

MODERN DRUMMER™



The International Magazine Exclusively For Drummers

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A I R T I S T

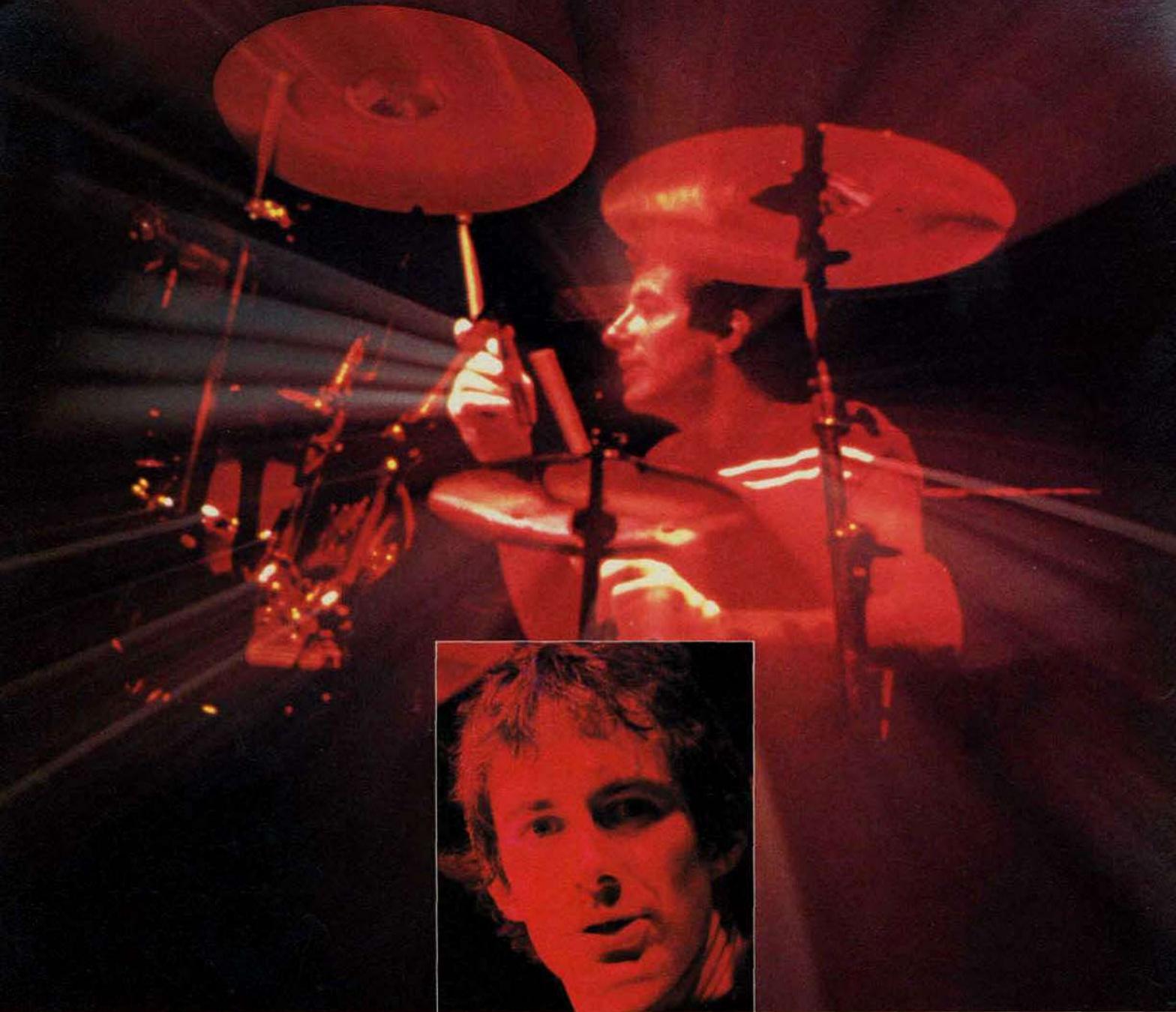
Alabama's
MARK HERNDON

FRAN CHRISTINA
The Fabulous T' Birds

BILL MAXWELL

Plus: Avoiding Back Pain
Ideas On Double Bass
Tuning Tips

Carl Palmer's "Sole Survivor"



"There are lots of drums out there. But there's only one I want up here."

—Alan Gratzner, REO Speedwagon

It's ten p.m., and 30,000 rock 'n rollers are preparing to ride the storm out. It's been a good night. The crowd's up. The band's up. And the last thing Alan Gratzner needs is for his drums to let him down.

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Cover Photo by Greg Toland

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AIRTO

Some percussionists make music only with their hands and feet; others use their entire body. Airto goes even further than that—he uses his soul. In this MD exclusive, Airto traces his life and music from his early days in Brazil, through his experiences with artists such as Miles Davis and Chick Corea, up to his present activities.

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MARK HERNDON

As drummer for Alabama, Mark Herndon has spent the last few years winning awards and playing to sold-out concerts all across the country. Here, Mark shares his feelings about the importance of communicating with an audience, and explains how his rock-influenced drumming blends with Alabama's country swing.

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FRAN CHRISTINA

Growing up with rhythm & blues gave Fran Christina the necessary background for his work with the Fabulous Thunderbirds, as well as his earlier gigs with Asleep At The Wheel and Roomful Of Blues. He discusses that background and how it influenced his approach.

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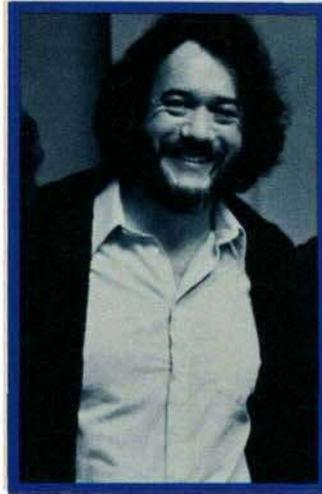


Photo by Rick Mattingly



Photo by Tracy Hart

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EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

Truth in Advertising



Advertising executives have long been aware of the advantages of "celebrity endorsements" as an effective method for promoting a product or service. Influential personalities, with nice things to say, obviously carry a lot more clout than the average person on the street. Perhaps that's why so many celebrities are used to endorse everything from shampoo to dog food in major magazines and on national TV. Of course, it's also a form of advertising which doesn't come cheaply. Major corporations, with huge advertising budgets, have been known to pay incredible sums of money to have important figures from the world of sports or entertainment spout off the numerous advantages of owning their products.

The whole approach is on a much smaller scale in the percussion world. However, the endorsement concept itself is big business even in our industry, and an important aspect of many advertising campaigns. Just browse through an issue of MD and you'll notice it immediately. As you browse, you may also realize that we've used a similar approach in our own advertising campaigns. Note the full-page photo of a leading drummer, capped with the headline, "Who Reads *Modern Drummer*?" Or, more recently, two leading artists in a handshake, beneath the heading, "*Modern Drummer*. Where Drummers Meet." We call it a sub promo (subscription promotion) page, and it's designed to enlighten readers on the benefits of subscribing to the magazine.

Occasionally, I'm asked how we manage to get so many great drummers to endorse the magazine—people like Joe Morello, Ed Shaughnessy, Louie Bellson, Bill Bruford, Phil Ehart, Michael Shrieve, Elvin Jones, Peter Erskine and Neil Peart, among others. Perhaps it appears as though we're highly budgeted for advertising and are paying out a small fortune in return for flattering comments. The truth of the matter is, *no one* has ever received anything in return for an endorsement. Those artists who've been kind enough to place their stamp of approval on *Modern Drummer*, have done so because it happens to be the way they truly feel about the magazine. Most have agreed to be part of our subscription campaign on our very first request, no questions asked. They've endorsed the magazine because they believe in what we've been doing for the past seven years. And to my mind, that's the best form of advertising any magazine could possibly ask for because it's based on true feelings; no fees, no freebies.

Perhaps this is a very appropriate time to extend my personal thank you to those artists who've been part of our subscription promotion over the past several years, and who have stood behind us since the beginning. It's extremely satisfying to know we've got the honest support of some of the most highly regarded people in our business.

RS

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READER'S PLATFORM

NOT TAKING IT LIGHTLY

It's ironic that printed next to Burt Dotson's letter dealing with having an open mind, was Doug Light's primer on the closed mind.

The name of this publication is *Modern Drummer*, not "Jazz Drummer." MD sets a fine example in blending all types of drummers from varying backgrounds. Take the blinders off, Doug, and look around you. There is a vast amount of talent in all fields. Most of us are interested in reading about, listening to and learning about drummers in areas other than our own.

Dennis Davis
Hazelwood, MO

THANK YOU

To the MD readers: On behalf of Papa Jo Jones, I would like to thank all of those who responded to our call for help in the April issue of *Modern Drummer*. Through your generosity, Papa Jo was able to pay his back rent, and get the food and medicine he needed. In addition, I read the letters of encouragement to him, and he was deeply touched by the many kind words.

Papa Jo is still very weak, but the continued support of the entire music community will surely help him regain his strength.

Jack DeJohnette
Willow, NY

KAREN CARPENTER

Just a short note to say how much I enjoyed the Karen Carpenter article. Not too many people knew Karen as a percussionist, but there were a handful of us that recognized her as a strong force in today's percussion world. In the world of what I call "animal drumming," Karen proved the most important element of good drumming: taste. And it came from every pore of this fine musician. She is certainly missed.

Christopher Moore
Birmingham, AL

GINGER BAKER

Thanks MD and Chris Welch for the truthful and illuminating article on Ginger Baker. He's truly an innovator. In a time when most pop/rock drummers were merely timekeepers, Ginger inspired a generation of percussionists to become artful soloists. He wasn't perfect, but when he was right, he was awesome! It is unfortunate that he's been away from the American music scene for so long.

Jim Wallace
Fairlawn, NJ

JACK DeJOHNETTE

At 19, rock 'n' roll has been my musical mainstay for the past five years. In my rock 'n' roll tunnel vision I'd never even heard of Jack DeJohnette. Nonetheless I found his interview informative and educating. A week after, DeJohnette appeared in nearby Albany at a college concert. I was treated to the most enjoyable music experience of my lifetime. DeJohnette's mastery of the drums was almost beyond comprehension. But, maybe more importantly, I was experiencing the whole jazz sound objectively for the first time. After the show, Jack was polite enough to give me an autograph and a handshake. The following day I purchased *Tin Can Alley* and some older DeJohnette material. Soon I hope to be taking reading lessons and I feel a renaissance coming in my drumming career.

I'd like to thank MD for opening up my eyes, and Jack DeJohnette for giving me the incentive to aspire to the fullest.

John A. Balli
Kinderhook, NY

GARY CHESTER

Thanks to Scott K. Fish for leaving Gary Chester out of his "History of Rock Drumming." Because of his omission, I think we got one of the best stories I've ever read in your magazine. Gary set the record straight with a vengeance. Now I've added one more goal to my career to meet Gary Chester.

Larry Lynch
Greg Kihn Band

It's articles like this that inspire me so! I'd never heard of Mr. Chester until this interview. I know I've heard him play, but never realized who he was. I'm an unknown teacher/drummer in the Detroit area. Reading about Gary Chester has inspired me to become a better instructor and helps me to be thankful I can make a living doing what I love. P.S.: Loved the comment about the garbage collector!

B.C.
Rochester, MI

BILLY MINTZ APOLOGY

To: Max Roach, Art Blakey, Roy Haynes, Art Taylor, Ed Blackwell, Philly Joe Jones, Louis Hayes, Elvin Jones, Grady Tate, Tony Williams, Jimmy Cobb, Al Foster, Clifford Jarvis, Jack DeJohnette, Bobby Colomby, Al Heath, Buddy Miles, Bernard Purdie, Manny OQuendo and Billy Cobham:

In a practice stage of my life I transcribed drum solos to increase my ability

and knowledge to become a better drummer. A friend suggested I write a drum book which became *Different Drummers*. Legally, I only had to contact the record and publishing companies, but to this day I've felt bad and unethical for never consulting you on solos, photos and biographies used in the book.

I'm very sorry if any of you took personal offense. My intention was to become a better drummer. Then, via the book, to help others and acknowledge and praise all of you for your musical and spiritual contributions to the world.

Billy Mintz
Los Angeles, CA

BUDDY RICH

I very much enjoyed reading the article *Buddy Rich: Dedication to Excellence* written by Roy Burns. Not only was it informative and educational but it also provided a better insight into the drive and motivation behind Buddy Rich.

I recently had the opportunity and privilege to see Buddy Rich and his band in concert. Every word written by Mr. Burns was superbly exemplified by Mr. Rich. He is the epitome of dedication and determination. After all, how many individuals can be back to work six weeks after having quadruple bypass surgery? The efforts he displayed in returning to the bandstand were awe inspiring.

Buddy Rich is without a doubt a remarkable drummer. Yet more importantly, his spirit and will prove he is even more remarkable as a man. He overwhelmingly demonstrates that it requires more than unsurpassed technical expertise and the ultimate mastery of his instrument to earn the reputation and respect as "the world's greatest drummer." It takes the utmost dedication and perservance as well. And Buddy Rich is indeed a paragon of both.

Gary W. Cottrell
Greendale, WI

HASKELL HARR

Would it be possible to let people know that Haskell is still around and very much interested in the percussion world? He's not able to get around much and misses the contacts he had when he lived in the Midwest. I believe he is 88 now. I'm trying in a small way to let the world know that this living legend lives on.

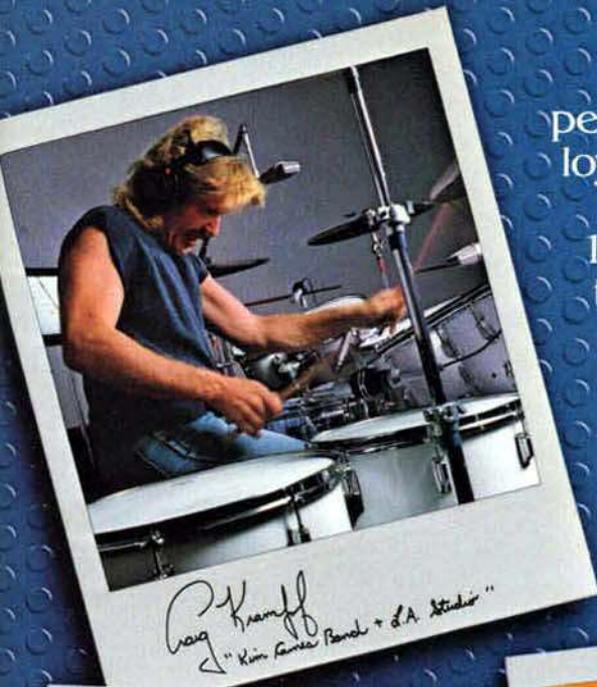
Jim Cantley

Editor's Note: Mr. Cantley enclosed Mr. Harr's address: Haskell Harr, Km. 8, San Dimas Golden Age Convalescent Home, 1033 E. Arrow Highway, Glendora, CA 91740.

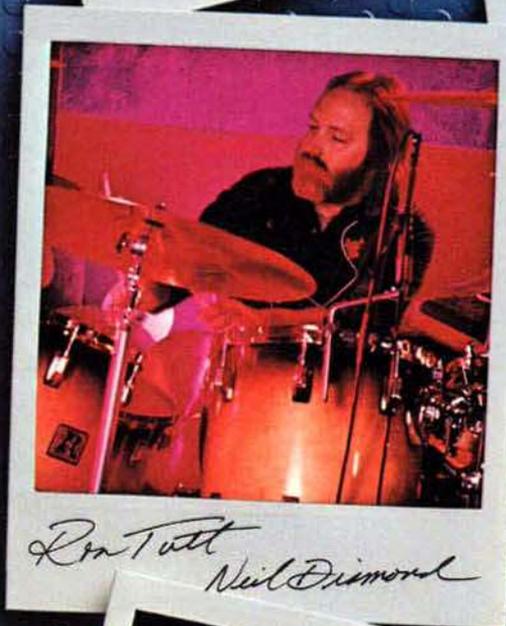
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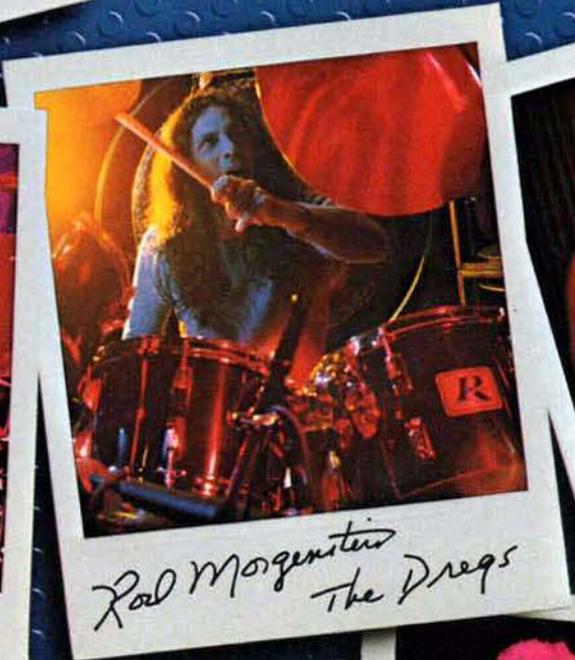
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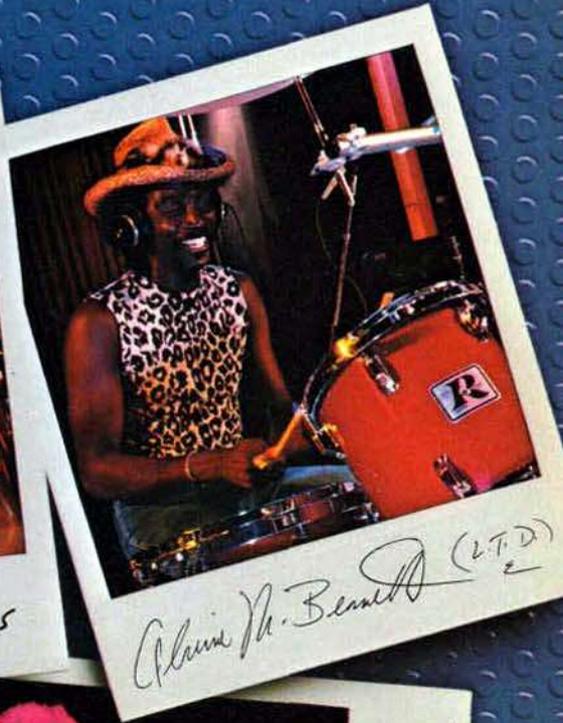
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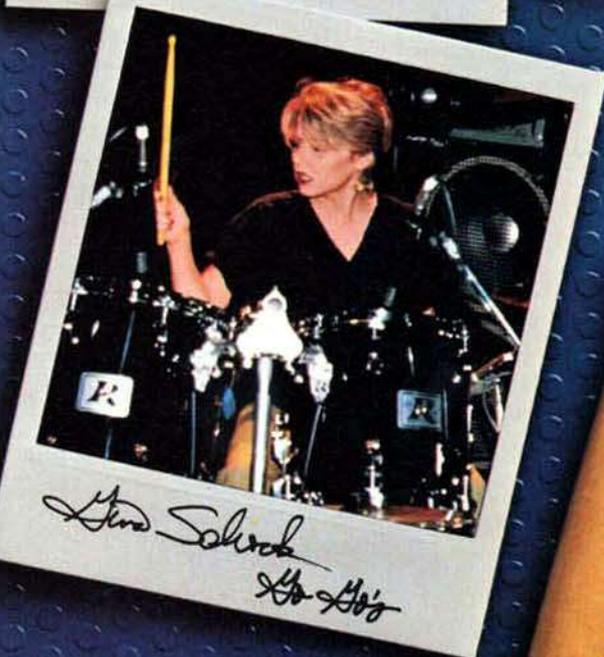
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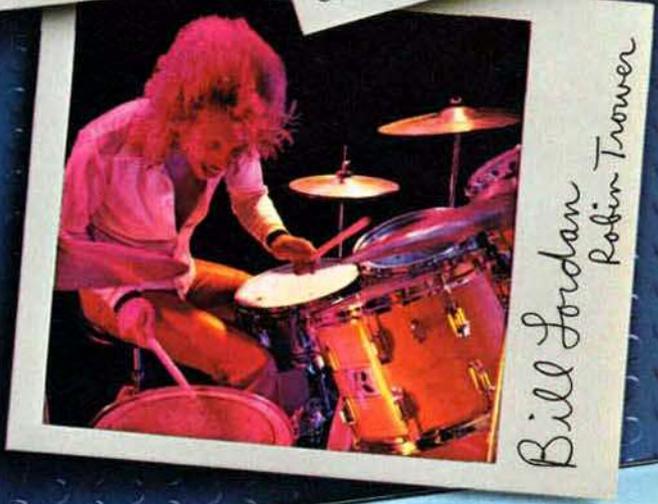
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ASK A PRO

NEIL PEART



Photo by Jaeger Kotas

Q. How much of an influence was Keith Moon's drumming on your style of playing? I've heard from people around your home-town that he was a big influence on you.

Richard Moore
Acton, Ontario

A. *It is certainly true that Keith Moon was one of the first drummers to get me really excited about rock drumming. His irreverent and maniacal personality, as expressed through his drumming, affected me greatly. To me, he was the kind of drummer who did great things by accident rather than design. But the energy, expressiveness and innovation that he represented at the time was very important and great. It is ironic that I wanted to be in a band that played Who songs and, when I finally got into one, I discovered that I didn't like playing drums like Keith Moon. I liked to be more organized and thoughtful about what I did and where. I was fortunate enough to see The Who many times at their best during the late '60s and early '70s and it was very sad to watch him decline and expire from the sheer exuberance of his life. There have been many other great drummers who have taught me things and inspired me, but "his like we shall not see again."*

ELLIE MANNETTE

Q. I have an old steel drum on which the lowest note (F) on the pan has gone flat. Do you have any tips on how I could go about tuning this note without knocking the other notes out?

Donny Murdaugh
Hilton Head, SC

A. *Carefully, very carefully. You'll need a ball-peen hammer of about 24 ounces. Turn the pan upside down and tune from the inside. You are trying to get the note in tune, as well as its octave. Very gently tap the middle of the concave dish of the note. Listen*

STEVE SMITH



Photo by Martin Cohen

Q. I'm a big fan of your snare drum sound. I recently saw a picture of you in a Zildjian ad and you have a black ring around the edge of your snare. I assume it's for muffling. Can you tell me what it is, why you use it and if they are being commercially manufactured?

Neil Macadam
Glasgow, Scotland

A. *It's black gaffers tape and I use it because it cuts down on real high overtones and it feels just as good. I don't like to use a Pinstripe head, a Black Dot head, or the Fiberskyn 2 head. I really like the feel of the white Ambassador head, but I don't want to put a big pad of foam on because I don't like the way the snare drum feels like that. You can't really play anything too articulately like that. I have my snare real tight so I use a single layer of tape about one inch wide. It takes a long time to put on without making it a big mess. You have to bend it around the head to make a nice, round circle. I think Remo should make these. It would be the same as the black dot, if you took the dot out of the center and spread it around the edge.*

YOGI HORTON

Q. What have you been doing since you recorded with the Stones?

Lester Toyle
Bangor, ME

A. *Recording and doing the world tours for Ashford and Simpson (Street Opera), Diana Ross (Why Do Fools Fall In Love?), Luther Vandross (Forever, For Always, For Love), and Cheryl Lynn (Instant Love). What was great was that I had done Cheryl's album and she was on the bill with Luther. I got to watch another drummer play my parts off the record and "see" what I sounded like in a way I never did before. I got a lot of insight into creating music for records that comes off great live and is coherent when played by others.*

carefully as it comes up. You may need several light taps. After it reaches the highest pitch to bring it in tune, the octave may have moved around. It is necessary to adjust it. The adjustment can be made by tapping the area behind the note toward the rim or skirt of the drum. Take the ball end of the hammer and tap the corner formed by the skirt and the area behind the note. This will release the octave. Try to match the note as close as you can because it must be related to the root pitch to complete the sound of the note.

ERIC CARR



Q. You play loud! What kind of sticks do you use to help get such a powerful sound like I heard you get on the Kiss tour?

Ricky Butler
Toronto, CAN

A. *This is a story for Ripley's. I always played 5B's and started the tour with them. A month into it they were too light because I was building up my strength from playing. The drummer from the Headpins, who did some dates with us in Canada, had some Quantum 7000's, by Regal Tip. They're like logs! I began to alternate songs, going from Quantums to the 5B's so I could build my strength without sacrificing my playing ability. Three quarters of the way through the tour I went to the big sticks primarily. They have a ball tip that gives a good, big sound. I began to go through two or three snare heads a night and wrecking my tom heads to the tune of \$1000 a month. Luckily, this is a band expense. Now, 5B's feel like toothpicks.*



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:

"Sound and rhythm are inescapable parts of life. What I do on the drum set is to really tie into this rhythm of life and let it drive whatever music I'm playing. In practical terms, this leads to a lot of experimentation with sounds.

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Some speak very fast, others swell like waves—some are rough and aggressive, while others are soft and polite.

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

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CYMBALS SOUNDS GONGS

AIRTO

by Robyn Flans

As Airtó takes the stage, his presence fills the room. The large and powerful looking man appears almost gruff, unwelcoming, austere intimidating at initial glance. But then the second glance his eyes sparkling as he offers his first warm and gentle smile, and his sense of humor and charisma embrace the audience. For a brief moment, he takes in the crowd before taking it to a musical montage of magic.

At the crux of Airtó's philosophies, motivations and approaches lies the word "communication." It sounds so simple, yet it pervades every aspect of what and who he is and does, whether it be a session or a live gig; whether playing a simple cowbell or his elaborate Josephina; whether performing, cracking a joke, or sharing as he did here his history, experiences, perceptions and emotions.

It is, therefore, my responsibility to communicate the musician and the man I've met, from the respect with which he speaks of his instruments and the making of music, to the laughter in his heart and his smiling eyes. Most of all, I must somehow capture on paper the warm, loving, sensitive and passionate spirit that lies within Airtó.

RF: Tell me about your hometown.

A: It was very small and it was in south Brazil. I grew up in the woods and fields, in a very simple house with a very basic kind of living. I had contact with nature from the time I was very small until I was 14 or 15 when we moved to a bigger town.

RF: Your father wanted you to have a "sensible" career. Did you ever expect to make a living at music?

A: Actually, my father was not sure what I should be. I guess he wanted me to be a barber, like he was, and my mother wanted me to be a dentist. But I was involved with music from the time I was very small. Before I could even walk, every time I heard music, I would start moving and beating the floor with my hands. My mother was concerned that I was sick. One day when we were at my grandma's house, I started doing it and my mother said, "Look, that thing is happening again." So my grandma said, "Oh, look at his hands; look at his feet. This is a musician that is coming. Don't you see that?"

RF: Musicians weren't very well looked upon in Brazil, were they?

A: No. To decide to be a musician at that time was some kind of craziness, because the musician was associated with alcohol and prostitutes.

RF: When did you first start playing drums?

A: I was 13 or 14 years old. I went to a dance at Carnival time with my parents. I couldn't get in because I was not over 16, and I started crying at the door, so the guy said I could come in but I had to sit on stage with the musicians. That's what I wanted anyway, so I sat down. The drummer didn't show up and they asked me if I knew how to play drums. I said I didn't know. I had never played drums, although at the Sunday matinees for kids I would sing and play tambourine or triangle. They asked me to play a samba, so I played the samba right away on the spot. I had watched the drummer all the time. Then they asked me to play a rhythm called marcha, which is like a march, and I played it. So they asked me to play until the drummer came, but the drummer never showed up, so I played until 4:30 in the morning. They gave me some money, and as we were walking home, I said, "Look what I got," and showed it to my father. He said, "You got all this money from where?" I told him that they gave it to me because it was the money for the drummer and I played the drums, so I made the money. He said, "We cannot accept that." We were very poor but my father was always very, very honest. So we went back and I explained that I had to give the money back because my father said we could not keep it. The leader explained to my father that it was mine, and finally he said, "You take the money or I'm going to throw it away." We took the money and I gave it to my father, but he didn't feel very good about it. It was a lot of money at that time—the same amount he would make being a barber in two busy days. Then about two days later, the band came to talk to my father, wanting me to play. Finally my father said okay and asked them to take care of me and not let me drink, and I started being a musician at that time, professionally. Even before that, I played percussion with some accordion players at weddings and things, since I was seven or eight.

RF: Where had you come in contact with percussion?

A: I don't know. I always liked it. I would always go off in the woods and make little instruments to blow in—little whistles and things. I would get things that had seeds inside and would make little instruments to shake.





Photo: Greg Toland



A young Airto as a nightclub singer in South America

RF: Had you seen percussionists? Obviously there were drummers, but were there percussionists?

A: No, but sometimes I would see show bands from Spain because they used to go to south Brazil to work. They had bongo and conga players, the traditional, average kind of percussion with maracas and such, but I was never really into being a percussionist. I was a musician. I loved to sing and I was not into any particular instrument. The percussion was natural to me. Once I saw a woman playing percussion with Luis Gonzaga, who is a very famous singer. Her name was Zezinha and she was playing triangle and zabumba, which is like a small bass drum you hang on your shoulder and neck. It was the first time I saw a woman playing percussion and I thought it was incredible. I was just a kid, and it really impressed me because it was so beautiful. But I never *decided* to be a percussionist. I was a drummer mostly, even though I played percussion all my life. My first instrument was a plastic tambourine my grandma gave to me so I wouldn't beat the floor. When I moved to Curitiba, I started playing more and more drums. I was playing with a big band for dances, but I knew how to play percussion all the way. Then when I moved from Curitiba to Sao Paulo, which is a big city like New York, I wanted to be a singer. I couldn't get a job as a singer because they wanted female singers in the nightclubs. The females would sit down with the customers and have a few drinks, but nobody would invite *me* for drinks [laughs]. So then I continued playing drums for about a year and a half in a band that travelled all over Bra-

zil, and we went to Argentina and Uruguay. After that, I played with a trio at the only bar in Sao Paulo that had jazz and contemporary music.

RF: What did you know of jazz at that point?

A: I met a guy, Raul de Souza, who came to Curitiba to play in the Air Force band. He was a great musician and he had a friend who used to buy arrangements from the States and play jazz. We went to this guy's house and he said, "You have to hear jazz and you have to stop singing those sambas and boleros and things." So I heard J.J. Johnson, Paul Desmond and Coltrane, which I thought was incredible. I didn't understand anything, of course, but I was thinking, "Woah, what is this? Everybody's playing whatever he wants." But then he said, "You have to hear, be relaxed, listen and let the music flow through you." So I heard it many times and I started liking jazz. That was the only exposure to jazz that I had at the time.

RF: How old were you?

A: Maybe 18 or 19. So I went to play with this trio and we were actually playing samba, but more like they used to call samba-jazz in Brazil jazz things with a samba beat. It was beautiful, great for improvising, trading fours and everything, and I did that for almost two years. When the group broke up, I formed the Quarteto Novo, which means the New Quartet. It was a great musical experience to me because we were playing more original music. It was very modern because we would make incredible arrangements out of very simple songs. It sounded beautiful and was more acoustic oriented, so I started the new trend of percussion, which was, instead of playing the conventional things, I was using different instruments for different things. Suddenly, everyone realized you could play shaker with triangle at the same time, or two shakers instead of one.

RF: What *made* you know this?

A: Creativity, inspiration. What I used to do a lot was sit at the drums and play the bass drum and the hi-hat with my feet and then play two percussion instruments with my hands. It would be the basic drums on the bottom and light sounds on the top. We did that a lot in that group, so I started a trend. In Brazil at that time, there was no such thing as a percussionist. Someone was considered a percussionist if he played classical music in a symphonic orchestra. Otherwise you were a rhythmist, and we were all rhythmists until we all began playing that style. Then we became percussionists.

RF: Any formal training in percussion?

A: No, I always just played. I was always in touch with my percussion making instruments and trying to get new sounds out of them and things like that.

RF: You've said that you must have an awareness of your own environment. What do you mean by that?

A: You do not have to go somewhere to get creativity and inspiration. That's yours; you've got it. If you are a musician, you can be creative anywhere in the world. People don't have to run to Brazil in order to hear the birds because there are birds everywhere. It's just a matter of getting inspired and getting your creativity working; drawing the energy that is in the universe that we don't see but is always here. To draw that energy, you don't have to go to Brazil or China. You can do that anywhere because you do that on your own.

RF: So back to Quarteto Novo.

A: The New Quartet was together for almost two years and it was a great experience. Even today, that group is considered one of the most advanced groups, musically speaking, ever in Brazil. But Quarteto Novo started to dissolve because of lack of direction, business-wise. We were playing on the TV and radio shows and everything, but we had to back up singers in order to play. There was almost no instrumental music on TV or radio, so we started to feel sort of depressed and started playing with different people because it became impossible to play together. So we decided to break up the group. Flora [Purim] and I were together by that time, which was 1967, and she was coming to the States, just to try. She wanted to be a jazz singer.

RF: Had you ever thought about coming to the United States?

A: No. I always thought I would never come to the United States. I was

happy in Brazil.

RF: Did you think you could achieve the success you wanted, there?

A: I was not after any big thing. I just wanted to play, buy food, have a place to sleep, and that was it. But Flora came to the States and she was writing me letters, telling me how nice it was and about the respect the musicians have here for one another which is true and how people help each other here. Brazil is a very hard place because there are so many musicians and not too many places to play. Nobody invites you to sit in because you might play better than they do. So she told me it was a whole different ballgame here. The musicians treat other musicians with much more respect. A singer would even tell another singer that she is singing good! That would never happen in Brazil. But I came here a month later to pick her up and take her back to Brazil. But then I stayed.

RF: Why?

A: Because then I felt something else. When I came here, I saw some of the people who were like gods to me, like Miles Davis. I recorded with Paul Desmond and I met J.J. Johnson, I met Cannonball Adderley a beautiful man; an incredible person and they were all real people. I said, "Wait a minute, something is happening here that I don't know." I decided to stay a little more, and a little more. Flora started getting small gigs for us here and there, and so I just kept staying. When I met Miles Davis, it was like meeting God in heaven or something, and it was very different.

RF: Flora's book (*Freedom Song*) indicated that you were very unambitious when you came here.

A: That is true, and I am still the same way. I have a lot of drive when I'm playing and when I'm creating, but I don't have drive for putting things together and making plans for the future, getting musicians to rehearse and dealing with the whole bullshit. I don't have drive for that at all, even though now, I do have some kind of drive, otherwise I wouldn't be around. I was

not ambitious. I never thought I was going to be playing with Miles Davis or Cannonball Adderley or anybody. This was not even a dream to me. I just knew that I loved to play the music and everytime I played, people said, "Wow, that's good."

RF: Most of the articles on you make it sound like when you first came to the United States, the first person you played with was Miles Davis.

A: I spent two and a half years eating shit before I played with Miles. I used to sit in when they let me, but many times they didn't know I wanted to because I couldn't speak English. It was, "Me play." And to them it was, "What is this?" It took me about a year and a half to start speaking English.

I used to sit in at a place called Lost & Found, which was in New York. Benny Aronov was playing there, with Reggie Workman on bass. I didn't have any real-

ity as to who they were, but then I started bringing a snare drum and a cymbal, and they wanted to play some samba and bossa novas with me. Flora was singing there sometimes and then we started working there for food. We didn't have money to buy food, so we would play the whole night and eat. Then I met Walter Booker, a bass player who was with Cannonball Adderley at the time, and he helped me a lot. I was living at his house for part of the year and eating his food and playing his drums. He had a studio there where I would play drums. Cannonball and other musicians used to rehearse there and I had the opportunity to play with them, so they could see that I was a good musician, even though I was from Brazil and couldn't speak any English.

"I THINK IF YOU PLAY GOOD TODAY, YOU HAVE TO PLAY GOOD, OR BETTER, TOMORROW. I DON'T ACCEPT THAT SOMEBODY PLAYS GOOD TODAY AND BAD TOMORROW. THAT IS BAD NEWS TO ME."



Cannonball Adderley, Airtio, and Flora Purim



RF: Why did you say in an interview that Cannonball Adderley was your musical father?

A: Because he was the most beautiful human being I ever met that was famous, respected and a great player. I consider him my musical father because to learn to be a person with a great musician is very rare. A lot of the great musicians are assholes as people. You cannot even talk to them, but Cannonball was very, very human; a beautiful man. Anytime we needed something, we could go to Cannonball and he would do it for us, just out of love. We were foreigners—we are still foreigners, by the way—and I could feel that. I still feel that sometimes. On the phone, if you have an accent, you don't get across as good.

RF: You speak English beautifully now, though.

A: I have an accent anyways, and on the phone it's harder. When I can use my eyes to speak, that's different. When I cannot do that, they think, "Oh, this guy doesn't know." So there is that kind of prejudice and I feel that sometimes, but it doesn't really bother me.

RF: And you felt that within the music industry when you came here also?

A: Oh very much so, because it was, "What does this guy want? He wants to play? Play what?" Things are changing for the better, I think, all the time, because that's why we are here, to be better people than we are.

RF: When did you become a percussionist in your viewpoint? When you came to the U.S., you were a drummer *and* percussionist, weren't you?

A: I started getting calls just for percussion after Miles Davis. Then I was a percussionist. It was a change in this country, too, because when the U.S. and Cuba cut their relations, politically speaking, the percussion, that was mainly Cuban and Puerto Rican, went down the drain and great percussionists

were out of work. Percussion almost disappeared at that time.

When they found out that they could play other things besides congas, bongos and maracas, everybody started gathering a lot of little things to play. People saw me with Miles Davis and started calling percussionists again and they knew a little more could be done with percussion, so percussion became percussion again. Even rock 'n' roll bands have a couple of percussionists. I feel responsible for that, which is great.

RF: How did you finally get with Miles?

A: I had met Joe Zawinul, who was also playing with Cannonball Adderley, and Joe was friends with Miles Davis. One day, Miles said, "Hey Joe, I'm looking for somebody that plays percussion, but I don't want a conga or bongo player. I want something different." And Joe said, "Well, there's this guy from Brazil and he's got all kinds of weird things. He plays good drums too, but he's a percussionist with some good sounds I think you're going to like. Give him a call." So Thanksgiving day, I was by myself at Walter Booker's pad because Walter and his family went to Washington to be with their relatives. Lee Morgan called and said he was coming over to pick me up and bring me to his house because his wife was cooking some great food. He came, and while he was there, Miles Davis' manager called and said, "I am Miles Davis' manager and he wants you to record with him." And I said, "Hey, what kind of joke is this? Bullshit," and the guy said, "No, I am Jack Whitmore and I am Miles' manager," and I said, "Hey man, don't play this joke on me," and I hung up. Lee Morgan asked me what happened and I told him some guy was playing a joke about my playing with Miles Davis. So Jack called back right away and Lee picked up the phone and said, "Oh, hey Jack, how're you doing?" And I thought, "Wow!" And he said, "Okay, he'll be there." He got off the phone and said, "Miles wants you to rehearse at his house and go to record with him at CBS on Monday." I went to rehearsal and rehearsed a little bit and then recorded with Miles.

The music he was playing was so alien to me because it was jazz, but it wasn't jazz; it was much more advanced than jazz. He was beginning to use the wa-wa with the trumpet and everything. It was some kind of crazy thing, it was two basses—an acoustic bass and an electric bass with two keyboards, and people like Keith Jarrett, Chick Corea, Davey Holland, Wayne Shorter and Jack DeJohnette. I was thinking, "Whoa, what is this?"

RF: What was wrong on that session where Miles walked out and said, "This is shit"?

A: The music just didn't come out. Today I can analyze it a little better. I think there were too many musicians there playing where there wasn't that much music to be played. The parts weren't really fitting together and it was a very experimental kind of thing. Everybody was going, "Yeah, yeah, yeah," and then Teo Macero asked, "Hey Miles, how is it?" And Miles said, "It sounds like shit. I'm going home," and he left. I got very hurt because I thought I didn't make it. I put everything on me, of course, but about three days later, they called me again. On that first session, there had been another percussionist playing tablas, sitar and some other things, but when they called me again, I was the only one. There was just one bass and less people, and then it was nice. I didn't even know how to think about those sessions because I didn't understand the music at all.

RF: How do you play on something where you don't understand the music?

A: You listen and you play. You just have to be careful that you don't play too much. If you don't feel, you don't play. It is better not to play than play too much.

RF: When you were young, did you find that you were anxious and overplayed?

A: Many times bandleaders told me, "Hey, shut up," or something like that. So I had learned that, but not to the extent that I learned that with Miles Davis. Miles is the best for learning to play the right time, the right note, the right space and everything.

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TAMBOURINE STUDIES

by Airtó

I play a lot of rhythms on the tambourine using five basic strokes, which I call Thumb/open, Thumb/closed, Fingers/up, Fingers/down, and Slap.

THUMBSTROKES

With both of these strokes the tambourine is struck with the thumb of the right hand. The "open" and "closed" designations refer to the sound of the head, which is controlled by the left hand.

Right hand: To make the thumb stroke, you need to keep your right hand fairly loose because you want the sound to ring; you do not want to choke the head. Keep the thumb extended when making the stroke. As your hand turns, your fingers will pass the head and your thumb will strike the instrument about two inches from the rim, with a fairly hard glancing blow. Volume is controlled by the distance from which you strike. The motion is mostly of the forearm and wrist.



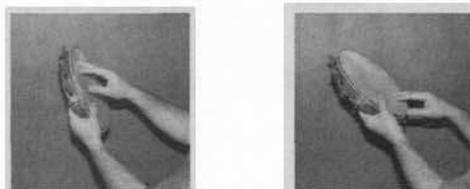
Left hand: The "open" and "closed" sounds are controlled by the middle finger of the left hand. For Thumb/open, the middle finger is away from the head, allowing the head to produce a tone. For Thumb/closed, the middle finger touches the head, muffling it.



FINGER STROKES

Fingers/up: In this stroke, it is the tambourine which strikes the right hand, as opposed to the hand striking the tambourine. The top part of the tambourine should strike the three middle fingers of the right hand. To do this, with your left hand, turn the tambourine toward your right hand in a sort of pivoting motion. (The movement of the left forearm is similar to the movement made by the left-hand traditional grip stroke.) The movement should be fairly quick, so as to produce a sharp sound when the tambourine strikes the fingers.

Fingers/down: This is the exact counter motion to Fingers/up. As the tambourine is being returned to its original position (again, with a pivoting motion of the forearm), strike the bottom part of the tambourine with the three middle fingers of the right hand. The right arm should not have to move; only the wrist.



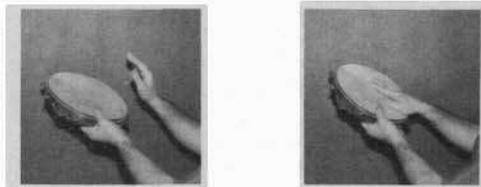
FINGERS/UP

FINGERS/DOWN

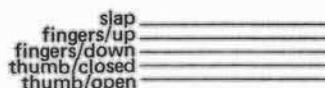
Both of these strokes should produce the same sound. Remember: Fingers/up—strike fingers with tambourine; Fingers/down—strike tambourine with fingers.

SLAP

The tambourine is held in the same position as the Finger/down stroke. The right hand simply slaps the head. The hand should be absolutely flat, and the sound should be sharp, with no ring.



In the following examples, the five basic strokes are notated on a regular five-line staff as shown:



RHYTHMS

Samba: This is the most important Brazilian rhythm. Each instrument has a specific part to play, and this is what the tambourine player does.



Xote: (pronounced "shotie") There are two kinds of Xote in Brazil; this one is from south Brazil, and there is a dance that goes with this rhythm.



Shuffle: This is a rhythm I first used with Gatemouth Brown, and then I used it when I toured with the Crusaders. This beat is good to use in shuffles, or in certain funk tunes that are based on Gospel music.



This material is excerpted from Airtó's forthcoming book on percussion, to be published by Modern Drummer Publications.



Mark HERNDON

by Rick Mattingly

Every musician dreams of finding just the "right" band to join, but after meeting the other members of Alabama for the first time, Mark Herndon was glad that they didn't hire him. My mother worked as a receptionist at a hotel, and they were hired to play in the bar. She found out that their drummer had given them notice, so she said, 'Listen, I know a drummer who lives near me.' She didn't want to say, 'My little boy plays drums.' She was a musician herself, so I guess she knew how to be cool about it. She told them, 'The last I heard, this drummer was looking for work. I can ask him to come out here if you guys want to talk to him.' Then she got on the phone to me and said, 'Get out here. You might get a job.' So I went to the hotel and started talking to them, and right when I was in the room with them, the lounge manager called and fired them because they didn't play enough disco. They weren't telling me what was happening, but I knew what was going on. So I said, 'Well, I'll see you. You've got my number.' As I was walking down the stairs, I was thinking, 'I'm glad they didn't hire me. They can't even keep work.'

That should be the end of the story, because all we know that you are only given *one* chance to make it, and if you make the wrong decision at the crucial time, you are destined to spend the rest of your musical life working country clubs and bars. Which is exactly what Mark continued doing after his uneventful meeting with Alabama. He spent a few more months working the country-club circuit in Florence, South Carolina, and then moved to Augusta, Georgia to join a band which seemed to show more promise. That band fell apart almost immediately, as so many bands do, and Mark seemed destined to return to Florence to try again. He never made it back, though. "The very hour I was packing my car, Randy [Owen] from Alabama called me up and said, 'Hey man, do you remember talking to us about six or eight months ago?'" I said, 'Why sure.' He said, 'We need somebody to play and we remember talking to you. Would you be interested in coming to work for us?' Here I was facing starvation so I said, 'Hell yes. I'll be there yesterday.'

"I already had all my stuff in the car, so instead of going back to Florence, I headed for Myrtle Beach, where we had agreed to meet at ten o'clock the next morning. I got there at 9:45, and I was waiting for them when they drove up to the club. I had once read an article in *Modern Drummer* about what other musicians look for in a drummer, and one of the most stressed points was punctuality—being there when you say you're going to be there and showing up on time for gigs and rehearsals. That stuck with me, and I think it helped get me this job. They were looking for somebody who really cared about working at it.

"I've always played real hard, and at the audition I just played my normal way. We played some cover tunes; some top-40 stuff that was popular at the time. I handled a couple of rock things with no problem, but then we got to the country songs and I said, 'Guys, I don't know anything about country tunes and I don't know if I can play it.' They said, 'Don't worry about it. Just play.' I played what I thought fit, and they liked it.

"They gave me what I considered a grace period. They probably considered it more of an eyeballing period, like, 'Let's watch this guy and see where he's coming from.' They were really paranoid about it because the guy who had been with them for about three or four years suddenly left. They guys were real down and out. Here

they had just signed a contract with a record label, and the drummer up and leaves. According to Teddy [Gentry], all these cats they were auditioning either were good but didn't have their heads on straight, or else they just couldn't play. It was very frustrating for them. So they said, 'The job is yours if you want it,' but it was like, 'Try it out for a couple of weeks and see if you like it.'

"My mother and I are pretty good friends, and I can talk to her about professional things. I told her, 'I don't know if I want to take this gig or not. That's not my kind of music right now.' She said, 'Well, if I were you, I'd take it. It might lead to something better.' Boy, it lead to something better alright. If I hadn't taken it I'd be back in Florence kicking myself now."

Mark started working with Alabama at a Myrtle Beach club called The Bowery. "That place was wild. It's an ocean-front college beer hall, and it's wild as hell—people swinging from the rafters. That was right down my alley—I loved it! It was not your traditional country scenario. They had can-can girls dancing on the stage and we played everything from Eddy Arnold to Frank Zappa. A cross section of the world came into that bar, and there would be some of the wildest requests you would ever hear. We made our living down there by passing the hat.

"After working down there two or three weeks, I decided that I was going to stay with Alabama, because I noticed a rapport between the band and the crowd that I had never seen before in a club act. The guys had the crowd literally on their feet by the end of the night. People always come into a bar with entertainment on their mind other than what's on the stage. But this was more like a mini-concert. The people were really digging on what the band was doing. There were a following of regulars, but there were also a certain number of people who were different every night, and they'd leave as fans. I thought that was pretty neat. And I had finally found a band where I felt that everybody was equally as interested as I was, and wanted to work at it just as hard as I did. I wanted to go somewhere; I wanted to play concerts. And they all had that goal. I couldn't believe it! I had found three kindred spirits!"

It had taken Mark quite a while to find a band he was happy playing in. But then, it had taken Mark quite a while to become involved in music to begin with. His first musical experience consisted of piano lessons when he was 12 years old. "My grandmother was a concert pianist, and my mother was quite a piano player herself, so naturally, little Mark was going to learn how to play the piano. I couldn't get into it. The piano teacher was wanting me to learn stuff that I didn't like. If I was going to play music, I wanted to play the stuff I was hearing on the radio. And besides that, the teacher never took a bath. When he sat on the bench with me, learning scales, it was kind of brutal on the nose. Besides that, all the other kids thought it was 'sissy' for a 12-year-old boy to be taking piano lessons, and at that age you're kind of influenced by what your friends think."

When he was in the 10th grade, Mark decided to try out for the school band as a drummer. "I wasn't really into it, but I thought drums were hot. So I tried out, but I couldn't play the cadence. The drum major wasn't very nice, and he wasn't very patient. He played through the cadence one time, and you were supposed to pick it up, just like that. I guess if I had been a drummer prior to that I probably could have picked it up, but I didn't get it so they washed me out. It's kind of funny to look back on now—I couldn't

Rockin' Alabama



Photo by Wade L. Dykes

drum, which was a 20" Slingerland bass drum. Little by little I pieced together a drumset. I had a lot of different brands, but I was adamant about everything being the same color. It took me about a year to get a playable drumset.

"I was probably the biggest hanger-outer of anybody I knew back then. I'd check out every band that came to this club in Florence called Zorba's a great rock 'n' roll club. The group Nantucket used to play there, and so did Mother's Finest. And they'd get unheard-of bands too, but they'd be equally as good. I'd be there every weekend watching the drummers, looking at their sets, and I'd get to talk to them sometimes. I think that hanging out like that did more for me than any drum lesson I could have bought. I've learned something from everybody I've ever watched play, and I still do. I still like to hang out, I still like to go to concerts, and I really pay attention to what the drummer's doing. So I would go to Zorba's and see a drummer who I really thought was hot. I'd remember some of the beats he used and run back home and practice them until I got them right. I've forgotten a lot of them now, but I picked up some coordination from doing that."

By this time, Mark had moved to an apartment, and he would invite friends over who played guitar. "We'd just jam and mess around and experiment until the wee hours of the morning much to my neighbors' dismay. As a matter of fact, I got in a couple of fistfights over the noise back then. They'd come over and tell me to quit, and I'd tell them where to put it, and you know ... It was all college kids who lived around there."

Eventually, Mark dropped out of school and got a job. One of the guys he worked with was trying to put together a band, and when he found out that Mark played drums, he invited him to a rehearsal. They liked Mark's playing, and offered him the gig. "Compared to what I know now, it was really a nowhere little gig, but at the time I thought, 'Woah, I've landed my first gig!'" The band was playing predominantly heavy metal, with a few top-40 cover songs thrown in. On a good night, each member would make all of 20 dollars, playing at the type of places where chicken wire was strung across the front of the stage to protect the band from flying beer bottles. The other members moved into Mark's apartment, and he was basically supporting them on the money he made from his day job, and the little money the band made playing in beer joints. After about a year of that, Mark moved out. "I'd had it. It was going nowhere."

Herndon's next gig was with a society band Ed Turbeville & His Orchestra who played weekends at country clubs, doing standards such as "Harbor Lights" and more top-40 cover tunes. It was Ed who taught Mark about playing for the band, instead of just for himself. "Ed was the first mentor I had; he was the first guy I worked for. He taught me a lot about discipline. When I came to him, it was like a drum solo the whole time I was playing. I was more interested in my own chops than in playing for the band. He settled me down and started me thinking 'band.' It was a good

make it in the band."

It was a couple of years later that Mark finally became seriously interested in becoming a musician. "I had a friend who was a drummer and he played in a rock 'n' roll band. They played for a lot of dances at school, and they were real good. I think it was the Senior Prom; they had the people eating out of the palms of their hands. People weren't dancing, they were up by the stage watching the band. It was like a concert, and it hit me like a bolt of lightning I *had* to learn how to play. I'd had friends who had drumsets, and I was always able to tap out a little rhythm. It just came naturally to me. But I never got the fever until that night, and it's something that has stayed with me ever since.

"I still had a little bit of school left. I was going to military school and I lived in a barracks, and that was not real conducive to practicing. Most of my time was regimented into things I had to do. I had a pair of sticks, and I arranged some 8-track tapes on a table like a tom-tom set-up, and just practiced going from tape to tape.

"When school was over, I went back home. I kind of put it away for a while because I had a summer job working in a factory and it seemed like I was either working or sleeping. But when I went away to college, I set up some chairs with pillows on them in my dorm room, and I'd play along with the radio and things like that. I made my first foot pedal out of a coathanger and a ping-pong ball. I bent the coathanger around so it had a little spring action to it, and I straightened out the question mark part of it and stuck a little ball on it, and tapped out some rhythm against a cardboard box. My cymbals were styrofoam packing material stuck up on a couple of pieces of two-by-four. I wish I had a picture of that, because it was classic. I went outside one day and looked up at my window, and my dorm room looked like a junk pile. But I had fun.

"I saved money and saved money, and finally bought my first



Photo by Wade L. Dykes

thing, because I might never have lasted with Alabama if it hadn't been for old Ed."

But did Mark appreciate what Ed was doing for him while it was actually happening? "No way. I didn't really see the light back then. It used to make me so mad I'd do something that I thought was great, but it was actually out of taste and he'd turn around and cuss at me or something."

"Interestingly enough, Teddy, our bass player, and I talk about this same kind of thing. The older I get and the more I play, the more I get into this 'Listen to us' concept, rather than 'Listen to me.' A lot of times when we're playing, I sort of take myself out and listen to see how much the band is playing as a band, and see how my part is fitting in. If you do something that doesn't fit, you'll know it. That's like putting the ol' square peg in the round hole. If you're playing something in 4/4, and you try to throw in a little triplet on the ride or something, and it's hard to do, then it doesn't fit. That's the rule of thumb I go by. If you can do it effortlessly, it will fit in the song. If you have to think about how to do it, it shouldn't be there. The song pulls it out of you; the particular piece you're playing will make you play. Your head won't make you play your heart makes you play; the music makes you play. That's the way I perceive it anyhow."

"It's something you have to learn to do, I think. And I'm just beginning to scratch the surface there. I've stubbornly held onto licks and stuff that I know in my heart don't fit. But technically it's something I want to do, so I'll do it and do it, until finally I'll say, 'Just drop it, man. It doesn't go there.' I think I'm growing up as far as playing is concerned. I've opened that door now, and I want to pursue it even further. I can't always get into that way of thinking every night, but it's coming."

"You have to sacrifice your own ego. To me, that's where it's hard to be a professional. Being a professional means sacrifice, and if you want to be a pro, you have to spend your whole life trying to be a pro. I don't consider myself a pro; I'm still learning. There are a lot of things I still have to get straight. The day I start thinking I'm a pro, I guess, will be the day I've messed up. I still do things I know I shouldn't do, but I'm always interested in playing better. I try not to be guilty of practicing on the job, though. I've seen a lot of players do that and it's not too impressive. That's usually the kind of band where everybody's playing for themselves, rather than playing for the band, and it's kind of annoying to listen to that. But I'm a human being I make mistakes and I will experiment every now and then. There's a fine line between practicing on the gig and experimenting, I think. It's hard to describe, but I think experimenting consists of trying to make the band sound better. Practicing means that you're just trying to improve your own playing. When you experiment, you aren't trying to do things that you can't do; you're just doing something within your own realm of playing to make the overall music sound better. Maybe it's just something that comes naturally, like sticking a little



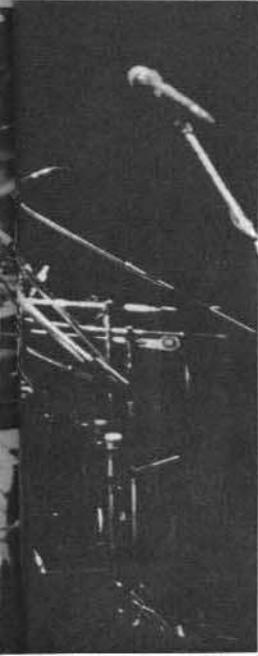
Photo by John Lee

chime in at some point, or something like that. If you don't get any mean looks, it fits. But you can't spend the whole song trying new things every night. You find what works and stick with it, and maybe just spice it up a little bit every now and then. That way, you and your band are going to grow. You can't just keep playing the same piece the same way every time."

Herndon spent about two years working with Ed and his orchestra, and learning to concentrate on keeping good time and a solid beat. Although Mark now realizes the benefit of that training, at the time he found Ed's insistence on just keeping a beat rather hard to accept. That's when Mark started putting feelers out, and it was during that time that he first met Alabama. As already described, that meeting did not immediately lead to a gig, so Mark continued working with Ed, and a couple of months later, hooked up with the band in Augusta. "I was in two bands for a while, because I was in the process of leaving Ed and starting with this other band. They had a guy they were phasing out, so he would play on weekends while I was working with Ed. Then I'd pack my car, drive to Augusta, and play with these guys during the week. I finally left Ed to go with these guys full time, and the band only lasted another two or three weeks! It was the classic problem that all musicians who are dedicated have with other musicians who are not we couldn't get anybody to come to practice. We couldn't get any work out of anybody. Then one guy was married and decided that his wife should sing in the group. I'm in the band and she's my wife and she's gonna sing.' Oh Lord, it was awful! She couldn't carry a tune in a bucket." That group broke up, Mark went with Alabama immediately thereafter, and "Before I knew it, I was celebrating a year anniversary with the group, and then two, three, and now it's over four years that I've been with them."

In that four years, Alabama has had remarkable success. After winning *Billboard's* "New Group of the Year" award in 1981, they have gone on to win such honors as The Academy of Country Music's "Entertainers of the Year" award (three years in a row), and "Vocal Group of the Year" award (two years in a row), a Grammy award for their album *Mountain Music*, the American Music Award for "Favorite Country Group," the Country Music Association's 1982 awards for "Entertainers of the Year," "Vocal

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"I THINK 'TALENT IS YOUR ABILITY TO FEEL MUSIC AND THEN TO BE ABLE TO GIVE THAT FEELING TO OTHER PEOPLE.'"

The Fabulous Thunderbirds are the real thing alright. Hailing (both literally and spiritually) from Southwest Texas (Austin, to be specific), the T-Birds seem to sum up the earthy spirit of the entire Gulf Coast region, playing axle-grease fried blues and roots rock 'n' roll with the kind of outcast authenticity that can only be learned, not earned. From the tops of their Wildroot heads, to the pointy-toed tips of their feet, guitarist Jimmie Vaughn, electric harpist and vocalist Kirn Wilson, bassist Keith Ferguson and drummer Fran Christina exude commitment and no-nonsense enthusiasm. Their music seems to have chosen them every bit as much as they chose it, and one can half-imagine them pickin' their teeth with barbed wire after chowing down on a hearty meal of barbecued armadillo and cactus fritters, before draining a draught of thirty-weight and packing up their grip on the way to another party, in another bar.

All of which is captured with spooky vehemence on their last Chrysalis album *T-Bird Rhythm* in a winning collaboration with producer Nick Lowe. And so strong has been the word-of-mouth on this band that Carlos Santana himself brought them onboard for his latest solo album, so that he could "feel the earth underneath him."

Which is why it came as something of a surprise, when I finally met drummer Fran Christina, to discover that, in spite of the roots authenticity of his upbeat Texas shuffle on "Extra Jimmies" (from their earlier Chrysalis outing *What's The Word*), he hails not from the physical state of Texas only from that state of mind.

Christina was born February 1 1951, in Rhode Island, but, as he puts it, "Musically, I never left Texas. I'm just a product of everything I've ever listened to from Chicago to New Orleans to Texas. And most of the bands I've played with especially Roomful Of Blues, Asleep At The Wheel, and the T-Birds have reflected the sound of Texas r&b to one degree or another."

Kind of a strange buzz for a young man to get living in Rhode Island, hardly a hotbed of the blues. "It was strange, now that you mention it," Christina reflects. "It was a freak because we were playing music that nobody else was back then, and I have to credit Duke Robillard with that for bringing me out. Him and my brother. They were record hunters, and there were also a couple of good radio stations back then that played rock 'n' roll, rockabilly, r&b and blues; a station out of Providence playing the stuff that we all gravitated towards. I think the first real buzz I got off of anybody was Muddy Waters and Elmore James, and it just went on from there to people like Rockin' Sydney, T-Bone Walker . . . you name it.

"Actually, I have to take that back, about the first things that grabbed me. I was younger than that. You see, I grew up in a Catholic family. I used to go to my grandma's house on Saturday night and stay over there with my cousin so that I could get up early on Sunday to go to Mass with her. But there was this Negro Baptist church down the street, and they all sang and got off great gospel. So me and my cousin would go down there after Mass to check it out every Sunday; I mean, if my parents ever found out they would've killed us. Then we started going in the church. Oh, man, it was something the way they were getting down; it was just sonic. And (*hat* was probably the very first thing which turned me onto music."

And that big beat, with everybody slamming their feet down on the church floor in unison.

"Yeah," Christina smiles, "that was the whole deal. And it all came back to me later. What I just described happened to me when I was like seven or eight, then it started coming back to me when I began hearing all this r&b and blues. I started hearing all those sounds again you know, Ray Charles and all that and I made that connection and realized *that's* what I've been hearing all along that it was all the same. The hard blues, the rockabilly, the gospel, the r&b, the rock 'n' roll. All of it came full circle and I realized where it all stemmed from. It all fit, and I haven't had time to think about it since I've just been doing it."

Thus, without benefit of British mid-wifery (having American r&b fed to us by English bands), Fran Christina entered a musical continuum as rich and as varied as the people who make up America. "It's funny, isn't it," he muses. "It keeps coming back and hitting 'em right in the face. It just blows my mind; I can't understand why they want to deny it."

So with that big beat echoing away in the back of his mind, Christina was drawn into the popular music of his day and its blues roots. But why drums?

"Well, you know how it is when you're 12 years old. You go around banging on things, right? And then your older brother who you really idolized plays guitar with his grease-monkey friend, and they say 'Come on, we need a drummer.' So they got me a pair of sticks. We used to be working the night shift in this guy's garage, and we'd set up a bunch of oil drums, and they'd hook up their amps," he laughs. "We'd do covers of Everly Brothers stuff; Lightnin' Hopkins, John Lee Hooker. Which sounded pretty good on oil drums.

"Afterwards, I was in my little cover band in the bowling alleys. That was my pre-musical period from 12-14. You know, covers of "Get Off Of My Cloud," "Wipe-

out" . . . bowling alley music. When I started, I had a set of Winstons, you know, but then my cousin had a boyfriend who had a beautiful set of Slingerland *Radio Kings*, and I wanted *those* bad. That was like my dream kit, so he was giving it up, and he sold me all his drums, hardware, cases and cymbals for \$200. Beautiful cymbals, too; I had those for a real long time, until they were stolen on my wedding anniversary. There was this big 22" A. Zildjian medium ride; really nice, even tone; good ping to it; and no big buildup, until you hit it in the right spot for that great big backbeat/r&b kind of thing . . . you know, where you *want it* to build up like a wave. Yeah, and a 20" A.," he continues digressing wistfully into his lost cymbal bag, "and 19" and 18" K. Zildjian crashes, and a 14" K., that was a Turkish K., that was the neatest little crash/splash you ever heard it was so fast and dark. God, they were just great. I haven't been able to find any cymbals that good since."

Currently making do with a 20" A. medium ride, and an 18" (Canadian) K., and a pair of 14" *New Beat* hi-hats, Christina obviously hears something in those old cymbals, and seems mildly put off by today's heavier modern cymbals. "There's something wrong with most of the cymbals I see on the shelves these days. They're either too dark or too light; too much buildup; too slow or too fast; not enough ping. The main thing is I can't get the sound out of each section of the cymbal that I like. You ought to be able to get an articulate, even sound all around the cymbal; something distinctive from the bell; a sort of clear half-crash in the middle; and a nice controlled explosion that doesn't swamp the sound when you come back in the ride.

"I may be wrong," he continues, "but it seems like the quality of the brass, or how they're processing it, or the way they mix it, or the way they finish the cymbal seems different. The new cymbals don't sound like the same instruments that they were 10, 15, 20 years ago. Something's wrong. I've heard some Paistes that I like . . . but you get a one-formula cymbal and they make them all sound the same. Who wants to sound like everyone else?" he laughs. "Oh, this is the Formula such and such, this is the most popular one, the one so and so is using.' Big deal. I don't want to be popular. I want to sound like what I like."

How Christina sounds is partly a product of his lack of formal training (coupled to an abundance of practical experience and the encouragement of musical friends like guitarist Duke Robillard). "One of the reasons why I never developed a habit of practicing, was because I felt like everybody was being bugged by it. So they threw my drums in the basement, and what I used my drums for half the time was basic frus-

Fran CHRISTINA'S T' Bird Rhythms

by Chip Stern

Photo by Tracy Hart



tration-vent go down and take a two-hour drum solo and block out everything. Then, around the time I was 14, the desire went away, and I stopped playing drums for a couple of years. Then Duke came along and said, 'Hey, man, I'm starting this band, and I want you to play drums.' And I said, 'Nah, I can't play the drums, you guys are too good . . .'

But Christina got talked into it, which is how he ended up playing the hardcore Texas r&b of Roomful Of Blues and the driving Western swing of Asleep At The Wheel. He soon began incorporating his many influences into a southpaw's style.

"I was into everyone from Baby Dodds to Sid Catlett; from Elgie Edmonds to S.P. Leary. And Mr. Al Jackson, I really took a hankering to him and all of the New Orleans drummers, like Earl Palmer—they had such a great *feel*. I'm pretty much a product of that Louisiana sound. I got turned on to those rhythms again when I had a chance to go to New Orleans with the T-Birds. Before I went there I knew what it was they were playing, but when I went down there and saw it I knew *why* they were playing it—all the styles from Zydeco to the jazz. It all has that little extra hip shank in it; that street dancing, the grease,

and that second line call and response. I got really turned on to the whole attitude of those rhythms when I got to see them up close, in the context of the community."

As for being a lefty playing a righty's kit, Christina pleads ignorance. "I didn't realize it until I was 17 years old, that I played backwards and upside down," he laughs. "I guess what happened is that people started telling me that, and I hadn't noticed. When I first started seeing drummers, most of them were right-handed and set up that way. And I was looking at them, so when I got my first set of drums, I set them up to feel comfortable, without



Photo by Tracy Hart

anyone to tell me how. It's weird. I throw with my right hand, but I write with my left. So I don't know if that has anything to do with it, but that's how I feel comfortable.

"The thing is, there are patterns that right-handed drummers play real easy and natural that I have to think about, and vice-versa. But there are a lot of things that come easier to me than for a righty; just getting around the kit on certain things. It's like the left side of my kit is pretty much played with the left side of my body, and the right side with my right. So I might tend to accent like a mirror image of the way someone else would."

Moving around from Roomful to California, Kentucky and Ann Arbor, Christina increased his playing experiences even as the entire music scene was coming under the spell of the new popular rock of the mid-to-late '60s. "How'd I take to rock?" Christina asks rhetorically. "Well, I went to Shea Stadium to see the Beatles, and that sort of turned me off to rock concerts forever; pressed up against a chain-link fence, with 40,000 screaming girls crushing against you, and no sound to speak of it was terrible. But I got caught up for a short period of time, certainly. You've got to re-

spect the Beatles, of course. And the Stones and the Byrds. It was a weird period, because here I was presented with all the popular rock of the day, like Traffic, and I'd been listening to all this blues. Still, King Crimson and Jimi Hendrix got to me for a while, and I guess I was captivated by it all for a year or two. But I was pretty wide open to anything back then.

"But the stuff that stuck with me after the infatuation passed was like, Carl Perkins. I mean, I played it all, and once I realized where all of this stuff was coming from, I began checking out the original roots of everything that was breaking: Louisiana, South Texas, Memphis, Chicago that's what originally drew me to music, and that's what kept me in it."

But after the Ann Arbor music scene more or less dried up, Christina found himself discouraged by the day-to-day rigors of the music *business*, and after 10 years of playing, he decided to hang it up for a while. "I'd gone up to Nova Scotia to visit a friend, and I found a chunk of land and a house up there real cheap, and I just moved up there. I was getting real tired of club owners screwing me around, so I didn't want anything to do with it for a while. It's actually Duke Robillard's fault

that I left Nova Scotia and began playing again, but I was up there for a good four years, and in that time I started playing with the T-Birds. A friend of mine, John Nicholas, who used to play with Asleep At The Wheel, was the one that put us together.

"You see, the T-Birds came up to New England and they brought along a drummer who had *never* been out of Texas before ... I guess he was like 45 or so, and he just didn't know how to handle it when they hit Boston. And they woke up one morning and he was gone no note or nothing right in the middle of a long tour. So my friend John heard that they were looking for a drummer, and told them there was this guy who lived up in Canada. And they called me up. Well, they didn't *call* me up. I didn't have a phone, so they called the Canadian Mounties, and had them deliver the message that 'The Fabulous Thunderbirds need you to play drums next week in London, Ontario.'" Christina breaks up at the memory. "So then, I had to hitchhike from Nova Scotia to London, just south of Toronto, about 1500 miles, and it took me a couple of days, because I didn't think I'd have that much trouble getting rides. All I brought

along were my sticks and my snare, because when their drummer split he just left the drums, so I used his old set of Slingerlands, which had been through a pretty thorough beating.

"All I knew about the T-Birds, because I'd never heard them you understand, was that my friend John thought that they played my kind of music and that we'd work out well together. And from the first note it was like, 'I've found my brothers!' Me and Jimmy just kept looking at each other, surprising the hell out of one another. He'd respond perfectly to some idea I threw out at him, and it was fantastic; it was just the way I'd always been thinking about this music. So I'd play with them on the road in New England anytime they were up in my neck of the woods, and it just grew from there.

"The role of the drummer in this music is just about as basic as you can get. Forget the flash and the trash and just get down to drivin' the band from the bottom kick 'em in the butt. I know that the simpler I play the more straight-ahead the better the band plays, especially the guitar player. With harp players . . . well, harp players get a drive happening out of accenting the groove; there's a certain kind of push that harp players need from me. When they go to accent things, it really has to have that push. That's where I would use accents more, whereas guitar players like Jimmy I don't know about most guitar players but what Jimmy likes is something to ride on. He has a sense of time that's so strong, he doesn't need me to remind him of the beat, just to make it bigger and prettier. The great thing about this band is that we all have a similar time sense; we don't think about the time it's just a feel that we share. Keith and I are so tight I don't even have to listen to him he's always there. It's really a shock to me on the infrequent occasions when he does stumble a bit, which is like, never. The way these cats play is so laid-back, unpremeditated and spontaneous. *Everybody is playing at it, and not playing.* Down there in Texas, most of them grew up with their instruments in their hands, listening to the same sources some really raw shit happening musically, something that you can't shake. It's a thing that's indigenous to Southwest Texas and Louisiana that *real* ancient rhythm & blues.

"That's why we can play as a unit the way we do. When you don't have to *think* about the music and the time, it's so easy, because you don't have to be considering, 'Well, how should I play this fill, or where should I put this accent?' Then you're *playing* music, and that's when it starts to happen. That's why it's difficult in the studio, because you start planning. 'I'm going to do this here, and put that there.' You can't play music while you're thinking

about arithmetic. You've just got to let it breathe and come out of the sticks."

All of which brings us beyond a discussion of musical attitudes and into a bit of background on the different kits and setups Christina has used over the years; the peculiar challenges of playing live or in the studio; and coping with musicians who possess differing styles and time feels.

"I always loved the sound of those old Slingerland *Radio Kings*," Christina enthuses. "They have an incredibly fat,

**I HAVE THE TYPE OF
DRUMSETS AND SOUND
THAT MOST ENGINEERS
CRINGE AT IN THE STUDIO.
THEY START COMING AT
ME WITH PILLOWS AND
GAFFER'S TAPE. . . "**

warm sound. I've had a number of sets of them over the years, and that's what I've got now at home in my little practice room. They're my favorites. The only drums I've ever found that I liked as much were an old set of Fibes . . . which is an interesting story. I was just home at my folks last week, and my younger brother, who plays drums too, called me up to tell me he thinks he found *my* set of drums. You see, I had this set of Fibes stolen when I came down from Nova Scotia to play with Scott Hamilton, Chris Flory and Mike Ashton

(who play with the Widespread Depression Orchestra); we have this little four-piece bebop band called the Whiz Kids. And I'd gone down to Boston, stayed over at a friend's house and had my drums in the back of the car I had a gig with these guys that night in Providence. So that day, my wife, who trains horses, had a horse running at Suffolk Downs. I went to see her horse and didn't even bet on the thing, and it came in at like 30 to 1. So I came back to my car to go to the gig, all bummed out because I didn't bet on this horse, and when I opened the trunk the Fibes are gone, and *those* cymbals I was telling you about, too," he added with an audible sigh.

"And these Fibes were a really neat set of drums, like one of the original sets when the guy started making 'em, just before he got bought out by Martin; I'd really fallen in love with those things when I heard Mose Allison's drummer playing a set. I liked the way those drums were real punchy and crisp, a little too crisp, in fact, for me. So what I did was put calfskin heads on 'em, and it was neat, because you got a warm sound but it was still punchy. So these were stolen like nine years ago, just as I was getting used to them, and my brother'd been looking for the same type of drums, and he found a set of Fibes and they were *those* drums, believe it or not. So right now they're owned by my sister-in-law's cousin's son, with all these thrashing marks on 'em so I know they're the ones. Pretty wild, huh? I'm thinking of going over and asking him if I can buy them back.

"But what I'm doing now is making a set of drums. I sent this guy MacSweeney

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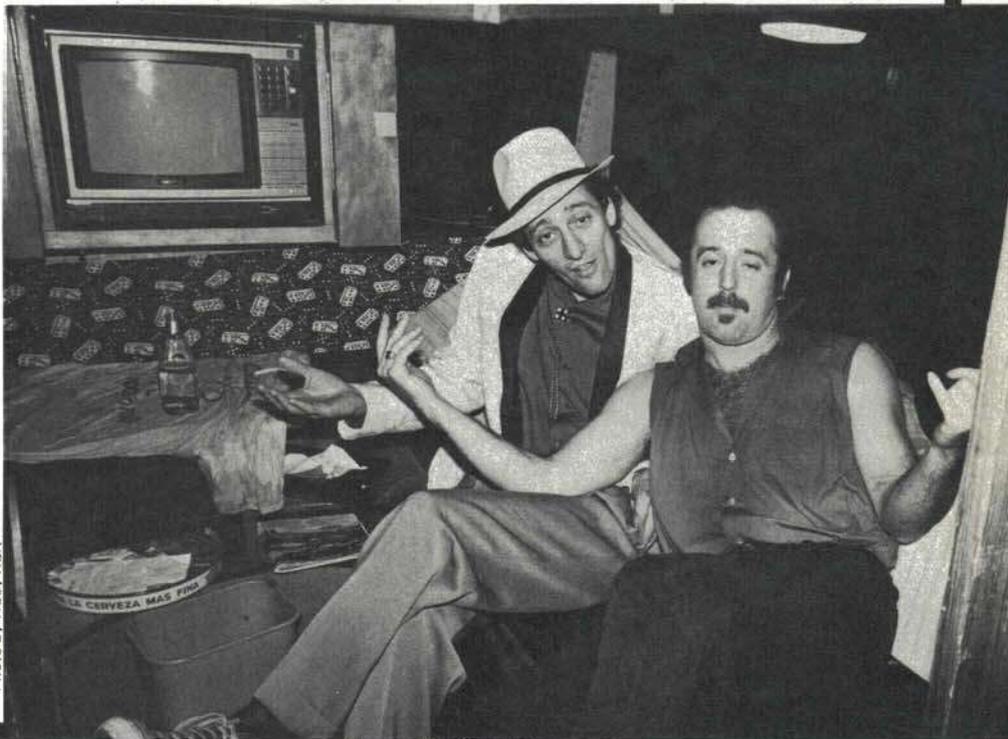


Photo by Tracy Hart

Fran with Kim Wilson

LOWER BACK

Drumming relies on the ability of the player to tolerate sitting and to bend and twist the spine with a full range of motion while playing the instrument. Since drumming is so physically demanding, it is imperative that the drummer maintain his low back in excellent condition, before and after practicing or performing so that he prevents the onset, or worsening, of low back pain. Poor posture, tense muscles, lack of exercise, improper rest and nutrition, are all factors that predispose one to low back syndromes that can often be prevented or cured by healthy attitudes and habits.

Approximately 11 million people are treated for low back pain every day. Eighty per cent of us will experience incapacitating low back pain at least once in our lifetime and one third of us are suffering with low back discomfort right now.

Alf Nachemson, a well known Swedish orthopedic surgeon, has done extensive research on lower back dysfunction. He found that sitting and leaning slightly for-

ward creates up to 11 times more pressure on the lumbar (lower back) spine than lying down. Standing only creates four times as much pressure.

Physiological Causes

The bony structure of the low back include the five lumbar vertebrae, the sacrum (composed of five fused vertebrae) and the coccyx (four or five fused vertebrae). The two pelvic assemblies are attached to the right and left sides of the sacrum. These segments are supported by *ligaments*, *muscles* and *tendons*. *Muscles* are the only tissues of the three with *contractile ability*. Muscles move the bones. The muscles attach to the bones via tendons; dense white connective tissue with slight elastic properties. *Ligaments* are the dense, greyish, virtually non-elastic connective tissues that anchor one bone to another. The ligaments are often sprained (pulled beyond their normal range of motion and sustaining micro-tears) when there is inadequate muscular support in the area. Poor posture (i.e.

slumping on the drum throne), can create a chronic strain and stretch on these ligaments in the lower back and perpetuate an unstable situation.

Attaching the vertebrae to each other are the *intervertebral discs*, cartilagenous structures, which are responsible for shock absorption from jolts and jarring, creating space between the vertebrae and allowing for movement between these segments of the spine. The discs are composed of two parts: the outer fibrous multilayered annulus fibrosus arrayed in a manner similar to a radial tire, and the inner liquid nucleus pulposus. Shock absorption is carried out by the liquid nucleus pulposus, which when healthy, allows one vertebrae to rock upon the other, acting somewhat like a ball-bearing, while absorbing compressive forces. The outer rings of the annulus fibrosus protect the spine by restricting excessive movement of the bony spinal column which could potentially harm other ligaments, blood vessels and nerves. The discs add 1/3 of the height to the lumbar (low back) spine and create the normal curved shape of the low back.

Unfortunately, when traumatized, the discs begin to weaken, cracks and tears appear in the annulus fibrosus, and the nucleus pulposus begins to bulge towards the pain-sensitive areas. Pressure on the local nerve root by a protruding disc can create pain in the low back and low buttock, thighs, knee, ankle or foot. Pain at the buttock level and below is often classified as sciatica, with reference to the path of the sciatic nerve, a large (almost two centimeters in diameter) nerve formed by roots of the last three lumbar nerves and the first two sacral nerves. Loss of strength, as well as pain, in the buttock, thigh, leg, ankle and foot is created by irritation of the nerve root. The muscles are sustaining excessive contractions because of the irritated root, and the sustained contractions reduce the diameter of the blood and lymph vessels passing through the muscle and thus reduce the supply of oxygen and other nutrients into the muscle, and the passage of metabolic waste products out. This diminishes the effective strength, efficiency and speed of the muscle contractions and results in less speed and rhythmic control for the drummer. Unnecessary soreness and cramping of the lower extremities also manifest because of the nerve irritation, which makes for a very grumpy drummer not one who is very excited to practice and perform.

Besides disc protrusions, muscle, tendon and ligament strains and sprains, another situation that often arises with or

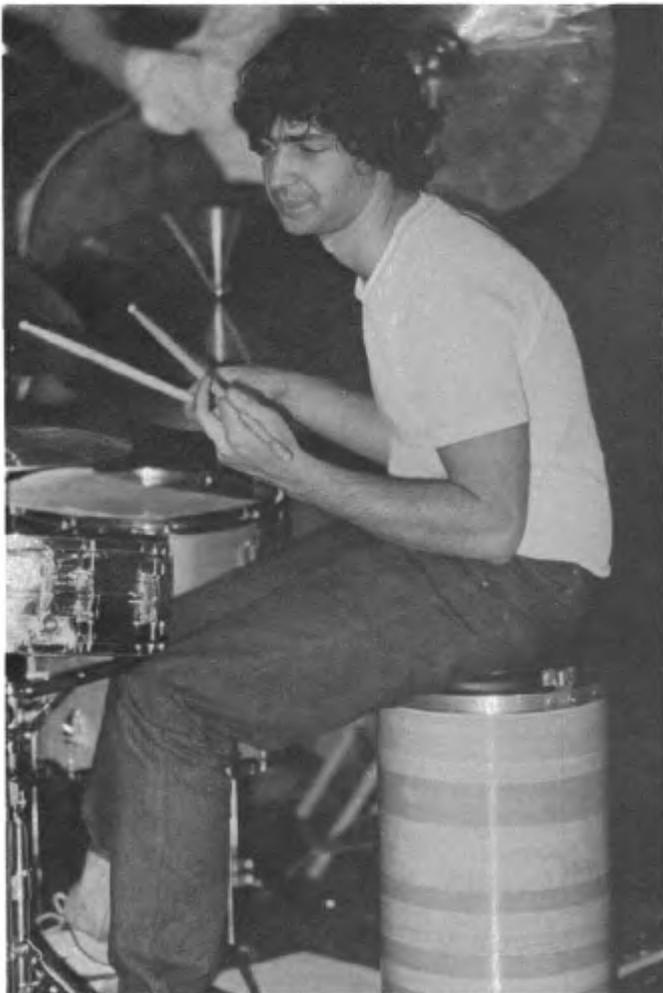


Photo by Dr. R.H. Siegel

Danny Gottlieb demonstrating 'sway back' posture.

and how to

PROBLEMS -

without the aforementioned conditions is the facet syndrome. Facet is the name applied to the joints at the rear of each vertebrae. Each vertebrae has four facets: two on top to articulate with the vertebrae above, and two on the bottom to articulate with the vertebrae below. With continual pressure from bad posture, lack of muscle tone, nutrition and rest, the facets may begin to jam and the capsule around them is squeezed and irritated. This often creates pain in the lower back, above the anus, groin and thighs. Standing with an exaggerated lordosis (sway back) is a predisposition to this problem because it tends to reduce the space between the facets and creates compression and pain. The facet syndrome can lead to an intervertebral disc syndrome and vice-versa, because both are related to loss of height between the vertebrae, the disc in the front and the facets in the rear. Disc syndromes are more disabling, but while facet syndromes and chronic sprains are not incapacitating they can lead to just as much pain and loss of productivity as the former.

Trauma to the spine can be divided into various classifications. Chronic trauma is the insidious, cumulative degeneration of the structures of the lower back. It can be created by months/years of practicing or playing with a bent or slumping posture, which distributes the body weight in such a way that uneven stress over the vertebrae and discs precedes actual degeneration to the segments. Chronic trauma may be permitted to continue because of insufficient support of the low back by weak muscles of the abdomen, hips and back. Various medical research studies have shown that up to 50% of lower lumbar spinal pressure can be redistributed up from the lower back by proper strength and tone of these muscle groups, especially the abdominals.

What You Can Do

By learning and adhering to a simple, yet well-planned exercise and posture program, the effects of chronic trauma can be minimized and even eradicated. Learning to bend one's knees when reaching down to the floor from the standing position protects the back from strain. Getting off the drum stool and squatting or kneeling to adjust a bass drum pedal or pick up a drum key can mean the difference between agony and comfort. Having sympathetic band members help a low-back-pain sufferer lift and move the heavier equipment is good insurance that they will have a drummer to play the next gig. A multi-drum set-up that forces one to reach out to play the cymbals or toms at ridiculous lengths should be re-

positioned to produce greater ease of attack and movement. Besides being more efficient and enhancing playing control, there is less stress created on the lower back from excessive reaching, bending and twisting. If one uses bass drum mounted toms, he should be careful not to force himself into a situation where he is too close or too far from the bass drum pedal, creating discomfort in the spine. If there is no comfortable set up with the mounted toms, he should invest in floor stands for them. The drummer should remember that the nerves that control the function of the thigh, leg, ankle and foot muscles are those that exist from the lower back. If there is discomfort indicating excessive compression and/or irritation of the lumbar spinal nerve roots, one can be sure that those muscles that control the bass drum and hi-hat pedals are functioning at *much* less than optimum.

With this in mind, I'm not all that surprised when drummers who have been treated and educated in my office report

back that execution of certain complex and speedy foot patterns have required less effort and are smoother than before. This new automaticity of movement translates into better time, with less hesitation or rushing from fills or breaks. When dealing with moderate to severe low back problems such as disc protrusions, facet syndromes, and sprains or strains, every available minute should be taken in the supine position (lying on the back) with the knees bent and supported. This reduces the axial gravitational pressure (pressure downwards along the spine) and allows healing to proceed unimpeded. The more time one has in this position, the less time it will take for the body to repair the damaged tissue in the muscle, ligaments and tendons. Choose a drum throne that feels comfortable and gives you the most support. Make sure it is stable and check it periodically when setting up to make sure that all rivets are in the proper place and not coming out. The author once sustained a severe fall from a stage because of a defective drum

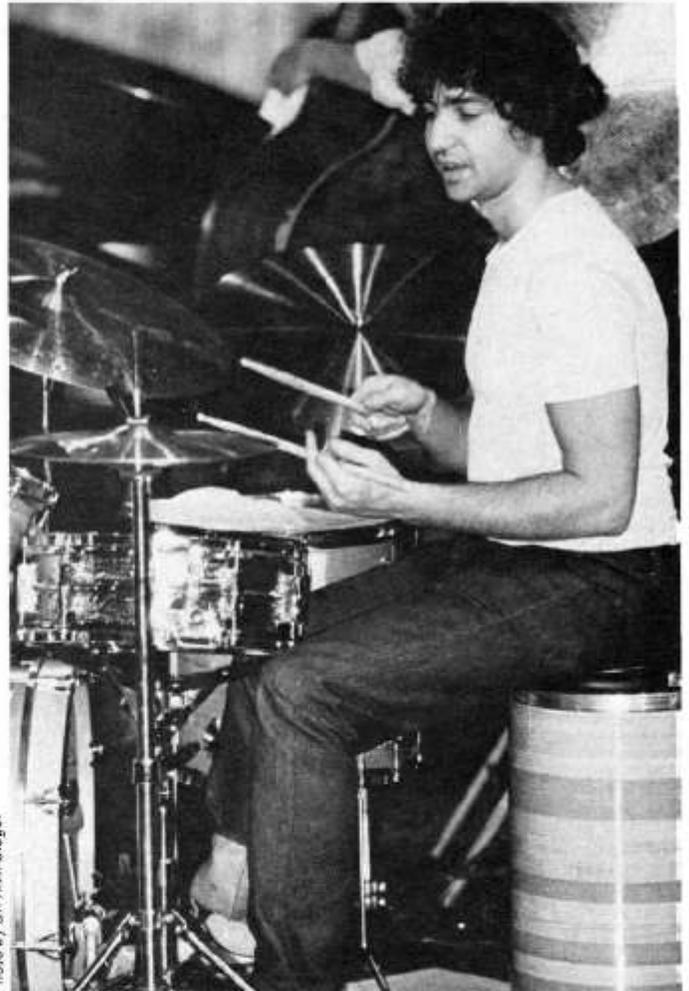
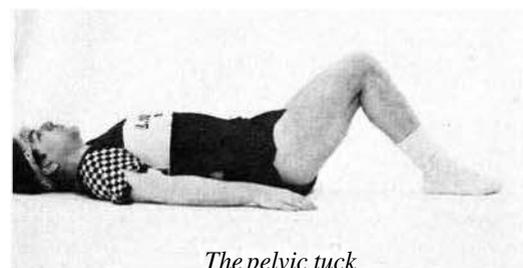


photo by Dr. R.H. Siegel

Danny Gottlieb demonstrating correct posture.

avoid them

by Dr. Roy H. Siegel

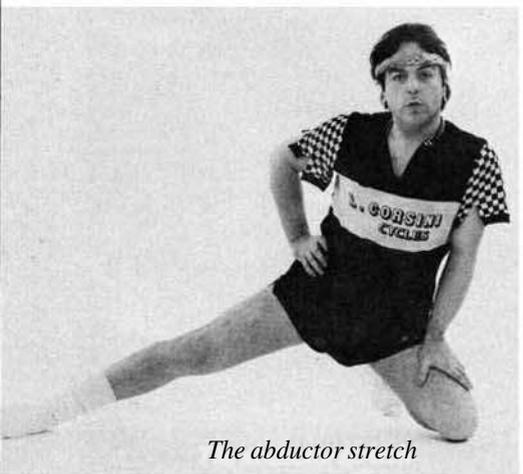


The pelvic tuck

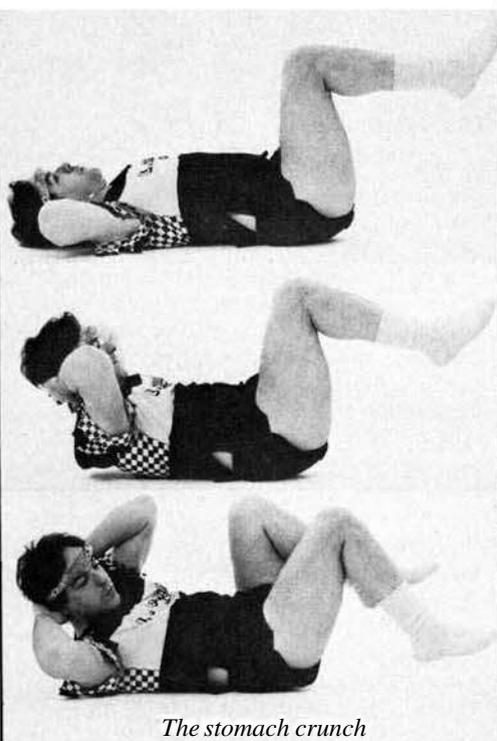
stool that had a rivet slip out of a cross bar. Be sure that the seat cushion is not too hard otherwise, pressure on the back of the thighs may lead to reduction of the superficial circulation to the muscles of the thighs, legs and feet. If the cushion on the throne is too soft, your thighs will be pressing on the wooden base with the same undesirable results. Try to sit with the thighs somewhat close to parallel with the floor. Sitting low is usually worse than sitting higher than with thighs parallel, as it creates more pressure in the lumbar spine, however, if you sit slightly high, refrain from getting into a chronic slumped over position.

Nutrition

Eat fresh, whole, natural foods, and minimize your intake of processed, preserved and otherwise adulterated preparations. Think of yourself as a high performance race car. You wouldn't think of putting "Ring-Ding" gasoline in the tank. Drink plenty of water (at least six glasses of pure water a day) to reduce the possibility of dehydration within the muscles. Alcohol, coffee or tea reduces the water content of the body which is lost in excess urination. They have a diuretic effect. Diminished water supply in the muscles leads to weakness because proper water content is essential to metabolism in these tissues. Eat as many raw, fresh fruits and vegetables as possible to ensure proper levels of vitamins and minerals, especially vitamin C, calcium and magnesium. Calcium, magnesium and potassium have important roles as natural muscle relaxants. A tight, contracted muscle is a weakened muscle because it squeezes off its normal blood



The abductor stretch



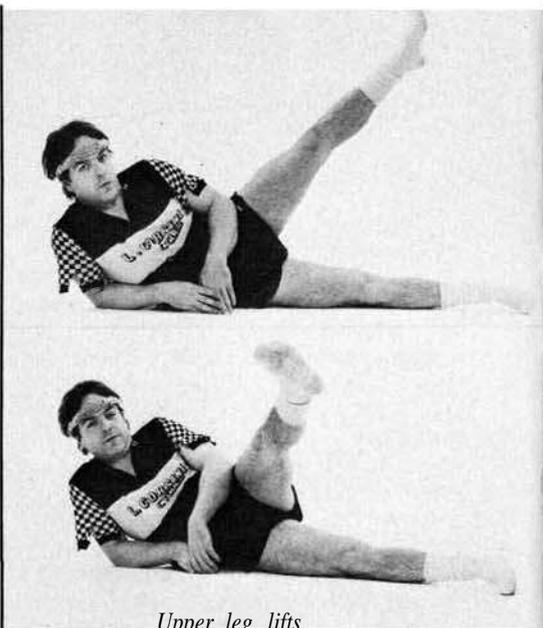
The stomach crunch

supply and waste drainage, leading to reduced support and stability of an irritated or inflamed back. Vitamin C is important in maintaining the strength of collagen and elastin, two components of the connective tissues (ligaments, tendons and muscles) that maintain structural integrity.

Exercise and Postural Readjustment

The most productive exercise for reducing low back pain is the *pelvic tuck*. This can be done in any position: standing, sitting or lying down. Contract the stomach and buttock muscles as hard as possible, flattening out the low back. Hold the contractions as long as possible. The posture created by this exercise while standing should be maintained in combination with the chin tucked in, without bending the head forward, and the neck elongated so that the head does not jut in front of the rest of the body. This posture will reduce the amount of stress on the low back, as well as the neck and shoulders. If the head is too far forward, the muscles along the spine must stay contracted to keep the head and upper body from moving further forward. So even if this position feels the most comfortable, it may be creating chronic tension and trauma which will manifest itself in irritation, pain and most important, actual degeneration of the spinal joints. Do not do sit ups with the legs straight. This creates a pull on the low back by the psoas muscles for the first 30 of movement that may actually irritate and perpetuate a low back syndrome. Straight leg lifts while lying on the back are not recommended either as these exercises may arch the low back and pull on the inflamed area.

The *stomach crunch* is an exercise that

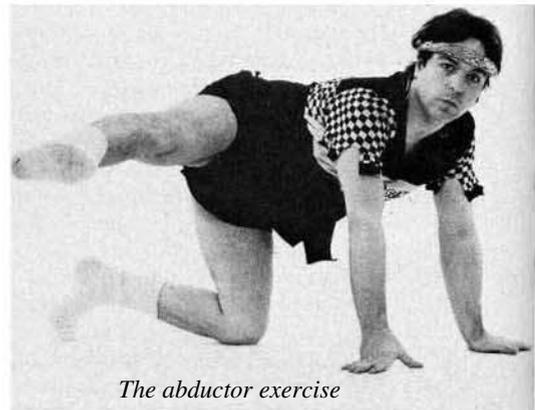


Upper leg lifts

strengthens the upper abdominal muscles while protecting the low back. As Dino Danelli is illustrating, put the hands behind the neck to support the head, knees up in the air with the thighs perpendicular and legs parallel to the floor. While exhaling, slowly raise the upper back off the floor while contracting and flattening the abdominals as much as possible. Inhale and return to the floor. Repeat this up to 100 times. As this exercise becomes easier, begin to utilize the oblique abdominals (towards the sides) by coming up (don't forget to exhale) to either side. When that is mastered, start moving the knees slightly (about six inches) back and forth towards the head four times while coming up and four times while going down. This movement exercises the lower abdominals.

Next, do the *upper leg lifts* while lying on your side, up to 100 times. This strengthens the abductor muscles which are found on the outside of the hips. Strengthening these groups keeps the lateral back muscles from over contracting and creating spasm in the spine. This exercise also strengthens the knees.

In doing the *lower leg lift*, lie on one side, bend the upper knee and plant the upper foot in front of the lower leg. Lift your



The abductor exercise



Lower leg lift

lower leg up and down while keeping one hip over the other. This strengthens the abductor muscles found on the inside of the thigh. If the abductors are too weak or overcontracted, this may lead to instability of the pelvis and prolong low back pain.

The *hamstring stretch* is an extremely important exercise. Do not do this, however, if you have sciatic pain (nerve pain going down the leg) as this exercise will pull on that nerve. If the hamstrings are excessively tight, they will prevent the pelvis from moving forward with normal bending. This is because the three hamstring muscles attach from the back of the knee to the bottom of the pelvis. If this pelvis movement is restricted, all forward movement of the lower torso must therefore be sustained by the lower back and this will serve to further irritate a lower back problem. Lie on your back, bend one knee and flex the thigh so it is perpendicular to the floor. Then slowly attempt to straighten that leg while walking your hands up it. Hold for 10 seconds and release. Repeat on the other leg. Do not do toe touches to stretch the hamstrings. What gets stretched are the irritated back muscles and ligaments. If you insist on doing *hamstring stretches standing* do it the following way: bend both knees, put your fingers onto the floor, and then try to straighten the knees. This creates more of a hamstring stretch than a low back irritation, but try to do it lying down, because that removes any possible gravitational axial compression.

The *abductor stretch* is done by getting down on one knee and stretching the other leg out to the side. Hold this for 10 seconds or until a muscular stretch is felt. The last two exercises are done in the hands and knees position. They are done once the others are completed without pain in the back.

The *abductor exercise* (held in what is fondly known as the fire hydrant position) should be done without tilting to the side of the knee on the floor. Hold the leg out to the side and do circles, first clockwise and then counter clockwise. Do this until the leg collapses from exhaustion. That will ensure strengthening of the abductor groups.

The *hamstring and gluteus maximus strengthening exercise* done in the hands and knees position involves extending the knee of one leg and holding it out straight back. Proceed as with the abductor exercises doing clockwise and counter clock-



The hamstring stretch lying

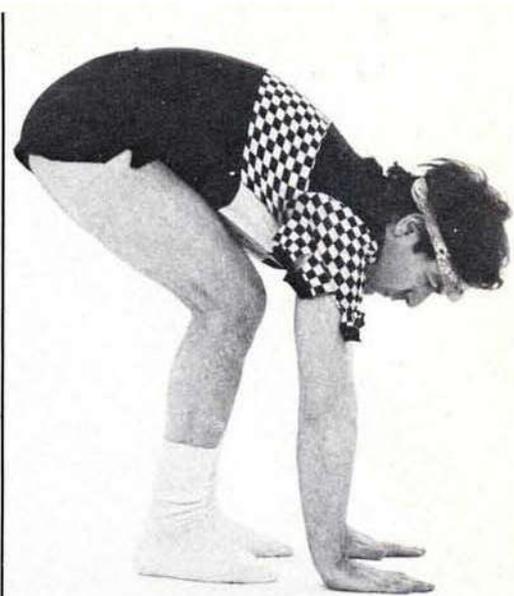
wise circles until exhaustion.

The circles can be small to large for variation and use of the different fibers within the muscle groups. Remember to keep the hip of the supporting leg right over the knee, so as not to tilt and render the exercise ineffective.

If you ever experience low back pain that persists for more than a few days, be sure to seek some professional advice. Don't create a long-term problem out of a situation that could have been corrected early on. Chiropractic has, in my opinion, the most to offer for the non-surgical cases of low back pain. Simple and painless methods exist in chiropractic that will serve to reduce the underlying cause of the problem (if it is a biomechanical distortion) to give the body a chance to heal. One of the chiropractic techniques that the author uses in his practice (developed by Dr. James M. Cox of Fort Wayne, Indiana) utilizes a sophisticated treatment table. This instrument enabled the doctor to create a traction effect on the lower spine. Specific traction separates the vertebrae, increasing the space between them. This may reduce compression of the facets and thus resolves chronic irritation of these joints. It creates a centripetal (inward) force and tightening effect of the surrounding ligaments that eases the protruding disc material back towards center. In addition to this type of treatment, if one sticks to these exercises and posture recommendations, back pain may become a condition of the past, and drumming will be pain-free once again.



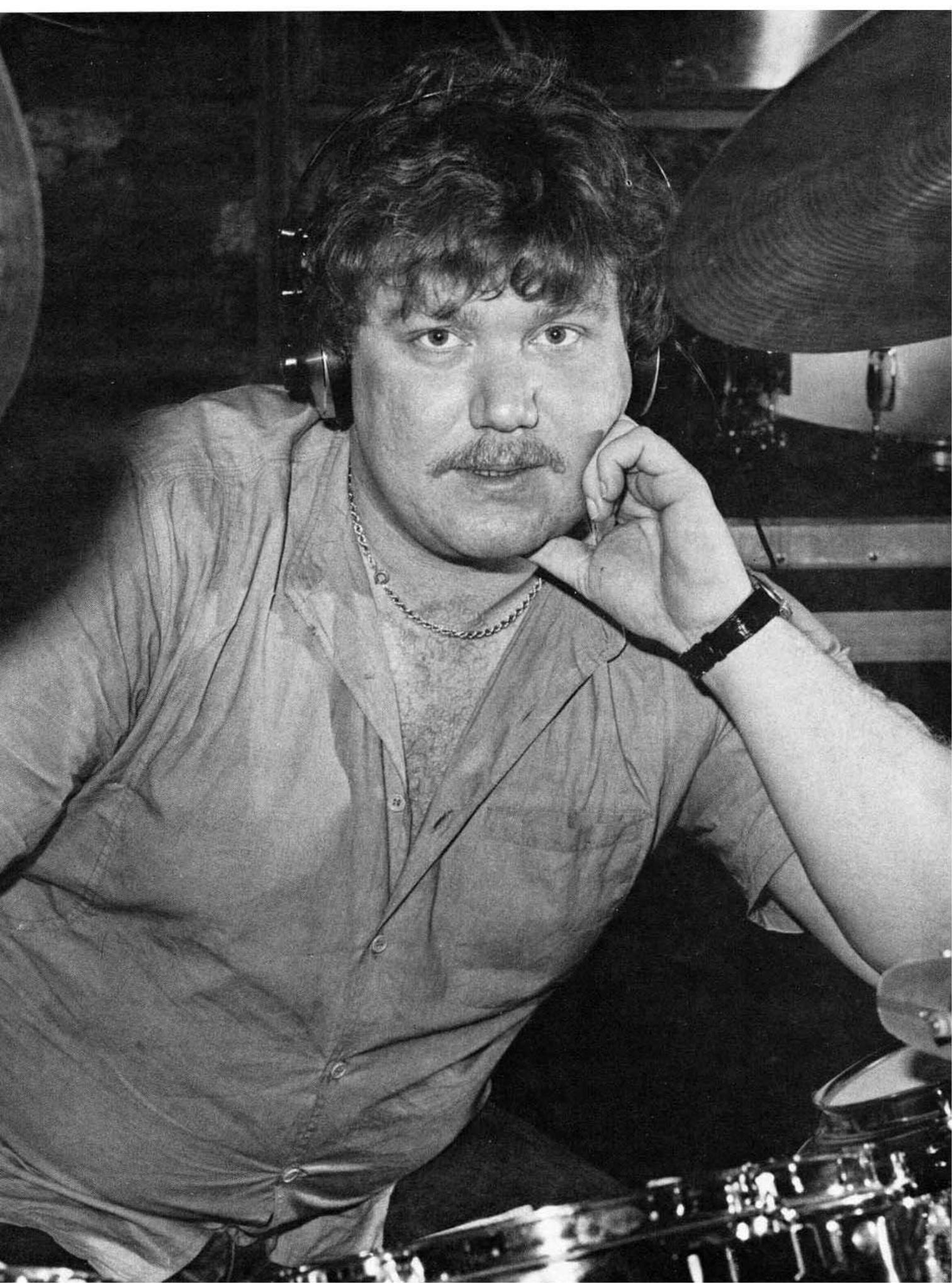
The hamstring/gluteus maximus strengthening exercise



The hamstring stretch standing



Dr. Roy Siegel is a Manhattan chiropractor who lectures frequently on the mechanism, diagnosis and treatment of low back and leg pain. His practice consists primarily of athletes and dancers who depend on maximum biomechanical function for optimum performance. Dr. Siegel has played drums for over 20 years.



Bill Maxwell

by Scott K. Fish

a gift of music

To deem Bill Maxwell a "Christian drummer" is a half-truth at best. The implication is similar in effect to calling someone a "blues drummer" or a "country drummer." It imposes limitations. Bill Maxwell stands out as one of the most unlimited drummers around. He might be a little uneasy in a classical percussion setting, but don't even think twice about having him play in a small jazz group, a blues band, a Gospel group, a funk group, with a contemporary orchestra, on a TV or movie score, or even behind Sammy Davis, Jr. or Harry Belafonte! Not a problem for Bill Maxwell.

But, let's set the record straight. Bill is flattered when referred to as a "Christian drummer," but he sees it as only one spoke in a wheel of many talents. As a record producer, he's primarily involved with contemporary Christian music and musicians like Andrae Crouch, The Winans, Denny Correll and Keith Green. And anybody who hasn't heard these artists on record with Bill Maxwell on drums really ought to. You're in for a treat.

On the other hand, Bill can be heard with Freddie Hubbard on his *Ride Like The Wind* album. He also worked with John Williams on the soundtrack of *Return of the Jedi*, and recently toured with The Crusaders as a replacement for Stix Hooper. But, Bill Maxwell's heart is mostly into Koinonia, a band he formed with other L.A. studio musicians.

For the last three years Koinonia has been house band at The Baked Potato in California. They've recently recorded their first album which is being released in

Europe right now and is in negotiation for U.S. release. The band toured Scandinavia last March after the release of the album in that country. "We wondered if anyone would know who we were," Bill said, "or if anyone would come see us. Our first concert was in Copenhagen at the Montmartre club. During the soundcheck I looked outside and they had a line of people all the way around the block. Almost every night was sold out. In some places they had to book us on our days off to be able to get all the people in. In Stockholm they had to turn away more people than they were able to let in every night."

In his letters, St. Paul wrote about God giving each of us different talents. Bill's talent is music. Not only does he have a ball performing and producing, he also sees his music as a ministry. This combination is exemplified in this exuberant, funny, successful and down-to-earth, human—in the best sense of the word—human being, Bill Maxwell.

SF: How did you get from being the drummer in an Oklahoma bar band to being the drummer/producer on a Grammy Award-winning Andrae Crouch album?

BM: It was a continuous trip. I was in the same band from the time I was 14 or 15 up until 1971—the Third Avenue Blues Band. We started out in clubs in Oklahoma City. I started touring as soon as I got out of high school in '67. I stayed with that band up until 12 years ago; seven years with the same guys. We had one album out on Uni Records and I don't have it. I don't even care to! But, the band was real good, real tight. It wasn't commercial. We played blues shuffles—a cross between Jack Mc-

Duff and B.B. King. It was an unusual band, not necessarily geared toward the popular music of the time, although we thought we were.

I finally reached the end of my rope with that in '71; I moved to Nashville and joined a band called Barefoot Jerry. It was there that my life just plummeted totally downhill. I was into drugs very heavily. My wife was sick and everything seemed wrong. I was so miserable. That brought about the change in my life: accepting Jesus.

I went outside and prayed one day. I said, "Lord, if you can give me some peace, I'd give anything." And I heard something back that spoke to me so loud it literally scared me. He said, "I want you to leave here and go back to Oklahoma. I have a plan for you."

The first thing I did was run back inside with this band and smoke a joint and try to forget it. I didn't want any part of it.

The next day the band decided to go in a different direction. The lead guitarist I liked was leaving, and they didn't know if they were going to stay together. I said, "I think I'll go back to Oklahoma." And I did. I didn't know what was going to happen there. I ran into Hadley Hockensmith, the guitar player who had been with me in the Third Avenue Blues Band. He was working and playing guitar in a mission on the streets with winos. So, I started working in this little church/mission, having decided "I'm going to quit playing music and just try and get my life in order." We got our organ player from the blues band and led him to Jesus. Two weeks later, Harlan Rogers—who'd been in a mental hospital—had a miraculous recovery. Then we got the trumpet player, Fletch, who'd been heavy into drugs. We prayed for him and he had no withdrawal. So we said, "This stuff is very real."

At the time I was thinking of joining Bill Chase's band. He offered me a good job and lots of money, but I just decided to work in the mission.

From there I met Andrae. He was one of the only people at that time who was actually making a living playing contemporary



Photo by Rick Malkin

Photo by Rick Malkin



Photo by Rick Malkin

Christian music. We were the first professional musicians he'd met who were Christians. Professional musicians who could play. It shocked him. He started trying to hire us immediately.

SF: How long did you work at the mission?

BM: Eight or nine months.

SF: Were you working on the streets?

BM: Yeah. We'd talk to winos and we'd take in people who didn't have a place to live; feed them, pray with them and try to give them clothes. We were actually trying to do what Jesus said. We weren't going to play like we were in a church. We were trying to follow Jesus' example. It was miraculous because we were really involved in helping people.

For example, one man in our mission came home and found a guy robbing his house. Instead of calling the police they got the guy and said, "You shouldn't be doing this. You need help in your life." They prayed with the guy and the guy was so touched. They moved him in and he lived with them for two months.

We went about things in a little bit different way than the standard church. What the Lord said is a very powerful, vibrant thing. The church wasn't. It was very bor-

ing. I hated to go to church. But, this mission was happening. You'd see junkies coming in off the streets, get prayed for and not want smack. That's supposedly not possible, but we would see that.

SF: Were you in church often as a kid?

BM: No. Nothing. I have one memory of this 300-pound drummer walking into a club we were playing one time. He handed a Bible to everybody in the band and said, "I claim everybody up here for the Lord Jesus." I kept thinking about that. I still have that Bible.

When I got ready to leave Nashville, some people tried to give me a pound of dope as a present. I wanted it *so* bad. I'd never turned any down since I started. Never. But I said, "No. I don't think so." I got in my car and wanted to get high so badly. I said, "Why'd I leave that dope back there?" I found this *Good News for Modern Man* Bible and didn't even know what it was. Every time I felt like getting high I'd read, and I started getting higher from reading than I had by smoking a joint. By the time I got to Oklahoma I didn't want any. It's been that way for 12 years. It was a literal miracle to me because I was snorting coke, taking acid, snorting

heroin . . . I was starting to go the whole way of being a burned out musician.

In June '72, I went to work with Andrae. He had another guy producing his albums. He was starting to sell and do well. He said, "I want to produce my own albums." Andrae asked me if I'd hire musicians for him because I knew guys like Dean Parks, Joe Sample and others. He asked me if I'd hire the band and get better players.

So I did that and Andrae liked the tracks that we were doing. Then it came time for him to sing a song. He'd ask me, "Are you coming down to the studio?" I'd been sitting down there and telling him if it sounded good to me or not; if it was in tune or *what* was happening. When he got ready to mix, he said, "We're getting ready to mix the album. You've got to come in to mix." I said, "Wait a minute! You're producing this." Andrae said, "No. *You've* been producing this more than me. We're co-producing it. I'll split the deal with you." I didn't know essentially what a producer was, but I guess it was what we were doing! We finished that album called *Take Me Back*. It was the first album I worked on as a producer and it won a Grammy Andrae's first one. So, immediately people thought I was a producer. That's where *that* started.

I liked producing. I always felt very limited as a drummer by not being able to express the whole scope musically. When I play drums, I don't think drums as much as I think of the whole band. I'm thinking the top end with my cymbals, or I'm thinking of where the pulse is and with my foot, what the bass player is doing. I'm very aware of all the vocals, the moods and the key. Playing drums, you can't get as fulfilled as when you're producing or when you're in charge. You really have a say in every aspect of the music, including the way it's put on tape. That was very, very interesting. Just like a broadening of playing drums.

SF: Is there pressure in Christian music circles to not play secular music?

BM: I don't think so. Most people are supportive of a lifestyle, or they should be anyway. Where there's resentment is like if Andrae put a pop record out. He'd automatically lose everything he had. They'd feel that he'd be deserting what he had. But, if a pop artist becomes a Christian, I don't think they expect the artist to desert their earlier music. I *can* understand, and *not* understand that. I don't think Andrae should be doing anything else. He's so gifted at what he does. But, other people . . . maybe not.

SF: But, Andrae's music is as accessible as any pop music.

BM: Oh yeah. He's a great musician. He has people like Quincy Jones and Stevie Wonder saying, "This guy's one of the greatest musicians we know." You could ask any of the great musicians of our time.

Bill Maxwell with engineer



Photo by Rick Malkin

Andrae doesn't have to hide anything musically. He never has. He's felt that music in itself is a pure art form totally. It's what your words are saying that pollutes it or brings life to it. I agree with that 100%. I don't feel any stylistic boundaries. Some old church person could say heavy rock guitars are of the devil. Somebody else will say pipe organ is terrible. I love music if it's well done.

I feel in my heart that what I have is the truth. If someone doesn't have it, I still love and respect them for what they're doing. I don't have any bad feelings towards them. There are a lot of Christians who'll say, "Why are you playing with this person? Why would you work with Freddie Hubbard?" Because I *like* Freddie Hubbard! I love the way he plays. He's a beautiful musician and he's a friend. I don't feel anything's wrong about associating myself like that as long as I'm a good example. Maybe we can be a little bit of a help. I know Jim Keltner's been a help to some people. If you did any little bit of good, it's worth it because there are a lot of hurting people. There are *especially* a lot of hurting musicians. They just have rough lifestyles.

Instead of pointing fault at everyone and telling everyone how bad they are, the Lord walked around healing people and helping people. That's what the church is supposed to be: a light. An example of love. Not an example of criticizing, paranoia, fear and all the stuff I read in the newspaper.

SF: When you started seriously studying the Bible, who gave you guidance?

BM: Two guys at the mission, Jimmy and Bobby Hall. Jimmy used to be one of the best shuffle drummers I ever knew. He quit playing and became a preacher. Both those guys cleaned up their act, went to Bible school and were running the mission. I just sat with them and a couple of good preachers who came through town. I listened to a lot of tapes. I'd go to local churches. It was a radical change in lifestyle.

SF: Had you quit playing drums at that point?

BM: I never really quit when I was in the mission. We'd draw crowds in the mission because our band was a big nightclub band. It wasn't like anything you heard in church. We played Jimmy Smith-style jazz. We'd jam in the church on the same type of songs we used to do, only it was looser. There are not many places like that mission that I know of where we had the freedom that we had. We were all ex-doper musicians with long hair and that was the only place we could fit in.

SF: Did you initially want to be a studio drummer?

BM: No. I like playing music. I wanted to play with good people. All I ever did was live playing. I'd get called in and do records but it wasn't my favorite thing be-

Photo by Rick Malkin



cause there was no audience. I like making mistakes. You can't make mistakes on records. I like to go for things. I wanted to play live with somebody like Miles Davis.

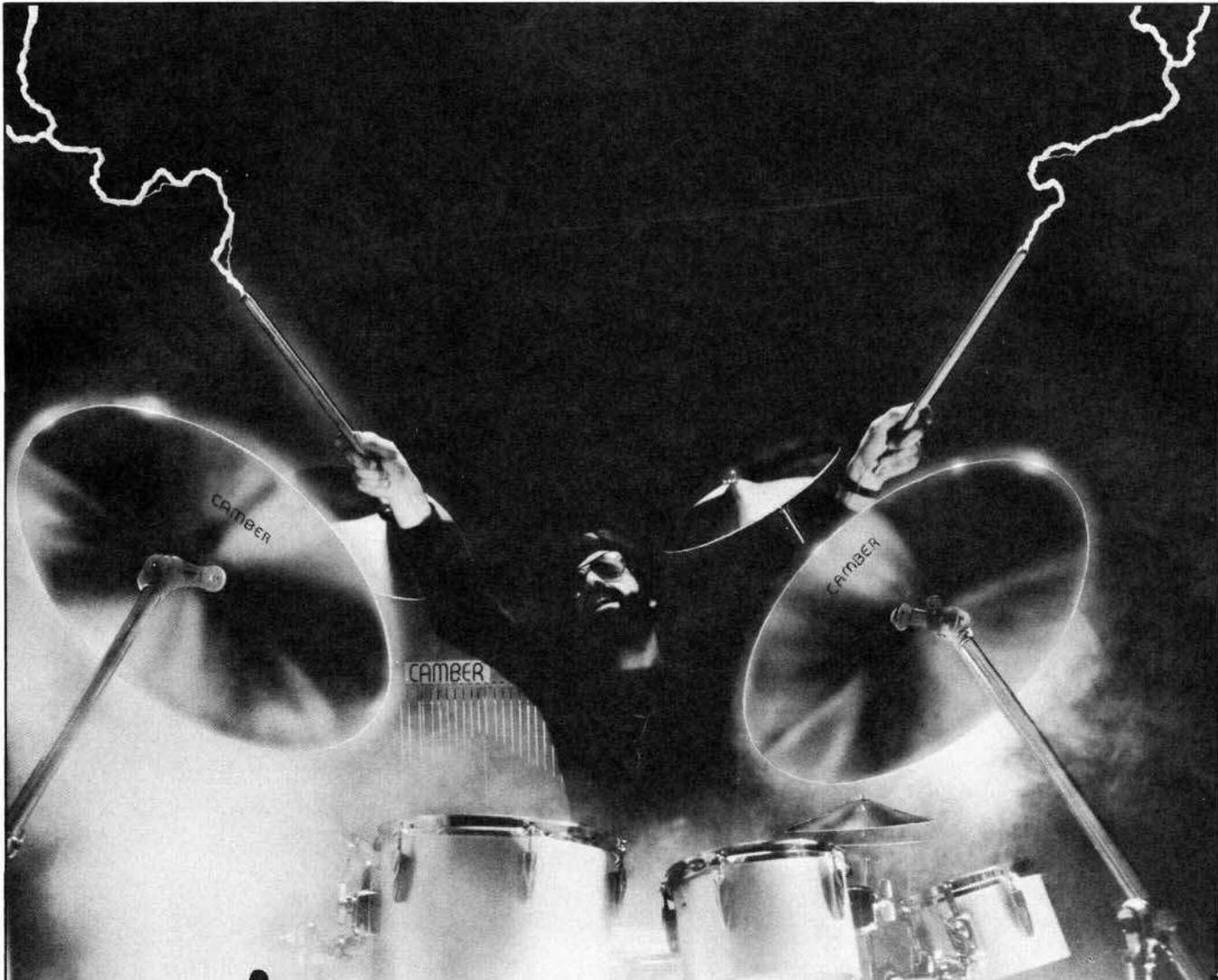
SF: Are you a self-taught drummer?

BM: Yes and no. I had an unusual background. My mother was a jazz piano player who died when I was two months old. She was pretty good. I heard a record she'd done. I'd shown some musical ability as a baby, so my grandparents sent me to a little children's music school. I played key-

boards and had a little toy drumset. Then I got a violin and played it when I was three, but not well. I played trombone and started taking piano lessons when I was about nine. I learned how to read music doing that.

When I was 12 they had summer school band in between 6th and 7th grade to prepare you so you wouldn't have to start in the beginning band. The Band Director said, "What do you want to play?" I said,

continued on page 92



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6.) $\frac{4}{4}$

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Double Paradiddles & Quarter Note Triplet Paradiddles

Right Hand remains in L.T. position until next entrance.

7.) $\frac{2}{4}$

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

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

Sextuplet Impression with superimposed Paradiddle-diddle sticking

8.) $\frac{1}{4}$

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

Open Six- & Seven-Stroke Rolls

9.) $\frac{2}{4}$

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

(Freeze)

Both hands down

10.) Cross-sticking (X) pattern

* Ref: Wrists turning positions:
 \div = Palm (R.H.) facing up

— = Palm (R.H.) facing down
 Natural R.H. matched grip position

$\frac{2}{4}$

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

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Slingerland

The holder I originally saw has a small problem with wobbling, due to inexact tolerances at the base. However, this problem has been solved, and the holder is now solid. The ball-and-cage is very smooth and holds position effortlessly. Slingerland's new tom-tom holder is a welcome change from their previous one. They deserve a tip of the hat for being perhaps the only company to realize that a long height tube is needed when mounting power toms! The 1982 holder retails alone at \$160.00.

TOM-TOMS

The 12 x 12 and 13 x 13 *Megatoms* have 12 lugs each; the 16 x 16 floor tom has 16. All have internal mufflers installed for both batter and bottom sides, along with Slingerland's unique curved hoops. The floor tom has three, thick hexagonal legs which locate into *Iso-Lok* lever brackets exactly like on the mounted toms. No chance for slippage with this system!

For some reason, the tension rods do not allow the heads to be slacked off much. When I tried to get a very deep sound, I noticed that the rods were very loose still threaded into the lugs, but loose enough to rattle.

The toms are fitted with *Pinstripes*, top and bottom. To me, Slingerland toms have always had a unique sound. They have lots of attack, along with a bubbly sound (at least with the *Pinstripe* heads). The three toms did have great volume, but it seems that the tuning range is somewhat limited.



SNARE DRUM

A 7 x 14 snare drum comes with this kit,

Slingerland has totally revised all their hardware and have been marketing the *May-EA* miking system in their catalogued drumkits. The entire kit is built in the USA (except for the stand bases, which I'm told will be made in the U.S. in the near future). Shells are 5-ply maple, with alternating thin and thick plies.

Components of the *XM52* kit are: 16x22 bass drum, 12x12 and 13x13 toms, 16 x 16 floor tom, 7 x 14 wood snare drum, and *Magnum* hardware.

BASS DRUM

The bass drum has 20 separate lugs, and maple hoops. Slingerland has remained with their regular spurs, and fit two pairs onto this power bass drum. They are angled slightly forward, have spike tips and will disappear into the drum. With the advent of their new hardware series, Slingerland should take another look at their spurs. The steel rods just might be too flimsy for the weight of the drum with toms and holder attached. *Pinstripe* heads are fitted on both sides, and a felt strip is installed behind both heads.

Playing the drum as it came from the factory, I found it to be big-sounding, but overly resonant for my own tastes. Some padding placed against the batter head gave a nice, solid punch, while still retaining tone and volume.

MOUNTING SYSTEM

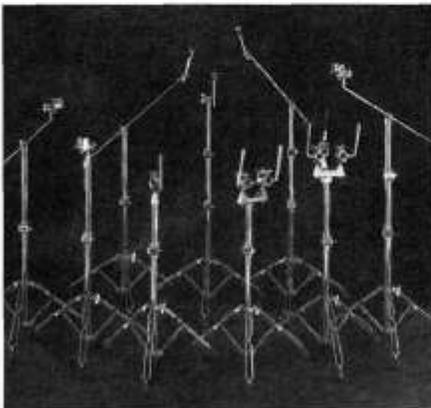
Slingerland has re-designed their tom-tom holder for increased sturdiness and set-up flexibility. The holder uses an extra-

long (21") single down post, which passes through a large, satin finished casting located near the front of the drum and raised in its center. A polyurethane block is tightly fitted inside the casting, thus eliminating metal-to-metal contact. One of the main features of this holder (and all the stands as well) is a new locking mechanism to secure the post. Slingerland calls this *Iso-Lok*, and it basically works on a clutch-type principle. A lever on one side of the base casting squashes the polyurethane piece around the height tube. Turning the lever upward 90° will release the tube all in a single motion. Working in conjunction with the *Iso-Lok* clutch is the *Superset* lock, which acts as a memory ring. It is keyrod-operated, and overlaps the entire raised part of the casting to provide accurate height set-up time after time.

Atop the height tube is a large cast piece which accepts separate holder arms. Hex rods locate into holes in this casting, anchored in place by small pins. Slingerland's ball-and-cage system has been redesigned for size and sturdiness. A large sprung wing bolt closes the cage around a black neoprene ball. When loosened, it provides 360° angle adjustment for practically any conceivable angle. Hex rods are also used for the L-shaped tom-tom arms. They can be adjusted with a T-screw for distance apart, as well as forward angle. The brackets on the toms utilize the same *Iso-Lok* lever clutch with an internal poly fitting. A small cut-out block inside the casting clamps to the hex arm when the lever is turned downward.

X M52 Magnum /May EA

having a 5-ply shell, 12 double-ended lugs, four ventholes, plus an internal muffler. The new *Slapshot* strainer is incorporated here. It's quite a large unit, allowing the snares to extend past the head. The snare unit attaches to the strainer with small set screws. Vertical snare tension is adjustable on the throw-offside only. There is also an adjustment knob to keep the snare strands under constant horizontal tension. The throw-off handle is a large, hand-sized ribbed plastic piece, and releases from the center of the unit to drop the snares evenly. The strainer on this particular drum may have needed some lubrication, as it required a bit of effort to engage or release the throw-off handle. This drum was somewhat brittle-sounding, even with its *Pin-stripe* batter and, like the tom-toms, the heads cannot be loosened up too much without rattling the rods and hoop. The snares vibrated quite a bit, and the only way to get rid of this was to choke the drum beyond recognition. It seems to me that the *Slapshot* would work a lot better if it were of the regular sort of drop strainer, without the parallel tension snare feature.



HARDWARE

All the stands in the new *Magnum* hardware line have double-braced tripod bases (triple-bracing is optional). Where the base adjustment surrounds the tube, there is a nylon ring set in between. The height joints all use the lever clutch with *Superset* lock cap. A quarter-turn of the lever is all that is needed to either secure or release the tube.

Two cymbal stands are included with the *XM52* kit, having two adjustable height tiers each. The stands have offset, extended

ratchet tilters, like on the now-defunct *Grandstands*. A piece of rubber tubing is used for a cymbal sleeve. The stands have more than ample height, are very sturdy, and will not tip over. The locking clutches are so strong, that it's impossible for the tiers to sink or twist.

The snare stand uses the typical basket design with carriage ring. The model I saw had a ratchet angle adjustment, but I'm told that this is being changed over to a ball. The *Magnum* stand has incredible stability, even when the drum is tilted forward. It will set up low enough to accommodate deep drums.

The *Magnum* hi-hat I saw had a Japanese-style split footboard with an adjustable toe stop. I have been informed that the footboard has since been changed to match the *Magnum* bass drum pedal. Tension relies on an externally housed compression spring, which is conveniently adjusted at the top of its casing. A metal strap is used for linkage. (There is a possibility it may be changed to a chain link.) The bottom cup has a lockable tilt screw; the clutch has a nylon tightener and metal counterlock washers. A knob spur is at the frame base. Action is a bit springy, but nonetheless, is very good and practically silent.

The *Magnum* pedal has a split, ribbed footboard with no toe stop. The frame is double-post, holding double expansion springs which are adjustable near the base. The adjustment knobs have "click-stops" which, besides holding the tension setting, also allow accurate identical tensioning of both springs. Linkage is a metal strap. The *Magnum* clamps to the drum hoop using a claw plate and swivel lever. Once the plate is initially adjusted for hoop thickness, the lever is all that is needed to mount and remove the pedal. There are sprung spurs at the base, and a wood beater is included. Action is springy and alive. The pedal itself is well-designed.

COSMETICS

Slingerland offers a large range of wood and plastic finishes. The kit tested here was seen in a superb Natural Maple gloss lacquer. All badges have serial numbers.

Slingerland includes a few neat things, which I should mention. First of all, there

is an owner's manual, and, they have packaged an Aquarian *Kwik-Key* with every drumkit. For drummers who constantly have to take down and set up their kits, the company has devised a color-coding kit for stands and holders. Different-colored caps fit onto key rods which are recessed in the stand height joints. A corresponding-color bar decal sticks onto the tube, and you can match sections of your stands by color for quicker set-up *nice ideal*

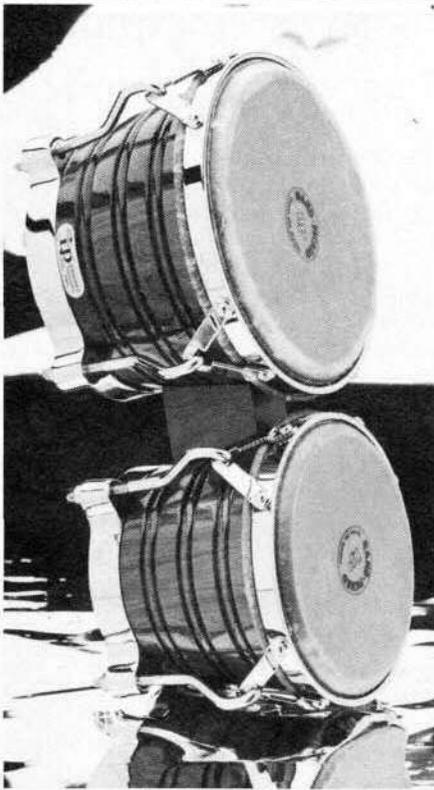


MAY-EA SYSTEM

The feature which sets this kit apart from the others is the installation of Randy May's *May-EA* internal miking system. Randy May is the drummer who, if you read your drum catalogs, invented Pearl's *Vari-Pitch* drums, and he has now formed his own company on the West Coast.

The *May-EA* (Electro-Acoustic) system uses a modified Shure *SM57* unidirectional cardioid microphone mounted *inside* each drum shell. The mic' has a hinged plastic shock-mount with an air membrane which surrounds the mic'. Thus, vibration is cancelled out. On the exterior of the drum shell is a knob with a recessed key-rod. This knob allows rotation of the mic' a full

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180 on its steel shaft, aiming the mic' at different locations in the shell for different tones and volumes. (The bass drum's shaft is longer, naturally.) The key rod does the main rotating, and the knob locks the position. (Note: the *Kwik-Key* included does not fit the space in the recess comfortably, but keys from some other manufacturers will.) Also mounted in the shell is a male XLR jack which will accept a low-impedance mic' cable. There seems to be a current controversy over the amount of hardware mounted in or on a drum shell, but I will leave that up to you.

Unlike conventional miking techniques, the *May-EA* mikes the internal acoustics of each drum separately. Since the internal sound is the sound being miked, I do question Slingerland's use of internal mufflers on the drums; we all know that internal devices can sometimes rattle and create a problem.

Immediately, some good points of the *May-EA* system can be realized. Microphone stands are eliminated, giving an uncluttered appearance. Mic' cables still hang, but since there are no mic's outside any of the drums, there is no way to accidentally hit a mic' with your stick. Set-up and tear-down time is greatly reduced, as all mic's stay inside the drums. (This is also a big deterrent to microphone theft!)

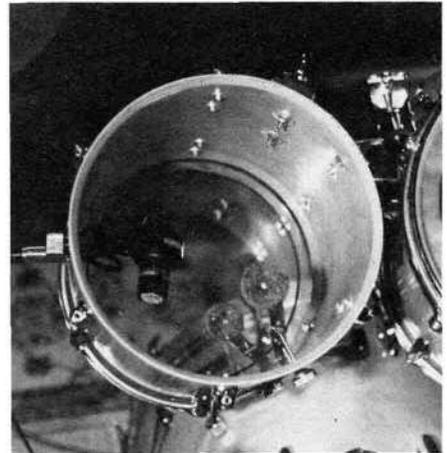
I brought the kit into the studio for testing in a recording situation. One drawback, depending how you look at it, is that you are "stuck" with the SM57 mic'. The engineer would not be able to use different mic's of his or her preference. However, if you like the sound and frequency curve of an SM57, then it's no problem. In the studio, phase cancellation and leakage of cymbals, as well as of other drums, are greatly reduced, since there are no "open" mic's in the sound field. Actually, each drum is its own room with its own inherent sound qualities.

The swivel mount on the mic' holder allows you to close-mike the batter head or various shell locations on one side of the drum. The engineer pointed out that instead of having a fixed radius, a telescopic arm might be nice, in order to extend the mic' throughout the shell to find the "sweet spot." The way the system is presently designed, mic' positioning cannot be varied to a large extent. Rotating the mic' on its shaft gave some different sounds. Close to the top head, it gave more attack; facing the shell gave a harder, more reflective tone. Facing the bottom permitted more resonant-head vibration and a deeper sound. I especially liked the bass drum sound once padding was placed inside. With the bottom heads removed, the sound was punchier, approximating the effect of a mic' shoved right up into a concert tom shell.

Using the kit live allows increased moni-

tor levels without feedback, since the mic's are shielded away from speakers. Also, there is reduced bleed into the drum channels from surrounding band members' amplifiers. As stated before, there are no mic' stands to tip over or move about, and there is no worry as to where to comfortably place the mic's and stands.

The factory choice of *Pinstripe* heads top and bottom may not be the optimum combination. As with any drumkit, experimentation is necessary to find the sound you want by way of heads, and in this particular case, mic' location.



The *May-EA* system is a good concept. Used on this Slingerland kit, the results are a cleaner, more isolated sound, but the drums do sound different than we are used to hearing them. The shock mounting is excellent, giving no vibration transmissions whatsoever. I expect there will be some refinements in the future. Perhaps Randy May could find a way to offer different microphone combinations for those who request it.

Any Slingerland drum kit may be ordered with the *May-EA* system installed. The mic's and mounting hardware can also be purchased separately for installation in an existing drumkit. (This would mean drilling holes in your shells.) The *May-EA* model 57 for snare and all toms retails at \$160.00; the bass drum model retails at \$170.00. The entire kit reviewed here with the *May-EA* lists at \$2865.00.

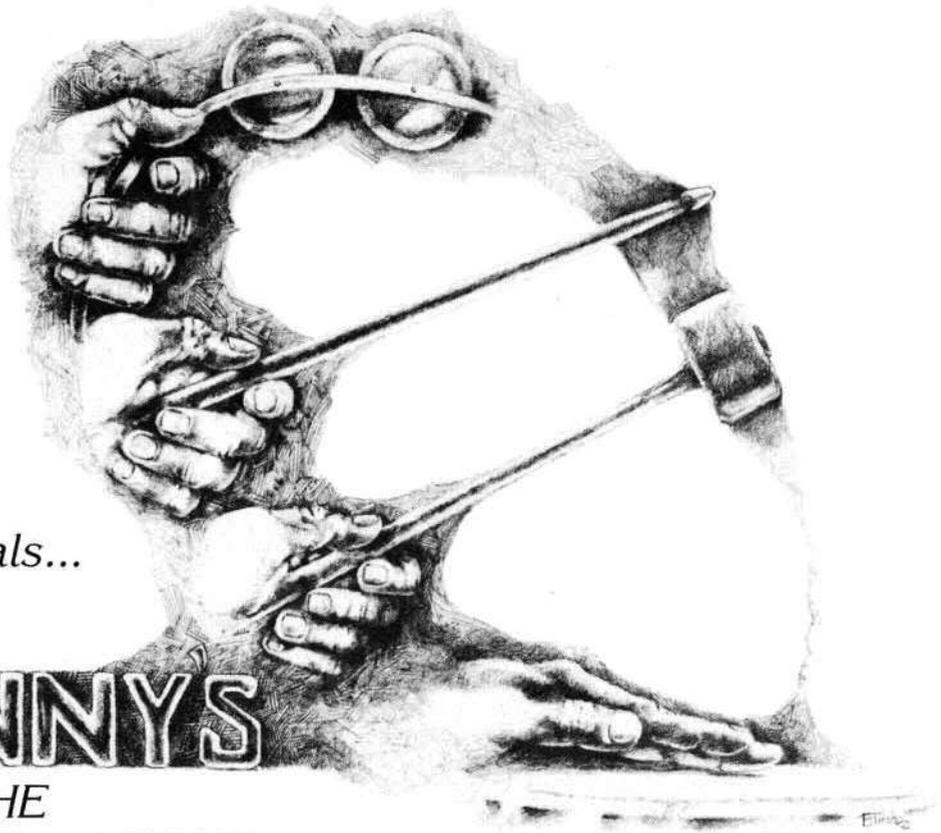
Slingerland has taken strides to regain players' confidence in American-made products, and with pleasing results overall. The *Magnum* hardware ranks with the best of them, and construction quality seems to be at an all-time high. The *May-EA* system is being used by some name drummers, including Chad Wackerman, drummer for Frank Zappa, who is quite particular when it comes to sound. It is an exciting idea, and players should be able to appreciate the clean look and ease of set-up. If you're a Slingerland fan, then the addition of the *May-EA* miking system makes for less headaches in getting your sound across. 🎧

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Photo by Dennis McMahon

Ron Guidry on Drums

Have you heard that Ron Guidry, one of the premier pitchers in baseball, plays drums? And that he's set up his kit in a secluded room in Yankee Stadium? I journeyed to "The House That Ruth Built" to meet the star southpaw, check out the rumors and bring you the story.

DM: I hear you have a drumkit here at Yankee Stadium.

RG: I have a set of drums set up in a special room in the back of the stadium. That's where I go everyday to practice a little bit and keep my wrists in shape. It keeps my arms loose, my wrists loose and I'm always really relaxed. I'm not tight all the time.

DM: What's your practice routine?

RG: I have no routine. I've played in a band before and I've got a big stereo set with big speakers. I'll buy some different music, put the music on and listen to it for a while. Then I'll play along with it like it is, and then play it like I would play it.

DM: I hear soul music is your favorite.

RG: It's fun to play because the beat is always jumping. But, I can go from country/western to jazz. The only music I don't like to play or listen to is symphonic music. I like to play something that you can really jump to and work out to.

DM: Do you practice anything special on drums on nights that you're pitching?

RG: I won't play a lot. If I do play on a night I'm pitching, I won't play too much. I might play for five, 10 or 15 minutes at the most. The days I'm not pitching I might play an hour-and-a-half to two hours.

DM: When you play drums before a game, can you tell anything about how you're going to be on the mound?

RG: I don't think so. I'm always good on my drums, but I'm *not* always good on the field. I don't think drumming has any bearing on what I do.

DM: Do your team mates comment on your drumming?

RG: Some of them come by and watch me play. Shane Rawley, one of our pitchers,

started to pick them up and now *he's* playing. He's going to get a set of drums.

DM: Do you play right hand or left handed?

RG: I can play both ways. I might switch in the middle of a song. It's great to be coordinated.

DM: When did you start playing drums?

RG: I guess when I was about 10 or 11 years old. I had a cousin who was in a band. I used to listen to them and go by the bandstand and watch him play. I got caught up in the fever while watching him play. I thought, "Man, I'd like to do that. I wish I could do that." But I couldn't afford a set of drums. One day my cousin called my dad and said, "I know Ronnie would like to play drums. I'm buying a new set. I'll sell you the set I have for \$200." That's the same set that I have today.

It's Premier, Premier, Slingerland and Ludwig were the most wanted sets in my time. I set them up in the house and started playing. After all these years they sound so much better than all the rest. The older they get, the better they get.

DM: What size sticks do you use?

RG: Smaller ones. I'm not a heavy hitter. I can get the sound of it because with lighter sticks you make the sound. You learn how to hit your snare. If you get a big drumstick your sound is going to be heavy.

DM: What kind of band did you play in?

RG: A little street band. We had a singer who played guitar, a bass player, trumpet player and a saxophone player who also played organ. It was like, "Hey, what are you doing Saturday?" "I'm not doing anything." "Well, how about making \$200 or \$300? We got people who want a band for this party." "Yeah. Let's go." We played some clubs, some little parties and a couple of hours at the beach. We were going to school so we couldn't play during the week. But you could make \$6000 to \$8000 a year just working weekends.

DM: What kind of music were you playing then?

RG: Rock 'n' roll and a little bit of soul. It was great to dance to and fun to play.

DM: Did you play original music or other people's songs?

RG: Well, I left that up to the guy who

said, "Okay. This is what we're going to play." We played music that was on the scene, upwards of 50 songs a night. If you were playing a song and you saw that people were really getting into that song, you might extend it. No singing. Just jamming. A lot of the time that's what we'd do.

I never really envisioned myself as a musician. That's something I did as a hobby. I enjoyed it, but baseball was my main thing. Baseball was what I wanted to do more than anything else. So when I signed I played baseball. But I never gave up the drums.

DM: Can you compare musicians and ball players?

RG: Their lifestyle is the same. On the road all the time. You come home. You have a night life. It's a hard life to be a ballplayer and it's probably even harder to be a musician.

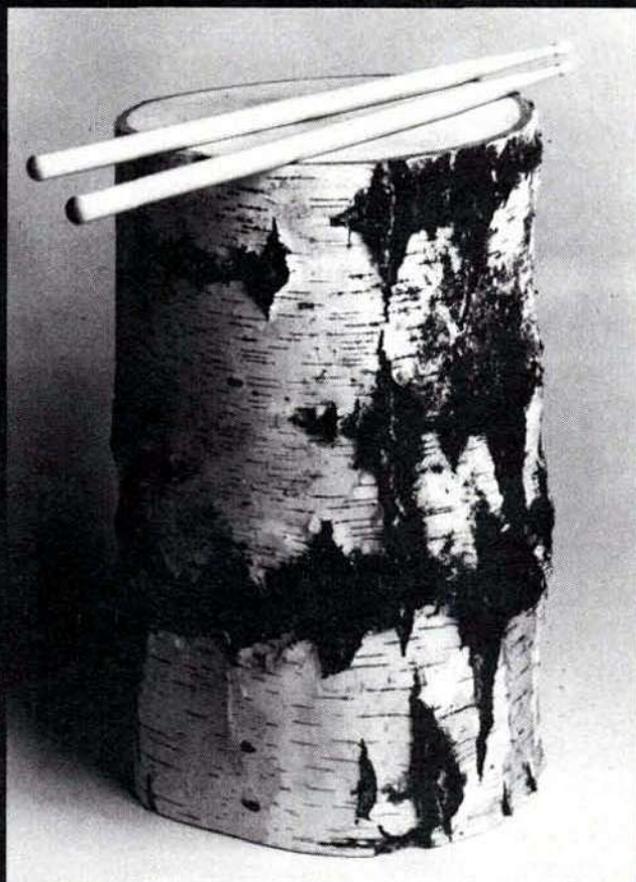
DM: Do you ever think about going back to playing in a band in the off-season?

RG: I doubt it. The only time I get to be home is in the winter. After baseball season I go home to Louisiana. I'm not going to give up that time just to be a musician. All I want to do is spend time with my family and friends and do all the things I've been doing since I was five. But, music is not one of them.

DM: How about after you're finished playing baseball?

RG: No. I'll just want to relax. My drums will always be there if I want to bang on them. But, if I bang on them it'll just be by myself. It might even be a, "Hey look. Saturday night we got a party and ..." I might want to do that once or twice a month. But I don't want to make a habit of it. If you start doing that you almost become a band member. I don't want to sit in on a group and then tell them to get another drummer. That's not my thing.

All I know is that drumming gives me great pleasure. I never thought of using the drums to get out frustration. To me it's having fun and getting a few laughs. A lot of times I just use drumming to get away and have a good time. I've been doing it for 20 years. It's not something that you can just say, "I'm not going to do it anymore." You just can't give up drums if you've been playing for 20 years. They're going to be with me all the time.



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Ideas on Double Doss

The first time I heard the sound of double bass drums was at Donte's club in Hollywood, where Louis Bellson was performing with his big band. There was so much sound coming from the drums, that someone outside could easily have thought that two drummers were playing.

Double bass drums have also become a very popular element in today's rock music. Ginger Baker greatly popularized the sound in his work with Cream, as did Keith Moon in his performances with The Who. Later, artists such as Tommy Aldridge, Narada Michael

Walden, Terry Bozzio, Billy Cobham and Neil Peart took the style to even greater heights.

One very good basic foundation for playing double bass drums is to utilize the single-stroke roll, alternating between both feet, and variations of this pattern. Here are a group of exercises employing single-stroke patterns for bass drums. To develop a true sense of dexterity, it's best to practice these exercises leading with both right and left hand.

a) S.D.
B.D. 1
B.D. 2

b) S.T.T.
S.D.
L.T.T.
B.D. 1
B.D. 2

c) S.D.
B.D. 1
B.D. 2

d) S.T.T.
S.D.
L.T.T.
B.D. 1
B.D. 2

e) S.D.
B.D. 1
B.D. 2

f) S.T.T.
S.D.
L.T.T.
B.D. 1
B.D. 2

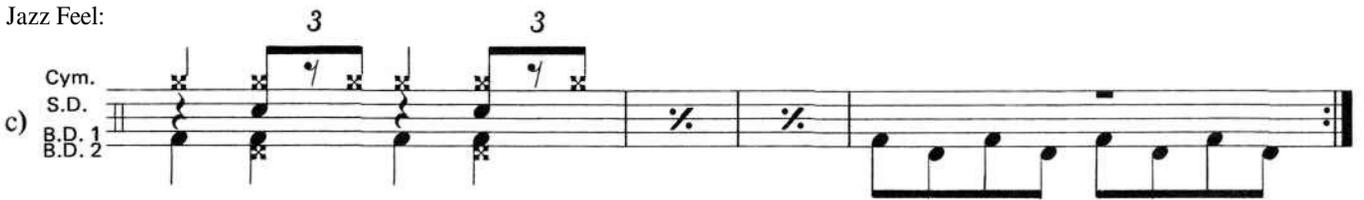
Here are some four-measure phrases using double bass drum patterns at the end of each phrase:

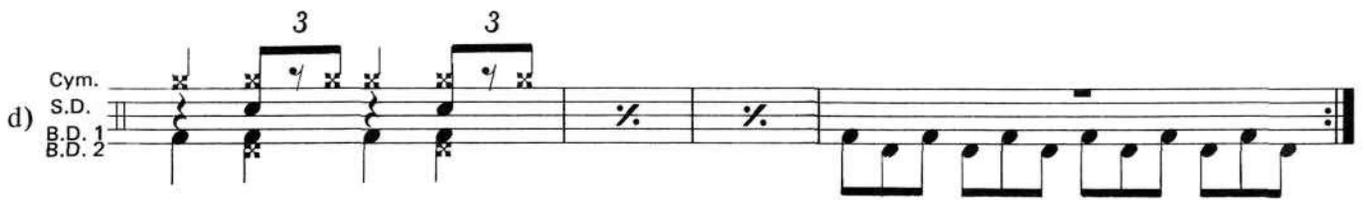
Rock Feel:

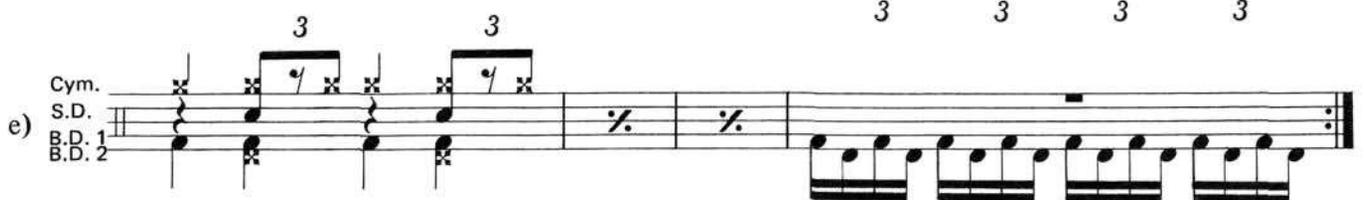
a) Cym.
S.D.
B.D. 1
B.D. 2

b) Cym.
S.D.
B.D. 1
B.D. 2

Jazz Feel:

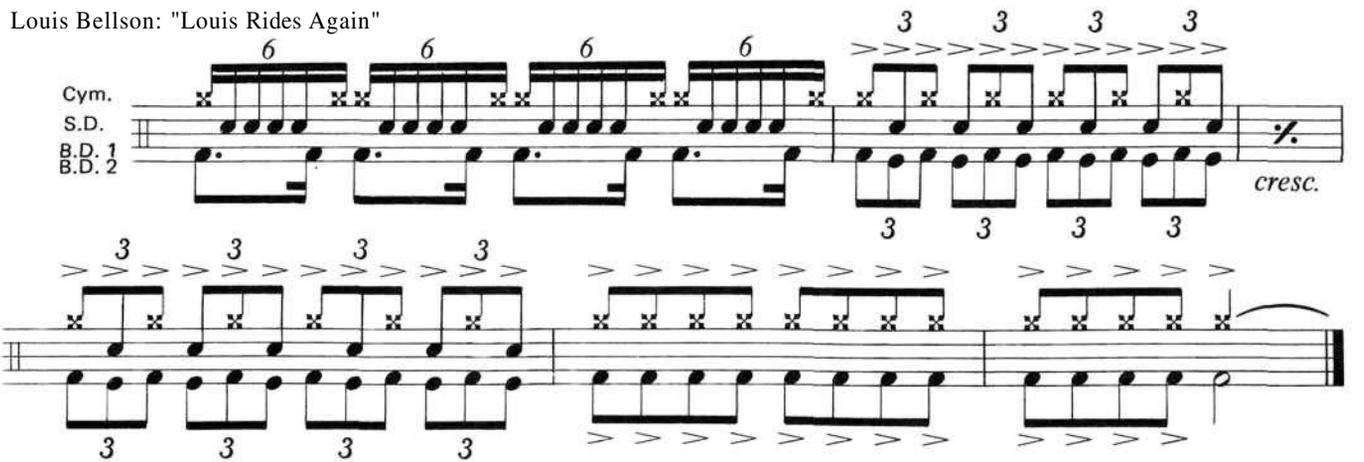
c) 

d) 

e) 

Included below are seven spot transcriptions from various players using double bass drum techniques covering a variety of styles:

Louis Bellson: "Louis Rides Again"



Ginger Baker: "White Room"/ *Wheels of Fire*: Cream



Ginger Baker: "Politician"



Narada Michael Walden: "Breathless"/ *Exposure*: Robert Fripp



Billy Cobham: "On A Magic Carpet Ride"/*Magic*: Billy Cobham

Cym.
S.D.
B.D. 1
B.D. 2

Musical notation for Billy Cobham's 'On A Magic Carpet Ride'. It consists of two staves. The top staff is for Cymbal (Cym.) and the bottom staff is for Snare Drum (S.D.), Bass Drum 1 (B.D. 1), and Bass Drum 2 (B.D. 2). The notation shows a complex rhythmic pattern with various note values and rests.

Neil Peart: "Red Barchena"/*Moving Pictures*: Rush

Cym.
S.D.
B.D. 1
B.D. 2

Musical notation for Neil Peart's 'Red Barchena'. It consists of two staves. The top staff is for Cymbal (Cym.) and the bottom staff is for Snare Drum (S.D.), Bass Drum 1 (B.D. 1), and Bass Drum 2 (B.D. 2). The notation shows a complex rhythmic pattern with various note values and rests.

Neil Peart: "YYZ"/*Moving Pictures*: Rush

Cym.
S.D.
B.D. 1
B.D. 2

Musical notation for Neil Peart's 'YYZ'. It consists of two staves. The top staff is for Cymbal (Cym.) and the bottom staff is for Snare Drum (S.D.), Bass Drum 1 (B.D. 1), and Bass Drum 2 (B.D. 2). The notation shows a complex rhythmic pattern with various note values and rests, including a triplet of eighth notes marked with a '3' above it.

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Slingerland

Airta continued from page 12

RF: In interviews, you always say that you learned to listen with Miles, but it's never taken further in those articles. Can you describe *how* you learn to listen?

A: Listening is the one most important thing in music besides playing your instrument. Nobody can teach you how to listen because all musicians *think* they're listening. There is a way, though, when you are home in your livingroom and you put a record on, you're relaxed, and you lay back and listen. Then you can focus your attention on the bass player or the drummer or the piano player, individually, but at the same time, you're listening to the whole thing because you have the relaxation to listen like that. Then you know everything that is happening all the time. That's the same way you have to be listening when you're playing. The only difference is that you are one of the musicians.

RF: Are you saying to listen as if you aren't playing?

A: Yeah, you are a complement of the music. You are not a soloist unless you are taking a solo. But you're not supposed to develop the solo for the saxophone player because *he* has got to develop *his* solo and you have to back him up. It's got to do with respect for other musicians and people generally. You have to respect what they play and you have to enjoy it. Another thing is sometimes the music drags a little bit and we want to make the music

happen right away, so we push and push. That's not the right attitude because sometimes, if the music is dragging a little bit, let it drag a little bit. It's okay. It doesn't have to be *you* that is going to lift everything. Don't put it on yourself. Just keep playing because that's the music right there that is happening.

RF: You don't see that as the drummer's responsibility then?

A: No. Even though you kick ass a little bit sometimes because you have to make your presence known and give it a little push, you have to come back to your place again. It's to inspire the other musicians and give them a little lift, but then you have to go back to your place, the way you were playing.

RF: If you go sit in with somebody or do a session, you don't have that time to sit back and listen to what everybody is doing, like you do at home. You have to be able to pick it up instantly and not play too much.

A: But that's automatic. It's just not getting in anybody's way. The biggest problem is playing too much. Sometimes it is much more important what you don't play than what you play. I don't want to mention names, but I know some musicians who play so busy all the time, that to play with them, you have to be like exercising all the time playing like crazy and that's not music.

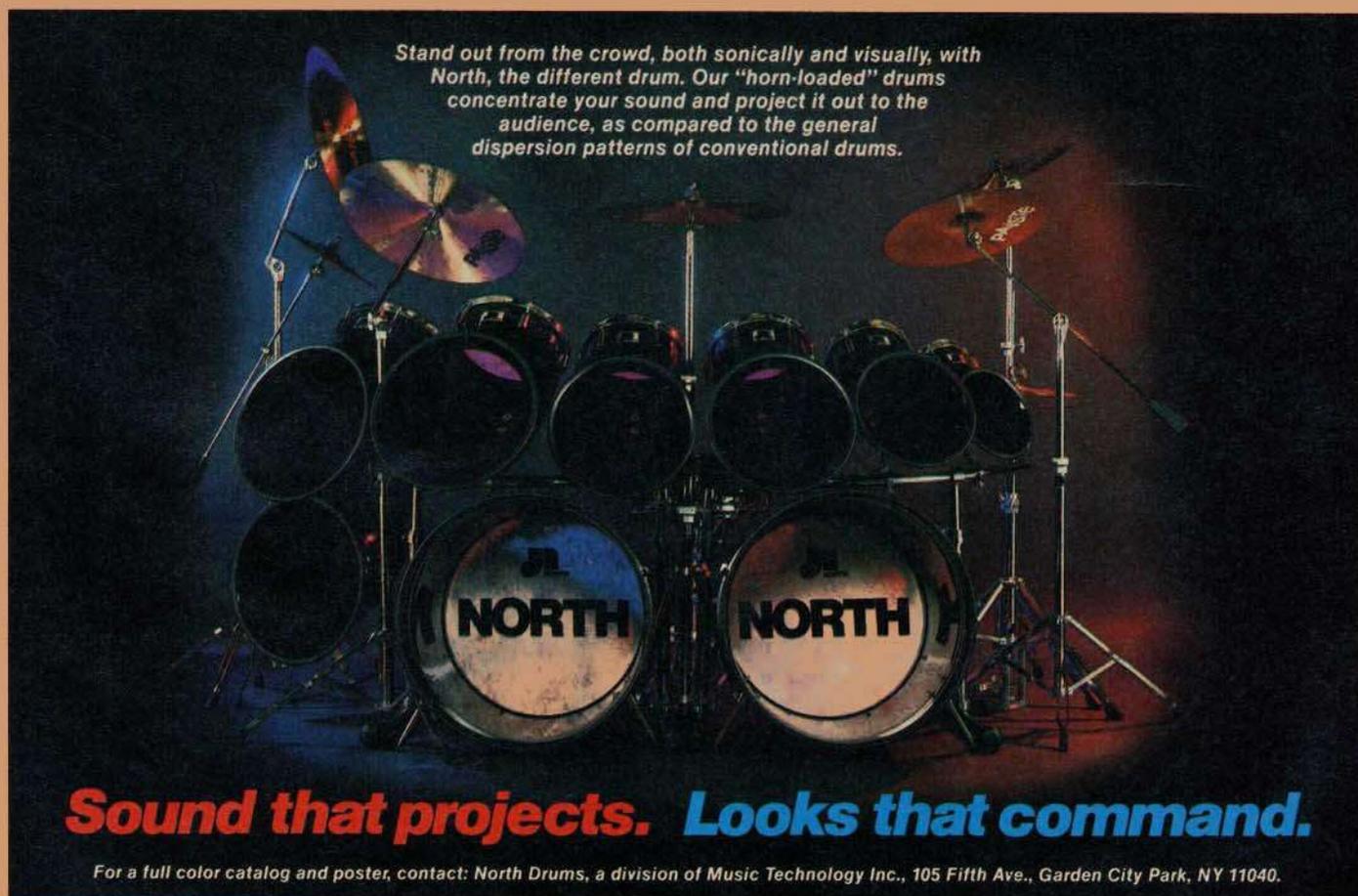
RF: You've talked a lot about communication in music. Sometimes I feel that jazz

players are more interested in playing for themselves than they are playing for an audience.

A: That's kind of true, but I think that's an old way of thinking. I don't think that is happening as much anymore—the closing your eyes and playing. You have to look at the other musicians, you have to look at the audience, and you have to communicate. You have to look at the musicians who are playing with you, otherwise it's like you're playing by yourself, just for the music. Playing just for the music is beautiful, but then where can you go? Then you've got to live on top of a mountain and play in a cave everyday.

RF: We were talking about improvisation before and you have said that sometimes music goes too far out. Where do you draw that line between too far out and appropriate improvisation?

A: I think the line goes back to the listening. When you are listening to each other, each musician plays off each other. Let's say we're going to play a free-form music no song, just sounds and whatever comes out. That doesn't mean that everybody is going to go there and just start playing, although a lot of bands do. I don't like it. Everybody is screaming at each other and nobody is playing, actually. Somebody has got to start free music. Let's say the bass player plays one beautiful, fat, nice note and the piano player plays a chord that comes from that note.



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Then the drummer makes a sound and the percussionist makes another sound. Then the bass player makes another one and it goes like a conversation, which has got a lot to do with the listening and the respect you have got to have for people. Then everybody likes it because something is happening there. It isn't just a bunch of guys banging around or screaming at each other. Somebody takes off in some kind of pattern, and everybody jumps on that pattern. They play that pattern for a while until it breaks up or dissolves, naturally. Somebody has got to start all the moves, but it doesn't have to be *you*, even though sometimes it *is* you. Just when you feel very strong about it, you suggest something. You don't break the music up like that; you keep on that track and then you suggest a break, and then by the second time, if nobody goes, you come back. Sometimes the first time you suggest, everybody goes with you and that's a new thing that you are playing right there. That's the way I explain free music. You don't have to draw a line. The line is that everybody has got to be listening and everybody has got to respect each other, that's all.

RF: Why do you say that Return to Forever was the greatest musical experience you ever had?

A: Well, I don't. You see, when you do an interview, sometimes you say something and the person, instead of asking a little better, just says something wrong. I was quoted saying things I have never said in my life, many times, by people who don't know what they're doing. Let me put it this way: It was a beautiful experience. It was actually the most valuable experience I ever had as a *drummer*, but not as a group. As a group it was actually Miles Davis, Quarteto Novo and the music Flora and I play all the time. I love to do that. With Chick Corea it was good. The music was good and I learned to be on time, to rehearse a lot and get all the parts memorized and everything, so I learned a lot. I said that Return to Forever was a great experience because I got to play some jazz with American musicians who are great players. Quarteto Novo, creatively speaking, was actually probably the most creative musical situation I had ever been in, and Miles Davis, as far as learning good and bad things. Playing for Miles Davis, this great master, this great musician, is an incredible experience for anybody.

As far as what makes a great musical experience, I think it is a matter of moment. It's not really something that you do that makes a terrific experience, because sometimes you play with the best musicians and the music doesn't come out that great to you, personally. Everybody likes it and everything is fine and you know it was good, but what makes an incredible experience is the moment the present time. The inspiration you have that moment and how

much you can express yourself, is what makes an incredible musical experience to me. Sometimes you are playing with musicians who are not that great, yet the moment was right and the vibes were right.

RF: Why did you leave Return to Forever?

A: Chick wanted to go into a different kind of music. I didn't want to play the kind of music he wanted to play, so I left. Also, I was with CTI records and Creed Taylor said, "Why don't you have your own group and I'll back you up?" So I saw an opportunity to have my own group and to play the music I really wanted to play, and play with the musicians I thought would be good. I had met some musicians like Hugo Fattoruso, Ringo Thielmann, Jorge Fattoruso, Hugo's father, and David Amaro, so I put together the group, Fingers. Flora was performing with us then and things were good. I couldn't really divide myself in two and play with Chick and play with my band.

RF: The solo venture wasn't something you really preconceived, so was that the direction in which you were moving in your own mind, or did it just happen that way?

A: We all move towards that direction anyway, I think, because musicians all have that dream about playing their own music, even though nobody owns any kind of music because music is everybody's. We all want to experience our own stuff and I think one of the reasons a musician is a musician is because you are your own boss

and nobody tells you what to do, or when and how, and that means freedom. We all want to be free and say, "Okay, let's try this song or this sound here," and spend three, five or ten days rehearsing one song and getting it really right. So I wanted to do that, plus, the situation I had with the record company at that time was very rare. Nobody backs anybody up anymore. That's a dream today.

RF: What is the difference between what you do and authentic Brazilian music?

A: Right now, the authentic Brazilian music is actually very rare, even in Brazil, because everything that happens in the States happens all over the world. In Brazil, there is lot of disco music, and great musicians and composers in Brazil were very influenced by the Beatles. Even though they have their own personality, the real authentic Brazilian music is very rigid and it is rare to hear even in Brazil. You have to go to special places to hear it.

I have lived in the States 15 years and I have played all kinds of music with different musicians. When you play with different people and different kinds of music, that's an influence on you. When you put your own songs together, you put a little bit of those spices in it.

RF: A lot of jazz people think the bossa nova is such a hip thing to play, yet you call it "apartment music." What do you mean?

A: We used to call it "apartment music" a

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long time ago in Brazil when the bossa nova first started. The bossa nova was created because in Brazil, everybody loves to play, especially percussion. A bar in Brazil is great because everybody is singing and banging the glasses and it's a very happy scene, instead of the U.S. where a bar is very sad because people are all watching TV or feeling bad. So in apartments in Rio, they wanted to play, but they would make a lot of noise, and the neighbors would complain and call the police. So they started turning the volume down and the piano and drums weren't played anymore. It was just a matchbox and acoustic guitar and then everyone would enjoy themselves and it was called "apartment music." The bossa nova was big in the U.S. in the '60s, but in Brazil it was called "apartment music" because they had to restrain themselves.

RF: Do you not like the bossa nova?

A: It isn't that I don't like it. If I have to play it, I'll play good, but it is the same way with casuals. If the only thing I have to do is play a casual, then I will go and play casuals really well, because when I play, I can make everybody dance. But I choose other kinds of music instead of bossa nova.

RF: Do you ever get frustrated that you are at the top of your field, respected as one of our most important percussion influences, and yet you reach such a small audience?

A: I used to get very, very frustrated. I used to think that nobody knows anything they just know what other people tell them until I realized that it's not the people, that's the industry; that's the system. Just like any other system, the music business tells the people what is good and what is not happening, so if they don't want to tell people that I am happening, too bad. But I don't feel frustrated anymore.

Flora and I have a group and everywhere we play, we play for packed houses. They like the music very, very much, so that's a very good indicator, which means what we do is very good. So that's the way it is. Someday, somebody is going to realize that there are other kinds of music that could sell too. Once, a long time ago, I thought there would be a way to play for a lot of people, sell a lot of records and everything, if you really wanted to do it. But then I realized that there's no middle. You have to do one thing or another, which means you sell out totally or you don't. Unless it's a very rare case like George Benson, who never sold a lot of records until he recorded "Masquerade" and boom! So that was the right time for him and it just happened. If it doesn't happen like that, then it's because it's not to be. Then you have to keep doing what you're doing and feel good about it. There's no way you can change your whole

self. I have seen people do that and they didn't make it. On *Touching You, Touching Me*, an album I did for Warner Brothers, I had a product manager who was almost dictating what he wanted to hear. Everybody was telling me I had to do something like this. I gave it a good try. It was the biggest effort I ever made in order to reach the record company people. There were a couple of very commercial cuts, and when I played it for Mo Austin at Warner Brothers and my product manager, they loved it and said, "You should go in the studio and cut a single on this and do this and do that." We did cut a single, but they only pressed 500 copies and never sent it to the D.J.'s. What else is new, right? So I feel like I did it. They got it. Maybe they were busy promoting Rod Stewart, because that's what they do. They promote the English, Europeans, but the South Americans have to wait a little bit. That's the way I feel sometimes about the *business*, and that's what it is.

RF: You've played with some incredible drummers. What to you is a good drummer who complements what you like to do?

A: Ideally, I always look for a drummer who plays drums and percussion. He doesn't really have to be a percussionist, but he's got to be a good drummer, sensitive, and has to know how to cook on a low

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fire and also to explode at the right time and then go back to his place again. He's got to be listening to the music all the time, he's got to be a good person to deal with, he's got to have some kind of musical conception about percussion and of course, he must have good time. If the guy rushes or slows down, that's no good for me. I also look for a player who is solid, day by day; consistent. I think if you play good today, you have to play good, or better, tomorrow. I don't accept that somebody plays good today and bad tomorrow. That is bad news to me. If someone just plays good every night, that's enough. They don't have to be great or take great solos or play swing or samba really good, just consistent.

RF: I would love to hear you talk about some of the drummers you have worked with.

A: Jack DeJohnette is my favorite drummer because I know exactly how he plays. I liked playing with him very much with Miles Davis. I learned a lot, just sitting close to Jack DeJohnette and playing percussion with him. Everything he played made a lot of sense to me, after I started understanding everything. He blew my mind right away the whole group actually, the way they were playing. Jack respects a soloist and if you are taking a solo, he will back you up, and he kicks your ass

sometimes and then goes back to his thing again. I think he's one of the most musical drummers ever.

I admire, very, very much, Art Blakey for his consistency over the years and he's still a giant. He's incredible.

And I love the way Billy Higgins plays. I played with him at the Keystone Corner a few times. I look at his hand and it is so beautiful, so light, and he's playing very fast. He's so sensitive to the music. He can play a trio situation and he's burning, playing fast, playing everything you can ever think that a jazz drummer would play and the drum stick looks like he's not even gripping it. He's burning and there's no effort. He's smiling, he looks at everybody in the band and he has a very good communication on stage with the other musicians and he's very musical.

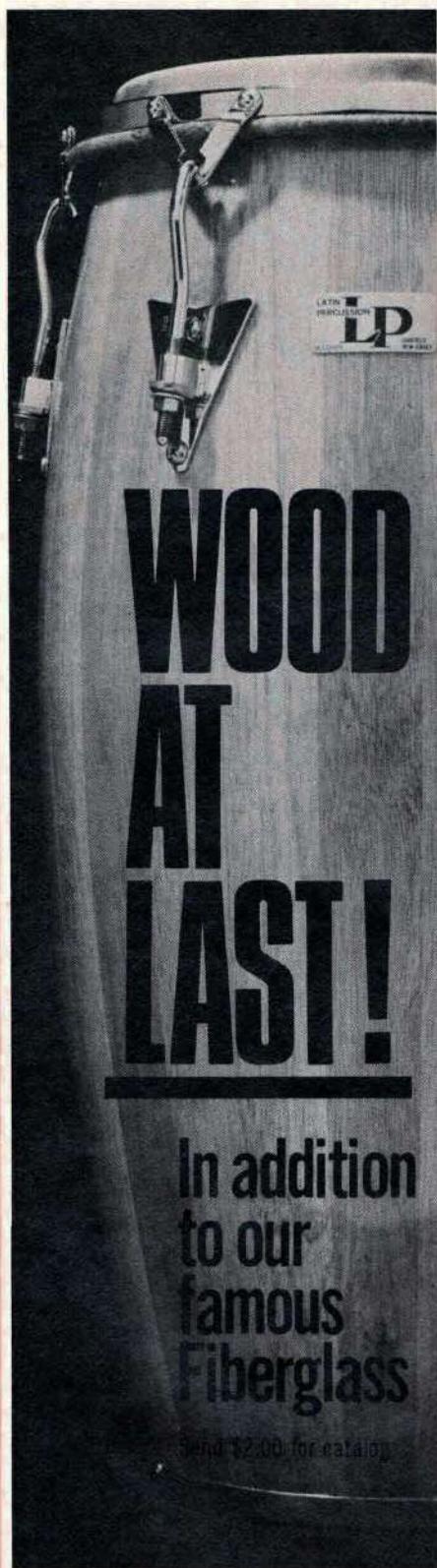
Of the other kind of drummers, the heavy-weight drummers who play the Weather Report and Mahavishnu kind of music, Billy Cobham is my favorite and nobody can play like him.

RF: Let's talk about the studio for a while. When did you get involved with commercial studio work?

A: For about two years in New York, I think 1971 to '73, because of my unique sounds and that I had played with Miles Davis, people started looking at me like the new thing new "thing." So they started

calling me for all kinds of recording. First it was musical albums and whatever and then producers of TV and radio commercials started calling me a lot. I thought it was great because I was making a lot of money. I enjoyed it in the beginning because it was very, very different and creative. After I started doing a lot of those things, I stopped, because I realized I was becoming a real "thing," instead of being a musician and playing for the people, which is what I do. There were some serious situations, like the United Negro College, which I did with Herbie Hancock. The situations ranged from that, which I consider a very, very valuable and serious commercial, to a sausage commercial. One day I went to the studio and there were many people there, big producers, and it was a big thing. They were all just there for me because the thing was all done. It was a sausage commercial. The scene was morning and the mother says, 'Hey kids, time for breakfast,' and the kids run into the house and say, "What's for breakfast?" She says, "Oh, we have sausage," and there's a close-up on the sizzling sausages. They stopped everything and said, "Stop. Roll back a little bit. Here. Right there! You are going to do the sausage sound." And I said, "Okay, great," and we experimented with that a little bit.

RF: Where in your mind did you find a sau-



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sage sound?

A: I picked up a piece of paper that was in the studio, a clear cellophane, and I played with it and they said, "Great, that's it!" So I made the sausage sound with that on the commercial.

RF: What happens if you go into a situation where the producer or the artist suggests you do something that, in your mind, you know won't work?

A: Right now, usually I say, "Okay, you want me to try that? I don't think it's going to work, but I can try that if you want." So I try it and if they think it works, it's fine with me. If they think it doesn't really work, I'll try whatever I have in mind.

I have something to say about recording: I am not really thrilled about studio work, even though the pay is real good. For somebody who is a beginner, it's good to be on as many records as possible so you get yourself well known and you gain experience in recording. But studio work, to me, is very, very heavy, mentally speaking. You have to think much more than you have to play. Even though I can play parts, I don't like to, but I do that if the musical situation is so great and the musicians are so good and everybody knows what he is doing, especially the artist. I prefer to just have them play the song for me, once, twice and sometimes three times and I write down on a little piece of paper what I will play on the intro, the verse, the bridge, and I make my whole percussion arrangement.

RF: And you're allowed to do that in most situations?

A: No. Nobody is in most situations. Most of the time, when you come to overdub, they already have an idea of what they want to hear and it is not particularly what you hear.

RF: I would think people would request you for your creativity.

A: No, they don't. That is why I rarely record today for other people. If they just want a percussionist to play parts, I'm glad if they call somebody else. I used to ask for a lot of money to play certain situations, but then I stopped doing that because it is better to keep a relationship and say, "I'm sorry, I'm busy," so you don't get into bad feelings. So I agree to record now in only certain situations. With George Duke, for instance, I will go in and play parts because George Duke knows what he wants and when I go there and he says, "Play this or that," I play it and it sounds good. That's a whole different situation. Mainly his ideas would be the same ideas I would have.

RF: And he's probably taking your abilities into mind when he's creating that part.

A: Definitely. That's when I say yes, when the people call *me* and they say, "I want *you* to come and play here." Then I make sure they want *me* and not just my name so when I get there they don't want me to play something that is not creative or is not

what I play. It's not that I can't do that. I did it for many years in New York.

RF: But after a while it can feel like prostitution.

A: Definitely. I admire very much those people who can do that. There are great percussionists who record with everybody today. They are very well requested and very busy all the time, jumping from one studio to another, but they grew up with that. That's what they do. They are not players. They are recording musicians and that's fine with me, but I'm a player and I like to play.

At the beginning of the year, I spent three weeks recording with Paul Simon, which is another kind of situation which is very experimental. The way he records is that first, everybody plays and then we decide jointly how to do it: "You play this; you play that; you lay out. Let's change this verse here, because it doesn't sound the way I thought." Even though it is not just going into the studio and burning and playing like I would like to do, I understand very, very much that his music is very well elaborated and when it comes out, it's great. Sometimes you don't believe that that song became so good. All of a sudden, that song that was not sounding that great, sounds beautiful. And then he's not happy yet, so he'll say, "Okay, tomorrow we'll continue with this song." But he knows what he's talking about; that's the way he is and he knows *exactly* what he wants. Instead of telling you exactly what he wants right away, though, stopping you from the beginning, he doesn't like to do that. So little by little we musicians understand what he wants. Instead of playing this beat which is a great beat, but it's all over the place, we play a much more simple one which is exactly what is needed. It is almost like getting the gold from the mine. It looks like dirt, but then little by little it becomes gold, and that's the way I see recording with Paul Simon.

RF: With someone who you haven't played with before, how do you determine what it is going to be like?

A: I ask who is playing the session, what kind of music it is, which studio and how will it be overdubs, live, or what kind of situation it is going to be. I gather as much information as I can. The last thing we usually talk about is money and sometimes some people will say, "No thank you Airtio," and then I know they didn't want *me*. They just want a percussionist but they want my name and I don't want to do it. Some people say, "Airtio, that's too much money. We really want you because you would sound great with us." And we talk about it and compromise and I play because they want *me* to play. I know when I get there, I'm going to be *playing*. That's usually the process, although I am now telling my process for all to know, [laughs]

There was one session where the people called me and said, "Bring everything." I

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said, "What do you want me to play?" I have a truck full of percussion. I got to the studio and it was pretty commercial kind of stuff. I had called my friend, Laudir de Oliveira, so we could do some real playing, but we heard what they were recording, and in about 15 minutes, I managed to tell the guy that I didn't want to be part of the session and we left. I recommended somebody else and even lent my percussion to this guy to play the session.

RF: How do you usually know what to bring on the session?

A: I ask what kind of music it is and to explain the session. If I know that it is more Latin oriented, pop, jazz or whatever, I figure out what I am going to bring. Some people say, "You're not going to be playing any heavy sounds. Bring all the small stuff." So then I know pretty much how it is going to be and what I am going to be playing.

RF: Do you have a standard set-up for your live performances?

A: I have about four or five set-ups because I cannot carry all my stuff. So what I do is figure it out by what kind of places we're going to play, and what kind of repertoire we are going to be doing. Flora and I talk about the musicians who are going to be playing with us and that way, I kind of know what I'm going to take. I like to vary it. I take a slightly different set-up on each tour. There are certain things you have to have all the time, but the things that are more as a complement, for the other sounds, I can change.

RF: What are some of those basic things you have to have with you all the time?

A: Tambourines, cowbells, congas, shakers, the basic sounds: wood, metal, wind and skins.

RF: What makes an instrument worthy of your collection?

A: If it's a sound that I don't have yet.

RF: I find it hard to believe there is such an instrument.

A: There is no end to sounds. There's always a new sound.

RF: There is a game you play to guess what something would sound like if you hit it.

A: That is just something I like to do. Basically we all know how an object is going to sound when we hit it. You see a piece of wood and you know what kind of sound it will make if you hit it, and a piece of metal will be different, and so on. But many times, you look at something and you think of a sound and you hit it and it's a whole different thing. I think it is very good training for the percussionist's ear. This way, when you see an instrument, you can know the way it's going to sound. Sometimes, even if you are aware, you look for a particular instrument, but you don't find it, so you pick up something else. If you don't find it right away, it's better that you don't play than to play a wrong sound, just because you thought you should play there. Let it go. Somebody else will play

there.

RF: So, back to what makes an instrument worthy of your collection.

A: Well, first of all, it is getting a new sound, second how much fun it is to play the instrument and then the third, where the instrument comes from; if somebody gave it to you with a lot of love and a lot of good feeling. It could be even a little shaker, and you have a hundred shakers like that, but that one is a very good one. I have instruments I don't even play because they mean so much to me that I don't want to touch them. I touch them, yes, in very, very special situations, but they are important; they have a great feeling and when I touch them, I remember where the instrument comes from. It's part of me, part of my life. I am attuned to that instrument. I cannot just take an instrument like that on the road to play for anybody or any situation. I have a lot of respect for some of my instruments. I have two instruments I have never played, except in private. The owner of the Keystone Corner went to Africa and asked me what I wanted him to bring me back. I told him not to buy anything new, but if he found something old to bring it to me. So he brought two trunks of instruments and told me to pick out two of them. He said, "Wow, those are exactly the instruments that I thought you were going to pick out." I smelled them and I just touched them, they were so beautiful. There's an old black kalimba that was hanging in somebody's house. He went to this little hut to visit some people and there was this whole family living in there and they cook there, they sleep there, they have their incense burning there, they pray there, they cry there and this instrument was hanging on the wall. It smelled like people living together. They told him it belonged to their great, great, great, great whatever, so he brought the instrument and I picked it up.

The first day I got it, I didn't even touch it that much. He tried to play it but he pressed a little too hard and it made a little hole in it, maybe because he was not meant to play that instrument. I was meant to play it. I believe in that. So then I looked into the hole and I could see two or three cocoons inside. Something had been born inside that instrument. What a beautiful thing! The first time I tuned the instrument, I spent five or six hours and it poked my fingers—there was blood all over the place—but it has beautiful vibes and I respect that instrument so much. I'm not going to take that on the road. Some very special situation is going to come where I'm going to say, "I have just the instrument for that."

RF: Have you spent time getting to know the instrument?

A: Oh yes. Almost every day. By myself. A cuica was the other instrument that I picked up. It is a very, very old instrument and I have a lot of feelings for it. The other

is my berimbau. I have four or five berimbaus, but there is one that I rarely play. I take it on the road with me sometimes, but if it is not the right situation, I don't play it.

RF: There is an incredible sensitivity here.
A: I have been a percussionist all my life and I have to be like that. Well, not that I *have* to be like that. I don't make an effort to be that way. I feel it. It is very important. This way, I feel I have my vibes together with my instrument. And then there are some that I break on stage. I get a new tambourine or something that I think is great. It sounds beautiful in the store but then it's time to perform and the thing is falling apart and ruining my solo and I just throw it on the floor, and it breaks into thousands of pieces. And the people applaud. So I have two different kinds of sensitivity [laughs]. But that's the way I feel.

RF: What about those instruments you've developed?

A: I haven't made an instrument now for quite some time. I used to walk in the streets looking for things all the time. You go down a little alley while you're walking and see little things people throw away. You see a hose or something like that and you blow in it and some kind of a sound comes out. Or you see a grill from a refrigerator and you know pretty much how it is going to sound and you have a box at home that it might fit right on top of, so you just put those things together and you have an instrument right there.

RF: Tell me about Josaphina, Geronimo and the armadillo. How were they born?



A: I have a good friend who lives in Berkeley, California, and his name is Peter Engleheart. He is a beautiful, crazy man; very creative, and he makes things out of metal. One day we were talking and we came up with this idea together to make like a robot that you could play with all kinds of songs. It was 100% creativity we just went off with it and he built Josephina and it was beautiful. I don't know why we named her Josephina, but she just looks like a Josephina. When you beat her real hard, she moves all over the place. And then about a year or two later, we came up with the idea of having a big bird with big legs, which is Geronimo because I think of the great American Indian. And then we

built the fossil. The fossil is just like a giant armadillo—the head looks like something from way before, so we decided to call it the fossil. Now we are thinking of making another one. It's going to be like a skeleton and he's going to have pedals, so if you step on the pedal, then the arms start moving and making sounds. The head will turn and make some kind of a noise. We are going to have to get together to design it.

RF: How much time do you spend with an instrument when you get it? How do you develop a rapport with it and know it intimately like you obviously know your instruments?

A: It depends on the instrument. Some instruments I get, I play once or twice and I lose interest, even though I play them sometimes. Some instruments require more research, like you can never stop playing the berimbau, and the same thing with the drums and some other instruments where you can get all kinds of sounds. But if I play with a woodblock for ten minutes, I kind of know how hard I can hit it and where to hit it to get the best sound, because they are all pretty much the same. And the cowbell, the same thing. If it's too loud, I put some tape on it to make it sound a little rounder instead of too metallic. There are some cowbells I like to be metallic because that's the way they sound the best. But it doesn't take that long, while some instruments take longer and much more playing them. There are some instruments I have never tried to play really well, like the tablas, because that's a whole different thing that is alien to me, even though there are some American percussionists who play that very well. Nana Vasconcelos plays tablas very well, even though he is a master on the berimbau, which is his main axe. He can get sounds out of the berimbau that nobody else can. That is because he spent a lot of time with it. That is his instrument; he built that one. Even congas, I don't play that well. I know how to play them—I get the sound—but I never really got into the congas because Patato Valdez and Mongo Santamaria are still alive and they are the real thing. In order for me to play the congas, I have to play just congas, because you use both of your hands. The way I like to play percussion is to play two or three different sounds at the same time. I also lose the touch for the small instruments—the very sensitive things that I have to play. When you are a conga player, you are a conga player. You aren't kidding about it.

RF: You mentioned the woodblock that you might spend ten minutes with. I think what amazes me about you is that you can take the most simple instrument and get the most intricate sounds out of it, an instrument someone else would spend two seconds with and think they had it explored. So when you spend ten minutes with a woodblock, there's obviously more that goes into it than just spending ten min-

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utes with a woodblock.

A: When I say I spend ten minutes with the woodblock, it is because I am only talking about today. I already spent my life with wooden blocks and cowbells, so I know basically how they sound and where to hit them, although some of them are slightly different because each instrument has its own little thing going. So some of them, you hit a little bit on the right and they sound best, or the left, or the middle. Some wooden blocks you have to feel them, touch them and look because some of them are thick so you can hit them harder and they won't break. Some of them you have to be careful with.

RF: How did you develop your tambourine technique?

A: Playing. A plastic tambourine was my first instrument. I learned the basic beats you play in Brazil and when I came to America, I was just playing the tambourine well. But there was more to it. Then I had to take solos and I had to choose an instrument to take a solo on. Instead of just playing the drums or the congas, I wanted to play something else, so I spent more time with the tambourine, finding tricks and things you can do to make it sound like a whole different thing. Sometimes people tell me my tambourine playing sounds like a whole set of drums, but that is mainly because of the way I put the tambourine on the microphone and the way I tune the tambourine really low. If I am going to play a tambourine solo, then I have to play a tambourine solo that is going to make some sense; that is going to be something that is going to make some difference, not just be an average tambourine solo.

When I came to America, I met, for the first time, the tambourine without the head. I said, "Hey, what can I do with this?" I saw other people play it and I have my own things that I can do with the tambourine without the head too, even though it isn't a big thing. I have my own beats that I developed for that kind of tambourine because I use it when I play certain kinds of music.

RF: When you play, how much of your show is improvisation and how much is rehearsed?

A: I like to have arrangements in my group. The first few times I play a song, it varies because I'm still looking for it, even though it's very close every time I play it. The instruments might even be the same, but the approach, the intensity and the beat I might play changes time to time; day by day, actually. Tonight I will play a song, say "Light as a Feather," which we've been playing forever now, and I will play the same instruments. Then tomorrow night I will play the same song with the same instruments and it will sound totally different because of the energy that is there in the place, the size of the place, the intensity, how the other musicians play that

night all depending on the present time. Every time you play, it is new, even if you play the same song ten times in a row. It's got to be a new unit of time, otherwise you are not playing, you are just reproducing whatever you think is good, cool or hip. That's why I like to change my set-up. Tomorrow when I play the same song, I will play it slightly different and it's a big difference to you and the people too, even though, if you go back and analyze what you played the night before, it's not that much of a difference. In reality, it is, because every time you play, you play for real and you play for that unit of time.

RF: There was a point when you felt that you and Flora needed to have separate musical experiences. Why did you feel that?

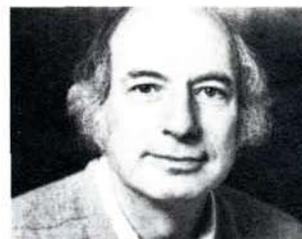
A: I probably said that because of management and record companies who always thought Flora could do much more for them as a singer than I could as a musician. Second, the real reason is that, even though Flora and I both come from Brazil, we come from different backgrounds. She is from Rio de Janeiro which is a very sophisticated city. She likes electronics and has a degree in electronic music, and I don't mix electronics with my percussion. She likes the music I like and I like the music she likes, but if she were to pick a repertoire, it would be 80% different songs than I would choose. We are individuals, and strong individuals. Flora Purim is Flora Purim and Airto is Airto, even though we live together for 20 years. Also, the musicians we like to play with sometimes aren't necessarily the ones the other needs. I look for a good soloist who has solid back-up, and she needs more of a sensitive player who will listen to exactly what she is doing and who backs up really well, which is one of the hardest things to find. If it's not an older guy who comes from the old jazz school of backing up people like Billie Holiday or Carmen McCrae, they don't know how. They think you look at the charts and play bar by bar. That's not the way it is at all. Backing up is a whole different ballgame, and you have to feel good in making the singer feel good. That's another reason of having two separate bands.

RF: How is it to work with someone you are that personally involved with?

A: For many years, it was very hard because when I was happy, she was not totally happy and when she was totally happy, I was not totally happy, so it was always a compromise. It's still like that a little bit, even though now, we have learned how to deal with it. We have to understand certain things and contribute the things the other person needs, and that takes 100% of you, even though on stage it looks like 50% and 50%. In reality it is 100%. Still, sometimes we have to discuss a lot about a song we want to put in our repertoire. I have to consider why and how good it will be for Flora and she has got to do the same thing. Then as soon as it is

PRACTICE CAN BE DANGEROUS TO THE HEALTH OF YOUR DRUMMING TALENT!

I'm Stanley Spector and my students are among the most successful drummers throughout America and the Free World. But I would like to talk about you.



You say you have an idea you'd like to express. You say you're unable to accomplish it because you lack technique. You say you practice technique every day expecting that with effort and time it will help you to express that idea. Is such an expectation justified?

First, please tell me what you mean by an idea? I understand an idea to be an aspect of knowledge. Since knowledge is always of the past, an idea must also be of the past. If I'm happy with my drumming it is because I'm happy now in the present. I don't need an idea about either my drumming or my being happy. But if I'm not happy, I may think back to the past when I was happy about my drumming, and when I do that I do have an idea about my drumming and being happy with it. Unfortunately the idea can in no way help me to play the drums happily now. The more I attempt to practice and capture the ideas of past memories, the more I remain welded to the past.

Second, tell me what you mean by a technique? Yes, technique is the means of expressing an idea. But can technique ever be your technique? Is not technique either a copy of another drummer along with his idea, or is it something that is alleged to be a technique that you learn out of a method book? In either case it will be something you repeat endlessly. That being the case, is not technique itself always something of the past?

Do you remember your goal? Your goal was to produce a performance involving improvisation that is spontaneous, free, and totally in the present. But yet you are approaching it through practice, ideas, and techniques which are entirely and totally of the past. If you were not already so far down this path of confusion and frustration, the situation would be hilarious.

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about to go down for the third time it is a small matter that your solution violates fact, reality, and logic. If you continue following such a path your practice and study is based upon nothing but pretence and ignorance.

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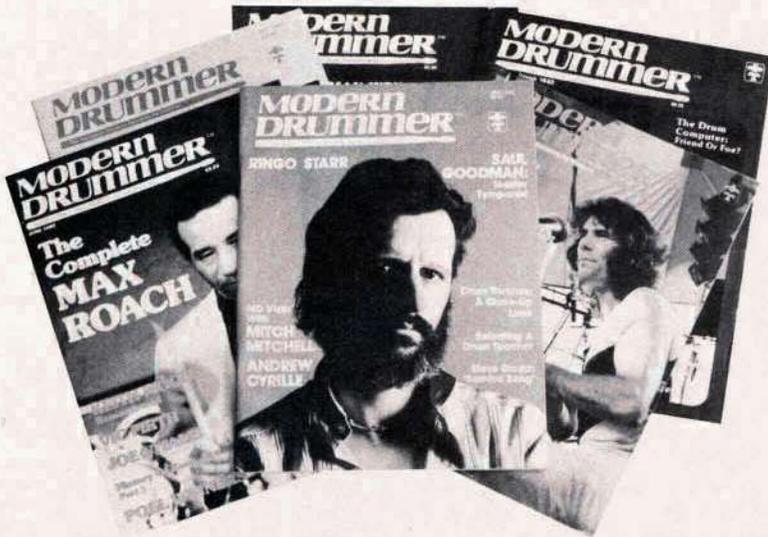
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decided, we give 100% to making that song the best it can be.

RF: Can you separate the business from the personal?

A: I don't know if we do that totally because we still bring the music to the house anyways. We discuss the music in the house and we make plans. One of the hardest things, actually, is when Flora is happening a lot and I am happening a little bit. That's very hard on me and it is very hard on her if I am doing a lot of things and she is not. But then I have to accept if Flora is happening a lot and I am not. Then I just have to do something with my ego, go out in the street and cry or have an argument with my friends or have an argument with Flora whatever it takes and try to work it out. It's not easy. Usually, one of the parts feels sacrificed even though the other part, sometimes, tries to explain real hard, "I'm doing this for us." I know it's for us, but I'm not part of it. This happens time to time on both sides. Then is when you have to put the relationship in first place and you say, "Okay, that's professional and this is personal. Is the personal thing good enough for me to sacrifice for it or not?" We had to find out that it's good enough, so far, and if one day it is not going to be good enough, then we won't sacrifice anymore. That's the best way I can put it.

RF: Although each of you have appeared on the other's albums in the past, this new album (*Flora Purim and Airto Live and Hot in SanteFe*) is technically the first joint project.

A: First of all, we never did an album together because of the record companies' conceptions and the individuality that we have. We never felt that the situation was right for us each to give that 100% that is needed to have a good album together. But this time the situation happened to be right and all of the elements went together, so we did it and it feels very, very good.

RF: What about future plans?

A: Of course we are going to keep playing and improving our music the best way we can. We now have a band made up of all Brazilian musicians. They are called the Steps of Imagination, and we met them in New York. This is the first time we have worked with an all-Brazilian group since we left Brazil. We will be making a studio album with them soon, and also doing a video. And then we have plans to do a worldwide tour at the end of 1983. We will be going to Japan, Europe and Israel. And in December I will be taking part in a special project called the Brazilian Spiritual Mass. There will be a 60-piece orchestra, a 24-voice choir, and Gil Evans will be writing the orchestra parts and conducting.

We now have a very nice man as a manager whose name is Monte Kay. There's no bullshit with him and he loves talented people. He opened Birdland and was the first owner, so he had dealt with people from Charlie Parker to Coltrane, every-

body. He has managed many artists before but for a few years he was doing something else, and then he decided he wanted to do this again. He thought the live Flora-Airto recording was a terrific idea, which is something new to me. He's going to make sure everything is going to go right. We are just going to keep doing what we do, which is go on the road and play for the people with the difference that there is an album out there that people can buy. I think people are going to be very, very pleased to see our show and then buy the album and get the real thing.

RF: What about the fact that you are always on the road? That's an awful lot of wear and tear on a human being, isn't it?

A: Yes. In order to do that, you have to love the whole thing so much that it is ridiculous. I'm not getting tired, because every time I play, I feel that it is rewarding, but sometimes I fly ten hours to Europe and I go there and play three concerts and come back. Then we go on the road for three weeks and every day is a different city and a different place and a different sound system, a different audience and a different kind of treatment you get from the club owners or concert promoters. I am beginning to feel that I don't want to do that for too long anymore, even though I want to play. But I don't just want to go on the road and go on the road and go on the road and then go on the road again. Cannonball Adderley died on the road. I do not want to die on the road. I am sorry to say that, but ... I feel like I have died on the road so many times already that when I die for real, I want to be somewhere else, at least at home.

RF: What about keeping the family going?

A: It's hard. It's very hard. That takes a lot from all of us. I used to really love being on the road. I would come back home, stay home for three days and be itching to go on the road again.

RF: What changed?

A: I have changed, first of all. I like the house we live in. I like to sleep in my bed. I like the vibes in my house. I like the friends I have here. The road is becoming harder and harder to make it because the money is still pretty much the same, but the general cost of living has gone up. Actually we must be very lucky or very good or something like that, because the people come to see our show every time. It's almost like a family thing. They come and they want to check us out because we represent some kind of example for a lot of people. But the world is becoming harder and harder because the people don't go out that much. There are more and more artists every day and some of them have big corporations backing them up, so people are very choosy now, unless they have a lot of money.

But it's hard to keep the family together and keep *yourself* together. When my daughter thinks about me, I want her to

think about me at my best, not the worst of me.

RF: When you come home, you're always probably exhausted.

A: But it is always good. I am not really exhausted, but it is a whole different kind of reality. You are dealing with a whole different thing. It is a different world and when you come home, you have to make the change and the change cannot take that long, otherwise you have to go on the road again and it's too late. But we're still making it and it still feels real good, so I'm not going to quit now.

Eventually I am going to be on the road less and less and do some special projects, not particularly big things, but beautiful things.



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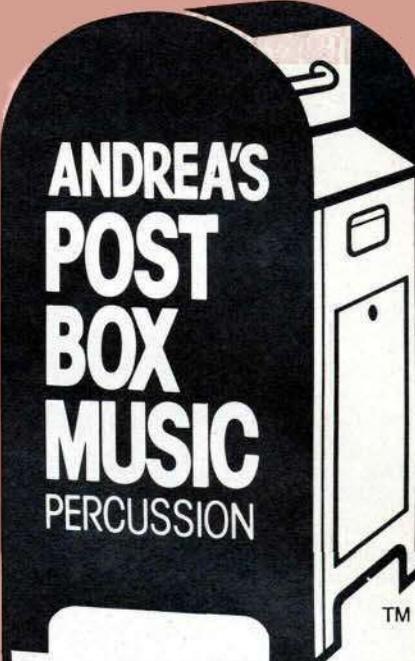
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Rumors

Rumors abound in the music business. They seem to spring from everywhere, adding confusion to an already confusing business. These rumors must come from *someplace*, although individuals rarely admit to starting them.

One way rumors get started is when a number of people hear and repeat a story with each person adding a little imagination to the story. With each re-telling the story gets more and more bizarre.

Example: Ask 10 people to sit in a circle. One person whispers a story (or joke) to the person next to him. He, in turn, whispers it to the next person. When the story goes all around the circle it returns to the first person. In most cases the story has been added to and changed in its trip around the circle. The first person is usually amazed when he hears the story he started. It bears little or no resemblance to the story as he originally told it.

This illustrates that even well-meaning people will alter what they hear. This is the result of careless listening and more careless re-telling. As a friend of mine put it, "Most people just repeat what they *thought* they heard."

Cowards

There are people who, because of jealousy, anger and envy, will deliberately start rumors to hurt another person. Politicians, during the heat of a campaign, are famous for this. However, at least this is done publicly.

The sneaky and most dangerous rumors are the ones that circulate quietly. The person about whom the rumor has been started rarely has the opportunity to defend himself. This is sad because rumors can hurt a person's career, and the people who spread these rumors are cowards.

Rumor Helpers

Some individuals mean no harm, they just always want to be first with the "inside" story. In their haste to impress others they usually never check to see if a story is true before spreading it all over town.

These people get a vicarious thrill by repeating negative stories. They love to pretend that they know what's happening. "Did you hear the latest about so and so?" is their opening line to catch your curiosity.

By not checking their facts before talking, they can do as much damage as the envious person who started the rumors.

Good News Is No News

Bad news and trouble sells newspapers and gets TV ratings on news shows. "Plane lands safely" doesn't get much attention. However, "plane missing ... all aboard feared dead" will get the attention of many people.

Even if the next day the news is "all aboard found safe," the damage has been done. Relatives have had their lives disrupted by irresponsible news reporting.

Although I'm not criticizing newspapers or newpeople, it does happen. In their haste to be first, problems can be created. Believe me, if it can happen in news reporting, it can and does happen in the music business. After all, the only thing anyone has to do is start whispering, and the phenomenon of "bad news travels fast" is in motion.

Dealing With Rumors

If someone tells you something that you find difficult to believe (especially if it is negative), ask some questions. Ask the person, "How do you know this to be true?" "Were you there?" or "Who told you this story?"

The last question will tell you a lot. If the person says, "I can't say," be suspicious. If the person volunteers a name that you think is false, be careful.

Think Before Speaking

I've heard stories about myself that are

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truly amazing. One guy told me (he didn't know who I was) that "Roy Burns had a twin brother who played drums better than Roy and that was where he got his ideas." He told me that "Roy Burns' twin brother is in a mental hospital and Roy Burns stole his style from him." The truth is that I have a younger brother who is perfectly healthy and who has never played drums. In fact, for a time he was a professional bowler.

I asked this person how he knew this story and, believe it or not, he said, "I'm a friend of the family." I then introduced myself and the guy got very embarrassed. His excuse was, "That's what someone told me." I said that next time he should check the facts before repeating negative stories.

When I was in Las Vegas a few years ago I was introduced to another drummer. He said, "Are you Roy Burns the drummer?" I replied yes. He looked very concerned, and I asked him why. He said, "I heard you were dead!" That one made me feel a little scared. I remember thinking, "What next?"

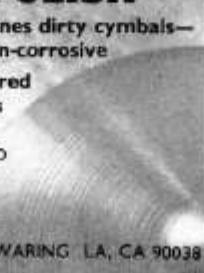
Some Last Thoughts

When you hear weird rumors about someone, check them out. Call some other people and ask, "Have you heard anything unusual about so and so?" If no one else has heard anything, *don't repeat the story*. Simply forget about it.

If a person is continually telling you negative stories about others, avoid him. Just tell him, "I don't want to hear it."

You may not be able to stop someone else from starting or repeating rumors, but at least you won't be adding to the problem. Just remember, such strange stories are usually greatly exaggerated or, more often than not, simply not true.

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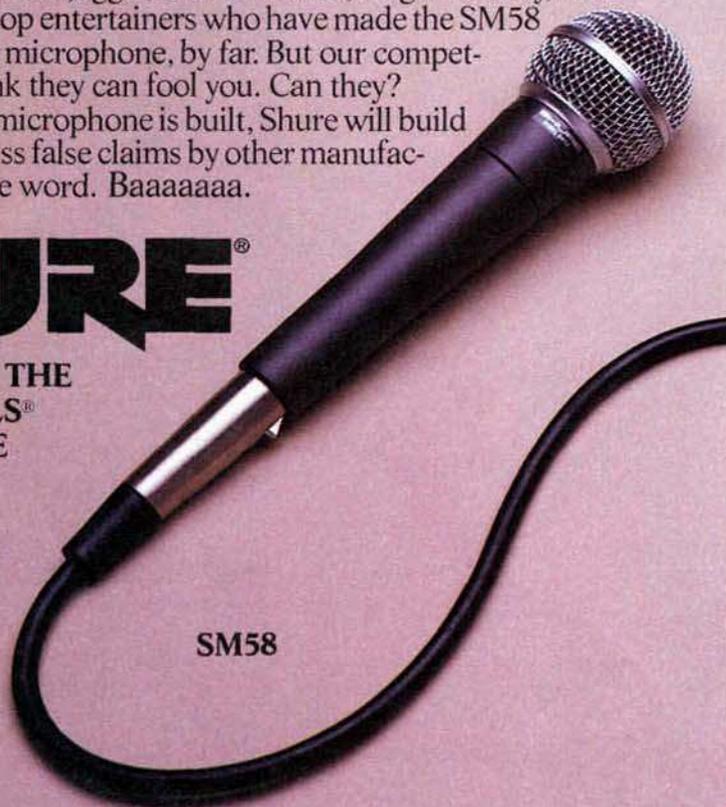
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Photo by Candice Barainello

Adam Shendal:

by Robert Barnelle

nity to speak to this innovative and provocative man. From that point, Adam Shendal, and Vegas, proceeded and continued to bloom.

RB: Didn't you grow up around both Buddy Rich and Louie Bellson?

AS: Well, I was lucky because my step-father, Dean, grew to know Buddy, and I wanted to play the drums. At 11, I was always pounding on things. Then I got introduced to Buddy. Buddy and I became good friends and I practiced a couple of years. Then Buddy was appearing at Caesar's Palace with Tony Bennett and I was, you know, really trying to copy his style, technique and a lot of his licks. So one time I said to Buddy, "Could I fool around on the drums a little?" I looked up and there were like 15 people standing there watching me, and Buddy said, "Wow, this kid can play!" Later on I grew to know him better and my playing matured. Then I met Louie Bellson which was a rare treat. He's one of the finest guys in the world.

RB: Being around players of that caliber must have inspired you. What kind of goal did you set for yourself?

AS: I don't know. At that age you always want to be the best you can be. You know what it takes to be good; you have to practice. At the time, I wanted to play like Buddy Rich. But as I went along I began to realize that to play that one style just wasn't enough. You've got to be able to really reach out and listen to what everybody is doing and let yourself shine through that. After listening to so many great players, you realize that there are so many guys who are saying so much. I don't play to be the greatest; I play to try to cover all the bases.

RB: You have to cover all the bases in the Wayne Newton Show because his act is so diversified, in terms of styles.

AS: Right. I think today's drummer really has to be able to play everything. There are great players who are either great rock players or great jazz players. But today, it's getting more to the point of being "good or bad." You see more players coming up who can play bebop, they can play with a small group, big band, funk, whatever. They're hip to the new Latin rhythms that are happening right now. Now I find it's more just being a "player." Having the conception to play any kind of music. Not only in playing, but in the way

the drums sound.

RB: You're playing with a large orchestra. What are some of the things one must keep conscious of in a band that size?

AS: Well, it's something like 36 pieces: full string section, brass, two guitarists. You know, playing in a big band situation you really have to play to everybody in the back row. Wayne's show is such that it gives the drummer a little more liberty than a lot of shows might. There are a lot of places to play drum fills and so on, but the important thing is to be able to set up the band. I mean, you can't play something so avant-garde that the band can't hear where "one" is. In a small group, it can be a little looser at times. But you're so spread out with a group that size. You have to adapt your concept to that particular situation.

RB: When you first came to the Wayne Newton Show, did you have to make any changes in your playing?

AS: Basically no. I would say that I have grown playing with the Wayne Newton Show. As I matured in my playing, I found that many of the things I was doing things I thought were great things to do before I began working with Wayne, drum fills and so on got in the way with the big band. Now I find myself doing less to achieve more. I've learned you've got to complement the orchestra. Listening back to myself on the tape of the show, I'd see that some of those things didn't work and I'd say to myself, "Just play time through there." You try not to get in the way. You pick your spots; when to do things and when not to.

RB: How do you create the spontaneity you do working nearly 40 weeks a year?

AS: Well, Wayne Newton is not the conventional type of entertainer that will go in and do a set show night after night. I've memorized practically all the charts in the show, but there's still some stuff that Wayne will pull out that I'll have to rehearse in my memory, or look at the chart for a second. You have to approach each tune as if it were the first time, without saying "Oh, we've got to play this again." When the band takes on this attitude as a unit to approach everything fresh that energy and excitement is created. Like last night: Wayne called two or three tunes we haven't done in maybe six months. So you've got to be right there at all times. You've got to know tempos. He'll test you

Vegas. It's a word that conjures a succession of freeze-frame images: The glittering marquees that boast some of the world's most dynamic performers; the smoke-filled but lavishly decorated gambling casinos; the million-watt color of Las Vegas Boulevard, known as "The Strip." The only place in the world, it is said, where one can stand on a corner and read newspaper at the stroke of midnight.

Like any place that's steeped in fantasy and myth, the deeper one goes into reaching the reality, the more the mystery unfolds, revealing something which is many times more interesting than the legend itself. This became evident to me in my conversation with Adam Shendal, the drummer for the Wayne Newton Show.

Invited to the rehearsal, I walked into the Caesar's Palace main showroom. Amid the plush surroundings and luxurious decor, I began to listen to the two-fisted honesty of Adam's playing. At the time, his playing seemed to me to be the very antithesis of the environment I stood in. Where the room was geared so that an individual could sink deep into the velvet seating, the open throttle delivery of that 36-piece band driven by the cannon-fire backbeats of Adam's playing, was more than enough to bring those individuals up and to the very edge of those seats.

After the rehearsal, I had the opportu-

Working Vegas

constantly. Consistency in a situation like this is very important. Some nights I'm drained. We've worked several weeks without a day off. It's difficult.

RB: A lot of Vegas players are excellent readers. Do you think a dependency on charts can stifle a player's ability to hear and play different styles?

AS: Yeah I do. Especially the way a lot of arrangers write charts. Don Vincent, Wayne's arranger, is excellent and he gives me a lot of freedom. But many times an arranger will put the horn figures in a chart and musically speaking, a lot of jazz drummers will play it like it's a Vegas big band chart. Just because a chart has horn figures marked, a lot of times these things shouldn't be caught. A lot of drummers, because of their lack of concept with today's music, will catch a figure where maybe they should just be playing time. It's getting back to knowing what to play when. That goes for any kind of music, even jazz. I find that a lot of guys have different ways of catching figures. In rock and funk, the rhythmical aspect of the music is first. Many times, by catching things you really shouldn't, you break up the flow of that pattern you're trying to set. I feel it's very important to know just when to play time.

RB: Do you think a lot of Vegas players are ignoring some of the newer styles, like fusion?

AS: Yeah, most of them are. They get left out of the big picture. That's a problem with a town like this or any town, unless you're talking about New York or L.A. Many players fall into a pattern. They have their families and playing is a job. They go to work. They can play anything you put in front of them on paper, and for them, that's enough. Then all of a sudden times start changing and you have to be able to do different things. However, I think the newer drummer is continually growing. He's listening constantly to all the new things. They're gathering all these concepts in their heads, although they may never use them on the Vegas stage. To play the Vegas style, I mean, well, there are a lot of guys in recording, rock groups, whatever, that maybe couldn't play the Wayne Newton Show because it takes a certain kind of ability. You see a guy doing a symphony and he just plays on a snare drum; he's fantastic! He may never be able to



Photo by Candice Baranoff

play any jazz or rock. But for what he's doing, he's great.

RB: What kind of set up are you using in the show?

AS: I use Zildjian cymbals. As far as the drums go, I've actually cut down on the drums I'm using to do the show. Now I've come back to a pretty basic set. A 12" and a 13" on the rack, a 16 x 16 floor tom, a 22" ride cymbal, a 16" crash on the left, a 17" crash on the right. On the hi-hat I'm using 14s the Zildjian *Quick Beats*. The ones with the holes drilled into the bottom cymbal. It gives a little more "click" on the hi-hat. I find for the show, I really don't need much more than that.

RB: The public is starting to get some strong images about Vegas now. What do you feel is the greatest misconception about Vegas style entertainment?

AS: I don't really know if there is a misconception, to be honest with you. I mean, after you get a guy like Steve Martin on TV and he says, "Hey, I'm a groovy kindaguy and I'm a Vegas kinda guy ..." Well, a lot of it really is like that. But for the most part, that doesn't take away from the fact that there are a lot of really great players working here. But basically, you're playing to please a mass audience. If you made a huge mistake in your playing, maybe the guy from Omaha wouldn't know the difference. But if you went into the Baked Potato in L.A. or the Bottom Line in New York, you have a discerning audience of people who listen to a certain kind of artist. It's a different kind of entertainment. Not to say it's good or bad or otherwise. Then again, more and more recording art-

ists are coming here. Melissa Manchester, Anne Murray and Donna Summer, all work here now. They sell millions of records. Wayne Newton is the kind of entertainer that tries to cater to his audience on all levels. He does some jazz, some country, some rock, ballads, everything. Me, personally, I like to listen to Sinatra, Barbra Streisand, then I like to listen to the Police. To me, entertainment is either good or bad. And, like any business, Vegas is looking to serve it's clientel.

RB: Has success changed your approach to the instrument?

AS: Success is a relative thing. To me, I don't know if I've really achieved that much success.

RB: Well, you're working with Wayne Newton. Last night you played Caesar's to a packed house. Many would consider this a degree of success.

AS: I guess it's a certain amount of success. It hasn't really changed my playing. I never look at success or glory or people coming up to you and telling you how good you are because you better watch out there's some young kid coming by you all the time. It's happened to me.

It's just diligence and hard work. Being able to keep on learning and keeping a positive attitude toward growing in a field. A lot of times you have some young guys who two years ago couldn't even spell "drums," than all of a sudden, two years later they're like giants in the industry.

RB: Did your playing gradually improve or did you find yourself taking giant steps from time to time?

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AS: When I started out, I was practicing six to eight hours a day. But since I've always loved sports, I began to divide my time between snow skiing and drums and going to school. When I was 17 and a senior in high school, I began to slack off in my playing. Which brings me to something we spoke about earlier: When I was in high school everyone was saying "Hey, you've got to see this kid play the drums!" My good friend, Walfredo de los Reyes, Jr. was playing congas and very little drums. I became a little big-headed about what I was doing. Meantime, Walfredo and I were playing in the high school jazz ensemble. He was playing percussion and I was playing drums. A year went by and all of a sudden, he came out of the woodwork. He had been woodshedding all that time and I slacked off! So he came out and was showing me patterns and stuff that created more enthusiasm for me to practice new ideas that were coming out. At that time I started listening to Tony Williams and Elvin Jones. But I was really gaining an understanding of the differences between the sound of the drums and what the drummer was doing conceptually to make that music sound good.

So, you find yourself slacking and growing, slacking and growing a little more. You just have to keep the door open in your mind that your ideas and concepts are not the only way to do things. That's why I listen to what other drummers are doing.

Even though you might say while listening to someone, "I can play that," it doesn't mean that you can place that as the right idea in the right spot, for the musical situation you're in. It's like the difference between doing a spacy kind of a fill versus doing something really fast around the toms, which means nothing.

RB: So discretion is very important. Can we talk a little bit about your style and technique?

AS: Well, like I said, I was around Buddy Rich a lot and technically he's a phenomenon. Louie Bellson, as well. When you see their technique it makes you want to go in a corner and hide somewhere. So I was trying to copy their style a lot. But later, working with the rock beats I began playing matched grip a lot. I found I got a lot more power out of my left hand, although a lot of players today are playing the conventional way and getting the same amount of power. I can play both ways, depending upon the situation. In Wayne's show, I play matched grip a lot because there are so many backbeats. It seems to be an easier way to go, for me. I've seen guys use timpani grip. I've seen guys who look like their hands are broken and, in their way, they get the sound they want. You've got to experiment to find what's good for you. I really work on a lot of Latin rhythms, and independent patterns between my hands and feet. I feel that speed is important up to a certain level because you need it to play any tempo you need to play. But I also feel it's important to have the freedom with your hands and feet to do anything that comes to your mind. It's extremely important and a constant challenge.

RB: How much of your training is formal and how much is self taught?

AS: I took lessons in reading. But for my playing, I listened and watched. I took lessons with Irv Kluger, a brilliant teacher, who played with Charlie Parker, among others. He taught me a lot about jazz and reading. Then later on with a teacher named Joel Ross—a fine reader and a brilliant technician. Joel took me through Jim Chapin's book, which gave me a lot of independence. But for me, I learned the most just being in a musical situation. Individualism is generally what makes the player. A lot of problems players develop today are due to the fact that they are clones of other players. Buddy Rich said something to me years ago. He said, "Listen to everybody and let yourself shine through that."

RB: Working with such a charismatic performer as Wayne Newton, how aware are you of your own showmanship onstage?

AS: Completely unaware. I do try to be exciting in my playing. I know Wayne is looking for a lot of energy in a show like this. Playing a lot of drum fills is very often not the answer. It's a matter of laying it down so the band can work together as a

unit and play together for him, so *he* has the freedom. In a show like this you might find yourself playing more than if you were going into the studio to create the excitement. But you've got to play in such a way that the band knows where the time is. You're working together to create that type of excitement so Wayne can do his thing. Anybody who sees any field logically my field being music knows you have to have a total concept.

RB: Do you think a drummer, while studying, should put equal emphasis on a harmony instrument?

AS: Yeah I do. And I'm sorry I didn't do it. As a young kid growing up, I had a lot of interest in sports and I didn't take the time to learn the piano. But I did listen to Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea, and Bill Evans all the time. I used to drive around in my car and sing their solos. I'd listen to what Trane was playing against the changes. I think that helped me in my approach to playing as opposed to just looking at the drums. Around Vegas, it's not enough to be just a drummer.

RB: You mean the guys who can double get most of the work?

AS: Yeah. Most people in this town, like Walfredo de los Reyes, *ST.*, who's a legend in the Latin percussion field and a great musician, plays all the percussion instruments. In this town, there are a lot of guys who double. They play timpani, vibes, bells and shakers. They play the total percussion as well as the drumset. Anything you can do like that is definitely important and will contribute to your growth as a musician. I have friends who are really amazing because they've taken the time to do everything. I can kick myself in the butt for not learning the piano.

RB: So we could say, "scratch the surface of the Las Vegas drummer and you have a fairly well-rounded musician."

AS: To a point. He's an excellent reader and within the confines of the element here, I'd say he's got it covered. Now when you talk about going and playing with the Lee Ritenour band, I don't think he's got it covered in that area. There are a few guys who could do it. Then again, you look at the guys who are playing with Lee Ritenour, like Alex Acuna. Alex was working in the Hilton Hotel house band here in Vegas before he moved to L.A. and eventually played with Weather Report, Lee Ritenour and Chick Corea, among others. He's a good friend of mine and, to me, one of the moving forces in music today. He's got independence like you wouldn't believe.

RB: What are some of your own traits that have perpetuated your success?

AS: You have to have the ears to listen. You have to be able to be inspired, therefore having the enthusiasm to want to practice; to want to grow. And the determination to be all you can be. It's like the

ones who don't seem to have the ability at first, but they have a tremendous amount of determination and drive which pulls them through and puts them in a position where they can develop their strong points, and overcome their weak points.

RB: How much validity do you lend to the concept, "It's not what you know, it's who you know"?

AS: I don't lend any validity to that concept. I think you have to stand on your own two feet in anything you do. You can't fool the public. You can kiss somebody's rear end for a while and play politics up to a certain point, and a lot of politics are played here in Vegas, but when you're talking about the higher qualities of musicianship, I don't place any validity on that concept. There it comes down to your ability.

RB: Do you think today's musician must also be a good businessman?

AS: I think it's important in life to protect yourself and to be knowledgeable about business; to have an understanding of where your money's going. But speaking as a musician, there's a job to be done and you have to go in and have the responsibility and the talent to do that. Be a nice person but stand up for what you believe in. Go out there and do the best job you can do every night. Rather than be shrewd, I'd say "be real." That's the best way to handle your business.

There are people in the industry who have used politics to get to where they're at. There are a lot of people who are capable of coming in and playing the Wayne Newton show. I'm not the only one. I know how to play for Wayne, and Wayne must like the way I play. It's been five years now. But you have to realize that there are a lot of guys who can do a job. That's why in L.A., if they can't get one guy to do a session, it's not like they're lost if they can't get that one person. If anyone starts maintaining that attitude, they're kidding themselves. You know that you are fortunate to have a job, and by having that job you must maintain a professional attitude in doing the very best you can. Louie Bellson has contributed more to the music industry in his lifespan than anybody I know. And he's the nicest human being you'd meet in your whole life. To me, he's the complete antithesis of the concept that you have to be shrewd to get anywhere.

RB: Where does Las Vegas stand in the face of changing trends in the record industry and show business in general?

AS: I see Vegas as a town that has established stars. It's a place for them to work, call their home, make a lot of money and get as many weeks as they're capable of getting. I don't see anything highly creative going on here, versus a new Broadway show or a new album coming out. I mean, you're not going to see Pavarotti coming here. I don't know, maybe you will. You

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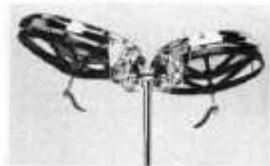
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don't see a lot of rock acts here, although Manhattan Transfer has been here and Melissa Manchester. These are major recording artists. But they're the kind of recording artists who have a mass appeal. I do think Vegas is growing, it's just not paving the way, unlike New York, L.A., or places like that. Now we have some very good studios in town. Kenny Rogers comes in and records when he's in town. Willie Nelson has done some tracks here. The studios are equipped to get the sound. I think you'll be seeing more of that in the future. It might be established as a great town to record in. I have been very fortunate here because I'm doing a lot of different sessions on a local level. I mean, what's happening here may not be on the caliber of New York or L.A., but who knows? Maybe some day it will be. I think within the next five years, as they're doing more TV shows here and so on, there will be more and better things happening. More creative things. More clubs sprouting up.

Vegas, as far as the youth goes, is not unhip by any means. There's a lot happening at the university. Right now the Jazz Society is bringing in a lot of groups. Having those talents come into Vegas, and seeing that more and more people are paying money to see them, I think that will create more of the same.

RB: When you have a highly talented young artist with a home base in Las Vegas, is he tempted to leave town to pursue the bigger and better?

AS: Well in the case of Alex Acuna, his talent exceeded that of just playing a show here. Same with Walfredo de los Reyes, Jr. He knew he had to go to L.A. Now Walfredo works for Ben Vereen. They play Vegas. It's his job and he plays the show the way it should be played. When he's in L.A. he's working with Clare Fisher and doing different things in clubs, and getting involved in the studio situation there. And that's the way it should be. If I found it was opportune for me, I'd probably do the same thing right now. It's tough because you get locked into making money. Especially with a guy like Wayne, working as much as he does. You go to L.A. and you've got to struggle for a lot of months because there are already people who are established there. They're going to get the first call. Rather than me putting up the struggle, I'm trying to take another route. I'm hoping the community will grow. Then hopefully doing more things in this community, therefore being one of the ones that gets called around here.

RB: There are so many great players in Vegas. Are there any jam sessions going after hours? Like New York in the '50s?

AS: No. That's what's sad about the town. I'd like to see more of that.

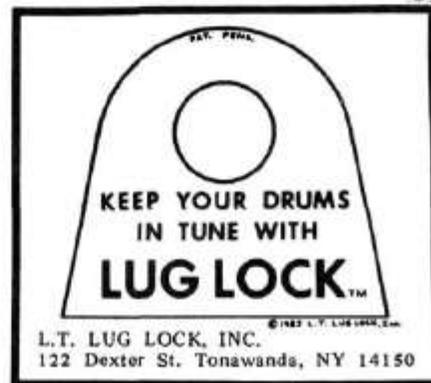
RB: It's unfortunate because there's a veritable gold mine of great players here.

AS: That's right. Like our concertmaster, Elek Bacsik. He's one of the great jazz vio-

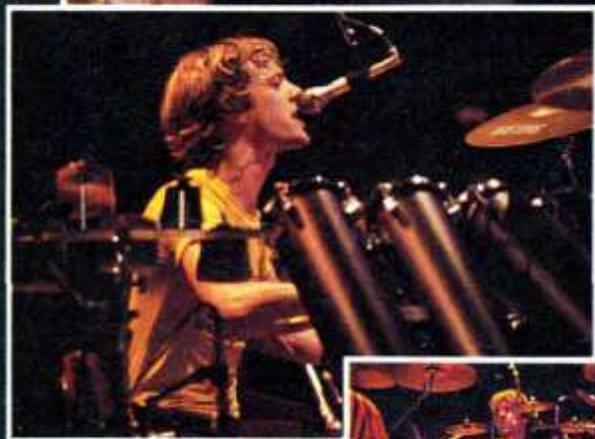
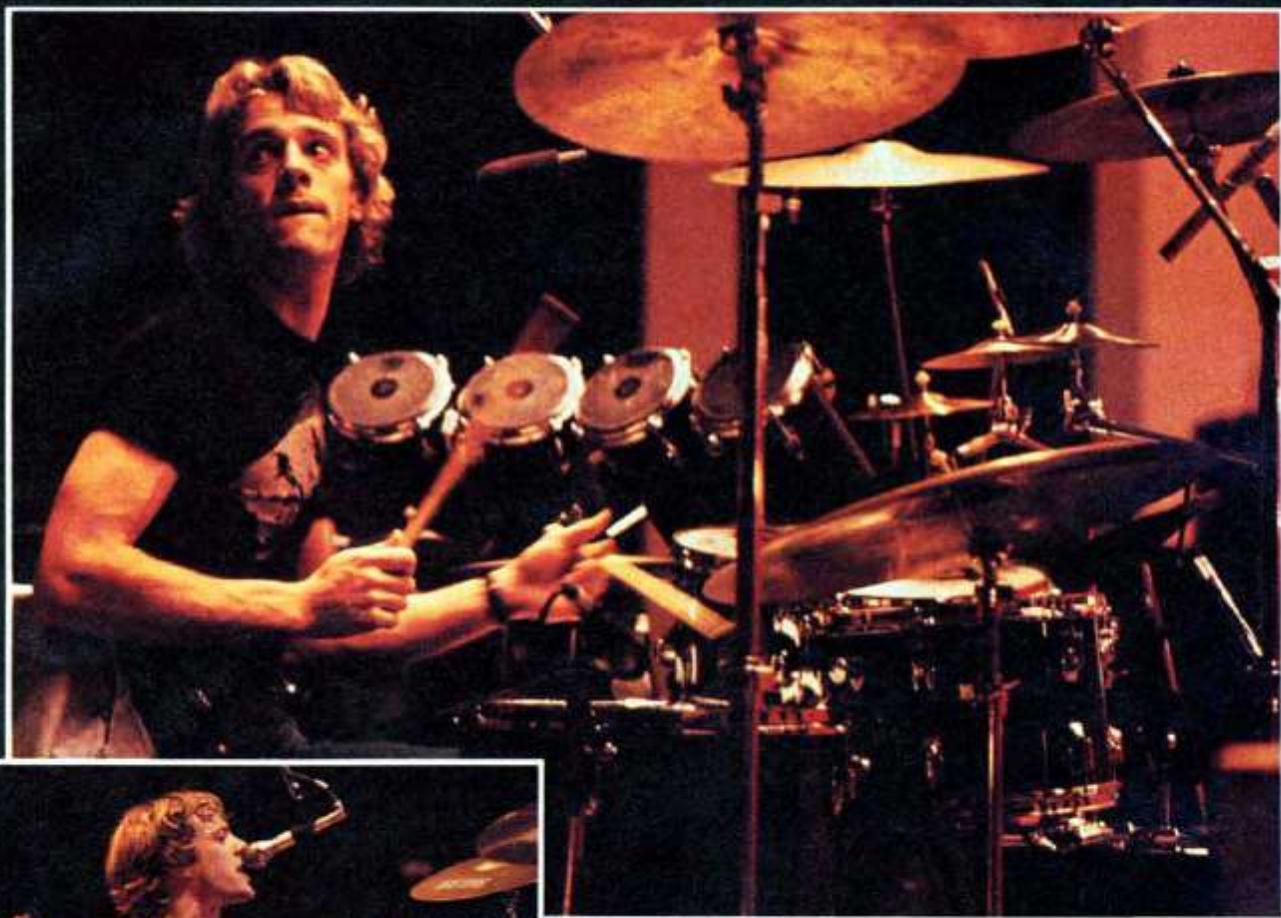
linists of the world. He's played with Dizzy, he's played with Miles, and people of this caliber. He plays in a house band situation, playing single-note lines many times. But I mean, if you ever heard this guy solo . . . you're talking about one of the great musicians of the world. Yet he knows he has a family and he has to do what he has to do. He's made his mark and has been known by the greater element of people in the jazz world. Not to say he doesn't like playing the Wayne Newton Show. I'm not saying that. Now he's settled down a little to a good life and a good job. What I'm saying is that his ability far exceeds playing any Vegas-style show. And there are a lot of musicians in town in that same situation. Wayne Newton is the type of entertainer that gives Elek the opportunity to play and solo more. But there's a difference between really stretching out and working a show where the man out front is the guy you're working for. He's the center of attraction. Wayne is good enough to let some of us stretch out and play, but still you know that it must be within the confinements of the show, unlike a jazz club situation.

RB: Do you think the excellent reader is a dying breed?

AS: Well, a lot of it is how much you are reading. If you can play and read something the first time as if you're not reading, well, that's a tremendous ability to have. There are so many drummers around today who are great readers. Charts leave a lot up to the interpretation of the drummer. Therefore you have to know which figures to catch; to know how to play the music at hand. But no, I don't think he's a dying breed. At one time I thought a lot of guys were just great players and not great drummers. But then it gets back to being able to do everything. A lot of guys on the scene right now like Vinnie Colaiuta and Terry Bozzio, as far as I know, they're excellent readers. These guys are very futuristic players. To go to work and to go into the studio, you have to be able to read, and also know what to do with these figures. Reading is a very important thing and, if anything, is going to enhance your playing. In order to work today, you have to be able to read, play different styles you have to have it all.



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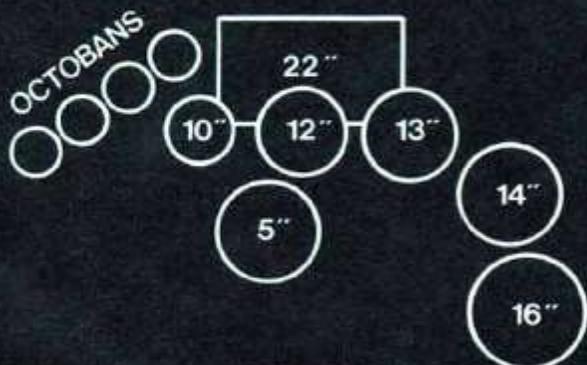


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Size	A. Zildjian	Sabian AA	Sabian HH	K. Zildjian	Paiste 2002	Paiste 602	Paiste Rude	Camber Brass	Krut	Nuvader N.S.	Nuvader Bronze
8" B	---	---	---	---	107.00	107.00	---	---	---	---	---
8" S	\$65	58	75	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
10"	\$77	68	80	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
11"	---	---	---	---	126	126	---	---	---	---	---
12"	\$89	79	103	---	---	119	---	---	36	40	---
13"	\$101	89	116	---	104	133	---	---	42	---	---
14"	\$113	100	130	149	111	142	100	40	48	50	---
15"	\$125	110	143	167	124	159	---	---	53	55	---
16"	\$137	121	157	185	142	181	128	50	58	60	90
17"	\$149	131	170	---	156	200	---	---	---	---	---
18"	\$161	142	184	215	170	218	153	60	75	75	105
19"	\$173	152	198	---	191	245	---	---	---	---	---
20"	\$185	163	212	245	211	272	190	70	87	90	120
21"	\$203	179	---	---	241	311	---	---	---	---	---
22"	\$221	194	252	292	270	349	243	---	110	120	150
24"	\$239	210	---	---	326	419	294	---	---	---	---
14" HH	\$226	200	260	298	222	284	200	80	96	100	150
14" Hvy HH	\$238	210	306	---	222	284	---	---	105	---	---
15" HH	\$250	220	286	334	248	318	224	---	106	---	---
15" Hvy HH	\$262	231	336	---	248	318	---	---	---	---	---
18" C	\$197	173	---	---	246	246	---	---	---	---	---
20" C	\$221	194	---	---	313	313	---	---	---	---	---
22" C	\$256	226	---	---	401	401	---	---	---	---	---

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---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	12	---	---
---	---	---	---	---	47	---	---	---	---	---	---
---	---	10	---	---	56	---	---	---	20	---	---
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---	25	12	---	---	67	---	---	---	---	40	---
---	30	---	---	---	63	---	---	---	---	---	---
40	35	16.50	---	---	71	---	83	---	---	50	75
---	45	---	---	---	77	---	---	---	---	55	---
50	50	22.95	39.95	---	92	71	101	75	45	60	90
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
60	65	39.95	59.95	262	113	89	119	95	65	75	105
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70	80	44.50	72.95	327	142	117	137	115	80	90	120
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---	105	---	---	419	178	162	---	150	95	120	150
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80	70	---	79.95	341	142	100	166	125	65	100	150
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---	90	---	---	---	153	117	---	---	---	110	---
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Herndon continued from page 17

Group of the Year," and "Instrumental Group of the Year," and similar awards from *Billboard* and *Music City News*. Platinum albums and sold-out concerts further attest to the popularity this group has with the public. To Mark, this is a logical conclusion of that communication between the band and the audience that he first saw in Myrtle Beach.

"The audience rapport is still the same. I sometimes go to concerts, and I'll think, 'What's wrong with these people? They're not raising hell like they do at our shows.' The other night we were in Birmingham, and the audience was putting out 127 decibels. The audience'. It was unreal. And then we were doing a live album in New York, and the guys from the Record Plant were telling me the same thing. They have a level that they usually set the audience mic's for a live album, but they had to back that level down about half way. They said the crowd came on so strong that it almost blew them out of the truck.

"I don't know what it is. None of us are primo musicians on our own, I wouldn't think, but we work together pretty well as a team. I think it goes back to that 'giving' thing. I notice that a lot of bands will stand there and play, and never acknowledge the audience, or they'll just turn around and play to each other, and talk to each other between songs. I don't sing or talk myself, but the guys out front work the crowd really great. It's stayed the same since Myrtle Beach it's kind of like a big barroom scene. Everybody feels like they're on stage with us."

Music is supposed to be about communication. But perhaps one reason some musicians have trouble communicating with an audience is because they have no idea of what it feels like to be in an audience. That feeling is something that Mark Herndon has definitely not forgotten.

"I like to go to the hall early sometimes and just check it out hang out and get the feel of the place. Recently we played at the same hall where I used to go to concerts. The last group I had seen there was the Eagles, quite some time ago. I found the very seat that I'd been in for that concert, and I just sat there for a good hour while our crew was setting up the equipment. I was just reminiscing, looking at everything, remembering what I looked at and what I thought. And here I was looking down at my stage. It was really a rush.

"You know who I play for mostly? It's the kid out there in the crowd who is like I used to be all kind of star-struck, eating it up, and wondering what it's like to be up there. I want to show 'em how it feels how good it feels to be up there playing. My whole career really revolves around concerts. I'm more into that than I am the recording scene. I may change as I get older, but right now . . .

"Studio work is interesting. I don't dislike it, but if I had to spend the rest of my life doing either/or, I'd want to be doing tours rather than studio work. I'm not much of a studio player; I don't play on all the cuts on the albums. Live playing is really my thing. There are a lot of funny things that happen on a tour that just don't happen in studio work. It's two different kinds of fun, really. The studio is more of an intellectual trip. It's stimulating because you're trying new things and the creative juices are flowing. Spiritual feelings are put to rest for a while and the creative ones are used. The give and take is much more intense in the studio because everyone is bubbling over with ideas, but you've got to know when to keep your mouth shut because there are other people in there too, trying to work."

In concentrating on being a good live player, one thing Mark had to learn was to not just listen to the lead player. "I'm really into guitar. I can't play a lick on guitar, but I love listening to great lead guitar playing, so I had to learn the discipline of working with the bass player. I still listen to the lead, in a natural sense, but a lot of times, if you play with the lead you'll be too far on top of the beat, because most lead players play ahead of the beat. It's just a slight edge, but if you listen to that you'll get faster and faster. I had to train my ear to listen to the bass."

Soloing is another subject that Mark has had to deal with. "I

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can't play a solo. I mean, I can get out there and chop all day long power triplets and crossovers and all that crap and do a reasonable job of it, but that's not musical. Maybe the kind of music I'm playing right now just isn't conducive to drum solos. But I can't sit down and just play drums; I've got to have some music that makes me want to play."

Even though Mark is not willing to sacrifice the musicality of Alabama's show just so he can be in the spotlight for a solo, he does feel that a certain amount of showmanship is necessary if you are going to reach out to an audience. "If you're talking about playing in a band and getting really involved in the music, I think it's important to be a *little* showy about what you do. I'm not talking about showing off, but I think people hear a show with their eyes just as much as they do with their ears. I like to see a player with some charisma. You can get so involved with playing perfect that you don't think about putting on a show for people. You've got to have fun. In a professional situation you can get carried away and get *too* serious about it. It can get to you if you start thinking, 'We're selling a lot of records and so people are going to expect a *hell* of a show. The music has to be *perfect*.' You can't think of it like that. I'm getting myself out on a limb here, but you've got to treat it like, 'Let's all get up here and have a good time,' rather than, 'How much can we dazzle them?'"

"I'm sure that a lot of glitter and stuff works for some groups, but we don't use a lot of heavy production, and I've seen a lot of top-name groups that don't. Teddy and I went to see the Eagles back when they were riding the crest of *The Long Run*. They just had the band gear, reasonable lights, a good sound system, and that was it. It was a *great* show. They had that place eating out of the palms of their hands. Elton John was another one no special effects. There are some groups ... I guess they need it, I don't know."

On the subject of equipment, Mark has come a long way from the cardboard-box drums and styrofoam cymbals of his college days. He has been with Gretsch for several years now, and doesn't plan to change. "I'm real satisfied with the Gretsch drums. They sound great. They put some quality into their work, and their hardware has improved 100% over what it was in the past. Those new tubular stands are state-of-the-art. Plus, they're an American company, so it's the least I can do to help out an American product. I've had offers to go with other companies, but I'm not going to do it. Gretsch was there when nobody else cared. They brought a set out to me in Tulsa, and I *loved* it. It was big *and fat* sounding. There's nothing wrong with Gretsch, and I'm not going to change them just for some kind of glamour trip."

When it comes to specific set-ups, however, Mark admits to being guilty of changing his kit for every tour. "I had a basic kit last tour, and an elaborate one this tour. I may go back to a basic kit, or I may turn something upside down! It refreshes me to change my kit around." One of the things Herndon recently added was a second bass drum. "I got interested in it after seeing Rush, and I practiced it for a while. There are only two places I use it in the show, but I thought it would add something. I still haven't decided whether I'm a one-kick man or a two-kick man. I thought it was very lenient of the other guys in the band to go along with it, you know. They have to live with me, too. I figured they would say, 'Aw, come on, man.' But they said, 'Fine, if you can use it. We don't care, as long as it fits.'"

Mark uses double-headed rack toms in sizes of 10", 13" and 14", and two floor toms: 18 X 16 and 18 X 20. Evans *Black Cold* heads are used on tops and bottoms, as well as on the bass drums. The only holdover from his bar days is an old Slingerland snare drum. "I bought that thing in a little music store in Florence, and it's the baddest sounding snare I have. It's a 6 1/2 X 14, and right now it has a *Pinstripe* on top. I have used black-dot heads on the snare, and at one time I went through a stage of using the Evans black heads on the snare, but that's not quite what I wanted. I like a fat snare with a lot of brilliance to it, so you can really get it to crack."

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"I don't have an endorsement with a cymbal company. I've always used Zildjian, but I've been trying out some Paistes. I've got a little 10" splash, a 17" heavy crash, an 18" medium and an 18" thin, a 16" thin crash, an *Earth* ride, and a China-type that doubles as a ride on a couple of things. That's a trick I picked up from Cobham he'd use his Pang to ride on sometimes. I'm using 14" *New Beat* hi-hats at the moment. I had an odd combination a while ago a Paiste *Rude* bottom on top, and a *Sound Edge* on the bottom. The *Rude* eventually wore out around the hole. I use an open hi-hat for a crash sometimes I smack it with my left hand and I think that's what caused it to break. So I've turned the *New Beats* upside down using the bottom for the top and so far they've held up great. My tech' says they sound better than the other combination. They're crisp but they have more music to them. I've also got an *Icebell* and a bell tree from UFIP, and a set of wind chimes. I don't know who the wind chimes are from. They're silver and have a double row. And then last night I stole an ashtray out of a bar. It has a great ring to it and I've thought of a place to use it in the show. So I'm going to have my tech' drill a hole in it and mount it on a stand.

"I've always played with big sticks, except for the time I played with Ed, because we had to play so light. But even now, with 25 microphones on my drumkit, I still play hard. One reason is because that's the way I feel the music and interpret it. But I'm also concerned about whether the person in the 122nd row can hear it. That's really silly, because we've got a hell of a sound system out there; even if I was just tapping the drums you could still hear it. But I played for so long without any kind of amplification when everybody else had amplifiers and were blowing me away. So I guess it's something left over from the old days.

"But I don't start out loud and just play one volume all the way through a show. It's very important to shade, and to almost even *not* play in some places, and hit the drums in different ways to get different sounds. If you want a Latin feel out of that little 10" tom, you can hit the rim at the same time you hit the head, and that gives it a hollower sound. Or you can use hard flams on the snare for more of a rock feel. There are a million different ways you can color. That's something I've really been getting into. I play hard most of the time on stage, but there are a couple of places in the show where we can really shade and make it nice. Dynamics are very important."

And does Mark find that the other members of Alabama respond to these subtleties? "Oh yeah. I don't get a *lot* of compliments showered on me, or I couldn't get my head through the door. But every now and then one of the guys will say, 'I really liked what you did on such-and-such a tune. It really set everything up,' or, 'I think what you did there really sucked!' [laughs] It's one way or the other, but yeah, we all notice what everybody is doing. In a four-piece band you really have to be conscious of what the other musicians are doing, because if you're not, and you don't play together, it sounds worse than a big orchestra not playing together. It sounds emptier. In a small band, the more things you do together, the bigger it's going to sound. You might think that it would sound fuller if everybody played busy all the time, but it doesn't work that way. I've listened to too many show tapes to believe that.

"Being in a band is a lot like being married everybody is united, going toward a common goal, but you've got to give and take. Say somebody asks you to play something that you don't like. You don't *always* have to do it sometimes you can suggest something else but a lot of times, just to keep everybody happy, you say, 'Sure, I'll do that,' and just let it ride. Nobody likes to be told what to do, but it goes back to what I said earlier about being professional. I have to remember how good it feels when I ask the bass player to play a certain thing, and he says 'Yeah.' That makes me feel great and makes me play better. So I should do the same thing for him, or whoever.

"A lot of it is just leaving a person alone. I think if you tell somebody how to play all the time, they get in a straightjacket.

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They can't play because they're always thinking, 'Am I pleasing this guy? Does he like what I'm playing? Is this okay? How about that?' And that can get to be a real drag. It's just like in a marriage you have to let your partner be themselves to a certain degree, or else they won't be worth anything as a person. It's the same thing with musicians. You have to let people be themselves, or they won't be worth anything as players. That give and take only betters the band.

"It's something you have to work at. I mean, we fight like cats and dogs sometimes. But it's like a family thing. Brothers and sisters fight like hell, but they stay together. Usually, the big problems in bands as far as getting along are all over something small anyway, and it gets built up. So it's something that everybody who's a player has to work at."

Letting Mark play the way he likes to play is something the other members of Alabama have encouraged, in spite of the fact that he didn't share their country background. Herndon's original doubts about whether to accept the gig were based primarily on a fear that they were looking for a certain type of drummer, and he would have to adjust his style to fit in. But they liked what he did, and he, in turn, can now see how his rock-influenced drumming gives the group something special. "First of all, my rock background gives me the punch that I think a drummer needs to drive Alabama. Alabama's music would kind of sit back and not do a whole lot live if they didn't have somebody back there kicking. And I'm not just patting myself on the back any rock-influenced drummer could do my gig as well as I do. I'm just saying that in concert, their music would be more for sitting back and listening than for getting down and raising some hell, if they didn't have some force behind it. That's number one, and number two is that I think my background gives me some different things to draw on than if I'd had a straight country background.

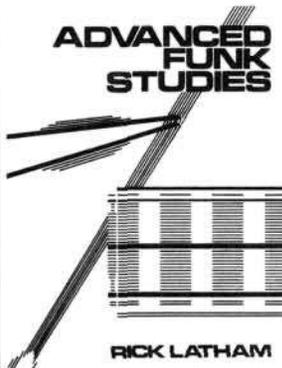
"I draw influences from a lot of people. The guy I patterned myself after for a long time was Barry Borden from Mother's Finest. He's now with Molly Hachet. He blew me away because of where he was coming from. He meant what he played. He really drove it home, and he was perfect for that band.

"I thought the work Graham Lear did with Gino Vannelli was just outstanding. There's some work on *Storm At Sunup* and *Pow-erful People* that is so musical. He really plays *music*. His work with Vannelli is a completely different personality than his work with Santana. Maybe he's that good that he can fit himself in with whatever artist he's working with. I also like some of the stuff Bill Bruford did with Yes, and I like Don Henley for his discipline. There again, he was the perfect drummer for the Eagles. I've watched so many people and gone to so many concerts, and I've drawn something out of everybody I've watched."

And yet, despite Mark's positive feelings about his contribution to the group, and despite the tremendous success Alabama has enjoyed, Herndon remains very humble about his abilities. "A lot of times, I get real paranoid about playing in front of other drummers. I think I know where that comes from: it's because I got started so late. I didn't slug it out in bars for years. I *have* played quite a few bars, but it's not like I have 15 years' experience playing in clubs. But here I am in this position without a whole lot of experience. It makes me feel a little self-conscious sometimes, and it's something I have to deal with. But I keep my gig, so I must be doing something right."

When I suggested to Mark that the thing he has that makes up for his lack of years is an intangible something called "talent," he pondered a moment and then replied: "I think 'talent' is your ability to feel music and then to be able to give that feeling to other people. You can get so carried away with trying to be good that you're fighting against yourself. I think any time you're playing music and that beautiful feeling just comes out of you like a volcano that's talent. And not all people who play have that. It's great to have the discipline and the formal training and things like that, but it doesn't amount to anything if you can't experience that feeling in your heart." 

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Trying to advise people on how to tune their drums is a risky affair. Tuning is generally a very personal matter. There are no hard and fast rules; no absolute rights or wrongs. But I've been receiving a lot of letters inquiring about the best tuning for club work, and many drummers have come up to me on my gig and asked me how I got the sound I use. So I thought I'd pass on some of my general thoughts about tuning so you can take them under advisement for your own consideration.

Facing Reality

Recently, MD did a feature on how the pros tune their bass drums, and what they look for in a bass drum sound. Any time you hear a drummer on record, or in a live concert situation, there are mic's on the drums. Often there are electronic effects in use as well. If you're playing your drums unmiked, with no additional effects, you simply *cannot* hope to duplicate those sounds. You will only inhibit the projection, quality and musicality of your drums if you try to radically alter the natural tuning the drums create for themselves. Remember that the audience should hear the drums clearly, with a pleasing sound, and adequate power to balance with the rest of the band. Undue muffling and padding to get a "studio sound" will only force you to work twice as hard to get any projection, or simply make it impossible for you to project adequately at all.

One very good, funky drummer I know came to me at the end of his set and asked how I had enjoyed the music. I had to tell him that the music was fine, but I hadn't been able to hear him play at all. He was genuinely surprised, and said he thought the drums sounded great. His exact description was, "just like the Steely Dan sound." I told him the drums might sound that way from where he heard them, but that the sound was incapable of carrying to the audience. He was understandably disappointed.

Tuning For The Audience

This brings me to another consideration that often seems to escape club drummers. When you're tuning your drums, from what position are you listening to them? In a live situation (again speaking of unmiked drums), you've got to be concerned with

what the drums sound like *out front*, where the audience hears them. So many drummers describe the tuning they've achieved by saying how great they sound to *them*, seated *behind the drums*. It's physically impossible to have any idea of the projection, depth, or roundness of sound from a player's vantage point. You have to listen from out front to hear the influences of the shell and bottom head, which combine to give the drum so much of its tonal quality. From behind, what you mainly hear is the sound of the top head reflected back at you. From in front, the audience hears the sound of the top head as modified by the depth of the shell, the resonance of the shell and bottom head, and the further influences of distance, room ambience, and dozens of other acoustical factors.

Things you *can* hear from behind the set include the relative pitch of the drums as created by the tension of the top heads; how much ring is in each drum; whether a batter head is wearing out, or suffering from a loosened tension lug, etc. But to get an accurate idea of what your audience is hearing, you have to have someone else hit the drums, and *you must go out into the room and listen*. If possible, you should do this at rehearsal when the rest of the band can play a little too, so you get an idea of how the drums blend in. It doesn't have to be fancy. Anyone who can hit the drums in steady rhythm and step on the bass drum pedal will do. I usually have another band member do it for me, while the remaining players play through a tune. It isn't perfect, but it gives me some idea to work with. You simply cannot tune the drums exclusively for yourself, and not take your audience into account. After all, they're the ones keeping you on the gig in the first place.

I hasten to mention that if you *are* miked, then a certain amount of this is reversed. If your drums are top-miked, as they usually are with double-headed drums, then the mic's are *hearing* the drums from much the same position you are. In that case, you *do* want to tune the drums for your own ear, because that's the sound that will eventually reach the audience. Of course, you'll want to discuss that eventual sound with your sound engineer, so that the mic's can be EQ'd to favorably enhance the qualities you want from your drums.

Returning to live, unmiked drums, I'm a traditionalist when it comes to tuning. I believe a drum was designed to create a sound with all of its parts combined and working together: batter head, shell, and bottom head. Remove or modify any of these, and you're reducing the drum's ability to produce sound to its fullest capacity. There *are* certain situations where this is desirable, such as studio work and some concert applications, but I firmly believe that club work is *not* one of those situations. I'm constantly amazed by the number of drummers who come to me and rave about my drum sound, and are flabbergasted when I tell them that I play all my drums, including the bass drum, double-headed and wide open; totally unmuffled. Most have never even conceived of such a tuning.

Exploring the Variables

I believe the way to modify the sound of your drums is by the use of variables that still fit into the "traditional drum" formula. That is, by the use of different heads, different tensions, different drum sizes to begin with, different sticks played in different manners (see July's "Club Scene" for some suggestions), and so on. I don't like heavy taping, padding, or the use of muffling devices such as *Deadringers* in a live situation. All of these have their place, but your drumset in a dance club is not it.

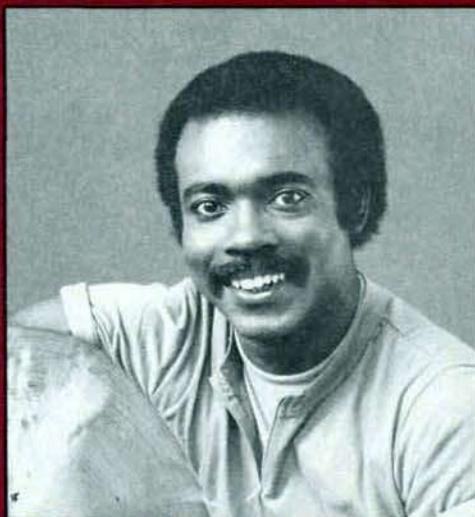
Let me give you some examples of what I mean by variables. Look through a Remo or Evans catalog, and you'll see several distinctly different drumheads, with explanations of the sound they're designed to produce. It seems more logical to me to use a head that has an inherent muffling quality of its own, such as a *Pinstripe*, or the even more drastic Evans *Hydraulic*, than to buy a relatively live, bright-sounding head, such as an *Ambassador* or clear *Emperor*, and then tape it up to deaden the ring. Just as an aside, let me mention that most players over-muffle their drums anyway. The "ring" that everyone is so afraid of, is a large portion of the natural resonance of the drum created by head and shell. To *completely* deaden that, serves only to destroy the drum's capacity to project through amplified music. My drums, especially the bass drum, ring like old field drums when played alone. But in the context of the band's playing, that ring is ab-

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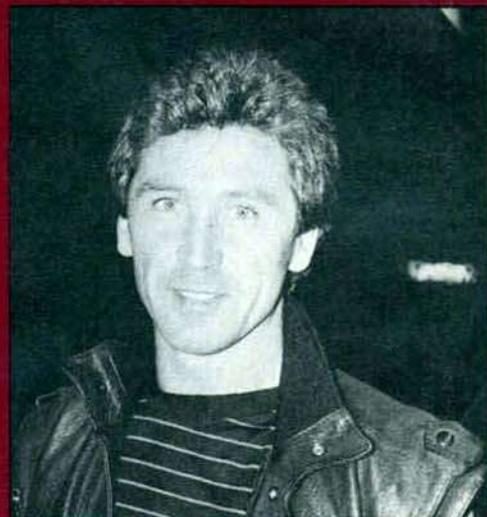
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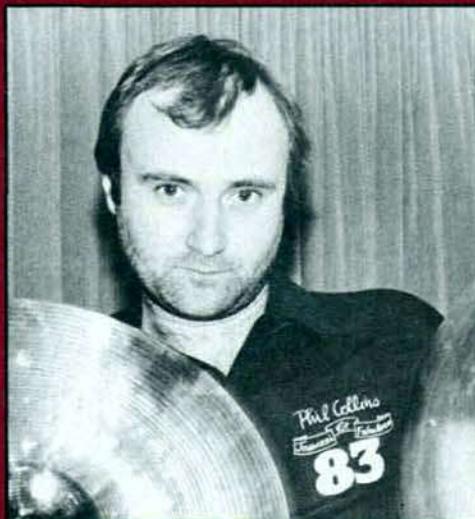
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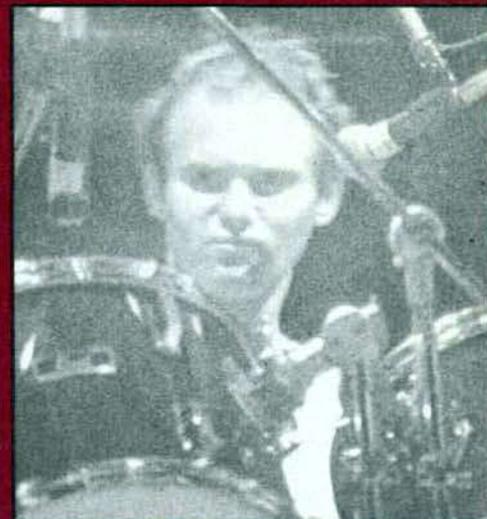
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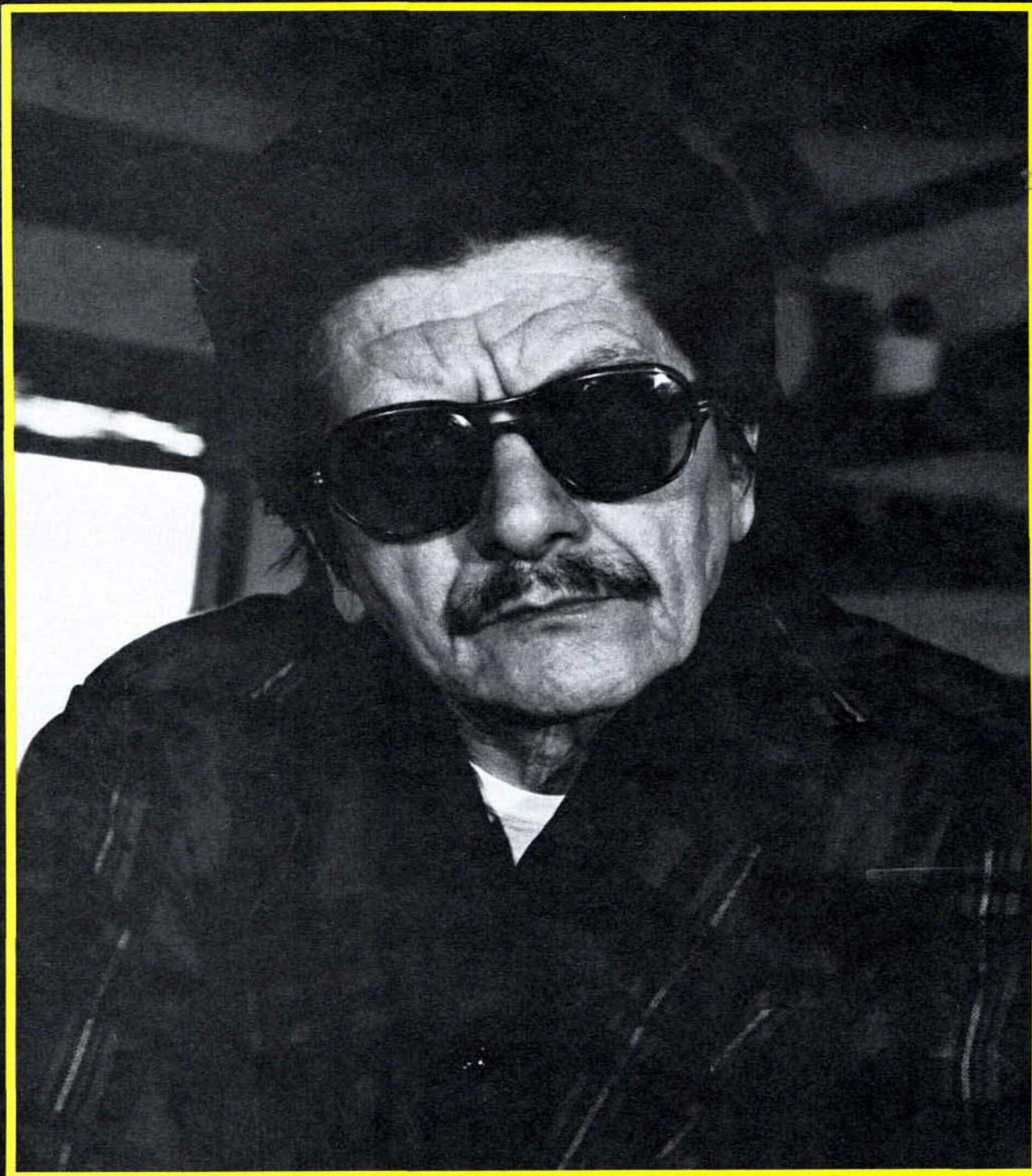


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sorbed into the amplified sound. What the audience hears is a big, fat, highly projecting drum sound. They don't hear the ring, the *band* doesn't hear the ring, and even *I* don't hear the ring.

You should use the type and weight of drumhead that has the qualities you need to achieve the sound you want. If you hit hard, with heavy sticks, start with a heavy-weight head. Then talk about the quality of sound. If you want a good live sound, use a clear head, since coatings have muffling effects. If you want a flatter but otherwise unmodified sound, then go with a white-coated head, or possibly a *Fibreskyn* or *Duraline*. If you want deep punchiness, the "ring-out-and-die-quickly" sound, go with *Pinstripes*. If you want more attack, emphasizing the stick on the top head, then try Remo CS or Ludwig *Silver Dots*. But be sure in your own mind what you want from your batter head. Then buy the head which *best* serves to achieve that for you.

Let's not forget bottom heads. The bottom head is the primary resonator. It takes the sound produced by the top head, fattened and rounded by the shell, and gives it its last modification before projecting it out to the audience. The bottom head can radically affect the final sound of a drum, and yet, I think it's the most often-forgotten factor in many club players' tuning efforts.

Let me state categorically, once and for all, that unless your drums are miked, there is *no good reason* in the world for removing the bottom head from a drum in a club situation. Period. Some drummers believe that removing the bottom head increases projection. This is a misconception. When you remove the bottom head, you're taking away the drum's main resonating feature, and you're left primarily with the pure "attack" sound of the stick on the top head. The open-bottomed shell concentrates this sound and tends to direct it in more of a linear pattern than would normally occur with a two-headed drum. But remember, this sound is being created by taking *away* part of the total sound the drum is capable of producing, not by adding anything. And there is no way that a drum which has had part of its sound removed can project more than a drum left with all its sound-production capabilities intact.

Additionally, the type of head used on the bottom is the fine-tuning you give to your drum's sound. You can enhance the resonance by using a clear head, or diminish it by using a coated head. A thin head will allow higher overtones to carry, while a thicker head allows only the lower ranges to project. I personally use clear *Emperors* for all my bottom heads to maximize the depth and projection of the toms. You should note that Remo *Pinstripes* and CS, Ludwig *Silver Dots*, and Evans *Hydraulic* heads, are all intended to be batter heads, specifically designed to modify the sound

of the stick striking the drum. They *don't* belong on the bottom of your drums if you intend to get a clear, projecting tone. CS or *Silver Dots* choke the resonance out, *Pinstripes* and *Hydraulics* muffle the sound to a tremendous degree. Of course, since every rule can sometimes be broken to your advantage, be aware that if you have to play a low-volume gig, you might be able to maintain a decent drum sound by using a non-resonant bottom head, rather than padding up the drum or muffling the top head, which generally changes the sound more radically. As an additional benefit, a double-headed drum will give quicker stick response than a single-headed one, given equal tension on the batter head.

I'm a firm believer in using the right tool for the job, and this includes using the right size drums for the sound you wish to obtain. I've heard some very unpleasant results from tightening up a 12" tom to try and get a high, concert tom sound that would have been expected of an 8" or 10". All that was achieved was a 12" drum that sounded like a saucepan. Conversely, I've heard drummers tune a 13" or 14" rack tom very loose and muddy, trying to get a depth that the drum was simply incapable of producing. The result was totally unacceptable.

You should realize that each drum size has its own natural range; the range of pitches you can reasonably expect to obtain. If you try to get higher or lower than the drum can handle, you're defeating the purpose of tuning. Tuning a drum should be an attempt to get the best possible sound out of it, using all of its potential, and varying it only enough to achieve a pleasant variety of sound relative to the other drums.

Michael Derosier, formerly of Heart, once told me he disliked multiple-drum sets with drums only an inch different in diameter, because it simply wasn't possible to achieve a noticeable variety of pitch from one drum to the next. I agree with that. I play a set consisting of 8", 10", 12" and 14" rack toms, and 14 x 14 and 17 x 16 floor toms. My drums differ two inches in diameter, and at least two inches in depth as well. This enables me to tune each drum to its maximum potential *individually*, and almost automatically achieve a pleasant variety of pitch around the kit. The bottom line is: if you want a high sound, get a small drum; if you want depth, get a large drum.

Remember, your drums are a musical instrument. Let them work *for* you in the manner for which they were designed, and you'll maximize your sound. Don't over-modify them, or try to achieve in a live situation, sounds that are the products of outside technology. You're live, so let the drums be live, and you'll enjoy a lively reaction from your audience and your musical colleagues.



JACK DEJOHNETTE'S CONCEPTS THE ART OF ACCOMPANIMENT

Multi-Directional Music

Box 95

Willow, NY 12495

Price: \$15.00 (audio cassette)

This tape represents a new approach to drum instruction in a couple of different ways. First of all, this is the only tape that I know of which is complete in itself—it was not meant to accompany a written text. Secondly, and more importantly, this is not a dogmatic presentation which tells you *the way* to play. Rather, DeJohnette demonstrates that there are a variety of options available to the drummer. He briefly discusses each option, and then demonstrates what it will sound like, using drums, piano and bass.

The first two tunes are fairly uptempo. In the first, Jack plays simply, while in the second, he plays in a style he refers to as "spaciously busy." He then goes on to play "Stella by Starlight" twice, first with a simple, smooth, brush accompaniment, then with a freer type of playing. The two versions sound very different, even though the piano and bass tracks are exactly the same. This is where you begin to hear how much difference the drums can make.

That idea is carried even further on side two. Jack plays the same ballad four times, but with four different ways of drumming. Again, the piano and bass are the same. If you've ever thought that there is only one "correct" way to play a given tune, this tape will make you reconsider your position. And if you've ever felt that the piano and bass were more important than the drums in setting the overall mood of a piece, Jack will convince you that the drums are an equal voice.

This is not a tape full of licks and beats to be memorized. This tape is to make you think, and stimulate your imagination. Music is aural art, so it makes sense to have aural instruction.

Richard Egart

BRUFORD AND THE BEAT

Axis Video

P.O. Box 21322

Baltimore, MD 21208

Price: \$49.95 (VHS/Beta)

For a music video to be successful, the visual element must enhance the musical and verbal elements. To be more specific, on a video designed to give an insight into a drummer's style, you should be able to see *how* the drummer plays as you're hearing it, and also learn *why* the drummer does

certain things. This is all accomplished reasonably well on this 30-minute tape from Axis Video.

First of all, there is plenty of playing on this tape. Bill is seen soloing, demonstrating ideas and concepts, and performing with King Crimson. The camera angles enable the viewer to see how Bill is using his hands, and where the sounds are coming from (which is important, considering his mix of acoustic and electronic drums). One section of the tape has Bill demonstrating how the pattern he used on "Discipline" began as a snare drum exercise. He shows how he gradually developed the idea, first spreading it out to other instruments, and then using it as the basis for a King Crimson tune. The segment concludes with a performance of the piece by the whole band.

At other times on this tape, Bill discusses his feelings on such subjects as rudiments, soloing, live performance, and how to turn weaknesses into strengths. In several instances, his verbal comments are heard dubbed over a shot of him playing what he is talking about. The tape is rounded out by comments from Steve Howe and Robert Fripp.

In a recent interview, Bill described this tape as "semi-entertainment, semi-clinic." That's a fair assessment. It's educational, certainly, but you can just sit back and enjoy it, too. The camerawork is worth mentioning: it is artistic throughout, but the necessity of being able to see what Bill is doing is never sacrificed simply for artistic effect. The visual artistry is used as it should be to complement the musical and verbal content.

Rick Mattingly

MAX ROACH: IN SESSION

Axis Video

PO Box 21322

Baltimore, MD 21208

Price: \$49.95 (VHS/Beta)

Max Roach: In Session is a partial documentary of the recording session for Max's *Chattahoochie Red* album. It is a 30-minute video of Max explaining how and why the album was done, footage of studio rehearsal, footage of actual recording sessions, and some videographic art interpretations of the music.

There's quite a bit of footage of songs that never made it to the album. On the positive side, it gives us a partial look at some Roach compositions that we might never have seen or heard otherwise. On the negative side I think the video would've worked better using either songs from the

album in their entirety and/or songs not on the album in their entirety.

Having the opportunity to be on hand for a Max Roach recording session would be a rare privilege. But, for the viewer who's never seen a recording session, or even been in a recording studio, this tape might be a little confusing.

Max Roach: In Session gives us a glimpse at Max's all-around approach to leading a band, and it gives us some fine footage of Max drumming.

The videographic artwork is interesting in itself, but it might be distracting to viewers who would rather see Max play in a non-abstract situation.

Max Roach has never been a man to stagnate. We can listen to his body of work on records and even though not every experiment is successful, what remains is a very valuable legacy from a giant. Similarly, this video could well be the beginning of new things in this new art form, for Max Roach. If that's the case, we have a lot to look forward to.

Scott K. Fish

STEVE GADD: UP CLOSE

DCI Music Video

541 Avenue Of The Americas

New York, NY 10011

Price: \$79.95 (VHS/Beta)

Steve Gadd: Up Close is one of several new videos from the DCI series, and judging from the focus of DCI's ad campaign, it appears that *this* is the one they're counting on to really get things off the ground.

Gadd aptly demonstrates a host of ingenious funk patterns built on basic rudimentary stickings, independence exercises, bass drum and hi-hat techniques, r&b shuffles, rudimentary hand exercises, fills, setting up grooves, a fiery samba solo, the beat on Paul Simon's "Fifty Ways," and the now classic four-stick technique from "Late In The Evening."

The tape is structured around a question-and-answer format between Steve and Rob Wallis of Drummer's Collective, and if there's any fault to be found here, it's that more emphasis on Gadd's remarkable playing, and less on a somewhat annoying assortment of meaningless questions ("Why did you want to be a drummer?") would have made this video even more enjoyable. The editing is also a trifle ragged at times, but yet, none of these minor faults can overshadow Gadd's contribution to the project. The man is such a dynamic musician, that one tends to forgive the shortcomings of the production itself.

For those ready for video, *Steve Gadd: Up Close* is an expensive, but extremely worthwhile way to pick up on some of the key factors which have made Gadd one of the great drummers of our time.

Mark Hurley

**DIFFERENT DRUMMER
ELVIN JONES**

Rhapsody Films
30 Charlton Street
New York, NY 10014
Price: \$50.00 (VMS/Beta)

Originally shown on PBS, this 30-minute film is designed as a mini-documentary of Elvin Jones. Elvin's composition "Three Card Molly" provides a framework for the film. He discusses how the piece got its name, then shows how he bases his drum solo on the melody of the composition, and then performs the piece with his quartet. In between, Elvin comments on his early years in Detroit, his work with Bud Powell and John Coltrane, and the way he hears different colors in different elements of his drumset. There are also clips of Ron Carter speaking about Elvin, a scene with Elvin visiting his sisters at home and in church (where they sing in the choir), and a vintage performance of Elvin with the John Coltrane Quartet.

I believe that it is this type of video presentation which will have the most lasting value. The filmmaker, Edward Gray, captured not only Elvin Jones the drummer, but also the person. The viewer learns a great deal about Elvin's approach to his instrument, while also picking up his warmth, intensity, sensitivity and humor. It is obvious that a great deal of time and preparation went into the making of this film, and the result is a professional quality video which provides a unique look at a unique musician.

Rick Mattingly

LENNY WHITE: IN CLINIC
DCI Music Video, Inc.
541 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10011
Price: \$79.95 (VHS/Beta)

Taped live at a Lenny White drum clinic, this presentation focuses quite a bit on the verbal, although there is ample footage of Lenny playing the drums. After a few minutes of opening remarks about his approach to playing, Lenny opens up the clinic for questions. He discusses the use and/or non-use of rudiments; his reason for playing hi-hat with his left hand at a right-handed drumset; playing melodically; playing dynamically; practice routines, and how to back up different players in a band situation.

The playing footage is Lenny with guitar and electric bass. He jams on a samba tune, two funk tunes and then an interesting demonstration on how to construct a

melodic drum solo by building off a riff or a repeated rhythmic pattern.

I would've liked to have seen Lenny play/demonstrate some straight-ahead jazz drumming. There are some moments of discussion on how he was influenced by Tony Williams with Miles Davis, and it would've perhaps rounded out the video if Lenny had discussed and demonstrated this side of himself.

Also, during the jams there was a bit too much footage of the guitarist and bassist. Drummer's Collective is also known as the Rhythm Section Lab, which may be why the cameramen focused in on the guitar and bass, but since this is a Lenny White video, it would probably be more useful for drummers if they could have both seen and heard Lenny, while only hearing the other two musicians. The shots of all three musicians, or Lenny and one other musician were fine, especially during a call-and-response section between Lenny and the bassist towards the end of the video.

Scott K. Fish

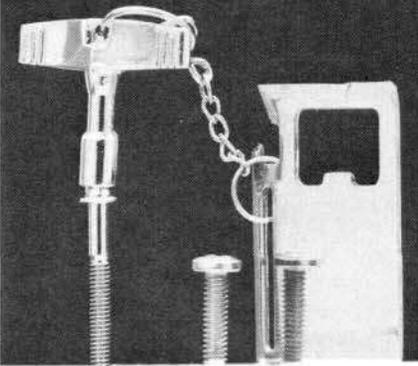
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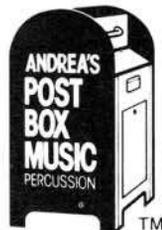
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Keeping it Simple

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 (hereinafter known as Jack)
 And the party of the second part,
 (hereinafter known as Jill)
 Did knowingly, willingly and negligently
 Ascend said natural elevation of land
 of local area and well-defined outline,
 (hereinafter called the Hill)
 At such time and place as first inscribed above,
 For the purpose of retrieving, in a cylindrical container,
 (hereinafter called the Pail)
 Such quantities of the liquid most commonly observed
 descending from the clouds as rain,
 in the form of liquid oxide of hydrogen,
 (hereinafter called Water)
 As was necessary and proper to meet the nutritional
 needs of the parties first described above
 Etc.

In case you found the above little ditty confusing, allow me to explain. What you just read were the first few lines from the traditional children's nursery rhyme "Jack & Jill," rewritten by a lawyer. Before you ask yourself what a lawyer's rendition of a children's nursery rhyme has to do with making you a better musician, stop and think about what is wrong with the way it is written. There are three main problems:

1. There are *too many words*.
2. The words are used in an *inappropriate manner*. *Simpler* words would have conveyed the meaning with much more *clarity*.
3. As a result, the true meaning of the original rhyme is *lost* in a maze of needlessly *complicated* and *inappropriately* used words.

Let's examine the musical application of this. All of us, at one time or another, have given in to the temptation to play something "flashy" or "busy" when our best musical judgment told us that a single accent on the tom-tom, or a simple "time" pattern on a closed hi-hat was all that was really needed.

It takes self-confidence and discipline to "cut the fat" from our playing, and to play only what is essential to enhance the music. There will be many occasions where sophisticated rhythms are absolutely essential, and equally as many times when the music demands the utmost in simplicity. The key is to know the difference, and, to the best of our ability, make everything we play make sense within the context of the music. A good general guideline may be: "Why play 20 notes if you can say the same thing better in 10?" For example, if the accents you want heard in a fill are:



(A) Try keeping the rhythm essentially intact. Use the tom-toms to vary the tonality instead of cluttering up the fill with extra notes that have little musical value and are likely to confuse the feel of the fill.

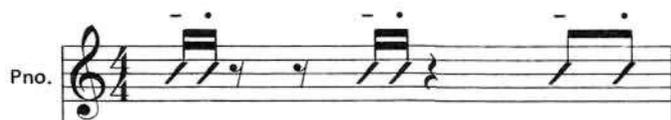
Note:
 H.H. with H.H. Splash stick H.H. with stick T.T. S.D. T.T. B.D.

(B) Similarly, by understating when playing "time," the rhythm has a chance to breathe. Harvey Mason's playing on Herbie Hancock's "Chameleon" is an excellent example.

B♭ m

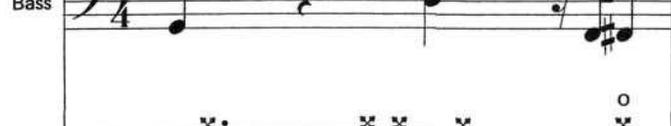
Note: The drums do not play the accent on "2 and." Leaving that accent to the keyboards gives the rhythm a more open feel. Also, the downbeats on the hi-hat are accented, but the "and" of each beat is played almost as ghost strokes and barely heard. This creates a very tight quarter note "time" feel with the accuracy of subdivided 8th notes.

(C) In this example the guitar carries the primary "riff." Instead of playing in unison, the drums play more open with a syncopated pattern that highlights the guitar instead of burying it. Notice how simple and sparse the bass and keyboard parts are. Their role, along with the drums, is to support the guitar and not cover it up.

Pno. 

Guit. 

Bass 

Drs. 

$\text{♩} = 96$

It may be helpful to think of the rhythm section as one, collective instrument whose primary function is to lay down an identifiable rhythm pattern, or "groove." What each instrument plays individually is not as important as the overall "feel" or "groove" generated by the entire rhythm section. A flashy drum part, no matter how technically impressive, has little musical validity if the effectiveness of the rest of the rhythm section is crippled because of it.

Once the music starts, all theoretical discussion is meaningless, and each of us must rely on our own musical instincts for guidance. Matters of style and taste are unique to the individual player, and the following guidelines are offered only as a place to begin.

1. Have a valid musical reason for everything you play.
2. Make every note count.
3. Let the music "breathe."



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REAL SOUND.

"WHEN PERFORMANCE COUNTS"

Christina continued from page 21

at Eames up in Boston my specs for what I want, and I understand he builds great shells; so he'll send them to me, and I'm just going to paint them myself. I've got a good friend in Austin who's a guitar painter, and he's teaching me how to use the gun and all, and I'm going to put custom hardware on it, the very best I can find.

"I'm in a different situation now, where I'm not playing acoustic anymore; I'm playing amplified drums, and I hate to admit it, but I have to mike my drums—they have to be miked. I don't hear them the same way; the sound isn't reproduced the same way for the audience, so it's like I'm starting over again. I mean, I had my set of *Radio Kings* that I found in a garbage can right next door to my house that I refinished—a great set of drums, real meaty sounding and warm with these mahogany shells—but I just took them off the road because they were taking a beating and it wasn't working out."

"Weren't they projecting," I wondered?

"Well, it's not a matter of projecting," he explained.

"You mean that all of these wonderful subtleties of tone which you were used to hearing just don't carry over live, because the frequencies cancel out?"

"That's the deal," Christina concluded. "I have to make a compromise between what my sound is on stage, and what the sound man has to work with. So I have to work with him to some extent; I mean, I tell him what I want and what I'm prepared to do. Like I'm not going to take the bottom heads off and I'm not going to make the drums feel like I'm banging on a paper bag. I want to be able to get something close to the sound I'm used to. We have our own sound man on tour, and he's real receptive and understanding, so he's pretty much got it together. But he's up against it as well, from playing places that seat 500 to an 18,000-seat hall. Those subtleties just don't come through, so the name of the game is *punch*, which is basi-

cally the way I play with the T-Birds probably with anybody I'd like to play with. It's the kind of stuff I've always played, you know, hard blues; straightforward heavy-backbeat kind of stuff.

"The drums are all Premier that I'm using now. The snare drum is like an 8 1/2" x 14", I think. I just asked them to send me the biggest, meatiest snare drum they could, and this is what they came up with. It's what you would call a fairly loose, open-sounding snare drum."

Sure. Unlike those snare drums that go "thwack," but choke up right next to the hoop.

"Yeah, I hate that too. It's like the drum's saying 'I ain't supposed to do nothin'; I'm right out on the outer limits.' I like a snare to sound like a snare. I'm still working with my soundman Dave to get the sound that we both like. I like the snare to have some depth, some shot and some pop. The other drums I'm using are a 14 x 24 bass drum, and a 9 x 13 rack tom, and a 16 x 16 floor tom. With the new kit I'm having made it's practically the same thing, except the kick drum will be two inches deeper, so it'll be 16 x 24, and the rack tom will be 10 x 14. I'm hoping that the extra depth on the bass drum will make it more like that donut when the punch comes through there. It'll be interesting to see how the drums will react with those thick wooden shells. I suspect that with the birch shells it'll project better, yet still keep the sound warm; it may be a mistake but I have to try it out, because I think that the way we have the drums miked now, we can get the punch out of them, but I still want the warmth, and that's so easy to lose."

The whole art of amplified drums, is in miking the kit so as to bring out the fundamental. But how does one bring out the center of the stroke without sacrificing all of the tone and resonance one is used to hearing in an unmiked acoustic kit?

"Well, that's a challenge. All I really want out of my sound man is to help me project the sound I like to hear, and I'm willing to stretch a little. I mean, I never, ever used to use *Pinstripe* heads; I was al-

ways just a straight *Ambassador* or calf-skin man, all the way. But that was only a minor concession for me, just to get rid of some of the ring, and *Pinstripes* are a good compromise because they don't impair my technique, and they have a nice, warm, fat sound. You see, I always like to play drums with a lot of ring, and acoustically it doesn't make much difference, but in miking it, that just amplifies the overtones and the ring more than it does the fundamental sound of the drum. So I had to compensate for that. I'm always learning.

"Through using the *Pinstripes*, I've been able to bring out more of the sound of the drum. I just tune the drums up so that they sound in tune with themselves; not up to pitch, even though it ends up as one; and I suppose over the years I've been hearing a particular interval that I like. Mainly, though, I just tune to get the feel of the drum right, and to bring out its individual voice. It's funny, I've heard people play on my drums, and it's just not the same thing. The way I play, I can't sit in the house and listen to someone play my drums, because they just don't sound the way I play them. It has something to do with my technique, I guess."

As Christina and Dave didn't bring their own mic's out for the most recent T-Bird tour, each situation has presented a unique opportunity for trial and error. "Right now we're just using whatever the clubs have," Christina shrugs. "Generally we like Sennheisers and Shures. Shures are particularly good for the snare, like the Shure *SM57* or *58*. Sennheiser *42/s* are good, too, for toms and stuff; and we decided that we really liked the *AKG D12A* for the bass drum. Every gig we try out different mic's, always experimenting to figure out which mic's hear what, and we narrow it down to what I like to get out of the drums, and what the mic's are capable of. So pretty soon we'll find the mix we like instead of just going with the house mic's."

Fran's road manager interrupts our ruminations with a reminder that soundcheck is at 5:00, and the guys want to get back to the hotel. We walk across the street to the Bottom Line, where we find Jimmy Vaughn struggling to locate a noise source in his signal chain. The sound of his Fender *Twin Reverb*, *Stratocaster* and Leslie cabinet is wet and reverberant; his ringing blues phrases hang in the air like a curtain of tears. I see what Christina means about the Thunderbirds' time sense. They are swinging without a drummer, and apparently they don't require their drummer to play like a fashionable metronome, digging coal out of his snare drum. Christina begins orchestrating the band's groove in an offhand but firm manner, feeling free to signify and cajole, yet never getting in the way. He throws out a few smoke signals to me, as well, commenting musically on some of the styles and postures we'd dis-

cussed, going down into his lick locker to pull up a few plums from his other bags, including swing figurations and some stick-juggling flash. "Stop showing off," says his soundman, teasing him dryly.

I told Fran that I never suspected he had all this show biz stuff together. "Yeah, that's fun," he chuckled. "Sonny Payne with Count Basie inspired me to try that; an unbelievable drummer I mean, I just fool around with it. When Basie would be doing these flagwaving, uptempo things, Sonny's one hand would be carrying the beat, and he'd flip this stick behind his back without even looking, catch it, and bring it in on the snare right on the beat, after falling like 30 feet in the air. Man, he had more rhythm in his baby finger than I have in my whole body.

"I guess I picked up on all that big band swing stuff through my experiences with Roomful. Asleep At The Wheel was more Texas/western swing, but that's a similar groove. I guess my jazz licks come from playing with my friends in the Whiz Kids. I don't even know where I picked all that up."

"Well, when you're not thinking about what you're doing," I quipped, "what do you think might be the difference in posture between what you're doing when playing the low-down dirty beat, and the swing beat?"

"The low-down dirty beat I have no problem with," he asserts, "because that's just the way I hear things. I never even knew there was a difference until I started playing with Asleep At The Wheel. Then I realized that there was a difference between playing Charlie Christian/Count Basie swing and country/western swing, which was just a white version what I call *cracker swing*.

"You don't even realize what the difference is until you look at it real close. To me, the beat is like a foot long, and for the kind of thing I usually play backbeat stuff that's just what it is; you play the tail end of that note, and that's what I think gives it the fatness and the depth and stuff. Now when I started playing country/western swing, it's more like at the beginning of the top-end of the beat. Do you follow what I'm talking about?"

"Well, I usually think of jazz as being a horizontal beat," I said, "rock as a vertical beat, and funk as a diagonal beat. I think what you're saying has to do with treatment and interpretation of the beat; how you syncopate on or off the beat."

Christina continued: "It's like if you took the same song, and had different cats play it, you'd hear a different *inflection*. Like in cracker swing, if you put a metronome on it, it would probably be right on time, but if you took the same song with some black swing players, it would still be right on time, *but the metronome wouldn't mean so much*. It's like you wait until the last possible second to hit the drum.

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"We were doing blues tunes, only with Latin percussionists. We had Santana's fantastic Cuban-wall-of-rhythm, and we came up with some new kind of fusion music. I don't ever think I've heard the blues sound that way, once we came up with a compromise on how to accent the 'one' so it didn't just pull apart. We've got the most unique version of Bo Diddley's 'Who Do You Love' that you'll ever hear, only I didn't do the tom-tom thing, just a straight backbeat with the Cuban wall puttin' their Latin flavor to it, and it was really a gas. That's like the difference between the cracker swing and the Basie swing it's a matter of where you put the feel. The cracker thing is a little more on the beat, while the Basie thing is a little bit more of a laid back, up-from-the-bottom kind of push. You really lay back and everybody gets a chance to feel the space in between the notes and to do what they want with the time. It makes it real soulful."

Which is as good a way as any to sum up Fran Christina's style of drumming, a triumph of gut feeling over empty chops. Some of today's hyper-clean jock drummers (and engineers) might miss the point of his sound, inadvertently hear it as sloppy, and try and suggest that he, you know, "Clean up a bit man; muffle them drums; get into that practiced, precision sound." Which is not to suggest that Fran Christina isn't takin' care of biz. No. But Fran Christina is a *feel* drummer; he knows the language, the vocabulary of the blues, and he ain't interested in being

MOD-Dern or trendy.

"I have the type of drumsets and sound that most engineers cringe at in the studio. They start coming at me with pillows and gaffer's tape, but I just tell 'em where I'm at when I get there. And then they say, 'Well, what do you want to sound like?' And I tell 'em, 'Look, just make me sound like Al Jackson.' They have a hard time doing that nowadays, but you know, those articles you had in *Modern Drummer* on microphones were really helpful to me the last time we went into the studio to do *T-Bird Rhythm*. That gave me some good input to go by when we were working on the drum sound.

"I'll tell you," he confides, "I love playing with the T-Birds. I get to play a lot of fills and a lot of energy, but I honestly don't know what they are, what they're going to be, or what it is I'm doing or what you'd call it. I try not to think about it I just try to let go and move with the music and I usually don't have any problems. As far as practice goes, I've never been a rudimentary-reading type. Not at all. You know, I make my little attempts from time to time, to learn to read. But invariably I get bored and feel like playing. I'm a little old for that now, but I've come this far without it, so what the hell. Besides, I've had real on-the-job training in *playing* this music since I was 15. Practice and I'm not just copping an attitude or anything has never been convenient. Drummers know what I'm talking about. It's really hard to find a space to practice where people aren't bugged by the sound, and hey, I can sympathize with them. I mean, who the hell wants to listen to somebody practice their chops all day? It's a drag, and if I had to listen to it, I'd go nuts, too even if it was Art Blakey. Just for myself, I love my drums, and I love my wife, and I figured I could keep both if I didn't practice."



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Transcribed by Frank Spicer, Jr.

Photo by Paul Jonason



Carl Palmer: "Sole Survivor"

From the album *Asia* on Geffen Records.

Key:



S.D. B.D. T.T. 1 T.T. 2 F.T. H.H. Ride Bell of Cym. Crash

Musical notation for a bass line, consisting of several systems of staves. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, time signatures, and repeat signs. Key features include:

- A '5/4' time signature change in the first system.
- A section labeled 'B' with a '12 times' repeat sign.
- A section labeled 'C' with a '2 times' repeat sign.
- A section labeled 'D' with a '13 times' repeat sign.
- A section labeled 'E' with a 'Fill' and a '2 times' repeat sign.
- The piece concludes with a final rhythmic pattern.

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Bruno Carr

Bruno Carr is not a household name with most drummers. But if you could ask Billie Holiday, Ray Charles, John Coltrane, Charlie Parker, Michael Franks, Aretha Franklin, Monte Alexander, Stanley Turrentine, Roy Ayers or King Curtis who Bruno Carr is, they would know. He has played drums with all of them, either touring, recording, playing on TV, or appearing in movies with them.

Carr is probably one of a few musicians who does not care for recording. He states, "I don't feel that I've ever been recorded well and anything that I'm asked to do, any drummer could do." In many cases he asks that his name not appear on the record album. "I want to be known as a personable drummer, such as Elvin Jones. You can recognize that it's Elvin when you hear him. He has his own style."

Carr plays with a lot of fire and conviction. When he is playing, all of his energy is being centered towards the music. This could be witnessed when he was playing with Kenny Burrell for one week in Los Angeles. Carr's playing could also be described as being subtle, controlled, restrained, and having a nice, light touch. In other words, adapting to what the situation calls for. Carr's playing complemented Harry "Sweets" Edison's music beautifully. And besides being the first time he had played with Edison, that gig was also broadcast live on radio, all over Los Angeles. Carr would also be heard on another broadcast within a month, this time with Red Holloway. When seen with Michael Franks, whether the style of music

be light jazz, Latin or funk, Carr always played with taste. He also kept his eye on Franks. "I always keep an eye on the leader. You never know when they'll stop a song or change the tempo."

Carr was born February 9th, 1928. With over 35 years of playing experience behind him, Carr has the spirit of a man half his age, in his playing and in his attitudes. He jogs, does sit-ups, and when touring, exercises in his hotel room. "I have to stay in shape to be able to do the gig."

Born and raised in New York, Carr grew up around many different ethnic groups, including German and Italian neighborhoods. He was a timbale player in Latin bands and this is still reflected in the way he plays his small tom-toms at times.

By listening to the radio while growing up, Carr was able to hear different styles of music. "Leaders would hand me charts, but I'd already know the tune by ear. I've got a good memory too."

Carr took drum lessons, as he describes it, "for a hot minute." He did take lessons though on brushes from Big Sid Catlett. "He taught me how to play loud and soft, to play in time and how to groove."

Carr can read music, but he says, "If Henry Mancini had a gig or session with no rehearsals, he would need someone like Jake Hanna, who reads music all day. With those guys, reading music to them is like reading the newspaper for us. They do it all the time."

When the gig does call for reading, Carr will practice some reading on his own to stay sharp. One book he likes is Ted Reed's beginning book. "I've given many copies of that away. I need to pick up another copy for myself." Carr also keeps abreast of new drum books.

One thing Carr does do, is to tape rehearsals. "I do this so I know what to put in and what I can leave out." Carr personifies the adage, "it's not what you play, but rather, what you don't play sometimes, that counts." Carr also counts how many measures in a section, to learn the structure of the song.

Before the gig, Carr will do some warm up exercises to loosen up his hands. After the first set, Carr gets together with the bass player to discuss how they are going to

play whether on the beat, before the beat or after the beat. "The bass player is my ally and we've got to play as a unit."

Carr, reflecting on his own playing, said, "You try to do your best, but sometimes it's not exceptional, it's mechanical. You're going through the motions." Carr feels that he plays his best when the music is new to him. He used to try and repeat the ritual of what he had done on a good night, to get that same feeling the next night. Carr explained, "It doesn't work." Carr does sound excellent, even though he personally is not satisfied with his own playing. He is just very honest with himself as he searches for his own sound.

On the topic of drum solos, Carr stated, "They are not important to me. If you listen to my playing, I'm soloing within the song. I used to like solos when I was younger." Carr went on to comment, "I like to make the guys out front play. As long as you hear me, you don't need to see me." But this writer has heard Carr solo, and his solos are creative, energetic, exciting and unpredictable. Carr commented, "I don't want the band to be able to predict what I'm going to play. When I do a solo, I try to be musical. I keep the melody of the song in my head and play around with the rhythms. I never think of what I'll play beforehand because that will mess me up. Whatever comes and will not mess up the artist and is as simple as possible." Carr sees the role he plays in a band as a supportive role. As Carr puts it, "Staying out of the way of the singer."

When asked what it was like playing with Billie Holiday and some of the other famous musicians of the 1940s, Carr replied, "It was an experience, but frightening because of their fame. But it also gave me confidence, since they had confidence in me." Asked if this is when success began for him, Carr replied, "No. The people I played with had success in name, but had no money to pay." It was not until Carr played with Ray Charles that he experienced success in terms of not ever having to worry about not working again. Carr states, "I've been working ever since." With Charles, Carr toured, recorded, appeared on TV and in movies. But with all of the glory, when Carr felt he could not

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learn any more with Charles, he moved on.

Carr then played with Herbie Mann for seven years. Of all of the groups he played with, Carr feels that he learned the most about music from Mann's group. Carr comments, "Herbie changed his music all the time. We played Latin, jazz, Mid-Eastern and pop music." This was also one of the reasons why Carr left Mann's group. Carr states, "While touring Europe for three weeks, we had no time to rest or to even wash our clothes. The group was also broken into two factions, jazz and pop. The audiences wanted to hear our hits and the group wouldn't play them. I left on good terms." Besides touring with Mann, Carr also recorded and played on many TV show with the group.

It was when touring Japan with groups that Carr's endorsement of Yamaha drums came about. "I was touring Japan with Mann in 1964 and the promoters don't like you to bring your own drums because of the cost. So I played on the Yamaha drums that were furnished. They were like toys. I told them after one set that I couldn't play on them." Then ten years later in 1974, Carr was touring Japan again, this time with Michael Franks. Carr goes on to tell the story. "Yamaha drums were furnished again. I remembered how bad they were previously, but I tried them and this time they were great. They make my drums to my specifications, including the size and color of the drums that I

choose."

In California, Carr was playing on a beautiful purple set of Yamaha drums. The set consisted of two small toms, 12" and 13" with the bottom heads on; one 14" floor tom with the bottom head on; one 22" bass drum with the front drum head off and a blanket inside for muffling, and a 15"x 6 1/2" concert snare drum. All of Carr's drumsets include 13 drums, but he only uses all of the drums for special shows or when playing with a larger group. Carr replies, "When I do use all of the drums, I can plan the sounds. Using all of the drums also depends on the size of the stage. I usually start with my basic set and bring in extra drums, one at a time, just for the change. At times I'll also use an extra 16" floor tom for timpani cues. I really love to concentrate on just the bass and the snare." Other reasons why Carr does not use his larger drumset include, as Carr states, "It's more work and you begin to sound like everyone else, doing the same lick around all of the toms."

When it comes to tuning, Carr likes his batter head to be tighter than the snare head. He likes his tom-tom heads to be as loose as possible but without sounding like paper boxes. Carr also uses Rogers external mufflers on his tom-toms. Carr states, "I tune my drums by what sounds good to me. It also depends on the room I'm playing in. At one club, my drums will sound great and in another club I'll have to retune them to make them sound good."

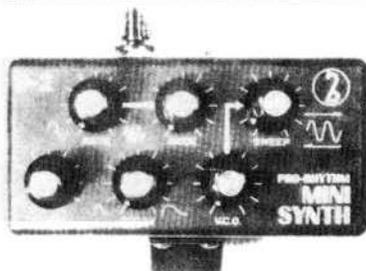
Carr presently has Yamaha clear heads on his tom-toms and a Remo coated head on his snare. Carr replies, "I prefer calf heads, but they're unpredictable. I've tried other types of heads but none of them appeal to me."

Carr plays both Paiste and Zildjian cymbals. From Carr's viewpoint behind the set, he places a 22" Paiste ride on the right side. Centered on the front of his bass drum is a 20" Flat Top Paiste and to his left he places a 18" Zildjian swish with rivets. His hi-hat cymbals are 13" Zildjians.

Carr places his cymbals up high and at sharp angles for various reasons. "The height is so I can hear the cymbals quickly and so I'm able to see and hear the singer. The angle is to stop the ringing quickly. I like a fast crash."

Carr likes to check out all styles of music when listening for pleasure. Lately he has been hearing funk groups and incorporating their licks, but also seeing how he can play their ideas differently. When listening to other drummers, he listens to how they voice their part, whether they hit a high or low sound, and what their concept is.

Asked if he prefers playing with a singer or an instrumental group, Carr replied, "A singer. They pay better, take care of you and you don't work that hard. Playing with a singer also gives you a chance to use a lot of finesse. Singers also leave room for



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musical coloring. Instrumentalists are the worst to work for. They don't leave any room. Singers also need to be kicked to keep the tempo cooking. At the same time, you need to stay out of the way of the singer. The first song dictates to you the flow of the evening. To start the night with a ballad is a low note to start on. Slow songs wear you out. It takes more energy to play them right. Also, if the leader gets excited or nervous, they will rush the tempo. There's nothing you can do. You never know where the tempo is at. The tempo has to be established and correct at the first. You've got to lock the tempo in."

When asked if there's someone who he would like to play with but hasn't, Carr's reply was, "Al Jarreau. He does all kinds of different songs and is willing to try something new as far as I can tell. So many singers, once they find their niche, stick with it and are not willing to try something different, but he does."

Carr has never recorded as a leader but has had the chance to, and still does, yet is not excited at the offer. "Unless the record company is behind you, it goes nowhere. Then if you have a hit, the company starts dictating to you to do the same thing over and over. I prefer to have a lot of time to myself. I like my freedom and need a lot of space for my own head."

"When you're a famous name, you're doing a lot of record dates but you're not playing. I don't want that. In Los Angeles, the studio musicians will play clubs as a diversion and for low wages. This brings the scale down. You can play six nights a week in Los Angeles and not even make \$200."

On a brighter note, Carr states, "When I'm on stage, I have no worries, life's everyday problems fade away." When asked what his ideal group and gig would be, Carr replied, "To play everything." Asked if had any goals, Carr replied, "To open up a coffee shop with live music and to make a living."

On a final note, I asked Carr, "Has the music business and life been good to you?" He replied, "Yeah, but it's been up and down, so you go with the flow. No gig lasts forever. It's an end to a means." 

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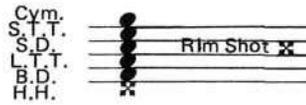
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Unusual Phrasing

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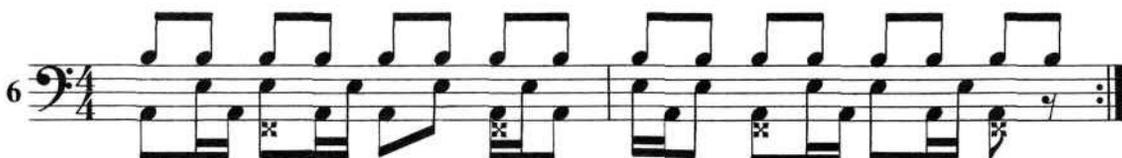
In Examples 2-4, the cymbal and hi-hat are playing in 4/4; however, the snare and bass drum are implying this 3/4 pattern:



Exercise number 5 shows two measures of 4/4 time with the cymbal pattern implying five phrases of 3/8 time, with one 8th note left over.



Exercise number 6 shows a rock beat with a pattern of 5/8 in the bass and snare drum:



The same pattern is used in Exercise 7 in the jazz style.

This concept can also be used in solos. Example 8 shows four measures of 4/4 time. The bass drum and the accents imply five phrases of 3/4.

Examples 9-11 show a variety of ways this can be developed around the drums. After the given examples have been mastered, you

should experiment with your own ideas. The odd phrases can fall in any voice or any combination of voices.

Both hands R L R L R L R L R L R L *etc.*
 on Hi-Hat →
 (closed)

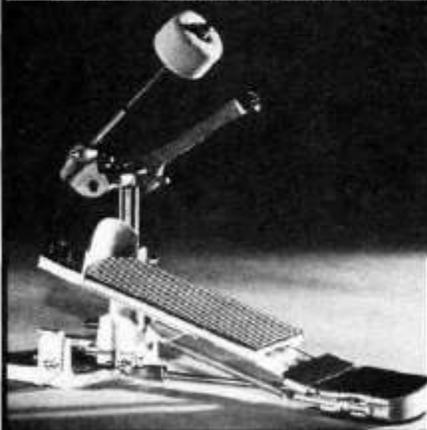
Jazz style: $\text{quarter note} = \text{triplet eighth notes}$

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Maxwell continued from page 29

"I think I'll play drums." He said, "OH NO! I knew your *mother*. She was a *great* piano player. And for you to be a *drummer* . . . ! Why don't you play a *good* instrument like clarinet or something?" That really made me madder. "No! I want to play drums. That's what I want to do."

It came so easy. Literally, within six months I had a drumset and was playing dances. I started working with older guys real fast. Maybe there weren't that many good drummers when I was young. I could keep a beat, liked a lot of different music and playing drums was just *easy*.

I took a few private lessons from Tom Gauger. I think he's with the Boston Symphony now. There was another teacher named Eddie Lockhart and then Johnny Johnson. All this was in about one year. Then I quit. I could read from playing piano and the books were starting to seem easy. It was getting to where it was real easy for me to create things on the drums. My teachers started asking me how I did things and I started feeling like I wasn't getting as much out of it. I had enough groundwork.

The only thing I wish I would've done was learned how to play matched grip totally from the start, so I could play with my left hand on my left side. I play now with matched grip because there's so much more power for popping a backbeat. It just doesn't go as well using traditional grip.

SF: I have a quote from J.D. Salinger's book *Seymour: An Introduction* that seems to perfectly depict not only the lifestyle role model for most musicians, but also the stigma that's put on musicians by non-musicians:

"It seems to me indisputably true that a good many people, the wide world over, of varying ages, cultures, natural endowments, respond with a special impetus, a zing, even, in some cases, to artists and poets who as well as having a reputation for producing great or fine art have something garishly Wrong with them as persons: a spectacular flaw in character or citizenship, a constructably romantic affliction or addiction—*extreme self-centeredness*, marital infidelity, stone-deafness, stone-blindness, a terrible thirst, a mortally bad cough, a soft spot for prostitutes, a partiality for grand-scale adultery or incest, a certified or uncertified weakness for opium or *sodomy*, and so on, God have mercy on the lonely bastards."

BM: It sounds like J.D. Salinger knew me. That's really a great quote. Really true. In order to produce something original or artistic, you really dig deep inside yourself and you can come up with some beautiful art that way. **But**, the further you dig the more alone you find that you are. What comes out of *that* is a lot of escapism. The reason I liked to get high all the time was for no other reason than it made me feel better than the way I was feeling. It was an

improvement over the way things were.

With escapism there's a void of man not being in communication with his Creator. They're trying to fill that hole and it's always with the wrong thing. God makes for healthy people, not sick people. Jim Jones was *not* a man of God. God brings out good fruit and a well-rounded personality. People caught up in drugs and alcohol are lonely and miserable. *I* was lonely and miserable! I still get lonely but I know how to get filled up. Once you get down to the real being of that person you see a phony camouflage of trying to be hip or cool. And it seems so shallow. How can I compare working on a record with saving somebody's life? It puts things in a different perspective.

SF: Do you teach drums?

BM: No. I burned myself out doing that. I became a drum teacher when I was 15 or 16. It was too much playing six nights a week, going to high school, teaching drums in the afternoons after school up until the time for the clubs, and then teaching all day Saturday.

I worked very hard. It came easy to me but when I first started playing drums I loved it so much that that's *all* I did. Before I went to school I'd play for an hour and a half. When I came home from school I'd play until I went to bed. That's why I was playing professionally in six months. In that amount of time I put in the practice hours that most people would put into four years because it was fun.

SF: What did you practice?

BM: I turned up the stereo. I had an Art Blakey record, Elvis Presley records, Brenda Lee records, Andre Previn records. A weird assortment but I liked playing with them all. Even symphonic records. I practiced by myself. I liked Freddie King instrumentals. I just started playing with the music. Then I'd work on my hands. If I couldn't do something I'd try to figure out *why* I couldn't do it. I'd keep doing it until I could.

SF: Do you still practice drums that much today?

BM: No way. I should but I'm playing so much. When I play a full day of sessions, I'm doing nine or 10 hours of playing. You run through different stages of working out your coordination to where you can do different things. I'm at a stage where it's not very hard for me to work out anything. I could do it sitting here just thinking about it. I'm doing enough sessions to keep my reading at a comfortable level. I'd really like to be able to do more things with less effort. That comes from just dealing with it. I have a little Gretsch set at the house that I play on every now and then. But, I really find more fun playing my piano.

SF: Do you compose on the piano?

BM: A few *things*—*only* one of which has been out in the past couple of years on record. I like to try to find chord voicings.

You can play rhythms with a piano just like you can with drums. Being a drummer *helps* your piano playing.

SF: How was your timekeeping at age 12?

BM: The first band I was ever in, the guitar player had really poor time. I didn't know it. I was just wanting to play. He'd drop the beat and I'd turn the beat around to try to get with him. I thought, "Gosh, I guess this is what you have to do."

Another guitar player came and played with us about a month later. He said, "No, no. That's not the way to do it. All you've got to do is lay down the beat and *we* play with you." I said, "Is that all there is to it? Boy! That makes it a lot easier." From then on I just grooved.

SF: So you never had trouble keeping time?

BM: When you play live a lot you get a tendency to play on top of the beat a little and rush. When I had my most trouble was in the first couple of years when I switched from doing drugs. I was so used to playing in a state like being on downers which smoking dope will do that I learned to feel the time in that way.

When I didn't smoke dope any more I was more *up*. It took just a little while to get it back together. There are examples of some great drummers right now where you can tell that if they're not loaded they don't play good. Because they're used to being that way.

Now I can cut with click tracks all day long and I like them. If you want them fine. If you don't want them fine. I don't care. I'll just play right around them and find the time. My tendency now is to play with good time. The only problem is that once I developed time on that level, it made it real hard to enjoy a lot of music I used to enjoy. When you start defining your time and really getting your time feel down, you'll find how few people play with real good time.

SF: Do you naturally play on top, dead center or behind the beat?

BM: It depends on the song. If I'm playing Latin I feel I'm playing on top of the beat because it gives it that lift. If I'm playing bebop I'm playing on top of the beat. If I'm playing funk I play pretty far back. With r&b dance music like disco I play in the center. If I'm just playing straight ahead funk I play back.

SF: Can that be taught or learned?

BM: I guess. It's a matter of listening, hearing and feeling. All music is, is a feeling and then transcending the feelings through instruments. If I'm doing a session and someone asks me to play like another drummer I have no idea how another drummer plays. I couldn't sit down and play like Tony Williams, or you, or Elvin. But, maybe I could create the *feeling* of what they did just because of the feeling they gave me. There's something about the way that they feel the time that I can relate to. Instead of licks, it's the feel-

ing of the music. If a person's in tune with that then they'll understand.

SF: If you were playing a straight-ahead funk session and someone asked you to play more towards the center of the beat, how would you do that?

BM: I'd try to do it. If it wasn't what they wanted I'd say, "Okay, give me a click track." And I'll hit right exactly with it. I'll try to give them what they want however they want to do it, but I need to know that whoever I'm working with knows what they're talking about. If they *don't* then I'm as confused as they are. I hate getting in the middle of confusion.

SF: How did you develop your bebop drumming?

BM: Moonlighting. We would do maybe one jazz song a set. There was this black club called Trevas Club in Oklahoma City where I grew up. I started going in there when I was about 16. They had Sonny Stitt come in, Roland Kirk, Kenny Burrell mostly the black traveling club acts. I'd go hear them all. Roland Kirk was very nice to me when I was 16. I'd talk with him about music and his feelings. He could tell I really appreciated it and he let me play with him. He was real encouraging. In those kinds of situations I'd play bebop.

There were some pretty good musicians around there. At night after everybody quit, we'd have instruments set up and we'd all play free music. Anything that came to our mind. No form. We'd play it all night long and we'd get into bebop during that.

SF: What's the drummer's main function in a band?

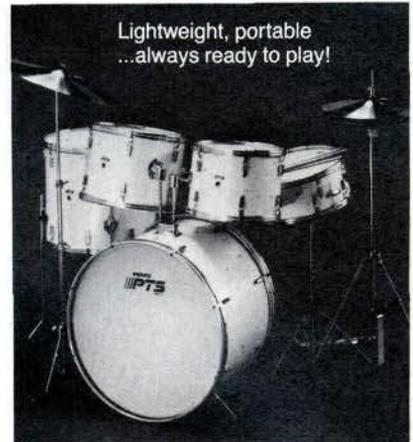
BM: I saw a Ray Charles interview. One of the questions was, "What's the function of each instrument in the band? What's the drummer supposed to do?" Ray said, "Keep the damn beat." I thought, "Boy! I wish somebody would've told me that when I was younger because I was a flash drummer. I liked Joe Morello's technique. I'd try to show-off. I went through a period where I'd play badly instead of listening to the music. That's *bad news*. That aspect of drumming really bugs me. It's like: Why did they get all the technique first? Why can't they get the *feel* first? Then the technique would be so much more meaningful. They go about it backwards.

SF: Who was your main inspiration for your funk drumming?

BM: I don't know a lot of their names. The drummer I like best is on a Bobby "Blue" Bland album called *Two Steps From The Blues*. They had a song on there called "Don't Cry No More" which was the same kind of beat as "Turn On Your Love Lights." I don't know who that drummer was but he laid it in their *perfect*.

Then whoever played on the original James Brown records during his Apollo time before "Papa's Got A Brand New Bag." To be truthful, I was mostly influenced by black drummers. But, I could

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never put my finger on the drummers as much as I could the music. I heard an Albert Collins' shuffle and I loved the way it felt so I liked the drummer. I liked Stax Records. When I was 16 or 17 I went to Stax and we were working cutting tracks with Al Jackson as our producer. I liked him just because the feeling of those records was so great.

When I'd listen to jazz I'd hear Joe Morello. As I started getting more tuned into music I'd hear Elvin and I'd say, "Boy! This is what I like." I liked Elvin immediately. He did one thing that got me, and I try to do the same thing. He would never play "2" and "4" anywhere. He might not even play "1" and "3", but you felt it so strong because of the way he built everything around it. It was all placed impeccably underneath. Somewhere, based around that feeling, you felt like you were dancing. Elvin was playing all kinds of polyrhythms because he felt the pulse so strong *inside*. I figured out when I was about 16 that if I could get that pulse inside of *me*, I wouldn't lose it. That's what Elvin had. I still think about that. It doesn't matter if I drop a stick. It doesn't matter if I break a drum head. No matter what happens it's *inside* and *not* with my hands. I'm not going to let my hands and feet dictate what I play. Once I have a feeling for the song, it's coming from inside.

SF: Do you feel that up-and-coming drummers are overly concerned with equipment?

BM: I don't think any of that's bad as long as they don't lose the basic function: the feeling of the music. You can take any one of the things that're important and make it your major thing. You've got to keep clear what's most important about what you're doing. Are you going to be a drummer? Or are you going to be a rock 'n' roll star? I've always found *that* to be very fleeting. Being in music since I was 12, I've seen a lot of guys come and go who were real famous, but they weren't real good musicians. So if you set your hopes on being a rock 'n' roll star instead of the music, you might get that. But you won't keep it long.

SF: So there are no guarantees. Is there anything a person can do to help insure longevity?

BM: If they really love music, then they're going to be involved in it. Always try to do it as good as you can and treat it with respect and integrity. Try to improve upon it. Don't make light of any particular form of music. If it's a pure form of music whether it's Dixieland, classical, avant-garde if it's being done in its highest form then it's beautiful music. Be open minded and then you're always ready for change.

SF: Is it safe to say that when reading music, if you can't sing it then you can't play it?

BM: It's not the case with me. I don't relate to the paper very well until the music

starts. Once it starts, it makes sense; as soon as I hear what the feel is going to be.

There's one great arranger in L.A. named Bruce Miller. He thinks I'm a great reader. I'm not. Here's what it is: I don't read his music first. I feel it and try to catch as much as I can. But, I'm going to feel the feel of the music before I sightread it. So many guys sound stiff when they sightread. I just try to play the song and try to catch as much of the chart as I can the first time. Then the second or third time I hope I'll have it. That'll make him think I'm a better reader than I am. He'll think, "Boy! He's gotten right into the heart of it." Well, I'm *feeling* the music first.

SF: You've developed your ears as well as your eyes.

BM: Oh, the ears came a lot ahead of the eyes. But, in general, totally reading stiffens you up. I just relax, play it and scout it out four bars ahead. When I see a big punch coming up, I think, "Oh, I'll get that one perfect." Maybe down the chart there's a little punch coming up or something.

Very few guys I work with write out the whole tom-tom part unless they have a very specific thing in mind. Then usually the guys I work with are good enough to where it's very playable. It feels very natural.

SF: Do you always play drums on records you produce?

BM: Most of the time. I've used Jim Keltner and Mike Baird before. It's not an ego thing with me. It's just that when I'm working with the songs I know what I want out of the drums, and I don't feel like laying it heavy on another drummer. I've spent a little more time with the music than they have because I'm involved with picking the songs and the arrangements.

I produce much better playing than I do in the booth. When I have the headphones on and I'm playing a track I can really think. I know the guitar player is on my left and so-and-so's on my right. I can tell you as soon as the take's over who made a mistake and in what bar, because I'm concentrating on every bit.

The worst thing is that usually the last thing I get to concentrate on is my part. I'm too busy worrying about if it's sounding right. But, fortunately I can usually read the music they have for me and the part falls naturally with everything else.

SF: Have you ever stopped a song in the middle of a take while your drums were cooking because you heard something you weren't happy with as a producer?

BM: All the time! Someone said it's like playing with a machine gun ready to come down on their head if it's bad. I go for different feeling in tracks. You can make a mistake and fix that. What you can't fix is a feel. I try to get a feel throughout the track that feels spontaneous, loose; like we're playing the chart well. I go for early takes. First, second and third takes.

There's something that happens before you listen to a playback. If I listen to a playback I'll say, "I love what I played on the chorus, but that little cymbal thing ... I don't know if I like that. I shouldn't do that next time. And when I get to this part I'm going to play the tom-tom ..." It just totally messes with the whole feel. By the time you analyze and break it down it takes away from the feeling of it. I don't like perfectly planned out, calculated music. I like what happens when you put people together.

I always try to be encouraging as a producer. The worst thing someone can do to me is discourage me. A producer who comes in very heavy-handed and creates bad feelings, gets bad music out of me.

If, for instance, someone's rushing on a date I'm producing, I won't say, "Hey, you're rushing. Stop that." I'll say, "This feels good. That feels good. But, I need you to lay it right in the center of the beat." I'll try to put it in a way that's positive to get the result I want without tearing anyone down. The best performance usually comes from encouragement and not discouragement.

SF: Have you ever had to fire a musician from a date?

BM: Yeah. It's sad. Sometimes they just can't cut the music. Certain people sound real good doing one thing or you might think they're better than they are. To be a musician today you really have to be

broad. Doing the Christian records I've done, there's a lot of broadness. Everything from '30s type Art Tatum music, to swing, to big band and beautiful orchestras. You have to be very careful how you cast a record. That's one of the main arts of a producer.

SF: Does it matter if they're Christian musicians or not?

BM: Not to me. I'd never discriminate on a record that I did. But, it just so happens that most of the best players now are Christians.

Joe Sample's one of my favorite musicians and he doesn't say he's a Christian. And I don't care. I love Joe and I'll play with him anywhere. I'll do anything for him. When he comes in on a session he gives you his whole heart. If I hire somebody for a session or they're working on a session with us, I don't expect any big egos like, "I'm a star." I expect it to be, "Let's just go in here and work as hard as we can and make great music together. Let's try to give to it." We'll have a good time and we'll all encourage each other and hopefully it'll be good. I don't want to see anyone down. I want to see everybody try.

SF: As a player, have you been in a recording situation where you were so uncomfortable with the music that you had to leave?

BM: I've been on one. It devastated me. But only once. Most of the guys I work with now are people who know me and I

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know them. It's a real encouraging atmosphere. I had a hard time getting over the discouragement of that session because I felt like the man was mean.

SF: Were you having technical difficulties?

BM: No. It was all vague. It was like saying, "Play more green." That's as much as his directions meant. Then they'd say, "Play this fill that's out on this record now." I don't do that. It's not a matter of my own integrity. I just don't copy licks as well as I'd play something that I feel like playing.

SF: Has Andrae been inspirational to you?

BM: A good friend. He's been gracious and as good a friend as I could've had. In that way he's inspirational. I don't see Andrae Crouch as the black Billy Graham or whatever people have thought. To me he's a man; he's a friend. He's had his problems and I've had mine. I know him very well, but one thing is I really love him and I really care about him.

He is a genius musician, a gifted musician. He learned to play piano by being prayed for. They prayed for a piano player in a church. They prayed for him and the next week he was a piano player. He calls it a gift of music that God gave him. The guys that know, know that harmonically he's extremely advanced, like a Gil Evans. Everything you hear is a little simple melody. But start to analyze it and you have to add up notes to get what he has in his chords. He doesn't play that much, but as a piano player he's an awesome accompanist and rhythm player.

He's been very inspirational in that I've seen a guy who was using his music for the Lord; yet when it gets right down to above and beyond all the flash, *musically* he was as advanced as anybody, and the real musicians found that out.

SF: Can you offer any tricks of the trade for backing vocalists?

BM: I always keep my eye on the vocalist. They're leading the band and I won't go against them. If they turn the beat around I'll try as gracefully as I can to get everybody to follow them. My job is to make the music feel good behind them. I always try to keep in tune with what they're doing, even if it's wrong. The first thing is to sup-

port them. That doesn't mean follow everything they do and try to copy it on drums. That's a terrible habit. Your spots will open up. A drummer can find where his fills are. It's actually a mental attitude of being supportive of who you're working with. If you're not supportive of him don't work with him.

I don't take jobs I don't like. I'm there because I want to be there. The money helps, but that's not a reason to do it. That'll mess you up. You've got to have the attitude that "This is who I want to play with and I'm going to give him my all."

SF: Is there a tradition of great Gospel drummers?

BM: No. It's so funny to even think of Gospel music as a tradition. I really don't, because I recognize that Gospel music is purely the good news of the Gospel. It's had so many different kinds of music. You could say that Bach's music is Gospel music because every piece he wrote, he wrote on it, "For the Glory of God and God Alone." That was the church music of that time. So, they've had many different traditions. Black Gospel music is the same music as the blues that they played in the fields. There's been no drummers really. There have been some piano players. Usually a lot of the players that just play Gospel were limited. The *fine* musicians in Christian music are happening *today*, other than the 1700s or 1800s with the classical composers.

SF: What's your present drum and cymbal setup?

BM: For live playing I use a 22 x 16 bass drum. I have power tom-toms. 8 x 8, 10 x 10, 10 x 12 and 11 x 13, all double-headed, and a 16 x 16 floor tom-tom. All my drums are Pearl. For recording I use a smaller bass drum, a 16 x 20. I carry an assortment of about six different snare drums to the recording sessions. I endorse Pearl because they make the finest drums there are right now.

My favorite snare is a Ludwig 6 1/2" *Black Beauty*, they're not making anymore, customized by Valley Drums. Nothing rattles. They've got special snares on the bottom, a Pearl strainer and different

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hoops for more even resonance. I have *Lug Locks* on it for recording. I can get any sound I want, lock it in place and it'll stay for the take.

I use Gauger RIMS on all the tom-toms because it gives much more resonance. The other five snare drums are a 6 1/2" brass *Black Beauty*, a 5" bronze Ludwig (also customized by Valley Drums), a 6 1/2" wooden Pearl snare drum, an 8" wooden Pearl snare drum and a 6" brass Pearl snare drum.

I have only one old K. Zildjian 22", my baby, that I use mostly for a ride cymbal. I offered to give a guy a drumset for that cymbal because it sounded like Elvin Jones' cymbal, but he gave it to me. I use a 20" K. as an alternate ride and I have an assortment of crash cymbals. Mostly I use an 18" crash. The K.'s aren't as bright as the Paiste's. I have Paiste hi-hat cymbals. One is a 602 and the other half of the set is a 2002. They're real bright. That's my general set-up if you see me playing live.

SF: Do you have a drum head preference?

BM: Right now I do. But, if you talk to me next week it might change. For tom-toms I like Remo clear *Ambassadors* on top and *Diplomats* on the bottom. They're tuned pretty tight so I get a lot of resonance, almost timpani-like. For the snare I like the rough coat *Ambassador* on top and a clear *Ambassador* on bottom. I'm using an Evans head on the bass drum. I don't particularly like it. It gives the impression of having a lot of bottom end, but it doesn't. It's not *true* bottom end when I analyze it while recording. I don't use any muffling unless I'm asked, and then only the snare and bass. No tom-tom muffling.

SF: Do you have a tuning preference for your snare?

BM: It depends on the song. If I'm going to play a certain kind of funk, I like that old tubby sound, like your drum has been sitting in the rain too long. If I'm playing another type of funk I'll tune it tight and poppy. I'll change it by the song. I'll even do that live if I've got enough time.

It's the same with my tom-tom tuning. If something's not working with the chord structure of the song if I've got a big fill and the tom-toms are resonating a half-

step from the chord I'm not going to do that. I'll make sure that when I hit something it feels like the music that's going on around it.

On Andrae's new album, *Finally*, on the last song of side one and on "Let's Worship Him," that's more my drum sound. Also the sound of the drums on the second track of side two. That's more the sound I get when I do Chaka Khan type stuff. How I tune my drums depends on the style. I don't have any ego about it. As long as it doesn't go against my integrity, I'll do anything they want me to if I can.

SF: Is it important for you to associate with people who're positive and empathetic with your career?

BM: It's important for me to be with people who love me and I love them. Even if we don't agree about anything else, we can agree to care about each other as people. I need that very badly and I think people do too. The people I work with in the studio are family.

SF: Tell us about your band.

BM: I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that my band Koinonia is what I'm supposed to be doing. That's the most enjoyable musical experience I've ever had. I've never been involved in anything that powerful. Spiritually it's the first time we can play the highest form of music we're capable of and feel so much communication with each other.

Koinonia is a group of us musicians who started playing together on sessions in Los Angeles. Three of the people were in the Third Avenue Blues Band: Hadley Hockensmith, Harlan Rogers and myself. When I started doing sessions with Abraham Laboriel he asked me about starting a band. It took three years but we finally did it and hand-picked everybody. I told Abraham that it'd be great if Alex Acuna could do it and it shocked me when Alex said yes. Alex is playing percussion and drums. Dean Parks is the other guitar player. John Phillips is the saxophone player and Abraham is on bass. There's seven of us.

It's the best group of musicians I've played with anywhere in my life, and it's very enjoyable music. We recorded our album in the Fall essentially live in the studio, with Phil Schneer producing. We paid

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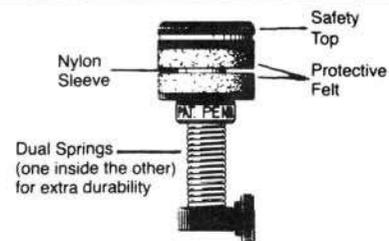


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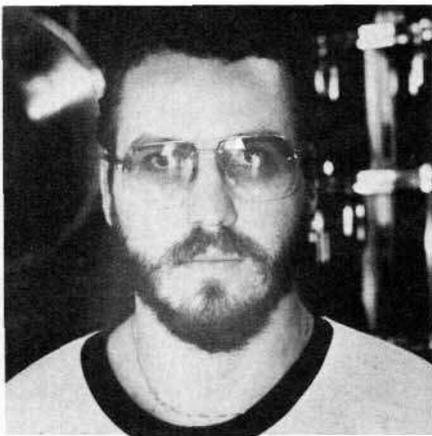
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for the album ourselves and decided to do something unique. We're leasing the masters ourselves to each country individually, instead of going to one major record company. If you sign with a record company they usually give you 50% royalty on all foreign product. We felt our music would be as big, if not bigger, overseas than it would here.

The first country that took it was Scandinavia on Royal Music. We did a tour for a month in March all over Scandinavia. They told us the other day that they think this will be the biggest selling instrumental album by far this year in Scandinavia.

The music we perform was written by band members, or for us by people like Victor Feldman and Michael Omartian. We have a book of about 55 songs.

We're trying to release it in each country and then back it up with a tour. All of us are treating the band as a much more serious endeavor. We want to go into it full time if we feel that that's what the Lord would have us do with it.

The name Koinonia is a Greek word from the New Testament. Leave it to Abraham Laboriel. He speaks four languages fluently and only he could come up with a name that no one could pronounce! It means communication or fellowship while sharing equally. That's exactly what we do.

Koinonia is a band where we also have

very spectacular substitutes. We've been playing the Baked Potato on Monday nights for three years. It's the only band where people will call the club and ask if the regular band's going to be there tonight. If they say "yeah," then they won't come. They want to come hear the subs. Larry Carlton has been subbing on guitar. Joe Sample usually subs on piano. I've had Steve Gadd sub for me. Ernie Watts subs for John Phillips. And Paulinho DaCosta subs for Alex.

We hope the album will be out in Japan in the Fall. We've just signed with Sparrow, a Christian label, to put the album in Bible book stores only. We're real close to having it distributed throughout the United States in record stores too.

SF: Who are your favorite drummers today?

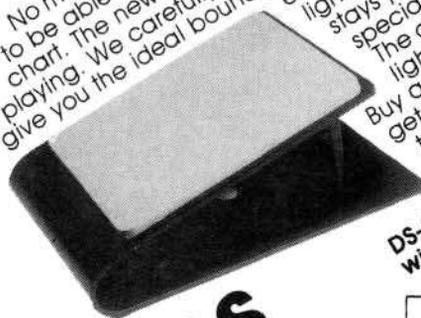
BM: Alex Acuna. I've never seen him not be able to do anything that he's been called upon to do. He's *totally* spontaneous. I can play with him every week and he never repeats himself. There are no Alex Acuna "licks" that I know of. And he makes *me* play! They haven't even been able to capture him on record.

In the old style of playing I love Elvin Jones. Another guy, on given days, is Jim Keltner. He gives you a feeling of *heart* in his playing.

I liked Bernard Purdie the times I've heard him live. A sax player I work with

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who used to play with Bernard, says I play like him. I don't notice or feel that. But, I know that the r&b roots that Bernard and I have are similar.

SF: There's a part of Scripture that says, "Without vision, man will perish." Does the misery and loneliness that we've talked about have to do with not having a dream or a vision?

BM: Yeah. Say someone's dream was to be the drummer on the *Tonight Show*. Once he became the *Tonight Show* drummer that's just the same old ordinary life. You'd think, "Is that all there is?"

Everything I ever did that I'd built up ahead of time in my mind when I accomplished it, it wasn't nearly what I thought it would be. It didn't give the satisfaction that you'd think it would because it was a goal. It was like you were always reaching for it.

Jesus said, "If any man is thirsty, he'll come to me and he won't be thirsty anymore." That's the *first* time I wasn't thirsty; when I got something that I still wasn't craving more of it in a bad way. I've never found anything else to give that fulfillment.

The reason I play Christian music or Gospel music is not for the art form. My gosh! It's been a pretty primitive art form most of the time.

I remember when I came to Los Angeles. I wasn't the best drummer in the world but I knew I could play. I'd hear a couple of people say, "Aw, I wouldn't hire him. He's a *Gospel* drummer. A *Christian* drummer." And it'd hurt me a little bit because I felt I *could* play. Then I read a scripture that said, "Be proud if someone discriminates against you for the sake of the Gospel." I was being discriminated not for the way I could *play*, but for my *belief*. I had to get over that a little bit.

I can't think of myself as a Gospel drummer. I'm a drummer. I'm a musician. In my productions I do music that has Christian lyrics. That's all I've ever done as a producer. But, I can play whatever kind of music. Now, some of the same guys who discriminated against me are people that I'm working with now. It turns around.

I kept on working for 10 years in L.A. It's never stopped. But, I've seen session players go in and out of favor. I've constantly had more work than I can handle. I'm literally one of the busiest guys I know. I'm working everyday doing something in music.

So, the Lord's been good to me. 

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STAYING IN TUNE

by Hal Blaine

Q. I have tendonitis in my right wrist. Is this common among drummers? I had a prescription for oral cortisone and it cured the pain in one week. I'm afraid it will damage my wrist in the long run. Any help at all would be appreciated.

B.K.
Wallingford, CT

A. I'm not a doctor so I can't give you medical advice. I myself have had problems with my wrist in the form of a ganglia cyst. There are many possible things that can flare up for a drummer, like bone spurs, calcium deposits, early arthritic conditions and tendonitis. See more than one doctor. I'd be leery of cortisone myself. Many doctors don't recommend it, while others inject it directly into the affected area so that it doesn't go all through the body as an oral dose might. Specialists with new techniques might help you.

Q. I would like to know the best method for tuning drums and whether double-headed toms actually produce a better all-around sound than single-headed drums.

S.R.
Fort Valley, GA

A. This is strictly up to you and the sounds you would like to get out of your instrument. It has to do with the band you're playing with, what they need and like or dislike, whether or not you're recording, how the drums record, if the sound is enhancing the track or making it sound terrible. All these are considerations that are personal and up to you. I, personally, use toms without bottoms heads. This evolved from the fact that I went from using regular toms, to using a couple of metal timbales. I put legs on one and used it for a floor tom and I used another for the mounted tom. I loosened the head to get that "fall off" sound. It came out of what I wanted and needed at the time.

Q. I'm into all kinds of jazz, fusion, as well as Rush, Toto, and even Captain

Beefheart. I want to play what comes out of that, which is me. I formed a band with friends playing music ranging from swing to fusion. The bar owner made no money so we couldn't work there anymore. The guitar player from my band was playing bass in a country band a few months later and asked me to join. I think I'm open-minded. I find country music boring but I play in the pocket, always on the beat and never add outrageous licks. I know what I play fits. But after every song the bass player always tells me I'm overplaying and that I'm just going to have to learn to play straight. He tells me to change something after every song, and the next night tells me to feel "free" and jazz it up! My playing hasn't changed through any of this and I play 80% like the record. The problem is I need the money but I don't want to be controlled by this guy country music is controlled enough. I'm thinking of leaving but I need the money to attend a drum school of some kind. I can't stand anyone watching over my playing. I'd love to hear your opinion, but I realize the final decision is up to me.

K.B.
Goodells, MI

A. Obviously your bass player has the "leader" syndrome. There are guys who are just that way. One of the easiest things to do is to look the guy in the eye and say, "Oh, of course. I'll change it next time." You probably won't change it though. This guy just wants to hear you say "yes." I've worked for plenty of these people through the years and you will too. You feel forced to do this economically rather than through love but the fact that you're doing it and not playing out of the idiom means that you're a mature player.

I made my mark in rock 'n' roll. All my 189 gold records were for that. Recently I have been nominated by the Academy of Country Music as the Drummer of The Year and I've fallen into this country thing all of a sudden; lots of sessions with Johnny Cash and the beautiful Dottie West, as well as lots of stuff on the charts. I used to think country was boring until I got into it. It's another phase, facet and ex-



pression of yourself. With all of my training it's still real tough just to lay back there and hold it back. But, that's our job. There will be other bands and solos to be played. As for school, great! That's what I did because I wanted to be well rounded after playing all those years. I studied arranging, harmony, sight reading, sight singing, piano and voice. I really wanted to have it all covered. It helped my playing tremendously. As far as quitting goes, remember you are learning something by playing in any band and idiom. I think you should keep yourself working and if that means this band, for now, then that's what it means. You can go a little nuts when you're out of work. The leader type seldom learns that he's not doing anything but making things worse. You're the one who's going to have to learn how to handle this type and get what you can out of the situation; in this case, money to go to school. Tough choice, but it could be worse. You could be unemployed.

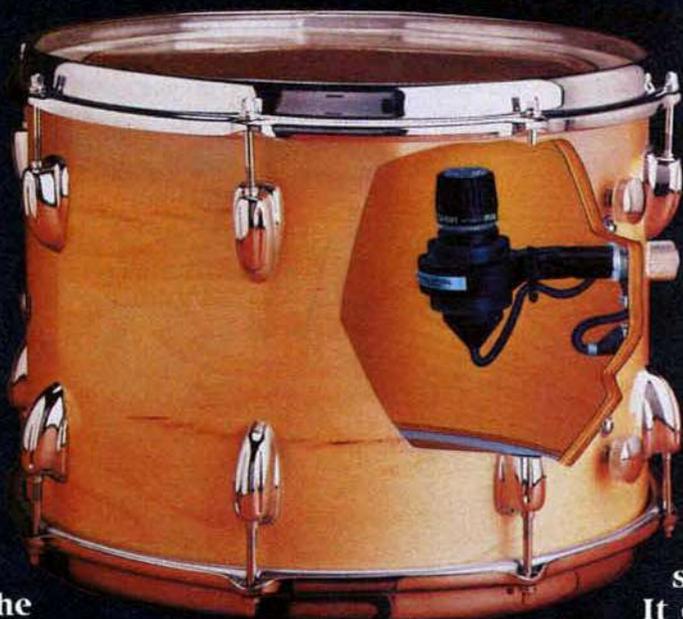
Q. I've been playing, practicing, breathing and sleeping drums for the past 10 years and playing in bars for three years. I'm 27 and every time I feel I can get close to quitting my part-time job in the warehouse and starting my career, something happens. Things were going good with this band good money, jobs coming in and one night one of the guys said he was tired and wanted to take two months off! He said the band is third or fourth on his list of priorities. The other guys felt he was wrong and said we'd replace him if we had to. Instead, they found someone to replace me someone who doesn't want to play as much or as often. I formed my own group but after practicing three months, making tapes and pictures, the other guy and his wife, the bass player, told me they were moving out of state. I almost cried. I'm too poor to drive an hour and a half one way to

continued on next page

Editor's note: The reader response to "Staying in Tune" has been so great that we cannot possibly answer all letters as promptly as we would like. Because of the urgency and sensitive nature of many of these letters, Hal would like to assure our correspondents that all letters will be read and answered with all haste and in the order received. Thanks for your enthusiastic response and continuing patience.

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play with (hem. Can you tell me how to get people who are serious? This really hurts me. All I want is to practice and improve and be full-time when I am 30.

R.L.

St. Paul, MN

A. I know the feeling. We've all been there. At age 27 you're just starting. Around 32 or 35 it'll begin to happen. Things happen and you go from band to band. Just stick with it. As long as you're working and practicing with bands, even if it's only two gigs before the band folds, you're getting valuable experience that builds on itself. You aren't losing. When people run out on you, you must learn to handle it. These kinds of shattered dreams are what life is all about. If you can't take that, you can't take anything.

Keep looking until you find the right band. You're not the only person in the world that's been through this. It's up to you to not be so shattered that you can't face looking. If you do give up, then nothing will happen for sure. It will be less painful each time it happens. Make sure you're ready when you do get in the right band. Play your best always. The next band that you want to be part of might be in the audience digging you. You must remember that right now it's "boot camp" or basic training. You have your goals set right; to play with serious people and learn. Don't stop.

Q. I am a 19 year old, self-taught drummer who has been drumming 3 1/2 years. My parents are negative about it, not giving me any support. Last year I went away to college, got more serious since my roommate played guitar, and flunked out of school. Now, I'm back home and going to a junior college to please my parents. I'm working part time and looking for gigs. I'm considering dropping out of school and enrolling at the Percussion Institute of Technology. My parents will probably disown me, but I feel it's time to commit myself. What do you think?

O.K.

Oakland, CA

A. You have a problem that seems to be worldwide parents don't want kids to play their instruments. They want you to get some education because, believe it or not, they're thinking about you and your future. It's hard to find the happy medium of keeping them happy and yourself happy. I went through this when I was younger than you. It changed when they finally saw me on the Perry Como show and realized, finally, that I was in it as my vocation. You're going to have to, somehow, sit down with them and explain that this is the most serious thing in your life at this moment. Remember that this could change in a few years and they realize this, I think. They don't want you to be hurt by the fact that there are so many people who

are in music for the wrong reasons. If you're that serious about it, let them know how much you respect their judgement and try to make them understand that you have to do this thing. It sounds like they care a lot, otherwise they wouldn't be so concerned. I was the youngest of four children and I got a lot of support from my brother and sisters. Maybe if your whole family sat down and talked it over, they would realize that you're talking about going to PIT, which is a music college. It's a trade school like a computer school or a medical school.

Q. I am 22 years old and currently in prison. I have been playing for 12 years and I still try to practice everyday but, I don't read music. I will be getting out soon and I want to make a career in music. I feel that I'm a very good player but, I know I must pay my dues. I hope to find a band that has already made a name for themselves that are in need of a drummer. Is this a worthwhile idea? What's the best way to find this band? How should I go about accomplishing my goals? Will I need to read music to be a professional?

B.C.

Address withheld by request

A. I try to tell prisoners that one of the best things they can do is to play and get other guys interested in music and keep your head in the right direction while you're doing your time, so that you can do it more easily. When you get out, there are many roads you can take and one of the first should take you somewhere you can learn to read music. Reading and writing music are the ABC's. Music magazines have ads looking for people, constantly, to go on the road or whatever. The union magazine has these ads too. The better jobs and, obviously the better money, go to the guys that can read music and the guys that can play in many directions and styles. Not only rock. You never know what you'll be asked to play jazz, Latin or polkas. Listen to as many different kinds of music as you can. It's a matter of knowing and studying the instrument. If you're anywhere near Nashville, you should know that it's one of the centers of the world for music. There must be a million people down there putting bands together. Your head's in the right direction knowing that you have to pay your dues. Part of the dues is woodshedding over the next few years. Really get it together and I think, the next time, it'll keep you out of the joint.

Q. Two weeks ago my morn got rid of my 6-piece Ludwig set. She said I was driving the neighbors crazy. I went two weeks without playing when my friend sold me his set for \$10.00. It's a cheap set, a Crown, with cymbals that bend when you

hit them. I got them so I could practice. I can't read "set" music too well but I can read snare music. Also my soloing is off and my parents won't let me have private lessons. What's a guy to do? I play along with the stereo to Kiss and my friend who plays guitar. We're talking about a band. Any suggestions?

M.C.

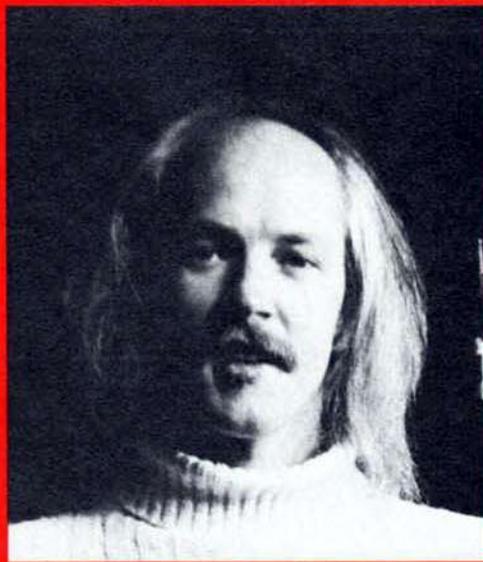
No Address

A. Like me when I was a kid, your folks took your drums away. Maybe you were driving them nuts. They think drums are a lot of noise. Maybe they don't understand what it takes to learn how to play them well. Maybe they only understand yesterday's music. If they like Count Basie it doesn't mean that the music of Kiss is bad. I'm sure it's hard for your parents to understand because they didn't grow up with it. I think it's great that you're getting this little cheap set of drums. That shows your folks that you're sincere about it. They may realize that, because you're serious, you'll sound better the more you practice and you'll sound better on a good sounding set. If you do give up, then your parents will realize it was only a part-time thing and they will feel they made the right decision.

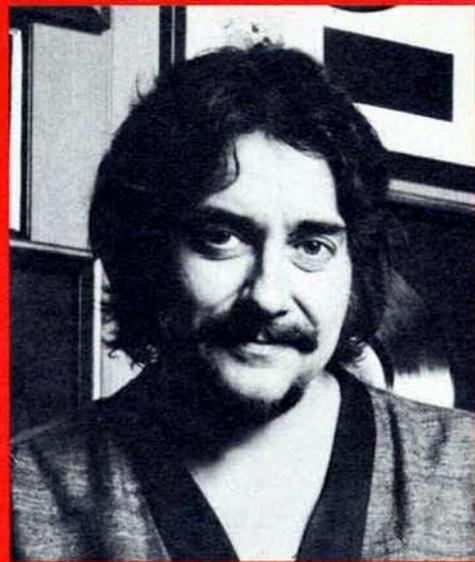
You say you read snare music. Well, there's not a whole lot more to putting it on a set. When you start practicing you'll be using your hands and both feet to read, and after an initial period of struggle, it will come to you. Learn about tempos, rhythms and keeping them steady and then reading in groups, not note to note. For instance, you see the word "the" and you really don't read it anymore, you see it whole; the sound it makes. Same for music. The more you read the easier it gets. When playing on set, you'll get used to seeing exactly what the figure on paper says and where you should put it on the drums. It will become second nature for you to know what the sounds are that you want and where to get them on the drums. I suggest a practice pad set also. Anything so that your folks can see that it's not just drums that you want to play on but you're interested in perfecting your craft; that it's a serious situation. They may see that they made a mistake taking away your drums. On the other hand, not all parents are stupid. Maybe I'm not getting the whole story. Maybe you're not doing your homework, or maybe you're doing too much drumming and not enough living and schooling. Remember, balance! Be smart. If you come home and say "To heck with homework, I'm going to play my drums," that's causing trouble. Let your folks know how important it is to you. Maybe there were other reasons for selling the drums. These are hard times now. It's true that they might be suffering some guilt and pain for this, so have a meeting with them and talk.



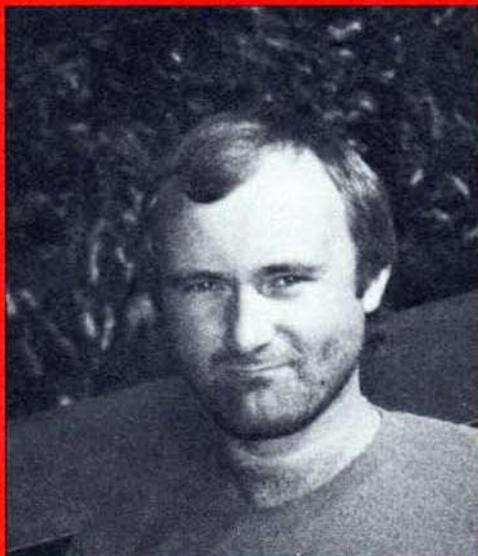
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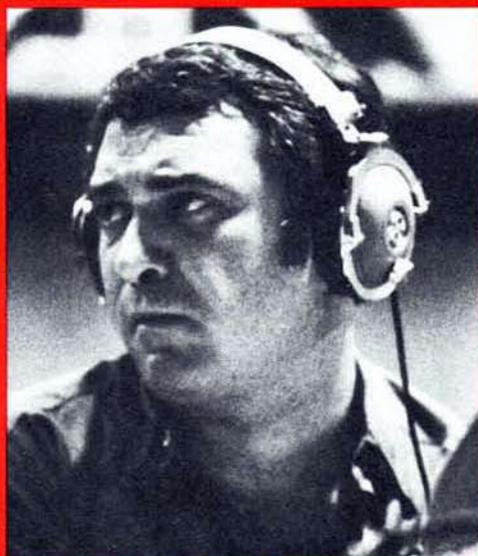
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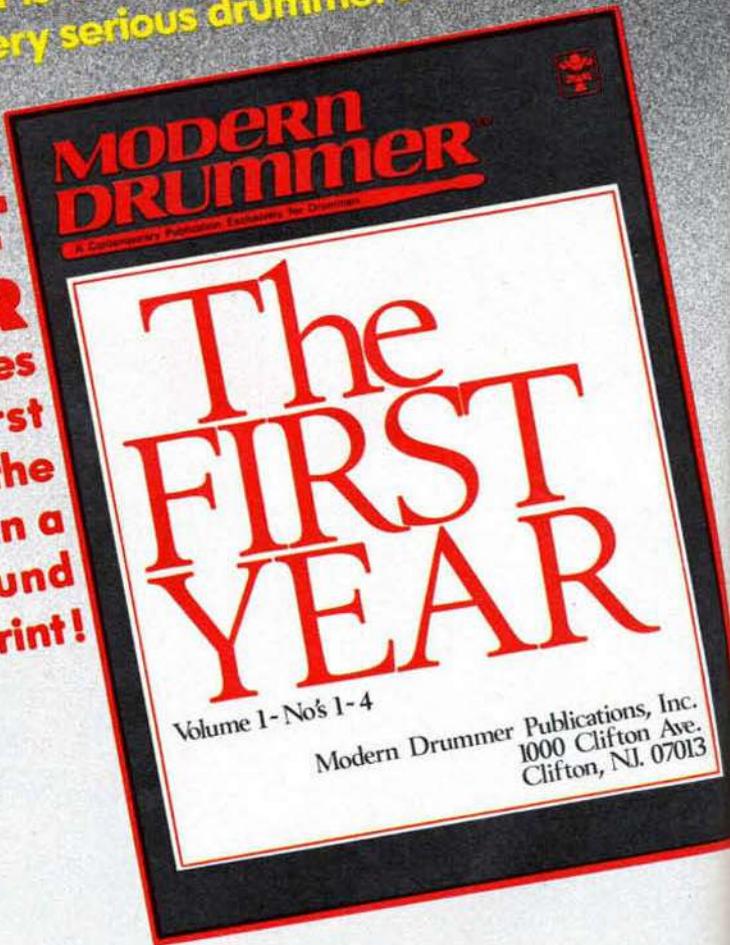


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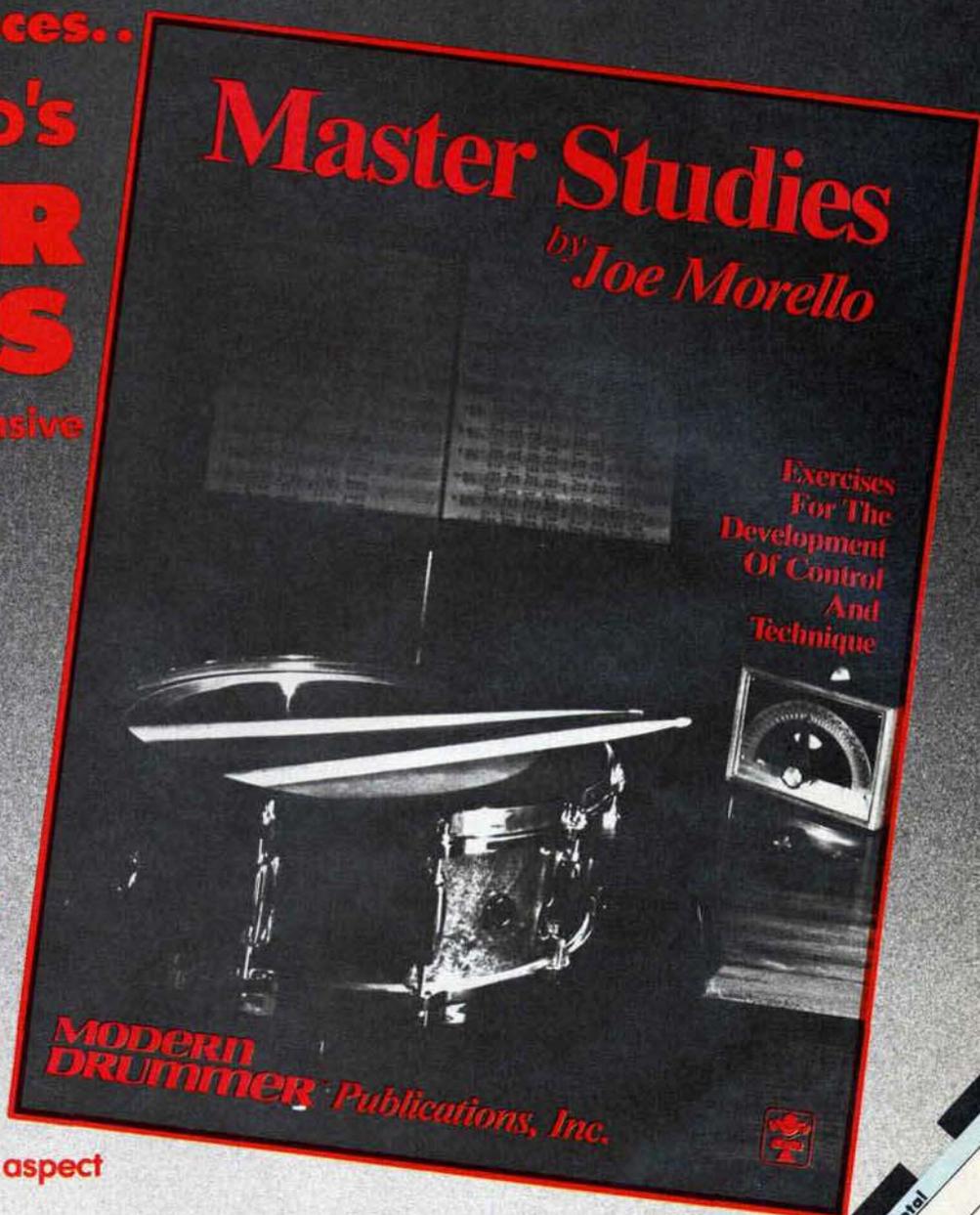
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IT'S QUESTIONABLE

by Michael Epstein

Q. Does Billy Cobham's triple bass drum set-up have a separate pedal for each drum, or some other type of arrangement? If so, how does it work?

M.L.

Kurrajong Hts., Australia

A. *Billy's set-up was custom designed and built by Tama Drums who took five King Beat pedal assemblies and connected them to two separate drive shafts. This allows Billy to play one, two, or three pedals in any combination. The unit is five feet in length. As far as we know, Tama is not planning to make these custom units available to the general public.*

Q. I have been trying to find out if anybody still makes a bass drum beater that beats up instead of forward. Who does and what would it cost?

J.W.

Waterloo, IA

A. *Nobody is currently manufacturing the old cocktail-style bass drum pedal. Al Duffy at Pearl recently converted two Pearl P-800 pedals for Louie Bellson who wanted to use them on his floor toms. These are not available to the public as a product. Al told us, however, that if you wish to buy a P-800 and send it to him at Pearl International, he'll convert it for you. If you're interested, write to him for details in care of Pearl International, 408 Harding Industrial Drive, Nashville, TN37211.*

Q. Will someone explain "polyrhythms" and "four-way independence" in comprehensive language? Can you recommend any records where these things are used?

J.F.

Denham, LA

A. *"Polyrhythm" put simply means playing two or more different time signatures at the same time. If you played four quarter notes on your bass drum and quarter note triplets on your snare drum at the same time that would be a three-against-two polyrhythm. "Four-way independence" simply means having the facility to play independently with all four limbs. For example, a right handed drummer might be challenged by playing a ride beat with his left hand while keeping a backbeat with his right hand. Another example is being able to play with the left foot anything one could play with the right foot. Some masters of these two techniques are Alan Dawson, Joe Morello, Buddy Rich, Michael Dawe, Billy Cobham, Jack DeJohnette, Max Roach, Neil Peart and Simon Phillips.*

Q. Rogers used to have a stick tray in their catalog that attached to a cymbal or hi-hat stand. Do they still have these available?

S.L.

Rochester, NY

A. *Yes they do. The tray (part number 610975049) retails at \$35.00. The clamp works most easily with a tub as small as 1/2" and up to 3/4" or 7/8" in diameter.*

Q. When and how did Corder Drums buy out the Fibes Drum Company?

P.D.C.

Rockville, MD

A. *According to a Corder press release, the Corder Drum Co. acquired Fibes drums around 1980. Fibes had been a division of the C.F. Martin Co., who decided to put the drums up for bid. Corder was the highest bidder. James T. Corder wrote us that "The entire factory of machinery, inventory, tooling and dies were moved to Huntsville, Alabama."*

Q. I want to cut a hole in my front bass drum head that will accommodate a microphone. What is the best way to get a hole that is neatly cut?

O.O.

South Bend, IN

A. *Remo Belli told us that they cut all their mylar with clicker dies. These are basically round knives. One way to approximate this is detailed in the following suggestion sent in my MD reader Jim Marko. Select a soup or vegetable can whose rim has a diameter a few inches larger than the size of the hole you need. Trace the outline of the circle on the back of the head and sand this area lightly. Now, cut a circle out of an old head which is the same size as the sanded area. Sand the face of the cut-out and glue it to the previously sanded area on the back of the head, using an epoxy glue. Lay the headface up on a board, take a can with a rim the exact diameter of the hole you need, and heat it with a home gas torch or on the gas burners of a stove. (Be sure to use gloves for protection). Using a pliers or some other kind of gripping implement, place the can in the middle of the patch and it will easily melt through. Sand lightly and you're ready to go. The tearing that sometimes accompanies the cutting of plastic heads is avoided because the edges of the hole are double thick and fused together. You can, of course, use an X-Acto knife or razor blade to cut the hole, and trim the excess with a curved nail scissors.*

Q. I recently went into the studio for the first time to record with my own band. The engineer didn't like the sound I was getting for the particular style of music we were playing and suggested putting on Evans *Hydraulics*. This was exactly right. I'd never heard of them before and I wanted to find out what the idea behind them was. What exactly does the oil do? Also, what is the difference in the different models they offer?

F.S.

Little Rock, AR

A. *The Hydraulic head was invented by accident. Bob Beals was making a two-ply head that he hoped would prove durable. The Blue-X looked like it had oil in it because of the light infraction caused by the interface of two sheets of plastic film. This phenomenon, called Newton's Rings, breaks up the color spectrum much like the effect of oil on water. The publicity generated by this inspired Bob to experiment with adding a thin coat of a specially formulated compound which had the effect of eliminating overtone and ring in a head without external muffling. This proved ideal for close miked studio recording. At first, 1000 gauge plastic film in a single layer was used, but it was quickly discovered that two layers of 700 gauge proved more durable. Bob told us that this is because the strength of a double layer "is in the surface and not the thickness. You get 30 to 35% more strength and flexibility with two thinner, double layers." The first commercial use of the heads was in France for recording purposes. All models are two-ply with the hydraulic option available in the Blue-X, Glass and Red models. The non-hydraulics include the Black Gold, Eldorado, Looking Glass, Glass, Redhead and Blue-X.*

Q. What other companies besides Zalmer make a twin pedal?

P.L.

Shelburne, VT

A. *DW Drums manufacturers a double pedal DW 5002 and Don Sleishman is manufacturing a fine unit in Australia. You can contact him by writing to 56A Bignell Street, Illawong, NSW, 2232, Australia.*

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Since the MD feature on **Alphonse Mouzon** in the March/April, 1979 issue, he has continued to produce his own group, touring with them in Europe in addition to touring, recording and writing for Herbie Hancock for the past three years. Mouzon's *Distant Lover* album earlier this year, went to the top of the soul charts and his newest release was issued just recently.

"My music has changed," explained the producer/writer/singer/drummer/key-boardist. "When I was playing with Weather Report, it wasn't my music because I wasn't composing, and the same thing was true when I was playing with McCoy Tyner. In 1976 and 1977, my music was more fusion, but a little esoteric not really avant-garde though, and still melodic. In 1978 and 1979, I was doing disco and funk stuff under the name of Poussez which was pretty successful in Europe. I produced it, wrote it and played all the instruments including keyboards and bass synthesizer. It had a group concert, but I released it under another name and not as a solo project since it was a little different. I wanted to have Alphonse Mouzon albums and Poussez albums out at the same time. In 1980 and 1981, I put out two albums, *By All Means* and *Morning Sun*, which were more mellow, easy-listening, jazz/pop albums, a la Benson, the Crusaders, Bob James, Earl Klugh. I'm not doing any more fusion on my albums, although I might do some live since, when people come to see me, they expect that."

While Alphonse has consistently drawn large audiences in Europe, this fall will be the first time he will be touring the States as a leader.

In addition to composing and playing the score of Francis Ford Coppola's *Rumblefish*, **Stewart Copeland** has been working on a 16MM documentary on the progressive music scene in England. Look for the new *Missing Persons* album with **Terry Bozzio**. You can hear **Myron Grombacher** on Pat Benatar's upcoming live album, and if you happened to miss seeing him play live, you can look forward to seeing the Benatar concert in November on HBO. **Jack White** is in the midst of an 85-city tour with Rick Springfield. Listen for **Rick Marotta** on a few of Juice Newton's new tracks. **Phil Ehart** on Kansas' upcoming album to be followed by a tour. **Pip Pyle** (formerly of National Health) is working with a group that he describes as "symphonic, electronic rock." He also has a band called Soft Heap in England as well as a group with former National Health members. **Stewart Elliott** has

Wall of Voodoo's album should be out shortly if it is not already. Through the last year, the band has been on the road consistently and group drummer/percussionist **Joe Nanini** warns, "If you're not careful, you can get really lackadaisical about your playing because the road can be such a grind. You tend to be playing the same set every night, not just the same songs, but the same set and the order of the song. It's so easy to let your mind wander 'Where am I? Am I in Chicago now?' Sometimes this band changes the set list around to keep us on our toes, but really, the only way you can keep your playing from falling down when you're out two and three months at a time, is just to use discipline. It comes from within. And whether you're playing for ten people or for ten thousand, you not only owe it to them because they paid to come see you play, but you owe it to yourself to do a good job. For me, because of the kind of role I play in the band, I have opportunities to play the same song different ways each time. There are some songs I play a lot of hand percussion and

After all the painful turmoil weathered by the Pretenders (the death of guitarist James Honeyman-Scott and the recent death of ex-bassist, Pete Farndon), **Martin Chambers** is itching to get back on the road. "The immediate thing with Jim's death was that it was a blow, of course. He was my best friend and had been for many years. And sure, there's a flash that it's all over, but it was literally just a flash because I knew Chrissie [Hynde] and I would carry on and do what we could."

formed a band with Colin Blunstone (formerly of the Zombies) and Alan Parsons Project members called Keats, signed by EMI England. **John Ferraro** is in England with Barry Manilow this month. **Donny Baldwin** cut two sides for David Anderson. **Mike Baird** is on two new Air Supply tracks included on their new Greatest Hits album. **Rick Parnell** (ex-Automatic Rooster) who is on Tony Basil's "Mickey," is giving lessons as well as playing a role as a drummer in a film released this summer called *Spinal Tap*. Look for **Preston Heyman** on a single with Randy California, formerly of Spirit. **Leon "Ndugu" Chancier** has formed Rancee Productions with former Motown A&R director Reggie Andrews. (They co-wrote the Grammy Award winning "Lit it Whip.") They have written the Dazz Band's "On the One for Fun," as well as having co-produced the debut release by

by **Robyn Flans**
 sound effects and things, and I never play the same song exactly the same way twice."

He also enjoys using electronic drums in their show. "They're static in a way and cold, but as far as playing along with them, it's really cool because it frees you up to do a lot of things you couldn't do without it. The drummer's primary role in a band is as a timekeeper and if you don't do that, it doesn't make any difference what else you can do. You can solo like Elvin Jones, but if the time falls apart in the band, then you're not doing your job. So for me, in my role with Wall of Voodoo, having electronic drums sets up a kind of a static rhythmic pattern and then on top of that, it frees me up to where I can use my imagination and do anything I want, which is something I've never been able to do in a band before. It took a lot of getting used to, though. Any drummer will tell you there's nothing more frustrating than playing with a metronome, and it can make you lazy, too, if you're not careful."

When they recorded "Back on the Chain Gang" with the aid of two studio players, Martin says, "It was difficult because Jim wasn't there anymore and Chrissie and I were wondering if it ever was going to work again." They hired two new players, Robbie McIntosh and Malcolm Foster, and while "Chain Gang" became a big success, the four recorded an album due out shortly. You can also expect the Pretenders back on the road in the fall, much to Martin's delight.

Kiddo and Rockie Robbins, both for A&M Records and Platinum Hook for RCA. As reported in the May "Update" column, **Michael Botts** and Andrew Gold formed a band. Once they found their missing link, Alan Graham, the trio diligently began recording demos. Botts says it is an ideal situation since all three sing, play and write and there has been much industry interest. **Vic Mastrianni** is presently with Dottie West, and congratulations to him and his new bride, Susan. The Gil Evans album *Priestess*, recorded in '75 but recently released for the first time, features **Susan Evans** on drums. Sue has been playing percussion recently with Jane Jarvis, along with drummer **Grady Tate**. **Phil Cunneff's** group recently recorded a live album at New York's Jazzmania club. **Charles Connor** has been working on his autobiography, aptly titled "Keep A-Knockin'."

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THRU D

INDUSTRY HAPPENINGS

FEDERAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC SEMINAR IN WEST GERMANY.

On April 5, 1983, at the Federal Academy of Music in Trossingen, West Germany, amateur musicians were able to obtain a formal education in drums and percussion. The Academy, in conjunction with The International Society of Pedagogics holds 60 seminars at the Academy each year upholding the philosophy that music instruction and learning is life-long for the amateur, the pedagogic professional, the conductors, and the music teachers in music schools and society.

Fifty-two men from all over West Germany attended this seminar under the instruction

of: Mr. Birger "Kr lle" Sulsbriick whose course was titled: Latin Percussion Instruments and Rhythms from Cuba and Brazil; Mr. Peter Hudec whose course was titled: Big Band Drumming; Mr. Thilo Berg whose course was titled: Rock and Funk Drumming; and Mr. Joachim Sponsel whose course was titled: Basic Drumming Technique and Pop Drumming.

For further information regarding The Federal Academy of Music contact: Dr. Hans-Walter Berg, The Federal Academy of Music, 7218 Trossingen 1, Postfach 110, Trossingen, West Germany.

RIZZUTO TO DIRECT ROGERS



Ed Rizzuto was recently appointed director of marketing for Rogers Drums. This is in addition to his responsibilities as marketing director for Fender acoustic guitars, strings and accessories.

Rizzuto, whose music background includes 15 years in musical instrument sales and marketing, is also a musician and music educator who worked professionally for many years as a player and band director. Before coming to F/R/R/S in 1981, he was a marketing man at Yamaha, where he started as a District Sales Manager in 1970 and eventually rose to become General Sales Manager of the Musical Products Division.

Rogers staff members working closest with Rizzuto are John Cermenaro, percussion product specialist, and Andrea Dion, marketing sales coordinator.

JIM KILPATRICK WINS WORLD SOLO DRUMMING TITLE



Premier Percussion's northern sales executive has just won the World Pipe Band Solo Drumming Champion Title for the first time. Sponsored every year by the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association, and Premier Percussion of Leicester, England, this title is eagerly sought after by the world's best solo and band players. Standards are exceptionally high by comparison with any other world-class competition, and each year sees unexpected peaks in performance.

Drummers usually play accompanied by one or two pipers, and tension in the Glasgow school hall is electric. Jim played the standard march, Strathspey and reel, but the way he played it was anything but standard. All the rudiments were there but they were not clinical. They were warm, musical, perfectly played, and an ideal complement to the music itself.

DRAGON DRUMS JOINS DURALINE/SYNDRUM

Dragon Drums, Denver manufacturer of accessory drums, joins Duraline and Syndrum as a division of Research Development Systems, Inc.

Bob Scott, president of RDSI, announced May 16 that all Dragon Drums products are in production at his company's manufacturing facility in El Monte. According to Scott, all toolings, dies, molds and drills have been moved from Denver and are in operation alongside RDSI's other production lines.

Ralph Packer, originator and developer of Dragon products, will retain his position of director of marketing and R&D for Dragon Drums at RDSI. Scott went on to say, "We think these drums, which are known for their power and projection, will complement our Duraline sticks and heads as well as our Syndrums. All of our products are designed for the drummer who wants more than a conventional drum kit can offer."

COPELAND AND POWER PRODUCTION COMPANY

Miles, Ian, and Stewart Copeland announce the formation with Derek Power of a new film and television production entity: Copeland & Power.

Miles Copeland III is manager of the Police and President of the International Record Syndicate (I.R.S.). Ian Copeland owns and operates Fron-

tier Booking International (F.B.I.). Stewart Copeland is the drummer and founder of the Police. Derek Power, recently Vice President of worldwide sales for Neufeld-Davis Productions, has resigned his position there to join the Copelands in this, their newest venture.

RAY BARRETTO REJOINS LP



Ray Barretto, the world-renowned Latin percussionist, with whom LP had been associated for many years, has rejoined LP's endorsement program. LP is proud of Ray's return and his most varied musical background bebop through Afro-Cuban jazz, and Latin jazz to the leadership of one of the world's most enjoyed Salsa bands. Ray Barretto acquired the nickname "Mr. HardHands" in the '70s, and it described the powerhouse of sound that he's known to be.

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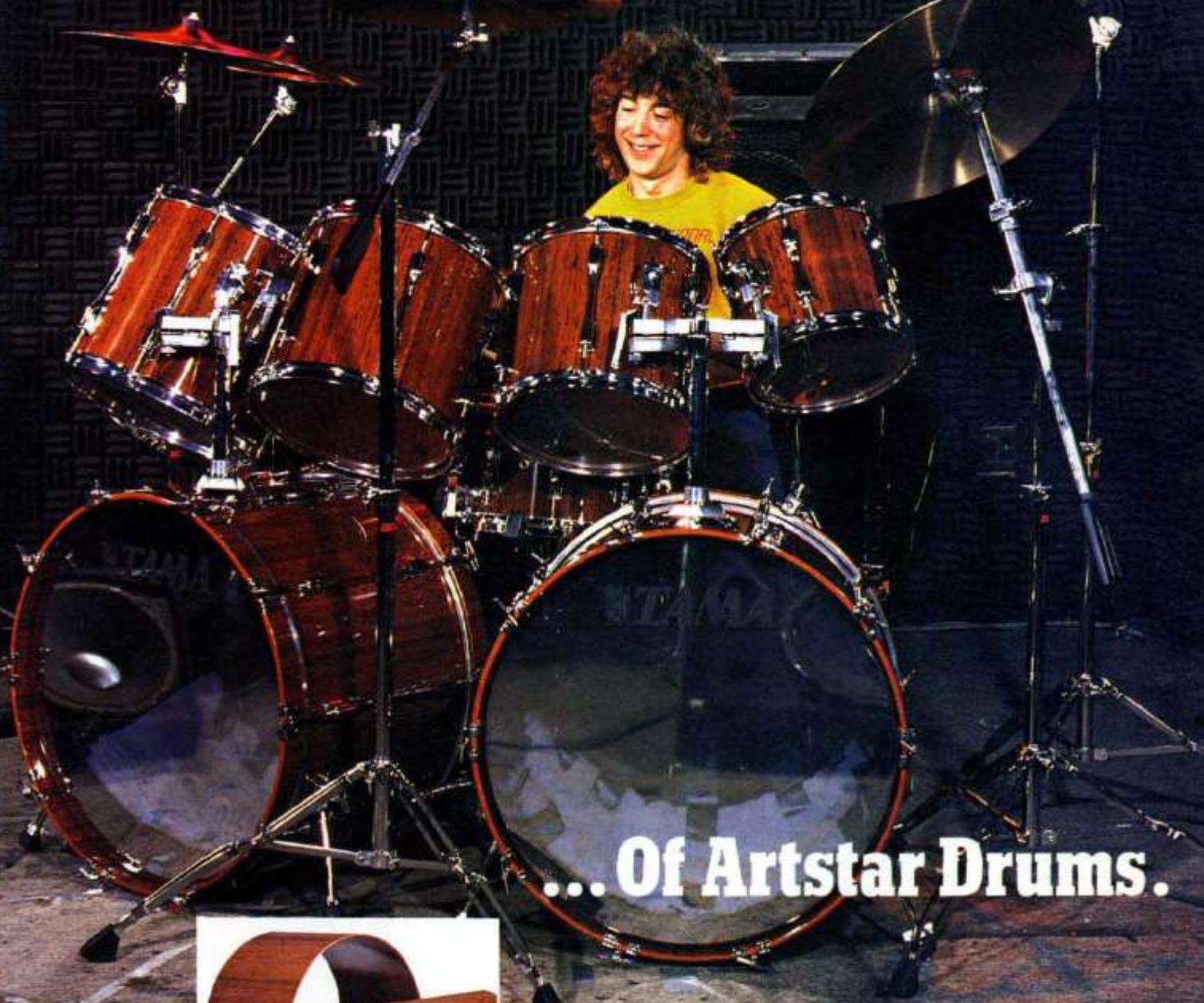
Scientific research sponsored by Avanti is now developing objective measures of instrument sound quality. Such computer-based data can help insure consistent sound, from instrument to instrument.

Avanti's new guarantee and research results are spelled out in an informative free brochure. Send for "Guarantee Info" to Avanti, 101 Horton Avenue, Lynbrook, NY 11563.

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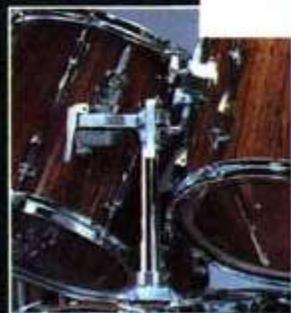
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JUST DRUMS

MXR DRUM COMPUTER



MXR Innovations, Inc., announces the addition of a Drum Computer, *Model 185*, to its line. The new Drum Computer features 12 real drum sounds, recorded in the studio and digitally transferred to the Computer's programmable read-only memory chips (PROMs). Each of the 12 voices has its own output level control and separate output jack. Recording capacity of the unit is 100 patterns, with up to 99 click-track beats each, and 100 songs.

Seven accuracy levels from 8th notes to 32nd-note triplets are available, and built-in error correction places the programmed drum sound on the nearest note according to the accuracy level selected. Any time signature can be programmed in merely by setting the pattern length and accuracy level. Tempo is adjustable from approximately 40 beats per minute to 250 beats per minute.

Full front panel controls make recording fast and simple. Made a mistake? No problem: it's easy to erase either an individual occurrence of a particular voice, or all occurrences of that voice in a given pattern.

Pattern lengths can be extended or shortened with just the push of a few buttons. String a group of patterns together electronically in the Drum Computer to produce a complete song.

Playback is equally simple, and the recorded patterns or songs can be outputted to any high quality reel-to-reel tape recorder or direct to a mixing console. On playback, both Tempo and Pitch can be adjusted, and a human "feel" can be induced by using any of the four levels of Shift. This feature offsets the drum voices slightly, positioning them either just before or just after the primary rhythm beat selected by the accuracy control.

Power-fail memory protection is built in, so the Drum Computer is easily transportable; programmed patterns and songs will remain in memory for up to 10 years, powered by internal lithium batteries. It has a suggested retail selling price of \$1250, and is available from selected MXR Professional Products dealers worldwide.

For additional information, contact: MXR Innovations, Inc., 740 Driving Park Avenue, Rochester, New York 14613.

TIMBER TIMBS



Wooden timbales of 10-ply maple construction with 14" and 15" diameter standard depth shells, these timbales offer the same hardware as used on LP's *Tito Puente* model timbales, however, the wood shells add a greater warmth to the sound, both on the head and when struck on the side.

Write to: Latin Percussion, Inc., 160 Belmont Ave., Garfield, NJ. 07026.

THE MODULS ONE



H.W. Cano Electronics has new modular electronic drums, featuring external sensor pads using real drum heads for the feel and response of acoustic drums. Stereo mixers are included to patch individual modules to form a complete, expandable stereo drumkit.

The *Modulus One* creates an accurate, infinitely adjustable snare sound plus high tom through bass drum sounds. The *Gravitom* synthesizes many special effects such as paint

cans, gongs, bird calls and the "synthesized drum" sound.

The modular electronic drums are available individually or as a complete five-piece set with console and sensor pad flight cases. The console holds up to 10 modules in a stereo mixer configuration. The sensor pads mount to any cymbal stand. Stands not included.

For more information: H.W. Cano Electronics, 7057 Vivian Ct., Arvada, CO 80004.

FROM HARDY TECH "STAND-OFF" LINE



Hardy Technologies, Inc. introduces the CS. *Stand-Off* for cymbal stand mounting, and the C. W. *Stand-Off* for holding a cowbell and woodblock. Designed for both studio and roadwork, the CS. *Stand-Off* fastens to any cymbal stand or mic' stand and accepts all standard mic' adaptors.

The C. W. *Stand-Off* fastens to any tension rod with a rigid mount. Both products have a suggested retail price of \$24.95.

Write to: Hardy Technologies, Inc., PO Box 4124, Elkhart, IN 46515.

SLINGERLAND BLACK GOLD



Slingerland Drum Company showcased its new *Black Gold* drumset at NAMM in Chicago. The gold-like hardware provides a striking contrast with the black gloss finish and the addition of new black drum-

heads. Also available are the new limited edition *Black Gold* cymbals and *Black Gold* drumsticks.

For more information: Slingerland, 6633 N. Milwaukee Ave., Niles, Illinois 60648.

**PRE-TUNED
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Seven pre-tuned series (PTS) marching drums with rope-tension trim have been introduced by Remo, Inc. Designed for youth bands and amateur marching groups, the drums feature replaceable pretuned PTS Ambassador drumheads that never need tensioning or adjustment.

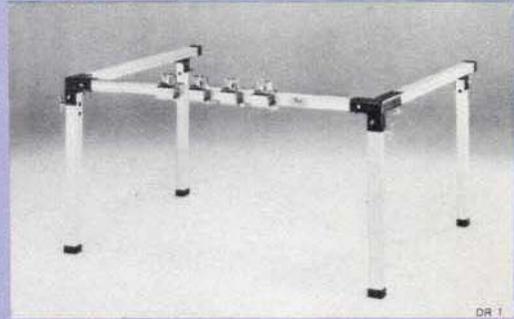
A "beginner series" consists of 8 x 10 snare and tenor drums plus an 8 x 16 bass drum. Also introduced was an "intermediate series" with 9 x 13 snare and tenor drums plus an 8 x 22 bass drum, and an "advanced" 10 x 14 snare drum. The 10" and 13" snare

drums have inside snares, while the 14" features outside snares.

All drums have Acousticon shells, covered in satin-silver plastic. The standard trim consists of black rope and ears with chrome-trimmed head hoops. Other trim colors are available at no extra cost. Each drum comes complete with carrying strap and drumsticks or beater.

Suggested list prices range from \$53.25 for the 10" tenor drum to \$93.75 for the 22" bass drum. For more information contact Remo, Inc., 12804 Raymer Street, North Hollywood, Calif., U.S.A. 91605.

**PORCARO/JAMIESON DESIGN
THE DRUM RACK FOR PEARL**



Pearl is now marketing *The Drum Rack*, designed by Jeff Porcaro and Paul Jamieson. The rack comes in two sizes. One has a larger width for double bass drums with identical height and depth. This rack forms a three-sided frame around the drumset, open at the back. It can support an al-

most unlimited number of tom-tom, cymbal, cowbell and other special holders via a series of PC-1 or PC-2 clamps, eliminating stand clutter.

The Drum Rack comes with four PC-1 clamps and folds compactly for storage and travel.

TAMA ARTSTAR DRUMS

Originated by a suggestion from Neil Peart, Tama Artstar drums offer thinner, not thicker, shells. Research has shown that the 6mm tom and 9mm bass shells offer more tone and projection than their thicker, conventional counterparts.

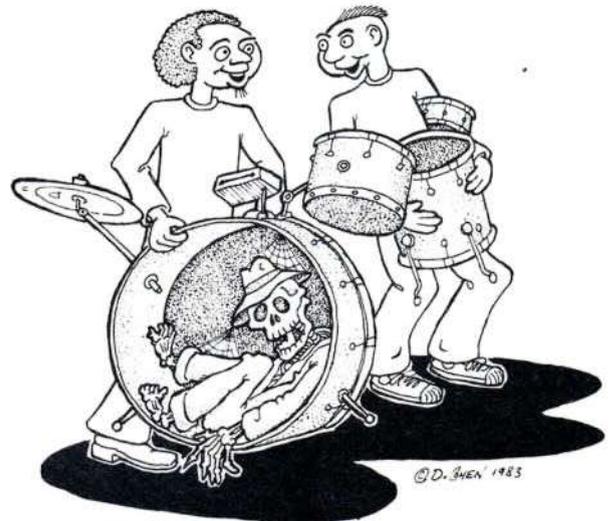
Shells are constructed of birch sandwiched between two plys of South American Cordia

wood with a high-gloss finish. The drums come in extra-depth "power tom" configurations and will list at 25-30% above Superstar prices.

The Artstar series also features Tama's new *Mighty Lugs*, a high-tension, full-shell-length springless tension lug, previously only available on Maslercraft snare drums.



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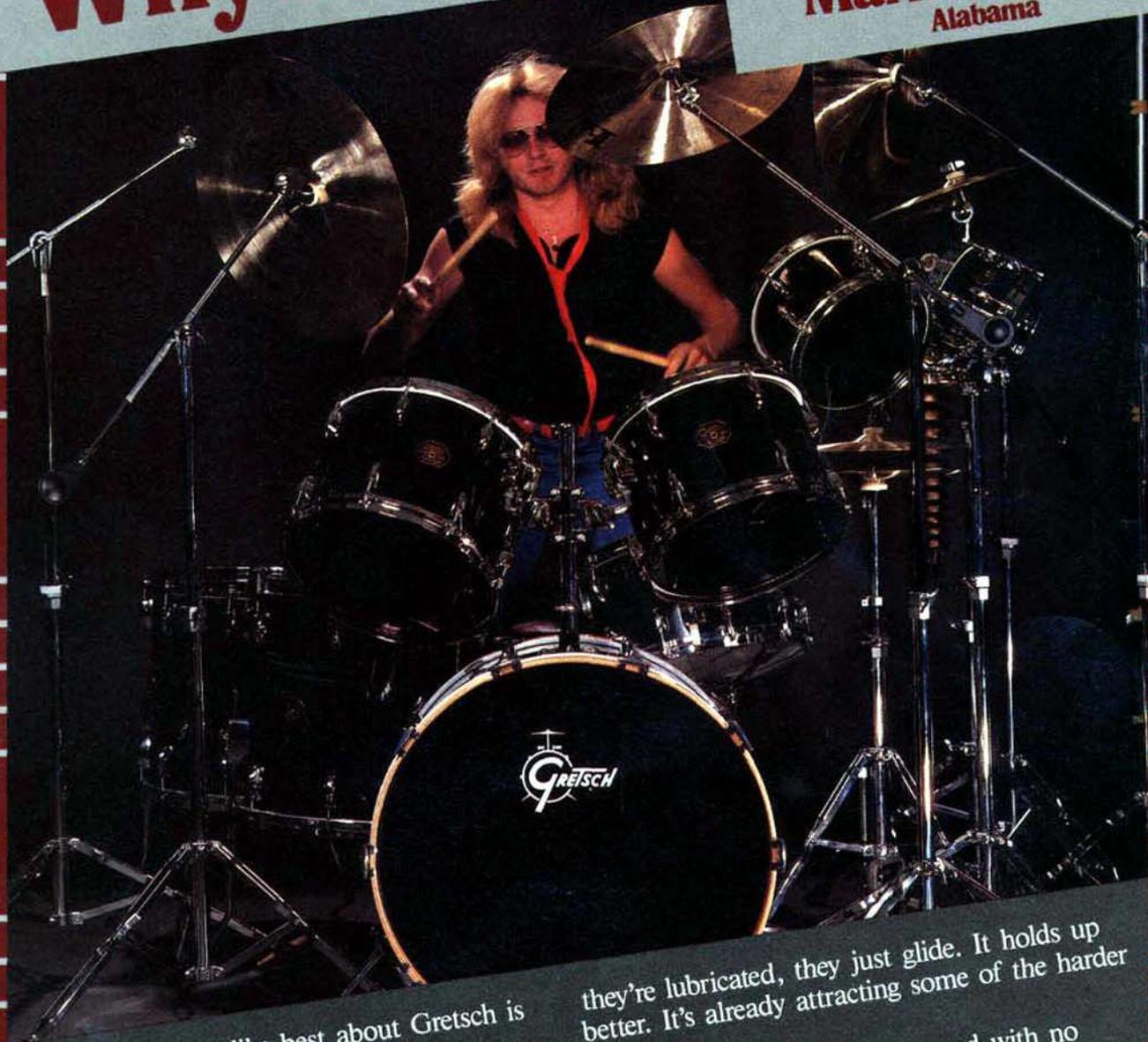


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