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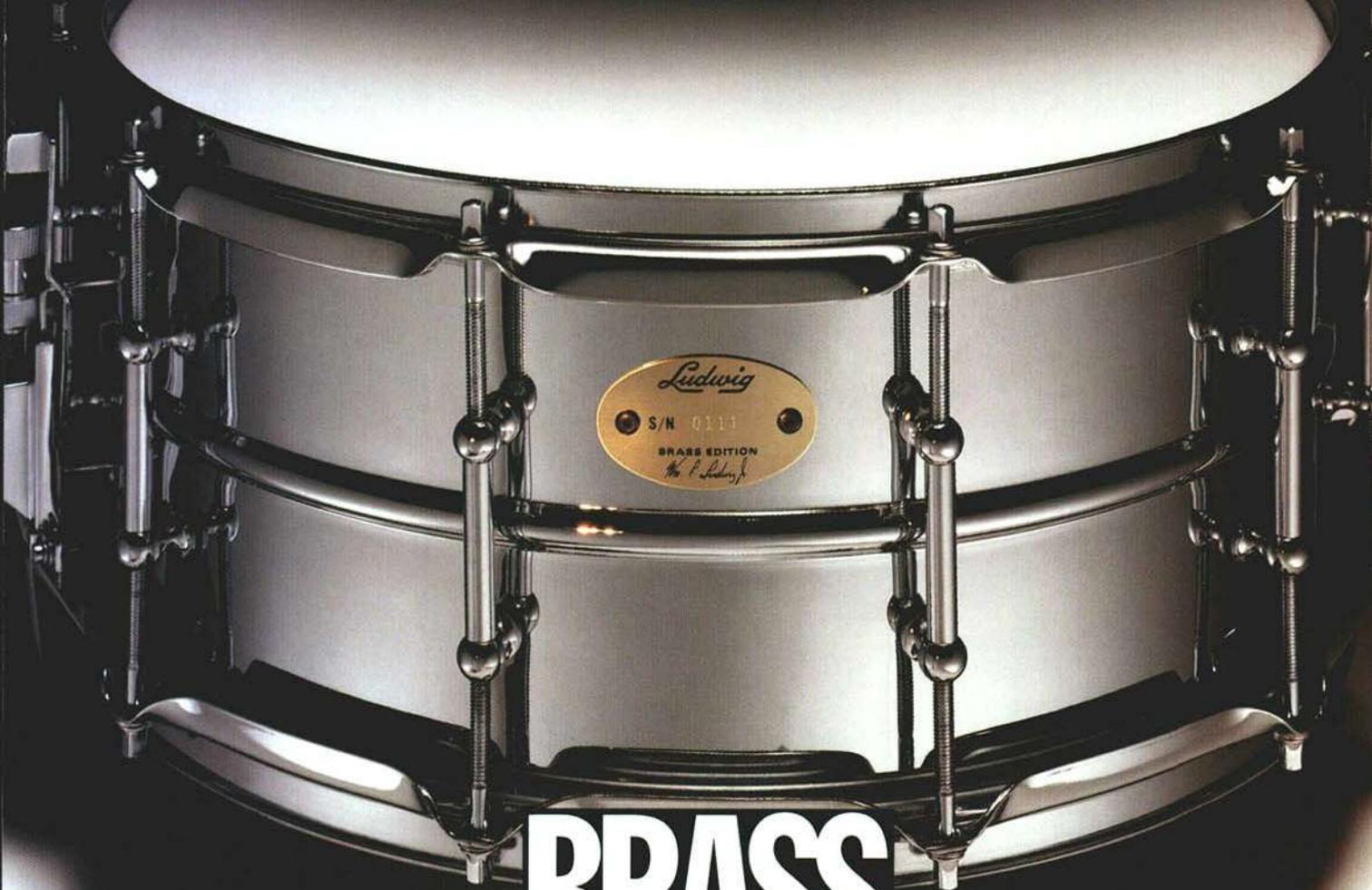
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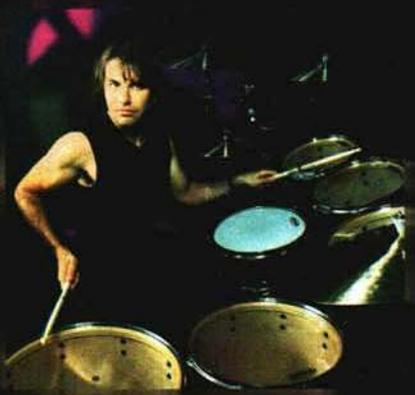
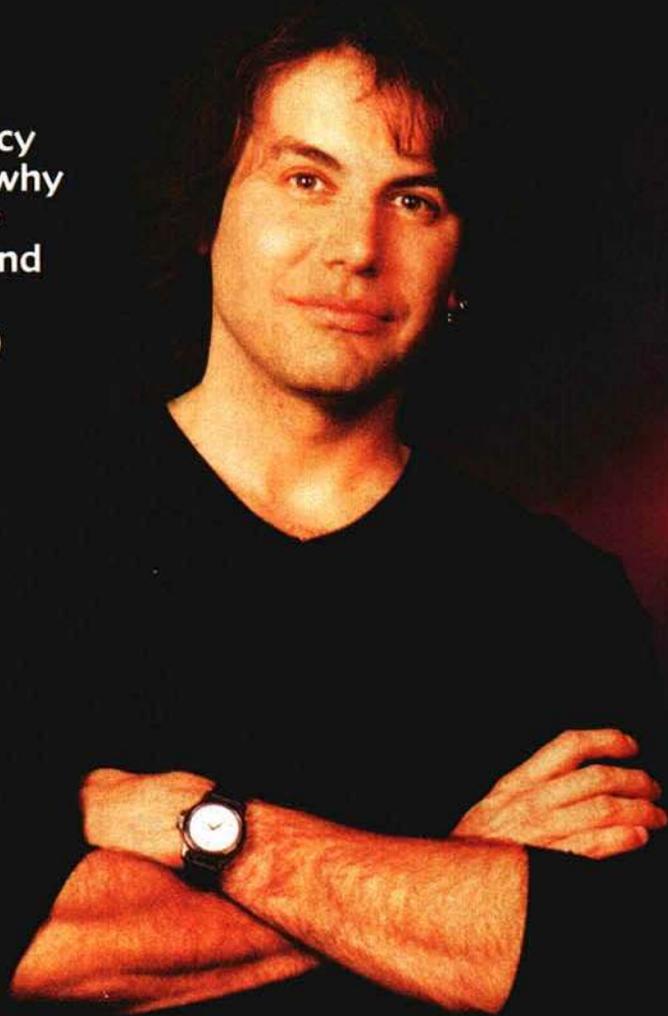
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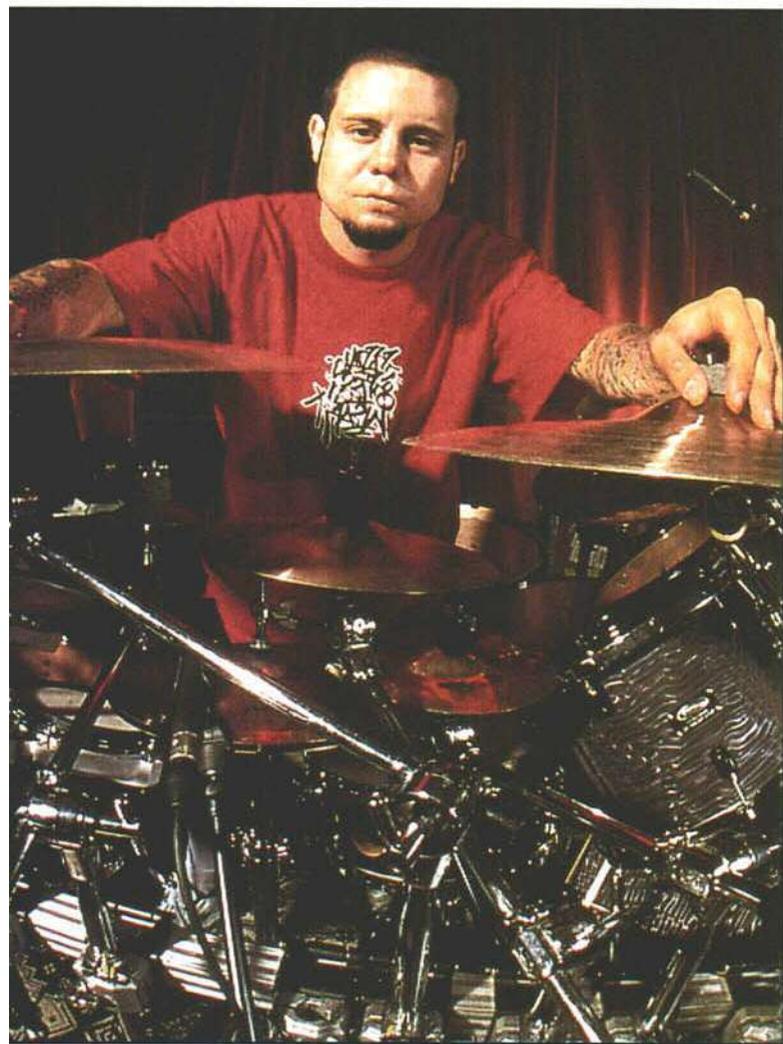
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Drumming In The Real World

Whooo-wheee! My head is *spinning*. One of the perks/responsibilities of being an *MD* editor is attending concerts. In fact, we're invited to a lot of them—at venues ranging from tiny clubs to major arenas. (We try to make it out to as many as we can.) Well, I just finished up seeing a *string* of shows—five national acts and one local band—all in the same week. Besides feeling completely whipped and having constant ringing in the ears (a little louder than usual!), it occurred to me that there's nothing better for a drummer than seeing *another* drummer play live.

"Duh, like we didn't know that?"

Sure, it seems like an obvious point. But today, with CDs, educational and concert videos, DVDs, the Internet, music cable channels, and other such mediums piping music into the home, it might be easy for someone to pop on the couch with remote in hand, forgetting the value of actually

being in the same room with a performer.

Live performance is where you get the real goods. (Every other format can be edited and massaged in ways to "paint" a performance in the best light.) More importantly, you can learn so much every time you see another drummer play.

I keep certain things in mind when I check out drummers live: What did they play that worked? What didn't? How much intensity did they play with? How fluid were their motions? What kind of touch did they have? Were they sensitive to dynamic changes? What kind of musical interaction did they have with the other musicians? And, did what the drummer play *mean* something?

Another area I think about is how the audience is affected by what a drummer plays. Was the audience really captured by the groove? Did the fills add excitement without losing the feel? Was the drummer

a good performer, or did his actions look bad—or worse, embarrassing?

Of course, there's the topic of gear. I know it's not cool to some people, but I enjoy checking out drummers' kits. What brands, models, and sizes of drums and cymbals are they using? Does the gear fit the music? What about positioning? Is the kit spread out, or compact? Does the drummer look comfortable at the kit—why, or why not?

Believe me, I do realize that ticket prices are high, and in a lot of cases there are potential negative factors at live events that can make them less enjoyable. But there's so much to be learned—and so many ideas to be *borrowed*—that just don't come from any other source. C'mon, watching and listening to someone perform live is what it's all about. That's drumming in the real world.

Bill Miller

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Jimmy Chamberlin



I'd like to thank you for the inspiring article on Jimmy Chamberlin in your August 2000 issue. As a drummer of over twenty years—and a recovering addict—I find

Jimmy's words and persistence quite encouraging. I'm now approaching two years of sobriety, and it is my earnest hope to return to playing in the near future. I can never express in words how instrumental your magazine has been in helping to light my path on the way to recovery. Kudos to Mr. Chamberlin, and my thanks to *Modern Drummer* for the constant inspiration and education.

Gary Gochenour
Omaha, NE

Tito Puente

The Earth stood still this past week when I heard of the passing of El Maestro, Tito Puente. The contribution and example of this man in the world of music was monumental. Like the absolute silence that prevails when a giant sequoia falls in the forest, so is the sense of loss I feel at Tito's passing. Yet the soul, creativity, exuberance, and class that he brought to music-making will live forever. Tito exemplified everything that is meant by the phrase "beyond categorization." His quest for creative growth and challenge shone as an example of what it meant to be a true artist. We were truly blessed to have such a one among us for so long. Muchas gracias por todos, Tito.

Alan Cook
via Internet

Editor's note: MD's tribute to "The King Of The Mambo" appears on page 76 of this issue.

Note From Bermuda

I greatly appreciate the update on me in the August 2000 issue! However, the article says, "While Jon's been playing on the same Impact kit since 1985, he also

employs a Kurzweil K2000 sampler to help reproduce the 'proper' sounds." This might give some people the impression that I am triggering drum sounds. The fact is that my drums are miked for their *acoustic* sounds, and at no time do they trigger any other sound. They already make the "proper" sounds, and that's what

the audience hears at every concert. The sampler is only there for special effects, some percussion, and a few sequences, all played or started from a drumKAT. Thanks for letting me clarify that.

Jon "Bermuda" Schwartz
Los Angeles, CA

Zac Hanson

For umpteen years I've seen readers piss and moan about the drummers who have graced your pages, saying that drummers like Tommy Lee (just for one example) have no right to be mentioned in the same sentence as our drumming forefathers, let alone to appear on the cover. But I've always tried to keep an open mind. It's my feeling that such drummers do have a place in our drumming community, no matter what their antics are off stage—not to mention their chops or lack thereof. Drumming is an art and a form of free expression.

However, artistic expression must come from *some* level of ability. So this is where I must vent *my* disapproval. Zac Hanson simply lacks such ability. As a result, he has not come *close* to proving himself and earning the right to be in a drum publication.

Over a year ago, when my two teenage daughters were inundating me with the Hansons, I thought to myself, "There's one kid you'll never see in *MD*." But now I receive the August issue, and not only do I see his name on the cover, but also a two-page spread listing him as up-and-coming! Up-and-coming *what*?

Zac Hanson can't record his own material, and he can barely cut it on stage. Yet you have him in the same pages as drummers like Terri Lyne Carrington, Dave Weckl, Virgil Donati, Mike Portnoy, and Rod Morgenstein. What were you editors thinking?

Mark T. Petitta
via Internet

I am a fifteen-year-old girl who has been drumming for about three years. Zac Hanson has been my inspiration and drumming role model since I first picked up the sticks. I wouldn't even be playing today (left-handed too, like Zac) if it wasn't for him.

I want to thank you for your recent article on Zac. I'm glad that he is starting to be recognized as an up-and-coming drummer, especially by the best drum magazine on the market. Zac may not be a great drummer at this point. But for being fourteen and only playing for a few years, he has an enormous amount of passion for his instrument, and he is always improving. Isn't that what drumming is all about?

Lauren Moscovitch
via Internet

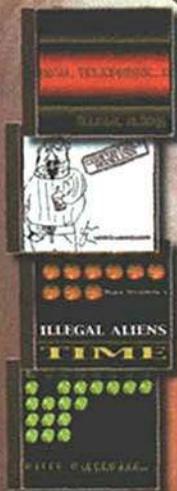
Just so everyone has all the correct info: I played drums on four songs (accidentally uncredited) on Hanson's *Middle Of Nowhere*, including the singles "MMMBop" and "I Will Come To You."

Nick Vincent
Studio City, CA

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Drumkit Of The Month

I've been reading *Modern Drummer* for many years, and each month I look to the back page in anticipation of the *Drumkit Of The Month*. After my usual initial reaction ("Is that what I *think* it is?") I let my eyes roam to the text to read about how some guy's dad ran a junkyard, and so he welded a drumset out of old Buick fenders. The text typically continues with the guy's attempt to justify the absurdity of his creation by stating that all of the drunks in the local bar compliment the sound he gets out of it.

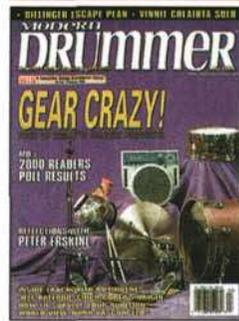
I have a few favorites that I'll always remember, such as the guy who spent a small fortune on stainless steel for his shells, only to discover that his creation was the most obnoxious-sounding drumset a person could own. (One more lesson on the importance of bearing edges.) And I remember the guy who had everything *including* the kitchen sink. I still like to imagine him trying to explain to his wife why he really *needs* that fifth hi-hat, even though it's so far away from his throne that he can't reach it without getting up.

Occasionally, of course, I find a real

gem, one that makes me want to take my hat off and say, "Now *that's* a drumkit!" Bobby Standridge's Soup Can Kit in your August issue has got to be the crown jewel. It's imaginative, unique, and professionally done. Someone should market it. I'd buy it.

Lowell Parker
Dallas, TX

Nickel Drumworks Strainer



The July issue review of Rocket Shells snare drums indicated that because the Nickel Drumworks strainers fitted to the drums are made of "plastic" (sic), they could be flimsy. Your reviewers might not be familiar with the characteristics of modern engineered plastics. The molded parts are actually made of a polycarbonate material used for motorcycle and hockey helmets, as well as for bullet-proof glass. The flexibility of the material—which your reviewer perceived as flimsy—actually

gives it greater impact strength. The use of this material for my snare strainers is borne out by the fact that I've had only three failures in the more than 10,000 units out there to date.

If the authors of the review would like some more detailed information on engineered plastics, I would be happy to provide it.

Greg Nickel
Nickel Drumworks
Austin, TX

Comments On Clinics

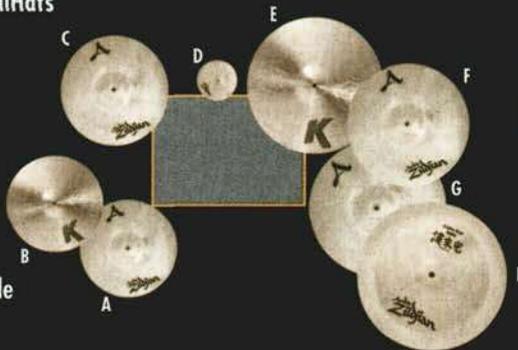
I agree with Robert Coxon, who said in his *Teachers' Forum* article on clinics in your July 2000 issue: "Still rare, however, is the clinic where the artist is articulate and where something other than pure technique is offered to those in attendance." Rare, indeed...but it does happen.

I attended an Alex Acuna drum clinic recently, and I was amazed at Alex's combination of teaching ability and playing skill. Alex is an example of the rare artist who takes time to communicate *and* educate, with feeling, wit, and style. I came away with useful knowledge that I can

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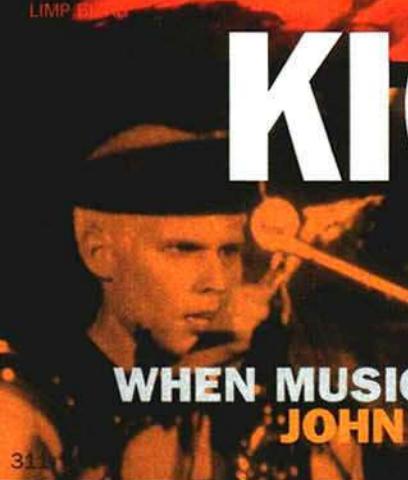
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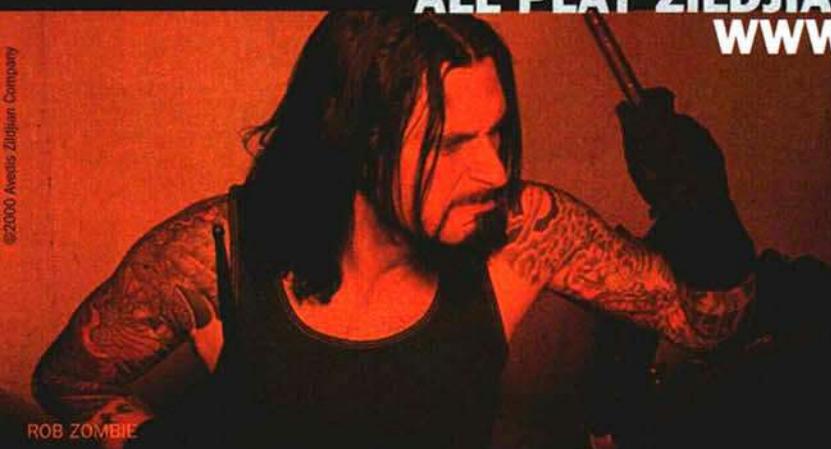
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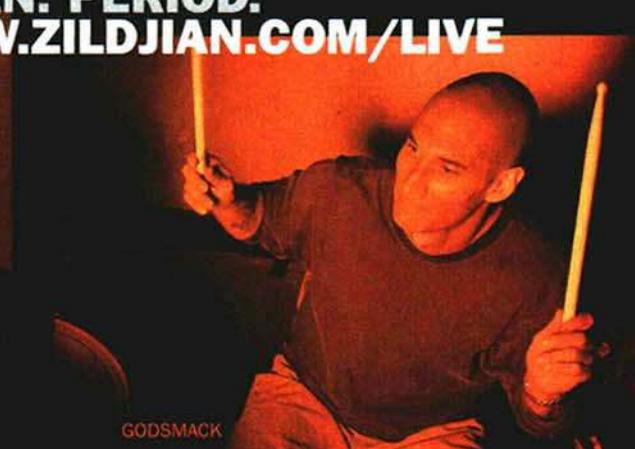
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I also want to thank you for the article about me by Billie Hanes in the July issue *Update* section. Great job!

Tommy Perkins
via Internet

I recently attended a jazz concert featuring the heavily touted (at least in *MD* articles and endorsement ads) Cindy Blackman, along with the veteran all-star Billy Hart. Experience, listening, and groove (Mr. Hart) came out well in front of chops and bluster (Ms. Blackman). Mr. Hart's first few measures of soul-stirring, undeniable groove erased the disappointment I felt after listening to forty-five minutes of Ms. Blackman's bombardment of rolls, cymbal crashes, and tom hits.

I mean no disrespect to Ms. Blackman, who played some figures I could only dream of pulling off. However, drumming that detracts (and distracts) from the main point—to play a musical composition as a unit—does the music and the musicians a disservice.

The point? Young drummers should take

the "industry hype" with a *boulder* of salt, and Ms. Blackman should display her considerable talents with more taste and discrimination. The study in contrasts I witnessed showed how a drummer should support the music, not employ the music as a platform to show off his or her individual ability.

James Dugan
Hanover, PA

Don't Hesitate To Share Your Ideas

Here's a little story I've wanted to share with *MD*'s readers for a long time. I'm a long-time drummer, but an engineer by profession. On occasion I've had ideas on how to add another dimension to drum hardware. Seven years ago I developed an idea to drive a double bass drum pedal from the hi-hat pedal. I drew up the necessary detail drawings, and had this great fantasy of presenting them to a drum hardware manufacturer one day. Secrecy prevailed for fear of someone copying the idea. But that's as far as it went.

My wife constantly reminded me that I should do something with my Combo

Pedal (that was my name for it). But I thought I had plenty of time. As it turned out, I had seven years, because two months ago I opened *Modern Drummer* magazine to see a full-page ad showing "my" idea brought to fruition by Mapex as the Janus pedal. I understand that it has already won awards as the most innovative hardware item of the year.

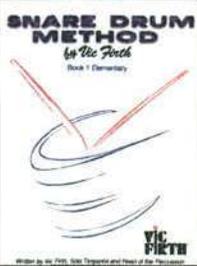
If you have ideas, *get them out there*. Don't wait for the pros. It's not the money that's important. It's the feeling that we, too, can help improve the quality of our equipment and our playing environment.

Geoff Worthington
Issaquah, WA

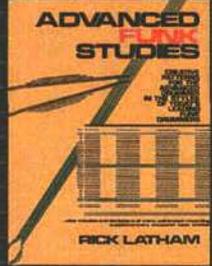
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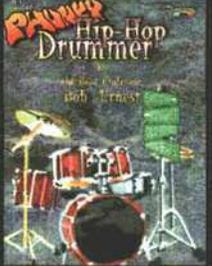




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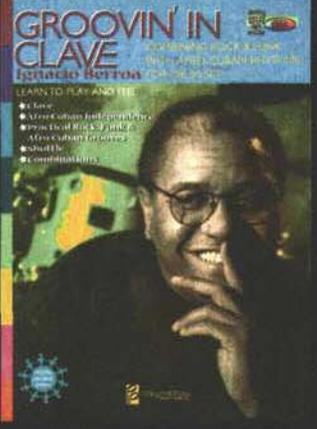
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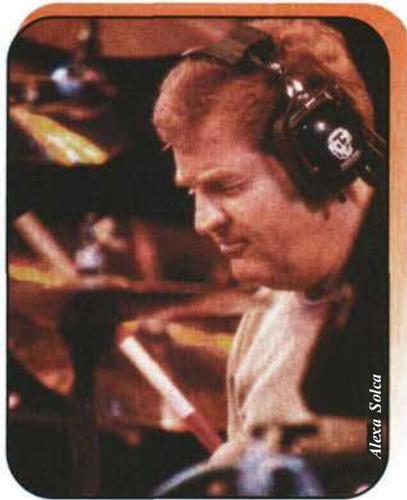
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Under The Hood With **Paul Leim**



Q I'm a big fan of your playing, and of today's country music in general. My band is now rehearsing "Under The Hood" from Billy Ray Cyrus's newest CD. I'm not sure if I should approach the beat as a train beat (alternating strokes on the snare between the right and left hand), or if I should play it more straightforward (tapping 8th notes on the snare with the right hand

and playing on 2 and 4 with the left). I feel that I can get the best drive to the song by using a straightforward beat, but the train beat gives it a more relaxed and grooving feel. How did you play this song?

Also, could you discuss what went into that track in terms of drum sound, heads, tuning, miking, and the use of sound effects like triggering, reverb, gates/compressors, etc.? This will be very helpful to me, because I'm trying to get my drum sound to be as good as possible.

Geir
Norway, via Internet

A Thank you for your question. "Under The Hood" was written by Big Al Anderson. Many of Al's songs have that Louisiana style, which is sort of a half-shuffle feel (or "lazy 8ths," as we like to call it). This feel is a ball to play because it's so loose and swampy.

The sticking can be done in either of two ways. The right hand can play the 8th-note half-shuffle while the left plays backbeats,

or you can alternate the left and right hands (similar to a "train beat," as you mentioned.) To some degree, the tempo of the song and your proficiency at either or both techniques would dictate your choice. I played the feel alternating my left and right hands in order to have the flexibility of accenting 8th-note fills within the groove.

The snare I used was a 3"-deep maple drum that Yamaha's chief drum designer, Hagi, made for me. It's bright, fat, and very sensitive. I used a Remo Ambassador head, cranked tight. There is no triggered sound mixed with the snare on that song. Reverb and compression would have been up to the mixing engineer weeks after we cut the song. However, we did use some room mic's in the tracking room while we were recording. They're mixed in to create the ambiance you hear on the song. By the way, that was the session in which I did the sound-pressure-level test I talked about in my April '99 *MD* interview.

Congratulations on doing what it takes to get better. Good luck and God bless.

Style Tips From **Russ Miller**

Q I play in a Las Vegas casino, and although I'm playing professionally, I feel like I'm stuck doing the same thing night after night. I've followed your playing for some time, and I'm impressed with how you can play so many styles well. I'd like to learn several other styles, including Afro-Cuban and fusion-jazz. What do you recommend working on?

Also, I saw you recently in concert. You had some sort of device attached to the rim of your snare drum. What was that, and what was its purpose?

Franklin Bell
Las Vegas, NV

A I recommend a few different approaches to learning new styles. First, gaining knowledge on a musical level is crucial. Nothing can replace listening to a given style of music as much as possible. You couldn't speak English if you had never heard it spoken. By listening to recordings of a particular musical style, you'll internalize the nuances and characteristics of that

music that cannot be written in musical notation. The notes are only about 50% of playing something effectively.

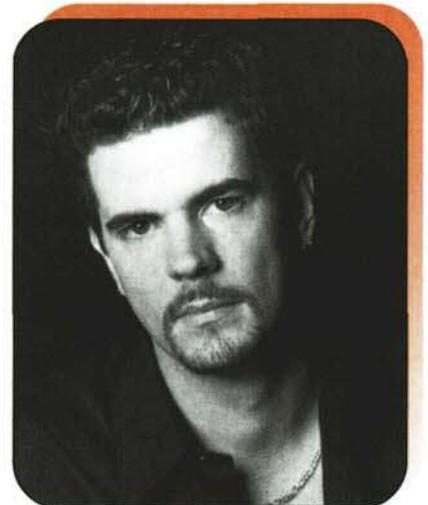
Analyze the fundamentals of what's being played on the drumkit within each particular style. For example, does the time seem to be focused on the kick and snare (as in rock or funk), or is it on the ride cymbal and hi-hat (as in jazz)? Is the style based on specific rhythms voiced on particular instruments (as in Afro-Cuban or Brazilian music)? This information will give you a base from which to work.

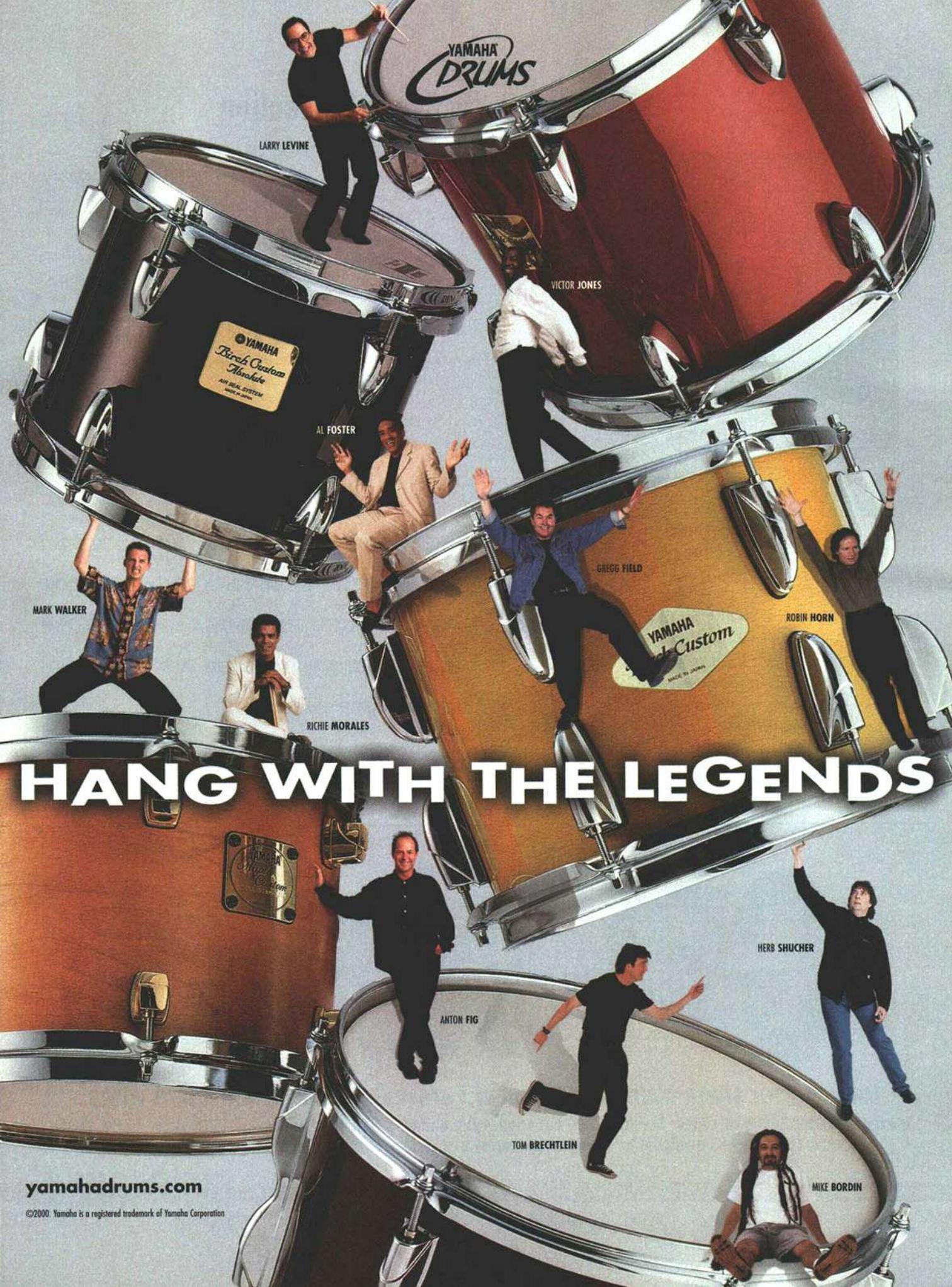
Always develop a solid pulse, and keep focused on dynamic interplay. Use the knowledge gained by listening (along with book/video research) to help you apply the correct specific patterns and musical "attitude" to a given style. Your ears will develop just as your muscles have developed.

There are many books that feature play-along tracks for several musical styles. These are great to practice with until you're ready to play these new styles convincingly in a professional setting.

The device on the side of my snare drum is my signature Groove Wedge from Yamaha. It's a wooden wedge that allows you to get a great-sounding woody cross-stick sound out of any metal-hooped snare drum. It's especially useful on drums that are 13" or smaller in diameter.

Thanks for your questions, and good luck on your musical journey.





LARRY LEVINE

VICTOR JONES

AL FOSTER

GREGG FIELD

MARK WALKER

ROBIN HORN

RICHIE MORALES

HANG WITH THE LEGENDS

HERB SHUCHER

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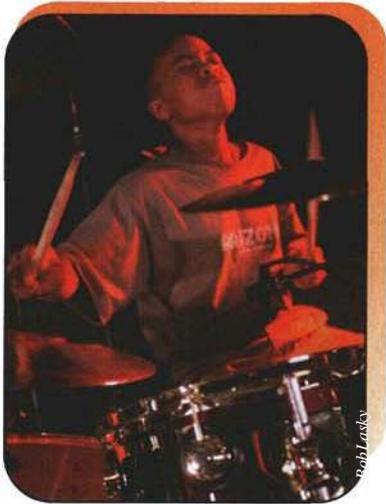
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MIKE BORDIN

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Tony Royster Jr. On Cymbal Selection



Q I really enjoyed your performance on *Modern Drummer's* 10th Anniversary Festival Weekend video. I'm eager to know what your cymbal setup was for that show—especially the China cymbal to your left side.

Joseph Aquinaga
Portage, MI

A Thanks for writing and for the compliments. At the time of the 1997 *MD* Festival I was experimenting with a variety of cymbals. The majority were Zildjian A Customs, including 6", 8", and 10"

splashes, 14", 16", and 17" Projection crashes, and a 20" ride. I also used 13" K hi-hats, 6" and 10" Zil-Bels, and a 17" K China.

I've since changed my cymbal setup pretty drastically. I'm using a wide variety of models, including quite a few more Ks. If you have any more questions, please check out my Web site: www.drumbum.com/tony. In the meantime, keep practicing!

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.

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Carter Beauford, September '98



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Re-Mounting Older Ludwig Toms

Q I have an old set of Ludwig drums, and I'm interested in converting the clip mounts on the toms to a system with more positioning flexibility. And of course I'm not interested in spending a whole lot of money. I would appreciate any information you may provide.

Kim Norton
Athens, GA

A While many tom-mounting systems might be fitted onto your drums, we thought you might like to stay within the Ludwig brand. Ludwig now offers an excellent tom mount that employs L-style mounting arms and a ball & socket positioning system. It's their model LR2980MT, and it comes complete with the base plate. You would also need to refit the toms themselves with the appropriate mounting brackets, which are model P1216D. These items can be ordered from any Ludwig dealer. To obtain a list of dealers on the internet, surf to: www.ludwig-drums.com and click on the "dealers" button.

Holey Hi-Hats

Q I am a new drummer who wants to experiment with new sounds. I've heard of some drummers drilling holes in their bottom hi-hat cymbal. What change

does it make in the sound? Could my Sabian B8 14" hi-hat cymbal handle it okay, or would it crack? I am only fourteen, with no job. I can't afford new hi-hats if I destroy the ones I have.

Austin
via Internet

A Holes are put into some bottom hi-hat cymbals (usually by the manufacturers, rather than by drummers) to prevent airlock and improve on the "chick" sound made when the hi-hats are closed by the foot. The holes do not appreciably affect the basic sound of the cymbals themselves when struck with sticks.

Your Sabian B8 cymbal should be able to withstand a drilling operation, if that operation is done properly and carefully. You can do it yourself *if you* have access to a good drill press. It should not be attempted with a hand-held electric drill. The cymbals should first be struck with a center punch, to establish a "starting point" for the drill bit. The cymbal should be backed with a piece of wood for this operation, and also for the drilling itself. That way you avoid damaging the cymbal as a result of the pressure of the drill.

A medium- to high-speed drill should be used. You don't want to take too long to bore through the cymbal, because the resulting build-up of heat can affect its temper and change its tonality. The hole or holes should be drilled in the cymbal about

one inch out from the edge of the bell, *not* anywhere near the outer edge of the cymbal itself.

If you are not confident about doing this yourself, or if you do not have the proper tools, we suggest you contact a drumshop with a repair department. Or, you can take the cymbal to a well-equipped machine shop. Just be sure that whoever does the job understands the care that must be taken.

Suspended Snare Drums

Q Have you ever seen someone attach their snare to a drum rack instead of using a snare stand? It seems a good way to eliminate yet another hardware stand. But is it practical? If so, how would it be done, and how might it affect the sound of the drum?

Mike DeMuro
via Internet

A There's no mechanical reason preventing such a setup. The upper section of a snare stand (the basket and down tube) can certainly be fitted into a rack clamp, with the tube coming off the rack horizontally (or close to it). The only limitation to this would be whether or not the stand's down tube was long enough to reach from the drum's playing position to the rack.

However, we can think of three reasons why most drummers who use racks *don't* mount their snares this way.

1. Even if the snare stand's down tube is long enough, fitting the stand onto the rack

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Tommy Lee (Methods Of Mayhem)
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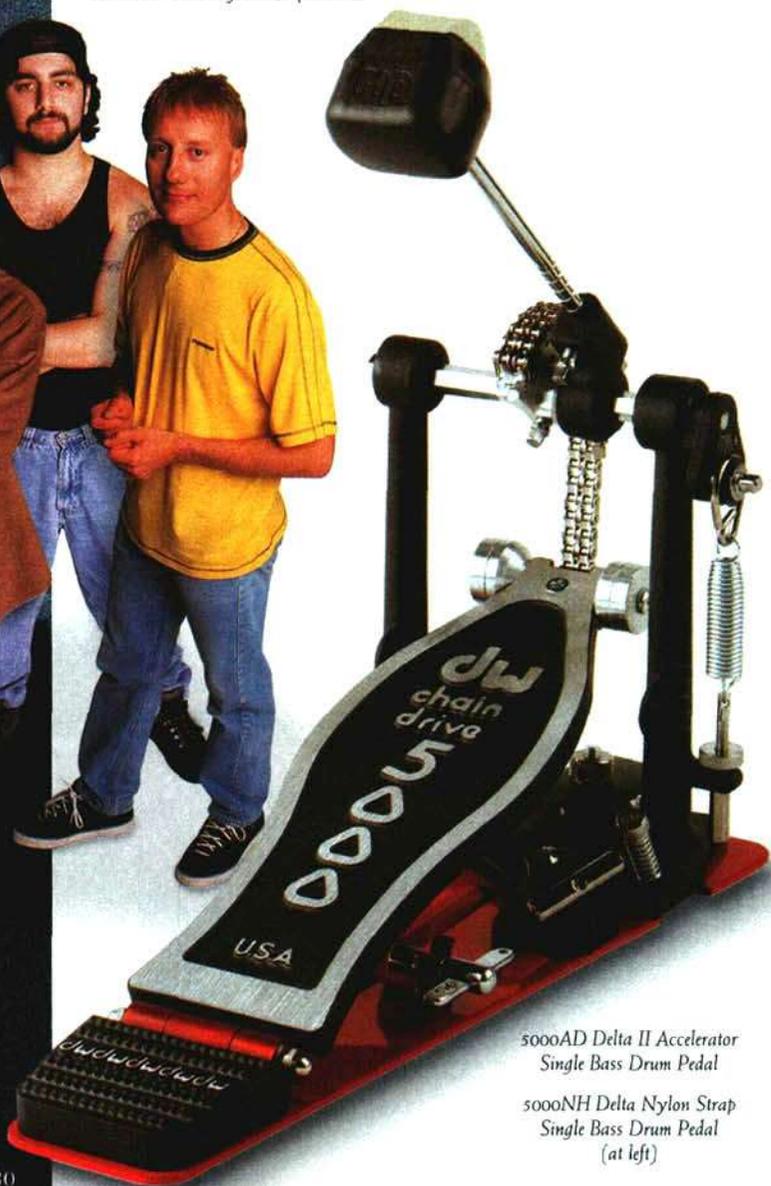
Jim Bogios (Sheryl Crow)
5000AH Delta Accelerator Single

Mike Mangini (Steve Vai)
5002NH Delta Nylon Strap Double

Mike Portnoy (Dream Theater)
5002TD Delta II Turbo Double

Gregg Bissonette (independent)
5002AD Delta II Accelerator Double

DW Pedal Artists (from left to right)



5000AD Delta II Accelerator Single Bass Drum Pedal

5000NH Delta Nylon Strap Single Bass Drum Pedal (at left)



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cunningham
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snoops

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can still be difficult. It either has to come from the drummer's left side, under the hi-hat, or from in front of the drummer, between the rack toms. Either way, maneuvering the hardware into correct position can be difficult, if not impossible. For that reason most drummers simply choose the much simpler option of an independent snare-drum stand.

2. The amount of impact pressure that a snare must endure is generally greater than that of any other drum. The leverage factor of this impact—added to the weight of the snare drum itself and multiplied by the distance to the rack—would put a tremendous strain on the clamp holding the stand to the rack. On any tube-style rack (Gibraltar, Tama, Yamaha, Dixon, Monolith, etc.) the clamp would be very prone to slipping. And on Pearl's square rack, although slipping would be eliminated, the strain could actually break or bend the snare-stand down tube.

3. From an acoustic standpoint, suspending a drum is usually done to increase its resonance. Since most drummers use some sort of muffling to *reduce* the resonance ("ring") of their snare drums, suspension would seem counterproductive.

Solid Versus Ply Snare Drums

Q What are the differences in construction and sound between a solid wood snare drum and a ply-shell snare drum?

Mitch Phillippe
via Internet

A A ply-shell snare drum is created by laying up a number of veneers in a mold, with glue between each veneer. This creates a cylindrical shell made up of "plies," in the same way that sheets of plywood are created.

A solid-wood shell can be created in a number of ways. One is to steam a single, solid board until it can be bent into a circle. The ends of the board are shaped to create a surface where they can be glued together, and the resulting cylinder is allowed to dry while the board is held in clamps to retain the shape. This creates a solid-wood shell with a single large glue seam.

Another popular method is "block" or "stave" construction. In this process, a number of specially shaped vertical segments of solid wood are glued together in a circular pattern to create a cylindrical shell.

(This is the same way that wooden barrels and conga drums are manufactured.) This creates a solid-wood shell with many small glue seams.

A few companies—notably Brady and Spirit Drums of Australia and Canopus of Japan—offer one-piece solid-wood drums. These drums are created by boring a cylinder out of a segment of a tree trunk. The resulting shell is a single piece of wood having had no mechanical changes made to its structure.

Differences in sound can be subjective. However, in general, solid-wood drums tend to be denser than their ply counterparts. This density offers increased reflectivity to sound waves, giving the drums more projection, better snare response, and some of the brightness usually found in metal-shell snares. Conversely, ply shells (especially thinner versions) can offer a warmer, woodier sound, with a rounder tonality. Wooden shells of twenty or more plies, on the other hand, can take on many of the characteristics of solid shells, due simply to their thickness.

Bass Shaker

Q I recently sat in on a kit that had a "shaker monitor" mounted underneath the drum throne. It seemed to actually be part of the throne assembly, but I wasn't up there long enough to really get a good look at it. I swear I felt the whole kit coming up through my body. It was amazing.

Since then I've been trying to find some information on this product, with no luck. Are you familiar with it at all? Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Billy Hammond
Lake Charles, LA

A It sounds like the product you experienced was the Bass Shaker, by Aura Sound. It's a mechanical device that attaches to a drum throne using a strong clamping mechanism. The device turns audio signals into mechanical vibration. That vibration is what you felt through the seat. The signal can be that of the bass drum, bass guitar, or any other low-end sound. The unit works in conjunction with the AMP-75 amplifier, also made by Aura Sound. For more information, see Rick Van Horn's review of the Bass Shaker and AMP-75 in the April '99 *MD*. You can also contact the company directly at (310)

643-5300. They're in El Segundo, California.

Drummer In The Rose

Editors' note: The August 2000 *It's Questionable* contained an inquiry as to the identity of the drummer featured in the on-screen band in Bette Midler's 1980 movie *The Rose*. Dozens of readers responded, but the most extensive information came from Sabian's marketing director, Wayne Blanchard. Wayne writes, "In addition to appearing along with Harry Stinson on the soundtrack for *The Rose*, Penti 'Whitey' Glann was also the on-screen drummer. Whitey was a sensational player who initially made a name for himself with the Toronto band The Mandala, a soul unit led by guitarist Dominic Troiano. Their album *Soul Crusade* and the hit singles 'Opportunity' and 'Love-ids' are Canadian classics.

"Troiano, Whitey, singer Roy Kenner, and bassist Prakash John evolved The Mandala into a band called Bush. (Troiano recently settled with UK band Bush so they can use their name in Canada. Until recently they were called Bush X up here). Bush released an eponymous album (excellent and available on CD) before Troiano and Kenner replaced Joe Walsh in The James Gang.

"In the mid-1970s Whitey and Prakash also recorded Lou Reed's *Rock 'N' Roll Animal* and Alice Cooper's *Welcome To My Nightmare*. [Glann toured with Cooper from 1975 through 1979.] I lived in the UK at that time, and I recall concert reviews of Reed and Cooper that pointed out their rhythm sections as being among the best the reviewers had heard.

"Among his many sessions, Whitey was on the debut solo album by Steppenwolf's John Kay. A great version of the old Hank Williams classic 'I'm Moving On' is a highlight. Whitey was also highly proficient with both single and double kicks. As for why he used the upturned [horizontal] kick drums in *The Rose*: He told me it looked great, and that he and the surrounding bandmembers could better hear and feel the drums onstage.

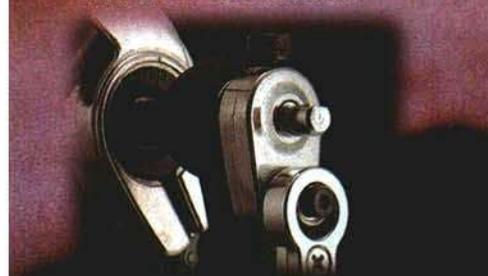
"Whitey was an underrated drum talent during the 1970s and '80s. But the good news is, he's still playing. He's an active member of the Toronto music scene."



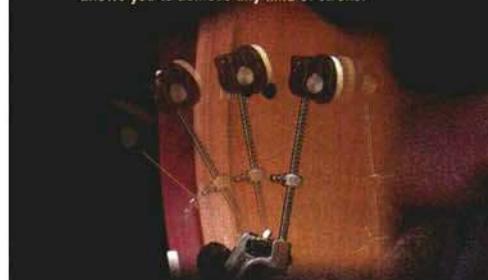
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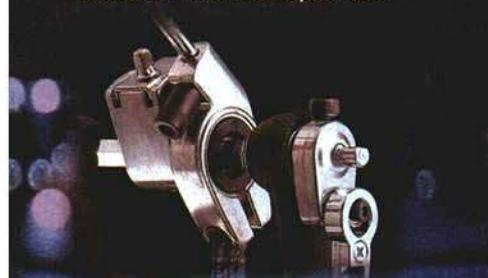
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TICO TORRES

Bon Jovi's Renewed Crush

"**N**ot old, just older." This line from a song on *Crush*, Bon Jovi's new album, says a lot about the melodic hard rockers who have returned to the limelight after a six-year break. "I was so burnt out from all the touring back in the '90s, I didn't touch my drums for almost four years," says powerhouse drummer Tico Torres. "When I did get back into playing, it felt great. I'm playing like I'm seventeen again."

Crush revives the same formula that propelled Bon Jovi to sell eighty million records worldwide. A big part of that formula is Tico's hard-hitting, song-oriented groove playing. "Willie Bridges from King Curtis's band use to tell me, Tico, less is best."

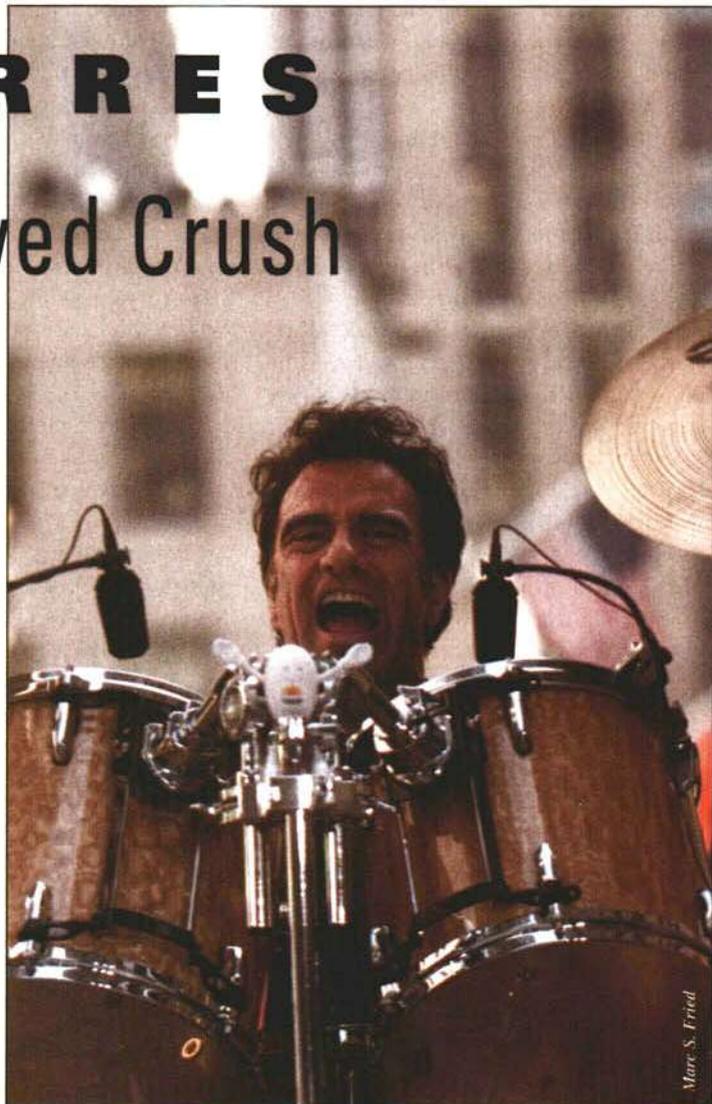
Recording *Crush* at the band's own New Jersey studio gave them the freedom to experiment with some alternate takes. "Say It Isn't So" originally had a rolling 16th-note feel," Tico explains. "Then at the last minute I switched to playing heavy quarter notes on the hi-hat. That made it fatter and changed the whole feel. For the bridge, I initially had a towel over the ride cymbal. Later I took the towel off and just rode the bell. Again, that changed the com-

plexion of the song."

Tico cut the *Crush* drum tracks with click tracks or loops he'd created. "I'm very comfortable playing to a click," he says. "It keeps everything perfect. Besides, I don't like debates. If someone says something is a little behind or ahead of the beat, you can pull up the click and see."

After ten Top-10 hit records and eight albums, the band is back on the road, touring the world. "I feel good," Tico states. "I've been going to the gym. I started lifting weights—not to bulk up, but to promote my drum muscles."

So will we ever see a solo record from Tico? "I'm dying to do a record, maybe something eclectic. I have the biggest pile of junk you've ever seen. I would like to use all that stuff—some household items, some wooden boxes for drums. That would be *so cool*."



Marc S. Fried

Billy Amendola

Samantha Maloney

Hole In One For The Crüe

Samantha Maloney learned to play drums by practicing along to records like *Shout At The Devil* and *Theater Of Pain* by her favorite band, metal's tattooed bad boys, Mötley Crüe. She certainly never imagined that one day she'd be filling the seat once held by her idol, Tommy Lee. It's no surprise, then, that Maloney describes her current situation as "very surreal," as she tours the country with Mötley Crüe's *Maximum Rock* tour. Maloney is filling in for Randy Castillo (who replaced Lee on drums last year) while he recovers from stomach surgery.

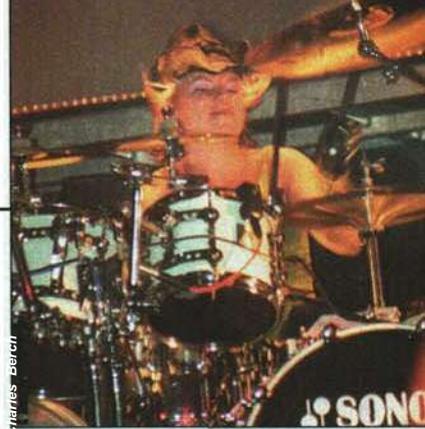
Maloney, twenty-four, left the emo-rock quartet Shift (with whom she'd played since age sixteen) when she landed the position as drummer for Hole, almost two years ago. (Coincidentally, one of the drummers she beat out while auditioning for Hole was Tommy Lee's sister.) While attending a Mötley Crüe performance for VH1's *Hard Rock Live*, Maloney met the band for the first time. Once backstage, she got an unexpectedly enthusiastic reception from Castillo. "Randy comes up to me and says, 'Oh my god, you're amazing! I saw you at the LA Forum when Hole were on the Manson tour.' He said to the band, 'This girl rocks!'" Those words of praise apparently stayed with bassist Nikki Sixx: Maloney was the first drummer he called when it was time to look for someone to fill in for Castillo.

When Sixx phoned her at home in NYC, asking if she had any interest in flying to Los Angeles to sit in as Castillo's temporary replacement, Maloney's response was a resounding "Yes!" She also told Sixx, "I'm sure I can handle this gig way better than any guy out there." Maloney was rehearsing with Mötley Crüe the next day.

Due to Castillo's extended convalescence, Maloney will finish the entire first leg of the tour. "I had absolutely no time to learn any of the songs, but it wasn't a big deal because I knew most of them. There's only three new songs in the set. Everything else is old classics. It's like a dream. The guys are so awesome and I get to play songs like 'Looks That Kill' on stage with them every night!"

For the tour, Maloney added a second 18x22 bass drum and four more cymbals to her Sonor kit. "Playing double bass," she says, "gives me the appropriate full-on metal setup." She also finds that the Crüe's longtime fans welcome her. "Once the crowd sees me playing with these guys, they love it. Another drummer told me that my being here gave the Crüe a shot in the ass. They realize this is a cool thing."

Gail Worley



PAT MASTELOTTO

A Boot Up Crimson's Butt

Awise man said long ago that writing about music is like dancing about architecture.

Truer words were never spoken, especially when it's in regard to reviewing a King Crimson show. You could write an entire article on just thirteen bars of one song! Can you say "highly formulated, incredibly mathematical, extremely dissonant, and creatively mind-wrenching"? Well, the latest version of the progressive rock giant is back on the road, supporting a new release, *The ConstruKtion Of Light*.

Over breakfast one morning, drummer Pat Mastelotto explained that the writing for Crim's latest album was entirely organic. On previous records, guitarists Adrian Belew and Robert Fripp presented fleshed-out ideas, but this time only riffs were brought in for the abbreviated Crimson aggregation to jam and vibe on. (Longtime Crim rhythm-section mates Bill Bruford and Tony Levin left the band, leaving Pat and stick player Trey Gunn to charge the batterie.)



Once the basic musical ideas were gathered, Mastelotto said he would return to his temporary domicile with Munyon, the engineer, and, using Pro Tools, further investigate rhythmic and sonic possibilities. "Robert came in the door with a concept," Pat explains. "He wanted the entire album played on electronic drums." Finding the process stimulating and challenging, Pat incorporated his library of sounds, as well as V-Drum, ddrum, DM Pro, and Wave sounds.

Regarding the Bruford "nolo contendere" issue, Pat says that he didn't have much time to give it a thought. Instead, he focused on doing his homework and being realistic that some fans would either embrace him—or find his contributions not up to their (sniff!) Bruford standards. So in order not to embarrass himself or the King Crimson legacy, Pat let the influences of all former Crim percussionists—Ian Wallace, Jamie Muir, and "The king of kings, Michael Giles"—flow freely through him. The album, and Pat's brilliant contribution, speak for themselves.

King Crimson has always been an adventurous performing unit, and now with Mastelotto in complete control of the percussion department, his fabulous abilities are obvious. Pat is at the top of his game live, offering up a blissful combination of solid groove and reckless abandon. Want to see a master at work? Go see and hear Pat put a boot up Crimson's butt.

Dony Wynn

Orchestra Morphine's

BILLY CONWAY & JEROME DEUPREE

KEEP PLAYING THE SONGS

Last summer ('99), after finishing their new record, *The Night*, the Boston-based group Morphine left for Europe to play several festival dates. A few days into the tour, on July 3, in Palestrina, Italy, singer/songwriter Mark Sandman suffered a fatal heart attack on stage.

What do you do when the central figure of your band—and close friend—is suddenly gone? How do you cope? Backstage before a recent Orchestra Morphine show at New York City's Bowery Ballroom, drummer Billy Conway says the answer was in the music. "Mark wanted to be known as a songwriter," explains Conway. "So when we did a memorial concert for him, we did songs from the new record as well as some old ones. We had everyone from our road manager to [J. Geils Band singer] Peter Wolf sing. We realized then that it felt great to play rather than shy away." Hence, Orchestra Morphine, an ensemble that is more than a tribute to the

prolific Sandman, but rather a new way of presenting the band's work.

"We put together a group made up of friends who had played with Mark," Billy explains. Joining Conway, saxist Dana Colley, and original drummer Jerome Deupree, who came back into the fold during the *Night* sessions, are a keyboardist, bassist, two horn players, and a male and female singer. "The whole thing is such a family affair," Conway enthuses. "Everybody goes back a long time."

In fact, Conway and Deupree knew each other from the Boston music scene, before Morphine even existed. But what about *playing* together? Who's hitting what? Well, the Orchestra Morphine drum section is certainly not your average five-piece kit player with a percussionist. Deupree plays an 18" Sonor kick, a 14" snare, a 14" floor tom, and an 18" crash/ride cymbal. Right next to him, a 16" cocktail drum, mini bongos, a 12" Remo

Mondo snare, an old conga, and a crash cymbal surround Conway. "It's never been about a lot of gear," laughs Billy. "Often we're sitting so close, I can reach over and play Jerome's ride."

Though Orchestra Morphine's tours have been a resounding success, Jerome Deupree says carrying on without Sandman was not something the surviving bandmembers took lightly. "We did a lot of soul-searching," Deupree states. "We asked many people whether this works. So far the response has been overwhelmingly positive. People have been very supportive."

"Being in a room with people breathing life into the songs feels healthy," Conway adds. "We're musicians, so what better way to express how you feel than to play the music?"

Fran Azzarto

ERIC BOBO

CYPRESS HILL'S

Stretching Percussion Boundaries

Although Eric Bobo would tag Cypress Hill as his main gig, his current focus is a solo project. "It's a Latin jazz album, a return to roots for me, because that's my background," Bobo explains. "It's not really anything that goes with the whole recent Latin explosion. It's just something I've been wanting to do for a while. I figure there's a lot more people who are open to this type of music now, so I'm giving it a shot."

In creating his upcoming solo record, Bobo has been working with Beastie Boys producer Mario Caldato. It should be noted that Bobo worked with The Beasties well before he worked with Cypress Hill. He cut tracks on *III Communication* and *Hello Nasty*, playing both percussion and drums. (His primary instrument is the timbales.) Bobo has also been a percussionist with The Black Crowes (on *America*) and is also credited with performing on 311's *Transistor*.

But as far as his Cypress Hill gig is concerned, Bobo says that his input into the songwriting has increased, and that there's now less percussion and more drumset work for him. This increase in involvement essentially forced the once-background percussionist to step forward and become an integral part of the band. Bobo is

even credited with cutting a bass track. (Brad Wilk of Rage Against The Machine tracked the drums on that cut.)

"Now we're combining our show with both hip-hop [sequenced] and live drums," Bobo explains. "Our show is less on props and more on music, with a harder edge."

Taking sharp turns in his career isn't new to Bobo. In fact, he got his start jamming Latin jazz over twenty-five years ago, learning in a scene that's quite remote from the stages his current band shares (most recently with Limp Bizkit on a Napster-sponsored tour). However, Eric is quick to explain that the education he received back in the day—thanks in part to his father, legendary percussionist Willie Bobo—was vital to his present success as a prolific percussionist.

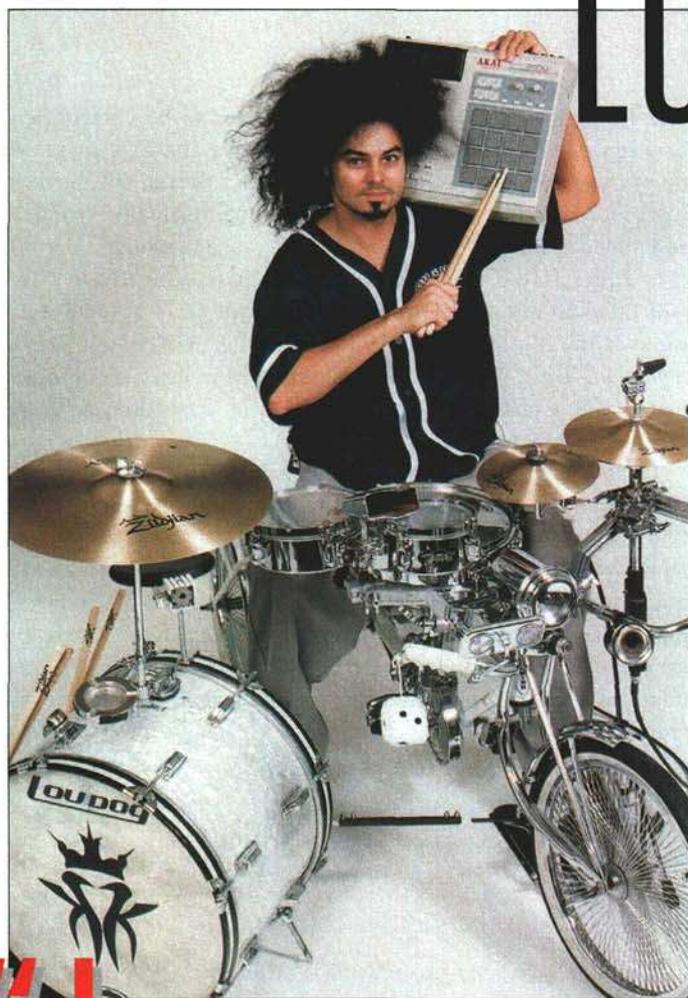
"I've been playing professionally since I was five years old. My first gigs were at jazz clubs surrounded by Latin jazz giants, and I learned from them. Just being able to get in there and understand the language of working with live musicians made it easier for me to get things going."

Waleed Rashidi

KOTTONMOUTH KINGS'

LOU DOG

RIDING HIGH



come from that Orange County, mid-'80s punk rock scene," says Lou Dog, drummer for hip-hoppers Kottonmouth Kings. "I'm a punk drummer. I play hip-hop like a punk." Lou joined Kottonmouth Kings, with his former Humble Gods cohort, Brad X, in 1997. His goal in life? "To play hip-hop that rocks harder than anything else out there."

As the rare hip-hop act using a live drummer, Lou's hard-rocking approach gives The Kings cross-genre appeal, thanks largely to his elaborately customized kit, spawned from a vision he had while riding a '64 Schwinn low-rider three-wheeler show bike. "The Drum Trike is so detailed, so engineered, so conceptual," says Lou, "that to completely appreciate it is to get into the details. I was sitting on this bike one day. I got a beat in my head and started imagining that I was playing drums. The next thing I know, the snare pops up between my legs, right over the crossbar. On one end of the handle bar, I've got my miniature 10" remote hi-hat cymbals with the 8" splash cymbal off of that. On my right handlebar, I've got 6" and an 8" mini timbales, with a little cowbell on top of that to give me my distinctive sound."

The only piece that's not attached to the bike body itself is the kick drum, and even that is integral to the full concept. "It's a '64 Rogers 20" kick drum—a Ringo Starr-style kick drum, with the

Oyster Pearl finish, to match the '64 Schwinn bike frame. Coming up off the top of the kick drum is a Ringo Starr-style cymbal stand with an 18" Rock crash." Electronics are limited to two Roland pads, "one off my left handlebar and another on the hoop of the kick drum."

"The whole thing about this kit is that it's so functional, it's unbelievable," offers Kuma Gai, producer of the band's latest CD, *High Society*. "In the studio, it's precise. Sonically, this thing is built really, really tight."

"I'm taking orders right now because people want to buy these bikes," says Lou. "Tommy Lee is buying the bike I'm currently touring with." Members of Limp Bizkit and Stone Temple Pilots have also expressed interest in owning the Drum Trike kits, which are individually hand assembled by Lou himself.

With all the customizing involved in hybridizing the Drum Trike, it must be asked: Does it still function as a bike? "Hell yeah!" says Lou. "I can ride it off stage!"

Gail Worley



William Goldsmith

Sunny Days Ahead

For William Goldsmith, twenty-seven-year-old drummer for Seattle's atmospheric rock trio Sunny Day Real Estate, the symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome first manifested themselves as "really intense, sharp pains in my arms" and "numbness in my hands," especially upon waking from a night's sleep. "I could still play," he says, "but it had gotten to the point where it was always really painful. It made playing music not much fun."

Goldsmith was quickly diagnosed with the repetitive stress disorder (along with tendinitis and bursitis in the shoulders) via acupuncture he was undergoing to alleviate lower back problems. Goldsmith was informed that, without treatment, his career as a drummer would be over within two years.

What Goldsmith is going through is, not surprisingly, showing up in other young drummers. "I was asking for it," he says, "because I'm self-taught and never really learned any technique. I play more with my arms, and that's not good."

A vital part of Goldsmith's rehabilitation therapy includes two acupuncture sessions weekly, plus a five-nights-a-week regimen of Bikram Yoga, a physically intensive modality involving ninety minutes of continuous postures in a room heated to 102°. "It's not for everybody," he admits. "It's definitely one of the most horrify-

ing things I've done in my life. You have to be careful, and between moves you have to stay really still. The first couple of times I went, I almost threw up several times. It's an unbelievable workout." As brutal as it sounds, the grueling ritual will eventually restore the drummer's severely restricted range of motion.

In June, SDRE released their fifth album, *The Rising Tide*, which Goldsmith enthusiastically dubs "light years beyond" even their critically acclaimed 1998 release, *How It Feels To Be Something On*. "The production and the performance are so much better, and it just moves really nicely. I'm very happy with the drum arrangements I did."

To counteract formerly destructive habits, Goldsmith says he's concentrating on becoming more restrained in his technique. "I find you can play heavier the more relaxed you stay. I'm trying to let my wrists do the work and give my arms a break. When I was a kid, I wanted to be exactly like Keith Moon, and that's how I played for a long time, just completely insane. Now I'm really starting to enjoy simplicity. I don't like playing things that are unnecessary. I want to leave room for all the colors to really swirl around me."

Gail Worley

news

Gary Husband recently toured the US with Allan Holdsworth. He's also finishing up work on his next solo record, *Flesh To Wood*, due out later this year. His critically acclaimed video, *Interplay & Improvisation On The Drums*, is now being distributed by Hal Leonard; it's also available through www.musicdispatch.com. For more info on Gary, check his Web site at www.1212.com/a/husband/gary.html.

Josh Freese has a solo record out, *The Notorious One Man Orgy*, on Kung Fu Records.

You can hear **Gregg Bissonette** on a variety of recordings. He's on Don Henley's *Inside Job*, Jann Arden's *Blood Red Cherry*, and Duran Duran's *Pop Trash*, not to mention the *Friends* and *King Of The Hill* weekly TV shows.

Besides Bissonette, Duran Duran's latest also features **John Tonks and Steve Alexander**. **Joe Travers** is in the drum chair for the tour.

John Marshall can be heard on the CD reissue of *Autumn Leaves* by Barney Kessel.

Rich Redmond is on tour with Pam Tillis. He recently recorded with Tillis on the *Raffi Goes Country* disc, as well as the soundtrack for the new Disney Movie, *702 Dalmatians*.

Soulfly has recently added drummer **Joe Nunez**.

Mike Buck is on The Leroi Brothers' *Kings Of The Catnap*.

Luis Conte is on Jimmy Haslip's latest, *Red Heat*.

Ian A. Falgout has been recording with Wake Up Neo, Devereaux, and

Story Road, as well as doing scattered clinics with John Vidacovich and Earl Palmer.

Tre Cool is on Green Day's latest disc, *Warning*.

Adam Pedretti is on Killing Heidi's debut album, *Reflector*.

David Buckner is on tour with Papa Roach.

Todd Sucherman is on tour with Styx.

Rob Ladd has been touring with **Don Henley**. **Danny Reyes** is on percussion.

They Might Be Giants released a new EP on the Web, *Working Undercover For The Man*. **Dan Hickey** is on drums.

Mickey Curry is on Lara Fabian's self-titled CD.

Drummer **Billy Johnson** is currently touring with Santana.

drum dates

This month's important events in drumming history.

The late R&B drummer **Yogi Horton** was born on November 25, 1959.

KISS drummer **Eric Carr** passed away on November 24, 1991.

Levon Helm performs "Up On Cripple Creek" with The Band on CBS TV's *The Ed Sullivan Show*, on November 2, 1969.

On November 4, 1978, The Who's *Who Are You* becomes the last record to feature **Keith Moon**. It hits the US charts at number fourteen.

Neil Peart receives The Buddy Rich Lifetime Achievement Award on November 6, 1994 following the release of his *Burning For Buddy: A Tribute To The Music Of Buddy Rich* album.

Birthdates

Floyd Sneed (Three Dog Night)
(November 22, 1943)

David Garibaldi (November 4, 1946)

Tony Thompson (November 15, 1954)

Clem Burke (November 24, 1955)

Matt Sorum (November 19, 1960)

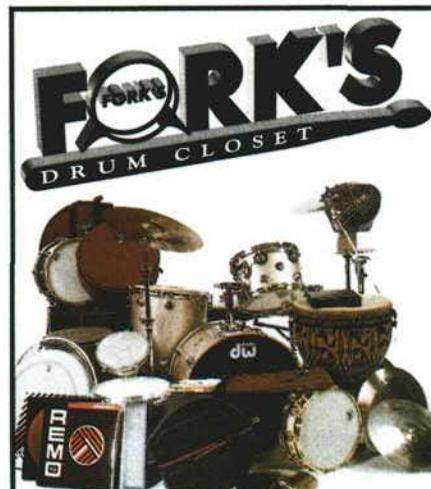
Charlie Benante (November 27, 1962)

Mike Bordin (November 27, 1962)

Matt Cameron (November 28, 1962)

Rick Allen (November 1, 1963)

Travis Barker (November 14, 1975)



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Dom Famularo

Drumming's Goodwill Ambassador

by Cheech Iero

His attitude is positive, his enthusiasm is infectious, his dedication is evident, and his playing is inspirational. Aptly referred to as the drumming world's Ambassador Of Goodwill, Dom Famularo is perhaps the most widely traveled drum clinician/speaker in the world today.

"Goodwill Ambassador is a reference I don't take lightly," says a smiling Dom. "It's the ultimate compliment. It's my job to go out and find new drummers and make the pie bigger. And for those who are

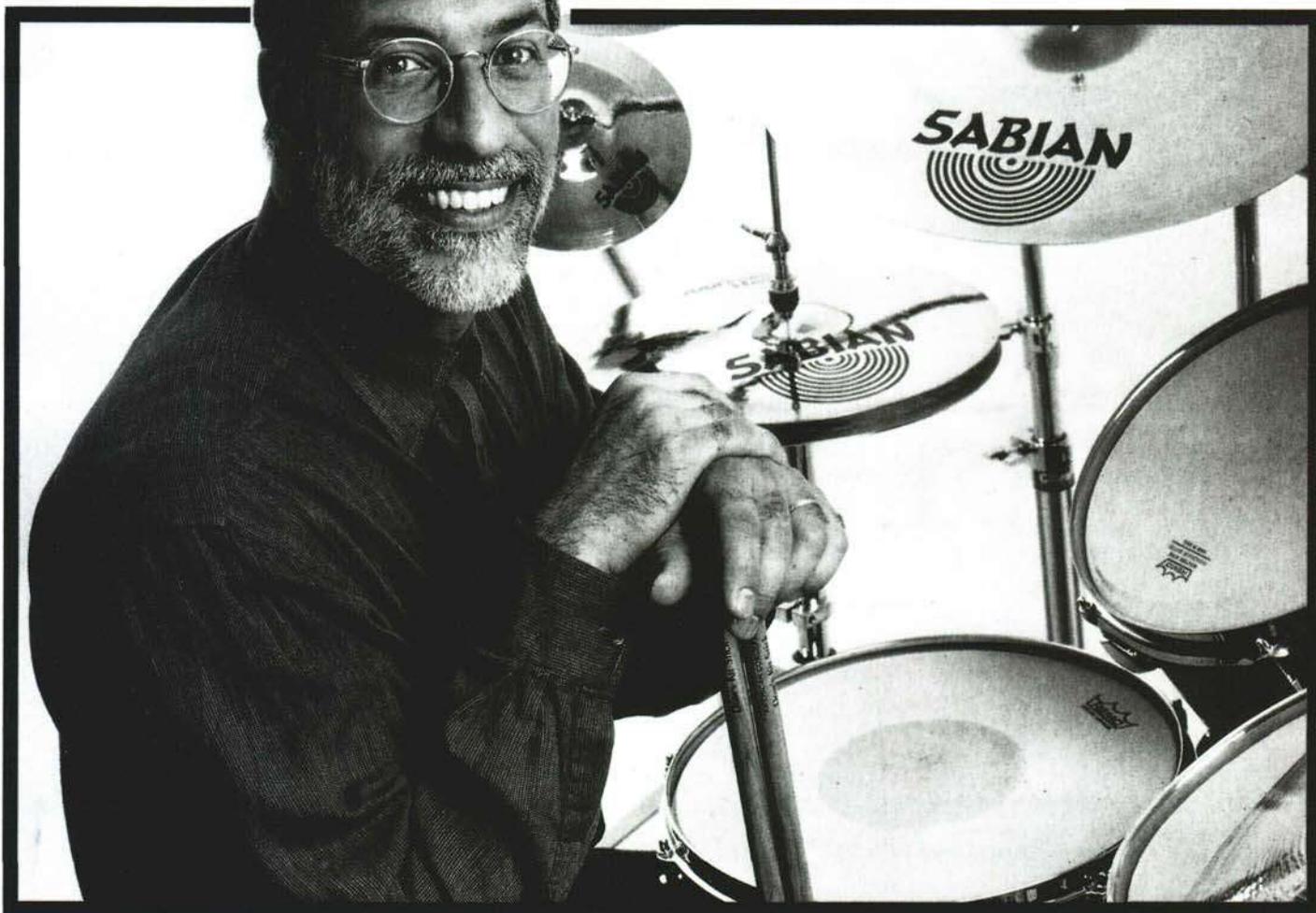
already players, I try to keep them inspired and keep the fire burning."

Lining the wall of Dom's home office, just below the clocks that show the time zones around the world, are two large maps. "I've put pins in all the cities and countries I've performed in," says Famularo. "This is where humility comes in. It's not a matter of saying, 'Look where I've been!' It's more a matter of saying, 'Look where I still *haven't* been.'"

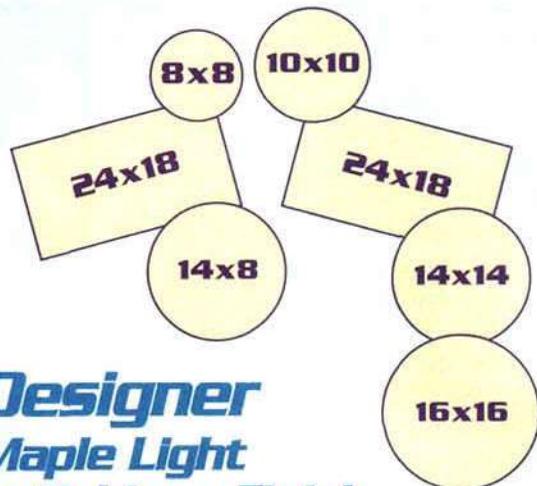
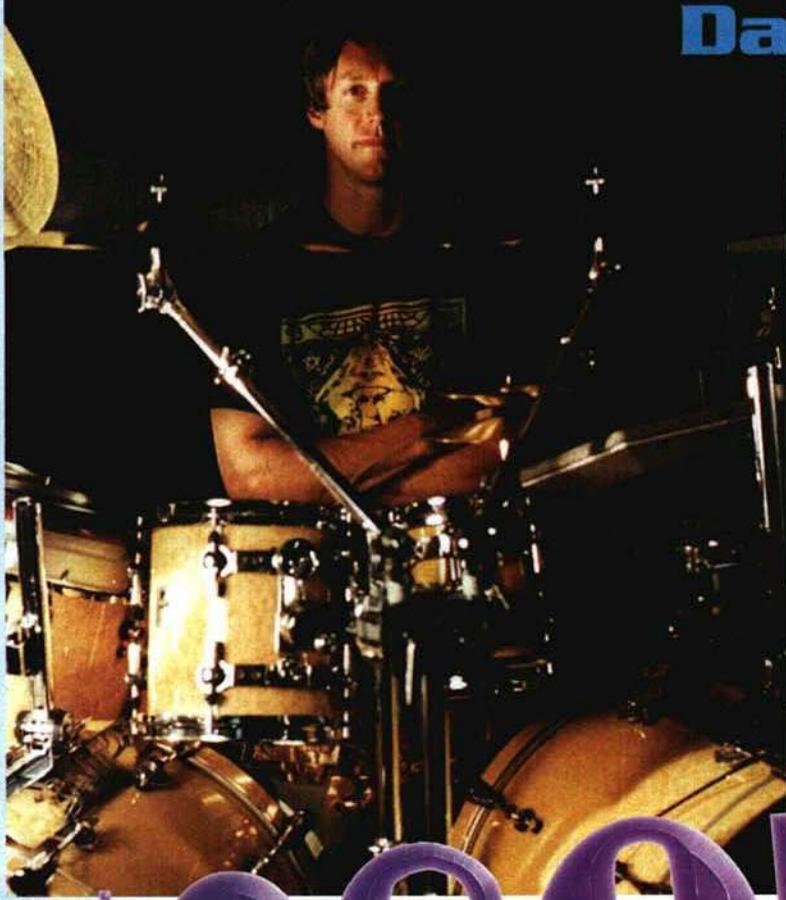
After a brief perusal of the two maps, one can't help but notice that drumming has

taken Dom Famularo to China, Sweden, Israel, Italy, Turkey, Australia, Puerto Rico, Ireland, Belgium, Holland, Britain, South America, Mexico, Canada, Japan, and clear across the United States. "I've been with Vic Firth since 1979, Sabian since '88, and the last three years with Premier drums," states Dom. "I've been blessed to be associated with companies who believe in me enough to make me a voice for them around the world."

Looking back on the early years when drums first became an important part of his life, Dom recalls a humorous incident that started the ball rolling. "At twelve years



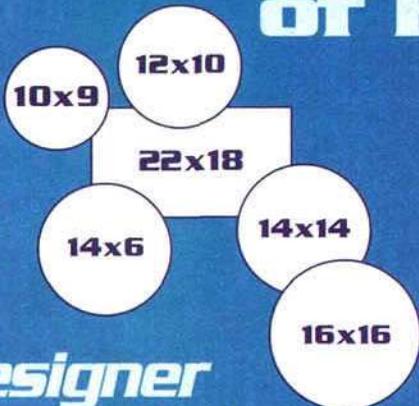
Danny Carey of TOOL



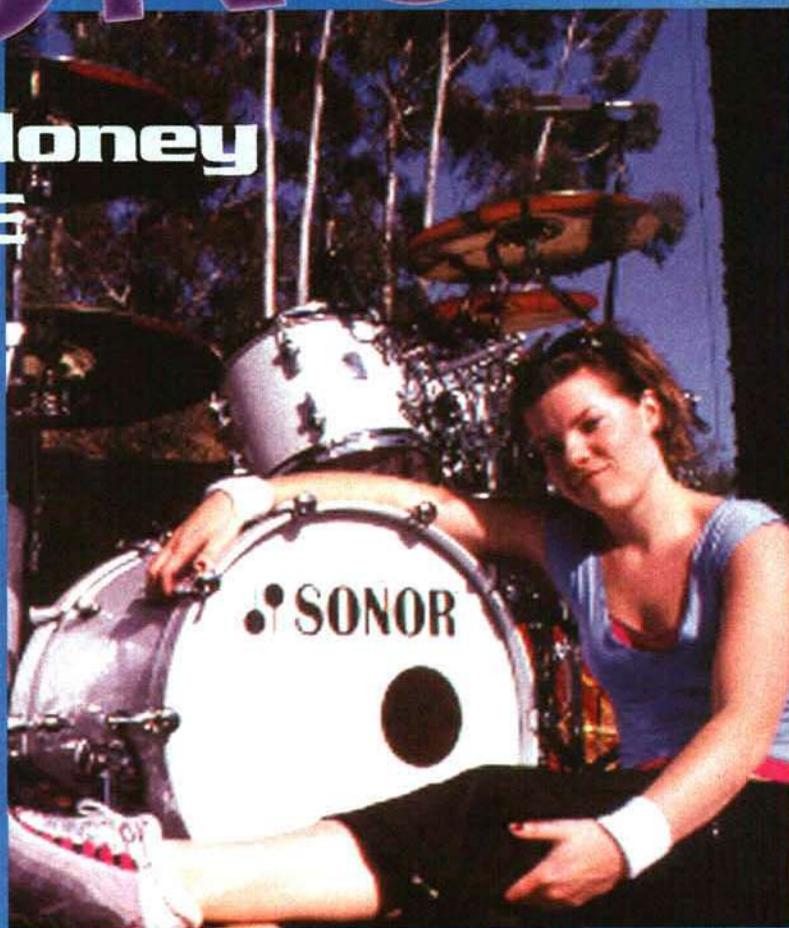
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old I was in a band with my brothers," he says. "The Beatles' 'Ticket To Ride' was popular at the time. We played the song over and over, sometimes for eight hours straight in the basement of my house. Guitar, bass, keyboard, and three vocal mic's—all running through *one* amplifier. It sounded like *Radio Free Europe*. It was terrible!

"Finally we convinced my father to take the money he was saving to buy my mother a dishwasher and use it to buy us an additional amp instead. Well, now we were a *real* band. We could actually hear the vocals and the chord changes. What a difference! We thought we were hot stuff.

"My dad was involved with the local fire department, and one day we got asked if we wanted to play at a fireman's party. 'Can you boys play four hours' worth of music?' we were asked. 'Absolutely,' we said. We never bothered to tell them we only knew *one* song. The night of the party we performed our song and they loved us. Lots of applause. So we played it again...and again...and again! Well, this went on for quite some time, until the fire chief came up and asked if we could please



"It's not just about playing in a band, getting a record deal, and making money. There are other things that can happen that are much greater than that."

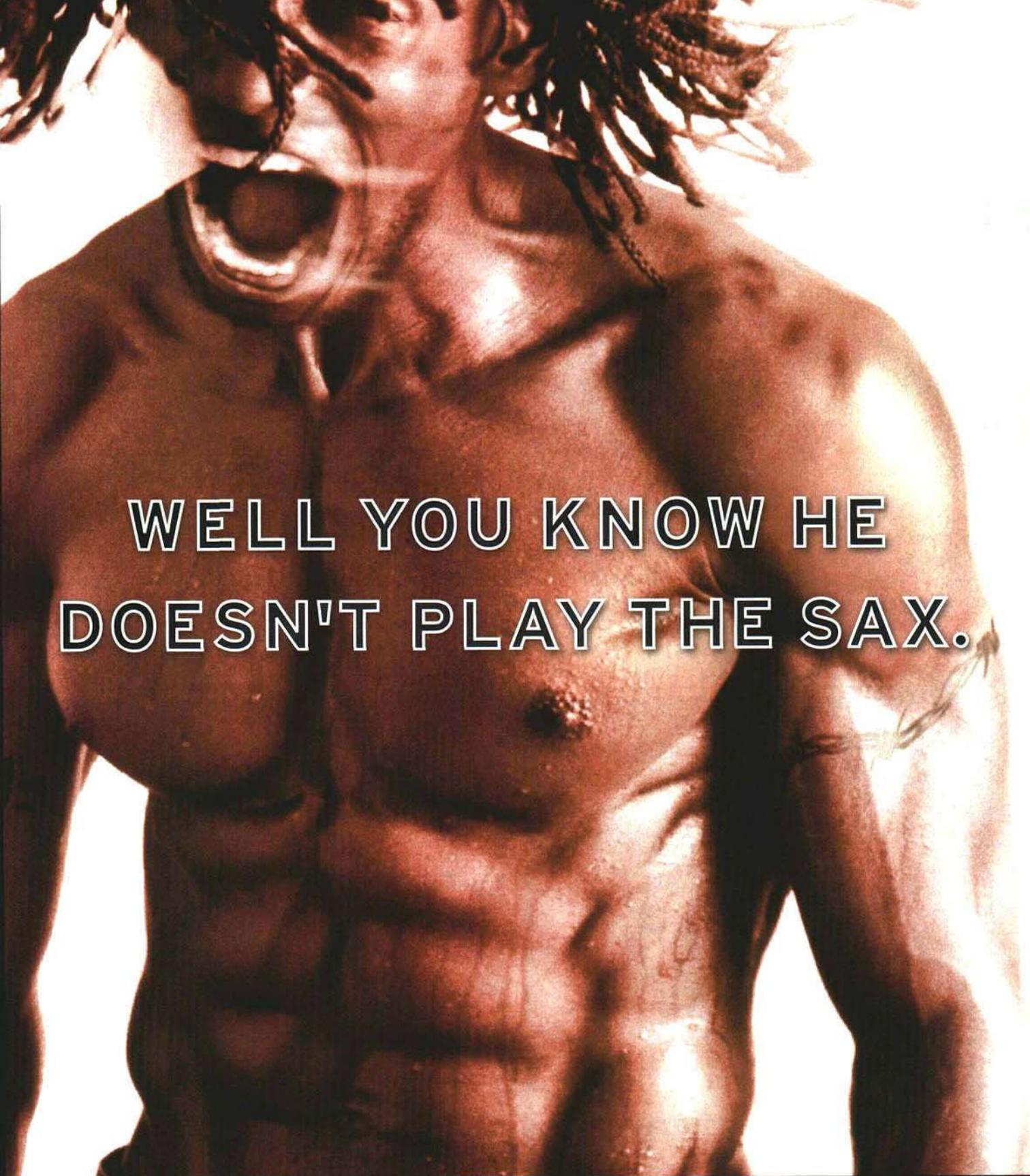
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play something slow so he could dance with his wife. I said, 'Of course we can,' and we immediately went into 'Ticket To Ride' at sixty beats per minute! We just played the same song—*slower*.

"Despite it all, they loved us," laughs Dom. "You see, it didn't matter that we only knew one song. What mattered to the crowd was our spirit, and the effort we had made as young boys to get together and play music. We got paid at the end of the night and the next day we used the money to help buy my mother that dishwasher!"

Moving forward a good number of years, one can't help but wonder how this lifelong drummer would eventually become one of the world's most highly regarded and in-demand motivational clinicians.

"My first clinic tour started with Simon Phillips and Billy Cobham," recalls Dom. "After that I was an opening act. The music stores where I did my clinics were inspired by what I did, and they asked me back. One store would talk with the next, and it just snowballed. It was a matter of a high-quality product, combined with the desire to share information in an enthusiastic manner. I felt if I could get the message



across, this would be a great life. The next thing I knew, I was performing with top players in foreign countries, and the following year they'd ask me back. It's amaz-

ing how it built up. Now I even do these music camps in France, Germany, and Italy. It's a more specialized type of learning: one-on-one, with master classes, clin-

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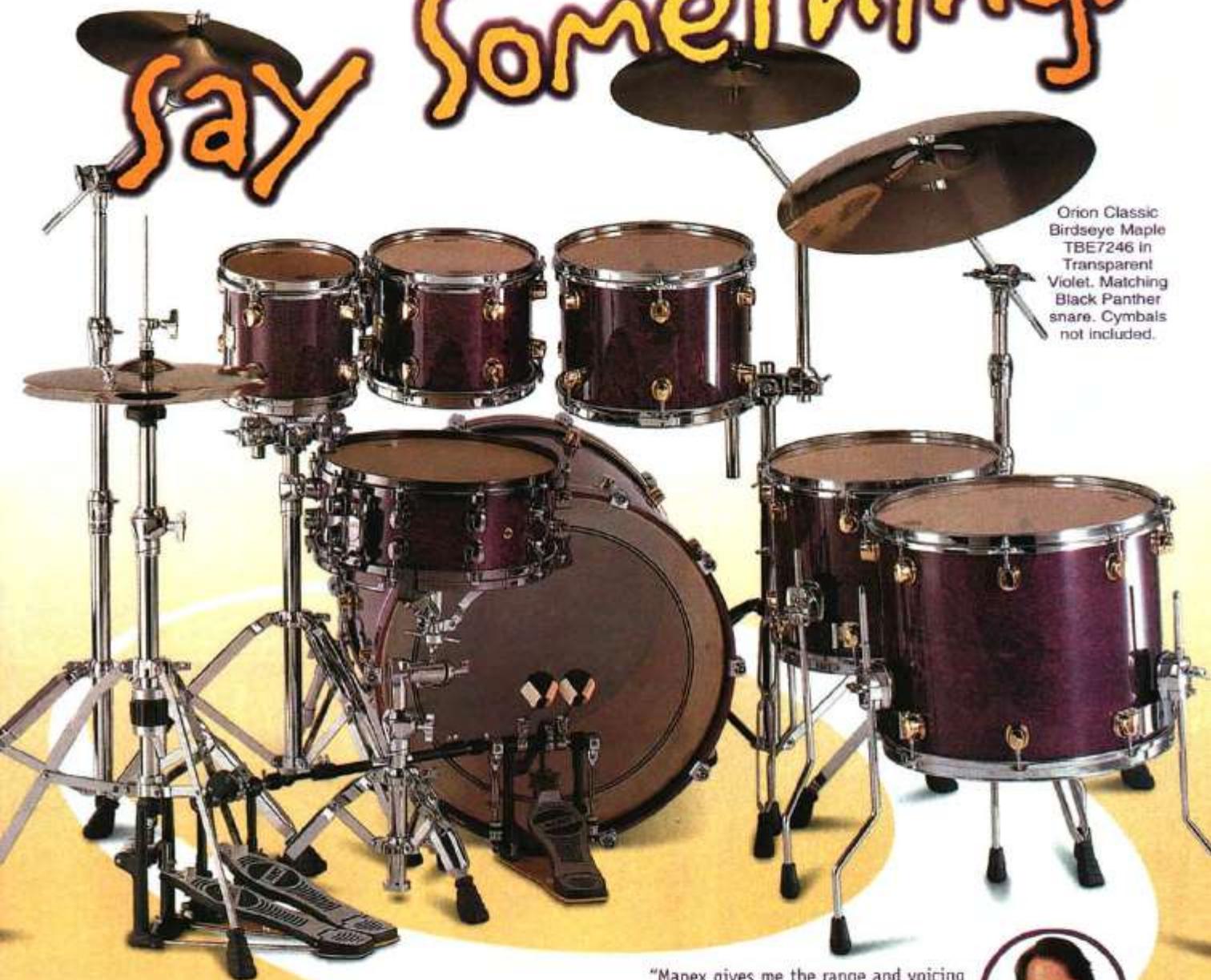
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ics, and drumming events. It's a little bit of everything."

On another wall in Dom's office hangs a picture of him with a young boy, over an engraved plaque. "This was a boy who came to one of my events in England," recalls Dom. "The boy had cerebral palsy and no use of his legs. But he wanted to play drums. His father told me he was trying to raise money to send his son to a clinic in Budapest. There was a chance that his disease could be reversed through treatment. I asked the father how much money he'd raised thus far, and I realized he didn't have nearly enough. So I asked if he'd mind if I used my clinics to try to raise more money. We collected money at every clinic, but we were shy \$1,000 by the end. Fortunately, Chad Smith came in the following week, did a clinic, and then donated the \$1,000. We gave the money to the parents and they were ecstatic.

"Well, two years later I went back to perform at that English store, and the same boy came *running* up to me and gave me a big hug. The emotion was beyond comprehension. I keep this photo on my office wall to stay focused on the potential we

have as drummers. You see, it's *not just* about playing in a band, getting a record deal, and making money. There are other things that can happen that are much greater than that. They're right there waiting for us, if we choose to go after them."

A well-schooled player, Dom doesn't hesitate to acknowledge the many teachers who guided him along the way. It's one of the reasons he now enjoys teaching as much as he does. "Al Miller was a great rudimentalist who gave me a solid foundation in reading and rudiments," recalls Dom. "Ronnie Benedict gave me focus, and Joe Morello opened me up to the techniques of George Lawrence Stone and Billy Gladstone. Later, Jim Chapin showed me the Moeller technique and helped me achieve more power and speed. When I moved to California I studied with Shelly Manne, Joe Porcaro, Colin Bailey, and Johnny Guerin. Each experience was extremely memorable. Shelly, in particular, focused on imagination and the different things you could do with rhythms, sticks, brushes, and different sound surfaces."

An author as well as an in-demand clinician and teacher, Dom's book *It's Your*

Move was ten years in the writing. It features drumset exercises, along with interesting explanations of the Moeller stroke. "I had an artist draw the pictures for the book to make it clearer, so students could see the various positions of the strokes. It makes the topic come to life. In essence, the book is about understanding movement in order to obtain a higher level of expression. It's what I refer to as motions and emotions."

Dom has also authored *The Cycle Of Self-Empowerment*, a motivational book that came about through his teaching experiences. "When someone comes to me for lessons, I first try to find out what they want," says Dom. "But there's nothing worse than someone with desire but no *discipline*. If that's the case, they're not going anywhere. I try to help them understand more about discipline, and show them ways to improve. If you *say* you're disciplined, but you're not practicing the instrument, then you're really not putting the right value on it. You need to make it a priority. If I don't teach a student discipline, then I can be accused of stifling that individual's talent. I'll do *whatever* it takes.

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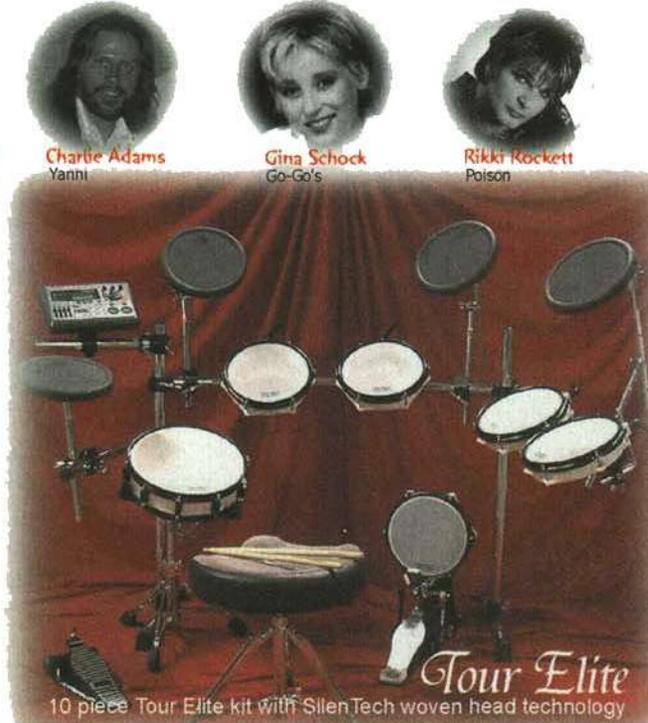
Michael Kennedy
George Strait



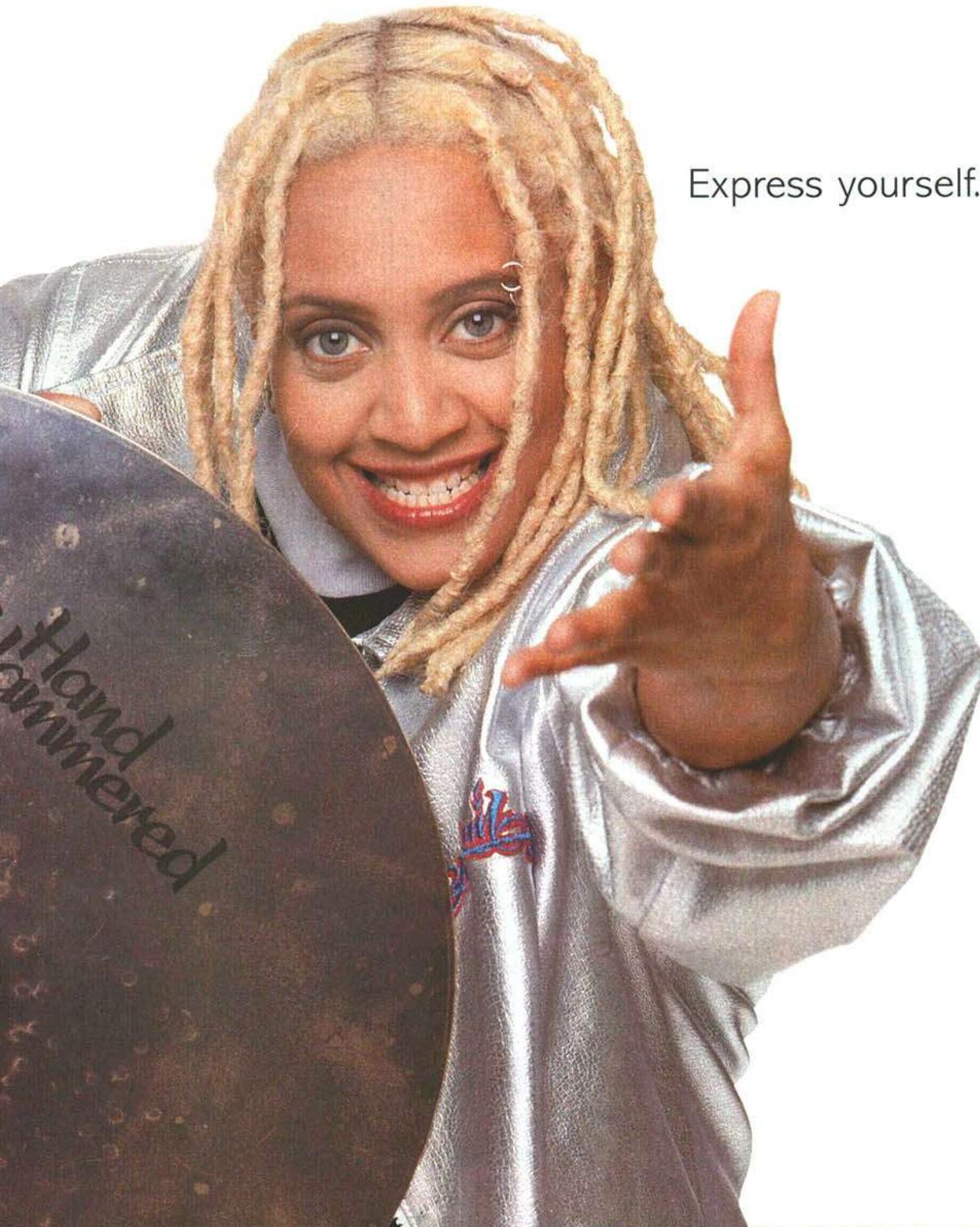
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Even if a student doesn't have the money to pay me, it won't stop me from teaching him or her. It's not about that. We'll work the money thing out later."

Dom's teaching studio, located behind his home, is a freestanding structure that houses the ultimate teaching environment. "We built it on a foundation of patio blocks so it's actually movable," explains Dom. "The inside is insulated, plus there's 1 1/2" of air space, a middle wall of 1/2" soundboard, 1/2" of sheetrock, another 1" of air space, and then the interior wall. It's literally a room within a room. I'm also putting in a complete air exchanger system for fresh air, in addition to the heating and air conditioning system that's already in place."

The studio is outfitted with two miked drumsets, a concert snare drum, a marching snare, two practice pads, mirrors, videotape equipment, and a complete sound system for play-along and listening. "I've got all the options to teach at a high level," comments Dom. "Plus I can come in here at 2:00 A.M. to work on something if I want, without disturbing my family."

Having taught professionally since the age of seventeen, Dom often takes a philosophical approach to teaching drums. "Sometimes a student's problem can be caused simply by low self-esteem," he says. "If a student doesn't think enough of himself, or thinks he can't do something, I need to work on that and build his confidence. I've even gone so far as to stand on a chair, screaming, 'C'mon, you can do it!' When they say, 'No, I can't,' I just respond with, 'I don't know the word *can't*.' When they finally *do* do it, and I capture it on videotape and let them see it, they leave with a much higher level of self-esteem. That's what teaching is all about."

"Students have to learn the meaning of the word *perseverance*," Dom continues. "You remove the option of quitting. When you hit a roadblock, you find a different path. Perseverance is like the opening scene in Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan*. Hitting that beach was the greatest example of perseverance I ever saw. Quitting just wasn't an option."

"Actually, my strategy with students is pretty simple and straightforward. First,

where do you want to be? Second, now that you know where you want to be, visualize a plan to get there. Third, stay on course. If you go off course, it isn't going to work."

There's no mistaking Dom Famularo's love for the art of drumming. One need only spend ten minutes in his presence to sense the intensity of that love. "I've pushed this thing with drumming as hard as I could," claims Dom. "I've given it my very best shot. As a result, I've been fortunate to live the life I always wanted to live."



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Colors.



DW Drum Artists (from left to right): Brain (Primus), Paul Wertico (Pat Metheny), Martina Axen (Drain STH), Scott Crago (Eagles) and Gerald Heyward (Blackstreet).

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	10"	12"	13"	14"	15"
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Bronze				5, 6, 7"	

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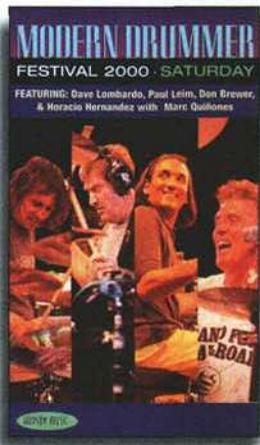


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Saturday, May 20 Highlights

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

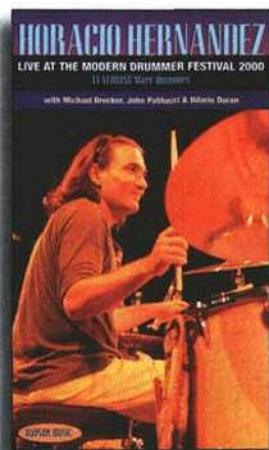
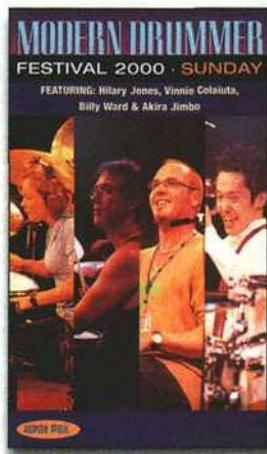
- Tony Medeiros
- Street Beats
- Dave Lombardo
- Paul Leim
- Don Brewer
- Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez & Musical Guests featuring Marc Quiñones

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).

Includes thirty full minutes of Vinnie in performance, plus interviews!



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.

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If It Ain't Broke... Fix It Anyway

Redesigned Pearl Export Kit And Masterworks Collectors Edition Snare Drums

You'd think that if you made what is pretty well recognized as the best-selling drumkit in the world, you'd leave it alone. After all, why mess with a good thing?

Well, how about to make it even *better*? Pearl has completely redesigned the mega-popular *Export* series, upgrading the look, function, and features—while *lowering* the price. For example, both the *Export* (wrapped) and *Export Select* (lacquer) series now feature a split-lug design that strongly resembles that of Pearl's high-end *Masters Custom* drums. The kits also feature a matching wood 5 ½ x 14 snare drum, a complete set of *PowerPro 800W* series double-braced hardware (including a throne on *Export* kits), *Integrated Suspension System (ISS)* tom mounts on all mounted toms, and the newly designed *P-100* bass drum pedal with Pearl's *Duo-Beat* two-sided beater. New color choices are available for both series, and kits can be ordered complete with one of two specially priced cymbal packs for a one-stop shopping concept.

At the other end of the scale, Pearl has augmented their ultra-high-end *Masterworks* program with two *Collector Edition* snare drums. The first is a 1-ply, steam-bent 100% maple in 5x14, 5 ½ x 14, and 6 ½ x14 sizes, and in black lacquer and liquid amber finishes. The second is a 6-ply, 5.4 mm 100% rosewood shell. Both drums feature 24 K gold hardware and *Mastercast* hoops.



Taking A New Shape

Toca Premier Congas

In 1998 Toca debuted their Premier series "all-weather" professional fiberglass bongos and congas. For 2000 the drums feature a new bowl shape for "better sound balance and volume." A new metallic blue color has also been added to the original red/black fade finish. EasyPlay hoops, heavy hardware, and synthetic drumheads also help Premier series drums to "withstand the elements without shell damage or having to retune after every song."

Bigger Softness, Softer Bigness

Meinl Amun Thin Big Bell Ride And Revised Raker Cymbals

If you like the character of a thin ride cymbal, but you also seek clear stick attack and a high, rich sound, check out Meinl's Amun series 20" thin Big Bell Ride. According to Meinl, this model's thinness and extensive hammering give it "a jazzy basic tone easily varied by the size of the stick used." At the same time, the big domed bell provides "a clear ping sound and enormous power."

Speaking of power, Meinl's Raker line has long been favored by European heavy metal drummers for just that. But Meinl has given the line a lathed and hammered surface to produce "a softer and warmer sound than ever before," making the cymbals more versatile and useful for various styles of music.



Sometimes Its Good To Mesh Up

Triggerheads Mesh Drumheads

No doubt about it: Mesh drumhead technology is the hottest thing to hit electronic drumming since the extension cord. And they're showing up on "practice kits" too, taking advantage of their silent performance. But if you don't play electronics (yet) and you don't want to buy a whole new kit to practice on, how can you take advantage of this new technology?

Easy: Buy a set of Triggerheads. They're black mesh heads originally designed to work in conjunction with ddrum triggers to "electrify" acoustic drums. (Hence their name.) They're dandy for that purpose—with any number of triggers, not just ddrum's. But they can serve as ultra-quiet practice heads, too. And with the addition of RimNoise Eliminators (rubber extrusions designed to fit over metal drum rims) you can make your drumkit virtually silent!

Triggerheads are available in 8" to 16" sizes for toms and snares, and in 18" to 26" sizes for bass drums. They're just making their way into some US drumshops now, so check with your local dealer. Failing that, you can order the heads directly from the Swiss supplier, ddrum Schweiz, for a nominal shipping charge. Check their Web site for more information.

When You're Looking For Less...

Mapex 750 Performing Artist Series Hardware

In response to many drummers' requests for sturdy single-braced hardware, Mapex offers the 750 series. The B750 boom stand (\$125) features a knurled boom arm that drops into the main body of the stand and can be used as a boom or straight stand. The stand also features Mapex's ball & socket tilter and the new OS Cymbal Accentuators (in place of traditional felts). The H750 hi-hat stand (\$155) features an adjustable foot board, a ten-stop spring tensioning system, rotating legs for multi-pedal setups, and a tri-nodal cymbal seat.

The P750 single bass drum pedal (\$125) has a new Yellow Flash non-slip floor plate, Tri-tonal beater, and a stroke adjustment stabilizer for accurate pedal height to fit the player's personal taste. All Performing Artist Series hardware features Mapex's two-year warranty to the original owner.

Been Busy At The Shop

Drum Workshop Aluminum-Shell And 12" Edge Snare Drums, New Finishes, And Hardware Upgrades

They don't call 'em *Drum Workshop* for nothing. The elves have been busy out in Oxnard lately, and the result is a slew of new drums and hardware innovations.

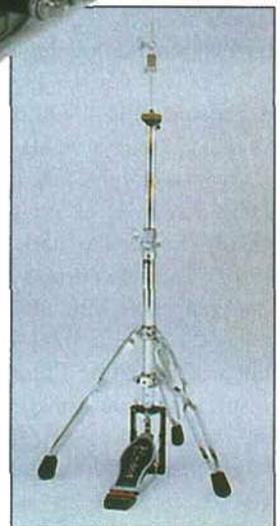
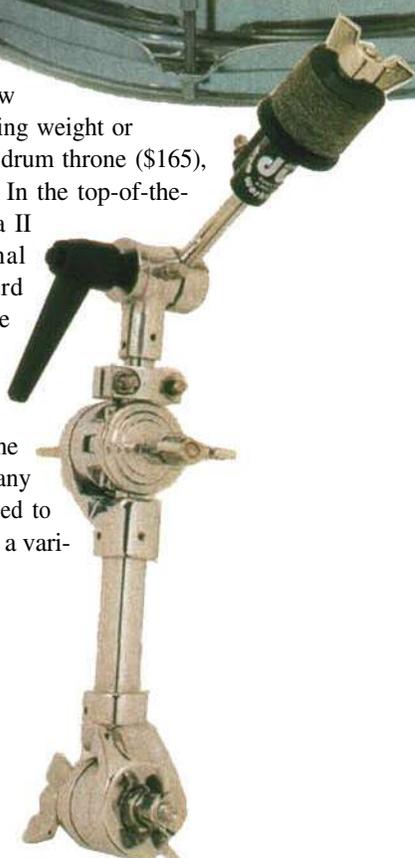
To begin with, DW now offers 5x13 and 5x14 snares with heavy-gauge aluminum shells, said to have "a bright yet noticeably coarser and drier tone than any other metal drums currently available, making them ideal for studio and live situations." They feature a brushed-satin finish and come with True-Pitch tuning and DW custom snare wires, throw-off, and drumheads. List price for either size is \$1,095.

For something a little more traditional but still unique, try DW's 12" Edge drum, which combines brass and maple shell sections to provide "the warmth of wood and the brightness of metal." The new 5, 6, and 7x12 Edge models offer a new tonal option in a drum size that can be used either as a small-diameter primary snare or as an accessory drum.

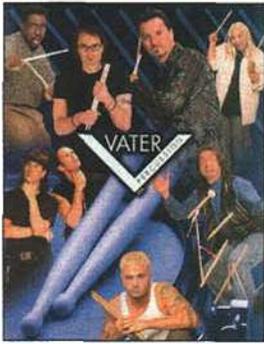
And when it's time to visualize what your drums should look like, you might want to consider one of DW's new exotic wood veneers: quilted cherry and Claro walnut. Each is prized for its deep coloration and distinct figuring. Or you might opt for a striking FinishPly wrap, in white oyster, ultra white oyster, black moire, black swirl, or black velvet.

On the hardware side, DW has upgraded its 7000 series of middle-weight stands to now include double-braced legs. The company says that the new legs add stability without significantly increasing weight or cost. Also new in the 7000 series is the 7100 drum throne (\$165), designed for mid-to heavy-duty applications. In the top-of-the-line 5000 series, the new 5500D 3-Leg Delta II hi-hat (\$275) is offered with a conventional rotating triple-leg assembly and a footboard without a pedal plate (all in order to make the stand more portable).

Finally, two new versions of DW's Dogbone cymbal adapter include the 788 Mini Dogbone (\$29) and the 789 Mini Dogbone with cymbal tilter (\$64). Both models fit on any existing 3/8" tom or cymbal arm and can be used to add or position cymbals or other accessories in a variety of locations around the drumkit.



And What's More



VATER'S new 16-page catalog is packed with specs, descriptions, and photos of their complete product line, including thirty-eight new

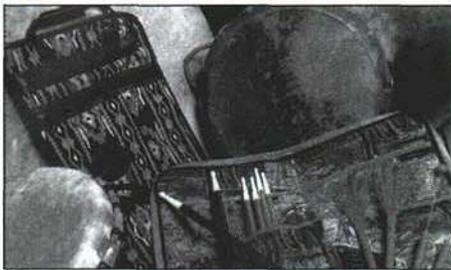
products for 2000. Also included are artist photos, company history, and helpful tips on stick selection.

Percussive Adventures from **EASTWEST COMMUNICATIONS** is a double-CD package of unusual percussion sample tracks. No straight-ahead drum beats here; the focus is on hand percussion, along with some ethnic wind instruments, synth coloration, and other enhancements. African and



Oriental ideas are more prominent than Latin grooves, and the overall effect is more of tribal patterns and extended fills than backbeat rhythms. *Percussive Adventures* is particularly useful for film and project scoring or for esoteric atmospheres in live performance.

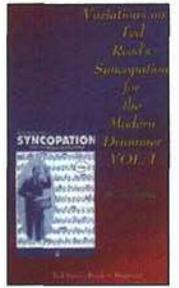
The new **VERISONIC** Professional Stick Bag features deep pockets, leather binding, and thick fabric with rich designs. A Renaissance tapestry motif is trimmed in brown leather; a Southwestern design is trimmed in black. Fabric shoulder straps, heavy zippers, and elastic hardware mounts are additional features. The bag lists for \$80.



Veteran jazz, big band, and rock drummer **JAY WEBLER** has created a video tutorial called *Variations On Ted Reed's Syncopation For The Modern Drummer*

(Volume 1). The video provides instruction on "the four fundamental rudiments," then explores how to apply them to various exercises from Reed's legendary book. The idea is to strengthen your hands as well as improve your reading and improvisational skills. A sample of the video may be viewed at www.thepercussionist.com. The tape is available directly from Webler for \$29.95 plus shipping.

A different sort of ethnic book/CD package is offered by ethno-percussionist **IVAN KRILLZARIN**. His *Earth Rhythms Catalog Vol. 1* features selected rhythms from Africa, Brazil, the Caribbean, and Latin America. (*Vol. 2*, covering Asia, the Balkans, India, the Middle East, and Polynesia, is in production.) A total of sixty-seven rhythm tracks are presented, with transcriptions for drumset, bass, and bongos. The package may be ordered directly from Startree Publications for \$24.95.



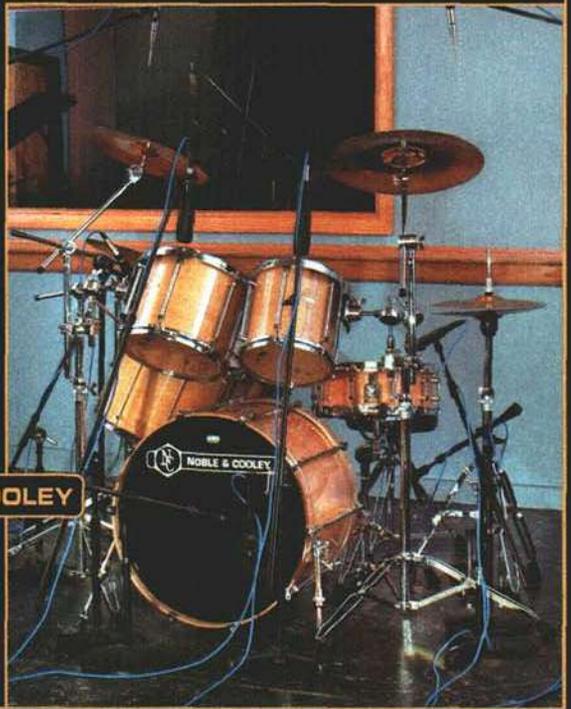
Making Contact

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Bottom row from left to right:

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Photo by Dave Green

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Pacific Drums And Percussion L Series Drumkit

DW Wades Into The Middle

by Rick Van Horn

Drum Workshop is pretty well recognized as a leading manufacturer of high-end drumkits. And that's totally understandable, because for more than twenty years DW only *made* high-end kits. However, a few years ago they decided to expand their coverage of the drumkit market with a series of mid-priced and entry-level kits. Not wanting to dilute the well-established high-end DW image in any way, the new line was given the name Pacific Drums And Percussion.

The new brand offers three series. Our review kit represents the "top of the line." It's the L Series, which features all-maple shells with high-gloss lacquer finishes. Also available are the C Series (with maple/mahogany tom and bass drum shells and wrapped finishes), and the E Series (with "select hardwood" tom and bass shells, a steel snare, and one wrapped finish).

The L Series kit is targeted directly at experienced semi-pros, knowledgeable hobbyists, and even working professionals who don't need (or can't afford) an ultra high-end kit. Drumkits in this range must offer pro-quality sound and features, but must also remain reasonably affordable. It's a tricky balancing act.

Hands Across The Sea

DW has approached the problem by designing the Pacific drums



Hits

- clear, resonant tom sound
- attractive overall look
- realistic pricing

in the US, then having them made "offshore" (read: in Taiwan) by some of the world's most experienced drum suppliers. This system combines high-quality materials and DW's design experience with lower overseas manufacturing costs. Also factored in is a certain amount of simplification, including limited drum sizes, drumkit configurations, and finishes.

Our test kit was the standard-issue five-piece model, with the addition of the two available add-on toms. The tom sizes are slightly shallower than "normal," although not quite as shallow as DW's designated "Fast" toms. All of the toms (except the 14x16 floor tom) are suspended to promote resonance and projection.

As an acoustic design element (and another "simplification" to promote affordability), none of the drums are fitted with reinforcing rings. This shouldn't be interpreted negatively as a "cost-cutting" measure, however. Many high-end drums (including DW's own Workshop series) are designed without reinforcing rings. And the Pacific toms certainly didn't lack for resonance or stability. They produced clear, pure tones, and the lower toms especially rang for days.

Visually, the kit is quite appealing. The lugs are reminiscent of DW's turret-style, but more oval in shape—very clean and streamlined. The tom mount is only as large as it needs to be, including the base attached to the bass drum shell. The clear amber finish was well done and very attractive. (Clear red and clear blue lacquers are the only other available finishes.) And the simple, oval badges are small and understated.

Drop By Drop

Even with an eye toward affordability, the Pacific drums have some neat details that attest to their DW heritage. All of the lugs feature rubber insulators to isolate them from the shells. The bass drum tension rods are drumkey-operated, and the claws are lined with felt to prevent them from marring the hoops. The tom mount is well designed for positioning flexibility, with ball & socket L-arms that allow the drums to be rotated completely. The advantage of this design is that it allows the bottom heads to be tuned without taking the drums off the mount. The mount also features an auxiliary clamp to accommodate an additional cymbal arm.

The toms were fitted with single-ply coated-clear batter heads. These have a ring of coating material around their edges, which



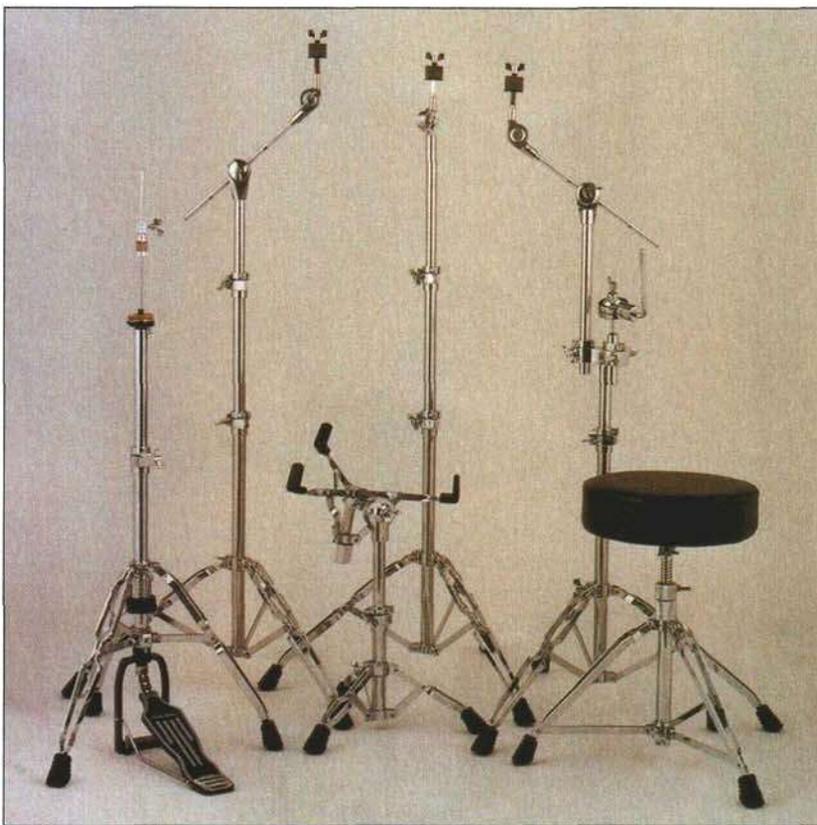
provides a slight muffling effect. Bottom heads were single-ply clears. The matching maple snare drum featured a coated single-ply batter and a hazy snare-side head. The bass drum was fitted with a single-ply coated-clear batter, a black front head with no hole, and an internal muffling pillow.

Standing In The Pacific

The 900 Series stands that accompany the L Series kit all feature wide-based double-braced legs, telescoping tubes with captive wingscrews, insulated tube clamps, and memory locks at all tube connection joints. The cymbal stands feature cast tilters and drop-

resistant wingnuts, and are surprisingly lightweight considering their double-braced design. The snare stand features a ball & socket basket adjustment for universal positioning. The hi-hat features a rotating tripod and an incremental spring-adjustment dial that's easy to reach and use. With direct-pull action, it operated smoothly and comfortably. All the stands are nicely designed and should hold up well, even against heavy-duty use.

The P-500 bass drum pedal is a single-chain-drive model, fitted with an offset cam for quickness and power. It also features a solid baseplate, along with nice details like two drumkey-operated bolts to secure the beater shaft, a felt/plastic convertible beater, and a



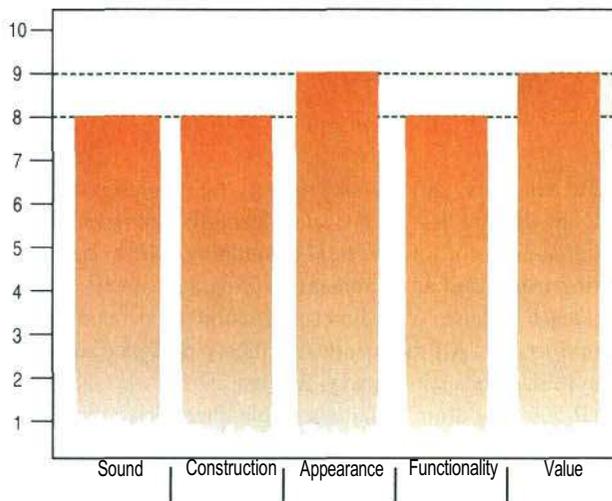
Our review kit features 900 Series cymbal, snare, and hi-hat stands (at left and center). The CT999 cymbal/tom stand and DT900 drum throne (at right) are available options.

side-operated hoop clamp. Unfortunately, the convenience of the hoop clamp is reduced by the fact that a drumkey is required to operate it. A wing bolt would have been better here.

The pedal features a hinged footboard and adjustable spring tension and beater throw/footboard angle. I found it easy to get comfortable with and fairly quick and responsive to play.

A nice inclusion in the hardware box is an instructional video featuring DW's Don Lombardi and John Good. Don gives a step-by-step tutorial on how to unpack, assemble, and set up the kit, and later offers a nice lesson on basic playing techniques. John

In A Nutshell



provides a thorough demonstration of how to tune the drums. The video might prove most valuable to less experienced drummers purchasing E or C Series kits, but there's useful information there for drummers of any level.

Making A Splash

Given their design and their one-ply heads, the Pacific toms and bass drum really stressed attack, projection, and resonance. If they lacked anything, it's a bit of the roundness and tonal expansion that reinforcing hoops can add. However, those characteristics can partly be achieved through head selection. When I tried the Pacific toms with Remo Pinstripes and Evans G2s, they got a little fatter and warmer. It's nice to have the choice.

I'm not fond of single-ply bass drum batters. They offer lots of attack, but can be weak in the low-end department. With its factory-installed batter, the Pacific bass drum had punch and power. But it didn't have as much depth as I thought it should—especially considering its size and the fact that there was no hole in the front head. When I switched to a Remo clear Emperor I got a good deal more depth, with no appreciable sacrifice of power. The drum itself offered plenty of "bigness" and shell tonality, while the internal pillow allowed for any desirable degree of muffling. Very convenient.

The snare drum also offered plenty of volume, cut, and crispness, with a dry, woody character. It wasn't the most sensitive snare I've ever played, but it would certainly serve well for general-purpose applications. Its 5 1/2x14 size gave it a wide effective tuning range from medium-high to medium-low. This would make the drum very versatile, which is what you want if you're only using one snare.

C'mon In...The Water's Fine

The Pacific L Series is a no-nonsense, pro-quality kit. It offers terrific acoustic performance and versatility, excellent functionality, and an attractive appearance. It also comes with an impressive pedigree. And you get all of that at a realistic price. So take the plunge and check 'em out.

Pacific View

Kit reviewed: Pacific L Series

Configuration: 18x22 bass drum, 8x10, 9x12, and 12x14 suspended toms, 5 1/2x14 snare. (7x14 suspended tom and 14x16 floor tom with legs available as add-ons.)

Hardware package: Pacific 500 Series chain-drive bass drum pedal, 900 Series hi-hat stand, snare drum stand, straight cymbal stand, and straight/boom cymbal stand

Finish: Clear amber lacquer

List price: \$2,495 (for basic five-piece configuration)

Arbiter Flats

Advanced Tuning produces round tones from flat drums.

by Rick Mattingly

A drumkit consisting only of heads is not a new idea. A review of the original RIMS Headset kit appeared in the April 1986 issue of *Modern Drummer*, and there was a short-lived product called Flat Jacks on the market even earlier. And such drummers as Terry Bozzio and Bill Bruford have used RotoToms instead of conventional toms in the past, proving that it doesn't always take two heads and a shell to make a viable drum for professional applications.

But if all of your resonance has to come from a single drumhead, then that head better be in perfect tune. That's where the Arbiter Flats kit has an advantage. It features Arbiter's Advanced Tuning system, which is designed to guarantee easy, consistent head tensioning.

Tuning Up

Instead of several individual tuning lugs, each head has a single tuning lug that is mounted horizontally and attached to a circular, metal V-clamp. The drumhead is sandwiched between two collars, with the top one also serving as the counterhoop. Each collar has a



Hits

- fast, accurate tuning
- portability
- compact setup

Misses

- limited resonance
- snare drum stresses high frequencies

flange that fits into the V-clamp. When the lug is tightened, the V-clamp squeezes the flanges together, thereby tensioning the head evenly all the way around.

When I originally reviewed Arbiter's Advanced Tuning system on their AT drumkit (September 1998 *MD*), I

noted that although the pitch of each head sounded focused, it wasn't perfect. By tapping around the circumference of each head, I could hear the pitch go up slightly whenever I was opposite the tuning screw or the hinge, indicating that the head was under a bit more pressure at those points. An Arbiter spokesman said at the time that the company was addressing that problem. It looks like they succeeded, because on the Flats the pitch was absolutely consistent all the way around the head.

Besides making head-changing quick and easy (thanks to the quick-release hinge on the V-clamp), the AT system also allows fast tuning. You can tap on the head with a drumstick in one hand while tightening the head with a key in the other hand. This is much like the way a guitarist plucks a string while turning a tuning key. Finding the optimum pitch and resonance for each head is fast and effortless.

Setting Up

The Flats kit we received for review had combination spurs/legs for the bass drum (which also has a bracket for mounting a bass drum pedal). Three tom-mounting brackets that can be attached to conventional cymbal stands were also included, along with memory collars and a specially designed drumkey. (A regular drumkey works for the tuning system, but Arbiter's key is easier to use.) No snare drum stand, hi-hat or bass drum pedals, or tom/cymbal stands were included. The kit did come with a padded carrying case.

Although the toms and bass drum don't appear to have shells at all, they actually have wooden rings (about 1" deep on the toms, and 1 1/3" deep on the bass) that Arbiter refers to as "ultra-shallow wooden shells which color the sound and add volume." This "shell" basically provides a bearing edge and a surface with which to mount the counterhoop and collar. The shape of the bearing edge certainly affects the "color" of a drum's sound, but I couldn't hear much evidence that such narrow shells added any significant volume.

Gettin' Down

With only one head and not much shell, the toms and bass drum basically sound like RotoToms. Again, it's the tuning system that



The entire Flats kit collapses to fit into one padded bag.

gives the Flats an edge over other "head only" drums, providing as much resonance as you're ever going to get from a single head. In fact, considering that the toms and bass drum were fitted with Remo Pinstripe heads, I was surprised at how much ring they had. For live playing I would prefer an Ambassador-type head. But for home practice or teaching-studio use, these drums had nice tone with considerably less volume than conventional drums.

The snare drum had a 2"-deep shell and regular batter and snare-

side heads. The drum was certainly crisp and responsive, but with its shallow depth it had a somewhat brittle sound. The narrow shell also cut down on the volume, so that the drum sounded consistent with the head-only toms and bass drums. Still, its sharp attack sound allowed it to cut fairly well.

One feature (or lack thereof) that might take some getting used to is that there is no snare throw-off. There is also no single fine-tuning adjustment screw for the snares. You need to pull the snare unit tightly when attaching it, and then it can be further tensioned via four drumkey-operated screws that force the dual butt plates away from the lower rim. Anyone who plays so hard that frequent tightening of the snares is necessary will hate this system. But let's face it: This isn't exactly your ideal thrash-and-bash drumkit. When playing at a "reasonable" volume (with a full range of dynamics), I never had to fool with the snares again once they were set to my preference.

Packing Up

The bass drum, toms, and snare drum fit into a round padded bag. The snare drum has its own zippered compartment on the top



This close-up of the ultra-thin Flats snare clearly shows Arbiter's AT (Advance Tuning) system.

Quick Looks

New Vater Drumsticks, Brushes, and Accessories

Recording, Sweet Ride, And 8A Drumsticks

The three new Vater drumstick models listed above are all 16" long, and are of similar, moderate-sized diameters. The largest, at .560", is the Recording model, which features a medium-sized, rounded barrel-shaped tip, a short taper, and a fairly thick neck. It's a front-loaded stick that can provide good impact power without being massive or unwieldy. Its forte is the downstroke; it isn't the quickest-rebounding stick you'll ever play. But that characteristic lets it pull full tones out of toms and ride cymbals without a lot of effort on your part.

If you *want* rebound, on the other hand, the 8A might be your ticket. At a very comfortable diameter of .555", it also offers a fairly long and gradual taper to a small, squarish barrel-shaped tip. The small tip gives it excellent ride-cymbal articulation, and the neck taper gives it terrific rebound for quick sticking patterns. This is the most delicate-sounding of the stick models we tried, yet it didn't lack for impact power.

Jazz and studio players may favor the Sweet Ride. The smallest of our test group at .530" in diameter, it comes with an extra-small ball tip at the end of a very short taper. This design affords pinpoint attack on a cymbal, backed by almost the full weight of the stick. The result is clarity and articulation from the ride-cymbal sound. Again the short taper reduces rebound action somewhat, but the small size of the tip and the overall small diameter of the model keep the stick well-balanced and easy to play with.

All of the above models are available in wood tip only. They're priced at \$10.80 per pair.

Karl's Drumbale

Named for Santana timbalero Karl Perazzo, Karl's Drumbale is the world's first tapered timbale stick. It's thinner than most drumsticks but thicker than most timbale sticks. The idea is to offer a single model that can allow the player to switch from drumset to timbales

flap. The other drums lie inside each other and can be secured with straps. Personally, I'd line the entire case with stiff cardboard for extra protection. When I first unpacked the kit, the snare head had a couple of deep dents, and the snare unit itself had obviously taken a hit that bent a couple of the wires. (Presumably this happened during shipping.) So some extra protection would not be out of line.

There's a little extra room in the case, so one could conceivably throw in a couple of other accessories and maybe a stick bag. But realistically, in addition to this case for the drums, one would need a hardware case for the floor stands, hi-hat pedal, bass drum pedal, and throne, as well as a cymbal bag. (That's still a lot less luggage than the typical drumset requires.)

Summing Up

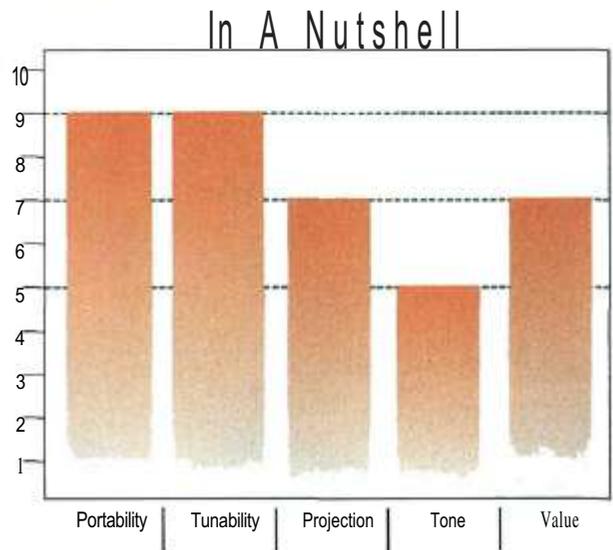
So, would I use this kit on a gig? Generally, I try to put good sound over convenience, so I prefer drums with shells and two heads. But I've played gigs where there was so little room for the band to set up that this kit would have made life a *lot* easier. The sheer portability of the Flats could also be an advantage in certain situations.

The sound is certainly adequate for low-volume settings. And because the heads produce such a pure tone (due to the tuning system), if miked properly the drums could also be used in medium- to high-volume settings. I'm no authority on triggering, but I would imagine that this kit would also do the job in situations in which you just need to provide the initial vibration and let the electronics take over from there.

Flats definitely have value as a practice kit that responds just like "real" drums (but takes up less room and produces lower volume in the home.) It might also prove a useful tool in a teaching studio, for the same reasons. Finally, it could be handy as a "rehearsal kit" in the band room—or even on tour.

The five-piece kit reviewed here is the "standard" model, but other configurations are available, and drums can also be pur-

chased individually. If Flats aren't in your local drumshop, contact Arbiter North America, 20 Strathy Rd., Cobourg, ON, Canada K9A 5J7, tel: (877) 553-5596, fax: (877) 553-5598, fraser@arbiterdrums.com, www.arbiterdrums.com.



Going Flat Out

Kit reviewed: Arbiter Flats

Configuration: 22" bass drum, 10", 12", and 14" toms, and a 2x14 snare drum. (Also available are 8", 13", and 16" toms, a 20" bass drum, and a 2x13 snare drum.)

Shells: None

Hardware package: Tom mounts and bass drum spurs. No stands included.

List price: Approximately \$850; may vary slightly per dealer

without changing sticks.

The stick is 15 5/8" long and around .530" in diameter. The "neck" starts a gradual taper about 4 1/2" back from the "tip", which is actually just a smaller, rounded-off end about .375" in diameter. This design gives the stick quite a nice, playable balance. The lack of an actual drumstick tip is really only noticeable on a ride cymbal; the stick sounds fine on hi-hats and crashes (which is where it's more likely to be used anyway). It sounds equally good on drums of any description. Karl's Drumbale sticks are priced at \$11.85 per pair.

WireTap Sweeps Brushes

WireTap is Vater's name for their entire series of wire brushes. The latest entry in that series is called Sweeps, and it's about the simplest design in retractable brushes you can imagine. There's no pull rod. When fully retracted into the black rubber-coated handle, the wires still extend about 1/4" out. This is enough to hold between one's thumb and forefinger to pull the wires out for playing. (Or you can just give the handle a flick to expose even more of the wire.) Retracting the

wires back into the handle is a simple matter of pushing them carefully into place.

The base of the handle has a rubber cap. The handle itself is comfortable to hold, and the overall balance of the brushes is excellent. The thin metal wires are fixed in a nice, medium spread, offering a, very traditional sound on a drumhead. Vater recommends keeping the brushes in the heavy plastic sleeve that they're sold in. List price is \$19.95.

SplashSticks

SplashSticks are the newest model in Vater's line of multi-rods. This particular version wraps its bundle of 16" dowels in a plastic sleeve that extends a full 12" up from the bottom. This leaves only 4" of the dowels exposed. The result is a tighter, more "stick-like" sound than that created by dowels with more room to "spread." In addition, the plastic sleeve offers a more solid surface for playing rimshots.

Even though adjustable multi-rods have been introduced in the past, they never seemed to catch on. (Perhaps the little adjustable

Wuhan Western-Style Cymbals

East meets west to create a new line of ancient instruments

by Rick Van Horn

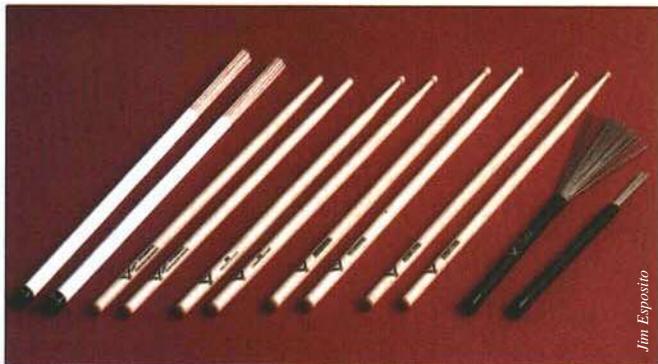


Jim Esposito

Quick Looks *continued*

rings got lost or broken too easily.) As a result, drummers seem perfectly happy to keep several different models of multi-rods in their bags in order to achieve different sounds. Vater's SplashSticks offer

yet another choice—and it's a very useful one. They're priced at \$21.75.



Jim Esposito

(From left): SplashSticks, Karl's Drumbale, 8A, Recording, Sweet Ride, WireTap Sweeps

Stick And Finger Tape

Vater says that their Stick And Finger Tape is the world's first tape intended for use on sticks and fingers. It's lighter than most stick wraps I've seen, with a gauze-like consistency. Yet it has a self-adhesive property that prevents it from coming unwrapped during playing. In terms of grip, the tape provides a very secure surface—if a bit high-friction. In fact, the gauzy material might be a little rough on soft, uncalloused hands. But the sense of security provided by the material is impressive.

As a wrap for fingers, Vater's tape has the advantage of being thinner and more flexible than standard adhesive or first-aid tape. Because of this thinness, however, some drummers might require an extra turn of tape around their fingers to achieve the necessary level of cushioning. Fortunately, the gauzy weave of the tape allows it to "breathe," making such extra wrapping still comfortable.

Each tape roll is 1" wide and 30' long, allowing it to wrap approxi-

The name "Wuhan" has a certain magic among drummers. It's the brand of genuine, honest-to-goodness, made-in-China cymbals prized by jazz, pop, and rock drummers alike for decades.

(Neil Peart cited them as favorites, for gosh sakes!) The nature of their manufacture—a handcrafting process that's been going on in the same place and in more or less the same manner for almost 2,000 years—gives them a truly unique character. To be frank, it's the standard for "China cymbal" sound to which all other brands aspire.

The fact that Wuhan cymbals have been on and off the US market several times over the past twenty years has only added to their mystique. (To quote Don Henley, "You always want the thing that you can't get.") Well, there's good news tonight, folks: Wuhan's are back.

The better news is, they aren't just China cymbals anymore. Oh certainly, the new line—currently being distributed in the US by Universal Percussion—includes all of the Chinas and gongs for which Wuhan is famous. But Universal's Tom Shelley figured that if he was going to form an alliance with a cymbal manufacturer, he'd take that opportunity to offer a complete line of Western-style cymbals, too. He wanted them to be professional cymbals that could go head-to-head with those of the major brands in terms of performance and application. But he also wanted them to retain a unique character that would set them apart from the competition. And while he was at it, he figured that the new line should be significantly less expensive than other comparable cymbals.

Lofty goals, eh? Well, I'm here to tell you that Tom and the craftsmen at Wuhan have met those goals, and then some. They've kept the initial model line very simple, focusing on quality rather than quantity. The result is a batch of really nifty-sounding, pro-

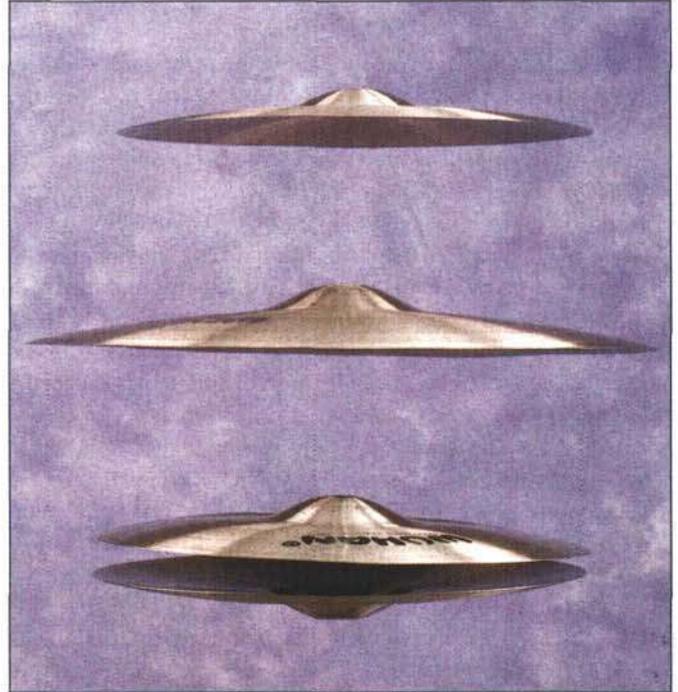
Hits

- professional handcrafted quality at affordable prices
- distinctive tonality throughout the line
- full one-year replacement warranty

quality cymbals that are available at startlingly low prices. Let's take a look at a representative sampling that we were sent for review.

20" Medium And Medium-Heavy Rides

Much of what I'm going to say about the ride cymbals carries through the entire Wuhan line. To begin with, as a line these cymbals are thinner and lighter than their counterparts from other manufacturers. For example, the 20" Wuhan medium ride would likely be considered a medium-thin or thin ride elsewhere. The Wuhan medium-heavy actually comes closer to most mediums.



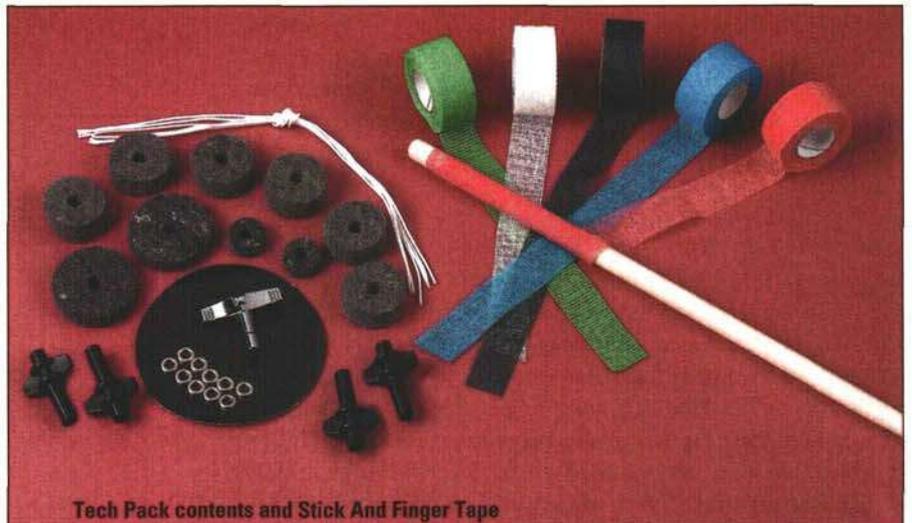
Cymbal for cymbal, Wuhan's are generally thinner than corresponding models from other manufacturers.

mately five pairs of sticks. The tape is available in red, black, green, blue, and white, at \$5.55 per roll.

Tech Pack

Vater's Tech Pack is a convenient package of essential items that you shouldn't be at a gig without. These include snare-holding cord, various cymbal felts, T-style combination cymbal sleeve/wingnuts, steel tension-rod washers, a drumkey, and a bass drum impact pad. Having these items readily available in an emergency could easily save you a great deal of grief. But stocking up on them individually could prove tedious and costly. At \$21.99, the Tech Pack is inexpensive insurance.

Rick Van Horn



Tech Pack contents and Stick And Finger Tape

This thinness gives *all* of the Wuhan cymbals a rich, warm, dark sound. With the rides in particular, it produces lots of liveliness and a good amount of spread. Stick definition is moderate; these are definitely *not* ping rides or dry rides. The bell sound on the medium cymbal was fair to good; the bell on the medium-heavy was really *quite* good.

Jazz drummers ought to love these rides. They should also serve well in big band, pop, and even some rock applications. I'd draw the line at loud rock situations where sheer cut and projection were desired over tonality and character. Otherwise, these beauties have a lot to offer.

16" Crash

Another characteristic that runs throughout the entire Wuhan line was most noticeable in the 16" crash we tried. I call this trait "a touch of China." By this I mean that although this was clearly a Western-style cymbal, its metallurgical pedigree and method of manufacture still give it just a touch of that Wuhan China-cymbal heritage. It's nothing remotely approaching "Oriental" or trashy. It's more of a subtle hiss that underlies the clear, ringing tonality of the crash. It gives a "breathiness" to the explosion of the crash that is just *so* sweet.

The 16" crash didn't lack for volume within the context of its size and weight, but it did have an understandable threshold. For louder applications, Wuhan offers an 18" size, which I didn't get a chance to hear. (If it's a bigger, more powerful version of the 16", it would probably bring tears to my eyes.) There is also a 14" crash in the line, along with 14" and 16" Fast crashes and an 18" crash ride.

14" Matched Hi-Hats

When it comes to hi-hats, Wuhan has really kept it simple: 14" matched hi-hats—period. No special weight designations, no esoteric "dark," "quick," or "power" versions. These are what you get...and they're just fine. Medium to medium-thin in weight, the hi-hats produced a respectable "chick" sound when closed with the foot. But it was the sound they produced when struck with a stick that impressed me. It was warm and pleasant, with lots of musical sibilance. This worked well for open/closed jazz patterns, and for funky "barks." (The cymbals were especially quick and responsive for the latter.)

For straight-ahead rock beats the hats had plenty of projection, yet that "touch of China" hiss kept them from sounding clanging and obnoxious. I can honestly say that these would be "general-purpose" hats in the most positive sense of the word. Short of a thrash metal gig played with billy clubs, I can't think of anywhere they *wouldn't* work just fine.

10" And 12" Splashes

Because each Wuhan cymbal is hand-made, no two are entirely alike in appearance, weight, or acoustic performance. This was particularly apparent among the splashes. We were sent three 10" and three 12" splashes, and they all differed dramatically in weight. Among the three 12"s, for example, one was medium-thin, one was thin, and one was almost paper-thin. But *vive la difference*, because they all sounded great! They were genuinely *splashy*, with that little "touch of China" giving them a delightfully delicate character. Choosing between them would simply be a matter of picking the one that blended best with the other cymbals

in one's setup. On the other hand, that might be the hard part. It's rare that we've ever been sent six splashes all of which I liked, but that was the case here.

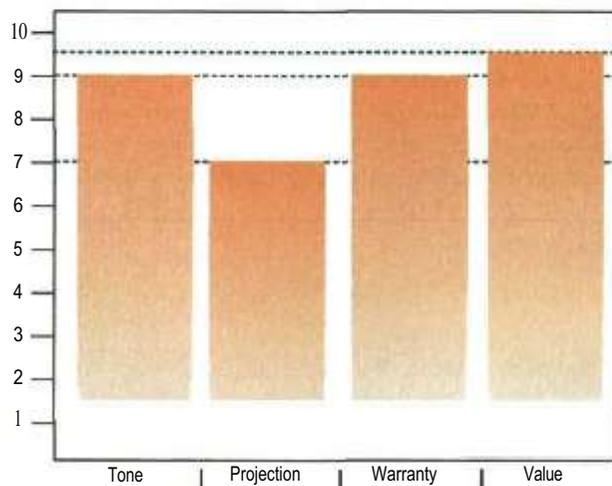
And It Gets Better

I spoke earlier about the fact that the new Wuhan are priced significantly lower than competitive pro-level cymbals. Check the listings at the end of this review to see what I mean. It's hard to argue with great sound that costs less. What else could you want?

Well, how about durability? Since I've said that the Wuhan are thinner than corresponding models from other brands, what does that say about the possibility of breakage? Of course, *no* cymbal can be guaranteed against breakage, no matter *what* its weight or thickness. But Universal Percussion offers a pretty impressive warranty on the Wuhan: They will replace any cymbal that breaks for any reason—no questions asked—for one full year from the date of purchase. This is a one-time offer per cymbal; they won't give you a new splash every other Friday. But it's still a heck of a deal, and it says a lot about the confidence that Universal's Tom Shelley has in the Wuhan line.

So there you have it: great sounds, great prices, and a great warranty. What are you waiting for? *Check 'em out.* Universal Percussion is a distributor and does not sell directly to consumers. So if your dealer isn't carrying Wuhan yet, ask them to contact Universal at tel: (800) 282-0110, fax: (800) 979-3786, email: UnivPerc@aol.com, Web site: www.universalpercussion.com.

In A Nutshell



Ratings are averaged to reflect positive and negative features for all items reviewed.

China Closet

10" Splash	\$87
12" Splash	\$99
14" Crash & Fast Crash	\$119
16" Crash & Fast Crash	\$144
18" Crash & Crash Ride	\$166
20" Med & Med-Hvy Ride	\$196
14" Matched Hi-Hats (pair)	\$237





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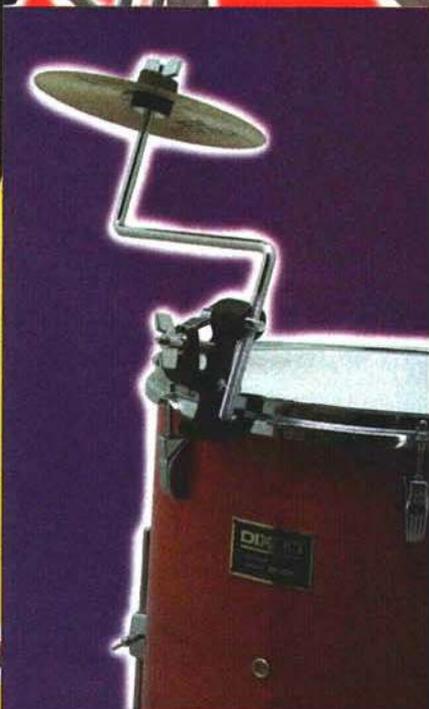
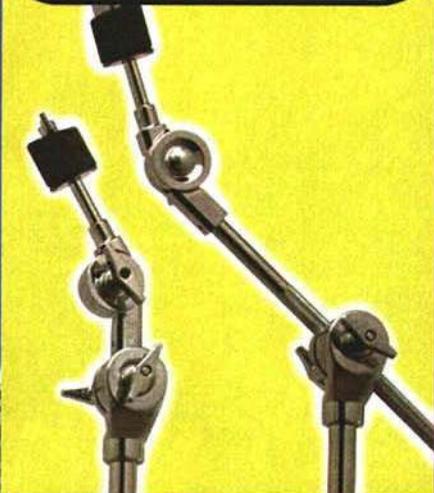
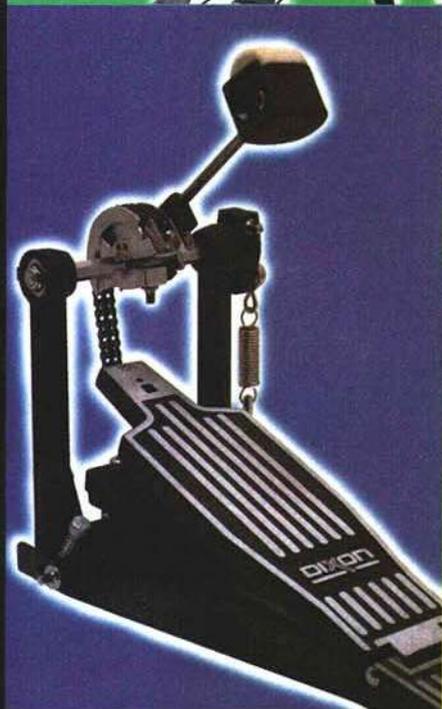
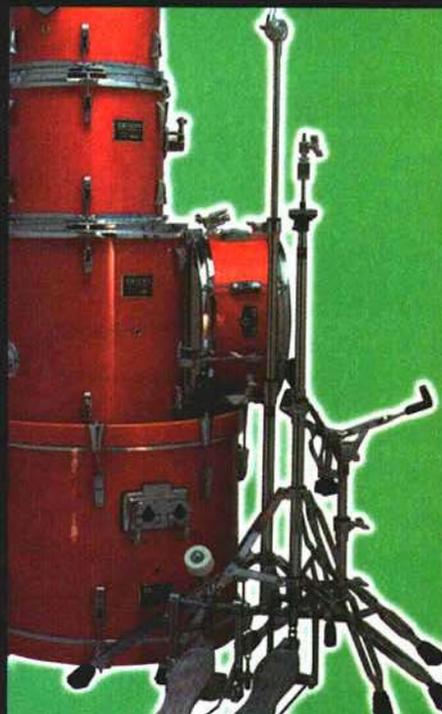
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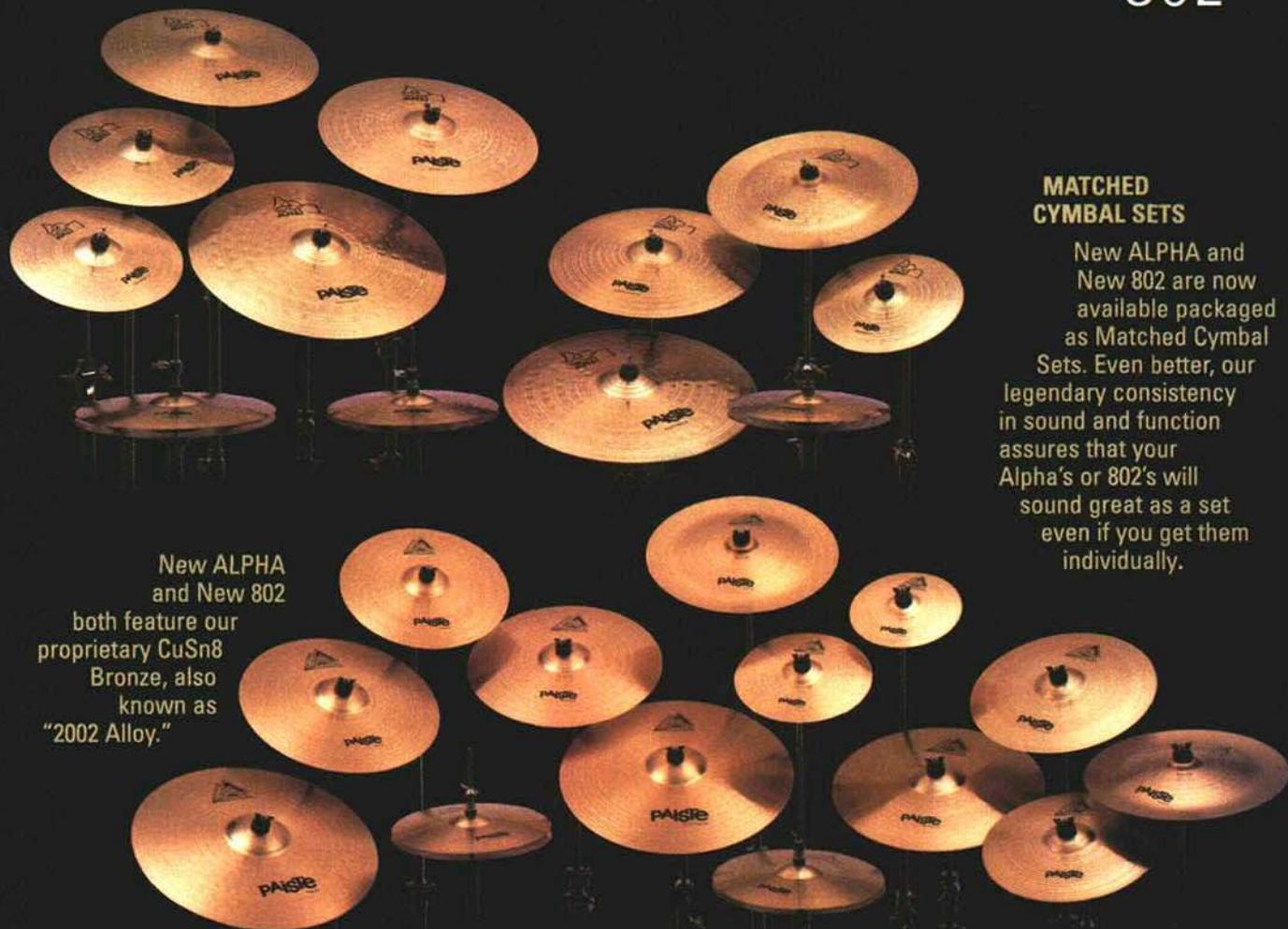
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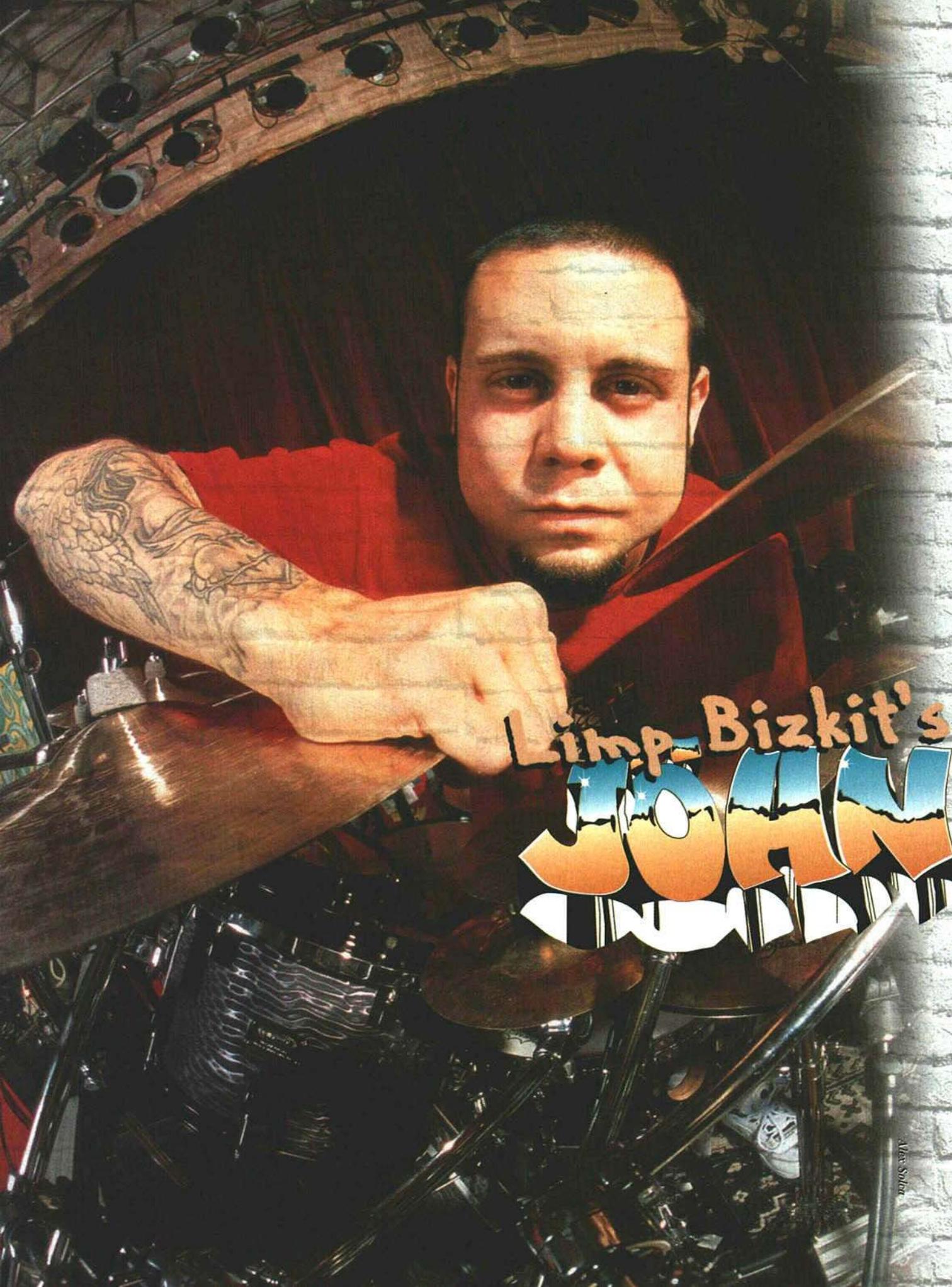
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CYMBALS SOUNDS GONGS



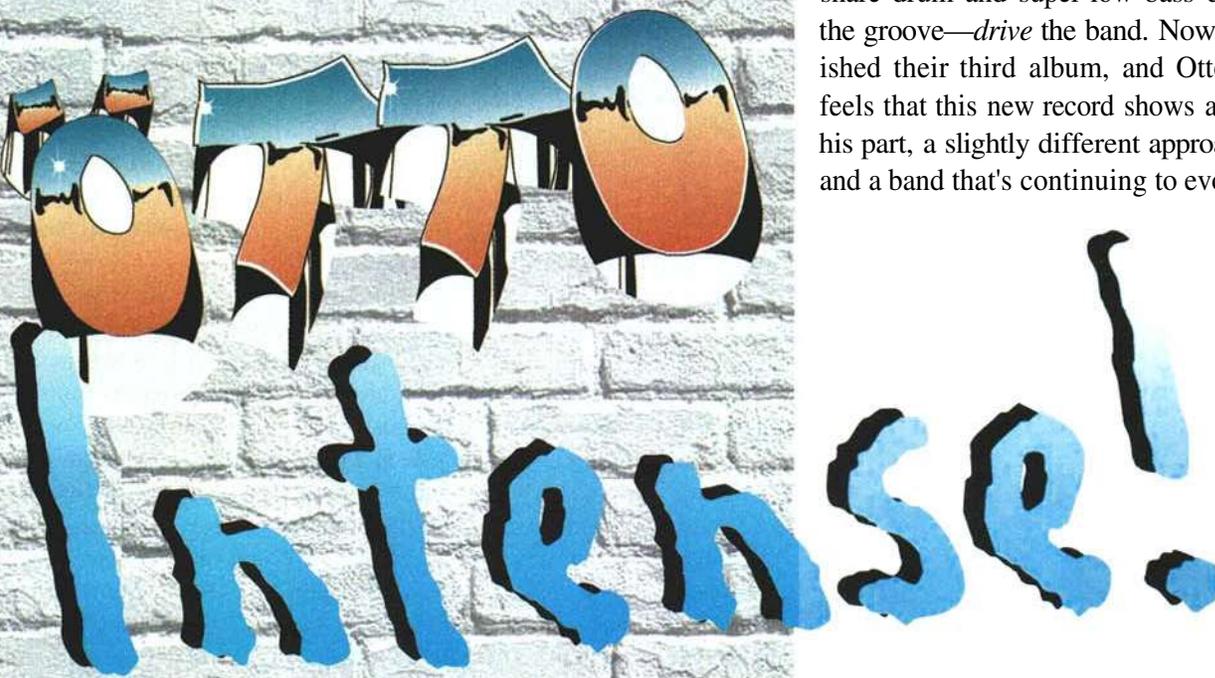
Limp Bizkit's

JOHN

Limp Bizkit's story is one of perseverance and originality, born in a garage in Jacksonville, Florida. Of course, this story has been told a thousand times. It's the great American dream, after all. Fred Durst (vocals) was tattooing, Sam Rivers (bass) was working at a Chicken Fillet eatery, and his cousin John Otto was working at his dad's auto shop. But every spare moment these musicians had was spent in Sam's garage constantly jamming until they honed their own style. Then they put themselves in the faces of every band that came through town, eventually getting their break.

It paid off. Limp Bizkit's 1997 debut album, *Three Dollar Bill Y'all*, sold 1.5 million copies. The band was then invited to play the 1998 *Warped* and *Ozzfest* shows, the *Family Values* tour, and the infamous *Woodstock '99*. Then their second offering, *Significant Other*, surpassed their first (6 million copies sold) and included a cover of George Michael's "Faith" and the monster hit "Nookie."

At twenty-three, drummer John Otto is thrilled that he gets to be in a band where his creative ideas are honored. His sound and style—a poppin' snare drum and super-low bass drum kickin' out the groove—*drive* the band. Now they've just finished their third album, and Otto is excited. He feels that this new record shows a lot of growth on his part, a slightly different approach to the music, and a band that's continuing to evolve.



Intense!

by Robyn Flans

MD: How did you get your start?

John: I started to get into music around the sixth grade, at eleven or twelve. When I started junior high, I wasn't sure what elective class to take, so I thought about drums; I had been setting up pillows and trying to emulate playing for a while, because I couldn't afford a drumset then.

In seventh grade I went into regular band and also took private lessons to get some snare drum technique. In eighth grade I actually bought a cheap set, a CB-700. I was stoked! I had two Zildjian cymbals too.

MD: What did you practice?

John: I would play to albums. At that point in my life I was getting into new *and* old music. I was really into John Bonham and Lars Ulrich. I was heavily influenced by Lars. I was also studying from books.

In eighth grade I started more private lessons and had a couple of friends I would jam with. I joined the marching band in high school to see what that was all about. It was good because it teaches you how to play with other people. It's a group effort. The experience also really helped my snare drum technique.

Next I took lessons privately from Jimmy Glenn Sr. He was from the Buddy Rich school. That was the time I began to spend hours practicing with just a snare drum, trying to master the rudiments—not just the twenty-six, but the thirty-eight—and a few books. I liked Gary Chaffee's *Rhythm And Meter*, which is mostly a snare drum book. It's simple, but it's cool because you can take those exercises and apply them to the drumset. I also worked

out of the Haskell Harr books, playing time with my right hand and feet while playing the snare drum parts in the book with my left hand.

At the end of the marching band thing, I realized I didn't want to continue in drum corps, that I really wanted to be playing drumset. The corps situation was great, though. I'd say it helped my time some, but more than anything it helped my chops as far as hand and snare technique. I would definitely recommend it for any young drummer.

After that, I went to a performing arts high school called The Douglas Anderson School of the Arts. I had to audition. I was accepted, and started there in my tenth-grade year. There were a couple of different performing bands, so most of the day I was at least touching the instrument, which was all I wanted! The school gave me a great opportunity to play. The more you're surrounded by it, the better you get.

I made All-State band when I was going to the other high school, but as a student at art school we *had* to do it. It was a lot of work. I also studied mallets and general percussion as well.

It was at art school that I got heavily into jazz. I started studying with a guy named Ricky Kirkland, who used to play for Ray Charles. He's a phenomenal drummer, and because of him I started to understand big band. I would go to his house, where there were two drumkits set up in his studio, and we would jam. Most of the time we would trade fours and eights, and work out anything I wanted to.

MD: When you got into jazz, who were you into?

John: I started with Charlie Parker and worked my way to the present. I listened to a lot of Elvin Jones and Art Blakey. Then current guys, too, like Brian Blade, who worked with Joshua Redman. Being in that school gave me an opportunity to check out so many great things.

MD: It sounds very intense for a high school student.

John: I guess you have to want it, and I really wanted it. I wanted to understand drumset on all kinds of lev-

els. When I started listening to jazz, I didn't understand the music. But I thought, These guys wouldn't have problems playing *any* kind of music. I wanted to be able to do that.

MD: Were your parents supportive?

John: Yes, totally. They were cool, but I think they were supportive because they saw my commitment and how serious I was about it. If I hadn't really been into it, I don't think they would have been too happy. I'm blessed that they let me make all that noise in their house for years and years.

When I was in the eleventh grade, I intensified my study. I was trying to figure out where I wanted to go to college, but by my senior year I started playing gigs for money at little cafes and clubs. Then Sam [Rivers], Limp Bizkit's bass player, called and asked, "Do you know any drummers?"

MD: Sam is your cousin, correct?

John: Yes. We had been playing together since we were little. He went to school across the street from the art school, so we were always in touch. When Sam called me, he and Fred Durst had been in a band a year earlier and were looking for a drummer. I wasn't doing anything, so we started jamming over at Sam's parents' garage. The next year, Sam and I were out of school, so we started jamming a lot. Wes [Borland, L.B. guitarist] went to the same art school as I did, but he studied art, not music. We had been trying different guitar players and were writing songs, and I mentioned that I knew Wes. He came over and started jamming, and it worked. We began to play out a lot.

People were really responsive. We practiced every day, played gigs constantly, and throughout the next year we started getting on the bill with bands coming through town. During that time we hooked up with KoRn, and then we went on tour with House Of Pain. They were doing six or seven shows in Florida, and we opened all of them. We stayed in contact. Then [bassist] Fieldy from KoRn heard one of our demos, and he got producer Ross Robinson into it. By that time, we had some wheels in motion with record labels. There was a guy starting a label called Flip who had some interest. And other people started hearing about the band because we were really trying to put ourselves out there, sending stuff out and playing open-

"When I started listening to jazz, I didn't understand the music. But I thought, These guys wouldn't have problems playing ANY kind of music. I wanted to be able to do that."



Alex Solica

ing slots. Once we got a deal, we decided we wanted Ross to do our record, and we went out to LA's Indigo Studios to do it.

MD: What did you know about recording?

John: We had recorded a few demos, and in the eleventh grade I had recorded with a local Jacksonville artist, Neil Champagne, who is a jazz trumpet player.

MD: Was your first recording experience scary?

John: Actually, when I was in eighth grade, my mom bought me a couple of hours of studio time for a birthday present. I went with a few friends and messed around. It was very cool. By the time I was recording in LA, I really wasn't nervous.

When I'm recording, I try to make sure that the little things are right with me. It's more about focusing on the finer points of playing, whereas live that doesn't really matter. The only thing that matters live is pushing and pulling with the musicians you're playing with and making everything sound together. If you mess up a fill or something, it's really not as big a deal. I don't care about the little fill live. I care about keeping the groove for the people in the audience and making the music feel

right. In the studio, I focus on the details of my playing.

MD: As you were beginning to create the sound and style for Limp Bizkit, what were you finding they needed from you as a drummer?

John: When we first started jamming, we'd do all different kinds of things. Fred would be singing and busting out rhymes, and I would be thinking, "There's gotta be a way for me to play behind this but still keep the intensity." I didn't want to be playing rock behind it. I didn't want it to be, "This guy is rapping over a rock band." We knew we had to create our own way of playing these different styles we were mixing together.

I'll tell you, it's a lot harder to do than people think—especially for a drummer. It's hard because it isn't about simple things like fills. It's much deeper. It's about keeping something super-intense when it's one way and then changing it when it becomes something else. It's like putting on shirts that aren't traditionally supposed to match, but making them mesh. It's about moving smoothly through changes. And coming up with the changes

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- 12. 20" Oriental Crash Of Doom
- 13. 20" K Custom ride
- 14. 22" Classic Oriental

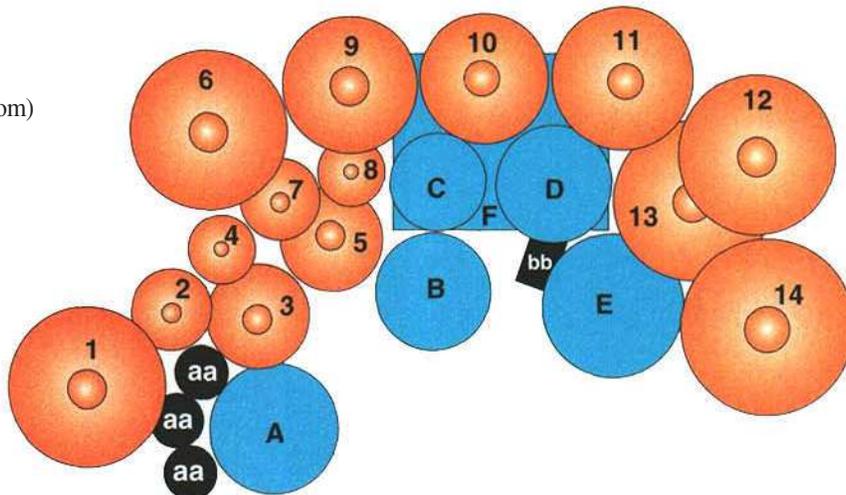
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is a challenge. They can't be too complex or you'll lose the listener.

MD: It used to be when you said the word fusion, one thing came to mind—jazz and rock—but that's not the case anymore. You have successfully fused rock and hip-hop.

John: First of all, the reason our band fuses stuff is because we all like different styles. I listened to a pretty fair amount of hip-hop growing up. I didn't really start listening to a whole lot of rap until I was in ninth or tenth grade, but when I was in junior high I was listening to some here and there—the more mainstream stuff. I was also playing drums and studying music. I had good instruction because the people who were helping me learn were also open-minded and told me to never limit myself to thinking that one style of music was best. That was a real positive thing to hear.

I've never had an attitude about any kind of music. I listen to everything. So many people try to make you feel it's wrong or not cool to listen to this or that kind of music. It's so selfish for anyone to do that to you.

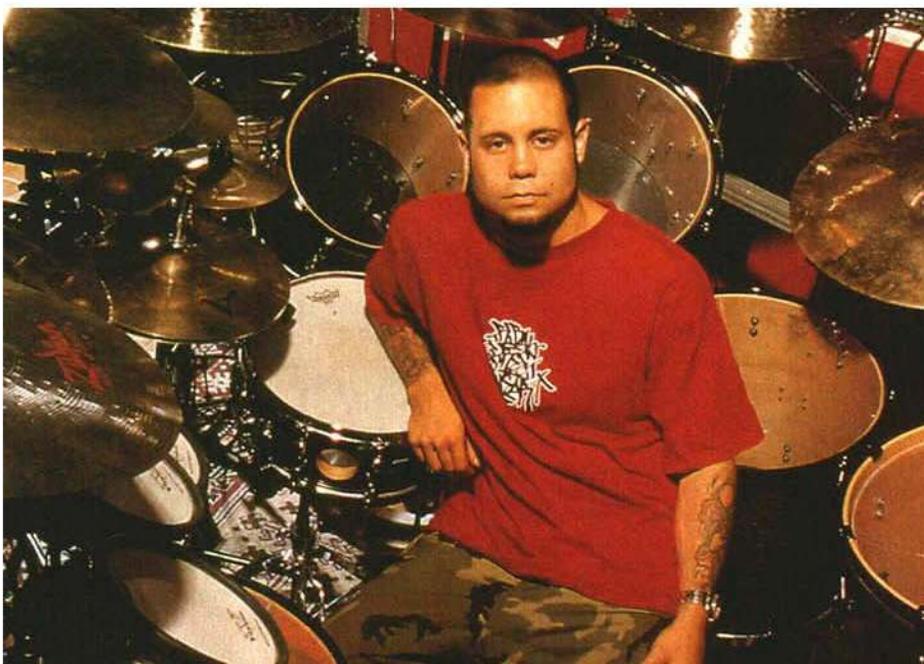
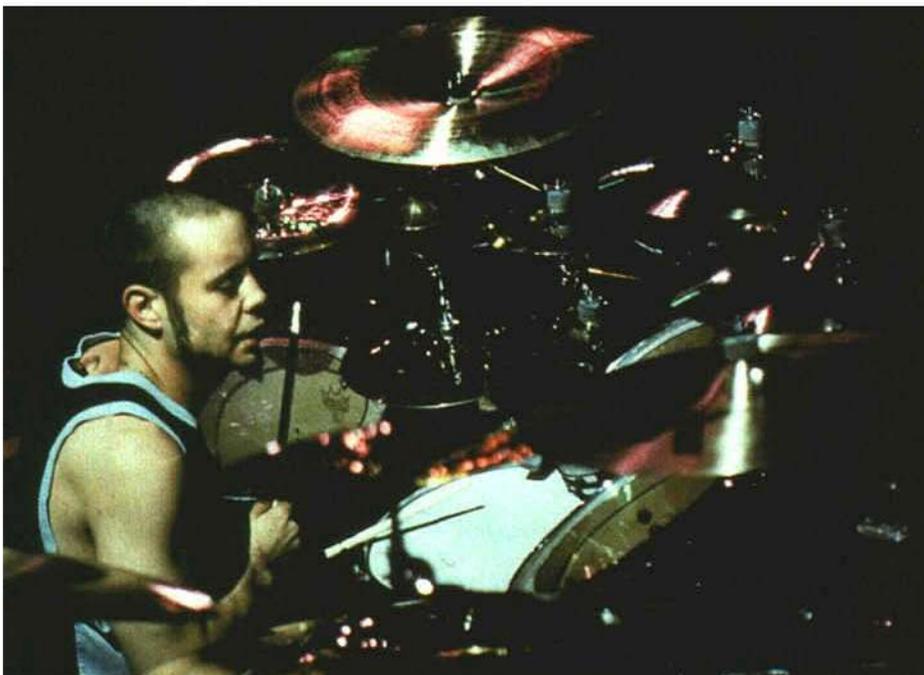
MD: Parents do that too.

John: It's even worse when parents do it. It's oppression, and it can have a major effect on a person who wants to play music.

When we started our band, we were experimenting with all sorts of styles. Since I had a broad background, I brought different things to the table. But through a lot of work we came up with our own approach, our own sound. We're proud of that.

MD: You've just completed your third album.

"So many people try to make you feel it's wrong or not cool to listen to this or that kind of music. It's so selfish for anyone to do that to you."



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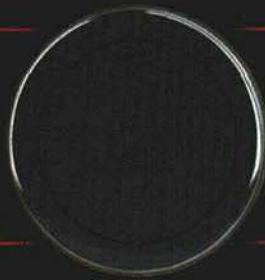
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John Otto

John: I feel it's the best stuff we've ever done. We've grown. It doesn't sound like we went in and tried to rehash a bunch of old songs.

MD: Neither does your last one.

John: Yeah, but this new one really reflects where we're at now. It's fresh, and very melodic. I would say there's an extremely different use of melody on this record, much more than we've ever done before.

MD: How does that affect you as the drummer?

John: It affects me in the sense that I want to be more aware of space. The melodies should ring out, not be covered up. Our first record was a little heavier. On this record there are a few songs where we explored different types of environments and melodies. I really tried to have a "song approach" for them, but still keep the drums present. I wanted to sound bigger than I am, but not get in the way of the track by overplaying.

MD: Rumor has it that you also used electronic drums on the new record.

John: I took a whole other turn as a drum-

mer on this record. I added a Roland V-Drum set to my acoustic setup, which offered a lot of sound choices. I set up the pads around my acoustic drums. I also placed a small Roland bass drum pad to the right of my bass drum. I was able to instantly switch between acoustic and electronic kits. At some points I even turned my foot sideways and played both bass drum pedals at the same time. So on the new album, people will hear certain bass drum sounds that are electronic and acoustic and think somebody just added a sample, but it was actually played.

MD: Can you recall a song you did that on?

John: There's one song called "Asleeping," which is the working title, and a song called "Boiler," which was probably the hardest in an overall sense. It's in 4/4, but it has that kind of 12/8 feel. It's the kind of thing where you wouldn't realize how hard it was to play until you saw it being played. On the choruses I'm keeping the 16th-note pattern on the open hi-hat, but hitting cymbals at the same time and playing the beat. On part of the chorus,

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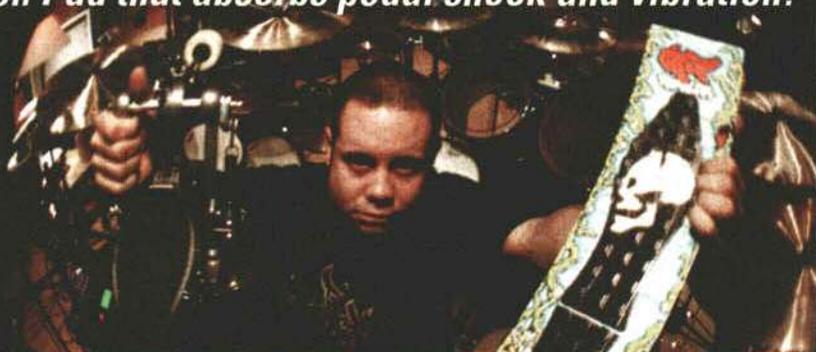
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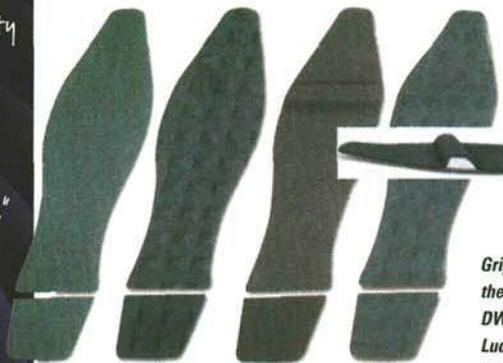
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John Otto

I'm hitting both of those bass drum pedals together, the middle section is all electronics, and then I go back to just acoustics for the verse.

MD: Do you remember how you came up with that idea?

John: I've been wanting to do this for three years, but I finally had the money to really investigate it. I had fun. But for me, my real work began when we started writing the songs for the new record.

MD: Can you describe the writing process?

John: When the band is working on new material, I'm thinking about how I'm going to integrate all that at the same time, just listening and trying to think about where to put what.

MD: You've got DJ Lethal putting in samples at the end of the recording process. Can you explain his role within the unit?

John: Lee brings an electronic element to the band. He makes those turntables sound like a guitar, not like your regular deejay stuff. He does more conventional stuff here and there, but mostly in our music you'll think a lot of things you're hearing are guitar when they're actually Lee. He runs his turntables through Marshall stacks and has guitar foot pedals. He has a "clean" deejay setup with a sampler, and then he has a dirty one with distortion effects. He also has loops, and he and I trade off loops sometimes.

MD: And how does what he creates affect you as a drummer?

John: It's like having a second guitar player. I have to leave a little more space. I try to take advantage of the things he does and add to them.

Working with loops can be hard sometimes because a lot of the sounds Lee does are actually sampled live, but they may not come in until halfway through a song. So if I'm not hitting the right time when that stuff comes in, I'm done.

MD: Do you feel confined by the loops?

John: Well, it depends on the loop. But the loops can add so much. They can sound very cool. You just have to get used to playing with them. I don't have a problem with it now.

MD: Can you offer any tips on how to go about playing to loops?

John: The reason I don't have to use a click now has more to do with the fact that I used to practice with a drum machine a

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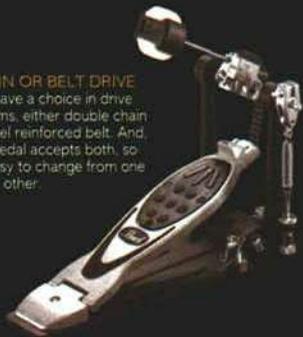
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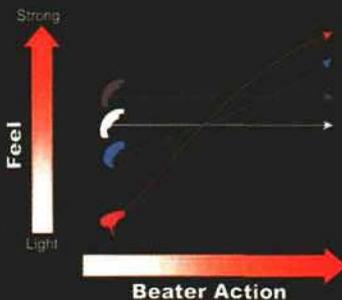


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John Otto

lot when I was younger. The more you practice with a click, the better off you'll be. But that doesn't mean you have to record and play live with a click track. That's always been my philosophy—practice with a click, play without it.

As far as playing to loops, another important part is being able to really hear what's going on. Your monitor setup, whatever you use, has to be right. If a monitor system goes out, it's impossible to do. We've actually had instances where that's happened.

We played one show where there were wrestlers from the WCW who came out and did a skit in the middle of our show. I was so lucky they were there, because at the same time they started their skit, my monitors totally went down. The next song we were going to play was a loop-driven thing, so thankfully, by the time the skit was done, the problem was fixed.

MD: Is the new material going to be hard to pull off live?

John: Some elements of it are going to be harder, but the V-Drums are going to make other things easier. A lot of the stuff that sounds like loops is actually going to be played by me now, so that stuff is going to be easier because I'll be controlling it. But it will also be more difficult because I'm going to want it to sound exactly right. And I've found that it's weird to all of a sudden go from acoustic drums to electronic and then back again.

MD: You may have made things a little more complicated for yourself.

John: A little bit, but that's what it's all about. It's about making the drumset a little fresher and bringing my creativity out. It feels cool to play like that, to add things in and know that it's me. Plus, my doing this frees Lee up to do other things.

MD: What are the most difficult songs for you to pull off live?

John: They're all unique in their own way, because the ones that don't have samples in them have a lot of weird drum stuff going on. The thing that takes the most focus from me is just sustaining solid time throughout the intense songs we play.

I would say that "1999" is a difficult song drum-wise, all the way around. There's a weird tom thing going on in the middle that is a half-time feel to everything else that's going on. It's a little unnatural to play, but it sounds cool. I'm also playing

hits on top of all of that. Plus, everybody trades off on the verses. There's a lot going on as far as using the whole drumkit and staying in time with everything.

Another tough one is "Mission Impossible," which we did for the soundtrack. That's hard because the way the middle part is done—with the busy tom part—is a real challenge for my endurance. Everything is based on 16ths. In the verses I have a lot of ghost notes going on between the hi-hat and snare. Then in the middle section I'm playing a constant 16th-note pattern on the floor tom with my right hand. Then I'm doing a pattern on the first two toms and the bell of my ride with my left hand. After about sixteen bars, my right hand feels like it's about to fall off.

MD: Do you do anything to warm up before a show?

John: Absolutely. I run through rudiments and try to loosen up my wrists. I also stretch out my upper body before I get ready to play. I tend to make myself do more work onstage than I have to because I get so into it. That's what makes it come off energetic, but it can be exhausting too. It's all about learning to pace yourself. I really work on that. When we were creating the new material, I knew we were going to be playing it live, which is another reason I try not to clutter the music with overly busy parts.

MD: Are you using the in-ear monitor system?

John: I tried the in-ear system, and I really wanted to use it. Unfortunately, when I tried it, I was hearing *everything*—it just didn't feel like a rock show. I felt removed from the whole thing. I can't sit there and look at 20,000 people and feel like I'm in a studio. Wes and Fred love in-ear monitors, but they don't work for me.

It would be killer for me if I could make them work, because the regular monitors are very tough on the ears. I crank my monitors so loud it's ridiculous, but I have to be able to hear the loops and things above all of the noise. I really don't want to lose my hearing. I think I'm going to get earplugs that take the damaging frequencies out. They say it's the cymbals that really do it to you, not the drums, and I have fourteen cymbals that all get used quite a bit.

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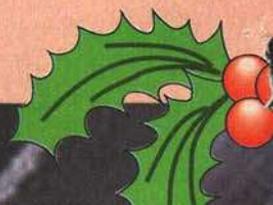
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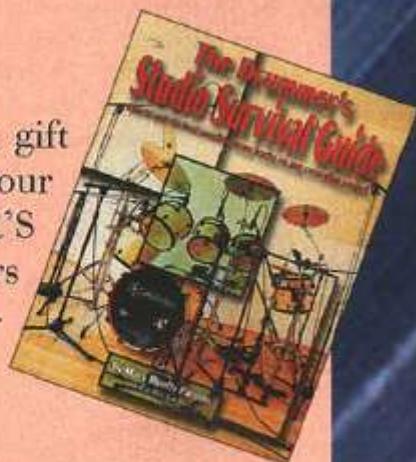


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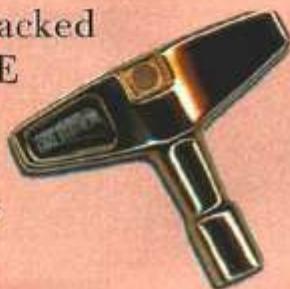


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John Otto

me. My new Orange County drumset is incredible.

MD: Is there anything you feel you could use some work on?

John: There's so much to work on. I just need to keep practicing. With me, it's more of a thing where I need to touch the drumset on a day-to-day basis. When I do practice, I have a certain routine.

MD: Can you describe it?

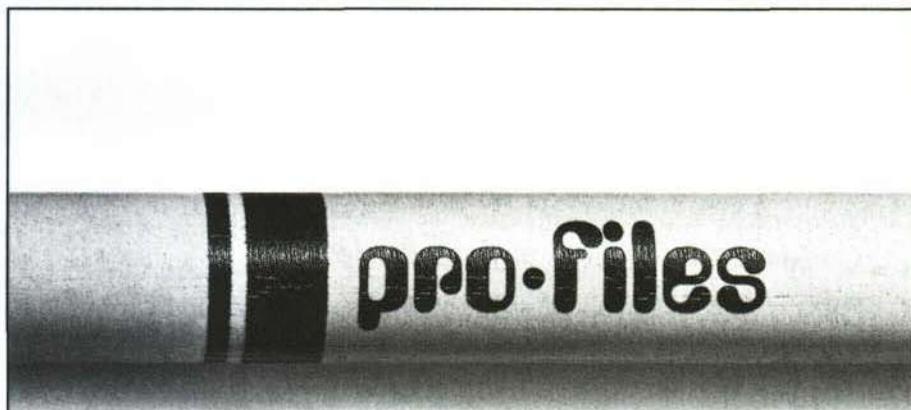
John: I practice snare drum for a half hour, doing things out of a technique book to

fine-tune my chops. Then I work on different styles. The objective is to increase my vocabulary, so I'll experiment with different kinds of styles that I don't get to deal with in our band. I'll work on African or Afro-Cuban rhythms and independence between my limbs. I find that working on those things really helps my playing and keeps drumming very fresh for me.

MD: I'm sure you feel there's a lot more you can accomplish on the drums, especially considering you're only twenty-three.

But it must feel great to have achieved so much at such a young age.

John: It feels good. I'm just glad I can do what I've always wanted to do. I'm so thankful that I've had the opportunity to do all these things and experience what I've experienced. I hope I'll be able to continue doing that for a long time to come.



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John Otto.



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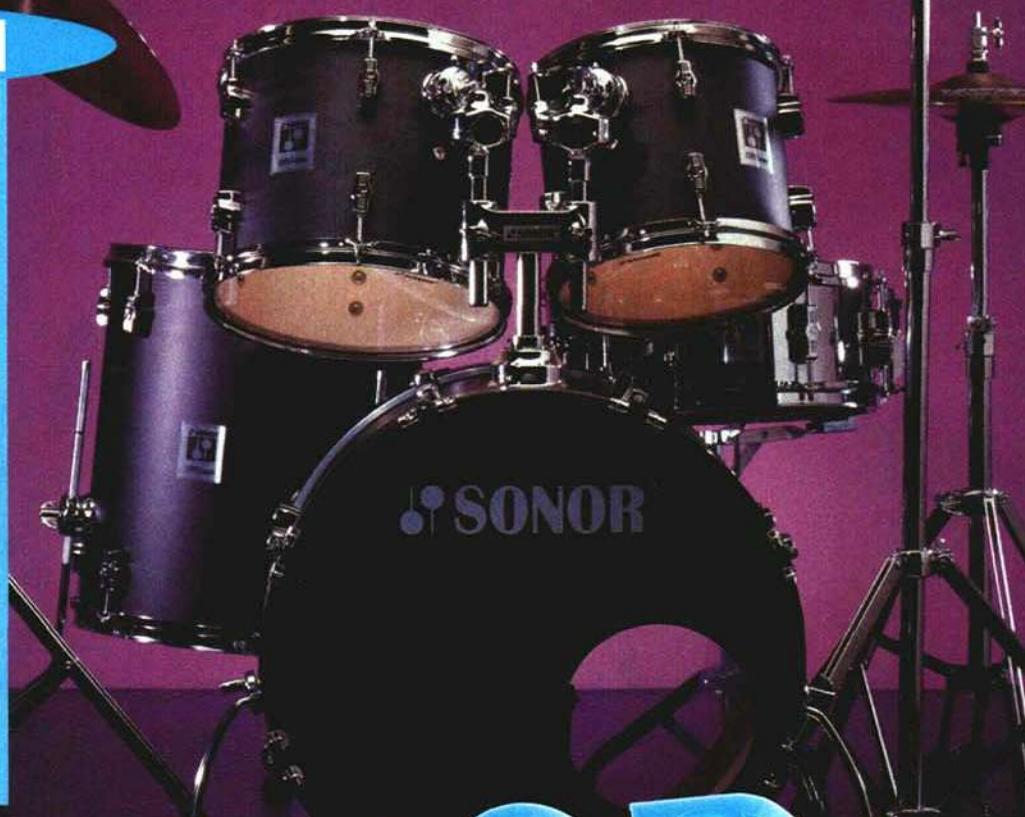
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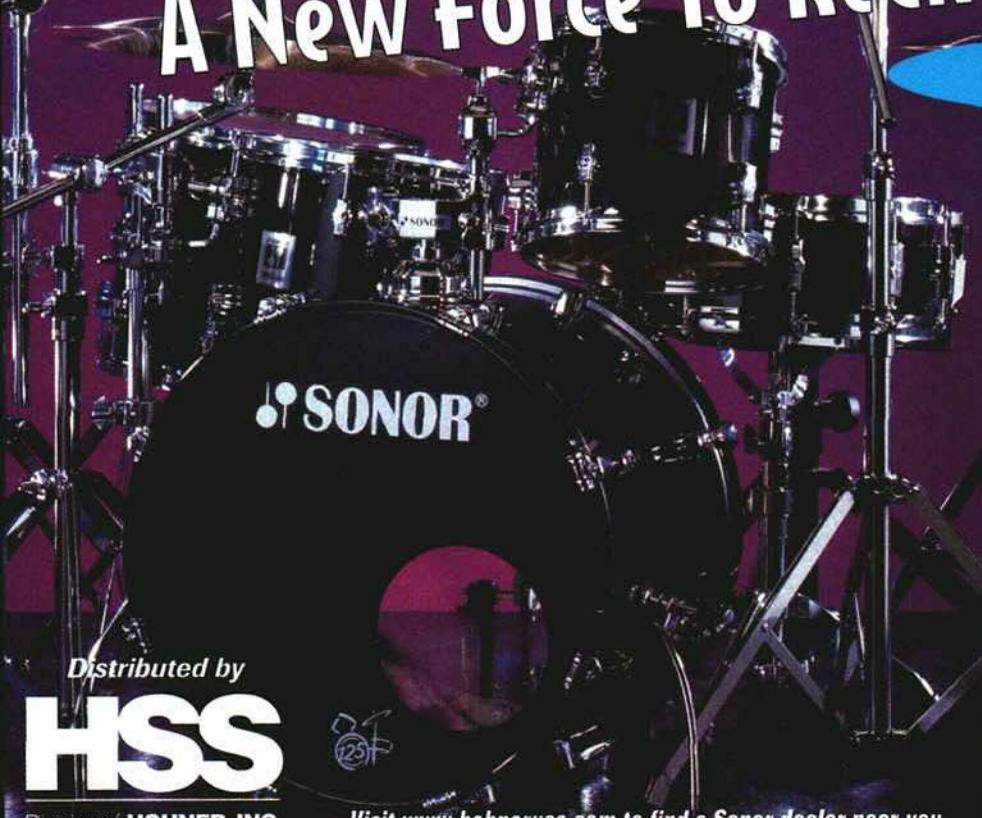
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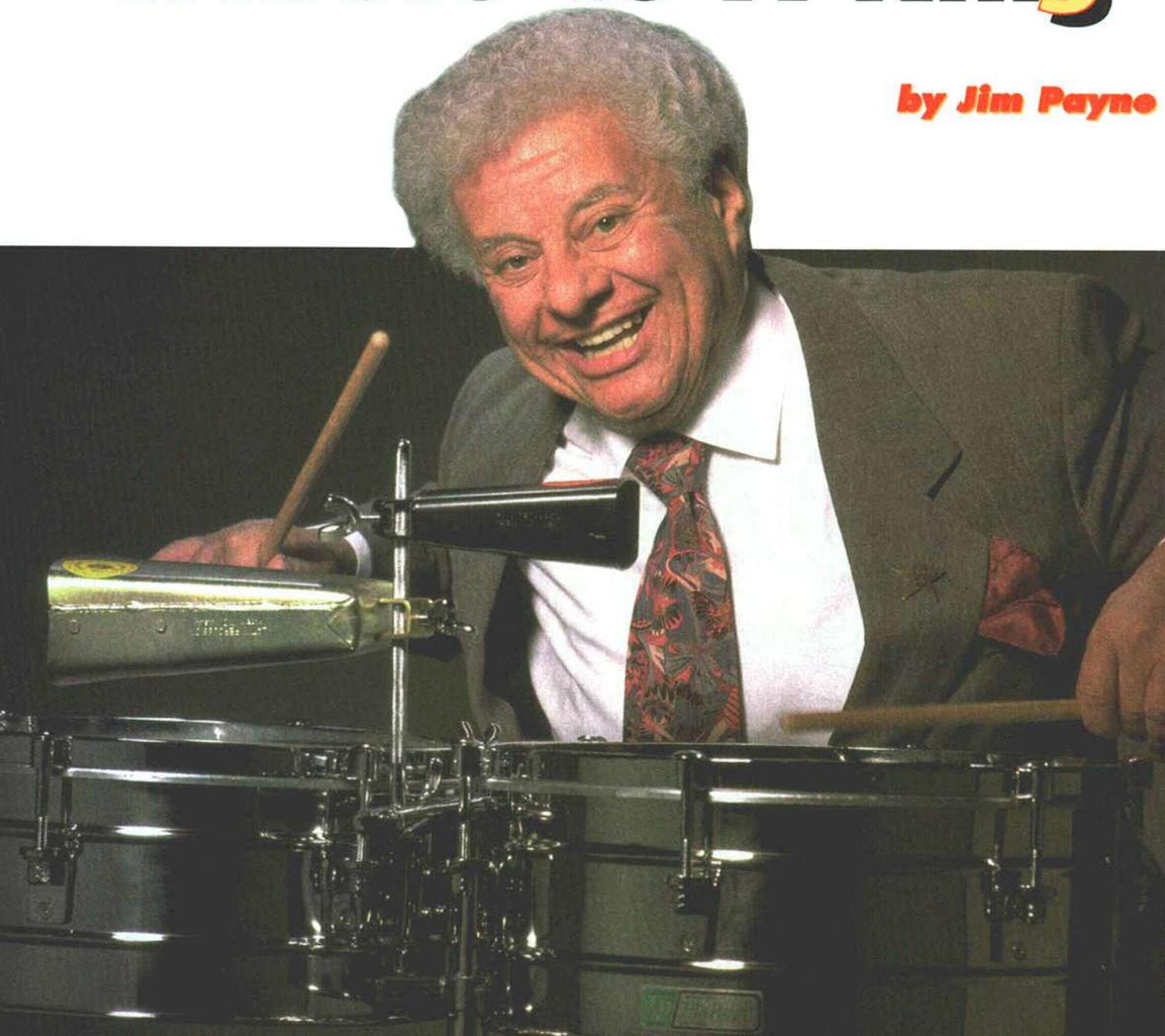
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Tito Puente

Tribute To A King

by Jim Payne



Tito Puente, the King of Latin Music, passed away on May 31 at age seventy-seven. He was arguably the most important Latin musician of the last fifty years. This past year I had the privilege of collaborating with him on a new book/CD, *Tito Puente's Drumming With The Mambo King*. He was an inspiration to me and I can truly say that he was a remarkable person in every respect. His energy, humor, and good-time spirit will be deeply missed by me and his millions of fans throughout the world. His forty-year stint as a bandleader was equaled only by the likes of Duke Ellington, Count Basie, and Dizzy Gillespie. He composed countless songs and arrangements, and recorded an incredible one hundred seventeen albums, more than any other known bandleader to date.

For drummers, Tito Puente was to the timbales what Buddy Rich and Tony Williams were to the drumset. He was the undisputed King—"the fastest gun in the west." He combined the snare drum and drumset techniques of Western music with the traditional Cuban style, and with innovation and hard work, took performance on the timbales to a new level.

Puente brought the timbales out in front of the band, played them standing up, and made them a featured instrument, much the way Gene Krupa had done with the drumset. Latin music authority Jose Rizo has called Puente's experimental, all-percussion album, *Puente In Percussion*, "the most incredible recorded percussion session in history."

Tito was a master musician, proficient on piano, vibes, saxophone, and drumset, as well as timbales—and he was a charismatic entertainer. As soon as he walked on stage, the party began. Carlos Santana knew, when he recorded a version of the 1963 Tito Puente song "Oye Como Va," that he was borrowing from a master composer whose carefully constructed compositions, rooted in percussion, were guaranteed to create an irresistible dance groove.

Tito had legions of admirers of all ages across the world, but he was as down-to-earth and typically New York as the fans at Yankee Stadium, where he threw out the first ball at a game this year.

If you want to hear the real thing, one step closer to the roots (like you might listen to James Brown to hear the real thing in

R&B and funk), you can't do better than to listen to Tito Puente, the true king of Latin music.

Early History

Tito was born in Spanish Harlem, or "El Barrio" (The District), as residents call it, a long, narrow slice of Manhattan squeezed between 3rd and 5th Avenues and stretching from black Harlem's famous 125th Street south to 96th Street, where the elegant upper East Side begins. His parents, Ernest and Ercilia Puente, had boarded a ship in San Juan and spent five days sailing to New York to begin a new life. His father landed a job in a razor blade factory. Ernest Anthony Puente Jr. was born in Harlem Hospital on April 20, 1923. They called him Ernestito, and eventually everyone

shortened that to Tito.

It didn't take long for Tito to gravitate towards his life's passion. He began drumming with forks and spoons on pots and pans at an early age. "After a while, the neighbors complained to my parents," Tito told me. "'Why don't you put that brat to study music? He's driving us crazy here!'" When he was eight years old Ercilia enrolled her boy in piano lessons at the New York School of Music on 125th and Lenox Ave. Tito's course of study had begun. The lessons cost twenty-five cents. To avoid any possible opposition from Ernest Sr., Ercilia waited until her husband was asleep before tiptoeing into the bedroom to take the money from his pants' pockets.

When Tito was twelve and his sister



Tito circa 1969

Anna was seven, they became an amateur dance team, following in the tradition of Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire. Tito prided himself on being one of the few bandleaders who really knew how to dance. At a children's talent group sponsored by their local Catholic church, Tito was crowned King of the Stars of the Future four years in a row.

Meanwhile the big bands were in full swing. "I would listen to the great dance bands of the day on the radio," Tito recalled. "Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Chick Webb. And I'd go to theaters like the Paramount and the Strand to see them perform. My hero was Gene Krupa." In fact, after hearing his hero's famous floor tom solo on "Sing, Sing, Sing," Tito decided to begin playing trap drums. So the drumset was really Tito's first percussion instrument, not the timbales. Eventually young Puente won \$10 playing "Sing, Sing, Sing" note-for-note in a kids' drumming contest.

Study And First Gigs

The Latin music of Tito's Afro-Cuban heritage also intensely interested him: Machito, Rafael Hernandez, Noro Morales, Arsenio Rodriguez, and Cuban pianist Anselmo Sacasas. He continued his piano lessons with Victoria Hernandez and also studied with Luis Verona, the pianist with Machito's Afro-Cuban Orchestra. Tito also began drumset lessons with a man he remembers only as Mr. Williams. "Mr. Williams knew absolutely nothing about Latin music," Tito said, "but I wasn't going to him for that. He gave me a good foundation—snare drum technique, how to interpret figures in charts, and how to accompany shows." Tito knew that all the big band musicians had to read music, and since playing in a big band was one of his goals, he religiously set about acquiring the skills he'd need. By fifteen Tito had been studying piano and drums for seven years—some called him "El Nino Prodiyo," the child prodigy.

Puente began playing drumset semi-professionally at the Park Plaza on 110th and 5th Ave. on Sunday afternoons with a group called Federico Pagani's Happy Boys, playing pop, Latin, jazz, swing—a little of everything. Cuban-born Jose Montesino was the Happy Boys' timbalero,

and the future El Rey de Timbal was eager to learn all he could from this seasoned professional. Montesino willingly showed the young Puerto Rican authentic Cuban rhythms and techniques. Tito set up his timbales next to his drumset and began doing double duty as drummer and timbalero.

At sixteen, Tito landed his first paid gig, a one-night stand with The Noro Morales Orchestra at the Stork Club. He then dropped out of high school and went on the road playing with a series of different Latin bands.

By 1941, at age nineteen, Tito took over the drum chair in what many consider the premier Latin band of the time—Machito & His Afro-Cubans. A self-confident Tito matter-of-factly explained, "I sat in with the band and Machito hired me."

Machito had come from Havana to New York in 1937, the first authentic *sonero*, or ad-lib-style Cuban vocalist, in the city. He worked with several established bands, including Xavier Cugat, before opening at Manhattan's Club Cuba in 1940 with his own band in a partnership with Mario Bauza. Tito played drumset and timbales with Machito, and when featured playing timbales, he played standing up in front of the band. When he formed his own band, Tito continued this now-standard style of

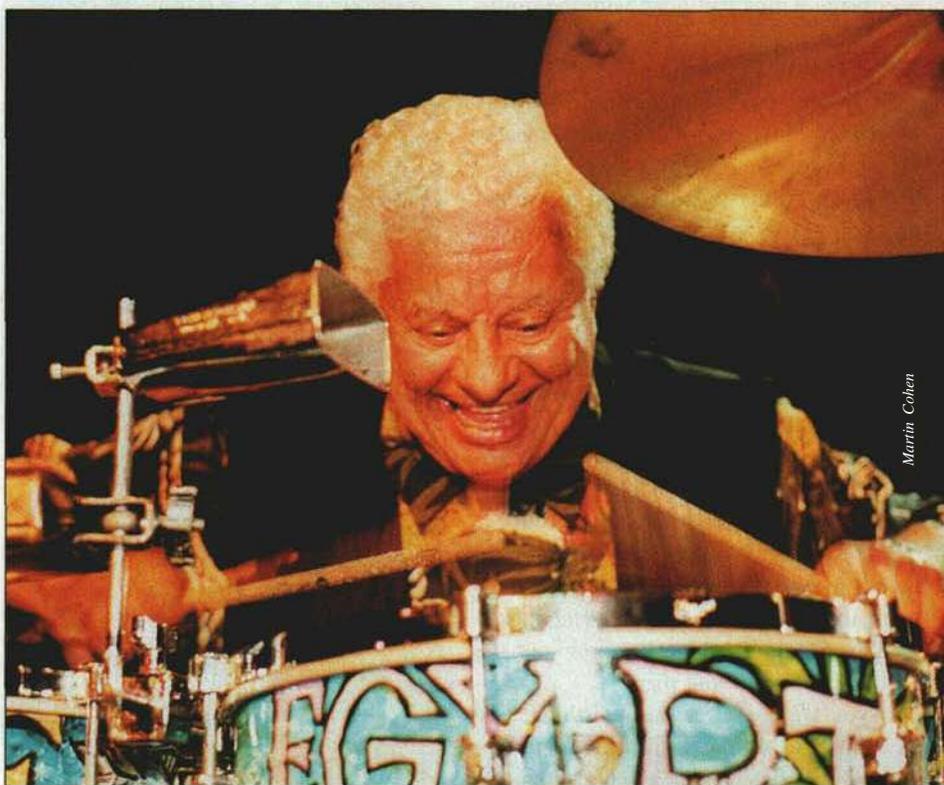
playing the timbales in order to give cues more easily, and he could even jump and dance while playing without losing a beat.

Drafted In World War II

In December of 1941, Tito received his draft notice and packed up for boot camp in Long Beach, Long Island to serve in World War II as a Seaman 1st Class in the US Navy. Stationed aboard the USS Santee, an aircraft carrier that sailed through the Panama Canal to escort merchant supply ships in the South Pacific, he loaded ammunition into the ship's guns. He and his shipmates were bombed, strafed, and even torpedoed.

During the long stretches of down time, Tito kept busy on his music. He had started studying alto saxophone in New York, and when he found the drum chair in the ship's band already filled, he concentrated on alto. A friendly Navy aircraft pilot, who played tenor sax and had arranged music for Charlie Spivak's big band, taught the young seaman the basics of arranging, and Tito began writing his own music. Later he became the ship's bandleader and chief arranger.

The war ended in 1945 and Tito, along with millions of other soldiers and sailors, returned home with an honorable discharge. Fortunately his years of study and



Martin Cohen

freelance experience had given him the tools he needed to take over the drum chair in almost any band, and he soon landed a series of first-class gigs. After a stint with Frank Marti at the Copacabana, he joined Jose Curbelo. "At that time the Latin bands were playing nightclubs downtown like the Conga and the Havana Madrid," Tito recalled. "You had to be a good musician because we played the shows too, not just dance music or barrio music like in Spanish Harlem. You had to play waltzes, tangos, sambas, boleros. That's how I developed my experience in reading and playing all types of music. In the studio too, man, you had to know how to read music. You went in and you stopped at the eighth bar and you started on the ninth. Most of the Latin percussion musicians didn't read much music. They always depended on the ear. Your ear can only go so far. Really, you just have to learn your

profession, your instrument. This is it. *You have to study.*"

Tito studied the Schillinger system as well as traditional theory, conducting, and orchestration with Richard Bender at Manhattan's prestigious Juilliard School of Music. "I was trying to learn how to write motion picture music. Schillinger's graphs and the permutation of melodies interested me, but I found that wasn't my main goal. I stopped studying there a couple of years later and developed my style by performing and playing. Everybody reads the same books. Everybody goes to school. Everybody studies. Everybody graduates and gets a big diploma. They go home and put it up on the wall, and they just stare at it all the time. Musicians, dentists, doctors, everybody, it's the same thing. But to really learn, you've got to go on and practice and gain experience by playing in front of an audience."

The Palladium Era And The Mambo

In the 1950s America fell in love with the mambo, and the "Home of the Mambo" was the Palladium Ballroom at 53rd and Broadway. Federico Pagani, who had led The Happy Boys, booked Tito into the Palladium on Sunday afternoons, so Puente put together a pickup group called the Picadilly Boys, named after a tune he had written called "Picadillo," meaning a hash or a mishmash. The Palladium pickup band, which had included Charlie Palmieri on piano, developed into Tito's first real band when he left his steady gig with Pupi Campo and took the band into the El Patio Club in Atlantic Beach, Long Island on July 4, 1949 for a summer gig that lasted until Labor Day.

Tito scored his first hit when he recorded "Abaniquito" with his new band for the Tico label, with Cuban-born Vicentico

Remembering The King

In his more than five decades in the music business, Tito Puente influenced and worked with many of the top musicians in the business. The following are some of their memories of "The King Of Latin Music."

Jose Madera

(Puente's conga player/arranger/musical director for twenty-nine years)

"Tito was a pleasure to work for. He was the *alpha* and *omega* of Latin American music, and I consider myself very fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with him for so many years. He left an indelible mark on the music industry, one that will never fade."

Johnny "Dandy" Rodriguez

(Puente's bongo player for thirty-seven years)

"Tito Puente was such a big part of my life; not just through our relationship in the band, but as a member of my family. I started playing in his band when I was sixteen years old, so I grew up in his band. He also baptized my daughter. And playing in his band was such a unique experience. I referred to it as "The Tito Puente School of Music," since it taught the bandmembers a style that was Tito's signature: classy and lively, from the early ballroom days of the Latin big bands."

Giovanni Hidalgo (conga master)

"I feel privileged to have had the chance to perform with Tito Puente on many occasions. He was always a great showman and bandleader, and his music touched so many people around the world. We are all indebted to him for blazing the musical trail for us to follow."

Marc Quinones (percussionist with The Allman Brothers Band)

"When we were young kids, Bobby Allende and I were part of a band called Los Rumberitos, whom Tito took under his wing. He allowed us to share the stage with him at clubs like The Corso in New York City, all while

we were children. Years later, when Tito asked me to play timbales on his one hundredth record, it was *the* highlight of my career. It's not often that your idol asks you to perform on his album. He was a very humble man who always looked like he was having fun whenever he would perform. There will never be another Tito Puente."

Bobby Allende (percussionist with Marc Anthony)

"Tito was blessed with what every musician strives for: admiration, respect, and longevity."

Ralph Irizarry (bandleader and timbale player for Timbalaye)

"There isn't a percussionist worth his salt who wasn't influenced by Tito Puente's albums *Puente In Percussion* and *Dance Mania*. We worked together many times, and he appreciated my band, Timbalaye, because it features the timbale player as the bandleader, just like his band. Tito fought tirelessly for education, and secured the longevity of Latin music by setting up scholarship funds to make sure that young musicians will have the opportunity to learn to read music and play for years to come."

Johnny Almendra (Los Jovenes del Barrio)

"I played drumset in Tito Puente's big band, and also was fortunate enough to work with him through my teaching at The Harbor Conservatory in New York City, where Tito donated both his time and money. Every percussionist owes a debt to Tito because he took an 'ethnic' music and popularized it worldwide. He made it possible for us to be able to make a living playing timbales."

Stephan S. Nigohosian

Tito Puente

Puente kept fine-tuning his band, a dedicated group of excellent musicians he affectionately called "the boys." He insisted on first-rate musicianship, and he could be stern when he didn't get the performances he wanted. But Tito also respected his fellow musicians and knew how to make them feel at ease. In 1951 Mongo Santamaria joined the band, replacing Frankie Colon on congas.

As Tito perfected his sound and got more recognition, the mambo became more and more popular. The mambo features medium to up-tempo syncopated rhythms and horn lines; a strong tumbao (or underlying rhythmic foundation) from the congas and the bass; and an infectious, syncopated guajeo (repeated figure) from the piano. The sum: an intense and driving music perfectly suited for dancing.

When the mambo came to New York in the 1950s via Perez Prado, Israel "Cachao" Lopez, and Arsenio Rodriguez, it meshed perfectly with the new big band instrumentation of the Latin bands—four trumpets, four saxophones, four trombones, and rhythm section. Combine the mambo with this powerful instrumentation and the



Valdes on vocals and Mario Bauza on trumpet. Tico plugged the tune on New York radio, and the people loved it. Tito was off and running. But first he had to

spend years on the "cuchifrito circuit," the smaller venues that provided bread & butter for struggling Latin musicians, before he made it into the big time.

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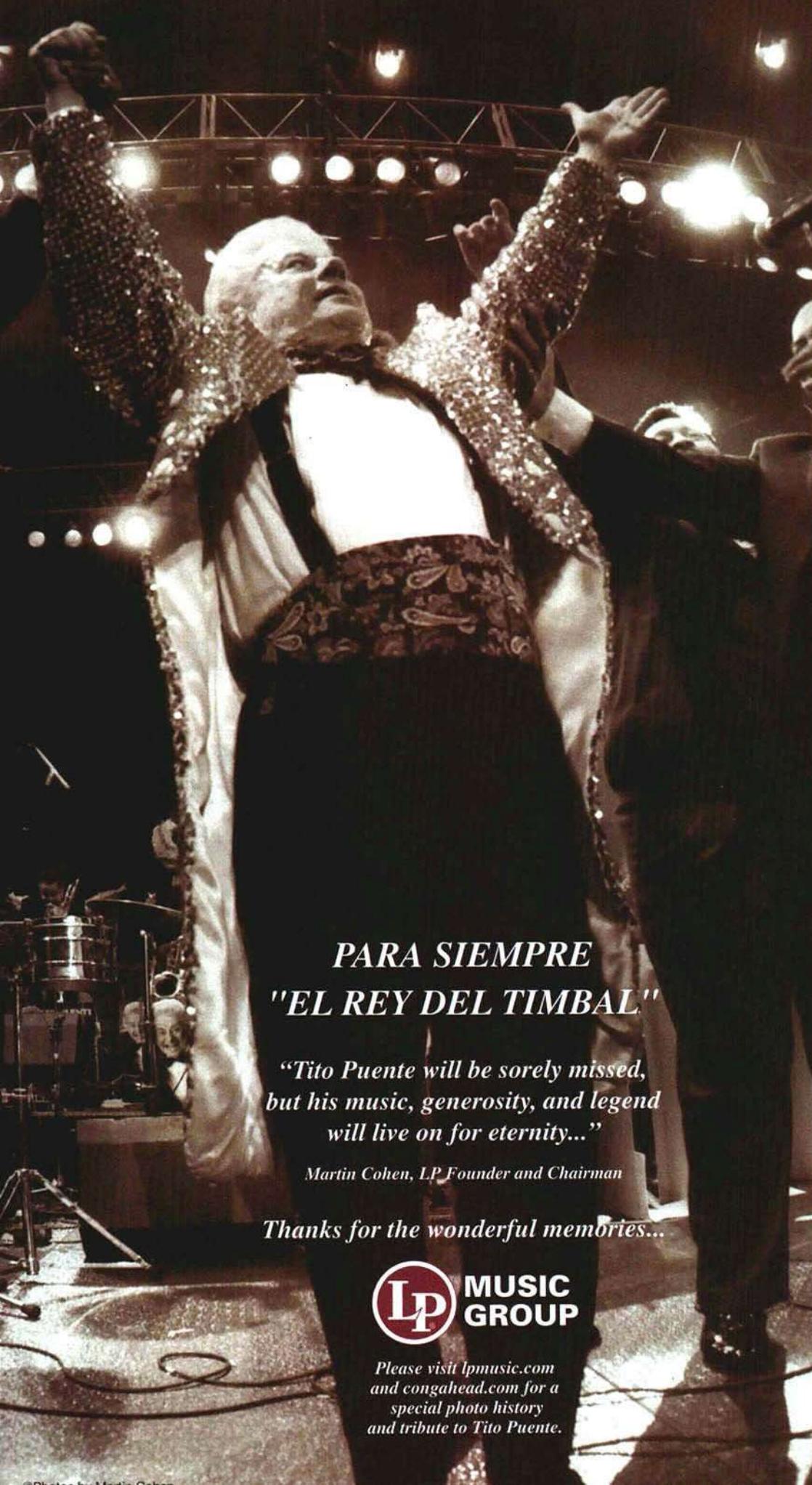
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The Palladium Dance Hall in the early days. 1962



At home, with his trophies. 1975



Hard Rock Cafe induction. 1990



With Martin Cohen. 1991



National Endowment of the Arts Award. 1997

Tito Puente

arranging and bandleading skills of musicians like Mario Bauza, Rene Hernandez, and Tito Puente, and you have a national dance craze. Although Prado's hits, "Mambo Jumbo," "Patricia," and "Cherry Pink And Apple Blossom White," probably introduced more Americans to Latin music, Tito's raw, high-energy, New York-style mambo was more authentically Cuban, more infectiously swinging, and irresistible to dancers.

In 1952 the Palladium instituted an all-mambo policy, featuring the best Latin bands. Business was booming, and night after night excited crowds climbed to the second floor of the building at 53rd and Broadway and packed the Palladium ballroom. According to Johnny Pacheco, "There were so many people moving at the same time in the Palladium that the floor used to shake. They had to reinforce it with steel beams to keep it from falling down. Everybody was going crazy." Marion Brando sat in on bongos and Kim Novak and other movie stars created a stir at this celebrity hot spot. The people who flocked there to dance the mambo came from all different ethnic backgrounds—African-

American, Latino, Italian, Jewish, and Irish. Race was simply not a consideration.

Cubop And Birdland

During the Palladium era, Tito played a major role in the cross-fertilization between jazz and Latin music that became known as Cubop. "I combined the melodic concepts and harmonic changes of jazz with the Latin percussion rhythms, without losing either's authenticity. Like Dizzy said, 'It's a marriage.'"

Birdland, a basement club around the corner from the Palladium, on the east side of Broadway between 52nd and 53rd, was a major center of the jazz scene. Latin musicians walked around the corner from the Palladium on their breaks to check out the Birdland scene, and jazz musicians like Stan Getz and Dexter Gordon walked over to the Palladium. Tito was booked at Birdland, and alternated sets with John Coltrane, Art Blakey, Charlie Parker, and Miles Davis.

Drums Only

The Latin percussion section of Willie Bobo, Mongo Santamaria, and Tito Puente

was one of the best ever. Together they recorded some of Tito's most adventurous percussion music. For *Puente In Percussion*, Tito added conguero Carlos "Patato" Valdes to this core rhythm section and recorded the album only with drums (with the sole exception of the band's bassist, Machito alumnus Bobby Rodriguez).

Tito explained how he put it together and how communication is the most important function of the drummer: "I had the idea that I wanted to do a percussion album, just percussion. George Goldner of Tico Records couldn't see it. He said, 'How can you go in the studio and just play drums?' I was always telling him that percussion sends a message. A percussion man is *saying* something. I explained to him about Africa, the mother country, where they used to send messages with their drums—you know, 'I got married,' 'Happy birthday,' 'I went bankrupt,' 'Can you lend me five bucks?' Whatever. He got a big kick about my sense of humor about drumming.

"He still didn't want to do it. He said, 'What do you mean, no horns?' I said, 'Yeah, no horns, no trumpets, no saxes, no



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Tito Puente

piano. No nothing, just drums.' I blew his mind with that. Finally, he wanted to make me happy. He said, 'I'm gonna give you the studio after midnight.' I said, 'That's okay, after midnight.'

"That night, we all sat around and stared at each other. Mongo brought in a bottle of Havana rum. We put it right there in the center and we had a little rum and planned the breaks and the endings to use after we finished our conversation with our drums. Everybody played great, and *Puente In Percussion* turned out to be a classic."

Released in 1955, *Puente In Percussion* was Tito's first 12", 33-rpm album. It's a percussionist's dream, filled with timbale, bongo, and conga solos, as explosive and polyrhythmic as the fireworks on the 4th of July, and as relentlessly energetic as the red jackhammer on the cover. "I had my chops built up at the time," said Tito.

Dance Mania

Tito became red hot in the late '50s, and *Dance Mania* was the album that lit the fire. Released in 1958 on RCA, *Dance Mania* has been reissued twice. In January 2000, the *New York Times* listed *Dance*

Mania as one of the top-25 most significant albums of the 20th-century. If *Puente In Percussion* was a drummer's dream, *Dance Mania* was a dancer's dream. The infectious rhythms, coupled with Tito's slick, hard-hitting horn charts, made every cut memorable.

Tito knew how to make people dance. He understood horns and jazz harmonies and piano guajeos, but he also understood percussion. "Puente listened to the big band as a rhythm player, and he interpreted the band as a drum," says conguero/trumpeter Jerry Gonzalez. Hilton Ruiz adds, "Tito's horn lines were percussive, based on drum beats. You just add a melody, and the whole band becomes a drum." After *Dance Mania*, Tito officially became "King of Latin Music."

End Of One Era, Beginning Of Another

One night in April, 1961, the Palladium was raided. Fourteen people were arrested on a variety of charges. A month later the liquor license was gone, and the Palladium era was over. The '60s saw the rise of rock 'n' roll and boogaloo, and many estab-

lished Latin artists had a hard time adapting to the new trends. Fortunately, by this time Tito had his own audience all over the country and the beginnings of worldwide recognition. He even had his own TV show, *El Mundo De Tito Puente*.

By 1972, when the legendary Fania All-Stars recorded live at the Red Garter in the Village, Tito was there along with all the newer stars of the day—Eddie Palmieri, Johnny Pacheco, Larry Harlow. All of these Latin artists were beginning to take advantage of the newest phenomenon in Latin music, salsa. Tito always said that salsa was the same as the mambo and cha-cha that he had been playing for forty years. But the name, "salsa," greatly increased worldwide awareness of Latin music, and he didn't object when his record sales rocketed to an all-time high—or when the royalty checks for a cha-cha he had recorded fifteen years earlier suddenly started to amount to six figures.

In 1971 the San Francisco band Santana recorded a version of Tito's "Oye Como Va," which became a worldwide hit and gave Tito's career another boost. "'Oye Como Va' is a tune known all over the

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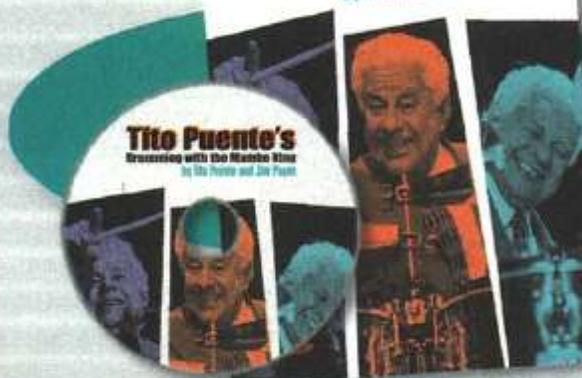


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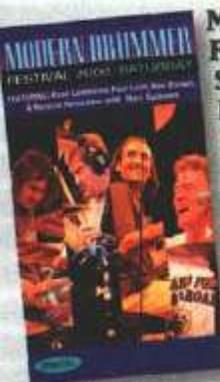
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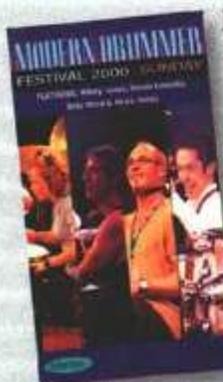
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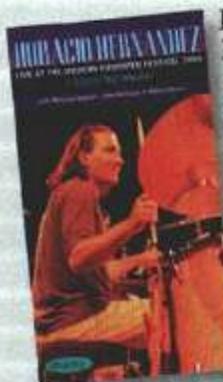
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Tito Puente

world," said Tito. "Everybody's played that tune. And," he added jokingly, "if you don't play that tune in your repertoire, that means that you're not into nothin', see?!"

Grammys, Latin Jazz, Movies & More

Tito won his first Grammy in 1979 for the album *Homenaje A Beny More* ("Homage To Beny More"). More, the famous Cuban singer, guitarist, and composer, performed in Havana in the '40s, went to Mexico in 1945, joined the Perez Prado Orchestra, and then returned to Cuba to form his own band.

After an award ceremony celebrating his first Grammy, Tito decided to begin a scholarship fund to help support the education of musically gifted youth. Annual fund-raising concerts with top Latin artists now support the Tito Puente Scholarship Fund, which is associated with the Boys Harbor Music Conservatory in New York.

In the '80s, Tito began recording more Latin jazz for Concord Records' Picante imprint, and his first recording for them, *On Broadway*, received another Grammy. (Tito received his fifth Grammy this spring

for the album *Mambo Birdland*.)

The 1991 movie *The Mambo Kings Play Songs Of Love* catapulted Tito's fame to a new level. The film tells the story of two Cuban musicians who come to New York in the '50s to make it in the Latin music scene. They head first for the Palladium, and who should they find on the bandstand playing a swinging mambo? The "King of the Mambo," of course, Tito Puente. Comfortable in his role as an entertainer, Tito played himself in the film, and the resulting publicity brought him recognition on an even wider scale. At the same time, Tito released *The Mambo King*, his 100th album (not including reissues or repackaged "best-ofs"), an incredible accomplishment.

Countless performing and recording opportunities continued to pour in up to and past the millennium, including dates with Sheila E, Arturo Sandoval, Poncho Sanchez, Tower Of Power, Placido Domingo, and Gloria Estefan.

Tito had come a long way from his Spanish Harlem beginnings. He continued to front his traditional Latin Orchestra as well as his Latin Jazz Ensemble, which

became known as The Golden Latin Jazz All-Stars. That group included the best of a new generation of Latin musicians: saxophonist Paquito d'Rivera (a former member of Cuba's Irakere), Puerto Rican master conguero Giovanni Hidalgo, flutist Dave Valentin, trumpeter Claudio Roditi, conservatory-trained piano wiz Hilton Ruiz, and versatile drumset players Ignacio Berroa and Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez.

Tito's Influence

This abbreviated biography hardly does justice to a man who has influenced every Latin musician in the world. The players who have passed through Tito's various bands are virtually a Who's Who of Latin music. To name a few: Charlie Palmieri, Eddie Palmieri, Mongo Santamaria, Willie Bobo, Ray Barretto, Carlos "Patato" Valdez, Manny Oquendo, Poncho Sanchez, Jose Mangual Sr., Ray Gonzalez, Johnny Rodriguez, Sonny Bravo, Jose Madera Jr., Francisco Aguabella, Jorge Daito, Alfredo De La Fe, Paquito D'Rivera, Dave Valentin, Claudio Roditi, Hilton Ruiz, Giovanni Hidalgo, Ignacio Berroa, Andy Gonzalez, Jerry Gonzalez, and Mario



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Tito Puente

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Tito successfully combined big band instrumentation, jazz harmonies, and a fiery Cuban-based rhythm section to create a fresh and enduring music that communicated to dancers and listeners alike. He

loved Afro-Cuban rhythm and he loved jazz, and he lived and played in both worlds. His band could stop and turn around on a dime and the figures were tight and clean. And the time was relentlessly on top of the beat. Tito liked it that way,

whether he was playing a cha-cha or a Latin version of John Coltrane's "Giant Steps." And his timbale solos—a treat for a drummer's ears—were a national treasure.

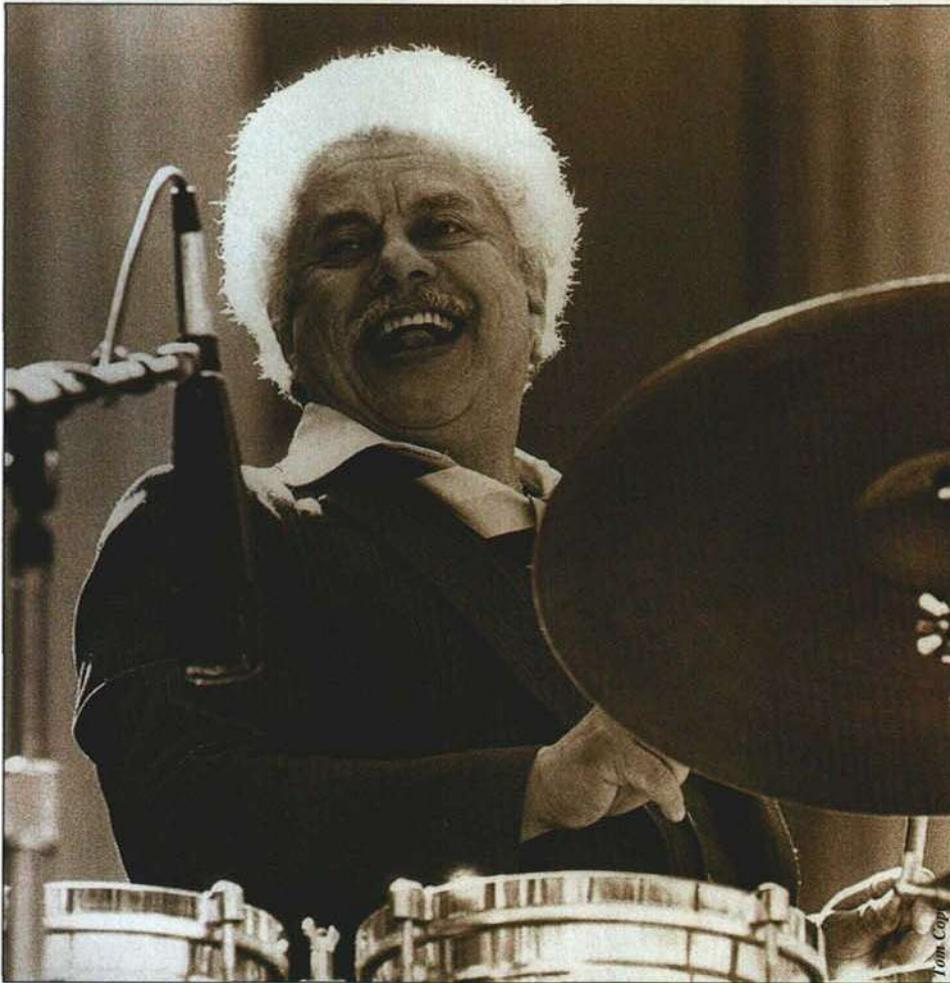
My Experience

I consider it a great honor to have collaborated with Tito on the book/CD *Tito Puente's Drumming With The Mambo King*, which deals with Tito's life, the history of Afro-Cuban music, and, most importantly, Tito's timbale playing. As far as Tito the *man*, he was the most down-to-earth superstar I've ever been around. He was a gentleman—old school. Tito was very easy to work with, but he was also thorough and particular, and he examined the exercises carefully. He wanted the job done right. He made me want to be on his team.

Tito cared about his fans. At Tito Puente's, his restaurant on City Island, just east of the Bronx, he would stop at tables and chat with customers or with the school-children who came there as part of an afternoon cultural trip. Then he would sit at his corner table and enjoy his favorite filet of sole and glass of red wine.

He also cared about his bandmembers, and felt responsible to keep them working. Tito had a special affection for Jimmy Frisaura, the trumpet player who was with him for forty years; Johnny Rodriguez, his bongo player; Sonny Bravo, his piano player; Jose Madera Jr., his conga player; and many others.

At his home, Tito showed me his various



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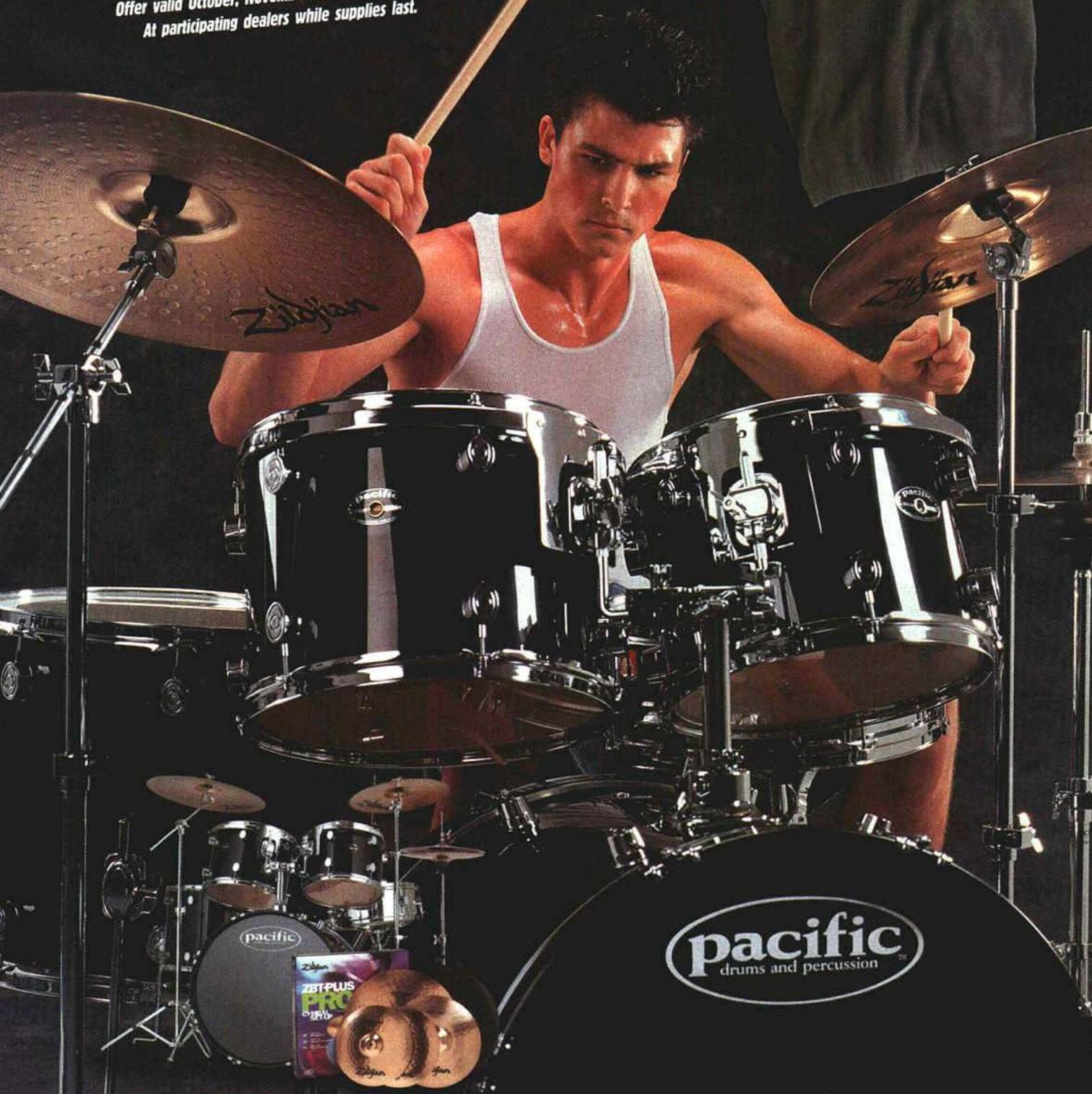
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Tito Puente

sets of timbales neatly piled up in their cases in his garage, along with marimbas and vibes. He always took very good care of his instruments. He had recently received a set of gold-plated timbales that he was very proud of. And there were boxes full of charts—a life's worth of music. Over in the corner he had a special photocopy machine that could enlarge the arrangements so that his bass player, Bobby Rodriguez, whose eyesight was failing, could still read the parts. Several large plaques and awards were also stacked in the garage. (Tito's wife, Margie, didn't want them cluttering up the house.)

In his work room, he had arrangements lying on the piano and on the floor next to the piano, some of them very old ones of his classic tunes, like "Cayuco" and "Chino." Sometimes when I called, he'd say he was "with his pencil," meaning he was writing arrangements or sketches for his next recording session. Tito always had plans. He had plans for the next album, ideas for the next guest artist, or the next TV appearance, or the next tour. He was always excited about performing with all the "beautiful" and "fantastic" entertainers and musicians he worked with.

Although many people thought Tito was getting on and that his "time had come," so to speak, you would never know it being around him. Shortly before his death, he had a full summer of dates booked, including a European tour. He had recently finished a double-bill tour with Steve Winwood called "Latin Crossings," and he had just completed a new album with Eddie Palmieri that featured both of their bands. Tito talked to me about slowing down or even retiring, but he said he could never find the time.

As far as he knew, he was going into the

The Master's Recordings

Tito Puente recorded more than one hundred albums during his illustrious career. The following is a list of some of Tito's best, several of which were Grammy winners.

Album	Year	Label/Catalog #
Puente In Percussion	1955	Tico 1011
Cuban Carnival	1956	RCA1251 / 2349-2
Top Percussion	1958	RCA 1617 / 3264-2
Dance Mania	1958	RCA 1692 / 2467
Mambo On Broadway	1956	RCA 1354 / 71992
More Dance Mania	1963	RCA 7147 / 3241-2
Pa Los Rumberos	1972	Tico 1301
Homenaje A Beny (More)	1978	Tico 1425
On Broadway	1983	Concord 4207
El Rey	1984	Concord 4250
Mambo Diablo	1985	Concord 4283
The Mambo King	1991	RMM 80680
50 Years Of Swing (box set)	1997	RMM 82050

hospital for routine surgery, and he thought he'd be out and ready to go back to work. His death from a heart attack during the surgery was an unexpected shock to everyone who knew him. He was seventy-seven, but he was the most active seventy-seven I've ever seen.

In His Own Words

A quote from Tito from an awards ceremony for *Latin Times* magazine says a lot

about the man. "I have tried my best to expose our music and to bring enjoyment and pride to our Latin people, to the young people. So the best thing is either you stay and learn and go to school, or take a walk. Put our music where it's supposed to be. To the young people struggling to make something of themselves, I urge you to study your craft and work as hard as you can. Nothing, believe me, comes easy. I ought to know. I studied. If my music has brought joy to one person, then I have been successful."

Editor's note: Portions of this article were excerpted from the book Tito Puente's Drumming With The Mambo King, by Tito Puente and Jim Payne, published by Hudson Music. For more information visit www.hudsonmusic.com. Jim Payne can be reached at www.funkydrummer.com.





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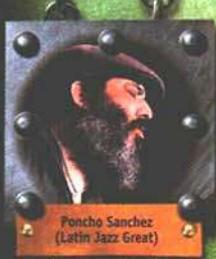
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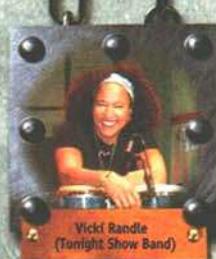
Kirk Johnson
(New Power Generation)



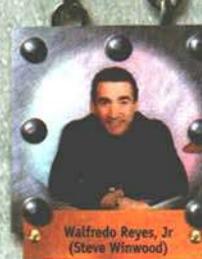
Mike Matlin
(Goo Goo Dolls)



David Leach
(Ben Harper)



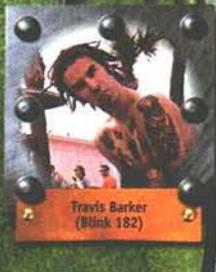
Vicki Randle
(Tonight Show Band)



Waltredo Reyes, Jr.
(Steve Winwood)



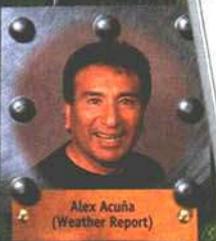
Giovanni Hidalgo
(Master Conguero)



Travis Barker
(Blink 182)



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(Lenny Kravitz)



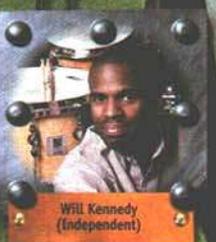
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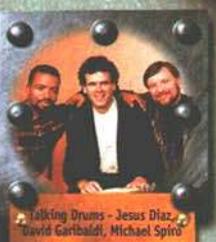
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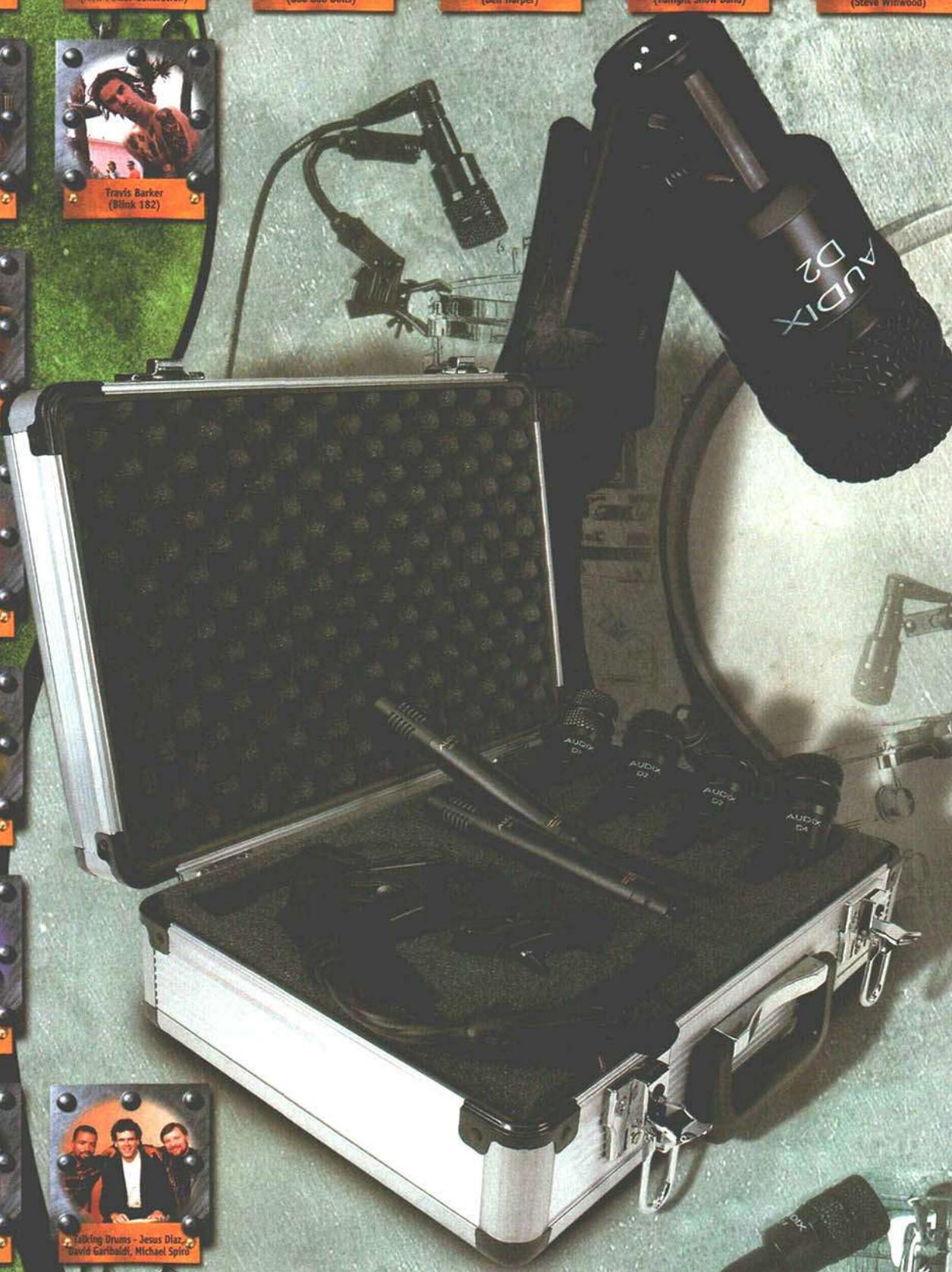
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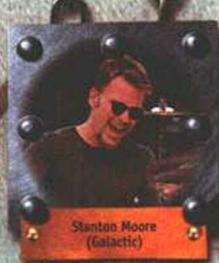
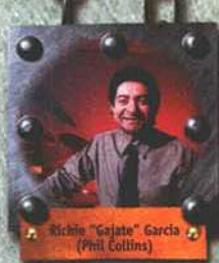
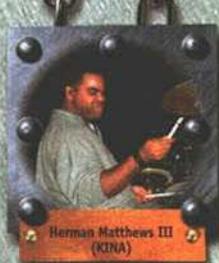


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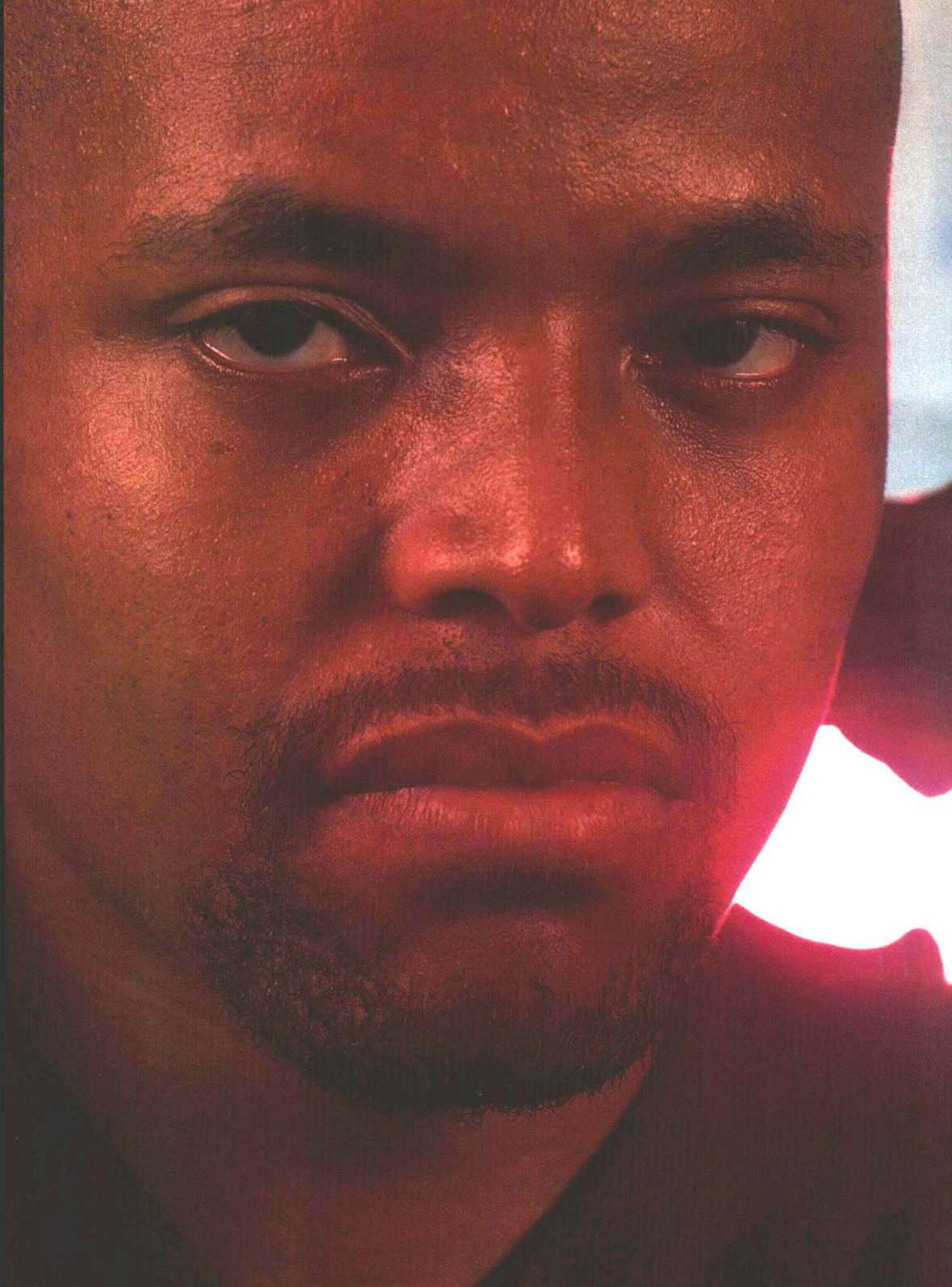
Twenty-nine-year-old Nasheet Waits is a member of a select cadre of New York-based musicians who are changing the way jazz will be heard in this new millennium. Using sounds and styles learned at the feet of the old-guard masters, but surpassing the "young lions" hype of the early '90s, these new jazz cubs are inducing tremors that are being felt far and wide. Waits, along with saxophonists Greg Osby, Abraham Burton, and Mark Turner, pianists Jason Moran and Marc Cary, vibraphonist Stefon Harris, bassist Tarus Mateen, and drummers Eric McPherson, Rodney Green, and Kareem Riggins, are recreating the jazz idiom in their own image.

At a recent set at the Jazz Standard with Greg Osby, Waits formed his detailed drumming from divergent styles: in-the-pocket hard bop cymbal pointing, atmospheric rhythm washes, and avant-garde, jab-and-punch interplay that recalled *Nefertiti* or Spring-era Tony Williams. It's not that a jaded jazz critic gets a drumming thrill, but

Waits's unique time divisions and displacements, over-the-bar phrasing, and deft, willowy cymbal work was like a roller-coaster ride through jazz drumming past, present, and future.

Like many great talents, Nasheet Waits didn't spring on the scene full bore and on his own. Nasheet's father was the late, great Freddie Waits, a renowned presence among '60s and '70s musicians. Not only did Freddie's drumming grace many classic Blue Note sides, he also worked regularly with Ella Fitzgerald, Sonny Rollins, McCoy Turner, and Max Roach's M'Boom percussion ensemble.

From his father, Nasheet learned the foundations of jazz drumming. From Max Roach and Michael Carvin, he learned the mystery behind the method. From contemporary master Billy Hart, he learned the musical value of giving of yourself and having consideration for others. That all comes to bear in Nasheet's work on such critically acclaimed albums as this year's *New Directions* project and Jason Moran's *Facing Left* where he changes into a style that is dense, dynamic, and uniquely his own.



As the saying goes, father time waits for no one. But Nasheet Waits is definitely giving the old man a run for his money—and a workout to boot.

MD: When I saw you perform recently with Jason Moran, and when I hear you on his album, *Facing Left*, you play in the hard-bop vein, but you also really stretch when given the chance. You're not limited. Did you consciously try to develop a more progressive-jazz style?

Nasheet: I don't know if I would say that. I just play a representation of my experiences. It's also about playing what's appropriate for the situation. A lot of drummers today are playing in a retrospective sense more than trying to step into the future—or even the present, for that matter.

MD: Would you say there are too many

players focusing solely on Philly Joe Jones, Art Blakey, or even Elvin?

Nasheet: That's up to them. That's their path of development. I think it's great, however, that people are trying to pursue this music, and trying to contribute. That's always positive. Like I said, my thing is more about offering a representation of my experiences and playing something that's musically appropriate. Playing with Jason, Tarus Mateen, Greg Osby, and Abraham Burton allows me to do that. Some other situations don't always call for it 'cause they may be coming out of a more traditional bag. There's nothing wrong with

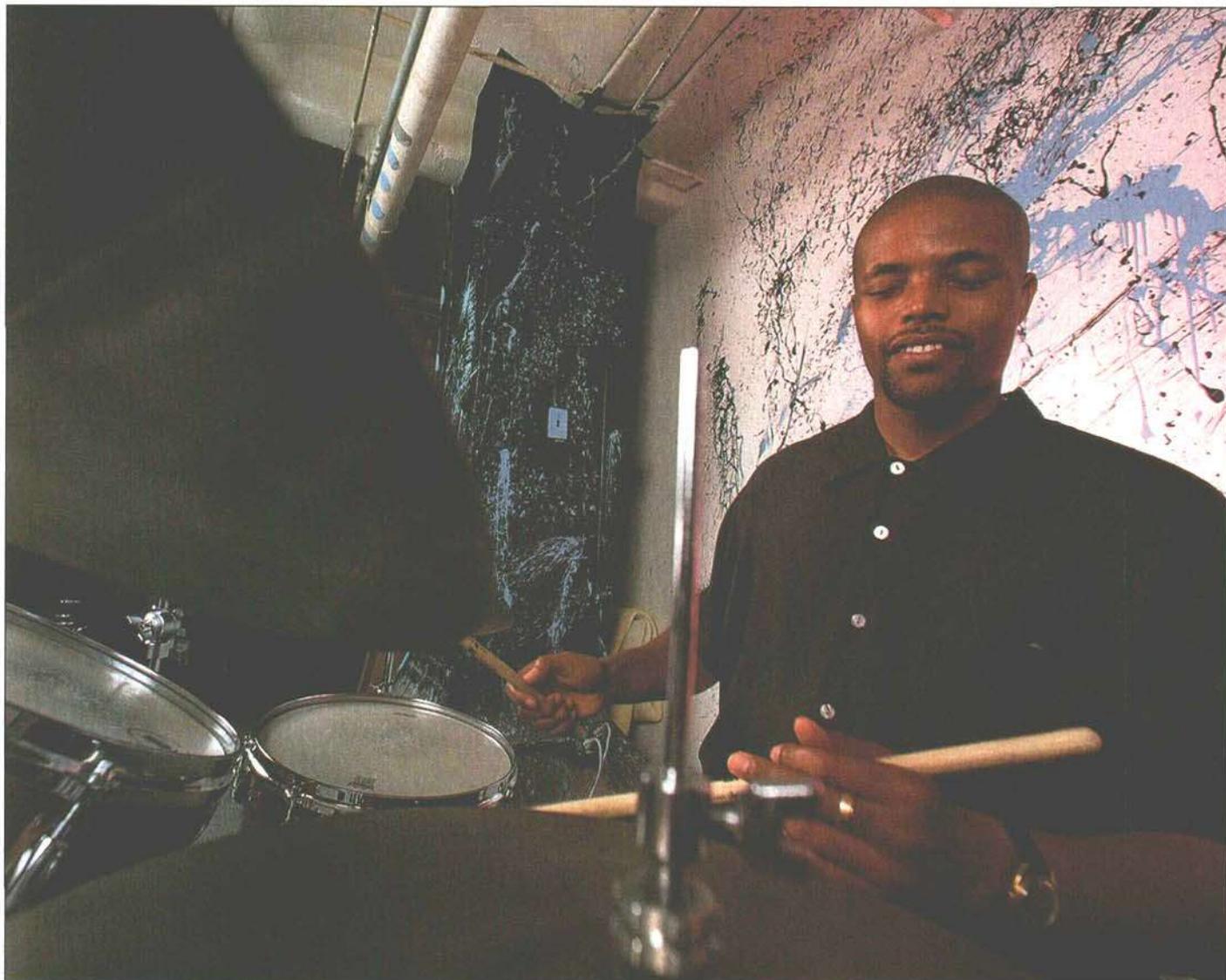
that. But for me, I like to push it a little bit further.

MD: Greg Osby has been pushing it for a while, and there's a newer group of players who seem to be actively pursuing that as well.

Nasheet: We're definitely, consciously doing that. Those choices are being made in terms of the way the music is being projected and the way we're playing.

MD: When I saw you with Greg Osby, you were very musical and "inside" in a way, but there was also that feeling of the edges being pushed and explored. You say you're playing from your experiences. Does that include free jazz?

Nasheet: I wouldn't label it "free." There are certain elements of freedom involved, but there's also an equal amount of discipline and form. Even when there are what you might call free things, like loosening up the time, there are still harmonic implications that are distinctive to the tune and the situation. I don't think it's ever totally open. While it *is* limitless, there are some



road marks that we're using, like certain phrases or musical ideas that will bring us back to a point so that we know that we are at a point, whatever that is.

MD: It's never as "out" as, say, the music of David S. Ware, which is at times full-bore, out-to-space.

Nasheet: That approach is never our focus—or my focus, for that matter. There's always a certain amount of momentum being dealt with where people can feel that we're going in the same direction, even if we're pulling against each other. There's a unity and conformity even in the most out and open situations. That's the way I play. I imply things so people are comfortable and know where we're at.

As far as playing things the way that people have played them traditionally for

the last thirty or forty years, I think it's gotten to the point where you don't necessarily have to do that all the time. The whole purpose of playing music is creating. I don't think I'd enjoy myself if I was just playing something that was confined to a particular place.

I think listeners can receive new ideas without being stupefied. We can offer up new ideas and still do it in a way that people can relate to. It's a very emotional message that's being conveyed. We want to be real to ourselves and real to our experiences so that the audience gets a true feeling of what we're trying to express.

MD: You recently toured with tenor saxophonist Mark Turner.

Nasheet: Yes. There's freedom in his compositions, which allows some embellish-

ment on traditional forms. With some artists you can play a standard and really open up. The trust is there. But everybody has to be willing to let go of preconceptions of how something is supposed to sound.

MD: What musicians that you work with are willing to do that?

Nasheet: I named them: Abraham Burton, Jason Moran, and Eric McPherson, another drummer. I grew up with Abraham and Eric, and today, when we get together to play, there's hardly a word spoken. When we're playing, we're conversing about all those moments we've shared over the past twenty years. All of that's in the music.

Eric and I play double drums all the time. We also play trio with Abraham on sax. That's music to me—dealing with something that is truthful, and based on those experiences that we've shared. That's natural, organic music. There's nothing contrived about it.

MD: Does one drummer play rhythm and the other color?

Nasheet: Sometimes. Sometimes the sax is playing the rhythm. We all take different roles at different times. There are no rules. We might have roles for certain compositions initially to set up a mood or color. But it's pretty open. Playing with Jason, Tarus, and Greg has aspects of that in it too. I haven't known them as long as Abraham and Eric, but the freedom and trust that we've shared comes from a lot of playing over the past two years.

There's a sensitivity involved when you're talking about freedom and openness. You have to really be listening to what's happening. You might play things like another drummer because the people you're playing with are going in a certain direction. If somebody's playing like Charlie Parker, to complement that you might play like Max Roach, or at least in that spirit. It calls for that type of complement.

MD: On a song like "Wig Wise," from Jason Moran's *Facing Left*, you remind me of an amalgam of Ben Riley, Tony Williams, and Ed Blackwell. It's swinging, but free in places too. Have you concentrated on free drumming at times?

Nasheet: No. I never consciously thought, "Now I'm going to play free." My development has always come from what I thought the music needed and what I felt I could contribute. That came from listening to how other people did it and their having



Nasheet's Rig

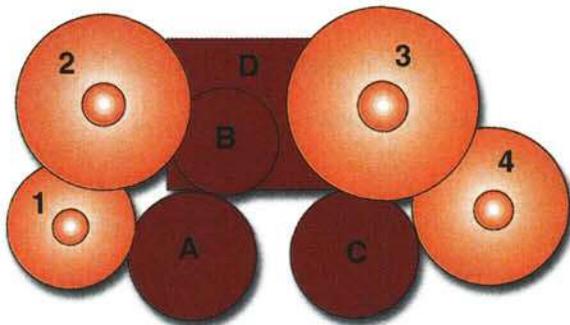
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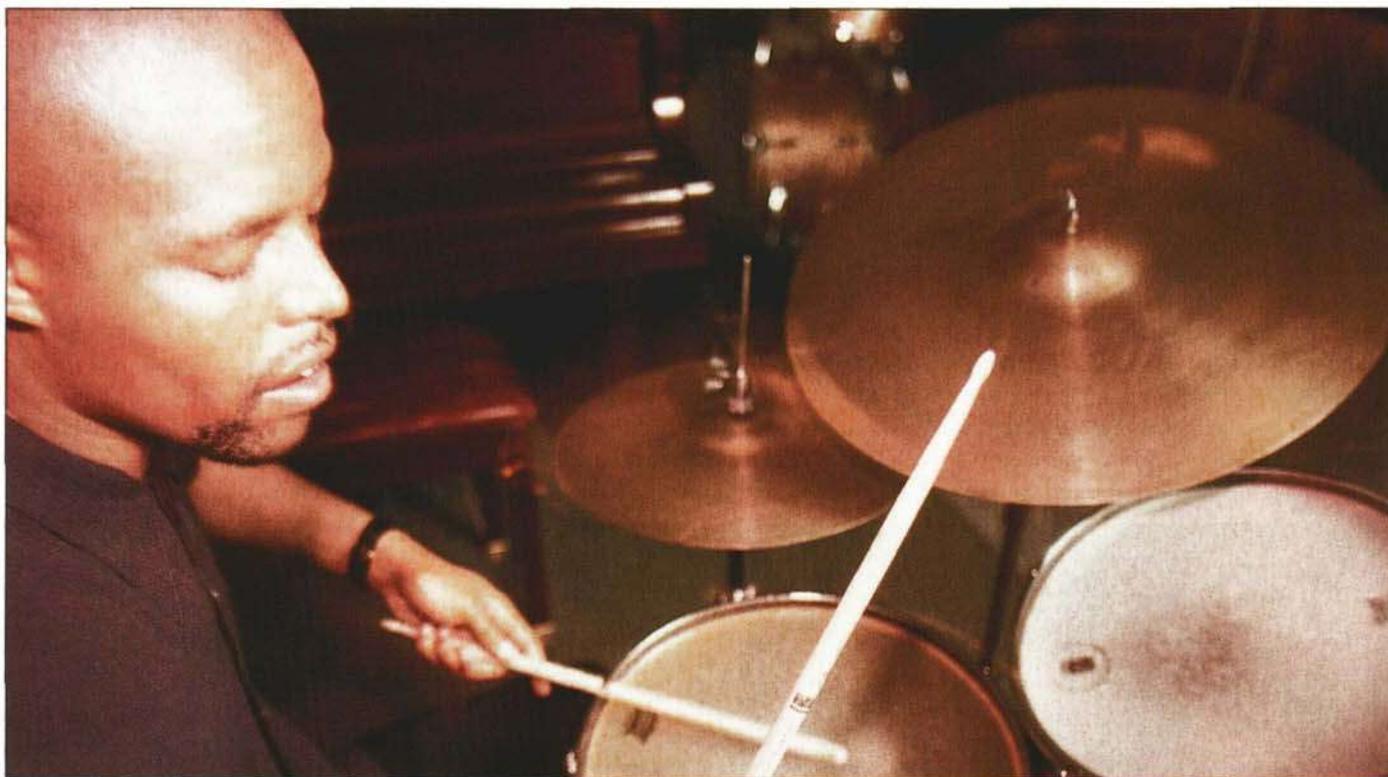
Nasheet Waits

a different twist on it. You have to be open to what each situation needs. It's not about applying patterns that you've learned.

MD: When you were ready to express those ideas, was your technique there? I would think you'd have to free your tech-

nique to some extent.

Nasheet: I've been in positions where I wanted to play something but technically



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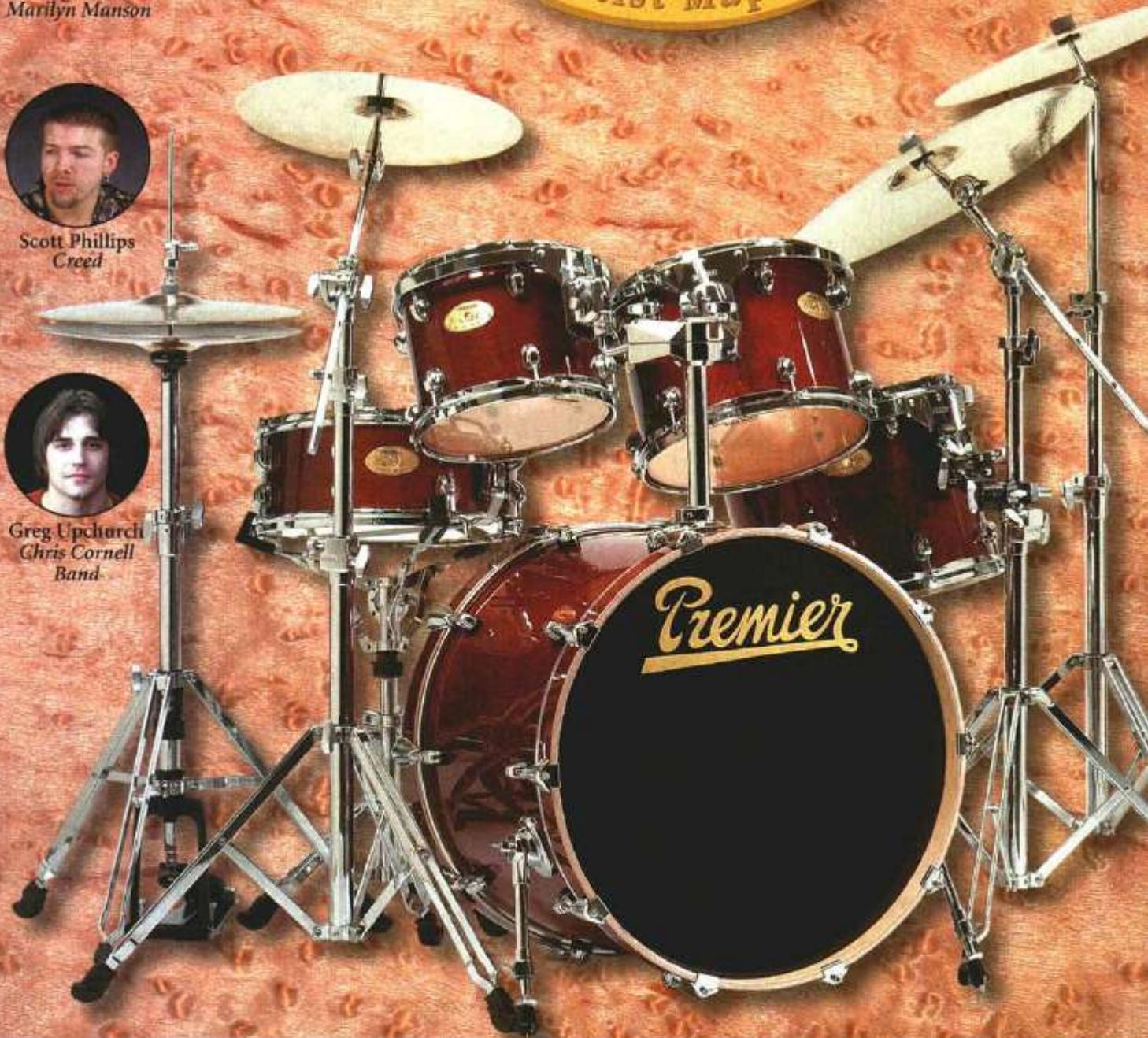
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wasn't able to execute it. It didn't come out the way I would have liked on the technical tip, but on the musical tip, maybe it was still cool. I'm not a perfectionist by any means. I'm just a musician. I don't really beat myself up on the technical thing. In terms of trying to get to something and having enough technique to do it, for me, that comes with playing and practicing.

MD: What things did you practice?

Nasheet: In terms of opening up and practicing freeing up the time, I never worked on that. I practiced more traditional things, like independence, or working out of books like Jim Chapin's *Advanced Techniques*, Charlie Wilcoxon's *Rudimental Swing Solos*, or Ted Reed's *Syncopation*. I worked out of a little bit of *Stick Control*, too.

When I began studying with Michael Carvin, I studied out of books to get a foundation. Once I had that coordination, it was really about forgetting all that stuff. I had the foundation, so then I needed to create music with that foundation.

As a professional playing as much as I do, you find yourself creating different things if you just listen naturally to what



Like father, like son: Freddie Waits performs with a young Nasheet, circa 1977.



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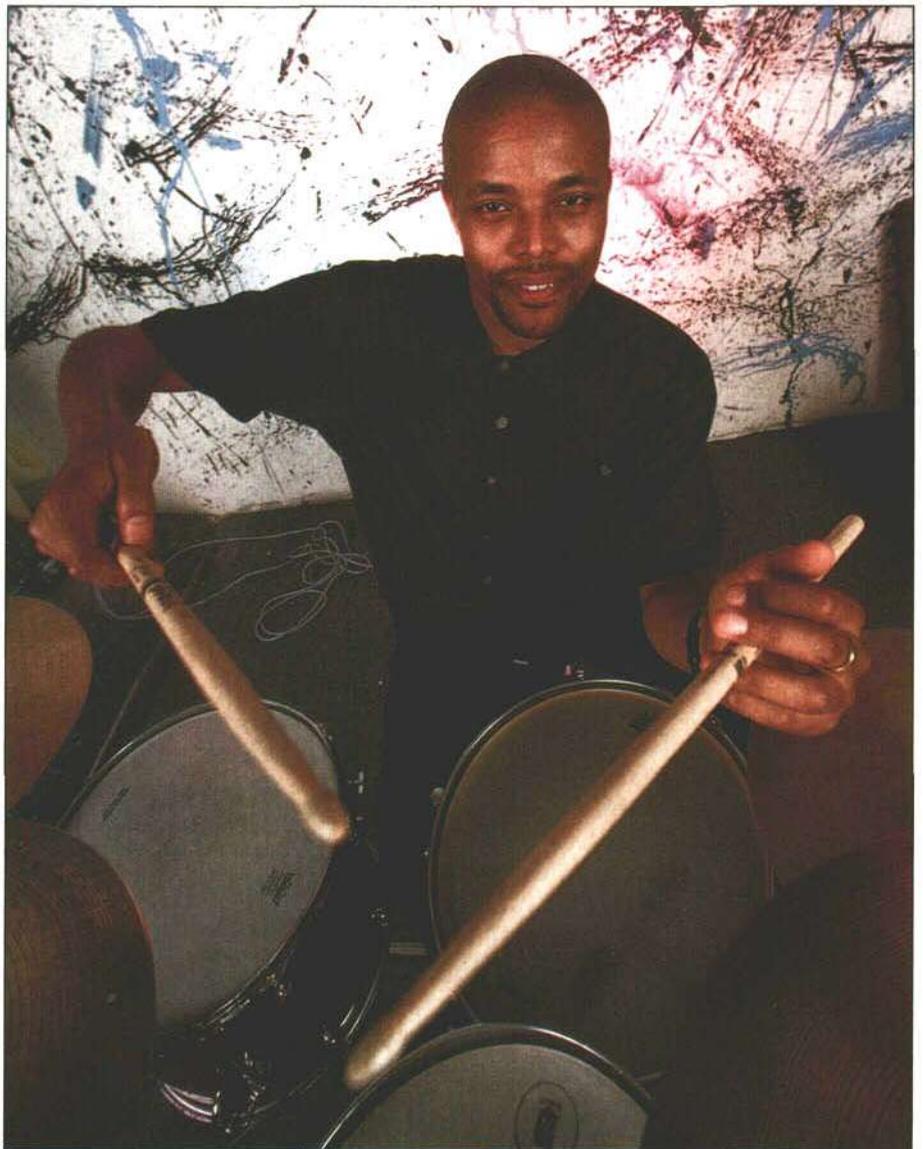
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Lifting Waits

These are the records that Nasheet says best represent his playing:

Artist	Album
Jason Moran	Facing Left (Blue Note)
Antoine Roney	Whirling (RCA)
New Directions	New Directions (Blue Note)
Orrin Evans	Orrin Evans (Criss Cross)
Marc Cary	Trillium (Jazzateria)
Joe Lovano/Jaki Byard	Haunted Melodies: Tribute To Rahsaan Roland Kirk (Metropolitan)

...and these are the ones he listens to for inspiration:

Artist	Album	Drummer
John Coltrane Quartet	Transitions	Elvin Jones
Miles Davis	Filles de Kilimanjaro	Tony Williams
Herbie Hancock	Taking Off	Billy Higgins
Ornette Coleman	The Shape Of Jazz To Come	Billy Higgins
Eric Dolphy	Live At The Five Spot	Ed Blackwell
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Nasheet Waits

you're creating and what your voice is trying to say. You'll stumble on something, and that may be what your own voice is.

Sometimes people practice so much and listen to so much stuff that when it comes time for them to play themselves, it's hard for them to know what they want to sound like. It's like they have too much information. They get so technical and specific that when it comes time for them to play *their* voice, it just sounds like a conglomeration of other people.

MD: There are so many CDs, books, and videos available now. You're saying that maybe it's good at times to turn all of that off and concentrate on yourself?

Nasheet: Exactly. That's what all of the people I work with have in common. These cats enjoy music and have listened to all types, from Indian tabla or sitar music to Kodo drumming—to everything. But they've learned to let a specific influence go and just play for a feeling.

For example, sometimes people get into

playing the clave perfectly, and that can be cool. But by sticking to patterns you can get caught up in just recreating what someone else has done. But what do you do when it's time for you to use *your* voice to express something? What will you do?

MD: Can being able to say your own thing involve something very simple?

Nasheet: Sure, or just playing what's appropriate for the situation to *you*. Want simple? How about breaking up your hi-hat patterns? Instead of playing 2 and 4, use your hi-hat to initiate some phrases as opposed to using the left hand. As you experiment with it you'll find sounds that will appeal to you—that's *your* sound. Something as simple as that can make your stuff sound worlds apart from what someone else is doing. For me, finding your own voice is a conceptual and self-realization thing, not a technical thing.

MD: What about trying to create your own thing at the same time you're trying to make a living?

Nasheet: If you're working for a cat who is unyielding or unwilling, then what you're playing may not hook up with the way he's playing. Maybe he's playing like Paul Chambers and he expects you to play like Philly Joe. If you're not coming from that, there will be problems—that is, if you don't acquiesce.

Generally you'll get to a level of maturity where you'll get on a gig and play what's called for. But at this point, I don't want to do those types of gigs all the time. If I did, then I'd feel like I hadn't really contributed anything as a *musician*. I'd just be coasting.

MD: With the musicians you play with, is there a feeling that you're all actually moving things forward?

Nasheet: I think so. But I can't say that there's anything new under the sun. You might be playing something that seems totally revolutionary, but then hear it being played by some African drummers. I do know that there is a group of us consciously trying to do things that haven't been done before, at least not on a large scale.

MD: How about some background info? You're from New York?

Nasheet: Born and raised.

MD: When did you start playing drums?

Nasheet: I was around them as a child, so I began playing when I was five. I stopped when I was in junior high school for a few

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years, until my father passed.

MD: Did famous people hang at your house with your dad?

Nasheet: Oh yeah, he played with Ella Fitzgerald; I remember meeting her as a child. She gave me a sailor's suit, [laughs] And she gave me a toy drum I would put coins in. Elvin Jones was around a lot. My father was also very close with Max Roach. He was like a member of the family. And, of course, my father played with Max in M'Boom, the percussion group.

MD: What did they talk about when they'd get together?

Nasheet: I honestly don't know. When they were talking, the kids weren't supposed to be around. And to me, it was like family talk; I wasn't mesmerized by it the way I would be now.

MD: As you went through your formative drumming years, did you see Max? Did he hear you play?

Nasheet: Oh yeah. I actually had an opportunity to play in M'Boom. And I roadied for Max, too. He was very helpful in giving me something to do after my father passed. I never formally studied with Max, but I learned a lot from him just by being around him and asking questions.

People have looked out for me in the jazz community because of who my father was. They've opened their houses, their hearts, and their minds to me and my brother because of my father and his legacy and his relationship with them.

MD: What kind of a man was your dad? Funny? Quiet?

Nasheet: He was *very* serious and strict. But he also had a good sense of humor, and was very loving and understanding. He was very open to what I wanted to do. My dad was from Mississippi, and then he moved to Detroit, where he did a lot of Motown sessions.

MD: There's something delicate, and yet propulsive, about your cymbal work. Did you ask Max anything about cymbals and how to approach them?

Nasheet: I never got any direct answers from him. I remember asking him about subdividing or how he played in five and seven. He gave me a roundabout answer, which was a way for me to find out for myself. He didn't want to ruin the search for me. [laughs] But thinking back, he did give me a few pointers.

Max, Michael Carvin, and Dr. Fred King, who also played in M'Boom, were

my mentors. The answers that I'd get from these people were like the answers you'd get from a griot. They don't really give you the answer, they give you the answer in parables or story form. So it may take years for you to decipher what they said. You might ask them a question and get a very indirect answer. But you reflect back on that and realize that they were pointing you in a direction. A lot of that is stuff you have to find out yourself. They can't walk the path for you.

MD: Max, your dad, and Elvin: Were they your major influences?

Nasheet: A lot of people influenced me—Billy Higgins, Blakey, Tony Williams. Philly Joe Jones. Billy Hart was a good friend of my father, and he's been very kind and generous with his information.

MD: You must have grown up playing the ride cymbal beat. Was that just natural for you?

Nasheet: That was something that my father taught me. He did teach me the foundations of the music. After that I just wanted to play.

MD: Did you go through a phase of doing the six-hour-a-day practice routine?

Nasheet: Nah. When I grew up playing it

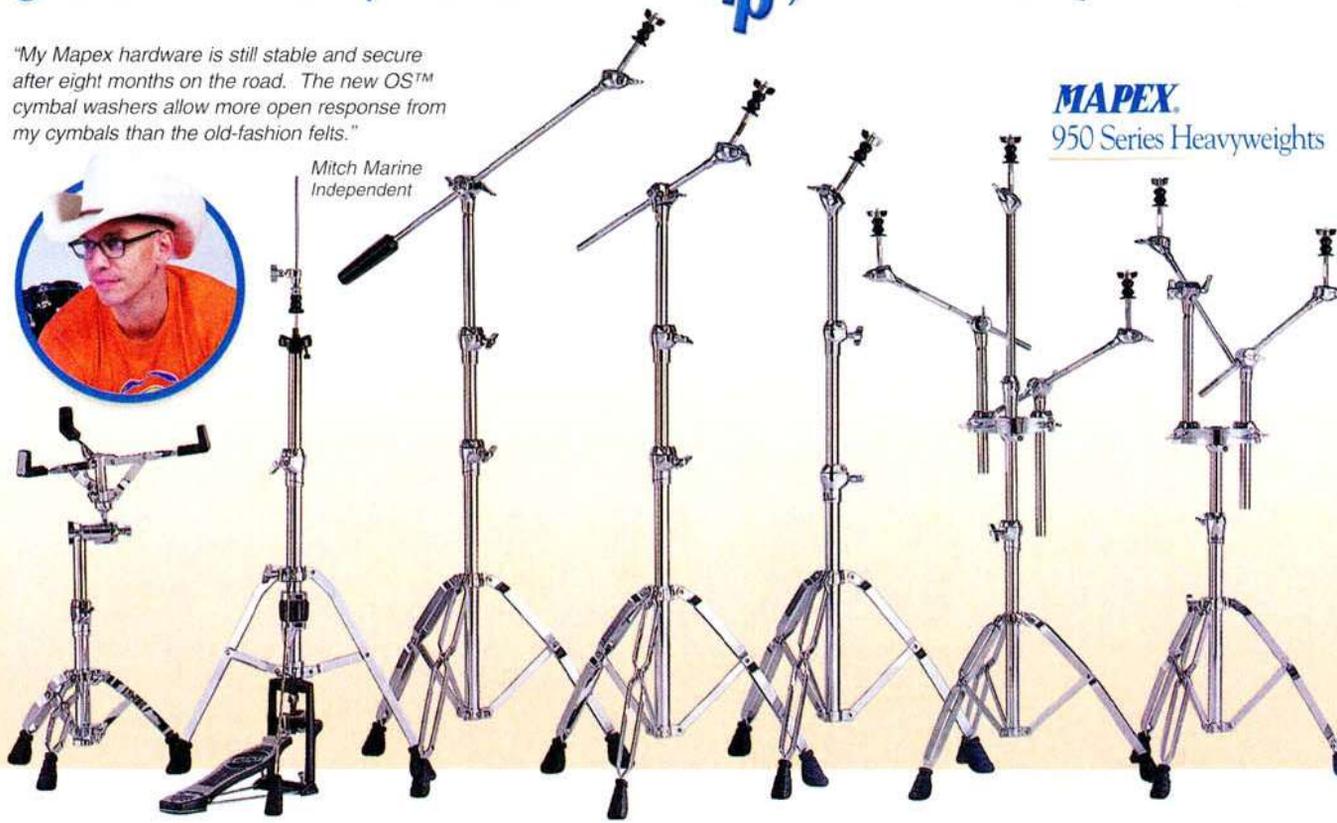
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was because I liked it. [laughs] I played in the junior high school band, but I didn't learn to read music until I got with Michael Carvin in 1991. That was when I learned about form.

Instead of practicing for many hours, I practiced consistently. I focused on independence. I practiced Latin rhythms and stuff like that. But I was never overly consumed with acquiring sheer technique.

MD: What kind of schooling did you have?

Nasheet: I studied history at Moorehouse University in Atlanta. But then after that, in 1992, I went to Long Island University. I went there to major in music.

MD: So did you do a crash course in music then?

Nasheet: Yeah. I started doing a lot of listening, checking out the albums by all the Blue Note guys. That was when I really focused on Miles Davis with Wayne Shorter and Tony, and earlier with Philly Joe Jones and John Coltrane. Listening was a big part of my education.

MD: How did you begin assimilating jazz and playing with groups?

Nasheet: My buddies, Eric McPherson and Abraham Burton, had kept on playing,

even though I had done other things. They were playing with all sorts of people. The jazz community is pretty small, actually. I just started playing with the people they were playing with.

MD: How long before you landed a big gig?

Nasheet: After I had some things together, it took a couple of years. I worked with tenor player Jesse Davis, and I formed a friendship with Antoine Roney, Wallace Roney's brother. My first gig was with Antonio Hart in 1992. I played with him for five years. He was at the tail end of the young lions thing. That was my first major gig where I was working consistently.

MD: What brought you to the point now where you play with so much depth?

Nasheet: Playing with Antonio Hart gave me a good foundation. He was well versed in Charlie Parker. We were all growing together, trying to familiarize ourselves with the history, and playing some things that we liked to play. We experimented a lot with different ideas.

MD: And your big break?

Nasheet: After that gig, I began playing with Greg Osby, New Directions, Stanley Cowell, and Hamiet Bluiett. Just recently I

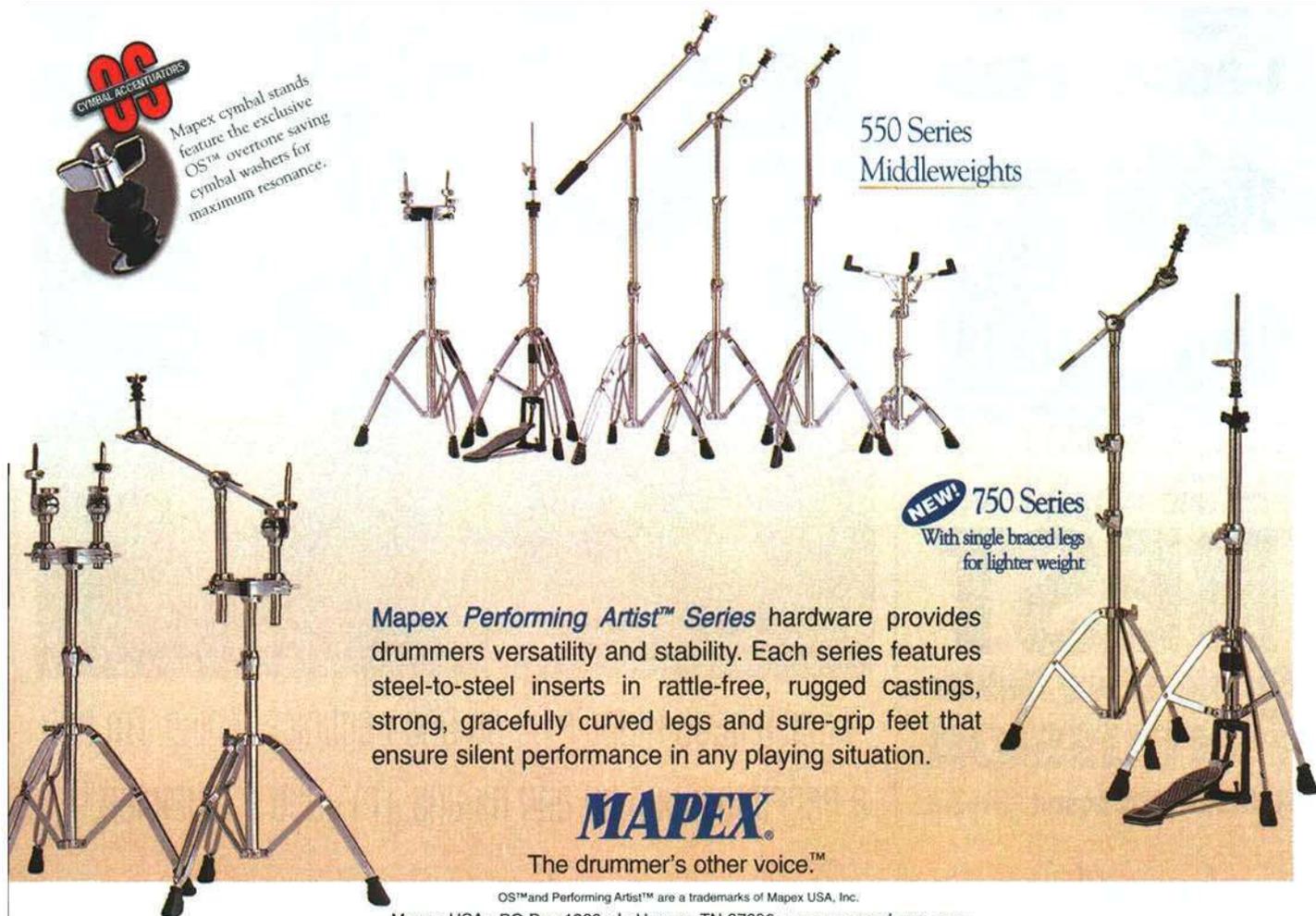
began playing with Andrew Hill. That gave me a feeling of having the go-ahead to do whatever I wanted to do within the framework.

Stanley Cowell is a virtuoso. His music is complex, but it has elements of the tradition as well. He has such an understanding of the music. I was able to take a lot of chances on that gig. Hamiet Bluiett is rooted in the tradition, but he wants you to play what you play. That gave me the freedom to be adventurous, and it was what was called for musically. And Andrew Hill is *very* open. All of these people are very encouraging.

There's a lot of freedom involved in these bands and in these situations. You don't have to hold it together all the time. Sometimes you can be more ethereal with your role in the band. You can color more and feel free to interject.

MD: Once the door was open, was your mental concept together so you could actually express these freer ideas?

Nasheet: I was playing that way before, even back when I was with Antonio. He had a lot of confidence in me. My being able to play that way wasn't recognized back then. But now Jason Moran and Greg Osby are



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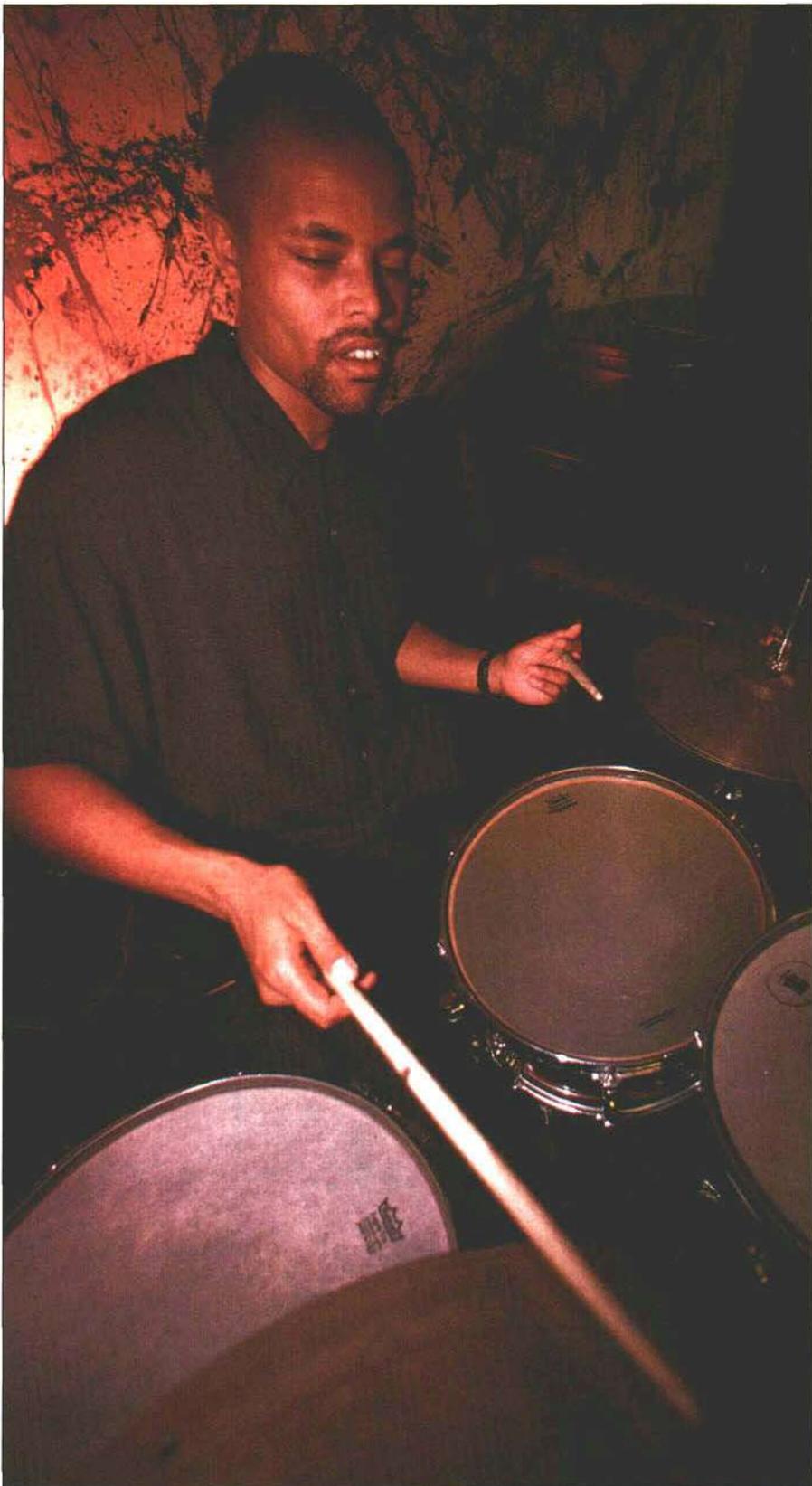


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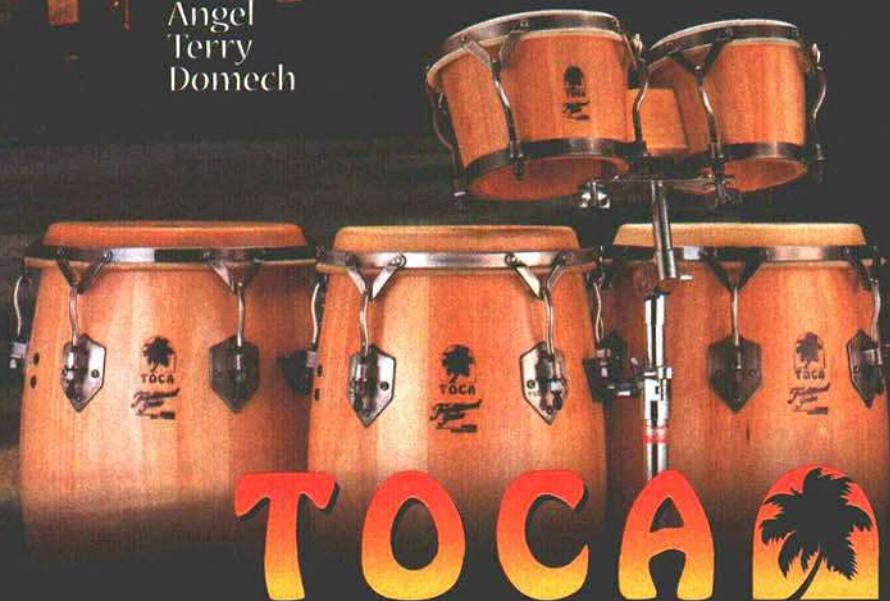
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Nasheet Waits

being viewed as players who are doing something different on a collective basis, so I'm getting more recognition for that.

MD: Did your ability to stretch and improvise come at all from listening to drummers like Milford Graves or Rashied Ali?

Nasheet: I never studied those cats. First and foremost, I listened to my father. I heard him in the womb. [laughs] It's funny, though; I haven't really listened to a lot of my father's recordings. It was an innate type of connection. I listened to Elvin with Coltrane the most.

MD: On the tune "The Murder Of Don Fanucci," from *Facing Left*, you sound kind of Elvin-ish. But being a younger player, did you also listen to R&B and pop when you were coming up?

Nasheet: I grew up hearing the roots of hip-hop and rap. I heard all of that. That's also part of my experience.

MD: Hip-hop rhythms don't bore you to tears?

Nasheet: I've never had to play just that. If I had to, I would try to do it to the best of my ability. But I can't listen to any one

thing all the time, especially something that's as rhythmically monotonous as hip-hop. I think those rhythms are secondary to the music. You get more from the lyricist on a rhythmic tip than the beats that are behind them. I'm into people like KRS-One, Busta Rhymes, and Jay-Z. They have a flow.

MD: Is there still work for jazz-inspired drummers coming from wherever to New York?

Nasheet: If you can play, there's work. But a lot of it has to do with being in the right place at the right time. I just tell cats to hang out and play with as many people as they can. It's a word-of-mouth thing. Once people know your name....

MD: Do you have plans for a solo record?

Nasheet: Yes, but there's no big rush on that now. I'm thinking I'd like to record with that trio I talked about, with Eric McPherson and Abraham Burton.

MD: What do two drummers and a tenor player sound like?

Nasheet: That shit is happening! It is what it is.





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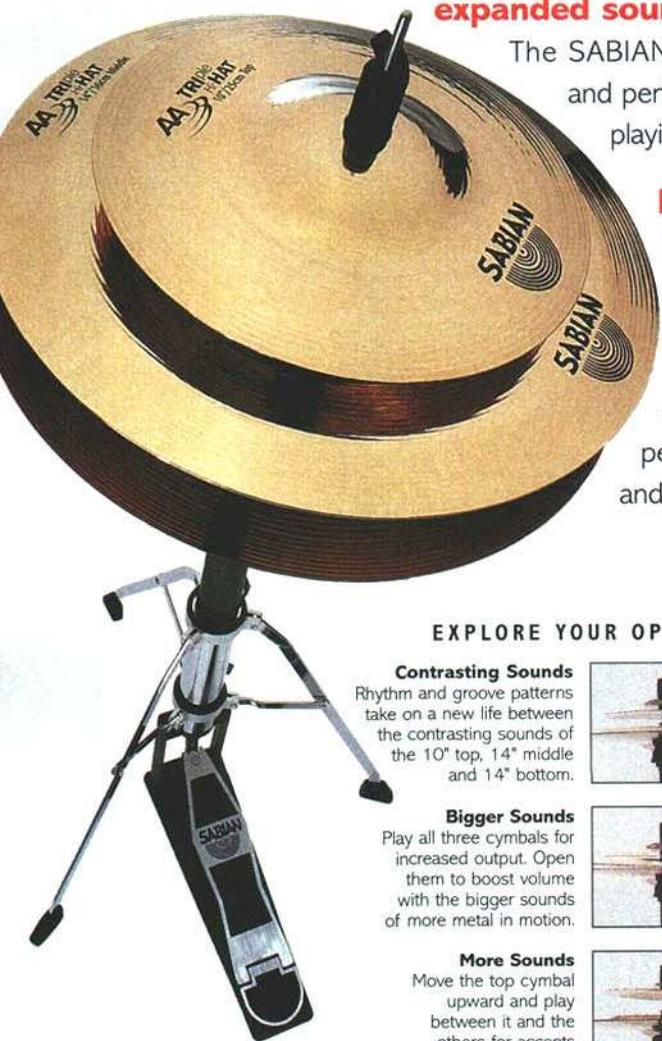
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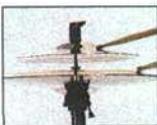
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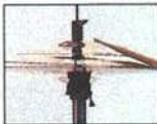
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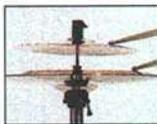
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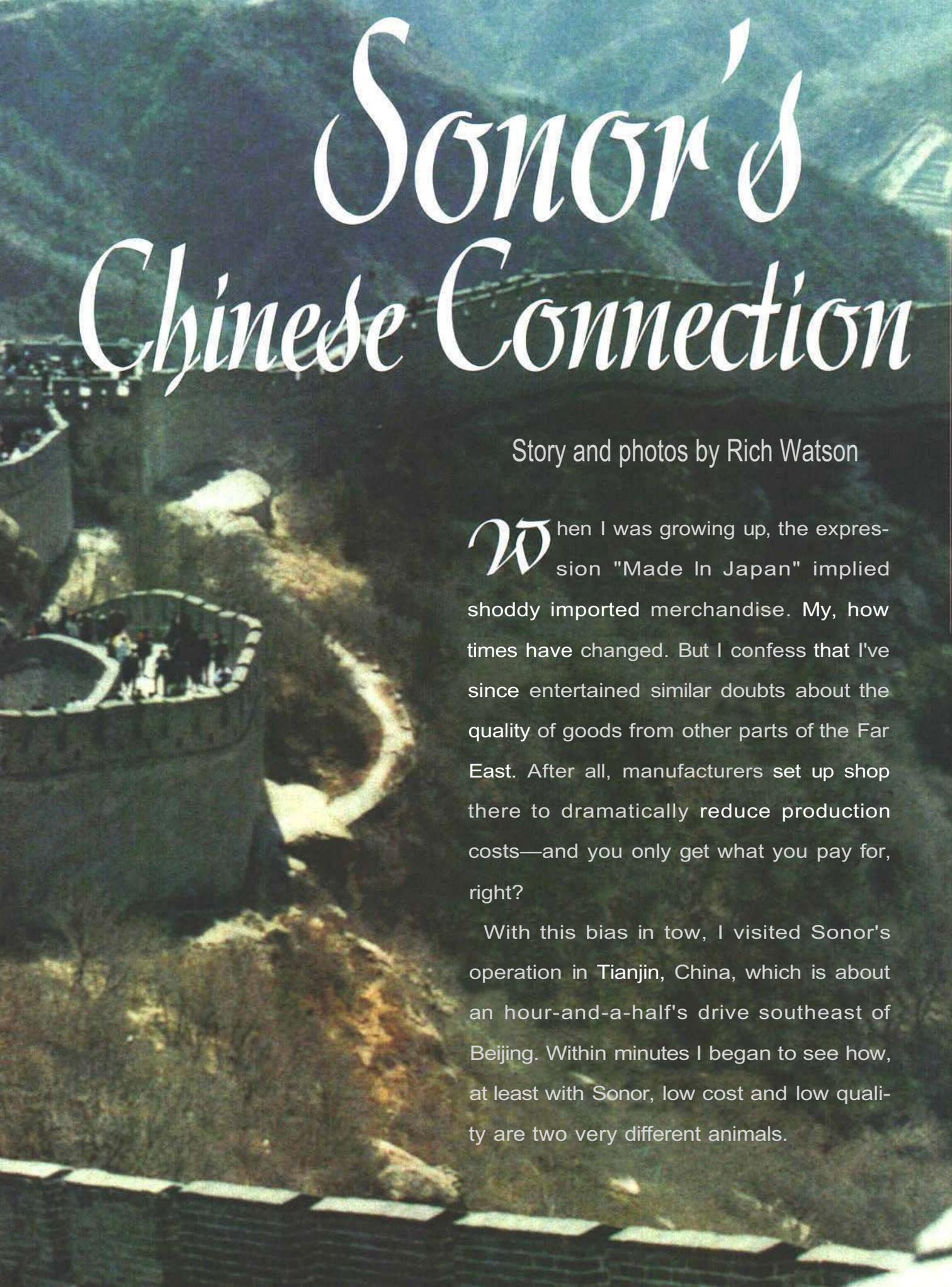
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Sonor's Chinese Connection

Story and photos by Rich Watson

When I was growing up, the expression "Made In Japan" implied shoddy imported merchandise. My, how times have changed. But I confess that I've since entertained similar doubts about the quality of goods from other parts of the Far East. After all, manufacturers set up shop there to dramatically reduce production costs—and you only get what you pay for, right?

With this bias in tow, I visited Sonor's operation in Tianjin, China, which is about an hour-and-a-half's drive southeast of Beijing. Within minutes I began to see how, at least with Sonor, low cost and low quality are two very different animals.

Chinese Address, German Soul

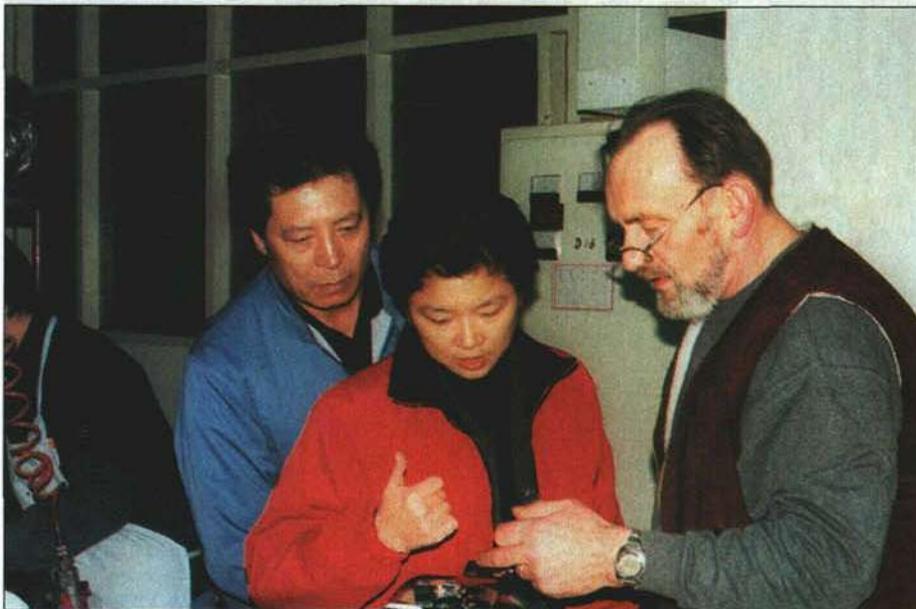
Sonor has long been associated with high-end drums. Their Designer series is among the most expensive in the world. More recently they sought to apply the knowledge and character they've developed over their 125-year history to a line that was affordable to just about everyone. To compete with other compa-

and figuratively, this is by design; everything Sonor makes in China is first conceived, planned, and developed in Germany. The lines' origins are obvious in the way they sound, and even in the way they look.

"Taiwan is full of drum companies," comments Sonor sales manager Karl-Heinz Menzel. "Their holders, lugs, and bass drum spurs look very similar because a lot of them use the same suppliers. But if you look at Sonor's 2001 and 3001, they don't look

like a Far East product. I don't mean that in a negative way. It's just that Sonor parts look distinct because all of the product development on these lines was done in Germany. We didn't copy someone else's design, or buy parts from a common supplier."

Imprinting the 2001 and 3001 lines with Sonor's distinctly German identity doesn't stop at the drawing board. Sonor ensures that its ideals (some would say obsession) regarding workmanship are maintained through vigilant oversight by Karl and German reps like Rolf Lukowitz. A big, barrel-chested man with a deep, bass voice, Rolf is one of four Sonor quality managers from Germany who oversee the Tianjin operation on a rotating basis. Everyone at the plant calls him "Lucky" (pronounced LEW-kie) or "Mr. Lucky."



Left to right: JMT plant manager Y.C. Shu, KHS Musix Co. assistant manager Muse Liu, and quality manager Rolf "Lucky" Lukowitz discuss manufacturing processes.

nies whose drums are made in the Far East—a list that now includes Mapex, Pearl, Tama, Yamaha, and DW's Pacific brand—Sonor formed a partnership with the JMT Musical Instrument Company and began making their Force 2001 and 3001 series in China. (All of Sonor's other lines are still manufactured in Germany.)

Although the 2001 and 3001 drums are made in JMT's factory in Tianjin, their character remains essentially German. Literally



Quality is checked at every step of the Force production process. Here a worker confirms the accurate placement of drill holes for lugs.



A bass drum bearing edge gets a final smoothing before the hardware is mounted.

"I am here for the fifth time in two years," says Lucky, who has worked at Sonor for three decades. "I spend so much time here, I'm practically Chinese now," he adds sardonically in a thick German accent.

Close supervision was especially critical in the beginning of the Sonor-JMT partnership, since JMT's standards and procedures weren't initially compatible with Sonor's. One early challenge was China's traditional reliance on standardization, which enhances economy, but sometimes fosters resistance to modify

old designs and manufacturing procedures.

"At one time we discussed the position of a bolt on the hi-hat stand," Karl remembers. "I wanted to change it, and the factory managers told me it wasn't possible. The discussion went on forever. 'No, we've done it this way for many years,' they told us. 'We should keep doing it this way.' For them, the change seemed like just a difference in philosophy. For us, it was a matter of practicality—it was clearly a better design. Eventually they agreed to change it."

Beyond design issues, Karl had to ensure that JMT was on the same page in terms of quality control. Reps like Rolf Lukowitz were born to this task. "This is my most-used tool," says Lucky, holding up the micrometer that he carries with him to spot-check tolerances on everything made at the factory. "When Sonor says a tolerance is two millimeters, it *has* to be two millimeters."

The company's quality mantra is realized everywhere in the Tianjin factory, where quality-control specialists closely examine every component. For example, in one corner of the plant I watched two workers check tom-holder castings. They used marker pens to circle flaws that I could *barely see*. Marked parts were placed in reject bins. Other workers are just as fastidious with Sonor's drum finishes. Anyone entering the lacquer finishing area must first remove their shoes and enter a "clean-room" cubicle where any dust is blown from their clothes and hair. Wood used to make drumshells is stored in humidity-controlled rooms.

Attention to detail is most obvious in the construction of the



Workers assemble Force 2001 toms with modern, efficient equipment.

Sonor drum shells. Lucky holds up a tom shell for my inspection and enthuses, "Inside and out, you can barely see the seam. They're perfect—*perfect*." (This guy clearly has a passion for perfection.) "And this is a 2001," he exclaims, "the least-expensive series Sonor makes!"

"Working with Sonor was a big step for JMT," says Muse Liu, an assistant manager of KHS Musix, JMT's parent company, and Karl's chief liaison in China. "They gave very good lessons on upgrading to make high-quality products. And Mr. Lucky makes my job easy. If someone asks why we do something, I just tell them, 'Mr. Lucky says that's how we do it.' With Mr. Lucky and issues of quality, there's no gray—only black & white."



Plant workers sift through thousands of ceramic cones for metal parts in a vibration polishing machine.



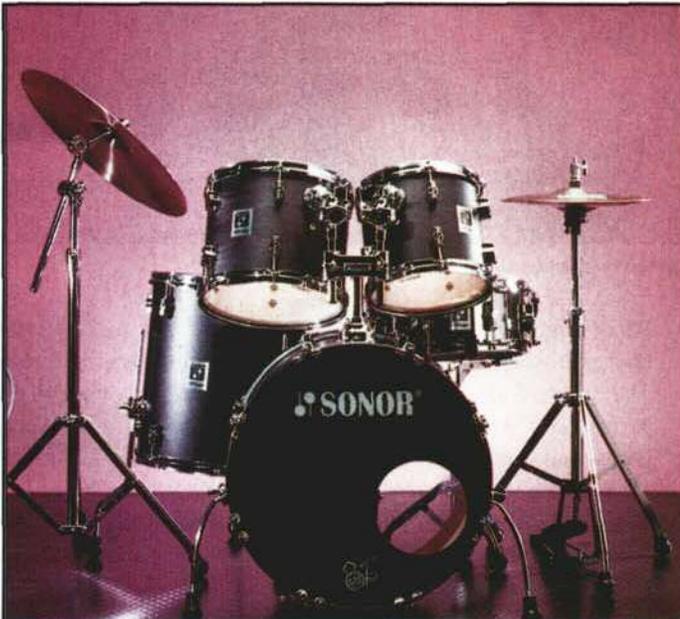
Sonor sales manager Karl-Heinz Menzel (right) and Lucky talk about the steel hoops made at the JMT factory.

The New Force In Drums

The kick and tom shells on the 2001 and 3001 lines are made of six plies of basswood and three outer plies of maple. Sheets of basswood and maple are precision-cut so that the maple plies' grain runs horizontally and the basswood plies' grain runs vertically. This "Cross Laminated Tension Free" (CLTF) design is said to improve the stability and resonance of the shells. State-of-the-art wood-pressing machines subject them to heat and pressure from both inside and outside. The initial forming process

takes twenty minutes for the tom shells and thirty minutes for the thicker bass drum shells. Lucky explains that within eleven minutes, the glue and a special hardener become "hard like glass" between the wood plies.

The shells are cut to the proper depth and milled to be straight soon after they are formed and the glue has cured. However, the final bearing edges are cut and fine-sanded last, after the drilling and finishing procedures, so that any incidental bumps along the



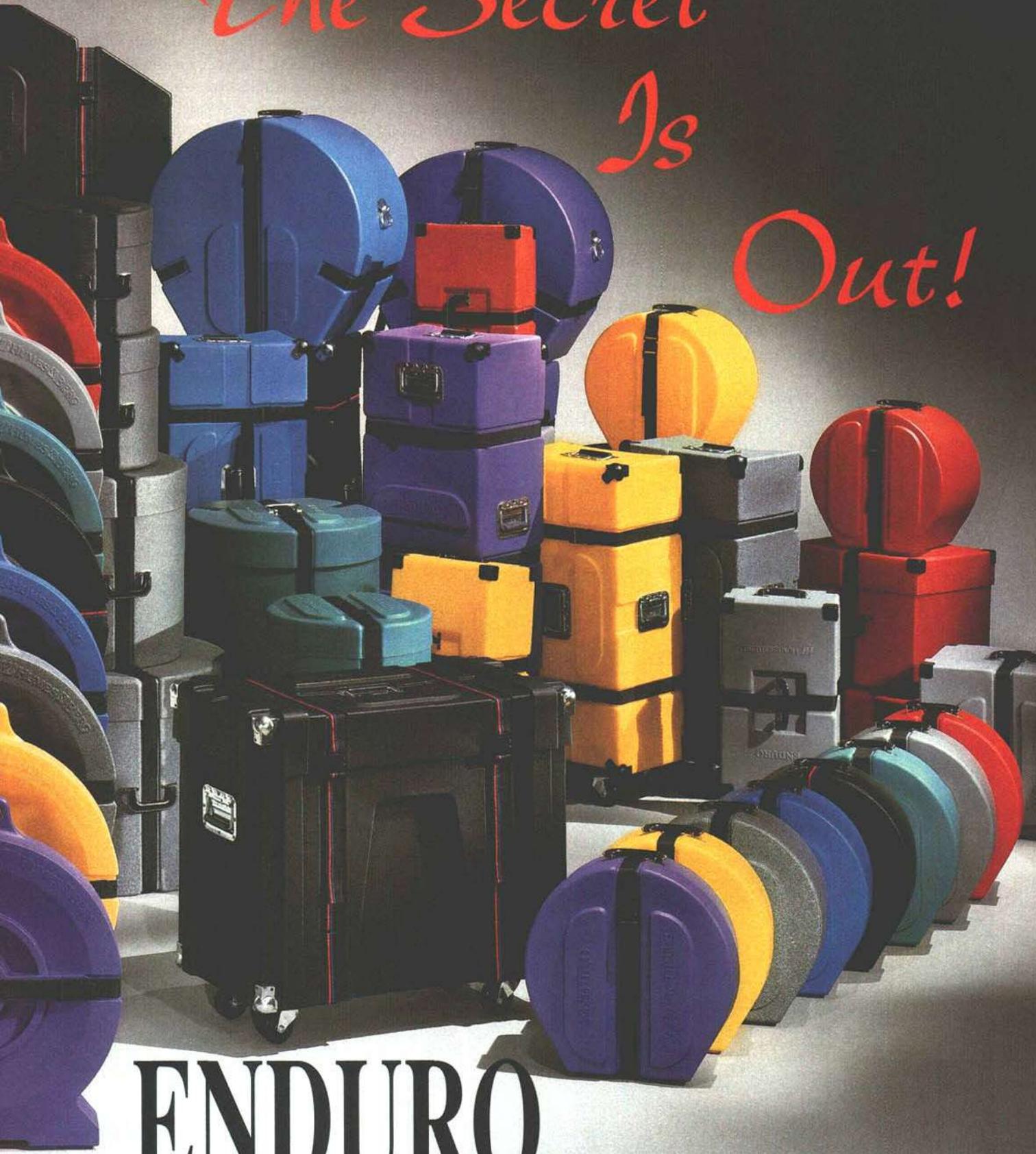
FORCE 2001/3001 QUICK COMPARISON

	2001	3001
Basic Configurations	Stage —(16x22, 5½x14, 10x12, 11x13, 16x16) Studio — (16x20, 5½x14, 9x10, 10x12, 14x16)	Fusion 1 (16x22, 5½x14, 9x10, 10x12, 12x14) Fusion 2 (16x20, 5½x14, 9x10, 10x12, 12x14) Stage (16x22, 5½x14, 10x12, 11x13, 16x16)
Snare Drum	chrome-plated steel with eight lugs	9-ply wood with ten lugs and 2.3 mm Power Hoop on top
Add-On Drums	none	ten-lug steel snare, 16x22 kick, 8x8, 9x10, and 16x16 toms
Stands & Pedals	double-braced HS 204 hardware set with two-section cymbal stands and a P 493 S kick pedal (same pedal as with HS 405)	heavy-duty, double-braced HS 405 hardware set with three-section cymbal stands, an adjustable-spring hi-hat with a rotating footboard, and a P 493 S kick pedal
Other Hardware	none	memory locks for bass drum spurs and tom mounts, plastic gaskets under lugs protect lacquer finish, heavier-duty bass drum claws
Heads	single-ply with pre-muffled bass drum heads	Remo single-ply with pre-muffled bass drum heads
Bass Drum Hoops	black wood	matched-color wood
Finish Choices	Midnight Black and Cherry Red sealed wax finish	high-gloss Piano Black, Caribic Blue-Green, and Indigo Purple lacquer
Retail Prices	\$975 (Studio), \$995 (Stage)	\$1,349 (Fusion 1 or Stage), and \$1,329 (Fusion 2)

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Sonor In China

way don't affect the critical smoothness of the bearing edge.

Sonor 2001 is the only drumset line in this price range with a natural wax finish. A protective sealant is sprayed onto the shells after the wax finish is applied.

Features shared by the 2001 and 3001 lines include an upgraded ball-clamp system for the rack toms, wood bass drum hoops, key rod (versus T-rod) tuning on the bass drum, low-mass, die-cast lugs, and non-intrusion tom mounts. Sonor's Tune-Safe system, designed to prevent detuning, incorporates a plastic insert fitted into a slot inside the lugs. Redesigned prism clamps on tom mounts and bass drum spurs help keep the drums where you want them. The large rubber foot on each bass drum spur can be screwed back to expose a metal spike. All stand couplings have nylon inserts for quiet, solid positioning. Sonor positions the rack toms' air holes to be concealed by the tom arms—a small but nice aesthetic touch. Drumsets in both lines include a snare stand, a hi-hat stand, a straight cymbal stand, a mini-boom cymbal stand, and a bass drum pedal. (For differences between the two lines, check out the Comparison sidebar on the previous page.)

Industry Standard

Force drums are made in two separate factories in Tianjin. One handles wood-shell construction, including pressing, edge cutting, sanding, lacquering, and drilling, as well as assembly and finishing of all the drums. JMT's metalworks factory at a separate four-acre site takes care of die-casting, processing (drilling, threading,

etc.), preparation (buffing, vibration-polishing), and plating.

Both facilities are clean, efficient, and completely modern. According to Karl, the state-of-the-art shell presses in Tianjin form the shells faster than the ones in Germany. And most of the die-casting is done on new vacuum die-casting machinery, the industry's technical standard. The vacuum eliminates air pockets in the molds as the metal is injected, ensuring stronger, higher-quality parts. It also reduces the burrs and other distortions common to less advanced types of casting.

Many of the smaller metal parts are polished in high-tech vibration polishing machines, where water and thousands of different-sized ceramic "cones" find their way into the parts' holes and crevices. Then JMT's electrolytic plating machines, also state-of-the-art, apply copper, nickel, and finally chrome plating to much of the Force series' hardware.

Three of the metal casting machines produce aluminum parts such as some pedal components, memory locks, and the base of the drum throne seat. Six others are dedicated to zinc parts, including lugs and the ball castings for the ball-clamp mounts. The strongest of the machines exerts up to 250 tons of pressure, depending on the size of the part.

"Most of the manufacturing equipment is brand-new," says Karl. "Some of it is made right here at JMT. Some of it comes from other countries. There are even some American-made computer-controlled machines that cost millions of dollars." Even for their lower-cost products, Sonor clearly spared no expense on manufacturing equipment.

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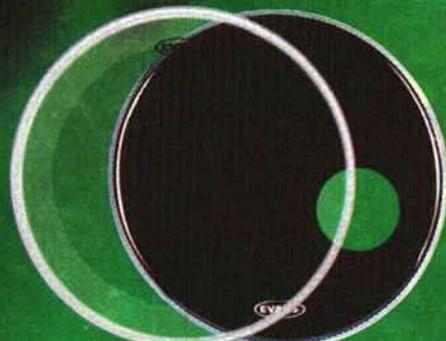
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Not In Kansas

Recently the whole world's attention was focused on US trade relations with China. Much of the discussion centered on working conditions for the Chinese people. Knowing that *MD* readers aren't a bunch of insensitive louts who would ignore worker exploitation to get a smaller price tag on their drumset, we felt that the issue as it pertains to Sonor's plant in China warrants mentioning.

It didn't take long in the Tianjin factory for me to realize (as Dorothy had upon arriving in Oz) that I definitely wasn't in Kansas. The first thing I noticed was the workers' intense concentration. It was tough to get them to look up and smile for a photograph. (Of course the reason for this could be cultural; Chinese are shy compared to Americans.) There was virtually no conversation aside from job-required statements such as "pass me that part." And there was definitely no standing around the proverbial water cooler, gabbing.

This atmosphere might seem a bit rigid to Westerners, but I was told that it is the norm in China. Discipline and focus are simply expected. Just the same, I was relieved to see that when the workers weren't on the production line, they seemed anything but oppressed, smiling and joking with each other, just as American workers would.

Sonor and JMT are clearly concerned for the well-being of their workers. The factory is climate-controlled. Hoods over the shell

compressor exhaust heat and any fumes from the heated glue. Workers involved with milling and sanding of the wood shells wear particle-filtering masks. And Sonor has provided hearing protection for employees working with loud machinery.

The factory has enormous kitchen and dining facilities to provide workers with subsidized meals. A low-cost dormitory that accommodates up to three hundred people is offered to workers, giving priority to those who live farthest from the plant.

Regarding environmental stewardship, Chinese laws might be less stringent than in the West, but the local government is hardly unconcerned. For obvious reasons, JMT would have preferred to locate the metal plating operation within their main Tianjin facility, but local environmental laws wouldn't allow it. Consequently, the plant that handles metal-parts production and plating is approximately thirty minutes away. Karl explains that environmental controls are much more strict in mainland China than in Taiwan, where most Far East drums are made. "In Taiwan, the water expelled from the plating plant would be going directly into the river. That does not happen here."

No, working conditions in Sonor's Tianjin factory aren't the same as might be seen in a US factory. But neither are they in any way uncomfortable or inhumane. And I couldn't help but see the connection between the workers' glum concentration and the impeccable quality of the goods they were producing. I can only hope that the next time I buy an automobile—or a drumset—it will have been shown the same attention to detail and quality.



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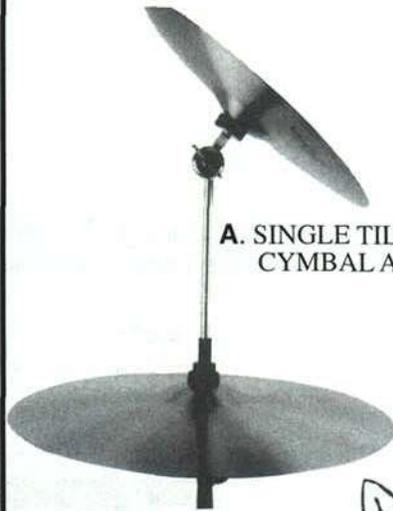


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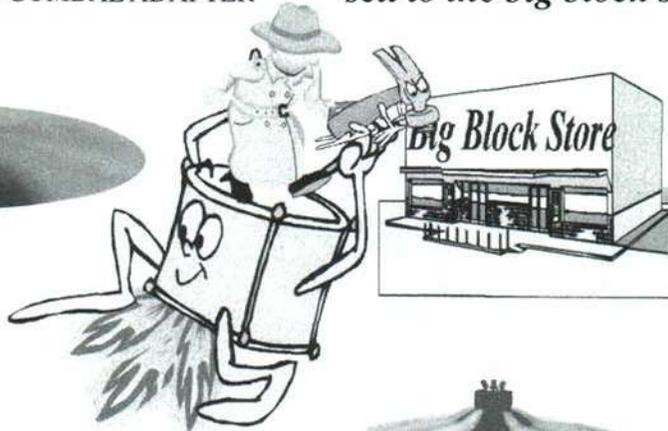
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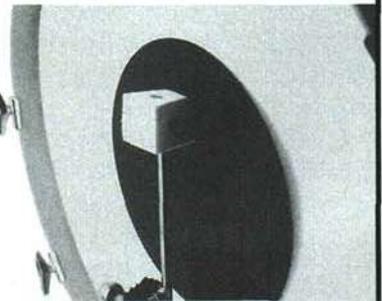
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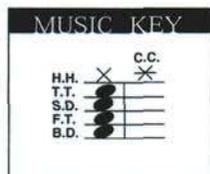
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Playing Simple Fills

by Robert Coxon



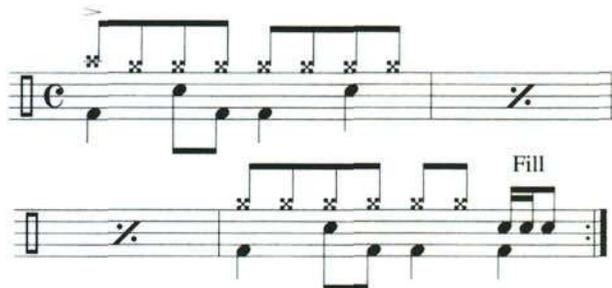
Many younger, inexperienced drummers make the mistake of playing far too many long, complicated fills. These often end up *detracting* from the groove rather than embellishing it. Usually the most appropriate fills are short and sweet. Just listen to any Motown hit from the '60s to hear some classic examples.

Long, more complex fills, like Phil Collins' entry into "In The Air Tonight" or Kenny Aronoffs fill in John Mellencamp's "Jack And Diane," are more the exception than the rule. Plus, these fills were the *feature* of their songs. Also note that they were written into the composition beforehand to attract attention to themselves and set up the next section. They are the only elaborate fills in their respective songs. Playing any more fills in the songs would have lessened their impact.

So instead of taking an entire bar to pummel around the kit, let's practice short, simple fills that are just one beat in length. After that, we'll try some fills that are one and a half beats long, and finally some that are two beats long.

Play four bars of steady time (with a click if possible), and place the fill in the fourth bar, as shown below. Be careful not to speed up or slow down during the fill. Follow it with a strong cymbal and bass drum on the first beat of the next bar.

One-Beat Fill



Two-Beat Fill



For practice purposes, I've placed the fill at the end of every four bars. However, if you were playing with a band, the fills would most likely be much further apart, say, at the end of every eight, twelve, sixteen, or thirty-two bars.

The previous examples had the fills played only on the snare drum. Now it's time to try playing this same rhythm around the drumset. Here are a few examples to try:



A tip: Be sure to play quarter notes on the bass drum underneath the fills. This helps to keep the tempo steady, and makes the drumset sound full. If you stop playing the bass drum, the fill will sound thinner than the rhythm it's punctuating. However, if you choose to utilize the bass drum as *pan* of the fill, you'll need to focus just a bit harder on keeping a steady tempo.



Also, always use a sticking that works best for you.

RLR L
LRL R
RLL R

The diagram shows a drum set with a snare drum marked with an asterisk (*). The sticking diagram indicates the sequence of strokes: RLR L, LRL R, and RLL R.

Finally, edit your playing and always use the utmost discretion when playing fills. Here are a few more examples of short, simple fills that do not exceed two beats in length and would not detract from the song's groove.

One-Beat Fills

Four musical staves, each showing a one-beat drum fill. Each staff begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note, and ends with a quarter note fill.

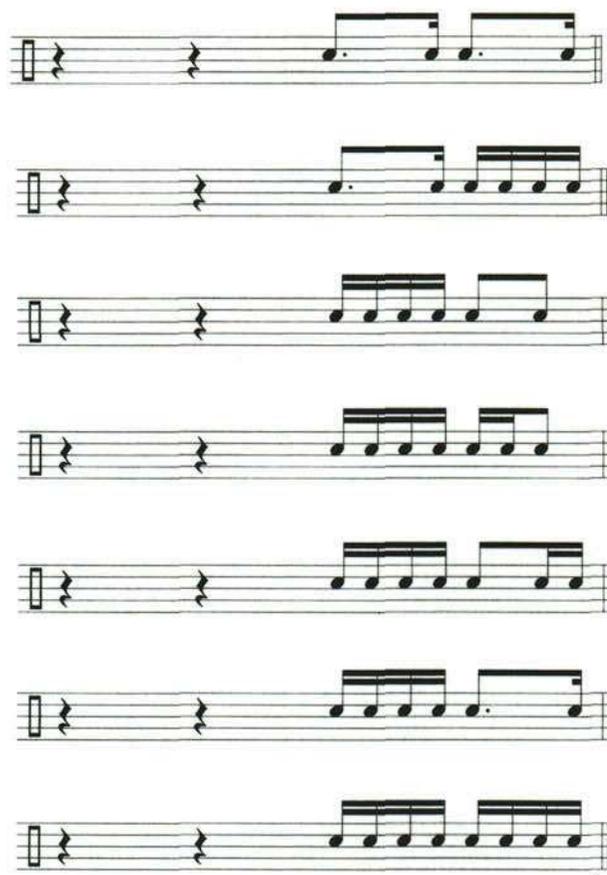
One-And-A-Half-Beat Fills

Eight musical staves, each showing a one-and-a-half-beat drum fill. Each staff begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note, and ends with a quarter note fill.

Four musical staves, each showing a two-beat drum fill. Each staff begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note, and ends with a quarter note fill.

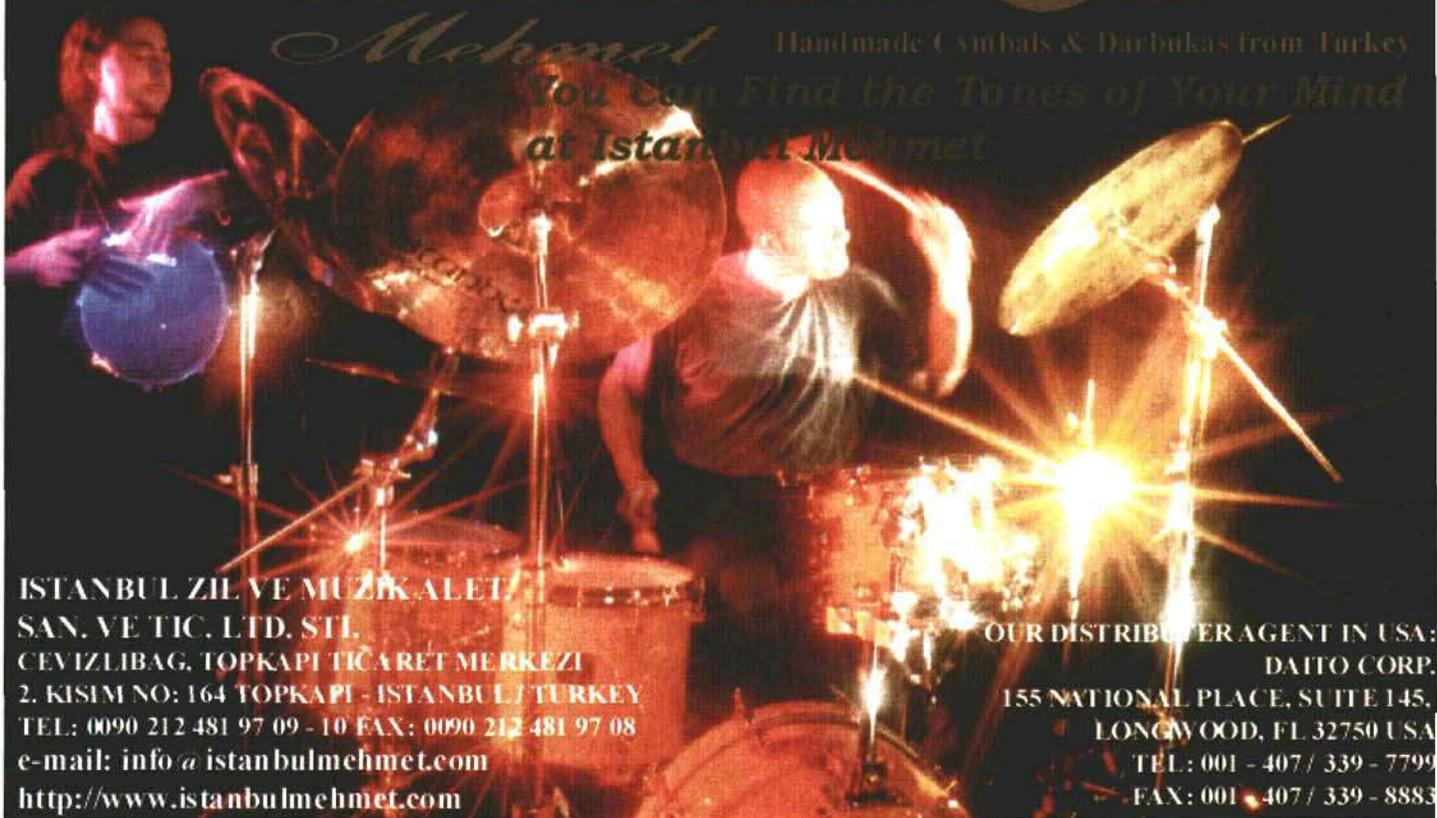
Two-Beat Fills

Eight musical staves, each showing a two-beat drum fill. Each staff begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note, and ends with a quarter note fill.



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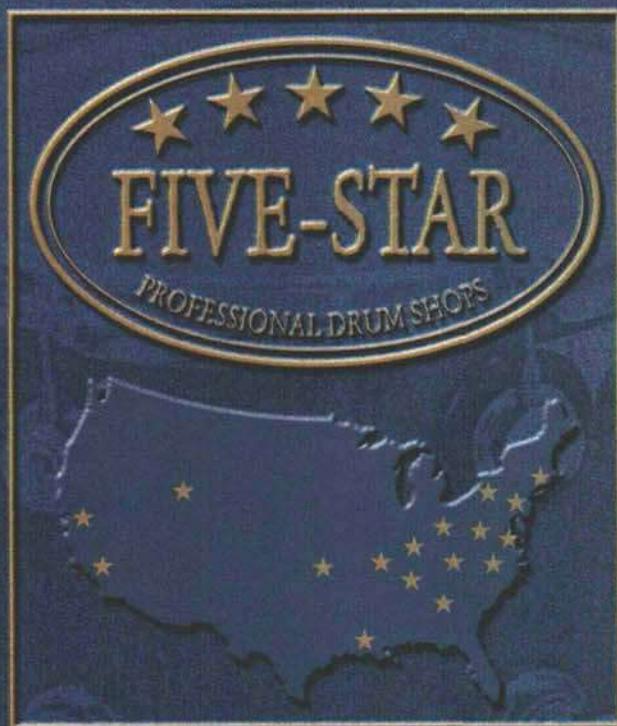
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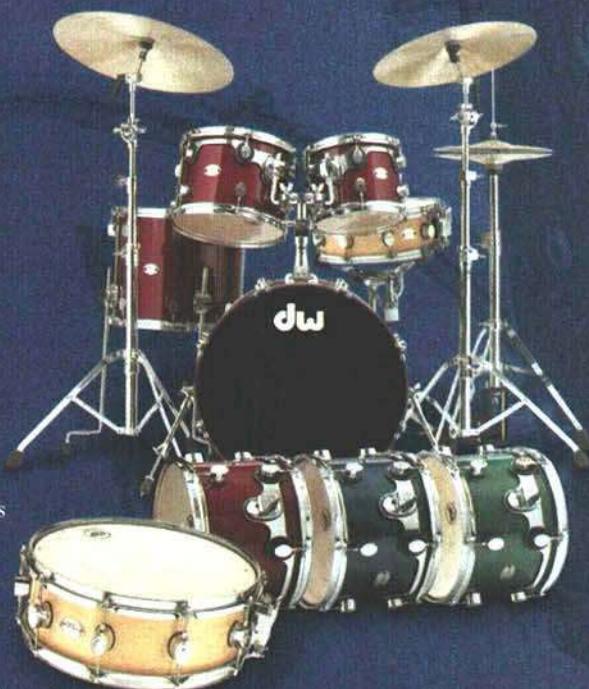
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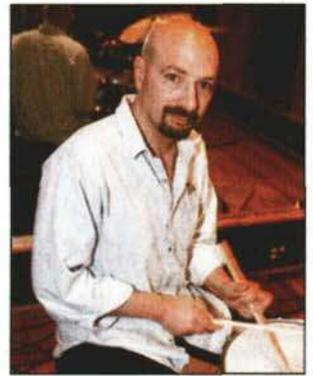


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Step By Step

Time-Phrasing Tips



by Steve Smith

MUSIC KEY

R.C.	X	Cross Stick
T.T.	X	Stick
F.T.	●	
B.D.	●	
H.H.	●	
w/foot	X	

Here is the step-by-step process I went through of taking an idea that I heard on a recording, learning it, and then working with it until I was able to turn it into something new. From that new idea I then developed some new playing concepts and used them for the foundation of a Vital Information cut, "Take Eight." We called it that because the groove for the tune's "A" section feels like it's in 8/4 time.

This is the basic pattern that Alan Dawson played on "Take Five" from Dave Brubeck's 1972 album, *We're All Together Again For The First Time*, featuring Dawson, Brubeck, Gerry Mulligan, Paul Desmond, and Jack Six. The pattern swings and is quite natural and easy to play once you work it out. (All notated 8th notes are swung.)



This led me to breaking down the pattern into two patterns: one in 3/4 and one in 2/4.



Next I applied the patterns to a concept of time playing that was innovated by Roy Haynes, Elvin Jones, and Tony Williams, among others. You play two bars of 4/4 time, but you phrase the cymbal in two bars of 3/4 and one bar of 2/4. So instead of this (which has eight beats):



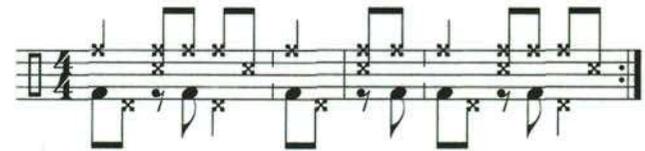
you have this:



Now add the snare, bass, and hi-hat.



The next step is to develop the variations, 3/4, 2/4, 3/4, and 2/4, 3/4, 3/4.

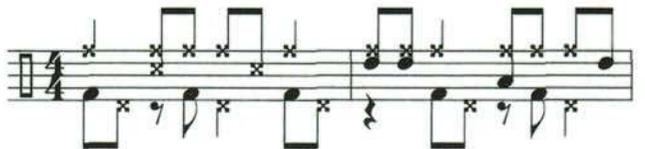


Eventually I added the tom-toms on the 2/4 bars, like this:



This starts to add more melody to the patterns. You can also phrase using basic 4/4 and then stretch the time while superimposing the 3/4 over the 4/4 for longer periods before resolving to a 1.

As I experimented with this time-playing concept, I developed a melodic pattern that became the basis of "Take Eight," a tribute to Alan Dawson and Joe Morello. The tune can be heard on *Where We Come From*, as well as on *Live Around The World*.





As you can see, the entire pattern is ten bars long—eight bars, plus a two-bar tom-tom turnaround that's a combination of a Gene Krupa/Cozy Cole tom-tom beat and a New Orleans rhythm.

The first eight bars is basically Alan's "Take Five" groove plus an extra 3/4 bar. So it's 5/4 plus 3/4, or 3/4, 2/4, 3/4. But the tom melody makes it sound very different; instead of the cross-stick on some of the 3/4 bars, I use the high and low toms for melody, like this:



Developing these patterns for time playing or soloing has been very rewarding for me. Once you master the basic patterns and then become comfortable with the concept of superimposing 3/4 and 2/4 over 4/4 (polyrhythmic time implication), you'll be playing some very swinging, interesting, and melodic time and solos.

Alan & I

I studied with Alan Dawson less than a year after he recorded this particular Dave Brubeck record. His playing was very smooth and effortless. He had great command of his four limbs and a wonderful melodic sense. His touch was very controlled, and he had a large dynamic range.

When I studied with Alan, we worked on technique using the twenty-six rudiments, George Lawrence Stone's *Stick Control* book, coordination using Ted Reed's *Syncopation* book, and reading, using many different texts.

The most profound ideas I got from Alan had to do with form and melody. He would have me learn two jazz standards each week, figure out what the form was (blues, AABA, AABC, etc.), and be able to sing the melody. Then I'd have to play my lesson while singing the melody, and *then* play eights or fours, or solo over the entire form, never stopping or interrupting the melody and form. This really helped me develop the ability to give shape to my playing so that the other musicians playing with me can easily hear the form of the song, chorus after chorus.

I'm grateful I had the opportunity to study with Alan Dawson, a true master teacher and player.

Some of this material also appears in The Alan Dawson Drum Method, by Osami Mizuno (with help from special contributor Steve Smith), published by TOA International. (Available only in Japan. Used with permission.)



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Creating A Vocabulary, Part 1

The Mozambique And Rolls

by Rob Leytham

MUSIC KEY

T.T.
S.D.
F.T.
B.D.
H.H.
w/foot

R.C. Cowbell

Add'l
T.T.

Remember in grade school when the teacher would give you a list of new words on Monday morning, and by Friday you'd have to not only spell them correctly but use them in a sentence? As the year went on, the vocabulary words became more challenging and hopefully became part of your everyday speech. This is how I like to teach drumming.

I give my students a new beat at their lesson along with a couple of rudiments to practice during the week. I'll then write out a solo that will use the new beat and the rudiments around the drumset. This helps them learn how to put together the lesson into musical sentences or phrases.

This month we'll use this method to study the "Mozambique," along with the five- and six-stroke rolls put to the drumset. First, learn the basic beat, with your right hand playing the ride cymbal and your left playing the snare. Practice the 16th-note sticking repeatedly before adding the feet. Once you become comfortable with that, add the bass drum and hi-hat.

Notice that the feet are playing 8th notes, with the bass on the beat and the hi-hat on the "&s." You can create a samba feel by adding the optional bass drum on the "ahs."

R L R L R R L R L R R L R R L R

Now play the same sticking, but alternate your left stick between the snare and toms while your right continues playing the ride cymbal.

The next two examples have your right stick leaving the ride cymbal and playing the floor tom on the "ah" of beat 4.

Now move your right stick off the ride cymbal and play the same pattern on the cowbell, with your left playing between the snare and toms. The right stick will continue to play the "ah" of beat 4.

Finally, this example has the right stick playing the cowbell on beats 1 and 2, and then moving back to the ride cymbal on beats 3 and 4.

Two rudiments that work well with the Mozambique are the five- and six-stroke rolls. (Practice these rudiments on the snare drum before playing the solo.)

Five-Stroke Roll

Six-Stroke Roll

The six-stroke rolls are played as sextuplets,

R L L R R L R L L R R L

16th notes,

and inverted 16th notes.

The next exercise is a six-stroke roll followed by two bass drum hits. The rhythm is played as sextuplets, so make sure that the double hits on the bass drum are played evenly, like the hands.

When playing the rolls on the toms, make sure that the doubles are clean-sounding. You can accomplish this by using a "drop/pull" technique. Strike the drum with the stick, using a wrist motion to get the first hit. Then pull the stick with the back fingers to get the second hit. This will help make the doubles sound even on the toms. Now have fun with this solo.



Art Blakey

"Arabia"

Transcribed by Eddie Dalton

MUSIC KEY

T.T. 
 S.D. 
 F.T. 
 B.D. 

This month's *Drum Soloist* features one of the hardest-Swingin' drummers of all time, the late, great Art Blakey. On "Arabia" (from The Jazz Messengers' *Mosaic* album, recorded 1961) Blakey is a powerhouse. He lays down such a phat pocket that soloists Freddie Hubbard (trumpet), Wayne Shorter (tenor sax), and Curtis Fuller (trombone) can't help but deliver spectacular spots.



When Blakey takes his turn, he kicks off with a driving floor tom accent pattern that eventually moves to the snare. No matter how far he stretches, the time is solid and swinging. (Although not indicated, Art plays a strong 2 and 4 on his hi-hat throughout.)

While listening to Blakey's performance here, it's hard to believe that this track was recorded almost forty years ago. Some of the licks Art pulls off sound amazingly fresh.

The transcription consists of ten staves of music. The first staff begins with a common time signature (C) and a star symbol. The notation uses various note values (quarter, eighth, sixteenth notes) and rests, with many notes having an accent (>) above them. The piece features several triplet patterns, indicated by a '3' above the notes. The rhythm is driving and swinging, characteristic of Art Blakey's style.

The image displays a page of musical notation for a drum set, consisting of 13 staves. The notation is written on a single-line staff with a treble clef. The music features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and triplet markings (indicated by a '3' above a group of notes). The patterns are complex and rhythmic, typical of a drum set exercise or solo. The notation includes various note values, rests, and triplet markings (indicated by a '3' above a group of notes). The patterns are complex and rhythmic, typical of a drum set exercise or solo.



Kirk Bewer

Thirty-year-old Canadian drummer Kirk Bewer began his musical career with The Tracy Young Band in the summer of 1989. After spending two years playing six nights a week in clubs and rodeos all over western Canada, Kirk decided to hone his skills by studying at Vancouver's Capilano College. This included two years of tutelage by Ken Moore (Paul Anka, Vancouver Symphony). Then it was back on the road with Tracy Young, traveling from The Yukon to New Mexico.

After working with a couple of country-rock bands, Kirk moved into a two-year

stint in the house band of a top Winnipeg club. Many of the area's top musicians sat in regularly. This exposure to many different players helped develop Kirk's pop and R&B chops—talents amply demonstrated on his demo CD. The result has been a busy freelance career for Kirk backing such artists as The Platters, Stephanie Beaumont, John Hannah (Streethart), jazz singer Helena



Infante, and even Canadian CFL star (and sometime rocker) Troy Westwood. He's currently working with several Winnipeg-area artists.

Kirk cites Ron Gannaway (Steve Wariner), Randall Stoll (k.d. lang), and Craig Kalheal (Downchild Blues Band) as influences. He plays Canwood drums with Sabian and Zildjian cymbals. His goals, he says, are "to be embraced by my peers and to make a positive contribution to the music community."

Frank Reina

Frank Reina got a set of drums at the age of three and a guitar at five. He decided to stick with the drums once he realized he could never play lead like Jimmy Page.

A native of Houston, Frank has lived in Los Angeles for the past seventeen years. He entered the Percussion Institute of Technology in 1983, which he cites as a great learning experience. Since then the thirty-six-year-old drummer has played and recorded with guitarist Buzz Feiten (currently with Dave Weckl), singer Chuck Negrón (ex-Three Dog Night), Dave Mason, Dionne Warwick, Bill Medley,

Richie Havens, and Warren Hill. He recently recorded drum tracks for Scott Weiland's upcoming solo record, and his drumming can be heard on all but one track of A.J. Croce's latest release, *Transit*. Frank's own original band, Big Blue Missile, had a song on the soundtrack for *Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me*. He does all his performing on Orange County Drum & Percussion drums, with Zildjian cymbals.

Frank's cites Vinnie Colaiuta as his biggest influence, stating simply, "Vinnie is from another planet. No one can touch him."

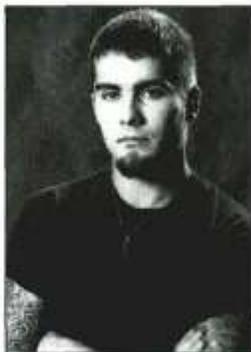
Other influences include John Bonham, Stewart Copeland, Steve Jordan, and Tony Williams. Frank plays all styles, but enjoys rock and pop. And while he enjoys playing live, his real love is recording. His dream gig, he says, would be to play or record with Neil Stubenhaus, Michael Landau, David Garfield, and Steve Tavaglione.



Jason Bittner

Albany, New York's Jason Bittner has been drumming for twenty of his thirty years. With one year of Berklee College training and two years of performance with his local community college jazz and percussion ensembles under his belt, you might think he would have taken the jazz route. Nope.

Highly influenced by Neil Peart, Dave Lombardo, and Mark Zonder, Jason



spent most of the late 1980s and early '90s in various local hard rock/metal bands—playing shows and cutting demos. He also toured with RoadRunner recording artist The Great Kat in 1993.

In 1994 Jason joined Stigmata, a long-running New York hardcore band. He's spent the past five years with that group, making recordings and touring in the US and abroad. He took 1997 off to record and tour with Metal Blade recording act Crisis, but returned to Stigmata

in time to record their 1999 release, *Do Unto Others...* (Victory). The CD showcases Jason's combination of blazing speed, machine-gun patterns, and sheer power. If you're into extremely aggressive music, check it out at Jaybitt@aol.com.

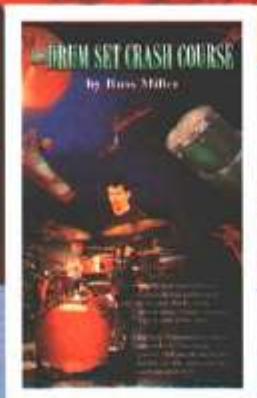
Despite his affinity for hardcore playing, Jason says, "My career goal is to play with as many different people and in as many different musical styles as possible." He's pursuing that goal playing Tama drums, with endorsements from Meinl cymbals, Aquarian heads, Gibraltar racks, and Pro-Mark sticks.

If you'd like to appear in *On The Move*, send us an audio or video cassette of your best work (preferably both solo and with a band) on three or four songs, along with a brief bio sketch and a high-quality color or black & white close-up photo. (Polaroids are not acceptable. Photos will not be paid for or credited.) The bio sketch

should include your full name and age, along with your playing style(s), influences, current playing situation (band, recording project, freelance artist, etc.), how often and where you are playing, and what your goals are (recording artist, session player, local career player, etc.). Include any special items of interest pertaining to what

you do and how you do it, and a list of the equipment you use regularly. Send your material to On The Move, Modern Drummer Publications, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Material **cannot** be returned, so please **do not** send original tapes or photos.





new

Russ Miller

The Drum Set Crash Course Video

(VH0508) US \$29.95

The *Drum Set Crash Course* video is a wealth of information and insight from one of today's most prominent drummers, Russ Miller. Russ demonstrates everything from two-limb to advanced four-limb independence, as well as how to master more than 18 different styles of music! Each style is presented with basic grooves, variations, fills, solo development, mix of instruments on the drum kit, dynamic studies and hints for playing each style more convincingly.

Russ' *Drum Set Crash Course* is a complete curriculum for any novice to advanced player, or as reference material for any professional. Russ provides incredible playing demonstrations, informative descriptions and inspirational performances! The *Drum Set Crash Course* video is the most comprehensive "all-in-one" drum set learning tool available and is a must have for all students, teachers, professionals and enthusiasts.

Have you ever spent hours of practice time working with a teacher or a book focused on one particular style of music or concept only to get frustrated or even bored? Although in-depth studies of particular music styles are crucial to one's musical development, it is very important to have a fundamental understanding of many music styles in the professional music world. After many years of studying, performing, and teaching, I came up with the idea of developing facility on the instrument while learning the fundamentals of various musical styles. The Drum Set Crash Course was born!

—Russ Miller



INSPIRING DRUMMER SERIES

Will Kennedy

Be a DrumHead

(VH0515CD) US \$39.95

new

The second video in the *Inspiring Drummer Series* features the World-renown, Grammy® award-winning artist Will Kennedy along with drum innovator Bob Gatzen. *Be a DrumHead* analyzes the concept that our environment affects the way we think, act, and feel, and that "drum space" is a controllable environment that sets the stage for one's creativity. Throughout *Be a DrumHead*, Kennedy and Gatzen perform and discuss several creative ways to develop your personal "drum space," why it is important, and how to practice more creatively and productively. The artists communicate between Will's V-Room and Bob's drum lab through a virtual screen in this new, unique and entertaining presentation.

The attached practice CD will introduce PTM (Practice Time Management), a method of formatting musical selections which will encourage practicing, develop a deeper understanding of musical form, and create the feeling of achievement. The method is very effective for anyone who has limited practice time or for one who simply needs a boost of motivation.

The *Inspiring Drummer Series* not only delivers spectacular performances from the artists, it gives new breath to educational drum videos by expanding one's creativity and desire to play. This series is "Edutainment" at its best, and should be suggested as required viewing for its educational, inspirational and motivational impact regardless of instrument choice or age group.



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10 Louis Armstrong *The Complete Hot Five & Hot Seven Recordings*

Warren "Baby" Dodds, Zutty Singleton (dr), Louis Armstrong (tp, vl), others



Half of this four-CD box doesn't include drums; on the half that does, the drums are barely audible save for choked cymbal hits. So why place it high on a drummer's required listening list? First, these are perhaps the most pivotal recordings in jazz. Second, all drummers should be familiar with Warren "Baby" Dodds' monumental place in jazz drumming history.

On the Hot Five and Hot Seven recordings, Satchmo redefined the focus of jazz as improvisational soloing, introduced swinging scat singing, and pushed New Orleans music into a new sense of rhythmic swing. Baby Dodds shared in the history-making. By the time of the 1927 Armstrong dates, the drummer was already a leader of the New Orleans style, and had turned heads with King Oliver in Chicago. His use of alternating patterns pointed towards future swing improvisation. Then came landmark recordings with Jelly Roll Morton and these watershed Armstrong dates, which changed everything. Simply put, all jazz drummers owe Dodds a debt.

A later incarnation of the group featured on the fourth disc includes Zutty Singleton on drums and the great pairing of Satchmo with pianist Earl Hines. It may sound old and scratchy now, but these players were *radicals*. (Columbia/Legacy)

Jeff Potter

9 Planet X *Universe*

Virgil Donati (dr), Derek Sherinian (kybd), Tony MacAlpine (gtr), Tom Kennedy (bs)



Former Dream Theater keyboardist Derek Sherinian's solo project has turned into a full-fledged progressive fusion band. *Universe* unveils some of the most adventurous prog/fusion around. Musically reminiscent of U.K. and early Bill Bruford solo work, Planet X sells intensely driving keyboard & guitar-layered melodies. Virgil Donati's speed and combination of single and double strokes on the kick are mind-boggling. ("Dog Boots" will give even the most accomplished speed-metal drummer double bass fits!) Virgil's ability to create interesting patterns over the subdivided material while supporting the rhythms is downright inspirational. Truly one of today's drumming pioneers. (www.insideoutmusic.com)

Mike Haid

8 Stereolab *The First Of The Microbe Hunters*

Andy Ramsay (dr, perc, kybd), Laetitia Sadier, Tim Gane, Mary Hansen, Morgane Lhote, Simon Johns, Sean O'Hagan (vl, gr, kybd)



Equally inspired by droning Krautrock, geeky '60s hi-fi test records, and sexy bossa nova cooing, Stereolab has continually challenged the very notion of modern pop. Andy Ramsay's hard-nosed beats help make the band way more dramatic than that description might suggest. *Microbe Hunters'* nine-minute opener, "Outer Bongolia," comes to mind, a steady, incessant two-bar vamp that headphones reveal to be full of fire and hidden variations. "Intervals" sees Ramsay's brief, repeating snare/tom fill on "&4" providing odd but effective propulsion. "Nomus Et Phusis" features an intoxicating 6/8 pattern. And "Retrograde Mirror Form" morphs into a polyrhythmic tapestry Frank Zappa would dig. Yet it's all still pop. Sweet. (Elektra)

Adam Budofsky

VIVA DRUM INDIES!

Damn the majors, drummer/leaders are doing just fine in the indie world.

8 Alex Acuña Y Su Acuarela *De Tambores: Top Percussion*



Wall-to-wall percussion jamming of the highest order. Master Acuña is one of the gifted few who can jump between countless rhythm instruments and *really* play them all. Aided by an all-star lineup of fellow rhythm kings, Acuña gets to pull out all the stops with peers who can hang with the heat. (www.tongarecords.com)

7 Sylvia Cuenca *The Crossing*



The Crossing features Cuenca's vital, exciting straight-ahead drive with a sextet featuring trumpeter Eddie Henderson. Recently a member of Clark Terry's quintet, Cuenca has toured with numerous name jazzers. Take notice! (www.jazzcorner.com/cuenca)

7 Robert Jospé *Blue Blaze*



Jospé and his septet shine on this tight, upbeat album. The mixture of jazz, R&B, and island influences is delightful, and Jospé's grooving, tasteful drumming complements the emphasis on ensemble teamwork. Michael Brecker makes a tenor cameo. (www.ioberijospé.com)

6 Franklin Kiermyer *Sanctification, Auspicious Blazing Sun*

For the adventurous, Franklin Kiermyer offers *Sanctification*, where explosive, dense, soloistic waves of free jazz drumming hark to mid-'60s Trane/Elvin/Rashed Ali explorations. *Auspicious Blazing Sun* teams Kiermyer with monks and musicians of Nepal. The "out" bent of these CDs may repel some while proving transcendental to others. (suoship@mobilitymusic.com)

Jeff Potter

7

Monty Alexander Monty Meets Sly And Robbie

Sly Dunbar, Desmond Jones (dr), Monty Alexander (pno), Robbie Shakespeare (bs), Handel Tucker (kybd)



Caution: deep grooves. They're billing this as "the return of Jamaica's funk soul brothers," but exactly where the famous rhythm section is returning from is unclear. Dunbar and Shakespeare were heard as recently as last year on *Drum 'n' Bass: Strip To The Bone*. Here, along with fine Jamaican jazz pianist Monty Alexander, they raid the vaults of classic soul and funky jazz. Jones and Dunbar are a tight, efficient unit.

There are live acoustic drums throughout, as well as a healthy mixture of Sly's trademark percussive flavorings—bass drums that sound like bass guitars, vintage Syndrum-esque punctuation, snippets of samples, and a bucketful of snare sounds. The effect is powerful and tasty, and on some of the sparser pieces, the vibe is hypnotic. (Telarc)

Robin Tolleson

7

Iron Maiden Brave New World

Nicko McBrain (dr), Bruce Dickinson (vcl), Dave Murray, Adrian Smith, Janek Gers (gtr), Steve Harris (bs, kybd)



I Last year, British metal legends Iron Maiden made a huge announcement: Singer Bruce Dickinson and guitarist Adrian Smith had returned to the group (thus making Maiden a three-guitarist band). The lineup, which includes drummer Nicko McBrain, shines on the heavy-hitting, prog-rocking *Brave New World*. The opener, "The Wickerman," showcases

McBrain's booming but crisp approach. Later, during "Nomad," you might picture Maiden riding camels through the Sinai as an Arabian-flavored melody is held down by McBrain's steady beat. The album closes with the blistering "Thin Line Between Love And Hate," where Nicko moves from half- to double-time, a trick he employs often (and superbly). Overall, Nicko plays quite intelligently on these brave new tunes. (Columbia)

Jeff Perlah

8

Peter Erskine Live At Rocco

Peter Erskine (dr), Alan Pasqua (pno), David Carpenter (bs)



Anyone following Peter Erskine's career only through the trio dates he's led for ECM over the past few years could be forgiven for wondering if he'd lost the aggression and chops that characterized his early work. This disc should dispel such concerns. Erskine may not bash the way he did with Weather Report a couple of decades ago, but he still knows how to project intensity throughout the dynamic range. This group has the same instrumentation as Erskine's ECM trio. But whereas Erskine has said that ECM producer Manfred Eicher once complained about "too much groove," no one was censoring Erskine's talent for propelling the music forward during *this* gig. "Kick-ass" and "musical" can definitely be used in the same sentence when the topic is Erskine's playing on *Live At Rocco*. (Fuzzy Music)

Rick Mattingly

7

Ween White Pepper

Claude Coleman (dr), Gene Ween (vcl, gtr), Dean Ween (vcl, gtr), Dave Dreiwitz (bs), Glenn McClelland (kybd)



In this age of specialization, it's refreshing to find a band who can excel at many distinct genres. Drummer Claude Coleman is required to nail every stylistic twist imagined by the mighty Ween, who mix jagged-edged hard rock and other surprises into a Beatlesque pop foundation on *White Pepper*. Take "Bananas And Blow," a giggle-inducing calypso send-up: Coleman's right there with spot-on fills and a perfectly breezy cross-stick feel. Elsewhere he plays solid shuffles and country two-beats. Claude wisely alters his sound to fit each song's demands, his snare thick and booming on "The Grobe" while crisp and light on the Steely Dan-like "Pandy Fackler." For two guys who didn't even use a live drummer on their early records, Gene and Dean sure chose a good one for *White Pepper*. (Elektra)

Michael Parillo

WHAT IN THE WORLD

8

Pachora AST



The tunes on Pachora's *AST* are hard enough to count, let alone stretch out on! Clarinetist Chris Speed, tambura and

electric saz player Brad Shepik, and bassist Skuli Sverrisson comprise the soloists in this "Middle-Eastern Europe" group. But the band is really driven by percussionist **Jim Black**, who has put together a cool doumbek drumkit and plays the tastiest cymbals this side of Istanbul. (Knitting Factory Works)

7

Eddie Bobè Central Park Rumba



Central Park Rumba is an update of the powerful scene that's met steadily in NYC's great playground for the past

thirty years. There is incredible syncopation over layers of strings and horns, along with the essential coro (vocals) from all the percussionists. **Eddie Bobè** is the Nuyorican master drummer who has put together an all-star group for this driving album. (Piranha)

6

Jorge Amorim Ritual Music



"Ritual," the first track on Jorge Amorim's *Ritual Music*, stands out as an experimental sound collage, a futuristic vision of

world music. It clears the listener's head for the remaining tracks, which mostly focus on tight grooves, drum 'n' bass, luscious vocals, and powerful piano and saxophone solos. (www.freedomzone.com)

David Licht

8 The Jayhawks Smile

Tim O'Reagan (dr, vcl), Gary Louris (vcl, gtr), Marc Perlman (bs), Karen Grotberg (jno, vcl), Craig Johnson (gtr, vcl)

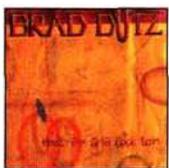


The title track of the Jayhawks' latest recalls the melodic, melancholy highs of pre-disco Bee Gees, which they stir into a hook-laden Badfinger-meets-Eagles soup. It all makes *Smile* the best pop record of 1974 made this year. Drummer Tim O'Reagan's brilliant mix of rock, country, and R&B, along with his soulful vocals and songwriting talents (he co-wrote four of the tunes), provide the soul and spark to the revamped Jayhawks sound. O'Reagan drives the songs while still leaving space for them to breathe, and his deliberate fills are delivered with uncanny feel. He's best known for his take on the rootsier material. But when the bicentennial meets the millennium with programmed drums on the catchy "Somewhere In Ohio," he leads the way to the dancefloor in style. (Columbia)

Linda Pitmon

7 Brad Dutz Heat The Grill Cook Loin

Brad Dutz (perc), John Fumo (trp), Kim Richmond (reeds), Trey Henry (ts), Glen Garrett (bs cl), Clay Jenkins (tip), Joel Harrison, Jim Hershman (gtr), Vinny Golia (soprano sax)



Multi-percussionist Brad Dutz displays a strong sense of color here, using a wide array of percussion instruments to support his compositions. His music is fun and interesting, a sort of chamber jazz filled with quirky melodies. Dutz often establishes a mallet-instrument ostinato, using other patterns to support or contrast it. This may involve additional percussion instruments or the other instrumental voices, which at times act as extensions of his mallet lines. There are also many fine moments of non-pitched percussion and improvisation, as with his metallic pattering midway through "ShishKabubble." This is an intriguing demonstration of writing for percussion as a voice. (Household Ink, rhythmweb.com/dutz)

Martin Patmos

7 The Slip Does

Andrew Barr (dr), Brad Barr (gtr, vcl), Marc Friedman (ts)



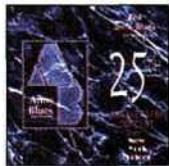
Boston trio The Slip uses space beautifully on its second record. Whether they're stoking a burning groove-jazz jam or meditating on a pretty, hushed melody, airiness is crucial to the band's fragile vibe. Each tune, loud or soft, is like a house of cards, a delicate yet well-designed construction. Though *Does* features several vocal songs, The Slip sounds best on the searching instrumental material, as Brad Barr's blissfully jerky guitar lines are far more expressive than his voice. Drummer Andrew Barr plays with a feather-light touch, his ghost notes and brief rolls feeding off his brother's guitar quirks (and vice-versa). Picking the spots to stretch while allowing his beats to evolve over the course of a tune, Andrew is skillful with cross-sticks and syncopated ride patterns. Watch this guy, he's just revving up. (www.flyingfrogrecords.com)

Michael Parillo

7 The Army Blues Jazz Ensemble

25th Anniversary Concert With The New York Voices

Steve Fidyk (dr), A. Dallas Smith (ts), James F. Roberts (gtr), Tony Nalke (kybd), Peter Eldridge, Kim Nazarian, Darmon Mezzler, Lauren Kinhan (vcl), fourteen-piece horn section

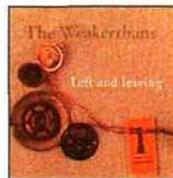


From the hard-charging Benny Goodman swing classic "Air Mail Special" to Conrad Herwig's screaming arrangement of "Body And Soul," the ABJ Ensemble shows off some big guns and a very cohesive large-ensemble sound. Drummer/staff sergeant Steve Fidyk is every bit in control, a strong-handed, dynamic player who takes every advantage of his moments in the spotlight. A seamless arrangement of "Willow Weep For Me/All Blues" sees Fidyk laying solid groundwork and busting the chops to kick the band up a notch. Not that this band needs much prompting. There isn't a weak link anywhere in these ranks. (www.amiy.mil/armyhand)

Robin Tolleson

KICKIN' OUT THE NEW

6 Weakerthans Left And Leaving



Weakerthans' Jason

Tait can scream out a distorted up-tempo rock tune with quick 16th-note fills on the toms throughout "Aside," and then break it down to "Pamphleteer"'s easy

ballad, using timpani mallets on the toms. Tait infuses *Left And Leaving* with a great sense of drama, without going over the top into that "arena rock" trap. (Sub City)

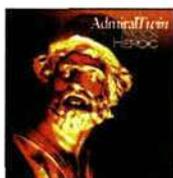
7 Tsar Tsar



On its self-titled CD, Tsar is doing the power-pop thing to the max, and Jason Coulter has the sparkly clean drums to match. On "I Don't

Wanna Break-Up," he bops between a tom groove and 2/4 on the snare in a very syncopated manner—nothing sloppy here. He's got just enough flash to make it exciting. Nothing goes to waste as he rides on the crash, the toms, the hi-hat—it all fits together in a perfect pop puzzle. (Hollywood)

6 Admiral Twin Mock Heroic



It's getting to the point where it's hard to tell who's sampling what and where these days, but when it's Jared

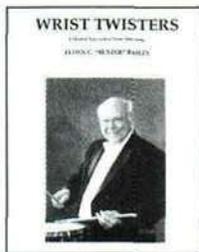
Gollihare's time to play in between the samples, he does so with a raw passion. On *Mock Heroic*, Admiral Twin's drummer sticks to the kick/snare/ride/hat setup, but he has a real lively sound. It's less about proficiency and more about fun. This guy digs his job. (Mojo)

Fran Azzarto and Lisa Crouch

10 Wrist Twisters: A Musical Approach To Snare Drumming

by Elden C. "Buster" Bailey

level: beginner to advanced, \$25 (with CD)



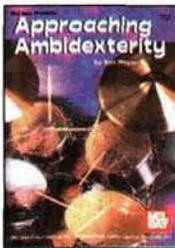
Buster Bailey was the legendary snare drummer with the New York Philharmonic from 1949 until his retirement in 1991. Heard on hundreds of recordings, from *Bolero* to *West Side Story*, he brought shape and expression to a non-melodic instrument, in addition to his amazingly relaxed technique. This 132-page book opens with thirteen pages of text and pictures explaining stroke, phrase markings, accents, dynamics, and stickings. The "wrist twisters" comprise over five hundred two- or four-measure exercises in a variety of meters covering single strokes, flams, multiple-bounce rolls, pianissimo rolls, flams/rolls, drags, and four-stroke ruffs. Clearly notated multiple stickings, dynamics, and phrases make it worth any snare drummer's time to master these exercises, and help make woodshedding an eye-opening musical experience.

Wrist Twisters ends with five one-page etudes incorporating Bailey's lifetime of snare drum expertise. The CD is an eight-minute snare drum improvisation recorded at a clinic in Osaka, Japan in 1989. Destined to become a classic like *Stick Control* or *Syncopeation*. (Keyboard Percussion Publications)

Andrea Byrd

8 Approaching Ambidexterity by Ken Meyer

level: beginner to advanced, \$12.95

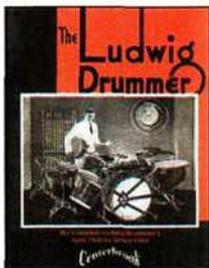


This well-laid-out book is fun and challenging for beginners through advanced players. *Approaching Ambidexterity* offers an easy-to-follow system for playing simple patterns that graduate to more complex rhythms with the right-hand lead switching to left-hand lead. The feet remain consistent for both directions, but even *that* is not so easy, as the patterns become progressively more difficult. It would benefit beginners to learn this method so that they're open to a broader scope of drumming skills from the start. Such an ambidextrous approach can open new rhythmic ideas, using different sound sources and patterns from both sides of the drumkit. In fact, this type of concept has been used by many pros, including Billy Cobham, Simon Phillips, and Mike Mangini. With all of the interest in playing left-foot clave against various rhythms, this reasonably priced book is a good starting point to test and develop your ambidextrous skills. (MelBay)

Mike Haid

6 The Ludwig Drummer

level: all, \$35



Published intermittently from the mid-1920s to 1976, *The Ludwig Drummer* provided news, educational articles, and ample promotion of Ludwig products. This tome compiles issues spanning 1926 to 1948. Though it's best suited for drum history/vintage gear fanatics, casual browsers will also find it enlightening—and often amusing. One gem is William F. Ludwig's 1933 analysis of dance drummers. Of the "hot drummer," he writes, "This is the often sought after drummer by the leader that has been criticized for having a 'drag' band. To try to change this band overnight by the addition of a 'hot' drummer may prove disastrous."

Shockers also appear. A 1940 cover features the vaudeville novelty act Jack Powell, "the greatest drummer and highest-paid drum artist of the world," decked out in garish blackface. Most of the book, though, is good historical fun, and despite the grainy photo reproduction quality, it has the compelling charm of a scratchy old 78. (Centerbrook Publishing)

Jeff Potter

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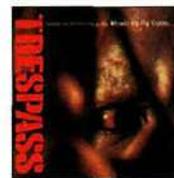
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THE EDITORS' VAULT

8 Ry Cooder Trespass OST

Jim Keltner (dr, perc), Ry Cooder (gtr, floor slide, array imbirra, kybd), Jon Hassell (trp)



Ry Cooder's score to this 1992 Walter Hill film is some cool, scary stuff. The plot involves two men who find themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time (an

abandoned factory during a gangland execution), and as usual, Ry Cooder nails the appropriate vibe. Deep, dark, angry sounds abound, anchored by some of Jim Keltner's most out percussive excursions. Jim consistently comes up with the perfect skittish patterns, thunderous fills, faraway screeches, and mechanical beats, often voiced on unusual sound sources. But it's never weird for weird's sake. This music truly puts you in the action, and is so evocative that it could fairly be mentioned in the same breath as classic works by soundtrack genius Ennio Morricone. Keltner fans shouldn't be without it. (Warner Bros.)

Adam Budofsky

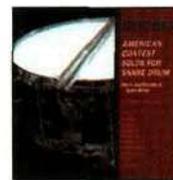
FLYING SOLO

9 Guy G. Gauthreaux II

Open-Close-Open:

American Contest Solos For Snare Drum

Guy G. Gauthreaux II (snare dr, field dr, bass dr), Mary Beth Lewandowski (piccolo)



A snare drum CD? It's about time! Gauthreaux plays twenty solos in chronological order, sort of a time line of the snare drum repertoire of the last three centuries. The first six

pieces showcase the rudimental aspects of traditional solos, including "Three Camps," "The Downfall Of Paris," and "Connecticut Halftime." Other music is by John S. Pratt, Alan Abel, Charles Wilcoxon, Michael Colgrass, Warren Benson, Morris Goldenberg, Mitch Markovitch, Art Cappio, Jacques Delecluse, and Gauthreaux himself. Hear how versatile and musical the snare drum can be with dynamics, snares off, brushes, stick clicks, etc. This is an invaluable educational tool for students learning any of these solos—and enjoyable for drummers of all styles. And check out Gauthreaux's chops. (Pioneer Percussion, tel: [703] 321-8760. fax: [703] 321-9772, pioneerp@erDls.com)

Andrea Byrd



Anton Fig On...

by Robyn Flans

Little needs to be said about Anton Fig and the way he drives the Letterman show band under almost every musical circumstance. Besides that high-visibility nightly gig, Anton is currently working on a solo record. He describes it as a *song* record as opposed to a *drum* record, and says that he's having a blast using different musicians and vocalists for various tracks. In the midst of all this activity, Anton was able to take a little time out to reflect on some of the great drummers of our time.



...Al Jackson

I grew up in South Africa, so we didn't get to hear a lot of music live. We were only able to hear it on record, and we didn't even get a lot of *records* in South Africa. But friends would go overseas and bring records back. A friend of mine brought me a record called *Stax/Volt Live*, either volume 1 or 2. It had live versions of things like Otis Redding's "Try A Little Tenderness." I listened to it like crazy. Later, when I started playing with Booker T. & The MG's and The Blues Brothers, I realized that I knew all those songs really well. Somehow the Al Jackson style—which is a very spare and understated kind of playing—had seeped into me as well.

When I played with Booker T., [bassist] Duck Dunn showed me how Al used to do a shuffle, which was basically shuffling on the snare and playing quarter notes on the bell with the right hand. It sounds amazing. It's an incredibly driving shuffle beat that I use all the time now. Every time I go back and listen to Al Jackson, the stuff sounds better and better!

...Bernard Purdie

I obviously heard him on all those Aretha Franklin records, like "Rock Steady." We play those tunes in the Letterman band and I know my weak imitation of that is pathetic. To this day, when I hear "Rock Steady" I still don't know what the hell Purdie's doing. I can *hear* it, but it's impossible to *duplicate* it. I've heard Purdie on the show from time to time, and he still sounds unbelievable. He's got an incredible groove. It ends up sounding clean, which is actually strange because he's sort of messing with it internally. It comes out as a seamless, ultimate-groove kind of playing.

...Ringo Starr

After listening to Beatles songs, you find you know all the parts. Somehow every-

thing becomes so ingrained: the guitar part, the harmony, and the drum parts. The drum parts can't help but be a part of you. I think Ringo has said he leads his fills with his left hand, which makes them sound unique. I remember Nils Lofgren being on the show once. I asked him who the drummer was on a particular song of his that I liked. It was just a snare/ride beat, but it was unbelievably grooving. Nils said it was Ringo. It was an incredible track! I think Ringo is very underrated. Not only was his time fantastic, which is the key to everything, but he also had his signature fills. He definitely defined his own style.

...Ginger Baker

I listened to Ginger Baker a lot. I loved Cream from their first record. I never saw any of these bands play live, so because I only heard the music on record, I thought Ginger was thrashing away, playing really hard. When I finally saw him play, I was really surprised at how lightly he plays. He also had his own style. He would do these four-against-three kind of weird-sounding tom fills. He really played differently from

everyone else. He had a jazz musician's approach to playing. Obviously a song dictated a part, but the band was so improvisational that I think they played each song differently every night. And Ginger played what he was feeling at the time.

...Mitch Mitchell

Mitch was fantastic. I loved all those Hendrix records, and I listened to them extensively. Mitch also had a jazz approach to drums: free, not restricted. On a song called "Little Miss Lover" he did a sort of paradiddle beat between the snare and bass drum. I had never heard anything like that before. Today it doesn't sound as exotic, but it was amazing then. Go back and listen to those records. Some of them, like "Voodoo Chile," were like extended jams, and there's *great* playing going on. There's great excitement in all those Hendrix records.

...John Bonham

Now, *there* was a guy who thundered away! He *sounded* like he was playing hard, and I think he *was* playing really

hard. I think he was the first guy to start doing the triplets between the bass drum and the toms. When I first heard "Good Times, Bad Times," where he does this double thing with the bass drum, it blew me away. That still sounds great to me. And I still try to do it, and it *still* doesn't sound anything like him. Zeppelin was the forerunner to any really heavy band. I just love the way Bonham would muscle his way through songs like "Kashmir." He would just play straight, and let the band swim around him. Then every so often he'd throw something in. All the drummers you've mentioned so far were innovative for their time. And they all had incredible grooves for the musical situation they were in.

...Keith Moon

I loved Keith Moon because he didn't really care as much about time as what the music felt like. Listen to "Young Man's Blues" from *Live At Leeds*. It's ferocious. Moon doesn't always come out of a fill exactly on 1, but somehow it doesn't really matter. With him it was pure energy and

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will. With the real good musicians, there's just this inner drive that is coming through. It gets translated by their instrument, but really you're just hearing the strength of their personality. To me, Moon with The Who was just a soundscape. He was huge on colors, and a little less fussy about rhythm. It wasn't that it was out of time—it was just loose, which really helped create the band's sound. I've heard The Who with Zak Starkey and with Simon Phillips, and it was fantastic. But somehow it's not the same without Keith Moon, which goes to show you that even for a guy who was flailing away, he totally defined the sound of the band.

...Kenny Aronoff

Kenny is a very *reliable* drummer. He does tons of recording, so he's used to playing very consistently, and usually consistently *hard*. His time is very good, and you know he's going to come in prepared. When he comes in to sub, you know he's going to pull off a good job. He'll have done his homework, he'll play hard and confidently, and he'll drive the band. He's perfect for the kind of gigs he does, like John Fogerty and Melissa Ethridge, which require really steady, dynamic, and reliable playing.

That's why he works so much: People can depend on him to deliver.

...Tony Williams

I played with Tony three times. Each time I played with him I thought I was totally out of my league, which I was. He was one drummer I really used to love to listen to. I was in Boston playing with The George Russell Orchestra at one point. Tony was going to do their show at Carnegie Hall, but he couldn't make one of the rehearsal days. George Russell had me come down to play the rehearsal, and then he said, "Why don't you play the show?" So I ended up kind of in the band, while Tony was featured at center stage. I was fresh out of college, playing at Carnegie Hall with Tony Williams! During one section in a song Tony started trading fours with me. It was like when you pull the plug out of a bath and watch the water go down. I was getting pulled all over the place by Tony's power. I felt like I was in his whirlpool, his vortex.

Some time later I played with Tony on the Letterman show, which was great. The last time we played, we got to trade fours again. He was so unbelievably powerful, it was pretty much like "Count off the tune

and duck." He would go for anything, and he'd play the wildest stuff.

You can't mistake Tony Williams. He totally defined a style. When he played, he had phenomenal technique, but it didn't *sound* like "technique" because it was so channeled into his musical ideas. But he could pull off *amazing* stuff. It was like the technique just served him for what he had to say. After that particular last day, he said, "If you ever can't do the show, I'd love to sub." A month later I was going back to South Africa to see my folks, so I told Paul that Tony wanted to do it. Tony died a week before he was scheduled to sub. He's very sorely missed.

...Dennis Chambers

I've heard Dennis play many times, and he's just phenomenal. When he used to play with John Scofield, he'd solo around a bunch of guitar accents. He once told me, "That's easy, anybody can do that." He's lying, I think.

Dennis can play at every dynamic range, at any tempo, and in virtually any style. He played on Funkadelic stuff, yet he's a phenomenal swinger. And he has a ferocious set of chops on the instrument. There are some guys who you know are going to put

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a smile on your face. So you don't mind listening to them as long as they want to play. Dennis is one of those guys.

...Ed Shaughnessy

Ed was my first introduction into TV drumming. I remember when I was at school at the New England Conservatory, and he was the *Tonight Show* drummer. It just seemed like a status and place in life that I never dreamed I could be at one day. When I did get the Letterman job, Ed actually sent me a note saying something very complimentary. The Letterman show band played on the *Tonight Show* at one point, and I got to meet Ed. I remember thinking his drums were bolted into the stage and looked like they were a necessary part of the furniture. He propelled that band.

...Marvin "Smitty" Smith

I used to share a practice room with Marvin in New York. His drums are still there. I remember that when I'd approach the door, I would hear pounding inside that sounded like *three* guys. It was him. I wasn't at all surprised when he got the *Tonight Show* gig. He sounds great on the show.

...Carter Beauford

Carter is great. He has sort of fusion chops, and he's playing in a band that certainly could be played a completely differ-

ent way. He's put his style into the music and made those songs way more exciting than almost anyone would have thought to do in the first place. He's come up with fantastic stuff. I've only ever seen him play with Dave Matthews when he's been on the Letterman show, but it's always interesting to see him play. He always has a lot going on within seemingly simple-sounding parts, with great attention paid to detail. It really grooves, and there's an illusion that there's just a good solid beat going on. But there's a lot more than meets the ear.

...Buddy Rich

When I was growing up, my father had a record of Buddy and Sammy Davis live at the Sands in Las Vegas. On the first song, "Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone," they traded fours, and Buddy was just ferocious. He's another one of those guys where you could hear the will and the power of the personality coming through. He was like a runner going toward a finish line, and *nothing* was going to stop him from getting there. I just saw a video about him recently, and his hands were *so* fast. The rolls he was doing sound so effortless, but they're so intense. His feet too. I remember Alan Dawson once told me that Tony Williams played a gig opposite Buddy Rich, and Tony came back saying, "Man, that guy can play!" He had incredi-

ble drive and he was someone with his own style. You can spot Buddy a mile away.

...Trilok Gurtu

I recently saw Trilok play, and I had a hard time sitting in my seat trying to keep count. He does that so easily. I love the way he combines percussion and drums into one big instrument. He'll sit down and play time for a while and then suddenly he'll be playing interesting sounds and colors.

...Horacio Hernandez

Horacio plays clave with his left foot and goes crazy doing other stuff at the same time. To him it's kind of normal, but to rock-oriented ears, it's not so easy to do. It's not internalized in the same way. He's amazing.

...Vinnie Colaiuta

Vinnie is simply unbelievable. I love his solo record. One of the songs is a tribute to Tony Williams, where Vinnie sort of plays in Tony's style. If you *can* play in Tony's style, why not?

Vinnie's versatility is incredible. He knows that there are so many different ways to play a song. I've seen Sting with Vinnie and with Manu Katche. It was fantastic either way—just a different way of doing the same thing.



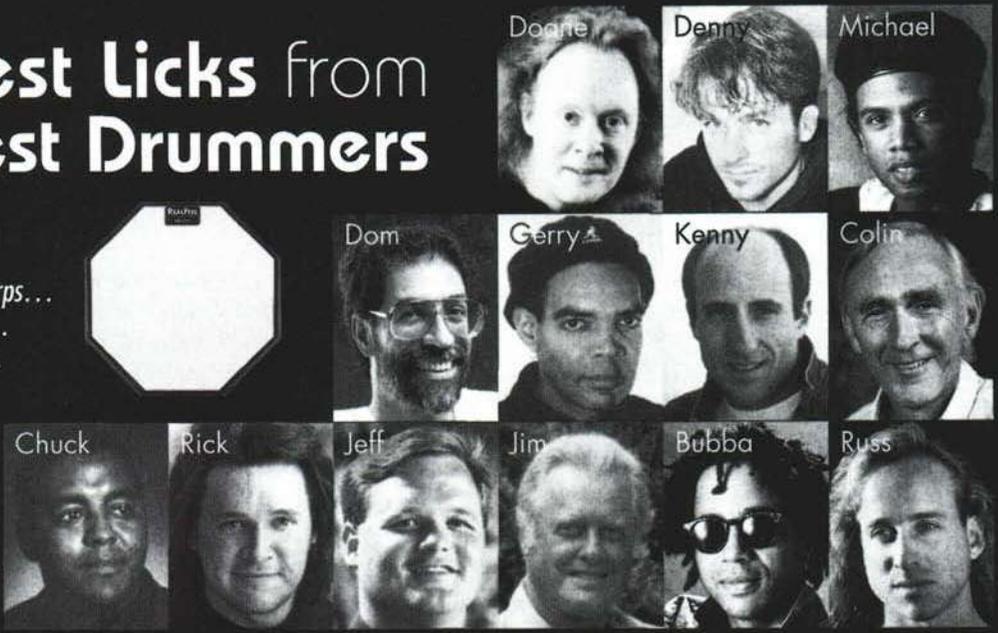
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Drums Are Musical Instruments

by Billy Ward

Some people in the neighborhood where I live in New York go to the gym every day. Their bodies are extremely pumped up, yet they don't plan on doing any sports—at least not baseball, basketball, football, or stuff like that. They go to the gym just to feel good about themselves. Other people work out so that they can excel at a particular sport.

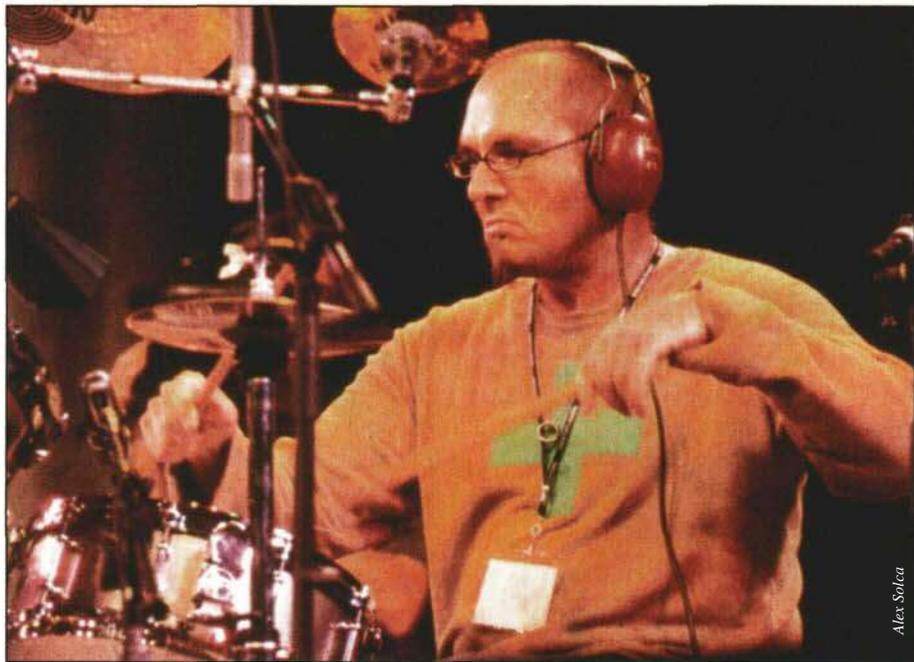
I think there are some drummers who practice like this. Some go into their practice room and work on some difficult fill or rhythm, seemingly doing it for their own benefit—just for the feeling of personal accomplishment. Other drummers practice things that will help them with their band.

Would you rather have a Super Bowl ring, or do you want to lead all the other quarterbacks in the league with the lowest interception ratio? Did you just play that double bass drum fill because it felt good to display what you've been practicing (your new muscles)? Or did the song really call for it?

When we practice the drums (or work out), endorphins are released. We get a groovy "high"—and a sense of accomplishment. Ever wonder why, when we play in our band, that same wonderful feeling doesn't happen? Maybe we're simply not playing right. Or maybe it's because we're not *practicing* right.

Whether you're practicing *or* performing, ask yourself one question: Am I playing for my vanity and personal benefit, or am I a team player? I admit, this is a very "black and white" way to look at this subject, but it at least encourages some thought, doesn't it?

Honestly, I'm not knocking either approach. But personally, I believe there is far more joy in playing for the song. It gives me a deeper satisfaction when I've helped everyone else in the band feel good. One of my favorite guitar players *is* my



"Drums are musical! We knew that when we were little kids playing on pots and pans."

favorite because of how he makes *me* feel. His feel and time are so great that he makes me feel invincible. That's the kind of influence I'd like to aim for when I'm playing with people.

This is my advice: If you want to practice to have faster feet, please *stop practicing on your instrument*. Work on speed and coordination on pads. Whenever you sit at the drums, play music. Make it a habit. Don't forget, we all play what we practice—and we should be practicing what we play. Drums *are* musical! We knew that when we were little kids playing on pots and pans. Now that we have these fancy instruments, let's not forget it.

Here's a simple exercise to try to get you to think more musically (and less technically) on the drums: Let's call it "Drums I-Ching." It's kind of a musical version of starting a boy scout fire in the forest with two sticks. Here's what you do: The next time you sit down at your drums, drop your sticks on the drumkit. That's right, just drop 'em! You can do this by literally letting go of your sticks, or you can just empty your head and let your hands fall onto the drums or cymbals. Listen to the sounds that creates. The first three sounds that you hear are your assigned motif. Let's say the three sounds were a click from a tom rim (along with a faint hum of the

head vibrating), a tom sound, and a snare sound. Okay, these are going to be the three notes of your motif. Beethoven wrote his entire fifth symphony based on two sounds—intervals of thirds. I'm pretty sure we can play a five-minute drum piece based on three sounds.

Now, the moment you hear these three sounds, notice the pitches and notice their relationship in pitch volume (dynamics) to each other. Please understand, you're allowed to use the whole kit in this solo piece. Just keep the three sounds as the compositional center of your statement. If you don't know how to proceed, then you're thinking too much. Empty your drummer-brain. Let that creative jazzy-or-symphonic dude that lives inside of you come out for a little while. (If this isn't working for you, give a listen to Stravinski's "Firebird Suite" or Tom Waits' *Bone Machine* album for inspiration.) Try it—you might love it! This has been a part of my practice for more than twenty years.

Another related exercise: How many sounds can you get out of *each* piece of

your drumset? You probably have heard the story of Papa Jo Jones playing at a drum festival and coming out with only a hi-hat—and absolutely *killing* everyone with what he played on it. How about the above Drums I-Ching exercise with one object? Your snare...your hi-hat...your tom-tom...your dog?

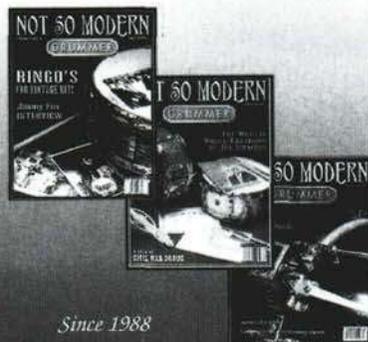
The odds are that you (like me) won't play anything that you'd necessarily want someone to hear. But these little private musical moments with your instrument might open your ears, quiet your brain, and teach you how to play more from the heart. Don't just practice technique, practice *music*.

Billy Ward is a successful session and touring drummer who has worked with a long list of artists including Carly Simon, Robbie Robertson, Richard Marx, Yoko Ono, Ace Frehley, John Patitucci, and Bill Champlin. He is currently on tour with Joan Osborne. Billy can be reached at his Web site, www.billyward.com.



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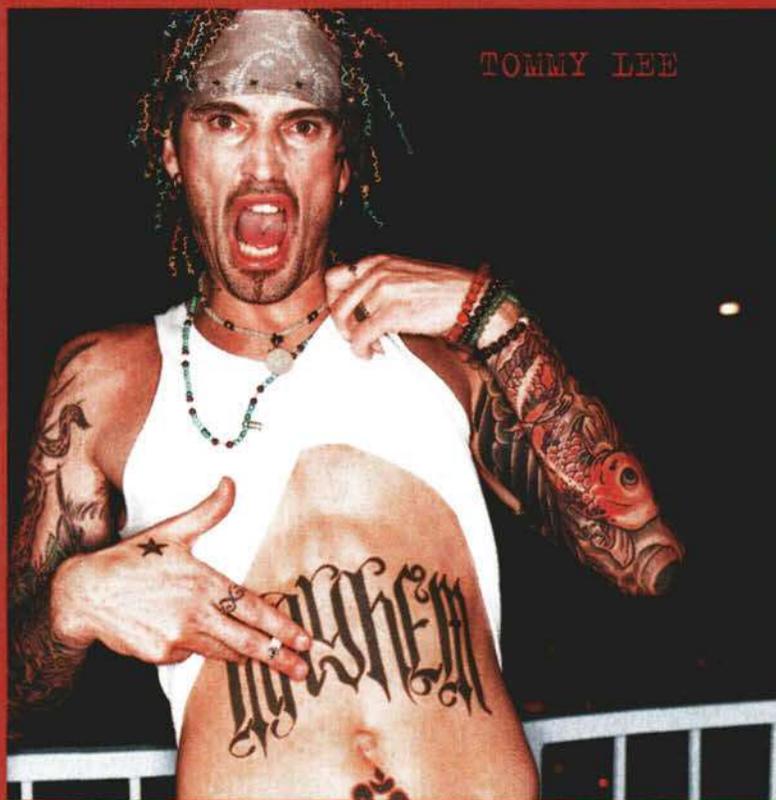
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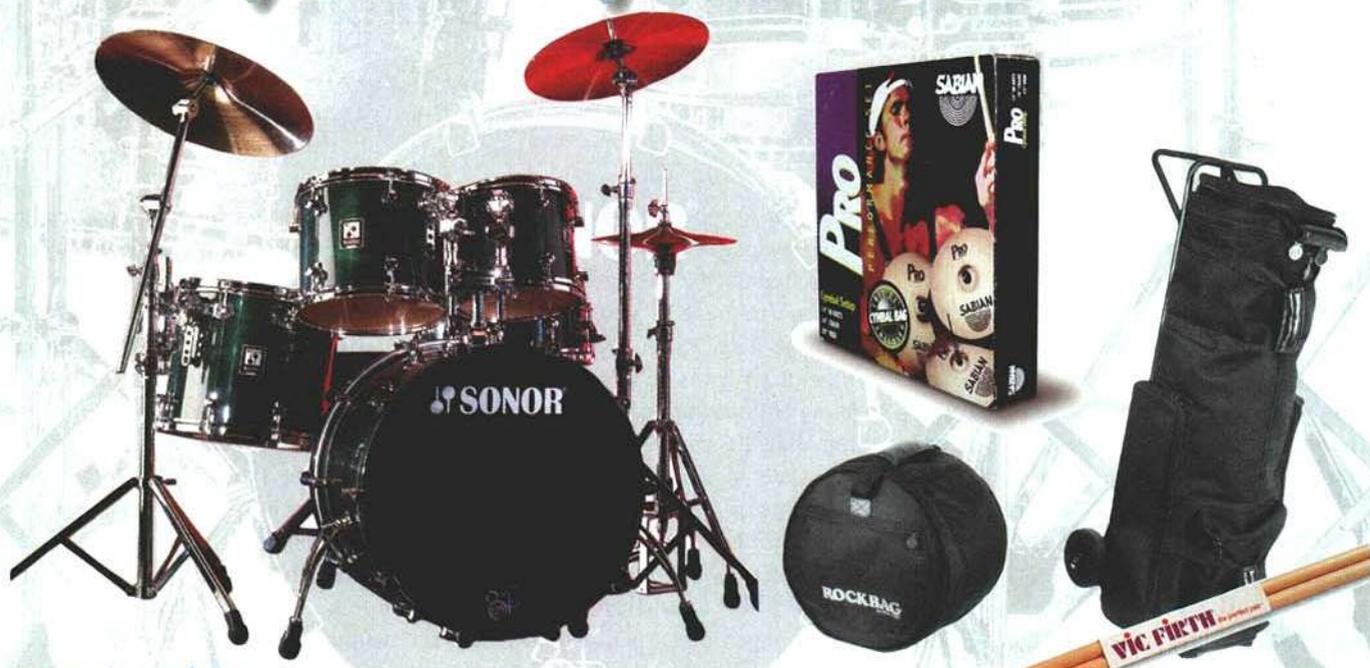
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Amusement Park Drumming

by Jason S. Gittinger

Throughout the country there are many amusement parks employing thousands of young people every summer. The live shows at these parks can be a wonderful source of musical training, experience, and income for a young drummer. There are many players out there, though, and with the implementation of taped or "canned" shows there are increasingly fewer jobs. If you wish to land one of these jobs, there are a few things to keep in mind.

Be Able To Play

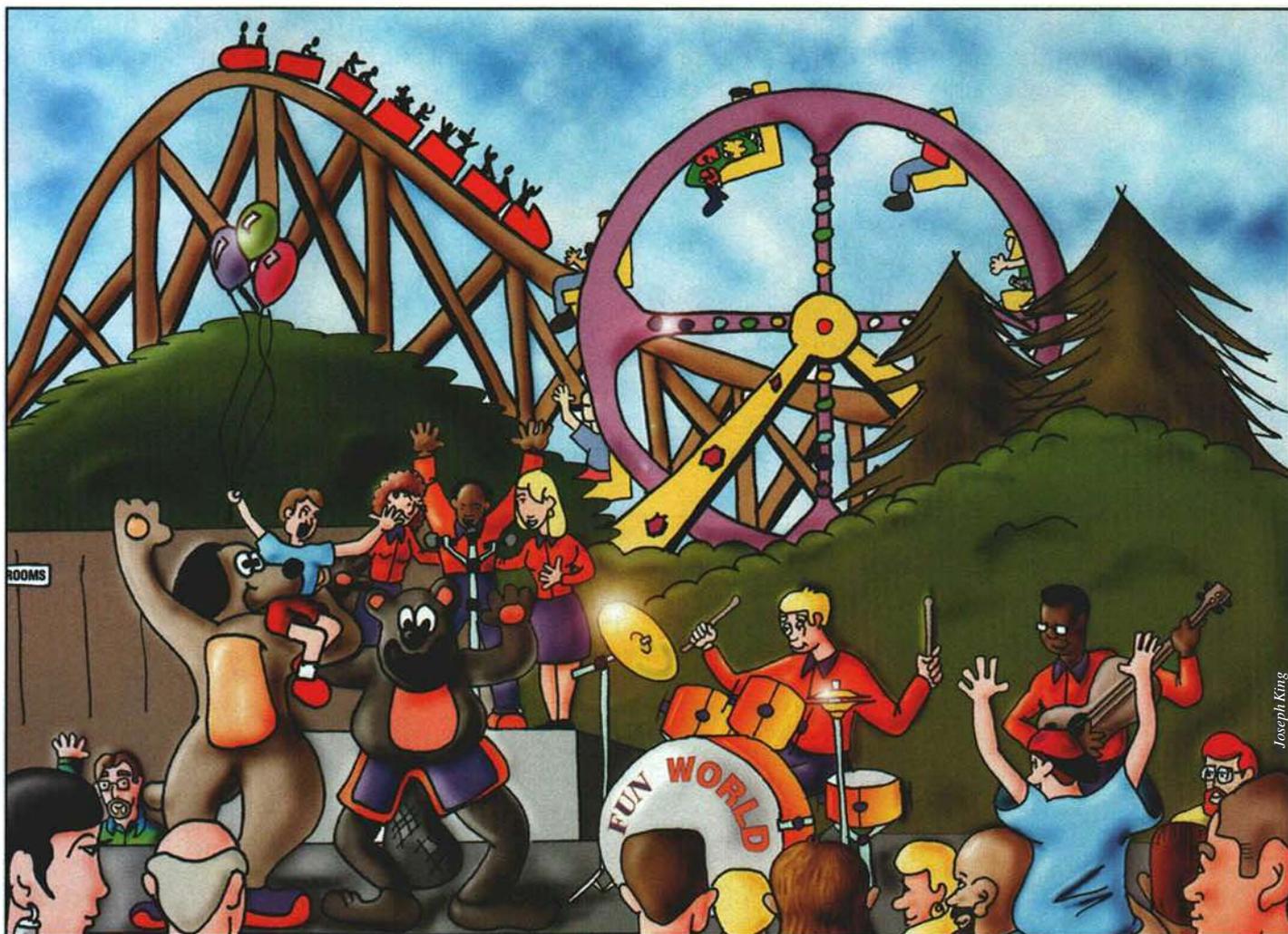
First of all, it is imperative that you are

competent on your instrument. You must have knowledge of various styles of music, and you must be able to play in those styles on request. If you think you may lack these skills, seek a professional educator or private instructor to assess your playing abilities and critique you. The last thing that the amusement park management wants to see at an audition is someone who thinks he or she can play but can't. Don't waste your time or theirs.

Audition

Assuming you *can* play, the next step is

auditioning for the job. You need to prove to the management that you can play whatever they want whenever they want it. You also need to show a good attitude and an "all-American, apple pie and baseball" smile. You need to give them the impression that you get along with others easily and you don't have a big ego. You're auditioning for a job playing the same music all day every day, with the same people, for a whole summer. They don't want to hire a great player with an attitude if they can hire a competent player who does the job with a great attitude and good social skills.



"Amusement parks don't want their band to look like they play at the biker bar on the other side of the tracks."

What Should I Wear?

Dress to impress. Look good. Don't wear an old rock 'n' roll T-shirt and jeans. Amusement parks want their employees to look like the good little boy down the street. They don't want their band to look like they play at the biker bar on the other side of the tracks. It will also help to get a haircut. I know the '60s and '70s paved the way for rock stars to have wild hair. But amusement park management doesn't care. If you don't cut your hair, they won't hire you, no matter how well you play. It's important to look professional. This makes them feel more at ease about hiring you.

What Should I Bring?

Bring a resume that lists your playing experience and references, as well as a professional "head shot" photo if you have one. Most audition sites don't furnish a drumset, so you'll have to bring one with you. Don't bring a huge kit. A four-piece kit with a hi-hat, a crash, and a ride cymbal is all you'll need to demonstrate your competence on the instrument. If you lug in an eleven-piece double-bass set with thirty cymbals, it'll take you an hour to set up. By then the auditioners would be pretty mad. You need to be ready to play as soon as possible. When you enter the room, present any forms you've filled out (and your resume) to the auditioner, and politely inquire as to where you should set up. Then quickly and quietly bring in your stuff and set up. Don't forget a rug! Once you've set up, don't play until you're asked to do so. The management is usually discussing the previous audition while you're setting up. It's very rude (and detrimental to your cause) to interrupt this conversation.

What Should I Play?

In most auditions the employers want to

see that you can do a lot of different things in a short amount of time—usually two or three minutes. Make a list of the styles you want to play, and prepare enough copies to give to the auditioners—just as you would if you were playing a written piece of music. This makes you look very prepared, and makes the whole process smoother. In some cases, of course, this won't be necessary. Some auditioners have preset things they want drummers to play, and they'll ask for those specifically. Others, though, just want you to play. If you've taken the time to prepare a list of styles for them, you eliminate that awkward moment after you ask what they would like you to play.

At almost all auditions you'll be asked to sight-read. This is how they check to see if you can learn a piece of music quickly and sound as though you've been playing it for years. It's important to practice this skill so you can approach this part of the audition with confidence. If you play timidly and question your own playing, they will question it as well.

I Got The Gig!

After you've been notified that you got the gig, the fun really begins. It's time to fill out the contract and return all the necessary paperwork. Before you report for work, make sure all the arrangements have been made for housing, parking, mail, and various other everyday things. There's nothing worse than showing up for work and finding out that you don't have a room in the dorm and there's no place for you to park. Once all of *that* is taken care of, it's time to learn the show.

Rehearsal Week

Your first week of work will probably be a rehearsal period in which you must learn all of the music (as well as any staging that must be done for the show). The first day is usually just for running through the music. It's time to put those sight-reading skills

you worked on so hard to good use.

Next you'll probably have to rehearse with the vocalists and dancers (if your show has them). A click track or some sort of metronome or sequencer may be used to keep the tempo of all the songs. *Be patient.* This is usually a long process with hundreds of starts and stops. Just sit back, relax, and have fun. Get to know your fellow bandmates and the singers and dancers. They're going to be your closest friends for the next several months, so you may as well learn their names now.

Shows, Shows, And More Shows

You'll be doing the same show literally hundreds of times. This may get old after a while, but treat it as a challenge. Try to play your best every time. Give yourself little challenges every day like, "Today I'm going to play as simply as possible."

For the first few weeks, you might go out and party every night with the other members of the show. But be very careful. This too will probably get old after a while, and you *do* need to get some sleep on occasion. Don't hurt yourself so you can't work. Remember, the reason you're there is to do your job. If you can't do your job, they'll find someone who can. Also, don't break any laws. Many major parks have their own security departments. While they may *seem* like "kiddie-cops," they are usually full-fledged police departments. Take them seriously and abide by the rules. You might want another job the following summer.

Keep a good attitude. Don't get down or bored with what you're doing. Would you rather be flipping burgers for less money? Have fun, make friends, and make the best of an opportunity not only to play the drums, but also to get a paycheck for doing it.



The Checklist

by Paul D'Angelo

Ever forgotten where you put your keys? Frustrating. Ever forgotten your wallet when you've gone to the convenience store? A real time-waster. Ever forgotten the seat portion of your drum throne when you were at a gig? Inconvenient at best, painful at worst.

For those of you who play out all the time, I have some simple tips that may help you avoid leaving important equipment on your basement floor. Other tips address a number of playing hazards, and a few might simply make your evening more comfortable. These tips are based on many years of experience. That is, experience at playing, sweating, and forgetting.

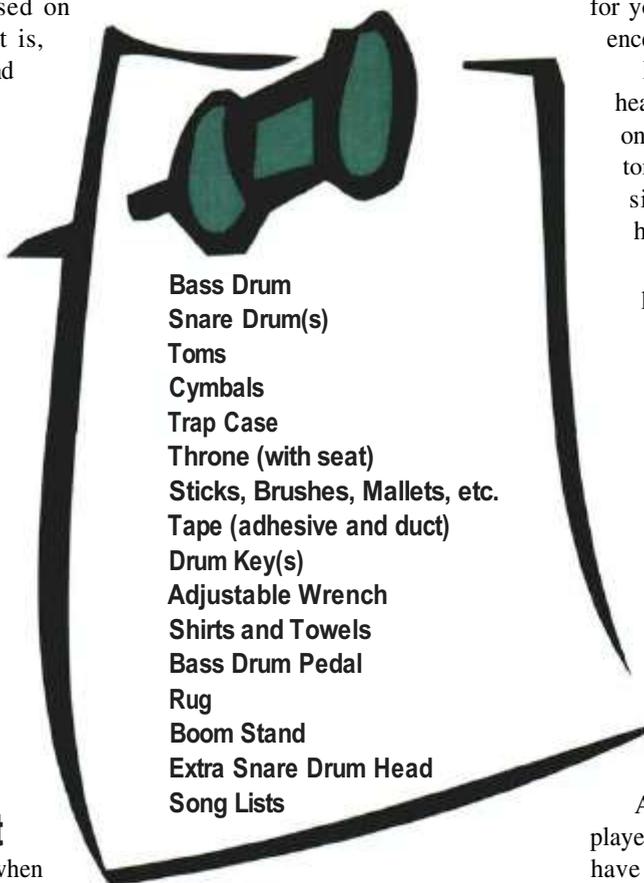
Unless you're one of my close friends, you're probably saying to yourself, "I've never even heard of Paul D'Angelo. What can he tell *me*?" Well, I've been playing drums in bands since 1967, when I got my first Ludwig Classic drumset. I have your basic regular day job, but I've been playing drums at night since I started working full-time back in the last century. (Or has it been a century that I've been working full-time?) I've opened for such acts as Edgar Winter, Rick Derringer, Leslie West, Blue Oyster Cult, John Hall, and Foghat. I've also played for an audience of two or less at the local dive on a Tuesday night.

Don't Leave Home Without It

The first thing you have to do when you load up your equipment is to make sure not to forget any part of it. This may sound simple, but it's a sure bet that one day you'll be distracted. It'll be the biggest gig you've played yet. You'll get home from work and have to shower, load the

car, and leave in forty-five minutes. As a result of this chaos and pressure, you'll forget the seat portion of your drum throne. (Yes, it happened to me. Luckily the gig was ten minutes from my house.)

I've solved the problem of forgotten gear by instituting a simple checklist that I keep in my wallet. Before I leave for the gig, each item on the checklist is checked out to make sure it's there. The idea is to bring all the gear you need with you so nothing can stop you from playing. Here's an example of the list in my wallet:



Okay, having the major drums on the list may seem silly. (If you can forget your bass drum, maybe you shouldn't be playing gigs.) But it doesn't hurt. And *don't* forget that cymbal bag.

Preparing For Plan B

Even when you arrive with your full compliment of "regular" gear, things can happen to make a gig anything *but* regular. You also need to be prepared for these situations. For example, if you have an extra snare drum, *bring it*. If you break a head while playing, the extra drum won't do you any good at home. If you don't have an extra snare drum, at least bring an extra batter head with you. You'll learn to change a head very quickly when the other bandmembers *and* the audience are waiting for you. It's a tense but productive experience.

I don't bother with extra tom-tom heads because they rarely break. And if one does, I can flip the tom over. If your tom-toms mount only one way, you can simply switch the top and bottom heads.

If you don't have an extra bass drum pedal, think about investing in one. I've carried a Ludwig Speed King in my trap case as an extra pedal for years. Just recently, while I was playing at a beautiful outdoor amphitheater for a community concert in front of hundreds of people, my bass drum pedal threw a spring. It couldn't be played. I reached into my trap case and changed pedals in less than a minute. I told our guitar player later that carrying the pedal around all those years was worth it because a broken pedal didn't stop me from playing that night.

Always bring a rug, even if you've played a venue before and you know they have a carpeted stage. Maybe they don't have that carpeted stage this week. Maybe the club is under new ownership. That wouldn't be considered rare. Is it worth the gamble?

Bring adhesive tape and duct tape. I use adhesive tape to keep my hands from blis-



"The first thing you have to do when you load up your equipment is to make sure not to forget any part of it"

tering, because I hate to wear gloves. (It's better not to use the waterproof kind, because it doesn't breathe at all.) I use the duct tape for everything else. It's truly amazing stuff. Coat a zip-topped, quart-sized food storage bag with a couple of layers of duct tape, leaving the zipper part exposed. It's a great storage container for keys, tape, felts, and other small stuff. They last an amazingly long time and are virtually free.

I recommend having a few small tools available. Having even just an adjustable wrench and a Phillips screwdriver can be a

lifesaver for a myriad of small jobs.

I don't know where *you'll* be playing, but *I* wouldn't eat at a lot of the places where I've played. So I've gotten into the habit of bringing a small cooler with cold drinks, fruit, and candy bars. (Okay, it's not the Bobby Rock diet, but it works for me.)

Think about the fact that you're probably going to be sweating up a storm. I always bring a large towel, along with a fresh shirt for each set. There's no reason not to be comfortable.

I carry a list of all of the songs our band

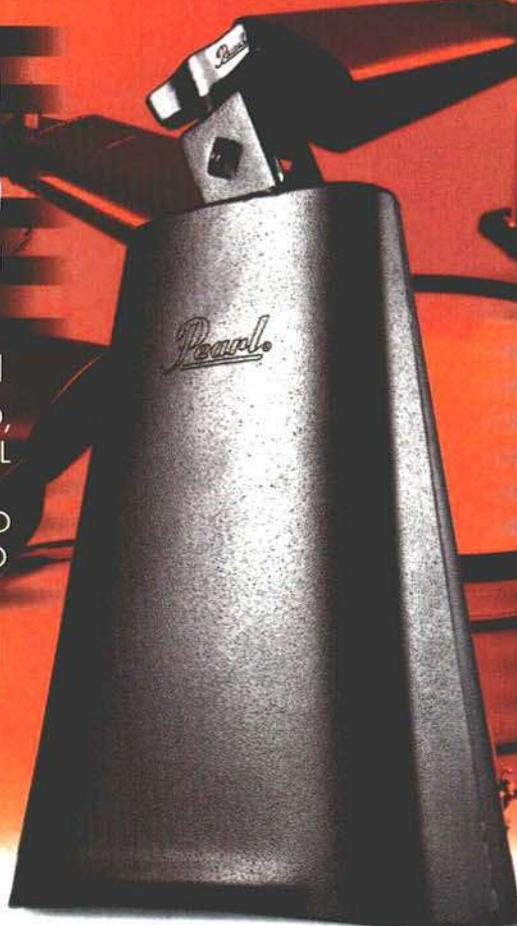
performs, once again in very small type and in my wallet. We always have our sets written out before the performance, but there are times when the evening goes in a different direction than we anticipated. Not having to remember what songs we do in a typically loud and boisterous environment is a definite plus. Besides, whipping out a song list of over a hundred songs in four-point type can impress your friends.

Well, it's time to head out for the gig. Now, where *did* I put those keys...?



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Ed Blackwell

by Mark Griffith



Tom Copi

There is a lot of labeling of musicians these days. Ed Blackwell is a classic example. Blackwell is best known for his use of African-influenced cross-rhythms and polyrhythmic patterns in his timekeeping techniques. But Ed was a highly evolved musician and a great spirit who incorporated many influences into a truly unique drumming style.

A native of New Orleans, Ed absorbed that city's colorful music traditions (which have been well-documented elsewhere). He played in many rhythm & blues bands, and he was also a devoted student of the

melodic drumming approaches of Max Roach. But throughout his career Ed was constantly influenced by non-drummers as well. He kept himself open to as many musical influences as possible. With the help of some newly released recordings, we can now study the entire career of the late, great Ed Blackwell.

New Orleans-based All For One Records has released two recordings that enable us to study Ed Blackwell's beautiful drumming in the days before his association with Ornette Coleman. In the mid-1950s saxophonist Harold Battiste formed

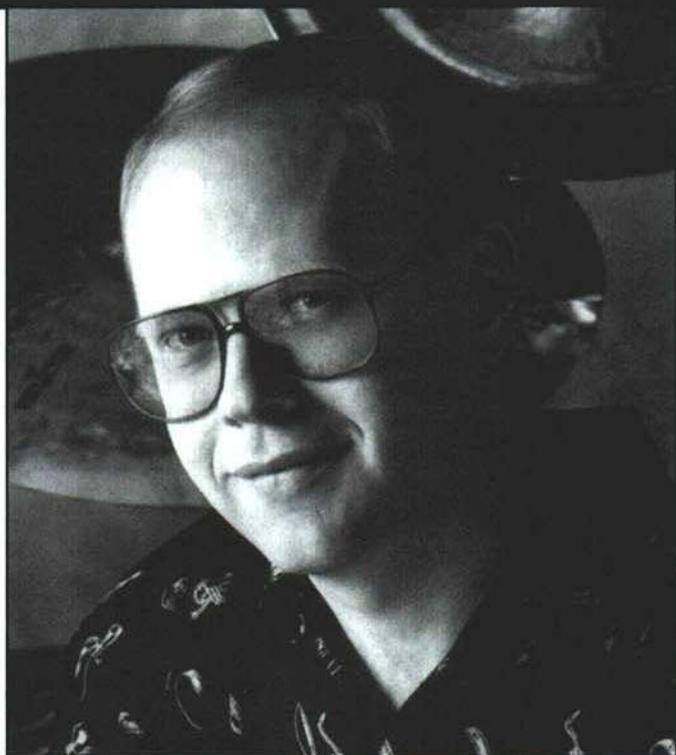
a group called The American Jazz Quintet. Ed Blackwell absolutely tore it up in that band. The studio recording *In The Beginning* is a good representation of the group, but *Boogie Live...1958 Featuring Ed Blackwell And AJQ-2* is an absolutely essential recording. The listener is treated to Ed's tight swing and his early melodicism (a la Max Roach). Ed's blistering solo on "To Brownie" is breathtaking, as is the ultra-fast timekeeping on "Fourth Month." At the time, Ed was only twenty-nine years old, but he had already absorbed a lot of music while living in Los Angeles and

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Ed Blackwell

Texas. Many years later this group would re-form to make another recording, *From Bad To Badder*.

It was two years later when Ed recorded with his most famous employer, Ornette Coleman, replacing Billy Higgins in this legendary group. Probably due to their long friendship—and a great deal of practicing together—Ornette and Blackwell are a very special pairing of musicians. They complete each other's phrases, and each fills the spaces that the other leaves. In fact, Ed's phrasing on the drums is at times very similar to Ornette's saxophone phrasing. Ornette and Ed recorded together for the first time in July of 1960, and the result was (and still is) some *shocking* music.

When listening to Ed's drumming, you'll hear some characteristics that are drastically different from the norm. For example, he often played greatly contrasting rhythms against the soloist. He also didn't limit his comping to his left hand and bass drum while his ride cymbal and hi-hat kept time. In fact, he often stopped playing the ride cymbal for long stretches of time in order to introduce cross-rhythms into the ensemble.

This is a very difficult thing to do while still keeping the music feeling good and moving forward, but Ed did just that.

Most of the recordings that Ed made with Ornette were done within a six-month period at the end of 1960 into 1961. Unfortunately, many people think only of these recordings when referring to Ed's artistry. These sessions were subsequently released as the recordings *Ornette, To Whom Keeps A Record*, *Ornette On Tenor*, *The Art Of The Improvisers*, *This Is Our Music*, and *Free Jazz*. These recordings are all collected on the box set *Beauty Is A Rare Thing*.

One important aspect of Ed's playing with Ornette is that, unlike a great deal of the later "avant-garde" drumming, there was no "bashing." On the monumental *Free Jazz: A Collective Improvisation By The Ornette Coleman Double Quartet* (a recording that features two quartets playing simultaneously), both Ed and co-drummer Billy Higgins are strong and authoritative without resorting to heavy-handed and dense drumming. This is an important recording in many ways. Not only is it the

first time that this double-quartet approach was recorded, but it is one of the first times that two drummers were used on a jazz recording simultaneously. Listen to how Ed and Billy soloed together, and how their timekeeping interacted with each other. Except for a very few exceptions (Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Wayne Shorter, Eddie Henderson) this dual-drumset concept has been underdeveloped in jazz, while it has been explored greatly in the rock world. When used tastefully, this is a completely different way for drummers to express themselves. Listen to how the dual drumming on this groundbreaking album anchors the exploration that is happening around them.

Blackwell also recorded with bandmate Don Cherry on Cherry's *Complete Communion* and *Symphony For Improvisers* recordings. Both were firmly entrenched in the Ornette tradition. But in 1969 Don and Ed made the first of two outstanding duet recordings. Duet recordings seem to me to be the purest examples of musical "conversation" that we have. *Mu (The Complete Session)* is a very good

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example of such conversation. Cherry plays a plethora of flutes and horns gathered from around the world. Blackwell surrounds him with the drumming traditions of Africa, the Far East, and modern America, as well as those of Native American and Indian classical music.

You can hear the conversation evolve as Cherry and Blackwell pass the ball back and forth like two basketball pros on a fast break, both moving with and without the ball in perfect synchronization. The duet setting is a great way to train your ears to hear and understand musical interaction.

Many years later, Cherry and Blackwell made another duet recording, *El Corazon*. Where some of *Mu* may seem to meander, *El Corazon* is a more arranged outing—very direct and to the point. It is also a superior recording sonically, providing a great opportunity to evaluate Ed's sound. His cymbals were not from the classic "old K" trashy tradition. A staunch Paiste supporter, Ed favored brighter and somewhat pingier-sounding cymbals. On most of the occasions when I saw Mr. Blackwell, he was using a Paiste 602 ride.

Ed's drums walked the line between

"high and bouncy" and "low and dry." However, Blackwell had an unrivaled touch, which is the most important aspect of his pristine sound on the instrument. Also listen closely to the rich sound that Ed got with a pair of mallets.

Ed also recorded a duet recording called *Red And Black* with saxophonist Dewey Redman. Recorded live, this series of duets takes on a more aggressive attitude, feeding off the energy that a crowd provides. Ed is at his interactive best with his close friend Redman, shaping and pacing the music with more than a touch of genius. This is among the most essential of all of Ed Blackwell's work.

Charlie Haden's *The Montreal Tapes With Don Cherry And Ed Blackwell* gives us an opportunity to listen to how the introduction of the bass changes the approach of both Don and Ed. We can also make the same observations by listening to Blackwell's own *Walls—Bridges*, where bassist Cameron Brown is added to the duo of Dewey Redman and Ed. Now we're hearing some outstanding *three-way* musical conversations. By listening to a group evolve right before your ears, you can

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Ed Blackwell

greatly improve your understanding of musical communication.

The next logical step in the listening process after duos to trios would be hearing Redman, Cherry, Haden, and Blackwell all playing together. Thankfully, in 1976 these four musicians formed Old And New Dreams, which became one of the most important jazz groups of the '70s. An easier listen than a lot of Ornette's music, Old And New Dreams played more spatially and perhaps a little bit more "pretty" (for lack of a better term) than Coleman. Their first two recordings are both self-titled. (The second features Ed's amazing African-influenced composition "Togo.") The live recording *Playing* is also quite good, as is their last recording, *One For Blackwell*, which gives Ed a little more solo space than usual.

To hear how Ed brought his unique brand of jazz drumming to a more traditional context, listen to the Lee Morgan/Clifford Jordan recording *Live In Baltimore 1968*. Compare this recording to the American Jazz Quintet live recording from ten years earlier. By 1968 Ed had absorbed the freer music, but it hadn't affected his drive or his bebop sensibilities (as can be heard on this recording almost exclusively of standards). It is this unique duality that made Ed such a special musician.

At this point we need to backtrack to 1961 and a legendary series of recordings that Ed made with The Eric Dolphy Group at New York's famous Five Spot Nightclub. Three different recordings came out of a single night of recording during a two-week stay. With Dolphy's and trumpeter Booker Little's forward-thinking approach, one might imagine that Blackwell would be playing more "out." However, Ed knew that if *everyone* played "out" there would be no reference point for the music. So Ed stays home while the others explore, without ever acting as an anchor on the music. Ed's rock-solid time-keeping and his open attitude encouraged the other musicians to play very loose and free.

Two volumes of recordings pay tribute to the Five Spot recordings. *Fire Waltz Vol. 1* and *Vol. 2* feature Donald Harrison and Terrance Blanchard along with Ed, Mal Waldron, and Richard Davis (who comprised the original Five Spot rhythm section).

Tracking Them Down

Here's a list of the albums mentioned in this month's column, including label and catalog information. Below the list are several sources you might want to check for hard-to-find releases.

RECORDINGS

American Jazz Quintet

In The Beginning, All For One AFO 91-1028-2
Boogie Live... 1958 Featuring Ed Blackwell And AJQ-2,
All For One AFO 92-1228-2
From Bad To Badder, Black Saint 120114-2

Ornette Coleman

Ornette!, Atlantic 1378
Jo Whom Keeps A Record, Warner Pioneer P-10085A
Ornette On Tenor, Atlantic 1394
The Art Of The Improvisers, Atlantic 1572
This Is Our Music, Atlantic 1353
Free Jazz, Atlantic 1364
Beauty Is A Rare Thing, Atlantic R2 71410

Don Cherry

Complete Communion, Blue Note 22673-2
Symphony For Improvisers, Blue Note 28976-2
Mu (The Complete Session), Affinity CO AFF 774
El Corazon, ECM 1230 829199-2

Dewey Redman & Ed Blackwell

Red And Black, Black Saint 120093-2

Charlie Haden

The Montreal Tapes With Don Cherry And Ed Blackwell,
Verve 314523260-2

Old And New Dreams

Old And New Dreams, Black Saint 120013-2
Old And New Dreams, ECM 115478118-21154-2
Playing, ECM 78118-21154-2
One For Blackwell, Black Saint 120113-2

Lee Morgan & Clifford Jordan Quintet

Live In Baltimore 1968, Fresh Sound Records FSCD1037

Eric Dolphy

Live At The 5 Spot Vol. 1, New Jazz OJCCD-133-2
Um At The 5 Spot Vol. 2, Prestige OJCCD-247-2
Memorial Album, Prestige OJCCD-353-2

Mal Waldron

Fire Waltz Vol. 1, Evidence ECD22073-2
Fire Waltz Vol. 2, Projazz CDJ681
The GitGo, Soul Note 121118-2
The Seagulls Of Kristiansund, Soul Note 121148-2

John Coltrane

The Avant-Garde, Atlantic 1451-2

Karl Berger

Transit, Black Saint 120092-2
Crystal Fire, Enja ENJ-7029-2

David Schnitter

Glowing, Muse MCD

Hilton Ruiz

Cross Currents, Slash ST248

David Murray

Ming's Samha, Portrait RK44432-2
Morning Song, Black Saint 120075-2

Joe Lovano

Sounds Of Joy, Enja CD 7013-2
From The Soul, Blue Note CDP 7986362

Ed Blackwell

What It Is, Enja ENJ-70892
What It Be Like, Enja ENJ-8054-2
Walls-Bridges, Black Saint 120153-2

VIDEO

Mal Waldron Live At The Village Vanguard
David Murray Live At The Village Vanguard

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J&R MusicWorld Mail Order, (800) 221-8180

Audiophile Imports, (908) 996-7311

Rare Records, (201) 441-9034

Plastic Fantastic, (610) 896-7625

The Jazz Record Center, (212) 675-4480

Double Time Jazz, PO Box 1244, New Albany, IN 47151

Scott Davidson Music, (302) 529-1081

One year earlier Ed had played with another groundbreaking saxophonist: John Coltrane. On *The Avant-Garde*, Coltrane is featured with most of Ornette's working group. You can hear that Coltrane and Blackwell didn't mesh as well as each of them did with their usual battery-mates (Elvin Jones and Ornette, respectively). This just serves to further underscore the unique level of communication enjoyed by both of those great drum and saxophone pairings.

The 1980s were a busy time for Ed. He recorded with Karl Berger (*Transit* and *Crystal Fire*), Dave Schnitter (*Glowing*), and Hilton Ruiz (*Cross Currents*), among

others. In 1986 he made two important live recordings at the Village Vanguard with The Mal Waldron Group. Called *The Git Go* and *The Seagulls Of Kristiansund*, both featured legends Woody Shaw and Charlie Rouse.

Perhaps the most important aspect of these sessions is that there was also a live video made of the proceedings. *Seeing* drummers is a vital learning tool, especially with someone whose movements behind the drums are as effortless and elegant as Blackwell's. From this same series of videos—called simply *Live At The Village Vanguard*—a volume featuring The David Murray Quartet gives us the best video

Ed Blackwell

images we have of Blackwell's drumming. (Ed also graces David's recordings *Ming's Samba* and *Morning Song*.)

The 1990s saw Ed contributing to some very important recordings. Joe Lovano featured him on his saxophone trio recording *Sounds Of Joy*, as well as on a quartet outing with Michel Petrucciani called *From The Soul*. Ideas and melodies bounce back and forth freely on both. You can hear how Ed phrases like a horn player on the drums, while never letting interaction replace the groove or enthusiasm masquerade as creativity. And again, notice his beautiful mallet sound.

Ed Blackwell finally released some recordings under his own name in the last year of his life. *Ed Blackwell Project Volumes 1* and 2 are amazing examples of Ed's chanting and rolling style of drumming. But these last recordings are as much life lessons as drum lessons. At the end of his life Ed was *very* ill. His kidneys were in complete failure. Simple things like moving around were often a real chore—let alone playing the drums. Still, he traveled across the country to make a gig in San Francisco, where he made these two records. On each track, his drumming snaps and crackles with youth and excitement. There is absolutely no indication that he was less than two months away from the end.

Let the title of Ed's last released recording, *Walls—Bridges*, stand for the obstacles he overcame and the connections he made between all genres of music: free, bebop, African, and American. Ed was the musical glue that held so many great performances together. He was an amazing drummer, a master musician, and a great man.



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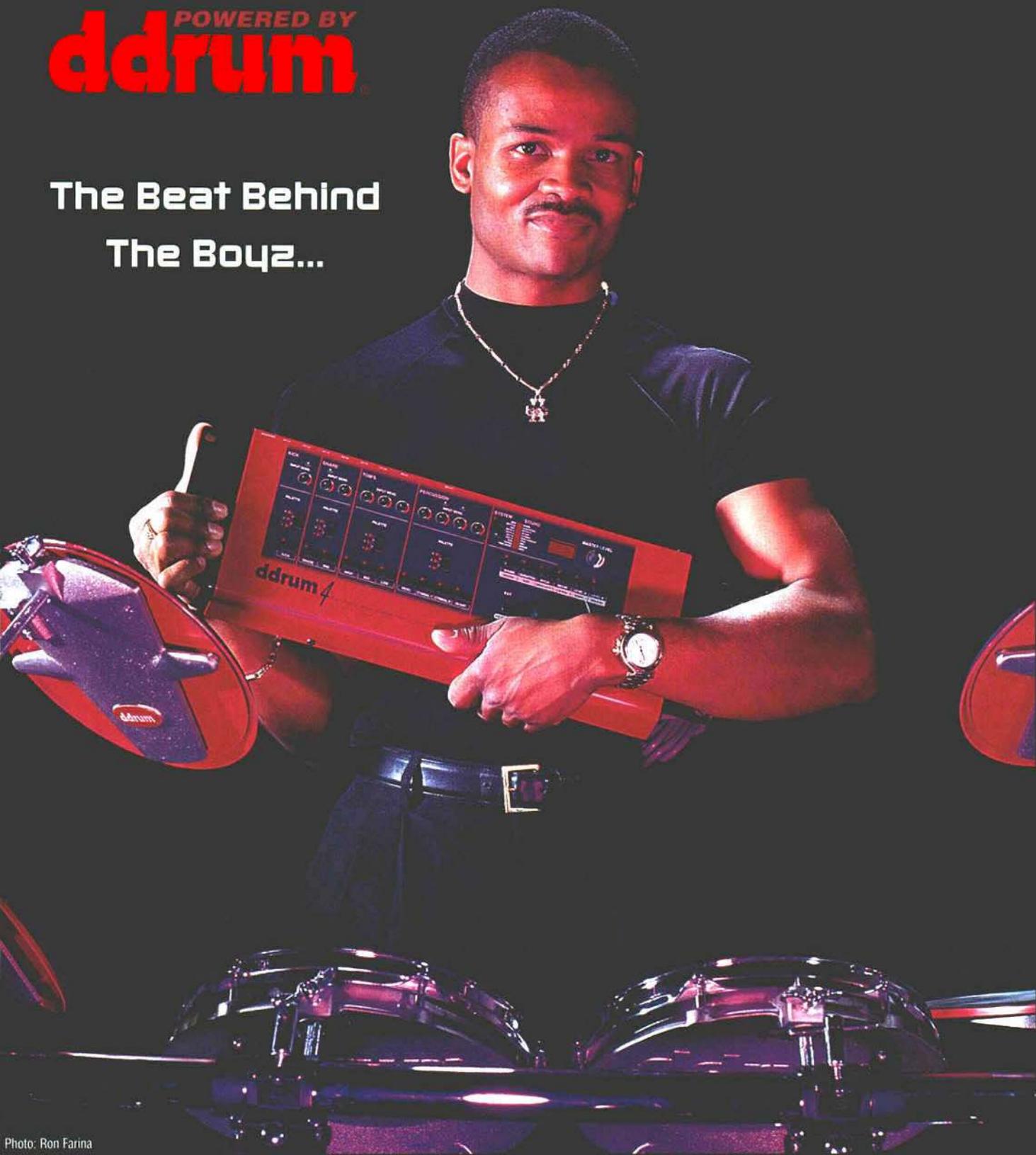


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Ride The Wild Surf

by Dony Wynn

In 1957 my dad brought home a 45 record and put it on the player. The sound that emanated immediately captured my imagination, but it wasn't the voice, the guitar, or the keyboards that made my butt move. It was the big driving beat of Earl Palmer, letting loose on Fats Domino's smash single "I'm Walkin." From then on I lis-

divine providence. It has been, from day one, my manifest destiny to be a drummer. I've heard Jeff Porcaro and Jim Keltner talk about old souls carrying the mantle of knowing they were drummers from ages past, and continuing the tradition. So it has been with me. I never had a choice. I was inexorably led to express myself on these

into in this article. It's about the fabric of life, really. Being in tune with your environment, and being in tune with yourself so as to be able to "ride the wild surf," as I like to put it. Without knowing how to negotiate life and its sudden twists and turns, you can easily fall and go under. You can lose your focus, drive, and aim, wondering which way is up. "Hanging ten" allows you to keep your perspective, so you'll know when to hold back in order to catch a better wave, or when to attach yourself to an innocuous one that might lead to the ride of your life. It's a bit like taking a swan dive off a cliff without knowing what awaits you beneath. If it's done for the right reasons, the wind will lift your wings every time.

First and foremost, to be a great drummer, you must be compelled. You must be willing to go well beyond any normal means in order to do what you want to do on your instrument. I know that I must've driven my parents—and the neighbors—crazy, but I couldn't stay off my first Sears & Roebuck blue sparkle kit. I spent hours soloing and improving my chops, playing to records on which the drummers had captured something that I wanted to add to my own growing arsenal. I'd come home after concerts and emulate what I'd just seen other drummers do. (We didn't have instructional videos then, you see.) I spent every waking moment being driven, pounding beyond the limits of good sense, not knowing where this paradiddle heaven was heading, just knowing that I didn't have

"To be a great drummer, you must be willing to go well beyond any normal means."

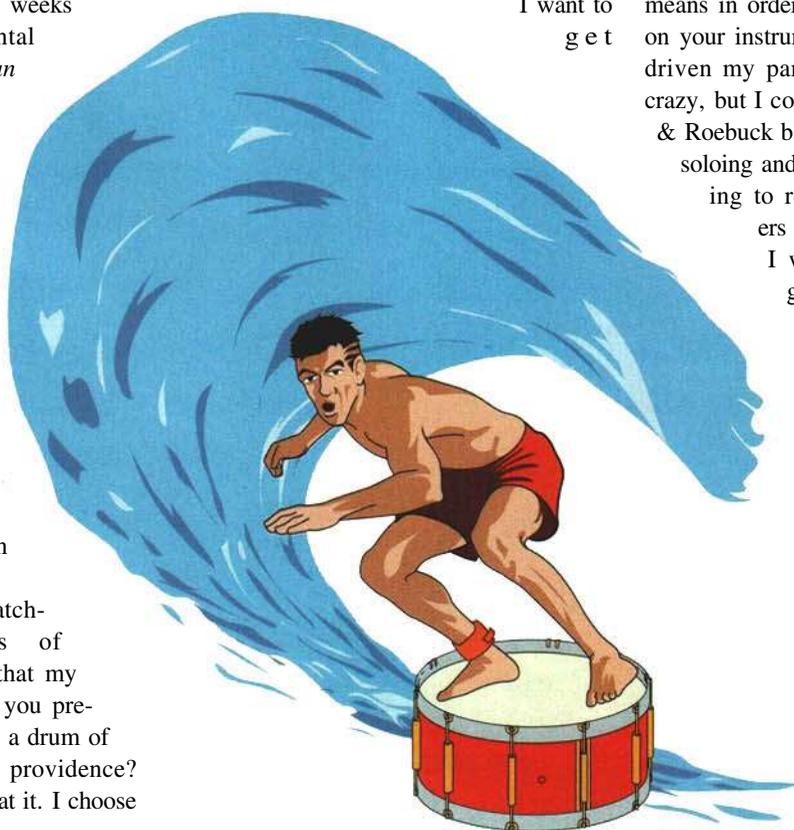
tened for the beat on any record my dad and mom brought home. It was the primal force that moved me from the inside out. I couldn't put it into words at that time, I just knew that "the beat" made my world go 'round.

Fast forward to 1963, mere weeks after The Beatles' monumental appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. It wasn't the mop-topped Fab Four who had the girls screaming on that particular Sunday evening. It was a new group called The Dave Clark Five, whose namesake drummer was pounding out machine-gun snare rolls on a song called "Glad All Over." This singular performance pushed me well over the edge. I was now absolutely *driven* to learn how to play the drums.

Many years later, after watching old home movies of Christmases past, I noticed that my family (or Santa, whichever you prefer) always provided me with a drum of sorts. Happenstance? Divine providence? There are many ways to look at it. I choose

ancient instruments. It continues to the present day: this age-old tribal tradition of moving butts, and, more importantly, of speaking to hearts and souls.

These snippets from my life are prime examples of what I want to get



any choice. It had to be.

I eventually met two guys in junior high school who had their own instruments. Better yet, the guitarist had a bedroom we could rehearse in. We began to piece together songs every afternoon after school, and I vividly recall playing for ten people at a church dance a month or so later. I also remember the thrill of watching the guys and gals moving to the beat I made—and then getting paid *seven dollars* for it afterward. The final switch was thrown that night; there was definitely no turning back for me.

A few years later I wanted to make what I considered a prudent move in my career: to find the best musicians I could to help me move forward in my musical journey. I learned that one of the better guitarists in the state lived only a few miles from my home. So one day I jumped on my bicycle, rode to his home, and knocked on his door. I introduced myself as his next drummer, and suggested that we should immediately start a band. He had a good laugh at my bold introduction, but he invited me in anyway. Within weeks we had a band organized. It was made up mostly of older guys, since I was ahead of my age in terms

of proficiency. We won the first state battle of the bands we entered, and played clubs thereafter (with me wearing fake mustaches and doing homework on pool tables).

I soon developed a reputation as an up-and-coming drummer within the musical community in Louisiana. At that time there were lots of clubs in which to play. (Louisiana people are notorious for having a good time, dancing the night away. That much has not changed.) In these clubs was a good number of musicians who, like me, were compelled to be the very best they could be on their given instruments. Competition was fierce, but in a friendly way, and everyone seemed to reach out to give each other a helping hand. There was much cross-pollination of players and ideas. (That's something I find in short supply these days. Most folks have forgotten what joys a community that networks can bring. But selfish is as selfish does, and it's not a pretty sight.)

Sadly, I got careless and lost my focus. My ego got the better of me, and I was fired from a band for being flippant. The bandleader was correct in firing me, and years later I look back on that scene and

thank him for putting me in my place. It helped me to grow up and to realize that the gift I had been given was not to be taken lightly. From that day on I disciplined myself and rededicated myself to the craft and abilities that God had bestowed upon me.

The next serious lesson I got was when I went to do my first session. As I mentioned, I had a growing reputation as "the next big thing" on drums. But when I got in the room and the red light went on, I soon discovered that while I had chops for days, my meter was awful. I left that session with my tail between my legs, and immediately bought dozens of records by drummers who were well known for their groove abilities: Bernard Purdie, Richie Hayward, Larrie Londin, Al Jackson, and John Bonham, to name a few. Discouraged but never giving up, I studied these guys like a fiend, learning virtually everything they played on, note for note, in order to figure out what it was that they did and why.

On a related tip, I once read a story about author Hunter S. Thompson (*Hells Angels, Fear And Loathing In Las Vegas*). It said that in order to fully understand why Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote

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the way they did, Thompson actually typed out—word for word—the entire text of *The Great Gatsby* and *The Sun Also Rises*. In the words of some wise old sage, "To break the rules, one must first know what the rules are." Hunter did, I did, and so should we all.

When I returned to making music, I was a changed man whose groove and understanding of playing a song were at a different level. I soon began to feel a dissatisfaction with playing Top-40 music. I yearned to make my own statement within the arena of original music. At the time, I worked for my father. He owned a series of businesses, and I was being groomed to take over these businesses and run them by the time I was twenty-eight years old. But I was even more dissatisfied in the nine-to-five workplace. While on a lunch break one day I stopped over at a friend's ramshackle recording studio. He played me some demos by Leo Nocentelli, the guitarist for The Meters. I fell in love with what I heard, and I asked to play on the tunes, which were a combination of rock and funk—a melding of styles that hadn't been explored very much yet. Days later, Leo came by to visit me at work. He told me I had a gift that I shouldn't ignore. His words sunk deep and coincided with what I was already feeling. So I sat

down, prayed, and pondered. New York City? Los Angeles? Nashville? I knew one person in Los Angeles: an old friend I'd played with in a few bands in Louisiana. He'd just joined a band called Toto, so that was a no-brainer.

After a year with no work but lots of auditions (where I didn't get the gig), I finally entered into the world of my childhood dreams. I toured with one of the most talented men I could have ever hoped to meet, Robert Palmer. (Ironically, Robert hired me after hearing me play on those Leo Nocentelli demos.) As we traveled the world, I got an education in foreign cultures. I visited all over the planet, meeting great musicians and interesting people who have had all sorts of influence on my life. That's a precious thing that bears no price tag.

In the early 1990s I found myself again beating my head against a wall. Instead of trying to force any particular issue, I decided to take a look internally. I made a leap of faith and took a year off from making, listening to, or even talking about music. I worked on a cattle ranch and took a course in creative writing at college. It was the best thing I could have done, because I came back to music a new man, refreshed and refocused for the continuation of my musical journey.

I recently ended a four-plus year relationship with country superstars Brooks & Dunn. They were a great organization, but the time to move down the road was at hand. It was a move that was entirely necessary for my musical and personal growth, economics be damned!

Again, my compulsion to make music for the purest of reasons has taken the reins of my manifest destiny. I will only work in music that I find challenging and personally rewarding, in which I can make yet another statement, expressed *my way*. I feel that with all the history I have under my hood, I can bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to any situation. I also feel that if I make music out of passion, for the love of it, ultimately it will be successful on any level I choose. On the other hand, if I pander, I will suffer an ignoble fate, and will be left behind by more daring counterparts. That, my friends, is unacceptable. After all these years, I am still compelled, driven to the outer edges to make music my way and with whom I choose. I know that if I stay true to my heart and soul, success will follow.

So, let me recap what I consider are important pointers on how to "ride the wild surf." First, when it comes to picking up a pair of sticks, you should feel compelled.

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There should be no choice in your decision at all. Making music for any other reasons will leave you looking for answers down the road. If you want to be a hobbyist, prepare yourself for life after music. If you want a career, get as many tools under your belt as possible. Competition in this day and age is so fierce as to not be believed.

If you feel your best playing years are behind you, consider getting involved in the *business* of music. At some point in time we musicians must regain control of the business, which is now run largely by lawyers and accountants who know nothing of music. We can do what many sports figures do after their playing days are behind them: hand down to the younger ones a knowledge that cannot be bought.

There is a related issue that I haven't addressed as of yet, but is of the utmost importance: To give yourself more lateral motion, be sure to learn either guitar or keyboards. This will help you immensely if you want to compose, produce, or be involved with any other aspect of music, whether it be behind the kit or behind a desk. The more skills you have, the more valuable an asset you are.

Second, be bold. Introduce yourself to musicians who you feel are like-minded. The melding of your energies and talents could make you the next big thing. Of course, your motivation to succeed should be integrated with having a good time making music with your buds. Gotta enjoy yourself and laugh often, too!

Third, be your own worst critic. Be harder on yourself than anyone else would ever think of being. Be practical and realistic. And if a staggeringly hard lesson steps in your path, walk through it, don't try to get around it. Chances are, that lesson has been put there to teach you something that you will use to your benefit later in life.

Fourth, it's important to play other people's music to get a feel for why they played the way they did. But to really enter the arena you must make a conscious decision to stop playing Top-40 music. In order to make your own statement, you've got to let go of that comfort zone, monetarily and otherwise. It may take a while to find yourself, but keep at it. Draw on your influences and let your imagination take flight. Find others who are similarly motivated. Surround yourself with talented, positive,

realistic people.

Fifth and most important: If some life change is speaking to you in a way that defies logic but is something your heart cannot shake, *do it*. There is a reason for these doors opening. But to walk down the path, you must first gather the courage and faith to cross the portal. Keep all negative thinking, yours and others, as far away from your life as possible. Close your eyes, put a smile on your face, and dive off that cliff! Your life will be forever changed.

A good, wise friend (and world-class drummer) once told me, "Just keep the beat." I tell you now: Ride the wild surf, folks. There is no other way.

Louisiana-born Dony Wynn has applied his personal drum gumbo to a wide variety of gigs. He spent fifteen years recording and touring with rocker Robert Palmer, playing on such hits as "Bad Case Of Loving You" and "Simply Irresistible." He switched gears in 1993 to work with R&B diva Patti LaBelle. And from 1995 until 1999 he was in the driver's seat for the high-energy band of country superstars Brooks & Dunn.



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Pro Tools

What's It All About?

by Mark Parsons

Read even a few interviews with recording drummers, and you're bound to come across a reference to Pro Tools, from Digidesign. Some imply that it's a gift from God, while others act like it's a tool of the devil.

Someday soon—if it hasn't already happened—you may go into a studio to make a recording and find a computer sitting where you're used to seeing a recording console. Some questions you may have in this situation include: What *is* Pro Tools? How does it differ from traditional recording methods? What can it do that other systems can't? What, if any, are the drawbacks? And finally, Will the producer use it to mess with my tracks after I'm gone?

In this article we'll try to answer these questions (except the last one, which is between you and your producer). Let's begin with an overview of the product.

What Is It?

Technically speaking, Pro Tools is a 24-bit, non-linear, TDM-based environment

for recording, editing, mixing, and processing audio. *Whew.*

Let's break this down into manageable chunks. Recorders are either analog or digital. Some digital recorders store their data on tape, in a sequential (linear) fashion—from beginning to end. In use, these are much like analog recorders. Others write their data to a hard disk, allowing them to access the information in a (you guessed it) non-linear fashion. There are many benefits to this, the simplest being that you can start recording or playing back from anywhere in the song, instantly. "Rewind time" doesn't exist. (And that's just the tip of the iceberg!)

Of the disk-based recorders, some are stand-alone and some are host-based. The former are dedicated, all-in-one-box, hard-disk recorders that can function like a typical multi-track recorder within a studio. An example of this is the Otari RADAR. Host-based products, on the other hand, use the processing power of your computer (the "host") to perform recording and DSP (digital signal processing) functions. An example would be Digidesign's new Digi001.

Pro Tools is a hybrid of these two methods. It uses the operating system of your computer (either Mac or Windows) to provide processing power for things like the graphic user interface (the fancy screens you see when you use the system). The real power, however, comes from hardware in the form of various

TDM cards. These plug into the computer and provide recording, routing, and DSP power.

The "24-bit" part of our technical description simply means that Pro Tools has a dynamic range and audio quality far superior to typical 16-bit "CD quality." Sampling rate is either 44.1 kHz or 48 kHz, and the frequency response is flat from 20 Hz to beyond 20 kHz.

Enough techno-babble. Let's walk through a typical Pro Tools session, starting with recording the basic tracks.

Tracking

You set your drums up the same way as always. The engineer mikes them in the normal fashion, and routes them to his favorite mic' pre-amps like usual. From here, however, things change. The drum signal goes to a Digidesign audio interface, which converts it to the digital domain before it's routed to Pro Tools.

Depending on the type of project, the session may or may not proceed as per usual. If you're recording a band in the traditional sense, the basic tracks *may* go down like you're accustomed to: Get a good take of the rhythm section for each song, then proceed to overdub the vocals and solos. You might notice that the producer isn't worrying about the odd late hit or less-than-perfect fill, but overall this stage of the session could seem like business as usual.

However, if it's more of a *producer's* session (that is, you're hired to provide backing tracks for a solo artist or project) then things may be a little different. Let's say the song contains an intro, three verses (each followed by a chorus), a bridge, and a solo, and then ends on a fade-out of repeated choruses.

Instead of going for a solid take in one



A complete Pro Tools system, including computer and monitor.

Some of Pro Tools' features may be considered controversial—especially by drummers. But there's no denying their usefulness from a production standpoint.

piece, the producer may fire up the Pro Tools internal click (the "MIDI Metronome") and ask you to play *one* verse, *one* chorus, the intro, the bridge, and the solo groove (if different from all of the above). He can later "fly" your parts around to put them where he wants them. Obviously, the ability to do this is a huge advantage in terms of being able to vary the arrangement after the rhythm section has left.

But wait—it gets better (or worse, depending on how you look at it). For more adventurous projects, the producer may have you play *a few bars each* of several different grooves, along with some fills, and then sends you on your way. The artist and/or producer (who may be the same person) can then cut and paste to his heart's content, creating various rhythm tracks almost at will.

Overdubs

If you look at the computer monitor during an initial tracking session, you'll likely see the "mix window," which is one of two main screen displays. This window is laid out like a typical mixer, and it allows you to create and then label the various tracks ("kick," "snare," "hats," etc.) at the bottom of each channel strip. You also set levels here—including headphone mixes. The current version of Pro Tools 24 supports five different phone mixes at once.

Once you get into overdubs (and particularly punches), you'll probably see the "edit window." This shows a graphic representation of one or more tracks (expressed as a waveform) stretched across the screen from left to right. A vertical line travels across the screen showing where we are within the song, time-wise. You can view

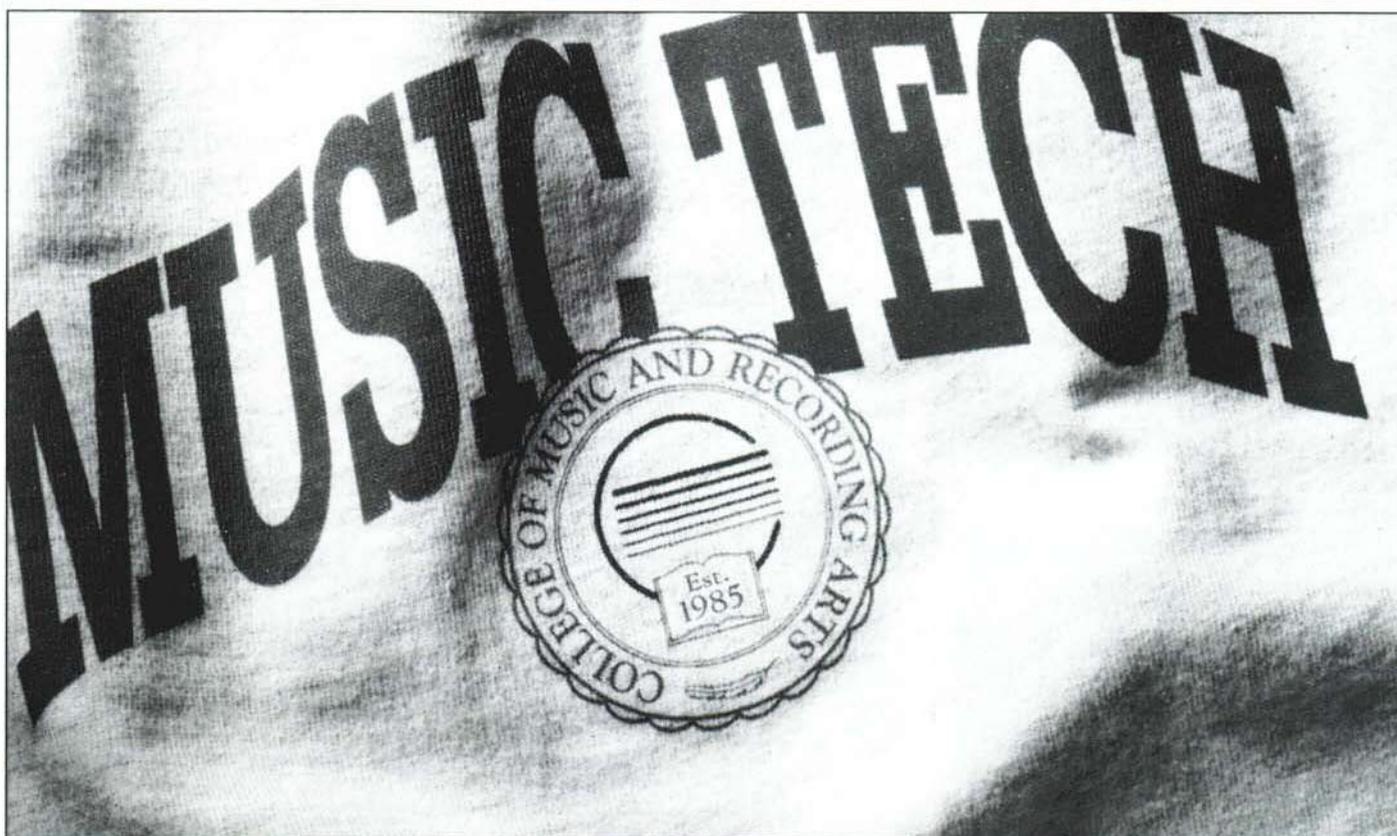
the whole song at once or zoom in on a small section.

Okay, the basic tracks are done and you're going to punch in a few parts. The first big difference between "standard" and Pro Tools recording will take a load off your (and the engineer's) mind: Punches with Pro Tools are non-destructive. If you miss a cue or the engineer blows the punch, it's no problem. You can undo it and try again. You can also cross-fade between the old and new parts for seamless transitions. Additionally, there is a "loop record" function, which will play the same section over and over, recording (and storing) a separate punch with each pass. This lets you try a tricky part as many times as you want *and* allows you to keep the one you want.

Mixing

After all of the recording is done, it's time to mix your project. This means it's time to hook up racks full of outboard gear—compressors, limiters, gates, reverbs, and equalizers—so you can tweak each track to perfection, right?

Not necessarily.



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Pro Tools

You *could* do this, but there's an easier and much more cost-effective way. One of the big advantages of Pro Tools is the use of "plug-ins." These are software programs that do, in the digital domain, what typical "black box" hardware processors do in the real world. While some plug-ins are made by Digidesign, many are made by major hardware manufacturers as virtual versions of their more successful hardware designs. These include products from Alesis, Lexicon, Focusrite, T.C. Electronics, and Line 6.

Another huge convenience is that Pro Tools allows for the full implementation of mixing automation. It can remember all your mix moves (like volume and pan), plus it can recall all the parameters of whatever plug-ins you used. This means you can work on more than one project at a time, with the ability to instantly call up an entire mix and work on it without having to go through the time-consuming and imperfect method of trying to reset the board.

And speaking of boards, you can mix within the computer environment utilizing the mix window, or you can use a digital mixer like Digidesign's Pro Control. The latter is a dedicated mixer that supports all of the Pro Tools features while letting you use a real, physical control surface.

Special Feature

Now let's look at a few of the things that really set Pro Tools apart from the old technology. Some of these features may be considered controversial—especially by drummers. But there's no denying their usefulness from a production standpoint.

We've already touched on the ability to cut and paste drum parts to meet the producer's wishes. What if the producer likes the arrangement of your part and your drum sound, but wants everything you played to be right "on" the beat? No problem. By using the edit window, zooming in close (to display only a small section of the track at a time), and taking advantage of Pro Tools' ability to look at things in "beats and bars" as well as minutes and seconds, the producer can go through the song and align any notes that (intentionally or otherwise) were originally played ahead of or behind the beat.

What about the opposite problem? You lay down a track and the part is tasty and the groove is in the pocket, but...the producer's not happy with the drum sound. He can now replace the sound of individual drums (assuming they're tracked individually) with virtually any sound of his choosing. Yes, the technology to do this (with varying degrees of success) has been around in one form or another for almost

twenty years. But with Digidesign's new "sound replacer" software, what once used to be a difficult and complicated process is now much more accurate and easier to do.

A Drummer's Perspective

In order to get a better handle on the Pro Tools phenomenon, we decided to query a serious Pro Tools "power user" who also happens to be a world-class drummer: Omar Hakim. Many of you read about his new solo CD, *The Groovesmith*, in MD's May 2000 cover story on Omar. But what you may *not* know is that he produced it himself using Pro Tools. Omar's setup consists of a Pro Tools 24/Mix Plus system, with an additional mix farm card and a sixteen-fader Pro Control digital mixer.

Omar is one drummer who is not a bit afraid to take advantage of new technology. "This is a very powerful system, and it has totally changed the way I produce records," he says. "From a drummer's standpoint it's very cool to record improvised grooves on my acoustic kit, and go back to them later and edit them into a song form. Before, I would have to record to tape, then break out the old razor blade and start splicing the pieces together. Fun, but *very* time-consuming. Also, the non-destructive editing in Pro Tools allows me to return to the original session if I don't

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like my editing experiments." Omar adds that he really likes the plug-ins feature, listing as some of his favorites the Renaissance Compressor (from Waves), the Lexiverb (Lexicon), and the Amp Farm (Line 6).

When asked about the error-correction issue, Omar takes a balanced approach. "The ability to fix timing errors can be a good thing if you don't go overboard," he states. "A lot of times I hear these 'corrected' tracks, and they sacrifice the musicality of the drum track for the sake of perfect timing. On the other hand, if you have a really bad drum track from a timing standpoint but you like it sonically, you *do* have the opportunity to fix it before the mix."

To hear what a Pro Tools project can sound like when it's produced by someone more interested in *using* the system musically than *abusing* it, check out *The Groovesmith*, available at Omarhakim.com.

Heaven Or Hell?

Generally speaking, the points for Pro Tools are technical, while most of the points *against* it are philosophical. But there are a few technical "cons" to go with all the "pros."

You will rarely—if ever—see an analog recorder (or mixer) "crash" to the point where it is unusable. One channel might go bad, in which case you can usually patch around it and keep the session running. Not so for digital recorders, and *doubly* not so for digital recorders that live inside a computer. It's a fact of life that with computer-based systems, "crash happens." And when this occurs, you don't just lose the use of your system temporarily. You can often lose valuable data permanently.

In fairness to the designers of these products, they face an enormous challenge. Not only do they have to create a system that does almost magical things with audio, but they also must make it work with lots of other third-party software (plug-ins). And it has to function with a huge number of various computer configurations. Given these conditions, I'm in awe that it can work at all, let alone as well as it does. And of course, the watchword for *anyone* storing or manipulating valuable information on a computer is (repeat after me) *back up your data*.

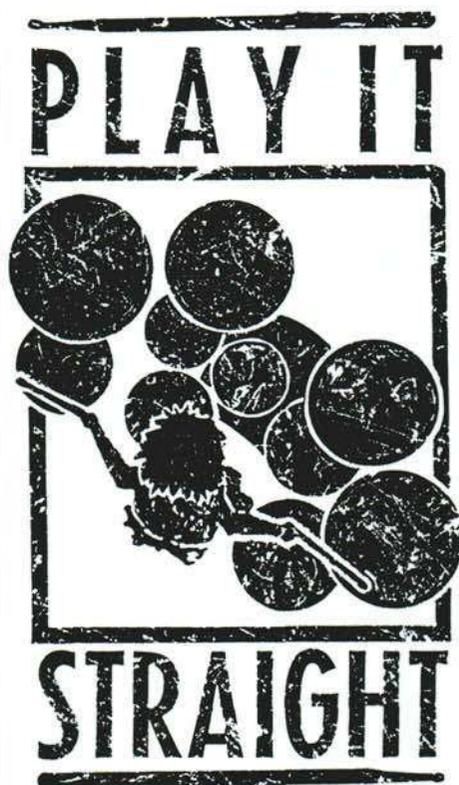
In a similar vein, I don't think a Pro Tools setup would be my first choice to

take on the road in an "every night, do-or-die" type of situation. Where physical reliability is paramount, I'd prefer an analog machine or one of the more robust dedicated HDR systems.

The real issues, however, don't have as much to do with the machine as they do with the user. With Pro Tools, you can do virtually *anything*, and therein lies the rub. At what point do you say, "It's good enough"? The ability to "improve" on the original performance can lead to a futile search for so-called perfection, resulting in over-tweaked performances that lack feel and soul.

This isn't a slam on Pro Tools. The ability to have this much power and control over audio is great for those who need it. Just remember that music isn't mathematical perfection. It's a living, breathing, organic art form.

The author would like to thank Bill Simpson of Braxton Technologies for his insightful comments on the world of non-linear digital technology.



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Montreal Drumfest Lineup Set

The lineup for the 2000 Montreal Drumfest has been announced. The weekend-long event will begin on Friday, November 3 with master classes by Virgil Donati and Pete Magadini (from 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.). The evening will be capped by a concert presenting frame-drum artist Glen Velez and Virgil Donati & Planet X.

Saturday will open with the Yamaha Student Showcase, featuring top local drummers. The day will continue with Maureen Brown & her band, Richie "Gajate" Garcia, Zoro, Will Kennedy, and Alex Acuna. Simon Phillips will close.

Sunday will open with Matt Frenette, followed by Johnny Rabb, Nathaniel Townsley, Tommy Igoe, Gregg Bissonette, and Tommy Aldridge. The show will conclude with Robbie Ameen & band.

Saturday and Sunday performances begin at 11:00 A.M., and are scheduled to run until approximately 7:00 P.M. The event will be held in the Pierre-Mercure Hall in downtown Montreal. For more information, call Ralph Angelillo at (450) 928-1726 or email angelillo@videotron.ca.

QUICK BEATS: TERRI LYNE CARRINGTON

(HERBIE HANCOCK)

What are some of your favorite recorded grooves?

It's hard to pick just a few. All music has some sort of groove factor if it's being played with heart and soul. Of course I love all of the James Brown grooves, and I like the grooves on a lot of organ recordings, like Jack McDuff with Joe Dukes. And I love Earth, Wind & Fire grooves with Freddie White.



If someone wasn't familiar with your drumming, which recording of yours would you recommend?

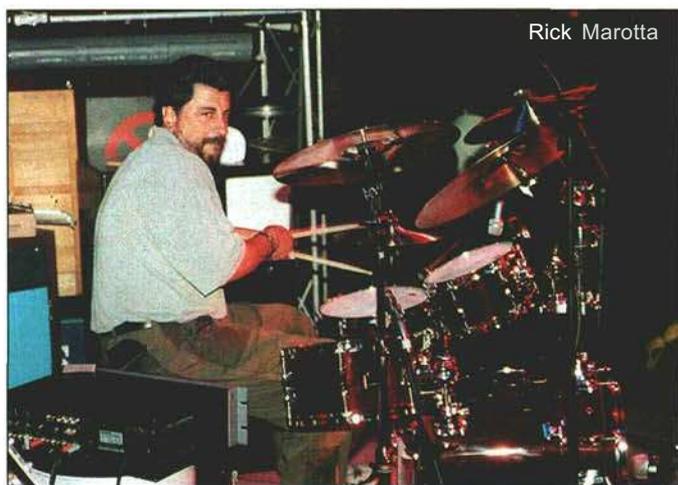
My playing is best represented on live show tapes with Herbie Hancock over the last year, but no one can hear that now. Of what's available, I like elements of what's happening on Herbie's latest CD, *Gershwin's World*. (I'm on four tracks.) Also try *Till We Have Faces*

with Gary Thomas and Pat Metheny. I also like some of the stuff on John Beasley's recording *A Change Of Heart*.

Who are some of your influences?

One major influence is Jack DeJohnette. He's a mentor to me. Elvin Jones, Roy Haynes—every master in jazz drumming. I spent time seriously listening to all of them.

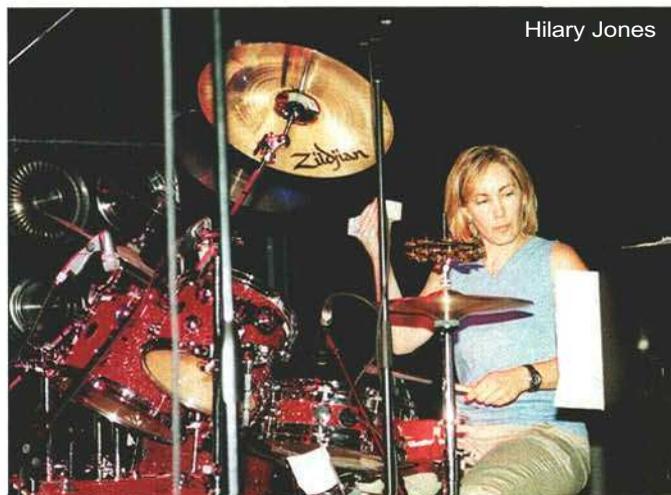
Jemcrack Drumming Jamboree



Rick Marotta

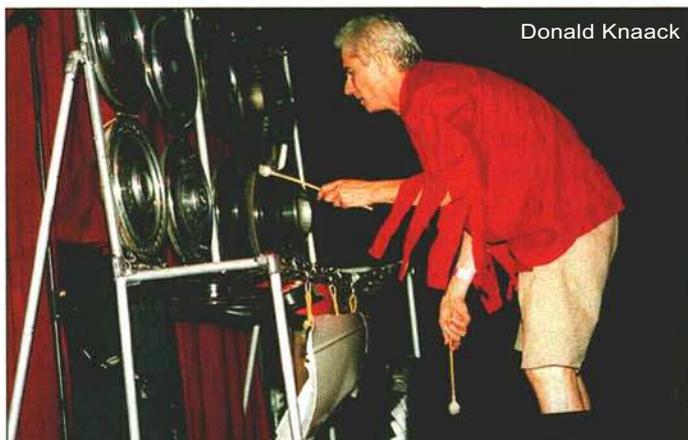
A feeling of community permeated the Jemcrack Drumming Jamboree, held in Louisville, Kentucky, on June 25. The event featured performances by Rick Marotta (sponsored by Yamaha), Hilary Jones (sponsored by Zildjian and DW), and Donald Knaack (aka "The Junkman"). Several Louisville-area teachers and professional drummers held instructional sessions on a variety of topics, including rock, jazz, and symphonic drumming. A special award was presented to veteran Louisville drum instructor John Roy, who was credited with teaching a large percentage of the drummers who performed at and attended the event.

Throughout the day, attendees were able to participate in drum circles and rhythm jams. Some were a planned part of the schedule, such as the "junk jam" led by Knaack on everything from plastic jugs to hubcaps. Others were impromptu, often taking place at the displays of a number of major manufacturers and Louisville retailers.



Hilary Jones

Rick Mattingly



Donald Knaack

Indy Quickies

Grover Pro Percussion has hired Ken Brooks as Marching Percussion Consultant. A veteran marching specialist, Ken has worked with such drum corps as The Boston Crusaders, Suncoast Sound, Rochester Crusaders, and Florida Wave. He is currently arranging for The Empire Statesmen in Rochester, New York.

The Museum Of Making Music, situated in the headquarters of the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM), opened its doors recently. Exhibits focus on the music industry's influence in shaping American culture over the past hundred years. The museum is located at 5790 Armada Drive in Carlsbad, California, just north of San Diego. Hours of operation are Tuesday through Sunday,

10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. For more information call (760) 438-8001 or email namm@namm.com.

Pure Sound Percussion has a new address and contact information: 2050 Cotner Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90025, tel: (310) 966-1176, fax: (310) 473-4255, info@puresoundpercussion.com.

Soundcheck Rehearsal Products, makers of the Cymbal Sock practice mute for cymbals, now has a Web site at www.cymbalsock.com.

Mapex is also now online, at www.mapexdrums.com.

Toca Percussion products can be seen as part of the Ritmos de Identidad (Rhythm of Identity) traveling exhibit presented by the Smithsonian Center for Latino Initiatives. The exhibit honors the legacy of Cuban scholar Fernando Ortiz, and is

built around the Howard Family collection of over a hundred fifty rare and historic world percussion instruments. Toca instruments are included among those representing modern-day percussion. An array of conga heads autographed by various Toca artists is also included.

The fourth annual **Hollywood Custom & Vintage Drum Show** will take place on October 7 and 8 at the **Remo Percussion Center**, 7308 Coldwater Canyon Dr., in North Hollywood, California. In addition to new and vintage drums on display and on sale, there will be special appearances by Bun E. Carlos and John "JR" Robinson. For more information contact Kerry Crutchfield at (323) 461-0640, drumcrutch@aol.com, or www.vintagedrumshow.com. *Modern Drummer* is a co-sponsor of the show.

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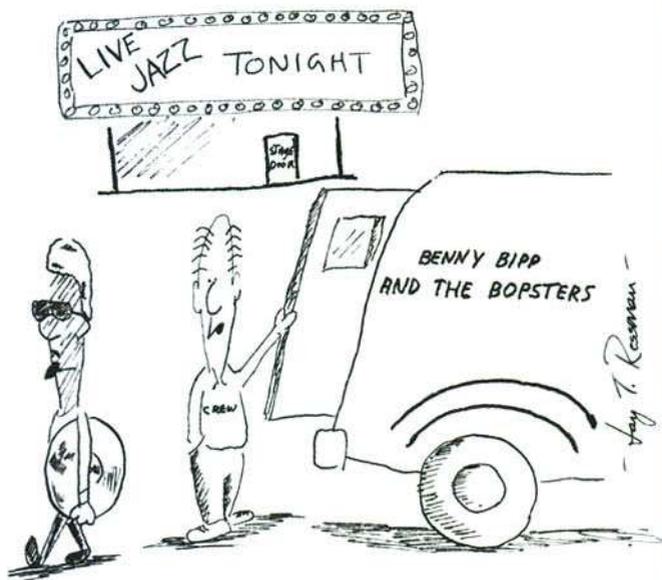
Jason Bowld (Pitchshifter)

Tim Bye (Unamerican)

Paul Angers

Paul Simmons (Simmons)

DRUM KICKS



"Just put it in the van with the rest of the stuff.
I mean, it's only a cymbal."

QUICK BEATS: JOHN RILEY

(VANGUARD JAZZ, ORCHESTRA)

What are your favorite grooves?

There are hundreds, but a few that come to mind are: Vernel Fournier on Ahmad Jamal's "Poinciana," Mel Lewis on "Walkin' About," from *The Definitive Thad Jones (Vol. J)*, Elvin Jones on John Coltrane's "Blues To Elvin," David Garibaldi's "On The Serious Side," from Tower Of Power's *In The Slot*, Tony Williams on "Freedom Jazz Dance" and "Gingerbread Boy," from Miles Davis's *Miles Smiles*, and all of Steve Gadd's grooves on Chick Corea's *The Leprechaun*.



Dorian Rorer

Which recording of yours would you recommend?

Some are with The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, *Lickety Split* and *Thad Jones Legacy*, and Bob Mintzer's *Big Band Trane* and *Latin From Manhattan*. For small-group stuff, Kenny Werner's *Uncovered Heart* and John Serry's *Enchantress*.

Who are some of your influences?

Early on it was Ringo, John Bonham, and Mitch Mitchell along

with Gene Krupa and Max Roach. Next it was Joe Morello, Buddy Rich, Danny Seraphine, Bobby Colomby, Carl Palmer, and Bill Bruford. Then I got into Billy Cobham and David Garibaldi. At North Texas I was introduced to Tony Williams, Elvin Jones, Philly Joe Jones, Roy Haynes, Mel Lewis, Paul Motian, Ed Blackwell, Jack DeJohnette, Ed Soph, Steve Gadd, Lenny White, Al Mouzon, Eric Gravatt, and Airtio. Lately it's been everyone from Trilok Gurtu to Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez.

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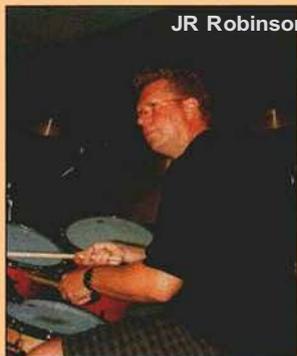
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10/14 — Performance with Mark Suter and Gilad Dobrezky, Howland Cultural Center, Beacon, New York. Contact Joseph Grainley, (212) 247-2936.

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.



JR Robinson

Steve Houghton

11/15 — PASIC 2000, Dallas, TX.
12/19 — Midwest Band in Chicago, IL.

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 Harsen, Dom Famularo, John Bergamo, Giovanni Hidalgo, and many more. France Festival, Paris, France. Contact 33 (0) 1 40 53 99 49.

Montreal Drum Festival 2000

11/2-4 — Nathaniel Townsley, Zoro, Richie Garcia, Gregg Bissonette, Tommy Igoe, Alex Acuna, and more, Montreal, Canada.

Odunde Fest 2000

11/24-26 — Festival, presented by Adefua African Drum & Dance, Rainier Beach Performing Arts Center, Seattle, WA.

PASIC 2000

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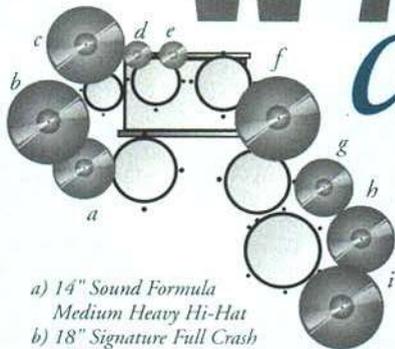
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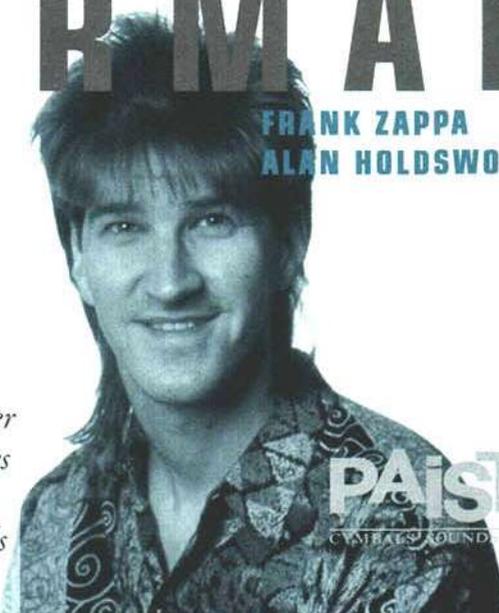
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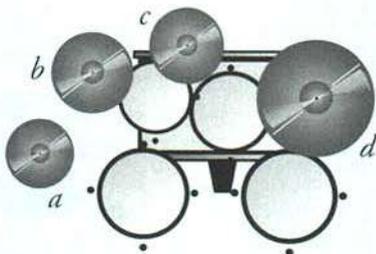


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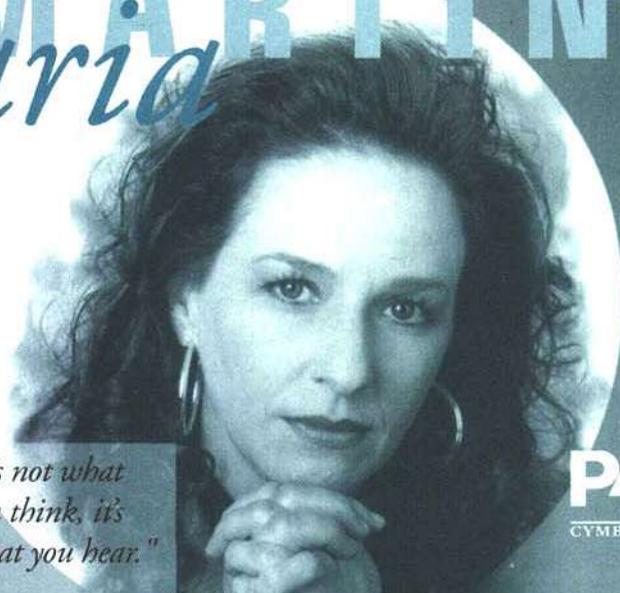
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AUTHOR /
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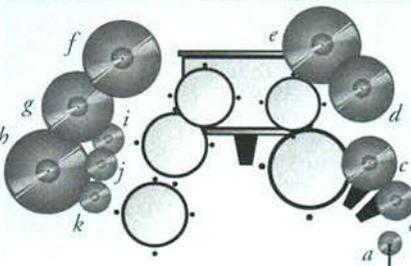
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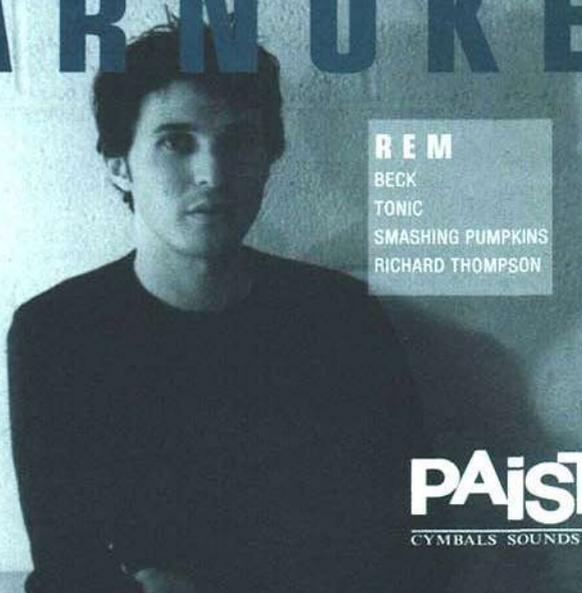
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Lisra Wales

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 Studio: **Megaphon, Sydney, Australia**
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 Artists: **James Muller (gtr), Daryl Pratt (vibes), Leom Gaer (bs), Jim Cox (organ, piano)**

With the release of *Scream*, Chad Wackerman proves that drummers make the best producers. Maybe it has something to do with sitting at the back watching others go about their business. "Drummers think in terms of the big picture," suggests Wackerman. "All good

drummers are producers in the sense that they have the power to make a chorus really exciting, and the band goes with them."

Wackerman's tenure with Frank Zappa gave him an appreciation for diverse musical styles, many of which appear on *Scream*. In fact, Chad pays homage to Zappa on

"Holland," a wistful ballad.

While occasionally an overdriven rock guitar rears its head, what distinguishes this album from fusion are the meticulously crafted compositions. Instead of three-chord vamps, we get meaningful transitions, underpinned by vibraphone and clever key-

boards. Odd time signatures breeze by, so smooth you'd swear they were in 4/4.

The studio, Chad says, was "fairly open-sounding but not very reverberant. It had a pretty high ceiling and a wood floor." The players had good eye contact. The guitar amp went into an iso-booth; the bass player went direct.

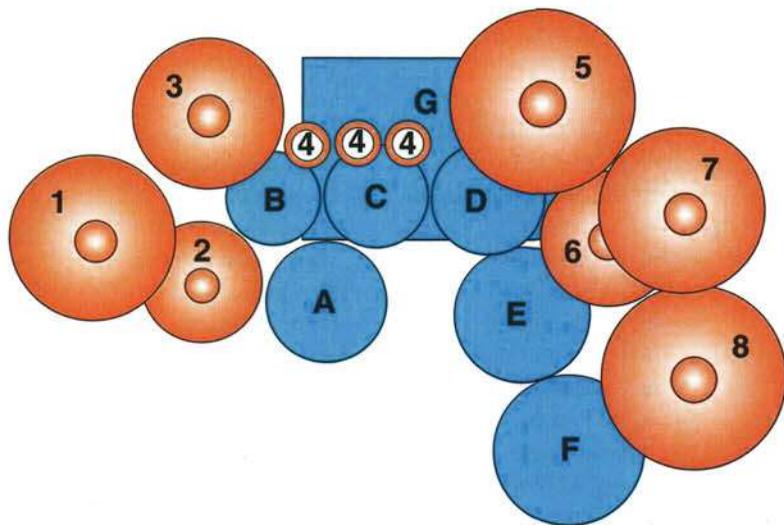
Inside Scoop: Wackerman describes the mix as "somewhere between rock and jazz." It is a rare balance: killer bottom end, toms with true pitch and presence, and crystalline highs from his Paiste cymbals. You can check out the bass drum "solo-ed" on the song "Looking In": note the snappy attack and blossoming lows.

Chad explains, "I tune the bass drum really low but not flappy. I get a lower fundamental note when I use Evans EQ1 heads. In the mix, it's a matter of 'negotiating' between bass drum and bass guitar, seeing how much low end you can get away with on the kick drum."

The overheads are the key, advises Chad: "I'm not a big fan of using a separate hi-hat mic'. A decent drummer mixes his drums pretty well acoustically. You get more air and openness in the sound if you're featuring the overheads more than the close mic's. We also used a pair of ambient mic's, Neuman U87s, placed on the floor eight feet from the kit."

T. Bruce Wittet

SESSION GEAR



DRUMS: DW

- A. 5x13 wood snare drum
- B. 7x8 tom
- C. 8x10 tom
- D. 9x12 tom
- E. 11x14 tom
- F. 14x16 tom
- G. 18x22 bass drum

CYMBALS: Paiste

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- 3. 16" Fast crash
- 4. Cup Chimes (three)
- 5. 20" Signature crash/ride
- 6. 14" Traditional hi-hats
(on remote pedal)
- 7. 18" Fast crash
- 8. 20" Thin China

HEADS: Evans clear EQ1 batter (with internal ring removed) on bass drum, EQS (with hole) on front; G1 coated on top of snare and toms, G1 clear on bottom of toms.

MICROPHONES: AKGD 112 on bass drum, Shure SM57 on snare drum, Sennheiser 421s on toms, AKG 451s for overheads, two Neuman U87s as distant mic's.

STICKS: Vic Firth Chad Wackerman Signature model in honey hickory.

TUNING & APPROACH: Medium head tension. No muffling except EQ Pad barely touching kick drum head. Snare drum backbeats were rimshots.

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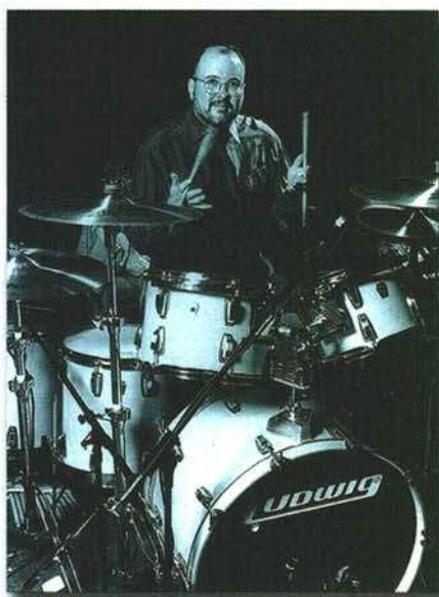
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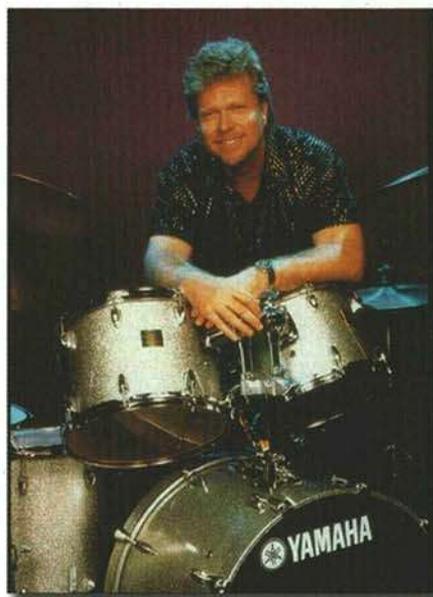
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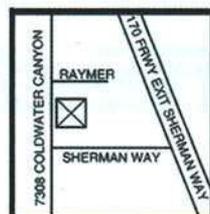
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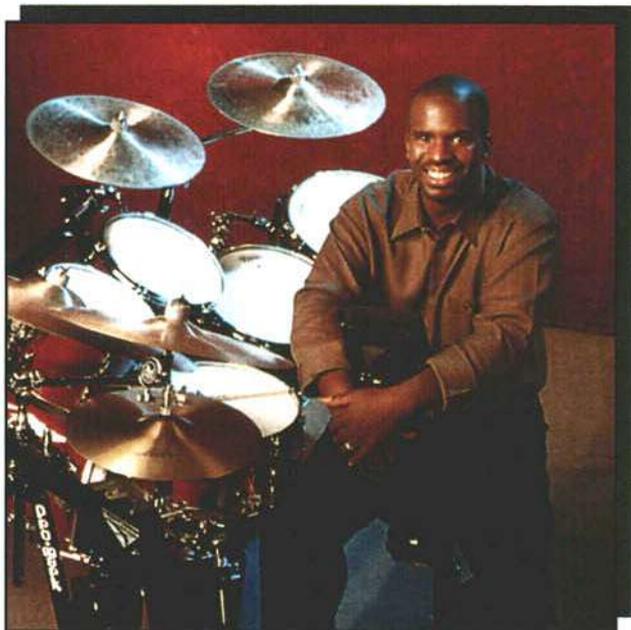
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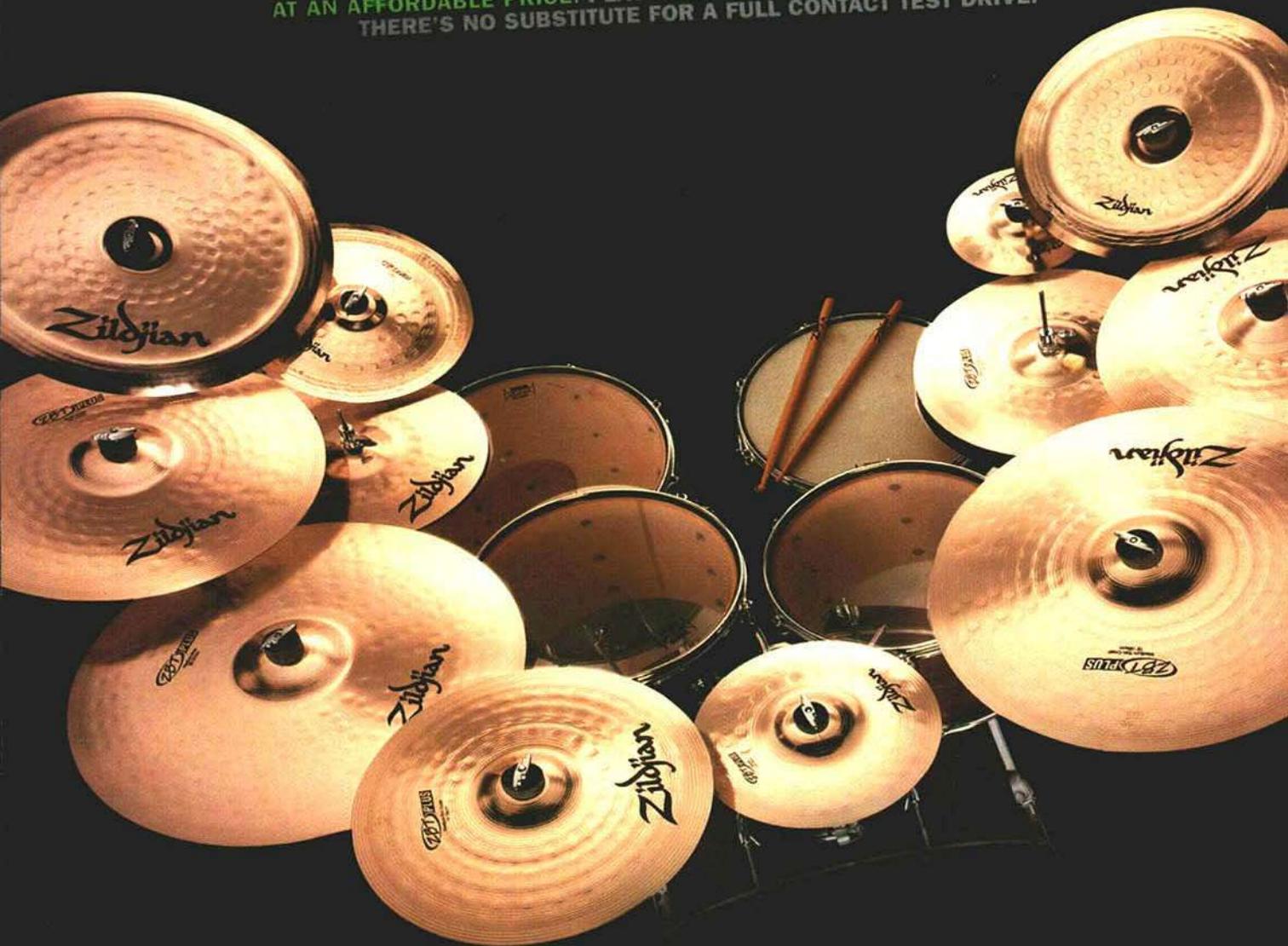
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