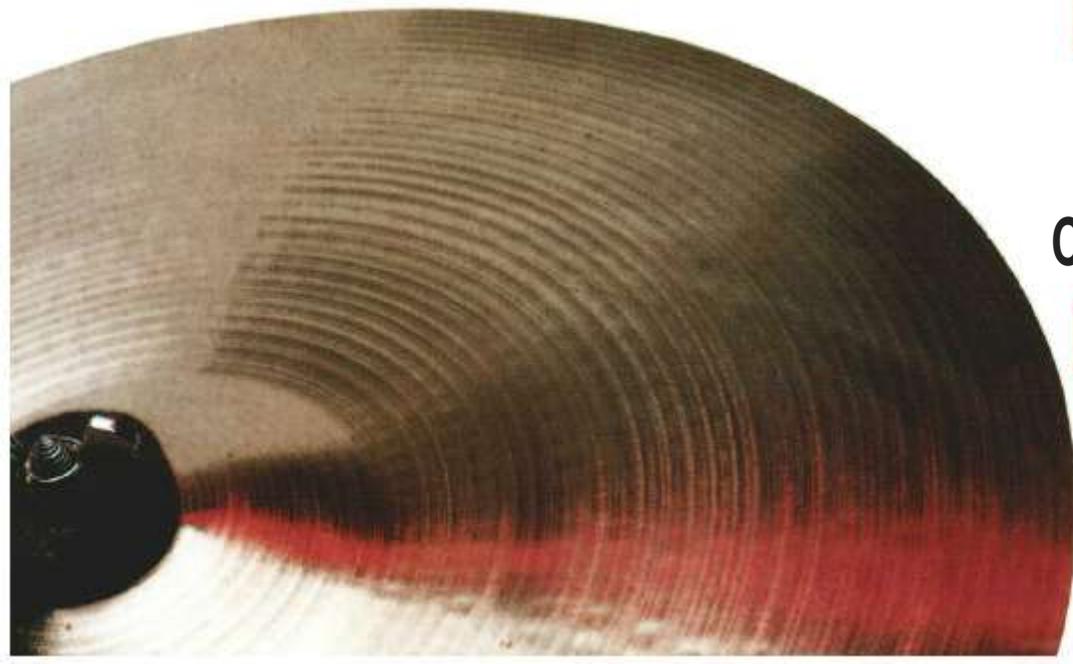
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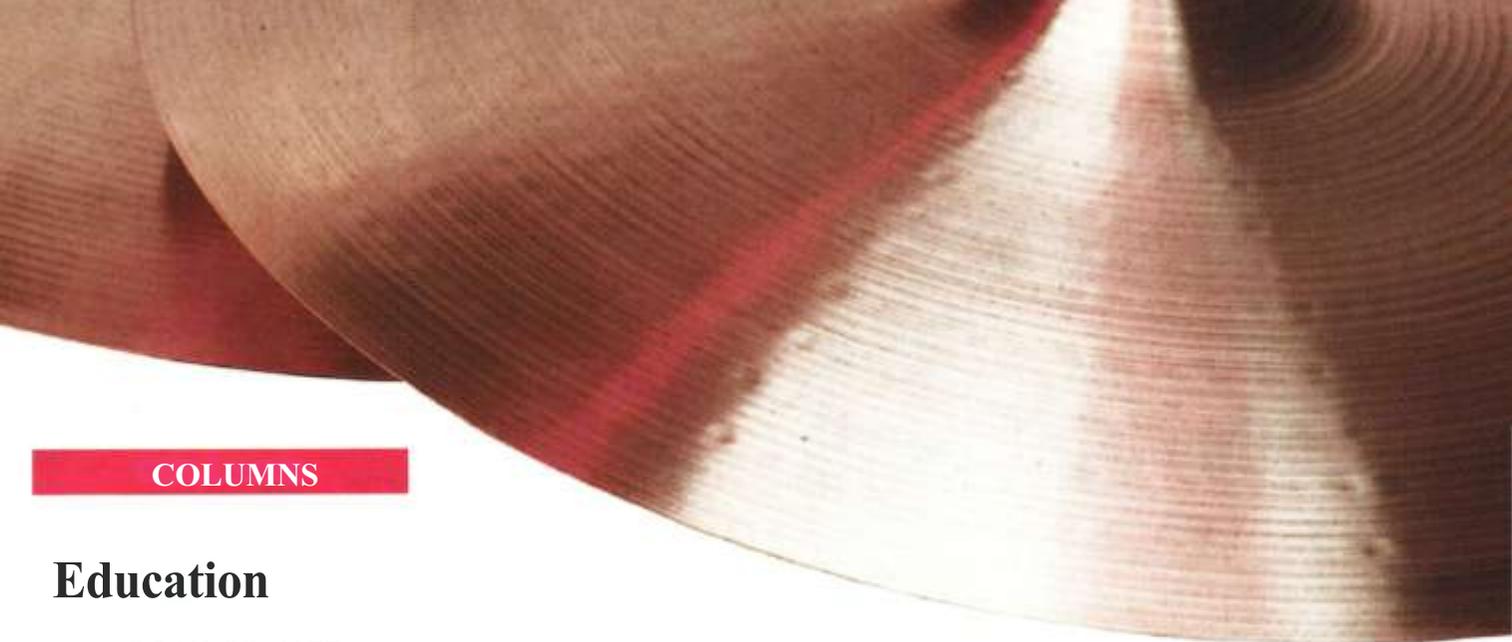
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## On Major Growth



Several years ago, a magazine called *Drums & Drumming* was introduced to the drum world. A publication of the GPI Group—publishers of *Guitar Player*, *Keyboard*, and *Bass Player*—*Drums & Drumming* began as a one-shot and gradually progressed to monthly frequency. In February of this year, GPI decided to suspend publication of *Drums & Drumming*, effective with their May 1991 issue. Major negotiations between Modern Drummer Publications and GPI began shortly thereafter, and I am now pleased to announce that we have formally purchased *Drums & Drumming* magazine, and are in the process of absorbing it into *Modern Drummer*.

One portion of the acquisition involves the *D&D* subscriber file, all of which is now being converted to *Modern Drummer*. Those who are currently subscribers to both magazines will simply have the balance of their subscription due them from *D&D* extended with their subscription to *Modern Drummer*. Also, for all who may have entered *D&D*'s \$12,000 Yamaha Equipment Giveaway, I'm delighted to report that *MD* will soon be offering the Yamaha Giveaway to readers of *MD*. You'll be hearing more about this in an upcoming issue.

Along with subscribers, the majority of *Drums & Drumming's* music dealer distribution is being added to our circulation, as are foreign retailers, wholesalers, and news dealers. We'll also be taking on foreign licensing arrangements and additional American and Canadian newsstand distribution. *MD* advertisers will be happy to know that we're expecting our total circulation will well exceed the 100,000 mark as a result of all this.

Finally, I'd like to point out to the thousands of *MD* readers that this transaction in no way means we're changing the editorial focus of *Modern Drummer*. Selected editorial material from *D&D* may be absorbed to some degree. However, we certainly are not planning any major alterations in editorial direction. Serving the needs of loyal *MD* readers in the manner they've become accustomed to remains our primary editorial objective.

Obviously, the merging of two magazines into one is a complex undertaking that requires total cooperation from everyone involved. My sincere thanks go to the fine people at GPI, who have done their best to facilitate a smooth transition. We now hope to continue to serve *MD* readers and advertisers—as we've done for nearly 16 years—even more powerfully and efficiently as a result of this exciting event in our development.

# MODERN DRUMMER

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# Radically Different Cymbals!

Let's examine the breadth of professional cymbal lines out there.

Since 1929, one large manufacturer in North America has given you one cymbal line. Most sounds in that cymbal line have essentially remained the same with respect to the alloy's underlying characteristics. About a decade ago, they gave you another line: a Turkish nostalgia "re-born" with ancient sound grafted more or less onto modern music. Both lines are made out of an alloy that has been used for cymbal making for thousands of years without significant changes.



So, in 1967 we introduced to cymbal making what now is known as the B8 alloy. The first line to gain wide recognition was the 2002, a sound that has now become a Rock 'n' Roll classic. Today, two of our top lines, the 2002 and the 3000, are made out of that alloy, and they set the standard for cymbals with musicality, volume and clarity in today's popular music. And, we remain the experts on that alloy.

After all, we invented it for cymbals. (Ever wonder why the other two companies have yet to give you a top professional line made out of it? Presumably because they haven't succeeded yet in unlocking it's potential.)

Have we sat back and enjoyed the ride? No way. In recent years, music has assumed great diversity, and musicians have kept hounding us for new cymbals, looking for new sounds. So, guess what? In 1989 we introduced yet another new alloy, which we now call "Paiste Sound Alloy", and we can't describe it any further, because it is patented and a trade secret. The first line to hit the musical circuit was the Paiste Line, or as you all quickly dubbed it, "The Signature Series". We don't have to say much about it, because it is the talk of the town. Just ask anybody who knows anything about cymbals. They'll tell you. And, in 1990, we introduced yet another line made from that alloy, the Sound Formula, bringing even more sounds to drummers.

One thing about price: we are more expensive. We have to be. We use the most expensive manufacturing process and expensive raw materials. But this ensures that Paiste will bring you up-to-date cymbals. Ones that are designed with current music trends in mind, not traditional sounds dressed up with marketing hoopla. And another thing about models: we have the most lines and the most models and we realize that it is hard to find your way around and you can't find them all to listen to. But please consider: music trends change and our

company has made a commitment to answer them with new cymbal sounds. Perhaps this is our Achilles Heel, but then again, so be it.



**The Sound Formula.** Created in 1990. Made from patented "Paiste Sound Alloy". Our newest professional cymbal line. Recently, music trends include ever more complex

interwoven styles and ethnic trends. At the same time, acoustic music celebrates a renaissance, as do classic popular styles. **Sound:** controllable, modern, elegant; low, middle, and high frequencies are evenly represented and very much in tune with each other, producing melodic and very musical sounds; every model is well defined and crisp, yet full and powerful when required. The Sound Formula is the professional cymbal of the 1990s, satisfying musical needs of great variety and diversity.



The 2002. Created in 1971. Made from SnBz8 Bronze. Amplified music called for this line. By 1971, Rock had firmly taken hold, and began to fuse with Jazz. The 2002 combines characteristics of the

acoustic, Jazz oriented Formula 602 (1959) and the explosive Giant Beat (1967), the first cymbal line made from B8 alloy. 2002 cymbals guide and influence the sound of classic milestones such as John Bonham.

**Sound:** strong in middle to high frequencies, adding a natural brilliance to cymbal sounds; very clear, explosive, yet musical and controllable; now a classic sound, these cymbals are generally preferred by Rock and Jazz Rock / Fusion musicians, and work well in studio situations.

Recently, members of that cymbal making clan split off and gave you another brand, which repeated the above principle, "switching" everybody from the "venerable old" company, asking you to listen for the difference. Well, there is not much of a difference. (Don't take our word, check it out yourself.)

## Enter Paiste:

When we started seriously considering expansion after World War II, we were small indeed. The only way to win was to come up



with a radically different concept. That meant new alloys, new sounds, better quality and consistency. Our lines then were made out of the same alloy as the North Americans use (today, we still offer one, the Formula 602). But, music changed so radically (the introduction of electronics!), that this alloy didn't do it anymore for our sound goals, entirely mandated by musicians with whom we cherish contact for musical input (Paiste Drummer Service!).



So, if you are looking for something new and different, or you'd just like to check out what alternatives there are, do yourself a favor and at least listen to a Paiste. Because you will definitely not get anything new and different from the other two firms. They prefer to

keep bringing you hundreds of year old "secrets" and traditional Turkish cymbals. Sure, they keep introducing "new" models and even "new" lines. But they are the same old alloy, the same old sound, the same old hat in a new dress. Don't be fooled!

P.S.: We sincerely appreciate all the drummers and percussionists out there who are using our products now. Your support has made everything possible.

Thank you.

**PAiSte**  
3000

The 3000. Created in 1986. Made from SnBz8 Bronze. By the 1980s music had exploded into a variety of styles

that influenced each other and were mixed freely. An extension of the classic 2002 sound, the 3000s were given added strength in the middle to low frequency range, enabling it to compete better with mid-range heavy Rock guitar sounds, especially in 3000RUDE.

**Sound:** generally the same brilliance as 2002, but with added lower frequencies, they sound larger and not as clean; very explosive, extreme volume, particularly in 3000RUDE; 3000 REFLECTOR add a glassy, shimmering quality; these cymbals are generally preferred by Rock and Heavy Metal musicians, and in any situation that requires extreme volume.

Paiste Headquarters, CH-6207 Nottwil/LU, Switzerland

# PAiSte

CYMBALS SOUNDS GONGS





### More Rahs For Roy

I really enjoyed your article on Roy Haynes in the May issue. Mr. Haynes is a very inspirational figure, because he plays such innovative material on such a minimal kit by today's standards. What? No ice bell...no gongs...no RotoToms? Not even a bell on the ride cymbal? Mr. Haynes is as incredible as he is, not because he plays on as much stuff as he can buy, but because he is a true artist-drummer-musician. Thank you for featuring such productive yet concealed talent amidst today's barrage of gadgetry and hype.

John Perlman  
Scottsdale AZ



### Return Of Club Scene

When *Club Scene* started again in the May '91 issue, I was excited (to say the least). When I first read Rick Van Horn's column I was in high school, but now I am out of college and am playing in local clubs. Rick's column is very enjoyable, educational, and informative—and now I'll be able to *use* all that information. Thanks for bringing back a great column that will help us all greatly—especially with the way that music and clubs are changing.

James Benner  
Denton TX

Rick Van Horn's *Club Scene*, in the May '91 issue, really hit a nerve. I can't count how many times I have encountered musicians who look down on Top-40 cover bands. In this letter, I thought I might be able to enlighten some of those people.

I am 36 years old and have been playing drums professionally since I was 18. I started in rock 'n' roll original bands, doing one-nighters and weekends. Although at the time I thought this was cool, I wasn't getting the satisfaction of making regular money. So I joined a Top-

40 band and "hit the road." I'm still out there today, and after 16 years of playing cover tunes, I've discovered that every type of music has challenges that can't always be appreciated just by listening. I don't just play Top-40 anymore; I also play originals, country, rock 'n' roll, big band, and easy listening. And I think it's a challenge for any musician to play different styles and make them sound like they should.

I know a lot of you guys are laughing to yourselves, saying, "Listen to this guy: He's been on the road for 16 years and he's proud because he thinks he's successful." Well, think about this: I've been all over the world, I've played for thousands of people, and in my travels I've been lucky enough to rub elbows with some great musicians. I'm currently playing in my own band on a cruise ship in the Caribbean. Maybe that's not success to you, but the IRS thinks it is. What I'm trying to say is: Before you cool dudes look down on me, ask yourself, "Do I have what it takes to play in a cover band?" For those of you who do, I'll see you out here.

Mike Musselman  
Memphis TN



### Tips On Subbing

Tom Oldakowski's article on subbing a show [June '91 *MD*] was excellent. It was full of valuable information for any drummer interested in show work. I had the pleasure of sitting in the pit with Tom during his run with the Broadway show *Chess*, and found it to be a wonderful experience.

I would like to mention that the lefty drummer may have a harder time landing a subbing job. One reason is that a right-handed drummer would much prefer not having his/her kit switched around by the sub. Also, sound baffles, microphones, electronics, and limited space sometimes make it impossible to switch the drums

over to a lefty setup. But lefties, don't give up! Here are a few suggestions: 1) Consider expanding your goals to include subbing for the percussion chair, which usually includes timpani, mallet percussion, hand drums, etc. 2) Try to find out if there is a lefty playing a show in town and let him or her know that you are interested in subbing. 3) Consider subbing for a touring show drummer. You will make a good contact, and there is always a chance he or she may ask you to finish the tour. Who knows; it may end up back on Broadway.

Ken Ross  
Riverside CT



### Acupad Review Rebuttal

*Modern Drummer* is a wonderful publication that I have enjoyed for years. You provide a variety of information to drummers worldwide, and since it is the only drum magazine on the market, I think it is important that this information be as thorough and accurate as possible. It is for this reason I am contacting you.

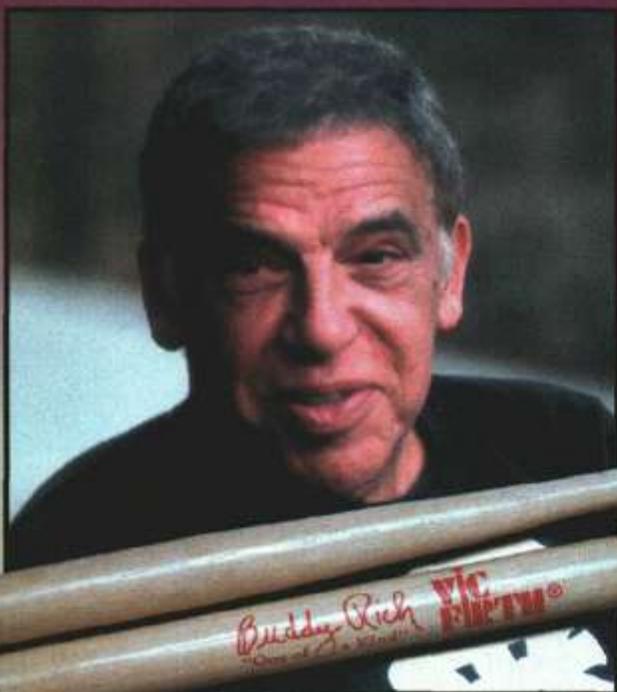
After reading Ed Uribe's review of Hart Systems Inc.'s *Acupad* in the August issue, one statement in particular concerns me. It reads: "If you need a trigger pad with especially sensitive tracking, the *Acupad* may not be your best choice." The *Acupad* is capable of tracking as well, if not better, than any pad on the market, at any head tension—providing the electronic controller is set up properly. As a company dedicated to quality products and service designed to meet the constantly changing needs of the consumer, HSI has put together parameter specification sheets for a variety of MIDI controllers. If this does not solve the problem a given consumer may have, HSI will modify the drums to personal specifications. (This has never been requested.)

Peter Hart  
Hart Systems, Inc.



# Vic Firth

Swings with  
3 Generations  
of Jazz

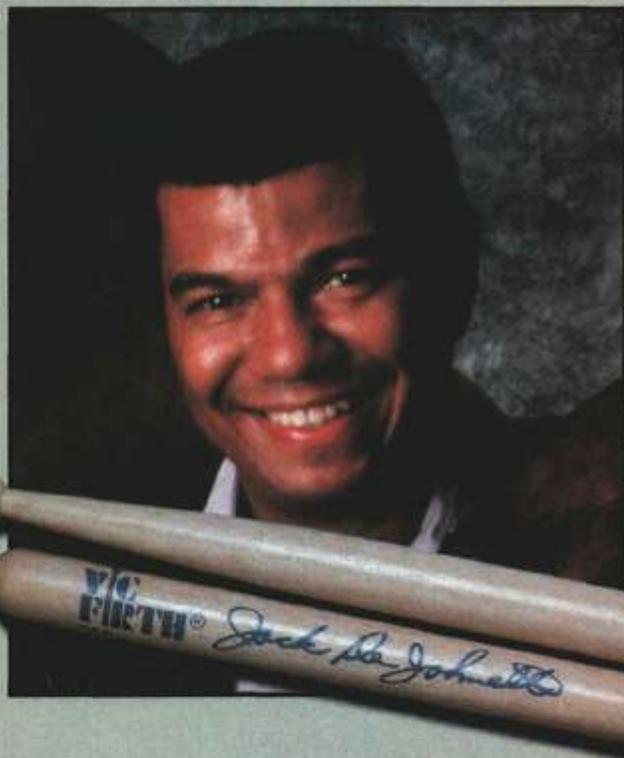


## Buddy Rich Signature Stick

We have researched Buddy's taste in sticks and created this model. It is a 5A - Buddy's preferred model - with a larger tip, neck, and shoulder. The profile of the stick is thus a single, curved line, giving the stick added weight and strength. The wood is hickory, and is finished with a white stain and red signature. Overall length: 16 3/8".

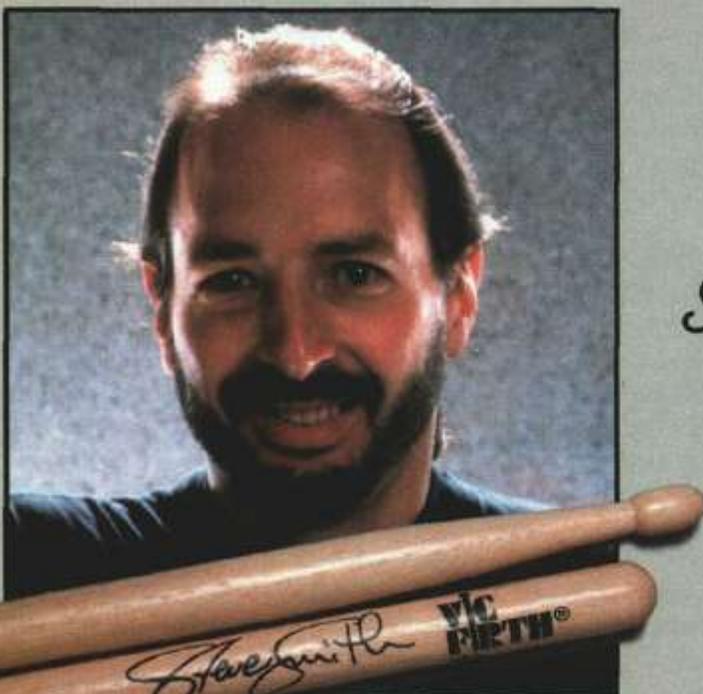
## Jack DeJohnette Signature Stick

This stick is a "Stretch 5A" - a full 3/16" longer than the conventional 5A, for extra drive and reach. Jazz and fusion artists will love its power. Crafted in hickory, and finished with a white stain and dark blue signature. Overall length: 16 3/8".



## Steve Smith Signature Stick

Designed by one of the finest all-around drummers today, this stick fulfills all of Steve's musical needs. It features a distinctive elongated tip, measuring a full 3/4" in length. The stick combines this unique tip with a long shoulder/short taper to provide the feel of a 5A - with the "beef" of a 5B! In natural hickory with black signature and logo. Overall length: 16".



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## Chris Whitten

Sometimes even a dream gig like Paul McCartney has its drawbacks. Chris Whitten, who had played on McCartney's *Flowers In The Dirt* and did the extensive tour that followed, decided late last summer that it was time to move on. Without another steady job lined up, and with only the promise of plentiful session work, Whitten left McCartney at the end of the tour. As luck and talent would have it, Chris was soon offered the drum spot on the Dire Straits 1991 summer tour.

It all worked out well for Chris, but what gave him the nerve to make a break like that? "I realized at the end of the tour that I had been with McCartney for three years, which is a long time for me," explains Chris. "I'm a session player at heart. I love the diversity of playing with all kinds of

artists, in all kinds of styles. Since the end of the tour was coming up, I decided the time was right."

After the tour, Chris hooked up with some sessions, did some clinics for Noble & Cooley on the East Coast, and planned to move from London to L.A. to expand his session career. One day while he was sitting in his manager's office discussing plans, the phone rang. "It was the Dire Straits people," says Whitten. "They asked me if I would be interested in doing the summer tour. I agreed, and when I went down to play the material from the new album, the stuff that Jeff



Porcaro played on felt great to me. He really did some tasteful, beautiful stuff, so doing the tour should be an enjoyable experience."

• Teri Saccone

## Michael Baker

Michael Baker says he wouldn't want to compare the Joe Zawinul Syndicate with Weather Report, because the latter was such a great band. But he sure is enjoying working with Zawinul anyway.

"In this band I have to do a lot of fast, creative rhythms with different splashes and things like that. It's definitely on the edge," Michael says. "I spent a lot of years playing jazz and organ trio music, learning how to play on the edge of the beat with-

out speeding up. Playing with a lot of those old jazz artists, there is a vocabulary of things that you do and don't play."

When he joined the Syndicate in 1990, Michael toured with the band for about eight months. Then they cut tracks for a new LP, which is due out shortly. Baker adds that in addition to playing drums, he also sings lead out front with the band, at which point the percussionist, Bobby Thomas, Jr., plays drums.

In addition to the Zawinul Syndicate album, Michael can be heard on Stanley Turrentine's last album, on Bobby Lyle's new album, and on Billy Childs' current release, *His April Touch*. Michael and his wife Aisha also had two of their songs in the film *The Five Heartbeats*. Michael played on both and sang on one.

• Robyn Flans

## Tim Alexander

If the rhythms pouring out of Tim Alexander appear out of this world, they're not. They just happen to originate from every corner of this world. Alexander blends influences like Chinese, Asian, Indian, and other Eastern musical dialects with folk, funk, metal, and progressive rock to help make San Francisco trio Primus one of today's most unusual acts.

On the band's latest release, *Sailing The Seas Of Cheese*, Alexander directs Primus through a set of seemingly chaotic

rhythmic pulses, textures, and time signatures. But the 26-year-old says there's a thought behind every note he plays—even if it forms a split second in advance.

"A lot of people think there's so much freedom in our songs to play whatever we want, but that's not true. We have structures and there are certain parts we hit all the time," Alexander says. "But within the structures, I'm kind of the one who gets to freestyle. Whatever comes out of me at that moment becomes part of the song."

Alexander strives to "keep things interesting" while staying within a song's boundaries. Toward that cause, he often adds kick to a verse with an unexpected double-bass ruff or triplet, back-to-back splash or China accents, trip-hammer flams across his acrylic tube toms, or a roll on the hi-hat. All the while, he maintains a driving rhythmic base. According to Tim, "It doesn't thrill me just to play a straight-four; my attention span won't let me do it."

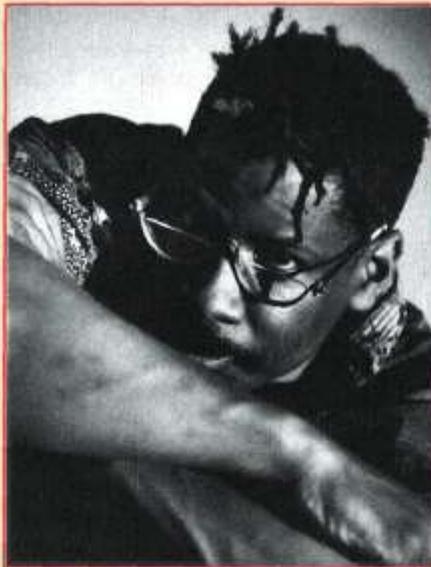
• Matt Peiken

## Vinx

"They were sticking me in front of everybody—Billy Vera, the Mamas & the Papas, Charlie Hayden. I even opened for this heavy metal band, Mother's Finest. It was kind of a test to see if I could fail in front of any of their people. So far it hasn't failed."

That's Vinx talking about his one-man percussion/vocal gig at the L.A. club At My Place. One rainy night a particularly noted patron was so knocked out by the show that he asked Vinx to be on his latest album and to open up his world tour with a short solo spot. That gentleman's name was Sting.

Sting also acted as producer for Vinx's album, *Rooms In My Fatha's House*. "He was the best producer I could have had," says Vinx. "He stood in the door and made sure nobody bothered us. Nothing was on that record unless I wanted it there."



Virtual carte blanche for a relatively unknown performer? Well, Vinx hasn't

exactly come out of nowhere. After a promising career as a triple jumper was cut short by an injury and the U.S. boycott of the Moscow Olympics in '80, Vinx decided to "officially become just a musician." Session work followed his "discovery" by Taj Mahal at the Montreux Jazz Festival, and he put together a band that includes percussionists Bill Summers, Darryl Munyungo Jackson, and Angel Figueroa. All these players, along with heavyweights like Herbie Hancock and Branford Marsalis, appear on Vinx's album, a very live-sounding, tribal meets R&B kind of music.

"It's primitive pop," Vinx offers. "It's like going back to all those sounds that everybody's trying to fake, but we just do it. What you hear on the album is what you hear when you see us live."

• Adam J. Budofsky

## Mark Schulman

Fifteen months is a long time to be on the road attests Mark Schulman, who was out with Richard Marx for that lengthy period. "If you look at it strictly from a playing angle," Mark explains, "it was a nice challenge for me in choosing my spots and playing simple, because the idea was just to lay it down and cop the parts from the record. The main thing was trying to make it feel good and to make the tempos right. A lot of times I would play with the click track. Singers tend to perceive tempos differently from night to night, and Richard, being the adamant personality he is, would swear that my tempos would vary. But I was using a click. One time he even said the voltage must be off on the click!"

When Mark returned from the road, he began working with Mr. Mister's Steve Farris. "It's sort of U2 meets the Police with a little more of a player's kind of attitude," he suggests. "Steve really welcomes a lot of playing, so for being a commercially oriented project, I have a lot of freedom—more so than any other project of that type. The rhythm tracks almost have a...I hate to use the 'F' word...but they have a fusiony edge to them."

Mark also works dates with Jeff Lorber, pop/jazz saxophonist Dave Koz, and Joe Pasquale. And in his spare time, he is working to establish a music underscoring production company with a partner.

• Robyn Flans

## Freddie Gruber

Freddie Gruber, the innovative veteran Los Angeles drum teacher, has embarked on a series of clinics in response to a promise he made to his late, dear friend, Buddy Rich. The clinics are lengthy and well-rounded and have a historical perspective. "I stick close to the evolution of facility as it relates to music," he explains.

In his clinics Gruber dramatizes what drummers can do to make music work. In addition to describing the history of the instrument, he defines swinging by breaking it down and relating it to various

time signatures from a variety of cultural backgrounds. He also stresses the importance of what the great players have done over the years—involving themselves with creating a more direct bridge to music, enlivening and giving meaning to music, bypassing the all-encompassing concern with fleet hands and feet.

Gruber brings his great passion and knowledge to his clinics. Thus far he has given them in New York and in cities in the western U.S., including Seattle. His plans include appearances at colleges like North Texas State, and in a variety of

American cities. Gruber currently is looking into possibilities for his clinics in Europe.

The future? "I plan to continue teaching one-to-one in L.A. and doing the clinics as well. It is also my hope to develop a presentation concerned with Buddy Rich's natural approach to the instrument. He was the genius of the drums, and there was so much to his playing. We owe it to him to clarify and dramatize what he did and what he represented."

• Burt Korall

## Dan Peters

Dan Peters, the new drummer for Screaming Trees who spent the past several years pounding away for fellow Seattle favorite Mudhoney, says it would be easy for novices to lump the two groups together. But he insists differences between them are clear from the drummer's stool.

"Mudhoney is pretty much just full-on noise, kind of a sloppy band," Peters explains. "But the Trees are just a good pop band with great songs. A lot of peo-

ple might be scared off by the name of the band or by the album cover [to *Uncle Anesthesia*, the band's latest effort], but if they gave it half a chance, they'd be surprised."

Peters, who replaced Mark Pickerel just after the release of the new record, says the immediate transition between bands had its ups and downs. "It's hard for me to just step in and play somebody else's stuff," Peters says. "I like to just hear the music and play what feels right. But I

have to pretty much play what Mark felt was right. On the other hand, all the stuff is already there for me, tailor-made. I don't have to come up with my own ideas. And I like the tunes, so it's not really a bummer."

Peters plans to tour with the Trees and stay with the band afterward, while at the same time picking up with Mudhoney again when that band regroups.

• **Matt Peiken**

## News...

**Kenny Aronoff** is on Glenn Frey's track for the film *Thelma & Louise*, Lyle Lovett's track for the film *Switch*, tracks for Belinda Carlisle, seven songs for Henry Lee Summer, Billy Falcon's LP, three tracks with new artist Danny Tate (which **Stan Lynch** produced), two tracks for James Reyne, a song with Junk Yard, and John Mellencamp's newest.

**Tom Roady** has been recording with Suzy Boggus, Paulette Carlson, Lacy J. Dalton, Anne Murray, and Ricky Skaggs.

**Mike Baird** has been recording tracks with Eddie Money, Richard Marx, Gladys Knight, Kenny Loggins, and Curtis Stigers.

**Tony Braunagel** is now working with Jack Mack & the Heart Attack.

Since leaving Santana, **Walfredo Reyes, Jr.** has been working on a recording project produced by Michael Sembello, with Reyes' brothers Danny on percussion and Kamar on vocals. He also recorded some tracks with Rickie Lee Jones, Jennifer Warnes, and Marcos Loya (sharing with **Carlos Vega**), and toured with Boz Scaggs. And in his spare time, he's

working on his own project, *Wallyworld*.

**Armand Grimaldi** is touring with **Don Henley**.

**Ricky Fatar** is working with Bonnie Raitt.

**Scott Crago** is doing Stevie Nicks' current tour.

**Eric Darken** has been recording with Yolanda Adams, Margret Becker, the Archers, Rich Mullins, and Paul Smith. He has also been doing various live dates with Sandi Patti. You can also hear him on his own solo Christmas record, which came out last winter.

**Jimmy "Chocolate" Chalfant** on Kix's new album, *Hot Wire*.

**Will Shepler** has been in the studio with Agnostic Front, working on their new LP, *One Voice*.

**Joel Maitoza** on the road with 24-7 Spyz.

**Vinnie Colaiuta** on *Awa Yio*, the new album by Ivan Lins.

**Eric Michaels** is on tour with Raw Youth, supporting their debut album, *Hot Diggity*.

**Mel Gaynor** on tour with Simple Minds.

**Mark Decloedt** on the road with EMF.

Percussionist **Debra Dobkin** on the road with Vinnie

James.

**Ron Riddle** currently on the road with Stuart Hamm.

**Dave Mattacks** has been working with XTC on their upcoming release.

**Wally Stryk** is now doing gigs with Kei Akagi, as well as continuing to work with Don Preston.

The Department of Defense recently sent drummer **Peter Maier** with band Zeke Moffit to military bases in Saudi Arabia to perform for the troops.

**Johnny "Bee" Badanjek** currently on tour with Nils Lofgren.

Vibes/marimba artist **Arthur Lipner** recently completed his first solo project, *Arthur Lipner & The Any Language Band*. It includes guitarist Vic Juris, and Bob Mintzer also plays on a few tracks. Arthur toured Japan and Europe this past spring, and has joined the guest faculty of Brabants Conservatory in Tilburg, Holland.

The always-busy **Carl Allen** has been working on individual projects with Jackie McLean, Abdullah Ibrahim, Ricky Ford, George Coleman, and Donald Harrison. Carl also recently did a month-long tour with the group Jazz Futures.

**Mark Brzezicki** has been exceptionally busy of late. Besides his thriving session career (including work with Procol Harum, Midge Ure, Pete Townshend, Roger Daltrey, Nik Kershaw, and Nils Lofgren), Mark has been working on an album with the re-formed Big Country, due this fall. Also a project dear to him is On The Air, a band he is working on with Simon Townshend. According to Mark, this band's upcoming release, due in autumn, will be of particular interest to drummers.

Congratulations to **Kenny Washington** for winning the prestigious Martin E. Segal Award from the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. This award is given to artists who exemplify the highest standard of performance and dedication to inspiring other young performers.

Drummer (and occasional MD author) **Tim Smith** has replaced **Bob Mummert** with Sweethearts of the Rodeo. Bob has taken the drum chair for Reba McEntire's band. Congratulations are also in order to Tim and his wife Sha on the birth of their daughter Madison.



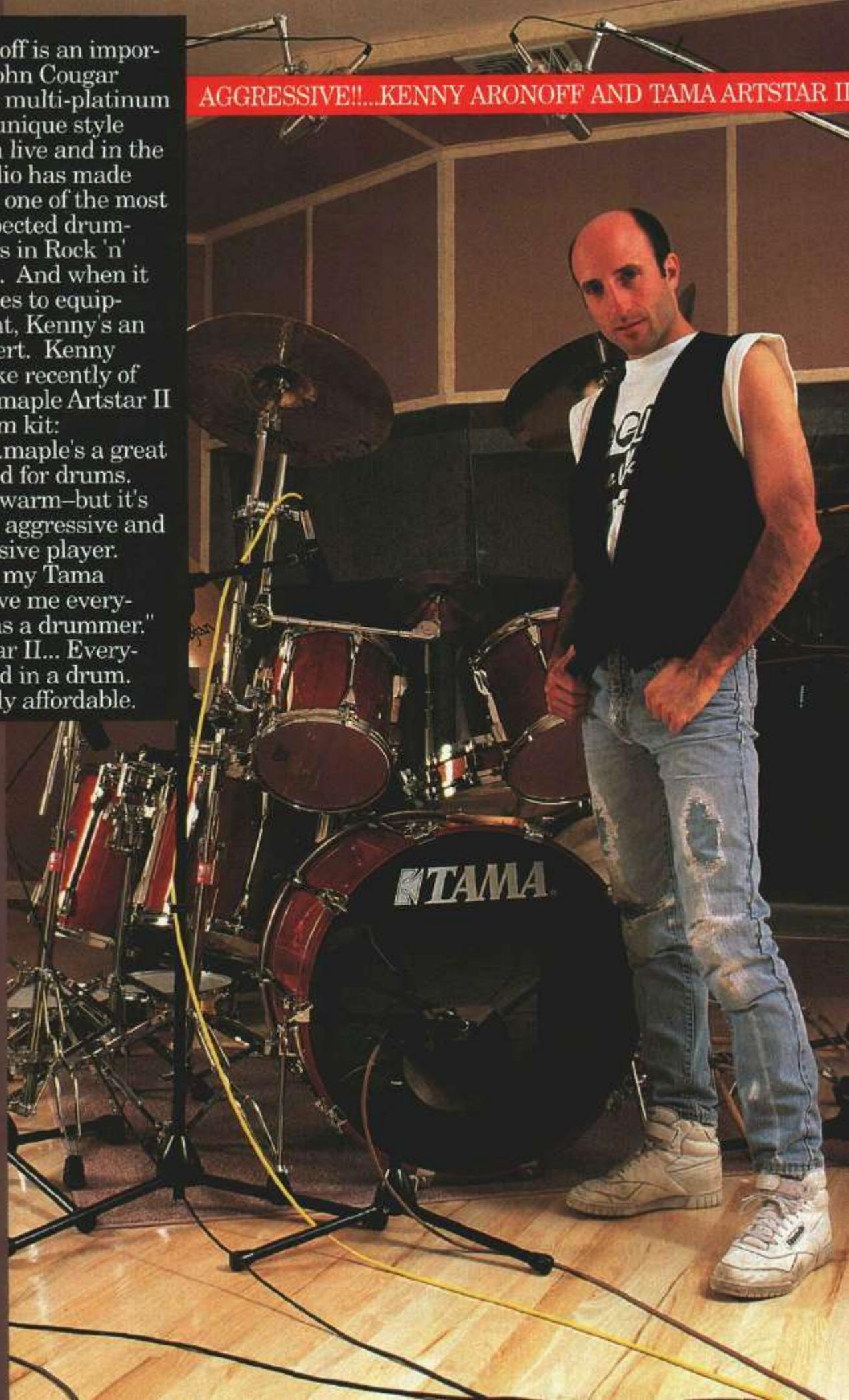
Kenny Aronoff is an important part of John Cougar Mellencamp's multi-platinum success. His unique style both live and in the studio has made him one of the most respected drummers in Rock 'n' Roll. And when it comes to equipment, Kenny's an expert. Kenny spoke recently of his maple Artstar II drum kit:

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## Manolo Badrena

**Q** I really enjoy your playing on Steve Khan's *Public Access* album. I think you are one of the most tasteful percussionists today. What were some of the instruments (particularly the shakers and rattles) that you used on Steve's album? Also, did you use an Udu drum, and if so, could you write out some of your techniques on that particular instrument? Being a student at P.I.T., I have become very interested in hand percussion. Could you give me some advice on playing percussion?

James Sulewski  
Hollywood CA

**A** First, thanks for your kind words on my playing. "Advice for playing percussion" is a lengthy subject, since it includes as many techniques as there are



countries in the world. Working as a percussionist today, you have the advantage of recordings, films, international media events, and all sorts of sources you can use to tap some learning skills from. Remember that percussion is not only classical or pop-oriented; there are countless countries in the world whose people have some kind of percussive idiom happening in their own culture—each with its own sound and technique.

As far as what instruments I've used on Eyewitness recordings, it's been caxixis, tube shakers, and shekeres. I play the Udu drum acoustically as well as sampled. A chart for any of the Udu drum parts would be a bit too complicated to run in this column, so write to me in care of *MD*, and I'll be happy to work one up for you.

## Chris Parker

**Q** I've noticed that on recent shows of *Saturday Night Live* you've been playing a smaller kit than on previous shows. I'd like to know the make and sizes of the drums and cymbals that comprise that red wood drumkit. It sounds great!

Mike Dmytriw  
Cleveland OH

**A** Thanks very much for your query and compliments. It's funny; never in my career has one set of drums generated so much interest and enthusiasm. It's especially nice for me, since I've been playing this kit in one form or another since I was 11 years old! I remember the strippers used to sit on the bass drum to take off their high heels.

To answer your questions: The kit includes a Ludwig *Pioneer* model, 12x26 single-tension bass drum stuffed significantly with a few pages of a 1970 newspaper from Woodstock, New York. The toms are an early-'60s Gretsch 8x12 that I refinished to match the bass drum, and a mid-'70s Yamaha 14x14 from a walnut recording kit of mine. A snare came with the bass drum (for \$1.50!) at a flea market in Kent Cliffs, New York, where I grew up. It was also a Ludwig *Pioneer* model, but I had to retire it in favor of a Pearl brass piccolo. Incidentally, the hardware is all Pearl with RIMS mounts, but Speedy Rosenthal, my drum

tech at NBC, refinished it with 8 coats of orange shellac to give it its "old gold" appearance. The cymbals are all Zildjian *Brilliant*s: 14" K hi-hats, an 18" K *Dark Crash*, a 22" Z ride (dry, hammered), and a 17" K *Dark Crash*.

## Phil Collins

**Q** I'm about to add a China cymbal to my kit, but I've been holding off until I could find out the size, brand, and type of cymbal you used on the song "Abacab," from the album of the same name. It's played over the lyrics, "...You want it, you got it, now you know...." I know many drummers consider that to be the ultimate China sound, and I would appreciate your help.

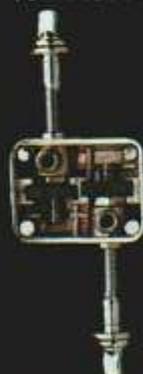
Rick Fontaine  
Galesburg MI

**A** China cymbals are really a matter of taste. I consider them to be like a drummer's equivalent of a fuzz box, so...different cymbals for different occasions. The type used on "Abacab" was an 18" Zildjian; it's one of my favorites.



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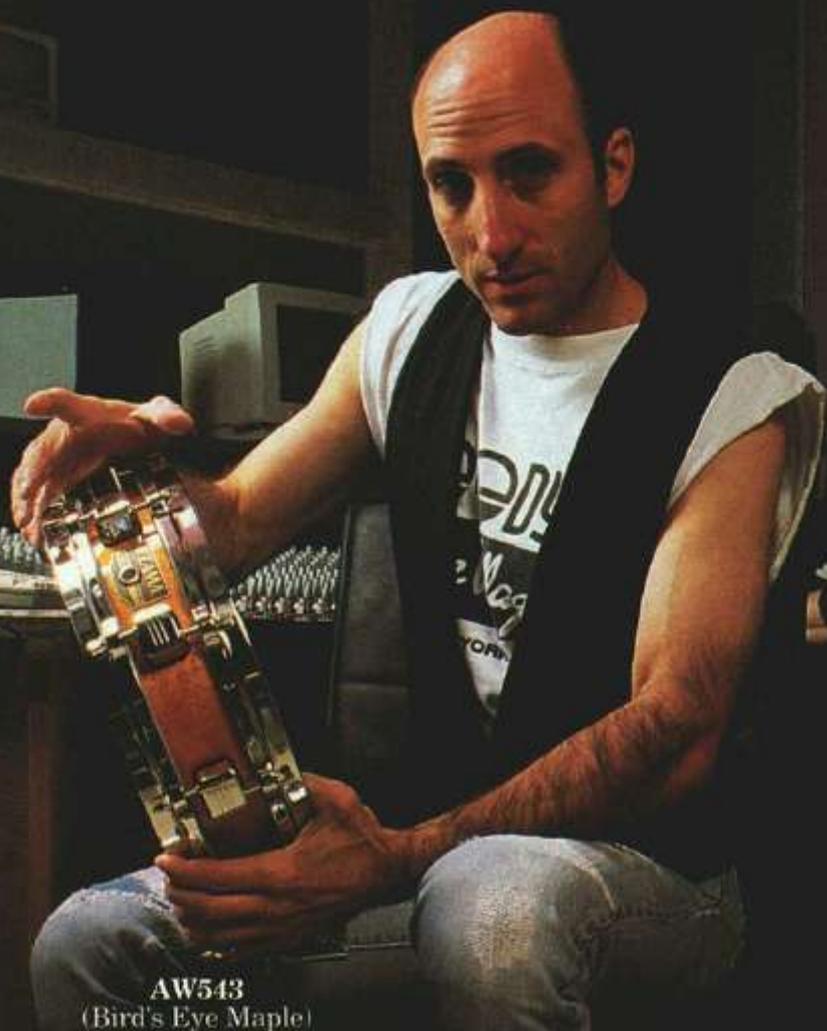
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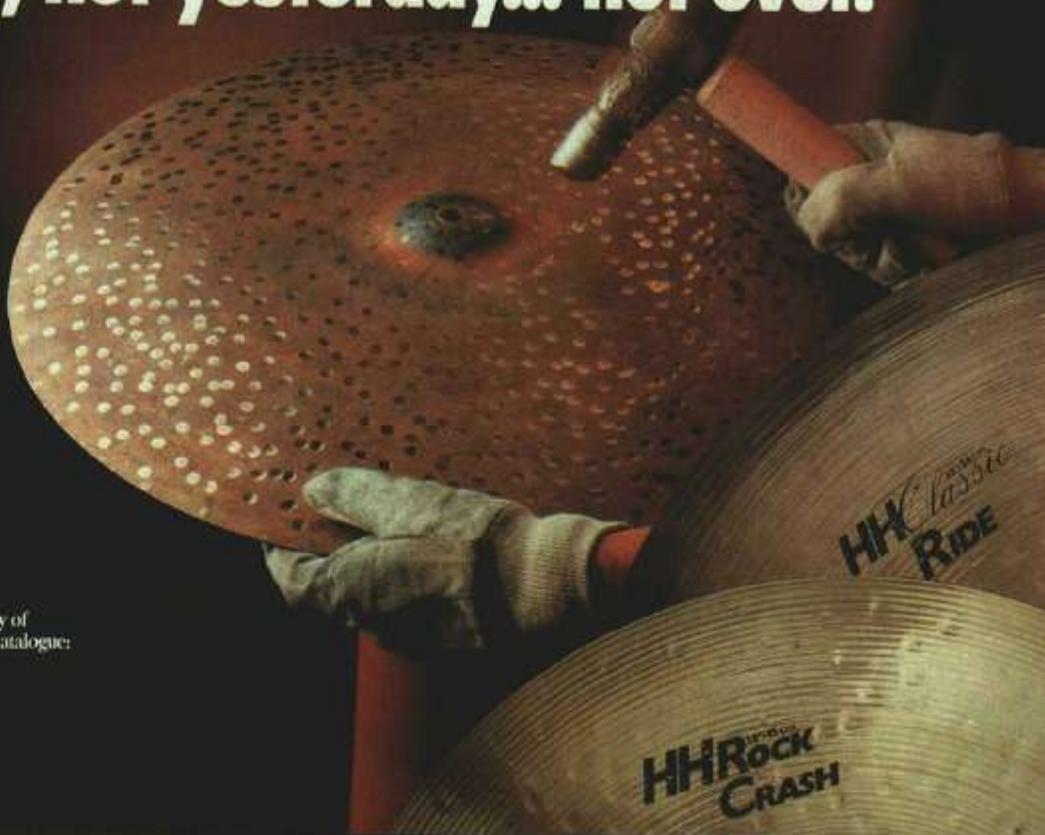
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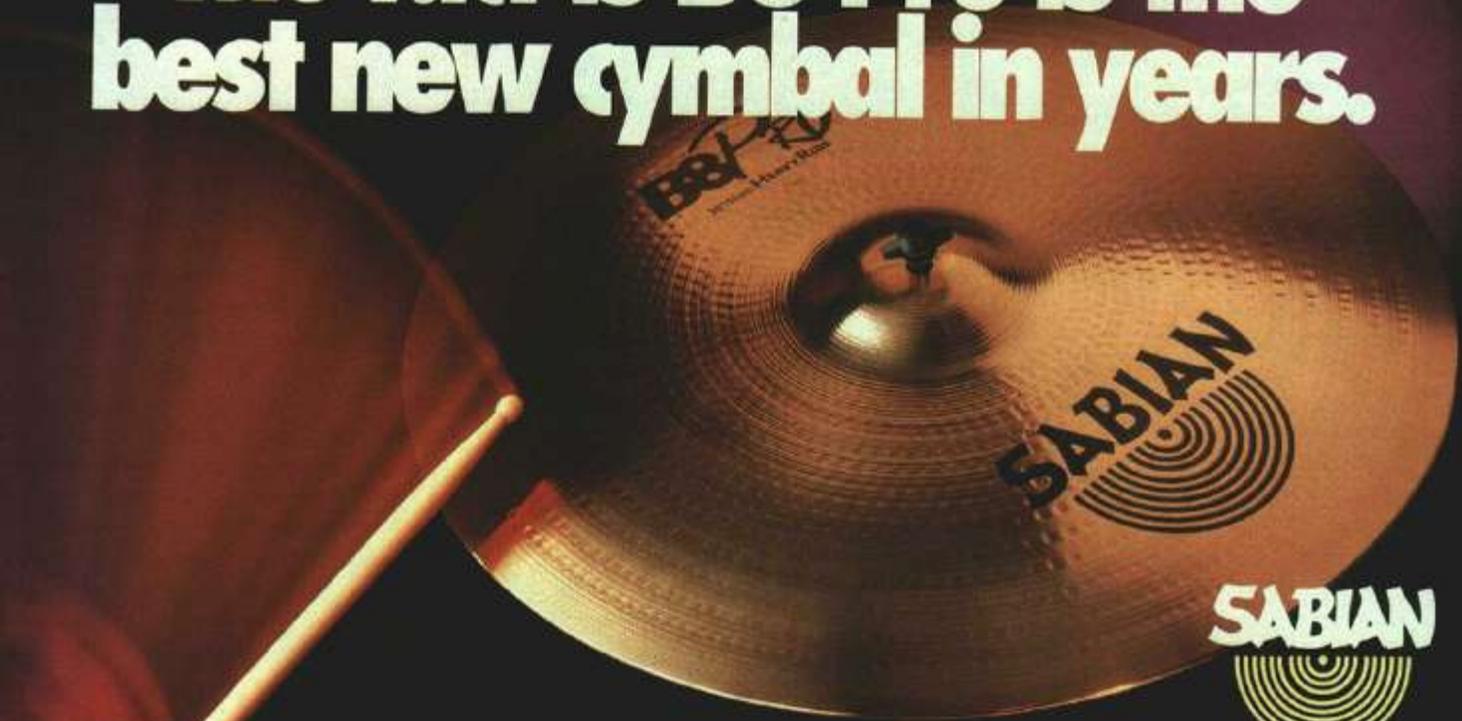
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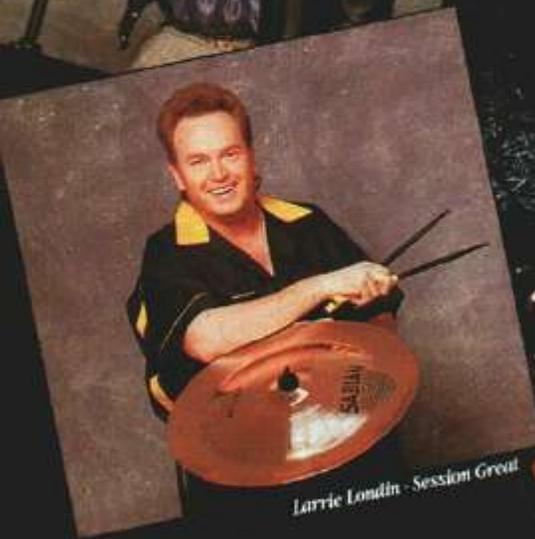
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## Q How To Find Steel Drums?

I would like to know if there is any company that makes steel drums, and if so, how I could get them through a local music store.

Jeremy Shaffer  
Dalmatia PA

## Q Caroline/ASBA Pedal Parts?

Where can parts for a Caroline/ASBA bass drum pedal be obtained? Ludwig was the distributor when I bought the pedal, but at the present time the information I'm looking for is not available.

Jerry Bogner  
Irvington NJ

A Paul Real Sales is now importing authentic steel drums made in the Caribbean. They are also the U.S. distributors for French-made Cappelle drum products. Cappelle was the last manufacturer of the Caroline/ASBA pedal prior to its discontinuance, and Paul Real does have a limited supply of some parts. The company is a wholesaler, and does not deal directly with the public. However, you may contact them to get information about steel drums and Caroline/ASBA parts, and to find out how a store in your area might be able to order them for you. Contact Paul Real at 1507 Mission Street., South Pasadena, CA 91030, tel: (800) 722-0558, fax: (818) 441-6686.

## Q Problems With Ludwig Shells?

I recently purchased a set of Ludwig *Super Classic* four-ply maple drums. After I made the purchase, I decided to dig through some back issues of *MD* in hopes of finding a product review of my new pride and joy. Sure enough, the November '88 issue possessed said article. In it, Rick Van Horn expressed concern that the bass drum shell may be

forced out of round by the weight of the rack toms and supporting hardware. Since that review was written two years ago, do you know if Rick's concern has become a reality for some owners of four-ply *Super Classics I*? If yes, is there a preference between using an extendable down tube for additional support, or suspending the toms from floor stands?

Tom White  
Baltimore MD

A *MD* has never received any letters from drummers who have experienced problems with their Ludwig *Super Classic* shells, and the Ludwig company informs us that neither have they. However, if you are concerned with the weight of your toms, Ludwig recommends that they be suspended on a floor stand, rather than using an extended down tube. (Ludwig does not offer such a device.) In that way, the resonance advantages of the thinner bass drum shell are not compromised by the insertion of additional hardware within the drum's cavity.

## Q "Play It Straight" T-Shirts?

I've seen the "Play It Straight" public service messages in your magazine for some time now, and I applaud the effort to show the concern of the drumming community. Are there any plans to market the "Play It Straight" logo on such items as T-shirts, pins, stickers, etc.? I would be proud to wear the message on my back, and I'm sure many others would feel the same.

Steve Broberg  
Placentia CA

A "Play It Straight" T-shirts are produced by Slobeat Musical Products, 15854 West 6th Avenue, Golden, Colorado 80401, (303) 277-1017. Contact them directly for information on how to order a shirt. (And thanks for your support of the "Play It Straight" campaign!)

## Q Career Advice?

I've been playing the drums for approximately nine years, and I have an intense love for music and the musician's lifestyle. I only have limited experience, but it's enough to know that I had to do something with my life, due to the fact that the odds of making it big in music are really slim. So I joined the Marines right out of high school—which kind of put an end to my playing the drums on a regular basis. I'm proud to serve my country, and I love the Corps like family, but I have this burning desire to continue making music. I sometimes feel like my chance is passing me by, and I don't want to be an old man looking back one day and wishing I had done what I could have. What I'm looking for is some advice.

Lcpl. Tom McGee  
Philadelphia PA

A While we can't advise you on how to become a drumming star, we can give you at least one suggestion on how you might combine your present status in the Marine Corps with your desire to make a life in music. The Marine Band Program offers excellent opportunities for both musical education and a musical career. Check out Rick Van Horn's feature, "Drums In The Military: The Armed Forces School Of Music" in the May '91 issue of *MD*. In it, Rick mentions how active-duty military personnel might apply for a change of military occupational specialty (MOS), and audition for the School of Music as a means of entering the band program. At the same time, check with the director of the Marine Band nearest to your duty station. You might be able to get some first-hand information about the band program that will help you decide if it has something to offer you personally.



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# The Passion of KENNY ARONOFF

By Rick Mattingly

Photo by Rick Malkin

**P**roducer Don Was remembers the day well. First he produced a Bob Seger session during which the band recorded a Texas shuffle. Later that day he produced another Seger session on which the band was evoking an AC/DC spirit. That night he produced Bonnie Raitt and B.B. King performing a blues together for a movie soundtrack. Towards the end of that third session, he turned to Kenny Aronoff and said, "I've worked with three different drummers today, and they were all you!"

Recalling the incident some months later, Don Was tries to analyze how Aronoff can cover a number of different styles so convincingly and still sound like himself. "It's because Kenny's playing so matches his personality," Was suggests. "He's a walking paradox, you know?"

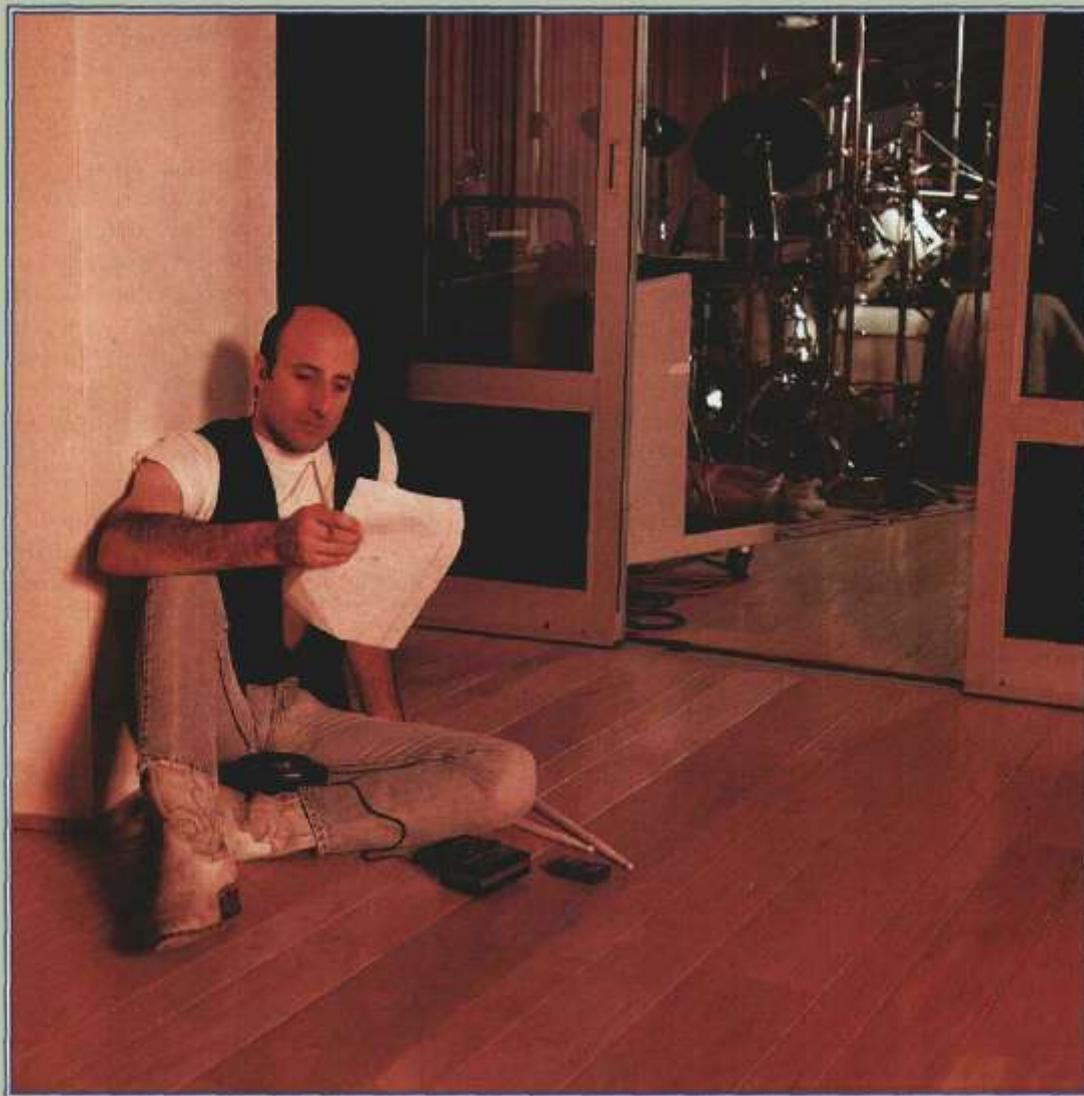
There are several things that you don't necessarily find in one person all living in Kenny." As Was realizes what he just said, he cracks up. "This *is* starting to sound like *The Exorcist*," he laughs.

Turning serious again, Was continues. "Here's a good example: The guy is a university-educated percussionist, yet he manages to combine this sophisticated musicality with the energy of a kid playing in a garage band. That's what I really find charming about Kenny's playing. He's got all the technique and chops of any studio drummer who's out there; no one is going to play any cleaner, and you can't baffle him by putting a weird chart in front of him. And yet, he doesn't play like a studio guy.

"I don't want to knock studio musicians," Was hastens to add, "but Kenny plays with the unbridled enthusiasm of a

kid who's in the studio for the first time. He hits hard and takes chances, which goes against the grain of what a studio professional is supposed to do. Kenny might get into some fill, and you're holding your breath wondering how he's going to get out of it. And he gets out of it! It turns out to have been a very sophisticated idea. So he's raw, and yet a player with a tremendous amount of finesse."

Over the past couple of years, Aronoff has had plenty of opportunities to display that unique blend of polish and gusto. After working virtually non-stop with John Cougar Mellencamp from 1980-'88, Kenny was forced into a career change when Mellencamp decided to take an indefinite vacation away from music in order to make a movie and devote more time to painting. Aronoff took advantage



of the layoff to pursue his longstanding goal of doing studio work. Between the time that Mellencamp came off the road in '88 and reconvened the band this past February, Aronoff appeared on some 50 albums by a variety of artists.

But why Aronoff? During all those years with Mellencamp he had been working out of Bloomington, Indiana, not exactly the recording mecca of North America. Sure, Kenny was a fine drummer who had a handful of platinum albums to his credit, but next to the regular L.A. studio cats, he was a virtual beginner. So why use a guy that you have to fly in from *Indiana*, for cryin' out loud, when there are plenty of seasoned studio drummers already in town? (A question that has undoubtedly crossed the minds of some of those LA drummers.)

That rare combination of rawness and

finesse that Don Was mentioned probably had something to do with it. But there's another aspect to Aronoff that

**"I'm definitely a band kind of guy, no matter how many sessions I play."**

figures prominently into the picture. Don Was explains:

"On Iggy Pop's record," Was recalls, "we were going to do a song that John Hiatt wrote. John was making his own

album next door, and he was going to come over and play on it. We had a great band: Iggy and Waddy Wachtel on guitars, Charley Drayton on bass, and Kenny on drums. So John came over to do the song, and I think he really wanted to play on Iggy's record, but he was exhausted and hungry. We were going to order food, but it was going to take a long time, so John sort of excused himself and left.

"It resulted in a misunderstanding," Was says. "Iggy thought that John was pissed off about something and didn't want to play on his record, and he felt badly, thinking that he had done something to offend John. So everyone was bummed out and the level of enthusiasm dropped. But we had to cut the track to stay on schedule. So we went in, minus John, and no one felt like playing. But Kenny jumped in right from the

countoff—you can hear it on the tape—and he slammed extra hard because he knew that everyone needed bolstering. And as bummed out as everyone was, 15 seconds into the thing it was slammin', just because Kenny played with so much enthusiasm. His spirit jumped across the room and got inside everyone else.

"That's the take that's on the record. It's amazing. We just had to go back and overdub everybody else on the first 15 seconds till they got on to what Kenny was doing."

**K**enny Aronoff spins the dial of the combination lock of a safe that is concealed in his home. "Check

this out," he says, reaching inside. He pulls out a CD of *With The Beatles* that has been signed, "To Kenny, Love, Ringo Starr." It was a gift from Starr in appreciation for a series of articles Aronoff once wrote for *MD* in which he analyzed Ringo's drumming.

And he keeps it in a safe? Noting various gold and platinum album awards that hang in Aronoff's den and office, many people would consider those to be the greater treasure. "I've got a bunch of those," Kenny says. "But this Ringo autograph is really special." He looks at it for a moment, smiling like a kid at Christmas, before returning it to the safe.

And that, as much as anything, sums

up Kenny Aronoff. He's had a successful career going for over a decade, and is considered one of the finest drummers in the business. But he has never lost his boyish enthusiasm for music. The fact that Kenny retained his love for the '60s music that originally inspired him caused him to make an important career decision. During Mellencamp's layoff he got a call telling him that the original members of the Jefferson Airplane—minus drummer Spencer Dryden—were reuniting for an album and a tour. Kenny was invited to join.

Aronoff loved the Jefferson Airplane, and what could be more exciting than to be invited to join a band that you had idolized? But there were considerations.

## Kenny's Listening Pleasure

Here are a few of the records that Kenny feels best represent his drumming.

| Album Title                  | Artist                 | Label/Catalog #         |
|------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Scarecrow                    | John Cougar Mellencamp | Riva/Polygram 824-865-2 |
| The Lonesome Jubilee         | John Cougar Mellencamp | Riva/Polygram 832-465-2 |
| American Fool                | John Cougar Mellencamp | Riva/Polygram 814-465-2 |
| Uh Huh                       | John Cougar Mellencamp | Riva/Polygram RVCD 7504 |
| Blaze Of Glory/Young Guns 2  | Jon Bon Jovi           | Mercury 846-473-2       |
| Brick By Brick               | Iggy Pop               | Virgin Records 91381-2  |
| Under The Red Sky            | Bob Dylan              | Columbia CK 46794       |
| Home                         | Bodeans                | Slash/Reprise 25876-2   |
| Blood On The Bricks          | Aldo Nova              | Jambco 848513           |
| Too Long In The Wasteland    | James McMurtry         | Columbia CK 45229       |
| All American Boy             | Vinnie James           | BMG/RCA 2387-2-RSP      |
| Life's Too Short             | Marshall Crenshaw      | MCA 10223               |
| Bang                         | Carey Hart             | EMI 7-92513-2           |
| The Knife Feels Like Justice | Brian Setzer           | EMI 17178-1             |

And here are a few of the most influential recordings Kenny's listened to over the years.

| Album Title  | Artist                      | Drummer   | Label/Catalog #       |
|--|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Are You Experienced                                  | The Jimi Hendrix Experience | Mitch Mitchell  | Reprise 6261-2        |
| Axis: Bold As Love                                   | The Jimi Hendrix Experience | Mitch Mitchell  | Reprise 6281-2        |
| all  | The Beatles                 | Ringo Starr   |                       |
| all  | Rolling Stones              | Charlie Watts   |                       |
| Aja  | Steely Dan                  | Paul Humphrey   | MCA 37214             |
|  |                             | Steve Gadd  |                       |
|  |                             | Bernard Purdie  |                       |
|  |                             | Rick Marotta  |                       |
|  |                             | Ed Greene   |                       |
|  |                             | Jim Keltner   |                       |
| Blue Matter  | John Scofield               | Dennis Chambers   | Gramavision 18-8702-2 |
| Heavy Weather  | Weather Report              | Alex Acuna  | Columbia CK 34418     |
| There And Back                                       | Jeff Beck                   | Simon Phillips  | Epic/Sony 35-8P-5     |
| Avalon   | Roxy Music                  | Andy Newmark  | Warner Bros. 23686-2  |
| Shoot Out The Lights                                 | Richard Thompson            | Dave Mattacks   | Hannibal HNBL 1303    |
| Pat Metheny Group                                    | Pat Metheny                 | Danny Gottlieb  | ECMCCM-1-1114         |
| Concerto for Two Pianos,<br>Percussion and Orchestra | Bela Bartok                 | Timpani: Saul Goodman                                     | Columbia MS 6956      |
|  |                             | Perc: Morris Lang,<br>Elden Bailey,<br>Walter Rosenberger |                       |



Reunions of '60s bands were becoming a dime a dozen, and many of them were dismal failures. If Kenny were going to have a successful career away from Mellencamp, he needed to establish himself as being on the cutting edge. Doing an album and tour with a dinosaur '60s band was not necessarily the way to achieve that goal.

But Kenny followed his heart and joined the Jefferson Airplane. "It was great, man," Kenny says. "I'd shut my eyes and I'd be 13 again, listening to the Airplane do 'White Rabbit.' Except this time I was on stage with them, playing the drums."

Aronoff admits that the record and tour were not considered especially successful. "Some comments went down in the industry about the material and the quality of musicianship," he says. "But those comments weren't about me; in fact, I got a lot of credit for holding the whole thing together." So how did it ultimately affect Aronoff's career? "It

worked out great," Kenny answers. "It was the first time I'd done a big tour outside of John Mellencamp, so that waved the flag and people realized I was out there. I think that's how Don Was heard that I was buzzing around. Don was asking about drummers who were available, and a guy who had worked as an assistant at the Record Plant when we did the *Airplane* album there mentioned my name."

Was subsequently hired Aronoff to record with Bob Dylan, Iggy Pop, Elton John, Bob Seger, Bonnie Raitt & B.B. King, Neil Diamond, Lyle Lovett, and Glenn Frey. Kenny also connected with Jon Bon Jovi, who hired him for the *Blaze Of Glory/Young Guns II* soundtrack, which was co-produced by Danny Kortchmar. Bon Jovi and Kortchmar went on to use Kenny on projects with Aldo Nova, Hall & Oates, and Billy Falcon. Aronoff also participated on sessions with the Indigo Girls, James McMurtry, Marshall Crenshaw, Henry

Lee Summer, Les Paul, and Belinda Carlisle, among others.

Doing all of those sessions, Aronoff found out that the studio is considerably different than the stage. "I'd gotten my live thing happening years ago," Kenny says. "I've been in bands since I was in the fifth grade. But sessions is a whole different world. You don't have time to hang out with a bunch of guys for two years before you make a record. You walk in and you have to jump from A to Z like that," he says, snapping his fingers.

"I don't consider myself a genius," Aronoff continues. "But if you do something over and over again, and you really care about it, you're going to learn from it and get better. So my eyes and ears were open. I was sucking in everything I was seeing and hearing. I learned something from every artist and producer.

"Obviously I learned more about my equipment," he says. "I tried many different types of cymbals and snare drums. I also tried different approaches to hit-

ting the drums. I usually beat the crap out of the drums. When the red light goes on, it's like I strap on the seat belt, put the pedal to the metal, and go like it was the Indy 500. Well, I still have that feeling, but I've learned to sometimes play a little lighter.

"One thing I noticed immediately," Kenny says, "is that it's easier to keep good time when I play soft and relaxed. That doesn't mean that playing soft is always better. When you are really hitting hard, there is a certain kind of force and aggression, and the placement of the

beat tends to be a little ahead. Plus, it affects the other players and makes them play with a certain urgency. But when you play a little softer, you flow better and your time improves."

Of course, "softer" for Aronoff still constitutes LOUD for the average drummer. "That's true," Kenny laughs. "The most frequent comment I hear is, 'I've never heard anybody hit so hard.' But there's a way to play hard and be relaxed. You can damage yourself if you're tense. As I bring the stroke down, my hand is relaxed until an instant

before I hit, and then I snap my wrist. But I immediately relax it again as I bring it back up."

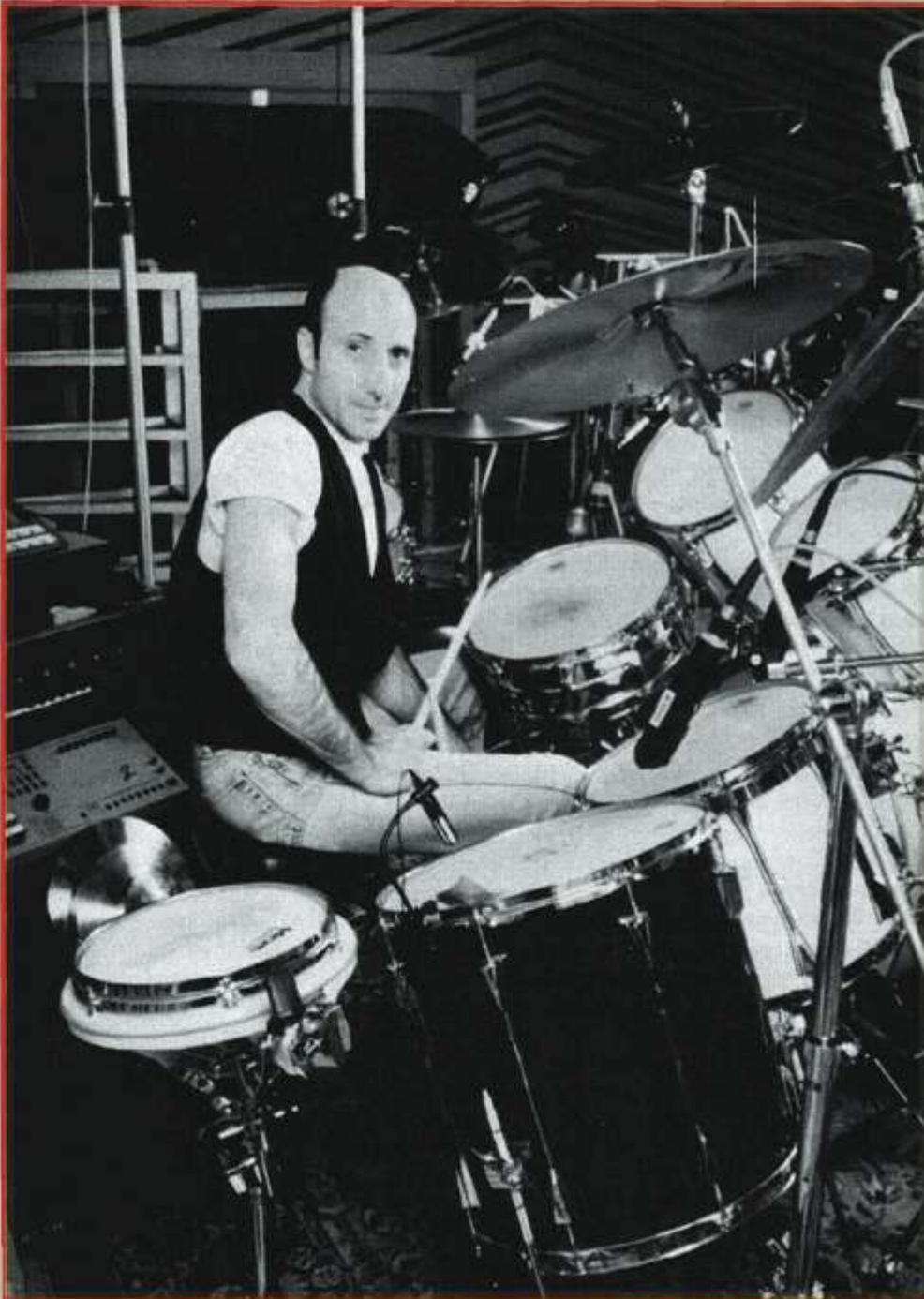
Besides altering his technique for certain tunes, Kenny found that his equipment often needed to change as well. "Snare drums can be a big issue," he says. "On some albums, they want me to use the same drum all the way through, as though we were playing a show. But on a lot of sessions, I'll change snare drums and cymbals from song to song."

Aronoff advises anyone who wants to do studio work to invest in a collection of snare drums. "Start with a 5" metal drum and a 6 1/2" wood," he says. "That will cover a lot of situations. The next step would be to get either a wood or metal 3" piccolo snare. Now you're pretty well-rounded. Then start expanding until you have each of those sizes in wood and metal."

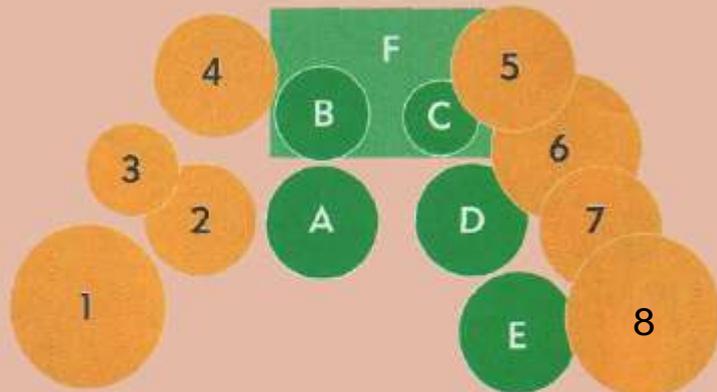
While Aronoff likes to have a number of snare drums at his disposal in the studio, he is quick to point out that changing drums is not always necessary. "You can play the drum loud or soft, hit rimshots or hit it in the middle, or just tune the drum differently," he says. "By hitting the drum differently, it doesn't sound like the same drum."

"I try to never muffle drums if I don't have to," Kenny adds, "but if that's what a producer wants, that's what I'll do." Kenny pauses and shakes his head with amusement. "You know what happens?" he says. "They'll want me to muffle the drums down, then they'll start fooling with room mic's and ambience to try to make them sound live again."

When it comes to cymbals, Aronoff tries to match the sound to the occasion. "When I play the more aggressive rock records," he says, "I usually put up Platinum 18" *Rock* crashes. They are bright, hard, and aggressive; they explode and then they disappear. Sometimes I use 19" crashes, but they don't have quite the same attack, they take a little longer to explode, and they are gongier. I'll occasionally put up an 18" K crash for contrast. But for the aggressive rock stuff, the K usually doesn't cut enough. I might put up a 17" Platinum *Rock*, but most of the



# Kenny's Live Kit



## Drumset: Tama Artstar II

- A. 6' 12 x 14 snare (either a solid maple, carbon fiber, or bell brass model)
- B. 11 x 12 tom
- C. 9 x 10 tom
- D. 13 x 14 tom
- E. 14 x 16 tom
- F. 16 x 24 bass drum

## Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 22" China Boy high
- 2. 14" hi-hats (either Platinum New Beats or a combination Amir top with a Platinum New Beat bottom)
- 3. 12" Platinum splash
- 4. 19" Platinum Rock crash
- 5. 19" Platinum Rock crash
- 6. 20" Z heavy power ride
- 7. 18" Platinum Rock crash
- 8. 22" China Boy high

**Hardware:** All Tama, including a Lever *Glide* hi-hat stand, and a Tama/Camco chain drive double pedal with felt beaters. The 10" and 12" toms are mounted on cymbal stands with multi-clamps and single tom holders. The 14" and 16" toms are mounted on a cymbal stand base with a double tom holder attached. All toms are mounted on RIMS.

**Heads:** Remo coated *Emperor* on snare with clear *Ambassador* (snare-side type) underneath. Clear *Emperors* on tops of toms with clear *Ambassadors* underneath. Coated *Ambassador* on bass drum batter, with a pillow and

weight for muffling. Front head is actually thin fabric, giving the drum a single head sound with a front head appearance.

**Sticks:** Vic Firth American *Classic Rock* hickory model with wood tip.

**Electronics:** "I trigger two ddrum brains with Fishman transducers, so my live sound is 75% acoustic and 25% electronic. I use a drumKAT (MIDI interface) to get from the triggers to the ddrum brains, and I also use the *drumKAT* to get tempos for each song. I have an Alesis *HR-16*, which I use as the sound source for the click to count off the songs."

time the 18" works.

"For something like a James McMurtry record," Aronoff says, "I'm not going to be playing as hard, and the room mic's will be picking up the whole kit. There will probably be two mic's above my head shooting down on the drums. If I play too hard, they have to turn the room mic's down because the cymbals will be overbearing. I play lighter so that the room mic's can get an actual picture of what's going on. Then I'll put up 18" or 19" K's. When I hit them, you can hear the attack, you can hear the swell, you can hear the decay. I'll put up an old 22" ride that's got almost a jazz sound; you can hear the definition. I'll put sizzle cymbals up. But that's because I'm playing at a dynamic level that allows the stuff to be picked up by the room mic's. If it's not going to be heard, forget it. I used an *Amir* 20" ride

for years, but now sometimes I'll use a Z ride. Other times I'll use a *K Custom*, but I have to play it hard and use a plastic-tip stick to get the definition."

Aronoff has become very aware that he has to play for the microphones, not for his ears. "A big problem in the studio," he explains, "is that if you set the room mic's up to get the toms, the cymbals are too loud. So you adjust the room mic's for the cymbals, and then the toms disappear. A lot of times on sessions I'll do a fill, and when I listen to the playback I can hear the snare drum but not the toms. If you stood next to my drums, you'd hear the toms. You'd hear the snare a little more because of the higher frequency, but the toms would be there." Because of the problems with miking the toms and cymbals, Aronoff will often play most of his fills on the snare drum.

After being in the studio so much the

past two years, Aronoff feels better prepared for whatever may arise. "If you've only done a few sessions," he says, "you can feel real insecure. You're always going to hit rough spots. I used to get very insecure that I wasn't going to succeed, but because of that I would turn into an animal and push real hard to *make* it happen. Well, after about 100 of those experiences, you start to realize that you *are* able to solve the problems—that you *are* good enough.

"But those problems never stop arising," he cautions. "You never know when you are going to run into a heavy situation with the producer, or with the artist, or with your own equipment! How come that drum that sounded good on the last 30 sessions doesn't sound good today? Who knows, but you have to figure it out.

"And what I've finally figured out is that I *can* figure it out. By the end of the day, I'm going to solve whatever problems have to be solved, because I have a lot of passion and concern for what I do."

For Kenny, the icing was applied to last year's cake during the week between Christmas and New Year's, when he subbed for Anton Fig on *Late Night With David Letterman*. "That was a wonderful gift from Anton," Kenny smiles. "That's the cool drum chair as far as TV shows, because of all the attention Dave gives the band. And of course, on Letterman they play all the songs I grew up listening to. So I was flattered that Anton asked me to do it, and it was a wonderful way to end the year.

"But the thing is," Kenny says, "I also knew that it wasn't going to be easy due to the fact that I was tremendously beat up from flying all over the country doing sessions and clinics. During October, November, and December, I was usually working seven days a week. I went to Japan for ten days to play the tribute for John Lennon's 50th birthday, and I flew home for Christmas Eve and Christmas day. Then I flew to New York for the Letterman show. So I didn't have time to get as prepared as I would have liked. They sent me this list of 250 songs that, at any moment, Paul [Shaffer] can call off. Nobody has charts, they just do it. And you never know if you're going to start at the beginning or somewhere in the mid-

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# Drummers Collective

NO SMOKING IN PRACTICE ROOMS  
SMOKING PERMITTED IN LOBBY ONLY



These gentlemen can play. Shown in back row (from left) are Ralph Peterson, Adam Nussbaum, and Jeff Watts. Shown in front row (from left) are Billy Drummond, Kenny Washington, and Marvin "Smitty" Smith. (Victor Lewis and Lewis Nash not shown)

# New York Jazz Drummers Round Table

**B**illy Drummond, Victor Lewis, Lewis Nash, Adam Nussbaum, Ralph Peterson, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, Kenny Washington, and Jeff Watts. You may not know all their names, but throughout New York City, Japan, and Europe, these drummers are the "first call" when it comes to live and studio jazz.

Consequently, scheduling a single day off to do this interview in between all their globetrotting was no easy task. When we finally did get together, the expected sparks flew, stories were traded, complaints were aired, and much light was shed on jazz and the art of jazz drumming.

Be prepared: These guys are opinionated. They all have very strong feelings on jazz and everything surrounding the music business. At times I felt like the fly in the spider's web. I almost wanted to say, "Hey guys, I just work here!"

But it's that tried-by-fire attitude, born of the melting pot of jazz that New York is, that has made these individuals the best. They're fiercely proud of what they've accomplished, and each exemplifies the fact that good music demands true team players, not stars.

By Ken Micallef

Photos by Aldo Mauro

**KM:** What do you think accounts for those nights when everything clicks, when the band is smoking and your playing seems to rise to another level?

**Ralph:** If we knew, we'd put it in a bottle for those nights when it isn't happening!

**Marvin:** It's very subjective. Different variables are involved.

**Victor:** I believe the spirits come down.

**Lewis:** It's like chemistry or alchemy between the environment and yourself. I've gone on gigs where I'm totally prepared, but the night is lackluster—even with all that intensity. But I've also been on gigs, even after a long day of traveling, when the music just happens. Every time you sit down you try to reach for that.

**Ralph:** Sometimes you can listen back to a tape of what you thought was a bad gig, and it's smoking. So it's unpredictable. And you can't keep what's going on in your life out of the music.

**Marvin:** That's one of the problems with New York musicians. I call it "the New York attitude." You come here and some older guys throw this vibe at you like, "Kid, you gotta do this and this...and it ain't swinging." There are definitely some parameters. But I do what I do for my love of music, period. It didn't matter to me what style it was. Whatever sounded good to me, I picked up on that. That's the approach to go with. A lot of cats limit themselves by learning just one drummer. They never find out what *they* sound like. You've got to differentiate between study and obsession.

**KM:** Here in New York, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts has decided to include jazz as a part of their



format—planned concerts, grants to musicians, endowments.... Could this have an impact on jazz nationwide?

**Marvin:** I think it's a fallacy to depend on one event.

**Adam:** Cultural awareness is what you're saying. It *will* help legitimize it as far as the masses are concerned. But I don't think it will have a *great* effect.

**Ralph:** It will just be more of the same.

**Marvin:** I wouldn't go as far as that. You might gain a little more audience, a little more of the so-called "elite class" who happen to find some dirty rags of clothing to put on when they...

**Ralph:** ...when they want to go slumming—right!

**Adam:** As long as it's being done with an open mind and a broad perspective of jazz itself, it could give everybody a chance. There are certain people who never work in town, while others work here all the time. It's kind of cliqued out.

**Marvin:** I think it will be a long time coming. There is a real polarization as far as the spectrum of music. First of all, it's hard to get jazz accepted as an art form in this country, period. When it *is* accepted, it's a very narrow spectrum of it—the more mainstream and traditional, if you will.

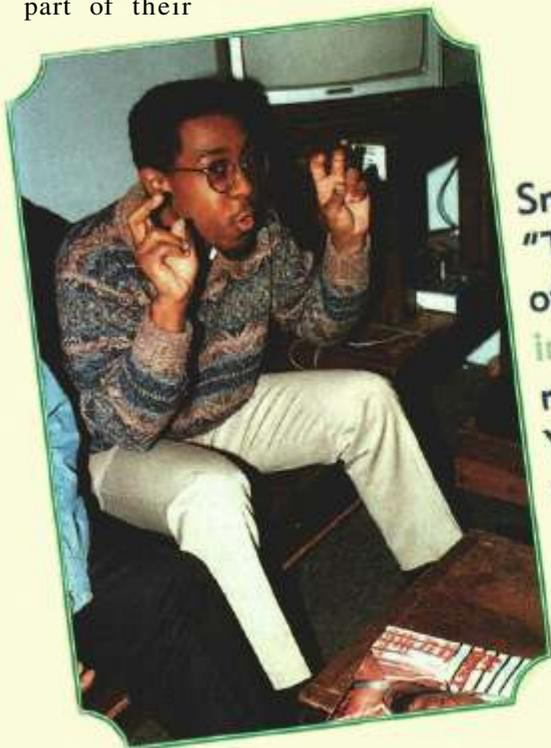
**Victor:** What's really happening will still be at the Village Vanguard.

**Marvin:** What's happening is that a lot of the labels are signing up young musicians who just aren't polished enough and don't have a strong musical identity. What they're putting out is a seriously watered-down approach to trying to play this music. What's even worse is that they're alienating a certain age bracket of musicians, basically between the ages 29 and 40.

**Kenny:** You might as well say 29 to 65.

**Marvin:** You have to be extremely young or extremely old to get a record deal now.

**KM:** With the current "renaissance" in jazz taking place, have you all started to receive



**Smith:**  
"The idea  
of the 'jazz  
institution' is  
really lacking.  
You can't learn  
it from a book."

more attention?

**Kenny:** In terms of drum endorsements, nothing is happening, not for jazz musicians.

**Marvin:** The media is kind of low on jazz in general. As far as us, the fact that you're doing this interview is a good sign. It's a long time coming though, man. When the drummer for "Dead Rat" is on the cover 50 times, what's up with that? Those guys happen to get an audition with some group going boom-boom-bap, boom-boom-bap, then all of a sudden it's MTV, platinum records...they get carte blanche. All of us here are constantly working very hard...the combined experience of all of us together is probably a couple of very old people!

**Adam:** If we were all concerned about getting rich, though, we wouldn't be playing this music. We're in it for the long haul.

**KM:** How does place of origin figure into a drummer's ability to play jazz? Is it a New York thing? Victor, you're from Omaha, and Lewis, you're from Phoenix.

**Victor:** If he's bad enough, it doesn't matter where he's from!

**Kenny:** It's not about where you're from, it's about what you listen to, what makes the initial impact on your mind's ear.

**Victor:** I used to think I would need some socially important element to ever come close, to reach a certain level of playing. When I came here, it was to learn and be a better musician back in Omaha. That was 17 years ago. In retrospect, I got a lot of exposure in Omaha I couldn't have gotten here—not to mention the chance to practice where and when I wanted to. That's a luxury in New York.

**Lewis:** In Phoenix, I had the chance to play with musicians who came through town—well-known musicians that I would never have been able to play with if I had grown up here. They would've called someone else.

**KM:** New York is still the place to be, though, right?

**Adam:** Yes. You want to be in an environment where you continually get kicked in the ass. I don't want to be the big fish in the little pond. I want to swim with the sharks.

**Marvin:** There's plenty of them here!

**Jeff:** Those are the situations you want to embrace. A lot of people lean towards their strengths instead of embracing their deficiencies. If you really want to master something, you've got to have a deficiency in your playing to work on.

**KM:** On a new gig, how much of what you play is leader-generated, based on the previous drummer, or totally up to you?

**Ralph:** I'm not really interested in the drummer who was there before me. If a leader calls Smitty, he should want Smitty for what he brings to the table. He should welcome the change.

**KM:** Billy, being the youngest...

**Billy:** I haven't had to deal with that. First of all, I wouldn't be able to.

**Jeff:** It goes much deeper than that, deeper than all of us together times ten.



**Ralph:** There are certain parameters to adhere to. You don't want to be locked into them, but you want to respect the gig and play the idiom.

**Lewis:** I did some work with Art Farmer, who Victor and Marvin have both recorded with. I might not be listening to cop their licks, but to hear what they did with the music. So at least I know where the music's been.

**Victor:** The best situation is when the people are calling for you. They know how you play, how you think—that's why you're up there. They know you'll take care of business.

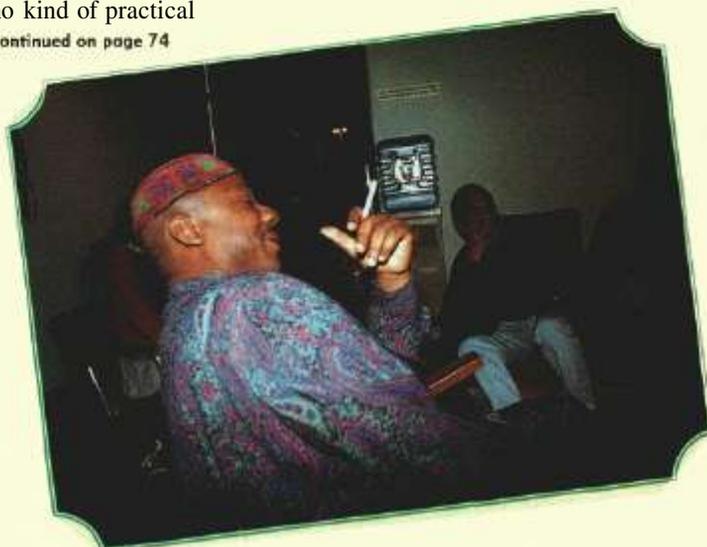
**KM:** Are more drummers getting into jazz now?

**Billy:** I just came from Canada. I told some drummers about this interview. They were not aware of most of the guys in this room.

**Kenny:** I do a lot of teaching in New York and around the country, and it's my experience that very often the teachers are just not qualified.

**Marvin:** The idea of the "jazz institution" is really lacking. They take one piece of the jazz spectrum and hone in on it—the people in the universities who have no kind of practical

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# John "Vatos"



# Hernandez

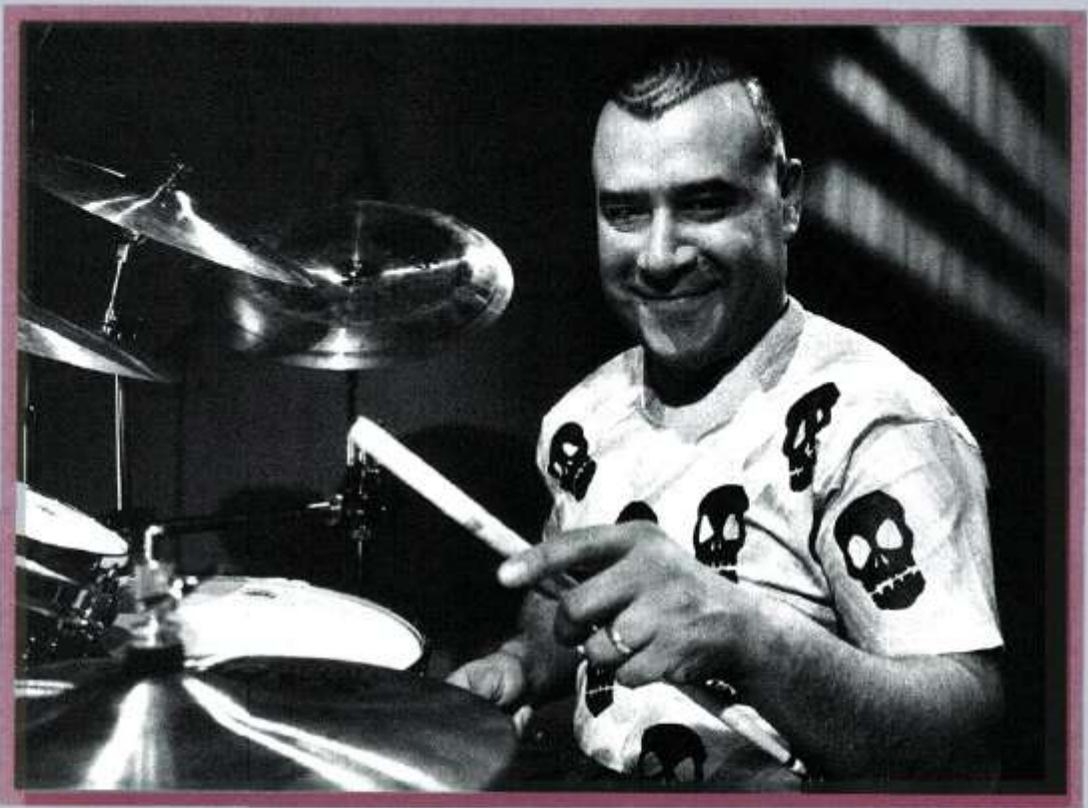


**F**or well over a decade now, drummer extraordinaire John "Vatos" Hernandez has been the driving backbone of seminal Los Angeles group Oingo Boingo. From the band's modest beginnings in the '70s as an adventurous troupe of street theater anarchists known as the Mystic Knights of the Oingo Boingo, to its present position as a staple of West Coast radio, Hernandez has been there, his aggressive, clock-like precision drumming an unmistakable trademark of the band.

But the road to fame and fortune hasn't been an easy one for the jovial Hernandez and his cohorts, vocalist Danny Elfman, guitarist Steve Bartek, bassist John Avila, keyboardist Carl Graves and horn section Leon Schneiderman, Dale Turner, and Sam Phipps. The band has released a dozen albums (two of which are "best of" compilations), and they've placed numerous songs in major motion pictures (one of which, *Weird Science*, scored them their first major Billboard chart success). They've even had cameo appearances in several of those films. With the snap of a finger, they can sell out three straight nights at Los Angeles' Universal Amphitheatre, which seats about 6,500, and then, two months later, turn right around and sell out another two nights at Orange County's 15,000-seater, Irvine Meadows Amphitheater, for their annual Halloween shows. Yet Oingo Boingo continue to go relatively unnoticed by most of the population east of the Rockies.

**Text and Photos by Pat Lewis**

It's only been over the last several years that Boingo's leader, Danny Elfman, has achieved any significant notoriety. But oddly enough, that success does not encompass his impressive body of work with Oingo Boingo. Today, Elfman is one of Hollywood's most in-demand film composers. Over the past five or six years, he has scored about fifteen major motion pictures, among them *Dick Tracy*, *Batman*, *Beetlejuice*, and *Edward Scissorhands*. And even though the music that he composes for the silver screen is stylistically different than what he writes for his rock band, Elfman still does his best to involve the members of Boingo in his film



work. Guitarist Steve Bartek, for example, has been at his side all along as his orchestrator. And Hernandez, too, has benefited, having played all of the drums on the *Midnight Run* soundtrack and electronic drums with his drum samples on several sessions for the TV show *Sledgehammer*, among others.

Los Angeles-born John "Vatos" Hernandez began his professional career at the age of 15 performing in a variety of symphonic orchestras in and around Los Angeles and Orange Counties. While still a student at Los Angeles City College, he joined the highly visible LACC jazz studio band under the direction of the notorious Bob MacDonald. ("I'd always heard that if you got into that band and you could live under that guy's direction, you were pretty much guaranteed to do all right in this business," recalls John.) Because the campus was only a stone's throw from Hollywood, the band oftentimes was honored with sit-in guests such as Jeff Porcaro, John Guerin, and Ralph Humphrey. David Paich, also a member of the band at the time, actually wrote his first big band arrangement for his fellow colleagues.

It was also during this time that John began studying the drumkit with Freddie Gruber. "I was 18 when I first began studying with Freddie," recalls Hernandez, "and since then, he has become my close friend and mentor. It is because of him that there isn't anything that I can't do on the instrument." He begins to laugh. "And if I think I'm going to have

trouble, at least I know what to practice."

In the early '70s, John became the house drummer for the television show *The Midnight Special*, and in between tapings, he toured the countryside with the show's host, Helen Reddy. He also was the substitute house drummer at the famous North Hollywood nightclub the Palomino. And somehow, in between all of this, he found time to sub for the Don Ellis Band, which is where he met guitarist Steve Bartek. In 1978, Bartek invited Hernandez to play drums on a movie date (the movie was the classic Boingo cult film, *Forbidden Zone*), which soon lead to his joining Oingo Boingo. Currently, Boingo is recording the material for their follow-up to last year's MCA Records release, *Dark At The End Of The Tunnel*.

## John Hernandez's Listeners' Guide

| Album Title                   | Artist       | Label/Catalog#         |
|-------------------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| Oingo Boingo EP               | Oingo Boingo | IRS/A&M 70400          |
| Only A Lad                    |              | A&M 3250               |
| Nothing To Fear               |              | A&M 3251               |
| Good For Your Soul            |              | A&M 3252               |
| Dead Man's Party              |              | MCA 5665               |
| Boi-ngo                       |              | MCA 5811               |
| Boingo Live                   |              | MCA 2-8030             |
| Dark At The End Of The Tunnel |              | MCA 6365               |
| So-Lo                         | Danny Elfman | MCA 25051              |
| The Forbidden Zone            | soundtrack   | Varese Sarabande 81170 |
| Back To School                | "            | Varese Sarabande 70437 |
| Midnight Run                  |              | MCA 6250               |
| My Stepmother Is An Alien     | "            | Polydor 837798         |

**PL:** When did you first hear of Oingo Boingo?

**JH:** I had originally seen the band back when they first started in '74 or '75. I was with my family at the KPFF Music Fair, and they marched in with their gorilla outfits, and they were jumping around and doing all this stuff. I said, "Wow, this is my kind of band." So when I found out a few years later that they were looking for someone, I jumped at the chance. That was back in the Mystic Knights of the Oingo Boingo period—about the first two years we had all the costume changes, and it was more of a theatrical thing.

**PL:** So you actually joined the band while they were still the Mystic Knights. I never realized there were drums during the early days.

**JH:** There was drumming. We used to open up with some real uptempo bebop songs like "Avalon." I used to have to play brushes and wear a monkey suit. It was a little hard for a "true musician," but I tend to have a lot more fun with my appearance and the silliness of it all.

**PL:** What was a Mystic Knights show like?

**JH:** The show would open up with us marching through the crowd. I had a marching snare drum on, Danny played trombone, Steve played flute.... We'd march up on stage and all of a sudden they'd be running around on the stage, and I'd count off—one, two, three—and we'd start the tunes.

**PL:** Why did you decide to can the monkey suits and write rock & roll music instead?

**JH:** We weren't getting the recognition from the record companies, though we were getting a lot of theatrical recognition. Nederlander wanted to put us on Off-Broadway with a big production. But we got tired of dragging all the dinosaur outfits around. It was a pretty wild show—movies and all sorts of stuff. We decided to go the band route, and so we started writing music—pop music, rock music—but with high energy and drive and some sort of intelligence. That was our original goal—something that was saying something, but was still radical, and thrashy, and drivy. That process took about a year and a half to finally blossom into an EP and onward to A&M and then to MCA and a catalog of music.

**PL:** Since the Mystic Knights of the Oingo Boingo's music encompassed so many different styles, did the music seem foreign or stylistically unfamiliar compared to what you were performing prior to joining the band?

**JH:** Not really. I've had a real well-rounded education, being brought up in Los Angeles. I've played in big bands and orchestras. I could play timpani, and I played a little bit of mallet percussion as well. And on sessions I would do a few over-

dubs here and there. I was well-versed in a lot of musical styles, which has really helped me a lot, especially in this music town. People who write original music can get pretty ruthless and say things like, "We want another sound" or "We want to change the style," and with a click of their fingers, they're saying, "Next, new drummer." So, I just said, "Hey, I can do it all."

# John's Setup

**Drumset:** Drum Workshop  
A. 6 x 14 brass snare  
B. 12 x 16 fiberglass snare (Blaemire)  
C. 10 x 14 wood snare  
D. 10 x 12 tom  
E. 12 x 14 tom  
F. 14 x 16 tom  
G. 18 x 22 bass drum  
aa. 12" RotoTom  
bb. 10" RotoTom

**Cymbals:** Sabian  
1. 18" AA medium crash  
2. 13" HH Sound Control crash  
3. 14" AA Sizzle hats  
4. 21" AA crash/ride  
5. 19" AA crash/ride  
6. 20" HH Chinese on top of 22" HH Chinese (stacked)

**Hardware:** All DW and Col-larlock  
**Heads:** All Remo clear Ambassadors  
**Sticks:** Pro-Mark 5A

Let me prove it to you." I was really lucky, nothing seemed foreign to me—playing with brushes, playing music from the '30s, playing swing, calypso, Latin. So Oingo Boingo was right up my alley, and I loved it.

**PL:** Let's talk about the ethnic qualities in Boingo's music.

**JH:** The ethnic qualities in Boingo have always interested me—Balinese, West African, and then just the American music of jazz, which has its own ethnic quality. So, oftentimes, it isn't just a funk tune, it's a Balinese funk tune.

**PL:** Is this something Elfman brought in?

**JH:** Yeah. Danny played in a Gamelan orchestra at Cal Arts [Valencia, CA].

**PL:** How does he communicate that information to you so that you can then perform in the ethnic style correctly?

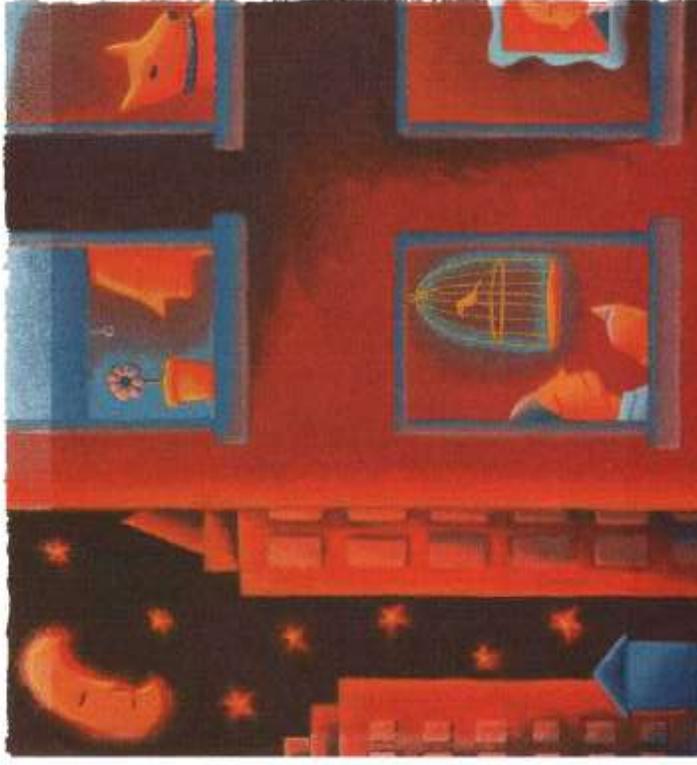
**JH:** He writes [the songs] in the scales, and I try to envision what it would sound like if I were playing rock 'n' roll drums in a Balinese orchestra. I re-voice the snare drum, re-voice the drums. You just experiment. Danny has little Balinese metal-phones that we play. And he's also got these West African Bala-

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# Equipment Theft:

## Before And After

**"A drummer knows  
the instrument  
better than anyone  
else. Exploitation  
of this knowledge  
is the key to gaining  
an advantage over  
the criminal."**



By Ernie Santilli

Illustrations by Dan Yaccarino

**Y**ou've been driving for a while, and you're a little tired from activity earlier in the day. But somehow you always get an energy boost sitting behind a drumset, locking into a groove. Even now, humming the chorus to the new song starts the adrenaline flowing.

Arrived, at last. Toting a fresh towel and spare sticks, you get a bit more pumped up with each step toward the building. Then, as you enter you notice something is amiss. It feels as though Mike Tyson has just landed a hard right to your breadbasket when you realize what has transpired: Your equipment has been stolen.

Unfortunately, for many readers the "you" in the above scenario has been *you*. Equipment theft is an ugly aspect of the business that all musicians must deal with. As the crime rate continues to rise it is obvious the problem is not just going to go away. There are, however, a number of ways to decrease the odds of becoming a victim. This article will examine the criminal act, deterrents, liability, and post-theft options.

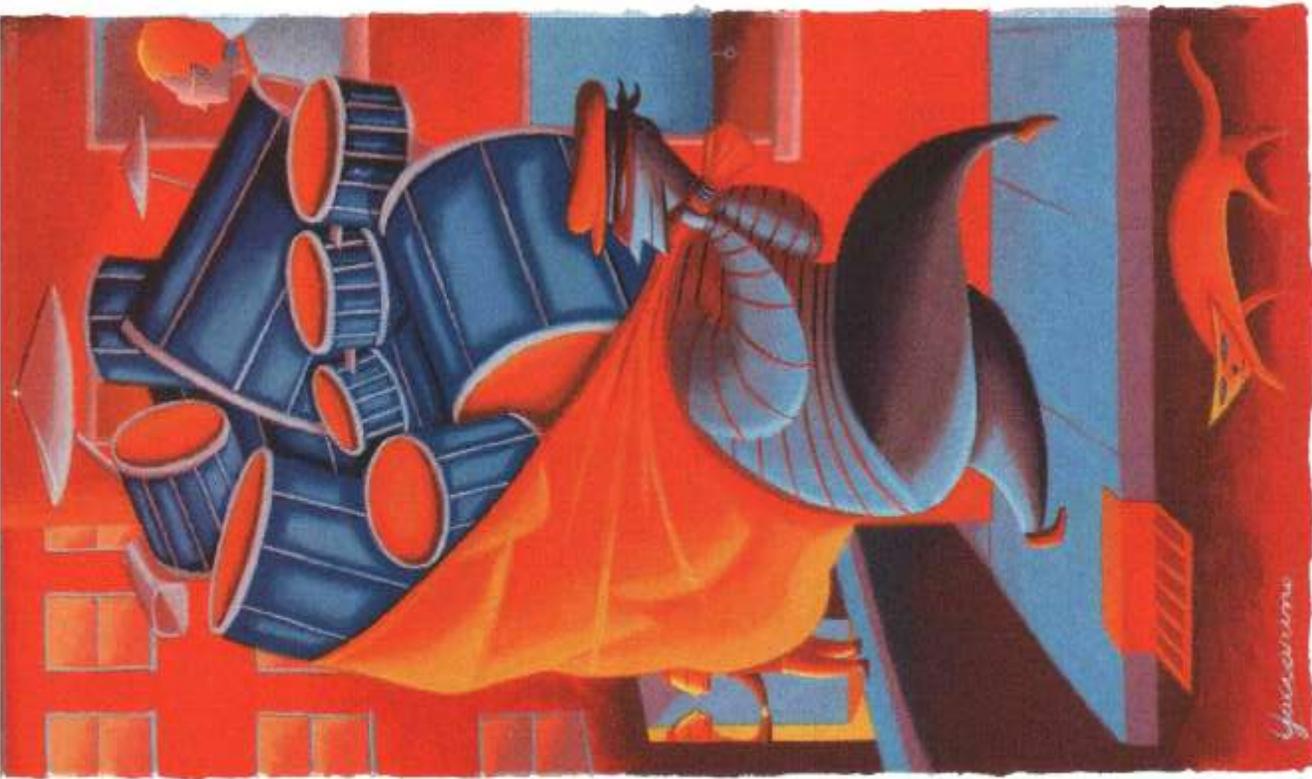
## The Criminal Act

Though no crime is admirable, there is something especially low about instrument theft. The perpetrator is knowingly taking a source of great joy—and possibly income—away from the victim. Unlike most other oft-stolen possessions, there is a sentimental bond between a player and his instrument. It is not surprising that some musicians find equipment loss a near-traumatic experience.

Drummers tend to be "closer" to their instruments than other musicians because a kit embodies more of a combination of personal preferences than any other instrument. Dimensions, wood plies, pedals, heads, throne, tom mounts, cymbals and percussion, stands, and possibly triggers—in *addition to* make, model, and color.... Just imagine the difficulty involved in replacing all those different variables, and it is easy to relate to the ripped-off drummer and empathize with his plight.

Before continuing, it is necessary to define the criminal acts for later reference. The general heading of theft includes both burglary and robbery. A burglary is a stealthy act of entering a building in order to steal property contained within, while a robbery is defined as the act whereby the criminal uses veiled or explicit threats of violence in an attempt to gain another person's possessions.

Those referred to as "scam artists" fall into a sub-category of robbery. By a scam artist I mean a cross between a thief and con man, the type of club parasite who will attempt to sneak out of the premises



with equipment and, if caught, insist it is his own. Unless the scammer surrenders the goods and attempts to escape—highly unlikely, as it is an admission of guilt—a threat of physical harm is sure to follow. Hence the robbery classification.

In most cases the loss of drum equipment will be as a result of burglary, with robbery and its brethren scam a distant second. As in any other crime, there are measures that can be taken to discourage thievery and recommended procedures to follow should one fall victim.

## Deterrents

Martial arts enthusiasts live by a cardinal rule: There is no such thing as being "too prepared." The same thought applies to the "defense" of your equipment. The Golden Rule of security is: *Do as much as you can to make the thief's work difficult.* Remember, "An ounce of prevention...."

### Securing The Rehearsal Hall

All musicians—from professionals to those in their first band—spend time honing their skills in rehearsal halls. By the same token, those halls are left unattended the majority of the time. This poses a special problem for drummers.

While most string, reed, and brass players take their instruments home after a session, drummers, due to the impracticality of breaking down and transporting a kit, usually leave their sets on the premises. As such the drummer is totally dependent upon site security to protect his or her instrument.

Thieves look at premises with a different perspective than honest citizens. What may appear to be an adequate security system to you may be child's play to the trained eye. With enough time and diligence a thief can penetrate virtually any "burglar-proof" building.

What's a drummer to do? Go back to the Golden Rule and *make the thief's work difficult.* Remember, every time site security is increased, the odds of being a victim are decreased.

# Pawnshops

**P**awnshops work on a simple principle. They will give you a "loan" equal to a fraction of an item's worth. Fail to repay the loan by a certain date, and the collateral becomes the property of the store owner, who will then place it up for sale.

The image of "hockshops," as they are sometimes called, is not a positive one. Movies have portrayed the business as one peopled by shady characters out to make a quick buck. And how many times have you seen a film scene in which the down-on-his-luck musician must pawn his instrument for food money? But is this negative image fair? I decided to conduct an experiment.

Randomly selecting pawnshops in large metropolitan cities, I phoned each of them with the same story. An acquaintance who owed me money gave me a guitar to hold until he paid off his debt. Two months had passed and I was left with the impression he had skipped town. I wanted to recoup some of the debt by pawning the guitar.

Basically, I was trying to get an idea of how many merchants would be willing to do business with me, knowing I had an instrument that was not mine. None of the dealers showed apprehension about looking over my guitar. Nevertheless, there was a huge hitch when it came to an actual exchange for cash: No broker would issue a loan without the recipient producing a valid legal document containing a photograph (such as a passport or driver's license). Some even required fingerprints! Furthermore, the broker provided the police department with a duplicate of every pawn ticket issued.

(Incidentally, I also conducted a poll of major and minor music stores around the country. Over 75 percent of them required a photo ID from persons selling or trading in instruments. The majority of retailers reported each transaction to the local law enforcement agency.)

Be advised that the policies may differ in your hometown. As in any business, there are persons who will operate outside the law. But, in general, it appears the "Tinsel Town" image of pawnshops as dens of corruption is yet another movie myth.

The foremost goal of beefed-up security is preventing (or at least deterring) entry. Obviously, doors and windows are a prime concern. The following can't be overemphasized: Do *not* assume standard door locks and window tabs are sufficient protection from purloiners.

Any addition to the traditional door-key lock is a plus. Padlocks are better than nothing, but they're hardly a cure-all. They will discourage small-timers, but an experienced crook won't be challenged by them. I have personally seen a law officer use a burglary trick to disengage a famous-maker padlock in a few seconds, with no visible damage done to the lock or entrance.

Police departments recommend dead-bolt locks on all doors. A key is necessary to unlock the mechanism from either side of the door, making it impossible for a thief to break through the door surface and disengage the lock from the inside.

If band practice is held in a rented space, ask permission before modifying the locks and offer the rental agent a copy of the additional key. In some areas this is a requirement of the Fire Marshal's office. Should the agent deny your request for modification, give serious thought to rehearsing elsewhere. The agent's denial is based on naivete or apathy, neither of which reflects a positive concern for building security.

When utilizing the basement of a private residence for a rehearsal hall, obtain dead bolts for both doors. Once again, gain permission first, then volunteer to pay for the expense of installation. In the event the band is financially strapped, start a kitty into which everyone donates what they can afford each session until the installation figure is met, or earmark that amount to come off the top before splitting the fee from your next gig.

Windows pose an even greater problem. Unless you own the property in which your rehearsal hall is located, you probably won't be permitted radical structure alteration such as bricking up an existing window area. Even if a major alteration is approved, the cost may be

prohibitive.

But there are modifications of a less permanent nature that can dramatically increase security. Bear in mind, entry is achieved by breaking/cutting the glass or forcing the window open. Mesh-laced shatterproof glass or, better still, *Plexiglas* is a good investment.

Sliding windows are a plus and a minus in that they provide fresh air but also an easy means of entry. The most direct defense is limiting how far the window can slide. Ideally, a window should be able to be opened a distance wide enough to allow ventilation, but too narrow for a burglar to squeeze himself (and pass loot) through.

To limit or prohibit the motion of a sliding window, it is necessary to place an obstacle in the runners. Don't forget that the upper window may be lowered; therefore, it is important to jam *both* sets of runners. "Window pins" are designed to do just that.

Crooks frequently "case" a neighborhood before selecting which properties to burgle. With a roomful of musical instruments it pays *not* to advertise. Give your rehearsal hall the lowest possible profile.

If you are going to replace standard glass, inquire as to the availability of frosted glass. Window shades are an inexpensive alternative. A wise investor will spring for two sets: one opaque shade to block the sun's rays and keep the room cool in

the summer, and one translucent shade for the inverse reasons. Drapes are another option. Those made of a heavy fabric also aid in soundproofing the room.

The above are a few of the many basic home security measures. There are enough options to fill a book; in fact, a few authors already have. David Allen Wacker's *Complete Guide To Home Security* and the Consumers' Guide Series book are first-rate references.

Short of hiring an armed guard, the best security measure is to have a professional burglar alarm system installed. A

continued on page 96





Photos by Matt Zbarwar / Ken McCaughlin

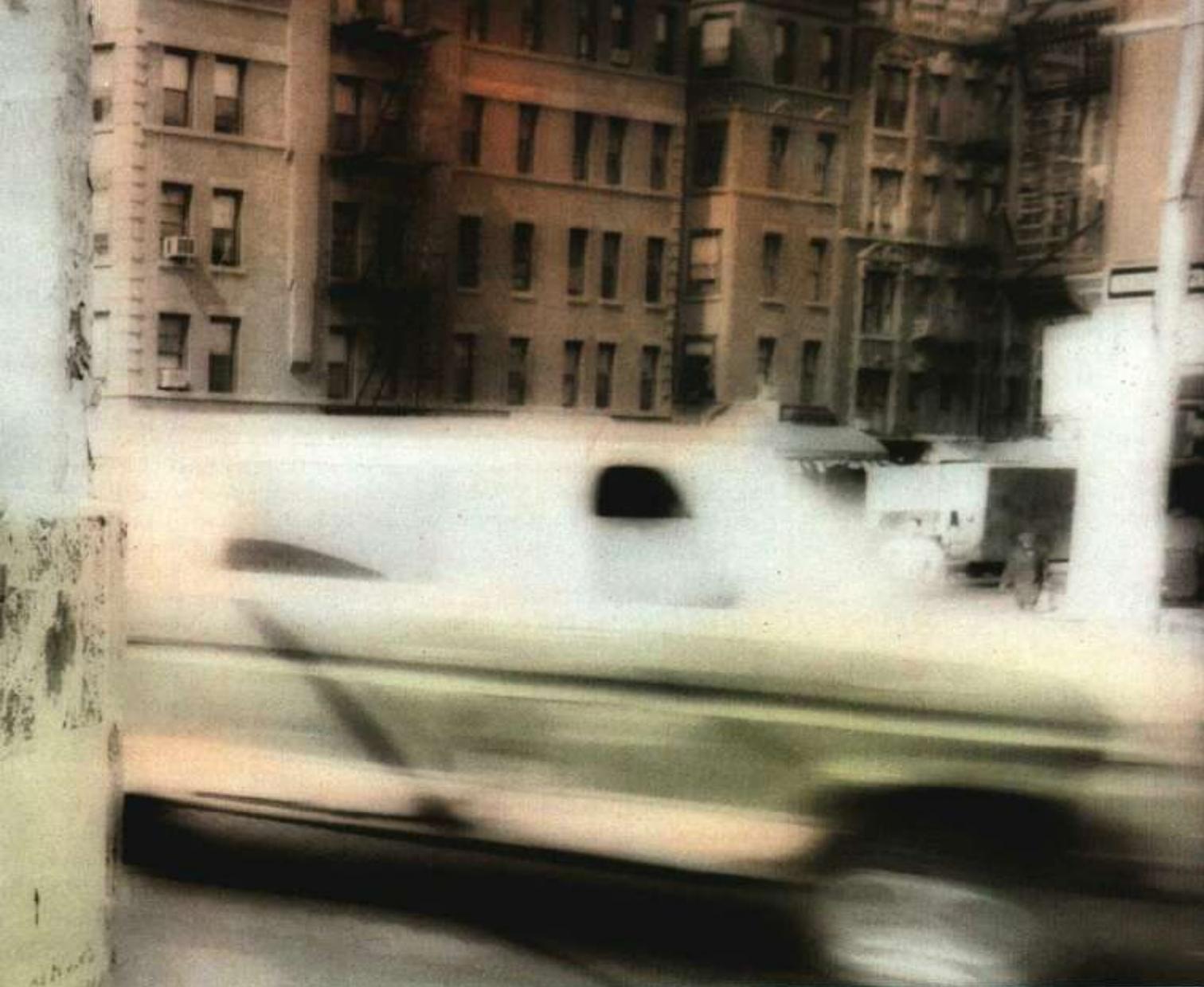
## From Recording Artistry to the Theater of



BLX-240-7 with options  
in #113 sheer blue

Omar Hakim, a unique musician. Style, creativity, brilliance, originality. In the truest sense, an artist. When it comes to drums, Omar has some definite opinions.

"These Prestige Studio drums are kickin'. When I record, I don't use a special kit that I don't play live. A lot of drummers do that. On my latest projects it's been my Prestige Studio kit and I think they sound wonderful."



# Live Music...Omar Hakim. Prestige Studio.

Prestige Studio, the absolute sound of 100% birch. It's Brilliant high end attack, superior low end depth and slightly reduced mid range presence produce a sound described as naturally equalized. Pearl's exclusive interior finishing technique provides lasting sustain uncharacteristic of birch drums by other manufacturers. Distinct, flawless, supreme craftsmanship. A compliment to artistic perfection.

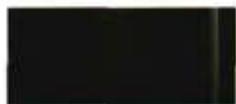
Six highly polished lacquer finishes



#113 Sheer Blue



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#116 Bordeaux Red



100% high density hand selected birch shell, 6 ply, cross laminated and internally sealed

**Pearl.**  
The best reason to play drums.

# New Sabian Cymbals

**Sabian's recent introductions include a unique ride, unusual hi-hats, several new China types, a whole series of moderately priced rock cymbals, and a nifty new approach to splash cymbals. Take your pick!**

## HH Power Bell Ride

According to Sabian's announcement, the 22" HH *Power Bell Ride* was created "in response to today's need for increased versatility in ride cymbals." Designed in conjunction with Mel Gaynor of Simple Minds, the *Power Bell Ride* combines an unlathed 8" heavy bell with a fully lathed heavy HH ride cymbal. The idea was to achieve cutting power from the bell without sacrificing the melodic ride characteristics one would normally expect from an HH ride.

The concept works. The 8" bell had plenty of cutting power; it would be heard through most loud music on its own. But with the additional sustain and projection provided by the rest of the cymbal, the sound was undeniable. Nicely enough, though, the bell sounded pretty decent even when played at lower volumes—producing a very distinct, clear "ping."

When used as a traditional ride, the cymbal sounded dark and somewhat trashy, and—owing to its 22" diameter—had quite a bit of a "roar" when I laid into it. Stick articulation was clear, although not what I would call piercing. Although Mel Gaynor is quoted as saying that the *Power Bell Ride* serves his needs "from one extreme of the dynamic spectrum to the other," I tend to think that in Mel's case that must mean from *f* to *fff*. When I played the cymbal at lower volumes, I

noticed a dominant undertone that was not apparent when the cymbal was roaring, and that might interfere with the notes of a given song. But in fairness, I can't really conceive of anyone who plays exclusively low- to mid-volume stuff *considering* this cymbal *in the first place*. You don't buy a Mack truck for short trips to the market. But if you need a ride cymbal that can compete with heavy amplification and still offer some musical qualities and tone, you should definitely consider the *Power Bell Ride*. It's available in regular or *Brilliant* finish at \$348.

## HH EQ Hats

Mel Gaynor was also in on the design of these babies. They combine a special 14" AA *Rock* bottom cymbal with a heavy HH *Flat* top cymbal. In addition, the bottom cymbal has two holes drilled in its bell and small sections cut out of its edge to prevent airlock. The goal was to create "crisp, clean, clear, and cutting sounds in the loudest situations" whether the cymbals are played "by stick or pedal, angled or flat."

The holes and cut-outs in the bottom cymbal did eliminate airlock; the cymbals had a great, crisp "chick" sound when closed with the foot. (However, the cutouts produced sharp corners, and these cymbals would have to be handled with care.) The lack of bell on the top cymbal—along with the fact that it is an HH model—created a medium-high stick sound and a very quick choking action when the hi-hat pedal was depressed. The thickness of the cymbal kept it from producing a shimmering sound (as for a swing ride pattern); instead the sticking sound was dry and precise. Between the pitch, the dryness, and the quick response, these hi-hats should prove very popular with studio drummers (and even more so with engineers). I imagine that they would work equally well in miked-up stage situations, where their controlled response would be a real asset. Using them in an unmiked situation would primarily be a matter of taste. They can certainly get *loud*; I played quarter-note rock patterns on them in a half-open position

and they projected fine. I simply found the combination of qualities produced by a flat HH top cymbal a bit dark for my ears. You'd need to be the final judge in that area. All in all, this is an interesting variation on hi-hat design. The HH *EQ Hats* are available in regular or *Brilliant* finish at \$360.

## B8 Pro Rock Models

In the February issue of this year I reviewed the introductory models in Sabian's B8 Pro line. These are cymbals made from the B8 alloy and made in what is called the "Euro style" of manufacture. I was impressed with the sound quality and the value of that line, which at the time was fairly limited in terms of models.

Sabian has now expanded the line with several *Rock* models, designed to offer the same sort of performance and value to drummers who need louder, more durable cymbals. Now, the question that comes to mind is: Are these new models just heavier versions of the old ones? The answer is: yes and no. While they certainly are thicker and heavier than their predecessors, they have also been designed with their own profiles and dimensions—specifically with the rock player in mind.

We were sent several cymbals in each size, all of which came in *Brilliant* finish. To work from the biggest to the smallest, we started with 20" *Power Rock* and *Light Rock* rides. While both were powerful cymbals that projected well and had excellent bell sounds, the *Power Rock Ride* tended to be clearer, dryer, and higher-pitched, with very little wash and excellent sticking definition—even at very high volume. The *Light Rock Ride*, on the other hand, was darker, a little washier, and (if you can apply this term in a rock context) a bit more subtle. It might make a better ride for people who need something for both low- and high-volume situations, where not as much sheer cut is desired from the ride.

Both cymbals exhibited a bit of "gonginess"—which is to be expected from a thick, heavy ride cymbal. But the lathing on the cymbals gave them an additional musicality over the pure "pinginess" of an

unlathed cymbal. The B8 alloy does not provide as much sustain as does the more expensive B20 alloy used in AA and HH cymbals—which might be seen as an advantage by drummers looking for a dry, clear ride cymbal. I know several drummers who would probably prefer the B8 Pro *Power Rock Ride* over many more-expensive models. I say that only to point out that choosing one of these cymbals can be a matter of taste, not just a matter of financing. They list for \$144.

When I tested the original B8 Pro thin and medium crash cymbals, I was impressed by their "pleasant, glassy shimmer." Well, when you add thickness to a cymbal, you lose a certain amount of that shimmer in exchange for sheer power and durability. This was especially true of the 16" *Rock Crashes* I tried, which were loud and explosive, but not as musically pleasant as their thinner counterparts. They worked well as high-volume punctuation crashes, however, because they spoke out quickly and then got out of the way. The 18" *Rock Crashes*, on the other hand, had a lot more sustain and a bit more "shimmer"—perhaps owing to the much larger bell and greater overall diameter. These cymbals sounded BIG: big bell (excellent for riding!), big explosion, big sustain, and big volume.

I should point out that, as with any rock-weight cymbals, the B8 Pro *Rock Crashes* did not respond well to low impact. I had to wallop them to get them moving properly. But, after all, they are designed for rock (read: high-impact) playing, so what would you expect? The 16" crash is priced at \$105; the 18" goes for \$120.

The 14" *Rock Hats* were also thick and



(clockwise from left) 22" Power Bell Ride, 18" HH Thin Chinese, 10" B8 Pro China Splash, 20" B8 Pro Power Rock Ride, 14" HH EQ Hats

heavy, and produced a fine chick sound and a dry, high-pitched top-cymbal sound. They had a respectable amount of sustain when played in the half-open rock style, and seemed to blend well with the other cymbals in the series. They're heavy-duty hi-hats designed for hard playing, and they sounded fine in that application. They list for \$159.

### B8 Pro China Splashes

These were my favorites in this whole group. From the B8 alloy, Sabian has created 8" and 10" splash cymbals with a unique profile: They look like mini-China cymbals, with the top half of the bell inverted back toward the underside of the cymbal. They are extremely thin, and combine the quick, shimmering sound of traditional splash cymbals with the dark, trashy sound of a China. Being that they

are so small and thin, they have a volume threshold; they can only be played so hard and they'll only get so loud. (If you need more sound, mike 'em up.) But within their range, they offer a sound so delightfully musical (and so original) that I just fell in love with them—and I'm not a fan of splashes or Chinas.

Their shape lends them to experimentation. The inverted portion of their bells allows them to be placed neatly atop other cymbals without coming into full contact with them, thus giving you two targets (and two sounds) in the same place. Or they can easily be placed under a larger cymbal for that "metal crusher" sort of effect popularized by Terry Bozzio. Their small size also allows them to be placed on their own just about anywhere on the kit. The group of two 10" and two 8" cymbals that we tried formed such a nice

pitch scale that I could envision putting all of them in some handy spot for creating melodic percussive accents. These cymbals are small, relatively inexpensive, and musically unique. Sounds like a deal to me. The 8" cymbal costs \$54; the 10" goes for \$62. Both are available in *Brilliant* finish.

• **Rick Van Horn**

### HH Thin Chinese

Sabian has also recently introduced a new line of Chinese cymbals, the HH *Thin Chinese*. According to Sabian, they've designed these cymbals to sound as close as possible to the authentic China cymbal sound. But they also wanted to design a cymbal that would be far more durable than traditional China-types (and not so crudely manufactured).

We were sent a selection of normal and *Brilliant* HH *Thin Chinese* cymbals in 16", 18", 20", and 22" sizes. All of them were just beautiful to look at. The manufacturing process includes a second hammering that, besides affecting the sound, gives these cymbals a unique, eye-catching look. Overall, their pitches are low, with short sustain and a "raw" sound—very Oriental. One other characteristic of this entire line: The point at which the cymbals are turned up seems to be a bit closer to the center of the cymbal than on normal Chinas. I'll get to the

significance of this in a moment.

Let's talk about the specific cymbals. The 16" and 16" *Brilliant* models sound great for quick, explosive crashes. They sounded low-pitched for their size, and worked best when mounted right-side up. (Their decay was even quicker when they were mounted upside down.) In these smaller models (along with the 18" models) I really liked the *Brilliant* cymbals because they weren't as harsh-sounding (in the ultra-highs) as the *non-Brilliant*s, and they had a little more sustain. However, if you're in a loud band and you need a China that really cuts through and is quick, I'd recommend the regular, *non-Brilliant* models.

The 18" cymbals demonstrated characteristics similar to those of the 16" models, except that I could play some ride patterns on the *non-Brilliant* models. Again, the *Brilliant*'s sound was not as abrasive and was a little more gong-like. The regular 18" was nice and trashy, had a little sustain, and also could be used as a ride cymbal either right-side up or inverted.

Getting back to what I mentioned earlier about the shape of the HH *Thin Chinese*. Since the bend in these cymbals is closer to the center, you have a little less room to ride on than with other Chinas. This isn't really a problem; you simply may need to angle the cymbal a bit more to make it easier to play the ride area.

The 20" cymbals had nice, low tones. The 20" *Brilliant* was a little gongy, and I'd use it more for a big crash than as a ride. The regular 20" worked well as both a ride and crash. It had a fairly quick decay and a low pitch that made it perfect for riding on. (This one, along with the *Brilliant* 16", was my favorite of the bunch.)

Now we get to the 22" models. All I can say is, "Wow! That's a whole lotta China cymbal!" These were very low-pitched and yet powerful. The regular 22" was extremely loud and trashy, and sounded great as a ride mounted upside down. (It was a pleasure riding on this one softly.) The *Brilliant* model worked okay as a ride, but it was quite gongy—I'd use it for big gong effects and huge crashes. The only problem with a Chinese cymbal this big is that it's tough to get it in the case with the rest of your cymbals!

Overall, these are beautiful-looking and -sounding cymbals. I have a fondness for China cymbals, and the more low-pitched and "Oriental"-sounding they are, the better. If that's what you're interested in, check out an HH *Thin Chinese*. The list price for the 16" is \$216; the 18" is \$255; the 20" is \$294; and the 22" is \$348. *Brilliant* finish is available at no extra charge.

• **William F. Miller**

## Bison Custom Symphonic Snare Drums

■ by Gary J. Spellissey

Mitch Greenberg of the Bison Drum Company explains that his custom drums started with the concept of a sym-

phonic snare drum that would produce a brighter harmonic than was available at the time. Members of the Chicago Symphony played the drum and began using it right away. Word spread, and after ten years of producing their drums for individuals, Bison now offers them to the entire drumming community. The snare drums are also available, with alterations, for use in rock and jazz idioms.

The snare drums are made in 3x13, 4x13, and 3 - 8x14 sizes. The shells are of 10-ply maple laminate; ebony and walnut stain are available for an additional \$30. All hardware is aluminum with a high-polish buffing. (All screws are stan-

dard steel.) The hoops are 1/4"-thick aluminum alloy with an in-line construction to allow a brighter harmonic. The lugs are machined out of high-strength aluminum alloy and fastened to the shell with a non-gasketed, socket-head cap screw through a pillow block. The lever-action strainer is also hard aluminum alloy, and is specifically designed to directly clamp to the steel aircraft-cable snares. The snares are held in alignment by metal clamps attached below the strainers on each side of the drum. This design helps transmit a brighter response to the shell of the drum. The lever is designed to "squeeze" into posi-



**Bison 6x14 Symphonic snare**

tion, eliminating the loud snap of the snares against the bottom head that often occurs with other strainers. The lever drops  $1/2$ ", so when the snares are in the "off" position they are well-removed from the snare head. The snare tension knob is machined from brass alloy and is a standard  $1/4$ " x28 thread. This allows tightening of the cable snares beyond the capabilities of normal tension knobs. The drums have double  $45^\circ$  bearing edges, and the snare beds are cut by hand. The lugs, hoops, strainer, and cable snares are made to produce a louder snare drum sound, more clearly heard as distinct notes at a farther distance than those produced by other snare drums.

The first Bison snare drum I received was a 6x14 model. As I removed the drum from the box, I was immediately impressed with its overall appearance and design. The shell finish was superb, both inside and out. The look of the drum is made different by the use of aluminum for all metal parts. The lugs are singular tubes running from the top to the bottom of the drum, approximately

1" away from the shell. This design allows for greater tensioning than a normal drum, while giving the drum a "classic" look.

The snare strainer looked "unfinished" to me, due to its matte aluminum color. I questioned Mitch Greenberg about this. He said the strainer *could* be anodized but that typical plating would be difficult because the strainer would slip while in use. As a result, the company opted for performance rather than cosmetic appeal.

The drum arrived with Remo *Diplomat* heads for both the snare side and the batter. I increased the tension on both heads, which made the drum very resonant and very sensitive—even when played at the edge of the head. Make no mistake, this is a drum capable of loud response without ever choking. The sound was dark and dry. With a muffling ring set on the top head, I liked the sound even better. As I continued my evaluation, I recorded the drum without a muffler from 15' away. From this distance, the drum sounded remarkable. I backed up a bit, and discovered that the

further the distance, the better the drum sounded.

Then came the real test: to place the drum in actual playing situations. In an orchestral setting, it felt great to play, and other players—both percussionists and non-percussionists—remarked on its clarity. (Do you have any idea what it takes to get a trombone player to comment on the sound of a snare drum?) I placed the drum in two other symphonic situations, and each time I enjoyed playing the drum more and more.

I then took the drum with me to see how it would fare in a "general business" setting. I must confess that I brought another snare that I regularly use. The Bison worked well in some musical styles, but not all. But remember, this drum is really set up for classical use. I also had reservations about the aluminum rims taking the abuse of continual backbeat rimshots, but found that the Bison had no problem in this area. Again, I want to mention that rock and jazz models are available.

I also had the pleasure of playing on a 3x13 piccolo snare equipped like the 6x14. The piccolo was really responsive and full-bodied. This drum could be cranked up to wherever you would want it.

Both of the Bison drums I tried would be welcome additions to anyone's instrument collection. They are resonant, responsive, and capable of a large spectrum of dynamics. The design and workmanship are exemplary, and the drums are a pleasure to play, regardless of the musical style. Because Bison is a custom drum company, you can specify exactly what you desire in a drum (snare types, number of air vents, etc.). I found Mitch Greenberg to be a knowledgeable drummer and drum-maker who is going to be around to stand behind his product. The cost of Bison drums is in line with other custom brands: List price for the piccolo is \$460; the 6" drum is \$630. If you're looking for a symphonic snare drum, a Bison drum would be "hard to beat."

# Vic Firth Signature Mallets

• by Rick Mattingly

After introducing an impressive line of "signature" drumsticks over the past few years, designed by prominent drummers, Vic Firth has applied the same idea to vibes/marimba mallets. *Gary Burton*, *Ed Mann*, *Terry Gibbs*, and *Victor Mendoza* models are now featured in the Firth catalog. Burton, Mann, and Mendoza have one model each, while Gibbs has four varieties to choose from.

## Gary Burton

According to Burton himself, the Firth *M-25 Gary Burton* signature mallets are an exact copy of the mallets he used to have made by the legendary Bill Marimba of Good Vibes. Burton also says that they resemble the early Musser *Burton* models, but that the later Musser versions were not quite the same. At any rate, the Firth model features rattan handles and yarn-wound heads. The length is 15 1/2", and the rattan handles have a diameter of 5/16". While with most rattan-handle mallets the diameter of the shaft can vary from pair to pair, the *Burton* mallets are consistent.

As one might expect, these mallets work well over the entire range of the vibraphone, producing a clear, articulate sound without being clanky. They also sounded good over most of the marimba range, with the exception of the top few notes, for which they were a bit too soft.

## EdMann

The first thing you notice about Firth's *M-21 Ed Mann* model mallets is their length: 16 1/2", which is a full inch longer than most mallets. The handles are made of black birch, and the medium-hard heads are of white yarn with a mushroom-



shaped head. I suppose that extra-long handle could come in handy if you have a multi-instrument setup and need some extra reach. But I liked the length for a different reason. I was still tending to hold the mallets the same distance from the head that I would hold shorter ones, so that extra inch of stick on the back end was affecting the balance. The shafts are thinner than the *Burton* model, but having the extra length (and subsequent extra weight) makes the balance similar.

These are slightly harder than the *Burton* mallets, but they still work fine over the full range of the vibraphone without being clanky. On a four-octave marimba, they worked best in the middle two octaves; they were slightly clunky on the lowest notes, and a bit soft for the upper octave.

One other observation: If you ever play mallets in a pit or other situation in which the lighting is not very good, you might appreciate the white heads on the *Mann* model. They tend to show up well, especially against marimba bars or a Simmons *Silicon Mallet*.

## Victor Mendoza

The Firth *M-23 Victor Mendoza* mallets feature black birch handles, like the *Mann* model, but a more standard 15 1/2" length, and hard, cord-wound heads with a more extreme mushroom shape. I found them slightly "top-heavy" compared to the *Mann* and *Burton* models. On a vibraphone, they were slightly brittle on the lowest notes, but bright and penetrating over the rest of the range. On the marimba, they were predictably clunky at the bottom, but sounded fine from about C2 all the way to F4. In a room with muddy acoustics, these could be the perfect choice for projection.

## Terry Gibbs

Firth offers four models in the *Gibbs* series: *M 30* soft, with a yellow cord head; *M 31* medium, with a blue cord

head; *M 32* medium hard, with a green cord head; and *M 33* hard, with a red cord head. All of the models are 15" long and feature rattan handles. The handles were different thicknesses on the ones I received for review, although each pair was matched. One might want to purchase the *Gibbs* models from a shop that has several pairs of each in stock, if one is concerned with the handle thickness. The thinner ones felt a little top-heavy to me, but had more flex. I liked the thicker ones for their balance, but they were definitely stiffer.

The *M 30* soft model sounded rich and full on the lower two and a half octaves of the vibes, but were a little mushy on the top half-octave. On the marimba they were wonderful on the bottom octave, good up to about G3, passable to F4, and weak above that.

I would rate the *M 31* medium as the most general-purpose of the bunch. They sounded fine over the full range of both the vibes and marimba (although they favored the low end of the marimba over the high end). They are very close to the *Burton* model, but being cord rather than yarn, have just a bit more bite.

The *M 32* medium hard could also make a good general-purpose mallet, especially in a room with muddy acoustics. They are a little brighter-sounding than the *M 31*s, but still work well over the full range of both vibes and marimba—this time favoring the upper end of the marimba slightly.

Gibbs' *M 33* hard model produced a lot of attack on the vibes, but wasn't as clanky as I feared it might be. On the marimba, it was best over the top three octaves, producing a xylophone-like sound.

Finally, here is how all of the above mallets compare with each other, going from softest to hardest: *Gibbs M 30*; *Burton*; *Mann*; *Gibbs M 31*; *Mendoza*; *Gibbs M 32*; *Gibbs M 33*. Among those seven models, you should be able to find mallets to cover most situations. All of the models reviewed here carry a list price of \$41 per pair. 

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*through age? Could we do it well*

*flexible and malleable. But our craftsmen hit upon*

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*an ingenious new technique that enabled us to*

*wouldn't feel the need to scour the*

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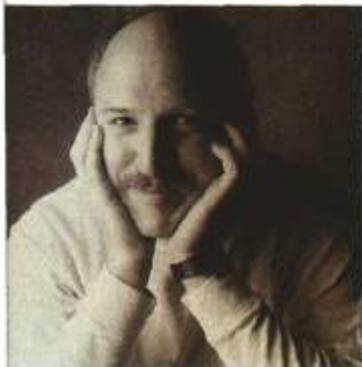
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*I liken the cymbal to a piano*

*or violin: it has the clarity and*

*the rich, creamy tone*

*of a real instrument. The subtleties are wonderful;*

*when you tap the cymbal, it has a 'give,'*

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*feel like you're just hitting metal."*

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# Sapphire Slim Line Studio Drum Pad

by Richard Watson

MD's May '91 issue featured an editorial on the entrepreneurial spirit among percussion product manufacturers. The article hailed opportunities seen and seized by small operations with big imaginations and commitment to the drummers they serve. From Sapphire, a tiny Acton, Massachusetts company you may never have heard of, comes a percussion trigger pad that should have some of the industry's big guns taking notice.

## Basics

Available in 6", 8", 10", and 12" diameters, Sapphire's new, aptly named *Slim Line* trigger pad is only 1 1/4" deep. Its design can best be described as a shallow cylinder, or shell, with top and bottom cover plates, all made of machined aluminum. A pure gum-rubber "head" is affixed to the top cover plate, which, like the bottom plate, is set into the shell with a bead of silicone. A transducer is attached to the underside of the top plate and imbedded in high-density foam rubber. The pad's playing surface is recessed about 1/16" below a strip of black anodized aluminum edging, creating a kind of miniature rim. The stand mount (also machined anodized aluminum) and a large T-nut extend another 2" from the side of the pad. The unit's shell and bottom are covered with a glossy *Formica*-like material. A standard W phone jack is located on the side of the pad near the mount.

## Sensitivity

The *Slim Line* sends a hotter signal

than any pad I've used. Designer Steve Rothmel attributes this partly to the excellent conductive properties of the pad's aluminum chassis. However, I suspected the same properties as a potential cause of false triggering from external vibrations (as created by other pads on a common stand). But once I adjusted my *drumKAT*'s gain for the *Slim Line*'s trigger signal, I experienced no interaction problems whatsoever. Another reason for the pad's hot signal is what Steve called "Selective Antinode Alignment" (SAA), a scientifically tested placement of the pad's transducer according to the particular resonance of each size of pad.

Speaking of resonance, Sapphire informed me that much attention was devoted to "tuning" the sound produced by tapping on their pads, in order to make them sonically inconspicuous to microphones when recorded along with acoustic drums. Not having tested it in this situation, I won't contest their claim. But I should mention that the hollow sound generated by tapping on the *Slim Line* was actually more audible than that of my other pads.

Velocity sensitivity (the ability to smoothly and accurately reproduce all dynamic levels) is perhaps the most important property of a drum trigger. The *Slim Line*'s velocity sensitivity is comparable to that of the best pads I've used. But what impressed me most about the *Slim Line*'s performance is the uniformity of its response across the pad. Thanks again to SAA, its signal strength remained absolutely consistent from dead center to the very edge of the playing surface.

## Stick Response

Steve Rothmel was very proud that his pad's playing surface is made of pure gum rubber, without so much as an adulterating dye. Perhaps due more to



the thinness of that rubber or the inherent resilience of the aluminum plate behind it, I found the *Slim Line* pad to be a bit more firm and fast than any of the pads I'm currently playing. While not unnatural, its relative lack of "give" more closely emulates a tightly—rather than loosely—tuned acoustic drum head. This degree of bounce is ideal for buzz rolls and technique that benefits from a fast response, but may require some getting used to for guys who like the feeling of really "digging into" a floppy head.

The *Slim Line*'s "mini-rim" is so small that I didn't even notice it until I began to actually play the pad. Without an additional discrete transducer to trigger a different sample in your sound source, the rim's value is purely ergonomic. But since most trigger pads seem to ignore the enormous satisfaction of laying into metal for a rimshot, I commend Sapphire for their attention to this subtle, often neglected detail.

## Stand Mount

The *Slim Line*'s beautifully crafted stand mount is available in two models. One fits Pearl-sized stands, the other fits the Tama type. Its clamp (which tightens on one side with a standard flathead bolt and on the other with a large T-nut) is fashioned to receive a vertical stand post or angle arm. Unlike some pads that can

be mounted in a row across a single bar and independently tilted, the vertical mount configuration requires some kind of angle arm or adaptor for each pad. (If you don't mind your pads being perfectly horizontal, you may be tempted, as I was, to clamp the *Slim Line* to the "trunk" of a cymbal stand.) The real payoff of this design is in stability. Since most of the force exerted upon a drum pad is vertical, mounting it on a vertical post virtually eliminates the chance of angle slippage and reduces interaction vibrations that can lead to the dreaded false triggering.

### Durability

At my first sight of the *Slim Line's* candy-apple finish, I mistakenly assumed the whole thing was plastic and a lot too pretty to be roadworthy. I was especially worried that the aluminum edging would be badly dented by the first errant whack. Appearances can be deceiving. When a couple of gingerly placed rimshots pro-

duced none of the anticipated damage, I hit the edging directly with increasing force up to a level that crossed the line between music and contact sports. The score? Mini-rim, two—reviewer, zip.

If quality of construction is an indicator of durability, the *Slim Line* wins again. Every edge and joint was perfect. Despite the aforementioned resonance, the unit felt strong and solid. Another clue to its durability is that every Sapphire pad comes with a two-year warranty.

The *Slim Line* pad is available in four standard colors: black, white, blue, and red. But since Sapphire gets its covering material from countertop manufacturers, you can special-order "just about any color you've seen or can imagine, from woodgrain to chrome." The black aluminum edging provides a clean, sleek outline. The pad's head might have been a little more dramatic in black or a color that matched the shell, but the gum rubber's natural creamy tan is okay too.

Unlike some trigger pads' industrial-functional designs, the *Slim Line's* drum-like shape won't look alien next to your acoustic drums. Then again, its narrow profile won't make a huge visual impact tucked in amidst a large acoustic setup. But a kit made up entirely of these pads would, I imagine, be a thing of modern minimalist beauty.

### Conclusions

Sapphire's *Slim Line Studio Drum Pad* is a handsome, well-made percussion trigger. Its feel is on the firm and rubbery side, but acceptably natural. Its velocity sensitivity and uniformity of response are excellent. Plans for a two-send pad and a kick drum trigger are "on the drawing board." Prices for the pads are: 6", \$120; 8", \$135; 10", \$156; and 12", \$180. Contact Sapphire Percussions, 272 Main St., Suite 5B, Acton, Massachusetts 01720, (508) 263-8677.

## KAT kicKAT

■ by Richard Watson

Since the introduction of the *KAT Mallet Controller* in 1986 and the *drumKAT* pad set/controller in 1988, KAT has defined "state of the art" in integrated MIDI percussion. Recently, KAT began branching out into the electronic percussion component market with its entry-level *midikAT*. trigger-to-MIDI interface and a line of pad triggers adopted from the latest, enhanced-performance Daus design. The newest member of the growing KAT litter is its electronic bass drum trigger, the *kicKAT*.

### Overview

While aesthetics should be among the last criteria for judging a piece of equipment, the *kicKAT's* appearance is so strikingly peculiar that it will probably dominate your first impression of the

unit, as it did mine. Contrasting competing products that range from lumpy-utilitarian to angular-futuristic, the *kicKAT's* form seems to have sprung from KAT founder Bill Katoski's somewhat whimsical approach to design. (Considering that the pad layout of the *drumKAT* looks for all the world like Mickey Mouse, should we be surprised?) Following the feline theme, the *kicKAT* resembles, even more overtly, a seated black cat!

What the "cat" sits upon is a reinforced, 1/8"-thick steel base (shaped roughly like a fat-bottomed "I") that is fitted with four spring-loaded retractable spurs and, on the underside, four opposing strips of industrial *Velcro*. The base's back (player's side) lip is raised for easy pedal mounting and covered top and bottom with a strip of gum rubber for a solid hoop clamp grip. A



standard 1/4" phone jack is located just above it on *kicKAT's*, hollow, black enamel steel body. The cat's semi-circular head (complete with slight outer points alluding to "ears") contains the unit's sensor circuitry. The "kicKAT" logo is printed vertically in bold white letters

down the cat's back. The maximum dimensions are 15 3/8" high x 11" wide x 14 7/8" deep.

### Velocity Sensitivity

I tested the *kickKAT* with a Korg *S3 Rhythm Workstation* and a *drumKAT* provided by KAT, and with my own Roland *R-8M*, Casio *FZ-10M*, and, alternately, *drumKAT* and Simmons *PortaKit* controllers.

To convincingly simulate the sound and feel of "real" acoustic percussion, a trigger should be able to accurately read and reproduce a drummer's entire dynamic range, right down to the ghost strokes. But lower-level dynamics are an area in which bass drum triggers seem particularly weak. Based upon my previous experience with KAT products, I was expecting miracles, and so was initially disappointed by the *kickKAT*'s velocity sensitivity. Although I'd confirmed that the controller was programmed to KAT's suggested levels of gain, threshold, and minimum and maximum dynamics, the range between "quiet" and "loud" was a bit narrow, and my softest playing wasn't triggering the *drumKAT* at all. Suspecting that KAT's recommended settings were tailored to drummers who prayed to Bonham and/or had eaten their Wheaties in childhood, I tried increasing the gain a notch and decreasing the threshold and the minimum dynamic. After re-training the trigger on my *drumKAT* (a suggestion, I confess, supplied by the folks at the KAT hot line), and a little more tweaking at a band rehearsal, the *kickKAT* was reproducing bass drum strokes I hadn't heard since the last time I played acoustic drums.

Concerned that similarly positive results might not be achieved with an interface lacking the *drumKAT*'s sophisticated adjustability, I dusted off my old *PortaKit* and plugged in the *kickKAT*. While the *kickKAT* performed best when matched with the *drumKAT*, it yielded a proportional improvement over my own (soon to be former) bass drum trigger when paired with the *PortaKit* as well.

The *kickKAT*'s gain strength dimin-

ished slightly when played off-center, but the fade was only significant at the outermost edges of the pad. Double-pedal players will be pleased that the impact surface provides plenty of "sweet spot" for two beaters.

### Tracking

Tracking fast playing (as opposed to tracking dynamics) is largely determined by the MIDI controller/interface, but can be tricky for some snare/tom triggers as well. This kind of tracking failure results in notes within fills and rolls that annoyingly just "disappear." But because average playing on even two bass drums is relatively sparse, accurate tracking is, you'll excuse the expression, a minor feat for a trigger. I wasn't surprised, then, when the *kickKAT* tracked both my single- and double-pedal playing flawlessly. But considering the possibility that there may be faster feet among you (or even among some of your grandmothers), I devised a test for speed-metal extremes. After setting the note number on the *drumKAT* to address a snare drum sound and rolling the *kickKAT* on its back, I played a number of open and fairly closed rolls on its beater impact surface with a pair of drumsticks. Within the sensitivity range programmed into the *drumKAT*, the *kickKAT* never missed a stroke. You may never need this degree of tracking sensitivity, but it's nice to know that the unit will never slow you down.

### Feel

My experiment with the drumsticks revealed to me something about the physical feel of the playing surface as well. The "give" of the gum rubber was not ideally conducive to playing press rolls. Instead, appropriately, its response was exactly that of a real, normally tuned bass drum head. If you haven't played on other kick triggers, you may be thinking, "so what?" But if there is a disparity in the naturalness of snare and tom pad triggers, it is nothing compared to the range among kick triggers; they are indeed not all created equal. Bill Katoski informed me that the *kickKAT*'s amazingly natural

feel is the result of extensive research and development and a no-expense-spared design philosophy. The playing surface is composed of layers of four different kinds of rubber! Each successive layer responds to hits of different intensity, making soft, medium, and hard playing feel equivalently natural, with no dead stop at the extreme end of the stroke or, in Bill's words, "not like playing a table top when you really lay into it." Likewise, soft attacks produced neither mushy nor "super ball" rebounds.

### Durability

A flyer that accompanies the *kickKAT* says that "the sensing element in the 'head' [is] specially designed to survive repeated impact from the beater." Long-term durability can hardly be proved in the ten days I allotted for a product review, but I did subject the *kickKAT* to about three hours of truly exaggerated flogging without causing any apparent damage or reduced sensitivity. Overall, the *kickKAT* features simple, no-nonsense construction. Except for the retractable spurs, it has no moving parts. Though lighter than it looks, the unit feels very sturdy, and its welding and finish are immaculate.

### Stability

The *kickKAT*'s, flat, one-piece base provides rock-solid stability in normal situations, but of course will not straddle cymbal stand legs or large bumps, such as riser edge trim, or severely uneven stages (as can triggers with adjustable legs). Most drummers may never encounter such unfriendly playing conditions, but if your next tour includes more than a few construction sites, beware. Thanks to its four spurs and *Velcro*, the *kickKAT* ain't going nowhere without your rug or carpeting. But, lacking any rubber on the underside of its base, it will skate across (or destroy) most hard-surface floors. Therefore a rug is essential.

### Portability

Stability and a solid feel don't come without a cost. Since its base is not

removable (at least not without defying a warning against hazardous shock), the *kicKAT* would not even fit into the snare drum compartment of my oversized trap case—let alone the accessories section or stand tray. A small floor tom case, or its equivalent, would suffice. (I might also recommend an extra beer for your roadie.)

### Conclusions

Belying its playfully unorthodox appearance, the *kicKAT* is a serious combination of quality workmanship, technical innovation, attention to detail, and ingenious design. My only suggestion would be to make its base removable for more convenient transport—but only if such a change didn't compromise the unit's solid stance. The *kicKAT's* velocity sensitivity and natural feel in particular make it the finest bass drum trigger I've ever played. *KAT* continues to impress me. The *kicKAT's* list price is \$259.



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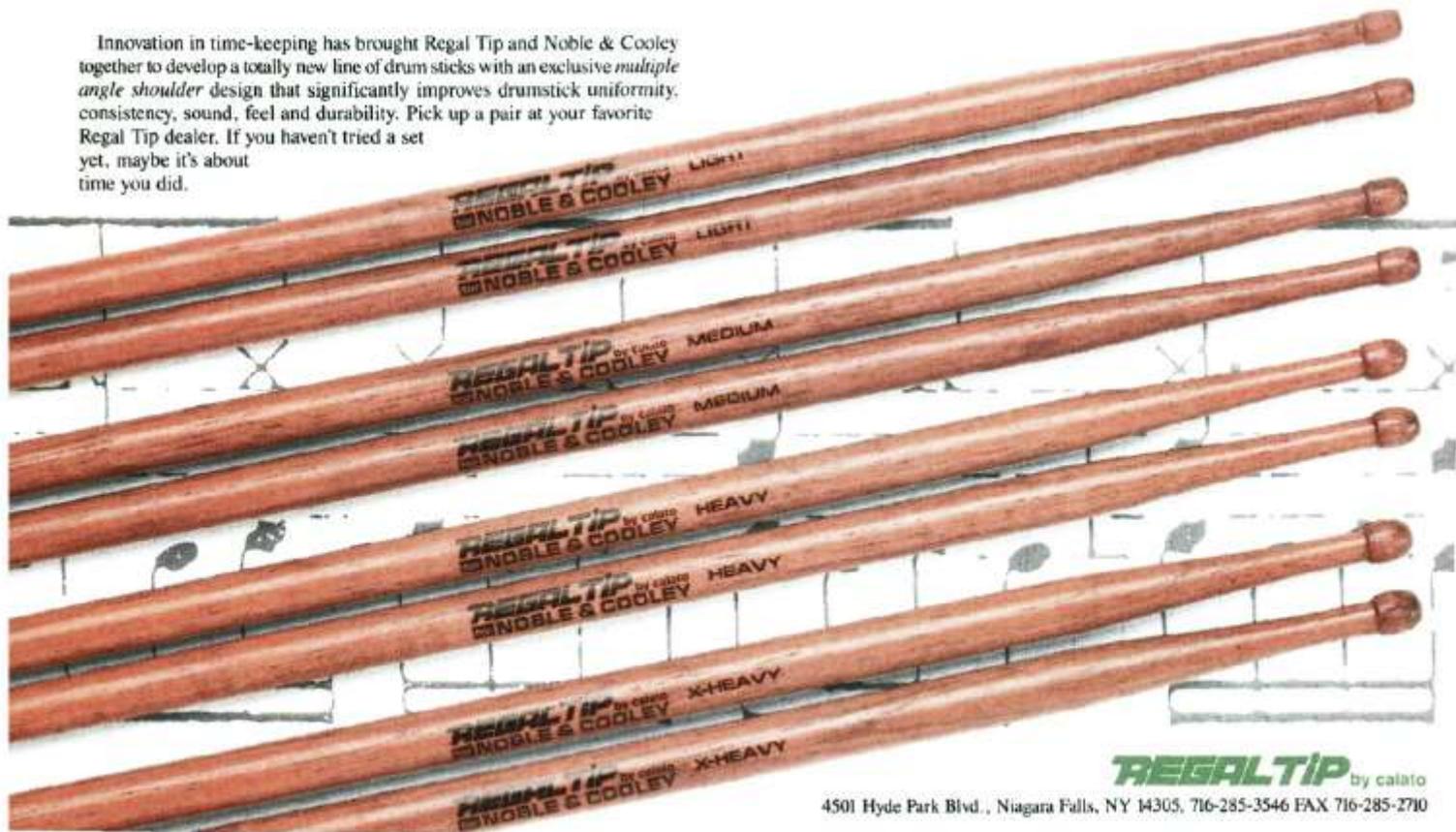
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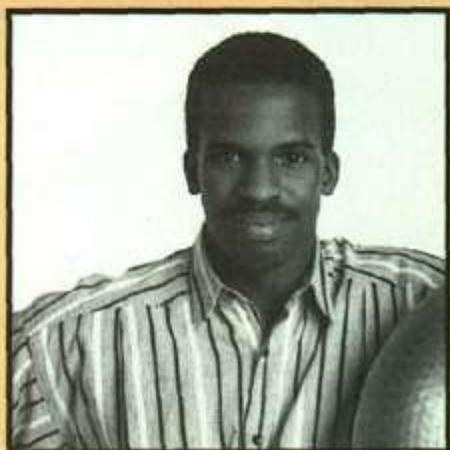
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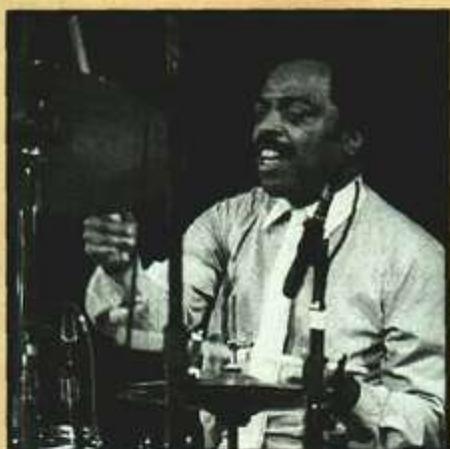


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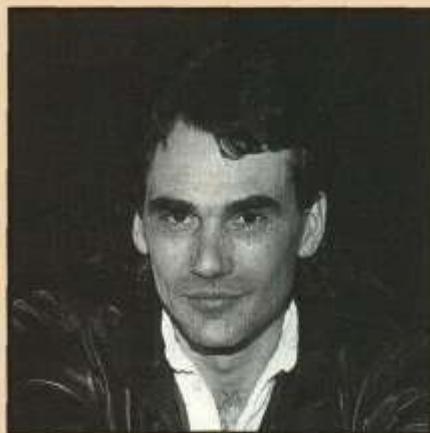


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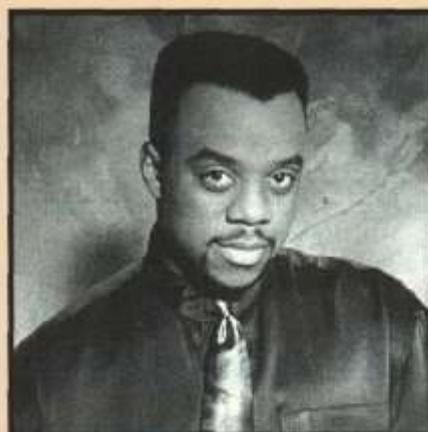
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# Filling In The Holes On The Hi-Hat: Part 4



Photo by Rick Malkin

by Rod Morgenstein

**MUSIC KEY**

|         |   |      |   |
|---------|---|------|---|
| Open    | ○ | R.C. | ▲ |
| Hi-Hat  | × |      |   |
| 16th    | • |      |   |
| 8th     | • |      |   |
| Triplet | • |      |   |
| 8th     | • |      |   |
| 16th    | • |      |   |
| 8th     | • |      |   |
| 16th    | • |      |   |

add  
Tone

For the past three articles we have been filling in the holes on the hi-hat (and toms) using a constant, uninterrupted flow of either 16th notes or 8th-note triplets. The next step is to experiment by *omitting* certain notes, thus breaking up the continuous barrage of sound and creating some very funky and colorful patterns. Take the following beat

Now add the toms.

Try the same process with the following triplet feel:

and then fill in the holes on the hi-hat.

Fill in the holes on the hi-hat

Now omit the last 16th of beat 2, the downbeat of beat 3, and the "&" of beat 4

omit the hi-hat notes on the downbeat of 3 and the middle of 4

and then apply various hi-hat notes to the toms.

and apply some hi-hat notes to the toms.

Working with the original beat, try omitting some other hi-hat notes—in this case the second 16th note of beats 1 and 2, the "&" of 3, and the middle two 16th notes of 4.

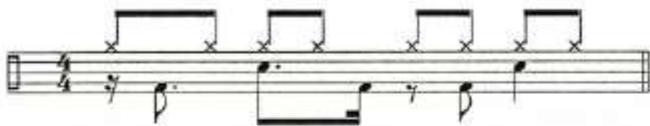
Using the original triplet-feel beat, here's another possibility:

Once again, work in the toms for added dimension.

Now add the toms.

The following is another variation of the original beat:

This last example takes the following beat



and in a two-measure context, utilizes both the continuous and broken-up feel.



There are limitless possibilities for applying this technique to the drumset. So take your favorite beats that have some degree of syncopation between the snare and bass, and forge ahead using the different ways we've discussed. *See ya!*



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because he chose to,  
or because he had  
no other choice?

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# Bill Stewart

Swinging with Scofield and Konitz, Funkin' with Maceo

by Bill Milkowski

He swings with authority, has a keen sense of hearing, and reacts to the moment with ideas as well as energy, which is why guitarist John Scofield, tenor saxophonist Joe Lovano, and alto sax great Lee Konitz have tapped Bill Stewart for their respective quartets.

At 23, Stewart is already making a name for himself in jazz circles, having appeared on recent albums by Scofield, Lovano, and Konitz. Plus, he's made some inroads into the land of funk through his recent gig with Maceo Parker, the alto saxophonist who helped James Brown take it to the bridge in the late '60s and later helped spread the funk with George Clinton's Parliament-Funkadelic and Bootsy's Rubber Band. Last year, Stewart appeared on Maceo's *Roots Revisited* (Minor Music/Verve), a soulful summit of jazz and R&B that sat atop Billboard's jazz charts for several weeks. He later toured Europe and the States on the strength of that album. His stay in Maceo's band culminated this past March with a special concert in Oakland that reunited Maceo with the Godfather himself, newly sprung from jail and back on the good foot once again.

"That was a unique experience," says Bill of J.B.'s comeback concert (taped for future broadcast on HBO). "It was a kind of thrown-together thing—really last-minute. I didn't even know we were going to Oakland until the day before we went."

Titled *Influences: James Brown And M. C. Hammer*, this HBO special showcases the Godfather of Soul on the same bill with rap's leading light, both backed by Maceo and company with Stewart laying down the funky backbeat. As Bill recalls, "We did three tunes with James: 'I Feel Good,' 'Good Foot,' and 'Please, Please, Please,' and M.C. did a tune...well, sort of a tune. He just sort of did his little shtick over a 'Cold Sweat' groove, just to show how he has been influenced by James. We did one rehearsal the day before and then we sort of winged it."

Though basically a groove-oriented gig, Stewart said playing behind Brown was nonetheless demanding. Unlike his jazz gigs with Scofield, Lovano, and Konitz—where he has to listen and react—the J.B. gig required him to *watch* and react.

"As a drummer playing his show, there are a lot of things you have to catch. He's got these little things he does—his showy kinds of gestures and a lot of stops and hits—that you really have to be alert for. So there was actually some pressure on me in that situation. It wasn't the kind of thing where I could relax and have fun."

Stewart is able to loosen up and do exactly that in both

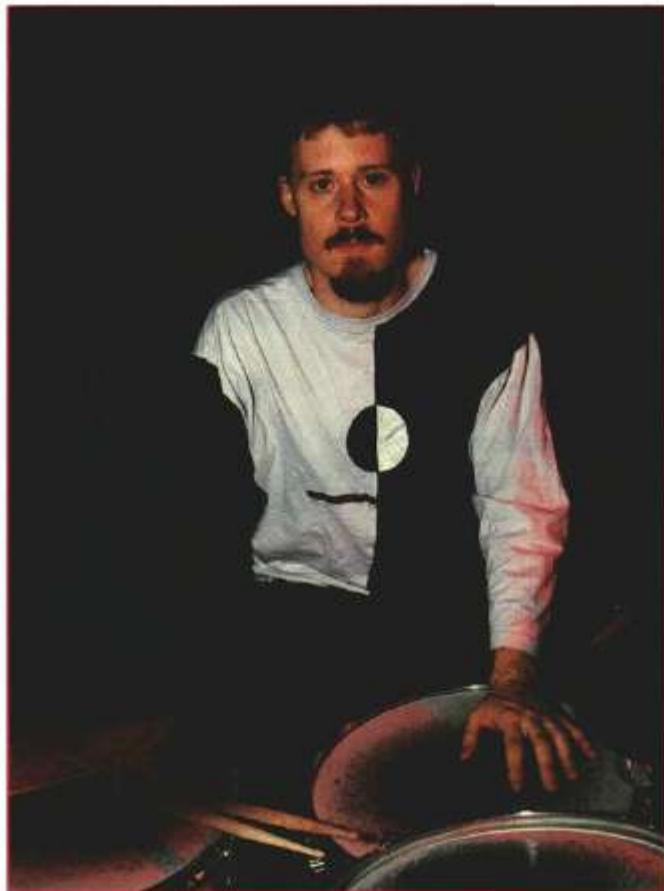


Photo by Ebet Roberts

Scofield's band (with bassist Marc Johnson and saxist Lovano) and Konitz's quartet (with bassist Ron McClure and pianist Kenny Werner). "Sco's gig is really ideal for me right now," he says. "The music he's writing now is real open with a lot of room—things that can be different each time you play them. The tunes are well-written, but they don't demand that the performance has the same effect every time. And some of the tunes don't even have changes, so that's nice too. I just have a lot of freedom to play the way I feel like playing."

That philosophy is put into practice on Scofield's latest Blue Note album, *Meant To Be*. "Mr. Coleman To You," a homage to jazz renegade Ornette Coleman, is a particularly good example of playing melodically and coming up with ideas in the moment, especially when the bottom drops out and the piece opens up to a daring free section that Lovano blows over with abandon.

Stewart's sensitive, interactive brushwork sets the tone for the title cut. On the burning "Big Fan" he swings ferociously while answering Lovano's tenor statements, and he handles the lyrical bossa "Keep Me In Mind" with tasteful restraint. On the uptempo vehicle "Go Blow," he flaunts facile swing chops, and on "Eisenhower," a jaunty paen to the '50s cool school of jazz, he nimbly trades fours with Sco's fluid guitar lines. Then he cops an appropriately laid-back parade-drumming attitude

on the lazy N'awlins shuffle "Chariots." Throughout the session, Stewart plays with uncanny finesse, tapping the bass drum so softly it's nearly imperceptible, yet still providing momentum. And his drumming is marked by a rhythmic flexibility that lets the music breathe.

Says Scofield, "Bill's the kind of drummer who allows the music to happen, and he swings his ass off, which is hard to find. From the first moment I started rehearsing with him, I knew he was the right guy for me." Adds Lovano, "He's a very mature player and a lot of fun to play with because he listens so well. In jazz, it's about action and reaction, and he's really got that down. I think Bill is one of the strongest young jazz drummers on the scene today, and he's only going to get stronger."

On both Scofield's *Meant To Be* and Lovano's *Landmarks*, Stewart hooks up with bassist Marc Johnson for what might be one of the most sympathetic rhythm sections since Charlie Haden and Paul Motian joined forces. Their chemistry is particularly noticeable on the more intimate trio tunes from *Landmarks*, like "The Owl And The Fox," the funky "Street Talk," and the polyrhythmic "Thanksgiving." And on "Emperor Jones," Lovano's tribute to drummer Elvin Jones, Stewart again shows an expressive touch with brushes. That same spirit of sensitivity and swing permeates a recent Soul Note quartet date with Lee Konitz (with bassist Ron McClure and pianist Kenny Werner).

"I really dig playing with Lee," says Stewart. "A drummer has to be really sensitive to play with him, I can tell you that from experience. When I first played with Lee, it was in a college situation, and I didn't feel like it was working. Actually I don't think I was quite mature enough at the time to really complement him well. You have to really listen for the spaces he leaves to play with him. He doesn't have a big overpowering sound that you can just bash over."

Despite Bill's doubts about that gig, Konitz remembered the young drummer, and later called him for a regular Sunday gig at the West End in New York. "It was great because we would go on stage and have no idea what we were gonna play. Sometimes I played whole sets free with him—no tunes, no changes, no nuthin'. And then when we played standards he wouldn't call tunes, he would just launch into something familiar and we would play a really abstract version of it.

"We did a similar kind of thing on this record on Soul Note. It's got three tunes that are totally spontaneous. And we do free versions of some standards like *All The Things You Are*." Now *there's* an example of a tune he's probably played thousands of times in his career. But he's one of those people who can really make it different every time, because he really knows the tune

inside out. Sometimes he doesn't even play the heads. It can get pretty 'out' with Lee. He really is into what I would call pure improvisation. He doesn't like to prepare anything in advance. We never play arrangements or things like that in his band. I guess he feels that sort of thing tends to inhibit him."

Scofield sounds like he's headed more into a similar direction with his new quartet, as opposed to the denser, more tightly arranged funk band he had through the late '80s with drummer Dennis Chambers and electric bassist Gary Grainger. "Yeah, I think that's maybe one of the reasons why he might've gotten out of that," says Bill, "because they played those arrangements and they sounded great, but they had pretty much done what they could do with them. So now he's ready to do this other thing. And I'm curious to see how it develops once we get out on the road."

When citing his influences, the first name that rolls off Stewart's tongue is Roy Haynes, immediately followed by Elvin Jones, Philly Joe Jones, Jack DeJohnette, Ed Blackwell, and Billy Higgins—all players who swing hard and react in the moment.

Born in Des Moines, Iowa on Oct. 18, 1966, Stewart grew up playing along with jazz records from his father's collection. Through his high school years he played in local Top-40 bands, though he had a stronger affinity for jazz. The trouble was, there weren't that many outlets in Des Moines for aspiring jazz musicians.

"By the time I was a senior in high school I was doing what few jazz gigs there were around town, but it was very limited. I went to the University of Northern Iowa for one year, but left there to attend William Paterson College, in New Jersey. I really wanted to get in the New York City area, and William Paterson was nearby. Being from Des Moines, I had never really seen a lot of live music. It just didn't exist. And I was never around people my age—or very many people in general—who were into jazz. So when I finally came to town, I wanted to see all my favorite drummers—all the people I had been listening to on records."

Stewart got his degree from William Paterson in 1989, but had begun playing around New York in different contexts a couple of years earlier. "One of my first gigs in New York was with [Jazz Messenger trumpeter] Brian Lynch at a club called Visiones in Greenwich Village. And I just sort of went from there. I kept meeting more people and making connections. In New York, it's just a matter of people getting to know you and liking what you do. So I was able to get some gig experience in my earlier months here, and it's been a gradual process of growth for me. I think my playing has improved a lot just dur-

"A drummer who's only concerned with what he or she is playing, and not with what the other musicians are playing, is probably not going to sound very musical within a group."



# Getting Serious About Timekeeping

by Peter I. Cohen

This is the Day of the Click. It has seeped through our defenses and infiltrated all of our consciousnesses. How could we have helped it? The click track has set the standard for meter and tempo in almost every recorded piece that we have heard for the last 15 years, at least in rock, pop, and commercials. Our ears have become accustomed to it. And as a result, whether we, as musicians, actually use an external reference or not, all of us today seem to have lower thresholds of tolerance for uneven time than we did in the past. The Click reigns supreme, in our minds and in our cells.

The drummer, always regarded as the "timekeeper" anyway, now finds himself (or herself) with a tougher job than ever before. The standard by which his or her timekeeping ability is measured has become absolute. Whether this is a "good" thing or not has fueled many a debate among musicians. In my own case, returning to professional drumming after a few years' time off (no pun intended), I must admit that I felt some resentment about this: Wasn't it unfair, after all, that now I had to be held accountable to the standards of a machine? But then I realized, much to my horror, that I, too, had internalized the new criteria over my years of idle listening, and had become, in fact, intolerant of my own waverings. Clearly, whether I liked it or not, the time had come to buckle down and do something about this. Time to re-calibrate my internal clock. Time to get serious about timekeeping.

Well, my self-training is far from over, but I've certainly collected some useful data and impressions so far. I should mention that my recent experience has been limited to performing and recording original rock music with one particular band, using click tracks and sequencers in the studio, but not on stage. However, most of my findings, I think, could easily apply to drummers finding themselves in other situations.

## Caught Between A Push And A Pull

For instance, most drummers can relate to the feeling of being "pushed" or "pulled" at various times and to varying degrees by other members of the band during live performance. You know—those times when you could just swear that the bass player is wanting to drag, or the guitar player is wanting to rush. You can just feel it—that tension between you, that resistance.

Well, you have a couple of alternatives: 1) You can yield to the

bass player, or guitarist, and go along with him. This has the advantage of relieving the tension, plus it offers the possibility of finding a new groove at a different tempo at which you might find common agreement. But it also carries with it a sense that you've somehow betrayed your role as timekeeper for the band. You've handed your station over to somebody else—the first step in a progressive erosion of the others' trust in you as the holder of that post. The first step towards total anarchy. (Today, the bass player—tomorrow, the accordionist!) Moreover, as most of us know, once you allow the tempo to start to move in one direction or the other, it tends to continue moving that way, until even the most inebriated listener can tell that the train of the tune has run away (or been derailed altogether). On the other hand, if you...2) stick to your guns and just muscle on ahead at the speed you feel it should be at, heedless of the signals coming from any of the others, you are likely to destroy any chance you might have for preserving a groove. Unless the others come to heel, the pocket will collapse under the ensuing tension. A no-win situation, it would seem.

But who is to say you're "right" in the first place? How can you be sure that in any given moment you have a better sense of the time—by which I mean both meter and tempo—than anyone else in the band? So many variables intrude—the feel of the room, the response of the crowd, the amount of rest you've managed to get that day, the fight you've just had with your mate, the number of cappuccinos you may have consumed before the gig, the technical demands of the tune itself.... Who's to say that the accordionist may not have a better grip on things than you, after all—at least right at that moment? Unless you're one of those blessed few who just happen to have been born with an infallible "internal metronome," there's no way to really tell.

Which may be at least one reason why no less stellar a figure than Max Roach said in a recent interview that all musicians—not just the drummer—should share in the responsibility for keeping time. "Why should I keep time for somebody?" he wondered aloud. "I have an instrument that can color, that can build and do anything in the world to enhance the performance. So am I going to be restricted to just saying 'ding-ding-a-ding' for you? If you can't keep time then you should not be involved in this music.... Every instrumentalist should be able to feel the pulse without the rhythm section."

I agree with Roach, at least up to a point. I'm still inclined to believe that the drummer should serve as the primary timekeeper for the band. But not as an iron-fisted, metronomic tyrant; rather, as a kind of tacit reference point for those other, equal contributors. This is not as mysterious as it might sound. It simply means that to be the "timekeeper" for the band may sometimes mean to yield the direction to another member at any given moment. Not "giving up the reins," but rather flowing with the inherent momentum of the tune at that particular place and time. Your leadership is made "tacit" by precisely this unspoken agreement you have forged with the

others to share the creative impulse as it arises with every beat.

At its best, this describes a situation where the drummer has joined in a kind of organic integration with the rest of the band such that each member has become interdependent within the whole. A situation in which the band can be said to have become "fused." Admittedly, this is a relatively rare occurrence, and it takes time and attention to cultivate within a group of musicians. But the musical payoff is enormous. It can explain why Led Zeppelin, for example, chose not to even try to go on without John Bonham; why Def Leppard didn't even consider finding another drummer after Rick Allen lost his arm; how the Allman Brothers' Butch Trucks and Jaimoe (see the March, 1991 issue of *MD*) and the Grateful Dead's Billy Kreutzmann and Mickey Hart can play so fluidly without getting in each other's way. Yes, when a band is truly fused, timekeeping *happens*. It is taken care of in the midst of the magic that music-making itself conjures up.

True, this may be a somewhat idealistic goal for most of us, but there are moments when it happens even in one-time freelance situations; and I wanted to at least mention it here, before going on to describe the more "practical" techniques. For we should never allow our efforts to achieve technical perfection to obscure our real goal: to let our bodies themselves become pure and spontaneous conduits for the groove. As Max Weinberg put it (in the April '91 issue of *MD*): "Just because a piece of music is in time does not mean that it grooves; that's a higher level and the one to which all musicians should aspire."

### Training To Entrain With Time

So back to the dragging bass player and the rushing guitarist. How do you actually become that "tacit reference point" around which the band's intercommunal sharing can revolve?

The answer, obviously enough, is training. Practice with some kind of external reference source. But what may not be so obvious is the reason: how subjective most of our "internal metronomes" are, how infuriatingly vulnerable they are to all the emotional vagaries of any given moment. It is not until we actually sit and practice for a while with some kind of mechanical signal that we will really "get" just how unstable and wavering most of us human beings really are. Practicing with such an external standard, we can eventually begin to internalize some of that solid, metronomic "sense" ourselves. It will eventually seep into us, become second-nature to us—again, not so we can become machine-like in our playing, but rather so that we can better provide what's wanted and needed in today's music. Not so we can issue dictatorial commands from our throne, but so that we can simply embody

the pulse in a way that everybody else will be able to feel it, too, and then entrain with it.

We have a choice among several such external time sources. First, of course, there are recordings: the time-honored technique of playing along to the radio, records, tapes, and CDs. But as useful—and fun—as this technique might be in terms of providing inspiration and developing musicality in general, it somehow does not seem to have as direct an impact on time-keeping skills, per se, as other things do. I'm not sure why, but—and this is just my personal opinion in any case—it may be because recordings contain in them so many more elements than just the single, isolated one that we're concerned with here. To train yourself in timekeeping, it seems necessary to hone the reference source down to that one, inescapable, unignorable (and often unnerving) stimulus—the Naked Pulse itself.

The simplest such source is the electronic metronome, and there are several good models available today. You want one that has an output for headphones, however; and it may also be useful to get one with a flashing-light signal. Here, you are down to the very basics—just a click (and flashing light), set to a certain number of beats-per-minute (bpm). You can practice your rudiments, practice your fills, practice your various patterns. Use your hands, use your feet, use combinations. But whatever you play with it, the key is to allow the click to penetrate your consciousness—not fighting it or fixating on it—but just letting it gently entrain you with it at various speeds. Although at first the unrelenting click in your ear may seem intrusive and irritating to you, it will soon become almost unnoticeable—even a kind of comfort. And after a while, not only will you find that your "evenness" will improve, but your inner sense of what 120 bpm feels like, as opposed to 110 or 130, will grow more certain. You will be well on your way towards developing your own internal clock.

One very effective exercise is to play along with a particular tune "in your head" after you have set the metronome to the respective tempo. This does require, however, that you have already notated the optimal beats-per-minute figure for each of the tunes in your repertoire (which you should do anyway), plus have a good memory for tune arrangement.

### Using The Beat Bug

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"Although at first the unrelenting click in your ear may seem intrusive and irritating to you, it will soon become almost unnoticeable—even a kind of comfort."



continued on page 106

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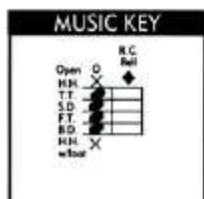
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# Practical Applications Of The Mozambique Rhythm



by Chuck Silverman

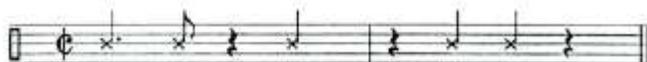


Many drummers are turned off by Latin music because much of the available literature doesn't explore contemporary ideas that can be used in other musical contexts besides Latin. But studying this music in a *new* and *creative* way can be of great help to many drummers. Learning about the mozambique rhythm, for instance, can give jazz, rock, and fusion players many great ideas on groove playing, soloing, fills, and independence. Latin music is music based on the drum. It's for *all* drummers, so relax and dig in.

To start off, clave is the most important concept in the study of Latin music. Translated into English, the word means "essence," "foundation," or "key." These are very descriptive words, and each of them carries a lot of weight. Clave is the essence of many of the rhythms we will be studying. Its two-bar pattern is the very foundation of Afro-Caribbean music, and in it we can find the key to a better understanding of the drumset's role.

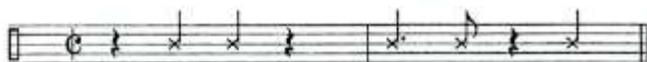
One of the patterns we'll become accustomed to is the forward clave, or 3-2 clave. It's called 3-2 because in the first bar there are three beats, and in the second there are two.

### 3-2 (Forward)



The 2-3 clave, or reverse clave, is exactly that—it has two beats in the first bar, and three in the second.

### 2-3 (Reverse)



Why is understanding clave so important? Well, getting the clave feel down will help all our Latin playing feel better. I've found clave to be a kind of tension-and-release formula. One bar is the tension, the other bar is the release. Actually, almost all music is about tension and release—in harmonic as well as rhythmic terms. If we can bring that feeling to our playing, we can become better musicians.

Now on to our first study, the mozambique rhythm. First we'll look at a typical application of the rhythm. By concentrating on the feel of the basic rhythm, we can then move to variations of the rhythm while maintaining the feel.

An important part of mozambique is its cowbell pattern. The following exercises are in both 2-3 and 3-2 clave directions. Notice that the only difference in the bell pattern is in which measure it starts. There are many variations to this pattern.

This is a basic example.



Now we'll add the other hand to the pattern, playing the snare and tom. The rhythm indicated is typically what a timbalero (timbale player) would play between the low and high timbales. The tom part designates another important part of the mozambique rhythm, the *ponche* (or punch). These examples are accompanied by the bass drum and hi-hat playing the downbeats.

### 2-3 clave



### 3-2 clave



Adding a different bass drum pattern to each of these patterns results in the following grooves.



Now let's examine a contemporary groove idea that has the inherent feel of mozambique within it. Try playing the following pattern as written. Then reverse the sticking, making every right hand a left and vice versa. This will develop your independence and your weak hand.



In this next example, we've taken the above idea, which was inspired by the mozambique rhythm, and applied it to an odd time, specifically 3/4. (Notice that in both these ideas the hi-hat is closed with the foot on each downbeat, except for beat "4" of the common-time example.)



I hope you've enjoyed our first foray into Afro-Caribbean rhythms and their applications to many different styles of music. We'll be examining many other rhythms in upcoming issues. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me through *MD*, and I'll be sure to get back to you.

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# Don't Pay To Play

■ by Rick Van Horn

In my last two columns I had a lot to say about what was good about playing clubs, and what could be gained by being a club musician. I also stated several opinions regarding the values of different kinds of clubs—and perhaps of the musicians who work in them. But this time, I want to start off with a blanket statement that applies to *any* musician approaching the possibility of playing in *any* kind of club: *You should never pay to play!*

In many places—especially large cities with an overabundance of aspiring bands and a limited number of venues—the music scene is a "buyer's market." Club owners are besieged with bands who want to perform in their clubs. The ethical thing for these club owners to do is to listen to the bands (either live or via an audition tape), decide which ones will go over best with their clientele, and then book them to play one or more dates. These should be paid bookings, at whatever the appropriate rate of pay may be. (It might be a flat rate, a percentage of the door, or some other figure that is agreeable to both parties. Salary negotiation is a subject for another column.) The band plays the date or dates, and if it does well, is asked back.

Now, that's the ethical way to do it. The *unethical*—and unfortunately all-too-common way—is for the owner to tell the bands, "Look, you all want to play here. I gotta hire a sound system, pay for lights, cover my staff's salaries, and maybe take a loss on all of this if you guys don't sell a lot of drinks (or tickets, or whatever). So you need to put up a \$250 deposit with me. If I make more than that on you, I'll split the overage with you. In the meantime, you guys get the benefit of the exposure you'll get playing in my club."

Now, let's figure that this guy is hiring

three bands for the night, and giving them all the same spiel. He makes \$750 from the bands, which "obviously isn't enough to cover his expenses for the night," so the bands get nothing back and are each out their \$250. In the meantime, the owner has received free entertainment for his clientele, and has been able to perpetuate the impression with any musicians in the area that his club is the hot place to play.

Sound like a ripoff? You bet it is. But many bands are so desperate for someplace to play—both from an emotional and professional need—that they succumb regularly to this type of exploitation.

Well, you ask, what can be done? If there are only so many clubs to play in, and many of those are pay-to-play situations, where do you go? My answer is that you have several options, and the choices depend on how ambitious, creative, and downright indignant you are.

First, if you are indignant (as I am) about such an unethical practice as pay-to-play clubs, you can pass the word around in your musical community, in an attempt to get other musicians not to play there. In other words, organize a strike! Nothing will affect club owners of this breed except a blow to the pocketbook. Put up flyers around town (music stores, record stores, school bulletin boards, and other places where club flyers are often posted) informing the club-going public about the situation and asking them not to frequent those clubs. And make sure to support any clubs that do *not* have such an unethical policy. I can't guarantee that it will work, but it might, and it certainly might gain you some personal satisfaction.

In the meantime, look for the ethical clubs, and try to get work in them. If you

live in a big city, try traveling to the suburbs, or the smaller towns a bit farther out. It might mean spending some traveling time and money, but those clubs might be *eager* for some quality "out-of-town" entertainment. In other words, you could go from being an unpaid, tiny fish in a very big ocean, to a fairly well-paid, big fish in a small pond. It's worth looking into.

Unfortunately, the bands that are the easiest for unethical club owners to exploit are young bands eager for the opportunity to play in front of people in order to gain experience—and willing to pay for that opportunity. While I concur that experience is an essential ingredient of improvement, I feel that a band can gain just as much experience by performing for some organization that isn't gaining additional financial benefit from the band's efforts. That is to say, rather than pay their own money to play in a club that sells drinks for profit, a band should offer its services, gratis, for school dances, fraternity parties, charity functions, or other such activities. The organization gets the music for free, while the band gets the experience and the exposure. It doesn't put spending money in the band's pockets, but it doesn't take it *out* of their pockets, either. And it *does* give them the opportunity

to try their skills in front of a live audience. Once those skills are fully developed—along with the band's popularity—the band will find themselves in a much better negotiating position when it comes *to paying gigs*.

My basic premiss for this column was that you should never pay to play. I have nothing against playing for *free*, if you stand to reap some other form of tangible

" Many bands are so desperate for someplace to play—both from an emotional and professional need—that they succumb to exploitation."



benefit. But don't make a career of playing for free, and *don't* do it in a club when the owner is making money as a result of your performance. Is he promoting his club by giving away free liquor? If not, then don't help him promote it by giving away your music for free. If you are working together on some promotional campaign, fine; just make sure that everybody's investment and potential benefits are equal.

Finally, if you *must* pay to play, you should pay yourself. That is, if you have to spend money, spend it in such a way that you stand to gain from your investment, instead of some unscrupulous club owner. Take the money that the club owner is demanding (or pool yours with that of several other bands) and hire your own hall, sound system, lights, etc. There are always old theaters, VFW halls, school gymnasiums, and other sites available for rental, whether you live in New York City or Podunk. Again, how much energy you have comes into play here, since you might have to do some research into permits, alcohol regulations, sound level restrictions, etc. But it can be done—and done profitably, if you do it well. You might find that "concert promotion" is more rewarding—in several ways—than slogging about from club to club. And when *you* are the promoter, you'll find that job-related negotiations are amazingly easy!

The bottom line here is: Always make

sure that you gain something positive from your musical efforts, no matter what they may be. That gain may be in the form of experience, publicity, or money. (A combination of the three is even better.) Keep

your wits about you when dealing with club owners, and make sure that when it comes to working in their club, you are employed, not exploited.



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continued from page 23

die. You have to be ready for anything. I obviously didn't know all 250; I got tapes of as many songs as I could and listened to them on the plane going to and coming from Japan.

"When I got to the show," Aronoff continues, "I thought we'd at least rehearse the beginnings and endings of the songs, but you only get an hour to rehearse, and Paul wanted to rehearse two Mellencamp songs—which I already knew!" Kenny laughs. "Then Paul showed me his basic cues, and after that we learned this little Vegas-type jazz thing that we were supposed to play when Dave said, 'You've won a brand-new car!' Then we went through the theme, and Paul told me to watch Dave's hand motions during the monologue and make drum hits to go with them. Then we just talked through some songs we were going to play on the show. During all of this I'm writing notes to myself as fast as I can, and all of a sudden somebody walks by and says, 'Three minutes to show.' Meanwhile, Paul is telling me,

'We'll play these two songs before the show starts. Now in this one, stop when I tell you to stop. I'll play for four measures, then you come back in, then I'll cue you to stop again, then I'll play for eight measures, then you come back in, and at the end play a solo. Then we'll go into "Brown Sugar.'" So I'm trying to jot all of this down as fast as I can. I go back to the drums and I'm not even situated behind them when Paul starts counting off the first song."

Despite Kenny's fears, the show went well. "The first day you do any gig is always the wildest," Aronoff says, "because you haven't experienced things that everybody else has been comfortable with for a long time. But it went great, probably because everybody was so concerned about doing it right. Paul gave me the best cues he could, and somehow I pulled it off."

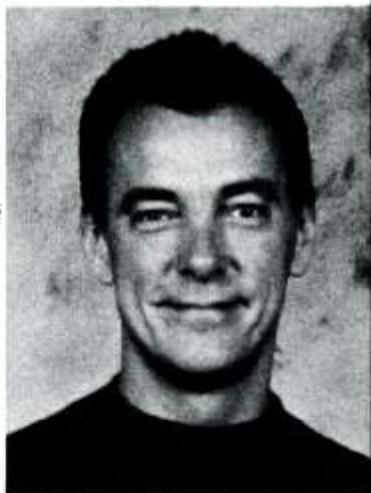
Letterman seemed to enjoy having Aronoff in the band, acknowledging him each night, getting him involved in "Stupid Human Tricks," and doing jokes—obviously directed at Mellencamp—about making records and doing farm chores.

"I was treated really, really well," Aronoff says. "But it got wild sometimes. At one point Paul called out a song, and I couldn't think of how it went. Paul was already counting it off, so I looked over at Will Lee and said, 'Will, who did this song?' Will said, 'Billy Preston,' as Paul was going, '...three, four.' I suddenly remembered how it went and BAM, we were doing it. Another time Dave turned to the band and said, 'Give me some AC/DC. One, two, one two three four.' Paul yelled out a song title and I didn't have time to think. I just played fast time on sloshy hi-hats and watched for a cue to end. When I saw the show in my hotel room that night, it sounded great. But I didn't know what I was doing," Kenny laughs.

Kenny came away from the experience with a new respect for what Anton Fig deals with on a regular basis. "He really does that show well," Kenny acknowledges. "Replacing the drummer has to be one of the most difficult things to do. The band is the car and the drummer is

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the gasoline. You can have the fanciest car in the world, but if you don't use the right gas, the car won't run well. And that's what it's like switching drummers, especially in a band that has an established groove. You change the drummer, you change the whole feel. But that can be exciting, too, for the other members, if the drummer is good. You just don't want to be bad gas."

**F**or a band called Hammerheads, Farm Aid IV was their biggest break yet. They would be performing at the same concert with John Mellencamp, Willie Nelson, Guns N' Roses, Bonnie Raitt, Crosby, Stills & Nash, Lou Reed, and Bruce Hornsby, not to mention an audience of 45,000 people. So if there was ever a time for one of the band members *not* to get sick, this was it. Nevertheless, the night before the show, Hammerheads drummer Matt Thompson ended up in the hospital. "I don't know if it was a flu bug or what," he recalls, "but they didn't want to release me. I had to make that concert, though."

Thompson arrived at the Hoosier Dome the next day around noon. Hammerheads were supposed to go on at 2:30. "I stumbled to the dressing room and collapsed on a couch," Thompson says. "I figured I would just rest as much as possible and hope for the best. All of a sudden the door flew open and Kenny Aronoff came in. He had heard that the drummer from one of the bands was feeling bad, so he came by to offer his encouragement."

Thompson smiles at the memory, simultaneously shaking his head in disbelief. "I was blown away when I saw Kenny," he says. "I mean, I've got so much respect for the guy anyway, and for him to take the time to come and see me was really special. He gave me a big ol' pep talk for about an hour, and told me how important it is for drummers to take care of their health. By the time I had to go on, he had me so charged up that I played great, and I felt fine the rest of the day."

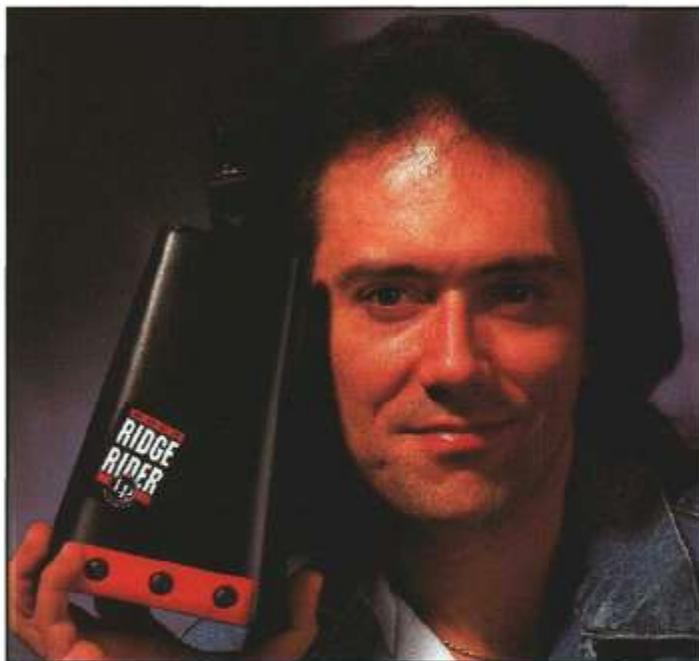
When complimented for his good deed towards a fellow drummer, Aronoff modestly shrugs it off. "I knew what he was going through," Kenny says. "There have been a lot of times when I've been

sick and had to play a show or do a session. But if you're eating right and taking vitamins and generally trying to take care of yourself, that at least helps the situation."

It's only been during the past couple of years that Aronoff has realized how important those things can be. "From 1980 to '88," he explains, "I was living a fairly normal life. We were going through the cycle of rehearsing for an album, recording the album, rehearsing for a tour, and doing the tour. Then we might

take a month or two off before starting to rehearse for the next album. But except for when we were on tour, I was living in my own house where it was easier to eat properly and get regular sleep. Even on the road we had a somewhat consistent schedule.

"The *Lonesome Jubilee* tour ended July 3 of '88. On July 7, I was in the studio with John Eddie, and from then until I went back with Mellencamp this past February I was on the go constantly. I remember one run that was typical. I had



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been recording in Bloomington, and then I had to catch a flight at night to LA to do a video shoot with Corey Hart the next day. As soon as the shoot was over I caught a plane to Atlanta to record for three days with the Indigo Girls. I flew back to L.A. to record with Bob Seger, and then flew to Woodstock for a week, where I was producing a band called the Breakdown. From there I flew back to L.A. to finish recording with Seger, and then I went straight into recording with Elton John. There were no breaks between any of these projects.

"Most of these things," Kenny continues, "were like 15-hour days. I would be sitting on the plane listening to a demo tape of the next project and transcribing it. Then I would catch two or three hours of sleep, get off the plane, and go right to the next thing. Sometimes I would go a whole week only getting three hours of sleep a night. Now that can be cool when you're motivated and have a lot of energy, but at some point the body needs a rest. I can probably push the limits as much as anybody, but living that kind of lifestyle, I had to make some changes."

Kenny's first change involved trying to eat better. "I didn't need food that would bog me down," he explains. "I needed food to give me lightness. That meant more vegetables and less meat. I wasn't a complete vegetarian, but I was very, very close. Also, I would start the day by just eating fruit. And I found that it was good to wait a little bit before I even ate that. You need to get your motor going first, if you can.

"Also," Kenny says, "because I wasn't getting enough sleep, I'd take a strong multiple vitamin with a tremendous amount of vitamin B and all the minerals. A good multiple vitamin will help protect your immune system, because working those hours, man, I was susceptible to *everything*. If you are starting to get a cold and you haven't had enough sleep, you're not eating well, and you're drinking, you're *really* going to get sick.

"Another thing," Kenny adds, "is if you *are* eating wrong, drinking, and abusing yourself, it's very important to get cardiovascular exercise so you sweat. That is a good way to get rid of germs and viruses. At a hotel I would ride a bike or do the treadmill, or I would go out and run. Of course, running in L.A. wasn't always good because of the pollution, but you can always do situps and pushups in your hotel room. If I've had a long stretch of work with no days off, though, I start decreasing the exercise so that I can save all my strength for the session.

"All of those things add up," Kenny concludes. "I found that eating better, staying away from caffeine and alcohol, taking vitamins, and exercising made it possible for me to accomplish what I accomplished over the past two years. I worked almost every day."

When John Mellencamp called to say he had decided to put the band back together for an album and a tour, Kenny had to make a hard decision. "I kept putting it off," Kenny says. "I didn't know what to do. I had a whole new career doing sessions in LA. Should I blow that off and go back to a band that I had already done for ten years? Would I be going forward or backwards? If I were Kenny Aronoff's manager, I would probably have told him to seriously consider quitting the band, move to L.A., continue to do sessions,

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and start trying to produce more."

As with his drumming, though, Kenny will often forsake technical correctness to go for what feels the best. "I've devoted 11 years of my life to this band," he says. "It's like family, and I'm an integral part of it. And I'm definitely a band kind of guy, no matter how many sessions I play. When I'm in the studio, I don't want to just clock in and clock out. I want to be part of the band that's making that record. That's why I get into it so much. I want to be on the team—the starting lineup. So if I didn't have this band to come back to, I'd look for another one to be in."

Kenny does, in fact, feel that there is a great deal at stake with the new Mellencamp record. "This is the most important record I've ever made with John," Kenny says, "because we have to beat six other records we've made. We have to be better than we were, or at least as good in a different way. We have to be leaders, not followers. A lot of bands are sounding like other bands; I want to sound like *us*."

"I also want this to be the best record I've made in the last two years because this is my family. I *belong* to this band. Like I said, when I do a session I try to make it feel like I'm playing in a band. But the reality is that I'm not. You can't just take a bunch of studio musicians—I don't care how good they are—and make them sound like guys who have been together for 11 years."

Kenny feels that he has come back to Mellencamp with a wealth of knowledge and new ideas. "On John's new record," he says, "I'm playing seven beats that I've never used on his records before—or anybody else's. They are not radically different, but they're fresh. On one song, I play the bass drum on all of the offbeats, which works well with the bass line. On another song I used a double bass pedal for the basic beat. I've never done that before, either."

"I should play you a couple of tapes," Kenny says, suddenly jumping up from his sofa. He loads an unmarked cassette into his tape player and soon John Mellencamp's unmistakable voice is filling the room. But it's not the sound that one normally associates with Mellencamp. He is accompanied by a single acoustic guitar (which he is presumably playing

himself) and his syllables are slightly slurred as though he is singing to himself rather than for someone else. Add to that the raw quality of the tape itself, which sounds as if it were recorded on a portable boom box, and if you didn't recognize Mellencamp's voice you might think it was an old recording of a Delta blues singer.

"That's a demo tape John gave us of one of his songs," Kenny comments. "I had to listen to that to come up with a beat." As the song continues, I try to decide what type of drum pattern would

fit what I'm hearing, but there is nothing about the tape that suggests anything out of the ordinary.

The song ends and Kenny ejects the tape, loading another one in its place. A moment later the sound of a driving rock band blasts from the speakers. Soon, Mellencamp's voice joins in, belting out a set of lyrics. Only then do I realize that it's the same song I heard on the demo. The drum pattern features a double bass lick, and instead of the customary backbeats on 2 and 4, the first snare drum note smacks one 16th note before the 2,

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giving the listener a musical jab in the ribs. Nothing on Mellencamp's demo seemed to suggest what Aronoff ended up playing.

"Usually," Kenny explains, "John just plays the song for us in the studio and we have to come up with an arrangement right on the spot. When you're starting from something that sounds like a folk song, you have to get another reference point. So John might say, 'Let's take the approach of an Animals song. What would they do?' I might take an actual beat from a song I've heard, but as we work with it, I'll change the beat and modernize it. A lot of the pressure is on me to come up with a beat, because that's really what you're going to build the arrangement around. So that's why it's important for me to listen to lots of different styles of music so I keep new ideas in my head.

"With this record, though," Kenny continues, "John gave us tapes of nine songs ahead of time, so that gave me time to do some research. I had some guidelines to go on: John said to think Lennon, Hendrix, and Zeppelin. When you hear the final record, you're probably

not going to hear anything that sounds like Lennon, Hendrix, or Zeppelin, but those were the general attitudes we were approaching the record with: aggressive, loud, intense. So I did a lot of listening to Lennon, Hendrix, and Zeppelin, but I also listened to a lot of other things.

"I came up with three or four different beats for each song," Kenny says. "For that song I played you, 'Love And Happiness,' one of the beats I came up with had that pushed 16th note, and in all honesty, I didn't think John would ever go for that. He liked it, but he asked me to try to use double bass drum in it. So I filled in some 16ths with the double bass, and that became the basic beat of the song."

Kenny has found that trying to come up with new beats behind the drumset is not always ideal, as it's easy to start playing patterns you already know. "A lot of times," he says, "when I want to come up with something new, I start singing things as opposed to playing them on the drums. After I come up with something interesting, then I'll write it down."

In a previous *MD* interview, Aronoff explained that with Mellencamp he

sometimes played open-handed, with his left hand playing hi-hat and his right smacking the snare drum. It was a technique that Kenny first experimented with during the time he studied with Gary Chester, long before he was a member of Mellencamp's band. But he had never developed it to a very high degree. He started using it again with Mellencamp on songs such as "Hurts So Good" and "Hand To Hold On To" to get a looser, sloppier feel, precisely *because* he couldn't do it as well. Soon, he was playing left-handed almost as much as he was the "regular" style.

But after all these years of doing that, surely Kenny's left hand has developed to the point where it's no longer particularly sloppy. "You're right," Aronoff agrees. "Playing left-handed now, it's much tighter, but it still has a little different feel. When I play 8th notes right-handed I tend to accent the 1, 2, 3, and 4. When I play left-handed, I tend to accent *all* the 8th notes. So that's good, because I can get a different sound without even trying. It just naturally comes out that way.

"When we play live," Kenny continues,



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"I tend to play half the show left-handed. When I want that super LOUD power stroke on the snare drum—when I really want to take it over the top—I can raise my right hand way up higher than I would be able to raise my left hand if I had my hands crossed. So another advantage is just for power.

"The other thing is I can keep my hi-hat going while I hit things on the right side of my kit, such as tom-toms or cymbals. An example of that is on the new Aldo Nova record, a song called 'Bright Lights.' Jon Bon Jovi was producing, and at one point he wanted this 8th-note tom fill, but he wanted the hi-hat going, too. And he didn't want to do it by overdubbing. So that's a good example of why it's good to be able to play that way."

The Mellencamp band took a few weeks off after recording the new album—except for Aronoff, of course, who ended up back in L.A. doing more sessions. But as the band prepares to hit the road for an extended tour, Aronoff is looking forward to doing some live playing again.

"I'll probably lose my place in the studio a little bit while I'm touring with John," Kenny admits. "But when I come back, if it means a lot to me, I'll just have to bust my butt again to start it back up. At least I've already proven I can do it. It may never get back to where it was. Who knows? But I have to follow my heart—follow that passion. That's the key."

**K**enny Aronoff can obviously handle a lot of different musical situations. So how does he assess his own abilities? "I play with a tremendous amount of force, confidence, and power," he says, "but also with control. That's the rock part, but there's also the roll—that sort of sleazy, slippery, undefined stuff. I'm constantly trying to decorate the cake with creative things so that it's not so controlled that it's sterile.

"Technically," Aronoff continues, "my basic style of playing is the 'less is more' approach. I can give you more, and if it's okay, I'd like to. But I have a whole vocabulary of ideas based on playing simple.

"I also play with a tremendous amount of passion," Kenny adds. "I play like I care. The thing is, at a session I'll go in

and try to do it my way. If a producer tells me he wants a particular thing, fine. I'll do exactly what he says. But I still play with my feeling until I'm told to do otherwise. There are other elements to doing it your way besides the beats you play. The good news is, your basic personality really has the most affect on how you're going to sound. The way I play drums from song to song stems from who I am as a person, I'm excitable and passionate, and that's why I can get into the Indigo Girls as much as Jon Bon Jovi. I can't play the same way technically for

both of them, but I can play with the same passion.

"See," Kenny says, "technique is important, but there has to be a balance between technique and passion. When I was in high school the three things that made me passionate were music, sports, and girls. It felt so good to play sports. You go out there and try to win. And even if you lose, you are sharing a very emotional and physical experience with a team. You feel the ups and downs, and you're *living*. Then I'd have a girlfriend, so I was feeling all the things that go

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along with that. I couldn't wait to call her up at night or go on a date on the weekend.

"And then there was music, which is really cool because I can feel all those other things when I'm playing music. There is the technical side, which allows you to express emotions, but you have to *feel* those emotions. Music isn't just control, it also involves the kind of passion that is almost out of control. You're not thinking, you're just *living*. And it may go a little this way or that way. That's why sometimes music doesn't have to be perfectly in time; it can just move. *That's life*. Life isn't perfectly in time. Life undulates, it swells, it moves to the right and to the left.

"But when you force everything to be perfectly in time and quantized, that's an intellectual ego trip. You're getting off on a concept, but that's not *life*; that's not *passion*. Nothing is perfect in life, and that's why some of the best music isn't perfect; it's got that same kind of movement that life has. It's not totally out of control, just enough to make it feel natural.

"You know," Kenny says, "when I hear a song now, my first concern is not the drum beat. I want to hear the *song*; I want to know the lyrics. I'm going deeper now. In the beginning of my drumming life, everything was on the skin. Then, as I became more educated, I started getting down into the layers of the skin. Then I

got to the bones, and now I'm in the marrow, man. I'm in deep. I want to know what this song is about. I want to know the whole vibe. *Then* I can start thinking about what beat I want to play.

"You want to know what the toughest session in the world is?" Kenny asks. "It's

when I can't get into a song. That's when I have to slap myself in the head and say, 'By golly, you *better find* a way to get into it or you're going to sound like shit on this record.' And I've never failed at that. I will find a way to get turned on by a session—somehow, someway." 

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## KAWAI

Digital Magic.

continued from page 27

experience. They haven't played with anyone, haven't been on the road, haven't been there. You can't learn it from a book.

**Ralph:** The institutions are still playing the same political games that go on in society. It's a reflection of America's societal problem with education as a whole. Qualified teachers are not respected in America. They should be sought out. You want to teach young people to be individuals, to give them the historical data necessary to attain their goals.

**Marvin:** If you're going to educate them about jazz music, you have to educate them about the African-American experience. A lot of bureaucrats don't want to hear that.

**KM:** Maybe it's easier to support the European classical tradition?

**Marvin:** It pumps up their egos. They don't want to make an African-American their hero. You kidding?!

**Adam:** Vanilla Ice is much safer than M.C. Hammer.

**KM:** It seems impossible to discuss jazz drumming without getting into the issues surrounding it.

**Ralph:** It goes back to what Max Roach says about drums and jazz being the strongest representation of the black man in American society. The first thing taken away from the slaves was the drum. Throughout the history of Ameri-

can classical music, the drum has been suppressed. It took leaders with courage to allow drummers to exert themselves. Every time they did, the music changed.

**Jeff:** What separates this music from other musics is not necessarily anything harmonic, or form things. It's the dance sensibility. There have always been complex rhythms, but this music has a dance sensibility that wasn't present until my people were here.

**KM:** Do you mean "swing" by dance sensibility?

**Jeff:** Could be swing, funk, reggae...it's rhythm. The drum being used to make people dance and other instruments imitating that. If jazz didn't have that thing that makes people want to dance, you could draw a criteria into it and draw parallels between it and European and other musics of the world. That's why the drum is so important.

**KM:** Is it true that it's hard to find good, swinging drummers in Europe?

**Adam:** You can count them on one hand.

**Marvin:** People have got to hear some soul in a player. They can go as far out as they want, but sooner or later they have to return to some soul.

**Adam:** The spirit always needs to be energized. It's not about how fast a guy's playing or how slick he is. Did he get you in your gut? Has he affected you?

**Jeff:** People are so conditioned now, a lot of them don't even care.

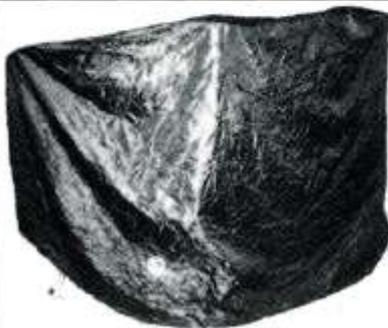
**Kenny:** People don't really know. They can go out of the club buzzing, but they tend to forget about it.

**Jeff:** This culture is so consumer-oriented. Music has been reduced to a product in the mass market.

**Kenny:** But it's the same all over the world. The Japanese and the Europeans will check it out. But in Japan, unless you're a really big name, jazz is still second-class music. I've been there with Clark Terry, Jon Faddis, Johnny Griffin, Tommy Flanagan.... Someone who plays more commercial jazz will be put in the big halls. Smaller artists are working at the Pit Inn.

**Marvin:** I was at Tower Records today, and they had this huge display for the live Chick Corea Akoustic Band album. This is the tragedy: You hear this record, and you're lead to believe that this is the precedent for what jazz should sound like. You put on a Coltrane record, or Miles Davis' *Kind Of Blue*, and people will turn their nose up. I mean, kudos to Chick Corea, the cat's done some beautiful things musically. But if it ain't swinging, man...throw it back! I mean, everybody in this room plays their ass off! Swinging their butts off! I'd probably die and go to hell if Dave Weckl came to my gig to ask me questions about playing the instrument.

**Adam:** I recently played a Zildjian day in Boston with Myron Grombacher, Gregg Bissonette, and Peter Erskine. I figured



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those guys would play with a track. I went up to play for the moment. I brought a bass player and a sax player. A lot of the kids had no idea who I was. I played a four-piece kit. I said, "I'm here to play music, not just to play the drums." I played "Mary Had A Little Lamb" for five minutes. I swung it, played the melody...I played the cymbals. The other drummers who were there know who we are....

**Ralph:** To know is not enough. When they fail to tell their audience what inspired them to play the drums, which nine out of ten times is either Art Blakey or Max Roach, then they are still part of the problem and not the solution.

**Adam:** But they may *not* know Art or Max. Their big influence may be John Bonham or Ginger Baker. I mean, a beat's a beat. It can be jazz or swing, Al Jackson, Bernard Purdie, Zigaboo Mod-eliste...! don't care what you call it. Chick Webb, Sid Catlett—if a guy grooves, he grooves, whether it's spang-a-lang or a backbeat.

**Jeff:** All those people you're speaking of were giving up, though. At the time they came out, the drumset was still evolving and being invented. The set was invented to play African-American music. In Europe, they still had a snare drummer, a bass drum player, and a guy who played the cymbals. There was no ride cymbal around.

**KM:** There have been no major stylistic innovations in jazz drumming since Tony Williams or Elvin Jones. Is it important to be innovative?

**Jeff:** Those people are at the core. Their names keep coming up. Just like in classical music, there hasn't been any serious evolution in so many years, the people who have done the most stuff are held in a place of reverence. Their works are preserved.

It's a crime when somebody who plays the instrument doesn't know who Roy Haynes is. Whenever one takes up the drums, there should be enough media exposure around so they know Kenny Clarke invented the ride cymbal, Jo Jones dealt with the hi-hat...it didn't exist until these people started to do it. It should be in a place of importance.

**KM:** Can we address the subject of innovation?

**Kenny:** But that's the problem. Most of the young drummers feel they have to play something different. Elvin Jones and Tony Williams didn't wake up and say, "I'm gonna play something different today!" It's a continual thing, something that happens.

**Lewis:** To come up with your own approach *is* important. That doesn't mean it will be a *major* innovation, but I think all of us are trying to express ourselves in our own way—it may be small—but we're trying to advance the instrument.

**Victor:** The best thing you can do is what's best for the music, as opposed to thinking, "I'm gonna play some shit tonight that's gonna wipe everyone out!" That can have nothing to do with the music.

**KM:** How did you guys learn the instrument?

**Adam:** I started with the name players of my day and went backwards.

**Jeff:** You have to do some serious research—hunt, look around. You really have to have the desire.

**Marvin:** For young drummers, the emphasis is not there, and they don't care to know. No one is pointing it out to them.

**Jeff:** If someone studies classical violin or trumpet, the repertoire they must know is presented to them. They have to deal with certain priorities before they get busy at all.

**KM:** What do you tell young drummers you meet in clubs?

**Marvin:** I tell people that if they really want to deal with this, they have to check out this, this, and this. I check out their reaction. If they have a discouraged look, I know they're not ready to deal with it yet.

**Adam:** I have very profound memories of being a little kid and going up to Art Blakey, Eddie Moore, Billy Hart, Elvin, Philly Joe Jones, and Mel Lewis. These cats turned me on. They didn't dismiss me. I guess with my attitude they could see I was honest and sincere in what I wanted. Those moments always come to mind when young cats approach me. I try to share what I know with them.

**KM:** If a drummer comes from Anywhere U.S.A. and he can swing, read, and play the idiom, will he be able to



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make a living here in New York?

**Kenny:** If a guy comes and can do everything you mentioned he'll be working inside of a week. He'll pick up all the leftover work we can't do. The problem is, there is no one around playing *really* good time. I remember when I met Smitty. This cat came to New York in Jon Hendricks' band and decided to stay. In less than a month's time he was prepared. There's plenty of work.

**Adam:** I think there are more players than the scene can absorb.

**Kenny:** I think there are more players who are *unqualified* than there are gigs.

**Marvin:** I've done gigs where afterwards the leader wanted me to tour, but I was already booked. So I think, "Okay, the B-Team." There ain't no B-Team! I have to be honest with the guy. I can't recommend a cat who can't cut the gig. It reflects on me. There are not enough cats here who are truly ready for the deal.

**Kenny:** I'm always looking for cats who can really play. They come to New York too soon.

**Adam:** There's no substitute for experience. You can be shedding all day and

know every lick from everybody, but unless you know about the reactive process that happens on the bandstand—it's about application. The ability to play music and be a catalyst for a situation. If a guy's been playing in his house with Dave Weckl all day and he gets a gig playing a shuffle like Sam Woodyard, he won't know what's happening.

**Lewis:** Part of what it takes is what the bandleader wants to hear. If they're playing things that are musical, and show some sense of maturity and history of the music, that's the first step in getting hired. After that, it's an ongoing learning process. See what it's like to play with a piano trio, with a sextet...see what it's like to play with musicians on a much higher level than you're on, to where you almost feel inept.

**Adam:** The best thing a bandleader can say to you is nothing.

**Marvin:** Except, "Man, yeah. Alright." Case in point: I had to sub for Billy Hart with Art Farmer and Benny Golson's Jazztet at Fat Tuesday's. I subbed the very last night of the gig. He's got this big book of charts and arrangements. I

had to cut it. Art and Benny said, "What do you want to play?" I said, "You call it, I'll be there." Bam! That's what you got to do. The gig is mine now.

**KM:** Is anything else required besides reading well and swinging?

**Kenny:** That's it—the time, the swing, that's it!

[laughs all around]

**Billy:** It don't mean a thing....

**Jeff:** If at least you're swinging, this scene will embrace you. Cats will at least give you a play. It's not a scene where a lot of politics are dealt with, like many other places. If someone gets a sincere and honest feeling from playing with you, that will win out over any politics or connections. If a cat sits in and makes his presence known and makes the music happen, that won't be denied.

**Kenny:** On the other hand, if you can't play and you come to New York, when you finally do get it together, it will take five years to change the impression you made. You have to be prepared.

**Marvin:** We need people who can play. The music demands it. Good players will always have a seat.

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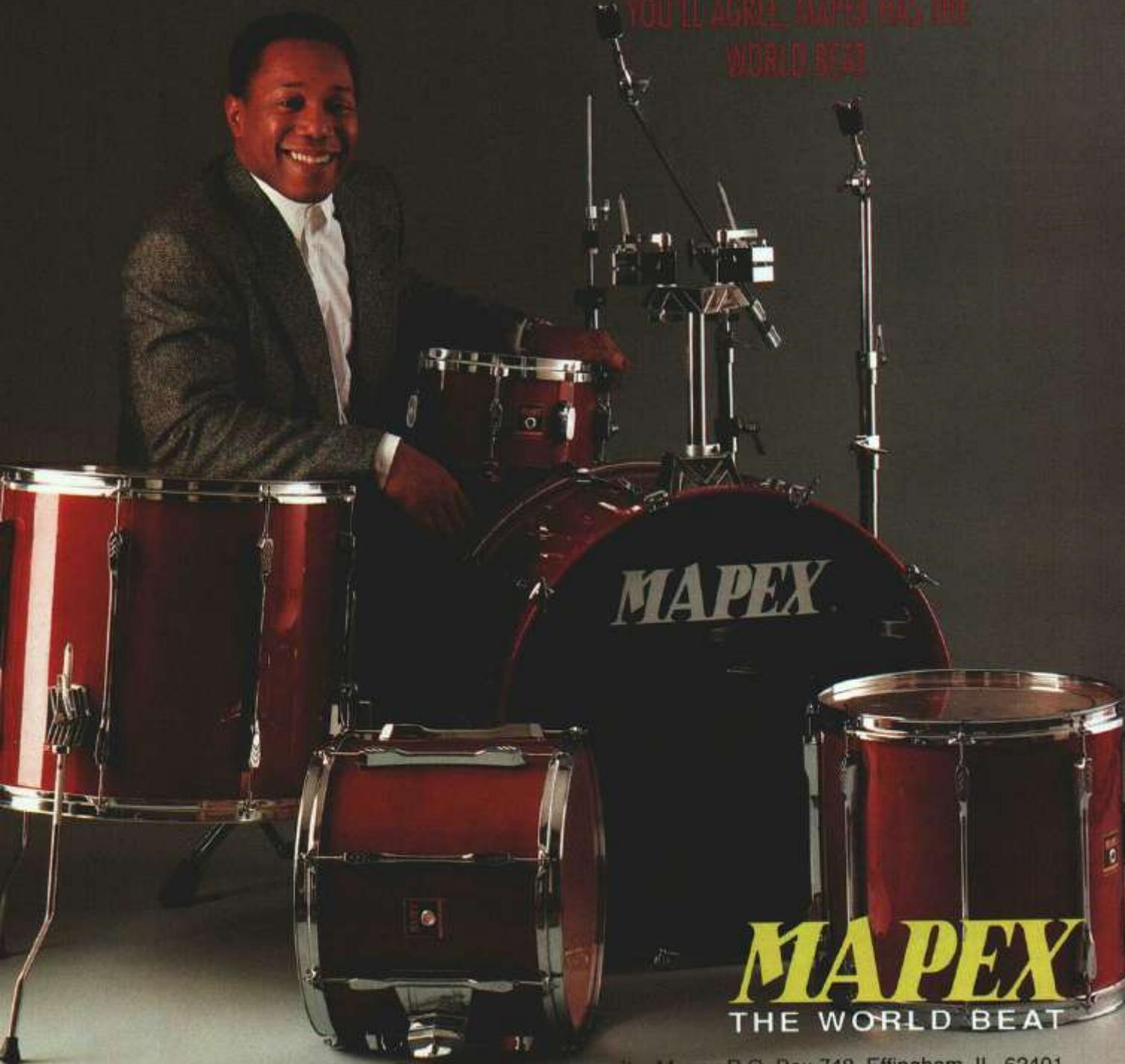
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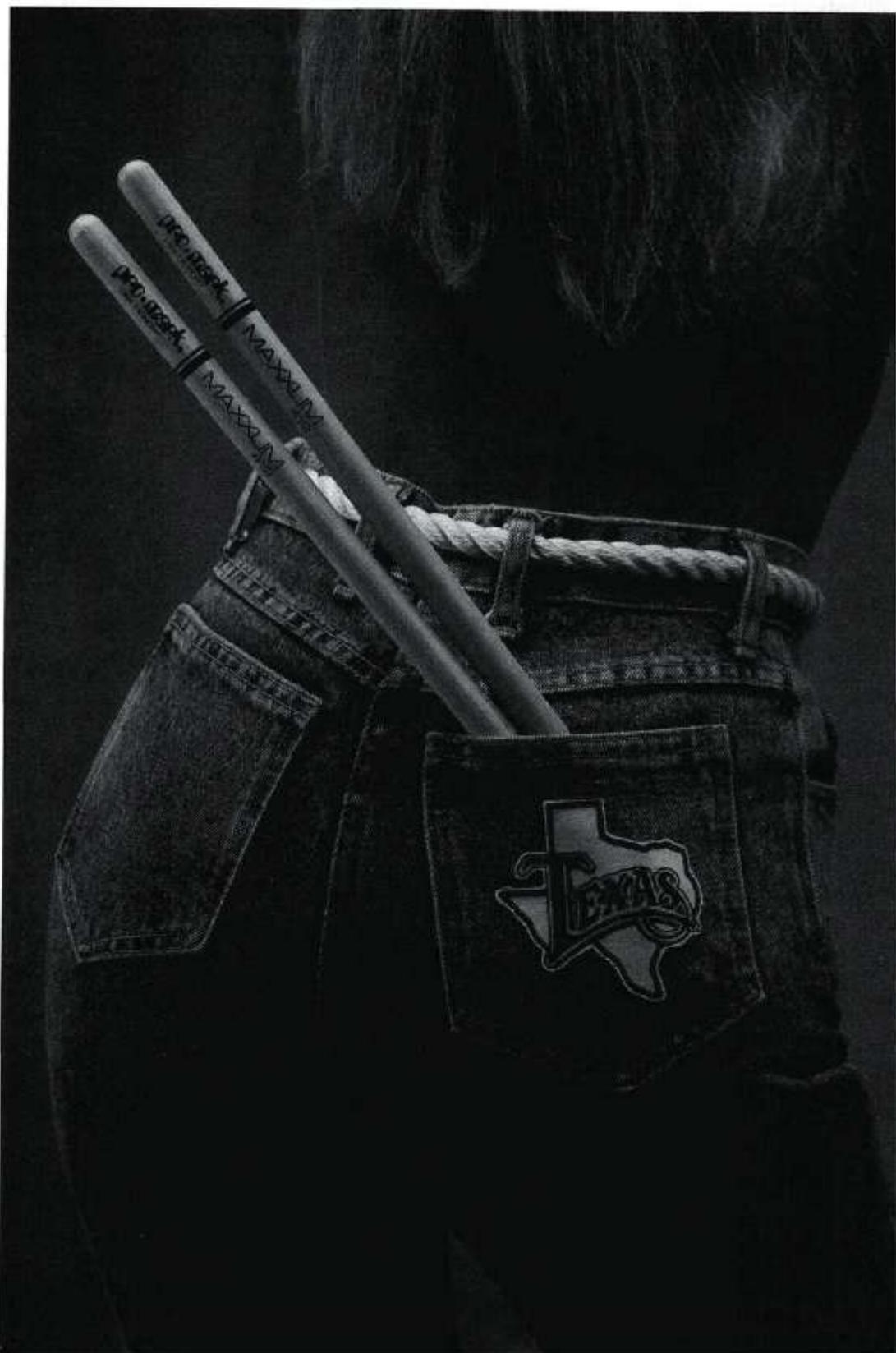
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**Ralph:** There may be lulls, you may have to play some weddings for finances.

**Kenny:** Weddings can pay the rent.

**KM:** Do you all still play that gig where you're relegated to just keeping time? To baby-sit, in effect?

**Billy:** It exists on all levels of gigs. You might be playing next to a cat who's a *cat*, and it still might be tricky.

**Adam:** Not everybody is compatible. Kenny may play with a guy and it might feel right, and I might go in and it won't feel right. You've heard records that look great from the people on them, but they sound terrible. Certain people want you to kick them in the ass. Can you be visible in the music? Or invisible if needed? Can you blend in?

**Kenny:** The drummer is never invisible. The drummer runs the band. Even in a situation where you've got to play time, if you're not there, you don't have a band!

**Marvin:** All of us can agree that if the drummer's not happening...

**Kenny:** ...the people will leave. Throughout history, the drummers made the big impressions in the big bands. It was a big deal when Sonny

Greer left Duke Ellington and Louie Bellson took his place, or when Jo Jones left the Bassie band and Shadow Wilson took his place. Even in Ellington's band with all those heavy personalities, it was the drummers who made the overall sound *change*. The same thing when Elvin Jones left Coltrane for a while and Roy Haynes came in—completely different thing.

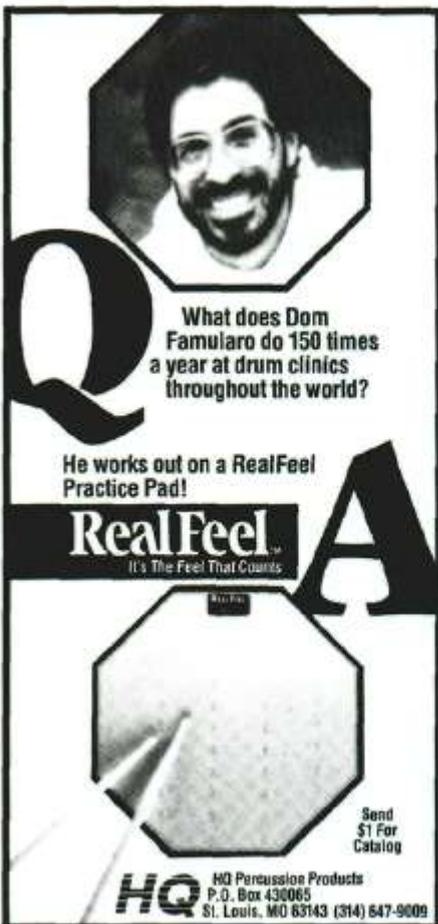
**KM:** Do you approach recording in the studio and playing live differently?

**Victor:** Years ago I approached recording with a separate attitude in terms of concept. I was glad when I finally got over that. Now I just go in and play the same as I do live. Also, back then I was roughed off by engineers: "Oh man, can you take your front head off?" I think there was a shortage of good acoustic engineers in the late '70s, early '80s. With the advancement of high-tech equipment, they started hearing from the meters as opposed to using their ears. Now we've got engineers who are at least as good as the ones in the '60s. I still think the guys then were the baddest cats for recording acoustic music.

**Lewis:** Definitely. Those records sound like you're in the club. It's basically a very rich, acoustic sound. There has been an effort in the last ten years to accommodate what we do rather than try to make us change. They have to adjust. If they did it in the '60s...they had the balance of the instrument down.

**Jeff:** You can't tell someone how to play in the studio. It's something you have to do. In a live situation, you want as high a percentage of what you play—and the way you want it to sound on the instrument—to get the people. That way they understand the information you're dealing with—based on the inspiration you feel at the moment.

In the studio it's the same way. You have to develop different techniques to get that sound to the microphones. It's important to be prepared and comfortable because, like Monk says, "You really get the music in the first couple takes." The inspiration and the spirit. Know the head and the arrangement, have the tempo locked in, know everything and be in the proper frame of mind. The first few statements you make interpreting



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**Kenny:** ...but the spirit dies. For me, getting there early is the key so I get used to the feeling of the studio. I get there two hours early, read the paper, have a sandwich, talk to the engineer—then I'm relaxed. Some of these rehearsals before the gig—for these cash-and-carry record dates we all know about—they have one rehearsal. If the music is that complicated, you make a tape and live with it.

**Adam:** Is it feeling good? Is it swinging? All the other stuff—only you will notice. I try to get the engineer to understand my sound.

**Kenny:** If you piss him off, he can destroy you!

**Adam:** The engineer is another element in the band. He takes what is in the air and translates it.

**KM:** Can we talk about feathering the bass drum? Is that done even at very fast tempos?

**Lewis:** If it's really fast, no one is doing it. I mean *really* fast. I personally do it a lot, maybe most of the time. But some-

times when you don't do it, the music takes on a whole different dimension. Feathering is almost like tapping your foot to a record.

**Victor:** It becomes not really a strike, but a touch. You use a little emphasis when you want.

**KM:** I've read where Art Blakey said he tuned his drums just to get them to sound, like he wasn't extremely concerned about tone or pitch. Any thoughts?

**Victor:** There's tuning for pitch, for touch, for resonance. It depends on the type of drums, the venue, the music. A lot of times the pitches between my tomtoms may vary to where I find that spot where the drum resonates the best within a certain pitch range.

**Lewis:** Touch is real important. The way the sticks come back.

**KM:** Given that some jazz clubs are pretty small, why do some well-known players get pretty loud? I see it regularly.

**Victor:** It depends on the drummer. Elvin Jones comes to mind. But he can play really soft, too. Tony Williams just likes it that way.

**Lewis:** It's obvious that on that high of a

musical level the guys are doing that consciously. It has to be that.

**Victor:** I know that Lorraine Gordon, who runs the Village Vanguard, gets upset when guys get too loud. She got upset at me and I thought, "There's no way I'm as loud as Tony." That's when she said Tony wouldn't work there anymore.

**Lewis:** I played there with Don Pullen and George Adams, and the level got pretty high. It depends on the music.

**KM:** What are the guidelines for soloing in a jazz context?

**Adam:** In a tune with a definite form, I'm gonna use the form for sure, and I'm gonna use the tune. You've got a framework—use it.

**Kenny:** I only like playing drum solos because I play form all the time. What I don't like about drum solos is that it seems the other players aren't listening. They're having a beer or talking to a chick. I hate it if they come back in the wrong place after I set up the head. That means that they are not paying attention to what I'm doing.

**All:** Right. You're right.

**Marvin:** Not only are they not listening

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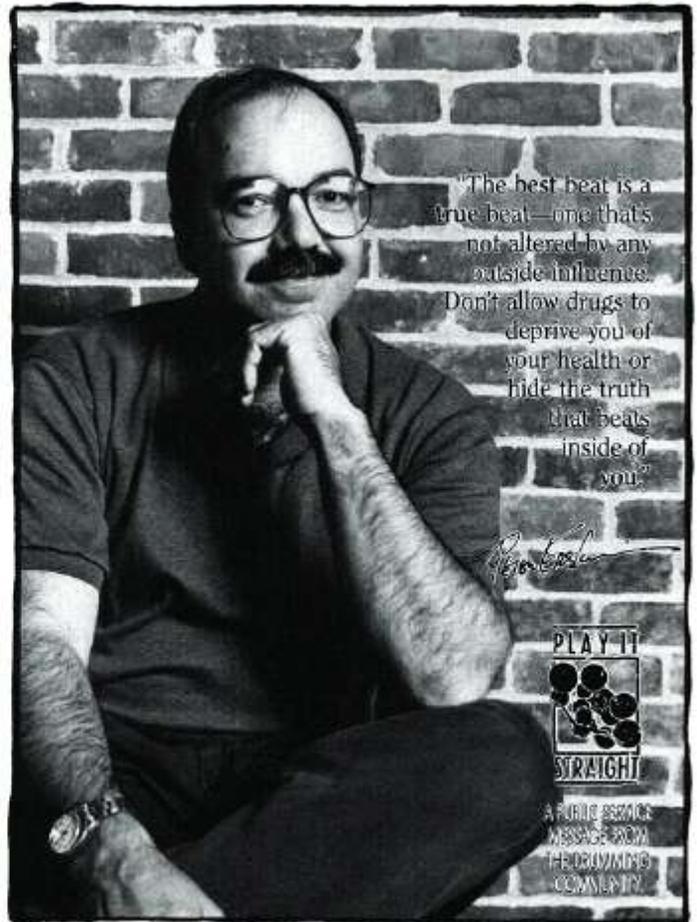
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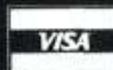
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to you, but they're not giving you the credit to know what the form of the tune is.

**Kenny:** They look funny if I don't accompany *their* solo correctly. I want the same kind of respect. I will fistfight, I've done it!

**Adam:** I don't want to count the band in.

**All:** Yes. Right, exactly.

**Adam:** Music is a series of signals. I mean, I'm playing the form behind you, indexing all your shit, putting it in line where you ain't.

**Kenny:** I'll come off the bandstand

cussing the guys. I'll tell them straight off.

**Marvin:** Kenny's a native New Yorker, man. He'll cut you! With Sonny Rollins, he'll play a calypso for 45 minutes and *then* say, "You got it!" I mean, Sonny—get me out of here!

**Adam:** I think Miles said you should stop before you're finished. But if it's happening, it's not too long.

**Ralph:** But if you're playing extra choruses to impress someone in the audience, you're not serving the music.

**Kenny:** A lot of horn players do that because they think that's what Coltrane was into. But 'Trane was really searching for something. Or listen to Charlie Parker on some airchecks: I'll be beggin', "Please play another chorus," and he'll stop. This is live—he'll stop after four choruses.

**KM:** Do you all still find time to practice?

**Lewis:** On the road, I get more time in on a pad. When I'm at home there's too much to do. That may sound like an excuse...

**Victor:** ...no, it's not. It's real life.

**Lewis:** Sometimes the music will take you to a higher level of playing. You try to keep your chops in shape. When you get on the stage, these elements come together that are unpredictable. You might play way above where you thought you could play or maybe way below. It's hard to base anything on a physical condition or technique.

**KM:** What do you all stress with your students?

**Marvin:** I like to ask them questions first. "How long have you been playing this music? What do you have for records? Where do you want to take it?"

**Kenny:** I'm hard on students. Well, not hard...

**Marvin:** Man, don't lie!

**Kenny:** I'm honest with them. I teach musical conception, how to play within the band. I want to know what they're hearing. I'll give them a tape of music with no drums. I tell them to listen to that for a week, then accompany it. I tell them to buy particular records or don't come back. They're wasting my time and their money.

**Jeff:** I get students who've never played any jazz. I give them something simple so they can deal with the groove of jazz and apply it with some people as soon as possible. I'll have them play a shuffle awhile, but if they can't hold that, I'll just tell them to play quarter notes. Then I'll have them play a simple form—a blues, 12-bar—whatever. I told some high school kids, "Play 'Spiderman' like you're playing the melody behind a horn player, singing the melody to yourself, playing some choruses like someone's soloing. It doesn't have to be blazing or masterful. Just try to speak."

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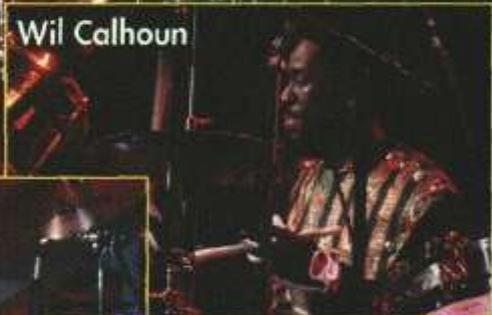
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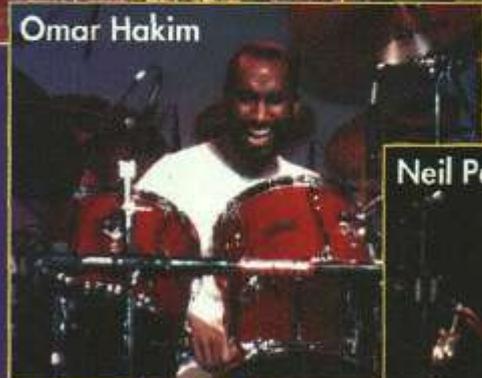
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At the end of an hour, a student should be ready to play a 12-bar blues and know what it is, play some good-feeling time and be able to take a solo, and lock in with the bass player. The solo should feel good and be sincere rather than paradiddle, paradiddle-one, flam, flam-two. Form is a problem. If drummers are aware of form and the fact that a song is going by, they'll never have a problem. The song becomes the constant, rather than the amount of beats and metric stuff. The way drummers learn about music in this country is all exercises—slow, fast, slow, stop. You want them to see their instrument fitting into the music and making music with the instrument by itself, independent of anything else being there. Unfortunately, they practice all the paradiddle stuff first and *then* they start listening to music and copping licks. So their licks tend to fall into a certain context rather than being freely applied from their having an understanding of how to make some music on the drums, period.

**Adam:** The drummer's ear is the last thing to get developed. It should be the first. Your biggest tool is your ear.

**Jeff:** In the Suzuki method, they play you examples of what your instrument should sound like—when it's played well, when it's played musically. With drummers, you want them to think about grooving, playing good time, making other musicians in the band feel they can depend on your time.

**KM:** Is part of the problem in the idea that "anyone can play a beat"—and so not enough thought is given to serious study and preparation?

**Adam:** No. So much of drumming comes from books and exercises that people forget what the bottom line is.

**Jeff:** A beat has been reduced to a pattern. They're not thinking about making it feel good. So many people are hearing drum machines and trying to make stuff sound metronomic instead of making all the parts feel good within each other. That's the last thing they think about. When I play a gig I look for the oldest, dirtiest, dustiest mug in the crowd, and I want to see his head bob. You want to get with the folks. Sometimes you'll start a tune and not everybody will have an idea of where the pocket's gonna be. This can happen in any kind of music. You want to

get the discipline to establish that as soon as possible.

**Adam:** You have to hook up with the bass player quickly.

**Jeff:** The longer it takes, the more music is getting wasted. Competence comes through professionalism and preparation. If you're prepared, you can be flexible.

**Ralph:** Luck is when opportunity and preparation intersect.

**Marvin:** Sounds more like fate to me.

**Adam:** Like the boy scouts say: "Be Prepared."

**Jeff:** That's the whole thing we're talking about. If you're able to be professional where you live, you can do the same thing here in New York.

**Marvin:** People are shocked when I tell them that. But we need good musicians here. There's always room for good musicians. They look at me like I'm crazy.

**Adam:** You have to be able to adapt. Some cats can't deal with that. They can't get to a gig on time. Or a guy may play great one night out of five. A bandleader would rather have consistency.

**Jeff:** It's your responsibility to make the gig sound good. Sometimes you'll do a record date. Some people will complain: "I'm not taking the music from rehearsal home, because I only get paid this much," and stuff like that. But when the record comes out, no one knows anything about that. Every time you sit down behind your instrument, you've got a responsibility.

**Lewis:** The music we play is very personal. How could you put a drum machine to an Art Blakey track and get the same effect?

**Victor:** That's one of the things about jazz drumming—it's the imperfections. They'd have to sample your whole personality, good *and* bad.

**Kenny:** I still feel that the masters are up there somewhere, and they only allow for the music to get to a certain point before they hold court. Jo Jones and those guys hold court! They say, "No, come on back." The click tracks and all that pop-corn stuff, they can't do what we do. They have not come out with a microchip yet that can play spang-a-lang on the ride cymbal. It's *always* the feel.

*Special thanks to John Castellano and the staff of Drummers Collective, New York City for their help in putting this story together.*

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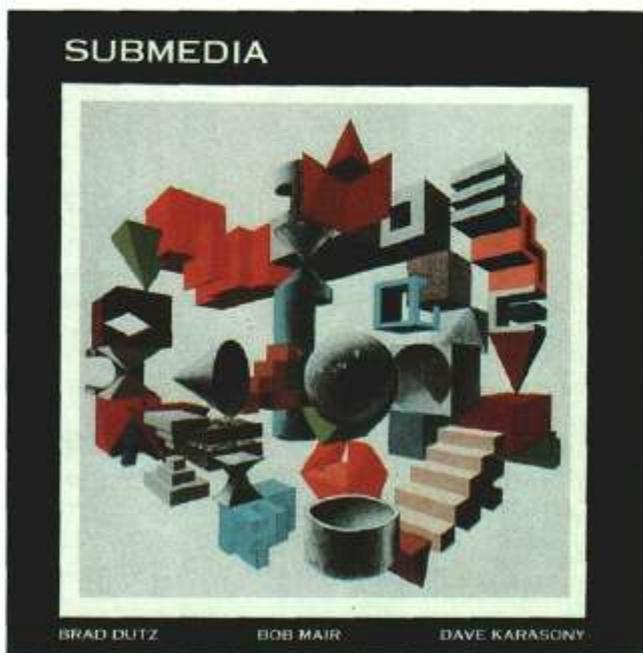
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In the improvisational trio Submedia, a pungently satisfying musical whole bubbles to life, adorned with a wide palette of fascinating electronic and acoustic sounds.

Dave Karasony, whose crisp, relaxed drumming recalls the witty Bob Moses, maintains an engaging dialog with bassist Bob Mair's liquid lines. Mair is equally content to hold down a sinuous vamp and let the listener focus on a churning stream of percussion. Don't be fooled by the goofy (and often intentionally misspelled) song titles; there's real beauty here. At once hauntingly ethereal, jaggedly abstract, and downright swinging, Submedia conveys its message with subtlety and grace.

• *Harold Howland*



**JACK WILKINS**

*Alien Army*

Musicmasters 5049-2-C

JACK WILKINS: gtr

MIKE CLARK: dr

MARC PURICELLI: pno, kybd

MICHAEL FORMANEK: bs

Happy Eyes; Barcelona Rising; Chess; No Time But Now; Fun Fat (Sweet: Fomix, Clean Dreamer, Pod Dance); Moon Rain; She's The One; Romance

Jack Wilkins' thick hollow-body, round-toned electric guitar sound is rooted in the jazz tradition of players like Jim Hall and Kenny Burrell, but his modern approach to that sound shows a tendency towards the unexpected left turn. His new group, Alien Army, is a quartet groomed from that same approach.

Rather than striving for an ensemble sound locked into every 16th note when approaching funk grooves, the Army instead retains a texture of looser jazz interaction, swelling and stretching around the groove. Drummer Mike Clark bridges the tight/loose contrasts admirably on tunes like "Happy Eyes," laying down shifting, linear funk grooves with his cracking, tightly wound snare, while initiating flowing interplay above it all. His blistering solo spots combine the fierceness of fusion chops with the earthiness and fluid phrasing of jazz. Especially fascinating is Clark's interplay with bassist Michael Formanek. This brave duo takes plenty of chances.

With their unique writing and four very adventurous, individualistic players, Alien Army has produced an engaging disc that reveals more levels with each listening.

• *Jeff Potter*

**MICKGOODRICK**

*Biorhythms*

CMP 46

MICK GOODRICK: gtr

GARY CHAFFEE: dr

HARVIE SWARTZ: bs

In Praise Of Bass Desires; Thramps; H., D. & L.; Falling Grace; Something Like That Kind Of Thing; Biorhythms; Groove Test; Bl'ize

Medley: Not Soon Forgotten / Her Manic-Manner Moods / Double Helix; What's The Point; (I'll) Never Forget

Considering Gary Chaffee's renown as a teacher (his students include Vinnie Colaiuta and Steve Smith) and author of drum books (the *Patterns* series), it's surprising to discover that this is his first recording. But I venture to guess it won't be his last.



Chaffee is given ample space to display his abilities on this disc. Not only does the trio setting allow plenty of room for expression, but several of the tunes are actually based on his favorite rhythm patterns, which Goodrick wrote tunes around. Chaffee demonstrates a knack for complex patterns, most notably on the title track, which is based around groupings of 23, 28, and 33 (biorhythm cycles) within a seven feel. But there are also straight-ahead tracks on which Chaffee proves himself adept at simple, uncluttered groove patterns.

Two drum solos on the album show off other aspects of Chaffee's playing. On "H., D. & L." he solos over a guitar/bass vamp, which gives him the freedom to explore the type of unusual rhythmic divisions that he is known for teaching. After hearing this, one can see the connection with some of

Colaiuta and Smith's playing. But where that solo is busy and complex, the solo on "Something Like That Kind Of Thing" is spacious, perfectly complementing the mood set by the guitar and bass at the beginning of the tune.

Chaffee has his own voice as a drummer, as do Goodrick and Swartz on their respective instruments. The trio as a whole has a fresh sound, with a nice blend of acoustic and electric playing. Chaffee's playing is worth checking out by any drummer; the trio is worth hearing by any musician.

• *Rick Mattingly*

## MIND FUNK

*Mind Funk*

Epic 46902

JASON COPPOLA: gtr

PATRICK R. DUNBAR: vcl

JOHN MONTE: bs

Louis J. SVITEK: gtr

REED ST. MARK: dr, perc

Sugar Ain't So Sweet; Ride & Drive; Bring It On; Big House Burning; Fire; Blood Runs Red; Sister Blue; Woke Up This Morning; Innocence; Touch You

There's not a lot of funky material to *Mind Funk*, just infectious, driving rhythms made more potent by the drumming of Reed St. Mark. He gives the album a no-nonsense percussive base, but allows the other players room to breathe and complements throughout with thoughtful,

punchy rhythms.

St. Mark is a very triplet-oriented drummer, but he doesn't use them in typical metal fills. Instead, he often relies on triplets to glue his rhythms, such as the light but fast 8th-note triplet ride in the grooving "Sister Blue." *Mind Funk* is one of the most sincere bands pushing this style of hard rock, and St. Mark is one of the reasons why.

• *Matt Peiken*

## PAUL MOTIAN

*Bill Evans*

JMT 834 445

PAUL MOTIAN: dr

BILL FRISSELL: gtr

JOE LOVANO: tn sx

MARC JOHNSON: bs

Show-Type Tune; Turn Out The Stars; Walkin' Up; Very Early; Five; Time Remembered; Skidoo; Re: Person I Knew; Children's Play Song

This disc is Paul Motian's tribute to the music of late piano master Bill Evans. Having spent a golden period between 1959 and '64 with Evans, Motian is well-qualified to spearhead this project. Bassist Marc Johnson, also an Evans alumnus, supported the pianist in his final years of the late '70s.

Although the quartet's performances reflect the subtle harmonies, introspective sensitivity, and cool burn of Evans' style, the delivery is very much their own. The band projects a *subtle* intensity, unconcerned with blatant blazing. Their peculiar ensemble chamber quality revolves around Motian's floating, open, reactive phrasing and Bill Frisell's odd, sumptuous harmonic choices.

Motian utilizes conventional time-keeping more on this



disc than on his previous, but on cuts like "Very Early," he excels with his textural, conversational, phrase-by-phrase style that very few drummers—or bands—can pull off. Texture also pervades Motian's solos, as in "Walkin' Up," where even the timbre differences between rim hits and rimshots executed higher or lower on the stick become an important part of the solo. Motian is one drummer/leader who has successfully kept his ears fresh through the decades, and this release only continues to prove it.

• *Jeff Potter*

## TONY MARTUCCI

*Earth Tones*

Sound Judgement SJ101

TONY MARTUCCI: dr

MARC COHEN: pno

JOE LOVANO: sx

ELLERY ESKELIN: sx

DREW GRESS: bs

Deed-Lee-Yah; Eronel; Tekke; Two Mouth; Monks Mood; Cyclic Episode; Le Sei Rose Di Maria; Whirlwind

Fans of no-nonsense mainstream jazz should enjoy this disc. It's a solid set of straight-ahead playing featuring a good blend of modern tunes and classic Monk compositions, played in a style that is based on bebop without being confined by it.

Martucci reminds me somewhat of Peter Erskine.

It's not a matter of licks so much, but rather in the similarity of attitude. Martucci's ride cymbal is his focal point, but while it is always there defining the time, it is spacious nonetheless, maintaining an uncluttered continuum similar to the way that chicken-wire can define boundaries without blocking the view. Perhaps it is not coincidental that Erskine wrote the liner notes for this disc.

The most interesting tune



on the album is Martucci's "Le Sei Rose Di Maria," which has a free form, yet is delivered with a good sense of compositional structure. It is no mean feat for a drummer to serve the development of a tune without the benefit of timekeeping, but Martucci pulls it off admirably.

This album is not a tour-de-force of drumming in terms of blazing fills and solos. The word I would choose to describe Martucci's playing is "mature." That's rare in a business where notemongers seem to get most of the attention.

• *Rick Mattingly*

Critique continues on next page



## VIDEO

### JOE PORCARO

#### On Drums

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**Price: \$39.95 (VHS)**

Joe Porcaro's credentials as an L.A. studio player and as a teacher (and co-director) at the Percussion Institute of Technology make him especially well-suited to do an instructional video. In *On Drums* Porcaro doesn't have a trademark sound that he is trying to promote. Rather, he is interested in showing some of the options a drummer has within a given style.

This refreshingly non-dogmatic approach is evident early in the tape, during Porcaro's discussion of jazz time-keeping. After showing the traditional ride pattern and several ways of breaking it up, Porcaro demonstrates ways that different players stress the quarters, or the 2 and 4, or even the "skip beats," as Joe calls them.

Another strong point of this production is Porcaro's emphasis on the application of the various licks and techniques he discusses. After talking about jazz timekeeping patterns and turnarounds, he demonstrates the application with the aid of a keyboard player and bassist. He uses the trio again to demonstrate the oft-neglected topic of the two feel versus the four feel. His explanations are clear to begin with, and seeing him using the concepts in performance leaves no doubt as to their application.

The tape contains a lengthy section on developing wrist, arm, and finger technique, and again Porcaro gives you practi-

cal applications: for example, how a combined finger/wrist motion can apply to a samba pattern on the ride cymbal, or how a five-stroke roll can be used in a hi-hat funk groove.

A 25-page booklet containing 61 exercises accompanies the videotape, and is an aid to following what Porcaro is doing (especially at fast tempos). A nice touch is that relevant exercise numbers appear on the screen while Porcaro is performing. This is a quality production throughout, and it should help any intermediate-level drummer gain a better understanding of jazz drumming and control of the hands and sticks.

• Rick Mattingly

## BOOKS

### HEW ORLEANS DRUMMING

#### Second Line And Funk Rhythms

by Roy Burns and Joey Farris

Rhythmic Publications

P.O. Box 3535

Fullerton CA 92634

**Price: \$9.95 (book)**

**Supplementary cassette: \$7.50**

While New Orleans drumming is often distinguished by its feel rather than by its patterns, there are certain beats that are typical of that style. Most widely known are the "second line" rhythms that were derived from the marching bands that played funerals, but a lot of funk has come out of New Orleans, too.

The authors have attempted to document this style of playing with their new book, *New Orleans Drumming*. They provide examples of second-line beats with both shuffle and 8th-note feels, various funk rhythms, and specialty patterns such as the New Orleans mambo, the mardi gras rumba, and the carnival calypso.

Within each type of rhythm, especially the second-line material, the authors provide a number of variations. This really helps in understanding the essentials of the style. In other words, the more variations you have, the more you realize what they have in common. After mastering each section, one should be able to play within the given style without being locked into a single pattern.

There is also a tape available on which Farris performs all 164 exercises from the text. Again, the New Orleans style is a *feel* as much as a bunch of patterns, and as good as this tape and book are, one needs to listen to New Orleans drumming in context. Get some records by the Neville Brothers and the Meters to get the flavor. Then check out Burns and Farris for the recipe.

• Rick Mattingly

### YOU CAN TEACH YOURSELF DRUMS

by James Morton

Bayside Press

P.O. Box 66

Pacific, MO 63069

**Price: book, \$9.95; book and cassette, \$18.95**

The title may send shivers up the spines of drum teachers everywhere, but with all the economic and political forces already threatening our existence, what's one more? Written in a positive and motivating style, *You Can Teach Yourself Drums* is attractive indeed to the resourceful beginner.

Morton makes a convincing case for good basic technique, the ability to read and write music, facility on a second instrument such as the piano, stylistic versatility (the book

itself only covers rock), and the application of one's learning by playing as often as possible with other musicians. He gets things rolling with an accompanying cassette of the six easy charts included, and the music is refreshingly more youth-oriented than is usually found in such presentations. The tape has two disappointing flaws, however: First, the recorded drum track cannot be deleted, so the student is forced to tag along when he or she ought to be taking charge. And second, the recorded drummer's technical demonstrations sometimes reveal uneven hands and shaky coordination, which don't set the best example.

The 89-page book is succinct and well-organized (though it seems that the publisher could afford a laser printer). After brief preliminaries on the drummer's role in music, holding the sticks, basic reading, and a few hand-foot exercises, the student is playing Chart 1, a reggae-flavored blues, all in quarter notes. The text moves right along to Chart 2, which is an 8th-note rock feel. Similarly, Chart 3, 16th-note rock, follows minimal preparation.

After being introduced to fills, dots, ties, accents, and syncopation, the student is ready for Chart 4, medium funk. Charts 5 and 6, a slow blues and a medium shuffle, follow 8th-note triplet material. Each new beat is shown both in music notation and in a visual key.

*You Can Teach Yourself Drums* is good fun, painless learning, and fortunately for us teachers, just the beginning of a lifelong journey.

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continued from page 31

phones that [saxophonist] Leon Schneiderman built.

**PL:** What was it about Boingo that was initially so appealing to you?

**JH:** It was the freshness and the kind of freewheeling approach to everything that they had. It was going to be fun and it was going to drive forward. It was a lot of work learning a bunch of music right away, but that's what I've always really liked because I get bored easily. Even when I was growing up and playing in club bands, I'd be good for about a week or two, but by the third week, I'd be falling asleep or over-playing. When I ran into Danny and Steve, they had a great volume of music, and once you rehearsed it and learned it, you never rehearsed it again. You just ran it down for the show. So you were required to know the Boingo catalog [snaps his fingers] right now. Although I've been there since the inception back in the studio and all that stuff, you still have to log it all in your brain.

**PL:** What got you interested in drums in

the first place?

**JH:** I really liked the drive of the drummer, and I just always wanted to be a part of music—an orchestra, a band, anything. I'm also a very physical kind of person. My mother used to listen to a lot of big band music and I really enjoyed that. I always noticed the drummers. I really liked the drummer's role. I'd see guys like Sonny Payne, Louie Bellson, and Duke Ellington on TV and they'd be wailing, and I was just a little kid saying, "Wow." My sister and my aunts always listened to R&B music. So, I grew up with a mixture of jazz, Latin, old soul, and R&B music.

**PL:** Since you're of Mexican heritage, were you exposed to that style of music growing up as well?

**JH:** Sure. Even though my father wasn't really a musician, he used to party a lot and sing "Los Mananitas," which is the birthday song, as well as all these other Mexican songs. The men used to sit around all night long drinking and then show up at the ladies' houses strumming a bunch of guitars and singing in front of

their houses. Also, I used to live behind some people who had these little *cumbia* parties every weekend. I'd go to bed Saturday nights at 1 or 2 A.M. listening to this trio—a guy playing accordion, another on an out-of-tune alto saxophone, and the other on a 12-string guitar. Then these farm workers would come over, and they'd be dancing all night. My grandmother was a bar singer, too. She sang at El Pounce Cafe, which was the local bar hangout in San Gabriel [CA]. That's actually where my grandfather met her. She was the beautiful songstress of the town.

**PL:** Has any of the ethnic music that you grew up listening to filtered into your own psyche or musical style?

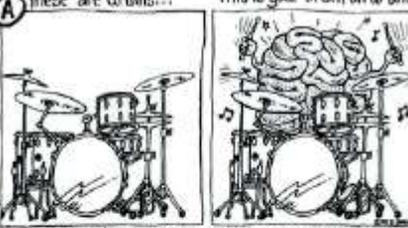
**JH:** It has a lot. There's a certain way of strumming a guitar—there's all sorts of strums in different regions of Mexico and Central America—and there's all these polyrhythms happening like in that classic *mariachi* song "La Negra," which is one of my mom's favorite songs. There are all these different rhythms that are going on, and people are always

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jumping and stomping around, too, and it was pretty exciting. I was really affected by all that because I loved my parents and I loved that kind of music. People would smile and get excited about music, and that was pretty inspirational to me.

**PL:** Where do you draw inspiration from?

**JH:** I have to be at peace with myself. Music is everywhere, and I listen to so many different kinds of music. I really like to listen to the soul and the feeling of music, you know, like Art Tatum—that poor black guy just hammering it out, man. Great players who have really studied and taken a lot of time—I'm inspired by them, even if they can't speak English and you can't understand them. Because the music is what's really important. Oftentimes people forget that. And I've been guilty of this many times—you go home and practice for hours, for weeks, and you come to the job and you *sound* like you've been practicing. And they say, "Would you relax a little bit? Sure that's the right beat, but nobody's dancing," because everything sounds so glassy and so even. And nothing moves. You're spelling it out, but you're not really saying anything. Music is supposed to be fun. I've been lucky that I've been able to hold onto some sort of musical standards and have a really good time in the process.

**PL:** You've pretty much always used acoustic drums in the studio. But for a while in concert, you actually played an entirely electronic kit.

**JH:** From about 1986 to mid-1988 I played an electronic kit live. I had done a lot of R&D on the DW electronic pedals. I was using a cable hi-hat with the hi-hat cymbals mounted in the center of the kit. So I had good access for working the foot pedals, and I came up with a system for the tom-toms that really was the most comfortable for me. It actually was moving air over a microphone fed into a MIDI trigger device. Back then, all I could get was the Roland *Octapad*, and the feel of that never really appealed to me. So I plugged mic's right into the *Octapad*. I had microphones mounted in padded drums, and I had them kind of tweaked up with a graphic equalizer to weed out any crosstalk. I could actually

play a rim solo without triggering the sound, or at the same time have electronic sounds. And it didn't give me the tennis elbow or the terrible feeling of playing on pieces of wood with *Formica* on them and piezo pickups inside. We were doing shows with other bands like Madness, the Police, and the Thompson Twins, and their drummers were all using pads and complaining about them. They'd throw those things against the wall, they'd get so upset at them. I'd show them my rig, and they'd never believe it. But it worked.

**PL:** Why did you go with an electronic kit in the first place?

**JH:** What happened was that I got stronger as I got older. And as we'd go through all the Boingo music, I would just get louder and louder. By the end of the show I would be wailing, which was very taxing on Danny. So we ended up going with electronic drums, which could be turned down. And since I didn't believe in anybody making my sounds, whenever we made an album, I would get a sample of all of our sounds and I would burn it into chips. I would just play acoustic drums in the studio. Then in the last four years or so, the MIDI thing got straightened out, and now we have big racks and computers. We got into all these different Cooper MIDI switching modules, and it became possible to just plug everything in and run through, so we had more time. Then we started to play larger houses, and the drums were a little further away from Danny. So we went back to the real drums, and I have much more control of the band, which is something that I had really missed with electronic drums.

**PL:** As aggressive as the Boingo's music is, does it give you any room for dynamics?

**JH:** Yeah, it does. But getting a large ensemble the size of Boingo to play dynamics can get a little unruly and rough. With real drums, though, I have a bit more dynamics. With electronic drums, just forget it.

**PL:** In a live situation, do you use triggers at all on your acoustic drums?

**JH:** No, I haven't done that. I haven't found a trigger that really works. You can play the drums, but you can't play the rims. If they're shock-mounted on the



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shell, they're going to be set off by a rim or a click or when somebody pounds the stage too loud. You've got to reset the sensitivity, then you have to beat the drum to get a quiet sound. It just never really works. The only thing that I've found that has worked so far is the DW electronic bass drum pedal. You play acoustic drums, and the switch is actually underneath the pedal—kind of a magnetic switch that puts out a trigger. That's been highly successful, but even that I've only experimented with, and never really live. Generally I'm very lucky, I can get a really good drum sound. And to ensure that, I carry around a couple of microphones that will help the kick drum. I have an AKG D112 and a Sennheiser 421, Live, I stick them in a little off-axis, about a hand's width away from the head. Sometimes during recording, I put them a little bit closer. Of course when you're in the studio, you can use a more expensive mic', like an Electro-Voice RE-20 or something. Those are beautiful, because the sound's all around the mic' and in a more controlled situation.

**PL:** How does Boingo record?

**JH:** The drums are in a room by themselves. The room is actually free and open to all drums, so it's important that we get a really good, solid-sounding room. And I just try to play the room and try to make the walls shake.

**PL:** So you lay down the drum tracks first?

**JH:** Well, we usually lay down a basic rhythm track first—drums, bass, guitar, piano, and very often sequenced parts.

**PL:** And you're all playing to the sequenced parts?

**JH:** Right. Sometimes we'll keep the bass track. But generally we always build up from the drums.

**PL:** How long does an average Boingo record take to record?

**JH:** Well, Danny's really gotten it down. We've really been the kings of bringing it in on or under budget. We do a lot of pre-production and really scope it out, work on parts, and get it all down. So when we get into the studio, we burn through everything. We can go through everything—from recording to mixing down to picking out the colors for the T-

shirts—in six weeks.

**PL:** Since Elfman and Bartek are so heavily involved with computers, do they ever use the programmed drum tracks from their demos on the actual recordings?

**JH:** Only in very rare cases are the drum tracks from the demos ever the final drum parts. There was one case, however, on our latest album, on the song "When The Lights Go Out." It was interesting because it was kind of a big, marching drone of drums. On one side you've got a computer playing my samples, and on the other side you've got me playing my acoustic set along with it. So, you get this James Brown double-drum kind of thing. It sounds like this big wall of drums. And if you turn the stereo up real loud, you can hear the difference. That's the only time that I've really done that. And then there's been a couple of songs where they've used my samples to deliberately get a real electronic sound. But it's never something done behind my back. It's something that we all decide on together.

**PL:** I've heard that Danny Elfman's quite a perfectionist. How do you deal with such a perfectionist on a day-to-day basis in the studio?

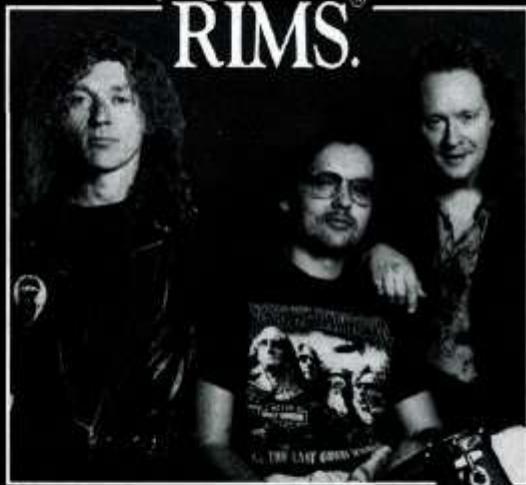
**JH:** It's perfect, because we're all perfectionists. We all lock horns and get it done right. We keep each other in check. And we all work on things together. And that's what's been so good about this band. Everyone's into everyone else's stuff. If the horn player doesn't really like a fill or wants some help here or there, he doesn't hold back. And of course, if I want somebody to tune up before we start playing a song, I'm usually the one who's screaming. Danny is the leader, and he definitely functions as a great leader. And he is a perfectionist, and that's okay by me.

**PL:** Does he have the veto power or the ultimate power to say, "This is it"?

**JH:** Oh sure, because he's the guy who has to sing his heart out, which is so hard sometimes to fathom. I mean, the writing is great, but he really sings his heart out—all of the time. No one works as hard as he does.

**PL:** Does Danny write out your drum parts note-for-note, or do you come up with your own parts?

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**JH:** It depends on the song. When he first started writing and playing, he and Steve would write out a part, and it would look like a medley. I'd say, "What is this? Is this three or four songs?" And they'd say, "No, that's what we want you to play." And I'd say, "Okay," and I'd play it. And then they'd say, "Why does it sound so bad?" "Because there's nothing happening," I'd say. "This is not a song." So I had to rewrite the parts. At first [Elfman] couldn't do it that well, but after a couple of years he got the picture and actually got to the point where he knew what I would do with it. So sometimes he'd come in with specific parts, and other times he would just let me come up with my own parts. With the last couple of albums, it's been pretty loose. He has a basic idea, but still leaves things open. Even in the studio, we're always tweaking things. It's an ensemble, and that's the situation that is important for me to be in. I need to be a part of that.

**PL:** What about all of this film composing that Danny's doing? Are you at all put off by the amount of time that he spends away from Boingo?

**JH:** I'm really glad for Danny. When I see him playing with his orchestra, he really communicates to me. And we both have such a great love for orchestras. Sure the band has suffered, but not that much. Besides, with the larger record companies, it takes time for an album to come out. You can have it recorded, and it may not come out for six to nine months afterwards. So there's all this time, and rather than sit around, Danny's a workaholic. One of the things that we're kind of glad about the movie thing is that Danny used to bring in 30 songs to the band, and we'd be beating our brains out. Now he's so busy he can only bring in 15 songs. And we still have too many to choose from! Now things might change if we were to get large, worldwide acceptance and have to go on the road a real long time, which hasn't happened yet. But we did real well in Brazil and Australia on this last tour, so we might start doing more international travel.

**PL:** Elfman's lyrics deal with some pretty morbid subjects, like isolation, death, and suicide. Do you personally subscribe

to his philosophies?

**JH:** You could say that I'm humored by them. It's very entertaining. His views are his views, but sometimes we do think along the same lines. I do identify with what he's saying. I also think that the situation with pop and rock 'n' roll music today has become so unbelievably stupid. I mean, you've got people blaming the death of their child on a piece of plastic, and somebody's artistic freedom is being infringed upon in the process. I've really fought for Danny's freedom to write whatever he wants. Danny's a fantasy child and he has pretty vivid dreams. And if he wants to write songs about them and somebody takes him seriously...I mean, you're not suppose to. It's all for fun. With a name like Oingo Boingo, isn't this suppose to be fun? And talk about backward masking—we got so angry about all that stuff. When it was just starting to happen, we put backward masking on one of our records that said, "If you're listening to this backwards, you're an idiot," and another one was, "Mickey Mouse is God."

**PL:** You use a click track in the studio.

What are you hearing in the headphones?

**JH:** All I'm hearing is a click. It might have two pitches so that I can hear the difference between the downbeat and the upbeat. I use that as a guide to make sure that I'm locked in with the sequences and stuff. Now with all sorts of control, you can zero the click into everything. For about 3/4 of the live show I use a click, because there's so much going on and I'm relied upon to do it all.

**PL:** Does that leave you any room for spontaneity?

**JH:** Not with a band like Oingo Boingo, which is a very large ensemble. And like all large ensembles, somebody's got to hold down the fort, and that's my job. The spontaneity comes when we go into the studio with set drum parts and then we'll change everything around, so nothing is ever set. So in the studio it's always interesting. But as far as doing things like playing a roll around the drums, you have to think of the overall production. When you're working with guys and you know what guitar parts they're going to be laying down and you

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know how everything's going down, you want to make sure to leave room, because in the medium of recording, less is more.

**PL:** Since you play to a click so much of the time, you must be very comfortable working with click tracks. Do you have any advice for those of us who aren't?

**JH:** You just have to keep working at it. You have to learn to lock into the rhythm. If you can make up a rhythm in your head and keep that going along with the click, then you'll be able to count out the music. If you just keep working on it, it happens.

**PL:** It's also a matter of not fighting it.

**JH:** Sure. You also want to analyze your playing, make sure that you're well-centered and that you never tighten up any of your appendages. You always have to have a point of relaxation. So you always have an "on" and an "off." For example, if your foot is constantly riding up real high and the heel never gets to rest, or your hands are constantly tense—you have to really center your appendages and then breathe, attack, breathe, attack. You certainly don't want to tighten up and get yourself all worked up when the click starts to stray or your time strays.

**PL:** How do you keep things interesting playing to a click?

**JH:** You have four appendages, and you can do anything. I mean, it's even more amazing if you constantly hear time that way. That's how guys like Jack DeJohnette and Vinnie Colaiuta do it—they can step right out of the world and come right back in. It's fun. That's the beauty of it. Also, I'm freer in other situations outside of Boingo, where I play without a click. But with Boingo, it's so orchestrated that I'm locked in. And that's what really locks me in, not necessarily the click.

**PL:** When you're playing to a click in a live situation, can you hear the band as well?

**JH:** All I have is the click for a reference, and I have a real small, open set of headphones, so I can hear the monitors and I can hear my drums. I don't totally enclose my ears. I need to hear the balance. Here's the scary part about the click, for all of the Boingo songs: There's

a four-count click count-off. "Click, click, click, click"—then the song starts. Sometimes I'm one click off—because the crowd's yelling too loud and I can't hear it. Or sometimes I won't hear the count-off at all—now that's a *real* fun moment. I mean, everybody's screaming, it's total confusion, and everyone's relying on me.

**PL:** How do you prepare for your live shows? Tell me about the "Vatos" rituals.

**JH:** "Vatos" rituals usually consist of getting there early, like around 12:00 or 1:00 in the afternoon. I usually change the tom-tom and bass drum heads every other show. I go out on stage, and my drum tech will have pre-tuned the drums, and then I go out and re-tune them. Then we go through a sound check, and we'll go through all of the individual drums. Then the band comes in and we go through all the relationships with all the other instruments. Then generally, if I'm going to have something to eat, I'll eat. Then I'll go and lay down usually for about an hour and just get real quiet and focus and not think of anything else—try to clear my mind. At that point, I just like to be left alone. You see, in order to put out so much energy, one of the things that I have found is you must be calm. Otherwise, if you go out there all nervous and overly pumped, you burn out real quickly. It's better to build the fire. It's better to go out with the strength and the confidence that you have with clarity of mind, and that building up and tension will just naturally happen.

**PL:** Do you still practice stretching before the shows as well?

**JH:** Oh yeah, I do that all the time before the shows, because once you start going forward and leaning and pushing, you will tighten up. The looser you can go in, the better, the more balance and strength you have. I do a lot of stretching, breathing, and back twists and turns, just to make sure all the energy is flowing. You've got to make sure your legs aren't going to fall asleep because they're cramping.

**PL:** You seem so buried in drums. Do you sit low on your throne?

**JH:** Actually, I sit pretty normal. I sit up

straight and my trunk is always up straight. I like stuff in front of me. People who usually sit behind my drums can't play them because they say I sit up high.

**PL:** Since a typical Boingo show lasts close to three hours, does sitting like that increase your stamina?

**JH:** It connects the strength. When you're leaning over a set, you have to constantly throw your upper body into it, rather than having your upper body set and just being able to reach. It's like being able to punch a guy to your left-hand side, without having to lean into him. Once again, if you lean into it, you're committed into the drum or into punching that guy. And that guy's going to pull your arm out, or you're going to fall into the drum and get real tight. It's a good balance of strength and center and poise. So I sit up real straight; that's one of the things that I work on.

**PL:** How important is it for you to duplicate the song in a live situation note-for-note?

**JH:** Well, the note-for-note thing in a live situation is important with the larger ensemble. The larger the group, if you do something strange, the more you're going to throw something off. With Boingo, I'll change a drum fill or I'll change things slightly, but it's pretty much been worked out. Otherwise everybody has a comment. The horn players can say, "Wait a minute, we're playing a figure here, so don't open your hi-hat"—that kind of stuff. And everyone relies on you. If I drop one snare drum beat or one hi-hat beat, they'll all turn around and look at me. But I complain too. I'll yell at Danny or Steve: "Can you tune up?!"

**PL:** You're a very hard hitter. Where does all that power and precision come from?

**JH:** It comes from having a good foundation, a good teacher. Freddie Gruber really taught me how to use my entire hand. You've got to use the support from way back at the back part of your wrist all the way up to the front of your fingers—using your whole hand like you're going to pick up a club and just beat an old tire. It's like taking martial arts, where you beat on a big bag with a big

stick. It's the same kind of technique. Dan Inosanto and Jet Kun Doe and most of the Filipino martial artists hold a stick pretty much the same way. It's really kind of centering the whole hand. And I've been really lucky with all the support and the right foundation, I can really lay into the drums and get out of them. I'm also able to preserve the front end—the feathering, the finger stuff, and all the real light things that I like to do, too. It gives me a chance to club and thrash, and that's one of the reasons that I'm not afraid to go into the drums, because I'm not going to hurt any of my other technique. Some people play with different parts of their fingers and hold the sticks funny, but I've got a good set of mitts, and they're deeply rooted with all the greats that Freddie Gruber has taught and has been influenced by.

**PL:** You do drum clinics around the country. What is one of the more important points that you try to stress to the youngsters?

**JH:** You have to study and really get to know your instrument well. Learn everything that you want to learn to play or might want to play, because you never know where the cards may fall. I tell all the kids that now is the time to practice, now is the time to do it. If all of a sudden you're playing country music and you're making a lot of money and you're taking care of your life and it's good music—maybe like the Desert Rose Band...what the hell? You're going to turn it down because, "I want to play with Guns N' Roses"? Wait a minute, Guns N' Roses already have a drummer. So keep your mind open and make sure you keep every opportunity open, because it's all fun. Whether you're playing drums at the *pizza* parlor or sitting in with your friend's blues band, it's fun.

You can't get narrow-minded about anything. Oingo Boingo said to me, "You want to play in this band? Well then, put on this monkey suit. And underneath the monkey suit, put on a jazz outfit. And underneath the jazz outfit, put on a tank top and a pair of shorts. So you will gradually strip down into another outfit." Now, what if I had been very narrow-minded and not done any of that? 

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# Mistakes

■ by Roy Burns

I don't like to make mistakes. I find them frustrating, and I imagine that most people feel the same way. How many times have we said, "Why did I do that?" or "I can't believe I did that!" We are all human and we all make mistakes at one time or another.

School, especially when we are quite young, teaches us that mistakes are bad. In fact, mistakes are often punished. We are told, "Do it again, and keep doing it until you get it right!"

In school, there is always a "right" answer to the problem. But in real life it's not so simple. And in drumming, there is very often more than one way to play a song and make it sound good. A lot depends on how creative the player is. So when you begin to play a musical instrument, or engage in any creative activity, mistakes take on a different meaning. James Joyce, the famous writer, once said, "Mistakes are the portals of discovery." Woody Allen said, "If you aren't making mistakes, you aren't trying." Without mistakes there is no experimentation...no learning...no growth. Mistakes are a necessary part of the learning process.

Unfortunately, I know of a few drum teachers who yell at their students when they make mistakes. As a result, sometimes a student decides not to try. (If you don't try, you can't make a mistake, and therefore no one will yell at you.) This is sad, because real teachers should be there to explain, encourage, and offer support. They should not berate, put down, or intimidate their students.

Do you ever say things like, "I hate myself" or "I'm really stupid"? These

ideas don't help. They just make you feel bad, and you don't learn anything. Instead, try this approach: The next time you make a mistake, ask yourself, "What caused me to make the mistake? Did I stop concentrating? Did something distract me? Or was I simply not well-prepared? Should I have practiced this piece more?"

In other words, instead of criticizing yourself, try to identify the problem. Once you understand why you made the mistake, you can go about correcting it—and avoid making the same mistake in the future.

By understanding the mistake, you can learn from it. After all, making a mistake doesn't make you a bad person. It just proves that you're human and not a machine.

Preparation helps to reduce the number and severity of mistakes. After all, it is much better to make several small mistakes than one gigantic one. Preparation helps you to improve your average. If you make fewer mistakes as you develop and grow, then you are improving. As long as you are improving, you are doing many things right.

When things go well we tend to take them for granted. Consequently, we don't learn as much when everything goes smoothly. A wise man once said, "Mistakes are life's way of getting you to

pay attention. The most aware person is one who has just had a close call." For example, if you've nearly been in a car accident—but just managed to escape injury—you will usually drive more carefully in the future.

Making a mistake playing the drums won't be a risk to your person—but it can be frustrating. Ask yourself, "Do I concentrate on my mistakes as a musician? Do I remember my mistakes better than I remember the things I do well?" Many times we agonize too much over our mistakes. As a result, they often rob us of self-confidence. The best approach is to develop a balanced view of things. For example, if you play 20 songs very well and only mess up on one, then I would say you had a good night. If one mistake can ruin your whole night, you're in need of a new viewpoint. Strive for excellence, not for perfection. Your goal should be simply to do your best.

The next time a mistake is really getting to you, make a list of all the things you did well that day. You will probably surprise yourself. We all do more things well in one

day than we give ourselves credit for. So look at it this way: Be aware of mistakes, learn from them, keep improving, and give yourself credit for all the things you do well. You will be happier, more balanced, and almost certainly more productive. You will also make fewer mistakes.

**"Making a mistake doesn't make you a bad person. It just proves that you're a human and not a machine."**





# The New Drum Rack by Pearl.

Pearl's revolutionary drum rack system totally changed the way drummers approached their set-ups. It's simplistic folding design and ultimate stability separated it from all the rest. No other rack system offered it's quick, easy set-up, it's compact storage with all clamps in place, or it's non-slip square tube design...until now. Introducing the second generation drum rack by Pearl.

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If you've had enough experience in constructing pipe puzzles and want to return to the reasons you considered a rack in the first place, the new Pearl drum rack is the answer. We'll let the other guys create all the questions.



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#### Easy Expansion Assembly



DR-200 Standard Rack

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continued from page 35

pro system will put a triple-figure dent in your pocketbook. But, after adding up the total value of drums, amps, keyboards, P.A., recording equipment, and miscellany housed in the rehearsal area, the question to pose is, "Can we afford *not* to contract a professional service?"

How much will a quality system run? Expect to pay an installation fee of about \$300 for a motion sensor and coverage on two doors. Add approximately \$100 for window protectors. After installation, a monthly monitoring fee of \$30 will be assessed. Figures may vary in your area.

A motion sensor detects the presence of an intruder who has entered through an opening rather than a door or window, for example, a hole cut out of the roof. The monitor is a circuit board at the security company's central station under round-the-clock scrutiny. When an alarm is tripped, a signal travels from the site to the monitor, where the sentry immediately informs the police.

Security specialist Ray Resnick advises, "Install two sirens—one on the inside, and another in a strategically located spot outside. If the telephone

line is cut (triggering the monitor line), the outside alarm will go off, alerting the neighbors." Adds Resnick, "The loud noise of the external siren is usually enough to scare off burglars."

#### Securing The Venue

Few musicians form bands without the intent of performing in public. Playing for strangers in an unfamiliar environment takes concentration as it is. So why be distracted with concerns about equipment security?

A little organization goes a long way when it comes to eliminating security problems. Before playing anywhere, decide who is going to be doing what from the moment you leave the rehearsal hall until you return. In addition to defining roles, this gives a more professional image.

Develop a rotational system for toting equipment from buildings to vehicles and vice versa. Never leave a partially or fully loaded vehicle unattended. It only takes a moment for a dishonest passerby to stop, grab an item, and drive off.

A loader should not enter or return to the building until another band member is within close proximity of the car or van. When leaving the concert hall or club after a show, rotate in a way that allows a third person to maintain a position by the equipment remaining inside. This prevents a) a member of another band on the bill from accidentally (or otherwise) loading one of your cases into his vehicle, and b) scam artists from plying their trade. We'll go into greater detail about the latter in another section.

Club owners generally expect bands to set up between mid and late afternoon the day of the initial gig of the engagement. A security problem arises in clubs that double as bars or restaurants during the period prior to show time. An organized band will schedule meals and other breaks in a manner that requires each member to spend an equal amount of time keeping an eye on the equipment.

A mistake that may have dire consequences is assuming that because a bartender or waitress is on duty, there is no need to guard instruments. The club employees have no idea who is authorized to handle equipment for you. Most

importantly, their job is to serve customers, not to baby-sit a drumset, so they cannot be responsible for what goes on away from their stations.

To provide quick identification from a distance, mark all cases and their lids with a large, distinctive design. The common practice is to make a stencil out of heavy cardboard and spray-paint the musician's name onto the case in a color that vividly contrasts that of the case. Use of stickers is discouraged because they can be peeled off.

Labeling with a name is not mandatory. Paint any unique design you desire. The idea is to mark cases so they are distinguishable at a glance.

If your artistic abilities are strictly musical, don't fret. Get a few rolls of masking tape of different widths. Choose a sequence of widths and run the tape across the case, leaving a randomly selected space between each strip. Upon duplicating the pattern on all cases, spray paint directly over the taped areas. Allow a few minutes for drying, peel off the tape and—*viola*—you've created a neat "racing stripe" effect you can identify from across the room.

The preceding precautions put a severe dent in the scam artist's style. Equipment under constant scrutiny is impossible to access. Nonetheless, there will be times when the musicians by the gear will be distracted by post-concert activities. An opening as brief as a few seconds may be all the scammer needs to lay his hands on a cymbal caddy and head for the exit. In the event of such an occurrence, a well-marked case will eliminate the con man's key weapon if caught—the argument over to whom the equipment belongs.

Unfortunately, the best-labeled cases under FBI surveillance won't eliminate the scam artist. He may strike during the very vulnerable period between the end of the last set and the time equipment is placed in the cases.

The span during which the stage is struck after an opening act is particularly inviting because there are two teams of equipment handlers at work, half of whom are strangers to the other half. A scam artist may feign being part of the stage crew, casually grab a snare drum and, instead of placing it in the appropri-

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ate case off stage, stroll right out the door with the drum concealed under a jacket.

There are two excellent ways to thwart scams while clearing a stage with the assistance of strangers. You can use a rotation similar to your loading routine, pairing band members with strangers so all equipment remains within eyesight of at least one member of your group. A second method is to form a line from the stage to the cases and pass equipment from one person to the next, the same way old-time fire fighters manned the bucket brigade. Have band members positioned at the first and last places in line to prevent "appropriations" on either end.

After the equipment is struck, make an effort to thank the strangers. You never know: They may be admirers of your music who will volunteer to help at future shows because you showed gratitude, not attitude. Every friend you have in the house provides another pair of eyes to watch your equipment—not to mention hands to carry it!

## Marking Your Equipment

Labeling cases is a good first step. But why not take it one step further and label your equipment? Markings serve a two-fold purpose. First, they prevent backstage mix-ups. For example, say you're sharing a bill with two or more other bands. Because of limited area in the wings, your equipment is crammed together with that of another drummer who also happens to use a *Speed King* bass pedal. Properly marked equipment eliminates the confusion over what belongs to whom.

More importantly, markings simplify the process of identifying equipment in the event it has been stolen. We have all heard the expression "Possession is nine tenths of the law." In other words, if you should locate what you believe to be the missing gear, it is not enough to simply claim it is yours; you *must prove* it.

I have split markings into two categories, obvious and subtle. Obvious markings are those that are plainly visible to the eye. Their subtle counterparts are intentionally obscured.

### Obvious Markings

The previously described case-labeling technique is an example of an obvious marking. I'm not suggesting you stencil your name or paint a racing stripe on your shells. But there are ID methods that instantly confirm ownership while barely affecting the aesthetic quality of the equipment.

Drums manufactured by major companies have serial numbers on the "badges" (metal logo labels). Have the seller write all numbers on a dated receipt at the time of purchase. The receipt will then serve as a second-party verification of ownership. Store the receipt in a place where it won't be lost or accidentally discarded. I keep mine in a small fireproof strongbox along with other important documents.

Copy the serial numbers on a piece of paper to be carried in your wallet or shoulder bag. Make a second copy of the numerical list and place it somewhere at home where it will be accessible to a housemate. A list attached to the inside of a personal phone directory will do just fine. The duplicate record may come in handy in an emergency when the on-person list is misplaced or in question.

A more personalized ID system available to musicians is a metallic plate engraved with "Property of (musician's name)" and attached to an instrument via rivets or super adhesive. Having a name affixed to an instrument has one serious drawback: You have to remove the plate when it comes time to sell. Unlike a thief, you have plenty to lose if you damage a shell attempting to remove a plate. For that reason it is advisable to steer clear of labeling drums with a proper name.

Don't entirely discount the use of plates. With a little creativity they can still serve a useful function. Make up a fictitious, official-sounding security agency name such as "DrumGard." Have the technician engrave "Registered With DrumGard Security Systems" on the plate. You will know the agency doesn't exist, but the would-be thief won't. The phony label may be enough to discourage the criminal.

You can also have the plate engraved with a generic pattern of your own design. It can be something simple like a

star enclosed within a triangle. Have the design engraved on a leg of each cymbal stand and the bottom of pedal footboards, too.

The design will not scare off any thieves. Nevertheless, it provides a distinctive mark, making your kit easy to identify. The criminal will have to go through a lot of trouble to disguise your equipment before he can sell it. Once again, you will *make the thief's work difficult*, in compliance with the Golden Rule. Of course, a plate sans a proper name will pose no problem when the equipment is sold by its rightful owner.

It is impossible to affix a plate to a cymbal without radically altering its tone. Because of their abundance, size, value, and (with the exception of the recent *Paiste* line) lack of serial numbers, cymbals are cherished by thieves. They are far and away the percussion instruments most frequently stolen at live engagements. After all, it's much easier to conceal a pair of hi-hats than it is a floor tom!

An indelible felt-tip marker is a superlative tool for labeling cymbals.

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Unlike paint, the marker fluid is so thin it will make no noticeable difference in the tone of the cymbal. Affix a design close to the bell on the bottom of the cymbal. It will not be very visible to an audience, nor will it wear off via repeated sticking and fingertip choking. Felt-tips work equally well for marking cowbells, gongs, and other metal traps.

Tubular chrome cymbal stands and percussion mounts lack a flat, porous surface, rendering the felt-tip ineffective. We need a liquid so thin it will not affect the ability of the hardware to telescope closed, yet one that will adhere to chromed metal. The miracle fluid: nail polish! Granted, you are restricted to extremely basic markings. But you are only applying a stripe or two to a segment of tubing, not touching up the *Mona Lisa*.

The prescribed methods for marking cymbals and related metal objects provide limited protection. For that reason, and due to the frequency of theft, cymbal storage should take top priority when packing after a show. Time and space permitting, bring the trap case on stage and immediately place the cymbals and snare within it.

If all the equipment must be struck before packing, load the trap case first. Secure the lid once the case is filled. I know a drummer who locks a chain around his trap case. Some find this a bit extreme. To them he replies, "Yes, but I haven't lost a cymbal yet."

Have a few color photos of your set taken. Thirty-five millimeter cameras are preferable over Polaroids because multiple prints can be quickly processed from a negative should the need arise. Photo prints will be an immeasurable aid in illustrating the exact appearance of the missing items to police officers and music store employees.

Shell color is the first thing laymen notice about a drumset. A verbal description of a color is vague at best; a photograph leaves little room for misinterpretation. The more exotic the shell finish, the more important it is to have a photo.

A pro rarely swipes an item for his own use. His *modus operandi* is to unload the stolen goods for cash as quickly as possible. Every obstacle we place in his way

gives authorities time to catch him red-handed.

## Subtle Markings

Diligent thieves will do their best to remove, alter, or cover an obvious marking. Therefore, you will need a means of identification the crook will overlook. This is where subtlety comes into play.

It may appear as though the deck is stacked against us in regards to post-theft identification through obvious markings. However, we have a definite edge in the subtlety department: A drummer knows the instrument better than anyone else. Exploitation of this knowledge is the key to gaining an advantage over the criminal.

The types of subtle markings fall into either the camouflaged, concealed, or invisible subcategories. There are tricks of the trade in each group. The following are some, but certainly not all, of the options.

An item that is camouflaged is one that blends in with its surroundings so well it is difficult to detect. One of my favorite stratagems involves the use of inexpensive rubber stamps. They are perfect for creating authentic-looking, false markings that a layman will overlook.

Have a print shop make a stamp with 1/4" letters of your initials and your numerical birth date. For example, if Bob Remington was born on June 30th, his stamp would read "BR630." Apply the stamp just below the logo on each drumhead. *Wite Out* is a suitable substitute for ink when matching the logo on a colored head. By this simple procedure you have affected what appears to be an inconsequential product number that in reality is a subtle label.

It is improbable the thief will have the know-how or willingness to spend the money to replace all heads on a stolen kit. Since it is a possibility, you must use a similar deception to mark shell interiors.

This time, due to the roundness of the drums, you'll need individual stamps and numerals preferably in the 1/2" to 1" range. Ask your printer to sell, lend, or give the five or six pieces of lead type needed. Toy and hobby shops stock rubber stamp kits that work equally well.

Apply the initials and numbers in a straight line but not in the center of the shell interior. (An off-center mark is less conspicuous). This will give the appearance of a matter-of-factly marked manufacturer's imprint.

Why use specific letters and numbers? Upon locating missing drums you can point out the markings to a law officer, then present your driver's license to illustrate the similarities. Even the most creative thief will have a difficult time explaining how your initials and birth date happened to be on "his" drums.

A concealed ID is one that is visible but out of plain sight. There are hollow portions of your kit that are ideal for concealment techniques. Examine your equipment thoroughly, paying close attention to metal parts.

All cymbal stands and most tom mounts have a hollow section. To place a concealed mark on these you'll need a flashlight, cotton swabs, and light-colored nail polish. Shine the flashlight into the hollow to illuminate a section of the piece normally not exposed to light. Dip the swab in polish and apply the liquid liberally to the selected area.

You now have a hardware part of which only you are aware of the mark location. To the thief's eye it looks like any other piece of equipment. Because of peeling due to metal-on-metal contact, it is wise to regularly check markings. They may need a periodic touch-up.

The majority of acoustic drums have a hollow area in the tension rod casings. Remove one head and unbolt the casing closest to a reference point, for example, the initial/birth date stamp or a mounting bracket. Type or neatly print your surname on a thin strip of paper. Fold the paper and place it into the hollow, and bolt the casing back to the shell. Repeat the procedure on each drum.

No code name is needed in this procedure. The odds of a thief unbolting every casing or even being aware it's possible to do so are extremely small. If he *did* and found a hidden slip of paper, he would toss it regardless of what was written on it.

Invisible markings are those that are imperceptible to the naked eye. A secondary tool is required to disclose their presence. So an invisible mark can be

placed anywhere and on any part of the kit.

Some video rental outfits daub a clear liquid known as coin lacquer on the spools of each tape. That way they can be sure customers are returning the same tape they borrowed. Due to the chemical content of the liquid, all object parts coated with the lacquer will give off a luminous glow when placed under a "black light."

You can do the same on your drumset. Because it is transparent, you can apply the lacquer on any shell or hardware finish with a swab or paint brush. The dried fluid loses its reflective quality in time, so it should be reapplied routinely. Black light tubes come in a variety of sizes and should be available at your local home improvement store. One will last years.

The obvious and subtle marking techniques illustrated above are only a few examples of what can be done to implement the Golden Rule. If you've got a great marking tip you would like to share, why not send it to *MD* care of *DrumLine*? You will receive a \$15 check if your suggestion is published.

## Liability

If your equipment is stolen, there is a possibility that someone may be liable. That is, a second party may be legally obligated to financially reimburse the victim for the loss. This does not mean they are particularly at fault and, as such, should not be blamed for the crime. Pointing fingers after the fact does nothing but create ill will.

### Rehearsal Hall Theft

Contrary to popular belief, musicians who practice in a band member's house

may not be entitled to recoup the funds needed to replace stolen gear through the member's homeowners' insurance policy. It all depends upon the reason the equipment is on the site in the first place.

The insurance adjuster may determine that the band functions to make money and, therefore, is classified as a business. A homeowners' account will compensate for no more than \$2,500 in business property losses. Separate floaters are available for higher limits—at an additional cost. Conversely, if your unit congregates for pleasure rather than financial rewards and you do so on one of the musician's personal property, compensation is in order.

Rental property tenants should not assume the landlord will shoulder the responsibility of theft insurance as part of the rental agreement. Generally, the fine print on the lease includes a waiver of any such responsibility. Read the document carefully.

There is a gray area here worthy of discussion. Performers of original material may work for years before they put any black ink in the ledger. New artists hoping to gain exposure will often play for fees that do not cover expenses. Though no profit comes from the gigs, money does change hands. The receipt of *any* payment makes a performer a professional and the band a business in the eyes of the insurers.

It is possible to insure a specific object. Art and jewelry collectors do it all the time. You can do the same for your instruments. But be forewarned: The policy will be expensive, and it won't be easy to find an agent willing to write it. Worse yet, this type of policy will have a

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\$250 - 500 deductible clause. In plain English that means you will not receive a cent for lost equipment valued at or below the specified deductible figure.

The agent will need two lists and a measurement to initiate your account. First, record every single piece of equipment likely to be used in performance. Be specific, listing brand and model names. Don't forget non-musical items such as thrones, cords, cymbal springs, multi-clamps, sticks, and caddies. Those accessories add up!

Secondly, note equipment that will remain in the rehearsal area at all times. Examples include recording machinery and PA monitors. Finally, tabulate the square footage of the room. Inform the agent of all theft deterrents installed at the site; you may qualify for a slight discount.

It is an enticement to radically upgrade your set by listing more or better equipment than you actually own. Bluntly put, that makes you a thief. If your avarice overrides your guilt, consider this: Suppose your stolen equipment turns up after you have filed a falsified

claim. You will be in big-time legal trouble for attempting to defraud the insurance company.

Don't get greedy. Upon the settlement of a legitimate claim, you will already benefit by having your used stuff replaced with new equipment. Besides being illegal and unscrupulous, insurance deceptions drive the rates up for everyone.

#### Public Theft

You will occasionally book a date in a venue where the house policy requires musicians to return the afternoon following the show in order to transport equipment out of the building. Lounge, society, and cover acts frequently are contracted for extended runs. They may perform for a week, a month, or a season; some are held over indefinitely.

Under any of these circumstances there is a period during which a drummer is away from his set until the next day. In the interim, equipment may disappear due to burglary or sticky-fingered employees. A question arises as to who is liable for such losses.

Musicians who insure their instruments have "worldwide" coverage on items on the first list. That means their policy will pay for the replacement of instruments stolen at home or on the road—provided the instruments are listed on the insurance record. The premium is based upon the specified items; consequently, the insurer is under no legal obligation to award reimbursement for items excluded from the worldwide list. That's why it is important to notify the agency whenever equipment is changed or added.

In general, venue managers feel it is up to the owner of valuable property to keep tabs on it while the Showplace is open to the public. A manager who requested anonymity drew an analogy: "If you've got a cigarette case or coat worth a lot of money, common sense tells you to take precautions against losing it by not leaving it unprotected. The same thing goes for instruments. The establishment cannot be held responsible if a musician fails to safeguard his property.

"On occasion there will be a security stipulation in a contract rider," he continued. "But we are concerned with per-

sonal safety, not the musician's private property."

Those without insured instruments are advised to discuss a loss with a representative of the promoter's office before instituting formal legal action. Present a list of the stolen items, approximating their value. The rep may file a claim for the loss on the establishment's insurance policy or, if the value is below the deductible figure, offer to make a reimbursement with company funds.

A quick settlement as outlined above is far from automatic. In some cases involving theft it is necessary to take the club owner to court. Losses valued under \$5,000 can be settled in small-claims court. It will be the burden of the plaintiff (you) to provide evidence of willful negligence (such as unlocked doors) on the part of the defendant.

To sue or not to sue? That is the question. The answer depends on how important it is to the band to stay on good terms with the promoter. Say, for example, you lose a stick bag at a prestigious nightspot where you are booked one weekend per month, and the owner offers no compensation after the theft is reported to him. A lawsuit over an item of low financial value could ruin what was otherwise a solid business relationship, jeopardizing future bookings.

By the same token, the desire to maintain goodwill sometimes works in the plaintiff's favor. When asked how his employer, one of the East Coast's largest promoters, would handle such a suit, our anonymous source said, "If Mr. X was a big draw and we wanted to keep bringing him here on every tour, we would offer an out-of-court settlement and write it off as a business expense. Not only are we keeping Mr. X happy, we're also avoiding friction with his agent, who handles other acts we book."

### Post-Theft

The ugly reality is, despite thorough precautions, you may become a theft victim. As previously stated, a thief attempts to sell the stolen goods as quickly as possible. A swift "counterattack" on the victim's part often spells the difference between retrieving an instrument and losing it forever.

Although you will be in a frazzled state

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of mind upon discovery of the theft, your first phone call should *not* be to a sympathetic close friend but to the police department. Do your best to deduct the period during which the crime occurred by recalling the last time you saw the missing equipment. Provide the officer with a detailed description of the stolen items. The police will keep a record of your lost instruments and refer to it whenever they arrest a criminal in the possession of stolen goods.

After speaking to the police, your next objective is to spread the word on your loss throughout the community. Find a one-hour photo lab and order numerous prints from your negatives. While the pictures are being developed, break out the phone book and call every music shop and pawnshop in the immediate vicinity. Give them a general description of your equipment and a phone number where you can be reached for more detailed information.

Type or neatly print a list of the missing items, noting brand, color, size, seri-

al numbers, and all obvious markings. Do not mention subtle markings; you may inadvertently tip off the thief to their presence.

Print the word "stolen" in large letters across the top of the list and put your name and phone number along the bottom. (An offer of a reward upon the return of the instruments is optional.) Make a photocopy for the police department, insurance company, and each store contacted. Once the pictures are processed, attach them to the list and distribute the information.

Drummers who live in large cities can hand-deliver the info to stores in the central business district and mail it to those in the outlying areas. First-class mail usually travels cross-town in one day. Ask or add a brief note inquiring whether the store has a bulletin board on which to post the notice.

Another method of reaching those who may come in contact with missing equipment is to place an ad in the classified section of the town's most widely dis-

tributed newspaper(s). The ad should appear in the "Instruments For Sale" section *and* the column where bands seeking new members advertise. Mention the reward if one is being offered.

Newspaper ads will reach fellow musicians who do not frequent the local music stores, and they'll warn drummers in the market for used sets to avoid purchasing your stolen kit. You could even be lucky enough to have your ad read by an acquaintance of the criminal willing to turn him in for the reward. "Honor among thieves" often goes straight out the window when the price is right.

Let's face it: You can follow every precaution suggested in this article, but that will not *guarantee* the security of your equipment. As long as there are valuables, there are going to be thieves. On the other hand, despite the fact that we cannot *eliminate* the crime, we can substantially *reduce* the frequency in which it occurs by implementing the security methods we've described.



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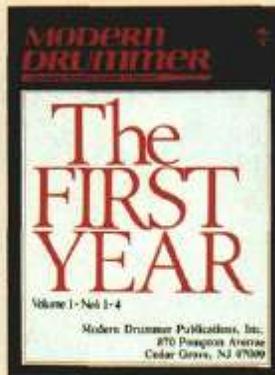
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continued from page 55

ing the past three years."

Stewart plays the same basic kit for all his jazz gigs, though he does make some alterations when he plays with Maceo Parker. "Maceo's gig is more R&B/funk-oriented than his record, even though we do play some material from his record. We end up doing more dance-oriented stuff because some of the people who come out to see him are people who heard him with P-Funk and James Brown. They're screaming and hollering for that stuff, and Maceo gives it to them.

"So with Maceo I use a bigger bass drum, and I tune the drums a little lower. And I don't use the same cymbals; I use a Zildjian 17" crash and a heavy unfinished Istanbul ride. The Istanbul is loud, but not real bright. It's not like a rock 'n' roll cymbal, but it is heavier and louder than most jazz cymbals—which I really need to be heard in Maceo's band. With Sco and most of my jazz gigs, I use two old 22" K Zildjian cymbals from Turkey on my right and a 20" American-made K Zildjian on my left."

Bill plays a Gretsch kit—a 22" bass drum for Maceo gigs, an 18" bass drum for jazz gigs—with an 8x12 mounted tom and a 14" floor tom. His snare for both gigs is a Ludwig 6 1/2 x 14 hammered brass, and his hi-hat also remains the same for both settings: an old K Zildjian on top and a new American-made Zildjian on the bottom.

Though Stewart feels he is still growing as a drummer, he prefers to make his leaps on the bandstand rather than in the practice room. "I work on real basic things when I

practice...things like sound production on the drums, getting the sound that I like, playing time. I'll still play along with records and practice soloing on standards, but one thing I don't do is sit around and practice real technical things out of a book. I've never really been into that. I might play rolls once in a while just to see if I'm getting a good sound. But I try to practice musical things."

One thing Bill *doesn't* need to practice is the art of listening, a quality that many young drummers would do well to emulate. Says Bill, "It takes some experience learning to play with people. And it has to be something that you value for it to come out. A drummer who's only concerned with what he or she is playing, and not with what the other musicians are playing, is probably not going to sound very musical within a group. So you have to familiarize yourself with what the other instruments are doing. When I play with people, I *listen* to the other musicians. Even when I listen to records, I don't just listen to the drummer. I listen to all the musicians. I guess the key is to make the group sound good. That's a drummer's first priority; everything else comes after that."

Stewart's solo debut came last year on a Japanese release. Playing with Bill were bassist Gary Peacock, pianist Marc Cohen, and trumpeter Tim Hagans. He has recently stopped playing with Maceo Parker to concentrate on touring with the John Scofield group, and he can also be heard around New York between tours with Lee Konitz. Those hefty credits are only the beginning of what promises to be a full and vital career for this exciting new talent on the drum scene.



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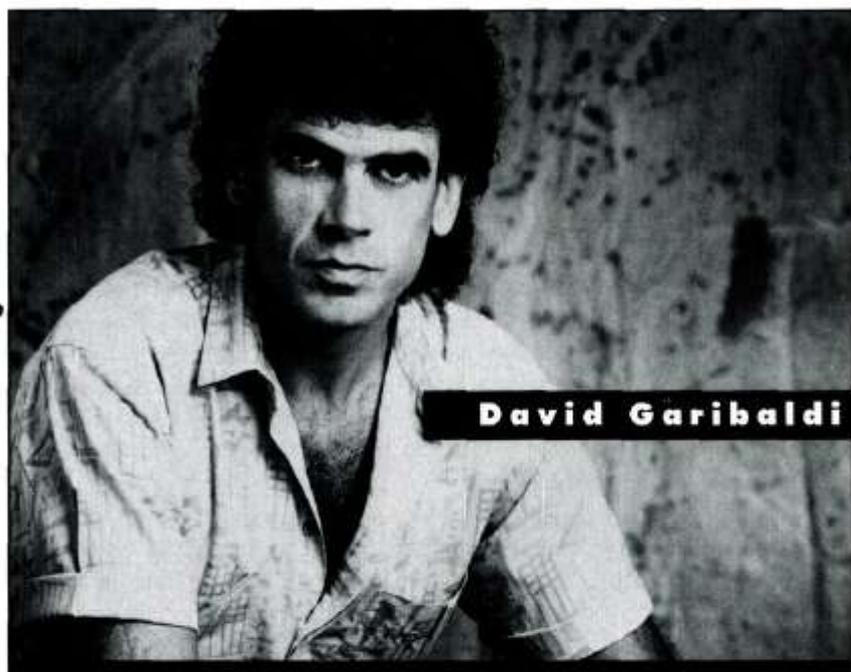
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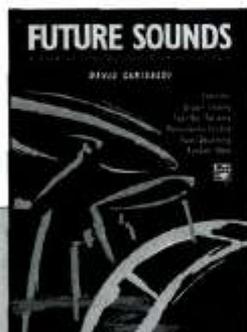
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tized surface that rests on the drumhead and picks up the vibration that comes from each strike. It divides the interval between any two consecutive strikes into a minute, then displays a figure that signifies beats-per-minute on the large, easy-to-read LED display. Simply, at every moment in a tune (assuming that I'm playing backbeats on the snare) I can tell both 1) how many beats per minute I'm playing at—the tempo, and 2) because the read-out is instantaneous for each strike, how evenly I'm keeping at this tempo—the meter. Two birds with one *Bug*.

Now, with my *Beat Bug*, I can tell if it's me or the guitarist who's "right." It doesn't matter how many cups of coffee I've drunk or how much sleep he's gotten: I have objective feedback. I may still decide to move with the guitarist, to speed up a bit or slow down, depending on the organic flow of the band and the tune; but now I can do this with a confidence I never had before. I still feel in control of things, no matter which way I might go; and the band, in turn, feels that confidence. They know, more securely than ever, that I am the timekeeper, even if I'm, in fact, following them.

The *Beat Bug* does have its limitations, however. Because it provides bpm feedback only on intervals between strikes that are regular and repeating (such as backbeats), it can give only indirect data about fills. Also, it cannot provide feedback during tom-tom or bass drum-alone passages. It carries with it, as well, the potential for abuse: You can easily start to fixate on those insistent red numbers, eyes narrowed and unblinking, becoming oblivious to your bandmates and to the feel of the tune itself.

Indeed, my bandmates were worried, at first, that I would fall into this trap. However, when playing with them I have learned to use the *Beat Bug* only for "spot checking"; sometimes I forget about it for many measures at a time, paying more attention to them, the audience, and my general "feel." If it feels like we're beginning to rush or drag, I give it a check. Often, it just turns out to be some kind of subjective sensation; I find (to my repeated surprise) that we're really right on. Other times, I might use the feedback to fine-tune the tempo up or down. It's amazing, I've found, how subtle a modification in stroke action can change those LED numbers—and from those, the performance of the whole band.

All the same, there are times you might choose to ignore the device altogether. While we were working up one tune during practice, my bandmates actually insisted that I not play a certain repeating figure that the *Beat Bug* said I was solid on, in favor of one that I was rather uneven on. They just preferred the feel of the latter, regardless of the "objective" perfection of it. So that's the one I'm playing now, all the while improving my evenness during performance with the help of my ever-present digital friend. I never leave home without it.

### Using A Drum Machine

Beyond basic metronomes of any kind, perhaps the most useful device for the training of timekeeping skills is the drum machine. The key word here is variety. Used as a click track, the drum machine can give you as your signal anything from a rimshot to a conga. As a sequencer it can give you infinite varieties of patterns and tracks, pre-programmed or programmed by yourself. It can give you any number of standard or non-standard rhythms to practice to, all with sounds either from its own bank or triggered from other sound modules via MIDI.

Undeniably more interesting to spend time with than a mere metronome, the drum machine constitutes a formidable learning tool. I would just caution, however, that it's easy to get so complicated with it that, as with recordings, the

Naked Pulse can get overshadowed. Sometimes, because of similarities in drum and drum machine frequencies, you might find that you can't always tell if your stroke is exactly on the beat—flams tend to become blurred. Also, working with drum machine sounds may not prepare you for the starkness and unforgiveability of the standard click track you might encounter in a studio situation. Still, these are just quibbles; practice time with a drum machine can be time well-practiced (pun intended).

### And The Practa Pal, Too

There was one particular situation, however, where no amount of training or feedback seemed to help me: when I had to keep up a steady four-on-the-floor bass drum beat for many measures, without striking anything else. I don't know, but I can't help but suspect that I'm not alone here: I find it hard to remain steady with only the bass drum doing quarter notes alone for a minute or more—a situation that happens to occur several times in my band's repertoire.

So I came up with a simple solution. I cover my wood block with foam and play "silent" 8th notes on it with my right hand, as if I were riding the hi-hat. That's all there is to it. There is just something about the simple act of playing that accessory pattern with another limb that keeps the foot even on the quarters—at least for me. At times when I don't want to clutter up my bass drum rim with the woodblock, I strap on my *Practa Pal*—a rubber practice pad product that uses a Velcro strap to secure it on the thigh—and play my 8ths on that. Works like a charm.

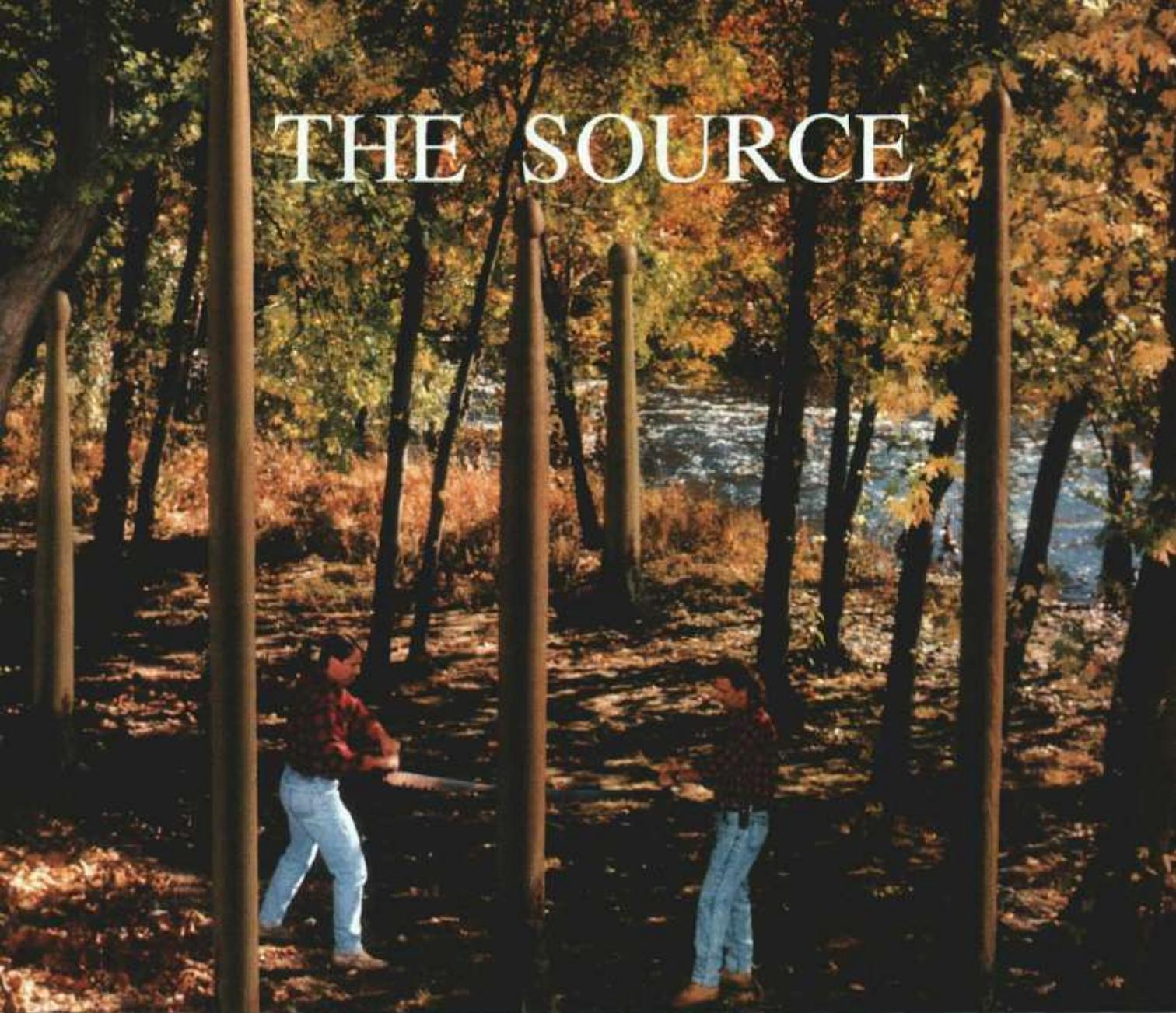
Just another way I have found to adapt to this, the Day of the Click. Sometimes it can be a tyrant, yes, and sometimes it can feel heartless; but the fact remains that The Click cannot be ignored, if you are going to play popular music today. And meanwhile, if you can use its demands to turn you into a better timekeeper—if you can harness it to fuel your groove—then it has really done nothing but make you a better drummer. And what can be the harm in that?



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Pro-Mark's Project X, which seeks to get direct response from drummers regarding the company's products, has yielded positive results, according to Sales Manager Pat Brown. After running an ad soliciting participation from drummers, names were selected via computer to represent a wide range of ages, geographic locations, and musical preferences. When the company needs product evaluation, Project X members are sent samples and asked to send back evaluation forms by a specified date. "Doing so assures that they will continue to receive periodic no-charge samples for testing," says Brown. Members who don't respond are taken off the mailing list and replaced by members from an alternate list. The company states that so far they have had nearly 100% participation.

## Indy Quickies

**Yamaha** drums are being used on stage for each of the city of Chicago's six 1991 Summer Events, including the Chicago Gospel, Blues, Jazz, and Country Music Festivals, as well as the Viva! Chicago and Taste of Chicago shows.

Slobeat Music Products has promoted **Randy White** to the position of National Sales Manager. White has been the general manager of the company for the past two years, and will continue in that capacity, as well as handle the duties that his new position demands.

**Premier** drums will now be offered with **RIMS** mounts as optional equipment with selected kits.

**Mapex Percussion** has been awarded two patents for their design of the tension adjustment mechanism on their *Orion*, *Saturn*, and *Mars* series hi-hat stands.

## Endorser News

**Mason Treat** with country artist John Anderson is endorsing Ludwig drums, Evans heads, RIMS mounts, and Pro-Mark sticks.

Paiste cymbals are now being struck by **Michael Blair**, **Andy Sturmer** of Jellyfish, **Scott Crago** with Stevie Nicks, **John Dittrich** of Restless Heart, **Roger Earl** of Foghat, **Dan Hickey** with Joe Jackson, **Michael Baker** of the Joe Zawinul Syndicate, and **David Palmer** with Rod Stewart.

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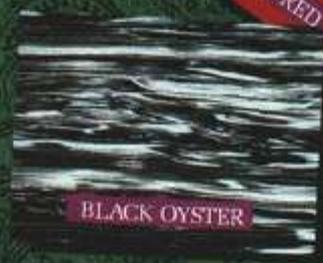
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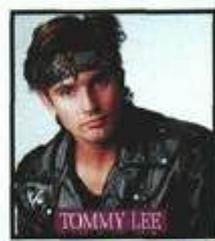
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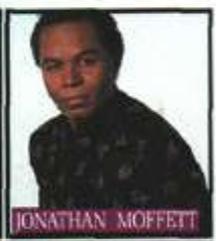
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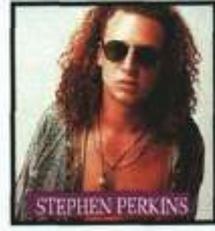
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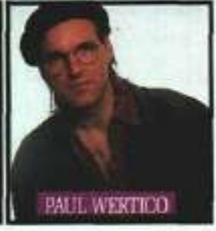
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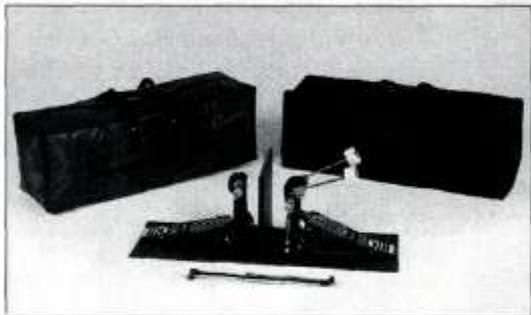
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(805) 499-6863

## New Impact Bags

Impact has released two new bags—a double pedal bag and a deluxe cymbal bag. The double pedal bag is 32" long and features foam padding, a removable hard-shell insert, and soft-grip handles. It can also be used as a hardware bag.

Impact's deluxe cymbal bag is 22" in diameter and features a separate hi-hat compartment on the side, 1/2" foam cushioning, and a large pocket for accessories and sticks. Both types of bags come in *Signature* (rip-stop *Tolex*) and *Impact II* (1000 denier polypropylene) versions. **Impact Industries, Inc., 333 Plumer St., Wausau, WI 54401, (715) 842-1651.**



## Octagon Gloves

Octagon drummer's gloves are made from super-thin, strong, and moisture resistant Cabretta sheepskin and calfskin leather, and are available in three styles. The gloves go through a chemical treatment process that makes them repel moisture up to 40% more than other drummer's gloves on the market, according to the makers. **Octagon Corporation, 6970 Aragon Circle, Suite 2, Buena Park, CA 90620, tel: (714) 522-1471, (800) 828-8877, fax: (714) 522-6490.**

## Overby Flutter Bar

Overby's *OVB-1000 Flutter Bar* is a device designed to allow drummers to quickly and easily perform one-handed rolls and fly-away drumstick tricks. Overby claims that this device (which attaches inconspicuously to any drum rim) will increase showmanship and

technical ability. **Overby Enterprises, P.O. Box 5436, Bryan, TX 77805.**

## Aquarian Kick Pad

Aquarian's *Kick Pad* is an impact pad for bass drums that, according to the company, will save drummers considerable money on bass drum head replacements. The pad measures 3 3/4" in diameter. According to Aquarian, this small size allows the *Kick Pad* not to inhibit the bass drum from speaking. A *Double Kick Pad* measuring 6 1/8" x 3 1/2" is also available. **Aquarian Accessories, 1140 N. Tustin Ave., Anaheim, CA 92807.**

## Simmons Trixer II

Simmons' *Trixer II* offers expanded sounds and programability over the company's original model. In addition, owners of the original *Trixer* can send their units back to Simmons to have them upgraded to the *Trixer II*'s capabilities. (Call Dennis Grzesik at [805] 494-5007 for return authorization.) The price of the upgrade is \$250, which includes up/down, kit select, and footswitch. *Trixer II* enhancements include an increase in the number of factory pre-set kits from four to eight, and an increase of user-programmable kits to ten. **Simmons Drums, 756 Lakefield Road, Unit C, Westlake Village, CA 91361, tel: (805) 494-5007, fax: (805) 494-9415.**

## Cappella Marching Sticks

Cappella's *Patriot Marching Series* sticks are made from white hickory and are available in 1S, 2S, and 3S models, all with wood tips. The company's *Elite 9000* model stick comes in nylon tip, and is also made from white hickory. **Cappella Drumsticks, P.O. Box 247, Applegarth Road, Hightstown, NJ 08520, (609) 448-1153 or (800) 262-BEAT.**

## New From PureCussion

PureCussion's shell-less 12" snare drum has been introduced, and the company states that its lack of sympathetic vibrations makes it an ideal recording "piccolo"-type snare.



The company's *Rimbali* is a combination of 12" and 14" *NE* series drums fitted with Evans Cad/Cam white-coated 750 heads. The pairing simulates timbale sounds, and a set comes complete with an adjustable cymbal holder, a cowbell holder, and a *Tolex* carrying bag. An optional suspended brass shell section may be added to achieve a traditional *piala* sound.

Also new from PureCussion is a traditionally shaped 14"-diameter throne seat that features a grey velour top, and their *Double Drop Clutch*, which can be used as a regular hi-hat clutch or as a drop clutch. **PureCussion, Inc., 3611 Wooddale Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55416, (612) 927-2330.**

## Slingerland Marching Percussion Carriers

Slingerland's *Magnum* marching percussion carriers include models for snare and bass drums, plus one for multi-toms. All are made from aircraft-grade aluminum. Snare carriers mount easily and



offer four-way adjustability, bass carriers feature three-way adjustability, and multi-tom carriers offer five-way adjustability plus a tilt feature to help reduce fatigue. **HSS, Inc., Lakeridge Park, 101 Sycamore Dr., Ashland, VA 23005, (804) 550-2700.**

## Updated Ludwig Educational Pack

Ludwig has introduced their updated Percussion Educational Materials Folder. Featuring articles by Danny Gottlieb, Ed Shaughnessy, Butch Miles, and others, the pack is available in two forms. The first is aimed at band directors and contains articles helpful in assisting younger students. The second contains articles intended for the "serious percussion per-

former." Some of the subjects covered are snare drum care and tuning, timp techniques, an Ed Shaughnessy drum clinic, and the 40 P.A.S. rudiments. Folders are available for \$3.00 from **Ludwig Industries, P.O. Box 310, Elkhart, IN 46515, (219) 522-1675.**

## New From Pearl

Two new Pearl kits have been introduced—the *CZX Studio*, and the *Prestige Session Elite*. *CZX Studio* drums are made of 100% birch, and kits come standard with Pearl's *B-914D* brass-shell *Free Floating* snare drum. Pearl's aim was to create a kit that "projects presence in the upper and lower frequencies unparal-leled in professional birch drums."

The *Prestige Session Elite* drums, which are made from a blend of birch and

mahogany, have been engineered as "a plausible alternative to the total birch or total maple sound," according to Pearl. The makers state that the drums produce "the same pronounced upper- and lower-end frequencies present in the 100% birch *Prestige Studio*."

In other Pearl news is *Pearl News*, the drum company's periodical, which includes articles on Pearl players, reviews of their recordings, new Pearl product overviews, and info on Pearl "imagewear" and posters.

Finally, the Pearl Corporation has entered into a distribution deal with Om Percussion, makers of a wide variety of wind chimes and other percussion products. **Pearl Corporation, 549 Metroplex Dr., Nashville, TN 37211, tel: (615) 833-4477, fax: (615) 833-6242.**



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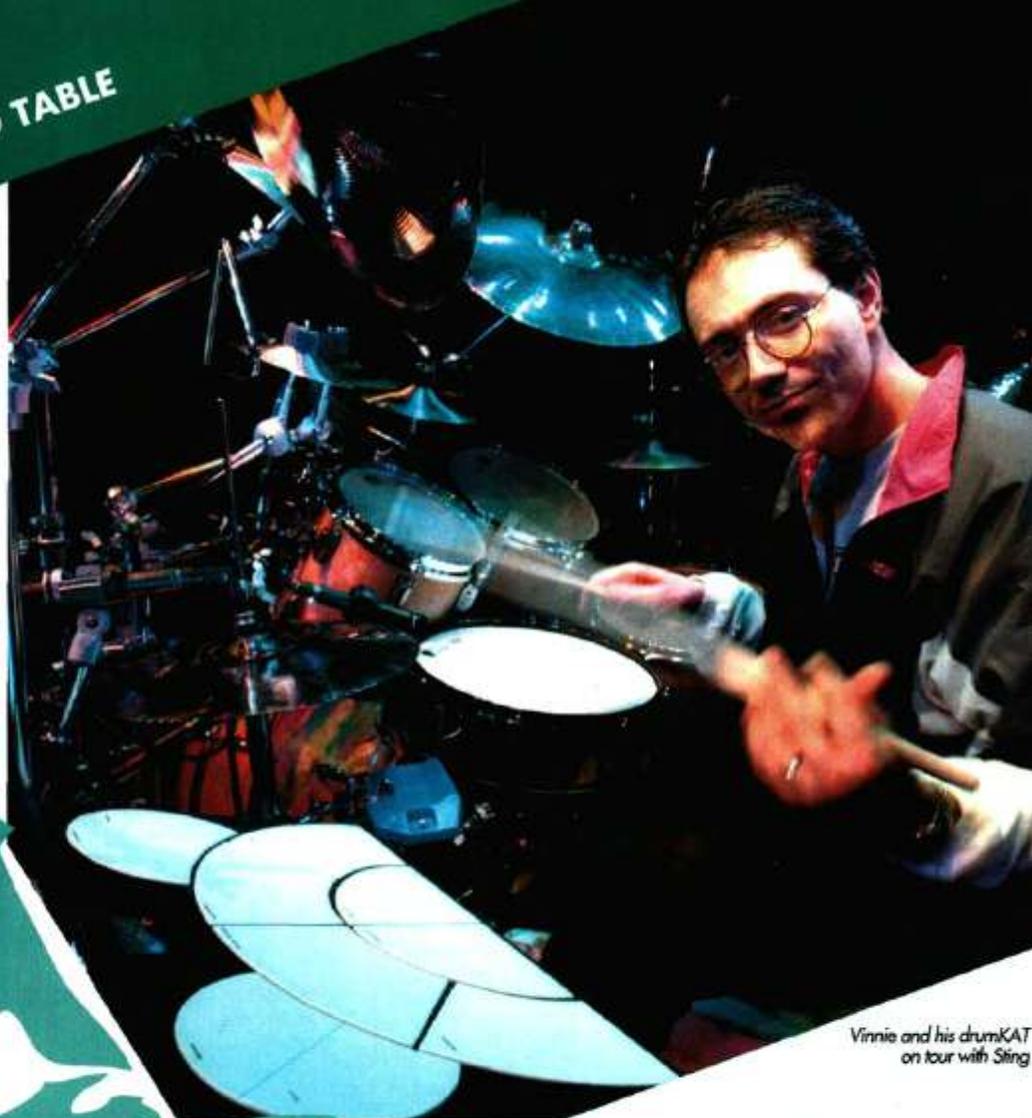
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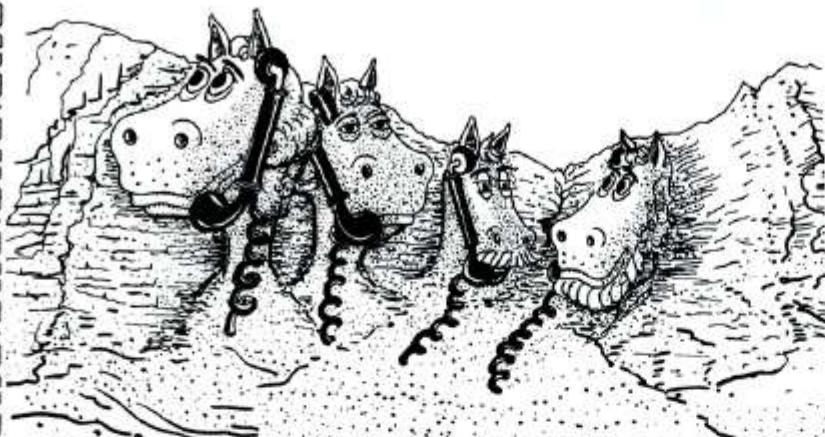
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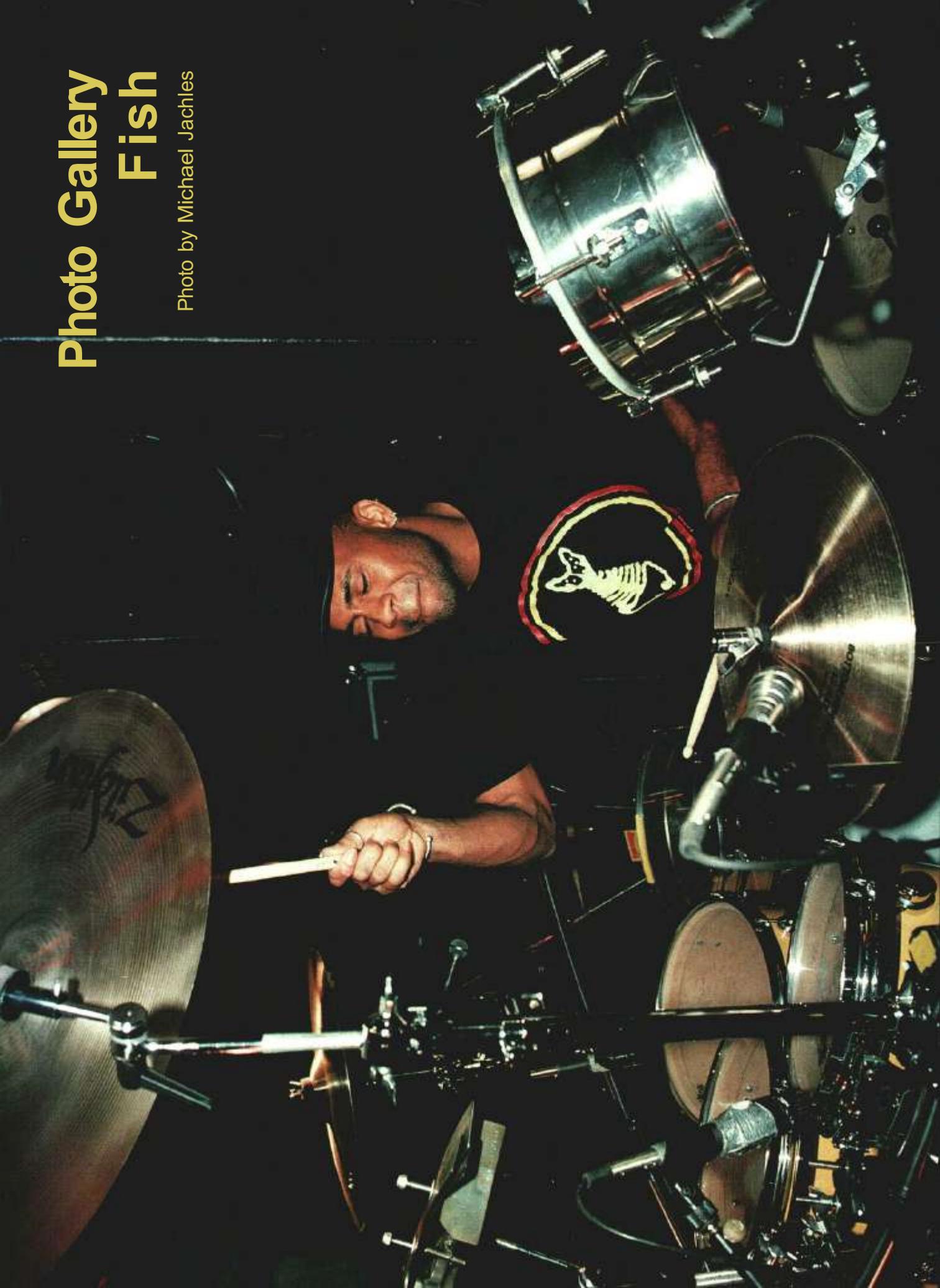
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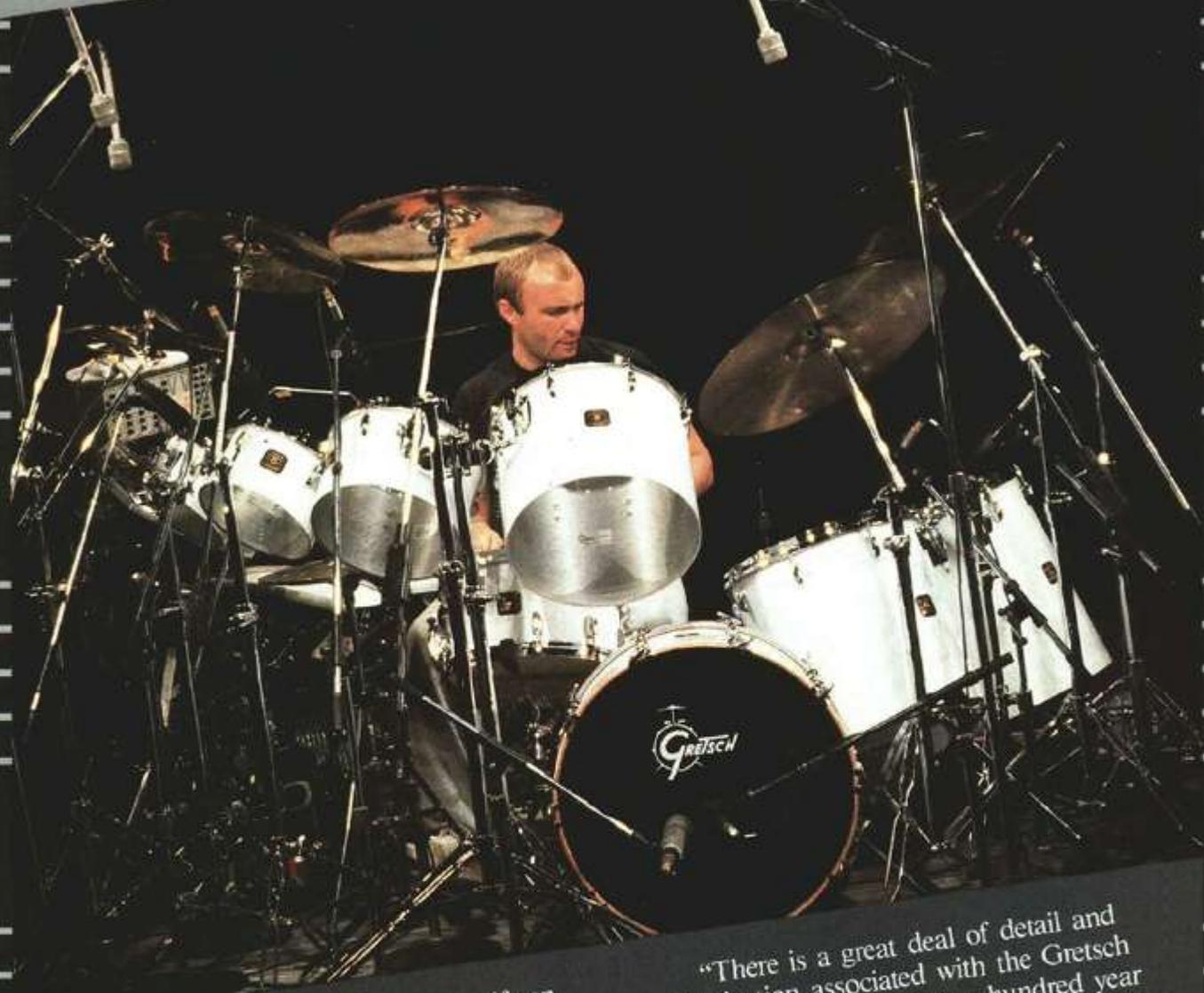
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