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# DRUMMER

The World's Most Widely Read Drum Magazine

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March 2001

WIN MD'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY  
SPECIAL EDITION DRUMSET

**DAVE WECKL**  
**TRANSITION TIME**

**GINGER  
FISH**  
**MANSON**  
**REFLECTIONS**



**MAX ROACH**  
**STYLE &**  
**ANALYSIS**

**BASS ON**  
**DRUMS:**  
**JOHN PATITUCCI**

**VIRGIL DONATI**  
**MONSTER**  
**CHART!**

**TABLA TITAN**  
**ZAKIR HUSSAIN**  
**FREE JAZZ LEGEND**  
**HAN BENNINK**

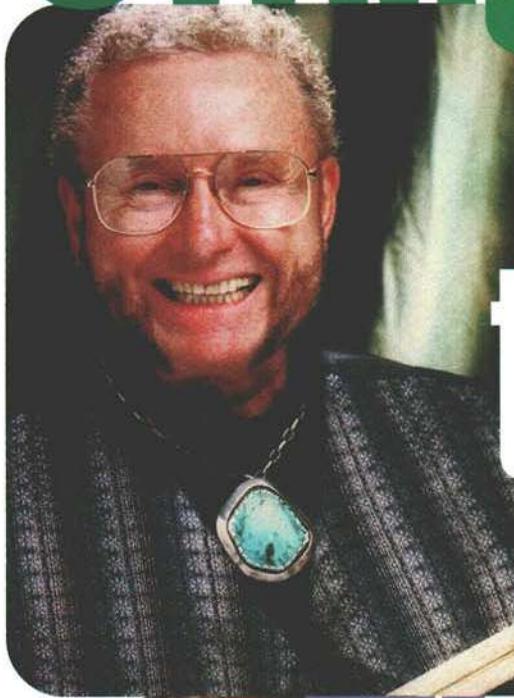
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# Modern Drummer Radio Comes Alive

Last summer I was lucky enough to be invited to join the staff here at *MD*, the magazine I had read since I was thirteen years old. Stewart Copeland, October 1982 was the first issue I read, and I was hooked right away. I had the drumming bug bad back then, and apparently I've yet to recover from it. I am no highfalutin editor in the magazine industry—I'm truly just a drummer who feels very lucky to be a part of this publication!

Therefore, it gives me great pleasure to be able to announce the launch of Modern Drummer Radio. Surf to [www.moderndrummer.com](http://www.moderndrummer.com), click on the MD Radio icon, and you'll be listening to the first radio station in history programmed by drummers *for* drummers.

Our goal with MD Radio is to literally bring every monthly issue of *Modern Drummer* to life. You will now be able to hear the featured drummers we write about—and the legendary drummers who have been covered since day one at *MD*—in

their element. Rather than just reading words about them, you'll hear these drummers play their music. Wherever you see the  image at the heading of an *MD* column or feature, you know you'll be able to hear that drummer on MD Radio. Twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year.

Of course, just like the magazine, MD Radio will constantly evolve, with our setlist reprogrammed on a monthly basis. Drummers in feature articles or in *Update* will be put into "heavy" rotation, most of the albums covered in *Critique* will be represented with cuts in "medium" rotation, and a host of Editor's Picks will play in "light" rotation. These Editor's Picks will feature tracks by Buddy Rich, Tony Williams, and John Bonham—and about a hundred other drummerq that you read about every month in these pages.

Our goal with MD Radio is simply to give you one place to hear the best drumming performances of all time, right next to the premiere drumming performances of today.

At any given time, you could hear a legendary Elvin Jones track, followed by a roaring Dave Grohl song, next to a classic Charlie Watts track, followed by a wild Bill Bruford track, and then a....well, you get the picture. Great drumming, and nothing but.

We should also mention that this is the first of many steps aimed at improving our Web site. We've been steadily chipping away at [www.moderndrummer.com](http://www.moderndrummer.com) for the past few months, so stay tuned for continued developments at MD Online.

We hope you enjoy the only radio station in the world programmed just for you. So go get the sound at [www.moderndrummer.com](http://www.moderndrummer.com)!



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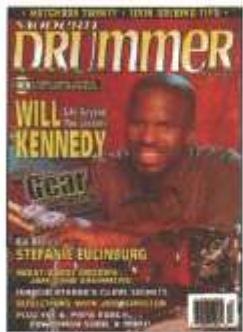
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**WILL KENNEDY**

Thanks for your December 2000 cover story on Will Kennedy. It was great to hear Will talk about his drumming experience, and also to get a feel for his spiritual beliefs.

He's a very knowledgeable guy, eager to share his own inspiration and motivation with others.

You are always trying to do a wide variety of drumming articles. There are a lot of us Christian drummers out here, playing in church and doing weekend-warrior work with Christian bands. Don't forget us.

Chip May  
via Internet

**STEFANIE EULINBURG**

I commend you on a wonderful interview with Stefanie Eulinburg in the December issue. I have seen Stefanie twice with Kid Rock. She is an outstanding drummer who deserves to be recognized for her work.

You should also consider presenting features on Martina Axen of Drain STH and Samantha Maloney of Hole/Motley Crue. Both are amazing talents who should also be recognized.

Eric Michaels  
via Internet

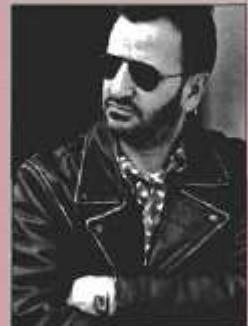
**JAM BAND DRUMMERS**

I just finished the article on drummers in "jam bands" presented in your December issue. It's nice to know that there are bands out there still committed to playing music. It seems that most music today is strictly for commerce. I'm thirty-seven, and I remember when "commercial bands" always had extemporaneous jams on their live albums. I miss that. I can't speak for anyone else, but I certainly feel

**Congrats From Ringo**

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate *Modern Drummer* in celebration of your 25th Anniversary. Best of luck for the next twenty-five years. Drumming is my madness, and I also offer congratulations to all of the winners named in your January 2001 issue as the Top 25 Drummers Of All Time. Love to all.

Ringo Starr  
Los Angeles, CA



disenfranchised by the current crop of popular music. And it isn't my age! When I put on Kansas's *Two For The Show* CD, some twenty years after it was recorded, I still get the same buzz I did back then. I hope these jam bands represent a trend towards the future.

William Melton  
Indianapolis, IN

**PAUL DOUCETTE**

I can't thank you enough for your December 2000 feature on Matchbox Twenty's Paul Doucette. I'm a sixteen-year-old female drummer who has been playing for four years. Paul not only inspired me to start drumming, but his talent, style, and dedication are what continue to inspire me to play in a musical field that is—unfortunately but obviously—dominated by males. Not only was the article extremely well written, it portrayed Paul for everything that he is—smart, talented, inventive, creative, and daring—and not someone who thinks fame is the ultimate level of success.

Paul is successful on many levels. The fact that his band has sold in excess of thirteen million records makes me smile. There is something very right with the music industry if true talent and hard work can send a group of five normal guys to the top of the charts.

Congratulations to Paul for keeping his

head on his shoulders. And congratulations to *Modern Drummer* for this outstanding profile.

Davie Jennifer Kaufmann  
New York, NY

**JEFF'S REFLECTIONS**

Thanks to Robyn Flans for the terrific *Reflections* interview with Jeff Hamilton in your December 2000 issue. It underscores the fact that world-class drummers do not happen overnight. Master drummers like Jeff engage in an intensive study and appreciation of the music, the instrument, and the great artists who have played before. This, in turn, forms the dynamic core through which their talent, soul, and personality continuously filter and evolve. Such drummers are never completely satisfied, and are always striving to learn. That has definitely been the case with Jeff, as anyone who's followed his career or heard him play in any recent setting can attest.

It's my hope that Jeff might become a regular contributor to *MD* in future issues. I'd love for him to describe the lateral-brush-stroke technique underlying his incredible, flowing brush sound, and the one-stroke/three-bounce sticking technique that swings his marvelous groove.

Skip Wallach  
Phoenix, AZ

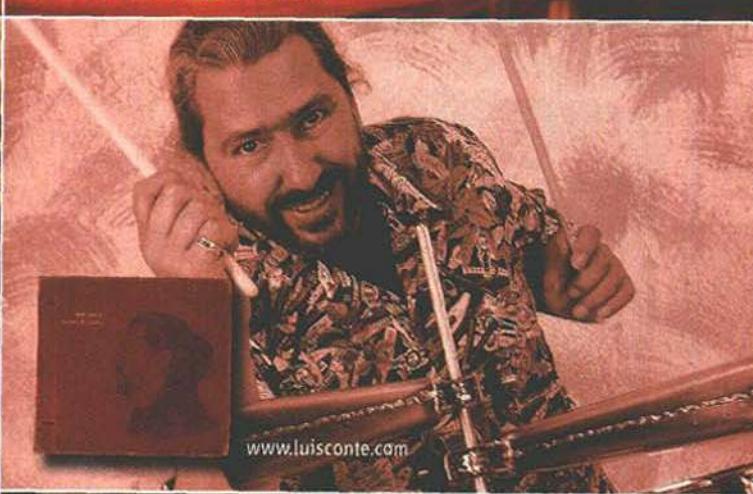
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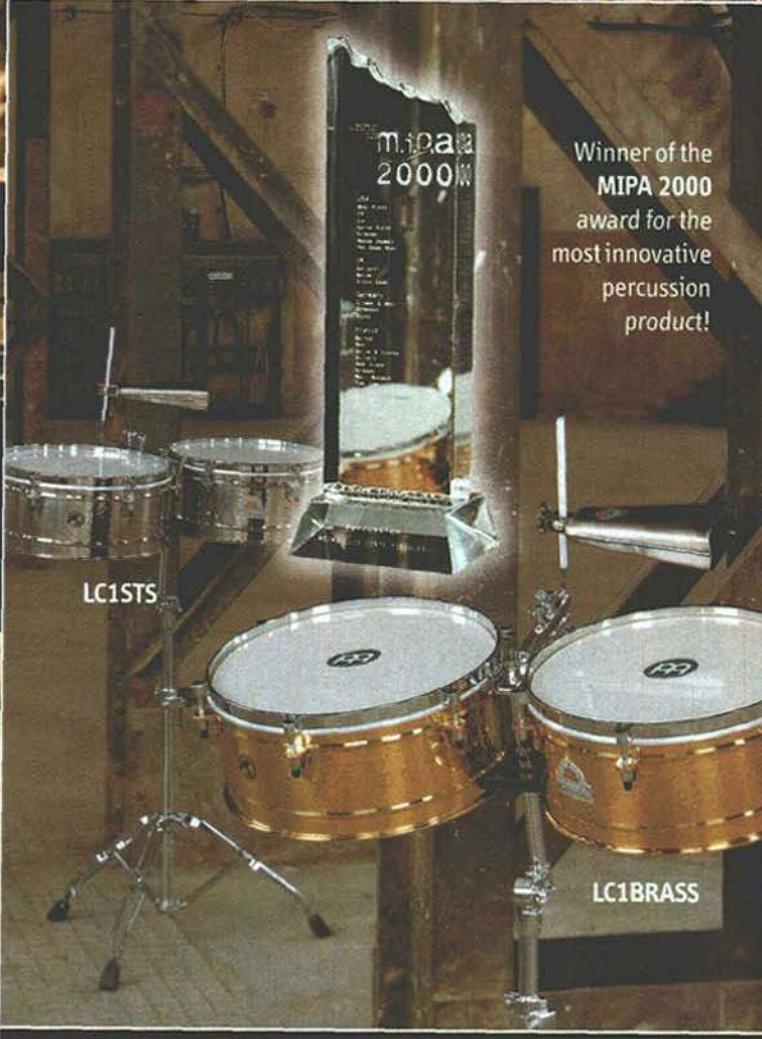
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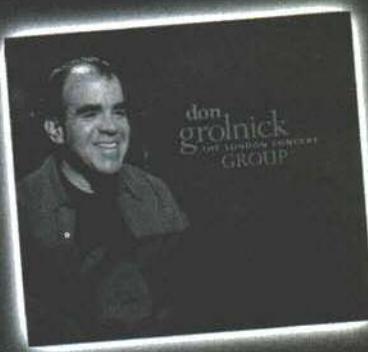
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## PLAY-ALONG TRACKS

I'd like to add to the suggestions for sources of "play-along tracks" mentioned in the December 2000 *It's Questionable* department. To get the music I want to play along with, I download MIDI files, delete the drums, and record the files to CD. I use Musicrobot.com to search for the songs I want. There are many versions out there, so I listen to several to find the quality I want.

Next I load the MIDI file into Cakewalk Express, a MIDI editor/composer. There are many versions and types of MIDI editors available for downloading as shareware or freeware. I use the editor to mute the drums from the file, and to create a wave file that can be recorded to cassette or CD. The editor can also be used to change the tempo.

This is a simple process, and the cost is limited to the recording media. But best of all is that I can play along with songs I like.

Gary L. Brown  
via Internet

## THE CHECKLIST



Thanks for the November 2000 *Jobbing Drummer* article about using a checklist. How many times have I walked out the door, driven halfway to the gig (and the point of no return), and only then realized that I forgot one small but crucial piece of gear. (And it's not like they carry Speed Kings at QuikTrip.)

One item that I think is pretty crucial for a drummer was left off the suggested list: a flashlight. Let's face it, we're usually back in the depths of a dark stage or in a dark corner of a room. And if we're on a riser, sometimes we can't see the back edges when it's break time. Then, break time becomes just that: We break something when we fall!

Bill Hamm  
St. Louis, MO



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## Jeff Hamilton's Kit And Practice Tips

**Q** The latest Clayton-Hamilton Big Band CD, *Shout Me Out*, is the best record I've heard in years. And your playing on it is inspirational. I'd like to know the specific sizes and models of your cymbals, the sizes of your drums, and the heads you used. Thanks a lot.

Jeff Howe  
via Internet

**Q** I'm an intermediate drummer who's kind of leaning towards the jazz end of the spectrum. I have the basic books, like *Syncopation* and *Stick Control*. They're great for developing technique, but they don't focus on jazz playing per se. I only have one hour a day, so how should I divide my practicing time?

Zeke  
via Internet

**A** First, to Jeff: Thanks...you have excellent taste! Seriously, the cymbals on *Shout Me Out* are The Hammer series by the Bosphorus Cymbal Company. They are completely hand-hammered, including the bell and the overall shape. I play a 22" with

three rivets and a 20" without rivets—both of which I use for riding and crashing. My 14" hi-hats are also from the Hammer series. I also play a 1976 Wuhan China with three rivets.

My drums are by Remo, and include a 5 1/2x14 snare, an 8x12 mounted tom, and a 14x14 floor tom. I play a 14x18 bass drum with small groups, but for the CHJO I use a 14x20. The heads are Fiberskyn FD 3 on all batters and clear Ambassadors on the bottoms. The bass drum has a normal FD 3 on the front and back. I have a thin felt strip on the inside of the batter of the bass drum, for just the slightest amount of muffling. Of course, none of my instruments would sound as good without my Regal Tip Jeff Hamilton sticks and brushes! Good luck with your sound, Jeff, and keep Swingin'!

Zeke, in response to your question about how much time should be spent practicing jazz drumming, I'd like to suggest a different angle for you to consider. The reason you started playing music is because you loved it. Let the music you love decide how much you practice. If a certain CD can't find its way out of your player, that's the



CD you should be playing to and transcribing. Create your own "books" by transcribing. This way, you'll be learning what you love most. I get a kick out of revisiting my old transcriptions of Max Roach, Shelly Manne, and Mel Lewis, to name only a few. It's like bumping into old friends.

Building good hands so that you're able to play the music you like is another thing. The two books you mentioned are great for this, so get with a good "hands" teacher who can help you make the most of them. Good luck.

## Alan White In a Tiled Room

**Q** I attended my first Yes concert in 1975, and my most recent was the *Masterworks* tour this past summer. I can't put into words how wonderful it was to hear songs like "Gates Of Delirium" and "Ritual" performed live again. Playing that music live must be an incredible experience for you and the band.

My questions concern *Tales From Topographic Oceans*. At the MD Festival some years ago you mentioned that the drums were surrounded by tile (similar to in a bathroom) in order to achieve a certain sound. But you indicated that you didn't actually achieve the desired effect. I always thought the drums sounded especially crisp on *Tales*. What effect were you looking for that you didn't get?

My next question is about the cymbal (at least I think it's a cymbal) that you use for accents at the beginning of the drum section in "Ritual." When you hit that cymbal, you don't hit the bass drum. I've

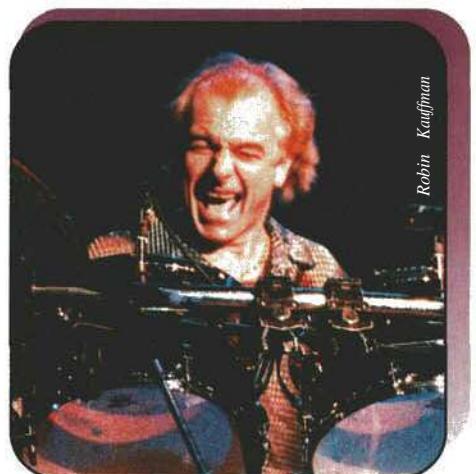
never heard that sound anywhere else. When I saw you on the *Masterworks* tour, that cymbal seemed to be located on the left side of your kit, just above the hi-hat. Would you please tell me what it is?

Finally, please tell me that a CD from the *Masterworks* tour will be released!

Eric Byrnes  
via Internet

**A** Thank you for your interest in our music. When you heard me refer to the "tiled room," I was referring to a room built for vocals. I had thought this might be an interesting sound for drums, but our experiments did not yield the desired effect. Later we were able to achieve a bright, attack-y drum sound with plenty of low-end frequencies by testing different locations in the studio, a variety of microphone configurations, and equalization on the recording desk.

In reference to your second question, the



Robin Kaufman

cymbal on the beginning of "Ritual" was a 20" inverted China, made by Zildjian. Played along with it was a wafer-thin metal plate, which gave the cymbal another texture and a unique sound.

And yes, a digitally mastered CD recorded during the *Masterworks* tour is slated for release in the near future.

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# Gettin' Chinese With Zach Danziger

**Q** What was your cymbal setup on Wayne Krantz's recording *Long To Be Loose*? That CD featured one of the best-documented China-cymbal sounds I've heard—not to mention some of the best drumming.

Ermilio Molina  
South Coast Metro, CA

**A** I really appreciate the kind words. I'm not exactly sure about every cymbal that I used on that recording, but I'll give it a whirl. The China cymbal that you mentioned was definitely a 14" Zildjian K mini

China. (I gotta find that cymbal again.) One of the crashes I used was a Zildjian 17" K Dark thin crash. I believe the ride was an early prototype version of what is now the 20" K Custom Light. It's nice to know that people have been exposed to Wayne's CDs. He's one of my favorites.

These days with my band, Boomish, I tend to gravitate towards a more unorthodox setup that includes many cymbals from Zildjian's Re-Mix line, along with models like the Oriental Crash Of Doom. You can find out more about this at [www.boomish.net](http://www.boomish.net).



## Repeat Bar

A Classic Quote  
From MD's Past

"I've been collecting drums and cymbals for years, playing around with different setups, to the point where I probably have twenty different drumsets. When I get money, I spend it on drums."

—Green Day's Tre Cool, May '98

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](mailto: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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## Zildjian Logo History

**Q** Can you tell me what the half moon and the star that Zildjian imprints on their K cymbals represent, and what the squiggly lines (as imprinted on the back of a classic black Zildjian T-shirt) stand for?

Chris Rehorst  
via Internet

**A** The half moon and star are a graphic allusion to Zildjian's Armenian Turkish heritage. Those symbols have been involved in the political symbolism of the people of that part of the world for centuries.

According to Zildjian's director of education, John King, the "squiggly writing" on the Avedis Zildjian trademark is a representation in Armenian (though evidently slightly misspelled) of "Avedis Zildjian Company." In the K Zildjian logo it is "Kerope Zildjian Company."

The literal translation of the Armenian word "Zildjian" breaks down as follows: "Zil" means "cymbal" or "bell," "dj" means "maker," and "ian" means "son of." So the literal translation is: "son of the cymbal maker." In ancient times tradesmen were traditionally given the name of their trade. So in this case the "Zildjian" name came to represent the Zildjian manufacturing company, as well as the members of the actual Zildjian family.

## Avoiding Cramps

**Q** I've been playing in a band called Defiance Of Authority for a few years now, and we're starting to get somewhere. For example, we played on the *Van's Warped* tour this past summer. Unfortunately, during our sets my wrists cramp up. It's really hard for me to keep playing and not mess up. I practice a ton, but I still get the cramps. Do you have any advice?

Rob  
via Internet

**A** Cramps tend to occur for one or both of two reasons. The first is insufficient warm-up before heavy use of muscles, and the consequent lack of blood flow to those muscles. The second is dehydration.

Your muscles need a chance to "work up" to the intense stress that a hard rock set requires of them. Play on a pad, do some

stretches, and generally get loose before you sit down to wail. (This includes before a practice session or band rehearsal.) Also, try to remain as relaxed as possible during your set. Don't grip the sticks any harder than absolutely necessary. And be sure you're using sticks that do their fair share of the work (not too small and light) without actually adding to your strain (not too big and heavy, either). You don't want to do anything that will impede circulation to your muscles, and that includes over-tensing the muscles themselves.

To combat dehydration, drink plenty of water or sports drinks over several hours prior to a set (or practice), not just during the set itself. All the cells in your body need to be fully hydrated in order to function properly. (Imagine how shriveled the leaves of a plant look when that plant hasn't been watered in several days.) Swigging water during the set is way too late. Although it might replace the fluids you lose while you're playing, it can't prevent cramps if you came into the set already dehydrated.

## What's An X-Hat?

**Q** I'm a beginning drummer from Malaysia. I've only been playing for a year and a half, and I'm self-taught. I've heard that an X-hat is a very useful device for double-bass drummers. What exactly is an X-hat, and what is its purpose on the drumset?

Jed Koh-Wee Seang  
via Internet

**A** An "X-hat" is Tama's brand name for a device known more generally as an "auxiliary" hi-hat. It's a remotely mounted, closed hi-hat used for a riding source as an alternative to the traditional hi-hat. It cannot be opened and closed in the way that a cable remote hi-hat can. It can only be adjusted by its clutch to be as closed or open-sounding as the drummer desires.

An auxiliary hi-hat is very useful when a double-bass drummer wants to use both feet on the bass drum pedals and still ride on a closed hi-hat. A drop clutch can be used on the standard hi-hat for the same purpose, but the auxiliary hi-hat has the added advantage of being able to be placed elsewhere on the kit, such as on the same side as the ride cymbal. It can also be

adjusted to close more tightly than most drop clutches can be closed.

## Vintage Rogers Drums

**Q** I recently purchased a Rogers Holiday drumset from a friend, who got it from someone else. It includes a 14x20 bass drum, a 9x13 rack tom, and a 16x16 floor tom, with reinforcing rings in all the drums. The drums were made in the US, and they have a gray finish on the inside.

I want to fix up these drums and use them, but I thought I should learn a bit about them before I went ahead with the job. There are going to be some holes in the drums, which I don't know how to fill (or if I should fill them at all). I've also noticed that the bearing edges are sort of rough-looking. The mounts and hardware are really ancient as well. Any help you could give me would be greatly appreciated.

Nick Simon  
via Internet

**A** MD's drum historian, Harry Cangany, replies, "At this point in time, no other brand is held in the esteem among collectors that Rogers is. They were ahead of their time, and weren't as appreciated then as they are now. There are lots of articles on the company. Go to my Web site at [www.drumcenter.com](http://www.drumcenter.com) and click on the Gallery Of Stories, or visit the Forum at the same address. Rob Cook also has a wonderful book out on Rogers.

"Refinishing your drums may be the worst thing you can do to them or to yourself. All old drums have value, and most times that value is destroyed when an owner chooses to change or upgrade them. I've argued about this for years with owners who want immediate gratification, and so make changes that they come to regret later.

"Vintage drums that have been modified are usually worth no more than half of what they might be if left unchanged. And if you botch the job, they'll be worth even less. My suggestion is: If the drums, as they are now, do not suit your purposes, trade them to get what you do want. I'll be happy to help put you in touch with someone who appreciates Rogers drums and might buy yours in their present condition.

"Finally, if you do decide to go ahead



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with any changes, they should be done by a competent repair/restoration facility. A number of those advertise in *MD*. You can also write to me for more details, in care of *MD*."

## Hot Cymbals

I've only been playing the drums for eight months. I've found that your magazine is very informative. You've filled me in on a lot of things that I should know about drumming. But I do have a specific question. I have my drumkit set up

in my garage. There are two windows just above it, through which the sunlight can come in and onto the kit. Can that sunlight affect the quality of my cymbals?

James Hynds  
via Internet

**A** Normal sunlight should not affect the look or sound of your cymbals. However, extreme heat buildup from sunlight can cause wrapped drum finishes to bubble or buckle, and can cause lacquer finishes to fade or discolor. We suggest

that you cover your kit with a sheet or blanket to protect it when you're not playing it.

## Pearl World Series Drums

**Q** I'd like some background on the Pearl World drumkit series. Is it an older series that's been discontinued?

Also, I purchased a new Pearl Export Select kit a few weeks ago. I think they sound great, but are they just for beginners, or can they be used for performing?

Erik Olsson  
Sweden, via Internet

**A** Pearl product specialist Gene Okamoto replies, "Thanks for choosing Pearl, Erik. The World Series is an older series, related to the current Session Series. Here's the history: The DX 7300 Series (covered finish) and the DLX 7500 Series (lacquered finish) were introduced in 1984. They featured 7-ply shells: birch (outside), mahogany (middle), and lamin (inside) for superb sound with fantastic low-end punch. Though they were priced affordably, they nevertheless featured high-end components such as double-braced hardware, SuperHoops, and Remo Pinstripe heads.

In 1986, the DX/DLX shared the spotlight with a similar but lower-priced series called the WX/WLX World Series. In 1987, the DX/DLX were discontinued and replaced completely by the WX/WLX. In 1992, the WX/WLX became the SLX Prestige Session Elite. In 1994, the SLX became the SPX Prestige Session and SX Session Series. And finally, in 1997, the SPX/SX became the current SRX Prestige Session Select.

From 1997 to 1998, the DX Session (covered finishes) and DLX Prestige Session (lacquer finishes) made a brief comeback. They featured 7-ply shells: maple (outside), mahogany (middle), and maple (inside). I personally think these drums were (are) fabulous for live and recording, thanks to their low-end punch and presence.

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Fuel's

# KM

kevin miller

Owning The Moment



Lisa Wales

Loyal fans can definitely make a band feel welcome—especially in the case of Kevin Miller and his band Fuel. When the group was out searching for a place to conduct their pre-production rehearsals, a fan left his house in the band's hands for two months so they could take care of business.

"He left his dogs and a refrigerator stocked full of food," Miller says of the gracious fan, from a tour stop in Tucson, Arizona. "So we just set up a mini-studio in his basement and went to work."

Thanks in large part to the above-mentioned individual, Miller and his bandmates were able to hone their album's material so well during rehearsals that

there really wasn't much more work ahead for them when they went to New York for the recording of *Something Like Human* on Sony/Epic. "Before I even walked into the studio I knew what to do," Miller says. "We really had a huge heads-up on what was going on."

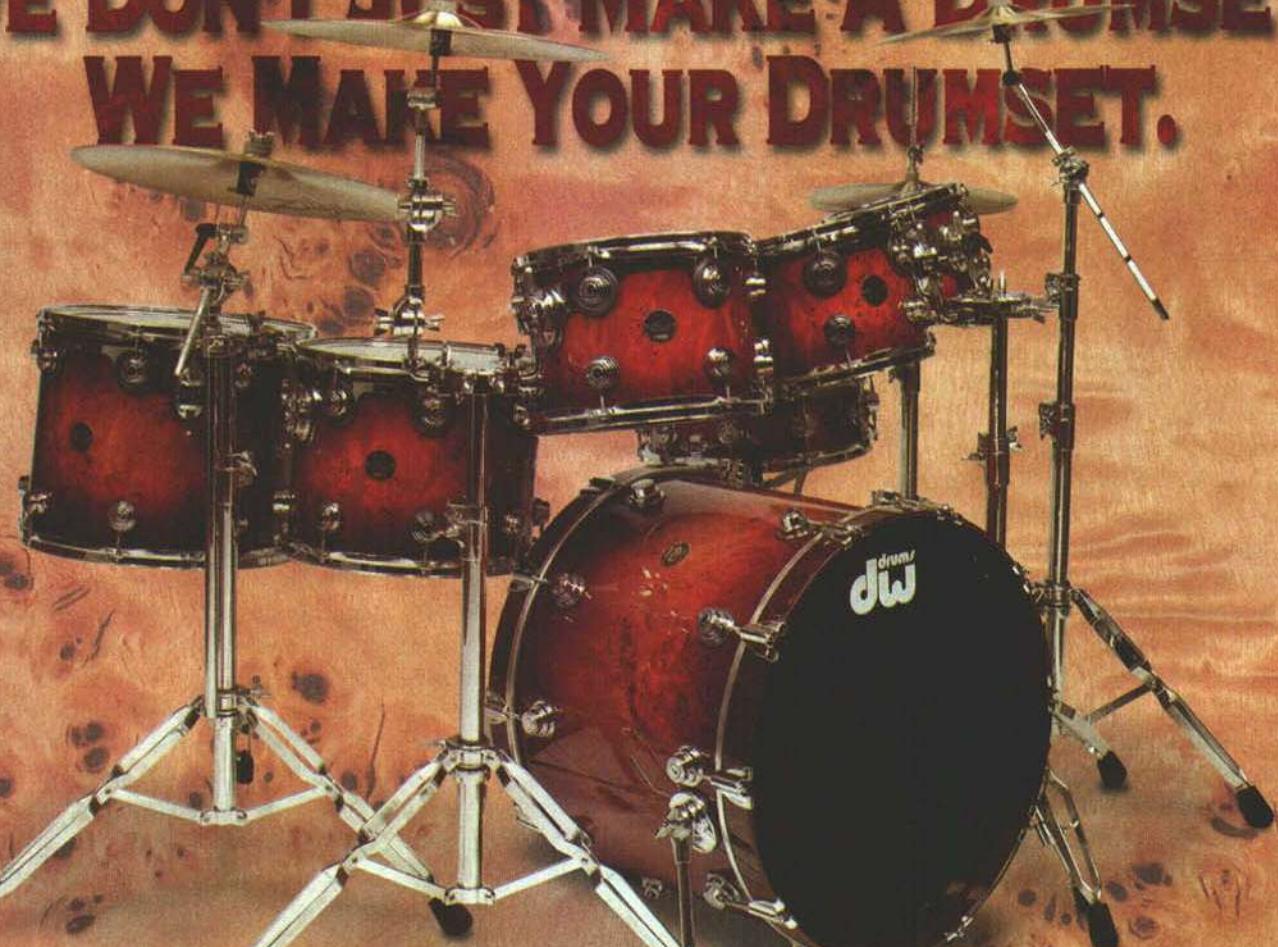
Working closely with producer Ben Grosse, Miller brought in three kits for the recording and spliced together the various sounds, occasionally using all three within the course of one song. "For example, on the verses and choruses we'd use one kit, and then we'd have another kit for the bridge," Miller explains. "They're all Premier kits. Two of them are pretty basic

main kits, and the other one has a 20" kick drum with two full heads, giving it a big, boomy tone—kind of like those Bonham recordings. Ben just asked me what I liked, and I told him, 'a warm, punchy kit.'"

All of the months spent in the studio writing and rehearsing have admittedly made Miller a tad rusty when it comes to playing live and touring. "It's been eight months," he says. "It always takes a little while to get back into the swing of things. I left the studio thinking, This is harder than I thought. But playing shows isn't as bad, as I'm a little more hazardous live. Playing live is my chance to own the moment."

Waleed Rashidi

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# Scott Rockenfield

**A**lthough progressive metal pioneers Queensryche are not the household name they were a few short years ago, drummer Scott Rockenfield has continued to build on his success as a player/composer/producer. Queensryche recently finished an extensive world tour with metal monsters Iron Maiden, in support of both bands' most recent recordings. Queensryche's current release, *Q2K* (Anthem), along with a greatest-hits release (Virgin), have propelled the seventeen-year-old band into the new millennium with a fiery new attitude. "We try to keep our sound as fresh and alive as possible, pushing ourselves musically and sonically," says Rockenfield. "I feel that we sound very contemporary right now."

In regards to the audience response to the recent QR tour with Iron Maiden, Scott states, "Once a metal fan, always a metal fan. Only now they're bringing their eighteen-, nineteen-, and twenty-year-old kids with them. It's a whole new generation ready to have fun and enjoy good music."

Queensryche has been on the road for eleven months solid and soon will be writing and recording the next QR release, which will hopefully be available sometime

in early spring 2001. Then it will be back on the road for a summer tour.

Rockenfield says that his sound and setup over the past seventeen years have remained somewhat the same, only slightly condensed and refined. "I feel that having less gear to worry about can actually give you more to work with," the drummer says. "When it comes to practicing, I spend most of my time working on my composing. Practicing drums has never been of much interest to me. I have other projects that I'm busy with that require my composing chops."

Those projects include an instrumental album with multi-instrumentalist/composer Paul Speer. Their current soundscape production, *Hell's Canyon* (Rainstorm), finds Scott at the helm of his state-of-the-art recording studio. "*Hell's Canyon* was recorded entirely on Pro Tools 24," he says. "We both own extensive state-of-the-art recording studios, which are centered around each of our Pro Tools 24 systems. I do all of my own drum tuning and Paul does most of the engineering."

"I'm a fan of many different styles of music," Scott continues, "but my main interest lies within film music. In fact, I'm cur-

rently in negotiations to score some films. I'm also going to be composing and recording the next QR release soon. Oh, and tomorrow I have to pick up my four-year-old daughter from school, take my nine-year-old son to his practice, and care for my nine-month-old son. And if I have any time left after all this, I'll spend some private time—very late at night—with my beautiful and very understanding wife!"

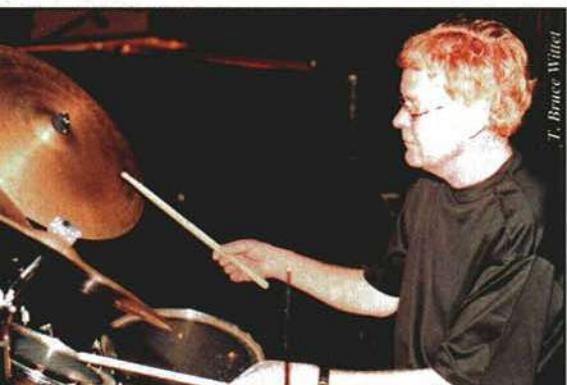
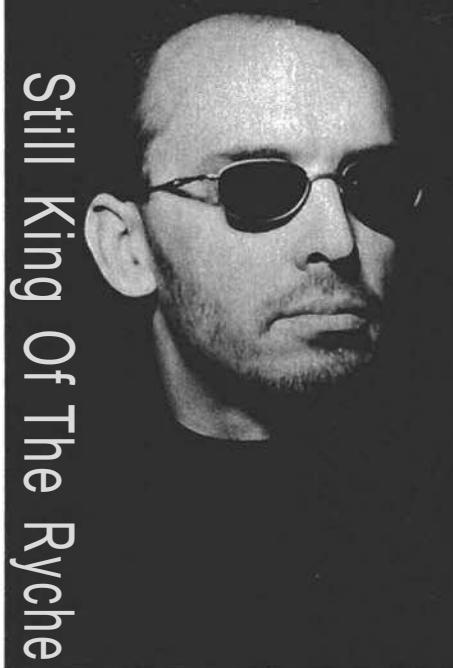
Mike Haid

## Jon Christensen Norwegian Minister of Sports

**S**top laughing! Just because Jon Christensen's drumming has become synonymous with "the ECM sound," the dreamy jazz textures he helped create for that German record label, you jump to the conclusion that he can't kick a ball around a field? Turns out Jon *does* care a good deal about sports. And it turns out that Jon's wife is, in fact, the cultural minister of Norway.

"A photographer came to our house," Christensen recalls, "and took a picture of me drinking a cold beer and watching sports on TV. The article joked that I was the sports minister of Norway!" It's certainly another side of the drummer, who, on a recent tour with pianist Bobo Stensen, was all over his drumset with all sorts of implements, including a kitchen scouring brush.

Christensen's got definite views on percussion. Basically, if you want the job done properly, you do it yourself. "Since most percussionists have paid good money for all sorts of instruments," he explains, "they feel compelled to use them all the time. They don't leave any space. For me, music is very much based on pulses. When you have a percussionist banging away all the time, it's very hard to play drums."



## Sports

Clatter is definitely not part of the ECM sound. The mic's go in special places—a couple of Crown PZMs on the floor adjacent to the bass drum, for example. The natural balance we hear on recent albums by Thomas Stanko and Bobo Stensen is no accident. Nor is the cymbal sound, a product of Christensen's cherished Turkish K 22" ride, as heavy as a doorstop.

When he's not recording, Jon's off to continental Europe and occasionally America. And sports are never far behind, he confirms. "There's a weeklong festival in Scandinavia where we play soccer matches. Instead of water, if somebody gets thirsty, it's beer and schnapps. Around ten years ago, Elvin Jones was involved. He was the referee. He didn't know anything about the sport, but it was nice to have him out there, running around in short pants and a hat!"

T. Bruce Wittet

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# Fates Warning's Mark Zonder West Coast Disconnect

**T**here are several cool things about the recording of the new Fates Warning release, *Disconnected*," says drummer Mark Zonder. "For me, one of the best things was being able to record my drum parts in my own studio. I practiced a lot for this record, and in doing so I was able to record my parts in two and a half days."

Another cool thing that Zonder is excited about is that drummer Dave Weckl recorded *his* new record at Zonder's studio, Frankie's Hideaway, and was helpful in the recording of Zonder's drums. "Dave had some great input on the recording process," Mark says. "He helped me with ideas about tuning and heads. He also let me use some of his mic's, which he recommended for certain sounds."

Zonder played his tracks on a small four-piece GMS kit that he's been using for several months, which includes a 20"

kick drum, a 10" rack tom, and a 13" floor tom. Another change for Zonder is that he played the whole record with matched grip as opposed to his typical traditional grip. "I used to play about ninety-nine percent traditional grip," he says. "Matched grip has opened me up to some different things. I'm really getting comfortable playing ghost notes, paradiddles, and complicated stickings with it."

Zonder is also in the process of moving to the East Coast after living in Los Angeles for twenty years. "I was really getting burned out doing the same thing every day in LA," Mark admits. "I'm moving to Long Island to try to get a new musical perspective and to get involved in some new side projects. My studio in LA basically runs itself, so I don't need to be here for that. It's time to find some new inspiration."

Mike Haid



Alex Soler



T.Bruce Wittet

## CARLOMAGNO ARAYA Ruben Blades' Energy Boost

**A**few years ago, if you were learning Latin drumset, Ruben Blades was required listening. The famous actor/singer had the vocal chops to bring authentic styles into pop. He also had the good sense to hire musicians who, at the drop of a hat, could turn *son* into *songo*.

When drummer Carlmagno Araya came on board, Ruben had a wider concept in mind, one that stretched from the Islands to mainland South America and beyond. It still had the uptown, slick licks, but it also emphasized a folkloric element.

The Costa Rican Araya is classically trained. "Matter of fact," he says, "I'm back in school, studying at the famed University of Miami for jazz performance on drumset. Big bands, small groups, fusion—I love all that. That's why I moved to Miami six years ago. I started playing Brazilian gigs and a lot of Latin music that I hadn't done in Costa Rica."

Carlo brings a more Brazilian approach

to Blades' music, but, he says, "As a rhythm section, we're not strictly South American players, straight-ahead salsa players, or straight-ahead jazz players. We just go for those sounds. Sometimes on stage I'll jump up from drumset and play percussion."

This proves a high point of Blades' show. It's a joyous moment of spontaneous breakdown that sees Carlmagno and his brother Ramses leap behind congas and bombo. "Ruben encourages us," says Carlo. "He wants us to have fun and be ourselves. Music is about now; you just do it."

Carlo's future plans are to keep studying and gigging around Miami. Last year, he toured America and Europe, stopping at the Montreux Jazz Festival. Everywhere he goes, he patiently observes and practices. "The great players develop their art through the years," he says. "You can do that too."

T. Bruce Wittet

# Paul Clarvis

## International Man Of Mysterious Rhythms

He's the percussion behind Austin Powers and James Bond movies—and such hits as *Sleepy Hollow*, *City Of Angels*, *The Mighty*, and *Notting Hill*. When we reached Paul Clarvis in London, the drummer was shagged out—recovering from a cold, that is. "I haven't been so ill since I got dysentery," he croaked, "which I got when I was in Syria a few years ago, checking out the music."

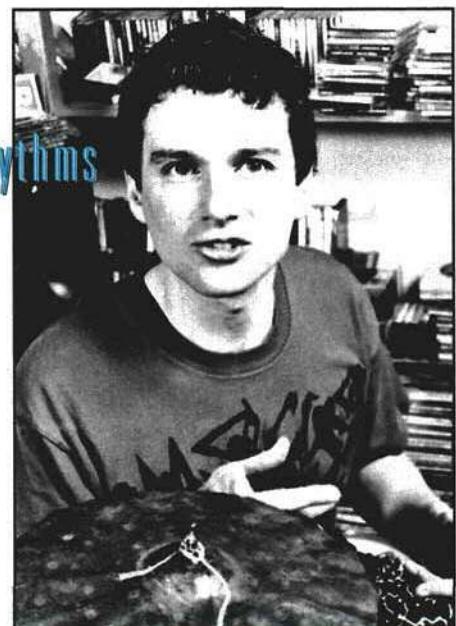
Clarvis doesn't play what most would consider "conventional" grooves. For example, On Henry Lowther's *Stillwaters LD.*, he rarely settles into more than four bars of time, often fluttering tastefully around drums, cymbals, and percussion. "All this comes from getting into the music, discovering what makes each style tick, and finding my own way into it," he explains. "I always memorize where the tune is going, because even if you know nothing about a style, if you phrase with the melody, you can make your way through."

Clarvis attended England's mighty Royal College Of Music, gaining the chops and

contacts that have taken him into the folds of many symphonic ensembles. "Being able to play with a conductor," Clarvis says, "is important for a drummer. You learn when to follow and keep things cradled. Often, if I play strong, the conductor will go with me."

Clarvis's jazz setup is a bizarre configuration that includes a Woolworth's department store bass drum, a wartime Leedy tom, and a collection of toys he loosely separates between metal and wood. "I hang bits and bobs on my snare drum and toms," he explains. With this, Paul produces a subtle groove. "I'm just playing the shape of a musical line." This is a passion he shares with his mentor, Scottish/Canadian teacher Jim Blackley.

Paul's drums may be a junkyard, but his business is in order. He and wife Sonia Slany, a concert violinist, created a record company, Village Life ([www.villagelife.co.uk](http://www.villagelife.co.uk)), and for their recordings they often forgo studios in favor of churches and other acoustically friendly halls that suit their alternative



jazz/chamber catalog.

Back to spy films, Paul says he often overdubs. "Most of my film work involves my working directly with the composer and the screen. Others I do live with an eighty-piece orchestra." Either way, Paul seems to add the odd touches that never occur to others. No, he protests, "I've never gone out of my way to sound too individual." Yeah, right.

T. Bruce Wittet

## news

**S**teve Smith has recently been working on a record with a project called Count's Rock Band.

**Kirk Covington** is on Tribal Tech's latest, *Rocket Science*.

**Denny Carmassi** is on David Coverdale's *Into The Light* and *The Very Best Of Montrose*. Denny also recorded *Trip To Heaven*, from the band 707, released on Bedrock Records (a label owned by Drum Headquarters/HQ Percussion head Rob Birenbaum).

**Vincent Tattanelli** is on the road with Nine Days.

Former Doughboys drummer **Brock Pytel** recently released his own record, *Second Choice*, on which he plays drums while fronting the band on vocals.

**Les Falconer** is on the road with Keb' Mo'.

**Dave Krusen** is on tour with Unified

Theory.

**Chris Sharrock and Jeremy Stacey** are on the new Robbie Williams CD, *Sing When You're Winning*.

**John Blackwell**, who recently finished up a tour with Japan's number-one pop star, Utada Hikaru, is now touring with Prince.

**Ricky Parent** is on Enuff Z'nuffs new CD, *10*.

**Simon Kirke** is on Ricky Byrd's new CD, *Tough Room...This World*. **Yves Gerard** is filling in on some of the live dates. Yves has also been busy producing Amy Serrago, and is on Patti Rothberg's new CD.

**Bryan Gardenour** is touring and recording with The Eric Stuart Band.

**Amir Ziv** and his band DROID have a new CD, *NYC D'n'B*. Amir is also touring with **Cyro Baptista's Beat The Donkey**.

**Larry Crockett** has a new CD with his band Crock Pott, *Be Somebody*.

**Rob Wade** is on Flybanger's *Headtrip To Nowhere*.

**Alex Hellid** is on Entombed's *Uprising*.

**Nat Mugavero** is on The Bob Nieske 3's *Simplicity*.

**Dave Gerhart and Erik Leckrone** are on the self-titled album by The Robin Cox Ensemble.

**Frank Severino** is on *Resonance*, a disc featuring material from a 1974 live performance by Joe Pass.

**David Northrup** is on tour with Travis Tritt, in support of *Down The Road I Go*. David is also on Shane Theriot's debut CD, *Highway 90*, along with **Willie Green and JD Blair**.

**Mike Kinsella** is on Joan Of Arc's latest, *The Gap*.

# drum dates

This month's important events in drumming history,

**Karen Carpenter** was born on March 2, 1950.

Blood, Sweat & Tears' debut record, with **Bobby Colomby** on drums, hits number-one on March 29, 1969.

Led Zeppelin and **John Bonham** become the first group in history to have six albums in the Top 100 at one time.

*Physical Graffiti*, *Led Zeppelin IV*, *Houses Of The Holy*, *Led Zeppelin II*, *Led Zeppelin III*, and *Led Zeppelin* are all on the chart the week of March 29, 1975.

**Alex Van Halen** and his bandmates' self-titled debut peaks at number nineteen on March 11, 1978.

Blondie's "Rapture," featuring **Clem Burke**, hits Billboard's number-one spot on March 28, 1981.

Also on March 28, 1981, Rush's *Moving Pictures* (featuring one of **Neil Peart's**

most famous performances) moves up to number three on *Billboard's* Top 100 chart.

Happy Birthday

Ralph MacDonald (March 15, 1944)

Micky Dolenz (March 8, 1945)

Carl Palmer (March 20, 1947)

John Hartman (March 18, 1950)

Kenny Aronoff (March 7, 1953)

Tony Brock (March 31, 1954)

Rob Affuso (March 1, 1963)

Caroline Corr (March 17, 1973)



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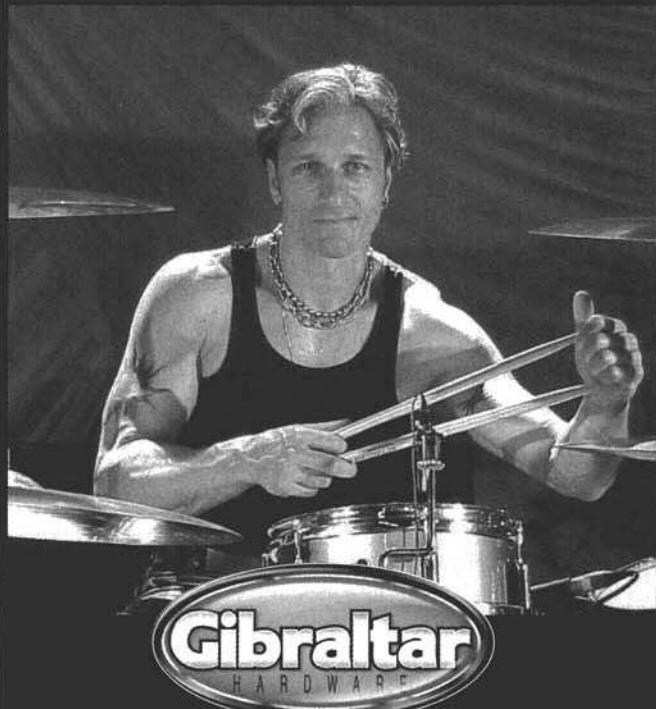
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# Ginger Fish On...

by Ken Micallef

**W**ith his appetite for paranoia and putridness, Marilyn Manson has become a master of flagrant shock-rock. Manson's latest, *Holy Wood (In The Valley Of The Shadow Of Death)*, is a kind of metal soap opera with its seeds in the super-glam rumble of Manson's 1998 release, *Mechanical Animals*. But Manson's grooves have slowed and gotten heavier, and his melodies have broadened.

Drummer Ginger Fish has seen it all with Manson, but beneath the outrageousness and controversy the band is known for, Fish has one of the most interesting gigs in rock. "This is a heavy metal band," he says. "But my main gig is playing shuffles and hip-hop beats with a swing to them. There are a lot of triplet things happening, and that's what I like playing."

Fish is a multi-tasker. Live, on songs such as "Beautiful People," "Rock Is Dead," "Disposable Teens," and "Dope Show," he plays a variety of pummeling triplet and shuffle feels, simultaneously controlling additional sounds from an Akai MPC sampler. And Fish must dodge whatever Manson may throw at him in the course of a night, from mic' stands to water bottles to bricks. Manson sent Fish to the hospital on one occasion.

The drumming on *Holy Wood* is a reversal for Fish. Where *Antichrist Superstar* and *Mechanical Animals* featured intricate, demanding arrangements that kept Fish on edge and overworked, *Holy Wood*'s scenario is about grand grooves and space-rock dynamics.

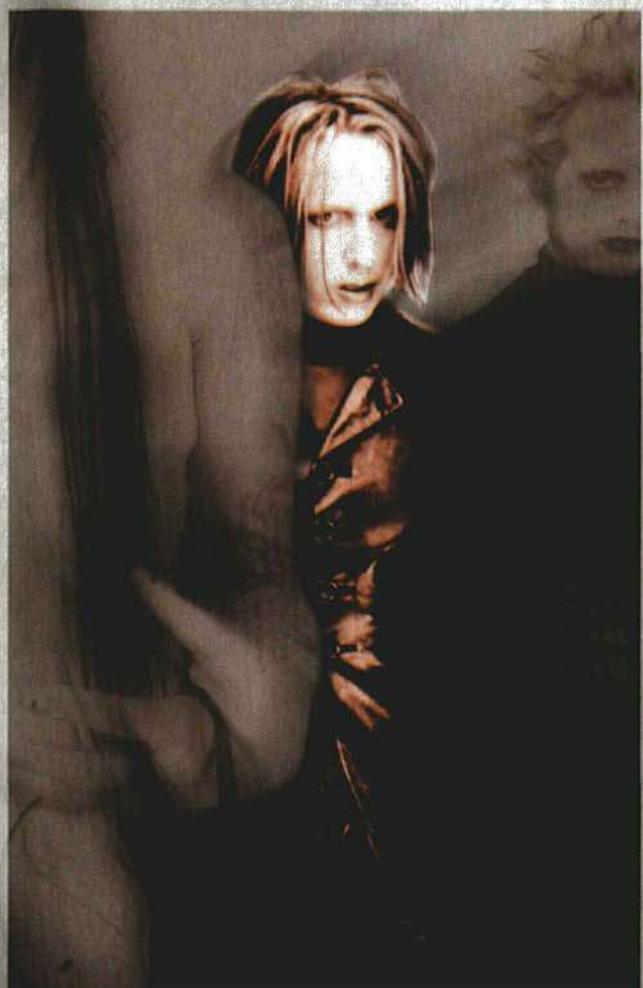
"It's pretty grunged out," explains Fish during a soundcheck in Florida. "I try to think of it like a big dump truck, pushing a heavy, heavy beat behind deep guitar riffs. It's cool because so much of what we've done in the past is so fast and crazy. This album gives me a little bit of a breather live. It's funny because everyone says this album is so heavy, but drum-wise I can cook a steak between snare hits because they're so spread out."

A lefty playing a right-handed kit, Fish has found novel ways to deal with Manson's demanding music. "I set up right-handed so I

don't have to cross my hands. My left arm plays from the center to the left, the right plays from the center to the right."

"When rehearsing for the tour," he continues, "I thought a lot about what would be the easiest, most efficient and comfortable way to play. I didn't want to twist my body or lean too much in any direction. I even considered having a riser constructed that leaned backwards so I could lean into my backrest. I eventually settled on cutting two of the legs on my throne so it would lean back. It seems to take tension off the nerves in my chest. It's a balancing act."

And is playing with a lead singer who can go off any second and attack you also a balancing act? "The band is still a love-hate relationship," Fish shrugs. "After six months of being on the road, I start thinking that the craziness is no big deal—another day playing another gig. Nothing to be too nuts about. But then it only takes one sentence out of somebody's mouth to cause a lot of trouble."





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## ...Louie Bellson



I saw Louie Bellson play recently and he is amazing. I can't believe how he seems so relaxed, quiet, and calm when you talk to him.

He shows his age a little bit when you're sitting with the guy, but the minute he gets behind his set he starts screaming out beats. It's just ridiculous. I guess he'll always be that way. It's not going to stop.

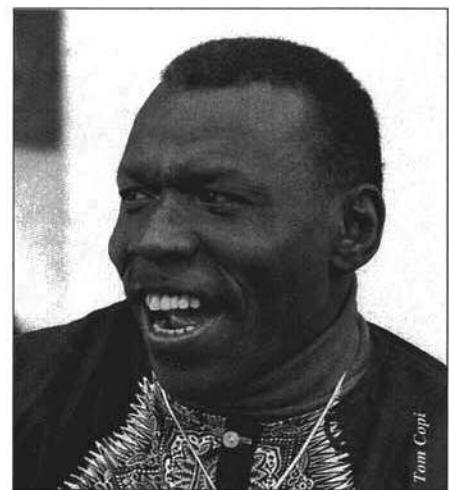
## ...Dave Weckl



There's one track on Dave's *Masterplan* disc that always puts a smile on my face. I can't think of the name, but it's a Latin thing where

he solos in the middle. It has a lot of triplets and craziness going on. I can't stop smiling, it goes on and on. [Sings melody and rhythm.] He just kills all these triplets and ruffs. It's just mad, and it's one song I always listen to for inspiration.

## ...Elvin Jones



I like Elvin's sense of space. A lot of it has to do with how those guys' drums sounded. You don't know if it's the age of the

drums, old heads, or what. Old cymbals, too. It's like fine wine, the way his drumming sounds and sits. He doesn't have to do anything, just sit behind that set and hit the hi-hat for one second, and it sounds so good.

## ...Taylor Hawkins



Taylor is one of those young players who just has it. I saw him with Alanis [Morissette] and I thought he was amazing. He just has that extra little spark in his playing. If it's playing a big fill or just hitting a splash in the right place, he's into it.

I saw Taylor in LA and he was so excited because [Queen guitarist] Brian May had come by his house to jam with him. He also sings, writes, and plays guitar and bass as well. It's fitting that he's playing with Dave Grohl right now. He actually gets to go out front and sing some songs with Foo Fighters.

Taylor's gonna be around for a long time. He just has it.

## ...Matt Cameron

I know of the infamous Matt Cameron. You don't have to see him play to know that he is amazing. With Soundgarden or Pearl Jam, and on the Chris Cornell album, he plays great.



## ...Josh Freese

I really want to hear him live with his new band, A Perfect Circle. On record they have a lot of 6/8 feels that he just kills on.

But I've heard enough stories about Freese—he's a high-dollar, "I only work for my price" kind of guy. I read where he said something like, "I hear about drummers needing Pro Tools to help them on record, but they don't use that shit with me." I guess if you're that good you can have an attitude.

## ... David Silveria

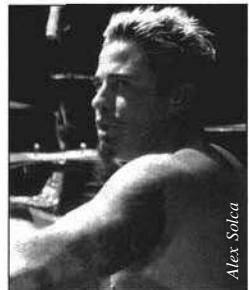
I've known David since I joined Manson. KoRn opened for us on the very first tour I did with Manson six years ago. He's interesting to watch because he comes from a different school from me. David plays all single strokes very hard. It's the same with his feet—all single strokes. It may have changed since then, but six years ago it was all very fast singles. I play a lot of doubles and triples with one foot, but when you do that you're losing some of the volume. Everything he did was two-footed and very fast, and it had a little punk edge to it.

I didn't get into KoRn at first because all of the stuff I'd done before was about backbeat and groove—bands like The Meters, where everything is about feel. It took me years to be able to listen to bands like KoRn, where the tempos are constantly changing. They play one tempo, then they switch and play another tempo. People think they're playing sloppy, but they're not. It's deliberate.

Even though he's had some problems with his arms, I think David has a lot of drumming years left in him. Some people worry about him because he didn't do that last tour. I think it was actually a smart move. Why go out on tour for a year and destroy yourself more if you don't feel up to it? Taking the time off to get better is a smart move.



Alex Solca



Alex Solca



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## ...Vinnie Colaiuta

Vinnie is definitely somebody I have listened to. I've heard so much of his session work. He's played on so many albums, records that people don't know about but that he just plays great on.

His time is killer, his fills are awesome.



Alex Solca

## ...Ian Paice

An amazing drummer. I have *The Best Of Deep Purple* and it's just great.



Alex Solca

## ...Virgil Donati

I saw him a couple times when we were in LA. He makes your mouth drop. What he plays doesn't seem humanly possible. And his band, Planet X, moves fast. They're all screaming players. They make your head spin.

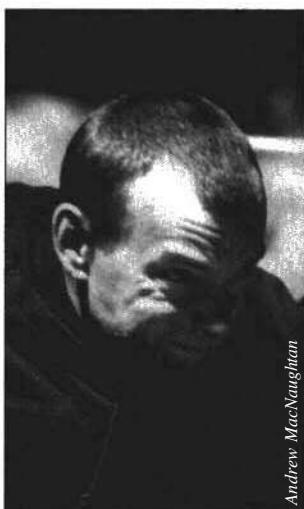


Alex Solca

Virgil's feet are just ridiculous, and his hands don't stop either. He'll play a drum solo and you can't see his arms; it's just cymbals flying all over the place. He gets off the set and starts pouring water down his throat.

That's what I've been missing: It took me twenty-five years to learn to drink water. I see players like Virgil and I wonder what's the secret. And then I see him guzzling water. I used to like that caffeine/sugar rush, drinking cokes all day. But now it's all about water. Water, water, water.

Rush's 2112—you have to learn it from beginning to end. I did it back in the day. I learned all of their stuff.



Andrew MacNaughtan

Go to [www.moderndrummer.com](http://www.moderndrummer.com) and click on the MD Radio icon to hear cuts from Marilyn Manson's *Holy Wood* album, as well as many of the artists in this column.



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## X Marks The Spot

### Sabian HHX Line And New Pre-Packs

Sabian has augmented their Hand Hammered series with the new HHX line, designed to deliver "musically rich hand-hammered tones with advanced projection." Individually handcrafted from Sabian B20 bronze, HHX models are heavily hammered. Super-size hammer marks across the bow and bell are said to produce tonal color while simultaneously providing plenty of bite and projection. High-profile shaping raises the pitch of the sound for increased projection. The series is dominated by natural-finish cymbals (to deliver full-bodied sound) and raw bells (for increased focus and improved projection).

The HHX line will assimilate some models originally introduced to Sabian's Hand Hammered series, including Manhattan models and the Fierce Crash (now renamed the HHXtreme Crash). Prices range from \$115 to \$454, depending on size.

Sabian has also introduced new sonically matched Hand Hammered, AAX, AA, and PRO Sonix effects packs. Each pack contains a 10" splash and an 18" Chinese cymbal, plus a drummer towel and a Sabian *Making The Difference* video at no extra charge. The seventeen-minute video was filmed at the company's headquarters in Meductic, New Brunswick, Canada, and introduces viewers to Sabian's cymbal series and manufacturing process.

Mike Portnoy Max Stax and Max Splash cymbals are also offered in a variety of sonically matched pre-packs. These include Max Splashes (7", 9", and 11"), Max Stax Hi-Combo (8" top/8" bottom), Max Stax Mid-Combo (10" top/10" bottom), and Max Stax Low Combo (12" top/14" bottom).



## Get Into Alex's Bag

### Vic Firth Alex Acuna Drumstick And Accessory Bag

The cylindrical, foam-padded Alex Acuna Drumstick Accessory Bag from Vic Firth features four large exterior pockets with fold-back flaps, plus four large interior pockets capable of holding up to forty-eight pairs of sticks. Four zippered utility pockets keep small accessories contained, while a large inner compartment is designed to hold bigger accessories. The bag sits upright for easy access to the interior pockets, and can support a practice pad when it's closed. The 21" x 8" luggage-grade nylon bag is priced at \$89.95.



## That '70s Kit

### Ludwig Big Beat Psychedelic Red Drumset And Student Gear

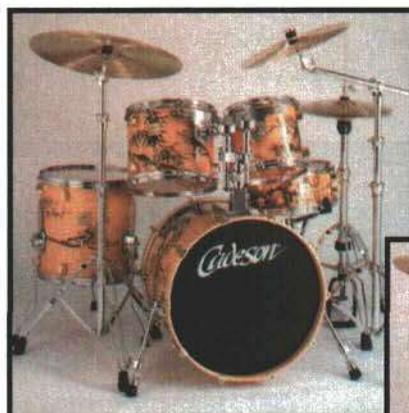
The '70s are back in style—at least when it comes to Ludwig's Big Beat kit and its special Psychedelic Red finish. The kit features a 16x22 bass drum, 8x12, 9x13, and 16x16 toms, and a 5x14 matching snare drum. It comes equipped with 800 series hardware stands, a Speed King foot pedal, and an L-Arm Poly-Ball double tom holder. The drums are outfitted with Weather Master medium coated batter heads, vintage '70s-style blue/green badges, and a script logo on the front bass drum head. Retail price is \$3,540.

Ludwig is also offering several products for students and beginners. The Accent Junior is a five-piece outfit that includes a 14x18 bass drum, 8x10, 8x12, and 12x14 toms, and a 5x13 steel snare drum. The double tom holder features secure tom brackets, multiple positioning, and memory locks. Stands and pedals are from the Ludwig Classic 600 series, and the drums are available in black, blue, and wine. The kit is priced at \$625.

For even younger drummers—between three and eight years old—The LJR105 Ludwig Jr. drumset includes a 16" bass drum with spurs, a 13" floor tom with legs, 8" and 10" mounted toms, and a 5x12 snare drum. The set comes with a cymbal arm with a 10" cymbal, a bass drum pedal, a snare stand, and a double tom holder, and is available in black only. The kit is priced at \$350. A Junior hi-hat stand with 10" cymbals, as well as a height-adjustable Junior drum throne, are available separately.

Designed for the young percussionist, Ludwig's Percussion Learning Center Snare

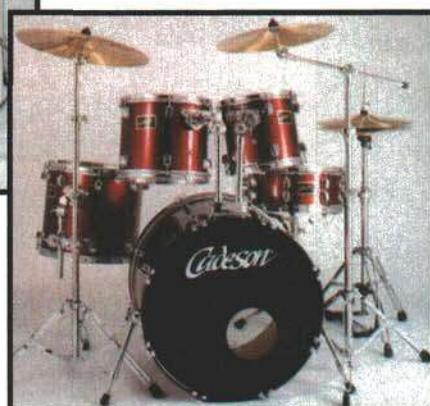
And Bells Kit includes a 3x13 maple-shell snare drum, a 2.5-octave bell set (with silver powder-coated notes marked on each bar), and a height-adjustable bell stand with four holding arms (which can be converted into a snare-drum stand). Bell mallets and sticks are also included. The Combo Kit comes in a padded backpack-style nylon bag, which also has storage room for books and other materials. Retail price is \$475.



## Music Can Be A Visual Art, Too

### Cadeson Soundscape And Stadium Series Drumsets

Following on the heels of their unique Chinese Water Color snare drums, Cadeson's limited-edition collector's series Soundscape set features original painted artwork. Each set includes a 4 1/2x14 snare, 9x10, 10x12, and 14x14 toms, and a 16x20 bass drum, and comes with Cadeson's 980A series hardware. Solid maple shells with 3-ply reinforcement hoops provide a focused tone. Only one hundred sets have been manufactured, and each set is signed and numbered. Retail price is \$1,890.



Cadeson also offers their mid-line Stadium Series, with drums that feature 6-ply basswood shells. This set comes complete with double-braced 680B-series hardware, cymbals, and sticks. The five-piece set consists of a 5 1/2x14 snare, 9x10, 10x12, and 14x14 toms, and a 16x22 bass drum. It's priced at \$699. The series is also available in many other sizes and an assortment of colors.

## Hey, Mr. Bass Man

### New Bass Drum Products From Evans



Among three new Evans products specifically for the bass drum is the Externally Mounted Adjustable Damping (EMAD) System. It comes with two dampening rings, each of which affects the head's sound and pedal response. The external mounting of these rings allows quick, easy adjustments without removing the drumhead.

The EQ Resonance Gate System (EQRGS) Pad is an hourglass-shaped muffling pad that eliminates the need for multiple pads to create different damping effects. Evans' current EQ Pad has a single, hinged muffling pillow on one side, whereas the new EQRGS has a second, smaller muffling pillow on the opposite side for use with smaller-diameter drums. A plastic gate that attaches to the top of the pads can be adjusted to control the length of resonance or sustain of a head.

The AF Bass Drum Patch is made of Aramid Fiber, the material commonly found in bullet-proof vests. The patch permanently attaches to the head with a high-tech adhesive. The center of the patch is solid for maximum durability, while four radial slits along the perimeter allow the head to vibrate naturally. The AF Patch is designed to emphasize the attack characteristics of the bass drum.

## Sticking Out

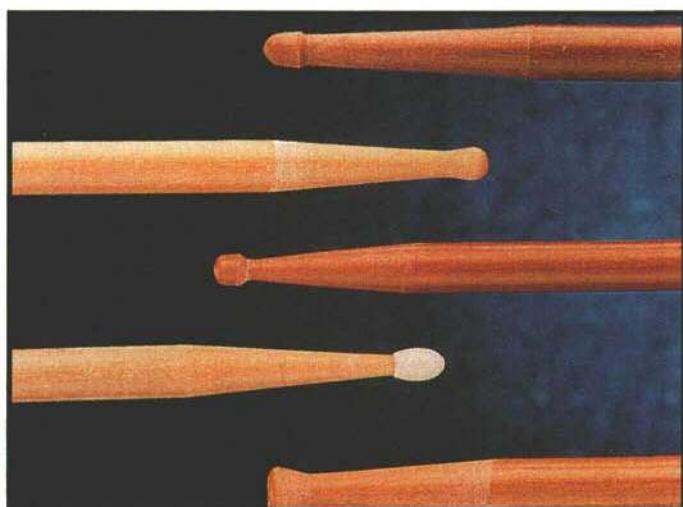
### EMMite Timbale Sticks, Claves, And 3S Model Stick

EMMite has added timbale sticks, a 3S model stick, and a new barrel-tip option to its synthetic drumstick line. The Canadian company's sticks are said to possess the same stiffness and feel as wood sticks, yet last three to five times longer.

Timbale sticks are available in EMMite, EMGlow, EMFlor, and EMWood versions, and are priced from \$10.95 to \$14.95, depending on material. The new barrel tips are available as an option for all

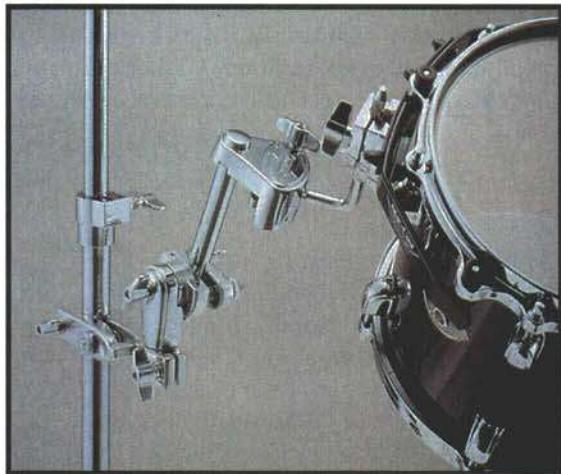
four EMMite standard-model drumsticks (7A, 5A, 5B, and 2B). The new 3S marching stick uses a triangular tip and is available in different colors in order to match with drum corps uniforms. It's priced at \$19.95 for the EMMite model, \$24.95 for all other models.

EMMite is also offering claves made of polyethylene. They are claimed to be louder than rosewood yet less expensive than fiberglass models. They're priced at \$10.



## Small But Powerful Marimba Lumina 2.5

The 2 1/2-octave version of Nearfield Multimedia's original Marimba Lumina is smaller (44" long) and lighter (15 lbs.) than the original Marimba Lumina. But it retains the features of its larger sibling while introducing several new capabilities of its own. These include a set of twelve pentagonal sensors in its upper left corner—two more than the original Marimba Lumina. The additional sensors allow you to extend the range of the instrument by an octave in either direction. There is also a dedicated transposition key that can shift notes up or down by one octave. The Marimba Lumina 2.5 has a built-in DB51XG synthesizer sound card and full size, location-sensitive bars. In addition to two mallets, the unit includes two small shuffleboard-style disks that can send notes or controller information as they are moved around the bars. Retail price is \$1,995.



## Get A Grip New Tama FastClamps

Two new FastClamp accessories from Tama allow drummers to easily fasten drumset add-ons to their kits via a clothespin-like clamping mechanism. The MC67 Universal FastClamp (\$35.50) features one side that can clamp pipes with diameters from 5/8" to 1 1/8", while the other side can clamp pipes with diameters from 1/2" to 1". Both sides of the MC62 Parallel FastClamp (\$26.50) can attach to pipes with diameters from 5/8" to 1 1/8".

## Striking Twice Revamped Meinl Lightning Cymbals

Meinl's Lightning splash and crash cymbals are now made with a new hammering treatment, which Meinl claims "not only influences the cymbals' surface structure, but also their sound." The new design is said to offer a warmer, more powerful sound. Prices range from \$100 to \$285, depending on size.



# Getting It On Film

## Remo NuSkyn Drumhead Film And World Percussion Upgrades

According to Remo, their NuSkyn is "a revolutionary new drum-head film unlike anything else the company has previously developed." The film is said to produce "a warm, full-bodied sound, bringing up desirable mid-range and low frequencies, without producing lingering high-pitched overtones." According to Remo, frequency analysis of NuSkyn shows it closely resembles the performance of animal skin. The film's tanned color resembles animal skin's cosmetics while featuring textured top and bottom surfaces said to be easier on the hands.

NuSkyn will eventually be fitted on several instruments, but has been introduced as an upgrade to Remo's Poncho Sanchez Signature Series congas. The conga head utilizes a steel insert ring in a tucked style with no flesh hoop—a first for synthetic conga drumheads. Remo guarantees the head against pulling out.

In other product upgrades, the Poncho Sanchez conga line now features chrome traditional and radius counterhoops that will be made to fit drums from most other manufacturers. (Remo will continue to offer its Softtouch counterhoop.) The company will also include a new double conga stand with a base height of 22" and top length of 20".

**NINO PERCUSSION'S** Wood Tone Block has two sounds, and can either be mounted or hand-held. The blocks are offered in small (\$12.40) or large (\$12.80) sizes.

**HEADLINER CYMBALS** now offers a cymbal box set consisting of a pair of 14" hi-hats and a 20" ride. The pre-pack is offered in brass (\$180) or bronze (\$252) versions.

**SPAUN DRUM COMPANY** is now offering hardware with their custom line of drumkits and snare drums. All stands feature heavy-duty, double-braced legs. Cymbal stands feature hideaway booms, and snare stands have the omni-ball, infinite-adjustment feature. Tom stands are available in L-rod style or 7/8" tubing.

**KoSA COMMUNICATIONS** has released its first CD, *Rhythm Is The Heart*. Recorded live at the 1999 KoSA Festival, the CD captures performances by Horacio Hernandez, Dom Famularo, Changuito, Repercussion, Marco Lienhard, Aldo Mazza, Ed Shaughnessy, John Beck, Gordon Gottlieb, and Glen Velez. The program includes drumset, Japanese taiko drumming, solo timpani, and frame drumming performances. Contact KoSA directly to order the CD.

**MEL BAY's** 2000/2001 Drum & Percussion catalog has been released, featuring drum books, videos, bodhrans, and mallet and world percussion educational products.

The newest educational product from **LP MUSIC GROUP** is a

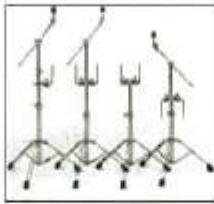
Remo is also adding a new finish to its congas, utilizing Tuff-E-Nuff—an impact-resistant, textured urethane that virtually defies damage. The Tuff-E-Nuff material will also be utilized on other Remo world percussion instruments.

Remo's timbales have been upgraded to feature 7"-deep shells and a repositioned tuning bracket that provides players with a larger palette of sound when playing the side of the drum. The timbales are fitted with hex tuning nuts, with a lowered carriage bolt on the counterhoop so that rimshots can be played without obstruction.

For drumset players, Remo's new Universal Tom Arm is designed with two cam-style levers, one at each of the two elbows. Each joint affords full 360° rotation, giving drummers full mobility for their toms. Short- and long-armed versions are available to fit 7/8" tom stands and bass drum receivers from most major manufacturers.

Finally, Remo's EZ Tune Washers are said to reduce the torque required on congas, bongos, and other high-tension instruments. Two hardened steel washers sandwich one "smart" steel washer with eleven small needle bearings built into it to lock in tuning without the grinding, squeaks, or metal fatigue associated with standard metal washers.

## And What's More



video called *An Introduction To Hand Percussion: Volume 1—Congas*. Hosted by world-renowned percussionist Wilson "Chembo" Corniel, it features segments on assembling conga stands, tuning, four basic conga "hits," accents, basic conga patterns and rhythms, and more. The video is priced at \$9.95.

**RHYTHM MAGIC** has designed two practice pads with the image of a drumset on the surface. The Drum-A-Long Practice Pads are available in a 9x11 rectangle (\$12.95) and in a 13 1/2" diameter circle (\$14.95), which can be placed directly on a snare drum. Also available is a Starter Kit (\$24.95), which includes the 9x11 practice pad, a pair of sticks, a rhythm poster, and a play-along CD.

## Making Contact

### CADESON MUSICAL CO.

(011) 886 222 1823 20

[www.cadeson.com](http://www.cadeson.com)

### EMMITE DRUMSTICKS

(519) 823-1089

[www.emmitedrumsticks.com](http://www.emmitedrumsticks.com)

### EVANS (J. D'ADDARIO)

(800) 323-2746

[www.EVANSdrumheads.com](http://www.EVANSdrumheads.com)

### HEADLINER PERCUSSION

(877) 88-MEINL, goMeinl@aol.com

### KoSA COMMUNICATIONS

(800) 541-8401, [www.kosamusic.com](http://www.kosamusic.com)

### LP MUSIC GROUP

(800) 526-5312, [www.lpmusic.com](http://www.lpmusic.com)

### LUDWIG

(800) 348-7426, [www.ludwig-drums.com](http://www.ludwig-drums.com)

### MEINL USA

(877) 88-MEINL, goMeinl@aol.com

### MEL BAY

(314) 965-4818

### NEARFIELD MULTIMEDIA

(310) 518-4277

[www.multimedia.nearfield.com](http://www.multimedia.nearfield.com)

### NINO PERCUSSION

(877) 88-MEINL, goMeinl@aol.com

### REMO

(661) 294-5600, [www.remo.com](http://www.remo.com)

### RHYTHM MAGIC

(877) 517-3617, [www.drumalong.com](http://www.drumalong.com)

### SABIAN

(506) 272-2019, [www.sabian.com](http://www.sabian.com)

### SPAUN

(909) 971-7761, [www.spaundrums.com](http://www.spaundrums.com)

### TAMA

(800) 669-8262, [www.tama.com](http://www.tama.com).

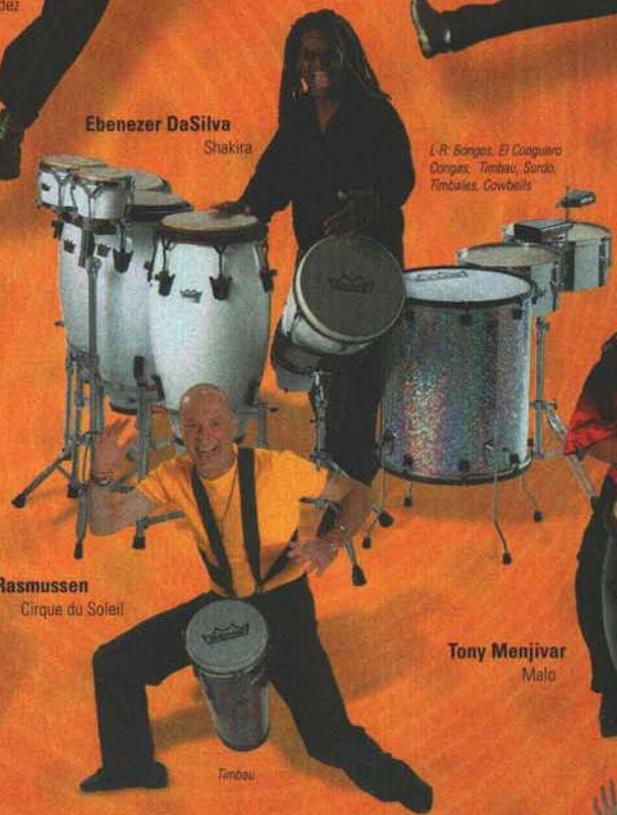
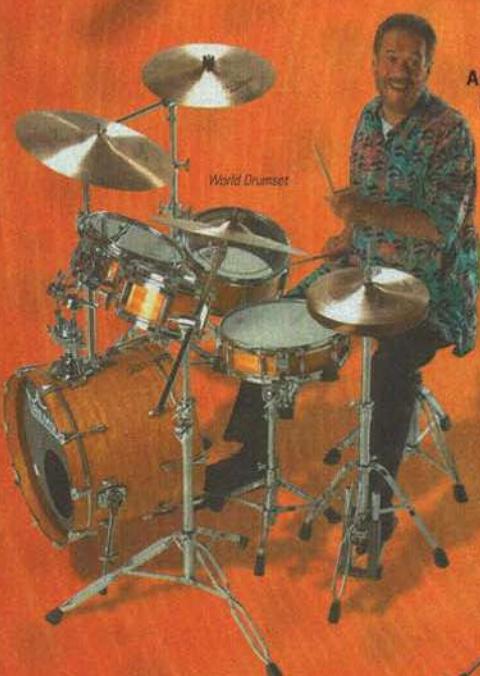
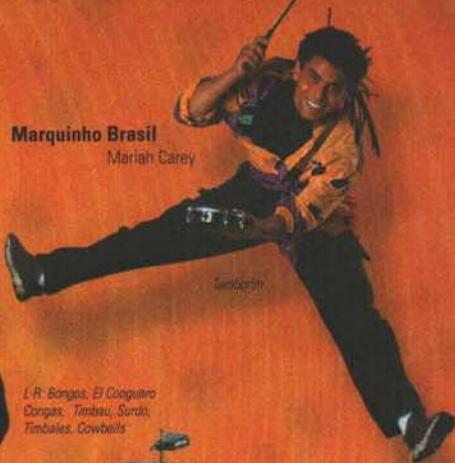
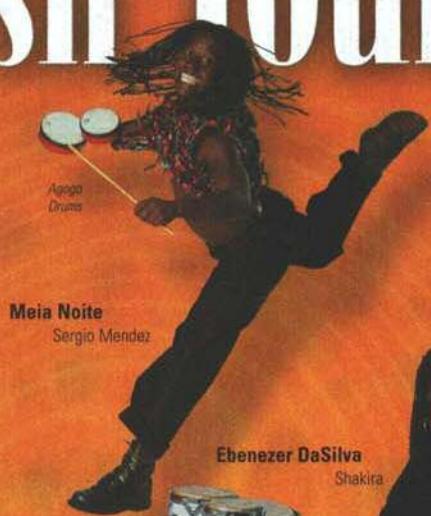
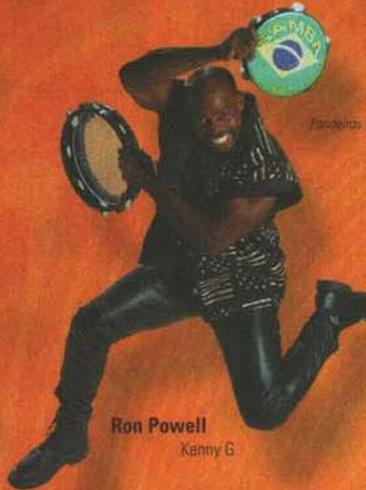
### VIC FIRTH

(781) 326-3455, [www.vicfirth.com](http://www.vicfirth.com).

Contact information for the **Brady Drum Co.** was printed incorrectly in recent issues. The correct information is: (011) 61-8-9497-2212, [www.bradydrums.com](http://www.bradydrums.com).



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## Pearl Rhythm Traveler Drumkit

This compact kit offers twice the bang for your buck.

by Mark Parsons

### Hits

- mesh heads offer good feel and extreme quiet for practicing
- drums can be tuned effectively for low-volume gigging situations
- highly affordable, considering duol-role capability

### Misses

- kit could benefit from a second cymbal stand



The Rhythm Traveler is the latest innovation from Pearl, and there's definitely something of a "tastes great/less filling" air about it. This is because it fills two distinctly different niches. The Rhythm Traveler was originally designed to meet a need in Japan for a practice kit that was very quiet—even quieter than a pad kit. As such, it was fitted with Pearl's new (and virtually silent) "Muffle Heads," which feature a mesh-like material similar to that seen on the Roland V-Drums.

Then someone got the smart idea that if these small, light drums

were fitted with regular drumheads, they might make a very portable gigging kit. *Voila.* The Rhythm Traveler was born. Let's move in for a closer look.

### The Drums

Of the many porta-kits brought to market over the past several years, some are "heads-only" (i.e. no shells) while a few have used smallish-diameter "normal" drums of moderate depth. For the Rhythm Traveler, Pearl has used a concept somewhere in between

these two designs.

The toms have shells (for greater projection than head-only dpums), but they're single-headed and shallow for great "packability" (that is, they nest). The kit is configured in the traditional five-piece manner: The two smaller toms are mounted on the bass drum, while the "floor" tom is suspended from the cymbal stand. The kick is double-headed, albeit very shallow at 8x20. The snare, at 5x13, is the only standard-sized drum in the set. The shells are identical to those used in Pearl's popular Forum entry-level kits. All of the drums have six lugs, with the kick and toms sporting single-ended lugs and the snare using double-ended lugs.

The Rhythm Traveler ships with Muffle Heads installed on the kit. But included in the purchase price is a set of five regular plastic heads. They're single-ply, medium-weight (probably 10 mil), and clear (except for the snare head, which is white-coated).

As for fit and finish, while this is a "value-priced" drumset, it seemed clean and well-made, with no obvious flaws or evidence of poor quality control. No, the bearing edges weren't hand-sanded by virgins only during the light of the full moon. But they were even and relatively smooth, with no noticeable defects. They did have a larger, rounder counter-cut than usual, which, in theory, should help produce some fatness out of a shallow, single-headed drum.

### Hardware

The cymbal stand (only one is included with the kit) and the snare stand are from Pearl's new 70W series of lightweight, double-braced hardware. As such, they are functional, stable, and well-suited to the intended uses of the drumset (practice, and gigs where size/weight considerations are paramount). The tom mounts follow the well-known Pearl pattern: vertical arms with tilters connected to short arms that fit into the tom shells. The vertical arms connect to the bass drum via a thru-shell mounting bracket.

The H-70W hi-hat stand is similar in construction to the cymbal stand. It's simple, small, and lightweight, yet smooth and functional. There's no way for the user to adjust the tension, which fortunately seems to be set at a good "middle of the road" strength.

There's no doubt that the P-70 bass drum pedal is an economy model. But it still contains the right elements for reliable operation: an external single spring, twin bearings, and strap drive. The only adjustments are the spring tension and the beater height. And speaking of beaters, the one provided is double-sided, with felt and hard plastic surfaces. Considering its humble design, the P-70 pedal proved surprisingly smooth and fast.

Also included with the Rhythm Traveler are two FCY-20 "Silent Cymbal Pads." These are plastic quarter-circle pads with foam on top to dampen stick noise.

### In Use (Silent Mode)

The Rhythm Traveler arrived with the mesh heads on, so that's how I used them for the first part of the review period. If you've ever played mesh pads before, you know how they feel—very realistic, with perhaps a bit more give than real heads. If you're looking to work on your double-stroke chops, you might not get *exactly* the same stick bounce you'd get from a tightly tuned snare. But if you

crank the tension up on the Muffle Head, it's amazingly close. Toms and kick also felt very natural.

As far as sound levels go, I'm happy to report that the Muffle Heads are *very* quiet. You should be able to play anywhere at any hour without disturbing anyone, even through a thin apartment wall. That's *provided* you avoid rimshots. Because the snare rim is a standard flanged hoop (as are the tom rims), when you whack it with a stick it naturally makes a solid *clack*. (Pearl should consider including some sort of rubberized rim guards to mitigate this.) Don't get me wrong. It's nowhere *near* as loud as hitting a real drum. But if you want to play at 3:00 A.M. with a sleeping baby in the next room, you'll want to forgo rimshots or cobble something together to keep things silent. (This shouldn't be too difficult with some foam and a bit of duct tape.)

To the best of my knowledge, no one has yet succeeded in manufacturing a silent practice cymbal with a realistic feel. They're either hard (with good bounce, but clacky) or too padded (quiet, but no feel). Pearl's Silent cymbal Pads take a middle ground. They're made of fairly hard plastic covered with a thin piece of foam. They serve their intended purpose, but don't expect the stick response you get off your favorite ride cymbal. If you play on the bell section of the pad you'll get good bounce (plus some clack) because it's unpadded in that area.

It would be nice if Pearl had provided more than just one practice ride cymbal and a hi-hat. (The other cymbal pad goes on the hat stand as a hi-hat target.) But since the FCY-20 Silent Cymbal Pads list for a whopping eight bucks per, it would be easy to add a few more, provided you had an extra stand or two. Apparently Pearl didn't include another stand with the Rhythm Traveler because the \$79 cost would have raised the kit's list price to beyond the "under \$700" range.

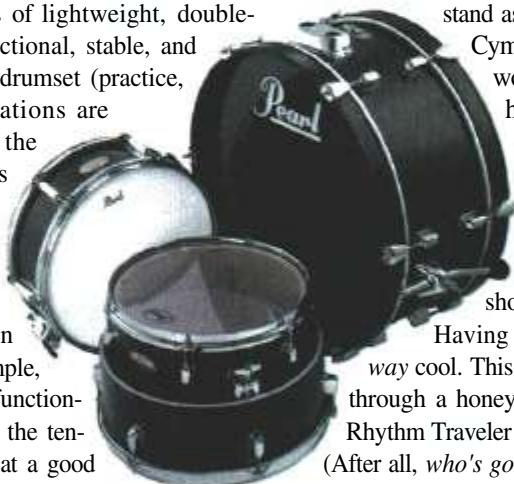
These very minor quibbles, however, shouldn't make you overlook the main point here.

Having a compact, silent practice drumset around is *way* cool. This little kit is positively seductive. I was working through a honey-do list on the weekend, and I'd walk by the Rhythm Traveler and think, "Okay, but just for a minute or two." (After all, *who's gonna know?*) And there I'd be half an hour later, still flailing away with a big grin on my face (and the chores still undone) when my wife walked in. "Ahem...."

### In Use (Playing Mode)

To swap modes from practice to performance (or vice versa) requires changing batter heads and re-tuning. But, with only one head per drum and six lugs per head, it goes pretty quick.

While changing out the toms I eyed the generic single-ply clear heads I was installing on the single-headed drums and figured that they wouldn't provide any depth or warmth. Well, I'm sure it won't be the last time I'm wrong. Granted, if you take a 5" deep, single-headed drum and tune it too high, it *will* sound thin and ringy. (Can you say *timbale*?) However, once tuned in their optimum range (mid to lower tension) the toms produced a fairly smooth, musical sound for such shallow shells. (Perhaps this is due in part to the rounder bearing edge?) I placed some Zero Rings on the toms and they dried up quiet a bit, yielding that short, punchy, no-bottom-head sound reminiscent of '70s recordings.



Out of curiosity, I tried 2-ply heads on the toms. This took out some of the ring, but the sound still had more midrange than the original heads *with* the Zero Rings. So in this instance I think I'd go with single-ply heads, adding or removing donuts as the situation required.

The bass drum, as is, had quite a bit of ring in the lower midrange. This is to be expected from a kick with two undamped heads only 8" apart. Moderate dampening—a small towel placed in the drum so it touched both heads slightly—removed most of the ring while adding a bit of depth and punch. And while this little kick is never going to sound like John Bonham's 26" hammer of the gods, it should get you through most gigs that don't require extremely high volume.

The Rhythm Traveler snare drum—basically a Forum snare with a diameter of 13"—has to be one of the least-expensive wooden production snares available. This, however, didn't stop it from producing a respectable sound, provided I did my part in regards to tuning and snare tension. Seeming to prefer a medium to high tuning range on both heads and not too much snare tension (lest it choke), this drum had decent tone, projection, and sensitivity. Rimshots were fairly solid.

### Conclusions & Prices

Personally, I think Pearl is onto something pretty neat here—something that addresses the needs of the everyday working drummer. We don't all have a soundproof rehearsal space available at all hours. And not all of our gigs require a miked-up nine-piece kit with a dozen cymbals.

As I hope I've made clear, a silent practice kit isn't just a fun toy. It can be a real help in keeping up your chops, especially for those who have to watch their noise levels. And as an extremely portable, lightweight gigging kit, the Rhythm Traveler should be able to cover the majority of those casual one-nighters that make up most of the working drummer's date book.

There is yet another possible use for the Rhythm Traveler. Pearl informs us that their dealers report success using the kit—with its mesh heads—to trigger electronic percussion modules. Specifically, they've had the best results with ddrum triggers. Since we didn't have a ddrum system available during the review

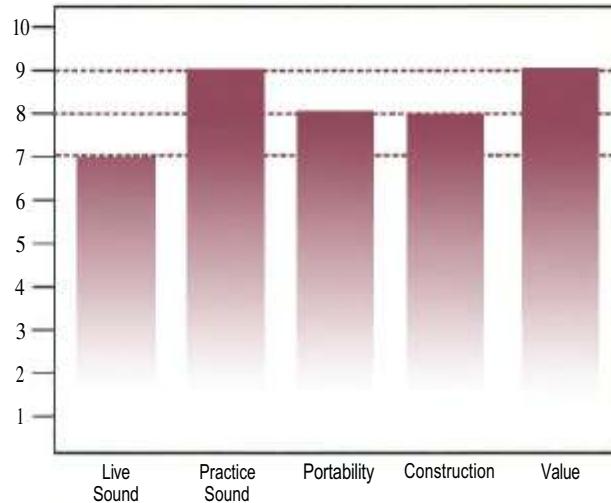


period, we are unable to provide first-hand information on this. But it's certainly worth experimenting with.

Pearl also mentions that they are making nylon cases for the Rhythm Traveler. It will be a two-piece system, with one bag for the bass drum and one that will hold the snare and toms in a way that protects them from each other. (I guess you'll still need your own hardware bag.) The price will be announced shortly.

And on the subject of price, certainly one of the points in favor of the Rhythm Traveler is cost. The list price is low and the street price will be lower still. We've mentioned the cost (or lack thereof) of the practice cymbals, and to my surprise the Muffle Heads cost a bit less than regular heads. So if you're a drummer who values silence or portability—or *both*—and you're not looking to break the bank, you owe it to yourself to give the Rhythm Traveler a test drive.

### In A Nutshell



### A Little Travelin' Music

<b>Drums Reviewed:</b>	Pearl Rhythm Traveler practice/live kit
<b>Configuration:</b>	5x10, 5x12, and 5x14 single-headed toms, 8x20 double-headed bass drum, and 5x13 snare. Also included are two Silent Cymbal Pads (for ride and hi-hat). Hardware includes one cymbal stand, one hi-hat stand, one snare stand, one bass drum pedal, and all necessary tom mounts and holders.
<b>Construction:</b>	6-ply all-mahogany shells
<b>Drumheads:</b>	One complete set of Pearl Muffle (mesh) Heads, and one complete set of Pearl plastic heads.
<b>Retail Price:</b>	Complete kit priced at \$659. Extra C-70W cymbal stand available at \$79, Silent Cymbal Pads available at \$8, Muffle Heads range from \$7.50 (8") to \$22 (20").

# The Duallist Pedal

## An engineering marvel that lets one foot do the work of two

Review by Chap Ostrander Photos by Jim Esposito

The Duallist bass drum pedal is an unusual combination of complexity and simplicity. The simplicity lies in the basic concept of its design. It's a single-footboard pedal that operates two beaters. You push on the footboard and the right beater strikes the bass drum. You release it and the left beater hits. That's it in a nutshell. The complexity comes from what you make of this beast. Understand: This is not a toy, nor is it a flight of the inventor's fancy.

The Duallist pedal is the brainchild of Scottish drummer/inventor Kevin Mackie. He worked on the concept for fifteen years (!) before achieving the product we see today, which is being manufactured by the MacRobert Corporation. The current model has been available in Europe for the past two years, but has just come onto the US market.

### Construction

My first impression of The Duallist was that it was big and chunky. Not so. It's light, and only slightly wider than a standard

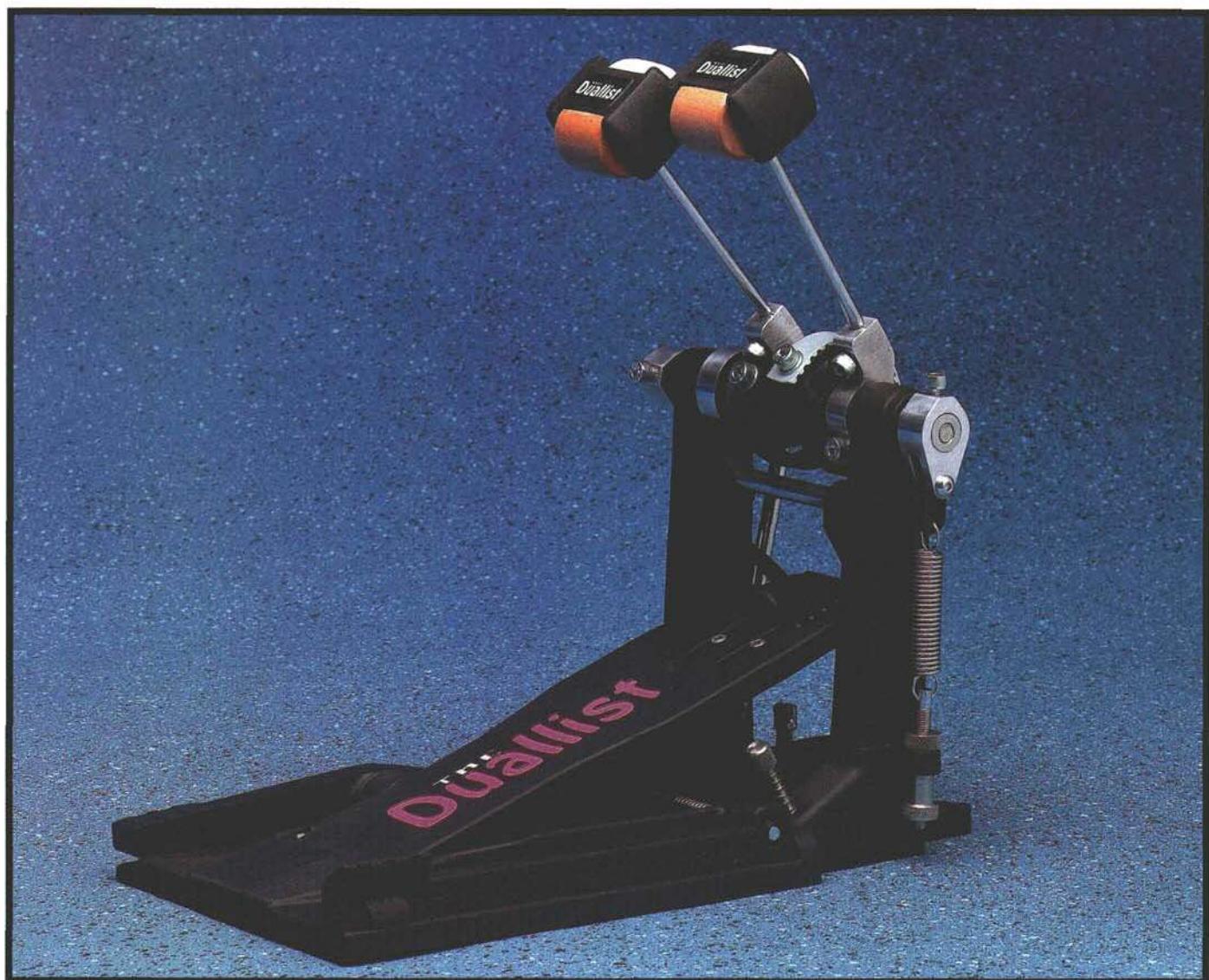
### Hits

- double-pedal function operated by a single foot
- equally good action in either single- or double-pedal mode
- lightweight and durable construction

pedal. When you play with it for more than two seconds you get used to the size.

The Duallist's light weight is largely due to the fact that the frame is constructed entirely of DuPont Zytel, which is an extremely tough nylon polymer. The most common application for Zytel is for automotive parts, such as cam covers and air-intake manifolds, where its strength, stiffness, and resistance to heat and corrosion is needed. Zytel's light weight (it weighs less than one-fourth that of steel for a given volume) gives the Duallist pedal a weight of only five pounds. Yet it's tough enough to withstand the heaviest pounding.

Another valuable property of Zytel is its lubricity, which means that the bearings don't need lubrication. The footboard hinges are self-lubricating bearings manufactured from friction-resistant industrial nylon. They provide quiet and efficient pivot action. The color of the Zytel is an integral element of the material, so the parts will never scratch. A spokesman for The Duallist told me that Nigel



Glockler from the heavy metal band Saxon has been using two Duallist pedals for over eighteen months and hasn't experienced any problems whatsoever. He attributes this to the toughness of the Zytel.

The Duallist's aluminum parts are made from a corrosion-resistant alloy suitable for intricate extrusions, while its steel parts are an alloy of 18% chrome and 8% nickel-steel suitable for hand machining. All the castings are manufactured exclusively in the UK for The Duallist.

The beaters supplied with The Duallist have four playing surfaces, which include felt, wood, and two differently shaped plastic surfaces. You simply rotate the beater to obtain the sound you want. It's also suggested in the video that accompanies the pedal that you experiment with different beater heights. The design of the pedal is such that it can accommodate electronic setups, even those with inverted beaters. A one-piece sliding hoop clamp allows you to adjust the spacing between the pedal and the bass drum (or the percussion item, when used with something like a Gajate bracket).

The drive connection for the right beater is a steel-reinforced polyurethane-coated strap. It has grooves underneath so that it mates with the footboard for non-slip and noiseless performance. It's very sturdy and will take a pounding. The connection for the left beater is an elastomer belt similar to those used in electric motors for vacuum cleaners and lawn mowers. It's also very durable and was put through rigorous stress testing before being chosen. The straps are secured under the footboard. The right strap feeds from the front, and the left one comes down through the middle. Both straps can be adjusted to your own preference.

The pedal's springs are made from piano-grade wire. The action is very smooth and predictable. Knurled knobs allow you to adjust the spring tension, with locking knobs above. Spikes mounted in the

base help to hold The Duallist in place. All the adjustment are tightened by an alien wrench. Personally, I'd like to see drumkey bolts at the main adjustment points, like stroke length and beater height. (In all fairness, an alien wrench *can* provide greater torque than a drum key can, thus making the adjustment more secure. But needing only one tool to make adjustments is simply easier for drummers to deal with.) The MacRobert Corporation manufactures all the components of The Duallist, so spare parts will be available.

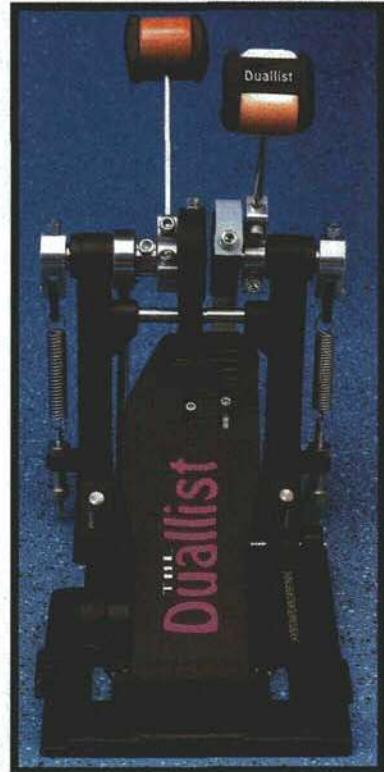
## How It Works

There have been several designs for double-action single pedals on the market in the past. The problem with all of them has been that while they might produce the desired double-action, they never produced a decent *single* action. They were one-trick ponies. The Duallist, on the other hand, feels great in single mode. You can adjust the stroke, the beater height, the spring tension, and the length of the drive straps (for both beaters) to obtain as light or as heavy an action as you want.

It's also easy to "shift" playing modes from single to double. This is accomplished by stepping on one of the Speedswitch levers located to the left and right of the footboard. The positioning of the switches lets you do the switching with your heel, thereby keeping your foot on the footboard. This allows you to continue playing as you choose your playing mode. Press the left-side switch and the left beater is locked back, putting you in single mode. Slide your heel over and press the right side to release the left beater, and you're in double mode. Your playing pattern can go uninterrupted.

## So What's The Point?

The Duallist offers single-bass drum players most of the advantages of double-bass playing, without some of the drawbacks. For



example, if you were a single-bass player who wanted to switch to two bass drum pedals (or a double pedal), your hi-hat foot would have to learn to hit as hard as your bass drum foot. Arguments could break out, resulting in swelling, cramping, and overall irritability. (The agony of de' feet?) With The Duallist, the same "trained" foot operates both beaters.

Another drawback of conventional double-pedal setups is that while playing them, your hi-hat is pretty much inoperative. It's either stuck closed or open, even with the use of a drop clutch. Since the Duallist requires the use of just *one* bass drum foot, your other foot remains free to operate the hi-hat.

The Duallist is also the *only* "double-pedal system" that allows you to play standing up. This means a percussionist could combine a Duallist with a Gajate bracket to play a wood block, a cowbell, or a tambourine while standing and playing bongos, congas, timbales, etc. I even considered mounting an X-hat in a perpendicular position to keep a hi-hat pattern going.

### Licks And Tricks

As I said earlier, the basic concept of The Duallist is that while the right beater strikes the bass drum head, the left beater is drawn back. When you release the footboard the left beater comes forward and strikes the head. How that action applies to your playing is really up to you. For example: If you play 8th notes in double mode, the pedal translates them into 16ths. Play quarter-note triplets and you get 8th-note triplets.

That might be all that many players would want in a double setup—but there's more. For instance, I tend to keep the beater on the head between beats when I play. In double mode, that works out as a shuffle beat, producing the first and third notes of a triplet. When I played a double stroke with the right beater, with what the left beater added I got a one-8th-and-two-16ths pattern. When I did the bounce with a pause, I got triplets. (I was able to accomplish this fairly quickly.) I was also able to produce the power triplets I hear players like Gregg Bissonette do, by playing the first beat with the stick on a snare or tom, and letting the beaters fill in the rest of the triplet. Very cool.

You may have surmised that with one foot you will not be able to play power paradiddles, or scare Virgil Donati into early retirement—and you are correct. The Duallist cannot completely duplicate every lick that can be played with a double pedal or two individual pedals. On the other hand, it boggles the mind to think of two *Duallists* on one kit, either on twin bass drums (can you say, "double-stroke rolls"?!) or one on the bass and the other on the hi-hat side for percussion applications. Remember, because The Duallist is essentially a single pedal by nature, it works with either your hi-hat or bass drum foot. The main thing is that you don't have to build up your hi-hat foot to bass-drum strength.

I have no doubt that any drummer's creativity will be expanded as a result of contact with The Duallist. And if you can't come up with enough ideas on your own, the twenty-two-minute instructional video supplied with The Duallist is packed with examples of how the pedal can be used.

### Major Feets

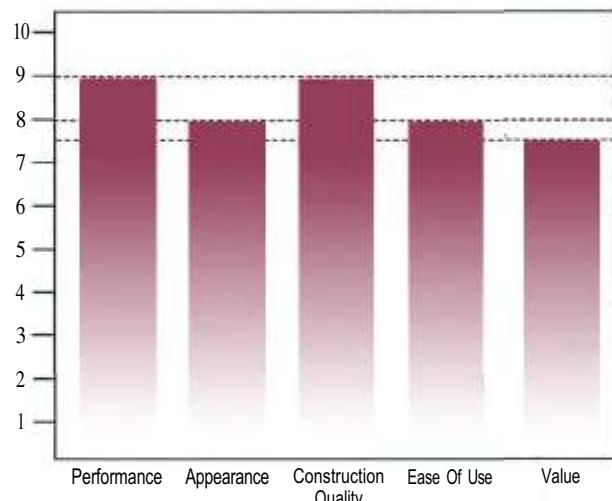
The Duallist already has quite an impressive history as an engineering achievement. In the UK it won the Design Counsel's

Millennium Product Award and the John Logie Baird Award for innovation. In the US it has been included in the NAMM Centennial Collector series, and it's on display at NAMM's Museum of Making Music. Meanwhile, Kevin Mackie may be the only percussion inventor in history to have been received and congratulated by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for his contribution to the music industry.

### On The Double

Daito Corporation is handling distribution of The Duallist in the United States. Their Web site, [www.amusicplanet.com](http://www.amusicplanet.com), offers audio and video demonstrations of The Duallist's capabilities. Or you can check out the manufacturer's site at [www.theduallist.com](http://www.theduallist.com), or email them at [info@theduallist.com](mailto:info@theduallist.com). But that's just breaking the ice. You really need to check the pedal out in person. Put your foot on it and you'll understand what I mean. The possibilities are limited only by what you put into it. This is a serious new instrument that can—and most probably will—encourage drummers to reshape their thinking about how they play.

### In A Nutshell



### En Garde!

#### The Duallist Pedal

<b>Design:</b>	Selectable single- or double-beater action operated by a single pedal
<b>Construction:</b>	Dupont Zytel polymer casting, with some aircraft-grade aluminum and steel components
<b>Beater options:</b>	Felt, wood, two hard plastics
<b>Color:</b>	Black
<b>Retail price:</b>	\$598

# Mapex Janus Transmission Hi-Hat System

## The difference is pivotal!

Review by Chap Ostrander

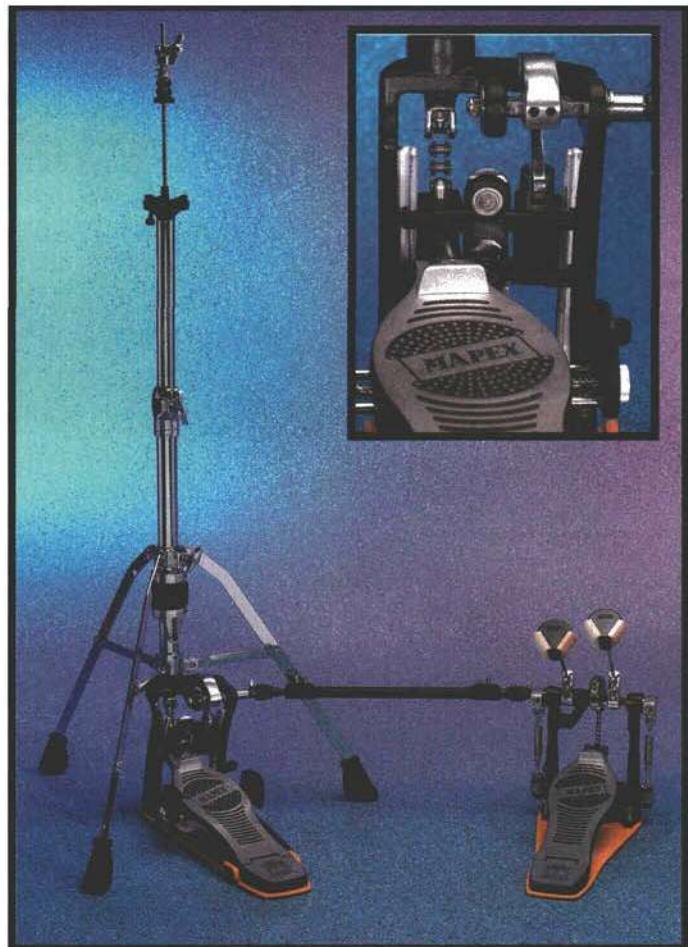
Photos by Jim Esposito

Any drummer who plays some form of double bass has to live with a major truth: Whether you use two bass drums or a double pedal, your hi-hat is going to be shoved over a few inches as a result of the extra pedal. You get used to it after a while, but it's not quite the same as when you had just one pedal on your hi-hat side. In some venues, there can even be a space issue. (When does a drummer have *enough* space?) Now, thanks to the vision of French drummer/inventor Jean-Francois Miguel, that's no longer the case. Based on his design, the Mapex Janus pedal combines a double pedal and a hi-hat, with just one pedal on the slave/hi-hat side.

The main advantage of the Janus system is that your hi-hat footboard is not pushed farther to the left to accommodate the left-side slave pedal. Your left foot has the choice of either playing the hi-hat *or* the bass drum. It stays on the pedal as you "shift" the footboard between the two operations.

### The Hi-Hat Component

I like the *look* of Mapex hardware. It's distinctive, while always being functional. For example, even the memory lock on the hi-hat stand portion of the Janus setup looks good while doing its job. The hi-hat features Mapex's Tri-Nodal Cymbal Seat, which minimizes contact with the bottom cymbal. The clutch uses OS (Overtone



### Hits

- one footboard operates either hi-hat or left bass drum pedal
- action of both functions is excellent
- saves space and keeps hi-hat cymbals close

### Misses

- would be improved by the inclusion of a drop clutch

Saving) cymbal washers, and there are no threads in the space where it meets the top cymbal. The softness of the washers gives a great feel to the hi-hat. You get good feedback from the top cymbal without choking it.

The adjustment for the spring tension is a large plastic knob mounted above the pedal. A moving guide passes through ten points of tension as you turn it. Even the lowest setting seemed rather tight, and I would hope that the pedal loosens up after a while. The pedal base has two spikes built in to prevent creeping. The single-braced tripod rotates for easy placement on the bandstand, or to accomodate other pedals.

The footboard unit connects to the base with two radius arms secured by drum key screws on each side. The total size of the hi-hat base (call it the "footprint" of the pedal) is smaller than you might imagine—really not much larger than their regular hi-hat pedal base. Mapex thoughtfully includes a bottle of spray lubricant to help keep everything operating smoothly.

### The Bass Pedal Component

The bass pedal unit is essentially the same as the Mapex P980 pedal, except for the Janus insignia in the heel plate. The Mapex name and other patterns are etched into the steel. The etching, while attractive, is also there to keep your foot in contact with the pedal.

A bright yellow steel plate forms the base for the pedal, with ribbed rubber underneath. The spring tension adjustment is held in place by ball bearings that fit into sockets in the main adjusting knob. A locking knob on top keeps the tension from moving. The springs for both beaters are on the main pedal unit. The drive for the right beater uses a single chain, and the action is extremely clean, quiet, and quick. Both pedals have removable toe stops.

### The Janus System

The most noticeable feature of the hi-hat footboard is the bicycle-type "shoe wing" derailleuer. The "wings" are each slanted in so that they will stay with your foot. A spring-loaded knurled knob on each allows you to set the width of the wings so that you can fit them to your shoe size. The "wings" are there because the operation of the Janus system requires lateral motion from your foot, in addition to the traditional up-and-down motion that drummers use to operate a hi-hat or bass drum pedal.

Here's how the whole thing works: The heel end of the footboard is connected to the base at a single swivel point. A steel post protrudes forward from the toe end of the footboard. That post is covered with rugged plastic that ensures quiet performance. The post engages a slot in a tough plastic block that rides on a rail. The block on the left side connects to the direct-pull hi-hat by a short chain. The block on the right pulls a cam drive that connects to one end of the double pedal's drive shaft. The slot in



each block is angled slightly down and in, so that the post from the footboard engages it and stays centered.

A pair of wheels above and below the transition point allows you to make the change smoothly. The height of the wheels can be adjusted, but I'm not sure why. You pretty much need to have the bottom wheel even with the bottom openings of the hi-hat and the bass pedal sides. Otherwise you wouldn't be able to switch from hi-hat to bass pedal. Perhaps Mapex wanted to give you the means to set the wheels so that you couldn't possibly move over to the bass pedal side, in case you wanted to play the Janus exclusively in hi-hat mode.

### The Playing Experience

Evaluated individually, the Janus hi-hat is quiet, smooth, and very responsive. The bass pedal is one of the best-feeling models out there. The main thing you'll need to learn is how to smoothly coordinate the switch between the two.

One idiosyncrasy that takes some getting used to is the fact that the hi-hat footboard *must* be at the top of its travel for you to make the switch. I usually rest my foot on the hi-hat to a certain degree, so I had to be mindful of raising it slightly to make the transition. The wings on the pedal are angled in slightly on the top, so they stay with your foot as you raise it.

A simple reality is that you can't play your hi-hat and left bass pedal at the same time. Those of you who currently play with your left foot covering both pedals won't find that same option here. It's an either/or situation.

Both sides of the hi-hat pedal unit were quiet and smooth, but the left beater on the bass pedal unit didn't move as freely as if it were driven by a standard slave pedal. A lot of linkage goes into moving the left bass beater from the hi-hat. I'd recommend liberal use of the included lubricant—especially on the bass-pedal side of the Janus. I'd also recommend that you dedicate a bag to carrying the Janus exclusively. For one thing, the combined units are fairly heavy, and would be easier to transport *outside of* your regular trap case or bag. For another, carrying the Janus alone would provide the best security for the linkage. Finally, it would keep the exposed lubricated parts away from the rest of your hardware.

Another idiosyncrasy of the Janus system is that you can't adjust the stroke of the left beater on the primary pedal. The

beater stroke is tied in to the height of the connector on the hi-hat pedal. During setup, you need to set the stroke of the left beater so that the linkage on the right side of the hi-hat base lines up with the height of the footboard at rest. If the drive shaft were round instead of a hex rod, you would be able to fine-tune these factors. In all fairness, however, the stroke position of the left beater is very serviceable, and I think that most players will find it usable.

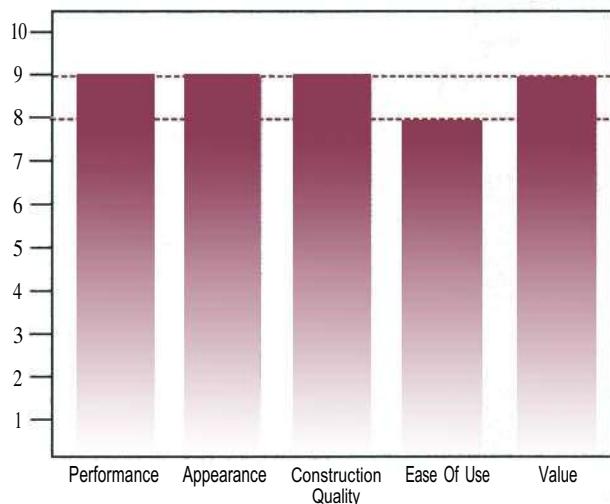
Mapex doesn't include a drop clutch with the Janus, which is too bad. Once you make the change from hi-hat to bass on your left foot, the cymbals are left hanging open. There are several good drop clutches on the market, so it wouldn't be difficult to obtain one. But it would be nice if Mapex included one with the Janus to begin with.

### Double Your Pleasure

The Janus setup is available in two versions. The JNS980 is the complete setup with hi-hat and double bass pedal. The JNS950 is the hi-hat piece by itself. You can either go for the full enchilada, or just upgrade your current double pedal setup using the JNS950. This means you just purchase the hi-hat, and you can attach it to your existing double pedal unit using the universal joint, which really seems to *be* universal. (It's been checked out, but do make sure for yourself.) The Janus setup is currently available only in right-handed format.

I've always been impressed with the quality and originality of Mapex hardware, and the Janus Transmission Hi-Hat is no exception. It's thoughtfully designed and well executed. And it effectively does the job of two pedals in the space of one. Give the Janus a try. It'll be good for your sole.

### In A Nutshell



### Not-So-Plain Janus

JNS950 (hi-hat unit only): \$380  
JNS980 (complete system): \$580

# Smith Custom Drums

## What's In A Name?

Review by Rick Van Horn

Photos by Jim Esposito

Smith Custom Drums are made by a guy named...you guessed it: Murawski. (Say what?)

Really. Joe Murawski is the owner of Smith Custom Drums, a boutique drum manufacturer in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Why "Smith" drums, then?

The way Joe tells it, he started thinking about going into the drum business in 1995. But first he wanted to attend that year's NAMM trade show to check out the scene. At the registration desk he was asked for the name of his company. "I needed to respond with something," says Joe. So I said, '*Ummm...Smith.* Smith Custom Drums.' It was either that or 'Acme,' and Smith just came out of my mouth first." When Joe did go into business shortly thereafter, he kept the Smith name.

Joe says his shop guys have a different explanation. "They like to tell our customers that we use 'Smith' because 'Murawski'—as incredibly melodic as it is—simply won't fit on a bass drum head." (*Rim-shot.*)

### Hits

- outstanding construction quality
- stunning finish
- deep, powerful bass drum and toms
- 8-ply snare drum offers wide tuning range

### Misses

- brass hardware makes drums surprisingly heavy

Be that as it may, Smith is the name on the drums sent to us for review. But although that kit represents the quality of work done by Smith, it doesn't really represent their "line," because they *have* no line. Instead, they operate on a genuine "custom" approach. Says Joe Murawski, "We like to work with drummers on the particular acoustic colors and textures they're looking for in their drums. That's where shell material, dimensions, and edges come into play. We can do just about anything a customer wants."

### Our Review Kit

We received a snare, a bass drum, and four toms. All of the drums were fitted with Smith's relatively small, machined-brass "turret-style" lugs, which attach to the shell with only one bolt each. The lugs are connected by brass tubes that receive the tension rods. The same bolts that hold each lug to the shell also pin





the tubes inside the lugs, locking everything together.

All of the toms were provided with suspension mounts. The tom-mounting brackets are designed to work with standard L-arm-type tom holders. Those brackets are Joe Murawski's personal choice for durability and performance. Instead of a die-cast tightening system that can strip under hard use, it utilizes a hardened steel bolt that's much more durable. And if the bolt *should* break, it can be replaced at any hardware store. That sounds like a sensible concept, and the mount worked fine during our testing. However, should a buyer want a different type of mount, Smith will happily supply it.

The snare drum came equipped with a Nickel Drumworks throw-off and butt, along with Puresound Percussion snare wires. Smith doesn't offer pedals or stands of any kind.

The toms came with clear Evans G2 twin-ply batters and Resonant bottom heads. The bass drum featured an Evans EQ3 batter, a Resonant front head (with a 4" hole), and an internal muffling pillow. The snare was fitted with a coated G1 batter and a clear 300 G1 snare-side head. Again, these heads are Joe Murawski's preference for use with the particular drums in our review kit. But Smith will ship drums with virtually any head combination requested by the buyer.

### The Shell Game

Starting with Keller maple shells, Smith makes drums with shell thicknesses of 5-, 6-, 8-, 10-, and 15-ply. They use reinforcement rings only when they have to—generally on the thinner shells (5- and 6-ply). Those reinforcement rings are typically 3-ply on toms and 6-ply on kick drums. They're used purely for the purpose of maintaining the structural integrity of the thin drumshells. The toms and bass drum on our review kit did have reinforcing rings.

Shell construction was absolutely outstanding on all of our review

drums. The edges were true and sanded smooth, and the interior seams of the shells were flawless. A rubber gasket or nylon washer separated every piece of hardware from the shell. Even the screw heads were aligned and polished.

### Sound Results

The relatively thin shells on our review toms, along with their twin-ply G2 heads, helped them to sound deep and punchy, with *lots* of sustain. Yet the drums also produced a good, clear attack, giving articulation to rapid stick patterns. Just for fun, I swapped a couple of the Evans G2 batters for Remo Fiberskyn 3s, which offer a thicker, calf-like character. When thus equipped, The Smith toms sounded very warm and round—approaching the sound of some vintage drums I've heard. Very nice.

Joe Murawski told me that he prefers to equip thin-shelled drums with twin-ply batters in order to maximize the low-end potential of the drums. On thicker shells, which create more high frequencies to begin with, he prefers single-ply heads to really promote that high-end clarity and attack. But of course, this remains the customer's choice.

A 6-ply, 18x22 bass drum should sound really big and deep. Out of the box, the Smith bass drum had plenty of punch, but the combination of the EQ3 self-muffling batter, the internal pillow, and the hole in the front head added too much "control." That control might be great for studio miking purposes, but it robbed the drum of its overall performance potential. So I pulled the pillow out, put a solid front resonant head on the drum, and relied on the EQ3 batter to handle any unwanted overtones.

*Boom.* Now the drum delivered its full complement of depth, tonality, and power. And it had all three in abundance.

The most surprising drum on our review kit was the snare, which featured an 8-ply shell with no reinforcing rings. Most snare drums

these days tend to be made significantly thicker in an effort to promote high-frequency projection. But the Smith snare's thin shell helped it to produce an extremely wide acoustic range. I could tune it easily to achieve a deep, fat, warm tonality, or I could tighten it up to get a clear, penetrating punch. It didn't have that "bullet-through-your-brain" crack that a thicker-shelled drum would have, but it offered a lot more personality than such drums usually do. And in all cases it had plenty of volume and resonance. The Nickel Drumworks strainer is a gem, offering smooth performance and extra-fine tuning capability for the snares, while the Puresound snare wires themselves produce crisp, clear response.

Since Smith makes snare drums in virtually any diameter, depth, and shell thickness, I asked Joe Murawski why he sent an 8-ply snare for review. He replied, "The 8-ply thing just happened to manifest itself from us being caught up in the moment. We were making some snares for Manny's and Sam Ash, and it seemed that most of the reorders were coming in for our 8-ply snares. I personally prefer snares with more high end myself. But I try to stay clear of my preferences when talking to my customers, since the drums ultimately won't belong to me."

### Take Another Look

Okay, from a custom drum company you *expect* unique and beautiful finishes. After all, that's a major reason for going custom in the first place. But you just gotta love a kit that comes in a purple sparkle finish with an iridescence that causes it to change color as you view it from different positions. Every *MD* editor who saw the kit commented on its stunning appearance. Maybe purple won't appeal to everybody, but the sheer quality of this finish sure would.

And, for those with more conservative tastes, there's the look of our review snare drum: a natural maple finish, with brass turret lugs combined with chrome rims and tubes. Very traditional, very classy, and very well done. So you pays your money and you takes your choice.

### Heavy, Man

Considering that it was composed mainly of drums with only 5- or 6-ply shells, the Smith kit was quite heavy. Joe Murawski explained that this was a result of his choice of all-brass lugs and tubes, which are considerably heavier than traditional die-cast lugs. But Joe believes that the brass hardware contributes to the overall quality of the drums in terms of durability *and* acoustic performance. I don't have any disagreement with that, but I do feel that the weight of the 14" and 16" toms make them impractical for suspension mounting. I'd opt to go with traditional floor-tom legs for those drums—which Smith does offer.

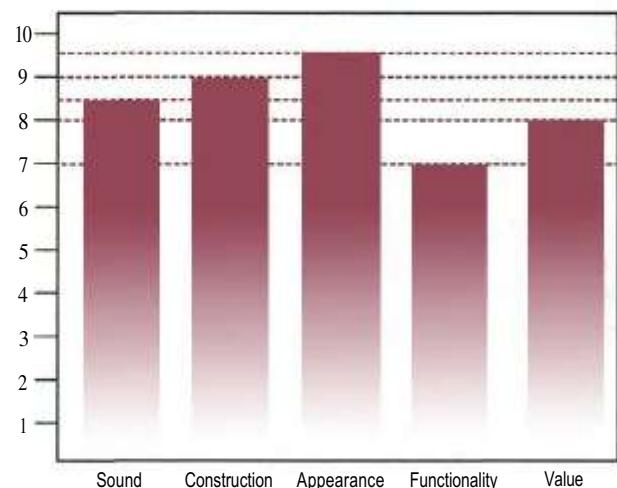
### Final Say

"Smith" may have a relatively common sound to it, but Smith drums are anything but common. They're made well and finished beautifully. They can be ordered in virtually unlimited sizes, depths, and thicknesses to meet any sort of performance requirements. And although they are certainly not inexpensive, they are priced competitively with other high-quality "boutique" brands. In short, Smith is a worthy contender in the field of custom-crafted drums.

Smith drums are currently available in selected Sam Ash stores, Manny's music, and a handful of other independent dealers. Or you

can contact Joe Murawski directly at Smith Custom Drums, 480 Barnum Ave., Bridgeport, CT 06608, tel: (203) 846-6834, fax: (203) 847-4870, [www.smithcustomdrums.com](http://www.smithcustomdrums.com).

## In A Nutshell



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

## The Village Smithy

**Kit Reviewed:** Smith Custom Drums six-piece custom kit

**Configuration:** 5x14 8-ply snare drum, 18x22 6-ply bass drum, 9x10, 10x12, and 12x14 5-ply toms, and 14x16 6-ply tom. All toms fitted with Smith suspension mounts.

**Shell Material:** 100% maple.

**Snare Hardware:** Nickel Drumworks strainer and butt, Puresound Percussion snare wires.

**Heads:** Evans C2 batters on bass drum and toms, coated G1 batter on snare. Evans Resonant heads on bottoms of toms and front of bass drum.

**Finish:** Kit finished in Wildberry Flake (multi-colored sparkle) painted finish. Snare finished in natural maple. All drum hardware chrome-plated, except for brass lugs on snare drum.

### Pricing:

18x22 bass drum	\$1,630
9x10 tom	\$ 605
10x12 tom	\$ 665
12x14 tom	\$ 880
14x16 tom	\$ 995
5x14 snare	\$ 795
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,570</b>



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# Pintech Tour Elite Pad Kit

## As Good As It Gets—For Less!

by Rick Van Horn

You may not have heard of Pintech Electronics, even though they've been around for a few years. They aren't a major corporation, and they don't make sound modules, effects pedals, or amplifiers. What they *are* is an American manufacturer of electronic triggering products. Those include a variety of pad kits ranging from entry-level student models to the top-of-the-line Tour Elite kit that's the subject of this review. They also offer electronic "cymbals," two sizes of tubular percussion triggers, three different kick trigger units, and triggers for acoustic drums.

In fact, just about the only electronic percussion gear that Pintech *doesn't* offer is sound modules—on the theory that there are enough excellent sound sources out there to give drummers plenty of options. Instead, Pintech focuses on offering pad and triggering systems with features—and prices—that set them apart from others on the market.

### On The Road

The Tour Elite kit takes its name from its intended purpose. It's designed to be used in live situations, and is built to stand up to the rigors of professional touring. One key to its ruggedness is its ConcertCast drum pads and snare drum. They feature cast-aluminum construction, heavy-duty LeverLok knobs, and a durable powder-coated finish. The tom pads (and other components of the kit that I'll describe later) are mounted on a time-tested Gibraltar Road Series curved rack

system. This makes the Tour Elite heavier than other E-pad kits that are mounted on lightweight aluminum rack systems. But it also makes the Tour Elite less likely to collapse under stress.

Specific physical features of the Tour Elite kit that I really enjoyed include the 13" piccolo snare drum. Notice I said "drum," not "pad." This is a genuine 4x13 drumshell, mounted on a Gibraltar snare stand. It has plenty of drumhead area to

accommodate brush playing, and its rim lends itself to cross-stick playing. The fact that it mounts on a separate stand makes it easy to position and solid to "play into."

I also liked the LeverLok knobs, which provide extra-solid grip strength to lock down the position of each pad, but can be rotated out of the way for a neater look.

The component listing for the Tour Elite kit is boxed at the end of this review.



### Hits

- woven drum pads provide great playing feel with excellent tracking
- metal drum shells offer durability
- rubber cymbal pads are soft and comfortable to play on

### Misses

- metal drum rims reduce practicality for silent practice or recording

But I do want to point out that it's a complete package, including *everything* you need to plug in and play (with the exception of the sound module). Even the individual components of the drum rack are carefully labeled as to their purpose. Your grandmother could set this thing up!

### Feels So Good

As far as I'm concerned, electronic pads finally "got real" with the invention of woven-head technology. A few years ago I conducted a review on a pro-level E-kit with rubber pads. I had a great time playing on it for two weeks—at the end of which I could barely move my wrists. The hard surface of the pads had caused me some serious shock damage. Woven heads do away with that problem.

The Tour Elite's snare, kick, and tom pads all feature SilenTech woven heads. These heads provide excellent triggering capability, while at the same time offering great playing response and "give." They are also lug-tunable for personal tension preference. As long as I didn't loosen them to the point of being "spongy," they maintained excellent tracking response at all dynamic levels.

Although Pintech offers two other styles of kick triggers, they've outfitted the Tour Elite kit with their ConcertKik bass drum pad. It's a good choice, because the pad—with its woven head—feels more like a real bass drum than any other kick trigger I've ever played. It's also wide enough to easily accommodate a double pedal. And the baseplate assembly, with its spurs and hook-and-loop fastener strips, stayed in place even under serious stomping.

The Tour Elite is fitted with Pintech's Studio Elite hi-hat and cymbal pads—which are, in fact, rubber pads. However, they're the *softest* rubber pads I've come across on an electronic kit. They're also quite large, with a 10 1/2" playing surface. This combination of size and softness provided a very comfortable playing feel. Each pad is dual-zone, permitting two sound options per pad, including the option to choke a crash-cymbal sound.

Included with the Tour Elite is Pintech's HH10-CV HyperHat. It's a controller that works with any sound module capable of providing full-range, open-to-closed hi-hat response. Best of all, it

offers adjustable footboard tension, just like a real hi-hat pedal. Once again: attention to function *and* feel. Nice.

### Quiet Please!

The quiet acoustic response of the Tour Elite's woven heads and soft rubber cymbal pads would certainly work for home practice. But the metal rims on the drum pads would not. They produce a very distinct and cutting click when struck. But let's remember that this kit is designed for live use. If you did want to practice quietly at home, it wouldn't take much effort to install some rubber edging over the rims of the drum pads. This might cut down a little on the snare's rim-trigger sensitivity, but that might not be much of an issue during practice.

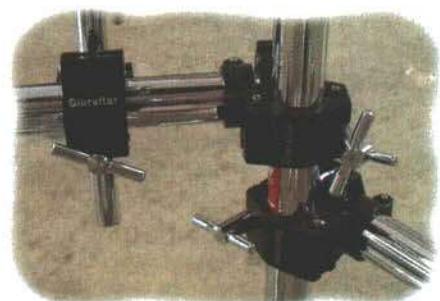
On the other hand, the "noisy" rims could create a problem if the kit were to be used for recording in a situation where live mic's were in the same area (for example, if real cymbals were to be miked with overheads). A solution to this would have to be worked out with the recording engineer in advance.

### Fun, Fun, Fun

Although Pintech states that their pads are 100% compatible with all popular drum modules, company president Larry Easterday recommends using a high-quality module with the pro-level Tour Elite. So we tested it with a Roland TD-8 module. It provided all the sounds we needed to put the Tour Elite through its paces, including brush and cross-stick sounds.

I tried every kind of playing I know how to do on the Tour Elite kit. I played hard...and I played very quietly. I used brushes. I played Nashville-style cross-stick. I played intricate rudimental patterns requiring quick stick rebound, and I laid into the toms a la stadium-style power ballads. I played long enough to work up quite a sweat—and it all felt *great*. Meanwhile, the Tour Elite pads and the Roland TD-8 communicated flawlessly throughout (once I had set the TD-8's sensitivity to my playing parameters).

I looked hard to find a flaw in the Tour Elite. And I discovered one minor one: Two of the tom pads had slight rattles when hit hard. I took the top heads off, and discovered that some holding screws in the lower section (yes, these pads actually have





closed bottoms!) were a little loose. Five minutes later I had corrected that problem, and the pads were totally silent. This was not what I would consider a major issue.

What is a major issue, however, is price. And in that area the Tour Elite (and all of Pintech's models) scores big. It's priced significantly lower than comparable equipment from other, larger manufacturers. Yet it offers playability and functionality that are the equal to anybody's, and roadworthiness that's better than most.

If Pintech electronic gear isn't in your local store, contact the company at (800) 445-0506, or visit their Web site at [www.edrums.com](http://www.edrums.com).

## Elitism

### Pintech Tour Elite Electronic Pad Kit

**Configuration:** 4x13 AcousTech dual-zone snare, four 10" ConcertCast tom pads, four 10 1/2" Studio Elite dual-zone hi-hat/cymbal pads, ConcertKik bass drum pad, and HyperHat hi-hat controller.

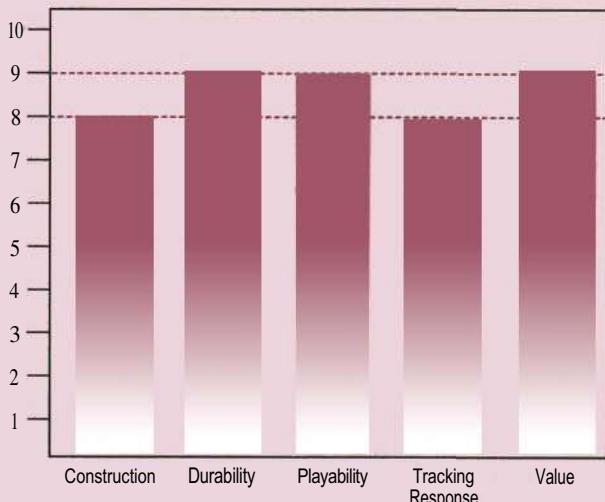
**Hardware:** Gibraltar Road Series curved drum rack, Gibraltar snare stand, three cymbal-pad arms, one hi-hat-pad arm, four tom-pad L-arms, sound-module mounting system, and all necessary cables.

**Finish:** ConcertCast and ConcertKik pads finished in white powder-coat. Studio Elite hi-hat/cymbal pads are black rubber. All hardware is chrome-plated.

**Heads:** Snare, tom, and kick pads feature SilenTech woven heads. Hi-hat/cymbal pads feature medium-soft rubber surfaces.

**Price:** \$2,960

### In A Nutshell

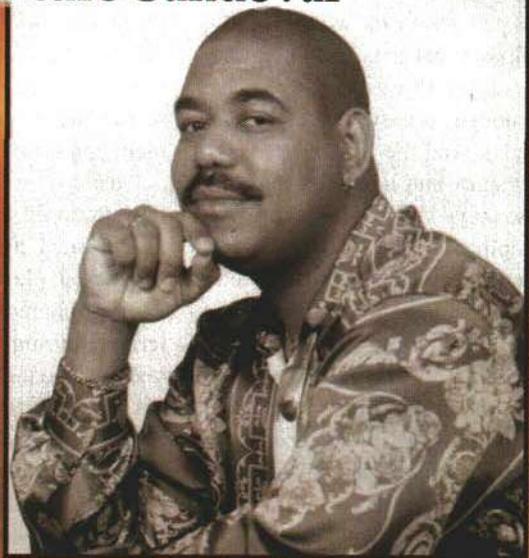


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w/Ruben Blades



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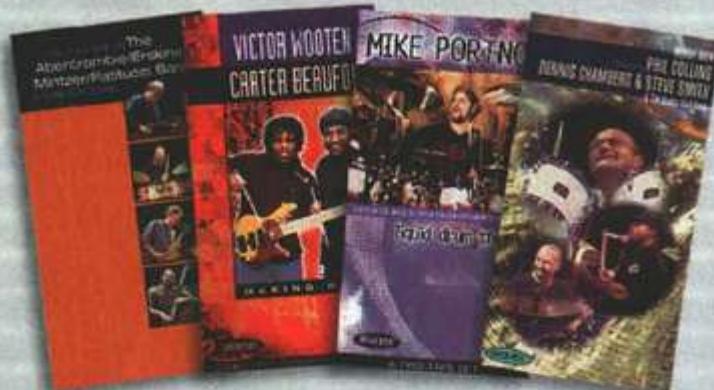
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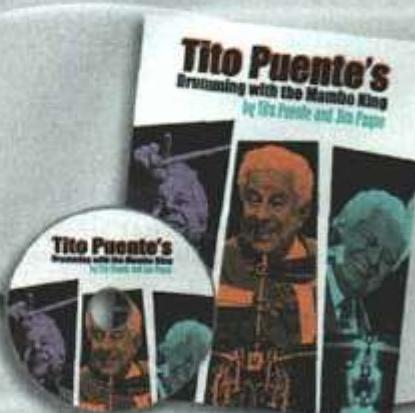
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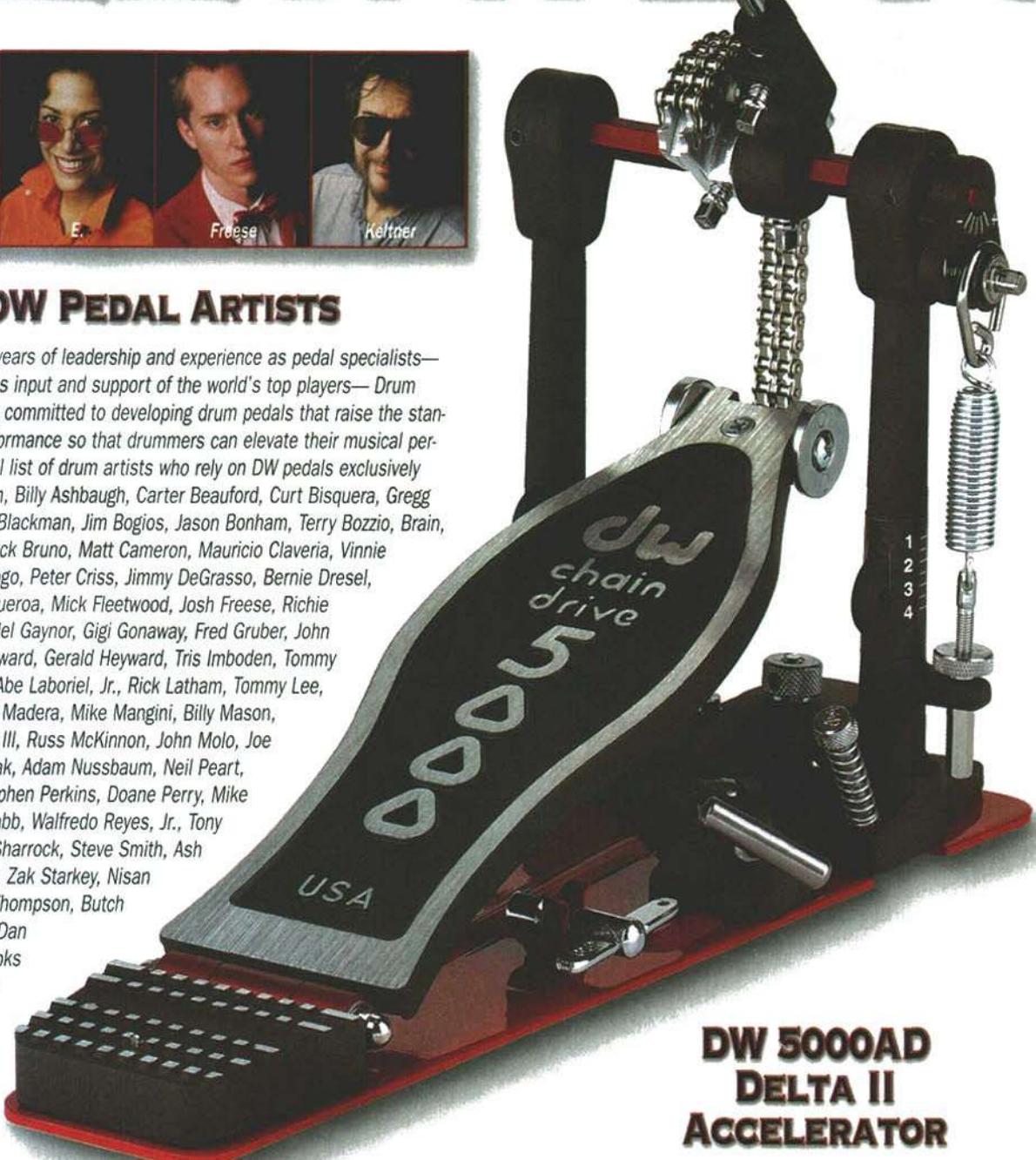
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- 9-Position "Elevator" Heel Platform (see above)
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double*	5002AD	5002TD	5002ND
Hi-Hats	2-Leg	3-Leg	Remote
standard	5500TD	5500D	5502LB

\* left-handed model 5002TDL is also available.

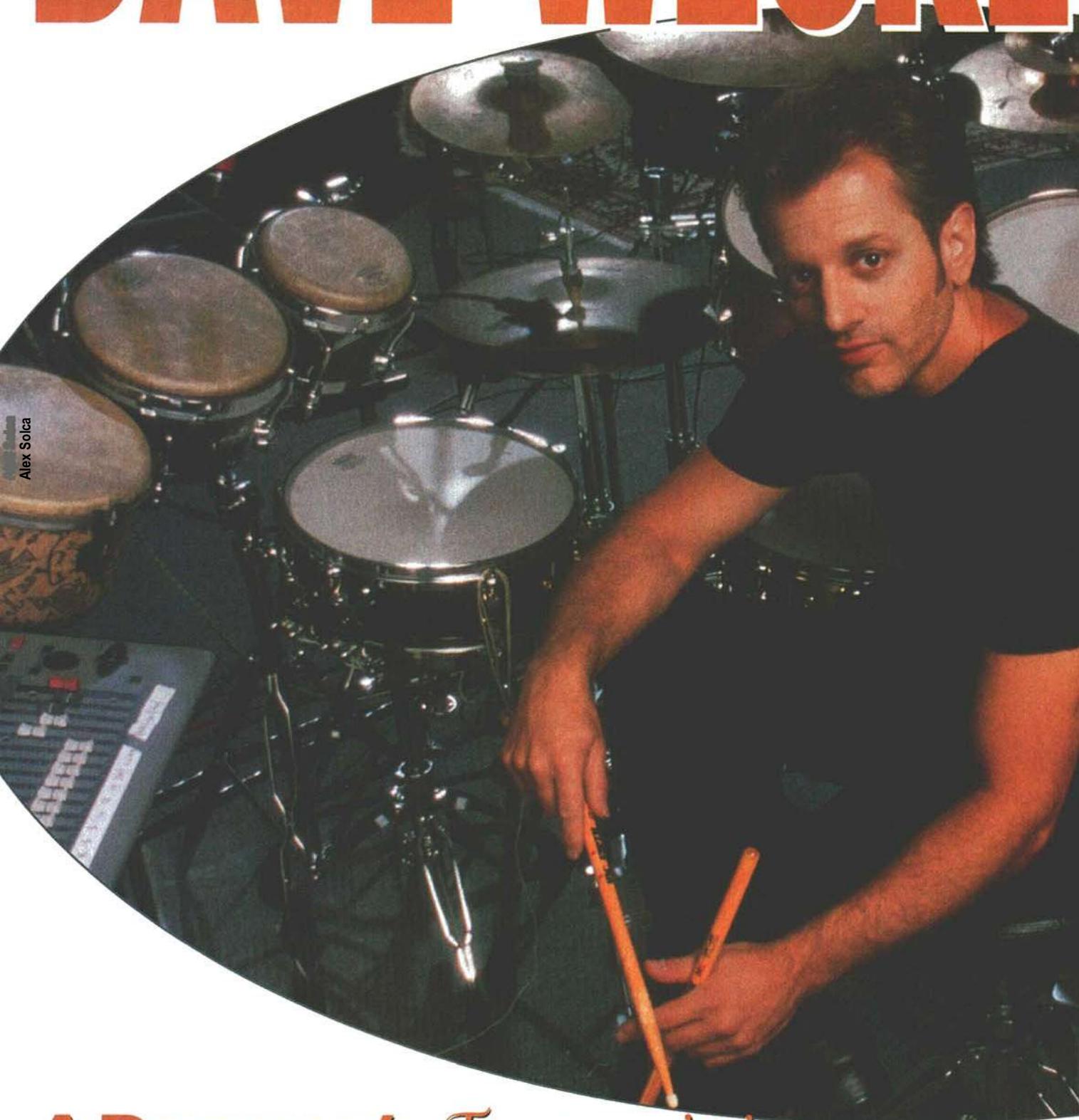
DW's Delta II Bass Drum Pedals were voted MVP in Modern Drummer's 1999 Consumer's Poll. Shown at right (from left to right): 5502LB Remote Hi-Hat, 5500TD Delta II Hi-Hat and 5002AD Delta II Accelerator Double Bass Drum Pedal (cymbals and cymbal stand sold separately).



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# DAVE WECKL



*A Drummer's Transition*



by T. Bruce Wittet

**I**t's Halloween in New York City. The annual parade is well underway in Greenwich Village and is spreading north and east. The streets outside the Bottom Line are packed with police and ghoulish revelers. Dressed in black, Dave Weckl, one of the most revered drummers of our time, slips into the club unnoticed. He pauses for a few moments to take in Steve Smith's band, which shares the bill with Weckl, then disappears behind the black curtains into the dressing room. There isn't a lot of meeting and greeting. Dave's off writing set lists, doing a last-minute check on the P.A., and tweaking his drums.

Look closely at those drums. There've been a few changes. On the new Dave Weckl Band album, *Transition*, Dave has supplemented his regular kit—perhaps "regular" is the wrong word—with bongos, a Tombek, blocks, and bells. You hear him play and you swear there's a percussionist up there, so seamless is his integration of percussion with regular kit. To be sure, his arms are doing considerable stretching to get the job done, but somehow he keeps the feel loose with a foot-tapping satisfaction.

Weckl's steadfast focus on his craft and his band brings to mind another great bandleader, Buddy Rich. Not to suggest that Dave shares Buddy's grumpy disposition or harsh personnel management—but Dave's a serious cat in his own way. His drive for perfection has earned him starring roles with the top musical figures of our era, from Paul Simon to Chick Corea to Randy Brecker to Madonna.

A while back, we heard talk that Weckl's feel was a little serious, stiff even. Mind you, if you'd heard Dave in 1987 nailing backbeats with the late pianist Richard Tee, you'd never have noticed any such thing. Same with Michel Camilo, with whom Dave played delightful, liquid Latin grooves that inspired a generation of drummers. Hindsight is 20/20, but maybe it was Chick Corea's Elektric Band that pushed Weckl too far emulating robotic drum machines.

For whatever reasons, Dave had concerns, prompting him to enter into a relationship with crusty drum-technique guru Freddie Gruber, ironically a close pal of Buddy Rich. Presto—if it were possible, Dave's flow became even smoother, the body motions more graceful.

And albums flowed, too. The last one, *Synergy*, with regulars Buzz Feiten on guitar and Jay Oliver on keys, drew waves of applause at the *Modern Drummer* Festival Weekend two years back. This time 'round, Dave had an idea about lightening the band's texture by eliminating guitar. It was a hard decision, letting Buzz Feiten go, since there was no real quibble on the grounds of performance. Same with Jay Oliver, who simply got too busy in other musical circles.

In the current DWB, Dave and faithful bassist Tom Kennedy anchor the pulse, leaving saxophonist Brandon Fields to soar and newcomer Steve Weingart to play his brand of kinky keyboards. Perfect sounds for Halloween!

Which brings us back to the Bottom Line. All the drum fanatics, old and young, are there, some parading and looking cool, others jostling for an unobstructed view of Weckl's amazing kit—two bass drums, percussion, and all.

One woman, scantily clad, is dancing on a chair near the bar. Everybody eyes the stage, pretending not to notice. Another woman is writhing hypnotically in a peasant dress dead center. *My*, but this Dave Weckl draws from a broad demographic! Steve Weingart is playing little squawks on the keyboard like when you step on your cat, then he goes to a Fender Rhodes patch and nods to Coltrane's "A Love Supreme." Dave is all smiles. As he explores new musical territory, he smiles more than I've ever seen him do. This, I'm thinking, is why he calls his new album *Transition*.



Paul La Ria

**MD:** What are some things you're working on right now in your playing?

**Dave:** Basically, I have a couple different approaches I use when I practice. I've been hitting the practice room quite a bit in the last year for my own self-gratification and progress. Also, a lot of preparation was needed for the three new videos we filmed for Carl Fisher and, of course, the new CD, *Transition*.

One of my practice routines lately is working on things that I'm not comfortable doing, or can't do at all. This is all in the sense of what I call "facility-building practice," which really is just foundational technical exercises. In other words, it's independence-based, involving more of the left foot and hand & foot combinations to make things flow comfortably and naturally. Nothing is really planned out as far as the stickings. It's based in melodic creativity and sometimes rhythmic repetition.

"Continuum": That's the word that has become important since I've been studying with Freddie [Gruber]. A continuum is what I like to experience when I play. I think this refers to a sense of what a *listener* responds to. It's a continuum of comfort in what's going on musically. When there's a glitch in the flow of a fill or a groove, you disrupt the continuum and interrupt the way it was feeling good.

**MD:** Unlike some purveyors of intricate inside grooves and

ghost notes, you never leave the listener in the lurch.

You never let the quarter note falter.

I think that's what you're saying about a continuum: There's never a hiccup in the groove.

**Dave:** Well, that's the goal and, hopefully, the end result. You're right that just about everything I do is quarter-note-based, even if it's floating, complex, abstract waves of sound. I always try to maintain a pulse through what's being played.

What I was actually talking about in terms of practicing is just a continuum of flow, of body motion. It's the working together of what is being played and what is *not*, in a sense of notes and space. I've come to realize and know this, and there's a lot of guys obviously who do this, but the one who comes to mind is Billy Ward. He really understands the whole

**"I started toying around with this idea of incorporating percussion into my setup. The trick—and this was where all the practicing came in—was how to do that and not compromise the flow of the normal drum part."**

essence of space and how the body is "flowing motion" in that space, creating the feel and the time of the notes.

Even if there's a lot of notes going on, there's still the motion of the body that really dictates where they fall. What I was talking about is keeping that flow consistent, even if it's complex groupings of hand & feet combinations.

Earlier you asked me if there was anything I *can't* do. Yes, plenty! When you look at the facility and physical ability of guys like Virgil Donati and Dennis Chambers, I consider there's plenty I can't do.

I'm continuing to work on my left foot—I think I've been saying this for the last ten years—working it into becoming a more usable musical entity in my playing.

**MD:** When you were young were you one of those players who were taught to play heel-toe on the hi-hat?

**Dave:** No, but I'm referring to using the double pedal, which I never had until very late in my studies.

**MD:** Do you play a lot of double pedal? You certainly don't play a lot of rapid 16ths.

**Dave:** There are at least three songs on the new CD where there's actually two patterns played on both bass drums. I've started to incorporate the left foot into fills and grooves. That's what I'm

trying to work into my playing: using the left foot so it doesn't become such a "both-hands-right-foot" type of scenario.

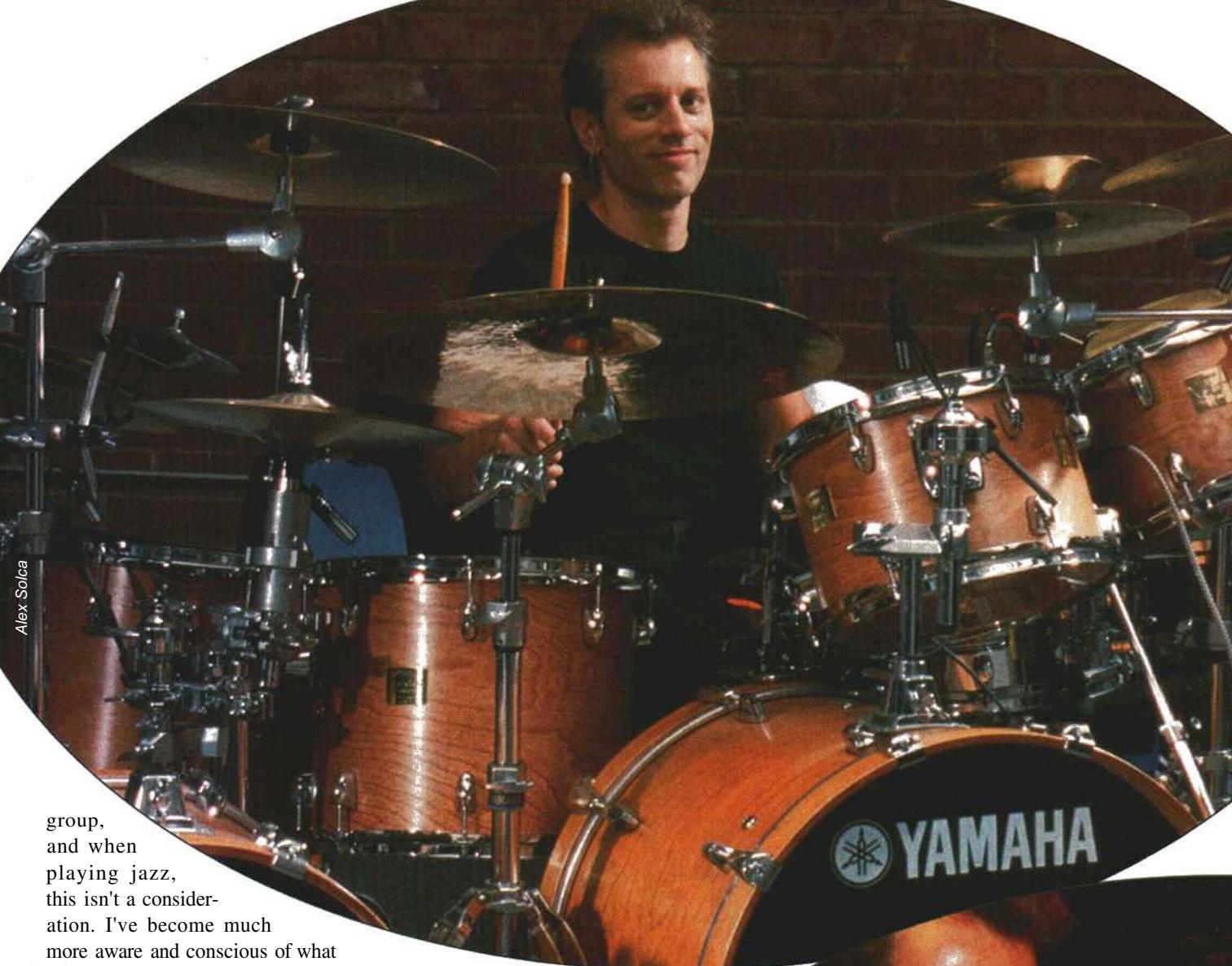
**MD:** In one song at the Bottom Line, you did an amazing sort of *partido alto*, in which you simulated the sound of a Brazilian rhythm section. Do your ideas come from sitting behind the instrument and exploring rhythms, or do they come from listening to various styles of music?

**Dave:** Both, but it really comes more from listening. I don't really tend to play an authentic rhythm from this country or that culture. What I started doing back in the Michel Camilo days was to take all of the knowledge that Michel had given me about percussion parts, mix it up with other grooves, and put it on the kit. That's my whole idea of what creative music should be—to come up with something new and be creative and spontaneous. I like to come up with different parts by, for example, combining what you're saying is a rhythm from Brazil with a bit of New Orleans, a little bit of funk, and a bit of swing. It becomes more organic, and not so pigeonholed. It becomes something *new*.

**MD:** Have you ever played in a situation with Cubans, the kind of guys who would start crossing themselves if you messed up the clave?

**Dave:** I remember a time in Brazil when I played with some Brazilian musicians and I felt conspicuous. I sort of knew what to play, but as far as if the feel was right, I wondered if I was playing *exactly* what I should have been playing. In my own





group, and when playing jazz, this isn't a consideration. I've become much more aware and conscious of what it is that I'm playing with other musicians.

The funny thing is that most of the time, even in those situations with great musicians from other cultures, they want you to do your own thing anyway.

**MD:** All these Cubans were admiring Steve Gadd, and he was probably struggling through a lot of their rhythms on *his* own terms.

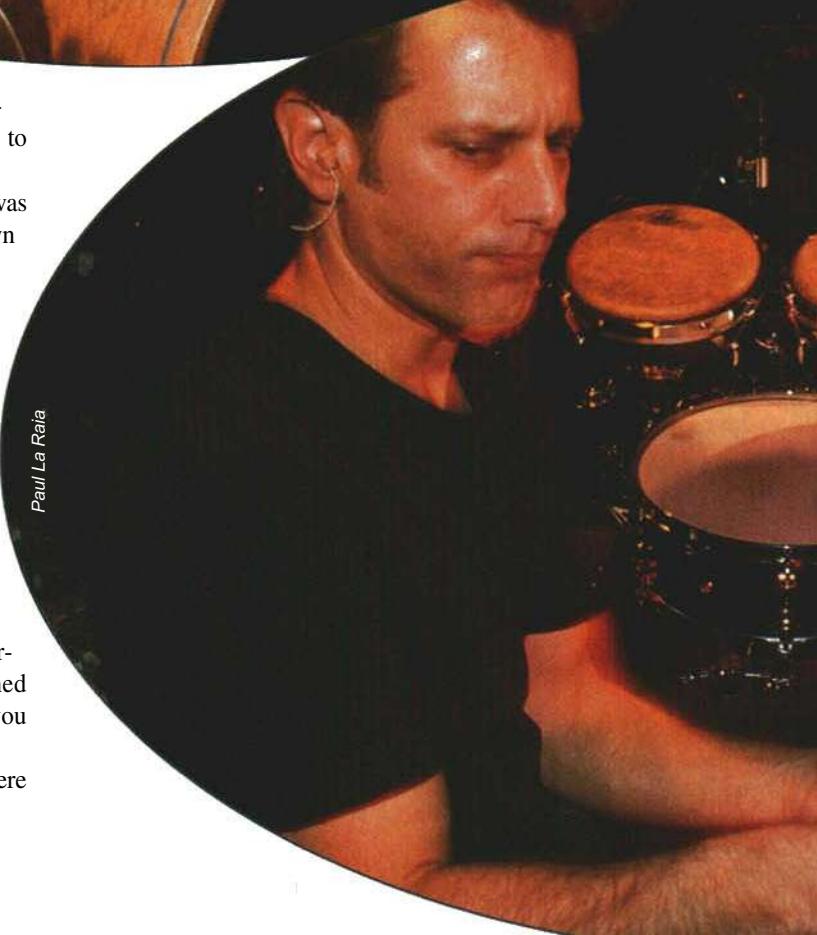
**Dave:** And Steve did the same thing I'm describing. I thought he was great at mixing parts from different cultures. Steve could make anything groove, and that's the whole concept. He put a little bit of everything in there, giving it a serious feel, and it was new! That's why I—and everyone else—loved it.

**MD:** Is it correct to say your sense of groove comes more from a jazz sensibility than Steve's?

**Dave:** Probably, but to compare anybody to Steve as far as his groove is concerned is kind of silly, don't you think?

**MD:** I took an informal poll at the Bottom Line on why people find you appealing. They talked about your ability to interject crafty fills within this floating time feel. They mentioned effortlessness. I'm wondering if this is a conscious thing you approach in your practice.

**Dave:** The questions you asked and the answers you got were



**"The younger players coming up play better at their age than any of us did comparatively. It's really fantastic to see; it's part of the evolution of the instrument."**

sort of "surface." I think that some people get the depth of what's going on, while some live on the surface, and either one is fine. Whatever comes across as being positive is cool with me.

All of what you just said, and the answers that you got, are a product of playing with the people that I'm playing with. I try to be sensitive to what's going on around me and to be able to follow the soloist. People ask me how I do this and that and come out on 1. It isn't that abstract! It's not free, most certainly, and it's definitely based on the quarter note. It's everybody playing together and it's me following the soloist, or vice versa.

Mike Stern made a comment in print once that he liked my ability to follow the soloist and be sensitive to the situation, and play what is right for the song. What I take pride in is making the soloist or people that I'm playing with feel comfortable, grounded, and free. Also, I want to give them ideas to play off of, and to complement what they're doing.

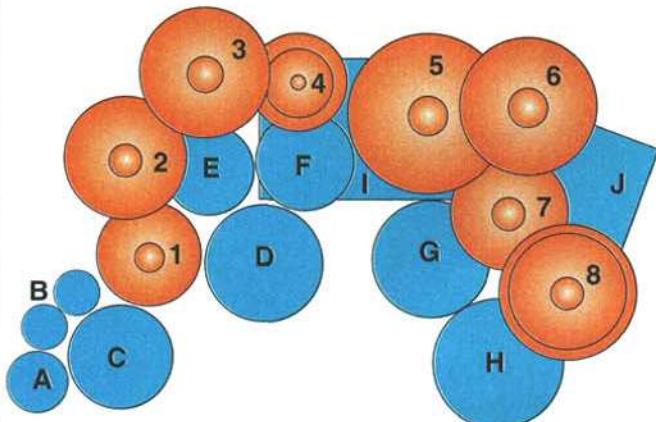
**MD:** I noticed Steve Weingart smiling on many occasions. What does he bring to the group? He certainly leaves space.

**Dave:** His approach is very spacious. When we started writing we had a great chemistry right off the bat. We're laughing all the time on stage because of the stuff that we hit together. It's

the phrasing and musical positiveness that happens in the things that we communicate. We're enjoying what each other is playing, and that's what it's all about. That goes for Brandon and Tom too.

**MD:** I've seen you play really simple, with the late Richard Tee, for example, just *nailing* simple grooves with few fills. But would it be safe to say that you thrive on complexity?

## Transitional Drums



**Drums:** Yamaha Vintage Birch (or Maple) Custom

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- C. 5x13 Dave Weckl Signature maple snare
- D. 5 1/2x14 Dave Weckl Signature aluminum snare
- E. 8x10 tom
- F. 8x12 tom
- G. 12x14 floor tom (mounted)
- H. 14x16 floor tom (mounted)
- I. 16x22 bass drum
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- 7. 14" K Constantinople hi-hats
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**Sticks:** Vic Firth Dave Weckl model

**Microphones:** Shure, including in-ear monitoring system

# Dave Weckl

**Dave:** No. I go through phases in what feels good. When I went through the *Rhythm Of The Soul* phase, I was into non-complexity. I was sick of playing a lot of stuff. But even now, in a section of a drum solo, I'll play simple stuff to create more space. In the current band, there's a lot of spaces where there isn't a lot going on. The ballad is a perfect example. My "phase" now, I think, is a blend of complex and simple, as needed for the music and my emotion at the time.

**MD:** Could you describe your choice of

drums for this album?

**Dave:** My new practice space/rehearsal studio required a set of drums to be left set up all the time. Joe Testa of Yamaha was nice enough to let me use a Vintage Birch Absolute drumset. I liked the drums right away. I had been playing a lot more acoustic gigs over the last year, and was using Remo coated Ambassadors, going for a more natural, open sound. So I put them on these drums, too. When we had guitar in the DWB, I felt that the drums shouldn't take up as much space. So I was

using thicker heads—clear Emperors.

**MD:** You find that Emperors mute the drums?

**Dave:** Not necessarily mute, but with a double-ply head a drum is not going to be as loud or project like a single-ply head. The point of the Emperors was that they gave a more concise, punchy tone. They are very quick and get out of the way. Ambassadors are more airy and take up more space.

**MD:** Do you find Ambassadors harder to keep in tune?

**Dave:** Absolutely not. I put a set of coated Ambassadors on this drumkit at the beginning of the tour and a month later they were still on there! I've never done that before.

Getting back to the birch drums, I was using them to practice, write all the music, and rehearse the band, so it seemed silly to bring in another kit. The recording studio, Frankie's Hideaway, was in the same building as my rehearsal room, so I simply moved them across the hall to the big room and recorded the CD with those drums.

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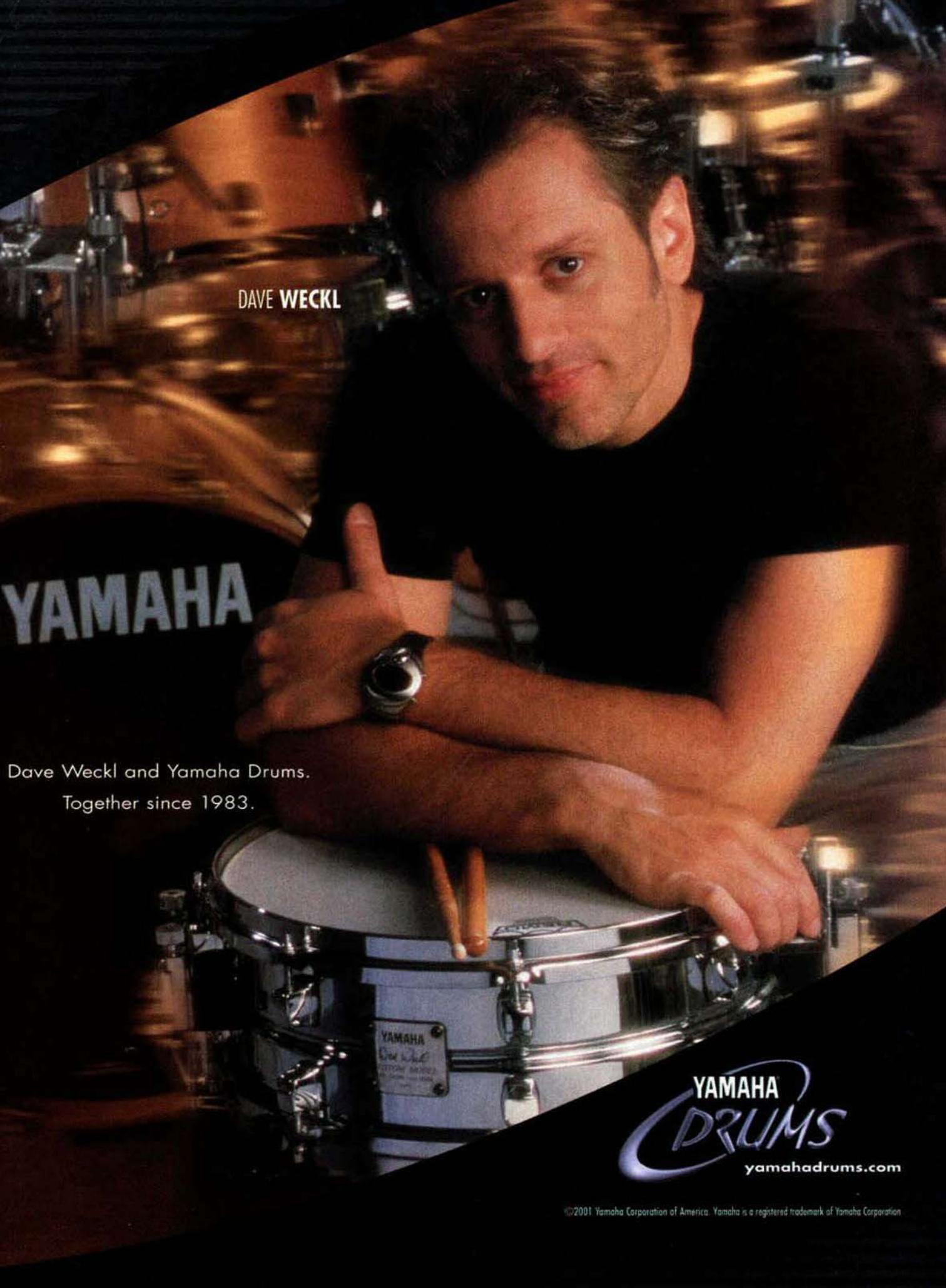
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# Dave Weckl

**Dave:** The birch shells are a little brighter, and they project a bit better. They're not quite as warm as the maples. And the maple bass drums have more low end. I can't find anything negative about *any* Yamaha kit, though. They all sound great, and either would have worked fine on the record.

**MD:** How do you set up your 18" bass drum? Sometimes you get a real "ethnic" pitch bend.

**Dave:** For the recording I used coated Ambassadors on both kick drums. Also

contributing to the sound is a recently developed bass drum muffling system I co-designed with Herbie May of Remo. It's a sort of felt-covered tube filled with pillow stuffing. There are three different sizes to accommodate different-sized bass drums. The tube rests on the bottom of the shell against the head and the accompanying C-clamps attach to the bottom of the shell with a hook & loop fastener, so you can adjust how tight you want it against the head.

The 18" is muffled a little bit more than

in previous years because I've been using a lot of double bass drum grooves. When I had the 18" more open and ringing, once the bass guitar got into the mix, the bottom got muddy. There's a full head on the front, a straight black Ambassador head. I use the muffling tube on the inside of the drum on both heads. The logo head is tensioned a bit tighter than the batter head, which helps produce the pitch bend you're referring to. To complete the setup, on both bass drums there's a Shure Beta 52 mounted inside with the May miking system.

**MD:** Do you release the beater from the head, as opposed to burying it, to get those longer 18" bass drum tones?

**Dave:** I get it off the head all the time, no matter which drum I'm playing.

**MD:** I've seen you soundcheck several times. Can you describe what you do?

**Dave:** The first thing I do is hire a soundman who has the temperament and ability to realize that I am going to be having a lot to do with how things sound. The first thing I do, together with my sound man, J.D. Andrew, is tune the house, making sure the speakers are all in phase, really *listening* and making the graphic equalization

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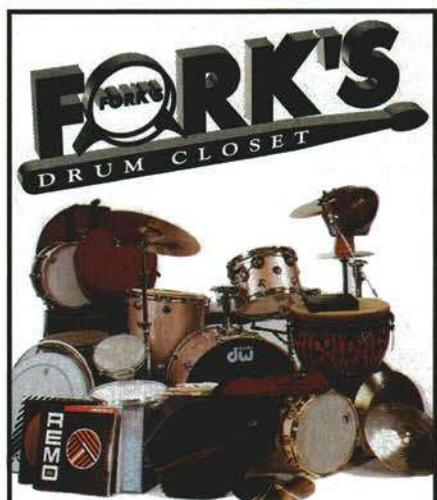
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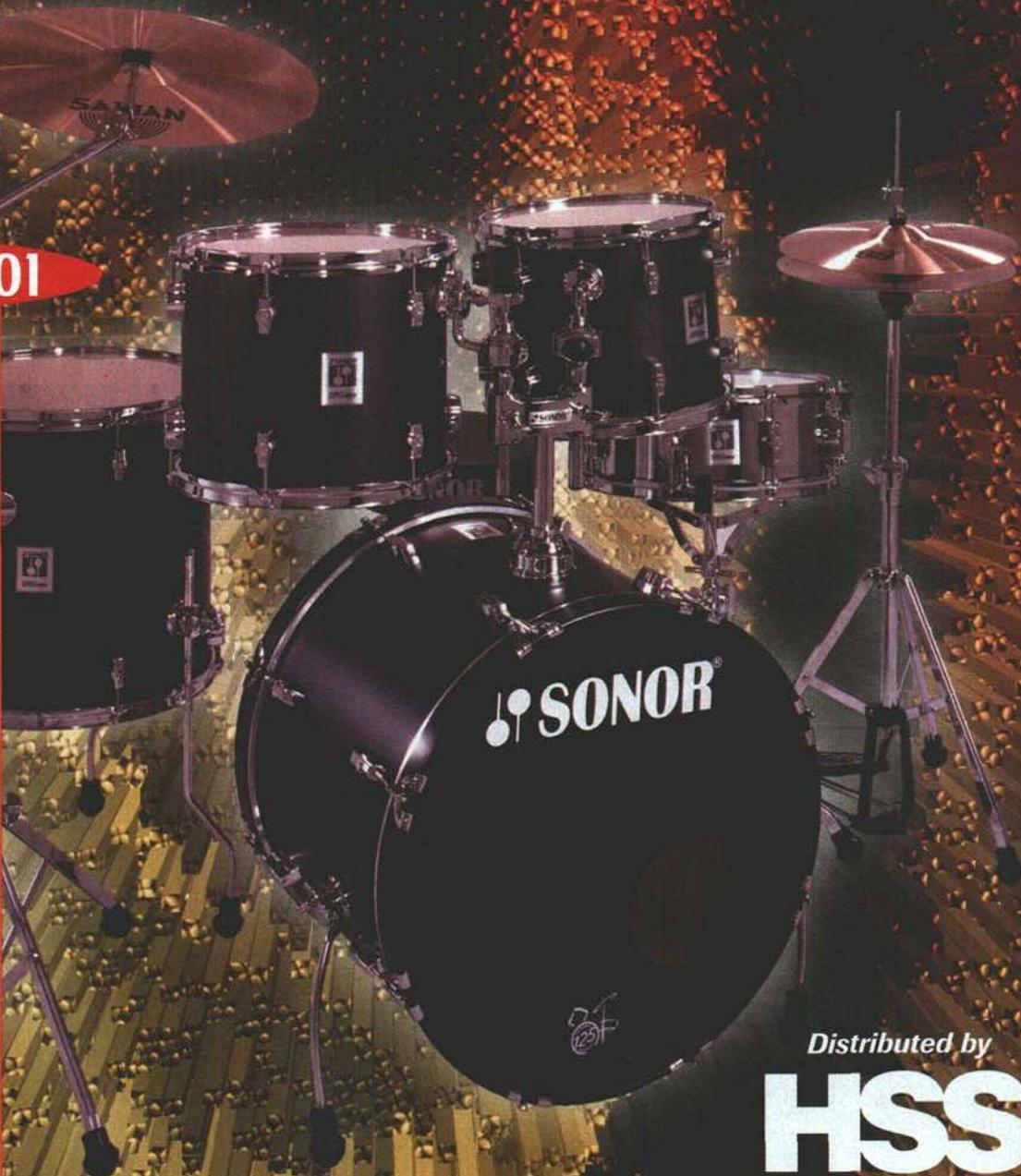
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Paul LaRia

decisions to get the system the way that I want to hear it out in the house. I do that by running my latest CD through the system.

I use a Yamaha 01 v mixer for the stereo mix of the drums, and the Shure in-ear monitor mix for Steve and me. The mixer is pre-set from the night before, so I know it's going to be close every soundcheck. Once on stage, we make sure that all the phasing of the drum mic's and balances are correct. I ask the soundman how the bass drums are balanced with the snares and toms—actually, I get the whole band's opinion. Then I go back out into the house and ask my drum tech to play a little bit so I can hear the sound. Then I stay there to hear everyone else. Now, it's the soundman's job to mix the band, but the concept of having a sound mixer being in full control of thirteen drum mic's on stage seems strange to me.

Quite honestly, I just don't want anybody being in control of my internal dynamics. All they have to do is turn up the bass drum a little bit and then everything that I play from a natural standpoint is shot to hell as far as dynamic balance is concerned. I'd rather get the drum balance

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1) Winners to be selected by a panel of MD editors. 2) Employees and the immediate families of Modern Drummer, and their affiliates, are ineligible. 3) Winner under the age of 18 must be accompanied to MD Drum Festival by a parent or guardian. Travel and accommodations for additional person(s) are not included in prize package. 4) Odds of winning depend on the number of eligible entries received. 5) Contest begins December 1, 2000 and ends March 1, 2001. Entries must be received on or before March 1, 2001 to be eligible. Winners will be notified by phone on or before April 1, 2001. 6) Sponsor is not responsible for lost, misdirected, and/or delayed entries. 7) Contest open to drummers everywhere, void where prohibited by law. 8) Each of the 2 winners will receive an all-expenses-paid trip to Montclair, New Jersey (including round-trip airfare, hotel accommodations, ground transportation, special backstage access, and attendance at MD's Drum Festival Weekend 2001 and related activities), a featured write-up in Modern Drummer magazine, a 2-year subscription to Modern Drummer, an award plaque, a selection of Modern Drummer books and clothing, and a check for \$500 US. Approximate retail value: \$1,500. 9) Approximate value for all prizes: \$3,000. 10) No prize substitutions will be permitted. 11) Sponsored by Modern Drummer Publications, Inc., 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, (973) 239-4140. 12) This game subject to the complete Official Rules. For a copy of the complete Official Rules or the winners' names, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Modern Drummer Publications/Undiscovered Drummer Contest/Official Rules/Winners' List, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009.

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Send a 2-minute solo drum performance on either cassette or videotape. Your performance may include time and groove playing in any musical genre, or a full 2-minute drum solo. Recorded examples lasting longer than 2 minutes will be disqualified. Clearly print your name, age, and phone number on your cassette or video.

Include a brief bio of your drumming background (100 words or less).

Provide proof of your age. (A copy of your driver's license or birth certificate is acceptable.) Your age as of March 1, 2001 will determine which group your performance is entered into.

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correct at the start so everything is being heard equally. Then if it's messed up, it's my fault, because I'm not playing the dynamics of the instrument correctly.

This is not to blow my own horn, or say that I know everything concerning sound, because that's most certainly not the case. But when you're talking about organic music where there's a lot of communication between musicians, the emotion has to be right, and there's really no way anyone else can know what that is!

That's why I did *Transition* all by myself: I didn't hire anyone to mix. I end up doing most of it anyway when I do have an engineer. It saves a lot of time and money and, in general, I'm happy with the sound produced in the studio and live.

**MD:** You get a great floor tom sound without a lot of "wobble" through the P.A. Are there things drummers do wrong here?

**Dave:** There's a lot involved. I find most people tune floor toms too high, especially the top head. What happens is they get high-pitched, ringing harmonics. Those overtones are going to carry and really be

## Weckl On The Web

It's easy to find Dave Weckl on the internet. Dial [www.daveweckl.com](http://www.daveweckl.com). You could do it in your sleep.

To see how fast it loads, we cleaned our cache. From a standing start, it took us 46 seconds (not too bad at all!) to load the home page. The attractive graphics seem to depict a space controller or game of some sort.

After you get there, Dave takes you on a scroll (you'll see what we mean). You travel a good distance horizontally to the outer limits. Here Dave spreads out the latest scoop on himself, former bandmember **Jay Oliver**, the **Synergy CD**, **Tour Dates**, **Latest News** (this one includes the *Transition* CD), and so on.

Try the radio button for **Gear**. Then click on **Photos** and your prayers are answered. You get front views of his kit, top views, back views, etc. And all photos download quickly.

Elsewhere, you get a good glimpse into Dave's thoughts, his *modus operandi*, and ultimately his affection for what he does. One of the better drumming Web sites out there, it's got Dave's attention to detail written all over it.

Go to [www.moderndrummer.com](http://www.moderndrummer.com) and click on the MD Radio icon to hear cuts from Dave Weckl's *Transition* album.

**dave weckl**  
transition

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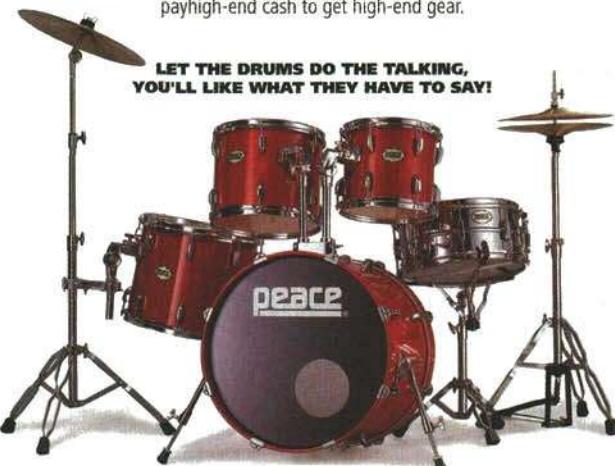
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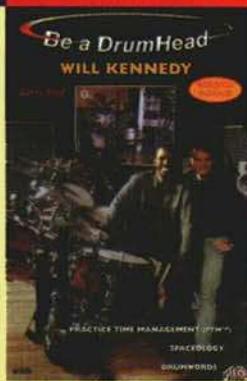
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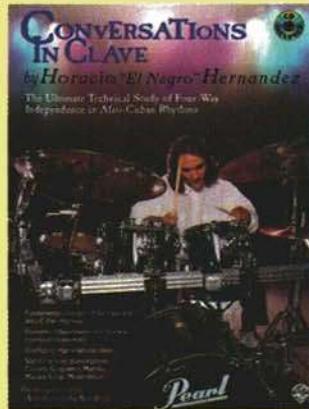
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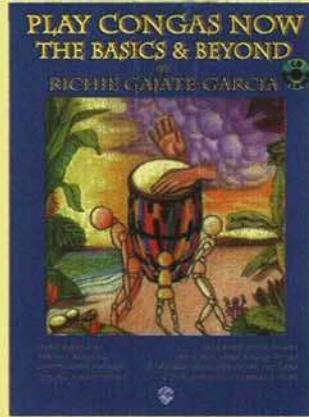


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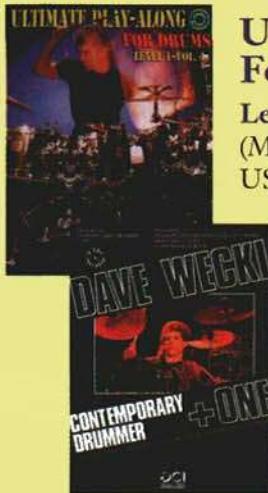
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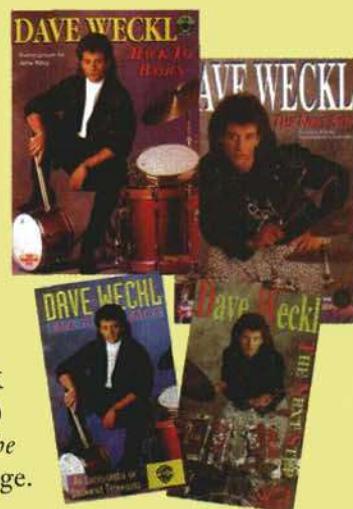
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## Dave Weckl

problematic, possibly causing feedback in the system. The first thing an engineer is going to want to do is EQ it out and maybe gate the hell out of the drum. Having said that, every room is different. It's all experimentation, and if you follow an exact formula, sometimes it won't work.

**MD:** Getting back to that floor tom, is the bottom head tighter?

**Dave:** Slightly. If the bottom head is too tight and you've got the top head loose, the low tones of the top head will ring excessively. It's a fine line and you really have to experiment.

Another problem is not the drum you're tuning but other drums. I'll fine-tune one tom by hitting *other* drums because there'll be harmonic problems. The 12" tom is the worst culprit for both snare and bass drum. If it's tuned too low, the bass drum will set it off and you get this long-lasting, low ring. If the top head is tuned too high, the snare will pick it up and you'll get the high harmonics of the tom when you hit the snare drum. People have trouble identifying what the problem is: You're hitting the snare drum and *something* is ringing. You assume it's the snare drum, but it's not. It's a harmonic from another drum that's being set off by the snare drum.

I'll hit the snare drum and usually find one problem lug and de-tune it—or tune the tom a little lower. Generally if there's a harmonic ringing, it's almost always the lug that's tuned to that pitch. It might be two lugs, but very rarely is it the whole drum. I decided to do a video on it, strictly on everything we're talking about. It's on tuning, equalization, the mixer, and all that stuff.

**MD:** Let's get a commentary on a few of the tracks from the new album. "Wake Up" features you integrating percussion, played in real time.

**Dave:** That's getting a lot of attention on this tour, especially from people who know my playing. With this music I wasn't hearing the forward motion from guitar or any melodic instrument: I was hearing it from percussion. I came close to hiring a percussionist in the band and on the record, but I also wanted to be sensible economically.

So I started toying around with this idea, and "Wake Up" was the first tune

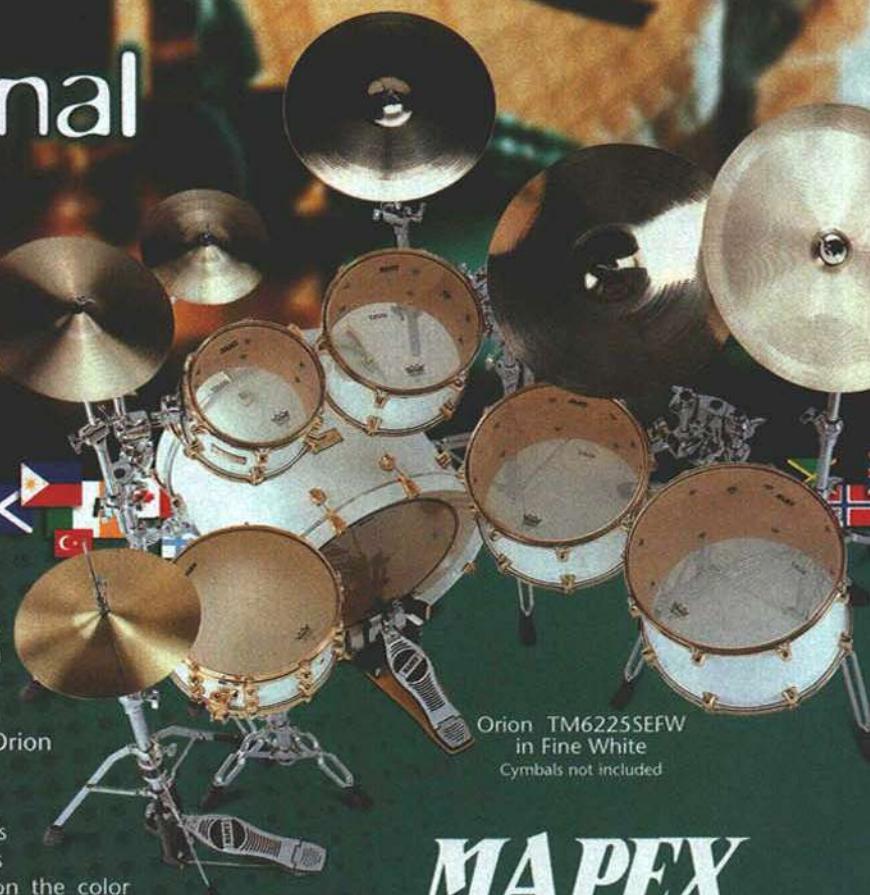
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# Dave Weckl

that got me into the concept. What I started doing was turning the snares off on my second snare drum, my 13" signature drum under the hi-hat. The chorus in this tune is one place where I was missing the Strat kind of guitar rhythm. If you listen to this tune, there's a tom or timbale-sounding rimshot on the left snare with snares off playing that kind of Strat part. The concept was to have that motion, but coming from the drumset. The Remo bongos and Tombek came later, and were added into this song as well. The trick—and this was where all the practicing came in—was how to do that and not disrupt the drum groove. I didn't want to compromise the flow of the normal drum part.

With all the stuff going on, I had to cover a lot of territory with the right hand. For example, in that same chorus, I go from the cymbal bell to the snare drum. The old days of copying Steve Gadd grooves really came into play, as far as the motion involved in going from the ride cymbal bell to the snare drum on 2 and 4. It was mostly the left-hand snare becoming sound colors that helped the forward motion. It ended up with me play-

ing linear, splitting it up between right hand, left hand, left-hand snare drum, and the bongos.

**MD:** Did it come naturally to you?

**Dave:** Kind of, but I had to practice the independence aspect of playing the left-hand rhythm part, especially for the more involved songs. I'd also like to mention the use of the two bass drums in "Wake Up." They're used for texture changes on the bottom end of the groove. The front part of the tune is on the 18". On the chorus I switch to 22" because it's heavier and more funky. Then when it goes back to the more open, dancing groove, I go back to the 18". If I were to play the beginning groove on the 22", it would be too in your face—but it works well for the B and C sections of the tune.

**MD:** Tell me about "Braziluba."

**Dave:** On "Braziluba," Tom came up with a groove similar to one he played with Tania Maria. It was coming from a Brazilian place, with a little salsa and New Orleans mixed in. That was an example of me playing something groove-wise that doesn't specifically have a name, but is a combination of many

rhythms. The drum solo at the end was really something that was fun for me to loosen up on, playing over a bass ostinato and recurring melodic bits.

**MD:** You don't always pick the easiest spots—or tempos—for solos.

**Dave:** For me it's about *expression* aid to be able to play the stuff, even when loose, in the pocket. I've always taught that if you can't play it in time, you shouldn't be playing it.

**MD:** On "Like That," I love Steve's quirky keyboard sounds.

**Dave:** He has quite an array of great sounds, with the Rhodes coming from the Yamaha S80. It's the only song on the record where we used a sequence. It was one of Steve's tunes that I really liked and wanted to do. It's another example of both bass drums being used—the 18" for the groove in the A section. During the sax solo, there's a "two bass drum" part happening. The left foot is playing quarter notes on the 22" and the right is playing almost a three-against-four pattern.

**MD:** It seems to me that it's more important for you to be expressive on the bass drum than to lock in with a specific bass

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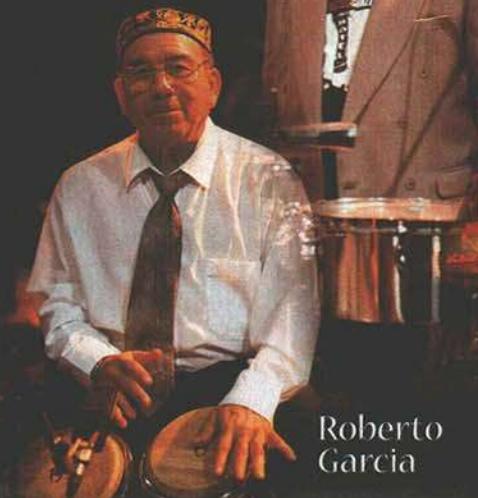
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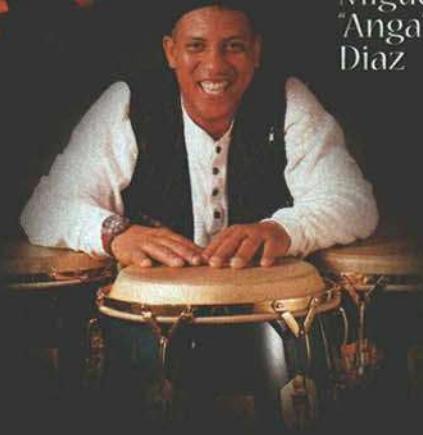
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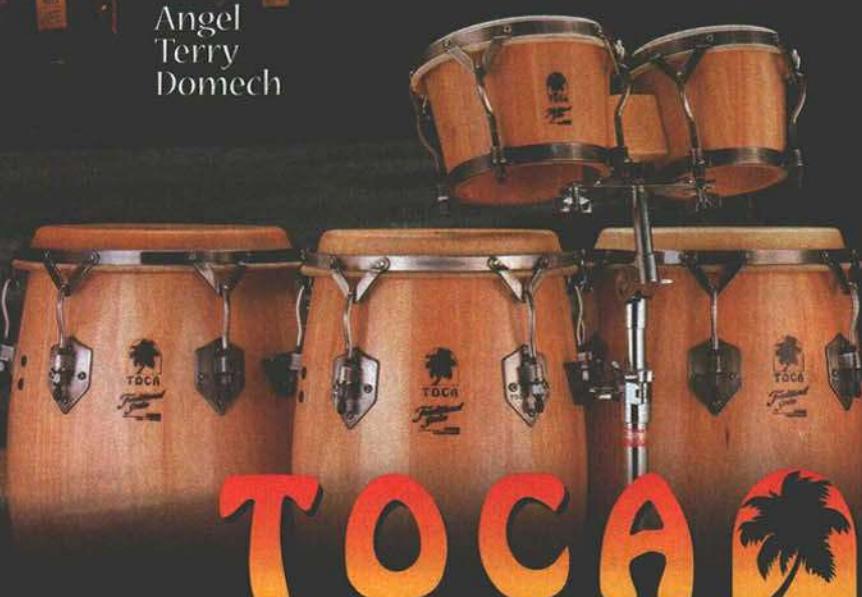
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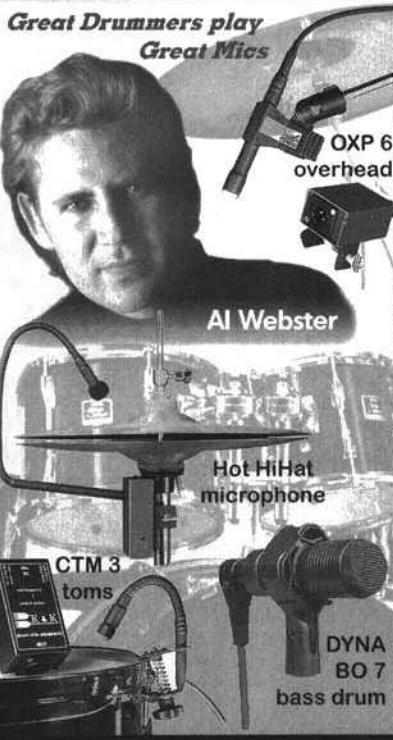
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## Dave Weckl

guitar pattern.

**Dave:** I'm not a big fan of that, never have been. Most of the time it's almost impossible to lock it in without flams. I prefer either counterpoint bass drum/bass parts or just pieces of the rhythm that one or the other is playing. Either part alone will carry the groove.

**MD:** When "Group Therapy" came to the table, did you debate the groove?

**Dave:** Yes, it's Brandon's tune, and he said he'd done it a number of different ways. I had wanted to write a bebop/funk tune and we ran out of time. Brandon's tune was so good and fun to play that we tried to incorporate a bit of what I was thinking. The whole approach is to be open and fun.

**MD:** "Passion" is your mom's favorite tune, according to the liner notes. I think it's my favorite, too, but then I like ballads.

**Dave:** It seems to be a lot people's favorite, and we pull it off well live. It's all in the essence of creating a mood and a vibe. When we mastered this record, I sat in the middle of the room with it turned up really loud. I wanted to keep it mes-

merizing and deep. It's really about evoking the passion—for just about anything. I've seen many people get affected by music positively and passionately.

When I started with the drum groove, it was like, close the eyes and get into a vibe. The percussion stuff really lent itself to getting the ethnic effect that I wanted.

**MD:** "Crossing Paths."

**Dave:** I've loved 12/8 rhythms ever since I played with Paul Simon and a number of African musicians. The bass player, Armand Sabal Lecco, taught me a lot. Michael Brecker was into it at the time, too. I really learned some cool stuff with 12/8 and the tradition of West/South African music.

**MD:** In that song, you mix it up with your ride bell.

**Dave:** You mean the four-against-three thing in the bridge? I have to give Jimmy Earl, the great bass player in LA, credit for that. In the past, when I would play a 12/8 tune for Jimmy, he would superimpose this four-thing thing over it. That tune has the most going on, as far as the percussion stuff being really difficult to play and keeping the drum groove hap-

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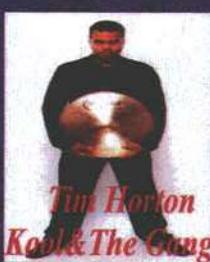
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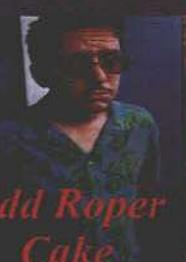
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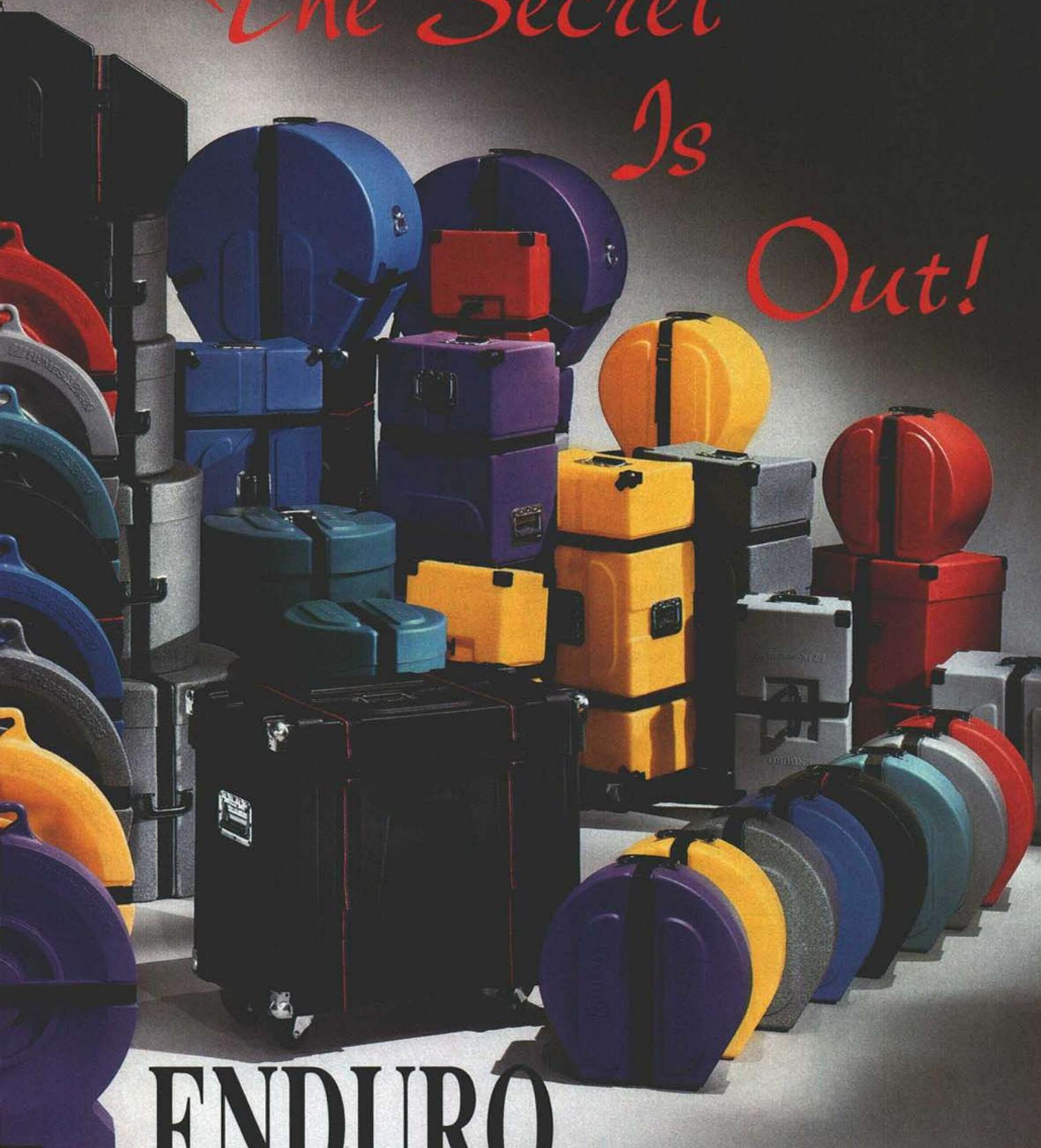
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# Dave Weckl

pening. That one took a lot of practice.

**MD:** "Just For The Record."

**Dave:** Tom's contribution. My only regret is we didn't get to play this tune a bit more before recording it. It has gone through quite a metamorphosis. We play it a lot slower and looser, taking it into swing, be-bop, and shuffle too. It's a lot of fun live.

**MD:** On "Amanacer," how would you describe your opening groove? Also, you sound as if you've been listening to the great timbaleros.

**Dave:** It's basically a groove I was singing in my head. Again, it's a combination of different rhythms I've heard. I love good timbale players. One of my favorites in LA is a guy named Ronnie Gutierrez, who sits in with Joey Heredia's group a lot. Everything he plays is in the tradition and feels great.

**MD:** Moving on to technique, in your clinics you describe a grip that varies from the standard thumb & first finger. You're talking about a thumb/*second* finger fulcrum.

**Dave:** Yes, this gets into the whole Freddie Gruber experience. On *A Natural Evolution*, my new video that's out now, I talk about all this stuff. The main focus is where the stick is held and the location of the fulcrum. In a nutshell, it's about rebound and letting the stick do fifty percent of the job instead of it being an up-stroke/down-stroke event—which it is, and has to be, when you're playing from the thumb and the first finger. The way you get the stick back up is to pick it back up. But in order for rebound to happen and the action/reaction principle to occur, there has to be a pendulum action in the hand. There has to be a seesaw, and the way to get that is to have a balance point

from the thumb and the middle finger.

**MD:** And yet drum books perpetuate the first method.

**Dave:** Well, because it is a method. It's not wrong to do it all yourself. It just takes a lot more effort and changes the focus. It made me think too much about the physical aspect of drumming versus getting to the music, which is where I feel I've been able to get to now—and having much more fun playing. It's the ability to *let go* and realize that I don't have to work so hard, that I'm able to play from a free, conceptual approach.

**MD:** Playing devil's advocate here, if you wanted to take the path of least resistance, you could have switched from traditional grip to matched.

**Dave:** On *Transition*, during all of the percussion tunes, I *am* playing matched. In fact, I'm playing sixty to seventy percent matched grip on the CD. A strange thing happened to me, though, when we did the first gig with this band in Columbia. I was switching back and forth so much I froze up—both hands. I had to stop the show. It's the first time in my career that happened to me. Right then I stopped playing matched grip and went back to conventional and raised the percussion up. Although because of the angle, playing the percussion is easier with matched grip, physically I don't have problems anymore. Switching back and forth, especially when my arms were extended in this octopus fashion, really caused cramping in the hands—and pinched nerves in the neck.

**MD:** You love the drums.

**Dave:** I love what I can *do* with the drums. I've been playing this instrument for thirty-three years and, like I said when I talked about the tune "Passion," I see

people emotionally and passionately respond to what we do. They're influenced to stop taking drugs, to stop drinking—I've had people tell me they're *alive* because of my music. To *think* that it is possible to create that kind of positive reaction and emotion in another human being from what I do on a drumset....

A lot of people get asked why they play the drums, and I'm kind of astounded at the answers. It tells me they're missing the point, for themselves and for human nature in general. To be able to create *that* kind of feeling in another human being is really deep. *That's* why I'm doing what I'm doing. It's what, in my opinion, I'm *supposed* to be doing, why I am here. I enjoy and need to be figuring out ways to get better and to keep progressing. The goal is to be completely free and uninhibited, to say what I want to say without there being anything in my way mentally or physically. It's always a gas to learn something. Seeing Vinnie Colaiuta, Steve Smith, and all the guys who are playing so great, just pushes the envelope and makes you want to get better.

When you watch and listen to someone like Vinnie, what else is there to do but be inspired? The younger players coming up reflect this, too, playing better at their age than any of us did comparatively—at least for me! It's really fantastic to see; it's part of the evolution of the instrument.

At the other end of the spectrum, being a musician is a hard life. There are frustrating, dark moments, and it's sometimes hard for those close to us to understand why we must do what we do. But every time I play and get that positive, human response, it all comes into perspective. It becomes very easy to stay positive.



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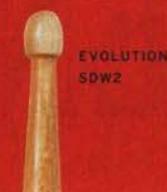
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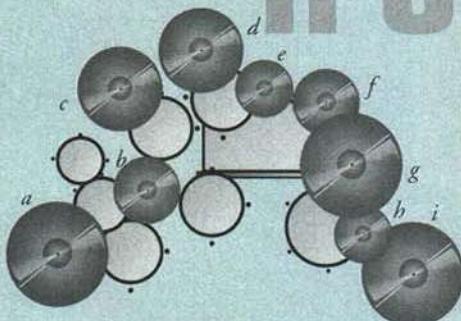
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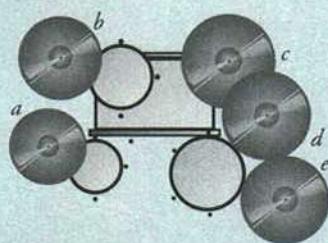
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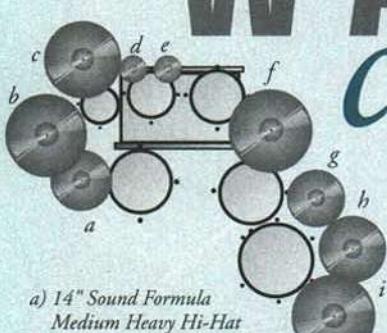
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# the Virtues of Birch

## kenny aronoff

Kenny Talks About His  
New Starclassic Performers.

Who's busier than Kenny Aronoff? When we finally caught up with him to get his thoughts about birch drums for this ad, he was at the airport on his "day off"—having just finished a gig on Letterman (and some clinics) and on his way to Denver to get back on the Joe Cocker tour. Busy, but as you know if you've ever met him, Kenny's never too busy to talk drums.

"Starclassic Maple changed everything. Sure, I played the old birch Tama Superstars. But Starclassic Maple is the best kit Tama's ever made. I love these kits. That's why I own six of them."

"But even with six kits, I couldn't get one in time for a couple San Francisco recording sessions. However, the studio did have a birch Starclassic Performer set. The tom sizes were a little different than what I normally use, an inch less deep. The kick was an 18 x 22 instead of my 16 x 24. Which was okay, I think the 18 x 22 size is one of the brilliant drum inventions of the past two decades."

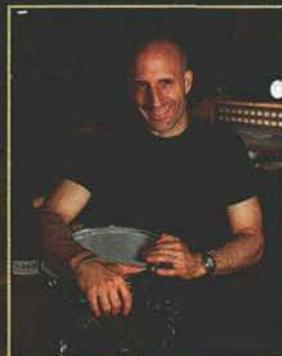
"I figured the kit would do all right, but I was immediately blown away by the Performers. They sounded phenomenal. They just jumped out at you. I felt like I was right there—the response was so quick...with a very centered tone and a lot of attack. But a lot of warmth, too. Anyway, they recorded superbly. That's the main thing."

"So I ordered a kit. I use the birch Performer for sessions where I want a more controlled sound and for stuff that's more expressive in the softer dynamics. Or when I want a tighter kick drum sound that's big and ballsy, but not boomy."

"It's not that maple is better than birch or birch is better than maple. They're just different in sound. They're also different in price—for almost half the price of a maple Starclassic, you can get a birch Starclassic Performer with the same quality—the same die-cast hoops and Star-Cast mounting system. And that's unbelievable."

"I use the birch Performer when I want a more controlled sound and for stuff that's more expressive in the softer dynamics. Or when I want a tighter kick drum sound that's big, but not boomy."

Hear Kenny Aronoff on Tony Iommi's new self-titled release on Priority Records.

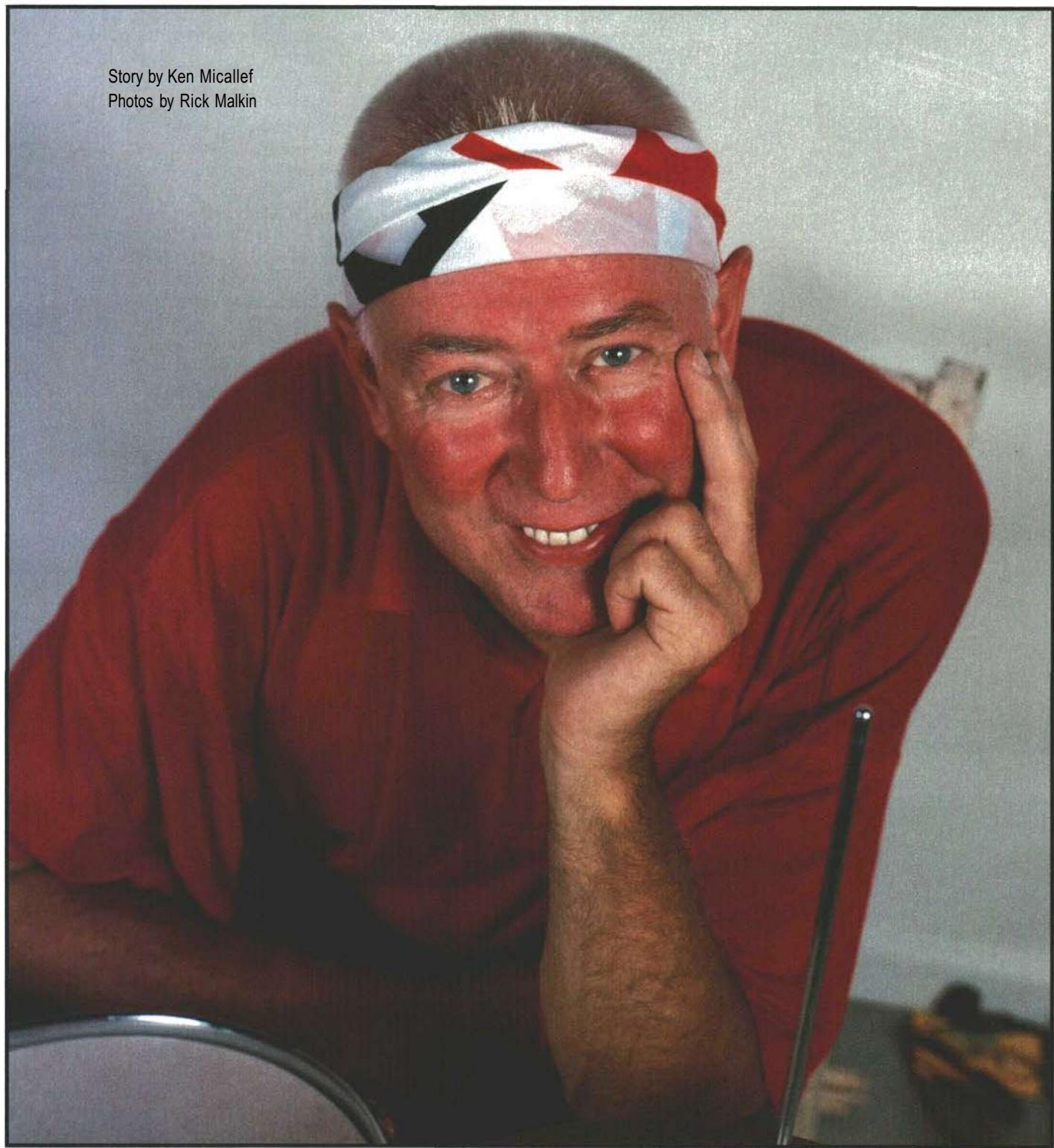


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# Han Bennink Burning The Nerve Beats

Story by Ken Micallef  
Photos by Rick Malkin



In his video, *Solo*, Dutch phenomenon Han Bennink does things no drummer has ever done in any performance, much less on video. Han ties ropes around a drumset and then crashes the drums and cymbals together like dominoes spinning in a percussion blender. He plays a bird whistle while sticking it between the cymbals of a hi-hat. He makes art from broken drumheads. He plays the drums with wooden clogs. He plays a chair, he plays a cardboard box. He screams, he growls, he covers the drums in white cloth and walks away.

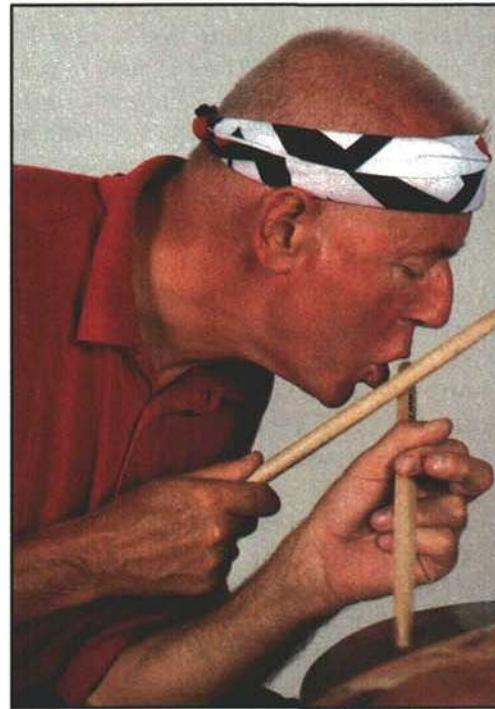
Since the early '60s, Han Bennink has been making unclassifiable, uncategorizable jazz. Incorporating Dixieland, bop, straight-ahead, and an entirely original strain of free jazz, Bennink is a master of many styles. But he would just as soon be bird watching, or burning cymbals, as he did once in China, circa 1996.

"I was arrested in China," explains Bennink, sitting in a small apartment on Manhattan's Upper West side. As with his drumming, Bennink's tales are a journey in themselves. "I was playing in Beijing with Misha Mengelberg and George Lewis. At a certain moment I took two old Tibetan cymbals, which the Monks use in monasteries, and used them for hi-hats. I then took the sheet music, ripped it in pieces, and put it in the hi-hat and lit it! Then, as I

moved the hi-hats, oxygen was coming in and out, and I was giving off smoke signals in a hall of 3,000 people! I thought it was a nice effect. However, the police arrested me because they saw it as a political action because of what China is doing to Tibet."

On such albums as Clusone 3's *Love Henry* or The ICP Orchestra's *Jubilee Varia*, Han Bennink explodes every drummer cliche, rambunctiously devouring free-jazz bombast and subtle trad swing. In concert recently at New York's Iridium with longtime associates pianist Misha Mengelberg and trumpeter Dave Douglas, Bennink was a whirlwind. He swung madly like Philly Joe Jones one moment, then played the wall the next. He tapped two snare drums in a complex unison rhythm, then bashed crash cymbals uncontrollably with head-cracking force. He'd then caress the cymbals with mallets, making them whisper and sing like a calm sea at midnight. But no matter how outside or bizarre Bennink may appear, what is supremely apparent is his powerful swing style and brilliant, jaw-dropping technique.

Where some American free-jazz drummers seem to lack basic swing skills and the ability to get a good sound out of the instrument, Bennink's drumming is entirely musical, beautiful, and powerful. Behind his madman's facade, Bennink is a master drummer from the old school. If you closed your eyes at the Iridium show you'd think



Philly Joe or Gene Krupa were onstage, that is until a cymbal explosion knocked you out of your chair and back to reality.

Bennink began playing drums in his teens under the tutelage of his father, a classical percussionist. By the '60s, Han was backing visiting American musicians such as Dexter Gordon, Sonny Rollins, Ben Webster, Johnny Griffin, and Eric Dolphy. Bennink also formed ICP (Instant Composers Pool) with Mengelberg, which explored a totally different kind of European free jazz. Perhaps his art school training influenced him as well, as Bennink soon made a name for himself as the drummer in Euro and Danish circles who could swing you under the table and add an element of surprise.

Han's exemplary musicality and often shocking creativity have graced records by international musicians such as Steve Lacy, Don Cherry, William Breuker, Derek Bailey, Peter Brotzmann, John Tchicai, Fred van Hove, and The Globe Unity Orchestra. The Clusone Trio (sometimes called Clusone 3) has become one of Bennink's main vehicles to spread his free-jazz treatise. With the trio's expanding world popularity and busy touring schedule, Bennink's Amsterdam studio is an increasingly empty place...except for the birds...and the matches, which at all costs you must keep away from Han Bennink.

**"The first sound you get from a cymbal is the most beautiful moment in the world."**

# Bennink's Beauties

**Han:** I go back to Baby Dodds. Like Jo Jones used to say, "There is nothing new under the sun." He was completely right. Drumming is two sticks, and that's about it. It's all about the context—how far you can look, how open your view is. My playing is also inspired by my background as a visual artist. I went to art school, but I have given up painting because my time is so limited. I travel and play, so there is no time to sit in my ivory tower and paint.

**MD:** Where was your video shot?

**Han:** In an old stable that is my studio. It's in the middle of a meadow near Amsterdam.

**MD:** On the cover of the video you're pictured playing on a pair of wooden shoes.

**Han:** Not to be hip or old fashioned, but my stable is so cold and the floors are concrete, so the clogs keep my feet warm. I play the snare drum with clogs too. They have an interesting sound.

**MD:** You have some very creative ideas, like playing the snare drum while muting it with your foot. How do you come up with these things?

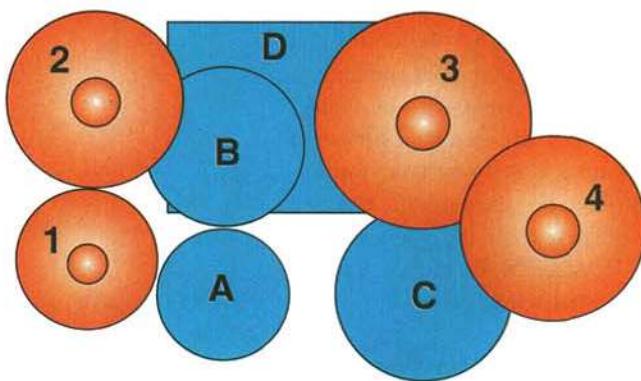
**Han:** I saw that in a picture of Pygmies playing drums in Africa. And I saw Art Blakey doing it with his elbow. I also read in an old book that Baby Dodds did it on his floor tom back in 1937. There is nothing new under the sun. Joey Baron does it today. Maybe Joey learned it from Han Bennink.

**MD:** I bet kids flip out when they see you play.

**Han:** Yes, many young kids come and knock on my studio door wanting lessons, but I don't have time. I do a master class now and then. My main income in Holland last year was from doing school concerts. I play for students in their classes. I talk to them and play for them.

The fact that I can do this is fantastic, because I had a terrible stutter when I was young. School for me was macabre, it was terrible. Kids pointed and laughed. But now with my outgrown hobby, drumming, which has become my profession, I can talk about it. It's not easy to play for eighteen-year-olds who are not interested in jazz. They listen to pop music. But when they see it live it connects.

**MD:** In the beginning of your video you have the drums loosely bound together with ropes, then you pull the drums together with the ropes and they make all kinds of clang-ing sounds. It reminds me of what attracted

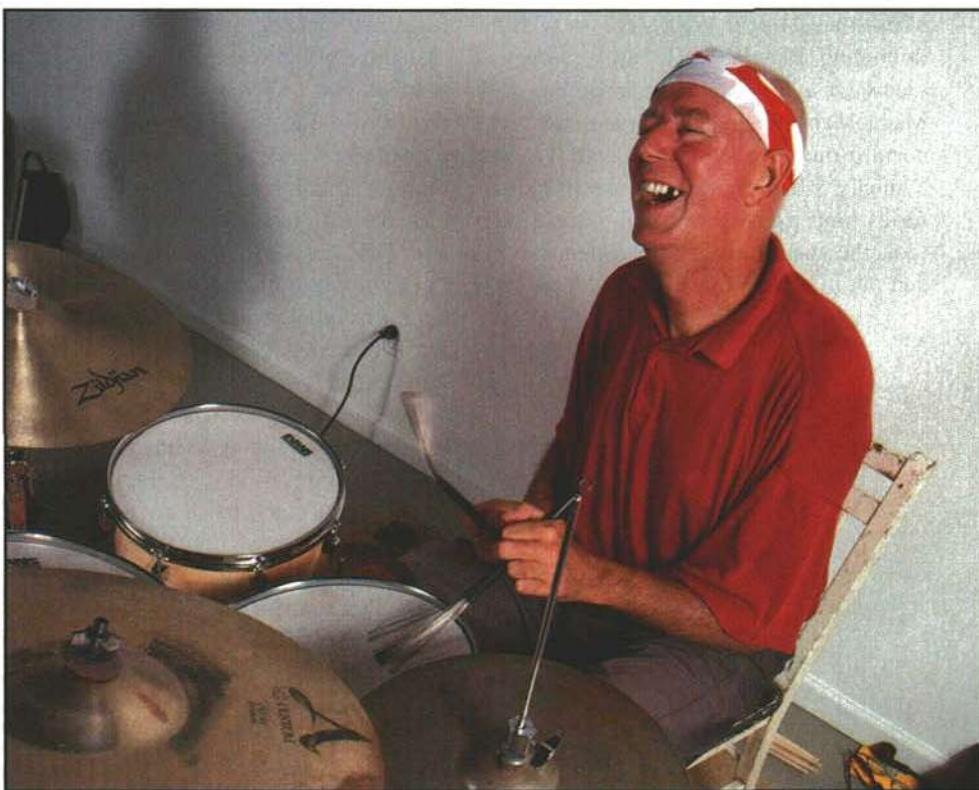


**Drums:** various

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- B. 5x14 LeSoprano snare drum (used as mounted tom)
- C. 16x16 Premier floor tom (from 1960s)
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**Cymbals:** Zildjian

- 1. 13" K Constantinople hi-hats
- 2. 16" K crash
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- 4. 17" K thin crash



me to the drums as a child, that sense of discovery of something totally fresh. It's not the technique that attracts you as a child, but the sound of the drums.

**Han:** The first sound you get from a cymbal or the first tone you blow on a saxophone is the most beautiful moment in the world. Later on you try to recreate that feeling in

many different ways. I can't read a note of music. But people come to me and say that I have a natural touch.

**MD:** But you also have great snare drum technique, like Philly Joe Jones. You play so fast and you have this unusual side-to-side technique.

**Han:** I bring everything back to the snare

drum and that technique. I have many instruments—balafons, xylophones, gongs from all over the world, and I used to play big ugly bass drums. But no matter what I play, people know it's me.

**MD:** Did you begin snare drum studies at an early age since your dad was a classical percussionist? Is that why your technique is so solid and fast?

**Han:** No. When I started playing I only concentrated on how to swing. I focused on my favorite rhythm section, The Modern Jazz Quartet with Ray Brown and Kenny Clarke. I wanted to get that feel. I also listened to a lot of Philly Joe with Paul Chambers, as well as Louis Hayes with Sam Jones. My all-time favorite brush player is Vernel Fournier, who played with Israel Crosby and Ahmad Jamal. They're great on *Live At The Pershing*.

**MD:** You really make the brushes sing at all volume levels.

**Han:** When you play lightly and into the rims you get these overtones that remind me of tabla playing. I like brushes.

**MD:** Live and in the video you often play the snare drum with the snares off.

**Han:** Sometimes the snares take too much of the overtones from the drum and all you hear are the snares. When the snares are off you can play more up to the rim. It should ring more and more as you approach the rim, like with timpani.

**MD:** Did your father influence your creativity, or just your technique?

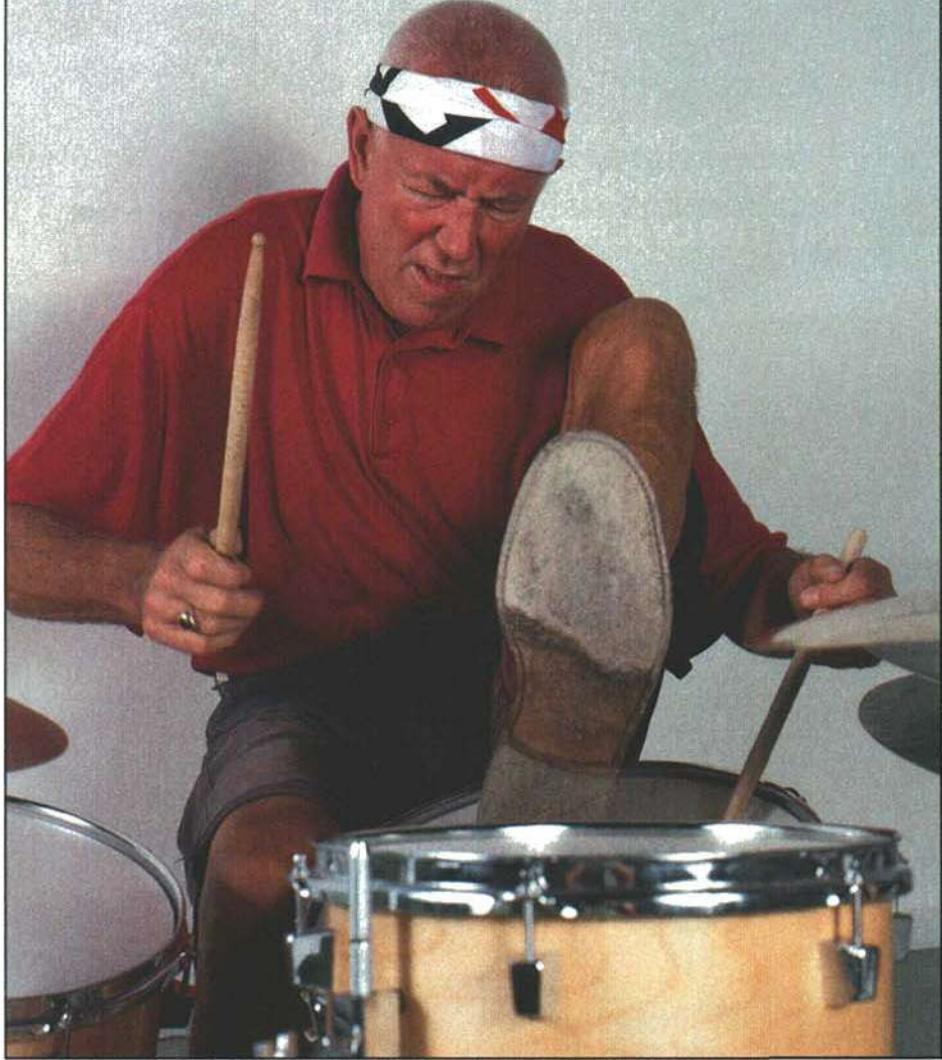
**Han:** My father didn't give me any lessons. I am completely self-taught, but he was my drum provider. He had a lot of gear that I could experiment with, and he actually made a snare drum himself. But even with all of that stuff to play, I looked for new sounds. I started playing kitchen chairs. Brushes sound really nice on them, and I am still very fond of playing chairs. I like chairs.

**MD:** At your Iridium gig you played on the wall.

**Han:** My drum setup is currently the classic setup for jazz, but occasionally I like to expand beyond the kit.

**MD:** You moved to free jazz at a certain point, but early on you were playing straight-ahead.

**Han:** My father played marimba in the symphony orchestra for the radio, but his hobby was playing the clarinet in a Benny Goodman style. So I heard Gene Krupa's



"Sing, Sing, Sing" right away. Once in the '60s I saw Gene Krupa playing in the window at the Club Metropole in New York. You could see him when you passed by. It was amazing.

**MD:** Even the way you shout and yell when you play reminds me of Krupa.

**Han:** Right. And Krupa comes straight from Baby Dodds. There's a link. Buddy Rich is more on top of it, but fantastic. I have recordings of Buddy Rich with Lester Young that I really like, but it's a completely different feeling.

**MD:** So you played a lot of swing as a kid?

**Han:** Oh yeah, lots, because that was hip. Nowadays it's hip to listen to rap or hip-hop or house music—mechanical beats. But in my time it was Bill Haley, Little Richard, and modern jazz. I was doing school concerts, forming bands, and by eighteen I was already playing with Americans. The fact that I was able to play fast tempos helped me get work, because that's what was being played then. I was young and playing with Johnny Griffin and Don Byas because I had the technique.

**MD:** How did you develop the ability to play so fast?

**Han:** Training. You have to practice. When the tempos are fast you have to think differently. [Slaps his hands together.] You have to think in half-time. But I practiced all the time. At art school people thought I was crazy, all the time working on the drums and playing ching-ching-a-ding, ching-a-ding, ching-ching.

I learned a lot from Kenny Clarke, who I knew quite well. He really inspired me early on to break up the time on the ride cymbal. He did that beautifully on the trio records with Bud Powell and Oscar Pettiford. It's so loose and relaxed, man. Just beautiful. Clarke's time playing was horizontal in that it moved forward like an arrow, but it was also vertical and so deep in how it felt.

**MD:** What inspired you to move from straight-ahead jazz to free jazz?

**Han:** I was following what was happening in jazz, and at a certain moment I became very fond of the music of Albert Ayler and his quartet with Sonny Murray and Don

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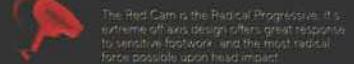
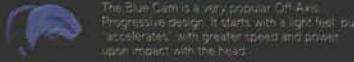
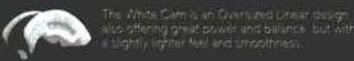


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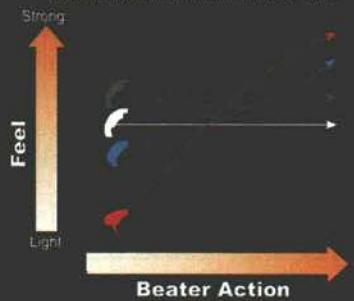
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# Han Bennink

## Free Listening

These are the albums that Han says best represent his playing.

Artist	Album
Eric Dolphy	Last Date
Han Bennink	Tempo Comodo
Han Bennink	Solo
Han Bennink	Jazz Bunker
Han Bennink	Nerve Beats: 1973
Tobias Delius Quartet	Toby's Maloby
Clusone Trio	Rara Avis
Clusone Trio	Love Henry
Eric Boern Quartet	Joy Of A Toy
ICP Orchestra	Jubilee Varia
Dave Douglas/Han Bennink	Serpentine

And these are the ones he listens to for inspiration.

Artist	Album	Drummer
Ornette Coleman	all	Ed Blackwell
Bud Powell Trio	Bud In Paris	Kenny Clarke
Miles Davis	Milestones	Philly Joe Jones
Roy Haynes	Out Of The Afternoon	Roy Haynes
Ahmad Jamal	At The Pershing, Vol. 2	Vernell Fournier
Count Basie Orchestra	various	Jo Jones
Sonny Rollins	A Night At The Village	Elvin Jones
Tommy Flanagan	Vanguard Vols 1&2	
	Overseas	Elvin Jones

Cherry. I played a lot with Don later on. We recorded two duet albums. But that music made an impact on me. They were not playing time. They had a unique pulse going on. I also listened to Milford Graves. And I had my own influences, like Indian music and all the famous tabla players. And I used a huge kit back then with all sorts of sounds to draw out these different influences.

**MD:** From what I've read, you used a lot of industrial metal piping.

**Han:** I did, but I don't need all of that stuff. I create music on whatever I find in any place I play. I don't rely on specific instruments anymore. This is improvisation; I have no plan. My plan is myself and my direction.

**MD:** You're also an avid bird watcher, which surfaces in all the bird whistles you use. Does nature inspire your music as well?

**Han:** A big wish for me is to set up a brand new drumset on a pier in Holland during a hailstorm. I always think it would be fantastic to just put the drumkit there in the hailstorm and not do anything. It would sound fantastic. Of course, it would be fan-

tastic advertising for weatherproof drumheads. [laughs]

**MD:** At one point in your video you play brushes along with a vinyl record that is playing.

**Han:** That's my favorite record! It's from 1957, called *Overseas*, and features Tommy Flanagan with Wilbur Little on bass and Elvin Jones on drums. That record takes me back to the time when I became really interested in playing the drums. That was when I first saw Kenny Clarke. I played along to that album for hours and hours when I was a kid. I also played along with Art Blakey and Philly Joe. That was my training.

**MD:** Did you try to match Blakey's cymbal pattern?

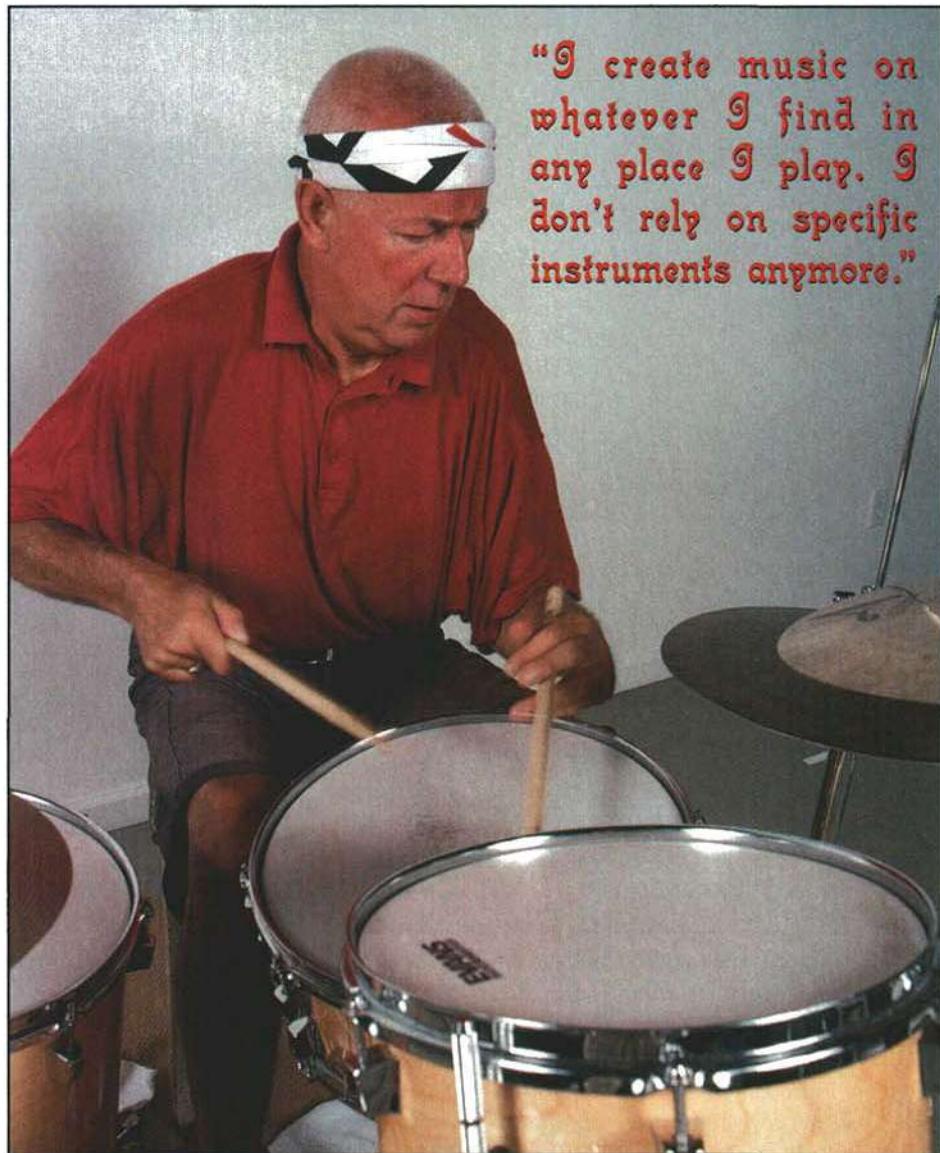
**Han:** I wasn't able to ape it, never.

**MD:** You play very loudly sometimes; you really bash.

**Han:** There are times when it has to be explosive. I am a bit like Mount Vesuvius [Italian volcano]. But I don't think about volume and speed. I am in the moment. If something should be loud, well, play it loud.

**MD:** You and Misha have been playing

# Han Bennink



"I create music on whatever I find in any place I play. I don't rely on specific instruments anymore."

festivals for years in Europe. Is America finally opening up to your music?

**Han:** We played in 1967 at the original Newport Jazz Festival. I played on Buddy Rich's drumkit. But yes, America is opening up to what we do. It's been fantastic. I just did twenty-four gigs in twenty-eight days! I never thought this would happen. I am very thankful because I like to keep moving forward.

Someone just released an album of mine recorded in 1973 called *Nerve Beats*. I'm proud of it, but it's done. I'm not interested in it now. I'm only interested in what's going to happen tonight onstage and in the future. I hope there will be more work and more people to listen to the music.

**MD:** What advice can you give to drummers who want to find their own concept?

**Han:** I have seen many drummers trying to imitate me. This one Japanese drummer imitates me. It's kind of strange.

**MD:** Does that bother you?

**Han:** Well, it did, but not anymore.

**MD:** So can you give any advice to drummers?

**Han:** Do as much as you can do, but you should also have a certain goal and direction. Then you must be obsessed with that direction. If you're not obsessed with it, you won't achieve your goals.

When I play I want to be like an artist painting, I want to play music like that. That's my goal.



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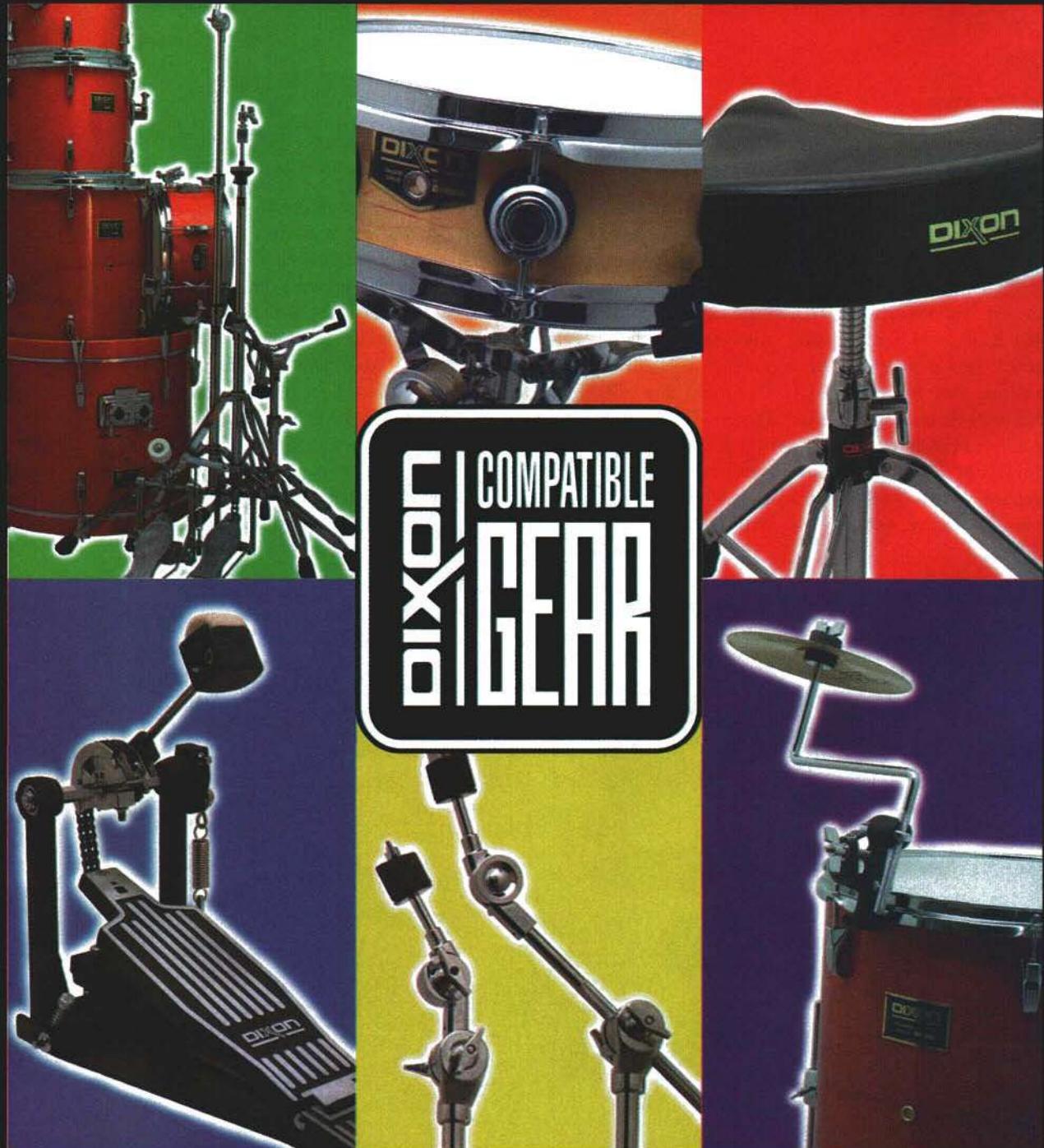


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# Zakir Hussain

## A Tale Of Tabla

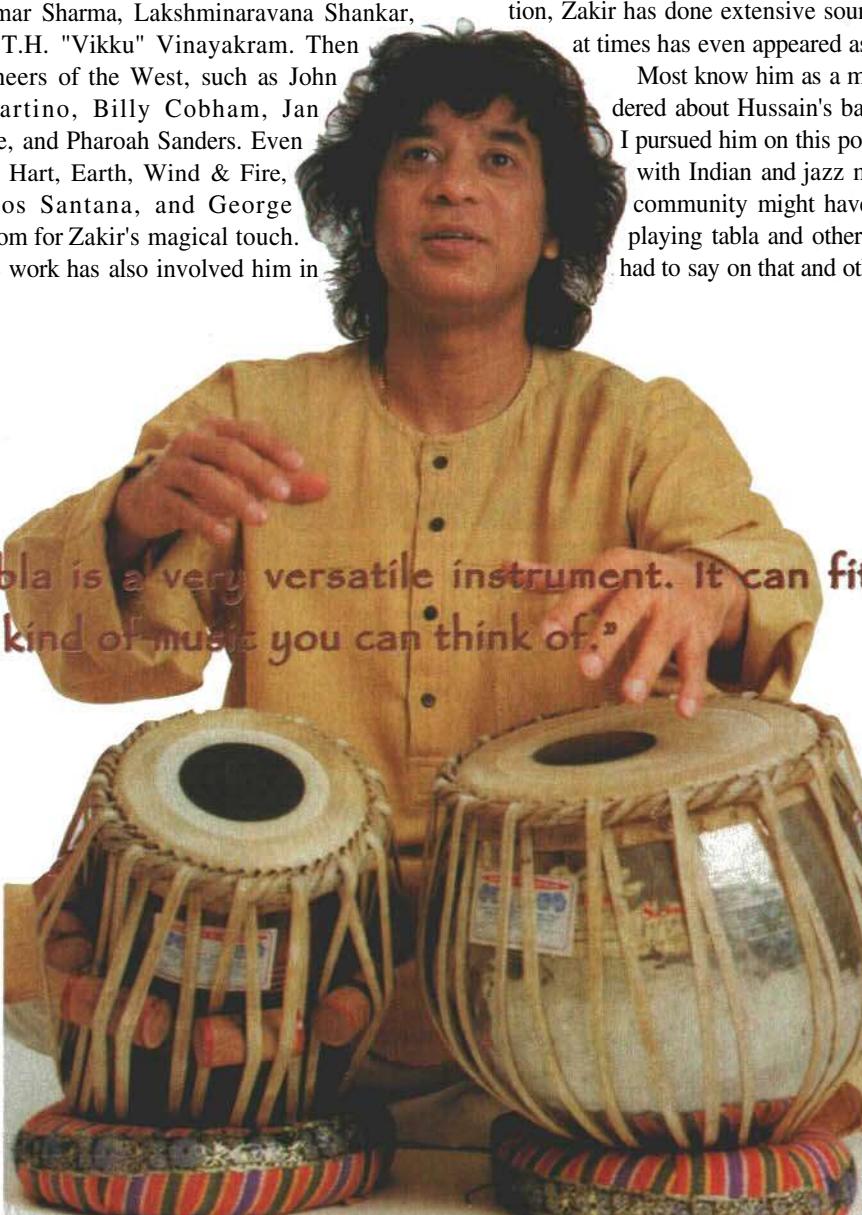
by N. Scott Robinson

**H**e is considered to be the greatest tabla player of all time. Zakir Hussain, son of the late tabla master Ustad Allarakha, has performed with a diverse assortment of artists. The names include India's classical masters Ravi Shankar, Shivkumar Sharma, Lakshminaravanan Shankar, Ali Akbar Khan, and T.H. "Vikku" Vinayakram. Then there are the jazz pioneers of the West, such as John McLaughlin, Pat Martino, Billy Cobham, Jan Garbarek, Peter Erskine, and Pharoah Sanders. Even pop musicians Mickey Hart, Earth, Wind & Fire, Van Morrison, Carlos Santana, and George Harrison have made room for Zakir's magical touch.

Hussain's innovative work has also involved him in

recordings with groundbreaking percussionists such as Airto Moreira, Glen Velez, Trilok Gurtu, Giovanni Hidalgo, Diga Rhythm Band, Tor Dietrichson, Reinhard Flatischler, and his own innovative percussion ensemble The Rhythm Experience. In addition, Zakir has done extensive soundtrack work for films—and at times has even appeared as an actor.

Most know him as a master of the tabla, but I wondered about Hussain's background as a percussionist. I pursued him on this point to see how his interaction with Indian and jazz musicians and the percussion community might have influenced his ideas about playing tabla and other percussion. This is what he had to say on that and other fascinating topics.



**"Tabla is a very versatile instrument. It can fit into any kind of music you can think of."**

*Rajni Sapse*

**MD:** What part of India did you grow up in?

**Zakir:** I grew up on the west coast of India, in the state called Maharashtra, in the city called Bombay, even though I was originally from the North.

**MD:** What kind of non-Indian culture was there? Was there a lot of Western music?

**Zakir:** There was quite a bit of non-Indian culture. India had a major Western influence because of being under the British government for many years. The popular kind of music that we have is like a fusion of Western and Eastern influences. Our film music was always a combination of violins, cellos, basses, piano, and horns, along with the Indian instruments, playing together. So I grew up playing in those orchestras myself and grew up listening to that kind of music.

We saw Hollywood movies from the 1940s and '50s, so there were all these Latin influences that came in, through the Fred Astaire & Ginger Rogers movies, the musicals like *West Side Story*, and jazz. We watched Elvis Presley and all sorts of things when we were kids. So India was sort of a melting pot of various types of music.

**MD:** When did you start to formally study the tabla?

**Zakir:** I began studying the tabla when I was two and a half years old. Ever since I can remember, I've found myself playing the instrument, practicing, and learning about it. By the time I was twelve, I was playing professionally in these film orchestras and in concert with various musicians.

**MD:** Besides the classical tabla, did you ever study other drumming traditions of India?

**Zakir:** You have to know other drumming traditions of India as an accompanist because of the repertoire. As a drummer you need to know the singing repertoire, the instrumental repertoire, and the dance repertoire so that you're able to accompany them better. I had to study all of these elements of Indian music forms.

**MD:** Does that include the folk drumming?

**Zakir:** It includes folk; it includes everything. The tabla was an instrument that was played as a folk instrument as well as a classical instrument.

**MD:** Among the kinds of strokes that you do on the tabla and the bayan, you have a



few that don't seem to be of the traditional classical tabla style.

**Zakir:** It depends on what you call "traditional," because the tabla played a hundred fifty years ago was definitely not the same as the tabla played fifty years ago. It evolves; you find better ways of making the instrument, you improve the tonal quality of the instrument, and that dictates how you play it and approach it. So it all changes.

I know that my teacher sounded very different from his teacher, and his teacher before him sounded different. So as you go along, the instrument is improved upon. Then there was the advent of sound amplification, and that allows you to highlight different frequencies and tonal textures of the instrument. Therefore, the playing of the tabla changes. That has always been the case with music, anywhere in the world.

**MD:** What I specifically meant is that you do a stroke where you bend the tabla's open sound—the tun—with the hammer, or when you snap the fingernail of your index finger against the skin of the bayan. What led you to come up with those techniques? Did you get that from other drumming traditions?

**Zakir:** Actually, it was just some stuff that I was working on, or experimenting with, in terms of sound. When I started listening to percussionists all over the world, I found that the approach was not just to play the repertoire but also to work with the sound an instrument has. You work with the surface of the instrument, find various places to play, and experiment with subtle changes of tone. That's something that percussionists all over the world do, and I just felt that there was no reason I couldn't approach my instrument with the same

# Zakir Hussain

focus. That's how I ended up finding different ways of using the bayan almost like a bass, and using the tabla's open sound, and seeing if I could bend those tones.

**MD:** What brought you to the US, and how did you get involved in playing music that was not Indian classical, such as fusion with John Handy or Shakti?

**Zakir:** When I first arrived in the US in 1970, I played nothing but Indian classical music for many years before I actually got involved in doing fusion. I arrived here because Ravi Shankar had sent for me to

play an Indian classical concert tour with him. My father, who always played with him, was not feeling well at that time, so I came to replace him. I ended up staying in the States, playing Indian classical music for four or five years with Ali Akbar Khan and his son Aashish Khan, Ravi Shankar, and various other artists. Eventually I ran into people like Mickey Hart, John McLaughlin, and others. I was also teaching Indian classical music at the University of Washington in Seattle.

**MD:** When you play with John Handy, Pat

Martino, Shakti, Pharoah Sanders, or Mickey Hart, what kind of adapting do you do?

**Zakir:** Well, tabla is a very versatile instrument. It can fit into any kind of music you can think of. For me, having grown up in India playing film music, there was already some idea of how I would work with Western instruments, because we had drumset, guitars, piano, the string section, and the horn section already there. We were playing Indian popular music with all these instruments.

At the same time, rhythm is a universal language, so it's much easier for a rhythm instrument to be able to flow into any kind of music than it is for a melodic instrument. So having done that kind of homework in India, and arriving here, and being young enough to not be tied down into a rigid discipline of what my classical music was all about, I was able to bend a bit and fit in with whatever was going on.

**MD:** With Pharoah Sanders, sometimes you play the mbira, and with Shakti you've played kanjira or congas. Did you study other drumming techniques, or do you apply tabla technique to these drums?

**Zakir:** I eventually did learn. We did have what you would call the Indian versions of the bongos and congas in India. When we were playing for films, we fooled around with those instruments, but never really used the exact technique to approach them.

Having said that, I must say that tabla is the kind of instrument that, if you're able to play well, gives you the kind of technical knowledge you need for your hands. It also gives your fingers a capacity for fluid movement so that you're able to play just about any other hand percussion instrument in the world. I would apply my tabla technique to these instruments.

**MD:** When you first met T.H. "Vikku" Vinayakram in the group Shakti, what kind of exchange was there between the two of you?

**Zakir:** When I first met him, I was already aware of the South Indian drumming style, and I had already played with musicians of that variety in India. I was very curious about the South Indian tradition, so I had studied a bit about it. When I met Vinayakram and when we got together to do Shakti, I kind of knew the tradition that he came from. I had already been working with the violinist L. Shankar before that, so

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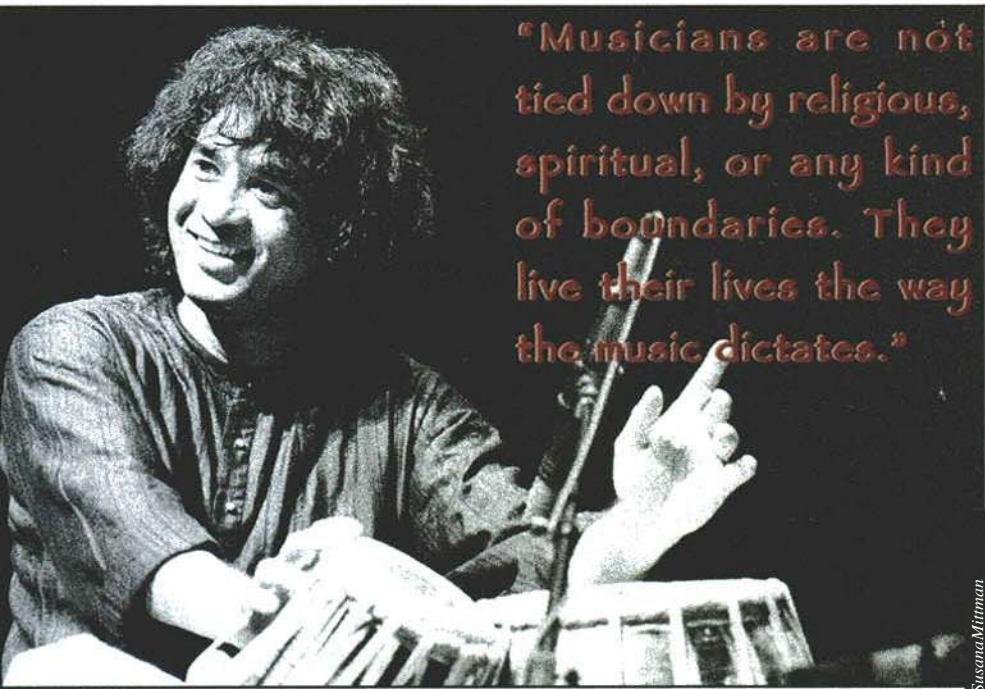
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I had an idea of what I was going to do.

Vinayakram had not seen me play before. He was a bit confused as to how he would approach my playing. But as I said, rhythm is universal, and some of the repertoires that the South Indian drummers and

the North Indian drummers play are similar. So we were able to find a kind of middle ground. You see, it was much easier for me to cross over and do South Indian rhythms than for him to cross over and do North Indian rhythms. So the first few

years we worked in the South Indian rhythm frame when we worked together, and gradually Vikku started to come out and experiment with North Indian drumming patterns.

**MD:** When you've come into contact with things like congas or South Indian rhythms, does the kind of practicing you do ever change?

**Zakir:** Well, Indian drumming is a very muscular tradition. You learn to understand what each muscle in your hand does, how to be able to control its movement, and the flow of energy through it. So my approach is that of a person who is curious, you know? I'm able to use my hands in a certain manner, and having also played the piano a bit, I'm ambidextrous. So I'm able to use my right and left hands as if they are interchangeable. So what happens is I just approach the instrument as a curious person who wants to find out what it can do. What are the tones of the instrument, what would happen if I played on the edge, what would happen if I played in the center, what would happen if I just used my fingertip? So I approach the instrument in that manner and I'm able to then extract from it

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Pharoah Sanders	Save Our Children
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Ashwin Batis h And Zaki r Hussain: In Concert , Part 1

Ashwin Batish And Zaki r Hussain : In Concert , Part 2

Zaki r And His Friends

the kind of response I need.

**MD:** Did you ever learn drumset?

**Zakir:** I fooled around with it when I was doing film work in India. I can play a back-beat. But to really open up and play, a la Jack DeJohnette, Elvin Jones, or Max Roach, I don't think so. [chuckles]

**MD:** It sounds as if you developed a similar kind of independence between the hands, much in the way drumset players do.

**Zakir:** With the hands, but not the legs!

**MD:** How do you approach composition and improvisation?

**Zakir:** It's very difficult to describe the concept of improvising. People have tried to do it over the past five hundred years, but they haven't been able to come up with a

complete explanation. Obviously, it's a question of what you feel comfortable with; do you feel comfortable jumping into an unknown territory without a parachute? Improvising is something like that. I mean, you go out there with an idea and see where it takes you.

You need to have a strong foundation with your instrument to be able to improvise effectively. Let's use walking as an example. Walking is something you do without thinking about it. When you walk, you sometimes sidestep a puddle, you stop, you turn, you walk faster or slower. As you're walking, you're looking at signs, you're window shopping, you're saying hello to a passer-by, or you're avoiding a

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# Zakir Hussain

car. That's improvising. You know how to walk so well that you don't have to think about it when other things occur.

Another point about improvising is, what you improvise has to be meaningful; it has to have some aesthetic value. Say you're going to paint a beautiful vision. It has to be a complete vision; it cannot be a few dots of this, fifteen dots of that, and twelve dots of that all thrown together.

**MD:** Some of the compositions you have for The Rhythm Experience ensemble are quite arranged. How does what you've been describing fit with the way you compose?

**Zakir:** When you have fifteen people playing together, you need to have an idea of what's going on so everybody's on the same page. So you compose. But within that composition you leave spaces for things to happen. That's what jazz is all about; you have a composed song with chord changes, but then you tell a saxophone player, "Okay, you're improvising, and these are the chord changes to work with."

**MD:** When you come in contact with players like Trilok Gurtu, Glen Velez, Airto Moreira, or Giovanni Hidalgo, is there ever

any kind of exchange between yourselves, and is there an influence on each other?

**Zakir:** I'm sure that without meaning to, we do influence each other. I've been tremendously influenced by people like Airto Moreira, Giovanni Hidalgo, and Babatunde Olatunji. Working with Glen Velez has been a revelation. And Mickey Hart has been such an incredible influence in terms of introducing me to the various aspects of world drumming.

You don't work with musicians with the idea that you're going to impose your tradition on them or that you're going to come out saying, "Oh, I have a five thousand-year-old tradition, so I am the senior, and you do what I say." There's no such thing. When I approach working with people like Giovanni, Vikku, or Airto, we play *together*. It doesn't matter who starts what; we work together. I'm sure that, while playing together, what I do may suggest something to Airto, and what he does may suggest something to me. Those suggestions are influences by themselves, and they help us to understand each other's approach to drumming much better. The more we do it, the more we learn about each other's

approach to rhythm. A healthy respect develops that way.

When all of us musicians are sitting together, we talk about tradition, we talk about the music, and we talk about the spirit that it has and the kind of power it carries. It's amazing! I still remember sitting in a restaurant in this tiny German town on the border of Switzerland and Germany with Glen Velez, and we talked for two hours about tradition, about drumming, and about music. That's how well we relate to each other. It's special when musicians come together.

**MD:** What was it that led you to start a record label, Moment Records?

**Zakir:** I wanted to have a visible platform for Indian musicians to perform their music. I felt that the best way of presenting Indian classical music was in its entirety as it's performed on stage. Because it's an improvised art form, a spontaneous form of music, the best moments of that music happen in front of an audience. When it's being performed the audience gets into it. I wanted that to be captured on record, and also have a platform for Indian musicians to display their wares.

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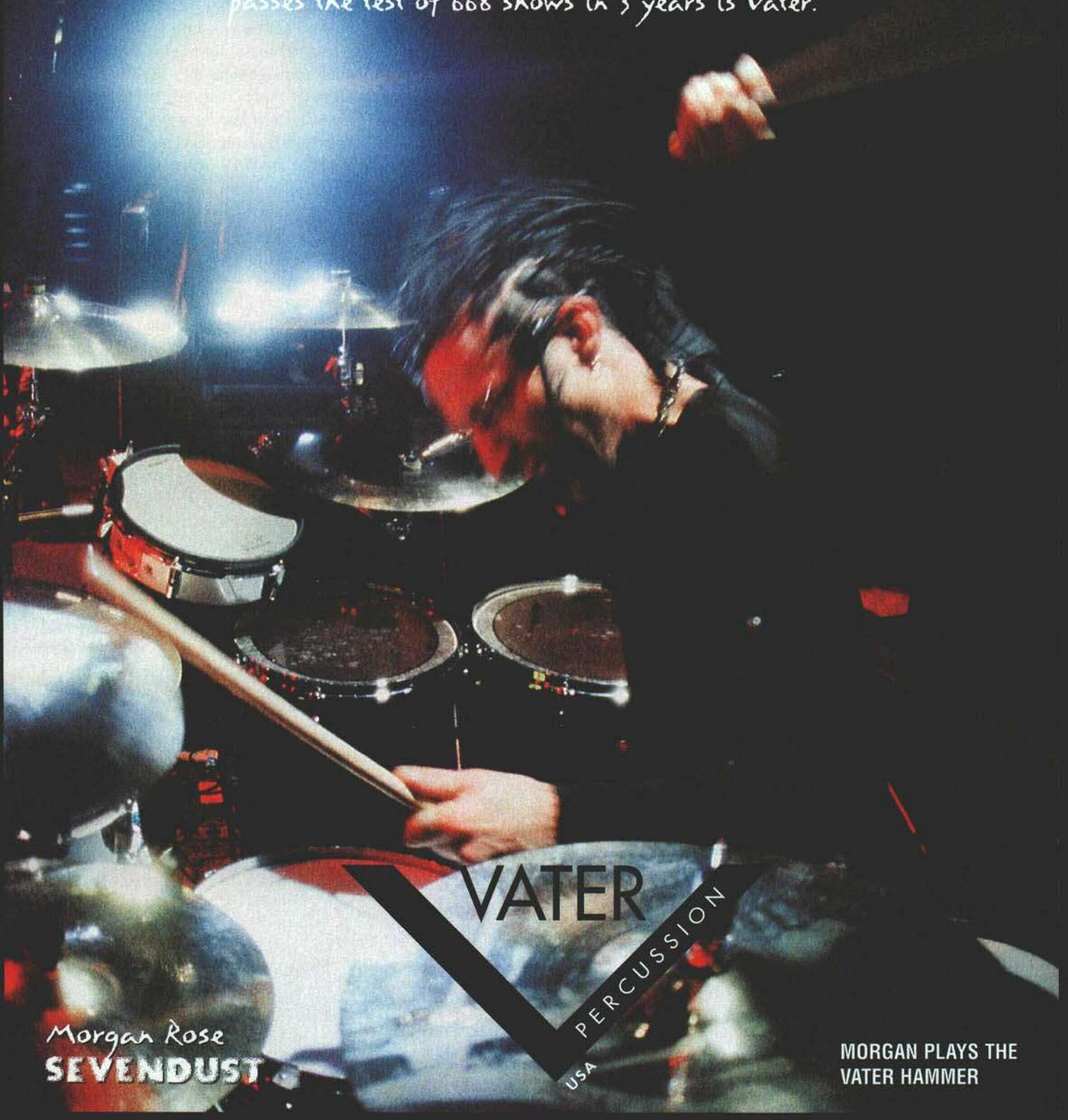
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**MD:** I was wondering about your film *Zakir And His Friends*. There were a variety of percussionists involved: Indonesian musicians, children from Venezuela, and players from the Caribbean. Were these musicians you've worked with in the past?

**Zakir:** They were musicians I've come in contact with over the years while traveling all over the world. When the film was being planned, we talked about all these various traditions that existed and that needed to be shown to the world. I mean, the kids in Venezuela are doing their thing [playing on their faces with their hands and sounding like congas].

It's so important that people know how kids are able to focus on positive things, stay out of trouble, and make a life for themselves. It's *important*. But unfortunately, because of the time constraints that a

film has, there are many other traditions that didn't make it into the film. We hope that we'll be able to make a sequel.

**MD:** You mentioned children: You've grown up with this incredible tradition. But today, with the very strong economic, political, and technological forces of the West, do you feel that tradition is threatened?

**Zakir:** I think the tradition is *stronger*, because for some reason men and women today are much more culturally inclined. They understand tradition better; they're better listeners of music and better focused when they watch theater or art of any kind. So for me, I feel that tradition and culture stand a better chance now than they ever did before.

In the olden days, music was a second-hand profession. People would say, "Oh yeah, you're a drummer. What do you do for a living?" But nowadays people understand that art is important; culture holds something that we must relate to. Tradition, roots—these are very important. How we use them in today's world describes who we are and what we're all about.

You see more and more people watching Western classical music, or going to the

opera, or seeing all kinds of other artists. I see the same faces going to see Miriam Makeba, Mick Jagger, and Ravi Shankar! I mean, it's amazing how a young person today is so well-rounded in terms of culture.

**MD:** Do you have any non-musical influences?

**Zakir:** Non-musical influences? Hmm.... Well, I guess when you talk about non-musical influences, critics who have critiqued my music have influenced me. The kinds of suggestions they have made, or the kinds of things that they have said, have made me look into the way I perform. Stuff like that is a non-musical influence.

Music is a way of life for us. It's what we grow up with, it's what we eat, drink, and sleep. Musicians are not tied down by religious boundaries, by spiritual boundaries, or by any kind of boundaries. They live their lives the way the music dictates. So in terms of the way *my* life is, it's 99.9 percent influenced by music.

*For more information on Zakir Hussain, see [www.momentrecords.com](http://www.momentrecords.com).*



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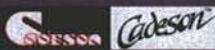
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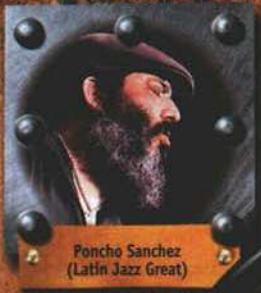
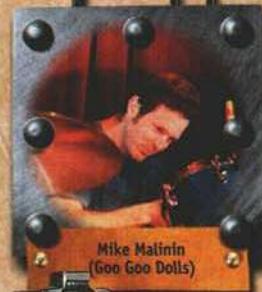
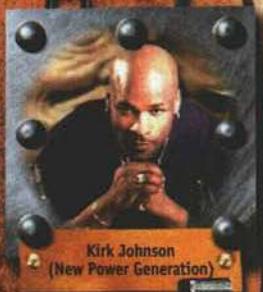
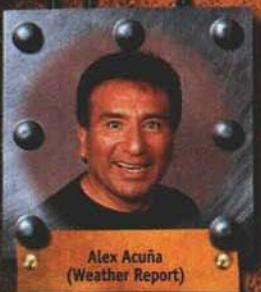
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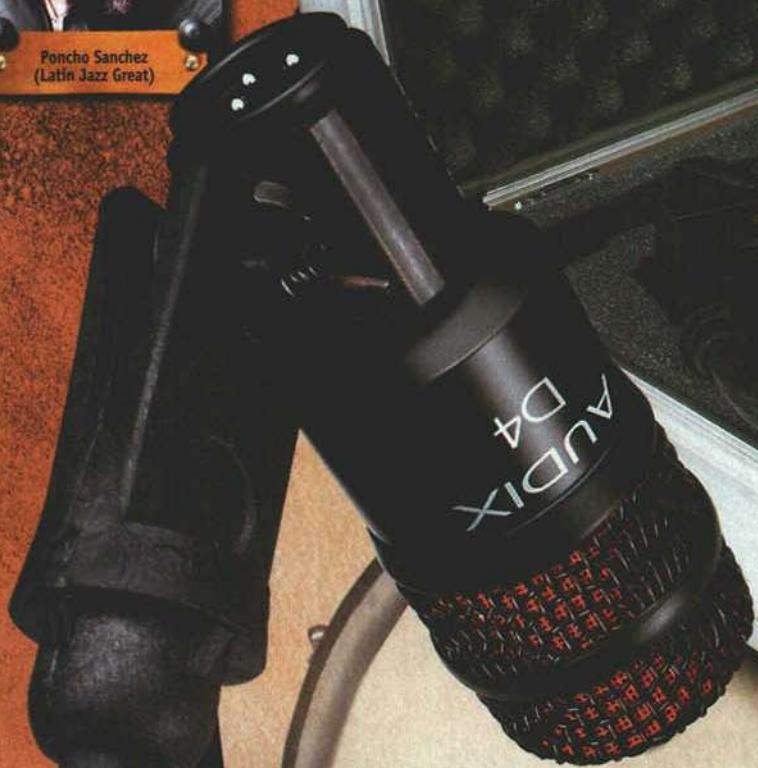
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# Jack Gavin

Story by Robyn Flans

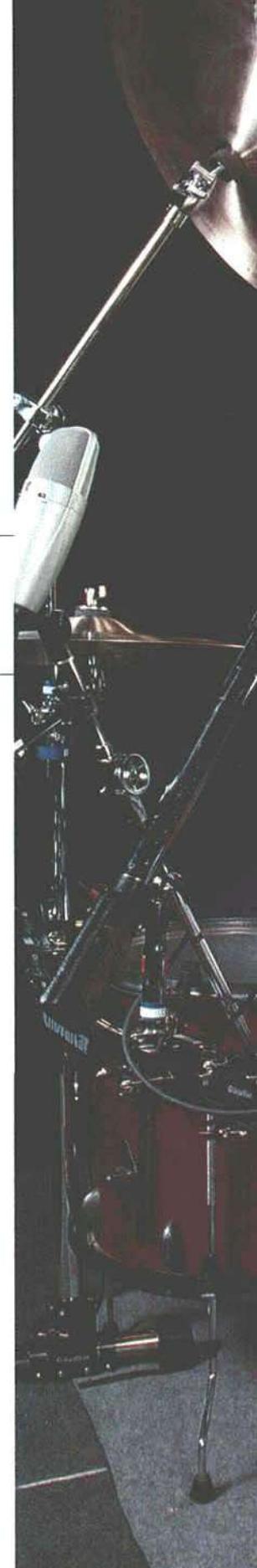
Photos by Rick Malkin

## Country Connection

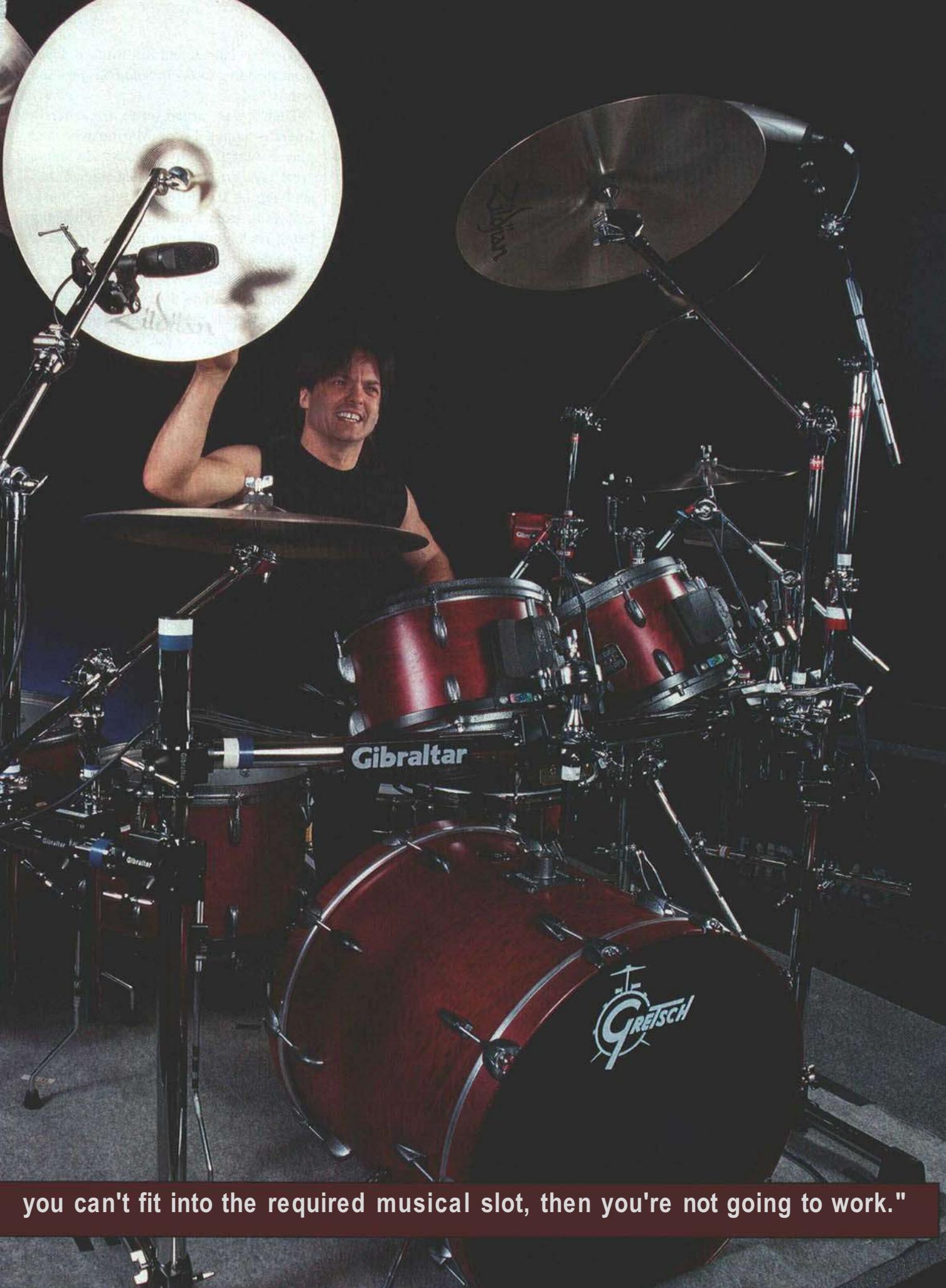
Jack Gavin is a true example of a musician who plays his instrument for one reason only: because of a deep love of music. Classically trained on mallet percussion and graduating with honors from Kent State University, Gavin was totally focused on pursuing a life in music. He didn't have any preconceived notions or stylistic boundaries when he set forth to find his niche. The drummer, considered one of the finest in country music today, then landed what would become a wonderful fourteen-year-long association with The Charlie Daniels Band. Gavin then moved on (in March of '99) to join country superstar Tracy Lawrence as drummer/bandleader.

This type of success was probably not what Jack imagined growing up in Niagara Falls, New York. That's where he began playing drums at age six when his two older brothers, Dave and Ken, started a band. When Jack asked his mom if he could play the instrument, though, she told him he could do so as long as he also took piano lessons. He ended up studying piano for ten years.

Every night after dinner the Gavin brothers would play music together. Jack recalls it as "a wonderful bonding experience" that his parents supported, because, despite the noise, they knew the boys were together, not fighting, and learning. Jack became very serious about drumming at age eight, so his parents bought him a set of Gretsch drums. He spent most of his time practicing and playing along to records by The Beatles, Steely Dan, The Doobie Brothers, and James Taylor. But what Jack's parents believed to be a boy's hobby ended up being a life's calling that motivated his every decision. It ultimately led him to Nashville in the early '80s.



"You can have the greatest technique of any drummer in the world, but if



**you can't fit into the required musical slot, then you're not going to work."**

**T**oday, hanging out in the basement of his sprawling Nashville home, where his childhood piano sits, Jack Gavin is thankful. Yes, he's having a great career. But he also realizes how fortunate he was to have a solid musical education early on. According to Jack, it's helped him in many ways.

**MD:** Do you think having learned the piano helps you as a drummer?

**Jack:** Absolutely. There's no question about it. Understanding theory helps in learning rhythm, phrasing, and musicality. It gives you a good fundamental understanding of music, which can't be replaced.

At a certain point, though, I lost interest in the piano and started studying only drumset with a teacher by the name of Ken Wagner. It was during those years where you're becoming a teenager and finding out who you are, who your friends are, and what you want to do. As a young teenager, I was really into progressive

rock—Carl Palmer and Bill Bruford. I was woodshedding to *Brain Salad Surgery* and Jethro Tull.

Then I was turned on to a teacher in Buffalo named Louie Marino who had played with Tommy Dorsey. He was a great jazz drummer. At that point I was studying all the different styles of music with him, from Latin to jazz, swing, big band, rock, funk, even disco. He really expanded my horizons. Plus Louie was very demanding. His philosophy was, "Either be prepared or don't come." It definitely made me think about getting off my tail. I started to put in a lot of hours every day.

**MD:** Was that about the time your parents started getting nervous?

**Jack:** In my final year of high school I got into a pretty big local band, Ta Ta Swan, and I passed on graduation to back up Steppenwolf with them. I walked in and they said, "Whose little brother is this? He can't be here." I wasn't old enough to be in a bar, so they had to sneak me in the back to play.

That gig lasted about eight months after I was out of high school. But then my older brother Ken said, "Let's talk about going to school." I said, "I don't want to go to school, I want to play drums." But he brought me out to Niagara County Community College and introduced me to the musical director, Paul Farrington, and got me interested in taking a theory course.

By the time the next semester came, I had fallen in love with school. I took theory and played in the big band and the orchestra. The funny thing is they should have never passed me out of high school, but I was an A student in college. It was something I loved and it was a totally different mentality. It seemed that the teachers were so much better at building you up as an individual and as a player, rather than having to discipline you all the time.

So I really got involved in college and in classical music and percussion. I still took my lessons from Louie Marino on drumset, but I was also taking percussion lessons from Lynn Harbold, the principal percussionist with the Buffalo Philharmonic.

**MD:** Are you glad you got all of that classical training? The mallets and such are not things you use in your playing life



today.

**Jack:** Not now, but at the time, you're developing as a musician, hearing tones, rhythm, and phrasing, and it grounds you.

**MD:** You weren't thinking, "Why do I need to know this, I just want to play in a band"?

**Jack:** At that time I wasn't sure where my future was, but I knew that what I was going through was a good experience. I didn't really understand what it was all going to be *for*, but I knew I wanted to be in music and I felt strongly that finishing my bachelors degree and absorbing all the information that higher education would have to offer would be of help.

**MD:** How long did you stay with that program?

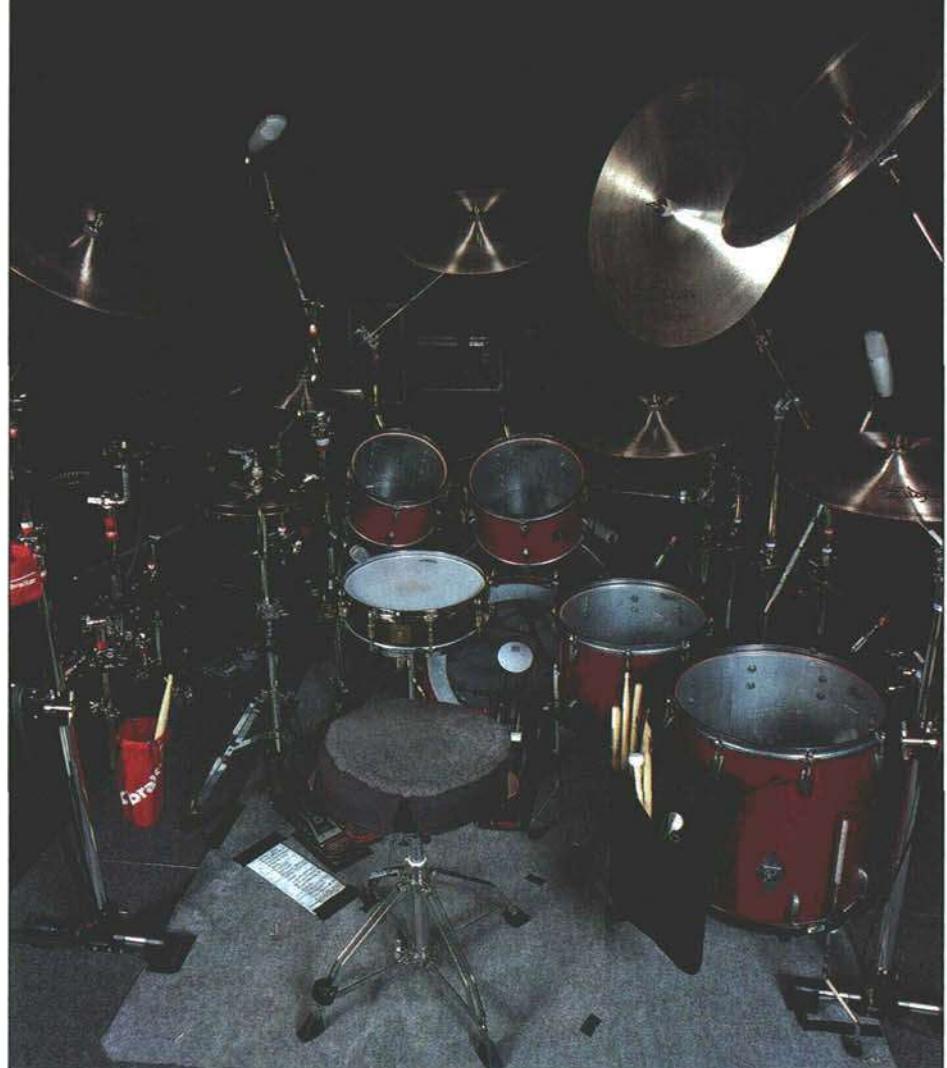
**Jack:** After I finished community college I auditioned for Kent State University in Ohio and got a scholarship.

**MD:** Was that scary?

**Jack:** Oh yeah. I finished a gig in Niagara Falls and my father drove me through the night down to Ohio. I auditioned around 9:30 the next morning, playing mallets and all percussion.

**MD:** What did Kent State give you that you didn't already have?

**Jack:** It fine-tuned my technique. I studied with Donald Miller from the Cleveland Orchestra, which was one of



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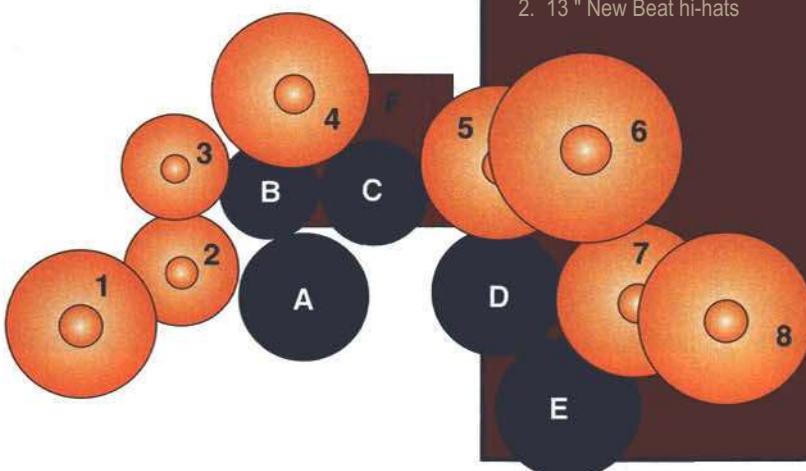
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## Jack Gavin

the top five orchestras in the world. I was studying at a high level of musicality and I won a solo award and ended up graduating Magna Cum Laude.

**MD:** For a kid who could barely pass high school! When did you figure out what you really wanted to do?

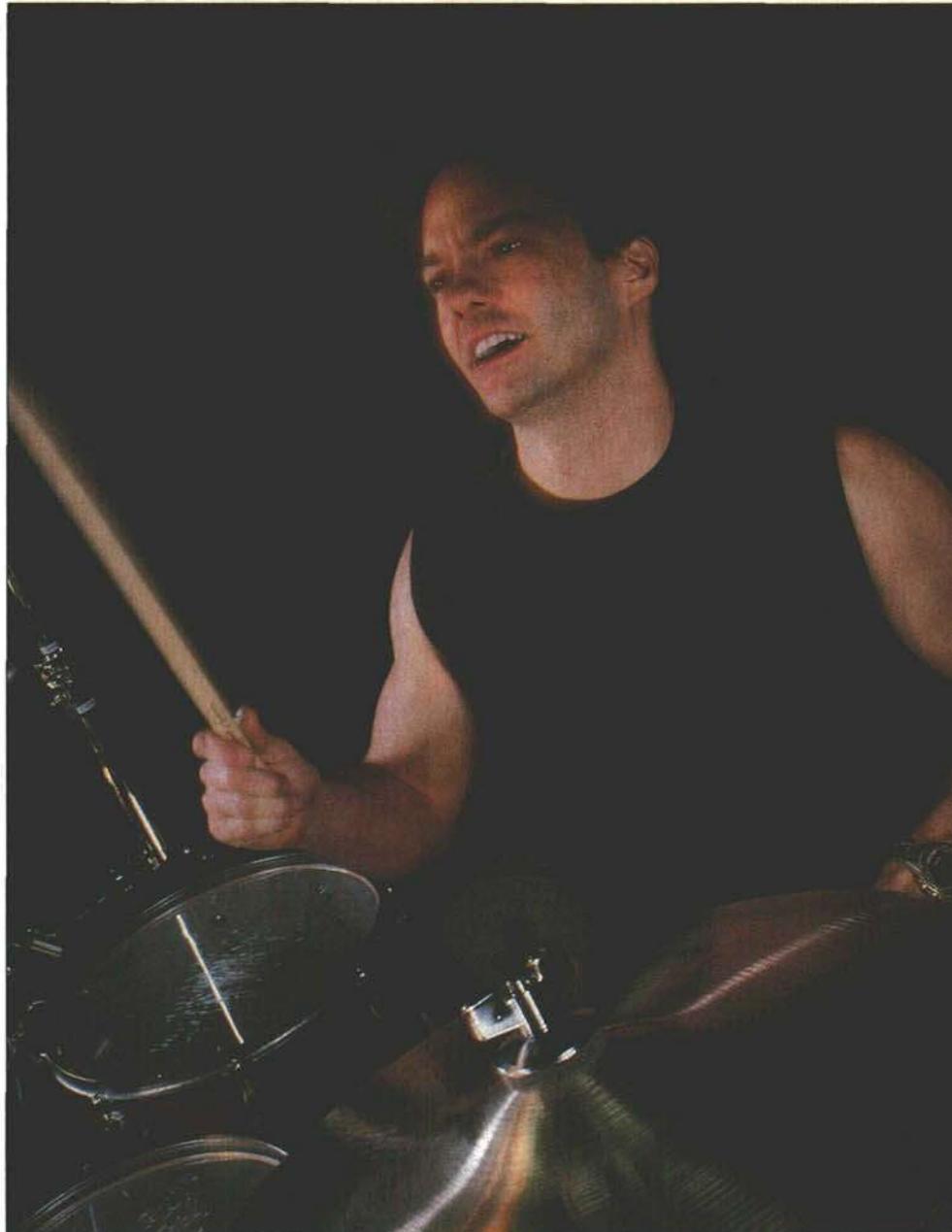
**Jack:** Even at that point I wasn't sure. I knew I was learning so much. I was in the "A" band at Kent State in the jazz ensemble. I got the jazz award for a couple of years and then the soloist award for mallets, and I played with the Philharmonic. I was twenty-one and it was an amazing time.

I graduated in '83, moved back to western New York, and started playing with

The Al Vino Trio, one of the better lounge bands in the area. We ended up going down to Florida for a few months, but after a while I realized that one lounge was going to lead to another lounge. While it's good steady work, I wanted to try to get onto a national stage.

I was able to visit Nashville around that time, and saw that there was a lot of opportunity for someone like me who had an educational background on percussion and drumset. I felt I had more to offer than many of the drummers who were self-taught; I felt it gave me an edge and it gave me confidence. So I went home, packed up, and drove down to Nashville.

**MD:** Were you thinking country music?



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**Jack:** I saw that not only was there country music in Nashville, but there was a symphony, and I heard some great jazz at night when I was there.

**MD:** Did you have to get a job?

**Jack:** I lived with relatives for a short time and then I got a day job as a construction worker, which I had zero background in. It was probably the most difficult time I ever had, moving to a strange city and having to work in a trade I had no understanding of.

**MD:** How did you get the word out?

**Jack:** I went out in the evenings and met as many people as I could. As in most fields, this is about a network of relationships that you cultivate, which lets you know about work.

**MD:** What do you consider your break?

**Jack:** I was playing around town in local bands and, since I was able to read charts, a rehearsal big band. Even though they were just rehearsal bands, I met a lot of people.

After about ten months I heard about an audition for a country artist, Mel McDaniel. I auditioned against about twelve guys, and I got the call.

**MD:** What did you know about country music?

**Jack:** Not a whole lot. But I was able to pick up the tape before the audition, which is how auditions usually run in Nashville. They'll either tell you what songs to learn, or give you a tape of what songs they're

## The Gavin Report

These are the albums that Jack listens to for inspiration:

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# Jack Gavin

going to want to play. I picked up the tape of the music and charted everything out, again using my education to be able to do that. I had a few days to get prepared.

I stood in line at the audition and felt pretty good about how I did. I had my charts and my metronome settings and was very prepared, which is what my background gave me. When I got the gig, I quit my day job, which at that point was building road cases for musicians. I put my stuff in cases and was on the road two days later. I had to learn the show in one day. I charted out fifteen, twenty songs and learned it. I was terrified. There was no rehearsal, just a soundcheck and then the show.

**MD:** Mel was at the audition, so he knew what he was getting?

**Jack:** He knew what he *thought* he was getting. But he wanted to fire me after the first night.

**MD:** How do you know?

**Jack:** Because Bruce Brown, the bandleader, told me some time later. Some artists want fluctuating tempos that you don't know about, and when they play live, they don't play record tempos. I didn't

realize that. I was learning the material off the records and marking my metronomic settings per the record, not realizing that when you play a show, everything is going to be ten or twenty clicks faster.

**MD:** How did you learn that?

**Jack:** It was a roller-coaster experience for the next eight months. I was so inexperienced with country music. That first tour began the learning process of what country music entails.

**MD:** Why didn't he fire you?

**Jack:** The guys—the bandleader and the band—knew I could play the show, and they had faith in me and stood up for me. They knew it was just going to take time for me to learn what Mel wanted. One night he wanted it crazy fast and then he'd want it faster, and I had to learn how to follow him. The only way you learn that lesson is through the experience of doing it.

**MD:** Were you freaking out?

**Jack:** Yeah. I was wondering if I had a job, walking on pins and needles every day.

**MD:** Was he patient?

**Jack:** Absolutely not. He was very difficult to understand. And he wasn't able to tell me. He didn't really have any understand-

ing of what he wanted and couldn't articulate it. He once told a drummer he wanted more "viscosity."

**MD:** Was he mean?

**Jack:** He was difficult, which is as politely as I can say it. He was difficult to understand and difficult to work for because he wasn't patient.

**MD:** How did you get through that?

**Jack:** The guys I toured with got me through it. In times like that, everybody supports each other. We all knew that we were dealing with a man who wasn't able to communicate. So we banded together because, really, we were all in the same boat, even though the hot spot was the drummer.

The artist only goes by what he feels on stage. If the tempo isn't just the way he wants it to feel, very often the drummer gets the brunt of complaints. It may not be the drummer's total responsibility because everyone on that stage has something to do with tempos and feel. But ultimately it stops with the drummer.

**MD:** How did that gig end?

**Jack:** Charlie Daniels' drummer gave notice after fifteen years with Charlie. I

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## Jack Gavin

heard about it and was able to audition. They did an overall audition of about twelve people and then narrowed it down to three.

For the first audition they gave me a tape of three songs to learn, and I got to play with only Charlie and a bass player. For the second audition, which was with the full band, I had to learn an entire record's worth of material. We actually played most of it.

This all was going on while I was traveling with Mel. I would climb in my bunk and hide the fact that I was charting out Charlie's record. I only had one day to woodshed for the second audition. But Charlie's office called to tell me I got the gig, so I gave two weeks' notice to Mel. We played out in California, and then I flew back to Nashville and hit the road with Charlie the next day,

I did close to two hundred dates a year with Charlie. He really likes to hit it. He has a wonderful setup where he and his wife travel in a mobile home—it's a way of life for him. He's a wonderful man and a great guy to work for. He was very open to ideas, and I ended up recording something

like fifteen albums with him.

Charlie has a high level of musicality, so he could explain to me what he wanted. He enjoyed his live shows and wanted everybody to enjoy that experience. He wouldn't get on stage and get nervous like Mel did. He very much enjoyed the experience, and as long as the tempos were up, he rarely asked me to change anything. In the fourteen years I was with Charlie I can count on one hand the things he might have asked me to change.

**MD:** Tell us about playing his signature song, "The Devil Went Down To Georgia."

**Jack:** It was recorded with brushes, but live, I played it with sticks because it needed a lot of power and it needed that drive. It's a quick train beat.

When the song was cut—and through all of the '70s—there were two drummers in The Charlie Daniels Band. One left, and then the other held down the fort for a couple of years, but then he left too. I ended up having to come up with parts that simulated two drummers.

**MD:** It's unusual for a country artist to use his live band on records.

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## Jack Gavin

**Jack:** True.

**MD:** What did you know about recording prior to his records?

**Jack:** I had some experience growing up around Niagara Falls, but mostly it was a new experience recording in a professional studio, and it was learned by trial and error.

**MD:** What didn't you know and what did you need to learn?

**Jack:** How consistent you have to be with dynamics and timing.

**MD:** Were there moments of sheer terror?

**Jack:** I was absolutely frightened to death. You really have to be open-minded and be able to take criticism and advice.

**MD:** But most artists don't want to have to waste their time with someone who needs criticizing.

**Jack:** And that's where I was fortunate. Charlie was such a wonderful person that he wanted to use his players. It gave him the ability to rehearse and arrange the material before going into the studio. He liked to take the time to work up the material—write it, arrange it, and try different ideas on demos before going in to cut. Fortunately I was a quick learner, and stylistically I was very comfortable because

Charlie's music is more of a rockin' country style.

**MD:** What was the biggest challenge of that gig for you?

**Jack:** Stamina. After that first show I played with him, I was literally drained from head to toe. I walked off stage thinking, "I have to build my stamina and my strength." I did that through exercise and practice. Cardiovascular training and upper body weight training became an integral part of my routine.

My routine now includes running. I've built up to four miles in thirty minutes, mainly on a treadmill. I recommend running on treadmills to save your knees and gauge your progress. I went from working nightclubs with Mel to working in front of 20,000 people—that's a night-and-day difference. In circumstances like that, you learn very quickly what the weak aspects of your playing are.

**MD:** Can you be specific about what changes from small clubs to 20,000-seaters? Does your equipment have to change? Your technique?

**Jack:** My equipment didn't have to change. But technically, I wanted to be

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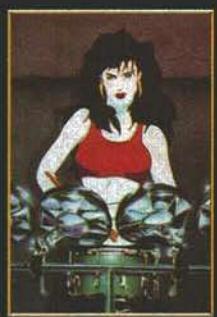
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# Jack Gavin

able to put out more energy to the audience. I wanted to have powerful shows, so I had to strengthen my technique to be able to play harder and for longer periods of time. Charlie's shows were seventy-five minutes, and that stamina had to be maintained throughout.

**MD:** What did you do to strengthen your technique?

**Jack:** I worked on George Lawrence Stone's *Stick Control*. I revisited the techniques of my percussion instructor and used weighted sticks to practice with and to warm up with. I still use aluminum sticks to warm up with. Just to be clear, it's not about building a lot of muscles to be able to play tight. When you play loud shows, your grip has to be loose.

**MD:** Certainly anyone can understand wanting a new musical experience after fourteen years, but it must have been very difficult to leave.

**Jack:** The hardest thing I ever had to do was drive to Charlie's house and give notice to a man who believed in me, was a joy to work for, and who gave me the opportunity of a lifetime.

**MD:** So why leave?

**Jack:** At the beginning of '99, when The Charlie Daniels Band shut down for three months, Tracy Lawrence's producer called. They were working on demos for his new record and asked if I was available. I did some demos for him and then he needed a band to do a few shows. I did the shows, some more demo work, and then more shows over a period of two months. In the middle of that, Tracy offered me the opportunity to come on board.

I decided to take the gig because I wanted some new musical experiences. It provided new challenges, and I've become the bandleader in Tracy's group. But I gave it a lot of thought and it was a very tough decision to make. I had stability with Charlie and a great experience, but it was time for a change. I also wanted to pursue more studio work in Nashville. Charlie understood and was the ultimate gentleman.

Tracy's music was a completely different style. He likes a high-energy show, but there's a greater range of dynamics. He has a very country side to him, but a very edgy side as well. That was a big challenge for me. I was able to start working on finesse.

**MD:** How does one work on finesse?

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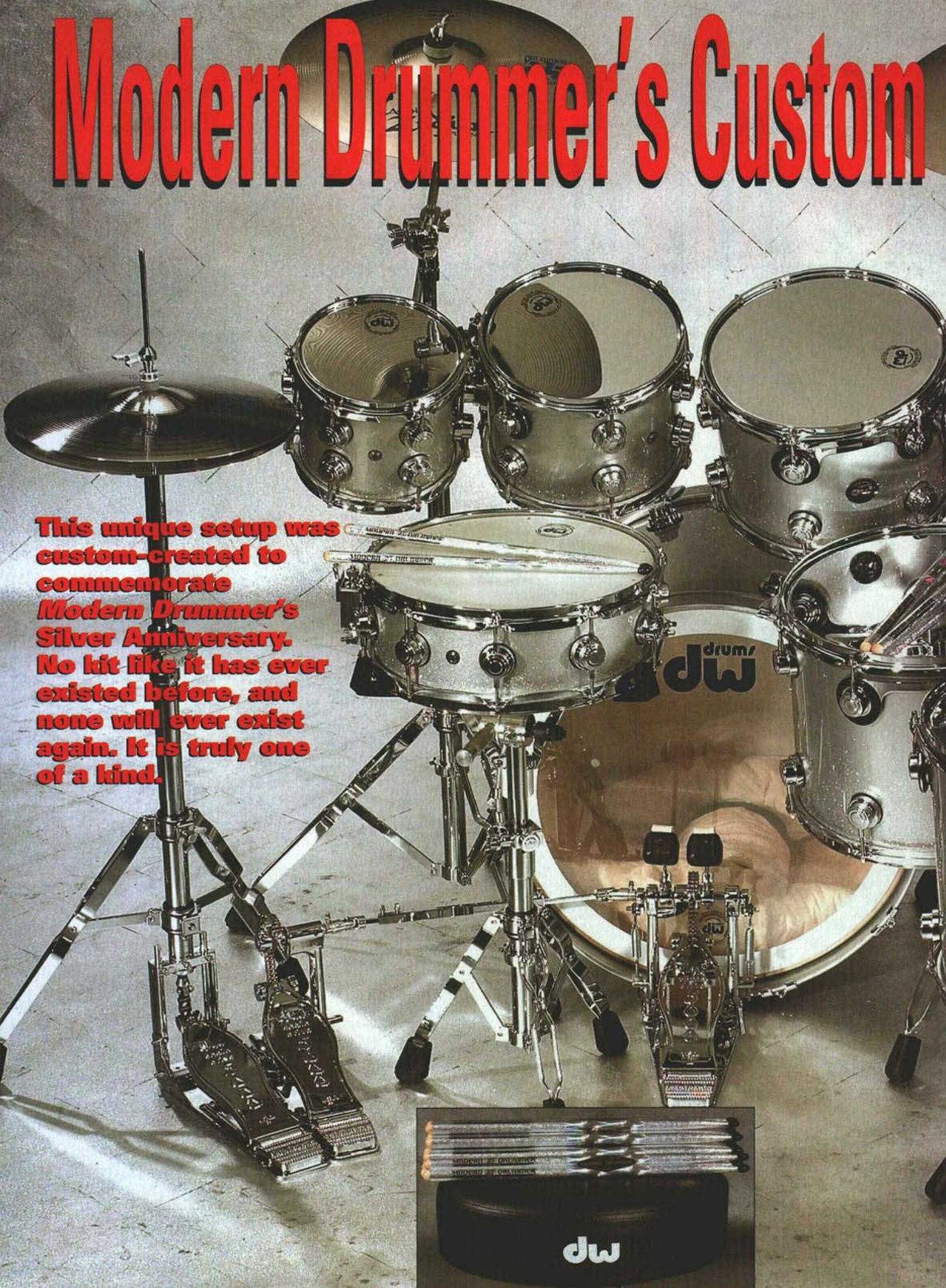
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## Jack Gavin

**Jack:** You work on control of the instrument at softer dynamics, which is one of the hardest things to do. It's a challenge to play with a really nice groove at soft tempos. I did a lot of woodshedding on the material. I'd listen to the live tape and then the recorded studio versions to find a happy medium. Again, the live shows will be more energetic, and usually tempos are going to be up somewhat. But you find a happy medium to give the band a good sense of where the pulse is, especially on ballads.

**MD:** What is the job description of musical director?

**Jack:** Putting the band together, running auditions, hiring, firing, rehearsing the band, running soundchecks, and addressing any technical or musical problems. As drummer you're pretty much running the show and following the artist's direction. Depending on how Tracy feels, he might want things a little quicker or a little more relaxed.

**MD:** How do you know that?

**Jack:** He'll convey that to me either verbally or through his singing style. If he's singing a little relaxed, I can see and hear

where he's placing the pulse. That changes from night to night, which is different from Charlie's show, where it was high-energy front to back, always pushing the edge of the tempos. The job of a drummer is a supporting role, to do what's best for the artist and to make him sound as good as he possibly can.

**MD:** How does recording with Tracy differ from recording with Charlie?

**Jack:** Tracy was very different because, first of all, the musical styles were different. It also gave me the opportunity to work with some of Nashville's premier recording musicians. You learn from those experiences. In some situations, you can only learn by doing.

**MD:** Having recorded so many albums with Charlie, can you choose three tracks that are most representative of your playing?

**Jack:** The first would be "All Night Long," from *Renegade*. It's a great example of a slammin' rockin' shuffle, Southern style. It was the first time I recorded using a double pedal. I use it in the intro to kick off the tune. It was also the first time we tracked as a live band in one room, with the engineer in the same

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room. So it was a challenge to get really good drum sounds.

The next song would be "Birmingham Blues," from the *Blue Hat* CD. I recorded two drum tracks to give the tune a sound reminiscent of the old Charlie Daniels Band, when he had two drummers. I laid one down and then went back in and overdubbed a second one. It was a 6/8 groove with a lot of polyrhythms. That was a fun one to do.

Another song I like the drumming on is the title cut from *Blue Hat*, which was a slower rockin' shuffle where both hands were playing the shuffle—commonly referred to as a "double shuffle." The tough part is nailing the backbeat when you're playing a shuffle with the left hand as well, and getting everything to line up with the bass drum, which is playing four on the floor.

**MD:** What tracks are you most pleased with from Tracy Lawrence's *Lessons Learned*?

**Jack:** That was such a different experience, recording with eight guys, up to four songs in a day, and being thrown into the mix with Nashville's most brilliant players. I had to really step up to the plate, because what each person brings to it can totally affect the direction of a song. A good example is "Lonely." It was a track where I had to go in, listen to it, and then track it. It was my first *first* take! And it's a single. We used all acoustic sounds and no triggering, which seems to be the current trend in Nashville. It was pretty exciting.

Another track from that album is "Unforgiven," where the dynamic range runs the gamut from very soft to very loud. It's tough to track a ballad with so much space in it. With so many guys, the pulse can vary a little bit, and everyone has to have their ears on. That's where you really hear how brilliant a session player has to be to be able to step into that situation—to hear it once, get a sheet, and go out and play it like he's played it all his life. It was amazing to be a part of that, and it was a wonderful learning experience.

**MD:** What's next for you?

**Jack:** I hope to do more studio recording. I'm building a studio in my home and doing some producing. I'm also thinking about doing some teaching, which I have

done from time to time in my career. With Tracy, I'm doing approximately a hundred fifty shows a year, so it's a little less than when I was with Charlie. It's enabled me to enjoy some time with my daughter, Cheyenne. As a touring musician, you never get that time back with your child, so this change has given me that opportunity.

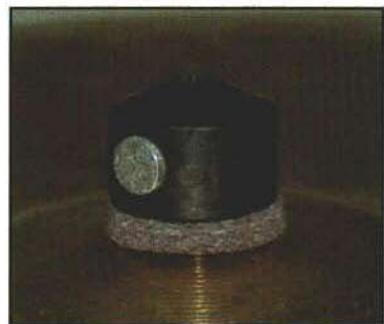
My goals have been to have some longevity in this business and to be as versatile as possible. My teacher, Louie Marino, stressed how important versatility was and to be prepared for whatever knocks on your door. You can have the greatest technique of any drummer in the world, but if you can't fit into the required musical slot, then you're not going to work. You have to be versatile enough to adapt to different opportunities.

I've been able to enjoy a seventeen-year career in music, but I know that can change in a day. I've been very fortunate and thankful to work steadily. I know great players around Nashville who *should* be working but are not. I don't know what makes the difference between someone who gets the opportunity and someone who doesn't. But it's truly been a blessing that I've worked so consistently.



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# Big Band Phrasing

## Part 1: Long Notes And Short Notes

by Ron Spagnardi



"Phrasing" refers to how the components of the drumkit are used in big band drumming to reinforce and accent horn figures in the arrangement. Though there are many accepted ways to phrase big band figures, most players adhere to a few basic principles.

First, big band horn figures are primarily composed of two types of notes: long, sustained notes and short, staccato notes. First let's

take a closer look at phrasing long-note figures.

### Long-Note Phrasing

As a general rule, quarter notes and notes of longer duration require sustained phrasing. Examples A, B, and C below show figures that would require long-note phrasing, indicated by the dash above the note. (Notice in example D that 8th notes tied over to longer notes also require sustained phrasing.)

**A**

**B**

**C**

**D**

The following exercises offer an opportunity to practice long-note phrasing in the fourth bar of a four-bar phrase.

A musical score for a drum set, consisting of ten staves, each representing a different drum or cymbal. The staves are numbered 3 through 10 from top to bottom. Measure numbers 1 through 10 are placed to the left of each staff. The notation includes various symbols such as 'x', '|', and 'o' on the heads of the drums, indicating specific playing techniques like strokes or sustained notes. Measures 1 through 9 end with a vertical bar line, while measure 10 ends with a double bar line. Measure 5 contains a single measure repeat sign (double vertical line) at its end.

## Short-Note Phrasing

Figures containing 8th notes that stand alone with no notes following, as well as notes smaller than 8ths, are considered short notes. Many big band players also use the bass drum and cymbals to phrase short notes. However, staccato snare drum accents, rimshots, and fast cymbal crashes are the norm.

Once again, careful listening is the best way to determine how to most effectively phrase the figures in a big band arrangement. The four figures below are good examples of short-note phrasing, indicated by a dot above the note.



Here are some examples of rhythmic figures best simulated with short-note phrasing. Notice that unlike long-note phrasing, the cymbal time pattern continues over the figures so that the time flow remains undisturbed.

The score consists of five staves, each starting with a letter 'C' and a number from 1 to 5. Each staff contains a series of rhythmic patterns. The patterns include eighth notes with dots above them, sixteenth notes with dots above them, and regular eighth and sixteenth notes. These patterns are set against a background of continuous cymbal strokes, represented by 'x' marks. Brackets with the number '3' indicate groups of three notes. The patterns repeat in a cycle across the staves.

6

7

8

In Part 2 of this three-part series, we'll examine the difference in notation and performance of big band section and ensemble figures.

*This material is excerpted from Ron Spagnardi's book The Big Band Drummer, published by Modern Drummer Publications, Inc.*



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# The Half-Time Rolling-Triplet Shuffle

by Ed Breckenfeld



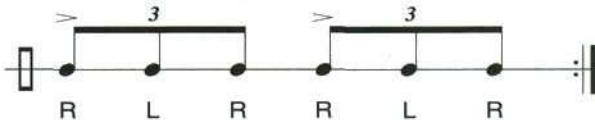
In my last article (December 2000 *MD*) we looked at the 4/4 backbeat shuffle, which is used extensively in blues, rock, jazz, and country drumming. We added "ghosted" snare notes to the shuffle to achieve a continuous rolling-triplet effect.

This month we're going to examine the *half-time* version of the

Try the above pattern with the right stick on the closed hi-hat and the left stick on the snare drum. (Left-handers invert the stickings.) Adding an accent to the beginning of each triplet will deepen the groove.

Below are some standard half-time shuffle patterns. On the left is the basic version and on the right is the same beat with ghosted snare notes added. As the number of notes increases with each pat-

shuffle. This takes us in a funk, hip-hop, and pop direction. We'll also be adding the same triplet effect to these grooves. The following sticking pattern forms the basis for the rolling-triplet shuffle:



tern, you'll see the rolling triplet begin to develop. Keep the ghost notes very quiet so that they blend with the cymbal part. This brings out the triplet effect. At the same time, the backbeats should be *slammin'*. The greater the dynamics, the deeper the groove.

For now, play these beats on the hi-hat. Later we'll move to the ride cymbal and add some left-foot hi-hat patterns.

The image shows four staves of drum sheet music. Each staff is labeled with a number (1, 2, 3, or 4) and a C-clef. The music consists of six measures. Each measure contains six groups of three strokes, each group starting with a vertical bar and ending with a diagonal bar. The first three groups in each measure have a '3' above them, and the last three groups have a '>3' above them. Measures 1-3 have a vertical bar at the start of the first group. Measures 4-6 have a vertical bar at the start of the second group. Measures 1-3 have a vertical bar at the end of the third group. Measures 4-6 have a vertical bar at the end of the fifth group. Measures 1-3 have a vertical bar at the end of the sixth group. Measures 4-6 have a vertical bar at the end of the eighth group.

The rolling-triplet effect has become completely continuous by the last pattern. However, this many ghost notes may scare your bandmates!

Here are some half-time shuffles that are a little more practical. Once again, the ghost-note version of each is on the right.

The patterns are as follows:

- Beat 5:** Measures 1-2: 16th-note shuffles. Measures 3-4: Ghost-note version. The ghost-note version has eighth-note bass and snare patterns.
- Beat 6:** Measures 1-2: 16th-note shuffles. Measures 3-4: Ghost-note version. The ghost-note version has eighth-note bass and snare patterns.
- Beat 7:** Measures 1-2: 16th-note shuffles. Measures 3-4: Ghost-note version. The ghost-note version has eighth-note bass and snare patterns.
- Beat 8:** Measures 1-2: 16th-note shuffles. Measures 3-4: Ghost-note version. The ghost-note version has eighth-note bass and snare patterns.
- Beat 9:** Measures 1-2: 16th-note shuffles. Measures 3-4: Ghost-note version. The ghost-note version has eighth-note bass and snare patterns.
- Beat 10:** Measures 1-2: 16th-note shuffles. Measures 3-4: Ghost-note version. The ghost-note version has eighth-note bass and snare patterns.

All of the beats above can be played with a straight-8th cymbal pattern, instead of the 16th-note shuffle. While this diminishes the shuffle effect, the rolling triplet remains intact between the bass and snare. Here's an example using beat 4:

Now go back and try all of the beats on the ride cymbal. For the left-foot hi-hat pattern, 2 & 4 or quarter notes will work fine. But for a more intense driving groove, try 8th notes on the hi-hat. Here's an example using beat 1:



To bring out the offbeats, try placing left-foot hi-hat notes on the "&s" of each beat. This really adds a funky, polyrhythmic feel to the grooves. Here's example 2 with an offbeat hi-hat pattern:



Be sure to try these variations on all of the beats. And remember, keep the ghost notes as quiet as possible. As busy as these beats are, if you play the ghost notes too loud, it will sound like you're overplaying. As always, be tasteful, and have fun!



An advertisement for Sennheiser drum microphones. The background features a close-up of a drummer's face and a drum set. A large image of a cymbal is on the left. The text "designed for drummers" is at the top right. The website "www.sennheiserusa.com" is on the far right edge. A legend at the bottom left identifies four microphone models: Evolution Series (e604 Snare/Toms, e602 Kick, e609 Toms), Classic Series (MD 421 II Kick/Toms), and K6 Modular Series (ME 64/K6P Combo Overhead/Hi-Hat). The Sennheiser logo is at the bottom right.



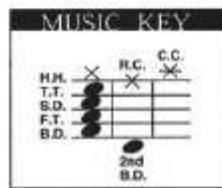


# Virgil Donati

## "Dog Boots"



Transcribed by Bruno Meeus



This month's *Rock Charts* features the incredible playing of master double bass drummer Virgil Donati. His new "super-group," Planet X, showcases Donati along with keyboardist Derek Sherinian and guitarist Tony MacAlpine. The trio recently released *Universe* (InsideOut Music, available at [www.xplanetx.com](http://www.xplanetx.com)), a recording that pulls out all the stops.

On "Dog Boots," Virg displays his ability to play double strokes with his feet at a breakneck pace and with lots of power. This gives the track a unique feel, one very different from the usual alternating double bass assault. Donati's also able to sustain the pattern while maneuvering through weird phrases. It's just another amazing performance from "The Thunder From Down Under."

$\text{♩} = 200$

A      Omit crash 1st time

**Section A:** The first section starts with a 16th-note bass line (X) followed by a 16th-note hi-hat (H). This is followed by a 16th-note bass line (X) followed by a 16th-note hi-hat (H). This pattern repeats. At the end of the section, there is a 16th-note bass line (X) followed by a 16th-note hi-hat (H). The section ends with a 16th-note bass line (X) followed by a 16th-note hi-hat (H).

**Section B:** The second section starts with a 16th-note bass line (X) followed by a 16th-note hi-hat (H). This is followed by a 16th-note bass line (X) followed by a 16th-note hi-hat (H). This pattern repeats. At the end of the section, there is a 16th-note bass line (X) followed by a 16th-note hi-hat (H). The section ends with a 16th-note bass line (X) followed by a 16th-note hi-hat (H).

Omit crash 2nd time

C

D

E

to Coda

Solo part

A page of drum sheet music featuring six staves of musical notation. The notation includes various symbols such as 'x', '|', 'z', and 'y' placed above or below the staff, and vertical strokes indicating dynamic levels. The music is divided into sections labeled "Solo part" and "Solo part II". The "Solo part" section begins with a measure of eighth-note patterns followed by a measure of sixteenth-note patterns. The "Solo part II" section begins with a measure of eighth-note patterns followed by a measure of sixteenth-note patterns. The music concludes with a section labeled "D.S. al Coda".

Drums only

*Coda*

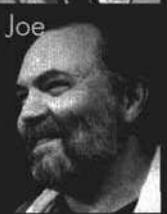
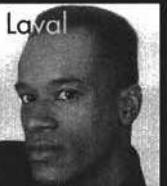


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# Maximize Your Soloing

## Inside Max Roach's Melodic Style



by John Riley

### MUSIC KEY



In my last article (December 2000 *MD*) we looked at the dynamic soloing style of Elvin Jones. Recalling his early days, Elvin had this to say about one of his peers, Max Roach: "I thought I knew how to play the drums until I heard Max Roach." Several drummers, notably Kenny Clarke, Art Blakey, and Roy Haynes, have been honored with the title "Father Of Modern Drumming." But the title is most often—and perhaps most aptly—bestowed upon Mr. Max Roach.

Max grew up in Brooklyn, New York and as a youngster studied drums and piano. He arrived on the professional music scene in the mid-1940s, just after Kenny Clarke and Art Blakey and just before Roy Haynes. This was a time when jazz music was going through a transformation from being *the* popular dance music of the day to becoming a more concert-oriented, serious-listening music. As a very young man, Max, through his work with Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, and others, established himself as a major shaper of this new music called "bebop."

As a member of the earliest bop bands, Max was given extensive solo space. He was also called upon to find new ways to accompany virtuoso soloists at a variety of tempos, some break-neck fast. Max accomplished this by emphasizing the time on the ride cymbal, as his mentor Jo Jones had shown him, while feathering the bass drum and interjecting occasional musical punctuations with his snare drum.

At times Max created a more substantial dialog by mixing snare and bass drum accents underneath his relentless cymbal beat and 2 & 4 on his hi-hat. The bass drum accents became known as "bombs," and as this music was formalizing during World War II, drummers that played a lot of bass drum accents were said to be "dropping bombs."

After years as a sideman with the greatest musicians of the day, Max had grown into a leader himself. By the early 1950s he began leading a series of top-notch and innovative ensembles, which he continues to do to this day.

Max is a fantastic soloist and is often called "the most melodic drummer ever." But when questioned about his melodic inventiveness, Max has stated that he is more interested in musical structure and thinks more about the architecture and form of his phrases than melody. It's this aspect of Max's soloing that I'd like to explore in this article.

Let's look at the structure of Max's solo on the thirty-two-measure, AABA-form song "Delilah," from the 1954 recording *Clifford Brown And Max Roach*. The song is played at a medium tempo, and Max's solo is preceded by one chorus of trading

"fours." Max's last "four" leads directly into his solo chorus. The solo is played with mallets, and Max keeps "four on the floor" going with his bass drum and 2 & 4 with his hi-hat throughout. Max plays a four-piece kit with two cymbals. This is the sound of small drums with cranked calf heads. Max plays the solo with his snares turned off. His small tom is tuned higher than his snare drum.

The solo opens with a classic bebop three-beat, 16th-note-triplet phrase, example 1A. That phrase is repeated and concludes on beat 3 of measure two. On beat 3 of measure four Max plays a triplet "connector" that foreshadows his next melodic idea. In measures five through eight, Max develops that triplet connector idea, example 1B, and plays another classic phrase consisting of triplets on the snare and melodic ideas on the toms, example 1C. Note how he starts simply and builds. Measure eight concludes with a flam on the snare drum, which foreshadows his next move—the quarter-note-triplet flams around the drums in measures nine through twelve, example 1D. Measures thirteen through sixteen explore 16th notes around the drums, mainly in groups of six, example 1E.

Thus far Max has played sixteen measures, which he has clearly structured into four distinct four-bar phrases, each employing a different subdivision. Bars one through four are based on a 16th-note-triplet idea; in bars five through eight, 8th-note triplets are explored; bars nine through thirteen feature quarter-note triplets; and in bars thirteen through sixteen Max develops 16th-note ideas. Much is revealed by simply looking at this solo transcription. The architecture almost looks like Max is trading fours with himself!

In measure seventeen, the beginning of the bridge of the song, Max plays another three-beat melodic phrase, this time in 16th notes, which he repeats, example 1F. The second half of the bridge, measures twenty-one through twenty-four, is made up of two two-measure phrases. The first one is yet another three-beat phrase that relates to the preceding phrase, example 1G, while the latter is similar to the triplet ideas played in measures five through eight, examples 1B and C.

Max doesn't toss off his ideas; he repeats and develops them with clarity and intent. The last eight measures of the solo are similar in structure to a recapitulation in classical music. Max paraphrases ideas that he introduced earlier in the solo to bring the solo full circle to a mature and pleasing conclusion. There isn't any "filler" material or ambiguity in this solo. Max means what he plays, and he executes his ideas flawlessly.

The tempo of this song is moderate and could afford one the

opportunity to play more elaborately and/or more bombastically. However, Max is a mature *musician*, one who is more interested in developing a solo that builds on the moods of *this* song rather than using his solo space as a showcase for technical theatrics. It's interesting that there is no interplay between the hands and feet in the solo, nor are there cymbal crashes.

Here are Max's main motifs to practice individually before tackling the entire solo. Pay particular attention to the stickings I've included; Max is super-efficient, so there are no awkward cross-stickings in this solo. Each idea flows best using alternating sticking:

The chart shows six staves of drumming patterns. Each staff begins with a common time signature and a bass drum note. The patterns are as follows:

- 1A:** A sixteenth-note pattern with a bass drum on the first note. The pattern is: L R L R | R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L R L.
- 1B:** A sixteenth-note pattern with a bass drum on the first note. The pattern is: R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L R L.
- 1C:** A sixteenth-note pattern with a bass drum on the first note. The pattern is: R L R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L R L.
- 1D:** An eighth-note pattern with a bass drum on the first note. The pattern is: R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L R L.
- 1E:** A sixteenth-note pattern with a bass drum on the first note. The pattern is: R L R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L R L.
- 1F:** An eighth-note pattern with a bass drum on the first note. The pattern is: R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L.
- 1G:** A sixteenth-note pattern with a bass drum on the first note. The pattern is: R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L | R L R L R L R L.

Now work on capturing Max's ideas, flow, and sound through the entire solo. Play it with mallets:

(17)

R L R L R L R L

(21)

R L R L R L

> 3 3 3 > 3 RL R R L L L R R

3 3 3 3 3 3 > 3 R L etc.

(28)

(32)

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Finally, here are some more classic "Max-isms" as found in the five other great solos on this album.

Study Max's playing on this album; it will really enlighten your playing. If you'd like to hear more of Max's great time playing, comping, and solo work, I recommend his album *Drums Unlimited*, as well as two others with Clifford Brown: *Clifford Brown And Max Roach At Basin Street* and *Brown And Roach Incorporated*.

John Riley's career includes work with such artists as John Scofield, Mike Stern, Woody Herman, and Stan Getz. He has also written two critically acclaimed books, *The Art Of Bop Drumming* and *Beyond Bop Drumming*, published by Manhattan Music.



Go to [www.moderndrummer.com](http://www.moderndrummer.com) and click on the MD Radio icon to hear "Delilah."



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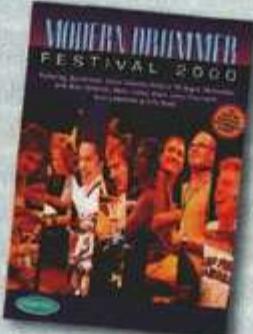
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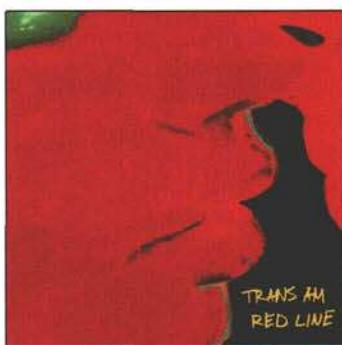
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## RECORDINGS

**Trans Am** Red Line

Sebastian Thomson (dr), Nathan Means (bs), Philip Manley (gtr)



*Red Line* is a drum record. Granted, it's a lot of other things too. But Sebastian Thomson's killer grooves are perched right at center stage. Often faster and more aggressive than 1999's *Futureworld*, this epic new LP expands upon the trio's past experiments with vocoder and synth textures built on an organic bed of rhythm.

*Red Line* has the unique effect of guiding the listener through time and space, making stops in the '70s, '80s, '90s, today, and tomorrow. Beautiful pacing and dynamics hold the varied recording together while constantly springing surprises. An acoustic guitar, a saxophone, a vintage drum machine, and big-guitar rock all make well-placed cameos. Thomson's huge, open sound also unifies the twenty-one tracks, which include several drum-based interludes and mini-solos over repeating patterns from the tonal instruments. The drumming is loose, crafty, and, above all, *slamming*. (*Thrill Jockey*)

Michael Parillo

**U2** All That You Can't Leave Behind

Larry Mullen (dr), Bono (vcl, gtr), The Edge (gtr, pno, vcl), Adam Clayton (bs)



A welcome return to form for the boys from Dublin, who've come up with a slew of picture-perfect pop/rock songs on their new disc. Larry Mullen and Adam Clayton are simply one of the best rhythm sections in rock music: They lay it down, keep it simple, and explode when called upon. Make no mistake, this is a rock album with less electronic trickery than the previous few U2 recordings. There might not be a signature drum riff such as "Sunday, Bloody Sunday" or "Pride" here, but that's only because the songs didn't call for it. The fact is, I was air-drumming to the grooves halfway through my first listen. How much fun is that? (*Interscope*)

Ted Bonar

**King Crimson** Heavy Construkction

Pat Mastelotto (dr), Robert Fripp (gtr), Adrian Belew (gtr, vcl), Trey Gunn (tch gtr)



To paraphrase the old saying, King Crimson isn't just the best at what it does, it's the only group *doing* it. The current four-piece incarnation finds Pat Mastelotto playing an all-electronic kit and the guitarists painting with an ever-widening palette of ungodly sounds. The first two CDs of this live three-disc set focus on Crimson's two most recent studio recordings, while the third consists of in-concert improvisations. Given the musicians' of-one-mind interplay and sheer conviction, the off-the-cuff material often seems composed.

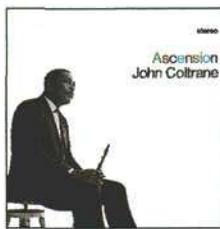
No Bill Bruford clone, Mastelotto is his own animal. His inorganic timbres may inspire love-it-or-hate-it reactions, but his drumming is unquestionably sensitive and precise. Sometimes Pat plays it straight; at others he cuts loose a torrent of white noise from his digitized snare and library of post-modern percussion. (*Discipline Global Mobile*)

Michael Parillo

## SIGNIFICANT REISSUES

**John Coltrane** *Coltrane Plays The Blues, Ole Coltrane, Coltrane Jazz, Coltrane's Sound, Impressions, Ascension, Kulu Se Mama, Living Space, Sun Ship*

Elvin Jones (dr), John Coltrane (sx), McCoy Tyner (pno), Jimmy Garrison (bs)



If you haven't already purchased Mosaic's recent Elvin Jones box set, consider instead what many regard as his best work, with saxophone colossus and jazz innovator John Coltrane. Impulse! and Rhino have reissued early and late-period Coltrane recently, all featuring remastered



Elvin on alternate and unreleased tracks. For Trane blowing the blues while slowly developing his signature composing style, check out the Rhino/Atlantic reissues *Coltrane Plays The Blues, Ole Coltrane, Coltrane Jazz, and Coltrane's Sound*. Elvin is tight and empathetic, and the recording quality is dry and detailed; every note is crystal clear.



After 1962, Elvin and Trane's styles changed dramatically, resulting in long improvisations and explosive interplay, which reflected the coming turbulence of the late 1960s. Trane's sound reached for the stars, Elvin's encompassed the depths of the earth and sea. Impulse! albums like 1963's *Impressions* feature classics like "Up Against The Wall" and "After The Rain," brooding, beautiful forays into new music. Then, in one incredible burst that occurred mostly in June, 1965, the quartet recorded *Ascension, Kulu Se Mama*, and the sessions that were eventually released as *Living Space, Sun Ship* followed. This was spiritual space music, setting the scene for the free jazz of the '60s, '70s, and today. Batten down the hatches and take off.

Ken Micallef

9

## Luis Conte Cuban Dreams

Luis Conte, Mitch Sanchez (perc), Joseph Rotondi (pno), Carlos del Puerto Jr. (bs), plus guests



Since he's been percussionist for the biggest in the biz from Santana to Streisand, you might expect Conte's debut CD to thrust him out front with a no-holds-barred MVP showcase. Fortunately, that's not the case. We're treated instead to a sumptuous, deeply personal, and heartfelt statement. The cover appropriately portrays a worn, thumbed-through scrapbook. Within the audio album is a nostalgic stroll teeming with the voices, street sounds, and music of Conte's Cuban boyhood. Family members relate memories, sounds of Radio Cuba crackle through, and Conte re-creates local music from the ballroom, to Carnival, to a lullaby. Best experienced in one sitting, the Caribbean journey features vibrant, sensual vocalists, and the marvelous centerpiece percussion is polished yet earthy. Good food for the soul, and a must for percussionists. (*Unitone*)

Jeff Potter

9

## Dave Weckl Band Transition

Dave Weckl (dr), Tom Kennedy (bs), Steve Weingart (kybd), Brandon Fields (sx. ft)



*Transition* is the most musical release Weckl has produced as a solo artist. Dave bares his soul artistically and personally by openly announcing his divorce as well as his separation from longtime musical partner Jay Oliver. Despite these background hardships, the band sounds relaxed and very much in tune with one another as they knock I out jazzy, sometimes Latin, yet funky material with a New York edge. Keyboardist Steve Weingart in particular seems to have made a considerable difference in the style and sound of the band. The material is much more playful than anything Weckl has done in the past. His feel is loose and flowing, and his chops, as always, are exceptional. Sometimes monumental life change can bring out the best in an artist. (*Stretch/Concord*)

Mike Haid

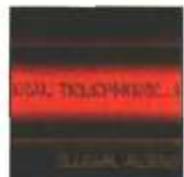
8

## Marco Minnemann Comfortably Homeless

8

## Illegal Aliens International Telephone

Marco Minnemann (dr, kybd, gtr), Artemis (vcl), Peter Wolpl (gtr), T.M. Stevens, Fabio Trentini (bs), Mario Brinkman (sound design)



Imagine getting drunk and stumbling through EuroDisney. *Comfortably Homeless* could very well be your soundtrack. At times techno, at times rock, this Zappa-meets-Cartoon Network material is more experimental than previous Minnemann releases. There's a lot to be discovered within each composition, with multiple polyrhythms and odd time signatures passing by at the speed of light. Marco's chops are blazing from beginning to end; he's simply relentless in his pursuit of pushing his drumming to new heights. *International Telephone* features vocalist Artemis with an overall ambient/heavy rock focus. Marco's distinctive arrangements and powerful drumming drive the music and allow him to explore. Musically and lyrically, both releases are for mature and artistically open-minded audiences. (*Duck Dive Music/www.flying-dolphin.de*)

Mike Haid

8

## Josh Freese The Notorious One Man Orgy

Josh Freese (all instr), with Stone Gossard, Warren Fitzgerald, Michael Ward, Lyle Workman, and Jason Freese



Phew, where to start? The splashy, pushy drumming, also evident on recent releases by The Vandals and A Perfect Circle? The fact that lyricist Freese doesn't mince his words? Or perhaps his kinky slant on male/female relationships and other groupings? (Let's not go there.) Josh's songs are solid pop constructions, though at times he lets a few glitches go in favor of the feel. At others, he's weaving an intricate mesh with punchy kick and scary tom fills. The final phone message begins, "Josh, it's Christina. You lose. Have a great life, rock star." Gotta respect a guy for baring his private life. ([www.kiingfurecords.com](http://www.kiingfurecords.com), [323] 468-6969)

T. Bruce Wittet

## KICKIN' OUT THE NEW

7

## The Twilight Singers Twilight



The drummers employed by Afghan Whig leader Greg Dulli on his new project, *The Twilight Singers*, conduct themselves in a style befitting the darkly sensual tunes Dulli is known for. A minimalist style is a must here, as overplaying would simply kill the mood. Primary drummer Steve Cobby shines on "Love," with a slick sense of hi-hat placement and enough great moves to keep a drummer's ear permanently perked up. **Barrett Martin, Shawn Smith, Aaron Hammond, and Michael Horrigan** add a tasteful beat or two each. (*Columbia*)

9

## World That Surrounds You



A musical melting pot, drawing upon folk music from all corners of the earth, on *World That Surrounds You* Janah puts it all out there. Avoiding the snare completely, bandmembers **Rick Shoemaker, Keith Johnston, Steve Atwell, and Ron Cochran** all play percussion, giving nearly everyone a chance to hit something. Blended into a rhythmic wall of sound and extremely well orchestrated, percussion like this is great to hear mixed within such a skewed pop setting. ([www.janah.org](http://www.janah.org))

6

## Chris Lee



On Chris Lee's self-titled release, drummer **Andrew Barker** plays with all the excitement of someone who's just happy to be behind the kit. Barker puts on a nicely versatile performance, trotting out a stutter-step snare/kick/hi-hat groove on the opening track, shifting to a laid-back drag on the snare on the next tune, and later taking a unique approach to 3/4. It all has a "drums from the garage" sound, not a high-tech production, which just lends itself to the charm of each song. (*Misrecords*)

Fran Azzarto and Lisa Crouch



## Racer X Technical Difficulties

Scott Travis (dr), Paul Gilbert (gtr), John Alderete (bs), Jeff Martin (vo)



This LA-based metal band turned heads when they exploded on the scene in the mid-'80s, but by 1990 they were history. Back with a vengeance, the quartet has released a near-perfect, timeless, melodic metal collection. Every track is musically and vocally interesting, coming off like Dream Theater meets Judaq Priest. Drummer Scott Travis (Priest) holds one of the most solid grooves in metal. His drum sounds are thick and heavy as he unleashes his most captivating performance to date. "Phallic Tractor" and "Technical Difficulties" show that Travis has commanding control over his double bass chops and uses them creatively to enhance the others' parts. Keep your fingers crossed that this band stays together for a few more albums of this caliber. (*Shrapnel*)

Mike Haid



## Bottlefly

Danny Martin (dr), Mark Arnell (vcl), Richie Wermerling (kybd. vcl), Lizard (gtr), Lawrence Addison (bs)



One listen is all it will take for fans of pop music to find themselves singing and dancing along to this London-based quintet's debut. *Bottlefly* is a swirl of flavors from the past four decades, mixing in the new-millennium sounds of today. Drummer Danny Martin complements the melodic songwriting team of lead singer Mark Arnell and keyboardist Richie Wermerling with punchy, feel-good backbeats—straight from the heart. Whether rocking out on the syncopated "Umbrella" or the ska/dancehall reggae of "Got 2 B Luv," Danny's performance on this CD is as good as any session pro's would be. Drummers looking to play along to excellent drumming on some great pop songs should check out *Bottlefly*. Play it loud and have fun. (*Universal*)

Billy Amendola



## Krisiun Conquerors Of Armageddon

Max Kolesne (dr), Moyses Kolesne (gtr), Alex Camargo (bs, vcl)



Largely due to Max Kolesne's precise and blazing-fast drumming, Brazil's Krisiun have developed into a technically masterful and utterly ferocious-sounding death metal act. On *Conquerors Of Armageddon* (produced by Morbid Angel/Hate Eternal guitarist Erik Rutan) Kolesne conquers his kit with a remarkable sense of timing. On "Abyssal Gates," he juggles all sorts of complexities with extreme dexterity. More amazing chops erupt on "Messiah's Abomination," "Cursed Scrolls," and the sprawling six-minute title track. But it's the way Kolesne's "lead" drumming interacts with his brother Moyses' chilling guitar work and his other brother Alex Camargo's rotting-throat vocals that separates this power trio from most other death metallers. *Espantoso!* (That's Portuguese for "Awesome!") (*CenturyMedia*)

Jeff Perlah



## Simon Phillips And Jeff Babko Vantage Point

Simon Phillips (dr), Jeff Babko (pno), Walt Fowler (trp), Brandon Fields (sx), Dave Carpenter (bs)



While it's wise to be wary when rock musicians throw their hat into the straight-ahead jazz ring, it's also best to keep an open mind regarding such efforts. And when Simon says he wants to swing, who are we to be cynical? Indeed, Simon swings very well, paying homage to early-'60s-era small groups. Simon has definitely done his Tony Williams homework, with plenty of power and double-stop flam/bass drum combinations on display. But then, that's how Simon plays rock, isn't it? His style remains uncompromised, and this will please his many fans. While no one will mistake Phillips for Mr. Williams any time soon, Simon surely holds his own in this jazz setting. And the uptempo closer/extended solo will hold any doubting critic at bay. You can't fake this stuff. (*Allegro*)

Ted Bonar

## BIG BAND AVANT-GARDE



## Fred Frith/Ensemble Modern

Traffic Continues

Ikue Mori (drum machines), Ensemble Modern: Rumi Ogawa-Helferich, Riner Romer (perc), Fred Frith (gtr), Zeena Parkins (harp, el harp)



This album presents two extended pieces by Frith that brilliantly combine improvisational moments, the energy of rock, and modern classical's written precision and instrumentation. To execute this music he enlists the forces of Ensemble Modern, perhaps the top performance group for new music, plus select specialists including Ikue Mori. The Ensemble Modern percussionists are in the top of their field, executing their parts precisely, as on "Traffic III/Traffic I." Mori, a drummer who moved into electronics, is a skillful programmer working with interesting patterns and sounds to emphasize energy and color. "Gyrate/Adage B" in the second extended piece is an excellent example of this. If you're searching for new and untraditional ideas, look no further. (*Winter & Winter*)



## Kappa Bien Serre

Philippe Keyser (dr, director), others (big band)



Kappa, the brainchild of drummer/director Philippe Keyser, is a fully functional top-notch avant-garde big band. The band works with large strokes of sound across the aural palette, making use of crescendos and sudden explosions of sound. The intensity rarely lets up. The title track begins with simple rhythmic patterns played by various bandmembers, building until Keyser enters with powerful tom beats. This becomes a heavy 6/8 stomp against the band, then morphs into abstract swing and free playing. Keyser pushes things along nicely in "The Heart Tears," with its Zappa-like horns and 8th-note/triplet patterns. "Greyhound" features some roiling solo work amid stabs from the band, before entering more abstract territory. An independent release for the adventurous. ([lezebre@videotron.ca](mailto:lezebre@videotron.ca))

Martin Patmos

# VIDEOS

## 7 Classic Drum Solos And Drum Battles

level: all, 60 minutes, \$24.95



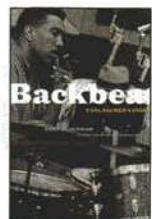
Should I be a lofty critic and suggest that drum solo clips removed from musical context could be seen as shallow showboating? Naaah! This is drummers going really, really fast, and it's a blast. The sixty-minute video features clips, mostly from the '50s and '60s, of jazz power soloing with an emphasis on greats from the big band school, such as Sonny Payne, Rufus Jones, Buddy Rich, and a staggering chops Workout from Louie Bellson. Also eye-popping are bits from Art Blakey and a smartly built "Take Five" solo from Joe Morello. The thunder increases with several drum battles teaming Gene Krupa and Cozy Cole; Lionel Hampton, Krupa, and Chico Hamilton; Elvin Jones, Sonny Murray, and Art Blakey; and a humorous bout between Buddy Rich and Jerry Lewis! It's scholarly jazz history that's also plenty rowdy. (Hudson Music)

Jeff Potter

# BOOKS

## 8 Backbeat by Tony Scherman

level: all, \$15 (paperback)



Music lovers worldwide have heard Earl Palmer's tasteful drumming for decades on hits by Little Richard, Fats Domino, Sinatra, Basie, Ray Charles, and countless others. Palmer got his start tap-dancing and gigging in New Orleans, found celebrity as the premier session drummer in the LA studio scene, and built his career on literally thousands of records, movie soundtracks, and TV jingles. His "day job" brought him much deserved fame (and passing fortune), but Palmer's most lasting contribution was to the sound of New Orleans bebop in the early '50s. Music writer Tony Scherman has condensed a thousand pages of interview notes into a tightly-packed, insightful account of a life spent in "the best seat in the house." Earl Palmer's kick drum and backbeat are part of the language of early rock 'n' roll, so it is little wonder that he is among the few sidemen to be inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame. Palmer's story is remarkable, and Scherman's *Backbeat* gives us all the inside view. (Da Capo Press)

Bill Kiely

## 6 O Batuque Carioca: The Rio De Janeiro Samba Schools' Drum Sections by Guilherme Goncalves and Mestre Odilon Costa

level: intermediate, \$20 plus shipping



From Brazil comes this sixty-one-page bilingual volume (Portuguese/English) featuring the instruments and rhythms of Rio's famous massive percussion groups, or "samba schools." Authors Goncalves and Costa are noted performer/educators who serve up authentic fare. The unique highlight of the book is a section that transcribes the ensemble signature grooves of sixteen renowned schools. The remaining half presents basic method and rhythms for the schools' percussion instruments. An accompanying CD will be available in a few months, which would make this brief method text less limiting. *Carioca* will best benefit those who already have a grasp on the sound/feel of samba and will delight in the authentic school transcriptions. (Groove, [www.maracatubrasil.com.br](http://www.maracatubrasil.com.br))

Jeff Potter



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# THE EDITORS' VAULT

## 9 PJ Harvey Dry

Robert Ellis (dr, vcl), PJ Harvey (vcl, gtr), Stephen Vaughan (bs)



PJ Harvey's debut album is anything *but* dry—it is positively dripping with blood, sludge, and raw scraps of brilliant ideas. Robert Ellis's drumming on this album is one of the most unusual and powerful examples of how hard odd rhythms and phrases can rock. Ellis doesn't play in five or six or three-over-four like anyone else—he simply dives into the leader's expressive vocals and rocks the phrases into submission. I've never been sure why more drummers didn't flip out over this record. Maybe it's because PJ Harvey was—rightfully so—a critic's darling of the women-in-rock scene of the early '90s. But this album is not touchy-feely, it's a bludgeoning assault with some of the best rock drumming of the decade. The new PJ Harvey album, *Stories From The City, Stories From The Sea*, is an equally bold album with excellent drumming from Ellis. But *Dry* is his explosive statement of power, technique, and drumming vision. (Unvera/Island)

Ted Bonar

# BOX TOPS

## 9 The Jimi Hendrix Experience

Mitch Mitchell, Buddy Miles, (dr), Jimi Hendrix (gtr, vcl).

Noel Redding, Billy Cox (bs)



This four-CD box set is more than a collection of stunning live performances, unreleased/alternate Hendrix standards, and works-in-progress. It's a full-on document showing the innovative guitarist during periods of extreme growth. This is a very intimate portrait of Hendrix, always searching, always scorching, until his flame catapulted him over the edge. Though this is ultimately Hendrix's show, the fiery Mitchell and the typically plodding (and briefly heard here) Miles are shown to good effect. Mitchell particularly influenced legions of drummers with his Elvin Jones-influenced rock style. With unrealized song snippets, alternate versions, and a lavish booklet with notes for each track, this is another addition to the already voluminous mountain of Hendrix reissues. But with deeper insight and more dazzling results than most, this set stands apart. (MCA)

Ken Micallef



# The Energetics Of Drumming

by Jennie Hoeft

We tap on things incessantly...and we don't know why. We grind our teeth to rhythms we hear in our head...and we don't know why. We are pulled to the music—we move to it, wanting to be a part of it—but we usually only move our hands and shift our feet...and we don't know why.

*Everyone* has a heartbeat, so we're all made of rhythm. But drummers are unique. We are the ones called to manifest this heartbeat and connect it with the Earth's pulse. We are *ground wires*, so to speak, that bridge nature's rhythm to the outside world. This is not to say that other musicians don't feel this primal pulse. They just haven't been called to be the anchor point.

Drums have been tribal healing instruments for thousands of years. Gurus, healers, and shamans have used the vibrations of the drum to align the body's energy in order to heal. This is *heavy*.

When called to drum, we are asked to physically—and energetically—ground the music. This doesn't mean that the drummer is perfect, or always right when it comes to rhythm and feel. It means that we have been given the task of keeping our minds, our ears, and our hearts open in order to more clearly "tune in" with nature's pulse. Given this responsibility, it's vital for drummers to treat the calling with respect. Hopefully these words of advice will remind you of that and guide you toward a more spiritually energetic place.

## Do Your Homework

Whether researching for a school assignment, practicing for a drum lesson, or preparing for a gig, "homework" means the same thing: Set a goal and do the work necessary to achieve it. The object is not to let anything get in the way of being *in the moment* when it's time to play. By having the foundation under us, we're able to free our minds. I can recall gigs when I didn't memorize the songs, but instead used

charts. I read well enough, but even so I was a step removed from fully *feeling* those songs. I was also distracted from interacting with my fellow musicians. Even "cheat sheets" can take your mind away from the "playing zone" and into the "thinking zone."

## Be Physically Prepared

As drummers, our bodies take a lot of physical abuse. We lift heavy gear, we set up and tear down, and we hit things for hours on end. All the while we expect to stay nimble, fast, relaxed, and strong. What body builder do you know who can also run a marathon?



We have been given the task of  
keeping our minds, our ears, and our  
hearts open in order to more clearly

"tune in" with nature's pulse.



Well, we chose this situation, so it's our job to maintain our bodies to the best of our ability. This means getting enough water—at least half a gallon a day. It means eating three meals a day with protein, fat, and carbs in balance. (See *The Zone* by Barry Sears for specifics.) And it means stretching, toning, and relaxing our muscles. Remember that we serve as ground wires for rhythmic energy. The better shape we're in, the purer the channel becomes.

## Be Thankful

In this industry, it's easy to find reasons to whine. We either work too hard, or we don't work at all. There's rarely a steady paycheck, no retirement, and no paid vacation. It's tough to climb the ladder, and tougher still to *enjoy* the climb. However, we've been given a gift, and we must be thankful. That's an unwritten but time-proven spiritual law, and it changes everything.

Let me use myself as an example. About a year ago I came off the road after two years with The Warren Brothers. We'd been touring strong, including opening for country superstar Faith Hill. It was a pretty high-profile situation, but I just felt that it was time for me to make a change.

A few months later I found myself in a lounge bar, playing background music for six people who didn't even know we were there. I had a miserable attitude. I asked the bass player (a very successful, well-known Nashville player) how he managed not to go crazy. He replied, "I'm a professional musician. No matter what the job entails, I look on it as a challenge and a gift. I'm *playing*. I'm making money *and* making music. Gigs come and go; some are good and some are bad. All you have is your attitude about the gig to take home with you. If you treasure your gift in *all* situations, it will always be there for you."

This is priceless advice that I have used countless times since. Be thankful. For whatever reason, we are drummers. We are on a path of healing and sharing. Doctors use X-rays and labs as their tools for healing. We use rhythm. We are conduits of the primal pulse, and it is our responsibility to respect and honor this gift.

*Jennie Hoeft is a veteran Nashville touring and session drummer. She is also a trained fitness and health specialist.*



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# John Patitucci

## From The Bottom Up

by Mike Haid

To have a career as prolific as bassist John Patitucci's is every bass player's dream. He has worked with practically every high-profile drummer in American jazz and Latin music, as well as countless session drummers. By the time he had gained prominence as the bassist for Chick Corea's Elektric Band, John had already gathered years of experience as an in-demand session player and accomplished jazz player in Los Angeles. Patitucci has gone on to become one of the most versatile and well-respected bassists of our time. He enjoys a successful solo career, having explored African, Brazilian, and Afro-Cuban rhythms, combining them with jazz and funk. His three most recent recordings

on Concord Records (*One More Angel*, *Now*, *Imprint*) are focused mostly on acoustic jazz. His compositions allow the drummers to speak freely as they reflect musically on Patitucci's enduring spiritual and family-oriented life experiences.

As a child, John was interested in playing drums. But in a family of five children a drumset was out of the question, as his father felt there was enough commotion in the house already. He now has a drumkit at home that he practices on to help with his independence. His first interest in music was with the soulful sounds of Motown. He then took an interest in jazz and began to study the music of the early jazz legends. One of the first drummers to influence



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Patitucci's career was Gordon Peeke (Stanley Clarke/George Duke). The drummer complimented Patitucci on his abilities to play various styles and on his outstanding improvisational skills. But he told the bassist that the most important thing for him to do was to just "lay it down."

"Early in my career," says Patitucci, "I had the good fortune to work with such studio greats as Harvey Mason, Steve Gadd, Jeff Porcaro, Rick Marotta, Jim Keltner, Carlos Vega, Vinnie Colaiuta, Alex Acuna, and Airto. They not only helped me to learn how to shape my bass playing in a way that was complementary to what they were playing, but also to provide something that was stylistically authentic to match each player in particular."

Patitucci learned to deal with so many drumming personalities by adapting to each player's overall approach. "Some guys are a bit more declarative about the way they play. They like to take charge," states Patitucci. "Certain bass players only sound good with certain drummers. But I didn't want to limit myself. I wanted to experience all the different ways of playing

with as many great stylistic drummers as possible. In order to do that you've got to adapt to the drummer.

"In the 1960s," John continues, "the bass playing of the great Motown players was very busy, which worked with the simple drumming style of that time. In the '70s and '80s the bass lines were simplified, while the drum parts became more involved. So after learning the bass from the early Motown players, I had to learn to play more sparsely to fit the style of the times. I had to learn how to play funky, without filling in all the rhythmic stuff.

Eventually I had to learn to play both sparse *and* dense parts with a strong pocket. I started to really improve on locking in with the kick drum, since many of the bass lines at that time were built around the kick drum patterns. Then I would use the hi-hat patterns for the subdivisions, and try to make it all work with a laid-back feel."

Patitucci spent many years working with Dave Weckl as founding members of Chick Corea's Elektric Band. "We had a lot of fun growing together and experimenting with different styles," Patitucci recalls. "Dave mixed a lot of styles together, trying to cre-

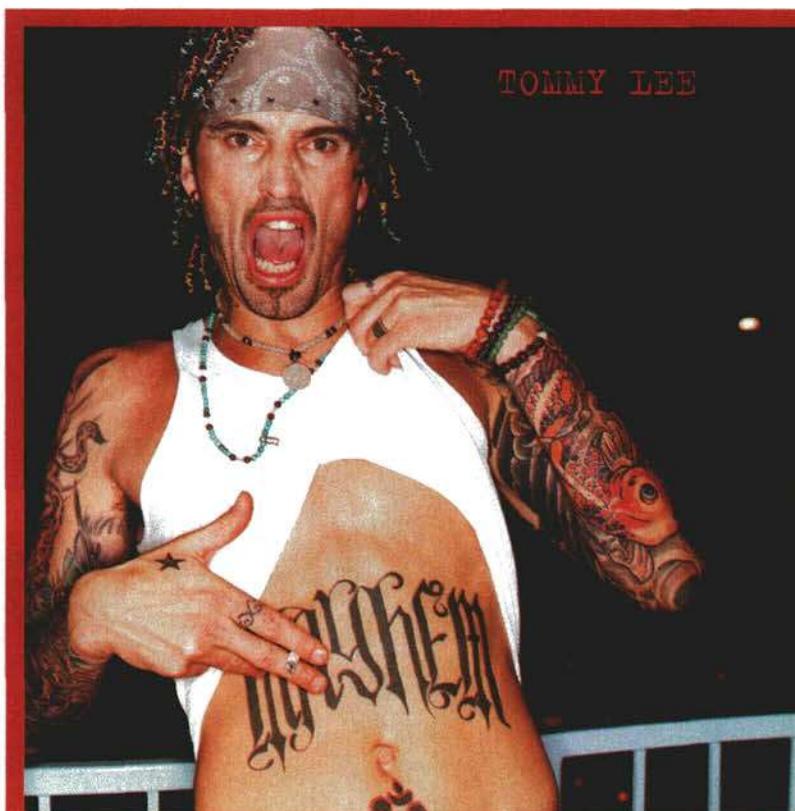
**John Patitucci has combined with many of today's top drummers to form some of the hottest rhythm sections in contemporary music.**

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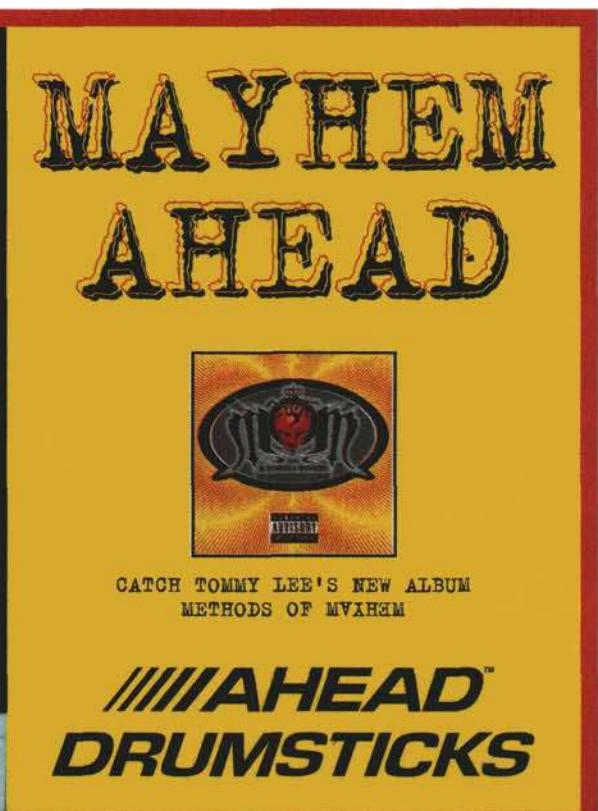
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# John Patitucci

ate new things. We both had experience in Latin music before joining Chick's band, so we each brought our own ideas and mixed them together with Latin, funk, and jazz. And of course Chick brought a world of music that was all his own. We experimented with new sounds and styles to develop a unique sound. Dave and I worked together for almost ten years. So we spent a lot of time together discussing music and working on new concepts.

"When we began The Akoustic Band," Patitucci continues, "it was a whole different mind-set. Now I was playing upright bass, and the concept was to create more forward motion and keep the music open and evolving, and not so 'part'-oriented. I'm sure it was the same for Dave."

When it comes to jazz, Patitucci describes the feels that he shares with the drums as either "walking" or "broken up." He is currently working with jazz legend Roy Haynes. "Roy likes to break things up quite a bit, so playing with him is pretty wide-open," says Patitucci. "The nature of the music dictates what the drummer and bass player will do. You've got to consider the composer's interpretation, the tempo,

**"Every drummer who I've had the pleasure of working with on my music was chosen because of his or her time feel. A drummer's time feel has to be great."**

the density of the melody, and the structure. All of these things will guide you toward what works and what makes sense to play."

Another drummer that Patitucci has worked with for many years—and has actually known longer than Weckl—is Vinnie Colaiuta. "I met Vinnie in 1982," comments John. "He did many tours with my band before I joined Chick. He's a brilliant player, a wonderful musician, and a great composer.

"Vinnie played for a short time in The Akoustic Band with Chick and me. We recorded a very spirited 'live' record from the Blue Note in Tokyo. In that group I laid the foundation, since Chick and Vinnie were filling up the music quite a bit. I tried to anchor the music to give them the free-

dom to create."

Patitucci has worked with Steve Gadd, and speaks highly of Steve's time and feel. "Steve's time is effortless and fluent. There's no way you can screw up, because he makes you feel so at ease. It's like he's playing you."

John has played on many very complex pieces, where the time is turned around, displaced, and played over the bar line. "On music like that you've got to think like a drummer," notes Patitucci. "I've always had a love for the drums, so I've made myself very aware of what a drummer is thinking. I've worked with a lot of guys who turn the time inside out. What makes guys like Vinnie, Gadd, Weckl, 'El Negro' Hernandez, and even Roy Haynes so good is that they have great internal clocks. You

The advertisement features a central image of a drummer in a dark setting, performing on a drum set. Above the drummer, the word "TURKISH" is written in large, gold-colored letters, with "HANDMADE IN ISTANBUL" in smaller letters below it. The background is dark, making the gold text and the shiny surfaces of the cymbals stand out. In the foreground, several cymbals are displayed prominently: a large gold cymbal on the left, a red cymbal in the center, and a yellow cymbal on the right. The word "TURKISH" is also printed on the cymbals. At the bottom of the advertisement, there is contact information for "Orkestra Zilleri Sanayi ve Tic. Ltd. Sti" located in Istanbul, Turkey, with details including address, phone number, fax, email, and website.

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also have to be sensitive to how each drummer phrases, because it's not always just about tapping your foot to the beat. It's also about listening to how each drummer comes *out* of his phrases. If a drummer lays back on the downbeat, you've got to be ready."

For his own solo recordings, Patitucci has chosen an incredible array of drummers, including Peter Erskine, Alex Acuna, Dave Weckl, Vinnie Colaiuta, Al Foster, Terri Lyne Carrington, Will Kennedy, Mike Shapiro, Paul Motian, Bill Stewart, Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez, and Jack DeJohnette.

"When I write a tune I can hear a particular drummer's personality coming out in the music," says John. "For instance, on my last record, *Now*, I hired Bill Stewart. I'm a big fan of the John Scofield records that Bill played on. He's a very creative player, with great time. He's an interesting soloist, and very fluent in jazz. His playing fits perfectly for the music I was writing at the time."

On an earlier recording called *One More Angel*, Patitucci employed jazz legend Paul Motian. "Paul has a unique time feel and a very wide-open beat," says

John. "He's got that gigantic beat that cats who were around in the '40s had. He interpreted my music so well. Billy Drummond is another great player I've worked with. Again, as with the others, he's got a great feel and is very creative. Peter Erskine is one of the most sensitive players I work with. Peter recently told me that he's done more recordings with me as a rhythm section than he has with any other bass player."

For his current release, *Imprint*, Patitucci chose Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez and Jack DeJohnette. "El Negro can play jazz and Latin styles with equal fluency," John comments. "His feel is very loose and open, which is very liberating for me. Jack DeJohnette is a hero of mine. I've been listening to him for years. We hit it off immediately. I can't say enough about Jack. He's a total musician in every sense. He's also a great pianist."

"Another guy who can play the heck out of the drums is [sax superstar] Michael Brecker," John continues. "He plays like Elvin! He swings hard and has a lot of chops. When we were recording the

Mike Stern record *Give And Take*, Jack DeJohnette was the drummer. Jack got hung up in traffic coming down from Woodstock and we were just sitting around, so Michael got on the drums and we started playing. He was *burning*. Then Jack showed up, sat down at the piano, and started playing 'Giant Steps.' He was just incredible. Chick Corea is a good drummer also. He's got a crispy, Art Blakey kind of feel."

Patitucci insists that a drummer's time feel is everything. "Every drummer who I've had the pleasure of working with on my music was chosen because of his or her time feel. A drummer's time feel has to be great. It's what makes you inspired to work with him or her. As a musician, in general, it can't just be 'my way or the highway.' You've got to be flexible. You have to be interactive and intuitive; otherwise the music is one-dimensional. I like drummers who can make dramatic things happen, and who really listen to the music and to the other players and interact in a creative way."



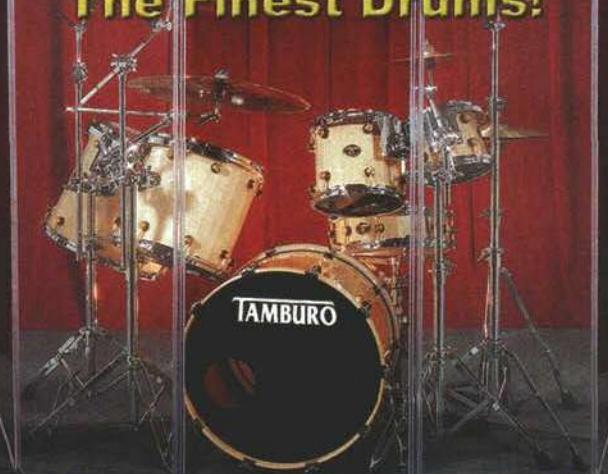
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# Buying And Selling Drums On eBay

## Part 1: Bidding For Drums Without Getting Ripped Off

by Michael Miller

Every day, more than four million items are up for sale on eBay ([www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com)), the Internet's largest online auction site. Of these four million individual auctions, at least 3,000 are of drums or related equipment, making eBay the single largest marketplace for new and used percussion instruments and accessories in the world. Whether you're looking for a hard-to-find vintage snare drum or a great deal on a new or slightly used five-piece set, eBay is the place to look.

### Who's Selling?

The majority of eBay auctions, in all categories, are placed by individual users.

In the Percussion category, they're drummers like you and me, with equipment they want to get rid of—for the highest possible price. You deal directly with the seller when you buy the item. eBay is there only to facilitate the sale, not to execute the transaction.

However, not all sellers are individuals. Many percussion retailers utilize eBay to sell both used and new equipment. For example, Drum Center of Indianapolis, one of the nation's largest independent drum shops, runs regular auctions on



\* eBay. When you deal with a quality retailer on eBay, you're likely to get professional shipping and packaging, receive some sort of warranty or return policy, and have the option of paying by credit card.

### How Do You Find What You Want?

There are four separate percussion categories on eBay: **General**, **Accessories**, **Cymbals**, and **Drums**. You can browse through these categories, which are located by clicking through the **Books, Movies, Music > Musical Instruments > Percussion** hierarchy. But that can be

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extremely time-consuming—particularly if there's a specific type of item you're looking for.

A better way to find a particular piece of equipment is to *search* for it. There are two ways to search on eBay: the simple

way, and the advanced way.

You conduct a simple search by using the Search box located on eBay's home page (or on many other pages within the site). Enter one or more keywords to describe what you're looking for, and then click the Find It! button. eBay will then return a list of auctions that meet your search criteria. Click on any individual item within the list to see that item's full details.

You conduct an advanced search by clicking on the Search link at the top of eBay's home page, or on the Smart Search link next to the search box. This displays the Find Items page, which enables you to search in a number of different ways. eBay's simple search searches only the titles of item listings (and only those auctions that are still active). But from the Find Items page you can elect to search the item title, to search the complete item description, to search for items within a specific price range, to search for items in a particular geographic region, or to search for auctions by a particular seller. You can also choose to search for completed auctions, which is a good way to

The screenshot shows the eBay homepage with the search bar containing 'percussion'. Below the search bar, there are several filters: 'All of eBay - includes all regions', 'Search', 'more search options', and 'Search titles and descriptions (to find more items)'. The results section shows 301 items found, with a sort option for 'Items ending first'. The results table lists various percussion items with their prices, bids, and end times. Some items include images and seller information like 'Thunderstone'.

Item #	Current Price	Bids	Ends PST
507681177	\$8.50	-	In 43 mins
507687556	\$760.00	10	In 53 mins
509903718	\$15.00	-	Nov-30 10:57
507855874	\$414.00	8	Nov-30 12:23
507910788	\$9.99	-	Nov-30 13:48
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# Taking Care Of Business

The screenshot shows the eBay homepage with a search bar at the top. Below it, there's a banner for "Vintage, classic and hot new toys!". The main area is titled "Find Items" with a sub-instruction "To use the old Search Method, click here." There are several search filters: "Smart Search" (selected), "By Item Number", "By Seller", "By Bidder", "Completed Items", and "International Search". The "Search Title" field has "All of these words" selected. Other filters include "Words to Exclude", "Price Range" (between \$1 and \$100), "View Results" (All items), "Payment" (Accept eBay Online Payments by Billpoint), "Search in Categories" (All Categories), "Item location" (All of eBay - include all regions), and "Sort by" (Items ending first). A "Search" button is visible.

look up the final prices on similar items before you make a bid.

Whether you use eBay's simple or advanced searches, you can improve the accuracy of your searches by fine-tuning your search parameters with eBay-specific search commands along with your keywords. Here are some of the more common commands:

1. When you're not completely sure what you're looking for, you can search for listings that contain part of a word, by using the \* command. For example, when you enter *drum\**, eBay will return listings that include the words *drum*, *drummer*, *drum-set*, and *drumstick*.
2. To conduct an "either/or" search, enclose the keywords in parentheses, separated by commas. For example, if you want to search for auctions of either ride or crash cymbals, you would enter *(ride,crash) cymbal*.
3. To search for listings that contain an exact phrase, enclose the phrase in quotation marks. For example, to search for an A Zildjian thin crash cymbal, enter *"A Zildjian thin crash cymbal."*

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4. To search for listings that *must* include a certain word, enter a plus sign (+) before the word. For example, to make sure you search for ride cymbals and *only* ride cymbals, enter *+ride cymbal*.

5. To search for listings that *must not* include a certain word, enter a minus sign (-) before the word. For example, to search for all types of cymbals *except* ride cymbals, enter *-ride cymbal*.

If you don't enter any commands, eBay will, by default, search for listings that include all the words in your query—although not necessarily in the order entered.

Do you have to perform a new search every day to look for newly listed items? Not necessarily. eBay offers the Personal Shopper service, which keeps track of your favorite searches and notifies you via email when items you're looking for come up for auction. You can access Personal Shopper from the link at the top of eBay's Find Items advanced search page.

There are also several third-party services that will notify you, via email, when items you want come up for auction on eBay (and other online auction sites).

My favorite notification is iTrack ([www.itrack.com](http://www.itrack.com)), which lets you track up to five different searches across eBay, Yahoo! Auctions, Amazon.com Auctions, and other major online auction sites.

### How Much Should You Bid?

When you find an item that you want, it's time to place a bid. The question is: How much?

The answer is simple. You should bid as much as you think the item is worth. Don't let yourself get pulled into tricky thinking. Set a dollar limit, and enter that amount as your bid. If you think an item is worth \$10, don't bid \$9 or \$11, bid \$10. If the current bid is lower than \$10, eBay's automated bidding software will enter the appropriate lower bid, and then raise your bid when—and only when—someone enters another, higher bid. Once your limit is reached, eBay will stop its bidding on your behalf—so you never bid more than the amount you first authorized.

If you get outbid during the course of an auction, you can always return to the item listing page and enter a new, higher

bid. You should do this only if you really think the item is worth the higher amount. It's very easy to get caught in a bidding frenzy, going back time and again to enter ever-higher bid amounts. Before you know it, you've paid twenty bucks for a wing nut from a 1975 Ludwig hi-hat stand that was probably worth less than a buck to begin with. Determine your limit, and have the discipline to stick to it.

This means, of course, that you won't win every auction in which you bid. There will be, on occasion, someone crazy or stupid enough to offer a ridiculous amount of money for the most common items. If you lose an auction to one of these crazies, so be it. You didn't want to pay more than the item was worth, did you?

Of course, now we come to the issue of determining how much an item is worth. To determine an accurate value for an item, you have to do a little research. To get a feel for the current going rate, you should search eBay for auctions of similar items (and remember to use the Find Items page to search the completed auctions as well as the open ones). If you're

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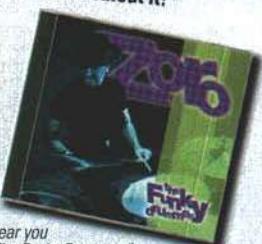


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# Taking Care Of Business

It's easy to get caught in a bidding frenzy, going back time and time again to enter ever-higher bid amounts. Before you know it, you've paid twenty bucks for a wing nut from a 1975 Ludwig hi-hat stand that was probably worth less than a buck to begin with.

bidding on a new (non-used) item, call around to your local drum dealers to see what price they're charging for that or a similar item. You can also get a feel for some used or vintage equipment by checking the classified ads in the back of *Modern Drummer* and other specialist publications. In short, find out what others are paying for that item, and set your bid accordingly.

## How Can You Increase Your Chances of Winning?

Given all of the above, what if you find an item that you absolutely, positively *must* have? Here are two tips that can

vastly increase your odds of winning an eBay auction.

First, *bid in odd amounts*. Most users place even-number bids—\$5, \$10, \$40, etc. If you bid *a penny more*—\$5.01, \$10.01, \$40.01, etc., you'll win an auction over anyone with an even-number bid.

Second, *don't bid until the last possible moment*. This strategy of placing last-second bids is called *sniping*, and it wins auctions. The thinking is simple. You don't bid at the start of or in the middle of an auction, so you don't reveal your hand—or drive up the bid price unnecessarily. You wait until the last possible second (literally!) to place your bid, which doesn't leave

any time for other bidders to respond. If your last-second bid is high enough, you win.

Here's an example of successful sniping. Let's say you find an old Zildjian cymbal you want to buy. The initial bid on the cymbal is \$20, and you think it's worth \$50. You wait and watch the item over the course of the week-long auction, never making a bid. By the last day of the auction, the bid price has increased to \$40. Watching the clock, you log onto eBay with about five minutes left in the auction. You prepare your bid of \$50.01 (remember that odd-number bidding!) and wait until there are only about thirty seconds remaining in the auction. As the seconds tick down, you click the button to place your bid. If your timing is good—and no other sniper bid a higher amount—you'll see your bid become the high bid just as the auction ends.

## How Should You Pay?

When you're buying from an individual, you probably have the choice of paying by cash, check, or money order. Cash



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really isn't a viable option, since it's not a good idea to send cash through the mail. Paying by personal check is convenient, but most sellers will hold checks until they clear, which can delay shipping for ten days or so. If you want your item fast, you should pay by money order or cashier's check. It requires a trip to your bank or post office, and it can cost you a little money. (Determine your bank's fees ahead of time.) But when you pay by money order, most sellers ship your item immediately.

If you're dealing with a merchant, you'll probably also have the option of paying by credit card. This is probably the best choice. You get your item shipped immediately, because the retailer gets paid immediately. Plus you get some degree of protection from your credit card company in case you never receive the item, or if it isn't exactly what you thought you were buying. (This varies with the company. Make sure you check out the provisions of the card you wish to use.)

Individuals can now accept credit card orders through the use of a third-party ser-

vice, such as PayPal or eBay's own Billpoint. You use your credit card to pay the third-party service, which then deposits those funds into the seller's bank account. You get the convenience of credit-card buying, and the seller gets immediate payment. (Some services charge the seller a modest fee. Buyers are never charged.) The only downside to you, as a buyer, is that some of these services explicitly do not offer the same consumer protection as you get from a standard credit card purchase. Check the fine print at PayPal or Billpoint to find out about their protection policies.

Finally, if you're buying a really expensive item (like a complete drumkit), you may want to consider the use of an escrow service. An escrow service is a third-party firm that acts as a "middleman" for your auction transaction. You pay the escrow service, typically via credit card. They then tell the seller to ship the item. When you actually receive the item you inform the escrow service that everything is okay. Then (and *only* then) the escrow service releases your

funds to the seller. In other words, the seller doesn't get paid until you, the buyer, are satisfied. There is typically a small fee associated with this service, which is usually paid by the buyer.

### How Can You Protect Yourself From Cheats And Thieves?

The instance of fraud on eBay is surprisingly low. You may see a news story or two about some particularly egregious scam, but the vast majority of people you deal with on eBay are honest and well-intentioned.

Still, it pays to play it safe. The best way to protect yourself on eBay is to learn a little about the seller. You can do this by examining the seller's *feedback* rating and comments. The feedback number (located next to the seller's user name in the item listing) is a count of how many positive comments he or she has received, less any negative comments. The higher the feedback rating, the more likely it is that you're dealing with an honest and reputable seller.

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eBay displays all the feedback comments that have been left about that seller by other eBay users. It's a good idea to browse through these comments; if there's anything fishy about a seller, it will turn up here. Make sure you follow your instincts. If you have a bad feeling about a particular seller, then don't bid in his or her auctions!

Even if you take all these precautions, you still might come across a seller who takes your money but doesn't ship your merchandise—or ships you something different from what you thought you bought. If this happens to you, your chief recourse (after trying to work something out directly with the seller, of course) is to avail yourself of eBay's Safe Harbor services. To access Safe Harbor, click the Services link on eBay's home page, and then click the Safe Harbor link. With Safe Harbor you have access to a variety of customer support features. You can register a complaint with eBay's Fraud Reporting System, and you can file an insurance claim for the funds you've lost. (eBay provides automatic insurance through

Lloyds of London for items priced up to \$200, with a \$25 deductible.)

In addition, you can always file complaints against a seller with your local US Post Office or state attorney general's office. You might also want to contact your local police if you had a large amount of money ripped off or if your credit card numbers were stolen.

## What If You Have Something To Sell?

If you want to join the ranks of successful eBay sellers, look for Part 2 of this article, "Selling Drums And Accessories On eBay Safely And Easily," in next month's *MD*.

*Michael Miller is the author of more than thirty-five nonfiction books, including The Complete Idiot's Guide To Playing Drums and The Complete Idiot's Guide To Online Auctions, both published by Alpha Books. More information can be found on his Web site, at [www.molehillgroup.com](http://www.molehillgroup.com).*



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## Rory Faciane

Louisiana's Rory Faciane comes by his musical interests naturally. His grandfather was a C&W artist who operated his own recording studio, record label, and publishing company. As a result, Rory grew up around musicians.

Rory started drumming with local bands on the New Orleans circuit as a teenager. Desiring to further his musical education, he moved west to study at the Percussion Institute of Technology in Los Angeles. This led to work with several bands and recording projects in LA. He cites a diverse list of influences, including John Bonham, Bruce Crump, Terry Bozzio, Richie Hayward, Philly Joe Jones, Dave Weckl, Vinnie Colaiuta, Steve Smith, John Vidacovich, David Garibaldi, Clyde

Stubblefield, and Jabo Starks.

Rory started a touring career in 1991 with a gothic recording act called Knorr. He also began doing drum clinics in local schools, and in 1995 he released his own educational drum video. That same year he recorded and toured with Ash America recording artists Biloxi.

Rory's current schedule is divided between a contemporary guitar-oriented rock band called Huckleberry and a Southern blues-rock trio called the Jay B. Elston Band. CDs from each band display



Rory's versatility and drumming skills. The Elston Band's self-titled effort especially showcases Rory on a variety of grooves, including second-line and Bo Diddley feels, and one *nasty* shuffle. (Check it out at [www.jayb.elston.com](http://www.jayb.elston.com).)

Rory performs on several different kits, including two Tamas, one classic Ludwig Vistalite, and a Roland TD-7 electronic kit.

Says Rory, "Having all these kits comes in handy when I play gigs with two different bands, at two separate clubs, on the same night—with a recording session at noon the next day!"

## Paul Hawkins

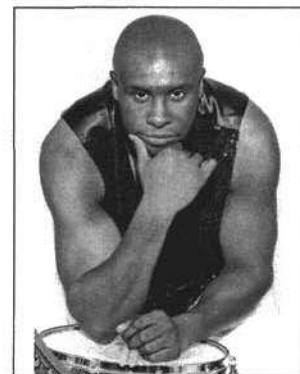
Thirty-eight-year-old Paul "Hawk" Hawkins is a veteran of the R&B touring scene. Citing influences like Dennis Chambers, Carter Beauford, Dave Weckl, and Diamond (of The Ohio Players), Hawk spends most of his time today gigging regularly in the Dayton, Ohio area (including Kentucky and Indiana). But he's also seen his share of the world. Clubs in Yokohama, Singapore, and Hong Kong have reverberated to Hawk's thunderous backbeat.

While a member of touring/recording act

Masters Of Funk ("Slide," "Just A Touch Of Love," "Watching You"), Hawk opened for such acts as Cameo, Lakeside, The Ohio Players, The Time, Roger Troutman, and Aretha Franklin. His demo video, consisting exclusively of live performances, amply displays his power, enthusiasm, energy, and sense of groove.

"I'm known in the Dayton area as a hard-hitting, funky drummer with a very solid pocket," says Hawk. "I'm dedicated to playing drums, and I hope I can tour

professionally for the rest of my life." He currently performs on a Pearl kit with Zildjian cymbals, along with Roland electronics.



## Mark Kovitya

"I don't feel that my value as a drummer lies in my chops or technical merit," says Columbus, Ohio's Mark Kovitya. "It's in the uniqueness of my part. In the same vein as Terry Bozzio, I think a drum part should be as 'composed' and distinguishable as any guitar or keyboard part. I strive to create a drum part that anyone can listen to and know what song is being played."

Deep thoughts for a twenty-two-year-old drummer. But Mark is a very focused young player.



He's dedicated to his band, The Stepford Five, whose debut album, *Mesh*, displays the drum characteristics that Mark describes.

While it has tinges of Smashing Pumpkins and Collective Soul in its sound, the group offers a fresh approach to contemporary rock—what one music critic has called "experimenting with the underbelly of rhythm and melody." The group gigs through-

out the Midwest, and info on them can be found at [www.stepfordfive.com](http://www.stepfordfive.com).

Influences like Jimmy Chamberlin, Danny Carey, and William Goldsmith (Sunny Day Real Estate) seem natural for Mark, given the musical nature of his band. But he also cites Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa, Mike Portnoy, and Keith Moon among his favorites. He plays on a Pearl Export kit with Zildjian cymbals. His major musical goal is simple: "As with any struggling drummer," he says, "it's my hope that one day I can make a living playing music."

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.



# Studio Diary

## Chill Out And Play Music

by T. Bruce Wittet

**J**ust when you least expect it, life often comes up from behind and bites you. When it does, take solace in the knowledge that you've done your preparation. Think *wide*, and have confidence that you are in the running. If you don't, either your technique or your scope will limit you, and instead of going global, you'll remain local. Most important, *relax!*

These were among my reflections following a session last spring at the Bathouse, a recording studio owned by Canadian super group The Tragically Hip. Almost a year to the day had elapsed since my last freelance session there. When the phone hadn't rung off the wall for a return visit, I resigned myself to the fact that the producer was using another drummer—someone trendier, someone more solid. Such is the fragile state of the drummer's ego.

So imagine my surprise at getting *the call* when I least expected it. Could I do a session in two weeks' time? Well, as a matter of fact, I *couldn't!* I was traveling to, of all places, the *Modern Drummer* Festival Weekend. Fortunately, the producer worked around my schedule. Again, the pangs of self-doubt reared up, as in: Maybe they're accommodating me because they can't afford Eddie Bayers. And maybe they're still going to expect Eddie's level of performance. Are you beginning to see major chinks in my armor? (Work with me, please. I'm baring my soul!)

### Being There

The Bathouse is located in Bath, Ontario, almost a three-hour drive from my home. The problem was that I deferred to a fleeting memory that it was *two hours and change*. Oh no, I was going to be late! That last hour on the road was frantic.

I shouldn't have fretted. If you live a life devoted to pleasing other people, as is the drummer's lot, then it's impossible to be late. You could have a flat tire and go into labor yet *still* be on time. If some excuse for lateness exists—a winter storm or a long stretch of highway traffic—then verily you will be late. But *others will be later than you.*

I pulled into the lane on the heels of the engineer and producer, my rehearsed apologies misspent. By then, the sun was setting as I unloaded my drums from the trunk and went about my ritual. Every drummer has a ritual, otherwise we forget things. I start with the bass drum. If I need to turn it over and change a head, there's still ample space, without bumping into cymbal stands. I push all the unwanted things to the side, including cases.

### What Dogs Do

Picture me setting up in this two-hundred-year-old house converted into a studio. Picture the St. Lawrence Seaway, no less, outside the window. Birds chirp, frogs croak. Dogs bark.

Dogs do other things, too. In this instance, entering the studio at sunset, I hadn't noticed that a dog had left a dusky deposit on the perimeter of the British East Indian rug, right about where I

stowed my fiber floor tom case.

From the freshly disturbed droppings arose an odor that permeated the parlor of this ancient house (now a drum room). Musicians trooped through, raising eyebrows in my direction. Imagine the drummer hygiene jokes that would flow from that session! Fortunately, the studio manager took a few moments and disinfected the area.

The engineer, Ken Friesen, set up microphones. He reserved ten tracks for drums. For him, that's not overkill. If he decides he needs just overheads and kick mic's, that's all he'll use. The others are for insurance.

The bass player hadn't yet arrived. I had never worked with the guy, but Friesen had and knew what would work. He positioned a chair for him to sit facing my bass drum. Since the bass player would be going direct—patching into the board, as opposed to into an amplifier—Friesen felt he could set up distance mic's for the drums in our little area. Unless the bass player pounded his feet or exhibited unusually sonorous flatulence, this would prove a great way of adding a little ambient life to the drums. The words of Eddie Kramer, who engineered Led Zeppelin's John Bonham, came back to me: Distance makes depth.

**"We get anxious over the most mundane things—things we can do in our sleep. You'd think we were grappling with grizzly bears!"**



The Bathhouse recording studio may look a little "countryfied" and laid-back...



...especially with its view of the St. Lawrence Seaway just across the road.

We got drum sounds within twenty minutes or so. I hit various drums at the engineer's request to ensure that all the loud and quiet notes went to tape. Then I played some time. During pauses in which Friesen would tend to, say, a faulty mic cable, I would experiment with extra snare drums I'd brought in a large case.

Ken recorded some basic grooves and we listened back. By this time, the producer, Randall Prescott, had introduced Japanese beer in tall, polished silver cans. He didn't get to be Canadian Country Music Producer of the Year for nothing! *Damned* if those drums weren't beginning to sound fine! We heard dogs barking in the lane, signaling that the first group of artists (we were doing a marathon) had arrived from Toronto. We had a meet-and-greet, then headed upstairs to sleep, the dead silence of the country night quieter than Dolby SR.

### The First Tremblings

The next morning, we got going. Artist one on the agenda was a group of singer-songwriters in a punk/folk/country vein. The producer asked the leader to run through the first song on acoustic guitar while we wrote out charts. The musicians in Randall Prescott's stable use the Nashville number system. Whatever means *you* use, never etch your part in stone. Things always change on the floor. Somebody will have a brain wave.

The dogs barked and two more people showed up: a violinist and a guitarist. This was going to be a *big* session! A singer stood in the hall with a guitar. In the din-

ing room sat a pianist at an acoustic grand. In an anteroom was a guitarist and a fiddle player (who, I learned, was off the next day to do a Dwight Yoakam album). There were musicians in every nook and cranny, all of them strangers to me.

The bass player seemed to be a nice guy. Good thing: He was facing me at six paces as we went into the first take. I'm going to own up here: My hands started shaking. Panic was coming on strong. Would I cut it? Was I the right drummer for the job? A *curse* on Eddie Bayers for whatever reasons he couldn't make it up here from Nashville. And another curse for all the times I wished they'd called me instead.

### Lean On Me, When You're Not Strong

To add to the mental confusion, there was no click track! Now, I know what you're thinking: This is a *good* thing, right? Who wants to play to a metronome? A click inhibits music, right?

Yes and no. My feeling is that with a click, the time is a certainty. This is all the more important in a large-scale session with everybody wearing headphones—especially when you're nervous. I know the arguments: Everybody keeps the time, and music should *breathe*. But you know as well as I do that if there's any little rush or drag (or odor!), the finger points at the drummer.

No click meant making infinite adjust-



But the studio is state-of-the-art inside.



A varied session schedule calls for a variety of drum and percussion sounds. Note the vintage Camco drumkit and the spare snare drums.

ments to accommodate the fiddle fills, guitar licks, piano arpeggios, and the bass player's feel, all the while keeping it *strong*.

It also meant shaking perceptibly. The curtains had parted with the breeze and I could see a boat way out on the St. Lawrence Seaway. I wanted to be on that boat.

Off to one side was a faded gold sparkle Sonor kit. Now owned by The Tragically Hip's drummer, Johnny Faye, it was used by Larry Mullen on U2's *Achtung Baby*. This was the real thing!

#### The Tape Rolls

The first couple of run-throughs were unstable. At this point, a good producer won't point the finger, but will instead offer vague observations: "Ahh, that was good. I think we're going to have a take pretty soon. Oh, and could we make those pushes a little more steady during the intro?"

Honestly, to this day I don't know if I was solely responsible for the numerous screw-ups that marred the first few takes. All I know is that I was trying desperately to figure out what I could do to rectify things. I knew the answer was to chill out, but knowing *what* to do and *doing it* are two different matters. I was grappling with this age-old mind/body dilemma when the hand of God struck—literally—in the form of an electrical storm and a power outage.

#### Thunder Rolls

We had two hours of down time. Turns out there's no generator/AC backup at the Bathouse. Standing on the porch with the pianist, I realized that he, too, was nervous—a fact he gave away when he lit the wrong end of his cigarette. He confided to me that his playing was "all over the place, out of the pocket," which was exactly the



Producer Randall Prescott kept the session running smoothly (and brought the beer).

way I felt! Right then and there, I loved a fellow man as never before. I loved this total stranger who, moments before, had been a factor in my anxiety.

As I chatted with the others, I realized that they, too, had moments of doubt—moments during which they felt that their respective parts were steering everybody wrong. I began to feel foolish.

#### Pull The Pickle Out

By the time the power flooded back to the console, I was *eager* to play. And I had a ball. Sure, there were some fluffs, but because I *played* with joy and abandon, the tracks *reflected* joy and abandon, and they were keepers. The word "abandon" is the key: It suggests to forget about it all and just play! When you do that, you begin to express *yourself* and not just cover the gig.



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Don't judge a book—or a drumkit—by its cover. This faded Sonor kit was used by Larry Mullen Jr. to record U2's *Achtung Baby*. Talk about intimidation!

Some bizarre things went down—a rimshot on the Roto Tom, an exclamation on the cowbell, or, better still, a two-bar press roll that inexplicably grew in my hands and crossed bar lines. In my relaxed state it gained a confidence, a pride of place that the producer acknowledged by letting it go unchallenged. In my former nervous, edgy state, none of these ideas would have emerged.

### Pop Psychology

I know I'm not alone in this. You too have a repertoire of ideas just waiting to get out. You too will get your chance. But if you allow—yes, *allow*—yourself to get nervous and flustered, all that will emerge is stilted time and stock licks.

We get frightened for nothing. We get anxious over the most mundane things—things we can do in our sleep. You'd think we were grappling with grizzly bears! What we ought to do is take solace in the inherent simplicity of our job. Provide the pulse *first*, and everything else will fall into place. *There is no lick more important than the pulse.*

Thirty-second notes on double bass don't matter. Rarely do they encourage the listener to tap a foot in time. Latin master Joey Heredia once confided to me, "You know, I don't think I ever showed up at a session where the producer has said to me, 'I'm wondering: Could you try a little clave with your left foot?'"

Make the music feel good and ensure it goes to tape feeling good. Although the two are not always exactly correlated, when cutting live tracks without a click, it gets darn close. In my Bathhouse session, the agenda was simple: Play songs with passion. Fortunately I realized this early, and I seized the opportunity to make music with good musicians.

After that revelation, the clouds opened and it was clear sailing. I know, it's easy for *me* to talk. I got a helping hand from Mother Nature!

*T. Bruce Wittet is a veteran studio drummer in the Toronto area. He is also a frequent contributor to Modern Drummer.*



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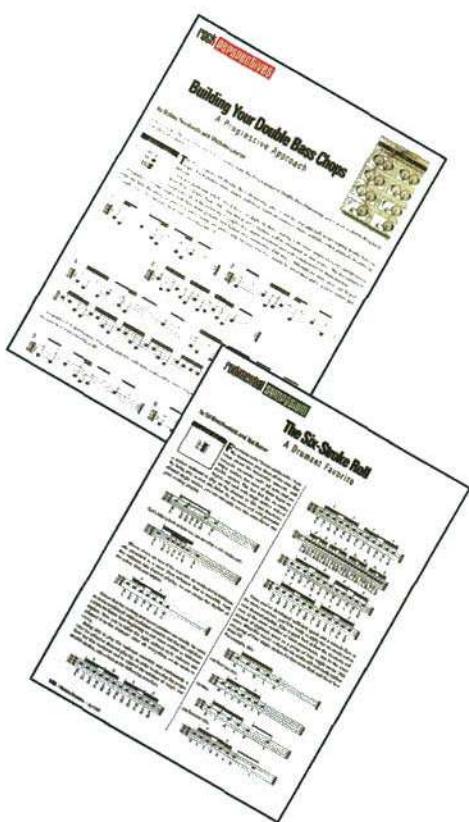
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# MODERN DRUMMER'S 23<sup>RD</sup>

*Modern Drummer* was only two years old when the first Readers Poll was instituted. Since then, this annual tradition has given you, the *MD* reader, the opportunity to voice your opinion about the leading lights of drumming. And over the years you've responded to that opportunity with great gusto!

Well, here we go again, for the twenty-third time. Remember, the intention of the poll has never been to suggest that one drummer is "better" than another. Music is an art form, not an Olympic event. On the other hand, there's nothing wrong with giving due recognition to those drummers, percussionists, authors, and educators whose efforts have been particularly outstanding in the past year.

All it takes is a stroke of your pen (or a click of your mouse) to show support for your personal faves. So get out there and vote!

## CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS

### HALL OF FAME

Vote for the artist, living or dead, who you feel has made a historic contribution to the art of drumming. Current members of the Hall of Fame are not eligible for this category. They are: Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, John Bonham, Keith Moon, Neil Peart, Steve Gadd, Louie Bellson, Tony Williams, Billy Cobham, Joe Morello, Carl Palmer, Bill Bruford, Art Blakey, Max Roach, Jeff Porcaro, Larrie Londin, Elvin Jones, Vinnie Colaiuta, Terry Bozzio, Ringo Starr, Roy Haynes, and Dave Weckl.

### ALL-AROUND

Not intended to indicate the "overall best" drummer, but to recognize drummers noted for performing in a variety of musical styles and applications.

### STUDIO

Drummers who record with many different artists and/or on jingles, TV, and film scores.

### MAINSTREAM JAZZ

Drummers performing in small acoustic jazz groups, in styles such as bop, avant-garde, etc.

### CONTEMPORARY JAZZ

Drummers performing fusion, jazz-rock, new age, etc.

### BIG BAND

Drummers performing regularly in traditional big bands, stage bands, etc.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. You must use the official *MD* ballot—no photocopies.
2. Please print or type your selection in the corresponding box.
3. Make only one selection in each category. Leave blank any category for which you do not have a firm opinion.
4. Affix appropriate postage and mail the ballot to *Modern Drummer's* offices at the address shown on the reverse of the ballot card.
5. Ballots must be postmarked no later than **March 1, 2001**. Results will be announced in the July 2001 issue of *MD*.
6. **Return Address/Prize Drawing:** Fill in the return address lines on the address side of the ballot to be eligible for *MD*'s voter-appreciation drawing. Three ballots will be drawn at random; each winner will receive a free one-year subscription to *Modern Drummer*.

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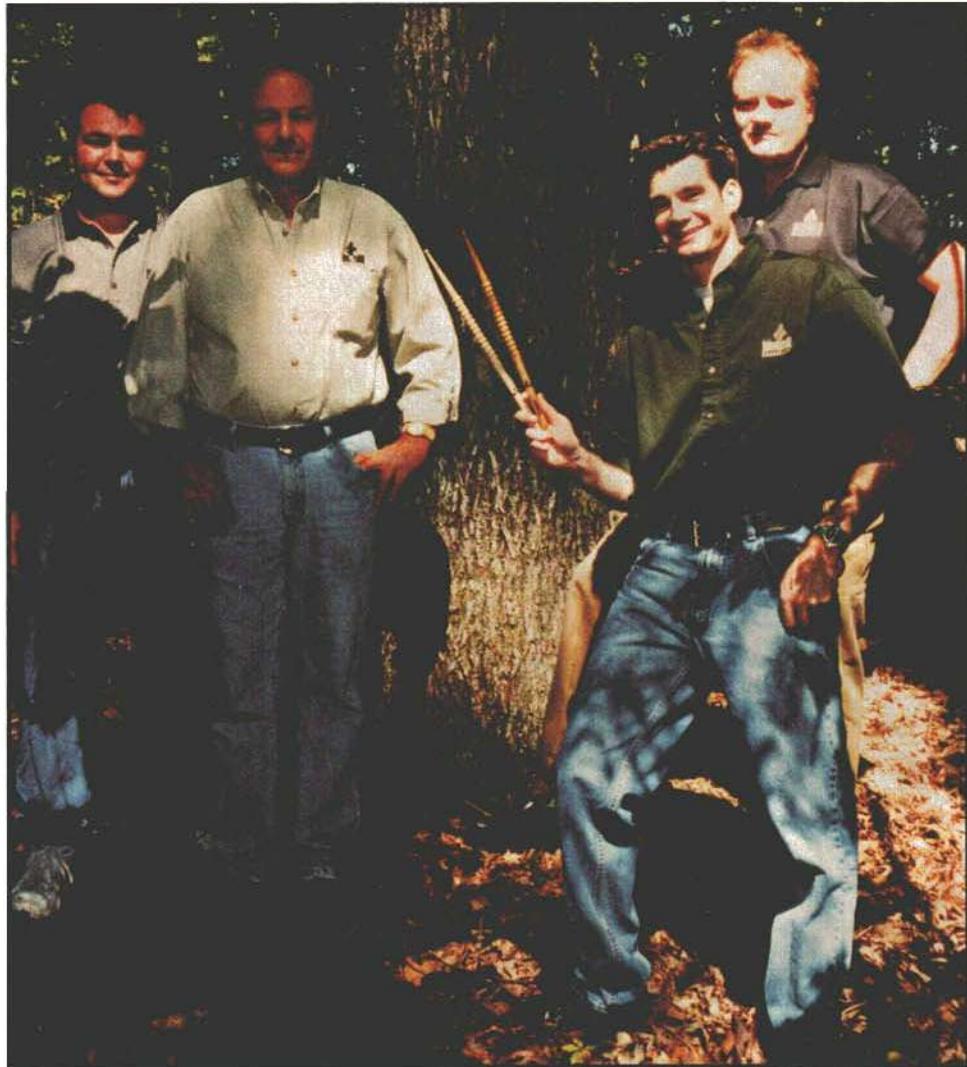
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ANNUAL READERS POLL

# johhnyraBB Drumsticks

## High-Tech And Down-Home

by Rick Van Horn

The johhnyraBB Drumstick Company is a double Cinderella story. The first chapter concerns a young, relatively unknown drummer who rises from obscurity to become a partner in a drumstick company that is named for him. The second chapter concerns that company, which in less than three years goes from non-existence to buzzword among drummers.



The johhnyraBB team, out in the forest where things all begin (from left): master lumber grader Steve Hooper, owner Gerald Hooper, Johnny Rabb, and company president Ed Sargent.

## Who IS Johnny Rabb...

Let's begin with the company's namesake. Johnny's background is similar to that of a lot of drummers. Born in Virginia, he moved to Sacramento at the age of four and started playing drums in his teens. He attended Berklee College of Music from 1990 through '95, pursuing a dual major in performance and music education. He returned to California to do a hip-hop project called Stickboy, rapping and playing drums at the same time. He was successful, but he began to feel like a big fish in a small pond. So he moved to Nashville, where he worked for a year with Tanya Tucker, and played dates with Billy Yates and Hank Williams III. But he still focused mainly on his own projects, including a video on his techno-style drumming, called *Hip House Groove*.

## ...And Why Is His Name On A Drumstick?

As we said, a lot of drummers have similar backgrounds. But they don't have a drumstick company named after them. How did that happen? "It all started when I was dropped from the Tanya Tucker gig," replies Johnny. "I was new at touring, and I was very timid. I think that played a role in my being let go. So my spirits were down. I had envisioned my drum career as so much more."

"One night I started fantasizing about what I'd do if a stick company offered me a signature stick. What would be my model? I got out of bed and made a drawing, which was the first design for the Rhythm Saw we make today. That drawing is pretty funny. It actually had a spoon instead of a tip!"

Johnny called several woodworking companies around Nashville, trying to find somebody to make a stick based on his idea. He finally reached Dick Sullivan of Sullivan Restoration, who had just moved down from Boston. "We made an immediate connection," Johnny recalls. "It was obvious that he was the guy to make the stick. Dick hand-turned one pair of Rhythm Saws, at a total cost of \$50—which was a big deal for me at the time. Of those two sticks, one was wrong, and one was right. So I had *one stick* to show people what my idea was.

"Unfortunately," Johnny continues, "the sticks sat on a shelf for months, while my bandmates made fun of them—and me. Then I called Joe Porcaro for advice, because I knew he had established his

Diamond Tip stick line. I also called Dan Frank at Trueline. I have to thank them for encouraging me to continue, however I could, to find a way to get my stick design off the ground."

The way came in the form of Gerald Hooper. "A bandmember's dad introduced me to Gerald," says Johnny. "Before that I didn't know that he or his business even existed. It's not like he was a relative. We're extremely close now; he's kind of like a father/brother figure to me. But we built that trust over these past three years."

The Hooper family has been in the lumber-milling business for over a century, supplying wood to companies that make products as diverse as kitchen cabinets and railroad ties. But johnnyraBB sticks are the first consumer products they have manufactured themselves.

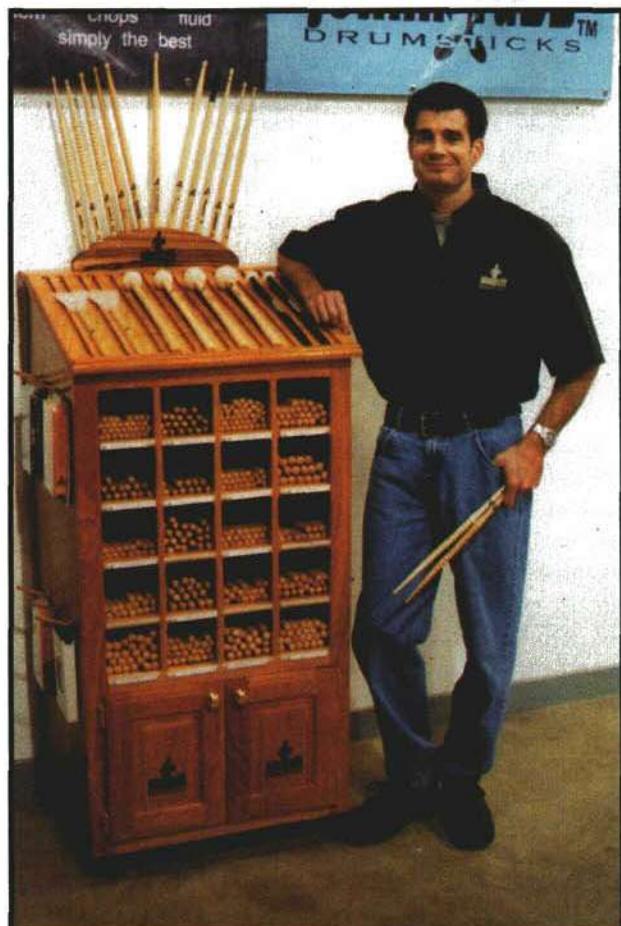
"Whenever Gerald does something, he does it *right*," says Johnny. "When it came to making the sticks, he started out by learning to do it on a little hand lathe. Once he understood how that was done, he spent time getting the right equipment to make sure the sticks could be equally well made in an automated process. That's not an inexpensive proposition."

## Rapid Expansion

"When I first came here," Johnny continues, "there was just a shed with no back or front walls—it was more like a hay barn. There I was, with one stick in my hand, thinking, Wow, it'll be neat if this guy can make some stuff for me and we can be partners. I saw the cement laid for what is now the factory, and every time I come up here Gerald has put in something new to make the operation better. It's pretty amazing. This whole company was built entirely from scratch within a few years. Now we've reached the point where we have to add another 40,000-square-foot production facility."

That's an admirable accomplishment, but it begs the question: Why would a man whose family had been milling lumber for four generations suddenly decide to go into the drumstick business? Gerald Hooper replies, "When Johnny came to me, he caught me at the perfect time. I was already furnishing hickory logs to a sawmill that sold wood to Vic Firth and Pro-Mark. So I knew something about hickory for drumsticks. We'd been curing our lumber to the kiln state for several years, all the while looking for ways to turn our wood into a finished product. When Johnny asked me if I knew someone who could manufacture his Rhythm Saw design, I told him / could."

Going into the drumstick business required a serious investment in new machinery. That's a lot of money to spend on an idea brought by a young, relatively unknown drummer. "I'm a gambler," says Gerald, smiling. "If I have an idea I think will work, I don't mind sticking my neck out a little. The deal wasn't done on the first day Johnny came here. But after getting to



The johnnyraBB line now includes over sixty-five models of sticks and accessories. The company even makes its own cherry wood display cases, which have the look of fine furniture.

know him and seeing his playing, I liked what I saw. I felt like he had a future in drumming, and his name would be an asset to the sticks we'd be making.

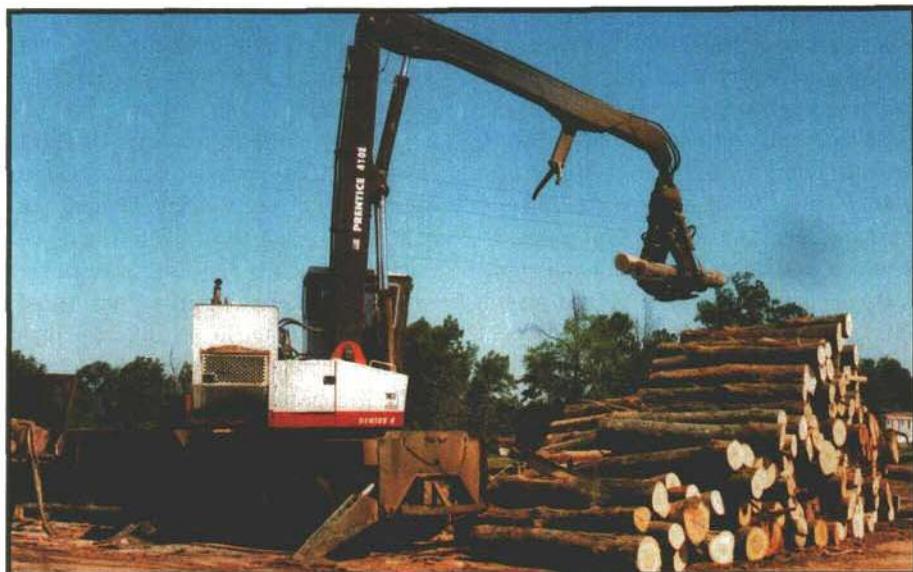
"Our initial plan was just to make the Rhythm Saw," Gerald continues. "But Jim Keltner got involved at an early stage, and he also wanted some special sticks made. He was coming out to Nashville for a studio project, so we brought him out to the factory and actually made the sticks for him while he was there. From that point we expanded into other sizes and types of sticks."

That expansion is largely the result of Johnny Rabb's input as an artist/designer. "I try to evaluate what's already out there," says Johnny. "Then I see what I can develop that's different, but still practical and marketable. Take, for example, the way we offer several models in either Straight Neck or Traditional versions. Straight Necks have a long straight taper, while Traditionals have a curve to the taper, with more beef on the shoulder. We also offer the same stick models with four different tip styles.

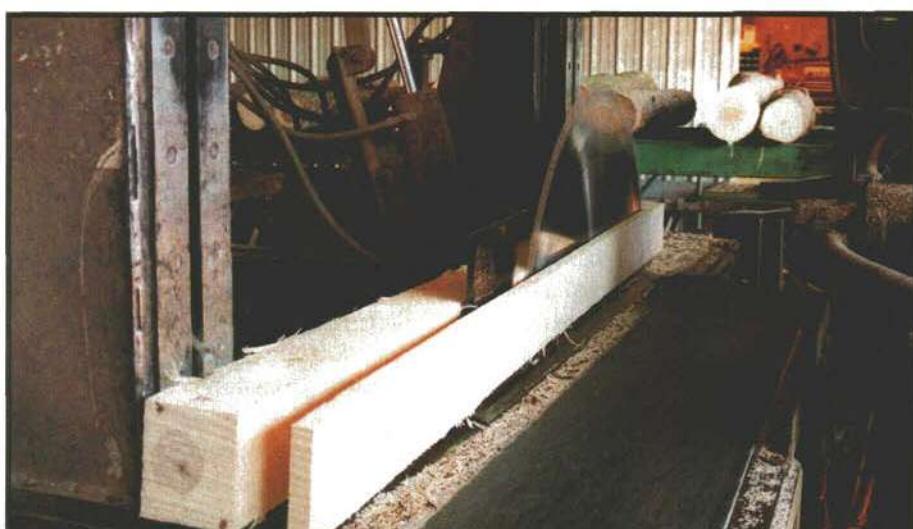
"In a sense I design our sticks, but many people are involved with their creation," says Johnny modestly. "Mike Duncan, who does our graphics and Web site design, also runs the computer-assisted stick-design program. I bring him dimensions, and he works on the actual layout. And of course, our 'signature' artists, like Jim Keltner, Rikki Rockett, Gina Schock, and Nigel Olsson have their own ideas. And now we have Matt Savage working on our marching line. Gerald has a lot of input, too, based on his extraordinary knowledge of wood and its capabilities."

Speaking of wood, the johnnyraBB stick line includes several exotic wood models—some of which are very expensive. What's the thinking behind those? "Part of it came about because of Gerald's love for those woods, plus the simple fact that he had access to them," Johnny replies. "But more important, we wanted to experiment with the different sounds that they make. For example, the timbre of a rosewood stick played on a ride cymbal is unique. And it produces extra volume, because it's such a dense wood. If you're that eclectic person who wants a pair of rosewood sticks for concert work, we have them.

"But some of our 'exotic' woods are really very practical," Johnny stresses. "For example, I really love our poplar stick. It's



These locally grown Tennessee hickory logs will be turned into thousands of drumsticks.



Each log is milled into rough boards. Even at this stage any imperfect wood will be rejected.



The boards are stacked on curlicue sticks that promote airflow for natural drying.

the lightest we make. You can play full force, but still get a light sound out of it. Jim Keltner loves poplar sticks because they allow a different approach to the drums. Other people like our oak sticks for their weight and durability. An LA drummer we know is doing a piano/bass/drums gig, and he wasn't getting the sound that he wanted out of his cymbals. We sent him a pair of cherry sticks, and the next day he called and asked, 'How can I get five more pairs of these?' The idea is to provide choices. But we still deal primarily in hickory."

### **It All Starts In The Forest**

Which brings us to a discussion of hickory with Gerald Hooper—who is just about as expert on the subject as any man alive.

"Most of the hickory for our drumsticks comes from right here in Tennessee," Gerald begins. "The region from which the wood comes is important in terms of its temperature and rainfall. It even goes as far as what side of the slope a tree grows on. That affects watershed and drainage, and the amount of sunlight the tree gets.

"We do what's called 'selective harvesting.' My son Steve is a master lumber grader. He picks only mature trees, leaving the younger ones to continue their growth. We do no clear-cutting at all. And when the trees are felled, our loggers aim each tree so that it lands where it will do the least damage to the surrounding vegetation.

"Each tree has two types of wood," Gerald continues. "The center of the tree is called

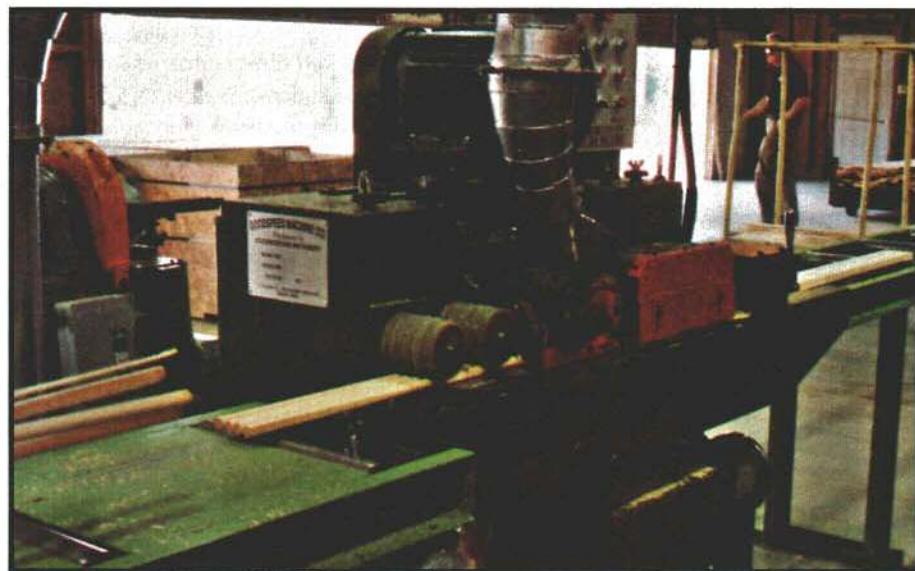
the 'heartwood.' It's older, darker, and denser than the wood toward the surface, which is called the 'sapwood.' The sapwood is living wood; it carries moisture to the leaves and fruit. The heartwood has no actual function in keeping the tree alive. Every year you drop off a little sapwood and pick up a little heartwood as the tree grows out."

Which type of wood makes the better drumstick? "I believe the sapwood makes a better stick," Gerald replies. "The living cells in the wood provide a good feel, because they hold the moisture better. Moisture is very important to a good drumstick. But some players do prefer sticks made from heartwood because of its weight. Marching-band drummers really like the density of the heartwood. Drumkit players tend to like sapwood sticks. But we've learned that even drummers who play the same stick model will have different weight preferences. One drummer wants a light 5A; another wants a heavy 5A. By utilizing both types of wood, we can offer that weight variation."

### **Whittlin' Them Down To Size**

Once felled, harvested logs are brought to the sawmills, where skilled workers determine which ones will be used for drumsticks. Says Gerald Hooper, "The sawyers make that determination based on how the log looks when they cut it. They're looking for healthy logs with straight grain patterns. Even at this early stage an inspector can choose to discard a log altogether."

Milled raw boards are stacked in sheds for air-drying. "We separate the stacks on



Each board is milled into four long dowels.



Dowels are cut to a specified length for machining purposes.



Every dowel is carefully inspected before being allowed to proceed.

sticks with a special curlicue design that lets the air flow through them," says Gerald. "The wood air-dries for sixty to ninety days, depending on the weather. That brings the

moisture content down to around 28%, at which point the wood is placed in our kilns. The kilns are basically dehumidifiers that conduct a gentle process of drying. Hickory

should not be dried too quickly—only about 1% to 2% moisture per day. Each kiln holds around 50,000 boards, which stay in the kilns from ten to fourteen days.

"When the drying process is finished," Gerald continues, "we cut a sample for a stress test. No matter how carefully wood is dried, the process creates stress in the boards. A board with stress wants to warp, so it won't make good drumsticks. We could let the stress go out naturally over a period of six months to a year, but if we want to use the wood sooner, we have to do something drastic. So we pump steam into the wood for about thirty-six hours. The steaming releases the stress in the wood so there's no tightness. It's ready to do whatever we want to do with it. This process is crucial to making good drumsticks. It's a large part of why our sticks are consistently straight."

After drying and de-stressing, the boards are turned into dowels that will be shaped into finished sticks. Even at this point they are constantly measured for moisture content, using a digital moisture meter that works on reflected soundwaves. Boards with moisture levels that are too high are sent back through the entire drying process. Only perfect boards are passed through to the doweling operation.

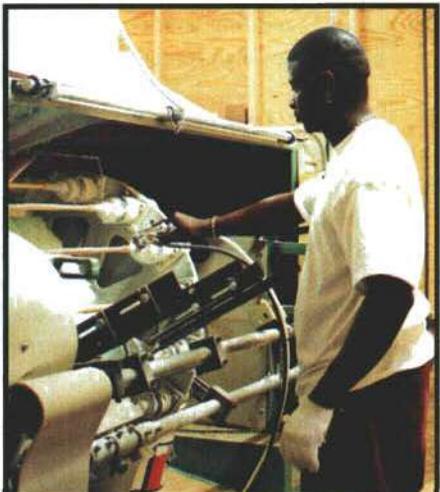
Another defect that might disqualify a board is a condition called "zebra striping." Says Gerald, "If you see a drumstick with dark streaks around it, that's zebra striping. And that's a poor stick that's likely to break easily. What causes zebra striping is the tree fighting off some kind of infection, perhaps as the result of a limb breaking off, or even some bug damage. You see a lot of it in nature. You won't see any of it in our sticks."

As soon as the dowels come out of the milling machine, an inspector carefully culls out any with defects. Acceptable dowels then go to the lathing operation. At this point Gerald Hooper introduces Keith Deming, who has been the production manager of the drumstick operation since its inception. "Keith installed most of our machinery himself," says Gerald. "I'll let him describe the process of drumstick manufacturing."

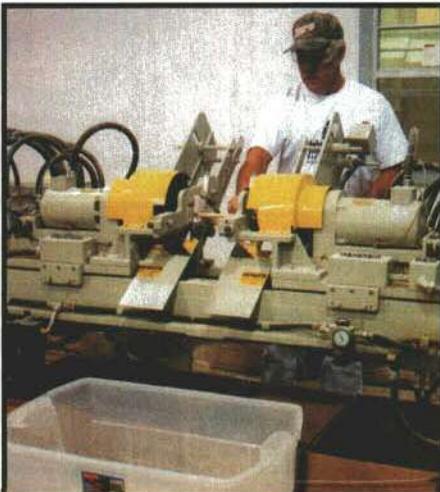
Keith begins, "The finished dowels are placed onto one of our back-knife lathes. We operate three now; we have five more on order. Each can cut a thousand sticks per day. A second machine cuts the tips and butts, at the rate of two thousand sticks an hour. After the sticks are completely shaped,



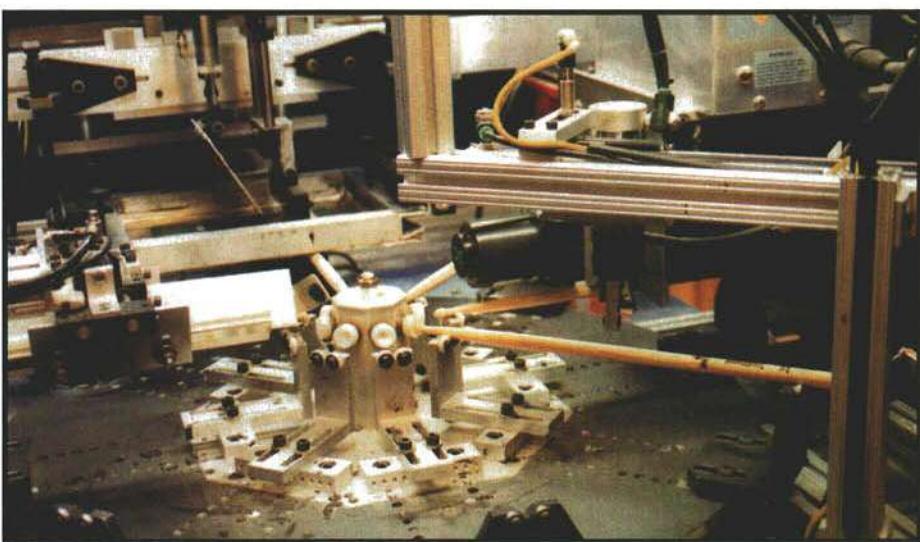
The unique Rhythm Saw model is created on a back-knife lathe.



Every johnnyraBB stick receives its finish in a hand-spraying process.



In a final shaping step, each stick has its tip and butt end milled on.



A computerized printing machine applies wraparound logos to the sticks, drying the ink with ultraviolet light.

we run them through a sanding process. Then we put a sealer on to protect the wood, sand the sticks again, and give them their final finish.

"We use a little different finish from most other drumstick makers," Keith continues. "They dip or tumble their sticks. We spray our lacquer on so we can regulate the location and amount of the finish. For our endorsing artists we sometimes spray only half the stick, or we add additional layers of lacquer on the grip area. Spraying gives us a flexibility advantage over dipping."

Logos on johnnyraBB sticks are applied by a computerized screen-printing machine that uses ultraviolet light to dry the ink. "It was designed especially for us," says Keith, "so that it can wrap the logo all the way around the stick. Each stick is hand-fed by the operator, but otherwise the entire operation is automated.

"Actually, almost *all* drumstick-making operations could be totally automated," Keith continues. "You can get it to the point where a dowel isn't viewed by human eyes until it comes to the very end of the process. But we don't believe in that approach. Our dowels are hand-loaded into the lathes, and hand-checked when they come out. We have skilled inspectors at each manufacturing step. Between the time the dowels hit the door until the finished sticks are boxed, they pass through fifteen inspection points. At any of those points, dowels can be pulled. If there's the slightest irregularity, or any discrepancy that might affect the endurance of that stick, it's going to go away right then. We inspect the finished sticks before we put them into our inventory. And when we take an order we re-check them one more time before they go out the door."

### Silence Is Golden

The johnnyraBB company may be the only drumstick manufacturer that maintains a soundproof testing studio. It's a high-tech recording studio/lounge located smack in the middle of the production area. "When we first built the sound room," says Johnny, "it was mainly for testing which models would hold up. I'd go in there and play them hard to see what would work. But now it's turned into our model-testing room, as well as our visiting-artist lounge. We have a drumset on a little stage, and drummers can come in and actually check things out. It just gives them a space that is quiet. There aren't many quiet spaces in the middle of a lumber yard."

Ed Sargent, a drummer himself and the former manager for jazz trumpeter Maynard Ferguson, is the president of the johnnyraBB Drumstick company. He adds, "Our sound room is also important to our R&D program. Let's face it, unless we offer unique and valuable designs, we're just making more of what everybody else has. Even with standard models there has to be a reason to buy ours over another manufacturer's. If our 5A is no different from anyone else's, there's very little point in offering it. So we use this room to hear the acoustic differences that our sticks produce."

### Vive La Difference

And differences there are. The johnnyraBB line includes sixty-five models, including standards, artist models, the original Rhythm Saw, and some even more esoteric items, like the recently introduced Webs.

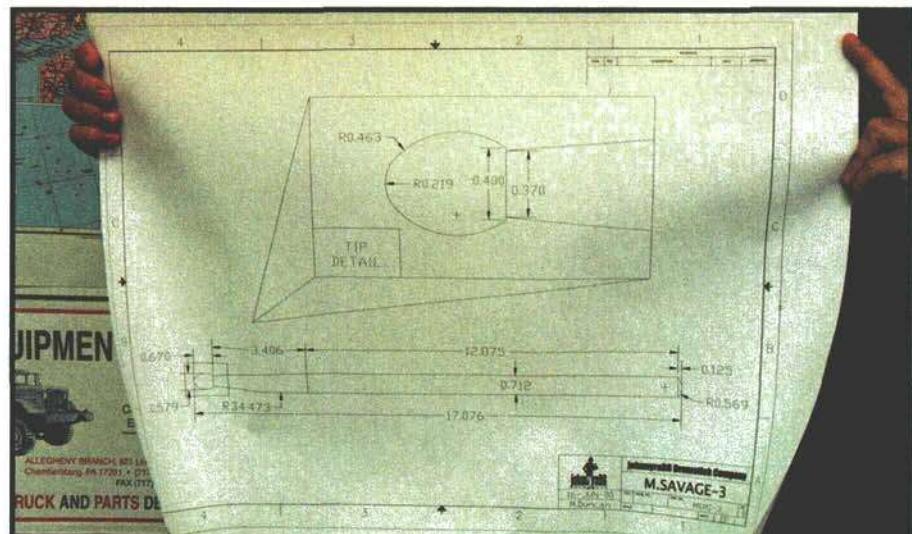
"Webs were developed by John McTigue III, a Nashville player with a lot of recording and road work to his credit," says Johnny. "They're neither a stick nor a brush. They have a unique three-layers-of-plastic design that can produce the volume of a slap from a punk snare drum, but can also go all the way down to standard jazz sweeps. They make train beats come alive, and their long wood handle can be used to get an amazing rim click. You can also use the handle on the bell of a ride cymbal, to smack a crash cymbal, or to play on blocks or bells. So you can get all aspects of dynamics."

The company's most ambitious introduction of the past few months is the Matt

Savage marching line. Says Johnny, "My background is in drumset and hand percussion. That's why we've enlisted Matt, who has extensive marching experience. Our drumstick line already includes his Field Pro and Indoor Pro snare drum sticks. We recently added five Bass Pro bass drum mallets, which have a unique grip design. It has an indentation at the bottom of the mallet to provide extra grip for the pinkie. The current bass-drum playing technique in drum corps is to hold the arms almost rigid at the sides of the drum, and do all the striking just by rotating the wrists. The groove grip on the Bass Pro mallets facilitates that style of playing."

Ed Sargent adds, "The material being written for bass drums now is incredibly precise. They're playing figures we used to get for the snare-drum line. So the Bass Pro mallets feature extra-hard felt for a solid attack, plus a shaft design that transfers a little of the weight from the shaft to the head. We also added a Tenor Pro, which has a super-hard anodized aircraft aluminum shaft. And the shaft has a double-dipped rubberized grip that's a little more gummy than most. It transfers the moisture from your hand off of the stick."

An earlier Matt Savage design is the unusual Practice Pro stick—a wood snare drum stick with a rubberized coating on the tip and neck. Says Johnny Rabb, "It can be used on any surface for practicing, and it helps reduce volume when it's used on a drum. But it also works great on blocks and cowbells, and even on hand drums, since it doesn't leave any marks on the hide at all. So it's a performance *and* practice stick."



Computer-design technology is used to create new stick models. This is the "blueprint" for a Matt Savage marching drumstick.

One surprising aspect of the johnnyraBB stick line is that there are no nylon-tipped models. "Gerald Hooper's background in the woodworking industry and the quality of our wood are what set us apart," says Ed Sargent. "Other stick companies already make great nylon-tipped sticks. We don't want to copy what they're doing. We want to be known for innovation. It's important to us to be perceived as the gourmet stick company out there."

### More On The Menu

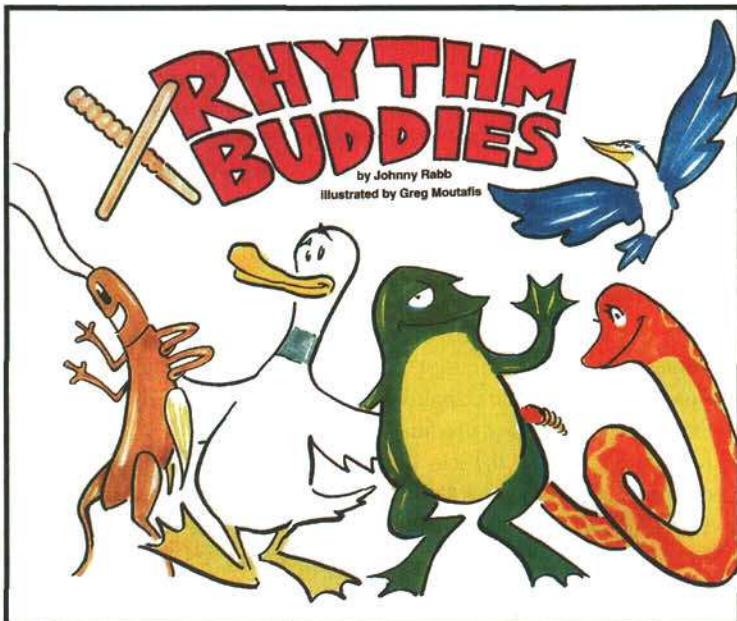
Gourmet sticks aren't the only things on the johnnyraBB company's plate. They've also been involved in music education, almost from the inception of the business. Says Gerald Hooper, "Johnny didn't just come to us with a stick design. He already had the idea for an educational program in schools, utilizing kids' books and the Rhythm Saw.

"I like the concept of getting involved with children at an early age," Gerald continues. "We all know what's going on with kids today, and we're all alarmed by it. The earlier we can get their minds on music, the better off we are. So we're offering edu-

tional products for kids from four years old and up."

Ed Sargent comments, "It's a known fact that kids who study music through their school systems score higher on their SAT tests. They also have better hand/eye coordi-

nation and motor skills. I worked for Maynard Ferguson for eighteen years. During that time, probably 75% of the dates we did were for the advancement of music education. When Maynard accepted the International Association of Jazz Educators'



Johnny Rabb and his namesake company are both heavily involved in music education. The Rhythm Buddies book/cassette package is for young elementary schoolchildren.

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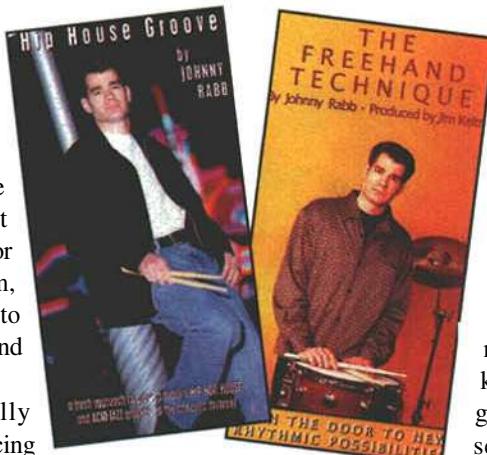


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Hall of Fame award, he said, 'If we can take the guns out of these kids' hands, and put some drumsticks or saxophones in them, our world is going to be a better place.' And it certainly can be.

"Johnny is totally dedicated to advancing music education in our school systems," Ed continues. "As he told me, 'In elementary school they give kids recorders to teach them about melody. But nobody is teaching rhythm.' So he has created the *Rhythm Buddies* books to help children develop the fundamentals of rhythm at an early age. And it has nothing to do with trying to boost our drumstick sales. The idea isn't, 'Are you four? Are you going to be a professional drummer? Here's the *Rhythm Buddies*.' It's just, 'Are you four? Here are some fun things that will expose you to music and help you to learn something about rhythm.'"



Johnny's Hip House Groove and Freehand Technique video/book packages are for more advanced drummers.

Says Johnny Rabb, "Kids internalize music from the time they can hear. They just tap their toe to a beat. They don't know—or care—if it's a quarter note. That's why the kindergarten-through-grade-four childrens' series uses a sound-association rhythmic system. In one book, the kids say the names or make the sounds of animals. If you ask them to tap out an 8th-note quadruplet, they'll have no clue what you're talking about. But get them to tap while they say the word 'caterpillar,' and they accomplish the same thing. It's all about playing percussion without thinking about it."

Johnny is also working on a program for grades five through twelve. "I want to develop a line of educational materials that reflects what I knew about when I was that age," he says. "In tenth grade I wasn't ready to totally nail all the reading. Kids should

absolutely learn to read. But there also needs to be an audio/video side to music education that they can internalize easily. I think it's a way to raise the bar on how early kids can learn."

Ed Sargent comments, "We're heavily involved with Johnny's educational efforts at both the elementary and secondary levels. In fact, that's where a lot of R&D input for our drumsticks comes from. You'd be surprised at the things that come 'out of the mouths of babes' sometimes—the honesty with which they talk about our products. A junior-high drummer may only be twelve years old, but he's still a performer and he still cares about his tools—and so do we. We have to, otherwise we're missing the boat."

"If we can provide a child with a musical foundation at an early age," concludes Johnny Rabb, "that child can build on that foundation for the rest of his or her life. We're just a little drumstick manufacturer, so maybe it's a big dream to try to achieve that. But you know what? This whole thing has been a dream. So why not?"



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## Eighth Annual Montreal Drum Fest

The 2000 Montreal Drum Fest unfolded from November 3 to 5 in the Salle Pierre Mercure in downtown Montreal. Drawing drummers from across Canada and the northern US, the event combined entertainment with education in just the right proportions.

The weekend started on Friday afternoon, with clinics featuring **Peter Magadini**, **Virgil Donati**, and the tag team of **Will Kennedy and Bob Gatzen**.

On Friday evening Virgil performed with his group, Planet X. As usual, Virgil stunned the hall with his frightening technique.



Peter Magadini



Virgil Donati



Will Kennedy and Bob Gatzen.

## Saturday, November 4



Always a popular feature, the Yamaha Rising Star Showcase left no doubt that Quebec colleges are doing it right. This year's group included (from left) drummers Jim Doxas, Jason Gray, Michel Francoeur, Serge Poulin, and Geoffroy Doyon. Each student performed with a jazz trio.



Percussion star Richie "Gajate" Garcia, currently touring with Phil Collins, engaged the crowd with anecdotes about his past and, in particular, how he acquired the nickname "The Octopus." Then, with all arms and feet in motion, he played some of his favorite grooves, including a salsa on drumset.



Canadian blues and big band drummer/leader Maureen Brown delighted the crowd with a New Orleans-tinged party set, spurred on by her crisp grooves. As an added bonus, her husband, Rick Gratton, sat in towards the end of her set, freeing Maureen to go up front with the vocal mic.



Simon Phillips laid it to rest for day one. Some of his British humor and affection for motor racing ("Four stroke? That sounds like an engine to me!") was lost on the French-Canadian members of the audience. But his performance to backing tapes on his big yellow Tama kit was clear as a bell. Several times the word "thunder" came to mind, especially when Simon split the load between gong drum and bass drums.

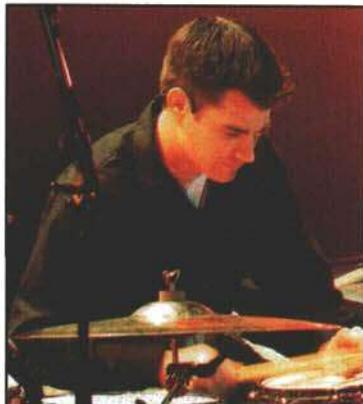


Drummer/educator Zoro demonstrated compelling reasons for woodshedding the funk rhythms of the masters. At one point, thick voices echoed from somewhere in the balcony. No hecklers these, it was Clyde Stubblefield and Jabo Starks, shouting their approval of Zoro's slick grooves and powerful message.



Alex Acuna started with a quiet song dedicated to his deity. Then he took a walk through his percussion setup, building up steam as he moved from cajon to timbales to congas, and climaxing on drumset. The famed Weather Report drummer demonstrated rhythms from South America, Cuba, and Africa, effortlessly fusing them into hypnotic patterns.

# Sunday, November 5



After a rousing early-morning set by Montreal-based Cuban ensemble Montuno Alegre, Johnny Rabb seized his half hour to synthesize vaudeville, show drumming, jazz, funk, and drum 'n' bass. Rabb demonstrated that new sounds were as close as the heads, rims, and shells of the average kit. By the time he had placed a splash cymbal atop his primary snare (he used three), his standing ovation was guaranteed.

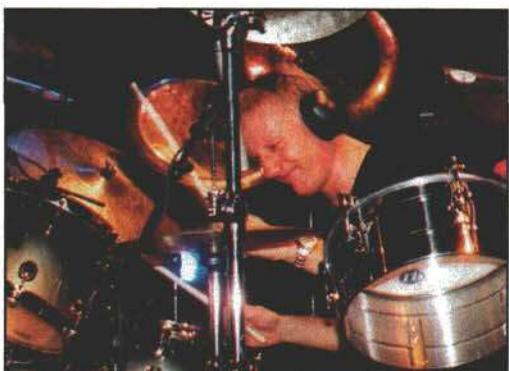


Tommy Igoe made many new friends with his no-nonsense, full-steam-ahead approach to Latin, funk, rock, jazz, and everything in between. Tommy displayed a remarkable ability to focus deep and hold the intensity level while playing intricate patterns. Then he sat at center stage and conducted a snare-drum lesson, demonstrating a roll to die for.



Matt Frenette was a hit with the crowd, owing to his success with Canadian artists Loverboy and Kim Mitchell. Playing to DAT, Matt played relentlessly, building intensity all the while. He kept up his unshakeable grooves—spiced by an exciting solo—for over forty minutes.

Gregg Bissonette led off with a barrage of contemporary chops, then segued to a crowd-winning examination of Ringo Starr's tasteful contributions to pop drumming. By the end of Gregg's play-along to the Beatles' "Ticket To Ride," he had won over young listeners and older naysayers alike.



For the closing act, the Drum Fest became, well, festive. Robby Ameen and bassist Lincoln Goines were joined by pianist Bill O'Connell and singer Xiomara Lougart. Covering an array of Cuban grooves, including the cha chas and songs he explored in his book/video series, Ameen had the crowd up in short order. Even Drum Fest director Ralph Angelillo—no dancer he—was bopping in the wings, celebrating the success of another show.



At first, Nathaniel Townsley played to tapes of gospel music. Then things got riotous when singer Cory Glover emerged from the wings, chanting the refrain, "What's your favorite color?" from the Living Colour hit. Also joined by Mike Ciro on guitar and Booker King on bass, Nathaniel put aside the gospel and nimble funk and showed his metal.



Jabo Starks and Clyde Stubblefield were joined by a Montreal rhythm section in an inspired reading of James Brown tunes. Vibrant and clean in their playing, Starks and Stubblefield showed no danger of losing the funk. Their moves were a virtual encyclopedia of several eras of popular music.



Text and photos by T. Bruce Wittet

# 2000 World Drum Festival



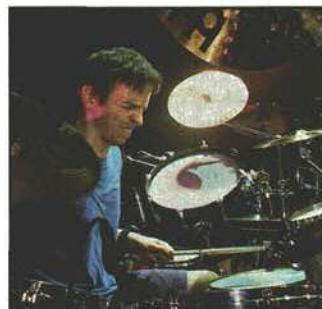
Boomish (from left): Zach Danziger, Tim Lefebvre, and DJ Jessy

The 2000 edition of the World Drum Festival was held on October 21, on the campus of the University Of Music in Hamburg, Germany. It was the first time the Festival was held in a single day, with such a concentration of international drumming talent.

Percussionist **Katrin Seebek** got the morning started, performing African and Afro-Brazilian rhythms that motivated the audience as they dispersed to various workshops. These were organized by drummer/educator **Udo Dahmen**, along with his Percussion Creative team. Along with a workshop by Dahmen himself, the day's curriculum included drum 'n' bass instruction from **Jojo Mayer** and seminars on such topics as Scottish drumming, avant-garde jazz, classical percussion, rock drumming, body percussion, and drum circles.

Also included was a project called Drumfire, which featured dozens of drum students from local music schools. They combined to present simple pieces for percussion and mallets, and a good time was had by all. The workshop program concluded with presentations offered by drummer/percussionists **Jamey Haddad, Stefan Rigert, and John Bergamo**.

The evening's activities began with Boomish, an eclectic New York-style drum 'n' bass act featuring drummer **Zach Danziger**, percussionist **Danny Sadownick**, bassist **Tim Lefebvre**, and DJ Jessy. They set the stage for the "Night Of Drums," which opened with German fusion star **Marco Minnemann**. Marco amply demonstrated his great technique, but also played very musically.



Marco Minnemann



The Drumbassadors: Wim de Vries and Rene Creemers



Jonathan Mover

Just what he did with his *feet* drew standing ovations.

Next up was the duo of **Rene Creemers** and **Wim de Vries**—

The Drumbassadors. The two European stars presented a set of pure drumming entertainment. This was followed by the Hands Ensemble, a stellar percussion group featuring **John Bergamo, Austin Wrinkle, Randy Gloss, and Andrew Grueschow**.

For this evening's performance the group was augmented by guest artists **Mark Nauseef, Jamey Haddad, and Steve Shehan**, who captivated the crowd with their sensitive playing. The audience was impressed by the ensemble's improvisations, extraordinary soloing, and extensive palette of sounds.

**Jonathan Mover** then demonstrated his creative and challenging drumset concepts. Jonathan was followed by The Scottish Drum Corps from Mannheim, Germany, who performed traditional pipe-band drumming attired in authentic Highland regalia.

In a study in contrast, the pipe drummers were followed by Jojo Mayer and DJ Big Wiz, who presented drum 'n' bass, jungle, and hip-hop styles that culminated in a "techno party" fueled by Jojo's virtuoso drumset playing. The evening concluded with all of the drummers and percussionists back on stage. Udo Dahmen conducted this percussive orchestra in a mass performance that left the audience cheering.



Jojo Mayer

Text and photos by Heinz Kronberger

## QUICK BEATS: LIBERTY DEVITTO (BILLY JOEL, FUN(K) CLUB)



### What are your favorite recorded grooves by other drummers?

Sonny Payne on "Fly Me To The Moon" (Frank Sinatra), Jim Capaldi on "Empty Pages" (Traffic), Phil Wilson on "I Pity The Fool" (The Butterfield Blues Band), and Bernard Purdie on "Until You Come Back To Me" (Aretha Franklin).

### What are your favorite grooves you've recorded?

Billy Joel's "The Stranger" and "Easy Money," John Hiatt's "Snake Charmer," and The Fun(k) Club's "Dancin' With Mr. Boomer"(from my new CD).

### What's your warm-up routine?

I swim every day for power and endurance. When I'm on the road we do a soundcheck two hours before the show for about a half-hour, and then I stretch before going on stage.

### What's your current ride cymbal?

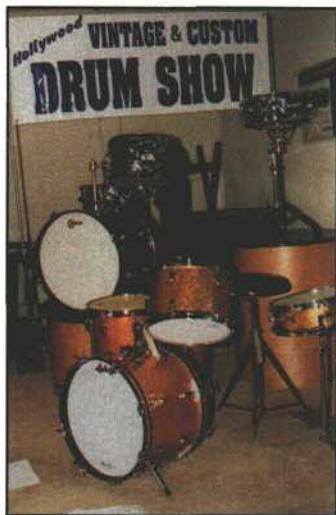
A Sabian 22" AA Rock Ride. It covers all the bases. I get a good stick sound for swing, it has a great bell, and it gives me a great rock wash when I play it with the butt end of my stick.

### What's the best concert you ever attended?

The Police in France, 1978. I had never seen anything like them before.

For more on Liberty, check out his Website: [www.libertydevitto.com](http://www.libertydevitto.com).

# Hollywood Custom & Vintage Drum Show



The Hollywood Vintage & Custom Drum Show offered a bevy of new and historic drums of all descriptions.



The Remo Percussion Center in North Hollywood was recently the site of the fourth annual Hollywood Custom & Vintage Drum Show. Co-sponsored by *Modern Drummer* and produced by **Kerry Crutchfield**, this year's event featured twenty-nine different exhibitors showing sought-after vintage drums, as well as the cream of today's top instruments.

Canada's Dunnett Classic Drums showed a handcrafted Titanium model that included titanium hoops, Puresound snare wires, and a Nickel throw-off. Drum Solo displayed solid-, segment-, and stave-shell models. Drums from Mayer Bros. and Thumper received lots of attention. Curry Custom Drums displayed a cocktail drum setup, as well as full-size Keller-shell kits. The smallest drums in the house were those of the Fever Drum Company. Designer Flo Vergara has somehow found a way to get a full, deep sound out of some very small shells. Puresound Percussion showcased their products by setting up ten snare drums, identical but for the different snare wires underneath.

Not to be outdone by the boutique companies, Drum Workshop and Yamaha were on hand to demonstrate why their drums are considered among today's best. But perhaps the busiest booth was that of the Ludwig Drum Company, where a never-ending line of attendees purchased everything from vintage replacement strainers to brand-new gold-plated limited-edition snares.

For drum history buffs, Rob Cook of Rebeats was on hand with his library of books detailing the history of the Leedy, Slingerland, Rogers, and George Way companies. John Aldridge of Not So Modern Drummer sold vintage and reproduction replacement parts, along with his NSMD publications. Frank DeVito of Danmar Percussion showed a Zildjian splash cymbal made for Gene Krupa and stamped with his initials by the factory. And Liam Mulholland brought the "holy grail" of vintage drums: a gold Billy Gladstone model valued at \$20,000.

**Bun E. Carlos** of Cheap Trick held everyone's attention at his

clinic, as he displayed grooves and licks used by popular drummers from the 1950s through the '90s. Bun E. stayed at the Ludwig booth for hours afterward, signing autographs along with fellow Ludwig drummer **Ed Shaughnessy**.

"JR" Robinson began his clinic by soloing on a Yamaha bebop kit, then gave a lesson using only snare drum and brushes. This was followed by a barrage of chops played on his new touring kit, followed by four grooving tunes played with some of LA's top session musicians.

The weekend's festivities included giveaways of over a dozen snare drums and other products from DW, Yamaha, Ludwig, Pro-Mark, Sabian, Remo, Thumper Drums, Drum Solo, Sam Ash Music, Puresound, Dunnett Classic Drums, K & K Stick Works, Diggit, Istanbul Cymbals, Not So Modern Drummer, E-Pad, Hollywood Pro Drum Shop, and *Modern Drummer*.



Following his clinic, Cheap Trick drummer Bun E. Carlos (foreground) manned the autograph table with fellow Ludwig drummer Ed Shaughnessy.



Part of "JR" Robinson's clinic was a lesson on brush technique.

## QUICK BEATS: MIKE PORTNOY (DREAM THEATER)

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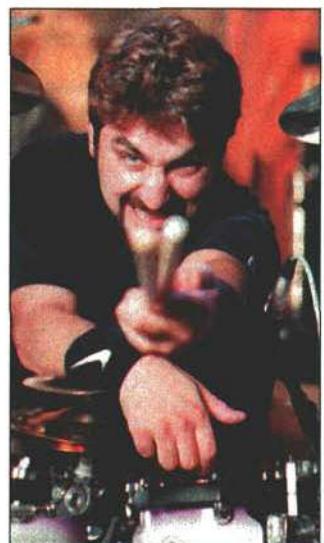
Ringo Starr on "Sgt. Pepper's" (reprise) (The Beatles), John Bonham on "When The Levee Breaks" and "Fool In The Rain" (Led Zeppelin), Simon Phillips on "Give Blood" (Pete Townshend), Vinnie Colaiuta on "Keep It Greasy" (Frank Zappa), Terry Bozzio on "US Drag" (Missing Persons), and Bill Bruford on "Hell's Bells."

### What's in your CD player at the moment?

Tenacious D's Bootleg CD-ROM, the *Magnolia* soundtrack, Spiral Architect's *A Skeptic's Universe*, The Beastie Boys' *Anthology*, and Kevin Gilbert's *The Shaming Of The True*.

### What discs best represent you?

For technical ability, Dream Theater's "The Dance Of Eternity" (from *Scenes From A Memory*).



For improvisation, Liquid Tension Experiment's "Three Minute Warning" (from *LTE1*). For groove, TransAtlantic's "All Of The Above" (from *SMPTe*).

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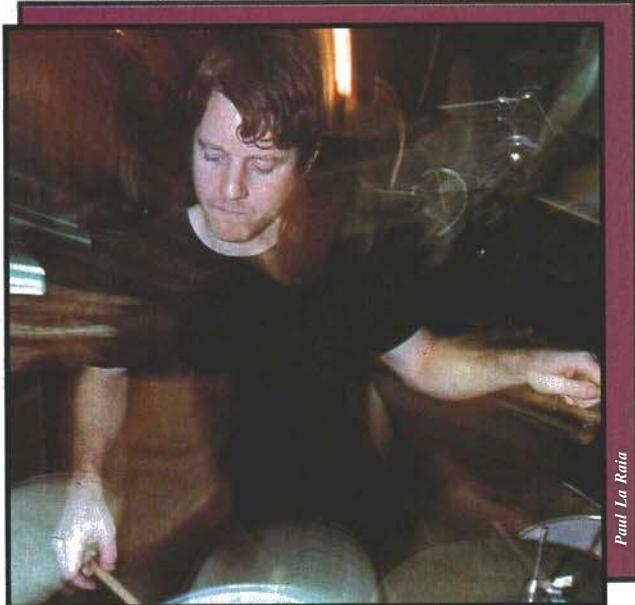
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# drumkit of the month



Tony Karasek uses this pan-ethnic setup to perform with Primasi, a San Diego-based coffeehouse band that performs Spanish, East European, Middle Eastern, and even Indian light classical music. "My eclectic mixed-bag drumkit clearly reflects our multi-national range," says Tony.

The kit consists of a 14x20 1965 Slingerland bass drum, a medium-sized doumbek from Turkey, a large doumbek from Syria, 1978 Bhargava tabla and bayan models from Bombay, India, a ghatam (clay pot) from Madras, India, a 1960s Sorrento floor tom (probably made in Japan), a pair

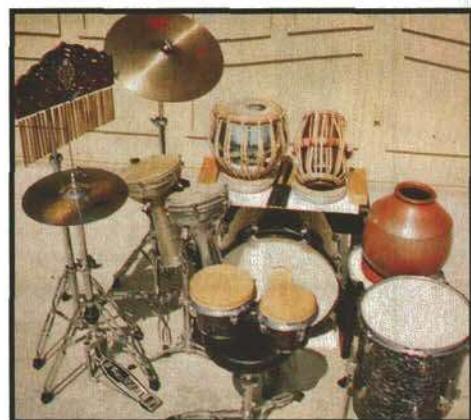
of Japanese-made bongos of the same era, an 18" Paiste 2002 crash, 14" Paiste 403 hi-hats, and pedals and stands by World Max.

"I made the bell tree from cut brass tubing mounted with fishing line to a top section of an Indian Sheesham wood partition screen that I found at the neighborhood Salvation Army store," says Tony. "The tabla and bayan are mounted on a K-Mart bookshelf set into a Radio Shack keyboard stand that slips over the 20" bass drum perfectly!"

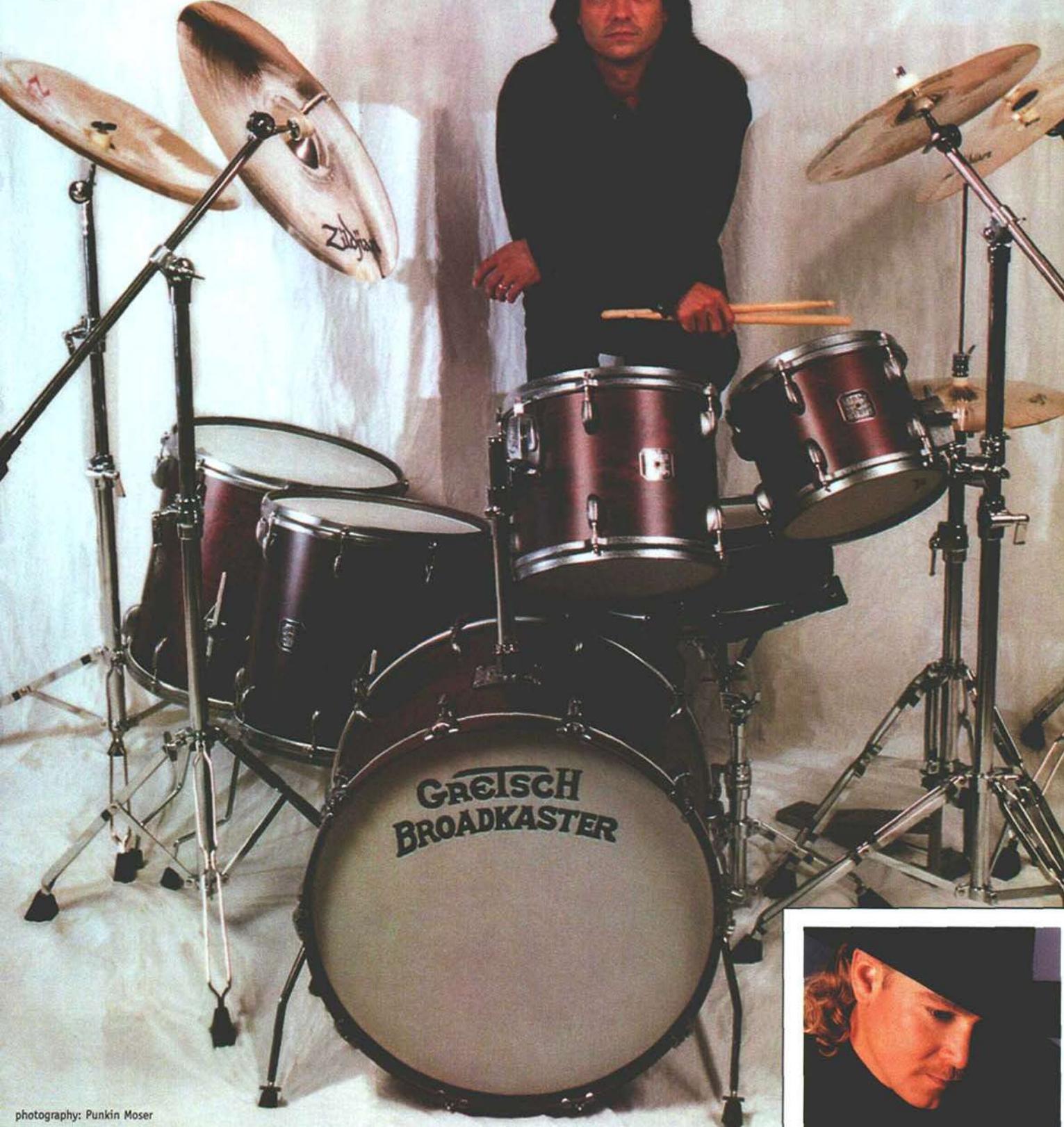
Anyone interested in more information on Tony's kit or its creation can email Tony at [shaicat@funty.com](mailto:shaicat@funty.com).

## PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted.
2. You may send more than one view of the kit.
3. Only show drums, no people.
4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds.
5. Clearly highlight special attributes of your kit. Send photo(s) to: Drumkit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Photos cannot be returned.



# Jack Gavin



photography: Punkin Moser

Natural musical talent and solid prolific performance experience that comes from touring with world renown bands combined - make Jack Gavin a prized drummer in today's music industry. His versatility and excellent classical training (Kent State University Graduate, Percussion Performance, Magna Cum Laude) have established him with tremendous musical discipline and range of performance. Gretsch Drums leads the way in quality, responsiveness, and dependability for Jack to deliver a high energy performance along with his enthusiastic, dynamic on stage presence which ignites listeners night after night. Jack is currently Musical Director/Band Leader with Tracy Lawrence.

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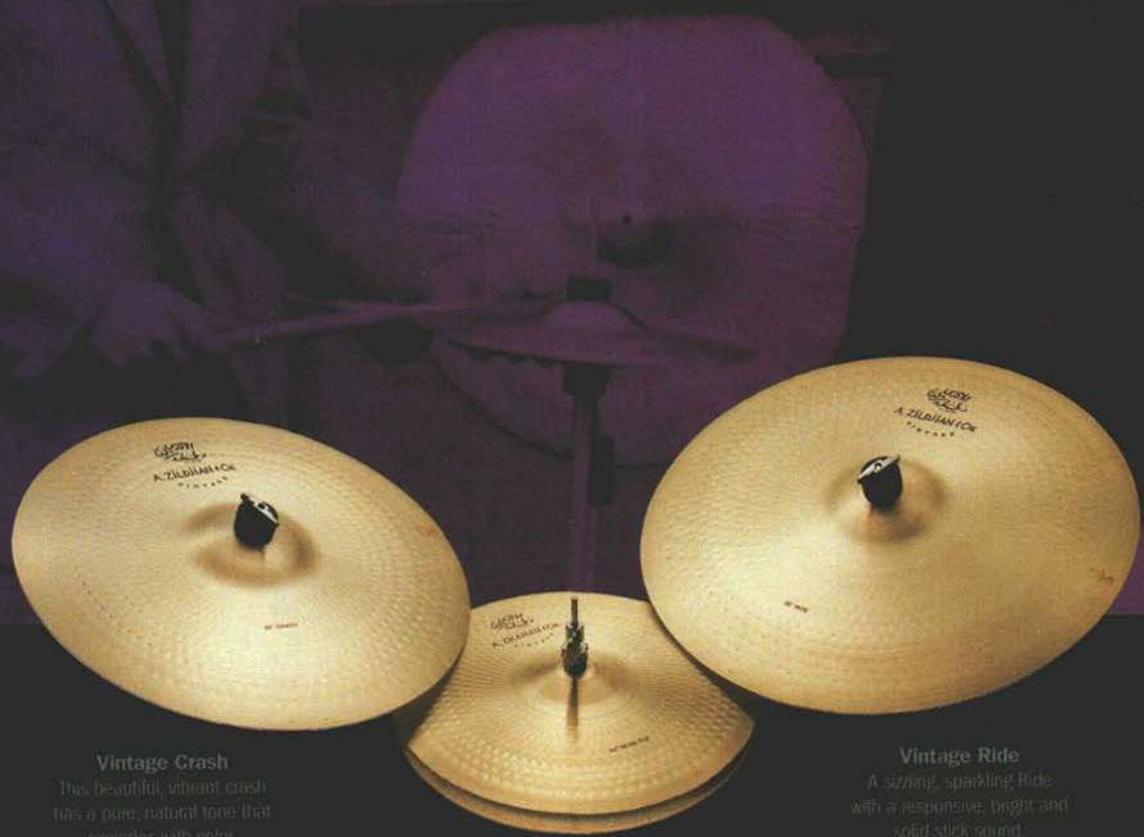


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