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Pantera's
Vinnie Paul
Reflections

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FOCUSED DRUMMING: THE CENTRAL ELEMENT
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Special Thanks

Modern Drummer's Festival Weekend 2000 was a great show, with memorable performances by a roster of incredible drumming stars. You'll see the pictorial coverage elsewhere in this issue. You'll also see a special thank-you note from MD, directed to all of the artists, sponsors, and supporting companies whose participation in the Festival helped to make it happen. As Festival coordinator, I'd like to add my personal thanks as well.

What you won't see elsewhere in this issue, however, is a thank-you to a group of remarkable individuals without whom the MD Festival Weekend could never take place. That group is the Modern Drummer staff, whose names are on the masthead below. They work very hard throughout the year to bring you the magazine you're holding. But every spring they also turn into a crack event-production staff.

Joan Stickel, Diana Little, and Roz Madia handle advance ticket sales, fielding hundreds of orders by phone, fax, email, and regular mail. (Diana also acts as my administrative assistant, coordinating hotel reservations, limo arrangements, and dozens of other little details that would otherwise drive me crazy.) Scott Bienstock, Michele Newhouse, and Joe King create the Festival T-shirts, program, and advertisements. Bob Berenson serves as a liaison with our industry sponsors both before and during the show. Tracy Kearns and Isabel Spagnardi coordinate all backstage artist relations, make sure the bills get paid, and plan an absolutely amazing after-show banquet. And all those named above (along with Web site director Kevin Kearns and editorial assistant Sue Hurring) take tickets, pass out T-shirts, and generally act as a front-of-house theater staff at the Festival itself.

My editorial colleagues—Bill Miller, Adam Budofsky, Rich Watson, and Billy Amendola—all do double duty: Before the show they help move and organize literally tons of drum equipment, door prizes, and other gear. And at the Festival they serve as masters of ceremonies, helping to move the show along smoothly.

And of course, there's my boss, Ron Spagnardi. He's the guy to whom I went, some thirteen years ago, with a crazy idea. "Would you be willing to pay for Modern Drummer to bring a bunch of incredible drummers to a theater in New Jersey, so that all our readers could come and see them play?" He did, we did, you did, and the rest is history.

Thanks, everybody.
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I know that every drummer isn’t as much of a “gear nut” as I am. And that’s because it means that they won’t get as much sheer pleasure as I did from your July issue. Talk about being a kid in a candy store! The pages and pages you devoted to all the exciting, exotic, and otherwise fascinating percussion equipment available today kept me riveted. Your cover alone was enough to make me drool.

Drumming personalities are great, and you should definitely keep them coming after issue. But tossing in a treat like this for us gear nuts once in a while is a wonderful idea, too. Keep it up.

Tom Francis
Chicago, IL

I am writing in gratitude for exposing Chris Pennie and the Dillinger Escape Plan to the drumming community [July 2000 MD]. The intensity and creativity that they are bringing to music is refreshing to say the least. And behind his impressive dexterity and chops, Chris is an incredibly modest and down-to-earth guy. He (and the band as a whole) has been truly inspirational to my playing. It’s great to see such a talented band begin to get their due credit.

Travis Lloyd
Lexington, KY

Thank you for Rich Watson’s fine piece on the passing of my esteemed and beloved teacher, Ustad Allia Rakha [July 2000 MD]. He was an inspirational and brilliant man who deeply touched any of us who were privileged to know him.

Ed Shaughnessy
Los Angeles, CA

First, I want to thank Modern Drummer for presenting me with the Editors’ Achievement Award [MD Readers Poll, July 2000]. I really appreciate it. And I want to thank all my fellow drummers for supporting me with my music, CDs, and Realistic Rock books over the years. I will hold this honor in my heart.

In addition, I want to let everyone know about something to watch for on the Internet. If you start a Web site, make sure that the name of the site—that is, the domain name and address—are registered in your name or your company’s name. You have to register with a company like Network Solutions for the right to use that name. If you don’t register, then the site, the name, and the address can be stolen from you. I know, because this just happened to me.

I had what I thought was a good Webmaster. He was a big fan of my first group, Vanilla Fudge. I contacted him when I saw the Vanilla Fudge site he put up, and he offered to build my personal site and my Guitar Zeus site. Knowing nothing about the Internet (this was in 1995 or ’96), I said okay. After the sites were built, I asked him if we could get carmineappice.com and guitarzeus.com as

JEFF BALLARD WRITES...

I feel obligated to write this letter. I think the interview published in the July issue did justice to what I said except for a few things that really need to be addressed.

First—and most hurtful to me, my colleagues, my contemporaries, and my friends—is the statement attributed to me as an answer to a comment made by the journalist. His comment was, “That was a time when it was all about the young lions on the major record labels.” My printed answer, in part, was: “Yeah, the suit-wearing jerks that played traditional jazz.”

I never called these musicians “jerks.” In fact, I do not feel this at all. I have much respect for the musician who plays music more traditionally. And, of course, I do not care what people wear. I really believe my approach to music is only one of the thousands that exist. And all of them together make up what music is. I think the statement was made up to create controversy. Controversy sells, but what a cheap sell. I am very sorry if those words—mistakenly attributed to me—have insulted anybody.

On the technical side, I want to make two corrections. First, the chacarera is a rhythm that is 2 over 3. Dotted quarter notes are played on the rim. And the head is played on beat 2 (muted) and on beat 3 (open). Second, the “rhythm” of the bulería described is correct, but the count the gypsies use is 1 2 1 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 with accents starting on the first 2 and then 3, 6, 8, and 10.

Concerning names, the name of the song on Chick’s record Change is “Rhyme,” not “The Spinner Song.” And Guillermo Klein’s name is not spelled Guilherme.

Again, in general I feel the article is good. But these few mistakes were too important to me to let them pass. Respectfully,

Jeff Ballard
via Internet

Editor's note: In response to Jeff Ballard's comments above, writer Ken Micallef says, “I am sorry if Mr. Ballard is upset with the story I wrote. However, the statement he’s referring to is a direct quote from the audio transcript of our interview. In my twelve years as a professional music journalist, I have never misquoted an interviewee. Mr. Ballard's recollection of what he said is unfortunate, but I stand by my article.”
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MEINL
ROLAND MEINL
our Web addresses. He said it would be no problem. What I didn't know was that he had registered my sites' domain names to his company. As I understand it, this is not a legal act. These are my names. Guitar Zeus is my copyrighted musical project, and Carmine Appice is my name, not his.

Later, the Webmaster and I had a major disagreement, after which I switched my sites to my manager's company to run. That was when we found out that the previous Webmaster had registered my sites in his name. Now he says I owe him money for the sites. Without going into details, he was essentially threatening to steal my sites if I didn't pay him within a certain time period.

Money aside, this is illegal. I paid for the site domain names, and he can't own my copyrighted names. Besides, if someone owes you money and they don't pay you, do you steal something from them? No, because that, too, is illegal. There are legitimate methods of seeking payment, which he should have utilized. Or he could simply have worked out an agreement with me. Instead, he chose to steal my Guitar Zeus site and is trying to get my Carmine site. Now I have to go after this guy and his company through legal channels.

I thought it would be a good idea to let fellow musicians know about these Internet snakes before they get someone else into the same kind of mess I've been put in. The Internet is a great tool for everyone in the world, but it's also a place where people can get ripped off. Please go to www.nadobra.com/domainfaq.asp for more information about this topic.

Carmine Appice
Encino, CA

FESTIVAL WEEKEND 2000

Thanks, Modern Drummer...you did it again. The 2000 MD Festival was phenomenal. It's so gratifying to see the brother/sisterhood of drummers gathered in one place at the same time.

On Saturday I sat next to a mother and her thirteen-year-old son. She said, "This has been our weekend to be together one-on-one for the past five years." On Sunday I made friends with two students who drove in from Berklee in Boston. At the end of each day I found myself being sought out by people to shake hands or hug as we departed. It's amazing what a common passion can do to a large group of people. Especially when it's drumming.

All the artists knocked our socks off, whether it was Don Brewer and Billy Ward playing with every little bit of their hearts or Akira and Vinnie defying all laws of physics. All one could do was wear a big smile and say, This is what it's all about. I'm not sure any other group or organization could pull it off the way you do year after year. Continued success to you from all my MD Festival buddies and myself.

Tim Burklow
Pequannock, NJ

Being a bass player, drummers are (of course) my favorite people. In that vein, I went to the Modern Drummer Festival Weekend along with a group of drummers. Holy smoke! Seeing and hearing that lineup of musicians was the most inspiring thing that's happened to me in a long time. You have my thanks for an incredible experience, which I hope to repeat.

Warren Mannell
via Internet

Congratulations to MD for another wonderful Festival weekend. All of the performances were first-rate. My friends and I were especially blown away by the amazing Akira Jimbo. I've seen excellent demonstrations of four-way independence.
These new cymbals recreate the fast, bright, beautiful sound of the earliest Zildjians made in America in the 30s. A time when drummers called Chick, Gene, Papa Jo, and Davey ruled... and swing was king. Hear them again for the first time.
before, but the way Akira applies his independence to produce a full musical experience is unique and awe-inspiring.

I also want to thank the members of Street Beats for coming out and entertaining us on Sunday morning as we waited in line. It was truly appreciated, and they sounded great in the open air.

See you next year!

Rob Schaff
Middletown, CT

I couldn’t let today end without writing to tell you how much I appreciate everything that the Modern Drummer staff did for Paul Leim and myself at the Festival. I’d like to specifically mention Billy Amendola, who was always there when we had a question. What time are we on? When should I load out? Who’s that over there talking to Ed Thigpen? He was right on top of anything we needed. It was truly a pleasure to work with such a professional.

Your entire staff operated the same way. Everyone was so nice to us. I wasn’t ready for it. Paul doesn’t get out of the studio much, and I think this experience has shown him that it’s possible to get that same level of professionalism outside of a recording studio.

Thank you again for inviting us to be part of the Festival. This has been an experience I will never forget.

Jim Handle
Drum tech for Paul Leim
Nashville, TN

Thanks so very much for the opportunity to come and see the Festival Weekend show. I loved it! Playing for the crowd didn’t suck either. I’ve received a lot of emails with some very positive feedback and lots of questions.

So from the bottom of my heart, thanks to all at Modern Drummer for making my weekend golden. I hope to see you again real soon.

Tony Medeiros
Indianapolis, IN

I’m writing after just hearing the news of Tito Puente’s sudden passing. I was extremely fortunate to see Tito Puente play a couple of times, and I actually got to meet and spend a few minutes talking to him a few years ago. While I am not a huge fan of Latin jazz, I loved to watch Tito play. Not only was he a fantastic percussionist and all-around musician, he was probably the best showman ever to pick up sticks.

Last night the local TV news here in New York closed with a video tribute to Tito showing him playing throughout the years. About halfway through the two-minute tribute, I realized that I had a huge smile on my face. That was, in my opinion, Tito’s greatest gift: He could make anyone watching him smile and have a good time. He was a class act all the way. I know I’ll miss him.

Steve Simmons
Port Chester, NY

Editor’s note: See this month’s Industry Happenings for more on Tito’s passing.
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Grooving with Jim Keltner

Q I had the great pleasure of watching you during a recent Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young concert at Madison Square Garden. It was a great thrill to see you clearly for an extended period of time after many years of catching glimpses of you playing behind so many rock legends in music videos and concert films. Your ability to maintain a solid, driving rhythm while integrating toms, maracas, and even brushes (at an arena rock concert!) for color is absolutely incredible. Among the many questions that came to my mind during your performance, the following stand out:

1. Your left bass drum was completely different in shape and design from the rest of your kit. What is your concept with respect to the use of double bass drums in terms of sound and rhythmic contrast?
2. I noticed that you wear a glove on your right hand during heavier playing. What kind of glove is it, and how does it assist you?
3. At times you seemed to simultaneously maintain a behind-the-beat groove with your left hand on hi-hat and snare, while playing on top of the beat with your right hand on cymbals. Do you have any exercises or can you recommend any written materials that might help in developing this incredible ability?

Harold F. Bernstein
Stamford, CT

A Thanks for all the compliments. The little bass drum on the left that you're referring to is a custom 13x14. I use different-size bass drums or other odd drums in that spot basically to add another sound source to the drumset. I like for the beat to have a little melody in it whenever possible.

The glove I wear is made by Easton, the same people who make the Ahead sticks I use. I wear it mostly to protect my thumb. For some reason, without the glove, the flesh of my thumb separates from the nail. I tend to lead the stick with my right thumb in a loose grip, which means that the harder I hit the more strain is put on my thumb.

Harold, you're the first person ever to point out to me that I was playing behind with the backbeat and on top with my right hand. That probably happens as a result of what I'm hearing from the other players at the moment. So it's probably a semi-conscious thing. I'm glad it was working well the night you heard it. I'm not aware of any actual exercises to develop that way of playing. You might try playing left-handed (if you're right-handed). It might be a bit awkward at first, but after a while you just may find something about it that you like. It's good to be able to alternate—and it does spread your groove out a bit.

Adam Nussbaum On The Record

Q I recently discovered your playing on Steve Swallow's Deconstructed release from 1996. The album is a jazz masterpiece, and your playing is absolutely innovative, melodic, and exciting. Could you please describe the recording session, and say whether you have any future plans with Mr. Swallow? I'd also like to know your favorite recordings among those that you've played on.

Brian Presson
Detroit, MI

A Thanks for the kind words. Positive feedback is always appreciated. I've been constantly discovering a lot about drumming, about music, and—most importantly—about life itself. It's an ongoing process...a journey of learning.

The Deconstructed project was a lot of fun for me. Steve Swallow is one of my favorite people. He's a true friend, an incredible musician, and one of our era's best composers. This was also an excellent band. We had played this music on a two-week tour, then we went into the studio (with Tom Mark, a fan-
The music on *Deconstructed* was written over pre-existing harmonic structures from the "Tin Pan Alley" era. These were popular American songs from the 1920s and '30s. Musicians like Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, and others would put a new melody on an existing chord structure. One analogy would be a person changing clothes (the melody) over an existing body (the harmony). The fun thing about this project was that with Swallow’s great compositional skills, the tunes became something very new and different from the originals. For any musician it’s always important to be able to hear the harmonic rhythm of a composition. That way you’re always aware of the form structure. If you can really hear harmonic rhythm, you can tell what structures Swallow’s tunes are based on. But just so you know, here’s a list of his titles, and the original tunes:

- "Running In The Family" = "Basin St. Blues"
- "Babble On" = "Lady Be Good"
- "Another Fine Mess" = "Gee Baby, Ain’t I Good To You"
- "I Think My Wife Is A Hat" = "Deed I Do"
- "Bird World War" = "I Found A New Baby"

For your continued listening pleasure, there is a new CD on the Xtra Watt label that features this same basic band. It’s called *Always Pack Your Uniform On Top*. It was recorded live during a 1999 spring tour at Ronnie Scott’s in London—one of the great jazz clubs in the world. It features all new originals from Steve Swallow.

As far as my favorites among my own recordings, I’d have to say that I hope that the ones where the music sounds good are where I sound good. Among some recent projects are Dave Liebman’s *Monk’s Mood*, John Abercrombie’s *Tactics* and *Open Land*, Jerry Bergonzi’s *Lost In The Shuffle*, and Dave Stryker’s *Blue To The Bone 2*. There have also been some good CDs with Michael Brecker, John Scofield, Joey Calderazzo, and others. Actually, I always hope that the next one is my favorite. Good luck!

---

Submit questions for your favorite drummer to Ask A Pro, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Or you may email rvh@moderndrummer.com. We will do our best to pursue every inquiry. However, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to reach every artist or that any given artist will respond. Also, due to MD’s publication schedule, artists’ touring schedules, and other considerations, it sometimes takes several months before an inquiry and reply can be published.

**Repeat Bar**

**A Classic Quote From MD’s Past**

“If you’re playing a drum solo, it shouldn’t just be a whole series of things that are difficult to do. Okay, so you’ve played a lot of things that are difficult. Well done, we’ll give you a round of applause. You’ve got to play a song. You’ve got to improvise something that’s musical.”

—Ginger Baker, May ’93
The Secret Is Out!

ENDURO

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High-Tension Risk

I have a 5 1/2x14 Mapex Black Panther snare drum with a 5 mm-thick wood shell. I've fitted it with die-cast hoops, a Remo Falams II (Kevlar) head on top, and an Ambassador snare side on the bottom. I keep both heads really tight, to the point where the drum is beginning to sound a little like a 3 1/2"-deep piccolo. I like this configuration because of the combination of body and "crack," but I fear for the beautiful black shell.

I take extreme care to make sure that all the lugs are as close to the same tension as possible to avoid warping the shell, and I don't intend to crank the tension any more than it's cranked now. (Pushing on the head with my finger doesn't move it more than 3/16th of an inch.) Will keeping the tension at this level endanger my shell when I'm playing hard—like rimshots, or just plain hitting hard?

George
via Internet

A
It's hard to predict the long-term effect of such tension on your shell. Fortunately, using die-cast rims will reduce some of the risk, since the rigidity of the rim helps prevent any one lug from getting more than its share of head tension. However, you should realize that you're using extreme measures in almost every factor: high lug tension, a high-tension head that doesn't have much "give" of its own, and high-impact playing. At some point something has to give, and if it can't be the head, it's going to be the tension rods (which can strip), the lugs themselves (which can strip inside or crack), or perhaps the shells (most likely where the lugs are attached).

Our feeling has always been that a given size of drum has an optimal tuning range. While that range may allow for quite a bit of variation, it is usually counterproductive (and sometimes risky) to take the tuning far out of that optimal range. While we appreciate what you say about getting the body of a deeper drum with the crack of a shallower one, trying to make a 5 1/2" drum sound like a 3 1/2" may ultimately prove damaging to the 5 1/2". (To say nothing of what that high-tensioned drumhead may be doing to your hands, wrists, and arms.) It might be better to actually play a 3 1/2" drum.

Slicknut Source

Rich Watson did a Quick Looks review of the Samson Slicknut cymbal fastener in the July 2000 MD. I'm having a hard time finding this product. Can you provide contact information for the manufacturer?

Russ McAdoo
via Internet

A
We're sorry the information didn't appear in the original review. We've had quite a few inquiries like yours since it appeared. The product is just starting to get established, so not too many dealers are aware of it. Hopefully, that will change soon. In the meantime, you can contact the manufacturer, MD Custom Accessories (dba Samson Fasteners) by phone: (603) 329-4313, fax: (603) 329-4741, or email: samsonfastener@mediaone.net.
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Mapex Info

Q On page 54 of your July issue your Product Extravaganza includes a picture of a Mapex drumkit with the most amazing finish I have ever seen. It starts out white and fades into a deep blue. The photo caption says, "New from Mapex is this maple/basswood Pro M series Studio kit." Do you know the name of the finish? Can I get that finish on any other drums (from Mapex or even another company)? Can you tell me how much the pictured kit costs?

Rich
Kingrich45@aol.com

A Mapex's product specialist, Josh Touchton, replies, "Thanks for your interest in Mapex drums. The drums that you saw in the July MD are the new Pro M series, which replaces the Mars Pro. It features new basswood/maple shells, single-point lugs, updated bass drum heads, and two new finish families. Benchmark finishes feature subtle metalflake sparkle finishes and are available in gold, red, and black. Ice finishes are Benchmark finishes that fade to an iridescent white, and are available in Blue Ice, Purple Ice, and Walnut Ice. The finish that you saw in MD is the Blue Ice finish. The retail cost on that set (model PM6225UF) is $1,829.

"There is one other Ice finish that is available on Saturn Pro and Orion series kits. It's called Gold Fade, and it was featured in the MD Giveaway that appeared in the June, July, and August issues."

The Age-Old Grip Question

Q I have been rethinking my entire approach to my drumset lately, including my grip. I have always played matched grip, but I'm considering learning to play with traditional grip. Because both of these grips are used successfully by drummers at all levels, there must be something attractive about each. What are their advantages/disadvantages?

Rick Raffesberger via Internet

A There has been lots of discussion about matched versus traditional grip over the years. However, in recent years the issue has become less a matter of "right versus wrong" and more a simple matter of personal preference and application. Here's a quick summary of the generally accepted information.

1. Matched grip offers a more "symmetrical" approach to moving around a kit—especially a large kit. It also lends itself to left-hand lead. As a result, it became very popular in the heyday of Billy Cobham, Lenny White, and Simon Phillips.

2. Matched grip utilizes more muscles in the hands, wrists, and forearms, thus distributing the workload more evenly. This can result in greater stamina and potential power.

3. Matched grip actually extends the "reach" of the drummer's left hand (assuming a right-handed drummer), which can facilitate a more open setup, or perhaps permit the addition of other drums or cymbals.

4. Traditional grip is thought to be more useful for "sensitive" playing in the left hand, such as jazz comping or playing ghost notes.

5. Traditional grip takes more advantage of stick rebound, and thus can lend itself to a very relaxed style of playing. It also helps in the control of dynamics.

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There are arguments over which grip can produce the greatest sticking speed. Our position has always been that speed depends more on the abilities of the player than on the grip being used. This is borne out simply (as you mention) by the number of great players who use the two different grips.

**Head Choices**

**Q** I have a very quick question: What are the best heads to use for RotoToms?

**Ben via Internet**

As with any drums, the "best" heads to use depend on what sound you want. However, most drummers who play RotoToms tend to use either clear heads (of any given brand) or Remo Pinstripes. Single-ply clear heads will have the most attack and ring; twin-ply heads will be more durable and will offer a little lower tonality. Pinstripes give a bit of control to the ring.

**Nylon Versus Wood**

**Q** I’ve been playing drums for over twenty years. I’ve always preferred nylon tips to wood tips on drumsticks. Yet I see many of the players I admire mostly using wood tips. The nylon tip, for me, gets more of a ping from my ride, and lasts much longer than the wooden tips I have tried. Why do many well-known players choose wood tips? Thanks much.

**Wayne Hanley via Internet**

**A** It’s a matter of personal preference, of course. But personal preference is often influenced by current trends. Ten years ago, the vast majority of major drummers were using nylon tips. Clarity and cut from cymbals was very desirable, so nylon tips were a major contribution to the popular sound.

In recent years, there’s been a return to a desire for “darker,” “warmer-sounding” cymbals—especially rides. (That’s why so many models of dark, or "old-K-style" cymbals have been introduced by the cymbal companies.) Wood-tipped sticks contribute to the creation of darker, warmer cymbal sounds. So, along with the trend in cymbals, there has been a trend back to wood tips.

However, a trend is only a trend. Whether you wish to be a part of it is totally up to you. If you’re happy with the sound of nylon tips on your ride, and that sound serves your musical purposes, then by all means stick with what you like. There’s no reason to use anything simply because other drummers do. What’s important is what works for you.
It won't give you his sound,
but it might give you yours.
Tom Hambridge's life has changed quite a bit over the last two years, since artist Susan Tedeschi asked the drummer to produce and play on her first record. The multi-talented Hambridge also brought some material to the table—including her two big hits, "It Hurts So Bad" and "Rock Me Right." The songs won several awards, helping Tedeschi snag a 1999 Grammy nomination for best new artist.

Since producing Tedeschi's album, Tom has moved his family from the New England area to Nashville. Upon his arrival, he produced several new artists, such as Barrence Whitfield & The Savages, Shannon Penn, and Sons Of The Jet Age. Most recently Tom finished a record with Dan King. "I get a lot of calls to do what I call 'jumping in the trenches,'" he says. "I'll look at the material and a lot of times I'll play. I like to produce and play at the same time because it puts me in the middle of things, right inside the arrangements. Even if there is a drummer in the group, I can sit down and help create what the drummer is going to play."

As for the Tedeschi gig, Hambridge landed it after having toured with Jonatha Brooke and doing her live record. Tedeschi heard Tom with Brooke, called him, and asked him to join her unit. Since then they've toured with The Allman Brothers, done some dates on The Lillith Fair tour, and headlined several dates.

From a drummer's perspective, Hambridge says Tedeschi's music starts in the blues. "That could be 12/8 stuff, shuffles, Chicago kinds of things, or Texas shuffles. Then she has a real cool gospel and soul thing going on. And the stuff I wrote for her is rock.

"I love this gig because I get to play lots of different things in Susan's set," Tom continues. "It's not just getting out there and playing loud and hard the whole night. We start off with 'Rock Me Right,' which is in-your-face, and then we immediately go into the quietest ballad/brush thing. Susan sounds like a cross between Aretha Franklin and Janis Joplin, so she's got quite a range and can also belt it out."

The success Hambridge is experiencing continues to open doors for him to write for and work with artists he's revered. In fact, he's elated over the fact that a song he wrote, "Lone Wolf," will be the title track of Johnny Winter's next record.

Tedeschi and band have already begun working on her next album, which includes several Hambridge compositions. And while Tom is extremely busy working with Susan, he's now so in demand that he's having to decline touring offers with some of his favorite artists. According to Tom, "I hate having to say no, but I feel so fortunate to be in a position where people I admire want to work with me. It's something I've always wanted."
Gregg requires a vast range of distinctive voices from his drums, and only an instrument that allows him to speak clearly can satisfy his diversity. His instrument of choice — the Orion Classic — such as the above Traditional Maple model in Gold Fade finish with gold plated lugs and matching Black Panther™ snare. With thin all-maple shells, the Mapex Isolated Tom System, precise bearing edges and a variety of shell dimensions, the Orion’s sonic choices are limitless.

From the Supernatural rhythms of Santana to the hard driving fusion of Steve Vai, Gregg Bissonette’s range of drum voices and mastery of his craft has made him one of the most sought after studio drummers today. Visit your local authorized Mapex dealer or visit mapexdrums.com to discover your own drum voices.
MIKE

Mike Joyce was only twenty-four when The Smiths split up in 1987. The enormously popular band scored twenty consecutive top-40 UK hits in four years and left a wake of deeply inspired bands. The breakup obviously could have left Joyce reeling. "But early on I resigned myself to two things," the drummer says today. "First, I'd never be in a band as good as The Smiths. Second, I'm young, so I have time to reach another nirvana."

So Joyce got right back on the horse and toured behind the debut album of controversial singer Sinead O'Connor. According to Mike, "After working with [Smiths singer/lyricist] Morrissey, I felt it was important to have a frontperson who was articulate and strong. Sinead was a beautiful girl, a beautiful person, and very strong—but fragile as well. A complex character. And of course she had an amazing voice."

Mike's next gig was with another notorious British singer, the brilliant and eccentric Julian Cope. Cope had had an American hit with "World Shut Your Mouth," and needed a drummer to tour prior to the release of the adventurous Peggy Suicide album. "It was fantastic playing with Copey," Mike says with a smile. "He's an incredibly interesting guy. Being with him was like a drug for me. It opened up a whole new spectrum of thought. He means it, man, as Johnny Rotten might say."

Joyce's imitation of the Sex Pistols/Public Image Ltd. singer is quite accurate. That's not surprising, given his '91-'92 stint with PiL, following a tour with his home-town heroes The Buzzcocks. "The work I've done is with people I've admired immensely," Joyce insists. "I find playing with strangers intolerable. I'd rather go on the dole—which I've done. I'll not join a band until we've gone out a few times and I find out what kind of people they are."

That helps my playing."

To illustrate, Mike recounts his introduction to PiL's famous frontman. "I didn't meet Johnny until three days after we began rehearsing. I saw him at the rehearsal complex cafe, so I went up and said, 'Hi Johnny. How you doing?' He turned to me, with his Johnny Rotten stare, and said, 'I've heard you're crap.' And I said, 'That's funny coming from you, 'cause you haven't heard me play. I know you're crap, though.' He liked that and was like, 'You want a drink?' I had a great time playing with PiL."

These days Mike says he's thrilled to be reunited with Smiths bassist Andy Rourke for the first time since the Sinead O'Connor tour. The two fell out as a result of an eight-year court case between Joyce and Morrissey regarding mechanical rights to the Smiths albums. Joyce won the ruling, and is now focusing on the positive, notably his gig with the band Aziz, led by ex-Stone Roses guitarist Aziz Ibrahim. Joyce plays on half the album, which also features Paul Weller, Jimi Hendrix bassist Noel Redding, and Weller's long-time drummer, Steve White. "When Aziz, Andy, and I played together, it felt like a band. But right from the start we all agreed that the songs should come first, and if that meant bringing other people in, then so be it. So Steve's being on five tracks is fine with me. That's the great thing about being thirty-seven. If I were seventeen I'd probably be in tears. But I've led a charmed life when it comes to playing in groups."

Adam Budofsky

THE RETURN OF MR. BIG

Pat Torpey

Granted, it's been a while since we last heard from Mr. Big. Their last hit single, "To Be With You," made its way into the US charts in the earlier part of the '90s, and drummer Pat Torpey agrees that most people thought Mr. Big went the way of Mister Mister from the previous decade. Let the record show that Mr. Big never did throw in the towel.

"We took a self-imposed hiatus," Torpey says from his Studio City, California residence. "Some people thought we weren't around anymore, but we were doing a lot of international things, especially in Southeast Asia and Japan. After some time, we figured we'd either kill each other or break up, so we decided to take some time off. Everyone had other things they wanted to pursue, so it worked out."

And after a few years of working on their various side projects, including his own solo project, Odd Man Out, Torpey regrouped with Mr. Big and began work on their new self-titled album for Atlantic. "We started recording in May of 1999, and it didn't take long. We never really spend a lot of time in the studio; we have a pretty good idea of what we're gonna do."

Although he knew what to do, Torpey does admit that he's been indecisive on what to get—out of his drums, that is. "I'm in a constant battle for that drum sound in the sky—the perfect sound, whatever that is. So I'm always trying different things."

Examples of such "different things" can be heard on the new record, as Torpey explains. "One thing I've never done before with Mr. Big is play a song with mallets, which I did on 'My New Religion.' We tried to aim for that distant Ringo Starr sound, sort of dull and not prominent."

Torpey also mentions "Dance With My Devil," in which his goal was something reminiscent of the Jimi Hendrix Experience's "Fire"—recorded live, with minimal overdubs. "If anything, we're always trying to keep it pretty natural and straight ahead," Torpey states. "We're aiming for the perfection of imperfection. A performance is hard to duplicate, and when I try to copy myself, well, that's where I get into trouble."

Waleed Rashidi
Unleash your sound

"Deeply resonant, yet powerful, with explosive high energy..." That's why Remo WeatherKing® Emperor® and Pinstripe® double-ply drumheads have been the heavy-duty choice of the world's leading drummers for over 40 years. Today, with the application of Remo's newest exclusive two-ply technology, these heads are better than ever. Now, they're even more consistent and durable, with a full-bodied frequency spectrum that fuels both heavy-hitters and all-around drummers like never before. Visit your local music dealer or check us out on the Web at remo.com and unleash YOUR sound.

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I t's been a little over a year since former Damn Yankees drummer Michael Cartellone joined Lynyrd Skynyrd. He came into the picture shortly after the band released *Edge Of Forever*, which Kenny Aronoff had recorded. Ironically, just the previous year, Michael had taken over the John Fogerty gig from Aronoff. "I had known the guys in Lynyrd Skynyrd for years," Cartellone says, "so there's a lot of ties there. I visited them in the studio and found myself playing percussion on *Edge*.

Cartellone committed to do one tour with the band—which turned into nine months and 150 shows. "Shortly into the situation, it just started feeling good," he says. "I was very happy being there, and they expressed that they were happy that I was there. So it became an invitation to stick around permanently. It was an easy decision for me. I don't think I've ever been in a band that was as much of a family environment. Everyone gets along great, and when that's what your work environment is, how can it not be fun?"

As for playing the music, Michael says the tours are a blast. "Playing all these classic Skynyrd tunes is so much fun. I had grown up playing a lot of these songs in cover bands, and to actually be playing 'Free Bird' as Gary Rossington plays his trademark slide guitar solo is a very cool experience."

And just what does the band require of a drummer? What they want from me is energy and creativity," Michael says. "When playing the classic songs, they want someone to be true to the song, yet still inject a personality. That's easier said than done. I think 'Free Bird' and 'Gimme Three Steps' are so ingrained into the listening public that you really can't take many liberties. If you try to doll it up, you realize it doesn't sound right. I think they were looking for someone who understood that concept, as well as someone who could come in and take the band into the future."

Recently Skynyrd has been recording a Christmas album called *Skynyrd And Friends*, to be released later this year. "We've chosen a few classics to cover for that album," Michael says, "and then the band is writing some new material for it as well. In fact, I've co-written something with Johnny Van Zandt that I'm hoping will make it on the album. That's been another fun thing about the band for me—my inclusion and involvement in the songwriting process."

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Dennis Chambers recently described Bruce Guttridge as "a monster" of a player (January 2000 *MD*). The compliment is well deserved; Bruce is one of the Mid-Atlantic's hardest working and most in-demand drummers. Coming off of a five-year stint with Ken Navarro, Bruce is currently recording, producing, and playing with many top acts, including Carl Filipiak, George Hazelrigg, and Dan Leonard.

In addition, Bruce has been focusing much of his time on the DC pop sensation Less Traveled, a strong vocal/guitar band that also features world-class bassist Gary Grainger. "Music that people like is what it's all about," Brace says. "I'm enjoying playing in a pop group and still being able to stretch a little. This band is fantastic in that regard."

Guttridge is a talented engineer and producer, as evidenced in his work on Less Traveled's upcoming CD. "This project is great because I have control of the production every step of the way. And playing with Gary Grainger is amazing."

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Guttridge has produced two of his own CDs, which showcase his abilities as composer and arranger. "In the past I haven't wanted my records to sound like 'drum records.' But lately I've wanted to do new material with some serious drums: a little darker, and a lot of stuff in odd meters. It'll still be strongly based in melody, but it's going to be coming from a much more rhythmic area."

Bruce attributes much of his musical development to the support of his mother, as well as his father, jazz historian and writer Leonard Guttridge. He has also studied with Joe Morello and Gary Chaffee. "I've been playing all my life," Brace elaborates. "Since I was five, it's been nothing but music."

In addition to his busy schedule, Brace is developing his Web site, www.bruceguttridge.com, where visitors can sample music, obtain CD information, and read about upcoming events.

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Robyn Flans

Rich Nagel
Uncompromising.

There's only one way to describe a musician whose flawless drumming with Frank Zappa, Weather Report, Santana, Genesis and Phil Collins have become classic examples of impeccable time-keeping, note-perfect performances and gigantic drum sounds: Uncompromising.

There's also only one way to describe the drums he plays: DW.
Former Nine Inch Nails drummer Chris Vrenna was recently in the studio producing the forthcoming album by the band Cold for Geffen/Interscope records.

Billy Ward is on tour with Joan Osborne.

Danish drummer Anders Mogensen is on When Granny Sleeps' latest release, Welcome.

Lou Ciccotelli and Rob Ellis are on Laika's Good Looking Blues.

Drummer/leader Dennis McPartland has released the eclectic Off The Beaten Path.

Two more Lonely Bears albums featuring Terry Bozzio are now available in the States, Injustice (1992) and The Bears Are Running (1994).

Gregg Bendian's Interzone has recently released Myriad.

Joe Farnsworth is on Eric Alexander's The First Milestone.

Bernard Purdie is on Jimmy McGriff's House Party.

Scott Amendola is on Noe Venable's No Curses Here. Scott also has a self-titled solo album out on Art Of My Hearts Records. Visit his Web site at www.scottamendola.com.

Ian Froman is on Rick Margitza's Heart Of Hearts.

Cannon Hall is on Tommy Guerrero's A Little Bit Of Somethin'.

Brian Blade is on David Berkman's Communication Theory.

Joe Sirois and The Mighty Mighty Bosstones are out promoting their new CD, Pay Attention. They recently co-headlined this summer's Warped tour.

Johnny Rabb took a trip to Florida to accept an award for entry into the Guinness Book Of World Records for fastest drummer.

Paul Doucette is on tour with Matchbox Twenty promoting their new CD, Mad Season.

Don Henley has a new CD, Inside Job. Former Tom Petty drummer Stan Lynch produced the disc.

Clarence Penn is on Tommy Smith's Blue Smith.

Jim Copley is on Paul Rogers' solo outing.

Jeff "Tain" Watts is on Joey Calderazzo's self-titled solo album.

Steve Gadd, Larry Ciancia, and Shawn Pelton are on Carly Simon's Bedroom Tapes.

Jack Mouse is featured on the new Dan Haerle Trio recording, The Truth Of The Matter.

Grady Tate and Victor Jones are on Jimmy Scott's Mood Indigo.

Zaun Marshburn is on Saint Low's self-titled debut album.

Shadow Of The Vibe, by The Matthias Lupri Quartet, features Sebastiaan De KIom on drumset.

Jim Copley is on Paul Rogers' solo outing.

Billy Drummond is on Voodoo Dogs by Larry Goldings & Bob Ward.

Live drum 'n' bass artists Droid, featuring drummer Amir Ziv, have signed with Shadow Records. Their upcoming CD, NYC D 'N' B, will be in stores this fall. Besides playing with Droid, Amir also plays metaliphone for Cyro Baptista's Beat The Donkey.


Simon Kirke, along with band-mate Paul Rodgers, enjoys success before Bad Company when Free's "All Right Now" hits the US charts at number four in October of 1970.

Elton John, with Nigel Olsson on drums, rolls into the UK charts at number six with "Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me," on October 27, 1973.

In October of 1978, Steve Smith replaces Aynsley Dunbar in Journey.

On October 6, 1983, R.E.M., with Bill Berry on drums, makes its TV debut on NBC's Late Night With David Letterman.

Stewart Copeland releases The Leopard Son, one of his many film soundtracks, on October 29, 1996.

Birthdates

Earl Palmer (October 25, 1924)

Billy Higgins (October 11, 1936)

John "Jabo" Starks (October 26, 1938)

John Guerin (October 31, 1939)

Roger Hawkins (October 16, 1945)

Mike Clark (October 3, 1946)

Trilok Gurtu (October 30, 1951)

Tico Torres (October 7, 1953)

Chad Smith (October 25, 1962)

Tommy Lee (October 3, 1962)

Tony Royster Jr. (October 9, 1984)

Zac Hanson (October 22, 1985)

This month's important events in drumming history,
There's only one way to describe a drummer whose exceptional drumming covers a spectrum of styles from the straight-ahead jazz of Maynard Ferguson and the jazz-fusion of Chick Corea to Alanis Morissette's unique blend of mainstream rock. Unlimited.
And there's only one way to describe the drums he plays: DW.
On Reinventing The Steel, Vinnie Paul and Pantera combine their love of metal legends Judas Priest (and Priest’s classic album British Steel) with a focus on writing real songs for real people. The tunes spit, burn, and pounce like the Pantera of old, but with a primal, pointed intensity that makes the album a crash course in flesh-eating heavy metal.

With all the pounding year after year, and no earplugs, one has to wonder how Vinnie’s hearing has held up. “My right ear is probably down 5 dB at around 3 k, from bashing on the ride cymbal,” he says. “But my left ear is great. When you do three hundred shows a year, something has to give sooner or later. I just put big monitors behind me, turn the drums up loud, and rock, man. I want it to feel like a freight train when I’m playing. There have been times when I have had some ringing in my ears, but it’s never been a permanent thing. It goes away when I get a break from it all.”

Paul is renowned for his double bass drum technique and ferocious energy, both of which he credits to a good foundation in take-no-prisoners “Southern” hard rock.

“One of my biggest heroes of all time is Tommy Aldridge,” says Vinnie. “He’s the dude who inspired me to play double bass and to get up and kick ass. Three nights ago I saw him playing with Ted Nugent and he was phenomenal.”

And Paul’s advice to drummers who want that wall of double bass wallop? “There are things that you can do with your feet that sound way cooler than what you can do with your hands. Not many people are capable of doing 16th notes and double ruffs with their feet. So if you go from that angle it will set you apart.”

...Alex Van Halen
He was a huge influence on me while I was growing up. He isn't necessarily a technically great drummer, but he has a very exciting feel. Every time you put on a Van Halen song it moves, and the music has a great feel.

...Ringo Starr
Ringo was a simple drummer. But considering what was happening in music when he came out, he was very ingenious. He did stuff that was uncharacteristic to drumming, like on "Come Together." So he definitely deserves some credit. And he deserves credit for his singing, too.
There's only one way to describe an amazing artist whose impressive performances as a producer, composer, band leader, vocalist, percussionist and drummer have created a reputation that's second to none. Unsurpassed. Of course, there's also only one way to describe the drums she plays: DW.
Virgil Donati’s Monster Foot only fits one pedal.

PowerShifter Eliminator

If it’s not an Eliminator, it’s just been eliminated.
...Don Henley
Another good singer/drummer. "Hotel California" has a great feel, and "Life In The Fast Lane" rocks.

...Pete Sandoval
I gotta be honest. The only time I listen to Morbid Angel is when my lead singer has it on. I know that Pete Sandoval is incredibly fast—a blast-beat-style drummer. Something like that is for a real choppy, short-stroke player. I can't do a lot of the stuff that he does, just because I'm into big strokes and playing with power.

...Artimus Pyle
He's the original guy from Lynyrd Skynyrd. I'm a huge Skynyrd fan. The drums were never over the top, but they were great for that band.

...Bill Ward
I love Bill. Black Sabbath was a major influence. Bill never played anything that sounded soft, it was always heavy. To me, that's where the term "heavy metal" came from. I never listened to his records as far as copping a fill; I put them on when I wanted to jam. When I was in high school we'd put those records on and just headbang to 'em. It was all great.

...Ian Paice
He laid down some seriously deep grooves. One of the first real groove drummers of heavy metal or heavy rock.

...Peter Criss
Whoa. The first drum solo I ever learned was Peter's "God Of Thunder." [laughs] All his drumming is simple, simple, simple. But it was always perfect for KISS.

...Charlie Benante
Charlie is a damn good friend of mine. He's a chops king, a double-bass king...just a hell of a player. And he is one of the originators of thrash metal drumming.

...Tommy Lee
T-Bone! Well, I loved him when he was in Motley Crue. He's another friend of mine. Once he called off the "sticks and licks and tricks" on the road he really became a great drummer live. He always played exactly what was called for. Of course, he was probably the greatest drummer ever to promote some super image.
WELL YOU KNOW HE DOESN'T PLAY THE SAX.

NO ONE WORKS HARDER THAN THE DRUMMER. AND NO ONE WORKS HARDER TO GIVE DRUMMERS WHAT THEY DESERVE THAN VIC FIRTH. DRUMSTICKS PERFECTLY TONE-PAIRED AND WEIGHT-SORTED. THE #1 DRUMSTICK IN THE WORLD.

WWW.VICFIRTH.COM
Pacific's L-Series is a mid-price line designed to look and sound better than a mid-price line. According to the makers, it offers "classic sound and contemporary performance created by combining traditional drum-making materials with today's most advanced drum designs."

The line features all-maple shells in FAST Tom sizes. The drums are fitted with clear bottom and coated/clear top heads to create "just the right balance of clarity and resonance." Rack toms come standard with suspension-style mounts, while floor toms include special full-sustain legs that allow "more efficient vibration and a fuller, more professional sound." Three standard configurations (with two add-on drums) are available.

All L-Series kits include a matching all-maple snare drum. Standard bass drum hardware includes heavy-duty spurs and a height-adjustable three-way ball & socket double tom-mounting system (with an auxiliary clamp to accommodate an additional tom or cymbal arm). Each kit is equipped with a 500 Series single bass drum pedal and a full complement of heavy-duty 900 Series stands.

Describing cymbals may be the only situation in which terms like "dark" and "dirty" are positive attributes. Sabian's new AA Raw Ride offers both qualities—in contrast to the bright sounds usually associated with the AA line. According to Sabian, "The Raw Ride speaks with a sinister simmer at lower levels, but has the capacity to roar at louder volumes. Its medium-thin weight and high profile give it a mix of traditional and trashy tones with hot and breathy stick definition." The Raw Ride is available in 20" and 22" sizes.

On "the dark side of bright" are Sabian's new 15", 17", and 19" AAX Dark crashes. Utilizing Sabian's AAX Auto-Focus Response design, these crashes are said to offer the contemporary player "a selection of accenting options in thin to medium-thin models that deliver fast and punchy output on the darker side of the normally bright AAX responses."

In a departure from the concept of "dry" rides, the new 22" Chester Thompson Signature Liquid Ride is designed to complement Chester's heavier, more solid-sounding Precision Ride. It's a thinner model said to offer "glassy sticking definition and a shimmering presence warmed by a liquid wash of tone."
Remo's line of doumbeks has been upgraded to include a choice of sparkle finishes, in addition to existing FabriFinish options. The Diane, Leila, and Cleopatra pretuned doumbeks, as well as the Diane tunable models, can now be ordered in the same white, black, blue, green, purple, or red sparkle finishes currently available on Valencia congas and bongos. The high-gloss, metal-flake-style painted finishes are said to complement Remo's Acousticon shells and Renaissance heads.

New to Remo's marching drumhead line are WhiteMax heads. Based on the BlackMax series, the new heads feature "the warmth and musicality of Mylar plus the superior projection, sensitivity, and durability of an advanced woven Aramid fiber." They're designed in response to the trend of slightly lower batter-head tensioning. Their two materials combine to create "a rich tone and an extremely hand-friendly playing surface."

Dunnett Classic Drums claims they've introduced the world's first cryogenically tempered drums. A new technology, cryogenic tempering involves computer-controlled temperature reduction via diffusion of liquid nitrogen into a vacuum-sealed chamber, all of which takes about three days. The tempering transforms the microstructure of any metal object into a more uniform structure that is stronger, longer-lasting, and more dimensionally stable.

According to Dunnett, cryogenic tempering completely de-stresses a metal drumshell, negating the weld and thus rendering the drum virtually "seamless." It also substantially increases the strength of standard triple-flange hoops and the life of snare wires. Dunnett K300 cryogenically tempered drums are available with stainless steel, titanium, brass, and copper shells, and feature treated hoops and snare wires (which are also offered as aftermarket items). The drums are sold through a network of authorized dealers and directly via the company's Web site.

Expanding their line of esoteric shaker instruments, Rhythm Tech now offers the Cocktail Shaker, a medium-sized (7" long by 1 1/2" diameter) shaker. It's said to be "small enough to hold onto with a drumstick in your hand, loud enough to play from behind the drumset, and great for club performances."

For more intense performances, there's the aptly named Loud Shaker. At 9" x 3", it's big, aggressive, and...well...loud. The company suggests that it's especially good for outdoor live performances.

On the more subtle side, Rhythm Tech's Maraquitas are miniature maracas that combine the soft, sandy sound of egg shakers with a convenient handle. They can easily be held along with a drumstick, or used alone for whispery percussion effects. Their small size makes them applicable for classroom and other educational uses as well.
Bavarian Delight
Sonor Delite Drums

Launched at the Frankfurt Music Fair, Sonor's totally new high-end Delite drum-kits feature Vintage Maple Shells made with the company's CLTF (Cross Laminated Tension Free) system. The shells are extremely thin in order to produce "a warm, resonant tone with instant response and a full tuning range."

The Delite series also utilizes Sonor's new AX ball-clamp tom mounting system for positioning flexibility. New convertible spurs, six high-gloss lacquer finishes, and single tension lugs (with Sonor's Tune Safe System) are also featured. The line offers a broad range of drum sizes, including snare drums in three shell depths.

Sticks Are Raw, Music Is Cookin'
Zildjian RAW Drumsticks And New Artist Series Models

Zildjian's new RAW technology involves scoring the surface of a drumstick in a lateral fashion. This scoring acts like a "tread" to offer additional grip to drummers. The resulting feel is extra-rough and dry. The RAW surface is currently available on 5A, 5B, 7A, and Rock models with both wood and nylon tips.

Also new from Zildjian's stick line are Artist Series models created in conjunction with John "JR" Robinson, Matt Sorum, and John Tempesta. Robinson's JR Jazzer is a scaled-down version of his existing Artist model, with a smaller diameter to provide a wider range of applications. Scrum's stick (16 5/8" long and .645" in diameter) and Tempesta's model (16 3/4" long and .655" in diameter) are both hard-hitting models designed for heavy playing. Tempesta's stick also features Zildjian's DIP soft handle coating.

Big Bottom...Big Bottom...
Aquarian Full Force Bass Drum Heads

Aquarian isn't subtle about describing their new Full Force bass drum heads: "These heads are loud." Designed for maximum attack, power, and volume, the heads feature an acoustically vented muffling ring tucked into the hoop on the underside of the head. "Tone holes" in this ring allow it to move and resonate with the head to create a louder and more powerful bass-drum sound. Force I batter heads are available in clear or with Aquarian's Satin Finish. Each Force I head comes with a free Single Kick Pad. Force II resonant heads are available in smooth white or smooth black. Each Force II head comes with a free Port Hole so that drummers have the option of putting the hole where they want it.

All Force heads are made with Aquarian's Extra-Warm drumhead film for greater resonance and increased mid-range and low end. Heads are available in sizes from 18" through 28", with batter/resonant head packages also available.
Some Precision In An Imprecise World

Precision Beats Drums

Precision Beats is a new manufacturer of custom-made professional drumkits and snare drums. The drums feature Keller maple shells, RIMS mounts on toms, and custom-made stainless-steel lugs. Single-hole mounting and rubber gaskets on the lugs make the drums “sound like no other,” according to the manufacturer.

In addition to maple snare drums, the company also offers a 1/4"-thick stainless-steel drum, along with a bronze drum and a maple drum vacuum-wrapped with carbon fiber. Drums are offered with hand-stained finishes over a laminate surface said to allow scratches to be polished out with ease. Virtually any color can be created.

And What's More

PURESOUND PERCUSSION has added 20-strand ($44.95) and 24-strand ($49.95) models to its line of handcrafted snare wires. The new wires are available as retrofits for most 12" to 15" snare drums to improve the drums’ sound and performance.

S'LAMM laminated-maple drumsticks are now available from PEAVEY. The sticks are said to offer the lightness of maple, but with the greater durability of a laminate. Current models include 5A, 5B, and 5BX (with a 5B shoulder and a small bead for greater cymbal articulation).

AYOTTE has re-designated their drumSmith line as the new Ayotte Professional Maple series, and is now hand-making the drums in their Vancouver factory. Woodhoops are now available on the drums, which are still being offered at mid-range prices.
**Spirit Drums Solid-Shell Drumkit**

The Wizards of Oz are back in a big way.

by Chap Ostrander
Photos by Jim Esposito

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Hits</th>
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<tr>
<td>• unique wood type and construction method for a drumkit</td>
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<td>• powerful yet controlled sound</td>
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<tr>
<td>• ultra-sensitive snare drum</td>
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<tr>
<th>Misses</th>
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<td>• very heavy</td>
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<td>• tuning can be tricky</td>
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Last Summer Rick Van Horn reviewed an unusual line of snares coming out of Australia. I really can’t improve on what Rick said, so I’ll repeat it here: “Spirit Drums of Australia has taken the concept of a solid wood shell to its simplest form. Their shells begin as solid segments cut from tree trunks. Each segment is already in roughly cylindrical form, and the drum shell is formed by lathe away the inside and outside of the cylinder until the desired dimensions of diameter and thickness are achieved. The resulting shell is a single, seamless piece of wood, absolutely unchanged from the way it existed within the living tree.”

Wood Shop Was Never Like This

In order to work with ironwood, Matt and Jim first had to purchase a lathe capable of dealing with its hardness. The acquisition of a World War II-era three-ton metal lathe gave them the ability to turn the ultra-hard timber. The first ironwood snare they made went to a local drummer who was blown away by the sound. The density and interlocking grain of ironwood give it resonating qualities that have made Spirit snare drums famous in a relatively short period of time. After succeeding with snare drums, Matt and Jim figured no one else in the world had the means or opportunity to make full kits out of this unique material.

Of course, operating a custom drum facility in the bush in Northern Australia is slightly different from the way large drum companies work. When an order comes in for a kit, the first thing Matt and Jim do is check on their stock of logs. If they don’t have enough, they have to turn to other suppliers. Fortunately, they have a network of contacts around the world who can provide them with the materials they need. The rest of the process is just like working with any other type of wood, but with a little extra care and attention to detail.

A look inside a floor tom reveals its thick, solid shell and unique interior carvings.
the shell material on hand—and it's not typhoon season—they get in the truck for a five-hour ride to a rendezvous with timber cutters for a new stock of logs. Matt stresses that they are environmentally conscious and that all their timber comes from a small cutter who operates in an area about the size of Texas. The inner segments of each log are carefully inspected to make sure that the wood is in the best condition, with no gumlines or termite damage.

After the five-hour trip back home, the fun begins. Ironwood logs only come in diameters of up to 22", so the largest drum Spirit can create is a 20" bass drum. (Their equipment could make a 22" bass if they ever found a log large enough.) Very little timber is wasted, since it is an extremely valuable resource. The same log section used to create a 20" bass drum shell can also yield a 16" tom shell, a 12" shell, and sometimes an 8" shell as well.

The shells are lathed directly from the logs to a thickness of 12 mm (7/16”). The bearing edges are 40°, and the snare beds are cut by hand. The insides of the shells are carved with a scalloped effect. Matt and Jim believe that this carving keeps the sound in the drum longer, increasing the complexity of the overtones. It also lends control to the sound, eliminating ring and giving a crisp, dry sound to the snares. It’s interesting to note that Matt and Jim do different patterns from each other, and they are never the same.

After being turned, the shells are left to season. Then eight different layers of coatings are applied to reinforce their structural stability. The layers are hand-sanded between each coat. Finally, the shells are finished with a clear satin finish. Aside from looking great, the shells come with a lifetime warranty.

**Added Attractions**

Spirit does not equip their drums with any sort of mounts. Instead, they utilize RIMS mounts, which can be fitted with whatever brand of mounting system the buyer desires. Rack toms come with the "traditional" suspension-style RIMS; floor toms utilize RIMS mounts with legs.

The bass drum comes with maple hoops. Toms come standard with pressed hoops, with die-cast hoops available as an option. (Our review kit featured the die-cast hoops.) Spirit offers snare drums in depths of 4", 5 1/2", and 6 1/2", and in diameters of 12", 13", and 14". (Spirit’s Web site lets you hear the different snares by downloading MP3 files with sample sounds. There are also some recordings of different-size kits as well.) The 13" and 14" snares come with die-cast hoops; 12" snares are fitted with pressed-steel hoops. They all come chromed unless you opt for gold plating. In addition, Spirit offers polished brass on the rims and lugs. The snares also come with the Nickel Drumworks strain-er, probably the smoothest and most effective strain-er system available today.

The lug design is simple and very clean. Brass tubes that run the length of the shell are hand-threaded at each end. Each tube sits on a pintel, or rod, that acts as a pivot point. This allows the threaded section to move, which eliminates the chance for stripping when a tension rod is threaded into it.

In his earlier review of Spirit snare drums, Rick Van Horn expressed a concern about the potential for stripping out a lug. At the time, Spirit's lugs were machined from a single piece of brass. That design did not allow for a threaded insert that would pivot and line up with the tension rod. The new design is an elegant fix. The machining of the connection between each lug and pintel is so precise that it allows the lug to pivot, but at the same time will not let it rattle. The pivot is mounted in the center of the 4"- and 5 1/2"-deep snare shells (lower on the 6 1/2" shell), 2" up from the bottom of the tom shells, and 2" from the back edge of the bass drum shell. The effect on the toms and bass is that there is a large area of the shell with no hardware on it whatsoever, which really shows off the natural wood.

The rack toms feature a second set of pintels near the top head to help stabilize the RIMS mounts. The floor toms don’t need them, because their circular steel RIMS mounts sit directly under the mounting points at the bottom of the shells. (By the way, although Spirit’s lug design comes standard with their drums, if you prefer a particular brand of hardware, they can work with that as well. Don’t forget these are true custom drum makers.)

The bass drum has shell-mounted legs that fold out for play and back against the shell for pack-up. The tension rods are drumkey-operated (as opposed to having “T” handles) for easy pack-up and precise tuning. The Spirit Drums logo is actually burned into the shell, which I found attractive. Along with the interior carvings and the dramatic exterior grain of the shells, it helps to give an almost “primitive” visual quality to the kit.

**Stunning Sounds**

These drums have the kind of presence that you hear in a concert setting on miked drums. The density of the wood gives the snare some of the qualities of a metal-shell drum, but with the warmth of wood. I found that it could be cranked into piccolo range or deepened to sound like a much larger drum.

The small toms sing with full voices, while the floor toms possess richness and depth. The bass drum can be warm and full or punchy and explosive. Actually, good as it sounds from the playing position, its real impact is best felt from some distance away. A serious whoomp.

I found the drums to be very sensitive to tuning changes. You’d need to have (or develop) a good ear to hear how each head is tuned to get the maximum from them. But I assure you, the effort would
be well worth it. The snare especially becomes a sensitive and articulate instrument when tuned optimally. So much so, in fact, that I'd have no qualms in recommending it for concert or symphonic use.

A Weighty Decision

Spirit's solid-shell drums are among the most distinctive and beautiful I've ever encountered. But it must be said that when you start with the world's heaviest wood, and then add a substantial amount of steel hardware, the resulting drums are going to be heavy. 

Heaaavvyy—to the extent that I'd have trouble recommending them for use by club-daters who move in and out of venues on a daily or weekly basis. However, if your playing situation involves a studio installation, a long-running show, a house gig in a club—or a crew of husky roadies to move your gear—I'd say go for it! A rack system would be the best way to support the drums, since mounting them off cymbal stands with multi-clamps could be an exercise in balance and counterweighting.

Out From Down Under

You're not going to find a Spirit solid-shell kit sitting on a dealer's shelf waiting to find a home. Each kit is built strictly to order, as part of a consultation process between Jim, Matt, and the customer. Spirit requires three months to complete construction—most of which is for the wood to season—and a 33% deposit up front.

Matt and Jim care deeply about their products, so they combine the finest components, handcrafted quality, and individualized service to best fill the needs of their customers. You don't just order a kit from Spirit, you form a relationship with the builders. Together you work out the details until your dream drums are realized. If you are patient enough, and you have the means to obtain one of these kits, you will ultimately be playing on a true work of art.

You can contact Spirit Drums at 11 Cycas Close, Rainforest Estate, Cairns 4870, Australia, tel: O11 617 40 390961, fax: O11 617 40 316968, matt@spiritdrums.com (or) jim@spiritdrums.com. In addition, Spirit's Web site, www.spiritdrums.com, has a wealth of information about their drums, the unique wood they use, and their construction process. And they recently added a feature that allows you to chat live with Matt or Jim, if they're available. Just remember that Australia is fourteen hours ahead of the Eastern Time zone, so check and see if you can click on the chat icon. You may begin a dialog that could change the course of your drumming life for good.

Spiritually Speaking

Drums Reviewed: Spirit solid-wood custom kit
Configuration: 8x8, 8x10, and 10x12 rack toms, 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms, 20x20 bass drum, and 5 1/2 x14 snare
Finish: Satin clear finish over natural Cooktown ironwood
Retail Price: $6,500, including air freight from Australia
Istanbul Agop Traditional Cymbals
The real deal from Turkey
by Rick Van Horn
Photos by Jim Esposito

**20" Original Ride**

Istanbul Agop's series of Traditional rides includes models with designations like "Jazz," "Medium," "Rock," "Ping," etc. But our review cymbal holds the distinction of simply being called "Original." As such it represents the basis from which the other models are created.

And what is that basis? A thin cymbal, with a medium-sized bell and a moderate bow (or shoulder). This sort of design creates a dark, washy ride sound, with lots of spread and the potential to roar. If you want more stick attack and definition, a nylon-tipped stick would be your best bet. But that's not the sort of sound this kind of cymbal is about. It cries out to be played at moderate volume with a fairly small-diameter wood-tip stick. Under those conditions this ride offers a truly wonderful depth and character. An original, indeed.

**Crashes**

Our test group consisted of 14" and 16" medium-thin crashes and an 18" thin crash. (The series also includes paper thin, medium, Rock, and extra-heavy models.)

Honestly speaking, I've rarely been impressed with 14" crash cymbals. They just don't seem to have enough diameter to really open up and speak, yet they're a little too big to be sweet and splashy. The medium-thin 14" in our test group fell right in line with this opinion. It had a rich, dark underlying quality, but it also had an annoying gongy tone that was present at any volume level. Even though only a medium-thin cymbal, it sounded a little thick and plate-y. Again, I attribute this to a weight-to-diameter ratio. Perhaps a thin or even paper-thin model would be sweeter-sounding.

Ah, but then we come to the 16" medium-thin, and what a difference two inches can make! Here was the same rich, dark quali-
ty—but with a full voice and explosive spread. Not too huge, mind you. It's still a 16" cymbal, after all. But this model offered all of the color and personality one would expect from an "old-world" crash cymbal. Very nice.

Things got even better when I hit the 18" thin crash. "Full-bodied" is the term that immediately came to my mind, with lots of undertones and character. It wouldn't be the cymbal you'd want to play an arena stage with, but it sure could be the distinctive "big voice" in a jazz, big band, or pop setting. This was my favorite among all the cymbals in our test group.

**Hi-Hats**

The Traditional hi-hats I tested surprised me. I'm extremely fond of 13" hi-hats, due to their quick response and generally splashy character. But the 13" Regular hats in our review group responded more like larger, heavier cymbals. They weren't splashy; rather they produced a more solid sound. This was great for a foot-operated "chick," and also for a powerful closed or half-open sticking pattern. But what was missing was the delicacy needed for an open-closed jazz ride, or for quick, funky "barks. Considering that the Regular models are in the middle of the weight range for Traditional hi-hats (which also includes light, medium, Rock, extra-heavy, and Flat hats), I expected a little less punch and a little more sensitivity. I'd rate this pair as good for pop and rock where power was as important as personality, but probably a little overbearing for a lighter gig of any kind.

On the other hand, the 14" hi-hats had just about everything the 13" models didn't. They were designated as "Matched," which the Istanbul Agop price list shows as being medium weight. Yet they had much more spread and musicality than their smaller siblings. Sweet and sibilant, they offered a lovely jazz character, yet could speak dynamically for those funk barks I mentioned. Admittedly, their chick sound was not as pronounced as that of the 13's, but it was more than sufficient. Overall, I found this pair to be the more impressive of the two.

**8" Splash Rock**

The 8" Splash Rock cymbal was sort of the "odd man out" in our otherwise fairly thin and jazz-oriented review group. Although it is still thinner than most rock splashes or small effects cymbals I've encountered lately, it's substantially thicker than a more... well... traditional splash. It also features a special hammering pattern to give it additional life and brightness. As a result, when struck and allowed to ring out, it really did...with a fairly long, gongy sustain instead of the quick decay one usually associates with a splash. On the other hand, it had a terrific, loud explosion, and it sounded great when struck hard and then choked quickly. So I wouldn't call this cymbal "splashy" in a classic sense. But it certainly would fit the bill in any sort of loud environment. (The Traditional series also includes thinner splashes, along with bell and splash China models.)

**Summing Up**

Turkish-made cymbals are noted for their underlying character and often-subtle nuances. The Istanbul Agop Traditional models we tried can certainly lay claim to those attributes. They're also representative of a large model line that is worthy of further examination.

As I said in last month's review, hand-made cymbals imported from Turkey aren't cheap. But Istanbul Agop's pricing isn't out of line with that of premium domestic cymbals, either. The brand is just now getting established, so if your dealer doesn't carry them, contact the US distributor, DR Music, at 7 Palisade Ave., Emerson, NJ 07630, tel: (201) 599-0100, fax: (201) 599-0404, DRStrings@aol.com, www.drstrings.com.

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**Turkish Traditions**

With the exception of China models, all Traditional cymbals are priced identically by size. Representative pricing is shown below, not all sizes are included.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>China</th>
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<tr>
<td>8&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>13&quot; Hi-hat (pair)</td>
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<tr>
<td>14&quot; Hi-hat (pair)</td>
<td>$339</td>
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Sabian Triple Hi-Hat
Sabian serves up a new way to look at an old instrument.

by Rich Watson

I must lack imagination. I keep thinking that things like hi-hat stands have evolved pretty much as far as they can. Then I’m amazed when a product like the Triple Hi-Hat rolls around. Fortunately, the folks at Sabian and some inventors they’ve partnered with have a lot of imagination. Thanks to them, drummers have a new way to approach the instrument and augment their expressive capabilities.

<table>
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<th>Hits</th>
<th>Misses</th>
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<tr>
<td>• interesting sound possibilities</td>
<td>• some adjustments are cumbersome</td>
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<tr>
<td>• strong, cutting chick sound</td>
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More Is More

On a standard hi-hat, depressing the pedal draws the top cymbal down to meet the stationary bottom cymbal. Simple. On Sabian’s Triple Hi-Hat, the middle cymbal remains stationary. Depressing the pedal draws the top cymbal down to meet it. Simultaneously, the bottom cymbal rises to meet the middle cymbal. In simple terms this explains how the stand works. But the next question must be “Why would I want three hi-hat cymbals?” In a word: more. More sound targets. More sound combinations. And, depending on how you play them, more sound—period.

Triple Hi-Hat cymbal sets include a standard 14” bottom cymbal, a 14” middle cymbal with no bell, and a 10” top cymbal. The sets are available in a choice of Sabian’s AA or PRO series cymbals. Both types sound bright and focused, but the PROs have a more pronounced high end.

Your first step on the Triple Hi-Hat’s pedal will go a long way toward explaining why three might be a magic number. The chick sound is powerful. The additional cymbal contributes another frequency component. Surprisingly, this broader-spectrum sound is no less defined than a standard two-cymbal hi-hat. If you play in situations where the chick sound gets lost, or you need it to really cut through the roar of the band, this setup will help deliver you to the promised land of audibility.

And if you’re looking for more horsepower when riding on the hi-hat, the Triple provides it in spades. Just angle your stick so that it strikes both the top and middle cymbal. That extra frequency component (a term that sounds far too polite in this context) gives you “bash” by the boatload.

The flat middle cymbal has a reverse-flanged edge for optimal contact with the bottom cymbal. Being quite thick, its pitch is high—even higher than that of the bottom cymbal. The 10” top cymbal has a large, deep bell designed to accommodate the top of the middle rod. This and its medium weight make it sound much more gongy than a splash when it’s played alone. But it does provide a dramatic sonic contrast when “crashed.” That contrast is also useful when you play ride patterns with the tip of the stick between the top and middle cymbals, especially while they’re open.

By moving the 10” cymbal higher on the rod (beyond where it will contact the middle cymbal with the pedal action), you can play between it and the middle cymbal. This facilitates playing “double-time” patterns and single-handed rolls by striking the underside of the top cymbal with upstrokes. The pitch relationship of these cymbals makes this a fun and interesting effect.

When Less Is More

Of course, there may be times when you want a more modest hi-hat sound—like for those low-volume gigs at the Elks lodge. Sabian gives you the option of converting the Triple Hi-Hat into a (somewhat) conventional “double.” Just remove the middle cymbal, screw down the middle rod so that it doesn’t obstruct the top cymbal’s motion, and replace the 10” top cymbal with a standard top cymbal. In this configuration, the action is comparable
to a fast, conventional hi-hat.

If you don’t have to have a "matching" top cymbal, you can use any 14” hi-hat top cymbal. (I tried this, and it worked just fine.) Otherwise, Sabian offers matching 14” top cymbals at additional cost.

**The Mechanics Of Three**

The innovative transport mechanism in the middle of the Triple Hi-Hat stand requires exceptionally large tubing. Otherwise, the Triple looks much like a regular hi-hat stand. A spring-loaded thumb-screw can be tightened to tilt the bottom cymbal. The clutch looks fairly standard, although instead of nuts to secure the top cymbal from below, it has a "clutch bolt" with an integrated platform for the washer and cymbal to rest on. The bolt (male) threads into the clutch (female). This design might offer a little more secure connection, since there is more area of threaded contact between the parts. Rubber rings are used in most areas where you'd normally find felt washers. Several manufacturers have adopted this change, because the rubber rings are thought to have less of a muffling effect on the sound. The pedal features a standard chain-drive linkage.

The stand has single-braced legs, but it seems stable enough even for "lead-foot" players. Three hook-and-loop material strips on the bottom of the base plate keep it in place on a carpet or rug. The entire tripod rotates to make room for other pedals and stand bases. The simple footboard features non-slip rubber in the middle, heel, and toe sections. There is no toe stop.

Spacing the cymbals evenly for "standard" triple play is easy: First loosen the clutch’s wing bolt. Then depress the pedal until the bottom and middle cymbals touch. (This lowers the pull rod to the same degree.) Then retighten the clutch.

The opposing motion of the cymbals has two interesting effects. Compared with a regular hi-hat, the Triple's pedal stroke is only half as long as the distance between the two cymbals. Therefore, even at a comfortable stroke length, the cymbals can be quite far apart. Also, the action of the two cymbals moving toward each other amplifies the force with which they strike. Both of these factors contribute to a louder chick sound with the same effort, even when you use just two cymbals.

**When More Is Less**

Changing the height of the Triple Hi-Hat's lower and middle cymbals is pretty cumbersome, and considerably more involved than on a conventional hi-hat. But to cut Sabian some slack, this may be unavoidable when dealing with the interaction of three objects whose heights are all interdependent. Also, most players only adjust the stand's height once, and then leave it alone.

The three-position tension adjustment, located just above the stand's tripod, is quick and easy to use. But even at the lightest setting, the pedal action is stiffer than that of most conventional hi-hats. You can feel the inertia of the additional machinery, as well as the gravity that pushes one cymbal up while pulling the other one down. Even so, this stiffness doesn't inhibit fast playing; it just feels less "floaty" than standard light-action pedals. Sabian claims that the Triple Hi-Hat actually facilitates faster playing because the top and bottom cymbals move toward each other. Theoretically, I would agree. But I'm more inclined to say that this double action merely offsets the mechanism's inherent resistance.

**Conclusions**

You can’t say Sabian doesn’t take chances. They create radical cymbal lines like Radia and V-FX, and now they’re offering a new take on a very familiar part of the kit. The Triple Hi-Hat feels different, but not so different that you couldn’t get used to it in a few days. It opens up unprecedented tonal variation possibilities, and facilitates stronger and more cutting hi-hat sounds than you may have ever imagined. If you want to bring your hi-hat out of the shadows and into the spotlight, the Triple deserves a serious look. (Sabian also offers remote cable models of the Triple Hi-Hat, with or without cymbals, with a choice of a short [5'] or a long [8'] cable.)

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**In A Nutshell**

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<tr>
<th>Sound Possibilities</th>
<th>Feel</th>
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**Triple Threat**

- Triple Hi-Hat stand without cymbals: $315
- Triple Hi-Hat stand with AA cymbal set: $657
- Triple Hi-Hat stand with PRO cymbal set: $535
- Remote Triple Hi-Hat stand with long cable: $357
- Remote Triple Hi-Hat stand with short cable: $336
- AA Triple Hi-Hat cymbal set: $435
- PRO Triple Hi-Hat cymbal set: $313
- Normal 14” AA top cymbal: $159
- Normal 14” PRO top cymbal: $111
Rhythms Bata-Udu

Joe Agu's heritage and passion fill these "pot drums" with great sounds.

by Rich Watson

Hits
• many different sounds and pitches from one drum, including gorgeous bass tone
• striking appearance

If there's a ring of authenticity to every instrument Rhythms makes, you can trace it back to the company's owner. Joe Chijindu Agu is a native of Nigeria's Igbo ("EE-bo") people, whose language gave us the term "udu." That heritage—and Joe's passion—clearly stoke the kiln in which Rhythms' range of clay drums is fired.

"At Rhythms, we make drums because of who we are, the sons and daughters of Africa," says Joe. "Drum making is part of our tradition, handed down from one generation to another. To say that music is a part of life in Africa is an understatement. In many African cultures music has a greater significance than life itself. It is often believed to have pre-dated the existence of man, and it remains the main conduit for communication with the gods." Artisan and musician Joe Agu's spiritual worldview, African roots, and respect for tradition help form the clay of all Rhythms percussion instruments, including the Bata-Udu sent to MD for review.

Hand Drums Made One At A Time

"Udu," which means "pot" in the Igbo language, refers to the clay pots historically used to carry and store water or wine. Today udu drums are used in storytelling and live music performances. All of this tradition is reflected in the material, shape, and finish of the Rhythms Bata-Udu. But Joe transcended tradition with the addition of two different-sized goatskin heads. He adopted this double-headed concept from the Yoruban people's quasi-hourglass-shaped bata drum.

Rhythms drums are made of porcelain-based clay, which Joe shapes by hand in his Santa Clara, California shop. He then paints and fires the clay in a small kiln. This is not a mass-production operation; Joe personally makes all of the company's clay drums, one at a time.

The Bata-Udu's earthy finish of brown, tan, and creamy white suits the drum's organic sounds and vibe. However, other colors are available on a special-order basis. Why the pair of crocodiles on the neck? Joe explains that his surname, Agu, means "lion" in Igbo. Some of the first Rhythms drums had lions on them. But the symmetrical look of the Agu-iyi, or "water-lion" (crocodile), appealed to him more.

Considering the Bata-Udu's ornate beauty, I was puzzled by the utilitarian gray foam rubber of the support ring that was sent with the drum. Joe informs me that the review drum was shipped with the wrong ring. The rings that accompany customers' Bata-Udu drums are covered with a batik-patterned cloth.

One Instrument, Many Sounds

In general, ethnic percussion has made tremendous inroads to recorded pop and jazz. Why? Because top players and record producers are constantly seeking to expand the sonic palettes with which they color the music. Perhaps not surprisingly, Rhythms drums are being played by a growing list of musical luminaries including Steve Gadd, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, Marquinho Brasil (Mariah Carey), and David Charles (Bob James).

Like Rhythms' single-headed Udu-Igbah, the Bata-Udu is technically a drum. (Igbah means "drum" in the Igbo language. Therefore udu-igbah literally means "pot drum.") But the modest volume it generates is more in the hand-percussion range. Unmiked, it would fit nicely into most light acoustic settings. With proper miking (near the top of the drum's neck is recommended), it can also adapt to larger-scale situations, as Marquinho Brasil demonstrated in live performances with Mariah Carey. However, the subtlety of some of its interesting tonal colors might shine best in the studio, as either the main percussion instrument or to augment a drumset track.

Although the Bata-Udu displays beautifully when upright, the recommended playing technique requires that it be rotated horizontally on the support ring so that the neck and the top of the
instrument extend away from the player, toward the audience. This positions the tone hole (and the crocodiles!) upward, providing convenient access to it with both hands. Slapping the clay body of the Bata-Udu with your fingers creates high-pitched, short-ringing tones. Striking your palm on the tone hole produces a surprisingly rich and more sustained bass tone. "Cupping" and then quickly releasing the tone hole with the palm of your hand creates a cool "gulping" effect similar to that of a ge undulation on tabla.

The medium model’s 4 1/2” and 6” goatskin heads, each bordered by a black, suede leather "collar," produce tones that are somewhat bongo-like, but mellower. Because the heads are soft and pliant, they can be easily pressed down to vary their pitch. They are basically pre-tuned, but can be tightened by warming them near a lightbulb or with a blow-dryer.

Each Bata-Udu comes with Rhythms’ Udu Magic video featuring percussionists Marquinho Brasil and Hugh Humphrey, producer/composer Kenneth Nash, and Rhythms’ own Joe Agu. Their demonstrations help, but even without the video, it wasn’t too tough to figure out how to create the half-dozen sounds whose spirits inhabit this handsome drum.

**Conclusions**

The Bata-Udu seems a bit pricey. Then again, it’s a unique (patented), gorgeous handmade instrument that provides a wealth of interesting sounds for music making. And as with premium-grade drumsets, sometimes you have to pay more to get the real deal. (Also—and this is always great news—Joe informs me that substantial discounts are available.) For more information, call (408) 246-1002 or visit www.afrorhythms.com and check out the site’s multi-media demo.
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Surely you've heard of Phish by now.

The sixteen-year-old Vermont quartet still cruises the ocean floor, mostly avoiding the sharp hooks of the music biz, but it's grown very successful through years of nonstop touring. A hard-jamming, mind-bending live act, Phish ushered in the new millennium in regal rock 'n' roll style. Luring almost 80,000 fans to Florida's Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation, the band capped two days of music with a mammoth eight-hour set that drummer John Fishman considers "my favorite musical experience of my entire life."

But if the stage is where Phish thrives, the recording studio has been more enigmatic. The group's self-produced debut, 1988's Junta, is an epic collection of the compositionally ambitious, lyrically goofy music the band was known for at the time. A series of uneven albums followed. Then in 1996, Phish hunkered down and began to find its voice on record with shorter (and often quieter) songs and more serious lyrics. Billy Breathes ('96) and The Story Of The Ghost ('98) both sound lush, and they reflect a comfort in the studio, even away from the kinetic energy of Phish's adoring followers.

As the band's songwriting has become more focused, Fishman's drumming has also undergone a gradual, but very clear, transformation. "He kind of started at the top and worked his way down," says Phish guitarist Trey Anastasio. "He used to be all hi-hat and ride cymbal." Now Jon is plunking down an unflinching backbeat, working punchy kick/snare patterns more than ever before.

Which brings us to Farmhouse. Without even one trademark display of instrumental acrobatics like the earlier "Fluffhead," "Reba," or "Limb By Limb," this new LP emphasizes feel. In fact, Fishman and bassist Mike Gordon have developed such a deep pocket that playing with them, says Anastasio, "is like sprinkling powdered sugar on top of a big, fat chocolate groove."

Like a Phish show, a conversation with Jon is a wild ride. And like his drumming, the man himself is energetic, articulate, and bursting with ideas. Sure, he may answer questions in a roundabout way, and some responses may have, in fact, little relation to the query at hand. But you know what? That's fine. The guy is never dull.

So join us as Jon discusses, among many other things, exotic rhythms, living in the moment, free will versus determinism, and why A Live One is such a lame title. And watch out for nautical references: Appropriately, a fellow named Fishman, in a band called Phish, conjures plenty of water imagery in his stream-of-consciousness chat.
Let's start by talking about the groove-oriented direction Phish has been going in for the last couple years.

Jon: We're using space better and we're less busy. There's also less of the guitar player trying to be the drummer, the drummer trying to be the guitar player, the bass player trying to be the piano player, and people trying to do everything at once.

We're embracing the traditional roles of our instruments while still appreciating the fact that you can tread into the territories of other instruments. The drums can play very melodically, but they have their traditional role that they're best suited for. Tony Williams, Philly Joe Jones, and Billy Higgins all have incredible melodic sense—you can hear the tunes singing out during their drum solos—but they can't take the place of the piano, the guitar, or the sax.

I'm not a very accomplished jazz player, but I was playing some standards with hard-core jazz musicians in New Orleans a long time ago. My swing didn't have as much of a "snap" as some of the other guys'. The bass player, Walter Payton—an incredible player—drew that to my attention. He was scowling at me, like I kept disrupting his flow. Afterwards he put his arm around me and said, "It's gotta have that snap, man. It can be implied or it can be stated, but it's gotta be there." He was reminding me of the role of my instrument. In Phish I used to be all over the place, and Trey would find himself trying to really beat out the rhythm, which is tough because he's got this thin-sounding instrument that's up on top.

MD: You've always seemed to be a really precise player. Is part of getting groovy learning to loosen up and play behind the beat?

Jon: I guess that comes more from getting into the same space as the people you're playing with, finding that common ground—a slipperiness to the playing, a deepening of the pocket.

Most people think of clicks on a metronome as moments in time represented by vertical lines. But try to imagine them as the width of a big, wide road. The yellow line going down the middle of the road is the dead center of the beat. And you've even got a little gravel to play with...
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aa. woodblocks
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Hardware: Gibraltar stands, Yamaha tom mounts with RIMS, DW 5000 bass drum pedal with strap drive and felt beater (with loose spring tension and long throw)

Heads: Aquarian Texture Coated on snare batter with Classic Clear underneath, Remo coated Ambassadors on tops of toms (tuning: 6” = tight top, loose bottom: 8” = B; 10” = D; 12” = A; 16” = D), clear Ambassadors on bottoms of toms, coated Powerstroke 3 on bass drum with black P3 on front (light batter, loose front, with goose down pillow for muffling)

Sticks: Vic Firth SD4 Combo

Electronics: custom footswitch for turning vocal mic’ on and off

Microphones: Electro-Voice RE-20 on kick, Shure Beta 57 on snare (top and bottom), Sennheiser 409 on toms, AKG 460 on hi-hat, AKG C3000 on ride, various Audix for overheads
on the left shoulder.

MD: Sometimes you're weaving a bit...and you get pulled over, [laughs] Live, you're still playing older songs. Do they get reworked because of your new focus on the groove?

Jon: There are things I used to do in older songs that would now distract me from my role. Not doing them makes something about one of the other instruments stand out more. By getting out of the way, not doing that little thing that kind of tried to be a guitar thing or piano thing or whatever, you really hear what the guitar or piano's doing better. And the groove is stronger, because the less we're all doing at once, the more of yourself you can put into what you are doing. It's like an editing process.

Some of the parts we play are kind of weird, but now I play them with a much deeper sense of the groove. So the older stuff has much more body, even if we're playing less.

MD: Can you think of an old song that you're more excited to play now?

Jon: We haven't played it much recently, but [A Picture Of Nectar's] "Guelah Papyrus" never grooved nearly as hard as it does now. On the record it's sort of stiff, but now it's a perfect example of a song that benefits vastly from me playing the drums and Mike playing the bass. We were sort of treading into each others' territories on the recorded version and earlier live versions. It was rickety. Now it grooves its ass off.

MD: In the early '90s you seemed unconcerned with simply laying down a solid beat. You constantly strove to do something different.

Jon: Well, I always want to be changing, and I always want to be pushing my limits. I used to say, "I won't ever play the same beat for two songs." Now what I've realized is that you can play the exact same beat a hundred different ways. You can move the accents around or change the feel of it—it can be swung or straight or in between. Anything. You could have a whole career playing the same 2/4 beat, just changing around subtle things.

MD: Some drummers have.

Jon: Great drummers. Once I realized that, my definition of what's "different" changed. But I still like playing new and bizarre coordinations—that will never leave me.

MD: You lead a double life: You're using much more restraint, yet elsewhere you still play wild patterns that sound like two drummers. Do you have a process for learning about exotic-coordination beats?

Jon: [laughs] When I can't do something at first I do it really slowly. I get my body used to what hits together and what hits apart. I used to say, "I won't ever play the same beat for two songs." Now what I've realized is that you can play the exact same beat a hundred different ways. You can move the accents around or change the feel of it—it can be swung or straight or in between. Anything. You could have a whole career playing the same 2/4 beat, just changing around subtle things.

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happen. But if you're sacrificing groove, maybe you're better off having another instrument cover an aspect of it that you shouldn't be bothering with.

For development reasons, it's good to get to the level where you're doing as much as you can do. Then you should back off to what's most musical. If as much as you can do is also the most musical—honestly—great. I like to keep what I'm capable of at a bit of a higher level than what's actually necessary. You never know when you'll need that extra inch of headroom, when you'll want to press your face to the ceiling.

MD: So take Phish's ultimate gig: New Year's 2000 at Big Cypress. You must have needed some headroom there. Was there a meditative aspect to playing for almost eight hours straight?

Jon: As a band, we think compositionally. We're trying to make a spontaneous composition with themes that develop over time. It's cool when you're really in it. It's like meditation: you inhale and exhale—you breathe. Are you doing that or is that happening to you?

New Year's is the perfect example of that, of sustaining a state of living right here and now. You're listening and you're reacting. You don't know what's coming next and you don't care about what just happened. There's no analysis going on and no planning, in the ideal sense. I've gotten to the point where I hear the whole band as one instrument. If I hear something happening in the overall texture, things will come out in the drumming.

MD: What state did you achieve after playing for that long?

Jon: It's not so much the level you achieve, it's the level you end up getting subjected to. [laughs] Musically, you get to the point where you can't really focus on a particular thing. Well, you can, but it's torture. If you're in an around-the-world sailing rig and you're going for twenty-four hours, trying to stay awake and upright in a storm, there's no way you're thinking about anything. It's all happening automatically—much more than anything we achieved on New Year's! You know the craft of sailing so well and you're just pulling ropes and steering rudders and turning wheels and doing whatever's necessary to keep the damn thing from going over.

MD: What about the rest of the time? Is that state something you can rely on?

Jon: Well, even in an hour-and-a-half set, you're still trying to get to where you're not thinking.

MD: But are you there most of the time?

Jon: More and more. I'm never thinking, you know, "There's seven of these, five of those...." It's like that Charlie Parker quote: "Study, learn everything about music, and then forget all that and play."

One requirement is that everybody is in it together. We're all going for that state of abandon and we're aware of that. With some bands you sort of know what they're going to do and how they're going to do it. But with Phish there are four people looking into the woods going, Where's the path? I dunno—let's go find it.
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It's gotten to the point where if we're listening really well and picking our spots, we start to lose the border between where things are and aren't planned.

**MD:** There must be a large measure of trust involved. If someone's unreliable, you get snapped out of the state too easily.

**Jon:** Yeah. There's a lot more trust there now, a lot more confidence that everyone understands where the frustrations of the past come from. Mike and I both used to be unreliable sometimes. Individually and as a unit we're much more reliable now, which has taken a lot of the pressure off.

**MD:** By the way, you're lucky to play with Mike. He's such a great bassist.

**Jon:** He's like a musical vulture. As soon as he hears some theme happening, he'll...
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MD: I was surprised that Big Cypress was more or less a regular Phish set, just an unusually massive one. I thought you'd break it up—two guys would rest awhile, maybe you'd do a synth jam—but it was simply a giant bunch of songs.

Jon: And we rocked the whole time! It wasn't like we went to sleep halfway through. It just sustained itself. It never got boring, either. Having experienced that long set, I think it will be much easier to get back into that state for short periods of time.

MD: When it was over, what did you guys do?

Jon: We just stood there. We walked backstage and went, "Wow." We couldn't believe it was almost eight hours. Within about an hour we were sitting on the bus saying, "It was easy, man! We could do a twenty-four-hour gig. We could do a whole day!"

MD: Let's talk about the new album, Farmhouse.

Jon: I've never enjoyed making an album so much.

MD: Why is that?

Jon: It was so easy that I don't even remember it happening. I just went in and jammed with my friends. We partied and played, and didn't think of a thing. What was different about Farmhouse is that we were literally recording the basic tracks forty-eight hours after a tour ended. We were all in great playing shape. More than ever before on an album, we got to that "New Year's" state.

I'd screw up some fill and just not care. I'd think, "Well, maybe that's good. I don't even know." We used to get two thirds of the way through a track, and if I did something I didn't like, it messed up the rest of the song. I'd automatically be thinking, "There goes that take."

Now it's like, "What's a mistake?" I don't know the difference between a mistake and a good thing. I feel I don't even have the right to impose that opinion on what I just did. Something happened in the music and I reacted a certain way. What is that? Good? Bad? I don't know.
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We'll decide later when we listen back. In the moment that you're playing you don't have the right to analyze. It's a crime against music, [laughs] I really think that. You're just being egotistical. Do what comes naturally and judge it later from a historical perspective. At the time the Golden Age was happening, nobody was saying, "This is the Golden Age."

MD: While making Farmhouse you diverged from Phish's usual democracy and let Trey take the reins as co-producer. Jon: It worked out great. Trey has a great production sense. Even his most crude recordings sound better than your average basement tapes, so why not let him go wild on the good equipment? It's just another example of how as a band we've gotten better at exploiting the strengths of the individuals.

I remember reading this great interview with Bill Russell in Sports Illustrated where he was explaining what made the Celtics of that era such a great team. He said something to the effect that, "If I expend energy trying to do something you're good at, rather than what I'm good at, that's not the best use of my energy." I can always try to improve in practice, but out there in a game, the energy we're expending should go toward our strengths, which enhances the overall effectiveness of the team.

It was great to know how to recognize when four heads are better than one and when four heads are bogging down the creative process. It's a really fine line—one day with everyone thinking about it, you end up with A Live One for a title! It doesn't really please anybody, it's the lowest common denominator. There's no way you can go through the creative process with a group and not have times when you look back and go, "God, we really screwed ourselves there." [laughs] But there are far more examples in our overall existence where the combination of the four personalities resulted in the betterment of the end product.

MD: Do you always record live basic tracks, or does it change from record to record?

Jon: Oh no, we're always playing together. Music for us is becoming like sculpting. It used to be more like painting with sound, where you're putting a whole bunch of stuff on the canvas and the only way to take anything away is to just keep adding—painting over it. Now, in the true sense of sculpting, we start with more than we need and take away.

We spent weeks taking stuff out. We're getting better at it. What's changed is that nobody gets attached to anything in the beginning because we all know it could go. I mean, the whole damn drum track could go! If it's right, it'll stay. Some things are worth fighting for, but it's good to learn how to let go.

MD: Live, you're singing while playing a lot more than you used to. Not your usual frontman antics, but vital parts within the fabric of the songs.

Jon: That happened as a direct result of covering Remain In Light for the Halloween album. [Phish performed The Talking Heads LP in its entirety on October 31, 1996.] We all had vocal parts...
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on every song, and I actually sang lead on “Crosseyed And Painless.” It was “Drumming and Singing 101” because the drum parts weren’t very complicated, but singing and playing was something I thought I couldn’t do. It was like adding a fifth limb. Ever since then I’ve been more enthused to take vocal parts.

That’s the benefit of learning other people’s albums as a band. It’s going to expand you somehow, probably in a way you’d never considered. When I first found out I had to sing on every song, I was terrified. But then it was like, “I gotta do it,” so I just sat there and practiced. It wasn’t as hard as I thought it would be, which was really encouraging. Now I’m able to sing parts with drum beats that are a little more complicated. I’m excited to expand on it.

MD: On to some drumming-specific stuff. What’s your practice routine?
Jon: Sometimes I sit with a metronome and a pillow and do rudiments for an hour or two. I only started that as a warm-up exercise when I joined the band and started gigging. When I was a kid I never did one day of rudiments. I sort of regret it. Now I

“In the moment that you’re playing you don’t have the right to analyze. It’s a crime against music.”

Jon Fishman
The Cutting Edge

Adrian Young, No Doubt
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1. Two ways to enter: (a) call (900) 786-3786. Cost: 99¢ per call. You must call from the number where you wish to be notified. Or (b) send a 3.5" x 5.5" or 4" x 6" postcard with your name, address, and telephone number to: Modern Drummer/Sonor At 125 Contest, 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. 2. Enter as often as you wish. Each entry must be printed or mailed separately. 3. OSS OF WINNING EACH PRIZE DEPEND ON THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE ENTRIES RECEIVED. 4. CONTEST BEGINS 8/1/00 AND ENDS 11/30/00. PHONE CALLS WILL BE ACCEPTED UNTIL 11:59 PM EDT 11/30/00. POSTCARDS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY 11/30/00 AND RECEIVED BY 12/5/00. 5. Winners will be selected by random drawing on December 11, 2000 and notified by phone or by about December 12, 2000. 6. Employees and their immediate families of Modern Drummer, Sonor, HOS Inc., Sabian Ltd., Vic Firth Inc., and their affiliates are ineligible. 7. Sponsor is not responsible for lost, misdirected, and/or delayed entries. 8. Open to the residents of the US and Canada (except in Florida and the Province of Quebec). 12 years of age or older, provided that CALLERS UNDER THE AGE OF 18 OBTAIN PARENTAL OR GUARDIAN PERMISSION TO ENTER. California residents under 18 may not participate. Residents of MN, IA, LA, NJ, and Canada may enter by mail only. Void where prohibited by law. 9. One prize per household per contest. 10. Grand Prize: From Sonor: A Delight six-piece drumset in satin finish, including a 18"x22 bass drum with pedal, a 4x14 snare drum, 8"x10, 10"x12, 12"x14, and 14"x16 toms, one (1) snare stand, one (1) Hi-Hat stand, two (2) double tom stands, two (2) cymbal stands, three (3) cymbal boom stands, and a six-piece set of Rockbags and hardware caddy. From Sabian: One (1) A4 Performance Set that includes: a 20" medium ride, a 16" crash, a 14" Hi-Hats, and a Deluxe cymbal bag. From Vic Firth: Twelve pairs of Vic Firth drumsticks and an SB4G2 stick bag. Suggested retail value of grand prize: $8,108. 11. Second Prize: One (1) winner will receive a Sonor S-Class Pro five-piece drumset in emerald green, including a 16"x22 bass drum with pedal, 8"x10, 10"x12, and 12"x14 toms, and a 4x14 snare drum, one (1) Hi-Hat stand, one (1) snare stand, one (1) cymbal boom stand, and a five-piece Fusion bag set and hardware caddy. From Sabian: One (1) PRO Sonix Performance set, which includes: a 20" medium ride, a 16" crash, and a 14" Hi-Hats, plus a cymbal bag. From Vic Firth, Inc., twelve pairs of Vic Firth drumsticks. Suggested retail value: $4,450. 12. Third Prize: One (1) winner will receive a Sonor Designer 5x14 drumset with drum throne and a Rockbag snare bag. From Sabian: One (1) Richie "Gajate" Garcia El Rayo cymbal. From Vic Firth, Inc.: six pairs of Vic Firth drumsticks. Suggested retail value: $1,707. Value of all prizes: $14,306.

A School Of Phish

J

don Fishman comments on each of the band’s eleven LPs. Which is his favorite? Well, it’s between....

Junta (1988)
You’re just a kid and you go into the studio. You’ve got five thousand bucks, and you can’t believe you’re going to make a record. It’s your first album, the one that will never be comparable to anything else you do. There’s something totally pure about it—you had your whole life up to that point. Maybe Farmhouse is our best album, but in a way it will never be better than Junta.

Lawn Boy (1990)
The second album, [laughs] Now the reality of your life has set in a little bit: You’re making records. We won some studio time from a battle of the bands and did two songs, "Split Open And Melt" and "Bathtub Gin," which actually are two of the better-sounding tunes on the record. So it was, "Well, we have these two songs, let’s get another ten grand together and make an album." This is all I have to say about Lawn Boy, and that it’s our best damn cover.

A Picture Of Nectar (1992)
Phish plays jazz, Phish plays rock, Phish plays country, Phish plays Latin...but what is Phish? We were messing around with lots of different styles and trying to show that we had versatility, but is there any common denominator? It’s sort of disjointed. Good moments, but actually one of the worst-sounding albums. This is the one where we didn’t know better.

Rift (1993)
Musically ambitious, long-winded, and had we let the producer actually produce it, it would have been a lot better. We were still control freaks. Looking back on it, I wish we were a little more able to recognize the opportunity we had there. We just missed the boat.

Rift is also when lyrics started to become a little bit more meaningful. Up to that point they were pretty much nonsense. Tom [Marshall, who has written the bulk of Phish’s lyrics since Rift] started to show through a little bit.
Hoist (1994)
Phish in LA. We could hire anybody, so it's filled with sounds that aren't Phish. A lot of people were seeing us as the next thing to be broken into the mainstream, and this was the one that was gonna break us. Even made a video—the thing died in the water.

Looking back, Hoist is a lot better than I thought at the time. I was feeling the weight of all the commercial effort, which was affecting the soul of the music a little bit. But it was a big step forward in our embracing what an album is. Still, there's a part of me that feels it was just trying too hard.

A Live One (1995)
Hoist had come out and we were a little confused. We didn't have much of an idea of what our potential was as recording artists, but we had a pretty good idea of who we were as a live band. So A Live One was buying time to figure out who we were in the studio and also letting people—and ourselves—know that in at least one way we knew damn straight who we were and where we were going.

But it was a lousy title.

Billy Breaths (1996)
Billy Breaths might still be our best album. We boiled it down to nothing: "Let's find our studio identity by locking ourselves in a barn for a couple of months—with no written material, nothing to go on at all—and just see what happens." It was also our first experience with letting a producer produce, and I think it's our best-sounding album to date.

A lot of controversy over the cover [a Gordon self-portrait photograph]. Whereas for Hoist we spent thousands of dollars, wasted a whole bunch of time, and ended up with a lousy cover, this time we didn't labor over it. You hear the music and it's like, "Wow, these guys really put themselves into this album." But you can tell the cover was just thrown together.

Slip Stitch And Pass (1997)
A precursor to Hampton Comes Alive, it's an edited version of part of a show. We just took out a couple of songs that weren't as good.

The Story Of The Ghost (1998)
We were starting to form our identity in the studio and we tried to come up with stuff as a group. We rented farmhouses in Vermont, brought some digital equipment, and got rid of everybody. We took a book of Tom's lyrics and the four of us just hung out for a week at a time in a couple sessions. About half the basic tracks that came out of that got used on the album. Then we went in with the producer and recorded "Limb By Limb," "Guyute," and other songs that we'd already played live.

Hampton Comes Alive (1999)
Hampton Comes Alive is just a good, solid document of what we do live, warts and all. It's completely unedited, no overdubs, the mix is from the board. And it's got the best packaging we've ever had, by far.

Farmhouse (2000)
Farmhouse is the tip of the iceberg. From here on out we ought to be able to make great studio albums.
see the purpose of it, and I enjoy it. As a kid I just wanted to play my drumset. I was expanding my independence and coordination massively, and all the chops I got came as a consequence of that.

I've also started playing to records—like James Brown records—to get other people's feels inside me. I keep saying to myself that I want to learn everything [longtime Bob Marley drummer] Carlton Barrett did, beat for beat. When all is said and done, he's my favorite drummer. The guy is just a clock.

Normally there's something I'm going to work on, like the beat to [Story Of The Ghost's] "Limb By Limb" [composed by Anastasio on a drum machine]. Eventually I get sidetracked or just burnt on it. Then my imagination starts going and I start hearing things. If you're going to end up sounding like you, you have to pay attention to that stuff.

MD: What stuff?

Jon: Those sound ghosts, the patterns that come up in your imagination. You have to work diligently and consciously to get them out to your hands and feet so they feel in the world the way they feel in your mind.

Here's what I mean: Mike called me up on the phone one day with the drum part to the middle section of [Rift's] "Mound." He's not a drummer, and he heard in his mind a totally screwed-up beat. I listened and wrote it down on a piece of paper. It isn't what any drummer would've thought of. It's just this weird thing with no concern for where anything on the kit is—sort of like Trey's drum machine compositions. It's really cool because it makes you think of things you would never have thought of yourself. As a drummer, what you hear in your head tends to line up with how your body moves.

Since Mike's beat is something that neither my mind nor body would ever have conceived of, it affects my mind and I start hearing new things as a result. Then my body says, "Where'd that come from?" There's this little voice going, "It came from Mike's drum beat." [laughs]

When I was in Chile recently there was a sink dripping and a clock's second hand ticking. They were both so consistent, and I sat there listening to them as one thing. You could call one of them four—or your
Anastasio On Fishman

If you want insight into Jon Fishman’s craft, star guitarist Trey Anastasio is the man to ask. Besides having played with Jon for the better part of twenty years, Anastasio is a pretty darn good drummer himself. Yep, that’s Trey funkin’ up the kit on Hampton Comes Alive’s “Gettin’ Jiggy Wit It.”

MD: What do you like most about being in a band with Jon?
Trey: His versatility and desire to progress. Fish wants to take everything in and incorporate it into his style organically. It impresses me to no end that he looks for weaknesses and overcomes them. He also listens better than anybody I’ve ever played with. He’s never listening to himself. And he’s so fluid it’s almost like he’s not moving at all. When Neil Young played with us at Farm Aid, he said Fish was light as a feather. It’s true—he’s subtle and fluid, watery. Pisces, [laughs]

I often write drum parts, either on paper or a drum machine, and some of them, like “Taste” or “Limb By Limb,” are totally screwed up. It’s an amazing testament to Fish’s talent that not only does he learn to play these beats, but he’s jumping up and down with excitement any time I throw one at him.

MD: How does his newfound groovyness differ from his old style, and how does that impact what you do onstage?
Trey: He used to be the decoration. And Mike is a fairly decorative bass player historically, so years ago when Mike was up on the high end of the neck and Fish was dancing around the beat, actually defining the beat wasn’t at the forefront of their minds. It forced me to slam out the downbeat. There’s an old saying about a soloist being only as good as his rhythm section. I never understood how true that was until Mike and Fish started really focusing on the groove. Page [McConnell, Phish keyboardist] and I have mentioned a million times how much easier it is to play with elegance, simplicity, and space between our notes because the groove feels so solid now.

MD: What are a couple of your favorite Fishman creations?
Trey: One is the whole worked-out section in [Junta’s] “David Bowie.” That’s Fish’s bread & butter groove. He was born playing that.

But his best creation is actually a guitar riff. I came in—years ago—and he was sitting on the bed with my guitar. Like a drummer playing, it was an odd-beated, rudiment-type pattern with no concern for the notes, [laughs] I sucked it up, and now I play it all over the Phish repertoire. The best example is in the outro to “Billy Breathes” [on Billy Breathes], two seconds before it crashes at the end. It’s so funny because it’s my shining moment on tape—I’m just so proud of it—and the ultimate peak is his little drum riff on the guitar. My best riff was written by Fish!

MD: Your bread & butter.
Trey: For every drum part I’ve written for him, he’s written a better guitar part for me. [laughs] I’ve always felt incredibly connected to Fish—literally from the minute I met him. He’s an amazing person. Anyone who’s seen us knows that, just from looking at him up there. He’s really unique and strange and good-hearted. Being in a band with people like that is way more important than playing with the hottest cat. Because we’re not the hottest cats.

Yet together, we are. I realize that more and more. We talk about The Modern Jazz Quartet and The Chieftains, bands that have played together for forty-five years. That’s the kind of thing I’d like to accomplish, and Fish is a big part of it. It’s no coincidence that the band is called Phish. [laughs] He’s really the heart and soul of the band.
Jon Fishman

common time—and the other one was beating against it. Maybe every ten or eleven beats of the clock, the cycle would repeat. And I sat there the longest time trying to absorb it, trying to get my hands to follow. I think I got it, like, once! And I freaked out and went to bed. [laughs]

I thought of recording a long segment of it and learning it between two hands. Then I’d throw it out. The point of something strange like that is that it’ll make your brain start hearing things that are out of the ordinary of what your body has taught it to hear.

MD: What do you do before a gig?
Jon: Well, I used to obsessively sit there doing rudiments. Now I have a practice kit. I sit by myself, put some earplugs in, and mess around. I’ll maybe familiarize myself with tunes that I’ve forgotten a bit, or just play a blues shuffle for an hour.

MD: You imply that your chops came almost by accident, yet your technique is remarkably smooth.
Jon: I’ve always been pretty good at economy of motion. That evolved out of my natural desire—even if it wasn’t mature—to do all these parts at once. I never consciously thought, “Oh, economy of motion is important.” But if I waved my arms around, I’d start missing things. I had to learn how to relax and move as little as possible to get to all the parts on time. Now when I play a simple, sparse beat, my body’s just used to moving in an efficient way.

MD: Even when you play intricate parts, like the Latin-style beat to [Billy Breathes’] “Taste,” you look so casual, like you’re reading the newspaper.
Jon: [laughs] It should be like that. I’m not a very flourish-y drummer. I don’t know how to twirl my sticks or any of that stuff. I’m the opposite of Keith Moon in that sense. But he was so entertaining to watch.

MD: You’re entertaining to watch.
Jon: Yeah, in my own way. I don’t hit hard. My hands are like baby hands. I don’t have any calluses or anything, they’re totally soft, wimpy little hands. I’m good about using my fingers. I have good control, but not Dennis Chambers control.

MD: We all know that technique is just a means to an end.
Jon: Look, it’s great to have good technique. These guys who say, [grizzled voice] “Ahh, technique doesn’t matter,” it’s like sour grapes. If you had great technique, you wouldn’t be saying that. I want my technique to be great. I just spent a lot more time learning bizarre coordinations and independence.

MD: It’s not like that’s the antithesis of technique.
Jon: Then chops, maybe. I’d always like to be better. When I’ve seen Dennis Chambers play, I have never, for one second, found myself even remotely thinking that it wasn’t musical. And no one had chops like Buddy Rich, but there was always musicality in front of his technique—that soul, that burning furnace. His high-speed single-stroke roll still sounded like music. At that speed, he was controlling this little melodic composition going on in there!

MD: A lot has been made of the listening exercises you guys developed in rehearsal. Do you still do them?
Jon: Mostly our recent rehearsals are focused on learning new material. We haven’t been doing those listening exercis-
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  - Medium thin
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  - Medium thin
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es. When we invented them, they were really useful and they opened up our ears a lot. They taught us to hear each other so keenly that now it’s redundant to do them. Now it’s easy to tell when any one of us isn’t listening.

It’s funny, because we went through this highly analytical period and now it’s completely the other way. We’re not allowed to analyze. You come offstage between sets and you have a drink and hang out and party. You can say you liked something but you can’t analyze. There’s actually a “no analyzing” rule.

MD: You’ve always been a band that pushes forward constantly and addresses deficiencies. For you personally, what’s the next frontier?

Jon: I want to keep strengthening the overall depth of the pocket. And there are a lot of patterns I’ve been meaning to get to—five in the space of four, six in the space of five, etc. Find out what those sound like. I also have a bunch of independence exercises written out.

I might start taking piano lessons, because on the piano your left hand is like your ride and your right hand embellishes.

If I learn a little of that it’ll help me ride with the left and embellish with the right. And I’d still like to learn how to do a one-handed roll. That’s a constant challenge.

MD: Are you close?

Jon: I can cheat. I use the rim of the snare drum. I’m not really close to actually doing it. Right now I’m concentrating on more groove-oriented things. Just trying to get that so ingrained that I can go off and do all that other stuff too without losing the groove.

MD: You must feel fortunate to play in a band that nurtures all the aspects of your musical personality. And after sixteen years, you’re still going strong. It’s never gotten stale, and there’s plenty of inspiration for future work.

Jon: I think you end up doing the stuff you had no choice but to do. Choices are kind of an illusion. There’s a part of me that just knew it was a matter of time before I met the right people. I still remember meeting Trey like it was yesterday. It was completely obvious: “This is the guitar player for me. I can totally relate to this guy.”

All four of us—just from being in a band for sixteen years—have thought that if Phish broke up tomorrow there are other things we could do. I have this little fantasy that I’d move to the islands and become a scuba instructor. Open a club, put my drumset up, get a calypso band, and play seven nights a week in my little bar.

But those moments have been fleeting. I really don’t see any reason for us not to keep going. We’re all really good friends and we love playing together. Phish has got it all: We have good, tight arrangements, but there’s completely open water. There’s nothing I do in any other band that I don’t do in Phish. I’ll never find that again, with anyone.

Artists who make a good living and are recognized while they’re alive are lucky bastards. Sun Ra, one of my favorites, said, “I’m just like the birds. I get up and make my sound, and you can listen if you want, but you don’t have to.”
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Hal Blaine

The Beat Of A Generation

by Michael D. Amitin
A nyone who's ever bopped their head to the jingle jangle backbeat of tunes such as "California Dreamin,'" "Good Vibrations," or The Byrds' "Mr. Tambourine Man" knows the stellar work of drummer Hal Blaine and his fellow session-mates The Wrecking Crew.

Redesigning the studio map as the rhythm thunder in Phil Specter's famed "wall of sound," Hal and The Crew launched a dial-a-hit ride that spanned three decades, providing millions of listeners worldwide with the soundtrack of their youth.

Though pop was his bread & butter, Blaine traversed genres effortlessly. He pried his jazz-honed skills to a myriad of sessions that kept him in sync with his bebop roots. Years later, at the Monterey Pop Festival, the polymorphous man from Holyoke easily made the vast musical leap from Simon & Garfunkel's "Parsley Sage" to the raga fire of Ravi Shankar. Whatever the setting, Blaine's solid playing was a deft balancing act, incorporating his reverence for tradition with a passion for exploration. Added to this was his mastery of musical understatement, using nimble wrists and an economy of motion to turn an evocative phrase—or spike a fiery dynamic.

From "This Diamond Ring" to the tarnished ring of "Mrs. Robinson," which spun him Oscar gold, Hal Blaine supplied the supple rolling grooves America was bopping its head to. The Blaine beat bounced seamlessly into the '70s, as he mellowed down a string of acoustic pop hits like America's "Ventura Highway."

Nowadays, Blaine keeps his annual dates with the Oklahoma Symphony, performs regularly with longtime friend Mason Williams, and does occasional appearances with artists such as Steve Allen and Nancy Sinatra.

Decompressing from fifty years "on the town," Blaine recently held court with MD in his plaque-studded home, a marathon away from LA's surf-drenched shores, where the studio legend discovered the perfect boots for walking into rock 'n' roll infamy. The light was shining brightly on his newest and perhaps greatest accolade: his induction this year into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame.

MD: How did your big bang start?
Hal: As a seven-year-old I transformed furniture dowels into drumsticks. Anything became a snare—no object was safe in the Blaine household.

MD: What did you hear growing up?
Hal: It was the height of the depression. My ears were glued to radio serving up Borscht Belt humor from the Catskills and a steady diet of jazz—you know, Billie Holiday, Satchmo. At fourteen my family

This diagram details the custom drumkit that Hal Blaine was using circa 1969. Hal is credited with being one of the first to use a multi-concert-tom setup in the studio.

**Drumset:** Ludwig Classic drums, custom fiberglass concert toms
- A. 5x14 Supra-Phonic 400 snare
- B. 6" tom
- C. 8" tom
- D. 10" tom
- E. 12" tom
- F. 13" tom
- G. 14" tom
- H. 16" tom
- I. 16x16 floor tom
- J. 14x22 bass drum

**Cymbals:** Zildjian
- 1.14" hi-hats
- 2.16" thin crash
- 3. 22" medium ride
- 4.17" sizzle with one rivet

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- I. 16x16 floor tom
- J. 14x22 bass drum

**Cymbals:** Zildjian
- 1.14" hi-hats
- 2.16" thin crash
- 3. 22" medium ride
- 4.17" sizzle with one rivet
moved from the town I was born in—Holyoke, Massachusetts—to Hartford, Connecticut. I found work with the Ringling Brothers. Soon after, they were suspiciously burned to the ground. I assisted people to an ambulance, which eventually got me work in the local hospitals. With the men off fighting in the second world war, all the doctors were women.

**MD:** And you received medicine that would further unleash the limitless bounds of your unbridled creativity.

**Hal:** [laughs] Right. I went on to study with Krupa’s backup drummer, and developed my bebop chops. I went to the same school as Louie Bellson before I came to Hollywood.

**MD:** Where did you land when you first hit the West Coast?

**Hal:** Eventually, my parents, who had immigrated from eastern Europe, opted for the sunshine of southern California. So my adolescence blossomed on the hot-rod streets of beautiful downtown San Bernardino.

**MD:** Your transformation from couch beater to studio maven took a huge leap when you joined teen idol Tommy Sands for a spin through “Babes In Toyland.”

**Hal:** Tommy Sands was a major star at Capitol in those days—that was about ’57, ’58. My "hit parade" took off from there, and I was on the charts all the way to 1981 with Lefty Frizell’s "Texas State Of Mind." The Tijuana Brass was my first Record of the Year—"A Taste Of Honey." I played on eight Song and Record of the Years, 42 Number 1s, and 360 Top-10s.

**MD:** How did The Wrecking Crew materialize?

**Hal:** We were jazz guys wearing jeans. We could hang with the rock 'n' rollers, who started booking a lot of the studio dates. We were already making hits, and then we did that first session with Phil Spector with The Crystals, and started being referred to as "the wall of sound." It was getting crazy by then. A lot of producers realized they’d better get on the bandwagon for this new thing called rock 'n' roll. Later, when Disney put us in their movies, the status quo—the older musicians in town—basically said, “This is going to wreck music as we know it,” and that’s how we came upon the name.

Eventually, Larry Knechtel, Joe Osborne, and myself sort of became the nucleus session guys for Dunhill Records, with producer Lou Adler. We did our thing, playing whatever we wanted on records with The Grass Roots, The
"Countless drummers swear by their age-old hand-hammered cymbals, which are treated as rarities, and countless drummers have vainly tried to find one of these 'originals.' In my opinion, this problem has been solved with 'Traditionals,' because these cymbals offer exactly what these drummers are looking for." (7)

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"Nostalgia aside, ... Traditionals flats are nicer than my old 602 - certainly warmer and a little broader." (4)

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"The Traditionals belong to the most intensively worked on cymbals I have ever played. ... It is a lust for the ears. Especially for the jazz, and blues group which Paiste serves with these cymbals." (5)

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Mamas & The Papas, The 5th Dimension—all the Dunhill groups, including the late, great Dusty Springfield. It got crazy, I was so busy. Besides the records, I also started doing all those TV shows at the same time—The Monkees, The Brady Bunch, Mary Tyler Moore, I Dream Of Jeannie....

At one point I did twenty-six sessions in one week—three or four each day. Rick Foucher, my drum tech, would tear down one set after a session while I was counting the downbeat at the next studio.

**MD:** When you bounced between these sessions, how did the engineers get your sound so quickly?

**Hal:** They trusted me with my sound. They'd put up the mic's, have me run through it for a couple of seconds, and that's it. Al Schmidt, Lee Hirschberg, Bones Howe—those engineers knew the sound of my set, which was basically the '62 Ludwigs on all the Spector stuff and the hits that followed. From '67 on, I basically used the big set with all the concert toms. It was a fiberglass set that I had designed.
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"TAP TEST"
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Did you replace many band drummers in the studio?

There were something like 175 different bands that I replaced the drummer in. I'll tell you, they all loved it except The Byrds' drummer—he blew his top.

Usually it was understood that we were going to help the group achieve success. Sometimes we'd make three or four hit records for a group and then they'd decide to use their own drummer. The times that happened, their record would come out, not be successful, and the band would break up.

Joe and Larry were some formidable rhythm section mates.

Just great guys, and such versatile players! Joe was on bass, and Larry was often on guitar or piano. On the early Byrds stuff like "Tambourine Man," I think Larry played some bass. He did the bass on "Help Me Rhonda" too, and piano on "Bridge Over Troubled Water." And Joe's incredible. He's gone on to write something like seventy Number-1 country hits.

How about a Crew hit that involved other members?

Whew! "Wichita Lineman" had Carol Kaye on bass, with Larry and me. And you know, The Crew never did a rehearsal, the studio chemistry was automatic with whoever was on the date. We listened. We knew if a record felt good, that was the ticket. Even if there were small mistakes, if it was danceable, we knew we had it.

Was it, Here's the arrangement, go? Hal: No. The producer would give us the chart and I would mark the changes needed, we'd bat it around, and then let it roll. It worked every way imaginable. But at a certain point it was just intuitive, and we all knew how to stay out of each other's way and where to stick our licks in.

How did you arrive at a feel for a particular tune?

When I was making records I always wanted to see the lyrics first, and then play to what the song was about.

For example?

Let me see. Oh, like "Bridge Over Troubled Water." When I first heard the lyric, it lead me to think of a bunch of
Russ Miller

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--- Russ Miller

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guys on a chain gang—that sad, sullen sound. I thought Paul Simon was talking about chain gangs working over a river in the south. I told my assistant: "Hey man, go out to the back of the Caddy (an ol' '55) and grab those snow chains and that wooden crate out of the trunk." I wound up on my knees in the studio, pulling that chain over my back, hitting on 2 and 4. That's the sound you hear on that track.

MD: What other hit tunes come to mind where you stumbled on something during the session that may have had a big hand in its success?

Hal: There's so much stuff. On Herb Alpert's "A Taste Of Honey," the whole band was playing that intro horn lick, but nobody was coming in right. We couldn't get it in tempo, so I just pounded my kick four to the floor—boom, boom, boom, boom—to get the time straight. The tape was rolling, and that kick stayed in the track, sort of becoming a hook.

Oh, and the "Macarthur Park" session, that was truly amazing.

MD: How did that date come about?

Hal: Oh, I love this story. One day I get a call from this guy with a thick British accent, "Hello Hal, it's Richard, Richard Harris. How would you like a free vacation to England? We're cutting this great new song Jimmy Webb has. We've got ya' booked at 8 A.M. tomorrow on TWA."

Well, I arrived in England, they took me directly to an apartment, and within minutes I hear the voice of Richard. "Hello Hal, how are ya?" and I turn around and there's Richard wearing a bathrobe that came down to about his navel—the man was
“Targets...the critical aspects...of drumming:
Timekeeping and Groove”
— Modern Drummer
naked. "Do you know any great studio musicians like yourself over here?" "Richard, I thought we had the session booked." "Hal, settle in, it's gonna be a ten-day party. Jimmy's out in the country, and we're gonna have a ball."

Well, that it was. We ended up doing the date back in LA later with me, Joe, and Larry, and the incredible Armon Steiner at the board. We rehearsed it, and they expected us to stop at the end of each section—you know, it's a trilogy. They thought they'd have to edit the three sections together. We just felt it together and did it in one take all the way through—and that's a nine-minute song! Ah...[sighs]... "Macarthur Park," one of the great records.

MD: How did Spector wedge the drums into his "wall of sound"?
Hal: Phil knew my stuff from Tommy Sands, Elvis, and Connie Francis and thought it would work well with his concept. He washed everything in that massive Goldstar echo chamber that everyone in town wanted. You can hear how the kick drum was drenched in reverb on The Ronettes' "And Then He Kissed Me," and on the opening lick on "Be My Baby." He had me tune my snare pretty high to cut through the mud.

Earl Palmer and I both did fills at the ends of Specter's songs, but Phil wouldn't let us rehearse the fills before we cut them. It was hilarious—and daunting!

MD: Did Brian Wilson want you to emulate the sound you had going with Spector?
Hal: Brian was influenced production-wise very much by the Spector sound. He wanted the same Crew musicians, but he was driven to come up with his own extension of that idea. We detuned my snare, and made the kick and toms a lot drier.

MD: So there you were, a dark-haired Eastern European, laying down the undercurrent for the beach blond anthems. You helped escort The Beach Boys in their transition from alleged surfer boys to artistic innovators. What were those sessions like, and how did they evolve?
Hal: Brian Wilson was perhaps the greatest musical mind I ever worked with. He wouldn't be satisfied until what was on tape matched his internal vision. He was very free-spirited and improvisational in his approach, and he gave us a lot of room to play. We experimented and he loved all my percussion enhancements. But man, he heard everything.

MD: What did he hear that you might've been doing that blew his mind?
Hal: We were all drinking orange pop in bottles back then. I turned a bunch of the orange bottles upside down and started tapping them with the tips of my sticks. "God Only Knows" was up, and I saw Brian in the control room running around with that frantic "roll the tape" look. My playing the bottles is that galloping sound percolating under the keyboards. It enters
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Hal’s All-Time 50 Greatest Hits

Hal Blaine has appeared on thousands of recordings. We asked him to try to recall his personal “top 50.” The following, truly amazing list includes some of the most important popular music ever recorded.

1. “Macarthur Park”
   Richard Harris (1968)
2. “Bridge Over Troubled Water”
   Simon & Garfunkel (1970)
3. “God Only Knows”
   The Beach Boys (1965)
4. “Sounds Of Silence”
   Simon & Garfunkel (1966)
5. “California Dreaming”
   The Mamas & The Papas (1966)
6. “Can’t Help Falling In Love”
   Elvis Presley (1962)
7. “Crying”
   Roy Orbison (1964)
8. “In My Room”
   The Beach Boys (1964)
9. “He’s A Rebel”
   The Crystals (1962)
10. “Mr. Tambourine Man”
    The Byrds (1965)
11. “Another Saturday Night”
    Sam Cooke (1963)
12. “The Way We Were”
    Barbara Streisand (1974)
13. “Da Doo Ron Ron”
    The Crystals (1963)
14. “Be My Baby”
    The Ronettes (1963)
15. “Good Vibrations”
    The Beach Boys (1966)
16. “And Then He Kissed Me”
    The Crystals (1963)
17. “Only The Lonely”
    Roy Orbison (1964)
18. “Poor Side Of Town”
    Johnny Rivers (1964)
19. “Blue Bayou”
    Roy Orbison (1964)
20. “Dancin’ In The Streets”
    Martha & The Vandellas (1964)
21. “A Taste Of Honey”
    The Tijuana Brass (1965)
22. “Mrs. Robinson”
    Simon & Garfunkel (1968)
23. “Monday, Monday”
    The Mamas & The Papas (1968)
24. “Aquarius/Let The Sunshine”
    The 5th Dimension (1969)
25. “California Girls”
    The Beach Boys (1965)
26. “Up, Up And Away”
    The 5th Dimension (1967)
27. “Galveston”
    Glen Campbell (1968)
28. “Help Me Rhonda”
    The Beach Boys (1965)
29. “Mountain Of Love”
    Johnny Rivers (1964)
30. “Classical Gas”
    Mason Williams (1968)
31. “Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me”
    Mel Carter (1965)
32. “Fly Me To The Moon”
    Marvin Gaye (1965)
33. “Homeward Bound”
    Simon & Garfunkel (1966)
34. “Return To Sender”
    Elvis Presley (1962)
35. “I Got You Babe”
    Sonny & Cher (1966)
36. “Along Comes Mary”
    The Association (1968)
37. “Strange Things Happen”
    Frank Sinatra (1966)
38. “Wichita Lineman”
    Glen Campbell (1966)
39. “If I Were A Carpenter”
    Bobby Darin (1966)
40. “A Case Of You”
    Joni Mitchell (1971)
41. “Mother And Child Reunion”
    Paul Simon (1971)
42. “This Diamond Ring”
    Gary Lewis & The Playboys (1965)
43. “Ain’t No Mountains High Enough”
    Marvin Gaye & Tammi Terrell (1970)
44. “River Deep, Mountain High”
    Ike & Tina Turner (1968)
45. “Midnight Confessions”
    The Grassroots (1966)
46. “Charles The Wonder Years”
    Barry McGuire (1965)
47. “Everybody Loves Somebody”
    Dean Martin (1964)
    Bobby Vee (1964)
49. “I Am I Said”
    Neil Diamond (1971)
50. “Any World”
    Steely Dan (1974)
Hal Blaine

the tune with the lead vocal and carries on until the snare improv at the tune's climax. What a beautiful song. I'm really glad Brian's so happy now, because it was a major ordeal. People talk about *Pet Sounds* in classic terms. Did you know that was The Beatles' favorite record?

Brian did a lot of takes, but not full takes. He'd go six or eight bars, and he'd say, "Hold it! I've got an idea." "Good Vibrations" was a classic example of Brian having a specific sound in his head. We'd go in, and sometimes it would be a fifteen-minute session: "Thank you very much, gentlemen." But when it came to vocal harmonies, the singers would think a pass was perfect, and he'd push them for more and more takes. Eventually they'd hear what he heard. He was relentless, like taking your soul and squeezing something right out of it.

MD: Speaking of squeezing, what's that squeeze box story of yours?

Hal: I was in England about six months prior to recording "Poor Side Of Town" with Johnny Rivers. I'd heard a relatively obscure rock 'n' roll record with a drummer doing what we call "squeeze box" today, the little sizzle closing on the hi-hat, which came down from the swing drummers. So I threw that into the "Poor Side Of Town," and....

MD: And everyone got rich off it....

Hal: [laughs] Yeah. At first Lou Adler was saying, "Hey, don't use that! It sounds like white noise." But we decided it worked, so we left it in. Then, after "Poor Side" came out, every producer who called me would say, "Be sure to bring whatever that toy is that you used on 'Poor Side Of Town.'"

MD: How do songs you recorded over thirty years ago affect you when you hear them now?

Hal: They're all emotional. It takes me back to the day, the studio, the camaraderie, the stuff that doesn't happen every day.

MD: If there would be a common thread that all the great artists you worked with possessed, what would you say it is?

Hal: That they could keep a song feeling fresh whether it was the first or six hundredth time they played it.

MD: You do a few select drum clinics. What types of advice to you like to pass along to younger musicians?

Hal: Well, I let the kids play and encourage them with the things they're doing right. I don't believe in the "Hey, look at me" clinic, where you charge big bucks for kids to watch you play drum solos. I want the kids to walk away feeling like they can take a sense of the love of it, and grow from there. I also try to point out how important it is to strike a balance between music, family, and friends.
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In our series on the different kits of Tama artists, Joey Waronker's set may be the most different so far.

"One part of me is definitely drawn to the playing of someone like Art Blakey, where you've got that great sense of time and feel. But another part of me is drawn to just creating colors.

"Back when I was playing with Beck, I kept my kit simple and just explored the groove. Then I realized it would be fun to go in an opposite direction. If I think there should be a bell tone that happens only once in a song, why shouldn't have a bell just to do that? So my style and my set began to change.

"But it's basically still a five piece kit. Of course, there are some differences. For one, the bass drums don't necessarily do a double kick thing. The 26" is the main and the 22" is the auxiliary.

"Another difference are the two hi-hat stands. I'll have eighth notes going on one hi-hat with my toe and quarter notes with my heel on the other. To make this work, I have to be able to get the footboard angles just so. Having hardware that can do this has helped me get to the next level.

"I love the multi-clamp gadgets. They're great for getting all my hand percussion to work with the kit. In REM there's so much variation going on in each song so I'm always moving the percussion around. I'll put an effect cymbal on top of the tambourine for one song, and then I'll take the whole thing apart.

"The idea is to keep everything changing. Which is why I need equipment that's reliable and flexible. I want my own character out of my drums, but I don't want to sit with them for two hours to do so. It's just really nice to have instruments that respond to what I want to do."

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New Jersey weather can be fickle. That warning used to appear on ads for the Modern Drummer Festival. It was a cosmic disclaimer that rarely amounted to anything until this, the thirteenth annual Festival Weekend. Sure enough, as the long line of ticket holders waiting outside Memorial Auditorium at Montclair State University can attest, it got cool and it rained—pretty much the whole time.

But the weather didn’t deter the 5:30 Club, devoted zealots who arrive at the theater every year to be first in line. Nor did it deter Nashville’s Street Beats from making music on a motley collection of boxes and buckets outside the main entrance Sunday morning. Nor did it dampen the spirit inside the auditorium, where some say the best festival in years unfolded.

Maybe it was the thrill of a long-awaited appearance by Vinnie Colaiuta, who slipped into the venue unnoticed at the last minute. Or Don Brewer from Grand Funk Railroad, a legendary drummer from a legendary band. Or Jeff “Tain” Watts, about whom festival guest (and great drummer himself) Adam Nussbaum speculated the night before, “He’s going to stake claim to serious territory.” Or Akira Jimbo, a performer worthy of a recent MD cover, yet a wild card for many in the hall.

To put it simply, MD’s Festival Weekend 2000 was amazing. Here’s what happened.
Contest Winner Tony Medeiros

Winner of the MD Undiscovered Drummer Contest in the over-eighteen category, the effervescent Tony Medeiros, recalls the sequence of events: “I sent in a demo tape, I won, and then they asked me to play the Festival. I was shocked. For my performance I did my doubles-on-double-bass stuff and left-foot cascara rhythms: I’m the genetic deformity of Virgil Donati and Horacio Hernandez!”

Truer words were never spoken. A shocked crowd rose to its feet at the tremendous display of speed and control—and taste, too. As Tony noted backstage, he put his wife through college playing country music: “My learning to groove was country music’s fault!”

Street Beats

Here we have the heart and soul of percussion, street-corner drummers who combine precision movement and earthy grooves. They drove all the way from Nashville in the pouring rain to present their exciting beats and rapidly shifting tempos on an exotic mix of conventional percussion and found objects from Rubbermaid to LP.

Street Beats exhibited flawless synchronization of hands and torsos as they successfully negotiated funk, Brazilian, and classical grooves. This innovative troupe dealt a lesson on the importance of what you do as opposed to what you do it on.

Dave Lombardo

Dave’s last-minute inclusion in the menu made campers very happy. (He got the call two weeks before the show—and then his wife gave birth to daughter Sophie three days later!) An eleventh-hour replacement for Raymond Herrera, who canceled due to unforeseen circumstances, Dave did not disappoint. All the quick beats and double bass patterns we know from Slayer and Grip Inc. tumbled out. Lombardo played with a raucous, childlike spirit that had everyone smiling. He has a knack for drumming in a way that everyone can identify with, yet at a level that leaves no doubt as to the reason for his popularity.

Paul Leim

Everybody has heard Nashville’s Paul Leim on Shania Twain hits. Seeing him go about his work was a rousing reminder that he didn’t get to his prominent position for nothing. Playing to a DAT of songs he has immortalized in the studio, including the Jennifer Warnes/Bill Medley smash “Time Of My Life,” Leim gave every ounce of energy to each groove, locking in the up tempos and punishing each fill on the ballads. Paul handed out a thousand sheets to illustrate his presentation on the “Nashville Number System” vs. conventional chart notation. Very educational.

Don Brewer

Legend in the house! The crowd rose respectfully, even before the Flint, Michigan native could play a note. Another performer watching from the wings, Billy Ward, put it this way: “What a fantastic thing to hear the drummer of Grand Funk Railroad play. This is the consummate American band and American drummer.”

Brewer played enthusiastically to Grand Funk tapes, endearing himself to the crowd by singing backup and lead vocals—a rare occurrence within these walls. Obviously at home with stadium PA systems, Brewer demonstrated attention to the sort of details that make his sound larger than life. For example, during one entry, he muted his floor tom immediately after shots to heighten the punctuation.

Viewing from the side, contest winner Tony Medeiros remarked, “That’s what we all want to be doing: rocking!”

Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez & Musical Guests

Talk about dying and going to heaven: saxophonist Michael Brecker on the same stage as bassist John Patitucci, Cuban pianist Hilario Duran, drummer “El Negro” Hernandez, and percussionist Mark Quinones. There was an instant and obvious rhythmic rapport between Mark and Horacio, who, despite the complexity of the musical surroundings, kept an eagle eye on each other.

Horacio just kept building in waves, commenting in long phrases effortlessly, gracefully traveling the length and breadth...
of his kit. Mark, perhaps better known as percussionist for The Allman Brothers Band, showed himself a melodic player on congas and aggressive on timbales, instruments on which he was particularly comfortable. Standing O’s all around for this star-studded and spectacular performance.

— Sunday, May 21 —

Contest Winner Mike D’Angelo

Give me a break! He’s how old? The Charlotte, North Carolina youngster took the prize in the MD Undiscovered Drummer Contest in the under-eighteen category, and captured the audience with his confident, busy ostinatos, jazz licks, and impressive press rolls.

Mike’s mom took the winning phone call while he was at school. “I cried because I was so happy,” she recalls. As for the twelve-year-old’s performance, “I went to my drum teacher and said that I didn’t want to go out and do a regular solo,” Mike says. From the standing ovation, we would say mission accomplished.

Akira Jimbo

Let’s get this straight: If you didn’t expect the ultimate in grace, precision, and compositional skills after reading his MD cover, what did you expect? Akira triggered electronics in real time, constructing entire songs—a one-person band like none other. His placement of fills and timpani stings was incredible.

Moving to a real crowd pleaser, the Beatles’ “Come Together,” then a quirky version of “One Note Samba,” Jimbo was in constant, joyous flight around his kit.

As he explained to the crowd, one glitch in his electronics execution, and it’s a train wreck. What did we learn? A big lesson about how a drummer can be truly responsible for rhythm, melody, and harmony.

Billy Ward

Once a decade or so, the whistle blows and one of these types of players gets off at the stop. New York session great Billy Ward, of the loud, loose snare backbeat and plundering tom fills, is a one-of-a-kind musician and drummer.

Billy played really hard, with a long windup, yet he didn’t break sticks or heads. He then went the other direction, placing shakers inside his shoes and playing with great sensitivity. He delighted the crowd with his wacky percussive approach to the drums. Billy admitted to the hours he spent learning to tune drums (not surprising when you heard his perfectly tuned kit) and how we shouldn’t forget the most basic percussion instrument: our hands.

No question, Billy Ward didn’t seem quite your regular fellow. He’d stand out in a lineup. But his style and his urgings on drumming matters (“make your setup user-friendly”) made perfectly regular sense. His charm, his drumming to DAT and with musical guest Jon Pousette-Dart, and his work ethic were infectious.

Hilary Jones

Hilary Jones will always work. The phone will always ring for her. And it’s on account of her drumming, as she demonstrated. She lets notes ring; she lets music breathe.

Hilary opened up with shakers and didn’t quit them until she had said something with them, graduating to splashes on hats, then flutters on snare. When she was...
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happy, she got grooving—seriously grooving. Around the hall, heads were bobbing in a sea of motion, following her through African/tribal patterns. Often she'd start atypically from the floor tom, moving up around the kit.

In her spoken portion, Hilary discretely deflected gender-specific questions, claiming, "I wouldn't know about that. For me, it's the drumming that I'm concerned about."

Jeff "Tain" Watts

Nussbaum was right! Performing with the Jeff "Tain" Watts Experience (David Budway, piano; Paul Bollenback, guitar; Craig Handy, sax; James Genus, bass), Watts showed us that jazz can rock. And by jazz, we mean collective improvisation over incredibly difficult charts, everybody collaborating to lift the intensity, jumping across transitions in feel and tempo, and firing off exciting bursts of notes.

Watts was a powerhouse—at times so aggressive that he made you wonder if his drums would hold up to the brunt of his attack. Yet there were also times when his touch was so musical. It was obvious to everyone why he is one of the most important names in jazz drumming today.

Vinnie Colaiuta & Musical Guests

Something calm and friendly pervaded an amazing performance by Vinnie Colaiuta, underscoring his acceptance of MD's award for All-Around Drummer. His demeanor seemed to fly in the face of the no pain, no gain notion. Vinnie smiled. He talked to the crowd. And then he turned in the performance of a lifetime.

For once, words fail. It wasn't just that the time felt incredibly deep, or that his hands and feet were a paragon of slick, immaculate technique, or that his mind was operating at some lofty plateau.

Perhaps it was Vinnie's thoroughness, his exceptional command of rhythm and motion. At times, it looked as if he even surprised bandmates guitarist Michael Landau, bassist Neil Stubenhaus, and keyboard player David Garfield. In fact, the band seemed as amazed as the rest of us at what Vinnie was playing; they were beaming with excitement at what the master drummer was laying down.

You want to talk death defying, beating the laws of nature, then making it groove so mercilessly you need to join in a standing ovation? That was Vinnie Colaiuta's performance at MD's 2000 Festival Weekend.

Next year it may be sunny, but this year it burned! Either way, if you come next year, bring an umbrella and jacket. New Jersey spring weather can be fickle.
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From left: Michael Brecker, Horacio, John Patitucci
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Hillary was sponsored by DW Drums, Zildjian Cymbals, Attack Drumheads, Vater Drumsticks, and Gibraltar Hardware.
Jeff "Tain" Watts & His Band

"Tain" was sponsored by Sonor Drums, Sabian Cymbals, and Vic Firth Drumsticks.
From left: David Budway, James Genus, Craig Handy, "Tain," and Paul Bollenback
Vinnie Colaiuta
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Vinnie and friends were sponsored by Gretsch Drums, Zildjian Cymbals and Drumsticks, and Remo, Inc.
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In commemoration of MD2K—Modern Drummer’s 13th Drum Festival—award-winning producers Rob Wallis and Paul Siegel of Hudson Music recorded this historic event on video. If you were lucky enough to have been there, this three-tape series will serve as a great memento. If not, then these tapes will give you the feeling of having been there yourself!

Saturday, May 20 Highlights

Excerpts of Saturday’s great clinics and performances, plus backstage footage, interviews, and more! Artists include:

- Tony Medeiros
- Street Beats
- Dave Lombardo
- Paul Leim
- Don Brewer
- Horacio “El Negro” Hernandez & Musical Guests featuring Marc Quiñones
- Running time 80 minutes

Sunday, May 21 Highlights

Great moments from Sunday’s show, including appearances by:

- Mike D’Angelo
- Akira Jimbo
- Billy Ward
- Hilary Jones
- Vinnie Colaiuta & Musical Guests (Featuring David Garfield on keyboards, Michael Landau on guitar, and Neil Stubenhaus on bass)
- Running time 90 minutes
Weekend Now On Video

Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez & Musical Guests

This tape presents the fiery "El Negro"'s complete performance with an incredible band brought together exclusively for the Festival. With special guest Marc Quiñones on percussion, the band also features Michael Brecker on saxophone, John Patitucci on bass, and Hilario Duran on piano.
- Running time 60 minutes

And There's More To Come!

Hudson Music is also preparing highlights of the Festival to be released on DVD. Be sure to check next month's MD for more details.

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Look through the following chart. Better yet, pick up the disc and follow along. You'll see and hear why Vinnie Colaiuta established himself as a monster drummer during his time with Zappa.
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Play the combinations in a relaxed manner at a good speed so that you can move easily. (More examples may be found in my book Master Studies on pages 30-33.) Good luck!
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The cowbell has been used in Afro-Cuban music since the early 1900s. The earliest recordings featuring the bongo bell are by the early son groups such as Sexteto Habanero (1924-27). The instrument actually originated from the bell that hung around the neck of a cow, ox, or mule. The musicians simply removed the internal tongue (clapper) and played with some sort of stick. Today, the cowbell has evolved into a sophisticated instrument, with specialized cowbells used for various styles of music.

Let’s first cover some of the basics: The cowbell is a wedge-shaped (tapered) instrument with an open and closed end, and it’s struck with a wooden beater or dowel made from birch, maple, or other hard wood. (In the past, players often used the shaft of a hammer.) When the bell is struck, the open end produces a low tone, while the closed end produces the high tone.

The cowbell is manufactured in various lengths, widths, and thicknesses of metal, which creates differences in pitch and texture. It’s usually constructed from steel and welded at the seams. Often it’s made from one piece of steel and is usually finished with black lacquer or chrome to prevent rust.

Percussionists often use different materials to reduce the overtones cowbells produce. In the past, aluminum foil, masking tape, and duct tape have been used, but recently cowbell manufacturers have designed specific rubber mufflers that are attached by adhesive to the inside of the bell. LP has designed a special “Jenigor” plastic bar for use on specific models of their cowbells to reduce overtones and protect the open edge.

There are many models of cowbells to choose from and different styles available for a variety of playing situations. Many companies make entry-level to professional-quality cowbells. Some of the most popular manufacturers in North America are LP, Toca, and JCR. But no matter which cowbell you try, each has a distinct voice. As in purchasing cymbals, you may want to test several bells before picking one.

Let’s discuss some of the general types of cowbells that are available today. The bongo bell is usually played by the bongosero...
(bongo drummer) during the montuno section of Latin music. It's also played in sections of greater intensity and where volume is needed. It usually has a large bell with a low pitch, and is traditionally played by holding the bell in the left hand while striking with the right hand. The bongo bell is held with the open end facing away from the player, while placing the hand in a fan position to grasp the bell and slightly muffle the tone.

The timbale bell is usually played by the timbalero (timbale player) with a timbale stick. It's commonly used in passages of greater intensity or when greater volume is needed. It's traditionally mounted on a stand, and has a large-size bell, a low pitch, a very lively sound (more overtones), and a flat striking surface.

The mambo bell is usually played by the timbalero with a timbale stick. It's a large-size bell with a low pitch. It can be used interchangeably with the timbale bell. It has fewer overtones than the timbale bell and a centrally raised striking edge for a more defined tone.

The cha-cha bell is also usually played by the timbalero with a timbale stick. It has a high pitch with either a dry or lively sound. It's commonly positioned higher than the mambo/timbale bell.

Finally, the charanga bell is normally played by the timbalero with a timbale stick. It's generally the smallest cowbell and has the highest pitch. Often it's mounted on the rim of the macho (large timbale).

The function of the cowbell in a musical arrangement is to provide steady time. There's very little room for improvisation except for the occasional short fills between musical sections. The following rhythms are some of the most common patterns played on the cowbell, although there are many variations.

Section 1 includes rhythms commonly played with son clave (shown), while Section 2 includes rhythms commonly played with rumba clave. Once these rhythms are mastered, you can try to combine them together, playing with one hand while playing clave or another cowbell rhythm on a different bell. In addition, you may want to learn the drum parts that go with many of these patterns. Ask your local drum store for a good Latin percussion teacher in your area and check out many of the excellent books and recordings on Afro-Cuban music.

In the following examples, the higher-pitch notes (appearing above the staff) indicate closed tones, while notes that appear on the fourth space indicate open tones.

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Section 1

Son Clave (in 2-3 form)

Bolero/Guajira (on mambo or timbale bell)

Cha-Cha-Cha (on cha-cha bell)

Mambo (on mambo or timbale bell)

Cascara (on mambo or timbale bell)

Bongo Bell #1 (on bongo bell)

Bongo Bell #2 (on bongo bell)

Section 2

Rumba Clave

Conga (on mambo or timbale bell)
Cuban Mozambique (on mambo or timbale bell)

New York Mozambique (on cha-cha bell)

Gaga (on cha-cha bell)

Merensongo (on cha-cha bell)

6 Bell (on cha-cha bell, in 3-2 clave)

Trevor Salloum is a percussionist and music educator. He is the author of *Fun With Bongos*, *The Bongo Book*, *Bongo Drumming: Beyond The Basics*, and *Afro-Latin Polyrhythms* (Mel Bay Publications).

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In the previous "third hand" exercises, we explored some basic 16th-note patterns in which we substituted bass drum strokes in place of "traditional" single-stroke hand patterns. This technique creates more interesting drum fills and a separate voice to spice up well-worn patterns.

Now that you have the 16th-note patterns, it's time to kick up the difficulty a notch and move on to triplets. The triplet is the perfect rhythm for mixing bass drum strokes into your stick work. One right hand stroke, one left hand stroke, and one bass drum stroke, played in a continuous stream at top speed, is a classic and impressive technique with many applications. Let's get started with the simple developmental exercises:

As with any exercise, start slowly, and gradually work up your speed. It's imperative that you work on all stickings. Remember that the triplet should be a smooth and even rhythm. If you find gaps or a stuttering effect in these rhythms as you increase your speed, back the speed down until the patterns are smooth. This process can take quite a while for beginners, so be patient. When you eventually get them up to top speeds, these exercises will sound like the smooth hum of an electric motor.

Let's move these exercises around the drumset.

We can also break the individual triplet up among different drums in a variety of ways. For instance:
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One of the more challenging sticking patterns over this triplet idea is the RL-LR pattern. When these exercises are mastered, you'll definitely be a well-tuned triplet machine.

All of the exercises in this article can be used as one-bar fills or for solo ideas. Try mixing and matching the various hand patterns and drum combinations. Use your imagination.

These techniques can also be used within drum beats. Check these out:

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Cannon Percussion
** RECORDINGS **

**9. Paul Wertico Trio Don't Be Scared Anymore**

Paul Wertico (dr), John Moulder (gt), Etc Hochberg (bs, gtr, tp)

Paul Wertico’s reputation as a light-handed cymbal-oriented player is in serious jeopardy with his latest trio release. Not in jeopardy, however, is his reputation for taste and chops. He just combines all that with fierce focused power. The Trio’s first release, *Live In Warsaw*, featured the same personnel, yet was more in a Scofield vein. *Don't Be Scared Anymore* is more inventive, raw, and musically complete. Highlights: Wertico building a very nice solo over the vamp of “African Sunset.” “The Underground,” a slow 6/8 that gets large.

And “Testament,” which is nearly as “out” as the Sign Of Four sessions Paul did with Gregg Bendian, Derek Bailey, and Pat Metheny in ’97. This is the heaviest and most musical play-...

**8. The Who Live: The Blues To The Bush/1999**

Zak Starkey (dr), Pete Townshend (gtr, vcl), Roger Daltrey (vcl, gtr, hrm), John Entwhistle (bs, vcl), John “Rabbit” Dundrick (kybd), Zak Starkey (dr), Pete Townshend (gtr, vcl), Roger Daltrey (vcl, gtr, hrm), John Entwhistle (bs, vcl), John “Rabbit” Dundrick (kybd)

Well, they never seem to completely go away, do they? That statement would have been made with a good amount of cynicism in the ’80s, when The Who were apparently flogging a dead horse with unfortunate “reunion” tours. But now you just have to marvel at the resilience of these geezers. *Blues To The Bush* is taken from (relatively) small-venue gigs The Who undertook last year, and it seems the old energy is back. No, this ain’t *Live At Leeds*. But be reasonable. It still really rocks, due in no small part to Ringo’s son, who smokes. And how cool is that? A child of the best pop group ever joins the aging best rock band ever, tears through a set of classic material—some of it untouched in thirty years—and helps return them to their rightful level of credibility. Will wonders never cease?

(musicmaker.com)

**5. RoyalTrux Pound For Pound**

Chris Pyle, Ken Nasta (dr), Jennifer Herrema (vcl), Dan Brown (bs), Neil Hagerly (gtr, vcl)

What happens when the hippies leave their opium dens and hunker down in the garage, where they find standard rock instruments and some Latin percussion? Well, we can only suppose that’s how the world was gifted Royal Trux, because a stranger combination is hard to find. A classic rock smorgasbord, there’s a bit of everything in the mix. But the drums are in your face throughout. Big, boomy, and powerful, it's Bonham without much of the finesse. Drummers Chris Pyle and Ken Nasta bring in that Zeppelin flair on “Fire Hill” with a slamming 2/4 on the snare. While the kick follows the guitar riff with complete absorption, the percussionist, by contrast, is tripping along on bells and bongos. Pyle and Nasta keep this ensemble pounding with a hip sense of good of rock ‘n’ roll.

(Fug City)

**7. Jason Marsalis Music In Motion**

Jason Marsalis (dr, perc), John Ellis (tr sx), Derick Douget (al & sp sx), Jonathan Lefcoski (pno), Peter Harris (bs)

Nature or nurture? Scientists should study the astounding Marsalis clan to research this age-old question. Either way, there's no question about the results of dedication. The twenty-three-year-old sibling already has a long list of heavy credits, including a stint with Marcus Roberts. This, his second disc as a leader, showcases Jason's impressively nimble, musical, and versatile kit work as well as promising compositional skills. The tunes embrace influences from straight-ahead, second-line, and Latin, played with eager exuberance. Here's one rocketing long-ternmer who's applying gifted genes to good use.

(basinstreetrecords.com)

**REISSUES**

**Miles Davis**

*On The Corner, Big Fun, Get Up With It*  
*Billy Cobham*  
*Total Eclipse, Crosswinds, Shabazz*

In unique ways, Miles Davis and Billy Cobham are founding fathers of fusion, largely responsible for the creation and endurance of the style. These six reissues represent some of the best of the genre. Recorded during and after his seminal *Bitches Brew* album, Davis’s music on these albums runs the gamut from European-influenced cerebral wanderings to mad metal Improvs. Jack DeJohnette, Al Foster, and Billy Cobham are a study in contrasts—DeJohnette the ingenious post hard bopper, Foster hitting his hi-hat-bashing funk stride, and Cobham the sophisticated pulse merchant weaving staccato grooves and intricate stickings. (Sony Legacy)

Cobham’s more outrageous side surfaces on these long-awaited reissues. Though not as heralded as his debut, *Spectrum, Total Eclipse* is a better album compositionally. Cobham’s drumming is untouchable, at times so fast and forceful, it sounds ready to explode. *Crosswinds* maintains that ferocity, yet overall is not as strong as *Total Eclipse*. A live recording, *Shabazz* is better than Cobham’s slick GRP output of later years, but falls short with overly long songs and less-inspired solos. Far better is The Cobham-Duke Band’s *Live In Europe*, which features John Scofield and Alphonse Johnson performing surreal funk like “Almustapha The Beloved.” All in all, these recordings represent Fusion 101 that is highly musical, full of fire, fury, and—you got it—chops. (Nordet Bird)

Ken Micallef
Imagine how the soundtrack to the sequel of '70s sci-fi film *Logan's Run* would sound. Actually, don't bother, because Roger Manning (Jellyfish, Beck, Air) and Brian Reitzell (Redd Kross, Flyin' Traps, Air) have plundered Mini Moogs, Mutron Phasers, and Synares, all in the service of recreating those grooviest of future times. They have the genre down, too, nailing the sounds and the styles. "Metropia" is as good as silver-boot funk workouts get, and "Islands In The Sky" is so corny it's genius. Reitzell sounds like he's having a ball throughout, whether liberally spraying Syndrum "boings," smack-ing deep, dry backbeats, or ripping round-house tom fills. And it's all played so well, you'll get the joke but still come back for more. Great fun. (Empire Ectase)

Adam Budofsky

Bassist Ray Brown, one of the greatest time/feel players in jazz history, spent much of the '90s with Jeff Hamilton as his chosen rhythm mate. Now that's drummer prestige. Hamilton, the bearded king of solid and smooth, has swung the Big Ones, including Ella, Basie, and Oscar Peterson, and he's just as regal holding court with his own trio. This live date showcases the drummer's superb taste, textures, and no-nonsense swing. He loves to caress a good tune, not shout over it. And several tracks reconfirm his rep as a modern brush master. Classy. (Mons Records)

Jeff Potter

The abstract jazz/rock landscapes of guitarist Allan Holdsworth have always served as excellent vehicles for drummers to explore freely. This release is no exception. The music here is more subtle than typical Holdsworth, with an acoustic jazz element dominating the music. Gary Novak has certainly come of age since his training with Chick Corea several years ago. His flurries of double-stroke and combination double/single fills engulf each track with a delicately smooth feel and jazzy tone. (Chad Wackerman also performs solidly, but on only one track.) Novak has developed a touch that drum heroes are made of. Hopefully he will continue to find the proper vehicles to further develop his gift. (www.gnarlygeezer.com)

Mike Haid

Neil Young's distaste for being pigeonholed is notorious. You just never know whether a new album will feature crunchers like "Hey Hey, My My" or delicacies like "Love Is A Rose." *Silver & Gold* features the mel-low, reflective Neil of *Harvest Moon* and *Comes A Time*. This terrain requires little of a drummer beyond keeping it steady and uncluttered. Of course, that's not such a "little" thing at all, which is why Jim Keltner is considered one of the best in the business. Listen to "Distant Camera" or "Razor Love" for a lesson in playing it cool without sounding boring. And Oscar Butterworth (Jewel, Steve Forbert) delivers similar sensitivity on a couple cuts. This is the way it's done. (Warner Bros.)

Adam Budofsky
VITAL TECH TONES VTT2

Steve Smith (dr), Victor Wooten (bs), Scott Henderson (gtr)

VTT2 is a full-on electric guitar/bass/drum assault from three world-class players. Tribal Tech fans should enjoy this release, as it reflects a bit of the recent exploratory TT sound featuring Henderson's amazing guitar work. There's little overindulgence here, though. Rather, you sense a collective determination to create an intensity within the arrangements. Smith once again displays his vast array of superior jazz, rock, and funk technique on the kit. He responds in grooving, melodic phrases and drives each track with a "live" drum sound rich in tone (though some double strokes tend to get lost in the mix). VTT seems to bring out the best in Smith from all angles and pushes his abilities to the limit. (Tone Center)

MASTICA '99

Pat Mastelotto (dr, perc), Gum 6 (vcl, bs, cello), Monkey (vcl, gtr, reeds)

Drawing from experience with XTC and King Crimson, crafty drummer Pat Mastelotto somehow finds a middle ground between the two on '99. Full of pop hooks yet way too out there to be truly radio-friendly, this album sprays a mist of ethereal textures over earthy percussion. Mastelotto favors soft, dry drum sounds over cymbal gloss, and thus lays the metals fairly low in the mix. Though he's an able kit player, Pat is an equal-opportunity employer, adding hand drums and other devices to invoke a world-music flavor. At times, crisp bongo rhythms are eclipsed by thundering toms that would be right at home in a samba group. And just when you think you've got a handle on Mastelotto's formula, in comes a vintage drum machine, creating yet another texture. (www.firstworldmusic.com)

DAVID THOMAS AND FOREIGNERS BAY CITY

P.O. Jorgens (dr, perc, vbs), David Thomas (voc), Jorgen Teller (gtr, Cassi), PerQultActa (dr, melodica, slide gtr, bs)

Pere Ubu front man David Thomas is up to his old tricks again: off-key singing and indecipherable ramblings. Still, Thomas's ever-present weirdness doesn't detract from P.O. Jorgens' masterful (if brief) performance on Bay City. Jorgens, a Danish multi-instrumentalist, produces a pitter-patter of percussive sounds, making his playing the most exciting element of this quasi-experimental CD. In the song "15 Seconds" he plays, among other things, bells, woodblocks, and assorted junk to create a "knocking and pinging" potpourri. Unfortunately, this is primarily Thomas's fling, and Jorgensen is under-used. (He doesn't even play on some songs.) It makes you wonder: What would the record be if Jorgens' talents had been employed more often? (Thinly Ear)

LAN XANG HIDDEN GARDENS

Kenny Wollesen (dr), Donny McCaslin (br, bs sax, fl, Tunisian horn, perc), David Binney (al sax, dr, live samples), Scott Coley (bs, perc)

Opening with a subduced electronic soundscape and growing into horn harmonies over brief tomm rumblings, Lan Xang shows itself to be a group with some original ideas. Kenny Wollesen provides a wide variety of feels throughout, as in "Segue," with its abstract swing in 9/8. A broad dynamic range is also demonstrated, ranging from freely musing cymbals under quietly controlled horns in "Trinity Place" to the hard-hitting release against a stunning bass groove in "Mode Four." Wollesen makes his drumming an integral part of the sound of this group's consistently interesting improvisations and compositions. Drawing on a wide range of influences and pitting minimal electronics against modern acoustic improvisation, this is a group to watch. (Naxos Jazz)

THE SWINGIN' NECKBREAKERS THE RETURN OF ROCK

The Swingin' Neckbreakers' latest endeavor, The Return Of Rock, combines generous portions of humor and aggression propelled by the hell-bent-for-leather drumming of John Jorgensen. No fills, no frills. Jorgensen keeps it clean and simple throughout, with an excellent sense of timing and clever use of the kit. He keeps it to tom and snare on the opening track, "So Less," riding on the four and accenting with the crash every measure to keep up the relentless forward movement. Damn the torpedoes and full-steam ahead. (Telstar)

SWING-A-DELIC BOOGIE BOO!

A more classic than modern interpretation of "swing," the drums on Swing-a-Delics Boogie Boo sit low in the mix, swinging just hard enough along with the bass to keep 'em dancing. No crazy fills or bombastic cymbals, drummers Ira Kaye and Andy Burns are the workhorses of the band. With nice vintage sounds, you don't get slammed over the head with the drums and are rewarded with a tasty fill when the moment requires it. (Medamix)

THE PIN-UPS BACKSEAT MEMOIRS

Two drummers share percussive duties on The Pin-Ups' Backseat Memoirs. The CD opens with Jason Finn (ex-Presidents Of The USA) crashing four on the snare and rocking on a great-sounding kit, getting lots of movement and staying on top of the beat with quick hands. You can practically hear him sweat, he's moving so fast. Nothing sloppy here. Geoff Reading has something more of a backbeat flair, with snare fill when the moment requires it. (Telstar)

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SIMON PHILLIPS
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Please check our monthly MD Import column "Madness Across The Water"
Mark Elf Over The Airwaves

Ralph Peterson (dr), Mark Elf (gtr), Jay Leonhart (bs)

In his late-'80s youth, Ralph Peterson was a rambunctious drummer whose explosive phrasing sometimes overshadowed his genuine creativity. Now older and wiser, Peterson can be counted on both to fire a session and perform tastefully. *Over The Airwaves* is a perfect example of the serene storm Peterson has become. Elf is a masterful jazz guitarist, and can match Peterson blow for blow. But this trio is equally lyrical and intuitive on standards like "Love For Sale" and burning originals like "The Cookie Maker." The trio sounds loose at times, but what they lack in unity they make up for in ingenuity. (Jen Bay Records)

Ken Micallef

Basic Drumming by Joel Rothman

level: beginner to intermediate, $14.95

*Basic Drumming* aims to cover it all, and pretty much succeeds. Rothman starts out with basic terminology, then jumps right into fifty pages of reading in quarter and 8th time. Plenty of dynamics, duets, and summaries make it fun, though the absence of tempo markings and a heavy hand on the repeat sign are downsides. The next section deals with the concept of the roll, thoroughly dealing with pressed rolls and double strokes. Section three focuses on basic sticking technique, throwing in accents and the forty international rudiments. By the time a student progresses to section four, he or she is definitely ready to rock. All thirty-nine pages are full of creative grooves, basic fills, and odd time signatures. The remaining two sections tackle jazz drumming and dance beats from around the world. The last page has a mini musical dictionary, a nice touch. With smooth progression and a clean presentation, Rothman's 193-page book gives the reader much more than basic drumming. (J.R. Publications, 170 NE 33rd St, Ft Lauderdale, FL 33334, tel: [954] 563-1844)

Fran Azzarto

Stevie Wonder Innervisions

Stevie Wonder (all inst), guests

In 1971, Stevie Wonder became the first Motown artist to take complete control of his own recordings. Besides writing some amazing albums (it wasn't just about "songs" anymore), Stevie played most—and often all—the instruments himself. And not just adequately. He was monstrous. *Innervisions* (1973) might be the pinnacle of Wonder's career. "Living For The City," "Don't You Worry 'Bout A Thing," and "Higher Ground" are masterworks of socially conscious groove music. And what a mind Stevie has behind the kit. You could fill a dance floor with his hi-hat work alone. His shuffle on "Higher Ground" makes it the funkiest version ever recorded. And like Paul McCartney, Steve Winwood, Todd Rundgren, and other songwriting icons who've played drums on their own records, Stevie's patterns are wonderfully quirky yet completely appropriate. A landmark in modern music-making. (Motown)

Adam Budofsky

Voicing ideas from your head to your feet shouldn’t get hung up on pedals that slip, bind or squeak.

MAPEX. P980 Dual Link Stroke Adjustment
15-Minute Warm-Ups For Drums by Mat Marucci

Drum Set Dailies/Rudimental Applications For Drum Set

by Frank Briggs

level: beginner to intermediate, $5.95 each (book/CD set)

The first two drum additions to Mel Bay's Qwikguide series, these handy (5 1/2x8) booklets include a CD that provides an audio example of each of the exercises. It's great to be able to hear what the written music is supposed to sound like, especially for beginning students. Contents pages clearly state the duration, CD track, and corresponding page number of each exercise.

15-Minute Warm-Ups is a set of fifteen exercises for snare drum that can be expanded from a practice pad to a full set of drums, or from quick warm-up to serious practice. From singles to doubles and from flams to rolls, the exercises include various meter changes, a variety of rudiments, and brief written explanations. On the twenty-six-minute CD, Marucci expands on the descriptions and demonstrates what the exercises sound like.

Drum Set Dailies is an introduction to paradiddle applications on the drumset, including rock, funk, fusion, and Latin styles. The eighty-seven exercises—each a measure of four beats with a repeat sign—are grouped under the four paradiddle stickings (with a redundant "1 e & ah 2 e..." throughout). On the twenty-three-minute CD, each exercise is announced without further explanation, clicked off, and repeated four times. A few of the exercises are played twice, others are played once slowly and then repeated at tempo.

This series is a clever way to inspire practice. Keep an eye out for further additions. (Mel Bay)

Lauren Vogel Weiss

Correction

August's Critique included a review of Ignacio Berroa's book Rhythms For Drum Set. The title of that book is in fact Groovin' In Clave, and it is distributed by Carl Fischer.
Tony Medeiros

Thirty-one-year-old Tony Medeiros is no stranger to drum contests. In 1998 he won Thoroughbred Music's "Best Unsigned Drummer" contest. That earned him a spot at Thoroughbred's 1998 Florida Drum Expo. More recently, his exciting videotaped performance wowed the editors at *Modern Drummer*. They promptly named him the winner of *MD*'s Undiscovered Drummer contest in the over-eighteen division, and invited him to perform at *MD*'s Festival Weekend.

Tony is a graduate of Morehead State University in Kentucky. From there he went directly into professional music. He's currently playing with jazz violinist Cathy Morris in an original contemporary Latin/jazz/pop group. He also plays with an original fusion project called The Rhythm Section. And in December of 1998 he released an impressive solo CD called *Monkey Business*. (Mp3 preview files and ordering information are available on Tony's Web site: www.tonymedeiros.com.)

Tony is also making a name for himself as a clinician, based on some pretty advanced concepts he's been working on. "I've been discussing the development of doubles with the left foot," he says, "using what I call 'the universal technique'. It's a single stroke yielding two notes as well as two tones—open and closed. This technique is very useful for playing hi-hat/cowbell foot patterns, as well as double bass. It allows the player to play a rhythm (like cacas-cara) with the left foot, then switch to playing rudimental double bass without learning a second technique."

Tony plays and endorses Yamaha drums, Pro-Mark sticks, and Remo heads. He uses a variety of cymbals "depending on what fits the situation." He also makes great use of LP Gajate brackets fitted with LP Jam Blocks and cowbells.

As for goals, Tony says, "Like everyone else, I want to be a star. I hope to tour on a larger scale and touch as many people with my music as possible. Doing clinics is an added perk, because I love to "hang" and talk with other drummers. But the real thrill for me is connecting with an audience. I'm not a 'less is more' kind of player. My personal version of that would be: 'What's appropriate is more.'"

Mike D'Angelo

This is actually Mike D'Angelo's second appearance in *MD*. The first was in the June 1990 Readers' Platform, where Mike was shown avidly reading a copy of *MD*—while wearing a diaper. (Mike was two years old at the time.) His proud dad wrote: "I thought you might like to see *MD*'s future."

Prophetic words, indeed. Ten years later Michael's videotaped drum solo won the under-eighteen division of *MD*'s Undiscovered Drummer Contest, and earned him an invitation to perform at *MD*'s Festival Weekend 2000.

Mike's drumming career began when he picked up a couple of coffee stirrers in a restaurant and proceeded to play a respectable closed roll on the table. (This also took place when Mike was two.) From then on he shadowed his father, Phil, who is a drummer as well. "He used to come with me on Friday afternoons to help me set up for my weekend gigs," recalls Phil. "While I was setting up, he was playing the kit."

This was all the more remarkable, because Phil sets up left-handed. "Mike started to learn that way," says Phil, "even though he's a right-handed player. It probably helped him develop his left side. But he soon graduated to his own right-handed kit, and he hasn't stopped since."

Even though he's only twelve, Mike already has some significant drumming accomplishments to his credit. He's won two MARS Music "Hot Sticks Drum Challenges," he's played in the pit for high school and college musicals, he's been first-chair percussionist for All-District and All-State Honors Bands, and he's been selected for the Charlotte Junior Youth Symphony. He studies with Rick Dior (Charlotte Symphony percussionist) and attends Northwest School Of The Arts, where he performs with the jazz band, concert band, and wind ensemble. He also plays with his own band, Cosmik.

Mike cites Dave Weckl, Carter Beauford, Louie Bellson, and Tony Williams among his favorite drummers. He enjoys playing jazz, big band, Latin, funk, and pop music—all of which he does equally well. He plays a Pearl birch kit and/or a Yamaha DTX-PRESS electronic kit, with Zildjian cymbals, Yamaha double pedals, DW single pedals, and Vic Firth sticks. His goals include attending a major music college, then backing a major pop artist. Britney...are you listening?
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Making Money At The School Level

by Tommy Thomas

Interested in making some extra money, expanding your abilities, making professional contacts, and doing something well worth the effort? How about teaching the drum line at your local high school?

There are many high school bands that compete at marching band contests, play at football games, march in parades, and perform concerts. These band programs usually have a director who pushes his kids to perform their best, and who goes out of his way to build a program that will produce fine young musicians. Unfortunately, many of these band directors just don't have the time or the training to nurture and cultivate their drum students. And since you do have experience in the field, you could very easily fit into the program.

Doing The Job

Your job is to get these kids to reach their playing potential. Though it sounds easy, it's anything but. First, high school is not what it used to be, so you'll have your work cut out for you. The good news is, if someone is in the band program, it's usually because they want to be, which makes it somewhat easier to get them to perform at their best.

First you'll need to see what the group is capable of doing, collectively and individually. Show them some exercises you're familiar with, and see who catches on and who has difficulty. Something you might also want to do is expose your students to drum corps and college marching band drum lines. When they understand what those drum lines have accomplished, it gives them something to compare themselves to and work towards. Maybe even encourage them to check out the local university or college percussion ensembles. Whatever you choose to do, you need to show them what's out there. This is a great way to get them to perform with purpose.

Once you've laid the foundation, you can concentrate on what it's going to take to get them where they want to go. You'll certainly need to stress that they must practice and do whatever else it takes to become special. If you're truly able to get this point across, you're likely to see results almost immediately. To facilitate this you have to get everyone to strive toward the same goal. It's essential to build a strong sense of teamwork among the individual players. Each member of the drum line must understand the need to pull his or her own weight.

Hopefully, you'll have at least one student who's unusually gifted. If you do, you need to challenge this individual with extra things to work on, as well as added responsibility. He or she could become the section leader of the drum line, helping you to write out parts and teach them to the other members of the group.

In contrast, you may have some players who are slow learners, or who are simply not as talented as the others. You'll need to be much more patient with these students. Encourage and reward them often when they deserve it. Boosting their confidence will make them want to continue to work hard. Suggest that they take private
lessons, which will not only increase their own skills but will also improve the drum line overall. Whatever means you use to motivate these students, treat them with respect and dignity.

**Negotiating A Fee**

In most cases, the money used to fund a school band’s activities is raised by the band parents or boosters. This is required to supplement the dwindling amount of money allotted each year by the school board. With that said, you can see that working with a drum line definitely isn’t a get-rich-quick opportunity.

Normally, a marching band will rehearse a certain number of days per week. Rehearsals are usually held after school, and they last about two or three hours. If you figure on $10 per hour at two hours per rehearsal, two rehearsals per week and four weeks per month, you’d probably be looking at $150 to $200 per month for starters. Of course, this figure can vary depending upon how many rehearsals you actually attend, your rate per hour, and how much money is available. Keep in mind that you could actually make a good deal more if your experience and reputation warrant it (especially if you work with more than one school).

Whatever financial arrangements you make, be sure to get it all in writing. This will serve as a guideline for what’s expected of you, and for what you can expect in return. It also demonstrates that you’re professional enough to make a contractual commitment.

**Other Options And Side Benefits**

Teaching fees aren’t the only ways to make extra money doing this. Usually, a band director will arrange the wind and/or brass instrument parts for the field show. But very few band directors are skilled at arranging for percussion. You could write the drum parts and collect a writing or arranging fee. Generally, $100 per arrangement is reasonable, though this could also vary.

If you have the ability to relate to the youngsters in the drum line on a one-on-one basis, you might want to consider offering private lessons. Besides the extra income, you’ll also be directly increasing the talent pool you have to work with at school. (And you’ll be building your own teaching practice.)

Another benefit you’ll receive from teaching at the high school level is the professional contacts you’re likely to make. Maintaining a good relationship with the band director may lead to similar arrangements with other schools. The contacts you’ll make may help you to pick up even more weekend gigs. And working closely with your local music store or drum shop for the equipment needs of your students could lead to extra discounts on gear for yourself.

Perhaps the greatest reward you’ll receive for working with a young drum line is the knowledge that you’ve influenced the players to progress further than they would have on their own. You’ll also find out a lot about yourself and your own abilities as an instructor. Above all else, you’ll know that you may have been the single most positive influence in the lives of many young players, because you taught them something about themselves. You’ll be making a difference.
Paul Wertico

"Scared" In The Recording Studio

Story by Ted Bonar • Photos by Barbara Wertico
"I feel that we were able to capture the magic because of the overdubbing and layering, not in spite of it."

This is not your mother's jazz recording!

Nor was it meant to be. Paul Wertico, long known as Pat Metheny's first-rate cymbal man, is still bursting at the seams over his new CD, *Don't Be Scared Anymore* (Premonition/Blue Note), just as he was when he put his dense, intense music to tape during the summer of 1999.

"I've always enjoyed doing solo projects over the years," explains Wertico. "But my trio [including Eric Hochberg on bass and John Moulder on guitar] has really gelled over the last few years. The time was perfect to go in the studio and really do something to document that chemistry."

Paul says the circumstances surrounding the sessions were ideal. Wertico didn't have a label at the time, and therefore was not beholden to anyone's vision other than his own. Things really gelled when Reelsounds Studio owner Mark Brunner invited Paul to come over to record and test out his new recording facility. "To have total freedom to try things out in the studio was a joy and a luxury," Paul says. "I was able to make the record I wanted."

In addition to tapping into that creative freedom, Wertico's vision was to utilize his three-piece band to create a thick, intense wall of music that would satisfy his vast musical influences. "People know me as a cymbal guy with a nice touch, and that's great. But on this record I wanted to finally capture my total musical vision, not just as a drummer, but also as a bandleader, producer, and composer. That includes some really intense stuff."

Another variable in the mix was the fact that the other two members of Wertico's trio are incredibly busy working musicians. "In one sense, I had a great luxury because of the artistic freedom," he says. "In another sense, my hand was slightly forced into an unorthodox recording method because of the time constraints of my band." Consequently, The Paul Wertico Trio broke about every rule in the jazz book while making this record.
We pretty much did everything in an unorthodox manner, Paul says. "Out of the twelve tunes, only four were cut with everybody playing simultaneously—and even then we couldn't see each other." What's even more fascinating is the fact that roughly eighty percent was played to a click track and...gasp...overdubbed!

"The drum parts went down first," Wertico explains. "I would go into the studio and set up a click and a shaker part, and I'd just go for it on the drums. I've always been at home playing to a click, and I feel that laying the drum parts down in this manner gave me more freedom to produce all the other parts later. I've always been a form-oriented player, and since I knew the forms of the songs, as well as the vibe I was going for, after I decided how many choruses would be improvised, I just had to play along with the song in my mind.

"The click tracks were used extensively to keep everything solid," Paul continues, "as well as to have something to play along with. I also wanted to be able to give my full attention to the overdubbing of guitar and bass parts after the initial drum parts went down. I wanted to add layers and layers of sound, so using the click ensured that the basic tracks had perfect meter in which to build off of. I felt confident that since the music was so adventurous, and that as a band we play so well together, the outcome wouldn't be stiff at all."

Mark Brunner, who also engineered the
session (and who is a drummer as well), brings up a fascinating point about the layering process and his view of the songs as they developed. "When Paul would play his tracks—and all but one of the drum tracks was a first take—I really had no idea what was happening, because I couldn't hear the song. The click and the drum track didn't mean anything to me. But as the guitar and bass parts added their layers and solos, the track—and the perfection of the tempos—slowly revealed themselves to me. It was really a fascinating way to learn how important tempos are to the excitement and success of a song and how Paul found those tempos with just a click. I also couldn't believe that Paul could solo over the form in odd meters with just a click, such as the over-the-top 'free-form over the form' soloing in five at the beginning and end of 'African Sunset.'"

The click helped keep things together and fresh because the musicians embraced it rather than fought with it. Wertico explains, "The tracks have plenty of life even with the click. We were doing odd meters and building choruses all over this record, but the click just helped free me to make the music I wanted because I imagined so many things for this record."

Wertico is referring not only to the multiple bass and guitar parts, but also the many layers of percussion he added to some cuts after recording the initial drum tracks.

Regarding the record's opening track, "Clybourne Strut," Paul states, "That song is really the perfect opening track. It's kind of a second-line New Orleans groove, but since I'm from Chicago, not New Orleans, it's sort of a 'second-city second-line.' After laying down the drum track, I overdubbed three passes of percussion—timbales, tuned cowbells, and two metal studs that I found in the trash at the studio. I went for an almost Brazilian feel for the percussion parts."

Brunner expands on that topic: "This record was built from the ground up. On some tracks we have four separate bass layers, tons of guitar layers, multiple percussion tracks—and it all started with the drums leading the way with the click. The tracks would start very simply, and by the end, we had a kind of a 3-D trio record."

So how did Wertico ensure that the music would be exciting? One of the number-one rules of jazz, one would think, is that the band needs to play off one another in order to improvise collectively. "Live is great, no doubt, but we had already done a live record [Live In Warsaw! (Igmod)], so I knew that we knew how to do that. On this record, I really wanted to nail the drum parts and then add the different elements."

"As a drummer," Paul continues, "I know what I'm looking for out of a track, and I was able to go into the studio and really focus my energies on the feel, groove, and shape of the track before anyone else even came in. This was actually a huge benefit, because then, as the producer of the record, I was able to totally devote myself to making the rest of the record as interesting and exciting as it could possibly be when everyone added their parts."

This unusual approach to jazz is probably best exemplified in the making of the
song "Long Journey's End." Brunner explains, "That song was brutal. Paul started playing a repetitive pattern, a la Ed Blackwell, on drums with an upbeat click. Before he started tracking he had told me just to keep running the tape and that he was going to see how long he could play the pattern. He laid down this absolutely blasting repetitive pattern for six-plus minutes. It was incredible." Wertico elaborates, 'I was hoping to go for about three or four minutes, but I got into the groove and just kept hammering away.' After the drum track was completed, the fun began with the percussion, bass, and guitar parts.

"We went right to the edge on that one," Wertico continues. "I layered two percussion tracks, then we added four bass tracks, with poor Eric having to play some pretty challenging repetitive bass parts—both on upright and electric, some with electronic processing—for six minutes. Finally, it was time to add the guitar. John's such an emotional player, and he really got into it on this one. For the ending he looked up at me, and I was so excited about what he was playing that I just waved to him to keep going. The guitar sound is really distorted and thick."

Wertico finished off by layering some huge cymbal swells to add to the cacophony, overlapping a chaotic track during the few moments of relative calm. And indeed, the track is exciting and enduring. Upon listening, it's obvious that the layering approach worked to the benefit of the music. The effect is that after six and a half minutes of outright onslaught with the full band, the guitar picks up the gauntlet for another minute or so with some of the best feedback soloing this side of Hendrix. "I wanted that kind of intensity for that piece, as well as a trance-like quality. When you listen to the track with headphones on, it feels like you're racing through time and space. I feel that we were able to capture the magic because of the overdubbing and layering, not in spite of it."

However, even the tracks that weren't layered still weren't done "traditionally" in any sense. On the quirky, Ornette Coleman-inspired waltz, "Just A Little Tuna," while playing the track as a group live to a click, the trio purposely included "mistakes." "I wanted a light-hearted piece to relieve all this intensity," Paul recalls, "something that had some humor. On one fill I dropped my stick on a microphone, on some others I fall completely out of time. I really wanted that drums-falling-down-stairs effect. Again, because it was recorded to a click, I think the track is even more effective."

Brunner also adds, chuckling, "One of the purposes of this project was to satisfy Paul's twisted mind. What was beautiful was that he made a point to include everything that felt or sounded good, despite whether or not there was a technical difficulty. There was never a time where the vibe was sacrificed for the technique. It was always the other way around."

"You know, as a result of this process I generally had less to worry about," Paul explains with a laugh. "I didn't have to worry at all about whether I was locked with the bass!" What came out of this multi-layered jazz process is very definitely a locked feel.

The craziest of all the tunes is the final Live at a click, the trio purposely included "mistakes." "I wanted a light-hearted piece to relieve all this intensity," Paul recalls, "something that had some humor. On one fill I dropped my stick on a microphone, on some others I fall completely out of time. I really wanted that drums-falling-down-stairs effect. Again, because it was recorded to a click, I think the track is even more effective."

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track of the album, "Testament." It has five totally different parts, and was completely cut 'n' pasted together. Says Brunner, 'I didn't know where this song was going when they first started laying that down. We recorded chunks of music and put them next to each other. In one of the sections where they were recording live, Paul was playing a very rock-type pattern with all sorts of kicks and arrangements, and he gave me a cue to cut off the click. Then they went into this outside, free-form soloing section with double bass licks and skronky guitar all over the place. That part went from being totally in time to totally 'outside.' It wasn't until we mastered the CD that all the parts came together for me as a song. When all the parts were pasted together, it just worked beautifully."

According to Wertico, "excitement" was a main ingredient in the recording process. "Everyone involved was excited and believed in this project," Paul asserts, "and we were all committed to this process of trying to make a jazz record differently. There wasn't one moment when I questioned the decision to record in this manner. Because of the talent and the vibe of the people involved, I knew that we would come up with something special. The process felt free and liberating. That's what makes this music so rewarding to me."

Brunner explains another vital ingredient to making this record: "We had fun. The sessions were so relaxed. The record was recorded over a three-week period, averaging four nights a week of studio time. But that was all after-hours and not nearly all of it was intense playing. We relaxed, ate, drank, smoked some cigars. We found the vibe. We took our time making a record fast."

As for the drumming, it's inspiring. Wertico's long-held reputation as a cymbal master will not be tarnished with this effort, but the overall sound is more versatile and intense—and, well, louder than some may expect. Unique grooves, a slow bluesy backbeat, solos in five and seven, free-form excursions, double bass drum flurries, overdubbed percussion, and a Bonham-type hip-hop groove are all included here. "I grew up listening to everything I could get my hands on," Paul says, "from solo drum recordings by Andrew Cyrille, to Hendrix and Keith Moon, to lots of ethnic music, to the heyday of fusion, to Steve Reich—you name it. Oasis is one of my favorite bands right now—that wall-of-sound from the guitars! I wanted some of all of that on this album."

Wertico obviously loves his music and the process of creating. "A lot of people know me for my flat-ride playing," he says. "I love playing that way. But as I look back on this record, I set up my flat ride for the recording...and didn't play it once!"

But after all of the rule breaking during the making of this album, Wertico still managed to follow a few. "I broke some rules about how to make a jazz record from a technical recording aspect. But the rules of music stay. Vibe. Feeling. Chemistry. Space. Intensity. Commitment. It's all there."

All except the flat ride, that is.
Focused Drumming

The Central Element

by Ron Hefner

We drummers read a lot in MD about the importance of laying down a consistent groove, staying "in the pocket," and using the "less is more" approach. The main idea behind these concepts is to maintain a clear focus on the tune being played, thereby supporting the music and taking the focus away from all our amazing licks.

If you’re looking for an easy-to-comprehend example of this kind of focus, check out any recording with Al Jackson on it. The man frequently played entire tunes without one lick or fill from beginning to end. "Green Onions," the first hit record for Booker T. and the MG’s, features Jackson playing the simplest possible quarter-note shuffle and never deviating from it. Talk about focus!

That’s all well and good. But does this mean a drummer is unfocused if he plays fills, stretches the time, or plays over the bar line? Do we judge drummers like Elvin Jones as unfocused? Of course not. But here is where we can discover a different approach to the idea of focus—and it’s a lot more than just keeping time.

I recently commented to a fellow musician that the older we get, the fewer notes we seem to play. Many young drummers have a tendency to play as many notes as possible in a given space. I guess it’s just youthful exuberance, and I was certainly guilty of it when I started out. However, as we mature as musicians, we have more of a tendency to make each note mean something. And that is a central idea of focused drumming: It’s not necessarily about how many notes you play; it’s about their significance, their “weight.”

Nobody would accuse Elvin Jones of under-playing, yet he is one of the most focused drummers in jazz. Check out his drumming on John Coltrane’s Crescent. The tunes, like "Wise One" and "Lonnie's Lament," are relaxed and have a lot of space, so you can really hear Elvin doing his rolling-triplet interaction between the snare, toms, and bass. Yet the unflagging ride cymbal is always there, driving the band. He’s not playing simplistically, but there is a strong sense of focus throughout.

Elvin’s steady ride cymbal beat is not the only focused element in his playing, however. He also maintains a larger, overall focus on McCoy Tyner’s piano comping. Tyner uses a loose, irregularly spaced comping style that gives a certain buoyancy to the music. Elvin complements it by punching and jabbing the accents in perfect accord. This illustrates an element of focus that a lot of drummers fail to consider: the rhythmic “big picture.” It’s one thing to keep a steady beat. It’s another to grasp and embellish the rhythmic approach of the other musicians. Doing so really creates a group personality and identity. You’ll find the same group “focus” on recordings of Miles Davis’s groups with Philly Joe Jones and Tony Williams.

Dynamic independence is another element of focus that some drummers seem oblivious to. This is different from rhythmic independence, but it’s just as important, especially in jazz. Many less-than-accomplished drummers don’t have the ability to play a loud accent on the snare or bass drum without varying the cymbal at the same time. When playing straight-ahead jazz, this interrupts the consistency of the ride beat.

One of my early teachers got me over this bad habit by making me play a jazz cymbal beat at a moderate volume, then having me intersperse loud, staccato accents on the snare and bass without changing the dynamic level of the ride cymbal. The overall result was a clearer focus on the main ingredient: the time.

This doesn’t mean you always have to keep a perfectly steady dynamic level on the cymbal. In fact, a lot of modern playing doesn’t call for that. But the ability to do so is a facet of independence a lot of players have neglected, and it can really create a focused effect.

What about music that’s “out of the mainstream,” like free music or avant-garde jazz? Examples would be Cecil Taylor’s recordings with Andrew Cyrille, or Coltrane’s "Ascension" with Elvin. How can the idea of focus apply to these seemingly free-blowing sessions? There’s often no metric time and no apparent key signature.

Music like this requires a thematic listening approach for the drummer. What is the overall feeling, the overall mood, and how do these things shift and vary? In this kind of music, the players are creating a portrait together, kind of like a group painting. Therefore a group focus exists, just as much as in mainstream time-playing. Here, the drummer needs to listen and respond to the...
"colors" the other players are putting on the canvas.

Once I grasped this concept I realized that the "free" music of Taylor and Coltrane wasn't the random chaos it seemed to be. It was just focused on something other than traditional metric division, melody, and harmony. But the focus was still there.

One way to define something is to consider what it is not. Go down the street and listen to the drummer who seemingly plays every lick he knows in the space of thirty-two bars. Or listen to a drummer who seems to have competent time, but lacks the "edge" and propulsion that make the music come alive. Drummers like these can teach us a lot, because they're not listening. They're focused on themselves—or on something else entirely—rather than on the requirements of the music. The results are clearly audible.

Focus is a central element of drumming. All the great drummers have it. Players like Al Jackson, Elvin Jones, and Andrew Cyrille share the common bond of focus, in spite of their disparate styles. That fact is a testament to the magic of our art.
I wish that I could have known Ulysses Grant Leedy. Unfortunately, he died nineteen years before I was born. But I have been lucky enough to own a number of his drums and to meet his four children and most of his grandchildren.

The Leedy Manufacturing Company was the first giant in the drum business. I got interested in them for two reasons. First, Leedy Manufacturing started in my hometown of Indianapolis, and operated there from 1895 to 1929. In that time frame, U.G. Leedy and his employees designed and built products that were the envy of the world.

In my opinion, the only worthy competitor Leedy faced during their heyday was Ludwig & Ludwig, of Chicago. From conversations I’ve had with Bill Ludwig Jr. and the four Leedy children, I’ve learned that there was respect between these rivals. The Ludwig brothers had even sold Leedy products before they became full-line manufacturers on their own.

The Leedy factory in Indianapolis grew to over 100,000 square feet under one roof. Much of that building still exists. If only the walls could talk! The famous players and bandleaders who went there to pick out the latest snares, toms, or mallet instruments were pictured in the renowned Leedy Topics, a special-interest newsletter with pictures. The Topics (like the Ludwig Drummer) was a combination sales tool and public-relations piece sent at no charge to drummers and drum shops.

A story I heard from Mrs. Dorothy Helgessen, one of Mr. Leedy’s daughters, was probably not in the Topics. U.G. came...
home exasperated one day. It seems that during World War I the company had shipped marching drums to the US Army, and an officer called to say that twenty-five percent of them were "rejects." Mr. Leedy stated that his company didn't make rejects. The officer went on to suggest that if a certain amount of money were paid to him, he would make sure that all drums passed inspection. U.G. told the officer to send back every one of the drums.

By 1929, after his thirty-fourth year as a manufacturer, U.G. Leedy decided to sell his company to C.G. Conn, the Elkhart, Indiana manufacturer of band instruments. The Leedy machinery was moved to Elkhart, and a new era of manufacturing took place. Besides Leedy, Conn later bought Ludwig & Ludwig. Many years later they also owned Slingerland.

How successful was U.G. Leedy? He sold his company to Conn for $950,000 in cash—right before the stock market crash of 1929. Deposit that money in an interest-bearing account at 6% and look forward seventy-one years. It comes to more than $50,000,000 in today's dollars.

Sadly, U.G. was a sick man. He had developed heart disease and would live only two years after the sale. But in that time he started a new company called L&S. Formally the initials stood for "Leedy & Sons," but informally the company became known as Leedy & Strupe. That's because it was run by U.G.'s son, E.H. Leedy, along with former Leedy engineer Cecil Strupe. The original plan for "Leedy & Sons" was also opposed by Conn's lawyers.

Ultimately U.G.'s death made it a moot point.

The second reason I became interested in learning about Leedy was because of my former neighbor, the late Del Rowlison. He was a retired gentleman when I was a teenager. One day he came to look at my new Ludwig set. He told me they were nice, but that "the finest drums ever made were Leedys." Twenty-four years passed before I bought a Leedy and discovered first-hand why Mr. Rowlison had such loyalty. (Of course, I still cherish my Ludwigs.)

Every year more enthusiasts discover the rich history of Leedy Manufacturing and look for Leedy, Indianapolis drums. In future installments, I'll discuss the most popular Leedy snares: the solid-wood-shell Tudor and the metal Floating Head. But the drum featured this month is a beautiful Black Elite 4x14 that was built between 1925 and 1929. The metal is brass. The hoops, strainer, rods, and lugs are finished in Nobby Gold, a Leedy term for a golden or copper-colored lacquer put on brass. The one-piece shell has black nickel plating, and is hand-engraved. A customer could also choose White or Gold Elite models, which featured non-engraved enamel-coated shells.

Leedy Elites will bring between $500 and $2,000 in today's market, depending on their sizes and conditions. Here's a hint on how to clean them (and Ludwig Black Beauties) straight from an old Leedy catalog: Use 3 In 1 Oil. It works, honest!
Creating Your Own Mini Bass Drum

Story by Chap Ostrander
Photos by Jim Esposito

When I started drumming, drumkits came with a 20" or 22" bass drum. (I think it was the law.) In the ensuing years, the standard moved to 22", 24", and even larger as rock drummers looked for more depth and power. True, most companies offered 18" bass drums as part of what were termed "jazz" kits. But even in the catalogs they looked like toys compared to the majority of bass drums.

However, not too long ago I had the opportunity to review the ultra-compact Yamaha HipGig kit, with its killer 20x16 bass drum (that's 16" diameter and 20" deep). I was definitely impressed, but I didn't have a personal need for such a drum until a few weeks later.

I was playing a local production of Oliver!, using only a bass drum, a snare, and a few toys. I had taken the bass drum from my teaching kit in my basement. I didn't want to take the bass drum from my regular gigging kit (which is stored elsewhere), because I'm paranoid about forgetting to return parts I've removed. Whenever I do that, I invariably find out the hard way: on a gig, two hours from home, at eleven o'clock at night. (Sound familiar?)

Well, Saturday morning came along, and I wandered downstairs to make sure that everything was ready for the student who was due to arrive in about fifteen minutes. Doh. No bass drum! I had cymbal stands with multi-clamps, a hi-hat, a bass pedal, a snare on a stand, and a stack of toms. What was I going to do on such short notice?

Necessity Is The Mother...

I thought back to my HipGig review. If a 16" bass drum could work for a club gig, it should certainly work for a basement drum lesson. My student's lesson consisted of bass and snare patterns, so I really just needed those two components. I set up the snare and the stool, then laid the 16x16 floor tom on its side and put a bass drum pedal up against one head. The beater of the pedal struck the head only about 1" from the top rim, but we got through the lesson.

This episode got me to thinking how nice it would be to have a great-sounding compact bass drum that I could afford. Then it dawned on me that I might have the means to construct my own. All I really needed was a way to suspend a floor tom so that the bass pedal's beater struck the head in the middle.

Parts Is Parts

I've been a drummer for a long time, and a pack rat for even longer. So I have bits and pieces of hardware left over from years of collecting, hoarding, and repairing old stands and equipment. When I must replace...
an old item with a new one, I keep any old parts that are still good. You never know when you’ll need a spare wing nut or leg on short notice. The point is I had lots of raw material to work with on my mini bass drum project.

When the floor tom was laid down on its side, bass-drum fashion, its leg brackets were positioned at 12:00, 4:00, and 8:00 around the shell. It was obvious that L-shaped legs—like those on old Ludwig bass drums—could be inserted into two of the leg brackets to serve as bass drum spurs. To my great joy I had a pair like that lying around! I fitted them into the brackets, and they held up the front of the drum the necessary five inches.

But what about the batter side, where I needed to raise the drum to line up with a bass pedal—and, hopefully, secure the pedal to the drum? The answer came in the form of a shell-mountable cymbal arm; the kind that is "L"-shaped and adjustable in height. Usually the L-arm is a knurled 3/8" steel rod, with the height adjustment made by sliding a hollow upper section with a tilter on top. This type of cymbal arm mounts on a bass drum shell by fitting into a bracket that is very similar to a floor-tom leg bracket.

I had a spare floor-tom leg bracket, so I drilled the necessary holes and mounted it to the floor-tom shell, about 5" from the top head (now the "bass drum batter head"). Keeping the "leg brackets" positioned at 4:00 and 8:00, I mounted this holder on the bottom of the drum. I then slid the long end of the L-arm into the mount from the back, with the shorter end pointing straight down toward the floor. (The short end of my L-arm happened to be 5" long, but if you find one that’s longer, this length can be trimmed easily with a hack saw.) I purchased a rubber foot for this new "leg" at a drum shop.

The last problem was figuring out how to attach the pedal to the drum. The solution came from the lumber and framing section of The Home Depot. It’s called a "T-strap." Measuring 6"x6", it’s shaped like a flat metal "T" with holes conveniently placed at the ends. The top part of the T is clamped by the pedal. The lower part extends under the drum, where the short leg of the L-arm conveniently goes through the hole.

I also wanted to find something to prevent metal-to-metal contact between the back leg and the T-strap. Various sizes of rubber or nylon tubing that I found at the local hardware store were either too small or too big to cover the leg and still pass through the hole in the strap. I finally discovered that a piece of electrical shrink-wrap tubing ($0.60) covered the rod and let it pass through the T-strap. (I didn’t even have to shrink it.)

If you don’t have a supply of old parts lying around, you’ll need to buy them. But even a new shell-mount bracket only costs around $10, while an L-shaped arm goes for $15 or so. And if you don’t have any Ludwig-style bass-drum legs, you can easily make them yourself. A six-foot length of 3/8" steel rod costs about $8 at The Home Depot. This would be more than enough to make the legs in front and the support in the rear. Just buy a length of rod, cut the pieces to proper length, and bend them in a vise.

**And Voila!**

So now I had my mini bass drum, which became the foundation of a complete compact kit. I added 8x8 and 10x12 toms in the "rack" and "floor" positions, utilizing multi-clamps attached to cymbal stands. A piccolo snare completed the setup and kept everything to scale.
With the help of Bob Yerby at Remo I outfitted the 16" drum with PowerStroke 3 heads: a clear head on the batter side and a white one on the front. The acoustic nature of the PS3s helped get a satisfactorily deep sound from the drum. I won't pretend that a bass drum of this size can produce the full depth of a larger drum. But in relation to everything else on the kit, I think it sounds fine. And in any quiet or intimate setting where one would even consider using a compact kit, it would do the job admirably.

The nice thing about this "convertible" drum is the flexibility it gives me. With the drum in "bass drum" mode, I can use the remaining floor-tom leg bracket (now on the top) to hold another L-arm for a cymbal. When I switch the drum back to a floor tom for use with my full-size kit, I employ the "leg" mount I added to the side of the drum to mount a splash cymbal, cowbell, or drumset tambourine.

I know that there are some commercially produced bass drum cradles and lifters on the market. I'm sure that they work well, and they undoubtedly enhance the resonance and projection of the small bass drums that they support. I just don't have the extra cash to buy one. Plus a bass-drum cradle would be another thing to carry.

What I came up with is cheap, unobtrusive, and easy to fabricate. It also allows me to place the drum in its usual case. It doesn't interfere with the sound or portability of the drum, and it gives me an accessory holder as well. Such a deal!

...into a self-supported mini bass drum.
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"Talent does what it wants; genius does what it can. A beautiful quote by Edgar Varèse. It holds true for drummers as well as for cymbalsmiths."
In Memoriam

Buzzy Drootin

Buzzy Drootin, a Russian-born jazz drummer whose career spanned a half-century, died May 21 at the Actors Fund Retirement and Nursing Home in Englewood, New Jersey. He was eighty.

Having moved from Russia to America at the age of five, Drootin began drumming as a teenager. By 1940 he was touring with The Jess Stacy All-Stars, a band that included Buck Clayton and Lee Wiley. From 1947 to 1951 Drootin was the house drummer at Eddie Condon’s in New York City. He also worked clubs in Chicago and Boston, with musicians like Jimmy McPartland and Doc Cheatham.

In the 1950s and ‘60s Drootin recorded with Tommy Dorsey, Bobby Hackett, and The Dukes Of Dixieland. He played with the Dixieland All-Stars, the Jazz Giants, and the Newport All-Stars while touring extensively in the US and Europe. In 1973 he formed The Drootin Brothers Jazz Band with his brother AL Buzzy continued to play into the 1980s, backing up musicians like Wild Bill Davison and Chuck Hedges at the Los Angeles Classic Jazz Festival.

Drums And Sounds 2000

Europe’s biggest drum festival took place Saturday and Sunday, April 22 and 23, in the City Hall of Lahnstein, Germany. Jurgen Mader and his team from the Drums Only store in Koblenz organized the event.

Things got under way on Saturday with a series of master classes conducted by Joe Porcaro and Dave Weckl. A competition was also held, giving drummers in two age groups (under sixteen and sixteen to twenty-five) the chance to win such prizes as a trip to the Los Angeles Music Academy and a complete Sonor S-Class Pro drumkit.

On Sunday morning, over 2,000 visitors from seventeen countries gathered to enjoy the show. But first came the surprise presentation of a Lifetime Achievement Award to Joe Porcaro in recognition of his career as an author, educator, and performer.

The day’s performances began with drummer Ralf Gustke and the Yamaha Workshop Band: Marcus Deml on guitar and Frank Itt on bass.

The grooves established by this talented trio prepared the audience for the next heavy set: Curt Bisquera and Abe Laboriel Jr. These studio giants played with a drum computer and against it, soloed individually and together, and generally had tremendous fun on stage.

Dirk Brand and his band had no easy job following Curt and Abe. But Brand’s rap and jungle grooves were more than convincing, and soon had the audience “in the pocket.”

Horacio “El Negro” Hernandez was up next. Sounding like a three-person rhythm group, he received several standing ovations, and could not leave the stage without playing the day’s first encore.

Horacio was followed by Simon Phillips, fresh from appearances at the Frankfurt Music Fair and a successful workshop tour through Germany. Simon played songs from his solo album, with help from Gary Willis on bass and Ray Russel and Andy Timmons on guitar.

Will Calhoun and Doug Wimbish proved to be the absolute rhythm group: a two-man band that didn’t need any other musician. Their performance combined funky grooves and world rhythms, taking the audience in yet another direction.

It’s hard to find new words to describe the performance of the Dave Weckl Band. “Tight,” “original,” “grooving,” “dynamic”...they’ve all been used before. Suffice it to say that this band is unique, and they proved...
it yet again to the cheering audience.

Following an act like Dave's requires self-assurance, terrific ability, and extreme creativity. Fortunately, Vinnie Colaiuta has all of that in abundance. He also had a top band: Mike Landau, David Garfield, and Neil Stubenhaus. These four crack musicians presented a collection of seamless grooves and outstanding solos. Only after several encores and lots of applause did the audience allow them to leave the stage.

The next Drums & Sounds festival will take place in 2002, at the Rhein Mosel Hall in Koblenz. It will again be scheduled on the Easter weekend.

Text and photos by Heinz Kronberger

What are some of your favorite recorded grooves?

If someone wasn't familiar with your drumming, which recording of yours would you recommend they listen to that best represents your playing?
Soundgarden's Superunknown.

What records/books did you use when you first started playing?

What's in your CD player at the moment?
The Roots' Things Fall Apart, Os Mutantes' E Sens Cometas No Pais Do Baurets, Skip Spence's Our, Jeff Buckley's Sketches For My Sweetheart The Drunk, Nick Drake's Pink Moon, and Captain Beefheart's box set, Grow Fins.

Who influenced your drumming when you first started playing? Did you study books or records?
The James Brown and Memphis drummers influenced me as a player. I never studied drums. I learned by playing in local nightclubs.
The 2000 Frankfurt Music Fair this past April was the site of the first-ever MIPA (Musikmesse International Press Award) presentation. More than twenty music-related magazines from over ten countries combined to nominate and vote on the best new products in the music industry. The awards were divided into various instrumental and technical categories, with only those magazines dedicated to those categories voting for the candidates.

*Modern Drummer* participated in the percussion-product voting, along with such international drum magazines as *Batteur* (France), *Rhythm* (UK), *Sticks* (Germany), *Slagwerkkrant* (The Netherlands), and *Drums* (Japan). When the votes were tallied, the winners were as follows:

**Acoustic Drums**: Pearl Masterworks Series  
**Cymbals**: Zildjian K Constantinople  
**Drum Hardware**: Mapex Janus Pedal  
**Drumhead Line**: Remo  
**Drumstick Line**: Pro-Mark  
**Electronic Drums**: Yamaha DTXPRESS  
**Percussion Instrument**: Meinl Luis Conte Signature Timbales  
**Small Effect Percussion**: Remo Springdrums
Atlanta Vintage & Custom Drum Show
9/16 — Second annual show. Buy, sell, or trade. Ludwig snare raffle, door prizes, drum clinics, booths with John Aldridge and Not So Modern Drummer, and Ludwig Industries. Vintage drum exhibit by collector Bill Pace. For more information contact Billy Jeansonne, (770) 438-0844, billyjeansonne@earthlink.net, atlantavintagedrums.com.

Batuka Music Festival 2000
9/11-12 — Presented by The Instituto de Bateria Vera Figueiredo. Performances by Mike Portnoy and Dom Famularo. V Drummers National Contest, Sao Paulo, Brazil. For more information, www. verafigueiredo.com.br or email batuka@osite.com.br.

Alessandra Belloni
8/25 — Tambourine and Frame Drums workshop, Accord, NY, contact Leaf Miller (914) 247-4053.

Ignacio Berroa

Ndugu Chancler
11/15-18 — PASIC 2000, Dallas, TX.

CMJ Music Marathon 2000
10/19-22 — Exhibit, music business topics on radio promotion, artist management, digital downloading, Web-casting, film soundtracks, and more. Night-time performances by more than a thousand bands in fifty of New York’s greatest venues. New York Hilton and Towers, New York City. For more information and registration, contact CMJ events department, (877) 461-0640 or email cmjmarathon@cmj.com.

Evelyn Glennie
8/19 — Performance, Suffolk, UK

Rodney Holmes/Santana
8/18 — Milwaukee, WI.
8/19 — Chicago, IL.
8/20 — Indianapolis, IN.
8/22 — Minneapolis, MN.

Hollywood Custom & Vintage Drum Show
10/7 — Performance by Bun E. Carlos, 2:30 P.M. 10/8 — Performance by John “JR” Robinson, 2:30 p.m. Both days will feature giveaways and sweepstakes, including DW/Craviotto custom snares, custom drums from Remo, and numerous vintage drums. Remo Percussion Center, 7308 Coldwater Canyon, North Hollywood, CA. Contact Kerry Crutchfield, (323) 461-0640 or email drumcrutch@aol.com.

Interactive Music Expo
10/3-4 — Keynote/conference, exhibits, Los Angeles Convention Center, Los Angeles, CA. For info & registration call (203) 256-5759 or surf to www.imusicxpo.com.

Journees De La Percussion
11/2-4 — Artists include Evelyn Glennie, Neil Grover, Billy Cobham, Luis Conte, Bob Hansen, Dom Famularo, John Bergamo, Giovanni Hidalgo, and many more. France Festival, Paris, France. Contact 33 (0) 1 40 53 99 49.

Percussion from OZ
10/21 — Workshops, competitions, and performances. University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia. Contact Amy Valnet, 61 407 659 070, fax 61 (0) 3 9966 19.

Thelonious Monk Institute Of Jazz
9/10-11 — Afro-Latin Hand Drum Competition. Audition tapes are due by July 5. Judges include Candido, Giovanni Hidalgo, Milton Cardona, Babatunde Olatunji, Poncho Sanchez, Big Black, and Ray Barretto, artistic director. Johnny Almendra and his band will back up the semifinalist. Kennedy Center, Washington, DC. For application and details visit www.monkinstitute.com or call (202)364-0176.

Montreal Drum Festival 2000
11/2-4 — Nathaniel Townsley, Zoro, Richie Garcia, Gregg Bissonette, Tommy Igoe, Alex Acuna, and more, Montreal, Canada.
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LIMP BIZKIT'S JOHN OTTO

REFLECTIONS WITH ANTON FIG

CHAD WACKERMAN INSIDE TRACK

NASHEET WAITS FOLLOWING IN FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS

PLUS A TRIBUTE TO TITO PUENTE

For Festival Weekend 2000—the biggest and best ever—Modern Drummer says thanks to:

Our Artists:
Don Brewer, Vinnie Colaiuta (with David Garfield, Michael Landau, and Neil Zaza), Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez and Marc Quiñones (with Michael Brecker, Pillar O' Dara, and John Patitucci), Akira lombo, Hilary Jones, Paul Leim, Dave Lombardo, Billy Ward, Jeff Watts (with Paul Bollenback, David Budway, James Genus, and Craig Handy), and Street Beats (Brandon Allison, Carson Carr, Neal Davis, Shane Gouldney, and Drew Mena)

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We couldn't have done it without you!
Reddy Staehle is an authentic, down-home, New Orleans drummer/percussionist. He's worked with a number of notable N'awlins artists, including the legendary Dr. John. In fact, Freddy worked on the Doctor's 1972 classic, _Gumbo_.

Soon after the _Gumbo_ session, Freddy began assembling the enormous homemade percussion rig shown here, which he calls "The Winger Tree." It contains various drums and cymbals, as well as tambourines, wind chimes, bells, funnels, tree limbs, and other unusual items. With this assembly Freddy can create everything from a swampy drum groove to the sounds of buzzing insects and birds rustling in trees.

In a slight departure for the _Drumkit Of The Month_ department, you can actually hear Freddy's unusual rig as well as see it. It's featured on New Orleans trumpeter Charlie Miller's latest recording, _Fonk Horn_. (Charlie has been Dr. John's musical director/arranger, a jazz instructor at Loyola University, and a sideman with Thelonious Monk, Chuck Mangione, B.B. King, and others.) The CD is available on Miller's Web site: www.icorp.net/cmill/. That's Freddy peeking through his Winger Tree in the photo at right. Charlie Miller (with trumpet) is shown with Freddy in the photo below.
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SensiTone Series
Our SensiTone Series snare drums are the perfect balance of heritage and technology. Their Custom Alloy beaded metal shell, available in both Brass and Steel, helps focus response, attack and projection, and creates outstanding body and tonal clarity. SensiTone is everything you've always wanted a metal snare drum to be...plus a whole, whole, lot more.

Masters Series
Masters snare drums are the finest wood shell snare drums on the market today. Whether you choose 4 or 6 ply 100% Maple, or our 6 ply 100% Birch shell, your Masters Series snare drum will provide the warmth, attack and tone that has made this series legendary.

Piccolo, Effects & Soprano Series
If you need the crisp, brilliant attack and tight sound that only a Soprano drum can provide, or if you simply want to add a few different snare sounds and variety to your kit, then look no further than Pearl's wide selection of Soprano, Effects and Soprano drums. Choose between Brass, Steel or Maple shells and a vast array of sizes.

Free Floating System
For over a decade, our FFS Snare Drums have been among the most widely used in the world. Their floating design removes all hardware from the shell, allowing the natural voice of your choice of shell material to resonate completely unrestricted.

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Steve Ferrone
8.5"x14" Black Nickel plated Brass shell, tube lugs and 24K gold plated hoops and accents.

Marvin "Smitty" Smith
4"x14" Copper Shell, 24K Gold plated hardware. A warm, full bodied drum with maximum cut.

Dennis Chambers
5.5"x14" Power Piccolo 8 ply Maple shell, "MultiTrace" throw-off.

Omar Hakim
5.5"x12" Afican Mahogany shell, "Glasstone" style throw-off.

Chad Smith
5.5"x14" Black Nickel Steel shell for an aggressive, true "Rock" Snare Drum sound.

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Need a perfect drum groove for a soon-to-be hit song? Or the spark to ignite the bands behind the likes of Barbra Streisand, Clint Black or Michael Jackson? John "JR" Robinson has been the main man to call for these do or die sessions for longer than the life span of most bands.

And his red-hot new JR Jazzer Model Zildjian Artist Series Drumstick helps provide the fuel.

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