

MODERN DRUMMER™

The International Magazine Exclusively For Drummers

JULY 1983

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Steve GADD

MICHAEL SHRIEVE

Denater's

Myron Grombacher

Focus On Reggae

DRUMSTICKS: The Full Story

'83 Readers Poll Results



The graphics on Myron's drums are his initials in Japanese. Design by Jeff J. Chonis, artwork by Patrick Foley, L.A.

Ask him to play something besides Ludwig, and Myron Grombacher gets nervous.

Pat Benatar's Band live is full-contact rock, and Myron Grombacher throws a lot of the punches. He doesn't play drums, he attacks them. And the assault comes from every angle — behind, beside, in front of, and on top of his kit.

But you don't need to see Myron to appreciate his power, speed, and finesse. It comes through just as strong in the studio. "Get Nervous," Benatar's latest, is proof.

Get nervous is also something Myron Grombacher would do if you

asked him to play drums he couldn't depend on. That's why, on stage and in the studio, Myron plays Ludwig six-ply shell drums and Ludwig heads.

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CONTENTS

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FEATURES

STEVE GADD

So many stories circulate about Steve Gadd that one begins to wonder who the actual person is underneath all of the rumours, myths and legends. In this MD exclusive, Gadd sheds a great deal of light on who he really is and what he stands for, and provides an inside view of the realities of studio work,
by Rick Mattingly 8



Photo by Rick Mattingly

MYRON GROMBACHER

Some musicians tend to fade anonymously into the background, while others establish themselves as an integral part of the overall band identity. Myron Grombacher definitely belongs to the latter category, contributing seasoned rock drumming, a flamboyant personality and a very professional attitude to Pat Benatar's group.
by Robyn Flans 14



Photo by Lisa Wales

THE REGGAE DRUMMERS

One of the biggest influences of the past decade has been reggae, and as with any musical style, it is primarily the rhythm which gives the music its identity. Here, we focus on five of reggae's top drummers, who give a revealing survey of the music and the lifestyle.
by Robert Santelli 18



Photo by Lynn Goldsmith

MIKE SHRIEVE

First coming to prominence with Santana, Mike Shrieve has gone on to work with such diverse artists as Steve Winwood, Stomu Yamashta and Novo Combo. Mike discusses his recent activities, and takes an introspective look at his concepts and motivations,
by Scott K. Fish 22



Photo by Rick Matkin

DRUMSTICKS:

The Full Story
by Michael Epstein 26

'83 READERS POLL RESULTS 30

COLUMNS

EDUCATION

STRICTLY TECHNIQUE

Warm-Up Exercises
by John Beck 36

CLUB SCENE

Achieving Variety
by Rick Van Horn 64

SOUTH OF THE BORDER

Reggae
by Desmond Jones 68

SHOW AND STUDIO

Backing the Club Show
by Simon Goodwin 72

CONCEPTS

Concentration
by Roy Burns 78

DRUM SOLOIST

Steve Gadd: "Quartet #2"
by Karl Sterling 84

ROCK PERSPECTIVES

Accents on the Hi-Hat
by Stanley Ellis 94

EQUIPMENT

SHOP TALK

Drum Anchoring
by James E. Murphy 80

JUST DRUMS 114

PROFILES

PORTRAITS

J.C. Heard
by Mark B. Lipson 48

REVIEWS

ON TRACK 70

NEWS

UPDATE
by Robyn Flans 110

INDUSTRY HAPPENINGS 112

DEPARTMENTS

EDITOR'S OVERVIEW 2

READER'S PLATFORM 4

ASK A PRO 6

DRUM MARKET 102

IT'S QUESTIONABLE
by Michael Epstein 108

EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

Looking Toward the Future



Some time ago, I announced that *Modern Drummer* would be starting a Book Publishing Division. For those who've wondered about it, I'm now happy to report that MD's Book Division is making its official debut this month with Joe Morello's *Master Studies*.

Thanks to the combined efforts of several individuals, we were able to convince the ever humble Mr. Morello that his original collection of exercises for the development of technique, be put into book form. Well, the book is now available, and without going into great detail (I'd prefer to let the book speak for itself), I think you'll agree that *Master Studies* will ultimately become a true classic in drum literature. Look for the announcement of Joe Morello's new book elsewhere in this issue.

Master Studies is the first in a series of texts we're planning. Several months back, I got word through Advisory Board member Danny Gottlieb, that jazz drummer Bob Moses has been using some innovative concepts in his private teaching practice. I invited Bob up to the office one day, where he proceeded to spend nearly three hours elaborating on his fascinating approach. Fortunately, Bob also has the ability to crystalize his marvelous concepts into meaningful words and music. It's the kind of stuff great books are made of, and though untitled at the moment, I can tell you that this book is one you won't want to miss.

We've also been working quite closely for the past year or so with master Brazilian percussionist, Airto Moreira. Airto has been wanting to document his own special brand of percussive artistry for many years, and we are honored to be publishing the work of this great performer. Look for Airto's book under the MD banner later this year.

We've got several other book projects in the works. However, it's a bit too soon for public announcement. But stay with us, as I believe you're going to find MD's Book Division the most exciting percussion venture to come along since the birth of the magazine itself.

Another project, announced some time back, is also gradually taking shape. I'm referring to *MD's First Annual Drum Weekend*, which may very well be the percussion event of 1984.

Here again, it's just a bit too soon to name names, however, I can tell you that *Drum Weekend* will offer the serious drummer an opportunity to see a group of the world's leading rock and jazz drummers in clinic and clinic/concert formats, over a three-day period. Complementing the educational aspect will be a percussion instrument exhibition, playing host to the major drum, cymbal, accessory and electronics manufacturers in the country. This feature will give attendees a chance to see and hear the latest equipment, ask questions, and talk directly with the manufacturers. All in all, we see the entire event as a fantastic opportunity for drummers worldwide to assemble, share ideas and learn from the leaders in our field.

MD's Drum Weekend is currently being planned for early spring of 1984, and will be held in the New York metropolitan area. Look for future announcements and specific details on this great event in upcoming issues.

RS

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READER'S PLATFORM

CLEANING CYMBALS

I enjoyed Chris King's article "Tips on Cleaning Cymbals," in the October issue of *Modern Drummer*. Yet, I disagree with his statement that abrasive cleaners, such as Comet and Ajax, help to remove dirt from a cymbal. I have found that using such cleaners causes damage to the delicate tonal rings that give the cymbal its unique quality.

Greg Szczesniak
Hi Sea Music Company
Boca Raton, Florida

BASS DRUMS

I'm writing to tell you how much I enjoyed your MD Forum: *Bass Drums: The Pros Tell All*. Excellent. Would it be possible to get the same pros to tell how they tune their snare drum?

Richard E. Humphrey
Baltimore, MD

YOUNG AT HEART

It is interesting to read about the arguments pro and con concerning number of rudiments; matched vs. traditional grips; jazz vs. rock, etc., and realize that some percussionists must travel a very narrow musical path.

After 30 years of playing I decided to explore rock, fusion and other "new" drumming concepts. I had become a musical dinosaur and sought instruction from younger drummers. What an enlightening and enjoyable experience!

Any older drummers who think their styles are the last word should take note and seriously woodshed some of the new articles offered in MD and suggested methods books along with a young drummer who reads and really knows how. You might find some of the old juices flowing again.

Dave Mitchell
Atlanta, GA

JACK SPERLING

Thank you for the long overdue article on Jack Sperling. I had the good fortune of hearing him last year in concert. He is one of the most musical drummers I've heard. His time was flawless and his fills were very tasteful. I found him to be genuinely interested in upcoming drummers and percussionists.

Stan Rougon

LES DEMERLE

I recently attended the Les DeMerle clinic in Washington. The guy was great. He was one of the easiest people to talk to. More should be printed on the man. He used everything! I'm surprised he didn't use his own head for part of a solo. He's the kind of player you see and realize how much more you have to practice and study. Drummers are no longer the Rodney Dangerfields of music.

Donn Garrett Entiat
Washington, DC

ARTIMUS PYLE

Scott Fish and Paul T. Riddle did an extreme article on Artimus Pyle in the April '83 MD. The man is just total inspiration to me. Not only his playing, but his personality and feelings on his drumming. I can feel his energy! Great work, MD. "It's a monstrous concept."

Chuck Zeoli
Providence, RI

ROCK CHARTS

In your November 1982 issue, you ran a transcription of "Touch and Go" by the Cars as transcribed by James Morton. I recently saw this particular song in a music (piano/guitar) folio and it was *all in 4/4* time with the down beat (bass drum beat) on "one" the first measure, on "two" the second, on "three" the third, on "four" the fourth and then this pattern repeated. I realize that in *4/4* the beat is superimposed and that in effect, the *5/4* time signature is used to keep the down beat on one, but I thought I'd point this interesting pattern out to you and MD readers. I truly enjoy your rock transcriptions and your magazine so keep up the great work.

Richard O'Neil
Moriah, NY

MORE COUNTRY!

One of the most popular forms of music in the world today is country music, yet there is no mention at all of country drumming in the MD Readers Poll; in fact I was hard pressed to find anything pertaining to country music in the rest of the issue.

Isn't it time for a magazine with the integrity of MD to step out of the shadows of the skyscrapers and into the light of the *whole* world of music? Come on, gang, you've got a great thing going . . . don't blow it!

Ric Ward
Drummer: The Kendalls
Madison, TN

JOHN MARSHALL

I was glad to see an interview with John Marshall. Sometimes music publications have a tendency to avoid or ignore the less commercial artists for fear of reduced sales. I see no such trend in MD's publishing history. But, I do notice an absence of European drummers from your pages. Some coverage could give them the added American sales necessary to have their music appreciated and understood in the States.

Tim Gilles

Editor's Note: We are in the process of working with some European writers for greater "international" coverage.

JACK DEJOHNETTE

Thank you Rick Mattingly and Jack DeJohnette for the most enlightening and captivating article. It came at a time when I needed a lift. I'm flying high now.

Terry Lindsay
Pittsburgh, PA

PETE BEST

Don't you think that Pete Best has been living off his infamous past long enough? After listening to the "Decca Tapes," it's very obvious why Pete was removed: he is a very boring drummer. Why, Robyn Flans, have you chosen to waste your good ink on such a misfit? Pete Best is not famous because of his drumming. He's famous because the Beatles fired him.

Billy Bruce
Valoosta, GA

I've been reading MD for five years. I want to compliment Robyn Flans on her interview with Pete Best. It was one of your best so far. He had some very good things to say for drummers, especially when he said he had to forget about that incident and go on. Mr. Best's story is one musicians can relate to in this realistic world of the music business. I think we should all take our hats off to Pete!

Gregg Martin
Evansville, IN

MORE LATIN DRUMMING

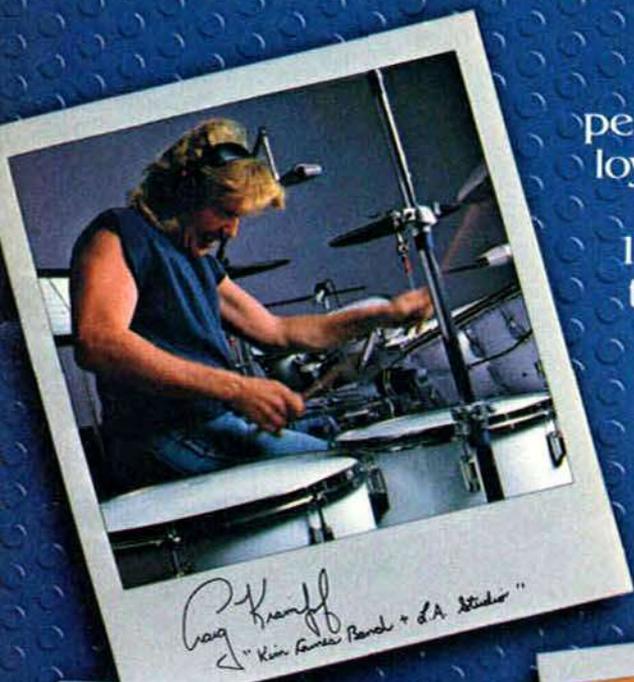
Except for the Sheila Escovedo article, there was no serious focus on Latin percussion in the MDs I've read from time to time. Latin rhythms and percussion instruments have become more and more an integral part of modern music/percussion. As a student of percussion and drumset, I'd like to see more information on playing Latin percussion.

Ayal Joshua
Rehovot, Israel

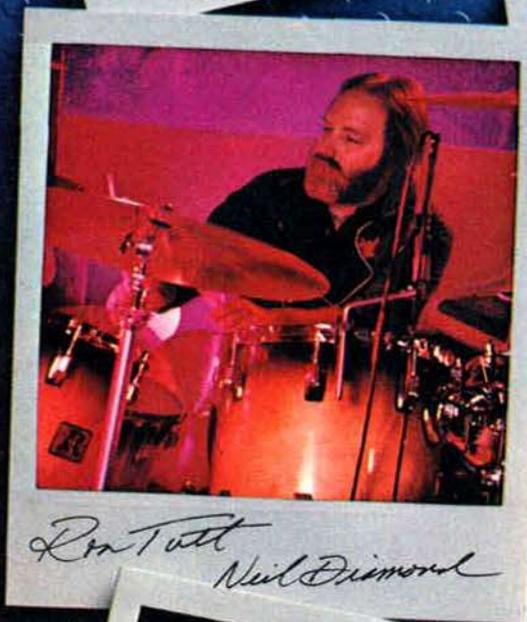
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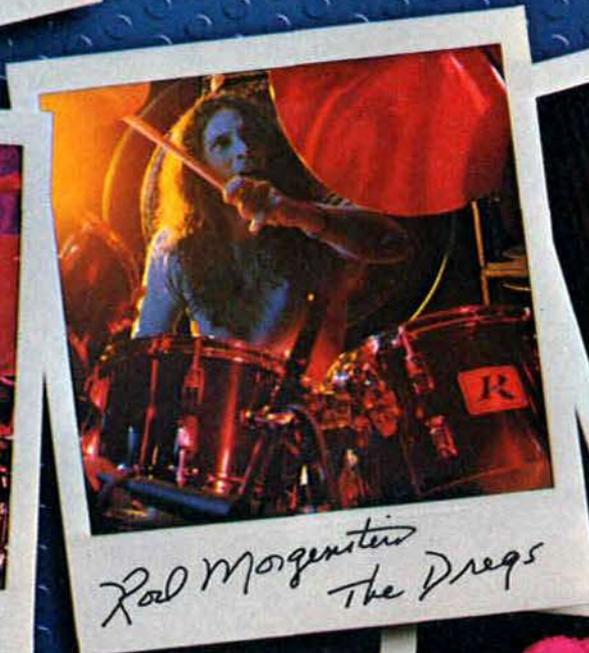
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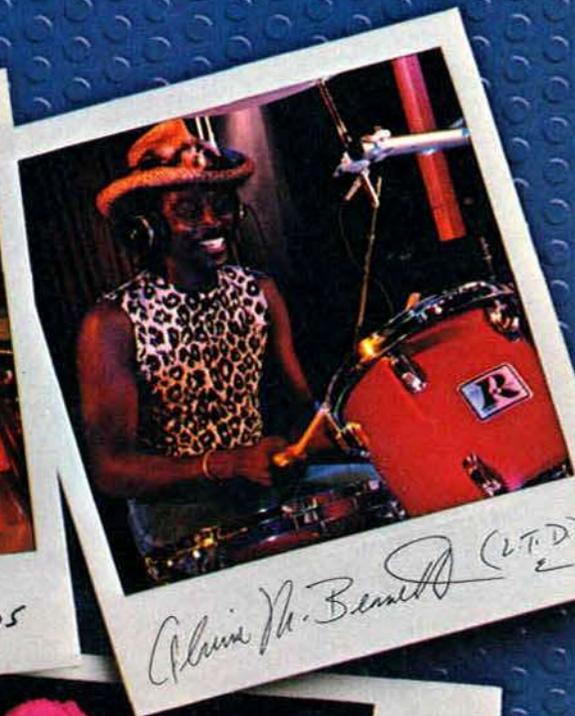
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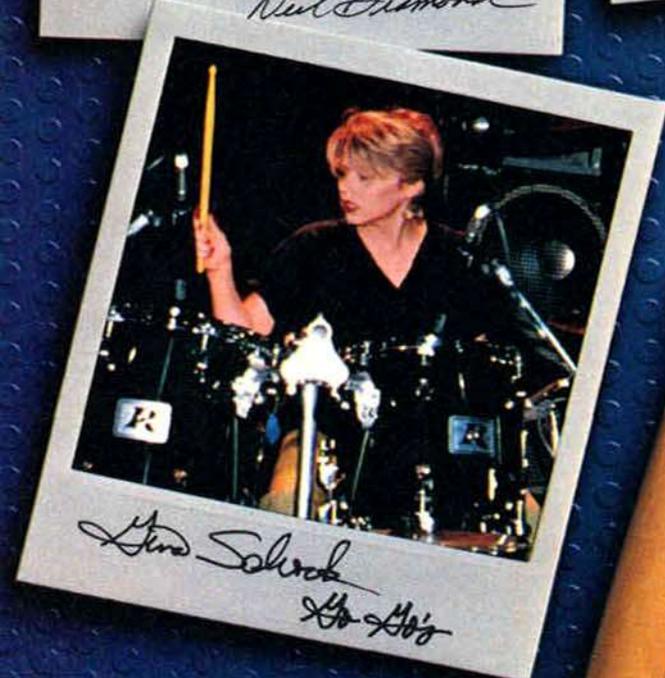
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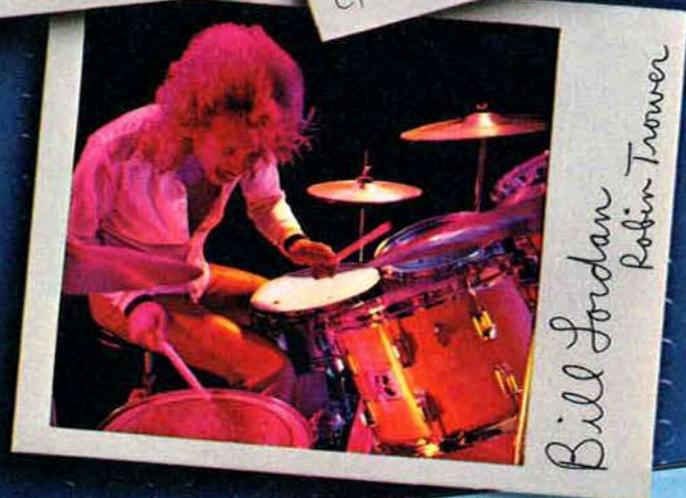
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The Drags



Alvin K. Bernard (L.T.D.)



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Bill Jordan
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ROGERS

ASK A PRO

LOUIE BELLSON

Q. Who actually instructed you from your basic rudiments to your present playing technique?

Mark J. Beckert
Port Murray, NJ

A. *The very first teacher I had was my father. I was 3½ years old. After he had given me lessons for five or six years, he felt it would be better for me to have an outside teacher, so after my father, it was Burt Winans. He was one of the originators of the 13 rudiments. He took me through the paces on a gut-snare parade drum, 12 x 15, using an S or B model stick. Then I took lessons from Roy Knapp in Chicago. He felt that he couldn't teach me anything technically and that I would learn the most just by playing with bands. He got me into mallets and theory and harmony, which my dad also did. This made me a more musical drummer with a broad knowledge of the whole percussion spectrum. This is why guys like Billy Cobham and Steve Gadd are so sought-after today—they did this same thing and became very musical.*



When Buddy and I get together—and we've been playing 50 years—we go into the back room someplace and see who can play the smoothest double and single rolls. The first two basic rudiments! How you apply rudiments is equally important. Billy and Steve took those basic beats, and the way they distributed those beats on the drumsets was amazing. Rudiments are scales, and every instrument has them. Once you have command of the instrument, then you can go beyond them. That's what I've tried to do.

LES DEMERLE



Q. I saw a picture of you bending a cymbal under your arm and playing it at the same time with a ferocious expression on your face. How and why did you do this? Was it to get a particular sound, was the cymbal broken or were you just fooling around?

Joby Shinoff
Studio City, CA

A. *Well, that shot, which was on the cover of Fusion Volume Two, was taken during a drum solo at the Berkeley Jazz Festival. It's a thing that I do where I use an 18" thin cymbal that is bendable to the point where I can play harmonics on it with a mallet or stick. I can get about two octaves on it by bending the bow. I used to do it in solos or fours, and play as close to the melody as I could. It doesn't hurt the cymbal. It's never cracked and it's hardly bent after eight years of doing that crazy thing with it. It's a visual thing, I admit, but if it's used in a musical sense, it's a similar effect to putting your left elbow on the snare and changing pitch that way, making the skin tighter and looser.*

SANDY SLAVIN



Q. What does your present set consist of? Do you alter it—number of drums, types of heads, muffling—for live and studio situations? Also, how did you come to join Riot?

Ed Wynne
Springfield, MA

A. *It's all Ludwig drums, all power toms—13 x 14, 14 x 15 and 15 x 16. They're all mounted the same way, on racks, because I find that it's a little*

BILLY COBHAM



Q. On your album *Observations and Reflections*, your drumset sounds superb. I know you're playing Tama drums and I recently purchased a Tama set consisting of the new *Extender Series* shells. I'm aiming to get a sound similar to yours. Please share your suggestions on tuning techniques, head combinations and muffling devices that you used on the album.

Bob Sergesketter
Houston, TX

A. *Well, first of all, you won't get that sound with Extender shells because I use the conventional shells. They're two-headed drums with Deadringers on the top for recording. Head combinations would be Pinstripes on the top for the tom-toms. I like to use Diplomats on the bottom. What I try to do is to tension the bottom head, which decides the depth and the body of the sound that you're going to get, very carefully. If you tension it too tightly then it chokes the drum; too loose and the drum sounds like a box. You have to find that area in between where the drum sings. To get the drum to sing you have to use a head that's thin enough to vibrate and use a stick that'll be in proportion to the type of drum shell and head you use. So, it goes past just the drum itself.*

easier to get the drums sounding the same. There's a difference if, say, the floor tom is on legs and the other toms are shell mounted. I'm using a custom-made, 6½ x 14 Eames snare. All drums have Pinstripes on top and Ludwig clear heads on the bottom. I try to keep my set consistent between a live and concert situation. Depending on the hall, you may have to muffle a bit, more or less for a live show. I do use one less crash cymbal in the studio because it's mounted on the same stand as my floor tom and I need to eliminate the sympathetic vibration. I had been playing in various bands in the New York area about five years ago, and when Peter Bitelli left the band, they gave me a call.



Finding the right sounds is a matter of looking in the right places. —Stewart Copeland

Stewart Copeland's playing is a sensuous integration of sounds and rhythms. His keen awareness of sound and pulse developed from his musical experiences in the Middle East, Africa, Europe and his native America.

His search for the right cymbal sounds led him to Paiste—the widest cymbal selection anywhere in the world. In his own words:

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"So you see, finding the right sounds is a matter of looking in the right places".

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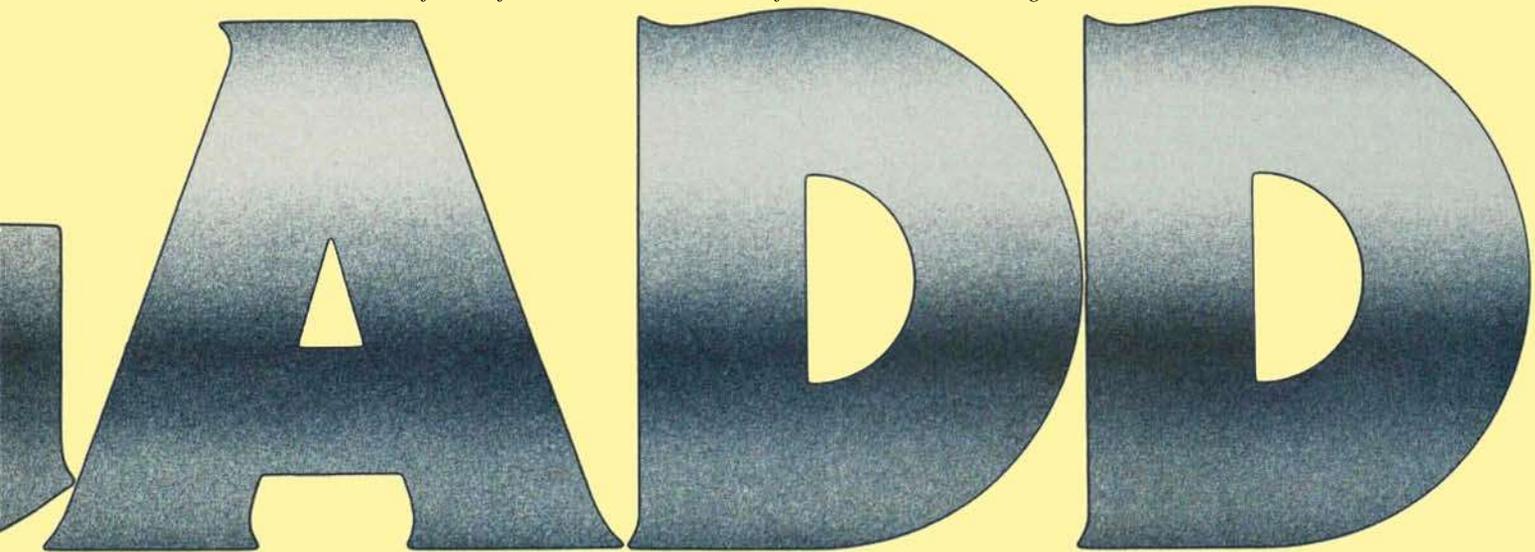
Photo by Rick Malkin

Sometimes, a person becomes noted for something which is merely a by-product of what the person was actually going for. Steve Gadd's primary concern has always been to play for the music. He has never been preoccupied with trying to establish his own sound or style. Instead, he has concentrated on trying to satisfy the musical needs of whoever is hiring him, and on doing his best at all times.

And yet, in the process of doing that, Gadd has established a personal identity so strong that scores of "Steve Gadd clones" have appeared — some consciously trying to achieve success by imitating Steve, others forced into the role by conservative producers and artists who are afraid to try anything other than that which has already been proven successful. So for whatever reasons, quite a few drummers are modeling themselves after Gadd — from those who memorize his patterns and solos, to those who actually effect curly hair and beards, and purchase black Yamaha drumsets just like the one Steve uses. In fact, judging by the letters that come into the MD office, a few people are downright obsessed with Gadd. We get letters from people demanding to know why they saw a photo of Steve using a different cymbal set-up than the one which was described in the last article they read about him. (Gadd: "I use different cymbals, depending on what the music calls for.") And if anyone from Yamaha is reading this, I wish you would make your Steve Gadd model drumsticks available in America, so we can stop having to explain to people that those black sticks that Steve uses are only available in Japan.

And then there are the rumors, ranging from the ridiculous (a Japanese music magazine recently reported: "It is believed that he played a single paradiddle when he was only three years old.") to the trivial ("When Steve was young, did he and Cubby really do a drum battle on the Mickey Mouse Club show?" No, Cubby played drums while Steve tap danced.) to the grim (Phone calls from people who are hysterical because they just heard that Steve was killed, or Steve is dying, or Steve is sick, etc.). And that's just what we get here at the magazine. Carol Gadd told me some amazing stories about people she has encountered outside of the building they live in — people who camp out on the sidewalk for hours, just hoping to maybe see Steve drive up in a limousine.

Well, don't be looking for a limo. If people want to think of him as a superstar, that's up to them. But Steve doesn't think of himself like that. He drives himself. A nice car, but nothing



you'd pay particular attention to if he passed you on the street. In fact, when I showed up outside a New York recording studio to do this interview, I didn't even notice Steve sitting in his car right in front of the entrance. As I climbed into the back seat, his first words were, "Hi. Want some peas?" whereupon he passed me a sack of fresh, raw peas, purchased that morning from a vegetable stand. ("We've been stopping by that stand for weeks, waiting for these to be in season.") As we drove through the rain in midtown Manhattan (Carol had some errands to run and Steve was driving her from place to place), we discussed and agreed that we both preferred fresh, crisp vegetables to cooked, mushy ones. Not the kind of conversation one might fantasize about having with the living drum legend himself.

But a legend is a "thing," and Steve is a person. And like many people, he doesn't especially enjoy spending his free time—of which there is very little—talking about his work. There's an old saying that "The people who talk about it the most, do it the least." Although that statement is usually applied to a subject other than drumming, perhaps the same principle applies. Steve Gadd doesn't need to spend his time talking about drumming, analyzing it, reading about it or dreaming about it because he's totally involved in doing it. And no amount of talking about drumming can match the actual playing. So when he's not working, Steve, like any ordinary person, has ordinary interests (he likes horses) and does ordinary things (watches TV when he's home).

by Rick Mattingly



He's not particularly interested in keeping statistics on himself, either. Gadd does not maintain a notebook listing all the sessions he's been on, and when I spoke to him on the day of the Grammy awards, he really didn't know how many of the nominated records he had played on. He knew that he was on a few of them, but the tone of his voice indicated that he wasn't overly concerned about his own personal glory. Again, the important thing to him is the playing itself.

As a result, Gadd has maintained a fairly low profile over the years. He has shied away from doing a lot of interviews, and it is perhaps the lack of direct information that has given rise to the stories, rumours and myths. And because so much of his work is done in the studio, opportunities for people to hear Steve live are relatively infrequent.

In the last year, however, he has suddenly become more visible. He recently completed a video tape, recorded his first solo album (with Ralph MacDonald), and has appeared at such events as the Percussive Arts Society convention in Dallas, the Drum Corps International championships in Florida, and Zildjian Day in Los Angeles. He even agreed to do this interview! Is this increased visibility the result of a conscious decision? "Yes," says Gadd. "There are a lot of people that I haven't been able to keep in contact with, that I'd like to say 'hello' to, and also let people know what it is I'm doing."

While doing this interview, Steve pondered each question for a moment before he answered it. When the answers came, they tended to be short and to the point. A couple of times, in an attempt to get more words out of him, I would ask a series of very similar questions about the same subject. Steve chided me about that: "Kids get confused because everyone is always trying to complicate everything. We should be trying to simplify things in this interview."

RM: A lot of drummers dream of establishing an identity for themselves

in the studio, as you have done. But they complain that whenever they go in to do a session, they are often asked to imitate something that you did. When you were getting started, were you ever asked to sound like someone else?

SG: Yeah, they did the same thing back then. They'd want the tune that they were producing at a certain time to be in the current style. Remember when Russ Kunkel first started playing with James [Taylor] and there were those spacy tomtom fills? They liked stuff like that. In other words, they would ask you to sound like something else; to fall into a category. They still do that sometimes. When you go in they'll play something and say, "We want it to feel like this."

RM: A lot of musicians get frustrated by that because they want to develop their own style, but they feel that no one is giving them a chance.

SG: I guess when you first start out there's a little anxiety, and it's a little frustrating. But after you've been in the studios for a while and start knowing the producers, it gets beyond that stage.

RM: They start trusting you?

SG: Yeah. It's just like anything else; it takes a while. When you get in a band, other players have to get to know you musically, and producers have to do the same thing. I've gone to sessions where they didn't want me to use any of my equipment at all—my cymbals or anything—and I just did it, if that's what they wanted. I was trying to get into the recording business, and you just have to weather your way through that stuff. It gets beyond that after a while, but when you start out, it's the same for everybody. It doesn't make any difference who you are. It was the same way for me.

RM: So those are some of the dues of the studio?

SG: I wouldn't call it the dues of the studio; it's just the process of getting to know people in the business musically. After different musicians and producers get to know a player musically, then that player can be called to do anything. They will know what the player is capable of coming up with himself, creatively. But it doesn't happen on the first date. It takes a while.

It's just like being in a band. If you took someone's place in a band, the first thing you'd probably do is try to play the music on the level of the last drummer who was playing it. After you understand it that way and get comfortable with everyone, then you start injecting more of your own things.



Photo by Lissa Wales



But not until the music and everything makes more sense. So I think it's just part of the business. It just takes time to get to know people—personally and musically.

And then I'm sure that trying to do the job the best that you can for the person who hired you would have a lot to do with them calling you again. Just your attitude, you understand what I'm saying? It's more than just the playing. It's understanding what the whole job is and wanting to do it. There's a lot of money put into recording. There's a time limit there and the product is the most important thing. And then some people don't verbalize what they want real clear, and they can be taken the wrong way and you can get an attitude. But if you look beyond that stuff and just try to get the job done in the amount of time you have to do it in, then it works out good. Then they'll hire you again and get a chance to know you a little more. Maybe one day they'll hire you and say, "Listen, we want *you* because we want it to feel like this and we know you can do it." But it doesn't start out like that. I think for me, too, it'll probably always be that way, where people will produce records based on an inspiration they heard from something else that was done.

RM: So even with you, people don't always hire you to do something new. They might be hiring you because they liked something you did before, and they want you to do it again.

SG: Yeah, I guess. I don't really know why they hire you. It's probably because they know you can play, and because they know you can apply your ability to any situation without getting an attitude. I think how easy you are to work with has a lot to do with it too. There are a lot of things in the studio that affect the music besides the playing. There's your attitude, and your willingness to try and understand what it is that they're really going for, no matter how they ask you. There are a thousand ways to say the same thing, and if you take it the wrong way . . . Maybe you should check out a few other ways it could be meant. In other words, instead of letting something like that frustrate you at the beginning of a date, which could get in the way of the whole thing, just try and let yourself go beyond that, because it happens to everybody.

So that's just one of the things that happens when you first start recording, and it still happens to me. If a new thing comes out that's real big and different, people are going to want to do things in that style. I don't feel it takes away from my creativity. It can help give a direction for what you are doing at that moment.

RM: That's certainly a positive way of looking at it.

SG: Yeah, it's real important when playing music to keep your attitude positive, whether it's a producer asking you to do something that someone else did, or whether it's a live performance and the monitors are not exactly what you want. You can spend the whole time on stage thinking about how they're *not* what you want, or you can put that attitude out of your head, concentrate on what's *good*, and go on from there. There are always going to be certain things that are going to give you an excuse to piss and moan. People don't need that. You have to get beyond that stuff.

RM: I've heard a lot of drummers complain about things such as an

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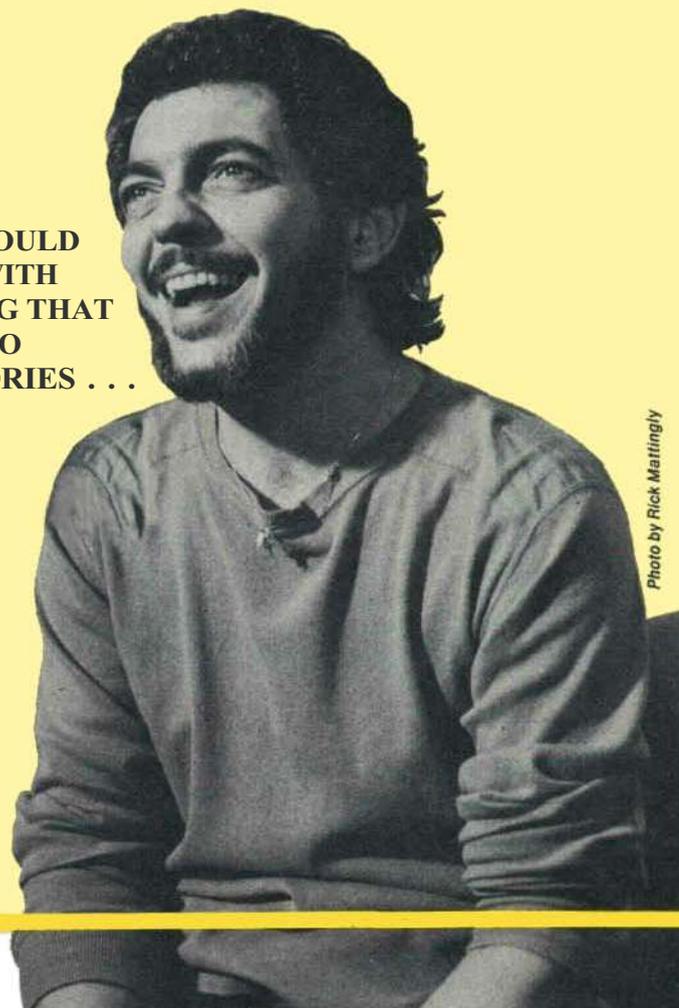


Photo by Rick Mattingly



engineer taking hours to get a drum sound, so that the player feels burned out by the time they are actually ready to record.

SG: Well, that's what it's like; that's the studio. It can be that way or it can be real quick. I guess after you've been doing it long enough, you can be in a position where you don't have to take the jobs where it takes so much time to get the drum sound that you feel you can't do anything. Or, you can be experienced enough in the studio to know how to pace yourself, so you don't go in there ready to hit it at the start of the session, and then get messed up if you don't get to run down the tune for two hours. If you know that in front, you can prepare yourself. But that's just the way it is. It's not just you in there. There's an engineer, who's got to get things comfortable for the producer or it's not going to be a record after that. And that's just the business. So maybe it's not as glamorous and exciting as it appears on the outside. It might have a certain appearance on the outside, but when you get involved in it, it can be very

tedious and time consuming. But rewarding, too.

RM: Let's talk about some of the people you've worked with, in terms of how they work in the studio. Steely Dan.

SG: I've done tracks with them different ways, like we did "Aja" live in the studio with the full rhythm section. But then on other tracks on other albums, I've gone in and I was the only musician in there. I'd be playing drums along with a rough keyboard track, or something they'd put down just to let me know what the tune was. They would explain to me the feel they wanted and the fills that they wanted. So I've worked with them both ways, where it's been spontaneous, and also where it's been very thought out.

RM: Paul Simon.

SG: Paul Simon spends a lot of time on every composition, making sure that everything that goes down on the recording is perfect for what he wants. A lot of it's experimenting with different things. There have been some tunes that we've cut two or three different ways before it got on the record. They'd all be different and they'd all feel good, too. But it's just that he's very particular, so that's the way he works.

RM: Chick Corea.

SG: Chick is very organized. The compositions are all written out; he knows, in front, what he wants, to a point where he can really explain it and get the most out of you. And he writes the music very clearly; he can write a good drum part, but if there's something vague about the drum part then I'll take a piano score or some-

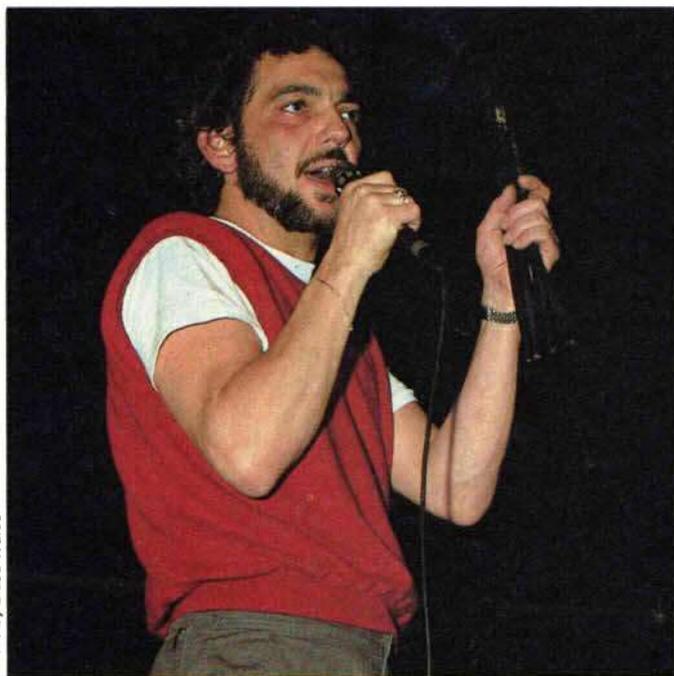


Photo by Lissa Wales

ON SOLOS:

"My solos depend on what happens before them. If the band plays the 'head' of the song prior to my drum solo, then I think of the song while soloing—my phrases will be the same length as the phrases of the song. If my solo comes after a vamp, I think in four- or eight-bar phrases. I don't just think one bar at a time."

A Steve

ON READING:

"Reading improves just from doing it. It wasn't easy for me, but thanks to the encouragement of my teacher, John Beck, I stuck with it and it has been very useful. The more you do something, the more familiar it becomes and the easier it gets.

"When sight reading music, first look at the whole piece to figure out what the 'road map' is. See how many bars are in the intro, look for section letters, see how many bars are in each section, and look for repeat signs, D.S., D.C. and coda signs.

"If you can keep your place, even if you are unable to make any of the figures, you are still ahead of the game. You can get the figures the next time, or after everyone else does. Keep your place and *listen* to the music; after you *hear* the run-down it will make a lot more sense. Don't try to *see* what it sounds like.

"Listen while you look and soon you will be playing the figures the first time through. You will find that the same figure can be written out several different ways—some more complicated than others. Familiarize yourself with all the ways. You'll find that the simplest ways are more commonly used."

thing with a little more information on it. Most of the albums I did with Chick, like *Leprechaun* and *Spanish Heart*, were all live, with strings and horns.

RM: You did two albums in Japan with Steps.

SG: We recorded live with Steps, and also did a studio album. There was not too much preparation. On the studio album we went in and there were some new tunes, so we ran them down in the studio and recorded them.

RM: Did you have a lot of input into that group? Wasn't it a cooperative band?

SG: Well, when we first started out, it was just a bunch of guys who enjoyed playing together, and then it became Steps. The reasons why I left didn't have anything to do with the music; I loved the music, I just didn't have the amount of time right then that everyone was going to put into that band. So it was a good band, and *is* a good band.

RM: Paul McCartney.

SG: Paul is a great musician. He has the tune worked out and has certain ideas as to what he wants, but he's very open and very objective about it, and it can go another way. Things just flow with him. He's very serious about it, but it's not a *heavy* thing—he's got a sense of humor about it. He's excellent; really enjoyable to work with.

RM: Al DiMeola.

SG: We rehearse in the studio and spend a lot of time on each song. When you're playing rock'n'roll and stuff like that, a lot of times the sound gets into everything because there's not a lot of separation, so that can make it take longer.

RM: George Benson.

SG: I enjoy playing with George; he's great. An album with George is like . . . he's got a producer who's got certain ideas. So what the musicians see is a lot of the relationship between the producer and George, so they agree first. There has to be that kind of agreement before any kind of information can be given to the rhythm section so they'll know what to do. So that's the way that goes, but you don't spend a lot of time on tracks with George. You can get two or three tracks a day with him.

continued on page 40



Photo by Rick Maikin

Gadd Clinic

ON TIME:

"Practice with a rhythm machine or a metronome. Set a tempo and play a feel along with it. When you feel locked in with the tempo, stop and think of another feel. Play that until it feels comfortable, then stop. Give yourself a two-bar count off, then play the first feel for 16 bars, with a fill at bars 8 and 16. After the second fill, go to the second feel for 16 bars. Just notice what happens. It can show you places where you might be rushing or dragging. Repeat this exercise using different dynamics for each section."

A

count off

4/4

2

mf

ff

7

Fill

1

7

Fill

1

B

f

p

7

Fill

1

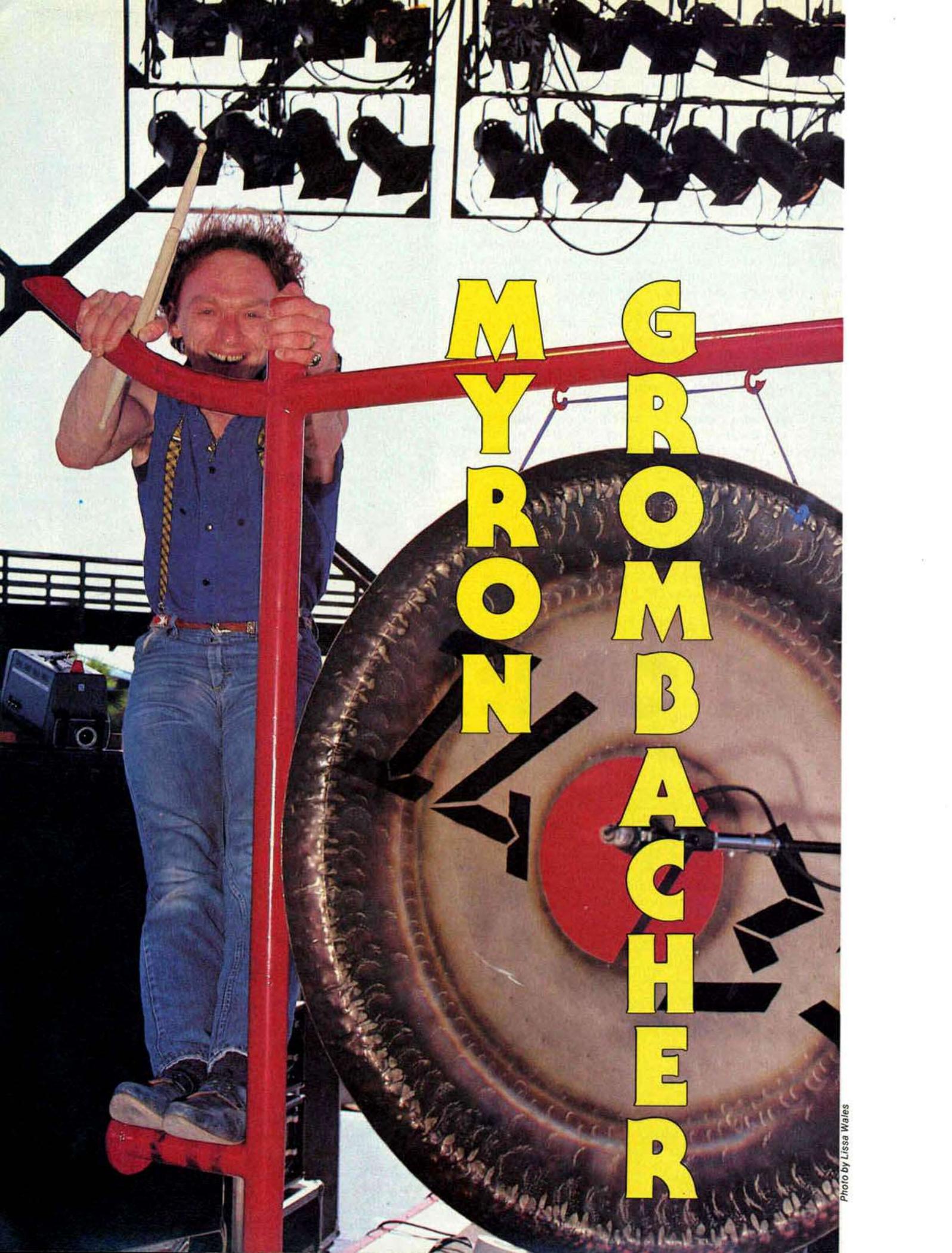
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Fill

1

ON TUNING:

"Sometimes you get everything sounding good, except that the snares rattle when you hit the toms. On the snare drum, try loosening the four bottom lugs on each side of the snares. If that doesn't work, try slightly changing the pitch of the toms. If that doesn't work, try slightly muffling the toms. If that doesn't work . . ."



M G
Y R
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Photo by Lissa Wales

Seeing Myron Grombacher on stage with Pat Benatar is quite a treat. Aside from being a superb rock drummer—fluid, steady, fluent, tasteful and powerful—he is quite a showman. With boundless energy, the man gives 100% and you never know what to expect. You can see him lean back, almost reclining, only to wallop as he springs up on the rebound. Or, you might see him leap onto his seat in an aggressive pose, only to lightly caress his cymbals on the opening of "Shadows of the Night." The next thing you know, he's jumped to the ground, attacking his gong and hopping back to his set on his left foot, prepared to plow into his bass drum pedal with his right as he seats himself. Maybe next time he'll dance in back of his kit in graceful movement, climb the bar of his gong like an agile gymnast, momentarily hanging upside down. And then he's back to his seat in an instant, never missing a beat in complementing Benatar's dynamic vocals.

It's hard to believe that Myron didn't begin playing drums until he was 17. He had originally wanted to be a lead singer. "I had great moves, but I couldn't sing," he laughs now. But once he began to play the drums, friends tactfully suggested that he stop singing and concentrate on developing the obvious talent he had on drums.

Once he made the commitment to the instrument, he spent three months of intense rehearsal, playing with records to familiarize himself with various rhythms and feels. He was extremely influenced by Mitch Mitchell

because "his approach was very fresh in that he had jazz influences and combined them into rock music."

ROCK 'N' ROLL ENERGY

by
Robyn
Flans

Photo by Lisa Waide

Completely self-taught, at 29, Myron is happy with those musical experiences he has had, choosing rock 'n' roll as his medium. "I'm a rock 'n' roller and I like what I'm doing. I get a lot of enjoyment out of the music I create."

The interview took place in the livingroom of his San Fernando Valley home, and his drum roadie, Jeff Chonis, joined us to discuss the technical aspects of Myron's set-up.

MG: When I started playing drums, I primarily played in rock 'n' roll bands. Shortly before I became 18, I became the house drummer at a blues club. I had no feel for the blues whatsoever, but I had a brand new drumset which was great looking. Everybody knew who I was from being a local rock 'n' roller.

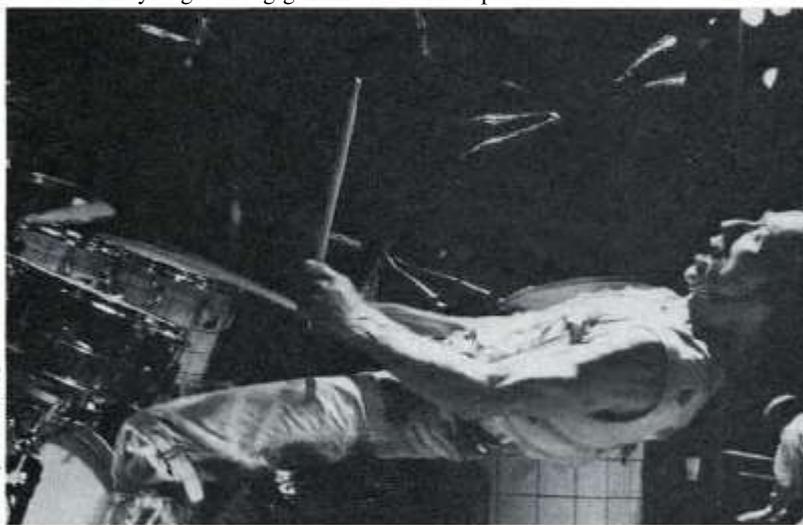
RF: You had only been playing for about a year?

MG: Right. I really wanted to learn it and I was very sincere about it, so I got a job playing there. Sometimes people would come through Ohio on tour who wouldn't carry musicians with them. The clubs would provide people, and I got to be one of those people. It was an invaluable learning experience in terms of feel, in terms of a groove, learning how to swing, and it was great. It's like learning your ABC's. From there, I quit high school and joined a rock 'n' roll band called Freeport that was on Mainstream Records. I think some of those guys from there are still active in the Michael Stanley Band and a couple of other bands. In Cleveland, Freeport was the big thing. That's when I started to record and tour for the first time. We'd go out as an opening act for Alice Cooper, Fleetwood Mac and bands like that, and it was great because I got to see that side of the coin. It taught me a lot and gave me a good background in communicating to people from stage, and to this day, I'm not shy about that. That was probably from

starting in front of the drums and eventually coming around to behind them. I don't feel awkward on stage and I don't get stage-fright. I get pumped up, but it's not a negative thing. I love it. It's really what I wanted to do and I'm happy doing it. I kicked around and played with so many people that I got to be one of the better known people from that area.

A friend of mine from the Dead Boys, Stiv Bators, called me on the phone and told me that Rick Derringer was looking for a drummer and he said I should come up and play. At that point in time, I had some other friends who were playing with Andy Pratt and I was going to play with Andy. Rick Schlosser, who's such an incredibly good drummer, was Andy's drummer and he was leaving to do studio work. Andy was doing a different form of music, which I kind of wanted to do because it would have been growth as a musician, but Rick was doing rock 'n' roll, so it wasn't really that hard of a decision. It was the thing I had always geared myself toward playing and it was an opportunity to play with someone I admired. Eventually, Neil [Geraldo], who I had played with on and off for years in Cleveland, and I were united in the band and it just went on from there.

RF: Did you get that gig from an audition process?



MG: He had auditioned something like 40 drummers, and I got it, so he liked the way I played because I was a rock 'n' roll drummer. But he would do other things, too. Playing with Rick was great because he would throw everything at you. Sometimes you'd be playing reggae music, anything. That's the way he is. He's a very good fundamental teacher. He's a pretty firm person and he's a well-rounded musician, so he was very encouraging from a creative point of view. He showed you that you could play many kinds of things competently if you wanted to. He was inspiring on that level.

RF: You keep saying "rock drummer." Define what a good rock drummer is.

MG: A lot of it comes down to the attitude that you have when you're playing music. A great jazz player has a lot of natural enthusiasm for jazz; he's very comfortable in the element and expresses the element very well. He can really make it a moment for you. And rock drumming is the same way. It's only really 30 or 40 years old, and there are different schools of thought that come down and different spheres of influences, but they all interlock. Sometimes you see people who are playing rock 'n' roll who are not happy with it. They're frustrated creatively or in some different sense. There's enough freedom in the music that you can express almost anything you care to, provided how you put it. It's like the difference between making commercial music and non-commercial music. As long as you're behind what you're making 100% and realize it for what it is, then you would not be embarrassed by it in any case. It's how much sincerity you have towards what you're doing. Sometimes you see drummers cross over from jazz and start to play rock and sometimes they are guys who always wanted to do



naturally an overly enthusiastic person and I had the tendency to bring that aspect into my playing. He didn't think that was in my best interests or his. But he found a way to get through to me, the importance of having a strong foundation in rock music. I couldn't really argue with him. It was right. We recorded it once my way and once his way and his way held up to a listening and my way, unless you were a drummer, was a bit tiring.

Mike did some things that were very different. It was one of the first times I ever played with a click track because sometimes what he'll do is when he's not entirely sure of how he's going to arrange something, he will record it. I remember one song we did in particular called "It Ain't Funny, But It Sure Is Fun," where we first recorded the middle section of the song.

We ran the whole song and then later he said, "I need more on the end, so go in and do more on the end. Keep playing and I'll tell you when you're done." It wound up being in the middle instead of being on the end. He's got a unique vision that few people have, but it is so creative with what he's doing. He's sort of like an Andy Warhol, the way he produces records. Some people say, "Well, if you're silk screening something, that's not art." I think it is.

At this point, I'd like to say that's when I met Peter Coleman. Peter engineered the *Romantic* album and, of course, he went on with Mike to engineer and co-produce Patty's first album. [Most recently Coleman co-produced Benatar's *Get Nervous* album along with Neil Giraldo.] For a drummer, he's a dream. He knows so much about miking and he gets an outstanding drum sound. He's very demanding, but it pays off. When things were incredibly even, it was his fault!

RF: Were you thrown at first by the click track?

MG: Oh yeah, sure. You have to learn to relate to a click track as being meter, but not necessarily being time. Meter is like the law. It occurs. It's like when you watch the hand moving on the clock, you *see* the seconds ticking off. Time is sort of loosely defined. That's the emotional content, the phrasing, the dynamic qualities. It's important to play great time and have as good a meter as possible. But if you're trying to make emotional music, sometimes you've got to lean forward a little, sometimes you've got to do a little of this, or sometimes you've got to pull it back just slightly so the vocal performance is pushed up to the front where it belongs. I think that as soon as you acclimate yourself to that, you don't have a great deal of difficulty doing it.

RF: The studio seems to overwhelm a lot of people at first.

MG: It's a very intimidating experience the first time you do it. You come in and all of a sudden, it's a very different way of looking at things. Listening through playback speakers is very different, and then you learn sounds, and you learn mic' placement, and technol-

it. They look right doing it, even though they play jazz great. Terry Bozzio is one who plays great jazz, but he likes playing rock 'n' roll and you can tell when you see him play. He likes rock 'n' roll and that's the way I am. I *like* rock 'n' roll.

RF: There has to be more to it. I'm sure there are a lot of people who like it but can't be great drummers.

MG: You can if you love it and that's what you want to do. I think people set their own limitations in certain areas. A lot of times people are shy or inhibited and in many cases, that's really not the way to approach anything. I think if you're sincere about it and honest about it and have enough determination, you can do just about anything you want to do. Nobody's flown without an airplane yet, but . . .

RF: Then your first recording experiences were with Freeport?

MG: Yes, but none of it was really released—hopefully. We were very young at that point in time. My first important recording experience, in terms of my career, was really my work with Rick Derringer on the *Romantic* album [*If I Weren't So Romantic, I'd Shoot You*], I got to write some songs, it was an active group, we got to help with the arrangements and I got to work with Mike Chapman, who is a producer's producer. I had worked with producers on jingles and little things, but this was a man who made records. More than that, this was a man who made *hit* records. So there was an entirely different psychology that went into it. I went through a little trauma there.

RF: How so?

MG: He made me eliminate a lot of things that I thought were really exciting. I had the tendency to overdo it. I'm



Photo by Paul Natkin / Photo Reserve

ogy keeps improving, and on and on. Those are just things you have to learn to become comfortable with. In the final analysis, it's definitely worth the adjustment. In our band, for example, we try to get as much emotion in the music as possible, but still make as good a record as we can. With the state of the art nowadays, you need to make good performances. People, once again, are dancing and they don't want long instrumental sections on pop music, which is basically what we make. It's learning how to do that; it's kind of a craft. Sometimes you get a little dismayed as a musician when you have to stop and get something right in terms of sound.

RF: There are a lot of bands that have difficulty using their touring drummer in the studio, first time in.

MG: Absolutely. That, a lot of times, is a producer technique. Certain producers will have certain drummers that they work with and if you're trying to make a hit record, the drums are the first step in making it. Producers don't like to spend a lot of time getting someone to understand their whole psychology. For them, that is a very important thing; that's something that a solo artist, for example, would have to take into consideration. That's not very often in a band environment unless the drummer is just bad. That is more a producer's technique and they've got drummers that they work with every day, so the communication is good and I can see why they do that. Neil and I have great communication and it's difficult sometimes for us to work with other people, only because you have to stop and say, "Wait, he doesn't know what I'm talking about."

RF: Are you talking about verbal or musical communication?

MG: You almost get ESP where the other person is on the same wavelength. It doesn't matter what you're talking about, the other person has an instant understanding of what you're saying. In the studio, eventually you have to reach a point where you're communicating and you're understanding from an intellectual and emotional point of view. You have to be able to see it through their eyes. That's why a lot of producers do want their own house drummers. And sometimes they're right. Sometimes they only use him on the single and you hear him and it's right. Gary Mallaber does a lot of that and you hear him and it sounds great.

RF: You were with Derringer for how long?

MG: Almost three years. And that was a lot of fun because it was a group situation and the musicians were always very good in the band. We couldn't sell many records, but live, we were an exciting band and all of the players were above average in capability. It was a lot of fun to work with them.

RF: You come from very guitar-oriented bands. Do you often find yourself working off the guitarist in the band?

MG: I do; I was going to bring that up. Now I love great bass players, but usually you'll find that in most great rock music, the rhythm guitar is one of the most important elements in the music. For example, most bands that were great rhythmically had either great rhythm guitar players, like Keith Richards, or they had lead guitar players like Neil Giraldo or Jimmy Page who understood how to play rhythm guitar. Bands like the Pretenders, who I love, have great rhythm playing. Rhythm guitar is rule one, and I always key to that because

a lot of the attitude of the music that you're playing comes through a guitar. Pete Townshend is one of my favorite guitarists and he doesn't take a lot of leads, but he plays a lot of guitar. The reason I love playing with Neil so much is that he's a person who cannot only play great leads, but he knows how vital it is to play rhythm guitar. In fact, this album [*Get Nervous*] was a bit different for us because there were some tracks where we all played at the same time, which we liked a lot. Prior to that, on a

Photo by Lissa Wales



Jeff and Myron

lot of *Crimes of Passion*, Neil and I would record together and then we would put things on after that, only because we were arranging them and playing them at the same time. We had such good communication and we understood each other so well. He could talk to me, I could talk to him, and we knew what we were trying to get out of it. It was clean and done and boom. Roger [Capps, bass], from playing with us, has developed an understanding of what we're getting at, and more than anything, we're going for the attitude of the song. We're trying to get that point across.

RF: What prompted the addition of keyboard player Charlie Giordano?

MG: Neil has always played keyboards on the albums, but we've always sacrificed the elaborate kind of playing live. So in an effort to become more musical, we decided it was time to have the addition of a keyboard player if we could find the perfect person. We found Charlie in New York and he's the perfect person. He's so versatile, from funky r&b to a perfect technipop synthesizer. Neil is very demanding, and it was right from the start. Charlie could immediately translate any suggestion into a hell of an idea.

continued on page 52

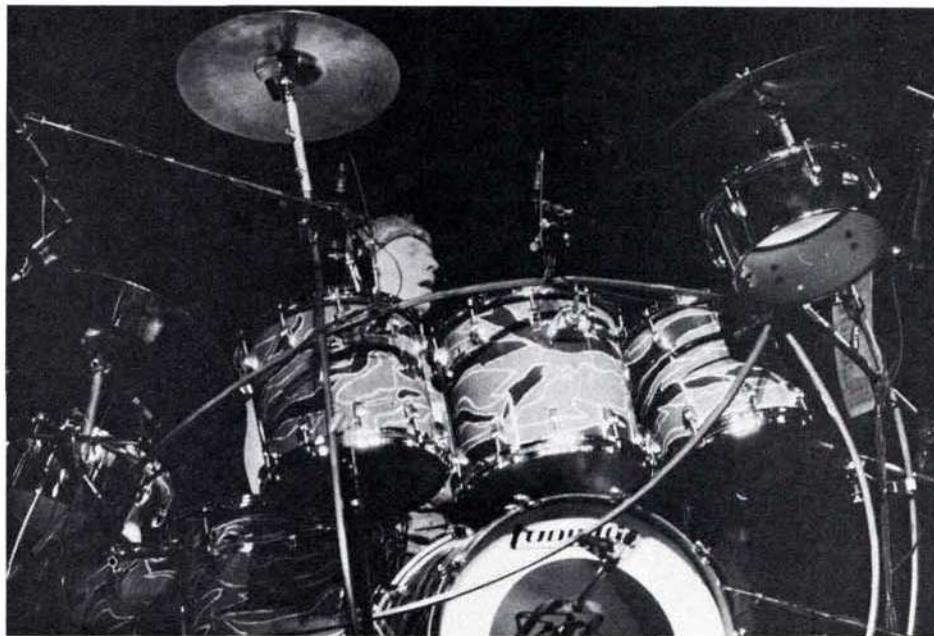


Photo by Paul Natkin/Photo Reserve

THE REGGAE DRUMMERS

by Robert Santelli

A decade ago, it would have been unthinkable to envision a music form born in the steamy slums of Kingston, Jamaica, becoming one of the more exciting influences on contemporary music. The simple "chinka-chinka" rhythm and the infectious off-beat have worked their way into everything from hard rock to soft, middle-of-the-road pop music.

Today reggae, in its true roots form, represents a real alternative to the Madison Avenue mentality currently sweeping rock 'n' roll. Reggae is a music that's political, religious, and most of all, revolutionary in scope and content. It's a grass-roots music closely tied to the people who support it. And over the past few years, interest in reggae has helped the music finally achieve a legitimate position in contemporary music.

I have been writing about reggae and reggae musicians for some time now. And at least once a year I make a pilgrimage of sorts to Kingston, Jamaica, in search of the latest sounds and trends bubbling in the recording studios there. Over the past few months I've spoken with a number of drummers and percussionists about the music and their role in it, about the problems they encounter being Jamaican musicians far removed from the music capitals of New York, Los Angeles and London, and also about the joys of "carrying the beat" or "riddim" reggae style.

The following interviews are made up of the words of reggae's most innovative and important drummers. The comments of Sly Dunbar, Carly Barrett, Nelson Miller, Skyjuice and Horsemouth Wallace offer a rare introspective glimpse into the world of Jamaican reggae drummers.



Sly Dunbar (some insist on calling him Sly "Drumbar") is one half of the most celebrated "riddim" team in all of reggae, and is currently the undisputed kingpin of Jamaican drummers. Together with bass player and long-time friend Robbie Shakespeare, these two Kingston-based session studs/producers/arrangers/songwriters and record company owners have set new standards of excellence for Jamaican musicians and have helped reggae leap into the '80s with spirited, innovative instrumentation and razor-sharp live performances.

Sly Dunbar began playing drums the day he left school some 15 years ago. He joined a group called the Yard Brooms, a Kingston ghetto outfit that included at one time or another Lloyd Parks, Ranchie McClean and Ansel Collins, all top-notch musicians in their own right. Dunbar was a fanatical fan of the Skatalites, one of the most successful ska groups ever to record in Jamaica, and from the start he patterned his drum style after that of the legendary Skatalites drummer, Lloyd Nibbs.

Sly and Robbie teamed up in 1975 and have been together ever since. The Riddim Twins, as they're often called, first drew acclaim outside Jamaica when they toured with Peter Tosh and the Rolling Stones in 1978. From that point on the duo has worked with such reggae luminaries as Gregory Isaacs, the Tamlins, Jimmy Riley, Wailing Souls, the Waiters, Big Youth, Dennis Brown, Lee "Scratch" Perry and Black Uhuru, and non-reggae artists like Grace Jones, Joan Armatrading, Ian Dury and Joe Cocker.

Sly and Robbie are virtually inseparable. I met them for the first time at Compass Point Recording Studios in Nassau, Bahamas, and have since spoken with them on numerous occasions. Sly is generally a quiet, unassuming person who shuns publicity, but sit him down and get him rolling and he'll answer all the questions you have about reggae and drums—his



S L Y D U N B A R

Photo by Christine Rodin

two favorite topics—without any problem at all.

RS: You and Robbie are recognized as two of the very best musicians in all of reggae. What is it that you two do that makes nearly everything you play sound, well, right?

SD: We take the music serious. We go into the studio and try to figure out what is the right way to play the music. And because we are musicians first, we can hear things other producers cannot. When we do our recording sessions, we always listen back and listen back and listen back to the tapes. Sometimes we make mistakes, mistakes that nobody understand, but we fix 'em and make the music sound right.

RS: You play with reggae and non-reggae artists alike. Is the formula, as well as your drum style, basically the same once you leave the reggae format?

SD: Disco, rock, funk—it's the same approach as for a reggae tune. There are many riddims you can play, so you pick the one which can soothe the song, seen? Reggae can be played in all forms. Some people put a limit on it, but there's no limit. Like when we have to create certain riddims, what we do is put a kick down on the first beat; put more syncopation in it.

RS: You began playing drums right after you finished school in Kingston. Did you have your own drumset?

SD: Well, the band I joined had a kit and that the one I used until I could save enough money to buy one. But in those days, money don't come easy, so it take a while.

RS: Aside from the great Lloyd Nibbs, was there any other drummer who influenced you?

SD: Yeah mon, Al Jackson from Booker T. and the MG's. Me see him on the TV show, *Shindig* in Jamaica and I knew he had a good groove. So I watch him and go out and get his records.

RS: Skin, Flesh and Bones was a popular

continued on page 82

C A R L T O N B A R R E T T



Photo by Dick Meseroll

Carlton "Carly" Barrett has been the drummer for the late Bob Marley's Wailers ever since Marley, Peter Tosh and Bunny Livingston Wailer—the original Wailers—decided to add a permanent bass player and drummer to the band more than a decade ago. It was Carlton Barren and his bass playing brother, Aston "Family Man" Barrett, both formerly of Lee "Scratch" Perry's Upsetter band, who were chosen to fill out the Wailers. Together these five musicians formed the nucleus of what soon was to become the greatest reggae band in the history of the music form.

Even after Peter Tosh and Bunny Wailer left the group to pursue solo careers, the Wailers flourished. And it was no big secret that the driving power of the Wailers' music came from its bottom: the throbbing bass riffs of Family Man and the exceptionally tightfisted drumming of brother Carly.

Since the untimely death of Bob Marley in 1981, Carly Barrett and the rest of the Wailers have kept a rather low profile. For months after Marley's passing, the group agonized over whether it should remain intact as the Wailers. The band did a brief tour of California and the enthusiastic, supportive response it received from loyal fans in Los Angeles and other parts of the state convinced the Wailers to carry on. Since then the band has been working on an LP of Wailer originals which should be released in the States very soon. Called Out of Exile, the record features some of Carly Barrett's finest moments as a drummer.

RS: Before the rise of Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare, you and your brother Family Man had no rivals in reggae. You two were responsible for popularizing bass/drum combinations in reggae, as well as helping bass players and drummers get the recognition they so obvi-

ously deserved.

CB: Yes dat true, y'know. Fams and I, we always had a special pattern for playing, a cool drive that everybody take notice of, ever since the earliest days of reggae. The Barrett Brothers—Aston "Family Man" Barrett and Carlton Barrett, a one-two punch.

RS: You've often described your drum-playing as a spiritual experience. Can you explain what you mean by that?

CB: Well, it's a spiritual vibe that I try and get from my drums to the music. Because drums come from the slavery days and from Africa, it comes from a lot of history. The reggae drummer carries that history more than the guitarist or keyboards player, and the good reggae drummers make playing a spiritual experience.

RS: You've been a member of the Wailers right from the very first album the band put out, *Catch A Fire*, back in 1972. Why was it that Peter Tosh and Bunny Wailer quit the group just at the time the Wailers were breaking big in the States and in Europe?

CB: Well, at dat time the group was called the Wailers, not Bob Marley and the Wailers like later on, y'know? Everything was cool until some people tell Peter and Bunny to break free. Instead of sayin' to Bob, Peter and Bunny, "You are three singing together as one," they say to Peter and Bunny to break free and be their own superstars. Dat's why the Wailers separate.

RS: I understand that Bob Marley gave his musicians a free hand, so to speak, when it came to song arrangements. Is that true?

CB: Bob never interfere with his musicians. He always leave the basic parts for his musicians to figure out. He had a lot of respect for the Wailers.

continued on page 82

N M E L S O N M I L L E R

Photo by Robert Santelli



Nelson Miller's ideas on drumming are quite typical of the second generation of reggae drummers who actively seek to open up and expand reggae's untapped rhythmic possibilities. The drummer for Burning Spear's band was born and raised in the old coastal resort town of Port Antonio, unlike most of his contemporaries who are products of the Kingston ghetto. Yet Miller's early education and experience with reggae, and drumming in particular, were just as basic and crude as those who lived in the city.

Miller's view on what makes a good reggae drummer as well as his interest in other forms of music, namely jazz, help to round out his powerful drum style. Along with other up-and-coming reggae drummers such as Style Scott and Barnabas, Nelson Miller envisions reggae riddims more complex, but never to the point where the inherent richness of reggae's compelling beat is smothered or less important than it is now.

Onstage, Miller's drum style can be summed up as determined and a bit more aggressive than most other reggae drummers; his recent tour with Burning Spear—in this country and in Europe—accurately reflected his instinctive ability to build interesting and strong foundations. Miller's drumming did much to keep Spear's often windy and cumbersome songs in focus.

I saw Miller twice in the last few months: once in Asbury Park, New Jersey, where Burning Spear played to a sold-out audience that included Bruce Springsteen, and another time at the Tuff Gong studio down in Kingston. Both times we talked about drums and the current state of reggae drumming.

RS: In your opinion, how has reggae drumming changed over the years?

NM: Initially, reggae was confined to like direct rim shots with just a few different variations and patterns. But when disco came popular, many reggae drummers began to pick up on that beat. Some kept in

mind a reggae mood, but others did not, y'know. Today I think reggae drumming has more complex bass drum patterns and instead of playin' rim shots all the time, you do a lot of slappin', just like in funk.

RS: Then the advent of disco has had a rather significant impact on reggae, even though a lot of reggae musicians don't like to admit it.

NM: Yea, I think so, y'know.

RS: You've been playing drums with Burning Spear for a couple of years now. Your drumming style is much more complex than Spear's mostly roots approach to his music. Does this cause any complications?

NM: Well, I just learn to adapt. If you are a good musician, you can adapt to any style or brand of music.

RS: You once mentioned to me that jazz has had a big influence on the way you play drums. Who in particular do you listen to and what artists have had an impact on your overall style?

NM: For me I like to listen to Weather Report, Return To Forever, Billy Cobham, Steve Gadd—all of these have made a big impression on the way I play drums, y'know. Jazz has always had a pronounced influence on me.

RS: Do a lot of other reggae drummers listen to jazz for inspiration or technique?

NM: No, not really. Not a lot. You see, when I first started to play drums seriously I wanted to come up with a style that was different than all the other drummers in Kingston. I didn't want to sound like everyone else so I search for new inspirations. That's when I picked up on jazz.

RS: Most reggae drummers have little or no formal training. Is that true of you as well?

NM: Yes, yes. [laughs] I learned to play drums by watching, y'know. There was a friend of mine who played in a band and I used to watch him until one day I went around to where he was sitting and said, "Y'know, I can play that there ting."

continued on page 82



Photo by Robert Santelli

Along with Sticky Thompson and Skully, Skyjuice is a name that's synonymous with percussion in reggae circles. Together these three own more than a lion's share of the work in Kingston recording studios, and virtually dictate the stylistic trends that occur within Jamaican percussion.

Of the three, Skyjuice is the youngest and undoubtedly the most ambitious. When we spoke, Skyjuice was on tour with Black Uhuru and had just returned from a shopping blitz with good friend Duckie Simpson in New York City. After modeling the half dozen or so shirts he had bought, he unabashedly told me of his grand plan: "First I want to be the best percussionist in Kingston, then the best percussionist in reggae, and then the best percussionist in the universe. It is not a joke or light thing, y'know. Skyjuice want to reach for the sky, reach for the stars, seen?"

RS: I know you are quite close with Sticky Thompson. Is he the one who got you started with percussion?

SJ: Sticky was the one who get me into reggae. But nobody never really teach me 'bout percussion. I jus' watch as a youth from Trenchtown. I jus' watch people like Toots Hibbert [Toots and the Maytals] and Sly and Sticky and I pick up the feel. It was jus' a natural ting for me to do.

RS: How does your percussive style differ from Sticky's?

SJ: Well, you see I don't try to have his style. My style of playing percussion has always been different from his, even from the early days. It's like the other day I was at a session at Dynamic [Dynamic Sounds—a popular Kingston recording studio] and I was dubbing some tracks for this dude and he say, "Skyjuice, I want you to play like Sticky." So I say, "My name is Skyjuice. I'm not Sticky. I create

SKYJUICE

my own sound. If you want Sticky you should get Sticky. I play like Skyjuice." Every percussionist should have his own sound, his own feel. Nobody should ask a percussionist to sound like someone else.

RS: Percussion, it seems, is playing a more and more important role in reggae. Why do you think this is so?

SJ: It's because people are demanding more from the music. Percussion is an added element to the music, like a seasoning. If you don't use any seasoning when you cook your dinner, the food taste flat, true? Well, the same with music, especially reggae music. If you don't use percussion, the music don't sound right. It sound dull.

RS: What equipment do you find yourself using most during recording sessions?

SJ: Well, I try and use everything: drums, maracas, tambourine, wood block, agogo bells. But I don't use them if they don't fit.

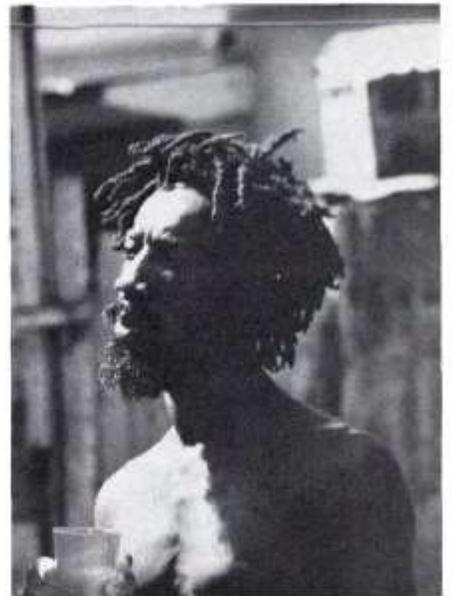
You can't force a percussive instrument into the music, otherwise you can ruin the feel of the song. Lately I think I use the maracas a lot. If you listen to Coxone's early Downbeat records [Downbeat was the name of one of Coxone Dodd's labels] you will notice the maracas in most of the songs. Back in the '60s the maracas were there, but not right out on top. Today I'm playin' the maracas way out in front and on top. I also use the tambourine a lot to build up the sound when the song calls for it. But it's real hard to say anything 'bout what instruments I'll play on a song until I hear it and know what kind of feel goes with it.

RS: How did you get the name Skyjuice?

SJ: The name Skyjuice is a very powerful name. The way I get the name is because my father was a juice man; when I was young he sell juice all around town. Then when I start school they usually call me

continued on page 83

LEROY "HORSEMOUTH" WALLACE



Leroy "Horsemouth" Wallace was one of reggae's most popular drummers in the mid-1970s, primarily because of his star role in the movie, *Rockers*. Wallace got the lead part in the film after director Ted Bafaloukos noticed Horsemouth's magnetic and affable stage presence at a 1976 Central Park concert in New York City when the drummer was a member of Burning Spear's band. Bafaloukos felt that Wallace was somehow "spiritually tied" to reggae and would be perfect for the role of the main character in *Rockers*. "Horsemouth is reggae," Bafaloukos once said of the drummer.

In the movie *Horsemouth* played himself—a Rasta reggae drummer who takes life day by day, gig by gig. The movie turned out to be as successful as reggae's first film, *The Harder They Come*, which starred singer Jimmy Cliff, and overnight, Leroy "Horsemouth" Wallace was a movie star.

But, strangely enough, *Horsemouth's* appearance in *Rockers* did not help his career as a drummer. According to Wallace, it nearly destroyed it. "People were jealous of me," lamented Wallace. "They tried to hold me back because it was I and not dem that was a star, y'know?"

I ran into Horsemouth late one afternoon outside the gates of the Tuff Gong recording studio in Kingston. He was sitting on the curb and "meditating on the mysteries of life" as he remarked. He told me he had been looking for a gig to play to make some money, but that he had found none. He then proceeded to tell me about how his life had changed since his appearance in the movie. Wallace is a bitter man; he still remains disappointed, even rancorous at times, because his role in *Rockers* made him neither a Hollywood star nor a highly paid, in-demand session drummer. I've included some of our discussion here because Horsemouth's background as a

once-noted studio drummer for producer Coxone Dodd, as well as his comments on drumming and reggae in general, are particularly direct and candid. They shed further light on the largely misunderstood music form and the musicians who pump life into it.

RS: For years you played drums for Coxone Dodd. You must have played on hundreds of tracks. Despite your reputation in and around the studios of Kingston, you never received much outside recognition.

HW: True mon. Coxone don't advertise the name of the musicians on his records in the early days, so I play but nobody know about it. If you are a drummer or other instrumentalist who really love de music, you try to set up a reputation at Coxone's studio because in those days he had the right riddims, dem that you really love with your heart. It's not so much the money, 'cause Coxone, he sometimes don't pay you. It's the love of music.

RS: When you were approached by Ted Bafaloukos to be in his movie, *Rockers*, what were your immediate thoughts?

HW: Well, at dat time I really didn't like white people. I was a very prejudiced person, y'know. I wasn't interested in listening to white men talk, talk, y'know? I jus' come to de States with Burning Spear to mash down Babylon. Dat's what I want to do with my drums all the time, y'know? I jus' do dat. But this white guy talk to me very nice, seen? Dis guy make me feel like a human being. Dat get me interested in the movie.

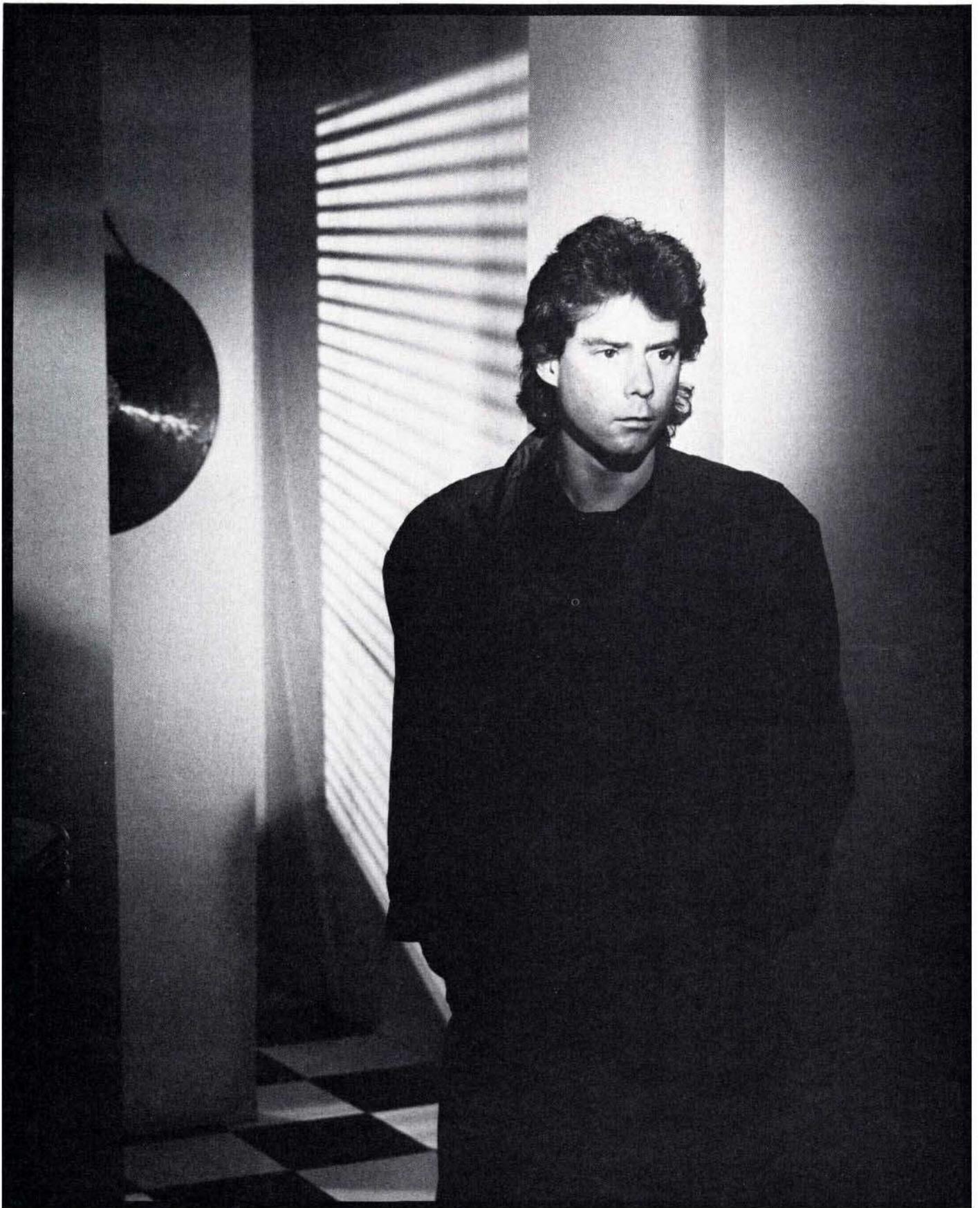
RS: Did you enjoy making the film?

HW: Yes, mon. I really enjoy it. From the time I was a little youth I always wanted the opportunity to be in a movie 'cause I felt I was a natural, y'know. Acting for me is real life; I cannot pretend.

RS: But the movie. . .

HW: Let me tell you a fact, mon. The pro-

continued on page 83



Coming To Terms

Mike Shrieve

Not long ago, two readers wrote separate letters that said, "I just saw the movie Woodstock. Who was the young drummer playing with Santana?" That "young drummer" was Michael Shrieve. Michael has traveled many literal and figurative miles since 1969 and Woodstock. His brand of drumming, mixed with the rock/Latin music of Santana took most people by surprise. "Evil Ways," "Jingo," "Black Magic Woman," "Everybody's Everything," "Oye Como Va" and "No One To Depend On" were some of the Santana hits that Michael played on, and he was the last of the original Santana members to hang on in the midst of numerous personnel changes.

After leaving the group, Michael recorded an album entitled *Blessing In Disguise* that is listed in the Paiste Profiles of International Drummers, but in fact was never released. The formation of Automatic Man came next, followed by the realization of a five-year dream to work with Japanese percussionist Stomu Yamashita. Together with Steve Winwood, Michael and Stomu recorded three albums with this group *GO* that were very well done.

When *GO* disbanded, Michael wrote music with his brother Kevin and started rehearsing a band called Patterns. This was when I interviewed Michael for the first time in the Oct./Nov. '79 *MD*. Even before that interview hit the press, Patterns had disbanded and Shrieve had decided to forget about bands for a while.

This interview picks up where the last one left off. Shrieve has returned to the stage with Novo Combo, who've released two albums on Polydor Records. In addition, he's still actively pursuing his concept of blending "earthy" percussive rhythms with "ethereal" electronic music. The gist of most of this interview is in how he's dealing with it. Michael is a complex man; sometimes hard to interpret but always interesting.

Rather than being an interview about drumming *per se*, the conversation seemed to lean more towards what Bill Bruford called "life past the cymbals"; the aspects of a musician's career that involve the creation of music and the marketing of music.

SF: The last time we spoke you were rehearsing Patterns. Shortly thereafter you disbanded the group.

MS: That was a group I had with my brother Kevin. I just didn't want to spend any more time doing that. It was really great, especially working with Kevin because of his ideas and concepts.

SF: What happened between Patterns and Novo Combo?

MS: The first thing was I said, "Forget about bands." Even before Patterns there was Automatic Man. There's so much that goes into a band: the making of it; the working of the music; the personalities involved. There's so much that goes on behind the scenes. The audience never sees that part of it. It's really a complicated process, especially if it's not the right energies together.

Kevin and I went to Germany and worked with Klaus Schulze for a month. I'd been listening to his music for quite a while. He was supposed to be in Patterns after we got it to a certain point it never got to. We made some music that was, and still is, wonderful music.

Prior to Patterns and going to Germany I was very interested in working with the relation of sound, rhythm, color and graphic images. I was always watching computergraphic video tapes I'd acquired from computer artists. I'd sit home and look at those tapes with different music. By putting the same visual computergraphic images with color videosynthesis, and putting different music to the same images, it was phenomenal. Your eyes and body perceive the images in different ways. Same image, different music. That started fascinating me. I'm sure that filmmakers and people who do film scores deal with this all the time. But these were abstract computergraphic images that were really beautiful and seemed to be speaking some language. There seemed to be something encoded there. So I was anxious finally—after playing everybody else's music—to make some of my own music with these videotapes. That was also part of my reason for going to Germany.

I came back, finished the tapes in New York, put them with the visual images and was really in heaven watching this. There was no furniture in the house except my video machine. It was real *Zen*. I was gearing up for videodisc too. I went to record companies trying to sell this for about a year. I just couldn't sell it. Everybody I played it for liked it. Even people in record companies. It was beautiful music because

it had a rhythm to it, yet it had a flow *above* it. So you had something that was grounded. It wasn't just space music. With a lot of electronic music, I loved the sound and what it did to me, but I was hungry for maybe just a little more solid rhythm. Not necessarily heavy handed either. Just a pulse that would keep you there. I felt that we were successful in doing that. I've just had a hard time selling it.

SF: What was the record companies' response to it?

MS: "Where's the hook?" In retrospect, I obviously went to the wrong places. Now I'm going to smaller labels who are more interested in that kind of music. You can't put expectations on certain types of musical ventures. You have to go into it with open eyes, an open heart and a real love for it; with no false expectations as to what you're going to receive from it monetarily, or in the amount of people who are going to appreciate the music. You have to do it understanding that it's only going to reach a certain amount of people, and most likely *those* people are going to love it. But, you can't be bitter because more people don't hear it. It's like we were discussing once about bitter jazz musicians who say things like, "Well, John Coltrane never had a hit record."

Cindy Shrieve: But electronic music is more successful now, I think, because of film scores and stuff.

MS: That might be the place to go for it rather than going to Columbia records. So ... you also learn *where* to bring it. We're talking about how to get your music released once you've recorded it. It's up to the artist. If you can't find a way then *create* one. There are alternative ways to do it. I'm just learning that it's part of my job and responsibility—if I'm going to make music that's electronically oriented—to find out who's interested, put a package together that's interesting and have them release it. It's easier said than done. I've gone to a lot of places. I don't have any doubt that this album will be out. Either that or it'll be like Muzak on the Space Shuttle!

SF: What was the inspiration behind Novo Combo?

MS: After attempting to sell the electronic music, working more with Kevin and a few things that happened personally—I had a bunch of equipment stolen—that stopped my process of looking at the screen and the

With Himself

by Scott K. Fish



visuals. I began to be hungry to be in front of an audience again. Enough people had come to me and said, "We wish you were playing. Where can we see you play?" So after saying "no more bands," actually I missed it. When you're raised and weaned in a band like I was, you start to miss that feeling of your mates and the camaraderie of doing things with other people.

This was when the record business was just beginning to get really rough. I figured, "Best to get started now because surely it will come out of the slump." Here we are three years later and it's worse than ever in some ways. In other ways it's the same as it is with the electronic music. I really don't see barriers or obstacles, although it may be more difficult. Less artists are signed. Less records are being played on the radio. But, still there's nothing that's insurmountable. It's a matter of seeing it for what it is and moving towards that. Looking at it with real eyes.

I wanted Novo Combo so that I could be in front of audiences again. Also, the idea of beginning a band from the bottom up was appealing. And no matter that I'm Michael Shrieve who used to play with Santana. "Hey, remember me from *Woodstock*?" In the record business, they just want to know when your last hit record was. Although they may have respect for me, it's down to dollars and cents and what kind of band you have.

We started like every other band and played every little dive in New York City, Long Island and New Jersey. When guys come up to me and say, "It's easy for you!" I think, "You didn't see me carrying equipment up stairs. You didn't see four guys in my apartment sleeping on the floor." I don't want to hear about it. I really don't. I'm sure all this experience has been really good for me, having been

from one side to the other. Starting from the beginning. Just like when I was a kid living in California, I wanted to move to New York. I used to live and re-live 52nd Street when Charlie Parker, Max Roach, Miles and all those guys were there jumping from one club to another, all on one block. That aspect of moving to New York was always exciting for me. So I did it.

It's the same thing with the band. There are certain things that you dream about doing and eventually you do it. Novo Combo provides a working situation that, hopefully, I can continue to grow in. In a band, that's always a touchy situation. Are you growing at the same rate as other people? Are they growing at the same rate as you?

**"I DON'T BELIEVE IN THE
'STARVING ARTIST'
MYTH."**

SF: People probably do assume that you can just call a record company and say, "Hi, this is Mike Shrieve. I've got a new band," and they'll say, "Oh yeah? Great! Come on down and we'll give you a contract."

MS: I didn't think it would be easy. In fact, part of the whole thing *was* the challenge. I knew too many people in the record business around here and I'd heard them talk about other people. I gathered that they must say the same thing about me when I'm not around. It's cold out there!

SF: Did you ever kick yourself for leaving Santana?

MS: No. I followed that through until it was really time for me to go. Seven years was a *good* length of time. At this point, Carlos, Michael Carabello and I are talking about doing something else together again. I'm sure that we will. I'm sure that will come full cycle. We've seen each other more in this last year than we've seen each other in the last six years, and there's still that real strong camaraderie and bond.

SF: In Novo Combo you're still playing with an "open" drum sound. You haven't fallen into that "dead" studio drum sound.

MS: That's one thing I insist on. Stylistically my playing demands it. I'm finally getting to the point where I do have somewhat of a style. Sometimes people call me up for sessions and I'm good at some things and not so good at others.

What I do, I do well, and it doesn't always work in every situation. With Novo Combo the best thing for me to do is play how I play on the rim and off the toms, and a lot of upbeat things on toms. More and more now, from the second album on, I use timbale a lot in the drum kit. It would just sound silly if the drums were flat sounding and taped up. They have to ring out. It's a good thing that my style doesn't sound good without an open sound. That's the approach I have to drums.

SF: Do you miss the progressiveness of the music of the '60s?

MS: There's progressiveness happening right now. In the '60s there were so many bands. It was easier to get signed and it was easier, in a sense, to be freer with the music. You could experiment more and people would listen to it. I think there's a lot of good stuff happening now, but I will agree that it can be very stifling being a musician and wanting to make a record that a lot of people will hear, because of the state of the record industry and radio. They are *extremely* different now than they were in the '60s. Especially radio. The record companies react to radio, actually. They want to hear a group that has a song that *radio* will play. They don't want a song that *they* like. They want a song that *radio* will like. So, really who's got the power?

SF: You think radio is dictating to the recording industry?

MS: Without a doubt. The playlists are shorter and shorter. They have demographics and whole companies to find out, "Well, what songs are we going to play?" Then 400 stations play those songs. There are about three companies that determine what America listens to. They're the ones who determine what's going to work. That's what you're dealing with. Again, you can look at that as stifling—which sometimes I do—because I'm eclectic in my taste and in the things that I desire to do. I could say, "Who wants to bother with *that*? I'll just move to Germany! I'll

Mike Shrieve with Santana

Photo by Laura Friedman



move to Europe." That's a possibility that's always there. I walk a thin line between staying in America doing this or going to Europe or Japan. I always have. It's like an actress doing commercials to make a living instead of acting.

SF: After you've auditioned, rehearsed, done a demo and found a record company that releases an album, what determines whether that record is going to sell? How much control do you have over what happens to the record?

MS: Not much. That's why all those steps have to be thoroughly taken care of beforehand. With a new group you have to choose management wisely. Then between the group and the management you have to choose a record company wisely. You have to make sure relationships are good in the record company between the company management and the company, and between yourself and the record company. Everything is changing so much in the record companies. One week your man in

the record company is there and a week later he could be gone! It happens all the time. I mean, 300 people were fired from Columbia this last year. We're talking about people that'd been there for a long time.

What we're talking about is having a hit record. And building a group that over a period of time really becomes something that's speaking/or you. A group that you can feel proud of musically and proud in building and continuing, that's worth all the time and trouble it takes so in the outcome you're going to feel pride on a multitude of levels. It's not an easy thing to do without compromising yourself too much. That's what's the thin line for me. Because I grew up in America listening to the Beatles and loving songs. I never saw myself as like Ringo Starr because I was listening to Max Roach, Tony Williams or James Brown. I loved the songs the Beatles played. I still love *songs*. So, the idea is to play me *in* the songs and have me playing

myself within a good song. It's always a thrill to play a really good song with a real good singer behind it with the band pumping. It does pump the blood and there's a rush that you get from being in front of an audience responding to you. It's something that I can't deny. Now, how much you have to go through for that nowadays is the question you have to keep asking yourself. Especially somebody like me who has other opportunities available. Most of my opportunities—although other bands ask me to play with them every once in a while—are geared more towards the experimental side of me.

SF: Such as the film score for *The Tempest*?

MS: *The Tempest* with Stomu or stuff with Klaus. Any number of things that I could get together.

SF: You don't have to respond to this, but it seems that your heart is more with the music you play with Klaus and Stomu than it is with Novo Combo.

MS: Why do you say that?

SF: I don't know. It's just a sixth sense I have. I liked Novo Combo a lot. One of the first things that impressed me about the band was that it was playing good songs. But, it seems that your heart is more into the electronic music; that there's an inner struggle of how to create that kind of music and still make a living.

MS: I guess I want to do both. To start a new band takes a lot of your energy and time. That's what's been happening with me. I've been willing to give my time to it and put everything I have into it because it demands it and deserves it. I guess in explaining the process it can sound like a real troublesome thing.

SF: My thought was that you seem to have a great affinity towards wanting to help people through music. I wonder if what you're trying to do is possible in a rock-band format? Did that ever cross your mind?

MS: It often crosses my mind. "What am I doing with my time? Is it being well spent? Am I spending it effectively? Am I being as effective a musician as I really can or should be?" It's difficult. In some ways wherever you *are* or wherever you *go* is

continued on page 88

Photo by Laura Friedman



DRUMSTICKS: The

So you think it's just a hunk of wood, huh? Well, you're wrong. Or maybe you're right. Drumsticks determine the sound you get from a drum. Or maybe they don't. It's well known that maple gets a pingier cymbal sound than hickory, unless, of course, you know that it actually gets a mellower sound. The abundance of information and opinions about sticks is exceeded only by the number of sizes, shapes, weights and materials they're fashioned from. What follows is an attempt to present an overview of the characteristics of materials used in the manufacture of sticks, why certain designs in taper, weight, bead shape, density and size offer different options to the player, and what gets the sound out of the drum.

CALATO REGAL TIP

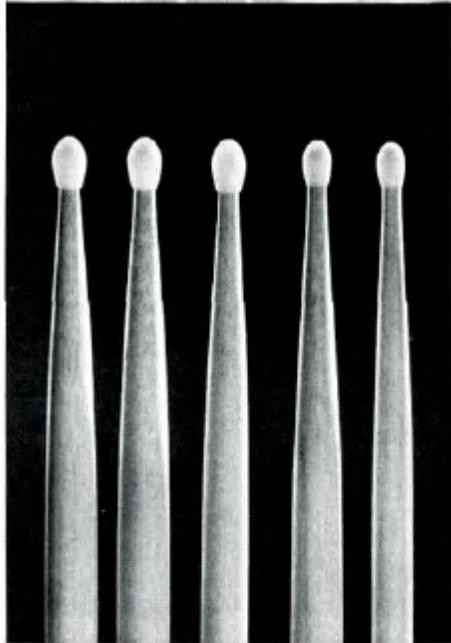


Photo Courtesy of Calato

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

It's best to start with the simplest question: What is the purpose of a drumstick? It seems to be the function of a stick to draw the best possible sound from a drum and cymbal. Naturally, sound is affected by other considerations—touch, acoustics, the drum or cymbal itself, and so on. A stick has to compromise between getting a good sound and response from a drum, as well as a cymbal, in modern music. Today's music leans more heavily towards the use of drums than cymbals, so how do you know which stick to use? The issues are somewhat different with orchestral snare technique.

The factors involved across the board seem to be the kind of music being played and the drum and cymbal used. Ask yourself if the stick draws the sound from the drum that *you* want, and if it fits the music you play. Is the stick comfortable in your hand? Can you play it as many hours as you need to? These may be the most important criteria for the greatest number of drummers. After this may come the choice of materials that provide the above. I don't feel that one kind, brand, model or tip can satisfy all of my playing needs. Read and judge for yourself.

WOOD STICKS

Wood has been the material of choice for many, many years. It's easily shaped, readily available and, because it's highly fibrous, the shock of striking a surface is dissipated throughout the fiber's molecular structure before transferring a greatly reduced vibration to the hand and arm. This is known as "stick shock." Other factors involved in the popularity of wood are its relative flexibility and strength in regard to its weight/diameter ratio. Simply put, this means you get a stick that's not too thick and not too heavy with a maximum of sound producing capability.

Roughly 45% of all sticks sold around the world are U.S. hickory which comes from Alabama, Tennessee, the Carolinas and Florida. Forty-five percent of the sticks sold internationally are made

from a species of oak, such as Asian White Oak and some domestic species. The remaining 10% are divided between hard rock maple, ash, rosewood, bamboo, birch, rare African woods like bubinga, and of course, the new challengers to wood sticks: synthetics of various materials.

Hickory offers a long-grained fiber which is extremely resilient, withstanding impact better. It has a flex modulus (flexing strength) of 3.2 million, which mean that it recovers quickly after a blow and transmits relatively little shock to the hand. This is why it's used in axe and pick handles. As Ray Enhoffer of Latin Percussion says, "Hickory offers a nice balance between weight and diameter of the wood versus stick shock."

When hickory wears, it tends to shred as opposed to breaking. One drawback to hickory is also its strong point: The long, open-grained characteristic of this wood makes it a bit more susceptible to accepting moisture after manufacture, which causes warpage.

Asian oak is a shorter grained wood that's more dense than hickory, which, to a slight degree, minimizes warpage. Because it's more dense (as is maple), the flex modulus tends not to be as great. I have found them to be a bit more brittle than hickory, but paradoxically, if they don't break cleanly, tend to last a bit longer. Here we begin to move into that subjective area of sound and feel. Herb Brochstein of Pro-Mark says that many players have told him that the density of oak brings out a bright, natural ping on a cymbal, that cuts as well as a nylon tip. Chris Campbell of Dean Markley has suggested the opposite. The feedback he has gotten from pros who've tried his hickory sticks, indicate that oak has a softer, mellower sound. All manufacturers agree that hickory, maple, oak and other wood varieties offer a *different* sound and feel, with preferences being highly subjective.

As competition between stick manufacturers increases for a greater share of the market, we can expect to see new technology applied to wood stick manufacture. Latin Percussion offers their *Dyna-fibe* hickory stick as a case in point. Martin Cohen, LP's president, attempted to find out what characteristics of certain woods offered the most "plus" factors in drumstick manufacture and use. His research was extensive enough to unearth enough material to publish a book on the subject, and help him develop a process to make hickory more dense. He found that hickory has "hollow" molecules in the fiber and that intense pressure (using a secret process) would "flatten" the molecules. The second part of the process involves a chemical bath which impregnates the stick, adding to the density and, according to Ray Enhoffer of LP, "makes it as hard as brass." This might tend to make the stick last a bit longer. Equally probable is that a degree of natural spring and flex is lost here. What is certain, is that when I held equal-size sticks of

VIC FIRTH

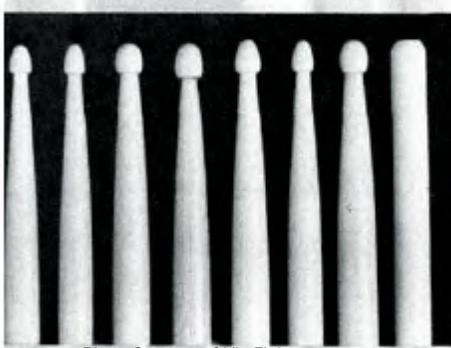


Photo Courtesy of Vic Firth

Full Story

by Michael Epstein

untreated hickory and *Dynafibe* hickory, there was a noticeable density and weight difference.

Bamboo has been used for certain musical situations with varying degrees of effectiveness. Fred Hinger, formerly a percussionist with the Metropolitan Opera and founder of the Touch-Tone Corporation, found that bamboo was unsurpassed in an orchestral setting for its ability to get delicate shadings of sound, as well as deliver lots of volume when necessary. The drawbacks to the use of bamboo were that it is fragile, tending to crack easily and that in certain halls, bamboo sticks did not project. This led him to develop an aluminum stick which we'll look at later.

Recently, birch snare sticks have been made by Touch-Tone as a direct descendant of the bamboo. As compared to hickory, birch is a soft wood. "Soft," Bill Hinger says, "is a relative term depending on the player. You see guys that go through three or four pairs of sticks a night. The criteria for stick durability rests a lot with a player's touch and technique." Birch was chosen by Hinger for its lightness and sound. It's also readily available, thus economical, coming from the Maine/New Hampshire region in pre-cut dowels. The most interesting characteristics of these sticks will be looked at later when we discuss bead characteristics and stick design.

There is an economic factor in the popularity of hickory, oak and maple. The relative availability of these woods at relatively moderate prices reflects what the market desires. Vic Firth has noted that most players are conservative when it comes to stick choice. Sticks of a rare type of wood may sound and feel good, but it's not always easy to get these species regularly and in quantity. Drummers tend to stay with certain types and sizes because they want to be able to replace them readily, as modern musical requirements take a heavier toll in terms of breakage. The manufacturers respond accordingly.

MANUFACTURE

Regardless of the choice of woods used in the production of a stick, most manufacturers use similar methods in changing a tree to a stick. The differences seem to lie at the point at which each company's quality-control system comes into operation. The basic process involves getting logs, which are ripped down to boards, and then further reduced to squares called billets. Then the billets are lath-turned to dowels. From here the dowels are placed on machines which are tooled to produce the variations in design that each manufacturer offers. Most woods are kiln-dried at the board stage, which is critical to the stability of the stick in terms of moisture content. Too much moisture allows for warpage; too little affords the possibility of a brittle stick. Joe Calato, of Regal Tip, feels that the greatest problem in terms of ex-

pense passed along to the consumer is the time it takes to select good wood. Flaws in the wood have to be found before a stick hits the market. Grain structure is critical. A straight grain (all fibers going in one direction for maximum strength and resonance) is looked for. Knots affect a stick's strength and are obvious breakage points. Discolored woods are rejected as uncosmetic. Calato buys full boards which they mill to squares, as well as buying pre-turned dowels. Dean Markley buys wood in log form only, and cuts it down themselves. They like the quality control this affords them. They go directly from one-inch squares to the lathe, after careful separation of the heart wood and the outer wood, and use only the lighter colored portion of the wood because they like the look. Chris Campbell feels that most drummers prefer a light colored wood, although he points out that there is no difference in density or strength between a darker or lighter wood. In fact, they offer *Two-Tones* as specials to retail stores.

Pro-Mark begins their quality control at the tree, according to president Herb Brochstein. They select their oak from special trees grown in Japan. Wood from Japanese White Oak and *Golden Oak* (a name they coined) is harvested once a year, in the fall, so they must buy wood 18 months in advance. Pro-Mark wants to offer a slightly heavier stick in oak and they feel that the *Golden Oak* gives a drummer the chance to play a 5A, for instance, that has more heft without adding diameter. In their U.S. operation they buy kiln-dried dowels, and sometimes, squares.

All manufacturers attempt to individually check a portion of their production to extremely exact specifications. The rest are eye tested. It is, of course, impossible to check each stick and produce an appreciable number. Sticks that are cosmetically bad are pulled as a matter of course. Sticks are rolled to insure that no warped sticks leave the factory.

The smaller operations tend to offer a few more features of quality control that I found interesting. Before leaving home, Dean Markley sticks are not only rolled but an attempt is made to match weight and density. Vic Firth sticks are pitch paired and put into open bags so that if a drummer disagrees with the choice, he or she can make a personal selection. Vic comments, "Why not? The idea that you spent all this money on a drumset and you end up with a piece of garbage to play it with is ridiculous. In a way, the stick is the instrument that makes the sound. It's the equivalent of buying a \$100,000 fiddle and using a \$10 bow."

WARPAGE

A major problem in the manufacture of wooden sticks is warpage *after* the sticks leave the factory. Changes in humidity and temperature between point of manufacture, storage facility and retail

DEAN MARKLEY



Photo Courtesy of Dean Markley

CB-700



Photo Courtesy of CB-700

PRO-MARK

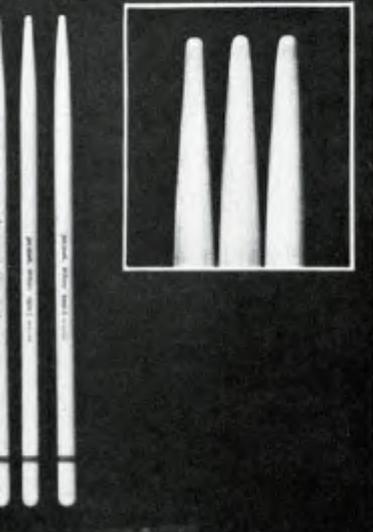


Photo Courtesy of ProMark

outlet are all contributing factors. Chris Campbell feels that sticks have a definite shelf life and that sooner or later all sticks will warp. This means that when you buy a straight bunch of sticks in a store, in order to insure that your favorite model won't be discontinued, chances are that you're going to wind up with a large percentage of warped sticks the longer you hold on to them. If you have found this to be the case, it might indicate that you should buy fewer pairs at a time. Dean Markley keeps only small quantities of all their models on hand, and they try to completely turn their stock over every 30 days. They also guarantee their sticks to dealers who can return bad sticks for credit. In today's market, this offers a certain competitive edge. Chris stresses that this is only possible for a small manufacturer. They also, prior to this stage, reject any wood that does not have a 12% moisture content.

Herb Brochstein disagrees that all wood warps, *always*, and offers his experience in contention: "I sold my retail store in 1968 and moved to an old, unheated house around the corner where I stored a lot of my sticks. Ten years later, I was looking through these discontinued models and checked them for warp. There was none! After 10 years! They'd been through a lot of temperature changes. I sent some to Japan to be analysed as to how this had happened, but they couldn't give me an answer. I guess Mother Nature kisses one piece of wood and curses another." Out of this experience and the search to decrease warp, Pro-Mark developed a process to help control warpage in their hand-made stick. The treatment occurs after the normal kiln-drying process and goes on for a couple of days. The exact method is "hush-hush," but it is related to controlling the moisture content of the wood. At this point they claim a 96% ability to control the moisture content to their very specific tolerances.

FINISH

All sticks are sealed in some way to retard moisture absorption and provide a slick cosmetic look and feel. All the manufacturers I spoke to were extremely reluctant to talk about the exact nature of their finishes. Some just said that their finishes were designed to keep the bead hard and playable in the case of a wood tip, as well as to protect from moisture and rim-shot shred. Some are varnished with a polyurethane base, like the LP sticks, and then coated with carnauba wax. Pro-Mark is developing a finish designed to make the surface of a stick non-slip, to eliminate the necessity of a drummer having to lightly sand the stick for a no-skid grip. Dean Markley sticks are sealed, but not finished with a varnish. They use a mixture of oils and paraffin, and other stuff that's "none-of-your-business." The mixture sinks into the wood and disappears during the polishing process. Sticks are

tumbled in bins and, as they roll against each other, polish themselves to a high gloss. When you get the stick in your hand, you have the pleasure of holding a polished piece of wood without lacquer. When you sweat, you get a surer grip without sanding. Chris Campbell feels that the degree of protection that a lacquer finish offers is negligible and is more than compensated for by the feeling of the stick and its non-slip characteristics.

STICK SIZE DESIGNATION

One of my favorite areas of drumstick confusion is the bog of size designation. What exactly is an *A* or a *B* or an *S*? The actual origins of these designations are lost in the swirling mists of time. I don't believe that these designations were ever directly related to a uniform standard of length and weight throughout the industry. The one point of agreement among all manufacturers today is that these designations don't have much to do with each other. The *5B* of one manufacturer may not approach the *5B* of another too closely in terms of length, shape, heft and what-have-you. From what I have been able to determine, the designations were used as an all-purpose delineation for the use of the sticks as well as general weight and length. Twenty-five years ago, sticks that were called *A*'s ran from 15 1/2" to 16 3/4", weighing anywhere from 1 1/2 to 1 3/4 oz. These were considered to be orchestra models, *B*'s were band models, running in lengths from 15 7/8" to 16 3/8", and were a medium, to medium-heavy stick weighing 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 oz. *S* was for street model, designed for marching, and coming in lengths of 16" to 17", and tipping the scales at a hefty 2 1/2 to 4 oz.

While lengths and weights today may vary either side of the indicated numbers, the usage designations remain pretty much the same. The designations can also refer to the bead size or shape. Some stick manufacturers use, say, a *5R* with the *R* meaning round or ball tip. Ed Shaughnessy indicates that his stick is at the top end of the *A* spectrum and has a round tip by giving it a *16A* designation. The most popular sizes in all brands these days are *5A*'s and *5B*'s, owing to the dominance of rock as the music of the day. In former days, the big sellers were variations of jazz *7A*'s but electronic amplification has necessitated more sound production from the drums. One stick that seems to have pretty much disappeared is the *D* for dance. Its function has probably been absorbed by the heavier *A*'s and the lighter *B*'s. The only manufacturer that seems to have anything in this line is Vic Firth, who makes a light *8D* for jazz which is slightly longer than his *7A*.

STICK DESIGN

I had long suspected that many sticks on the market were copies of other sticks on the market. Slipping into "investigative reporter" mode, I

DURALINE

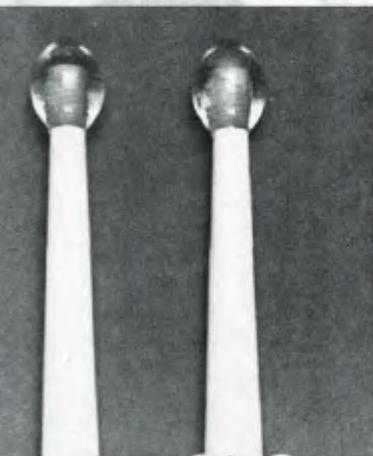


Photo Courtesy of Duraline

RIFL RITE

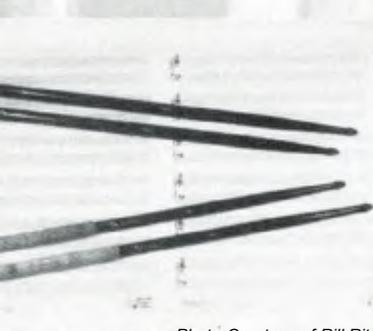


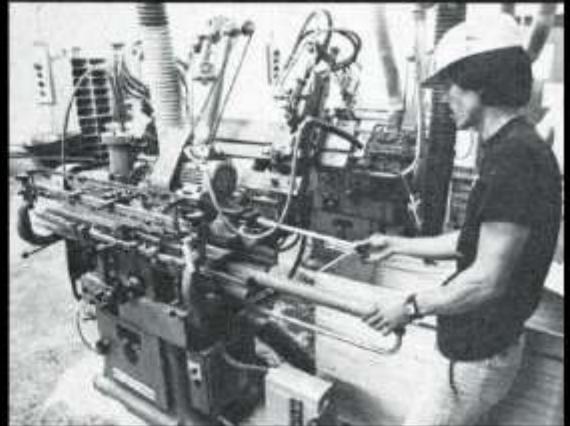
Photo Courtesy of Riff Rite

continued on page 96

INSIDE PROMARK



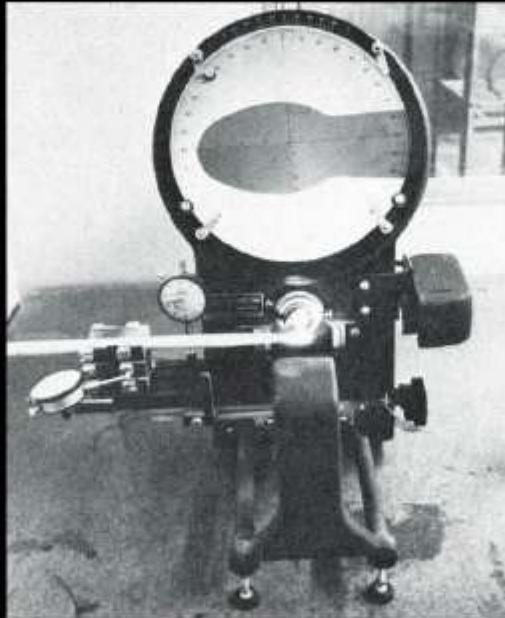
1) President, Herb Brochstein, inspects a shipment of hickory wood dowels at Pro-Mark's Houston, Texas facility.



2) A craftsman shapes and turns a hickory drumstick on a custom-made West German lathe.



3) Nylon tips are individually fitted, glued and pressure sealed to each stick.



4) A drumstick is viewed through a Comparator, a device which magnifies the bead and taper.



5) Sticks are measured for uniform length, shape, weight and diameter.



6) Each drumstick is sanded before final finishing and branding.



7) Inspectors check each stick for warpage or other possible imperfections.



8) Shipping clerks prepare boxes of drumsticks for shipment from the Houston depot.

'83 READERS



HALL OF FAME

NEIL PEART

JAZZ



1
B
U
D
D
Y
R
I
C
H



2 BILLY
COBHAM



3 PETER
ERSKINE



4 JACK
DEJOHNETTE



5 ELVIN
JONES

POLL RESULTS

STUDIO



1
STEVE D'ADAMO



2 **JEFF PORCARO**



4 **RUSS KUNKEL**



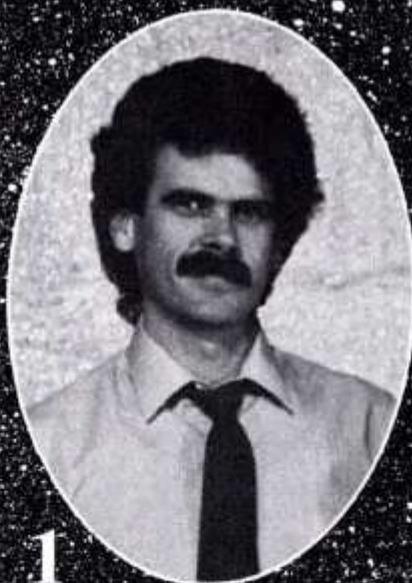
3 **SIMON PHILLIPS**



5 **VINNIE COLAIUTA**



2 **HARVEY MASON**



1
DAVE GARIBALDI

R&B



4 **STEVE JORDAN**



3 **BERNARD PURDIE**



5 **STEVE GADD / CHARLIE WATTS**

ROCK



1

NEIL
PEART



2 STEVE
SMITH



4 BILL BRUFORD / CARL PALMER



3 TERRY
BOZZIO



5 JEFF
PORCARO

ALL-AROUND



2 NEIL
PEART



3 BILLY
COBHAM



1

STEVE
GADD



5 BILL
BRUFORD



4 JEFF
PORCARO

CLASSICAL



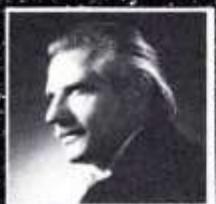
2 CARL PALMER



3 SAUL GOODMAN



1 VIC FIRTH



4 MICHAEL BOOKSPAN



5 FRED BEGUN / FRED HINGER

BIG BAND



2 LOUIE BELLSON



1 BUDDY RICH



3 ED SHAUGHNESSY



4 MEL LEWIS



5 BUTCH MILES

MALLETS



1

**GARY
BURTON**



2 **DAVE
SAMUELS**



4 **ED
MANN**



3 **LIONEL
HAMPTON**



5 **LEIGH
H. STEVENS**



**MIKE
MAINIERI**

MULTI-PERCUSSION



2 **ED
MANN**



1

**NEIL
PEART**



3 **CARL
PALMER**



5 **RALPH
MACDONALD**



4 **ALEX
ACUNA**

UP & COMING



2 **SIMON
PHILLIPS**



3 **VINNIE
COLAIUTA**



1

**STEWART
COPELAND**



**TERRY
BOZZIO**



4 **JEFF
PORCARO**



5 **ROD
MORGANSTEIN**

LATIN / BRAZILIAN



1

AIRTO



2 **ALEX ACUNA**



4 **PAULINHO DACOSTA**



3 **RALPH MACDONALD / NANA VASCONCELOS**



5 **GRAHAM LEAR**

RECORDED PERFORMANCE



1

NEIL PEART
SIGNALS



2 **JEFF PORCARO**
OTO IV



3 **BILL BRUFORD / TERRY BOZZIO**
BEAT / SPRING SESSION M



4 **CARL PALMER**
ASIA

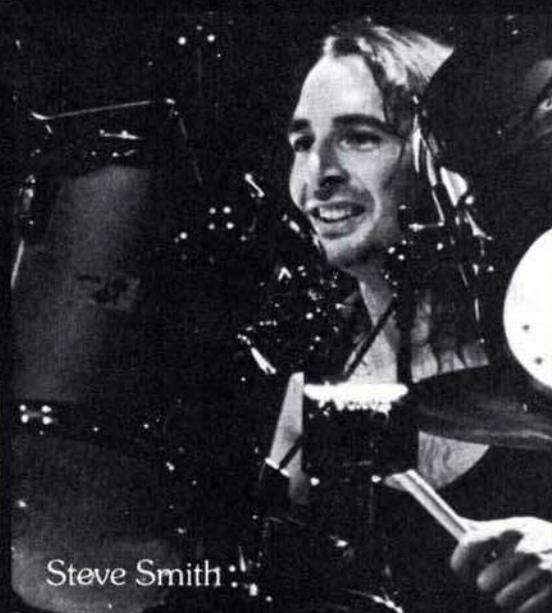


5 **PHIL COLLINS**
HELLO, I MUST BE GOING

ARTISTRY IN RHYTHM



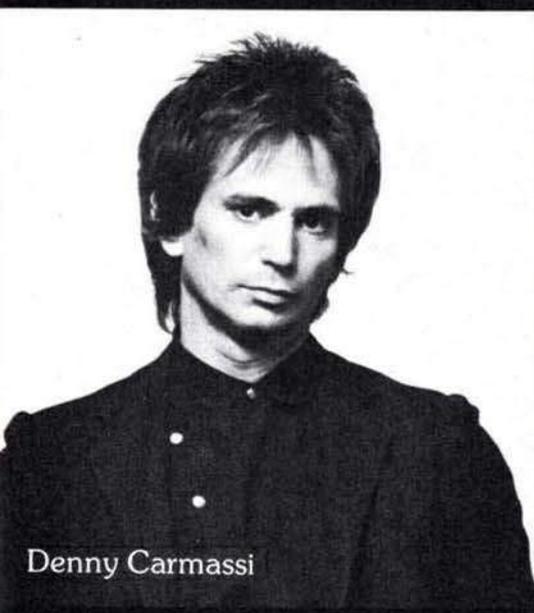
Harvey Mason



Steve Smith

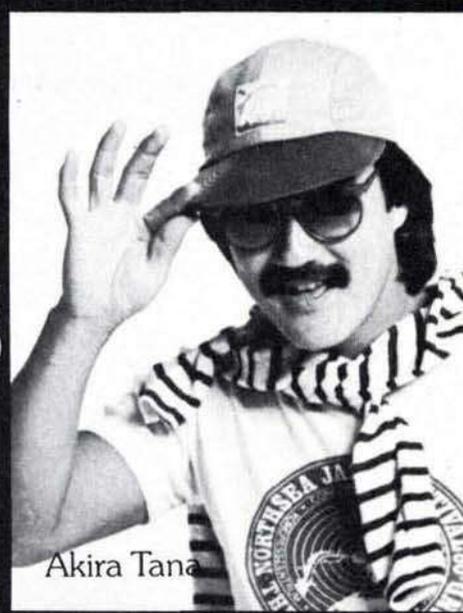


Vinnie Colaiuta

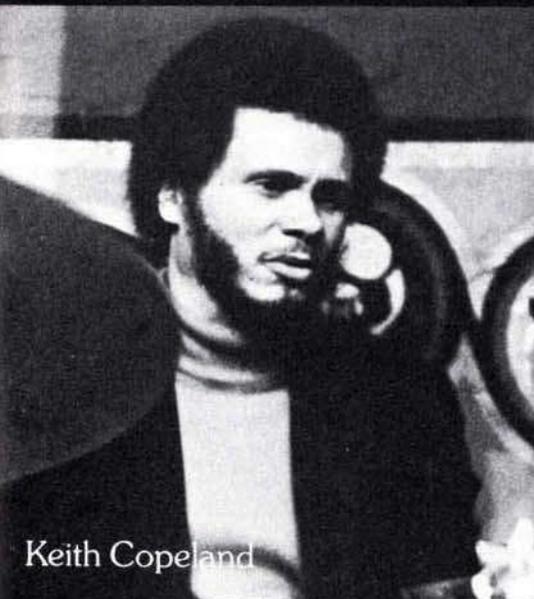


Denny Carmassi

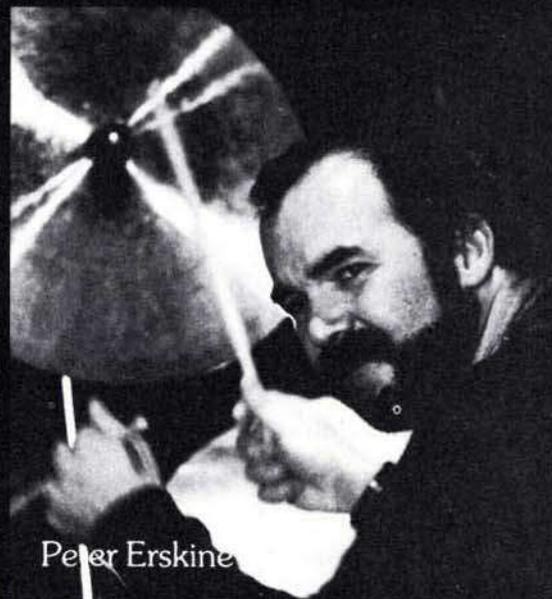
**“What do
these
great artists
have in
common?”**



Akira Tana



Keith Copeland

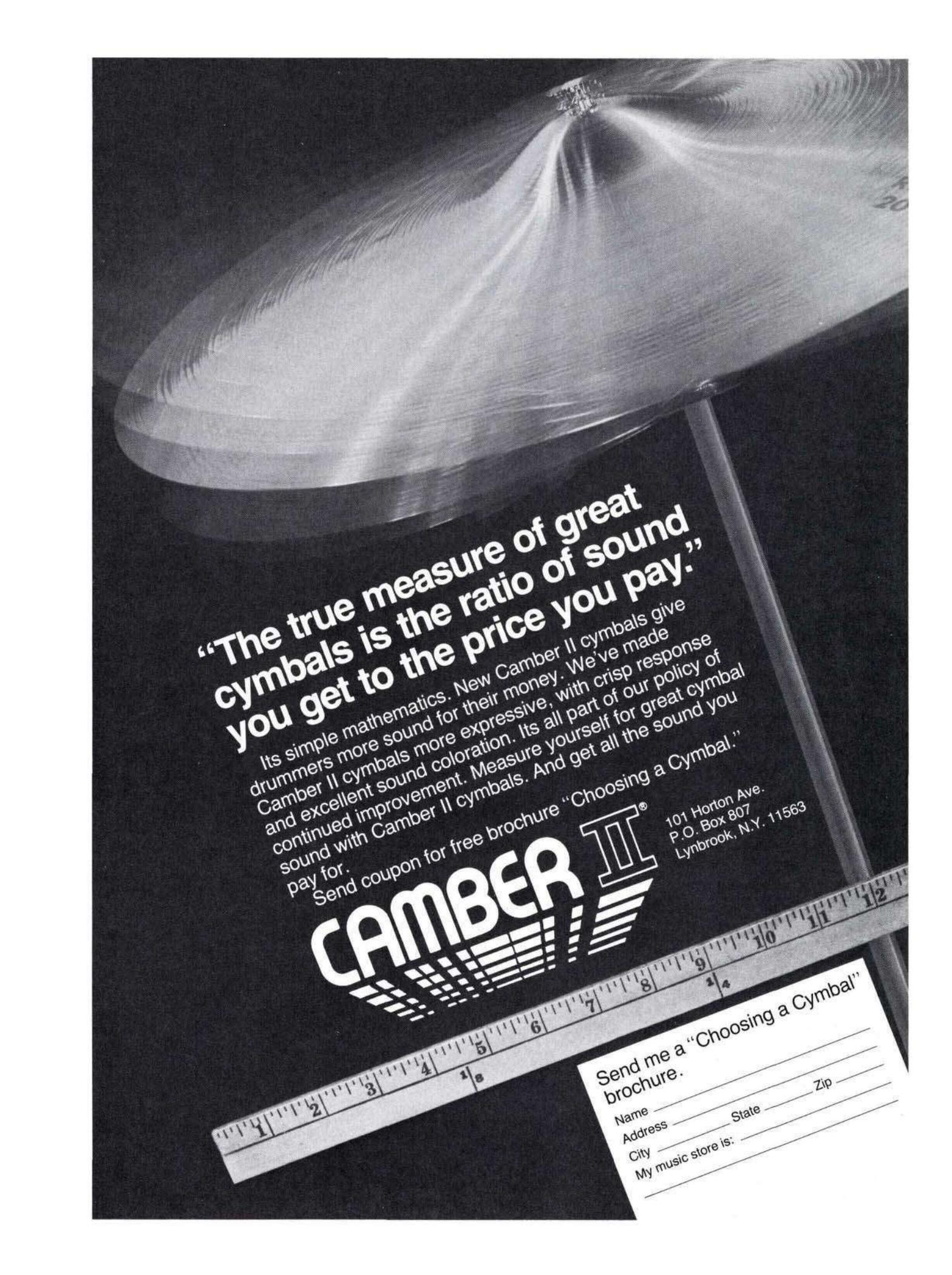


Peter Erskine



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make
time
with my
sticks?**

**vic
FIRTH**
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Photo by Lissa Wailes

Ralph MacDonald and Steve at Zildjian Day in L.A.

Gadd continued from page 13

RM: Jim Hall.

SG: Jim Hall was great to work with. He's not only a real great musician, but he was a real gentleman. He wrote me a letter thanking me for my efforts on an album \ did with him. I thought that was real nice.

RM: Is that kind of thing rare?

SG: Yeah, it's rare for me to get letters like that from people. A thank you is always nice to get. But people that you work with a lot of times don't have the time to say thanks. They get involved . . . you know, it's a fast pace, this business, and you just go from one thing to the next. I'm not complaining; it's just nice to have it happen.

RM: Carly Simon.

SG: All of these people are very, very par-

ticular about the tracks, but they each work differently with the producers. She's real enjoyable to work with. She's real open and she really depends on the people in the band for input and for feedback, and she likes that; she likes to feel involvement from the people in the band. We try different things—her ideas and the producer's ideas. And then again, she and the producer have to come to a decision, and that makes it easier to go for the track.

RM: Do you enjoy sessions like that—where the artist wants your input—more than a situation where the artist doesn't?

SG: I always have something to give, like a suggestion. People don't always ask for it. Sometimes, things like that can just confuse things. It has to be the right time. So if I can give a suggestion at the right time that's going to cause a positive effect, then

that's good. It's not going to be good if I give it at the wrong time though.

RM: Is there anyone in particular that you especially like to work with?

SG: There are a lot of people I like to work with. I mean, I enjoy my work. I'm lucky enough to play with a lot of good people, and everybody is good in different ways. So I'm just open to trying to enjoy all the stuff.

RM: Most people are only aware of your playing from your work with the types of artists we have just talked about. But don't you also do a lot of jingles and things that don't call for much creativity?

SG: Yeah, I still do jingles. But the sessions I get booked on, I feel real good about musically. I don't feel stifled at all. I may not be asked to come up with a "50 Ways" part all of the time, but just because it isn't a drum-oriented piece of music doesn't mean that it doesn't call for your creativity. Your creativity in the part you play is part of every session, whether your part is out front, or whether it's more of a background thing. I mean, creativity isn't just coming up with a tricky drum part. Creativity is creating *music* with a bunch of people that you're playing with. It's not a real personal thing; you're part of a unit, creating a product that's going to be sold, for an artist who's written the stuff. You have to work together to come out with music.

RM: I suppose a lot of people just look at a session in terms of their own part.

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SG: The job isn't just a drum thing. It's more than that. If I don't get a chance to play a drum fill on a session, to me, that doesn't mean it's not a good session.

RM: That brings up something you said in your previous MD interview (Oct. '78). You were talking about your early days, and that you sometimes tended to over-play. You said, "It may have been good drumming, but it wasn't good music."

SG: After getting out of school, and getting out of the Army, I guess I had a lot of energy stored up inside me, and it was that, along with just the style of the music. When I played, it was with a different attitude than the attitude I learned in the studios. I was much more aggressive, and it was a more personal thing when I played—just me and the drums. But then, after I started getting into the studios, I saw the challenge of a simpler way of playing. I'm not saying I threw that other way of playing out the window. That's still valid and that approach might be good in certain situations. But there are other, more laid-back approaches, that are just as good too. You can take the opposite end—playing the simplest, littlest amount you can play—and find that challenge. It's just two different approaches.

I think it's real natural for young players, when they first get into the studio, to want to do something to be noticed. It's not always what you do on the drums

that's noticed. It's what you *don't* do, a lot of times, that's noticed. When you're first starting out, and you've got a space to play, you might be confused about what is going to impress people. Even though you've got a space there, where you can play some drums and really razzle-dazzle them technically, sometimes that will be less impressive than if you sort of let that space go by and play a real simple little thing. It's better for the music. I think that a good rule is to always think in terms of music first, and let that determine how complicated the fill is or how loud it is.

RM: Jim Chapin quoted you as saying that coming from a jazz background, you tended to put an edge on the time, and you had to learn to lay back.

SG: Yeah, it had a lot to do with that energy level that I was talking about. It was just that feeling of aggression—that personal thing between me and the drums—and the way I projected that into the music. And then eventually I was able to channel that energy into an enthusiasm for the *music*, and sort of separate myself from the drums, personally. I was able to channel it and start playing less.

You start realizing that when you put that much energy into it, you might be on the upper side of the time. You just have to think about the other way to do it.

RM: How did you eventually learn to lay back? Did you sit down with a metronome

and work at it?

SG: It's not that complicated. It was just something I realized I was doing, and when I was aware of it—when I understood it—then I could see how it could be different. It's just an awareness of something you have to look at inside yourself, and all you have to do is listen to yourself. I did it by being in a situation where I was recording, and then when I heard things back, it was like, "It felt one way when I was playing it, but now it doesn't feel the same way." So you have to realize that as comfortable as it felt at the time, *this* is what it sounds like.

I think the only way to find out about playing on top is to put a click on, and then play loud and soft with it. If you can understand that it's real natural to get on top when you're playing loud, then you can start to understand it.

Time is a funny subject. It really is. It's a little bit different every time. And it gets confusing when you start talking about "playing on top" and "laying back" because those phrases are used in so many different situations. One person can say it and mean one thing and another person could say the same thing and mean something else.

RM: I remember the first time I heard one of those terms, years ago. I was playing with a group, and things were really feeling good that night. Afterwards, a guy came

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SG: I started out playing jingles, not intentionally, but I came to New York with a band, trying to get a record deal, and one of the members was the bass player Tony Levin. He had been in New York for a couple of years and made friends and met people who were in the recording business, and he was recording, and recommended me. That led to my first jingle, my first record date, and then to my second jingle and my second record date. After a while, the thing that leads to the next thing is how well you did on whatever it was that you just finished.

RM: Would the fact that you were successful on a jingle necessarily lead to something like, say, a Chick Corea date?

SG: When you say that I've been successful, what do you mean by that?

RM: You have done the job you were hired to do well enough, and enough times, that people have no hesitation in calling you again.

SG: So success is doing the job.

RM: That's the type of success I was referring to, yes.

SG: So, you have to do the job in one area, and then you have to do it in another area. There's no secret; you just do the job. Your next job is based on what you did on the last one. In this business, it's word of mouth. You don't have managers and you're not going out hiring P.R. people to help you. It's honest. You get called for something, and if you do it, you might get called for something else. But you've got to do what you get called for. Let's not forget that you've got to do *that* before you get called for the next thing.

As far as whatever different styles I played, I love those kinds of music, so I did go after playing those kinds of music honestly and heartfully, with a lot of love, because that's the way I feel about those kinds of music. I didn't try to play all those different kinds of music because of jobs that were coming in. I just took jobs as they came in, no matter what they were. I didn't know what they were, and I still don't know what they're going to be. I just take them and play them. You've got to love the music first. I didn't try to play a certain style because of jobs that I thought I was going to get called for. The playing came first, and then the work came second.

RM: Do you ever miss being in a full-time band?

SG: Yeah, you miss the relationship of the band just like you miss the relationship of the people involved. It's the music, and it's also everybody's friendship and devotion towards the thing. It's a real group effort. It's a nice situation, especially if it's a cooperative thing where everybody's putting in 100%, and they're all sharing. Just the relationship itself is nice. Even outside of music situations—just take a man and a woman; if they're giving 100% and sharing everything, that makes a good relationship. It's a nice thing to be part of.

RM: You were with Stuff for a while, and then with Steps. Do you plan on being in a situation like that again?

SG: I don't *plan* on anything. But I would like to be in something like that, with the right combination of people—personally and musically. If I were going to be in a band, I would definitely want it to be a cooperative thing with friends, but where the business stuff is real together too. Where it's real organized, not just from the musicians' point of view, but from the *whole* thing—from the conception to things like how many years you want to be together. Taking your time and working hard at something you're going to be sharing with the rest of the guys in the band. That would be a nice thing.

RM: Do you get any of that type of relationship in the studio with the people you work with a lot?

SG: Oh yeah. Not necessarily because you've done it with them a lot, but just because they're players who listen and their attitude is the right thing. And those kind of people have the type of attitude of a person that you'd probably want to be in a band with; that you'd want to commit to. So you meet those people in the studio.

RM: That brings up a prejudice that I've never understood. Bands made up of studio players are often not taken seriously.

SG: You mean because they don't feel that people who are studio players will get out and back up the band live?

RM: Maybe that's what it's based on. I don't know.

SG: That sounds like what it is. I don't know what else it could be. I can understand how record companies might feel that way when they're going to sign a group of "studio players" who want to form a band and go out and play live. The record company is aware of what people can make in the studios, and aware of the fact that people don't have to go out and travel and be on the road. It's not easy out there. So I can understand how they might be, not prejudiced, but a little bit concerned over their investment. But all of that stuff is worked out beforehand, or should be. And as far as any kind of prejudice with the public, I haven't felt any with any band that I've played live with.

RM: I've never sensed it from the public. It seems to be the kind of thing you read about. For example, critics often dismiss Toto because they're studio musicians. I don't know where that type of attitude comes from.

SG: It comes from bullshit, that's where it comes from. Because, obviously, Toto completely proves that wrong. Right now, they're number one, and there are a lot of lesser known situations that could also prove it wrong. So obviously it's a bunch of bullshit. As far as the critics, I don't really know what they think. As far as I'm concerned, they've got a whole other way of thinking anyway.

up and said, "I really like the way you lay back when you play." I was thinking, "Oh really? I lay back?"

SG: But it felt natural when you were doing it?

RM: Yeah.

SG: That's what I'm saying. Someone came up and said, "It felt good because you were laying back," and you didn't even know what the hell he was talking about. That's how vague it is. So the thing is, when they tell you it was happening because you were laying back, it might make as little sense to you as when they *ask* you to lay back.

RM: Judging by the letters we get, people are hearing these terms and getting confused about what they mean.

SG: There are a lot of confusing things that don't need to be that confusing. I think it will finally make sense to them when they finally play with people who make sense musically. Then they'll understand.

RM: Do you ever feel that people get too hung up with trying to analyze everything?

SG: I don't really know what everyone's doing, but personally, I don't like that approach. As far as music, I think the playing speaks a lot louder than the words.

RM: You've had success in different areas: jingles, jazz, rock, funk, and so on. Does one thing lead to another, or did you have to pursue each area separately?



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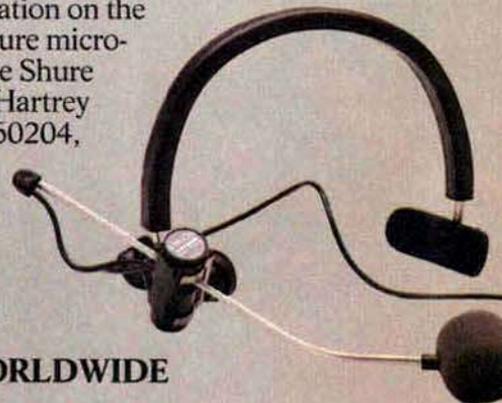
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RM: Let's talk about some of your recent activities. You recently made a video.

SG: I'm proud of it. Drummers Collective approached me to do it and I think it's real informative. It was set up where I sat at a set of drums and Rob Wallis sat next to me and asked questions. I would verbally answer them, and on a lot of occasions, I would also demonstrate, and there are three or four short solos. I was real happy with the way it came out.

RM: I understand that you and Ralph MacDonald have been doing an album together.

SG: It's my first solo project, and something that Ralph and I have talked about doing, off and on, over the past three or four years. But it's just been in the last few months that we both were in a situation where we could take advantage of the time to do it. And it was real enjoyable. We started out the tracks with just drums and percussion, and got good sounds on the drums acoustically. Then we listened to the tracks and let the overtones of the drums sort of dictate the harmonic sections—different tonic chords—and we built songs that way.

RM: What could you do here that you haven't been able to do on all the sessions you've done in the past?

SG: Well, I have a lot more to say about what the final product is on this than I've ever been in a situation to do. I didn't have as much creative control on other projects, so this feels good. I have to make a lot more decisions. But I don't have anything I feel I've never been able to do before. I didn't go into it with that in mind. I just feel that it's making music, and Ralph and I are doing it for ourselves. We're still working with other people and stuff like that, but it's just a different mood musically and businesswise.

RM: What styles of music did you choose to do on your own project?

SG: I think you should just wait to hear it. It's hard to put music into words; I don't like to do that. It started out with drums, so obviously it's got a percussive/rhythmic approach, but I can't really categorize it.

RM: You must think highly of Ralph MacDonald to share your first solo project with him.

SG: Yeah, I like the way he plays percussion, I like his time, I like his musical ideas, and I like the fact that he listens to other people while he's playing, so we can fit. It's easy to make parts fit together with a player like Ralph.

RM: Are the two of you pretty much able to play together without having to spend a lot of time working it out beforehand?

SG: Yeah, I think there's a lot of real natural ability there, and yeah, it's real effortless. We do work some things out, but usually that's just frosting on the cake, because it's real comfortable before things have been worked out. We'll work out little breaks and stuff like that, but the feels

are real nice. We each have an understanding about drums and percussion and that helps keep us from getting in each other's way.

RM: Have you ever done any percussion playing yourself?

SG: In college I played marimba and xylophone, and things that are considered percussion in an orchestra. But not too much percussion playing on record dates, because usually when they want percussionists, they want people who can play congas and the hand drums, and people who have developed technique as far as getting the right sounds on those drums. I like to play congas, and on our album I do play some of the hand drums, but not in a way that the sound is that authentic conga sound. With the kind of playing I was doing, the sound wasn't as important as just the feel I was going for. So I do play percussion, but not in the normal way.

RM: You've done some things, such as the Simon & Garfunkel Concert in Central Park, where there have been two drumset players. What's different about playing drumset with another drumset, as opposed to playing drumset with a percussionist?

SG: When you're working with a percussionist, you don't play as much because there's another person playing a rhythmic instrument that's in the same family as the instrument that you're playing, so you have to leave more space. You have to take that idea another step further when you have a whole other set of drums, which is *exactly* the same instruments as you have. You have to allow enough space for him to do something and stay out of his way, and he's got to do the same thing for you. And when you're both playing at the same time, then you both have to really listen so you're together. It requires a lot of concentration and you have to listen carefully. You'd have to do that with anybody you're playing with, but when it's the same instrument that you're playing, you just have to take everything a step further.

RM: You mentioned a moment ago that you had more control on your album than you've had in other situations. That brings up something I hear drummers complain about a lot. Some people get very offended if an engineer asks them to remove their bottom heads, or use tape, or change their tuning or whatever. Do people ever alter your drums?

SG: Yeah. They always have. When I first went into the studios, I didn't know anything, so I just learned it that way. And that's one of the things you come up against—people want to change your drums around. I don't know what all these guys are getting so bugged about. Why don't they be thankful that somebody hired them for a date? You know what I mean?

RM: They want success so bad . . .

SG: They don't want to work for it.

RM: They want the success that you've

had, and a lot of people have the idea that you are in total control of your sound, and that you would never let an engineer touch your drums or tell you how to tune them.

SG: No, I'm not like that. People shouldn't have preconceived ideas. One of the worst things that can happen is before you go into a date, to have preconceptions about the music before you've heard it. That's going to hurt you; it ain't going to help you, I think. And you know, there are some unpleasant things that happen in the studio. You've got to work with the engineer. If he likes one-headed tom-toms, you've got to take the bottom heads off your drums. You've got to work together, man. It's just part of the thing.

RM: I've heard drummers complain, "Yeah, but if I do whatever the engineer wants, how will I ever get known for *my* sound?"

SG: I never tried to get known for *my* sound. I've never tried to do that. I don't really have a sound. I mean, a lot of the CTI dates I played on Rudy Van Gelder's Gretsch drums. To me, I don't have a sound. I try to adjust the sound for whatever the date is. It's different all the time.

RM: Philly Joe Jones always contends that: "You should be able to sit down behind any set of drums and sound like yourself."

SG: Well, maybe that's what I did then. Maybe I do have a sound, but it's not just the drums. It's the way you hit the drums.

RM: A lot of drummers want to be Steve

Gadd. What does that really mean?

SG: I don't know what it means to *them*. It's a lot of work. I don't know what people think it is, but to me it's music; playing music the best you can.

RM: Do you ever find that people have preconceived ideas about you before they've met you?

SG: Sure, that happens a lot. People have heard stories about things that have happened in the studios before, and they're like a little standoffish. And then they get to know you and they see that you're a regular person, like anyone else. You can go crazy at times, you can have a sense of humor, you can laugh, you can be annoyed, and you can let people know the way you feel when you feel those things.

RM: Some artists read amazing things about themselves and then feel pressured to live up to their own image.

SG: Yeah, things get blown way out. People look at things differently or they'll take a situation I was in and it'll just look different to them. But I just do the best I can, you know? I try not to get caught up. I can see how you could get caught up, but I try not to. You just do the best you can. Play the music the best that you can play it, and don't accept jobs that you know are going to piss you off. Once you've been in the business long enough, you know there are going to be certain things that you're not going to want to do. So why do it if you're going to get bugged?

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And the "Steve Gadd" that did any of the things that people are talking about is me, and what I did then was do the best I could. And that's what I do now—the best I can. I try not to get caught up in trying to live up to something that isn't real; that isn't worth the time to think about. I have to live up to my own expectations. I can't fulfill and live up to what other people's expectations might be because of stories they've heard. I treat people the way I want to be treated—be respectful and demand respect. And I want to use my time more wisely now. Time is all we've got. After

that, we're dead.

RM: [after a long pause] I hope we're not going to end with *that*'.

SG: No, it's just . . . sometimes questions frustrate me. They really do. There are so many ways to answer, and they make you look at yourself in ways that you don't normally look at yourself. I don't study myself, and I don't like to talk about myself. So when people ask me questions, it's like I've got to go back in the past to try and figure out the answer. I don't even know if it's the right answer, because it's stuff I don't spend time thinking about.

It's hard to believe that I could be important to so many people.

RM: You are aware that some people call you "Steve God"?

SG: Well, I've heard that, yeah.

RM: We get calls every now and then from people who are hysterical because they've heard that you died.

SG: Do you get a lot of those calls?

RM: We get one every few months.

SG: [to his wife] You got a call like that once.

Carol Gadd: We get lots of calls like that.

SG: I wish I could come up with something that lived up to these stories, you know? I sort of feel boring. I've gone through real crazy times in my life, and probably a lot of the preconceptions we were talking about are the result of stories about different periods of your life. It would be so difficult to put those things in perspective because of all the circumstances; because of everything that was involved. You've got to go back and figure out what was happening in your personal life . . . I mean, all of that stuff plays a part in it, and to go back and try to weed through all that stuff—it's hard to make sense out of it.

RM: So who's Steve Gadd?

SG: Steve Gadd is a real hard worker. I'm real dedicated . . .

CG: He's very professional when it comes to anything that has to do with work, whether it's the way he feels it should go or not. They're hiring him for a reason, and if they make a request, he'll go through the change even if it's just to find out whether or not something works.

SG: That's what you have to do. You have to allow people the chance to hear what it is they're talking about. Let them hear how stupid they are, *or*, let *you* learn something. One way or the other, it works out. The thing is as long as it works out, then the job is taken care of, no matter which way it works out. I'm not there to prove a point; I'd like to learn, if I could. I've just got to let myself.

RM: It all goes back to attitude.

SG: I think it does. I think your attitude is real important, not just in the studios, but in getting through life. There's always something you can be bugged about, but there's just as much stuff to be happy about. And happiness is a real nice thing.

RM: You strike me as being happy.

SG: Yeah, I think I'm real lucky. I enjoy what I'm doing. It's a business, but it's a combination of business, love and enjoyment. The longer you do it, I think, the more it becomes, in terms of how many things enter into it. I think at the beginning it's pretty pure. You know, you're a kid and you're inspired to play just because of something that sounds good—that's a real pure thing. The longer you do it, life enters into it also. You have to sort of put everything into perspective and try to keep your head above water. But it's love.



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J.C. Heard

J.C. Heard is relaxing in the livingroom of his modest apartment in Troy, Michigan. Though the apartment is not large, it is lavishly furnished in rich brown teak and soft leather. The walls are adorned with Japanese artifacts, Samurai swords, delicate silkscreen landscapes, and wispy ricepaper prints. Hand-carved ivory statuettes and eggshell-thin pottery stand out against the darkness of the wood.

J.C. is dressed casually, but in style, with black and white checked pants, white sport shirt, and two-tone patent-leather shoes. He has a pencil-thin mustache, and his hair is short, and nattily parted off to one side, Cab Calloway style. He is rummaging through an enormous stack of some 1000 LPs which he has recorded in the past 50 years. Somewhere in that collection is the first album he recorded with Teddy Wilson's big band in 1946. Since that time he has made records with many of jazz's greatest vocalists and instrumentalists. Among them are Charles Mingus, Ray Brown, Charlie Parker, and Frank Sinatra. He has recorded extensively with Billie Holiday, and also performed and recorded with Ray Charles, Nat King Cole, and Dinah Washington. At age 65, J.C. Heard is, without a doubt, one of the world's greatest jazz drummers. In terms of pure technique, only a Buddy Rich could even come close to rivalling him. In fact, Buddy Rich is one of J.C.'s greatest fans, and the two have been good friends for over 40 years. J.C.'s rhythmic roots lay in his experience as a tap dancer—in fact, he started out in vaudeville.

"Actually, I started out as a tap dancer. I was a big fan of Bill Robinson and used to do some of his stuff. When I was ten, I won first prize dancing in one of those little talent contests, and as the winner I got to dance with Butterbeans and Suzy and their show. That was in 1927. In this show I wore short pants and a bow tie. They had six chorus girls, a girl singer, and a comedy team—Ashcan and Lewis. I'd been dancing with Butterbeans for five weeks when one night the drummer was sick and couldn't make it, so I filled in. I never played the show on drums before—in fact, I never touched a set of drums before that, but I knew the show by heart and I just sat down and played it."

J.C. was able to hear some of the great big bands of the '30s and '40s at the Graystone Ballroom on Woodward and Canfield. He spent many nights riveted to the front of the bandstand there, listening to great drummers like Chick Webb, Kaiser Marshall, Jo Jones, Big Sid Catlett, and Davey Tough. Like many aspiring young drummers, J.C. began beating on everything in sight, trying to imitate the rhythms of his idols.

"I didn't have my own set of drums 'till I was 11 or 12. I used to beat on my mother's pots and pans. I'd bust holes in the furniture trying to sound like Chick Webb. My mother finally got me a little set of drums with trading stamps from *True Romance* magazines. It wasn't much, but it was better than nothing."

At the age of 13, J.C. began playing and singing professionally with local bands, making frequent appearances at the Cozy Corner bar on Hastings Street. By 1936 he had met and sat in with Lester Young, Count Basie, and Benny Goodman. *Everybody* stopped by the Cozy Corner. It was there that Teddy Wilson first heard J.C. play. Two weeks later, J.C. got a telegram from New York: Wilson had just left Benny Goodman's band and was in the process of forming his own group. He wanted J.C. to be his drummer.

"Man, when I got that wire from Teddy, I was so excited I didn't even think about the money," he says. "I knew Teddy was already on top. I moved right to New York. The band only lasted a year, but it was enough time for me to get known

around New York. We played all the major spots, like the Apollo and the Famous Door."

J.C.'s work with Teddy Wilson marked the beginning of a career which has spanned 55 years and four continents. In those years he made world tours, movie appearances, and recordings with the most brilliant innovators of jazz. After Wilson's band broke up, J.C. was the driving force in the orchestras of Benny Carter, Louis Jordan, and Benny Goodman. He played in live radio broadcasts from the Savoy Ballroom with Coleman Hawkins, Cab Calloway, and Woody Herman, and in 1946 won *Esquire* magazine's Drummer of the Year award. That same year he won third place in an Olympian drum battle with Buddy Rich and Gene Krupa at Carnegie Hall.

"We had three drumsets on the stage at Carnegie Hall. Gene was in the middle because he was the oldest. Gene won the gold award, Buddy won the silver, and I won the bronze award, which was for third place."

In the '40s, the movie industry began hiring big bands to feature in musicals, and J.C. made appearances in five American films. "I was in Richard Widmark's first movie, *The Kiss of Death*. Then I did *Something to Shout About* with W.C. Fields in 1945, *Two Tickets to Broadway*, with Tony Martin, *Stormy Weather*, with Cab Calloway and *Boogie Woogie's Dream*, with Lena Home."

In 1950, record producer Norman Granz assembled Jazz at the Philharmonic, which consisted solely of jazz luminaries, and in 1953 took the 22-piece orchestra (along with J.C.) to Japan, where they played to sold-out crowds of ecstatic Japanese fans. The performances were recorded and released as *The Greatest Jazz Concert Ever* on Columbia records. When Jazz at the Philharmonic finished its tour, J.C. organized his own big band—the Sharps and Flats.

"I had all Japanese players in it. Toshiko Akiyoshi was playing piano. When you closed your eyes it sounded just like Count Basie. I mean, it was *perfect*!"

Heard met with such great success in Japan that he lived there for the following

continued on next page



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four years. During his residence he met his future wife, Hiroko, acted in three Japanese movies (he was a Samurai warrior in one), and hosted a late-night talk show, complete with interpreter.

Through connections of his Japanese agent, J.C. played a series of concerts in Southeast Asia, and ended the tour with a one-month engagement at the Calcutta Hotel in India. By the time he returned to the United States, the Big Band Era had ended. He began playing with small groups—first with Roy Eldridge and Coleman Hawkins, and later with Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker.

"I did all the first stuff with Bird and Diz," he says. "A lot of people think it was Max Roach on those recordings, because the sidemen aren't listed on the album jackets. I was in that band before Max. People wonder how I can play a commercial thing like Cab Calloway and then go play with Bird and Diz. I'm just flexible."

Heard's versatility is reflected not only in the wide diversity of artists with whom he has recorded, but also in the sheer number of recordings he has made.

"I've made records with so many people that I forget who I recorded with. I didn't know exactly how much I'd recorded until last year. This guy from France sent me a four-page list of everybody I'd ever played with. He listed 1,100 albums that I'd played on!" he says incredulously. "And that was mostly as a sideman. I've made quite a few records singing, too."

After a ten-year respite from travelling, J.C. has resumed his touring schedule. He prefers to tour at a leisurely pace, traveling for three or four weeks, then taking a few weeks off. His annual tours take him through France, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, and Sweden, and he is a regular guest artist at most major European jazz festivals. Twice a year he performs at the Grand Hotel on Mackinaw Island. He usually travels alone, hiring local musicians to fill the 21 chairs in his band.

"I've probably been more successful in Europe and Asia than I have in the U.S. People overseas seem to understand jazz a little bit better than we do here. You should see the jazz halls they have in Switzerland—beautiful! They wouldn't build nothin' like that here. In the North Sea Jazz Festival in Holland they have 600 musicians performing in 100 concerts over the course of three days. Now why do you have to go all the way over there to see that?"

In spite of the fact that Heard is an international traveler, and could easily afford to live anywhere in the world, he prefers the Detroit area. He has a global viewpoint and a philosophy which reflects a fusion of optimism and growth.

"A lot of my friends ask me what I'm doing in Detroit. They want to know why I don't move to New York or L.A. I like Detroit! Some of the best jazz players come out of Detroit. I belong to the world,

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and I want the world to hear me! I've been around the world three times already. You can't live in the past. Everything is moving forward, and that's the way I want to go."

At 65, J.C. Heard is swinging relentlessly into his 70s. His power and creativity seem only to increase with his age, and he shows no signs of slowing down. He is a master at time-keeping, and his solos are brilliantly developed—they are pure color and fire. His musical genius is complemented by his expertise as an entertainer, and he has a natural ability to put his audience at ease and make them feel right at home. In that respect he is reminiscent of the late Duke Ellington. He is a firm believer in developing a rapport with the crowd.

"I was taught to talk to the audience and make them feel good. Some of these jazz musicians nowadays don't say a word to the people. Now the rock 'n' roll guys know how to put on a show, they just don't say too much musically."

J.C. is able to strike a perfect balance as an entertainer and an artist—which may account for much of his success over the last 50 years. His talent and showmanship were nurtured by luminaries in jazz's golden era and persisted after onstage styles shifted from warmth and impersonality. So J.C. remains an eternal talent from another age, an artist lionized longest in other lands. But his music—and J.C. himself—are home to stay.



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RF: How does the addition of keyboards afleet you as a player?

MG: It forces me to play a little less, which, in turn, is a little better. It also makes me play more musically because previously, most of the melodies were guitar oriented, and now Charlie can embellish the highs and lows of the music, which makes me play more musically. Someone else is making the point and I no longer have to overemphasize, so the band works together more collaboratively.

RF: So then most of this album was recorded live?

MG: In a sense, but it's an unrealistic live. On this album, we did "The Victim" live. To me, a live cut is everybody in there going crazy. Patty, I believe, repaired the vocal in one or two spots, but that, to me, is live. Neil and I have always played live—plug it right into the wall and hit it. This album was a real pleasure to make because we were fairly confident of the direction we wanted to go.

RF: Which was?

MG: In some areas we moved forward and in some we moved back. There were things about the first album that Patty did that she loved. There was a certain quality to the sound of it and the performance on it. Then there were things on the other later albums that we loved. One was to have more of an energy level on it, a little more rock 'n' roll perspective, and not quite as studiofied. We wanted the best of both worlds and I think we got it. The sounds, I think, are more indicative of the sound of the band. When you listen to this album and see the band live, it seems to me that there's a little better correlation in the sound.

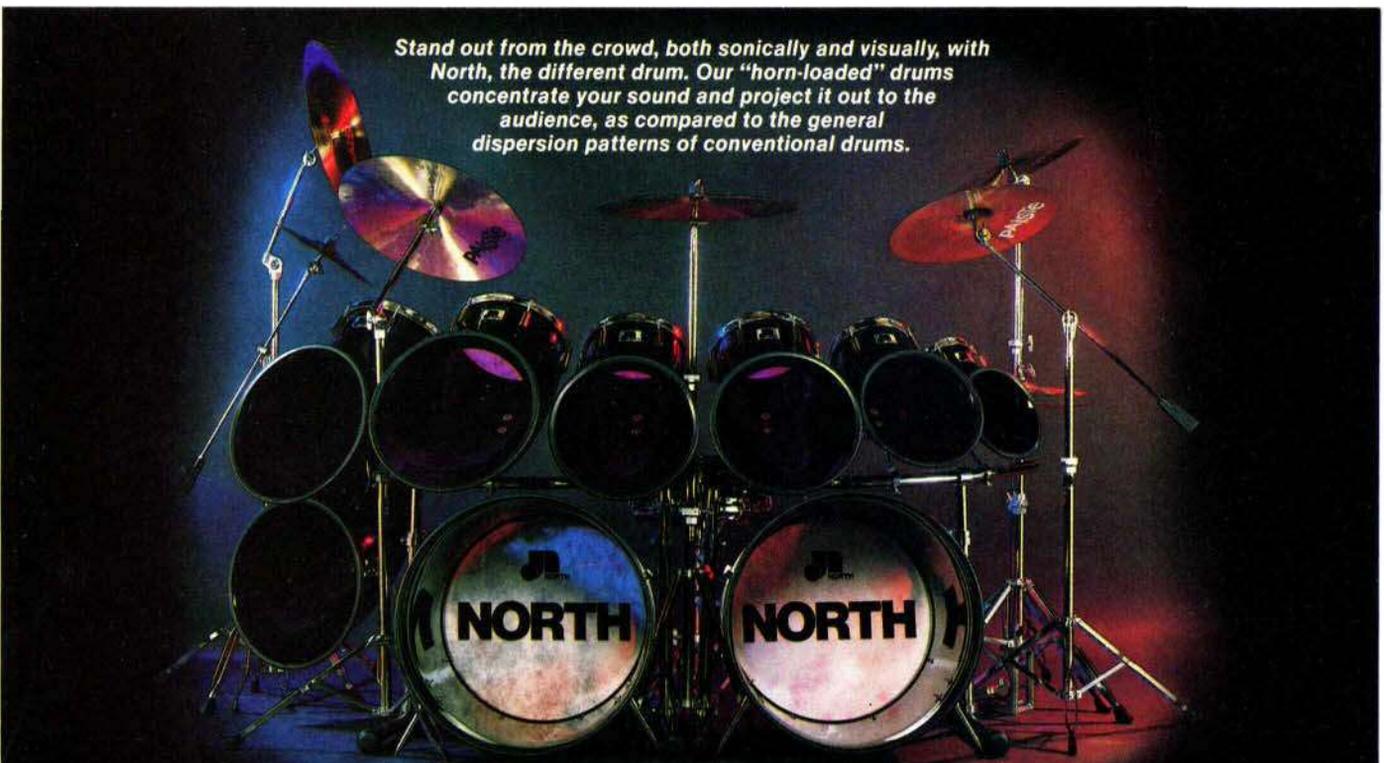
RF: You were with Derringer for three years. When did you and Neil leave that band?

MG: Neil left about a month before I did. The last album we both did with Rick was *Guitars and Women*, which is the only album I believe Neil is on. At that point in time, Mike Chapman had approached Neil about playing on Patty's album. Neil and I had made tentative plans to start our own band because we'd always wanted to play together. Rick was moving in a different direction, and Neil and I were more or less moving in the same direction. Neil wanted a little more freedom in his playing and even though it was a band, it was Rick's band and it was still called Derringer. So it was just the right time to leave. I was still doing *Guitars and*

Women because I was writing with Rick at the time and we still had two or three ideas that had only been semi-developed that we had to put on the album. So I stayed there and Neil went on and did Pat's album. I can remember his calling me about how excited he was about that album. At the end of *Guitars and Women*, I went back to my home on the East Coast and Neil called me there and said, "Why don't you come out and play with Patty?" They were going on the road and they needed a drummer. And I said, "I thought we were going to put our own band together." He said, "It will be like being in our own band, but we've never really worked with a great vocalist and you've got to really check this out." So I said alright and went up and played. It was such a comfortable situation and it was great to work with a singer. That made me streamline my style even more. It's one thing to play and sing and it's another thing to play with someone who not only has a great musical gift, but has a really great voice, which opened up a whole new horizon. Rick is really great at singing what he sings, but Patty is a serious, fine vocalist, and for my money, she's the best vocalist in the business. It was such an exciting opportunity and still, it was very much the kind of thing that we did well, which was the kind of band we wanted anyway.

This is sort of a unique opportunity in that it operates very much like a band, but by the same token, it is a solo performer's career. Patty is a solo performer. It's not "Pat Benatar and the Sonic Wallpaper." It's "Pat Benatar" period. There's a little bit different psychology in it, in that you learn how to channel all of your energy into the expression of another person's art. That is very good from a discipline point of view, which at that point in my career, is what I really needed. I needed some discipline because I needed to refine the style of playing that I was in. I don't know if it was out of the sense of frustration, feeling that people weren't getting the point, but suddenly I knew the people were listening because I was listening. You get to a point where you feel you don't have to say it, that it is being said and it's being said in the manner you agree with and you support. Sometimes I might not particularly agree with a lyrical content, but perhaps with the overall state-

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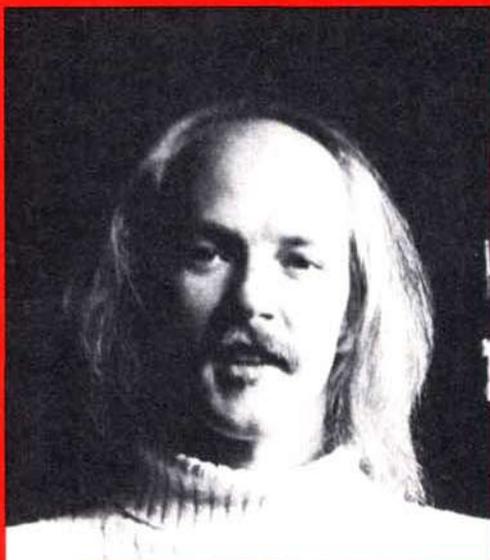


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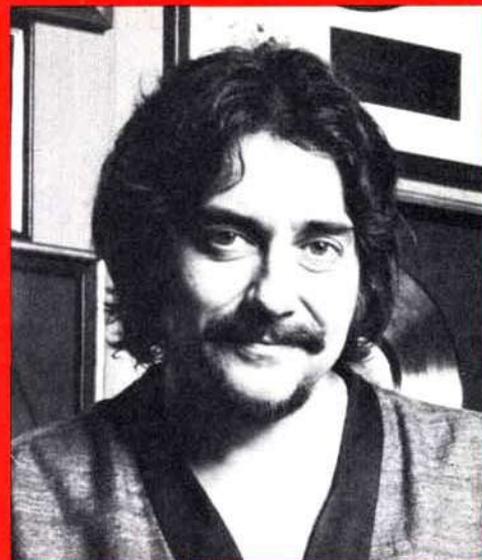
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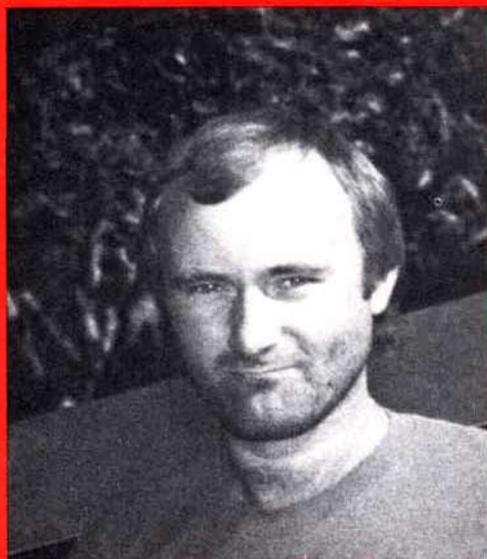
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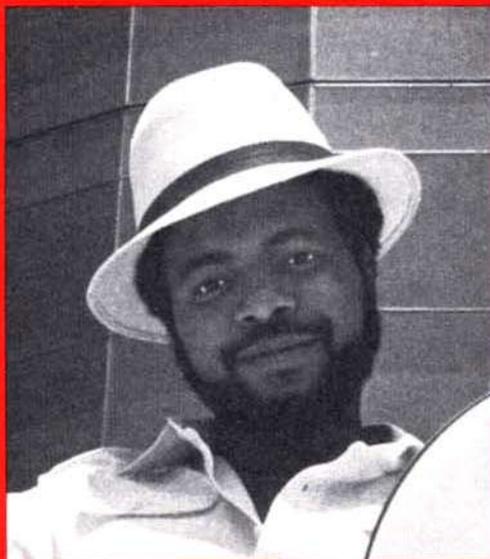
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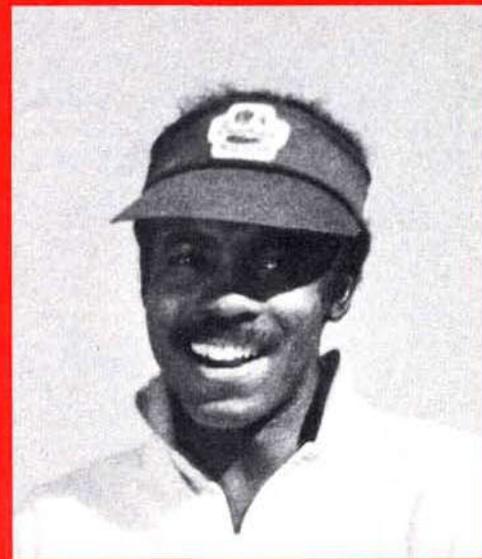
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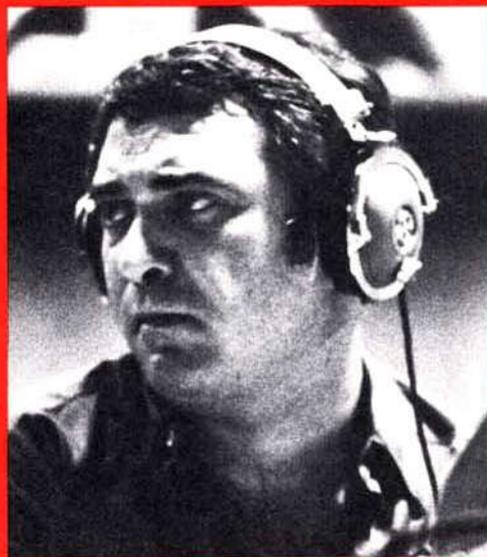
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ment. Whenever you have more than four or five people together, you need a spokesman, otherwise you get a lot of people saying nothing. Earlier on, a lot of my playing experience had been that. When you're young, this person is competing with that person. Everybody is trying to say it. For the first time in my life, I sat back and realized that there was a person there that was going to be the definitive person to say it. It takes a great weight off your shoulders in a lot of ways.

RF: It gives you direction.

MG: Exactly. You learn how to focus your energy and it makes you more of a musician because you have to learn taste, which is something I hadn't really bothered with previously. She was, and still is, so great to work with. We're great friends and it's almost like a family atmosphere, which is terrific. I have creative input on a couple of different levels. I can write songs, and when you write a song and you hear somebody sing it like that, you're pretty happy about it, particularly if you've got a voice like mine.

RF: How would you describe your role within this musical situation?

MG: It was not a thing that was imposed on me by anyone else. It was a thing that gradually became apparent. When we first went out on the road, there were a lot of preconceptions about what we were going to be. All we ever wanted to be was a good rock 'n' roll band. We didn't make any pretense about it. The record company had a certain way of marketing Patty that was very weird. Since then, she's learned to exercise her own control. The good thing about working with her is it's good to work with people who have good vision and good understanding of what they want. In other words, if you go in and someone is not sure of what they want, there can be problems. I have total musical freedom and she doesn't ever tell me what to play. But I know what she's trying to say and she knows what she's trying to say and how she's trying to say it, which makes it so easy and so comfortable. I think that just eventually became very apparent to me. Neil and I were much more aggressive on stage the first two tours, but we have since dropped back to a position of support because that's what we feel functions best for what we do. As Patty moves forward, we move behind her, which is where we want to be. We're there and we're allowed to do whatever we want. If you've got that kind of attention, you don't want to diffuse it, you don't want to distract from it, you want to do what you have to do the best way you can. I think that is the best thing for us. I mean, I want to hear her sing, so I can understand why the audience would want to, too. That pretty much sums it up.

RF: When you are talking about playing for the song, how do you lyrically accent a song? Do you take that into conscious consideration?

MG: Yes. We are what I call a pop band. Occasionally we will make a social statement, but it will mostly be by innuendo. We are not a politically motivated band and the reason why is because we feel that you're in too much danger of becoming hypocritical and diffusing whatever statement you have to make. You stand to lose credibility. We don't want to bludgeon people with anything. Most rock 'n' roll music, the kind of music we make in the pop format, is made by creating elements of tension. There are a lot of different ways to do that. It's just learning how to lay back and focus that energy right where it counts the most. All of a sudden you don't realize it, but you've rammed it home. Dynamics are vital. Rock 'n' roll, a lot of times, doesn't have a lot of dynamics because you're out there slamming away. We play what I call full-contact rock. In other words, we're out there slamming away too, but we try to do it with at least enough delicacy and finesse that it doesn't lose the musical aspect of it. We do have a person who has a very musical voice that opens up a sort of practical side of looking at it. It's a natural evolution and you'll find yourself doing it in time.

RF: Are you listening more to vocals?

MG: No, I just listen to the general tone, unless there's something in particular where we would want to drive a lyric home. Then I would come forward with something.

RF: You were talking about the freedom you have within this band. You've been writing for a long time.

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MG: I have always written, mostly lyrics, although lately I've been playing very horrible guitar, which enables me to write music as well. When I write the music, what I'll basically do is come up with the melody idea and a very rough chord structure, which Neil will translate and expand. It wouldn't be possible to make the statement as well without him. We all work to the benefit of each other like a group does. I don't have a lot of creative outlet in the band, only because Patty and Neil both write and they pretty much know what they want to say and they have a lot to say. So I usually end up with only one or two songs on the album, but that's alright with me because I do have an outlet there. It's usually the weirdest stuff that I write that we wind up using, but that's usually the kind of material we need at the time.

RF: On *Get Nervous*, you wrote the entire song "Silent Partner."
MG: Yeah, "Silent Partner" I wrote by myself, but of course, we all help one another. There's always little bits and pieces of the other people's personalities in there, which I like. I have pretty much creative freedom, although it is a structured format that we work within and we do it consciously and we want to keep it that way. Eventually, I'll probably want to be in a band where I have a little more focus—self directed focus—but for this point in my life, I'm very happy doing what I'm doing. But that's by no means all I intend to do. I'm grateful to be in the position I'm in. How many people are in a position where you make music with people you like and love and you happen to sell a lot of records? And we still make rock 'n' roll. A lot of people don't like us because we sell records, but that's sort of an elitest thing and I can't really support that.

RF: Well that's always interesting. When Pat first came out, she was the unsung hero.

MG: Right, and as soon as *Crimes of Passion* sold seven million records, we were a curse. It happens to everyone like that. But I think the band has shown growth. Patty has shown an incredible amount of growth, and all of us with her, and I think it's been a positive growth. I think we make better music now; we have more control over the music that we make. Neil is producing the records—he knows exactly what I'm trying to say to him. And the people that we choose to work with, work well with us, so it's very much an ideal situation in that respect.

RF: You did some outside work recently.

MG: I did a record that I had a lot of fun doing with a guy by the name of Fred Salem, the lead guitarist in the Outlaws. He got a bunch of different people to agree to do his album and we recorded the whole thing in five days. It was amazing. It was called *Cat Dance*. It came out the week the axe fell on CBS and since he's on Epic, nothing happened. I feel bad about that, but it was a fun rock 'n' roll album. It was almost a jam type of situation and people don't do that anymore. I generally don't get to do a lot of outside projects because I don't have time, but I hope to do more of it. We're going to do a live album on this tour, so we're going to take a break from the Pat Benatar thing and Neil and I are going to do something together. We're going to be doing a few different sorts of things, branching out a little bit and taking it a little bit easier. Since we've started, we've been on the road non-stop for the last three years. It's obviously been worth it, but after a while, it does take its toll.

RF: How does one keep himself together on the road?

MG: Again, it's a matter of discipline. Playing a rock 'n' roll show for 120 minutes a night is a matter of conditioning. I shouldn't be able to play as hard as I play for as long as I play, considering the fact that I smoke cigarettes, but it's a thing where I have built up a conditioning to it.

RF: What about pacing?

MG: That's the most vital thing. I'm what you call an over-achiever. I go right for it, so in many instances, I have to simmer myself down or Jeff, my roadie, will. He's always on stage with me and he'll say, "Take it easy."

RF: You're quite a wild man on stage.

MG: I'm a wild man, and after a while you're going to levitate right off your drums if you don't calm down. You could very easily play yourself out because when you run out on the stage and there's however many people, five, twenty-five or twenty-five thousand

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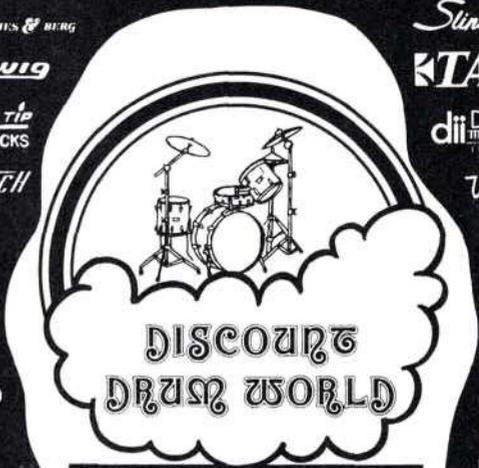
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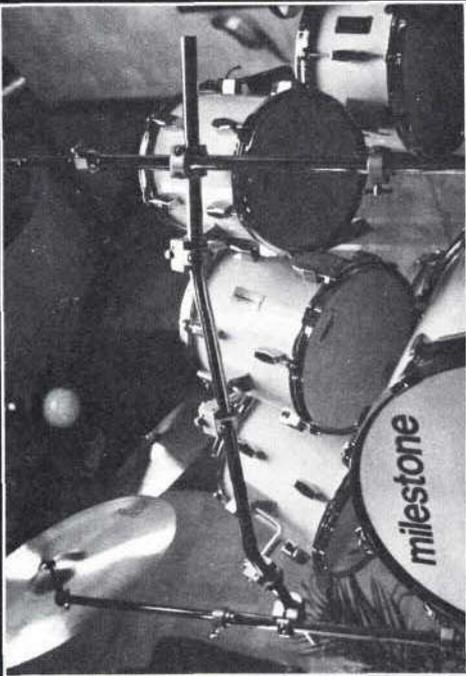
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people, you get that burst of adrenalin. If you respond to that, you could easily drain yourself. I like to hit the drums as hard and as often as possible, and after a while, you really have to learn how to condition yourself. You don't shut down. You get to a point when you're playing where you have to step outside yourself. You're very much aware of what you're doing, but you have to step outside of yourself and move yourself on. I don't mean it to sound mystical or anything, but it's like a frame of mind that you put yourself into, similar to yoga. A lot of drummers do yoga, but I have no background in that at all. But there is a mental conditioning that comes in learning how to take energy and move it through you and collect it and bring it forth when you need it, while maintaining a constant energy flow.

RF: Do you have a conscious method of breathing?

MG: No, I just try to get as much air as I can, every chance I get. Every one of those breaths count. It's a thing that, over the years, I just learned how to do and it's very unconscious. I see other small people do it too. I only weigh 125 pounds, but I work real hard. I've seen Tony Williams play and he's got that same kind of burst of kinetic energy that comes out of nowhere. You see big people do it too. Billy Cobham does it. They'll be playing along and you'll think, "Oh my God," and all of sudden, he's doing it twice as much. So a lot of it is focus, I feel, and just collecting yourself and going for it.

RF: Do you do anything to keep in shape?

MG: Not really. I've got an incredibly high energy level and I've had it since birth. I was a hyperactive kid. I've always had excess energy. You do have to watch certain things, like when you're on the road, you can't indulge in anything that might make you feel bad the next day. I wouldn't do drugs and I don't think other people should do them. You have to watch how many cocktails you have and how late you stay up the night before. There's a maturity that goes into getting on the road and staying there. You really have to protect yourself. I have to eat a lot of food while I'm on the road. I lose something like four pounds a night on stage from the playing, so I have to eat a lot of food all day long because I don't weigh that much to begin with and then I really feel light. If you feel light, you can't really have that sort of power that you need to play.

RF: Do you find you have to eat at certain times?

MG: Absolutely. It's all conditioning. It's sort of like being in the Army. You have to go out there and regiment yourself and you have to condition yourself to be able to do that night after night for six or seven months. It's not fair, for example, that you would blow off a small town and save it for the Garden. A ticket is a ticket and that kid has been waiting. The people who are in Peoria, Illinois are as important to us as the people in Madison Square Garden. If there's ten of them or ten thousand, they get the same show.

RF: If somebody is hyper, how do you channel that energy?

MG: Very carefully. That is the thing. If you've got a lot of energy, you have a tendency to move ahead as I do. Most hyper drummers will do that. It's just another form of discipline. You have to realize your limitations and your pros and your cons and that's how you find your middle ground. You realize that some things you execute much easier. You have to find out with your own body a way to get a consistent level. It's just like when you're in the studio, you always have to try to hit that drum as hard as you hit it the last time and in the same place. That way you get that nice, full, firm sound through the whole thing. A lot of drumming is discipline and people have to get used to that and that's a bit of a bore. Live, it's a little different. You don't have to be quite as critical of it as you do in the studio because the studio is something you have to listen to for the rest of your life. You've got to be able to accept it and not let it bother you. That's another thing: learning through mistakes. Sometimes mistakes are very good because all of a sudden it gives you a new way of looking at it. It's like if you held a diamond in your hand and you always stared at the same place. If someone came along and turned it, it would look like a whole new thing. You have to be able to pick up on everything, including mistakes, and learn not to be discouraged by them, but let them make you better.

continued on page 60

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RF: Do you do anything to warm up before a live gig?

MG: Yes. We have a little kit we take with us on the road that goes into the dressing room so every night before the show, I can warm up. A lot of times, when you go into larger rooms, there's a temperature difference and you stand a good chance of pulling a muscle unless you do warm up. I'm only wrist oriented about 50% of the night. The rest of it is mostly arm technique, but if you don't warm up, they're not going to respond right. It also helps you with your pacing. You can establish your optimum soft and optimum loud so you're in touch with yourself when you go out on that stage. I may find a way to change this, but right now, I'm home so little that I almost never get a chance to play other than that, which in a lot of ways is very limiting. I would prefer to be able to be a little more conscientious about it, but unfortunately, time dictates circumstances.

RF: What about your equipment?

MG: I love drums, but I don't know a lot about them, which is why it's so great to have Jeff. What happens is you get out of touch with equipment because you don't go into stores. I do endorsements, so they just send me stuff and you don't know what anything is anymore. So you have to rely on a person like Jeff. It's at the point now where he tunes the drums and I almost never have to adjust the tuning. We've been together for two years.

RF: Jeff, is it true that you have a special snare drum head made?

JC: To my knowledge, no one else uses this head we use on the snare. We were having problems with going through snare drum heads, like six a night, so we went to the Ludwig factory and I had Bill make up a head: 1,000 mil Rucker white head, 1000 mil dot with two coats of Ruff-Kote.

RF: Doesn't that make for difficult stick response?

JC: A little bit, but it's worth it. Myron can still play everything that he would normally play, so it's not a problem. And they sound great.

RF: Why only on the snare?

MG: They don't really sound good on the tom-toms, but they work perfect for the snare drum. A lot of times you're playing it hard and you want it to sound like you're playing it hard. It brings out the top end in the drum, which we like. If you hit the drum hard, you're going to get the bottom out of it, but it brings out a real nice crack and it works real well for that.

RF: Do you go through a lot of tom heads?

JC: He gets a fresh set of heads every night before the show.

MG: After about three quarters of a night, they're done.

JC: They just barely make it through the show. That's why I have the tuning down, because I put on new heads every day.

MG: Jeff designed the new drumset also.

RF: Don't you feel like a caged animal?

JC: That's why we call it a drum cage. But it's open in back.

MG: It's made out of cold rolled steel. I always knocked everything over and broke everything my whole life, so I had that made about five years ago and Jeff has since redone it, updated it and modified it so it is more functional. But it's a one-of-a-kind item that I had made for me by a metal sculptor and a person who worked with structural steel. The good thing about the cage is that I used to break a lot of heads and the way that the drums are mounted in, there's a shock absorber factor to it so you don't go through the head. The drum actually moves when you hit it, so it's a little difficult for the average person to sit down and play. That's one of the weird little characteristics of it. When you hit the thing, it moves and it makes people nervous. But it works great for us. We can do all kinds of things on the drums that you wouldn't normally be able to do.

RF: What about sizes?

JC: A 14 x 6 1/2 hammered-bronze Ludwig snare, 12x13 rack tom, 13 x 14 on the right and the biggest one, a 14 x 15 goes in the middle. The floor toms are 16x18 and 18 x 20. The bass drum is a 24 x 16. They're all oversized drums—the power toms that Ludwig makes. We also have other snare drums. We have two bronze snare drums, one is hammered and one isn't, they're both the same size and we have a 14 x 5 bronze snare drum and a 12 x 15 snare drum, which is a converted parade drum. That way he can change off if he wants

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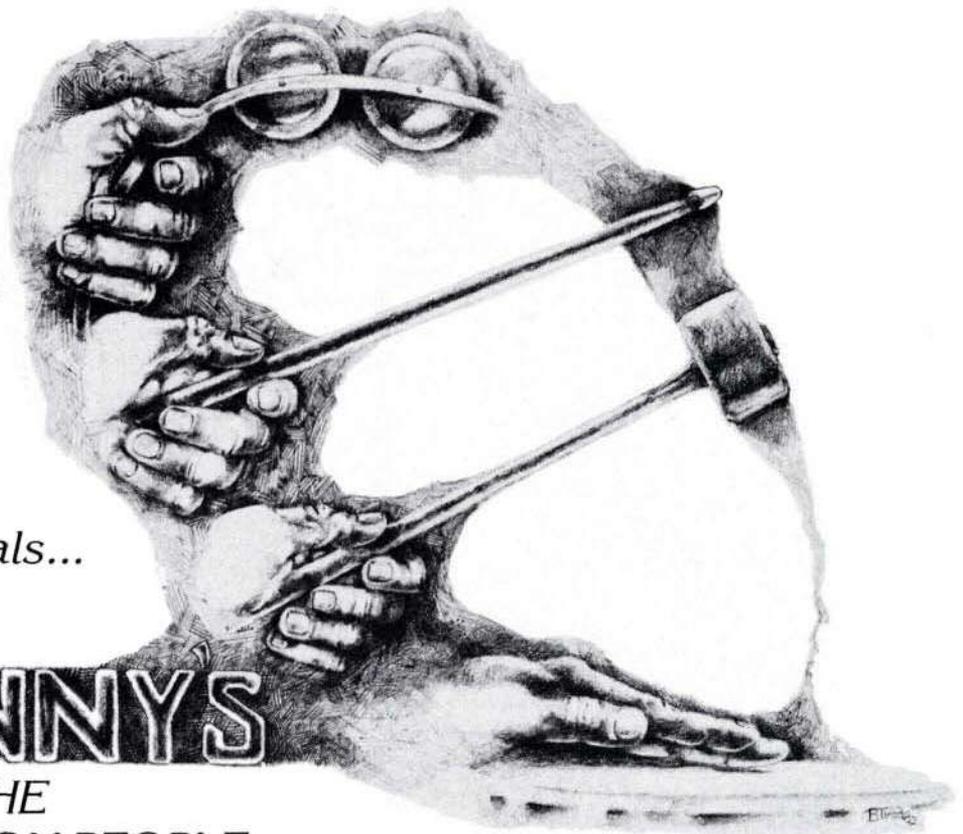
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to. He does break snare drum heads.

RF: Even with the special head?

MG: Hardly any, because for the most part, it's a very dependable head. It can take a lot of punishment.

JC: But there's always back-up everything within arm's reach.

RF: Do you use that snare head in the studio as well?

MG: Yes.

JC: We also have two timbales, 13" and 14".

RF: What do you use them on?

MG: On "Tough Life," and on the new album I use it quite a bit as well, on "I Want Out" and others. There's a little timbale solo, but we have this mechanical sound of cutting metal and you can't tell that it's actually drums.

RF: What about cymbals?

JC: Paiste. A 38" symphony gong, 22" 2002 China type, 22" 2002 ride, two 18" *Rude* crashes, one 14" *Rude* crash, and an 8" bell cymbal. We also have what we call a pizza cutter, which is Paiste's *Roto-sound*, which is a cymbal that spins. It's actually a plate of metal and you hit it and it spins and creates a phasing effect. Over on the left-hand side, we have a 19" sizzle ride 2002, stacked on top of that, we have a 16" 505 China type. And we use 14" *Rude* hi-hats.

RF: Tuning techniques?

JC: First the drum head comes off, the drum gets cleaned, the new head goes on. A very crucial thing is that they get stretched. I put them on, I tighten them down, not to where they're going to be, but close to where they're going to be as far as the tension goes, and then I sit on them or I stand on them and bounce up and down, putting my full weight on them to stretch them out. Then I tighten it up again and repeat the process. Then I loosen all the lugs and I put them finger tight. That way, I'm starting so that all the lugs are the same amount of tension and then I start tuning them. I go in a cross pattern and tune it to where the drum should be. There's an interval that the toms are set up at. I don't know what the notes are; they're in my head because I know what pitch that drum should be at.

RF: Why do you have the 15" in the middle, Myron?

MG: Remember the old Muscle Shoals studio albums with Al Jackson on drums and how they would always track a floor tom-tom with a snare drum? If you have a 15" tom-tom, it resonates so deeply that when I play them both together, it's just like playing the floor tom-tom. I use a double-headed drum and all the heads will resonate as you hit the bass drum. It provides the lowest frequency of the tom-toms, so it's directly over the bass drum so it resonates even lower. The kit is pretty well cut in half. There's the high drums and then there's the low drums.

JC: It's like having two drumsets: a three-piece rock drumset with a lot of low . . .

MG: For that big "Shadows of the Night" sound.

JC: And then the higher sounds over here.

MG: The floor tom-toms are almost tuned like timpani, they're so low. In fact, all of them are down so low, a lot of people hate them because you don't get a lot of bounce out of them. The high drums are very high and the low drums are very low. It's an awkward sort of set, but I've played it like that for years. I've always just looked at it that way. There are some drums that lend to lead voicings. Timbales are always very effective because they're metallic and therefore they stand out. I like higher pitched drums because you can get a nice attack off of them, but I really like low, solid, very woody, earthy sounding drums.

RF: Those are hard to tune.

MG: Very difficult. We tune to a relative pitch. We don't tune to exact pitch because I play them so hard, when they go out of tune, if you're tuned to exact pitch, then you have a problem with quarter tones, vibrations coming from the bass guitar.

RF: Jeff, how long does it take you each day?

JC: I change the bass drum head about every four to five shows, but it usually takes about an hour and a half.

MG: Jeff and I have a terrific working relationship. There's a lot of mutual respect and it's a real partnership. In order for me to get



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through the night, there are different critical points in the evening that will arise. One is, if I don't take that salt pill, I'm not going to make it through the encore. When you come off, if you put as much into it as I try to, you're not responsible enough to be able to find a glass of water. When you come off, you're crazy. Or, a lot of times I slam things and Jeff gives me first aid.

RF: So you're taking salt pills.

MG: Well, I actually just stopped taking those because we recently read horror stories about them.

JC: So we've switched to a half-a-gallon of *Gatorade*.

MG: But there are different cues during the night. Sometimes I'll be flying around the kit and I'll have a gong cue right at the end of it, and all I have to do is come around and put my hand out and I have a mallet in my hand and I'm on my way to the gong. There is some split-second stuff that we do that other people don't do.

JC: I try to get pumped up as well, even though I've been working all day and I'm a little bit tired by the time the show starts. I try to get pumped up somewhere near where he is so I'm alert and right there.

RF: Who are some of the drummers you admire, Myron?

MG: There are a lot of them. I'm probably easier to please than a lot of drummers because I divide things up. I look at it as a consumer and I look at it as a musician. If you're listening with musician's ears and someone does something that you might perceive as not being so musically correct . . . I've learned that if there's someone that I like, I don't listen to them that way. I love Charlie Watts, for example. He's one of my favorite drummers. Sometimes Charlie will play something that I think is great, but it might be outside. That's okay with me. I listen to different people and all I really listen for is: are you getting through to me? Are you saying something that is going to hold my attention and going to affect me? How vital is that information? Sometimes a person will reach out with different degrees of finesse, but you know when somebody reaches out and grabs you. Sometimes you listen to people and you listen for perfection and sometimes you're not listening for perfection. All I listen for is the attitude and the feel, because that's basically what music is to me.



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Achieving Variety

I've often stated that one of the most difficult challenges facing the club drummer is the need to closely reproduce the sound and style of a variety of artists, in order to make the music more recognizable and familiar to the audience. A few issues ago I offered some suggestions on analyzing the character of various styles of music, and even of particular artists. But that's only half the battle. You might be a very versatile player, and able to perform well in any number of styles. But now you're faced with making your drums *sound* authentic as well. Many recording artists have a distinct and unique drum sound, and are immediately identifiable by that sound. But while your audience can listen to their radios and hear several drummers on several very different drumkits in the space of an hour, in the club they're listening to one drummer on one drumkit trying to perform the music of those several drummers. Drummers are at a disadvantage compared to guitarists or keyboard players, who can alter their sound radically at the touch of a button using an array of available electronic effects. Conventional drums are pretty much a one-shot deal; once you tune them, that's how they sound—period. And no matter how you have them tuned (tight, loose, high, deep, crisp, flat, etc.), that tuning isn't going to duplicate the original artists' tuning on every song you play during the evening's performance.

So what can you do? I'm sorry to say that most club drummers I talk to take the attitude that, "I can't do anything about it, so I just tune them the way I like 'em and let it go at that." This doesn't seem a particularly professional attitude to me. You're in business to please an audience, and making the music more familiar to them is a big part of that. I think a professional would do a little experimenting to see what *could be* done about it. And there is something I've discovered that, although it isn't a complete retuning for every song, goes a long way toward achieving a distinct variety of sounds on the same kit. That something is the drumstick—how it is chosen, and how it is used.

Think about it. You can't change your drums from song to song, or your cymbals. You can't change the heads or modify the tuning very much. What *can* you change easily to create different drum sounds on the same drums? You can vary

the size and type of stick, the method in which you hold it, the manner in which you strike the drums and the cymbals with it, and the places you choose to strike. All of these elements combine to produce your drum sound, and the variety you can obtain by their carefully calculated use is remarkable.

Some of the reasons for using different sticks for different songs are mainly technical. You might find a little more rebound in a certain stick, and need that for a tune with a lot of quick sticking. On the other hand, a song with a heavy ride and solid, open backbeat might call for a heavier stick, with a little more shoulder weight, so the stick does the work and not you. But I'm talking mainly about variety of sound, and I want to give you some examples of how it works.

I've recently changed groups, and I'm now performing with a high-energy, straight-ahead rock 'n' roll act in Waikiki, Hawaii. I found that the music we're playing requires a wider variety of drum sounds than did my previous band's, and so I was forced to seek a method of achieving those sounds as closely as possible. Our repertoire includes music by the Police, Van Halen, Bob Seger, Don Henley, Tom Petty, the Doobie Brothers, Missing Persons and others, many of whom have immediately recognizable drum sounds, especially on the snare drum.

I wound up using two, and sometimes three, types of drumsticks, in order to have the widest possible variety of stick-vs-drum combinations. I chose Regal Tip 5B's, which have a fairly long taper and a nylon tip; Max-Beat 2B's, which are about the same length and diameter but are of a heavier wood and have a much shorter taper, making them more shoulder heavy and giving greater impact to the wood tip; and I'm occasionally using Aquarian X-10 Lites, in their 5A size. This stick is a little shorter, and the synthetic material produces a unique sound. I keep a pair of each kind on my stick tray, and changing sticks between songs is no more difficult for me than changing settings is for our guitar player. Not only do I vary the type of stick, but also my grip. In some cases, a traditional grip gives me the best response from the head, or the best sticking capability. In other cases, matched grip will give me greater power with less fatigue. In addition

to the grip, there's the choice of playing with the tip on the head, or reversing the stick and playing butt-end. Sometimes I play one of each, using the tip for the right-hand ride and the butt-end in my left hand for the backbeat. I will occasionally use both sticks reversed to get extra impact out of the toms on a power fill, but if the fill must be played at very high speed, then I'll play with both tips forward, to maximize the rebound.

The sounds created by all of these different grips and stick positions can be further varied by changing the point at which you play on the drums. A snare drum struck by the same stick, first at dead center, then slightly off-center, then near the rim, and lastly with a rim shot, will sound very different each time. The same is true with toms, and cymbals produce radically different responses between the bell, shoulder and edge. If you multiply all the various stick types and grips by all the places to hit the drums and cymbals, the mathematical combinations are staggering. Yet this is a method of achieving sound variety that is overlooked by many good players.

Let me give some examples of specific tunes and how I approximate the drum sounds on my kit. Of course, these work on *my* drums with *my* tuning, and I don't claim them to be universal; but they'll give you an idea of how to experiment *on your* drums.

I'm starting with a Ludwig 1967 *Super-Sensitive chrome* snare, 5 1/2" deep. This in itself presents a slight problem, because this is a crisp, concert-band type of drum, rather than a deep rock snare. I've padded the shell to cut down ring, but otherwise I play the drum fairly tight and wide open, with no dampening of the head. My drums are by Drum Workshop, and I play them all tuned medium-tight, with *Pinstripe* heads on top and clear *Emperor's* on the bottom. The drums are live, with a fairly distinct pitch to each. I'm not miked, so I have to rely on drum projection to get me on an equal level with the rest of the band. For this reason I don't muffle any of my drums.

Stylistically, I try to achieve a very "middle-of-the-road" sort of tuning, rather than a flat, studio sound, or a deep, tubby, concert-rock sound, or the more radical, high-pitched sound prevalent in new wave and some progressive rock. Not

continued on next page

JULY 1983



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because any of these are objectionable in themselves, but because I can't play all night with any one of them. With a medium tuning, I can rely on stick variety to make the changes I need in the tuning as I play, and at least come close to each of the styles. Here are some examples:

Police: Stewart Copeland's most recognizable sound is the high, sharp crack of his snare, which is in dramatic contrast to the deep rock snares we've heard for the past few years. I use the Regal 5B's, with the nylon tip on the head just off-center, and just the slightest amount of rimshot I can manage. This gives a little thinner, higher-pitched snare sound than a direct head strike, yet isn't as ringy and metallic as a full-on rimshot.

Eagles/Don Henley: This is the polar opposite of the Police sound. All through the Eagles' recordings, and still with Don's solo tunes, the snare is incredibly deep; just a solid, open backbeat. For this I use the Max-Beat 2B, played butt-end against the dead center of the snare. Of course, my drum teachers would cringe to hear me say that; I was always taught that you never hit a drum dead center because it becomes just that: dead. No resonance, and little projection. This is true, but some rules are made to be broken in order to achieve a desired result. And that flat, dead sound is the closest I can come to Don's sound on my snare (though I do have to hit hard, with the heavier stick, in order to get the sound out).

Phil Collins: I find the most distinct sound from Phil's kit to be the high, almost metallic quality of his toms, which he uses to introduce several of his own and Genesis' hit tunes. For this I use the 5S's, played

matched grip with the tips forward, and concentrate on my higher-pitched toms. When I do go all the way around to the low toms, the contrast of pitch is very pleasant. **Van Halen:** Van Halen music has a very resonant, ringy quality. (I've always thought they sounded like they were recorded in my high school gymnasium.) For that ringy and heavy snare sound, I use the 2B's, butt-end with as much rimshot as I can manage, being careful to hit the snare head at the point where I get as much head sound as possible as well as the ring from the rim.

Doobie Brothers: Keith Knudsen and Chet McCracken were notable for tight syncopation between hi-hat and snare. I'm particularly fond of this type of music, and for it I use the Regals, with the nylon tips giving a clean, crisp response out of the hi-hats and snare alike. I tend to use traditional grip here.

Bob Seger: We seem to play tunes of Bob's that are either shuffles or straight, old-fashioned boogie. My swing background makes me more comfortable playing these rhythms with traditional grip, but I need a deep, solid backbeat. So I play the hi-hat or ride the bell with the nylon tip of a 5B, but reverse the left stick so that I'm holding it traditionally, but striking the snare with the butt end. I go for full snare sound here, just off-center.

Tom Petty: Stan Lynch is of the deep-snare, deep-tom school. He has one of the *biggest* drum sounds in rock. The particular tunes we play call for a heavy backbeat, but also feature a few really loud tom fills. So I use the 2B's, matched grip, with butt-end on the snare and tip on the cymbals until the fills come up, then I reverse the right stick as well, to get maximum impact out of the toms. I go back to the tip for further cymbal work however, as I play light to medium cymbals, and don't recommend striking those with the butt ends of heavy sticks.

Missing Persons: It's hard to describe

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Terry Bozzio's drum sound. He's such a radical player, and uses such a wide variety of drums and equipment that the average club drummer is hard pressed to duplicate either style or sound. Terry is fond of incredibly fast fills, and often uses *Roto-Toms*, which to me have a very brittle, plastic-impact sound. So when we play Missing Persons tunes, I tend to favor the *Aquarian X-10 Lites*, which are synthetic sticks and produce a unique sound from the drums. They are a little shorter than my wood sticks, and yet fairly heavy toward the tip, so they give a good solid impact, even at very high speed.

Some general notes to help you select sticks and positions:

Tips: Nylon tips will sound higher and more distinct on hi-hats and ride cymbals, and will produce more of a plastic, "head-sound" from the drums; wood tips sound darker and warmer on cymbals and get more of the total drum sound out of the kit. Neither of these is right or wrong—choose the one which best fits the tune.

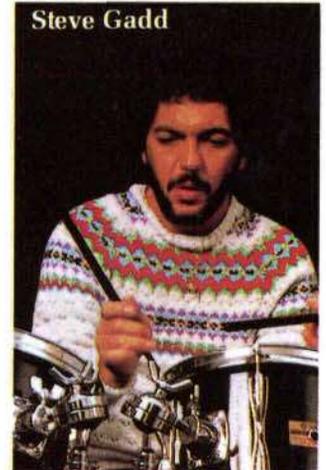
Position: Stick tips of either type will sound a little lighter and thinner than butt ends, due to the weight behind the impact. Nylon-tipped sticks played tips-forward will sound even thinner than comparable wood tips. (Exception: *Quantum* sticks by

Calato. They have so much weight up front, the impact is always solid. However, the other qualities of nylon tips do apply.) Butt ends create a tremendously loud sound when played on the bell of a ride cymbal, but use caution when attacking a crash cymbal in this manner. Make sure it has the weight to withstand the impact.

Stick size and type: This is the old adage of using the right tool for the job. If you're doing a lot of incredibly fast sticking (playing fusion, or progressive rock, for example), then a lighter, quicker stick might be right for that style. When you want a solid, jackhammer backbeat, reach for a heavier stick that gives additional impact with less effort on your part. There are dozens of sticks out there, varying in size, weight, wood type or synthetic composition, tip shape and material, and lots of other variables that affect the sound they produce. Do some experimenting, and see if you can't increase your versatility by this simple method. It represents a tremendous potential for gain at very little financial outlay, and the experimentation process will keep your imagination busy and your chops improving.

And if you're ever in Hawaii, drop in and say hi! I'm currently appearing with "Four Lane Hyway" at Moose McGillycuddy's, in the heart of Waikiki. 🇺🇸

Steve Gadd's reasons for playing Yamaha System Drums.



Because I've always been very concerned with the quality of sound in a drum, I use the Recording Custom Series drums, with these beautiful all-birch shells and a black piano finish. They give me a very controlled resonance with a lot of tone. They let me relax with the music, so I can adjust my touch to any volume requirements. Yamaha drums are very sensitive, and there's always a reserve of sound.

I've always tended to go for simple equipment like the Tour Series snare drum with eight lugs, because it's easier for me to get the sound. Same thing goes for my hardware, which is why I like the 7 Series hardware. I don't require really heavy leg bracing so the lightweight stands are just fine; very quiet, too. For more information, write: Yamaha Musical Products. A Division of Yamaha International Corp. Box 7271, Grand Rapids, MI 49510.



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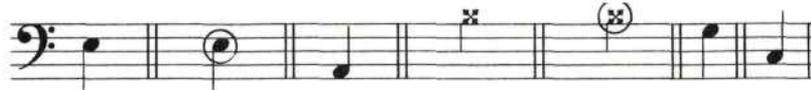
SOUTH OF THE BORDER

by Desi Jones

Reggae

Reggae has been with us for some time now. Although it is not as popular as rock, it has fought its way from obscurity, to worldwide recognition. Record producers and musicians alike are beginning to realize the true potential of reggae music and believe that this unique form of music will soon hold its own on the international scene.

Snare Drum Stick on Rim Bass Drum Hi-Hat Closed Hi-Hat Open S.T.T. L.T.T.



Basically, reggae has two different feels: The triplet feel and the straight 8th-note feel. However, for the purposes of this article, we will deal with the triplet feel only. In the triplet feel, the tune derives its feel from the manner in which the hi-hat is played.

Ex. 1

A)

B)

Drops: This beat is so called because of the snare and bass drum accent on the third beat of the bar. This is the beat that most European reggae drummers are familiar with. When dancing to this beat, one tends to feel a drop in every bar. This is the One Drop. Here is the basic format:

Ex. 2

A)

B)

C)

In the One Drop, not only can the hi-hat be varied, but bass drum, snare drum, and even tom-toms can be added. Make up your own variations, but remember, the drop must be maintained on the third beat of every bar.

Ex. 3

A)

B)

C) Bass line with eighth notes and triplets, featuring accents and dynamic markings.

D) Bass line with eighth notes and triplets, featuring accents and dynamic markings.

E) Bass line with eighth notes and triplets, featuring accents and dynamic markings.

Steppers, or the Four Drop: As its name implies, this reggae beat consists of four strong accents on each beat of the bar, with an accent on three. This beat was first introduced by the legendary Sly Dunbar in the '70s. He later incorporated certain Latin rhythms on the basic reggae pattern to make the "steppers" one of the more exciting reggae beats.

Ex. 4

A) Bass line with eighth notes and triplets, featuring accents and dynamic markings.

B) Bass line with eighth notes and triplets, featuring accents and dynamic markings.

C) Bass line with eighth notes and triplets, featuring accents and dynamic markings.

D) Bass line with eighth notes and triplets, featuring accents and dynamic markings.

E) Bass line with eighth notes and triplets, featuring accents and dynamic markings.

F) Bass line with eighth notes and triplets, featuring accents and dynamic markings.

G) Bass line with eighth notes and triplets, featuring accents and dynamic markings.

H) Bass line with eighth notes and triplets, featuring accents and dynamic markings.

Reprinted from *The Art of Reggae Drumming* by Desi Jones, by permission of Centerstream Publications, Box 5052, Fullerton, CA 92635. Distributed by Columbia Pictures Publications.



JACK DEJOHNETTE'S SPECIAL EDITION—*Inflation Blues*. ECM 1244. Jack DeJohnette: drs, pno, vcl. J. Purcell: wdwnds. R. Reid: bs. Chico Freeman: wdwhnds. B. Carroll: tpt. *Starburst / Ebony / The Islands / Inflation Blues / Slowdown*.

No matter what styles of music he is drawing from, DeJohnette always sounds like DeJohnette. This release offers everything from the modern jazz style that Jack is noted for, to the Police/reggae-type feel of the title track. DeJohnette's presence is felt strongly on every tune, and yet he doesn't over-dominate his distinguished musical associates. It's not just a blowing session either—the compositions were well thought out and provide stimulating frameworks for the solos.

Fields, The Sky / Goodbye / Phase Dance / Straight On Red / Farmer's Trust / Extradition / Goin' Ahead / As Falls Wichita, So Falls Wichita Falls / Travels / Song For Bilbao / San Lorenzo.

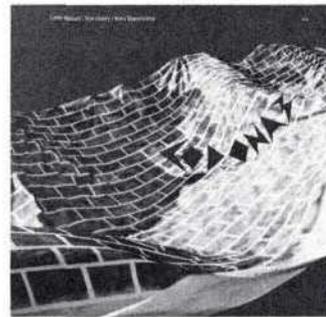
It's about time this group did a live album! The studio recordings have always been excellent, but the Metheny Group was born on the road, and this double album puts them where they belong—playing in front of people. Gottlieb's signature cymbal colors are ever present, but he also hits more drums than you might expect if you've never heard him live. And check out the way Vasconcelos blends his Brazilian-jungle percussion with Mays' synthesizers and electronics, and makes it all sound natural.



STEPS AHEAD—*Steps Ahead*. Elektra Musician 60168-1. M. Brecker: tn sx. E. Elias: pno. Peter Erskine: dr. E. Gomez: bs. M. Mainieri: vb, mar. *Pools / Islands / Loxodrome / Both Sides Of The Coin / Skyward Bound / Northern Cross / Trio*.

This long-awaited first American release from Steps Ahead (formerly Steps) will give everyone the chance to discover something that has been known for a while only in New York and Japan—that this is one of the finest mainstream jazz groups going. Erskine has obviously found the band he was meant to play in; his drumming is solid, enthusiastic, and

swinging. And he is very aware of what many seem to have forgotten: jazz drumming is based on keeping good time.



CODONA—*Codona 3*. ECM-1-1243. C. Walcott: sitar, hammered dulcimer, sanza, tabla, voice. D. Cherry: tpt, ogn, Doussn'gouni, voice. Nana Vasconcelos: berimbau, perc, voice. *Goshakabuchi / Hey Da Ba Doom / Travel By Night / Lullaby / Trayra Boia / Clicky Clacky / Inner Organs*.

We defy anyone to put a label on this music. There is a traditional Japanese piece played on non-Japanese instruments, a blues song about a train which features a sitar solo, a muted trumpet accompanied by a berimbau, and other such mixes and matches. It's worth checking out, whatever it is.

Mr. Roboto / Cold War / Don't Let It End / High Time / Heavy Metal Poisoning / Just Get Through This Night / Double Life / Haven't We Been Here Before.

Styx is always coming up with something new, and this time it's the science-fiction concept of Kilroy. But within this new framework, they haven't forgotten what Styx is all about, and so the songs themselves are true to the band's heritage—hard rockers balanced with ballads, strong vocals and musicianship with impressive production. Styx won't lose any fans with this one, and they may gain a few new ones.

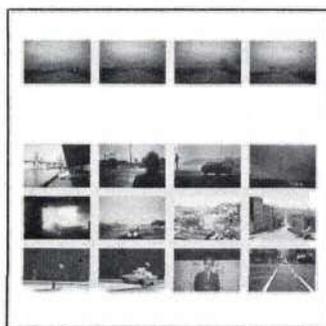


BILLY COBHAM'S GLASS MENAGERIE—*Smokin'*. Elektra Musician 60233-1. Billy Cobham: perc. G. Goldstein: kybds. D. Brown: grt. T. Landers: bs. *Chiquita Linda / Looks Bad, Feels Good / Some Other Kind / Red Baron / Situation Comedy*.

This disc was recorded live at last summer's Montreux Jazz Festival, and it sounds like the band was having fun—there's a spirit here not usually found on studio sessions. Billy has gradually gotten away from showing off his formidable chops and concentrated instead on making everything feel good. This record certainly feels right.

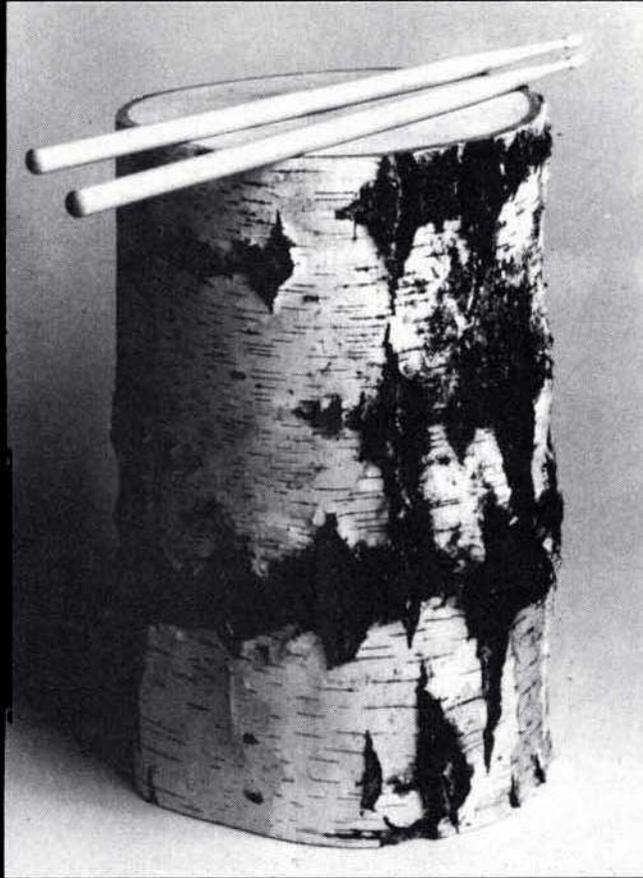


STYX—*Kilroy Was Here*. A&M SP-3734 D. De Young: kybds, vcl. J. Young: grt, vcl. T. Shaw: grt, vcl. C. Panozzo: bs. John Panozzo: dr, perc.



PAT METHENY GROUP—*Travels*. ECM 1252/53. P. Metheny: grt. L. Mays: kybds. S. Rodby: bs. Dan Gottlieb: dr. Nana Vasconcelos: perc. *Are You Going With Me? / The*





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Backing the Club Show

If you play in a band which works in hotels and clubs, you're likely to be required to accompany show acts from time to time. At its best, this can be an enjoyable and satisfying experience; at its worst, show backing can be a musical obstacle course and 45 minutes of hell.

A lot depends on your luck with the act you're backing, and your ability to cope with the job. The least demanding acts are the ones that only want the band to play them on and off, and perhaps back them in a closing number. This sort of act is quite popular with musicians because they can leave the stage for most of the performance.

At the other end of the scale, there's the musical act which requires constant backing throughout the performance and consistent concentration on the part of the musicians. Jugglers and magic acts often have music as a background, but the drummer has a dual role: be part of the music and also emphasize the visual climaxes with rolls and crashes where appropriate. Probably the most demanding act to back is the comic or impressionist who has short pieces of music interspersed with longer periods of talking. You must concentrate all the time, listening for your cues, and when you play, it's usually only in four- or eight-bar bursts.

The Parts

Ninety-nine percent of show acts who require specific music for their acts, carry written arrangements. This means that the ability to sightread is almost essential. I say "almost" since many drummers who are not good sight readers manage to back shows with a combination of reading, watching, listening and bluffing. It should be remembered that for many club drummers, the only time they're required to sightread is when backing an act, and perfected skill can only come with experience.

In the case of a drummer who can read a page of music perfectly when practicing on his own, but has difficulty sightreading in a performance, the stumbling-block is usually lack of experience in following a part. Repeat signs, D.S. al Coda, and all the other instructions which one must follow are not often dealt with in any detail in the books we use for home practice. However,

there are books which do concentrate on following parts. *The Stage Band Drummer's Guide*, by John Pickering (published by Mel Bay) is a good one.

If you are fortunate enough not to have any problems with your reading, it doesn't necessarily follow that you'll never experience trouble with show parts. Show artists seldom write their own parts; they pay arrangers to do it for them. Therefore, they want to make the parts last and they're most reluctant to change them. So, as small alterations appear in the act over the years, they also appear on the parts. Songs get shortened or lengthened, joined together or pulled apart. Sections are left out or added. All this finds its way onto your parts as a series of crossouts, arrows, changes written in above the line, etc., until often, the best reader in the world would become hopelessly confused.

A few days before writing this article, I was given a part to play which was written as a shuffle. Someone had written above it, "Play as a bossa," and the artist's Musical Director told me to ignore all of this and play it as a rock rhythm with straight 8ths.

The Band Call

It's advisable to go along to your show backing job armed with red and black pens, pencils, eraser, and a few sheets of paper stiff enough to stand up on your music stand. Except in extreme cases, you should be able to get together with the artist and/or Musical Director before the show. A "band call" is when you have the opportunity to play through the parts. A "talk through" is when you're shown the parts and given verbal instructions. This is your opportunity to sort out any ambiguities in the parts, so make the most of it. Clear up all possible misunderstandings before the show and don't leave things to chance.

Get the permission of the artist or MD before making any alterations on the parts. Obviously you don't want to add to the confusion you may find staring you in the face, so any pencilled alterations or instructions which no longer apply should be erased out. It's surprising how often you can tell an MD that there is something extra written on your part and he will tell you to ignore it. The fact is that it should not be

there to confuse you, so if you can remove it neatly, do so.

Perhaps you're thinking that it shouldn't be *your* responsibility to make corrections. Well, you're dead right, but if you're about to become the next guy to suffer because of this slack attitude, it's up to you to do something about it. Unless you're asked to do it in pen, any alterations you make to the part should, be done in pencil so they can be erased when they've become obsolete. When you first get to see the parts, look at the repeat signs and make sure they are sufficiently obvious. If there's time, it's helpful to go over the repeat signs in red so they stand out. Instructions can also be underlined in red.

Sometimes, there are numbers which you're not required to play on at all. You'll be told at the band call to "Tacet" when this number comes up, but don't trust your memory alone. You should have a piece of paper with the title of the number and "Tacet" written on it. When you turn your parts over, you need to know what the next number is, even if you don't play on it, otherwise there's the danger that you'll forget about it and start playing what's on the following part. If the Tacet sheet has not been supplied by the act, use one of your own sheets of paper and put it among the parts in the appropriate place.

Instructions about what to do next sometimes appear at the bottom of parts. This is not a good idea because of the habit musicians develop of pulling down the part as soon as they have played the last note.

Occasionally, an act will come along with no actual parts for you to play. If they want you to back them, they should at least supply a list of numbers with any instructions you need to remember included. Acts have been known to just say, "We're doing this, this and this," and expect everyone to remember it. If they don't give you a list, write one of your own. Make sure you know what rhythm to play in each number, and make note of anything else you need to remember during the act.

Interpretation

Most drum parts are written as guides, rather than something to be followed note for note. Therefore, you might find some-

continued on next page

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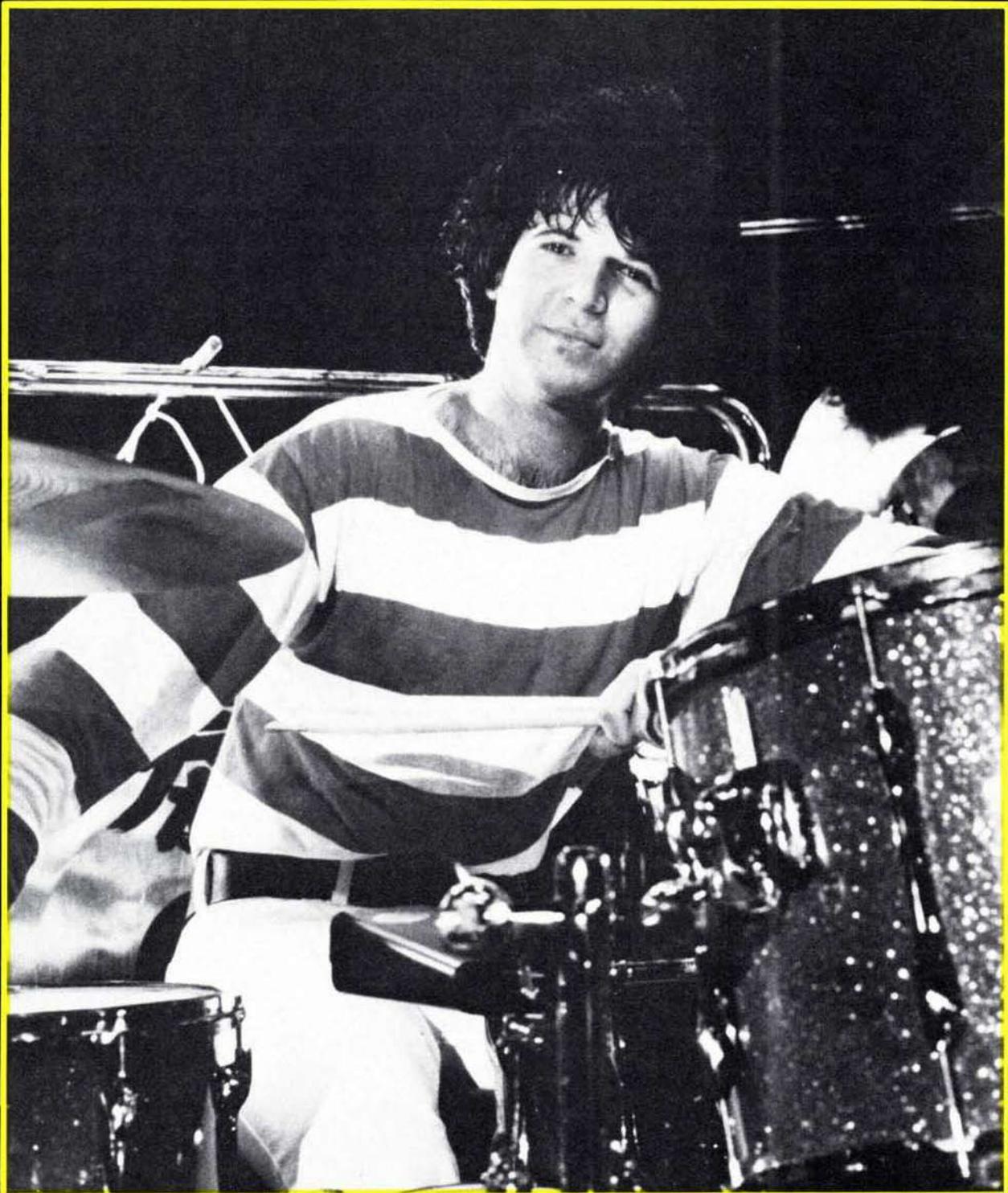


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thing like a succession of quarter notes or 8th notes for snare drum or cymbal on its own. You might be required to play exactly what's written, but it's more likely that this is an indication of the desired feel and you would be expected to play whatever feels right to you within that framework. This is something to be sorted out at the band call. If you're left to use your initiative with a part of this sort, and you're not sure whether to play it as written or embellish it, look ahead and see whether the written rhythm develops later on. If so, it almost certainly means they want you to keep it simple (as written) early on. If not, what you play is up to you.

On the other hand, you can look at a rhythm on a part and say to yourself, "I can't possibly play that." When this happens, don't think that you are duty bound to play it as written or die trying. Usually when you find a part like this, it's been copied from a record, or it's been cobbled together by an arranger who cannot actually play drums, but has a vague idea of what he'd like to hear. Simplify complicated things so that you're playing within your capabilities. You might find a busy rhythm, something Latin for instance, which feels uncomfortable played as written, but which you have your own way of playing. Don't be uncomfortable—play it your way! You'll be doing a far better job if you're grooving nicely, rather than struggling.

Show acts sometimes carry big band parts and when they only have a rhythm section backing them, they use the rhythm section parts from the big band arrangements. The drummer has to remember that his part probably includes brass figures which are not going to happen in the small group, so unless it has been agreed at the band call to play the brass figures, be prepared to leave them out and just play straight time.

Taking Direction

When people ask me what I thought of a particular act, I often surprise them by saying that I don't know because I wasn't watching. The fact is that when there is a Musical Director for the act, it's the drummer's job to watch *him* rather than the artist. You have the sound coming from the speakers, the part telling you what to play, and the MD telling you when to play it. If you watch the artist, you might miss an important signal from the MD.

The Musical Director is usually a keyboard player who will give a strong musical lead during the numbers. *Watch him and listen to him*. He'll start the numbers, usually with a count, though be prepared for the guy who gives a slow, deliberate nod of the head as the signal to begin. This method is usual when signalling something with no tempo, like a long chord, a drum roll, or a cymbal crash. You should be warned in advance about this by being told

to do it "on the nose." An MD who starts in-tempo numbers "on the nose" is probably used to playing in orchestra pits where this method is common practice. The idea is that everybody should have a preconceived idea of the tempo and any discrepancies can be ironed out during the first couple of bars. It's difficult for players who are used to having a count-in, particularly when you're reading an unfamiliar part; you're probably counting harder than ever. Remember to pay attention to the MD throughout the show. During the course of each number he may signal you to speed up, slow down, play louder or quieter.

There are occasions when you need to watch the artist rather than the MD. If you see "Stage Count" written at the top of a part, it means that the artist is going to count you in. This can be confusing if you're on the stage and he's on the floor, but the expression originated from when the act was on the stage of a theatre and the band was in the pit. If you have any rolls, crashes or sound effects to be coordinated with visual parts of the act, you'll probably be asked to watch the artist, but a good MD will give you these cues himself, if necessary. Get this point cleared up at the band call.

Quite often there is no MD with the act. When this happens, one of two possibilities may occur. Either the artist is directing the act himself, in which case you watch him as you would an MD, or it's assumed that whichever member of the band does the directing when the band is playing on its own, will assume the mantle of show MD. If this happens, give this member the same amount of attention as you would a visiting MD. *Do not assume you know better than him*. You may, but if he directs one thing and you do something else, the result will be chaos.

The subject of how to be an MD is a vast one, but I would just say if you happen to be the guy chosen to direct, remember that your fellow musicians are dealing with unfamiliar material. A casual count-in may be okay for the stuff you play every night, but now all your directions must be definite. There's no margin for error or misunderstanding. Make quite sure that everyone concerned knows who is going to be MD before going on.

Before The Show

There are a few preparations worth making before backing a show. First, position your music stand where you can see your parts *and* the MD, and/or artist with-

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out having to move your head. Eye movement is all you need. If you have to swivel your head between the music and the direction, you're making things difficult for yourself. If you need to make minor rearrangements in the layout of your set in order to facilitate this, then do it. Next, open up the parts and place them in order on the stand. Make sure that you can see and hear all you need to. Have spare sticks handy, so if one falls or breaks, you can pick up another without having to fumble or reach across your body. Most important, make sure you are in a *relaxed*, but *alert* frame of mind.

During The Show

I mentioned pulling down the parts earlier. Some acts have their parts in a book so that you can turn over as you go along. Others, who like to be more flexible, have them loose. As each part finishes, pull it down; that is, take it off the stand and put it anywhere convenient—on the floor if necessary. Don't try to fold the parts as you pull them down. Don't even look to see where they land. Get your eyes onto the next part. If you don't have to play it immediately, take a quick look at it and prepare yourself to play it. When a number follows another without a pause, it's known as "Segue." It's a good idea to have "Next Segue" written close to the last bar of the previous part. This gives you warning. However, if you're not familiar with the pace of a show, it's always advisable to be prepared for numbers to be segued, or almost so. So *always*, at the end of a number, have the next part up and an eye on the MD. If you see "Segue Tabs" on a part, that means you'll finish that number and go straight into the play-off number. Acts often have a false tab, so don't relax and lose concentration until you're quite sure the show is over.

If you make a mistake, the rules are the same as for any other musical performance. Don't panic. The moment has passed and you cannot bring it back. Do a good job with the rest of the show. If you lose your place, use your ears. Don't allow your playing to falter. Keep an eye on the part and try to get back into it. Watch for obvious points of reference: double bars marking a new section in the tune, pieces of phrasing, etc. It all helps.

Artists do make mistakes as well, and if this happens, you must be flexible. Work as a team and try not to let the mistake show. You must be certain that the artist has made a mistake before changing anything.

For instance, a singer will sometimes stop singing in the middle of a song, pretend to forget the words, start talking, drinking, or shaking hands with people in the audience. This does not mean you stop playing. He'll pick it up again, so keep going. Sometimes the artist or the MD might stop you. That, of course, is different. If

you receive direction which conflicts with your part, follow direction.

The usual mistake an artist makes is leaving out a section of the song. When this happens, it's fairly obvious and is more of a problem for the other musicians than it is for the drummer. Everybody needs to reorientate themselves in the part, but if it can be done smoothly, you're doing a good backing job, and that's what counts.

There is a school of thought which says that the musicians should stick to the part and leave the artist to sort himself out. The thinking behind this is that it's easier for one person to change, than for upwards of three people to do so. The fact is, you're there to help the artist look and sound good, and if you don't help cover up his mistakes, you're failing in that part of your job. Another consideration is that the uninitiated in the audience, who hear the artist doing one thing and the band doing something different, will assume that the band is wrong.

The Artist

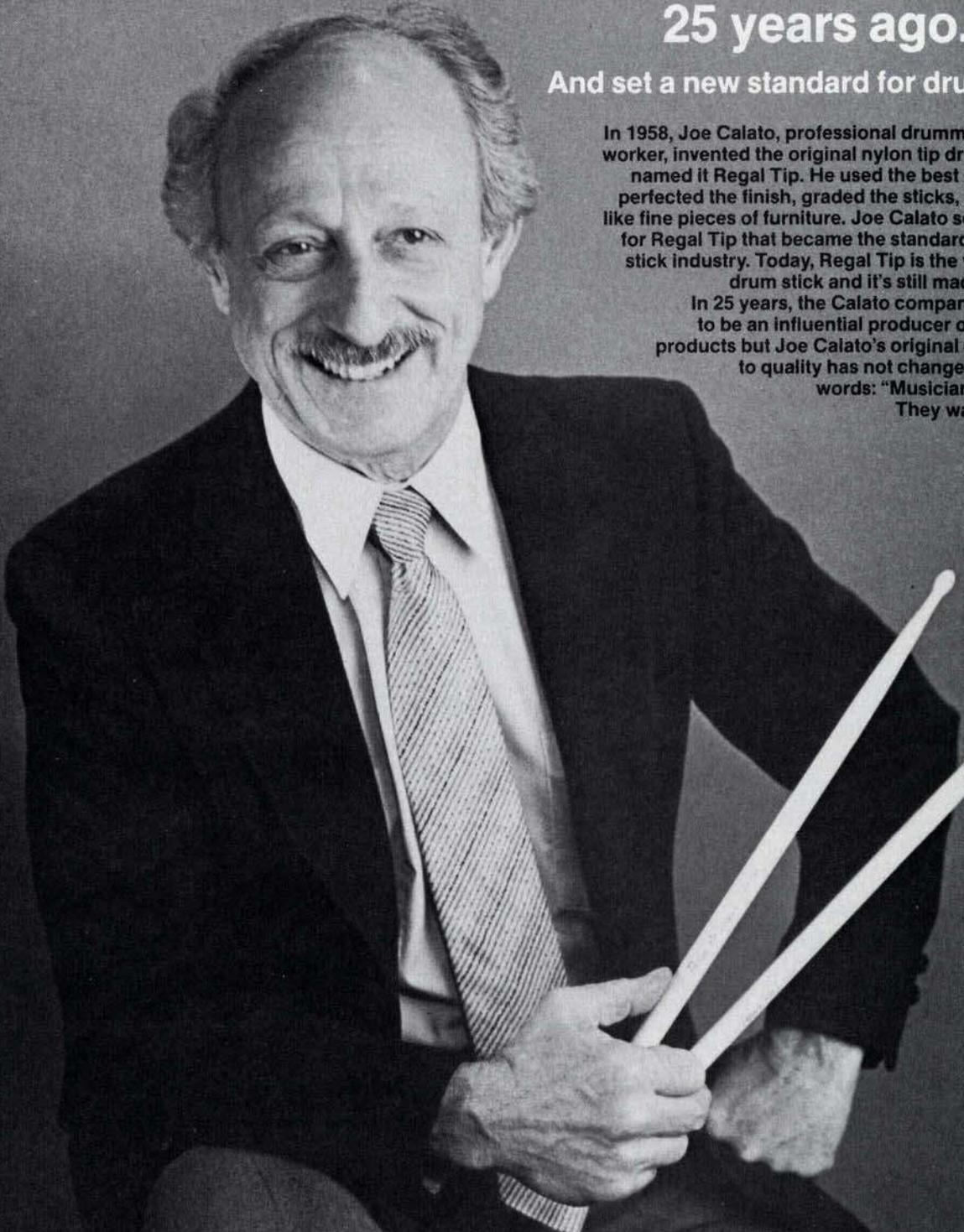
Remember that the artist is human. Do not be intimidated by his presence if he happens to be a well known face from TV. If he's decided to use you as his backing, rather than his own people, he obviously has faith in you, or he's prepared to make the best of things even if the backing does not come up to his expectations.

If artists seem unpleasant at band calls, it's probably nerves. The fact that you might be a little nervous as well, means you might not be in the mood to take any rubbish. Make light of any tension and try to promote a relaxed atmosphere.

Certain comics have a habit of picking on the band during their acts, and if any individual gets singled out, it's usually the drummer. When this happens, don't respond by doing exchange insults. A comic earns his living with his mouth and wit, so you're likely to get the worst of the exchange. If he is sufficiently inexperienced for you to score points off him, there's also a good chance your interruption will put him off his stroke and he'll lose the continuity of his act. You might think he deserves it, but your job is to *back the act*, *not disrupt it*. And if the act goes badly, the club manager will not be pleased with you. By all means, hit him after the show when you're out of sight of the audience, though a far better scheme is to tell him he owes you a drink.

Remember that the artist needs you. Be sympathetic to his needs, and help him to put on a good show. If you do a good job of backing a show, it's as satisfying as any other musical situation. The audience might not be applauding *you*, but without your contribution, they probably wouldn't be applauding the artist either. He knows that, and so do you, even if the audience does not.



A black and white photograph of Joe Calato, an older man with a mustache, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and patterned tie. He is smiling and holding two drumsticks in his hands. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

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Concentration

The ability to concentrate and not be distracted from the music by fear or pressure is extremely important for every professional drummer. For example, if you become nervous at a recording session or an audition you may lose your concentration. You may be thinking, "I hope I do well," or "I hope I don't make a mistake." These thoughts are natural enough because we all want to do well. However, if we dwell on these thoughts we get more nervous and we lose our concentration on the music. Then we make mistakes and get even more nervous.

Some people try to build confidence by practicing and telling themselves that they will do well. This often does help if it isn't overdone or unrealistic.

Confident people sometimes think, "Boy I'm hot tonight." This can also break concentration and result in what might be referred to as an "indulgent" performance. In other words, overplaying because you are convinced you are great.

I believe the easiest method for dealing with fear, pressure and other distractions is to improve your ability to concentrate. For one thing, concentration has no bad side effects that I know of.

When you are really concentrating you are not necessarily over-confident or under-confident. You are simply paying attention to the task at hand. When your

concentration is total there is no room for fear or over-confidence. You are too busy paying attention.

How do you know when you are paying attention? This is difficult to say because if you are really paying attention you don't say to yourself, "Wow, I'm really paying attention." Once you do this, you have already lost your concentration.

It is perhaps easier to catch yourself when your mind starts to wander. For example, you are at a rehearsal and you suddenly realize that your thoughts are drifting on their own. Someone says something to you and you say, "Excuse me, what was that again?" You were "somewhere else" and did not hear the question you were asked. This is commonly known as daydreaming. I call it loss of concentration.

When this happens, as it does to all of us on occasion, it is of no value to be angry with yourself. If it helped it might be okay, but it doesn't help. Anger just stirs up your emotions and you distract yourself even more.

Try this: When you catch yourself daydreaming, just say to yourself, "I caught you. Now come back and let's start concentrating again." Make a game of it. Each time you catch yourself drifting mentally, bring yourself back to concentrating.

In this way you gradually train your mind to concentrate fully for longer periods of time. As you improve at this skill of concentrating, you will discover that it will take less effort. In fact, it will become easier and easier. At some point it will be almost automatic. Automatic concentration, which happens after some practice, is good because it requires less effort than in the early learning stages.

Pressure and danger. If someone pulls a gun on you in the street you will be very alert. You will be concentrating like crazy in order to save yourself. Your mind will not wander. You will be focused, although in a negative way.

However, when doing your first big recording session or TV show, the pressure can get to you. In this case, unlike the one with the gun, the problem is to forget your fear enough to concentrate on performing

well. If you can learn to do this you will be focused in a positive way.

Just say to yourself, "I am in this situation because someone else had confidence in me. They think I can do a good job. Therefore, I will concentrate on the music and performance. In this way, I will do my best under these circumstances."

Eliminating Fear and Pressure. This is a tall order. I am not sure that it would even be a good idea. However, no matter, very few of us can achieve this lofty goal.

I prefer not to eliminate fear and pressure but learn to deal with them. It is okay to be scared and it is okay to feel the pressure. The key is to find a way to handle your emotions so you won't make unnecessary mistakes. The most straight forward way to do this is to develop your ability to concentrate.

Some tips on concentration. First of all, concentration is a skill that can and must be developed. It is not so much intelligence as it is learning to focus your attention on what is important.

Secondly, you concentrate most easily on something you are interested in. You can't develop concentration by forcing yourself to focus on things that have no interest to you.

If you have difficulty concentrating, ask yourself, "Why is this task or this situation important to me? What benefit will I receive if I do well?" Once you understand what is truly important to you, focus on those aspects of the situation. Concentration will be easier and your performance will be better.

No Magic Formula. There exists no precise formula for success. Concentration enhances what you have to offer. It will not take the place of talent, studying, practicing or experience.

However, developing concentration skills will help you to get the most out of yourself under pressure. Performing well under pressure is one important key to becoming a top professional.

One last thought: Even if you are not an outstanding drummer, learning to concentrate more fully will help you to improve and to do your best. Your best is all you can do. And that is a lot!

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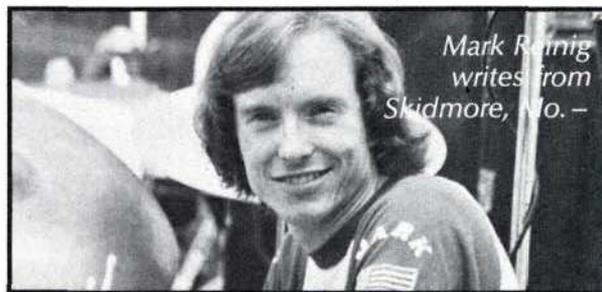
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Drum Anchoring

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Nothing could be more frustrating or nerve-wracking than having everything just where you want it, only to have the drums slowly creep out of position. It not only cramps your style, but also makes it increasingly hard to concentrate on your playing. If you're plagued with this problem, take heart and read on.

I'll start with the simplest methods of anchoring and stabilizing your set-up utilizing methods that require no special staging or platforms. Later, we'll go into methods for the hardest working and touring drummers. Some of these methods can be used immediately, without any special requirements or construction. Others may take some time, thought and ingenuity. Let's start with the most basic and least expensive.

Probably the most common reason for drum creep is the set-up surface. Slick wood stages, linoleum, tile and wood floors all make for an unstable set-up area. Our first concern then is the floor, stage or platform itself. Thick rubber, runner-type mats are great. They adhere to slick surfaces as well as the bottom of your drums and hardware. Rubber mat material is fairly inexpensive and can be purchased at hardware, building-supply and, home-improvement stores.

Following along the lines of a rubber mat, is a thick carpet with a rubber or non-skid backing. The density of the carpet allows legs, spurs and hardware to settle and stabilize themselves in the thickness of the material. Another good item to use, in conjunction with a carpet, is a front-mount bass drum anchor which attaches to the bottom front of the bass drum hoop. The spurs on the anchor tend to dig in and keep the set-up from creeping forward. These are available at most music stores and drum shops for around ten or fifteen dollars and are well worth it.

Another nice item that can be added to either the rubber mat or carpet is *Velcro*. Surprisingly enough, a small strip attached

to bass drum hoops, hi-hat or bass drum pedals, and to the rug, mat or carpet, in the correct location, will hold the equipment in position. On a rubber mat, the *Velcro* can be rubber cemented into position. On carpet, it can be sewn or snap-riveted on. *Velcro* not only holds the equipment in place, but also marks location to aid you in setting up. *Velcro* in various lengths and widths is available at most sewing and craft centers, and at many large hardware and department stores. The price is usually per yard.

After the set-up surface has been treated, we can move on to the drums themselves. If you're a particularly hard player, surface treatment alone will not be enough. "Heel up" players should rely on more than one strip of *Velcro* alone for total anchoring.

Perhaps the oldest and most widely known method of stopping drum movement is some type of anchor between the bass drum and throne. Ropes, chains, adjustable bars and straps are all materials used to attach the throne to the bass drum at a desired length. Ropes and straps tend to stretch or come undone, while chains and bars are often cumbersome and clumsy.

One thing I've found that's moderately effective, is a length of rubber-coated aircraft cable looped around the throne and attached by hooks to the bass drum tension rods. The cable is virtually impossible to break, and once the desired length is established, it will be free from stretch. Any device attached between the throne and the bass drum *should not* interfere with foot action or comfort.

The following anchor methods require a platform or riser.

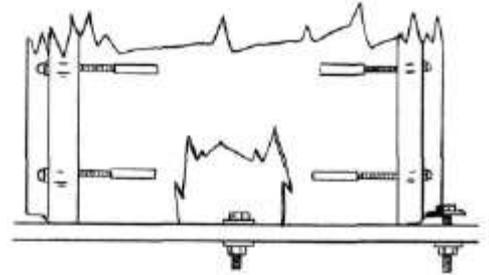
The illustrations will help to more clearly explain the items I'm about to describe. These anchor methods will aid in "spiking" your set-up location, as well as being more sturdy and reliable.

Since the bass drum is the foundation of a set-up, all but two of these anchor methods involve stabilizing the bass drum. However, since many newer drumsets mount most or all of the drums and hardware on separate stands, I'll also include ways to anchor your stands and hardware.

Anchoring the bass drum to the plat-

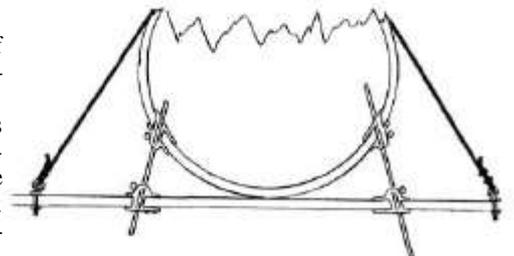
form can be done in several ways. You can attach a bolt to the platform which passes through the air hole in the bottom of the bass drum. The shell of the drum should be isolated from the platform surface by rubber or felt washers so that noise and vibration don't cause a problem. This method is similar to mounting a cymbal to a stand, except the nut will be tighter to secure the drum in place.

If your bass drum doesn't have an air hole, and you don't want to drill a hole in this area, there is an alternate method. The bolt runs through the platform as before, but not through the bass drum shell. Instead, a large washer is attached which will overlap on the bottom of the hoop and clamp it down tight. Again, felts or rubber should be used to isolate noise.

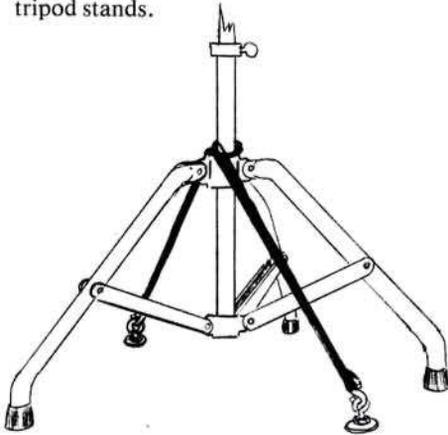


Another method is with an eyebolt on each side of the bass drum and attached to the platform. A tarp strap or cycle strap is then stretched over the bass drum and hooked to each eyebolt. Again this method will *not* suffice for the very heavy player.

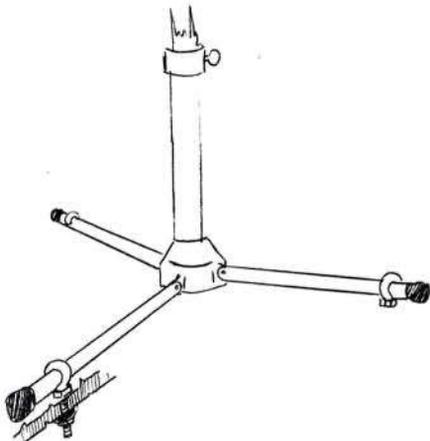
The ultimate for the lead foot player is where a set of shell-mount bass drum leg mounts are attached to the platform in the proper location. When the bass drum is set up for performance, the legs are simply lowered into these mounts and tightened down. If all the fittings are kept tight, there should be no noise or vibration.



Once you've decided on which system to use, you can move on to stands and hardware. There are two methods of anchoring hardware to a riser or platform. The eye-bolt and strap method can be used for all tripod stands.



For anchoring flush-base stands, a bolt with a hook end is attached to the platform and tightened down so the stand leg is bound under the hook. Since flush-base stands have a tendency to be top heavy and tip over, this will help correct the problem. This method can also be adapted to tripod stands if longer hook bolts are used.



Since shell thickness, platform thickness, drum size and hardware sizes differ, no bolt sizes or strap lengths are given. Simple measurement with a tape rule will help you decide this. Also remember, any anchoring device should be noise free, especially if close-up miking or recording is a factor. Speed of set-up, reliability, sturdiness and dependability should all be considered as well. Experiment until you find the method that's best for you. Then *anchor down* and concentrate on your playing.

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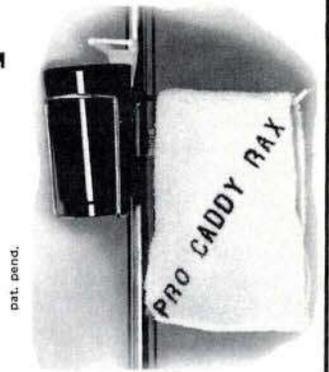
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Dunbar continued from page 19

Kingston band in the early '70s; it was probably the most important band you played in until you and Robbie joined up with Peter Tosh for the Stones tour in '78. Were you in any other bands between Skin, Flesh and Bones and Tosh's Word, Sound and Power?

SD: Well, I played with Tommy McCook and the Supersonics for a little while and a band called the Volcanoes. Then in the studio I would sit in with many bands that I can't think of right now.

RS: Lloyd Nibbs seems to be the godfather of Jamaican reggae drummers. What was it about him that made his style so convincing and admirable?

SD: For one thing, Lloydie used to play variations of African riddims that no Jamaican drummers had ever heard of before. Lots of rim shots, but with a special style. It's hard to explain the feeling the man had with his drums, but it influences all the drummers around today in one way or another. You can ask any reggae drummer in Kingston and he will tell you that Lloyd Nibbs had an influence on him. But I think he had more of an influence on me than most because I loved dat band the Skatalites and would listen to them when I was growing up as much as possible, y'know? Youths at school would call me "Skatalites" because I love dat band so much.

RS: I've been to Kingston numerous times in the past five years and it seems that whenever I visit a recording studio there—Harry J's, Tuff Gong, Dynamic, Aquarius—there's always a drummer I run into that's complaining about how he can't get any work whenever you're in town. Is there really that much of a demand for you?

SD: Well [laughs], I don't really know. I always have plenty of work, y'know, and I have to turn down some sessions. But in Kingston, the reason why drummers can't get no work is because first they have to prove themselves. There's like a pecking order in Kingston. When one drummer leaves to go on tour, dat's when a younger drummer can step in. But he has to wait his turn, y'know. The best drummers in Kingston always get the best sessions and the best gigs. It's like that in rock and jazz and funk too, but it reggae it's even more so because all the energy and all the studios are in Kingston. In the States you have studios in New York, L.A., Memphis, Miami—all over. In Jamaica, the studios are just in Kingston so that's where all the musicians come. Sometimes it jus' get crowded.

RS: What made you and Robbie decide to start the Taxi record label and production company? Surely you two have enough to do with session work and tours and producing other artists.

SD: We were playin' for everybody else. It was time for us to play for us. I have lots of ideas, y'know, that I want to try in the studio—new drum techniques, new sounds.

Taxi is the best way for me to do it.

RS: One of the highest compliments I ever heard about your drumming was that it never sounded stagnant or dull.

SD: Hmmm. I try to sound good every-time I play my drums. I no get stagnant, but sometimes reggae get stagnant. Robbie and I watch most of the growth in the music, right? And whenever anybody start a new riddim in Jamaica or a new beat, everybody try to get on top of it. And for a while every song dat come out sound the same. Me and Robbie, well, what we try to do, we try to move away from the pattern. Whenever you hear a song from a Taxi album you hear a *new* sound, a new beat, not some stagnant sound from 1977. Most musicians don't take the time to really check it out. But we watch the scene and whenever it start to get flat, we switch and move on.

Barrett continued from page 19

RS: What is your favorite Wailers album, or better yet, what LP best reflects your best drumming?

CB: I think it *Kaya*.

RS: And why is that?

CB: Because *Kaya* have some directly emotional songs on it, things that hurt and feel, y'know? So I got to play deep; more within.

RS: Have you ever played with any artists other than Bob?

CB: Well yes, Scratch Perry and the Upsetter band and before that the Hippy Boys in the '60s. When I first start to play drums I think I played on some gospel records too.

RS: Is it true that the Ludwig drumkit you used to play whenever the Wailers toured was a rented kit?

CB: Yes mon, it true. Finally Bob get the Ludwig drumset and buy it. Today it's in the Tuff Gong studio like a shrine. The first drumset that Bob give to me was a kit he bought in Delaware when he was living there and working in the car factory. He bought it for himself, but later he give it to me as a present, y'know.

RS: What happened to it? Do you still have it?

CB: No mon. It get burned up in a fire at the Green Mist in Kingston. Dat's when I get a new kit. Bob go to Manny's in New York City and buy me a new kit after everyting cool with Island [Records].

RS: Are there any tracks from the Bob Marley and the Wailer LPs of the past that you did not play on?

CB: One record, *Survival*. Nobody knows this, but I'll tell you, right? One side of the LP is the Wailers, but the other side is not the Wailers.

RS: You're right, I didn't know that. What side isn't the Wailers?

CB: Well, let me think now. [hesitation] The side with the song "Africa Unite."

RS: Why didn't the Wailers play on that side?

CB: Well, some people try and convince Bob that he should try playin' with some new players. Y'know, to see if the Wailers

really as good as everyone say. So Bob brought in some players—Mikey Boo played drums—and dey cut the tracks. But after Bob hear the results, he realize the Wailers the best reggae band in the world. [laughs]

RS: Speaking of other Jamaican drummers, if you had to nominate, say five Jamaican drummers for a reggae hall of fame, who would you choose?

CB: Boy, dat a tough one, y'know. Let me think on it ... okay, you got Sly Dunbar and Lloyd Nibbs. And then Hugh Malcom and Winston Graham of Soul Vendors. And one more—Carlton Barrett. True.

RS: It's quite difficult for drummers to get live gigs on a steady basis in Jamaica. Why is that?

CB: Because there's not enough nightclubs in Jamaica. Ghetto people mostly listen to reggae and support the music. But ghetto people don't have the money to go to nightclubs so the clubs close down and fold up. Most drummers don't get the chance to show their stuff live on stage unless dey join a band that tours the States and Europe.

RS: Another thing, you don't see many music stores in Kingston. Where do you and other drummers get your equipment?

CB: Most of the drummers get their equipment in the States when they go on tour there. Youths get drums, if they're lucky, from relatives or friends in New York or Miami or someplace else in the States. A drumkit is very very expensive to buy in Jamaica plus you have to pay cash, mon. No monthly payments or credit like in the States. Pay it all in cash.

RS: You once told me Ludwig and Rogers were the drumkits you preferred to play. But you're playing Yamaha drums. Why the change?

CB: I have been touring Europe for years and the Ludwig company never offered me any drums or an endorsement agreement. But the first time the Wailers go to Japan, the Yamaha people want me to endorse their drums. So they give me a kit since the Wailers was the top reggae group in Japan. I cannot turn down an offer like that!

Miller continued from page 20

RS: How did you practice? You didn't have a drum kit, did you?

NM: No, I didn't get a drum kit until a long time after that. I built a little pad to practice on. I got a piece of wood and cut a piece of automobile tire to put on it. That's what I practiced on. I still have that pad today.

RS: What makes for a good reggae drummer?

NM: Well, for one thing, he has to be able to keep a pulse going right through the music. It's very important for a reggae drummer to keep time properly. A lot of drummers are good technically, y'know, but for the timing they are not there. I concentrate on keeping a steady time and then I worry about coloring the music, y'know? Then I think about playing a certain lick to get a certain feel or coloring. Like right

now I'm playing a lot of different bass drum patterns.

RS: In reggae, the relationship between the bass player and the drummer is especially important. How does a reggae drummer go about setting up that relationship?

NM: He tries to have the same groove as the bass player, even before the music starts, so it's easier to lock in with what he will be playing. You listen to him and concentrate on what he's playing so the timing is tight. Sometimes I listen to the bass player and I will play something counter to what he's playing, but it's always with the same timing. I think that's where jazz has helped me out, y'know?

RS: The last time we spoke, we were talking about the differences between a rock drummer and a reggae drummer.

NM: Yeah, well the rock drummer tends to do a lot of playing, like busy drumming. Most reggae drummers, especially the older ones, like to keep things simple. Reggae is different from rock because rock drummers that I hear tend to make a lot of noise. I'm not putting down rock 'n' roll, but reggae is message music. As musicians we try to put across a musical and a lyrical message. It's not just entertainment.

RS: How much of the riddims that you play and that the average Jamaican drummer plays would you say is a direct result of the influence of African drum patterns?

NM: Well, all drums come from Africa. The first drums were built in Africa. Some of the more roots-oriented performers, like Ras Michael and the Sons of Negus, for instance, have a lot of African roots in the riddims. But I think reggae also has a lot of mento roots too [Jamaican folk music] and a bit of calypso. And also jazz and rock.

RS: Once again, jazz drifts into the conversation.

NM: Not just because I listen to jazz, y'know. Before reggae, before rock steady and ska, most Jamaican drummers were jazz drummers. Like in the '50s before ska came out, Jamaican drummers were playing jazz up on the North Coast, in the hotels and the ballrooms there. And from there, when ska came in, a lot of these drummers brought their jazz influences with them.

RS: It's no secret that trying to make it as a musician in Kingston is no easy task. The competition and the limited number of gigs, both live and in the studio, put a lot of pressure on musicians to excel. Is it better, you think, to be a member of a permanent recording band or a free-lance session drummer?

NM: Well, if you're going to be on tour most of the time out of the country, you can make some money and get some recognition. If you know the right people you can get on recording dates and make some money, but you hardly get any recognition. Sly [Dunbar] was one of the first drummers in reggae to become a star. Maybe now other drummers will get some attention, y'know?

Skyjuice continued from page 21

Juicy because of my father. They say my family was the Juicy family. In Jamaica they have a drink called skyjuice [skyjuice is a mound of shaved ice with a sweet syrup poured on top of it. It's sold by street vendors]. Well, because of my father and because I love skyjuice so much, the youths call me Skyjuice and the name stick.

RS: So many reggae musicians have nicknames. . .

SJ: True, true! Everybody have nicknames like Skully, Sticky, Flabba, Crucial Bunny Tom Tom, Horsemouth. My real name is Christopher Burth, but no one ever call me that.

RS: Much of your work has been done with Sly Dunbar on drums. Does your friendship with him go back as far as your friendship with Sticky?

SJ: I played on Sly's first hit records, the ones on the Taxi label. But I would go around with Sly every since his days with Skin, Flesh and Bones and the gigs they used to play at Tit For Tat [Kingston reggae club]. He introduced me to many musicians and later on, when they find out that I play percussion, they come and check me. I played on Jimmy Riley, Junior Delgado and Tamlins' tracks because of Sly. Tunes like "Love and Devotion," "Baltimore," "Fort Augustus"—all the good tunes that Sly and Robbie put out on their Taxi label.

RS: As a percussionist, how do you work with a drummer? Is it a mutual give-and-take thing, or do you simply follow the lead he throws you?

SJ: People think percussion is very easy to do, but it's not true, y'know. A percussionist, a reggae percussionist, has to *listen* to the drummer. That's the most important thing, listen. What I do is follow him, like you said, and fill in the soft spots with some nice percussion so the song has more feeling. The percussionist has to fill in the gaps and color the tune. The brightly colored tunes need bright percussion. But it is up to the percussionist how to do it; what instruments are right for what tune. It's a gift to be able to do it right.

RS: You've often mentioned that, if given the chance, you'd always pick Sly to play with because he gives you plenty of freedom. What kind of freedom in particular are you talking about?

SJ: The freedom to color a song the way I think right. With Sly you can say, "I want to try this ting for special effect" and he say, "Go ahead, Skyjuice." That gives me inspiration to come up with the best sounds I can. A lot of reggae drummers you can't do that with, but Sly takes the music seriously and is very open, y'know. That's why he's the best drummer on the scene today.

Horsemouth continued from page 21

ducers, y'know, dey rip me off. Dat shack you see me live in [in the movie], well I live there for real. Still today I live there, in the ghetto. Bafaloukos, he cool, y'know, but the producers owe me money still. They

are the ones to see dat I get my money and my children don't starve. I could have been a movie star in the States, but they hold me back, mon. It's true, y'know.

RS: Didn't your appearance in *Rockers* open up other doors for you? Wasn't it easier, for instance, to find session dates and gigs with bands because of your popularity?

HW: It's a very weird ting to be a drummer in Jamaica who becomes a star. Other musicians don't like it. Dey prefer you to jus' keep de beat, y'know. Jus' stay in the background and say nothin'. But I can't do that. You try and make it and some black brothers keep you down. It's that way because it's the way of the ghetto and most reggae musicians come from the ghetto. People who live there want to see themselves drive a big car and see dem belly full, but your belly hungry.

RS: Did you have any formal training as a drummer?

HW: Yes, mon. Unlike other reggae drummers I learned to read music. I used to play overtures, y'know, before reggae music come out. Classical music too.

RS: You had this training in school.

HW: At Alpha School. Alpha is a reformatory school in Kingston. It's for delinquent youths and if you don't have a mother or father. The Catholic nuns who run the school teach the music to me. I used to play in the school band.

RS: When did you begin playing for Coxone?

HW: Well, I leave school in 1964. The nuns wanted me to join the army, but I decided to play drums for a living. Most of the youths at Alpha joined the army. But I was a roots person. Roots mean freedom for me.

RS: Back in the mid-'60s, drummers like Lloyd Nibbs of the Skatalites or Hugh Malcom of the Supersonics were Jamaica's top drummers. Did they have an influence on your drumming style?

HW: Yes mon! In the early days I would listen to Lloyd Nibbs and Hugh Malcom, true. When I started playing drums, there were only three serious drummers in all of Kingston—Lloyd Nibbs, Hugh Malcom and a roots drummer, Drum Bagle. Yes, he was a roots person, the way I am today. He never played no foreign beat, jus' the local beats; the roots Jamaican beat.

RS: Reggae music has come a long way since you first began recording at Coxone's Channel One Studio. How do you see yourself fitting into the reggae scene in the 1980s?

HW: I am like a mercenary drummer. I have no group; I play with whoever can pay me. But reggae music is not a rich thing, y'know. It's a ghetto music. You can't earn a million dollars in the ghetto. People who look at reggae and at a superstar thing don't hear the music right. That's why I and I not rich. I and I a roots drummer playin' a roots music.



DRUM SOLOIST

Steve Gadd: Quartet #2

Transcribed by Karl Sterling

From the Chick Corea album Three Quartets (Warner Bros. 3552).

High Pitch Crash
Low Pitch Crash
Ride
HI-Mounted Tom
Low Mounted Tom
Snare
Left Hand on Closed Hi-Hat
Click Hi-Hat with Foot
Open H.H. struck with L.H. Should close as in example.
Remain Open
Struck Open
Close with Foot
F
F
F
F
Floor Tom
Hi-Hat with Foot
Bass Drum
Hi-Hat Splash with Foot
Hi-Hat Let Ring
Half Open Struck with Stick, Let Ring

R L L R L L
p
p
p
p
R R R R R R R R
F L R F L
F
R R
p
F L R F L R R
L F
R R

Bass clef, piano (*p*). Musical notation with accents and slurs. Fingerings: L R L R, R L R L, L.

Bass clef, piano (*p*) to mezzo-forte (*mf*). Musical notation with accents and slurs. Fingerings: L L L L L L L L, R R R R R R R R.

Bass clef, mezzo-piano (*mp*). Musical notation with accents and slurs. Fingerings: R, R L L R L L R L L R R L L R R L.

Bass clef, mezzo-piano (*mp*). Musical notation with accents and slurs. Fingerings: R L R L L R L L R L L R L R L R R.

Bass clef, mezzo-forte (*mf*). Musical notation with accents and slurs. Fingerings: L R L R R L R L L, L R R.

Bass clef, mezzo-forte (*mf*). Musical notation with accents and slurs. Fingerings: L R, L R, R L.

Bass clef, mezzo-forte (*mf*). Musical notation with accents and slurs. Fingerings: L R L R, R, L R.

Bass clef, mezzo-forte (*mf*). Musical notation with accents and slurs. Fingerings: L R R.

Bass clef, forte (*f*). Musical notation with accents and slurs. Fingerings: L R, R L R, R L R, R L R, L.

Bass clef, mezzo-piano (*mp*) to mezzo-forte (*mf*). Musical notation with accents and slurs. Fingerings: R R, L R L R, L, R, R, L, R, R, R, R, R, L R L.

Musical staff 1: Bass clef, eighth notes with accents and triplets. Dynamics: *mf* to *mp*. F F

Musical staff 2: Bass clef, eighth notes with accents and triplets. Fingerings: F L R L L. Dynamics: *p*

Musical staff 3: Bass clef, eighth notes with accents and triplets. Fingerings: F L R L R, R L L R, L R L, R F L R L R, R L L, R L R L

Musical staff 4: Bass clef, eighth notes with accents and triplets. Fingerings: R F L R L R, R L L R L R L R, F L R F L R, R L L R, R R

Musical staff 5: Bass clef, eighth notes with accents and triplets. Dynamics: *p*

Musical staff 6: Bass clef, eighth notes with accents and triplets. Dynamics: *ff*

Musical staff 7: Bass clef, eighth notes with accents and triplets. Dynamics: *ff*

Musical staff 8: Bass clef, eighth notes with accents and triplets. Fingerings: L, R L, L, R L. Dynamics: *ff*

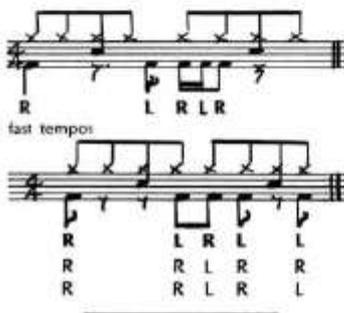
Musical staff 9: Bass clef, eighth notes with accents and triplets. Fingerings: L R, L R L R

Musical staff 10: Bass clef, eighth notes with accents and triplets. Fingerings: R, R

Jim Keltner on the DW Double Pedal

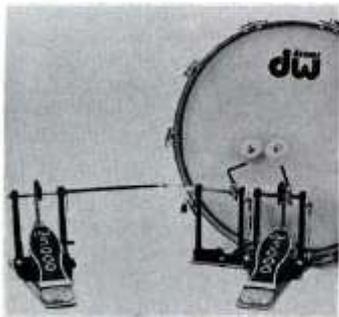


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never going to be just now you envisioned it. Which doesn't mean that it lessens the effectiveness of it or the quality that you're receiving from it or what comes from you. Maybe I've learned, or been *thinking* that I learned, that there's some patience required and a building process in getting to a desired place with other people. The place where you *are* being most effective. Then again, a rock-band format is *clearly* not the place to do some things. I know there are things I *want* to do and *will* do that won't be within the confines of that kind of music; that can't even possibly be considered within that structure because of what it's geared for and how it's geared.

It's true, since the last time we've spoken, that I haven't done much with my interest in sound, color, light and bringing those kinds of things together for healing aspects. I was just really starting to get into it enough that I was buzzing with it. I was feeling it really deeply and feeling some sort of lineage or heritage with it. It's a strange feeling. It's like how certain jazz drummers feel that they are carrying through with their tradition; that there is an actual lineage back to Africa. A heritage they're going to stay with. They align themselves with it. That's a really beautiful place to be.

Now, it's true that what I do with electronics and just the *thought* of combining electronic sequential rhythms with traditional rhythmic instruments sets me off. There's something about the idea of using a primitive, traditional instrument with a relatively new medium of music that just speaks loudly to me. It feels like there's something that has to do with that simultaneousness of time past, future and present; where it's all happening at once. That kind of thought concept just stirs these real deep things in me.

It's the same thing as sitting enthralled with abstract computergraphic images, like a child watching a TV screen with no picture on it, just watching the dots and the colors changing. There's *something* there that felt right. Something encoded. Something we don't even know is occurring. Without trying to sound nebulous or real abstract . . .

SF: Too late!

MS: [laughs] We really don't know what the effect of television is on us yet. We don't know what the effect of sound from the city is on us and all the things that attack us aurally.

SF: The use of TV has undermined mankind tremendously. It doesn't require you to think.

CS: It's passive. Think how it's integrated the way we've grown up. We've *all* grown up on it.

SF: Watching videos on TV is not like the visions one has when listening to a song on the radio or on record. These videos are dictating the interpretation of the songs. So that wipes out . . .

MS: Any interpretation on your own.

SF: Absolutely.

MS: That's one of the big questions about video and music. A lot of people complain about that. We have to recognize that people didn't realize, *before* they were watching these visual interpretations, that *they* were actually interpreting them themselves. Do you know what I'm saying? Until that was taken away, they didn't realize they were doing it. It's the same as saying you don't miss something until it's gone. Now that MTV is there, I've heard people say that they don't like to see somebody else's interpretation of the song. It's saying, "Oh! This is the way it is? I thought it was *this* way or *that* way."

CS: At least we realize that that image is being taken away from us. Kids just cease to create images in songs. They just wait for the video.

SF: It's like reading a great book and being disappointed in the movie.

MS: There you go. Why didn't I just say that?

CS: It's still entertainment though.

SF: But at what price? There's a controversy now about how video is affecting the recording industry.

MS: In actual fact it's helping the recording industry. It's helping new artists because kids will see a group on MTV where they might not hear the record on radio. They'll buy the record because they've seen the band on TV. It's been a boost for several new artists. Men At Work and Missing Persons are good examples. And it reaches millions of people. How many concerts do you have to play to reach that many people? How much money do you save for an investment in a videotape?

It's a form that's in its infancy. I'm sure it'll develop in some ways and in other ways it won't. But for some artists—and this is true with anything and always will be true—it will be the perfect medium. For artists of the '80s born with that duality of vision, they will seize it as an opportunity, as a means of expression they otherwise wouldn't have, so that the music is just a part of their expression. They need visual images to fulfill the expression more. Eventually it will even create a different type of artist. It's going to be good for some, but others are going to use it with the same unoriginality they use to deal with songs.

It could be the same as the way you approach any instrument. You sit down at the drums and it's either something that keeps a beat or it's more than that. It could be your means of communicating on another level.

The whole electronics era is, on one hand, going to take away a lot of things we might have to use our minds for. But, on the other hand, if we're responsible as human beings, it'll allow us more time to do things that we otherwise wouldn't be

able to do. So the questions are: What's the quality of your time now that you have more time? If you had a million dollars, how would you use it? Now that you have this gift, what will you do with it? It will always come back to those same questions. You can say that the computer age is going to ruin us as sensitive human beings, but to the right people it's going to open up possibilities that were unheard of before. It's all in how we perceive any of the tools available to us. These things are here to stay. The right people will most likely be the artists and the creative thinkers.

SF: Why didn't you work the electronics into Novo Combo?

MS: I wanted it to be high energy and good songs. The tendency with electronics was to get too carried away. But now I'm ready for it to be put into the group and I miss it. I miss the sound of keyboards and electronics. It's so prevalent in today's music.

SF: Why did GO disband?

MS: Stomu Yamashta put it together. The nucleus was Stomu, myself and Steve Winwood. I met Klaus through that. In a lot of ways it was terrific, but in a lot of ways it wasn't quite what I had in mind. With Stomu, I had it in mind to do some "out there" percussion stuff. I wanted to work with him because he was a crazy, avant-garde classical percussionist. I didn't want to be playing songs really.

SF: You didn't expect to be playing drumset in GO?

MS: I did. But, after the third album it was like I was playing funk. Stomu was wanting to get into Western song forms it seemed, and I was wanting to take it out there into some percussion extravaganza. Somewhere along the line it got off-base.

I'd like to do more percussion things too. I still love the sight of a lot of drums onstage. I enjoy sitting down and playing but I also love standing up and playing. It's a whole different experience. I've always loved to move. I remember a young drummer told me once that someone said to him, "You don't dance, huh? You just play the drums?" And he said, "We maybe don't dance, but we make the people dance." I thought that was true, but wait a minute! When I see a guitar player crying on his instrument—I used to try to extract *that* out of the drums. I went through this process of, "Oh man. I play the drums. Man, I want to be *crying* and make people cry." I went through this whole thing and then a voice spoke to me and said, "Son! If you want that then you have to do it from your instrument." Then I said, "Okay, let's get deeper into it. If you want to do that, pour it out of yourself and translate it through your instrument." That happened early on in Santana. I just went deeper into myself as far as feeling and being unashamed. Not just keeping a beat, but going someplace else with it.

That's a real deep part of me. Part of my responsibility is to go to the place in myself

that cries. Naturally the best thing is to have music around you that will bring that out of you. You give out to that and it gives it back to you. It's important for me to feel that.

SF: Can you express that more with electronic drums?

MS: On the electronic drums, when you play a roll using the snare sound, ring modulation and the *echo processing* the sound, the sound sweeps down and the echo continues it out. That's the way I had always heard it on an acoustic snare drum. Like a press roll where dynamically you'd bring it up and then down. I remember with the big crowds with Santana, in my solo I'd try to experiment by playing loud and then come down real soft so that it was just dropping the stick on the drum, to see what I could get away with! I really loved doing that. I loved the sound of a stick dropping on a drum, or touching a cymbal. It's the same with certain combinations of sound, like using the drums with sequencers. Electronic drums extended the sound out. This was, in a way, how I'd been hearing it.

I'd really like to get a solo performance together. To do something on my own, make it a musical statement and keep people interested. It'd be the kind of thing where I'd be standing up. Part of it is just for the expression. Part of it to feel that if all else goes wrong, I've still got myself and I can do this.

SF: When you compose, do you use a tape recorder?

MS: I can write some things on keyboard and a little on guitar. I can write drum parts. I don't have a need to do it that often but I can write down ideas and read them.

SF: How "attitude" affects musicians is a study that's fascinating to me. Could you comment on that?

MS: We all went to school and were taught certain subjects. A lot of us found that we were short-changed in how to live, or what to expect from life itself. If people had taught us how to deal with life on an everyday basis, and how to come to terms with ourselves in relation to whatever we wanted to do, then we would approach things with much more confidence and direction, instead of having dissipated energies and doubts as to what we really want to do, and why we want to do it. Anything that helps you to prepare yourself better for life, I'm for.

You see people in any field with a low self-worth image, so it puts them in a negative approach to their life, what they're doing with it and how they're moving towards the things they want. There's a lot of clearing out to be done with our attitudes; things we came up with since childhood; things that have come upon us in our individual life experience.

I've done work on that lately to try to get to ground zero with myself in terms of what I want to do and what I have. It's important, first of all, to come to terms

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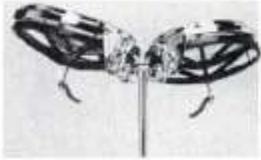
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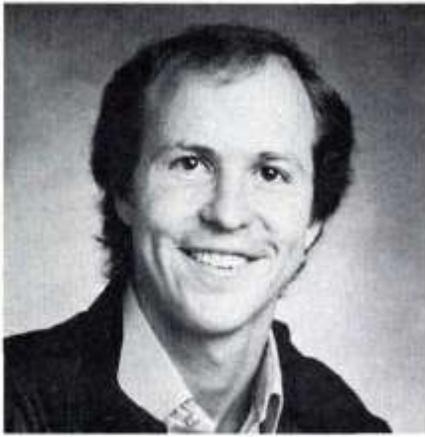


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with yourself and begin to love yourself. From there you can begin to look at things around you with a much clearer perspective and not be so affected by outside stimuli, whether it's things around you or people around you. The untold effect of all the things around us is that we're *reacting* to situations instead of *acting*. That's nothing less than second best in dealing with your life. And it's not an easy process because there's so much junk that we've all accumulated. You have to be willing to do some work on yourself.

SF: When you first told your parents that you wanted to be a drummer, did they encourage you?

MS: Yeah, and they gave me a lot of room to do things I wanted to do. I wanted to get away from where I was and where I grew up. I worked really hard to do that when I was young. I felt like I wanted to get somewhere fast. It's funny when I hear people say, "You were 18 at Woodstock. That's *so young*." And it feels like I had so much that happened to me even *before* that. When I was 15 and 16 I was playing in bars. The only white guy in all black clubs playing James Brown tunes and stuff like that. My parents were very encouraging. My father used to drive me there!

SF: How did you relate in school to your teachers, and vice versa?

MS: Well, that was a different story. My grammar school memories are clearer than my high school memories. I feel like I was already gone in high school. I wasn't participating in the activities that everybody was participating in. I was into music and I was hanging around with musicians. It was at a time where it wasn't happening to be in music. So I didn't feel like I was really there in high school and I ended up going to several different schools. Getting kicked out of one and going to another.

But, getting back to the point that there are things that we have to clear out, it's just important to be in tune with yourself and what your desires are. There has to be some sort of higher reason or higher force behind them. You can't just always work on what's happening in the *world*. It has to be something *more* than that. You have to touch base with some deeper side of yourself everyday.

SF: In other words, work on yourself first instead of trying to solve the world's problems.

MS: Definitely! It's going to have to start with yourself. Because otherwise you're just going to be contributing to whatever mess everybody else is in. You can't take it for granted that everybody out there—even though they look together—is together. Or that their decisions are being based from a clear point of view. Everybody has a responsibility to take a good look at themselves and do some true homework. From there you nurture yourself, take some time for yourself and *then* you move out into the world. Who knows what

happens when you look into yourself that way? You may change what you do! You may decide, "What I've been doing is not really what I want to be doing. I have something completely different to offer. Something much better for me and something much more positive to give to people. It could probably make me more money if I'm aligned with myself and doing something that's really right."

Often when I was younger, I would go straight for the heart of myself and do what I wanted to do. And success came to me. Now I find myself 12 years later and clearly it's not the same. As much as I try to do what I want to do—whether it's a band I want to put together or a record company, or that the market place is completely different—all those things have to be dealt with. Then again, you have to ask yourself, "Do I want to be in that marketplace or is there something I can do that'll make me happier and make music that'll be much more fulfilling to me? I could still make a good living from it." I don't need to be a millionaire. I just need to be happy and not at all in poverty.

SF: The "starving artist" myth.

MS: I don't believe in the "starving artist" myth. I'm not saying I have loads of money. I'm saying that from the point of view that I've been around a lot of people who haven't had money. I've had money and I haven't had money. I've run the gamut of it and I still don't believe in the starving artist. If somebody wants to play a certain type of music, then they have to say, "I'm going to play this type of music and I realize that there's not a big market for it." And you go to the audience that most accepts it. And you can't yell at the rest of the world for not wanting to hear your music. There's a lot of negativity you can put on something when people don't want to hear it.

In light of that negativity, it demands a certain amount of self acceptance of what you're doing. I'm not saying to bow down to anything, but there's a certain amount of acceptance that you have to have in your heart to say, "This is what I've chosen to do." If some love comes from it and into the music, I'd be willing to bet that there'd be a more positive reaction to what you're doing.

SF: You can tell by listening whether it's positive or negative energy coming from the music.

MS: Yeah. Sometimes you hear things and it's just like somebody yelling and screaming, "Listen to me! Look at me!" It's like the child in them saying, "Look at me!" Or they're angry. And it's all part of each individual's evolutionary process. There's no lying. There's no getting around it. So, it's up to us individually.

As far as drummers are concerned, I think it's valuable to get into the history of the drums and the lineage of the drums, and see where it comes from. Then you'll

see what the drums meant in other times. You'll see the respect that came from the instruments and the people who played the instruments. The people that played the instruments had a lot of pride and a lot of dignity in what they were doing. And there's a power in that. There's a shamanistic power in the drums, in the rhythm. Rhythm is still the heartbeat of everything that's going on. There's a pulse to everything that's happening. To get into that would enable one to be more accepting of what they're doing.

SF: Do you think that when kids are looking for the keys to going from obscurity to fame, they center their attention too much on technique and equipment?

MS: Those aspects of drumming are necessary. But you're going to have to understand that there's something even *before* that. Sooner or later you're going to have to ask yourself "why" you're doing what you're doing. The natural response would be, "Because I love it," or "Because I want to be in a band," or "Because it brings attention to me," or "It's the thing to do." But the more serious you get about it, you find that you were brought into that because of some other reason that's deeper than you thought. Because those other things aren't going to last.

Let's say you get what you want. Let's say you go for it and you get rich and famous. You're going to have to ask yourself, "Well, now that I'm here, what is it that I really want from it? Is it all this stuff that's happening around me or is it the instrument itself? What is in me and how does it come through the instrument?" Which opens up a whole lifetime of work, which can be very exciting. When you find your life's work, it can be a very exciting place to be.

SF: Do you find the journey toward success more rewarding than the arrival? After Santana hit big, was it somewhat of a letdown?

MS: It wasn't a letdown. And I don't want to say that I love to struggle. But the *process* is exciting to me. It's something that I feel good about feeling excited about because I do feel like I have a lifetime to do it. Everybody wants to be recognized for what they do. Anybody would be lying if they said they didn't. And it's terrific to be recognized for what you do. It's feedback from people.

SF: When you knew in your heart that it was time for you to leave Santana, were you scared?

MS: I don't think I got scared because there was a two-year period before I left where I thought, "There are things about it that aren't the same. And it's not doing the same thing to me anymore." But, at the same time, I said to myself, "Listen, this is—for a drummer—a great place to be. Playing with great people." I recognized that and said, "I'm going to stay until the time is right for me to leave."

It's just like any other relationship. You look at the reason you're there. You look at the common bond. You look at what you can add to it and you look at what you can receive from it. You look at the flow of energy that's happening from it. If that is still flowing then it's still a good thing. And if it's not, either you check it out and work on it and talk about it, or else you say, "Listen, maybe it's time for me to go somewhere else."

SF: I think people outside have a hard time understanding why successful bands break up. It's as if they're thinking, "Why would they break up when they had such a great thing going?"

MS: It always looks different from the outside. That's true, I'm sure, almost with anything. Even if you were looking at somebody's life and you're saying, "What a great life." But look at things in the longer rhythm. Things aren't always as they appear. So be patient with people even if they look like they've got everything going for them. It's much better to look at somebody without jealousy and say, "Who knows what he's going through?" He may have many more problems than you. Maybe he's not even happy doing what he's doing, even though it looks like it's what you want.

And that's the other problem with people saying, "Oh, I want this," or "I want to be like that." Relax. Forget about that and see what is right for you. There's got to be some level of peace and happiness inside yourself from what you're doing. And those things all come in a certain amount of time. People have to be patient with themselves.

There's more to life than just being a big star and making a million dollars. It's important to be aware of that. I just want to try to do my part and have my awareness aligned with my life with music. It's just like the song that says: "Be careful what you're dreaming/Because your dreams, they might come true." And it's true. All the things you think and do make up what you are. So by being aware of all those things, the work becomes a real joy. One of the best things in the process *is* the work! All the processes of drumming, of practicing, of interacting with other musicians and putting music together is a real joy. Performing is a real joy.

On one hand you've got your music/drums. On the other hand you've got your life. Try not to separate them. Try to bring them together so that they're harmonious with each other. If you've got a situation that's difficult, bring it into balance with yourself in relation to the music. Let it drive you to higher heights. Naturally there's practice and work involved in developing technique and feel, and getting in touch with that feel in yourself. There has to be a way to intergrate all those things. Part of the reason we have difficult times with our music or lives is because we

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see everything as separate entities, when really it's all a part of a whole. The more we can see everything in our life as integrated parts making up a whole, the clearer we're going to focus on problems and situations, and be able to deal with them, rather than it being a scattered mess.

When I sit at the drums for four or six hours—whether I'm playing one rhythm for a long period of time, or playing with a rhythm machine or something like that—it creates a real trance-like quality. That's what I love best about drumming. That trance. It's the happiest place for me. It's the deepest place inside and it makes me understand "why" I play the drums. While I'm in that place, it seems that a lot of other things going on inside me work themselves out or become more clear. All of a sudden I'm able to see things in a different light. Almost like a dream-state, or as if I was in meditation.

So that's a place I like to go to. I just sit down and repeat a rhythm over and over. It also brings me to understand that that's what drums were really always about. To induce a trancelike state. Then, within that, other things occur. That's why I really like extended rhythmic pieces that repeat themselves.

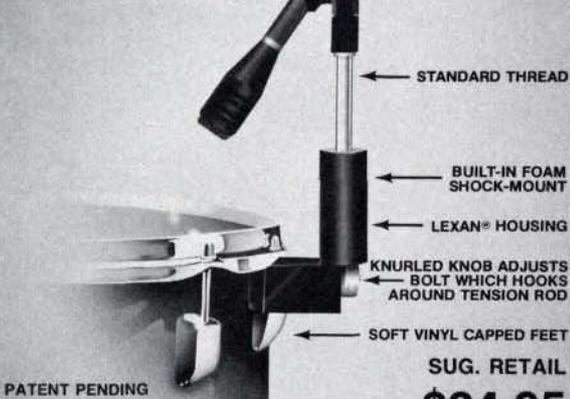
SF: There's a truism that the way we play an instrument is a reflection of the way we are as human beings. You're talking about finding a balance in our lives and a peace within our lives, and I'm certain that will

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sound vague to many readers. The next obvious question is, "How do I go about attaining those things?" As we sit here it's interesting to me that you have a huge record collection that includes music that *everybody* listens to, to music that *nobody* listens to. And you have a healthy library of books on subjects not all relating to music. How much have these things affected your outlook on life and your approach to music and drumming? And if someone's total input was *PacMan*, AM radio and TV, what kind of effect will that have on their lives and their approach to music?

MS: They're going to go for what they know in the beginning. They're going to play the instrument for the reasons they want to play it. And they're going to be affected only by what input they have. But at a certain point it's not going to be enough. Then they're going to ask themselves, "Well, what else is there?" And they might start listening to other things once they want to delve into it deeper.

SF: I'm sure all the great artists you've performed with were not shallow individuals. **MS:** No. For the most part not. I prefer to be in an environment with people who aren't. Not meaning "snobby." I love street people. There's always some depth to people who are doing something well, something that you find enriching. The kids will work it out. Out of 100 there will be five that want to do something more. The ones that want to will look for those things that will take them to the next place. There'll just be that innate desire in those, and the rest won't have it.

SF: Did you read a lot in high school?

MS: Yeah. Mostly literature. I was into Dylan Thomas and Charlie Parker! I wanted to read everything I could about both of them. When I was younger I was interested in any biographies, so that I could get some sort of perspective on my life, living in a small town, and a perspective on what other people had done and how they thought.

SF: You told me that when you were a kid you had the opportunity to meet all of your drum heroes. What did you talk to them about?

MS: When I was about 15 or 16, I saw Tony Williams playing with Miles outside the Both/And Club in San Francisco. I couldn't get in so I stood outside. There was a window and the drums were right by the window. I stood out there all night and watched Tony because I was really familiar with his work. That was great. I waited around for him to come out. I didn't talk to him about anything. I just met him.

When I was a kid I met Buddy Rich. I went to the hotel where he was playing with his band and I was too young to get in and couldn't afford it. I waited outside in the lobby area of the room he was playing in. He came out and I had always heard that he was difficult to approach. I was with my

brother and I just went up to him and said, "Mr. Rich, I've been a fan of yours for a long time. I even study out of your book. And we can't get in." He said, "Wait a minute." He came back and two people ushered us into this table right in the front row where we watched the whole performance.

All these things were happening when I was so young. I snuck into a concert at Stanford University with the John Coltrane Quartet, with Elvin Jones and Jimmy Garrison and McCoy Tyner. We snuck in and went up through this passageway, then a window, and ended up in the men's dressing room, where Elvin Jones and Jimmy Garrison and everybody were putting their ties on. I was like, "Oh boy! Here we are." I said, "Listen, I'm sorry." They just laughed and said, "Cool. We hope you enjoy the concert." Jimmy Garrison was especially nice.

Another time I met Elvin when I was in Santana. He was playing at The Village Vanguard. I waited around until after and met him. I asked him about his cymbals. He said they were K. Zildjians. He was just the sweetest guy. It was snowing and we were standing with coats on. He just looked at me with those big eyes of his and that big smile and reached down into his cymbal bag and gave me his pair of hi-hat cymbals. Just like that! I'm still friends with Elvin and I see him every once in a while. That was just incredible.

SF: Have you had extensive formal training?

MS: I used to study with Mike DeLuca from the West Coast. He taught at Mickey Hart's father's music store. Mickey Hart was just working in the store and he was then the rudimental champion of California or something. Mike DeLuca was a terrific teacher for me. And I studied with Peter Magadini for a while when he was in San Francisco. That was really good too. I also studied with Anthony Cirone for a little while and then Michael Carvin. Michael could imitate any drummer. He was really in touch with his African heritage and the lineage of the drummer and the dignity of being a drummer. I had great teachers and they were all real different.

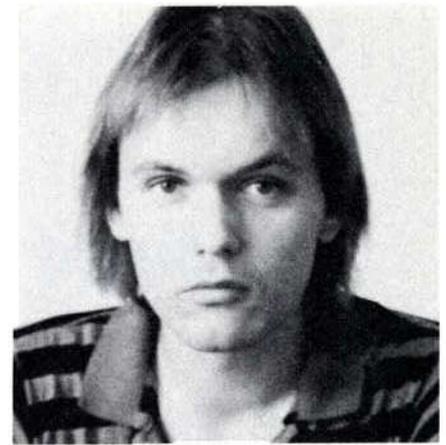
SF: How about when you were living with David Garibaldi?

MS: David Garibaldi was a teacher too. He was playing with Tower of Power and I was playing with Santana. Tower of Power was just like a local band playing in these little clubs around. I went and saw them and he was just so incredible even then. So I said, "Listen David, I've got this big house in Mill Valley. Why don't you move in?" At that time in San Francisco, everybody—all the young drummers—were trying to sound like David Garibaldi. David had already taken the Bernard Purdie thing a step further. It was like a science to him. When we lived together we used to play together a lot and there were things

that rubbed off. But I made it a point of not trying to play like him. In fact, one day he said, "How come you're not doing that?" I said, "Well, I want to play my way." We got into a big discussion about it. David and I have to get back in touch. That was a wonderful period when we were living together. There was a lot of music that went on between us.

You were talking about my record collection and my books. My taste has always been very eclectic. I listen to the Thompson Twins, Missing Persons, Thomas Dolby, Kate Bush, and Peter Gabriel. I enjoy that stuff as well as I enjoy electronic music, Bach and other classical music. Jazz. I do! It's just important for me to listen to a lot of things. It was different with Santana than it is now. I even enjoy the business for what it is now. I'm not complaining. I just see it for what it is and that's the game of what's happening. If I choose to enter that then I have to enter that knowing what it is, and what I'm getting into. That's why I'm not going to bitch and complain about it. It's what it is. The music industry and music business is different then it was and if you want to be out there you have to have records that are selling. You have to grow in music and you have to grow in life.

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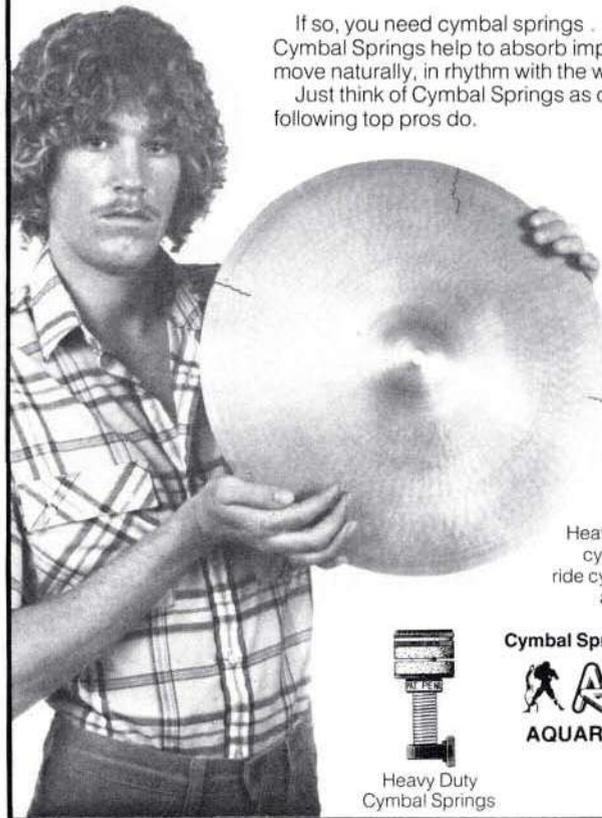


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This method worked well for the soul players of the '60s. The bass player would play a figure on the "and" of every beat, one or two measures before the end of every eight- or 16-bar phrase. The drummer would break away from a traditional timekeeping pattern and accent *with* the bassist. Often the drummer would use only the hi-hat in an open and closed fashion, and the bass drum. Example 1 illustrates a typical bass guitar pattern and the drummer's response. (Play right hand on hi-hat and left hand on snare in all examples.)

Key

H.H.	o = Open H.H.
S.D.	- = Closed H.H./L.F.
B.D.	+ = Closed H.H./R.H.

Bass figure #1

Drum figure #1

A similar example has been used in disco music of the '70s.

Bass figure #2

Drum figure #2

The more complicated 16th-note figures of recent jazz/rock concepts use this method to the highest degree.

Bass figure #3

Drum figure #3

Bass figure #4

Drum figure #4

Bass figure #5

Drum figure #5

All examples so far have been simple repetitive figures. More often than not the bassist will *vary* his rhythms within one measure. Example 6 illustrates this, and a typical drummer's pattern for complementing those same rhythms.

Bass figure #6

Drum figure #6

At slower tempos the bassist may be able to use 8th- or 16th-note triplets within his pattern. See Example 7, followed by two variations for the drummer.

Bass figure #1



Drum figure #7



Drum figure #8



Drum Example 8, while following the bassist's 16th-note triplet pattern, gives the listener the momentary feeling of going into a different time signature, because the traditional three-note pattern of the triplet has been broken up into a four-note pattern. 

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learned that everyone "improves" from everyone else's designs. Pro-Mark's story is a good example of creative appropriation. "Our early design methods were not very scientific. We took a certain brand of stick about 1956, and asked a Japanese manufacturer to make the tip a bit more sculptured, definite, pointed, make the neck a little thicker, round the bead more and whatever. It was all trial and error, with letters and samples going back and forth. We never drew a blueprint in the beginning, maybe just a rough sketch. We finally settled on the size designations, designs and tolerances for what was to be the Pro-Mark 5A and so forth. Most of our models are based on the old standards established years ago. We dropped the D designation years ago for the A line." Dean Markley's Chris Campbell is bolder yet: "Some of our designs come from previously designed stick blueprints. Some of our sticks are exactly like other sticks on the market. Some we've changed by beefing up things like tips and shafts or made thinner or fatter depending on what we think the feel of the stick should be for maximum ease of playing." Modifications on earlier models seems to follow the pattern of putting the stick out there and seeing how it's received. "Stick design reflects what a drummer wants to feel and hear and that's so subjective. We talk to our endorsing artists who try them out, and then try to make intelligent decisions based on

feedback. We do this every time we make a stick—see how it works for guys playing all styles. This gives us an idea about who this stick is for and how to market it."

Design seems to be born out of players' frustration with not being able to find what they want in existing stick models in length, bead, weight, material or finish. Joe Calato feels that, "Design is validated in the marketplace. With changing music, certain sticks are phased out as others come in. We try to serve the market with excellent new designs for changing times." Vic Firth disagreed with the standard lengths of sticks a few years ago. He felt a thinner stick needed a certain, very specific length, as opposed to the notion that all sticks of all diameters be of the same (or extremely close) length.

BEAD SIZE

What does "bead size" mean exactly? This depends who you ask. Fred Hinger doesn't think it means much: "Bead size is hogwash. It's the length of time the bead or the stick or whatever is on the drum that's important. If you leave it on too long, the sound is choked and small. If you get the bead off the head quickly, it'll ring more. When I use a wood stick, I play with the butt end. I guess you could say I like a large bead." I guess so. In fact, his stick is "all bead," to stretch the point a bit. Both Fred and his son Bill feel that sound on a snare drum is far superior when you eliminate the bead entirely. Their reasoning

runs this way: The more drum head you get in motion with a blow, the more tone you are going to pull from the drum. The more volume as well, depending on the force of the blow. They feel that a rounded end with no bead presents a large and consistent surface area to a drum, which is felt by the head as a lot of mass, even though the stick they make is lighter than most. "In effect, you're fooling the drum into thinking it's being hit by a big 3/4" ball with the equivalent weight behind it," said Bill.

Other stick makers who *do* use a bead agree that the size of the tip should be in relation to the thickness, length and use of the stick. Vic Firth: "You obviously wouldn't want to use a big tip on a 5A, which you'd use for light orchestral or fast jazz playing. You'll want something that's airy in the hand so you can move; something that won't thicken the sound and produce partials on a cymbal that you may not want."

In general, a large bead will get more drum head motion, extracting fuller, deeper tonalities from a drum. This is because it allows a fuller range of the overtone series of the drum to be expressed. A small bead offers less volume and clearer, higher tones than a similarly shaped large bead. Cymbals respond well to a smaller bead, in that it doesn't cause the building up of partials that a larger stick can cause. All of this is subject, of course, to the hand that holds the stick and the relative degree of control the player can exercise as to touch.

BEAD SHAPE

There are many varieties of bead shapes available in many models ranging from a ball, to a teardrop, to an acorn, to a barrel, to an oval, to no bead at all. They all serve to lay varying amounts of wood on a playing surface at a given point for a different stroke. A round bead offers the advantage of being able to strike a drum at any angle, and still put the same amount of surface on the drum. This is obviously beneficial to a multi-drum set-up where the drums are at many different heights and angles. A more elongated bead *can* offer the same amount of surface area to a drum, but you have to be pretty sure of the angle of the stroke. Al Duffy of Pearl International offers the following in regard to an oval bead. "A 10-degree angle will be okay but a 30- or 40-degree angle lessens the amount of contact considerably. The same applies to the acorn shape. In some musical situations, of course, all this angle talk is not critical. That would be your louder musics. This is so personal and stylistic an issue. Maybe a round bead won't get the cymbal sound you want, so you go to an elongated bead that puts less wood on the cymbal but more on the drum. So much depends on touch. Now, there are a lot of players out there who can use any stick and sound pretty good. So choice involves not only bead

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size, shape, weight and diameter preference, but individual technique as well." LP's Ray Enhoffer says in this regard, that unequivocally, "A drummer's instrument is his hands."

STICK LENGTH

Choice in stick length is directly related to weight, speed and power. Some drummers feel that the shorter the stick, the greater the ease in playing. You're pushing less stick through the air. Drawbacks to a short shaft are that in order to get much volume with them, you have to grab the stick towards the butt end, losing the advantage of a balanced fulcrum. Longer sticks overcome more inertia so when the mass of the stick whips down on a head, you'll get more sound. A longer, heavier stick will tend to throw back more, working for you. They also allow you to keep your fulcrum in a position for maximum leverage. The important consideration in all of this is to find a stick that feels good in your hand and that will do most of the work for you.

NYLON TIPS

"Wood tips sound better than nylon." "Nylon lasts longer than wood." "Nylon sounds unnatural on a cymbal." "Wood gets dead spots and the cymbal sound becomes indistinct." "Wood feels better." "Nylon is economical." These old, familiar and irrelevant arguments will never change the fact that nylon is here to stay, wood was here first and there is something unique that each has to offer in terms of sound and feel.

Calato *Regal Tips* were developed by Joe Calato in the 1950s. Joe was a cabinet maker, in addition to being a drummer who wanted to find a way to make his wood-tip sticks last, as he couldn't afford new ones. He had tried the time-honored method of dipping the stick tips in clear nail polish, but the results were disappointing. Taking the idea of tip protection a step further, he fashioned plastic beads from the handle of a screwdriver and found that not only did they last longer, but the cymbal sound was bright, pingy, and cut through the band. Apparently, enough drummers agreed with this assessment of the nylon tip because the idea took off and never came down. Every stick manufacturer I spoke to makes nylon tips for their sticks, as well as wooden ones. Joe Calato says that they "couldn't afford not to follow our lead." With the explosion of rock 'n' roll and musical forms that required more sound out of drums and cymbals, the nylon tip was an idea whose time had come. The sound controversy of wood versus plastic has subsided into simply being a matter of taste, and for the manufacturer, a matter of serving the market. Calato, for example, makes wood-tip sticks as well. "Drummers," said Joe, "tell us what they want and we attempt to provide it. Many

drummers who are into wood tips are willing to trade durability for that particular sound and are happy with the bargain. I think, if you like the nylon sound, there's no trade-off. It has all the plusses."

The manufacturers found that the transition from all wood to nylon-tipped sticks was not a rose-strewn path from the drawing board to the bank. Most manufacturers experienced the same difficulty early on. How do you get a two-part stick, under a lot of stress, to stay in one piece? Pro-Mark had difficulty in their first year which they solved with a process they were eventually granted a patent for. The process involves a force fit of the nylon tip over the end of the stick, and a special glue formula developed in Japan. This process replaced the method of drilling a hole in the end of the stick and fitting a nylon tip with a pin inside into the hole. Some sticks have their ends threaded and the tips have a counter thread, referred to as "screwed and glued" in the manufacturers' lexicon. Dean Markley experienced problems with this method, finding that, from their point of view, this stressed the wood in weird ways, and the tips would still fly off. Now they have their tips molded to their specifications and use a method that just came about, developed in "what if" sessions. They heat the nylon tips until they are pliable, stretching the nylon over the wooden bead. It shrinks as it cools and it won't come off.

Vic Firth echoes my own opinion about

the relative value of nylon- or wood-tip sticks: "If I was playing a drumset every-night, I'd use both. Don't limit yourself to one pair of sticks with one type of bead or another, or one size or weight for that matter. You're just not going to get the same results in all places and at all times. I can't just use one pair of timpani sticks during the course of playing a Beethoven or Brahms symphony. It's not possible. At different times, I may need a darker sound, or more weight for more volume, or a bright airy sound."

SYNTHETIC STICKS

Just when you thought it was safe to play a plastic-tip stick without raising any eyebrows, here come synthetic sticks. Synthetics can't be lumped together, as their methods of manufacture, as well as materials, are all different. Some make the claim that they feel as close to wood as possible, while others proudly proclaim that they feel nothing like wood, nor wish to. Other manufacturers say both things at once.

Mark Fiedler of Riff Rite felt that he could make a better stick using graphite. Graphite began to come into its own in the aerospace industry. Fiedler felt that the properties that made it good for sticks were its durability, sound and flex characteristics. By the mid '70s he noticed that many recreational products (golf clubs, tennis rackets, archery bows) formerly

continued on next page

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made of wood could be completely redesigned using graphite fibers. This meant that the material was becoming (relatively) cheap enough to use commercially. So Fiedler, a self-taught drummer, began to experiment and research a graphite stick in 1976.

Graphite is a crystalline, synthetic fiber, akin to rayon, which is burned in an inert atmosphere to achieve the crystalline state. Graphite sticks, like wood, are subject to intense bending stress, but, Fiedler claims that the flex characteristics of graphite can be reproduced and controlled better than wood, and offer ten times the durability.

MANUFACTURING PROCESS

The exact mechanics of production remain proprietary, but in some form and fashion, the fibers are aligned longitudinally, along the length of the stick to give the stick a "grain" (fiber orientation in graphite parlance). Solid and hollow portions are built into the shaft for balance, weight and to insure the proper rigidity/flex factor. Most of the strength of the graphite fiber composites lies in the outer fibers which deal with most of the stress transference from strokes and rimshots. In graphite, a completely solid stick would be too costly and heavy. Also as per one or another of the laws of physics, a tube can often be more solid, stiffer and more stable than a solid rod.

Yeah, but how does it feel? Mark Fiedler likes it pretty well, commenting, "We

don't try to approximate the wood feel. We're marketing it as a totally different kind of striking tool with its own characteristics and properties. We're the lightest synthetic stick available and the design makes for a fast rebound response. I disagree 100% with synthetic stick makers whose point of balance is weighted to the front of the shaft for more 'power.' Graphite takes a bending load and responds to a downstroke motion with a super-quick recovery against the backward drag created by this motion, and flexes forward. It recovers similarly after the stick hits the drum, so we don't need to weight it forward. To help dissipate some of the stick shock, our sticks come with cork grips as well as a plain shaft."

DESIGN

The bead is a ball type on all models. The idea was to put more mass onto the head. All the sticks are one-piece construction and come in 5A, 5B, *Rock* and 6A. The average length is 15 3/4". The taper and shoulder have been designed to be slightly husky for heavy play, and Fiedler told me that a *Rock Knocker* is on the drawing board.

The sticks are selling most strongly on a regional circuit, which I understand to be the Midwest. They are being purchased, at present, by what Mark referred to as the "semi-professional on the club/touring band network." He stressed that all of their professional endorsers have never

been sought after by Riff Rite, nor were they paid. "They play them because they like them."

All synthetic sticks cost an appreciable amount more than a pair of wooden sticks. Cost of materials divided by their own durability quotient are the reason. Riff Rite's suggested retail price of \$36.50 per pair is the highest of the lot. "We don't want to be, but we are. At \$38.00 per pound for graphite, it's hard to do much about the price. It's cheaper now than it was in the '60s, when it was \$1000.00 a pound. Given enough volume-buying in all commercial application areas, the price will come down. We predict that in two to five years, 25% of all drummers will be using a synthetic stick in conjunction with wood."

Perhaps. As of now, synthetic sticks account for far less than 10% of the market.

DURALINE

With forests depleting and the price of wood approaching lunar orbit, traditional wood stick manufacture was problematic for someone like Duraline who wanted to get into the stick market. As wood manufacturers will attest, it's hard to get good wood; a lot has to be rejected and this is expensive. Add to this a desire to eliminate totally the age-old problem of warpage, mix this with a designer named Sam Muchnik, and you have the impetus behind the Duraline synthetic stick.

Unlike the graphite stick, Duralines have a solid core of *Kevlar*, the same material used in bullet-proof vests. Like wool, it comes in bolts and strands, separated to 7,200 microscopic fibers in the core and is designed to absorb shock. The strands are put through a solution that coats the fibers, making a rigid dowel over which a white outer shell is injection molded.

Injection molding guarantees non-warpage, as the molds are tooled to very severe tolerances and the compound of the molded outer coat prevents moisture absorption and won't warp from humidity or atmospheric pressure. The outer coat is a mixture of nylon plasticisers and wool, which is meant to keep the stick porous. So, when hands sweat, the stick stays put.

Duraline's Steve O'Brien explained a little about design consideration of this stick: "We didn't even *try* to make a stick that feels and sounds like wood," he emphasized, mirroring Mark Fiedler's conception. "We make a stick that people know isn't wood. Because of our association with *Syndrum* and the number of people playing them, we had access to lots of pros who tried our prototypes and gave us feedback that helped us design our later models." After two to three years of experimentation with taper, length and outside materials construction, they felt they were ready to try the market. One problem to be overcome was *too much* durability. Their early stuff was so strong it broke whatever it played on. This is a common synthetic

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problem. Every manufacturer has a story about how they really did invent an unbreakable stick. Due to an (as yet) unalterable physical principle—for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction—one thing or another must offer some "give"—either the stick or the drum. The surface of the stick is designed to chip, score and give against a rim or a cymbal, in a like manner to a wooden stick. "Wood is still the standard of excellence," admits Steve, ruefully. "Let's face it: it's highly fibrous and the shock is dissipated throughout the molecular structure of the fibers. I want to stress that there's no 'good' and 'bad' in regard to ourselves and wood sticks, or our competitors' synthetic sticks. They're all unique and different in their fashions."

Bead Size and Shape

The bead, a separate unit from the shaft, comes in three different sizes. The *Magnum* series (weight and size equivalents to a 5A, 5B and 26) have a ball shape designed for rock, presenting a maximum of striking surface. The other bead sizes in other models run the gamut from a relatively small bead, through medium, to the marching type. Rather than nylon, a polycarbonate is used in manufacture of the tip. Not only is it more dense and harder than nylon, claims Steve, but it tends to get a brighter cymbal sound. My experience has been that this tip tends to build partials and overtones on a ride cymbal. If this is something you're looking for, you should investigate this stick for your own needs and applications. As in the manufacture of any two-part stick, Duraline has had to contend with the difficulty of getting the tips to stay on. "It's a universal problem," said Steve. "We think we have it solved, but on occasion a tip will come off."

Sizes and Weight

Duraline sells their sticks by the gram: 55, 60, 65, 75 and 100 gram sticks are roughly equivalent to a 7A, 5A, 5B, 2B and 3S. As you would expect, the biggest sellers are the 5A and 56 equivalents. Feelwise, these sticks may seem heavier to most because it may be the first time a person has held two sticks of equal weight. Duralines are deliberately weighted towards the front for a solid blow, and because the designers feel that this balance affords a quicker stick response back off the head. Steve O'Brien: "It's one reason

we went to polycarbonates. Our rebound has been characterised as 'excessive' by some product reviewers. Great! This means that, while the stick may require a bit more finger control, it also works harder for you."

Synthetic and Wood

Asked, "Why a synthetic stick?" Steve echoes feelings similar to all synthetic manufacturers: "This is a feel and sound thing. How does the stick feel to you? Does it produce the sound that you want? A key thing that we offer over wood is consistency. Wood can never approach this. It's a natural product; every tree is different so all sticks will be of different weights, densities and of varying grain and strength patterns. We try to tell dealers and drummers about the *true* cost of woodsticks. What is the net cost? Is it what the freight costs are, or the number of warpage rejects, or should you also take into account the time wasted by sales staff watching a customer roll out a gross of sticks to get 12 good pairs? Out of the gross, how many end up in the bargain bin because of warp, or the grain structure's not strong, or there's a rough spot down by the taper where the lathing was done improperly? We eliminate all that. All a dealer pays us is the net price. This is passed along to the player. There's no warpage loss, rolling out time, etc. They're all the same feel and balance. I think the biggest difference you'll notice is what you hear on the cymbals."

Cost

Because injection molding is extremely expensive, it is difficult for Duraline to respond quickly to requests from the market for minor (or major) modifications in design in the same way that the wood guys can. The costs of retooling and set-up are as yet, prohibitive. For example, all Duralines are 16 1/8" long, which some players find too long or short. The current list price for the sticks is \$25.00, the major portion of which goes into the *Kevlar*.

AQUARIAN

Roy Burns was mad. Roy Burns was frustrated. Roy Burns wanted a straight, evenly weighted, good sounding, good playing drumstick. He wanted one every time he played. He couldn't find one so he had to develop one. Roy hasn't bought a stick since 1957. Doing clinics for Rogers, he could take boxes of sticks home. He could have *built* a home with the number of rejects he rolled out. It was the basic warpage problem inherent in all wood, the basic density problems and the basic difficulty in matching sounds for two sticks. Roy and Dave Donohoe held a council of war. "It wasn't just the money wasted on bad sticks. It wasn't just the money we hoped we'd make. It was the frustration of having to go through a hundred sticks to find one good pair." Enter Aquarian synthetic sticks.

continued on next page

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Design Considerations

Given the above criteria for a stick they wanted to make, they also wanted to address themselves to the modern uses of a drumstick. Today's players have more technique than players of an earlier era, and that technique was developed in playing with electronic instruments. It requires harder playing. So the question is how to make a durable stick that can play this music.

Core

Aquarian started with the core as their first consideration. The version that stuck was a fiberglass core running the length of the one-piece, injection-molded stick, covered by a nylon-based synthetic. "In order to get durability, we realized that all models of our sticks had to be heavier than existing designs," said Roy. Enter and exit the usual unbreakable-stick prototype for the usual reason—destruction of everything it played on. Right track, wrong solution. They knew that the more rigid a stick is, the more sound it will produce from a drum or cymbal. The fiberglass serves as the rigid core and the nylon aggregate "acts like wood," in that it gives and chips to save the cymbal or drum from destruction. Because the synthetic fibers go in all directions (as opposed to a wood grain going longitudinally), the edge of the stick may chip but this won't weaken it as a whole. Wood weakens every time a rim-

shot cuts a fiber in half and a stick will tend to lose its life after a week of hard playing. Roy concedes that Aquarians will wear out or break eventually, but they remain rigid and functional up until they do.

Trade-offs Between Wood and Synthetics

Aquarian claims a five- to ten-time stick life over wood, depending on the player's style and technique. There are some players who can break them easily, of course. With sticks that are straight and exactly the same weight, you have the advantage of an extra stick. It's rare that two sticks wear out at once, and a new pair will be a perfect match in all aspects to the leftover stick. There is a long-run economic advantage here. Roy on economics: "Wood prices went up so much that sticks were listing for over \$7.00. There was no guarantee with that. Now we can't guarantee our sticks won't break but we do guarantee they'll outlast wood if a drummer's using the right stick for the right job."

In terms of economics, Aquarian is shooting for the student market with their *ValueLine* stick. At \$14.95 a pair, they're twice the price of wood, but Roy says they will last five times as long. They feel that a student's parents who just laid out seven bucks for a pair of sticks is unlikely to be thrilled when the stick is cracked on a pad during practice. A long-lasting stick is ideal in this context, offering a stick that

will serve a beginning student's playing needs and the parent's pocketbooks. Roy believes this is a partial answer to those who ask, "Who's going to pay \$25 to \$29 for a pair of sticks?" Roy feels that if this were 1956, "A \$30 stick would be out of the question, because sticks were only \$1.50 a pair. Today we're talking about our sticks costing three times the price of wood. If you get five times the life, *plus* a straight stick, *plus* an 'extra' pair, aren't you way ahead?"

Stick Features

Aquarians in all models have a textured grip built into the mold to make it easier to hold onto the stick if the hands sweat while playing. The *X-10's* are definitely heavier than wood with the same diameter. The *X-10's* with graphite are the lightest in the Aquarian line and are closer in feel to a very solid wooden stick. I held an *X-10 Lite* and then a dense rosewood stick, and they were similar in heft. For heavy rock, Roy recommends the *X-10's* because of their reinforced interior. The Aquarians mirror the most popular *5A* and *5B* sizes using their own bead, taper and balance designs, developed in the usual trial-and-error method. These features are the same on all models, as is the length which is about 15 ³/₄". The sticks are weighted towards the front, as the designers feel this offers more rebound and power.

The Synthetic Stick As Calf Head

Roy feels that synthetics are where plastic heads were to calf 25 years ago. "At a certain point, calf was hard to get, expensive, and increasingly less durable. Remo Belli told me that if it hadn't been for the advent of the plastic head, we may not have had enough calf to go around, and you'd be paying as much for a head as a drum. Well, today, wood's scarce, there are more drummers, and prices are going up. It's difficult to maintain quality if you can't get good wood or if you can't get wood at all. It's an exhaustible resource." Whether or not this is actually the case, the years will show. What is clear is that synthetics are here to stay.

WOOD MEN SPEAK OF PLASTIC

Wooden stick manufacturers' feelings about synthetics range from the expected "So what?" to a shrewd look at the possibilities and challenges of the future. Some of the more considered opinions follow.

Joe Calato: "Right now I feel the issue is one of sound quality and feel. Different drummers want different things. Wood sounds different than plastic and always will. I prefer it. I don't know if it's psychological or not, but wood feels different than plastic. It's like the feel of leather and leatherette. The way they transmit vibration is different too. Synthetics tend to transmit more shock than wood because it's a little too rigid. I prefer the art and

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craft of wood work."

Chris Campbell: "The only synthetic worth talking about, in my opinion, is the graphite. And then, only when it's covered with cork handles. It responds well and is flexible, but the shock transmitted is still too severe, even with its wood-like grain structure. Because the other synthetics are made of amorphous material [having no cellular structure], they need an inner support for rigidity, and they don't dissipate vibration very well yet. I feel these are drawbacks. I do look for some interesting things from graphite in the future."

Herb Brochstein: "Most players still prefer the feel of wood, and the market reflects this. I don't think people are for or against synthetics, but they are simply going for what feels good in their hands. If wood feels and sounds better, they'll take the trade-off of a relatively shorter playing life. We've been working on synthetic sticks for years. We haven't found anything we want to put our name on out of all the processes and materials available. Few people want to pay \$40 for a pair of sticks. We'd have to have a way to avoid the stick shock that seems to be generated in today's models. If we found something that worked as well as wood, we'd get into it. We have one type of synthetic stick now that uses some wood and other materials and it works well. The lasting qualities aren't as long as I think they should be if we're going to call it a long-life stick."

It looks to be a sure thing that, if the designs are perfected and the market is there, wood manufacturers are going to respond to the opening.

ALUMINUM STICKS

There are a few manufacturers working with aluminum. One is Verisonic and the other is the Hinger Touch-Tone Corporation. Fred and Bill Hinger both offered interesting and provocative ideas about the nature of stick sound as related to design.

Design

The genesis of the all-aluminum stick was the bamboo orchestral model—light but extremely fragile. After a try at fiberglass, which was vibration and shock prone, Fred Hinger hit on an aluminum tube as the answer. He was also looking for weight and consistency, stick to stick, that wood couldn't provide, with the focus always fixed on what configuration would extract the most sound out of a drum. The stick is hollow with a .031 mm wall that has been compressed out of soft aluminum, to form the shaft, which has no bead. It has a sliding weight that moves up and down the shaft to change the amount of power and mass behind a stroke, depending on the desired sound. The thin-walled shaft is easily dented and is intended for orchestral playing only—no rimshots please. The diameter of the stick is 5/8", and 3/4" in the concert snare sticks. The unique, non-bead aspect of this stick has been previously discussed. For orchestra, these sticks are quite something, producing a sound from a drum unlike any other stick I've ever used. The material does limit its use, but if snare work only is a part of your playing situation, these may be for you. I find the design remarkably well-suited for what it is intended to do.

STICK SELECTION

Taking into consideration whether or not you need wood, a synthetic, or both,

and assuming you have made your choice of model or brand, how do you choose a stick? In wood, remember the warp factor. Roll the stick to see if it's true on a flat counter top. Then match for weight and tone. Go for the more dense-feeling sticks, rejecting the lighter. Look for knots, funny grain and obvious defects in the shaft and bead. Check the neck under the bead for flaws that might lead to quick breakage. This is generally the area of greatest stress. Strike the stick on a wood counter, door or floor, and pitch-pair them. You'll notice the difference in tone easily. If you feel too much vibration in your hand and arm from a particular stick, take another one. Depending on your own experience or who you believe, buy a whole bunch of your favorite sticks at once from the economic and convenience advantage, or buy only a few at a time to protect from the warpage factor. You have the option of sanding the finish for a non-slip surface on the wood sticks.

As far as synthetic choice goes, given that all the sticks are supposed to be exactly the same, you may just want to try different brands for their feel and make your decision based on that. After all the discussion, all of the theories, and all of the opinions, your final choice still boils down to what it's always been: Use the stick that feels best and sounds best to you.



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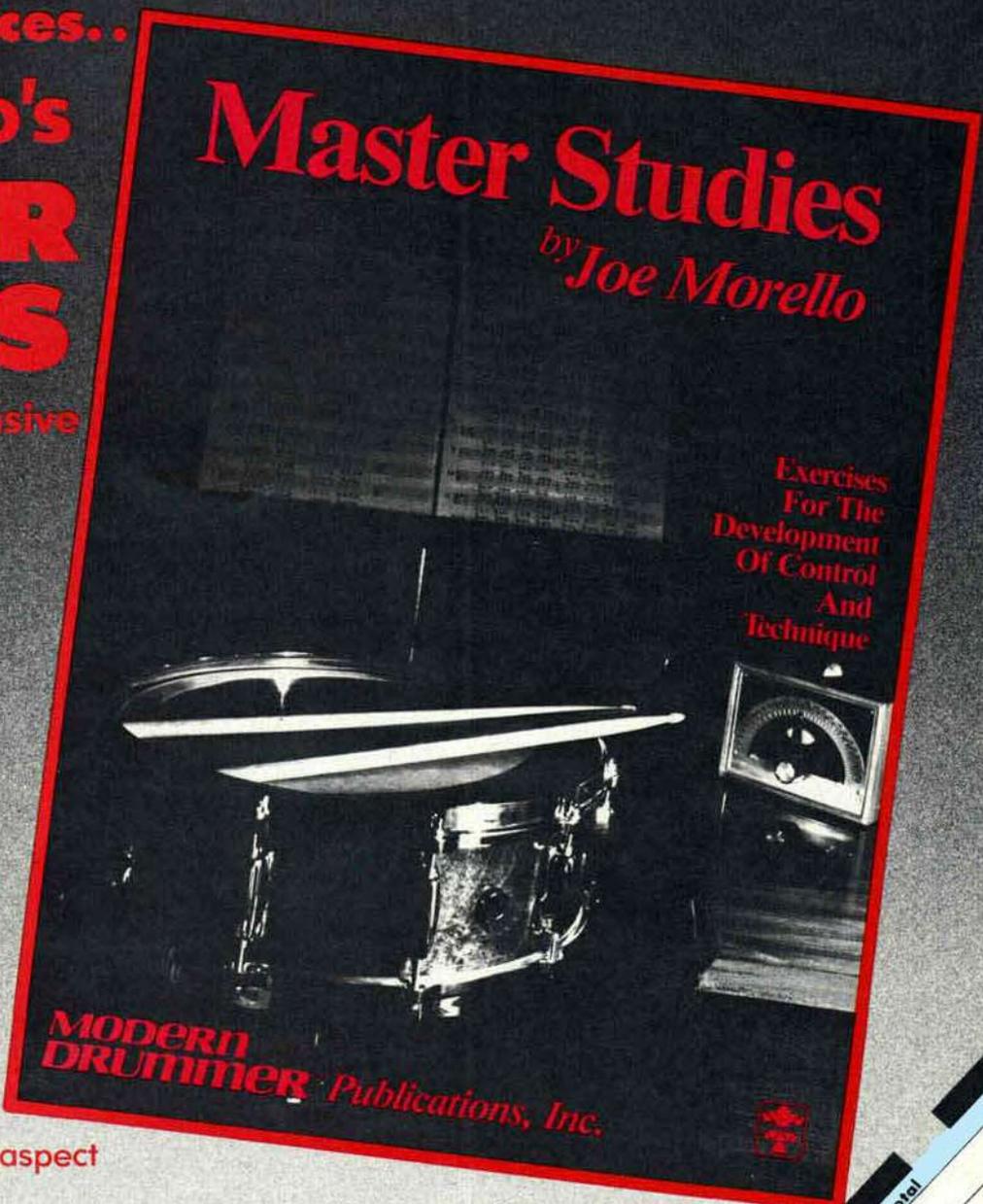
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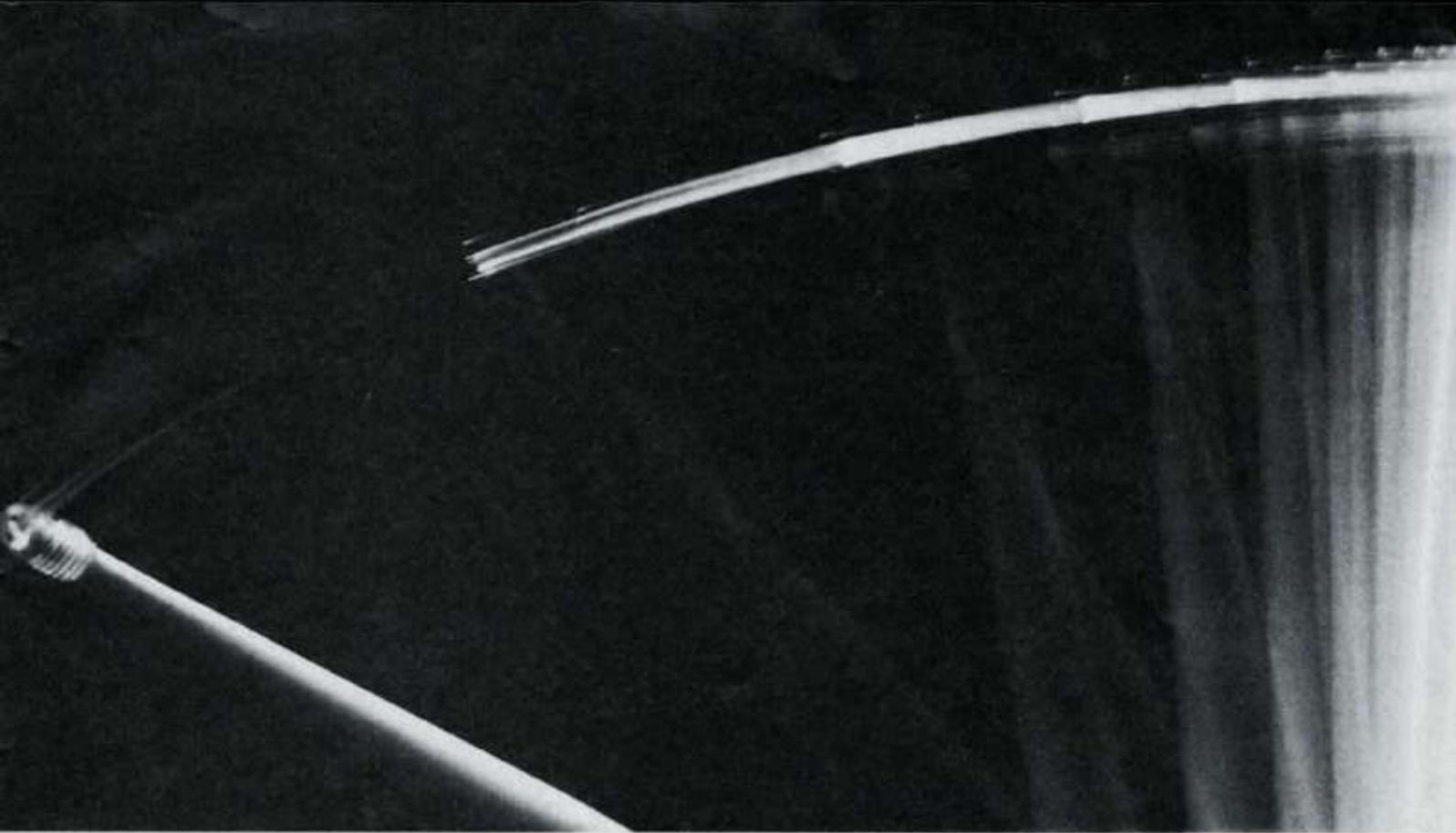
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continued on page 112



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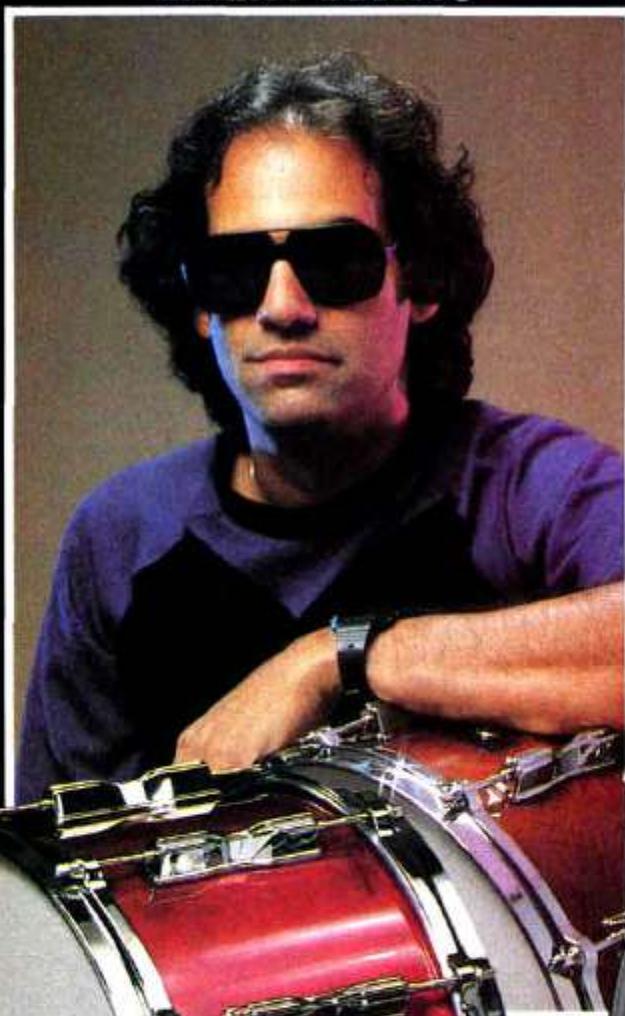
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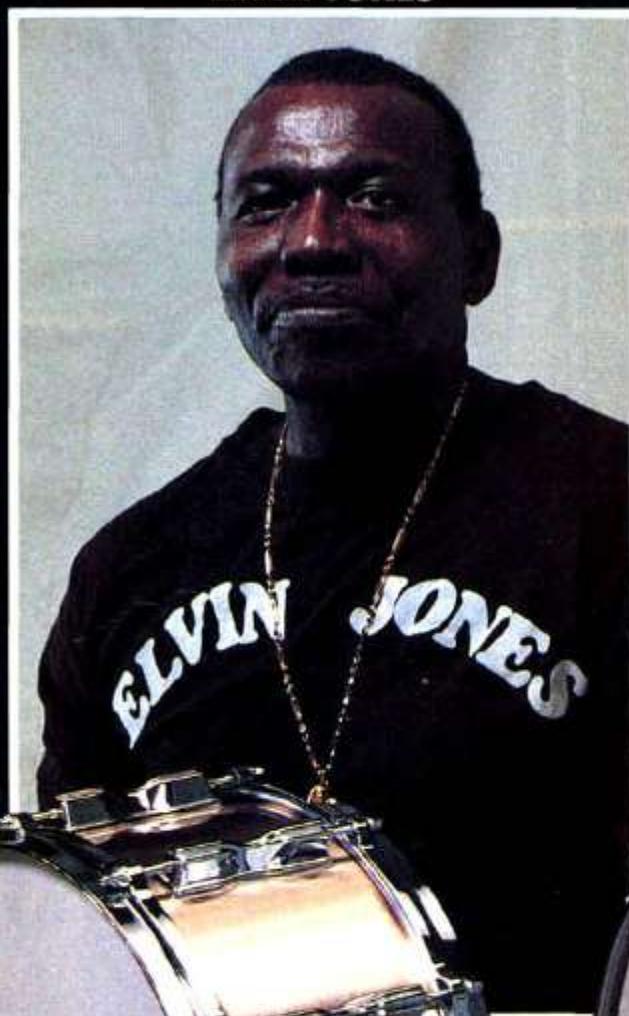
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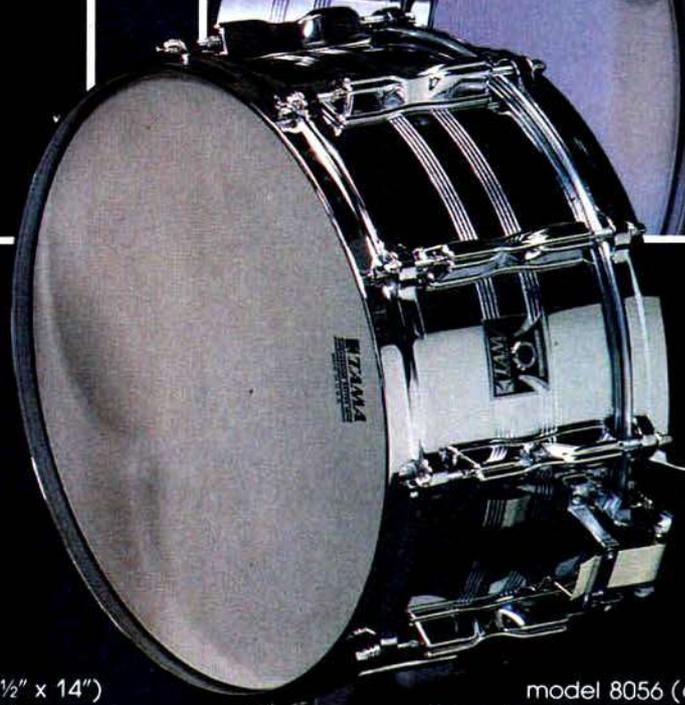
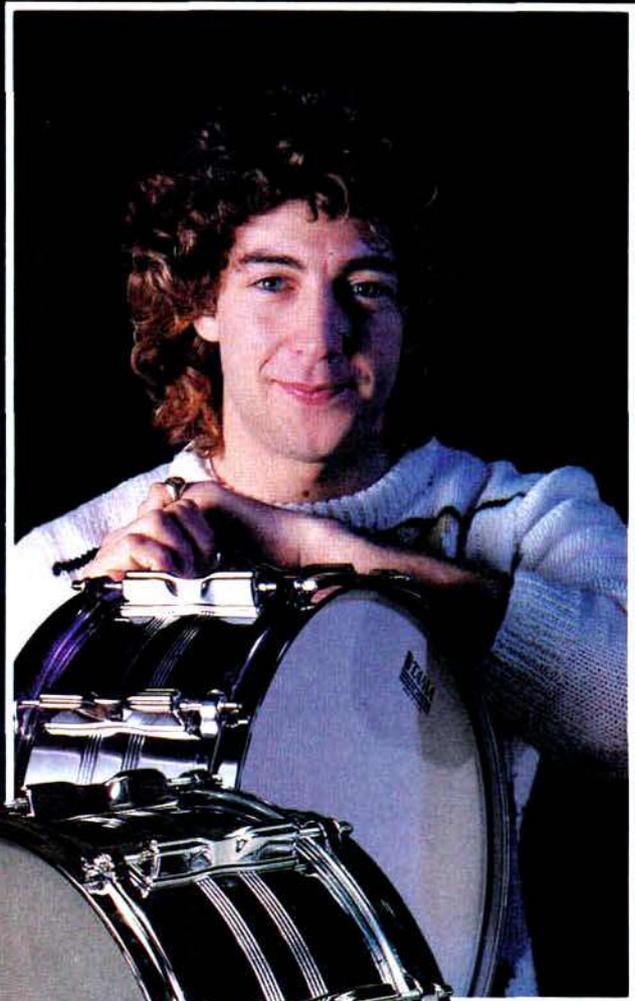
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IT'S QUESTIONABLE

by Michael Epstein

Q. In the Pearl ad with Jim Keltner, I noticed that both toms and the snare drum have a batter head a size larger than the drum. Could you tell me how and why this differs from the conventional way?

M.T.

Los Angeles, CA

A. *The Extender heads are made by Pearl from a design which Al Duffy modestly claims he 'stole' from the Dresden timpani of 150 years ago. These drums had oversized heads and, around 1965, Al noticed that, "When you put an oversized head on a drum, you increase the resonance and decay rate to the point where, in some sizes, you get up to six-and-a-half or seven seconds of decay. Also, with an extended collar, you've got a great clarity of pitch, a lot of resonance and much more volume." Conventional drums generally use a short collar and a tight head. Al extended the batter head one inch in diameter, reasoning that a head is like a stringed instrument "in a little different shape. It has a bridge, an area you're actually playing on and another area, the collar, where you don't play unless you want a special sound. It's similar to the area on a cello beyond the bridge between the bridge and tailpiece. The cello makers don't draw the string up to the bridge and then bend it down in a sharp right angle and bolt it firmly to the cello, do they? Imagine what that would sound like! So, why should we do that to drums?"*

Q. I have single-headed power toms with Remo Pinstripe heads. I can't seem to get that rock 'n' roll "thud" sound from them. How can I tune my drums to get that sound?

B.B.

New Britain, CT

A. *Our first suggestion would be to find out what equipment your favorite drummer(s) is using. If you're trying to duplicate the sound of a double-headed drum with a different drumhead setup than yours, it's going to be next to impossible. The next consideration is that the sound you hear on studio recordings is often times not a natural sound. In MD interviews, drummers have said time and time again that the sound of their drums on records—after the engineer has mixed the sound and EQed it—often sounds nothing like the drum sounded in the studio. You might try using a "deader" head like an Evans on your power toms. The trick with a single-head tom is to not muffle it too much, because it will tend to sound like cardboard. Having a bottom head on a tom gives you greater leeway in tuning because you can muffle the top head more and adjust the bottom head for tone.*

Q. Our band is just starting to get jobs. Is it more important to be firm with the price we charge, so we don't get known as a "low budget" band, or is it better to take lower-paying jobs to get exposure?

B.K.

Morton Grove, IL

A. *Your questions answer themselves. Any new band needs the experience of playing for a live audience, but you also don't want to cut your throats financially. When a job opportunity presents itself, find out how much money you'd make, and also what the job's worth in terms of exposure. Then decide whether or not to do it. Some clubs love to tell new bands that they'll let them "audition" one night and hire them if they go over well. Usually at the end of the night the club owner will say, "You guys are good but . . ." and you never get hired. On the other hand, if there's a function where you have the opportunity to play for many people, or people with influence for no pay, it might pay in other ways to do it. Between sets mingle with the crowd, make contacts, and keep your eyes and ears open for new and better opportunities.*

Q. Every drummer has to pay dues in basement bands, with poor agents, bad clubs and being a roadie. But, how do you get involved? I'd love to work with a national act as a roadie. Is this job handled by agents, a road manager or the band itself?

T.G.

Eugene, OR

A. *A good roadie is worth his weight in gold. How to get a job as a roadie varies. Many of the better roadies are people who started helping popular bands set up before they were popular bands. Paul T. Riddle had a roadie nicknamed "Puff" who used to loan Paul money for drumsticks before the Marshall Tucker Band was making any money. A first-class roadie not only sets up equipment, it's also his responsibility to keep the instruments in repair and in tune. And if something goes wrong onstage he has to fix it in an instant. No excuses. The next time a band comes to your area, try getting to the hall early when the roadies are setting up, and talk to a few of them about getting started in that field.*

Q. In the May '82 MD there was an article in *Show And Studio* by Fred Miller called "How To Get 'That' Drum Sound." Where can I get Mr. Miller's book? Can you recommend any other books on live or studio recording and tuning?

R.T.

Sylmar, CA

A. *Fred Miller's Studio Recording for Musicians can be ordered from Consolidated Music Publishers, 33 W. 60th St., New York, NY, 10023. The price is \$11.95. There's also a book on tuning called Analytic Drum Tuning by Steven Walker. The price is \$7.95 and can be ordered by writing to Steven at Box 26051, Indianapolis, IN 46226.*

Q. Can Evans drum heads be used on 14" and 15" timbales? I'm trying to simulate the sound of rawhide heads with a slight overring.

E.M.

Philadelphia, PA

A. *Sue Vogel at Evans tells us that Evans heads will work on some timbales but not on others. If a timbale is designed to be used with a calfskin (rawhide) head, you might have a challenge adapting a plastic head to it, and vice versa. As for the sound, the Evans heads were designed to have a "dead" studio sound without a lot of overring. Perhaps the best solution is to experiment with the heads. Who knows? You might come up with a fantastic new sound.*

Q. I am currently playing Turkish-made K. Zildjian cymbals. All of them, with one exception, are stamped "Istanbul." The exception of which I speak bears the stamp, "Constantinople." What could have been the latest date that this cymbal was manufactured and what does the initial K. stand for?

J.R.

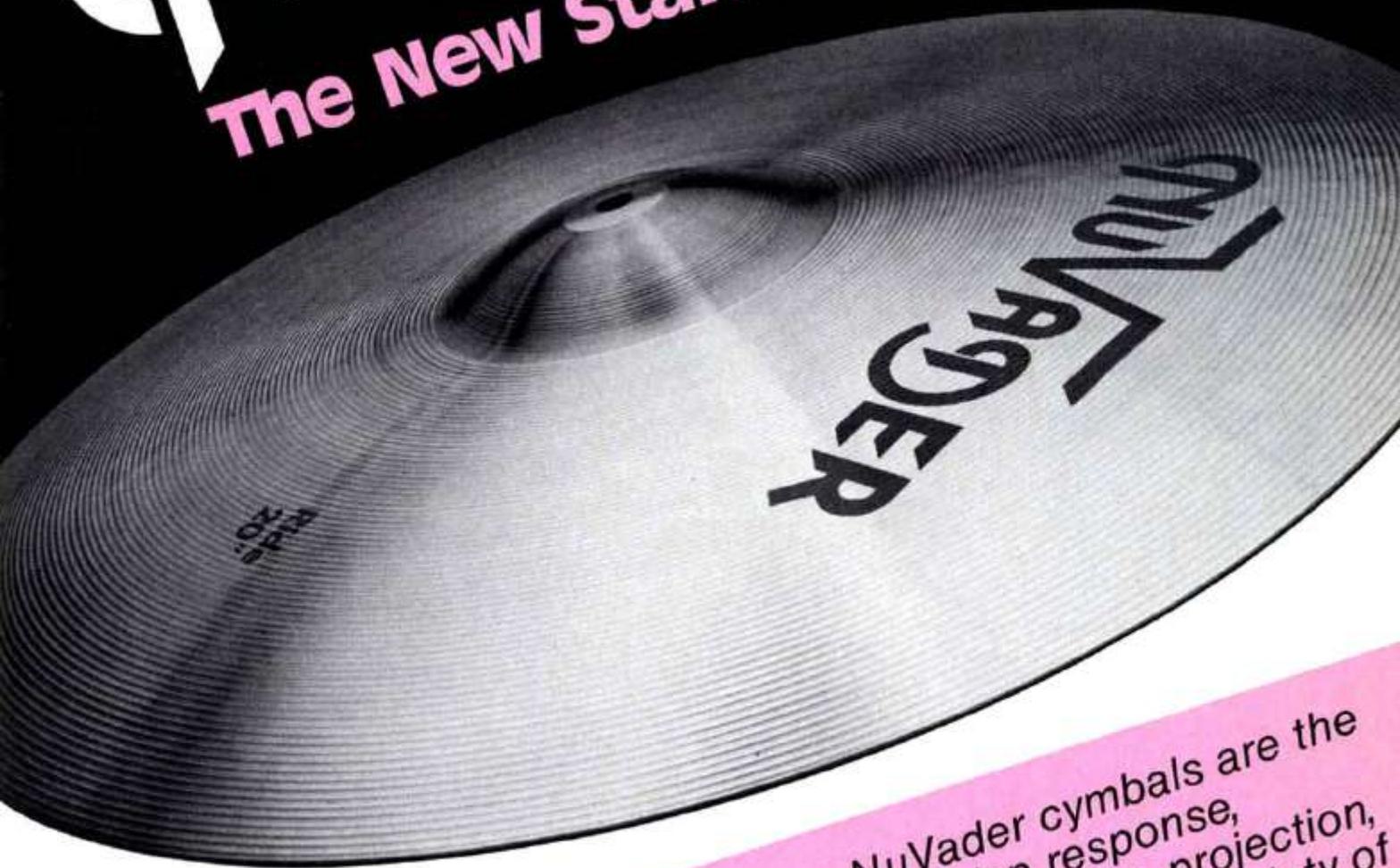
Thunder Bay, Canada

A. *Lenny DiMuzio, of the Zildjian Company, told us that exact dating is not possible. The Turkish Republic changed the name of Constantinople to Istanbul in 1930 and, based on this fact, it's probable the Constantinople K. is over 50 years old. The Istanbul K. might be ten years younger. The initial K is that of Keropi Zildjian who was the only Zildjian manufacturing cymbals at this time. There was not yet an A. line. Lenny said that if he could see the cymbals, their ages could be accurately determined through comparison of cup size and trademark. The modern K. trademark is smaller than earlier versions, which had a crest above the logo reading "K. Zildjian, Istanbul." These were last made 40 years ago. If you've got one marked Constantinople with a crest, you're a lucky man!*



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UPDATE

This year started out with a bang for **Larrie Londin** when he awed the huge turn-out for Zildjian Day in Los Angeles. Then February brought two noteworthy projects (among many), one with Joe Cocker and the other with Adrian Belew in Champagne, Illinois.

"It was a new step for me musically. Actually, Adrian is a very fine drummer in his own right. He's used to doing all the guitars and drum work by himself and then have bass, sax and piano players. Adrian felt with my r&b background, which is my roots and where my heart lies, that he needed some kind of commercial playing within the album and thought by making the bass and drums a little more commercial, music-wise, he could do all the far-out guitar parts on top of it. Even though he told me all that, I knew what kind of music he was going to do and I thought, 'Possibly you just have the wrong guy. I'll give you an out. If it doesn't work within a few days, I'll go home.'" He's a tremendous musician and a great person and we got along beautifully. The music was extremely hard and challenging, basically because I had never done that kind of music. I've always appreciated odd time signatures, but I was never used to playing in 7, 15, and 10. Basically, Adrian told me to play whatever I felt and I was in my glory. I couldn't ask for any better people to play with, or music that was more exciting."

In March, Larry, Shane Keister (keyboards) and David Hungate (ex-Toto bassist) put together a band and hopefully will have a record deal by now. Although they don't want to be out of town too often, most likely they will tour a little.

"We just thought for our mind's sake, we would put together a group to play the music we would like to play. We play what everybody else wants us to play all the time, but this is something for *us*. I think most studio players who don't play live, eventually burn out. Either they start drinking or going for the drugs, or they just start getting stale because they're just playing what everybody else wants them to play. That's speaking for myself. Playing live is refreshing from the standpoint that you don't ever play the same song the same way. Every night it's going to be different, but in the studio, you may play the same song 20 times exactly the same way. When I've come into a studio situation and I'm being confined with a chart of someone else's idea, all the pressures and tension that come on during a three-hour session don't bother me as much after I've gotten out and played live. Don't get me wrong—I chose this career, but I do like to get out and let it all out as much as I can, and then I come back ready to do that again."

With the recharged success of Chicago, **Danny Seraphine** feels his playing has also been revitalized.

"We hadn't toured in a couple of years. Doing it for 15 years straight without a break, you get burned out. I always love playing, but it was good to get away for a while. I got married and had a son, and 13 months later, we had a baby girl, so I had a chance to get my personal life together. It was kind of a slow process getting back into shape and getting my chops back. For about the first month, I held back, but after the first couple of weeks, my chops actually got stronger than ever. The best thing to do, to not have to go through that though, is to stay in the best shape you can and play as much as you can. But practicing alone doesn't get it. As far as stage chops, you really have to play live because there's a certain way you play on stage. It's the same with the studio. Those chops are totally different from stage chops, so if you haven't been in the studio for a couple of years, that's just as scary. You have to get past that feeling of second guessing everything you're playing before you play it, and get yourself into a space where you can enjoy it."

Look for new Missing Persons album out late this summer with **Terry Bozzio**. **Sandy Nelson** has complete demos for which there has been much label interest. His *Collectors Jams Volume 2* was released on Liberty Records in March, and is a new album of old material. **Steve Smith** has been on U.S. tour with Journey since the end of March, through next month. **Ed Mann** is doing a series of clinics for Dick Grove Music School, the first of which was last April. In recent release is **Mick Fleetwood's** second solo album on RCA Records. **John Panozzo** on tour with Styx. **Hal Blaine** on upcoming Johnny Cash album. This summer **Eli Konikoff** is on a major jazz festival tour with Spyro Gyra. This month, the group is playing a festival in Switzerland. **Chet McCracken** has been doing a series of clinics, the first of which he did in the spring with **Jack White** (of Rick Springfield's band). Chet worked on the TV series, *America Works*, and has also been working with Jimmie Haskell, sometimes playing congas, drums, Simmons Electronics and vibes. He also played the latter three instruments on Amy Holland's recent album, released on Capitol last month. Also listen for Chet on a couple of tracks of Stevie Nicks' recently

by Robyn Flans

If you've caught Danny on tour during the past year, you've noticed he's been using double bass drums on stage, something he had contemplated for some time.

"One night I went out to a club with a friend of mine and we decided to jam and they had double bass drums. I started playing them and liked it, so I decided I'd give it a shot live. I had always been against them because I just felt they were clumsy. If you use them for what they're good for, though, it can be great. I really enjoy using them live because of the double-time, really strong rock 'n' roll things. They're really good for those kinds of things and they're good for solos."

Aside from a release from Chicago, you can catch Danny on the upcoming Dakota release, a group he has produced in the past. This is the first time he produced and played simultaneously.

"If you try to wear both hats at the same time, it's rough. When I get in there running a track down with the guys, I'm a player. When we listen back to it, I have to think of it as a producer. I figure that I probably can add more to the project by really getting inside the music, which is one of the reasons I wanted to play."

released album, as well as double drums with **Keith Knudsen** on Ralph May's recent project. Currently he is producing four sides for Deran Craig on CBS Records as well as co-producing Kathy Walker with Michael McDonald. **Bobby Elliot** has reformed the Hollies and they are presently touring behind their album which came out in May. **John Cowsill** has been working with Mike Love. **Tommy Dobeck** on upcoming Michael Stanley Band release. **Bob C. Benberg** on the road with Supertramp. **Prairie Prince** on tour with the Tubes. **Dean Hagen** on drums and **Shiela Escovedo** on percussion on tour with Marvin Gaye. **John Moss** on tour with Culture Club. For those who are always interested in Beatle info, **Andy White**, who drummed on "Love Me Do," has moved to the States with his new bride, Thea Ruth. He had been living in Glasgow, Scotland and working with the BBC. "What I do here depends on how lucky I am," Andy said. "But I don't mind, really, playing, teaching, anything as long as it has to do with drumming." **Billy West** has been touring with Leon Russell. **David Moody** recently with George Hamilton IV. **Victor Lewis** will be with Stan Getz at the Stanford Jazz Workshop from July 31 - August 6.

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INDUSTRY HAPPENINGS

REMO PTS DAY IN NEW YORK



In order that drummers might try out the Remo PTS (Pre-Tuned System) instruments, Remo Inc. has begun a series of PTS Days, with the first being held in New York City last March 27th. Drummers were invited to the Sheraton Centre hotel, where a number of PTS drumsets and percussion instruments were set up so that anyone could play them and try them out. Demonstrations were also given by such notable artists as Louie Bellson, Glen Ve-

lez and Billy Cobham. A number of other prominent artists were there to answer questions, and to check out the PTS instruments for themselves. Shown in the photo, left to right, are Louie Bellson, Sonny Igoe, Remo Belli, Max Roach, Vic Firth, Peter Erskine and Charlie Perry. The event was held from noon until midnight, and there was no admission charge. Remo plans similar events in major cities across the U.S. in the near future.

MD'S RON SPAGNARDI NOMINATED TO *WHO'S WHO*

The staff of *Modern Drummer Magazine* is proud to announce that Editor/Publisher Ron Spagnardi has recently been nominated for listing in the 19th Edition of Marquis *Who's Who In The East*, for achievement in the field of publishing.

Ron founded *Modern Drummer* in 1976 as a small, quarterly magazine, and has been influential in overseeing its growth to an international, monthly publication.

He is also an active member of The American Music Conference, The Percussive Arts Society, The National Association of Jazz Educators, The Society of Professional Journalists, The Presidents Association and The American Society of Magazine Editors.

The Board of Directors of *Modern Drummer Publications* extends its congratulations.

ZILDJIAN/BERKLEE SCHOLARSHIP



Highly talented percussionist and Berklee College of Music sophomore Raymond B. Cox (2nd from right) is awarded the First Annual Avedis Zildjian Memorial Scholarship by Berklee President Lee Eliot Berk (2nd from left) for his outstanding performance ability and academic achievement. Also shown are Armand and Craigie Zildjian, son and

grand-daughter of the late Avedis Zildjian, founder of the Zildjian Cymbal Company of Norwell, MA. Cox, who has also received the Boston Jazz Society's Roy Haynes Scholarship at Berklee, is an active participant in the College's lauded Concert Series with top faculty and student ensembles. He is majoring in Professional Music at Berklee.

GERLACH NAMED LUDWIG MARKETING MANAGER

Dick Gerlach has been named Marketing Manager, Percussion, for the Ludwig and Musser subsidiary of The Selmer Company. The announcement was made by Robert D. Kane, Selmer vice president of sales and marketing.

Prior to his appointment to the Selmer Company's marketing staff, Gerlach was employed for 23 years by Ludwig as a staff clinician and sales executive, serving most recently as sales manager of that organization.

Gerlach, a Milwaukee native, comes from a family with

a strong musical background. His mother, who played piano and drums professionally, taught him percussion and he also studied with Roy Knapp in Chicago. In the mid to late 1950s he served with the U.S. Air Force, and while a member of the armed forces performed as a percussionist with combos throughout the country. For the past 25 years he has also played extensively on the Chicagoland nite-club circuit, and taught at The Tri Arts Music Company in Chicago and at Meadowdale Music in Carpentersville, Illinois.

Drum Market continued from page 104

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Jeff Porcaro

TOTO



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For more information on CB700, write P. O. Box 507, Bloomfield, CT 06002-0507.

Kaman Music Distributors, exclusive agent for CB700 Percussion, introduces the new *GPO-5 Gibraltar* practice pad outfit. Features include high-density

BLASTICKS AND JESTICKS

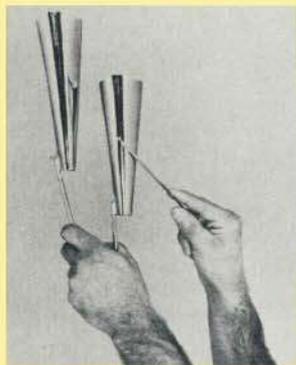


Calato has recently introduced two new products. The *Blastick* is a brush-like stick which fills the gap between drum sticks and drum brushes. It is made of a thermo-plastic material with a solid handle and black plastic wires. Because the plastic wires do not have the spread of a conventional drum brush, the *Blastick* is meant to be played more like a stick than a brush, and can be used for those times

when a stick is too sharp, but a brush sound is too soft.

The *Jestick* is a hand-percussion instrument that combines a clave, guiro and tambourine into one instrument. The *Jestick* can produce the sound of a clave and tambourine combination, a guiro and tambourine combination, or it can be used as tambourine jingle alone. A "*Jestick* Rhythm Course" explaining the use of the *Jestick* is available at no charge. Also, there will soon be a *Jestick* demonstration video at no charge for all retail stores and school music departments. For more information write: Calato Mfg. Co., Inc., 4501 Hyde Park Blvd., Niagara Falls, New York 14305.

WORLD PERCUSSION AGOGO BELLS



Clasping Agogo Bells in double- and triple-bell styles are now available from World Percussion, Inc. Imported from the Gope factory in Sao Paulo, Brazil, these Agogo Bells come in four styles with painted or chrome finish. (Double chrome Agogo Bell shown here.) Metal beater included.

For further information and catalog send \$1.00 to: World Percussion, Inc., PO Box 502, Capitola, CA 95010.

PRE-TUNED CONCEPT/ROCK SNAREDRUM



A new, pre-tuned 14" snare drum with a 6 1/2" deep shell, has been introduced by Remo, Inc. as part of its pre-tuned series (*PTS*).

Designated the *PT-9214-SN* Concert/Rock Royal Snare, the new drum is said to provide the bigger, deeper sound favored by most rock performers and is for concert percussionists as well.

It is equipped with outside snares and chrome-trimmed *PTS Ambassador Bright* batter and snare-side heads. Available in white finish only, the drum has an *Acousticon* shell, formed of high-density laminated tubing. The pre-tuned heads are held in place by retaining clips, instead of adjustable lugs, and can be replaced in seconds without tightening or tuning.

For more information contact Remo, Inc., 12804 Raymer Street, North Hollywood, CA 91605.

AVANTI CYMBALS

Camber of New York, a division of Ambico, Inc, is importing a new line of professional quality, competitively priced cymbals—*Avanti*. Camber devised a set of computer-based criteria against which their shipments of *Avanti* cymbals can be definitely and graphically measured. The study was designed and programmed by Robert Berkovitz of North American Digital Systems of Cambridge, Massachusetts with the cooperation of percussionist and consultant to Ambico, Christopher Bowman. Musicians, in these studies, selected cymbals of all varieties and brands, appraising some as "good" and others as "not-so-good." The differences in sound as heard by the human ear was modeled on a computer to illustrate the differences in the strength of sound at high frequencies—the part of sound that produces the characteristic "hiss" of a cymbal. According to these studies, the characteristic length of the hiss is the measure of a cymbal's sound quality. Other data from the study is being reviewed by Camber.



MARKLEY PRO DRUM STICKS

Dean Markley offers a new, professional drum stick line. Using a special oil for the finish instead of lacquers allows the American Hickory used for the Dean Markley sticks to retain its feeling of wood, not plastic. The final product is a reflection of the 22-step manufacturing process that includes: a "true center" lathing for more controlled balance, and a five-station sanding process that gives the drummer the smoothest feel.

More information on the limited production of Dean Markley professional drum sticks may be obtained by writing Dean Markley at 3350 Scott Blvd. #29, Santa Clara, CA 95051.

OMNI-SCISSORS

Here's news for anyone who works with drum skins. A new cutting tool that is helping to make skin and all the new synthetics easier to cut and work with.

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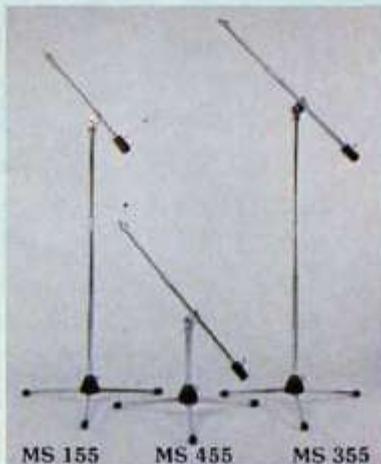
The IM76... for the low end, such as floor toms and bass drums.

When I heard that Ibanez had come up with a new line of microphones designed exclusively for use with drums, I was anxious to hear the results. If you have experience with miking drums, you know how their sound can present a problem. And because drums are so unique as a sound source, it's important that each area of the set is handled in the right way. Now, Ibanez has virtually eliminated drum miking problems with the introduction of their Tech II microphone line. The Tech II line has been carefully designed to accommodate every aspect of percussive sound, from the splash of a cymbal to the kick of your bass.



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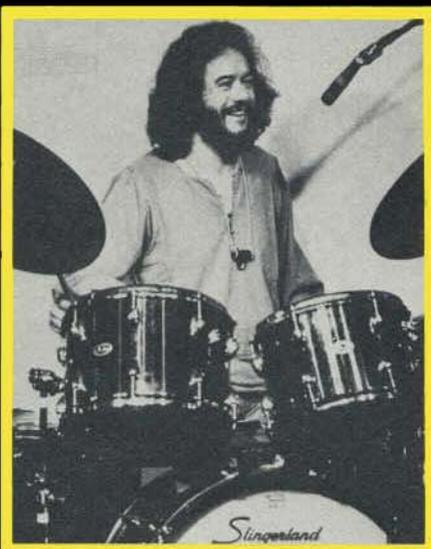
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ADVERTISERS INDEX

A & A Drum Center	95	Milestone Percussion	56
Aquarian Accessories	93	Modern Drum Shop	56
Armen Percussion Concepts	78	MD Library	103
Axis Video	100	MD T-Shirt	44
Camber Cymbals	39	NJ Percussion Center	67
Corder Drum	99	North Drums	52
Countryman Associates	45	NuVader Cymbals	109
Cymbal Safe	98	Pace Practice Pedal Pads	66
Dean Markley Stix	47	Paiste Cymbals	7
DeMerle, Les	66	Pastore Music Inc.	67
Dial-A-Drum	101	Pearl Drums	113
Discount Drum World	55	Percussion Center	51
Drum Torque	96	Percussion Institute of Technology	95
Drum Wear	55	Percussion World	67
Drum Workshop	88	Pied Piper	91
Drummer Accessories And Sportswear	76	Precision Drum	66
Drummers Collective	40	Premier Drums	3
Drummers World	54	Promark	63
Drums Ltd.	101	Regal Tip/Calato	77
Drums Unlimited	41	Remo	53
Duraline	41, 46, 90, 93, 105	Resonant Drum Sticks	42
Freeport Music	66	Rick Latham Advanced Funk Studies	54
Gon Bops of California	97	R.I.M.S.	89
Gretsch Drums	Inside Back Cover	Rogers Drums	5
Hardy Technologies	92	Rolls Music Center	60
Imperial Creations	75,99	Rug Caddy	60
J.C.'s Drum Charts	81	Sabian Cymbals	111
Jopa Percussion	92	Sam Ash Music Stores	62
Latin Percussion	73	Shure Bros.	43
Long Island Drum Center	87	Simmons Drums	50/51
L.T. Lug Lock	67	Sofia, Sal	67
Ludwig Industries	Inside Front Cover, 49	Sonor Drums	71
Manny's Music Store	61	Stanley Spector School of Drumming	79
Mattel Electronics	65	Tama Drums	58/59, 106/107, 115
Maxtone Drums	62	The Drum Pad	51
May EA	57	Valley Drum Shop	63
Mayberry Music	87	Vic Firth Sticks	37
Mechanical Music	81	Yamaha Drums	66,67
		Zildjian Cymbals	Outside Back Cover, 81

AUGUST'S MD



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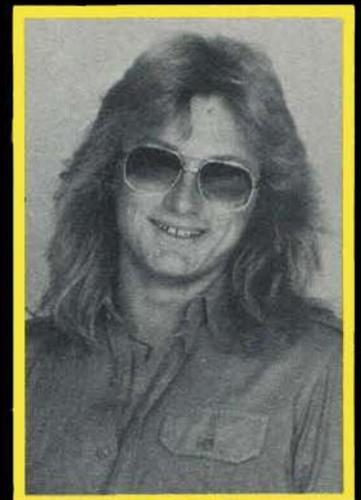


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"Gretsch has all the sizes I need, all the individual elements I was looking for. I'm really impressed by Gretsch, all the way down the line."



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STEVE GADD. HOT ON ZILDJIAN.

The man is hot! And he should be. No less than Chick Corea put it this way: "Every drummer wants to play like Steve Gadd because he plays great. He plays everything well. He could very well go on to become one of the greatest drummers the world has ever seen."

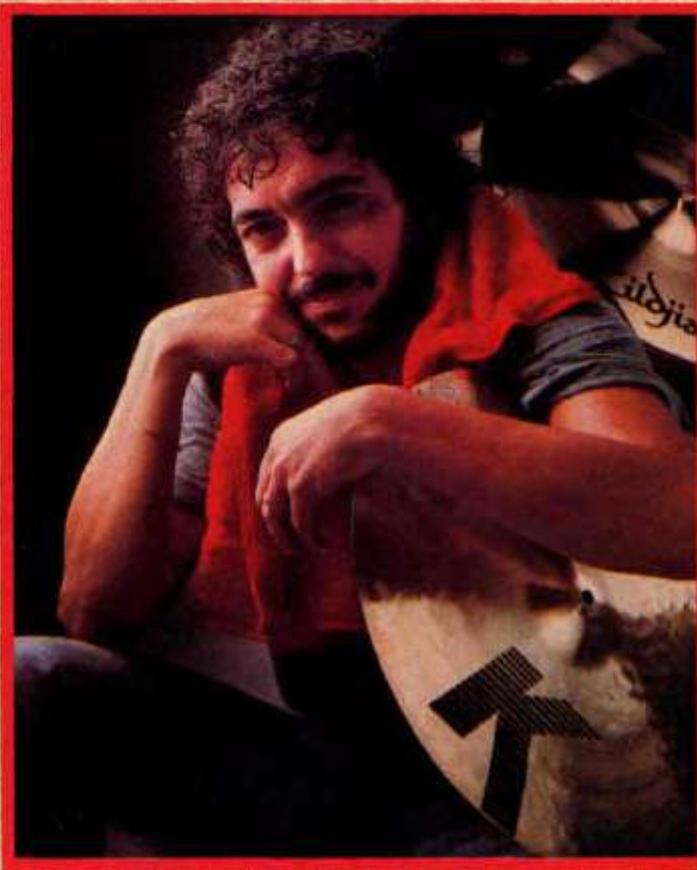
As you can imagine, between his touring and recording, Steve's not the easiest guy in the world to pin down. But he did stop for a breather the other day and we got a chance to talk with him.

On Practice. "I've been playing since I was a kid. As long as I keep my muscles loose, I don't have to practice a lot every day. When I do practice, I just sort of let things happen naturally and then later on try to work it into my playing. Like on '50 Ways to Leave Your Lover... I used my left hand on the high hat for the whole section—it was a little thing I'd been practicing and it just worked out."

On Control. "Sometimes I use light, medium and heavy sticks to do the same drills because the sticks affect my muscles in different ways. You have to use your hand and arm muscles differently to control your playing. It's a subtle thing but it helps me tremendously."



On Effects. "After I graduated from Eastman, I played in a rock 'n roll band. It was keyboard, bass, drums and a lot of homemade stuff. I bought 6 big artillery shells, sawed them into different lengths and hung them on



Steve Gadd, one of the world's most innovative musicians, has paved the way toward new playing techniques for today's drummers.

a rack that I built. I'd use them for the free sections in the music."

On K's. "Art Blakey gave me my first set of K. Zildjian's a long time ago. I love the feel of them. There's something about the way the stick reacts to the surface...it almost becomes part of the cymbal. They're not cold or edgy. They have a very warm and deep feeling. They've got real character. I use a 20" Ride and an 18" Crash Ride with 14" Hi Hats for recording and live sessions."

On A's. "I love to use A. Zildjian's when I play rock 'n roll. When I want to play louder, I add a 16" Thin Crash and an 18" Crash Ride for a full crash sound. The bells on the A's really project the sound in a clear natural tone."

On Zildjian. "Zildjian to me is the foundation. I play Zildjians because that's what's in my heart. I love the sound, the feel, the history...I love the quality and the status of a Zildjian."

If you're a serious drummer, chances are that you, like Steve, are already playing Zildjians. For 360 years, they have been the overwhelming favorite of drummers worldwide.

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