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an editor's overview



"Hey, Baby, Come Here Often?"

Recently there's been some controversy over drum contests that focus on speed. Some people dig them from sort of an athletic angle. This is understandable. Humans have always been obsessed with physical accomplishment. *The Guinness Book Of World Records,* ESPN2, and the number of frozen climbers littering Mount Everest seem to prove this.

Others say that speed trials miss the point of music itself. They feel that music is a form of *expression*, not merely another excuse to take hormone pills, and that the spirit of the art is sullied by such crass events.

I suspect the truth lies somewhere in between. Clearly the urge to wow listeners solely with physical prowess has resulted in some pretty bad music over the years. Jazz-rock fusion and heavy metal are particularly susceptible to this problem. Fusion especially. Like, a lot. *Bad*, bad problem.

Then again, denying the thrill of physical accomplishment—even in music—seems disingenuous. We all love a little theatricality. Can you imagine a world where Keith Moon never existed? They called him "bigger than life" for a reason. Ever heard a drummer referred to as "more tasteful than life"?

Maybe the answer isn't to abolish "fastest hands" events, but to create new contests that celebrate other aspects of drumming. The first contest I'd like to see would actually be a "slowest hands" event. Now *that* would be cool. You know, playing slowly is a lot harder than you think. We could call it The Dale Crover Slowhand Shootout, named after the amazing drummer for The Melvins, who made the term "slow learner" a respectable thing.

How about a Quietest Drummer contest? Think of how far that would go toward stopping all the bad-mouthing us drummers have to endure. Of course, that probably wouldn't be the most *exciting* event to witness.... No mind, we could follow that up with The Tony Williams Memorial Loudest Drummer Contest. I think that would go over pretty well, especially if it were held in Florida, where death metal reigns supreme.

The possibilities are endless: The Neil Peart/Buddy Rich Clone Contest-to make it interesting, we could have the winners in each category compete against each other by seeing who could accompany a James Brown song the longest without playing a fill. The Largest Drumset Contest—no playing (scary thought), just gawking. Or how about The Fastest Breakdown Contest? It could be held at some groovy New York club where the bar is stocked with hot-looking models. The first drummer who breaks down a seven-piece kit with eighteen cymbals, a double pedal, and a cowbell on a Gajate bracket gets to try out his or her best pickup line at the bar.

So maybe speed trials aren't such a bad thing after all. Maybe they're only the beginning of a larger trend. It's our duty to take this as far as it can go, don't you think?

DRUmmeR

Volume 25, Number 10

The World's Most Widely Read Drum Magazine

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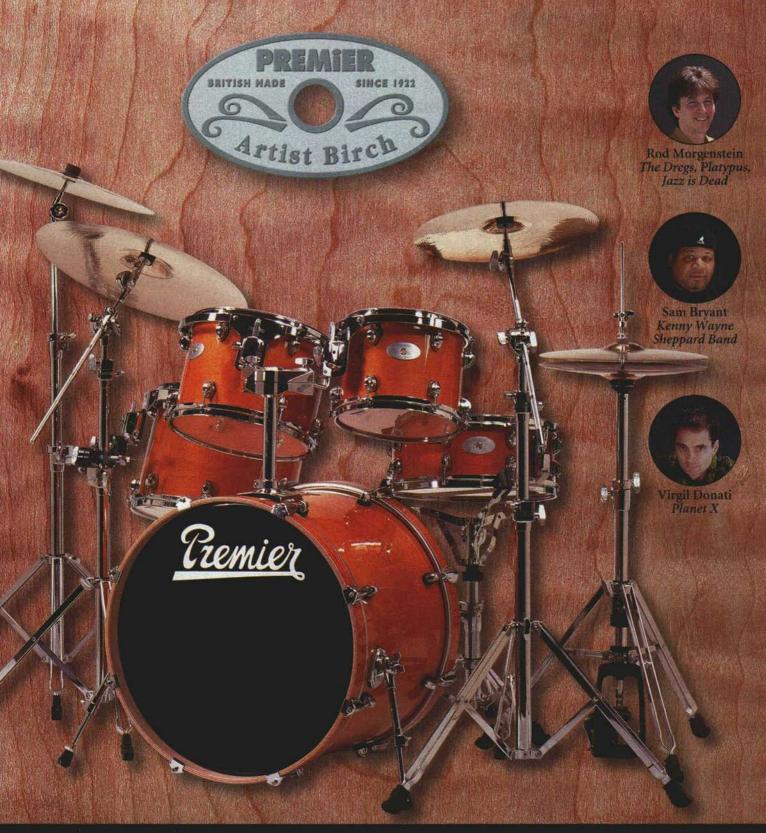
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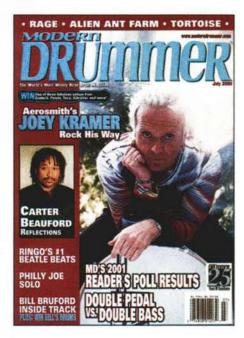


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readers' plateorm

JOEY KRAMER

I greatly enjoyed your July cover story on Joey Kramer. However, having seen Aerosmith many times since the early 1970s, I would classify Joey's playing as being beyond "solid." He's what I call a "signature drummer," meaning that his sound is paramount to the band's success. I once saw Aerosmith without Joey, in the early '80s. Joey was sick, and Bobby Rondinelli subbed for him. Bobby is a fine player, but it was a totally different sound. Having seen the band numerous times with and without Joe Perry and Brad Whitford,



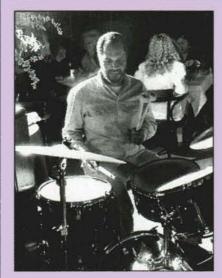
I can tell you there was a much bigger difference in the sound when Joey wasn't there.

Drummers like Bonham, Ringo, Keith Moon, and Jeff Porcaro are recognized as "signature drummers." I believe that Joey Kramer definitely belongs on this list. Without Joey it would not be Aerosmith.

> Ben Russell Framingham, MA

Your interview showed Joey Kramer to be just like the rest of us: crazy for the sound of drums. Even after many years of playing, he still continues to work on his craft.

Joey has survived drugs, depression, and the changes in pop music over the past thirty years. Because he's usually content to be a part of the team, we rarely get to hear what he has to say. Thanks for bring-



BILLY HIGGINS

When I was a young student at Berklee College Of Music in Boston in 1990, I approached Billy Higgins at a club one snowy night. I mentioned to him that I was playing in the school's Thelonious Monk ensemble. Since Billy had played with Monk, could he come to school the following day and discuss that gig? Perhaps he could even play with our band. (Naive audacity!)

Without hesitation, Billy agreed. I met him the next morning at his hotel, and we trudged together through the snow towards Berklee. As we entered the student-filled lobby, I looked to see if anybody recognized Billy. Not surprisingly, no one did—which made me feel as though I was in on some fantastic secret

As we entered the ensemble room, I announced my guest. "Guys, I've brought with me today a very special

guest. I'm sure you all know of him, and if you don't, just look on the backs of many of your favorite records. I'm pleased to welcome...Mr. Billy Higgins. The expressions on the faces of each member of that ensemble would normally be reserved for news that your wife's expecting twins.

Billy proceeded to talk about Monk, life, and music. He listened to, critiqued, and complimented the band. And then...he played. There was sheer delight on the faces of *all* the musicians—Billy included.

Thank you, Billy, for all the inspiration, and for letting us bask in the warm essence of your blessed spirit. May you rest in peace, smiling.

H. Benjamin Schumann
Founder & Artistic Director
Jazzreach Performing Arts & Education Association
Brooklyn, NY

I was saddened to hear of the passing of Billy Higgins. He was certainly one of the most vital contributors to the art of drumming, and he will continue to be a great inspiration to us all.

Billy's taste and touch on the instrument is something that all drummers should get familiar with. I was fortunate enough to bear witness to this in person when he played in Boston a few years ago (on his *birthday*, no less) with Joshua Redmon, Pat Metheny, and Christian McBride. Needless to say, I was in music heaven that night. Mr. Higgins was a joy to watch, and I am glad to have that fond memory.

Seth Hoffsommer Southbridge, MA

ing us closer to this remarkable drummer.

Mike Bond Solana Beach, CA

DOUBLE PEDAL Vs. DOUBLE BASS

I was surprised at the choice of drummers included in the discussion of "Double Pedal Vs. Double Bass Drum" in your July issue. Since the double-bass genre requires maximum foot and hand speed, I would think you'd have chosen players who utilize double-bass playing primarily, rather than occasionally (Virgil Donati being the

exception).

It would have been more appropriate to get responses from drummers like Pete Sandoval, Gene Hoglan, and Joey Jordison, along with non-mainstream drummers like Pete Hammoura (Nile) and Flo Mounier (Cryptopsy). In this way you would have included players more attuned to the differences between double pedal and double bass, since their styles all call for high speed.

Adam Novick Howard Beach, NY



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MD READERS POLL

Jimmy Chamberlin's inclusion among the *MD* Readers Poll winners is a long-overdue celebration of one of the most innovative and underrated drummers around. To me, the poll has been dominated by the usual gang of contemporaries (Colaiuta, Gadd, Steve Smith), along with a spate of annoyingly over-the-top drummers (Portnoy, Beauford). It is a refreshing change to see Chamberlin honored the way he has deserved for many years.

Billy Donald via Internet

I would like to thank MD's readers for including me among the Readers Poll win-

ners this year. It is truly an honor to be included in that incredible group of talented artists. My thanks and admiration go out to all the players named in the poll for their contribution to drums, and for their inspiration. God bless.

Paul Leim Nashville, TN

CREDIT WHERE IT'S DUE

Nile's *Black Seeds Of Vengeance* was favorably reviewed in your April 2001 issue, with some very nice comments about my drumming. Unfortunately, due to a shoulder injury I was only able to play on one track on that recording: "To Dream Of Ur." The fact is, my good friend Derek

Roddy stepped in to play the rest of the tracks.

And play he did! With no prior rehearsal Derek walked in, listened to the demos we had available, and proceeded to floor me and everyone else in the studio. Derek is an amazing drummer, not only in death metal but in any other style as well.

I'd like to publicly apologize to Derek for not getting his name credited where it belongs. He is definitely a drummer to be on the lookout for, and I thank him for being there. I'd also like to thank another amazing drummer—Tony Laureano—for doing all the tours while I was out.

Unfortunately I am no longer with Nile. However, my shoulder is back to 100% and I am working on a new project that I'm sure you'll hear about in the near future.

Pete Hammoura

OOPS!

The photos that accompanied MD's July 2001 feature on Brady Blade were accidentally not credited. The photographer was Rick Malkin.

HOW TO REACH US

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We Want Your Licks! Introducing Chop Shop

Modern Drummer is launching a brand-new column featuring readers' favorite licks. That means you! To have your "chops" featured, simply send us a transcription of your favorite lick or pattern (limited to four bars), preferably with an accompanying cassette tape. Include a brief note to say what makes the lick hip, and include some tips on how to play it (including sticking, tempo, and dynamics if not shown on the music). And so the world will know who sent such a musical gem, toss in a good, clear photo of yourself. If we choose your submission, we'll send you an MD T-shirt in return for your efforts!

Mail your entry to Chop Shop, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. include your name, address, and phone number on all items you send Materials will not be returned, so don't send originals you can't part with.

MD FESTIVAL WEEKEND

I've been a musician for thirty years, but a drummer for only the past two. I took my wife (a non-musician) to your Festival with me, not knowing what to expect other than what I had seen on the video from the '98 show. Wow, I was so jazzed! I was able to hang out with great people for two days, watch incredible musicians play, and actually learn some things. My wife loved it, too. She got to meet Carmine Appice and Vanilla Fudge on Sunday, and it made her day! It was all great, and I just want to express my thanks.

Mark Mannings

As a first-time sponsor of the *Modern* Drummer Festival this year, I was amazed at the event the folks at *MD* put on. Two days of great drumming, a world of information, and the dedication of the *MD* staff made the experience a pleasure. The staff made sure our artist, Stanton Moore, had all the support necessary to make his spot in the event shine. They left no stone unturned, efficiently handling even the smallest of details. I tip my hat to the entire MD team for a great event.

Brian Kaye

General Manager, Bosphorus Cymbals Atlanta, GA

I just returned home from my first *Modern Drummer* Festival Weekend. What a blast!

The show was entertaining and very well organized. I especially enjoyed discussing various topics and experiences with fellow drummers. We're lucky to be part of such a warm and friendly community.

Thank you for your professionalism and your commitment to something that I cherish. I look forward to attending another Festival in the near future.

Scott Madden Ann Arbor, MI

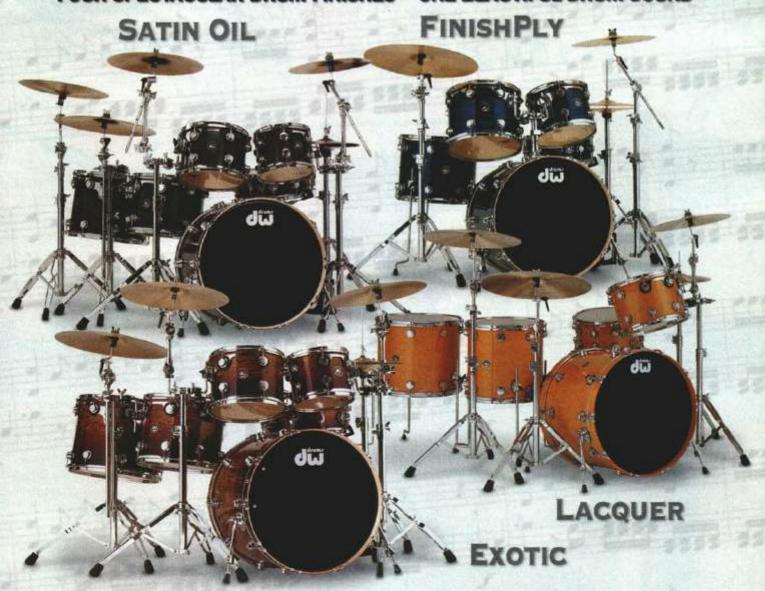
I've been drumming for over thirty years, and I thought I had seen it all. But at the *Modern* Drummer Festival I nearly fell out in the aisle over the incredible performance by Virgil Donati! He has mastered all the aspects of drumming: speed, finesse, power, articulation, creativity, intensity, and showmanship. (Actually, *all* of the Festival performers were absolutely awesome. And I think it's great to have so many bands playing with the performing drummers.)

Where else can you see so many great drummers in the same place for so little money? If, after seeing all the great players you have every year, drummers don't want to go home and get in a practice room, something's wrong. Thanks to everyone involved in putting together such a fantastic event.

Rick Lawton

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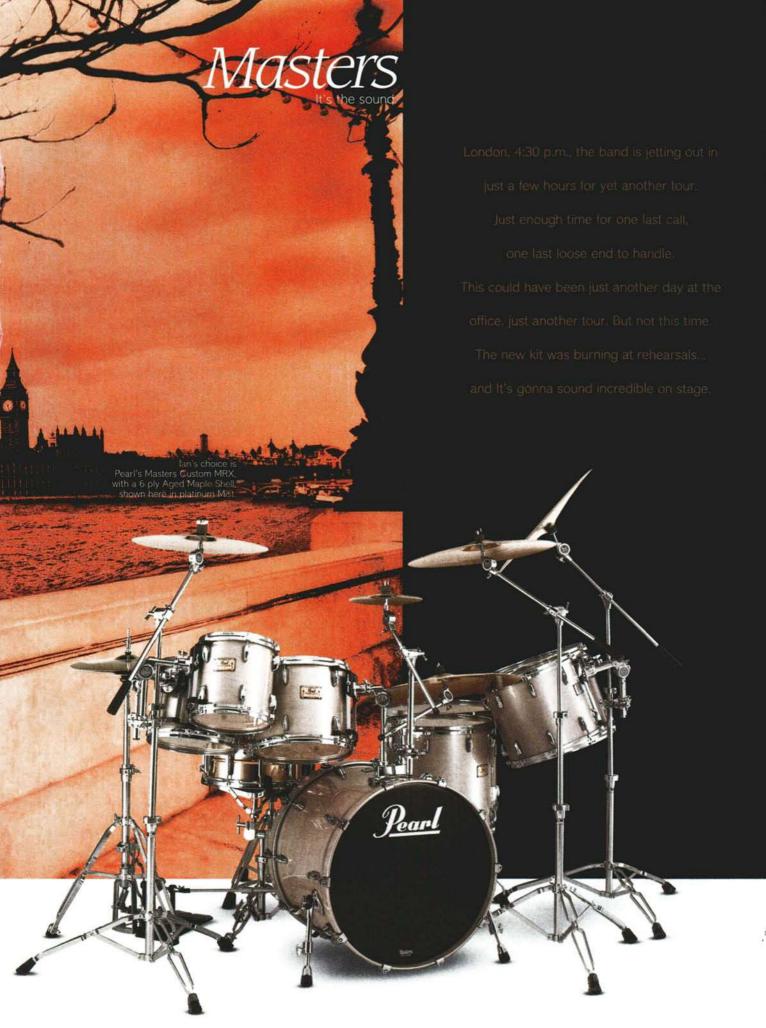
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Billy Martin's Musicality

I'm a huge MMW fan, and your drumming and sense of musicality is a major inspi-Pration to me. Your natural drum sound on *Combustication* is great. I was wondering how you went about recording the drums on that album, and whether or not it was recorded live. Oh, and how can I get a copy of your breakbeat record?

> **Bill Wachowiak** via Internet

Thanks for the kind words. Every take on *Combustication* is a live cut by the whole A band, with the exception of "Hey-hee-hi-ho." That one started with my live drum track, which I spontaneously improvised. Chris laid his track next, and then John did his.

The recorded sound of the kit starts with the drumset I play. It already sounds good without a studio. We recorded on a 16-track, 2" tape deck, which contributed to the fat sound. Also, the room I played in was more wood than carpet. The mic's were generally older ribbon types. And of course, our engineers/producers, Scotty Hard and David Baker, used their magic touch.

You can order my breakbeat record, illy B Eats Vol. 1, online at www.amuletrecords.com. Or check any record store that sells vinyl.



Playing The Parts With David Garibaldi

I recently had the chance to see you in action with Tower Of Power at the Emerald Theater in Mt. Clemens, Michigan. Your performance was inspiring, to say the least. (Thanks for the autograph on my MD, too!) I'd like to know if there are any methods (besides sheer repetition) that you use to remember the breaks and accents in all the different songs you play in the various settings in which you perform.

> Doug T Detroit, MI



With Tower, we've always put the music together "garage-A style," which means "head" arrangements. The inspiration for tunes comes either from a song idea that another bandmember brings in, or from a drum groove, or a guitar idea, or a bass line. Sometimes it takes months to refine a song, or even a section of a song, until we have something that flows the way we want. Through that process the songs are "personalized," and that's when the memorization happens.

Additionally, Tower's live shows are always works in progress. Because we live so far apart from each other, rehearing the way we did in the early days is impossible. We rehearse on the road. Each day before the show, we have a soundcheck and a short rehearsal. That's when we add new segues between songs and learn additional material to change up the playlist. We average 150 shows a year, so changing the material is very important in order to keep things fresh.

Taping rehearsals can help, as can making notes. But in the end, all of it must be memorized. In other settings that involve reading music, I've sometimes had trouble memorizing because I could use the written music as a "crutch." Now I make myself memorize as much as possible. Then I'm able to focus on playing, and not have my eyes buried in a chart. Fortunately, we're playing so much now that memorization really isn't a problem for me.

The human brain has an incredible ability to remember, process, and catalog information. My advice is to find a way that works for you, and then have as much fun as possible!

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Kevin Miller On Sounding Good And Staying Fit

I caught you with Fuel in Pittsburgh recently. I was extremely impressed with your kit's sound. Can you run it down for me? Also, your playing is very hard and heavy, yet tasteful. What drummers do you listen to for influence? And do you do any sort of workouts to maintain your physical wellbeing?

> David Rav via Internet

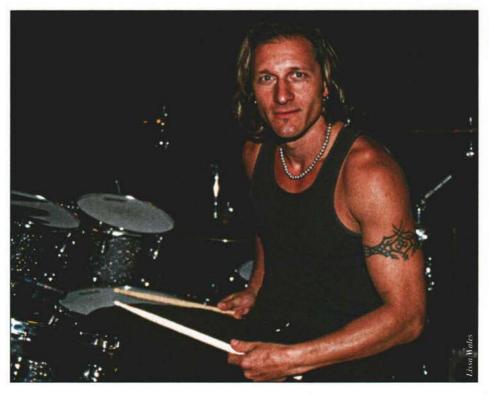
My kit is a Premier Gen-X series, with 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms, an 11x14 tom on my left side, and a 13x16 tom on my right side. I'm using two 18x22 kick drums and a 7x14 snare. The heads are all Evans. On the tops of the toms I use coated G2s, on the bottoms I use clear Gls. The snare has an ST Dry batter and a Glass 500 snare-side head. On the kicks I use EQ2s.

My Zildjian cymbal configuration includes three 19" Z Custom Rock

crashes, one 20" A Custom China, one 22" A Custom Rock ride, and two 12" A Custom splashes. On my right side I have 13" K Mastersound hi-hats on a fixed stand. I can spin the bottom nut to adjust how tightly they're set. My regular hats are a 14" New Beat top and a Quick Beat bottom.

As for my drumming influences, one of my earliest was Alan White from Yes. Among the "new" guys, Dave Grohl's influence is undeniable. But I grew up on The Stones, The Doors, and bands like that, so that's where most of my overall musical influences come from.

For my training regimen, I travel with a Bowflex machine. It's



really amazing for drummers. Free weights can create a lot of joint fatigue and straining because of moving the weights around. This machine is a much smoother and more fun way of isolating my muscle groups. I get a much cleaner, useful lift. I use light weight and more reps—so it's more of an aerobic exercise for toning than for building. I use the machine four to five days a week, and I'm able to play much harder and for longer periods.

A Bowflex machine isn't a small piece of equipment, but it is surprisingly portable. It can be set up or broken down in about a minute. And I had a special case built for it so it can travel with me on the road.

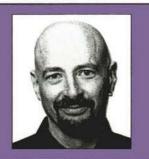
Would you like to ask your favorite drummer a question? Send it to Ask A Pro, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Or you may email rvh@moderndrummer.com. We will do our best to pursue every inquiry.

Repeat Bar

A Classic Quote From MD's Past

"One of the things I enjoy about being a drummer is just the process of improving and practicing. I enjoy the process of getting there."

Steve Smith, February 1993







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its questionable

Editor's note: Modern Drummer receives dozens of vintage-drum inquiries each month. While we respond to most of these inquiries directly, we do like to share some of the more interesting ones with our readers from time to time. As usual, the answers provided to this month's batch of questions come from our resident drum historian, Harry Cangany.



Slingerland Sweetheart I have an immaculate five-piece Slingerland kit that I believe is from 1976. All of the drums have the silver-onblack oval badge, except for the snare. The snare is an older drum, possibly a brassshell model. Its badge is gold on black. All the tags read: "Niles, Ill.," and all of the drums have serial numbers.

I think the bass and tom shells are poplar/maple combos, but I don't know the configuration. The shells are perfectly in round, but the bearing edges do have some bumps. I've used steel wool lightly, but the bumps remain. Should these be of concern? And are these True-Timbre bearing edges?

The hi-hat and bass drum pedal have a blue metallic color. Is this original? And would the leather strap-drive bass pedal be a Tempo King?

The drums sound warm and jazzy. Did I get lucky to obtain a nice-sounding entrylevel kit? Or is there something I don't know here?

> **Angel Zollo** Saluda, NC

Your Blakrome Slingerland set is from The mid-1970s. It features 5-ply shells with a middle ply of poplar. The rest should be maple. This kit was made during Slingerland's "golden age."

Without a separate photo of your snare drum, I can only say that if it has etched lines, it's the Sound King model. No lines means it's the Festival model. It's probably not the Super Sound King, since the badge on the snare is not the silver-andblack version.

If the bearing edges are imperfect, you might want to use a fine grade of sandpaper on the "bumps." But be careful.

The term "Tru-Timbre" is used by the present-day Slingerland operation (owned by Gibson Guitars). It was not used when the drums were made in Niles, Illinois. The blue on the aluminum pedal and hi-hat posts is original. I can't see your pedal in the photo, but blue is the color for the Tempo King model.

This is not an entry-level kit. You

have a beautiful, well-maintained professional drumset, of which you can be very proud.

Really Rogers?

I recently sold a kit that I'd had since I was a kid (as the rather old photo shows). I never knew or cared about what brand they were, I just played 'em and had fun. But it strikes me now that they might have been vintage models—by the looks of them, maybe Rogers?

My questions are: 1) What brand are they? 2) What year were they made? 3) Are they vintage drums? 4) How stupid was I to sell them for \$50? (Give it to me straight.)

> Jeffrev Ward Mt. Vernon, IL

Buyer Beware

I acquired this snare drum at an antique shop in New Hampshire. I've looked everywhere, and except for the stamp on the bottom head and the snaps on the accompanying carrying bag, I've found no indication of the maker. The owner of the shop described the drum as being from the 1880s. Can you give me an accurate date, manufacturer, and potential value?

> Bob DeRosso Nashua, NH

Your drum is a circa-1918 Ludwig & Ludwig Jazz-Er-Up model, with a Ludwig & Ludwig Crown model calf head on the bottom. The drum came in wood or metal, with six thumb rods for tuning. The metal drum was available in 3x12, 3x13, 3x14, and 4x14 sizes.

The value, you ask? First, if an antique dealer is off by thirty or forty years, does

A. He shouldn't sell drums?

B. He owes you an apology?

C. He owes you a refund?

D. All of the above?

Thumb-rod-tensioned drums aren't worth what tube-lug drums are worth, and you couldn't find the name because the hoop has been painted. The value is probably about \$100-200. So let us know about A, B, C, or D.

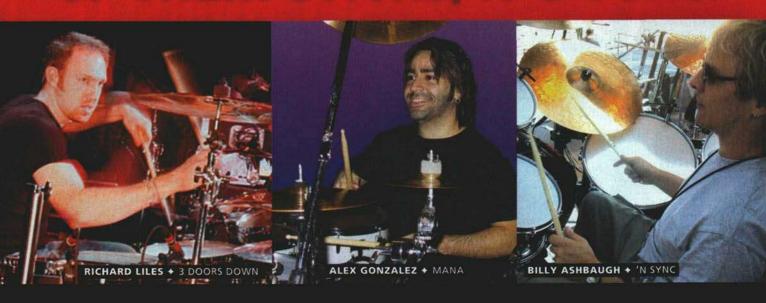








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Four questions, four answers: 1) They are Rogers—probably from the Dayton, Ohio-made era, by the looks of the T-rod. 2) They were made between 1966 and 1969. 3) Yes, they are vintage. 4) Assuming they were in good condition, very. A black diamond Headliner kit (20" bass drum, 12" and 16" toms) with a chrome-over-brass Dyna-Sonic snare drum and all accompanying parts has a retail value of as much as \$1,100 (or even \$2,000, if you believe eBay). Is that straight enough? Just chalk your error up to youthful naivete. But if you do it again, we're sending Drum Security to your house.



Sunken Snares

The photos below are of some mystery drums that came into my possession over thirty years ago. Can you provide me with any information on their history and value? Can you put me in touch with someone who might be interested in purchasing the drums?

> **Dick Daniels** High Ridge, MO



You have a six-tube-lug L&S Service Model snare, made in Indianapolis, Indiana in the mid-1930s. Someone has left part of an older Ludwig strainer on it. That

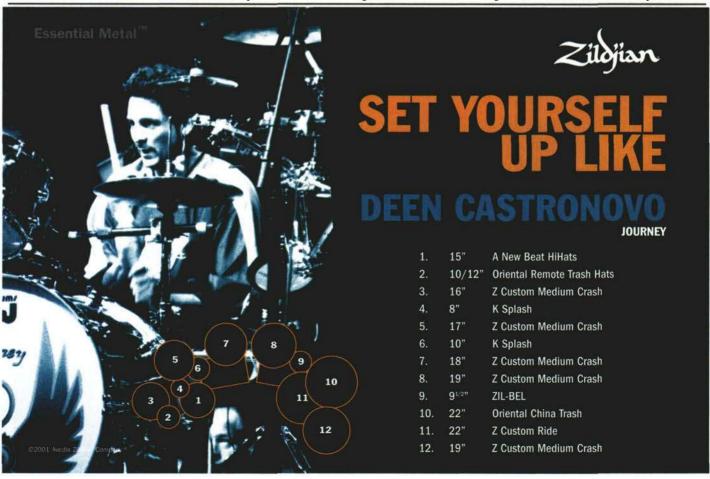
strainer was made to be mounted on a wooden hoop, not on a metal drum. The second drum is a Super Ludwig Stiple-finish model made between the late '20s and the early '30s.

These drums were made too late to have gone down with the Titanic, but that's what they look like. (Let's see...the Andrea Doria sank in 1956. Try that one.) The L&S has marginal value. A restored Stiple Super Ludwig is worth \$2,500, but yours is really rough and would require major work. Look in the Vintage Showcase section of MD's classified ads for potential buyers.

Gretsch Guidelines

I bought my Gretsch kit in 1984. They were originally covered in a plastic wrap, which I recently removed. I sanded the shells and had them refinished in a black walnut stain. All the drums feature serial numbers on the insides of the shells. I'd like to know where the drums were made, and what the ply configuration is.

I was also recently given a 14x14 eightlug floor tom with die-cast hoops. It has a





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round badge with a tack holding it in place, the internal mufflers have been removed, and there is no sound hole in the shell. More mysteriously, the bearing edge is on the inside ply. Why?

> Jerry Lehti Port Moody, BC, Canada



Your Gretsch shells were made in A Jasper, Indiana, and are primarily maple with a poplar inner ply. We can peg the drums as being built in the 1960s, for two reasons. One is the round badges. The other is the fact that in 1964 the US government mandated serial numbers, so that drum owners could identify and insure each drum. The manufacturers didn't record the numbers, so their only other use is for discussion. It's like a mess-hall song: You sing out, "I've got drum 146731, where is 146732?"

Someday we'll know where they all are.

In the 1960s, Gretsch, Slingerland, and Leedy (Chicago) built quite a few tom-toms without vent holes. Gretsch tacked on badges; the other two didn't.

As for your floor tom: In the good ol' days, bearing edges were cut from the inside of the drum only. The edges were more rounded then. In today's world the cuts are made on both sides of the shell, giving a sharper bearing edge with less wood contact on the head.

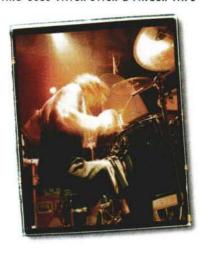
Mystery Marcher

QI obtained the pictured marching drum in 1966. The heads, rope, leathers, and snares are unchanged since that time, but they might have been replacements. The



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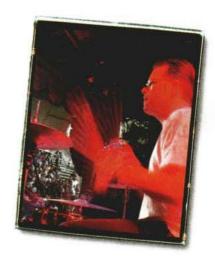
ROB BOURDON

PLAYS THE 5B WOOD





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shell is held together by a line of nails at the seam and by interior reinforcing rings. It measures 11x16. Through the vent hole can be seen a paper label that reads: "WILLIAM KILBOURN (successor to) George Kilbourn, manufacturer of BASS AND SNARE DRUMS, Tambourines, Banjos, Toy Drums, and also manufacturer of the PATENT GUITAR BANJO, No. 7 Clinton Avenue, Albany, NY."

I've kept the drum as a display item, although I did tighten it up and play it on a job once. I was afraid of breaking the batter head, but it held up fine-and the drum sounded pretty good. I'd be pleased to learn more about this drum.

> Jim Barnard Naples, FL

The way the snares are placed on a leather retainer makes me guess that you have an early 20th-century drum. Drums of 16" diameters and depths from 10" to 12" were plentiful after World War I, when American Legion posts took their members out for routine and competition marching.

I don't have any information on Mr. Kilbourn or his drums. I hope that one of our Albany readers might research an old city directory and find out about him and let us all know. In the meantime, as I look around at the number of today's "cottage industry" drum makers, I can't help but think that future drum historians are going to have lots of problems.

Saving Gracey

Over thirty-two years ago I purchased these drums used. My guess is that they're from the early 1950s. The only badges are on the toms, and they say Gracey Drum Mfg. Co. Ltd. I've never heard of that company.

The set includes a 14x22 bass drum, 9x13 and 16x16 toms, and a 5 1/2x14 metal snare. The bass and toms seem to have 5or 6-ply shells with reinforcement hoops. There was a bass-drum-mounted cymbal stand, but it stripped so I removed it. The drums aren't in great shape, but they've served me (and my son) well. I'd like to know how rare they are, and whether they have any historical significance.

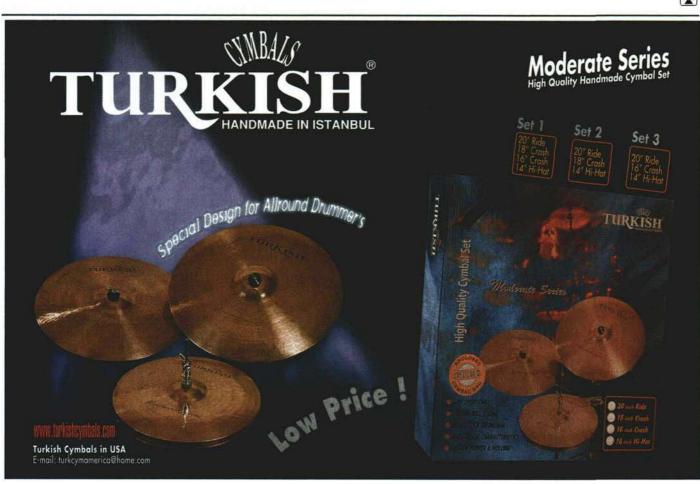
> **Robert Wehrheim** Hanover Park, IL

Gracey is a new name to me, but I feel safe in saying that you have 1960s-era Japanese-made drums. The badge, no doubt, identifies the American importer or distributor. This kind of thing still happens, where Taiwanese factories will badge drums with anyone's brand name if they buy enough of them. (Interested in having Wehrheim Drums out there?)

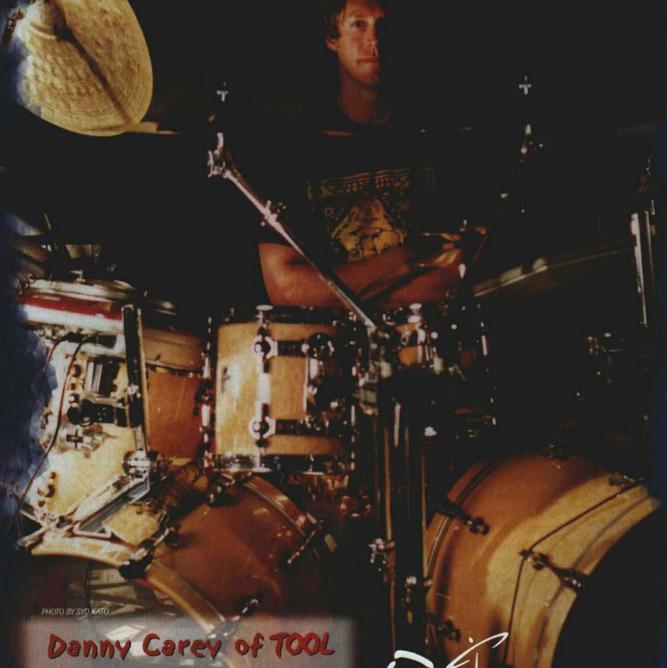
Hoshino (the makers of Tama drums) tended to make Slingerland-clone drums back in the '60s. Since your drums have that sort of appearance, that's my guess as to who made them. I hope they continue to serve you for the next thirty-two years.







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Train's

cott Underwood is about to drop some science. "One day I read this great quote by Joseph Campbell," Underwood says. "He was talking about haiku - a really strict form of poetry where you have to follow guidelines. He said the beauty of that is when you're confined to those strict guidelines, you have to find a way within yourself to truly express what you want to sav."

The quote struck Underwood on a number of levels. As a former jazz and art-rock drummer, he had to simplify everything when he started playing with Train. "I realized that within the confines of pop-rock songwriting structures, I was now able to do what I loved and maybe get a little more expressive on drums," he explains. "So I feel like it really challenged me and forced me to find ways of expressing myself within a simple groove."

Underwood met that challenge on the band's latest. Drops Of Jupiter. "I'm much prouder of this album than the last one," he says. "The first record was my first recording that was complete and that got national attention. People would come up to me and say, 'Great drumming.' And I would think, No, it's not. I wish I had just gone off or did something special on that one. But at this point I'm glad I didn't."

After the Joseph Campbell-inspired revelation, Underwood started experimenting with different drumming ideas. His love of trance music and looping is evident throughout Jupiter. In fact, Underwood turned to a Roland 505 Groovebox, on which he programmed a "trancey" drum groove as the band collectively wrote songs. They experimented with adding those trance beats to the song's mix, until Underwood started rethinking the decision. "I started thinking that maybe we should manually make real loops where I would do a bass drum part with a mallet," he recalls. "Then I'd tap a snare with my finger."

The technique was used most specifically on the song "Mississippi." "That song is my favorite tune on the record," Scott says, "because I love that quality of drumming where there's a continual loop."

Of course, the added sonic layer of loops means that Underwood (who also plays keyboards) will be playing to a click during the band's live set. "I thought that was going to be a bummer and be very sterile. But I've grown to really love it," he reports. "Don't ask me how I got here. It's actually expanded my drumming and made me a little more confident with my time."

David John Farinella



PIWOOL





MATT CAMERON

Drinking From The Well

this as my band," says Pearl Jam drummer Matt Cameron of his psychedelic revivalist project, Wellwater Conspiracy, the gig he shares with ex-Monster Magnet guitarist John McBain. Bonding over shared aesthetics and an engaging sense of the absurd, McBain and Cameron spawned Wellwater Conspiracy in the wake of Soundgarden's heavily mourned demise in 1997.

The Scroll And Its Combinations, an enigmatic title for an equally puzzling collection of tunes, is Wellwater Conspiracy's third album. Comparisons to 1960s psy-

chedelic pop progenitors Vanilla Fudge and 13th Floor Elevators seem obvious. "I'd say that's pretty accurate," Cameron agrees. "What's obvious on the record is where our influences come from. Our musical tastes are pretty broad, but the '60s fuzz-tone thing is big, obviously. We're both really grooving on the freedom of this project, because there's no band, per se, which frees us up for being multi-instrumentalists." For the record. Cameron plays bass, quitar, and drums, while doing an impressive job handling lead vocals.

While the music is decid-

edly retro, the drumming maintains a modern veneer, as Cameron adjusted the percussive timbre to accommodate each track. "Sometimes I'm just beating it out, trying to play the arrangement. Often, when we record, we've just learned the songs, so you're hearing the initial takes. There are a couple of tunes where there's double drums going on-with John playing drums too-or overdubbing that adds a really good flavor to the drum parts in general. We didn't skimp on the drums at all."

Cameron's main focus was to loosen up behind his kit and just have fun. "I'm kind

of unlearning thingsapproaching it from a more wide-open angle. I'm not just trying to play time anymore. On this record, my playing is a lot less reined-in than on a Soundgarden record. Soundgarden was more about parts and trying to make everything fit. This is kind of Elvin Jones-influenced, and it's really fun to play this way. Some of the music was just weird and sloppy, so I tried to do that on the drums too. It's that psychedelic tribalness that this whole record really nails. It's kind of goofy, but it was a fun challenge."

Gail Worley

Vexis Fleisig Series 7 Drumming

hen director Daniel Minanan needed an edgy, suspenseful score for his film *Series* 7—a dark, satiric lampoon of reality-based TV focusing on a fictional game show where contestants compete to the death—the film's music supervisor suggested they "see what Girls Against Boys are doing." Once approached, the NYC-based quartet knew the chance to work on this film's score was too enticing to pass up.

The music the band created for *Series* 7 challenged drummer Alexis Fleisig. In fact, various objectives came into play. "For the song 'One Dose Of Truth,' we wanted really tight drums and lots of rolling, sort of '80s style," he says. "When I say 'rolling,' I mean lots of fills, like The Cure and music of that era. I was thinking especially of the Cure song 'In Between Days.' I wanted to try to get that feeling of manic-ness and energy that comes from recordings like that." The remainder of the mostly instrumental tracks, Fleisig says, are "more rock, biggersounding. It really depended on the mood of the

scene, whether we wanted to have more low tom sounds or high-energy snare."

The project also presented Fleisig with challenges he hadn't previously faced with a Girls Against Boys recording. "It's interesting to play along to a song with a different theme in mind," he says, "instead of just playing how you think the song sounds **bell** and in your own style. In this case, I was playing with a scene in mind or mood I was trying to establish."

As an example, Fleisig cites a hospital scene where a would-be assassin's stealth was crucial to her own survival. "For that scene, I was using soft mallets and trying to keep the drums from being really prominent, but still have them there. For me, drums have always been something where you pound a rhythm out through the whole song, thinking, I've gotta dominate.' For this, instead of bashing away at everything, I was trying to accent different things. It's an interesting way to go."

Gail Worley



Too Much Goin' On

ust over a year ago, Damon Delapaz was the guitarist for Houston, Texas-based pop-punk band FenixTX, then an underground independent group whose tracks hadn't even hit major radio rotation. Yet, all that changed within a matter of a few short months—with a little help from some friends.

When Blink-182 skinsman Travis Barker suddenly dropped out of commission during a national tour with FenixTX, Delapaz offered his services and filled in. His performance with Blink-182 was so exemplary, Delapaz was thrown the throne after FenixTX's original drummer left. That pretty much signaled the end of Delapaz's guitar-playing days.

"It would have been easier than teaching another drummer the songs," Delapaz explains. "When we made up the songs on guitar, I'd usually have the drum parts in my head."

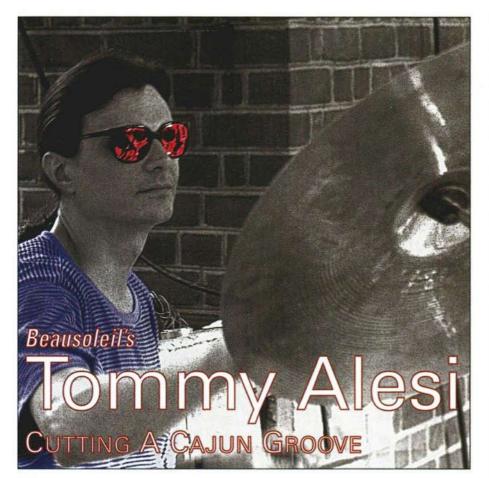
Months later, FenixTX was on MCA Records with a hit song on heavy radio rotation, and Delapaz found himself in Burbank, California's Ocean Studios, tracking drums for his band's follow-up, Lechuza. Tracking that album wasn't as seamless and sequential as Delapaz had hoped, as the band's busy studio schedule was constantly interrupted by their progressively heavy live schedule, often derailing their train of thought and productivity.

"The whole recording took a really long time," Damon recalls. "We kept having to stop. When you're in the studio, it's nice to be able to get in the zone and make your record. But every weekend we kept having to leave to play a show somewhere. We'd get back to the studio and be like, 'Okay, where did we leave off?"

As if his hectic schedule, sudden instrument switch, and major label follow-up didn't offer enough pressure, Delapaz had another slight glitch in his plans: He didn't own a drumset. Luckily, he had famed LA-based drum tech and Warrant drummer Mike Fasano to bail him out. "We had a twomonth tour in the middle of recording," Delapaz says, "and Mike let me use his drumset. He was like, 'Here, take these Pork Pies,' so I did. I had this big drumset with the Warrant logo on the front bass drumhead. Everyone was asking, 'Dude, Where'd you get this kit?' and I was like, 'From Warrant!"

Delapaz now has his own set of Pork Pies to bang on, in some pretty massive specifications-26" bass drum, 13", 16", and 18" toms, and a 9x14 snare. "I can't even tell you how many problems I've had trying to find heads for that bass drum," he says. "It's a monster!"

Waleed Rashidi



hen Tommy Alesi gets chugging hand-to-hand on the snare in a train beat, the band cooks and people kick away their chairs. Alesi's band is Beausoleil, considered one of the best Cajun groups in the world. And you can hear why on their latest album. Looking Back Tomorrow.

Alesi's participation with the group began in 1978, when he joined up with Beausoleil leader Michael Doucette. "I brought only a snare drum and I played brushes," recalls Tommy. "About '83, I added the bass drum and hi-hat. I didn't start playing a full kit until the late '80s. The group was pretty much acoustic, and I didn't want to scare them away from having a drummer!"

Explaining his lilting Cajun train beat. Tommy says, "The beat is similar to country, but you have an 8th-note feeling on the ride or hi-hat rather than a shuffle thing." Then you lay back. "That comes from my love for the blues," he notes. "I hold back without trying to drag. Maybe it has to do with my following both accordion and fiddle. The accordion can't play as fast, and I get caught in the middle."

Waltzes are a Cajun drummer's stock-in-trade. Says Tommy, "On a couple of tunes, I'll break away from a traditional waltz and play the '&' of all the beats on the hi-hat. If people don't mention anything else about me, they mention that."

Cajun drumming requires solid interplay between bass and snare. Tommy prefers a Yamaha kick, but on the road he'll play les drums du jour. He'll bring a 7x12 Spaun drum, great for brushes. He keeps the snares semi-loose because it "adds character." Cymbals are Sabians combined with old Zildjian hats. "The group is sensitive about cymbals," he states, "so I look for crash cymbals that dissipate quickly."

Let the future unfold, says Tommy. "We don't project way ahead. I just like going out and playing. It's really just a fun thing to do."

T. Bruce Wittet

Michael Zerang Percussion Without Borders

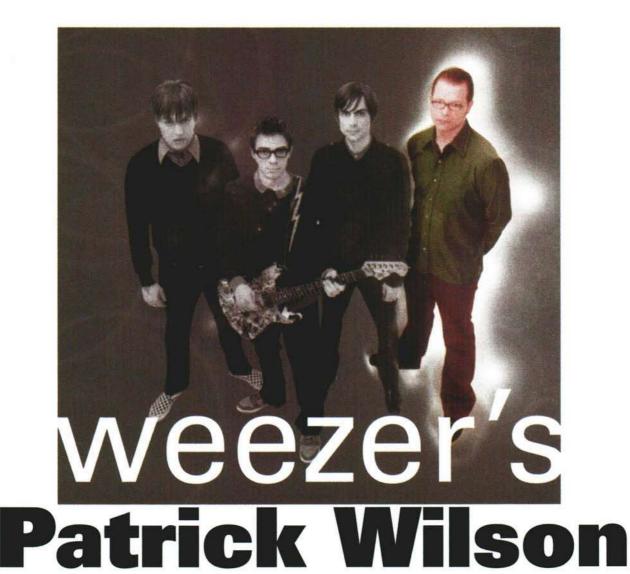
Michael Zerang has become a firstcall player on the international "free music" scene, playing with such artists as Peter Brotzmann, Ken Vandermark, Mats Gustafsson, Jaap Blonk, Sten Sandell, Axel Dorner, and many others. MD spoke with the percussionist before a duo concert with British saxophonist John Butcher Milwaukee. "I was in Paris with John two weeks ago," Michael recalls. "We were playing with cellist Fred Longberg-Holm, with whom we'll be playing and recording in Chicago. I've been getting more opportunities to tour, and soon I'll be in England and Scotland touring with saxophonist Tony Bevan."

Ever expanding the boundaries of percussion, Zerang has written numerous commissions for theater in Chicago and recently did a series of concerts with dancers Shirka Urechko from Canada and Lotta Mellin from Sweden. "I love dancers. I'll be touring in Sweden this fall with Lotta. The feedback from the dance and theater people is interesting. It's a different audience. Percussion is new to them."

Michael also takes a different teaching approach to the typical drum workshop. "At my workshops nobody plays for the first four hours," he says. "No one touches a drum. Percussionists are so used to playing rhythms instead of thinking about the sonic aspects like decay and how things work. We cover those things first."

Keep current on Zerang's activities www.geocities.com/SoHo/ Exhibit/7760/index.htm.

Michael Bettine



Back To Blue

ith Weezer tickets selling out in a matter of minutes across the nation, the band that faded from the spotlight a few years ago has returned with a surprisingly strong following. Fans who have waited three or four years to catch the act in concert finally have their chance.

Fans were beginning to wonder about a new record, too. Well, the band's latest self-titled disc has been riding high on the charts of late. This time around they decided to step back further in time and record material that's more in line with their decidedly poppy self-titled debut (sometimes referred to as the "blue" album).

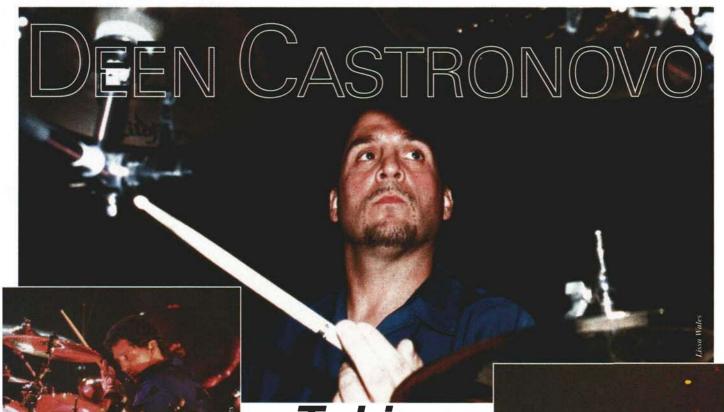
Drummer Patrick Wilson explains the thesis behind the project: "I think our whole plan was, 'Okay, let's go do the blue record style again. It's way more straight-ahead. Pinkerton [Weezer's 1998 release] was a full freak-out, but this new album is nothing like that. It's real radio-friendly."

Tracking for the new album went pretty quickly, even though the band was rather meticulous about Wilson's drumming. "I was pretty much done in ten days," he says. "And that's with people saying, 'Hey, it's 92 beats per minute instead of 91."

As comfortable as Wilson might be in the studio, he says that he just recently realized how he sounds live. "Interestingly, we did a show on New Year's with Blink-182 at a 12,000-seater," he explains, "and for the first time suddenly everything totally made sense to me. I felt that was the type of venue that Weezer's sound made sense in. It just sounded like a huge stereo to me. I had to play simpler in such a big room because I thought, 'Man, if I start going off, no one's going to get it."

Aside from his busy Weezer schedule, Wilson has been working with his own side project, The Special Goodness. He plays most of the instruments and records it all in his home studio.

Waleed Rashidi



ith the release of Arrival earlier this year, classic rockers Journey faced the question of how their fans would accept two new members, lead singer Steve Augeri and drummer Deen Castronovo. With all respect to former lead singer Steve Perry and drummer Steve Smith, these two guys do an incredible job. "I'm very proud of the new record," Deen says. "Steve Smith is God to me. His are major shoes to fill. To replace him was daunting. But I hope Journey fans feel I did a good job."

Before joining Journey, Deen scored big in the early '90s as a member of Bad English with Journey members Jonathan Cain and Neal Schon, Deen was also a member of Hardline with Schon. "If it wasn't for Neal and the grace of God," Deen admits, "I wouldn't be anywhere. Neal found me when I was a twenty-two-year-old playing in a rehearsal space in San

Taking A New Journey

Francisco with Tony MacAlpine. Neal came in and we started jamming on Journey tunes. In fact, the first songs I ever learned as a drummer were Journey songs. So I knew them. Then Neal asked me for my phone number, and boom-a week later I was in Bad English. That's how quickly it happened. I've been blessed."

So will Journey fans accept the new lineup with open arms? "When we first started playing shows, I was waiting for the signs from the fans—'Steve Smith Rocks, Deen Sucks," the drummer jokes. "I obviously don't screw with Steve's parts. They're masterpieces. I stay identical to the original drum parts as much as I can, because the fans respect and deserve it. You know how many air drummers are waiting for that lick in 'Separate Ways?' You deviate from that and it's

like, 'Hey, that's not how it goes!' [laughs] If it ain't broke, don't fix it. That's the way I see it."

Arrival, produced by Kevin Shirley (Aerosmith, Black Crowes), was recorded in two weeks. "We cut fourteen songs live in seven days," Deen reports. "Then we did overdubs and vocals. I even got to do most of the high background vocals with Steve Augeri. So the record was a real team effort. But bottom-line, I wanted to play well on this record. It was very important to me."

Billy Amendola

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Full, sparkling overtones paired with a complex mid-section, and dark feeling undertones

Refined sound, responsive feel, and controllable, versatile dynamics

Rich surface texture, prominent, unique lathing grooves, complex, subtle hammering patterns

Introducing Innovations Cymbals

We've come up with a new hand crafting technique for making cymbals. It brings out rich, intricate harmonics in cymbals to create full, complex sound. It also gives the cymbals a decidedly new and different look. We call it "Sonic Texture Formula". Because this is a true innovation, it qualifies as an invention. We have therefore applied for and received patent pending status.



We also developed a way to use some mechanical pre-shaping in the making of the cymbals without sacrificing sound quality. This saves cost. We then work the cymbals using our traditional hand manufacturing. But we still pass the savings on to you. The result is the new Innovations Series, which delivers cymbals with true professional sound and quality at a very attractive price.

EWS

Garry Peterson is on tour with The Guess Who, marking the first tour in the US with their classic line-up since 1970.



Gregg Bissonette has been working with ELO lately. Also, congrats to Gregg and wife Sadhna on the recent birth of their daughter Mary Ruth.

Virgil Donati is on tour with Steve Vai.

Jeff Campitelli is playing with Joe Satriani.

Carlos de la Garza is touring with Reel Big Fish.

Marc Slutsky is currently in the studio with Splender. (Marc recently became a Yamaha endorser, and is using their Birch Absolute drums.)

Steve Stephens is working with artists Bruce Conte, Paul Taylor, Rocco Prestia, and Tim Scott. He can also be heard on Cherokee's recently released RCA offering.

Alex Sassaris is on Eve To Adam's recently released debut, Auburn Slip.

James Kottak (Kingdom Come, Scorpions) is on Light On The End Of The Tunnel by War & Peace.

Joey Jordison is on drums and Shawn Crahan is on percussion on Slipnot's latest album, Iowa.

Shawn Pelton is on David Byrne's solo CD, Look Into The Eyeball, as well as David Mead's Mine And Yours.

Joey Shuffield and Fastball are on a Who tribute CD, Substitute, The Songs Of The Who. (For more on Joey surf to www.moderndrummer.com.)

Eddie Bayers is on Jamie O'Neal's Shiver.

Terry Bozzio is on two cuts from bassist Billy Sheehan's debut solo CD. Compression.

Vinnie Colaiuta and Matt Sherrod are on Leroy's debut CD.

John Leamy is on the new Masters Of Reality CD, Welcome To The Western Lodge.

Dan Richardson is on Stereomud's Perfect Self.

Dale Moon is on The Travis Larson Band's second full-length album. Suspension.

Rey Washam (Scratch Acid, Ministry) is on Swell's brand-new platter, Everybody Wants To

Robin DiMaggio has released a solo album, Blue Planet.

Morgan Agren is on Mats/Morgan Live, as well as Jimmy Agren's Glass Finger Ghost.

John Favicchia's new album, Dharma, features famed guitarist Steve Khan. (Go to www.johnfav.com for more information.)

Guillermo E. Brown is on Spring Heel Jack's new genre-buster, Masses.

Edward "Hot" Cleveland is on Eric Gales' latest. That's What I Am.

Columbia/Legacy has remastered Masque and

Leftoverture by Kansas, featuring Phil Ehart on drums. Each album features two extra cuts and expanded liner notes. Legacy



has also reissued the first four Blue Öyster Cult albums, featuring Albert Bouchard, each with at least four extra cuts.

Joe Nevolo is on Shadow Gallery's Legacy.

Richard Lyles is on the road with 3 Doors Down.

Tim Alexander is on Attention Deficit's latest. The Idiot Kina.

Terry Silverlight is on Bach 2000 by David Matthews & The Manhattan Jazz Orchestra.

Aldo Mazza (member of Canadian percussion ensemble Repercussion and director of KoSA) and his wife Jolan are the proud parents of a new son: Massimo, born June 15.

DRUM **DATES**

This month's important events in drumming history.

Cozy Cole was born on October 17, 1906. Papa Jo Jones was born on October 7, 1911. Art Blakey was born on October 11, 1919. (He passed away in October of 1990.) Ed Blackwell was born on October 10, 1929. (He passed away on October 7, 1992.) Billy Higgins was born on October 11, 1936. Billy Gladstone passed away in October of 1961. Gene Krupa passed away October 16, 1973. Al Jackson passed away on October 1, 1975.

Buddy Rich releases Best Band I Ever Had. which contains the track "Birdland," in October of 1977.

In October of 1978, Modern Drummer magazine, with Steve Gadd on the cover, announces it's going bimonthly beginning with the January issue.



In October of 1982. Drum Workshop introduces the 5000 series double bass pedal.

Hosted by The Berklee College Of Music, Zildjian celebrates its 360th Anniversary in Boston, Massachusetts on October 9, 1983, with performances by Larrie Londin, Peter Erskine, Steve Smith, Vinnie Colaiuta, Steve Gadd, and percussionist Ralph MacDonald.

Jeff Beck's Guitar Shop, with Terry Bozzio on drums, hits number forty-nine on the US charts in October of 1989.

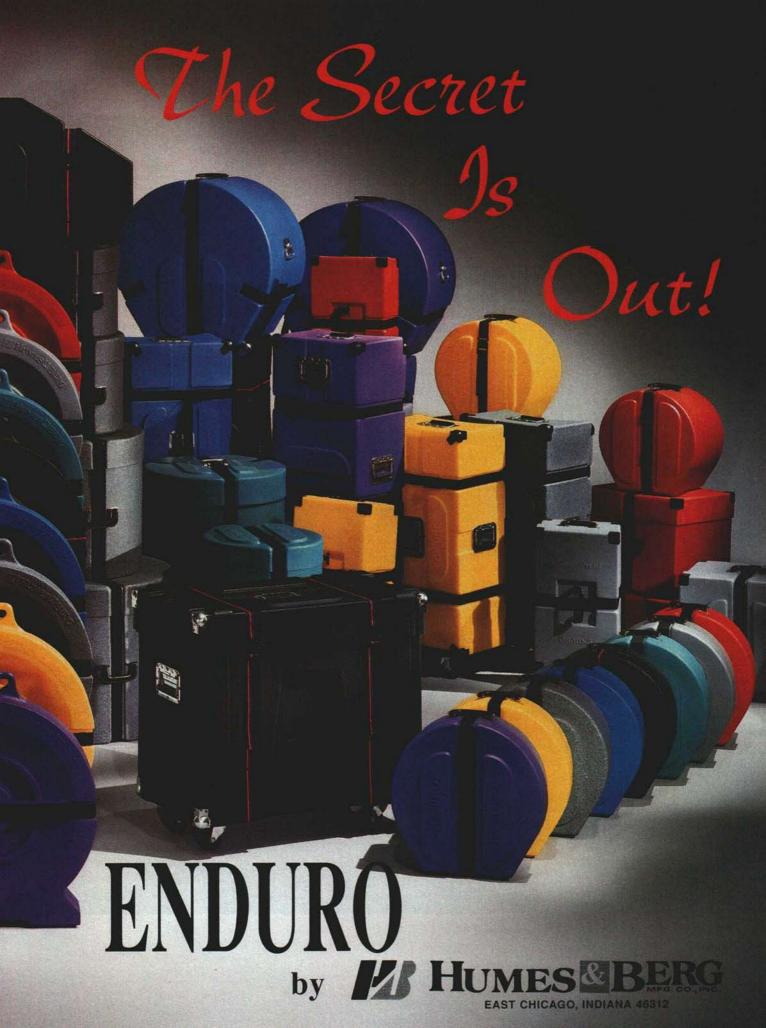
Happy Birthday! Earl Palmer (October 25, 1924)

John "Jabo" Starks (October 26, 1938)

John Guerin (October 31, 1939)

Roger Hawkins (October 16, 1945) Mike Clark (October 3, 1946) Trilok Gurtu (October 30, 1951) Keith Knudsen (October 18, 1952) Tico Torres (October 7, 1953) AJ Pero (October 14, 1959) Tommy Lee (October 3, 1962) Chad Smith (October 25, 1962) Larry Mullen Jr. (October 31, 1961) Tony Royster Jr. (October 9, 1984) Zac Hanson (October 22, 1985)

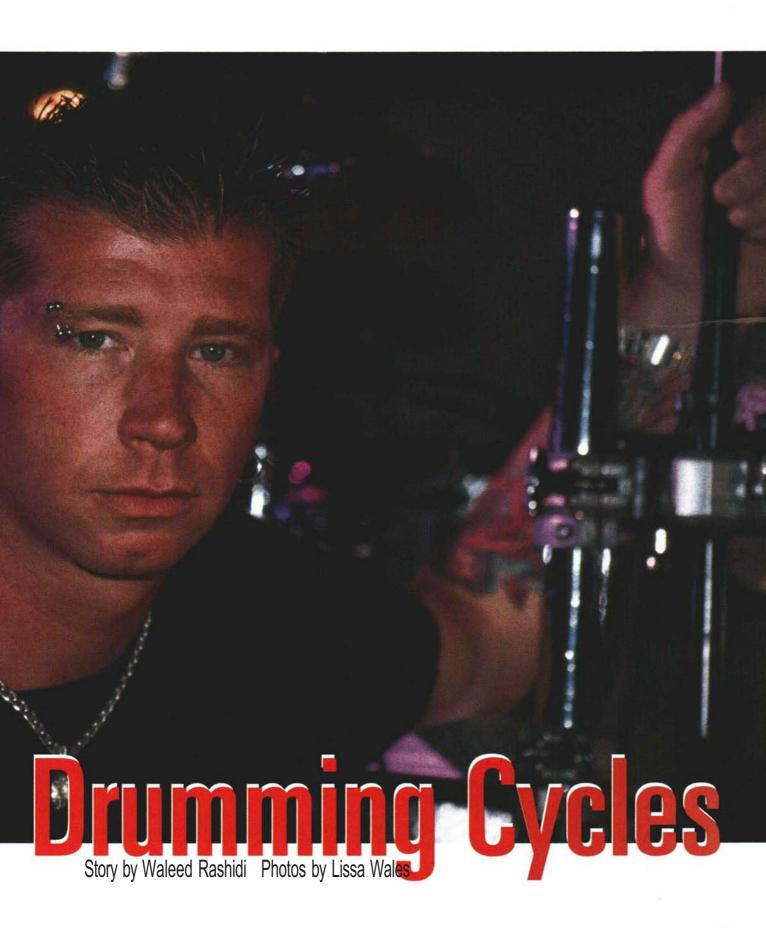


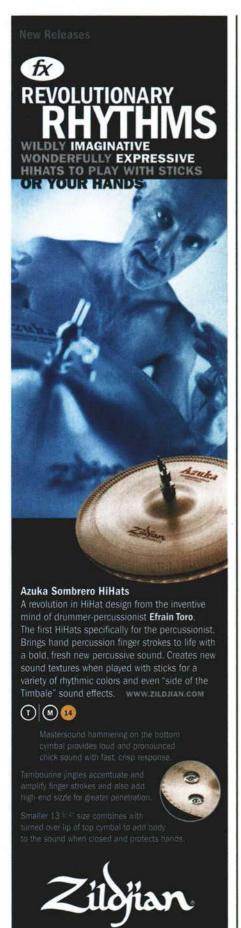


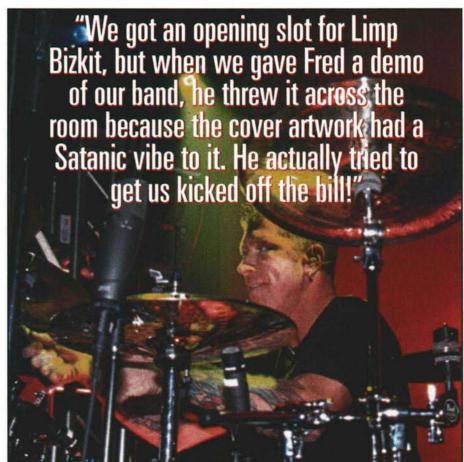
Thanks in no small part to Mr. Bizkit himself, Fred Durst, the road for Massachusetts-based Staind has been paved with good fortune almost from the instant the two bands met. Durst has basically mentored the band in songwriting, production, and touring. The live-recorded acoustic radio single "Outside," in which Durst duets with Staind vocalist Aaron Lewis, gave the band a jump start this year, launching them in radio play charts well before their latest album, Break The Cycle, was even released.

For Staind drummer Jon Wysocki, whether it be credited to a stroke of good luck, or the fact that he's got all his single and double strokes down, attention to his performance as a drummer has suddenly been elevated to a whole new level. Long gone are his days of being seen as just another rock drummer; Wysocki's laid-back and loose funk grooves, pocket fusion-jazz technique, and picturesque cymbal colorings are interspersed throughout the heaviness of Break The Cycle. And such playing perfectly complements his band's ethic of melding the sturdy with the fragile, as Wysocki proves with constant shifts in dynamics, all the while maintaining a consistent rock drive.

MD caught Jon while on tour in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The drummer seems comfortable knowing that the incredible response his band has received isn't just a fluke—it's reality.







MD: It appears as if you're quite the wanted man. With Staind's recent popularity, the offices at Modern Drummer have been swamped with requests to have you in the magazine. Do you receive a lot of fan mail personally?

Jon: You know what? I don't even check email or stuff like that. I'm so lame, I don't even have a computer. I'd probably have trouble just turning the thing on.

MD: So you're not all that computer savvy, but what about electronics savvy—specifically relating to your drumkit?

Jon: Well, we're using ddrums right now, but my tech and my sound man figured out the whole thing. I have a set of Roland V-Drums, which I actually sat down and fooled around with. So I have a little bit of knowledge as far as that goes, but not a lot. I would not say that I'm schooled in that department.

MD: Then let's talk about a department you're probably quite well versed in. How'd you get connected with Staind in the first place?

Jon: I hooked up with the Staind guys basically from Mike [Mushok], the guitar player. Both of us played in bands from the Springfield, Massachusetts area. We were both in rock bands at the time, and both of us

were looking to get out of those things and into something different. So we talked about it, and the issue was finding a singer, which is always the most difficult thing to do. Mike said he had a line on someone, and it ended up being Aaron, and it came together fast.

MD: And how about your start as a drum-

Jon: I used to bang on my mom's pots and pans as a young kid, and then when I was about five or six, my parents bought me a drumkit. I worked at it and took lessons, but I never took it too seriously until I was in middle school. Then I really, really got into it and listened to a lot of music. I heard KISS for the first time, Led Zeppelin and The Beatles and all that, and then just took it from there.

MD: I'm assuming that John Bonham was probably one of the drummers you looked up to at the time.

Jon: Definitely John Bonham, and I'd like to say Peter Criss. I know he's not the best drummer in the world, but I must say that I was influenced by his look more than any-

MD: So would you consider yourself a visual drummer?

Jon: Ummm, not really—not like Tommy

How Do You Get To Be The Best? One Step At A Time.



Chain & Sprocket Drive System (80) Split Stabilizing Pedal Plate (82) Noise Reducing Spring Damper (82) Heavy-Duty Aluminum Hinge (82) Double Pedal w/Dual U-Joints (83)

When Drum Workshop first introduced our original Chain & Sprocket bass drum pedal its smoothness, speed and strength started a revolution in drumming. Soon drummers from every corner of the music world were demanding to play on a DW Chain Drive pedal. But this was only the beginning. With constant improvements, plus the first double pedal that felt and performed as good as a single, the revolution continued. One-Piece "Turbo" BD Pedal (84) Ball-Bearing Rocker (84) Integrated Pedal Plan (85) Cable remote hi-hat (85) "Turbo" Rotating Dual-Leg Hi-Hat (86)

As DW's double pedal quickly became a standard part of every modern drummer's kit, the arrival of the "Turbo" plated single and double pedals provided drummers with superior stability and control. Spurs, Two-Way beaters and a host of options were added as DW also began developing conventional and remote bi-hats that gave drummers more consistency and performance options throughout their ever-expanding pedal set-ups.

"Accelerator" Off-Set Sprocket ('92) Single Post Auxiliary Pedal (94) Delta Tri-Bearing System ('95) Slotted Stroke Adjustment ('95) Dual Side Adjusting Hoop Clamp ('97)

In the '90's, DW refinements continued to raise the standard of pedal performance. However, none raised it higher than the Delta Tri-Bearing System which integrated friction-free hall-hearings at the pedal's three major moving parts: the hinge, rocker and hex shaft. Together with the "Accelerator" off-set sprocket, DW's Delta pedals once again redefined smoothness and power.

Delta II Dual Chain Drive (00) Force Maximizer Weight System (00) Elevator Stacking Heel Platform (01) Delta Solid Footboard (01) Aluminum Hex Shaft (01)

Our most recent pedal innovations have made DW pedals even smoother, stronger and more versatile. And, with more than 20 years of experience as pedal specialists, Drum Workshop continues to provide drummers with today's most advanced pedal choices. That's why, no matter what style of music you play, you can be sure that DW pedals have whatever it takes to let you be your best. One step at a time. Every step of the way.



Jon's Staind Drums

Drums: Orange County Drum & Percussion in custom silver flame-wrap finish

- A. 6x14 25-ply snare
- **B.** 10x10 tom
- C. 10x12 tom
- D. 16x16 floor tom
- E. 16x18 floor tom
- F. 20x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 10" Zil-Bel
- 2. 8" A Custom splash
- 3. 14" Oriental China Trash
- 4. 14" Z Custom hi-hats
- 5. 10" A splash
- 6. 19" A Custom Projection crash
- 7. 20" A brilliant medium-thin crash
- 8. 18" Z Custom crash
- 9. 20" Z Custom ride
- 10. 18" Oriental China Trash

Hardware: Pearl, including a DR-500 rack and a Powershifter Eliminator double bass drum pedal (with medium spring tension)

Heads: Remo coated Emperor on snare batter (no muffling, tuned very high), clear Emperors on tom batters with clear Ambassadors underneath (no muffling, bottom head tuned higher than top), clear Powerstroke 3 on bass drum (with Evans pad for muffling)

Sticks: Vic Firth 5B

Electronics: ddrum triggers, Roland kick trigger

Microphones: Shure

Lee or anything like that. But I think there is a visual element to the way I play because I have to play very hard in the band, so it looks very physical.

MD: Has your hard drumming led to any health issues?

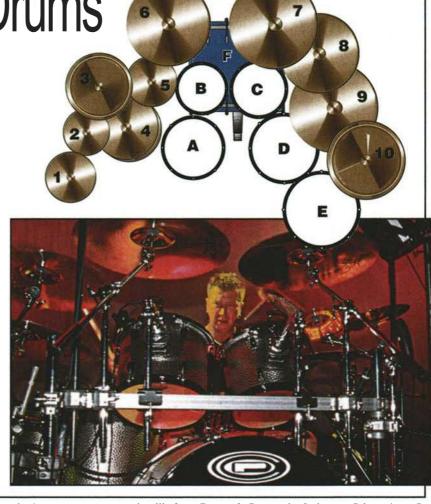
Jon: I've been very lucky—no carpal tunnel. But my shoulders, arms, and back, yeah, they feel it after four or five shows in a row.

MD: So what's your warm-up routine like? Jon: I run on a treadmill or bike for some kind of cardiovascular workout. And then I use very light weights. I just work on my chest, my shoulders, and a little bit of the arms—but no curls, though. This is usually earlier in the day. Before I go on, I just usually stretch. I definitely have to do that.

MD: And what about your kit of choice?

Jon: I'm playing OCDP [Orange County

Drum & Percussion] drums. I love 'em. I ordered a kit that has a metal wrap on it, but I think I sacrificed the sound for the look. We beef up their sound live by triggering the ddrums, which are really low in the mix. MD: I noticed that you're particular about your dynamics, and aren't the type to bash straight through. You've got that finesse of, say, a Stewart Copeland. Would that be a fair thing to say?

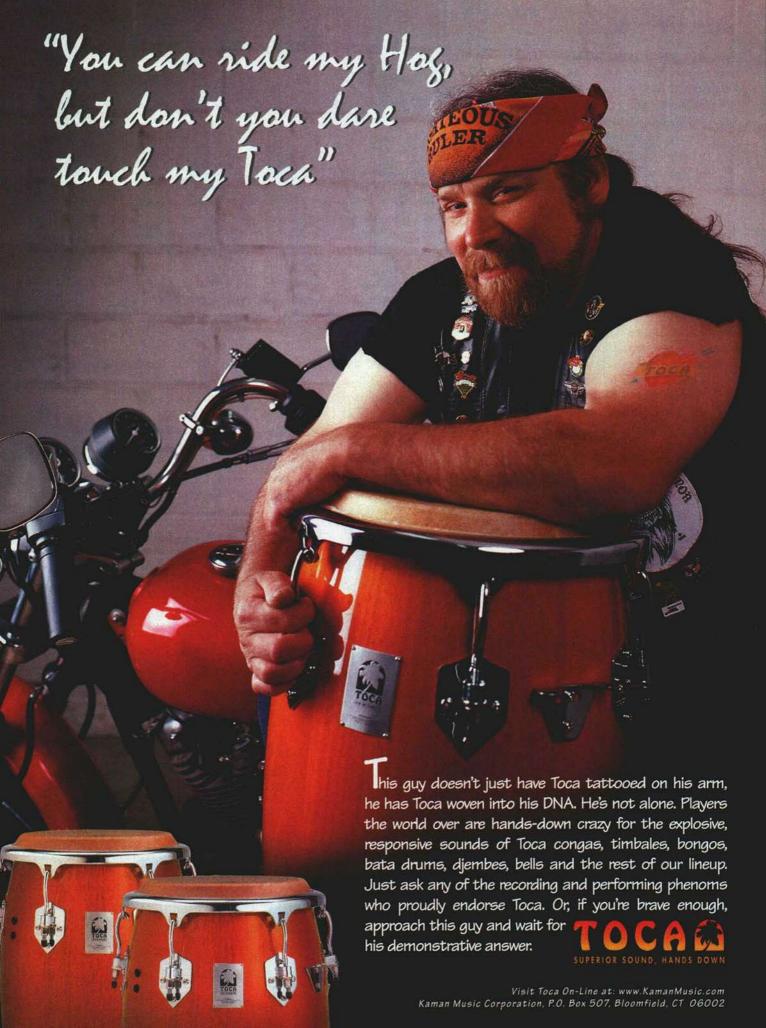




W W W.VICFIRTH.COM

JON TALKS ABOUT LIFE ON THE ROAD AND MAKING IT PLATINUM.

CHECK IT OUT - IT'S BEEN AWHILE.



Jon Wysocki

Jon: Wow, that's a great comparison. I love Stewart Copeland, he's amazing. I grew up listening to The Police, as a matter of fact. They're another big influence. You probably hear his influence in my playing because I use splashes—and China cymbals—a lot. I love the sound of 'em. They add a different element to the old rock feel.

MD: Do you use your cymbals more for color or accenting?

Jon: Both, actually. I think cymbals are a great way to accent, and dynamically, for breakdown and bridge sections that lead up into something bigger.

MD: In what ways do you think *Break The* Cycle differs from your last record, Dysfunction?

Jon: I wanted to go in there and have my grooves a little more mature. I really wanted to focus more on the song, rather than just throwing things in for the sake of throwing them in. I wanted to work for the music. Pre-production involved constructing the songs with the three musicians, and I'm excluding Aaron because it was me, Mike, and Johnny [April, bassist] who came up with the forms of the songs. Then Aaron would come in, and we'd break it down even more and figure out what we would



keep or if we wanted to go in a different place at a certain area of the song.

MD: Where did you record?

Jon: It was at NRG in Los Angeles. I was done with the drum tracks in four or five days. I did bang 'em out, but the thing is that it all had to do with pre-production. I had the songs down in my head. I feel like once I get in there, I kind of get into this zone.

It's tough for me in the studio, because I'm my own worst critic. I'll play a song fifty times, and then go back and pick each one apart. I'll just be like, "I don't know if that was good." But having other people in there helped—like our producer, Josh Abraham, and Ross Garfield, the drum doctor. Those guys were like, "God, that was a good take," or even when I felt like it wasn't a good take, they'd reassure me that it was okay.

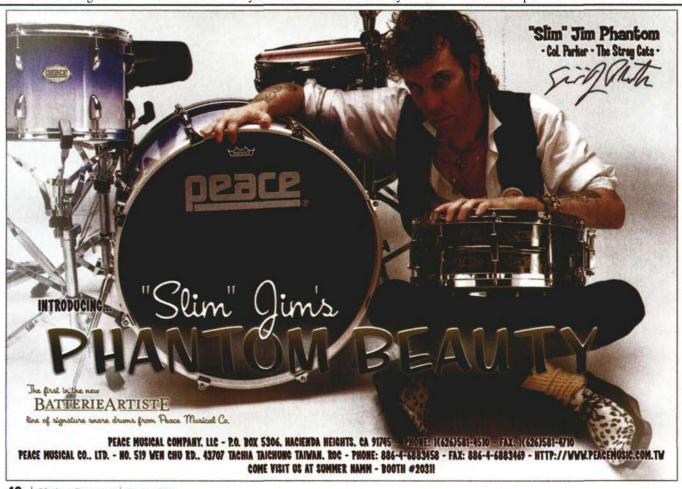
I get a little carried away sometimes. But in order to get the best possible product, you should be like that. I felt that this record was going to be a big one for us, and I just wanted everything to be right. I didn't want to have to look back at it six months from now and go, "Man, I wish I hadn't done that!"

MD: Are you speaking from past experi-

Jon: Yeah, our first demo was like that-all over the place. I hear it now and go, "Oh my God, what was I thinking?"

MD: Do you rely on punch-ins and edits to correct any minor mistakes?

Jon: No, not at all. We didn't use a click track, we just went straight through the songs. You get a better vibe that way. On our first demo, we punched in all over the place, but it disrupted the flow of the tunes.



Liberty DE VITTO

They should come with a coupon for new cymbals.



Jon Wysocki

MD: So now do you feel comfortable in a recording studio?

Jon: Well, I tell you what, if you're looking to hire me for studio work, I can probably bang it out pretty quickly. For some reason, I have good luck in the studio as far as getting tracks done fast. But I'd have to say that onstage is where I shine. Having the crowd right there, having the energy of the band—the whole vibe is more fun to me, whereas in the studio, there's a lot more pressure.

MD: Speaking of the stage, you guys have shared the stage with Limp Bizkit a lot. How did you hook up with Bizkit vocalist Fred Durst in the first place?

Jon: A friend of ours had a connection and got us an opening slot for Limp Bizkit. But when he gave Fred a demo of our band, he threw it across the room because the cover artwork had a Satanic vibe to it. He actually tried to get us kicked off the bill! He was kind of bent out of shape about it because he has a religious background. We were like, "Wait, no man, we're not Satan worshippers. It's just a cover."

Well, Fred let us play. And then he actually stood on the side of the stage the entire time. He totally dug us. When we got off stage, he was like, "Yeah, I'm interested in

working with you guys. I wanna hear new material." So within two or three weeks we brought him a tape and he loved it. We packed up and drove down to Florida and basically wrote our first record down there.

MD: And what were Durst's contributions to shaping the band's sound?

Jon: He set us in the right direction because Aaron was doing a lot more screaming. We were a lot heavier and metal-like, and Fred was telling him to smooth it out more and to sing.

MD: Did Durst have much to say about your drumming in particular?

Jon: Yeah, absolutely. He was like, "Don't just put something in to put it in. Do something that works." Fred's got that groove kind of feel, he knows about it. He comes from that hip-hop background. He knows what he's talking about. He'd be like, "Lay back and don't try and throw in these extra little kick drum hits or snare hits." And on other stuff, he'd just let me go. He was really cool to work with for sure.

MD: Who have you been listening to for inspiration?

Jon: I go to see Dennis Chambers whenever I can. He's just amazing. I can't believe what he does with one foot. He's just unbeliev-

able. I'm a huge Chad Wackerman fan too. I like cats like that.

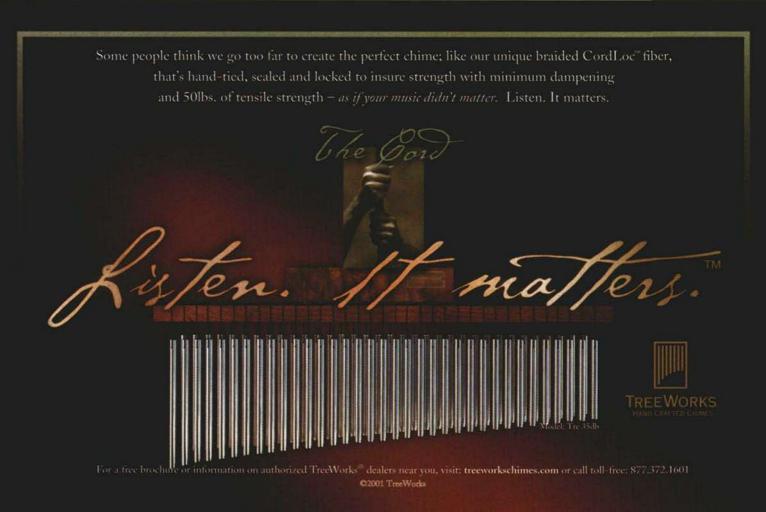
MD: Speaking of funky players, I noticed you had some funky stuff on *Break The Cycle*. The opening track, "Open Your Eyes," has some funky verses right from the start. Tell me about that groove.

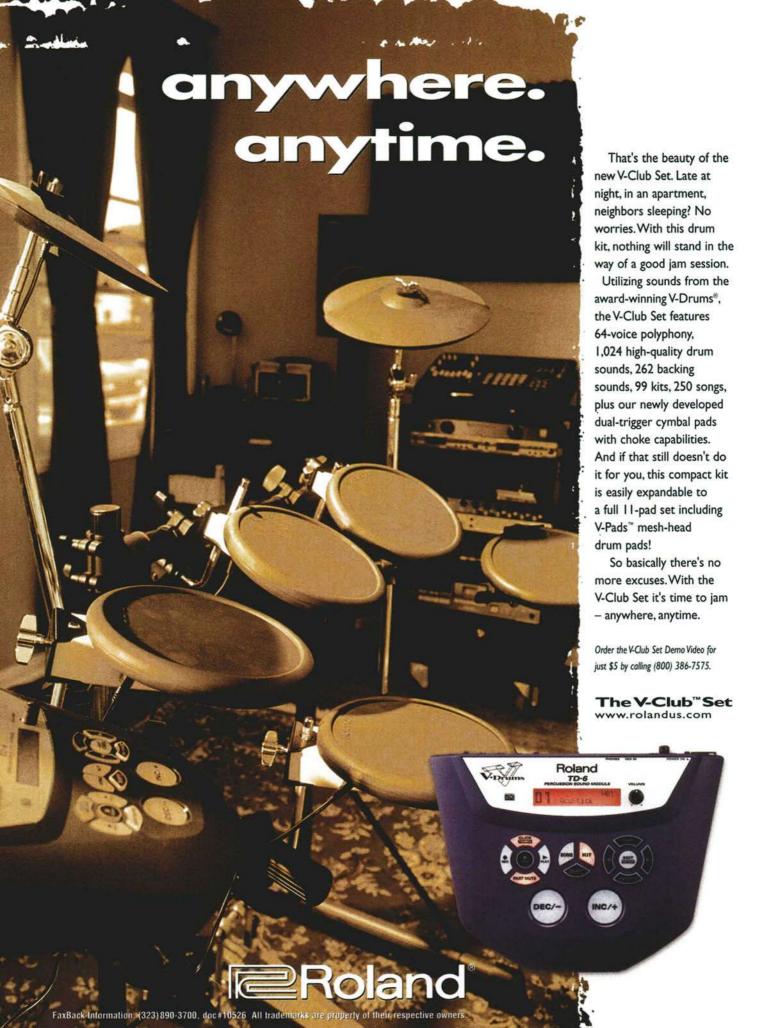
Jon: That definitely goes back to my days of listening to Toto. I love Jeff Porcaro. And Dave Weckl's time with Chick Corea's band really inspired me. And there are rock guys who are just like gods to me. Danny Carey from Tool and Morgan Rose from Sevendust are totally unbelievable.

MD: But Carey, for example, utilizes more than just a drumkit for his sounds. Would you be open to incorporating new instruments or sounds into your current setup?

Jon: I would love to play vibes or something like that someday. It's not really where we're headed right now, but I'm really interested. I've also got a long ways to go on the kit. You can never learn everything. I learn new things every day. I try to watch as many bands as I can. There are guys who tell me that they think I'm a great drummer. But I have so much to learn.



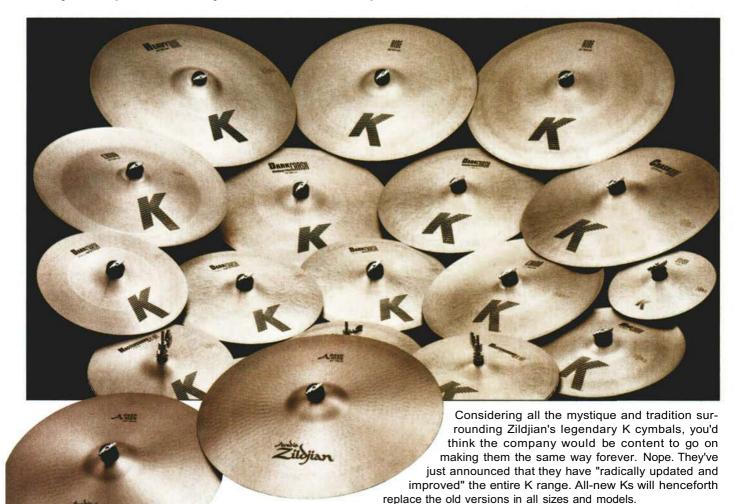




new and **notable**

Everything Old Is New Again

Zildjian Updated K Cymbal Line, A Deep Rides, And Azuka Sombrero Hi-Hats



The new models feature lathing and hammering techniques that make them "warmer, more responsive, and more versatile than their predecessors." The new models are said to offer more clarity and projection, making them ideal for a variety of applications (as opposed to just jazz). According to Zildjian, "Hi-hats have an improved wash and an articulate

chick sound, crashes are dark, rich, warm, and clear, and rides are less pingy and less bright, with more body."

Even as they renovate the K range, Zildjian has revived a classic model from the A range: the Deep ride. Available in 20" and 22" sizes, the Deep ride offers "the deepest low-end sound of all A Zildjian ride cymbals." This model was a favorite of jazz and fusion drummers during the late 1970s, who appreciated its low-pitched but clear "ping." The 20" is priced at \$320; the 22" lists for \$382.

And for something completely different, Zildjian has added Sombrero hi-hats to their Azuka Latin/world percussion line. Designed by Latin and world percussion specialist Efrain Toro, they can be played with hands or sticks for a variety of rhythm effects. The 14" top cymbal features a turned-over edge. The 13 3/4" bottom cymbal is riveted with jingles, and sits just under the curve of the top cymbal—thus protecting the player's hands while enhancing the contact between the cymbals. The bottom cymbal also features the Mastersound edge, which is designed to provide a clear, crisp "chick" sound. The new hi-hats are priced at \$392 per pair.

(781)871-2200, www.zildjian.com.

Testing Their Metal

DW Limited Edition Engraved Brass Snare Drums, Steel Piccolo Toms, And Bozzio/Wackerman Video

The folks at DW have got a lot of brass...drums, that is. But they say that their Limited Edition brass snare drum is special. It features a black-nickel-plated shell, hoops, and lugs, as well as an exclusive engraved pattern designed and hand-etched by drum historian and engraver John Aldridge. Each drum is one of a kind (with a serial number to prove it), and is said to combine "brilliant tone, sensitivity, and projection" with "a striking appearance."

If brass isn't your bag, how about steel? DW's 8" (\$139), 10" (\$149), and 12" (\$159) chrome-plated steel Piccolo Toms were developed in conjunc-

groups to extend the tonal spectrum of a kit, or as mini-timbales and effects in percussion setups. They include a mounting bracket that accommodates the 1/2" arm found on DW's stands. accessory clamps, and DogBones.

Speaking of Terry Bozzio, you can see him in performance with Chad Wackerman on Solos & Duets, a video recorded at Musicians Institute in Los Angeles during the duo's concert/clinic tour last fall. The nearly 90-minute video includes extensive footage of Chad and Terry's note-perfect duet on Frank Zappa's "Black Page #1," as well as interview footage with both drummers. Suggested list price is

> \$29.95. 2 (805) 485-6999, www.dwdrums.com.



Is It Your Personality... Or Just Your Drumkey?

Evans Magnetic-Head Drumset Torque Key

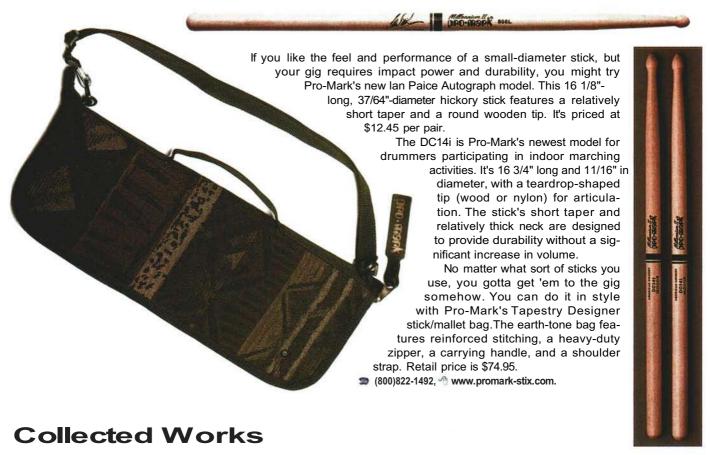
Last year Evans introduced a magnetic drumkey with an ergonomic handle, a knurled knob for easy spinning, and the ability to stay on a drum lug (even a bottom lug!) while the drum was being played. (And without rattling, no less.) What could be more useful and convenient?

Well, how 'bout adding a torque gauge? The new key's torque handle can be set to a desired tension, so that when the lug reaches that pre-set tension, the key will release. This makes it easier for any drummer—beginner or pro—to obtain even tensioning on a drum. (The key is not recommended for use on hardware.) List price is \$29.99.

(800)323-2746, www.evansdrumheads.com.

In The Club—In The Gym—In The Bag

Pro-Mark Ian Paice And DC14i Indoor Marching Sticks And Designer Stick Bag



Ludwig Millennium Snare Drums, Classic Birch Kits, And Upgraded Rocker Elite Series



Millennium snare drums

According to Ludwig, their Millennium snare drums are "destined to be favorites among collectors."The drums should appeal to players too, based on what Ludwig says about their "distinctive resonance, projection, and bright sound." Features include P86 Millennium strainers, tube lugs, and die-cast hoops-all brass-plated. Only one hundred of each model and size will be made, and each drum comes with a Millennium badge and serial number plate, along with a deluxe case. Sizes and prices are: 5x14 brass —\$1,025; 6 1/2x14 brass-

\$1,050; 5x14 bird's-eye maple—\$1,100; 6 1/2x14 bird's-eye maple—\$1,125.

Ludwig's entry into the ever-growing birch drumkit market is their Classic Birch, featuring 7-ply, 7-mm-thick birch and Italian poplar shells. The new series replaces the Rocker Pro line, with kits available in four configurations, five sparkle wrapped finishes, and five natural satin finishes. Prices range from \$1,995 to \$2,095.

Ludwig has also upgraded the Rocker Elite high-entry-level series with improved construction details, new hardware, and new finishes. Kits are available at \$1,450 (Jazz outfit) and \$1,550 (Power outfit).

(219) 522-1675, ** www.ludwig-drums.com.



Classic Birch Gig-Lite kit



Rocker Elite kit

And What's More



In Session With Korn, a new book and CO play-along set from WARNER BROS. PUBLICATIONS, provides drum students and players with the opportunity to explore the distinctive style of Korn's drummer, David Silveria. The book includes transcriptions, an analysis of each track, background on the songs, and bio information on Silveria. The CD includes six classic Korn songs, each recorded with and without drums. Retail price is \$24.95. (800) 327-7643, www.warnerbrospublications.com.

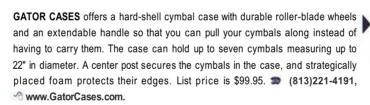
SPAUN DRUMS now offers 100% birch drums, which the company says are punchier, tighter, and more aggressive than their traditional maple line. The shells are 8-ply and less than 1/4" thick. (Snare drums with 16- and 24-ply shells are also available.) The birch drums are said to offer "strong attack, fat low end, great projection, and short decay." (909) 971-7761, www.spaundrums.com.





The Do Bop kit, from AFRICAN AMERICAN DRUM COMPANY, features a 10x10 rack tom, an 11x13 suspended "floor" tom, a 16x18 bass drum, and a 7x12 snare. The drums feature 7-ply maple shells with 4-ply reinforcement hoops, 2.3-mm steel hoops, and AADC bronze tuning lugs. AADC has also introduced the signature series Lion Head snare throw-off and bronze bass-drum claws.

(707)445-9029, % www.aadrum.com.







GAUGER PERCUSSION'S new aluminum-alloy RIMS suspension mounts are being distributed by BIG BANG DISTRIBUTION. The new mounts feature fully adjustable sliding-link flanges, enabling drummers to align each flange to the exact position of the lugs on their drums. The new design is said to allow for far more resonance and less choking than any other system on the market. Prices range from \$49.90 to \$61.90. (800)547-6401, www.bigbangdist.com.

SABIAN now offers "sonically matched" Effects Packs in their HHX, Hand Hammered, AAX, AA, and PRO Sonix lines. Each pack contains a 10" splash and an 18" China cymbal, plus a free drummer towel and a Sabian *Making The Difference* video. (506)272-2019, **https://www.sabian.com.







"THE MORE SNOTTONS IIO ITEMENTALE I HAVE THE BETTER"

There are drummers who like to dabble with different drum sounds, and there are drummers who REALLY like to experiment. And then there's Dean Butterworth. "The more options I have the better. When I go into the studio, I take five different ride cymbals, four or five pairs of hi-hats and at least five different snares."

Which is why Dean was the perfect candidate to test drive a set of birch Starclassic Performers. Dean was more than up for it. "The timing was great. A lot of my heroes played different birch kits, and for the last six months or so I kept thinking about what it would be like to have a birch kit with the same dimensions as my Starclassic Maple

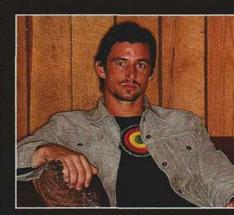
As it turned out, I fell in love with the Performers. The drums sounded really warm; they were just singing really nicely. The kick sounded great and the snare sounded great. The toms seemed like they had more sustain. The overall response was wonderful, really fluent. It was very easy to do a 16th note fill around the toms. It didn't hurt that the tom mounting system was the same as my Starclassic Maple kit. I've played other drums in the past and they all use designs that go off the tuning lugs. The Star-Cast system doesn't mess with the tuning. I like that. And I like the die-cast hoops on the birch kit for the same reasons I like them

on my maple kit-they lock in the tuning a lot better than a flanged hoop."

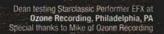
I wished I could have taken the kit with me. But I'm not going to tell you that I'm going to switch from maple over to birch. What I am going to do is get a birch kit after our current tour is over so I can do things like use birch toms with a maple kick or vice versa. And not just in the studio-I'd even like to experiment on tour and see what the "house guy can do with the sounds of different drums in those big, boomy rooms."

DEAN BUTTERMORTH

(Ben Harper & The Innocent Criminals)









Bison Drums

A Bigger Hoop, A Stronger Lug, A Better Design



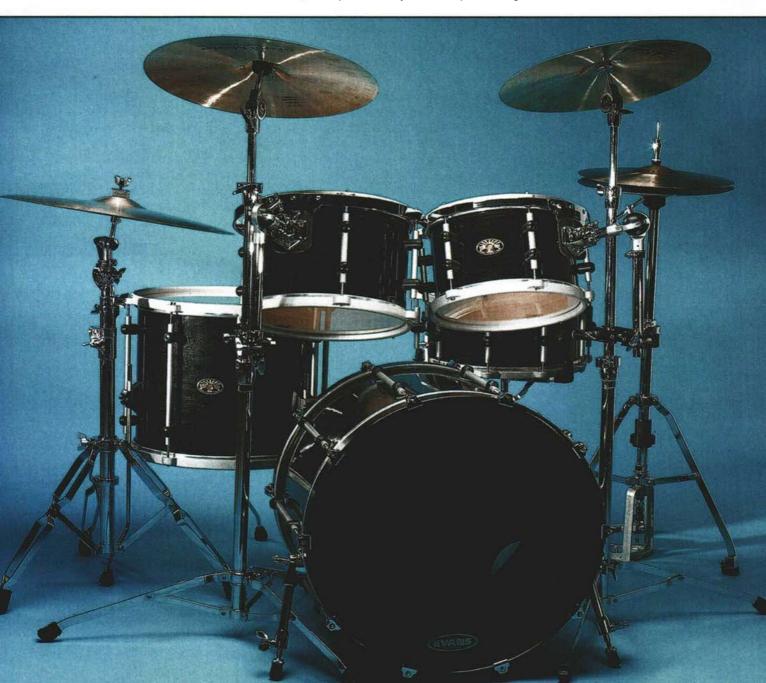
unique hoop and lug design

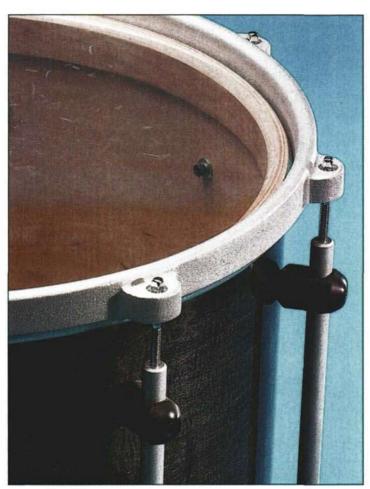
outstanding acoustic performance

excellent tunability

Text by Fran Azzarto Photos by Jim Esposito The Bison Drum Company of Wheeling, Illinois is no stranger to *MD*. In the past, Bison snare drums and bass drum beaters have made special appearances. But now it's time for the big show. Ladies and gentlemen, may I present to you the Bison drumkit! (And some really cool snare drums, too.)

What separates Bison custom drums from the slew of custom drum manufacturers across the country? Well, all you have to do is take a quick glance, and you have your answer. The special feature of these drums is unquestionably their hoops and lugs.





The special feature of Bison drums is their NGU (New Guaranteed Unbreakable) hoops and lugs.

According to Bison's owner and drum designer, Mitch Greenberg, the hoop and lug design has been rolling around in his head since he was eleven years old. A lifetime of thought has gone into the design of this metal, so it's appropriate that these hoops come with a lifetime guarantee. Greenberg has named his unique hardware NGU hoops: New Guaranteed Unbreakable.

NGU Hoops And Lugs

Bison's design concept is based upon moving the hoopand-lug tension away from the shell, and utilizing an incredibly strong, lightweight alloy to ensure proper tuning, high harmonic overtones, and durability.

The complex alloy used for NGU hoops and lugs is similar to that used for military aircraft, but Mitch Greenberg chooses to keep the exact composition a secret. (Magicians don't tell how they make their assistant disappear, after all.) The look of the hoops and lugs is definitely unique: gray, flat, and thick, with large ears around the tension rods. They appear massive and heavy, but they're actually guite light. In fact, NGU hoops weigh the same as die-cast hoops of the same diameter. Yet, according to Mitch Greenberg, NGU hoops are at least three times stronger.

Bison hoops are far thicker than most die-cast hoops, putting the precision-drilled lug holes almost a quarter of

an inch further away from the shell of the drum than on most other drums. This distance is a principle feature on the Bisons, and certainly a part of the magic of these drums. Greenberg has designed a hoop and lug system that moves the tension away from the shell of the drum, theoretically allowing the shell to vibrate more freely—and certainly in a different manner—than on drums with more traditional hoop and lug combinations.

The strength of the hoop also plays a major role in the tuning process. These hoops are round—and they are definitely going to stay that way. There is absolutely no give in this metal, and therefore the tuning is as easy as it gets. When playing rimshots on these drums (remarkably easy and effective, due to the girth of the hoops), the drum will stay in nearly perfect tune, even when one or more tension rods are loosened or knocked out. The alloy's strength provides the integrity needed to keep the hoop perfectly round, and fine-tuning seems to happen automatically. However, this is only allowed to happen because the hoop holes are precision-drilled to match up perfectly with the lugs, and the lugs are able to withstand tremendous tension due to the strength of the NGU alloy.

The single-tube lugs sit nearly an inch away from the shell. They're attached to the shell by Allen screws (one on snare drums, two on toms and bass drums). The screw has a fairly large acetyl-plastic casing around it, which maintains the strength and moves the tension away from the shell. Despite the large appearance of the screw casing, the actual contact of the screw to the shell is minimal. A small plastic washer makes contact with the outside of the shell, while the inside is held by an even smaller washer. This system allows the drumshell to resonate as freely as possible.

The Sound

Bison's goal, in Mitch Greenberg's words, is to create a "clear, articulate drum." I can safely state that Mitch has achieved his dream. These drums sound monstrous.

All of the Bison drums have an enormous amount of low end as well as a cutting, warm upper register. The toms were equipped with clear Remo Emperor heads on top and clear Ambassadors underneath, while the bass drums had Evans EQ1 batters and Evans front heads with a mic' hole. Every Bison tom provided a clean, warm, deep sound with an enormous amount of low end. Due to the nature of the way the head sits on the bearing edge, the tone of these drums actually approached that of a timpani-even on a 12" tom. These drums really ring.

Bison provided two bass drums, a 16x22 and a 16x20. Both had traditional wood hoops rather than the alloy rims found on the toms, but they did feature Bison's special lug design. Talk about dropping bombs! The 22" kick had low end and attack that would shake your bass player's boots, and the 20" had as much low end as most 22" drums. Of course, the 20" had the punch that you would expect from a drum that size, and was still plenty warm and deep.

And the ultimate test? The 22" was one of the easiest kick

drums I ever worked with in the recording studio. We threw a mic' up to it and were virtually done. The engineer's words prior to getting sounds were, "That's the way we get bass drums to sound after we've EQ'ed them, and we haven't done a thing to it yet." This statement was made about the drum without muffling of any kind. We left it wide open, and it was singing in literally less than a minute. Time is money in the studio, and this kick drum alone saved an enormous amount of both.

Snare Drums

Bison snares are right up there with the best wood snares on the market. We had the good fortune to play around with four drums: a 4x14, a 6 1/2x14, a 7x14, and a 3 1/2x14 piccolo, each with ten lugs. Greenberg also offers eight- and even six-lug snares. Due to the strength of the NGU hoop, those drums could succeed where many others might fail.

Each snare drum came equipped with Ambassadors on both sides, but the drums featured two different throw-offs. The 4" and 6 1/2" drums had Nickel Drumworks throw-offs, while the 7" and the piccolo had standard Pearl-style throwoffs. As with many custom companies, Bison can provide pretty much whatever you'd like. This includes standard steel hoops rather than NGU hoops, although the NGU lug design remains the same on all Bison drums.

The 6 1/2" and the 7" were both very warm, with plenty of low end—just like the toms and kick. Yet when we cranked them up they were capable of sending out a crack that could wake the dead. The 4" and 6 1/2" drums were the most versatile of the bunch, providing deep sounds with an explosive top end that could never be buried by the sounds of a rock band. The high-end frequencies of the NGU hoop are just too piercing.

The piccolo proved to be a unique drum. It came with a triple-flanged steel hoop, which—combined with the Bison lug design-gave it a softer, warmer sound than most piccolos are able to obtain. This drum also had an incredible tuning range. At a medium tuning it had more body than many 5"-deep snare drums. At a higher tuning it took on more of a traditional piccolo sound—very snappy and sensitive.

Hardware And Finish

The toms came equipped with a suspension mounting system, and utilized Pearl-style hardware. The floor tom legs are secured in their brackets by two drumkey-operated screws, making leg slippage a non-issue. If this hardware is not to your taste, I'm sure you could get any other type you prefer. Mitch Greenberg's attention to customer satisfaction is equal to the care he puts into making his drums.

All drums have either stained or lacquer finishes; Bison does not offer any wrapped finishes. Mitch likes to experiment in order to provide unique-looking drums—another hip option offered by Bison.

Finale

Bison's drums feature a unique lug and hoop design that integrates a special aluminum alloy. This alone is enough



Top to bottom: 3 1/2x14 piccolo with NGU lugs and triple-flanged hoops, 4x14 with NGU lugs and hoops, and 7x14 with NGU hoops and older-style lugs.

to set them apart from the norm. But add to that their outstanding sound and custom-finished appearance, and you have drums that can definitely be the star of the show.

30 (847) **459-1255.** • www.bisondrums.com.

THE NUMBERS

Bison Drums feature 10-ply Keller maple shells with 6-ply reinforcement rings and 45° bearing edges. Drums are made to order—any size and any lug configuration. Hardware and finish are provided custom to order.

List prices: (prices vary with finish; starting prices shown)

8x10	\$645
8x12	\$765
9x13	\$795
14x14	\$1,000
14x16	\$1,025
16x20	\$1,320
16x22	\$1,410

Snare drums: Call for pricing









Dunnett Classic Custom Snares

A Different Approach To Drum Design



virtually unlimited choices



some drums do not feature hardware isolation measures

by Chap Ostrander

n 1978, Vancouver, Canada drummer Ronn Dunnett wanted to upgrade his set. But he was unhappy with what was available on the drum market. So he decided to modify his existing drums, working on the shells and hardware, and redoing the finish. As the years went by, Dunnett developed his drum-crafting skills, ultimately producing drums of his own design. Although some of Bonn's concepts and design features didn't fit the pattern of "normal" drums, they managed to generate interest in the drumming community.

Today, Ronn says his goal is "to work with my fellow drummers and percussionists, to listen to their thoughts and ideas, to share my experience as a builder, and to create drums that are affordable, unique, and personal." Let's see how Dunnett accomplishes this goal.

Common Features

Each of the drums we were sent for review had its own individual voice, due to the distinct differences in shell material. But they all had great sensitivity at all dynamic levels, with no choking. They could also be tuned to lower or higher pitches without distorting. Each one tuned down into fatback range comfortably.

Rimshots were nice and clear, and rimclicks were especially easy to play. On some modern drums, the profile of the rim is so low that it's a chore to play a proper rimclick. Not so here.

Snare beds on Dunnett drums run the entire span between the lugs on either side of the throw-off or butt. This unusually wide bed is designed to accommodate 42-strand snares, which are standard on 14" Dunnett Dunnett's snare beds are also deeper than most, at 3/16". Ronn Dunnett feels that the deep bed creates a pocket into which the snares are "pulled." The deeper the bed, the more the user is able to adjust the snare tension without choking the drum or having the snares loosely rattling.

Even though 42-strand snares are not normally my first choice, they certainly worked on these drums, providing lots of snare sensitivity and response. For those who prefer more traditional snare sets, Dunnett also offers 16- and 20-strand models. PureSound or Grover snares are optional upgrades.

Dunnett believes that hoops have a huge impact on the sound and feel of a drum. So he offers a wide variety of hoops to help clients "dial in" the sound they need or tailor that sound to a specific need. These include triple-flanged steel or brass (brass in 10-hole only), single-flanged brass (vintage style with brass hooks), "B" series hoops (straight-sided hoops made from cold-rolled steel, stainless steel, brass, or titanium), and Yamaha-type wood hoops. Ronn doesn't recommend die-cast hoops, feeling that they dry out the tone a bit too much. But he can supply them if specified.

6 1/2x14 Titanium Snare (The Ice Drum)

The Titanium snare we examined was loaned to us before going to its owner, Markus Kamp of the Seattle band Sinforosa. It came fitted with the optional titanium hoops, which are polished on the inside and top surfaces and

"frosted" on the outside surface to match the shell. This drum's design was based on that of Ronn's personal titanium snare drum, which has come to be known as the "ICE" drum (for Initial Cryogenic Engineering/ Experiment). More on that later.

The aerospace-quality titanium shell has a wall thickness of only .035", making it amazingly light—only 700 grams. The "frosted" finish affords the shell a slightly textured feel. The shell is treated with a thin protective coating. The hoops and shell have been cryogenically tempered.

The lugs are Dunnett's own brass R5 model and are attached using stainless-steel fasteners. These lugs are made with a higher shell offset than most in order to accommodate the slightly undersized shell (13 3/4" outside diameter, as compared to the standard 13 7/8"). This provides more clearance between the shell and the hoop, allowing the head to extend out a bit over the edge of the shell. The difference between the head size and the width of the shell affects the tunability and tone of the instrument. The idea is that a head

tensioned at a shallower angle at the collar will tune a bit easier than one that pulls down at a sharper angle. This concept is used on Dresden timpani, gong bass drums, and all Dunnett drums fitted with R5 lugs.

The hoop, which has no flanges whatever, is held on by

small claw hooks (like those on a vintage bass drum). The shell is embossed with the Dunnett name on both sides, using a proprietary engraving process. According to Ronn, many engraved patterns are available, so you can let your imagination run wild.





The snare strainer on the ICE drum is a modification of the Nickel Drumworks Piston Drive snare release. In its initial form this strainer has gained the respect of many drum companies, and it's in use on many custom and high-end drums. It features a release lever that can be rotated in a 180° arc relative to the shell. This means that once you set your snare tension, you can lay the lever against the shell on either the right or the left side of the throw-off, or anywhere in between. I'm particularly fond of a throw-off that I can push back with my leg if my hands are busy. This type of strainer allows for that, as well as being very convenient for "normal" operation.

The sound of this drum was both surprising and satisfying. It was fitted with an Aquarian Texture-Coated batter head and a Classic Clear snare-side head, which are pretty standard models whose performance I could predict. But I really didn't know what to expect from the titanium shell. It produced a full sound, with very even overtones. It wasn't bright, as you might expect a metal shell to sound. But neither was it

dark. It had some of the warmth of a wood shell, but with more of a pronounced crack. With the snares turned off, the shell definitely contributed its own voice to the sound of the drum. But with the snares on, the shell sublimated its character to enhance the snare sound.

6 1/2x14 Solid Walnut Snare Drum

This drum was designed with vintage aesthetics in mind. It features a solid walnut shell with maple reinforcement rings, finished in natural matte lacquer. The bearing edges feature a 45° inside cut to the outside edge, which is then rounded over.

The single-flanged hoops are brass, as are Dunnett's V model lugs. (The latter are attached to the drum using stainless-steel fasteners.) A three-point snare strainer and



butt plate made by Slingerland complete the "classic" look of this drum, with no gaskets under the strainer, butt plate, or lugs. The shell is embossed on both sides with the Dunnett name. The drum came fitted with a Remo Fiberskyn 3 FD on top and an Aquarian Classic Clear on the bottom.

This snare would be my choice for a concert instrument. It was well behaved, with very predictable response and sound. (I mean that in the sense that it gave exactly the performance I expected it to under all circumstances—a very positive attribute.) The wood shell gave the drum a warm voice, and like its siblings it had fine response at all volumes.

5 1/2x14 Stainless-Steel Snare Drum

The Stainless-Steel drum we tested belongs to Kurt Dahle (Age Of Electric, Limblifter, New Pornographers) of Vancouver, BC. Ronn Dunnett considers this drum his "base" model. It's his most affordable drum, and it's the one upon which he bases his pricing for all the others.

The drum features a surgical-grade stainless-steel shell with a 16-gauge wall thickness. The finish is a highly polished surface, similar to chrome. The drum is fitted with 2.3-mm triple-flanged steel hoops, along with brass T model lugs held on with stainless-steel screws. The strainer supplied is the standard model from Nickel Drumworks, this time in clear plastic. There are no gaskets under the butt plate. The shell is embossed on two sides with the Dunnett name.

DUNNETT DIFFERENCES

Ronn Dunnett is a "different" sort of drum designer. So it's not suprising that many aspects of his drums as well as his way of making and selling them—differ from "the norm." Here's a quick rundown of some of those aspects.

VENTING

Ronn feels that not installing an air vent into the shell allows the snare-side head to react most effectively when the top head is struck. He wants the moving column of air to have 100% efficiency. If venting is requested, or Ronn thinks that a player is going to create impact levels high enough to result in snare-cord breakage, he will drill a 1/8" hole, placed 1/2" up from the bottom bearing edge, beneath each lug.

BEARING UP

All Dunnett metal-shell drums have bearing edges, although you might not think so at first glance. Ronn feels that bending the edges of the shell alters the way the shell will resonate, so his metal drums don't have flanged edges. Instead, Ronn uses a proprietary method of applying the edges to all his shells that varies with the materials used. They are machined to a 45° angle, and then polished. The result contributes to the drums' response, tunability, and sustain.

SHELL THICKNESS

Ronn Dunnett believes that a thin shell and minimal hardware are the best way to ensure optimum response and a clear voice. His philosophy is that less is more—especially when it comes to shell mass. As a result, he starts with undersized shells that are thin (14-18 gauge) and fits them with only eight lugs apiece.

CRYOGENIC TEMPERING

Cryogenic tempering is available as an option on metal shells. It's a high-tech process that involves computer-controlled temperature reduction using liquid nitrogen in a vacuum-sealed chamber. Once the chamber reaches the desired temperature of -328° Fahrenheit, that temperature is maintained for periods of up to thirty-six hours before a twelvehour reverse cycle begins. The entire process takes about three days.

Cryogenic tempering is claimed to significantly extend the performance, integrity, and productive life of metal drumshells, hoops, and snare wires. It also allegedly negates the effect of the weld that holds the shell together, while stabilizing the metal and equalizing the stress points caused in the manufacturing process.

THE NAME GAME

Because of the individuality of each Dunnett drum, the drums don't bear serial numbers. Instead, each drum is given a name. For example, the third titanium drum Ronn made (and the one we tested) was named "Thrice," while the steel-shell model we tested was named "Latrobe." Each drum also bears Ronn Dunnett's signature and the date that the drum was completed.

DIRECT OR DEALER

Ronn sells his products directly over the Internet, as well as through selected dealers. He will work with a client to fulfill the order, but if there is a dealer where the customer lives, the sale goes through that dealer. The price will be the same no matter who does the deal.



This drum could be anyone's primary snare. It came fitted with an Aguarian Texture-Coated batter and a Classic Clear snare-side head. The snare response was full, and articulation was very clean from low to high dynamic ranges. The slightest touch produced a clear snare sound. And although the sound was unquestionably that of a metal-shell drum, it was slightly warmer than that of a chromed-steel snare.

Finishes

Dunnett's proprietary engraving process allows the company to offer almost any pattern or finish. Ronn put his name on the frosted finish on the titanium shell by putting the lettering in a smooth spot. He even did a shell with a barbed-wire pattern around it for a dealer in Seattle.

Stainless-steel shells can be ordered in mirror finish, electropolished (brighter but less reflective), powder coats, and translucent shades without limit. Titanium shells have three options: polished, sand-frosted, and raw. Polished titanium looks like polished aluminum. Frost involves a proprietary process of etching the shell. Raw is an industrial look; unlike most finishes, it looks better as it picks up fingerprints.

Observations And Concerns

The threaded inserts in Dunnett lugs are fixed —using no swivel nuts. It's up to the owner to take care when changing heads to avoid stripping. Their design is such that the center tube can be removed and a new tube inserted. Ronn gives warranty coverage on all his products, and says that he has yet to replace any tube lugs on warranty.

The shells of the metal drums were essentially unfinished on the inside. While this would not be my preference, Ronn says that most of his customers enjoy the contrast and want the inside of the shell to stay raw.

The Standard (stainless steel) Classics have black nylon spacers underneath the lugs, which Ronn says are there as an alignment measure only. There are no such spacers or gaskets on other Dunnett drums. Ronn doesn't see the need for them. and says that he would rather have the hardware work with the shell instead of isolating it. This contradicts current popular theories of isolation and shell resonance-but the drums sounded fine as they were. Would they sound better with isolation measures? I don't know.

Closina

Ronn Dunnett is willing to do

whatever he can to satisfy his customers' wishes. His Web site contains many pictures of custom jobs for past customers. Check out the site to get an idea of Ronn's theories—and his sense of humor. The site is filled with both.

No two Dunnett Classic snare drums are alike. It's really a matter of letting your imagination run free, and then talking to Ronn about how your dream drum can be realized.

(604)643-9939, 1 www.dunnett.com.

THE NUMBERS

Every Dunnett Classic Snare is priced individually, according to its

The Titanium Classic (with optional titanium hoops) Base cost: \$440 Titanium shell: \$335 Titanium hoops: \$300 R5 tube lugs: \$108 Claws: \$40	Total:	\$1,223
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Base cost: \$440 Titanium shell: \$335	R5 tube lugs:	\$108
Base cost: \$440	Titanium hoops:	\$300
	Titanium shell:	\$335
THE TRAINIUM Classic (With optional titanium hoops)	Base cost:	\$440
The Titonium Classis Assis	• • •	

reinforcement rings at no additional cost)











JTS Drum Microphones

A "New" Brand Worth A Look And A Listen

HITS
excellent performance at
reasonable prices

battery power option for NX-9

by Mark Parsons

This month we're going to take a look at three new mic's from JTS that have specific drumset applications. And exactly who *is* JTS? Good question. I figured they were just another new player in the booming (no pun intended) drum microphone market. Nope. JTS—with head-quarters in Taiwan—has been making mic's for over a dozen years now, including acting as OEM for other companies. And on top of that, the owner of the company is a drummer himself. (Can't hurt!) The mic's are brought here by SHS Audio, the exclusive distributor of JTS products in the United States.

At Winter NAMM 2000, JTS introduced an earlier version of these mic's that seemed kind of familiar. In fact, they seemed a little *too* familiar to the folks at another mic' manufacturer. As a result, some changes were made to the current NX-series so they would look a little less like the competition. JTS took advantage of the cosmetic redesign to also make some internal improvements (like shock-mounting the capsules), so the models reviewed here really *are* "new and improved."



The Models

Even a casual glance will tell you that the NX-2 is definitely a kick mic'. It's a large, metal-cased dynamic with a pivoting stand mount built onto the body. At a hefty 29 oz., it's one of the heavier dynamic mic's I've used in a long while.

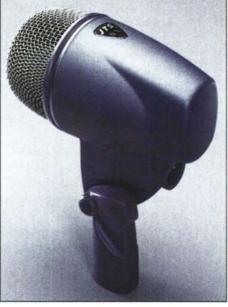
The polar pattern is stated as being cardioid (and it sounds like it). However, the polar chart in the literature is identical to both the "supercardioid" NX-6's chart and the

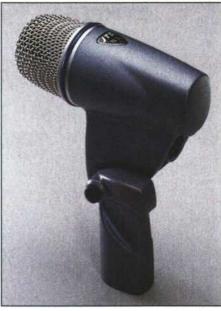
charts for hand-held JTS mic's (not reviewed here). Hmm....

The frequency response chart for the NX-2 (which is different from the others) shows a promising curve for a contemporary kick-drum mic'. Starting just above 30 Hz, there is a broad, gentle boost of 3 or 4 dB in the 40-80 Hz region. Then the curve shows a very shallow attenuation of the mids through about 1 kHz. From there it rises to a fairly prominent peak at 3 kHz, followed by small peaks at about 5 and 9 kHz. Bevond 10 kHz the response falls off quickly. Frequency response is given as 30 Hz-12 kHz, and assuming these are -3 dB limits (unstated, but it appears that way from the chart), this is probably a very hon-

The NX-6 is the tom/snare mic' in the bunch. It looks like the NX-2 on a diet—quite a bit slimmer and a tad shorter. At 21 1/2 oz. I wouldn't plan on clamping these sturdy dynamics to your tom hoops. They'll do best on a stand.

The polar pattern is given as supercardioid, which is useful for keeping cymbals out of tom tracks and hi-hats out of snares. Like its big brother, the response of the NX-6 is





NX-6 NX-2

est assessment.









Quick Looks

Evans EMAD Bass Head And AF Patch

The EMAD System



Evans may be a complete drumhead company, but they certainly seem to spend a lot of time and effort developing special drumhead systems and accessories specifically for bass drums. One of their latest offerings is the EMAD, or Externally Mounted Adjustable Damping bass head.

The basis of the EMAD design is two dampening foam rings (not a new concept) that mount on the outside of the head for convenient access (definitely a new concept). A sleeve attached to the outside of the batter head accepts one of two included 1/2"-thick foam rings. One ring is 1/2" wide, the other is 1 1/2" wide. The clear, single-ply head is 10 mil thick. The theory is that com-

bining the head with one of the two rings allows drummers to fine-tune the focus of the bass-drum attack and pedal response.

Without any damping at all, the head sounds wide open and resonant. With the smaller of the two rings installed, the sound was still deep, open, and full-but warmer and more contained, with a discernible tightening of the tone. When I switched to the larger ring, the sound got tighter and more focused.

When I tried the EMAD setup on an 18" bass drum, I could easily tension the drum up into "jazz range." But when I loosened it and played it full out, the sound was large. like that of a 20" or 22" drum. Yeow! And when I tried the setup on my 20" bass, the sound was huge. I played a concert in a large, resonant hall, and the feel and response were very satisfying, no matter what dynamic level I was playing at.

continued on page 60

non-linear (not that there's anything wrong with that). Gently rising from 60 Hz up to 200 Hz, it's flat from there to 2 kHz, where it rises to a peak at 5 kHz. There is another peak at 10 kHz, after which it rolls off. The response is stated as from 60 Hz to 16 kHz.

The NX-9 is a small-diaphragm electret condenser with a cardioid pattern. Designed for overhead and hi-hat applications, it's the most "normal-looking" of the three mic's. With a metal grill/windscreen at the business end, it looks almost like a slender hand-held mic'. It ships with a nifty sure-grip stand clip, which is a good thing, since the mic' is a bit too thin to fit the ubiquitous "57-style" clip.

If you loosen the little screw that holds the XLR connector into the tailpiece, unscrew the windscreen, and carefully remove the NX-9's innards, you'll see a battery compartment with a battery/phantom switch. Nice: If you need to use this mic' without phantom power, you can just pop in a AA and you're good to go. Just remember to set the switch correctly before putting the mic' back together, since there's no external switch. (This might be a good thing, as the case of the NX-9 is otherwise as "drummer proof" as the NX-2 and NX-6.)

Frequency response is given as from 60 Hz to 20 kHz. The graph shows a fairly linear response through the upper mids. After a little dip at around 6 kHz, the curve gently rises a few dB throughout the last octave (8 kHz-16 kHz), where it levels out before rolling off at 20 kHz.

A feature the NX-9 shares with the NX-2 and NX-6 (besides a rugged metal case) is internal shock-mounting of the capsule. This resulted in very low handling noise compared to some other mic's.

In Use

For this review we used a kit that was set up and miked for a future article (a very nice Bearing Edge wood hoop set. Look for the review next month.) We swapped out one existing mic' at a time for the equivalent JTS

model and listened to the results, both alone and in context with the rest of the kit. This review is by no means a shootout, but the procedure gave us a familiar reference to compare the JTS mic's to.

Let's start with the NX-2, which replaced an AKG D-112 in the lineup. This particular bass drum was in "lively"



NX-9

mode at the time (both heads on, no muffling, no front port). Placed a few inches in front of the front head, the NX-2 gave a clean, present sound. It had slightly better articulation than the D-112 and a bit more midrange ring. The D-112 had more low bass (thump).

Then we switched to a kick that was in "studio" mode (EQ cushion inside, and a port in the front head). First we put the NX-2 in front of the drum, a few inches off the head. Again, it produced a nice, natural tone. And again, it didn't have guite as deep a midrange scoop as the D-112 nor quite the boost in the bottom octave.

Finally, we put the NX-2 inside the drum, looking for a contemporary sound. We got it. With the mic' maybe 6" from the batter head and pointed at the beater, we got a very nice sound that was clean, articulate, and punchy. However getting the boom-mounted NX-2 through the standard 5" diameter offset port was a very tight fit. So be advised if you have a smaller port.

My overall sonic impression of the NX-2 is that it's somewhere between a "flat" mic' and a "pre-equalized" one, having some beneficial contouring built into its response, but not so much that it's a one-trick pony. It's contemporary, yet still useful in a wide range of applications.

Next up was the NX-6, and I have to say that while all three JTS models were good, this was my favorite of the bunch. We warmed it up on a snare drum, replacing (you guessed it) a Shure SM-57. The NX-6 was in the same ballpark, although with a tad more clarity on top. The response peaks at 5 kHz and 10 kHz happen to correspond to stick attack and snare wires (respectively). The result—whether by design or serendipity—is a mic' with very good articulation when used on a snare drum (especially for a dynamic). Additionally, it handled slamming levels with aplomb, and it exhibited very low handling noise. Well done.

On toms the NX-6 took over duties from the Sennheiser MD-504 (a.k.a. the e604). On a small tom the two small dynamics sounded pretty similar, with the JTS model perhaps having a bit more clarity in the upper mids—a slightly "wood-

ier" tone, in a good way. The 504 was a hair beefier on the bottom, but it was close. I'd say the NX-6 was more like the 504 than it was like the 57. Very nice in this application.

On a large tom the results were similar to the above. But here it was more apparent that the 504 is slightly fatter on the bottom while the NX-6 has slightly better transients. Again, a nice, realistic, present sound.

I thought it was unrealistic (and unfair) to compare the NX-9 to a studio condenser that retails for ten times its price, so I ran it next to a similar small-diaphragm cardioid electret condenser with which I'm very familiar, the Audio-Technica ATM33R.

Hanging over the drumset, the NX-9 gave a clean, clear, and fairly realistic representation of the kit. Though less bright than the A-T, it sounded more natural. It didn't have the "tizzyness" on top that the A-T (and many other inexpensive electrets) can sometimes fall prey to. This quality also came in handy on hi-hats, where the NX-9 sounded

clean but not harsh. Typical of this type of mic', it didn't exhibit a big, warm bottom end (but it wasn't objectionably thin, either).

Overall the NX-9 seemed well suited to its primary task: overhead miking on a drumset. It gets an additional thumbsup for the battery option. And taking into account its very reasonable price, the NX-9 seems like guite a value.

Conclusions

The JTS NX-series are "performance" mic's, meaning their target market is primarily drummers themselves rather than recording engineers. Judging from their solid performance in a recording environment (which is much more revealing of any potential flaws than a live venue), I wouldn't hesitate to use them in any live miking situation, where their rugged construction will be a bonus.

Once considered "wannabetas" in their earlier incarnation, these mic's now have a look and sound all their own. They should definitely be considered by drummers looking for good sonic performance at quite reasonable

20 (800) 475-7686, www.shsaudio.com.

THE NUMBERS

Application: Type: Pattern: Freq. Response: Impedance: Powering:

Size: Weight: Finish:

List Price:

NX-2 Kick Dynamic Cardioid 30 Hz-12 kHz 600 ohm N/A

3x5 (plus mount) 29 oz. Metallic enamel (light blue) \$199

Tom/Snare Dynamic Supercardioid 60 Hz-16 kHz 600 ohm N/A

1 3/4 x 4 1/2 (plus mount) 21 1/2 oz. Metallic enamel (light blue) \$159

NX-9 OH/Cymbals Condenser Cardioid 60 Hz-20 kHz 270 ohm

Phantom or AA battery 1 1/2 x 7 1/2 8 oz.

Metallic enamel (light blue) \$149

Quick Looks Continued from page 58

My wife got to try the 20" head on a gig with her single-headed Remo Legero bass drum. Loud or soft, the sound was there, along with the control.

The EMAD system simply makes drums sound bigger and fuller. Naturally this would have great application in a studio environment, giving the player more control of the sound. In terms of playing feel, the smaller ring gave a slightly better pedal response, but I would have no qualms with switching to the larger one if the job demanded it.

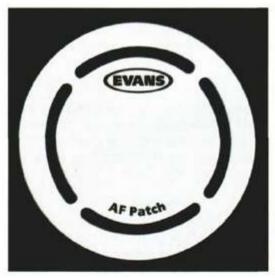
Evans was recently honored when the EMAD bass drum head was chosen as Best Drumhead Product of 2000/2001 at the annual Musikmesse International Press Awards. That was the consensus of thirtyone music magazines from around the world. I would have to say that I concur with them. Heads are available in 18", 20", 22", and 24" sizes, ranging from \$60 to \$70 in price.

The AF Patch

Another new product in the Evans line is an impact pad that they've dubbed the AF Patch. Made from Aramid fiber (which is used in bulletproof vests), its inherent ruggedness promises to provide lots of protection against the beater. The patch attaches permanently to the head (so be certain when you apply it!) and is designed to focus the attack without affecting head resonance.

The center of the patch is solid, while four radial slits around the perimeter allow the head to vibrate freely. Evans learned this technolo-

gy while developing their Power Center snare heads and Tri-Center conga heads. The patches come in sets of two. You need to apply them both for double pedals. (According to Evans brand manager Michael Robinson, a



double-sized patch would choke the head.) The two-patch package lists for \$12.

m (516)439-3300, 41 www.evansdrumheads.com. Chap Ostrander











Pacific Chameleon Drumkit

Now You Hear It...Now You Don't

quick convertibility from acoustic kit to quiet practice kit

compact size for portability

MISSES supplied silencer pad for snare drum offers poor response

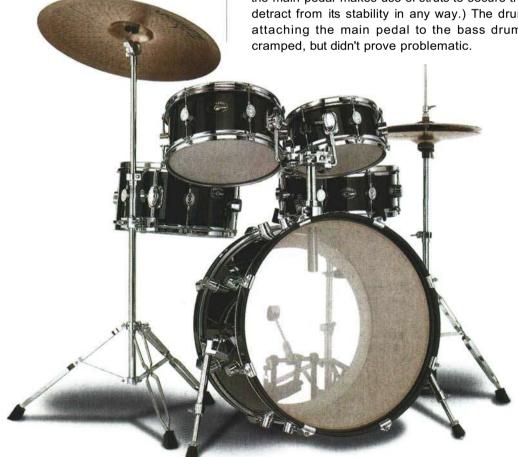
by Martin Patmos

acific's new Chameleon set is a nice-sounding, ultra-compact acoustic kit that can easily be converted into a virtually silent practice set. Intended as a beginner kit or a second setup, it's just the thing for gigs in small spaces, or for anyone with the itch to practice at two in the morning.

Simple, Sturdy, Hip

Setting up the Chameleon is fast and easy, thanks to well-designed yet simple hardware. Our test kit included a convertible straight/boom cymbal stand, a snare stand, a bass drum tom mount, a single tom clamp, a hi-hat, and a double bass pedal. This configuration includes a couple of upgrades; normally only a single pedal and a straight cymbal stand are included with the kit. The hardware comes from Pacific's 700 series, which features double-braced legs, telescoping tubes, and insulated clamps—all lightweight, functional, and sturdy. The snare stand has a large wingscrew on the cast basket tilter for easy access, while ball-andsocket L-arm tom mounts allow for easy positioning of all the toms.

A direct-pull chain linkage and drumkey tension adjustment give the hi-hat a comfortable feel, while a rotating tripod enables convenient positioning. Single-chain drives with offset cams operate the DP402 bass pedals, which include adjustable spring tension for each of the felt/plastic reversible beaters. The slave pedal is mounted on a baseplate, while the main pedal makes use of struts to secure the footboard. (This doesn't detract from its stability in any way.) The drumkey-operated clamp for attaching the main pedal to the bass drum hoop does seem a bit cramped, but didn't prove problematic.



Due to the shallow depth of the drums, tension rods are received in both sides of the oval-shaped lugs on all the toms, as you often find on snare drums. This creates a clean appearance. The toms themselves are mounted directly, as opposed to using a suspension mounting system as other Pacific drums do. The unobtrusive mount is vertically centered on the side of each tom, which is crucial for switching the Chameleon around. Only the bass drum, with its relatively greater depth, has a more standard lug arrangement.

I found the hardware refreshing in its minimalism. It's well designed, well built, and easy to set up, position, and play. Combined with the black covering and compact size of the drums, this all adds up to an inviting and hip-looking little kit.

To Sound...

Single-ply batter heads with a ring of coating around their edges are fitted on the bass drum and all the toms. Mesh heads are fitted on the other sides, where resonant heads would normally be. These two head types are what provide the sound-or-silence options offered by the Chameleon drumkit.

The batter heads tune up nicely, with their ring-y overtones controlled by the coating around the edge. Dynamics are good, and the drums project quite well given the shorter depth of their shells. While one might expect the lack of a resonant head to create a "flat" tonality, in reality these drums sound warm and open. The mesh heads provide just enough of an air cushion to avoid the flat response that can be a pitfall to playing such setups. Thus you get a classic sound without the technical hang-up. Note that the bass drum is equally open here, and a pillow might be desired for more of a "thump."

The snare drum sound is crisp and lively, and the coated batter comes printed with a number sequence showing the order that the lugs should be tightened when fitting the head.

...Or Not To Sound

It's two in the morning. You live between a nursing home and a convent, with a baby upstairs—and you feel like practicing. No problem. By simply turning the bass drum around, flipping the toms over, and placing the included rubber silencer pad on the snare drum, you can transform the Chameleon into a virtually silent drumset. And while this operation may sound like a project, it actually takes only five minutes. When you're finished, all you'll hear is a tap from the snare pad, while the mesh heads on the bass drum and toms make a quiet little "doiing." And the cool thing is that since the mesh heads are real drumheads, that "doiing" is pitched, so your melodic Max Roach-style solo isn't hampered.

Like all things, playing in stealth mode has its pluses and minuses. The obvious benefit here is the ability to practice quietly on the same kit you might play live on. The mesh heads are a great innovation, whether used to achieve a single-headed drum sound or for quiet practicing. But they do have a slightly springy response not found in a normal

batter head. This isn't a huge problem—just something that takes a little adjusting to.

The snare pad, however, is another story. I thought it performed surprisingly poorly, with practically no stick response whatsoever. This extreme difference in playing feel made playing "across the set" awkward and unrealistic. When I replaced the Pacific snare pad with a Sound-Off pad (from HQ Percussion), playing across the kit became more comfortable. Using Sound-Off pads on the toms (when not flipping them over) results in a louder sound than playing the mesh heads, but is an option for those not interested in moving things around. As for silencing cymbals, pads are available separately from Pacific (but not reviewed here).

The Chameleon's silent alter ego makes it a great option for a practice kit, despite the snare pad. But I do encourage Pacific to look into a better pad. It would make the Chameleon all the more valuable.

Extra! Extra!

Given that the Chameleon is aimed at the entry-level market. Pacific has kindly included a pair of Vic Firth sticks and a drumkey. Also included is the Pacific Drum video, which covers basic drumkit setup, tuning, and playing techniques. (Due to the unique nature of the Chameleon kit, though, some parts of the video are irrelevant.) A throne is available as an option; otherwise, everything you need (short of cymbals) is here.

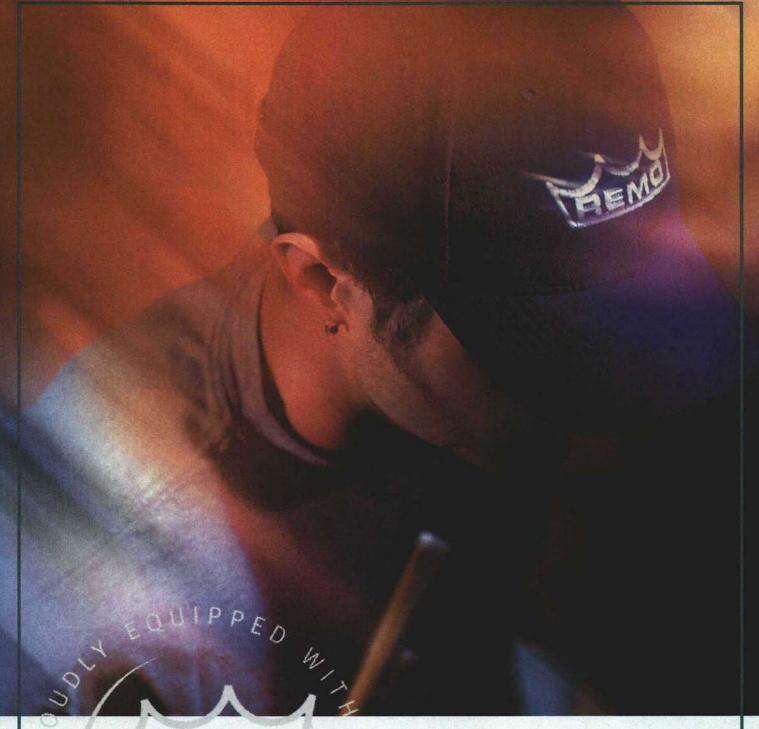
So How About A New Pet?

In the end, Pacific's Chameleon drumkit is a unique contender in the entry-level market, offering two instantly interchangeable kits in one. It would make an intriguing choice as a first kit for beginning drummers, offering good quality, the chance to get your feet wet, and the option of playing past everyone's bed-time. Yet with its quick setup and small size, it could also make a great second set for a more experienced player. The only dilemma might be deciding whether it's the one to bring to that cramped little club gig, or the one to leave set up at home. With good sound, quick convertability to a silent kit, compact size, a nice hardware package, and a hip look, the Chameleon has a lot to recommend it.

(805)485-6999. ** www.dwdrums.com.

THE NUMBERS Configuration: 12x20 bass drum, 5x13 snare drum, and 5x10, 6x12, and 7x14 toms Shells: 4-ply maple and select hardwood Hardware: Standard package includes Pacific 700 series snare stand, single bass drum pedal, hi-hat, bass drum tom mount, and single tom accessory clamp. Heads: single-ply coated/clear batter heads on all drums; mesh heads on bottoms of toms and front of bass drum Finish: black plastic covering List price: \$749





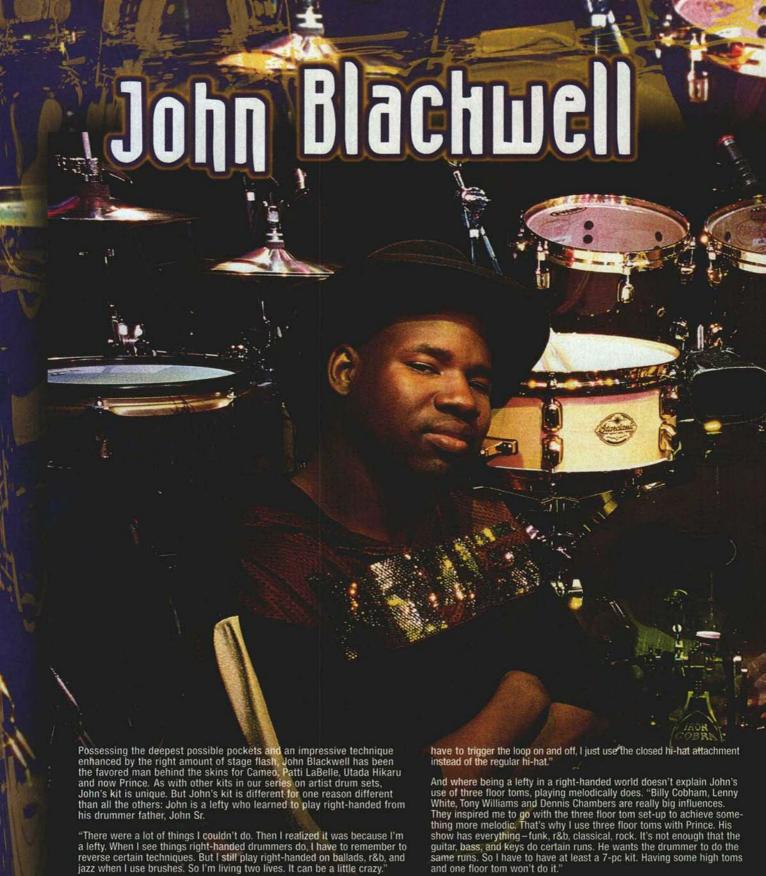
HOW DID WE GET ON TOP?

ASK THE PEOPLE WHO PUT US THERE.

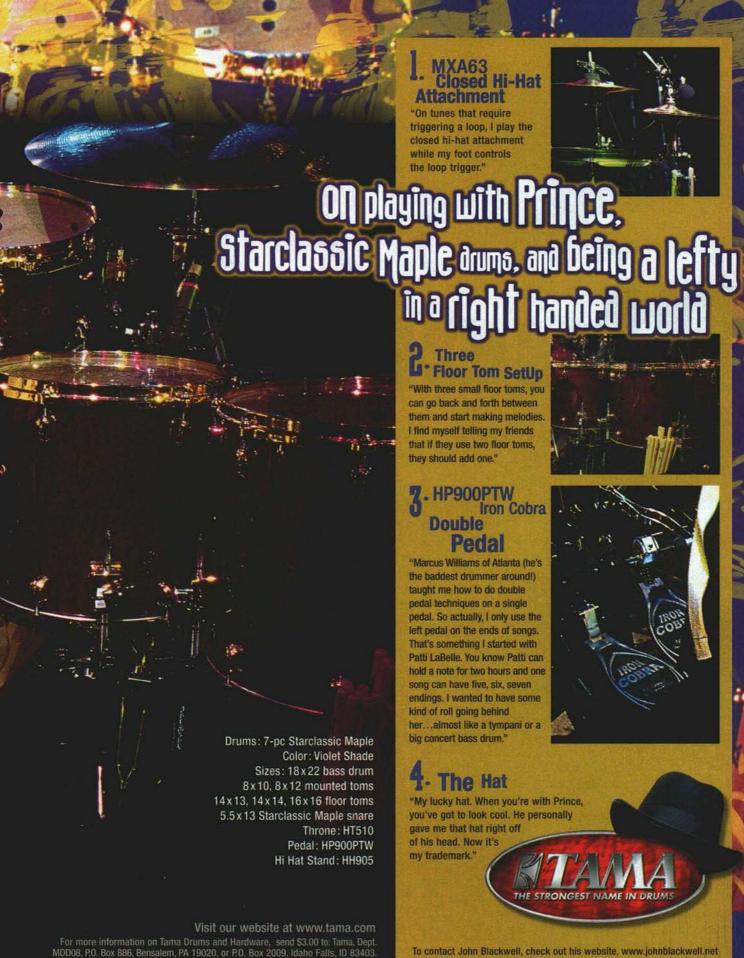
The top names in drum manufacturing have one thing in common—Remo. And they are not alone. Remo currently supplies drumheads to drum makers worldwide. Remo is the recognized leader in drumheads, supplying the most diverse, innovative, and technically superior products available on a global level. But don't take our word for it, ask the people who know Remo best: Adams, Arbiter, Ayotte, Brady, Canopus, Drum Workshop, Dynasty, Fibes, Gretsch, Grover, Latin Percussion, Lefima, Mapex, Orange County Percussion, Peace Musical, Pearl, Pork Pie, Premier, Rhythm Tech, Roland, Sleishman, Sonor, Tay-e, Toca, Van Der Glas, Yamaha.

So when you buy new equipment, don't just settle for anything, insist on the original equipment—Remo.





Being left-handed explains the placement of the closed hi-hat attachment on the left side of John's kit (next to his regular hi-hat) rather than the usual southpaw, right side placement. Another reason is his current gig with Prince. "Sometimes I have to play with a loop. I have to keep playing while I hi-hat pedal wrong to trigger pedal, which is next to the hi-hat pedal wrong to trigger the loop, I can end up playing on the open hi-hats and getting all these unwanted open hi-hat tones. Now when I



To contact John Blackwell, check out his website, www.johnblackwell.net



Story by Billy Amendola • Photos by Alex Solca

ohn Blackwell always listened to his dad's advice, and it's paid off, big time. "Growing up, my dad used to tell me, 'If you want to make any money in this business, play in the pocket."

Those were words of wisdom from John Blackwell Sr., who himself was nicknamed "Pocket Man" by some of the R&B acts he played with in his hometown in South Carolina, "Back when I was growing up," recalls John Sr., "money was tight. I taught myself to drum by playing on boxes until I could afford a real drumset. Eventually I had my own group, The Mellowtones, and from time to time I would sit in on gigs with The Drifters, Joe Simon, J.J. Jackson, and Mary Wells. [After John Jr. was born] I would have the drums set up in the living room and he would sit for hours watching and listening to me play."

"My dad always was and still is my main influence," says John Jr. Besides

playing and listening to his dad's R&B and funk records, in his teenage years John took an interest in jazz. "My mind was downloading all of the information like a computer," he says. "But my brain didn't really comprehend it yet. I heard it, but I wasn't ready to understand it until I started studying at Berklee. There I got into Billy Cobham, Art Blakey, Elvin Jones, and Philly Joe Jones, And I loved Tony Williams, from Miles to Lifetime. Tony was very melodic with the drums."

Soon after graduating from Berklee College of Music, John landed his first "big time" R&B gig with Larry Blackmon and Cameo. "My dad used to take me to every concert that came through our hometown

in South Carolina," John says.
"And Cameo was one of those groups."

After three years on the road with Cameo, John's next gig was touring with Patti LaBelle. It was on Patti's tour that John would meet bassist Larry Graham and

the legend himself. Prince. That meeting would eventually change John's career and life forever.

Obviously John Blackwell Sr. is very proud of what his son has accomplished. We here at *MD* are also proud. We first wrote about John back in August of 1998, when we featured the then-unknown drummer in our *Diamonds In The Ruffarticle*. We had a feeling that this talented young player would make a mark on the drumming world—but we had no idea he'd do it so soon!

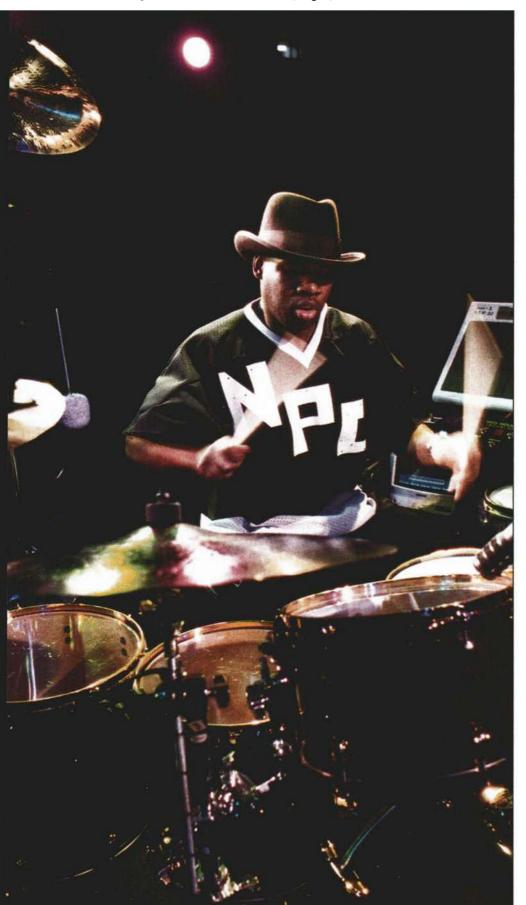


John Jr. and John Sr. relaxing in Las Vegas



MD: How did you hook up with Prince? **John:** Prince and Larry Graham, who's been working with Prince, came out to a few shows back when I was with Patti LaBelle. One night after the show Prince

came up to me and said, "My God, you're unbelievable. I'll see you soon." I thought to myself, how's he going to see me soon? He doesn't even have my number. [laughs]



I stayed in touch with Larry, and Prince, well, he knew where to find me. He approached me when he felt it was time. One night after Patti's show at New York's Madison Square Garden, he came up to me and asked if I would come to Minneapolis to jam with him and Larry. At first he flew me out to jam for a day, and then two days. Over time, it would turn into a week. I was honored not only to be jamming with Prince, but with Larry Graham too. I was in heaven.

I grew up on Sly & The Family Stone and Graham Central Station. To me, Larry invented funk. He's the groove master. But playing with those two guys, you learn the true meaning of funk. It leaves me speechless; sometimes I can't believe it.

MD: When you were "auditioning" for Prince and Larry, were you still on tour with Patti?

John: Yeah, but that tour was about to end. And it was right before I was committed to start a short one-month tour with Hikaru Utada, Japan's number-one pop star. Prince waited until that tour ended and then we got together again. I officially signed with Prince on September 2, 2000.

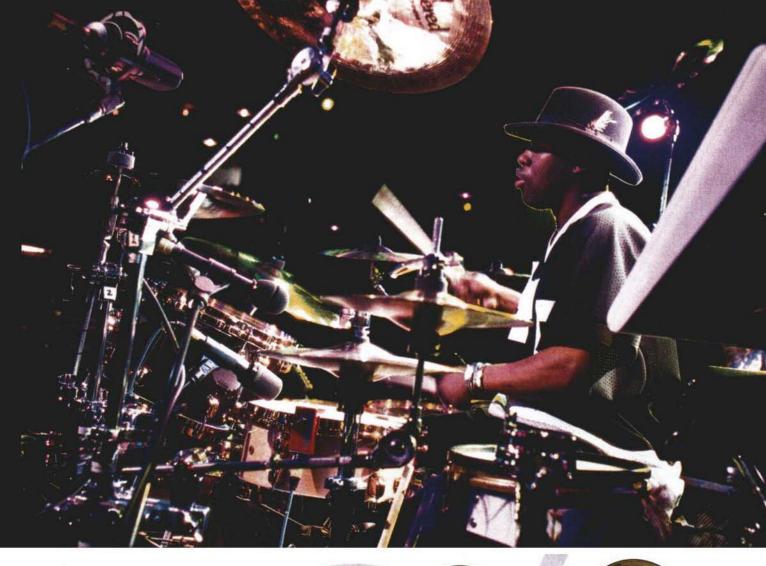
MD: Tony Royster Jr. was also on that Utada gig. How did that work out?

John: It was fun playing with Tony. Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis were producing Hikaru, and Jimmy Jam had seen Tony on the Grammys and thought we would be good together. Tony is amazing. A great kid, too.

MD: Let's go back to when you first started playing.

John: I was three years old when I sat down to play my first beat, "Brickhouse" by The Commodores. My dad had a stack of records that he would play to, and he would play that record *all* the time. I would sit and listen to my dad play in our living room. I would watch his hands and feet and try to pick up everything I could. After he would finish practicing he'd leave and let me discover things for myself.

Another way my dad taught me was by taking me to concerts. I saw Cameo in 1980. Larry Blackmon was playing drums. In 1982 on the *Alligator Woman* tour, Jonathan "Sugarfoot" Moffett was playing drums. I also saw Patti LaBelle in



Blackwell's Magic Kit

Drums: Tama Starclassic in custom violet shade (clear) finish

- A. 5 1/2x13 snare (or, occasionally, a 6x13 Innovation snare)
- **B.** 8x10 tom
- **C.** 8x12 tom
- **D.** 13x13 floor tom (custom, with legs)
- E. 14x14 floor tom
- F. 16x16 floor tom
- G. 18x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Sabian

- 1. 12" AA Mini-Hats
- 2. 16" HH Custom China
- 3. 17" AAXplosion crash
- 4. LP cowbell
- 5. 21" HH Raw Bell ride
- 6. 18" HH Sound Control crash
- 7. 18" HH China (prototype)

Hardware: All Tama, including an Iron Cobra Lever Glide hi-hat stand, an Iron Cobra single pedal (very tight spring tension), and Stilt boom cymbal stands

Heads: Evans coated Power Center on snare batter, G2s on tops of toms with G1s on bottoms, EQ4 on bass drum batter with single-ply head on front (with EQ bass drum pad for muffling)

Sticks: Vater 8A hickory model with

wood tip

Electronics: Roland V-Drum pads

Microphones: Audix



the early '80s when she was opening for The Commodores. Those were the first concerts I ever went to. I would watch the drummers up on the riser, playing to thousands of people, and I'd be like, Wow! This is what I want to do. After the show my dad would take me backstage to meet some of the drummers.

MD: So by the time you attended high school, you had some pretty good experience under your belt.

John: I'll tell you a story about high school that changed my life forever. It still has an effect on me to this day. In the eleventh grade I was in the marching band. We were called The Posse. We had a rival thing going with all the schools, kind of like a battle of the marching bands. And I thought I was bad. I had this shirt made up that said "The Greatest Drummer Alive." I would wear it everywhere. As soon as my mom would wash it, I'd put it back on. I would walk up to

people and say, "Read my shirt. What's it say? That's right." [laughs] I was very cocky and getting on everyone's nerves at this point.

One day my dad got really mad at me and told me, "No one is the best, there's always somebody better." But I wouldn't hear of it. Then one day one of my really good friends from church, Ray Jackson, said to me in front of a whole bunch of people, "Take that shirt off, enough already. You're not the greatest drummer. I'm better than you are." I was like, What? Now, I knew this guy forever. I didn't know he could play. So we challenged each other to a drum-off at my house after school. Everyone came to watch, and I sat down and did my thing. Then Ray sat down and tore the room apart. He left me with my mouth open. I was humiliated in front of all my friends. Here was this laidback, quiet guy, who never bragged. Well, he really put me in my place.

I'm glad I had that experience at a young age, because to go through it now would be really bad. It taught me a valuable lesson. It taught me to be humble.

MD: Were you playing in any other bands at school, or just marching band?

John: I was also playing in the high school jazz band. The director was Willie Niles. I was also playing with another teacher, Robert Newton, in clubs on the weekends. Robert had a band called Robert Newton & Lotus Feet. Robert was an experienced player, so people would come out to see him perform. This is where I got my stage performance experience. I learned a lot from Robert. I was studying with him five days a week in school and playing with his band on the weekends. I was fifteen at the time. That was my gig until I graduated at seventeen.

MD: After high school, you attended Berklee. How was that?

John: It was a good thing I had the Ray



Make the Move.

[John Blackwell did]

"Hitting as hard as I hit and playing as long as I play, I never thought I could start and end a show with the same pair of sticks. Vater made that possible."

John Blackwell, the sound, funk and fury behind Prince and the New Power Generation, is a spectacle for the eyes and ears. Blackwell's slamming tight grooves, poppin snare and furiously flamboyant drumstick twirling and cross-arm strokes must be seen to be believed.

John Blackwell's stick of choice? The Vater 8A. The 8A, .555" in diameter and 16" in length, is delicate enough for closed hi-hat flurries, yet capable of delivering power and punch across the drumkit. 8A features a small barrel-shaped bead for highly defined cymbal tones and a distinctive profile for superb balance and feel.

Finesse and Soul.

John Blackwell and Vater.

Power for the New Generation of Drummers.



John Blackwell
PRINCE AND THE NEW
POWER GENERATION

JOHN PLAYS THE VATER 8A

VATER PERCUSSION 270 CENTRE STREET, HOLBROOK MA 02343 FOR A DEALER NEAREST YOU CALL 781.767.1877 ALL VATER STICKS ARE TONE MATCHED BY COMPUTER ANALYSIS

John Blackwell

Jackson experience, because after my first day at Berklee I wanted to go home. [laughs] The first day there I went to this club called Wally's. I thought, Okay, I'm in Boston, time to blow this place down. So I see this guy setting up, and I go up to him and introduce myself, "I'm John Blackwell and I play drums." He's like, "Yeah, okay. I'm John too. They call me Lil' John [Roberts]. You're welcome to sit in later if you'd like."

So I'm watching him play and he's

swinging, doing his thing, and he's pacing himself. Then like any good jazz drummer, he starts putting everything in the right place, making everything feel good. Now I'm sitting there with my mouth open. I was speechless. I did sit in that night, but compared to Lil' John-forget it. I called home and told my mom I wanted to come home. [laughs]

MD: Was this when you became serious about becoming a jazz drummer?

John: In high school I was into it, but I

couldn't get it—till I got to Berklee. That's when I studied the roots, why certain drummers did what they did. It takes a good amount of studying jazz to really understand it. Otherwise you hear, "Well, he's a funk drummer playing jazz" or "He's a good rock drummer playing jazz." I wanted to study and do what a jazz drummer was supposed to do. I wanted to learn the real deal, one hundred percent. I learned it at Berklee.

MD: Do you think a player can be too schooled?

John: I hear what you're saying, because I hate to say it, but most true jazz musicians are not schooled or have any formal training. I was taken aback once when someone said to me, "John, you don't play like you're from Berklee." But for me Berklee was a good experience. The greatest compliment is when other jazz musicians would say to me, "You play like a jazz drummer, not a funk drummer who plays jazz."

MD: How would you describe your playing

John: I think it's a combination of all the drummers I've admired over the years: my dad—of course—Prince, Morris Day, Jonathan Moffett, Larry Blackmon, Lil' John Roberts, Yogi Horton, Tony Williams, Billy Cobham, Dennis Chambers, Ricky Lawson, Sonny Emory, Vinnie Colaiuta, Gerry Brown, Sheila E, and Zoro.

When I was studying with this teacher from Atlanta named Marcus Williams, he would tell me, "Don't try to play like me. Take what you can from me, but make it you. Play from your heart. Don't copy."

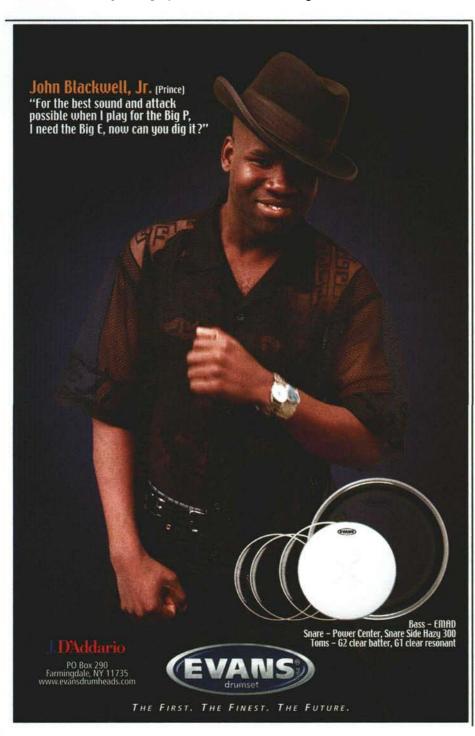
You can never really get the same feel as someone else anyway. You can try to copy Dennis or Tony note for note, but when you play, it comes from your heart. It's your feeling.

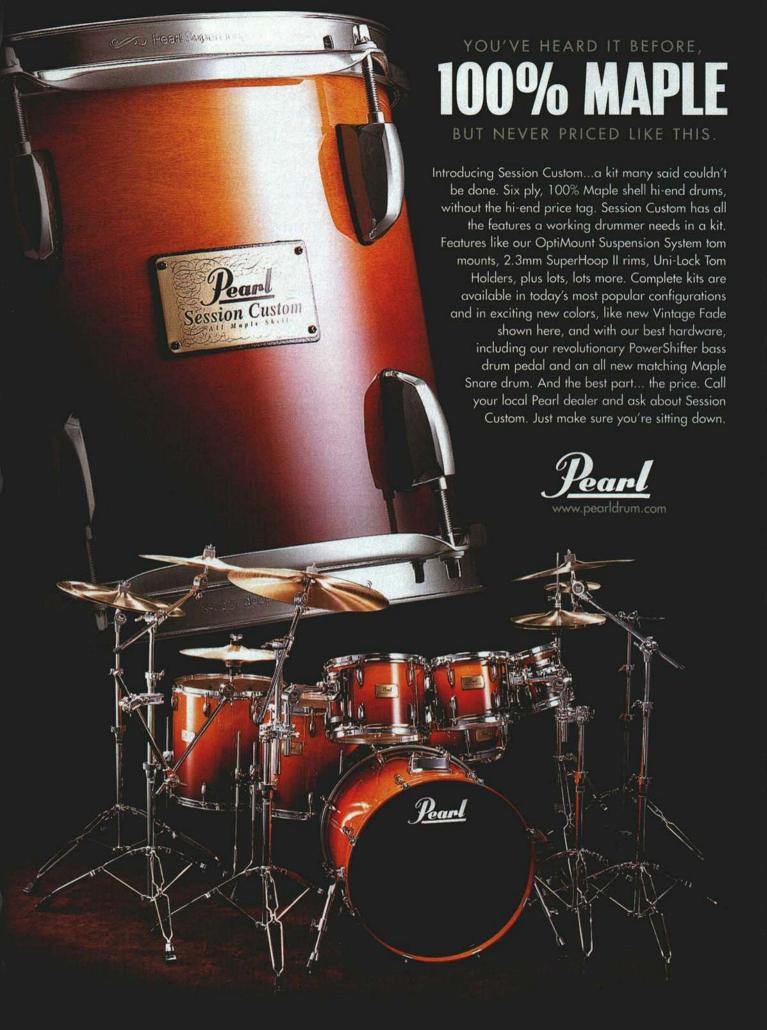
MD: You're a very visual player. How did you get into stick twirling?

John: Stick twirling was taught to me back in high school—back to the competition thing. If you couldn't twirl the sticks, you couldn't be in marching band. We used a lot of showmanship. It was a big part of the whole thing. The drummers would have battles, and we had dance steps to go with it. The show was as important as what we were playing.

After high school I let my imagination run with the showmanship stuff. I took some of that, and I took a lot from studying mar-

continued on page 82





Prince Talks Drums

Prince, The Symbol, The Artist Formerly Known As Prince, The Artist...whatever he wants to be called, Prince is a multi-talented superstar. He is truly one of the most groundbreaking artists of the last hundred years. And not because he's sold millions of records, won a few Grammys, or starred in a hit movie (which won him an Oscar for Purple Rain's soundtrack). It's because he's a serious musician.

Most people don't realize that, along with being a gifted songwriter, vocalist, guitarist, and keyboardist, Prince is also a fine drummer. Did you know that he programs the drum parts, as well as plays drums—or combines the two—on most of his recordings? Well, we were thrilled to get Prince's thoughts on our favorite topic.

MD: When did you first start playing drums?

Prince: I was twelve years old when I first started playing drums. I learned on a big box of newspapers. I kicked the box 2 imitate the bass drum and played the flaps 2 imitate the hi-hat and snare.

MD: What makes you decide whether to program drums or play them live?

Prince: My impatience usually dictates that decision. Whichever the engineer plugs in first.

MD: If you do decide on live drums, what makes you decide to play them yourself or bring in another drummer?

Prince: Basically the same answer as the question before, although when John [Blackwell] is in town, he always gets the call.

MD: Do you think being a songwriter has helped you as a drummer?

Prince: Yes, absolutely.

MD: How about as far as being a multi-instrumentalist?

Prince: Yes, being a multi-instrumentalist, I tend not 2 b greedy on the drums, not wanting to overshadow the other colors on the track. One of the things I'm trying 2 teach John is 2 hear the finished production in his head while he's recording it. This technique allows him 2 play the right thing at the right time.

MD: Do you think being a drummer has helped you as a songwriter?

Prince: No. One of the misconceptions about modern music is that a funky beat alone constitutes a song.

MD: How do you like to record your drum tracks?

Prince: That's a trade secret; I can't give up that information.

MD: What makes a drummer funky?

Prince: One's complete understanding of James Brown.

MD: What was your first impression of John Blackwell the first time you saw him play?

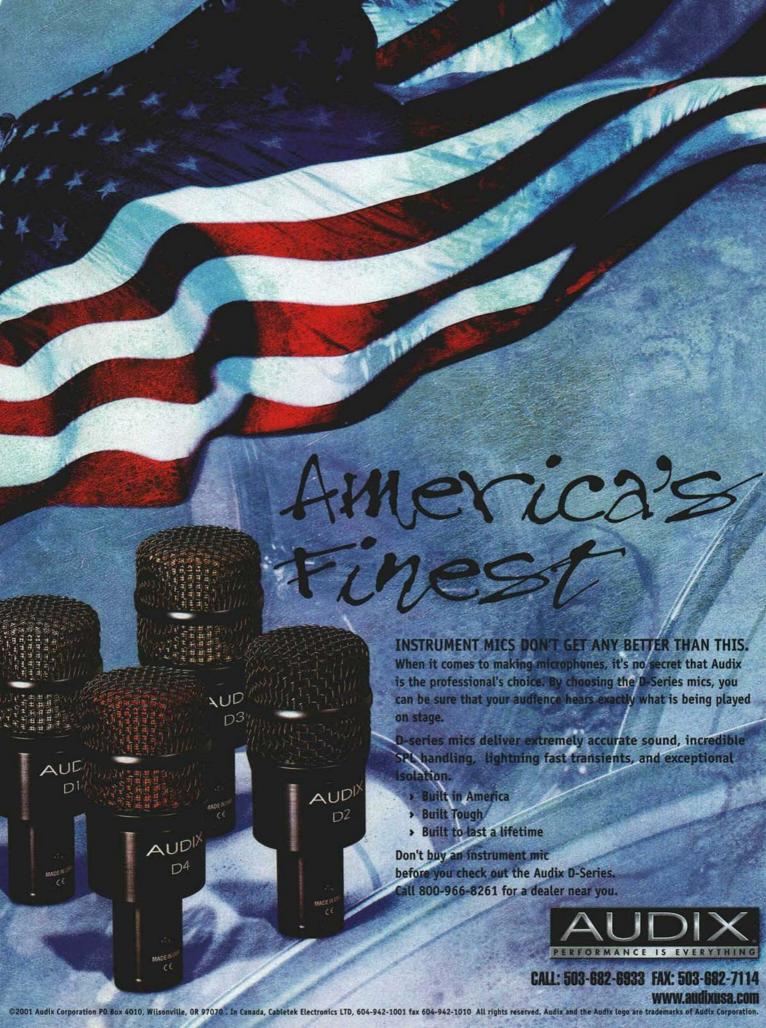
Prince: That he was in desperate need of a tailor! Second impression: that people will remember his name 'til times indefinite.

MD: What makes John unique?

Prince: His ability 2 take direction without a demanding ego. His understanding of money. (He plays 4 the love of the art, so he'll end up the richest of all!) His respect 4 the drum's history. And he doesn't break the drum stools we buy him!

For more info on Prince, surf to his Web site:





Nasty Tracks

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

Artist Album

Prince The Rainbow Children

Nasty Cameo

Love Jones (soundtrack) Dionne Farris Patti LaBelle Live One Night Only Hikaru Utada Bohemian Summer 2000

Hikaru Utada Distance

And these are the ones he listens to for inspiration

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Prince

The Time **Tony Williams** Cameo Cameo P-Funk All Stars

Billy Cobham & George Duke

Album

Art Blakey Is Jazz Revolution Of The Mind

anything

What Time Is It? Lifetime: The Collection Alligator Woman She's Strange

Live At The Beverly Theatre Live In Europe '76

Drummer

Art Blakey Jabo Starks

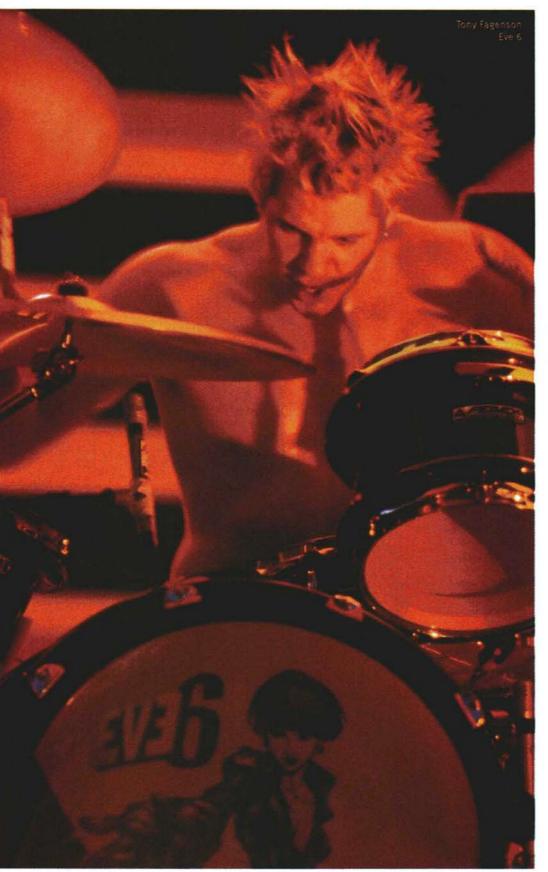
Prince, Michael Bland, Sheila E,

Kirk Johnson, Bobby Z

Morris Day **Tony Williams** Larry Blackmon Larry Blackmon **Dennis Chambers** Billy Cobham



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Playing Live With Prince & NPG

The reviews for Prince's *Hit & Run tour have* been pouring in, and everyone is raving about the new kid on the block playing drums. Some of the feedback for John Blackwell states, "He's the most amazing drummer playing today," Another said, "The brother could have had a show of his own. His playing those drums and Prince singing those lyrics just mesmerized me." It goes on, "Mr. Blackwell was awesome! He's a cool addition to the band. Flamboyant and talented." *Rolling Stone* magazine's Paul Robicheau said, "Drummer John Blackwell was the standout as a thrashing groove merchant who came off like a brash cross between Neil Peart and the late Tony Williams, especially with his stick-twirling, cross-arm strokes."

MD: Does Prince dig the stick twirling?

John: Oh yeah! When he first saw me he said, "You have to do that live. I have to display you doing that." It's part of the reason I got the job. [laughs]

MD: What are some of your favorite songs to play on this tour?

John: "Little Red Corvette" is one of my favorites. "Housequake," "Darling Nikki," "Controversy," and "Purple Rain" are also favorites. The ballad section is great, all the slow ones wrapped into one medley—"Do Me Baby," "Scandalous," "Diamonds And Pearls," "The Beautiful Ones," and "Nothing Compares 2 U." Of the new material, I like "The Work Pt. 1." I'm proud to say that I played on the recording of that. It has a James Brown feel to it. And live, the people really respond to it. It has a positive statement, and by the second chorus all the fans start singing along. [John sings] "Willing to do the work. Willing to do the work." That, and the Jabo/Clyde feel on the drums...it's like, Wooahhh! Another favorite of mine that's new is "U Make My Sunshine." Basically, I'm diggin' the whole show.

MD: Are the arrangements close to the original recordings?

John: Mostly everything in the show is played close to the record. Prince does give me the freedom to add a little of myself, but we try to stay close to the original.

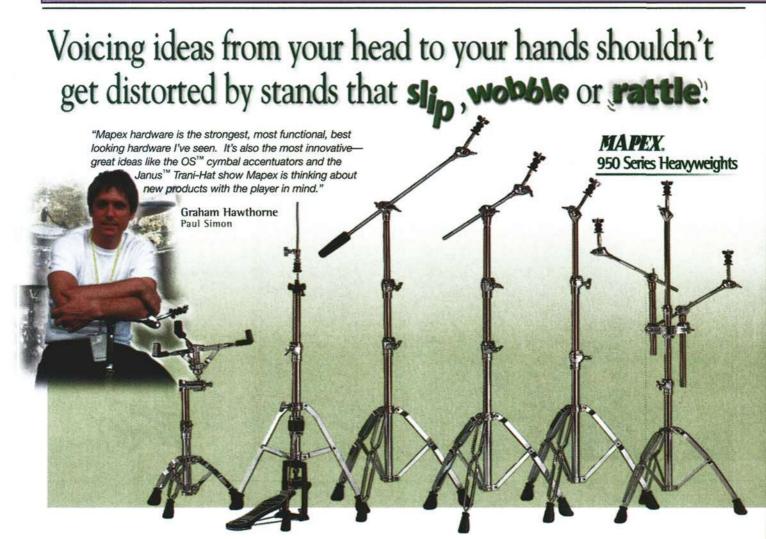
MD: That has to be challenging, because there's a lot of programming and drum machines on some of those early records.

John: On "Let's Go Crazy," I'm playing on top of the program, because some of the songs just don't sound right without the original parts Prince programmed. On "Let's Go Crazy," I'm playing on top of the drum track on the first half, and on the second half when Prince does his bluesy guitar solo, it's all live drums. I'm also playing on top of the machine on "Kiss."

MD: Are you controlling the sequencers?

John: Yes. I have a pedal to the left of my hi-hat. Morris Hayes [keyboards] did all of the live programming and samples. I use the pedal to start and stop everything. Every time I hit it, it has to hit on the 1, no matter what If I'm doing acoustic fills or whatever, when it comes time to kick back in, I have to hit it on the 1. Some machines will stop wherever you stop it, and when you start it up again, it starts from where you stopped it. This computer takes it back to the 1. MD: That can be tricky.

John: It can be, but once you get used to it, it's pretty easy. When I first came out to jam with Prince, Takumi [Prince's road manager and assistant] would show me how to work it. He'd say, "This button turns the loops on. This button turns on the claps." I was like, "Why do I have to know this? Aren't we just jamming?" [laughs] Takumi said, "Prince wants you to play around and



get used to it." So every time I went out to Paisley Park to jam with Prince, they would show me how to use it.

MD: That had to be fun.

John: Oh yeah. [laughs] The only time it gave me a problem was when I did a solo. Sometimes I like to take my foot off the hi-hat pedal, but then my foot would land on the trigger pedal. All of a sudden you'd hear "crash—bing—boom-boom—bing," all this stuff going off, and I'm like, Oh no! And Prince would look over at me like, Oh, that's funny. [laughs]

MD: Are you using floor wedges or in-ear monitors?

John: This tour I've been using floor monitors. Last tour I used the in-ear ones. I may go back, but so far the floor monitors have been working out well.

MD: What do you like to hear in your mix?

John: Bass guitar is mandatory. I always have the samples and whatever's programmed. I always need a lot of Prince's vocals, because at any moment he might say, "Everybody stop on the 1." Or he may go into another song at the drop of a hat. And Prince's guitar is a key factor. When he plays, I have to feel him.

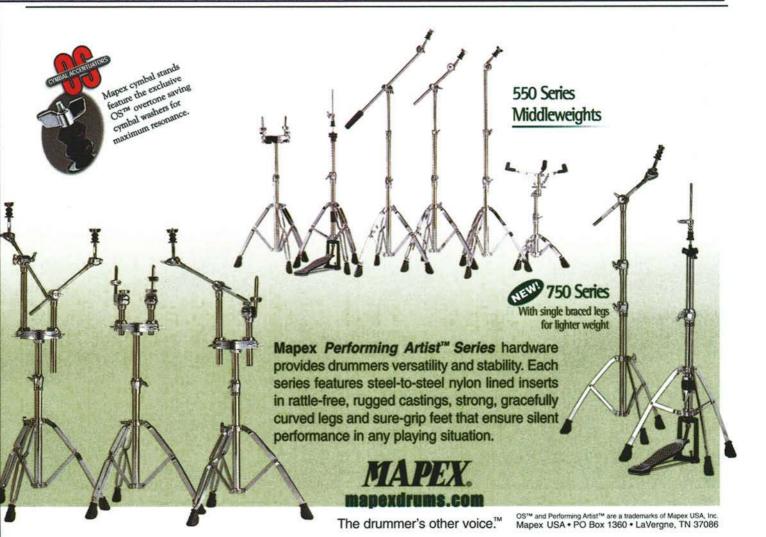
MD: What about the mix drum-wise?

John: I need a little bit of kick drum and some toms. I usually leave the hi-hat out and the overhead cymbals very low. I can hear all that over the kit. My favorite is when my tom-toms are singing through my monitors. There's nothing like hearing that sound to give you the feel.

MD: Is it hard staying fresh every night?

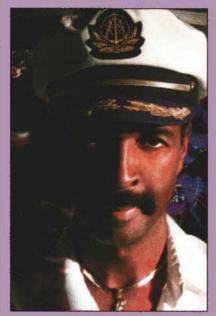
John: It's easy for me. I love what I do. I love this music. Larry Blockmon taught me years ago, "Play every show like it's your first, 'cause it may get old to you, but remember it's the first time for the audience." But I love it. It never gets old for me.





Larry Graham Groove Master

Don't be surprised if you look up the word "funk" in the dictionary and find a picture of Larry Graham. Larry is one of the original funk-masters, his bass playing



was an important element in the sound of the legendary Sly & The Family Stone. With Sly, Larry pumped out grooves like never before on such classic hits as "I Want To Take You Higher," "Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Again)," and "Dance To The Music."

Besides Larry's innovative bass playing, in 1980, while fronting his own band, Graham Central Station, Larry enjoyed having a numberone R&B hit with the heart-tugging vocal ballad, "One In A Million."

Graham's style of playing was so original that it forever changed the way bass players approach the instrument. "I played drums before I played Larry reveals. "The way I invented my style of playing was, when my mother and I were working together as a duo [she played piano and sang], I would pump the strings to make up for not having a bass drum and pluck the strings to make up for not having a snare. That's how I came up with the 'slap effect,' or 'thumping and plucking' as some people call it. When I joined Sly, that was the first time I played with a drummer. And one of the great things about [drummer] Greg Errico is that he knew how to play with a bass player, which is not an easy thing to do. Sometimes it can get too busy."

Nowadays you can find Larry laying down his bass grooves b John Blackwell's drums on various Prince recordings and special live appearances. "One of John's great assets," Larry says, "is he also knows how to; play with a bass player. He'll deliberately leave out some licks to make room for what I do, John knows how to play with me and around me.

"Another thing I like about John's playing is the way he'll read my body language," Larry continues. "He knows how to keep his eyes on whoever is taking the lead. And in this case that could be Prince or it could be me. John speaks with his drums, and he knows how to lock it in the pocket. And on top of it all, he's a really nice guy."



Ahmad Jamal calls Idris Muhammad "a Hall of Fame drummer." Idris has played on over 1000 albums...from Fats Domino's "Blueberry Hill, "Sam Cooke's "Chain Gang," and Roberta Flack's "Feel Like Makin' Love" to John Scofield's "Groove Elation" and Idris' new band "The Jazz Trio"

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John Blackwell

tial arts. I was really fast at swinging nunchakus, and I would apply these moves to my drumkit. Sometimes when I hit the cymbals, I'll hit them from underneath—like a boxer hitting with an upper cut. Sometimes I'll twirl the stick and swing my hand under the cymbals—from right to left and crisscross. I have a trademark China cymbal behind me—I'll twirl the stick and hit it from behind me.

MD: Ouite a few drummers have stated that studying martial arts has helped them with their drumming. Do you feel that way?

John: Definitely, for speed, and for precision. When I play, I think of how a snake strikes its prey. I think of how to get from here to there on the kit fast and still play in the pocket. So when I twirl a stick, I have to twirl it in enough time for it to be visual and still hit that cymbal on 1. Anyone can twirl a stick, but twirling and hitting at the right time requires you to move your arms very fast.

MD: Are there any players that have influenced your stick twirling?

John: I developed my own style from

watching guys like Lionel Hampton, Sonny Emory, and Gerry Brown. I recently saw a video with Sonny Payne that I couldn't believe. He was twirling his sticks way back then. And when he played he wasn't loud. He looked like his hands were going everywhere, playing fast, but it was soft hits on

MD: Do you feel it's important to warm up before you play?

John: Yes. You should always stretch. I feel stiff if I don't stretch. I stretch my hands, fingers, and arms. I also like to meditate. I think about positive things. I'll take a hot bath and let the steam release any stress I may have.

MD: What's your practice routine like?

John: I use the Buddy Rich method of playing on a pillow. I do exercises and singlestroke rolls. I think it's interesting what Simon Phillips does, where he takes singles, doubles, triplets, and quadruplets and makes them all sound the same. Working on that has helped me get around the kit smoothly. Another thing I like to do is take the lightest dumbbells I can find and "air drum" with

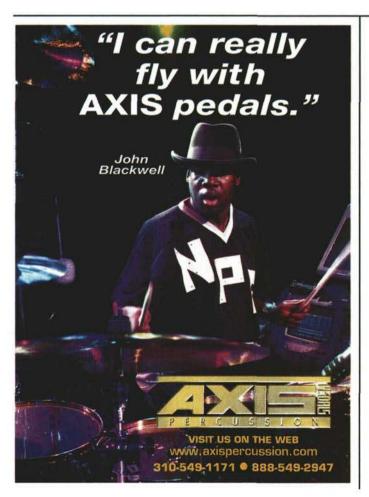
them—it's a great workout for my arms. For my foot, I practice a single bass drum exercise. In fact, I don't use a double pedal. I tighten my pedal very tight and try to get my one foot to pull off double bass drum techniques.

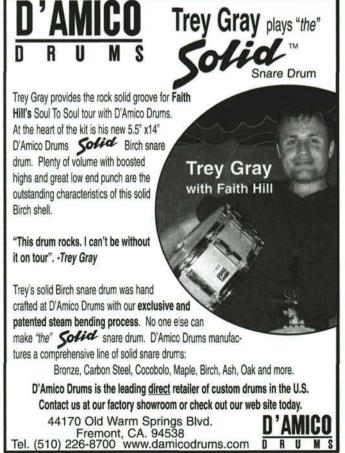
MD: Getting back to your career, how did you hook up with Cameo?

John: It was right after Berklee. Larry Blackmon heard about me from a background vocalist named Freddie Boy. I had first met Freddie at a Bee Bee & Cee Cee Winan audition around 1994. I didn't get that gig. But a year later Freddie Boy called and said, "Larry needs a drummer, can you do the gig?" I talked to my dad about it and he was all for it. He said, "Go ahead, this is what you wanted."

MD: After having a negative experience with auditions, how did you feel about going on this one?

John: I didn't have to audition. I went out with no rehearsals, just on the recommendation of Freddie Boy. I was so into Larry Blackmon, who is an excellent drummer himself. I knew all the beats.





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John Blackwell

MD: How did you hook up with Patti LaBelle?

John: I got Patti's gig through my buddy, drummer John Paris, who was playing with Patti at the time. Because of another commitment he had, John asked if I could fill in on a few dates. I thought it would be temporary, but I wound up touring with Patti for three years.

MD: How was that gig different from Cameo?

John: It was different because the Cameo gig was always set and arranged. On Patti's gig, the musical director, Bud Edelson, would give hand signals. It would be a different show every night. Bud would cut the music at points you would never have thought of. You never knew. You had to forget the night before, because every night was different. You had to be ready for anything. And if you missed a cue, he would curse you out. [laughs]

MD: Being young yourself and having the experience you have, what advice would you like to pass on to young drummers?

John: For a young kid who lands a gig-or anyone for that matter-regardless of whether it's big or small, always do what the artist you're working for wants. Don't try to steer the ship yourself. A lot of players get too excited. Control your ego. Control your head. Control that excitement. Don't ever forget, this is a business. Be professional. But also play from your heart.

For more info on John, check out his Web site at www.johnblackwell.net.





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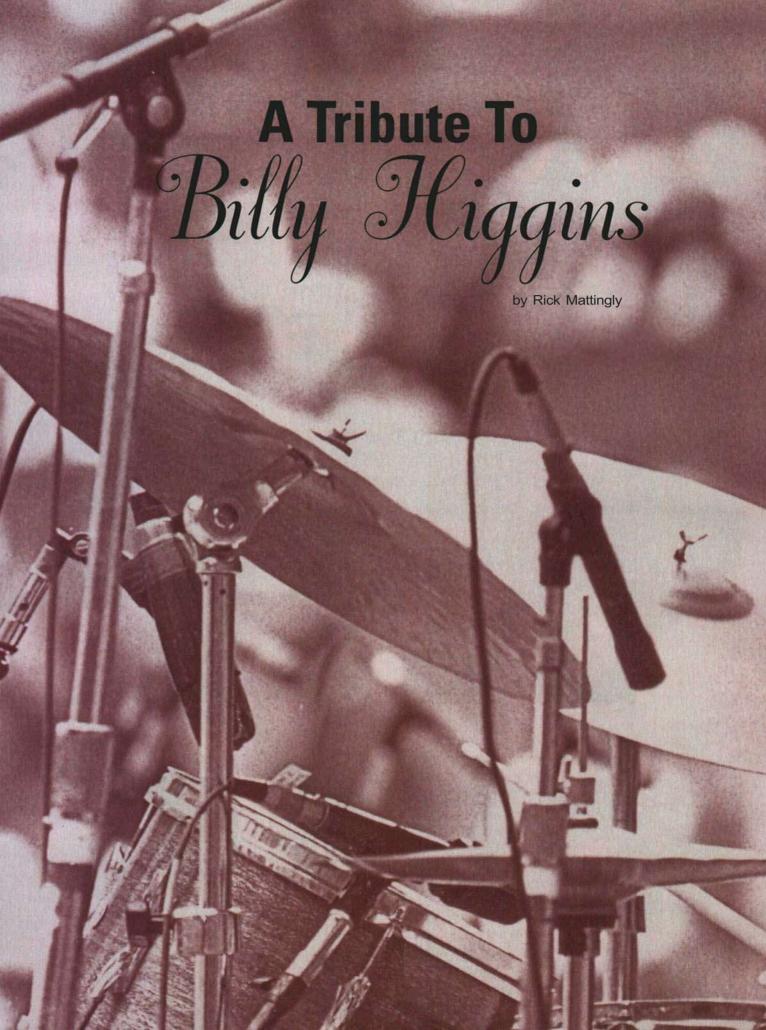
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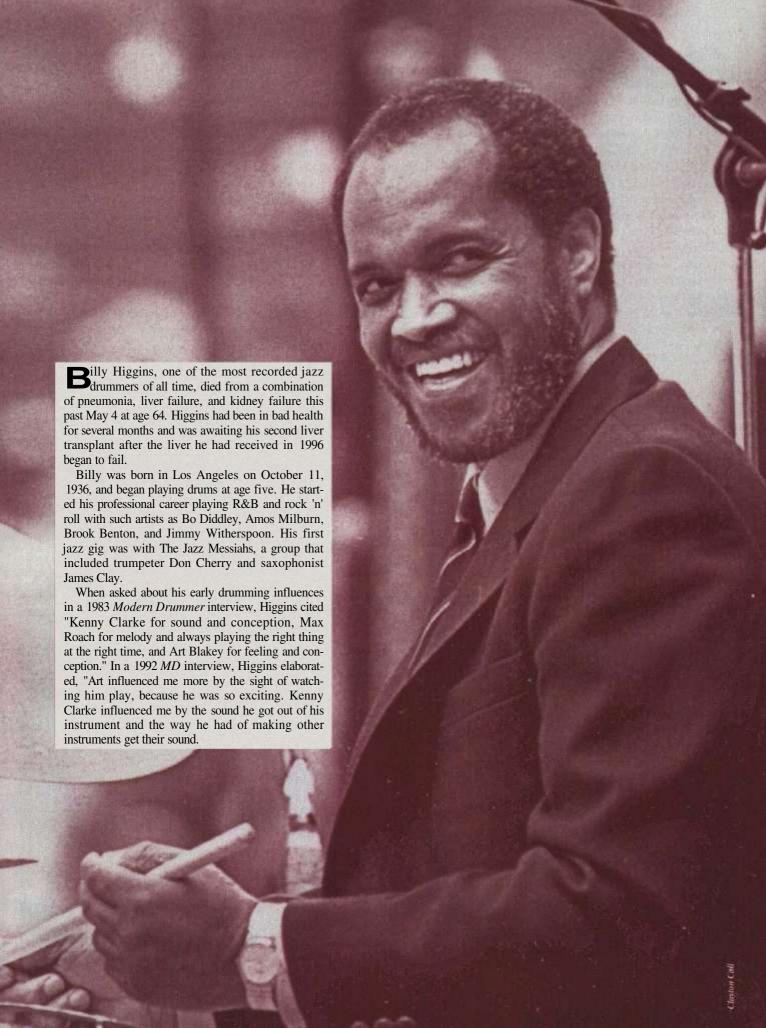


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"When you find your own sound, that's where your individuality and concept come from," Higgins said. "You tune the drums so the whole set sounds like a family. Sometimes the drums' relationship to the music sounds foreign, especially when you don't have the bottom heads on the toms or the front head on the bass drum-it doesn't do justice to the bass. The drummer has to tune the drums in a way that allows the bass's sound to be heard. You can't have the head off your bass drum and have the rest of them open. It has to be like a voice. It should sound like your voice. Your inner voice is what makes whatever's happening happen. Like any instrument, if it's out of tune, it's hard to play. But when it's in tune and you hear your sound, then you're free.

"Choosing cymbals takes a lot of time," Higgins went on. "I've heard some good drummers play a lot of stuff, but their cymbals were not giving out a pleasing sound. You have to find a cymbal that fits all keys. Some cymbals are not good in certain keys. But the cymbal will sound good in all keys if it has a golden intonation."

In 1955, Higgins began rehearsing with saxophonist Ornette Coleman, along with such musicians as James Clay, Don Cherry, and bassist Charlie Haden. Drummer Ed Blackwell often played as well. "We played together for three years before we ever had a gig," Higgins recalled.

Higgins recorded with Coleman in 1958 and then went with him to New York for a legendary engagement at the Five Spot that many consider the birth of the "free jazz" movement. Higgins was often given credit for holding the group together amid the radical musical explorations of Coleman. "People would say, 'Man, I dig you, but I don't know what the hell he's doing," Higgins told Valerie Wilmer for her book As Serious As Your Life. "And Ornette would be playing his heart out."

Higgins recorded several albums with Coleman, and he and Ed Blackwell both played on Coleman's landmark album Free Jazz in 1960. "Ornette's music was different," Higgins told writer Lora Rosner, "but I didn't care. I've always looked at music as just being music. Whatever sound a person had in his heart, it was supposed to happen. So I didn't say, 'This cat can play' or This cat can't.' I was trying to learn so I could apply myself to anything that came along.

"Ornette never said anything but 'Play your heart out.' He left it up to you. When somebody has that much confidence in you, you have to come up with something. Whatever you wanted to do was okay. We didn't have any music on the bandstand. Once you start playing together a lot you start breathing together, and then it becomes natural. It's something that becomes a part of you."

After leaving Coleman's group, Higgins worked and recorded with pianist Thelonious Monk. "That was a joy," Higgins said. "His songs, his compositions, the tempos he played—that's a school, especially for drummers, to play the tempos he played. They had a lot of room in them, but it was demanding. It was nothing you could rush or drag. It went a certain way."

In 1961 Higgins won Down Beat magazine's "New Star Of The Year" award. He settled in New York and was soon recording (frequently on the Blue Note label) with a wide variety of artists, including Steve Lacy, Sonny Clark, Lee Morgan, Cecil Taylor, Bobby Timmons, Eddie Harris, Grant Green, Donald Byrd, Dexter Gordon, Charles McPherson, Jackie McLean, Herbie Hancock, and Hank Mobley. His goal to be able to handle "anything that came along" was fulfilled as he proved himself adept not only at mainstream bop and avant-garde jazz, but also at the "boogaloo" jazz that was popular during the 1960s, which foreshadowed the increasing influence that rock rhythms would have on jazz in the coming years.

Higgins also played with The John Coltrane Quartet prior to Elvin Jones joining the group. "It was an honor and a pleasure to play with him," Higgins said. "I learned so much from his concept—a lot of it just being the sincerity of his musicianship."

Jones remembers meeting up with the band in Denver, Colorado, where he was to take over the gig. "Billy was gracious enough to



stay for a day or two, and I sat and listened to him play with Coltrane's quartet," Jones remembers. "That experience gave me some important insights into the way Coltrane played."

Afterwards, Higgins spent three years working with Sonny Rollins. Then, in 1967, Higgins began an association with Cedar Walton that continued for over twenty years and resulted in over twenty-five recordings. During the early to mid-'70s he continued recording with some of the most prominent names in jazz, including Gary Bartz, Johnny Hartman, Jimmy Heath, Milt Jackson, Sam Jones, Clifford Jordan, and Archie Shepp.

Higgins moved back to Los Angeles in 1978, and in 1979 his first album as a leader, Soweto, was released on the Red label. Later solo albums included The Soldier (Timeless), Bridgework (Contemporary), Mr. Billy Higgins (Riza), Essence (DMP), 3/4 For Peace (Red), Once More (Red), Billy Higgins Quintet (Evidence), and Mirrormirror (Verve).

One of Higgins' most prominent associations was with The Timeless All-Stars, which began in the early 1980s and included Buster Williams, Curtis Fuller, Cedar Walton, Harold Land, and Bobby Hutcherson. Higgins also appeared in the 1986 film 'Round Midnight, and he, Ron Carter, Herbie Hancock, and Wayne Shorter won the 1988 Grammy Award for Best Instrumental Composition for the tune they co-wrote for the film, "Call Sheet Blues." Afterwards, Billy worked often with the film's star, Dexter Gordon.

Higgins continued his association with many jazz greats through the 1990s, and also recorded with such younger artists as Pat Metheny, Cyrus Chestnut, Steve Grossman, Steve Turre, Roy Hargrove, Mark Isham, Joshua Redman, and James Williams. It is estimated that Higgins appears on over seven hundred albums.

Billy Higgins was also the founder of World Stage, a storefront performance space and teaching venue that serves young musicians from the Los Angeles community. "Maybe some of those kids will get hip to some music, because music is really the universal language," the drummer said. "I've been around a lot of places where I couldn't speak the language, but when you start playing music, everybody knows what you're talking about." Higgins was also on the jazz faculty at the University of California, Los Angeles.

In 1997 Higgins was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master's Fellowship in recognition of his "lifetime contributions, artistic excellence, and overall impact on jazz."

Although Billy had to cancel a number of gigs and tours during the months prior to his death because of failing health, he turned in a tour-de-force performance on guitarist John Scofield's Works For Me album, which was released this past January on Verve. "A couple of years ago I played with Billy Higgins on a gig with Charles Lloyd, and loved it," Scofield said in an interview on the Listen.Com Web site. "I was always a big fan of Higgins' playing. I think he just represents jazz music, and his rhythm is so personal he can play anything."

Billy Higgins will be remembered as a consummate jazz drummer who lit up every band in which he played with his wide, propulsive time feel and ever-present smile. "I feel blessed to play music, and it's also an honor to play music," Higgins said in an interview shortly before his death. "You've got a lot of people's feelings in your hands."

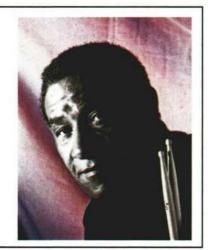


Remembering Billy



Max Roach

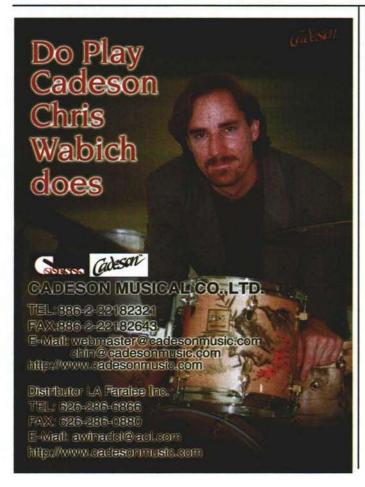
Not only was Billy a great musician, he was a dear friend as well. I knew him a long time; he was like a son. His untimely death really cheated those of us who loved him out of that great talent he had. He was an exceptional human being. The whole time he was in the hospital going through the agony of trying to get a new liver, I spoke to him every day. But he never complained about anything. It was amazing. He had a wonderful personality that was exemplified when he dealt with music—that wonderful, happy attitude he possessed.

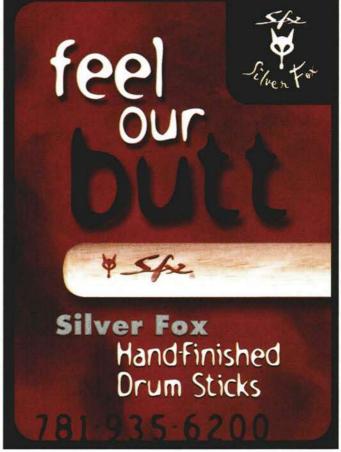


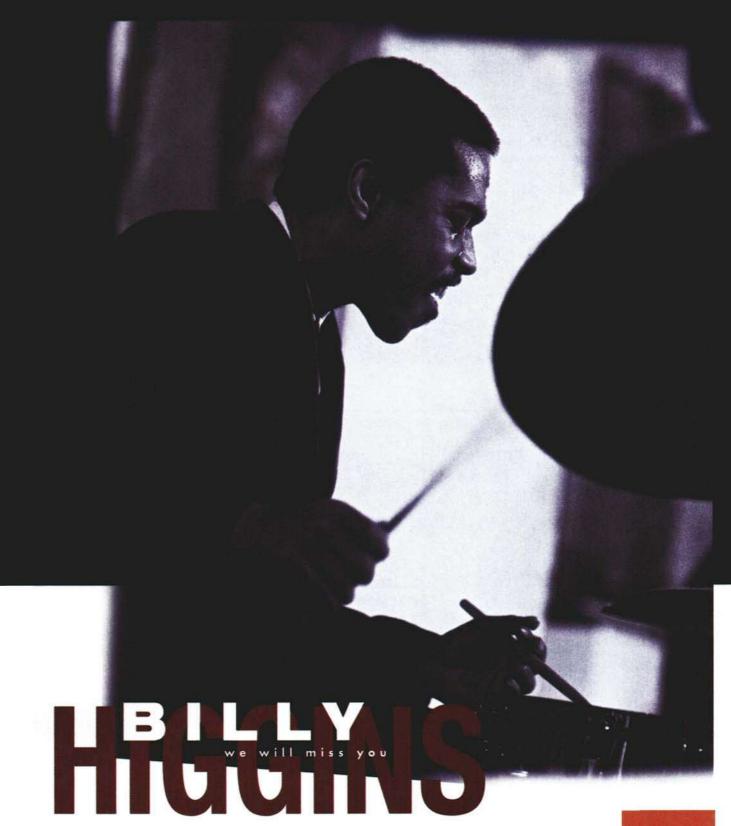


Terri Lyne Carrington

Billy Higgins was "pure joy" in terms of his music and artistry, as well as personally. He always had a welcoming smile, and his playing reflected this. I know few people who are as positive as Billy was. His contribution to the drum world was so important. He was so creative and openminded musically. I love the stuff he did with Ornette. He had his own style that swung real hard but never was overbearing, always tasteful and complementary to the musical setting. He was loved by all and will be terribly missed.







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Remembering Billy

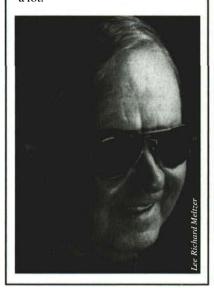
Peter Erskine

Billy Higgins was the epitome of swing, elegance, and class. His conversational gifts at the drumset were of the highest level, and he always propelled any ensemble or soloist he played with to ever-greater heights. I shall miss seeing his beautiful smile (and incredible posture!) behind the drums, but I am grateful that he made so many classic recordings that we can all listen to and be inspired by his musical genius.



Joe Morello

Billy was a fine drummer—a very good stylist, a very creative player. The music business will miss him a lot.



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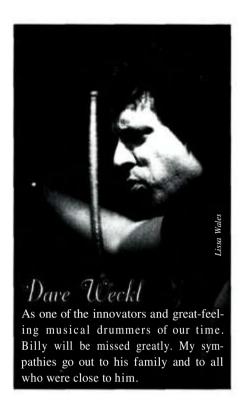
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Remembering Billy



Jack DeJohnette Billy was one of the great drummers. He

Billy was one of the great drummers. He was a master of understatement and had a great light—a great joyful feel. Whenever he was around, he always made everybody feel happy. He had a wonderful driving energy, and he was an important part of some very innovative music. He was just remarkable.

I used to go around and sit in with people with my melodica. I jammed with a group he was playing with one time at Slug's. That was really great. When you're on the bandstand with a drummer, you can really feel his playing. Billy had this real wide pulse on the cymbal, which gave you a lot of room to do whatever you wanted to do. He was consistent and would never let you down. Always exuberant, always creative, and he always knew what to play.

One of my favorite recordings he's on is Ornette Coleman's *Change Of The Century*—particularly the tracks "Una Muy Bonita" and "Ramblin'." Billy's playing is so great, so loose, so vibrant. Some of the Lee Morgan records on Blue Note that Billy

played on were great, too, and I particularly liked his work with Cedar Walton.

He was also a great humanitarian—the work he did with his World Stage program for youth. He was a wonderful spirit, and he surely will be missed. But his music lives on the recordings and through those who knew him and shared that great light and that smile and love he had for life and music.



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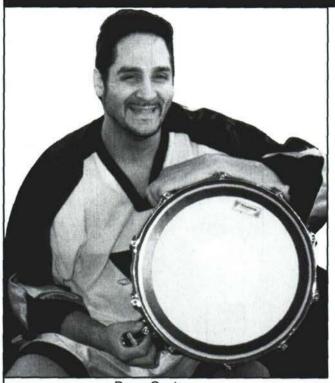


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Remembering Billy

Elvin Jones

I remember when Billy came to New York with Ornette Coleman's group and they were playing at the old Five Spot on the Bowery. I lived just two blocks from there, so I used to go over there and listen to Ornette. I think that was the best group he had, and I thought Billy brought a lot more warmth into that music than the subsequent drummers.

Billy always had that beautiful smile, and he was always a prominent member of any group he was with. He brought a freshness to the music that was very rare.

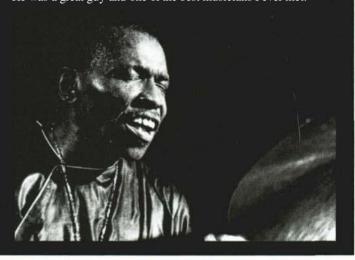
One time when I was playing in Los Angeles he came to see me and told me about this program called World Stage, and he invited us to come out there to listen to the young people play. It was a wonderful experience to be in that atmosphere with young people who had a tremendous interest in learning about music and with older people who were encouraging and helping them. I thought it was a marvelous pursuit.

We used to talk about religion a lot. He converted to Islam, and he gave me a copy of the Koran. So that's my gift from Billy

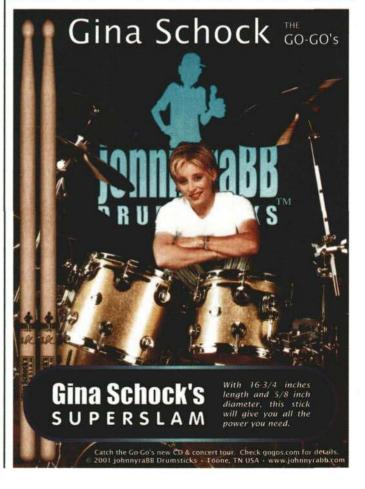
A few years ago I went to see Billy at a club in New York, and I noticed that he didn't look very well. His skin was gray-looking. But he never complained about it. That spirit he always had was there, even though I know he didn't feel well. Subsequently, I

heard that he'd had a liver transplant. And the next thing I knew he was traveling around and playing like always. He seemed strong and healthy and vigorous. So it was sad to hear that he had become sick again.

But I don't want to dwell on his sickness. I like to talk about the wonderful contributions he made to music, which are still being studied and appreciated by a great many people all over the world. He was a great guy and one of the best musicians I ever met.



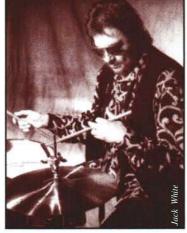




Jim Keltner

The first time I ever saw Billy was sometime around 1960 or '61. I was working in a store on Colorado Boulevard in Pasadena, and about a block away they were building a coffeehouse called the Dragon Wick. The studs and the framing were up, and it had a floor but no ceiling yet. I was coming back from lunch one day and when I passed by it, I heard these drums playing a really funky beat. I looked in and this guy was in there practicing. I had no idea who he was or why he was in there, but I stood there for a while and listened. I was just magnetized. Whoever he was, he had a beautiful touch.

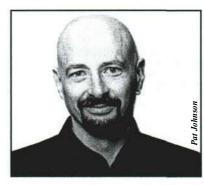
Later on, when I found out who Billy



Higgins was and went to see him, I recognized him as that drummer I had seen practicing. I never got to know him personally, but as a young man I saw him a lot. One night I heard him playing with Coltrane at a club in Watts, but the club was so crowded I had to stand outside and just listen. Afterwards I saw him come out of the club with that big ol' smile of his. He was this lanky guy with big rabbit teeth and shiny skin, and he was always smiling. The last time I saw him in person was in San Francisco with The Timeless All-Stars with Cedar Walton, Buster Williams, Harold Land, and Bobby Hutcherson. Billy was just playing beautifully.

Steve Smith

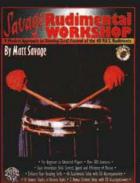
Billy Higgins had a serious swing factor. His playing on the Blue Note records was incrediblealways the right notes, attitude, and feel. One of my all-time favorite tracks of his is "The Sidewinder" by Lee Morgan. Billy was one of the first "soul jazz" drummers. He also played on Herbie Hancock's "Watermelon Man" and Eddie Harris' "Freedom Jazz Dance." The man could groove! The last time I saw him was a couple of years ago playing duo with Charles Lloyd. They sounded fantastic together, and Billy was a joy to listen to and watch. We're fortunate that he left us with such a beautiful body of work. Thank you, Billy.





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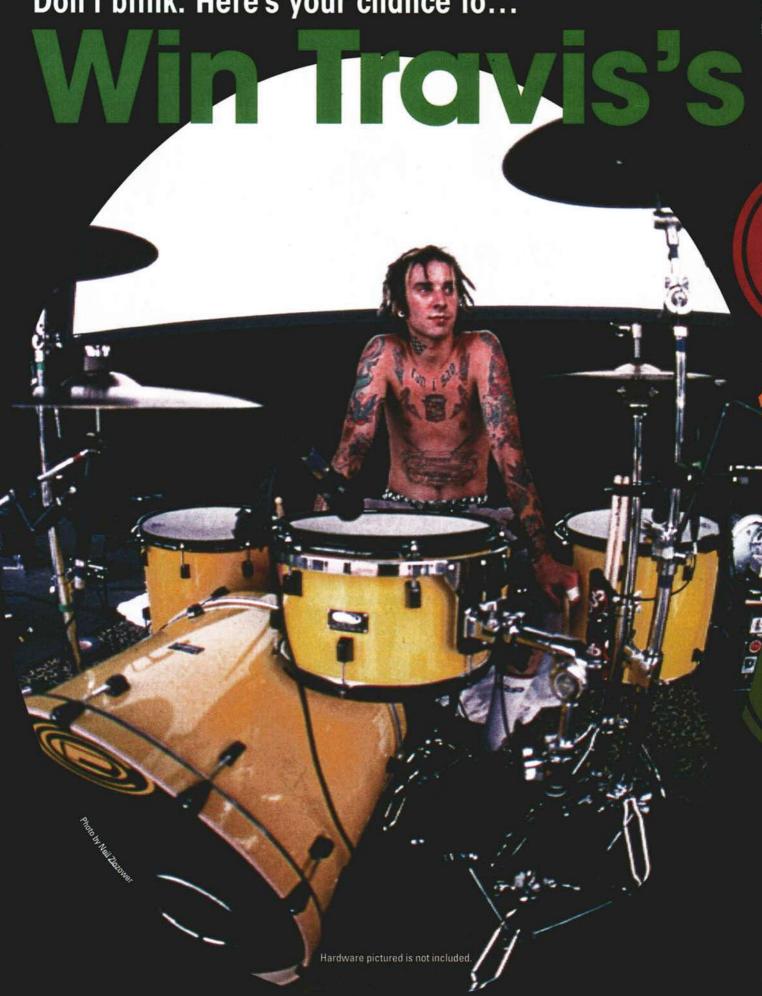
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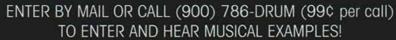
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MD Festival Weekend 2001

They Came To Play

Story by T. Bruce Wittet . Photos by Alex Solca

The fourteenth Modern Drummer Festival Weekend proved the most diverse in recent memory. Men in skirts paraded across the stage, a woman in slacks drummed as ferociously as any man, and a child barely out of short pants commanded the sold-out crowd with an adult barrage. And a fortune in vintage drums came out of the closet and mingled with the latest gear from manufacturers.

If all that wasn't enough, Festival 2001 marked the silver anniversary of *Modern Drummer* magazine. Industry representatives flew thousands of miles to help celebrate *MD's* twenty-five years at the forefront of drumming. Sizing up the crowd and the performances, *MD* editor/publisher Ron Spagnardi put it best: "I think we all agree that the future of drumming is in good hands."



Modern Drummer founders Ron and Isabel Spagnardi greeted the crowd at the fourteenth annual MD Festival.



From left: MD associate editor Billy Amendola, advertising director Bob Berenson, and Ron and Isabel Spagnardi visited with the now-legendary "5:30 Club" before the show.



Ron and Carmine Appice swapped stories backstage.



Virgil Donati signed T-shirts, hats, and drumheads for eager fans following his performance.

—Saturday, May 19—

The Drums Of Black Bottle

Back by popular demand, The Drums Of Black Bottle (Jackie Houlden, Andy Gillespie, Liam Chalmers, Gordon Hastie, Gary Montgomery, Alan Parker, John Walker, and Scott Young) traveled all the way from Glasgow, Scotland to appear at the Festival.

Proudly wearing his ceremonial tartan kilt, group leader Jackie Houlden immediately captured the crowd with a demonstration of the stylistic difference between the triplet lilt of Scottish rudiments and the straight gait of the American versions. After the applause died, Houlden quipped, "Eight years is a long time to wait to get called back for a gig!" referring to the group's previous Festival appearance in 1993.



Festival coordinator (and MD senior editor) Rick Van Horn greeted showgoers in a kilt presented by The Drums Of Black Bottle.

Drumline leader Andy Gillespie and four of his mates sat at a line of pared-down kits, where they played shuffles, street beats, and songos. Drumset players Alan Parker and Gary Montgomery laid down some wicked grooves, while Liam Chalmers and Scott Young added Latin touches on bongos and timbales. Before the set was over, the Scottish lads had explored every musical style imaginable. Their rhythmic energy kicked the entire day off in great style.

Gene Lake

Performing with David Fiucznyski on guitar, Reggie Washington on bass, and Fredrico Gonzalez Pena on keys, Gene Lake gave an intimate concert—often forgoing speed and flash for finer nuances. With a deft, light touch, Gene would feather his low-set drums and cymbals. Then, with torso barely arching, he'd whip off thunderous fills between his floor tom, bass drum, and his small-diameter cymbals. Gene certainly knew when and how to play lots of notes—and when *not* to.

With credits ranging from Me'Shell Ndegeocello to David Sanborn—along with his current gig in David Fiuczynski's Headless Torsos—Gene is obviously a *bad* cat and a drummer to keep an eye out for.

Gary Novak

Alanis Morissette's current drummer opened his set by playing to a loop. Flanked by huge monitor speakers, he took great liberties in stretching his fills way over the bar, in the fluid, creative style that marked the period when he held the drum chair in Chick Corea's Elektric Band. At one point, Gary confided, "If Alanis had known I sounded like that, I'd never have gotten the job!"

A high point of Gary's presentation was his candid admission of "cheating" with his phrases—alternating common phrases in uncommon ways to suggest complexity. With a light-hearted and low-key approach, Gary got laughs when he advised the audience, "If you can't do it, fake it."

Cindy Blackman & Her Band

Cindy did things we'll *never* see her do with pop star Lenny Kravitz. Sitting ramrod-straight and exhibiting near-flawless hand technique, Cindy opened with a long, sometimes boisterous drum solo. Wowed by the brunt of her attack, the audience broke into spontaneous applause. Later, in a jazz quartet that included Carlton Holmes on keyboards, J.D. Allen on sax, and George Mitchell on bass, Cindy provided the most probing—and sometimes unnerving—music of the Festival. Her explosive fills around the toms recalled her mentor, the late Tony Williams. Playing a custom, clear-coated Sonor bubinga kit with a 1953 Gretsch snare and old K Zildjian cymbals, Cindy explored the full range of creative and dynamic musical expression.

Virgil Donati & Planet X

Saturday's show came to a close with a supremely confident Virgil Donati sitting behind a lovely glitter-finish double-bass Premier kit. After acknowledging the ovation that greeted his introduction, Virgil launched into his first piece, accompanied by his bandmates in Planet X: Derek Sherinian on keyboards, Dave LaRue on bass, and Tony MacAlpine on guitar. For his second number, Virgil offered a display of stick twirling, with the sticks landing as softly as butterflies on his array of cymbals.

Then Virgil hunkered down into a groove—or, at least, what *he* conceives of as a groove! Turning the beat around every few bars, he confounded any poor soul wishing to tap out fours. It was magic, and the audience left the hall in a state somewhere between elated and overwhelmed.



Prince drummer (and this issue's cover artist) John Blackwell helped MD managing editor Adam Budofsky give away door prizes.

—Sunday, May 20—

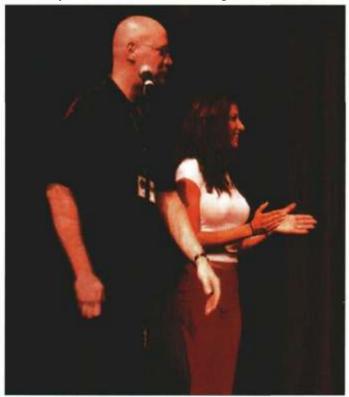
Gustavo Meli And Han Rubin

The two winners of MD's Undiscovered Drummer contest provided a vivid wakeup call on Sunday. Argentinean drummer Gustavo Meli, winner in the over-eighteen category, gave an intense, artful performance, displaying seemingly ambidextrous abilities with his hands and feet. Backstage, in halting English, Gustavo explained, "I feel the need to orchestrate when I play, and also to feel in my body when I play. I try to connect with the crowd with my spirit. The world is small now, and we can all learn from the famous drummers who travel everywhere. You can be good wherever you happen to live."

The under-eighteen winner, Ilan Rubin, caught us off guard with a take-no-prisoners attack on the drums, climaxing on a Paiste RotoSound that spun and whined eerily. The twelve-year-old from Southern California then cut a snappy funk groove, punctuated by a triplet fill that led him into Cuban territory. With rumbling drums and a bright, sizzling cymbal sound, Ilan displayed a technique and a command of drumming's heritage that were well beyond his years.

Stanton Moore & Musical Guests

Before his performance, Galactic's Stanton Moore was busy backstage, enthusiastically showing off his most recent acquisition: a huge, tattered bass drum of questionable origin. With this formidable weapon to his right and a de-tuned LP pandeiro to the left of his hi-hat, Stanton planned to get the crowd grooving, New Orleans-style. Said Stanton, "I'm thinking of Mardi Gras Indian



MD editorial director Bill Miller introduced Stanton Moore—with the help of Stanton's lovely wife, Amy.

stuff and marching bands: twenty drummers coming down the street, *booBOOM*. On Lundi Gras [the eve of Mardi Gras] we parade 'til the sun comes up. It kicks!"

Stanton's band, Moore & More (Brian Seeger, Charlie Dennard, and Brent Rose) did kick—seriously. Moore's vintage champagne sparkle Gretsch drums rang out through the P.A., and when he chose to accent with his mighty auxiliary bass drum, the walls shuddered. Explaining his happy-go-lucky street groove, Stanton talked about "owning" the place between straight 8ths and triplets. "You've got to put your beat between the grooves," he told the crowd. Stanton also emphasized the importance of the "big 4," referring to the pulse on beat 4 of each bar. "And don't just play in the center of the snare drum," advised Stanton. "It'll sound sterile and static." His playing was anything but.

Billy Martin With G. Calvin Weston

The percussive third of Medeski Martin & Wood, along with his trusty sidekick, sat side-by-side on two drumsets, separated by a table stocked with percussion instruments. Sometimes Calvin would play a quiet groove while Billy traveled to the table to pick up some metal shard or ethnic instrument. But instead of simply *visiting* any number of objects, Billy seemed intent on coaxing the maximum in tone and rhythm out of each one. When Billy went to his kit, the contrast in tone between his drums and Calvin's was delightful: Billy's faded yellow onyx Rogers drums sounded bright and airy, while Calvin's Tamas were deep and focused. The spirited interplay between the two drummers was right out of the ancient African call-and-response tradition.

Carmine Appice

Backstage before his spot, Carmine said cryptically, "I'm going to go through some history and some rudiments, and then I'm going to bring out a few surprises." He wasn't kidding. Sabian's Wayne Blanchard dropped us a hint when he took the mic' to present Carmine with a special award from Sabian, saying, "There wasn't really a rock drummer until Carmine came along." A voice from the audience boomed in agreement, "That's right!"

First Carmine brought out his old comrade-in-arms, bass player Tim Bogert (as in Beck, Bogert & Appice). It was just like the old days, with Carmine playing the heavy-yet-nimble licks he brought into the rock 'n' roll genre. Carmine went on to work the crowd, demonstrating his patented cymbal-grabbing technique and his unique between-the-fingers stick grip (for twirling). He teased us with DAT segments, including the hauntingly familiar one-finger organ intro from Vanilla Fudge's "You Keep Me Hanging On."

Then Carmine unveiled his big surprise: the real Vanilla Fudge—the same band that electrified living rooms across America when they appeared on The Ed Sullivan Show over thirty years ago. With Bogert on bass, Vince Martell on guitar, and Bill Pascalli on organ, the band was tight and their vocals were impeccable. And Carmine's drumming demonstrated why he was the original irresistible force. We got shivers and, yes, we rocked.

Lenny White & Musical Guests

The day was drawing to a close as Festival coordinator Rick Van Horn introduced the final performer as "Someone who is more than just a pioneer. He started it, and he's still doing it right now. Please welcome...Mr. Lenny White." The ex-Return To Forever drummer, solo artist, and producer sat behind the smaller of two drumkits and announced the first of the bands with which he would play: an all-star ensemble consisting of Buster Williams on bass, Antoine Roney on sax, Geri Allen on piano, and Wallace Roney on trumpet. Capturing a Miles Davis vibe perfectly in sound and feel, Lenny employed an exact copy of the old K Zildjian ride Tony Williams used to perform Nefertiti.

Next, Lenny moved to a larger drumset and introduced his fusion band: John Dryden and Donald Blackman on keyboards, Jerry Brooks on bass, and Nick Moroch on guitar. Their performance brought back memories of the style Lenny pioneered with Return To Forever, and left the audience with a full understanding of how fusion came to be.

And so the 2001 Festival ended. As the hall cleared, a feeling



More door prizes were presented by studio legend (and Festival 1999 alumnus) Bernard Purdie, along with MD associate editor Ted Bonar.

lingered—namely that acoustic music was alive and well. The weekend had been replete with natural, unmuffled drum and percussion sounds. The drum stars of today—and those who seek to emulate them—seem to inhabit a place in which styles mingle, tunings vary widely, and curiosity reigns. This new percussive world is one in which a few overtones and funny harmonics are not necessarily a bad thing! Backstage, German music journalist Heinz Kronberger remarked, "This is more than a drum show. This is one of the best *music* festivals in the world. You've definitely got to be here."

Special Presentations

On Saturday, MD Editor/Publisher Ron Spagnardi presented an Editors' Achievement Award to Yamaha's drum guru, Tekashi "Hagi" Hagiwara. Hagi had taken a twenty-four-hour redeye flight from Indonesia in order to be present to accept the honor. Later, Sabian's Wayne Blanchard helped celebrate MD's silver anniversary by presenting a special commemorative award to Ron & Isabel Spagnardi. Blanchard speculated on the impoverishment of the drum world were it not for this couple, who put together the first issues of Modern Drummer magazine in their basement.



Isabel and Ron flank Yamaha's Tekashi "Hagi" Hagiwara, with his MD Editors' Achievement Award.



Evans co-founder Bob Beals

The awards continued on Sunday, when Ron Spagnardi once again presented MD Editors' Achievement Awards—this time to the co-founder of Evans Drumheads. Bob Beals. and to drumming's ambassador to the world, Dom Famularo. Ron himself was surprised by yet another presentation commemorating MD's 25th Anniversary. In the first part of a double-whammy, Ron & Isabel were given a special plague from

Zildjian Cymbals, personally presented by company president Craigie Zildjian. Then Steve Badalament from Innovation Drums honored the occasion by presenting Ron with a one-ofa-kind, custom-finished Gladstonestyle snare drum fitted with special commemorative badges, Ron's photo, and other unique appointments. The standing ovation that Ron received from the Festival audience left him literally speechless.



Drumming's ambassador to the world, Dom Famularo

THE DRUMS OF BLACK BOTTLE

The Drums Of Black Bottle appeared through the courtesy of Sabian Cymbals, Vic Firth Drumsticks, Evans Drumheads, and Latin Percussion, Inc.

Additional equipment support was provided by Pearl Drums.











Gene Lake

Gene was sponsored by Premier Drums, Zildjian Cymbals, Vic Firth Drumsticks, and Remo, Inc.



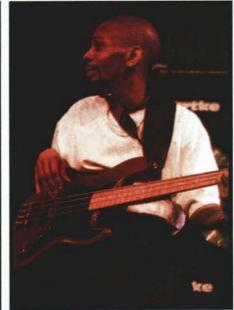










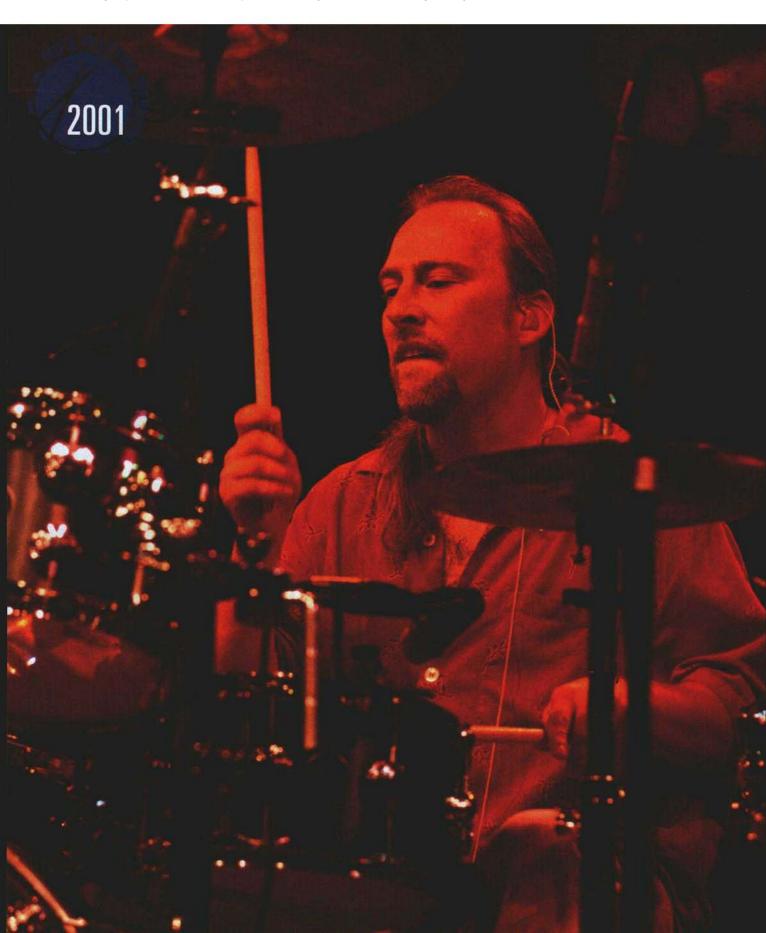


Fredrico Gonzalez Pena

David Fiucznyski

Reggie Washington

Gary Novak Gary's performance was presented by DW Drums, Zildjian Cymbals & Drumsticks, and Remo, Inc.













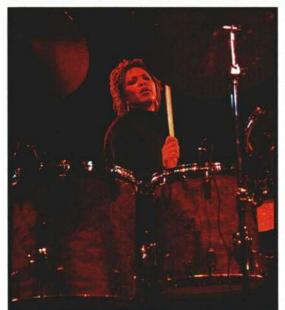
CINDY BLACKMAN & HER BAND

Cindy and her band appeared through the courtesy of Sonor Drums, Zildjian Cymbals & Drumsticks, DW Hardware, Latin Percussion, Inc., and Remo, Inc.

















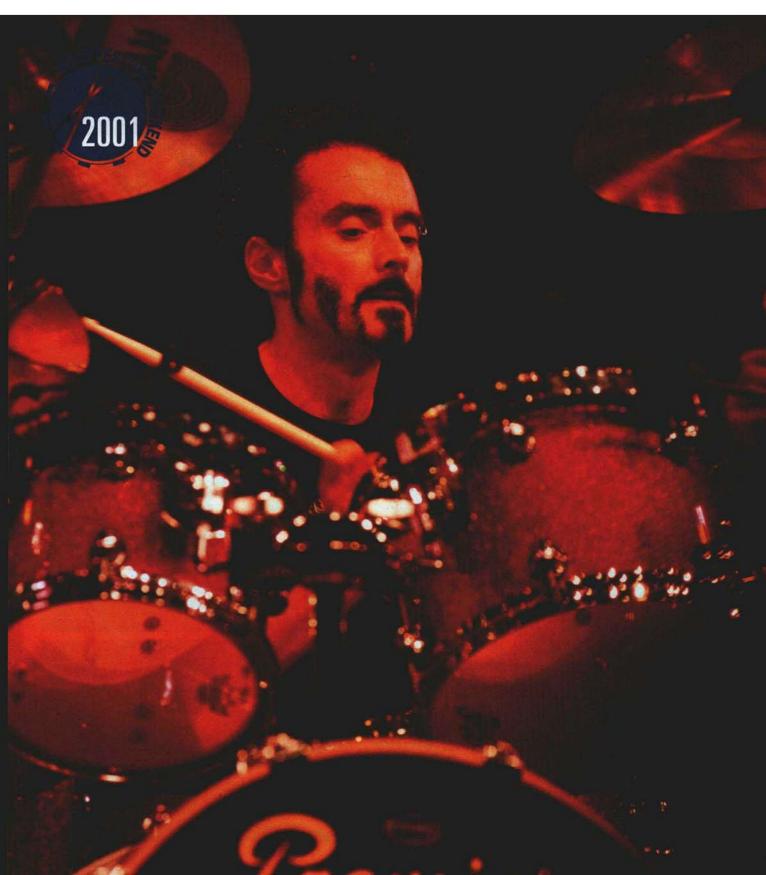
J.D. Allen and George Mitchell

Carlton Holmes

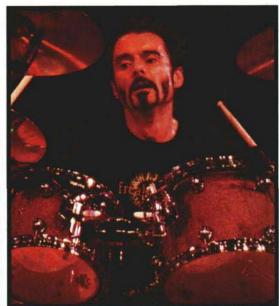
VIRGIL DONATI & PLANET X

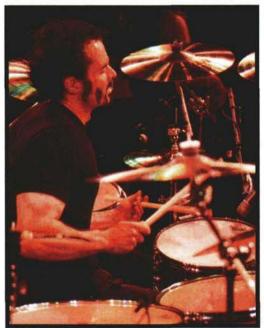
Virgil & Planet X were sponsored by Premier Drums, Sabian Cymbals, Vater Drumsticks, and Remo, Inc.

Additional equipment support was provided by Korg Electronics and Carvin Amplifiers.













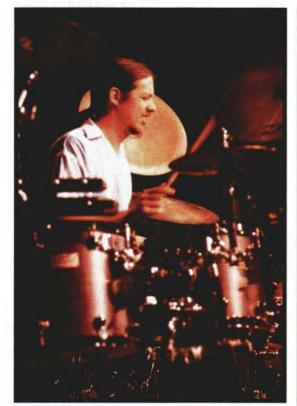


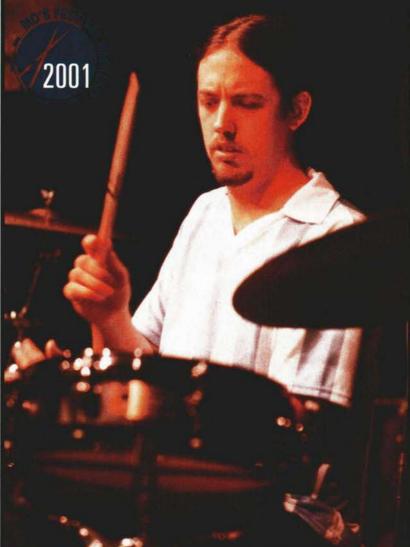


Tony MacAlpine Dave LaRue Derek Sherinian

GUSTAVO MELI

Equipment support for Gustavo was provided by Mapex Drums, Zildjian Cymbals, and Pro-Mark Drumsticks.



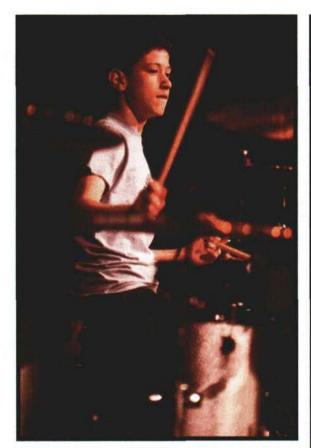


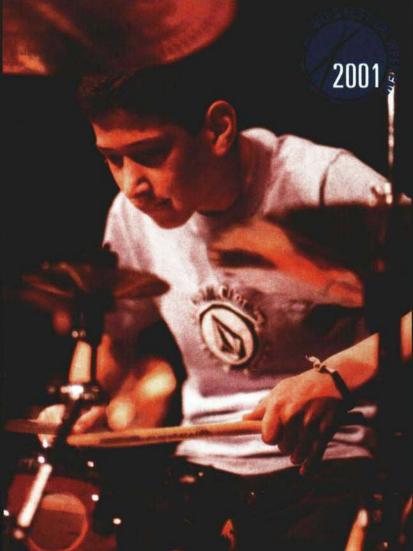


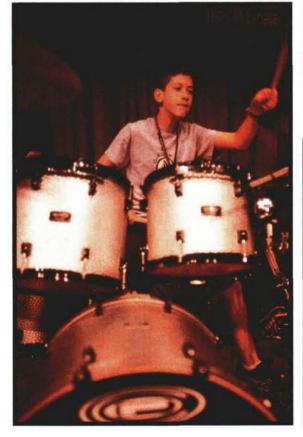


ILAN RUBIN

Equipment support for Ilan was provided by Orange County Drum & Percussion, Paiste Cymbals, DW Hardware, Kit Tools Drumsticks, and Beato USA.



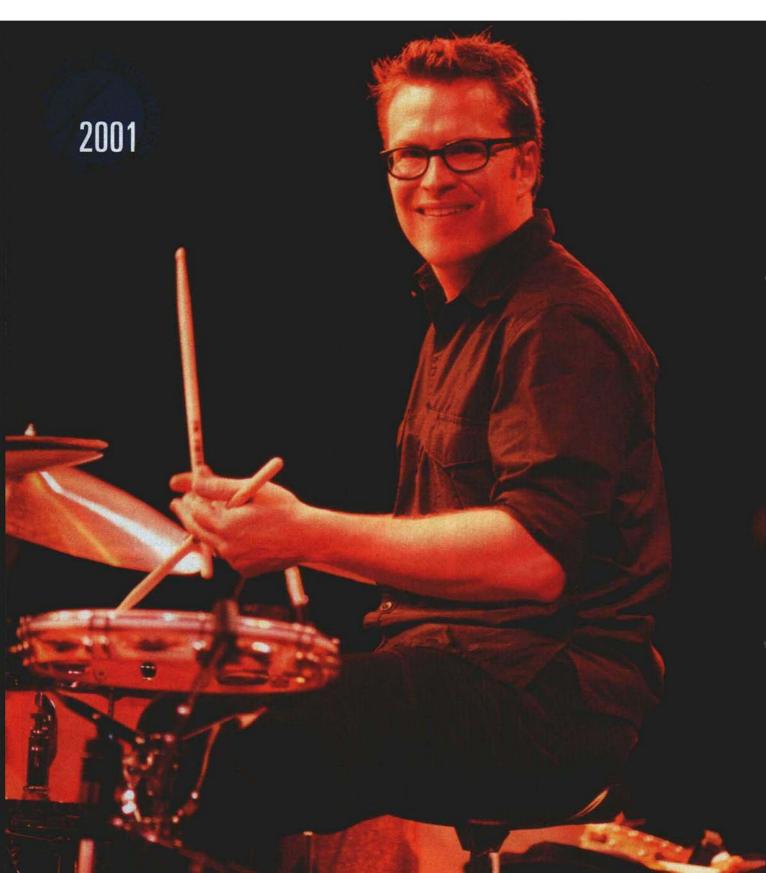






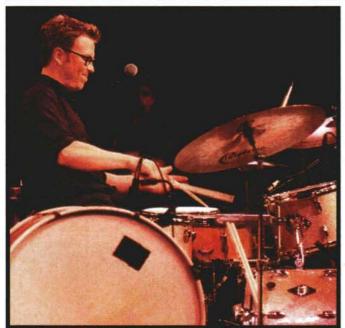
STANTON MOORE & MUSICAL GUESTS

Stanton and friends were sponsored by Bosphorus Cymbals, Attack Drumheads, Vic Firth Drumsticks, Latin Percussion, Inc., and Audix Microphones.













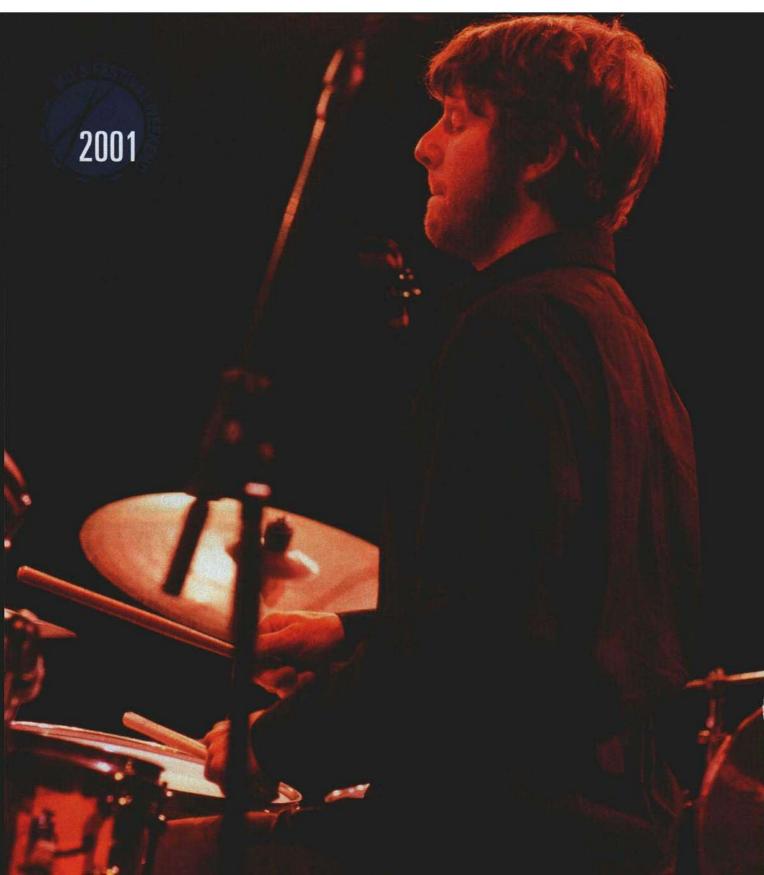


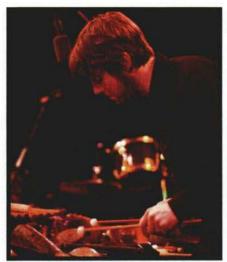


BILLYMARTIM WITH G. CALVIN WESTON

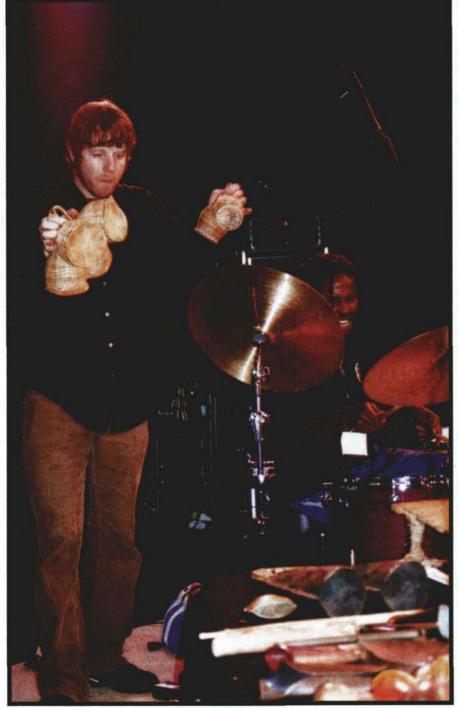
Billy and Calvin appeared courtesy of Zildjian Cymbals, Attack Drumheads, and Regal Tip Drumsticks.

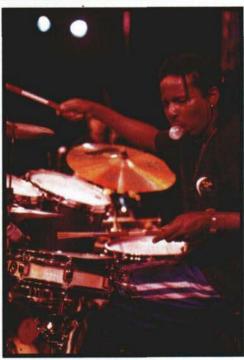
Additional equipment support for Calvin was provided by Tama Drums.







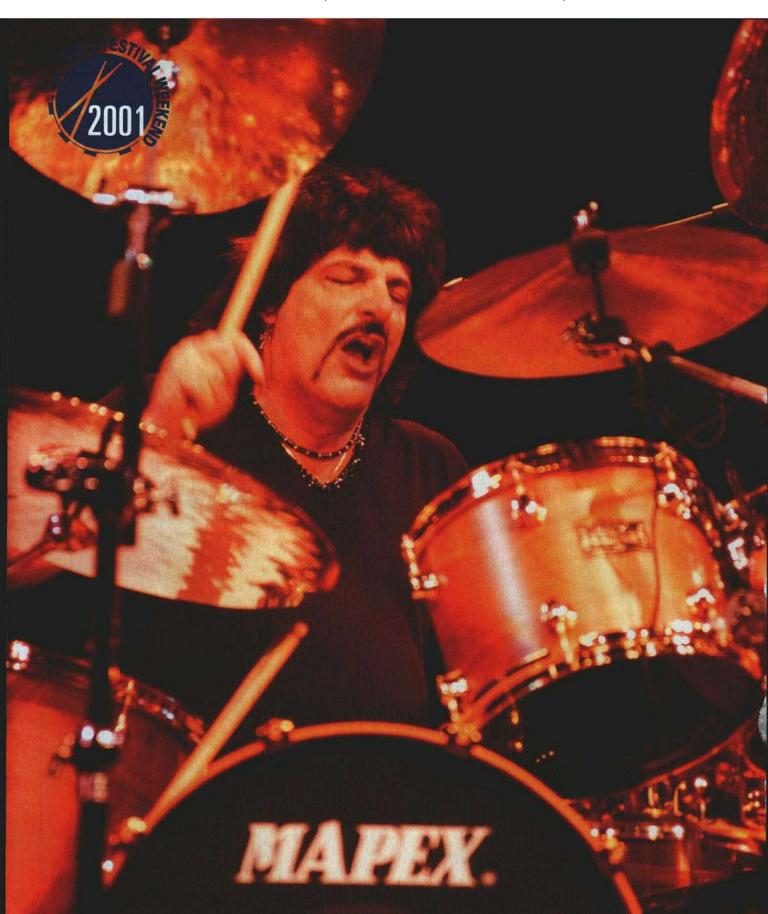






CARMINE APPICE

Carmine's appearance was sponsored by Mapex Drums, Sabian Cymbals, Vic Firth Drumsticks, Aquarian Drumheads, and Shure Microphones.





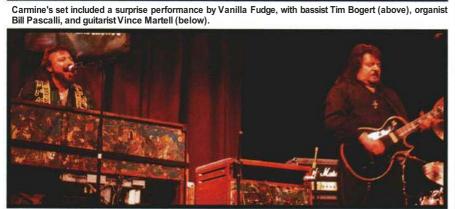








A special moment occurred when Carmine got off the drums in mid-solo to bring jazz legend Joe Morello out of the wings and onto the stage.





LENNY WHITE & MUSICAL GUESTS

Lenny and friends were presented by Innovation Drums, Zildjian Cymbals & Drumsticks, and Remo, Inc.











Lenny and Jerry Brooks





Donald Blackman and Nick Moroch







Wallace Roney

Antoine Roney

Geri Allen

Buster Williams

Jazz drummers' workshop

Billy Higgins

Style And Analysis

by John Riley



nless you're a hardcore jazz fan, you may think you've never heard the drumming of Billy Higgins. Never mind that he played on well over five hundred albums and three of the most popular-and sampledjazz crossover hits of the 1960s—Herbie

Hancock's "Watermelon Man," Lee Morgan's "The Sidewinder," and Eddie Harris's "Freedom Jazz Dance."

Mr. Higgins was one of the most sought-after accompanists in jazz. His buoyant, swinging feel was coupled with a great pair of

ears; he always knew just what to play to bring out the best in his bandmates. Billy had a special warm and airy sound, and he played with great intensity but very softly. "I always wanted to hear what everybody else was playing," he explained.

Billy Higgins grew up in Los Angeles, where his first jazz influence was Kenny Clarke. Billy recalled to his childhood friend and fine drummer, Bill Goodwin, that he "based his whole concept on Kenny Clarke's playing on the song 'La Ronde," from a 1952 Modern Jazz Quartet/Milt Jackson Quintet recording (Prestige #7059).

In addition to being inspired by "Klook," Billy was also influenced by the other instrumentalists he was playing with and all the major instrumentalists of the day, like Art Tatum and Charlie Parker. As far as drum influences, Billy dug the melodiousness

of Max Roach and Philly Joe Jones, Art Blakey's groove, Elvin Jones' comping, Ed Blackwell's groove orchestration, and Roy Haynes' individualist approach.

Billy first gained national exposure playing and recording with Ornette Coleman in 1958. Ornette's music was simultaneously swinging and free and required a new kind of suppleness and flexibility from a drummer. Through the years Billy shared the drumming duties in Ornette's band with Ed Blackwell. They were the perfect drummers for Ornette's open musical concept because they were able to hear where the music was going, support the new directions, and provide innovative accompaniment. To hear some early and

freely innovative music check out Billy's "selfless" playing on Ornette's recording The Shape Of Jazz To Come. (See this month's *Encore* on page 160 for more on this groundbreaking recording.)

In the 1960s, "Smilin' Billy," the appropriate nickname for this joyous man, played on hundreds of recordings with veterans like Thelonious Monk, Dexter Gordon, John Coltrane, and Sonny Rollins, and with the new wave of jazz stars—among them Herbie Hancock, Lee Morgan, Eddie Harris, and Hank Mobley.

Billy played the standard four-piece drumkit with two cymbals and hi-hat. He was a fantastic brush player and was also deft with

mallets. In every setting, his mantra was

the same: "The music is more important than the individual." One of my favorite recordings of his is Herbie Hancock's 1962 recording Takin' Off, and we'll start our inside look at Mr. Higgins' musicianship with this recording.

On "Takin' Off you can hear that Billy got a beautiful sound from his instrument. Higgins tuned his kit fairly high, like most jazz drummers, and used a riveted cymbal as his main ride. The cymbal to his left was used more as a secondary ride than as a crash. Billy favored this type of tuning and cymbal sound during his entire career.

Conceptually, Billy was a "facilitator," not a dominator; he would enhance the direction that the music "wanted" to go in rather than impose his own will on the composition. You

can hear that Billy was a master at creat-

ing a good feeling in the rhythm section. His supple ride-cymbal phrasing, which was based directly on Kenny Clarke's ride beat, has been admired and coveted by almost every jazz drummer to come after him.

Feathering the bass drum was also an important part of Billy's groove. Dynamically, he used the entire spectrum—but with great restraint. His snare drum comping ideas were often played as buzz strokes to lessen their sharpness. Along the same lines, he rarely marked the song form by playing a cymbal crash at the beginning of a chorus or at a change in soloists. His comping and overall flow was very precise but very legato.



On "Watermelon Man," Billy plays a straight-8th-note "boogaloo"-type groove, which became known by several names: "the Billy Higgins beat" and "that Blue Note funk groove." This groove is built off of the piano comp figure, but Billy finds numerous interesting ways to vary the pattern.



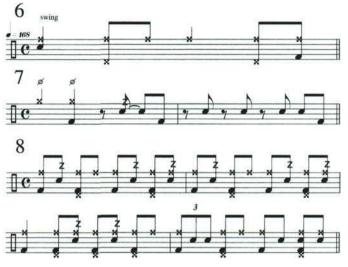
"Three Bags Full" is a waltz, and Billy plays some really hip and flowing across-the-barline phrases, somewhat reminiscent of Elvin Jones, to complement the melody. Notice how his comping propels the music during the solos; it's always uplifting.



"Empty Pockets" is a twelve-measure medium swinger. The head and first chorus of each solo are played with a relaxed broken feel, which evolves into a romping swinging groove. Here is Billy's treatment of the melody.



"The Maze" is another swinger, and during the head Billy plays off the piano comp. For the piano interludes, he goes to a nice broken "Latinish" Roy Haynes-type thing on the hi-hat. The comping is also characteristic, tasteful Billy.



"Driftin" is an apt title for this cool thirty-two-measure tune. During the melody Billy plays a hip, swinging version of the "bongo beat" and comps superbly throughout. Here is the groove played during the melody.



The concluding track, "Alone And I," is a lovely ballad, which Billy supports with brushes.

Billy plays memorably on everything he recorded. Here are a couple more favorites. Lee Morgan's 1963 hit, The Sidewinder, features Billy playing a catchy "swing-a-nova" on the title track.



Another great recording is Dexter Gordon's 1962 classic Go! Billy plays magically throughout, but one groove in particular catches my ear—the brisk stick/brush bossa he played on "Love For Sale." (He played this holding a brush in his right hand and a stick in his left.)



Another classic is Eddie Harris's "Freedom Jazz Dance" from the 1966 recording *The In Sound*. Here is the basic pattern, though Billy played endless danceable variations.



While Billy Higgins was a revered and renowned accompanist, he was also a great melodic drum soloist, and there are numerous "open" solos on his recordings with Ornette. While many drummers feel the urge to match the volume and "mass" of sound produced by the entire band when they solo, Billy always maintained his "cool" when he soloed.

One of my favorite Higgins solos is from *The Oracle*, a 1989 trio date led by pianist Hank Jones. Billy plays three choruses

on the sixteen-measure swinger "Yesterdays." Notice that his solo definitely relates to the melody and that he uses orchestration to delineate the form and build the solo. The first chorus is built off of the ride cymbal, and the second chorus works its way onto the drums, developing triplet ideas reminiscent of "Three Bags Full." The third chorus is centered on the snare drum a la Kenny Clarke. Where appropriate, I've included the stickings that work best for me.





After hearing only one Billy Higgins recording, one would possibly come away from the experience feeling that he was "a good drummer." When you get into the body of his work, you realize that this man made a whole lot of *great* recordings. He always played with a mature, practical approach that was musically and sonically pleasing, and, most of all, his beat was always "inviting."

While playing, Billy was a joy to behold; he smiled continuously. His beaming attitude infected the other musicians, the

music, and the audience. You hear the affect of his happy beat and joyous disposition on the recordings; everyone always sounded like they were having a ball playing together. As a testimonial to his understated greatness, many drummers would say, "But he didn't do anything." But most *musicians* considered Billy Higgins the perfect jazz drummer.

Billy, every time I hear you, I can't help but smile, and I know you're smiling too. Thanks for the great music and all the good vibes.



Drumset Warm-Ups

More Rudiments

by Rod Morgenstein



every drummer applies rudiments to the drumset, the most common being single strokes and double strokes. In my last article (August 2001), we played exercises that focused on one limb at a time, alternating single-stroke exercises, double strokes, and "mir-

ror image" patterns (one hand either repeating or playing the exact opposite of what the other hand plays). Let's continue by applying other rudiments to the drumset in unusual ways, in the never-ending journey to take our technique to the next level.

Exercises 1-4 consist of paradiddles. Paradiddles are popular rudiments that can be of tremendous value on the drumset.





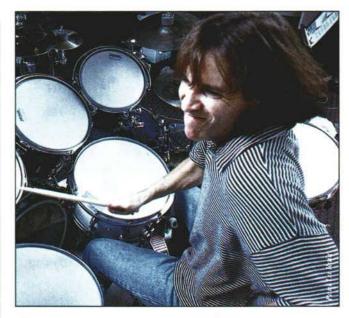




Paradiddle variations can also come in handy on the kit. Exercises 5-8 consist of a paradiddle-diddle, double paradiddle, triple paradiddle, and flam paradiddle respectively.











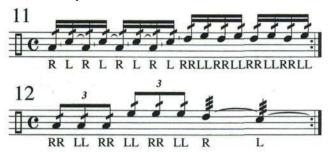
The roll is another staple of the drumming world. However, the vast majority of drummers seem to confine "rolling" to the snare drum, and on rare occasion going "around the horn" (snare, tom one, tom two, floor tom) with a double-stroke roll. Exercises 9-12 suggest doing otherwise. Exercise 9 is a closed (multiple-bounce) roll moving from drum to drum in quarter-note intervals.



Exercise 10 has a different surface being played with each stroke.



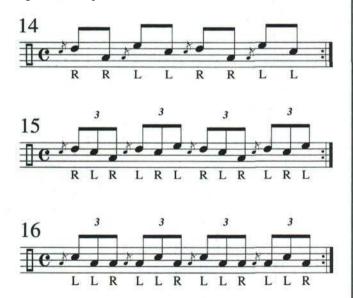
Exercises 11 and 12 also have a different surface played with each stroke, but alternate between a closed roll and open (doublestroke) roll every two beats.



A flam consists of a full stroke preceded by a grace note. This quiet grace note can be applied to the drumset in unorthodox ways. Exercise 13 is a flam with the full stroke played on tom one. On paper, it may appear as a simple pattern. But by placing the grace note on the snare with the opposite hand, the pattern becomes a nice challenge.



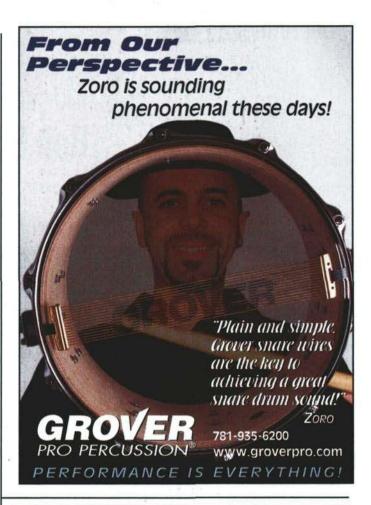
Exercise 14 is a flam tap, exercise 15 is a flam accent, and exercise 16 is a Swiss triplet. With each of these patterns, make sure the grace note is placed on the correct drum.

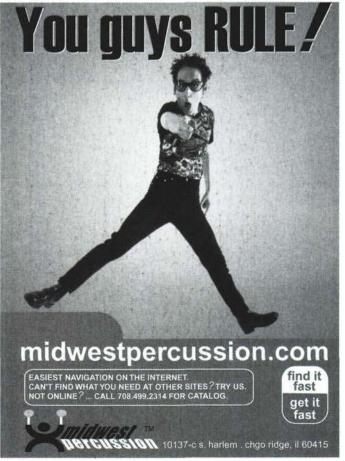


Don't forget, the basic idea behind all of this is to spend the first part of your drumset practice actually "warming up" on your drumset in order to increase your overall technical proficiency level.

Text excerpted from Rod's new Berklee Press book, Drum Set Warm-Ups.







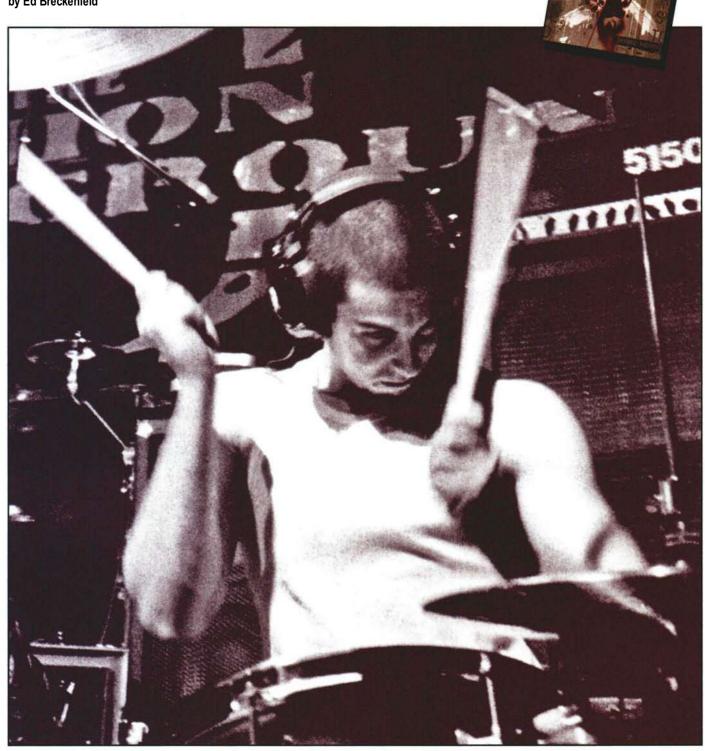


Linkin Park's



Hybrid Theory

by Ed Breckenfeld





inkin Park's platinum-selling debut album for Warner Bros. Records, *Hybrid Theory*, explores the modern rap/alternative hybrid. As MC Mike Shinoda trades with vocalist Chester Bennington, drummer Rob Bourdon plays off, around, and over

machine patterns. Bourdon's solid drumming "brings the rock" to the band's musical mix.

"Papercut"

The album's opener begins with a few bars of a drum loop. Then Rob crashes in with his own version of the pattern.

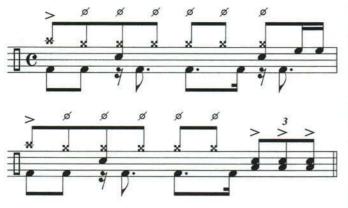


"One Step Closer"

Linkin Park's first single features this groove and quick fill.



During the climactic "shut up when I'm talking to you!" segment, Rob bashes louder on his hi-hats, while slightly varying the beat and fills.



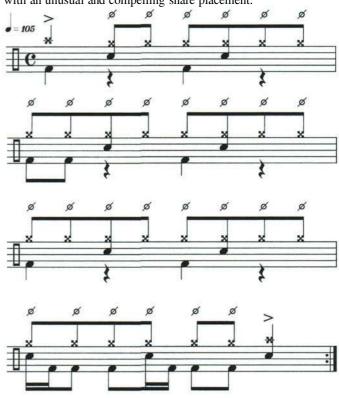
"With You"

Here's another syncopated pattern, this time with an offbeat snare thrown in.



"Crawling"

Rob's main drum part for this hit tune is a four-bar sequence with an unusual and compelling snare placement.



"Runaway"

The intensity builds steadily in this song, starting with a tight hi-hat verse groove.



Rob pounds out a jarring tom rhythm under the "gonna run away!" vocal chant.



Finally, the message is driven home at the song's end by a quarter-note snare beat.





Drums & Wires

Part 1: Drummer, Empower Thyself!

by Dave Hill

he house is packed, and the bodies are is on Stanton's face as the groove moves

moving to the filthy funk of New

Orleans' own Galactic, an instrumental funk and vocal soul combo powered by the steadfast rhythms of Stanton Moore. As the drums push the speaker cones about, the dancers look on to see what expression accompanying the band.

The audience hushes to listen even more carefully as the other darker, heavier drum tones replay the syncopations Stanton has been dishing out over the jam's last few minutes. The pulse is still undeniably Stanton's, carrying the essence of his New Orleans second-line roots. But now he's playing his rims and shells as a percussion instrument, complementing his original drum parts to create another layer.

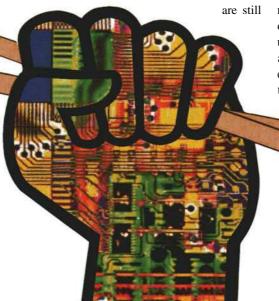
Just a few nights later, super-drummer Matt Chamberlain's "Zappa-esque" instrumental band Critters Buggin' takes the very same stage. He too employs some live

loop-dropping techniques, by creating, triggering, and mixing in recorded drum and percussion loops underneath his deftly accurate yet organic-feeling drumset grooves. (Those grooves have landed Matt heavy record dates and tours with Fiona Apple, Tori Amos, The Wallflowers, Pearl Jam, Macy Gray, and Edie Brickell.) At night's end, a troop of drummers and other curious musicians hang out close to the stage, trying to get a glimpse of Matt's live looping secrets while taking note of what skins, electronics, and effects he is currently using. In the past several years, advanced tech-

nology has affected even the most acoustic of instruments. Now many drummers are using technology to enhance both their live and studio performances in new and interesting ways. Many drummers are finding their own strengths as composers, arrangers, and producers as

Many drummers are finding their own strengths as composers, arrangers, and producers with electronics. You too may find that you possess an aptitude for creating and playing with drum machines, electronic drums, rhythm loops, and hard-disc recording tools.

> from subtle to downright nasty. Surprisingly, they see Stanton's arms are moving contrary to the beat. In fact, his sticks are dancing on the rims, yet the kick and snare sounds





Our Artists:

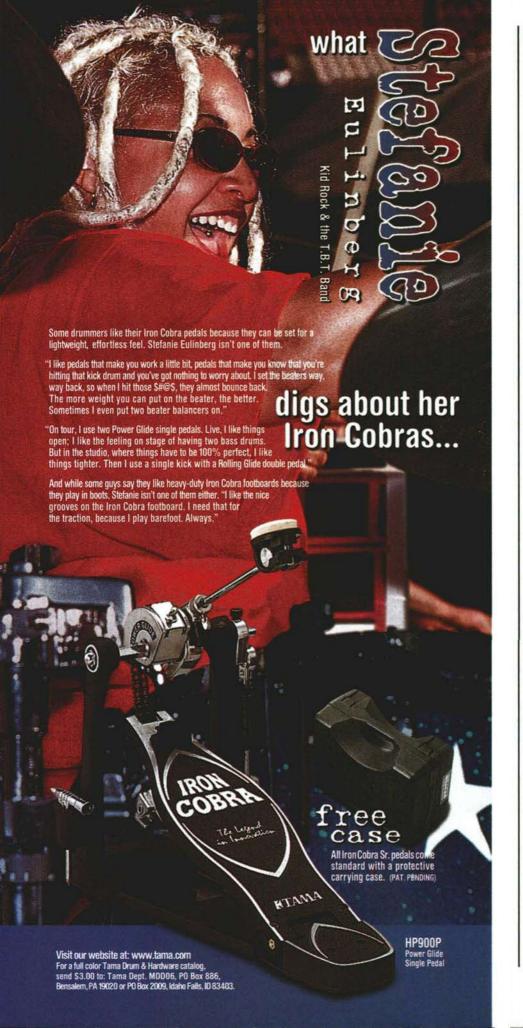
Carmine Appice (with Tim Bogert, Vince Martell, and Bill Pascalli), Cindy Blackman (with J.D. Allen, Carlton Holmes, and George Mitchell), Virgil Donati (with Dave LaRue, Tony MacAlpine, and Derek Sherinian), Gene Lake (with David Fiucznyski, Fredrico Pena, and Reggie Washington), Billy Martin (with G. Calvin Weston), Stanton Moore (with Charlie Dennard, Brent Rose, and Brian Seeger), Gary Novak, Lenny White (with Geri Allen, Donald Blackman, Jerry Brooks, John Dryden, Nick Moroch, Antoine Roney, Wallace Roney, and Buster Williams), and The Drums Of Black Bottle (Liam Chalmers, Andy Gillespie, Gordon Hastie, Jackie Houlden, Garry Montgomery, Alan Parker, John Walker, and Scott Young)

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they integrate new music-production software and hardware into their arsenal of music gear. Drum machines, keyboards, sequencers, samplers, and even computers have become common tools of the trade.

Drummers are learning that loops and electronics can even boost their own expression and musical vision in the same way an amplifier or effects unit adds dimension to a guitar or keyboard instrument. By learning the language of loops, samples, and electronics, drummers can reach a whole new audience, endear themselves to an entirely new group of artists, or—most importantly—empower their own drumming.

"Drums & Wires" is a new series of articles intended to demystify technology and inspire players seeking out new sounds and music-making approaches. This month we'll start out simple by defining and clarifying some general terms and concepts. But hold onto your hats, because soon enough we'll be delving into worlds that can expand your musical palette—and your creative power—further than you may have ever dreamed.

What's A Sample?

A sample is a recording. No more, no less. The recording may be long, but is often quite short. And it's common that the sample's original source may be completely unrecognizable (and occasionally illegal).

When artists speak of sampling, they are referring to digital recordings of sounds, grooves, or sections of music, which they intend to use to add to their own music. The sound may be repeated continuously to make a loop, which is often done with drum or percussion tracks. Or a sample can be triggered one time (called a "one-shot"), as is often done in a drum machine, sound module, or keyboard.

In fact, virtually all drum machines, keyboards, and sound modules (with the exception of synthesizers) are sample-playback machines. When you hear John Blackwell triggering electronic drum sounds with Prince, he is using percussion "one-shot" samples to simulate, or even exactly replicate, the sounds on his latest record.

What's A Loop?

By replaying a sample continuously, you are looping. Static or non-changing loops can be a real drag to listen to—then again, they can also be meditational. Drum loops

Electronics can boost a drummers expression and musical vision the same way amplifiers and effects units add dimension to a guitarist's sound.

are undoubtedly the most common form of loops, as a result of our instrument being among the most difficult to record accurately—and arguably the most inspirational for songwriters to work with. In a live setting, bands like Nine Inch Nails may drop in a four-measure drum loop to enhance what their acoustic drummer is playing, while bands like Galactic or Critters Buggin' may create live loops (sample recordings) as musical beds for live improvisation.

For another coy example of how drummers are using samples (loops) live, consider former Living Colour drummer Will Calhoun, on tour with Pharoah Sanders. Will often samples bits and pieces of live performances by the group, using a small, portable, and inexpensive sampler (approximately \$200). On the next gig, he'll then trigger these samples to create collages of loops consisting of as many as eight different samples, which he orchestrates with a foot-controlled volume pedal. (See "Dealing With Loops," February 2001 MD.) Imagine the look on Pharoah Sanders' face as he hears his licks from the previous night swirling out of the speakers again. For instrumentalists anywhere, loops can be inspiring to play along with.

Loops are also prevalent in studio environments. There, heartless and obnoxious click tracks can be replaced with percolating percussion beds or musical samples that give drummers some feeling to play along with while recording basic rhythmsection tracks. When recording with Tori Amos or Fiona Apple, Matt Chamberlain will often make his own loops to play along with. He may sample a small section of his drumming during a pre-production jam, or he might create an electronic drum bed using software (like Rebirth 2.0, www.propellerheads.se) on his laptop. And while the "scratch" loops may or may not make the final recording, their feel is implied by what the other instrumentalists recorded to them.

Some studio drummers are expected to enhance or even completely replace loops by adding their live feel and textures to the music. Artists like Gene Lake (D'Angelo, Maxwell, Screaming Headless Torsos) and Curt Bisquera (Mick Jagger, Elton John) are continually hired to re-create the original vibe the composer used in creating the song to a loop—but also to take the music to a new level by adding their live acoustic drums and cymbals.

Drum Machines

Drum machines can also be used to generate a sequenced loop. This is done by programming patterns or sequences to trigger sampled one-shot sounds (contained in most contemporary drum machines). The library of sampled one-shots (sounds) contained within the drum machine usually comprises factory sounds. However, many small samplers can be used as a drum machine, and some powerful hardware sequencers like the Akai MPC 2000 can import your personal samples as well as sequence them.

Most drum machines contain a number of factory-preset rhythms and fills (samba, rock, country, etc.), as well as open areas where you can write your own beats. You can also program a combination of beats into "songs," thereby constructing the entire rhythmic bed of complete pieces—which you can access later by simply pressing "play." Onboard effects are also often included, such as reverb, delay, and the ability to detune individual instrument sounds.

Some drummers like to program 16thnote percussion grooves to play along with. Such loop-like sequences can temporarily free drummers from their traditional timekeeping duties. In other words, since the machine is laying down a consistent groove in time, the drummer may express himself by pushing or tugging at the time. A good example of this is Manu Katche's work with Peter Gabriel.



Electronic Drums

Electronic drums essentially require three components to work as a complete instrument: a trigger, a MIDI interface, and a sound module. A trigger is usually a Piezo sensor placed on a playable surface (like gum rubber, plastic, or nylon) that picks up vibrations' timing and intensity when struck. A MIDI interface transforms this trigger's data (timing and velocity of the stroke) into MIDI note and volume information. That information is then sent to the sound module or sampler, which houses the sounds.

Improvements in electronic percussion technology over the past several years have given drummers extreme flexibility in the selection of sounds and feel of the triggers. Roland's V-Drums, Boom Theory's Spacemuffins, and Pintech's pad kits made great strides towards approximating what drummers expect a "drum" surface to feel like. By using stretched nylon and foam components instead of gum-rubber or hard plastic, the pads on these kits are more conducive to playing music. Their accompany-

ing sound modules and MIDI interfaces have also been radically transformed, giving drummers maximum flexibility in accessing high-quality and hip lo-fi sounds.

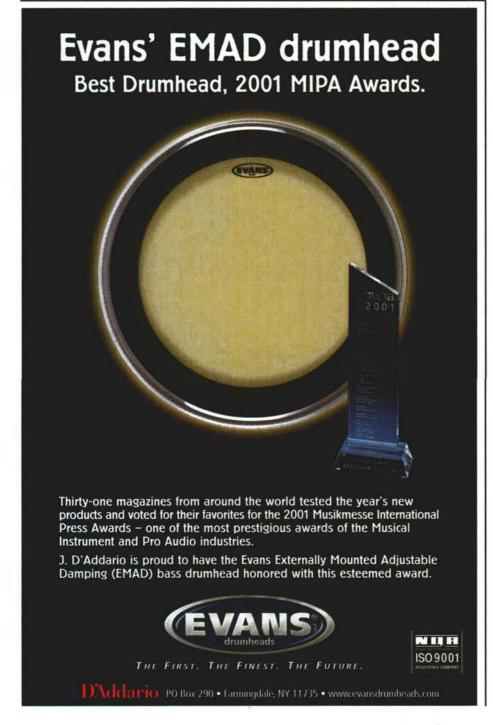
While "Vegas acts" or church groups may skirt volume issues by using electronics, the true value of electronic drums is that they give drummers access to all of the world's wonderful banks of samples. Using their sticks, drummers can play melodies, trigger vocal parts, and change drumkit sounds in mid-song. Thus electronic drums open doors into new types of musical expression.

This is not to say that every drummer should use electronic drums. But they are a viable option for musical rhythms and, yes, drum parts. Artists like Pat Mastelotto (King Crimson, XTC) rely heavily on electronic drums. Pat's e-drums are routed through a digital mixer to access electronic sounds, samples, and loops, from which he creates new King Crimson music. Pat can also re-create older tunes using some of drummer Bill Bruford's original sounds. In November 2000, MD discussed how John Otto of Limp Bizkit integrates electronic drum triggers into his acoustic set in order to access drum and percussion samples.

Computer-Based Music

It's official: "Pro Tools" has become studio lingo. As has "Mac," "PC," "plug-in," "soft synth," "Logic Audio," and manualsfull of other new tech buzzwords. The expression "fix it in the mix" has never been so apropos. Within the past several years, digital recording and editing has become commonplace. For a couple hundred bucks (or less), you can use professional audio software to record, edit, and otherwise manipulate audio tracks. And while digital recording has not completely replaced the legacy of analog tape, it has allowed low-budget studios to flourish (for better and worse) by granting access to powerful PC and Mac professional audiorecording tools.

The aforementioned software packages are more revolutionary than ADAT tape recorders and more powerful than any portable 4-, 8-, or 16-track ever designed. Pro Tools takes advantage of the simultaneous digital recording movement as well as the Mac-versus-PC competition. Recording engineers and musicians alike have found that by using Pro Tools and



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other software applications, they have increased control and flexibility in recording, processing, editing, and even mastering digital material. And all this comes at a fraction of the expense and space inherent in traditional analog studios.

Recording on a computer (digital recording) is yet another form of sampling. But this time, the recorded sounds become visible. Computers enable audio signals to be seen as a series of squiggly lines called waveforms. These waveforms can be edited in much the same way a Microsoft Word program can cut, copy, paste, format, and delete text. This may involve looping a section of audio that worked better than another section, moving a stray kick or snare beat closer to where the drummer may have intended to place it, or applying digital delays at the exact tempo of the track.

In recent months, several drummers have related in these very pages how an increasing amount of their studio work involves computer manipulation. Joey Waronker (Beck, R.E.M.) often brings to sessions his own laptop loaded with software like Logic Audio, Pro Tools, or Acid Pro, allowing him to interact with the recording by personally editing or re-mixing his parts. And in this month's Woodshed, Orgy drummer Bobby Hewitt explains how he not only composes and records entire songs on computer, but creates films of his band-strictly via keyboard and mouse! These drummers and others like them have found computers invaluable to their craft.



The Horizon?

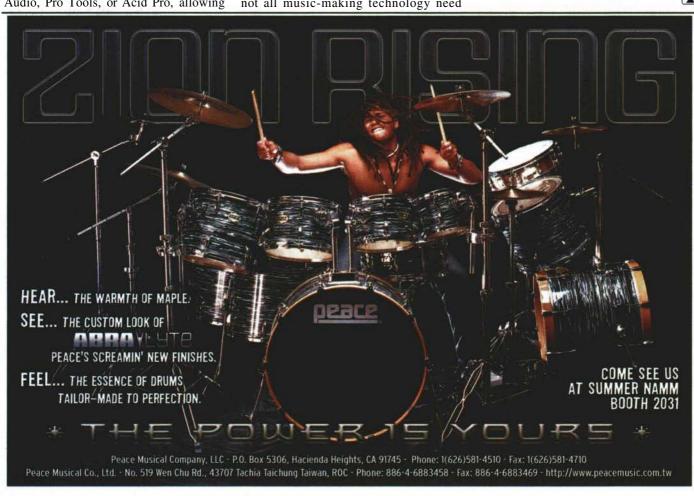
Just as each drummer sets up his drums and cymbals in his own unique way, he also develops preferences as to which sampler, effects unit, or software to employ. Knowing what tools are available, and what is on the horizon, is part of what Modern Drummer is all about. And while not all music-making technology need

make its way into your woodshed, you may find that you possess an aptitude for creating and playing with drum machines, electronic drums, rhythm loops, and hard-disc recording tools. Sure, the lingo, the sheer breadth of equipment, and the cost can be daunting. Such is the nature of stepping into any uncharted territory. But the potential riches you'll find there can pay you back in creative freedom and musical influence many times over.

In future "Drums & Wires" articles we'll look more in-depth at each area of technology affecting drummers. Our goal is to educate and inspire you about music-making technology—while remembering that our passion for music and drumming is what has gotten us this far, and will dictate what is to come.

Former Seattle multi-tasker Dave Hill has worked extensively with drummer Michael Shrieve (Santana), and is currently drumming, programming, and composing in New York City. Dave can be reached at www. bannervision.com/davehill.









Understanding The Language Of Music

Part 1: An Introduction

by Ron Spagnardi

T ave you ever noticed how many of the H world's most musical and influential drummers have had a deeper understanding of music, and some experience on another instrument? Take, for example, the piano skills of Jack DeJohnette and Philly Joe Jones. Then there's Elvin Jones' guitar playing...Joe Morello's early training as a classical violinist... Louie Bellson, Tony Williams, Mike Portnoy, and Stewart Copeland's composing and arranging abilities...Phil Collins' and Don Henley's songwriting talents...Max Roach's understanding of theory and harmony, and Alan Dawson's skill on vibes.

I think we might all agree that learning a secondary instrument, combined with an understanding of the language of music,

"If you want to know what's going on around you and contribute to the process of making music, you need to know more than 8th notes on the hi-hat and a snare drum backbeat."

> can help make you a more musical drummer. When you know more about melody, harmony, scales, and chords, you become more of a total musician. And as a total musician, you're much more valuable as a drummer in just about any musical situation.

> There's really no need to be in the dark when your keyboard player says, "Let's substitute a Db9 chord for the G7 on the fourth bar of the chorus." Or when your guitarist suggests a I, VI, II, V chord progression at the bridge. If you want to know what's going on around you and contribute

to the process of making music, you need to know more than 8th notes on the hi-hat and a snare drum backbeat.

There are many ways to obtain the knowledge you need. Guitar is a great instrument for understanding more about chord progressions. Learning bass can help you understand why your bass player chose a particular line on a tune. However, I've found that a general understanding of a keyboard instrument tends to be the fastest, easiest way to pick up on the basics.

Once you grasp the mechanics of keyboard, it's like having an entire orchestra at your fingertips. Melody, theory, harmony, and chord progressions all come together right there in front of you. The keyboard offers an opportunity to visually and aurally get a handle on scales, voicings, and chord structure. You also learn why certain things work musically and others don't, in accordance with the rules of music that have been handed down. A deeper knowledge can add to your appreciation of different types of music—and have a major influence on how you relate to your bandmates from a musical perspective. And if you've ever had the desire to write or arrange, it can open the door to that as

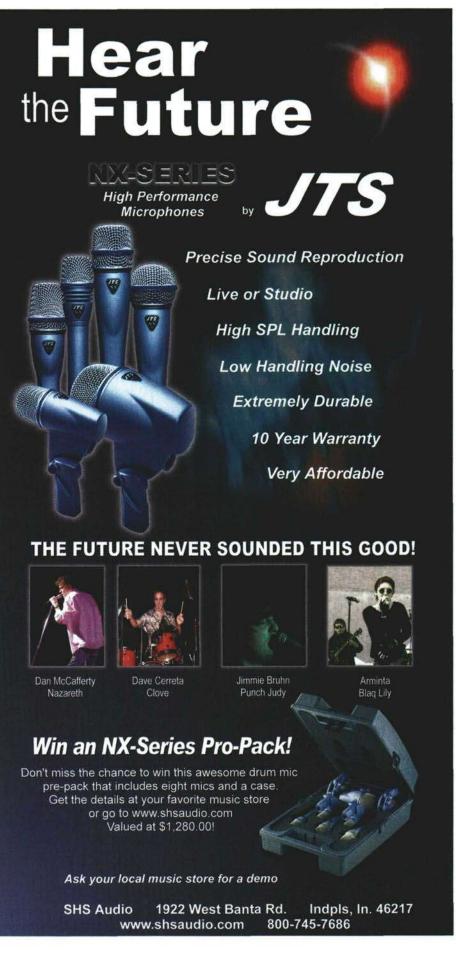
In order to gain maximum benefit from this series of articles, you'll need access to a keyboard instrument. A piano would be the obvious first choice. However, an organ, synthesizer, or a simple, five-octave portable keyboard unit (61 keys) will suffice. It's essential to see, hear, and practice the wealth of information that'll be presented here during the months ahead.

For those who feel they have little time in their schedule to learn another instrument, bear in mind that it's not our purpose to turn you into a virtuoso keyboard player. Helping you to understand just the essentials of music theory via the keyboard is our only objective here.

Over the next few months, we'll be discussing many things you may have heard of before, but never really understood. We'll be shedding light on key signatures, scales, intervals, inversions, the Roman numeral system, diatonic harmony, chord structure, progressions, voicings, alterations, extensions, and more. We'll start out with the basics and gradually proceed to a more advanced level. Sure, it's a lot to absorb. But it should be no more difficult than when you had to master the doublestroke roll, or develop your hand and foot coordination.

Next month we'll begin with keyboard recognition and note names. Study and practice the assignments each month, and you'll be amazed at how quickly your understanding of theory and harmony will expand. Who knows? Eventually, when your keyboard player calls for that Db9 chord on the fourth bar of the chorus, not only will you know what he's talking about-you may even be able to suggest an A minor instead!

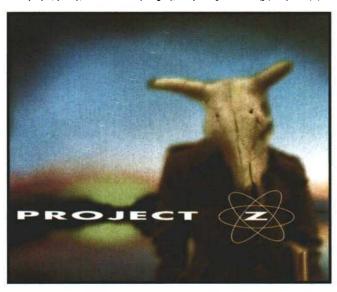




RECORDINGS

ProjectZ ProjectZ

Jeff Sipe (dr, perc), Count M'Butu (congas), Jimmy Herring. Derek Trucks (gtr). Ricky Keller (bs). Rev. Oliver Wells (org)



Jeff Sipe (Apt. Q-258) has been showcased with Col. Bruce Hampton & The Aquarium Rescue Unit, Jonas Hellborg, and Jazz Is Dead. Project Z offers some of the most exciting musical circumstances yet for Sipe's tremendous talent and imagination. Teamed with the current king of jamband guitar-slingers, Jimmy Herring, Sipe is in heaven, taking off on his freewheeling rhythmic tan-

gents or sparring with the playful guitarist. On the opening rocker "Raging Torrent," Sipe shows more moves on the cymbal than Alan Iverson off the dribble. The drummer plays the wickedest cross-stick on "Yachtz," showing propulsion and grounding at the same time. Sipe is a showman, but he's all about the music. (www.terminusrecords.com)

Robin Tolleson

8 Blues Traveler Bridge

Brendan Hill (dr, perc), C. Kinchla (gtr). John Popper (gtr, vcl).



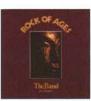
This is for college radio; this is for mainstream media. You'd have to have a heavy chip on your shoulder not to like this band. Veteran

group Blues Traveler draws on the jamband ethic and knows how to harness it in songs with great hooks. The vocal heritage casts an eye as far back as folkster Cat Stevens, as does the drumming, which is "Pretty" Purdie-like in its funkiness. Brendan Hill's cleanly recorded, chunky grooves and crystalline ride patterns keep these songs dancing. Hill seems to have an innate understanding of how to play lots of knickknacks drummers like to hear without getting obtrusive. He can really nail it yet keep it light at a slower tempo, as on "Rage," then hop over the coals in "You're Burning Me." And Brendan makes a significant loan to the library of drum sounds with the detuned snare in "Pretty Angry." (A&M)

T. Bruce Wittet

SIGNIFICANT REISSUES

The Band, Billy Cobham, and Philly Joe Jones



The years have taken their toll on the interpersonal relationships of The Band. (The surviving members don't have too many kind words for leader Robbie Robertson.) But the music stands. The final four albums recorded with the original lineup between 72 and 77—Rock Of Ages, Moondog Matinee, Northern Lights-Southern Cross, and Islands-comprise an uneven lot of live, cover, and new material, but there are still gems to be found. Like the music of The Band—oddly out of time and stubbornly individualistic—Levon Helm's drumming can be an acquired taste. His is not a pop style; he plays, sings, and looks like an old Civil War codger, but Lord, what a groove! Like popcorn bursting in hot oil, Helm dances in everything he plays, whether swinging, shuffling, or dropping a sprightly rock groove under The Band's rootsy rambles and

exotic Southern styles. Levon's drums are pure 70s, all taped up and dead-sounding. But his sound, gait, and style are timeless.(Capitol)

The Wounded Bird label recently reissued Billy Cobham's Crosswinds, Solar Eclipse, and Shabazz. Rhino's new two-CD set Rudiments: The Billy Cobham Anthology covers some of the same material, with two unreleased tracks (killer jam "All 4 One" from Spectrum and "Neu Rock N' Roll" from disco-suicidal A Funky Thide Of Sings), plus choice cuts from later Cobham albums stretching to 1978. CD 1 constitutes some of the finest jazz-rock ever recorded, with hard-edged improvisation pile-driving Cobham's challenging yet melodic compositions. Billy's late-70s albums remain un-reissued, so CD2 is a good taste of his rolling thunder meets serpentine melodic stew. Less improvisational but still blistering tracks include "Life & Times," "29," "Earthlings," "Hip Pockets," "Juicy," "Arroyo," and cheesy disco foolishness "Do What Cha Wanna." (Rhino)





For several years Philly Joe Jones was out of the public eye, returning in 1977 with Philly Mignon, reissued here. While not on the level of his legendary recordings with Miles Davis, this is nonetheless a solid straight-ahead album filled with excellent drumming. "Confirmation" kicks things off, Philly's driving swing pushing the soloists throughout, until he trades with the band briefly and takes an energetic solo. "Neptunis" relaxes things in an easy, late-night, mid-tempo way. The standout track, though, is "Jim's Jewel," with a Latin feel both driving and subtle, some deft hi-hat work, and fluid solo spots. Though he may have been less visible for a time, Philly Joe's playing never faltered, and it's nice to have this album available again. (Pacific Jazz/Capitol)

Ken Micallef and Martin Patmos



8 Staind Break The Cycle

Jon Wysocki (dr), Aaron Lewis (vcl), Mike Mushok (gtr). Johnny April Ibs)



Unlike many so-called nu-metal bands, Staind leave their mark with versatile, catchy, and heartfelt songwriting. Add in sharp musicianship, including the crisp and sometimes wonderfully splashy drumming of Jon Wysocki, and you have a winning formula on the band's second album, *Break The Cycle*. (Many of you probably agree, considering the record was *numero uno* on the *Billboard 200* chart at press

time.) On "Pressure," Wysocki's tasteful chops perfectly complement the thudding bass and emotive vocals of Aaron Lewis. The record only gets better. On the stirring and somewhat Police-y "Fade," Wysocki's ride cymbal, snare, and rimshots mesh nicely with Mike Mushok's melodic guitar. Then "It's Been Awhile" raises the ol' neck hairs with unforgettable singing and stunning power chords. Sure, you can call *Break The Cycle* great nu-metal, but you'd be more correct to call it great rock. (FipElekta)

Jeff Perlah

The Code Figli Di Baia

Paul DeLong (dr), Armando Borg (perc), John Pelosi (gtr), Richard Evans. Marco Luciani, Rick Fellini (kybd). Patrick Kilbride Ibs). Paul Christoper Caldeira (vol., perc)



This Canadian band loves to blow, and their Figli Di Baia is an honest, tasty, and entertaining fusion disc. Drummer Paul DeLong starts "Enable This" with a drum flourish before rocketing it into orbit. "As If" begins with a playful, free-form duel of synth guitar and drums, and jets to Rio for an extended vamp. DeLong distinguishes himself in many different settings. On "Invisible Cities" he makes the bars of 5/4

flow as smoothly as the 4/4s, and when it's time to take it out at the end, he creatively subdivides and conquers. And on the straight, funky groove of the Brecker-ish "Corner Pocket," he lays it down real solid, with a hint of new jack swing. Nice job. (www.thecodesite.com)

Robin Tolleson

Stabbing Westward Stabbing Westward

Andy Kubiszewski (dr), C. Hall (vcl). J. Sellers (bs), Walter Flakus (kybd)



Purveyors of power pop with palpable urgency and the big snare, Stabbing Westward has Tom Lord-Alge written all over it. This means dense but clear mixes and killer drum sounds. Fortunately, SW has the big songs to match, each one pandering and radio-friendly: lots of acoustic guitar, gentle vocals, and even a vibraphone patch set against a massive pad of guitars and keyboards. There's not a lyric

here anybody will commit to history, but at least it's got attitude and memorable melodies. From the opener, "So Far Away," drummer Kubiszewski establishes himself as murderously effective at mid-tempo driving rock. Elsewhere he's an enthusiastic participant, contributing percolating fills. Credit must go to the drummer for the fabulous pickup to "Wasted"—four strikes on half-opened hats. Brilliant, and it perfectly introduces the Duane Eddy-style guitar theme. (Koth)

T. Bruce Wittet

Mammoth Volume A Single Book Of Songs By...

Nicklas Andersson (dr, perc, vcl), Jurgen Andersson (vcl), Daniel Gustafsson (gtr, kybd), Kalle Berlin (bs)



The rowdy Mammoth Volume certainly lives up to its name, but that's not the whole story. This guitar-fueled Swedish quartet also blends pensive acoustic and keyboard-based moments into its assault on your speakers. And there's some pretty crafty thinking behind the songs on *A Single Book*, the band's second LP. Without being grandiose about it, Mammoth Volume navigates tricky time signatures

while maintaining a rough-edged rock 'n' roll snarl. Call it prog without pretense. Call it stoner rock for the grad-school set. Call it what you like—the stuff kicks. Nicklas Andersson matches MV's immense guitar riffs with equally huge hi-hat-swaying beats, favoring power over intricacy. He firmly makes his point with streamlined 8ths and 16ths, and always supports the exotic contours in the music. (The Music Carlet)

Michael Parillo

LIGHTING THE FUSE

8 Coryell, Smith, Marcus, Eckhardt

Count's Jam Band Reunion

Steve Smith (dr), Kai Eckhardt (bs), Larry Coryell (gtr), Steve Marcus (sx), Jeff Chimenti (kybd)



Before fusion became popular in the early 70s, there was a community of players in NYC in the mid-to-late '60s exploring jazz-rock. Two of the lead-

ers of this movement were guitarist Larry Coryell and sax great Steve "The Count" Marcus. This recording is a reunion of these two now-legendary artists, with the help of drum master Steve Smith, who had recently worked with both artists on separate projects. The music is an interesting restructuring of the authentic sound found in early fusion. Smith drives the tunes with a loose, jazzy feel that typifies the sound and feel of the early emergence of jazz-rock drumming (which derives its major influence from Tony Williams). Smith is a scholar in this field and does an outstanding job bringing a unique art form into the limelight again for future generations to discover and expound upon. (Tone Center)

B David Fiuczynski's Headless Torsos

Amandala

Gene Lake (dr), Daniel Sadownick (perc),

Fima Ephron (bs), David "Fuse" Fiuczynski (gtr)



Guitarist David "Fuse" Fiuczynski has created a unique organic/electric fusion, style with his Headless Torsos project.-The album features a

very raw-sounding production that highlights the musical talents of the players, as opposed to an over-processed sound where the production masks the subtleties of creativity. Much credit for this particular project must be given to drummer Gene Lake, as he recorded and comixed the album and wrote the very funky track "Leftovers." Gene's expressive fusion-style drumming, along with excellent percussion accompaniment from Daniel Sadownick (who also wrote two killer tracks), gives this adventurous instrumental music a lush landscape of acoustic colors that creates a spiritual depth beyond basic grooves. The rhythm section is funky and out front in the mix. The overall vibe is complete creativity. Yes! (www.torsos.com)

Mike Haid

Tony lommi lommi

Matt Cameron, Dave Grohl, John Tempesta, Jimmy Copley, Kenny Aronoff, Bill Ward (dr), Tony lommi (gtr), others



Tony lommi, a guitar icon in heavy metal music since his days with Black Sabbath, has a new solo record that is as much for drummers as it is for guitarists. On each track here, Tony shares space with a different artist and one of several top drummers. "Laughing Man" opens with Henry Rollins on vocals and Jimmy Copley laying it down on drums. "Meat" features Skin with White Zombie drummer John

Tempesta pounding some very heavy, tasty drum fills. "Goodbye Lament" features Dave Grohl on vocals and drums, along with Queen's Brian May on guitar. On "Time Is Mine," Matt Cameron (who plays on the most cuts) puts down a slow, heavy crawl over Phil Anselmo's dark, haunting vocal. "Black Oblivion" features Billy Corgan on guitar and vocals and Kenny Aronoff laying down some of his heaviest playing. Other standout tracks include "Who's Fooling Who," with Sabbath bandmates Ozzy and Bill Ward, and "Into The Night," with Billy Idol and, once again. Matt Cameron. Fans of heavy rock will welcome this CD into their collection. (Divine/Priority)

Billy Amendola

Badenya-Les Freres Coulibaly Seniwe

Souleymane Coulibaly, Ousseni Coulibaly, Lassina Coulibaly, Kalifa Diarra, Abdoulaye Diarra (perc, vcl), others



Full of fire and brawn, the music of the Coulibaly brothers (and several family members) delivers a spirited sound of percussion and voice rooted in West African tradition. The siblings from Burkina Faso have accompanied plenty of high-profile stars, including Youssou N'Dour and Miles Davis. But this stripped-down drum & voice format lends crackling purist intensity. A tight, aggressive multi-djembe attack dom-

inates, supported by strong balafon lines and soaring ensemble vocals. In an attempt at Afro-pop accessibility, a couple of cuts inject programming, only serving to squelch the full boil. But once the reins are removed, spontaneity is restored and an irrepressible spirit wins over. (Trace)

Jeff Potter

WHAT IN THE WORLD

6 Mahotella Queens Sebai Bai



A tribute to three heroes of African music who were associated with Mahotella Queens over many years, Sebai Bai brings

together vibrant vocals in the South African urban style known as Mbaquanga ("dumpling"). Solid traps from Theko Masithityane and percussion by the world-renowned Xavier Jouvelet lend to the infectious grooves. (Indigo)

Istanbul Oriental Ensemble

Caravanserai



Percussionist Burhan Opal has put together a wonderful group of musicians in an effort to preserve the soulful repertoire of 18th and 19th

century gypsy music from Turkey. Violin, oud, clarinet, kaval (flute), and an amazing kanun (plucked zither) player, along with darbuka player Ekrem Bagi, make this recording soar. (Network)





WHAT IN THE WORLD

Beausoleil Looking Back Tomorrow



Bon temps roller! (Let the good times roll!) describes this new CO from Beausoleil, now in their twenty-fifth year. Recorded at The Barns Of

Wolf Trap, Looking Back Tomorrow captures the live energy of this Cajun/Creole band. Drummer Tommy Alesi and percussionist Billy Ware, as well as bassist Al Tharp, provide solid support for the heartfelt vocals, accordion, guitar, and fiddle. (Rhino)

8 Tarika Soul Makassar



Inspired by a visit to the island of Sulawesi, where roots to Madagascar go back 1,500 years, singer-songwriter Hanrita has put togeth-

er an amazing album that combines the old and the new, a living tradition. Masterfully produced by Sabah Habas Mustapha and featuring nearly everyone involved on some form of percussion, Soul Makassar is a perfect blend of African and Indonesian music. (Triloka)

David Licht

8 Amorptiis Am Universum

Pekka Kasari (dr), Pasi Koskinen (vcl), Esa Holopainen, Tomi Koivusaari (gtr), Niclas Etelavuori (bs), Santeri Kallio (kybd)



Finland's Amorphis have progressed considerably since their smoldering extreme-metal debut, 1992's Karelian Isthmus. On their latest album the band seems barely concerned with pummeling our eardrums anymore. Instead, songs like "Alone" and "Shatters Within" combine progressive experimental space-rockery with catchy songcraft. Holding together the group's guitar- and keyboard-

drenched wonderment is the steady drumming of Pekka Kasari, whose staccato patterns occasionally recall drum giant Simon Philips, and whose tasteful approach differs greatly from the convoluted skin-bashing of many brute-metal makers. On the dramatic "Drifting Memories," Pekka's steady foundation supports compelling vocals, beautifully toned lead guitar, and horn elements reminiscent of Lizard-era King Crimson. This is a unique and wildly creative album. (Relapse)

Jeff Perlah

Vienna Art Orchestra Artistry In Rhythm, A European Suite

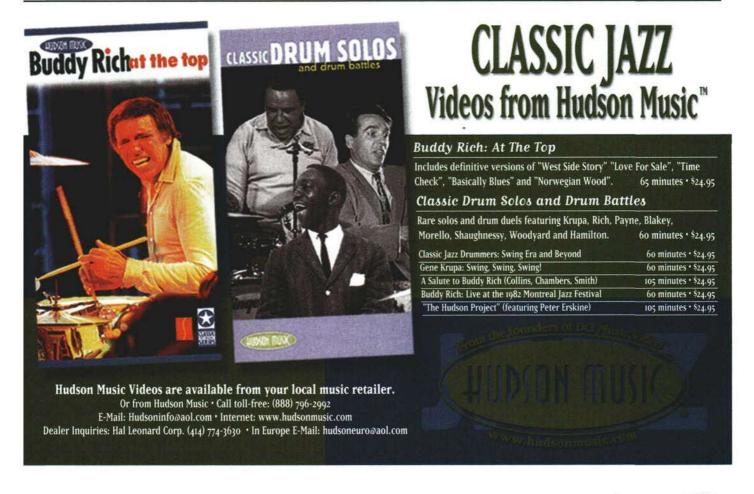
Jojo Mayer (dr), Patrice Heral (perc), Franck Tortiller (vbs), Robert Riegler (bs), Andy Scherrer (sx), Thorsten Benkenstein, (trp), Adrian Meats, Christian Radovan (tik), Arkady Shilkloper (fr ho), Ed Partyka (tba), others



Vienna Art Orchestra is a twenty-year-old institution featuring some of Europe's finest musicians. Blending jazz, fusion, and classical, they're captured in full heat in this live set from Switzerland. The opener blasts off with breathtaking metric modulations. Drummer JoJo Mayer grabs this rhythmic twister by the tail and makes some storming excitement. The remainder of the suite provides a forum for first-rate

soloists. JoJo keeps it seamlessly grooving with an intense edge. Known stateside as a frontrunner in New York's live drum 'n' bass club scene and for his swinging work with Monty Alexander, as well as the harrowing cult superfunk / fusion of Screaming Headless Torsos, JoJo proves here that he can just as mightily propel twenty-three pieces. (TCB/Allegro)

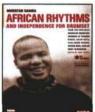
Jeff Potter



BOOKS

S African Rhythms And Independence For Drumset

by Mokhtar Samba, edited by Dan Thress level: intermediate to advanced, \$24.95 (with CD)



As Mokhtar Samba explains in the introduction to this excellent book, there were no drumset players in African bands as recently as fifteen years ago. But by now an African kit tradition has been established, and Samba—who's played with, among others, Youssou N'Dour and Jean-Luc Ponty-takes the clearest, most direct route toward explaining it to a new audience. Much like Afro-Cuban drumset patterns, the exercises in

African Rhythms are hand-percussion phrases adapted for the kit. The book is divided into six sections according to regional musical style. (Mali/Guinea, Senegal, Cameroon, and North Africa are represented.)

Many of Samba's beats feature fairly simple mechanics, while some of the polyrhythmic material is downright tough. (Wisely, difficult rhythms are broken up into building blocks.) Either way, the patterns can be tricky for those not used to African concepts like, say, the placement of hi-hat accents in Gnawa music. The exercises also require a particular loose-limbed feel that falls between straight and swung time. That's why the companion CD is pure gold: On it, Samba plays many of the book's beats, with and without hand-drumming accompaniment. This ensures that the student never drifts too far out to sea. Samba often ends the recorded examples with short fills that are not written into the exercises. Though this may be confusing at first, the fills give the player an idea of how to authentically embellish what is presumably an exotic drumming style. (Music in Motion Films, www.mimfilms com)

Michael Parillo

In Session With KornTranscribed by Tim Goodyer level: intermediate to advanced, \$24.95 (with CD)

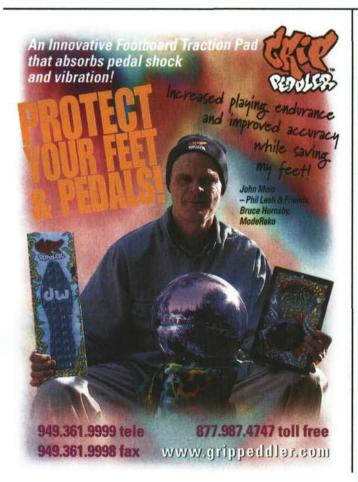


Fan of Korn or not, you have to admire the drum parts of David Silveria for propulsion and creativity. He's taking the concepts of spreading the beat around the kit like Steve Smith, while packing the power of a Matt Sorum, Silveria is quick to point out in an opening "thank you" section that it's not his actual tracks you hear on the accompanying CD. Rather, the drums have been re-recorded to make it easier to hear his

parts. But they seem pretty accurate. (I imagine Silveria would be squawking if they weren't.) Both Martin Shellard (music arrangement and recording) and Tim Goodyer (transcriptions and text explanations, made easier with very pleasing graphics) did a fine job.

In Session With Korn gives the reader a chance to dissect and conquer six fun Korn jams, including the devilishly funky "Freak On A Leash," the grunge-ska of "Got The Life," and grind of "Shoots And Ladders." This is your chance to fit one of your grooves around the buzz-saw guitar of "Justin," match wits with the slow rhythmic twists of "Pretty," or smack the kit in time with the undulating rhythm guitar of "A.D.I.D.A.S." It's a challenge, and a lesson, and a lot of fun. (Warner Brothers)

Robin Tolleson



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Feet Don't Fail Me Now! by Michael Packer

level: intermediate to advanced, \$12.95



This isn't a double bass drum book, but rather a series of foot studies aimed at the drummer who wants to develop independence skills and soloing techniques, concentrating on the lower limbs. Any serious student with a working knowledge of different styles of music and good facility on the pedals should be able to jump right in. Feet Don't Fail Me Now! seeks to take students past just being able to get by in a groove, and into the realm of operating "freely" in a style. The

book encourages students to be able to improvise, go way off the feel, even play counter to it with the hands, while keeping the groove solid in the feet. Packer, a faculty member at the Los Angeles Music Academy, offers different foot ostinatos to set up grooves and solos in rock, jazz, Afro-Cuban (tumbao), Brazilian (baiao), shuffle, and march styles, with a variety of note groupings and accents. These are fun to play, and are easy to just get lost in. A mastery of foot ostinatos will give any player a leg up (so to speak) on jamming in many different styles. (Hal Leonard)

Robin Tolleson

To order any of the books reviewed in this month's Critique, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, call Books Now at (800) BOOKS-NOW (266-5766)

or surf to www.clicksmart.com/moderndrummer. (A handling charge may be added, according to product availability.

The Best Of Dave Matthews Band For Drums

Transcribed by Jimmy Kuehn level: intermediate to advanced, \$18.95



Carter Beauford's intricate drum parts are something to behold. Analyzing them in detail is worthwhile for drummers who want to dig into what the instrument can do. This book presents ten of the best-known songs in The Dave Matthews Band's catalog (not including cuts from their new album). The drum parts are transcribed flawlessly and completely, and the book could serve as a primer on rhythmic possibilities. The music is presented with complete lyrics and

melody accompaniment, which is a wonderful way to visualize the parts. But the songs spill over way too many page turns for the drum parts to be used as charts. It should also be noted that because there is no text in the book, beginning and intermediate students will need help from a teacher to learn Carter's advanced licks. (Cherry Lane)

Ted Bonar

CORRECTION

The contact information for The Art Of Blues Drumming, which was reviewed in the July 2001 MD, is http://people.atl.mediaone.net/bluzbeat.



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The Practice Of Drumming

Another Viewpoint

by Billy Ward



Practicing is an interesting concept.
Tibetan monks practice meditation daily to quiet their minds. Doctors practice their medical skills. As for musicians, "He practiced on the bandstand" is a phrase and idea that is shunned. It means that the particular musician was overplaying, or at

> least not playing "in the moment."

> Let's take a minute to think about our practice habits. Have you ever worked hard on your practicing, dedicated hours of concentrated work towards getting better at the drumset, and then on the gig experienced as much clumsiness as ever? I'm starting to wonder if when we practice working out of drum exercise books or on

difficult licks, we're shutting our ears out of the musical act. When learning to do a difficult pattern, we're simply teaching our body to behave a certain way. Sometimes when I practice those kinds of things, I feel like one of the Apollo chimps or a hamster in a cage. If I can just play that 32nd-note triplet with my feet, the light'll go off and I'll get fed—or get that gig I want.

Is it possible that when we work hard at our practicing, we're only becoming better practicers rather than better players? I've read that our human brain has two sides—a logical side and a creative side. I'm starting to think that practicing involves the side of our brain that is logical, the non-creative side. But when we're on a gig, we are playing—feeling the audience, feeling the other bandmembers, and feeling our own way as we play each song.

When things are right and I'm enjoying playing, I almost feel like I'm hovering in the air. I'm up there on kind of a creative tightrope. I think we should practice being on that creative tightrope so it isn't a strange, unfamiliar feeling when it happens. For this, we need to be practicing playing instead of practicing practicing!

Why practice practicing? Well, duh...we all have to learn to drum if we're going to be drummers. But some folks like it so much, they're always figuring out new

Is it possible that when we work hard at our practicing, we're only becoming better *practicers* rather than better players?



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ways to do harder things on the drumset. Sure, it can be fun to see these technicalwonder musicians tear off unbelievable licks at music stores and clinics. It's even possible that there are bands somewhere that will let them display their amazing skills.

There's room in this world for everyone, so if you're really into technique, go for it. It's fine to work on technical things. Being able to execute our ideas is a part of our art. If a drum book or instructional video helps motivate and guide you to better technique, that's wonderful. When I was a teenager, I practiced endlessly on technical matters. I worked on things like stronger hands, and faster, more accurate rudiments. Also, reading skills and independence were important to me. These days, though, I accept the amount of technique that I have, so my practicing is focused on playing.

Sometimes I think drumming is like driving a car-it's that basic. When I was fifteen and learning to drive, driving a car seemed to be a fairly difficult thing. Now I don't have to think about it. Making music involves technique and vision, and when they match, it's art. If you can fully accept and embrace the amount of technique you

already have, you can go for a drive!

In my book, Ringo Starr is a great example. When I listen to those Beatle records, I realize how musical pop drumming can be. It all becomes about where you want to go. To add just a bit more, I'll never forget a concert pianist telling me that Mozart was harder to play than Rachmaninoff because Mozart's music, in its simplicity, is more exposed!

How Do I Practice?

Let's say I have an hour to practice. The first fifteen minutes is spent on some technical matter, which, in my case, is maybe practicing how I can pick up that mallet in the middle of a song and not drop a beat while doing it. Or maybe it's getting a nice relaxed single-stroke roll going. I include tuning my drums in this portion of improvement, or vacuuming the teeny bits of wood on the carpet under the snare drum! After that, I spend the next fortyfive minutes practicing playing.

First, I empty my brain of self-conscious thoughts and let my hands and feet start something. It's particularly interesting, but not necessary, if you limit the amount of "voices" that you're going to play with. I

love starting with just the hi-hat, snare, and bass drum. Or, another favorite, playing just tom sounds with the snares turned off. That easily becomes very melodic and enchanting.

So I start playing. Since I'm not thinking, the odds are that it's in 4/4 time because I love 4/4 time and I don't have to think to play it. So, it has begun—I'm listening to what's unfolding from the drumset, almost witnessing the drumming. As a witness, I hear something (that accidentally happened) that sounds cool. So I step in with my brain and tell my hands and feet to repeat that groovy part I liked. I then repeat it successfully and move on...or, more likely, stumble at this point.

At some point there's always a stumble, probably because the sticking wasn't worked out. (After all, I wasn't thinking!) So I go to that passage and figure it out. I've just learned a lick that my ears asked me to play. This is a lick that didn't come from a book or a mathematical equation. It came from my ears. Totally cool. I resume my playing as soon as possible.

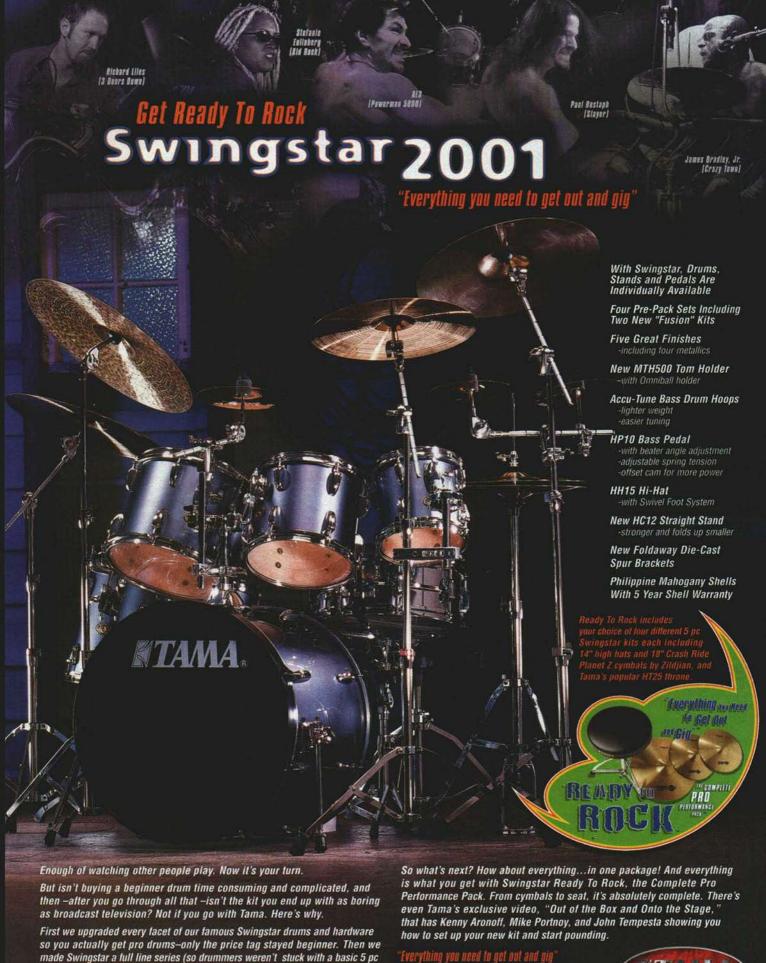
Sometimes, over the course of a few weeks. I'll remember some of the new things that I've been learning and I'll repeat them in another practice/playing session. These things become my vocabulary, a part of my uniqueness. When I get up on the bandstand or I'm working in the studio, I'm less nervous because of my practice/playing moments. Even if I haven't had a gig in weeks, I've been play-

I've found that in the last few years I've gotten a bit better at this kind of practicing. I even do it in my clinics—I'm now willing to risk a certain amount of embarrassment to demonstrate practicing in front of people. Practicing playing will, in my opinion, contribute to your musical self whether your technical level is a skateboard—or a race car! Give it a try. Let's become better players rather than better practicers.

Billy Ward is a successful session and touring drummer who has worked with a long list of major-league talent, including Carly Simon, Robbie Robertson, Richard Marx, Yoko Ono, Ace Frehley, John Patitucci, and Bill Champlin. He is currently on tour with Joan Osbourne. Billy can be reached at his Web site, www.billyward.com.



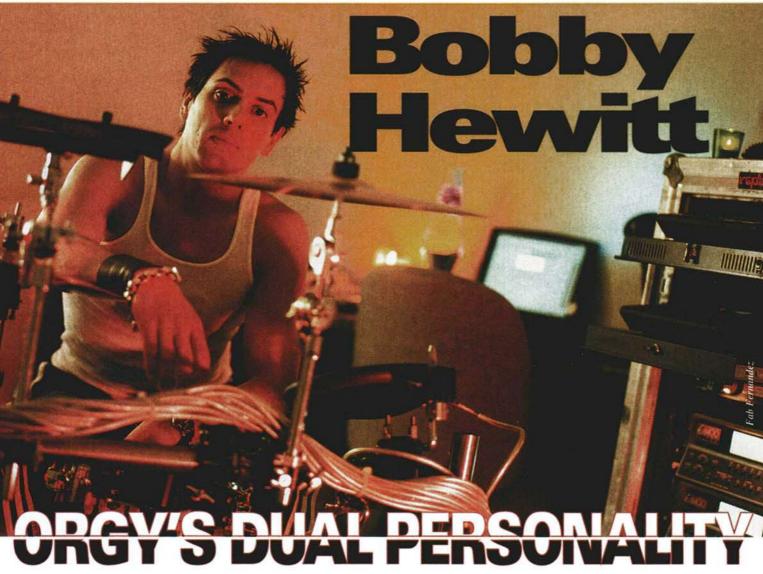




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set that basically goes nowhere). So as you grow as a player, so can your set.

Swingstar 2001



by Will Romano

sobby Hewitt, drummer for the gloomglam-metal band Orgy, is two people in one. There's the side he shows the world, and another he keeps private, tucked away.

One part of Hewitt drives vintage vehicles. He goes on stage with a splash of blonde in his hair and just the right amount of eyeliner. He lives in the San Fernando Valley with his wife, Shannon, the ex-porn star formerly known as "Shane." What else would you expect?

If we're talking about Bobby Hewitt, expect a lot more. Underneath all the makeup is a soft-spoken guy whose words and deeds belie the band's debauched moniker.

"I keep my sanity by living away from Tinseltown," confesses Hewitt, thirty-two, who lives in Granada Hills, California. "I get enough Hollywood on the road. I don't want

that in my house."

Modern Drummer caught up with Hewitt to discuss his home setup while Orgy went on a mini hiatus. It seems the band's synth guitarist, Amir Derakh, came down with a case of mono, and the remaining dates of the band's national tour were postponed. "That's okay, though, because our one-year-old son, Gavin, is just about ready to walk," gushes Hewitt. "It's given me more time to spend with him, and I can teach him the drums. We bought him a tiny electronic kit and we're working on getting him an acoustic set. I'm thinking we could get a band together with Tommy Lee's two sons."

When not hatching plots involving former Motley Crue drummers and their sons. Hewitt is practicing in his drum studio, a spare bedroom on the second floor of his two-story house. "This room was going to be a nursery, so that's why the walls are bright green," says Bobby, who claims to have done all the handiwork in his house. "It was also formerly a business office, complete with bamboo sheeting covering the walls."

Into this space Hewitt has crammed his Apple Macintosh G4 laptop computer, a 16track Mackie mixing board, floor monitors, a lava lamp, and his V-Drums—the same kit he uses both on the road and in the studio. "It gets loud in there," Bobby explains, "and there's one window that faces the neighbors. If they have a problem with the noise. they can tell me."

"A problem with the noise" is something critics have wrestled with for the past few years when trying to describe Orgy. The band's beguiling sound and image have given them the reputation for being tech geeks on the one hand, heavy metal-style rockers on the other.

The confusion was spawned by the group's electro-metallic debut *Candyass*, which went platinum, largely on the strength of their grinding cover of techno icon New Order's 1983 dance hit "Blue Monday." Somehow Orgy has been perceived as being made of metal and wires rather than flesh and blood. This is patently absurd, but an automaton image is something Hewitt doesn't shy away from. He revels in knowing all he can about electronics.

"I took a crash course in MIDI and samplers to figure out how to use my drums," Bobby says shamelessly. "Now people ask me questions about the V-Drums. I've even gotten to the point where I'm doing my own sampling. On our latest record, Vapor Transmission, I didn't use one factory sound from the V-Drums brain."

At first glance, Hewitt's V-Drums are deceiving. They look acoustic, but they're not. Bobby removed all of the internal electronics from the Roland pads, and attached them inside special shells made by Tama. And rather than the V-Drums' factory-issued heads, he employs permeable, responsive rubber/plastic mesh heads made by the

Swiss company Triggerhead.

"These heads make virtually no sound," Hewitt explains. "That's great for playing at home. As far as the shells go, they're custom-made out of Plexiglass. Tama drilled the holes and put the lugs on them. And DeMarzio made me silver guitar cables that attach to all the pads."

While he can't bring himself to play synthetic cymbals (Paistes of different sizes and textures get the call), Hewitt throws himself into a digital bath of drums. With the exception of his 20" Tama acoustic kick (which has two V-Drum triggers on it), all of Bobby's drums are electronic. He plays two "snares": a 12" and a 10" auxiliary; two 10" "toms"; four 10" pads used for loops; two 12" "floor toms"; and an extra "kick," which doubles as a snare, played with an inverted beater.

Bobby details his setup: "I feed my kick, snare, toms, and loops straight into a V-Drums brain, and then the cables are MIDled out [from the brain] into two E-Mu E6400 samplers. From the samplers, cables go out to the Mackie board, and then I have a power amp for the monitors. I flick the switches and I'm tearing the paint down."

When not messing around with V-Drums and samplers, Hewitt constructs songs on

his computer. "I run the Reason program for Mac," he explains. "It has a full mixing board, samplers, and a drum machine. It's insane. I can write a whole song and burn it to a disk without leaving this room.

"Lately, I've discovered video editing," Hewitt adds. "I've been wading through live footage and backstage stuff. For the song 'Fiction (Dreams In Digital),' I was filming as we were making the video. I kind of made a 'making of the video' myself—all from this room."





Getting The Most From Your Teaching Practice

by Rob Leytham

Every student has a different learning style. What works for one student won't necessarily

work for another.

f you had asked me fifteen years ago what I would be doing with my life, I would have said traveling the world, playing drums for the likes of Sting, Phil Collins, or Peter Gabriel. That's what I

> prepared my life for through countless hours of lessons, practice, and gigging.

> At that time, my teaching practice hadn't blossomed into what it is today. I now have eighty-five students on my private teaching schedule—each taking a half-hour lesson per week-with a waiting list. In my twelve years of experience as a private instructor I've learned a

lot of things. Here are a few thoughts that have helped my teaching practice grow.

Know Your Student

Teaching is more than talking drums and playing. You are quickly going to become a role model. You have to know your students as people. Find out what their goals are with these lessons. What style of music do they like, and who is their favorite band? Every student has a different learning style and a different level of self-esteem. What works for one student won't necessarily work for another.

The age group of my students ranges between seven and seventy-eight. My job is to customize the lesson to each individual student, and to make sure that they can play up to their best potential.

Stay Current In Music Changes

My musical taste lies back somewhere in the 1970s and '80s. Does that give me the right to go into the lesson saying, "Today we're going to study the work of Emerson, Lake & Palmer, and next week we'll do Genesis and Jethro Tull"? Absolutely not! Groups like Pantera, Korn, and Tool are inspiring the kids to play today. As a teacher, it's your job to know these groups so that you can explain the drum parts and



you'll hear some incredible drumming even if the rest of the music isn't to your liking. After the student has been taking lessons for a while, you can give a history lesson on the drummers of your time and before.

Make Your Studio A Fun Place To Learn

Your studio space should be a place where the student feels comfortable and inspired to learn. I have posters of famous drummers on the wall. In addition, every student is asked to bring a picture of themselves behind their drumset. These get pinned to the wall as well. I have colorful prints by Peter Max, black & white photos of Central Park, and a huge print of Bugs Bunny as a symphonic conductor. Anything to inspire. On my door I have a bulletin board on which I display "student of the week" achievements, along with bios of professional drummers. Also displayed is any article in Modern Drummer or *Percussive Notes* that is beneficial to learning.

My drumset and my voice are miked in order to record each lesson for the student to take home. The students get to hear themselves play, and the instruction won't be forgotten during the week. Parents also like to hear where their money is going, along with the progress their child is making.

Have a clock in the room. I used to hate

being in a lesson where the teacher looked at his watch keep your business growing. I set shortevery ten minutes. I always got the feeling he would

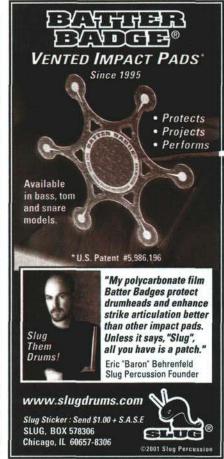
rather be somewhere else than with me.

Have occasional drum recitals. I try to throw two recitals a year. Parents love these. They feel the pride of seeing their child perform in front of other students and parents. We have also started recording the performances on CDs for the students and parents to have. Drum and cymbal companies that our store deals with are usually happy to send literature and giveaways, so the student performers receive rewards for their hard work. Since I've started doing recitals, attendance has grown from forty to over three hundred people. That becomes great advertisement for your business, since most of your new students will come from word-of-mouth referrals.

Be Prepared

The number of students on my schedule creates a more than forty-hour work week. To effectively teach these drummers, I put in an extra ten to fifteen hours a week preparing. This is my time to work on my own technique, honing my skills so I can effectively demonstrate the study. I do my best to stay current on new instructional videos and books in order to stay inspired and to find that new technique, beat, or fill to show to my kids. I'm also constantly listening to and buying CDs of world, jazz, and classical music for inspiration.

You have to set personal and professional goals to keep yourself motivated and





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and long-range goals for my teaching and my writing. Short-range goals include practicing, lessons, and book-promotion mailings. Long-range goals include book and magazine writings, student recitals, and clinics. You just have to look for the opportunities and not be afraid to act upon them.

This Is A Business

You need to be able to sell yourself. You need to convince prospective students and parents that your teaching will suit their needs better than that of any other teacher in town. Just don't be too arrogant, because that can be a major turn-off. Also, make sure that all the area schools and band directors know of your service. At the beginning of each school year, parents will go to the band director to ask who gives private lessons in the area. You want to be on that list.

Since you're self-employed, you need to keep accurate records of income and expenses. Income obviously includes payments for lessons. Provide receipts for all payments, whether cash or checks, and keep copies of those receipts. That way you know how much money you are making. Expenses include such things as studio rent, insurance, equipment purchases, and mileage. Keep a careful record of those too.

Get a tax accountant to answer any questions you have, and to help you file taxes quarterly. Be honest about what you write off, because the IRS loves to audit musicians. Also, get with a financial service or insurance company to set up a simplified employee pension individual retirement account (SEP-IRA). This will enable you to set aside money for retirement. All the money you put in now is deducted from your taxable income, which will save you on current federal and state taxes.

Appreciate What You Do

Do I still have dreams of playing drums for my heroes? Of course I do. But once I step into my studio and start teaching, I thank God for the opportunity to influence so many young lives. Truthfully, I wouldn't trade my job for anything else in the world.





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MD's Undiscovered Drummer Contest Winners

Gustavo Meli



It's been said that music is the true international lanquage, and that rhythm is the universal alphabet. That was never more apparent to those of us at MD during this

year's Undiscovered Contest screening. Along with hundreds of entries from across the US, we also had dozens of impressive entries from other countries all over the world. Tops among those—and ultimately among all contest entries—was the submission of Mendoza, Argentina's Gustavo Meli.

Gustavo's style combines the fluidity and independence of Latin drumming with the flash and precision of Americanstyle fusion. He also throws in some impressive rudimental chops, some hip showmanship, and a wild left-hand ride technique played with traditional grip! His talents won him not only the over-eighteen category in the Undiscovered Drummer contest, but also an invitation to appear at MD's Festival Weekend. Opening the show on Sunday, May 20,

Gustavo ably demonstrated that drumming talent knows no geographical bounds. Although his English was limited as he thanked the crowd for their enthusiastic ovation, his drumming had already spoken volumes.

Back home in Argentina, Gustavo is a busy player, teacher, and clinician. He tours the country doing clinics for Mapex drums, and is also a Zildjian and Pro-Mark artist.

Ilan Rubin



At the ripe old age of twelve, Ilan Rubin has already had a career that drummers twice his age would envy. A drummer almost since infancy, Ilan displayed enough groove and solid time by the age of

seven to convince his older brothers that he could handle the drum chair in their pop/punk band, F.o.N.

And handle it he has. His drumming has entertained and amazed thousands of fans in the band's home base of

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Southern California. What's more, two years ago llan set a record by being the youngest performer to appear at Woodstock '99. He's also already done two (!) Vans Warped tours.

Perhaps it's not surprising that such a "veteran" drummer would have the technical and performance skills necessary to



MD Editor/Publisher Ron Spagnardi (left) congratulates the contest winners.

win the under-eighteen category of this year's Undiscovered Drummer Contest. But the truth of the matter is that Ilan's contest entry—impressive though it was—didn't really display the full range of his talents. He saved that demonstra-

tion for MD's Festival Weekend. With a combination of blazing hand and foot speed, musical creativity, and a great sense of groove, llan left the Festival audience on its feet and cheering.

Besides his burgeoning career with



Ilan and Gustavo warmed up for their Festival performances by trading licks backstage.

F.o.N., Ilan has already impressed the percussion industry as well. He currently endorses Orange County Drum & Percussion drums, Paiste cymbals, Remo heads, Kit Tools sticks, and Beato bags. Not bad for a kid who's still looking forward to junior high school!

Honorable Mentions

Competition was especially keen in this year's Undiscovered Drummer Contest. The judging came down to a final round, with the entries of several extremely talented individuals vying for the final win.

With that in mind, Modern Drummer would like to recognize drummers who, although they did not ultimately win, displayed outstanding musical creativity, technical ability, and performance skills.

In the under-eighteen category, honorable mention goes to Marcus Gilmore of

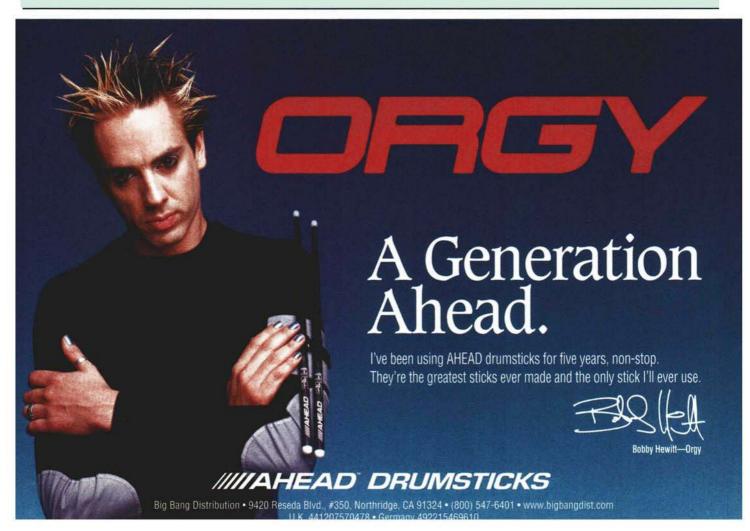
Hollis, New York, and Justin LeDuc of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. In the eighteen-andover category, honorable mention goes to Rogerio Jardim of Long Beach, California and Derek Roddy of Deerfield Beach, Florida.

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

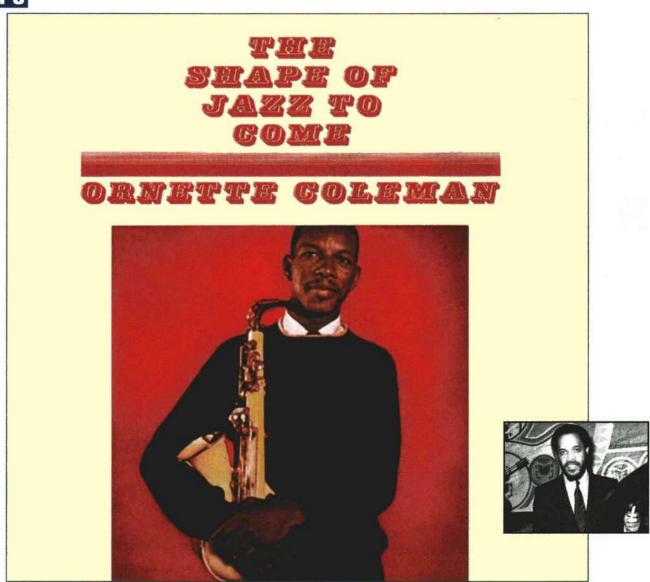
name and age, along with your playing style(s), influences, current playing situation (band, recording project, freelance artist, etc.), how often and where you are playing, and what your goals are (recording artist, session player, local career player, etc.). Include any special items of interest pertaining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

ment 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.









Ornette Coleman The Shape Of Jazz To Come

Billy Higgins (dr), Ornette Coleman (al sx), Don Cherry (cornet), Charlie Haden (bs)

Lonely Woman • Eventually • Peace • Focus On Sanity • Congeniality • Chronology

art of what made Ornette Coleman's music so revolutionary is what it didn't do. A great thinker, Ornette made the world safe for free jazz by dispensing with chordal instruments and freeing soloists from the tyranny of harmonic concerns. Many listeners were not so thrilled with such "developments." Fortunately, people like John Coltrane got what Coleman was saying. Subsequently, the emotional and technical palette that jazz (and other) musicians had to work with became a whole lot bigger.

The Shape Of Jazz To Come was the first of several albums Ornette recorded for Atlantic Records between 1959 and 1961. It still amazes today. The compositions are supremely cool. The solos go places. And the stuff grooves like mad. As "avantgarde" as this music is, it's still quite accessible.

Because Coleman's sound was so different, the communication between his sidemen was implicit in its success. Drummer Billy Higgins, a sensitive player if ever there was one, knew that the best way to support these tunes was to do just that-support, not use them as some excuse to be all freaky.

Now, just because it isn't way out there doesn't mean it ain't deep. Check out Shape's opening cut, "Lonely Woman." Higgins' ride cymbal accompaniment during the head-now that's something you can swing from. Then Billy punctuates the B section with sort of rough 'n' tumble rolls that almost sound wrong, but perfectly complement the mood of the piece. "Eventually" and "Congeniality," Charlie Parker-fast and frenetic, feature Higgins

and bassist Charlie Haden literally becoming one instrument. Scratch the horns, and you'd lose very little of the power. "Peace" is all sweet brushes and subtle dynamics. "Focus On Sanity" ends with an excellent Higgins solo that, like the tune itself, could be the soundtrack to a cab ride through lower Manhattan, minus the fear factor.

There isn't a tune on The Shape Of Jazz To Come called "Sympathy," but you could easily imagine one. The cohesion and communication among Ornette's bandmembers not only made this album an avant-garde pillar, but guaranteed it would remain an inviting listening experience over forty years on.

Adam Budofsky



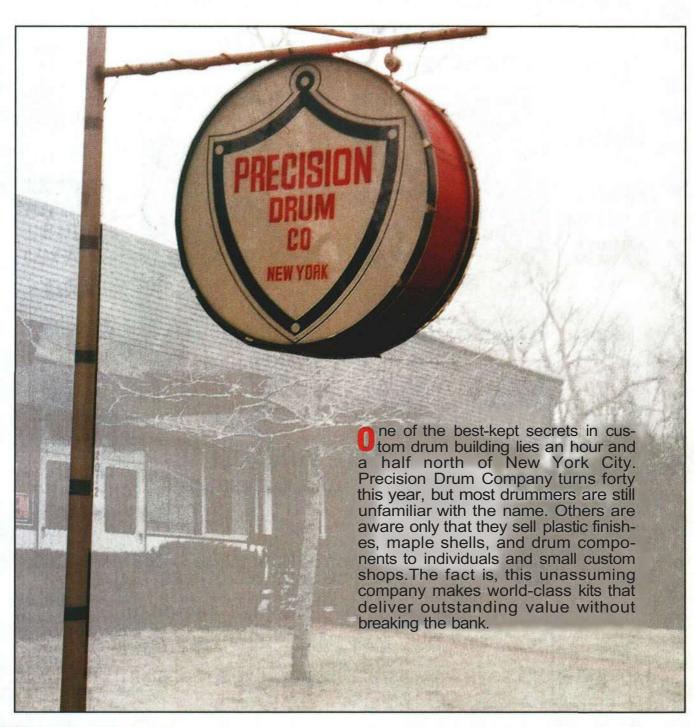




Precision Drum Company

More Than The Sum Of Its Parts

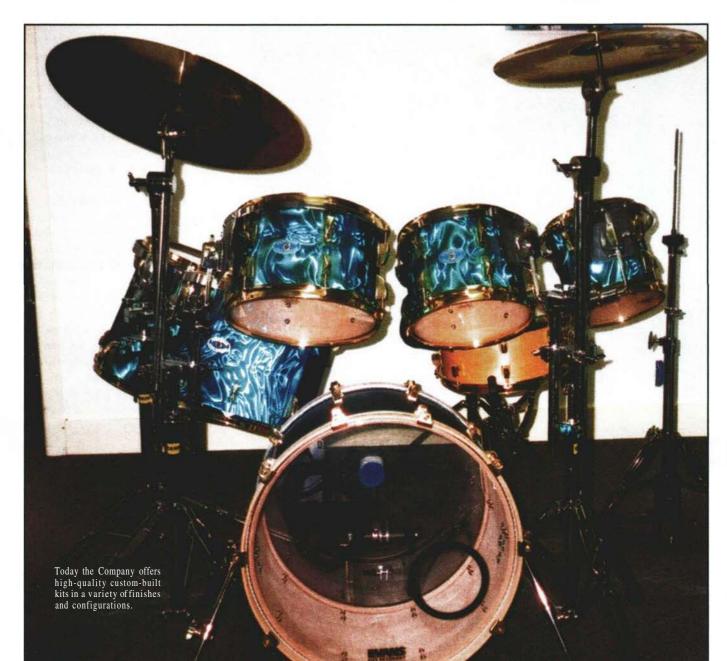
Story by Kate Goldsmith Photos by Rich Goldsmith

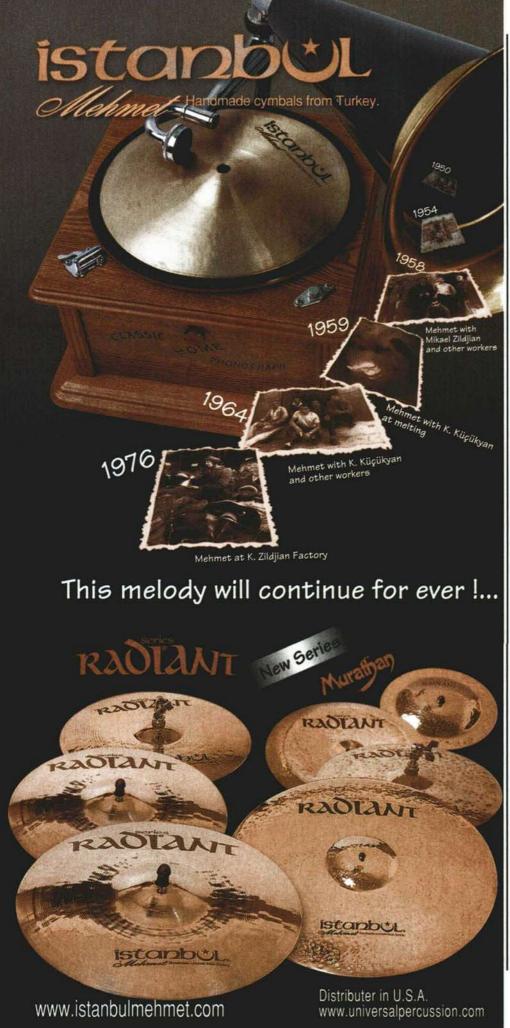


The customer actively participates in his or her drumset's design from day one, making detailed decisions that are usually reserved for famous drummers with endorsements from major manufacturers. But the most singular aspect of the Precision experience is that prospective customers are encouraged to visit and play a variety of sample kits, which are set up in the facility's showroom in Pleasant Valley, New York.

Originally a home-based, mail-order business selling plastic finishing in Yorktown Heights, New York, Precision has benefitted from a controlled and logical evolution. Founder George Folchi, a drummer himself, began building snare drums







for customers upon request. "I read an article by [drum builder] Jim Corder that explained how to cut bearing edges," George remembers. "I corresponded with Jim, and he gave me instructions on how to cut a snare bed."

Around 1986, Folchi added drumshells to his inventory. Not long afterwards, Precision became a distributor of Keller shells. Custom drum-building was the logical next step in the company's development.

A design engineer for IBM at the time, George used his experience to build the specialized drum-making machinery that the company still uses today. Assisted by sons George Jr. and Gary, he would drill the holes in the shells and cut bearing edges. If a customer wanted to do the work himself, free advice flowed generously.

"The beginning of our shell work was largely guys adding a single piece to their existing kits," explains Gary. "They came to us because we had access to all these vintage colors." Because Precision would do the basic shell construction (ply work, reinforcement rings, and bearing edges) for a good price, requests for unfinished shells flooded in from across the US, Canada, and Europe.

While extremely grateful for their past success with components, the Folchis are eager to present themselves as craftsmen who have a finished product to rival any other. A proud George Folchi Sr. says, "We've been hiding our light under a bushel. We've built many sets for people-both locally and through mail order-and the feedback has been very positive." Thus far, orders for complete kits have come solely through word-ofmouth recommendations. Although Precision still plans to offer all previous services, their future focus will be on promoting their expertise in drumset construction.

A Solid Foundation

Precision works exclusively in maple. Customers have the flexibility of choosing four different shell thicknesses: 5-, 6-, 8-, or 10-ply. The former will have the warmest sound and the most resonance. "It's a soft attack," says Gary Folchi. "With thicker shells, you get a little bit crisper attack, a different-sounding resonance, and a little

From Today's Hot Young Players...

.Danny Carey (Tool), Taylor Hawkins (Foo Fighters), Ginger Fish (Marilyn Ianson), Kevin Miller (Fuel), Tyler Stewart (Barenaked Ladies), Tré Cool Green Day), Stefanie Eulinburg (Kid Rock), Tommy Stewart (Godsmack), Al 3 Yowerman 5000), Dave Buckner (Papa Roach), Tony Fagenson (Eve 6), Paul oucette (Matchbox 20), Samantha Maloney (Hole/Mötley Crüe), Jon Fishman Yhish), Abe Cunningham (Deftones), Greg Eklund (Everclear), sPaG //Judvayne)...





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brighter sound. The differences are subtle; you really have to listen for them. The drums also *feel* different to play."

George Jr. agrees. "With thinner plies you're actually getting some movement in the shell. I don't know how measurable it really is, but a 3/8"-thick 10-ply shell is not going to expand the way a thinner shell will. So it's going to be felt as a much sharper reaction against the stick, with more sound projection."

Precision knows that bearing edges can make or break a drum's sound, so they pride themselves on doing them right. "We offer what we call our 'standard' bearing edge, because we feel that it's the best edge," says Gary. "But we'll cut any bearing edge that our machines are capable of cutting in order to achieve the sound that a customer is looking for.

"One of the things that I believe makes us unique," Gary continues, "is that we literally build each customer's kit for that customer alone." After the shell basics are worked out, the customer chooses drum dimensions, what style of lugs will go on the kit, where the snare throw-off will be placed, the type of suspension, and the color and type of finish (selected from more than forty plastic finishes, lacquer paints, or wax). A choice of wood or metal rims is offered on all drums. (See the sidebar to get an idea of what a Precision kit might cost.)

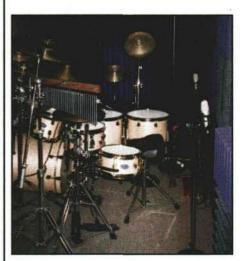
Every kit's vital statistics will be filed and kept for future reference. "We just started serializing all drums sold in complete kits," explains Gary. "We're keeping a record of serial numbers, matching the drums to their owners."

On average, a kit will be completed in three to four weeks. A lacquered kit might take a little longer, because Precision doesn't do that work in-house. Instead they send it out to a specialist. In an effort to keep transport costs more in line, the Folchis recommend shipping the kits unassembled, so that the shells can nest together.

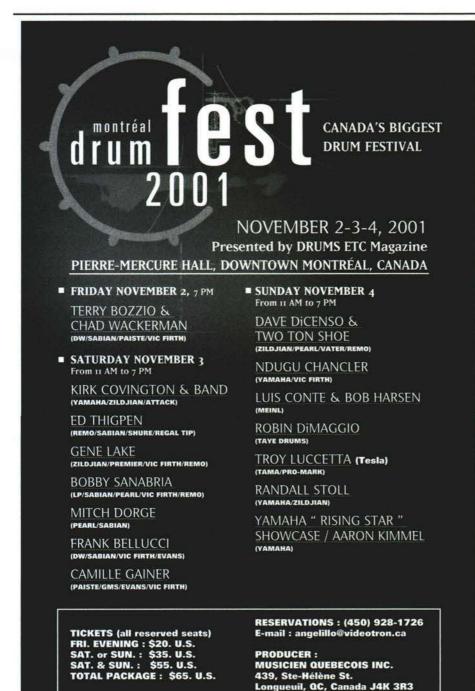
Precision also offers a cost-effective way to get a new kit. "We often work with people who already have hardware," says Gary. "They'll save the lugs, rims, and mounting brackets off of their old kit and re-install them on the new shells we prepare for them. To accommodate customers like that, we will drill for any hardware."

Committed To The Customer

Precision has a "sky's the limit" attitude that brings some interesting business their way. For example, they recently created a



An isolated recording booth helps Precision evaluate the sound of their drums.







Unique designs and size configurations are a Precision Drum Company specialty. The kit at left features drums that nest inside each other for easy portability. The kit at right utilizes small drums and a multiple-suspension mounting system to create a kit with a small footprint but a big sound.

30-ply snare drum for a customer in a local band. This very thick shell produces a crisp, tight sound with low resonance.

When the renowned and innovative Blue Man Group wanted four 6'-high bass drums, they contacted Keller for the shells. But Keller doesn't have the capability of making one-piece shells that tall, so they referred the order to Precision.

Drummers who rely on public transportation to get to their gigs would appreciate the convenience of Precision's threepiece portable kit. Many manufacturers have their own variation on this popular theme, but Precision will adjust the depth of the bass drum so that a snare drum can

also fit within. A drummer could theoretically carry all of his or her gear in just two bags: one for drums, one for hardware and cymbals.

In addition to the workshop and the showroom, Precision's building includes a recording booth, where valuable research & development takes place. Says Gary, "We record drums all the time. We have a foam-isolated sound room where we can hear the drums accurately, without the effect of the room. As a result, we're becoming more and more familiar with what works well."

Besides George Jr. and Gary Folchi, Precision's shop employs three other men.

Speaking Precisely

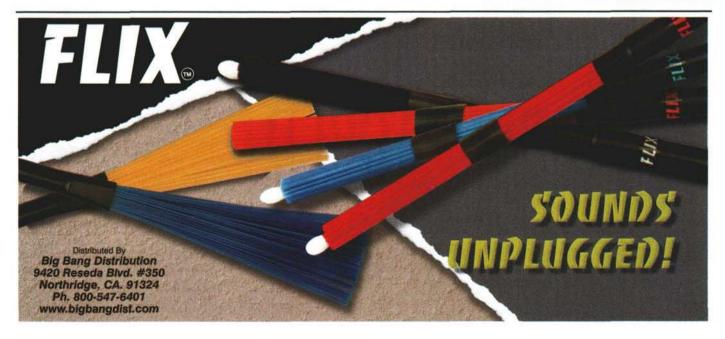
To get a rough idea of what a Precision drumkit will cost you, here are a few configurations. Your actual total would depend on a number of construction considerations.

16x20 kick drum, 8x10, 8x12, and 14x14 toms, and 5 1/2x14 snare drum. Two toms mounted on kick using RIMS mounts. Heads of choice. Wax finish. \$2,085

18x22 kick drum, 10x12, 11x13, and 16x16 toms, 5 1/2x14 snare drum. Two toms mounted on kick using RIMS mounts. Heads of choice. Plastic wrap finish,

Compact Traveler

16x16 kick drum, 8x10 and 10x13 toms. Drums nest together for easy transport. Toms mounted on kick. Heads of choice. Plastic wrap finish. \$1,685 Accompanying 5 1/2x14 snare drum with heads of choice: \$395





The unassuming storefront look of Precision's shop gives only a slight indication of the creative work that takes place inside.

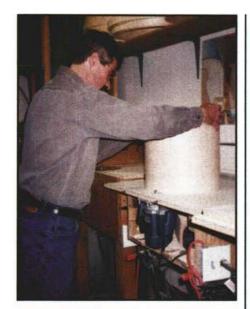


In the control room of their recording booth are Precision's owners: founder George Folchi (seated, left), sons George Jr. (standing, left) and Gary, and daughter Andrea Folchi Weyant.



All are or have been gigging drummers. Eric Clark assists with shell work, in addition to giving lessons. John Sheridan handles shipping, receiving, inventory, and assembly work. In addition, his knowledge of vintage drums has made him the company historian. Chris Armstrong cuts the recovering materials to size and ships the orders, and is now also doing apprentice shell work.

Although George Folchi is still active in the business at the age of seventy-four, the retired engineer prefers to let his sons run





Hand craftsmanship is the order of the day, as George Folchi Jr. puts a bearing edge on a tom shell (top) and technician Chris Armstrong works on a snare drum in Precision's busy shop.

the day-to-day operations. He works in the company's administrative office, headed by daughter Andrea, in Yorktown Heights.

Precision's commitment to slow, controlled expansion has served them well throughout the years. The company now combines experience, sincere customer service, superb craftsmanship, and value with an innovative and flexible spirit. Best of all, when you step into their showroom, you're in a place where your drumming dreams can really come true. For more information, call Precision Drum Company at (914) 962-4985, or visit their Web site at www.precisiondrum.com.



inside **track**

Drummer: Ricky Sebastian Album: The Spirit Within

Studio: Studio 47, New Orleans

Label: STR (www.STRdigital.com)



he Spirit Within reveals many untold strengths of its leader, drummer Ricky Sebastian. From his albums with Tania Maria, Blood, Sweat & Tears, Herbie Mann, Harry Belafonte, and Los Hombres Calientes, we know Ricky as a funk/Latin specialist. But on his debut solo album, Ricky goes much farther. He composes, co-produces, arranges, plays bop jazz, and even mixes (sitting beside, he stresses, engineers Brook Sutton and Sanford Hinderlie).

The one song recorded outside New Orleans, "Like A Prince," alludes to The Artist Formerly/Now Known Again As, and features trumpeter Randy Brecker. "It was recorded in New York City," says Ricky. "The word slick comes to mind—but in a positive sense!"

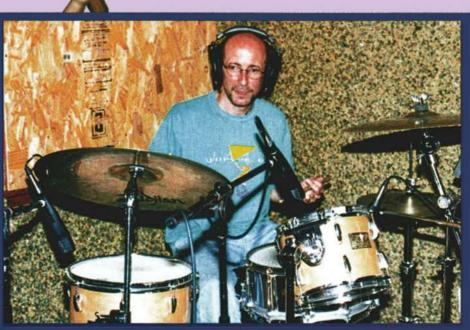
Otherwise, we're headed south to Louisiana to a bigger room and a more relaxed feel. But that doesn't mean Sebastian is slurring off. All of those tricky shots are right on the money, a difficult proposition when cutting live. He admits, "If I make a mistake towards the end of a take, I'm not opposed to punching in—but not if it's improvised jazz. That music is so conversational that the notion of altering it or bringing in a soloist later is absurd."

Ricky placed his fusion kit, or smaller jazz drumset, at one end of the room, flanked by the bass player. The piano and horns sat in an adjacent room. This meant zero leakage into drum microphones and allowed for "repairs"/ overdubs in rare instances.

Check out the old Ellington standard, "Caravan." "That tune has always been played in some generic Latin-ish way," Ricky says. "On my album, I put an Afro-Cuban slant on it and rearranged Charles Blenzig's arrangement. Cuban and Brazilian arrangers make songs interesting rhythmically and harmonically, so they're a fun vehicle for me as a drummer when soloing-and for everybody else in the band."

On "One Step Up," Ricky pulls off a folkloric Venezuelan rhythm on kit. "After the fact," he admits, "cats told me its name, but I wasn't aware of it when I was playing it. The way I played in the sax solo is reminiscent of Lenny White in Return To Forever."

Inside Scoop



Drums: Two sets of Pearl Masters Custom with maple shells.

Jazz kit: 16x18 bass drum. 8x10 rack tom, 14x14 floor tom, 5 1/2x14 Free Floating snare drum with solid maple

Standard kit: 16x20 bass drum, 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms, 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms, 5 1/2x14 Brady snare drum.

Cymbals: Zildjian and Istanbul

21" older Turkish K Zildjian medium ride

20" Istanbul ride

22" A Zildjian flat ride

15" K Custom crash

16" K Custom

16" A Custom

16" Oriental China

14" K/Z hi-hats

10" Splash (used only on one tune, the radio-friendly "Finish Line")

Heads: Remo Powerstroke 3 on both his jazz and fusion bass drums, coated Ambassadors on all rack toms, clear Ambassadors on bottoms, coated Ambassadors on snare drums.

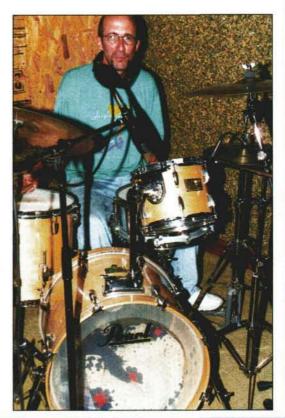
Tuning & Muffling: Very little muffling or holes in either bass drum. Jazz bass drum tuned higher and ringier than fusion bass drum. Toms wide open and cranked higher for jazz tunes; for funk tunes, toms tensioned lower and with a touch of muffling to increase definition.

Pedal: Pearl Powershifter double pedal with single chain, "which I'm crazy about."

Percussion: various LP products.

Sticks: Pro-Mark

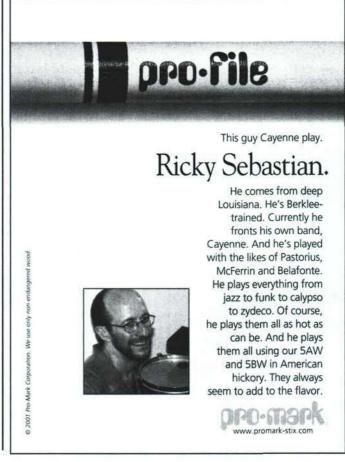
Microphones/Tech Specs: Overheads: Neuman KM 184, bass drum: Electrovoice PL 20, snare drum: Shure SM57, toms: Sennheiser 421s, hi-hat: Sennheiser MD 441. Mic' preamps: Drawmer 1960s and API 3124s. Album recorded direct to hard disk/Mac/Pro Tools 2-bit software, 32 tracks. ADL compressor and Summit! audio compressors.



T. Bruce Wittet



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Berklee Percussion Week 2001

Story by Seth Cashman

t the 2001 edition of Berklee College of A Music's annual Percussion Week, the message was clear: The groove is king. Now, don't get me wrong. This is the Berklee Percussion Week, so...chops gonna fly! Still, even with all the bustin' going on during each clinic and concert (and, yes, there were whoas-a-plenty), it was the almighty pulse that wore the pants this week.

Lewis Nash and (Berklee Percussion Department assistant chair) Yoron Israel laid that pulse down in a jazz context with swing and verve—both with their respective ensembles and in a duo performance. Jackie Santos danced around it (and even kicked it in the butt a few times) with The Beaver Brown Band. Prog fatherturned-Dead-head Rod Morgenstein messed with it during his concert performance with keyboard phenom Jordan

Rudess. Hilary Jones alternately SLAMMED and caressed it while performing to tracks that ran the gamut from heavy funk-metal-fusion to a very slick-and very Latin-cha cha cha. Local-boy-made-good Dave DiCenso stomped it with Two Ton Shoe. And in performance together, Eguie Castrillo, Mikael Ringquist, and Joe Galeota took it for a spin around the globe and back again.

For his clinic's (unplanned) opening solo, faculty member Larry Finn said his real agenda—as should be any drum-



Renowned jazz drummer Lewis Nash appeared on Jazz Night.



Associate professor of percussion Rod Morgenstein performed a clinic/concert with collaborator Jordan Rudess on keyboards.

mer's-would be to adhere to this groove thing. This he did, though not without an extremely hip embellishment or two, along with some crucial insights on the relationship of relaxation, body movement, and musicality.

In contrast to Finn, visiting artist Abubakari Luna was the man with a plan, drawing us all into a profound hypnosis with some absolutely transcendent Dahomey-rooted talking-drum arrangements. Sure, they seemed loose, lyrical, flowing, and spontaneous...but think again! Luna stated that these movements were all part of a different pulsethe griofs pulse-with every note a methodically placed syllable in the context of a musical dialect deeper than Don Henley's snare drum.

Out of "the trance" and into the world of Drumbelievable: two mammoth electronic drumkits, two hairy dudes from Amherst, Massachusetts.... But more music than you can imagine. Talk about technique serving the song.

Saturday was the Percussive Arts Society's annual "Day Of Percussion," giving young percussionists a chance to showcase their talent on Berklee grounds. Performing throughout the day were a high school percussion ensemble from Minneapolis, Minnesota called Rimshots, as well as percussion ensembles from Underwood And Cabot Elementary School (Newton, MA) and Rosemont Junior High School (Revere, MA). Additional clinics and concerts were led by Ricardo Monzon (Latin Percussion clinic), John Ramsay, Ron Reid (steel drum concert), Dave













Clockwise, from top left: Also featured on Jazz Night was drum star Yoron Israel, who is assistant percussion department chairman at Berklee. Electronic percussion was well represented by a duo called Drumbelievable. Berklee instructor Larry Finn focused his clinics on groove, along with the relationship of relaxation, body movement, and musicality. Hilary Jones and Mike Mangini brought the week to a close with a duo performance that included Led Zep's "Rock And Roll." Berklee students played a big role in World Percussion Night.

Samuels and David Friedman (vibes), Casey Scheuerell (percussion ensemble concert), Dave Cowen, Robert Kaufman, Joe Hunt, Rick Considine (drumset clinics/classes), Dave Vose (rudimental snare drum clinic), and Richard Flanagan (orchestral mallet clinic). Whew!

Even with all the foregoing, nothing could've prepared us for the week's final concert. Hilary Jones and Mike Mangini: playing together! Drum battle, right? genie? I quit!) The two reconvened for Led Zep's "Rock And Roll" (on which they played Bonzo's legendary ending break in unison, no less). Groove, you say? Message received.

Berklee College Of Music presents their Percussion Week annually. This year's event was sponsored by Drum Workshop, Pearl, Remo, Sabian, Sonor, Vater, Vic Firth, and Zildjian.

Wrong. It was 2-and-4 time!

Boston's own Hypercane (with ex-Extreme/Van Halen vocalist Gary Cherone on the mic'), the Jones/Mangini

stage for some huge-pocket, classic-rock jams before breaking up

for solo spots.

(Hilary? Da freakin'

bomb! Mr. Man-

Backed

Babatunde Olatunji Benefit Concert

Story by Martin Patmos

he weekend of April 8/9 saw drummers from all over come to the Paramount Theater in Middletown, New York to honor Babatunde Olatunji on the occasion of his seventy-fourth birthday. The concert also helped raise money to defray costs resulting from Baba's failing health. Each of the two days culminated in a special performance by Mickey Hart's Planet Drum and Baba's Drums Of Passion.

Babatunde Olatunji has dedicated his life to educating people about African culture through music and dance. In 1954 he founded a unique drumming and dance company consisting of Africans and people of African descent. Throughout the civil rights movement, the group was called upon by different organizations, including the NAACP and Dr. Martin Luther King. Baba's now-legendary

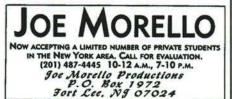


Baba, behind his drums, chanted across the djembe rhythms.



Maxwell Kofi Donkor (center) supported Baba on his djembe during the grand finale.

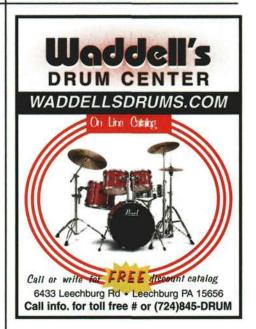
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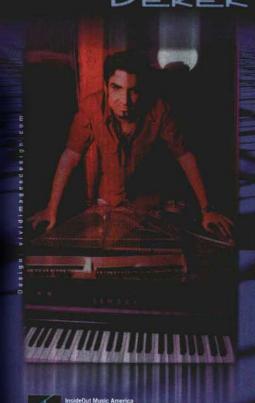
album *Drums Of Passion* was released in 1959, and his work has continued with further albums, performances, lessons, and endeavors in cultural centers. In addition to music and cultural work, Baba founded Voices Of Africa, an organization that raises money for the education and health care of African children. With two albums currently

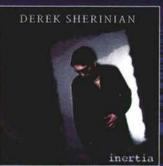
in the works, as well as a forthcoming autobiography from Temple University Press, Baba continues on the path that has influenced and inspired so many.

Maxwell Kofi Donkor (a master drummer from Ghana now living in New York's Hudson Valley) hosted the benefit concert. Praising Olatunji, he says, "Baba was the first



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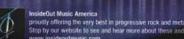
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person in the country to use drumming as a way of unifying people and bringing them some awareness about the cultural spirit of drumming. As this event shows, everybody has been touched by what he's done. He's been very generous—he just keeps giving, and giving, and giving. He has led an exemplary life."

I was privileged to attend the Sunday portion of this remarkable event. The show opened on a stage covered with drums of every shape and size. The buzzing anticipation of the audience was soon dissipated with the start of the Libation ceremony. Led by Baba, Maxwell Kofi, and additional performer Ali Appell, this ritual opening and blessing immediately engaged everyone through chanting, singing, and call-and-response phrases.

It wasn't long, however, before drum-related groups from all over contributed with their own performances. Some were based strongly in tradition, while others focused on a specific percussion concept. All donated their time and energy in support of Baba.

Following Sunday's libation was Maseebella, a traditional West African-style drum and dance troupe from Jamaica, Queens, New York. Furious djembe slaps flew



Tony Vacca (left) and Steve Leicach dueled on balafon.



Giovanni Hidalgo, with his multi-conga setup, was joined by fellow Planet Drum member Sikiru Adepoju and members of Baba's Drums Of Passion.

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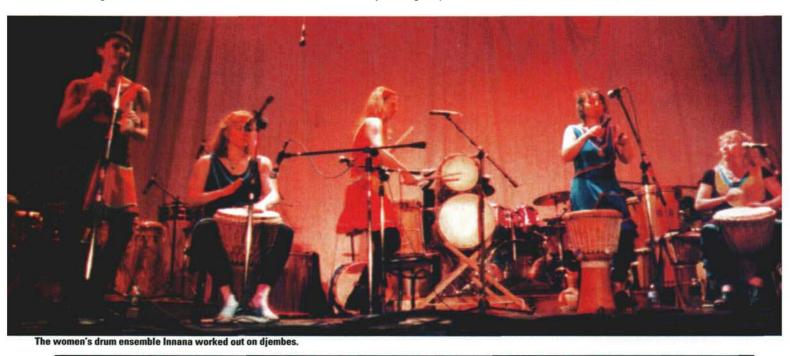
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over the pounding rhythms of the lower drums, accompanying the singing, spinning, and jumping of the dancers. This energetic performance led to the first of several standing ovations that day.

Innana—a troupe of women from Maine—played an exciting set based in traditional West African style. Working with ashiko drums, they brought forth a wide variety of sounds: using a single stick to click the shell and rim and to strike notes on the head, while muting and slapping away with their open hands. With exceptionally tight interplay and terrific energy, this was an exciting group to watch.



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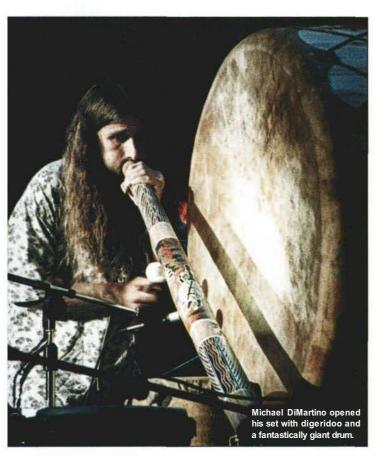


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Tony Vacca and Steve Leicach put on a show that mixed tradition with other elements. Using a vast array of percussion instruments clustered around the stage, the set featured a variety of drums as well as a segment with gongs and tam-tams. The crowd-pleaser, however, was a gripping balafon workout between the two percussionists.

The PanAshe Steel Orchestra (from Vermont), Michael DiMartino's World-Beat improvisation group, and many other groups also gave noteworthy performances. Between sets, drummer/teacher Arthur Hull kept the crowd entertained with fascinating rhythmic games and experiments.

The final act—theoretically—was Planet Drum. But as if Mickey Hart (behind his five-piece kit), Giovanni Hidalgo (with his congas), Sikiru Adepoju (on his talking drum), and Baba himself weren't enough, Maxwell Kofi and Baba's Drums Of Passion group quickly joined in. This addition of six diembe and two bell players drove the audience to dance in their seats. Featuring material from the first Planet Drum album and from the Drums Of Passion repertoire, this was an astounding—and exhilaratinglyloud—performance.

Hart kept things fluid and locked on his kit, while Giovanni blazed away on his congas. Adepoju played intricate melodic patterns, while Baba chanted and the DOP ensemble's djembe rhythms rolled over a bell/bass drum pattern. No matter where one looked on stage, there

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was an inspiring percussive performance.

The performance progressed with Giovanni marching forth and pounding away on a surdo, and Mickey stalking the stage with a set of agogo bells. Before it was over, more than two dozen players were crowded on stage to pound out a beat in honor of Babatunde Olatunji.

In addition to all of the performances, on Saturday evening Baba was presented with the key to the city of Middletown by its mayor. As far as raising money for Baba's medical expenses, the Spirit Of The Arts Foundation (organizers of the event) did an excellent job. Anyone wishing to make donations toward Baba's health care may do so through Spirit Of The Arts Foundation, 55 Bank St., Sussex, NJ 07461, Attn: Sandy Mitchell. Baba's Voices Of Africa may be reached at 1611 Jackson St. NE, Washington, DC 20018, or through Baba's Web site at www.olatunjimusic.com.

QUICK BEATS

RINGO STARR (THE BEATLES, RINGO'S ALL-STAR BAND)

What are some of your favorite grooves?

Al Jackson is the groove maestro, but also Jim Keltner. And I also loved Joe Watkins, who played with George Lewis & The New Orleans Jazz Band.

What are some of your favorite grooves that you've recorded?

All of them, or I would have changed

What new drummers or bands excite vou?

There are lots. I'm happy to see that bands are coming back.

What do you like to hear in your headphone mix when you record? The singer.

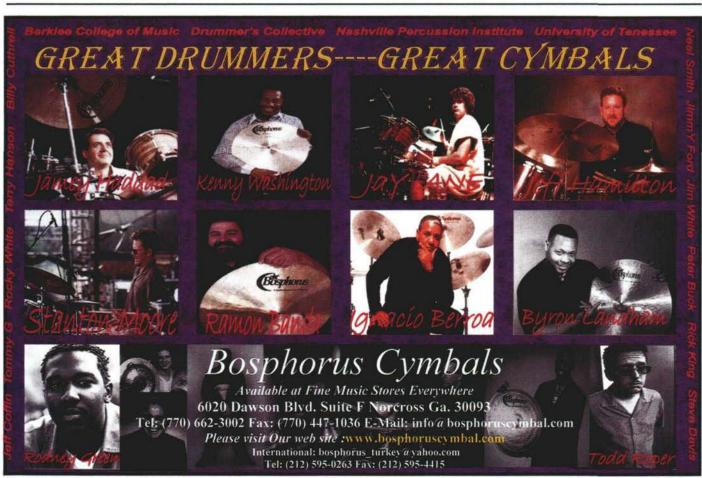
Who was a better drummer, George Harrison or John Lennon? George.

What do you think is the one thing drummers are missing when they try to copy your playing?

If they weren't born left-handed, they have to compensate. It's not natural.







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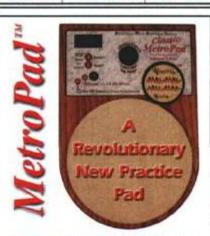
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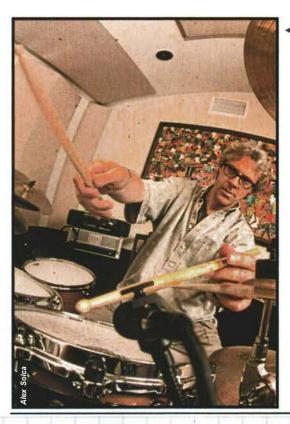
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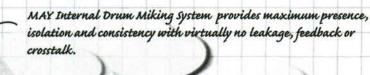


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