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NOVEMBER
INTERNATIONAL
DRUM MONTH

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NOVEMBER '92

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TRILOK GURTU

MEGADETH'S NICK MENZA

THE DRUMMERS OF STEELY DAN

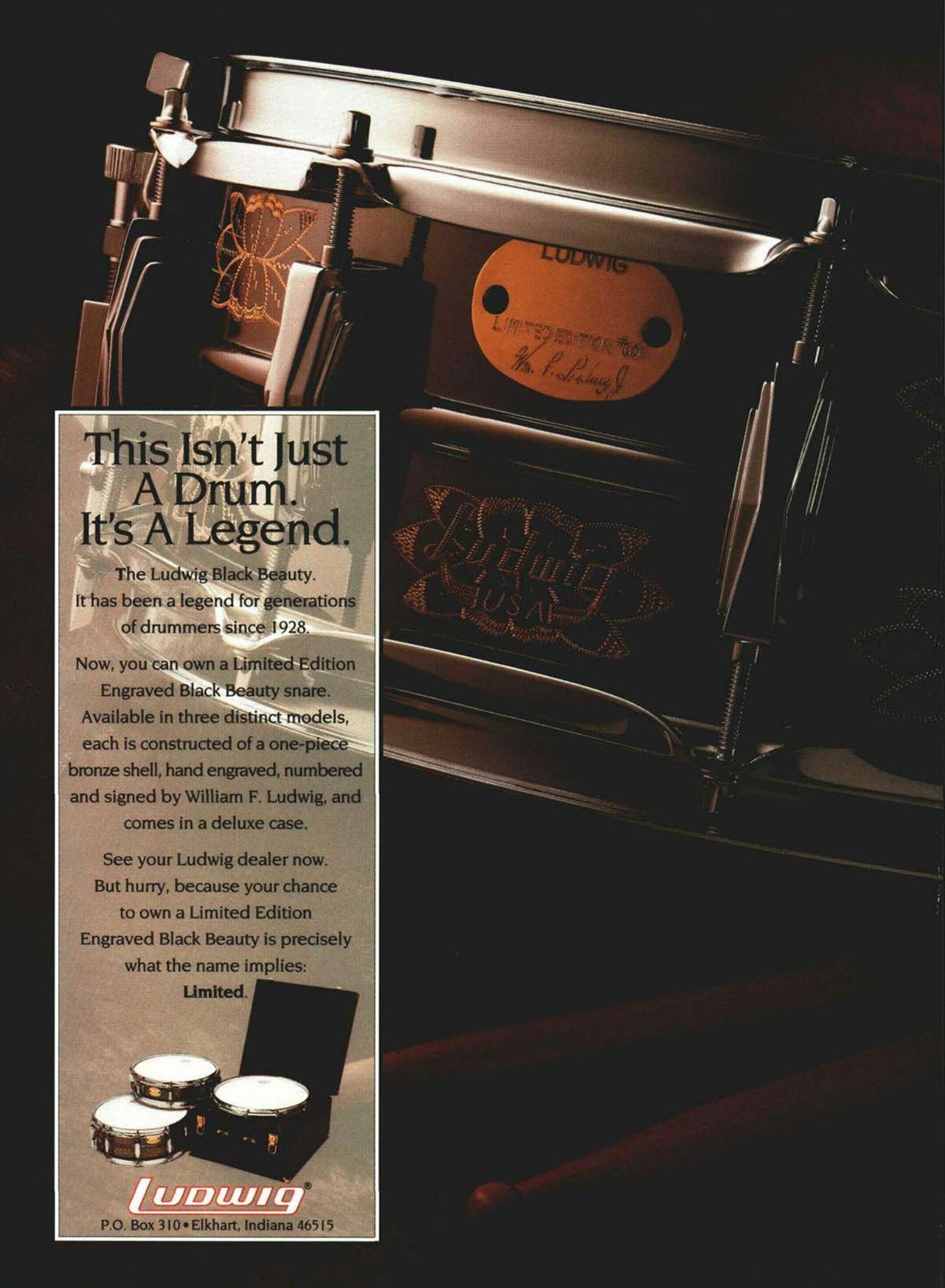
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FEATURES

TRILOK GURTU

By melding Indian rhythms and instruments with those of jazz and funk drumming, Trilok Gurtu has become one of the most unusual and carefully watched drummers today. Recently Gurtu has taken his magic in the studio and on the road with John McLaughlin. Find out what makes this unique talent tick in this insightful interview.

• by *Rick Mattingly*

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NICK MENZA

Megadeth's Nick Menza has proven that perseverance and drive—plus a good dose of ability—can lead to the path of glory. Take an up-close look at Menza in this exclusive interview, and check out Nick's bombastic setup.

• by *Matt Peiken*

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THE DRUMMERS OF STEELY DAN

Steely Dan's music was simply unique—very cool, very popular, and VERY well performed. The drummers who took part in the proceedings—players like Purdie, Porcaro, Gadd, Keltner, Gordon, Marotta—were indisputably at the top of their craft. Learn about the history and significance of the Dan's music and drummers in this special *MD* feature.

• by *Ken Micallef*

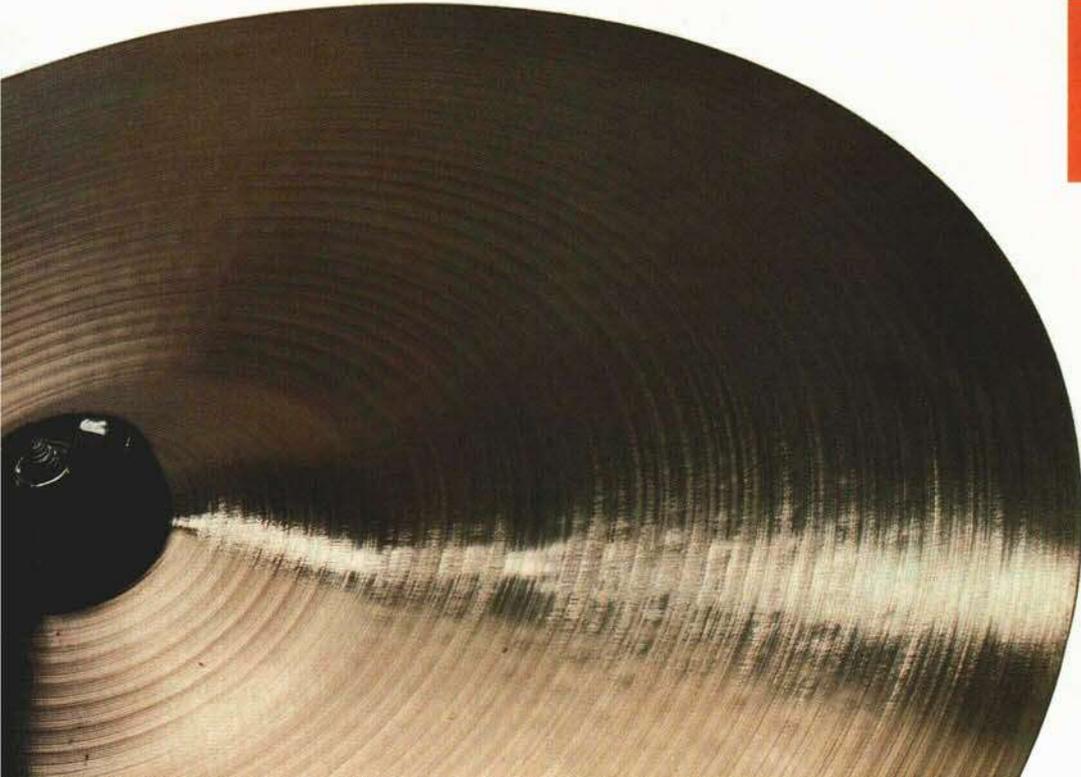
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DRUM WORKSHOP REVISITED

Since the last time we dropped by, DW has made a change or two beyond simply making hardware—like expanding their operation and becoming a respected and important force in the drum industry. Catch up on the inner workings of this unusual company.

• by *Rick Van Horn*

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EDITOR'S OVERVIEW



International Drum Month



I'm happy to report to all drummers that the month of November has officially been designated International Drum Month. Needless to say, this November promises to be a very exciting month for drum manufacturers, distributors, dealers, and consumers. First, allow me to supply a bit of background on IDM.

Roughly two years ago, I contacted Mr. Jerome Hershman, a key figure in both the formation and operation of the Guitar and Accessories Marketing Association, which celebrates International Guitar Month every April. My suggestion was for a similarly structured International Drum Month, which would create a greater interest in drumming and invite new participation among all age levels. Finally, after much thought and preparation, IDM has become official—thanks to the efforts of Mr. Hershman and Lloyd McCausland of Remo, sponsorship from the Percussive Arts Society, and funding from NAMM (the National Association of Music Merchants). At present, Mr. Hershman is Executive Secretary of IDM, and Lloyd McCausland is acting as Chairman.

So what exactly does International Drum Month mean to all of us? Well, first, we're counting heavily on the support of drum industry manufacturers, who, through their dealer networks, may offer any one of a number of possible promotions in November. For example, dealers might offer very special sales on drums, cymbals, and accessories, more clinics by name artists throughout the month of November, special IDM giveaways, and guest appearances and autograph sessions with top-level product endorsers.

You're also likely to see IDM logo buttons, posters, sales tags, T-shirts, special dealer ads, door prizes, and the official International Drum Month logo at participating dealers through all of November. Special events will be publicized in *MD* and other leading trade and consumer music magazines, and through national radio network spots. Robert Rosenblatt Associates of New York has been enlisted to handle the promotional campaign. *MD* will also be contributing publications from the Book Division, items from Modern Drummerware, gift subscriptions, and a special dealer program to promote drum education.

November should be a very special month for drummers—and the start of another exciting annual event for the entire drumming community. So don't forget to mark your calendar and look for participating dealers in your area. We're anticipating that International Drum Month will be quite a success the first time out, and you certainly don't want to miss out on what it may offer you.

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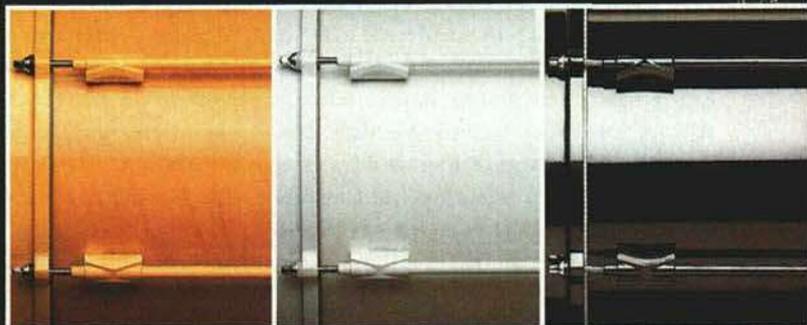
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Mickey Curry

Thank you for the encouraging and most honest story on Mickey Curry in your August issue. He doesn't just tell all the good experiences of his career, but also the bad experiences he's come up against. Hats off to a *real* professional and an honest person.

Mike DiGeronimo
Selden NY

Consumer Poll

Not that you want to get caught up in a grievance campaign, but is there not some way you can implement poll questions dealing with inferior aspects? What company had the longest delays...most manufacturing defects...least impressive ad campaigns...lack of innovative progress? When so much money is involved, manufacturers—as well as consumers—should be aware of what is taking place out in the field. If companies want to learn, they should be willing to listen to the bad news as well as the praise.

Ray Frigon
Brownfield ME

In Defense Of Carmine

I have been a steady reader of *MD* for over ten years now, but this is the first letter that I feel compelled to write. I have just finished reading the July 1992 issue, and I am quite annoyed by Ozzy Osbourne's nasty remark about Carmine Appice ("He left the band for health reasons—he made *me* sick") that appeared in the "Male Vocalists On Drummers" article.

I have never met Mr. Appice personally, but he has nonetheless been a powerful influence on my drumming. The first drum book I ever bought was his *Realistic Rock*, and I later studied with Bobby Rondinelli, who had been a student of Carmine's. I'm sure that much of what Bobby showed me came from the

foundation that Carmine had given him years before. I know that I am not the only drummer who has learned much from Mr. Appice, and what Ozzy thinks of him personally does not lessen my respect for this great drummer. To use the interview as a forum to insult Mr. Appice in print was a new low for Ozzy, and I am sorry that it appeared in your magazine. Let us adhere to the old saying, "If you have nothing nice to say, say nothing at all."

Mike Pasternack
Brooklyn NY

The Rest Of The Story

Your June '92 story on the history of Fibes drums omitted all the real details and reasons for the success of such a "short lifespan and unusual drum company." You neglected to mention that there were two inventors and developers of the Fibes drum line. Attached is my biography as well as copies of a few articles, advertisements, and publicity pages that will accurately detail the series of events leading to the creation and operation of Fibes Drum Corporation.

John J. Morena
Stuart FL

Editor's note: Accompanying Mr. Morena's letter was extensive documentation, including patent records and Fibes promotional literature indicating his involvement as a co-inventor of Fibes drums and co-founder of the company. Mr. Morena is a chemical engineer and a leading authority on composite materials and manufacturing, and he was largely responsible for the development of the Fibes fiberglass and acrylic drumshells.

The bulk of author Bob Owen's research for his June '92 article involved discussions with former Fibes president, Bob Grauso. Mr. Grauso also provided Bob with catalogs, photos, and other information pertaining to the development of Fibes drums. Mr. Morena was not mentioned in any of that material, nor did Mr.

Grauso bring up Mr. Morena's involvement with the company. As a result, Bob Owen was unaware of Mr. Morena's role in the history of Fibes and unknowingly omitted him from the story.

Sonor Force 1000 Review

Rick Mattingly's review of our *Force 1000* kit in your October issue was very positive on the whole, and we certainly appreciate it. However, Rick's comment that there was no drumkey or felt muffling strip for the bass drum with the kit might lead your readers to think that these items had been omitted due to negligence. The fact is, Rick received the first *Force 1000* kit to arrive in the U.S. We showed it at the NAMM show in January, and it made several different stops during the ensuing months. Apparently, the key and felt strips were lost by the time the kit made it to Rick. However, all *Force 1000* kits do ship from the factory with those items.

Bob Saydlowski, Jr.
Sonor/HSS, Inc.
Ashland VA

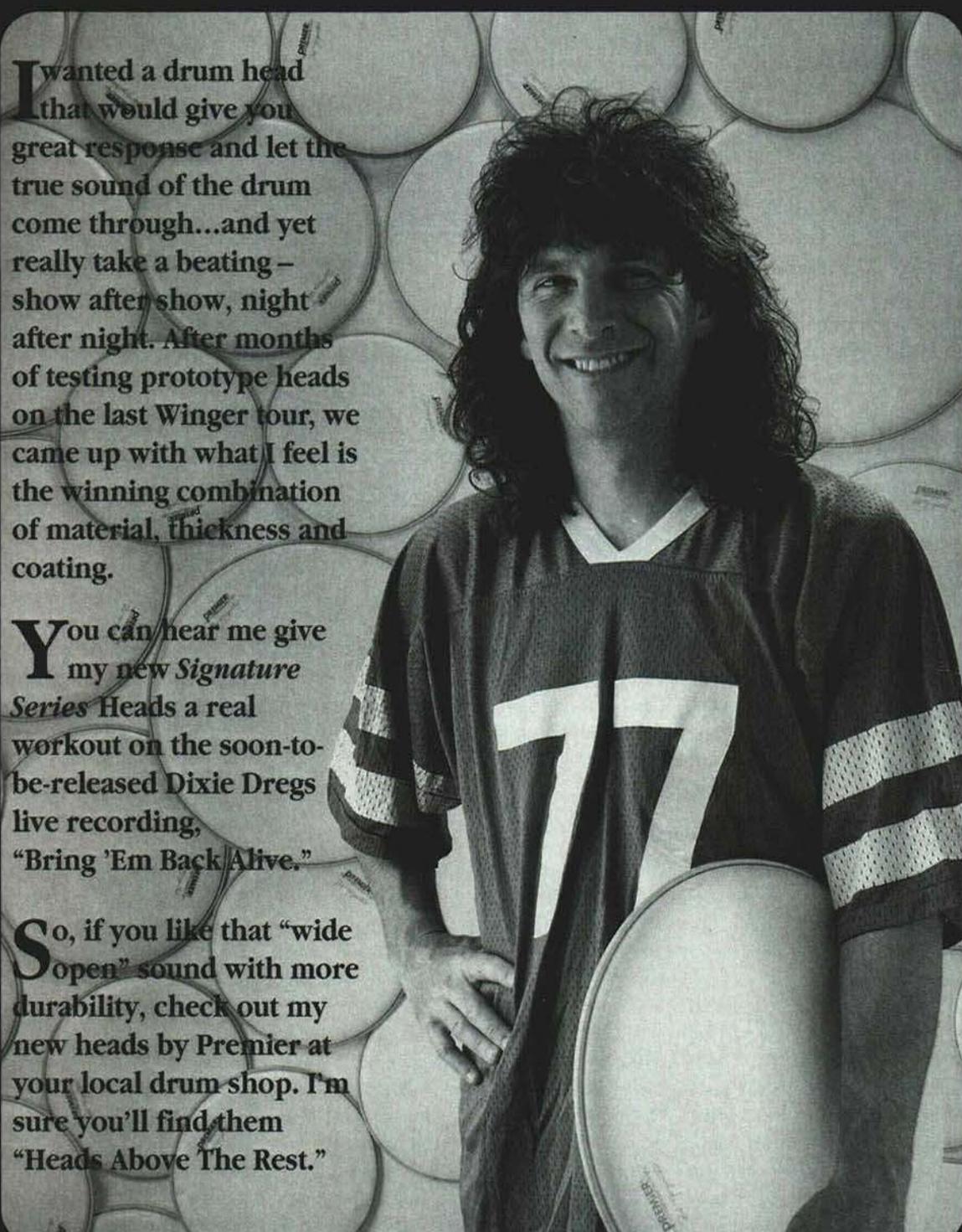
Mechanical Jazz

It appears that the world of recorded jazz is moving in the direction of the pop music scene: replacing live drummers with "the almighty drum machine." I recently purchased Eric Marienthal's *Oasis* CD, looking forward to listening to him and his complement of musicians. But six of the ten tunes on the album are without a live drummer. And this is not the first jazz CD I've come across where a machine has been in the drummer's chair.

I believe that jazz is music to be played by creative musicians, from their souls, out of their life experiences. It is not music to be pieced together bar by bar to satisfy some "fat cat" in the recording industry whose only concern is that the CD will make him lots of cash. I realize

continued on page 100

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I wanted a drum head that would give you great response and let the true sound of the drum come through...and yet really take a beating – show after show, night after night. After months of testing prototype heads on the last Winger tour, we came up with what I feel is the winning combination of material, thickness and coating.

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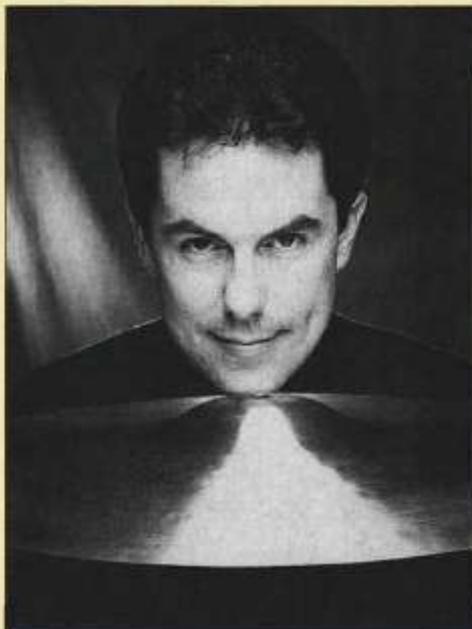
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Gregg Field

For the past year, Gregg Field has enjoyed occupying the drum chair with Frank Sinatra. "I had heard the rumor that I was going to be called for the gig," Gregg recalls. "They'd been having some drummer problems; they'd been through four guys in six months. And they were really good drummers, too. But Sinatra is extremely precise about what he wants, and the time has to be real good. His time is like that of no singer I've ever worked for. He sings with such a strong rhythmic pulse that I can rely on that for where I play the time. It's so much about trust for the orchestra. They have to trust that the drummer is going to go with them if we have to make a little tempo adjustment to make the old man happy."

The "old man" needs a true big band drummer, according to Field: "He needs someone who really knows how to play in a large ensemble and can play it loud when it needs to be loud. That surprised me on this gig. At some points, I am playing as loud as I physically can, which is pretty loud. It's every bit as loud



and on a couple of cuts with Count Basie, as well as on part of an album by Sal Marquez.

as Count Basie's band was—and that was the loudest band I'd ever played with.

"But the approach depends on the music we're doing," Field explains. "If we're playing a Basie type of tune, it means a strong rhythmic pulse needs to be constantly played. While I'm playing that, I need to be playing fills and figures over that rhythmic pulse. Then there are a few things we do that are like legit orchestral pieces, where I'm playing snare drum parts. So I have to make subtle adjustments in the way I play to make each of the arrangements work."

Besides being on tour with Sinatra on the average of two weeks per month, Field can be heard on the recently released *Sinatra Warner/Reprise Collection: Volume III* (video and CD),

• *Robyn Flans*

Ron Wikso

"Hectic" has been the key word in Ron Wikso's life these days: Lately he's been juggling the gig he's had with Cher since 1989 with his new full-member position in the Storm.

When the Storm first approached him after recommendations from its departing drummer, Steve Smith, Ron left Cher. Once on tour last spring with the Storm, however, Ron got a call from Cher's management asking if he could work some of her dates into his schedule. It turned out that he was available on the dates they needed him, so he was happy to work in both situations.

"With Cher you have to be pretty well-versed stylistically," Wikso explains. "Her idea of the gig is that it's a rock band, but at the same time, her history is more pop

and even show-type things. So you have to be able to cover a little bit of ground, play dynamically, and play for a singer. Then there are also dancers, so you have to be able to catch certain hits that go with the choreography.

"The Storm is another challenge," Wikso continues. "There are two guys from Journey—Gregg Rollie and Ross Valory—so a lot of the people who became Storm fans in the beginning were aware of that music. We play 'Black Magic Woman,' which Gregg sang with Santana, and that goes into 'Gypsy Queen,' so that part of the show is samba-esque in a way. On 'Black Magic Woman,' I have to pretend that I am three percussionists—because we don't have *any* and I adapt it to the

drumset, which is a lot of fun. Then we do 'Just The Same Way' and 'Anytime,' which is a little different because live we take an older approach than the band took on the new record, which incorporated a lot of technology. On the new record there is stuff that's sequenced, so I have to play with a click, which is another challenge.

"In the beginning," Ron confesses, "the biggest thing for me was filling Steve Smith's shoes. He's one of my favorite drummers in the whole world, as well as a friend of mine, so I felt a little bit of pressure on that end of it. When I watch him play, I think, 'Geez, maybe I should go be an accountant.' But the guys made it a really smooth transition for me."

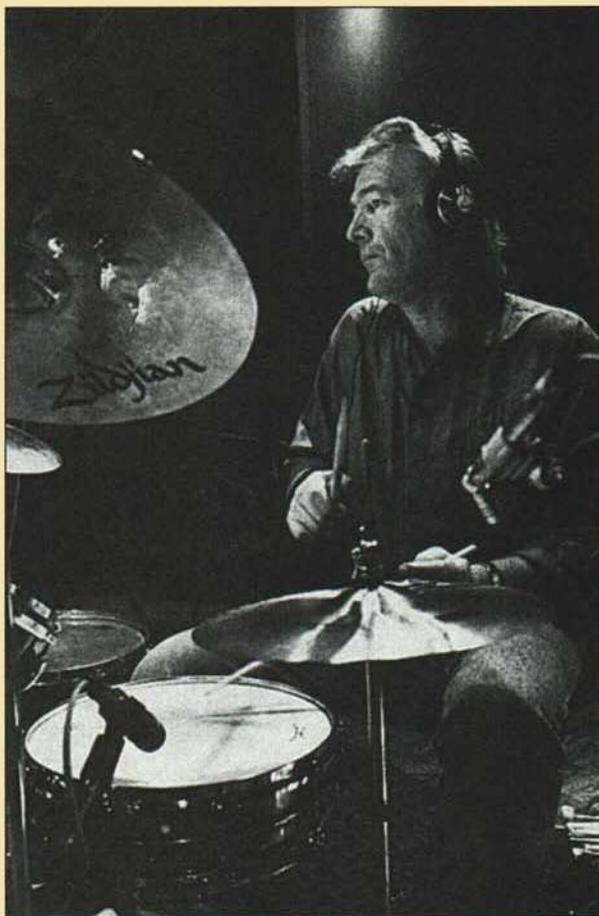
• *Robyn Flans*

Denny Seiwell

Recording the music for TV's popular *Homefront* has been a great source of pleasure for drummer Denny Seiwell. Seiwell, who began in the jazz clubs of New York, took a detour when he worked with Paul McCartney's Wings in the '70s. Today Denny says that playing the show is like going back to his roots. "*Homefront* is amazing," says Seiwell. "Piano player/composer Stewart Levin writes the music for the show, and I get to be Gene Krupa for the day. After all the rock 'n' roll I play, it is really a breath of fresh air.

"I got to the first session and it was all the older guys," Denny recalls. "It was all 1940s music that was charted out really well. Every time I go to work, it's all of the music I heard when I was a little kid and watched my father play drums to when I was three years old. He died when I was with McCartney, but I feel like he's up there, just digging me down here, doing what *he* really wanted to do. It's so special; I've never had so much fun.

"I really do have to remember what I heard growing up," Seiwell explains, "because everything has to sound like it comes from the '40s. I use my old Gretsch drums; I have a little 18" bass drum with double heads, and 12" and 14" toms. They're tuned open to ring, but not like for the pop sound. They have more of a bombastic sound to them. Even though



great walks in the door, we usually ask them to get up and play with us."

• **Robyn Flans**

they're small, they're pretty loud. I also have a 1920s Ludwig brass snare drum, and of course the choice of cymbals and cowbells makes a difference, too."

Seiwell says that he doesn't play as much brushes on the show as he would have thought. "Because it's a big band," he explains, "even on the ballads I'll sometimes play with sticks to carry the groove. But I play light, which I always love doing. In a studio situation with a big band, you don't have to sit there and really bash."

In addition to studio work, Denny says his pleasure is playing live once a week at a club called Residuals in the San Fernando Valley. "It's just been great to have one night a week where I don't have that microphone hanging in front of me. And the place is jammed. Bernard Purdie sits in when he's in town, Ginger Baker came in one night, Steve Lukather has been in, and so has Neal Schon. When somebody

News...

Tris Imboden can be heard on the new Hiroshima record. He is currently in the studio with Chicago.

Eddie Bayers on records by John Fogerty, Bob Seger (shared with **Kenny Aronoff**), Tracy Lawrence, and John Anderson, on a Vince Gill and Patty Loveless duet album, and in the film *Honeymoon Las Vegas*.

Toss Panos on Dweezil Zappa's new double record (along with **Terry Bozzio**, **Tal Bergman**, and **Mark Craney**). He can also be heard on John Goodsall's latest LP and

on live dates with the guitarist. In addition, he's been doing some subbing for **Chad Wackerman** on the *Dennis Miller Show*, doing live dates with Marc Bonilla, and continuing his teaching at PIT.

John Macaluso on TNT's debut Atlantic recording, *Realized Fantasies*.

Russ Kunkel on a new Arlo Guthrie project for an animated film featuring several Woody Guthrie songs.

Fred Coury can be heard on Taboo's debut Epic album, to be released shortly.

Matt Chamberlain has

been doing some live dates with the Lost.

Charlie Morgan on the road with Elton John.

Sue Hadjopoulos on tour with the B-52s.

Brian McAllister now working with Joy Bang.

Dave Weckl's recent release is entitled *Heads Up* (not *On The Level*, as previously reported).

Frank Briggs touring and recording with Atlantic Starr.

Michael Blair finishing up a world tour in Japan with Lou Reed. Michael was also in Berlin (with Reed) working on

filmmaker Wim Wenders' new project. In addition, Blair's arranging skills will be featured on the Charles Mingus tribute album, *Weird Nightmare* (on cuts with Chuck D., Dr. John, and Robbie Robertson) and on the new release by avant-garde guitarist Gary Lucas.

Denny Fongheiser on records by Roger Waters, the Divinyls, Willie DeVille, Robin Zander, and George Lynch. Also, congratulations to Denny and his wife Angela on the birth of their son Hayden.

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THIS AD

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Mike Bordin

Q Your music has been an inspiration to me since I first heard you play on *Introduce Yourself*. In your interview in the April '92 *MD*, you mentioned some exercises: "a great pressure exercise for the feet; things you can do without even having a pair of drumsticks." I would greatly appreciate it if you could share some of these exercises with the readers of *MD*.

Tim Obregon
Brooklyn NY

A Thanks so much for the kind words, Tim. Inspiration flows both ways, and I do appreciate it.

I have two exercises for you—one for the hands and one for the feet. Here goes: For your hands, get one of those spring-type hand exercisers—the type shaped like an "A," with two grip handles and a spring coil at the top. They're available in any sporting goods or fitness shop. To strengthen the fulcrum (pivot point) of your grip, squeeze the contraption between your thumb and index, middle, ring, and little finger each individually. Working each finger individually with the thumb helped me strengthen all of my fingers (especially on my right hand, since I'm left-handed) and improve my stick control. (I should point out that I use matched grip.) Do this as much as you can stand, and experiment with different hand-grip resistances.

Now for the feet. Whether on the bus, at a desk, or anywhere else, you can do this: Keep your heel down on the floor. Lift the front of your foot up slightly, then

press it back down, imitating the action of a bass drum pedal. Start at a moderate, steady tempo; I use 8th notes. Begin as lightly as you can, then increase the force with which you press down until the last one is as hard as you can do. (If you need more space to increase the pressure evenly, two-measure groups would work, too.) If you really push yourself with this bit, your calf will burn, your thigh will bulge, and you will increase your foot's (or feet's) power, control, and quickness.



Steve Smith

Q I'm curious about your current kit—how it differs from the kits you played with Journey, what sizes, heads, etc. Also, what signal-processing equipment do you use (or have you used)? What does the future hold for you—a new Vital Information CD, or how about a possible Journey reunion? Now a stupid question: Do you have any of your older kits you would be willing to donate to a worthy cause—me? How about selling them? I really liked the red kit you played during the *Escape* tour. Anyway, thanks for your reply, and for being the killer drummer you are!

Stacey Hood
Birmingham AL

A With Journey, I used a Sonor *Phonic* kit (in traditional, not power depths) that included two 24" bass drums, 10", 12", and 13" rack toms, and 16" and 18" floor toms. I now use Sonor *Hilites*: a 22" bass drum, 8", 10", and 12" rack toms, a 13" tom mounted to my left, and 14" and 15" mounted "floor toms"

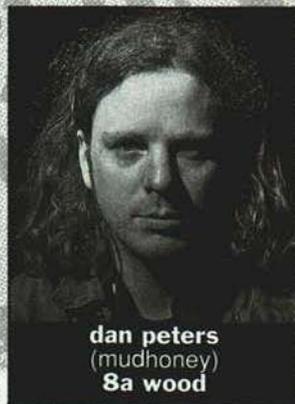
to my right. With Journey, I used clear *Ambassadors* top and bottom on the toms, and a black dot head on the snare. I still think the clear heads are great for rock recording, but for live and more jazz or jazz/rock recording I use coated white *Ambassadors* on top of all my toms and the snare. On the bass drum, I still like the sound of a clear or *Ebony Ambassador*. As for signal processing, I don't use anything special—just reverb. With Journey that was usually an EMT Plate; now I use more modern digital reverbs.

I'm currently working on a new Vital Info CD for a September release. As far as a Journey reunion: If it happens at all, it will be in the distant future. In regards to my old drumkits, when I no longer need a kit from Sonor, I return it to them. The only time I sold one of my kits was the one you referred to—the red one—because I had invested so much money in having it painted and repainted. When it was sold it had been refinished in an orange/red sunburst color. Unfortunately, the shop that sold the kit went bankrupt and I never saw the money. Oh, well.... Thanks for your interest and words of appreciation.

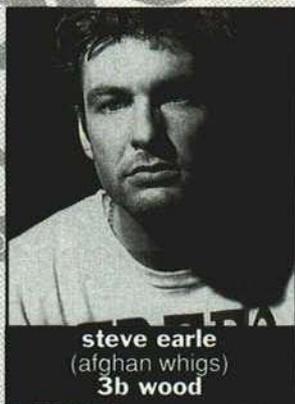


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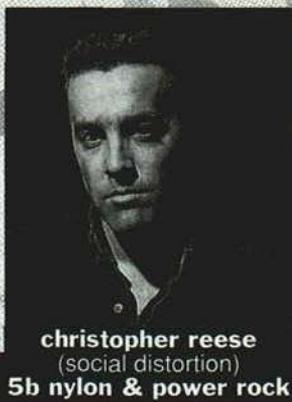
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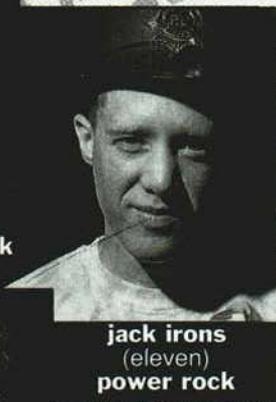
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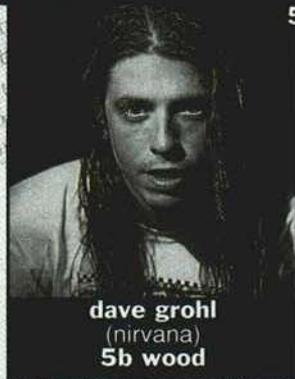
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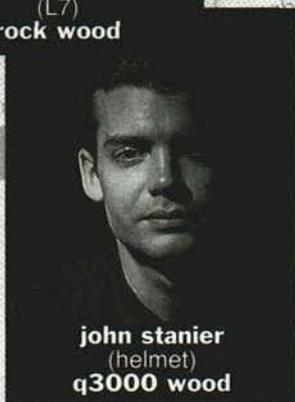
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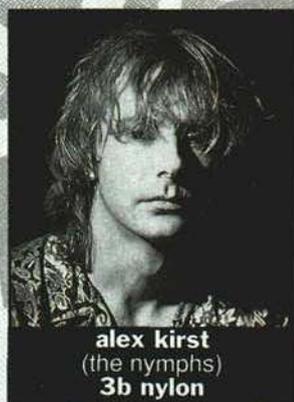
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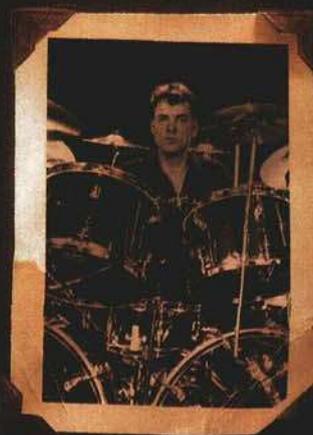
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Preparing For Studio Sessions

Q I'm going into the studio to make an album. I've been in the studio several times before, but I get nervous every time. I'm also concerned about my energy level, since I'm in a metal band and play hard and fast. Can you give me some advice on how to relax but keep my energy level up?

Scott Munger
Olympia WA

A There are several ways to accomplish your studio sessions successfully. Some are physical, some are psychological, and some combine the two. First the physical: In order to play fast, energetic music you obviously have to be in good physical condition generally. And you have to be well-rested and fueled prior to the session itself. Good food, adequate sleep, and the absence of junk in your system will go a long way toward giving you the stamina you need for a lengthy recording session.

Of course, having an appetite and being able to sleep the night before the session may be affected by anxiety. The way to avoid this is preparation and confidence. Be sure that the group is well-rehearsed and prepared to go into the studio, and be equally confident that you, in particular, are ready. If this means a little extra woodshedding in the weeks prior to the session, so be it. It's a lot easier to work out problems in advance than to worry about them all on the night before the session.

Once in the studio, the best way to relax is to concentrate on your breathing. Your body needs oxygen in order to operate properly. Tension and anxiety can reduce your breathing and thus reduce your oxygen supply. Before you start playing, do some gentle stretching exercises, and work consciously on boosting your breathing a little bit. (Don't overdo it and hyperventilate!) Then, even while you are playing, be sure to keep breathing evenly. Very often, strenuous passages of playing make us want to "hold our breath" for a few seconds. Try to avoid this, because it

almost instantly reduces your oxygen intake and has an adverse effect on your stamina.

Outside influences (such as pressure from your bandmates or criticism from the engineer or producer) can add to your stress. Prior preparation can prevent a lot of this, but it's still likely to happen to some degree no matter what. Don't be too sensitive to such comments; take them in the spirit of constructive criticism. And if there is something going on that you don't understand or don't like, say so. It's much better to keep everything clear and open in a session than to hold something back and discover that doing so created a flaw or problem on the track that may or may not be correctable later.

Cutting an album is exciting, so by all means let yourself be excited. Just don't let that excitement affect your control or your physical well-being due to stress. Go in prepared, rested, and ready to rock 'n' roll!

Album Sources

Q In your May '92 issue, you reviewed a CD by a band called Five After Four. I cannot find this CD anywhere. Also, some time ago you reviewed a CD called *A Social Grace* by Psychotic Waltz. I've even tried to special-order it and no one can get it. I would appreciate any info you could give me.

Robert Carver
Maineville OH

A The Five After Four album is available from Jazz Inspiration Records, at 1200 Sheppard Ave. East, Suite 408, Willowdale, Ontario, Canada, M2K 2SK. The Psychotic Waltz album is on Subsonic Music, which may be the band's own label. As a matter of fact, there wasn't even an address on the tape they sent us. We've had a lot of other letters asking about it, so we're making an open request to anyone who has any knowledge about the album to share it with us so we can pass it along.

Lacquer Finishes On Drums

Q Six years ago I refinished the shells of my kit. I used a transparent red lacquer to let the wood grain show through, then used three coats of Guardsman sealer and two coats of Guardsman high-gloss lacquer. The lacquer is now beginning to show signs of fine-line cracks throughout the finish. I was told it was because lacquer becomes more brittle as it ages, and the vibrations from the shells caused the finish to crack.

I'd like to strip the shells and refinish them again, but I'd like the finish to be more durable this time. What type of materials and processes does the drum industry use to apply super-high-gloss finishes to their lacquered drumsets? Also, are the shells buffed and waxed as a final step for added gloss and durability? If so, what type of wax is used?

Todd Gibson
Lima OH

A We checked with drum refinishing specialist Bill Detamore, of Pork Pie Percussion, who gave us the following information: "The term 'lacquered finish' is kind of like the words 'kleenex' and 'band-aid'; it's become a generic term for any painted or stained finish. Nobody that I know of except for Ludwig and Gretsch actually uses real lacquer anymore—and I'm not even sure that they do. This is due to the very cracking problems you are experiencing. What the industry uses now is either polyester, polyurethane, or acrylic urethane. And I must discourage you in the strongest possible terms from trying to do anything with these materials yourself, because they are incredibly toxic and dangerous. I have to use a special suit and breathing equipment when I paint, and I have to follow very strict regulations about controlling the area in which they are dispersed and disposing of any residue or left-over material.

"The best way of achieving the type of finish that you seek is to find a professional like myself who paints drums. Or you

continued on page 102

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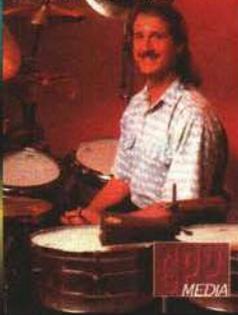
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Will Kennedy On...

■ by Ken Micallef

Explosive energy, raw yet streamlined facility, and a time feel that cuts into the music like a speedboat across blue water all define Will Kennedy's five-year role as rhythmic impetus for jazz/funk/Brazilian/world-beat-oriented group the Yellowjackets. His recordings with the Jackets are *Four Corners*, *Politics*, *The Spin*, *Greenhouse*, and *Live Wires*. Will is also in demand for studio work and clinics.

Knowledgeable and articulate when commenting on the following selections, Kennedy displayed as much concern about drum *sounds* as about technique—expressing an attentiveness to detail that has contributed to his success.

...Tony Williams

Tony Williams' Lifetime: "Allah Be Praised" (from *Turn It Over*)
Williams: drums; John McLaughlin: guitar; Larry Young: organ
WK: Tony Williams, definitely. He's been my idol for a long time. You could tell it was an older record and a younger Tony. There are some things he's developed over the past five or six years, like those tom patterns that are almost African, tribal things. Those have come a long way since this record.

These guys were definitely experimental and free-spirited. Tony plays the single-stroke roll so expressively. He can put it anywhere within the time. The way it swells, it's very effective emotionally in the music. His bass drum was wide open, with a harder "black dot" sound. His toms were tight and pitched high on both sides—that's Tony.

...Omar Hakim

John Scofield: "Picks And Pans" (from *Still Worm*)
Hakim: drums; Scofield: guitar; Don Grolnick: keyboards; Daryl Jones: bass
WK: That's a great tune. Omar has a voice on the drums that's hard not to recognize. There's a certain point in your playing where you create the ability to make a song groove, no matter how complicated the pattern. Omar is really good at that. This tune has accents everywhere—jagged accents against the time—but still it grooves. That's the *art* of playing the drums. It's fun to find that thing that makes a song lay nicely.



...Mike Clark

The Headhunters: "Daffy's Dance" (from *Survival Of The Fittest*)

Clark: drums; Paul Jackson: bass; Bennie Maupin: bass clarinet, tenor sax, piano; Bill Summers: percussion; Blackbird McKnight: electric piano.

WK: I like that. Mike Clark, I believe. He's playing an interesting melting pot of styles; you can hear James Brown and Elvin Jones. The triplet paradiddles between the hi-hat and snare drum are a Garibaldi-ish thing. You can really hear the time fluctuations in the music here. That's beginning to become acceptable again, in this heavily click/sequencer-oriented period. Some producers are strict, some go for the energy.

...Steve Gadd

Chuck Mangione: "St. Thomas" (from *Alive!*)

Gadd: drums; Mangione: flugelhorn; Gary Niewood: sax; Tony Levin: bass

WK: I don't have a clue who that is. These are all seasoned cats who know their instruments. You can tell by how consistent the tempo is and how accurately the notes are going by. The energy is correct and experienced-sounding. You can be a seasoned player with a lot of chops but not know how to use them, and it will work against the music. These guys make a statement with their chops. Now, who the hell is it?

KM: Steve Gadd.

WK: It is? Wow, amazing. Now that you say it's Gadd, I can recognize the ratamacue figures around the set.

...Ronald Shannon Jackson

Power Tools: "Wolf In Sheep's Clothing" (from *Strange Meeting*)

Jackson: drums; Melvin Gibbs: bass; Bill Frisell: guitar

WK: Drumwise, it reminds me of Bruford or DeJohnette—experimental and out. What helps me identify a drummer is the character of sound. I hear higher-pitched toms and some "tingy" ride cymbals, which leads it to a jazzier background, less of a rock 'n' roll thing. I thought the drum sound was great. It's the kind of tuning I like—higher toms and a snare drum that cracks. And it sounds like he's using Paiste cymbals.

KM: It's Ronald Shannon Jackson.

WK: Oh, really? He *is* a Paiste player. I'm glad the music world is open enough that this kind of thing can be recorded. It's great that this kind of freedom of expression is accepted.

...Lenny White

Lenny White & The Astral Pirates: "Assault" (from *Lenny White & The Astral Pirates*)

White: drums; Alex Blake: bass; Nick Moroch: guitars; Jeff Sigman: rhythm guitar; Don Blackmon: keyboards

continued on page 103

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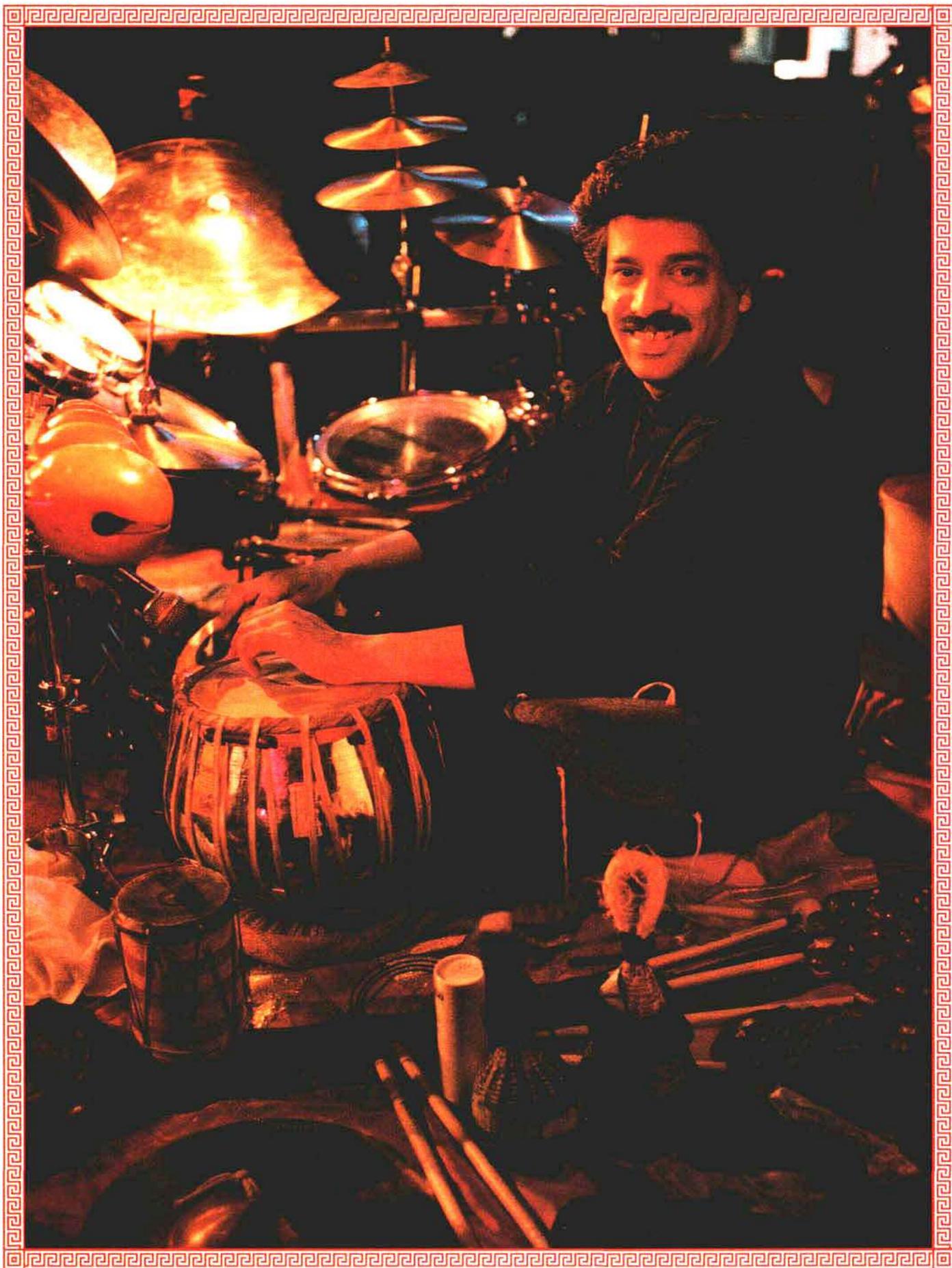
The Language Of Rhythm

By Rick Mattingly
Photos by Ebet Roberts

Sitting in the dressing room at Chicago's Park West club, the members of the John McLaughlin Trio are idling away the time between soundcheck—which ran late—and their first set, which is scheduled to start in about 45 minutes. While drummer/percussionist Trilok Gurtu sits crosslegged on the floor tuning a tabla drum by tapping its wooden pegs with a hammer, McLaughlin sits in a chair trying to decide whether he should put new strings on his guitar before the concert. He plays a fast run and decides the strings are too dead; he plays some more and decides the

strings will be okay.

Content with his decision, he leans back and starts strumming a jazz-flavored chord progression. Gurtu stops tuning and joins in, and what they are playing fits so well together that one is hardly aware of the incongruity of someone using a single tabla to play bebop. But the different sounds Gurtu evokes from his drum are not unlike the different colors of a drumset, with low thuds representing the bass drum, high-pitched pops serving as snare, and softer strokes providing the continuity of a ride cymbal.



They stop almost as suddenly as they began, McLaughlin adjusting the tuning on a couple of strings while Gurtu switches to Indian-based rhythm patterns that are more in keeping with the instrument that sits before him. A steady

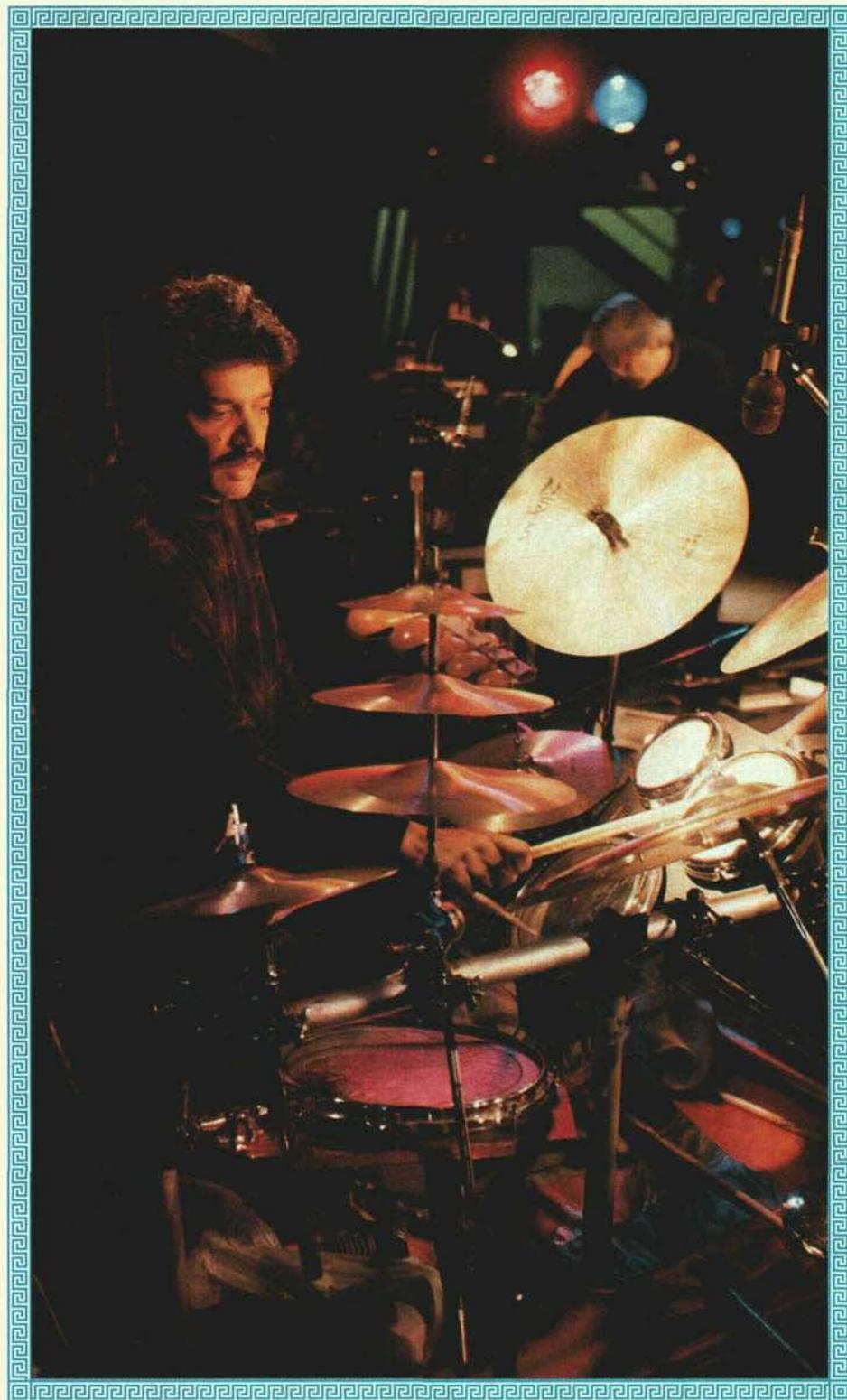
ful sounds from the small instrument. As his nimble fingers dance over the drumhead, one can't help but speculate that if you put a typewriter in front of the man, he could probably do 200 words a minute.

McLaughlin, meanwhile, has been pulling off fast runs of his own, and he suddenly turns to Gurtu. "Trilok," he says, "you know that place..." and finishes his sentence with a flurry of notes on the guitar. "What if you played..." and proceeds to sing a rhythm, using syllables like "ta di ki ma" while making a series of gestures with his hands and fingers. Gurtu nods. McLaughlin repeats his guitar phrase while Gurtu plays a pattern on the tabla that sounds remarkably like what McLaughlin just sang.

McLaughlin stops short, shaking his head, and sings again, emphasizing a couple of syllables as if those hadn't been understood. Gurtu sings the pattern back as McLaughlin nods approval, and then they both sing the pattern together. Their syllables almost sound like gibberish, but as they are singing exactly the same thing, it's obvious that each vocal sound has a specific meaning, and the hand gestures they are making in unison reinforce the contention that this is a rhythmic code or language. McLaughlin plays the line on his guitar again, singing the rhythmic pattern as Gurtu plays it on the tabla.

They stop again and Gurtu sings more syllables back at McLaughlin, emphasizing a couple of them that seem to be a slight variation. McLaughlin sings them back, nods, and the two start up again. At first they sing the syllables along with the playing, but eventually just guitar and drum are heard. When they finally stop, McLaughlin and Gurtu both smile contentedly.

The trio's bassist, Dominique Di Piazza, who has been watching all of this, looks slightly mystified, as does a visitor. Sensing their confusion, McLaughlin says, "The basic pattern is in five and I'm superimposing seven over it." Gurtu plays his pattern again, and McLaughlin obligingly counts five



stream of notes pours forth from the drum, some loud and some soft, with a variety of timbres. Gurtu's wrists are loose and appear to be made of rubber as his fingers coerce power-

along with it. Then McLaughlin plays his guitar line along with the drum, stomping his foot on the first beat of each rhythmic group, at one point shouting "one two three four

five six seven" above the sound of the instruments. "The seven has a triplet in it," McLaughlin adds, helpfully. But there's a hint of smugness in his smile.

McLaughlin goes back to running lines and scales on his guitar while Gurtu resumes his own warming up. One realizes that the two musicians had an entire conversation in which the only words they spoke were from the language of rhythm.

You have to sing a rhythm before you can play it," Gurtu says as he dunks a teabag into a cup of hot water while seated in the restaurant at his Chicago hotel. "You have to know the rhythm cycle—the tala. Tala is like clave in Latin music, so you have to keep tala to know where the time is, otherwise it might sound like it's free or not in time. There is a syllable for each part of the beat, and different combinations for different rhythm cycles. The basic pattern for five is ta, di, ki, na, thorn [pronounced "tume"]. The pattern for four is ta, ka, di, mi. Then you can combine them."

There are also hand gestures that go along with the syllables. One might compare these gestures to a band or orches-

tra conductor's baton patterns. "See, if you have to play seven..." Gurtu claps his palms together as he says "1," then flips his right hand over for "2" and "3" so that the back of his right hand is landing in the palm of his left—called a "wave" in the Indian system. The right hand flips back and forth for the next four beats: a clap on "4," a wave on "5," a clap on "6," and a wave on "7." The end result is a 3-2-2 subdivision of seven.

"Each rhythm has a basic pattern, but you can break it up however you wish and do anything with it," he says, clapping 2-3-2 and 3-1-3 patterns. "But the first one I did was the basic one for seven. This is the open beat," Gurtu says, turning his right hand over into the wave position. And how would a typical bar of 4/4 be clapped? Gurtu flips his right hand back and forth so that the "1" and "3" are clapped and the "2" and "4" backbeats are represented with waves.

Putting it all together, musicians will sing a seemingly complicated series of vocal syllables over the hand gestures. There are endless possibilities, but to get a basic idea, imagine the syllables being sung to 16th-note rhythms while the hand gestures are marking quarter notes. For more specific

"Improvising shouldn't be like you're looking for something. If you don't have anything to say, shut up."



rhythm patterns, various finger gestures are used in conjunction with the claps and waves. These syllables and gestures formed the basis of Gurtu and McLaughlin's "conversation" in the dressing room.

And later, during the concert itself, those syllables turned up again during a vocal-rhythm duet between Gurtu and McLaughlin, similar to the one that appears on the title track of the McLaughlin Trio's recent *Que Alegria* album. "All of the syllables we use represent the mathematical values," Gurtu confirms. "We have composed parts, but then we improvise in the middle.

"John knows the Indian rhythm system very well," Gurtu agrees when it is suggested that he and McLaughlin speak the same musical language. "Time is very strong with him. He studied it and he's very precise—more precise than I am, sometimes," Gurtu laughs. "He needs to know every value of every beat. Me, I just hear it and play," Gurtu says, tapping his fingers on the table as though it were a hand drum and producing a surprisingly wide variety of sounds from its wooden top.

Indeed, Gurtu's knowledge of Indian rhythms is inborn rather than acquired. His grandfather was a music scholar and sitar player, and his mother, Shobha Gurtu, is a revered singer in India. "She was around all the time singing," Gurtu recalls. "So my first lessons were listening to her. I always loved music and wanted to imitate it. My ears were open, and in my family, everybody is a musician, so I just went with the flow."

His first instrument, at age five, was tabla. "My older brother is a percussionist," Gurtu explains, "and we had a percussion group when I was about eight years old." But Gurtu wasn't only absorbing the music from his Indian culture. "I heard a lot of pop music before I came to jazz," he recalls. "I heard everything: the Beatles, James Brown, Jimi Hendrix, Yes. I liked the Motown stuff, like Diana Ross and the Supremes. Anything I heard, I would try to figure out how they did it. But I would imitate it in my own way, like with tabla the way the South Indian would do it. I would change it around.

"Then I wanted to play drumset because my brother had drums. I had a couple of cymbals, one African drum, and some caxixi [Brazilian shakers, pronounced "ka-SHE-she"]. I did whatever possible to make the illusion of a drumkit. Then a group asked me to play drums with them. I had never played real drumset, but I told them that I had because they owned a set of drums and I wanted to practice on them.

"I used to really play loud," Trilok laughs, "because I was afraid that if the group threw me out, I wouldn't have drums to play on anymore. So I was really hitting hard, and one night I broke my finger from using the wrong technique." Using a spoon as a drumstick, Gurtu demonstrates a mock traditional left-hand grip with only the index finger over the stick and the other three fingers underneath it. "I didn't know. I hit the drum and DANG, my finger broke," Gurtu says, holding up his first finger. "I didn't even stop then. I bandaged it and changed my grip and went on playing. I

SOLO GURTU

In a 1987 *Modern Percussionist* article, Trilok Gurtu told writer Paul de Barros that if he ever made a solo album, he would like to turn the tables on some of the musicians whose albums he had played on. "You go into the studio and everybody else has music but you," Gurtu explained. "Everyone just says, 'Don't worry, you'll hear it.' It's a nice compliment, but one day I'm going to make a record of my own, and I'm going to be the only one in the studio with a part written out. I'll just tell the horn players, 'Don't worry, you'll hear it.'" Gurtu has gone on to make two solo albums for the CMP label. Did he do what he threatened to do? "Yeah yeah," Gurtu says, giggling with delight. "I did it! I told them, 'Just play along.'"

Usfret, recorded between August 1987 and March 1988, featured Trilok's mother along with jazz musicians Don Cherry, Jonas Hellborg, Ralph Towner, and Daniel Goyone. Many of Shobha Gurtu's vocals

were based on Indian ragas, which were blended with Trilok's combination of Indian, jazz, and funk styles. "I'd always wanted to record with my mother," Gurtu said at the time of the album's release. "Using a classical Indian singer in a contemporary Western context had never been done before, so we were taking some chances. I decided to name the album *Usfret*, which means 'spontaneity' in Sanskrit, in part because of how well she adapted to what was a totally new situation for her."

Living Magic, released late in 1991, was a blend of Indian-flavored improvisations and Weather Report-style fusion. Anyone hearing the album who was unfamiliar with Gurtu's background would be hard pressed to decide if Trilok's specialty is Indian music or American jazz, as he performs both with authority. He also combines them in a very natural way. Nana Vasconcelos adds his Brazilian jungle spices on several

cuts, and Jan Garbarek and Daniel Goyone also make notable contributions.

On both albums the sound is superb, with every nuance captured. Gurtu is quick to praise CMP Records. "It's more than cooperation," he says. "It's understanding. They have faith in me, and when I need something, they are there. The engineer, Walter Quintus, gets a great sound. He is a musician; he has great ears. Working with CMP is wonderful, and it's getting even better."

The people at CMP were surprised, however, when Gurtu declined to fill the albums with unaccompanied drum and percussion solos. "They said, 'You don't play solos?'" Trilok recalls. "I said, 'No. Just because it's my record, I don't have to show off.' I don't need to take solos. I like to take part in the music—really feel it and try to be as honest as possible in playing it."

Rick Mattingly

didn't care what the correct grip was, I just wanted to play. So I started playing like this," he says, miming matched grip.

"And the technique came from the same thing. I don't really have any technique. Someone asked me to write a book about drumming. How can I write a book? I have not studied sticking. I worked out of one book a little bit, *Stick Control*. And I practiced my reading some, too. But that's all. I haven't done any drum books. Jack DeJohnette once asked me, 'What kind of sticking are you using?' I said, 'I don't know,'" Gurtu says, shrugging his shoulders. "I think it might be a combination of South Indian mridangam and African patterns. But basically the sticking comes according to what I want to express. I don't care how I get the sound out, even if it's unorthodox.

"Elvin Jones doesn't have any technique that you can explain," Gurtu points out. "Forget it. It just comes out. Thank God he doesn't have any formal technique. He's just there."

Gurtu finally got his own kit and played with a succession of groups in Bombay hotels. "Then this group who was into jazz said that I could play with them," Gurtu says. "It was very hard in those days in India to get a lot of records, but they had a record of Coltrane, and when I heard it, and heard Elvin, I thought, 'Wow, what is this?' It was so nice, but how was he doing it? I thought I could never learn to play like that, because there was no one to teach me.

"So from then on I wanted to hear all kinds of jazz and

learn everything. That's really how I developed my love for jazz. It was just a basic love, not something I wanted to do because it was in fashion or anything."

Despite a lack of formal training, Gurtu quickly developed into an accomplished jazz drumset player. "Indian music is a lot like jazz," Trilok says, "because eighty per cent of it is improvised. If you take one small motif, you can make a lot of combinations. You play and play and play, and you improvise a lot, and then it's natural to you after a while. I think that's what improvising should be: natural. It shouldn't be like you're looking for something. You can improvise within the composition or not. But if you don't have anything to say, shut up."

Gurtu first ventured outside his native India at age 20, when he went to Paris with an Indian fusion band called Waterfront. He then played free music in Italy for a while before returning to his homeland. At Bombay's annual jazz festival, Gurtu was able to play with established jazz musicians like Charlie Mariano and John Tchicai, which whetted his appetite for working with the pros.

Trilok came to New York in 1977 with Indian pop singer Asha Bhoshle, then went to Europe with a German guitarist, and ultimately hooked up with trumpeter Don Cherry, with whom he worked for the next two years. Ultimately settling in Hamburg, Germany, where he still lives today, Gurtu toured with Belgian guitarist Phillip Catherine and appeared on ECM albums with L. Shankar (*Song For Everyone*) and

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MEGADETH'S

NICK MENZA

BY MATT PEIKEN
PHOTOS BY GENE AMBO

Nick Menza grew up in a household filled with big-band jazz. His dad, Don Menza, is one of the most highly regarded tenor sax players in jazz. Drumming legends such as Buddy Rich and Shelly Manne were frequent household guests. Louie Bellson even gave young Menza his first double-bass set. So the direction he took with his playing was a natural one—for a rebellious youth, that is. Menza has been a metalhead at heart from day one.





Despite his early introduction to music and the opportunity to learn from some of the world's most renowned players, nothing has come easy for Menza. After fruitless efforts in a series of Los Angeles rock bands, Menza took on a gig in the late '80s as a drum tech for Megadeth, at the time an up-and-coming thrash band. The path from roadie to drummer in Megadeth was rocky in more ways than one, but it was a path Menza was hell-bent on traveling.

Now, after weathering bouts with substance abuse, self-doubt, and

relative anonymity, Menza and his bandmates are starting to reap the rewards of perseverance. Megadeth's new record, *Countdown To Extinction*, is a cleaner, more mainstream effort than anything the group has done in the past, more mature but no less meaty. With platinum success on the horizon, Megadeth is set to embark on their first headlining venture. And Menza also feels that, for the first time, the band is emotionally equipped to deal with whatever successes or failures come their way.

MP: The drumming on your first record with Megadeth is a little more adventurous overall than it is on the new one.

NM: The *Rust In Peace* album was still in the vein of that out-of-control, progressive thrash period the band was in, and it was my first record with the band. A lot of the songs were already written when I came in, and there were a lot of time changes in them, so I was trying to play the most intense stuff I could think of. But it gave me a heartache trying to play it live. It was like, "God, why did I try to think of the most impossible thing to play?" Songs like "Take No Prisoners" and "Five Magics" and the end of "Rust In Peace" are really bizarre for drumming. But the record also marked a place in the transition period for the band. With *Countdown To Extinction*,



the music may be more mainstream—and I know my playing is straighter—but we also know this is the best record Megadeth has ever made.

MP: What makes this new record the band's best?

NM: It's got a lot of melody, and the musicianship is very tight and clean. We felt that everything we played satisfied our artistic standards, yet all of it was necessary for the songs. The songs definitely took priority over everything else on this record.

MP: Did you personally approach *Rust In Peace* differently, like you had something to prove your first time out?

NM: I did feel like that. I mean, this was Megadeth, and I felt I had to pull out all the stops and play the most intense stuff I could think of, and do the most massive drum parts just to screw kids up! And the band dug it. We rehearsed the parts and [singer/guitarist Dave] Mustaine came up with a lot of the drum parts himself, some that I wouldn't have necessarily chosen to play the same way. A lot of it was pretty unorthodox to me, like turning snare beats around to put them on 1 and 3 instead of 2 and 4. But I didn't cop an attitude, saying, "Man, this guy's telling me what to play," because I respected him as a songwriter. He'd sit behind the drums and show me rather than try to explain it to me when I still didn't quite understand his drum jargon.

It was a great learning experience in my life, learning how to take direction without copping an attitude—and still feeling good about the end result. You know, he might have shown me some of those parts, but I played them and my name's on the record, and I can honestly say I played everything on that record without samples, without effects, or any other crap. If you listen to my drum tracks on *Rust In Peace* and on the new one, they're very dry, there are no samples, no reverb.

The biggest thing I stressed to [producer] Mike Clink when we did *Rust In Peace* was that I wanted my drums to sound like a drummer was playing them, and I wanted them to sound natural. Back in the old days, with bands like Rush and early Led Zeppelin...that, to me, is a *drum* sound. I don't dig this new, processed, artsy-fartsy snare sound,

this "paaahhh" that goes on for eight seconds and has this ridiculous tone. To me, that's for guys who don't play well and need to cover up their mistakes. With our records, you could hear me breathing on certain parts; and with digital recording, what you hear is what you get. Every little thing I play goes down on tape.

MP: But you seem to go for a more polished sound and song quality on the new record.

NM: We were definitely into getting a groove happening for *Countdown*. A lot of the older songs and the stuff on *Rust In Peace* just didn't translate in big arenas. We'd get in there and play all these lightning-speed riffs and the audience just couldn't hear the articulation of the notes. We found out that the slower stuff went over bigger and kids could bang their heads to it. It's not like we compro-

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"Louie Bellson used to get a couple of kits a year from Slingerland, and he gave me one. It was my first double-bass kit, and I still have it."

Drumset: Tama
A. 8 x 14 brass snare drum
B. 11 x 12 tom
C. 12 x 13 tom
D. 13 x 14 tom
E. 16 x 16 floor tom
F. 18 x 18 floor tom
G. 18 x 24 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian (all Platinums)
1. 15" hi-hats
2. 20" Rock crash
3. 24" Rock ride
4. 20" Rock ride

Hardware: Voelker custom rack, DW Turbo 5000 bass drum pedals with Danmar wood beaters, Aquarian heavy-duty cymbal springs, RIMS Mounts

Heads: Aquarian Power Dot on snare and bass drums, Aquarian *Classic Clears* on toms

Sticks: Vic Firth American Classic Rock model

Electronics: E-Mu Pro-cussion, LP Spike triggers, and a drumKAT

THE

DRUMMERS



Between 1972 and 1980, Steely Dan produced some of the most searing and bitter pop music ever recorded. With scathing lyrics delivered by Donald Fagen's pungent vocals, he and partner Walter Becker's music chronicled the feelings of many who passed through young adulthood during the 1970s. At times cynical and oddly nostalgic, Steely Dan made music borne of calculated musical precision aided by high-tech studio wizardry.

The army of musicians Becker and Fagen used were eager and willing to come under the Dan's exacting standards, knowing that time spent under their demanding ears could produce a legendary recording. Indeed, the term "studio musician" may have been coined as a result of the teeming lists of credits shown on any post-1974 Steely album. The life of the hired

gun now seemed even more glamorous and lucrative to young players, what with talk of making double, even triple scale. Musicians like Larry Carlton, Chuck Rainey, Victor Feldman, Rick Derringer, Jeff "Skunk" Baxter, Denny Dias, Michael Omar-tian, Tom Scott, Wayne Shorter, Steve Khan, Randy Brecker, Anthony Jack-son, Joe Sample, Hiram Bullock, Michael Brecker, Pete Christlieb, Don Grolnick, and others all made contri-butions to Steely Dan recordings.

And the drummers? Jim Hodder, Jim Gordon, Jeff Porcaro, Hal Blaine, Bernard "Pretty" Purdie, Steve Gadd, Paul Humphrey, Rick Marotta, Jim Keltner, Ed Greene—some of the most influential drummers of the last twenty-five years. Songs like "Peg" with Marotta or "Aja" with Gadd are etched into the collective conscious-

ness of millions of drummers.

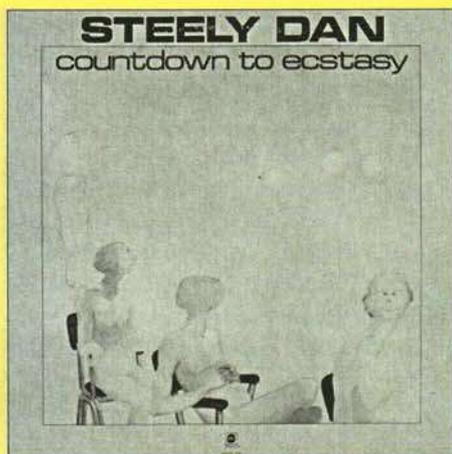
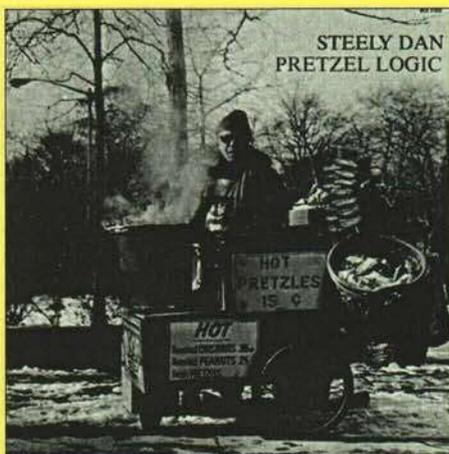
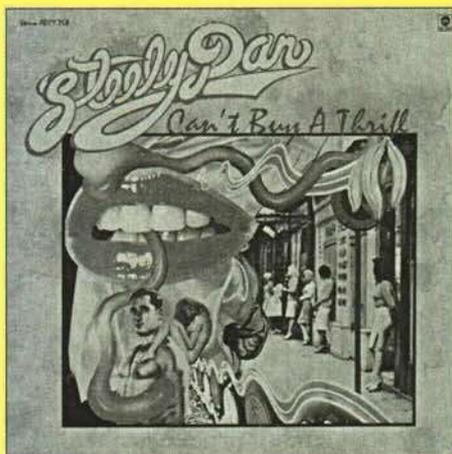
Named after a home appliance in a William Burroughs novel, Steely Dan began as a touring rock 'n' roll band that eventually disbanded after two albums. Fortified by two Top-10 hits, "Do It Again" and "Reelin' In The Years," and the sale of millions of albums, Becker (bass and guitar) and Fagen (keyboards) abandoned the road but continued to write and record pop gems of sardonic wit and lush musical sophistication. They pulled amazing performances out of their musicians, and the hits contin-ued.

Through the years their music became even more technically stream-lined as Becker and Fagen, with guid-ance from engineer Roger Nichols and producer Gary Katz, mastered the studio control board. Thirty or

OF STEELY DAN

By Ken Micallef

As we were going to press with this issue, we learned of the passing of Jeff Porcaro, who is featured prominently in this article. Look for a special tribute to Jeff in the December issue of MD.



forty takes of a single song—with entirely different rhythm sections—were the norm, not the exception. Bits and pieces of different instrumentalists' work would be lifted and spliced together, forming the ultimate solo or rhythm track. And most of this was done before the predominance of the click. WENDEL, the group's equally revered and despised electronic sequencing genie, further enhanced their control of the music. The dazzling audio quality of their finished products was second to none.

It's been twelve years since the last Steely Dan album, *Gaucha*, and many drummers probably don't know what the fuss is all about, as Jeff Porcaro can attest to. "I did a clinic a couple of years ago at the Dick Grove School," Porcaro says in his groggy baritone. "The students brought CDs of my stuff to play and ask me questions about. I knew what would happen; they'd ask about the 'Rosanna' beat,

which is probably the most unoriginal thing I've ever done. Yet I get all this credit for it. Stupid. So I brought along the CDs of the records I stole the beat from—'Fool In The Rain' from Led Zeppelin's *In Through The Out Door*, and Bernard Purdie's 'Home At Last' and 'Babylon Sisters' with Steely. Without saying anything, I put on the CD and played 'Babylon Sisters.' Half the class knew the song, but none of them knew who the drummer was. This is a class of 18- to 33-year-olds. Then I played 'Home At Last,' which I copped all the shit for 'Rosanna' from. Once again, no one knew the drummer. I said, 'Guys, it's Bernard Purdie. Who in this room has heard of Steve Gadd?' All the hands went up. 'Aja'? All hands up. 'I'm sure you all know Steve won Performance Of The Year for that in *Modern Drummer*. Well, you're all fucked up! I just played you 'Home At Last' with Bernard Purdie, and that's on the *same record*. What do you do, listen to 'Aja' and then take the needle off? As musicians you should know everything I just played for you. Some of the best drum shit ever is on that record. Each track has subtleties."

The same can be said about *all* of the Steely Dan releases. Let's go back and explore each of those records, from the beginning.

1972-'73 CAN'T BUY A THRILL & COUNTDOWN TO ECSTASY—

When Steely Dan arrived on the scene in 1972, "progressive rock" was

in vogue, with bands like Yes, ELP, and Genesis catching the fancy of many listeners. Steely surprised the rock audience because not only did they write radio-ready rock hits, but they had intelligent lyrics and used quasi-jazz forms (complex changes, harmonies, and structures) and jazz musicians like Victor Feldman and Snooky Young—and even *then* they had band members who could handle all the idiomatic changes Becker and Fagen delighted in. Check out Baxter and Dias's blistering solos on "Do It Again" or Fagen's neo-ragtime on "Fire In The Hole."

Jim Hodder, "percussionist, bronze god, pulse of the rhythm section," was the original drummer for Steely. Burly, with large hands, Hodder brought a syncopated, pert style to the music. He exemplified "tasty," a common term then used among musicians to describe one who was creative but not overly flashy. His drumming seemed part BJ Wilson from Procol Harum, part Bobby Colomby from Blood, Sweat & Tears, and part Ringo. He wed lots of straight 8th notes on the hi-hat with snappy tom fills. An attention to detail is apparent from his articulate press rolls on "Dirty Work" to the raga-style bossa groove he played on "Do It Again."

"Bodhisattva," the first song on *Countdown To Ecstasy*, kicks off with snare drum/hi-hat blasts from Hodder. Along with the rest of the band, Hodder's playing reflects a new looseness and confidence. Instead of striking a closed hi-hat with the tip, more of a swinging bash is employed, using the shank. He's more aggressive, playing Richie Hayward-ish fusion on the sci-fi "King Of The World."

Like Idris Muhammad or Herbie Lovelle from the 1960s Prestige-era jazz recordings, Hodder maintained a snakey, slinky touch. He's still playing rock, but with a jazzier's approach. His drums are tuned a bit lower, and the cymbals seem to ring more, matching the Indian flare of "Your Gold Teeth" or the country twang of "Pearl Of The Quarter." However, this was it for

Hodder as far as Steely Dan was concerned. Though a strong drummer and timekeeper, he lacked the definitive personality that might have kept him on Becker and Fagen's first-call list.

Nonetheless, *Countdown* is the album that set the course for Steely Dan. They continued to refine and redefine their music with each successive album, becoming more exacting and demanding with the performances and the overall sound, while writing more stunning compositions.

1974—PRETZEL LOGIC

This album featured the hit "Rikki Don't Lose That Number," a bluesy bossa nova that borrowed from Horace Silver's "Song For My Father." The writing on this album is more expansive, with nods to country music ("With A Gun") and jazz (a surprising, note-for-note rendition of Ellington's "East St. Louis Toodle-oo"). With *Pretzel Logic*, the studio became an instrument, the sound was richer, and they used full orchestration with horns and strings.

The drummer for the bulk of the album was studio musician Jim Gordon. Tall and good-looking with curly blond hair, Gordon was technically gifted and possessed a golden sense of feel and rhythm. During the '60s and early '70s, his trademark right-hand-driven 16th-note groove was in constant demand among artists like John Lennon, George Harrison, Traffic, Joe Cocker, Carly Simon, Delaney & Bonnie, and Eric Clapton. He was the drummer on Derek & the Dominos' *Layla & Other Love Songs* and the early Clapton solo albums. He wrote the beautiful second half of "Layla," all lush piano chords and trembling guitars. Unfortunately, Gordon's remarkable talent was mired by mental disease that tracked him from the age of seven and eventually ended his career. He heavily influenced two other drummers, though: Jeff Porcaro and Jim Keltner.

According to Keltner, "When he was on, he exuded confidence of the

highest level—incredible time, great feel, and a good sound. He had everything." "On *Pretzel*," says Porcaro, "I played on 'Night By Night' and Gordon and I played double drums on 'Parker's Band.' Gordon was my idol. Playing with him was like going to school. Keltner was the bandito in town. Gordon was the heir to Hal Blaine. His playing was the textbook for me. No one ever had finer-sounding cymbals or drums, or played his kit so beautifully and balanced. And nobody had that particular groove. Plus his physical appearance—the dream size for a drummer—he lurched over his set of Camcos."

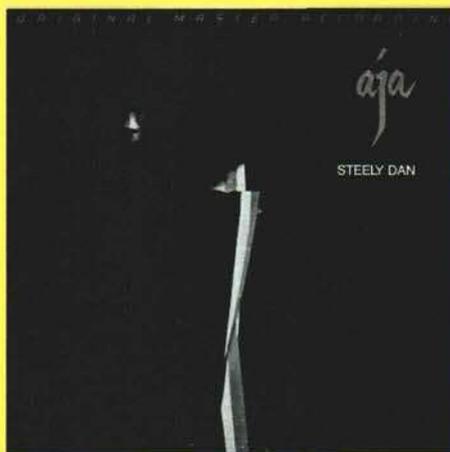
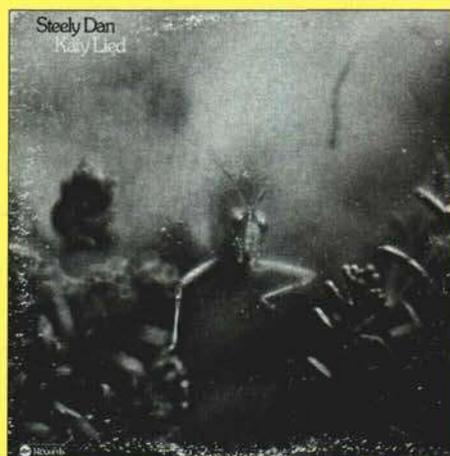
1975-KATY LIED

In retrospect, it's stunning to realize that Jeff Porcaro was only nineteen years old when he recorded *Katy Lied*. The album is a tone poem, a surreal view into the minds of Becker and Fagen. The grooves are varied, from the pumping shuffle of "Black Friday," to the 3/4 jazz waltz of "Your Gold Teeth II," to the slow blues of "Chain Lightning," to the perfect time of "Dr. Wu." Porcaro enjoys the distinction of being the only drummer Steely Dan used whose final product was always kept without being overdubbed by another player. The versions he recorded always made it to the final master tapes.

"On *Katy Lied*," Jeff recalls, "all that went through my mind was Kelt-

ner and Gordon. It was do or die for me. All my stuff was copying them. For instance, on 'Chain Lightning,' all I thought about was the song 'Pretzel Logic,' which is Gordon playing a slow shuffle. On 'Doctor Wu,' I was thinking of John Guerin, especially those fills going out between the bass drum and the toms. He'd do it in a

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DRUM WORKSHOP REVISITED



By Rick Van Horn

Drum Workshop president
Don Lombardi (seated)
and vice president John Good

"I've read about major drum companies hiring physics institutes to do tests on drum sounds.... We're not trying to send something into space here. If you aren't aware of what drummers are doing and the problems they're living with, it's impossible to sell them *anything*." Don Lombardi

When I first visited Drum Workshop, Inc., in 1982, it was a tiny business situated in the industrial section of Gardena, California, in the Los Angeles megalopolis. And although they had high ambitions, the company lived or died on the success of one product: a bass drum pedal. Well, in the ensuing years, DW has sold a *lot* of bass drum pedals—along with establishing the industry standard for *double* bass drum pedals and introducing the first practical remote hi-hat. And oh, yes: They've also become one of America's most prestigious brands of *drums*, too.

In February of 1983 the company outgrew their original quarters, and relocated to Newbury Park, forty miles to the north. Today, although they are still by no means a "major factory operation," Drum Workshop's dedication to quality and innovation has made them a major force in American drum manufactur-

ing. We spoke with DW president and founder Don Lombardi about DW's evolution from the production of a single pedal to full-line drum manufacturing.

"We've actually been making drums from DW's inception, back in 1975 or so," says Don. "That was when we obtained dies, molds, and tooling by purchasing the old Camco drum company. We started making pedals and hardware in 1978, and got the patent on our chain-drive pedal in 1980. By 1982, DW was just at the onset of becoming an independent accessory manufacturer. It took us five more years to develop a product line that included the single pedal, the double pedal, and our remote and regular hi-hats—and to achieve a stable position in the industry.

"We tried to push into the drum market more aggressively about 1985," Don comments, "but the investment required was too great, and the timing was not such that the average drummer could

participate. So we continued producing drums for some individual artists and for a few stores who were selling pretty much to old-guard players looking for the '50s/'60s sound: the 'pre-CBS Rogers,' 'old Ludwig,' or 'Camco' sound. It was really a labor of love for [DW Vice President] John Good and myself; we would make up a few kits now and then to meet what demand there was. But we never lost sight of our original goal: to have a full line of drums to go along with the hardware."

By 1989, DW was ready to give the production of drums a serious try. "I figured that the best thing we could do," says Don, "was go to the January NAMM show with a few drumkits and our first 20-page color catalog. Our plan was to enter the market quietly, and then build over the next four or five years to a point where we could make drum manufacturing a serious department of DW. To our total surprise, we left that show with about a year's

worth of orders! Even though it was a very small quantity compared to the overall number of drums built each year, it was still 800% more than we had ever built before."

The '89 NAMM show had a dramatic impact on DW's endorser roster as well, as Don relates. "Several world-renowned artists came to us. And not all of them were veteran players who appreciated the drums based on their 'historic' sound. Some were drummers in their early 20's who hadn't been *around* in the '50s and '60s. The most surprising and gratifying of these was Tommy Lee. Once it became known that Tommy was using the drums, there seemed to be a small onslaught of young artists checking them out—and appreciating what they were hearing. That, in turn, started to filter down to the level of some average consumers. I mean, prior to 1989, we pretty much knew everybody who had a DW *set personally*.

"We returned from the show," says Don, "with a plan

to spend six or eight months in a learning curve, hiring a few people and gearing up to produce drums on a small level. Well, that period turned into about two and a half years! It took us that long to find people who had the right

mentality and were willing to learn the processes that John and I employed when we were making just two or three sets a month. That's still the way things are done now. It's very labor-intensive and calls for a lot of craftsmanship. As a



Pedals are what started it all for DW—and they're still a very large part of the business.



Innovative products call for innovative tooling, like this multi-headed drill press.

Each finished hardware item is inspected and polished before shipping.



John Good demonstrates how a shell is tapped to determine its fundamental pitch—a major element of DW's "timbre matching" system.



result, we can only make so many drums within a certain time frame. Fortunately, we don't have to produce more drums than we can maintain 100% quality control over, because the market is only ready to take that amount."

At DW, the drum and hardware departments are completely separate divisions of the company's operation. As Don explains, "That's so we never divert our efforts from the innovation and quality of the hardware in order to make drums—or vice versa. John Good is completely responsible for the drum department, and doubles as our artist relations director. My areas of responsibility are more directed towards hardware production, new products, and overall quality control. We've grown very rapidly over the past five years; the number of employees has increased almost 700%. We're at a size now where we can service the drumming community and still feel good about the control we have over what we're doing."

Growth and quality control are factors that have led DW to consider a major move in early 1993—away from their multi-unit industrial complex and into a single factory structure. "Being in one building will have a tremendous impact on our productivity," says Don. "We'll be able to set up a flow for all the materials and products for the first time in our history. The time is right for us, because we're faced with another surprising demand for our drums—from the international market. The Frankfurt international music show earlier this year was like the 1989 NAMM show all over again. Distributors from all over the world were knock-

ing at our door to carry our product line. Being an American company adds to our desirability in the world market—and we feel a real responsibility to that."

As the founder of Drum Workshop, Don takes more than a little personal pride in the ongoing growth of the company. "I do feel we're entitled to a certain amount of credit," he says, "if for nothing more than 'stick-to-it-iveness.' When you look at the drum industry over the past 15 years, all of the companies who had been family-owned no longer have anything to do with the original family. Gretsch, Ludwig, Slingerland, Rogers, Camco, Premier, and most recently Sonor, have all been sold. But DW is still really a family business. My wife—who started with me, making seats in the garage fifteen years ago—now controls all the company finances. My son and daughter direct our sales department. John Good is definitely like a member of the family; we've been working closely together for over twenty years. And a lot of employees who were working here when *MD* visited in 1982 are still here.

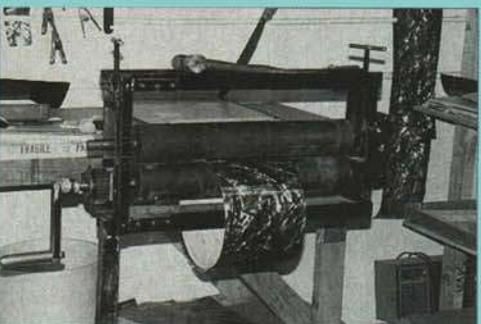
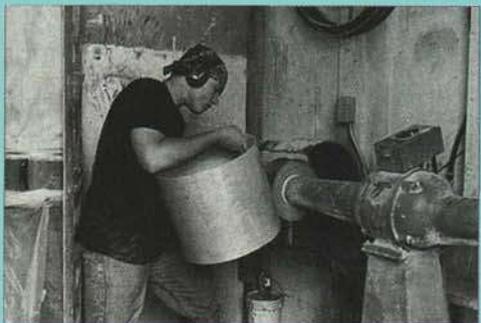
"We know that if we don't work together as a team," Don continues, "we won't be able to survive economically. We're not in a high-tech business, we're grass-roots manufacturing—taking raw material and turning it into something. It has to be better, or we're not going to be able to compete."

Innovation

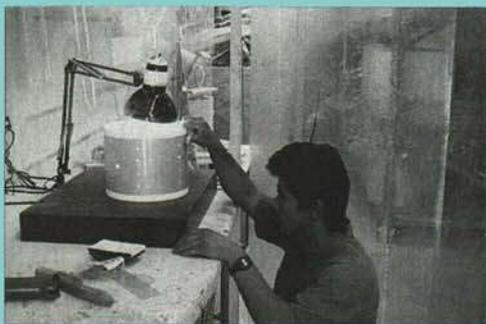
Much of DW's "ability to compete" has been based on its continuing introduction of innovative products—especially in the area of hardware.



Shells are sanded and polished in a combination of machine and hand processes.



The micro-thin covering material used on *FinishPly* drums is rolled onto each shell.



A shell is checked on a marble block to make certain the bearing edge is true. If any light shows under the edge from inside the shell, the shell is rejected.



Every finished DW drum is personally tuned and "signed off" by John Good before it's shipped.

While Don Lombardi is responsible for much of that innovation, he maintains an open-door policy toward any inventor, "because," he says, "I remember how frustrated I was when I couldn't get anybody to look at the things I had designed. Now that I'm sitting on the other side of the desk, though, I have to wear both my manufacturer's and my inventor's hats. As a manufacturer, I often see ideas that are unique and very functional, but wouldn't fit into the overall perspective of what the market is doing. Even as custom-oriented as DW is, we've grown to the point where we cannot produce something if the demand is only going to be two or three a month. We have to have a certain potential sales volume in order to spend the money it takes to get something into production."

And how *does* a new idea get into production? "The process is not as mysterious as some people make it sound," replies Don. "I've read about major drum companies hiring physics institutes to do tests on drum sounds, and R&D departments with computers and rows of engineers. We're not trying to send something into space here. Basically, the key to designing any new product is to fill a need. If you aren't aware of what drummers are doing and the problems they're living with, it's impossible to sell them *anything*."

"Once you have a valid concept," says Don, "then you get your design people together to see how you can best produce it. Often it's a matter of taking something that already exists—but isn't marketable in its present form—and improving on that

form until it *is* marketable. For example, the idea of the chain-and-sprocket bass drum pedal had been proven before we made one; we bought the patent. It was helpful to us as a company, because it gave our pedal a different look. We combined that with the attention to detail with which we made the pedal, and it was a winner.

"We didn't invent the double pedal either," Don continues. "But the problem with those that were available was that they just didn't feel like you were playing two single pedals. Jim Keltner was using one of the first double pedals—one made by another company and designed to work off of a spring connection. The right pedal was not as sensitive as a normal single pedal would be, and as a result, Jim was forced to sacrifice the technique he had with his right foot. We worked with him in the development stages of our double pedal so that there was no such sacrifice. In fact, the design concept of our first double pedal—the 5002 was that you could use any single pedal as the primary on the right, and—through a coupling mechanism and the design of the two plates—have the left side feel as close as possible to playing a single pedal."

What about the origin of DW's remote hi-hat? "I'd seen versions of remote hi-hats that worked off of cables," says Don, "but they didn't function properly. It was a valid idea, but I wanted to know if it could be done in a way in which a Chad Wackerman or a Vinnie Colaiuta could play it comfortably. We found an old gentleman at a cable company who had played drums when he was in high school. He sent us fif-

continued on page 118



Alojjan

Zildjian

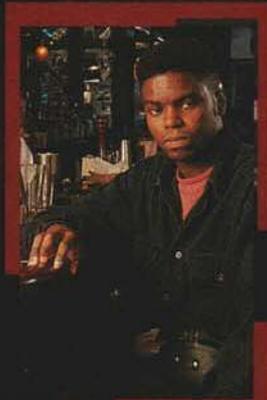
TAMA

TAMA

The Big Sound of the Small Jazz Kit...

relatively smaller size of the traditional jazz drum kit has never been a limitation to the formidable skills of the jazz drummer. For decades jazz drummers have driven jazz bands both big and small with imagination, techniques and sounds that have been anything but compact.

And just as jazz has always been the music of both change and sophistication, more and more virtuoso drummers are choosing Tama maple Artstar II jazz kits and Tama hardware to express their art.



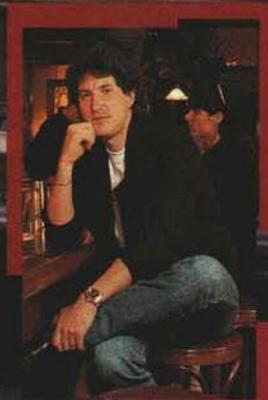
Rodney Holmes

*"My Artstars are easy to record and easy to tune. The maple shells really project, but they also have a warmth, depth and tone which I think is pretty rare. I couldn't get that sound with the brand of drums I played before. The **Lever Glide** is great, really easy to control, good range and very smooth--sturdy but not too heavy. I've always used Tama hardware, even when I was using other drums. And now with the **Stilt** tilting stands, I can always get the perfect angles even on really small stages."*



Rayford Griffin

*"I've had numerous compliments about my set not only because it sounds great, but because it looks great...very pleasing to the eyes and ears. Plus, it's versatile enough for anything from bebop to heavy fusion. And there's nothing more stable than the Tama **Omnisphere** tom-holder... easy to set up and no problems with positioning."*



Joel Rosenblatt

*"I love that the Artstars are maple; they've got warmth with attack, and the **hi-tension lugs** make tuning much easier. The hardware's great; it's easy to set up and adjust. And the **Lever Glide** hi-hat, well, there's just no comparison-- I swear by it. I can do things with it I could never do before."*



Hear jazz artists extraordinaire Rayford Griffin, Rodney Holmes and Joel Rosenblatt playing Tama Artstar II drums on the new **Tama Jazz Sampler** cassette. For your free copy, plus a complete Tama catalogue package, send \$5.00 (\$7.00 in Canada) to cover shipping and handling to: Tama Jazz, Dept. MDD26, P.O. Box 886, Bensalem, PA 19020 • P.O. Box 2009, Idaho Falls, ID 83403 • In Canada: 2165-46th Ave., Lachine, Quebec H8T-2P1.

TAMA

Consumers Poll Results

by Rick Van Horn

In *MD's* third tri-annual *Consumers Poll*, an enthusiastic—and very vocal—group of drum consumers listed their choices in the categories presented on the ballot in our June '92 issue. The general consensus seemed to indicate parity among the major manufacturers in terms of quality and service: Final results were the closest we've ever encountered, with the difference between positions often being measured in fractions of a percentage point. But another telling point was the number of different manufacturers and products nominated in the various categories—a reflection on the specialization that has become so prevalent in the industry. And yet another interesting outcome was the appearance of several new names among our winners—notably in the field of electronics. There seems to have been a good deal of "shaking out" within the industry in the past three years, and our poll responses bear witness to the fact that drum consumers are aware of this.

So now to the results. Each winner's vote tally is expressed as a percentage of the total number of votes cast in that category. (Some categories received greater responses than others.)

Most Innovative Company

Acoustic Drum Company: Pearl finished first this year by an incredibly narrow margin (19.72% of the vote) over Tama (19.25%). Comments included "range of quality, style, and prices," "components are always being improved," "always offering new options." Specific products mentioned were *Export Pro* and *CZX Studio* kits, drum racks, and *Free-Floating* snare drums.

Cymbal Company: Paiste took top honors here with 40% of the vote. Readers cited Paiste for "developing a new alloy that has opened up a new world of sound" and for "constantly offering new sounds and models." Products noted included the *Paiste*, *Sound Formula*, and *Alpha* lines.

Electronics Company: With 22.7% of the vote, the winner this year is a name new to the poll: KAT, Inc. Readers mentioned KAT's "attention to real-life drummers' needs," "products tailored for every knowledge level," and "always upgrading and improving their lines." The *drumKAT EZ* and *midik.I.T.I. Pro* received special praise.

Accessory Company: Among a very wide field (indicating the specialization mentioned earlier), LP Music Group won handily with 21% of the vote. Readers thought that LP "is always developing something new and useful," and "keeps the convenience of the drummer in mind." Products mentioned included the *Ridge Rider* cowbell, *Jingle Sticks*, *Cyclops* tambourine, and *Gajate* bracket.

Best Quality And Craftsmanship

Acoustic Drum Company: In another tremendously close race, Ludwig took top honors with 17.89% of the vote (versus Pearl's 17.43%). Comments included "consistent quality," "best out-of-the-box snare drums," "shells are thin but strong," and "strongest hardware and a great American sound."

Cymbal Company: The Zildjian company finished strongly here, with 49% of the vote. Readers commented, "I own 14; they've never cracked," "excellent quality and finish, even in budget-line cymbals," and "long-lasting and great-sounding."

Electronics Company: KAT was the winner here again, with 13.5% of the vote and comments such as, "their gear is easy to understand and reliable," and "stands up under constant use." But it's worthy of note that 54% of the votes went to no company at all, or featured comments such as "electronics are unreliable," "I won't use electronics," or "I've never found anything I thought was

worth the money." While this is no reflection whatever on KAT, it indicates a significant overall attitude towards electronics in general.

Accessory Company: LP Music Group won in this category, with 22% of the vote. Drum Workshop and Gibraltar led a large group of runners-up with 11% each. Readers stated that "LP's gear lasts," "I've never had a problem with any LP item," and "everything they make is designed functionally and practically."

Most Consumer/Service Oriented Company

Acoustic Drum Company: Pearl was this year's winner with 22% of the vote (over 17.5% for Tama and 13.7% for Ludwig). But overall, 16 manufacturers were cited for excellence in this area, indicating the priority they give to service. Comments pertaining to Pearl included, "they keep their price structure realistic and give great value," "I had a problem due to my heavy hitting style; they sent me new tom holders free," and "quick service, readily available parts, lots of literature."

Cymbal Company: Zildjian led this category with 43% of the votes. Readers mentioned, "Zildjian sponsors lots of clinics," "good warranty, fast service, a good attitude, and they know what drummers want," and "I wrote to them with a few questions and they called me long-distance for an hour and a half."

Electronics Company: Although KAT won this category with 12% of the votes, a whopping 64% no-name or negative-comment result was recorded. Readers stressed the high cost and constant obsolescence of electronic equipment, and complained that many companies proved difficult to obtain satisfactory warranty service from. To KAT's credit, no such comments referred to them, and KAT supporters touted the company's "constant low- or no-cost upgrades to existing equipment," "willingness to help with any problem," and "terrific warranty service and special-need response."

Accessory Company: Fewer than 1½

percentage points separated the winner—LP Music Group (15.6%)—from runner-up Pro-Mark, Inc. (14.4%). Comments about LP included "nice service people," "good warranty system," "informative marketing and literature," and "responsive to customer needs." Honorable mention went to Pro-Mark specifically for their Project X consumer-involvement program and their toll-free consumer-information hotline.

Most Interesting Advertising/ Marketing Campaign

Tabulation in this category is difficult, because most voters tend to indicate a company's overall advertising program, rather than one specific ad or ad campaign. With that in mind, Ludwig (with 31%) edged out Paiste (26%) and Pearl

(21%) for top honors. Specific ads from Ludwig that received special mention were those featuring the re-issued engraved *Black Beauty* snare drum and the inside-cover ads depicting Neil Peart at his kit. As an overall trend, drummers preferred ads depicting their favorite artists and their equipment setups, followed by ads that offered photos and descriptive text about specific products.

Most Valuable Product

Admittedly, this is a very subjective area, so it's not surprising that there were almost as many different nominees for this category as there were voters. As a result, only a small plurality determined our winner: Evans *Genera Series* drumheads. Comments about these heads included, "finally a head system

that controls every drum on the kit and still sounds balanced from one to the other," "great sound, control, and durability all in one drumhead," and "the first complete head system to take the acoustic principles of a drum into consideration." Honorable mention should go to PureCussion RIMS mounts, which received many votes but were not eligible for this poll because they are not a product introduced within the past three years.

There you have the results of MD's 1992 *Consumers Poll*. We extend our congratulations to the winners, and offer our thanks to all the readers who participated. We'll give the industry a few years to develop yet more new and exciting products, and then do this again!

Paiste Alpha Cymbals

■ by Rick Van Horn

These affordable Paistes
are a cut above "entry-level."

Shortly after Paiste introduced their *Paiste* ("Signature") series a few years ago, they followed it with their *Sound Formula* series. While the cymbals sounded remarkably similar, the latter series was manufactured in the company's German factory. The fact that the line was more limited in scope—coupled with certain production advantages and capabilities of the German operation—allowed the company to offer the *Sound Formula* series at a lower price.

It's interesting to note that in the brochure accompanying Paiste's new *Alpha* series, an endorser comments that they sound similar to Paiste's venerable 2002 series—yet are significantly less expensive. Well, the 2002 line is made in

Switzerland, and—you guessed it—the *Alpha* line is produced in the German factory. And again, the line is more limited, the factory can produce more at a time, the company can make them more efficiently, and—*voilà* the cymbals can be more economically priced.

I don't mean to imply that *Alphas* are low-cost 2002s. I merely use the comparison as a point of reference. They're both

made of the same B8 alloy, so it's not surprising that they would share some similar characteristics—such as a tendency to favor the high end of the tonal spectrum, with the glassy shimmer that Paiste cymbals are known for. Where *Alphas* differ from the 2002 line is that they're missing some of the lower frequencies that make the other line sound a bit more full-bodied. But enough gen-



eralities; let's get to some specifics.

My favorite among all the *Alphas* I tested was the 16" Thin Crash. It was absolutely delightful, with a delicacy and a spread that belied the surprising volume it was able to create. The 18" version exchanged some of the delicacy for additional depth and volume. The 16" and 18" Crash models were nice middle-of-the-road crashes—very explosive, with good sustain. The 16" Power Crash had very little shimmer or spread, and tended to be a little gong-y. It just seemed to be a bit too thick in relation to its diameter. The shimmer, spread, and overall response of the 18" model was a good deal better, but it still was a bit one-dimensional. To be fair, though, such cymbals are not designed to be subtle, and both were very loud and penetrating.

The 20" Full Ride was another personal favorite. It was very musical—with the emphasis on the high end, and not much bottom or "wash." The 20" Power Ride didn't sound as "pretty" as the Full Ride, but produced a very clean, precise stick sound that cut through higher volumes with good definition. The 22" Heavy Ride wasn't as dry as you might expect a cymbal this heavy to be. In fact, it tended to build up quite a "washy" sound. Depending on what you want in a cymbal, this could be an asset or a liability. I know some rock drummers who "like to get their ride roaring."

The thickness and small diameter of

the 10" and 12" Splashes made them sound less like traditional splash cymbals and more like mini-crashes to me. On the other hand, they had a bit more body than would traditional splashes, and might be just the ticket for use in amplified situations where the sound of a thinner cymbal would simply disappear.

The 16" and 18" China Types didn't produce what I would call a typical "Chinese" sound. Now, don't misunderstand me here: I much preferred these cymbals to more traditional China types. I found them more musical and much less "trashy"—and yet they were still a strong contrast to the other *Alpha* models. So as far as I'm concerned, they served the function of China types completely; they simply did it in a slightly different manner from the norm.

Finally, we come to the hi-hats. The characteristics of *Alphas* that made me love the 16" Thin Crash did not serve as well on the 14" Medium Hi-Hats. Their relative thinness and light weight kept them from producing a satisfactory chick sound when the hi-hat was closed. On the other hand, they responded well to light sticking, and choked very quickly. So they might be excellent choices for mellow jazz work or for funky patterns. The 14" Power Hi-Hats were just the opposite: a solid, loud chick, with much less top-cymbal stick response. They also produced a very loud half-closed ride sound. These would probably be best when used

for quarter- or 8th-note rock ride patterns. The 14" *Sound Edge* Hi-Hats were my favorites in the group. Falling more or less in between the other two models in terms of weight and thickness, they gave a clean, cutting chick with no possibility of airlock, and they offered better-than-average stick sound and choke capabilities.

Alphas are definitely not budget cymbals. Paiste describes them as cymbals for new or semi-professional drummers who want to start out with something a little better than an entry-level instrument, or for professionals on a tight budget who need cymbals that will meet their needs acoustically and financially. (I certainly had no difficulty finding models with which to play my club gigs quite satisfactorily.)

The pricing and sound quality of *Alphas* puts them in a niche of their own, somewhere between the entry-level and professional lines currently on the market. If you're a student or semi-pro considering upgrading your present budget cymbals—or a pro looking for a different sound that you wouldn't mind paying less for—you should give the *Alphas* a listen. The line is priced as follows: 10" Splash, \$75; 12" Splash, \$85, 16" crashes, \$130; 18" crashes, \$160, 16" China Type, \$160; 18" China Type, \$180; 14" Hi-Hats, \$210 per pair; 14" Sound Edge Hi-Hats, \$260 per pair; 20" Rides, \$180; and 22" Heavy Ride, \$220.

Kenner Snare Drums

■ by Rick Van Horn

This small Kentucky company is making snare drums as good as anybody's—and better than many.

In March of this year Rick Mattingly reviewed a build-it-yourself snare drum kit from Kenner Drum Company. For



those who aren't mechanically inclined, Kenner also offers custom-quality, ready-made snare drums, which we'll examine here. Our test models were all 4x14 drums, in three shell types: cast aluminum, cast bell brass, and solid Australian cardinal wood (stave construction).

As soon as somebody says "custom-quality," you know we're in the high-end market. The question then becomes, what do these drums offer that makes them a worthy consideration in a market already crowded with high-priced snare drums? Well, how about excellent design and appearance, high-quality construction, and terrific sound? These Kenner drums have all of those attributes—along with some special details that help to set them apart from other drums in this field.

To begin with, all of the drums feature die-cast hoops, solid brass chrome-plated posts and tube lugs, and die-cast cam-lever drop strainers. As a result, everything works well, sounds great, and looks fabulous. The aluminum-shell drum features standard chrome tension rods; the other two drums feature non-

plated machined brass rods, which add a touch of class to the overall look.

Both the brass and the aluminum shells are ten-lug models, with shells cast in Kentucky and machined to a little over 1/4" thick. But the brass drum is much heavier: 17 1/2 lbs. versus 10 lbs. for the aluminum drum. Both drums were extremely crisp and sensitive, and had tons of resonance and projection. But the acoustic characteristics of brass are warmer and mellower than those of aluminum, which made the brass drum sound just a touch darker and a little more full-bodied than the aluminum drum—which tended to favor the high-end a bit more and had a more aggressive "crack." In addition to our 4x14 test models, both drums are also available in 5x14 and 5 1/2x14 sizes.

The wood-stave drum is a work of art. It combines 32 individually machined cardinal wood staves with 32 maple splines (reinforcing pieces that strengthen the points at which the staves are glued together)—a total of 64 separate pieces that must be joined at a precise angle. The completed shell is approximately 3/4" thick, with a 45° bearing edge

and a hand-rubbed clear finish that lets the gorgeous red wood show through. Our test model featured eight lugs; a ten-lug version is available.

Thick, solid-wood shells tend to combine the reflectiveness and bright sound of a metal shell with the dryness and warmth of a wood shell. The Kenner snare epitomized this effect, offering a very crisp, penetrating crack without sounding abrasive. Owing to the shallow depth of our test model, the optimum pitch was pretty much in the high range; tuning the drum down was not particularly effective. But Kenner offers 5x14 through 8x14 sizes for those who wish a deeper sound. (A model made of white oak with black walnut spines is also available, in sizes from 4x14 through 10x14.)

As I said, at \$650 for the aluminum drum, \$825 for the brass, and \$925 for the cardinal wood, these drums are in the high-end category. But considering their sound, their appointments, and their quality, there's no question that they offer full value for your investment. For further information, contact Kenner Drum Company, Rt. #1, Box 150, California, KY 41007, (606) 635-5218.

Cannon Dead Heads

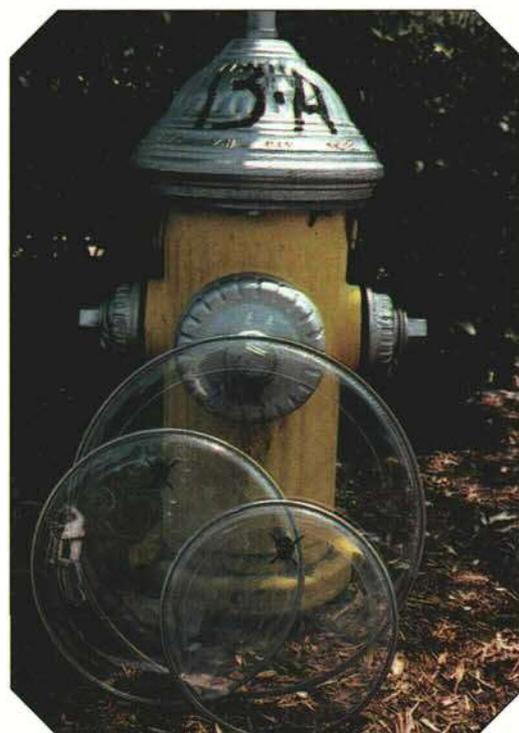
■ by Rick Van Horn

Cannon's *Dead Heads* are batter heads designed, as their literature states, to "kill unwanted overtones." This they do—dramatically. They also reduce attack sound, and the tone they produce on toms could best be described as "thick, round, and mellow." I found them to have a bit less attack—and a lot fewer overtones—than a Remo *Pinstripe*, and a bit more attack—but only a few more overtones—than an Evans *Hydraulic*. Drummers looking for a very round, boomy tone but not a lot of over-ring—perhaps for miking applications—might find

these heads an excellent choice. But unless the heads are hit *very* hard, they probably wouldn't be the best choice for a live, unmiked situation—with one exception. I was able to employ the characteristics of the 14" *Dead Head* to help tame an overly ringy metal snare drum without any additional muffling.

The heads are touted by Cannon as being made of "a durable polyester film" that is "perhaps the strongest plastic used to make drumheads." They certainly are durable; lengthy playing and hard hitting during our tests produced nary a dent in them. Given this characteristic, *Dead Heads* would most likely appeal to hard players interested in head longevity above acoustic subtlety.

If you like lively drumheads with plenty of attack: These ain't the ones. If you want durable heads that produce a deep "thud" without the need for any additional muffling, *Dead Heads* might be just the ticket. We tested heads in 10",



12", 14", and 16" sizes on snares and tomtoms, and 20" and 22" sizes on bass drums. (Heads are available from 6" to 24".) Heads up to 13" feature a thin bot-

tom ply for additional resonance; heads 14" and over feature two matched plies. Representative prices include \$10.50 for a 10", \$15.95 for a 14", \$19.50 for a 16", and

\$37.30 for a 22". If your dealer doesn't offer *Dead Heads*, contact Cannon Percussion, 425 5th St., Struthers, OH 44471.

Slappers

■ by Rick Van Horn

Slappers are a new design in drumsticks created by New York drummer Billy Amendola. The best way to visualize them is to imagine a pair of oversized tongue depressors made of absolutely gorgeous wood. But although that image may seem humorous, Billy is completely serious about his design and the potential it affords for new sounds on a drumkit.

Slappers actually come in two basic shapes: the straight model (which is $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide from each rounded end to the other) and the tapered model (which tapers down slightly from $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide at one square-cut end to $\frac{9}{16}$ " wide at the other, rounded end). Each is just under $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick. Weight is determined by the wood type; *Slappers* are available in (from lightest to heaviest): curly maple, zebra wood, oak, cherry, bubinga, rosewood, and ebony.

Obviously, flat sticks are not going to feel or play like round sticks. What *Slappers* offer is an alternative method of creating sounds on drums and cymbals. (Billy is the first to point out that they

won't work on a practice pad. You just don't get any rebound.) You can play them with the flat edge on the drum or cymbal, or with the stick turned edge-wise—and get a totally different sound. This puts them in a class with *Blasticks*, *Multi-Rods*, *Splitstix*, and other specialty items that have a valid place in your stick bag by virtue of their "different" nature.

However, I have to say that *Slappers* will take a lot more "getting used to" than would some of those other items. A flat surface just doesn't lend itself to the same type of hand and finger action that a cylindrical one does, and some players may be able to adjust more easily than others. I've seen Billy play wonderfully well using them as his primary sticks, and I know that Dennis Chambers has been using some at clinics with great success. I couldn't get comfortable enough with them to use them all night long—but I did appreciate their value when it came to pulling new and different sounds out of my kit over the course of a long night's gig. I even experimented with



holding two at a time in one hand—"musical bones-fashion"—which I certainly couldn't do with a pair of regular sticks. If you're the least bit interested in increasing the acoustic variety of your drumming, *Slappers* are certainly worth checking out. They're currently available in selected stores, or contact Slap Happy Productions, Inc., 68 34th St., Brooklyn, NY 11232, (718) 832-3457. List prices are: oak and curly maple, \$9.95; cherry (tapered only), \$11.95; purpleheart, rosewood, and bubinga (tapered only), \$14.95; and ebony, \$25.

Power Wrist Builders

• by Rick Van Horn

Power Wrist Builders, from The Taloose Group, are a selection of metal drumsticks designed to "increase a drum-

mer's strength, agility, and endurance." Their designer, Terry Loose, suggests thinking of them as "barbells for the wrists." Now, before we go any further, let me say that I'm fully aware of the controversy that surrounds metal practice sticks. Some drummers and teachers swear by them, others feel that they have the potential to cause injury. I'm not taking a position either way. I'm merely reporting on a product offered to those who have done their homework and made their own decision.

That said, *Power Wrist Builders* come in three basic sizes—all 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ long. The *Student* model is $\frac{3}{8}$ " in diameter, weighs 3.5 ounces, and is finished in a scratch-proof blue anodized finish. The *Advanced* model is $\frac{1}{2}$ " in diameter, weighs 4.5 ounces, and is finished in jet black. The *Professional* model is $\frac{5}{8}$ " in diameter, weighs 5.4 ounces, and is finished in red. (The test model shown in our photo happened to be finished in brushed aluminum.) The concept is to start off with the smaller size (and for

younger students with small hands to stay with it for a while), then ultimately to work up to the larger sizes. The first two models are for "building" and "toning" the muscles; the largest size is for "sustaining" that conditioning once it is established. Terry Loose recommends warming up with the sticks for 15 minutes a day (on a pad or pad set *only*, not on any drum or kit) before going on with a regular practice routine with wooden sticks.

The sticks themselves are machined beautifully, and come with an unconditional lifetime guarantee. My only criticism is that the very small diameter of the *Student* model makes them difficult for an adult-sized hand to hold—considering their weight—and forces a fairly tight grip. But considering that they are not intended for developing finger technique, but rather for building wrist muscles and stamina, this may not be a major problem. If you are interested in using metal sticks—and I earnestly suggest you first discuss the idea with



teachers and/or other drummers you respect—*Power Wrist Builders* are well-made tools to use for such a program. They sell for \$49.95 per pair or \$149.95 for the complete set, and come in felt

sheathes to protect their finishes. For more information, contact The Talouse Group, 1434 Corte De Rosa, San Jose, CA 95120.



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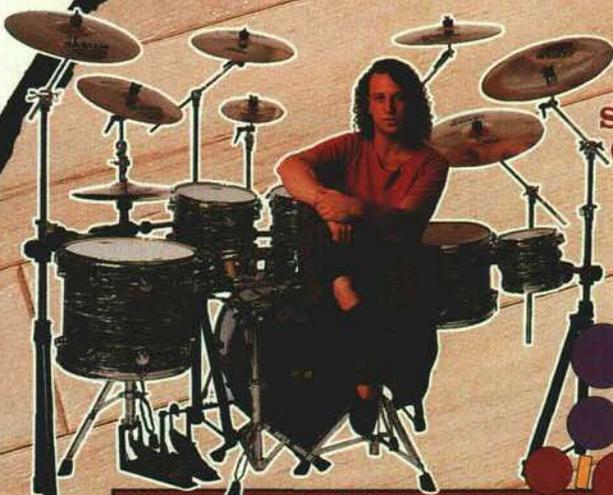
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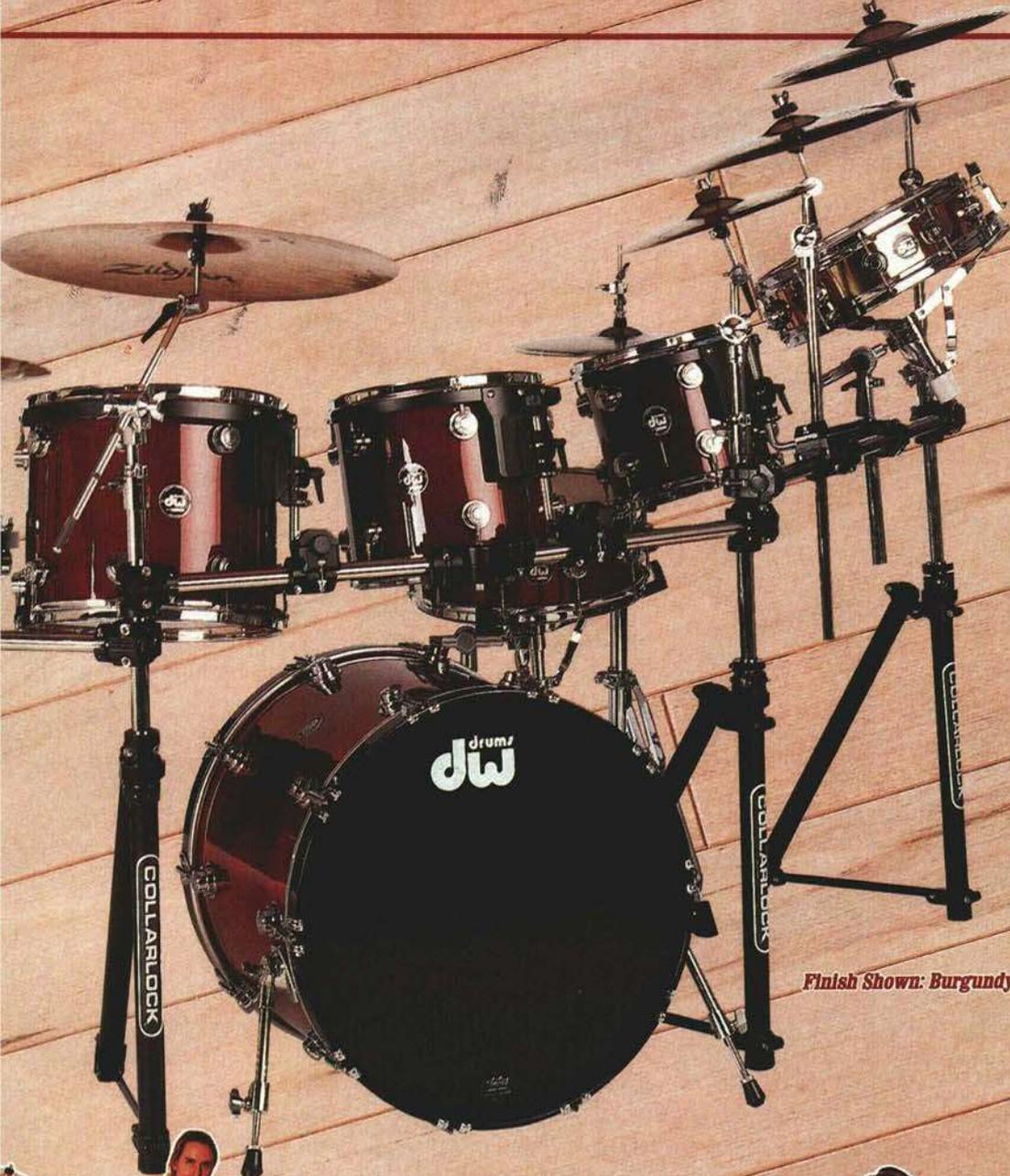
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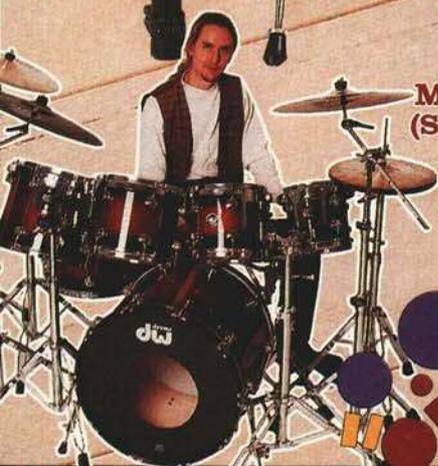
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Finish Shown: Black Oyster FinishPly™

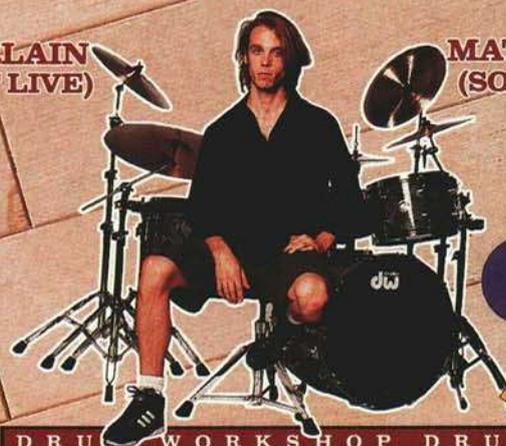
Finish



Finish Shown: Burgundy Transparent Lacquer (C-26)



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WORKSHOP PEDALS		
DRUM	HI-HAT	
5500T BD Pedal	5500T HH Stand	

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		9x13	
ZILDJIAN CYMBALS			
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		17"	
DRUM WORKSHOP PEDALS			
BASS DRUM		HI-HAT	
5000T BD Pedal		5500T HH Stand	

Tobacco Sunburst Lacquer

Finish Shown: Gray Slate FinishPly™

Slingerland Artist Power Custom Kit



Slingerland's *Artist Power Custom* drumsets feature 5-ply, 7mm, power-sized shells made with maple interiors and exteriors and mahogany cores. The shells are also cross-laminated to provide stability without the use of reinforcement rings, and are equipped with 45° bearing edges. Seven colors are available: natural maple, graphite metallic, white gloss, wine red maple, black gloss, emerald green, and bright blue. Standard five-piece sets include a 16x22 bass drum, 10x12 and 11x13 tom-toms, a 16x16 floor tom, and a 6 1/2x14 metal snare drum. A variety of sizes is available, as well as three different hardware series. **Slingerland, c/o Hohner/HSS, Inc., Lakeridge Park, 101 Sycamore Dr., Ashland, VA 23005, (804) 550-2700.**

Powr-Stix System

T&T Enterprises' *Powr-Stix System* is designed to aid drummers in developing strength and endurance. *Powr-Stix* sticks are turned aluminum and are specifically weighted to develop finger, wrist, and forearm muscles. T&T claims that though the sticks have enough weight to provide exercise, they are also playable. *Powr-Stix* pedal weights are designed to accomplish the same goal for the legs. The weights clamp on and off kick pedals, and, according to the makers, don't impede movement. **T&T Enterprises, P.O. Box 18197, Encino, CA 91416.**

Pad-L Practice Pad

Creative Projects' *Pad-L* practice pad is a portable, paddle-shaped product that is designed to strap onto a player's thigh and knee via two *Velcro* straps. The *Pad-L*'s neoprene pad section measures 3 1/2" x 1/4" and is attached to a 1/4"-thick acrylic base, which is backed by a 1/8"-thick neoprene sponge rubber cushion. The makers say that the *Pad-L* can also be used as a finger developer. By strapping the pad onto the back of one's wrist, wrist motion is decreased, causing the fingers to perform more to control the bounce of the stick. *Pad-L* is available in red and black. **Creative Projects, 1281 Ulupii St., Kailua, HI 96734, tel: (808) 262-2022, fax: (808) 537-1818.**



New From E-mu

According to its makers, E-mu's *Proteus/3 World* digital sample playback module differs from other units of its kind because of its selection of world-wide instrument sounds. The *Proteus/3 World* can be used to emulate traditional musical styles as well as to compose and perform contemporary compositions. Its 16-bit, CD-quality selection of wind, string, and percussion sounds was developed from E-mu's *Emulator III* library, and represents instruments such as didgeridu, Pacific Rim hula sticks, tabla, and Udu drums. E-mu states that a portion of proceeds from each *Proteus/3 World* sold will be given to the World of Music, Arts & Dance (WOMAD) foundation, which was founded in 1981 with the help of Peter Gabriel, and which seeks to raise awareness of worldwide artistic expression.

E-mu has also announced the integration of *G1.5 SoundEngine* technology into all members of its *Proteus* family of digital sample-based sound modules, which the company says will enable the reduction of suggested retail prices by 20-34%. **E-mu Systems, Inc., 1600 Green Hills Road, P.O. Box 660015, Scotts Valley, CA 95067-0015, tel: (408) 438-1921, fax: (408) 438-8612.**

Geddit? Expands Line

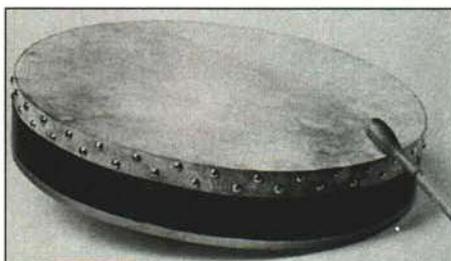
Geddit?, makers of changeable, non-adhesive drum coverings, now offers keyboard stand covers, stage backdrops, and speaker cabinet covers, which can be custom-designed with band logos or themes in all shapes and sizes. **Geddit?, 2260 S. Quebec, Suite 4, Denver, CO 80231, (303) 368-1900.**

Shure BetaGreen Mic's



Shure's new *BetaGreen* line of lower-cost microphones is aimed at aspiring musicians, and includes three dynamic and two condenser models. Some models feature neodymium magnets and "superior" shock isolation, and all models include an on-off switch and a rugged stand adapter. Four of the models come with a foam-padded, nylon carrying case. **Shure, 222 Hartrey Ave., Evanston, IL 60202-3696, (800) 25-SHURE.**

Saga Bodhran And Case



Saga's traditional Irish bodhrans are available in three models, all covered in natural goatskin. Double-ended sticks (called "kippers" or "tippers") come with each

instrument, and are available separately as well. In addition, Saga offers a bodhran bag that features a heavy-duty black exterior, thick padding, a smooth, non-scratch nylon interior, webbed nylon handles, a shoulder strap, and an exterior tipper pocket. Also available are 22"-diameter goatskin heads and an instructional book and tape package, Tony Sullivan's *The Bodhran Tutor*. **Saga Musical Instruments, Box 2841, South San Francisco, CA 94080, tel: (415) 588-5558 and (800) BUY-SAGA, fax: (415) 871-7590.**

S&S Stealth Electronic Bass Drum Pedal

S&S Industries claims that their *Stealth ST7000* bass drum trigger's streamlined wing-like design makes it the most compact unit on the market. The *ST7000* is made from cold-rolled steel and easily attaches to most bass drum pedals with its supplied reverse-angle beater. It features 1/4 outputs on both sides to facilitate either right- or left-sided setups. These dual outputs allow drummers to chain two *ST7000s* together and avoid

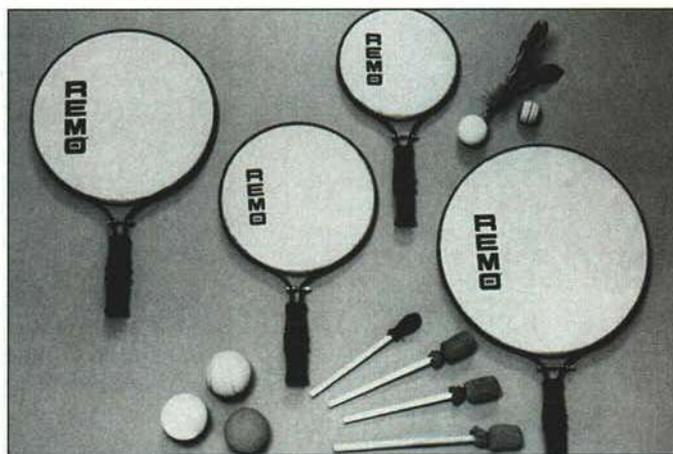
wasting inputs on sound/MIDI modules. S&S says that the unit's design, which securely houses the trigger in an "airtight compressive chamber" far from the actual impact point, eliminates false triggering and makes it feel more like an acoustic drum. **S&S Industries, 5406 Thornwood Dr., Suite 190, San Jose, CA 95123, tel: (408) 629-6434, fax: (408) 629-7364.**

Vibe Solo Book

Riohcat Music has recently released *Solo Vibraphone Collection* by Marlene Tachoir. The book consists of six unaccompanied four-mallet solos for vibes and is targeted at the beginning to intermediate player. According to the publisher, these original compositions are concert performance quality and are available at music shops or directly from the publisher: **Riohcat Music, P.O. Box 764, Hendersonville, TN 37075, tel: (615) 824-1435, fax: (615) 824-0797.**

Remo Paddle And Ocean Drums

Remo has made a couple of additions to their accessory percussion line. The company's *Paddle Drum* resembles a badminton racket, but with a drumhead in place of strings. The makers say



that the *Paddle Drum* can be hit either with hands, mallets, or balls, making it a combination hand drum/game. *Paddle Drums* are available individually or in sets including mallets, balls, or shuttlecocks.

Also new from the company is their *Ocean Drum*, which mimics sea sounds. The instrument is essentially a two-headed drum with hundreds of metal beads inside, which are rolled from side to side, causing wave-like sounds. *Ocean Drums* are available in 12", 16", and 22" sizes and come with a mallet. **Remo, Inc., 12804 Raymer St., North Hollywood, CA 91605, (800) 522-DRUM.**



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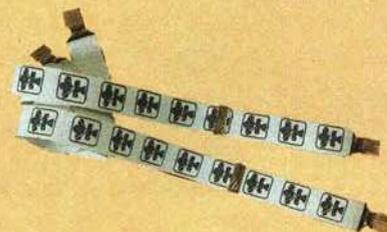
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Josh Freese

Teenage Groover With A Veteran's Resume

by Robyn Flans

Josh Freese's age has never stopped him. Now nineteen years old, he's been in the public eye since he was eleven. He started playing by the age of seven, after spending a lot of time with his dad—who directed the Disneyland band. "Instead of getting a babysitter," Josh recalls, "my mom used to let my brother and me hang with my dad every afternoon. I basically grew up at Disneyland, which is pretty strange. But it was fun, and I was around the band every day. I think every kid, at one time or another, wants to be an astronaut or a drummer."

By the time he was ten, Josh's parents realized that while his playing to Devo records was a good training ground, Josh really needed some formal lessons. Ron Romano taught him to read during his first few years of lessons. Later, at fourteen, Josh began instruction with Roy Burns. ("He taught me about life as well as drumming.") Previous to that, though, at his first NAMM show, Josh, then eleven years old, met some people from Simmons. At the time, they were making a line of affordable drums for the younger generation, and Josh was "just hanging out, banging away on the drumsets all weekend." Before he knew it, Simmons was flying him around to NAMM shows—a young "expert" of sorts. He was getting to know some of the drummers he looked up to—and, in fact, they were allowing him to sit in on gigs and sessions. It was an invaluable experience. The only problem was that Josh got tagged "an electronic drummer." "Everything I got hired for in the first four years of my professional life was for electronic drums," says Josh. "It got kind of monotonous having to play that all the time. I just wanted to play on a normal drumset *so* bad."

From age twelve to fifteen, though, Josh worked at Disneyland in a band called Polo as the electronic drummer alongside the original set player. Finally, at fifteen, he had a fortuitous experience. "I sent Dweezil Zappa a record I had played on and a bio," Josh recalls. "He had already done his first record with Chad Wackerman, and I wanted to get hooked up with him. Then I was working on an *ABC After School Special*, and since I missed school that day, I had to be with the tutor on the set with all the other kids. I happened to be wearing a Frank Zappa shirt. One of the other kids there was Ahmet, Dweezil's younger brother, and he said, 'That's my dad.' I told him I was playing drums on the show, and he invited me up to the house. We became really good friends. The second time I went over to the house, Dweezil was there and said, 'You're that guy who sent me that stuff.' He was working on his second record with



Terry Bozzio and Steve Smith, but I think he wanted a drummer to call his own. We also became good friends, and we began to play together with Scott Thunes, who has been Frank's bass player for the past ten years."

According to Josh, Scott Thunes really turned his musical head around. "There was about a four-year period where I refused to have anything to do with rock music," he says. "I was blinded by jazz and technique, thinking, 'How could I ever have enjoyed a Devo record?' But Scott is one of the most incredible musicians I know. And he turned me on to punk rock. He said, 'It's either Stravinsky and Copeland—or the Sex Pistols and the Clash.' Here was this guy who I worshipped telling me this, so I had to take another look. I'm pretty particular about the things I listen to now."

When Dweezil took time out to do his short-lived TV series, Josh went on tour with Michael Damian. And though that tour required Josh to be heavily involved with electronics once again, he says that there was at least one benefit to the experience. "Eleven out of the fourteen tunes we played had a click," Josh recalls, "so I was playing with a click for two hours a night for ten months. Now I use a click on about half the sessions I do. If the bass player and I have different views of where the downbeat is, I want a click track so we don't have to argue about it. My dad always stressed the idea of not rushing, but *pushing*. Playing behind the beat has its place for certain things, but as far as any mid-tempo to up-tempo things go, I think it's a lot more exciting and 'on the edge' to play on top of the beat."

When Josh returned to L.A. at the close of the Damian tour, it was a strange time for him. He had left school to work with Dweezil, and..."I thought I was the coolest thing on earth," he

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admits. "I was 16 and didn't have to answer to anybody. I was away from home, hanging with all these older people, meeting girls, making money. And even though it was very superficial, when you're that young you think, 'That's it, I'm rockin'!' We had agreed earlier that I was going to do correspondence schooling. They would send me out two weeks' worth of work, which I was supposed to complete and Fed Ex to my high school. But there I was on a Tuesday night in Japan, thinking, 'I don't have to do this, like they're really going to find me *here*.'

"I got back home and was backed up with work. After being home a month, I felt weird, like I was thirty years old, not seventeen. I wanted to go back to school to feel like a normal kid again. The first two weeks were fantastic, but then the cramming for tests and the long hours of detention became unbearable. Fortunately, at that time Dweezil said, 'It's time to make a record.' I felt pretty stupid going back to my parents to ask them to get me out of school again after they had gone to a lot of trouble to get me re-admitted in the first place."

But Josh says that his parents' support has been incredible, and for that, he is very grateful. "My dad has always been involved with music," says Josh, "and he knows how that game goes. My parents saw how involved I wanted to be and how badly I wanted it. My dad would drive me up from Orange County to the Baked Potato when I was twelve. I used to go there every weekend to see Vinnie Colaiuta play and have my mind blown. I took a few lessons from Gregg Bissonette when I was eleven or twelve, and my mom would drive me to the lessons and then up to Dweezil's house. It was very far to drive. And my folks would let me bang away at home all day long if I wanted. They're really proud now and happy for me. There are still times when things are on and off and they're not sure, but at the moment they're super excited about my band Xtra Large getting a deal, my working with Suicidal Tendencies and Infectious Grooves, and my getting to do a lot of different records, including the latest School of Fish album."

The recent situations occurred after Josh left Dweezil Zappa's band at the beginning of '92. After four years, it was not an easy decision to make. "It's difficult sometimes to separate the business from the friendship," Josh says, "but it was a business decision. I learned so many fantastic things from playing with him—like how to do things right on the moment that I would never think I would be able to do. There were times when he and Scott would ask me to play something totally against what

they were playing, and I'd think, 'Never in a million years.' But fifteen minutes later, I'd pull it off. Another thing I really learned was how to memorize stuff. We would learn so many new songs within a week's time. With the Suicidal Tendencies record, I had to learn all the demos two nights before we went in to record twelve tunes. But that was a piece of cake compared to what I had had to remember with Dweezil: twenty-minute instrumentals that were brain-wracking."

Josh came in contact with the Infectious Grooves/Suicidal Tendencies camp shortly after leaving Dweezil. Suicidal Tendencies asked him to join the band, but because of his own project, he wasn't able to—although he did get to record their latest album. And Infectious Grooves is a side project for all the members, so it gives their primary situations first priority. Right now, Josh's focus is definitely on Xtra Large and his own solo record.

"I'm really excited about Xtra Large," he says. "I'd describe the music as loud guitar, big drums, and powerful vocals. As for my own record, it's not really a drummer's record. I put drum machine on half the songs," he laughs. "I hack at a lot of instruments, so I'm playing everything—but I'm the first one to say it's nothing special. I just want to make a good record. If I wanted somebody to hear *my playing*, I would tell them to get a record I just played on, like Dweezil's record or Suicidal's record. My record is *songs*. I'm not trying to impress anyone with drum solos or anything."

At nineteen, it seems that Josh has the world at his fingertips. And he seems to be taking it very seriously and responsibly. Though very down-to-earth and mature, he's also a little hyper, which has led some people to draw erroneous conclusions

about him. "The morning after a trade show," Josh relates, "I got a phone call from one of the guys at a company I'm sponsored by. He said, 'Josh, you don't have to tell me if you do or you don't, because man, I've been there. I know the symptoms, I can see them a mile away. I know you're involved with drugs.' I started laughing. I wasn't offended; I was amused. The fact is my metabolism is crazy, I eat really poorly, and I smoke too many cigarettes. But I'm not interested in drugs. I've been a fan of Frank Zappa since I was twelve. I didn't just listen to his records; I watched his lectures and heard him speaking out against drugs. He made so much sense. I have too much to do with my life. Why would I let that get in my way?"

"I was away from home, hanging out with all these older people, meeting girls, making money. And even though it was very superficial, when you're that young you think, 'That's it, I'm rockin'!'"



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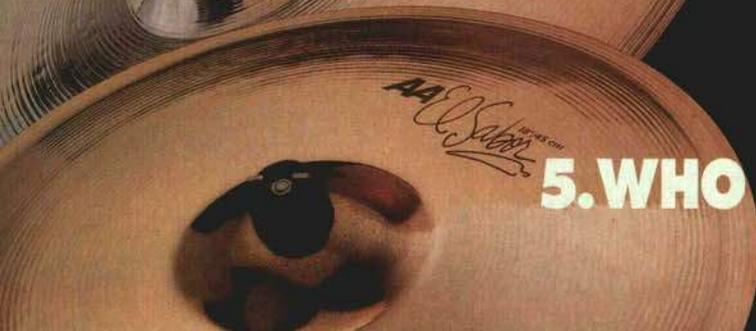



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RULES

- Submit answers on standard-sized postcard or coupon. Also, include your name, address, telephone number and T-shirt size.
- Your entry must be postmarked by December 1, 1992. The draw will take place December 7. Cymbal winners will be notified by telephone immediately. One prize only per winner.
- Enter as many times as you wish, but each entry must be mailed separately.
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Drummers Recycle!



by David Garibaldi

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R.H.	X	L.H.	X
H.H.	X	H.H.	X
S.D.	X		X
B.D.	X		X
H.H.	X		X
w/foot	X		X

Many new ideas can arise simply by recycling some older ones. This study comes from a previous *MD* article I wrote entitled "Study In 8th-Note Triplets," which appeared in the *Rock Perspectives* column in August 1985. The same material is also

included in my book, *Future Sounds*, where it is entitled "Permutation Study #13." (I'm sure you'll agree that those two previous titles are passe and unimaginative and that the new title is '90s and witty!) I also changed the time signature from one bar of 4/4 to two bars of 6/8 to avoid having to write those little "3's" over everything.

This new approach expands the exercises to include a second hi-hat and a floor tom. By moving the hands to alternate sound sources, the rhythm shown in these examples begins to sound quite different. Once the exercises can be performed comfortably, try permutating them.

The following examples sound good at a tempo of dotted quarter = 100. All hi-hat notes shown with an R below them should be played with the right hand on a mounted hi-hat (or other sound source) on the right side of the kit. The hi-hat notes indicated on the third space with an L below them should be played with the left hand on the regular hi-hat.

1
R R R L L R R R R L L

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

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

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

5
R R R L L R R R R L L

6
R R R L L R R R R L L

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continued from page 27

Barre Phillips (*Three Day Moon*).

When Gurtu came to Woodstock, New York to teach at the Creative Music Studio, he met two percussionists who would both have an impact on his career. The first was Nana Vasconcelos, with whom Gurtu toured Europe as a duo, and who has worked with Trilok on many occasions since, including Gurtu's recent CMP album, *Living Magic*.

Gurtu also met Collin Walcott, the tabla player with the group Oregon. The two became fast friends, and when Walcott was killed in a tragic bus accident while Oregon was touring Europe in November 1984, the surviving members of the group agreed that the only person who could possibly replace him was Trilok. It is an association that has continued to this day. "I have toured America with Oregon four or five times," Gurtu says, "and I play with them in Europe a lot. I haven't played with them in America for a while because it is very difficult financially, but we still make records together."

In 1988 Gurtu played a European jazz festival with his own group, which included Nana Vasconcelos and Charlie Mariano. John McLaughlin's revived Mahavishnu Orchestra was on the same program. "While we were playing," Gurtu recalls, "backstage they were dancing like crazy. Afterwards, John came up to me and said, 'Maybe we should play together.' So he came to my house and we played. And we've been playing ever since."

In the past—especially with the various Mahavishnu bands—McLaughlin has tended to be a very loud player. Indeed, when Danny Gottlieb became the Mahavishnu drummer, he had to switch to bigger drums, cymbals, and sticks in addition to playing as hard as he possibly could to keep up with McLaughlin's volume demands. But in the current John McLaughlin trio, the emphasis is often on how *softly* the group can play.

That's not to say that Gurtu doesn't get loud when the need arises, but he never has to play especially hard to do so. Because he is able to play *so* softly, a stroke that would generally be consid-

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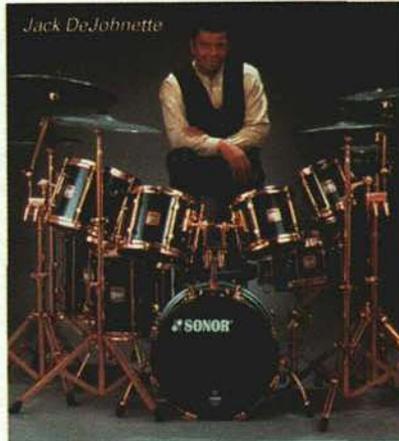
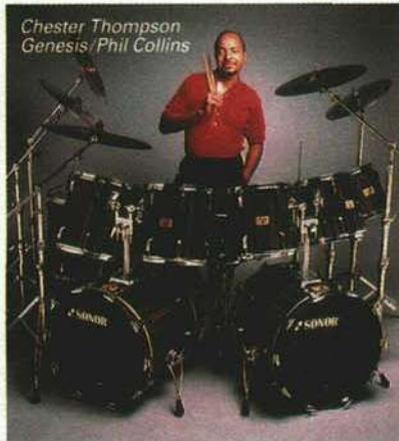
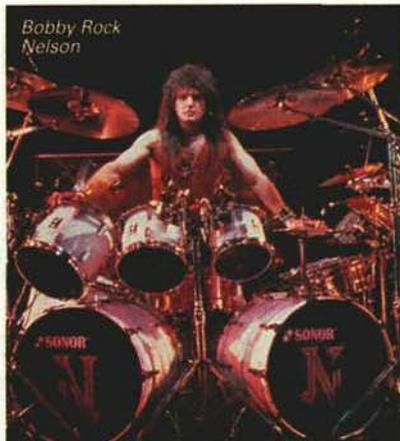
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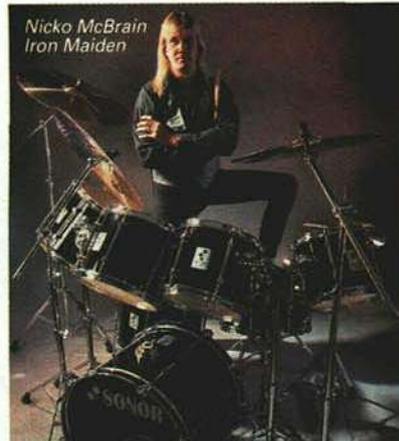
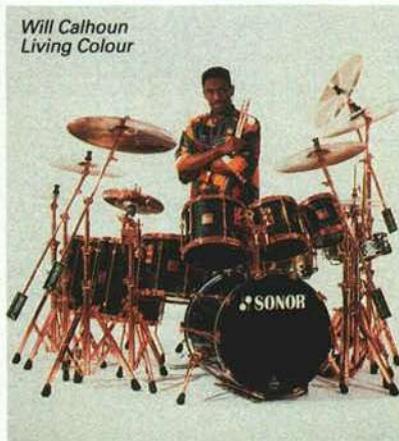
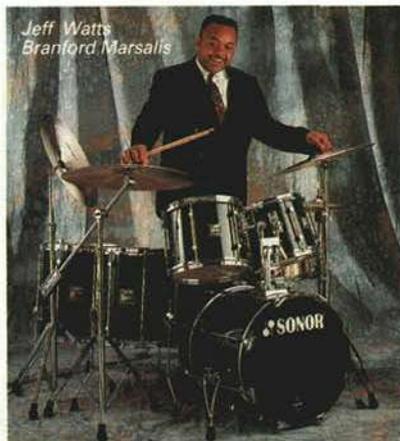
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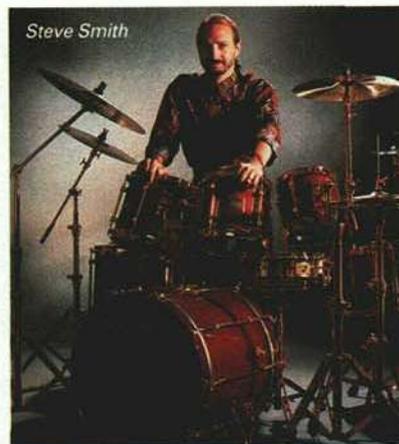
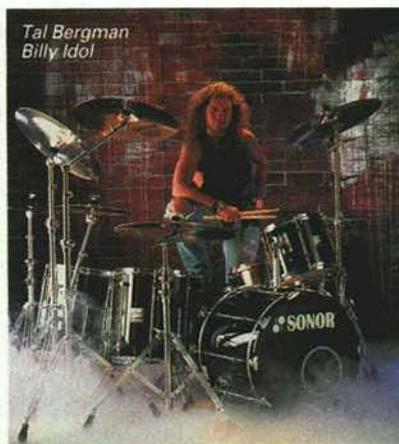
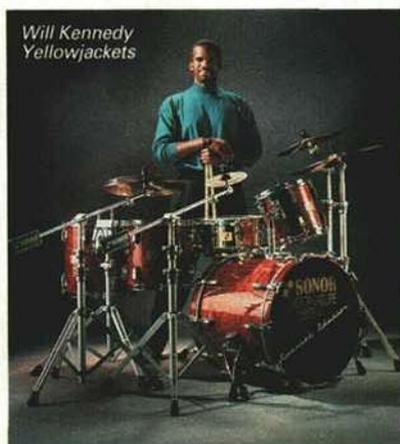
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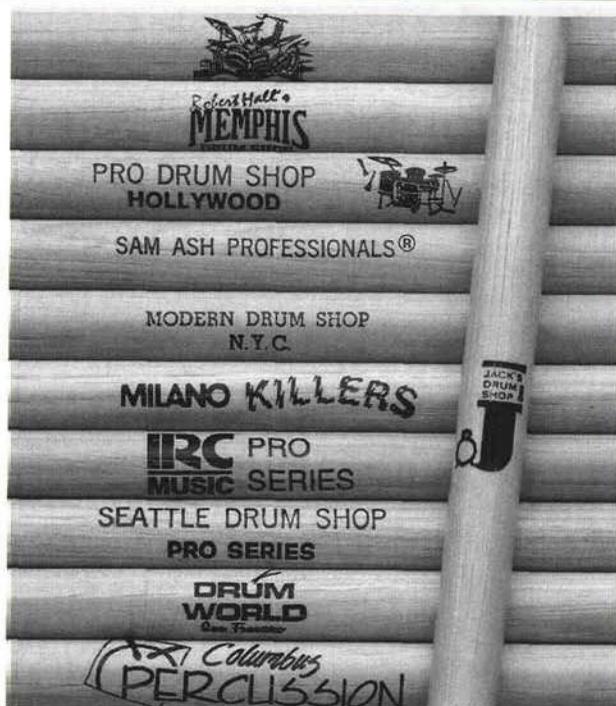


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ered moderate sounds much louder than it really is, simply because of the contrast. Gurtu has a much wider dynamic range than most drummers, but he has achieved it by extending it on the soft end, rather than on the loud side.

"Being able to play soft comes from Indian music," Gurtu says. "You cannot play loud all the time. You have to listen carefully to what everybody is doing to be able to react. That comes from classical training, but you can also hear it in Miles Davis. Every great musician has that trait.

"But playing soft is very hard, because when you are really into it, it's hard to keep the volume down and maintain a fast tempo. It's just a matter of doing it all the time and being aware of it. And then, when you finally play loud, it's like a great relief, and it's also a surprise. Nothing is a surprise if it's just the same all the time.

"And when you play soft, people listen harder, like, 'What's he saying?' It's like talking: You talk at different levels, soft and loud. Music is like that. You are communicating, so you can't just shout everything, or no one will be listening to anybody."

Trilok's setup reflects the softer dynamics with which he plays. The instruments are close together so that he can move from one to another easily. Were he making large arm movements for volume's sake, the arrangement would be cramped. But it's a setup designed for finesse, not power.

Gurtu sits within the setup rather than behind it. There is no drum stool; a large Persian rug covers the area, and Gurtu always removes his street shoes before stepping onto it—a gesture that has more to do with showing respect for the area he is entering than with merely keeping the carpet clean. While performing, sometimes he sits crosslegged, sometimes he kneels, sometimes he crouches.

Even though Trilok's instruments are close together, he must frequently move to different spots, as he cannot reach everything from one position because there are so many of them. The array of instruments are roughly divided into three groups: the drumset, which is to the right of the setup, the tabla and small

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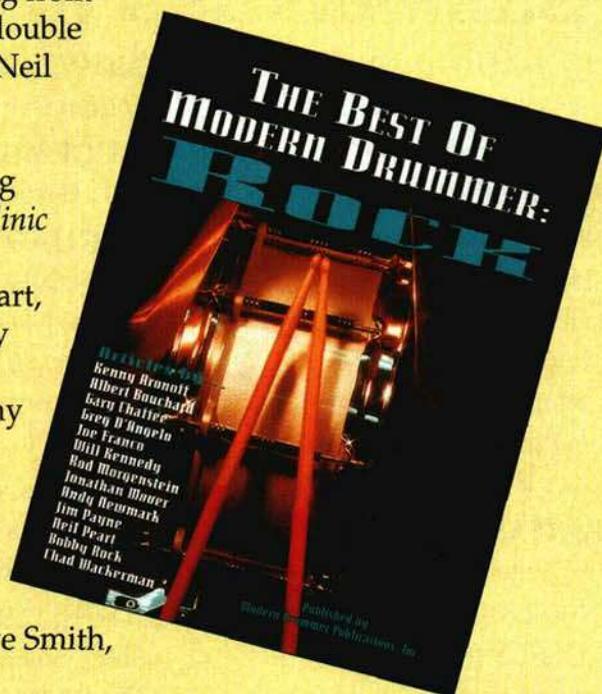
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percussion, which is on the left, and the gongs and bells, which are at the back of the drum platform. But Gurtu does not necessarily confine himself to one area at a time. He sometimes sits midway between two groups of instruments, such as when he plays a tabla with his left hand and uses a brush on the snare drum with his right.

Gurtu sees no problem with mixing sounds from different cultures, such as the aforementioned Indian tabla com-

bined with American brushes on snare drum, or using a tabla to play bop, as he did during his spontaneous jam with McLaughlin in the dressing room. "It's not like because I'm from India I have to play Indian," he says. "No. I just relate to the music. Of course, I do come from India so my roots *are* there, but that doesn't stop me from playing with musicians from all over the world. We all play music together. The best is when you all cooperate and make the music happen,

not say, 'I'm from here and you're from there.' That doesn't work.

"Tabla and drums are the same to me. Drums are actually a very recent instrument, but the tabla and conga go way back. So whatever you put on the drums is not coming from drums alone, it is coming from congas and timbales and tabla. Everything on the kit is borrowed. Basic drum patterns all come from Africa."

The centerpiece of the drumset area of Gurtu's setup is a 10" Brady snare drum mounted on a short conga stand that lifts it only a couple of inches above the floor. When Gurtu sits back on his ankles, his arms are in a fairly natural position in relation to the drum, but when he raises up—as he often does to play the hi-hat or to reach one of his cymbals—his sticks are aimed down at the drumhead at a rather severe angle.

Directly above the snare drum is a wooden frame with 6", 8", and 10" tomtoms mounted in a triangular pattern, made by the English company Melanie. The frame is actually just a flat piece of metal with circular holes cut into it, each hole covered by a drum rim and drum-

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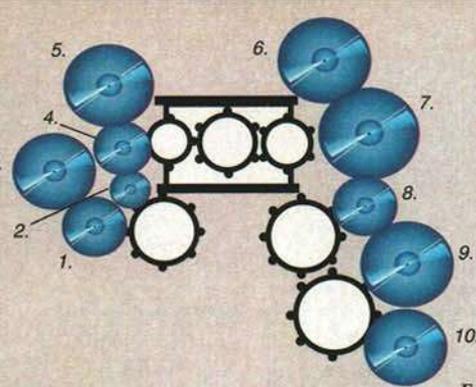


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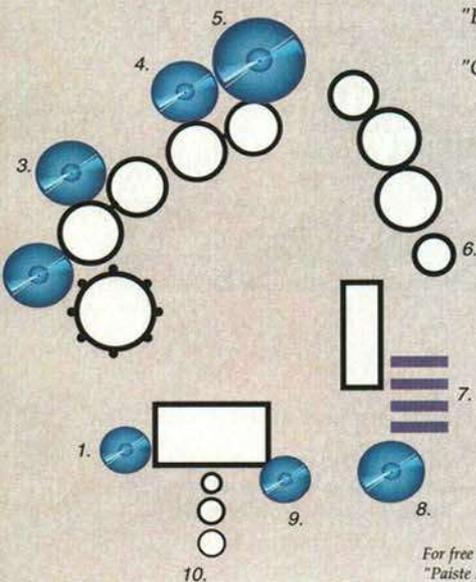
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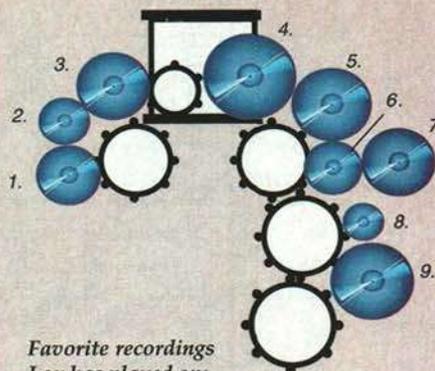


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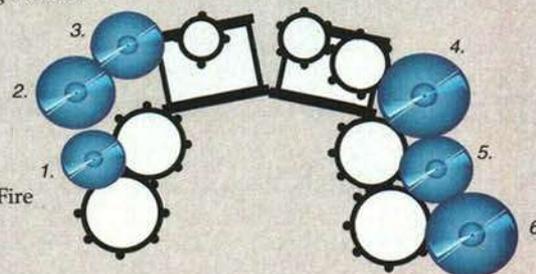
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head. They almost look like Roto-Toms, but they don't rotate. To the right of the snare drum, in the regular floor-tom position, is a similar 14" drum.

The single most unique characteristic of Gurtu's drumset is his lack of a traditional foot-operated bass drum. He played one in clubs early in his career, but ultimately decided to abandon it. "After a while," he recalls, "everything sounded so alike to me. Every drummer had a bass drum and played it the same basic way. I couldn't express myself as well just playing the American kit, but I played a lot of percussion and tablas and congas, and also used vocals, so in 1982 I decided that I was going to incorporate everything. Some people would only call me for drumset, some for tabla, some only for percussion. I said, 'Stop. Why do I have to do separate gigs to use all my instruments? From now on, when somebody calls me, they call me for what I am—all of it.'

"I had a kit like this when I first started out, just because I didn't have a real drumset. So I went back to that. At first, I didn't have the toms and everything I

have now. I just gradually built it up. So now, everything I do is with my setup. I never go without it. If you want traditional drumset, you should call someone else. If you want me to play, then I need my kit. I tell people that they should come and listen to me at a concert. And when they hear me, they say, 'Yes, we want you for our gig,' because I don't sound like anybody else. And then they say, 'But you have a bass drum, no?' And I say, 'No, I *don't* have a bass drum. But it sounds like I do.'

While Gurtu may not have a bass drum in the traditional sense, he does produce bass drum sounds from his two lowest-pitched toms, which he plays with sticks. In fact, for all practical purposes he's often playing double bass, as his sticks dart back and forth between low toms, snare, hi-hat and cymbals. "That's why my sticking is so different," he comments. "But you can play a lot of bass drum with one hand. In my own way I can express funk or do a shuffle. But I like to leave a lot of space. It's not busy all the time, like a lot of drummers."

Much of the bass drum sound, as well

as his tom sound, is coming from the way Gurtu's drums are processed by the sound tech. At the Park West sound-check, when Gurtu first struck the individual drums to check the tuning before the mic's were turned on, the frame-mounted drumheads produced only dull thuds. Once the sound reinforcement came into play, the drums sounded full and resonant.

"In a small room they would sound better," Gurtu explained at the time. "They do have some bottom, but this is a huge room and the drums are too small to fill it. Chris Brady is making me some new toms with wood shells, so when I get those, acoustically it will sound like what is electric now. Chris Brady is a great drum maker," Gurtu added, looking down at his snare drum and smiling. "When I went to Australia and played his drums, wow! They sounded amazing. I'd never heard drums like that."

Gurtu's cymbals are all Zildjians. He has two sets of hi-hats: a pair of 12" hats mounted closed on a stand to his right, and a pair of 13's on his left, mounted on a sawed-off hi-hat pedal—not a vintage

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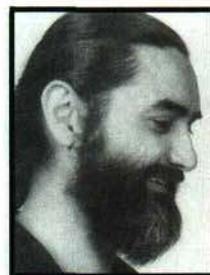
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low-boy, but the same idea. He plays it with his foot by extending his left leg almost straight out in front of him while kneeling on his right knee. It looks extremely uncomfortable, and almost seems to defy gravity, but he can operate the pedal with as much finesse as any normal-positioned drummer. Usually he kneels straight up when playing the hi-hat, but sometimes settles back on his right ankle.

"It depends on how I want to play the hi-hat," he explains. "If I want it louder or really crisp, then I raise up. If I want it open and light, then I sit. Of course," he admits with a sheepish smile, "sometimes I sit because I'm tired. It's tiring to play on my knees every day like that. I have to take a rest occasionally. I went through a lot of pain in Italy playing with Oregon. I had to have injections. Any drummer can get arthritis from using his limbs all the time, so I guess it's normal. But I have to try not to overdo it."

Occasionally, during an odd-meter tune, Gurtu's left foot will be playing a clave-like pattern on the hi-hat. Is he keeping tala? "Yeah yeah," he says. "Sometimes I do it as a reference for the

whole group, just to bring it together. Once the group knows where it is, then we can go out. I don't do that all the time. If I find we need it, I do it just for a while."

Above the toms Gurtu has a pang and a K flatride, both 18". To his right is a 22" A Custom with four rivets, which is Trilok's primary ride cymbal. Given the low volume level at which the McLaughlin trio often plays, Gurtu is able to make the most of the nuances of the cymbal. "Zildjian picked that cymbal out for me," Gurtu says. "Colin [Schofield] told me, 'We've got a cymbal for you.' When I played it, *yeahhhhhh!* It sounds great and doesn't bother anybody. I can play fast on that cymbal and it just flows. The cup sounds nice, too."

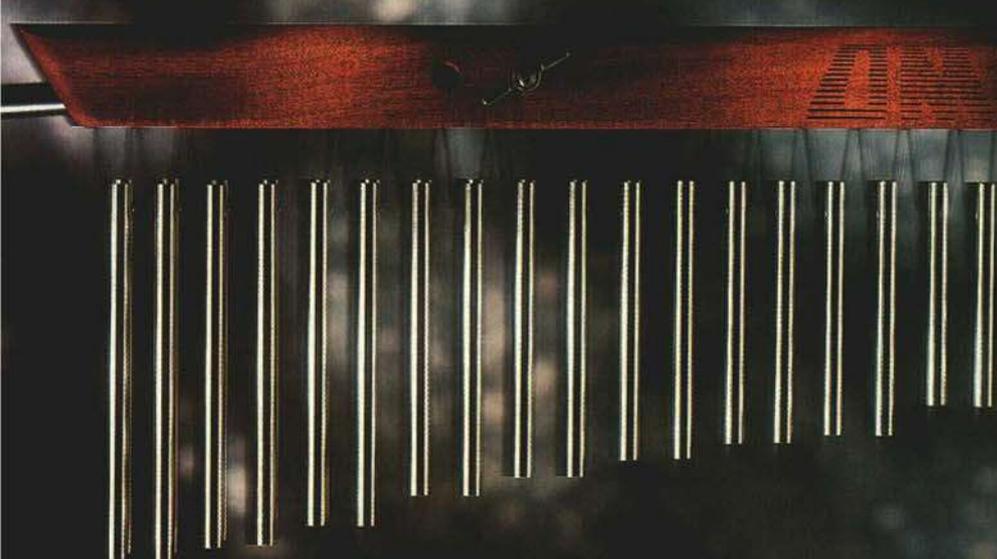
When Gurtu plays bop patterns on the ride cymbal very soft and very fast, his wrist barely moves and the stick stays close to the cymbal, which keeps the volume down. The speed comes entirely from the fingers. "Playing hand drums helped me with that," he says. "When I play tabla, it's very loose in the wrist, and all of the fingers are strong. So when I want to do this with the sticks," he says,

holding his right hand up and miming finger control of a drumstick, "I can really control the stick better. And that makes it easier to play soft, because it is very difficult to play fast and intense while you are also playing soft."

Gurtu doesn't have any crash cymbals, as such. Instead, he has three K splashes—8", 10", and 12"—mounted one above the other on a single stand. Again, the low volume of the group lets him make the most of the splashes, delivering explosive punctuations that never obliterate the other instruments. "Splash cymbals need to be worn out," Gurtu contends. "When you first buy them, they have a lot of metal sound with a lot of overtones like a bell. I *hate* that, so I tape them a little bit and play them for a while. After you play them and play them and play them you can remove the tape and they sound good. They have this...*quality*."

The percussion side of Gurtu's setup is anchored by a pair of tablas, which he often uses on the more Indian-sounding tunes, but which he is just as likely to use for funk or Latin-sounding patterns. At first listen, many of Gurtu's tabla pat-

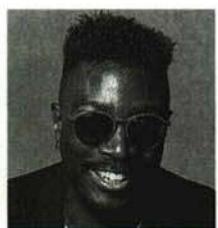
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 Snare Drum: Coated Ambassador
 Bass Drum: Clear PowerStroke 3
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TRIS IMBODEN
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 Bass Drum: Coated Ambassador
 Tom Batters: Coated Ambassador
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GARY NOVAK
 Snare Drum: Coated Ambassador
 Bass Drum: Clear PinStripe
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 Bass Drum: Sm. White CS Black Dot
 Tom Batters: Clear CS Black Dot
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DOANE PERRY
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 Bass Drum: Clear Emperor
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JOHN (J.R.) ROBINSON
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 Snare Drum: Coated PinStripe
 Bass Drum: Clear PinStripe
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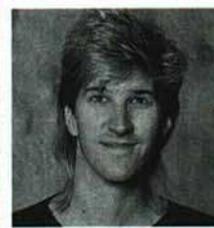
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 Tom Batters: Legacy LA
 Tom Bottoms: Legacy LA



MATT SORUM
 Snare Drum: Coated Emperor
 Bass Drum: Clear PinStripe
 Tom Batters: Clear PinStripe
 Tom Bottoms: Clear Diplomat



CHESTER THOMPSON
 Snare Drum: Coated Ambassador
 Bass Drum: Clear PinStripe
 Tom Batters: Clear Emperor
 Tom Bottoms: Clear Ambassador



CHAD WACKERMAN
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terns seem to be incomprehensibly complex. But as the ears become accustomed to the sounds and rhythms, one realizes that the rhythmic movement is very consistent, like straight 16th notes. The fact that the drums are producing so many different sounds and volumes, from high-pitched pops to ghost notes, gives shape to the rhythms as well as

momentum. "That's very important in music," Gurtu comments. "You cannot just play everything the same way. It has to have a lot of dynamics."

There are five temple blocks mounted above Gurtu's tablas, and he often plays them with a stick or mallet in the right hand while the left hand strikes the blocks with a coconut shell, producing

an especially resonant, hollow sound, like a giant castanet. Watching his hands deftly manipulate the mallet and shell over the five blocks, one is amazed at how many sounds he is producing, and then you discover that he is also making vocal "klook" sounds with his tongue, which perfectly blend with the wood sounds of the blocks.

To the left of the tablas are various sound effects and small percussion instruments: shakers, rocks, cowbells, a duck call, hand cymbals, a small metal drum with a large spring coming from the head, and assorted bells. There is also a coiled wire attached to a small handle. "A friend of mine in Australia made this for me," Gurtu says, striking the coils with a small metal rod and producing a sound very similar to the Indian stringed instrument called veena, which is often used as a drone-like accompaniment for sitar. Trilok uses his instrument in a similar way to accompany McLaughlin's guitar.

Perhaps the most unusual object in Gurtu's setup, and the most effective, is the plastic pail of water that sits in front of his 22" Wuhan gong. At one point during the McLaughlin concert, Trilok held a smaller gong suspended by a cord with his left hand and a yarn mallet with his right. He struck the small gong first, and then dipped it into the pail as he struck the large gong. As the small gong went into the water, its pitch began to bend downward. That sound, combined with the low tones from the large gong, creat-

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ed an effect that was beautifully eerie.

Gurtu continued to alternate between the two gongs. Occasionally he would strike the top of the small gong while the rest of the instrument was under water, and as he pulled it out of the pail, the pitch would bend upwards. He clicked the mallet handle against the side of the pail from time to time, producing high-pitched staccato bursts that contrasted sharply against the ultra-low legato gong tones. He also blew "shuussssss" sounds into the large gong with his mouth, which blended with the gong's overtones to create an ocean-wave texture.

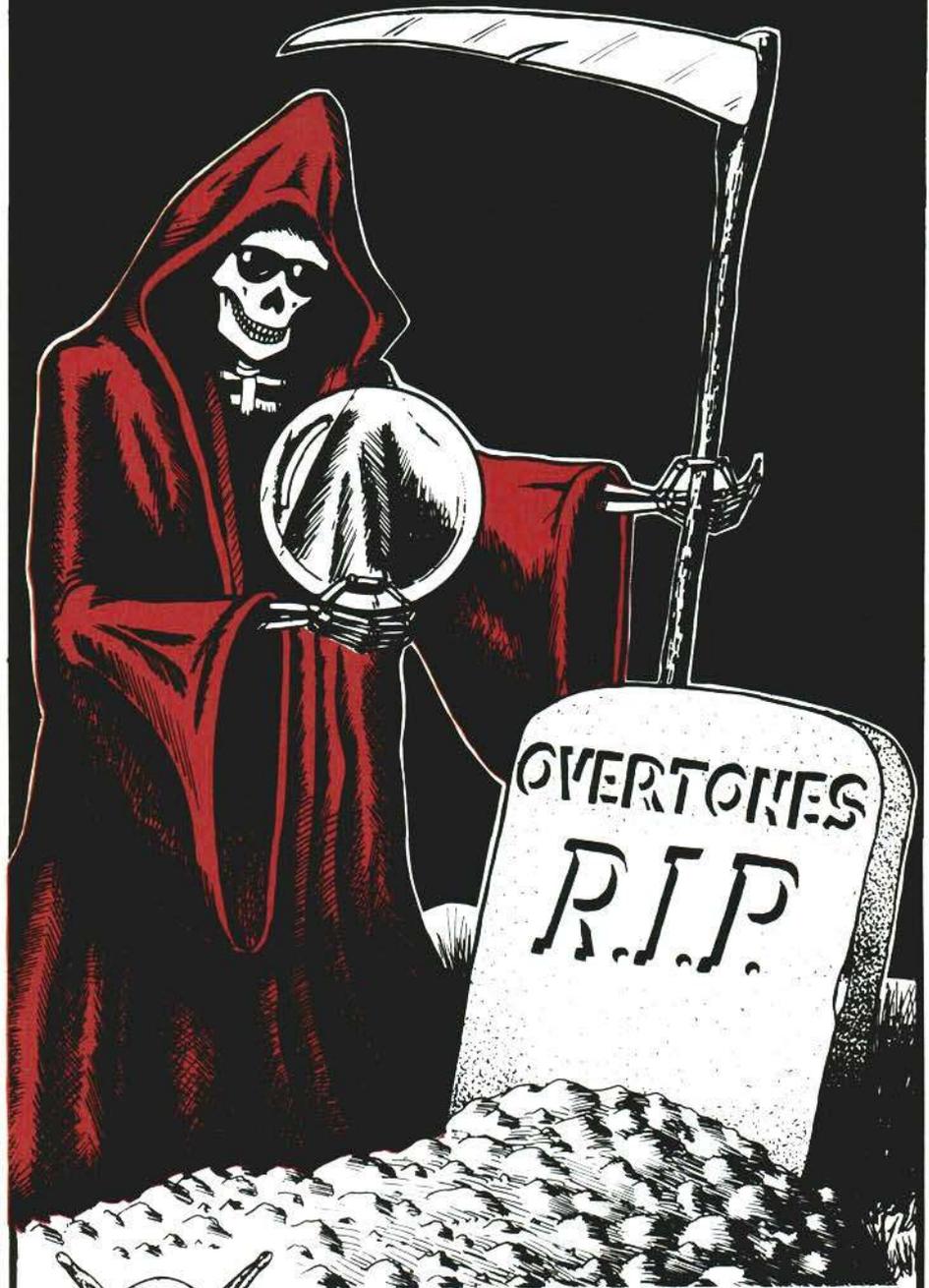
The most dramatic effect of all occurred when Trilok picked up a strap hung with bells, shook it gently as though it were blowing in a gentle breeze, and suddenly plunged it into the pail. The resulting "swoosh" was like butter thrown into a hot skillet.

"Water is an element," Gurtu says later, when complimented on his use of it. "It's natural, like air, earth, and fire. You can make a lot of sounds with water. I think it's becoming my trademark; I use water all the time. When I hit the small gong, and then hit the lower gong and hold it, I get a lot of harmonies. Then, when I put the smaller one in the water, the pitch goes down, and that creates a tension."

An important characteristic of Gurtu's playing is the constant presence of a time flow, even when he's doing things that most would consider mere "color." When playing a shaker, there is always an ebb and flow of dynamics, creating an ocean-like pulse. And when he dips a gong into water, the pitch bend is creating its own movement in time. "There is always time," Gurtu says. "You use the force of the sound to create a dynamic and it still has the time. It's not just sounds. It should have meaning."

Gurtu admits that it can sometimes be difficult dealing with so many instruments. "I get up in the morning and see my drums and start playing them. But then I see the tabla lying there and I say, 'Ah, you haven't had enough attention,' so I start playing tabla. And then I see a CD and I think, 'I haven't heard that music yet. I have to listen to it,' and the whole day goes like that," he says, shaking his head and laughing.

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While watching the McLaughlin trio perform, it's clear to see that the members are constantly supporting each other. "When you are accompanying," Gurtu says, "you make the other guy stand out. When John does that seven against five, I keep it simple so that whatever he plays sounds clearer. If you can make someone else sound good, that's a compliment. If you can see that he's trying to go somewhere, feed him."

"I learned a lot of this from my mother. For example, if a singer is singing low notes softly, the accompanist shouldn't stay loud. You have to be able to hear what the singer is singing. Otherwise, you could just have a metronome or a drum machine. Listening and feeling is important, not being selfish when you play. Drummers get bothered about, 'Oh, this drummer is in the audience, and that drummer is here....' Who cares? When you are on stage with other people, you are playing music and feeling each other—not showing off. When your time comes to show off, then you can show off. But when you play simple, people respond to that. Elvin can play simple. Tony can play simple. And their simplicity is like magic."

But Gurtu's pride in being a good accompanist should not be mistaken for a willingness to be in a subservient role. When it is his turn to take the lead, he expects other musicians to accompany him with the same sensitivity that he used in supporting them. Indeed, McLaughlin returned the favor on many

occasions during the Park West concert, such as when he provided gentle, strummed chords behind Trilok's gongs-and-water feature. "John takes care," Trilok says, nodding. "You can depend on him. It's never a competition. That's what is special with this group. I hate competition. I would leave a situation if I felt there was competition."

While Gurtu understands that a group must often have a leader who provides a focal point, he does not accept the "sideman" role that many players are forced into. "Drummers have to take a lot of shit," Gurtu says with disgust. "But drummers need to give some shit, too. Not in a negative sense, but in a musical sense. They should make things happen. 'Sideman' means only that another musician has a bigger name, but would he sound good by himself? A good band is not one person. It's a combination of people who play like that together."

"Some people get a big name, and if they come across something they don't know, they don't want to deal with it. They are afraid of what will happen to their name. But it should be the opposite way: When you encounter something you don't know, you should be happy that you have found something new you can learn. Every honest musician is searching for something new, not satisfied with what he's got. Right now I'm trying to learn more about harmony. Piano players and guitar players can write better harmony chords than I can, but I'm not running away from it. I'm trying to learn."

"Sometimes when I play bad on a gig, I'm sitting there thinking, 'I'm so sorry. I played like a donkey for you guys, and here you are clapping.' I have to think it over and figure out how I can play better. It's not because of ego, it's just out of love for music. If I am doing something that is not right, I must learn to do it correctly. We have to keep on learning and never say, 'Okay, that's enough.' It's never enough."



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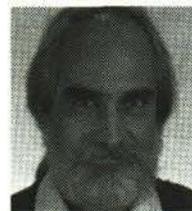
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Half-Time Shuffle Grooves

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The half-time shuffle is a popular rhythm that's been used in rock, R&B, fusion, and jazz for some time. Look at example 1 below, where the standard shuffle pattern is stated on the hi-hat. Once the bass drum is added on 1, along with an accented snare drum on 3, the basic half-time shuffle feel is in place.

We can now vary the bass drum part to create more rhythmic interest and to give the shuffle more of a solid groove. Note that the snare drum is *always* accented on 3 in all the musical examples. The bass drum is the only variable, weaving between the hi-hat shuffle and the snare drum accent. Practice these examples slowly at first, until you become comfortable with each one.

In the next seven examples, we add new snare drum variations. Keep in mind that these additional snare drum notes are to be played as ghost strokes—implied more than heard. Again, the snare drum is accented on 3 only, so that the half-time feel is always predominant.

After you've gained facility with the one-bar patterns, move ahead to the two-bar combinations. Here again, the same rules apply in terms of accents and ghost strokes. Try these at different tempos from slow to medium, and then experiment with your own patterns.

The image displays eight numbered musical staves, each representing a two-bar drum pattern in 4/4 time. Each staff consists of two lines of music. The top line contains eighth notes, with 'x' marks above them indicating ghost strokes. The bottom line contains eighth notes, with some notes having an accent (>) above them. Brackets labeled '3' are placed under groups of three notes, indicating triplet rhythms. The patterns are as follows:

- Staff 1:** Top line: x 7 x x 7 x x 7 x x 7 x. Bottom line: 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7. Triplet brackets are under the first three and last three notes of the bottom line. Accents are on the 4th and 7th notes.
- Staff 2:** Top line: x 7 x x 7 x x 7 x x 7 x. Bottom line: 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7. Triplet brackets are under the first three and last three notes of the bottom line. Accents are on the 2nd and 5th notes.
- Staff 3:** Top line: x 7 x x 7 x x 7 x x 7 x. Bottom line: 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7. Triplet brackets are under the first three and last three notes of the bottom line. Accents are on the 2nd and 5th notes.
- Staff 4:** Top line: x 7 x x 7 x x 7 x x 7 x. Bottom line: 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7. Triplet brackets are under the first three and last three notes of the bottom line. Accents are on the 2nd and 5th notes.
- Staff 5:** Top line: x 7 x x 7 x x 7 x x 7 x. Bottom line: 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7. Triplet brackets are under the first three and last three notes of the bottom line. Accents are on the 2nd and 5th notes.
- Staff 6:** Top line: x 7 x x 7 x x 7 x x 7 x. Bottom line: 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7. Triplet brackets are under the first three and last three notes of the bottom line. Accents are on the 2nd and 5th notes.
- Staff 7:** Top line: x 7 x x 7 x x 7 x x 7 x. Bottom line: 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7. Triplet brackets are under the first three and last three notes of the bottom line. Accents are on the 2nd and 5th notes.
- Staff 8:** Top line: x 7 x x 7 x x 7 x x 7 x. Bottom line: 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7. Triplet brackets are under the first three and last three notes of the bottom line. Accents are on the 2nd and 5th notes.

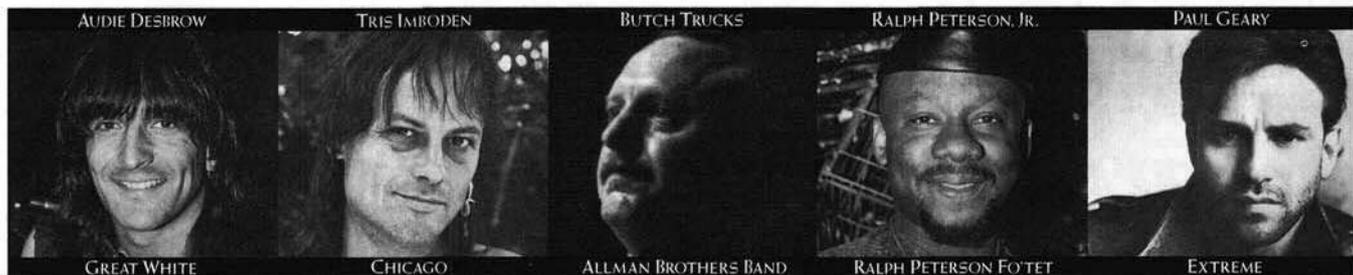
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10

11

12

Musical notation for four staves (9-12) showing a complex drum pattern. Each staff begins with a triplet of eighth notes (marked '3') and continues with a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, often grouped in triplets. Accents (>) are placed over various notes. The notation is presented on a grand staff with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature.



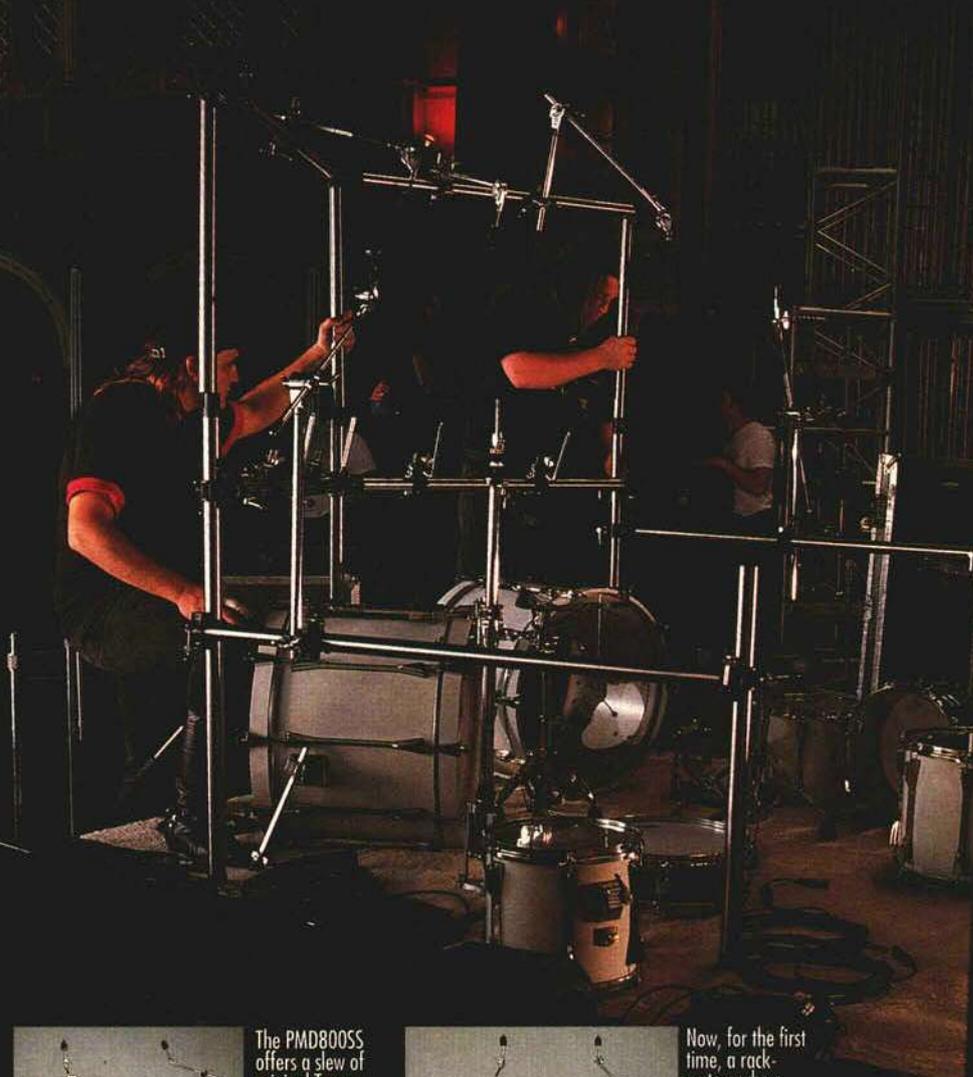
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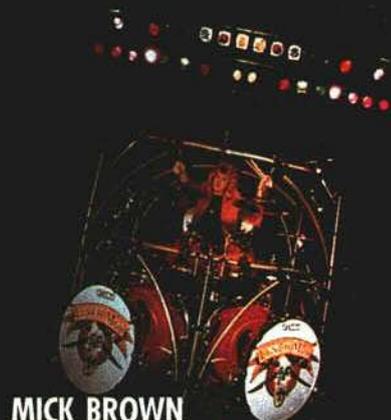
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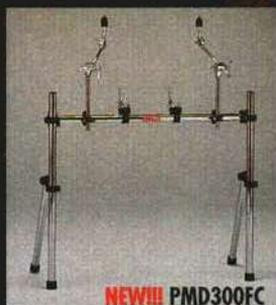


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Adrian Belew

■ by Robyn Flans

If you've ever looked at the back of any Adrian Belew album, you know he plays most of the instruments most of the time. But maybe what you didn't realize was that Belew actually began his musical quest at the age of ten as a drummer, growing up in Cincinnati.

From fifteen years old on, Belew alternated between guitar and drums in the bands with which he played. In 1975, Frank Zappa found him in Nashville in a band called Sweetheart. The job with Zappa led to several sideman stints with such artists as David Bowie, David Byrne, Herbie Hancock, Talking Heads, Laurie Anderson, and Paul Simon. In 1981, Adrian became the lead singer/co-guitarist in the re-formed King Crimson, who recorded three albums over the next few years.

Of particular note, though, is Belew's solo work. He doesn't consider himself a great drummer or even a great guitarist but rather a total recording artist. In 1982, he recorded Lone Rhino, followed a year later by Twang Bar King. In 1986, he released Desire Caught By The Tail. Mr. Music Head was released in 1989, Young Lions a year later, and most recently, Inner Revolution. In 1987 and 1988 he fronted a band called the Bears, who released two albums.

Through it all, Belew's varied knowledge of instruments was called upon, because to him, recording solo means solo. He likes it that way except when he feels a need to call upon some other musical experts to augment his talents. Thus, both being a drummer and having occasion to hire drummers for record projects or tours give Belew an interesting perspective on the job requirements.

RF: Let's talk about some of the drummers you've worked with.

AB: For my first solo album, I played the drums myself. For the second album, *Twang Bar King*, I thought it might be better to have a full live band at my disposal to try things with.

I chose to work with Larrie Londin because I thought he was an incredible drummer—very powerful. He just put all the things in the right places, and he had that certain feel that's just behind the beat, which makes songs motivate a certain way. There were lots of things on the record that he played that obviously I couldn't play. One in particular is his interpretation of "The Rail Song." It's a song about a train, and Larrie sounds like an intensely powerful locomotive. There were a couple of times that he and I worked together as double drummers on *Twang Bar King*. One song was "She Is Not Dead," which was a



unique recording experience. It began with the band playing the melody of a song from the *Lone Rhino* album called "The Man In The Moon." Then we turned the tape around and tried to learn to play to it backwards. So Larrie and I both played a very complex rhythm together. Larrie later said it was one of the experiences in his life where he was really stretching out. Larrie played my drums—a very old set of WFLs, before they were called Ludwig. It was a big old jazz kit with just four drums with no dampers or anything on them. It had a big, boomy bass drum and an amazing snare drum that just had that Motown sound. I played a kind of percussion set with lots of finger cymbals and delicate stuff. Larrie brought a real air of experience to the proceedings, just in the way he carried himself and the way his drumming was done so perfectly. At the same time, Larrie was a gas to be around—so much fun; you couldn't help but love him.

RF: Before your solo work, you worked with Bill Bruford in King Crimson.

AB: He's also one of my ultimate favorite people. He has that dry English wit, that outlook on the music business that is kind of a "so what, whatever happens" attitude. He's very articulate and fun to be around. As a drummer, I grew up listening to Bill Bruford. My two favorite drummers of all time are Ringo Starr and Bill. If there were somehow the perfect drummer on this planet, it would be a combination of those two people. I love the way Ringo orchestrated the songs and kept the beat so beauti-

fully, and I loved the way Bill undid the songs so beautifully. He's got amazing time, coordination, and independence.

Bill was one of those people who was very open and would teach me things. I'll never forget when we were riding on the Bullet train in Japan with some time to kill. Bill showed me a double sticking pattern that has opened up a whole realm of drumming I never knew existed. It took me three hours on the train to learn it; I kept banging on the tops of my legs. It's very hard to do and requires a lot of independence. You're playing the same pattern with each hand, but they're played an 8th note apart. The bass drum pattern that goes with it is also awkward. It's hard to explain, but if you want a reference point, Bill used that in a song called "Waiting Man" [From King Crimson's *Beat* album]." Later, when King Crimson played the song live, I played the drum part, with Bill on electronic drums.

On the third King Crimson tour, Bill forced me to play drums. It gave him a chance to stand up and play electronic percussion. He had a big rack system that was suspended in the air, and he could stand up and play all these pads while I sat across from him on stage playing a more scaled-down acoustic drumset. Then there was a portion of the show where we both played electronic percussion in harmony, facing each other.

RF: Who did you work with when you played with Zappa?

AB: Terry Bozzio, who was just a ferocious drummer to play with. I was always holding my breath wondering when he was going to end a roll before I joined back in. Terry was very much in a jazz vein when I played with him, so I don't think we linked up as well as we did later, when we weren't playing with Zappa any longer and he was in *Missing Persons*. We became closer friends and respected each other much more; we seemed to be more on the same wavelength.

RF: You used Chris Arduser on your current album, and he also played with you in a version of the Bears.

AB: Chris is a great drummer, too. The reason he played on four songs on my new album is that I realized at a certain point that the album could use a different energy than I was able to give to the drumming. I brought Chris in, and essentially we sparred, musically. He played the drums live in the studio while I played the guitar live in the control room. The result was four songs that took on a sort of raw energy. Chris plays really well. He's got lots of ability and plays very hard. I like working with him.

RF: Michael Hodges is in your live band now, as well as having been in the Bowie band you put together a few years ago.

AB: Mike and I grew up together, and I always admired his drumming. There's a certain thing that Cincinnati drummers have. I suppose the area is more famous for the black groups that have come out of there, but there is a definite style that Cincinnati drummers have. It's a funk style, kind of in the mode of James Brown and people like that. Michael is a great rhythm and blues player. He's also well versed in all the different kinds of rock drumming. He listened to a lot of people like Mitch Mitchell, and Michael Giles from the early King Crimson. He's a great drummer to play with.

RF: When was the last time you played drums on stage?

AB: I actually play drums every night on this tour. I come out and play drums for about the first three or four minutes of the last song. Then I switch back to guitar, and that's the end of the night. It's a song called "The Momur," which is kind of a classic of mine that my audience always screams for. It's a rave-up rock song from *Lone Rhino*. I think it's kind of fun for the audience to see me play drums for a few minutes.

RF: Do you feel that being a drummer contributes to your guitar style?

AB: Absolutely. I've always been a very rhythmic guitarist, which of course comes from my drumming background. I love to play drums, and I'm still trying to improve

and study drumming. I listen to a lot of players. I don't have the ability that some people do, but I think I have the mindset. There's just something about drumming that I don't get from any of the other instruments I'm trying to conquer. It's not just the

physicality of it; I think it's also the complexity of it. I really love trying to divide my mind into parts—one part playing this and the other playing that—which you have to do to be a good drummer. There's nothing more freeing than sitting down and just playing drums for an hour. I have a drumset right in my living room.

RF: When you practice drums, what do you do?

AB: I try to think up interesting patterns and beats. I just play for the fun of it. I'm one of those people—like most drummers are—who sit around and play on their legs all the time—unconsciously, even. I think that's a way that I keep my chops up a little bit, even when I'm on the road and not really playing. At

"I think it's unfortunate that people these days tend to think of a 'great' drummer as someone who plays wild all the time. Not every form of music requires that."



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STRAIGHT

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home, I have a lot of percussion devices lying around—everything from African slit drums to R8 drum machines. I like to fool with them all the time.

RF: When you record on your own, don't you find it musically lonely?

AB: Not at all. I love the creative process of being in the studio; I love the problem-solving aspects, and I think I have a good enough sense of what I want in my songs to try to play it myself. There are times I know I can't play something, so I ask someone else to play it. Keep in mind, when I finish these totally solo projects, I usually get involved next in a project where other people are playing and there's interplay between musicians. So in that sense, I keep a balanced diet between those two areas. When I'm making a solo album, it's a challenge for me to try to present a completely personal vision. So most of the time I have in my mind exactly what the drumming would be. Then it's just a matter of figuring out how to do it.

RF: When you play drums on your albums, is it mostly acoustic?

AB: Yes, primarily. I do a lot of interesting electronic drums secondarily. Sometimes I will incorporate that into the set of drums itself. Not only do I like working on a full kit, but I also really adore trying to find different and unique sounds—things that

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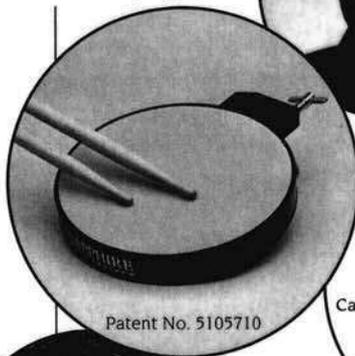


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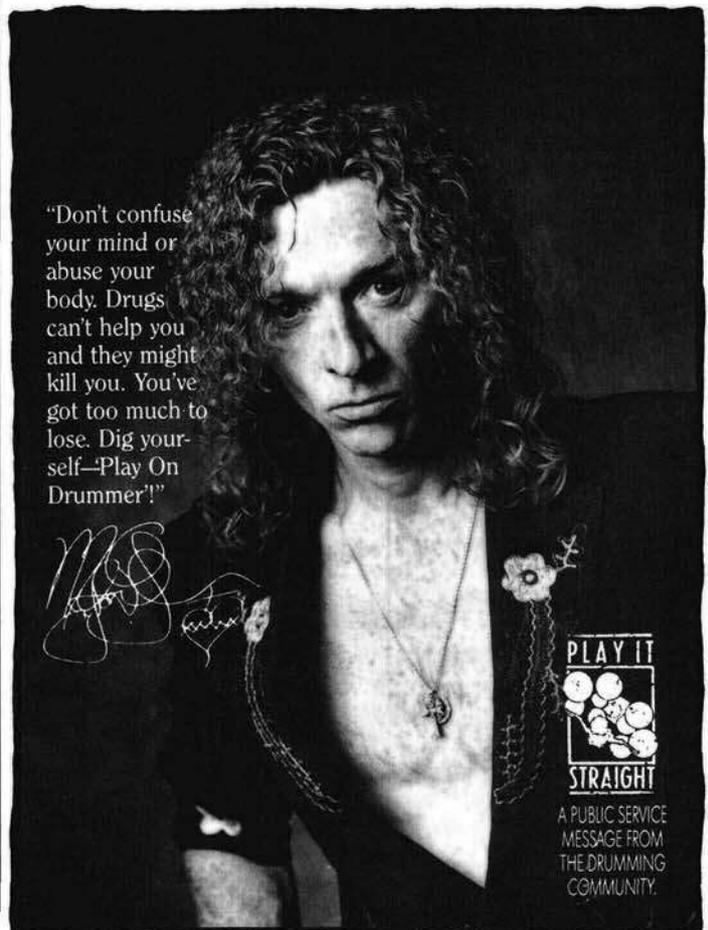
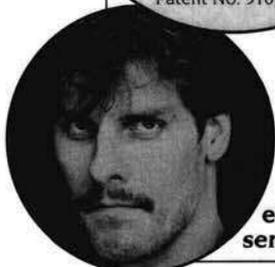
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are percussive in nature, but aren't necessarily percussion instruments. For instance, on *Mr. Music Head*, I had found these little Japanese fans, and I realized they make great percussion instruments. I played them with a pencil and put them on a beautiful \$5,000 microphone, and they sounded unbelievable. I like doing things like that. I've done lots of percussion sounds throughout all my records. Sometimes I'll do them on guitar. You asked how these two things have cross-bred. Lots of times I end up making percussion sounds on guitar, by tapping a guitar in a certain place, or scratching the strings, or any number of other ways. That creates a challenge that I like about the world of percussion.

RF: When you hire a drummer, what are you looking for?

AB: I like a drummer to have more than drumming awareness. I'm looking for *song* awareness, so he or she automatically knows when to open up, or when to change to a different sound. I like drummers who are interested in slightly askew beats that still work on a pulse level, so you can have a drum part that is unique and interesting but that also *feels* good. Sometimes I write in 7/8 or something like that, so I have to have a drummer who can make 7/8 feel natural.

I also like drummers who keep their ability to play flashy in the right spots. I like drummers who can orchestrate the song

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properly. Bill Bruford and Ringo Starr are drummers who orchestrate songs well. A lot of people don't realize that about Ringo. He was such a great drummer for the Beatles because he really knew what to put where in the songs. He didn't have "chops for days," but that wasn't the point. I think it's unfortunate that people these days tend to think of a "great" drummer as someone who plays wild all the time and goes at it all over the place. Not every form of music requires that.

RF: Why did you originally switch to guitar from drums?

AB: I started playing drums at age ten in the school marching band. I wanted to be a drummer so badly; it consumed me all day and all night. Then I got into my first band, and my parents bought me my first drumset. I was very happy being a drummer and singer—which was kind of an unusual combination. But when I was a junior in high school, I got mononucleosis and I wasn't allowed to play drums. The band hired another drummer for two months and I had to stay at home, lay in bed, and do nothing. So I thought it was a good time to teach myself to play enough guitar to be a songwriter. I had no aspirations to be a guitarist; I just had these songs in my mind that I obviously couldn't express on the drums. Then players like Jimi Hendrix and Jeff Beck started fueling my interest in being more of a guitarist, so I got my first fuzz tone and off I went. I never gave up drumming, though, because it was a totally different thing and had a totally different appeal for me. Although I'm not considered as one by the public, I still consider myself a drummer.



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mised or commercialized our music. Those are just words critics who don't understand music like to use. But we've done all the thrash and speed stuff we could do, and *Countdown To Extinction* is our effort at breaking ground in groove-oriented mood metal. We set a mood or a vibe for each song. Even my mom, who listens to country music, said she liked it. That made me feel good.

MP: We talked about how you played less on the record in terms of holding back on the chops. Did you approach it differently in terms of your style or choice of drums or cymbals?

NM: I used different things for different songs. I probably went through thirty different snares and a hundred cymbals to find what I liked: I changed ride cymbals for different songs, to fit what was happening in the tune. It's all a matter of musical taste, and I was free to use whatever I wanted.

MP: A lot of thrash bands seem to be cleaning up their music. Do you think thrash is on its way out?

NM: Thrash is always going to be there because there will always be rebel kids who want to listen to music their parents or their teachers think is offensive. And we can still fall into that line, but I think we've stepped out of it. Compared to bands that people consider "thrash" today, I don't consider us a thrash band anymore. Megadeth is a band that has been around awhile and has matured.

MP: I know this is only your second record with the band, but why do you think the maturity came at this particular point in Megadeth's life?

NM: This album is the first we've all collaborated on as far as the songwriting and what direction to take musically. I wrote some lyrics and music for this record, but unfortunately a lot of it didn't make it onto the final product. I wrote a song called "New World Order" that a band called Zoetrope—who opened for us in Chicago—bought from us, and that was flattering to me. I have some lyrics on the title track of the new record and on "Captive Honour" and "Ashes In Your Mouth." I also wrote some music to a song called "Break Point," which isn't on the album, but it's on the flip side of the first single. And it's a very slamming

song for drums, maybe more slamming than any song on *Countdown*. But it just didn't fit into the context of the record.

MP: You also played to a click the whole time. Did it come easy for you?

NM: Not back when I started using it. In fact, I actually resented the guys I worked with, because I thought they felt I couldn't keep time. It kind of messed with my head and made me think I wasn't good enough to play without a click. On *Rust In Peace*, I did some songs with a click and some without, dictated by the feel of the song. But I used a click on everything for the new record—and the tempos are moving. I programmed the click in rehearsals with [producer] Max Norman. I told him that some tempos weren't right for me and that certain parts needed to slow down and then speed up in the chorus. So it wasn't a straight click from beginning to end. There's a song called "Sweating Bullets," where I come out of the lead solo into a drum beat, and the tempo goes up two or three beats per minute.

MP: So why use a click at all?

NM: To make it absolutely precise in each particular section. We have time swings—rises and lags and grand pauses in our songs, weird little things that have to be there. And once you lay a click down, you lose that feeling. So we wanted to have the feeling there, but still be precise and have the parts move right. With a click, you might start a song with a guitar riff and then come in with the drums, and it would sound like it's dragging, even though you might be perfect with the click. So that's why we move the click a beat or two faster or slower in certain parts, to seem more natural. It sounded weird and wrong when I listened to the drum parts with just raw guitar behind it. But Max said it would be totally awesome when the guitar and bass tightened to what the drums were doing, and he was right.

MP: It sounds like you've had a pretty major role in the creative part of the band lately, which is kind of surprising since the media has portrayed Dave Mustaine as kind of...

NM: ...a tyrant? [laughs] Actually, in the past he was surrounded by so many incompetent people that he had no choice but to hammer everyone into submission. They had no creativity or self-

confidence. But I didn't come in and all of a sudden say I had songs and ideas. The first tour for me was kind of a testing ground, and I just kept my mouth shut. It took about a year before we were all comfortable with each other. They were probably wondering if I was going to flake out or turn into an asshole or how I'd react when all the stuff that goes along with being in an international touring band starts coming down. I walked into an ideal situation, with this band being where it was at the time. But there was also the pressure of living up to the band's reputation and holding up my end of it musically and fitting in personally.

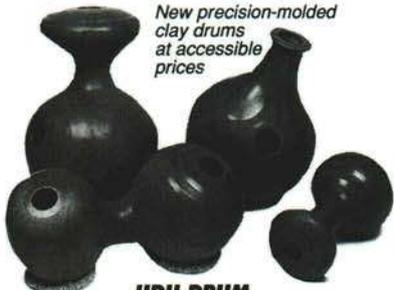
I remember my first gig with the band, at some club in Northern California, and I came off the stage ready to die! I wanted to be pumped and play as hard as I could—just hammer it—but I was so winded because I blew myself out. Then I started questioning myself, wondering if I could pull this off every night for a year. It took me about a month to seriously get into the motion of it and feel good, and it still takes me a couple of weeks to get toned up and ready for a tour. You can't just jump into it and jam. Even when I practice at home for a month, it's not the same as when you have a crowd out there and the heat of the lights and the pressure of a show. It's impossible to practice with the same intensity.

MP: How was the *Clash Of The Titans* tour for you? [In 1991, Megadeth co-headlined across the U.S. with Slayer and Anthrax on the Titans tour.]

NM: I thought it was great. It was the first major thing I'd ever done—it was in these giant arenas—and it was just rockin'! It was a rush for me, like living out a dream. But there was a lot of work that went into it, too. I realized at that point that getting into a major band isn't everything it's cracked up to be. You have to eat right and get enough sleep. You don't realize how fast you wear yourself down when you're on tour. I play so hard that it takes me a while before I start feeling good about what I'm doing. It's like working out. I'm in pain for a week before I start working out the soreness in my neck and muscles. When I play, I feel like a sprinter, running at full speed through the full set.

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MP: Have you always been such a hard hitter?

NM: Pretty much. I've always been into that Bonham-esque approach of hitting the drum hard and not being a wimp about it. I play with the butt ends of my sticks because I think the more stick that hits the head, the more attack you get, and I just like laying into my stuff. I play with huge cymbals, 20" cymbals for crashes and 24" rides. I just like getting the biggest, loudest sound I can possibly get.

I used to play single-headed toms, and then I realized that double-headed drums are much louder and have better response. Actually, the drums I used on my last kit were standard sizes, not power toms or concert toms. They cut through better and get a better tone. With larger drums, you don't have any distinction of notes. I've really gotten into the tuning of my drums, and I've experimented with every kind of head for the best combination of sound and durability. I'd like to play on coated *Ambassadors* all the time, but I can probably play on those for five minutes before they are completely dented. So I use Aquarian heads because they last forever. I had a snare head I used for almost our entire tour last year, and I told my tech not to change it because it sounded killer!

MP: You really hammer your bass drums, too. Does raising your legs so high limit your speed?

NM: My pedal tension is very tight; the springs are as tight as they'll go. And I like using wood beaters because, once you get them swinging, it's just a matter of keeping them in time. You don't have to work hard to slam every stroke down. I'm actually pressing about every other stroke because the pedals are working for me. A lot of guys sit on my kit and wonder how I play, because they say the pedals seem really stiff, but that's how I like them.

MP: For playing so loud, is there any room in your drumming for dynamics?

NM: There's some dynamics in there. You don't hear it so much live, but on the new record I play harder on the hi-hat in certain parts and come up or down in certain situations. We're not a real dynamic band in terms of volume changes, but we do incorporate them into our music, on songs like "Foreclo-

sure Of A Dream" off the new record, for instance.

MP: Did the volume of drums attract you from the beginning?

NM: Actually it did, because I grew up in an environment that was completely opposite of that. My dad was a jazz musician, and I grew up around all these big-time jazz drummers. My dad also listened to classical music, so I leaned in the other direction. If my dad had been a rock player, I probably would have gotten into jazz or who knows what else, because when you're a kid it's cool to be rebellious and do exactly the opposite of what your parents want. But I liked rock anyway.

I'd been around the whole jazz scene, and I got to be good friends with guys like Nick Ceroli and Shelly Manne. Louie Bellson used to get a couple of kits a year from Slingerland, and he gave me one. It was my first double-bass kit, and I still have it. Steve Gadd came over to our house and was the first guy to tell me to cut a hole in the front head of my bass drum. My dad saw that and was freakin' out, and Gadd said, "Hey, that's the sound!" He put a pillow in there and got this "thud" sound, and I was like, "All right, this is cool!"

MP: Did you know at the time that these guys were drumming legends?

NM: I had no idea. They were just dudes hanging around my house. My dad played first tenor sax in Bellson's band and Buddy Rich's band. Plus, he had about five or six albums out that Shelly and Nick played on, and this other trippy jazz guy named John Dense also played for him. All these guys were way into finesse and technique, and I have all that in my catalog of riffs, but it's not in me to do that right now. As I get older and more mature, I probably will start leaning in a progressive-fusion direction, and maybe someday I'll be playing jazz with my dad. I've jammed with him before, but it's really not my bag of tricks.

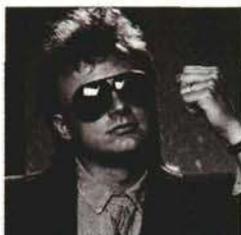
MP: Did growing up in the Los Angeles area, with the rock scene there, have more of an influence on your direction?

NM: I was born in Munich, Germany, and I moved to the States when I was around five. I got into bands like Rush and Zeppelin and early Scorpions and Van Halen before the L.A. scene really took shape. That's where my listening

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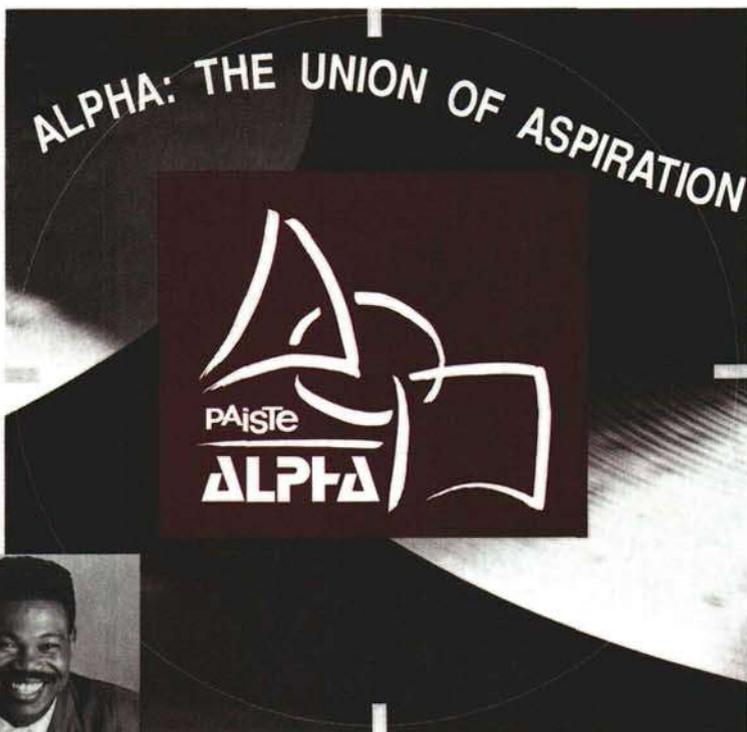
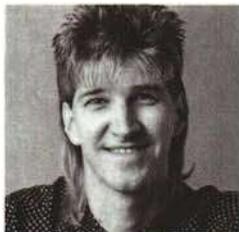
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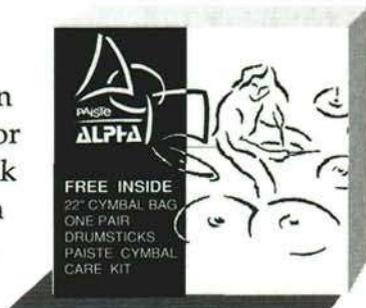
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tastes were, so my playing obviously went in kind of the same direction. I'd say my style is a cross between John Bonham and Neil Peart. I took a couple of lessons from Joe Porcaro, Chuck Flores, and Nick Ceroli. I always went out of my way to chop wood with a couple of the older drummers my dad played with. But I wasn't really disciplined with my lessons; I never practiced what these guys showed me. I'd do it for about five or ten minutes and then I'd say, "Enough of this," and I'd put on the headphones and jam to Rush or Zeppelin.

I can honestly say I know every Rush song and every Zeppelin song on drums, note for note. Other drummers would ask me about a lick on *Hemispheres* or some other album and I could just do it. Really, that's how I learned to play. By playing to records, you learn a sense of time and phrasing. A lot of kids overlook that, but I tell them to play to records, because that's how you get a vibe. You're playing with guys who are better than you and doing it right because it's on record.

MP: Is that something you felt you could translate to your own playing when you

finally got into a band?

NM: Without a doubt. I'd find myself pulling little riffs that Peart and Bonham did. What's neat to me is that some of the guys I copied when I was a kid are still out there, and they're my peers now. In a way, I'm right there with them.

MP: When did you start developing your own style?

NM: When I got into Megadeth. I had a style before then, but I never had a chance to apply it or express it in terms of original music. I was playing in a band with Kelly Rhoads, who was [late Ozzy Osbourne guitarist] Randy Rhoads' brother, and that was my first shot in a real band. It was just blues rock, and we had one record called *Rhoads Into The Future*, on Interchord Records from Germany. I don't know if you can find it anymore. If you do, you'll have a good laugh!

MP: Did Megadeth happen for you at a time when you didn't know what else you were going to do with your life?

NM: Oh, yeah. I was working construction—I was a framer, a roofer, a tiler, a cement worker—and all that was really killing me and killing my hands. I came

to the conclusion at that point that I had to learn how to play the drums really well so I'd be in demand, and maybe get into the studios and make a little money that way. I played a couple of sessions, but it really bothered me—the whole tedious life of being tucked away in a studio. I wanted to get out in public and boost my profile. I was really concerned with letting people see me play around L.A., because I knew somebody would eventually see me and want me in their band. That's what eventually happened. I hooked up with Neal Schaffer, and he passed my name along to Megadeth.

MP: Do you think living in L.A. had a lot to do with getting you to this point?

NM: It would have been a lot harder living somewhere else. I see a lot of guys—whole bands—move to L.A. under the pretense of making it big, and all I can say is, "Good luck." You've got to be motivated and have the will to succeed. Some say it takes more luck than talent, but I don't really believe that. I say luck is taking a chance and putting yourself in a position to be lucky. Nobody's lucky in this world. Everything happens to you because you make it happen. Winning

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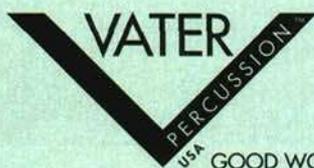


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the lottery is lucky, but you still picked the numbers and played them. Some people might say I was lucky getting the Megadeth gig, but they don't know I teched for the old drummer [Chuck Behler] for about a year. Would any other drummer have had the balls to set up some other guy's drums, cringing with frustration every night just hoping to someday take his place?

You asked before if Megadeth came at a right time for me, and, as far as my mental state, it definitely did. Chuck was a great guy and it was nothing against him, but being a drummer, it was kind of humiliating to sit back there wanting to do it and not being able to. I had very low self-esteem at that time, and it was an emotional disturbance in my life to be a tech. Not that I think techs are a lower form of life, but I was a *drummer*, not a tech, and I wanted to play. I'd get to the venue early in the morning and set the guy's drums up and practice for a few hours before I changed his heads, so he wouldn't know I was bangin' on his stuff. I'd set up in some room somewhere and work up a sweat, and people would come by and ask if I was the drummer, and I'd

say no. They'd tell me I was blowing it by not being in a band, but the thing was I wanted to be in *this* band. My drumming friends back home would shoot me down and say there was no way I was going to get in Megadeth. But I kept telling people I *was* going to get in the band. Now those people are amazed that I stuck through it.

MP: So how did you eventually wind up getting in the band?

NM: I kept my mouth shut most of the time I was a tech, but I started pressuring the guys to get me in the band. It came to a point where they were like, "Shut up, you're buggin' us, you're blowing it for yourself." Eventually we got off the road, and I told them I couldn't take it anymore—either get me in the band or I'm gone—and they said something like, "Nice knowin' you, good luck." So I quit, and then Mustaine called me about three months after the tour was over and asked if I was ready to get in the band, and I said, "Dude, I was *born* ready."

MP: Why did they decide to replace Chuck?

NM: Chuck had some personal problems—substance abuse, and just things I

don't care to get into because it's not my business. But the whole organization was kind of shady at the time. I actually couldn't have been in the band back then. It just wouldn't have worked because I wasn't into the whole drug thing. But I was almost thinking at that time that I *should* do drugs with these guys just to get on their good side. Sometimes you feel you have to go with the norm—like if you go against it, you're not part of the team anymore.

MP: How close were you to getting in that line of life?

NM: Very close. I dabbled briefly in doing heroin and cocaine, drinking, smoking pot—the whole thing. But one time I snorted a line of heroin meant for three people, and I got chilled and scared. I was just ruined, and I was so sick the next day. And I figured right there that this just wasn't the life for me, and I started separating myself from the rest of the guys. I just wouldn't get into that; I *couldn't* be in this kind of band because it wasn't healthy. I can say firsthand that drugs are *not* the way to go. And the rest of the guys in the band will vouch for that, too, because they're total-

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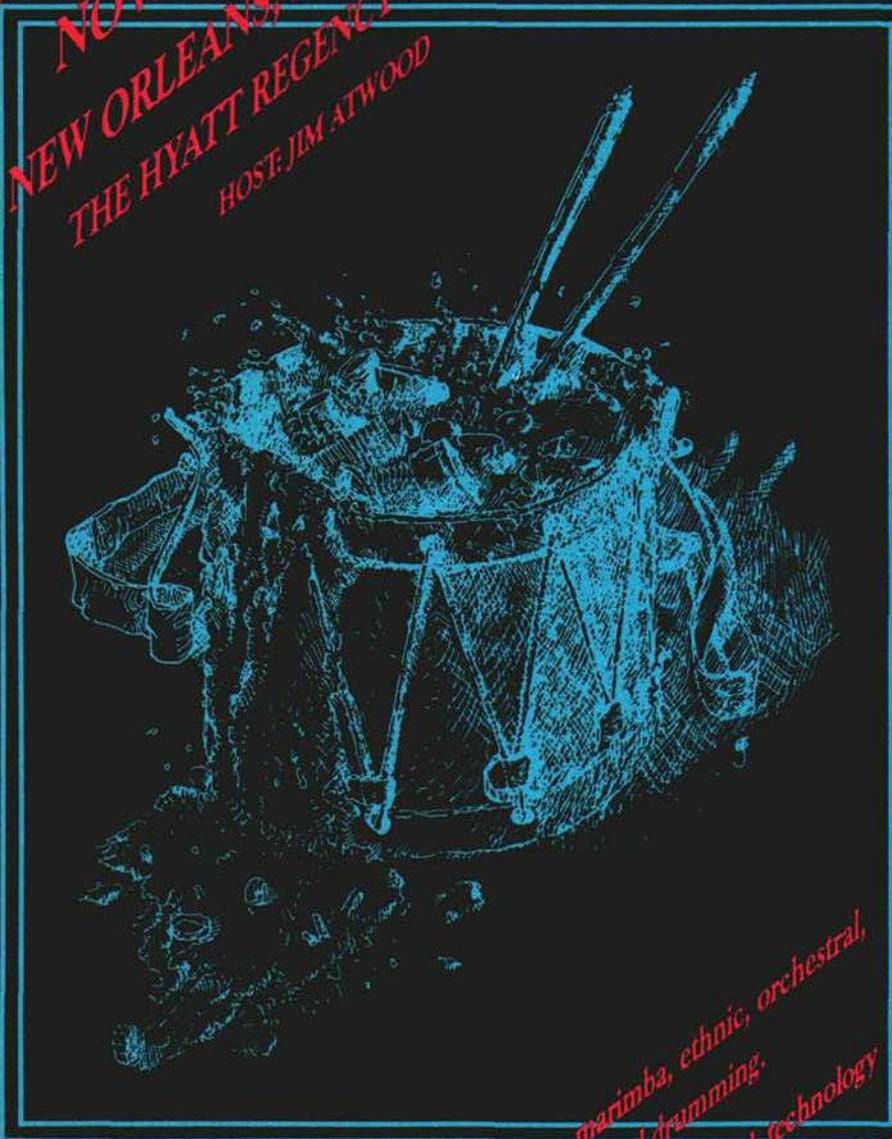
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MP: I heard all the members of Megadeth have started going to group therapy. How and why did all that start?

NM: When Dave Mustaine and [bassist] Dave Ellefson got clean from drugs, they acquired a counselor who has become sort of our spiritual guru. We started having group meetings with him, where we'd all air out our differences. That's what I think is responsible for the longevity of this band, the fact that we can all sit down and tell each other what pisses us off. If I have a problem with Dave, I can go up to him the minute it occurs and talk to him. If you hold on to that resentment, you build up this animosity to the point that you hate each other and the band breaks up. This, for us, is like an open forum, where we leave our egos outside the door and just talk.

MP: Changing the subject, why did you recently switch from Yamaha to Tama?

NM: Yamaha took very good care of me for a short period of time, but they didn't want to move up to the next level when our band did. They didn't want to do any advertising for me or do a poster for me. Megadeth may not have sold as many records as some of the bands using Yamaha equipment have, but Yamaha didn't understand the scale of exposure I gave them by playing over three hundred shows a year with their drums. All the other guys in the band had ads and posters for their guitars and strings, and I didn't have anything.

MP: So did it bother you strictly from an egotistical standpoint?

NM: No, it was more that it was time for me to break out and get my name out there. I wasn't being an arrogant asshole; I was just thinking about my future, and I couldn't wait another year to get my name out there. People might think the drummer in Megadeth is a great player, but all they know is I have long brown hair, and that I'm an animal that stands up and throws my sticks out to the crowd. [laughs] I went right to Tama and said I knew their drums were great, they didn't need to show me anything. I just wanted certain things, and [director of artist relations] Joe Hibbs and I were totally open with each other, and the

match was perfect. I hope Yamaha doesn't have any hard feelings, but they're going to be sorry when we break big this year.

MP: After watching you play, it seems like you really enjoy playing live, that you just have a good time up there. Do you like the concert environment more than the studio?

NM: Playing live is much more rewarding. I like making eye contact with the kids and making faces at them and pointing at them with my sticks, just get-

ting them fired up. I just had surgery on my eyes—I had really bad vision—and this show we just did was the first one where I've been able to see the kids in the audience. The whole last tour, I was basically blind—I couldn't even see Mustaine for cues! But since the surgery, I can see 20/20 now. And the show we just did was kind of trippy because I could see kids yelling at me. Now I'll be afraid to make mistakes because I'll be able to see everybody's reaction!



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Slingerland Radio Kings: Part 2

by John M. Aldridge

Last time we examined the Slingerland *Radio King* line, from its introduction in 1936 through its early development in the late '30s. The design and sizes of *Radio King* drums stayed pretty much the same until 1940, when the "New *Super Radio King Modernistic Lugs*" (first featured on the *Buddy Rich* model described in the last column) were added to take the place of the *Streamlined* lugs on deeper snare drums. The 1941 catalog offered the new lugs on tom-toms, but recommended them for mounted toms only.

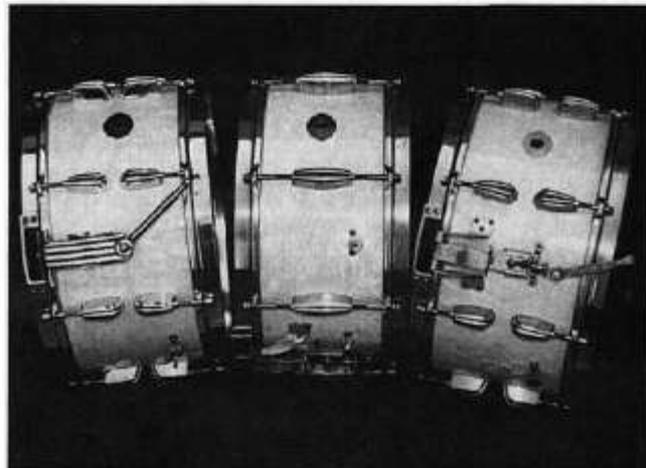
Also in the 1941 catalog, the new "*Super*" *Gene Krupa Radio King* featured the new *Super* snare strainer. This strainer, which is commonly referred to as the "clamshell," featured positive throw-off in both directions, and had a telescopic lever so that you had the option of having the lever extend above the top of the rim or remain below. The butt side of the *Super* strainer was spring-loaded and could be adjusted to tighten or loosen the snares. The actual snares on this model were attached to the unit via a slot in each end of the snares. A steel tongue about 1" wide on the bottom of the throw-off fit into this slot, and the spring tension held the snares in place.

The 6 1/2x14 *Super Gene Krupa* snare drum was the first *Krupa* model offered with separate top and bottom lug casings. The same drum with the older *Rapid* strainer was named the *Hollywood Ace Swing* model, while the original *Gene Krupa* model (with double-ended casings) was still offered.

The *Artist* model metal-shell *Radio King* was also offered in 1941. It featured the *Rapid* strainer without the extension bridges, and a seamless one-piece spun brass shell. This model was only offered in a 6 1/2" depth and came with 16 of the *Modernistic* lug casings.

Tom-tom sizes also changed in the 1941 catalog. Toms in 7x11, 8x12, 9x13, 12x14, and 14x16 sizes—with either separate or single tension—were offered in the *Radio King* line. Prior to this, *Radio King* toms were only advertised in separate-tension models.

The tom-mounting hardware also offered a new option in 1941: a rail mount system with three position notches. (The older hoop mount was also available.) The *Shur-grip* tom-tom stand (for floor toms) had been introduced in the 1940 catalog but was still referred to as "new" in the 1941 catalog. This was a very loosely constructed stand that would barely stand on its own until a drum was placed in it. The weight of the drum gave



Left to right: a 7x14 1940 Super model, a 6 1/2x14 1938 Gene Krupa model, and a 7x14 1939 Hollywood Ace model

it enough stability to withstand even the most vigorous work-out, though. This stand offered the added benefit of being able to tilt to the desired angle.

Shortly after the 1941 catalog came out, America entered World War II. Because of the shortage of metals caused by the war, a law was passed stating that only 10% of the total weight of any non-necessity item could be metal. Slingerland accomplished this by using rosewood to make casings and strainers. The parts had to be hand-carved, and since money was fairly scarce, production was scaled down.

The *Radio King Rolling Bomber* was the result of the metal shortage. The lugs on the *Rolling Bomber* snare were offset, and there were only six lugs for each head. The only metal parts on this drum were the tension rods, the screws used to attach the casings, and the lug nuts in the casings. The throw-off lever was also made of rosewood, but due to the construction of the snare unit, many had to be replaced with metal levers.

The strainer used during this period was the *Super* (clamshell) snare strainer. The hoops used on these drums were solid wood, and small, single-claw hooks were used to attach them to the drum. The toms and bass drums were constructed the same way—with either rosewood or dark walnut lugs and wood hoops—except that the lugs were directly opposite each other.

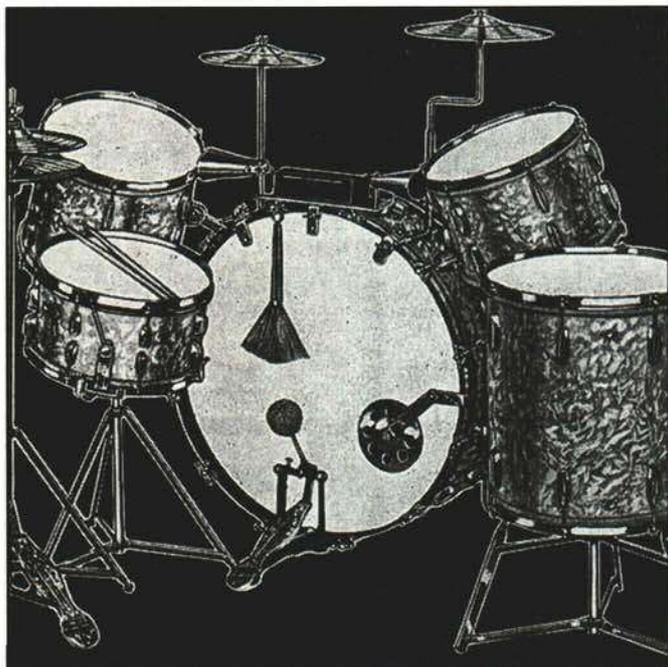
World War II set the drum business back a few years; development of new strainers and hardware ground to a halt until the war was over.

Post-war Slingerland drums were very similar to those of the pre-war line. All of the snare models were the same except for the sizes. The 5 1/2"-deep snare was introduced as a *Radio King* in the late '40s, and soon became a mainstay. Cocktail sets with

the 4x13 *BeBop* snare also gained popularity.

Around 1948 the Slingerland badge was changed to a large oval shape with an embossed design. This badge stayed the same until the mid-'50s, when it was reduced in size. The 1951 catalog introduced new floor tom legs with *Can't Slip* clutch brackets. This new leg was held in place by an eye bolt, which the leg passed through. A wing nut then pulled the leg against the bracket frame, holding the leg in place. The tom cradle was still offered as an option, but most floor toms from this period were produced with legs.

New tom sizes were also introduced in the 1951 catalog.



The 1941 Gene Krupa Super Radio King Deluxe Ensemble still retained some vaudeville and big band-era elements, such as a 28" bass drum, a floor tom stand, a bent-shaft cymbal holder, and twin cowbells and a woodblock placed between widely separated rack toms.

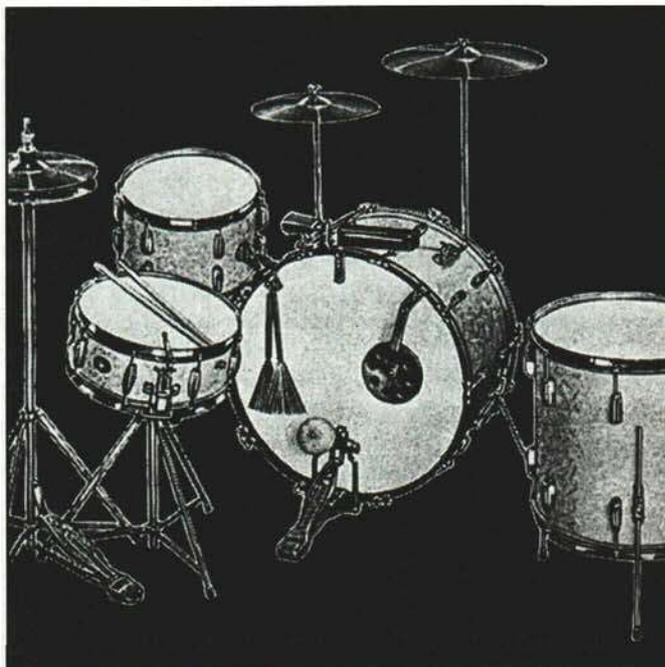
Smaller sizes, such as the 7x11, were dropped, and larger sizes were added. Also, single-tension toms were dropped from the *Radio King* line in favor of double-tension drums. The tom-tom and floor tom sizes offered were 8x12, 9x13, 12x14, 14x16, 16x16, 16x18, 16x20, and 20x20. Bass drums offered 14x16, 14x18, 14x20, 14x22, 14x24, and 18x20 shells.

In addition to standard sets available with the above drums, a 4x13 snare drum and 18x20 bass drum/tom-tom were offered as a *BeBop* set. The bass drum could be played upright using one head as a tom-tom, or on its side. The top/front hoop was metal and the bottom/back hoop was wood, to accommodate a pedal. When played in the upright position, the pedal could be reversed to strike upward and was mounted on the legs of the drum.

In the mid-'50s, Slingerland adopted the Ludwig triple-flanged hoop design in a roundabout way. While Ludwig's top

flange was bent to the outside of the drum, Slingerland's top flange was turned towards the inside of the drum. This caused a great controversy between Slingerland and the Ludwig company, who contended that Slingerland had "stolen" their design. The argument wound up in court, where Slingerland was cleared of any wrongdoing.

The *Radio King* name was used on drums through the '70s. The lug design was changed in the mid-'50s to the model still used today. The badge also changed again around 1960 to a black and brass oval, and again in the '70s to an aluminum and black oval. Solid-wood snare shells were also manufactured up



By 1950, the Gene Krupa Deluxe Radio King Ensemble had been streamlined into something more like today's kits. The bass drum size had been reduced (24" or 26"), one rack tom and one cowbell had been removed, the cymbal holder had been straightened, and the floor tom had been given its own legs.

until the mid '70s, but some of the shells after about 1965 were plywood.

Today, Slingerland *Radio King* snare drums are being manufactured by the Gretsch Drum Company (who owns the Slingerland brand name) and distributed by H.S.S., Inc. Introduced in 1990, these drums are practically indistinguishable in appearance from the mid-'50s to '70s model, except for a more modern snare strainer. But while these may be fine drums, they cannot combine the factors of design, construction, and history that make original *Radio Kings* the desirable vintage instruments that they are.

I'd like to acknowledge Jim Pettit for his help in supplying the catalog pages and photos used in this series.



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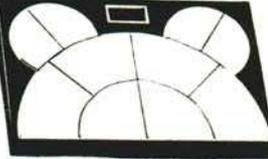
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continued from page 6

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that turning a profit is part of the reason for recording music, as well it should be—but not at the expense of other musicians. Using a drum machine for a finished product just puts drummers out of work, and only reinforces the belief held by some in the music industry that there is no need for live drummers to make music. This is shameful!

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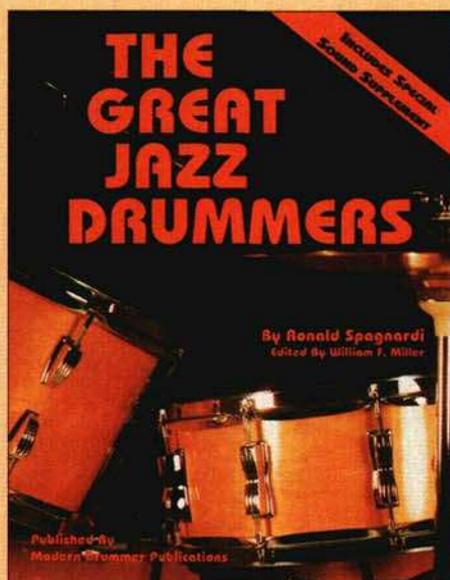
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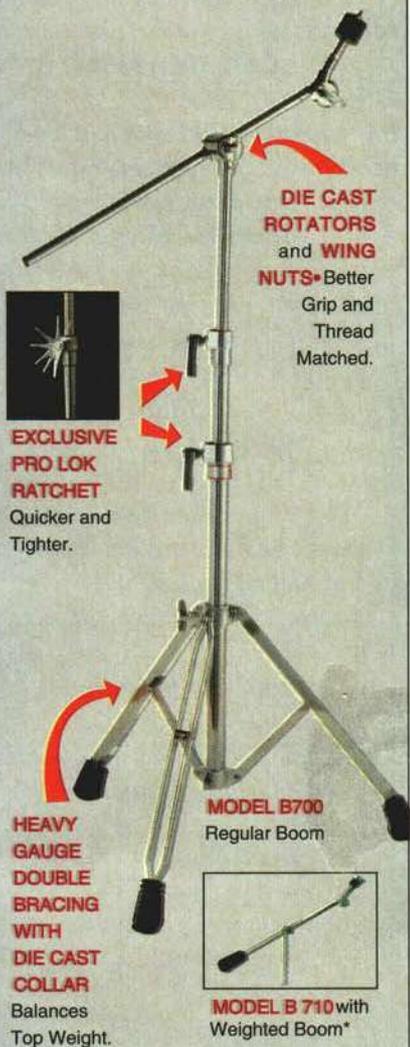
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IT'S QUESTIONABLE

continued from page 16

can go with another type of finish, like a verithane or urethane, which may not give you an 'industry' finish, but is much more resistant to cracking over time than is actual lacquer. As far as waxing a drumshell for added gloss and durability goes, a layer of wax really doesn't add any durability because it's so thin. It's also very soft, as compared to a urethane finish. Some companies do add a buffed wax coating, but it's exclusively for cosmetic appeal and to protect against fingerprints. If you do use some sort of wax on your shells, I suggest 100% carnuba. But if you paint your shells over again, you need to allow the paint to dry thoroughly for a significant period of time before you apply the wax. Otherwise, the wax will seal in solvents that need to leech out of the paint."

Kashian Cymbal History

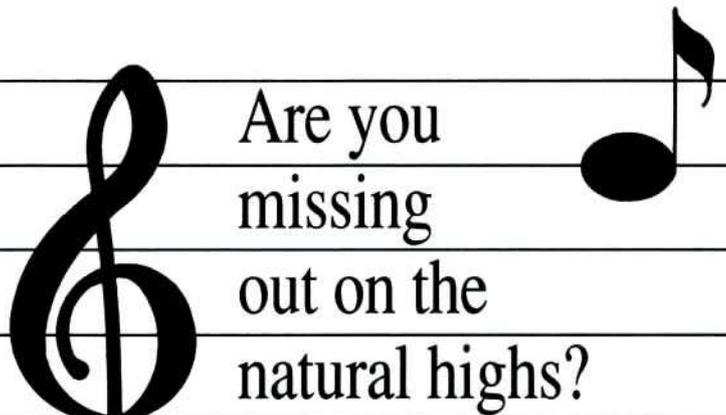
Q I'm looking for information on a pair of 14" hi-hat cymbals that are stamped "Kashian Turkish Cymbals Made In USA." Where do they fit in the hierar-

chy of cymbal-dom? I think they were bought new around 1974 or '75, and that Slingerland may have had something to do with them. Are they anything to consider as "vintage"?

Thomas Leno
Woodbury VT

A We checked with Sabian's president, Bob Zildjian, who is quite a cymbal historian. He gave us the following answer: "When the Slingerland company was involved in distributing Zildjian cymbals a few years back, they were interested in also putting out a second-line cymbal. They first came to the Zildjian company when we owned the Tosco plant in Italy, and in fact the first Kashians were Italian cymbals. But ultimately, Azco Ltd., which is now Sabian but at the time was a part of Zildjian, would take second-line Zildjian cymbals—normally put out as Zilcos—and put the Kashian name on them. So if your cymbal says "Made In USA," it probably was actually made in Canada in the Azco factory between 1979 and 1982."





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IMPRESSIONS

continued from page 20

WK: I've heard this before. Cobham? Bruford?

KM: Lenny White.

WK: I thought maybe it was Tony, too. It gets confusing. Lenny was really good with that quality of tom sounds: big-sounding, especially the floor toms. It's a harder sound, almost like Simon Phillips gets. Tonally, it's not a *note* but the sound is there.

I set up the same way as Lenny and Chuck Morris: left-handed lead [ride cymbal] but right-footed bass drum.

...Marvin "Smitty" Smith

Steve Coleman: "Black Polemics" (from *Black Science*)

Coleman: alto sax; Smith: drums; James Weidman: piano; David Gilmore: guitar; Reggie Workman: bass

WK: Like I said about Omar, this guy has an ability to make a complicated song groove, with tasteful licks and a nice solo. The drum sound is killing. The toms weren't bright, but you could hear every note. Man, I couldn't figure out that time

signature. Very tight.

KM: It's Marvin "Smitty" Smith.

WK: I haven't heard a lot of his recordings. "Chops city" here, with the ability to use those chops to good advantage. He definitely did it well on this tune. He's very advanced; he can handle any situation.



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STEELY DAN

continued from page 35

bebop style. Guerin was on Joni Mitchell's *Court & Spark*, which was in that same Steely style. Things were getting cool and bent.

"Your Gold Teeth II' is a song with lots of bars of 3/8, 6/8, and 9/8. And it's bebop! I could swing the cymbal beat and fake it, but that always bothered me. After recording it, Fagen gave me a Charles Mingus record with Dannie Richmond on drums. It had a tune that was full of 6/8 and 9/8 bars. I listened to that for a couple of days, and we tried it again and it worked. What a cool thing! The ride cymbal on that, and on the whole record, is an old K Zildjian my dad gave me. Unfortunately, all the cymbals are clipped and phased on the album because the DBX didn't work. That was real heart-breaking for those guys.

"On 'Black Friday' I was again thinking of Jim Gordon, my shuffle champion. I got real frustrated trying to play this, and I just threw a big tantrum. 'I'm the wrong guy! You should get Jim Gordon,' I told Gary Katz. After walking around the block three times, cursing myself, I came back in and cut it. That guitar solo is Walter on an old Fender *Mustang* guitar with rusty strings. That's a bad-ass solo, man."

And what about those multitudinous takes? "Oh yes!" laughs Porcaro. "Although their charts were meticulously written out for ensemble figures and general drum feel, there were no click tracks or sequencers, so you're going through the track hoping for the magic take—up to thirty takes some days.

"When Steely Dan's first album came out, I flipped," recalls

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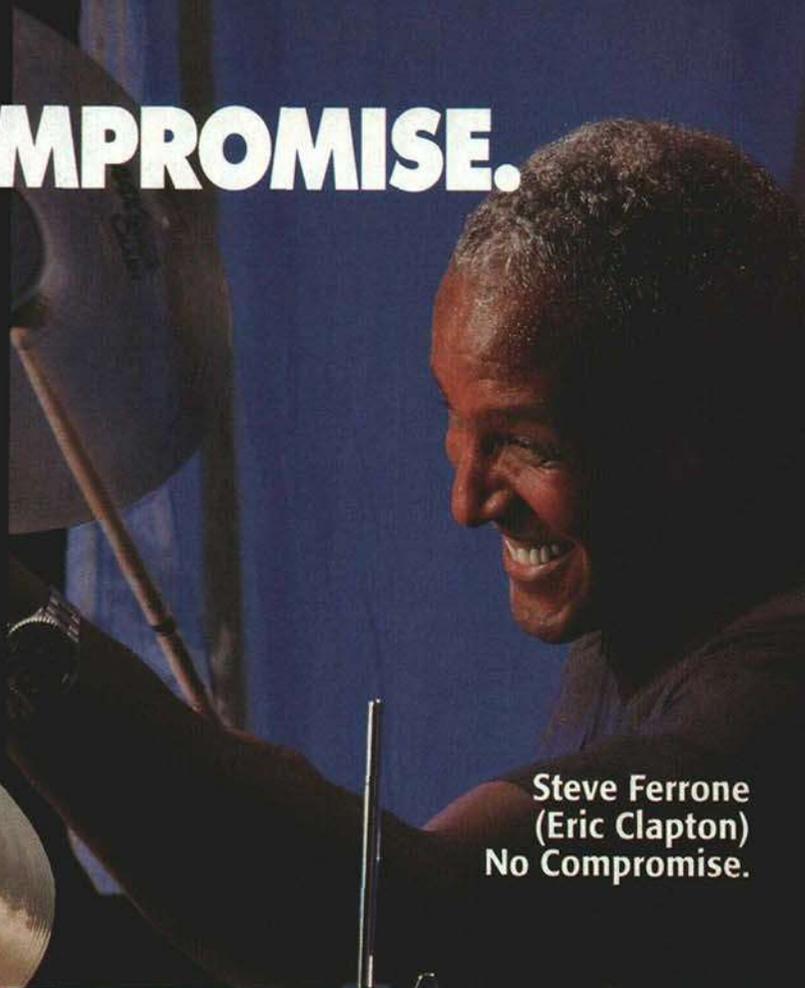
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**Steve Ferrone
(Eric Clapton)
No Compromise.**

Porcaro. "I thought they were the Beatles of California. I was always scared shitless playing for them. They were very demanding—not in a malicious way—but everyone respected them so much. You felt you were playing on something really special. When they were happy, it was great to see. It meant you'd accomplished something."

1976—THE ROYAL SCAM

Once again, Becker and Fagen continued to raise the stakes. On *The Royal Scam*, they took rock 'n' roll arrangements to a new level of craftsmanship. Dealing with the most highly skilled musicians available, including the Pharaoh of Funk, Bernard "Pretty" Purdie, the record had a sense of risk-taking and new ground being broken.

"Green Earrings," for example, sounds like a big band arrangement played with rock 'n' roll instrumentation. There's a lot of depth to the music, and every listening reveals yet another nuance, another layer of sound. Purdie's slam-dunk, slippery funk is pure joy. The grooves float and sting effortlessly above, below, and through the music. His drumming on songs like "Kid Charlemagne" and "The Fez" is the stuff of legend.

"With me, they wanted something very specific," says Purdie with a quiet tone of voice that makes him sound like a riverboat gambler. "They had already recorded *The Royal Scam* with other drummers, so I had to overdub. I stuck to the original patterns, but they wanted what *I* could do. It was a heavy situation. I wasn't uptight about trying to impress them, I was just doing my job. They knew my earlier work, so they wanted to

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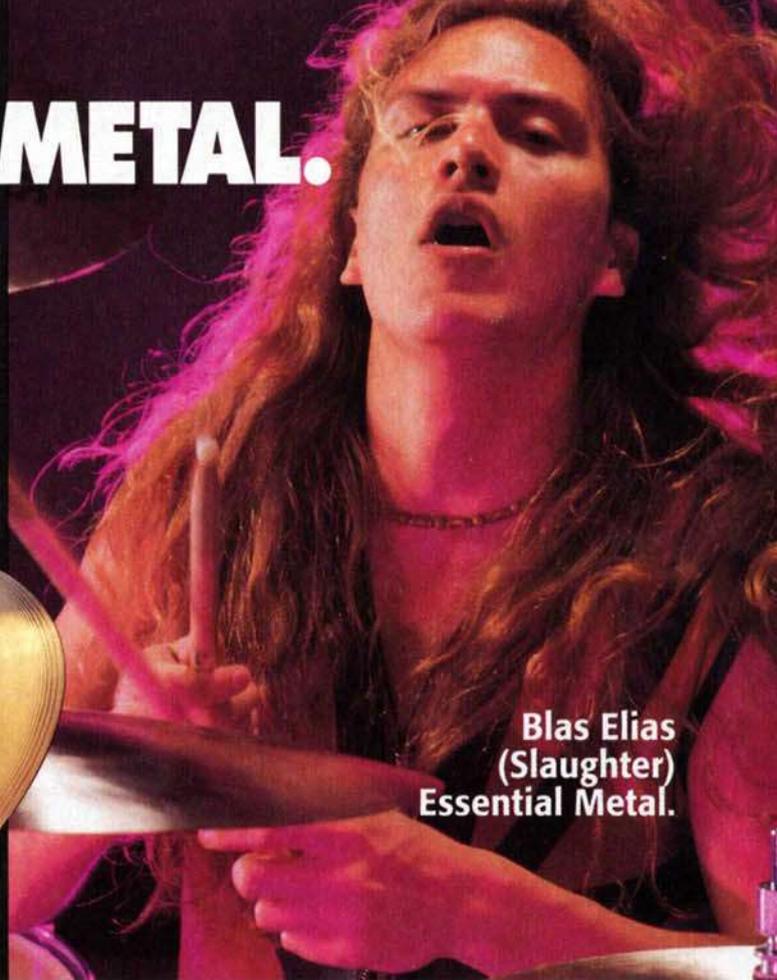
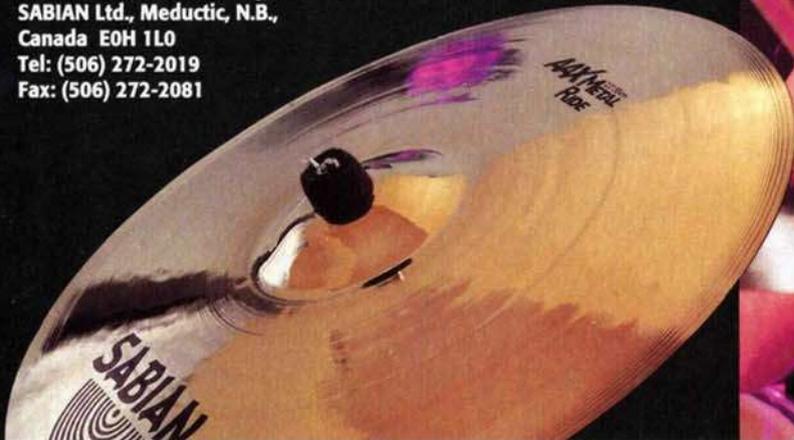
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hear my take on their music.

"They were very strict to the point of super precision," Purdie recalls. "Really picky. They wouldn't take no for an answer and they wouldn't accept mistakes—period. It was truly frustrating in the beginning. I come from the school that when you feel good about what you've done, it's hard to do better. It only goes downhill from there. I learned to curtail my own feelings and just wait. They wanted it their way, so you had to do many takes."

Drummer Rick Marotta, who already had had super-session duties at that time with Linda Ronstadt, Paul Simon, John Lennon, Jackson Browne, James Taylor, and Tom Scott, didn't know who Steely Dan were when he sat down to record "Don't Take Me Alive." "I remember I wanted to get in and out as soon as possible. Larry Carlton and Chuck Rainey were there, pretty much business as usual. Then they counted off this tune...the first thing I heard was the lyrics 'agents of the law/luckless pedestrian,' and I almost stopped playing. I thought, 'I'm listening in my phones to this guy who can really sing, and the tune sounds amazing, and the band is amazing,' it was just...*different*. You have to kiss a lot of frogs when you're a studio player. After that I had to stop and collect myself. 'This is real.' Every time I went in with them I knew it was going to be something really historic.

"They were the most demanding of anybody I've ever worked with," Marotta says. "Donald was like the Prince of Doom. For instance, I'd walk in the control room and it would sound unbelievably great, and he'd just sit there, looking at the floor, saying, 'Yeah, I guess it's okay.'"

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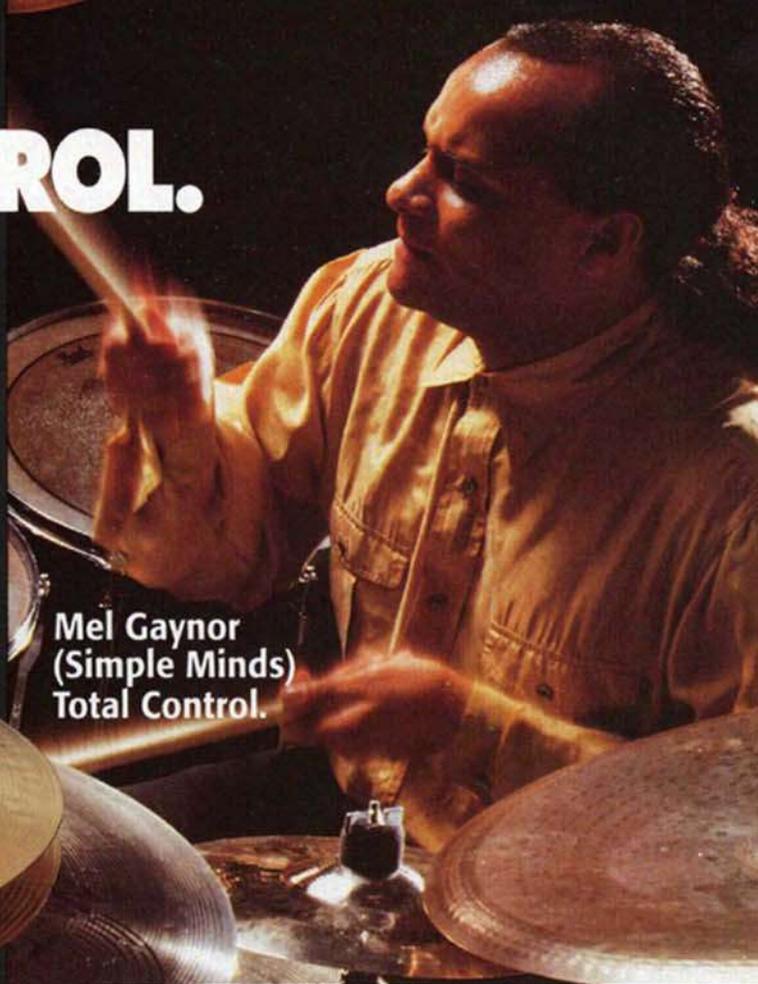
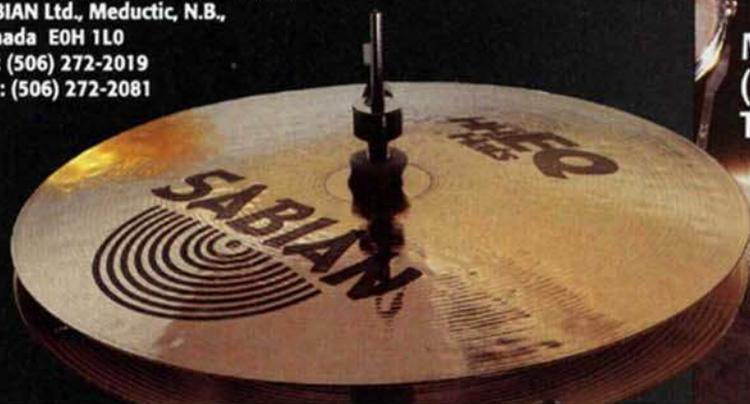
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"On 'Don't Take Me Alive,' there's one backbeat in the 16th or 17th bar that was a little softer than the others. I'd say, 'Donald, show me where.' He'd wait for the tape to come around and he'd point it out. 'Right...there.' He'd pick the same spot out each time. He wasn't crazy, he was just so microscopic. Walter was as well. It was beyond my imagination how anybody could be so focused for so long."

1977-AJA

Aja is the most popular of all the Steely Dan recordings. Four of its seven tracks were radio hits with a broad spectrum of appeal. Musicians had a field day with the title track, which had powerful solos from Wayne Shorter and Steve Gadd. Gadd, it seems, was the ultimate foil for the Dan's demanding assault on a musician's psyche. For "Aja," he sightread the entire seven-minute chart perfectly, solo and all, by the second take. An article at the time quoted Fagan as saying, "I was stunned. No one had ever done anything like that before. I couldn't believe it."

Once again, the new record surpassed the expectations of their legion of fans, each song a fully realized world unto itself. 'Black Cow,' with its silly chocolate bar subject, was gently nudged along by former Lawrence Welk drummer Paul Humphrey. (Humphrey's group, the Cool Aid Chemists, had a soul hit in 1971.) The laid-back Southern aroma of "Deacon Blues" featured Purdie. The incredibly catchy "Peg" featured a fiery, sassy drum track from Marotta. "Home At Last" showcased the classic Purdie shuffle, supporting a sad tale of remorse and fear. "I Got The News," a dotted-16th-note

bounce-fest that sounds like early hip-hop, was Ed Greene's only track for the Dan. And "Josie," the story of the welcome shown returned a town prostitute, is Jim Keltner's minimalist tour de force of taste and style. With its perfect balance of memorable songs, outrageously superb performances, and immaculate production, *Aja* is Steely Dan's masterpiece.

"When I first heard 'Josie' back I didn't like it," says the ever-sunglassed bandito. "It was a funny groove. It was such an odd song, especially for that time. In retrospect, I love the sound of it, the feel. Fagen had been through full sessions with other drummers for the same song. He was such a commanding musical figure, you knew that when he told you to play a little figure, you'd better play exactly what he wanted. That was a lot of pressure on me at the time, but I relished the musicality of it. I concentrated heavily. It was a five-page chart with no repeat signs.

"As for that fill near the end, it was a bar of 7/8. That's definitely not something that I would've played. That figure was written on the paper, it was totally Fagen's thing. I wish I could get a copy of that chart. I've had more drummers ask me about that lick. I was playing a 5x14 Ludwig *Vistalite* snare drum, a *Super Sensitive* weird instrument.

"Later they wanted me to overdub something over the breakdown, but they didn't know what. The beauty of those guys is that they truly wanted something weird. So I played this garbage can lid with rivets in it that I'd been given for Christmas. They liked the way it sounded, so it became a part of the song."

Though Keltner cut "Peg," his track didn't make the final



**Tito Puente
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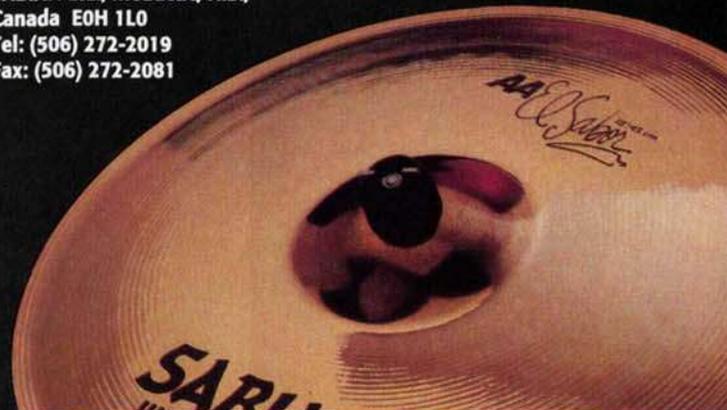
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pick. "You do have an advantage in a way, if you come in behind someone else. The writers have already been through the song, and they have a better handle on what they want. I didn't do a good job on 'Peg,' it just didn't work."

Consequently, Rick Marotta's take on "Peg" was the one Becker and Fagen went with. "Chuck Rainey and I got into this groove that was really unstoppable," Marotta recalls. "We had this groove for the verses, and then the chorus came and everything just lifted. It just went that way every time. Everything was just working—my hands, my feet—it was just one of those days. On 'Peg,' I could hear every single nuance that I had played, as well as what everyone else had played. What amazed me was how they could mix those records like that. You could hear everything perfectly. The snare on that song is an old wooden Ludwig with Canasonic heads. It used to be Buddy Rich's drum."

1980—Gaucho

After a long wait, *Gaucho* was released to an eager audience. While the music was of the usual high level, it should be noted that, drum-wise, this album is much simpler than previous ones. Except for a Purdie shuffle on "Babylon Sisters" and Porcaro's odd-meter forays on "Gaucho," the rhythms are all 8th-note grooves. No cranking shuffles like "Black Friday" or jungle grooves like "I Got The News." Part of this might have been Becker and Fagen's desire to fully explore their WENDEL, a sequencing tool that could quantize, sanitize, and generally sterilize a drum track.

"That was Roger Nichols and the computers," says Marotta,

who played on "Hey Nineteen" and "Time Out Of Mind." "WENDEL wasn't perfected then, so occasionally it was a little stilted. They were experimenting, taking little snippets of what we played and looping it."

According to Porcaro, "That's at a point when drum machine technology was just rearing its ugly head. There was a lot of talk about the future of quantizing and sequencing in real time. To a perfectionist, that was all really cool stuff. The title track was done to a Urei click. In fact it was all Urei except 'Hey Nineteen,' which is WENDEL."

The title track, which Porcaro played on, is an epic bit of Mexican-inspired music, full of enigmatic lyrics and romantic female choruses. The Dan had perfected their recording approach by this time. "From noon till six we'd play the tune over and over and over again," says Porcaro, "nailing each part. We'd go to dinner and come back and start recording. They made everybody play like their life depended on it. But they weren't gonna keep anything anyone else played that night, no matter how tight it was. All they were going for was the drum track." (The final product was a combination of 46 edits.)

"Hey Nineteen," the album's big hit, is a yearning for young love. "Everyone talks about that song, but it was a complete departure," says Marotta, "totally different from any recording we'd done. It's a great song—a classic groove, a definitive pocket. There are also other songs from those sessions that will never come out. I played on one song called 'Cooly Baba' that was really unbelievable. On the first batch I did with them in New York, there were some classic ballads, but they were never released."

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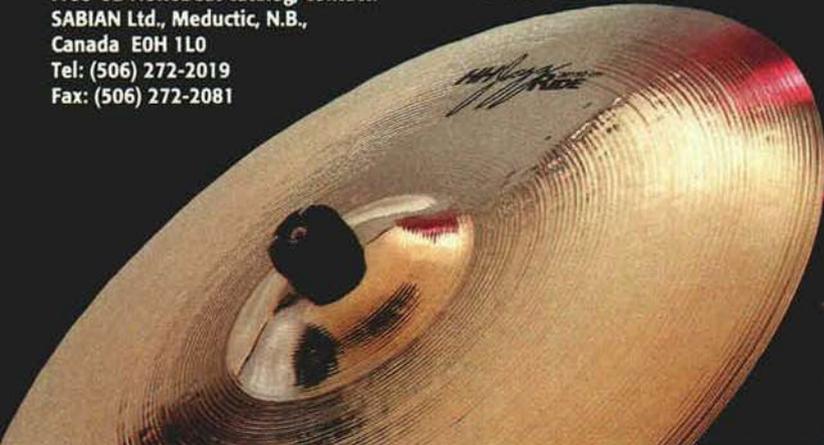
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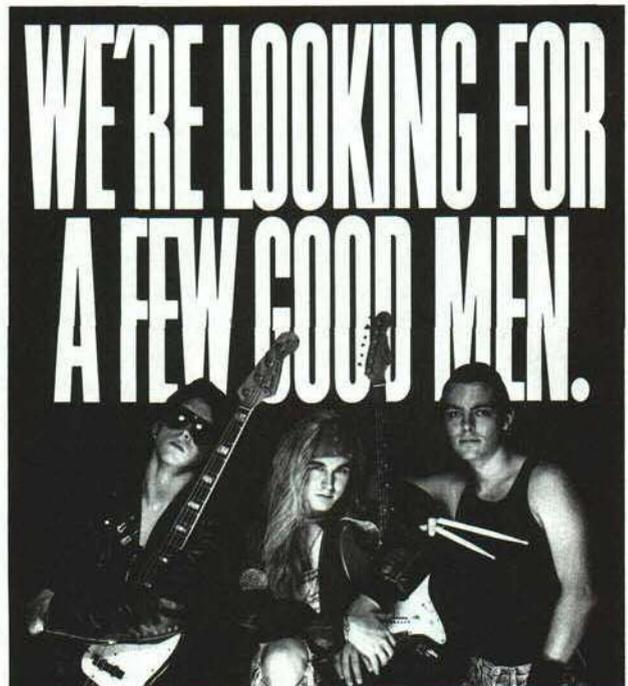


"They were using up to six different rhythm sections for the same song," Marotta continues, "so I would beg them to just do it with me. So Donald and I did 'Hey Nineteen' and 'Time Out Of Mind,' just the three of us—the click track, Donald, and me. He sang and played piano, and I played the drum track. It took no time. That's what's on the record."

Bernard Purdie sheds some light on how Becker and Fagen worked when things got difficult. Laughing his sinister laugh, "I'll put it to you this way. Walter was the more vocal one, while Fagen might be having a fit inside. If he didn't like something, he would jump on Walter and Gary Katz. Walter would try to explain. He was good at taking the heat and being the heavy. We could tell who liked the song the most, who had the most influence on a particular track. People can say what they want, but Walter was the heavy and Katz was the compromiser. He was able to hold the two of them together in getting things they both wanted."

In the years that have passed since the last Steely Dan release, Becker and Fagen have kept busy. Becker produces West Coast jazz, while Fagen relives his childhood on his *Rhythm And Soul Revue* shows. Fagen even issued a live recording of "Pretzel Logic." Talk of an impending Steely Dan record continues to float around, with both Dan-sters participating this time out. And there's a Steely Dan box set in the works, complete with outtakes. But if you haven't heard those first seven albums and all that wonderful music, what are you waiting for? You've got a lot of catching up to do.

This article is dedicated to Jim Gordon.



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RECORDINGS



RICARDO SILVEIRA

Small World

(Verve Forecast 314 511 878)

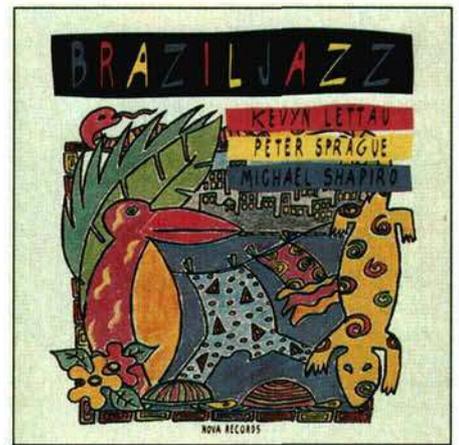
RICARDO SILVEIRA, CLAUDIO GUIMARAES: gtr
JEFF PORCARO, CARLOS BALA, PAULO BRAGA: dr
LUIS CONTE, ARMANDO MARCAL, REPOLHO,
STEVE REID: perc
ABE LABORIEL, JAMIL JOANES, ARTHUR MAIA: bs
Lou PARDINI, WILLIAM MAGALHAES, JIM AVELLAR: kybd
Small World; Haven't We Met; The Vendor; Sun
And Rain; Bel; Miles Away; Pepe Back Home; To
Be With You; Tell Me All About It; Quiet Motion;
Around The Lake; Night Wind



KEYVYN LETTAU

(Nova 9135-2)

KEYVYN LETTAU: vcl
MICHAEL SHAPIRO: dr, perc
LUIS CONTE: perc
JERRY WATTS, JR.: bs
DORI CAYMMI, PETER SPRAGUE: gtr
MITCHELL FORMAN, RUSSEL FERRANTE: kybd
Whenever Your Heart Wants To Sing; I Get A Kick
Out Of You; Your Smile; Tahiti Nui-Obi; To Say
Goodbye; Obsession; On Your Mind; Friends In
Love; Bridges; Shooting For The Stars



**KEYVYN LETTAU, PETER SPRAGUE,
MICHAEL SHAPIRO**

Braziljazz

(Nova 9141-2)

KEYVYN LETTAU: vcl
PETER SPRAGUE: gtr
MICHAEL SHAPIRO: perc, vcl
Words And Music; Secret Code; The Whistle Man;
New Meaning; Fruta Madura; You Said; Miracle;
Honeysuckle Rose; He's Gone To Travel; Tribute
(The Forest)

Fans of Brazilian jazz and pop will especially enjoy these recent releases. Brazilian guitarist Ricardo Silveira's *Small World* was recorded in Rio de Janeiro and in Los Angeles. The L.A. sessions have their charm, but seem kind of tame compared to the excitement generated from the Rio studios with the Brazilian players. Porcaro and Conte are the consummate pros, but drummers Braga and Bala and percussionists Repolho and Margal handle things with a sureness and subtle grace. They don't have the killer sounds that the L.A. guys have, but they have a more organic, musical approach. This one's a good study.

Vocalist Kevyn Lettau is featured on both the Nova releases. Her self-titled album moves from jazz, Latin, and ballads to classy pop material, with the singer equally comfortable in each

genre. Drummer Michael Shapiro provides proper feeling for each, and produces the date with the cream of the Southern California studio crop. It's as slick as a Steely Dan session, smart and strong. If any criticism can be made, it's almost *too* perfect-sounding.

Braziljazz is a trio effort, much less produced but no less elegant. Shapiro crafts tasteful tracks with minimal overdubbing, and guitarist Sprague doesn't clutter his rhythm tracks either. "New Meaning" is gritty and haunting, with a nice blend of electric and acoustic sounds from Shapiro. This one stays fresh throughout, and though the Brazil connection might seem thin at times, it's very enjoyable and well-played music.

• Robin Tolleson



COP SHOOT COP

White Noise

Big Cat ABB29CD

TOD A: vcl, high-end bs, gtr
CRIPPLE JIM: sampler, tapes
JACK NANTZ: low-end bs, vcl
PHIL PULEO: dr, metal
Discount Rebellion; Traitor/Martyr;
Coldest Day Of The Year; Feel Good;
Relief; Empires Collapse; Corporate
Protopop; Heads I Win, Tails You

Lose; Chameleon Man; Where's The
Money?; If Tomorrow Ever Comes;
Hung Again

In this day of political and social upheaval, all America needs is a band called Cop Shoot Cop! Indeed, the biting social, political, and religious commentary permeating this record is as hard-hitting as the band's name. But the critical

statements are made more potent by eclectic and percussive musical expressions.

Amidst narrated voices and sampled noises is some honest, solid drumming by Phil Puleo, who plays traditional acoustic drums and does a great deal of his riding and crashing on metal slats instead of cymbals.

Puleo displays an array of skills from cut to cut, pulling the reins on an intentionally wavering tempo in "Traitor/Martyr" and lending a militant feel with rudimental snare work on "Coldest Day Of The Year" and "Heads I Win." Puleo rarely settles into a traditional drum beat, but that fact actually, strangely enough, enhances the *catchiness* of the tunes.

Puleo is a precise player in a form of music requiring exacting performances. But his thoughtful approach and knack for timing unusual sounds with acoustic drums keeps Cop Shoot Cop from firing blanks. *Big Cat, P.O. Box 855, Radio City Station, New York, NY 10011, (212) 691-8805.*

• **Matt Peiken**

becoming a minimalist—not in the Steve Reich sense of basing his music around repetitive ostinatos, but in terms of playing fewer notes and having each one mean more. His drumming has also taken on a more steady flow with an absence of the interruptive crash cymbal and drum explosions that characterized some of his earlier work.

Just as a person's voice will often drop in pitch when he is expressing more personal thoughts and feelings, so the drumming on this album has a quiet intensity, as if coming from a deeper place. Erskine's playing is not functioning as the music's external skin but as its inner blood flow. There is a strong pulse evident throughout, sometimes stated with traditional brush and ride cymbal playing, as on "Touch Her Soft Lips And Part," "Speak Low," and "In Your Own Sweet Way," sometimes implied, as with the more open playing on "Angels And Devils" and "Distant Blossom."

Overall, his playing is a triumph of touch, feel, and taste. If you're looking for slick drum licks to practice, look elsewhere, because that's not the point here. Erskine has transcended mere physical craft to arrive at the place where the *art* of drumming resides.

• **Rick Mattingly**

**JOHN MEDESKI,
BILLY MARTIN, CHRIS WOOD**

Notes From The Underground

hap-Jones 2921

JOHN MEDESKI: pno

BILLY MARTIN: dr, perc

CHRIS WOOD: bs

STEVE BERNSTEIN: trp

THOMAS CHAPIN: al sx, al fl

DOUG YATES: bs cl

BILL LOWE: tb, tbn

CURTIS HASSELBRING: tbn

GLORIA TROPP: vcl

Hermes Daydream; The Saint; La Garonne; Orbits; Uncle Chubb; Rebirth; Otis; United; Caravan; Querencia



Here's an exceptional surprise: one of those rare "finds" born of small label vitality. Featuring a tight acoustic trio occasionally augmented by horns, *Notes* displays a wide variety of influences, original writing, and strong collective improvisation. As recorded "live" in the studio, this trio truly takes the music places when they stretch.

Medeski is dazzling, unleashing an aggressive rhythmic attack like a young '90s mix of McCoy and Don Pullen. He also has plenty of "greeze" when digging into New Orleans or funk feels. Drummer Billy Martin's deft mix of groove and texture evolved with the Lounge Lizards, Bob Moses, Bill Frisell, Chuck Mangione, and others. He has the clean, staccato punch of modern groove stylists surrounded by a halo of "looser" drum nuance and cymbal dance, often approaching the kit like a multi-percussion rig. With its sudden groove shifts, timbre explorations, odd harmonic layers, and tight dynamics, the music keeps on surprising. Hope-

fully, the good word will get around so these notes won't *stay* underground. *hap-Jones Records, 140 Plymouth St. #5, Brooklyn, NY 11201.*

• **Jeff Potter**

ARTHUR LIPNER & THE ANY LANGUAGE BAND

In Any Language

Tall Tree TTCD6015

ARTHUR LIPNER: mmb, vbs, steel dr

WARREN ODZE: dr

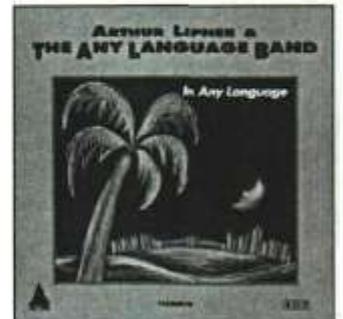
FRANK MALABE: perc

VIC JURIS: gtr

BOB MINTZER: sp, tn sx

PAUL ADAMY, DAVID DUNAWAY: bs

Some Uptown Hip-Hop; Mr. Bubble; In Any Language; Reflection; Second Wind; City Soca; Pramantha; Free Ride



Lipner and friends steer a pretty wide course, getting a classy sound, with the leader rapping out convincing marimba and vibes. Some settings are raw, some restrained and lush, yet everything is, above all, musical. It is also certainly a world beat—*universal* perhaps. There's a good bit of form to it, but the music still sounds free.

Odze has good hands and a lot of control on the kit on the vast menu of stuff that's required of him. He's effortlessly polyrhythmic while driving the loping title track, and he and Malabe fill it up on the opening "Hip-Hop." "Free Ride" is not the Edgar Winter

PETER ERSKINE

Sweet Soul

RCA/Novus 01241-63140-4

PETER ERSKINE: dr

MARC JOHNSON: bs

KENNY WERNER: pno, synth

JOE LOVANO, BOB MINTZER: sx

JOHN SCOFIELD: gtr

RANDY BRECKER: tpt

Touch Her Soft Lips And Part; Press Enter; Sweet Soul; To Be Or Not To Be; Ambivalence; Angels And Devils; Speak Low; Scolastic; Distant Blossom; But Is It Art?; In Your Own Sweet Way



Over the past few years, Peter Erskine has made a steady progression towards

tune, but Lipner's own high-powered romp—one of seven tunes written by the leader. In fact, nice contributions come from all over the place. In particular, guitarist Juris chimes beautifully on the 7/8 duet with Lipner, "Pramantha." For ordering info call *Tree Top Records* at (213) 877-5106.

Robin Tolleson

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ARNE LOKEN, KJELL SAMKOPF, PER
ERIK THORSEN, CELIO DE
CARVALHO, JON BALKE, JON
CHRISTENSEN: perc**

Schema Sonante (Demoralizing Etude For Young Percussion Players); Syllables; Music For One Percussion Player, Op. 24; Variations On Parang Chant; Rhythm Notes



Just between you and me, I am no fan of Western percussion ensemble music. For every miracle like George Crumb's lovely *Music For A Summer Evening*, there are a hundred dismissible pieces born of a crusade to liberate us poor drummers from the back of the bus. Part of the problem is that you rarely have an opportunity to audition the

stuff before you buy it.

This recording of published works designed specifically for student and professional concert use will help improve the odds. The music is serious and challenging, with an ear cocked to the East; it resonates of wood, bowed metal, and shade. The expert performance, supervised by the composers, is definitive. (Jon Christensen, whose sensitivity has adorned classic ECM jazz albums, sits down at the kit for his haunting "Rhythm Notes.")

For the percussion student facing recital time, and for the school music department operating on a shoestring budget, this release offers a bit of choice where before there was mostly a roll of the dice. *Distributed by Qualiton Imports, 24-02 40th Ave., Long Island City, NY 11101, (718) 937-8515.*

• **Hal Howland**

ROY HARGROVE

The Vibe

Novus 63132-2

**ROY HARGROVE: trp
ANTONIO MAURICE HART: al sx
MARC ANTHONY CARY: pno
RODNEY THOMAS WHITAKER: bs
GREGORY HUTCHINSON: dr**

The Vibe; Caryisms; Where Were You?; Alter Ego; The Thang; Pinnocchio; Milestones; Things We Did Last Summer; Blues For Booty Green's; Runnin' Out Of Time

In the past few years, young Roy Hargrove, whose sharp, punctuating style and lyrical tone are reminiscent of both Lee Morgan and Clifford Brown, has emerged as the trumpet player of choice among the jazz intelligentsia. For *The Vibe*, Hargrove has assembled his ideal band,



producing a relaxed session that is refreshing for its cohesive sound and well-written original compositions.

On "Caryisms" and "Where Were You?" Hargrove shows a talent for memorable melodies while pianist Marc Cary lushly winds his way through the changes. On "Pinnocchio" the quintet peruses the Miles Davis arrangement obligingly, drummer Hutchinson even throwing in Tony Williams-ish rim shots, single strokes, impressionistic cymbal washes, and three-over-two time feels. The seventeen-year-old has definitely done his homework. "Milestones" treads similar ground, catching fire on Hargrove's short yet scorching solo. Hargrove is wise enough to cover well known standards as well as originals, and his players know how to play inside without sounding *too* derivative.

• **Ken Micallef**

VIDEO

HANK JARAMILLO

Drum Chart Reading & Its Application To The Drumset

Alchemy Pictures
P.O.Box 4128
Parkside NY 11375

Time: 87 minutes

Price: \$44.95

Though not as slickly produced as other companies' high-budget instructional videos, *Drum Chart Reading*

nonetheless contains a solid body of information worthy of investigation.

The video's title basically says it: Session veteran and noted teacher Hank Jaramillo walks viewers through the basics of reading drum music and discusses how to apply these principles to session-type drum charts. Jaramillo's delivery is fairly dry, yet he gets his points across well, and covers a good amount of material in the hour-and-a-half time period he's allowed.

This is the type of video that is designed to be studied in increments; taken in one sitting, novice drummers will find themselves in relatively deep water by the end of the show. Yet this is its appeal. Used properly, *Drum Chart Reading* should enable drummers to develop enough skill to maneuver through many (common time) musical situations—certainly most of the rock 'n' roll charts they will likely come across. A 30-page booklet also accompanies the package, making it even easier for students to practice the ideas from the video.

Alchemy Pictures is a small, independent company who have wisely chosen to offer drummers instructional videos that attempt to cover ground untread by the larger, star-studded companies. Offerings like *Drum Chart Reading* may not feature MTV-level production values, but with more good ideas like this video's—plus a little more polish on the set and in the editing booth—Alchemy may just come up with even more worthwhile product in the future.

• **Adam Budofsky**

Critique continues on next page

BOOKS

UNDERSTANDING RHYTHM

A Guide To Reading Music

By Michael Lauren

Manhattan Music

Distributed by DCI

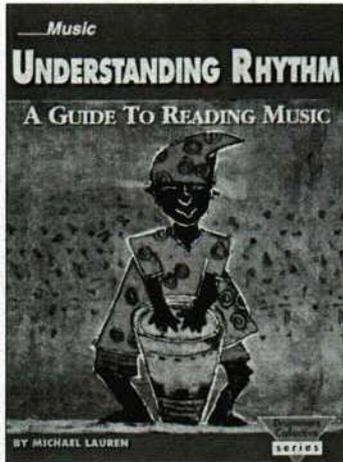
541 Ave. of the Americas

New York NY 10011

Price: \$9.95

As we've come to expect from the people at Manhattan Music (and their parent company, DCI Music Video), *Understanding Rhythm*, by Drummers Collective instructor Michael Lauren, is another clearly written and neatly laid-out instructional system for drummers.

No major undertaking here—basically explanations of note values, rests, dotted notes, ties, repeat signs, and the like, and a series of



"lessons" and "combination studies" designed to help the reader get a solid grasp on the concepts. Yet Manhattan Music's command of the medium simply puts books like this one several notches ahead of other projects cover-

ing similar terrain.

Though this book is designed for hand work only, a section on independence exercises for drumset is also included, nudging drummers into taking the exercises to the set. Also included are sections introducing syncopation, the different ways rhythms can be counted and written, and how dots and ties written for other instruments relate to drum notation. Note values covered in the book include whole, half, and quarter notes through half-, quarter-, and 16th-note triplets.

Understanding Rhythm isn't quite perfect. For some reason, chapter titles only appear on the table of contents, and after the first few pages explaining the fundamentals

of music and a note value chart, the reader is left on his or her own to tackle the lessons without any more editorial comment. To be fair, these would probably be moot issues if this book were being used by a teacher as a study guide; the teacher would obviously be there to further explain sections the student was having trouble with. This is simply something to be aware of for self-starters diving into reading drum music without a tutor. For what it represents, though, *Understanding Rhythm* is still a very useful tool for beginning drummers and their teachers.

• Adam Budofsky



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UFIP
EARCREATED CYMBALS

Ric Shrimpton

Spinal Tap Basher

by Robin Tolleson

Never mind that Van Halen, Metallica, and Def Leppard are touring now. The loudest drummer on the road today is Ric Shrimpton of Spinal Tap. With sonic-booming toms, a cannon-shot snare, and two bass drums obviously designed to drown out the rest of the band, Shrimpton is also a certain "Best Recorded Performance" nominee for his work on Tap's latest comeback album, *Break Like The Wind*.

Despite changing hats at a furious pace during the Spinal Tap set (trying to fool the Grim Reaper?), Shrimpton is the spitting image of his late twin brother, Mick, the Tap drummer who literally exploded onstage several years ago (as documented in the film *This Is Spinal Tap*). Of course the Spinal Tap drummer curse is well known. Most of the trapsters in the group's history have spontaneously combusted onstage, although Mick's brief replacement, Joe "Mama" Bestor, did not blow up but was somehow misplaced during their 1984 Japan tour.

Bandmembers Nigel Tufnel, David St. Hubbins, and Derek Smalls aren't overly confident about Ric's chances. They've taken out a \$1 million life insurance policy on him, and are introducing the drummer in concert as "the precarious Ric Shrimpton," adding, "Pray for him." The band can't really be blamed for continuing to hold auditions, and they will have a drummer on call with a beeper in most major U.S. cities during their tour just in case. None of it seems to bother Shrimpton. His ulcer is responding well to treatment, and he's playing each show like it's his last.

RT: It must be tough for you to talk about your late brother, Mick.

RS: No, not really. It's just one of those things, isn't it? Just rock 'n' roll. You live with it.

RT: That's a great attitude.

RS: You have to have a good attitude when you join Spinal Tap, otherwise you aren't going to join. I'm drummer number 13. In fact, my luggage tags have #13. I think they did that as sort of a joke, actually.

RT: What does your family think about your taking over for Mick?

RS: The thing is, we're a family of drummers—four brothers and three sisters—so it's kind of inevitable that another one of us would end up in this band. If it wasn't me it probably would

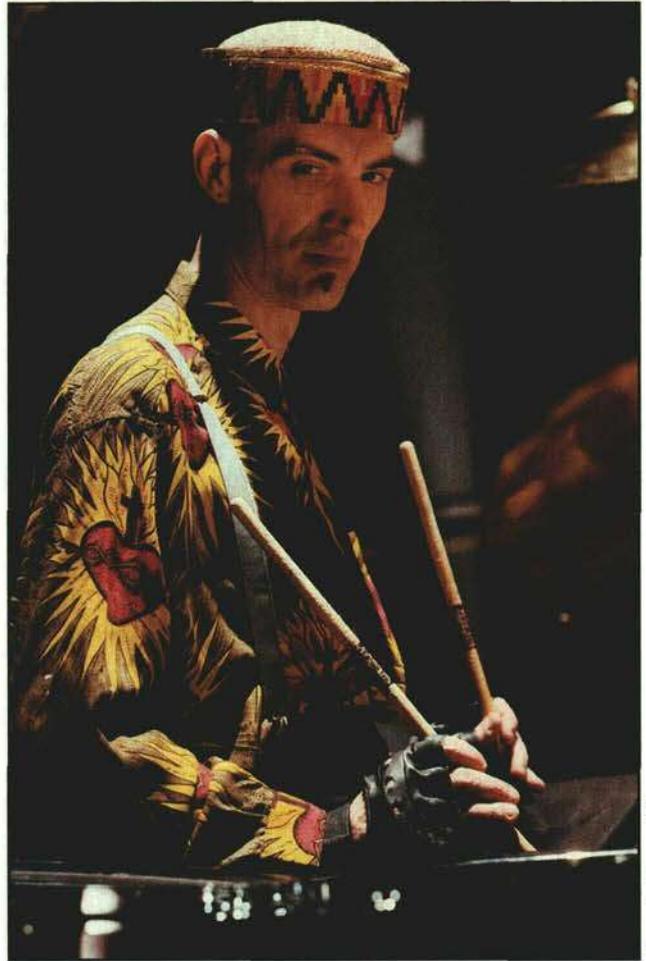


Photo by Henry Diltz

have been one of the girls. We grew up in East Anglia, which is above London. Our parents are farmers, and when we kids would practice we'd drive all the animals away. Our parents would have to run all across East Anglia to catch the pigs and cows and bring them back. It would be seven of us rehearsing at the same time.

RT: Kind of like a drum corps.

RS: Yeah, but all doing different things. One is a jazzer, one loves Latin music. Others are rockers. We kind of all developed our own styles because we never really listened to any other drummers. I hadn't heard of John Bonham until about six months ago. Everybody was always saying he was *the* rock drummer. Then I heard him and said, 'Yeah, I see, yeah.' He sounds a bit old-fashioned now, of course, but he's dead, so....

RT: Were you a Tap fan before you joined the group?

RS: Oh...who isn't? They're like one of the best bands in the world. I've put all my fears and worries aside because it's just such a pleasure to play with them. Their sense of lyricism is amazing.

RT: Do you work closely with Derek to get the grooves on the tunes? He's such a...bass player.

RS: He is amazing, and he's just starting to get funky. He's

never really been funky, and we're now doing a version of "Sex Farm" called "Funky Sex Farm," where the band actually raps. And Derek's got some Larry Graham thumb chops going there. He needs the thumb especially now that he's using the five-string bass, because all of his other fingers are being used.

RT: Let's talk about some of the songs from the new album. "Diva Fever" is a good double bass workout for you.

RS: Yes, that one was fun. I've always been a double bass drum player. Me and Mick were both double bass players. My younger brother is a jazz drummer, and just uses one very small bass drum. When I get on a kit like that I just don't know what to do with my left foot. It's kind of like, 'Well, what?' It kind of needs to have another drum there. You've got four limbs, you might as well hit drums with all of them.

RT: "Cash On Delivery" is kind of the opposite—a slow, half-time rock groove.

RS: That's definitely a bass-player-influenced track. Derek wrote it, and just wanted that big, solid kind of feel. That was recorded just after I'd heard John Bonham play, and I decided to do something with that kind of feel. He used the slightly open hi-hat thing, and I gave it a bit of that. We're stretching that out a bit live, so I get to bash away for a couple of minutes and get the audience going.

RT: "Christmas With The Devil" is a slamming tune.

RS: "Christmas" is a great song. Lyrically, that's one of the

best songs on the album. It says it all. These guys, like they say, have a personal relationship with their devil. It's quite moving to work with them on that type of stuff.

RT: That's a side of them you don't always see.

RS: Well, that was what was so surprising about Derek joining a Christian rock band while Spinal Tap was split up. He had a fish tattooed on his arm, and then when he re-joined Spinal Tap he had a devil's head eating the fish tattooed on his arm.

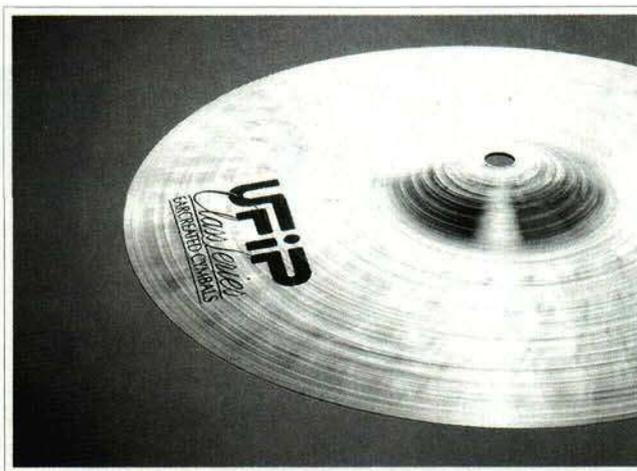
RT: You show some versatility with that Latin beat on "Clam Caravan."

RS: Latin? Is that what it is? I thought it was more Arabic. Nigel Tufnel plays a mean, sort of Arab-esque clarinet solo on that one. I had no idea the guy could play clarinet until he pulled it out the other day and started playing. It surprised all of us.

RT: Are you using anything special, equipment-wise, for this tour?

RS: I was going to, but I decided if I started to get into electronics, then I was immediately putting myself at risk for shock. I've seen guitar players on stage have electric shocks because of the electronic equipment. I thought about having the drums *above* me, but that sounded too dangerous, too. It's just a basic kit. Double bass drums, five toms, and seven cymbals—made by Yamaha and Zildjian, respectively. It's a chrome set, because I figured that the other guys were so right-out-

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front that people might not notice me, and maybe with a chrome set they would.

RT: Have the other guys in the band taken any precautions against your blowing up—like putting plexiglass between you and them?

RS: No, they've talked about that kind of thing, but if the inevitable happens, it happens. You could just sit in your room and die of not going anywhere or doing anything. So you might as well just go out and act like everything's fine and normal—and if something happens, well, it's just one of those things. That's been my attitude from the beginning. As long as they pay me lots of money Upfront, then fine. I'll spend it now, and if anything happens, no problem.

RT: What is the most challenging part of playing with Spinal Tap?

RS: Not dying...not being dead. Managing to stay alive on a day-to-day basis is definitely the most challenging part.

(Editor's note: Ric Shrimpton looks and plays a lot like Ric Parnell, son offamed Ted Heath Orchestra drummer and arranger Jack Parnell. Ric Parnell followed Carl Palmer in Atomic Rooster, has backed such diverse artists as Engelbert Humperdinck, Eddy Grant, Billy Idol, Bryan Adams, and Toni Basil, and has played and composed for the fusion group Nova, among others.)



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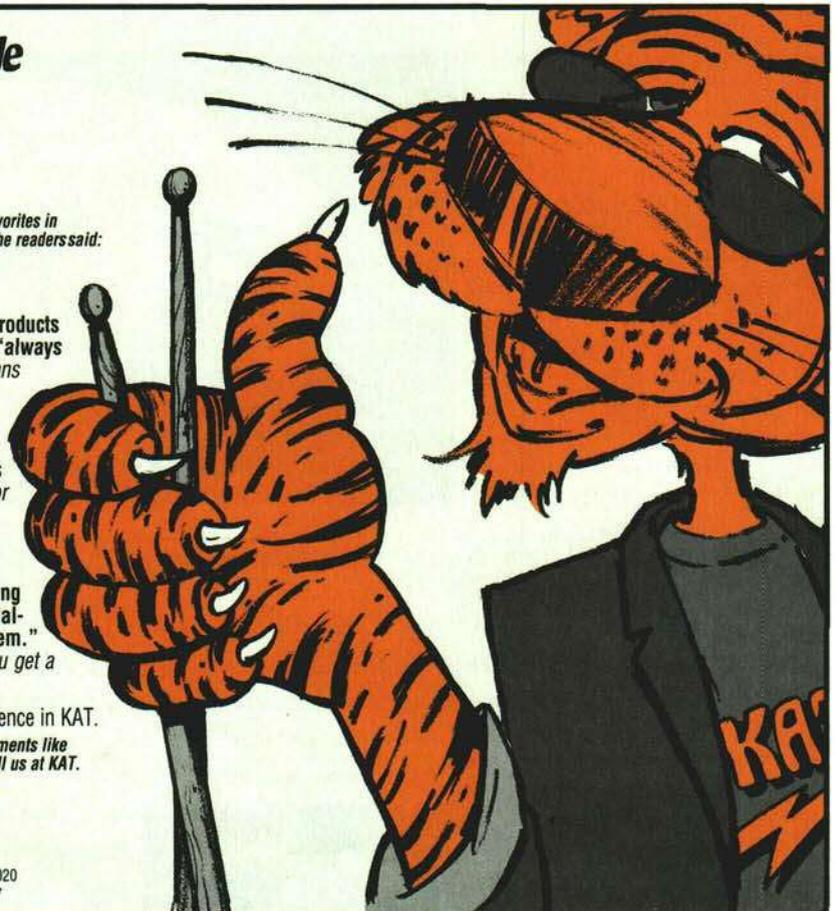
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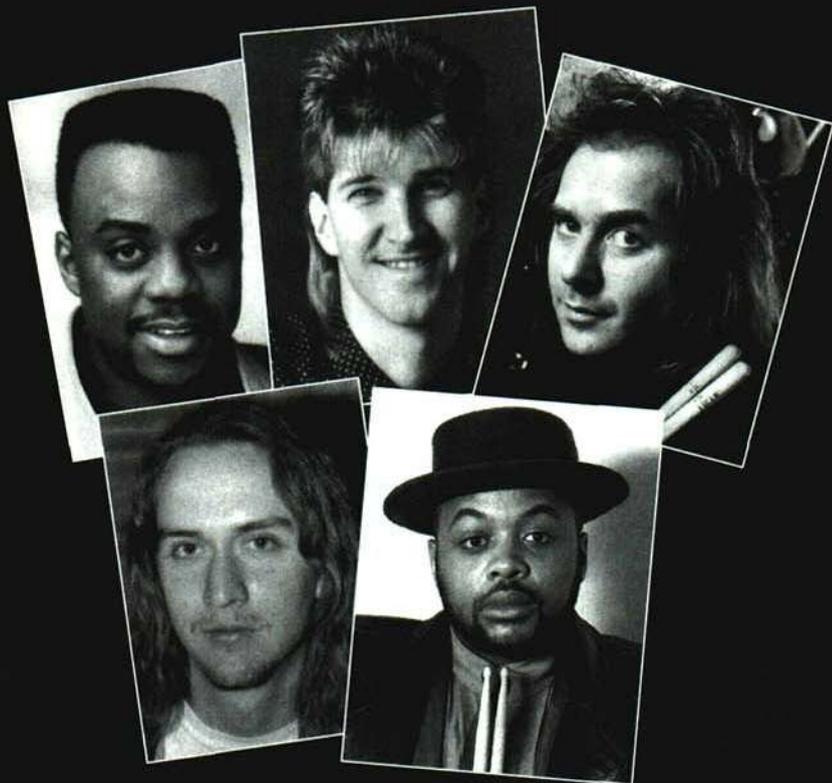
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continued from page 39

teen different samples of ways to do it. The trick is to get help from people like that—who are really interested in what you're doing—and not to lose sight of the fact that it *can* be done if you can just find all the right combinations."

Sometimes the best ideas result from trying to simplify things, as Don illustrates. "Our EP-1 electronic trigger pedal was simply a matter of saying, 'Why make a guy carry around a separate piece of wood to hit when all you're trying to do is set up a vibration? Why not have the beater hit a trigger on the pedal itself—and make the thing easier to carry around?'"

Over the years, DW has introduced several other innovations in the field of electronics. These have included the TE bass drum trigger pedal, the TBX-3 drum pad (designed in cooperation with Terry Bozzio), and an active internal trigger system for drums. Currently, the company is putting the final touches on a powered device that will allow drummers to close their hi-hat cymbals with any degree of tension they desire and have the cymbals held there—using nothing but their hi-hat foot. "The acoustic end of the market is 90% of what we're interested in," comments Don. "But we do want to service the drummer who is using electronics with some neat mechanical ways of accomplishing it."

Don is quick to share the credit for DW's innovations. "A lot of ideas," he says, "come from drummers playing the midnight set with twelve people in the club, and thinking, 'Gee, if only my hi-hat did this...' or, 'I wish I could put this over there....' First we have to determine whether that drummer is the only one who wants it, or if there is a universal need. If there *is* such a need, then it's just a matter of finding out what it will take to meet it. Pedals are a classic example. At one time, many drum companies looked at a pedal as something that 'went along with the drumset'—as opposed to being a vital element of it. It's the drummer's other connection to the kit besides the sticks. A drummer is just not going to play with crooked sticks, because they don't feel right—and it's the same thing with ped-

als. So in the early '80s the timing was right for someone to concentrate on producing a high-quality bass drum pedal for drummers."

Ironically, a *low-end* pedal introduced a few years ago was one of DW's only marketing failures. But Don considers that a learning experience. "We weren't able to sell enough high-end bass drum pedals at that time to cover our expenses," he says. "I thought we could make up the difference by producing a lower-priced, lower-quality pedal. I learned that if you're manufacturing in the U.S., you'll never be able to produce something cheaper than what's coming out of Taiwan—so there's no way to compete on the basis of price alone. Our low-end pedal cost around \$60—but drummers could get one from Taiwan for \$40. That's a big difference to a person on a budget. So we realized that we were better off making the highest-quality products we possibly could, and selling them for what we had to get in order to stay in business."

Don has a genuine empathy for those who cannot yet afford DW products. "I would love to be able to produce a great \$300 drumset that every nine-year-old kid could afford," he says, "and it's not out of the question in the years to come. As we continue to grow, a lot of the equipment we use to make our high-end drums could also be used for something a little less costly. However, the industry is inundated with drums in the low- to mid-price range, and I don't think we can do anything any better right now. The only reason anyone is going to buy one of our products is because they know it offers something they can't get elsewhere."

Drums

At the moment, a great deal of what DW is doing has to do with drums, and when you talk about the construction of DW drums, you have to talk to—and about—John Good. John has been with the company since his late teens, and describes his position succinctly—but with obvious pride: "My whole life is designing these drums. I pick every drumshell in this factory myself, and I oversee all the drum production. I also tune every drum before it leaves. Before

a drum goes into a box, it gets my name on a label, along with the date it was checked out. It makes for a very full day, but it also makes for the reputation of this company—which is tremendously important to me."

John believes in the hands-on approach to drum design, as opposed to having in-house "R&D engineers." "It's been important to us to really get involved with the practical end of drums," he says. "If you're paid to wear a little white jacket and sit in a room creating designs and concepts, you start to get nervous. And that's when you start coming up with designs that don't make a lot of sense. For instance, somebody who was obviously 'paid to think' must have thought of putting long lugs on tomtoms. They had the 'bright idea' of taking a drumshell—which you want to resonate and produce a nice tone—and putting a *ton* of hardware on it." John shakes his head in disbelief.

"A lot of people have looked at the drumshell as a 'wastebasket with plumbing around it' for the longest time," John continues. "They change the plumbing shapes from time to time: snap-on/snap off plumbing...nodal plumbing...round DW-type plumbing. But not many people paid a lot of attention to the 'wastebasket.' It really is something that we're dedicated to here."

"The reason a lot of drumsets seem so dysfunctional," John continues, "is because nobody took the time to match their shells up to work with each other. After you tap on several shells of the same size and hear how different their fundamental tones can be, you realize that you just can't put together a drumkit by walking along a row of shells and taking the top one off each stack. You have to listen to the shells and select those that will produce pleasant, even intervals descending from high to low. If you don't do that, then you're pretty much at the mercy of the luck of the draw. This was a tremendous revelation to me, and I really want to share it with the world—because it makes *such* a difference to the continuity of the sound of a drumset as a whole. We call the process 'Timbre Matching,' and it's the basis of how DW drums are made."

Another important aspect of timbre

matching is how it can affect a drum's tunability, as John explains. "Every shell has a fundamental tone—and the only vehicle that you have to match the 'sweet spot' of the shell with is the drumhead. So you should tune that drumhead as close as you can to the fundamental of the shell. Then the two elements complement each other, and the drum can produce sound to its greatest potential."

Shell Design

After years of building DW drums with 6-ply shells and 6-ply reinforcing hoops, John wanted to know what would happen to the pitch of the shell if the reinforcing hoop was removed. "So we built a set of 6-ply maple tom shells with no reinforcing hoops," he says. "Then, for laughs, I built a set of 5-ply maple toms of the same sizes, but with 5-ply reinforcing hoops. Since a thicker shell produces a higher pitch than does a thinner shell—given the same materials—I was convinced that the 6-ply shells would be higher in pitch when I tapped on them. But in almost every case they were a third *lower* than the thinner, 5-ply shells.

That told me that the reinforcing hoop dramatically raises the pitch of the shell. So I made those raw shells into tomtoms, took Chad Wackerman into the studio, and sampled the drums, shell for shell. The 6-ply shell with no hoops had a sound profile that expanded very erratically on the top, with a big expansion of the lower fundamental. It was very 'Gretsch-y' sounding to me—and I love Gretsch drums. If you're playing big, showy, suspended-tom fills—**DOOM, doom, doom**—those drums sound fantastic! But if you're playing fast, mainstream rock 'n' roll music, it's my opinion that they have a tendency to run into each other. So then I sampled the 10" tom with the 5-ply shell and 5-ply reinforcing hoops. It was higher-pitched, with a very controlled, DW-type top sound and a very narrow decay.

"Wanting to have my cake and eat it too," John continues, "I decided to take elements that I really enjoyed out of both types of shells. And that's how I came up with our new 5-ply maple shell with a 3-ply reinforcing hoop: our 5/3 Series. I was really concerned about building very

thin shells that weren't reinforced, because working drummers are going to load them into an ice-cold truck, go bouncing down the road, dump 'em out and pound 'em under two jillion watts of lights, pack 'em back into the ice-cold truck, and do it all over again, night after night. Drumshells take a beating through all that. So my primary concern was with the integrity of the shape of the shell. But that became tremendously secondary when I found out what that little reinforcing hoop was doing for me *acoustically* which was providing stability at the beginning of the cut of the drum sound. It stabilizes the vibration just for a split-second. Then the thin shell really exploits the lower fundamental—fast! So you get the cut and you get that fatness—simultaneously. The colorization of the drum grows dramatically with the velocity of the stick impact, but the drums don't run into each other. I find it a very musical sound."

DW recently introduced a new snare drum line that also involves a variation on their traditional shell design. "When you tap on a common 5x14 6-ply snare

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drum shell," says John, "it produces a low, resonant tone. Increase the shell's plies to 10 and you get a timbre that is dramatically higher. In the past, when we had both high- and low-pitched 6-ply shells, the very high ones always seemed to produce snare drums that sounded great—while some of the low ones were almost unusable. By increasing the plies, we *automatically* get into a range that is more pleasing and accepts a higher-pitched tuning. In other words, the 10/6 shell will work every time, as opposed to the 6/6 shell working only some of the time. Manipulating plies really does make a big difference in all the various types of drums that we make."

Drum Workshop purchases their drumshells from a company called Keller—as do several other drum companies. However, John is quick to point out that, "Having our source the same as that of other companies doesn't make our shell the same as theirs. I specify what materials I want used, how I want the shells cross-laminated, where I want them to join, how many plies are in the reinforcing hoop, etc. And then I spot-

check all of that. Keller is a very fine company and I have a great relationship with them. But I take the reputation of *my* company very seriously. So whenever I bring in a load of shells, I use a door-knob-hole saw to take core samples. I take the samples home with me, drop 'em in boiling water, and watch the plies come apart. That's the only way that I can know for damn sure that those shells are maple, the way I spec'ed them out, all the way through."

Bearing Edges

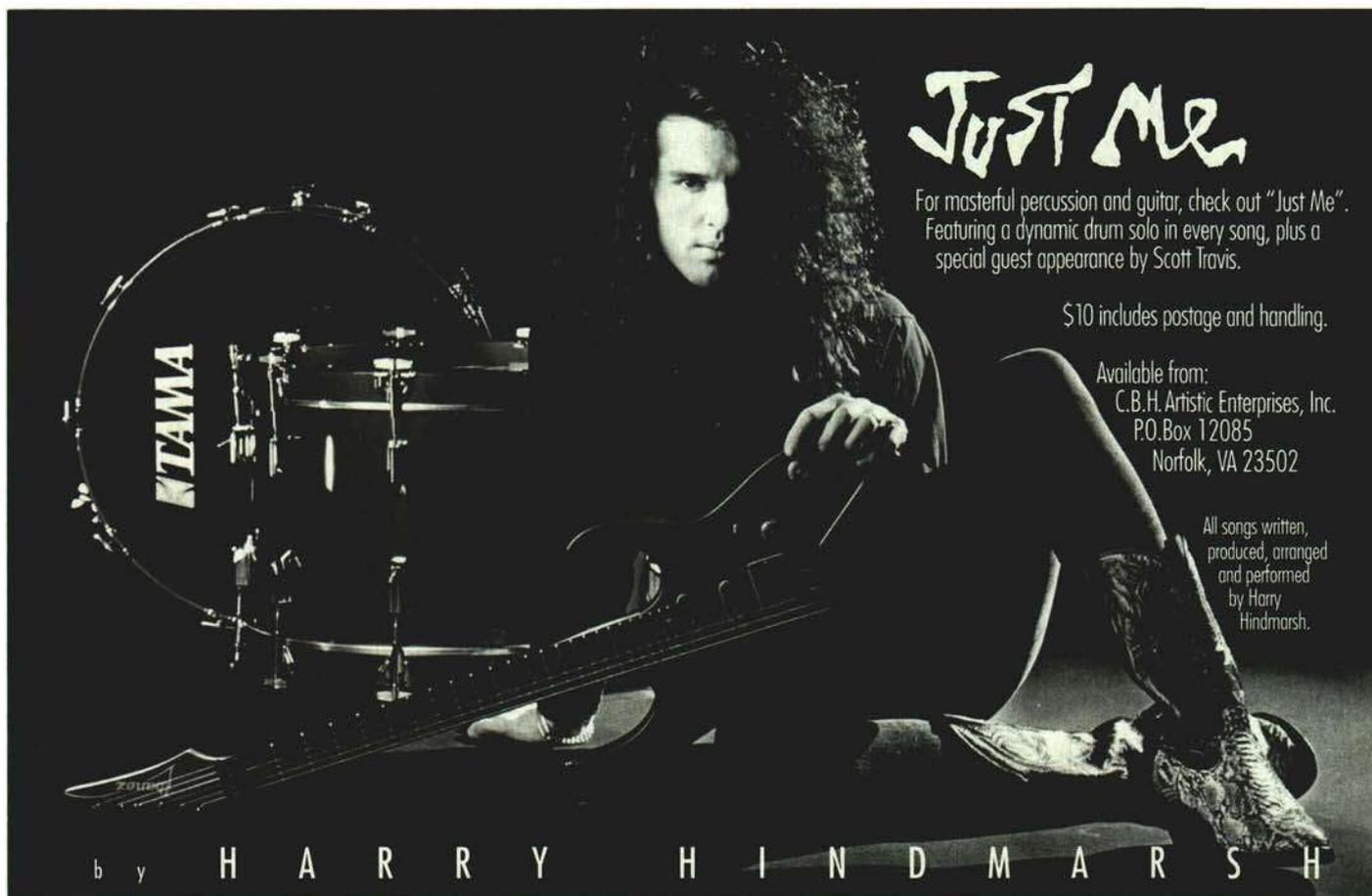
The specifications for DW's bearing edges are the result of a lot of field research. "I've spent years on the road," explains John, "with the drummers for Earth, Wind & Fire, Frank Zappa, Madonna, the Jacksons, and Men At Work. They all thought I was a great guy: 'John's gonna cut my edges before we go on the road!' Actually, I was using them as guinea pigs, to learn the information that led to what we do now with bearing edges. And I'm not going to share all of that, because we have to keep *a few* secrets. But I can tell you that different

bearing edges work best for different applications.

"On a tom-tom," says John, "we generally cut a 45° angle to the inside, with a counter-cut to the outside that's an arc with a 3/16" radius. That allows a drum-head to marry with that edge. A 45° angle to the inside gives a lot of room for sound reflection between the head and the edge of the shell. You tickle the shell and the vibration goes down—but you're also pitching the vibration into the drum, so you get a nice pleasant length of tone and decay.

"With bass and snare drums," John continues, "you don't *want* that length of decay. So we retain the 3/16" counter-cut to the outside, but cut the inside angle at 60°. That way we have less reflection area under the head, and we punch more of the shell. The vibration is thrown into the drumshell and established—and then it almost cancels itself. So the note doesn't resonate real long, like a tom-tom does."

Many companies use a counter-cut of 45° to the outside as well as to the inside, to create minimal head contact and sup-



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posedly to increase resonance. According to John, "If you have that acute of an angle both inside and out, you wind up with the drumhead coming into contact only with the tiniest, wafer-thin, last half of a single ply. How can that tiny contact point take all the vibration from the head and push it into the shell? We radius that outside slightly so that the head and the edge work together to maximize that transfer of vibration and utilize the resonance of the shell to its best advantage."

Covered Shells

The creation of the 5/3 Series shell also allowed for the development of DW's *FinishPly* covered drums. John explains how this program came about. "When you put a plastic laminate on a 6-ply maple shell with a 6-ply hoop," he says, "it has a tendency to disturb the vibration of the shell, and certain drums get choked. So I always went into any discussion of laminates kicking and screaming, because I believed they had no business being on a drum. But, with the 5/3 Series, we are able to produce shells that start out with a much lower

timbre and have much more sustain, drum for drum, than the 6-ply models. Adding an outside laminate 'ply' slightly raises the pitch—because the shell gets slightly thicker. And we can live with the minute amount of reduction in shell vibration it causes because there's so much more to begin with. This phenomenon allows me to put a laminate on drums, bring the price down to a more controllable level, and get more drums in more places faster."

DW's *FinishPly* program includes some pearl finishes similar to those popular in the 'old days.' But while the covering material used then was 1/16" thick, DW's covering is only .002" thick. "Unfortunately," says John, "because it's so thin, this material has a tendency to shrink—there's no getting around it. To account for that, you want a seam that overlaps a bit—so there'll be no gap in case the covering material shrinks a bit. But you *don't* want a lap-seam where the drumhead sits on the bearing edge, because when you put the drumhead on, the extra thickness at that point will throw the head off-center. What we

wound up doing was butt-seaming at the top and bottom of the drum—underneath where the heads sit—and lap-seaming the center. It's a little attention to detail that works quite well for us.

"We also have another interesting material called *Nevmar*," says John, "which you can actually rub with steel wool all day long and not scratch. It won't shrink, so we can butt-seam it from top to bottom on the drums. Given these types of laminates, we're now able to get drums out a lot quicker than we can with our lacquering process."

Lacquered Shells

DW uses polyester materials for their lacquering process, and offers a wide variety of colors by combining tints and base coats. "When you put the same tint over a different base coat," John explains, "you get a totally different color. Put the tint over silver or gold, and you get a deep metallic color; put it over white, and you get an opaque color. And if you put nothing but a clear seal under it, you get a colored wood-grain finish. We only have to stock 25 different tints

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Tommy Lee. Photo by Ross Halfin.

and a dozen or so base coats, and the permutations just go on and on. This allows our customers to personalize their kits; they aren't going to walk out of a store with a kit that looks like their neighbor's. And it isn't overly difficult for us to do because we're the size we are. If we were a gigantic company making thousands of drums, it would be almost impossible.

"We lacquer a drum in a series of steps over several days," John continues. "We start by turning it at 1,000 RPM and sanding it with a succession of coarse to medium-fine sandpapers. Then we shoot a clear polyester surfacer/sealer on. When that dries, the surface has peaks and valleys; it looks like the peel of an orange. Our sanders use wet/dry rotary hand sanders and make the surface dead flat—using 400 and 600 grit paper. Then they send it into the paint booth—let's say for a nice black cherry finish. The painter will spray the shell with black polyester paint. While that paint is still tacky, a coating of micro-fine crushed abalone shell mixed into clear polyurethane will be sprayed onto the surface—giving the finish its pearlescence. The two coatings melt together into a single layer, which now looks charcoal grey. The drum then gets sanded with 600- and 800-grit paper till it's smooth as a baby's bottom. Then it's sprayed with a candy-apple tint that gets sealed in with clear polyurethane, and

those two coatings melt together. The drum is sanded again, and then comes back for a clear polyester topcoat. That coat is sanded with 1,000-, 1,200-, 1,500- and 2,500-grit paper—which is really, *really* fine. And then the drum gets four polishing steps to make the surface literally like glass."

After all the spraying and sanding described above, the finish winds up only .008" thick. Yet it looks tremendously dimensional. "That's because polyester has a very high ultra-violet rating," says John. "When UV or sunlight hits it, it bends the light rays so hard that it looks a mile deep. But I would challenge anyone to hear any change in the pitch or resonance of a shell with only .008" of an inch of finish. So it's nice that we can use this very hard surface on the drums—both acoustically, and because it doesn't scratch easily."

DW's sparkle finishes are unlike the classic sparkles of the past, as John explains. "A lot of the laminates used for sparkle finishes had to be quite thick to get their dimension and depth. We found a way to *paint* sparkle, using the same steps that I described earlier. It goes on very thin, and we get that beautiful sparkle finish without affecting the integrity of the shell. We're very proud of this process.

"The one down side to our lacquering process," comments John, "is that it's very much a hand operation. It takes a

very long time, and some people get very frustrated waiting for their drums. But we think that once they see them, they'll feel that the wait was worthwhile."

Working With Endorsers

Every drum company tries to work closely with their endorsers in order to gain input for new and improved products. But in some cases, the factories are half-way around the world from where the majority of the endorsers are. But a large number of DW's endorsers live and work within an hour's drive, allowing them to visit frequently and share their ideas.

"It's part of the family feeling that we have," says Don Lombardi. "Even if they work on the East Coast, they can call us for special requests and modifications. And sometimes a small request from an individual strikes us as a valuable improvement to the line. Recently an artist mentioned that he wished our boom arm was knurled up a little closer to the top, because sometimes he likes to have it pushed almost all the way back. I thought that was a good idea, so I told the guy making boom arms to start knurling them up all the way—and that's the way they all are now. It's a matter of listening and being able to react quickly. That way, DW drummers get the feeling that they *know* the people who are making their drums and hardware, and they can literally get involved in the process."



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Five Student Types Teachers Dread

■ by Dan Broderick

I've been giving drum lessons for over five years now. The time I've spent in the basement studio of the local music store has been incredibly rewarding, but if I were to claim that I have not had my share of frustration, I would be a liar.

If you're a teacher, you must learn to deal with all the problems of human nature. You must work with people who possess short attention spans, who fail to show up, or who just can't seem to "get it." These problems are common, and a teacher learns to accept and correct such things in his or her own manner.

But there are certain types of students that seem to haunt instructors like a recurring nightmare. These aspiring drummers come and go repeatedly throughout a teacher's career. It's as though a gremlin is possessing the bodies of different students, and he keeps coming back to you. After having taught many versions of these frustrating students, I have generalized them into five types. I would like to discuss each type in detail, and to tell you how I try to deal with students possessing these frustrating attitudes. My solutions are not foolproof by any means, and no one is saying that your future students will come in without these same problematic mindsets. I merely wish to offer some suggestions, in the hopes that something I say will aid you in dispelling your own "gremlins."

The "Why Do I Have To Practice?" Student

A fact that every instructor hates to acknowledge is that a good percentage of his or her students do all of their practicing during their lesson. The snare or kit isn't touched all week, and the student makes an attempt to fake you out when presentation time comes.

The practical solution to this dilemma is to reassign the same material, warning the student that no new areas will be covered

until perfection of old areas is attained. The student may not be perfect the second time around, but he will probably practice with the hopes of leaving the old stuff behind.

Drumming builds upon itself, and you cannot successfully play difficult patterns without first mastering the basics. I often use the "building a brick wall" analogy, or a "crawl before you can run" lecture. A good way to evaluate how much practice has really taken place is to have your student play the rudiment or beat *very slowly*. Sometimes mistakes sound good when they're played fast enough. Precision even at sloth-like tempos indicates serious practice.

"There are certain types of students that seem to haunt instructors like a recurring nightmare."



The "I Don't Need To Read Music" Student

This person usually comes to you having picked up quite a bit by listening to music. He or she probably feels that learning to read music—or even taking the time to get a basic understanding of notes—just bogs you down: "Keith Moon didn't read music, man."

Students like this are especially frustrating for a teacher, because they are difficult to teach. Lessons become a "monkey see, monkey do" situation, and the teacher not only has trouble keeping track of what has been covered, but also has to give lessons in a manner with no rhyme, reason, or direction.

I try to introduce such students into the wonderful world of written music by getting them excited. I show them how to break down songs with funky time signatures, or how to write out a favorite fill from a song. If this still piques no interest, I try to show them how written-out beats can directly relate to the other instruments in a band. For example, I might illustrate the interplay between the bass drum and a bass guitar line.

If, after all this, a student still refuses to learn how to read music, I at least work with him or her on starting and stopping fills, and on counting. Reading and writing music may not be mandatory requirements for a drummer, but proper counting is. Teaching a non-reading student isn't impossible, but be prepared for some headaches when you try to explain aspects such as transitions, or when you try to maintain some sort of organization.

The "Show Me Something Cool" Student

A student of mine once said, "Dan, show me the ten coolest things you can play." This student was a fast learner, and he wanted to use his talent to impress. Well, we're all young once, so who can blame him? The problem here is that "cool" is a rel-

ative term. His "cool" after two years of playing is probably far different from my "cool" after thirteen years.

I tackle this problem in two ways. First, I show the student that many impressive-sounding fills are often very easy to play. An example would be a 16th-note run down the toms, or a blazing 16th-note accent pattern with all of the accents on right hand strikes. Hit the crash cymbal on the accents and you may attain "superstar" status in a young student's eyes. Just be sure to tell the student not to confuse flashy fills with *good* fills.

The other thing I try to show my students is the "perfect fill at the perfect time" theory—the use of tasteful, subtle fills. Try to set up two drumsets and trade off beats and fills with your students. This way, they see first-hand how you approach a break.

Be patient, because teaching a new drummer when *not* to "go for it" is no simple task. It could take years for someone to learn how to play tastefully.

The "Here, I Brought A Tape" Student

So many times a student will come into his third lesson and say, "I brought a tape along. Can you show me how to play this song?" You sigh, because you know the song is way out of this student's league, and you have a lot of talking to do. You have to explain that years of experience are packed into a song, and a half hour might not be a long enough time to do the part justice.

Besides, you are fairly certain that this student won't even be able to get the opening beat down.

A friend of mine who teaches guitar had the best solution for this one. When a student brought in a tape of Queensryche's *Empire* and said, "Show me," my friend replied, "Sure." He then picked the most involved song on the album, showing the student every rhythm, solo, and lick used by the guitarists. "Got it?" he said. "Good. Play it for me next week." Believe it or not, his student came back the next week with his tail between his legs and said, "Can we try something a bit easier? I'm not ready for this yet." It was a historic moment for music teachers everywhere.

The "I'm Doing Good, But Baseball Is Coming Up" Student

This is the student who learns everything quickly and eagerly, follows directions to the mark, and practices daily. He or she has such boundless creativity that it's inspiring. But he or she is also talented in other interest areas. Drums take a back seat, and the student quits. Your heart breaks.

What can you do? Nothing. Students are only people, and people lose interest in things all the time. Not everyone has his or her heart set on being a drummer. But for those of us who do, the rewards outweigh the hassles.



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Gus Johnson

Quiet Giant Of The Swing Era

■ by Burt Korall

Gus Johnson is a member of a disappearing breed. A drummer who made his reputation without ever resorting to unnecessary flamboyance, he is remembered by the music community for his telling simplicity and swing. Regrettably, he has been ill and unable to play since 1990.

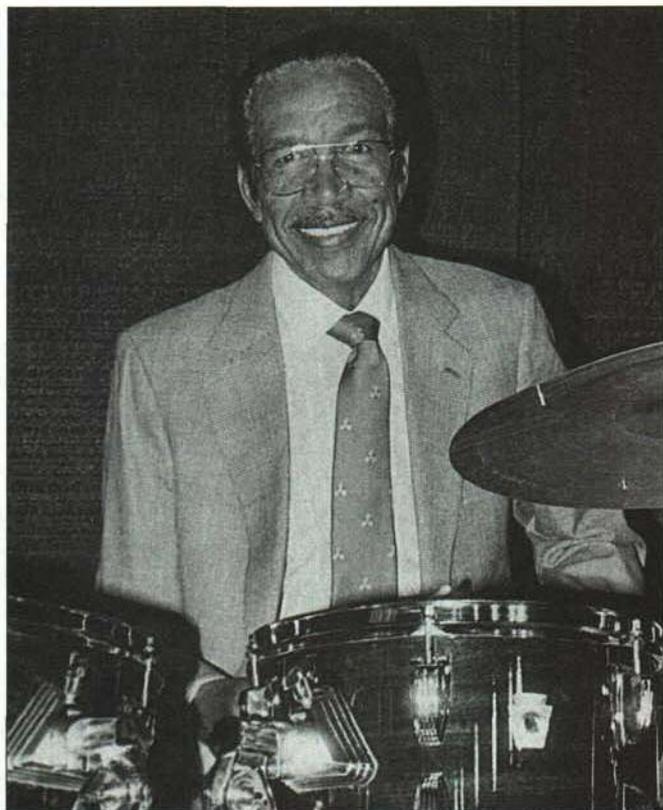
Players and leaders found Gus an amiable, persuasive presence. When doing interviews for my book, *Drummin' Men, The Heartbeat Of Jazz The Swing Years* (Schirmer Books), Johnson's name frequently came up. Those who talked about him were highly appreciative and surprisingly intense.

Woody Herman said: "I think Gus Johnson is one of the best 'time' drummers (in the world, and a marvelous guy. I don't think Basie ever knew what he had when Gus was with him." Gerry Mulligan noted: "I was lucky enough to have Gus in my band for a while. He had his own way of making the music come to life." Roy Eldridge added: "Gus combines great time and great feeling in his playing. He knows all about swinging." Art Farmer commented: "Gus has such a beautiful rhythmic quality. He really knocked me out on a record date with Manny Albam. He was so surprising—all the more so because he wasn't doing anything spectacular."

Buddy Rich expressed disappointment that Johnson wasn't more widely known, particularly among younger performers. "They probably think he's a tennis pro," he laughed. "So many musicians don't realize how good he sounded with the Basie band after Jo Jones left, and what a major contribution he has made during his career."

Born in Tyler, Texas, 78 years ago, Gus Johnson grew up in three Texas cities: Beaumont, Houston, and Dallas. His love of drumming progressively increased through childhood and adolescence. Joe Bonham, a drummer in Beaumont, and Abner Jones, the percussionist at the Lincoln Theater in Houston, were particularly important in Johnson's development during this early phase in his life. Johnson played whenever he could and diligently studied music. The years in Dallas, followed by a period at Sumner Junior College in Kansas City, convinced him that drums had to be his life.

In Kansas City, he met Jo Jones, his primary influence and mentor. "Jo had just come to town to join Count Basie. This was in 1935," Johnson told me during an interview before he became ill. "I had been doing a few things, like sitting in with



Pete Johnson, the piano player, at the Lone Star Club. One night Jo dropped by. 'You play nice,' he said. I asked him to come on the stand. He worked out with the brushes. Man, was he smooth! You could learn so much just being around him.

"Jo was great to me," Gus continued. "He sent me to Omaha to replace him with a six-piece band at the J.B. Tavern—a swank little spot downtown. But K.C. was my base. You could go to almost any club around town and find good musicians. We'd get off work about five or six in the morning, jam till noon, get some sleep, and then go back to work as early as five in the afternoon. There were a lot of clubs, like the Hey, Hey—it was run by gangsters—and the Saratoga—fights were the feature there. There never has been a place like K.C. since."

After working in Omaha, Johnson joined the Lloyd Hunter band, a well known midwestern unit, in 1936. He came in as a drummer but played bass for a few months when Debo Smith, "a hell of a swing drummer," decided to return to the band. Next, Johnson took a job in Ottumwa, Iowa, with pianist Ernest "Speck" Redd for \$1.35 a week plus one meal a day—a typical Depression gig. But he soon returned to K.C. and one of the key jobs in his career.

"Jay McShann, a piano man, decided to get a small group together in 1938 to play at Martin's on the Plaza, and he hired me," Johnson remembered. "He enlarged it 'overnight,' so to speak, so we could open at the Century Room. We went to five brass, five reeds, and four rhythm. Every night I'd learn some-

thing. We got involved in so many things in the McShann band and other groups I got to play with in K.C.: shows, various kinds of arrangements and musical styles. You had to keep up or lose out. I came up in the hard school, but it was worth the work and worry.

"The jam session was the real test," said Gus. "You learned by being there. When Earl Hines came to town in 1938, his drummer got off the bus itching for some competition. The other drummers weren't around—Jesse Price and heavies like that. So I took him on and caught him. I was lucky."

Johnson, a warm, unpretentious person, began developing his style in those crucial years with McShann. He made his point on drums with little or no fuss. "I play to make others play," he told me. "I'm not really a soloist. I don't care for the spotlight thing. I'm interested in keeping the rhythm exciting, filling holes and tying things together—whether it be a small or big band."

Johnson singled out Jo Jones, Dave Tough, and Sid Catlett as drummers who could play with a band particularly well without calling too much attention to themselves. He expressed admiration for "guys who can do anything on those drums, like Chick Webb, Buddy Rich, and Louie Bellson," and for showmen like Duke Ellington's Sonny Greer. But he insisted, "I

have to do it the way I hear it."

New York got a chance to pick up on Gus Johnson in 1941 when the McShann band came to the Savoy Ballroom with highly influential alto saxophonist Charlie "Bird" Parker in its reed section. The band was a great incubator for developing talent, and Johnson profited from his association with such highly inventive musicians. He became increasingly flexible and learned how to function in a variety of situations. New York became his center of activity in the early 1940s. It gave him the opportunity to hear and see the diverse and talented drummers who lived and worked in town, including Cozy Cole, Kenny Clarke, and Max Roach.

Johnson left McShann in 1943 and, with the exception of a period with the 250th Army Band at Camp Rucker in Alabama, became a familiar sound on the New York scene. After the stint in the service, Johnson went back with McShann, then played with Earl Hines, Eddie Vinson, Cootie Williams, Tab Smith, and others.

When Johnson briefly replaced Jo Jones in the Basie band in 1948, playing an engagement at New York's Strand Theater, he made an excellent impression. Two years later, he returned to Basie—this time playing in a small band. But because Basie missed the sound of the big band, the pianist organized in

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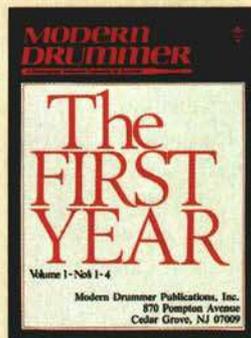
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1951 what ultimately was to become his most popular band. It made its debut at the Savoy Ballroom in October of that year.

"I felt great with Basie—after getting over trying to please everybody in the band," Johnson recalled. "Jimmy Rushing, the great singer who had spent so many years with Basie, made the difference. He really straightened me out. He took me aside one night on the job and said: 'Look, man, you just make Basie happy, and you'll be okay.' He was right."

For a little over four years, Johnson kept peerless time for the Basie band, giving it a marvelous, unobtrusive rhythmic foundation, melding in a memorable manner with the rest of the rhythm players and the band as a whole. The flow was seamless and natural; the pulse was straight down the middle. Johnson revealed a particular flair for dynamics shaping each arrangement in a dramatic and singular manner.

On the 23rd of December, 1954, the drummer was hospitalized following an attack of appendicitis. He was replaced by Sonny Payne, a showman that Basie took a real liking to. The bandleader wrote Johnson in the hospital. He said that "Sonny was doing a good job," and that he thought Payne would be good for the band. As it turned out, Payne stayed on.

Johnson turned to free-lancing when his recovery was complete. Because he had made a world-wide reputation for himself, via lean, exciting, substantial performances (listen in particular to the albums *Paradise Squat* [Verve], documenting the band's work in 1953, and *Sixteen Men Swinging*, covering the band's performances in '53 and '54), the former Basie drummer got more job offers than he could handle.

"I worked with Lena Home, Neal Hefti's big band, Ella Fitzgerald, Woody Herman, Benny Goodman, and Stan Getz," he said. "I had some happy times with pianist Eddie Heywood, and with Gerry Mulligan in his small group and the Concert Jazz Band."

Johnson was in constant demand in the recording studios, making albums over the years with such luminaries as Mulligan, Fitzgerald, Herman, Buck Clayton and Buddy Tate, Rex Stewart and Cootie Williams, Lawrence Brown, Benny Carter, Zoot Sims, Al Cohn, Manny Albam, Ralph Sutton, Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, Peanuts Hucko, McShann, and Basie.

He spent a considerable amount of time with the World's Greatest Jazz Band, replacing Morey Feld in 1969 and remaining until 1974. The band even recorded one of his compositions: "Under The Moonlight Starlight Blue."

"It was a groove for me in that band," Johnson noted. "The players were great—Yank Lawson, Bob Haggart, Bud Freeman, Bob Wilber, Ralph Sutton, and Benny Morton. There was freedom. I played what I felt. Some of the drum parts were written, but Yank and Bob preferred that I use my own ideas."

In 1974, Johnson settled in Denver, Colorado. He used it as a base until he became ill with both Parkinson's Disease and Alzheimer's Disease about three years ago. He continues to live there.

In his later years, Johnson appeared with a variety of musicians, touring a good deal with the Ralph Sutton Trio (with

which he also sang), playing in Europe and Japan with Benny Carter, and doing dates all around with Peanuts Hucko. He was constantly in demand for jazz parties, festivals, and concerts at home and abroad.

Jazz historian and record producer Ed Berger said that Johnson looked good, sounded fine, and was very supportive of the other players when he heard him at the Gibson Jazz Party in Denver in 1989. According to Johnson's wife, Mildred, with whom I have spoken several times while preparing this piece, the drummer collapsed on the stand at the Schweizer Hof in Berne, Switzerland, Thanksgiving, 1990, while performing with Ralph Sutton, Milt Hinton, and Jay McShann. He has not been able to play since.

But Gus Johnson is not forgotten, even in forced retirement. Musicians and fans recall that he was a player of major ability. They remember how he adapted—whatever the circumstances might have been—and how friendly he was. He always did the job, and, in the process, he set an extraordinary example for young, upcoming players.

Johnson never changed his manner of performance. "My recipe? Just keep it loose and swinging," he smiled. "I've always tried to play that way, even in the Ellington band. Yeah, I worked with Duke. Every time he couldn't find Sam Woodyard, I'd step in."

Gus Johnson leaves some large shoes to fill.



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International Drum Month Update

The National Association of Music Merchants has joined the Percussive Arts Society in sponsoring International Drum Month. Top national FM rock and pop radio station networks have also been organized by Robert Rosenblatt Associates of New York to support on-air promotional campaigns (including drawings for a complete drumset) in up to twenty-five radio markets across the United States.

In addition to free lessons and special sales, participating local music retailers will be giving away "beginners kits" consisting of a pair of drumsticks, a practice pad, and an instructional video, as well as bongos, tambourines, wood blocks, and percussion equipment personally autographed by noted drummers. Readers are encouraged to contact their local retail music dealer or drumshop to learn about special sales and contests throughout the month.

Pro-Mark Expands Toll-Free Line

The success of Pro-Mark's toll-free Drummer's Hotline has prompted the company to expand on the idea. Originally intended to aid drummers in finding Pro-Mark products, the Hotline began to be used for more general drum-related questions, regarding such things as drum repairs and equipment choice. In order to deal with these types of questions, Pro-Mark has instituted its Customer Satisfaction Line, (800) 233-5250.

Miami Rhythm Intensive

The second annual Miami Rhythm Intensive, a week-long series of workshops, master classes, and performances exploring rhythm in jazz and world music, is set to take place January 4-9,

1993 in Miami Beach, Florida. Jazz composer/vibist/pianist Karl Berger will direct the program, using the rhythmic training concepts he has been developing at the Creative Music Studio in Woodstock, New York since 1971. Workshops will be led by Nana Vasconcelos, jazz composer Peter Apfelbaum of the Hieroglyphics Ensemble, jazz vocalist Ingrid Sertso, and other artists as yet unconfirmed. In celebration of Miami's multi-cultural demographics, explorations into Afro-Cuban, Haitian, and Brazilian rhythms will feature locally based traditional musicians.

The Intensive is open to a small group of musicians and music students, with a goal of balanced instrumentation. Performances open to the public will showcase some of the work generated during the workshops. (Last year's Intensive introduced twenty-five musicians from around the world to instructors Berger, Vasconcelos, Apfelbaum, and Don Cherry, as well as to some traditional Haitian and Latin percussionists.)

Tuition for the program is \$250, which does not include airfare or accommodations. Assistance will be available to arrange budget lodging and board for participants.

The Miami Rhythm Intensive 1993 is administered by the Rhythm Foundation, Inc., a not-for-profit organization that presents live cultural events throughout the year. They can be reached at 230 12th St., Suite 101, Miami Beach, FL 33139, (305) 672-5202.

CPP/Belwin Acquires DCI And REH

CPP/Belwin, Inc. has acquired REH Publications, Inc., DCI Music Video, and DCI's publishing wing, Manhattan Music. These companies will now operate under the banner of CPP Media Group, which will act as a new division of CPP/Belwin.

DCI/Manhattan Music will still be run by co-founders Paul Siegel and Rob Wallis from their New York offices. Along with Roger Hutchinson, founder of REH, they will develop and produce video,

print, and software product for the division. David Hakim, vice president of sales for DCI/Manhattan Music, now holds that position for CPP Media. He and the entire DCI sales team have relocated to CPP/Belwin's Miami facility.

According to CPP/Belwin, each of the companies will retain its identity in look and production style. A fourth line of product, which will serve the education and children's markets, will be marketed under the CPP Media Group label. For more information, contact Jody Atwood at (305) 620-1500, extension 237.

In Memoriam

Rob Clayton, drummer for the Jody Grind, was killed this past April 19, when the van he was riding in was hit head-on by a vehicle operated by a drunk driver. Clayton had been with the band for about three months at the time of the accident.

The 22-year-old musician was a senior percussion major at Georgia State University. In the southeast, he was primarily known for his work with the Atlanta-based, funk/rock band Skin Deep. In 1990 and 1991 Clayton was selected as Best Drummer in the Yamaha Music Showcase.

Funeral services were held at St. Philip's Cathedral in Atlanta. Over 1,200 friends and colleagues attended the ceremony.

Sam Ash Music Institute Expands

Since its inception two years ago, the Sam Ash Music Institute (SAM.I.) in Edison, New Jersey has grown significantly in size. Currently there are 600 students enrolled in the school, which now offers classes and private instruction on many instruments and on MIDI, recording, and audio engineering. Twenty-two teaching and rehearsal rooms fully equipped with industry-standard gear, including a 24-track recording studio, are available for use. Also, a branch school offering many of the same classes as the Edison school has been opened in New York City.

The focus of S.A.M.I. is to provide a well-rounded music education for those wishing to enter the music business. A performance certificate program has been designed to offer students a structured course of study in each field, with required classes, electives, and private study. These are supplemented with ensembles and band classes at all levels. All students are allowed to join bands, which include groupings at similar ability levels. For more information call SAM.I. Edison at (908) 549-0011 or S.A.M.I. Manhattan at (212) 719-4572.

Endorser News

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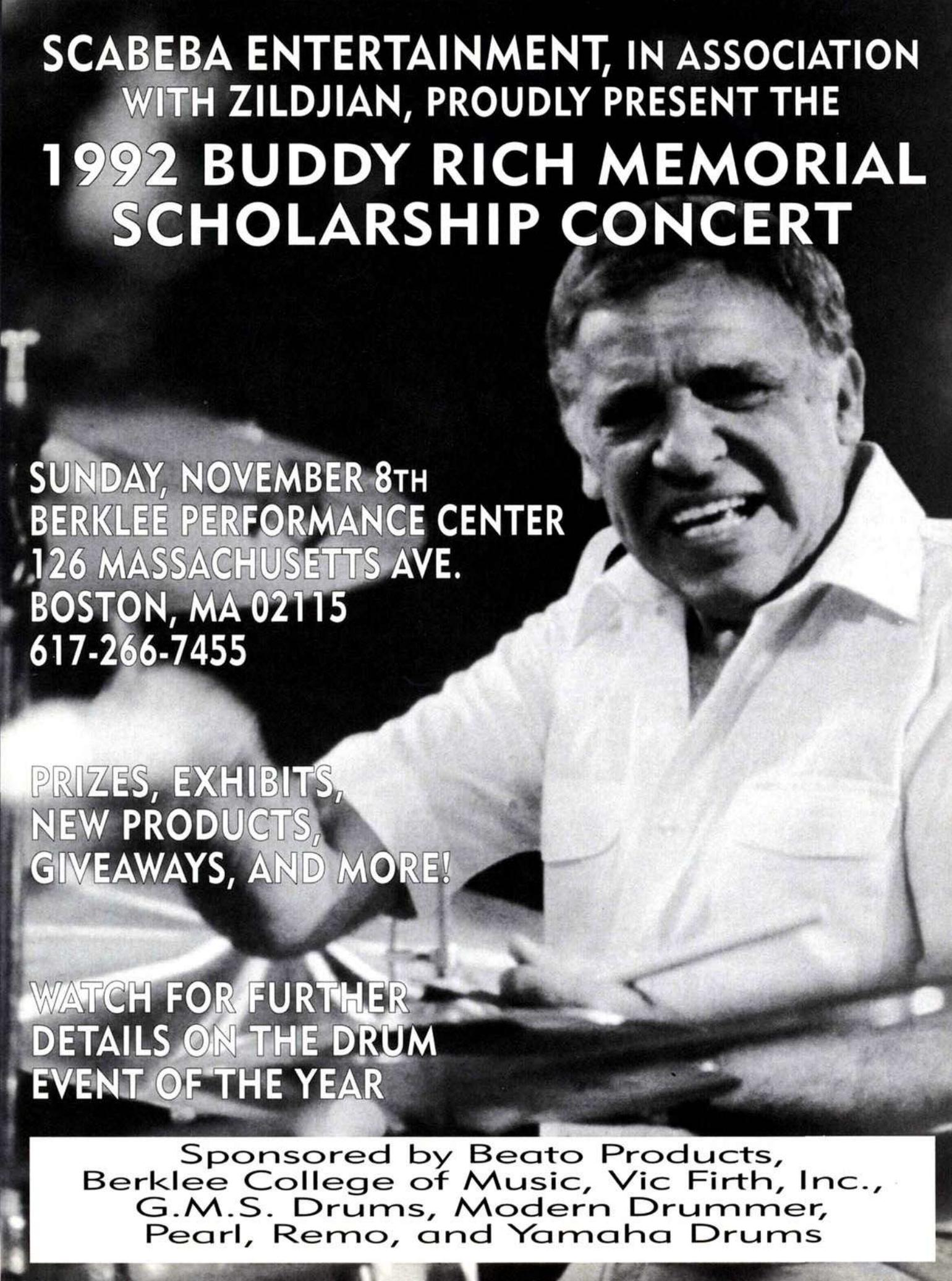
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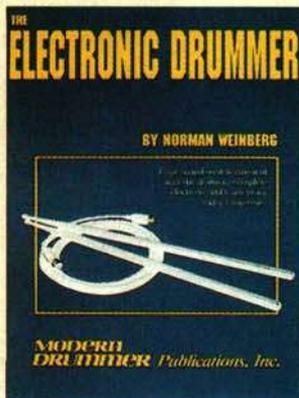
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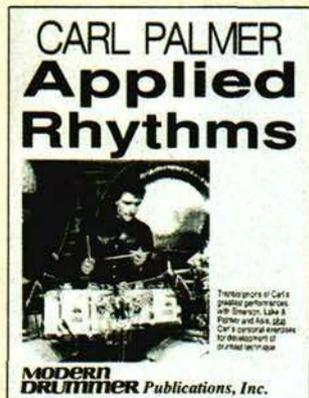
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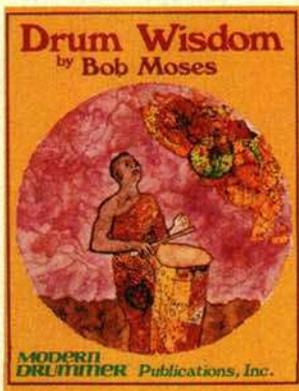
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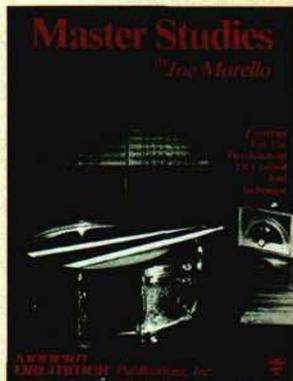
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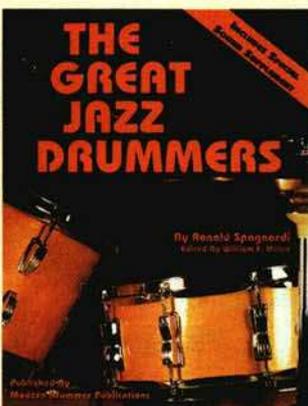
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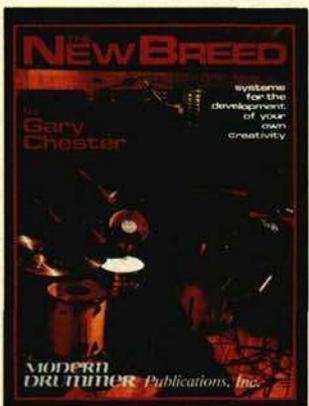
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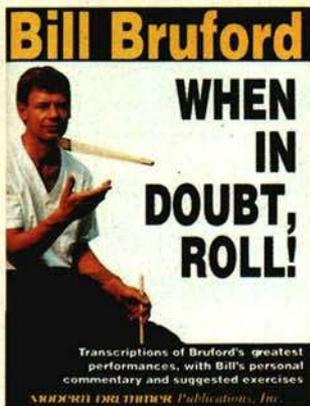
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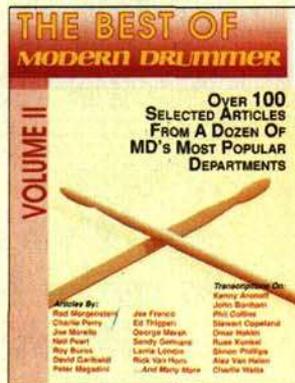
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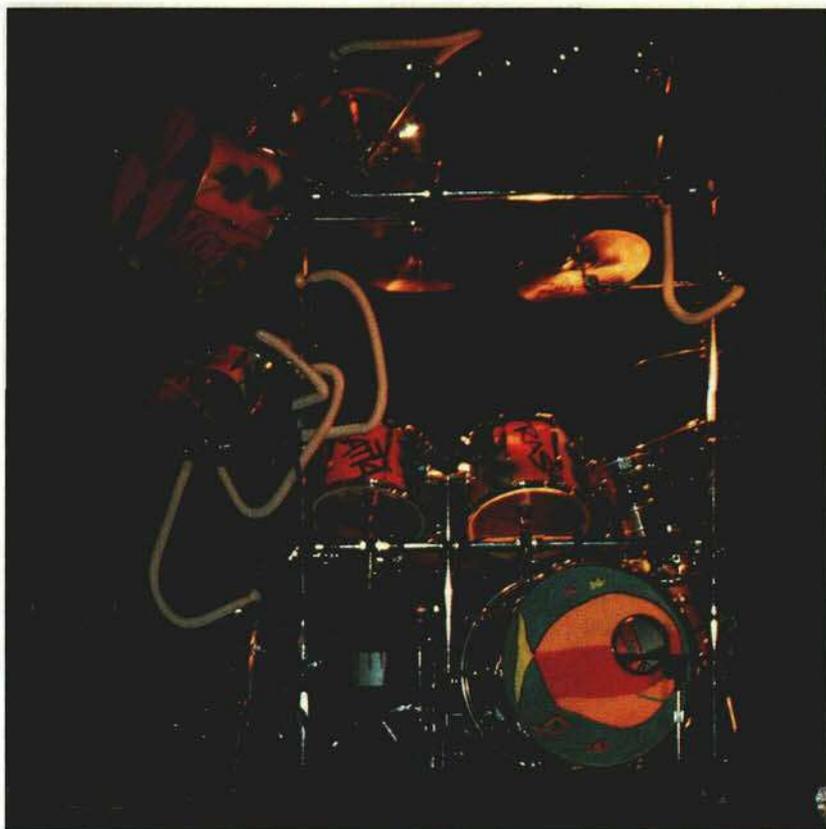
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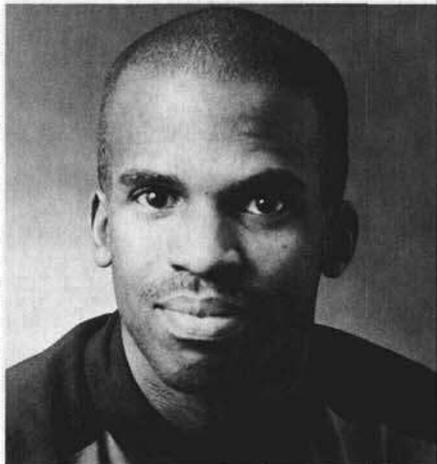
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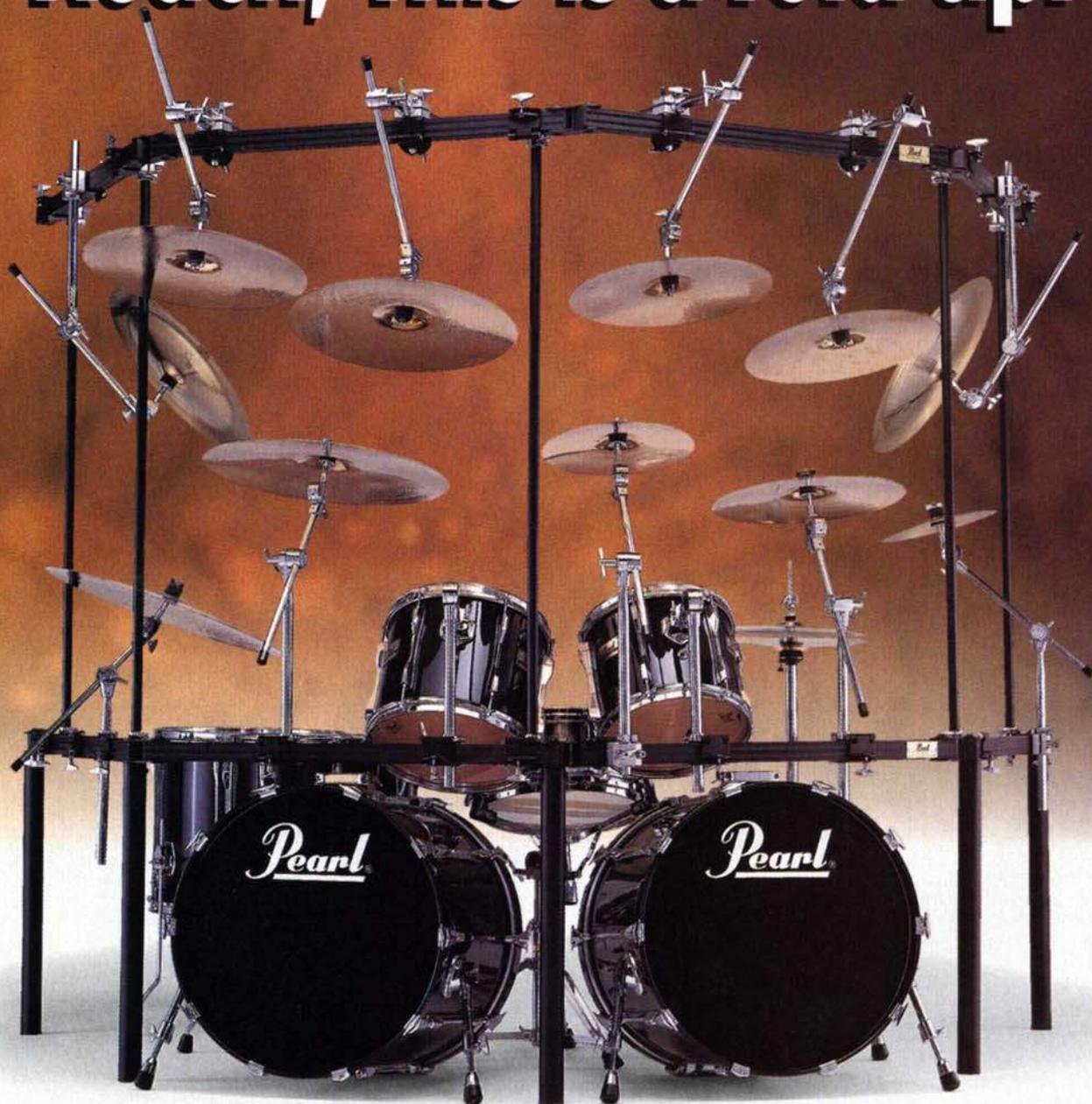
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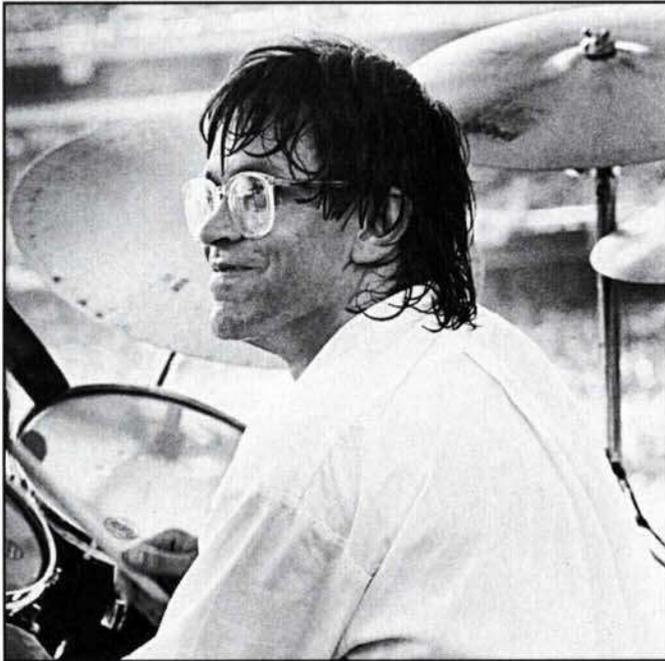
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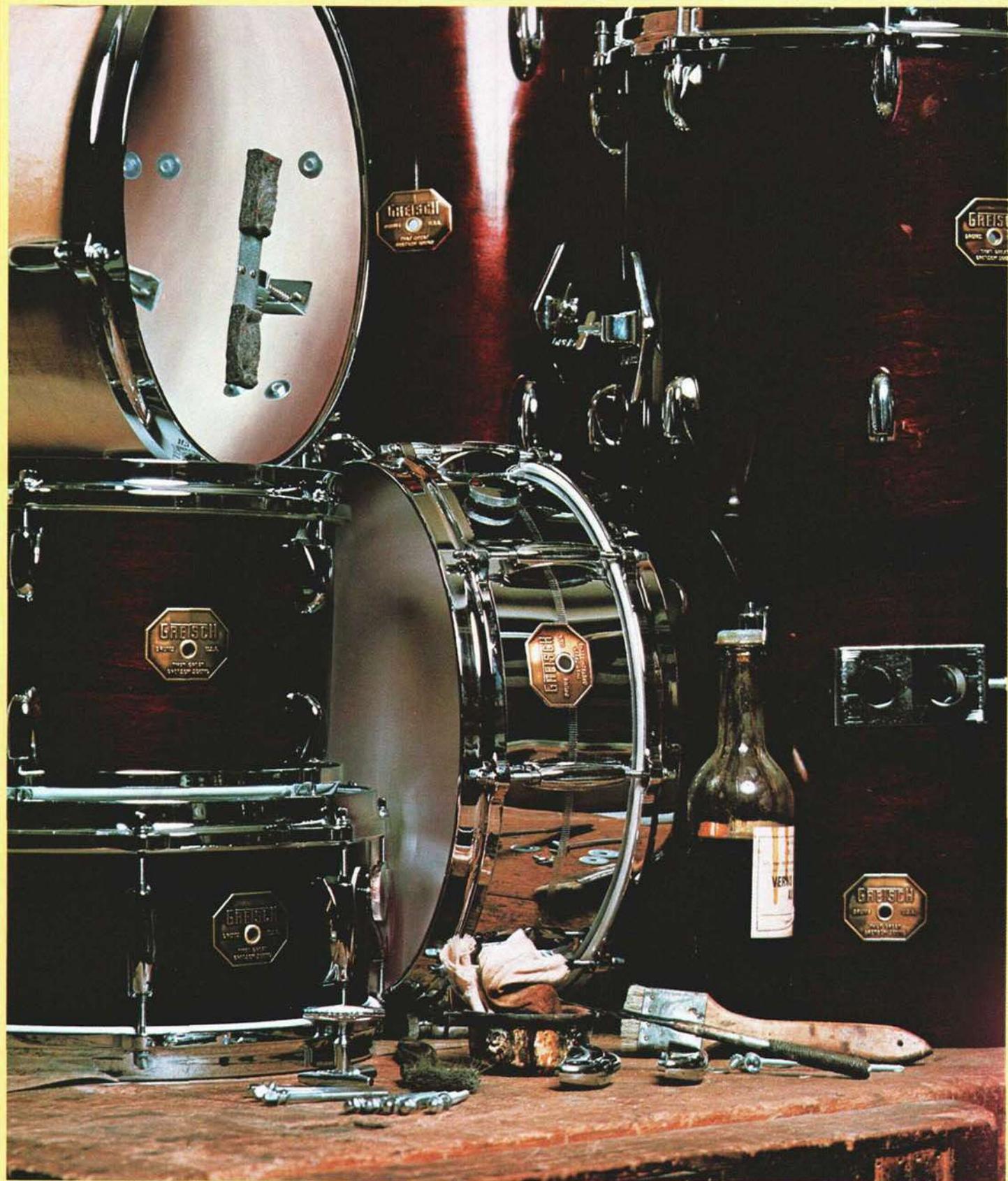
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