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The World's Most Widely Read Drum Magazine

April 2001

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BILLY MARTIN
IN THE MOMENT**

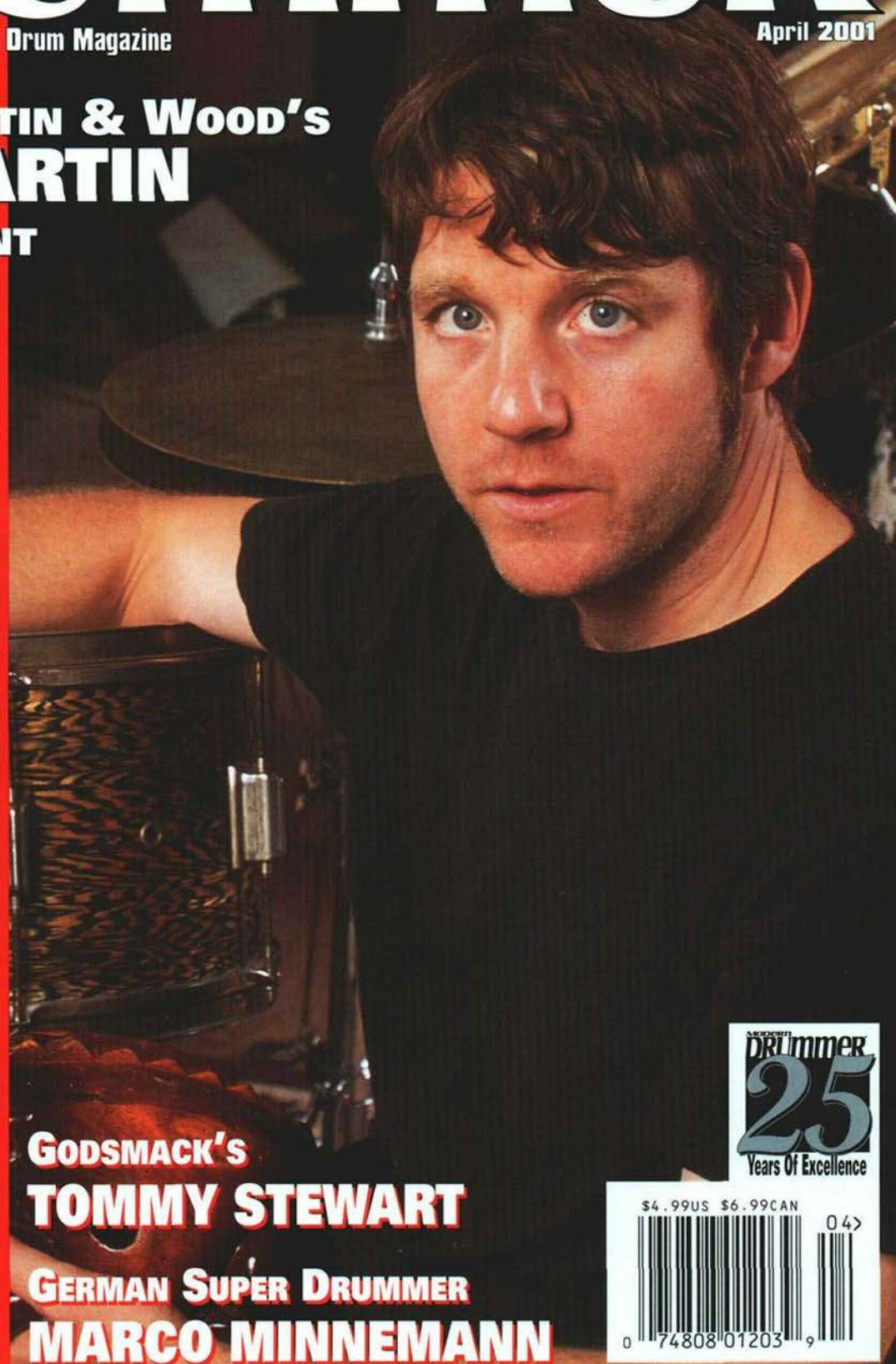
**LUIS
CONTE
PERCUSSIONIST
TO THE STARS**



**MIKE PORTNOY
REFLECTIONS**

**DRESSING UP
YOUR KIT**

**KAREN
CARPENTER
REMEMBERED**



**GODSMACK'S
TOMMY STEWART**

**GERMAN SUPER DRUMMER
MARCO MINNEMANN**



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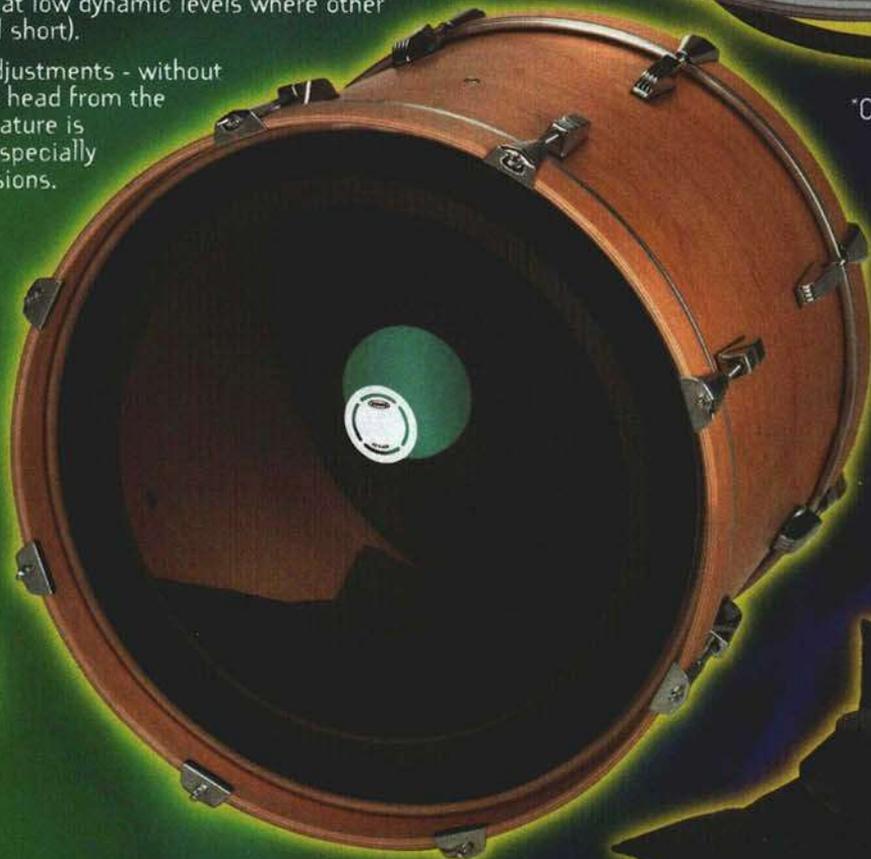
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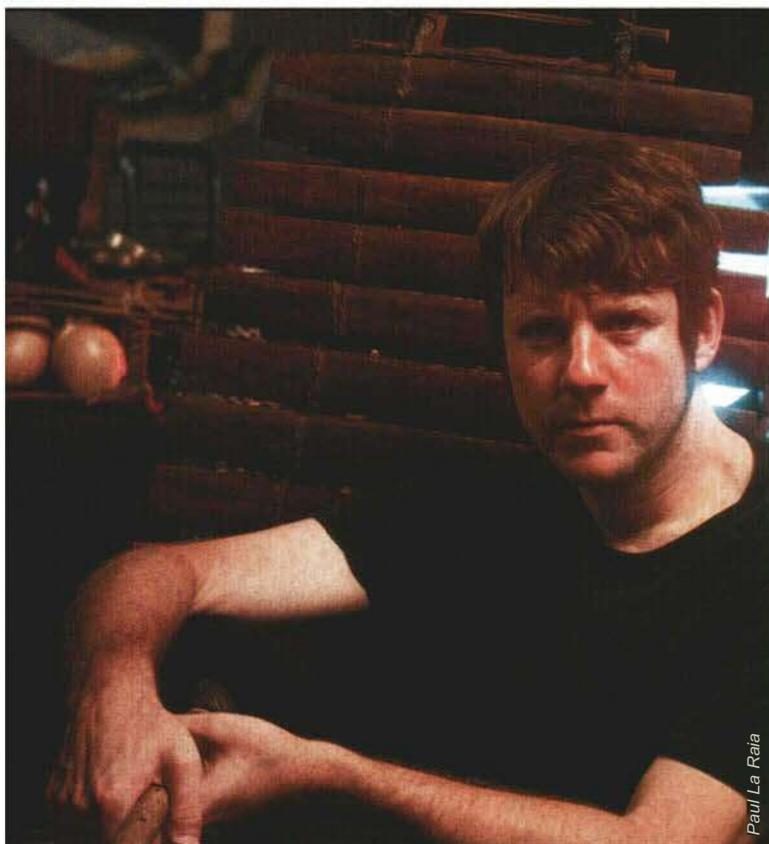
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UPDATE
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REFLECTIONS
MIKE PORTNOY ON...

Dream Theater's dynamo chats with *MD* about prog rock's drumming kings, plus a surprise or two.

by Robyn Flans

28

FROM THE PAST
KAREN CARPENTER

Everyone knows the princess of soft rock sang like the sweetest bird imaginable. But did you know she played drums—really, really well?

by Rod Fogarty

170

MMW's
BILLY MARTIN

Instrumental jazz group Medeski Martin & Wood is known to attract hordes of Deadheads. Sounds a bit odd, no? But listen to drummer Billy Martin's ten-ton groove and cosmic excursions—and his band's future sounds—and it all begins to make perfect sense,

by William F. Miller

58

LUIS CONTE

When Phil Collins asks a percussionist to back him as he duets with Tony Bennett—on drumset...at the Royal Albert Hall...in front of the Queen—well, you know you're talking about a player who could instill confidence in *anyone*.

by Robyn Flans

78

GODSMACK'S
TOMMY STEWART

New metal is rarely played as aggressively and precisely as Godsmack plays it. Drummer Tommy Stewart serves up a heaping plate of loud by serving the song.

by Gail Worley

102

MARCO MINNEMANN

A punk rock drummer with Zappa-worthy chops, Germany's Marco Minnemann is little known on this side of the big lake. Expect some changes—big changes,

by Michael Bettine

110

MD VISITS BRANSON

They claim it's the entertainment capital of the world. All we know is, there's a ton of drumming gigs there. But you better have your act together if you're gonna give it a go.

by Rick Van Horn

120

IN MEMORIAM

VERNEL FOURNIER

Legions of jazz drummers bowed down to Fournier—on the basis of what he did with one song. But, as is usually the case, there was a whole lot more going on down South.

by Rick Van Horn

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by Mark Parsons





Losing An Arm

This past September I had a life-changing experience: I was attacked by a 110-pound rottweiler. The dog clamped its jaws around my right forearm, chewing off a sizable chunk of flesh and muscle tissue. Adding to the seriousness of those injuries was a bad infection. All of this caused me to spend two weeks in the hospital (including five days in isolation due to the severe nature of the infection) and several more at home under the care of a visiting nurse. Needless to say, I'm not too fond of dogs—or at least their irresponsible owners—at the moment.

What really shook me up during this whole ordeal was that there was a strong possibility that I might lose my arm. The doctors remained positive, but the gravity of the situation was obvious. During the two weeks I was in the hospital I underwent three surgical procedures. (I've since had a fourth to close the largest wound.) For anyone, the thought of losing an arm

would be shocking. But for me, a life-long drummer, it was unthinkable.

Like a lot of you reading this editorial, drumming for me is more than a hobby or casual interest—it's a life's passion. Drumming has brought me tremendous personal satisfaction. I've never stopped working to develop my skills and have always strived to keep performing. In addition to all of the obvious musical pluses that drumming provides, my interest, education, and focus on the subject led me to my career here at *Modern Drummer*.

The bottom line is, when I look in the mirror, I know that, deep down, I'm a *drummer*. So when I was faced with the fact that I might lose my arm or possibly not be able to play because of it being too damaged...well...as you might imagine, there were some dark days.

I'm happy to report that at this point (three months after the attack) the arm has improved. All of the bandages have finally

been removed. I just started driving again and am back at work here at *MD* full time. However, doctors have advised me that I shouldn't play drums or do anything too physically demanding. They do feel that I will eventually be able to play again. I have a lot of faith that I'll be back at my drums soon.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the people who have sent me their good wishes. You don't realize how many friends you have until something like this happens. I'd also like to thank my family—especially my wonderful wife, Sarah—and my extended family here at *Modern Drummer*, for all of the love and support you have given me. While this whole thing has been a nightmare, it's made me realize how lucky I am.

Bill Miller

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 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER ISABEL SPAGNARDI
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CONTRIBUTING WRITERS: Robyn Flans, Burt Korall, Rick Mattingly, Ken Micallef, Mark Parsons, Matt Peiken, Robin Tolleson, Lauren Vogel Weiss, T. Bruce Wittet.

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25 GREATEST DRUMMERS

Editor's note: Whenever a list of the "greatest" anything is presented, controversy ensues. The "25 Greatest Drummers" listing in our 25th Anniversary issue was no exception—even though the selections were made by the MD readers themselves!

Upon reading your "Top 25 Drummers Of All Time" feature, I'm quite surprised at 1) Art Blakey only getting honorable mention (he should be number one), and 2) The lack of soul and funk drummers. Bernard Purdie got honorable mention, but where are Al Jackson Jr., Earl Young, Robert White, Bigfoot Brailey, Benny Benjamin, and *all* the James Brown drummers? I understand that this was a readers poll, but in my opinion there's too much of a rock and jazz slant to it, which compromises the credibility of the list.

Donnie Fletcher
Brooklyn, NY

How Harvey Mason did not even make the top 50 is beyond me. Let's see: Twenty-five-year studio/live career...on the cutting edge of fusion jazz...able to play in all styles... member of a top-selling group...influential on other drummers. The man is a giant. I wouldn't care to suggest who to throw out of the Top 25 (although I do see some questionable calls in there), but it sure looks foolish to have overlooked this gentleman.

Pat O'Connell
via Internet

In my estimation there are two glaring omissions: The incomparable Mitch Mitchell of The Jimi Hendrix Experience, and The Young Rascals' suave, swingin'-yet-powerful showman, Dino Danelli.

Bob Resch
Ypsilanti, MI

Where's Lars Ulrich?

Mark Frederickson
St. Louis, MO

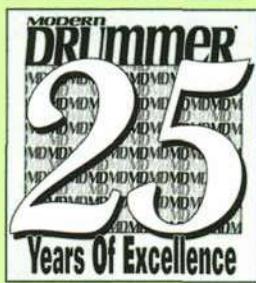
Danny Seraphine?

Tom Franklin
Los Angeles, CA

Rod Morgenstein?

Vinny Moldonato
New York, NY

MD'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY



Your 25th Anniversary edition contained a wealth of information and enjoyment—while awakening fond memories of the early start-up days of the publication. The cover of your January 1977 edition is still very vivid in my mind as I recall it arriving on my desk when I worked at Ludwig. In the thirty-five years that I've been in the music industry, I've never seen any other publication so capture the interest, imagination, and loyalty of its readers.

I admire your dedication to keeping the publication on solid principles, while changing with the times and your ever-enlarging readership demographics. Along the way you've explored areas of drumming that lacked understanding and following, providing something for everyone. And, as an adjunct to the magazine itself, the *Modern Drummer* Festival has grown to become one of the largest, most successful percussion gatherings in the world. No other publication has reinvested more to nourish the art of drumming and the sheer enjoyment associated with playing the drums.

I salute the *MD* staff for making twenty-five years go by so quickly. You have helped launch players, products, and trends, and along the way you have given *personality* to our industry. My best wishes to you for an even greater twenty-five years to come.

Karl Dustman
Dustman & Associates
Cleveland, OH

There is an abundance of words that could describe the combination of *MD*'s twenty-five years of valuable, enlightening articles, and the superb retrospective of them found in your 25th Anniversary edition. These two, though, should do the trick: class act.

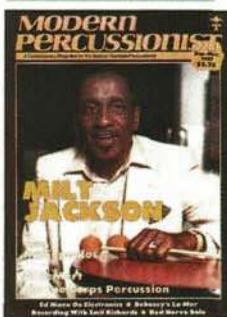
Jeff Goodman
Eagan, MN

Thank you *MD*, for making me look like a fool in public. Because of your absolutely fantastic January 2001 issue, I was laughing and grinning to myself on my train ride home. People actually looked at me funny. Because of your completely captivating past articles on my favorite drummers, I missed my train stop and had to backtrack. And to top it off, a poster! (Double sided—which one do I choose?)

What more could a girl ask for? Thanks for the most awesome issue ever!

Noelle Lynn Pereira
Singapore

THE EVOLUTION OF MD



The collection of classic interviews and articles in your January issue was a great way to celebrate your 25th Anniversary. However, in "The Evolution of *Modern Drummer*," the

author failed to mention your regrettably short-lived spin-off publication, *Modern Percussionist*. *MP* had the same quality mix of news, interviews, and instructional articles as *MD*, except that the coverage was of most everything *other* than drumset. *MP* was good stuff, and is a notable part of the history of Modern Drummer Publications.

Shane Durham
Lexington, KY

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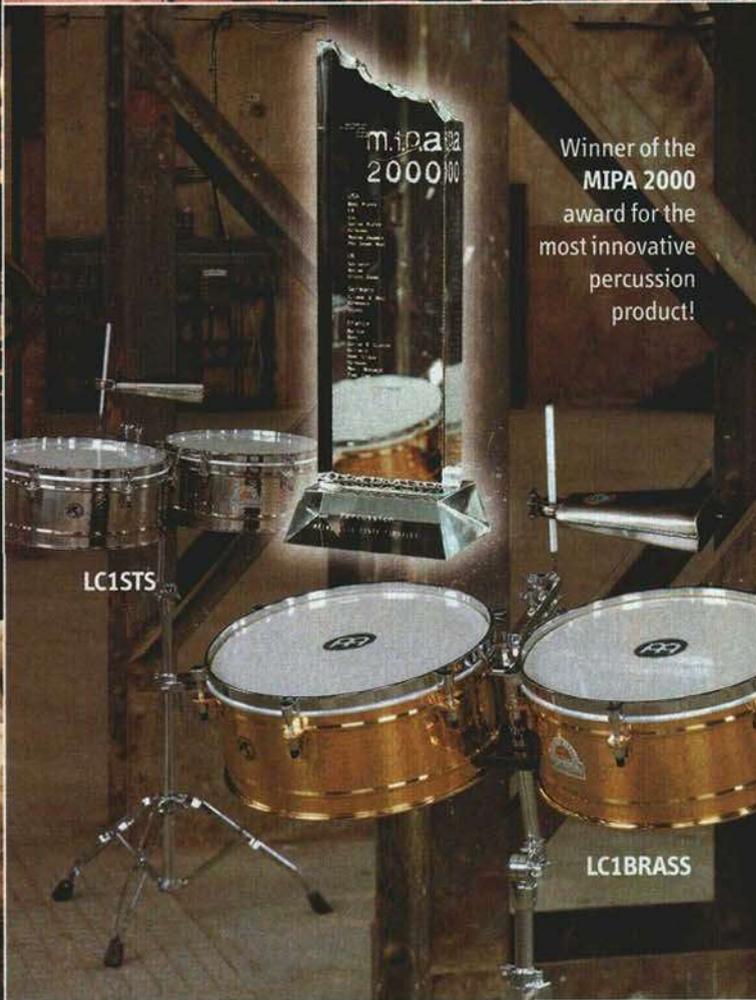


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DRUM INVENTORS

Many thanks for your recognition of my contribution to the art of drumming in your January 2001 "Drum Inventors" feature. Just to keep the record straight: At the time the interview for that story was conducted, the RIMS patents and trademarks were licensed to Drum Workshop. But that was a temporary measure to give my company, Gauger Percussion (GPI), time to get its new suspension system into production. GPI no longer has any product or license agreements with DW, and the RIMS trademark is exclusive to Gauger Percussion.

My congratulations go to all the "drummer/inventors" out there pushing the envelope. Drummers really do make the difference. What fun it can be!

Gary Gauger
President, GPI
Minnetonka, MI

WHERE ARE THEY NOW: RON TUTT

Thanks for including Ron Tutt in the January 2001 "Where Are They Now 3" feature. Ron is one of the greatest, most

consistent, and most versatile drummers going.

I had the opportunity to see Ron in action in Camden, New Jersey in 1998 with the *Elvis—The Concert* show he mentioned in the article. His playing was superb, displaying power and finesse at the same time.

I'm glad to hear that Ron's heart attack hasn't taken him out of the playing scene. If we're all lucky, he'll be playing for many years to come.

Bill Matlack
Williamsport, PA

THANKS FROM KERRY

I'd like to express my thanks and appreciation to *Modern Drummer* for supporting the recent Hollywood Custom & Vintage Drum Show [covered in March 2001's *Industry Happenings*]. Without your generous help, this show would never enjoy the success and visibility that it does. Thanks for being a co-sponsor of the event, and for your voice in the new and vintage drum community. The drumming audience is a unique one, and is well

served by your efforts.

I'd also like to thank some of the others who helped make this show come alive: Ludwig, Drum Workshop, Remo, Sabian, Yamaha, Pro-Mark, Ronn Dunnett, Bun E. Carlos, and John "JR" Robinson. And thanks to all the exhibitors and attendees who annually come together to make this show what it is.

Kerry Crutchfield
Hollywood, CA

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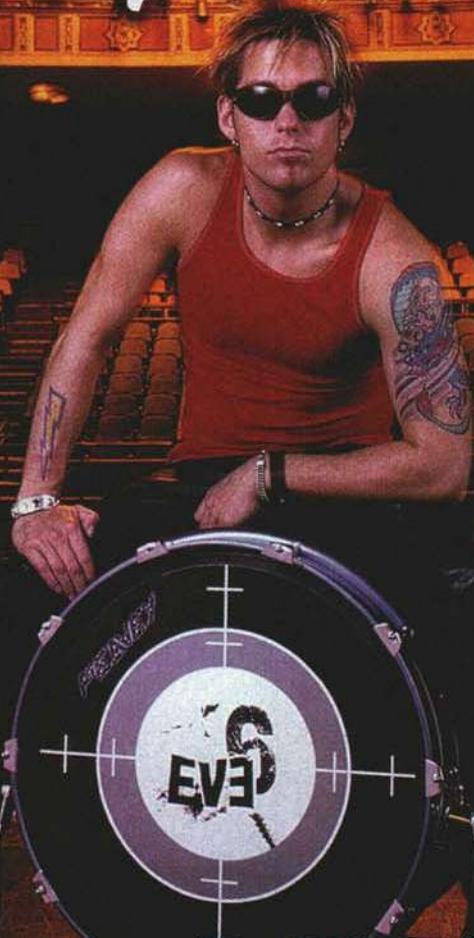
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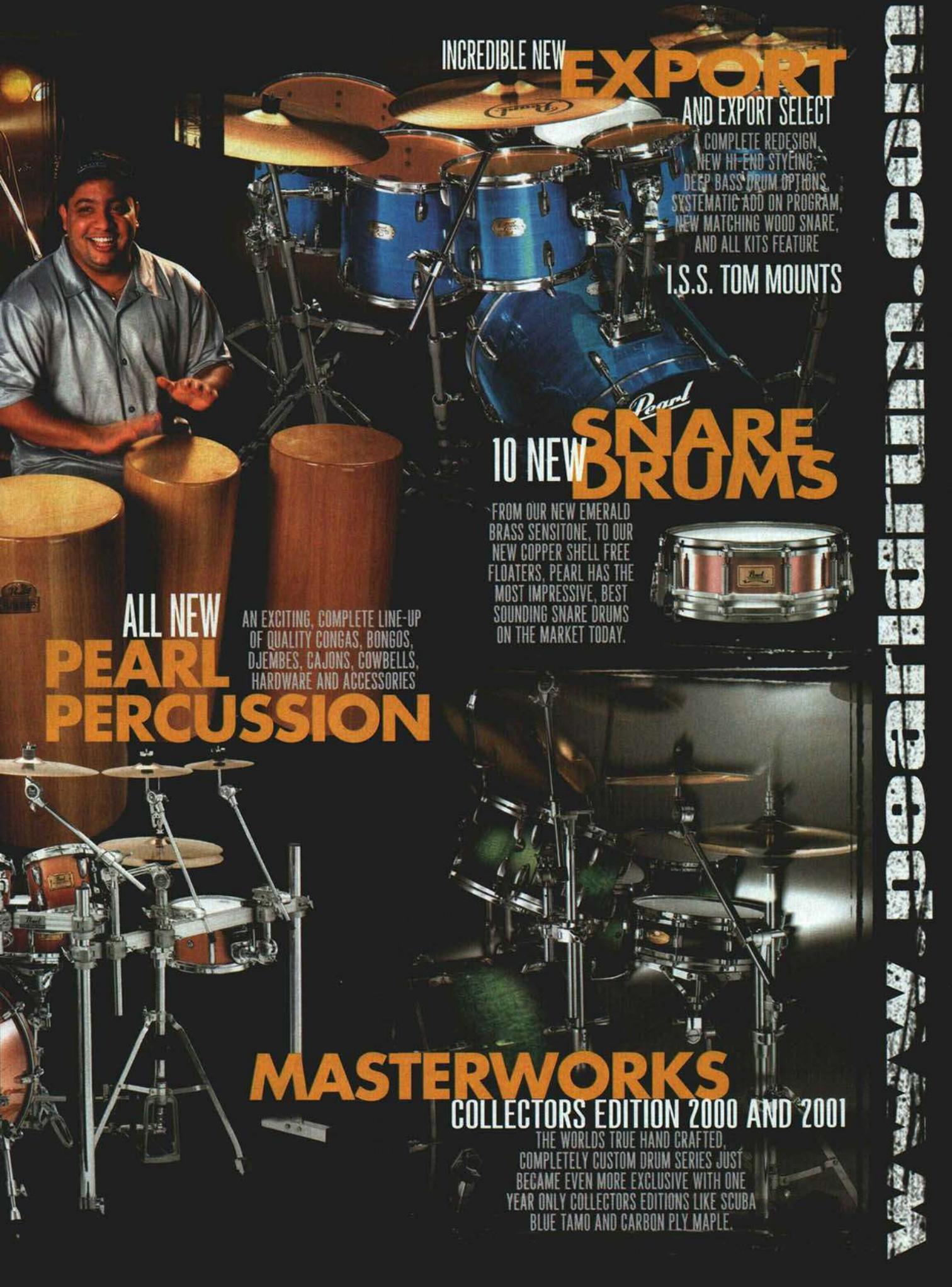
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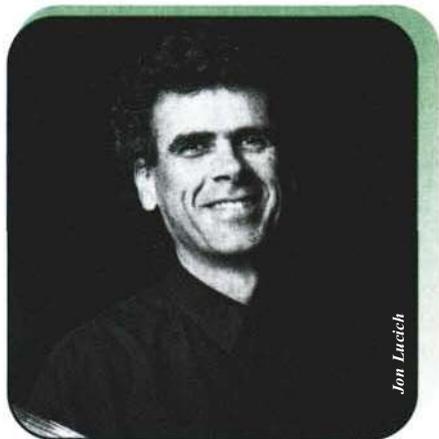
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PEARL DRUMS

Audition Tips From **David Garibaldi**



Jon Lucich

QI recently auditioned with a funk/fusion band. I thought the audition went well, and I totally expected to be hired. I soon got an email telling me that they were still looking for drummers, and would let me know if they needed my services. I replied to that email and got another response saying that while I was an adequate drummer, I just didn't have the drive they were looking for. My questions for you are:

1. How do I play with drive without rushing?
2. Do you have any tips to share about auditioning?

John Brower
Seattle, WA

A You're definitely not alone in this circumstance. Rejection is part of any musician's life, but drummers are particu-

larly in the hot seat. You can let this bring you down, or you can look at it as an opportunity for positive growth.

Auditioning is like reading for a part in a movie. Many famous actors read for parts they never get. Does this mean they can't act? Certainly not. All it means is that at that particular audition, whoever was doing the choosing chose someone else. Keeping that in mind has helped me get through many auditions.

Another thing that will help is to never let anyone get in your head. On the other hand, if you had a problem at the audition, consider what the bandleader said. Honestly ask yourself if there's something you can do better the next time around.

My most memorable audition experience was for Gino and Joe Vannelli. I loved their music, and at the urging of a mutual friend I sent them a tape of my work. They liked it enough to have me over to listen to their most recent recording. We listened to a bunch of tracks they had already done with Gino playing drums. Then they took me into another room that had drums set up. Gino asked me to play, and he and Joe sat down in two chairs right in front of me. *Yikes.*

After I played a bit, they asked me to play different time feels. We did this for about twenty minutes. Finally, they got up and we spoke a bit more, and then I left. The next day Gino called me. He said he liked what he heard, and asked if I was interested in playing on what was to be the

single for his recording, a song called "Black Cars." This was a very exciting day for me. My association with Gino and Joe became a friendship that continues today.

Another audition—for Rickie Lee Jones—lasted three days, during which time I had people calling me saying, "She loves your playing!" Still, she kept asking to hear more. To make a long story short, although I thought I was nailing it, apparently Tony Braunagel nailed it a bit better, because he got the gig. Such is the life of a modern drummer.

As far as playing with "drive" goes, practicing grooves with a click can be very helpful in determining how you perceive time. When I say practice, I mean the serious daily habit of practice. Practicing daily, with a goal in mind, will help you build your skills in many areas. Once this habit is established, it feeds your performance life. My practice often is geared toward problems I have on the bandstand. This gives my practicing real focus.

Also, when I practice, I do it with the same mindset as when I'm playing in a band. I'm always thinking about how the grooves I practice at home will sound in the music I play. If I'm grooving as hard as I can, the drive will be there. Read Vinnie Colaiuta's comments on time in *MD's* December 2000 *Ask A Pro*. He has a great perspective on this.

I hope this is of some help to you. We're all in this together, you know.

Tony Verderosa On Live Electronic Music

QI want to get into the whole scene of creating music with electronics, including getting involved in live drum 'n' bass performances. I'd like to incorporate my acoustic drums as well. But I'm not sure of the nuts-and-bolts approaches I need to take. Can you offer some guidance?

Dan
via Internet

A When it comes to producing contemporary electronic-based music live on stage, the challenge is to seamlessly incorporate acoustic instruments with MIDI instruments and samplers to create a new

hybrid. I call the concept "DJ drumming" and "live electronic drum re-mixing."

Loop-based electronic music styles such as drum 'n' bass, triphop, ambient, and big-beat all have one thing in common. Every style has become dependent on breakbeats (digitally sampled drum grooves) and computer-sequenced patterns. Until recently, the only practical way to bring these styles to a live audience was to capture the tracks on vinyl records and put the needle to the groove on stage. Thankfully, we now have many alternatives for playing out live. Here are a few ideas for you to explore that should help you keep a loose, improvised



Marcus Demuti

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feel on stage. (I'm a Yamaha artist, so the suggestions I make will be for Yamaha products. I sincerely believe in them and recommend them, but they're not the only such devices available.)

The simplest and least expensive way to fire off sequencer loops with a tempo that you can control on stage is by using a portable sequence re-mixer, such as the Yamaha RM1X. The most important feature this machine offers is the ability to establish new tempos "on the fly," using a Tap Tempo feature. You can tap in the tempo with a footswitch or with a dedicated button.

The RM1X also has sixty preset styles (with sixteen variations in each) that can be transformed and re-mixed to sound totally different from the original patterns. It also has fifty user style locations, which allows you to make your own patterns. These are not simply drum patterns. The RM1X has patterns that sound like fully produced techno, trance, and drum 'n' bass records, with synths, bass, piano, vocals, drums, and effects.

You must remember that sequencers do not adjust to the timing of the band, as live musicians do. *You* have to play with *them*, because they certainly are not listening to you! There are a few boxes on the market that can detect tempo fluctuations according to a signal you provide (like an ultra-clear, four-on-the-floor kick-drum groove). But these boxes are questionable, because they can easily be thrown off the beat. A simple double hit on the kick and they're off to the races!

It's possible to start a sequencer in the middle of a live jam. But I suggest rehearsing some sort of small break or pause for the band. That way, when you hit "start" they can hit the downbeat with you and adjust to the tempo of the sequencer. On the other hand, you might get very comfortable with tapping four beats on the pedal to match the tempo while the band is jamming, so that pausing will not be needed. Work this out in band rehearsals. I have had good results with both methods.

Recording sequencer loops on the fly is

easy with a Yamaha DTX electronic drum module. You could keep just a few pads off to the side of your acoustic drums to record patterns with. Set the DTX to Record mode and play the initial groove. Continue to loop in Record mode and add (record) additional parts on top. Then proceed to jam over the new loop on the acoustic drums.

My preferred system for creating live electronic re-mixes involves using triggers and pads (with the DTX) to access my sampler and keyboard synth module in real time, without a sequencer. I *become* the sequencer by designing special loops, effects, vocals, and small pieces of drum loops called loop fragments. These can all be tuned, filtered, and re-mixed live with my sticks and electronic hi-hat pedal.

You can learn more about all of these techniques and options by checking out my new videos and books, which I produced specifically to address all of these issues. They're published by Hal Leonard and are available in most drumshops and music stores. Or visit my Web site, VFXTV.net.

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

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—Phish's Jon Fishman, October 2000



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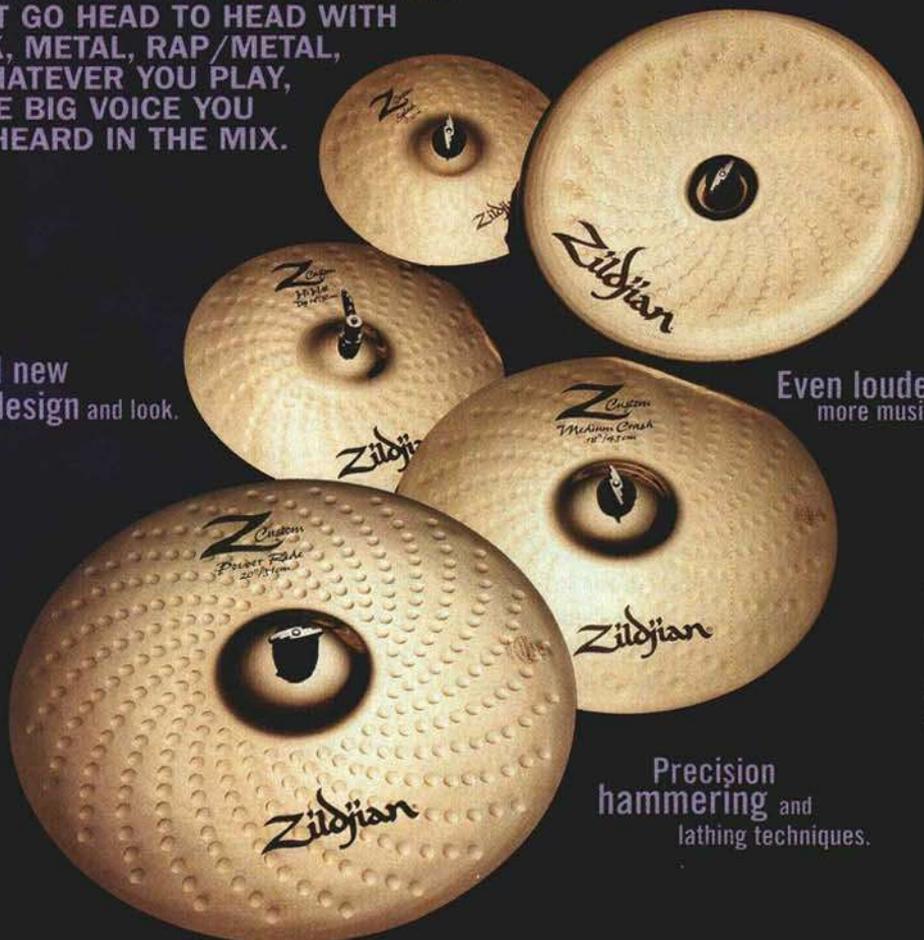
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What's A Mark Tree?

Q My daughter and I are drummers, and we're helping out on a musical piece at our church. I recognize most of the instruments called for in the percussion score, such as chimes, suspended cymbal, triangle, and bells. But there's something listed that's called a "Mark Tree." I don't have a clue what this is. Can you help me?

Myron Gookin
via Internet

A "Mark Tree" is a term for the percussion instrument more generally known as "wind chimes" or "bar chimes." These are small tubular-brass or solid-aluminum chimes that are strung onto a bar of wood or plastic and attached to a stand. The chimes themselves generally range in size from an inch and a half up to three or four inches in length, in an ascending-size configuration. They're used for glissandos and other ethereal effects.

The name "Mark Tree" dates from the early 1970s, when this instrument was first introduced to the LA studio scene by drummer/percussionist Mark Stevens. (At least he was the first one to market them.) The instrument more or less took his name, and arrangers and composers used the term "Mark Tree" to indicate its use on charts for many years thereafter.

Why Cymbal Felts?

Q I've always been puzzled by why most drummers put felts on the tops of their cymbals. It seems to me that all this accomplishes is to damp the normal vibration somewhat, and make it harder to play the bell. For what it's worth, Buddy Rich was one of the few who didn't use felts on top, as can be seen on his videos. What am I missing?

George Nichols
Sudbury, MA

A Felts are used atop cymbals mainly to protect the cymbals from striking the wing nut on the tilter (if the cymbals move a lot when hit). Striking the wing nut repeatedly can pose a real risk of damage to the area around the hole in the bell.

The flatter the cymbal is mounted, the less likely it is that it will strike the wing nut. However, many drummers mount

some or all of their cymbals at fairly acute angles. (By contrast, Buddy Rich kept his cymbals absolutely flat.) The way to avoid muting the cymbal's sound is to not tighten the wing nut down so that it presses the upper felt onto the cymbal. The cymbal should be allowed to move freely.

Head Patch Problems

Q I recently put a small moleskin patch on my bass drum batter to dull the sound I was getting from the drum. The patch fell off within a week, and a few days after that I noticed an indentation in the middle of the head, about half an inch deep. It's like a small pothole that my beater sinks right into. Why did this happen, and did it have anything to do with the patch? Also, when the patch fell off it left a sticky residue on the head, and sometimes the felt on the beater gets stuck to it. What should I do to remove the residue?

David
via Internet

A The indentation is probably the result of the moleskin pad muffling the sound of the bass drum to a point where you weren't hearing it the way you were used to. Even if you consciously wanted to "dull" the sound of the drum, it's likely that you *unconsciously* started hitting the drum harder to compensate for the reduced impact sound.

The "sticky stuff from the moleskin adhesive can be removed carefully with a product called Goo Gone (available in most home supply stores) or with acetone-based nail-polish remover. Just use it very sparingly, because acetone can have an effect on the plastic film of the head. However, since the head is already dented, it might be simpler to replace it entirely.

Mounting Conga Heads

Q I'm a relatively new hand drummer. I'm trying to learn all I can about the maintenance of my instruments, as well as how to play them. To that end, can you offer guidance on how to prepare and fit calf heads onto conga drums?

Frank Wilson
St. Louis, MO

A We asked conguero Michael Spiro—best known as a member of percussion trio Talking Drums—to give us the lowdown on conga-head installation. Here's his reply.

"The first thing to do is to soak the skin for one or two hours in cool water. To keep the skin as flat as possible as you do this, use a large, shallow pan, a large sink, or even the bathtub. You don't need more water than is required to cover the skin.

"Once the skin has been softened, put it on a flat surface (I use the floor), and place the flesh hoop/ring on top of the skin. Wrap the skin over the hoop so that the hoop disappears from view. There will be plenty of 'folds' in the skin because of the excess, but we'll deal with that in a minute.

"Next, place the whole skin-and-hoop assembly on top of the drum. Put the metal drum rim over the skin, and put one tuning lug in place. Don't tighten it down; just get the lug and the tuning screw on. Now go directly opposite that lug and do the same thing. Continue until you finally have all the lugs on. (Don't worry if you have to push down pretty hard on the rim to get the lugs on.)

"Use a pair of needle-nose pliers to pull up on the skin where the folds are, in order to eliminate all those folds. As you pull up and away from the skin with the pliers, go around the drum and cut off all the excess skin from the rim, using a sharp knife or box cutter. (Make sure you cut *away* from your body.)

"Tighten the lugs so that the rim comes down to approximately 3/4" below the top of the drum. Make sure you do this evenly, so that no one lug has more tension than another, and so that the rim doesn't get out of round.

"At this point, leave the drum alone for about a week. Do *not* try to tune it until the skin is completely dry. If you put tension on a skin that is not totally dry, you'll end up stretching it completely, and it will be useless. Be aware that the skin may *appear* to be dry before it really is, especially between the rim and the drum itself. So be patient and wait a full week, particularly if you live in a humid climate. At the end of that week you can tune the drum. Just do it gently, adding tension a little at a time to each lug.

"Now comes the most important part: Go practice!"



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Buddy Rode Here

QI'm a twelve-year-old drummer who loves jazz. I'm in three bands, and I can't get enough of the drums! My grandfather was Ed Crilly, president of the Chicago Jazz Institute and a fellow drummer. He died in 1992, and I recently came across a K Zildjian 20" Light ride that had been his. I have looked and looked in catalogs and magazines, but I can't find any information on this cymbal.

Part of my eagerness to know more about this cymbal is because it was also played by Buddy Rich. Buddy was a good friend of my grandfather, and on one occasion he practiced on his drumset, which contained this ride cymbal. I don't suppose that adds anything to the cymbal's value, but it's still pretty cool!

Charlie Dresser
Chicago, IL

AZildjian's director of education, John King, provides the following response. "The 20" K Light ride was in our product line from 1982 until approximately 1992. At that point we determined that K crash rides served most of the needs of drummers looking for that particular style of ride cymbal.

"Buddy Rich used all styles of rides over his long career, especially within his combo gigs. As you might imagine, his facility on all aspects of the drumset allowed him to use anything available with perfect results. But through the years his *primary* rides were models found in the A Zildjian category. In his early years he often chose 20" A Zildjian medium rides to accomplish his great work with the bands of that era. Later, when he established his own big band, he started to use ride cymbals with more articulation (such as Ping rides, Rock rides, and Earth rides) to bring out his fabulous ride patterns even more. But even then he would also use other cymbals that he felt were appropriate for the respective performance—including the 20" K Light ride.

"As to the potential value of your cymbal, even with proper documentation and/or a signature on the cymbal itself, a 'vintage' cymbal is usually worth no more than the current retail value of a comparable model in the same size. In your case, though, I'm sure you consider your cymbal priceless (as you should)."



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ELEVATE YO



Allen

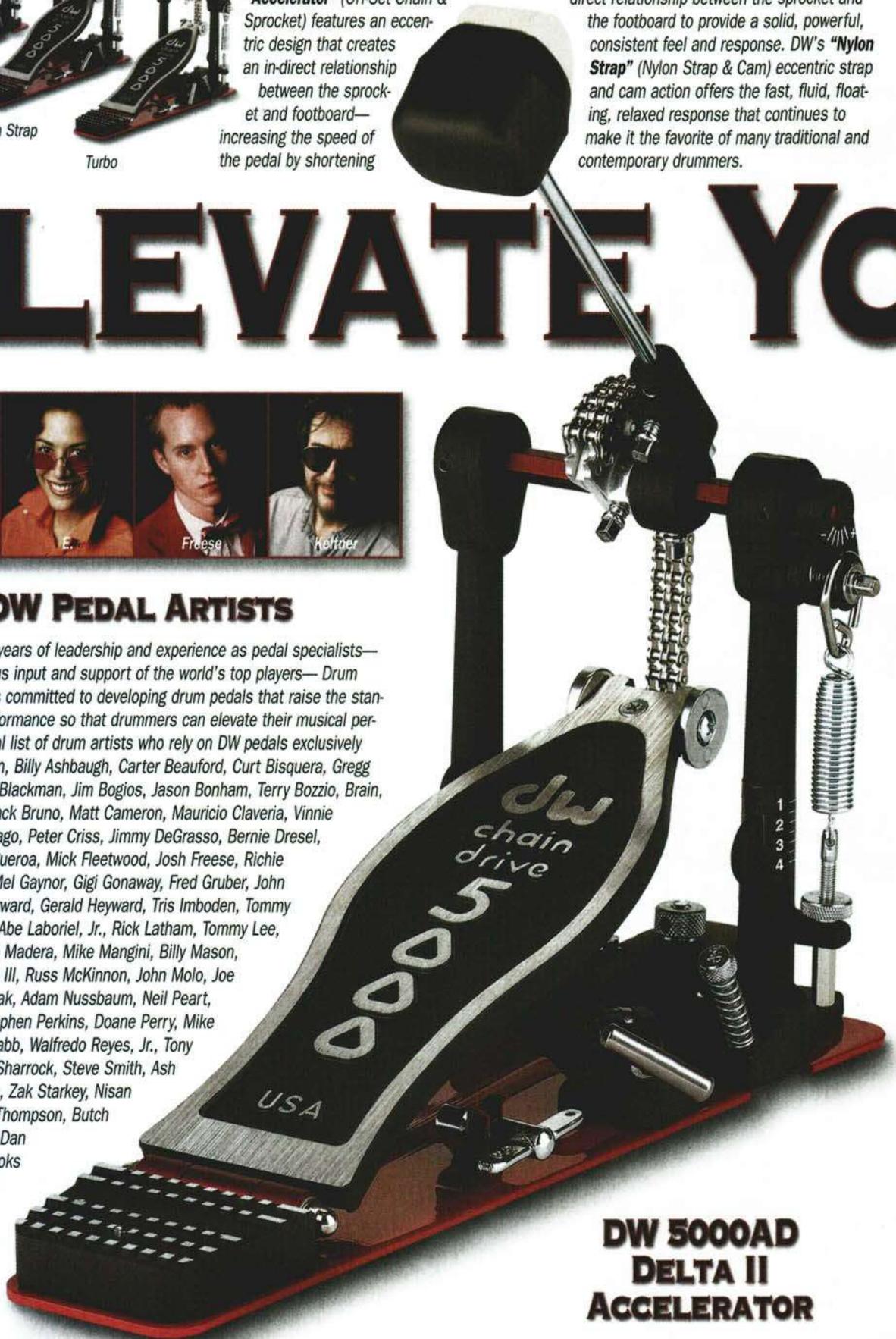
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DW PEDAL ARTISTS

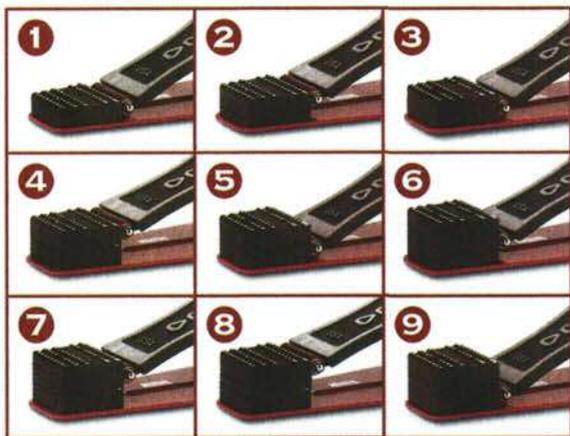
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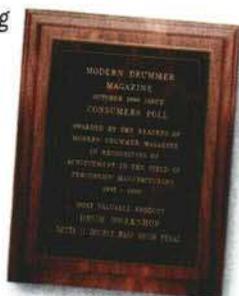


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* left-handed model 5002TDL is also available.

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).

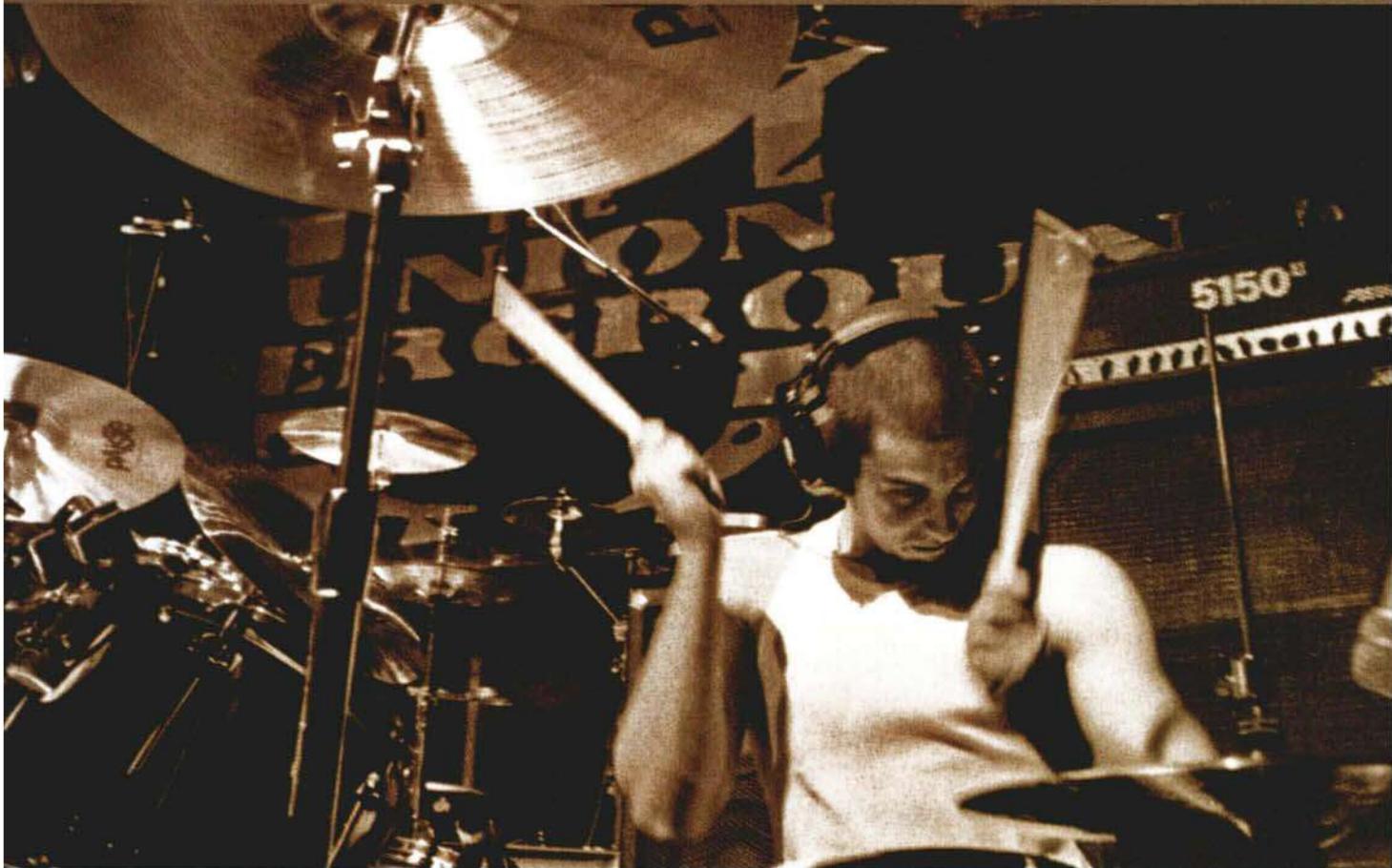


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Linkin Park's **ROB BOURDON** Drum Theory



When he was a ten-year-old kid in Woodland Hills, California, Rob Bourdon experienced an epiphany of sorts. No, it wasn't religious, sexual, or mystical. It was *musical*—and in the physical being of Aerosmith's Joey Kramer. "I got into drums because my mom is friends with Joey," says Bourdon, who now finds himself on an endless tour of duty with slam-rockers Linkin Park.

"The first show I ever attended was Aerosmith," Rob says, "and that was when I was in the fourth grade. I got to go backstage. It was so cool; I was in love with the whole thing. From that day forward I was totally into playing drums. I started out playing rock 'n' roll, but the people I was in school with were into R&B, so I got into playing those really intricate,

groove-based drum beats. Even though I don't do a lot of that with Linkin Park, I still love that style."

The mechanized metal thump of Linkin Park's *Hybrid Theory* allows for lots of hard and heavy "groove-based drum beats," and Bourdon handles that as well as various triggering duties. "I have a five-piece kit with two pads that run to an Alesis DM5. I use some of those sounds, but there's also a MIDI cable that connects that to our DJ rig, which has two Akai MPC samplers. Most of the stuff we play is to triggered parts, and it took some time to get used to playing with the click. But I've been doing it so much now that it's just a part of me. I can feel when we push ahead or pull back, and I can control it."

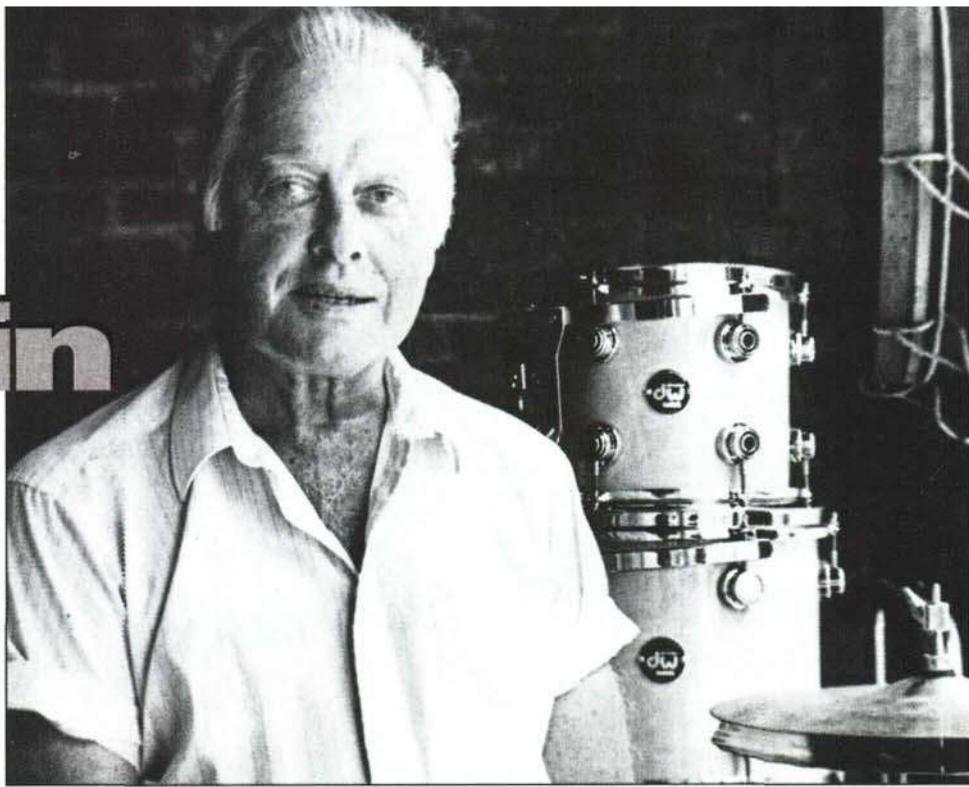
As the singles and videos from *Hybrid Theory* hit the airwaves—hopefully securing Bourdon's future—he can reminisce about what got him here. "I can remember early on getting into the Jeff Porcaro groove from 'Rosanna' by Toto. I would work for hours on playing that so slowly you couldn't even tell what it was. I learned a lot from doing that. I also studied reading, but never practiced it much. Every time I sat down to do it I would always move on to something else—mostly technique work like double strokes, paradiddles, playing eight strokes on each hand, then seven, six, five, four, three, two, and one. I like to work on my chops."

So practice *does* make perfect. No theory needed.

Ken Micallef

Jim Chapin

Still Rolling



It's a steamy tropical night in South Florida. I'm sitting out on Jim Chapin's lanai, watching the eighty-one-year-old drummer rip off amazing licks on his ever-present practice pad while the tree frogs and locusts in the backyard provide a symphonic backdrop. "This is not a drumstick," Chapin says. "It's a beautiful golden stallion. When I put my hand on it, I'm a jockey. If I ride him like this [he demonstrates a stiff-armed stroke], I've slowed him down to my tempo, my speed. I might as well get off the horse and run along beside him. But a good jockey gets up in the stirrups and gets his weight off the horse. The bell rings, you hit him in the rump one time, and off you go. He's carrying you."

Chapin then proceeds to play a set of RLL triplets, executed so rapidly that they almost sound like a press roll. "See, this way, I'm riding the stick; it's carrying me." What Chapin is demonstrating is the Moeller technique. Percussionist/educator Sanford Moeller, when in his twenties, observed veteran Civil War snare drummers gathering together to play. He was impressed with the way they used the physics of the sticks—a swinging-and-bouncing technique far removed from the stiff precision of many classically trained players. "The way I play has nothing to do with me," says Chapin. "I am one generation removed from the greatest bunch of bashers that ever played—the little kids in the Civil War. They had to get a bounce. Those old drums had terrible heads, and if the weather was slightly damp, it was all over."

Chapin says the Moeller technique also guarantees a drummer's longevity. "If somebody had told me in 1945, 'Jim,

you're going to have the same hands when you're eighty-one,' I would have said, 'Don't be silly; it's a young man's game.' But my hands are still the same. I never played triplets any faster than this." Chapin again demonstrates a dazzling set of licks on the practice pad. "Everybody says, 'You gotta squeeze here; you gotta hold on here.' They don't understand that, the minute you tighten up, everything up here [pointing to his forearm] will freeze up. And when you get older...! Guys come to me when they're forty years old and say, 'Jim, I used to be so fast and so strong, and look at me now.'"

Chapin uses traditional grip, but says matched grip makes more sense. "Nowadays, you've got all these drums out here [he gestures in the air, signifying a typical multiple-tom setup], and you just can't get to them. All these players are playing traditional—Steve Gadd, Steve Smith. And Virgil Donati—he should be playing matched grip. I guess they want to be like Buddy or Gene, in the tradition."

Terry Bozzio is one matched-grip player who impresses Chapin. "He's the most amusing and entertaining player. He can play a solo and hold your attention for an hour. I don't know many drummers you could listen to for an hour, do you?"

Chapin's famed book, *Advanced Techniques For The Modern Drummer*, which he says has sold "about a third of a

million copies," was self-published in 1948. "My mother took it to a distributor she knew. He showed it to some drummers, and they said, 'Nobody can play this.' Other guys said, 'This is the greatest thing ever written.' She said, 'Really?' She took out some ads in *Down Beat*. Max Roach and Louie Bellson liked it and endorsed it. Max really worked on it. Before that book, there weren't a lot of drummers really practicing independence." The first drummer to master his book, says Chapin, was Frank DeVito, who now owns Danmar, a manufacturer of percussion products.

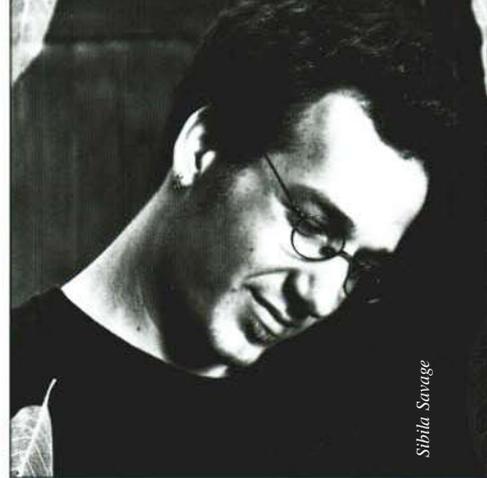
Chapin has more of a reputation as an educator than as a drumset player, and he knows it. Although he played drums in both the swing and bebop eras and worked with many famous musicians, his legacy will forever be linked to his books and his teaching. One of his longest steady gigs was with what he calls a "peanut" band in Las Vegas. "I wish I had pursued more of a career playing with great musicians. But I was having so much fun, I didn't care."

And, having said that, Chapin smiles gleefully and starts in on the practice pad again. "I still have my hands," he says as he whips off a set of blindingly fast flamadiddles. "See this? I'm coasting."

Ron Hefner

Scott Amendola

Leading Effort



Scott Amendola has never been satisfied to just be an amazing drummer. The thirty-one-year-old innovator has spent his career pushing music in new directions, never more so than with the eponymously named band he leads.

Since moving to San Francisco in 1992, Amendola has been nominated for a Grammy with the band T.J. Kirk, toured the world and played on national television with The Charlie Hunter Quartet, and recorded or performed with dozens of musicians, such as Bill Frisell, Pat Martino, Phil Lesh, and Primus.

But the effort that's closest to Amendola's heart is his namesake band. His first effort as a bandleader, Amendola composes and arranges all the music to fit his sax/violin/guuWbass/drums unit to a tee. "I just try to write what I hear. Hopefully it will sound like me," he says.

One thing for certain, the music doesn't sound quite like anything else, though Amendola cites everything from eccentric jazz to mainstream rock to African music as influences.

But what allows a sense of continuity across songs is the phenomenal interaction of five distinct musical voices. Amendola and his hand-picked crew take responsive improvisation to new heights. He has complete mastery of every piece of his drumset and the ability to create a plethora of sounds using sticks, brushes, mallets, and even his hands. "For me it's all about improvisation and opening up the music so that anything can happen," says the husky-voiced drummer.

Rather than simply echoing one another, each musician challenges and complements his cohorts. At any time, a member of the band might change key, rhythm, or

even tempo if it suits their fancy. Sometimes, a musician drops out mid-tune, leaving the other four a new scenario.

And even during the awkward moments, Amendola cherishes the right of every musician to fully express him or herself. For Amendola, music is something sacred that demands complete honesty and individuality. "Everybody gets to be themselves in the music," he says. "That's the only thing I know how to do anymore."

The Scott Amendola Band's self-titled debut album is available at shows and online at www.scottamendola.com.

Steven Raphael

KIRK COVINGTON

Back To Jammin'

After a short stint with jazz keyboard legend Joe Zawinul, fusion heavyweight Kirk Covington is back to jammin' with his longtime bandmates—and reigning kings of jazz/rock fusion—Tribal Tech. In a format that many fusion artists have picked up on lately, Tribal Tech has just finished recording its second "jam"-oriented release, *Rocket Science*. The album represents the process of going into the studio with no written material or preconceived ideas, and recording on the spot.

"Jamming in the studio is not as easy as jamming in front of an audience," Covington says. "It's much easier to create the jam vibe in front of a crowd, where the atmosphere is more conducive to letting go. The first time we tried to jam in the studio we failed. There are many factors that establish the right vibe, including where the musicians set up in rela-

tion to each other, headphone cues, lighting, etc. When we did *Thick* [Tribal Tech's first jam record], the keyboards, bass, and guitar were all set up tightly around the engineer in the control room. My drums were right up against the glass in the main room so we could easily see each other."

Covington notes that these are not pure jam records. "Once we create the jam and record it onto 20-bit AD AT tapes, we take the tapes home and load them into the computer. At that point we may begin to reshape the jams into songs by adding melodies, solos, etc. Other times they are untouched musically and simply enhanced sonically."

Covington adds, "On the new record, we improved again on the concept of recording by giving each player—except me—a mic' so they could call out chord changes during

the jam. Once we finished, we went back in the next day, listened to every note we played, trashed what we didn't like, and took home the good stuff. Another great asset is that we all have identical Macintosh-based hard disc recording setups at home.

"To have the massive musical vocabulary that the players in Tribal Tech do," he continues, "along with big ears and years of jamming experience, we feel that we have developed a new level of musical communication that few bands will ever achieve. This new record is the strongest, most potent musical experience we've ever captured on tape."

Covington is also recording and touring this year with TT guitarist Scott Henderson's blues project. The drummer also plans to release a blues record of his own featuring himself on drums, keyboards, and vocals.

Mike Haid

Terry Silverlight

Soprano Drumming

Terry Silverlight always keeps busy with a variety of work. Jazz label CEI recently released the drummer's self-titled solo album, which he produced and composed all of the tunes for. "It's a combination of material that features my drumming and material geared for radio play," Terry explains. "Aside from focusing on my drumming, a lot of the album focuses on my compositions. The challenge was finding a way to combine both things I like to do on one CD."

Silverlight recorded the project in his studio, using electronic drums as well as playing a good deal of the MIDI instruments himself—keyboards and bass—along with a few featured musicians. Terry approached the tunes in two different ways. "Some of the tracks got their start at the drums," he says, "with those ideas inspiring certain tunes. Some other tracks were done with the composition being the first thing that was created."

Terry cites "Taking Twos" as one of his favorite tracks. "At first listen it doesn't sound like it was done with electronic drums," he says. "It was *intended* to sound like an acoustic set. I'm playing some very complicated stuff on the tune, which proves that you can do that with electronics."

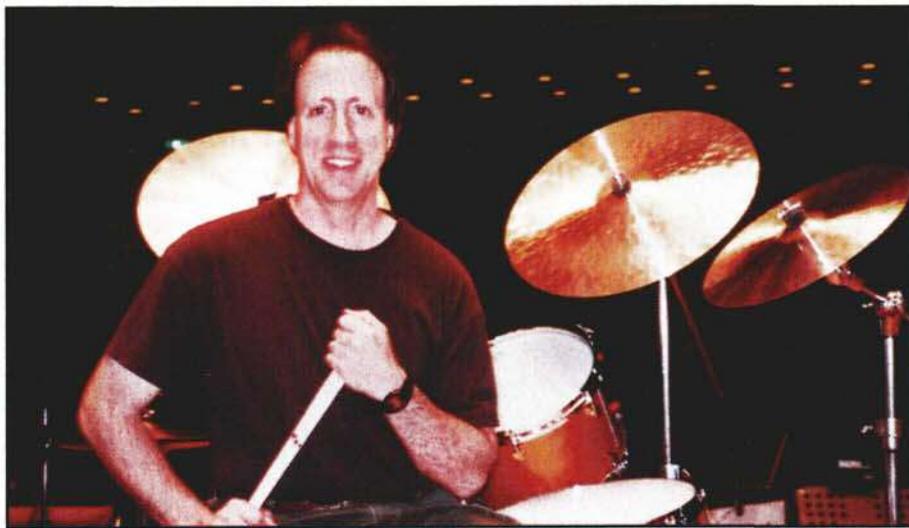
Other projects for Terry include performing and recording with the seventeen-piece Manhattan Jazz Orchestra, under the direction of David Matthews. Although their releases are only available in Japan, the last album they recorded, *Bach 2000*, will be available in the States shortly. "We took Bach's music and made it into crazy, high-energy music," he explains.

The drummer has also played on several film soundtracks in the last few years, such as *What Planet Are You From?*, *One Fine Day*, *You've Got Mail*, and *Object Of My*

Affection, as well as a new independent film called *The Pretenders*, on which he has four compositions. Terry also composed, produced, and played on a song featured in the film *Mad About Mambo* and has composed, produced, and played on music featured in TV shows such as *Passions*, *The Sopranos*, *Guiding Light*, and *Seventh Heaven*. He also recently co-produced and played on a CD by vibist Dave Shank.

No doubt about it, Terry Silverlight is one drummer who knows how to work.

Robyn Flans



drum dates

This month's important events in drumming history,

Tito Puente was born on April 20, 1923.

Jeff Porcaro was born on April 1, 1954.

Robbie McIntosh, original drummer with The Average White Band, was born on April 25, 1950.

Buddy Rich passed away on April 2, 1987.

Carlos Vega passed away on April 7, 1998.

Ringo Starr and The Beatles set a

record that has yet to be broken when "Can't Buy Me Love" hit number-one the week of April 4, 1964. The Beatles are the only group in history to simultaneously hold the top five singles on the *Billboard* charts.

On April 13, 1985 Quincy Jones gathers an all-star lineup, including **John "JR" Robinson** on drums, to record "We Are The World."

Happy Birthday

-
- Lionel Hampton** (April 12, 1909)
- Joe Porcaro** (April 29, 1930)
- Clyde Stubblefield** (April 18, 1943)
- Steve Gadd** (April 9, 1945)
- Steve Ferrone** (April 25, 1950)
- Narada Michael Walden**
(April 23, 1952)
- Danny Gottlieb** (April 18, 1953)
- Ivan Hampden** (Jennifer Lopez)
(April 1, 1958)
- Denny Fongheiser** (April 21, 1959)
- Chris Mars** (The Replacements)
(April 26, 1961)
- Aaron Comess** (Spin Doctors)
(April 24, 1968)

news

Sheila E & The E Train have released *Writes Of Passage*.

Terry Bozzio, Joe Travers, and Morgan Agren are on Dweezil Zappa's *Automatic*.

Lenny White is on Wallace Roney's *No Room For Argument*.

Camille Gainer is on Marc Gary's new CD, *Indigenous People*.

Bret Zwier is touring with Liquid Soul.

Stephen Belans is out on the road with Beaver Nelson, who's supporting his new CD, *Little Brother*.

Paul Carley and Scott Wade are on Surrender's new CD, *Full Circle*.

Legendary drummer **Sandy Nelson** has a new solo CD, *Veeblemania*. It's available exclusively on MP3.com.

Rodger Carter is touring with Evan & Jaron.

Jimmy Bower is sitting in for **Reed Mullin** in Corrosion Of Conformity while Mullin recovers from back ailments.

The drumming of **Tommy Alesi** can be heard on the *25th Anniversary Celebration* album by Beausoleil.

Monti is responsible for drums, keyboards, and programming on Gary Numan's latest CD, *Pure*.

Kenny Livingston is on the road with Lefty promoting their debut album, *4-3-2-1*.

Joe Bonadio is on Martin Sexton's *Wonder Bar*.

Long Beach Dub Allstars drummer, turntablist, and co-producer **Marshall Goodman** says the band is in the midst of recording a new album to follow up their 1999 Dream Works debut, *Right Back*.

Ritch Battersby can be heard on Grand Theft Audio's two-track contribution to the soundtrack of *Dude... Where's My Car?*

John Keeble is on a greatest-hits collection by Spandau Ballet called *Gold—The Best Of Spandau Ballet*.

John McEntire is on the new album by The Sea And The Cake, *Oui*.

Craig Pilo is doing live dates with Billy Vera & The Beaters, Danny Weis, Player, Carl Saunders, Ralph Dudley, and Ellis Hall. Craig's also appeared on the TV show *Titans*, performing with saxophonist Michael Lionton.

Alan White is on the double-CD set *House Of Yes: Live From House Of Blues*.

Gary Husband is on *What It Is*, a live-in-the-studio recording from 1980 featuring Steve Topping and Paul Carmichael.

Robert Barnett is on Big Ass Truck's *Who Let You In Here?*

Dan Gullotti is on *Body*, the new one from Zyrach's Orange.

Chris Wabich is on Karen Gallinger's *Remembering Bill Evans: A Vocal Tribute*.

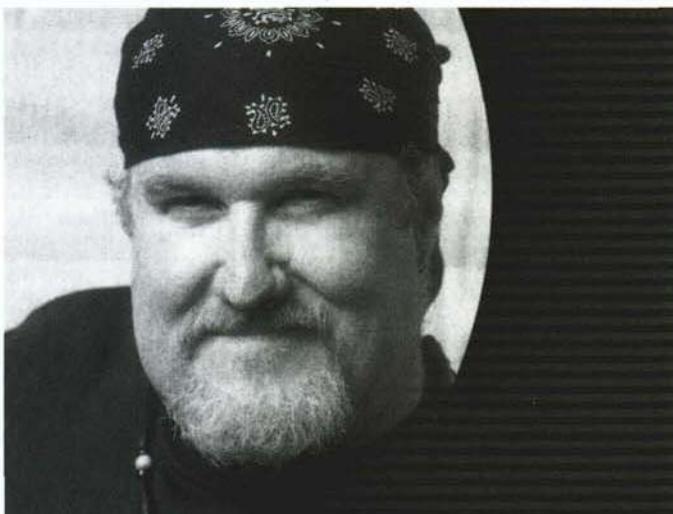
Mike Sarin is on Pete McCann's *You Remind Me Of Someone*.

John Bishop is on Ben Thomas's *The Mystagogue*.

Paul DeMarco is on Rose Tattoo's *25 To Life*.



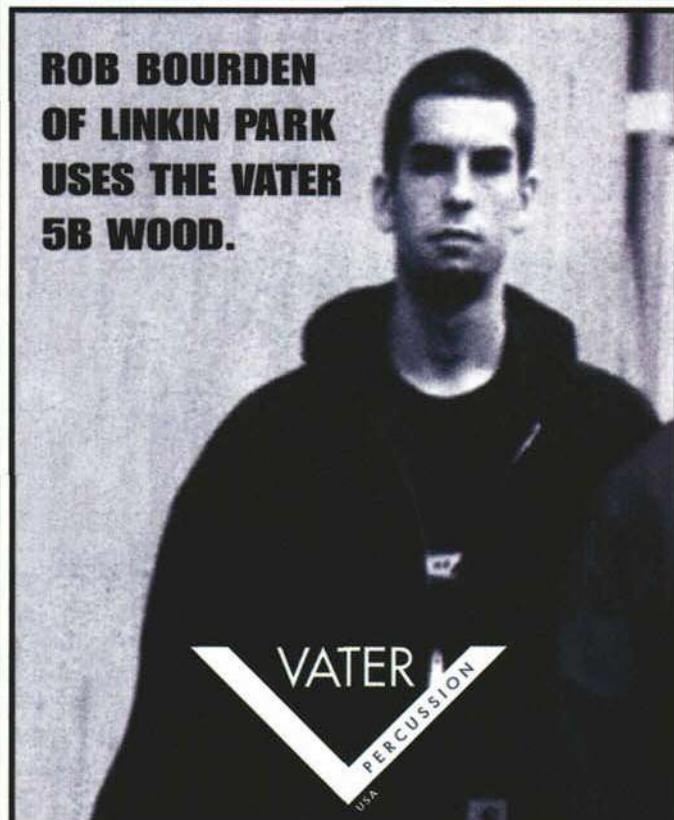
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Mike Portnoy On...

by Robyn Flans

At the beginning of 2001, Mike Portnoy went into the studio with Transatlantic to record their second album. "It's classic prog-rock," he says of the unit that includes Neil Morse from Spock's Beard, Pete Trewavas from Marillion, and Roine Stolt from The Flower Kings. "I put together Transatlantic to present a more retro-rock vibe, like early Genesis, Pink Floyd, and even The Beatles. With Dream Theater, I don't get to tap into those influences much because we're so technical and metal-oriented."

The rest of this year will be spent making the follow-up to Dream Theater's *Scenes From A Memory*, which has just been properly documented in a live setting. Toward the end of 2000, the band culminated a year on the road with a lavish production in

New York of *Memory* played in its entirety with a choir and actors on stage. The event was filmed for an upcoming DVD, which Portnoy directed. In addition to the performance, Mike has compiled bonus tracks, behind-the-scenes footage, and an audio commentary.

"It's a dream come true for me," Portnoy says, "because beyond music, my biggest love is film. I'm as influenced by people like Stanley Kubrick, David Lynch, Alfred Hitchcock, and Woody Allen as I am by Frank Zappa, Ringo Starr, and all my other musical influences."

Speaking of which, Mike took time out of his director's mode to reflect on a list of drummers we compiled.



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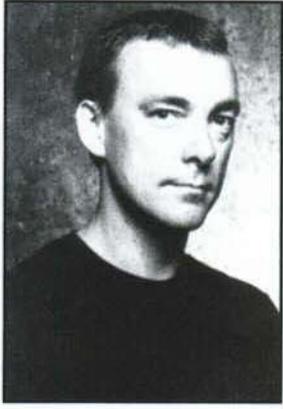
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...Neil Peart

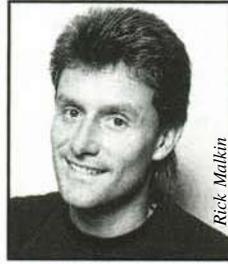


Neil was one of my biggest influences throughout high school in the early '80s. He was my first real drum hero. In fact, in the back of my high school yearbook I wrote for my future plans: "To become the next Neil Peart." A couple of years later, *Kerrang* magazine reviewed the first Dream Theater album and it had a big picture of me that said, "Heir to the Neil Peart throne." At that point, I knew I had achieved my initial goal.

Neil's biggest influence on me was the Rush period dating from the late '70s to the early '80s. Albums like *Hemispheres* and *Permanent Waves* were tremendously influential on me in terms of learning odd time signatures and over-the-top playing. Those early Rush albums were a blueprint for the kind of music Dream Theater was going to make.

...Carl Palmer

I had the pleasure of touring with both ELP and Deep Purple two summers ago, and it was a lot of fun. I got to spend time with Carl. He's a super nice guy. Of course, ELP was an influence on me and the rest of the band. Carl had more of a rudimentary military style than I do. But he's one of those flashy, over-the-top players, and between the way he and Keith Emerson played, they broke new ground in terms of progressive music.



Rick Malkin

because he's such a cerebral player, the way he phrases things, the way he's innovative in terms of sounds, and what he can make come out of the drums. I have the utmost respect for him. I feel fortunate to have gotten to know him through the years and to be able to spend some time with him, which is incredibly cool.

For me, *Close To The Edge* by Yes is one of the most influential albums of all time. But, of course, Bill's playing on the first UK album and all of his work with King Crimson is incredibly innovative as well.

...Bill Bruford



Lissa Wales

Bill, to me, is the ultimate progressive rock icon. He played with Yes, King Crimson, UK, Genesis—four of the top progressive bands of all time. He's a huge influence on me just

...Terry Bozzio

Terry's another big one for me. And again, he's played with so many artists who've influenced me. He also played with UK, and of course his stuff with Frank Zappa was huge. Zappa is my number-one biggest influence, and the stuff Terry played



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with him was mind-blowing. "The Black Page" and everything he did was completely groundbreaking in terms of polyrhythms. Obviously a lot of that was Frank, but the fact that Terry could actually execute those things was incredible.

Like Bruford, Terry has been through so many different stages, all of which have influenced me: the Zappa stuff, his playing with UK—the *Danger Money* album was a *huge* influence, one of my favorite drumming albums—and even the more commercial music he did with Missing Persons was cool.

The stuff Terry's doing now with his massive, drum-orchestra kit and ostinato patterns is incredible. It's been an honor for me to have been able to hang out with him, and even in some cases *play* with him when we've done some clinics together. It's been an amazing experience for me.

...Billy Cobham

I wasn't so much a Mahavishnu Orchestra fan, but I liked the solo albums Cobham did. He was one of the first fusion double bass drummers who really impressed me. "Quadrant 4" [from *Spectrum*] was the first super-



Fred Carneau

heavy double bass drumming I'd ever heard. Billy's performance on that track was what made me want to play double bass.

Since then, his use of three bass drums has been amazing. I really like his style because he plays fusion with a very aggressive approach.

...Alan White



Lissa Wales

As I mentioned, Yes was a huge influence on me, especially early on when Bruford was in the band. But I continued to listen to them throughout their career, and Alan became a big influence as well. I think *Drama* is one of the most overlooked Yes

albums, and Alan does some incredible odd time signature work on it.

When I saw the *Union* tour they did with all eight members, where Bill and Alan played together, the difference in their drumming styles became incredibly obvious. Alan was so much more of a groove guy. I kind of picture my style falling somewhere in between Bill and Alan, because Bruford is very much an innovative, technical, and by-the-numbers kind of drummer. Alan is aggressive and plays with a bit more of a swing to his groove.

A lot of people forget that Alan played with John Lennon. I just watched the *Give Me Some Truth* DVD that was recently released, and Alan is a big part of that. There's a lot of footage of him working with John during the making of the *Imagine* album. He was laying down some incredibly cool Ringo-esque grooves, and I have a great appreciation for that because The Beatles are my all-time favorite band.

...Stewart Copeland

You're listing all my big ones. Stewart was the first drummer to really get me interested in splash cymbals. When I think of Stewart, I think of incredible hi-hat and



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Lynn Houston

splash work. Those Police albums were huge influences on me in terms of groove. His style was somewhere in between reggae, ska, and punk—a strange combination of styles—and at the same time he had a bit of a progressive edge

to his playing as well. I miss Stewart's playing. I would love to hear him still playing stuff like that because he had such a cool style.

...Phil Collins

He's the only person on this list who has been as big an influence on my three-year-old daughter as he's been on me. I grew up listening to *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*, and Phil was one of the big progressive influences on me. And here we are, almost three decades later, and my daughter loves listening to his *Tarzan* soundtrack.

Obviously Phil's talents go far beyond the drums. In the '70s he was a great, great drummer, which a lot of this genera-

tion doesn't realize. Those early Genesis albums—particularly *Foxtrot*, *Selling England By The Pound*, and *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*—had some amazing drumming on them. Phil was playing really progressive patterns. His becoming a pop singer, songwriter, and superstar has overshadowed his drumming.

The one reunion I'm dying for is a Genesis reunion with him back behind the drums playing some of those classic songs. That's something I hope to see in my lifetime.



Michael Jachtles

...Chester Thompson

Obviously Chester is most associated with Genesis and Phil Collins. But when I think of him, I think of Frank Zappa. Chester played some amazing stuff when he was with Zappa, and he was doing some of the real crazy stuff along with Ruth Underwood, who was the percussionist in the band at that time. That's the stuff I think best represents Chester's versatility.

...Simon Phillips

Simon was another big one for me. He's another one of the reasons I started playing double bass. His versatility is unbelievable. He's played with so many different artists, including some of my favorites like Pete Townshend and The Who, Judas Priest, and The Michael Schenker Group.

I get compared to Neil Peart, but I feel in terms of fills and application of double bass, I'm closer to Simon. Obviously he comes from a much jazzier background than I do,



Ross Palmer

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but I always loved his style and wanted to model my playing after his. He plays with such a great feel and he also has such incredible technical ability. And Simon plays the coolest fills.

One of my favorite live shows was seeing *Tommy* with The Who at Radio City Music Hall with Simon on drums. Keith Moon is one of my big favorites, but seeing Simon play *Tommy* was unbelievable. I also love his playing on "Give Blood" from Pete Townshend's *White City* album, as well as his tracks on Jeff Beck's *There And Back*.

...Nick D'Virgilio



Nick is one of my favorite drummers playing today, as well as one of my best friends. Spock's Beard opened for us for the majority of last year, and that band is one of my favorites.

Nick is such a big part of their sound and style. I love his playing. I would watch him every night and was envious because he plays with such an incredible sense of groove. He can play progressive patterns, but at the same time everything that comes out of him sounds so perfect. I really admire him, not only as a drummer, but as a musician. He can play guitar, bass, and keyboards, and he has a great voice.

...Andy Sturmer

Talk about missing someone, I miss the hell out of Andy Sturmer. I haven't heard anything from him in years. The last Jellyfish album, *Spilt Milk*, is one of my all-time favorite albums. It's such a travesty that they broke up after that. They were so underappreciated.

The first time I heard of Jellyfish, they just seemed to me like a Saturday morning cartoon band. I didn't take them seriously at all. Then I was on tour with The Galactic Cowboys in '93, and they put on *Spilt Milk* one day in the tour bus. I was like, "Who is *this*? This is awesome." I had no idea they were so cool. They had

all of my more pop influences, like The Beatles, Queen, and The Beach Boys. Their albums really do sound like a cross between *Pet Sounds*, *The White Album*, and *A Night At The Opera*.

I never got to see them live, but I've collected a lot of bootleg videos. It blows me away the way Andy would play. His drumset configuration was incredibly original. He would play standing up, using just a kick drum, snare, hi-hat, and ride. But even though he didn't have a huge kit, he played so much—and while singing lead! He stood at the front of the stage because he was the lead singer. It was an incredibly unique approach. He's another one of those people who is an all-around musician that I totally respect.



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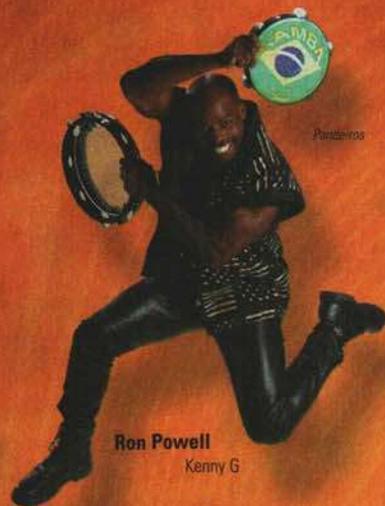
 <small>Van Halen drummer, Alex Van Halen, with West L.A. Music drum manager, Glenn Noyes</small>	 <small>Police drummer, Stewart Copeland, with West L.A. Music drum manager, Glenn Noyes</small>	 <small>West L.A. Music staff member with Stone Temple Pilots drummer, Eric Kretz</small>
 <small>West L.A. Music drum manager, Glenn Noyes with Rob Zombie drummer, John Tempesta</small>	 <small>Korn drummer, David Silveria, with West L.A. Music drum manager, Glenn Noyes</small>	 <small>Red Hot Chili Peppers drummer, Chad Smith, with West L.A. Music drum manager, Glenn Noyes</small>

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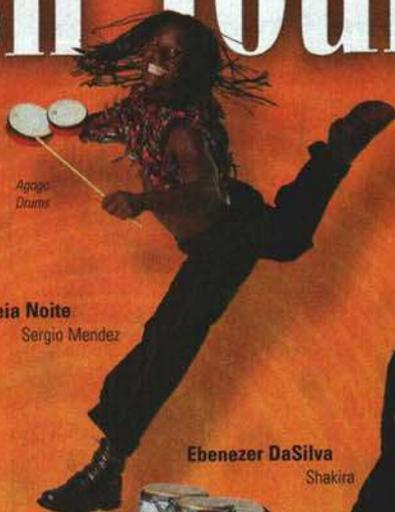
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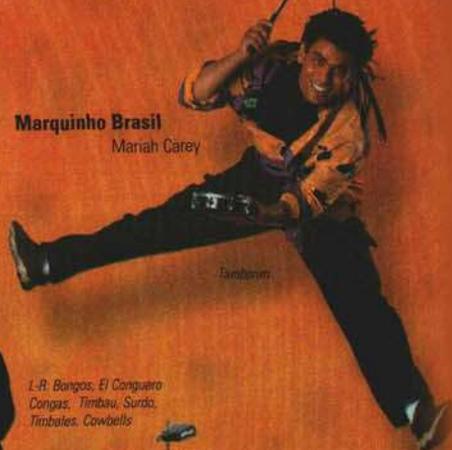
Ron Powell
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Meia Noite
Sergio Mendez

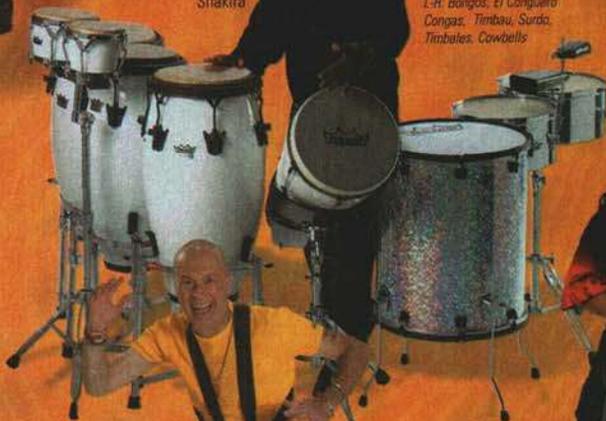
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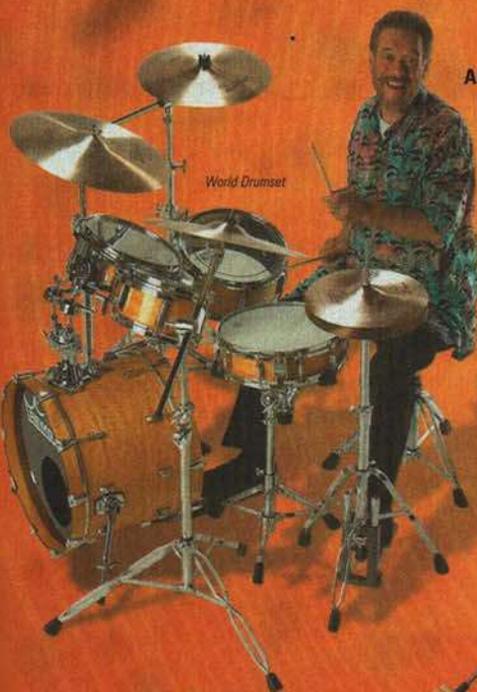
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...Dave Lombardo

Dave was one of my biggest influences in terms of aggressive double bass drumming. Slayer's *Reign In Blood* and *South Of Heaven* are two of my favorite thrash-metal records. I can't comprehend how a human being can play that fast. Dave's feet are incredible, and he has an unbelievably aggressive style, which I admire.



Alex Solica

...Jon Fishman

Believe it or not, Phish is one of my bigger influences of the past couple years. I think their playing abilities are completely overlooked and overshadowed by the whole Grateful Dead phenomenon. A lot of people don't spend the time to sit down and listen to what Phish is actually doing. There's some playing going on there that is incredible. One song, "You Enjoy Myself," has some of the coolest drumming I've heard.

I often ask myself the hypothetical question, "If I could play with any band, who would I play with?" Back in the day, it used to be *Zappa*. But now without him around, I end up thinking about Phish because of their improvisational style. To have that kind of artistic freedom is something I would absolutely love.



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Gretsch five-piece Broadcaster outfit in Burnt Orange finish.

From Out Of The South Gretsch Contemporary Drumkits

Gretsch Drums and their distribution partner, Kaman Music Corporation, have introduced two new drumkit configurations. A contemporary five-piece Broadcaster outfit with Burnt Orange finish (model GBR1520KSWO) and a six-piece kit (model GBR0622KSEB) with Ebony Satin finish are the latest products of the recent Kaman/Gretsch alliance. The kits feature contemporary drum sizes with suspended toms, and come standard with RIMS mounts.



If It Looks Like A Duck, And Walks Like A Duck... JohnnyraBB Webs And Ritmo Series Sticks

Okay, okay. JohnnyraBB Webs actually have nothing to do with ducks. What they are is a new playing tool that combines a traditional drumstick handle with a "brush" section shaped like an inverted triangle and made of three layers of high-tech polypropylene. The second layer is longer than the first, the third layer is longer still, and each layer is cut vertically into thirteen individual elements. The brush end is capable of producing a wide variety of sound textures at many different volume levels, and can be played on either side for different sounds. The handle is good for making standard drumstick effects, like cymbal crashes and rimshots.

In their first foray into the Latin scene, JohnnyraBB has introduced the Ritmo line of sticks, which includes the Pequeno, Cascara, and El Baston models. The Pequeno model (16 1/4" long with a .44" diameter) is designed to produce the greatest possible control and flex from a timbale stick. The Cascara (16 1/4" long with a .47" diameter) is a timbale stick designed for all playing styles and situations—light enough to control dynamics, but thick enough for power playing. Also 16 1/4" long, the El Baston stick is thicker and heavier than its compadres. It's designed for beating bells, blocks, and tambourines when volume is a must.



Stand And Deliver!

New Gibraltar Racks And Hardware

The innovative folks at Gibraltar Hardware have introduced several new products to make life easier for drummers and percussionists. First, for drummers who don't like the "caged" feeling of a wraparound drum rack, there are the new GRS-200 (small) and GRS-250C (large) Mini Side Racks. These racks can be set up on the side of a drumset to create the same effect of full-size racks, allowing the sets to be free from any obstruction in the front. The racks include two Road Series Multi-Clamps with memory locks and two SC-RBA Rack Bar Attachments for mounting any drum, percussion, or cymbal. The GRS-200 is priced at \$285.50; the GRS-250C lists for \$319.50.

For drummers or percussionists seeking to add to their sonic arsenal while taking a minimum of space, Gibraltar offers several new mounting systems. The MS-SP Splash and Percussion Mounting System (\$110.50) mounts cymbals and cowbells via L-Rod mounts on cymbal arms. The MS-TC Tri-Splash Mounting System (\$119.50) fits up to three splash cymbals via L-Rod mounts on a cymbal arm. And the MS-XLR X-Hat/L-Rod Combination Mounting System (\$115.50) permits the mounting of an X-hat and Percussion L-rod anywhere in a drummer's setup.

Back on the floor, Gibraltar's new Avenger II single (\$149.50) and double (\$399.50) strap-drive bass drum pedals are now available. The strap design is said to provide the speed and accuracy of a sprocket drive with the smooth and quiet action of a cam drive, all at an affordable price. Both pedals include new footboard and frame designs. Rock Plates are also optional, and the pedals feature the new Gibraltar logo, all in black finish.

New Avenger II hi-hat models include the 99707NL Legless Hi-Hat Stand (\$99.50) and the 9707 DL Dual-Leg Hi-Hat Stand (\$229.50). The legless model is perfect for drummers who are looking to cut down on space by mounting their hi-hat on a drum rack. The Dual-Leg stand is an option for drummers who use multiple pedals. Both stands include Gibraltar's Quick Release Rock Plate.

Gibraltar Mini Side Racks



The Avenger II single pedal features Gibraltar's new footboard design.

On The World Beat

Toca Alex Acuna Cajons, Kalani Drums, And Traditional Series Wood-Stave Timbales

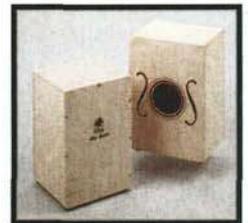
Toca's extensive percussion line has been augmented with some pretty esoteric instruments. To begin with, there's Alex Acuna's signature Peruvian (\$259) and Flamenco (\$249) cajons. Both are made from select hardwoods with a thin-ply playing surface to provide extra bass tone and overall response. Each also features a unique sound-hole rosette with stylish F-holes along the side, as well as Alex's signature burned in on the playing side.

Kalani drums include a 13" djembe (\$299.50) and 10" (\$269.50) and 13" (\$299) down downs. With satin-finished Asian Oak shells and black texture-coated hardware for added durability, the drums also feature rope-tension tuning systems and Toca's EasyPlay hoops with natural skin heads. Also available is the Kalani djembe/throne stand (\$159.50), which mounts a djembe drum or can be used as a throne for seated playing.

Finally, Toca has added a wood-stave timbale set to the Traditional Series. The design features handcrafted hardwood shells fashioned in a stave design and finished in a natural satin finish, a burned-in Toca logo, and brushed chrome plated hardware. The timbales are priced at \$499.50.



Toca Wood Timbales



Alex Acuna Peruvian (left) and Flamenco signature cajons.



Kalani Drums

Using Their Heads

Ludwig Weather Master Drumheads, Strider Marching Drums, And Omni-Lite Carriers



Weather Master drumheads



Ludwig Strider snare and Omni-Lite carrier

Everybody knows Ludwig drums. But suprisingly few people know that Ludwig makes drumheads, too. In fact, they recently reintroduced their Weather Master line, which is standardized to fit *all* brands of drums. The line includes tom heads from 6" to 18", bass drum heads from 18" to 40", snare drum batters from 12" to 15", and snare-side heads from 13" to 15". Models include white coated, clear, smooth white, Silver Dot, black, Power Collar, coated Silver Dot, and snare-side heads. The Mylar heads are available in heavy (10 mil) and medium (7.5 mil) weights. They're manufactured in Ludwig's plant in Monroe, North Carolina. Retail prices range from \$16.50 to \$49, depending on size.

For middle-school and junior-high drummers, Ludwig Strider snare drums and Omni-Lite carriers combine for an ultra-lightweight eight-pound marching system. The snare drum features a 7-ply, 7 mm birch and Italian poplar shell, 2.3 mm triple-flange steel hoops, eight Mini-Classic lugs, a Supra-Phonic snare strainer system, Weather Master Silver Dot high-torque drumheads, and a seamless aluminum torque-ring bearing edge. Drums are available in 10x13 and 10x14 sizes.

Omni-Lite carriers (also available for bass drums and multi-tom trios) complement the Strider drums. The aluminum construction of the snare carrier features lift-front-style connections. The carriers are adjustable for comfort, and also feature thick foam shoulder and stomach pads. They're available in white, black, red cortex, and mirrored chrome. A 10x13 drum with carrier lists for \$490; a 10x14 drum with carrier is priced at \$525.

Lighten Up

Carbonlite Carbon Fiber Drum Racks

Carbonlite drum racks feature rack tubing molded from high-strength carbon fiber composite materials. Because Carbonlite tubing is less than a quarter of the weight of steel tubing, players can have all the advantages of traditional drum rack systems—compact footprint, consistent positioning, and rapid setup—with up to 50% less weight. The tubing also has a carbon-fiber weave finish with a slip-resistant surface that the manufacturer says will not dent or rust. Complete rack systems are available in several standard configurations or can be produced to custom requirements.



Carbon fiber tube kits are also available for direct replacement of standard steel rack tubing on existing drum racks. The 1.5"-diameter tubing is sized for use with existing rack clamps and hardware. Three standard tube kits are available: Basic Rack (single front tube), L-Rack (front tube plus single side extension), and C-Rack (front tube plus left- and right-side extensions). The tube kits feature pre-cut carbon fiber tubes, complete with end caps.

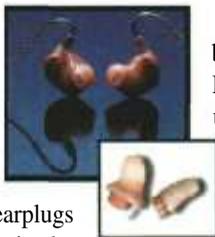
Pump DOWN The Volume

EarMold Concepts Hearing Protection Products

By now, every drummer knows (or at least *should* know) that exposure to amplified music poses an irreversible hearing risk. But nobody wants to stop playing the music they like. So the answer is hearing protection that doesn't distort or reduce the enjoyment of what one hears.

Musicians often complain that foam or flange earplugs attenuate more sound than is necessary—especially in the high-frequency region. EarMold Concepts' Musician ERs, on the other hand, reduce the loudness level while keeping the frequency response intact. Thus, music and speech is reproduced with accuracy at a lower volume level. Models are available to reduce sound by 9, 15, or 25 decibels. The amount of attenuation used will depend upon the loudness level in your playing environment.

Foam or flange plugs can be uncomfortable because the material is rough and is not properly formed to the ear. Musician ER earplugs are made from a soft material that is custom-fitted to the user's ear. They fit snug in the ear and will not fall out during performance. This comfort factor enables the plugs to be worn for long periods of time.



Many in-ear monitors today come with standard E-1 or E-5 earbuds, which are often surrounded by a foam plug. According to EarMold Concepts, the foam plug is abrasive to the ear canal, is unsanitary after one use, offers poor attenuation to outside noise, and often falls out of the ear. EarMold Concepts can make custom sleeves to fit over such preexisting earpieces. The E-1 and E-5 fits inside the custom earmold and then inside the user's ear. The soft, comfortable material seals the ear canal, providing excellent in-ear fidelity without having to turn up the volume to dangerous levels to compensate for outside noise.

Finally, EarMold Concepts offers UE-5 Pro and UE-3 Stage in-ear monitor systems. The high-end UE-5 Pro utilizes a dual-driver system: Each earpiece has a high and low driver with passive crossover. This design delivers frequency response from 20 Hz to 18,000 Hz. The UE-5 Pro also provides over 26 dB of isolation from external noise. This means the musician can hear the music clearly at a safe level without having to turn the volume up to compensate for external noise. The UE-3 Stage single-driver system is the "economy model" of the UE-5 Pro.

Microphones Should Be Heard And Not Seen

SIB Systems ISM 07 Invisible Shell Mic'

The ISM 07 from Germany's SIB Systems is a small, lightweight dynamic microphone designed to be mounted inside a drumshell. It can be used in toms from 8" to 18" diameter, along with snare drums and percussion instruments. The mic' is 3.2" long by 1.2" in diameter and weighs only 9 ounces (including the mounting bracket). Its frequency range—50-16,000 Hz—is tailored for drums and percussion instruments, yet its internal mounting provides isolation that reduces pickup of unwanted sound from other drums or cymbals. List price is \$189.

Installation of the ISM-07 requires no drilling of the drumshell. The shock-resistant steel mounting bracket is attached to the shell using one of the lug-casing screws. A specially designed mini cable passes through the drum's airhole and out to the snake or soundboard. The mic' can be positioned within the drum to maximize attack, or to obtain a deeper, warmer sound. In addition to the ISM-07, SIB Systems also offers the KM Pro II internal bass drum microphone.



From Very Small To Very Big

Remo Lynn Kleiner Gathering Drum,
Expanded Thunder Tube Line,
And Smaller Falam Slam Pads

In the realm of the small and compact, Remo now offers 2" Falam Slam and Double Falam Slam bass-drum impact pads. Complementing the original 4" sizes, the new pads are for players who prefer bass drum protection with a little less muffling.

In the mid-size range, Remo's Thunder Tube line now includes a larger 6x6 model for a bigger sound and unique overtones. The drum comes with a vertical black webbing handle for complete control, and is available in Stormy, Tie Dye, Quadra Crystals, and Custom Graphic finishes.

Definitely on the *big* side of the scale is Remo's new Lynn Kleiner Gathering drum: a table-style 40" frame drum, finished with a silver-burst Quadra covering. It's specifically designed for children to play as a group sitting down, either in a classroom or playgroup setting. The drum is fitted with a Fiberskyn 3 drumhead.

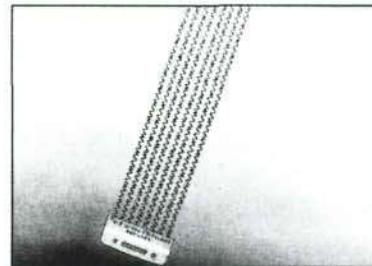
And What's More

SILINE & JOHNSON ThunderbirdZ snare drums are carbon steel drums available in 5x12, 5x13, and 5x14 sizes. The drums are black accented with brass hardware and solid brass lugs. Gold thunderbirds are inlaid in the finish. Retail prices: 5x12—\$450; 5x13—\$475; 5x14—\$499.



The Mounting System 2000 from **EVERYONE'S DRUMMING** is designed to mount a djembe, ashiko, doumbek, talking drum, tambourine, or frame drum onto its own stand or rack—in a tom position in a kit setup. The system fits onto 7/8", 12.7 mm, or 10.5 mm tom arms. The item is said to be flexible, durable, lightweight, and compact. It's priced at \$59.99.

According to **PURESOUND PERCUSSION**, their new 221 snare wires create unique tonal and performance characteristics by utilizing a 2-to-1 coil design. Each of the 221's eight heavy-gauge strands is made up of a pattern of two long coils and one short coil to achieve a dry, dark, distinctively gutty sound that's recommended for a variety of live and recording applications. The 221 model P-14221 is currently available for most 14" snare drums at \$42.95.



Making Contact

CARBONLITE PRODUCTS (727) 669-4038, www.carbonlite.com
EARMOLD CONCEPTS (800) 372-7052, customfitearmold@aol.com
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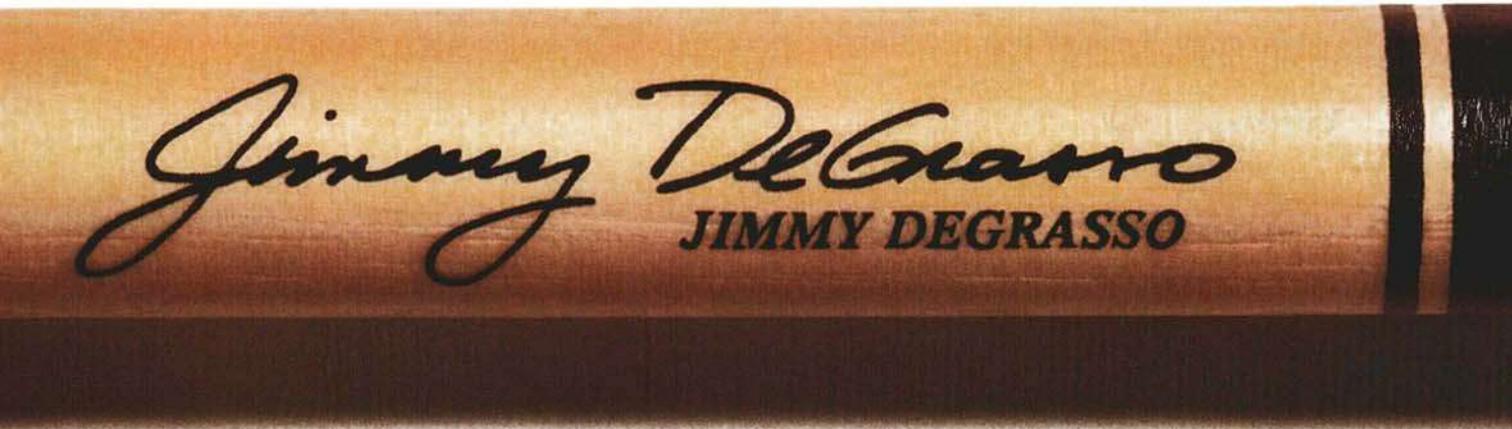
LUDWIG (800) 348-7426, www.ludwig-drums.com
PURESOUND PERCUSSION (310) 966-1176, info@puresoundpercussion.com
REMO (661) 294-5600, www.remo.com
SIB SYSTEMS (BIG BANG DISTRIBUTION) (800) 547-6401, www.sib-drumsystems.com
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New Pearl Snare Drums

Too many snare drum choices? Nah.

by Chap Ostrander

Let's face it: Pearl already offers a *serious* selection of snare drums. But they've never been ones to sit on their laurels, so they've recently added some new models to their Free Floating and SensiTone lines. And just to whet our appetites, they've thrown a Popcorn snare into their line of effects drums. Let's check these goodies out.

5x12 SensiTone Custom Alloy Snare

Pearl's 5x12 steel-shell SensiTone is a small but powerful package. It possesses a substantial crack when tuned up into soprano or piccolo range, making it an excellent candidate for auxiliary-snare status. But it also really sings when tuned into a "normal" range for a primary snare, making it usable for that application, too. As is the case on any 12" snare, playing cross-stick beats isn't practical due to the restricted head size. But with sticks or brushes this baby could work just about anywhere. And its price presents you with the pleasant dilemma of "Where do I put it?" instead of "Can I afford it?"

Hits

- 5x12 SensiTone is versatile enough to be used as a primary or auxiliary snare
- copper Free Floating models offer brightness of brass with additional warmth
- Popcorn snare is loud, with lots of personality

Misses

- 10" diameter of popcorn snare may require special mounting





Copper Free Floating Shell Snares

Pearl's Free Floating concept has been popular for years. The idea is that all hardware remains separate from the shell so that the shell can resonate to its fullest potential. One of the best features of this design is that you can change a shell just by removing the batter head. Replace the shell with another type of the same size, and *voila*. You have another drum.

Up till now, "another drum" meant a choice between wood, steel, or brass shells. Pearl has now added copper shells to the mix. Copper snare drums are being heard more widely today than ever before, from drumset to symphonic models. The attraction is that copper approximates the brightness of brass, while providing an additional middle range of warmth.

The "lugs" on the drums are springless threaded tension posts that attach to an aircraft-aluminum bottom ring. This ring has the bearing edge machined into it. To assure optimum tonal quality, it's also machined where it mates with the shell. The strainer and adjustable butt are both attached to the ring as well. The straps that tension the snares ride over Pearl's No-Adjust Roller Bed, which they say guarantees perfect alignment of the snares. I like this setup, because I've always been nervous about adjustable roller systems. I'm always afraid that, should I have trouble with the snare sound, I might not be able to see what adjustment I made. No such problem here.

Each of the copper FFS drums had a distinct "shell" tone that it settled into. This was especially noticeable when the snares were off. But even with the snares turned on, the tone was still apparent, providing the "voice" of the drum.

The 3 1/2x14 piccolo was my favorite of the three sizes. It was very powerful, with no choking or thinness. I loved its quick response and the fact that it produced clear, cutting highs without any appreciable loss of body. The 5" and 6 1/2" snares had increasingly deeper fundamental pitches, with no loss of snare quality or sharpness.

6x10 Popcorn Snare

Although Pearl's Popcorn snare could be mistaken for a toy, it's anything but. With a thin shell, Masters bridge lugs (with nylon spacers to minimize shell contact), and SuperHoop rims, this is one *loud* drum. Its 6" depth gives it lots of air to play with, while the 10" head keeps the voice high and piercing. The "pop" or "crack" sound it produces might be downright dangerous, and should be handled with care. The combination of the maple shell and the snares gives it a full-bodied snare sound that could see action in many applications, from newer music like drum 'n' bass to older-style Dixieland, funk, or whatever. It's a great little drum with superior fit and finish. You choose where you want to use the voice.

One point to consider, though: Many modern snare-drum stands are not capable of clamping to a 10" shell. You'll need to find one that is if you want to stand-mount the Popcorn drum. (Pearl's SBA-1 adapter gives their stands this capability.) Or you can fit the drum with some sort of suspension device (like Pearl's I.S.S. mount) to allow you to "fly" it from a nearby stand or drum rack.

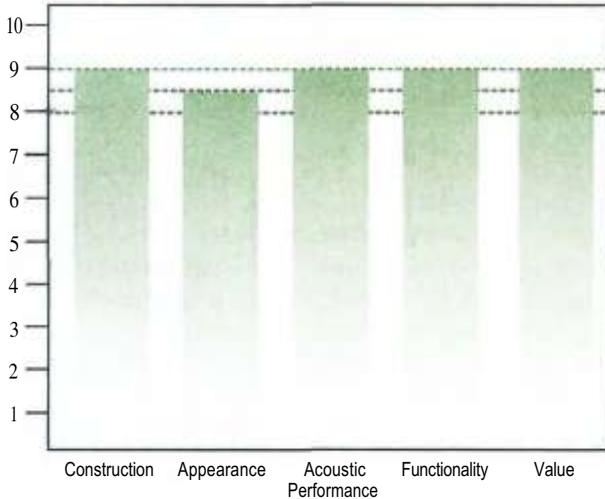


A Fun Bunch

I could easily find a place for *any* of our review drums on my drumset. And due to my wife's work in the classical genre, I was also able to send most of them on field trips to the concert stage. They were all met with approval for their sound, sensitivity, and overall quality.

To be honest, I don't think Pearl took many chances here. Adding copper shells to the Free Floating Shell line and a new size to the SensiTone series were sure bets. And the Popcorn snare is a great effects drum. Each of these snares is a winner in its category, presenting you with sounds you couldn't have gotten before. And everything comes at prices that are firmly within the realm of reality. Good job!

In A Nutshell



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

Cultured Pearls

SensiTone

5x12(S-5012) \$239

Steel shell in chrome finish. Fitted with eight bridge lugs with brass inserts, 2.3 mm Super Hoop II rims, side-throw strainer, and 20-wire snares.

Copper Free Floating

3 1/2x14(C-9114P) \$439

5x14(C-9114) \$479

6 1/2x14(C-9114D) \$509

Copper shells in natural finish. Fitted with die-cast hoops and ten springless threaded tension posts that attach to an aircraft-aluminum bottom ring. Strainer and adjustable butt also attached to the ring. Includes Pearl's No-Adjust Roller Bed alignment system for 20-wire snares.

Popcorn Snare

6x10 (M-610SN) \$349

6-ply, 7.5 mm maple shell with no reinforcing rings and double 45° bearing edges, in high-gloss natural finish. Fitted with six Masters bridge lugs, 2.3 mm SuperHoop II rims, compact strainer with non-adjustable butt plate, and 16-wire snares.

Meinl Raker And Lightning Cymbals

Who says you can't teach an old cymbal new tricks?

by Chap Ostrander

The folks at Meinl aren't shy about admitting when something they make needs improvement. Actually, they figure it's a lot easier to improve an existing model than to go through the involved process of creating a totally new one. With that in mind, they've re-examined their Raker and Lightning professional series, and have done some major tweaking on both.

Rakers

Meinl's Raker cymbal line dates back to the '80s heyday of European heavy metal groups. (Stefan Kaufman of the German metal band Accept was Meinl's first major ad figure.) But in those days, there was really only one thing a metal drummer needed from his or her cymbals: power. Rakers delivered power, along with a bright, clangy tonality. What they didn't have (because they didn't need it) was musical versatility.

Hits

- great bell sounds from the whole Raker line
- some Raker crashes can double as rides
- Raker and Lightning models can be mixed for more colors

Well, times have changed. Drummers still want loud cymbals, but they want them to have more musical personality, too. In response, Meinl has widened the scope of the Raker sound so that the line can find more homes (and land more gigs). They have accomplished this by employing new computer-controlled robotic hammering techniques, along with a technique called lathe-tuning. The theory is that the new Rakers will sound warmer and more pleasing in a greater number of applications.

Rakers also feature unlathed bells that are heat-treated and polished smooth. I'm going to say this once so that I don't sound repetitive later: All of the Raker cymbals I reviewed had *killer* bell sounds. And they don't mind being hit hard.

21" Medium Ride. This cymbal has all the features you want in a ride, from stick response to body. The overtones tended to build up during hard *or* soft playing, but they stayed under control. I

achieved some interesting accents by striking the edge. The sound flared out and then died away quickly. And it didn't sound like a gong, which is the case with some rides.

20" Heavy Ride. The Heavy ride had a much more piercing voice, with lots of presence. The overtones built up right away and filled up the voice. Due to its thickness, I got lots of stick response. This is definitely a *rock* ride cymbal. I would think it too loud for gigs requiring more delicacy. That's not a bad thing; we need rock rides too.

16" and 18" Medium Crashes. These crashes were full-bodied, with great projection and a very satisfying range of overtones. Predictably, the 16" had a higher pitch than the 18". Due to the medium weight, stick response was very good, so the 18" could easily serve as a crash-ride.

17" Heavy Crash. The heavy crash had a big, full voice that would work very well in tandem with the Lightning heavy crashes. The difference between them is interesting. The Raker heavy crash retains its voice through the dynamic spectrum, meaning that it's the same during loud or soft playing. This is great for accents at different volumes. Stick response would allow this cymbal to be considered as a secondary ride.

16" and 18" Chinas. These cymbals impress you right away as true Chinas. They give off lots of heat and "kang." The voice of the 16" is higher than the 18", but it seemed to produce more overtones (which I preferred). I'd use the 18" when I wanted a big response, and the 16" for more subtlety.

14" Heavy Hi-Hats. For cymbals termed "heavy," this pair of hi-hats was not physically heavy. (I've encountered some "heavy" hats where I could hardly lift the bottom cymbal.) This bottom cymbal was a *little* heavier than the top, and consequently had a higher pitch. Played together, these hi-hats sounded very cutting and clean, with a good "wash" between the two when played half open. Stick

response was great, and they were easy to play. And they possessed the all-important—and very satisfying—"chick" sound.

13" Medium Hi-Hats. This hi-hat pair seemed to be of a general-purpose weight. Their voice is darker than the 14" heavies, due to that weight difference. The chick sound is clean, stick response is fine, and the overall performance of the cymbals would make them applicable to just about any situation short of an esoteric jazz gig where dark tonalities were desired.

10" Splash. This is definitely a *rock* splash. It's fairly thick, with a high, cutting voice. It would be great for accents during loud playing, but a little gongy at low volumes. Consequently I don't think I'd use it on something quiet. However, it sounds fine when used for accents or when choked quickly, eliciting plenty of penetration.

Lightning Cymbals

Meinl's Lightning crash and splash cymbals have also been revised, in much the same way as their Raker cousins. Whereas they were primarily quick and bright, Meinl wanted them to offer a warmer sound with more power. The cymbals still have their original waved edge, but they're now getting what Meinl calls a "Hammered Surface Treatment." This changes the look and sound of the cymbals. Let's check out the results.

14" and 15" Medium Crashes. I liked the overall sound of these models. They were a little on the brash side due to their weight, but there was still an edge of cutting highs that came through. The voice of the 15" was lower than that of the 14". Because they are similar they would work well in tandem.

16" and 18" Heavy Crashes. Louder versions of their medium cousins, the heavy crashes still possess the full range of overtones that Meinl wanted to build into the Lightning line. They're definitely capable of fierce projection, but at the same time their range of voices is full and rich. A feature of these crashes is that the over-





tones become denser as you hit them harder.

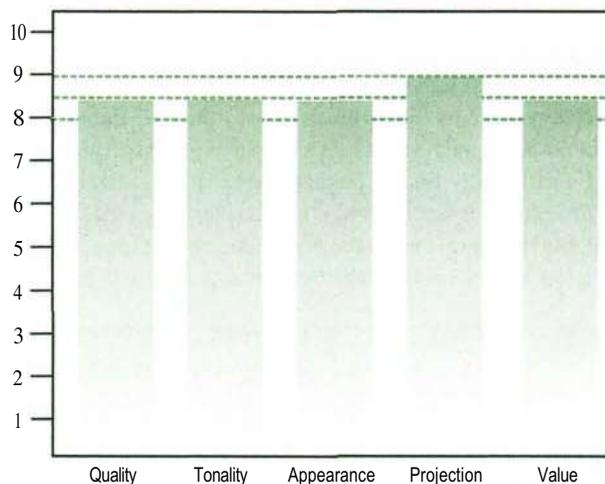
10" and 12" Splashes. I found these splash cymbals to be especially nice. Their voices were light and high enough to cut through as great accent cymbals, and they were both pleasing when choked. I really liked the higher voice of the 10", but either one would serve well.

Bullseye

I really think that Meinl has hit the mark with these cymbals. The Rakers retain their power and cut, but at the same time have more finesse than before. I could use them on most of my gigs, which don't usually fall into the heavy rock genre. I found the shininess of the bells to be very striking.

The Lightning line is very pleasing, with full-range voices and presence. They can fit in with many different styles of music, and they'll *look* good as well. Another important feature of all these new Meinl cymbals is that the two lines could be combined in one setup to good advantage. The Lightnings could do most of the accent work, while the Rakers would provide the power. Both are worth a listen.

In A Nutshell



Meinl Final

Raker Series

21" Medium Ride	\$324
20" Heavy Ride	\$285
16" Medium Crash	\$205
18" Medium Crash	\$244
17" Heavy Crash	\$226
16" China	\$205
18" China	\$244
14" Heavy Hi-Hats	\$310
10" Splash	\$114

Lightning Series

16" Heavy Crash	\$205
18" Heavy Crash	\$244
14" Medium Crash	\$155
15" Medium Crash	\$180
13" Medium Hi-Hats	\$266
10" Splash	\$114
12" Splash	\$127

(Other sizes and weights are available. All models are priced by size.)

Lang Gladstone Snare Drums

A piece of drumming history with a classic sound

Story and Photos by Rick Mattingly

Hits

- superb tonal qualities
- flawless craftsmanship
- creative design

Misses

- Snare-release lever can strike rim

Of all the snare drums that have earned the title "classic," perhaps the rarest is the Gladstone drum, designed by drummer/inventor Billy Gladstone. Billy was the drummer at Radio City Music Hall during most of the 1930s and '40s. He also held twenty-one patents for a variety of inventions (musical and nonmusical).

Snare drums featuring Billy's unique design were produced by Gretsch for a short period of time beginning in the late 1930s. But when World War II caused a shortage of metal, the drums went out of production. After the war, Gladstone began building the drums himself, but he only made sixty of them before his death in 1961.

One of the drums Billy made was for one of his students, Morris "Arnie" Lang. Arnie went on to have a long and distinguished career with the New York Philharmonic. (In November 2000, he was inducted into the Percussive Arts Society Hall of Fame.) In 1976, Arnie started his own company, Lang Percussion, which began by publishing music and manufacturing Saul Goodman timpani. In 1992, Lang Percussion began making replicas of the Gladstone snare drums, adding 4x14 and 5x14 drums to the 6x14 and 7x14 models that Billy made.

MD received four of the Lang Gladstone drums for review: three standard models and a Special Edition drum. Without mincing words, these drums were among the most impressive I've ever reviewed. Each one exhibited excellent craftsmanship and superb tonal qualities.

Special Features

Several unique features are common to all Lang/Gladstone drums. Probably the most famous of these is the 3-way tuning system. Through an ingenious tension-lug design and the use of a three-headed drumkey, it's possible to tension the top head only, the bottom head only, or both heads at the same time.

The 3-way tuning was much more crucial in Gladstone's day than it is now. The calfskin heads that were used when the drum was invented required frequent tuning, because the heads would expand or contract depending on the temperature and humidity. Being able to tension the bottom head from the top certainly made the drummer's life easier, as was the ability to tension both heads at the same time.

Today, the 3-way tuning is more novelty than necessity, except for the few players (mostly orchestral) who still use calfskin heads. (And, in fact, Lang/Gladstone snare drums are available with calfskin batter heads.) I can't honestly think of many situations in which I would need to quickly tension both heads at once. However, the ability to tune the bottom head without removing the drum from the stand or trying to use a standard key upside-down is a definite convenience. I was able to quickly experiment with different tunings on the drums I tested.

One thing did throw me at first. One end of the key has a small, square slot that looks like a standard drumkey. I assumed it was the end to use to tension the top head. Nope, it's the one that affects the *bottom* head. The top head is tuned by a hex-



Take a gander at these Gladstones (clockwise from left): a 6x14 standard model in black lacquer, a 4x14 standard model in black pearl, and a 5 1/2x14 Special Edition model with a solid pecan shell and 24K gold-plated hardware.



The Gladstone 3-way key threads onto a holder at the center of the logo badge when not in use.

shaped "collar" on the tuning mechanism, which fits around the square end of the lug that tunes the bottom head.

The tuning key itself attaches to a threaded post that extends from the center of the drum's logo badge. A rubber collar prevents the key from making contact with the badge itself, and also helps hold it in place while the drum is being played.

The 3-way key isn't the only "tool" built in to the Gladstone drum. The air vent on these drums consists of a metal piece with a large hole in its center and several smaller holes around its circumference. The vent is located above the snare butt plate. On the three larger drums I tested, the butt plate was designed to accommodate gut snares as well as standard snare units. On these drums the center air-vent hole was threaded, and there was a knob screwed into it. Unscrew the knob and you find a small hex rod, which can be used to adjust tiny set screws in the butt plate that are used to mount individual pairs of gut or cable snares. (If you're using a typical one-piece snare unit, you don't need the hex wrench. The snare unit can be attached/removed with a standard drumkey, or one end of the 3-way key.)

Another unique feature of the Gladstone drums is the adjustment lever on the internal "tone control." The lever is part of the snare-release assembly, and has ten positions (including "off") that indicate how much pressure is being applied to the underside of the batter head.

The tone control itself has a horizontal bar tipped with two

The Gladstone strainer features a quick-release lever. The internal tone-control adjustment is shown at right.



round pads. This dual-pad design gives a slightly more balanced muffling effect than that provided by a single pad pressing up against the head. As a result, the tone control can remove more ring with less pressure.

This is the first custom snare drum I've reviewed in years that had any type of internal tone control. These days, most drummers prefer to employ an external "O-ring"-style muffler, or to use a head that has its own built-in muffling. Still, I found the Gladstone muffler effective, and I couldn't detect any serious loss of resonance caused by its presence inside the drum.

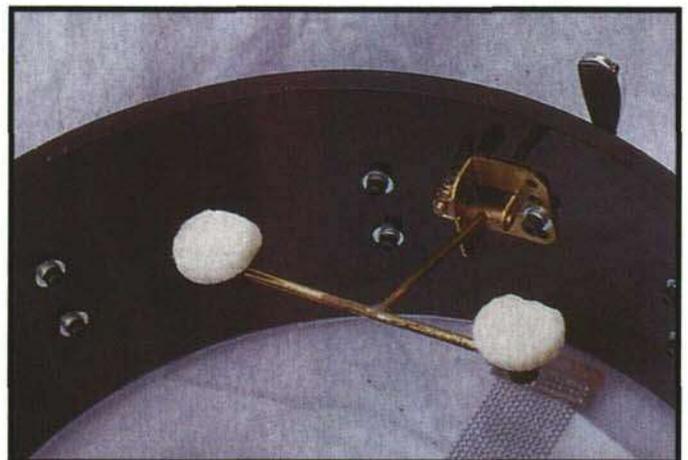
As for the nine "on" positions, I can't honestly say that I could hear nine different degrees of muffling. Four or five numbers covering the same area would probably be more realistic. But the tone control offered plenty of variation between a wide-open ringing sound and a dry, non-ringing tone. It's an efficient way to quickly adapt the drum to different acoustical situations.

The snare-release lever design reflects the fact that Billy Gladstone was a pit drummer who often had to quickly switch from instrument to instrument. It's a springless, horizontal-drop design, with a throw-off lever that sticks up above the top rim. This allows the player to quickly flick the snares off with the end of a drumstick in order to prevent them from buzzing due to vibrations from other instruments when the drum is not being played. (Of course, flicking it with a thumb or finger works fine, too.)

The throw-offs on all the review drums were smooth and quiet. However, when the snares are engaged, the lever rests against the drum's metal rim. I couldn't detect any noise being made by the lever vibrating against the rim when the drum was being played. But if the snares are off and you're not careful about how you flick the lever up to engage them, that lever hitting the rim can produce a loud, metallic click.

Individual Standard Models

Three of the drums *MD* received for review were standard Lang Gladstone models: a 4x14 with wire snares and a black pearl covering (some might describe this finish as black diamond pearl), a 6x14 with wire snares and a black lacquer finish, and a 7x14 with gut snares and a black lacquer finish. All three featured 8-ply, cross-laminated American maple shells with 45° bearing edges, die-cast



The internal tone control features two round pads to better distribute muffling.

rims, and eight tubular lugs attached to the shell by two screws each.

The 4x14 was fitted with an Aquarian Satin Finish (white coated) batter head and an Aquarian Classic Clear snare head. The drum was surprisingly full-bodied considering the shallow depth, and it had a meaty tone. The sound was also extremely crisp and articulate, influenced no doubt by the snare unit, which had twelve spiral snares rather than the more common twenty. This would be an excellent drum for drumset players who do a lot of fills and solos requiring articulation. For those who are more interested in fat backbeats and like a little more snare sound, a simple change to a twenty-strand snare unit would do the trick. Because of its shallow depth, this model could work well in acoustic, small-group jazz situations. But it can also produce enough volume for a lot of rock or pop applications.

The 6x14 drum was fitted with a Remo white Coated Ambassador batter head and a Remo Ambassador snare head. It too had a twelve-strand spiral snare unit. The drum had a similar character to that of the 4x14, except that the deeper shell gave it an even bigger sound. The response and articulation were especially impressive for such a deep drum. This could also serve as an excellent snare drum for a drumset player (with the same qualifications I listed for the 4x14 in terms of the snare unit). Because of its larger size, this drum would be more appropriate for rock or big band jazz.

The 7x14 model was fitted with Remo Diplomat batter and snare heads, and with gut snares. Predictably, it had a distinct military character. Rudimental patterns sounded fantastic on this drum, but it was also surprisingly responsive to *pianissimo* playing and to buzz rolls. Like the other drums, it had a meaty tone. It's likely that only orchestral or concert band players would opt for the gut snares. But if fitted with modern wire snares, the 7x14's big projection and full body could certainly work for a drumset player who needed a mighty snare drum sound.

Special Edition

The other Lang/Gladstone drum *MD* received for review was the 1999 Special Edition model. (Lang makes a Special Edition model each year.) It had a 5 1/2x14 Craviotto solid pecan shell, 24K gold-plated hardware, and Patterson cable snares. It was fitted with a Remo white Coated Ambassador batter head and a Remo Ambassador snare head.

Due to the solid-wood shell, the drum had a somewhat brighter tone quality than the standard Lang Gladstone models, with a lot of ring. Fans of vintage Slingerland Radio King drums would undoubtedly like this model. The cable snares produce a drier sound than that produced by wire snares, but not quite as military-sounding as gut. Cable snares can also withstand a beating much better than their wire counterparts, so heavy hitters would do well to check them out.

The 2001 Special Edition is a six-ply drum with a "top hat and cane" wrap finish. It's available with wood hoops and claw hooks (modeled after hooks made by Gladstone in the 1950s) or with standard die-cast hoops.

The Personal Touch

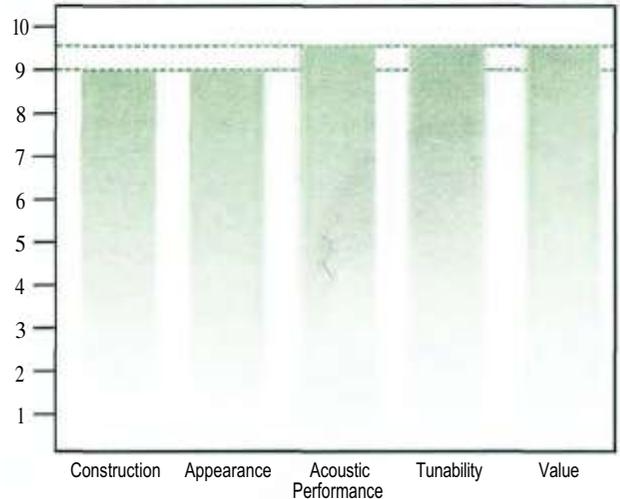
Those who buy a Lang Gladstone drum can send their name to Lang Percussion and receive a free custom-engraved name plate that can be mounted permanently to the drum. Purchasers also

receive a free two-year membership in the Gladstone Society, which publishes a newsletter devoted to historical percussion instruments.

Lang Percussion's Gladstone replicas are beautifully crafted and lovingly true to the design of their originator. They're one way to own a bit of drum history that's completely contemporary at the same time!

For further information, contact Lang Percussion Inc., 325 Gold Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201, tel: (718) 624-1825, fax: (718)624-5004.

In A Nutshell



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

I'm So Glad, I'm So Glad...

Lang Gladstone Snare Drums (standard models)

Shells: 8-ply, cross-laminated 100% American maple, with 45° bearing edges. Shells are lacquered on the inside as well as the outside.

Special hardware: Gladstone-design 3-way tuning system, snare strainer, and tone control.

Standard colors: Black Lacquer, Clear Lacquer, Black Pearl, and White Pearl. Custom finishes are also available.

List prices:

4x14:	\$1,450
5x14:	\$1,460 (not reviewed)
6x14:	\$1,470
7x14:	\$1,480
Gut or cable snares:	\$100 additional
Calf batter head:	\$70 additional

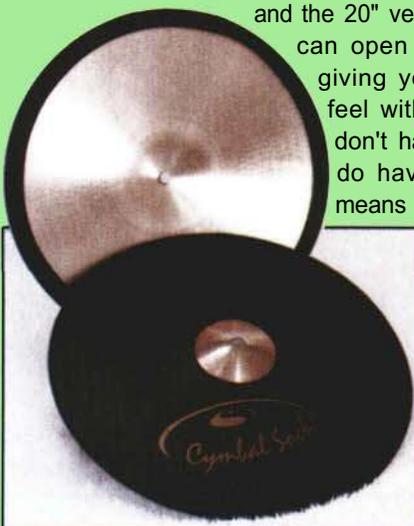
Contact the manufacturer for pricing on all Special Edition models.

Quick Looks

Cymbal Sock

The idea of muffling cymbals is certainly not new. Over the years we've seen devices of every description, from towels to T-shirts, and from stretchy fabric to sticky rubber. Drummer and inventor Al Arteaga's entry into the field is called the Cymbal Sock. It's a piece of rubber that covers all but the bell of the cymbal, and wraps around the edge for about 1" of the bottom. The bell area is left open so that the cover can be installed or removed while the cymbal remains on the stand. The cover conforms to the surface of the cymbal and reduces the sound output to just about zero.

Cymbal Socks are currently sold in a set containing one 14" and one 20" cover, with 16" and 18" covers planned for the future. You put the 14" model on your top hi-hat cymbal, and the 20" version on your ride. You



can open and close the hi-hat, giving you a realistic playing feel without the sound. If you don't have a 20" ride but you do have a 20" crash, by all means use it there.

As a cymbal muffler, the Cymbal Sock does a superb job of subduing the sound. As a practice pad, it provides stick response as comfortable as the best gum-rubber pads I've used. When I'm

playing a show or preparing for a gig, it feels natural to turn to the hi-hat to warm up. A silenced hi-hat with a smooth rubber cover allows you to warm up without disturbing anyone nearby. The best feature is that you can practice on your cymbals in their playing positions while in silent mode. This also makes it comfortable for teachers to have students warm up facing the drumkit, rather than rotate around to a pad. Speaking as a teacher, it's a relief not to have to shout instructions or counts over the volume of unmuffled cymbals.

Along with virtually silencing the sound of cymbals, the Cymbal Sock also protects them from dust, ultra-violet rays, and even the aging properties of air exposure. You can also leave the covers on while in your cymbal bag, which will greatly reduce wear caused by inter-cymbal friction. The Cymbal Sock itself can be cleaned with a little rubbing alcohol. It won't dry, crack, or leave any black residue. List price is \$85.99. To locate a dealer or for more information, contact Soundcheck Rehearsal Products at tel: (909) 393-9263, fax: (909) 393-9263, cymbalsock@aol.com, www.cymbalsock.com.

Silver Fox Sticks From Grover Percussion

Grover Pro Percussion recently acquired the assets of Silver Fox Percussion. Silver Fox was founded by the late Al Lemert in 1982, and has been known primarily for their lines of marching sticks, mallets, and accessories. Grover's acquisition of the line meant literally moving stick production from Silver Fox's Florida facility into the Grover factory in Massachusetts.

Grover is currently producing most of the original Silver Fox designs, as well as some new models of their own design. This will add maple sticks to the existing hickory lines, plus a selection of different tip shapes. Tip shapes currently offered on wood-tip models include Tear Drop, Olive, Acorn, Oval, Ellipse, and Ball.

The Silver Fox line also includes Del-Tips, which are made from *Delrin* rather than nylon. According to Grover, *Delrin* is not affected by atmospheric changes, and is denser and more durable than nylon.

Another tip shape unique to Silver Fox is the Ultra-Tip. On marching sticks Ultra-Tips have a hammerhead shape, designed for use on *Kevlar* marching heads. On smaller sticks, staccato Ultra-Tips have a small mushroom shape, which Grover says provides additional quickness due to the lowered mass and greater articulation inherent in the *Delrin* material.



All of the Silver Fox sticks I checked out were straight and matched by weight and pitch. The finish was smooth yet easy to grip. The hickory possessed plenty of density, making rimclicks especially sharp and clean. The *Delrin*-tipped sticks sounded bright and clean, while the Ultra-Tip models elicited a slightly darker sound.

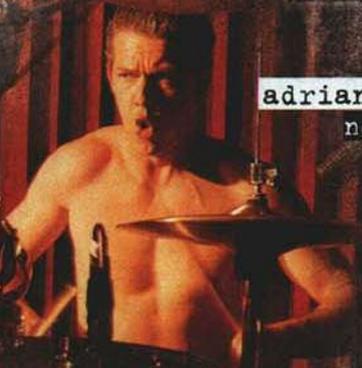
Grover's plan for the future is to add new models for drumset and marching applications. Their Maple Series is already out, and they're working on a new line of wound mallets specifically designed for marching. For more details check out the Silver Fox Web page at www.silverfoxpercussion.com.

Chap Ostrander



the cutting edge

Photo by Alex Soiza



adrian young
no doubt



scott phillips
creed

Photo by Kylie Bardin



Photo by Sean Murphy



tommy lee
methods of mayhem



ed toth
vertical horizon



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Kaman Music Corporation, P.O. Box 507, Bloomfield, CT 06002

Audix ADX-90 Clip-On Microphone

A Little Goes A Long Way With These Babies

by Mark Parsons

The new drum mic's keep on coming! Just when we thought it couldn't get any better, we were cruising the aisles at AES like a kid in a candy store and, among several new drum-oriented offerings, we came upon the ADX-90 from Audix.

Hits

- mic' is small and unobtrusive
- mounting system clamps to almost anything
- excellent acoustic performance for the price

What Is It?

The latest offering in Audix's ADX series (designed to give high-quality sound reproduction at a reasonable price), the ADX-90 is a miniature clip-on electret condenser designed for use with drums and percussion. The capsule is pre-polarized and the pattern is a fairly broad cardioid. Physically the mic' is quite small and unobtrusive, with its aluminum housing finished in matte black. As is typical with most miniature condensers, the electronics are housed in a separate cylindrical case, which is connected to the mic' by a thin, 14'-long cable.

Frequency response is given as 50 Hz-18 kHz. The supplied chart shows the response as fairly linear with the exception of a peak in the 4 kHz region (a boost of approximately 6 dB). The polar chart shows the response is within 5 dB out past 45° off axis at 100 Hz (the only frequency given).

Mounting Capabilities

I've come to the conclusion that it must be easier to design a good-sounding small microphone than to fashion a drum mount for it. Seriously. Most of the small drum mic's I've used have had sonic capabilities ranging from decent to stellar, but the majority of them were lacking in the mounting department. The simpler mounts either place the mic' in a less-than-optimum location, or lack flexibility. Larger, more adjustable mounts are bigger, heavier, and more complicated than they need to be. And some mounts aren't very compatible with things like RIMS or conga hoops.

That's the *bad* news. The *good* news is that Audix seems to have come up with a clip-on drum mic' that works as well mechanically as it does sonically. It's not an earthshaking design, but it's small, simple, light, flexible, and inexpensive.

The mount is based on a 1 1/4"-wide by 1"-high metal clamp that is opened and closed via a thumbscrew (*not* a drumkey or an allen wrench). The jaws of the clamp open to a depth of approximately 3/8" and are rubber-coated to protect whatever you clamp it to. And I mean *whatever*, as in: flanged hoops, die-cast hoops, wood or metal bass-drum hoops, RIMS mounts, tension rods, and even some of the



smaller L-arms used in drum-mounting hardware. And although Audix says it won't work on congas with curved rims, I managed to get it to work on an LP drum with a Comfort Curve rim by clamping the mount to a tension hook below the rim. This sort of flexibility is possible in part because the mic' body is connected to the clamp by a thin, 4"-long gooseneck, which lets you position the mic' pretty much wherever you want. All in all, it's a very workable mounting system.

Application Notes

The ADX-90 was designed to let working drummers get a good sound from their kits in a club environment—in an efficient, cost-effective, non-intrusive manner. *Non-intrusive* because of the mic's small size and the fact that it requires no stand on the stage. *Cost-effective* not only due to the reasonable price of the ADX-90, but again because of the "no stands required" aspect. And efficient because, according to Audix, you can mike up a typical kit with just three ADX-90s and a kick mic'. Can this really be done with sonically respectable results? Let's find out.

In Use

The first thing we did was place one ADX-90 each over a snare, a small tom, and a large tom. They were first tested in the typical close-miking location: an inch or two over the rim, looking down at a 45° angle. In this position they sounded good, but a bit thick in the upper bass region (around 125-250 Hz). This made the snare sound chesty and less snappy than usual, and the toms were likewise boomy.

But wait! Perusing the literature that came with the mic's reveals that Audix recommends against such a tight placement for the ADX-90: "It is not necessary or desirable to place the microphone too close to the drumhead." Backing the mic's up to the recommended three or four inches off the heads really helped. It let the drum sound develop. With less proximity effect the snare articulation was increased, yet there was still plenty of beef in the toms. In this location the sound was quite good, needing little or no equalization to achieve a warm, natural tone. Another big plus was that the bleed from the hi-hats and cymbals sounded very nice. (More on this shortly.)

Another reason to back the mic's up is that this little condenser has both a hotter output than a typical small dynamic and a lower max SPL rating. In other words, if you put this mic' right on top of a drum and really slam it, you're liable to hear some distortion. The answer, of course, is to *not* slam the mic', but rather back it up and let it breathe.

In fact, these mic's really came into their own when we placed them even further from the sound source in order to test Audix's recommendation about using three ADX-90s on a kit. We placed the snare mic' between the snare and the hi-hat (a bit closer to the snare than the hats—you can adjust to taste). The mic' on the mounted toms was between the two drums, approximately 5" from either head. The floor-tom mic' was about 5" off the head, parked under the ride cymbal. All we added to this setup was a dynamic mic' on the kick, placed well inside the drum to ensure that it wouldn't contribute anything to the mix except the kick drum itself. No close mic' on each drum, and no overheads.

The resulting mix was printed to DAT for evaluation (with no EQ or processing), and the results were quite favorable. The snare and toms sounded fine (as was expected from the previous test). But I was pleasantly surprised by the cymbals and hi-hats. Their sound, which was essentially off-axis bleed from the snare and tom mic's, was clear, natural, and very useful. The mix, taken as a whole, sounded like a well-balanced kit rather than just kick/snare/toms with distant and clanky cymbals in the background. I attribute this to a couple of factors. The peak in the frequency response certainly helped the cymbals to be more present than they otherwise might. But more importantly, the polar response of the ADX-90 is such that off-axis sounds aren't isolated as much as with many other mic's used for this application.

We also tried the ADX-90 in a couple of other applications. As a discrete cymbal mic' (placed above the cymbals and pointing down at them instead of being below and off-axis) it performed well, producing a relatively flat, natural sound that represented the cymbals faithfully. Of course, in the overhead position you lose one of the big benefits of clip-on mic's, since boom stands *are* required. But it's still nice to know that the ADX-90 is up to the task if the need arises.

The sonic results using the ADX-90 as a hi-hat mic' were similarly positive. But you don't want to place the mic' only a few inches from the hats and bash away, due to the headroom issue raised earlier. Moving the mic' from a close position (4") back to a more distant location (10-12") smoothed out the sound and removed some harshness.

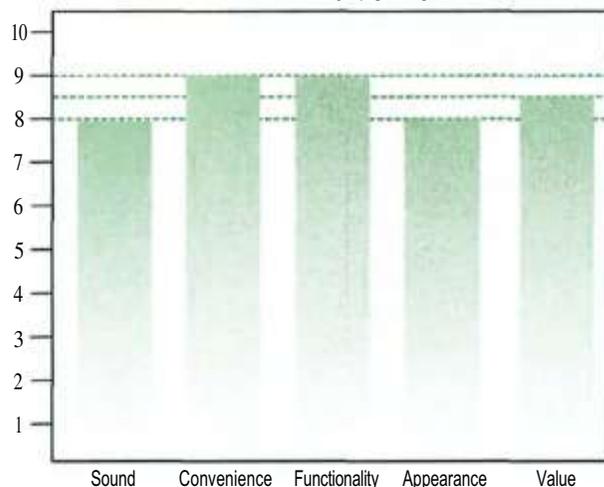
Because they seemed a natural for the task, we also tried the mic's on a pair of congas. As mentioned previously, the mount wasn't necessarily designed for curved rims. But clamping it to the

tension hook immediately *below* the rim proved an effective technique. Mounted this way, the ADX-90s ended up approximately 3" off the heads. Since hand drums don't produce nearly the SPLs of, say, a snare drum, placing the mic' at this distance wasn't a problem. The resulting sound was nice. It didn't have the fatness we got several months back when we tried the more expensive Audix D-2 on the same drums. But it was very useful nevertheless.

Conclusions

The ADX-90 proved itself more than up to its intended application. The mic' is very small and light, and the mounting system is very well designed. True to the manufacturer's claim, we were able to mike up a five-piece kit using only three ADX-90s and a kick mic' (with no boom stands in sight), and get a respectable sound in the process. The ADX-90 wouldn't be my first recommendation for a brutally loud metal drummer looking to close-mike a nine piece kit for an arena gig. But it's a good fit for working club drummers on a budget who wish to reinforce their drumsets in a quick, cost-effective, convenient, and high-quality manner.

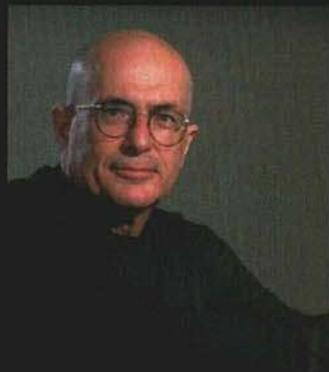
In A Nutshell



Audix Audition

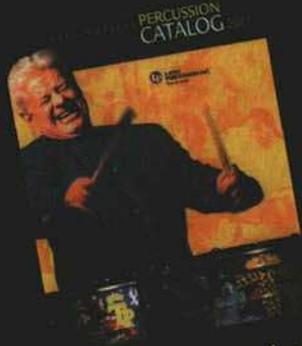
Model:	Audix ADX-90
Type:	Miniature clamp-on electret condenser
Polar Pattern:	Broad cardioid
Frequency Response:	50 Hz-18 kHz
Maximum SPL Rating:	135 dB
Mic' Body Dimensions:	1 1/2" x 1/2"
Weight (mic'/clamp/cable):	6 oz.
Housing:	Machined aluminum
Finish:	Matte black
Price:	\$199 (including mount)





Martin Cohen,
LP Founder & Chairman

“Passion,
Innovation,
Quality...
the spirit
of Latin
Percussion.”



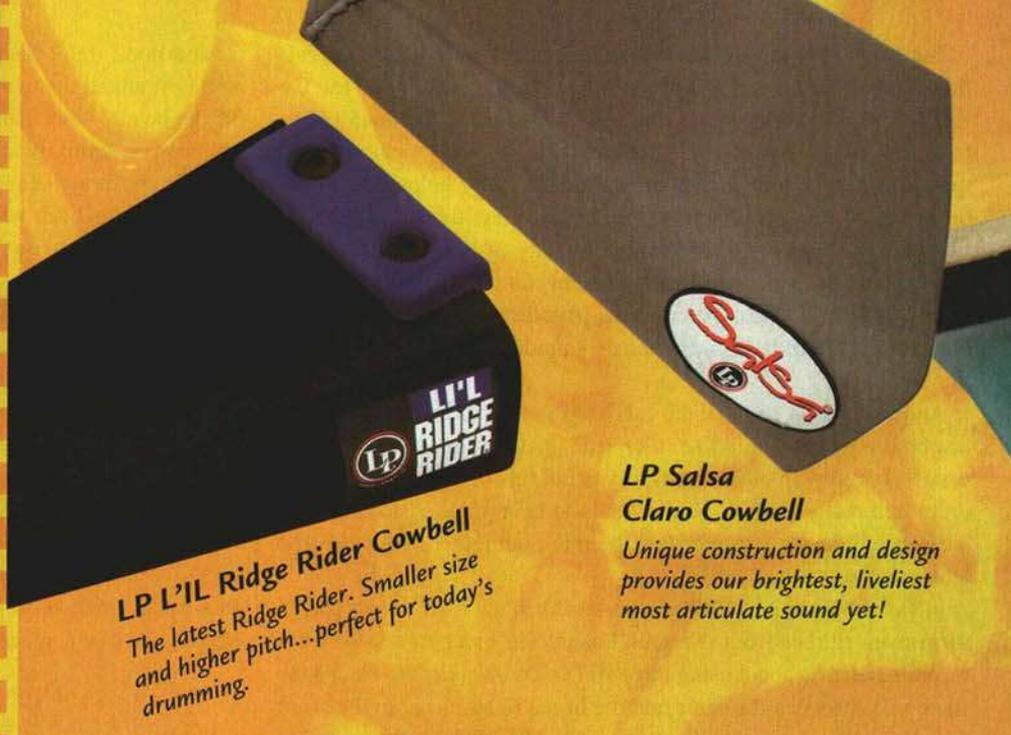
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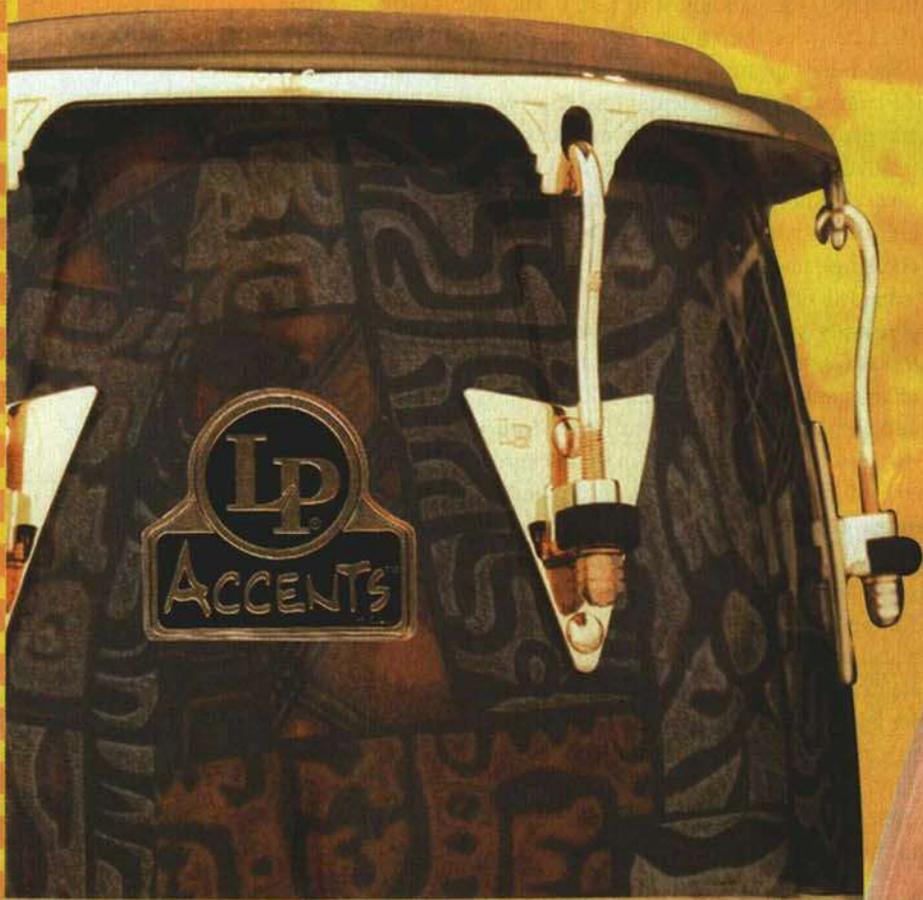


LP L'IL Ridge Rider Cowbell

The latest Ridge Rider. Smaller size
and higher pitch...perfect for today's
drumming.

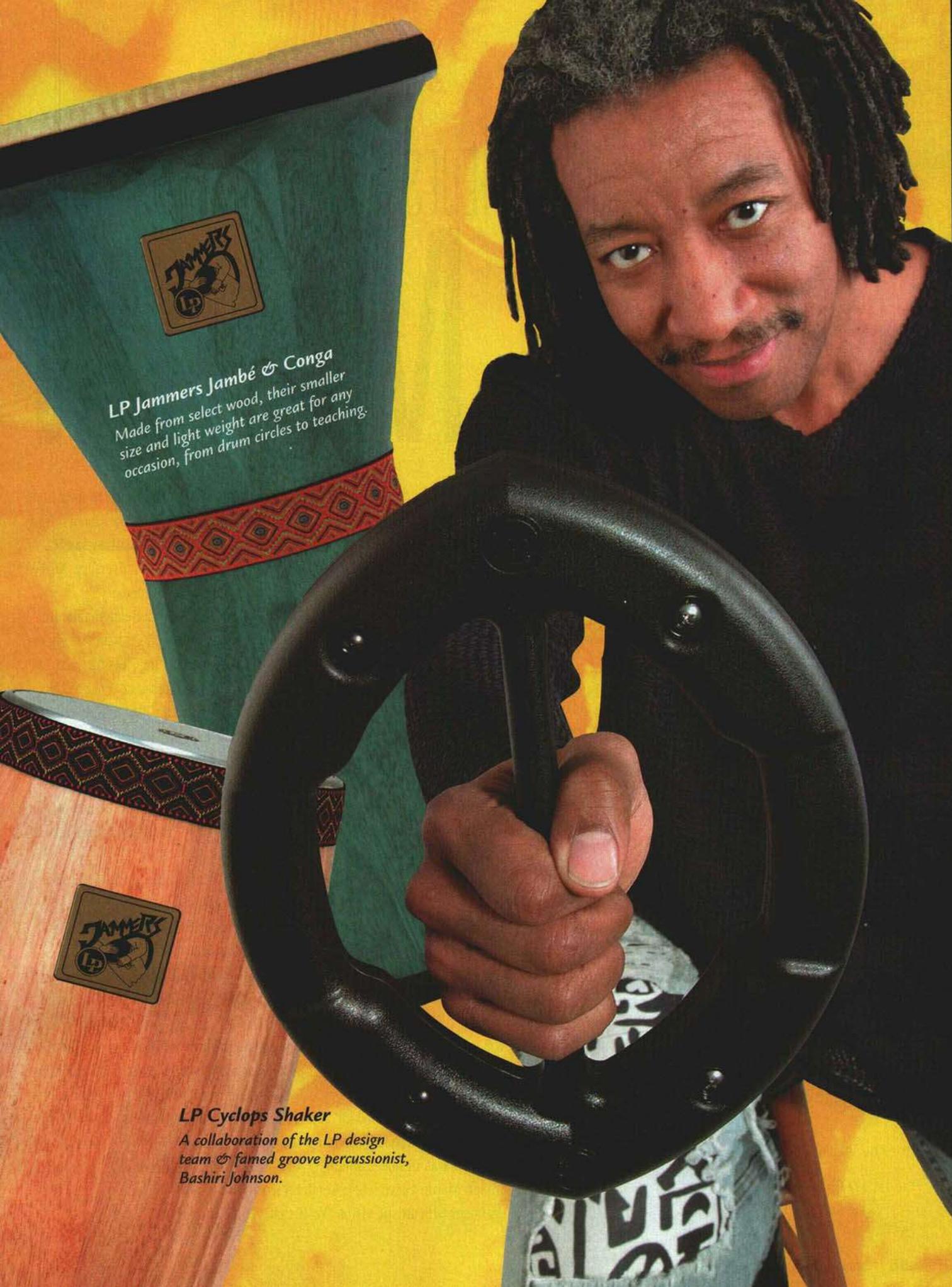
**LP Salsa
Claro Cowbell**

Unique construction and design
provides our brightest, liveliest
most articulate sound yet!



**LP Accents Tribal Series
Congas & Bongos**

A new earthy look in the rock hard
layers of fiberglass and the very
essence of each drum.

A man with dreadlocks and a mustache is looking directly at the camera while holding a large, black, circular shaker drum. The drum has a central handle and several small knobs around its rim. In the background, there are other percussion instruments, including a green Jambé & Conga and a wooden Conga, both featuring the LP Jammers logo. The background is a bright yellow.

LP Jammers Jambé & Conga
Made from select wood, their smaller size and light weight are great for any occasion, from drum circles to teaching.

LP Cyclops Shaker

A collaboration of the LP design team & famed groove percussionist, Bashiri Johnson.

MEDESKI MARTIN & WOOD'S BILLY MARTIN

A Medeski Martin & Wood gig can be a revelation. We're talking three musicians so gifted, so psychically connected that no matter where the muse takes them—New York downtown, New Orleans second-line, Motor City R&B, Brazilian samba, or even interstellar space—they thrive. On the verge of their tenth anniversary, MMW has become the most significant so-called "jazz" group of recent memory.

And man, are these guys popular. Okay, it's not quite 1964-era Beatlemania. But how many instrumental trios do you know that can play an evening's worth of improvised music to sold-out, 2,000-plus seaters? Or how about opening slots for such biggies as Dave Matthews, Beck, or Foo Fighters? (Stadium free-jazz? *Oh my.*) No matter the environment, fans line up to ride the MMW musical roller coaster.

And why not? On stage, MMW is captivating. The interplay is electric, the risk-taking palpable. And the trio's sound palette is broad, John Medeski's keyboard tirades and bassist Chris Wood's lo-freq rumblings at times spritzing, at others *bathing* the audience in sound. And as for drummer Billy Martin, well, he may be the most forward-thinking player of his generation. Calling him "creative" is certainly an understatement.

Martin brings a lot of different looks to MMW. First of all, there's his ability to groove. Billy's light, bouncing touch, a slippery old-school mix of Clyde Stubblefield and Al Jackson Jr., coaxes an audience to its feet. Then there's his "out" side, a fearless passion for free-time explorations that would make trailblazers like Denis Charles and Milford Graves proud. And let's not forget Billy's percussive side, where he dips into a toy store filled with sounds and rhythms dripping of Brazil and West Africa.

If you want a sampling of Martin's wide-ranging ability on record, give a listen to MMW's latest, *The Dropper*. Acoustic-jazz heads might want to check out the drummer mixing it up on last year's *Tonic*. Have a hankerin' for his good-foot groove? Try John Scofield's booty-shaking 1998 release, *Agogo*. And for those who want to hear how adventurous sheer drumming can go, give an ear to Billy's pulsing and pointilistic work alongside drummer G. Calvin Weston on *Percussion Duets* (available through Martin's own label, Amulet Records).

A drummer with artistic vision. Yeah, that's Billy Martin.

Story by William F. Miller

Photos by Paul La Raia



IN THE MOMENT



MD: Your drumming is so loose and flowing. Musician friends of mine just love your style, but I wonder if some *drummers* might think it's almost too loose, even sloppy at times.

Billy: Well, I can't really help that. It's the way I am. [laughs] I think after so many years of playing you get to a point where you can stretch out and relax with what you're doing. But when you say "looseness," I assume you mean it's not as tight as a studio or rock drummer.

MD: Right. In this day and age, it seems that so many players are going for ultra-precision, and whatever looseness they have gets ironed out in the studio with something like Pro Tools.

Billy: I'm not into that approach at all.

MD: Seemingly a lot of musicians are tired of it. They point to you as *the guy* who's not afraid to air it out, even to the point of playing a few clams.

Billy: I try to be sincere about what I play, and I know I'm not perfect. The clams that happen are just a part of my expression. Besides, there's beauty in imperfection. You can see that in nature.

As I get older, I realize that certain things are important. It's important to be open about yourself, it's okay to make mistakes. Often the mistakes lead you to other musical ideas, other discoveries. That's how some people compose and how improvisers find new directions to go in.

For me, so much of music is about being "in the

moment." If everything is planned out conceptually before you ever get on your instrument, you're going to miss out on something. But this is an attitude that comes out of a freer, jazz-improvisational approach.

As far as leaving clams on record, when the band does a take and it works *for the band*, I can't worry about a couple of miss-hits here and there in my part. Frankly, a good group performance is worth a few clams. There's nothing wrong with mistakes. It's you, playing in the moment and responding to what's around you. You're creating something that's uniquely your own.

MD: What you're talking about is acceptance.

Billy: That's the most important thing. Just let out what you have inside. What do *you* have to offer the world as an artist?

For a lot of drummers back in the '80s, it was the Steve Gadd, Dave Weckl approach. People flipped out over that style of playing, and it had a lot to do with the music being played. There was a lot of cloning going on, but it was also a case of band-leaders wanting drummers to play that way. In order to work, drummers had to go down that path. That's understandable. But there were also a lot of cats who just copied what they heard. They couldn't accept who they were, so they became something—or somebody—else. We should accept our own





Ear Tonic

These are the albums that Billy says best represent his playing:

Artist

Billy Martin/Calvin Weston
 Medeski Martin & Wood
 Chris Whitley
 John Lurie National Orchestra
 John Scofield

Album

Percussion Duets
 The Dropper
 Tonic
 Shack-man
 Farmers Reserve
 Combustication
 Perfect Day
 Men With Sticks
 Agogo

And these are the ones Billy says he listens to for inspiration:

Artist

Central African Republic
 Ornette Coleman
 Max Roach
 John Coltrane
 John Coltrane
 Andrew Hill
 Cecil Taylor
 Milford Graves
 Kool Keith

Album

(music of various tribes)
 The Complete Atlantic Recordings
 Percussion Bitter Sweet
 Impressions
 Interstellar Space
 Smoke Stack
 The Candid Recordings
 Stories
 Black Elvis/Lost In Space

Drummer

various
 Ed Blackwell
 Max Roach
 Elvin Jones
 Rashied All
 Roy Haynes
 Denis Charles
 Milford Graves
 none



Go to www.moderndrummer.com and click on the MD Radio icon to hear selected Billy Martin tracks.

personality and bring it to the music.

MD: So what would you say is *your* personality?

Billy: I guess what comes out depends on where I am at the moment. My goal is to be completely open to the music presented to me, whether it be written or totally improvised.

MD: So you try to be sort of a blank slate?

Billy: *Exactly.* That's hard to do, though. I mean, it's just natural for someone to think, "I've got a session with so-and-so tomorrow—what's that going to be like? Their music sounds like this, so maybe I'm going to have to play like that." But ultimately, when you get in there, you've got to let all of that drop off and just react to what's going on. That's how I try to approach things, and I think it's helped me come up with the best music I've done collectively, especially with MMW.

MD: Is part of what you're talking about keeping one's ego out of the way? So many musicians inflict their chops on a piece of music.

Billy: That kind of attitude turns me off completely. It might seem fun to show off, but when you think about it, that has nothing to do with the music. As a *musician*, I'm not here to prove that I'm the fastest, most powerful drummer in the world. Sure, developing technique is important, but music isn't only about your technique.

What I try to do when I play is not think about what my next move is going to be. And I don't want to think about who's out in the audience or who I should be trying to please. That stuff goes through your head when you play and can really get in the way of the music, I don't care *who* you are. But the way I let all of that go is to just be in the moment, to zero in and really listen to what the other musicians are playing.

MD: Watching MMW live, yes, you listen and react to John and Chris. But you also make some extreme left turns.

Billy: You shouldn't be afraid to take chances, to do something that you haven't done before. Go ahead, jump off that cliff and see how deep the water is. [laughs] I'm not a daredevil; I trust my instincts. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. But it's that sense of

adventure that adds so much to the music.

Getting back to what you said before, you have to have acceptance. If you do go out there and fall on your face, you can't beat yourself up about it and let it affect you. Make your statement and move on.

MD: We're talking about your open approach, but it's not like you only play "out." You lay down some hellacious grooves—funk, Latin, hip-hop stuff. Can you offer any tips on how to develop such a great feel?

Billy: I think it's important for drummers to realize that there are many ways to express time. A stream of 8th notes can be played straight, swung, and every place in between. Understanding that space—and being able to control it—helps you to groove.

MD: Some of the grooves you play sound so heavy, but to see you play live, in general, you have a very light touch.

Billy: To me, the funkier drumming is the lightest drumming. The lighter you play, the funkier you are. I totally believe that. It has to do with nuance and touch. You can't articulate when you're slammin' out a beat.

What really made this clear to me was hearing Clyde Stubblefield with James Brown. When Clyde plays, he dribbles the beat. It *bounces*. That's what grooving is all about. And there's no way you can do that by playing backbeats with your hand coming down from over your



head.

MD: You also play a lot of ghost notes on the snare.

Billy: The secret to great-feeling funk isn't your backbeat, it's the notes *between* the backbeats. Those "inside" notes create a tension & release between the snare and hi-hat that propels the groove.

Funk is sexy. You can't be sexy pounding the hell out of something all the time. There's got to be some fore-play, [laughs] When you play those kinds of grooves, think about trying to caress the beat.

MD: Besides your playing, you also have a unique sound. The vintage gear you use is sweet.

Drums: Rogers Luxor model (budget line from 1960s) in gold onyx finish

- A. 6x10 Brady snare
- B. LP bongos
- C. 5x14 wood snare
- D. 8x12 tom
- E. 14x14 floor tom
- F. 14x20 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian

1. 14" hi-hats (60s-era As, very dark and tarnished)
2. 18" A ride with two rivets (very old)
3. 20" cracked China (used occasionally)

aa. various cowbells mounted on bass drum

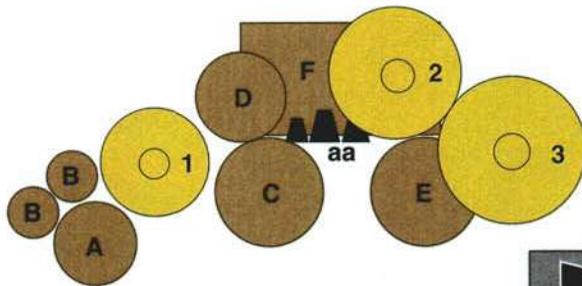
bb. percussion table featuring hand-made African bells, Japanese temple blocks, mbiras, talking drums, Chinese gongs, Pete Engelhart metal percussion, whistles, cuicas, slit drums, etc.

cc. percussion table with balifons and woodblocks

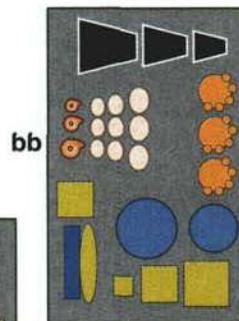
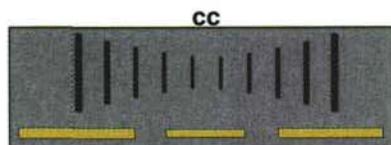
Hardware: DW, including bass drum pedal (single, with medium spring tension)

Heads: Attack Terry Bozzio coated model on all drums, no muffling except for bass drum (small, rolled-up towel placed on outside of batter head, loosely held in place by pedal)

Sticks: Regal Tip BG model (hickory, woodtip)



Vintage Martin



Billy Martin

Billy: I'm not a fanatical vintage drum collector or anything like that. But I fell in love with old Rogers drums about ten years ago when I was in Hawaii. My friend, Carl Green, lives in Hawaii, and he has an old Rogers Holiday kit. It sounded so good I ended up using it on *Shack-man* [MMW's 1996 release, which was recorded in Green's Hawaiian shack].

After that I started looking for an old Holiday kit, and this guy in Chapel Hill hooked me up with a set that had a gorgeous red onyx finish. I used that kit for a couple of years on the road. And then I heard about a music store that specializes

in used gear, The Horn Trader in Oklahoma City. While I was on vacation, driving around New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma, I stopped in to check the place out. It had a huge basement filled with old, beat-up drum gear. There was some really cool, really *old* stuff there, like drums dating back to the Civil War.

I looked around the room and saw this old Rogers Luxor kit in a gold onyx finish. The heads were black from the sun and a tom rim was bent, but the drums just had a certain vibe. Even though they probably hadn't been tuned in twenty years, I tapped them, and I could feel how they vibrated. I

was like, "I want *this* kit." The guy was kind of surprised because he thought it was a junker—so I ended up getting it for a really good price! And I've been using those drums ever since.

The sound of the kit is just so melodic, but it's also focused, so I can play funky on it. I think a lot of the older kits, especially the jazz kits, sound funkier to me than new drums. They have a lot more personality. They breathe and vibrate, but they don't ring forever either. I think part of the reason is that the shells are thinner and the drums are light. They vibrate like a violin.

MD: I think the Luxor was actually Rogers' lower-priced student line.

Billy: You're right, but I like the sound of the Luxor more than the Holiday, which was Rogers' top-of-the-line kit.

It's kind of funny, but for some of our gigs, where we have to fly somewhere to do a one-off festival, I can't use my drums. A kit has to be provided. That's a real challenge, because modern drums don't have the same feel as vintage drums.

I'll show up at one of those gigs, and the rental kit will be some large, very controlled-sounding rig with RIMS mounts

illyB On The Web

Wassup with illyB? You can find out more about Billy Martin's innovative music-making at two different Web sites. www.mmw.net, the official site for Medeski Martin & Wood, features the history, recordings, and tour schedule of the groundbreaking trio. You'll also find photos, merchandise (mostly designed by Billy himself), and a message board.

Martin's own record company, Amulet Records, has a happening site at www.amuletrecords.com. The company's motto, "The Art Of Percussion, Avant-Garde & Beyond," gives you a hint of what to expect. The site features news about label acts (drum guru Bob Moses being one), as well as Billy's side-projects. There are also descriptions of the label's releases. And as a bonus, you'll find a gallery of Billy's artwork, some of which he's turned into greeting cards!

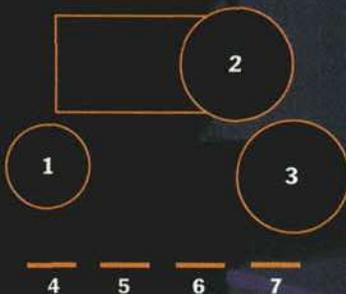
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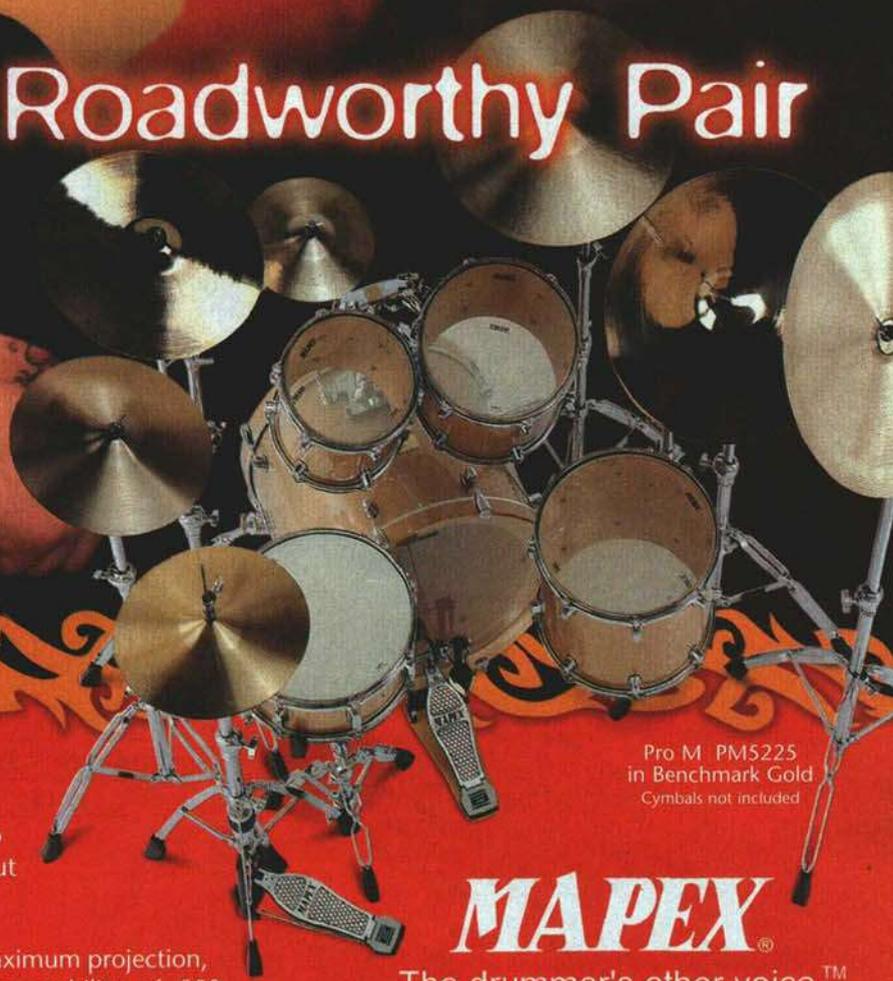
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Billy Martin

and the whole deal. We always *ask* for a vintage, pre-'70s kit, but I'll show up and the tech will say, "Oh, yeah, we saw that request. But these drums are a lot better than that old stuff."

MD: Like they're doing you a favor.

Billy: Yeah, right. I have to tell them, "Look, first of all, I want the rack toms to be connected to the bass drum like the old style. That's important. And I would prefer not to have RIMS on the drums because I don't want a floating system. When I hit the tom-tom, I want the bass drum to vibrate, and vice versa."

The drumset is a whole instrument. It's like a piano. All the strings in a piano make up the total sound of the instrument. Hitting one note affects *all* of the notes.

MD: You seem to prefer smaller drums and a simpler setup, too. It's a pretty basic kit.

Billy: It's just a 5" wood snare, 20" kick, 12" rack tom, and 14" floor tom with straight, peg legs. I like a bass drum with both heads and without a hole in the front head. For a little muffling, I place a small, rolled-up towel near the hoop between the batter head and the bass drum pedal. The

tomms are tuned up a bit for good response. The snare, in general, is a little looser. I also have a 10" Brady snare positioned off to my left.

MD: You play some nice drum 'n' bass-type grooves on that drum.

Billy: I was playing that way before drum 'n' bass came out, so now I'm trying not to do it so much, [laughs]

MD: And what about your bongos and cowbells?

Billy: The bongos are the African influence. I like using them because they add a different timbre—animal heads give a tribal vibe. I like that. I tune the larger bongo's head very low and the small drum pretty high. The cowbells bring a Latin or Brazilian influence to the kit. Those raw, metallic sounds really appeal to me.

I'd be happy with just a snare, two toms, a bass drum, and one cymbal and a hi-hat—*and* a cowbell. That to me is the quintessential drumkit. That's all I really need.

MD: Your choice of cymbals is different, too. You're not up there with a ride cymbal, a couple of crashes, and hats. It's one cymbal serving many functions.

Billy: A ride that I can also crash is worth

everything to me. I bought my "main" cymbal from my friend in Hawaii. The guys at Zildjian think it's an old 18" A dating back to the '50s. I use one or two rivets in it. It's a very warm-sounding cymbal that still has life in it. It has a funky ride sound, but you can also get an explosive crash out of it.

I can do basically everything I need to on that cymbal, but occasionally it's nice to add something else. I'll put different things up from time to time. I have an old China that has a few cracks and chunks missing out of it that I like—anything that has a bit of "trash" in the sound works for me.

I used to have some crashes in my setup, but as they lost their sound I couldn't find other cymbals to replace them. I'm not going to put up a cymbal just to fill a spot on the kit. I'm not going to use one unless I really like its sound. I won't compromise the music that way.

MD: Besides the vintage drums and cymbals, you incorporate a lot of ethnic percussion into your kit. How did all of that come into your playing?

Billy: Back in the '80s, when I graduated from high school, I discovered Brazilian

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Medeski & Wood: On Martin

No doubt, keyboardist John Medeski and bassist Chris Wood know Billy Martin's drumming; the daring trio has been in the trenches building a successful career for ten years. They've played literally thousands of shows together. To get an "inside" perspective on Martin, we thought it might be interesting to hear what his longtime bandmates have to say.



MD: How do you think Billy's drumming has evolved over the course of the band's career?

Medeski: The way I see it, I think he's taken some diverse elements and fused them together. There's the jazz element, with Billy incorporating the influences of people like Max Roach and Elvin Jones into his playing. Then there's the sort of hip-hop, James Brown, trad-funk thing. And then there's the Afro-Brazilian stuff, including all of the percussion he's worked on. I think Billy's really come into something of his own, something that's both especially creative and grooving.

Wood: I think Billy is playing a lot quieter than he used to—although he was never a bashing drummer, no way. His sound is amazing; you hear the full, open sound of the drums. Having a lighter touch is a part of that.

Billy kind of reminds me of Clyde Stubblefield, as far as how hard he hits the drums and the tone that he gets out of them. It's that touch that makes his playing really groove.

Medeski: Billy's always had a unique feel—his own kind of 8th-note feel. He has a real understanding of how he wants to phrase 8th notes.

MD: Do you find he's easy to play with because of that?

Medeski: What makes him easy to play with is his groove. Billy grooves really hard.

MD: He also has a unique sound, especially with how he embraces the past with vintage drums and cymbals.

Medeski: There's a certain unified tonality to his drums. Being connected the way they are, they all vibrate together. And the simplicity of his setup is cool, too. The complexity of Billy's playing doesn't come from his setup, it comes from *him*.

MD: What would you say are some of Billy's strong points as a musician?

Wood: I like that he's always taking risks. He's not afraid to do something that's completely different, like changing up a feel in a place that you wouldn't expect. I'm always inspired by his choices.

Medeski: I think Billy's aesthetic sense is amazing. He's very creative and always pushing us to make sure that we don't end up doing something that sounds generic. He's very aware of that.

MD: Very few jazz groups stay together for any length of time, but MMW's been together for years. There must be a strong bond between you.

Medeski: We've been through so much that we're like a family. We have incredible respect for each other. But it's like any relationship; over the years Billy and I have definitely butted heads. Strong personalities will do that. But we always work it out. We may disagree on some things, but when it comes to the music, it's always great.

and African music and percussion. It opened up a whole world of music for me. I completely stopped playing drumset for over a year and just played percussion. I learned a lot about Brazilian samba and batucada drumming [samba played only with percussion]. And then later on, when I came back to the set, I had all of this rhythmic experience to draw from.

I have some African and Brazilian

instruments, but I also like using "found" pieces, like ashtrays, metal from construction sites—anything that sounds good. Having all of those instruments around me is like having an orchestra at my fingertips. You have your skin section, your metal section, your wood section... you have your whistles, shakers, rattles, gongs, balafons....

MD: The balafons [African non-diatonic

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Billy Martin

xylophone] give you a bit of a melodic option.

Billy: They're *very* melodic. I can say a certain thing on the balafons that I can't say on a drumset. Mine are from West Africa. One is tuned just slightly differently from the other. They were probably made in different villages by different makers. The relationship of the notes is similar on each instrument, but when you play them at the same time, you can hear that they're tuned about a quarter-tone apart. That detuned quality creates another world of harmony and melody, and it's fun to hear how Chris and John interpret what I'm playing on them on their instruments.

MD: What inspires your percussion work?

Billy: A lot of it comes from listening to contemporary classical music, composers like Olivier Messiaen and Charles Ives. I also listen to a lot of African and Indonesian music. So much of it is percussion-based. It's very inspiring stuff.

MD: Let's switch gears and talk about the phenomenal success of MMW. How do you explain it?

Billy: It *is* a phenomenon. There's a network of people out there with a mindset

reminiscent of certain people in the '60s and '70s—the Grateful Dead hippie culture. They really appreciate a down-to-earth, sincere approach to music. Whether it's blues, jazz, avant-garde, African, world music, or funk, this subculture gravitates to the music. And apparently we've been adopted by this group, but it wasn't our plan.

Our plan was to play for everybody and anybody. But at the moment this subculture has definitely taken over. But I do see a lot of high-school-age kids and people in their fifties and sixties at our shows. I think the appeal strikes different people on different levels.

I'm looking forward to seeing how all of this develops. There's a natural evolution in our music that might turn off some of these people some day. We're not the same group we used to be, and next year we won't be playing what we're playing *today*. But I think we'll always appeal to people who understand and appreciate that we're totally about wanting to evolve and take risks.

MD: What gave you the courage early on to commit to this project? There aren't a lot

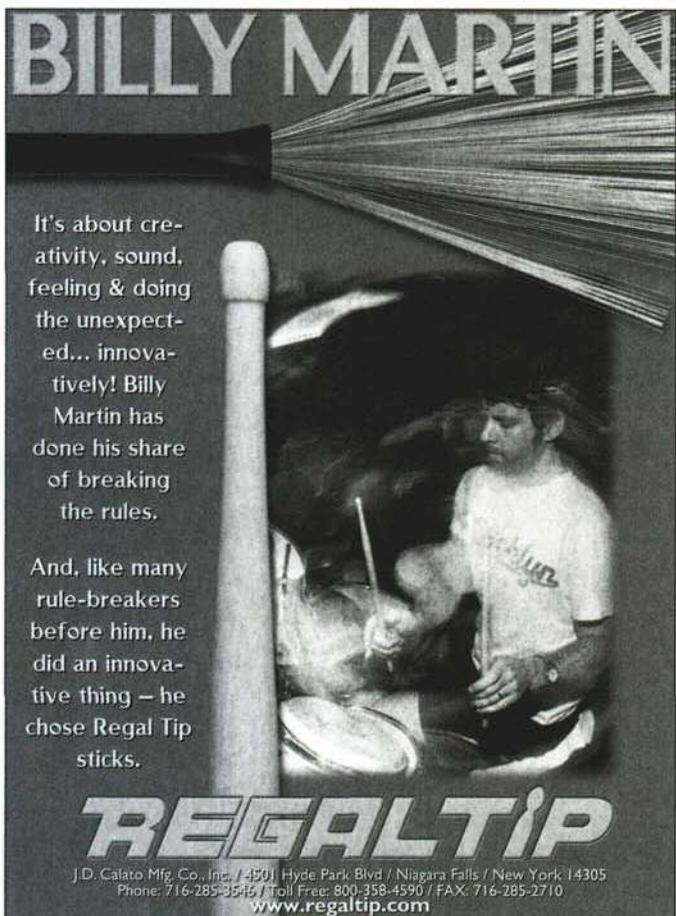
of jazz "groups" anymore.

Billy: What gave me the courage was that I just totally believed in what we were doing. The minute the three of us played together, the chemistry was so strong. It was undeniable. From that point I knew it was something we could sustain. If we could just get in front of people and play, we could have a long career.

On the business side, in the beginning I was more into the approach of, "Okay, let's make a demo. Let's tour. Let's do T-shirts. Let's get a mailing list..." I had done a lot of failed tours with other artists in Europe. I saw the mistakes they made, and I saw where we could take advantage—by getting involved with our own marketing, by playing college markets and alternative rock clubs—not the traditional jazz stops. The three of us were very supportive of each other, so we just pulled together and followed our own path.

MD: And you've remained close?

Billy: Oh yeah. In the beginning, it was like first love—very passionate. It was that strong friendship, and the music, that helped us get through the tough times—non-stop touring, living out of an RV. Now



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Billy Martin

it's evolved: We have a deeper understanding of each other.

MD: Each of the band's records are a bit different. But the new album, *The Dropper*, is such a departure. Did you have a conceptual game plan for this record, to take it to the extreme?

Billy: Honestly, the only plan was to record here at Shacklyn [MMW's rehearsal space in Brooklyn]. We wanted to have the freedom to work when we wanted to work. Plus our space is filled with all of our instruments, which, as you can see, is pretty huge. This allowed us to be able to draw from a larger resource of sounds.

Last summer Chris and I put up walls and ran wires so we could turn this space into a recording environment. And we had help from David Baker, our engineer/producer from over the years. He recommended certain recording gear that we should buy. But the whole project was a ton of work.

MD: There seems to be a lot more overdubbed percussion on this record.

Billy: There's a *lot* more percussion. This was the first record we've done where I've

had the luxury of time to be able to experiment with different percussion parts. I even built a few pieces from scratch. You can't do that when you're working in a regular studio environment.

MD: Sonically, *The Dropper* is much more extreme than anything you've done.

Billy: Our engineer, Scotty Hard, is a little more of a radical than we are. He took sort of a haphazard approach. He would turn a knob up to the point where an instrument would be ridiculously distorted. But the way that sound would sit within the framework of the music really worked.

MD: The drums are particularly fat on this record.

Billy: That's because of the tape machine we used. It's a 2"-tape, 16-track machine. Engineers are realizing that it's the way to go for drum sounds. It somehow fattens them.

MD: You can tell it's your kit, but it's beefed-up somehow. In fact, your whole performance is beefed-up on this record. It's some of your most aggressive playing.

Billy: I have my lighter side, but there's also another side. I mean, the first track,

"We Are Rolling," is like a hardcore grunge piece. But it's more jazz than anything, because it's very free. There's a lot more going on polyrhythmically and poly-metrically, as well as harmonically and melodically. It's much more sophisticated than some kind of thrashy rock thing. So yeah, there's a darkness to the record, but it's a beautiful darkness.

MD: And there are also tracks that show how far you've developed your groove approach. You groove your butt off on tracks like "Big Time," "Partido Alto," and "Bone Digger."

Billy: Thanks. Yeah, I was really happy with the way the grooves went down. Basically I think this record has a lot of extremes, which is what I like.

MD: Besides your work with MMW, a few years back you started your own label, Amulet Records. How did that come about?

Billy: I put it together originally because I had recorded a duet with drummer Calvin Weston. Calvin and I started playing together in The Lounge Lizards back in the '80s. The chemistry that he and I have is

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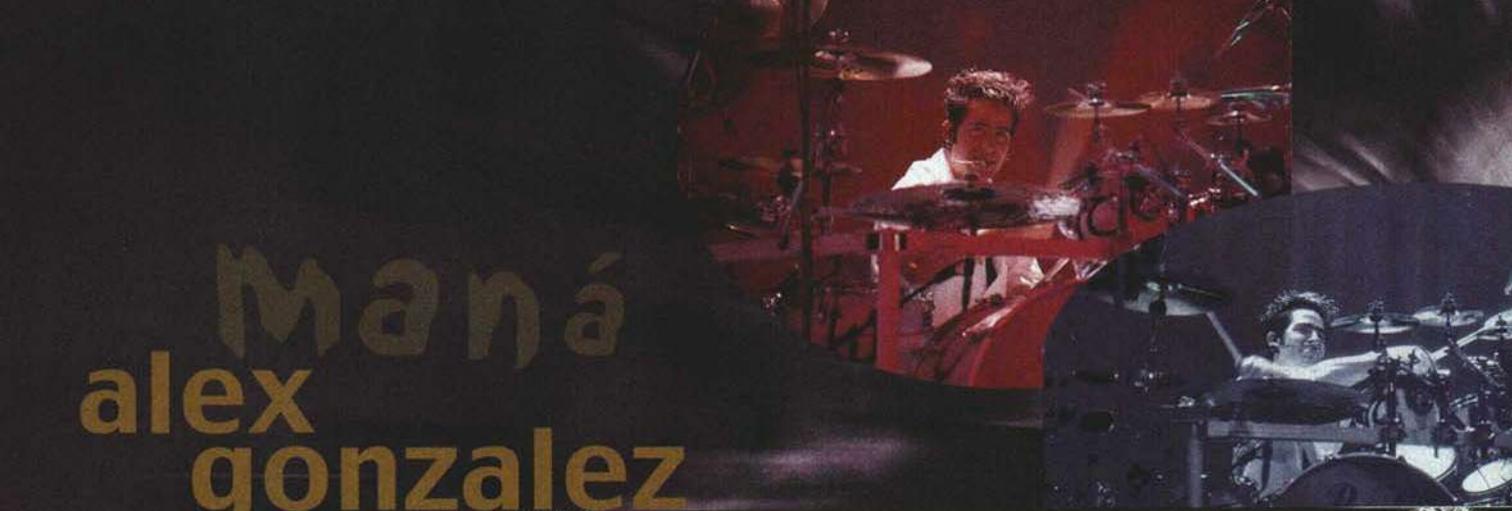
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Billy Martin

just so special. Ever since we started playing together I wanted to do a session with just the two of us. Well, we did it, and it turned out to be a very special recording.

I sat on it for a couple of years, and then decided to put it out myself. "Okay, I need to start a label. What am I going to call it? I'll call it Amulet Records." Just like that. And the label's first release was the recording with Calvin, which we called *Percussion Duets*.

The label just continued from there. I figured I would release projects that I was involved in. So my second record was this crazy rainstick thing—it's a relaxation CD. It's the sound of many rainsticks.

MD: What's it called?

Billy: *Falling Water*. It's not a percussion record, it's not music, it's sound. It's sixty minutes of a sound that will help you relax. It's very simple, like finding "the way" in Zen. I think it's beautiful. Besides, who else is going to put that out?

Then Bob Moses, a great drummer/musician/spirit and a dear friend of mine, wanted me to put out a record he had done in the '70s called *Bittersweet In The*

Ozone. Bob doesn't play drums on it—Billy Hart is on drums—but he's playing vibes and some other percussion. Bob also wrote and conducted the music. All sorts of great players are on it, including Daniel Carter, Eddie Gomez, Dave Liebman, Randy Brecker, and Howard Johnson. It's a classic, so I had to put it out. And the label has just continued to grow from there.

I really set up Amulet Records to focus more on percussion and avant-garde music that I feel deserves the exposure. And, selfishly, it lets me stretch in more directions. [Surf to www.amuletrerecords.com.]

MD: As creatively satisfying as MMW must be, it must also be inspiring to have other outlets for your expression.

Billy: It's totally inspiring. I feel so fortunate to be in a creative group situation. MMW stretches the boundaries. But there are still other avenues to be explored that I can't get to in the group, and that's where Amulet comes in. I'm hoping to do my own series of percussion records for the label.

MD: You have all of these projects in the works, but at this point do you have specific long-term goals for your playing?

Billy: The most important thing for me is to continue to evolve and to further expand my vocabulary on the drums. It's as simple as that. There are no specific playing goals. I just want to get deeper and deeper into expressing myself on the instrument.

MD: You're talking about things beyond technique.

Billy: Right. To be a better musician I have to evolve further as a human being. That has nothing to do with technique. It's all about being able to reach inside and share what you have within the work you create.

MD: And what about that other way you express yourself, through your artwork? The stuff you've created for the band—MMW's logo and merchandise art—lends a nice personal touch.

Billy: The need to express myself with my drumming is important to me. But visual art is another way for me to express myself. It gives me a lot of satisfaction.

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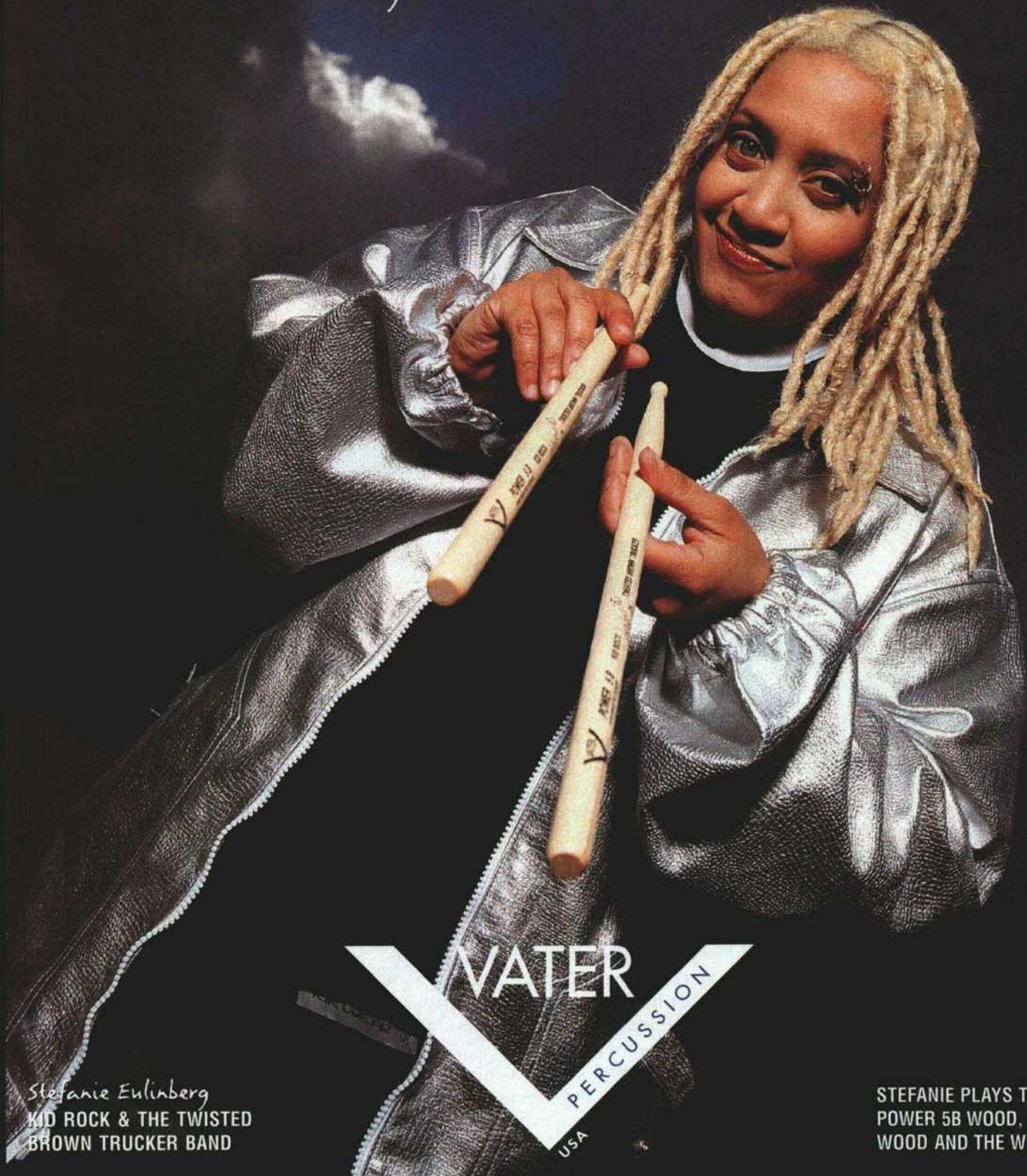
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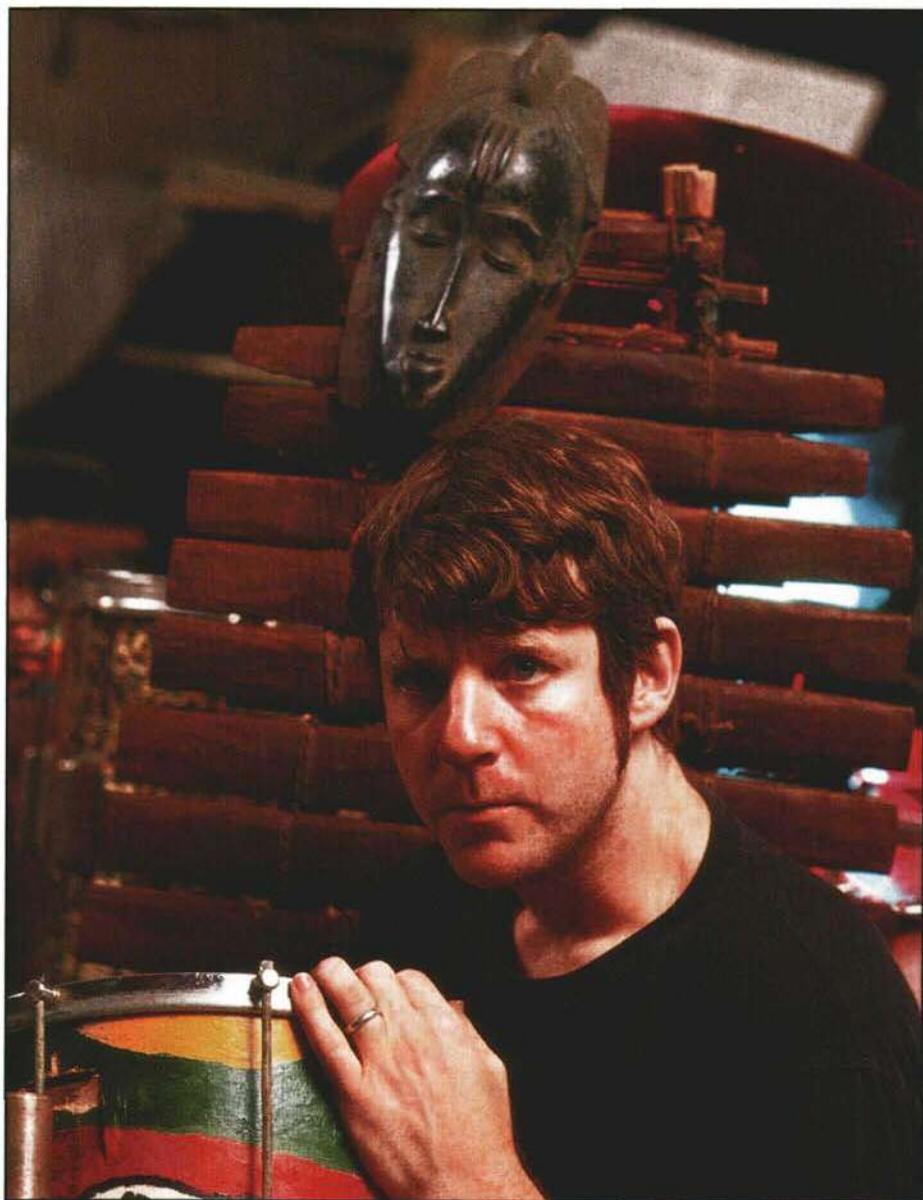
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The beauty of this system is that it's easy to understand, and it's also very open, allowing the rhythms to be interpreted in many different ways. There aren't time signatures, but there is time. And the notes can be expressed—or phrased—in many ways.

I'm in the process of writing a book, which I call *Riddim*, that uses this system to notate many claves that exist within

African-influenced music. These rhythms are at the core of the music that has its origins in West Africa, which is what I play—jazz, funk, bossa-nova, boogaloo, New Orleans, Brazilian samba... all that stuff.

MD: You're one creative cat.

Billy: [laughs] Well, I feel people need to express themselves. They need to do something and produce something in life, just like a flower or tree does in nature. Things are born, they live, and they die, but they leave something behind. They contribute something. They have some function in this world. And I think individuals need to understand that they can make a contribution, no matter how big or small. Put something out there. Express yourself.



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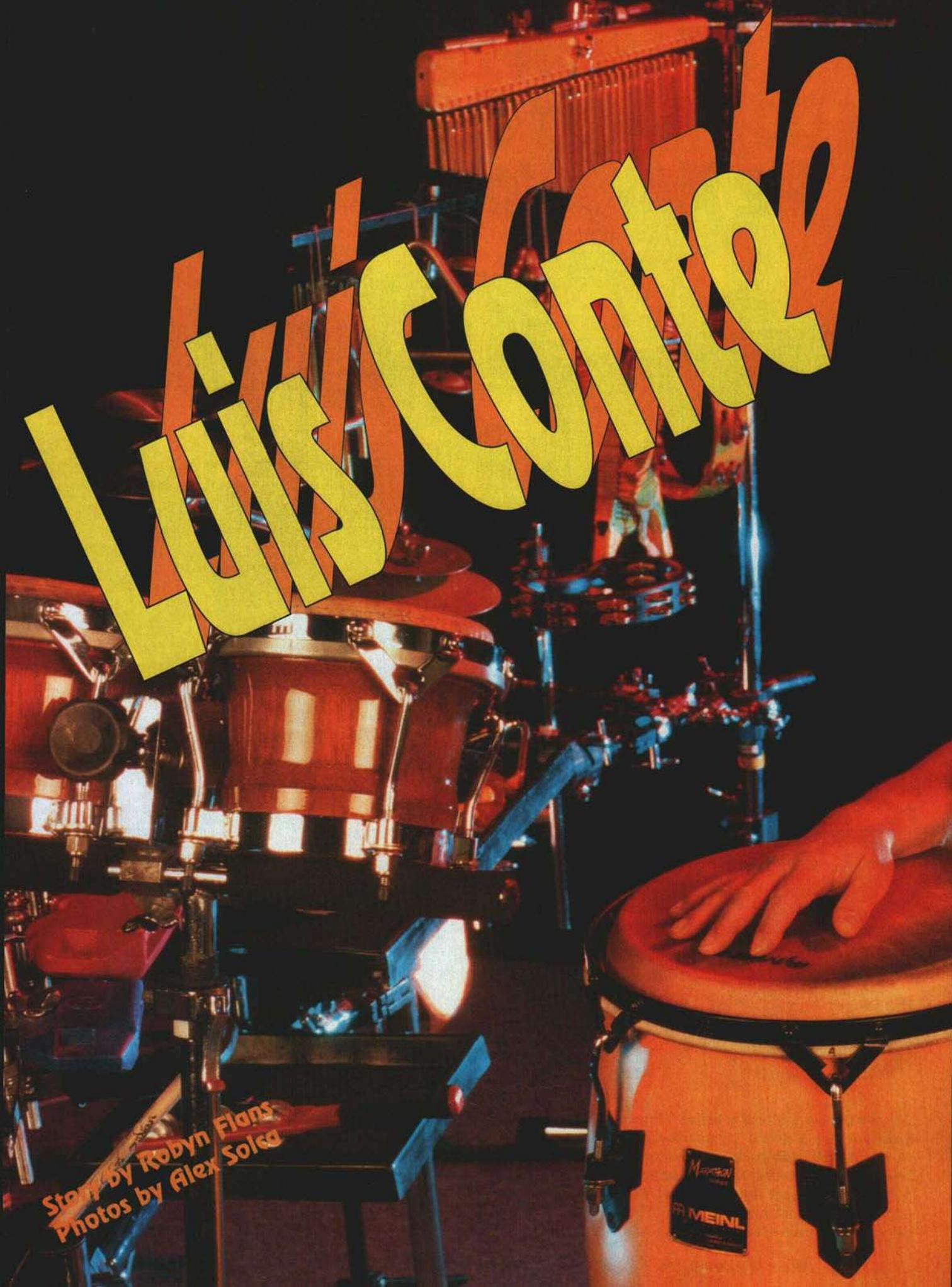
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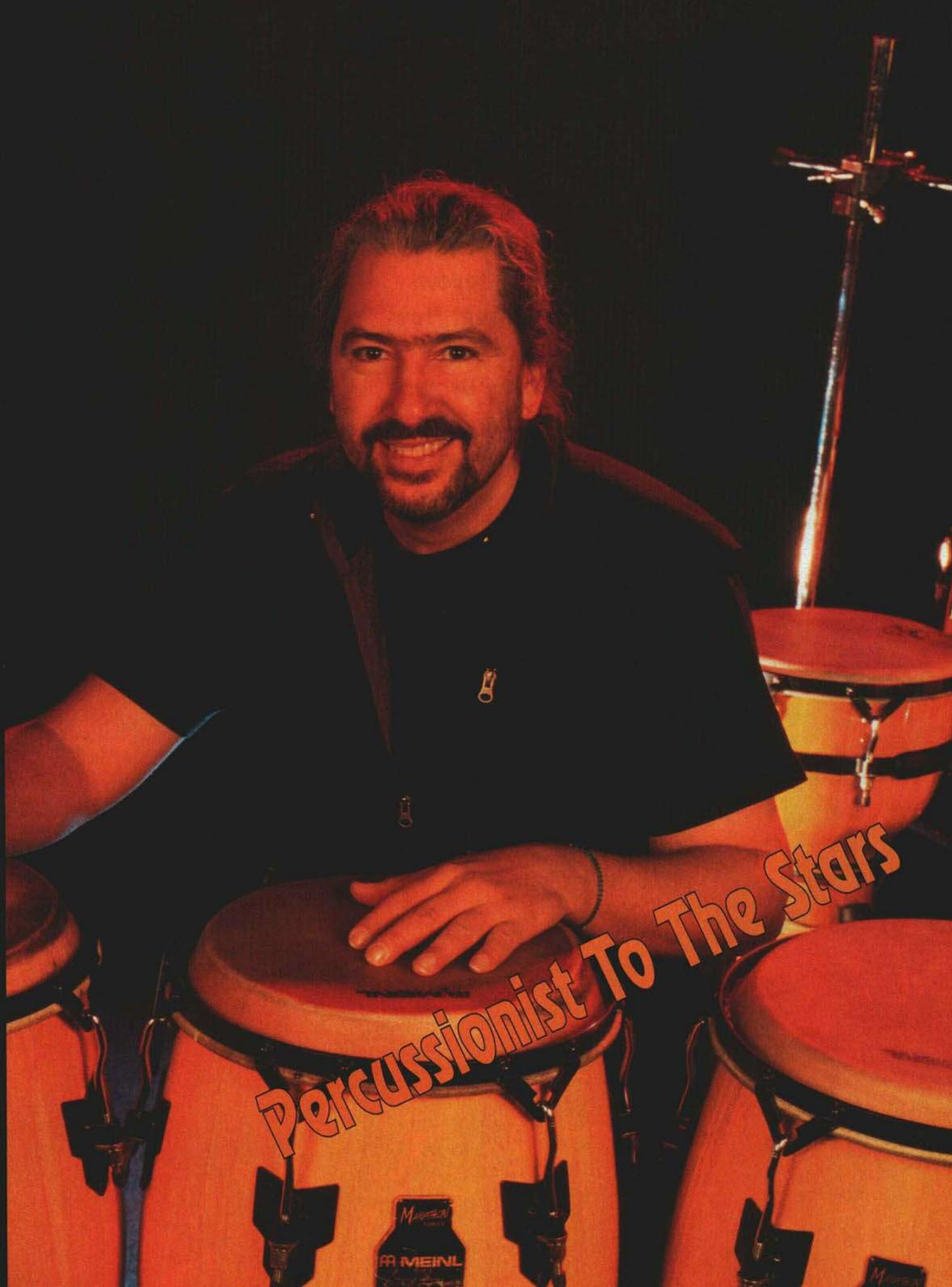
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Luis Conte

Story by Robyn Flans
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Percussionist To The Stars

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Luis Conte was nervous. There he was, at the Royal Albert Hall in London, performing with Phil Collins. Quincy Jones was conducting. And in the audience sat the Queen of England and South African President Nelson Mandela. The 1996 live BBC broadcast had Collins on drumset and Conte on percussion for most of the show. Until the end. That's when Collins took center stage to sing three songs, one of which was a duet with Tony Bennett. Covering those three songs on drumset—for his first live show on that instrument—sat percussionist Luis Conte. Unnerving? Scary? Luis laughs with disbelief as he tells the story.

"I thought about it like I was on a football team," Conte explains. "I've been a linebacker my entire career, and all of a sudden our team has no quarterback. I have a pretty good arm, so I have to go on the offense—get the ball, drop back, and throw. Am I going to say no? Of course not. I'm going to do it."

It wasn't the first time Conte had to rise to the occasion. Throughout his many years in

studios and concerts around the world, there have been plenty of challenges, difficulties, and magical moments for this gifted musician.

Born in Santiago de Cuba, Conte left his family when he moved by himself to the United States at only sixteen years of age. Because of the politics of the time, Luis couldn't speak with his parents for six years while he lived with relatives in Los Angeles and attended Hollywood High School. By the time he finally reunited with his family seven years later, he had already become a musician, much to his parents' surprise.

Even though he came from a line of doctors, Luis says his parents never said, "You're doing *whaf?*" While there were no professional musicians in Conte's family, he describes both sides of his parents' family as being "serious music lovers." Long before he left Cuba, at age six, Luis was already attracted to music. He would often go to the park with his father, where the youngster would rather watch the musicians rehearse than ride his tricycle. In fact, the musicians in the com-

Gigs
Madonna
Phil Collins
Eric Clapton
Backstreet Boys
Santana
Jackson Browne
Celine Dion
Barbra Streisand
Ray Charles
Tony Bennett
Arturo Sandoval





persa (ensemble) gave Luis a drum at Christmas. (There's a photograph in his new album [*Cuban Dreams*] of six-year-old Luis with that drum.) His grandmother from Havana was also supportive, always bringing him a percussion instrument when she visited.

As for the sounds Luis enjoyed early on, naturally, Cuban music was his first love. His family would often have it playing in the house. But aside from the Cuban influence, Luis loved the pop/rock music of the times—The Beatles, The Stones, and Sly & The Family Stone.

After his move to LA, Luis played guitar in high school bands, but wasn't doing much else with music. But then one day, while attending LA City College, where he was a pre-med student, he heard some percussionists playing congas. "When I saw them," Luis says, "it was like being reunited with something I once had a strong connection with but hadn't seen in a long time. I gravitated toward the drums."

The reconnection inspired Luis to begin researching the many styles of Cuban music. Although he never had formal lessons, except for some classes in reading and music theory at LACC, Luis sought out the older Cuban masters who were living in Los Angeles at the time. He asked them countless questions. "Those were

my teachers," Luis says. "And at that same time I started gigging, playing percussion in an R&B band."

Not six months later, Luis received what he considers his first professional break with a salsa band called Azuquita y Su Melao (Little Sugar & His Molasses). Then some friends told him of an audition with The Hues Corporation, who had scored a hit with "Rock The Boat." Luis ended up getting the gig, and that group would come to share bills with such luminaries as Sly & The Family Stone, The Staple Singers, The Ohio Players, and The Commodores.

Luis's gig with The Hues Corporation was just the beginning of a career that would see huge success. This master percussionist has worked with an unbelievable list of artists, including Madonna, Eric Clapton, Santana, Jackson Browne, Celine Dion, Barbra Streisand, Ray Charles, Tony Bennett, Arturo Sandoval, and Cachao. Luis has also worked on countless film soundtracks, including *Rain Man*, *Mission Impossible*, *Waiting To Exhale*,

Coming To America, and *Tarzan*.

While Conte's sideman career continues to flourish, he is particularly proud of his new solo album, *Cuban Dreams*. It reveals a very personal side of this master musician.

"I think it's important for me to do both studio and live dates. I have to play live. It keeps the fire going."



MD: Can you describe the difference in approach to playing salsa and pop/rock?

Luis: From a hand percussion standpoint, if you're going to play salsa, you really have to pay attention to the rules. There are a lot of rules in this music. The first thing

is, you have to be in clave. Plus there are certain rhythms in a salsa band that you have to know how to play. It could be a guaguanco, mambo, cha cha cha, or son montuno. You want to keep in mind that salsa music is traditional music.

The way to get really good chops on the timbales is to play salsa music. The same thing with the congas: Play with a salsa band. You get real strong. When you're a conga player in a salsa band, all you do is play the congas, and if you do that for three

Luis Conte

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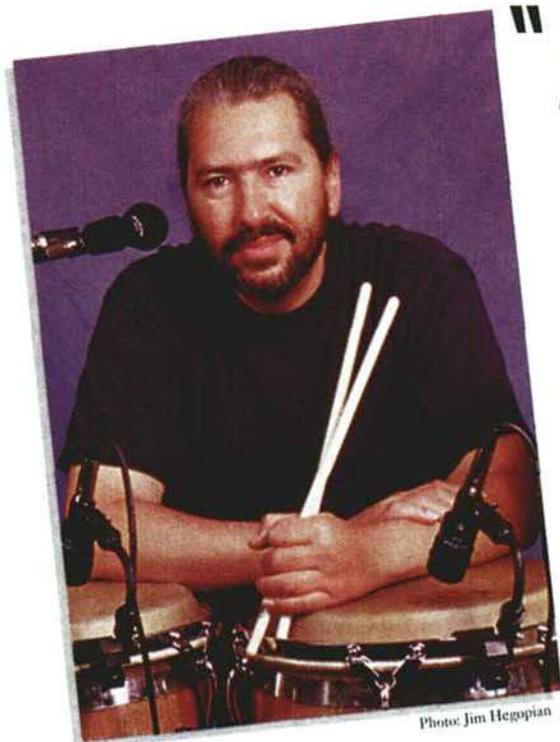
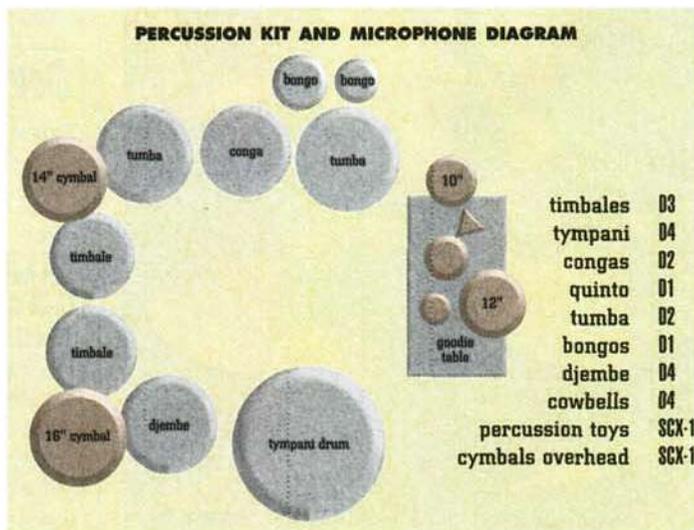


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Luis describes himself as "multi-percussionist" and he has the rare ability to weave his percussive textures through the fabric of any style of music. He is currently the most "in demand" percussionist in the world.

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Luis Conte

or four sets a night, your chops and your strength will really be there. Once you've covered the timbales, the bongos, and the congas, and you have those chops, when you jump over to a pop gig you have to forget the rules and open yourself up to play what that music needs. That music is a mixture of things, and you have to find a way to fit your gear into that.

MD: What do you like about pop music?

Luis: Like I said, in salsa, there are a lot of rules. Say you're the bongocero. On the

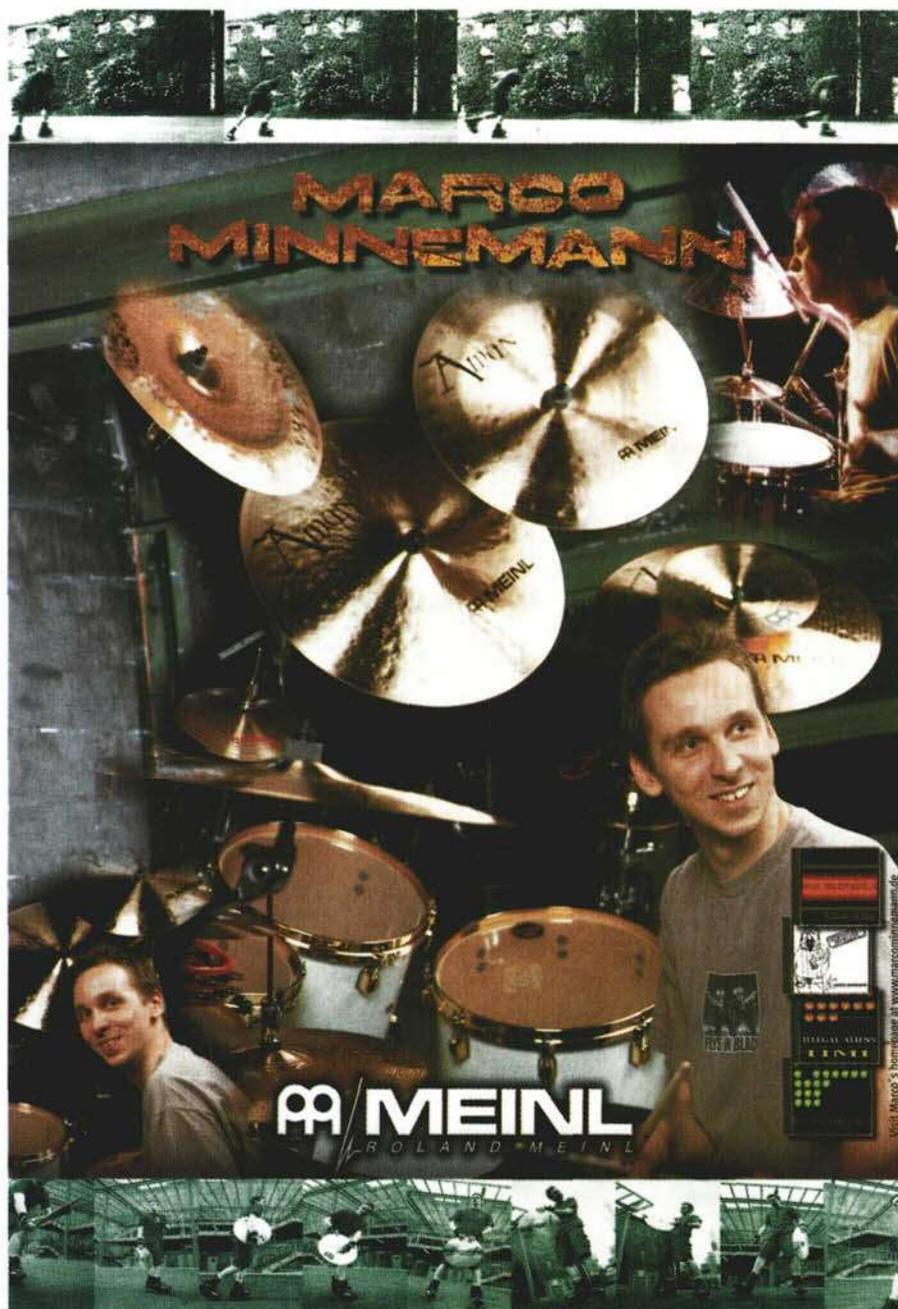
verse you play the bongos, and on the chorus, when the singer starts singing lead, you play the hand cowbell. When he breaks down to a piano solo, you play the bongos again, but you play them simpler. When he goes back up to the mambo and the horns come in, you play the cowbell again. There are strict rules. If bongos fit in a pop tune, you may want to play them through the whole song. In pop music there are no rules. You have to flow into the music.

I've been doing a gig with The Backstreet Boys. For the tune "Shape Of My Heart," on the first verse I'm playing on a Roland SPD20. In the first chorus I play 16ths on a tambourine. Then the next verse I play a shaker with a tambourine backbeat, and then on the bridge and pre-chorus I play congas. When it gets back to the out chorus, I go back to the tambourine.

I listened to the record, which was done on Pro Tools, and that's what I felt would be best because we're also playing with a sequence, which has some percussion in it. Don't ask me how I figure this stuff out, it's just what seems to fit.

The way I approach something like this is by listening to the song, although not a lot. When I listen to it the first couple of times I pick out what is on the record that I'm going to *have* to play. From there I just decide what I think will sound good, and if they don't like it, they'll tell me.

When I did the first Madonna tour, they said, "Get together with the guy who is doing the sequences and lay down the percussion parts that are on the record. Then



Dream Grooves

To give you an idea of the type of artists Luis Conte gets calls from, here's a small sampling of recordings that he's been a part of.

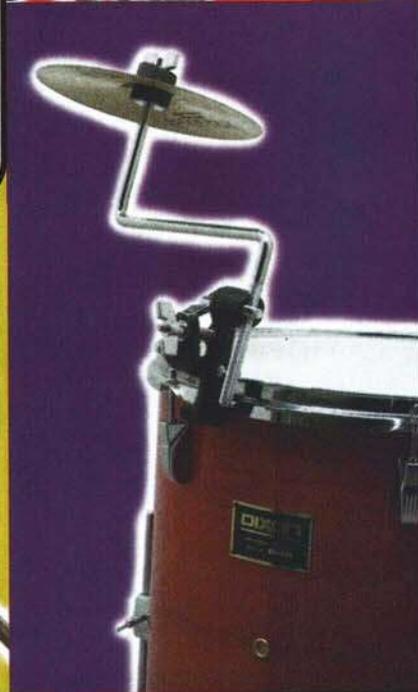
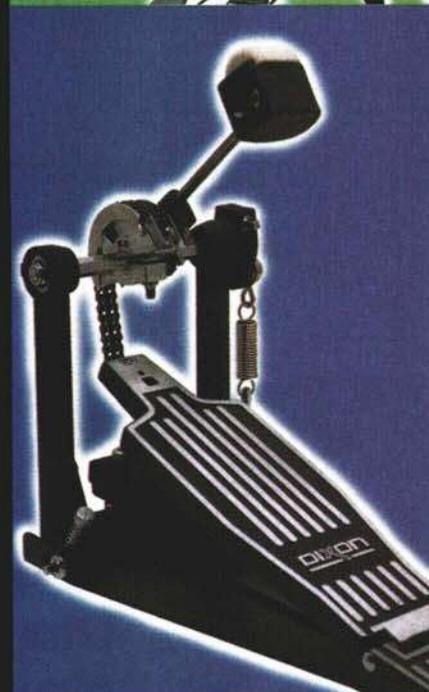
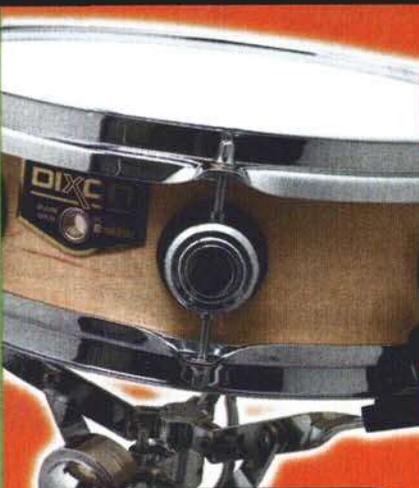
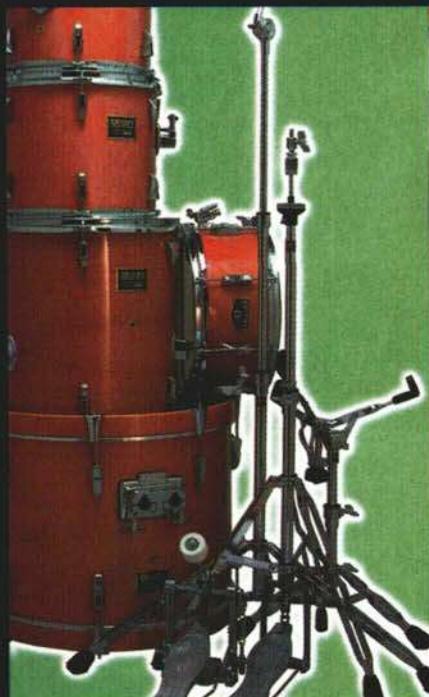
Artist	Album
Luis Conte	Cuban Dreams
Louie Bellson	Ecue Ritmos Cabanos
Toni Braxton	Secrets
Eric Clapton	Clapton Chronicles
The Phil Collins Big Band	Hot Night In Paris
David Crosby	Thousand Roads
Crosby, Stills & Nash	Looking Forward
Celine Dion	Falling Into You
Enrique Iglesias	Vhrr
Jewel	Spirit
Elton John	Duets
Chaka Khan	Epiphany
Kenny Loggins	Leap Of Faith
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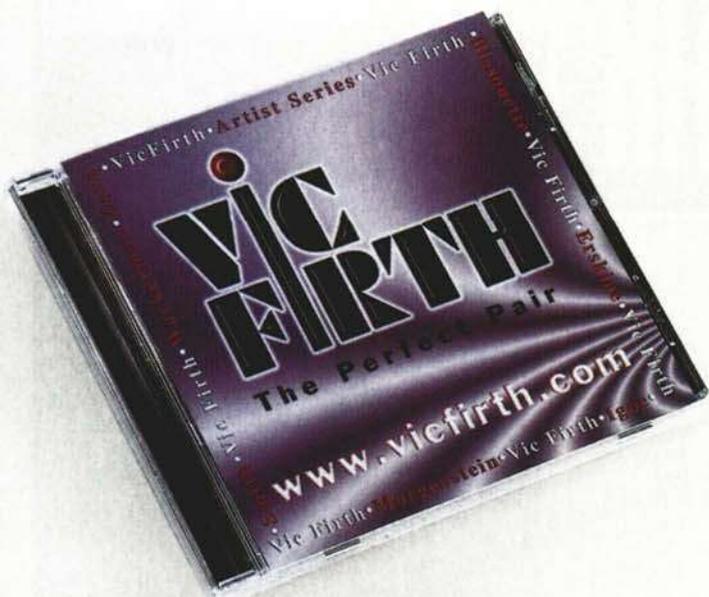


on stage, do your thing against those sequences." So when I go into the pop world, I have to be open to anything.

MD: What happened for you after The Hues Corporation?

Luis: When I got home, I couldn't sit around. I called a cab and went to play salsa gigs. But then I saw Airtio play and it blew me away. There he was, a percussion guy who wasn't a genius on the congas like

Mongo Santamaria, but he was like a painter with a gazillion more colors than I had ever seen. I went, "What?!" He's the first guy I saw play a pandeiro—a Brazilian tambourine-like instrument with



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a head on it, which they play for samba. He had a pandeiro with an animal skin, tuned real low, and he got on the microphone and was yelling and singing. It was unbelievable. I started adding to my collection of

instruments at that point.

Right after The Hues Corporation I worked with a singer named Evie Sands. Joey Carbone, the piano player, called to tell me about the audition. He had seen

me with The Hues Corporation and said, "Don't just bring the congas and tambourine." Producer David Foster was the other keyboard player on the gig. That was around '73. In '74 and '76 I played

SHUT UP AND LISTEN

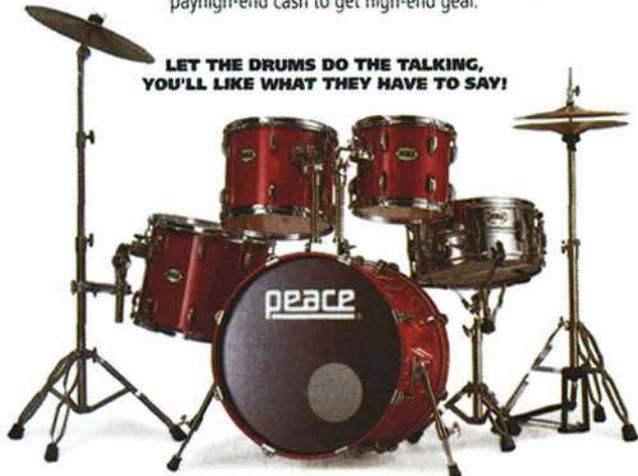
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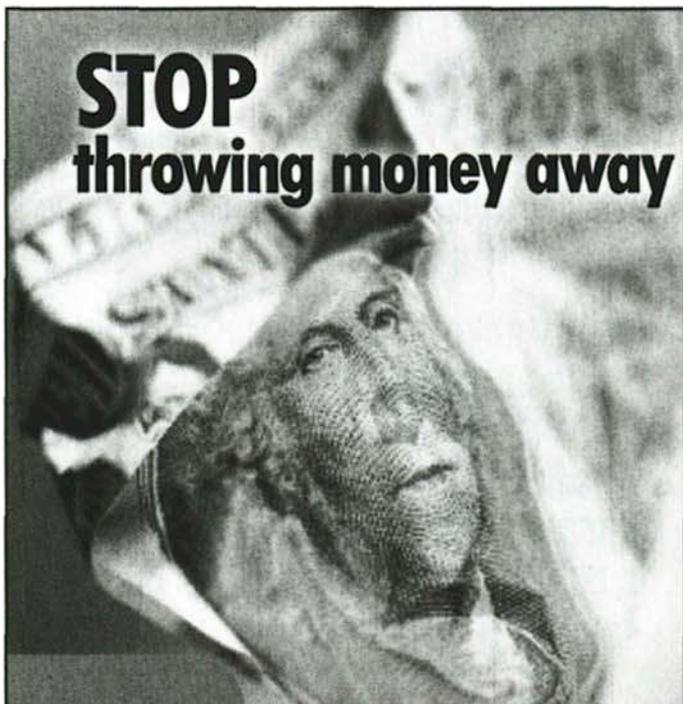


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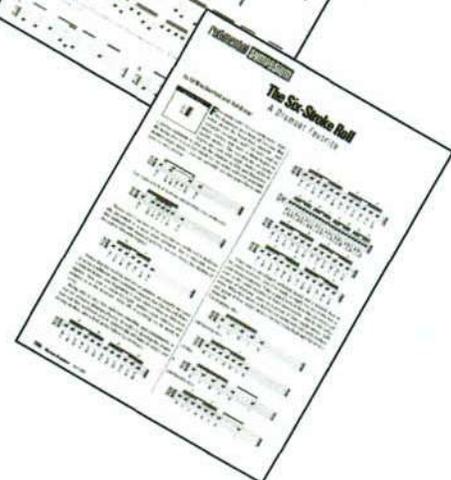
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Luis Conte

with Diana Ross. A dear friend of mine who passed away, Hector Andrade, who went under the nickname of "Bucky," told me about an audition with The Supremes. He was one of the original percussionists with Willie Colon's band back in the day. He was another influence of mine. We met while I was playing in the salsa bands. He was a good conga player, a good bongocero, a good guiro player, a good shaker player, and a good timbalero.

I got the gig with The Supremes and

went to Vegas for three weeks to perform with them. Alex Acuna was living in Las Vegas at the time and I had met him at one of the salsa gigs, so I called him while I was in Vegas. He said, "Where are you? You have to come down to my house right now. We're having a jam session and are going to do a record with Louie Bellson." Dig this: I knock on the door to the garage where they're playing, and there is Louie Bellson, Walfredo Reyes Sr., Walfredo Jr., Alex, and the bass player Cachao! I

walked in, everybody said, "Hi," and they started playing. So I started playing too. And Louie said, "We're going to do this record. Do you want to do it with us?" The record was called *Ecue*, which also had Emil Richards, Clare Fisher, and Manolo Badrena. I couldn't believe it—I was in heaven. I was in the same room with Walfredo Reyes Sr. and Cachao? And they're talking to me?

After that, the musical director for Diana Ross, who had seen me at The Supremes audition, called me for the Diana Ross gig. And Alex Acuna was on drums! He was still with Weather Report at that point, and you can imagine the hang. We were having fun all the time. I remember Alex playing me the rough mixes of "Palladium" from *Heavy Weather*.

MD: The recording dates began to happen after that. What did you know about recording?

Luis: I didn't know anything. I remember one session where I got sent home—but you learn from those experiences. I got called to do Leonard Nimoy's *In Search Of*. The guy said, "I want you to play congas, something really simple." Really simple to me at that time meant a tumbao, but I should have treated the music as a pop gig. The beat I was playing was not what he was looking for. He couldn't really explain to me what to play and I just couldn't figure out what he wanted. As soon as the red light went on, I freaked. We did it a few times and the guy said, "That's great." Then they paid me right there, I said thanks, and I packed up. But as I was leaving—and this broke my heart—I saw this other percussionist coming into the parking lot. I was so bummed out. But all you can do with an experience like that is learn from it.

MD: Did you ever figure out what you were doing wrong?

Luis: I think I was just playing tumbao too Cuban. I'll never know, though.

MD: Did that experience intimidate you for the next gig?

Luis: No. All I can tell cats is, if you want to play, you can't get intimidated. Everything is a learning experience and you have to keep looking at the light at the end of the tunnel. But it did reinforce the point to me that I have to make as sure as I can that when I leave a session I leave

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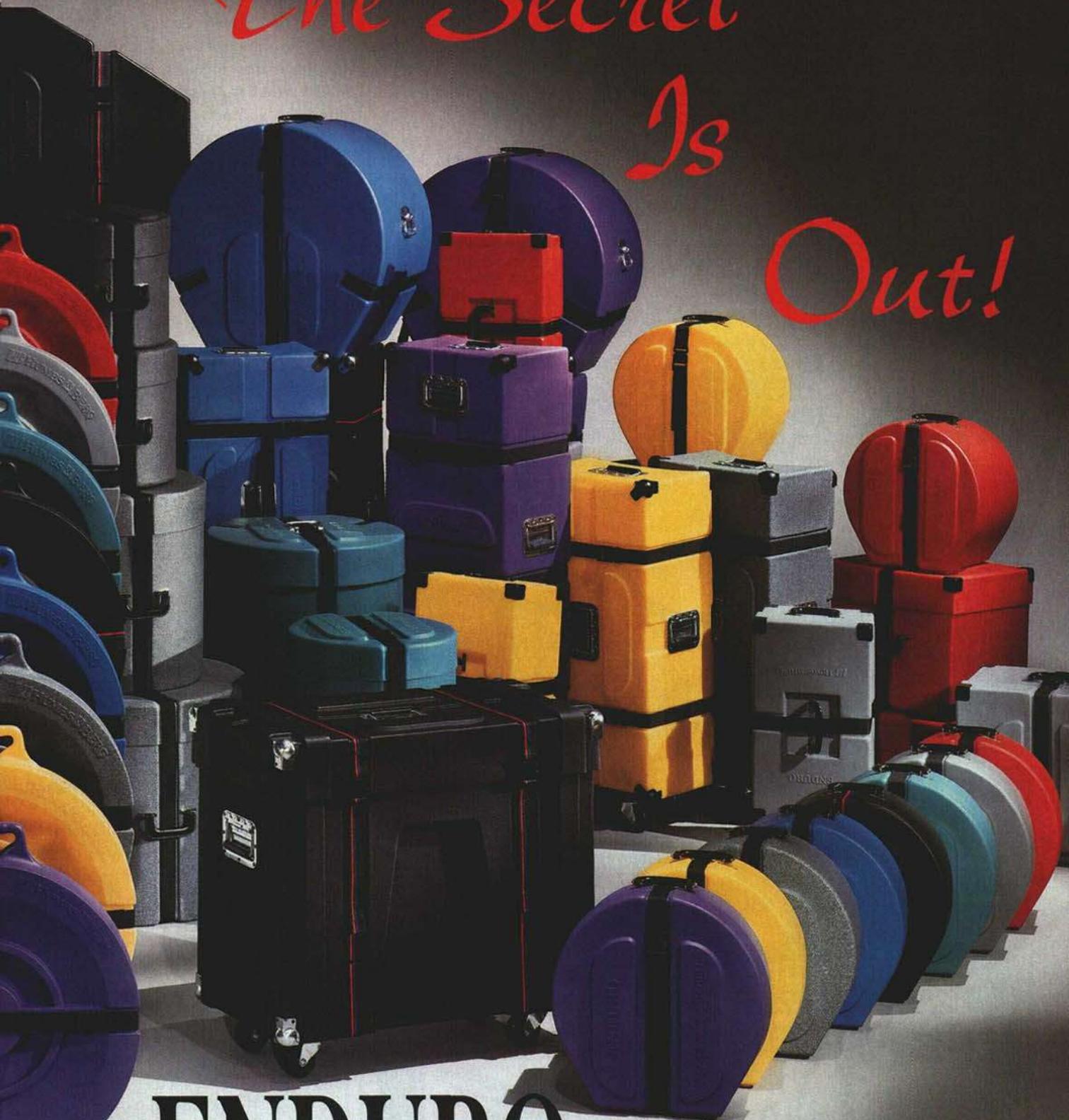
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Luis Conte

having given them what they wanted.

MD: What did you learn about the differences between the studio and live gigs?

Luis: They are two completely different things. For me, it's magic to play on a track that ends up on the radio: "This thing is going to be heard by a lot of people." So many people have heard me play on something like a Madonna or Luis Miguel song. They don't know it's me, but I get a kick out of it. Besides, you can make a pretty good living on some ses-

sions, and you don't have to travel all the time, so you can be with your family.

Technically, it's very different playing in the studio compared to on stage. You don't have to play as loud, for one. Live, you have to bang away. If I play on a Madonna record and then go out on tour with her, it's a different way of playing. The technique changes.

I think it's important for me to do both studio and live dates. I *have* to do both. I have to play live. That helps keep the fire

going. If I spend a few months just doing recording sessions and then go out and do a live gig, it's, "Oh my God, there's air moving and people reacting."

It's so important for percussionists to have their time together, especially in the studio. When we're recording, particularly now with so many machines, your time better be happening. Of course, with Pro Tools, they can fix it up pretty good, but they don't want to have to do that. Your *feel* is so important.

I've been very lucky. I was able to play with Jeff Porcaro on dates—what an honor! I've worked with a lot of incredible drummers, like John Robinson, Vinnie Colaiuta, Steve Gadd, Gregg Bissonette.

MD: Do you ever track live with these guys?

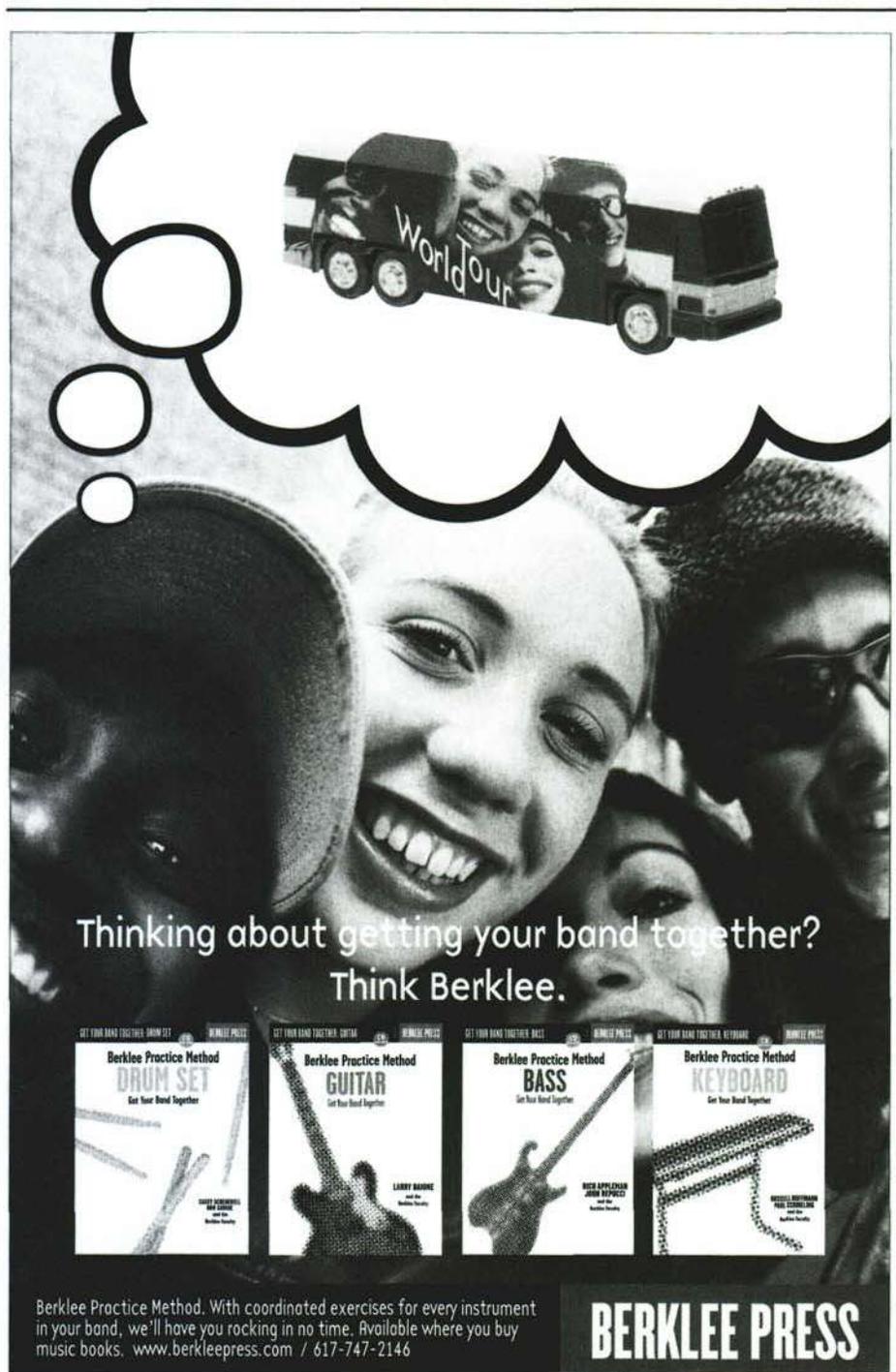
Luis: Probably eighty-five percent of the recording work I do is overdubs. But these guys have played on the tracks.

MD: Can you recall one of your most challenging sessions and what you had to go through to get it to work?

Luis: There was one where I got called—and I knew that I was the wrong guy for the session. It was for a cartoon movie called *The Prince And The Pauper*. I was going to have to play all this orchestral stuff. Talk about leaving a gig with a headache! I got to the date, and it was a hundred-piece orchestra. I felt like I was going to have a heart attack because I was supposed to play tambourine rolls, an anvil, a thunder sheet, and a plate. There was no conga part or bongo part. A shaker was the most familiar thing I ran into.

I think [percussionists] Emil Richards and Joe Porcaro, who were also on the date, must have seen the fear on my face when I started looking at the music. Emil said, "These are the moments, this is how you get better." They gave me the confidence to get through it and said, "We'll help you out on this, don't worry about a thing. We have a system."

That system involves the use of different color highlighters. One guy is blue, another guy is red, another guy is yellow, and so on. Everybody picks what parts they're going to play. Of course, those guys were playing marimba, xylophone, and timpani, and I was playing the easier stuff. I wasn't really reading notes, I was reading rhythms—gran cassa, piatti, cymbal swells, and tambourine rolls. You



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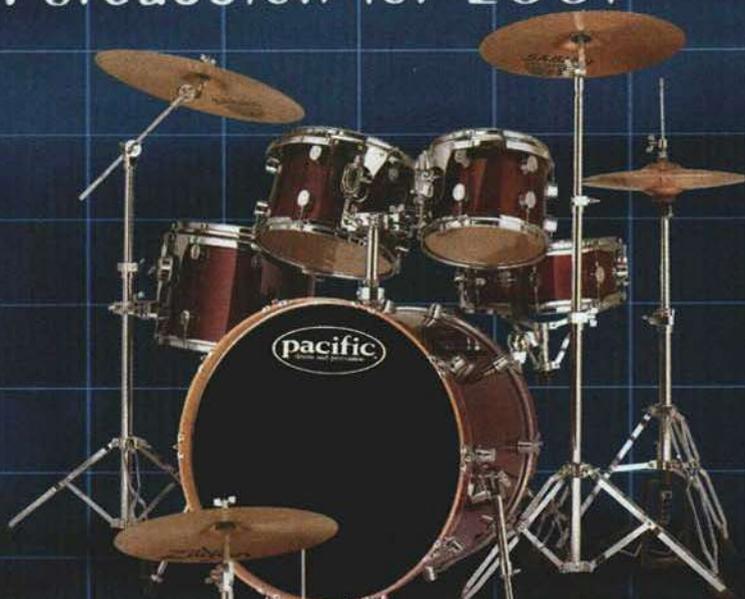
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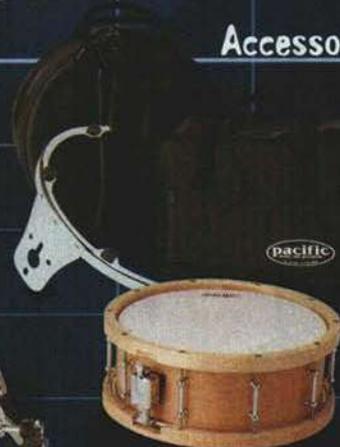
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Luis Conte

highlight your part so you don't lose your place—and that's going to school right there! It's like a book with seven parts, and we have to work it out.

So those guys highlighted my part—"Whatever is in green, you play"—and they walked me through the whole two days of the date. It was so difficult.

MD: So you left with a headache, but did you feel good?

Luis: I felt good and bad. I felt bad in that I was beating myself up, thinking, You're a total knucklehead. You should have kept going to school and gotten your act together in orchestral percussion!

MD: Let's talk a little about some of the notable live gigs you've done.

Luis: Definitely one challenge was playing for Madonna. We played for incredible crowds—200,000 people in Rio. Doing that is almost more of an event than a concert, and much like a circus in a way. There are so many people on the stage and so many personalities and things that happen, plus the staging. We did one tour where the stage was actually three *different* stages. At one point in the show the

stage would be a factory set, then it would be a disco, and then a church. And there are so many cues to have to play.

Madonna is such a professional lady. She works harder than anybody else in the band. Rehearsals go about three months. She'd rehearse with the dancers for a certain amount of time in the day. The musicians would be rehearsing in a different location, and after she was finished with the dances she would come over and rehearse the music with us. There are a lot of other artists I've played with where they'll let the musical director deal with it and not show up until the last minute. She's there all the time, which makes you really get your stuff together.

I think Madonna really likes the conga drums, so there's a lot of conga playing on her gig, as well as bongos and timbales. And, of course, there's also a lot of electronics, which was a challenge for me. When I did the first gig, I didn't even own an Octapad, which was the hip thing at the time. I remember they went out and bought all of this gear for me because I didn't have it. There were a lot of cues

and things that depended on me. I had to play the songs, but on top of that there were a lot of sound effects and samples I had to trigger, like of Madonna laughing.

By the way, every vocal Madonna does is real. But there are a bunch of sound effects and things, and I have to catch all of them. Believe me, she'll know it if I miss one sample.

MD: If you hadn't dealt with electronics before that, what did you do to bring yourself up to speed with them?

Luis: Electronics are just another instrument. I think it helps to look at them as an instrument. Some guys see the electronics and get intimidated, thinking, That stuff is replacing me. But if you look at it that way, you *are* going to get replaced. It's a tool.

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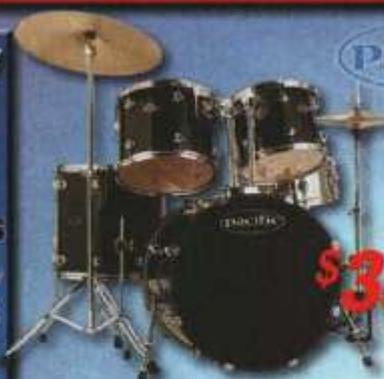
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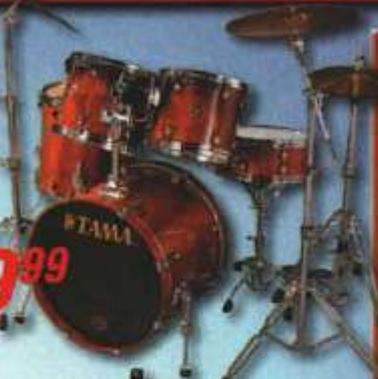
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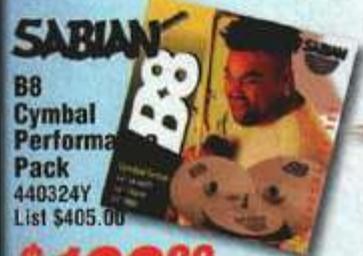


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Luis Conte

It worked great, though. For example, on "Express Yourself," I had to play congas and two cowbells. For me to play both, and to be heard and be accurate, would be impossible. There's no time to grab the stick to hit the cowbell and drop the stick to hit the conga.

Electronics are great for certain things. Now, if you told me I'd have to play some electronic cowbells on my *Conga Santiaguera* recording, that wouldn't be happening. But for certain things they

work well.

MD: Let's talk about that monumental first tour with Phil Collins.

Luis: I started working with Phil in 1996. The first tours I did with him were with his big band. Since then I've done a pop tour with him and the *Tarzan* soundtrack. With the big band, I played a lot of congas. There were arrangements of some of his tunes like "In The Air Tonight," "Los Endos Suite" from Genesis, and some swing tunes. I just listened and read the part.

At the end of the first day of rehearsal in Switzerland, Phil said, "Luis, make sure you get that tape of the three songs that you've got to play drumset on, because I have to sing." I went, "What?!" I had never even played a bar mitzvah on drums. I panicked. I didn't *tell* him I panicked, but I did. And he had no doubt in his mind that I was going to play the drums. He said to me, "You're a percussionist. You can play the drums. Besides, you're left-handed like me, and there's nobody else who is able to do it. You're the percussionist and you're going to do it." The way he said it, I thought, I guess I'm going to do it.

MD: Did he know this was something you didn't do?

Luis: We had talked about it one time on the telephone and I had said to him, "I have a set of drums in my house, but I never really play them. I suppose I can give them a whack." But I didn't ever think he was serious. So I got the tape and one of the songs was a funky tune Phil did with Quincy Jones with JR Robinson on drums. I took the tape, and that night in the hotel room I listened to it all night and wrote out the parts. The next day at rehearsal we played one of the songs, and I did okay. Phil looked at me and said, "Yeah, man, it's going to be fine." That was such a challenge. It turned out that I got such a kick out of it that I've actually been playing the drums a little at home now.

The great thing about working with Phil is that you're working with a musician, and on top of that, his instrument is the drums, so he treats all the cats like cats. There was a section in his pop show that featured drums, and he came to me and said, "I've never had a percussionist in the band, so if I put something together I don't know whether it's going to be right for you. So if you have time, why don't you put something together on tape and show it to me, and maybe we can do it." So again, I went back to the hotel that night and stayed up all night writing a piece called "Timbantiocha" for two drumsets and hand percussion, and we ended up doing it.

MD: Then you did *Tarzan* with him.

Luis: That was so great. I remember being in the studio one day, and it was just one of those incredible moments. I



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looked over, and there was Phil Collins' set of drums, and on the other side was all my stuff laying all over the place. I thought, It's just Phil and me playing. How lucky can one person be? It's those moments when you just pinch yourself because you can't believe how blessed you are. It's such a feeling of acceptance. I was thinking, Man, I can actually play!

MD: And on the opposite side of the coin, surely there have been gigs that have been less glamorous and exciting.

Luis: If you want to talk about boring gigs, I did a gig in Las Vegas once that really taught me that money isn't everything. The gig paid well and I thought, Man, for *that* kind of money, sure, I'll go out and do that. So I signed on, but I couldn't wait to get out. I was there for about six months on and off, and I was miserable. Certainly if I had to feed my kids I would do it again, but only if I *had* to.

There isn't an actor out there who can say, "Every movie I did, I loved." I did plenty of gigs that were less glamorous. I did people's weddings and New Year's Eve parties, plenty of casuals where you put your drums in the car, put on your tuxedo, and go to whatever the gig is. It may be New Year's Eve, you're by yourself, everybody is having fun, everybody is kissing each other, and you can't get off the stand to call your wife. That's the other side of the coin, and I did lots of those.

That's why as a musician, you need to be thankful for good gigs. I take stock: "Is it a Saturday night and am I putting on a tuxedo, getting into my car with my congas, and going to play 'Feelings'? No? Good. I guess this gig isn't so bad."

MD: As bad as they can be, you never know who you might meet on a casual.

Luis: Absolutely. I met lots of people and made a lot of connections at that point in my career. You really need to have the attitude that, if you took the gig, you have to give it your all.

MD: Your new album, *Cuban Dreams*, is a very personal one.

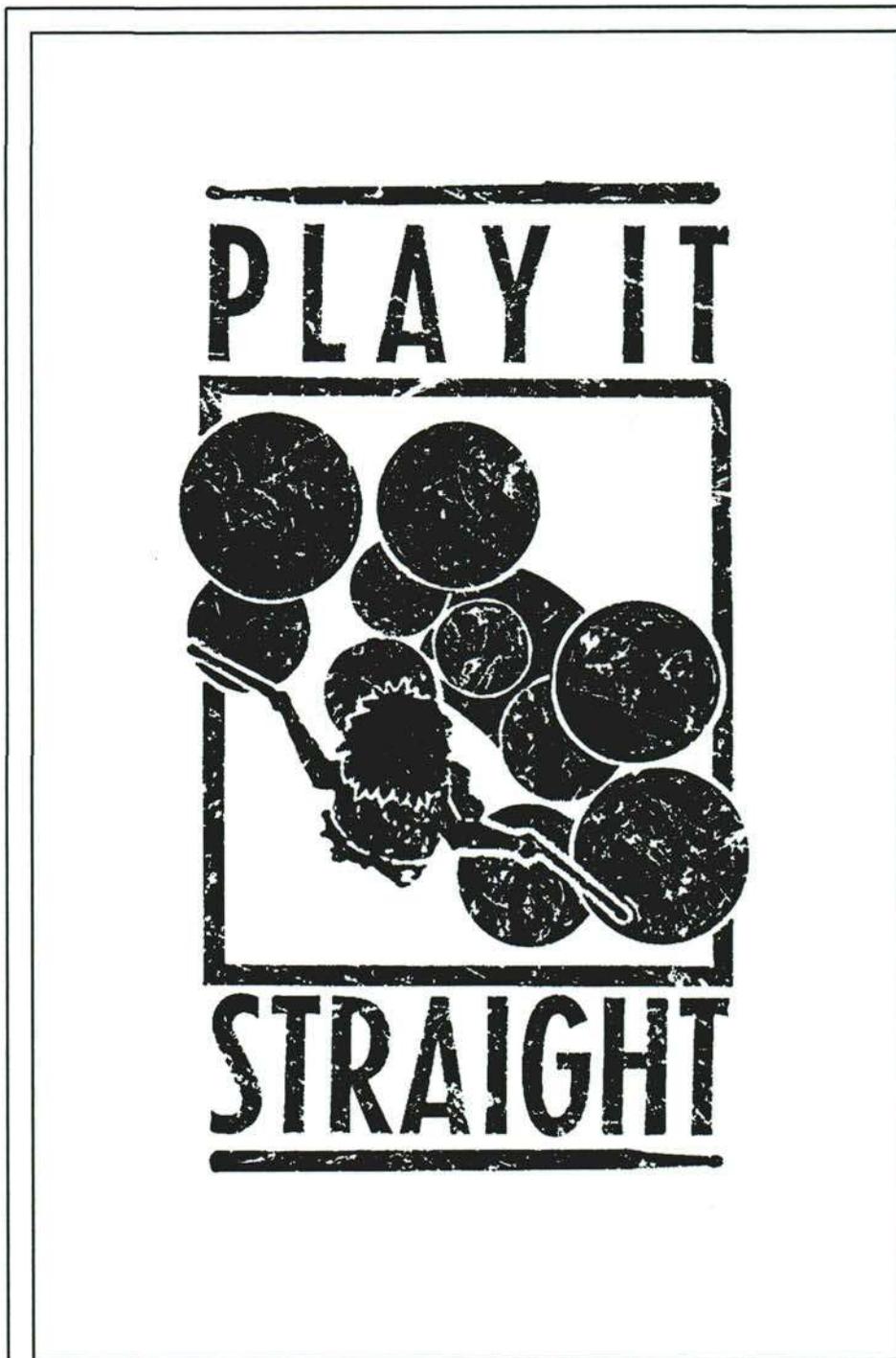
Luis: Yes, it's very deep because my family *is* the record. Because I left Cuba at such a young age, there was a lot of stuff inside of me that had to get out, and a lot of love for the country of Cuba and the people I left. The opportunity to make a

record fell into my lap because Pat Leonard, who was on tour with Madonna back in '87, now owns the Unitone record company. I always talked about Cuban music with Pat, and one day we were on the phone and he said, "It's like you never left. A big part of your heart is there. So if you're interested in doing a record, why don't you do something that is really meaningful to you?" I remember the phone call. It lit me up.

So at that point I thought about it and

talked to my wife about it. All the other records I had done were about world music, Latin, fusion, and funk, which I love. But I decided this would be a completely Cuban record. If you're going to do a Cuban record, it's very easy to turn it into a Latin jazz record or a salsa record, but I didn't want it to be that.

I started meeting with Michael Verdick, the co-producer, and he taped our conversations and we came up with a little storyboard. The first song, "Drume Negrita," is



Luis Conte

an old Cuban lullaby that came from talking with Michael and telling him that dancing is a very big part of Cuban music. People hear music from the time they're a little baby, and as soon as you can walk you learn to dance. There was an Afro-Cuban lady from Los Hoyos who used to take care of me, and she'd sing to me. As soon as I could walk, she would tell my father, "Doctor, this boy has to learn how to dance," and she'd teach me how to dance the danzon and the cha cha cha. As I was telling Michael Verdick that, he said, "Okay, that's the first piece." That's how the whole record came about.

I was telling Michael about the first time I realized the clave. My mom and dad we're having a big party for their anniversary, and they had invited all these musicians who were their friends. The grown-ups brought their kids, and it was a huge party with dancing and singing. I remember I was playing tag with the other kids, and I ran right in front of the band, but I stopped short and thought, Check that out: That guy is playing those sticks, first three times and then two times. I

froze. I forgot about tag and just stared. From then, that rhythm just kept going in my head.

MD: You re-created that with a new song you wrote. Have you been writing for a long time?

Luis: Yes, and I've now written some songs for Tolu, the all-star band with Alex Acuna, Justo Almario, Harry Kim, Arturo Velasco, and John Pena. We're all so busy that we don't get to do many gigs, but we're working on a new album now. I also wrote a percussion piece for *Mana Unplugged* with Alex Gonzalez. I still play my guitar, so I come up with some of it that way. Writing is your true expression.

MD: What do you get from being a leader as opposed to being a sideman for someone else?

Luis: It's important for me to do because it's really me. Normally I play other people's music, and there's nothing wrong with that. But it's somebody else's record, somebody else's tour, somebody else's song. In your life, there's got to be a little bit of you that gets expressed. And here's the moment for me.



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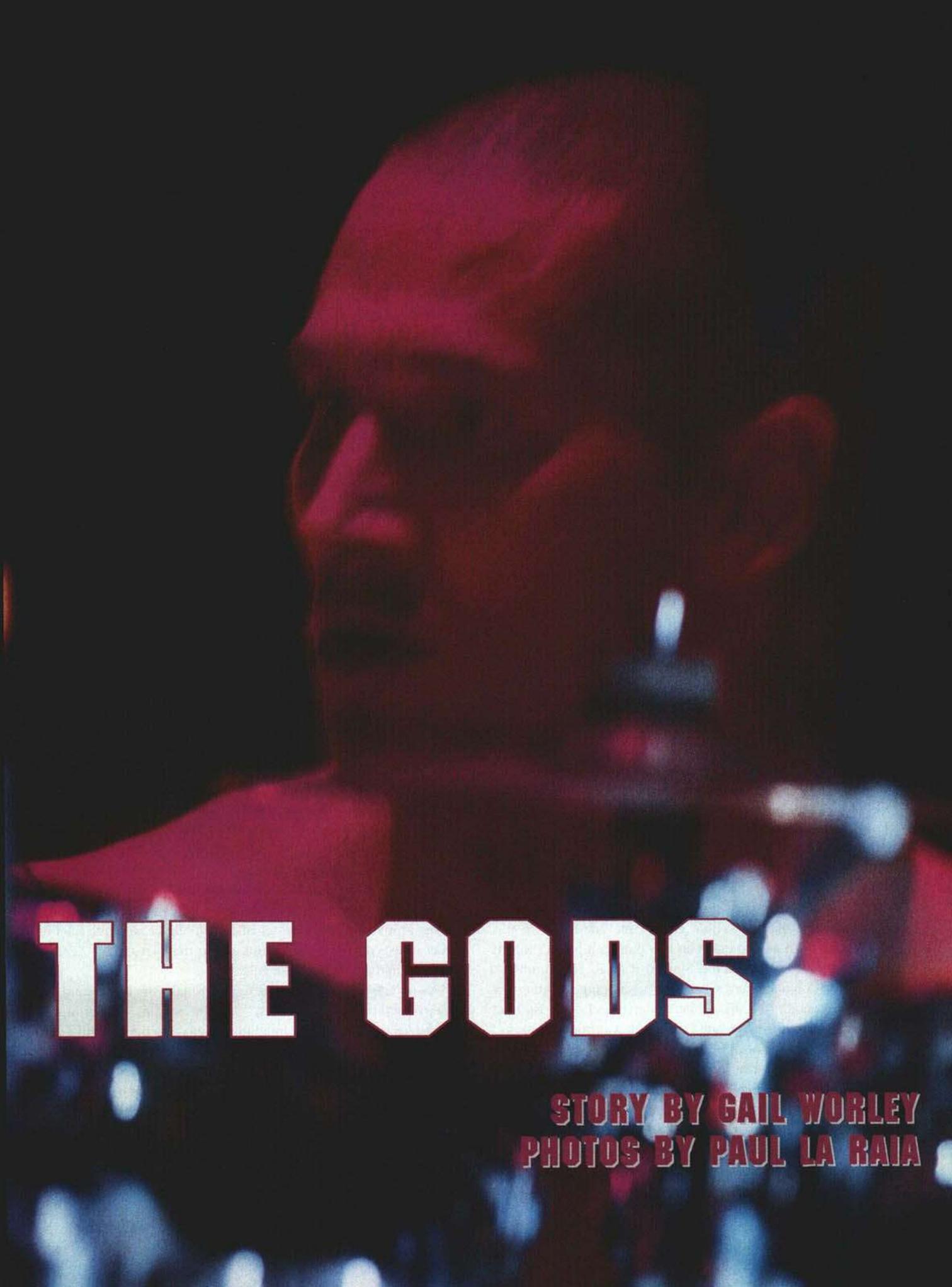
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GODSMACK'S

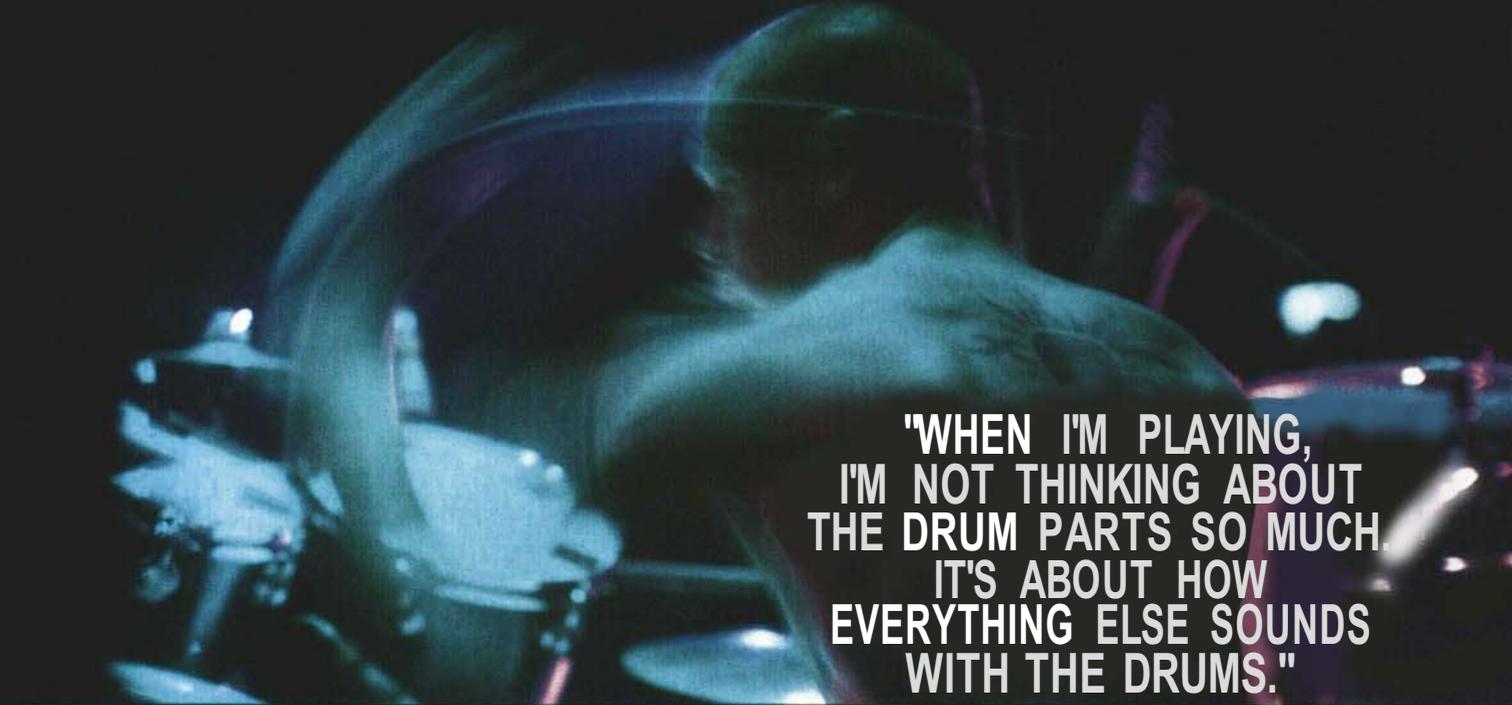
Tommy Stewart

HAMMER OF



THE GODS

STORY BY GAIL WORLEY
PHOTOS BY PAUL LA RAIA



**"WHEN I'M PLAYING,
I'M NOT THINKING ABOUT
THE DRUM PARTS SO MUCH.
IT'S ABOUT HOW
EVERYTHING ELSE SOUNDS
WITH THE DRUMS."**

Boston's Godsmack are a formidable contribution to the lush crop of "new metal" bands to emerge in the late '90s. Appearing almost to have come out of nowhere, in a short period of time these guys have quietly gone from total obscurity to selling over three million records. Their fierce musical assault blends classic heavy metal with the attitude of post-punk hardcore, often inspiring comparison to mid-period Metallica crossbred with Alice In Chains (whose song "God Smack" inspired their name). In the middle of their molten mix is the unassuming but wildly versatile percussive style of drummer Tommy Stewart.

The seed that would germinate and grow into the current incarnation of Godsmack was sown back in 1992, when Stewart first met vocalist Sully Erna (who is a drummer himself). Stewart had joined hair-metal hold-outs Lillian Axe (with whom he recorded one album, *Poetic Justice*), and Erna was drumming for a straightforward heavy rock band, Strip Mind. The two bands found themselves on tour together. "We just struck up a friendship, got to know each other, and kept in touch over the years," Stewart recalls. "In the summer of '95 he was out of Strip Mind and Lillian Axe was finished."

Stewart was living in Houston when he received a call from Erna. "He said he had a possible gig for me and said, 'You're going to laugh.'" Erna announced he was putting a project together and was going to sing, and did Stewart want to play drums? "I went out to Boston and heard what they were doing, and that was it. I joined the band." Bassist Robbie Merrill and guitarist Tony Rambola filled out the lineup, and Godsmack was born.

Thinking about what inspired him to pursue a career in music, Stewart remembers first hearing KISS as a young child and being "blown away," though at the time he related more to Ace Frehley than Peter Dinklage. "Then it just happened," he says. "I asked my mother for a drumset and she got me a little kit at Toys R Us. I proceeded to pretty much go through that in no time flat. I got a real kit when I was about nine or ten—around fifth grade—and started playing drums in the school band. In high school I played

in the jazz ensemble, and it took off from there. I remember my mom had brought me this case with a practice pad and a little xylophone. I think it cost \$75. My mother told me, 'I'll get this for you, but I don't want you to quit in a month.' And that was twenty-five years ago."

Godsmack's self-titled, triple platinum-selling 1998 debut was a slightly revamped major-label reissue of their 1997 indie debut, *All Wound Up*. Much of what was said about that record applies also to their sophomore effort, *Awake*: a polished and taut combination of Metallica riffs and quasi-industrial grooves, with Erna's tortured locals again recalling Layne Staley of Alice In Chains. As the album tracks, Godsmack's music becomes as physically manifest as a bruise, with Stewart's punishing beats and relentless grooves providing an intense but uncluttered approach to modern metal drumming.

Musically, the riffs and changes are solid, the production is crystal-clear, and Stewart's drumming is powerful as hell. "Vampires," the album's only instrumental, gives him a little more room to stretch, which he takes advantage of, while the disc's moody closer, "Spiral," with its open vocal harmonies and Middle-Eastern melodies, features some wicked tribal tom-toms.

Stewart claims he's got a straightforward approach to recording: "The role of the drums in a Godsmack song is to deliver and sustain the groove," he says matter-of-factly. "Since we have a lot of percussive-type riffs, the drums can either set up the feel or enhance what's there from the guitar riff.

"Our objective for *Awake* was to try to make the best record we could, something that moved us," Stewart explains. The drummer emphasizes that the band wanted to stay close to their original formula, determined not to overthink it due to the success of the first record. "For the first time in my career," he enthuses, "I'm a part of a band that got something on record that represents how it is live. Usually a band will sound a lot different—a lot stronger—live. But with *Awake* we were really able to capture that edge and the tension that we have live."

MD spoke with Tommy Stewart during a one-week break in Godsmack's relentless touring schedule.

MD: How did it happen that Sully played all the drums on your first record?

Tommy: When the band first formed, I was here in Boston for almost a year. But I left the band and went back to Los Angeles—to get out of the snow, is what I tell everyone. I probably just needed to figure some stuff out for myself. But I knew I didn't want to be in that type of climate. Waking up to the sun shining just has this huge affect on me internally, so it was probably a number of things that weren't lined up properly. That was at the very beginning of the band, and we had only done a handful of shows. I was gone for about a year and a half. In the meantime, they wanted to put together a CD to just basically promote themselves, before they actually had another drummer. Since Sully is a drummer anyway, he ended up playing on the tracks. Half the songs on the first record are from when we were all together in the beginning.

Sully and I just kept in touch, and they got to the point where they weren't really happy with the drummer they had. Sully said, "I'd like to have you back." I missed playing with them anyway, and it was something that made a lot of sense—one of those divine-intervention things I suppose. We all got back together and, as soon as I came back out, which was April of '98, it was like—bang! Everything just happened. It's been pretty non-stop since then. It's been crazy.

MD: Did you write all of your drum parts for *Awake*?

Tommy: It's a combination of Sully and me. Sully is a damn good drummer, and when he writes the songs, some of the guitar riffs that he comes up with are very percussive. He might already have an idea or a skeleton of a drum part in his head at that point. We'll get together at soundcheck and he'll say, "I have this idea, do this...." Sometimes it turns out to be exactly what he had in his head. Other times he'll shoot some ideas out and we'll bounce them off each other.

MD: There's a part in your live show—during the song "Get Up, Get Out"—where both you and Sully are onstage together playing separate kits. What's it like to have that dynamic live?

Tommy: It's totally awesome. You might have seen bands with two guys who play drums in the same band, but it's rare. Other than Phil Collins and Chester Thompson, I think it's rare that you have two guys who

can really play well. It's nice to have this approach and it's fun, because we really play well together. Even though we think differently from time to time about drum parts, we play pretty similarly. It's one of the high points of the show for the fans and for us as well.

MD: What's in your setup?

Tommy: It's a DW kit, with a 4 1/2x14 solid maple snare, 10x10 and 12x12 rack toms, a 16x16 floor tom, and an 18x20 kick. I just got that kick and I really love it. The heads are all Remo, the sticks are Vic Firth American Classic Rock models, and I use a combination of Zildjian A and Z series cymbals.

I have a couple of ddrum pads I'm using for triggering sounds, mostly 808 sounds, during a little hip-hop section in one of the songs. Then I have a Roland TD5 brain interfaced with a ddrum brain. The Roland brain has got some decent sounds, but the strength of the ddrum brain is it's really good for triggering sounds. I use those pads because you can actually tighten the heads and make them respond fast, slow, or however you want.

MD: You appear to be sitting pretty low when you play. What advantages does that give you?

Tommy: I used to sit high, but then I sat lower. I think it actually slows my speed down a little bit. But since I'm not playing anything that's really too demanding speed-wise, I like sitting lower because I can dig in a little more. I just feel like if I sit low I can absolutely lay into the kit and actually swing through the drums. It's almost like martial

arts, where they tell you if you punch towards someone's chest you're not actually stopping the punch at the chest; you're punching through the chest. That's how I play drums.

MD: What do you like in your monitor mix?

Tommy: I like it to sound like a stereo. The only thing I don't have is Tony, our guitar player's vocals—which absolutely no one should have in their monitors, [laughs] I don't have much snare at all, although in the bigger outdoor venues I do. But mostly it's kick and toms and then a little bit of everything else to make it sound like a big stereo.

MD: Godsmack songs are all very heavy. Do you feel that you have enough creative freedom within the domain of the material that Sully writes?

Tommy: Yeah. What happens is—and this is the beauty of having two drummers in the band—a lot of times I may not think of something that could be put in a song to spice it up, where Sully might, and vice versa. In that respect, there's all the freedom that's possible. This type of music isn't Rush—I'm not sure I could play like that, let alone think about putting something like that in one of our songs. It wouldn't fit. What's more important is what fits in the songs musically, not all the possible things you can do to it.

MD: Would you call yourself a song-oriented drummer?

Tommy: Yes, definitely. I'm not the most technical drummer. I think I *wanted* to be at one time, but I realized that that wasn't really where it was at for me. As I get older it seems like the song is more important to me





than the part I'm playing. But that doesn't mean that bands that have busier drummers—take Tool for instance—have drum parts that are too extravagant. If it fits the song, it fits what they're doing.

MD: Are there any songs on *Awake* that are particularly inspiring or challenging to play?

Tommy: That's funny, I remember reading an article on Neil Peart where somebody asked him that question, and he said, "Well, 'Tom Sawyer' is challenging to play every single night." So, it's one thing to play it, but he actually thought of this and created this part. He's obviously on a different level, and you just go, "This is challenging for you?" He makes it sound so easy. Given all that, I think a lot of times every song you do is a challenge. It seems like it's second-nature, but I really have to concentrate and see if I can squeeze something else out of it.

When I'm playing, I'm not thinking about the parts so much. It's about how everything else sounds *with* the drums. It's not about

me necessarily being right on, it's about us being together. That's the cool part. I think a lot of that feeling also has come from being on the road so much.

MD: What drummers have influenced you?

Tommy: The first drummer I really got into was Neil Peart. I don't think I would ever want to meet him, because I just wouldn't know what to say. His playing is so cerebral. Then I remember listening to Tommy Aldridge, and then I got a dose of Motley Crue's "Shout At The Devil" with Tommy Lee, and it was all over from there.

Godsmack toured with Tommy's Methods Of Mayhem, and it took me three and a half weeks to approach him. He was very personable and very humble and just a great guy. He was the first person I remember really playing like a freak. I mean, arms swinging everywhere—he's very long-limbed—and the stuff was just flying everywhere. It was a whole different thing from what I'd seen before. I mean, Neil Peart def-

initely plays aggressively, but I'd never seen this. That's where it really took off for me.

From there, just about everyone that I hear, I can find something in their style that is really cool. One of my new favorites—a great guy and a fantastic drummer—is Morgan Rose from Sevendust. He's really motivational.

MD: With all of the touring the band has done, would you say that you prefer playing live to playing in the studio?

Tommy: I do, yeah. We try to work things out in a live situation before it's ever even put down [in the studio]. When you play something live, as a unit, it takes on a whole new life form; it's instant gratification. You can put it out there, and hopefully the response comes right back to you and it's a never-ending cycle until the show is over with. In the studio, on the other hand, it's good because you get to enjoy the beauty of something that, at the end, has been created out of nothing. But playing live is always more exciting. We're definitely a live band.

MD: Are you personally surprised by the level of success Godsmack has achieved?

Tommy: Oh, no question. I don't think any of us would have expected this. We definitely welcome it, but we're surprised just about every day. I think the band is pretty popular, but it's not like we're on the cover of every magazine. It's a little more of an organic process. There's no question a lot of it was due to word of mouth. Our fans are extremely important to us.



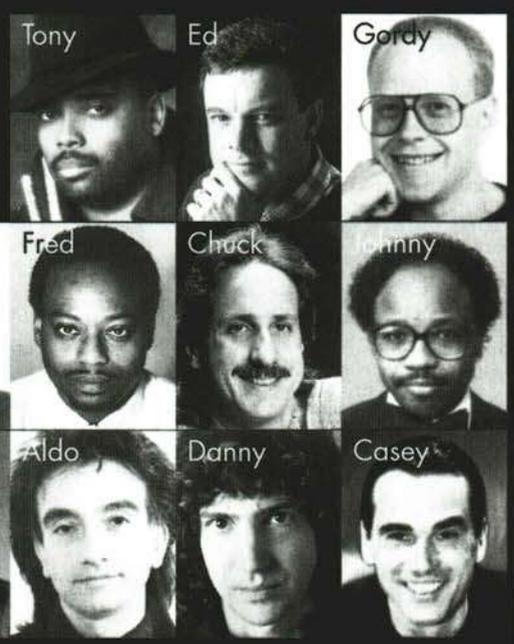
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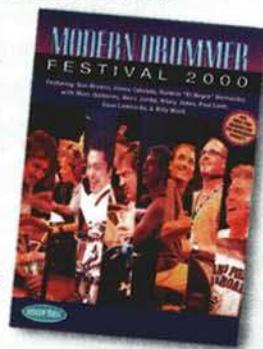
More than just an amazing audio and video record of the first major drumming event of the new millennium, the new Millennium Festival Weekend Video Collection now includes the world's first and only drumming DVD. The three-tape series and advanced DVD were produced and directed by Hudson Music's award-winning producers **Rob Wallis and Paul Siegel** (founders of DCI Music Video™) to give you a front row seat at the Festival and then some.



Festival 2000 Saturday/Video (80 minutes) includes excerpts of Saturday's great performances by **Tony Medeiros, Street Beats, Dave Lombardo, Paul Leim, Don Brewer, Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez & Musical Guests** (featuring **Marc Quifiones**) plus backstage footage, interviews, and more!

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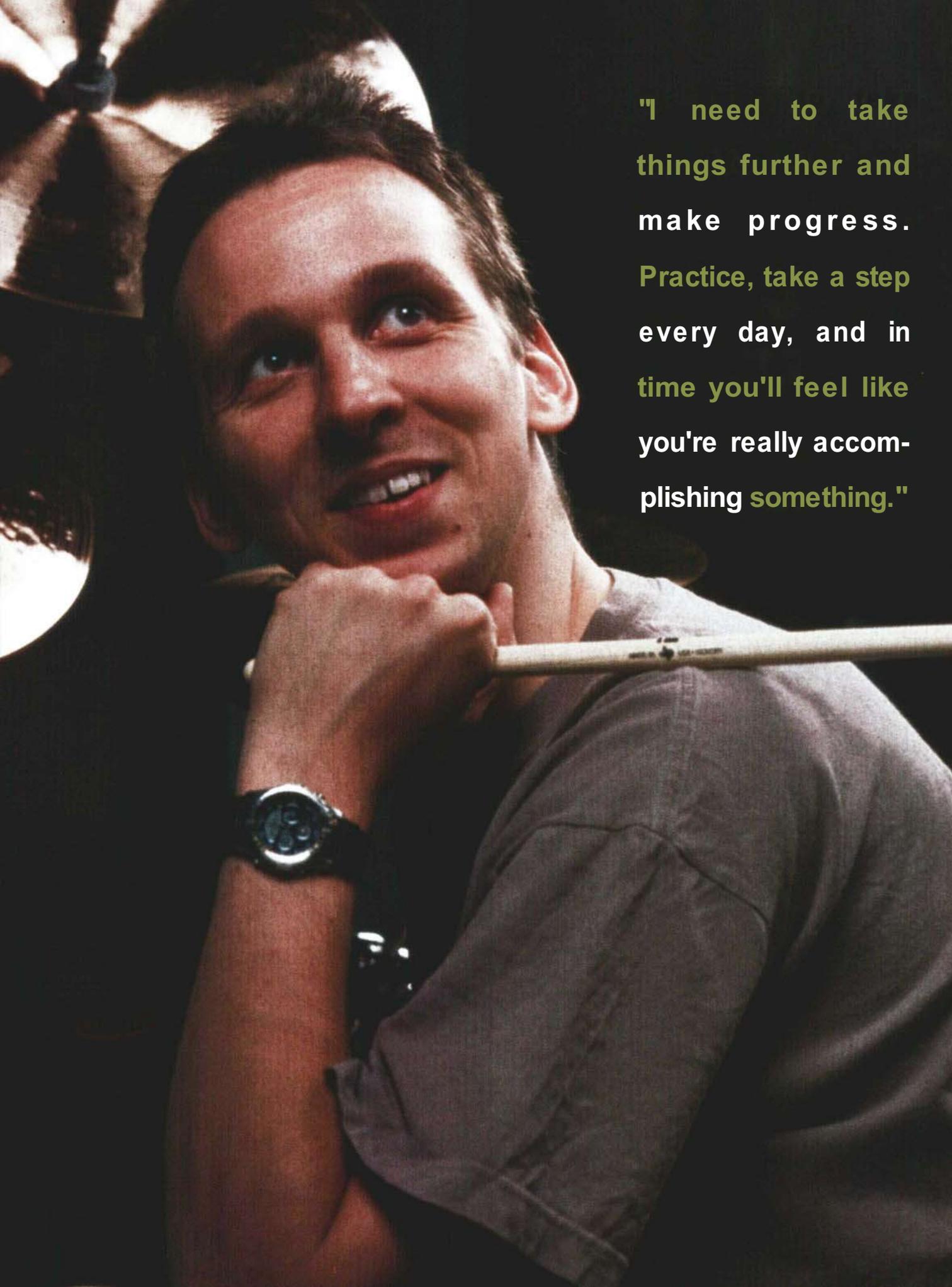
In the past two years, Marco Minnemann has performed at the three biggest drum festivals in North America: the Modern Drummer Festival, the Montreal Drum Fest, and PASIC. At each event he amazed the audiences with his astounding technique and musical abilities. While virtually unknown in America, this twenty-nine-year-old German has made a lasting impression and created a buzz that is spreading among drummers like wildfire.

Even though Minnemann is quickly becoming the next drum god, he points out that it's the music—and not just the pursuit of technique—that drives him. "It's very important for people to listen to the music itself," he says, "not just my technique. I'm a technical drummer, of course. But in the past few years while writing music I've learned to be careful with the music itself. It's very important. This was a huge step for me and my soloing—to try to *compose* on the drums."

Like many drummers, Marco had the usual childhood aspirations. "At age six I started organ lessons for about three years," he recalls. "Then I got bored and started to play guitar, which I'm glad I did because now I can play guitar on my records. Then I switched to the drumset at eleven years old. I have to say that I always had the dream of being a drummer. When I was very young I'd play on pillows along to records by Queen, KISS, and even Jethro Tull. Eventually my father bought me my first small-size drumkit, one of the old Remo PTS kits with the drumheads that you didn't need to tune."

From there, Minnemann studied with famed American free-jazz drummer Abbey Rader, who lived in Germany for many years. "Abbey was very influential and taught me *Syncopation*, *Stick Control*, and of course his own book," Marco says. "That was very good, because at that point I only wanted to play what I was listening to, which was heavy metal. It was very important that I had Abbey to show me the 'real stuff.' I can remember when I first worked out the double-stroke roll, it was like the real thing for me. I wanted to take it further. From there I bought several books, like Gary Chester's *New Breed*, which became very important for my independence."





"I need to take things further and make progress. Practice, take a step every day, and in time you'll feel like you're really accomplishing something."

at

thirteen years old, Marco played in his first band, a jazz trio. "We played standards," he says, "like 'Girl From Ipanema.' Later on I joined a couple of bands doing hard rock things, and that led to some studio work. And musically I was branching out.

When I was sixteen I transcribed all of Frank Zappa's music. He became a *big* influence on me, both from the playing and composing side. Frank is one of the musicians I really would like to have played with. He's very influential on my whole musical life."

Of course you can't talk about Zappa without mentioning the great drummers who worked with him. "His drummers

were a huge influence," Marco admits. "Vinnie Colaiuta and Terry Bozzio were my biggest influences in those days. And Chad Wackerman, too. I think he was with Frank the longest. You know, people always think of Vinnie or Terry first, but Chad is great because he did the job that Frank needed. He played everything exactly at the right time and played the right notes. It was cool stuff, too. I like

the records Chad did, like the last two live ones, *Make A Jazz Noise* and *Broadway The Hard Way*. They were amazing."

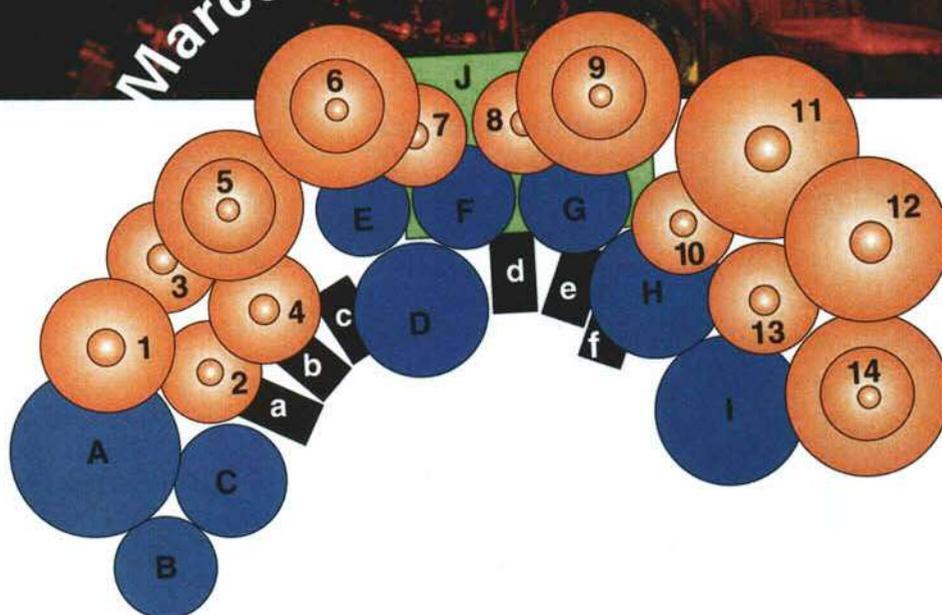
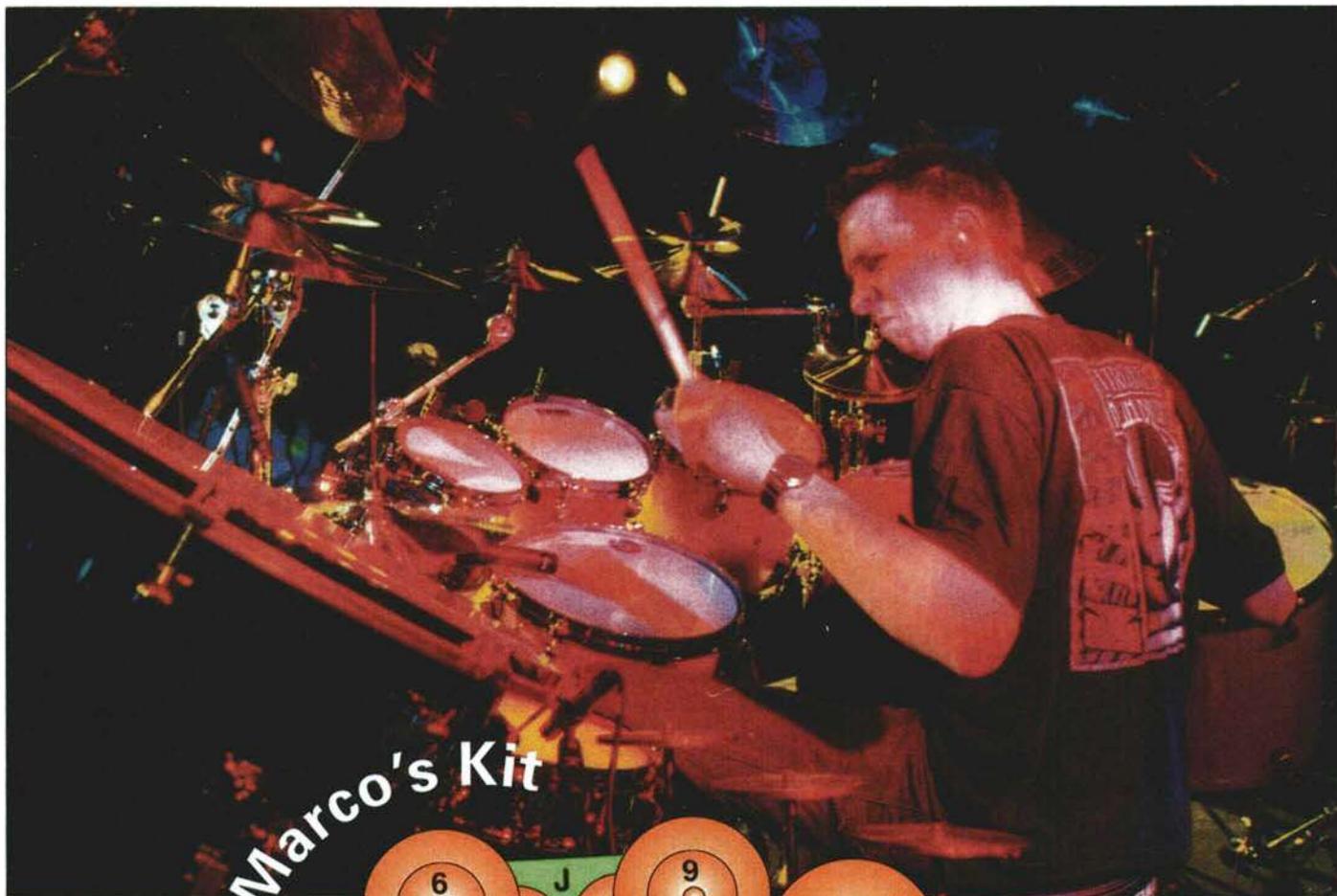
Zappa's influence looms large over much of Marco's early work. "What made me like Zappa's music was his virtuosity," he says. "That was pretty cool because he mixed different styles of music and did it well. The complexity of the music itself, and how he combined things like reggae, jazz, and Latin music in the same show, was amazing. So I liked both the technical side and the musical side. You can hear Zappa's musical influence on my first few records."

In Germany, Marco is probably best known for his band *Illegal Aliens*, which he shares with his wife, vocalist Artemis. The band has so far recorded four albums of very intense and demanding music, with the first two, *Thickness* and *Red Alibis*, featuring many of the techniques Zappa favored. Meter and style changes abound, as well as unison sequenced vibe/marimba runs combined with very intricate drum parts. With the vocals of Artemis, the music also resembles Terry Bozzio's '80s band, *Missing Persons*. But it's unfair to label Marco as a sort of Zappa clone, as his influences are varied, and he's come up with his own unique style.

"When I started the band," Marco says, "I was listening to very intense mood stuff, like Peter Gabriel. Sting was a big influence too. For songwriting, XTC is also a great band. These were all important influences on my music. I think my latest records don't sound like Zappa that much anymore; I feel that I've developed my own compositional style. That's very important to me. I probably spent more time composing music and thinking about it than playing drums. Also, when I write songs, they usually don't grow from the drums, but come from an idea or a mood I want to create."

Illegal Aliens is very much a two-person band, with Marco composing all the music, programming the sequences, and playing bass, guitar, and drums. Artemis provides vocals and lyrics. The last two records, *International Telephone* and *Time*, show his growth as a composer and musician. "*International Telephone*, which I divided into two projects, has an intense feeling," Marco states. "I started





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- A. 20" gong drum
- B. 5x10 snare
- C. 5x12 Simon Phillips signature snare
- D. 4x14 snare
- E. 8x8 tom
- F. 9x10 tom
- G. 10x12 tom
- H. 12x14 tom
- I. 14x16 tom
- J. 18x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Meinl

- 1. 14" One Of A Kind China with mirror finish
- 2. 10" hi-hats (made from two Amun splashes)
- 3. 12" Custom Cymbal Shop splash

- 4. 12".Amun medium hi-hats
- 5. 8" Classics low bell mounted on top of 16" Amun thin crash
- 6. 8" Classics medium bell mounted on top of 18" One Of A Kind China with mirror finish
- 7&8. 10" One Of A Kind splash with mirror finish
- 9. 8" Classics low bell with rivets mounted on top of 18" One Of A Kind China with antique finish
- 10. 10" hi-hats (Candela splash top, Candela low bell bottom)
- 11. 20" Amun medium ride with big bell
- 12. 18" One Of A Kind China with mirror finish
- 13. 12" hi-hats (Candela splash top, Candela Jingle Bell bottom)

- 14. 8" Classics powerful bell mounted on top of 18" Amun medium crash

Pedals:Tama

- a. cable hi-hat for #2 above
- b. main hi-hat for #4 above
- c. left bass drum pedal (Iron Cobra)
- d. right bass drum pedal (Iron Cobra)
- e. cable hi-hat for #10 above
- f. cable hi-hat for #13 above

Hardware: Tama

Heads: Evans

Sticks: Pro-Mark Marco Minnemann model

Microphones:AKG

Marco Minnemann

writing at the keyboards, the guitar, and even just from the lyrics. I tried to get into the right mood. My favorite songs off these records are 'Snowing' and 'Fate.'"

These moodier tracks show a real depth to Marco's compositional skills. "The next record is going to be even more like this," he says, "a real moody kind of thing. These songs represent the direction I want to continue in."

Don't worry, drum fans, Marco hasn't forgotten you. "I still want to do my solo records," he laughs. "I have to have some complicated stuff together to satisfy the drummer's world."

"Speaking of my solo recordings," Marco adds, "*Comfortably Homeless* and *The Green Mindbomb* feature the things I write from the drumset. I keep a book at home that I write all of my practice ideas and drumming concepts in. My everyday practice routine consists of about three hours on the drums, and then three or four hours composing music. I don't practice the same things every day. I need to take things further and make progress. Practice, take a step every day, and in time you'll feel like you're really accom-



plishing something. To do that you just have to be constant. I tell myself this every day. So maybe there's an ostinato, a lick, or a groove that really catches me. I try to keep it in the book or I record it

with a stereo microphone on a mini-disc player. A few songs from my last solo record came from the drumset itself. I create a drum part and compose music on top."

Marco's newest recording is an intense hardcore project dubbed "Braindead." "It's different, isn't it? I was in a band in the early '90s called Freaky Fukin' Weirdoz, which was pretty hardcore. Braindead is me, the guitar player from the Weirdoz [Werner "Riff Kiffa" Zeigten], and Artemis. This is a side of music I love. Most of the people who know of me in the US know me for *Illegal Aliens* or the more complicated stuff. But what I actually played before was hardcore music. I love to listen to it. I still like songs like 'Battery' from Metallica's *Master Of Puppets* or stuff by The Deftones. Led Zeppelin's been a big influence, too.

"I like to not only be a good technical player all the time," Marco continues, "but to also be aggressive. So this band is just a very 'in your face' hardcore project. It's one of my dreams to create good hardcore music. The idea is to do it but also not be too rude—to have a melodic kind of style, too."

With The Weirdoz, Marco played a heavy, forceful style, yet he brought in his technical ability. If you can imagine Vinnie Colaiuta playing in a punk band

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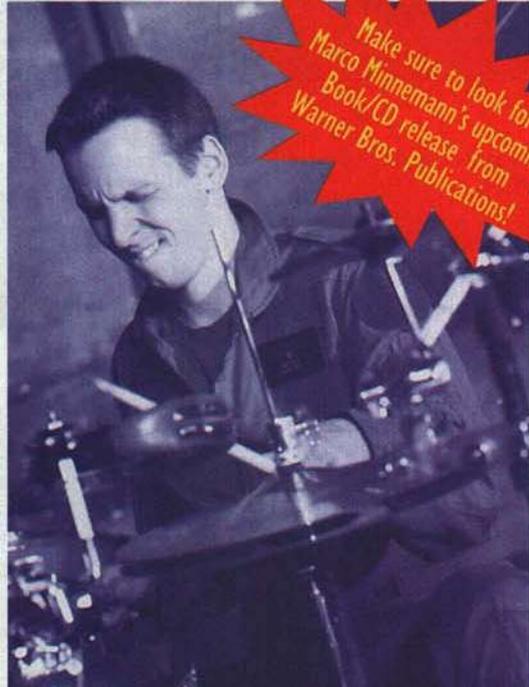
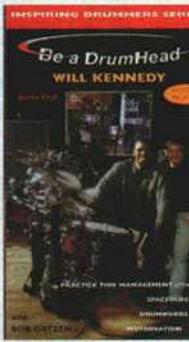
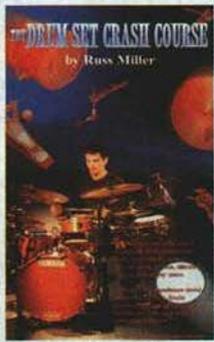
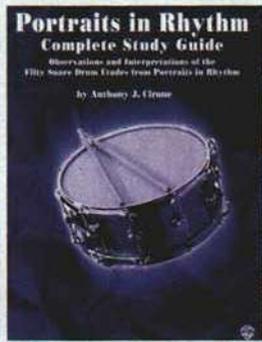
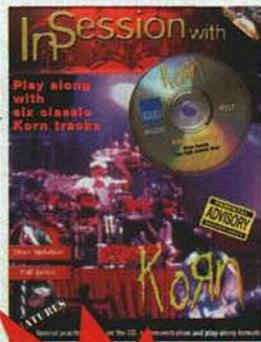
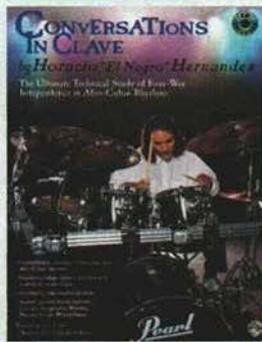
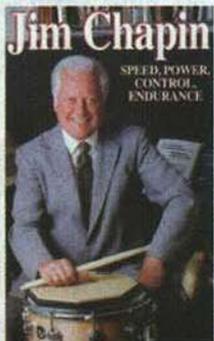
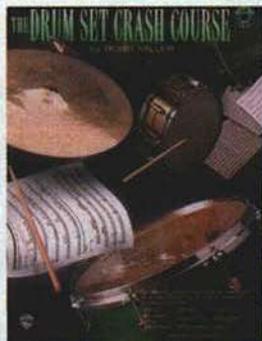
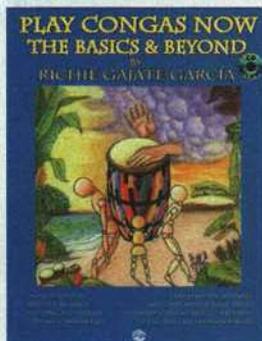
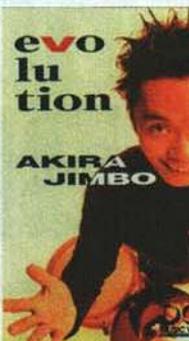
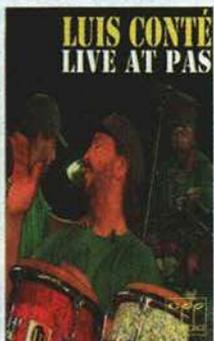
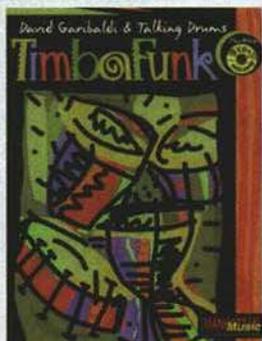
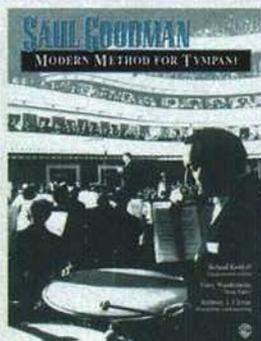
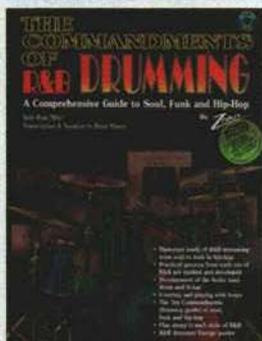
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These are the albums that Marco says best represent his playing.

Artist	Album
Freaky Fukin'Weirdoz	Senseless Wonder
Freaky Fukin'Weirdoz	Mao Mak Maa
Freaky Fukin'Weirdoz	Hit Me With Your Rhythm Stick
Freaky Fukin'Weirdoz	Culture Shock
Freaky Fukin' Weirdoz	Hula
H-Blockx	Fly Eyes
Illegal Aliens	Thickness
Illegal Aliens	Red Alibis
Illegal Aliens	Time
Illegal Aliens	International Telephone
Marco Minnemann	The Green Mindbomb
Marco Minnemann	Comfortably Homeless

Marco's *Illegal Aliens* and solo recordings are available on his Web site at www.marcominnemann.de.



Go to www.moderndrummer.com and click on the MD Radio icon to hear selected Marco Minnemann tracks.

you'll get the idea. "The Weirdoz still exist," he says, "and we recently did a record that just came out. The band started in 1990 and became quite a big success all over Europe and pretty influential on the whole European hardcore scene. In the last four years it became sort of a hobby for me. We meet every two years to make a record."

Even Marco's hardcore playing is sub-

tle and tasteful. "I always try to play as musically as I can," he says. "It's not just about bashing the hell out of the drums. I try to put something musical into it, like a compositional idea. Actually, back in the early days the band would complain about that. For them it was like, 'Hey, we don't know what you're playing. We can't count that,' or, 'Please don't play that fill, because it confuses us.' Yeah,

we had our fights about those types of things."

Marco was also a member of one of Germany's most popular hardcore bands, H-Blockx, recording their *Fly Eyes* CD and playing over two hundred gigs with them. "This was the most successful project I've done," Marco admits. "I wrote some of the songs, and the record went gold in Germany. H-Blockx is a very successful band in Europe. But to be honest, it was not one of my favorite projects. We had so much trouble in the band. H-Blockx was a big fight all the way. For instance, I was invited to play the *Modern Drummer* festival last year, but the band didn't want me to do it because, as they put it, 'You have to be a 100% dedicated punk drummer to be in our band.' Or with the Illegal Aliens records, they were like, 'What are you, some sort of jazz guy?' I didn't like this because there's so much more I want to play. I didn't understand that attitude. I love to play with everyone, and that band wouldn't leave me space to do my own thing. So I quit last year."

With all of the time spent working in a band, it's amazing Marco could find the time to work on his own projects. "I wrote some very important songs for the last records while I was on the road. I always have my sequencer with me and if I have any time in the hotel room I start composing music. Songs from *International Telephone* were written on tour with H-Blockx at soundcheck or in hotel rooms."

One of Marco's other activities is doing drum clinics. In fact, he's in great demand around Europe, as drummers from across the continent are eager to see him demonstrate his technical virtuosity. "At my clinics," Marco explains, "I start off playing a couple of tunes, then do some soloing. Then I try to break it down, explaining my concept of independence. It's something I call 'side independence,' where you learn to play things like paradiddles on the left side against reverse paradiddles with the right side. I give examples and explain how to do it. I also cover the finger control and foot techniques I've learned. My clinics have a very loose, conversational approach, where I try to get people to understand what I'm doing. Maybe I'm not the typical sort of clinician who talks a lot,

because I really like to play; my clinics are like a mini concert. But I also take questions. I try to have as much fun as I can. That's what I'm here for." For those up to the challenge, Marco has a book and video coming out, which explain his various techniques and exercises.

As for equipment, Marco plays a Tama Starclassic drumset and Meinl cymbals. "I use three hi-hats, with one cable hi-hat pedal set up on my right that I play with my right foot and the other cable hi-hat on the left side of my main hi-hat. What I do is play rudiments with my feet—maybe ratamacues between the hi-hats—and then play accents with the left hand while keeping a groove on the ride cymbal with my right hand. It works out pretty well. I also do some combinations on the foot pedals that are like tap-dancing moves. It's an interesting technique. It creates some fun grooves, and with the hi-hats set up in a stereo kind of way, it sounds very interesting.

"I like smaller hi-hat cymbals," Marco continues. "My cable hats are 10" and 13",

and they have jingles in the bottom cymbal, so it's a different effect. My main hi-hat is a 12" from Meinl's Amun series. They sound very crisp. I like them very much. In general, I like hi-hats and ride cymbals that sound short and crisp. I also mount little bell cymbals upside down on top of my larger cymbals so I can play melodies with them. It's something I learned from watching Terry Bozzio. Like I mentioned, he's such a big influence on me. But I also think my style is very different from his. We both like to work with ostinatos, but Terry has a very orchestral approach, while I try to be sort of a groove drummer."

Trying to find Marco's recordings can be a challenge. Unless you are at one of his clinics, you won't find them in stores here in the States. "I sell my recordings on the internet," he says. "That way I can do whatever I want with my songs and don't have to answer to a record company. It's my record company."

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MD VISITS BRANSON

Looking for a great gig? Head for the hills!

by Rick Van Horn

Quick: Name the entertainment capital of the world.

I'll give you a hint: It's not in the Nevada desert, on the Jersey Shore, or in central Florida.

It's Branson, Missouri—a tiny town in the Ozark mountains. Surprised? Actually, Branson's claim to the "entertainment capital" title is hard to dispute. Its 4,000 residents play host to almost seven *million* visitors per year, who eat in over 350 restaurants, sleep in more than 20,000 hotel rooms, and spend over a *billion* dollars.

But the stats of greatest interest to *Modern Drummer* readers are these: Branson is home to more than forty theaters, containing close to 60,000 seats. (That's more than in New York City's Broadway district.) Each of those theaters presents *live* musical entertainment, up to three times a day, six to seven days a week! And there are no "canned music" production shows or "self-contained" acts from out of town. The artists who perform in Branson live in and around Branson. And so do the musicians who play for those artists. In short, this little Ozark mountain town has become a Shangri-La for players seeking full-time employment at the world-class level.

Branson offers a wide variety of entertainment—and job opportunities for drummers. Just a sampling includes (clockwise from top left): "50s At The Hop (Dino Phillips), The Jim Stafford Show (Rick Inmon), The Pierce Arrow Show (Doug Huffman), Country Tonite (John Brown), Legends In Concert (Brian McRae), The Mickey Gilley Show (Gary Cornelius), The Moe Bandy Show (Nick Ochoa), The Shoji Tabuchi Show (Sam Kallaos and Robin Hendry), and (center) The Mel Tillis Show (Chuck Landry).





How It Started

Situated amid beautiful lakes and forests, Branson has been a popular vacation destination for almost a century. It caught the entertainment bug in 1954, when country singer Red Foley broadcast his Ozark Jubilee TV program from nearby Springfield, Missouri. A short time later some families in the area figured that campers might appreciate something to fill their evenings. So they began staging country music shows. The first theater on Highway 76 (now known as the Branson "strip") was built in 1967 by the Presley family. (No, not *that* Presley family.) Thirty-three years later, they're still packing 'em in.

But the entertainment scene really exploded in 1991, when CBS's *60 Minutes* dubbed Branson the "country music Mecca." Dozens of major artists—country and otherwise—came to share in the bonanza. Stars like Mel Tillis, Mickey Gilley, Andy Williams, Willie Nelson, Tony Orlando, The Osmond Brothers, Johnny Cash, Charlie Pride, Glen Campbell, Ray Stevens, Bobby Vinton, Roy Clark, Boxcar Willie, and Jim Stafford opened their own theaters. Other venues offered major revue/variety shows, while still others presented smaller-scale productions in theaters built into shopping malls.

Just outside of town is Silver Dollar City. A major theme park offering rides and other attractions, it also boasts its own roster of live entertainment, including the *Branson Belle* showboat. And with the influx of tourists has come an accompanying growth of peripheral activities. The Branson strip abounds with shops, go-kart tracks, mini-golf courses, and water parks.

What sets Branson apart from other entertainment-oriented cities, like Las Vegas, Atlantic City, or Orlando, is that the major draw *is* the entertainment. Not gambling, thrill rides, or movie re-creations. High-quality live musical entertainment is the foundation upon which everything else is built.

Drummers And Their Gigs

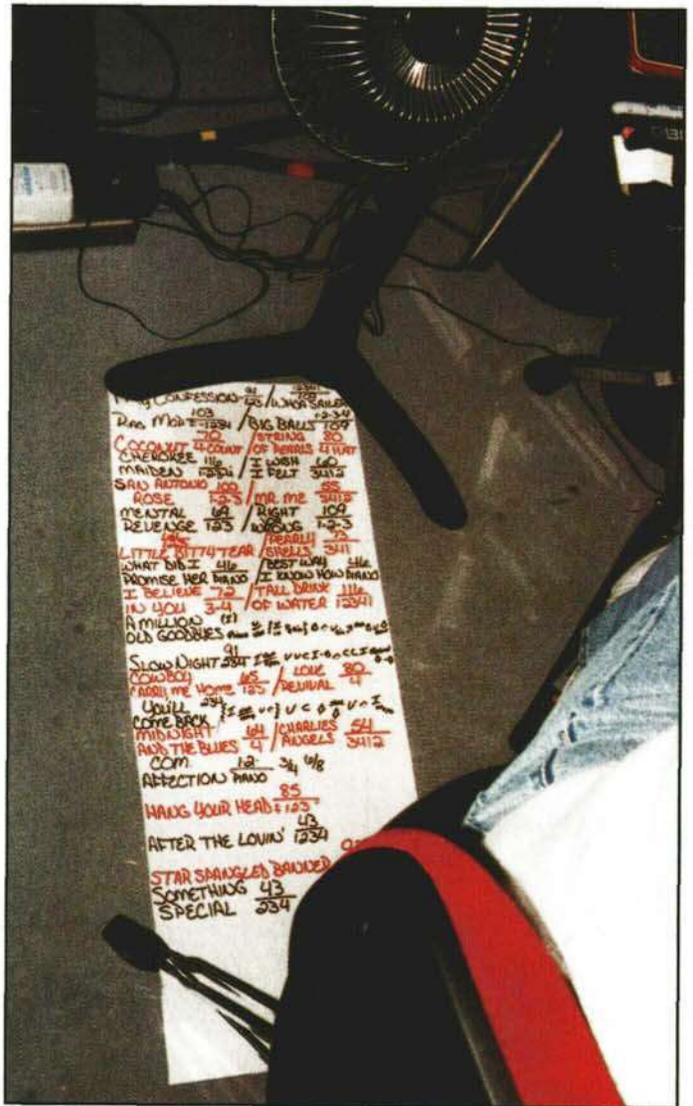
The drummers who play on Branson's stages are some of the most capable to be found anywhere. They have to be, because of the caliber of artists they work for and the variety of styles they're required to play. During MD's visit to Branson we saw several of those drummers perform, and we met many others during a memorable roundtable discussion held specifically for this story.

Louisiana-born **Chuck Landry** came to Branson by way of Nashville. For the past three years he's played for country superstar Mel Tillis in Branson's largest artist-owned facility. Mel's showroom boasts 2,700 seats, a rain curtain, and the largest permanent installation of moving stage lights in the world.

Mike Jackson's main gig is *Down Home Country*—a matinee show in the 76 Music Hall. But at the time of our interview he was also playing a pop/country breakfast show at the Legends theater. And at night he was anchoring a country/rock band at a local club.

Dino Phillips plays for *'50s At The Hop*, a '50s/'60s rock 'n' roll revue. Voted Branson "drummer of the year" for 1999 and 2000, Dino also gets off the drums and sings in the show as part of a doo-wop group.

At the time of our interview, **Brian McRae** was part of a crack four-piece rock band for the *Legends In Concert* show.



Major artists often have hundreds of songs to call on for their shows. Chuck Landry's "crib sheet" uses the Nashville number system to indicate tempos and arrangements for many of Mel Tillis's hits.



In Branson it helps to be multi-talented. Drummer for *'50s At The Hop* Dino Phillips (center) gets off the kit to sing in a doo-wop medley.

They back up talented performers who do amazingly authentic imitations of artists like Michael Jackson, Whitney Houston, The Blues Brothers, Rod Stewart, Cher, and Elvis.

Drummer **Robin Hendry** and percussionist **Sam Kallaos** play for Shoji Tabuchi—Branson's answer to Liberace. Shoji's spectacular variety show features lasers, pyrotechnics, and dancers flying off the stage and over the audience. The eighteen-piece orchestra and six backup singer/dancers are situated on tiered risers behind curtains that are frequently closed for production numbers and soloists. Robin and Sam must coordinate much of their performances using TV monitors.

B.J. Rossi's background is as a pop, jazz, and R&B drummer. But his current

gig is with legendary cowboy singers The Sons Of The Pioneers. Says B.J., "The night before I got the gig with the Pioneers I was playing in a heavy funk band. The next day I was playing brushes on 'Tumbling Tumbleweeds.' It was a major contrast."

Nick Ochoa is a long-time member of Moe Bandy's Americana band. When Moe moved to Branson several years ago, Nick came too. Moe is a country singer/songwriter with dozens of albums to his credit. "We do a band number and a couple of solo spots for the girls in the show," says Nick. "Other than that, it's Moe's hits. And to get them all into a two-hour show, we are a medley band. Medleys from hell!"

Rick Inmon has played with musical

comedian Jim Stafford for over five years. "At one time I played with a Dixieland group that did all Spike Jones comedy music," says Rick. "That set me up pretty well for my gig with Jim. He's a throw-back to vaudeville comedy, and he just loves anyone who can add to the comic element of the show."

Doug Huffman plays for country/gospel vocal quartet Pierce Arrow and comedian Paul Harris. It's a high-energy show, but it's still quite a departure from Doug's previous gig, touring with the classic rock band Boston.

John Brown came up through the Nashville scene and has toured with Donna Fargo and Loretta Lynn. At the time of our interview he was anchoring a massive revue called *Country Tonight*,

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

Although the best way to really investigate the Branson scene is to visit in person, that's not your only option. Information is readily available from the Branson/Lakes Area Chamber Of Commerce & Convention & Visitors Bureau, PO Box 1897, Branson, MO 65615, (800) 214-3661, www.bransonchamber.com. Promotional materials for the theaters contain mailing addresses, phone numbers, and even Web sites. That information can help you contact the musical directors of the various shows for the purpose of sending promo packs or asking about audition opportunities.

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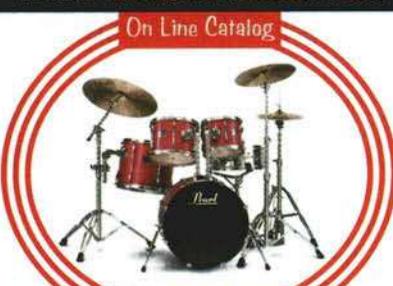
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Branson

which is presented in a 2,000-seat theater. With singers, dancers, trick rope artists, comedians, and instrumental soloists, the show is non-stop action from the down-beat to the final chord.

The term "country artist" doesn't necessarily mean all twang. Mickey Gilley's show combines country fiddles and steel guitars with Gilley's honky-tonk piano and the hottest horn section in town—testing drummer **Gary Cornelius's** ability to lay down a serious groove. Says Gary of his gig, "Gilley's Urban Cowboy Band is

like a high-powered car, and I'm driving. And I'd better have eaten my *Wheaties*."

Other drummers and percussionists who took part in our roundtable discussion include **Jeff Barker** (The Platters), **Doug Clifford** (Bobby Vinton), **Tom Dostal** (Andy Williams), **Rich Havens** and **Al Lohman** (*Lawrence Welk* show), **Bill Loden** (Horn Dawgs), **Kevin Lyons** (*Breakfast With The Classics* and *King's Classic Country*), and **Tim Pope** (Tony Melindez).

The Working Environment

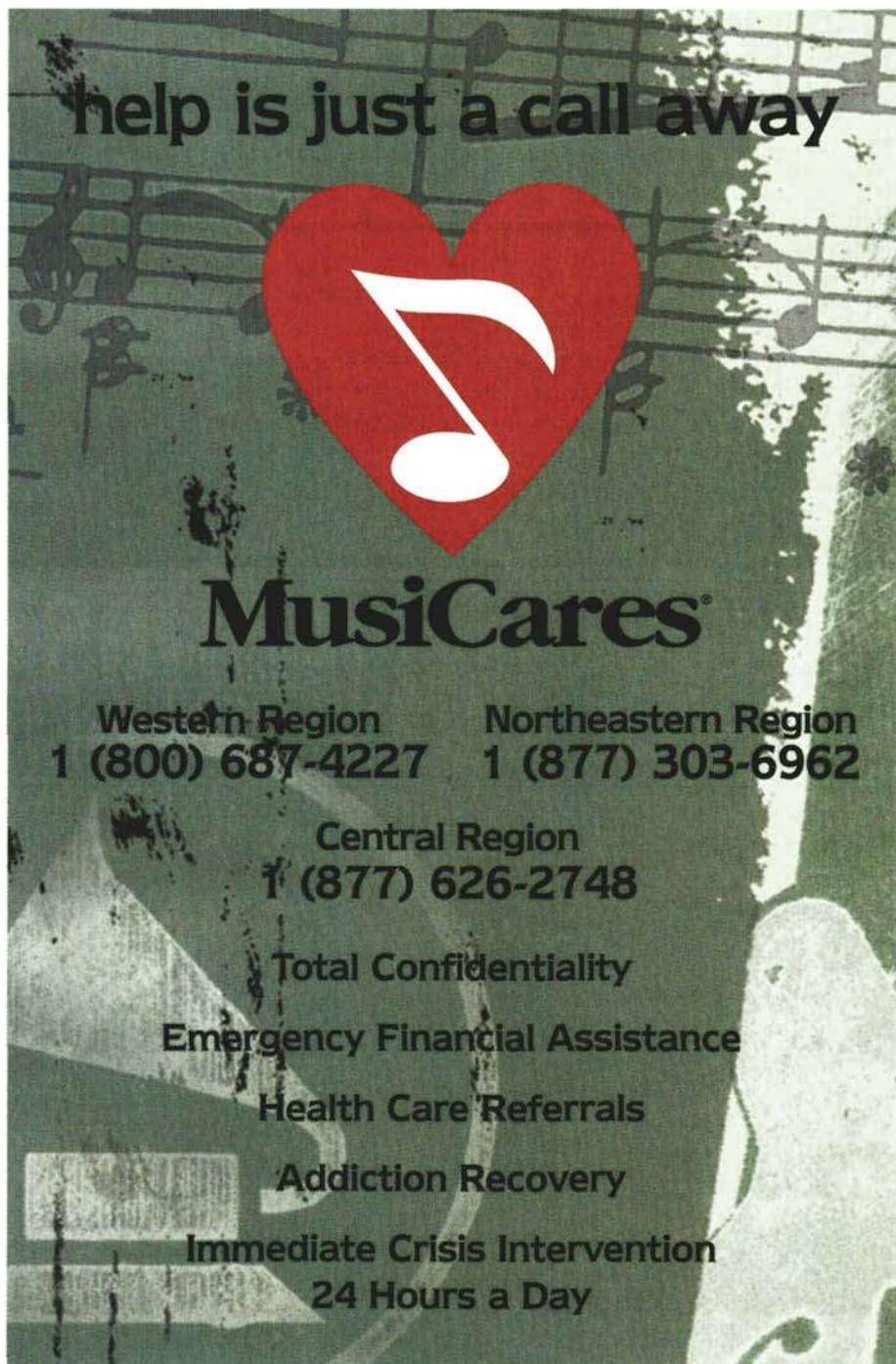
Branson's theaters offer a wide variety of working situations. Most shows feature acoustic drumkits. Nick Ochoa plays an acoustic kit, but triggers all of the drums. Jeff Barker uses a completely electronic setup. Monitor systems vary from standard floor wedges to in-ear systems. John Brown sub-mixes his drums and his own monitor mix into headphones.

Physical playing situations can sometimes prove challenging. The Mel Tillis band plays on a motorized riser that moves backward and forward at different points in the show. "Sometimes the wheels will spin before they'll catch," says Chuck, "and the whole riser will jerk. That can be tricky for me, because I play with my heels up most of the time."

Rick Inmon's setup for Jim Stafford's show is stationary—but completely invisible. The band sets up behind a special TV-projection curtain and watches the show entirely on TV monitors. On the other hand, Rick takes a more active part in the show than some other drummers. "I play a couple of on-stage numbers using a Yamaha Club Jordan stand-up cocktail kit," says Rick. "Jim loves the idea that the drumset can be moved anywhere on stage. My only problem was learning how to play drums while balancing on one leg."

Dino Phillips plays behind a curved acrylic drum screen built into the stage set of *'50s At The Hop*. He utilizes a lot of percussion in addition to his traditional drums, in order to duplicate the sounds of the original recordings. "I thought about using an electronic kit," says Dino. "But I wanted the drums to look and sound authentic to the people out front. Image is important in a stage show, and drummers didn't have electronic stuff back in the '50s and '60s."

Many drummers have to deal with more than one kit on a daily basis. "I do three different jobs a day, in three different places, on three different drumsets," says Mike Jackson. "When I sit down at each kit, my mind has to be ready to adjust to being there at that time. There is one particular song that I do in all three shows—but *differently* in each one. To make matters more confusing, I sing harmony on two of the versions—in different keys! Of course, that makes things fun for me. If I



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were doing exactly the same thing three times a day, I'd probably go crazy."

Remember Who's Boss

Certain Branson artists have idiosyncrasies that keep their drummers on their toes. Says Chuck Landry, "As most people know, Mel Tillis stutters. You can imagine what that can mean. There are times when he's supposed to come in, and he just...won't. We have to just kinda hang out there until he does. It's a country-music rule: Follow the singer."

Says Gary Cornelius, "Mickey Gilley wants to hear solid, balls-to-the-wall drumming. On the other hand, when we ritard a song, we *ritaaaaaaard*. I mean it drops out of the sky. It took me two months to get used to that."

Tim Pope describes gigs with Ray Charles, saying, "Ray's dictum was: 'If I'm right, I'm right. If I'm wrong, I'm still right. I don't care where you're coming from or who you've played with—you watch me.' We'd play 'Georgia,' and when we'd get to the bridge, Ray would do his famous side-to-side leaning thing to mark the time. It would be, 'three,

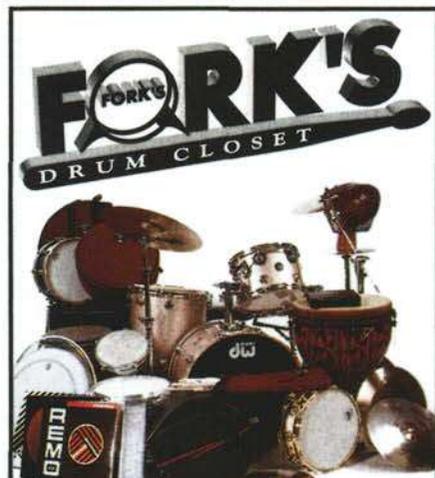
four...[long pause]...owe." And I was supposed to bring the band in. I'm watching him, and thinking, 'Come on...when's it gonna drop?' If we were in a little tight combo, it would be cool. But driving a big band and trying to make cues like that? It's tough."

The Grind

Branson's drummers play many shows each week, and those shows can be quite repetitive. Under those circumstances, even the best gig in the world can start to be a

grind. "When you do as many shows as we play," says Chuck Landry, "it can turn into a factory job. But when you're on stage, you shouldn't be thinking about what time it is or how much you're getting paid. You're there for the music, to make things feel good."

Country Tonight's John Brown comments, "We do two shows a day, six days a week, for six months—and seven days a week for four months. We have as much musical freedom as can be allowed, but our show is still a very structured, theatrical



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Branson

show. When the dancers go up, we go *bam*. When the dancers come down, we go 5AM. It has to be that way every show. The lighting cues happen at certain points, and the music has to follow. The bottom line is that if you want to work here, you need to have some discipline. And you also need stamina."

One aspect of Branson is very different from Las Vegas or other entertainment hubs. Every show takes an intermission, during which the performers visit with the audience, sign autographs, and pose for photos. It's a very personal-contact approach that's a large part of Branson's appeal. So along with discipline and stamina, drummers also need good "people skills."

Besides The Theaters

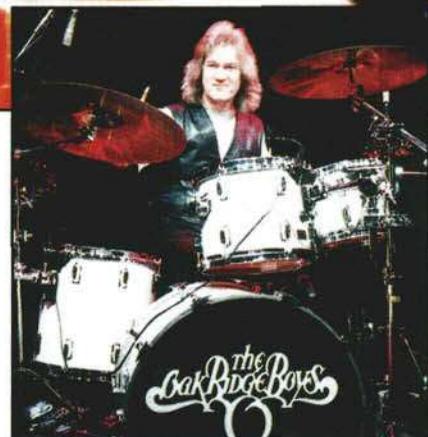
There's more to the Branson music scene than its showrooms and theaters. For example, Branson has also become a regular stop for major touring acts—primarily within the pop and country genres. These acts perform in the 4,000-seat Grand Palace. During our visit to Branson, drummer Chris Golden was anchoring a talented four-piece band



Major tours play Branson, too. Drummer Chris Golden backs up The Oak Ridge Boys at the 4,000-seat Grand Palace.

backing the legendary Oak Ridge Boys. They had played a festival in Kansas the previous day and were scheduled to perform in Wisconsin the next day. All of the Branson drummers we spoke to respect the musicians who play the touring venues and deal with such hectic schedules. But few would change places with them.

On the other end of the scale, Branson's nighttime scene includes several local clubs. One that is particularly popular is Beverly's,



because the owner is a sort of patron to the town's musicians. There is always a regularly scheduled band, but it's really more of a

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host for musicians to come and sit in after their own shows. This is where a good deal of networking goes on, as newer players get to show their stuff to the veterans.

The city also boasts a number of small recording studios. Some are project studios. But Joey Riley—Mickey Gilley's comedy sidekick and a fine musician in his own right—has opened a state-of-the-art facility capable of doing demos and master tracks. Although current session work is still on a fairly small scale, that situation is likely to improve as time goes on.

The Skills You Need

Some shows in Branson are assembled "by ear," with the musicians working from tapes to learn new arrangements. The more traditional country acts tend to use charts that employ the Nashville number system. But several shows involve more intricate charts written in "legit" musical notation. The more comfortable a drummer is with all of these methods, the better his or her chances of getting work.

"Our show is 75% new each year," says John Brown. "There's no way I can do it all without having the material written

down. Our musical director does number charts for the rest of the band, but I do legit charts for my stuff. Number charts don't provide enough information for me. There's still a lot of memory required to interpret them. I've probably played fifty or sixty different arrangements of the older tunes over the years. I don't trust my memory to recall which one I'm supposed to do now."

In terms of drumming technique, every Branson drummer offers the same advice: Know how to do a little bit of everything. Says Rich Havens of the *Lawrence Welk* show, "To learn to play up to the show level, you have to play all different styles. To do that, you need to work with every kind of band you can: casual bands, a Latin band, even an accordion guy who plays cocktail music. Get to where, when you're handed a chart, you can interpret whatever it has on it.

"We've been doing a show called *100 Years Of American Music*. We start off with ragtime, and go through music from the 1920s right up to today. Big band stuff, early rock, jazz, swing.... It's: 'Here's your part. This is what we want. Downbeat...go.'

If you can't play that way, you shouldn't be here. And you won't be for long."

Chuck Landry's requirements for versatility involve not only his playing, but also his drum sound—based on differences in the Tillis family. Although his main gig is for Mel, Chuck also frequently backs "new country" superstar (and Mel's daughter) Pam Tillis. Says Chuck, "All I've played for most of my career has been country music, western swing, and a little bit of jazz. I'm not a chops player; I try to play the traditional styles. And when I do, I try to make the drums sound appropriate for the music. For Mel I'll tune the toms up for a little more old-time sound. That's one reason I'm playing on a classic 1952 Rogers kit. Pam's material has more of a pop/rock feel, so I'll bring the toms down a little to get a bigger, rounder sound."

Sub Base

Subbing in Branson poses its own set of challenges, even for the most experienced players. Says Tim Pope, "I've been called to sub on a couple of gigs, where the regular drummer has told me, 'Don't worry about it, it's just 2-and-4 stuff.' I listen to

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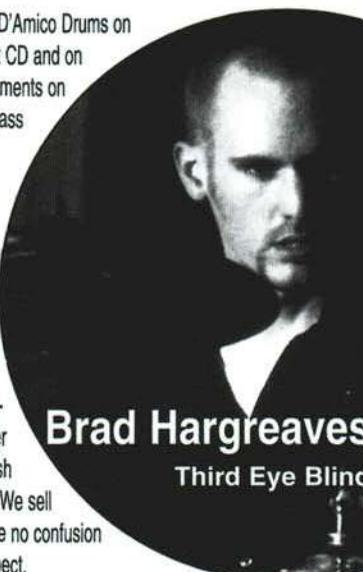
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Participants in MD's Branson drummers' roundtable included (top row, from left): Jeff Barker (The Platters), B.J. Rossi (Sons Of The Pioneers), Al Lohman and Rich Havens (Lawrence Welk Show), Ed Bunge (Percussion Shop, Springfield, MO), Gary Cornelius (Mickey Gilley), Chuck Landry (Mel Tillis), Dino Phillips ('50s At The Hop), Robin Hendry (Shoji Tabuchi), Doug Clifford (Bobby Vinton), Mike Jackson (Down Home Country), and Tom Dostal (Andy Williams). Bottom row, from left: Nick Ochoa (Moe Bandy), Sam Kallaos (Shoji Tabuchi), Rick Inmon (Jim Stafford), Doug Huffman (Pierce Arrow), Tim Pope (Tony Melindez), and John Brown (Country Tonite). Not shown: Kevin Lyons (Breakfast With The Classics) and Bill Loden (Horn Dawgs).

the tapes, and there are all these starts and stops! I'm okay if there's a chart there. But these guys get so used to playing these shows that over time they put stuff in that never makes it into the chart. I call the guy

back and ask, 'What happened to that *simple* show?'"

Mike Jackson adds, "The producers of *Country Tonight* called me up one day, around three in the afternoon. 'John Brown

is sick, he's about to fall off the drums up here.' I drove down and stepped in on the second half of the show—the *Christmas* show. Oh lord...no charts!"

Rick Inmon tells perhaps the wildest

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subbing story. "I got a call a few days ago to sub for a show out on our local entertainment boat. The leader gave me an audio tape on Saturday for a show on Sunday. The only problem was, the show is a *circus*. Have you ever tried to figure out circus acts with just an audio tape? Brrrrr....ching! Brrrrr....ching! Nothing but punches in the middle of a song, all based on visual cues. *That was an experience.*"

Welcome To The Theater

Drummers who've worked exclusively in bands might not be prepared for the purely theatrical requirements of playing for a show. Tim Pope describes some of those requirements, based on his own experience. "I came to Branson with Tony Orlando. He's a master entertainer. Besides great playing ability, what artists like Tony demand of their musicians is spontaneity. They want you to *feel* their accents and kicks as they happen. If they want to slow down just a bit at some point, they need to know that you're with them. Working with entertainers like that finishes your training. It's that cabaret aspect."

Sam Kallaos adds, "Every time that cur-

tain opens, it's a new audience seeing the show for the first time. Shoji Tabuchi stands in front of a different audience each night. He entertains that audience with great energy, and they leave happy. Part of our job is to do the same."

Theatricality also requires concentration and focus, as Doug Clifford explains. "Bobby Vinton is a type-A, 100%, never-kick-back showman. And he expects me to be perfect all the time. Plus I do most of the conducting. The drummers who play big shows here have a lot of responsibility within those shows. If you can't concentrate, you're not going to keep the gig."

Getting A Gig

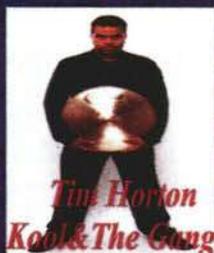
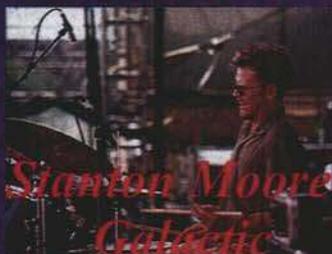
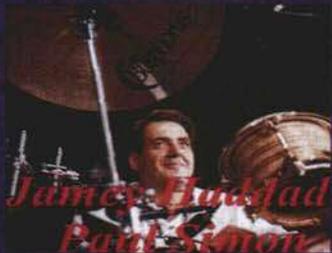
There is no foolproof way to get a gig in Branson, any more than there is in any other music center. Many of our round-table drummers followed the tried-and-true method of coming to town, taking day jobs, and networking among the local clubs and shows until they got some referrals. Others came with established acts, while still others took advantage of contacts made elsewhere, like Nashville or Los Angeles.

Every Branson drummer agrees that the key to getting your foot in the door is to be seen and be heard. "If you're breaking in from scratch," says Brian McRae, "you have to humbly approach people who can help you. You also have to be patient, and not get too eager to move on because 'nothing's happening.' It takes persistence and luck. And then you have to deliver the goods when the opportunity does arise."

Brian's opportunity arose on *very* short notice. "The drummer for *Legends In Concert* developed carpal tunnel syndrome," he says. "His arm swelled up about 30% overnight. Mike Jackson plays the breakfast show at the *Legends* theater, so the producers called him about covering the regular show. Mike referred them to me. I'd met Mike at Beverly's and had sat in on his nighttime gig there."

"The producers called me at noon—and asked if I could play the 2:00 show," Brian continues. "I came down to the theater, played one number with the band as a rehearsal, and then *completely* faked my way through a show that everybody else had been playing for six years. A lot of the special kicks and punches went right

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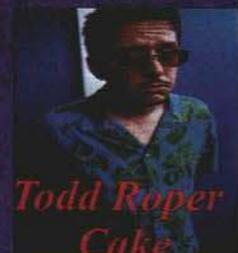
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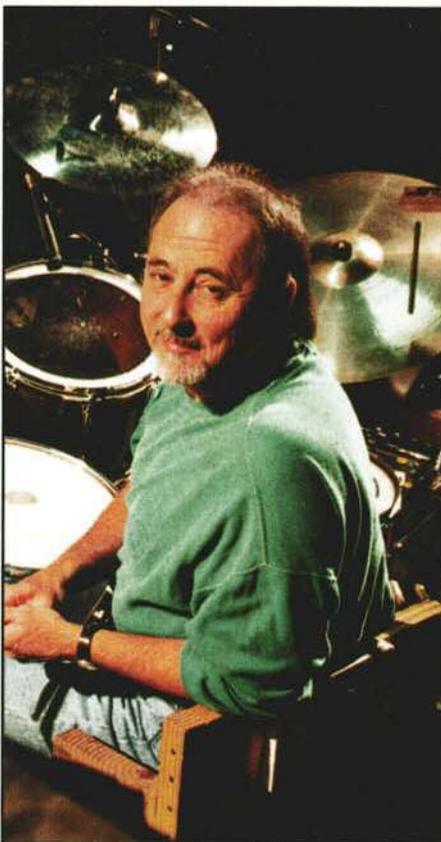


Branson

by me, but we got through it."

Short of a unique experience like Brian's, getting any sort of Branson gig usually involves an audition. Because of the lengthy performance season, auditions happen within a limited "window." "The theaters here are dark in January and February," says John Brown. "So if changes are going to be made, that's when they'll make them. The word will get out about auditions. Sometimes the local papers in Branson and Springfield will carry notices for them." (Robin Hendry got his gig with Shoji Tabuchi by responding to just such an ad.)

Another avenue into the Branson scene is Ed Bunge's Percussion Shop in nearby Springfield. Sam Kallaos comments, "Ed is kind of the patron saint of the drumming community in this area. I went to school locally, and Ed hired me as a teacher at his shop. So I heard about all the openings and the good gigs coming up. I'm now Shoji's assistant band director, and I help run the winter auditions. But I send any drummers who come through to Ed, because he's a logical source to find out what's going on. He's



As we went to press we learned that Branson veteran John Brown (left) had vacated the drum chair in the high-powered Country Tonite show. He'll be replaced by the energetic Mike Jackson, who can finally give up his three-gigs-a-day routine!

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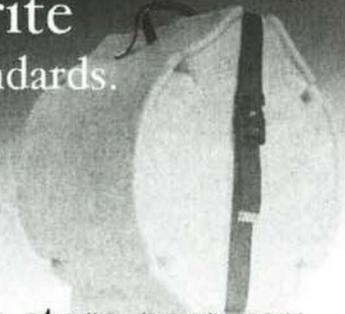
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Ed Bunge himself comments, "My shop has actually been a stairstep for some drummers. One of my sales managers went into the Osmond gig for five years. But it works both ways. We get a lot of calls from the working guys, saying, 'There's an opening over at such-and-such a show. Put the word out to the guys that are hanging loose and need a gig.' The help that they give to each other and to other drummers is amazing."

Our roundtable of drummers included no women. When asked about opportunities for women drummers in Branson, Gary Cornelius replies, "It burns me that we only have one woman playing drums in town. Rosa Avila plays for Andy Williams, and she is a monster. Why we don't get more women drummers down here is beyond me, because there are so many good ones. I don't think it's a matter of discrimination, because there are plenty of women playing ~~the~~ instruments. I just don't think women drummers are auditioning."

Mike Jackson adds, "Female drummers actually might have an advantage if they

can also sing. Shows are always looking for additional voices to add high harmonies."

Drummers thinking of testing the Branson waters should be aware that although the scene here offers a terrific career opportunity, it's not like winning the lottery. Says Rick Inmon, "After Mel Tillis's comment on *60 Minutes* about the millions of dollars to be made down here, *bam*. Here came all these new drummers who were figuring on getting rich in Branson. I wanted to say, 'Wait a minute. The *stars* may be making big money, but I hope you didn't sell the farm to get here."

"On the other hand," says John Brown, "how many musicians have employers that offer a 401(k) retirement plan and insurance benefits? You don't get that in most other places. In a big city the best you can do is work in the best-paying nightclubs. You can make money, but you don't get the same kind of long-term security."

Living Conditions

Branson might be a great prospective

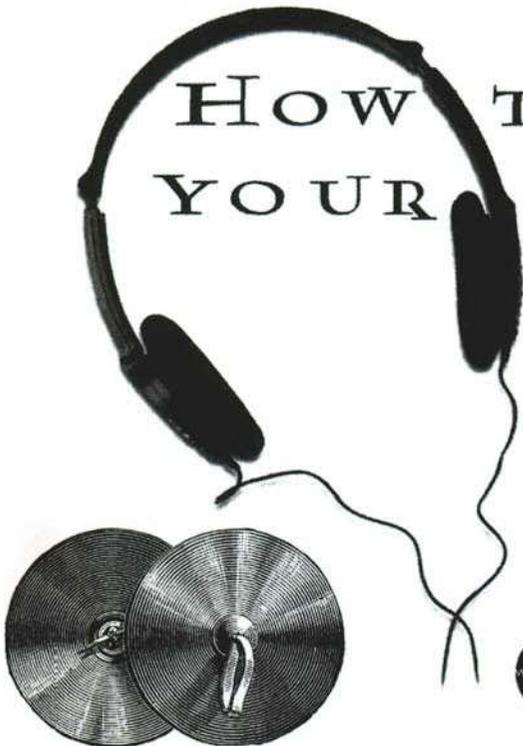
employment location. But what kind of a place is it to live in? John Brown replies, "It's the kind of place to come if you're looking for a small-town atmosphere. A lot of folks come here because they think it's a great place to raise kids. Granted, there's no opera or symphony. But Springfield is just forty-five minutes up the road. So all sorts of culture is available in the area."

Sam Kallaos adds, "The Branson school system is second to none. The music program is generously supported by many of the artists here in town. There's also plenty of opportunity for musicians like us to come in and interact with the kids and give them a good music background."

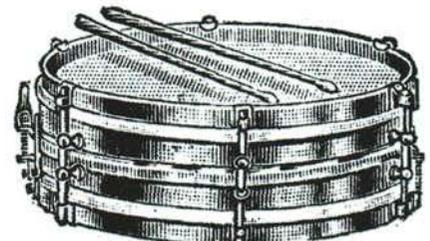
"What parent wouldn't like it down here?" says Rick Inmon. "Five minutes away their kids can go to Silver Dollar City. They can ride go-carts on weekends. There's a beautiful lake for camping and fishing. It's laid-back down here, but there are lots of things to do year-round."

Tim Pope adds, "I know people who sold their homes in New York or LA and bought twice as much house here. And I can't tell you how many musicians have

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Branson

moved away from here in the past few years only to move right back."

When asked about the crime rate in Branson, most of the drummers just chuckle. Jeff Barker, drummer for The Platters, comments, "About the worst crime around here is drive-by yodeling."

To the drummers of Branson, a large part of its appeal is a sense of community. Says Doug Huffman, "When I got the call to come to Branson, I had just finished eight years on the road. In Branson the audiences travel to see *us*. We not only work here, we live here. So we get to know each other. We get more personal with everybody in the shows and with what's going on in their lives."

"We're like one big family," adds Dino Phillips. "When you go to an open audition, it's not a cutting session. There's a camaraderie. Everybody knows everybody, so it's more like, 'Hey, how you been? How's the wife and kids?'"

Gary Cornelius chimes in, "People take care of one another here. If a person in the musical community is in a bad way,

everybody in town will stage a benefit. If somebody is not doing well, people will step in to do what they can to bring them back up. I've never found that anywhere else I've lived."

Sonic Boom

The Branson "boom" happened in the early 1990s. What's the scene like now, a decade later? Gary Cornelius replies, "What's helping to sustain Branson is that although it started out as a country-music town, today it offers everything short of grand opera. We've got ice shows, *Riverdance*-type shows, comedy shows, and every conceivable style of music."

John Brown adds, "Some seasons are busier than others, but any tourist city is like that. It's not going to go away. There's too much investment here. The strong shows will always survive, and new shows will always come in to give it a shot."

Still, Branson takes no chances when it comes to sustaining a steady clientele. It's

one of the few entertainment centers in the world that literally imports its audiences by the busload. Says Rick Innon, "Twenty years ago no one here had heard of 'marketing.' Now, promoting the shows to package-tour groups is a major element of Branson's success."

Adds Dino Phillips, "Branson is the number-one tour-bus destination in the country. And I love that fact, because that's my paycheck!"

Head For The Mountains

Can a drummer from the outside come to Branson and break in instantly? No. But anyone with dedication, perseverance, and the necessary skills stands a better chance of getting steady work here than almost anywhere else in the country. Just remember, the demand for quality is high. Branson is not the place to *learn* your trade. But if you're qualified, it is a remarkable place to *ply* your trade.



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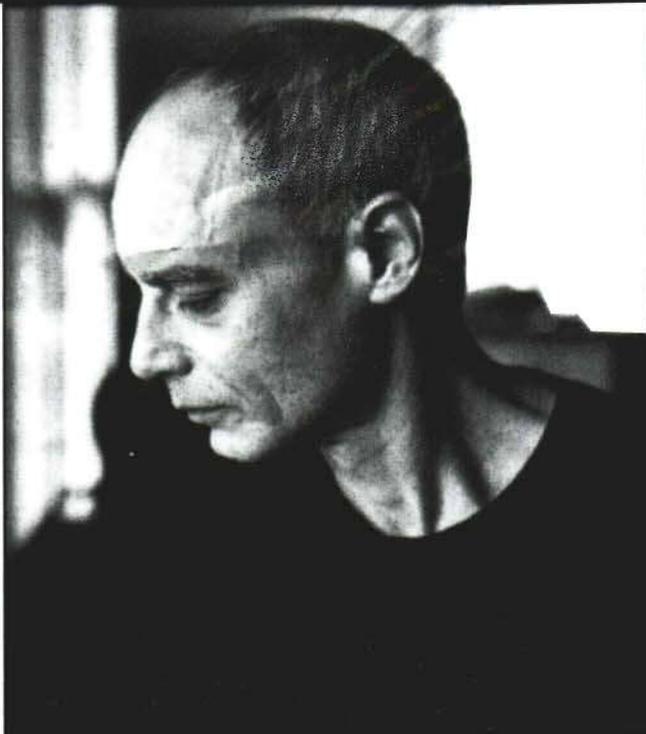


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Mixing Polyrhythms Into The Groove

by Ken Vogel

MUSIC KEY

Open	○	R.C.	×
H.H.	●		×
T.T.	●		×
S.D.	●		×
F.T.	●		×
B.D.	●		×
H.H. w/foot	○	Cross-Stick	×

Would you like to try something a little different and add some spice to your grooves? Polyrhythms are the key. In this article we'll try mixing some three-over-two and four-over-three polyrhythms to different drumset patterns in a variety of styles.

Practice Suggestions

1. Use a metronome or drum machine for a tempo reference.
2. Tape-record yourself.
3. Practice each pattern repeatedly until you can play it smoothly.
4. Try using some of the patterns presented at the end of a phrase.
5. Practice playing the patterns with a bass player.

Preliminary Exercises

Mastering the following preliminary polyrhythm exercises will make the drumset patterns that follow less difficult to perform accurately. Assign line A and line B below to different limbs:

Line A

- Right Hand
- Right Hand
- Right Hand
- Left Hand
- Left Hand
- Left Hand
- Right Foot
- Right Foot
- Right Foot
- Left Foot
- Left Foot
- Left Foot

Line B

- Left Hand
- Right Foot
- Left Foot
- Right Hand
- Right Foot
- Left Foot
- Right Hand
- Left Hand
- Left Foot
- Right Hand
- Left Hand
- Right Foot

Drumset Patterns

African Feel

3/4 Rock

4/4 Rock

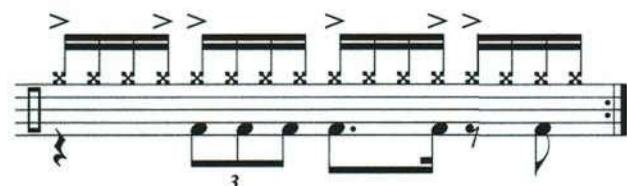
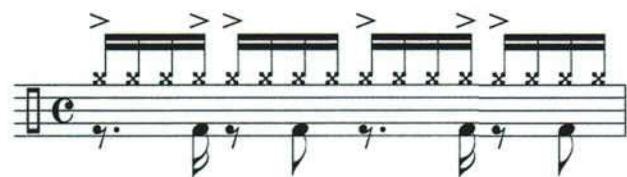
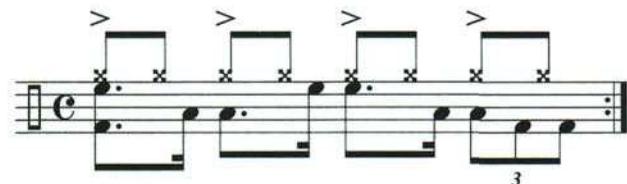
Blues



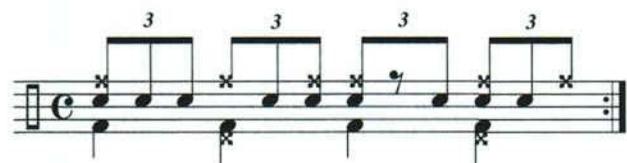
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Latin



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Peter Erskine

"Black Market"

Transcribed by Steve Fidyk

MUSIC KEY			
Open	○	C.C.	China
H.H.	×	R.C.	×
T.T.	●		
S.D.	●		
F.T.	●		
B.D.	●		
		Add'l Toms	H.H. w/foot

This month's transcription features the classic Peter Erskine/Wayne Shorter duet on "Black Market," from the Weather Report live recording 8:30. For the purposes of discussion and study, I included the rhythmic material that Wayne Shorter played. This will help provide insight into how and why the players reacted to each

other's musical ideas. (The transcription begins 5:14 into the piece.)

Studying and analyzing this transcription will certainly give you some new and exciting drumming ideas. However, your degree of comprehension and appreciation for Peter's level of musicianship will be enhanced if you study the transcription with the recording. By the way, Peter was twenty-four years old at the time this was recorded.

Performance Observations

While there isn't room to analyze every nuance of Peter's playing, I would like to point out some main stylistic concepts found in the transcription.

1. Peter's opening samba groove, which anchors the first twenty-four measures of the solo, allows Wayne to take liberties with his rhythmic phrasing.

2. Wayne's consistent use of quarter-note triplets, 8th-note triplets, 16ths, 16th-note triplets, and groups of sevens gives the illusion that he is slowing down and speeding up the phrase. This occurs over the course of the first twenty-four measures.

3. Starting at measure 25, the character of the solo changes. Peter moves from a "street samba" surdo feel to a fusion/funk groove. Wayne's rhythmic phrasing becomes less stretched by his playing of figures that are more sparse. Peter begins taking more freedom with his phrasing, utilizing displaced accent patterns. You can see examples of this in measures 31 and 32. Observe the accent scheme in measures 38 and 39, where Peter plays figures that extend over the barline. (It's a 3/8 motif starting on the second 8th note in measure 38 that resolves into a 3/16 motif in bar 39.) Peter creates tension with these rhythmic concepts as he interacts with Wayne. However, the groove is not sacrificed. It remains strong and intact.

4. Measures 57 through 61 are the emotional climax of the performance. Wayne states a 4:3 polyrhythm figure

on beat 2 in bar 57. Peter mirrors the figure starting on the last 16th note in bar 58. Both players continue this "over the bar" motif for four measures. The tension occurs when Peter continues to play the Brazilian samba foot pattern as the reference point throughout the phrase. Without the Brazilian rhythm, the phrase would lose forward momentum.



Hot Weather: Shorter and Erskine back in the day.

John W. Wright

Erskine Solo

The musical score for "Erskine Solo" is presented in six systems, each consisting of a melody staff and an accompaniment staff. The melody staff uses a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. The accompaniment staff uses a bass clef and features a consistent eighth-note pattern. The score includes various rhythmic elements such as triplets, sixteenth-note runs, and accents. The first system shows a simple melody with eighth notes and a corresponding eighth-note accompaniment. The second system introduces triplets in the melody and sixteenth-note runs in the accompaniment. The third system features a triplet in the melody and sixteenth-note runs in the accompaniment, with a circled 'o' above the final note of the accompaniment. The fourth system has a triplet in the melody and sixteenth-note runs in the accompaniment, with circled '6's above the final notes of the accompaniment. The fifth system includes a triplet in the melody and sixteenth-note runs in the accompaniment, with circled '6's above the final notes of the accompaniment. The sixth system features a triplet in the melody and sixteenth-note runs in the accompaniment, with circled '6's above the final notes of the accompaniment.

First system of musical notation. The treble clef staff contains a single quarter note followed by a quarter rest. The bass clef staff contains a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and sixteenth notes, including sixteenth-note triplets marked with the number '6'.

Second system of musical notation. The treble clef staff contains a quarter note, a quarter rest, a triplet of eighth notes marked with '3', and a group of seven sixteenth notes marked with '7'. The bass clef staff continues the rhythmic pattern with various note values and rests.

Third system of musical notation, starting with a measure marked '(25)'. The treble clef staff has a quarter note, a quarter rest, and a quarter note. The bass clef staff features a complex rhythmic pattern with eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and rests, marked with 'x' and 'o'.

Fourth system of musical notation. The treble clef staff has a quarter note, a quarter rest, and a quarter note. The bass clef staff continues the rhythmic pattern with eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and rests, marked with 'x' and 'o'.

Fifth system of musical notation. The treble clef staff has a quarter note, a quarter rest, and a quarter note. The bass clef staff continues the rhythmic pattern with eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and rests, marked with 'x' and 'o'.

Erskine Solo

(31)

(32)

First system of musical notation for measures 31 and 32. The top staff shows a melodic line with eighth notes and rests. The bottom staff shows a complex rhythmic pattern with many 'x' marks, indicating a specific drumming technique. The notation includes accents (>) and slurs.

Second system of musical notation for measures 31 and 32. Similar to the first system, it features a melodic line and a complex rhythmic pattern with 'x' marks. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' above it.

Third system of musical notation for measures 31 and 32. The top staff has a melodic line with a double bar line and repeat sign. The bottom staff continues the rhythmic pattern with 'x' marks, including a sextuplet marked with a '6' and a triplet marked with a '3'. A fermata is placed over a note.

(38)

System of musical notation for measure 38. The top staff shows a melodic line with eighth notes. The bottom staff shows a rhythmic pattern with 'x' marks and accents (>).

(39)

System of musical notation for measure 39. The top staff shows a melodic line with eighth notes and rests. The bottom staff shows a rhythmic pattern with 'x' marks, including two triplets marked with '3' and a fermata over the final note.

The first system consists of two staves. The top staff is a snare drum staff with a treble clef, showing a sequence of eighth notes and quarter notes with accents (>) and a repeat sign. The bottom staff is a bass drum staff with a bass clef, showing a sequence of eighth notes and quarter notes with accents (>) and asterisks (*).

The second system consists of two staves. The top staff is a snare drum staff with a treble clef, showing a sequence of eighth notes with accents (>). The bottom staff is a bass drum staff with a bass clef, showing a sequence of eighth notes and quarter notes with accents (>) and asterisks (*), including a triplet of eighth notes.

The third system consists of two staves. The top staff is a snare drum staff with a treble clef, showing a sequence of eighth notes with accents (>) and a triplet of eighth notes. The bottom staff is a bass drum staff with a bass clef, showing a sequence of eighth notes and quarter notes with accents (>) and asterisks (*), including a triplet of eighth notes and a sixteenth note group.

The fourth system consists of two staves. The top staff is a snare drum staff with a treble clef, showing a sequence of eighth notes and quarter notes with accents (>) and a repeat sign. The bottom staff is a bass drum staff with a bass clef, showing a sequence of eighth notes and quarter notes with accents (>) and asterisks (*).

The fifth system consists of two staves. The top staff is a snare drum staff with a treble clef, showing a sequence of eighth notes and quarter notes with accents (>) and a repeat sign. The bottom staff is a bass drum staff with a bass clef, showing a sequence of eighth notes and quarter notes with accents (>) and asterisks (*).

Erskine Solo

The first system consists of two staves. The top staff is a snare drum staff with a single eighth note followed by a quarter rest. The bottom staff is a bass drum staff with a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes and several accents.

The second system continues the rhythmic patterns. The snare staff has a series of eighth notes with accents, followed by a quarter rest and another series of eighth notes. The bass staff continues with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet and accents.

The third system features a triplet of eighth notes in the snare staff. The bass staff continues with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet and accents.

(57)

(58)

The fourth system shows the snare staff with eighth notes and quarter notes, and the bass staff with eighth notes and accents.

(59)

(60)

The fifth system shows the snare staff with eighth notes and quarter notes, and the bass staff with eighth notes and accents, including a triplet.

BD & HH simile

(61)



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Dawsonisms

Part 1: Roll Studies

by Osami Mizuno

Alan Dawson was a master drum teacher. Some of his students included Tony Williams, Keith Copeland, Steve Smith, Harvey Mason, Vinnie Colaiuta, John Robinson, and Kenny Aronoff.

I had my first lesson with Alan in June of 1975. The next four years were filled with hard work and a great sense of accomplishment. Today, those lessons are my greatest memory.

Alan's teaching methods were unique and strongly rooted in rudiments. In this four-part series, I will present a few of his ideas for improving one's drumming through the use of rudiments.

We begin here with roll studies that demonstrate the use of various-length rolls to develop greater technical facility. Practice each roll exercise precisely as written at various tempos and dynamic levels.

Five-, Nine-, And Thirteen-Stroke Roll Exercises

The exercises are as follows:

- Exercise 1:** Four measures of 5-stroke rolls. Patterns: R R L L R, R R L L R, R R L L R, R R L L R.
- Exercise 2:** Three measures of 9-stroke rolls. Patterns: R R L L R R L L R, R R L L R R L L R, R R L L R R L L L.
- Exercise 3:** Three measures of 9-stroke and 13-stroke rolls. Patterns: R, R R L L R R L L R, R R L L R R L L R R L L R.
- Exercise 4:** Six measures of 5-stroke rolls with triplets. Patterns: R R L L R, R R L L R.
- Exercise 5:** Four measures of 9-stroke rolls with triplets. Patterns: R R L L R R L L R, R R L L R R L L R, R R L L R R L L R, R R L L R R L L R.
- Exercise 6:** Three measures of 13-stroke rolls with triplets. Patterns: R R L L R R L L R R L L R, R R L L R R L L R R L L R, R R L L R R L L R R L L R.

Seven-, Eleven-, And Fifteen-Stroke Roll Exercises

Staff 1: $R R L L R R L$ (7STR.)
 Staff 2: $R R L L R R L L R R L$ (11STR.) $R R L L R R L L R R L$ (11STR.) $R R L L R R L L$ (11STR.)
 Staff 3: $R R L R R L L R R L L R R L$ (11STR.) $R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L$ (15STR.)
 Staff 4: $R R L L R R L L R R L$ (7STR.) $R R L L R R L L R R L$ (7STR.) $R R L L R R L L R R L$ (7STR.) $R R L L R R L L R R L$ (7STR.)
 Staff 5: $R R L L R R L L R R L$ (11STR.) $R R L L R R L L R R L$ (11STR.) $R R L L R R L L R R L$ (11STR.) $R R L L R R L L R R L$ (11STR.)
 Staff 6: $R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L$ (15STR.) $R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L$ (15STR.) $R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L$ (15STR.)

Six-Stroke Roll Variations

Variation 1: $R L R R L L R$ $L R R L L R$
 $L R L L R R L$ $R L L R R$

Variation 2: $R R L L R L$ $R R L L R L$
 $L L R R L R$ $L L R R L R$

Variation 3: $L R R L L R$ $L R R L L R$
 $R L L R R L$ $R L L R R L$

Variation 4: $L L R L R R L L R$ $L L R L R R$
 $R R L R L L R R L$ $R R L R L L$

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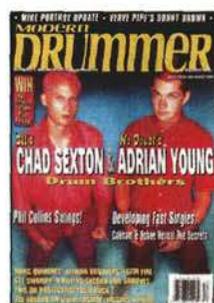
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Big Band Drumming

Part 2: Understanding Section And Ensemble Figures

by Ron Spagnardi

MUSIC KEY

Section figures are those played by only one, or possibly two, sections of the band (saxes, trumpets, trombones). Section figures are generally notated above the staff with either slash marks (A), repeat signs (B), or a basic time pattern (C), written beneath the figure.

Though section figures need to be emphasized, they're usually played in a much subtler manner than full ensemble figures (described later). They also require that you maintain the time pattern and accent the figures independently of the time so that *the flow goes uninterrupted*.

Here are a few common section figures. A dash (—) above a note indicates sustained phrasing. A dot (.) indicates short phrasing. A plus sign (+) above a long note means to lean into the ride cymbal slightly to give the note a bit more emphasis (somewhere in between a section figure and ensemble figure phrasing).

5) 3 3 2 3

6) 3 3 2 3

7) 3 3 2 3

8) 3 3 2 3

9) 3 3 2 3

10) 3 3 2 3

Ensemble figures are different from section figures. They are played by the entire band, and are generally notated directly on the staff to distinguish them from section figures. Ensemble figures usu-

ally require strong emphasis and can be phrased in various ways: A) snare drum alone, B) snare drum and bass drum, C) snare drum, bass drum, and cymbal, D) a combination of the above three.

A)

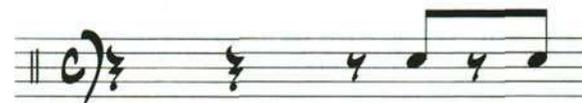
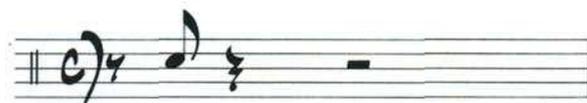
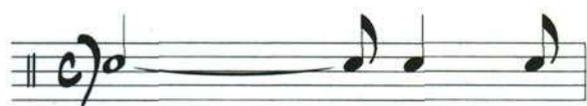
B)

C)

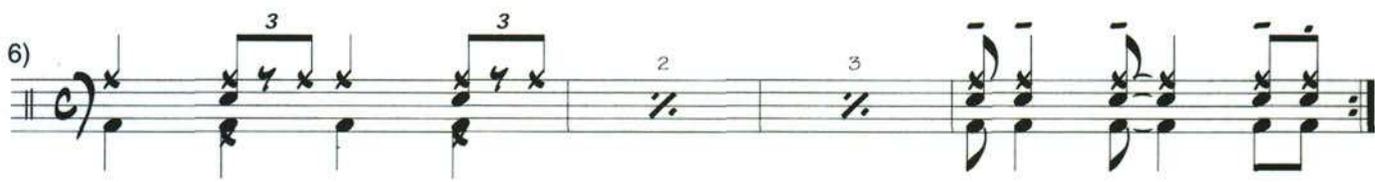
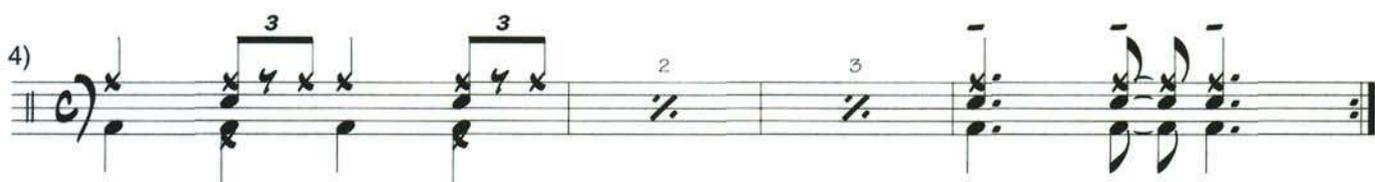
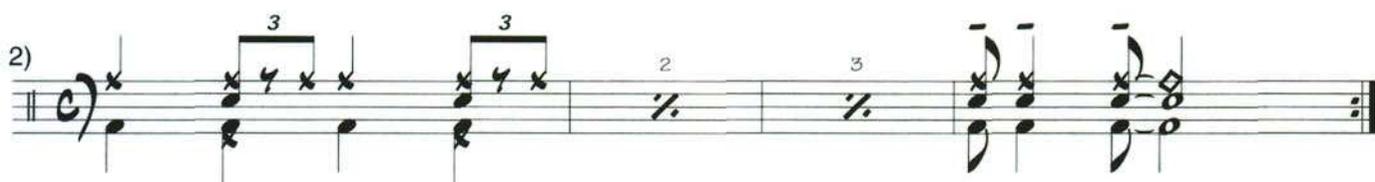
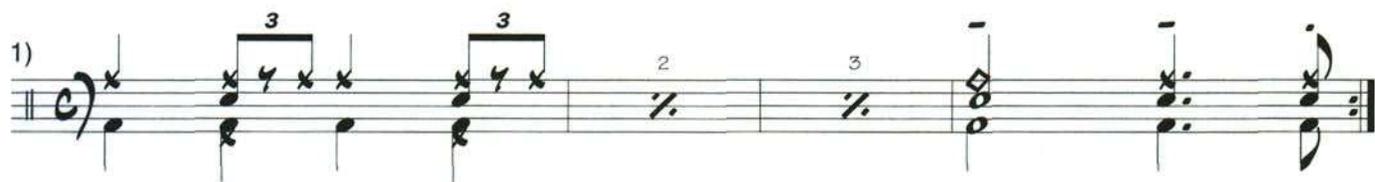
D)

Unlike section figures, the time pattern generally *will* be interrupted during ensemble figures. Exceptions to this rule are half notes and dotted half notes, or when an ensemble figure is made up

of 8th notes only. In these cases, dropping the time pattern would result in an awkward disruption of the time flow. Here are a few examples of where you would *not* want to stop the time pattern.



For practice purposes, all of the following ensemble figures have been notated using example C from the previous page. But feel free to experiment with different phrasings as you work through the figures.



7)

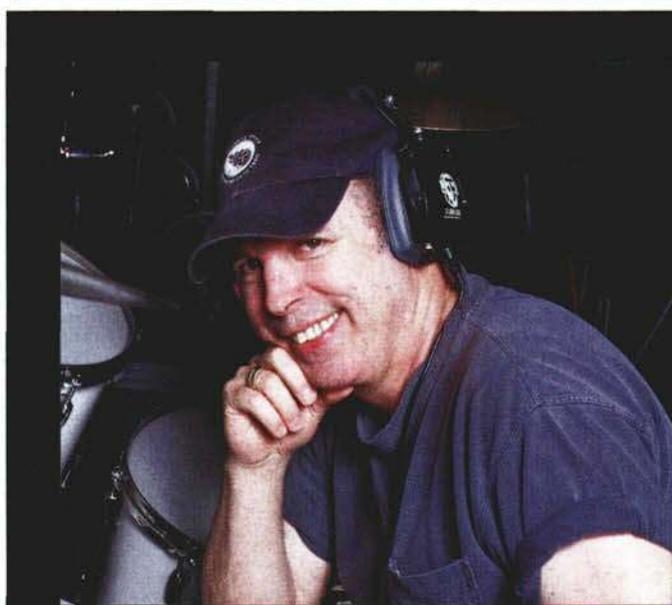
8)

9)

10)

Next month, in the third and final part of this series, we'll take a closer look at how fills are used in a big band arrangement.

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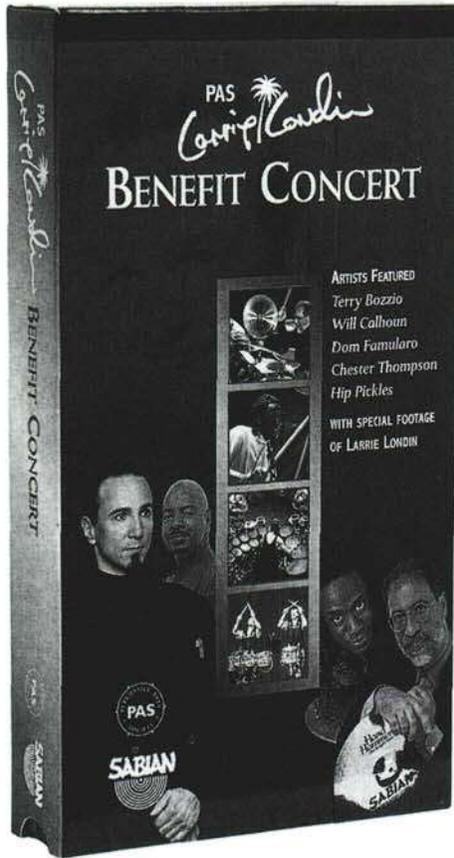
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RECORDINGS

poor **0** ratingscale **10** classic

8 **Mudvayne** LD.50

sPaG (dr), Kud (vcl), Gurr (gtr, vcl), Ryan (bs)



You might stop short of saying drummer sPaG sounds like he's having "fun" here, as Mudvayne is about as hot 'n' bothered as any band coming out of the *Tattoo The Earth* camp. But sPaG does find playful ways to spice up this impossibly angry music. Sometimes they go into a dreamy Tool-ish vocal section just to let a little light in. But for the most part Mudvayne's balls are definitely to the proverbial wall. Highlights include the strange "Death Blooms," where sPaG

places his fills interestingly and navigates the odd sections without a second thought. "Nothing To Gein" features sPaG playing a weird and heavy hand/foot combo early on, then later getting darned funky. It takes a lot of work to construct songs this quirky and pissed off. Mudvayne—and sPaG—have clearly put the time in. (Epic)

Adam Budofsky

7 **Rage Against The Machine** *Renegades*

Brad Wilk (dr), Zach de la Rocha (vcl), Tom Morello (gtr), Tim Commerford (bs)



Entering the studio, Rage planned to record two covers as bonus tracks for a live album. But the sessions went so well that a whole blistering LP emerged (likely the studio swan song for now-departed vocalist de la Rocha). Though *Renegades* draws from wildly diverse sources—not many records include songs by both Cypress Hill and Bruce Springsteen—the common thread is, unsurprisingly, the spirit of revolution. Many of these Rage-ified tracks would sound right at home alongside the band's originals, while others nudge the group out of its usual

mid-tempo comfort zone and into brisker territory. Brad Wilk brings his trademark muscle, keeping the beat simply but oh-so powerfully, and staying right in the pocket. He eats up the accelerated material, whipping out a mean both-hands-on-the-hi-hat beat for a radical update of the Stones' "Street Fighting Man" that will either thrill or anger. You get the feeling Rage will take it either way. (Epic)

Michael Parillo

SIGNIFICANT REISSUES

10 **King Crimson** *Larks' Tongues*

In *Aspic*, *Starless And Bible Black*, *Red*
Bill Bruford (dr), Jamie Muir (perc), Robert Fripp (gtr, mellotron, 'devices'), David Cross (vln), Jon Wetton (bs, vcl)



These newly remastered early '70s recordings show that King Crimson, beyond their rep as brilliant, thinking-man's prog-rockers, were remarkably creative and original, and have not been matched in rock circles for improvisational or compositional skill. Recorded before their classic *Three Of A Perfect Pair* period, but post *Court Of The Crimson King* and *Islands*, this astonishing trio of recordings shows a band, heavily influenced by both classical and jazz,



improvising on proto-metal riffs, surreal pop/rock, and lovely ballads. Bill Bruford is his wonderfully quirky and ingenious self throughout, but he is a single facet of this extraordinary band.

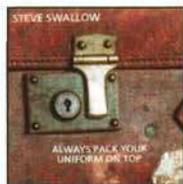
The early 70s were a time when rock bands were very adept at improvising over complicated arrangements, and none more so than King Crimson. "One More Red Nightmare," parts 1 and 2 of "Larks' Tongues In Aspic," and "The Night Watch" are profound, full of surprising percussion detail (often courtesy of the mad genius Jamie Muir) and outrageous left turns. But Fripp & Co. also wrote beautiful ballads, such as "Fallen Angel," "Book Of Saturday," and the bizarrely memorable "Easy Money."

Larks' Tongues... is perhaps the most lyrical and diverse of the three, *Starless...* the most obscure, and fled the hardest, most aggressive, and noisiest, forecasting the metal showers that lie ahead. All are essential. (Virgin)

Ken Micallef

8 Steve Swallow Always Pack Your Uniform On Top

Adam Nussbaum (dr), Steve Swallow (el bs), Mick Goodrick (gtr), Chris Potter (In sxl), Barry Ries (tip)



Too many jazzers believe hiring a band makes them leaders. But true leaders, like bassist Swallow, are unique instrumentalist/composers whose styles inspire sidemen to reinvent themselves with fresh ears. This live set from Ronnie Scott's captures a quintet of one mind. Guitarist Mick Goodrick, along with Swallow, shapes the sound with alluring harmonies and flowing over-the-bar placement. Even jagged, angular melodies become smooth and natural. Adam Nussbaum rises to the challenge. His drumming can be a thunderous, driving force. But this group also brings out the best of his nimble, dancing touch. He's one of the rare few who can play a lot of notes without making them *wasted* notes. The lush brushwork is conversational, always strong, but never obtrusive. The set radiates the kinetic immediacy that live discs were meant for. (XtraWATT)

Jeff Potter

7 The Offspring Conspiracy Of One

Ron Welty (dr), Dexter Holland (vcl, gtr), Greg Kriesel (bs, vcl), Kevin "Noodles" Wasserman (gtr, vcl)



On *Conspiracy Of One*, Ron and the boys don't break their accelerated pop-punk riff-rock formula—and that's fine. After all, if it ain't broke, why fix it? Right from Beach Boy Mike Love's introduction, the gates are open and they "Come Out Swinging." The second cut, the single "Original Prankster," echoes "Pretty Fly (For A White Guy)" from their last record, *American*. No mistaking what band it is here. Ron Welty plays throughout *Conspiracy* with propulsive style and speed (though it's nice to hear him take a breath on the tracks "Living In Chaos," "Denial, Revisited," and the Nirvana-inspired "Vultures"). When Ron's rocking, his drumming isn't just fast, it's accurate and precise. I was spent after listening. Want a workout? Check this out. (Sony)

Billy Amendola

9 Tribal Tech Rocket Science

Kirk Covington (dr), Gary Willis (bs), Scott Kinsey (kybd), Scott Henderson (gtr)

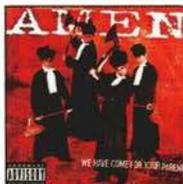


If Miles Davis were alive, Tribal Tech might've been one of his favorite bands. The seasoned quartet has reached a level of musical communication few groups achieve. Kirk Covington has helped redefine fusion by moving away from over-the-top chops to create the funkier, greasiest grooves, which the rest of the band rumbles over like a monster truck in the Delta mud. On this, the band's second successful on-the-spot compositional project, they even dedicate a tune to Covington, "Cap'n Kirk," allowing him to explode and yet still swing with dynamics and maintain a loose feel. Tribal Tech is in it for the creative process; technique is never in question—and that's just where Miles was headed. It's not the science that makes the rocket fly, it's the energy that propels it. (ToneCenter)

Mike Haid

7 Amen We Have Come For Your Parents

Shannon Larkin (dr), Casey Chaos (vcl), S. Mayo, Paul Fig (gtr), John Tumor (bs)



Picture buckets of sweat flying on stage at Amen concerts, and needles pinned to the red in the studio. Singer Chaos is aptly named. A somewhat less interesting version of The Jesus Lizzard's David Yow—Amen itself is reminiscent of that blood-curdling band—Chaos screams his way through these short societal attacks like he's just woken up next to a decomposing body. Drummer Larkin (ex-Ugly Kid Joe) wails here, double-timing choruses, endlessly pounding half-opened hi-hats, and nailing accents with unquestionable authority. You don't want to be anywhere near his sticks on the intro to "Piss Virus"; the violence is palpable. I'm gonna keep this disc in my car; next time someone cuts me off, I'll turn it up to eleven and *safely* vent my rage. (Virgin)

Adam Budofsky

KICKIN' OUT THE NEW

7 Oranger Quiet Vibration Land



Oranger treads so close to the Beatle boundaries, one feels almost compelled to warn them. But no harm, no foul. **Jim Lindsay** gets

it dead right on Oranger's *Quiet Vibration Land*—the push and pull of the tempo with the sing-songy melody, the nearly muffled tom sound, the swinging fills. This is no "a la" anything; for inspiration, Lindsay went straight to pop's wellspring. (Amazing Grease)

6 Euphone Hashin' It Out



Ryan Rapsys creates mid-tempo mindscapes as part of the drum-powered duo Euphone. *Hashin' It Out* is built on the back of rhythmic hooks and low-fi fills. Expressive hi-hat work and swinging backbeat on the snare

provide the musical groove, while spooky delay on the sidestick, talking drums, samples, programming, and a variety of percussion help to round out the mood. (JadeTree)

7 Catch 22 Alone In A Crowd



We're breathless. Listening to Catch 22's *Alone In A Crowd* and its rapid-fire tempo changes can just about suck the wind out of you. Half-time, double-time, dropping out, pushing past the max—drummer **Chris Greer** is so quick, the fills are almost over before you hear them. Third-wave ska skates the edge between hardcore tempos and speed metal guitars, but it takes some serious chops to pull off drumming this intricate at these speeds. (Victory)

Fran Azzarto and Lisa Crouch

7 Limp Bizkit Presents Chocolate St*rfish And The Hot Dog Flavored Water

John Otto (dr), Sam Rivers (bs), Fred Durst (vcl), Wes Borland (gtr), DJ Lethal (turntables)

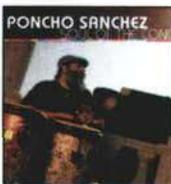


Chris Rock ain't got nothing on these guys; Limp Bizkit front man Fred Durst uses the "F" word until it fades numbly into the background. As always, though, the blend of DJ samples and live band is exceptional. Dynamics go down to a whisper. John Otto has a good handle on the situation, and, even when thrashing, never loses it. Two tracks say it all here: the bleak anthem "Livin' It Up" and the more optimistic "The One." Otto plays a solid bass drum and rides a washy cymbal until it's breaking up, but he's got the ghost notes, too. And fans of MTV staple "Rollin'" might be surprised to learn that behind the fa9ade, Limp Bizkit has depth musically *and* lyrically. (Interscope)

T. Bruce Wittet

8 Poncho Sanchez Soul Of The Conga

Poncho Sanchez (perc, vcl), Ramon Banda, Jose Rodriguez (perc), David Torres (pno), Tony Banda (bs), Sal Cracchiolo (trp, flghn), Scott Martin (sx), Francisco Torres (tbn)



That big bear of a *conguero* is on a roll with his Latin and soul. Hot off the heels of his '99 Grammy for *Latin Soul*, Sanchez follows up in a similar vein, mixing Latin, jazz, and R&B. The soul/jazz element is escalated this time by guest star Joey DeFrancesco, who drives his hip Hammond B3 licks through Poncho's rootsy, festive Latin dance groove. The pairing pays off big. Other guest spots include trumpeter Terence Blanchard's superb jazz soloing and the roots sounds of The Ortiz Brothers. Poncho and his traditional (no kit) percussion section is locked-in and fiery throughout. It's now the band's twentieth anniversary, and the sparks are still flying. (Concord)

Jeff Potter

8 Nile Black Seeds Of Vengeance

Pete Hammoura (dr), Karl Sanders (gtr, vcl), Dallas Toler-Wade (gtr, vcl), Chief Spires (bs, vcl)



Nile's new album begins with haunting effects that would seem right at home in the latest *Mummy* movie. And throughout this innovative record, the group's fascination with ancient Egyptian folklore complements vicious (and sometimes atmospheric) guitar stylings, a monstrous four-man vocal attack, and the pulverizing drumming of Pete Hammoura. Like many death metallers, Hammoura has some set of legs, but his ability to mix his blazing foot patterns with dynamic, time-changing chops turns "Defiling The Gates Of Istar," "Invocation Of The Gate Of Aat-Ankh-Es-En-Amenti," and the title track into sonically scary affairs. On the latter, his ride cymbal and snare crawl like a turtle while his double bass moves like a possessed cheetah. *Black Seeds Of Vengeance* certainly shows death metal moving in the right direction. The pharaohs would be proud. (Relapse)

Jeff Perlah

7 The Wallflowers Breach

Matt Chamberlain (dr), Lenny Castro (perc), Jakob Dylan (vcl, gtr), Rami Jaffee (kybd), Greg Richling (bs), Michael Ward (gtr), others

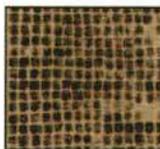


You have to look closely at the liner notes to discover that it's Matt Chamberlain on drums and not The Wallflowers' Mario Calire, himself no slouch on kit. Chamberlain stays to backbeat grooves here, as opposed to his more curious, lumpy work with Fiona Apple and Tori Amos. Matt's fans will eat up his military snare feel on "Witness" and especially his approach to the ballad "Some Flowers." Hear how he slightly opens the hi-hat towards the chorus, pulls back in the verse, then goes to a sweet, washy ride. *Breach* is all mid-tempo, hook-laden pop songs. In this context, Chamberlain always finds a way to distinguish one tune from the next. Sometimes he's artsy, always he's rock-solid and a model of restraint. (Interscope)

T. Bruce Wittet

FRESH FROM THE AVANT-GARDEN

6 Birth Birth



Birth's self-titled CD is a unique blend of avant-rock, free-jazz, and even drum 'n' bass. Drummer

Joe Tomino has a sharp

attack that fills the music with punchy life. The arrangements are at once spirited and free, yet played with precision by the tight band. Some tracks feature a blur of notes, and others settle into backbeats. The end of the album features a foray into electronics and a spaced-out free-jazz jungle jam. Crisp playing throughout. (Opus One Productions, scott@opusone.org)

7 Anders Mogensen External Experience: AM



Danish drummer Anders Mogensen walks the line between a straight-ahead and strong-jazz approach.

Anders swings with cer-

tainty, providing the quartet with a solid backbone. He's got plenty of power and snap to his playing, and this recording picks up the considerable nuances of his energetic swing patterns. Every now and then Anders gets just aggressive enough to keep things on the edge. For completists' sake, he pulls out the brushes and plays a mean ballad, and he offers some nice Latin-ish chops as well. Great-sounding drums, too. (New Net Music, www.newnetmusic.com)

8 Chris Speed Emit



Downtown vet Jim Black backs up cohort Speed on a joyful ride, both inside and outside the groove. Black's usual

arsenal of clackety playing is evident, but he's also grooving his tail off on a number of pieces. Black displays the freedom to bang away in time, and then rip into a polyrhythmic foray that takes things in a completely different direction. He also displays a unique knack for being in the moment on a kind of sideways-feeling dirge, "Berance." There's equal space, notes, and color on this record. Downtown with the pros. (Songlines Recording, www.songlines.com)

Ted Bonar

BOOKS

8 30-Day Drum Workout by Pete Sweeney

level: all, \$7.50



No abs of steel to be had here, but Pete Sweeney's *30-Day Drum Workout*, subtitled "An Exercise Plan For Drummers," is the ultimate quick fix to strong and clean playing. The idea here is to "provide a solid practice routine that covers various aspects of drumset technique," although even the author realizes that technique is not everything: "Technique is only a means to an end. The end result is playing music." Now, that's as true as it gets!

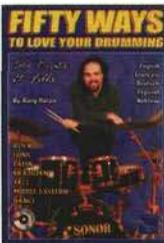
Starting out with a short yet detailed explanation of reading and musical terminology, the student moves quickly on to basic technique for all the limbs. Then it's on to the warm-ups. These are well thought-out, and could be taken out of context and used any time you get ready to sit behind the kit. Now it's time for the workout. Every day, from 1 to 30, helps the student develop a solid approach to his or her playing. The progression is swift yet not overwhelming, with each day focusing on the hands and then the kit. Not to fear, with each exercise there are tempo markings as well as some sticking. With its cheap price and hefty sixty-three pages, this one-month routine could be used by anyone who picks up sticks (even if your stomach doesn't look any better for the effort).

(Alfred)

Fran Azzarto

8 Fifty Ways To Love Your Drumming by Rony Holan

level: all, \$25 with CD



One day your bandleader will call out one of these beats. No question, if drumming is your passion, you are going to want to know rock, country, funk, Latin, jazz, and dance beats at a glance. You might even get a gig playing Middle Eastern music. That's here, too. Perhaps for that reason, Rony Holan translates the description of each rhythm into Hebrew, Spanish, German, and French.

As a "pocket reference," *Fifty Ways* is superb. The CD is well recorded and exceptionally well played—with one reservation. If you take Holan's cha cha, for example, you're going to find that it's at odds with the textbook varieties you've learned in the past. Same with his "funk shuffle." That said, you might want to defer to his judgment. He's done his homework and the beats and fills are up-to-date. (Or-Tav Music Publications)

T. Bruce Wittet

VIDEOS

9 Buddy Rich At The Top

level: all, \$24.96, 65 minute:



For decades, Buddy Rich fanatics have been mailing each other bootleg audiocassettes and videos. Tape hiss was a fact of life. That's why they'll purchase *Buddy Rich At The Top*, a blessed high-fidelity dub of the famed 1973 performance in Rochester, New York first aired on PBS in 1978. We're not totally safe from questionable moments here, though. The between-song gags make it seem as if Buddy sniffed the cameras rolling and choked. And why Buddy chose to cover Paul McCartney ("Uncle Albert") is a symptom of the impoverishment of big band arrangements. But those are far from deal-breakers. The standards are as tight as ever. And Buddy's fills will make you shiver with *deja vu*. It's as if he's mapping out licks that will become popular in later years, part Tower Of Power, part James Gadson. The Slingerland drum sound, from blackened heads, is funky. The camera angles are superb. Check out those stick heights! (Hudson)

T. Bruce Wittet

EDITOR'S VAULT

9 Television Marquee Moon

Billy Ficca (dr). Tom Verlaine. Richard Lloyd (gtr, vcl). Fred Smith (ts)



Widely regarded as the *Layla* of its era, Television's 1977 debut, *Marquee Moon* featured twin-guitar interplay and soloing that remains

stunning today. But whereas Derek & The Dominos' Eric Clapton and Duane Allman were updating the blues, Tom Verlaine and Richard Lloyd were about pure New York art rock experimentation. In both cases, the groundbreaking work of the guitarists too often overshadowed the accomplishments of the drummers—Jim Gordon on *Layla*, and Billy Ficca on this album.

Unlike The Ramones, Blondie, and other CBGB's pilgrims, Television constructed long, complex, impressionistic sonic scenes, as informed by John Coltrane as by The Stones. Ficca had lots of stuff to play off here. Each song is compositionally strong and interesting, and Ficca rarely took the easy route accentuating the changes. And he was never annoyingly clever about making his statements, either. Sure, he played lots of notes, but they were always *cool* notes. He also shows a boatload of chops, from surprisingly placed press rolls to unusual tom-based patterns. His take on the ten-minute title track, with tumbling fills, offbeat crashes, and decidedly un-punky grace notes, tells much of the tale.

Art-punk, new wave—whatever you want to call it—modern American music rarely comes more bracing and creative than *Marquee Moon*. Billy Ficca's performance is a much bigger reason than the history books have so far acknowledged. (Elektra)

Adam Budofsky



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Buying And Selling Drums On eBay

Part Two: Selling Your Drums Safely And Easily

by Michael Miller

In last month's *MD* we examined how to bid for, win, and pay for drums and accessories on eBay (www.ebay.com), the Internet's largest online auction site. However, if you have any old equipment sitting around your garage gathering dust, you might also want to think about becoming an eBay *seller* and putting those items up for auction to the highest bidder.

At last count, eBay had more than sixteen million users. That's a *huge* potential audience for anything you might want to sell. In fact, with that many potential bidders, eBay is a bit of a seller's market. It's possible to command extremely high valuations, especially when multiple bidders get into "bidding wars" over a particular piece of equipment.

How Do You List An Item For Auction?

When you decide to auction off a particular piece of equipment, you have to sign up as a registered eBay seller, and then place a listing for that item. All this is accomplished by clicking the Sell link on eBay's home page. Note that when you first sign up, you have to provide eBay with a valid credit card number. This is to ensure that you are who you say you are, and to provide eBay with a way to charge you their insertion and selling fees. You'll pay anywhere from 25¢ to \$2 to list an item, depending on the minimum bid price. eBay also takes 5% or so of the final selling price.

Listing an item for auction is as simple as filling out the form on the Sell Your Item page. You have to provide your eBay user ID and password, and then:

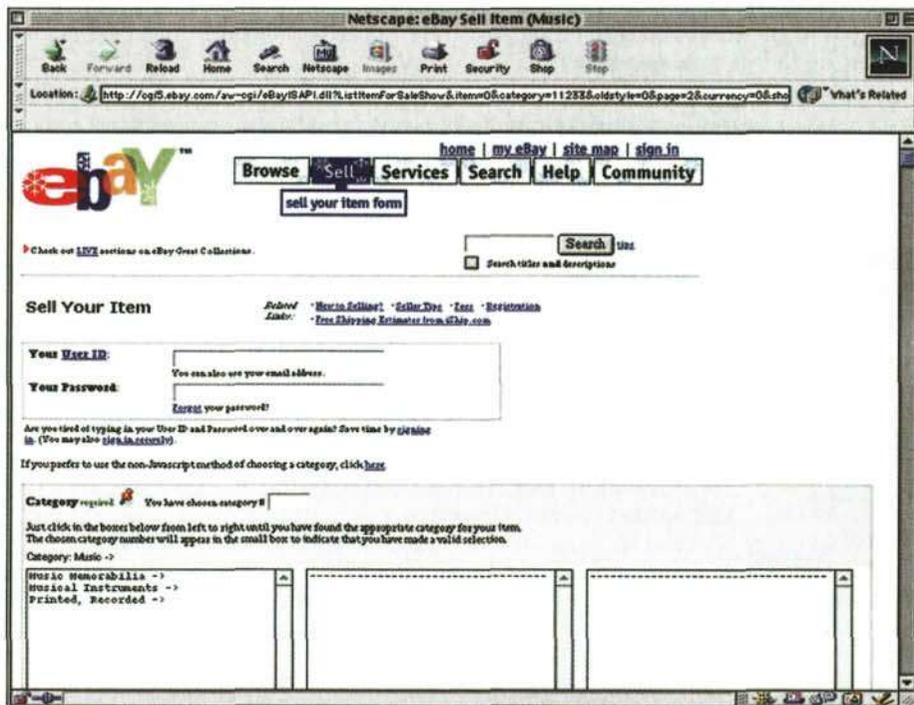
1. Choose a category for your item. (If you're selling drum equipment, choose the

Books, Movies, Music > Musical Instruments > Percussion category, and then either the General, Accessories, Cymbals, or Drums subcategory.)

2. Enter a short title for your item listing.
3. Enter a detailed description for your item.
4. Provide your location (to place your item in the appropriate local auction listings).
5. Set a minimum (opening) bid price for your item.
6. Choose how long you want your auction to run (three days, five days, seven days, or ten days).
7. Select any enhanced listing options, such as boldfacing the title (at extra cost, of course).
8. Determine what kinds of payments you want to accept, where you'll ship your item, and who pays shipping (you or the

buyer—generally the buyer).

On the Sell Your Item page you'll also see options for Reserve Price and Dutch auctions. In general, you should ignore these options and stick with a normal-type auction. Reserve Price auctions enable you to set a price—above the starting bid—below which you won't sell the item. (It's a way to generate interest with a low starting price while reserving the right not to sell unless the bidding reaches a certain level.) Dutch auctions enable you to sell multiple quantities of the same item in a single auction—five wing nuts, for example, or a half-dozen heads. The problem with both Reserve Price and Dutch auctions is that they confuse some users, and will typically result in fewer bids for your item. I'd recommend avoiding both these types of auctions until you're a more experienced seller.



What Price Should You Set?

Determining the opening bid for your item is more of an art than a science. In theory, you'd set the minimum bid at the level below which you don't want to sell the item. For example, if you need to get \$100 from that old snare drum to make it worth your while, start the bidding at \$100.

The problem with this theory is that high starting bids can sometimes scare off potential bidders. Another strategy is to start off with a lower, bid—as low as 990 (!)—to generate interest in your item, and then let the bidding run its course. This is a good strategy if you're selling a high-demand item and you're relatively sure that the bidding will eventually hit the level you want. If you're less sure about an item's potential, starting low may force you to sell the item at a lower price than is desirable.

A better course of action—especially if you're new to the game—is to search for auctions of items similar to the one you're selling. Look at the starting bids in those auctions (as well as the high bids) and price your item accordingly.

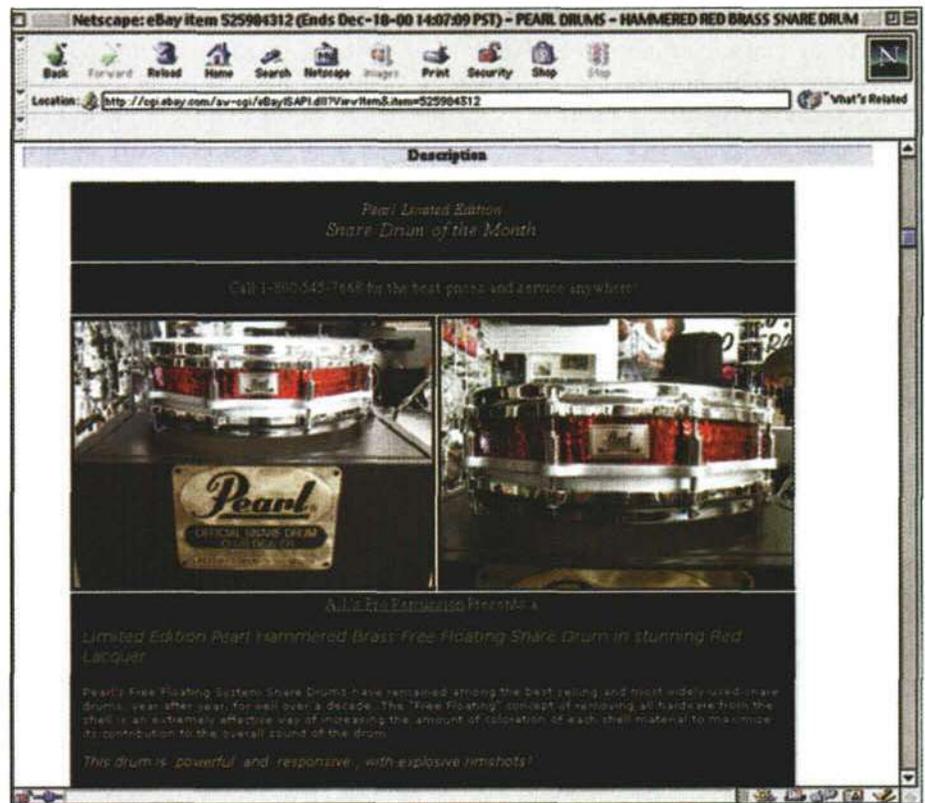
How Can You Improve The Performance Of Your Auctions?

With more than 3,000 percussion items up for auction on any given day, making *your* auction stand out from the crowd is a daunting task. Here are some tips on how to draw more attention to your listing—and generate more bids:

At last count, eBay had more than sixteen million users. That's a huge potential audience for anything you might want to sell.

1. Write a title that sells. Make sure your title both describes and generates excitement. Use words and phrases that are common to the category and that best identify your item to potential buyers. Also use attention-getting words, such as *sale*, *new*, *free*, and *rare* (but only as appropriate).

2. Include a detailed description. The better you describe your equipment in the



body of the item listing, the more confident users will be in bidding on your item. You can use as much space as necessary, so provide a full and complete description of your item, including any unique features, as well as any flaws or defects. (There's no need to lie to make a sale!) Put the most important information in the first paragraph, since some potential bidders won't read past that. Then fill in the rest of the listing with as much detail as you can muster.

3. Include a photograph. A picture is worth a thousand words, especially in an auction listing. When bidders can see what an item looks like, they're more likely to bid—and to bid higher. EBay's own photo hosting service enables you to include, at no charge, two photographs of your item in your listing. You can also upload additional picture files to another Web site, and include links to those pictures within your item listing. (See the instructions on the Sell Your Item page.) Use photos not only to show off your item, but also to illustrate any problem areas—such as rust pits or damaged coverings—that potential buyers are bound to ask about.

4. Create a fancy listing with HTML. If you want to create a really attention-getting listing—more like a real advertisement—you can use HTML code to add color, bold and italic text, pictures, and tables. If you're

technically adept, you can add the code manually to your item description, or you can use a third-party Web site or software program to build the ad and generate the HTML code for you. My favorite ad-building program is AuctionAssistant from Blackthorne Software (www.blackthornesw.com); similar services are available at the GoTo Auctions (auctions.goto.com) Web site.

What Types Of Payment Should You Accept?

When you're creating your item listing, you have to choose what types of payment you'll accept. The most common choices for occasional sellers are cash, personal check, and money order. Cash is great, of course, although it's seldom wise for a buyer to send bills and coins through the mail. If you take a check as payment, make sure you wait at least ten business days after you deposit the check before you ship the item—just in case the check bounces. Accepting a money order or cashier's check is just like taking cash in that the funds are deposited into your account immediately.

Some buyers might prefer to pay via credit card. Unfortunately, unless you're a bona fide retailer, you won't be able to get a bank to set you up with a merchant credit card account. A good workaround, howev-

Taking Care Of Business

er, is to sign up for a third-party service that accepts the credit cards for you, and then deposits the appropriate funds in your checking account.

EBay offers its own Billpoint service directly from the Sell Your Item page. A similar service is PayPal from X.com, which you can activate from their own Web site (www.x.com). Billpoint is the easiest service to use, since it's automatically integrated from within your item listing. PayPal is more popular because it's free (for non-business users), while Billpoint will charge you 350 plus as much as 2.5% per transaction. Either service works fine, and including one or the other is pretty much standard for most eBay auctions.

What Are The Best Ways To Ship Your Equipment?

After you get paid, the hard work is just beginning. Now you have to pack the sold equipment up and ship it out—at the lowest possible cost.

When you create your item listing, it's a good idea to list your shipping and handling charges up front. You can get a good

idea of what those charges will be by using the shipping calculator at the iShip Web site (www.iship.com). Plug in the specifics for your auction and iShip will estimate shipping charges for a variety of shipping services, including the US Postal Service, UPS, and Federal Express.

Choosing a shipping service is important. For most small, light items, US Postal Service Priority Mail is the service of choice. Many items can be shipped anywhere in the US for a flat \$3.20! You can't come close to this rate anyplace else. However, if you have a really big or heavy item (like a complete drumset), then you should consider other shipping options, including UPS Ground, FedEx Ground, and the Postal Service's Parcel Post.

When you quote shipping charges to bidders, remember to call your fee "shipping and handling." Figure in *all* your shipping costs—including the cost of boxes and other packaging material. You don't want to quote a \$5 shipping fee for a cymbal and then spend \$6 on a box to ship it in.

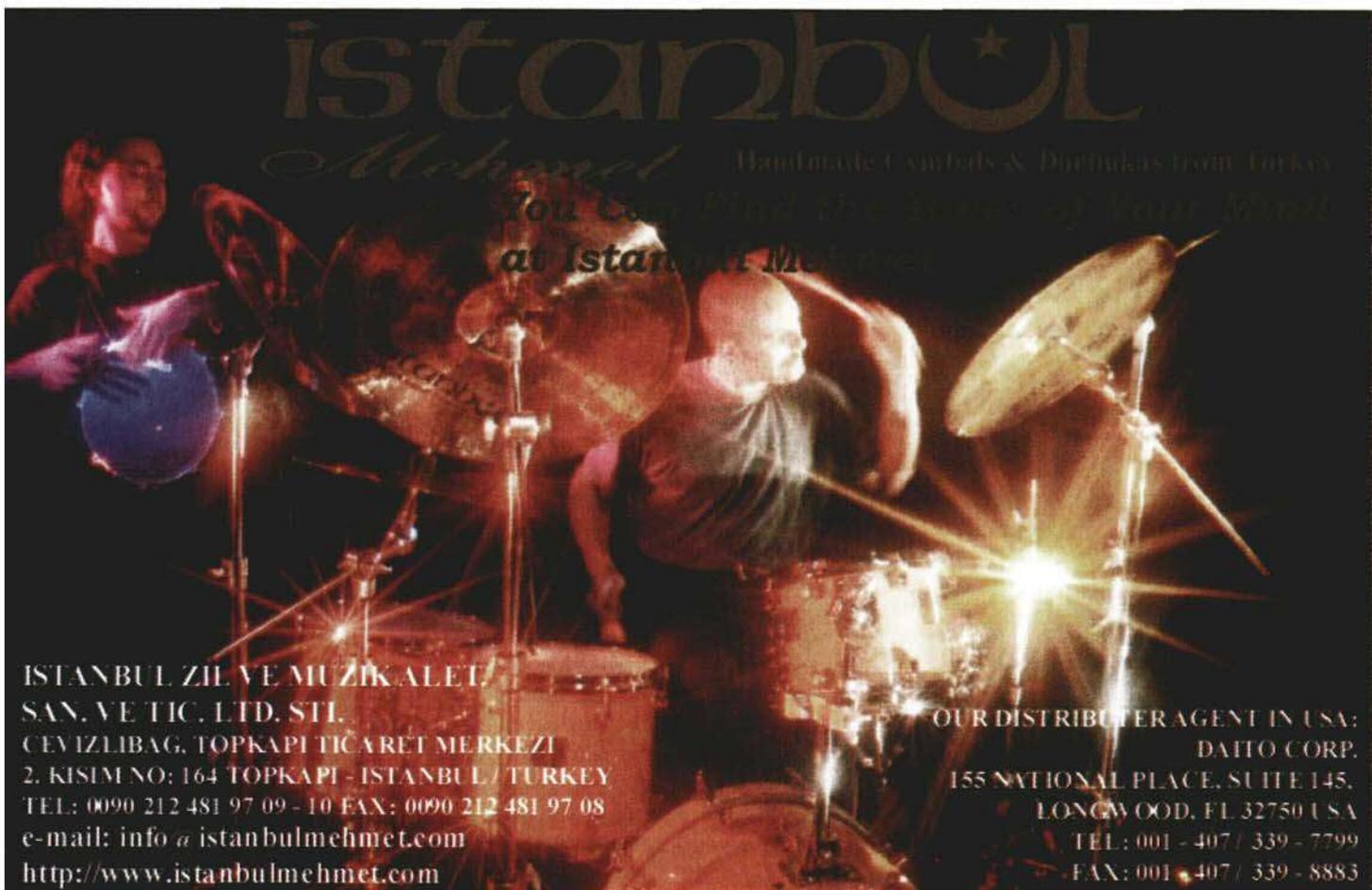
Fortunately, if you ship via USPS

Priority Mail, you can obtain small boxes for free. Just check with your local Post Office, or order directly from the supplies.usps.gov Web site. If you use other shipping services—or need a larger box to ship a drum or cymbal—you may need to purchase boxes separately. You can find boxes and other packaging supplies at local "box shops" or office supply superstores. While you're there, stock up on styrofoam "peanuts," bubble wrap, and strapping tape—three of the four essential packing accessories. (The fourth is crumpled up old newspapers, which you shouldn't need to buy.)

When it comes to obtaining properly sized boxes for shipping drums, don't forget to check with your local drum shop. You might be able to reuse some of the boxes that come with their manufacturer shipments.

The next chore is packing your equipment. If you don't pack right, you run the potential of having the item damaged in shipment. Here are some tips for packing various drum-related items:

1. Drums. If you're shipping an entire drumset, you're talking multiple big boxes



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and probably UPS shipping. Single small drums, such as snares or small toms, can probably be shipped via USPS Priority Mail. But compare rates with UPS just to be sure—and while you're at it, also consider USPS Parcel Post.

When shipping a complete set, pack several smaller boxes (for the small toms, for example) inside a larger box. Or remove the heads and "nest" several shells inside of each other—inserting packing material between each shell. In any case, use tissue paper or bubble wrap to protect the drums themselves, and pack in a fairly tight box with plenty of styrofoam peanuts.

2. Cymbals. Ship via USPS Priority Mail. Use a free USPS box for small cymbals. For larger cymbals, find a box slightly larger than the cymbal. For example, if you're shipping a 20" cymbal, use a 22"x22" box to provide room for the packing material around the cymbal. Wrap the cymbal in several layers of bubble wrap, then fill the box with styrofoam peanuts.

3. Stands. Since stands can be large and heavy, compare shipping charges for both USPS Priority Mail and UPS Ground.

Find a box big enough to hold the stand, then wrap the stand tightly in either bubble wrap or newspaper. Fill the box with crumpled newspapers or peanuts.

4. Parts and smaller items. Ship via USPS Priority Mail, using one of their standard (and free) boxes. Wrap the item in bubble wrap, then fill the box with either newspapers or peanuts.

How Do You Protect Yourself From Deadbeat Bidders?

As a seller, you're the most protected party in an online auction. About the worst that can happen is that a high bidder will fail to pay you for an item. If that happens, you just don't ship the item.

You can also report the jerk to eBay as a "deadbeat bidder" and file for a refund on eBay's selling fee. Also, don't forget to leave negative feedback for that user so that other sellers dealing with him will have some warning.

The other big thing to watch for is a buyer bouncing a check. This is why you should hold all personal checks until they clear your bank, no matter how much the buyer begs and pleads for faster shipment.

If you ship an item and are then notified that the check bounced, you have no one to blame but yourself.

What's Stopping You? It's Time To Start Selling!

Using eBay is a terrific way to locate other drummers who are interested in the equipment you want to sell. You'll reach more potential buyers than you would through a flea market or classified ad in your local paper. While it's not without cost—including your time and effort—it's relatively safe and increasingly popular. If you're not quite sure if eBay is for you, just log on and take a look around. Thousands of other drummers are using eBay to buy and sell all sorts of equipment. If they can do it, so can you.

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.



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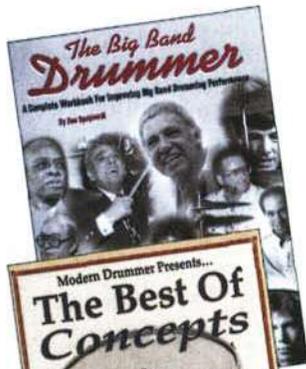
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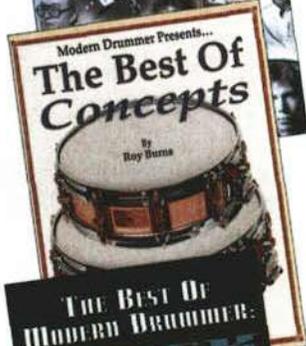
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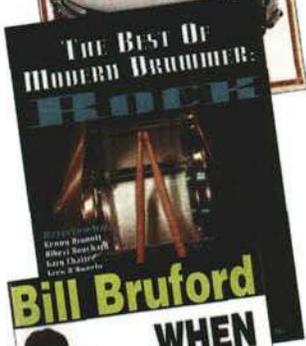
The Big Band Drummer by Ron Spagnardi

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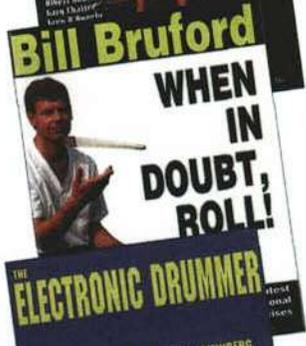
The Best Of Concepts by Roy Burns

Practical and entertaining ideas on dozens of subjects that concern all drummers.



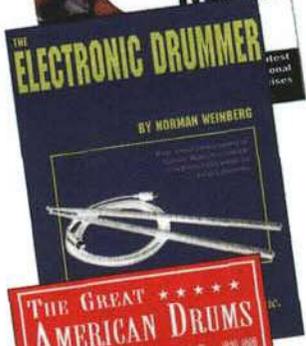
The Best Of MD: Rock

Everything from linear drumming, odd time, and double bass to shuffles, fills, and Neil Peart's advice on soloing.



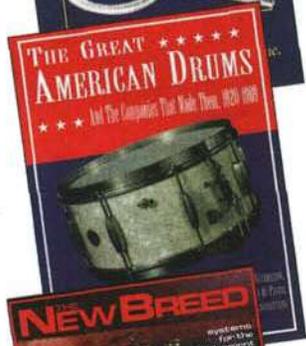
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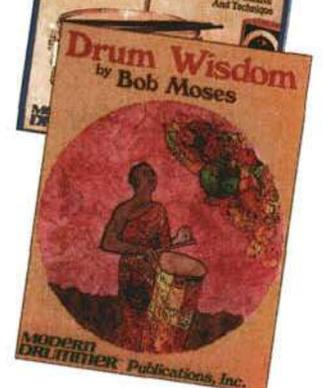
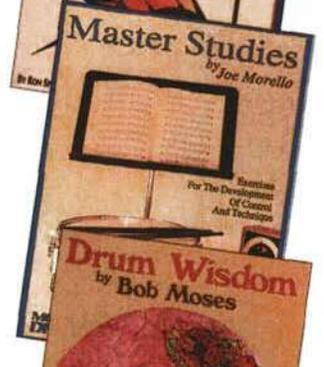
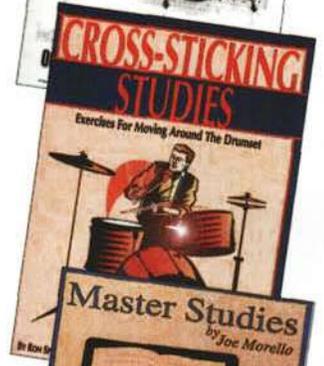
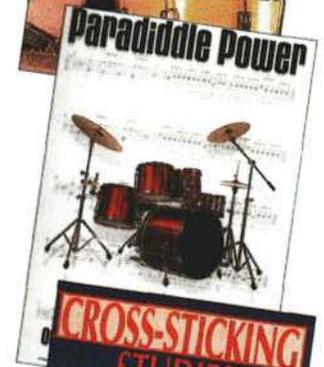
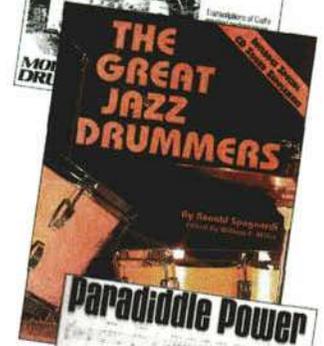
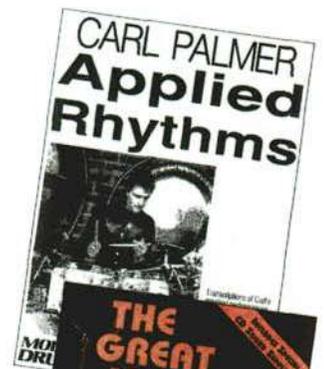
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Master Studies by Joe Morello

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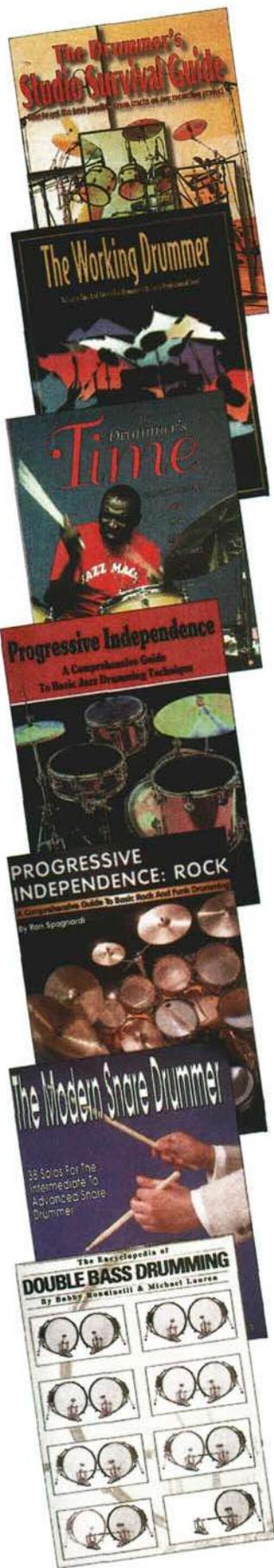
Drum Wisdom by Bob Moses

The unique concepts of one of the most exceptional drummers of our time.



For more information on any of these books
check out the "Books" section at www.moderndrummer.com.

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The Drummer's Studio Survival Guide

by Mark Parsons

The definitive book on recording drums, for the novice to professional drummer.

The Working Drummer

by Rick Van Horn

Everything the working clubdate drummer needs to know to succeed.

The Drummer's Time

by Rick Mattingly

A compilation of enlightening conversations with the great drummers of jazz, from Louie Bellson to Tony Williams.

Progressive Independence

by Ron Spagnardi

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Progressive Independence: Rock

by Ron Spagnardi

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Craig Borchers

DCI Drumset Champion

by Lauren Vogel Weiss

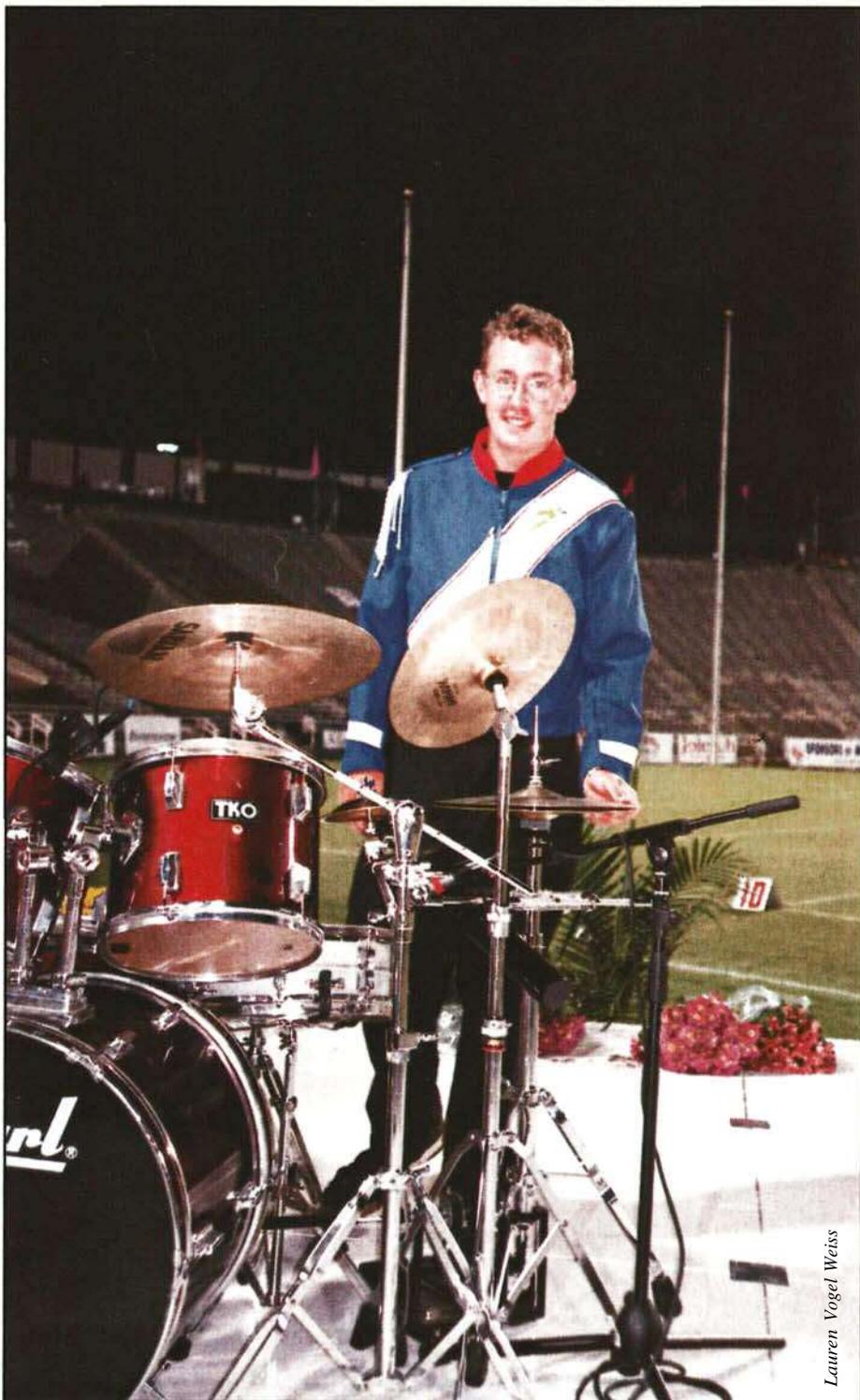
Drum Corps International (DCI) holds its annual championships each August. This past year the location was College Park, Maryland, just outside of Washington, DC. In addition to three classes of drum & bugle corps in competition, there is also an Individuals and Ensemble contest to determine the best soloists and small ensembles involved in the activity. *Modern Drummer* had a chance to talk to one of the winners.

Craig Borchers, a seventeen-year-old senior at Antioch Community High School in Antioch, Illinois and a rookie member of the Racine Scouts Drum & Bugle Corps from Racine, Wisconsin, won the "Best Multi-Percussion" award on August 9, 2000, performing an original composition on drumset. He began playing at the tender age of three and got his first drumset at age five, playing along with his brother on guitar. "He and I have been jammin' ever since!" laughs Craig. "Our parents were also inspirations."

Who were some of his drumming influences growing up? "Danny Carey, the drummer from Tool. I have all their CDs. I also like Raymond Herrera from Fear Factory and some of the older drummers—like Dave Grohl from Nirvana. I also remember the drummer from ZZ Top really got me into the double bass."

Borchers has taken some jazz lessons through school and continues his musical education by playing in the high school show choir, wind ensemble, and jazz band. He also plays tenors in the marching band, just as he does with the Scouts. He joined the corps when a friend from school asked him to come to Racine to check it out.

Following his first year in the drum & bugle corps activity, Craig plans to return to the Racine Scouts next season. "I love it out here," he states emphatically. "This is a great thing for kids to do instead of sitting around doing nothing all summer.



Lauren Vogel Weiss

Besides practicing a lot of rudiments, I've learned discipline and how to play with different people. I also enjoyed meeting new people."

Borchers was a little nervous performing his "victory encore" during the Division I and II Finals the evening of his solo competition. With thousands of fans in the stands, this was his biggest solo performance to date. "I really was nervous at first," he admits sheepishly. "Then my instructors here at the Racine Scouts calmed me down, helped me move all the equipment onto the stage, and kept me focused on my warm-up. And my friends sat right in front of me, cheering me on!"

Chuck Brummond, percussion caption head for the Racine Scouts, commented on his student's abilities: "One thing about Craig's solo is that his feet are as fast as his hands. It truly amazes me. Stylistically, he's got more things in his solo than people who have been playing for twenty, thirty, and forty years. The kid's amazing, and he's only seventeen years old." Scouts tenor tech Billy Aman also coached Craig on his solo.

Borchers played on his own drumset, which he took on tour that summer. The setup consisted of a 14" snare, 12" and 13" mounted toms, two 16" floor toms, and a 16x22 bass drum. His cymbals were a pair of 14" Sabian Fusion Hats, a 6" Paiste Signature splash, a 6" Zildjian Zil-Bel, a 16" Sabian Studio crash, an 18" Paiste Signature heavy China, and a 20" Paiste Alpha Power ride.

Craig's solo was based on a song from his band's repertoire. "From there I slowed it down a bit and was more mellow before I picked it up and went into a tom groove. Then I broke into this percussive samba, which I learned how to do from my uncle who plays in a band in Chicago. From there, I basically played around on double bass and incorporated that with the metal sounds. I finished by calming it down and playing with the smaller cymbals and bells and stuff. Then after that, I went ape in a big finish."

What advice would Craig give other aspiring young drummers about the drum corps experience? "Drum corps is great," Craig says with a smile. "Come out and see a show some time. It's really fantastic!"

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Dressing Up Your Kit

It Pays To Accessorize

by Jeff Kersh

Increasingly, well-known drummers are adding non-traditional percussive instruments to their kits to liven up their signature sounds and add a more exotic flavor to the parts they play. Stephen Perkins, Billy Martin, Phish's Jon Fishman, R.E.M.'s Joey Waronker, Alanis Morissette's Gary Novak, Dave Weckl, a host of Latin drummers, and many others "spice up" their drumming with sounds we may *think* of as being from the realm of the hand percussionist. But actually, the *first* drumkits incorporated cowbells, temple blocks, Chinese tom-toms, and other non-Western instruments. Like any trend, these additional bursts of color are making a comeback. This article is intended as a brief guide to using percussive sounds to augment your traditional kit.

A couple of concepts apply to all the ideas that follow, and they bear a little explanation in the beginning. One is the concept of an alternate ride instrument. Most of us immediately turn to a hi-hat or ride cymbal to keep the beat, purely out of habit. But that habit can and should be broken when the music requires it. After all, any steady beat resembles a ride pattern if it provides a road map to the structure of the song. Just consider Bill Bruford's use of Octobans and RotoToms, Keith Moon, Alex Van Halen, and Dave Grohl riding on crash cymbals, or the timekeeping sound sources used by hand percussionists.

The second concept involves the pop/rock drumkit with which we're all familiar: kick, snare, a couple of toms, ride and crash cymbals, and hi-hat. This is the instrument most of us grew up playing, and it's the instrument we tend to think of as "complete." It *is* complete, to a degree. But it can certainly be expanded to include a wide variety of sounds that

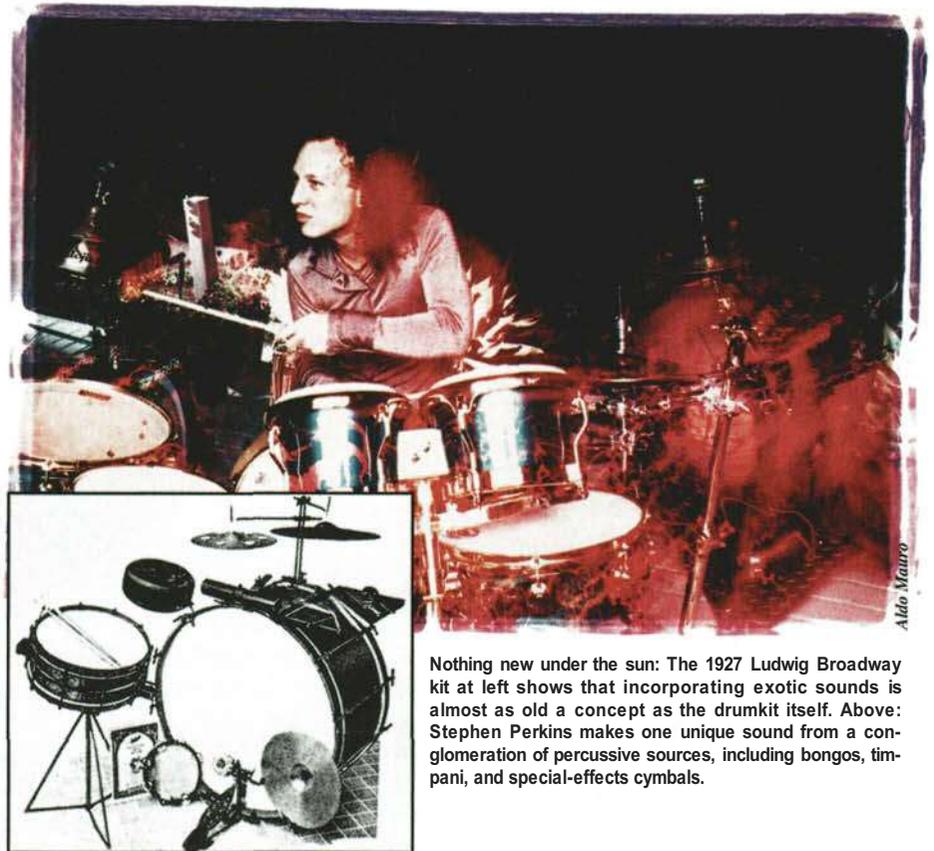
aren't typical of the drumkits we hear on the radio.

More and more radio songs include drum machines playing percussion parts along with the drumbeat. Why not include some *genuine* percussion sounds in your setup? You'll not only be able to duplicate some of the sounds on the radio, you'll be doing it with the real thing, adding a depth and feel those producers with drum boxes can't hope to achieve.

Additional drums are the most obvious choice for add-on instruments. They not only add color and an exotic flavor to your music, they also make your kit look larger and more eye-catching. A set of bongos above the hi-hat is a tried-and-true addition, offering a couple of high-pitched, interesting toms and allowing

you to incorporate a Latin feel into any groove. Bigger drums, like djembes and Brazilian surdos, can fill out the lower end of the spectrum. Native American drums add an earthy quality, while a talking drum can lend an ethereal sound. You might even consider a conga or djembe that you can play with your hands for quieter passages or a different feel. Experiment with blending these drums into your existing setup. The possibilities are endless.

Cymbals and other metallic sounds are easy to add to your kit. They're plentiful, and they can offer sounds ranging from beautiful and shimmering to ugly and loud. Try a China cymbal if you don't have one already, or strike a small gong for a flood of overtones and an ear-catch-



Nothing new under the sun: The 1927 Ludwig Broadway kit at left shows that incorporating exotic sounds is almost as old a concept as the drumkit itself. Above: Stephen Perkins makes one unique sound from a conglomeration of percussive sources, including bongos, timpani, and special-effects cymbals.

ing burst of noise. Most major cymbal companies offer a line of exotic or "effects" cymbals. The high-pitched explosions of today's preferred crashes are great, but you can really stand out with something darker or wilder. The flat rides popularized by drummers like Roy Haynes, for example, allow you to articulate every note you play without overtone buildup. Triangles or sound disks add to your "top level," as do splashes. I have a friend who played a cheap bronze cymbal until it broke into ribbons. Then he played the ribbons. Inventiveness can be productive and fun. For example, you can mount tin cans or pots and pans for a metallic treat. Think about sounds that will fit into your chosen style(s) of music but are just a bit "off-kilter." They'll stand out, and so will you.

Wooden sounds stand out, too, largely because they're not as widely used as drums and cymbals are. If a set of temple blocks or a slit drum are out of your price range, try a couple of woodblocks (or the plastic blocks now available). Even a box or a piece of wood might work, if you play it right. Don't just use wood sounds

for rimclicks. Use them to punctuate passages, use them as alternative ride instruments, or play simple, untuned melodies and double-stops.

Couple an exotic instrument with an exotic implement, and you can create sound you never even imagined.

Don't forget the ever-popular cowbell. One bell will open up your ride playing, but multiple bells can yield even more sonic possibilities. Listen to Latin drum-

mer/percussionists (especially timbaleros) or to the "trees" used by Neil Peart or Mike Portnoy to hear a few options. The vast range of bells and blocks on the market today guarantee you'll find the sounds that work best together.

While we're talking multiple sounds, why not give melodic instruments a try? They tend to be expensive, but a one-octave marimba, a beginner glockenspiel, or a small steel drum are affordable enough to begin exploring what other instrumentalists assume is their "turf." Drums apply here, too, in the form of RotoToms (at the least expensive) and timpani (at the most). Try doubling a simple guitar or keyboard melody with any of these instruments, or riding on a couple of notes instead of a cymbal. Before long, the other bandmembers may include you in their melodic decision-making. Melodic instruments are also a wonderful introduction to song keys and music theory in general, and could help you learn a second instrument like keyboard, guitar, or bass.

Shakers and rattles make interesting alternative "ride" instruments, and they



**Under
The
Influence.**

When it comes to drumming, you may have noticed that the most influential players are always the ones who draw from the most influences. You know, different strokes from different folks. So why limit your listening to only a few kinds of "good" music when there's so many great ones around? According to power/punk/funk/rock drummer Chad Smith, developing your own style comes from constantly exposing yourself to other styles. "Steal from everybody," Chad says, "then make it your own. And who knows, one day other drummers may find themselves under your influence."

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Dressing Up Your Kit

provide a thicker sound than the best cymbal. Steve Shelley of Sonic Youth has used maracas in his ride hand, and many drummers have tried playing a tube shaker in place of a hi-hat. Studio legend Jim Keltner has even taped maracas to the backs of his sticks for his one-of-a-kind shuffle feel. (Try this at home. You'll discover how hard it is to keep a beat that way.)

Shakers and rattles are relatively inexpensive, so you can experiment with a number of them to find the sounds you like best. New stick/shaker combinations have entered the market recently, eliminating the need to put down your sticks to get a shaker sound. Then there are jingle sticks, sleigh bells, and all kinds of rattles, both store-bought and homemade, that go far beyond straight 8th notes. Can your bandmates handle a ride beat that doesn't "tick tick" in the background? There's one sure way to find out; as you learn to manipulate these difficult-to-control instruments, your bandmates will learn along with you.

Say you've bought a couple of instruments to "dress up" your kit. What do you

play them with? It's not a bad idea to invest in a few pairs of mallets: felt, rubber, or something completely different. Multi-sticks, with mallet heads or brushes on one end and nylon drumstick tips on the other, are fun to use, and can serve as perfect "brushes" to paint your new sonic colors.

Try playing a single crash cymbal with a stick, then a felt mallet, then a yarn mallet, then a brush, then your hand. (Don't hurt yourself.) You'll hear different overtones, different attacks and decays, and varying degrees of depth from the instrument. There's the subtle attack but full swell from a mallet, the shimmer from a brush, the power of a stick. Those differences can be used to full advantage when you're backing a band. Blend those sounds to show off the versatility of a single cymbal.

Play snare drum brush rhythms on a conga head, timpani rolls on a floor tom or surdo, or faux-melodic parts on toms. Also, check out bass drum beaters with tambourine jingles, shakers, and other attachments. Or clamp a cowbell in a mounting bracket and play it with your foot. New implements are being devel-

oped every day, it seems. It's worth it to try at least a few, just to explore the possibilities. Couple an exotic instrument with an exotic implement, and you can create sounds you never even imagined. Your audience will notice, too.

Listen closely to the drummers you really respect. There's a good chance you'll hear a non-traditional sound here and there. As the drumkit continues to evolve, it takes not only rhythms, grooves, and ideas from other cultures, but instruments and sounds as well. Whether you add a drum, a hunk of metal, or a hunk of wood, and no matter what you play it with, your sound will expand, giving you new ideas for your drumming, and showing off your unique style. Like putting on a tux for a dance or some other function, you feel like a different person when you're "dressed up." Take advantage of that feeling, and try some things you never thought you'd try before. In doing so, you're participating in one of the oldest musical traditions: making *music* with rhythm.



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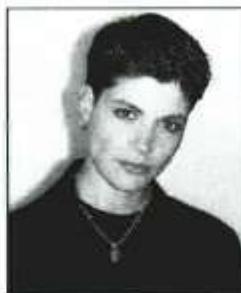
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Donna Kelly

Thirty-four-year-old Donna Kelly describes herself as "a true New Yorker." Donna was born in Brooklyn, is now living in SoHo, and has studied at Drummers Collective. She has been playing in the metropolitan NYC area for the past sixteen years.

Appropriate for the highly diversified music scene in which she performs, Donna's playing skills are varied and expressive. Her influences range from John Bonham to Vinnie Colaiuta by way of Max Roach. She does everything from live club performances to session work, along with

pit work for musical theater. Her recent recording credits include Abby Strauss (contemporary), Amanda's Waiting (rock), Josh Roy Brown (roots rock), Donya Lane (pop), Flamin' Amy Coleman (blues), Jody Joseph (folk/rock), and Soul Pusher (Euro). Donna's drumming on these recordings displays a creative touch, chops appropriate for each different situation, a deep sense of groove, and plenty of musical passion. As a result, she's gained a



reputation as a "songwriter's drummer."

Donna has also been performing in Off-Broadway shows, and has had the pleasure of working with Cy Coleman, Chita Rivera, Eartha Kitt, and David Shire. One of her goals is to parlay this work into a position in a Broadway pit. She uses a Yamaha Recording Custom kit, Zildjian and Sabian cymbals, Pearl hardware, a Tama Iron Cobra pedal, and various LP percussion instruments.

Jason Bodlovich

Santa Rosa, California's Jason Bodlovich is a double-threat: a drummer and a guitarist. "I got a late start in music," says Jason. "So I took a double-time approach to studying, practicing, and listening. I got serious in college, where I studied with bassist Mel Graves



(Lee Konitz, Mose Allison, Mike Stern, and Steve Smith), and drummers George Marsh (John Abercrombie, Dave Grisman, and author of *The Inner Drummer*) and Jim Holland (*The Complete Book Of Drum Fills*). By the time I graduated I was gigging with the San Francisco jump blues/swing

band ACME Swing Co. I had a blast soloing and kicking the horns, shuffling and playing jungle grooves. We toured the US and Canada, and I eventually caught the attention of the folks at Ayotte Drums. They've graciously offered me an endorsement."

Jason now teaches and freelances in the Bay Area. With such varied influences as Billy Higgins, Zigaboo Modeliste, Topper Headon, Mitch Mitchell, and Joey Baron, he strives to be "everyone's favorite drummer to call for gigs and recordings." Along with

a busy playing and teaching schedule, as well as a personal practice routine that borders on the militaristic, he recently found time to record and release his first CD as a leader. Called *Moment's Notice*, it features Mel Graves and several other notable Bay Area musicians. The album consists of jazz standards, a cover of The Meters' funky "Cissy Strut," and an original drum solo piece on which Jason explores recurring themes, ultimately trading fours with himself. Jason's playing throughout the album is tasteful and expressive. (You can get information on it from Jason's Web site: www.wolftones.com/Jbodlovich.)

Bradley Allen

Bradley Allen's drumming background began in elementary school and continued through high school, where he took vocal lessons as well. "All the pop groups had vocal harmonies," Bradley recalls. "I figured this skill would make me more in demand as a player, which has proven true." Later, piano instruction gave Bradley a more complete understanding of music, allowing him to write and arrange.

Bradley's professional career started at sixteen in polka and country bands. "Of course my personal favorite was rock," he says. "But I could make more money playing in a polka band on a weekend than my friends could make flipping burgers all week. When you're young, you should take

every opportunity you can get just to play."

A jazz drummer named Dave Divis later introduced Bradley to the playing of Buddy Rich and Joe Morello. "I knew right away I wanted to play jazz as a career," Bradley recalls. "Problem was, my small hometown in Nebraska wasn't a hotbed for music of any sort, let alone jazz."

Bradley pursued his musical education at the University of Nebraska, then joined the US Army Band. "Fmr seven years I gained valuable experience while earning a steady paycheck," he says. "I played in a number of jazz and variety groups, includ-



ing performing for President Clinton and Haitian President Aristide."

But after one night's visit to the jazz clubs of Kansas City, Bradley redetermined to make a career as a jazz drummer. He left the Army Band, moved his family, and took up residence in KC's active music scene. Since then he's become a fixture in the clubs, playing a vintage Ludwig kit and Zildjian cymbals. He has also released his own self-titled CD, which demonstrates his well-honed skills as a drummer and as a leader. (Go to showgigs.com/bradleyallen for more information.)

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.



Karen Carpenter

A Drummer Who Sang

by Rod Fogarty

To say that Karen Carpenter was one of the finest female vocalists of her generation is nothing new. Songs like "We've Only Just Begun," "Superstar," "Rainy Days And Mondays," and "Top Of The World" weren't just radio staples in the '70s, but have withstood the test of time. And a whole new generation, inspired by a fondness of all things groovy and smiley-faced, has embraced Karen's amazing singing and her brother Richard's wonderful songs and arrangements. In fact, the 1994 album *If I Were A Carpenter* featured a stellar cast of alternative artists like Sheryl Crow, Cracker, Sonic Youth, The Cranberries, and Redd Kross interpreting the duo's hits in a whole new way.

Yet many have failed to recognize just how good a *drummer* Karen Carpenter was. This can probably be attributed to the fact that many of the better-known Carpenters recordings featured studio drummers like Hal Blaine, Cubby O'Brien, Jim Gordon, and Ronnie Tutt. Fortunately, in recent years we've seen the release or reissue of many recordings where we can hear Karen playing. These bring into focus the real gifts of Karen Carpenter the drummer.

Karen was born on March 2, 1950 in New Haven, Connecticut. It was after the family moved to California in 1963 that she began a love affair with an instrument that would last her entire life.

According to friends and family, Karen took the drums very seriously from the start, spending endless hours practicing. Her brother Richard recalls, "She seemed to take to them in nothing flat." In time, Karen came under the influence of The Dave Brubeck Quartet, with drummer Joe Morello. So keen were her ears that she soon taught herself the intricate, odd-time rhythms of Brubeck's "Take Five" and "It's A Raggy Waltz." Karen had been playing little more than a year by this time.

The first incarnation of The Carpenters as



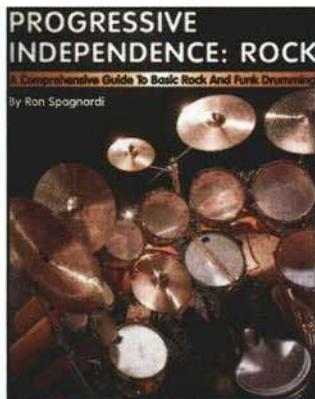
The sweetest voice of the 70s could rock the house from behind the kit when she wanted to.

a working group came in the form of The Richard Carpenter Trio. Consisting of piano, bass, and drums and performing strictly as an instrumental combo, they won first prize in the Hollywood Bowl Battle Of

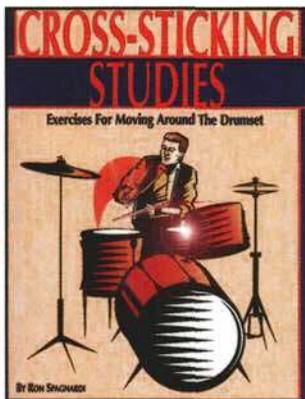
The Bands in 1966. The trio can be heard twice on *The Carpenters: From The Top* (A&M-31454), a four-disc boxed set that offers a complete overview of the group's recording years.

A Selection Of Great Books

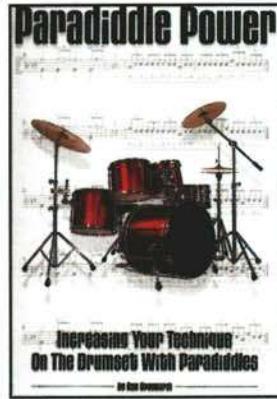
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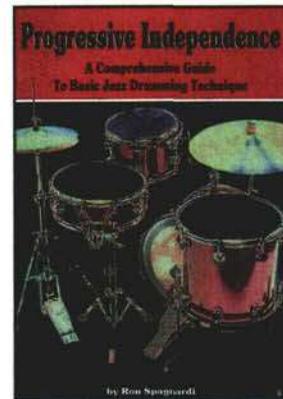
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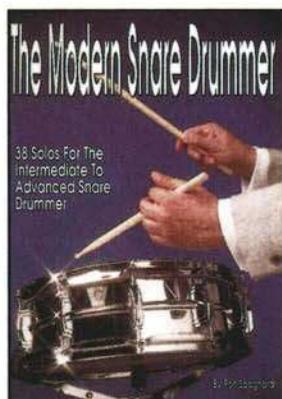
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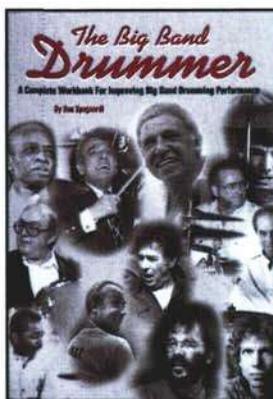
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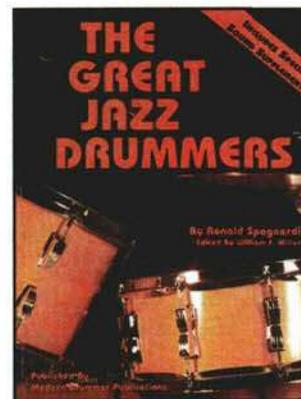
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Karen Carpenter

The first example is a rendition of Duke Ellington's "Caravan," where we hear a very young Karen playing with assurance and technique. After a respectable display of swinging and comping, she launches into a solo that can best be described as an explosion of energy and chops. The next tune, "Iced Tea," is a jazz waltz with some intricate, classical-style snare drum work, and a short solo that adds up to a real tour-de-force for a drummer just past her sixteenth

birthday.

In 1969, The Carpenters recorded their first album for A&M. The album, originally released as *Offering*, was later reissued as *Ticket To Ride* (A&M-82839). On this disc, nineteen-year-old Karen plays drums on all the tracks, and also sings lead on the lion's share of the tunes. The drum track on "Your Wonderful Parade" has Karen overdubbing snare and bass drum parts to create a huge drum-corps effect. "All I Can Do" is an uptempo jazz tune in 5/4 that swings from the word go. Here we witness a drummer in full command of her technique, assured and full of fire, playing imaginative fills and great hand/foot combinations. Her drumming is alive with the joy of self-discovery.

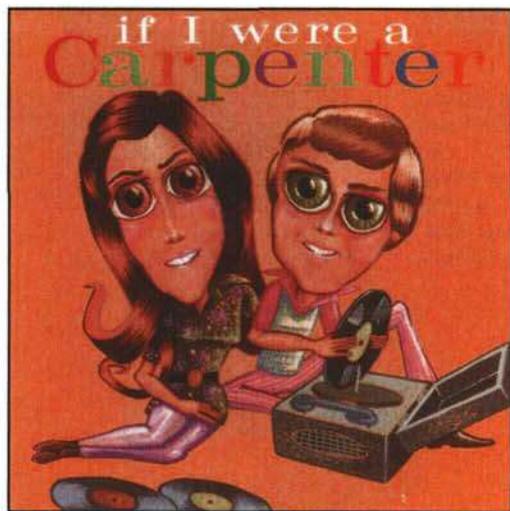
In 1970 all the pieces came together for The Carpenters on their recording of "Close To You." "When the producers finally decided to go with professional musicians," recalls studio legend Hal Blaine, "they talked to Karen about my playing drums. It was fine with her because she and Richard really wanted a hit.

"I always said that Karen was a good drummer," Hal insists. "I knew she could play right away when she'd sit

down at my drums on sessions. She played on a lot of the album cuts, and she played when they performed live, as well. But after their third or fourth hit, I remember saying to her, 'When are you going to get off the drums? You sing too good, and you should be fronting the band.'" In time, it was decided that Karen would remain behind the drums on the uptempo numbers, and come down front to sing the ballads.

"Karen was a very good player and very knowledgeable about the drums," recalls former Carpenters drummer Cubby O'Brien. "Some of the things we did together weren't easy. Richard wanted things played exactly like the record. We worked out all the drum breaks from the records, and I played exactly what she did. The whole idea of bringing me in was to get her off the drums so she could sing more. But Richard had grown up with her playing, so it was hard for someone else to take over the drum chair."

One of the things that Karen and Cubby did together can be heard on *The Carpenters Live At The Palladium* (A&M-68403). A percussion feature was arranged where Karen would move around the stage and play various configurations of drums and percussion. The medley of Gershwin tunes kicks off with a stop-time rendition of



In 1994 a new generation of musicians verified the Carpenters' coolness with an illuminating tribute album.

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"Strike Up The Band," where Karen fills in the spaces like a great tap dancer, dividing this rudimental workout between the head and rim of the snare drum. Moving to full drumset, she sails into some fast swing on the hi-hat, while maintaining a samba ostinato with her feet. Jumping out from behind the kit, she moves to timbales and cowbells for a brief Latin turn, trades solos with Cubby O'Brien, and ends it all on her multi-tom set for the big finish.

In 1973, work began on a new album, *Now And Then* (A&M-CD3519). After using session players for their three previous recordings, this one was cut almost entirely with road musicians—with one exception. Karen returned to her roots and supplied the drum tracks for every song except one. On "This Masquerade," Karen lays down a Latin rhythm that can only be described as elegantly hip. With a stick and a brush, she weaves an almost ethereal groove. Hi-hat accents and an uncluttered clave offer a textbook example of musical and creative drumming. Towards the end, she plays some fills that break up the time and are phrased in a very personal manner.

Karen Carpenter was a more accomplished player than most people realized. No less a figure than Buddy Rich considered

her to be a superior player. "I remember one time when Karen and I went to see Buddy's band," says Cubby O'Brien. "I knew Buddy fairly well, so before the show I took her backstage to meet him. I said, 'Buddy, this is Karen Carpenter.' He said, 'Karen Carpenter, do you know that you're one of my favorite drummers?' As tough as Buddy could be on drummers sometimes, he always respected someone who played the instrument well."

On February 4, 1983, at the age of thirty-two, Karen suffered a fatal heart attack brought on by the anorexia she had struggled with for the last seven years of her life. Once, when asked how she hoped time would view The Carpenters, Karen said, "We want to be remembered for our contribution to music. That's the main thing in our lives: to present what comes from within us through our music. We want to be remembered as good musicians and nice people."

And this is precisely how we'll remember Karen Carpenter, who, to the end, always considered herself a drummer who sang.

Extra thanks to Jim Catalano, Todd Trent, and Richard Carpenter for the photo of Karen behind the kit.



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Vernel Fournier

Vernel Fournier, a pioneer of New Orleans-inspired bop drumming, died November 4, 2000 in Jackson, Mississippi. He was seventy-two.

Fournier was a versatile jazz, blues, and R&B drummer who appeared on recordings by such varied artists as Billy Eckstine, Jimmy Reed, Etta Jones, Clifford Jordan, George Shearing, and Joe Zawinul. But it was his long-time membership in the Ahmad Jamal trio that earned him his greatest acclaim.

Between 1952 and 1965 Vernel lent his finesse and feel to thirteen albums by Jamal. In 1958 the trio made a live recording of a performance at Chicago's Pershing Club. One tune from that recording, called "Poinciana," became a jazz/R&B standard and a radio and jukebox favorite. Much of the song's success was based on Fournier's distinctive drum pattern (*Vernel Fournier/Drum Techniques*, published by Hal Leonard, includes a complete transcription).

Fournier's unique style was rooted in the Dixieland tradition, even when he was playing bop. In his March 1998 *MD* interview, he stated, "Some guys play the jazz cymbal beat with a quarter note and a triplet, with the middle beat of the triplet missing. Then some guys play it with a quarter note and two 8th notes. I always played it the New Orleans style with a quarter, a dotted 8th, and a 16th. It's much more syncopated, I guess you could say it's more military. They don't sound too different when you play fast, but when you play slow you can really tell the difference between the three styles."

No less a drum star than Jack DeJohnette credits Fournier as his inspiration to play the drums. DeJohnette started out in Chicago as a piano player. But the more he heard the Ahmad Jamal trio, the more he was captivated by Fournier's drumming. "He'd be sitting there with a cigarette hanging out of his mouth looking very suave and relaxed," said DeJohnette in the March 1998 *MD*. "But his intensity was right in there. Whatever he played stood out because he wasn't busy all the time. He left space, and when he played solos, you took note of them because they were very interesting."

Rick Van Horn



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PASIC 2000

Everything Is Bigger In Texas

by Ted Bonar

The Percussive Arts Society International Convention (PASIC) was held in Dallas this past November, and the entire drum industry was on hand for the event. The clinic and concert schedule was literally gridlocked with activity, and the product room—officially dubbed the "loud" room—held an unbelievable display of drumkits, cymbals, custom snares, electronics, mallet instruments, and other assorted percussive goodies.

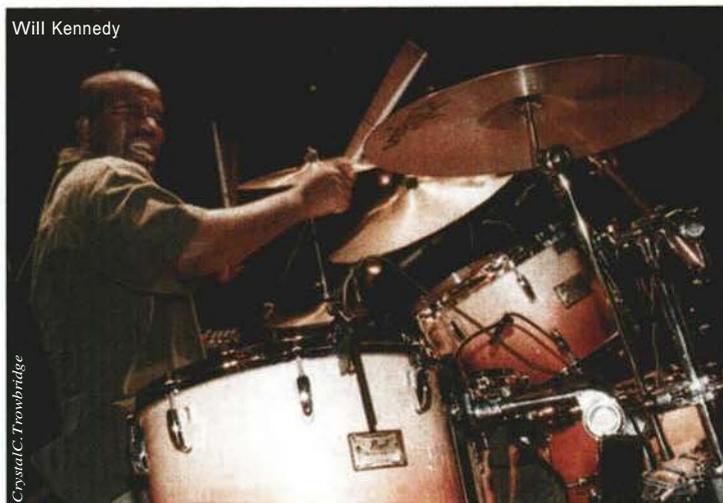
The best thing about this convention was the universal nature of the gathering. Mallet professionals and educators were given equal presence with the drumset icons, and the drumline events were positively bursting at their high-tensioned seams.

The multitude of events and product showcases couldn't possibly be completely covered by one measly magazine editor. But I sure did try.



Sheila E and Alex Acuna

Crystal C. Trowbridge



Will Kennedy

Crystal C. Trowbridge

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16

9:00 A.M.—WILL KENNEDY

EVERYBODY SAY SLAM!!! Really? This early? Will came out ready to go—demanding that we say SLAM!—and played to some killer R&B-flavored fusion tracks in front of five hundred people getting an early start on things. Will previewed some of the concepts from his latest video, *Be A Drumhead* (Warner Bros.), and played like the pro he is. Check out that left-hand lead! For all of those flashy chops, the man sure plays relaxed and grooving, and he set a positive, enthusiastic tone for the entire show. Not a bad way to start at all.

10:30 A.M.—BRAD DUTZ

I arrived in time to see one of the most fun and inventive percussion clinics of the event. Brad was playing, *well...everything* with *everything*. Hand drums with sticks, bells with chopsticks, djembes with brushes—any surface with his hands, feet, voice, or some version of a stick. Brad's mission was to show that "hand drums have a voice in all sorts of music." The colors and sounds he coaxed out of anything he touched were inspiring.

11:00 A.M.—ZORO

The mad-hatted Zoro hosted a history of R&B drumming, by way of a multi-media presentation/performance. The house was packed to hear Zoro play through the lineage of the R&B grooves, from gospel two-beats and James Brown funk all the way through today's slammin' sounds. This was one of the "fresher" approaches to a drum clinic at the convention: educational, fun, impressive, and far from self-indulgent. And about a thousand drummers now know the two-beat. Amen!

2:00 P.M.—ALEX ACUNA & SHEILA E

Now we're talking. The capacity crowd gave up a standing ova-

tion before Alex and Sheila played a note. And why not? The duo started on congas, then moved to timbales, cajons, djembes, drumKATs, and eventually the drumsets. At one point in between instruments (and after another spontaneous standing O) Sheila took the mic' and explained, "We haven't rehearsed anything. We're just up here talking to each other, listening, and having a conversation." Alex cooked on congas (yes!), Sheila smoked on timbales (right!), and they both *kicked ass* on drums (uh-HUH!). You think there was another standing O at the end of this hour? You bet there was.

4:00 P.M.—NDUGU CHANCLER

Mr. Chancler laid it down, both verbally and on the drumkit. Ndugu had plenty to say about drumming in the real world, observing, "I hear all of these solos and all of these licks today, but most of what we do is backing up singers." Ndugu demonstrated his big, bold, relaxed cross-stick groove on drumset—which, by the way, he "guarantees" when hired for a date—and then played timbales to a pre-recorded track. As a portent of things to come, Sonny Emory sat in and jammed on timbales. Ndugu closed with some sage advice: "Whatever you do, learn to love it. And if you want to be in this business, learn to get the job done!"

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17

9:00 A.M.—FREDDIE STUDER/PIERRE FAVRE

Everybody say SSSHHHHH! This most esoteric performance of the show was oddly appropriate at this early hour. Just as Will Kennedy set an enthusiastic, energetic tone to open the first day, this unique duo warmed up the crowd on Friday. But rather than a rousing drum solo and prerecorded tracks, Freddie and Pierre started off whisper-quiet, using sounds as much as rhythms as the basis of their interplay. These guys could draw overtones out of a slab of concrete, so you can only imagine what they did with their cymbals. They used bows, brushes, mallets, rattan sticks, and *handfuls of straw* to draw the sounds out of their instruments. The sounds were "outside," but the performance was captivating.

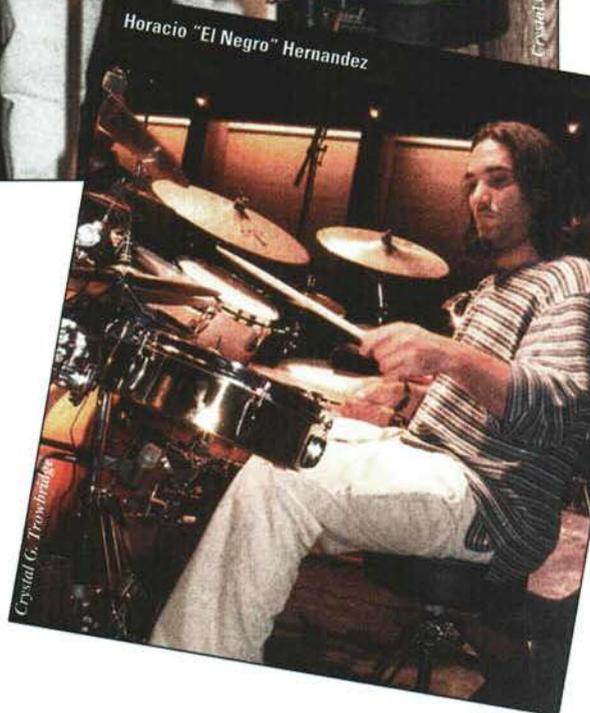
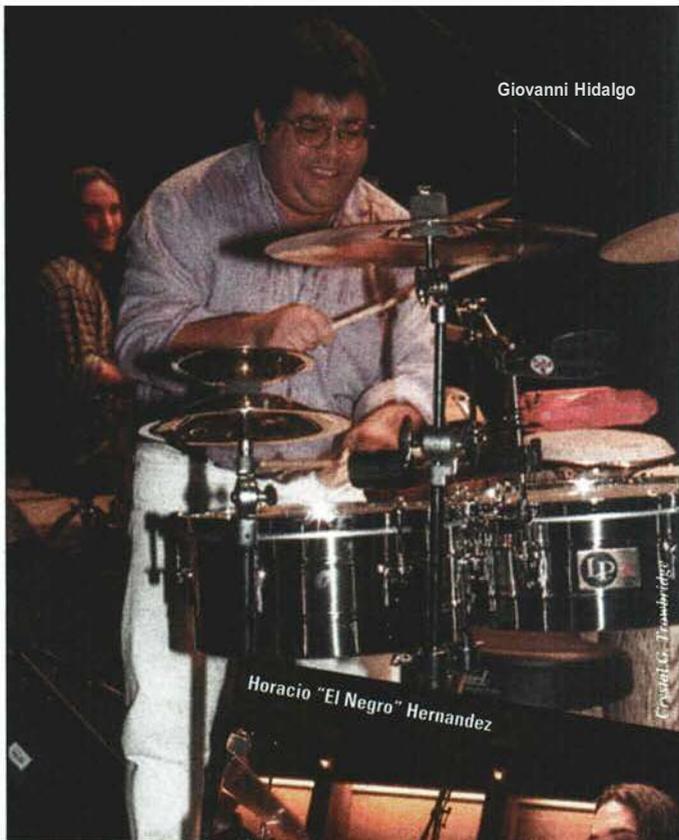
11:00 A.M.—SONNY EMORY

This man came to *play*. Sonny started on snare drum and gave the packed house the best rudimental display of any of the drumset performances, complete with stick twirls, back-taps, stick flips, and mind-altering single-stroke rolls. Moving on to the drumset, Sonny played his flashy, tasty best to some tracks, all the while keeping a beautiful, relaxed groove. Proving that he keeps everything in perspective, Sonny addressed the issue of his stick tricks, explaining, "I did marching band and the whole deal when I was young. That's where all the madness comes from. That stuff is fun, but before you learn to twirl, you *must* learn the music!"

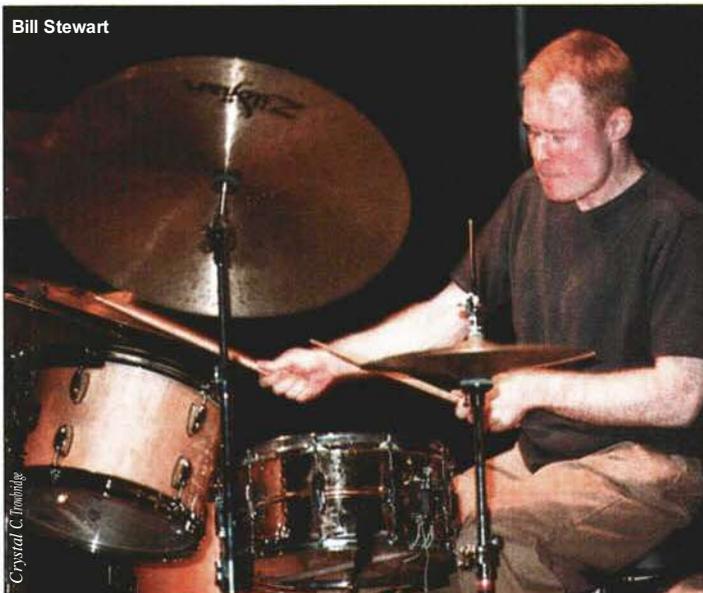
12:00 P.M.—IGNACIO BERROA

One of the pervasive undercurrents at the show was the presence of *clave*. It was everywhere you went, in everything you heard, and it dominated nearly every musical performance. With his warm, friendly, and funny presentation (at one point he declared himself President of the United States as the result of a ballot recount), Ignacio Berroa demonstrated the elusive *clave* for all to understand. He addressed the *learning* of *clave* by saying, "Don't worry about the *name* of the specific rhythm—just

Giovanni Hidalgo



Bill Stewart



worry about the music. As you study a specific type of music, the specifics of the rhythm will come to you anyway. We drummers are hired to lay down a solid groove. Don't worry if it's a song or a mambo—just play! You know who likes drum solos? Drummers. You know who hires us? Musicians!"

3:00 P.M.—BILL STEWART

Bill Stewart's clinic enjoyed a very nice vibe, which emanated from the casual, humble drummer himself. What was so striking about walking into the big room for this clinic was how small the drumkit was! This being a "drummers' convention," kits consisting of ten or fifteen cymbals, multiple toms, and loads of percussion usually dominated the stage.

Bill's gorgeous four-piece, with only a ride and three crashes, looked positively tiny. The sound, however, was wonderful: so musical, so swinging, so natural. Mr. Stewart got more out of his four-piece than most drummers would dare attempt.

5:00 P.M.—GIOVANNI HIDALGO & HORACIO "EL NEGRO" HERNANDEZ

Let me explain something. Most drummer duets at PASIC start small. A conga roll. A melody tapped on the toms. A rudiment or two. Two players start talking to one another until a conversation forms, and eventually a groove develops. It's nice. It's good. It's appropriate, since most of the time drummers don't play (or rehearse) together.

Giovanni and Horacio came out on stage and sat at their instruments—Horacio behind his kit and Giovanni behind five congas—and looked at each other for a few seconds. Then, without a word, without counting off, without so much as a *head nod*—BLAM! They were off and running together at blazing speed, blowing the roof off the joint. There was an audible gasp from the audience at this stunning opening, and the two powerhouse drummers played at this intense level for fifty minutes solid. Giovanni moved from congas to timbales, and the two thousand in attendance witnessed the most astonishing performance of the convention. Bow to the clave. Bow to Negro and Gio. Bow to the two of them for a remarkable hour of music.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18

3:00 P.M.—MIKE PORTNOY

Prog/fusion afternoon was kicked off by Portnoy playing like...well...Portnoy. He played along to some Dream Theater tracks and soloed on a relatively small drumset compared to his usual monster kit. He got the proggers' fists pumping nonetheless. Mike also played along to the beginning of a thirty-minute cut from his new prog project, *Transatlantic*.

4:00 P.M.—ROD MORGENSTEIN

Prog/fusion forefather Rod Morgenstein arrived with a message and a plan, giving a master class that demonstrated techniques from his forthcoming book, *Drum Set Warm-Ups*



Crystal G. Trowbridge

Marco Minnemann

(Berklee Press). Then, when the lesson was over, he played some of the most complex rock drumming of the weekend to a click track—and *nailed* it. Afterwards he explained, "You need to understand how notes and rests go together if you want to do crazy stuff over odd times. You must internalize the pulse and know where everything sits over that."

5:00 P.M.—MARCO MINNEMANN

What is that, a rocket ship? Oh, sorry, that's a *drumset*. Hey, look—a gong bass drum! And yet he opens by playing brushes.

But that didn't last long. Soon it was obvious that Marco is positively the *Überdrummer*, constructed by German engineers to be the fastest, most precise, and most powerful drummer in existence. He will play the fastest multi-stroke ostinatos imaginable with his left hand, while playing a blurring solo with his right hand, double bass, and *four* hi-hats—and there's nothing you can do to stop him. You can't steal his licks, because he is the Terminator, and he will hunt you down and play new licks that you can't comprehend. Even machines don't stand a chance against this guy. Drum 'n' bass? Ha! Jungle beats? *Please*. Machines, sequencers, or layered tracks? They don't stand a chance against the Terminator.



Mike Portnoy

Crystal G. Trowbridge

The Wrap Up

Drummers Dan Wojciechowski, Gordy Knudtson, Ed Soph, Dave DiCenso, Chester Thompson, and Gregg Bissonette also provided stand-out performances during the weekend.

Other show highlights included the numerous mallet, hand-drum, and drum-line events. Jim Greiner, Arnaldo Vacca, Tigger Benford, Victor Rendon, Umayalpuram Sivaraman, Poovalur Srinivasan, Dror Sinai, Jerry Steinholtz, Alessandra Belloni & Glen Velez, Amy Martin, Liam Teague & Robert Chappell, Erica Azim, Jamal Mohamed, and Karl Perazzo & Raul Rekow all were on hand to display their hand-drumming or percussion techniques. Mallet experts Nanae Mimura, Dave Samuels, Gary Burton, Terry Gibbs, She-e Wu, Nexus, Takayoshi Yoshioka, and D'Drum also appeared as performers or master clinicians.

The University of North Texas, whose nearby music school enjoys a remarkable reputation for churning out top-notch players, was also very involved at the show. Their percussion ensemble, drumline, and of course famed One O'Clock Lab Band all performed at the convention.

In addition to these many outstanding performances, the

Percussion Marketing Council (PMC) held a children's concert that demonstrated numerous rhythms and percussion instruments to an audience of over seven hundred enthusiastic children. Lalo Davila emceed the event from behind the timbales and led a band that captivated the kids in attendance. Prizes were also given away, and several children were able to test their mettle at basic hand drumming.

Besides the performances, the Percussive Arts Society (PAS) held its annual Hall Of Fame banquet on Friday night. Sabian founder and chairman Robert Zildjian, vibes player and band-leader Terry Gibbs, and long-time New York Philharmonic percussionist Morris "Arnie" Lang were all honored with induction. Inducted posthumously was marching drum instructor and arranger Fred Sanford, who died in January of last year following a bout with cancer.

PASIC 2001 will be held in Nashville, Tennessee, November 14-17. For more information, contact the Percussive Arts Society at 701 NW Ferris Avenue, Lawton, OK 73507-5442, (580) 353-1455, or go to www.pas.org.

QUICK BEATS

DENNIS CHAMBERS

What are some of your favorite recordings?

Steve Gadd on "Journey To Love" (Stanley Clarke), Ndugu Chancier on "Reach For It" (George Duke), Ringo Starr on *The White Album* (The Beatles), all Don Brewer (Grand Funk Railroad), all John Bonham (Led Zeppelin), Diamond Williams (Ohio Players), Clyde Stubblefield with James Brown, Joey Kramer (Aerosmith), Steve Jordan (Steve Khan & Eyewitness), David Garibaldi (Tower Of Power), Zigaboo Modeliste (The Meters), Ramon "Tiki" Fulwood (Funkadelic), and anything by Sly & The Family Stone.

What are some of your favorite albums that you've recorded?

George Clinton & P-Funk's *All-Stars Live*, Bill Evans' *Petite Blonde*, John Scofield's *Blue Matter* and *Pick Hits*, Stanley Clarke & George Duke's *Projects*, Don Blackman's *The Family Tradition*, Gary Willis's *Bent and No Sweat*, and all of the records I've done with Tom Coster.

What drummers inspire you?

Billy Cobham, Tony Williams, Lenny



White, Elvin Jones, Roy Haynes, Ramon "Tiki" Fulwood, Jeff "Tain" Watts, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, Jack DeJohnette, David Garibaldi, Harvey Mason, Mike Clark, Don Brewer, Gary Husband, Steve Gadd, Vinnie Colaiuta, Mark Mondesir, Diamond Williams, Clyde Stubblefield, Bernard "Pretty" Purdie, Steve Jordan, and Ringo Starr.

Some of the new guys are Chris Dave, Little John Roberts, Marvin McQuitty, and all of you guys who are playing from your hearts.

What ride cymbal are you using at the moment?

I'm using a Zildjian K Custom. I love it because it's very dark-sounding and it fits with the type of music that I play. Plus I can hear every stick beat from it.

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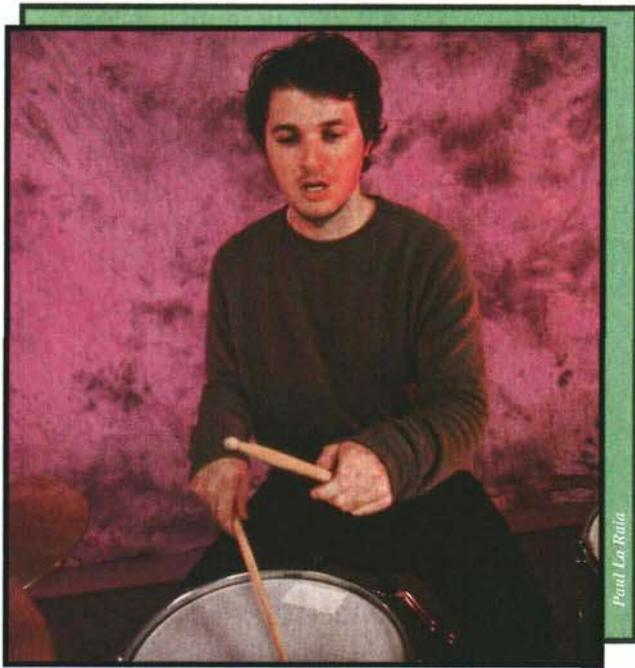
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You've heard of trying to put a square peg in a round hole? Well, Glenn Wahl of Little Valley, New York has succeeded in building a round drum into a square box.

Glenn started with a 1985 Ludwig kit that originally featured a 24" bass drum and eleven toms. He sold the bass drum and six of the toms, then converted one of the 10" toms into a "suspendable" snare drum. Rather than buying a new 22" bass drum to match the mahogany finish of the kit, Glenn decided to make his own bass drum.

Remembering that one of the best bass sounds he had heard was a street drummer in Toronto playing a footlocker, Glenn opted for a square shape. He affixed a section of a 22" shell to a square of plywood to form the "batter" portion of the drum, then added sides and a bottom made of 3/16"

mahogany plywood. He edged the box with aluminum trim that matches the bottom of the single-headed toms. Silicone caulk used throughout prevents any rattling.

Glenn figured that a normal shell-mounted tom mount would muffle the resonance of the box's top surface. So he cut an airhole, through which a Ludwig Modular tom stand protrudes. The box's hinged top provides access for muffling, and also allows the 10", 12", 13", and 16" toms to be "nested" inside (along with the throne seat and foot pedal.)

"Most drums have just two resonating heads with minimal shell resonance," says Glenn. "This drum has four resonating

panels *plus* the head. By muffling one or more of the surfaces internally, the drum can produce anything from a wide-open concert bass sound to a deep studio thud. And it seems much louder for the effort than other bass drums I've played."

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.



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THE ALL NEW

PowerShifter ELIMINATOR[®]

H2000 HI-HAT

PosiLink Twin Cam Drive

This completely new and exclusive Hi-Hat drive system utilizes two cams and two double link chains, working together, to provide the smoothest, quietest, most natural feeling Hi-Hat action ever imaginable. No other system can provide the extreme torque, natural response and tight, crisp Hi-Hat sound offered by this exciting innovation in Hi-Hat drive design. We've even replaced the normal felt washer on the lower pull rod return with a spring. This helps to further quieten the pedal when removing your foot, and adds greatly to the pedal response while playing.

4 Interchangeable Cams

You can easily custom tailor the response curve and action of the Eliminator Hi-Hat by choosing between four different interchangeable cam options. From super smooth and natural to radically aggressive, one Hi-Hat now does it all.

SuperGrip Clutch

Our all new SuperGrip Clutch design is the strongest, most dependable system available today. It features a completely solid upper and lower tunnel design with a center gripping hinge to hold your upper Hi-Hat Cymbal securely like no other clutch has ever done before. It also features a new die-cast wingnut designed to allow you to easily and securely tighten the cymbal.

Swiveling Dual-Legs

Eliminators' new Swiveling Dual-Legs allow perfect positioning with Twin Bass Drum Pedals and other accessory pedals while still maintaining a firm, stable stance. The set post design also provides easier positioning with your snare drum while leaving the pedal in the normal playing position. Our new Rubber Feet offer a simple flipping spike for the ultimate in grip.

VariSet Angle Adjustment

VariSet Footboard Angle Adjustment system allows you to effortlessly rotate the pull cam to change the angle of the footboard. The pedal height can also be adjusted on the pedal cam side to compensate for the difference in footboard heights produced by interchanging the cams.

PowerShifter Function

This revolutionary function allows you to move the footboard to one of three preset positions. This changes the angle of the chain and allows you to adjust the feel and action from a light feel, to one with extreme power and torque.

TractionPlate Footboard

This new concept in footboard design is shared with our Eliminator Bass Drum Pedal and allows you to remove and reconfigure each individual traction grip to suit your exact requirements. The TractionPlate is also reversible allowing you to position the slide or grip of the plate at either the front or rear.

Precision Tension Dial

Eliminators' new Precision Spring Tension Dial is engineered with a multitude of exact steps allowing you to precisely and quickly dial in your optimum tension setting. This innovative system offers a far greater tension range and its exact locked-in steps will not slip or move under stress.

See the all new PowerShifter Eliminator Hi-Hat at your local Pearl Drum Dealer or visit our web site for more info.

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