



MODERN DRUMMERTM

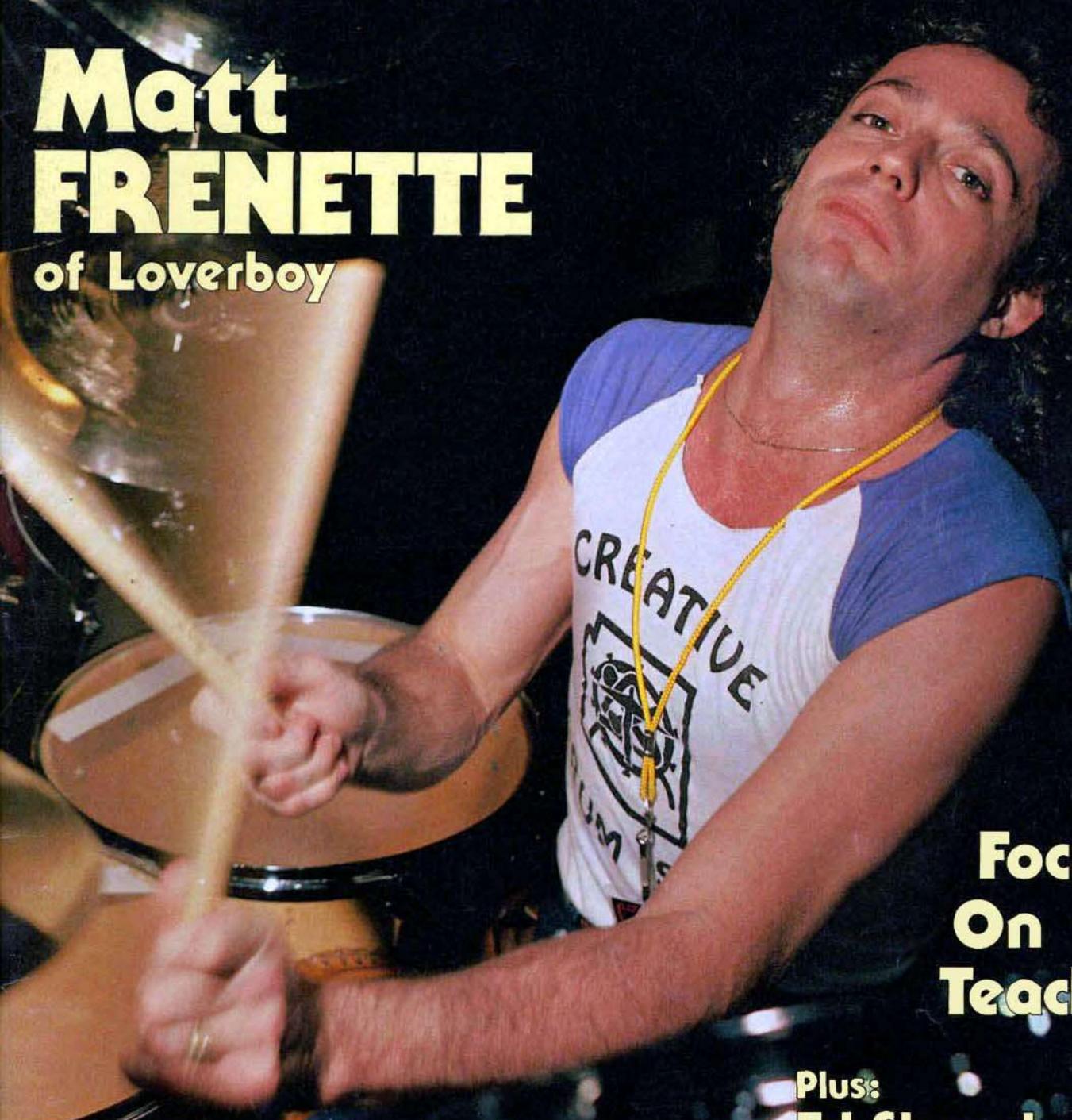
The International Magazine Exclusively For Drummers

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MARCH 1984

Matt FRENETTE of Loverboy



Focus On Teachers

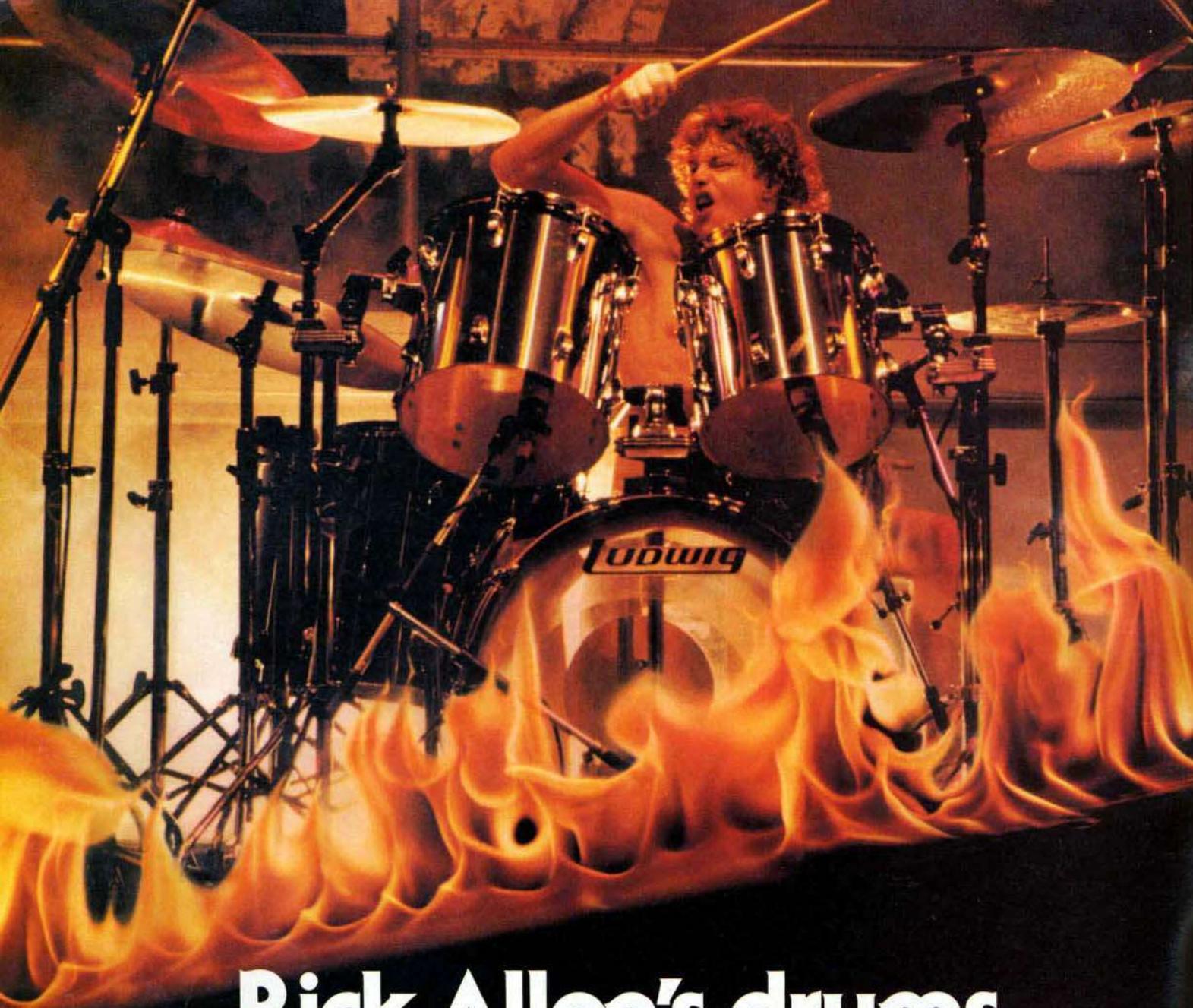
Plus:
Ed Shaughnessy

Art Taylor

**MD Readers
Poll Ballot**

Aerosmith's
Joey Kramer

Ronald Shannon Jackson



Rick Allen's drums have to take a lot of heat.

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FEATURES

MATT FRENETTE

As the drummer for Loverboy, Matt Frenette has propelled his group through their climb from club band, to warm-up act, to headliners—all in a very short time. Here, he reveals the musical preparation that enabled him to be ready for Loverboy's success, and comments on how his drumming fits into the overall sound and style of the group.

by Scott K. Fish 8

RONALD SHANNON JACKSON

By choosing to create a unique, personal style for his music, Ronald Shannon Jackson ran the risk of nonacceptance. But by being himself, he wound up in the company of such innovators as James "Blood" Ulmer, Albert Ayler, Cecil Taylor and Ornette Coleman. He discusses his musical philosophies and how they led to his own group, The Decoding Society.

by Chip Stern 14

JOEY KRAMER

The drummer for one of America's most popular hard rock bands of the '70s talks about the direction Aerosmith plans to take in the '80s. Joey Kramer also discusses the influence John Bonham and Steve Tyler have had on his musical style, and the special technique involved in drumming for a guitar-oriented band.

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JOHN STACEY

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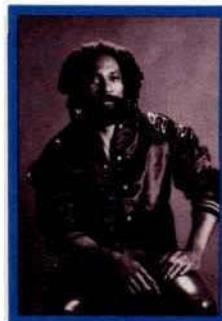


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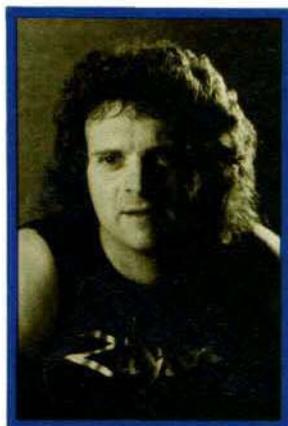


Photo by Robert Herman

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EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

A Case For Serious Study



The question of whether or not to study drumming with a private instructor is apt to be on the minds of many young MD readers, particularly as a result of this month's *Focus On Teachers* feature article.

Of course, we've all heard the stories about the "super-talents" of the drum world—those people who made it to the top without ever taking a formal lesson in their lives. That's certainly commendable. However, I think it's important for the average young player to be aware that this is the exception rather than the rule when you look at the music scene as a whole. The point is, the great majority of leading artists *have* had some formal training at one time or another in their careers.

Perhaps it all boils down to a matter of individual goals. If you're determined to become a well-rounded player, fluent in a variety of drumming styles, then by all means, formal instruction is absolutely essential and finding a qualified teacher who is attuned to your specific needs is critically important. How does one go about finding the *right* teacher? References are generally the most reliable source. Talk to players you admire and ask about their experiences with certain teachers. The good ones always manage to develop a devoted following. Finding the right instructor can sometimes be the most difficult part of the task, but once you've found one, the learning experience itself could prove to be invaluable.

To some, formal instruction may appear to be the long route to go, but in truth, a qualified instructor can directly lead you to the most appropriate study materials for your individual needs. A skilled teacher who is aware of the available percussion literature and abreast of the new materials should be able to custom tailor a program which can save you time and effort in the long run.

A capable drum teacher can also supply a solid foundation for you to build upon, and the importance of this should not be underestimated. The formative years can have an effect on your playing for a long time to come. We've all talked to drummers who complain about bad playing habits which linger a lifetime simply because they were not corrected at the early stages of development.

A good instructor can also provide motivation—that elusive element which can escape even the most serious player from time to time. A teacher with a strong ability to motivate can oftentimes further inspire talented students, as well as help the less consistent students to fully realize their potential as musicians.

Do some serious soul searching first. If you're one-hundred percent certain you've got the expertise, you're consistently motivated, and have both the talent and the know-how to do the job on your own, then in fact, *on your own* may be the best route (*or you*). But if you're coming up short in any of the above areas, don't fret over it because you're in the majority. Just begin your search for some competent guidance and start doing what needs to be done.

RS

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Susan Alexander, Charles M. Bernstein, Scott K. Fish, Robyn Flans, Simon Goodwin, Dave Levine, Robert Santelli, Bob Saydowski, Jr., Chip Stern, Robin Tolleson, T. Bruce Wittet.

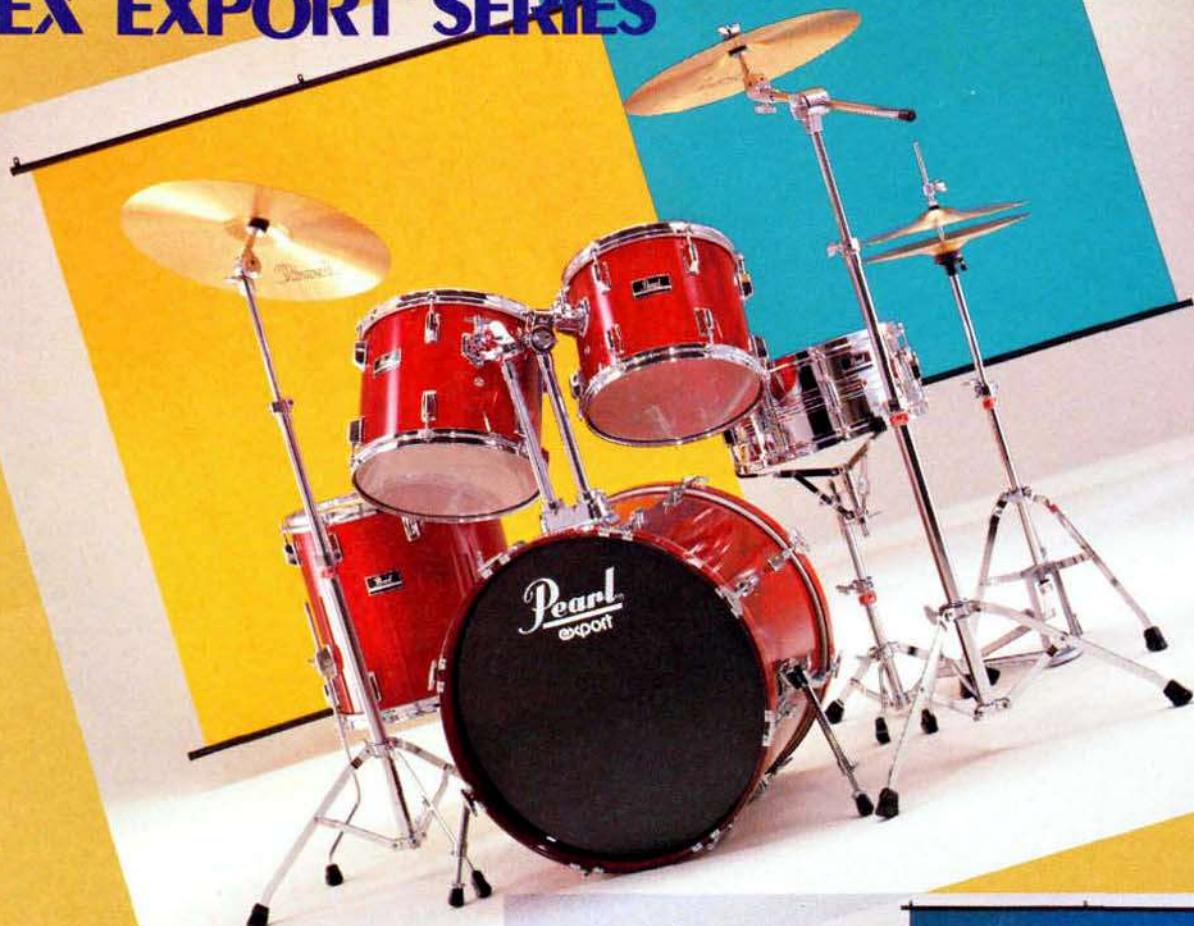
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READER'S PLATFORM

LINNDRUM CLOSE-UP

I enjoyed Bob Saylowski's article in your December issue comparing drum machines. I would like to congratulate Bob on a fine bit of research and even-handed evaluation. Considering the bewildering array of drum machines that have popped up recently, it has become difficult for the average drummers to make a reasonable evaluation of these different units in relation to their needs, especially since most of the marketing and advertising of drum machines is geared toward keyboardists and their needs. Accordingly, I was surprised to find that Bob had omitted mention of an important feature of the *LinnDrum*, which I feel would be of particular interest to drummers. The feature I refer to is the trigger input section of the *LinnDrum*, which has special envelope-follower circuitry built in, allowing the *LinnDrum* sounds to be triggered by an audio source (such as a miked drum). I believe that this unique feature is essential when using a drum machine in a "live" situation, or any time that the sounds need to be triggered by a drummer or other acoustic source.

Mark Harris
Marketing Director
Linn Electronics, Inc.
Tarzana, CA

BASS DRUM CREEP

I'd like to share an idea on the age-old problem of creeping bass drums. Take a nylon cord or piece of clothesline and measure it from one spur on the bass drum, around the center support of the throne, and then to the other spur. Allow a few extra inches. Tie a small loop at each end. Loop one end around one spur, then pass the line around the throne, and then loop around the other spur. After the job, just roll it up and put it in your pocket. This is easy and less expensive than similar items on the market.

Bob Boyd
Morganville, NJ

CARL PALMER

I loved the issue on Carl Palmer. He is my inspiration to play, and this interview is just what I needed. Carl Palmer is truly a percussive genius and I owe my drumming career to him. Thanks to Carl and MD.

Sal Tarantola
Staten Island, NY

EUROPEAN DRUMMERS

I've wanted to write this for a long time. It looks like the goals of your magazine are as follows: to make as much money as possible, to present the latest Steve Gadd clone, and to rehash the same drummers for the cover story—for example, Phil Collins, Carl Palmer, and if you don't mind my taking a guess, Neil Peart, in the coming months.

The two greatest drummers I've ever heard are Chris Cutler (formerly of Henry Cow and Art Bears) and Joki Leibezeit (formerly of Can). My only hope of ever finding out about them is through your magazine. There are many great drummers from Europe that you must interview. These include Christopher Tree, Detlef Schonenberg, Paul Lytton, Paul Lovens, and Ivan Krillzarin. I suppose you'll have five tributes for Keith Moon, yet no one knows about the late Stu Martin. One can only conclude that Neil Peart (what about Morris Pert?) will have the cover story six more times before any of the people I named get two lines.

Clav Grossman
Chicago, IL

FEMALE DRUMMERS

I am curious as to why you don't feature more female drummers in your magazine. I enjoyed your feature on Dottie Dodgion in your September '83 issue. Please continue—it's not as though we don't exist!

Juli Park
Sioux Falls, SD

Editor's note: Our policy regarding the selection of artists to be featured is based on the artist's career history, not the artist's gender. We believe that over the past few years, our coverage of notable female drummers has been in a realistic proportion relative to the number of males. We're glad you enjoyed the piece on Dottie Dodgion, and hope you also enjoyed our previous features on Sheila Escovedo, Gina Schock, Sue Hadjopoulos, Terri Lyne Carrington, Barbara Borden, Carolyn Brandy and Susan Evans.

ANTHONY J. CIRONE

I enjoyed reading your interview with Anthony Cirone. The article showed a great deal of insight, and I hope that all our future percussionists will take his advice.

Fred Hinger
Leonia, NJ

PHIL COLLINS' DRUMS

I enjoyed your article on Phil Collins. I have always wanted to know what kind of drum setup he used and you covered that point very well. But one thing did disturb me about the November issue of MD. Phil Collins was shown endorsing two different kinds of drumsets—Pearl and Gretsch. It seemed a little awkward considering that, in your article, he said he will exclusively use Gretsch drums from now on. I hope Phil makes up his mind on which set he likes better. As far as I'm concerned, his opinion holds very little weight right now.

Ricky Mintz
Los Angeles, CA

CYMBALS FOR RINGO

In one of your earlier issues, I read an interview with Ringo Starr. In the interview, Ringo requested that, if any of your readers had any older cymbals, they send them to him. I have two cymbals, both of which are over 30 years old. I am not exactly willing to give them away or sell them, but I would be willing to lend them to Ringo. Is there some way MD can put me in touch with him?

David Rosenbaum
O'Fallon, IL

Editor's note: We'll pass your kind offer along to Ringo, who is sure to appreciate it.

NEW VISTAS

For all you drummers who have *Vistalite* drums: If you want to change them, just take them apart and spray the inside with paint made for plastic. In my case, I had clear blue drums. Now, they are solid blue with what appears to be a very thick coat of lacquer. They look great!

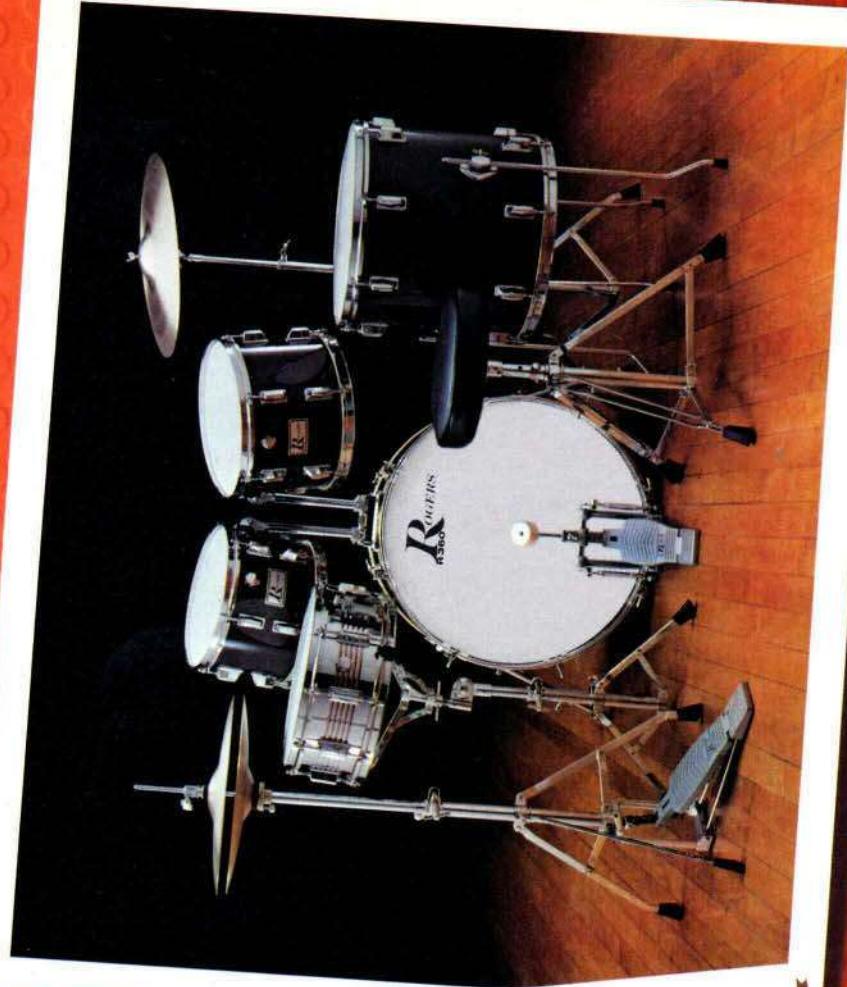
Keith Bradshaw
Hartsville, S.C.

ROCK OF AGES

I would like to inform you that your transcription of "Rock Of Ages" (Dec. '83 issue) is slightly amiss. The fourth measure has a snare beat on the "and" of four, whereas in your transcription, a bass drum beat is shown.

D. Stone
Kingston, PA

Editor's note: You obviously have sharp ears and eyes. Transcriber James Morion confirms that this was, in fact, an error. Our apologies.



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ROGERS

ASK A PRO

CHAD WACKERMAN



Photo by Paul Jonason

Q. How did you go about learning 80 Frank Zappa songs in two months?

Richard Santorsola
Melrose, MA

A. That was for the '81 tour, and it was like going back to school. We rehearsed eight hours a day, and then I had "homework" assignments, which were previously recorded drum parts that I had to study and practice at home after the group rehearsal. We'd use the rehearsal time to make changes to arrangements after the new musicians in the group (like me) had learned the basic parts on their own time.

LARRIE LONDIN



Photo by Randy Bachman

Q. Are you making any plans about ever playing outside the studios?

G. Spelvin
New York, NY

A. I've already been doing that, with Adrian Belew. We did a four-week tour at the end of the summer in '83, and we're going to do some more. We're going to try to get into Florida, Georgia, a little of Texas, and Denver. Possibly we'll get into Europe and Japan. I did Adrian's new album, and it came off really great. He's finishing up King Crimson, so it looks like we're going to do more stuff together... I hope!

STEVE SMITH



Q. Recently, I saw a picture of you playing Yamaha drums, and I would like to know why this is, since you endorse Sonor drums exclusively. Also, at a recent concert I saw you playing a different set of Sonors than your set of red Signatures. Please explain the recent switch.

Rick Morrow
Kansas City, KS

A. I used a Yamaha set on last year's Japanese tour. Instead of bringing our own equipment, we rented and borrowed equipment. I couldn't get any Sonor drums, so I requested a Yamaha set, just for that tour. Before the '83 Journey tour, I had my red Signature set sanded down and painted with a sunburst finish. Then, about a month into the tour, I switched to a Sonor Rosewood drumset, so I don't know which of those sets you saw. The reason I switched was because I wanted to go back to more traditional drum sizes, instead of the longer toms on my Signature set.

PAUL T. RIDDLE



Photo by Michael Jachet

Q. I'm a long-time fan of yours, and of the Marshall Tucker Band. Will there be another MTB album? Why isn't the band showing as much funk and jazz influence lately? It used to make them so different from everyone else. Your drumming had been an influence on me, and for many years I would watch you (when the band played Saratoga, NY) doing your preshow warm-up. It was a tradition, it seemed. Why don't you do it anymore?

Dan Meisner
Kingston, NY

JACK DeJOHNNETTE



Photo by Laura Friedman

Q. Could you please give me some recording and mixing tips for my drums? I use Sonor drums with clear Ambassador heads top and bottom, and a coated Ambassador on the snare. I don't muffle my drums at all, and when recording, I get a lot of buzz from the snare drum while playing the toms. The only way I have found to eliminate this problem is to detune and muffle my snare, resulting in a sound I don't like.

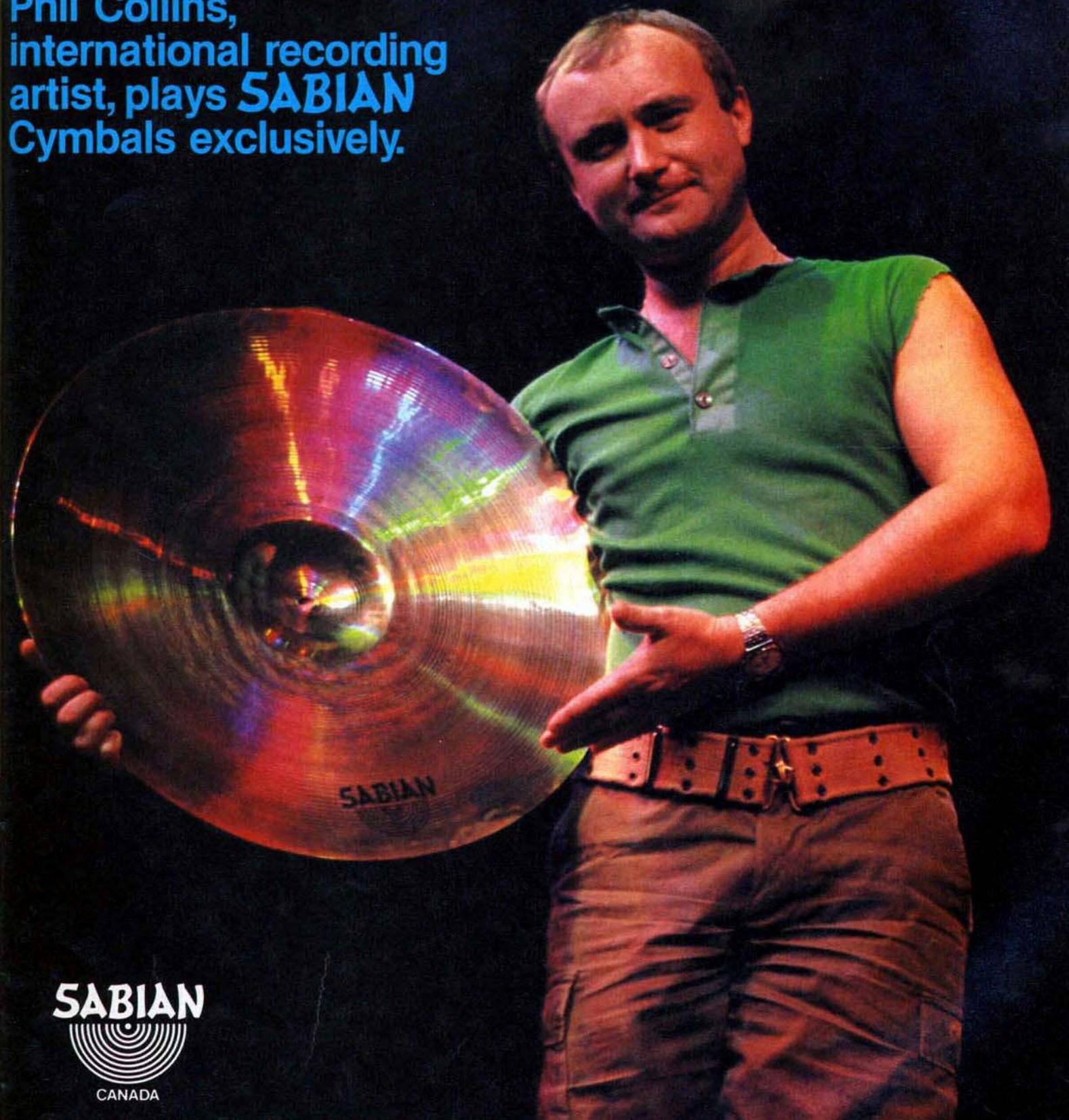
Steve McCraw
New York, NY

A. It always vibrates the snare drum when you play toms. I don't muffle the snare drum. It's all part of the natural sound. There is a fine-tuning adjustment on the Sonor snare that is very delicate, besides the normal tension adjustment for the whole snare. You might be able to fool around with those to solve the problem. It's usually a matter of experimentation and compromise when you're recording.

A. Right now, we're starting the pre-production phase of our 14th album. As far as funk, jazz or other influences are concerned, we've always touched on a lot of different musical styles through the years. A song comes up from one of our writers, and it may have a funk or other feel to begin with, so we'll just take it and go that way with it. It isn't really a predetermined thing. On the Just Us album, there was a straight-ahead swing tune with an old big band arrangement, and we used a horn section, which was a lot of fun. So we do still do a few different things. In regard to my preshow warm-up, I used to do that when we didn't have a regular afternoon soundcheck, in order to give the soundman a chance to get a good drum sound. But now, the rhythm section does a long soundcheck every day before a show. I think it looks more professional to just come on with the band.

PHIL SWITCHED

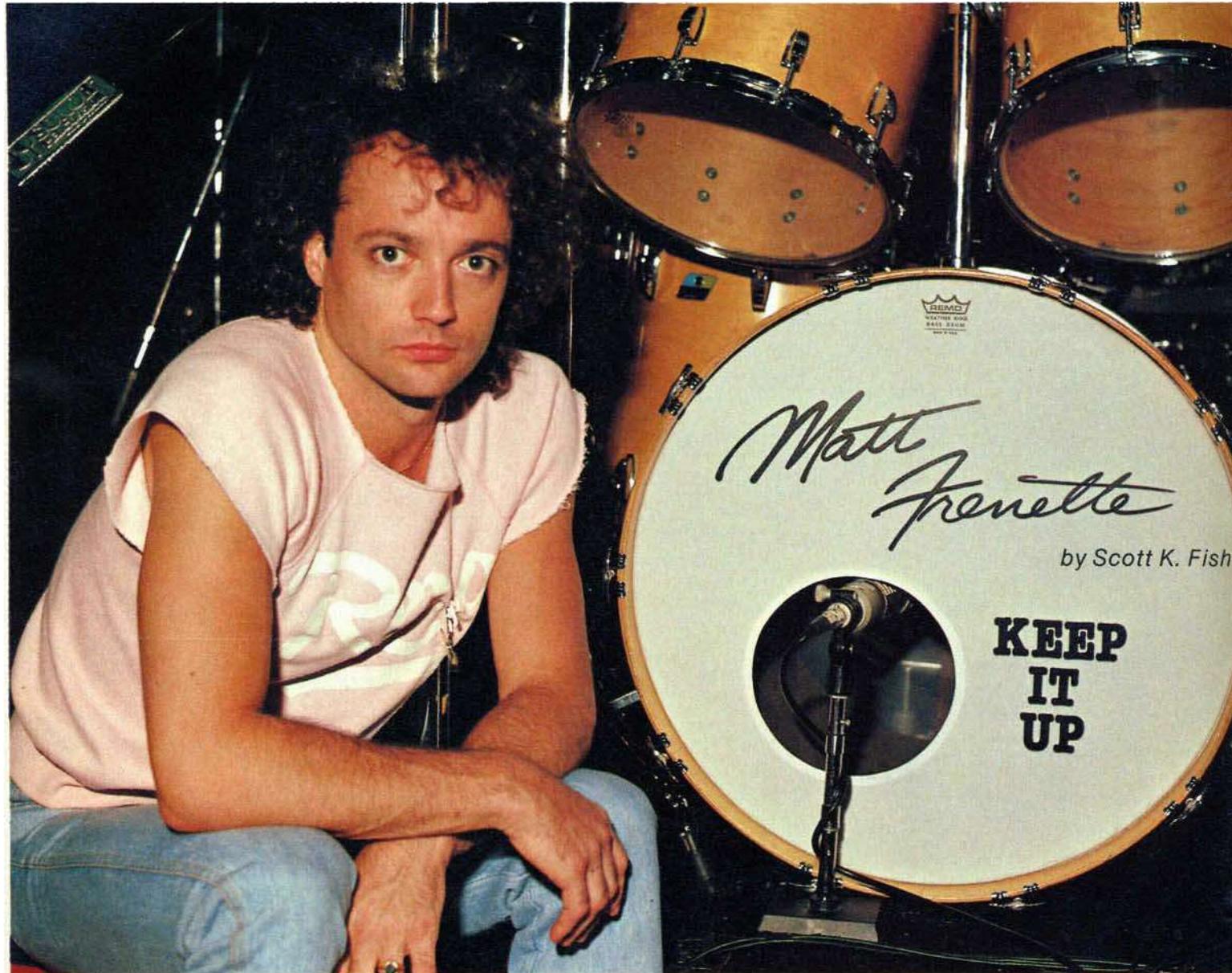
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by Scott K. Fish

KEEP IT UP

Things happen fast in the world of rock 'n' roll. The first time Matt Frenette was interviewed for MD, people were raving about Loverboy on the West Coast, but the group's popularity did not yet extend to the East Coast. The interview was therefore intended to be a portrait of an up-and-coming new artist. However, before we had the chance to publish that interview, Loverboy's success had spread across the country. Since Matt Frenette's position in the drumming world had skyrocketed along with the group's popularity, we are now presenting an expanded feature interview with Loverboy's drummer.

Despite the drastic changes that have occurred in his career during the interim between these two interviews, Matt has managed to maintain the unspoiled and enthusiastic attitude he displayed at the time of the original article. His perpetual facial expression is that of a five-year-old child in a toy store. Although Matt is excited about the success of Loverboy, this success has not gone to his head. He still finds time to talk to interested fans and realizes that, without continued hard work, the success of a rock 'n' roll group today can be very fleeting. Frenette's

flexible attitude, lack of egocentricity, and belief in teamwork have contributed greatly to the achievements of Loverboy. These same qualities have made Matt an interesting and very likeable individual.

MF: When I was a kid, every time I met people I really respected or looked up to, I always wanted to talk to them to find out one little thing about each of them—what they were like as people, what directions they followed as they came up, what music they listened to, and what influences they had.

As I grew up in the mid-'60s, the Vancouver scene was real healthy. There were a lot of horn bands, soul music and acid rock. While I was going through school there were a lot of drummers I got to meet.

SF: What are the odds on one of your fans getting to



Photo by John Lee

meet you at a Loverboy concert?

MF: Probably slim because of the security. But I always impress on our road manager and the security people that, if there are any kids who really make it known that they're into drums and they really want to meet me, I'll take an extra 15 minutes to talk to them. That's really important. It's a small bit of time out of my life, but it's really important to *them*. That's really rewarding.

SF: Do different people ask you the same questions over and over?

MF: Yeah. They want to know what it's like to be touring, and what it's like to be famous. Once they break that ice they'll ask, "How long have you been drumming? What kind of music did you listen to when you grew up?" Of course it's going to be different from what they listened to. Some of these kids weren't even alive when I was listening to Otis Redding, The Temptations, and The Chambers Brothers. I listened to a lot of black music. These kids don't really know about Jimi Hendrix, Cream, and a lot of the R&B music.

I also let them know that they should find some of those records and learn the *backbeat*, rather than always playing the *onbeat* that's used in a lot of today's rock music. I apply that to our music, but I also like emphasizing the snare, because it's really important to have both schools: the R&B feel and the real straight-ahead feel.

I haven't really done any clinics or anything like that. Possibly in the future, when I get more time off from touring, I'll be able to do some clinics, work with some kids, and maybe do specialty drum shops around the States and Canada.

SF: How do you answer the question, "What's it like to be famous?"

MF: It's all relative. I don't look at myself as being *real* famous. I just say that there are a lot of pressures and sacrifices. You don't get to practice as much and there are certain things that you have to sacrifice for success. But I try not to run it down. It's not a bummer for me, so I always try to inspire people. A lot of kids think it must be really weird to be successful. They always ask if I do drugs or get high when I play. The answer is *no*. We talk about that a bit.

SF: Can you elaborate on some of the sacrifices that you've made?

MF: You end up taking a good look at egos. You have to sacrifice, a lot of times, what you might think is right. There are a lot of factors to Loverboy's success: management; a great record company; timing; a little bit of luck; good tunes; the chemistry of everybody in the band.

It all has to start with the chemistry of the band, and the tunes. That early germ was really good in Loverboy. We all got along and respected each other. We all came from different schools; I came from R&B and jazz/fusion. In the group I was in, we did a lot of Stevie Wonder, Chick Corea, Billy Cobham, Steely Dan, Chicago, and Santana. There were a lot of those influences in my early years when I was making money by playing six days a week in colleges and schools.

Scotty came from jazz/funk; he didn't really play that much rock. Dougie is classically trained. He didn't play in any heavy rock bands at all. He played in a pop/rock/country group just a little while before Loverboy. Paul has a lot of influences that go back to R&B, blues, and rock 'n' roll. Michael comes from rock 'n' roll. Those influences all became one very healthy melting pot. It was a good blend. We all have ideas.

Some bands have trouble communicating. To become successful is to communicate with one another, and also be able to back down. It's very much give and take. If you feel that you're right, but the person who wrote the song feels that your part was too busy, try it the songwriter's way. Tape it, listen to it, and live with it. It's only music. I don't mean that in a derogatory way. Music is a beautiful thing, right? But it shouldn't be so serious—no matter what the level is—that it ever comes between people.

You've got to play as a team. I've played a million team sports—soccer, rugby, track, and all that stuff. I really feel that applies. Teamwork has really helped us stay together and enjoy each other's time. When you're working real hard in the studio, at a rehearsal or a soundcheck, sometimes you've just got to say, "No big deal. I'll try it." Nine times out of ten, the other person is right. Maybe in another song you'll get to play what you want to play or express.

If there's an obvious problem and somebody's dictating in the group, then it should be seriously looked at. It's really important to be able to communicate to become successful. Bands like REO Speedwagon and Styx haven't been around this long for no reason. These groups have continued to do a very good business by touring and making records without firing this person or that person. Sooner or later you're all going to get tired, I'm sure. You've got your separate lives to live—families and so forth. Someday, maybe you'll all decide, "Okay. That's it." But everybody will realize that when it comes. Communication is the key, and I believe we have that magic.

SF: What's your audience like?

MF: Kids today are pretty up and they're really keen. There are a lot of good female drummers now. It's really blowing my mind. They'll come up to me and say, "I use this kind of stuff, and I use these heads and sticks," and they're really into it. They can really put you on the spot. Kids today really research. They'll ask, "What kind of drumheads did you use on that one cut on the second album? Did you have them tuned tighter than on the other songs on the album?"

I really respect that, because I don't remember thinking like that when I was their age and learning songs off albums. I just remember learning feels. I don't remember getting into certain sounds and things, although the Beatles albums did blow me away with the echo effects they used, and the way Ringo's drums always sounded different from track to track. That always made an impression on me.

A lot of kids really attach themselves to the glamour of the rock 'n' roll business. The heaviness of it and the energy really turns them in that direction. They like big drumsets. Kids will say to me, "When I get my first drumset, I want to get a set just like yours." Now, I have eight tom-toms, a single kick, a snare and a few cymbals. I always try to impress upon them not to buy a big set in the beginning.

I actually rented a snare drum for a long time when I was learning rudiments and playing in the school band. Not every kid is going to do that these days. A lot of kids today get distracted by a lot of drums, the flash, the twirling of sticks, and they don't emphasize playing the groove enough; being able to lay down good time instead of laying down

a lot of chops. That should come from growing and learning about yourself, learning from other drummers, and then slowly piecing your style together. I don't think there's anything wrong in playing to a lot of your favorite records, but have a variety: jazz, blues, funk, heavy rock, and maybe a country record—just for the hell of it—to see what it's like. That really helped my versatility.

If Paul, our guitar player, wants to write a song with a slight country feel or a reggae break in the middle, I have to be able to pull that off. That's really important for a drummer. You should be the most versatile person in the band. A drummer should be able to go any which way, in addition to being able to play in different bands. If you have that ability and one group doesn't work out, you can go to another group that doesn't have the same flavor. That's important.

SF: You don't feel that young drummers are developing enough versatility today?

MF: The majority tend to get in ruts, but not all of them. There are a lot of kids playing fusion and jazz. I went through marching band for five years. That was a long time. I learned a lot of discipline, and the rudiments. I played conventional grip, of course, and it took me a long time to switch to matched grip. But I really felt that my marching band experience helped me. I still apply that knowledge in using dynamics and in using press rolls. A lot of rock drummers today can't play a good press roll. So many drummers really don't have those rudiments. They have a lot of good ideas, but they didn't really grow up in marching bands.

SF: I didn't either. But I was still aware of the rudiments and took it upon myself to learn them.

MF: Well, I don't mean to dwell on that, or say that everybody should go out and join a marching band. But if

the opportunity comes your way, it's really good for the discipline, the rudiments, stick control and independence. A lot of people today become good drummers who can rock real well, but their independence and flexibility are lacking.

SF: Can you think of a specific instance where you used rudiments in creating a drum part?

MF: Yeah. "Take Me To The Top" from the *Get Lucky* album. It has that light break in the middle where it's a bit jazzy. My part is light with rimshots, some cymbal stuff, and a press roll.

On the first album we had a reggae thing. There are songs where I've used press rolls and dynamic little breaks to lead the band—just like a bandleader—rather than just plowing through the arrangement. A lot of drummers and groups will start a song at one volume level and stay at that level through the whole cut. In concert they'll go into the next song at the same level they ended the previous song on. The dynamics through the night should be like the dynamics through a song. They should bring the song back down, and then let it grow again, bit by bit. Let the evening build, rather than going to one level and plowing straight through it. You get caught up in that adrenaline of the evening. You pyramid and peak. That's something to be aware of.

SF: For those who are interested in going back and studying the art of rock drumming, could you suggest key drummers to study?

MF: I learned so much from Don Brewer of Grand Funk Railroad. Man, he was so hot I couldn't believe it. That band had a lot of dynamics and some great arrangements. They really kicked ass.

I learned a lot from Stevie Wonder. A lot of people don't realize that Stevie is a great drummer; he does such great cymbal work. He doesn't emphasize the bass drum, but his cymbal, snare and hi-hat stuff is great. Rather than holding to the stock way of first playing hi-hat with the snare in the verses, and then playing the bell of the cymbal in the chorus, Stevie will

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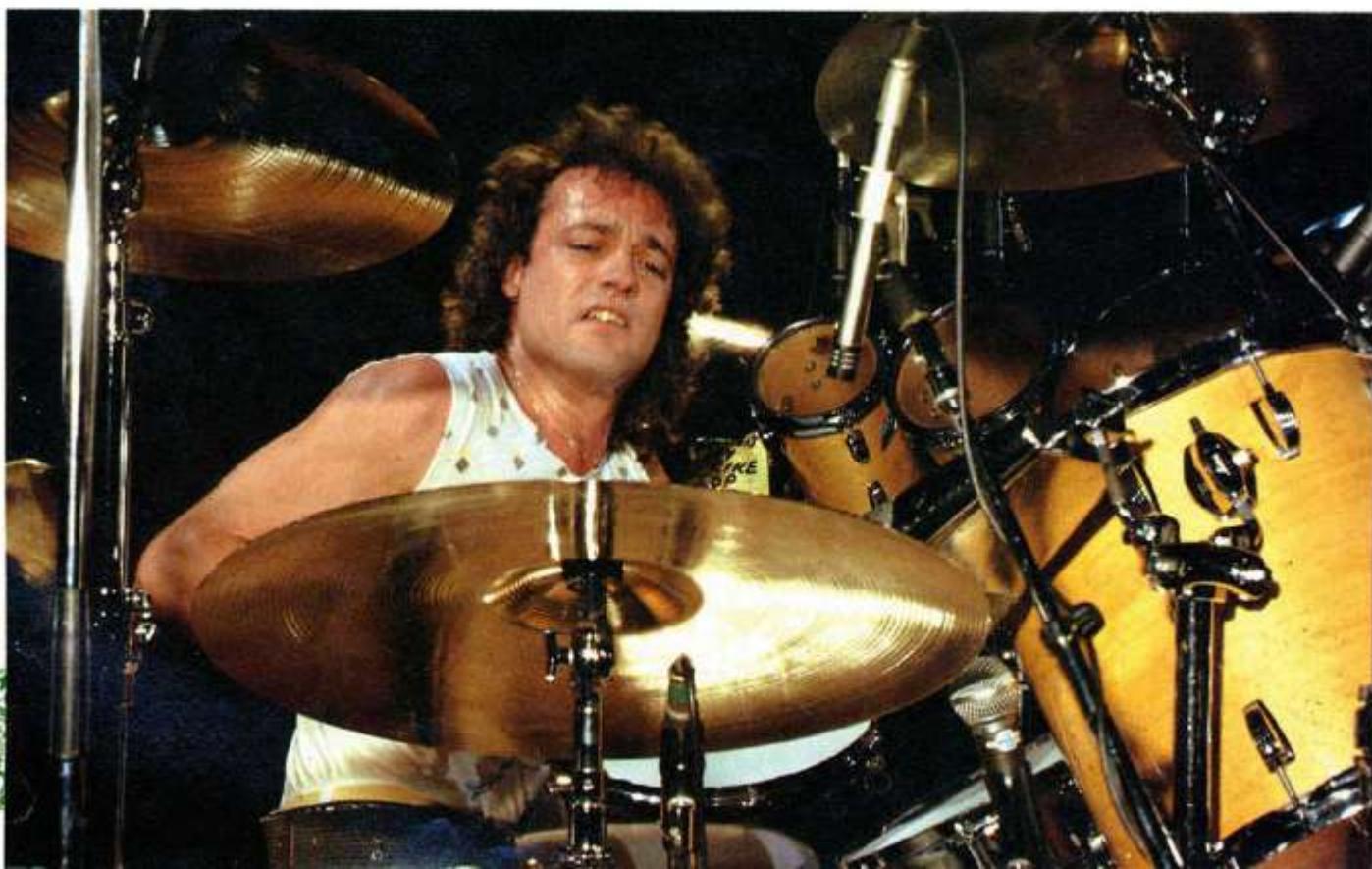


Photo by Lissa Wales



Photo by Lissa Wales

use all three things within the verse drum pattern. Then he'll go to the hi-hat during the chorus. He is sort of floating all the time. I really like that spontaneity. You can apply that to straight-ahead rock, or whatever.

I learned a lot from Michael Shrieve with Santana. I also liked Bobby Colomby with Blood, Sweat & Tears, and Danny Seraphine with Chicago. I went through the horn band thing for quite a while. Hearing Keith Moon and Ginger Baker was when it all hit me. It's funny, because a lot of the drummers that really affected me used double bass drums. Mitch Mitchell was another one.

SF: Mitch usually played single bass drum didn't he, except for a time when he had a black double bass drum setup?

MF: When I saw Mitch in 1967, he was playing double bass drums. He had a black Gretsch drumset. I was just blown away. On that same bill was first a local Vancouver band, then The Soft Machine, then Vanilla Fudge with Carmine Appice, and then Jimi Hendrix. By the time Tim Bogert and Carmine had finished their solos, I was just out of my brain. They did this bass guitar and drum duet. Carmine was so hot that night. Then Hendrix came on and I was just devastated. I was about 13 years old.

Ginger Baker really made a big change in my life. I saw him with Blind Faith. They were real hot that night. I saw Ginger's pink champagne Ludwig drums and I freaked. That week my dad and I got a loan, that I worked to pay off at about \$100 a month, and bought a pink champagne set of Ludwig drums. It was a small, little set. I still have that kit sitting in the basement.

I liked Ginger for turning the beat around, and playing the "1" and "3" on the snare. Ginger, Keith and Mitch were all great for their snare drum work—a lot of "shots" playing. It would be a bit too much in today's rock music. I've tried applying it sometimes when we're jamming or working on a new song. The guys kind of look back at me and say, "Ah, it's a little busy, Matt." But Keith, Ginger and Mitch were great for that.

SF: You've mentioned busy players as influences. So much drumming in today's pop music is pared way down. I've often wondered how much of that is because guitarists and keyboard players can't keep time without that steady "2"

and "4."

MF: That's really true. We just had a group out with us, and their drummer and I were talking. He does exactly the same fills every night. He said, "If I stray away from it, the guys in the band just look back and say, 'No. This is the way it's done.' " Some groups have that format. You'd think this guy could vary the way he plays a little bit, but he can't. That bothers him, because it can get pretty mundane and awfully boring when you're touring that long. But that's their show and everybody else can rely on that. I don't like to stray too far away from it because people rely on certain things. Maybe there's a move the other guys are going to do with a rimshot. One guy might jump up with the rimshot and the lightman is cueing off that. If a few nights go by and all of a sudden I don't play the rimshot, then the lightman throws the spot for no reason.

Plus, kids really listen to records and they have such great stereos now. They know every lick. I see kids in the front row playing air drums. One time in concert, I played this complex lick just as it was on the record. I saw this kid playing air drums and he nailed every note—even the little splash cymbal halfway through it. So if I don't play the lick off the record, he's going to know about it, right? When he comes to a show he wants to hear that lick. I think about that.

SF: I don't remember going to hear concerts in the '60s, expecting the drummers to play the same licks they played on the records.

MF: Me neither.

SF: So if someone learns to imitate all of Matt Frenette's licks, that person isn't really learning *to play*.

MF: Right. But if you get that melting pot of Matt Frenette's licks, Stevie Wonder's licks, and licks from other people, as you grow and keep playing, it will come along, and sooner or later that light will click on.

I was blown away when Billy Cobham first hit. A friend turned me on to Billy when he was in Dreams. It seemed to me that his drum solo on the song "New York" just came from nowhere. I got into Cobham so thickly that I still play his type of fills, with a blend of Charlie Watts and today's four-on-the-floor rock 'n' roll beat. I always got this blend of Charlie and Billy—staying loose and grooving, while being able to pull off a real heavy fill with that intensity and energy. That's what I ended up falling into, and I stayed there. I'm always trying to keep that backbeat and R&B feel.

SF: What was the motivation behind starting Loverboy?

MF: Paul Dean and Mike actually started the germ of Loverboy. I was still playing in a group that Paul and I had been in together for a couple of years. I stayed on for an extra year. After Paul left, he met Michael in

Calgary and they started writing. It was a good team and they stayed in Calgary for about a year and a half, wrote a lot of songs, worked on a concept/image, and started honing down ideas.

Then they met Lou Blair, one of our managers. They went to Vancouver and recorded a couple of demos with other players. Then they met Dougie, our keyboard player, Bruce Allen, our other manager, and shopped the demos. I quit the group I was in and went to Vancouver. I'd heard that Paul was putting another group together, but I didn't quit to join them. I just wanted to shut it down for a while and collect my thoughts. I practiced in the basement for a while, but I got real bored and couldn't do it. I had to play with other people; I needed that give and take of putting a song together. I couldn't sit there and play to records anymore.

I was real frustrated when the phone rang one day. It was Mike, and he said, "What are you doing? We hear you're in town. Would you like to come down and jam?" I said, "Yeah. That would be great."

It took a little while to get in the groove. It was a different concept than what Paul and I had done in two other groups that we'd played in together. He had all the songs already written. The concept and image of the group was going to be a little more pop oriented than what we'd done before. At first I thought, "This won't be right for me. I don't know if I want to go this route."

After I got into the songs more and played more with them, I felt that I

"THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS THAT YOU HAVE TO SACRIFICE FOR SUCCESS."

could still play the way I liked, even though the songs were more commercial and more accessible to the public. There was a lot of serious talk going on with the record company, and I had to take a real good look at it before I said, "Yeah. This feels really good."

We rehearsed and played clubs for eight months. Then our record contract came through with CBS. Our management was real strong. The band felt great and we were doing all original material in the clubs. We did three 50-minute sets and we were packing the joints. Then we knew that there was something here that the public liked. They could dance to our music; they could get off on the vocals and the energy. We were getting real good reviews, and better money in the clubs week by week. So we knew that something good was there, but we weren't sure how big it would actually get.

SF: How much did your managers help the band's career?

MF: Bruce Allen had a lot of experience. He managed Bachman-Turner Overdrive all through their fame during the early '70s. He has a lot of contacts, so we got out on a really good tour. The first show we ever did was warming up for Kiss in our hometown. Man, that was really rough. People were booing us. We took our lumps and played the set.

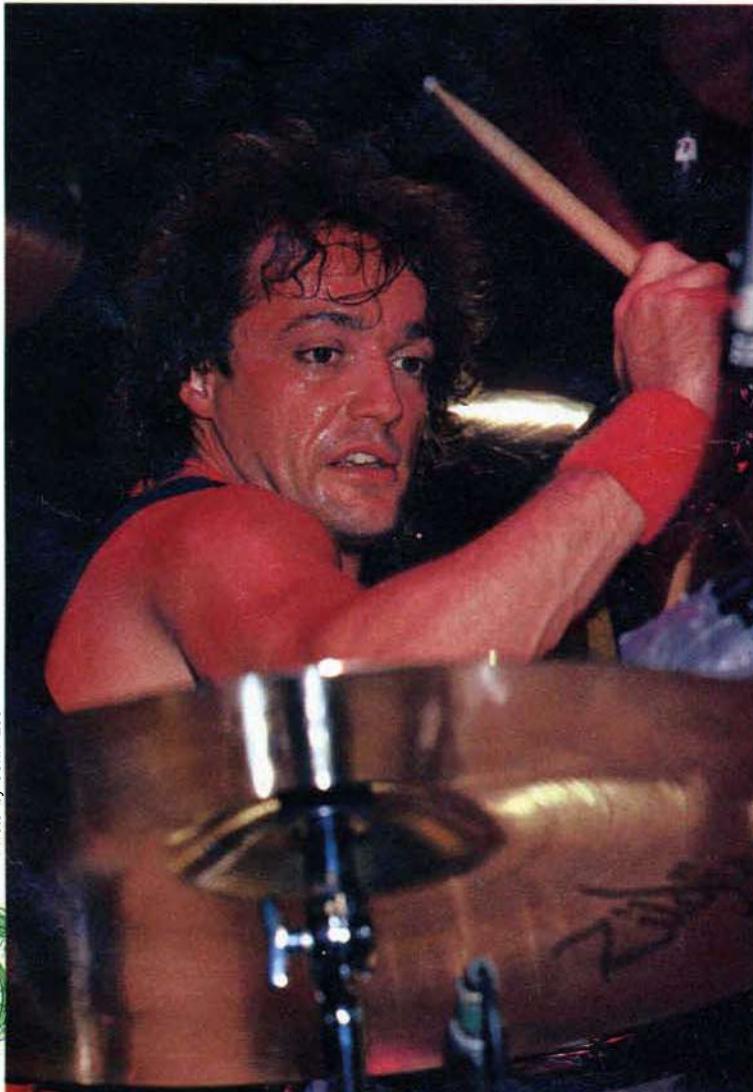
Then we warmed up a Canadian group called Prism. After that we went out with Cheap Trick and started getting our legs for playing in a concert situation. This gave us the opportunity to see how our tunes were going over with kids, rather than working in bars where people were drinking and the crowd was older. It was not going too badly.

Then Bruce got us on a three-month tour with Kansas. We worked real hard in '81 doing about 200 shows. That really helped break the band. If there were nights that we weren't doing a concert, we'd go out and headline a 1,000-seat club. Then three nights later, we'd be on tour for three or four shows with Kansas. There was no time off. We just worked and worked with Kansas, April Wine, ZZ Top and then Journey. By the end of '81, we'd played to every demographic in the USA.

There were a couple of dates with ZZ Top that were rough. The audience really wanted ZZ Top, and Loverboy was still in the breaking stage. They just looked at these leather-clad rockers running around the stage and didn't want anything to do with us. They wanted the Southern boogie happening—and right now! "Get off the stage!" Cape Cod was the worst gig we ever played. We were forced right off the stage. They just chanted, "ZZ Top, ZZ Top" through our whole set. Finally, we ended a song and decided that we should just leave the stage. Since then we've been back to Cape Cod as headliners, and we've packed the joint.

SF: What did you do right after you walked off stage that night?

MF: We seriously took a look at everything. We all sat in the dressing room looking at our shoes. Nobody said anything. Management came in and said, "Look, shake it off. No problem. Don't worry about it. It was just a rough night." It took us about a week to get over it, but it really toughened up the band. We took a good look at the weak songs in the set





day, and hit two or three radio stations in a city. Even at this level, we still do that. We meet press every day before our show—up to 30 people some days.

We're sponsored by Sasson on this tour. They're doing an excellent job of promotion. They'll have 10 to 15 kids backstage who've won a contest to see the band. It's really important to stay in touch with that. Sometimes it's a bit exhausting doing that much press, but you need that personal touch. We've always kept that as a philosophy in Loverboy, and our management and record company have always worked hard to do as much promotion as possible.

SF: Do you have to be a salesman?

MF: Yeah. You have to be an actor, a musician, an athlete, a businessman and a promotions representative. You really do. You have to cover a lot of ground. That's the only way. It's a *business*. It's a good business, but it's a big business. The music industry is huge. I don't see how kids could really afford to see all the shows that have been on the road this past year. We've been really lucky. Our shows have been selling out. I know two or three groups who have had some trouble this year with albums that haven't done well. They've had to drop whole tours. It's pretty scary to think that two years ago they were huge. It shows you how fast it can go, too. That's the very scary thing about striving for the top.

SF: How would you answer the critics of rock bands who tie in the expense of a tour with a corporation like Sasson?

MF: We didn't want to go with anything like a beer or a cigarette company. It's a pretty healthy band with a pretty healthy image. We're involved with Sasson because there are a lot of groups on the road right now. Ticket prices get extraordinary sometimes. We really felt that we wanted to keep everything at a reasonable cost to the public. By Sasson kicking in and giving tour support, it can keep our overhead down when we're on the road touring. That's the main reason we did it. It's a mutual relationship. Sasson feels that Loverboy can help their image.

The promotion they're giving us on this tour will help sell tickets, which will help sell more records, which helps us. There were certain things that Sasson wanted which we said no to. We don't have to be on stage in Sasson clothes. We have a very good deal with them, and it works very well for both of us.

SF: There's always been a tragic misunderstanding between art and business. The result is that many great musicians have ended up penniless. I'd like to see artists develop a more mature understanding of business.

MF: I agree. There are a lot of positive areas to look at. Management has a lot to do with it. If you get bad management, it can really hurt.

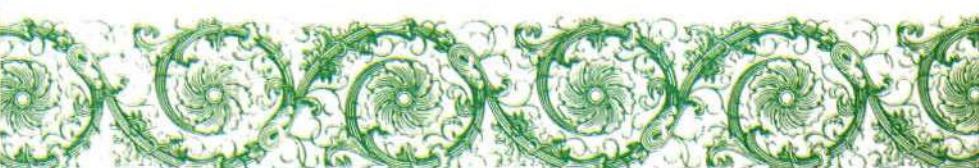
My endorsements with Remo and Zildjian are great. There's no big deal. I endorse them because I believe in the product. I wouldn't take an endorsement otherwise. Certain companies have made offers for products, and I've said no because I couldn't put all of myself into it. Remo and Zildjian can use my name and pictures to endorse their products. That's fine. But at any point, if I decided that I didn't want to use their products and wanted to use something else, or just didn't want the advertising press, I could pick up the phone and say, "Hello. This is Matt. No thanks." And vice versa, I'm sure, if I did something that wasn't happening.

The reason I haven't signed with a drum company is because I'm happy where I'm at right now. There are a lot of innovations going on in drums and shells. I'm just going to watch it grow a little bit more. Maybe there will be a custom drum company that will have a good wooden shell.

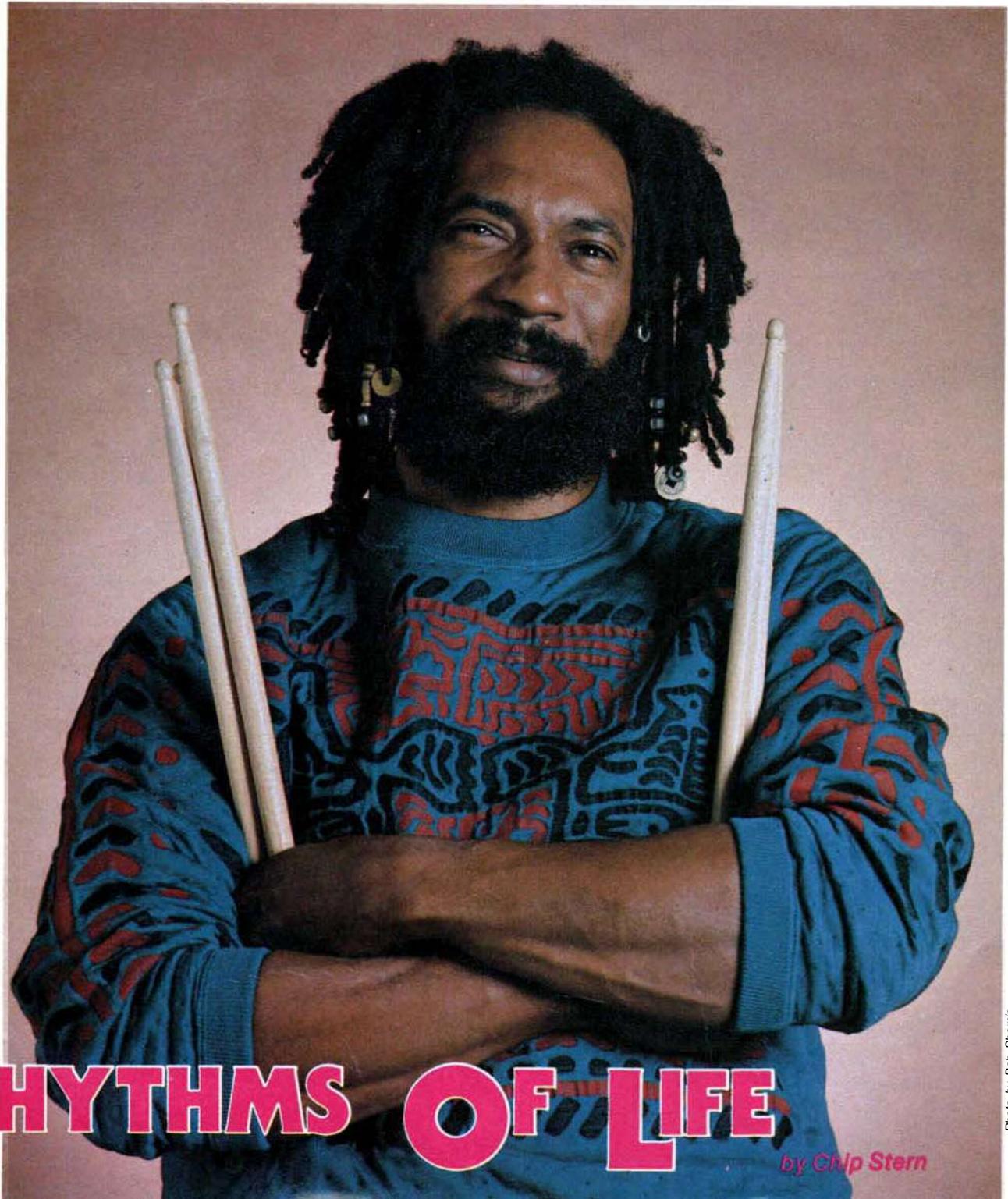
I've got so much different equipment. I've had a Rogers *Swivomatic* foot-pedal (split-heel) since the beginning. I love it. I have a Sonor hi-hat. My drums are Ludwig shells with a mixture of Sonor and Ludwig hardware. I like to look around and dabble, but I always come back to the conventional 6-ply maple drums.

The latest things I ran into were Paul Jamieson's snare drums. They're great. I'm thinking about using one of them. When we go to L.A. to do videos or TV shows, we rent drumsets. Paul comes out with these neat old maple Ludwig drums. The last video we did for "Queen Of The Broken Hearts" was out in the Mojave Desert, and it was 106 degrees that day—a killer. By the time we did the

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RONALD SHANNON JACKSON's



RHYTHMS OF LIFE

by Chip Stern

Ronald Shannon Jackson is one of the most distinctive drum stylists of the past 20 years—a shaman of modern rhythm. Had his stampeding electric ensemble, the Decoding Society, existed in 1972, they might have been as popular as the Mahavishnu Orchestra and Return To Forever. But there's a different rhythm today than there was a decade ago. This also accounts for the relationship between Shannon's drumming and the rest of the band, because in Jackson's music the drums are not simply the hip timekeeper, but the central core of the band's melody. They key the matrix of polytonalities he orchestrates as tonal extensions of his four limbs. Where McLaughlin (with Billy Cobham) and Corea (with Lenny White) would deal in polymetric extensions of the melody, Shannon attempts a synthesis of elements more akin to the polyrhythmic modulations of African tribal drummers—a layering of different tempos, key centers and cross-rhythms.

"My music is about seeking, and the rhythm of life in the '80s," Jackson offers in his friendly Texas drawl. Looking out from behind his knitted mane of hair and ornaments, Shannon projects a hard-earned calm; the strength of a survivor, happy to have come through the heights and depths of the '60s in one piece—with body and dreams intact. "New York was a fast lane alright," he chuckles knowingly, "not at all like where I grew up. I think the rhythm of the environment, and the rhythm of the times delegate what the sound will be. Geographically, Texas is a flat land, a wide-open land, a land with a lot of space. So you can't play a lot of notes because they'll get lost out there. You have to fill up that space first—put the essence in there, and then make a statement. You can hear all that in the quality of Texan horn players and drummers. Whereas a place like Kansas City, Missouri, is more hilly; the people are more stacked together, so there's a different inflection to their music. Just like in the way Texans speak, there's a definite drawl—a western accent as opposed to say the southern accent of someone from Mississippi, which is dominated by the river and the delta. Where I come from in Ft. Worth there are more churches than bars, which reflects the beat of our community. And all of these things play a part in the way people communicate, which is why the rhythms of the people in an arid place like Chad have a much different context than those the pygmies and forest dwellers reflect.

"Now, when you pointed out that my music usually has two or three tempos happening at once, look at where we're living—in New York City. Look at how we get around. You can catch a taxi; you can take a subway or a bus; ride a bicycle or walk. Now there's five different rhythmic movements—all different tempos. But this

is the era for that. In the swing era, when my parents came up, things weren't as jolting, as fast, as complex—there weren't as many choices. We're living in a time when the Russians shoot down a commercial airliner and say 'Look here: Not only did we shoot that boy down, but send some more and we'll off them, too!' Someone could push the button and atomic bombs wipe us all out. That's in the back of people's minds whether they think about it consciously or not. It makes you ask if life is worth living.

"That's why my approach, in terms of essence, is to swing everything—to have that swing exuberance; that seeking quality. I'm trying to unite people with the knowledge that music is a force, and also to portray that element of swing as it is in our era. That's why there's a slight flavor of rock and funk in everything we play. I'm making a statement that jazz is not dying and is never going to die. It's all a big continuation; we're just using different terms in a different era. It's like when bebop came out of swing, right? So here's this exact same life force, and we're employing all the theory, history and tradition, but with electric instruments in the '80s. I'm not like one of those fashion designers who creates clothes that are going to take us all back to the '30s. That's not what tomorrow is going to be. I can't live in the past. So I'm trying to help the people I want to communicate with to understand today and tomorrow, using the past as a foundation, only. Living in the present and knowing about the past so that we can anticipate tomorrow is what I'm trying to do with the Decoding Society."

In a sense, that's exactly what Shannon's been doing for years as a sideman with some of the most innovative figures in American music. If there's one common motif in the space gospel of Albert Ayler, the tribal polyphony of Ornette Coleman, the pan-African classicism of Cecil Taylor and the galloping bush music of Ulmer, it's that none of these composers acknowledges any substantive differences between melody and rhythm—every instrument becomes a drum. And at the heart of it all was Ronald Shannon Jackson.

I have a vivid memory of Jackson and Ulmer at the now defunct Tin Palace (a period more or less captured for posterity on Ulmer's Moers Music release *No Wave*), at the height of that group's powers. Ornette Coleman was in the throng shaking his head in delight: "It's like a new inception," he enthused. I also saw drummer Phillip Wilson behind the bandstand, trying to get a better view of what Jackson was doing. Riding on his snare drum rather than on the top cymbal, Jackson was like some futuristic parade drummer, driving the music forward with accents on his extra-long, funky Ludwig power toms. He had a horrible, noisy, mismatched set of drums, but he made them

sing. ("I got 'em for \$50, total," he recalls. "Cat wanted \$90, but I talked him down.") Cymbals, if you could call them that (equally funky), almost never got accented, and when they did it was more like a comma than a period on the sentence, as the sock cymbals chipped away in a steady tattoo. And yet for all the complexity of the group's sound, for all the sweltering cross-rhythms and bombarded tom-toms, there was Jackson's right foot performing one of the most overlooked functions in jazz—swinging 4/4 on the bass drum. Nothing fancy, just straight-ahead four-on-the-floor, like Chick Webb, Sonny Greer, Gene Krupa, Sid Catlett and Jo Jones used to do it when they were driving the big dance bands of the '30s.

"It's a funny thing," Jackson explains, "because the way I got to jazz was through records; you couldn't see any of those people live where I grew up. Recording technology wasn't nearly as advanced as what we've got today, so when you listened to those records you never heard the bass drum. Consequently, me and a lot of cats grew up thinking that the bass drum wasn't being played. But when I finally got to New York and heard cats like Art Blakey, Max Roach, Philly Joe and Elvin Jones, I realized that the bass drum was definitely played.

"Luckily, I had the good fortune to grow up in a dance band environment, so I was always in control of the bass drum, and I simply had to transfer that to the bebop and jazz bands I encountered in New York. I grew up playing traps in an environment where the bass drum was most important, as opposed to bebop or swing where you're playing a lot of snare, and doing a lot of accenting between the cymbals and snare, and keeping time with the cymbal. Whereas in dance music the bass drum is keeping the time. In blues music, the bass drum pulse is the soul of the music.

"See, the most important thing is that foot—the master drum. It's the control drum. It's the center. It's the heartbeat, the relaxed pulse, the more musical tonal center as opposed to the more direct speaking tone—that's what settles the music.

"Now you know that it can be really hard to hook up with the bass player. They'll hear some tone in your bass drum and right away they think something's wrong," Shannon laughs. "Or else they'll get on your case and tell you that you're rushing—all drummers know about that. I've found that a lot of bass players rush tempos, and don't understand why. If you think about it, as string players modulate upwards on their instruments, everything gets faster. That's just basic physics—the actual vibrations of the high notes are faster. Now if you're playing with masters like Ron Carter or Buster Williams, none of that matters, because they have a solid sense of their own tonal center. But less ex-



Photo by Ebet Roberts

perienced players get thrown off by all that bass drum timbre because it falls in the same tonal range as their sound. They will start to play higher so they can hear better. That's when they start to rush and get on your case. That's why, even though it's more pleasurable to have some tone in your bass drum, it's better to tune for a flatter 'thud,' so that in acoustic music, they can hear better, and in electric music, you can hear better. The drum cuts through and lets you control the flow of energy."

It soon becomes apparent how much thought Shannon has given to the physical and symbolic aspects of the bass drum, and what role he envisions for it in his music. "In any ethnic group that employs the drum, you're going to find the large drums, like this Trinidadian drum I have—the long drum; the deep drum. That bottom is where music comes from in most folk cultures. In drums themselves, there have always been master drums—especially in African tribal drumming where

there's always that pulse, that center to any social or spiritual event. You can take out the speaking rhythms or the communication on top—that which is portraying the event itself; the master drummer can keep everything going. The pulse, the intention, is still there on the bottom, so you can play the same pulse and change the rhythms on top of it. You can do the same thing on the drumset, when you start with that pulse from the heart—BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM. Now everything on top is good; those rhythms are the enhancers—what we emotionally want to say. But if the heartbeat isn't there, things are unstable.

"Life is rhythm: the rotation of the earth; the blooming of flowers; the way we talk; the way we walk. So as long as a drummer knows where the one is, and can project that feeling, everything is cool. One of the problems we had in the avant-garde era during the '60s was that no one ever established where one was, or locked and settled anything. I mean, all of life goes from positive to negative, good and bad, hot and cold, black and white—that's rhythm, too, like saying 'boom-chick,' back and forth. So because no one locked things in, it always gave the people anxiety, as opposed to tension/release. And no one went for it, which was just logical human nature. You don't necessarily have to talk to people to communicate with them—just give them a heartbeat.

"That's why I can't emphasize the importance of that bass drum enough. Once you establish what the actual beat is, everything else is in between. If you were to break a melodic line down, the actual beat it's coming from might be fairly simple, and keeping that foot thing locked makes all the difference. Like, 'BOOM-a-chicka-chik-changchang, BOOM-a-chicka-chik-

changchang, BOOM.' Without that 'BOOM,' it doesn't have that essence there. The 'BOOM' creates that space-space and tension.

"And that's why even when I'm not playing the bass drum, I'm playing the bass drum. Even though the other musicians and listeners may not hear it, they can *always feel* it, so they know where that space is. I always play my bass drum. What I'm actually doing is locking my big toe and the adjacent toe, so that the beater is locked in place against the bass drum head. I'm holding it there with my toes, and then the heel itself is actually keeping time," he says, stomping down the back of the pedal with his heel to make the point, "so that you can feel the vibration passing through the bass drum. Sometimes the beater will come up off the head, and that will serve to enhance what I'm doing, too. But that pulse is the thing that lets you be creative and still be together. Not beat, not rhythm—pulse."

For Ronald Shannon Jackson, the rhythm of his life was such that he always knew he was a drummer. Born January 12, 1940, he recalls his mother taking him to an American Woodman meeting as a four-year-old, and there, on a riser in the basement of a church, was a set of drums. Right away he sensed his calling. From there he engaged in the normal drum & bugle corps pursuits that mark the lives of many southern drummers, and something of that sound can still be heard in Shannon's big beat. But in terms of the almost tribal level of communication that marks the Decoding Society's ensemble improvising and his work as a sideman, Shannon points to the experiences he shared with other musicians in a Ft. Worth meeting place called Greenway Park.



Photo by Ron Saint Germain

"The musicians would get off from playing the gambling dens all up and down Jacksboro Highway. Rather than going to bed, they'd take all that bottled up energy and go to this great big John Phillip Sousa-style gazebo in the middle of the park. You could go out there, play your heart out and not bother anybody. The musicians used to go out there and just play pure music. So when I met people like Albert Ayler and Ornette Coleman, it made it real easy for me in terms of understanding what they were really talking about playing.

"What happened up on that gazebo was just cats getting together to talk about how they would really like to play, and how bad things were in relation to how they could be. This music didn't have anything to do with recording traditions, fake books, cutting contests or none of that. It was basically Congo Square tribal communion. Man, there was so much joy released in those situations, because people could be themselves without having to worry about the *po-police* comin' and lockin' everyone up, or cats coming in with guns shooting, or requesting 'Polkadots And Moonbeams' when you felt like just playing. This is really what the music I played with Coleman on *Dancing In Your Head* and *Body Meta* was all about. Greenway Park is where I first learned to hear music as communication and the expression of exuberance in life.

"I never had a drum teacher, because I already knew how to play drums. I don't know how—I guess it was from playing pots and pans. I always knew how to do a roll, and from studying piano I knew how to read music. I was giving recitals on piano by the time I was seven years old, playing simplified stuff like 'Little Johnny Appleseed' and 'Blue Danube.' It's just that they were not going to let me get to drums in the second grade, so I played piano all the time. But I had my pots and pans, and also some other instruments I made up from my imagination. My mother had a couple of basting brushes, and those were my wire brushes. I made my own sticks back in my uncle's tool shed out of the rims of chairs. To this day I'm still trying to get to those sticks because they were narrow and beveled at the bottom. Then they got bigger towards the middle, with almost no taper between the shaft and the bead.

"And I already had cymbals because my uncle was a cymbal player in the army, and he had a few real old K. Zildjian orchestral crash cymbals, which were very high-pitched because they were as grooveless as the old A.'s. And there were always big pots, too. We had this big old black iron pot that looked like a witch's cauldron, and I always used to bang around that with a stick. Someone suggested to me recently that *that* iron sound might've been what I was hearing when I set up an *Icebell* as a crash with James 'Blood' Ulmer. That could be. So with all that, once I got to the



Photo by Ebet Roberts

drums in school, they let me borrow a snare and a marching bass drum and take 'em home. I'd rig up a music stand to hold the cymbals and that was my first set. Other than going to school, helping my father stock juke boxes on Saturdays, and going to church on Sundays, I didn't have nothing to do but practice out in the shed."

Shannon's constant practice led him to work in all manner of blues/dance bands through high school, woodshedding in jazz with his friend, saxophonist Billy Tom Robinson (who had the hippest record col-

cymbals and the 14's would be our socks. Since he wasn't at liberty to leave the band room open at lunch hour, he'd lock us in, and we'd be in there for hours creating, experimenting and playing together."

After stints at junior college and a school in Connecticut, Shannon found himself on the New York scene playing in a variety of situations, from blues and modern jazz, to cabaret, club dates and bar mitzvahs. He was playing with the likes of Junior Cook, Bill Hardman, Betty Carter, Paul Jeffrey, Charles Mingus and other leading lights of the New York scene. No one, however, had more impact on his sense of music's possibilities than Albert Ayler. "No one played with more power than Albert Ayler—not before, not since. He had a sound on tenor that was like everything I'd learned in Greenway Park, but with all of the energy coming from one person. The thing you have to remember about the '60s is that if you caught some of these people when their spirit was in full bloom, you heard something unforgettable. But many times, a lot of us got into side trips that weren't conducive to music, health or spiritual well being—we lost a sense of our rhythm—and if you heard us when the spirit wasn't happening, it was something else. But Albert always had the spirit; he could just pull you along with the sheer sound of the tenor saxophone. Playing with Albert made me aware of where my rhythmic center was coming from—down in my gut. I always know when I'm being transposed from my normal state to my spiritual state. It's like breaking a sweat or getting second wind. Once you're past the conscious level, everything is open and you can get to the music, not just your instrument.

"The drummer can be on such an ego trip—it's the nature of our instrument. The drummer can be thinking, 'I'm the one who's controlling everything, because if I don't play this right, ain't nothin' going to be right,' or thinking, 'Look at that chick over there; she's looking at me be-

"I'M TRYING TO UNITE PEOPLE WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT MUSIC IS A FORCE . . .

lection in town), as well as playing in the marching band. "I was section leader. I played snare drum through my first two years of high school, then moved up to the master drum—the bass drum—my last two years, and I played timpani in the orchestra." More importantly, he had the good fortune to study under one Mr. Baxter in high school, who was also the teacher of Ornette Coleman and King Curtis, among many others. "Mr Baxter was held in such high esteem by both the black and white community, that there was a fresh influx of money to buy band uniforms and instruments every few years. There wasn't enough money in the budget to buy dance band equipment too, but Mr. Baxter had the wisdom to substitute the things we needed. We'd take some marching snare drums and those would be our toms. A marching bass drum was the kick, and an orchestra drum was used for the snare. He'd order three sets of hand cymbals: 14", 16" and 20". No one ever used 20" hand cymbals, so those would be our ride

Joey Kramer

Photos by Robert L. Herman

by Robert Santelli

Talk about the best American hard rock bands of the '70s and Aerosmith has to be mentioned in the first breath.

Driven by a sound that was as intense as it was relentless, Aerosmith initially caught the attention of the rock press not because of their music, but because of the remarkable look-alike qualities of lead vocalist Steven Tyler with Rolling Stone Mick Jagger. The critics pressed a bit further and came up with another Rolling Stones comparison—guitarist Joe Perry with Keith Richards.

For some time afterwards it was all uphill for Aerosmith, as the band desperately tried to shake off the Rolling Stone albatross that journalists strung around their necks. Few denied Aerosmith's rock 'n' roll capabilities, but the band's image problem stifled their progress. The early LPs were solid enough—Aerosmith and Get Your Wings helped define the direction '70s hard rock would take. But still Aerosmith floundered.

It was the seemingly incessant touring that finally broke the band. Aerosmith became a road band in the purest sense of the term. And it was in the clubs and concert halls across America that the band perfected its rock 'n' roll power and energetic delivery. By the time albums like Toys In The Attic, Rocks, and Draw The Line hit the record shelves, Aerosmith had effectively silenced the cries of "Rolling Stone rip-offs. "Aerosmith had created a niche in the rock hierarchy the only way it could: the HARD way.

Nailing down the beat for the band is Joey Kramer. Not as verbal or provocative as Steven Tyler or other members of the band, Kramer nevertheless steadily built a reputation as one of hard rock's most efficient—and physical—drummers. On stage his powerful drumming sets the pace for Aerosmith; in the studio he is responsible for the full bottom sound the band always seems to have.

RS: It seems as if Aerosmith has kept a particularly low profile in the '80s thus far. Ever since Steven Tyler got hurt while riding his motorcycle in 1979, the band hasn't been as active as it once was.

JK: Yeah, that's very true. But believe me, it's not like we didn't welcome the rest. I mean, we had been on the road for a long, long time; years and years of tours, and running from one show to the next. It was very hectic and trying. We all had vacation homes and families, but we were always on the road. So it got to be that any little thing that gave us some time off was pretty much welcomed. That's not to say, of course, that Steven's accident was welcomed. But when it did happen, it gave the band an excuse to take time off. Besides, musically we were in a rather dormant state where nothing much was happening.

RS: What did you do with your time off?

JK: Well, I had built a house up in the woods in New Hampshire and I just wanted to go there and stay there. I didn't want to know about looking at my drums. I didn't want to know about being in the city or dealing with people. I'd had it with the music business for a while. I just wanted to spend some time with my wife and kids. I also had other interests besides music that I wanted to pursue.

RS: Like what?

JK: Well, I'm pretty heavy into sports cars. And, of course, my family; I have a son and that was the first time I'd had a chance to spend time with him since he was born. Now he knows he's got a dad. I'll tell you, I've come to realize how important that family

thing can be. It contributes to my playing and my confidence. It's great to know that there's someone behind me all the time. I'm really grateful for what I have.

RS: For a long time in the 1970s, Aerosmith set the pace for American hard rock bands. Now that we're in the '80s and the music has shifted to a more techno-rock direction, how does the band intend to fit into the scheme of things?

JK: Well, I think rock 'n' roll, the way it used to be played, is starting to come back a little. It may not come back to what Aerosmith was doing in the mid-'70s, but the feeling of that type of rock is coming back. We realize that the music has changed and we're trying to change with the times. Sometimes it's difficult listening to the music on the radio today; there's a lot of good stuff, but there's also a lot of trash. The one group I have to admire is the Stones because they've transcended all the fads and changes in rock. That's what puts them in a class by themselves. But in terms of Aerosmith, we realize we're coming from an entirely different thing. There aren't many bands like Aerosmith that are really happening now. But I have confidence we'll be able to find a place in '80s rock 'n' roll. Good basic music that moves people is always in demand.

RS: As the band's one and only drummer, what have you done, drum-wise, to contribute to the Aerosmith sound?

JK: Well, our music is basically simple, so I try to keep things as simple as they need to be. Today a lot of drummers forget what a drummer's role in a band actually is. For instance, what Charlie Watts does and what Ringo did and what John Bonham did was great. Bonham was one of my very favorite drummers; he played in such a way that he had outstanding style, yet he managed to keep things simple when it was necessary to keep things simple. A lot of what was involved in his playing—and my playing, so I like to think—is more feeling and emotion, as opposed to technical genius.

RS: I take it that you didn't take many drum lessons as a kid.

JK: No, I really didn't. I'm completely self-taught. I guess I started playing when I was 14 years old. And I don't read music; I play strictly by feeling.

RS: Most drummers who don't read music bring up the concept of "feeling" when they're talking drums.

JK: When we first started the band, I was enrolled at Berklee in Boston and had attended classes for about three weeks, I guess, until it got to the point where I realized it was hurting me rather than helping. Getting into that angle of drum playing was suddenly turning into a negative source as far as the direction I wanted to go in. I was playing matched grip because I was self-taught, and at the school they wanted me to play conventional grip. Also, I wanted to take lessons on the vibes because I had always wanted to play the vibes. Well, they wouldn't let me do it. Nothing really worked out for me at Berklee, so I left. It was probably the best move I ever made.

RS: So you base your entire drum style on feeling.

JK: That's right. There are a lot of drummers out there doing studio work who can fit into any situation and sound just the way the producer or whoever wants them to sound. But at the same time, they don't sit behind their kits and make one particular band hap-

Finding A Place In The '80s

Photo by Robert L. Herman



Photos by Robert L. Herman

pen. However, with drummers like Bonzo or Charlie Watts, you can sit back, listen and just soak up the feeling. That's what made Led Zeppelin happen, and after 20 years, it still makes the Stones happen.

RS: What kinds of bands did you play with before Aerosmith?

JK: I played with a lot of black bands. Those cats taught me a lot about playing with feeling. I remember playing in a ten-piece group that included four singers out in front. I used to go to rehearsals with just the singers, so I had to learn to accent all their choreography. That was real interesting and real helpful to me as a rock drummer later on.

RS: Did you return home to Yonkers, New York, after you quit Berklee, or did you move right into Aerosmith?

JK: Well, I had been in Boston in 1970 to go to college, but that didn't work out either. I had gotten real sick with hepatitis and mono in the winter of 1970, so I had to go home. I was sick in bed until the end of that following summer. That September I decided I wanted to go to Berklee, so I went back to Boston, stayed at Berklee for about three weeks, and then bumped into Joe Perry and Tom Hamilton. They were trying to start a band with Steven. The funny thing is, I had already known Steven—we went to high

Photo by Robert L. Herman

school together—but Joe and Tom didn't know that.

RS: It sounds like Aerosmith was initially a big coincidence.

JK: Yeah. You see, there was a friend of mine from back home in Yonkers who was also a friend of Steven's. He was going to start the band with Steven, Joe and Tom. But when I spoke with him in Boston, he told me he didn't have the time anymore to do it. So he said he would turn me on to the guys, since I was a drummer and they'd be looking for one. I was looking for a gig at the time so it was perfect. That's how the whole thing started.

RS: Were your intentions always to be a drummer?

JK: Yeah. I think it came from my rebelling as a kid growing up in the 1960s.

RS: In what ways were you rebellious?

JK: When I was in junior high school and playing in bands, my parents were always holding everything over my head. They thought music—particularly drums—was nice as a hobby and perhaps a way to earn some money on weekends, but that was it. Until the time I left home, my parents wouldn't let me grow my hair long. I guess that's part of the reason why I'm 33 years old and my hair is still long. But when you're 14 or 15 nobody is interested in listening to you. When everyone at my high school—which, by the way, was a college preparatory high school—was explaining at graduation what universities they'd be attending and what courses they were going to take, I only wanted to talk about joining a rock 'n' roll band. All I knew was that playing music and playing the drums made me feel a special way, so why should I give it up? Everybody was against my playing the drums, but the more they told me that, the more I wanted to get behind my kit. Whenever I played I was happy. That's all I knew or cared about.

RS: How would you compare the difficulties of being a young drummer today to what you went through in the late '60s?

JK: Young drummers today send me tapes of their bands and ask for advice, but they have no interest in what was involved in making it or what it took to get there. They just see what they see and that's what they want—right now. They say, "Wow, what a life!" Well, what they don't know, and don't care to know, is that sometimes it sucks. When we first put the band together, we spent two-and-a-half years all living in a four-room apartment eating brown rice and carrots. Nobody's interested in that, so I never mention it. But young drummers have to realize that whatever you put into your drumming and your band is what you're going to get out of them. Impatience seems to be the end result of the music scene today.

RS: As a kid, did you hang out much in New York City?

JK: Oh yeah. I used to go to the Fillmore a lot. I'd catch Procol Harum with B.J. Wilson, and all the other great bands and drummers. That's where I became inspired to be a drummer. Guys like John Bonham had a big influence on me. I had a great admiration for him.

RS: Was he your biggest influence?

JK: Yeah. Steven actually turned me on to him. He was into Zeppelin when I first joined the band. At the time, I was into Clive Bunker and Mitch Mitchell and that sort of style. Then Steven turned me on to Bonham and I just zeroed in on him so heavily because of the way he made the whole band feel. His role was big enough that, when he died, Led Zeppelin wasn't able to carry on. Now people realize how big a part he played in Zeppelin's success.

RS: I heard that Bonham's former roadie became your roadie. Is that true?

JK: Yeah. Henry Smith was Bonzo's roadie for two-and-a-half





years before he began working with me. He was my roadie for about three years. Henry turned me on to a lot of the tricks Bonham used to do, as well as a lot of his playing technique. I learned so much from him and Steven. There are so very few drummers around like Bonham today. Today you hear very little from drummers like Ginger Baker or Aynsley Dunbar.

RS: I heard some of Ginger Baker's music while I was in England a couple of months ago. He's back playing with a trio.

JK: Trios are great for drummers because you have so much more room to breathe. For instance, when you're going around the kit to play a fill or something, in a trio, that's the only thing happening. There's no keyboards or rhythm guitar; there's nothing filling in. So everything you play is outstanding. A lot of times I'd like to be able to do that, but what being a drummer is really all about is being able to adapt to the type of band you're playing with and making that band happen. Nobody is interested in how busy you can be or how good your chops are. It's how the band feels and comes across that's important. There are a lot of drummers who can play circles and rings around me as far as solos go. But I'm right for Aerosmith, and that's all that really matters to me.

RS: What would you say is the one Aerosmith song that best typifies your style of drumming?

JK: It's a song off the *Rocks* album called "Nobody's Fault," which was never a popular Aerosmith song. We never even did the song live. But we had a whole lot of fun recording it, because we did it at a warehouse that we used to have up in Boston. We brought the mobile truck in and just set everything up. It represents some of my best drumming with Aerosmith, because not only was the playing real good, but the drum sounds were probably the best I ever got. It's hard, though, to pick one song or one instance, because I'm never really satisfied with the way I play. I'm to the point now where, as I grow older and mature a little bit more, I

"I'M OPEN TO COMMENTS, AND I'LL TRY WHAT OTHER MEMBERS IN THE BAND HAVE TO SAY ABOUT A SONG ... I'M NOT AFRAID TO ADMIT IT IF WHAT I'M PLAYING IS WRONG AND WHAT SOMEONE ELSE HAS SUGGESTED IS BETTER."

might allow myself to be a little more satisfied with what I do behind the kit. But it's only on a temporary basis.

RS: I think that when drummers, or for that matter any musicians, say they are completely satisfied with their performance, that's the first indication of a lack of growth. More times than not, what you'll hear from those artists will be stagnant.

JK: I agree. That's when they should hang it up and put down the sticks. Recording with Aerosmith, though, has been one challenge after another. There would be times when we'd go into pre-production, and we'd rehearse a song for maybe three or four weeks. I'd be playing a certain figure for that particular song, and after doing it over and over again, it would feel good. But then the guys in the band would come up to me and say, "Well, it doesn't wash anymore. Now we want to try this." So I'd sit and listen to the figure, and I'd say, "No man, what I'm playing now is much better." But they'd insist I try something else to go along with the new arrangement. I'd usually be open-minded enough to try something else. So I'd go off in some room with a tape, and try to come up with a new figure, apply it to the song and try to make it sound as comfortable as the figure I had been playing.

RS: It must be quite frustrating at times.

JK: It is, but it makes me a more flexible musician. I'll tell you though, nine out of ten times it goes full circle and I wind up recording the thing I originally played. And everyone else usually agrees on it. But, in the process, there's a whole lot of stuff I've learned and filed in my mental catalog that maybe I can use later on. A lot of drummers acquire an attitude when other people in the band say, "I think you should play this." They get defensive, like, "Hey, wait a minute! I'm the drummer. Don't tell me what to play." That's not what it's all about, because a lot of times somebody from the band can hear something that you can't. It really helps. You're the drummer and you'll ultimately be playing the part. But whatever it is that makes the song and the band work is what should be recorded. It doesn't matter who comes up with it.

RS: It's great to know that you're open to outside comments and

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I first met John Stacey in Chicago. He was there for a Ludwig advertisement photo session, and I was there on assignment from MD to interview several drummers. But John's name was not on my list. When I arrived at the hotel, a group of drummers, including Stacey, were sitting in the lounge talking. After listening to their conversation for a while, I turned to John and said, "You must be one of those drummers I've heard a million times on records but never knew it was you." And he was. Hours later, after everyone else had gone to bed, Stacey and I were still awake. He was doing most of the talking and I was doing most of the listening. John is a great storyteller; he speaks

colorfully and to the point. I was so fascinated by the guy that we got together the next morning for this interview.

John's bread and butter comes from backing country artists in the Nashville studios. But if you ever have the chance to visit him at home, you'll probably find him in his music room practicing drums along with recordings of Oscar Peterson, The Meters, or Tom Scott. During the week of the Country Music Association Awards, I had the good fortune to be in Nashville, where I got a chance to hear John with the Buddy Emmons Quartet. They played a set that ran the gamut from country waltzes to bebop renditions of "I've Got Rhythm." Stacey had the misfortune of having to

play the house drumset, which was detuned and overmuffled to the point that it had all of the musical warmth and response of a baked potato. But Stacey played so well that no one really noticed.

John Stacey is a true professional who is respected by his peers as a musician and a gentleman. If you're ever going somewhere to interview a group of drummers, check to see if Stacey is going to be there. And if he is, be sure to put his name on your list.

JS: I came to Nashville in 1969, and like other musicians who go there, my main concern was work. So I started traveling the road. I began working at the Grand Ole Opry with an artist named Ray Pillow,

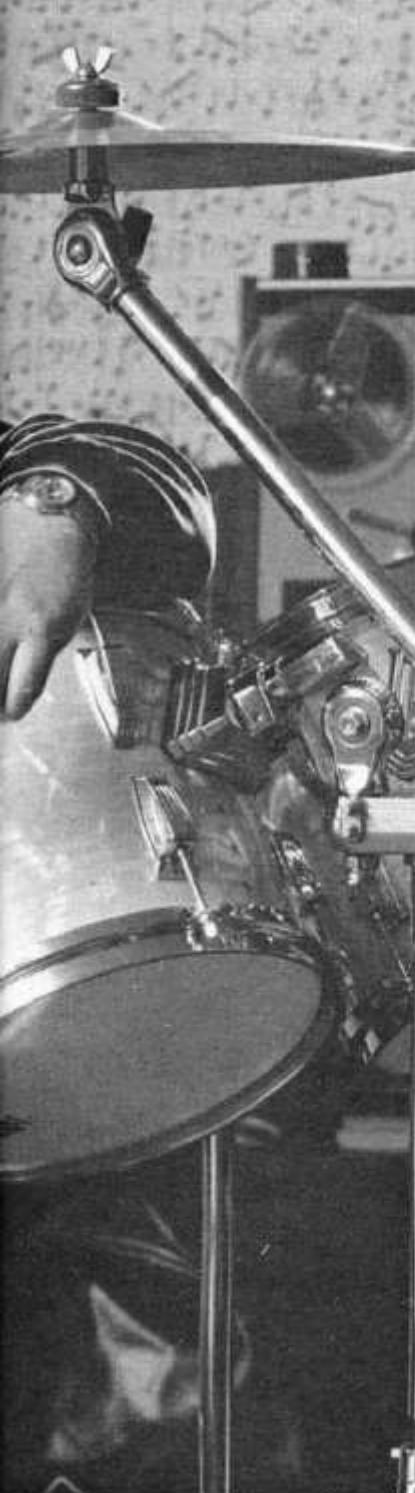


Photo by Douglas Richardson

who, at the time, had never had a hit record. It was a job to keep me going, and help me get to know other musicians. Shortly after that I went to work for Skeeter Davis, who was on RCA at the time, and who had a hot country/pop record called "The End of the World." I got good experience working with Skeeter but I didn't have studio experience. No one was willing to take a chance hiring people who had no experience. Studio time was too expensive.

The first session I had was with Warner Mack. He had a song at the time called "The Bridge Washed Out." He cut an album of all old Jimmy Reed songs. They wanted some blues players and I was be-

John STACEY

coming known around town as being a little too rock oriented to be a good country drummer. But Warner gave me my first real break by telling a producer, "I want to use John Stacey on drums, regardless." The producer was Owen Bradley, who headed Decca Records and who owned the famous Bradley's Barn studio. As a matter of fact, the guitar player, Dale Sellers, and myself were kind of new at the same time. We were cutting this album, and they had Grady Martin and Buddy Harman standing by in the studio in case we couldn't hack it. As if there wasn't enough pressure to start with!

My career kind of blossomed out from there. I got to know enough producers and people doing sessions who were in a hiring capacity. I worked the road for about five years with different artists. When I got married in '76, I decided to quit traveling. I had more accounts than I realized. In the last few years I have worked with just about every artist in the business in some way or another, whether it is recording, T.V. or concert dates.

SF: Were you a versatile drummer when you moved to Nashville?

JS: I went to Nashville with a sack over my head actually, thinking that, "I'm a rock drummer and I'm belittling myself by going to a country town." I could listen to certain parts of country music and just cringe. It just didn't represent anything I stood for. However, after going there and meeting people—especially the musicians—on several occasions I went to jam sessions and the musicians blew me away. Nashville is full of great musicians and there are so many great drummers that I feel proud just to be a part of that whole situation.

SF: At what age did you realize that you wanted to be a drummer?

JS: Drumming was like a predestined thing for me. Even in grade school, my second grade teacher wrote on my report card, "Johnny seems to be more interested in drumming than in his studies. He's always playing his pencils on the desk." I've really never considered doing anything else.

SF: Who were you listening to or emulating in your rock?

JS: I don't recall specifically listening to any one drummer. I just listened to rock music in general. I didn't really know

names of players back then. But I do recall names like Cozy Cole, Sandy Nelson, Gene Krupa, and Buddy Rich.

SF: Jazz or rudimental drumming never entered the picture?

JS: No, not in the beginning. In the school and the area I was from, band was not big at all. Even now, I realize that the teachers we had back then were not all that qualified, compared to other areas. Probably if we'd had a better program, I would have gotten into it more.

I first really became interested in jazz and knowing the names of players when I went into the service. That got me out of West Virginia, to where something was going on musically. Bradshaw, West Virginia was certainly not a musical town. It had a few bluegrass bands, but that was all.

SF: Were you in the Air Force Band?

JS: Yes. When I first went in was a mechanic on a C-130 aircraft. About midway I transferred into Special Services. When I got out, I almost re-enlisted in the Navy so I could go to the Navy School Of Music in Little Creek, Virginia. But I didn't.

SF: Did you learn to read music while in the service?

JS: Yes. I also took private lessons from a couple of people. Gary Edwards, who is one of the unknown greats, taught me privately for seven or eight years. The other drummer was Ronnie Free. If you'll get the old Mose Allison *Creek Bank* album, Ronnie played on that. He was another unknown great. Those guys really influenced me a lot as far as having love and dedication for being a drummer.

SF: You said that you had originally conceived of the Nashville musicians as "cornshuckers." Why did you go there in the first place?

JS: I was leaving South Carolina and going to Atlanta. I thought I'd stop in Nashville and see this guy I knew, named George Rogers, who played steel guitar with a country artist named Jack Green. When I got there, George said, "I don't see why you don't stay here awhile and get a job. There are plenty of jobs around here." He took me to a couple of shows backstage at the Grand Ole Opry. Nothing really excited me musically at the time, but I thought, "Well, this would be some easy bucks."

I was young and I was forming an opin-



Photo by
Douglas Richardson

ion before I knew anything about that town. I feel privileged to be a part of it now. The players there, for the most part, are down to earth—no ego trips. Well, maybe some, but not like in other music towns I know.

SF: Do you know why drums, at one time, weren't allowed on stage at the Grand Ole Opry?

JS: Traditionally, country music had no electric instruments or drums. It was a tradition that the old-timers didn't want to break. I think they had a lot of control about who was even on the Opry. But you can only hold off for so long. A lot of people's records had other instrumentation on them. When they'd play on the Opry, it wouldn't sound like the same songs without the same instrumentation. Like everything else, you have to give in some to change. They've come a long way. James Brown and the Pointer Sisters have now

made guest appearances on the Opry.

SF: People still say how the pop/country music today isn't real country music.

JS: I can see that to a point, because I did get to Nashville at the time when the traditional was still there—the hard country, straight-ahead, beer-drinking, heartbreak-ing songs. I liked it. It's like any other music. It's going to change, regardless of what anybody thinks. It's going to go on. I like the new country/rock. I don't know what they're labeling it now—urban country or what? But I think it's great that it's going in that direction.

SF: Did you find drummer/mentors when you moved to Nashville?

JS: When I first got there, I knew of Buddy Harman. He was in the control room, like I said, at the first session I played. They had the A team of session players at that session. I was in awe of everyone there. Owen Bradley was the biggest producer in town then. Here I was booked on my first session, and as if that wasn't enough pressure on a new kid in town, I then walked in the control room and found Buddy Harman standing by in case I couldn't hack it.

Everything went down well and I loosened up after a couple of songs. Junior Huskie, the bass player on the session, took me aside and said, "Look, don't be intimidated by these people. You're evidently a good player or you wouldn't be here. Just play." That loosened me up quite a bit. After proving myself at that first session, I was hired to do the rest of the album. I think that album has just been re-released on MCA records.

Before we finished the album that week, I had gained a lot of respect from these players. One of the reasons was probably because I could work under the pressure that they were putting on me. But it's not like that now. That was back in the old days when they had a clique of musicians who did just about everything that came out of Nashville—the Nashville Sound, per se. But now there are independent pro-

"WHEN YOU LEAVE ONE STUDIO AND GO TO ANOTHER, THE WHOLE SITUATION CHANGES . . . THERE ARE SO MANY VARIABLES THAT THERE'S NO WAY THAT A SET OF DRUMS IS GOING TO SOUND THE SAME IN TWO DIFFERENT STUDIOS."

ducers, record companies, publishing companies, and people who come to town to spend their own money to record songs. Now there's a mixture of musicians, and no one certain bunch of players gets all the work. That's great. Nothing's ever the same. It's the different combinations of musicians that give music uniqueness and a creative quality. That's why I say there's a lot of work there for good musicians. It's work on different levels, of course. All the major artists have certain people that they like to use. There are first-call players and second-call players. Everybody's professional enough there so that it doesn't matter. We appreciate the fact that we have certain accounts, but we also appreciate that there's somebody else out there who can do the job too.

SF: I've heard session players express a fear that if a producer calls them for a date and they can't make it, they won't ever get calls from that producer again.

JS: I have heard that also, but in my case, that has never happened. It should never come to where you are required to drop everything that you have in order to just work exclusively for one producer. I wouldn't deal that way with a producer. No one requires that of me. That circumstance doesn't generally exist in Nashville, that I know of.

Another aspect of this is that, if a producer who I work for all the time calls another drummer to do a session, without even calling to see if I'm open, I can't be mad. I respect a producer to know what kind of drummer is required for that session. I have to think, "Well, I didn't get the call for a specific reason." In turn, I want the same respect from a producer. It works out well that way.

SF: If I were a producer and had to make a decision between several leading drummers in Nashville, why would I want to choose John Stacey?

JS: Because a producer has worked with all of the different people enough to know what their best points are. I may be better in one area than the other drummers. In turn, they may be better in other areas than



Photo by Douglas Richardson

I am. The producer has a mental picture of this whole session before going into the studio. You would know what I am best at and that's why you would call me.

SF: What do you feel you're best at?

JS: I'm an old blueser at heart. I love blues; that's where my real love is. I lean towards the soul or fatback side of playing. In essence, I feel that a producer calls me because of my ability to take a 2/4 basic rhythm, add self-expression, and make it into a 2/4 *cookin'* rhythm.

SF: Outside of sessions, do you have opportunities to play what you want to play?

JS: Yes. There's a well-known steel guitar player in town named Buddy Emmons. I do clinics and performances with him, and we do a lot of jazz tunes in our country-style way. I get to stretch out a little bit on that kind of stuff. But there are not a whole lot of blues bands around town. Even if they do have their headquarters in Nashville because of their agencies, they stay out on the road. I don't travel the road anymore, and I don't really get that kind of freedom on sessions. Occasionally we'll get a bunch of players from town together in my music room at the house, and we'll jam on some good old stuff. We just get some head arrangements and get it out of our system.

SF: Can you tell me about the Nashville "number system" they use in writing charts?

JS: Yes. Number 1 is always the root chord. Let's say you are in the key of C, for simplicity's sake. Number 1 is a C chord. Then you just go up the scale: D is 2, E is 3, F is 4, etc. If there is a minor or diminished

chord, you signify it with the symbol by the number: D minor would be 2 - ; F diminished would be 4°. Of course, the secret is that you must train your ear to hear the changes as they pass in a song. Usually you hear the song one time to get the chords; that's the reason this system is so beautiful, because it is so quick and precise. If a song has two bars of C chord, one bar of F and one bar of G the chart would read 1 1 4 5. If you change keys, no problem. There's no need to rechart or transpose.

From a drummer's point of view, I like the number system because I can see where the music is going in advance. If I didn't have a chord chart, I wouldn't know where the music's going. Usually, if a song goes to a 4 or 5 chord and needs to build there, it helps you with dynamics. If there's a diminished chord, then maybe you'll play a little splash on the cymbal. If a producer wants me to play a fill going into the second eight bars of a certain section, if I know what chord that fill is going to be over, then I'll tune my drums to that triad. If I'm filling on three drums and I'm going to a C chord, I'll try to tune to C, E and G so that harmonically they'll sound in tune with what I'm doing. That's if you have enough time in the studio. A lot of times they can't afford to take that time.

SF: Last night you were mentioning how often you have to overdeaden your drums in the studio. How then can you tune them to specific notes or chords?

JS: When you're in that situation, you can't, so you don't even bother. You just basically fill using three tom-toms—they're the lower end—and the tonality of

the drums is "thud"-like, with no roundness or sustain. There are not a whole lot of those producers/engineer types left around now. They're slowly fading away. All I can say to those types is that this is 1983 and they've got a 1969 ear. I'm not going to get into any hassles with engineers, because drummers are at their mercy. They can EQ you any way they want to on the board, no matter what your drums sound like in the studio. You've got to have a good relationship with the engineers. Some of them are kind of old-fashioned. You just have to learn to live with that on some sessions.

SF: Do you think that dead sound started happening because of a lack of knowledge in miking live drums?

JS: Right. I think that's exactly why, because as time went on, they learned more and more. After having a track record of number one songs and considerably good drum sounds, it seemed unnatural to want to change anything. Why change something that was selling? But of course, as time went on the change was inevitable.

SF: How do you maintain your sound in the many different studios you have to work in?

JS: Good question. It's difficult—very difficult. There are too many variables. When you leave one studio and go to another, the whole situation changes. The glass in the drum booth, the carpet thickness, the ceiling height, the width, the engineer—there are so many variables that there's no way that a set of drums is going to sound the same in two different studios.

I consider the overall sympathetic ring

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Photo by Douglas Richardson

FOCUS ON

Murray Spivack

by Dave Levine



Photo by Rick Nalkin

"I think Murray is one of the greatest teachers of all time. He really straightened me out"—Louie Bellson.

"Murray is definitely one of the best teachers around today. He helped me a tremendous amount"—Chad Wackerman.

For a drum teacher to be so highly regarded by drummers three or four generations apart, he's got to be very special. He has to actively teach for 50 or 60 years, and be knowledgeable and skillful in communicating that knowledge. Longevity alone does not draw students to your door.

Certainly, Murray Spivack's insight spans the decades. He was born in 1903 (that's right, he just turned 80), yet his mind remains sharp—sharper, perhaps, than many of the up-and-coming young drummers who seek him out. Beneath the white hair and behind the sparkling blue eyes is one of the most respected, if not revered, drum teachers in L.A. Though his appearance and age may fool a prospective student, rest assured that he can be intimidating at the drop of a stick, as he energetically forces improvement from even the most gifted.

Murray's own study took place in New York from such players as Carl Classman (timpanist with the New York Symphony before the New York Philharmonic was formed), Dave Gusikoff (snare drummer at the Capitol Theater before Radio City Music Hall was built) and George Hamilton Green (mallet virtuoso). At the time, Billy Gladstone was playing bass drum and cymbals; Sanford Moeller was John Phillip Sousa's drummer, and was just beginning to teach Buddy Rich's teacher, Henry Adler.

As a young percussionist in the 1920s, Murray was the house drummer at the Strand Theater, and was on staff at radio station WOR. He taught in a studio on the fourth floor of the Gaiety Theater at 46th

and Broadway. Along with the knowledge and experience he was gathering, Murray was also collecting quite a bit of money. By the late '20s he was making four- to five-hundred dollars a week, a sum even today's drummers dream of.

Unfortunately, he was so busy working that he didn't have time to spend any of it. In 1929, when RKO pictures offered him a six-month contract to work in Hollywood, Murray and his wife viewed the opportunity as a welcome vacation. They bought a car and headed for Los Angeles, where Murray was to become the head of RKO's sound-effects department. His contract was renewed for a second six months, but the Spivacks kept their New York apartment, assuming that eventually they would have to return.

By 1930, however, the depression was on. Theaters in New York were closing and the movie business out west was booming. Murray was now business manager of the entire music department at RKO, and he had just begun work on the sound track for *King Kong*. By the time *Kong* and the economy hit the sidewalks of New York, Murray had realized that his future lay in L.A.

In 1938 he moved to 20th Century Fox, and later went on to engineer the sound for such movie musicals as *Oklahoma*, *South Pacific*, *My Fair Lady*, and *The Sound Of Music*. His expertise as a sound mixer earned him numerous Academy Award nominations, including one for *Tora, Tora, Tora*, and in 1969 he received an Oscar for his work on *Hello, Dolly!*

As his career as a sound engineer grew, he found that he was gradually getting farther and farther from the drums. To help keep his hands in shape, Murray began accepting students. He immediately began to get a reputation around town as a pretty good drum teacher. In the early 1940s,

players like Walt Goodwin and William Kraft, both of whom later became fixtures in the percussion section of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, were studying with Spivack. In 1942 a young Louie Bellson was working in San Diego and commuting to L.A. to study with Murray.

"When Louie first came to me I could see that he had talent," Spivack says. "But I told him that there were some things he was doing that I didn't particularly like. This impressed Louie because every other teacher he had gone to had said, 'You're the greatest; there's nothing I can show you.' "

Through the '50s and '60s, Murray's students included some of the drummers who went on to be successful in the house bands of the big hotels on the Las Vegas strip; drummers such as Joey Preston, Gordon Fry and Roger Rampton. That era also brought players like Wally Snow, Ralph Collier, Chet Ricord, Alvin Stoller, Chuck Flores, Frank Epstein and Remo Belli to the Spivack studio in Hollywood.

Murray's students of the past few years have included Gordon Peake, Gary Ferguson, Mark Sanders, Carlos Vega, Bill Carpenter, Bob Economou, and Chad and John Wackerman. Since his retirement from the movie business in 1972, Murray hasn't slowed down. He still keeps a full teaching schedule and there's still a waiting list of hopeful future students.

What brings players who are already successful to Murray's studio? "They come to me to get their hands in shape," Murray answers. "Can a piano player go out and play with a band after six months of study? Can a violinist or a trumpet player? If you want to play the drums, you've got to study them the way you'd study any other instrument. I've tried every shortcut you can think of, and I've had plenty of time to experiment, but they don't work. I went through most of them before these people were even born."

"Everyone today is a drumset teacher. No one explains things to the drummers. No one worries about the fundamentals. Consequently, I have to take students who may have been playing for a number of years and start them all over. This is because they've never had the basics—how to hold the sticks, how to make a stroke. They know nothing about playing the instrument."

"Drum playing concerns physics; it concerns muscles," continues Murray. "The interpretation of music comes after you've mastered the mechanics. I don't want drummers to take on my style. I want them to take on my knowledge so they can develop their own style. Dave Garibaldi, for example, sends me students—not for style,

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TEACHERS

Fred Gruber
by Scott K. Fish



Fred Gruber (seated at drums) surrounded by friends and former students: (l. to r.) Mitch Mitchell, Ralph Humphrey, Mike Baird (staff drummer—"Thicke Of The Night"), John Hernandez (*Oingo Boingo*), Steve Ettleson, Phil Seymour, Don Lombardi, Jim Varley (w/Neil Sedaka), Bruce Gary, Nick Vincent (kneeling) (w/Donny & Marie Osmond).

In 1947, Barry Ulanov, one of the greatest and most astute jazz journalists, was writing for Metronome magazine. One column—devoted to Fred Gruber—was entitled "The Shape of Drums To Come." Ulanov wrote that Gruber's drumming was ". . . a handsome amalgam of all the great schools of percussion. We've heard . . . where the drums and jazz rhythms of the future must go. I've heard the first drum soloist who not only kept my interest, but brought me back yelling for more."

Two years later, an article appeared in down beat entitled "Listing Top Drummers." It said: "Listing top drummers? Include Fred Gruber. His ability to play multiple rhythms, his constant playing behind the band and what seemed like his impeccable taste in his choice of what to play, mark him as a musician to watch closely. It shouldn't be long before in any list of modern drummers you'll be able to find Freddie's name. And it won't be very far from the top."

As accurate as that 1949 article was in acclaiming Gruber's talent, it was that inaccurate about how soon his name would be back in print. Suffice it to say that that kind of adulation scared Gruber—then just a teenager—and he went underground.

Albert E. Lyons wrote that, "Sometimes, paradoxical as it may seem, man has to be broken before he can be made whole. He is plunged into troubrous depths compelling him to find himself; to prove in no uncertain way the position he may occupy among men." Gruber came back an extraordinary teacher. His students have filled every style of drum chair imaginable.

Jim Keltner cites Gene Stone and Michael Romero—two Gruber students—as key influences. John Guerin, John Hernandez, Don Lombardi, Jim Gandug-

lia, Steve Ettleson, Bill Goodwin, Bruce Gary, Mike Baird, Brent Brace, Burleigh Drummond, Don Ellis and John Klemmer, to name a few, have all studied with Gruber. Don Ellis, a great musician who pioneered experiments in odd-time signatures, called Gruber "The greatest drum teacher in the world." Jim Chapin, author of the classic drum text Advanced Techniques For The Modern Drummer, sent a note to Fred that said, "Twenty-five years have gone by and nobody has caught your solo style yet."

But the crux of Gruber's genius was captured in a letter to me from drummer Bill Goodwin. He was remembering Fred's playing in a California nightclub years ago. "I'll never forget," he wrote, "when Freddy, for some reason, caught fire during some exchange of eights, and played the most amazing stuff I had ever heard. Totally original, polyrhythmic music on the drums. One night, Freddy told me one thing about my left hand—a simple thumb-position change. That one thing was the key to all the technical progress I achieved from that point on."

Fred Gruber has the wonderful capacity to clear up drumming difficulties that have plagued players for years. And it's done so surgically that the reaction is always, "Yeah! Why didn't I think of that?"

SF: Let's say I came to you for a drum lesson. I walked through your door and introduced myself. Where would it go from there?

FG: I'd probably ask you how long you've been playing, who you've studied with, and your reasons for wanting to play the drums, so I could decide what approach would be best for you. If it didn't work for me, I'd direct you to somebody who could, hopefully, help you be better than you are at the moment you walk through my door.

SF: Are there right and wrong motivations

for playing drums?

FG: In true terms there is no right and wrong. But I'm entitled to an opinion. It would have to work not only for you, but for me too. If there's no harmonic, we won't get a product. If I'm not properly motivated, what kind of a product would we get? Where would the joy be? It's a joint venture that takes the two of us to produce something positive.

SF: I'll use myself as a hypothetical first-time student. There were two initial motivations: Music was something that was everchanging and always different. Also, I loved music and the attention I received while playing music.

FG: That word "everchanging" really relates to life. That would tell me that you were, to some degree, in tune with life. Life, of necessity, is everchanging. It's all based on the key word: *change*. And change is constant. To some extent, you're in touch with it. In nonliving situations, you get bored. I'd say to myself, "Maybe I have someone to work with here." Hopefully you'll also have musical talent in addition to your awareness and feeling for life. I'd equip you with the tools that would enable you to express yourself as an individual. And I'd see what your growth was as we went along.

Growth is forever. We're all forever changing. But at the specific moment that you walk through my door, and play some basic or fundamental things for me, I can hear right away how you *phrase*. How you phrase is indicative of how you're *hearing*. That tells me what you're hearing at that moment on that day. I have to take into account that you're nervous, possibly mildly apprehensive or the reverse: You could be terribly aggressive in defense of your nervousness. But the bottom line is what you're "saying," by virtue of how you phrase, when you're illustrating what I ask you to perform. The minute you start to make some sounds, you're automatically phrasing. There isn't any other way to go about it—good, bad or indifferent. I can't ask a person walking through my door to sit down and play World War VI. It's just out of line.

SF: Some teachers do.

FG: Well, that's really foolish and it's not required. I'm a teacher. I'm not on a competitive level with someone who's coming to me for help. If you're trying to help, you don't get competitive because that's adolescent. It only takes so many taps before I can see where students are coming from. First, I ask if they're acquainted with some of the "scales" of our instrument: the *rudiments*. I choose some of the more elementary rudiments and see how—and this is a very key word in what we're discuss-

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Jim Blackley

by T. Bruce Witten



Interviewing Jim Blackley was a treat. The talk was smooth, ample, and of considerable substance. Most of all, it had heart, which is very important to Jim. He simply refuses to do half a job: He is at once a musical fanatic and religious zealot. He has traversed continents and musical boundaries; he has sacrificed willingly the material amenities—all in a journey toward a life of honor, proportion, balance, and excellence. I left his house clear-headed and relaxed, notwithstanding having held off on cigarettes and coffee for several hours. I'd had my first lesson with Jim Blackley.

Jim is something of a curiosity to many musicians. Billed the "swinging Scot" during one of his spells in New York, he is well respected by the upper circle of Toronto drummers, some of whom make return visits for chats, repairs, and inspiration. While Jim's system arises from the best of Scottish and American drumming traditions, it is a true method for any instrument. Never before, perhaps, has music been stressed so much at the expense of technique. Jim believes that if you know music—really know music—and can hear it at any tempo and grasp its inner logic, you will discover surprising technique. And nobody leaves Blackley's once-a-month sessions with any doubt about what it takes to make music.

But don't rush to buy a plane ticket to Toronto, Jim's home. There is a waiting list. It all seems to work out nicely, though. Jim is helping others turn craft into art, and he spends the rest of his time enriching his musical and spiritual being. Although you'll seldom see Jim perform in public, let me assure you, the man can play.

TBW: Someone once told me that there are certain patterns that you can learn, but never really pull off authentically. You can

practice them and play them, but they never actually become part of you. Do you feel that one can learn to master a style, or is that facility innate?

JB: I think that environment is one of the most important things in development. Music is a language and has to be learned. If you've never heard Spanish spoken, then you're not going to learn to speak Spanish. If you want to be a jazz drummer and have never heard jazz being played, then you're not going to learn to play jazz. You have to expose yourself to the jazz language. The first thing that every musician should be taught is the art of listening. It's excellent if everything starts off in a natural way and you grow up in a home where parents are playing records from morning to night, like my kids are. My oldest son, Keith, is the only one who is a professional drummer, but my other sons, Brian and Scott, are excellent musicians.

I don't approach teaching from the learning of rudiments. Not that there isn't any value to rudiments, but the important thing you must give the young student is direction about understanding structure, listening to chord changes, listening to the bass line, how to play the time and punctuate the phrases—these are the things that a musical player must learn. It has nothing to do with playing the rudiments. I could direct students into being outstanding jazz drummers without ever teaching one rudiment, yet I could cover everything that's being played in jazz, because everything develops from playing the time. My whole concept is based on approaching everything from the time. All rhythms and figures are first developed as cymbal patterns. Students learn to hear the musical line, played over the chord changes, the bass, and the melody line. And then, they learn how to take that single musical line

and explore the total drumset. They are playing musical lines—not rudiments.

The first two things students of jazz have to learn are the 12-bar blues and the 32-bar chorus. Those two things cover a large portion of jazz composition. Listening to singers in order to learn lyrics is another important aspect. When you learn all the tunes through the lyrics, you develop a natural foundation for the form, not an intellectual one. When you're playing and singing the song, you may not intellectually know where you are, but you just feel where you are. I'm a believer in learning all the bebop heads, and learning to sing them, because if you can't sing the head from beginning to end, it's impossible to accent properly.

When students come to study with me, I'll sit them behind the drums, play a very basic 12-bar blues record, and ask them to play some time. Next, I'll play something with a 32-bar form and ask them to play to that. Then I will ask if they know where they are in the music. All of them will say, "Oh yeah, I hear it," and I'll say, "Fine." Then I'll drop the needle at random on the record and ask them to tell me which bar of the tune they're on. Eight out often cannot tell where they are. They can hear the beginning and the turn-around, but they can't tell whether they're on the fifth, ninth, or eleventh bar. The Jamey Aebersold instruction records have been an invaluable aid for the students because they were designed for professional development. The student gets an opportunity to clearly hear the bass and the chord changes.

I can truthfully say that there are very few students who have come to me and don't have the potential to be first-class players. I'm not saying that everyone has it, but everyone has it at different levels. We must be very, very careful at the beginning about assessing the potential of any student. People who have not been exposed to any listening at all are not going to respond when you sit them down behind a set of drums to play to a jazz record. You have to educate their listening habits while you're fostering their technical habits. If I find that a student is developing a very high technical and musical proficiency, but is not performing, I will stop the lessons until that student goes out and does some playing. It's disastrous for a student to pursue years and years of study without any musical outlet. I know numerous teachers who tell the students to wait four or five years until they get all of their chops together before they go out and play. My philosophy is the opposite: I want the students out playing from the very first lesson. Even if they can only play quarter

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Pete Magadini

by Katherine Alleyne



Peter Magadini has led a busy life. Born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts in 1942, he moved to Palm Springs, California at the age of six. There he played his first snare drum while in the fifth grade. After moving to Phoenix, his parents took him to hear Duke Ellington's band when he was 15. He decided that he had to get a drumset. While in school at the San Francisco Conservatory, he worked with George Duke, Al Jarreau, and John Heard before later going on to tour for a year with Diana Ross.

Since then, he has worked with Don Menza, the Mose Allison Trio, Don Ellis, John Handy, Barney Kessel, the Toronto Symphony, and many others. He has recorded with Motown Records, A&M Records, and has albums of his own on Sackville and Briko Records. Additionally, he has worked as a studio musician in San Francisco, L.A. and Toronto.

Along with being a performer, he is an educator and author. His books include Learn To Play The Drumset (Books I and II), Musicians' Guide To Polyrhythms (Volumes I and II), Poly-Cymbal Time, and the Hal Leonard Percussion book. Recently, he wrote a music book for children, and we began our discussion by talking about that.

PM: It's taken me five years to write *Music We Can See And Hear*. I started in Phoenix when my son Niko was in kindergarten, and I continued my research with him in grades one through four when we moved to Toronto in 1976. *Music We Can See And Hear* is a book written primarily—although not exclusively—for children, to teach them about music at an early age in ways they can understand. I've always felt that my own background in music had a lot to do with my exposure to music as a child. I didn't come from a particularly musical

family. My grandmother played the piano, and my parents liked listening to big band jazz and some classical music, but that was about the extent of it. When I was still very young, we moved from Massachusetts to Palm Springs, California. There were only about five thousand people living there at the time, so there wasn't a whole lot of music around. But I had this first grade teacher named Miss Stevens, and in her class we used to have a rhythm band session every day. It was just a brief introduction to music, and it wasn't until the fifth grade that I actually started playing the drums, but I've always felt that that early experience left an indelible mark. I've been teaching music myself for about 20 years now. Through my own teaching and through watching the interest my children Britt and Niko took in music at an early age, I became interested in the concept of how very young children learn music. Most young children don't have the opportunity to experience music in school—or outside of school for that matter—unless they're taking some sort of formal training. Unfortunately, that often turns out to be a negative experience for a lot of kids. So by relating music to their environment—to the things they're seeing and hearing every day—I hope to turn the introduction of music into an enjoyable experience, and take some of the mystery away from it.

KA: How do you go about relating music to a child's environment?

PM: In the book we start out by explaining the basic concept of rhythm—what rhythm is, and what rhythm is not. We discuss steady rhythms and unsteady rhythms, and relate that by pointing out things kids are familiar with. In a steady rhythm the spaces are the same between each event, like a Venetian blind, or the

books on a bookshelf. In an unsteady rhythm, like a crackling fire, like the leaves on a tree, or like stars in the sky, the spaces between each event are not the same. They're random. Now an unsteady rhythm is a fairly avant-garde concept, but for kids, it only takes two minutes for them to accept the idea. We clap out rhythms, talk about dynamics, and show rhythm instruments the kids can make: washtub drums, wooden sticks, sandpaper blocks and shakers. I also suggest some percussion instruments that you can buy, and I mention the triangle, woodblock, cowbell, and tambourine, among others. So my background as a percussionist and a drummer has been very helpful in introducing this course. From rhythm we go on to dancing and moving, and this is a special section for me because I like working with dancers. I've even written a piece called "Five Alarm Time Cycle" for a drummer, six percussionists and a dancer, because I think the two art forms go well together.

I was also fortunate to have recorded a 16-track drum and percussion tape with Phil Sheridan at McCleary Place Studios in Toronto, and as an option, you can purchase that tape alone or with the book. The tape is comprised of drum solos, but each one has a different rhythmic theme. I've included everything from African, to cajun, to jazz waltz, to slow blues, to Latin American rhythms.

KA: I've heard the tape. It's fantastic. Is that all you?

PM: Yes. We overdubbed all the percussion tracks. When I recorded the tape I didn't know I'd be using it for this book, but it fits in well.

KA: How much time was spent in researching your book?

PM: I spent five years researching, and another three years writing, editing, and finding a publisher. When I was working with the kids, I spent about three days a week in the classroom, usually for sessions of about 30 minutes, because kids at that age have short attention spans. It's been great to see so many kids I started out with seven and eight years ago all walking around with instruments now.

KA: Does your son Niko play an instrument?

PM: Yes, he's a drummer. He's a good one too.

KA: Is he one of your students?

PM: No, he just plays. He's 12 now, and he's just grown into it. I teach at home, and he's been around my playing and teaching for so long that I think he was born believing that everybody plays the drums. Once in a while he'll ask me for a lesson, and I'll work with him, but there's no hurry. I'd just as soon that he have fun

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Keith Killgo

by Michael Rozek

At 30, Keith Killgo may not sound like a "veteran" anything. But his age hides his savvy—not only about the drums, but also about the experience of playing them. Killgo's been working since he was nine, beginning in clubs behind the likes of Miles Davis, Sonny Stitt, Stan Getz, Sonny Rollins and McCoy Tyner. "My father, Harry, was the pianist in the JFK Quartet," he recently told an interviewer, "a group that Cannonball Adderley produced for Fantasy Records in the late '50s. They were real active around Washington, D.C., where I grew up. So I not only played with my father and the guys in the band—whose original drummer was Joe Chambers—but also hung out at the Bohemian Caverns, which housed practically all the jazz in town, and got to sit in with everybody that came through." From there, Killgo went on to head his own high school rock, R&B and jazz bands. After a two-year stint at Bradley University as a "traditional" music major, he wound up at Washington's Howard University, where he became a charter member of the million-selling Blackbyrds. That association began in 1973 and ran until 1980. Killgo was leader and also involved in production, writing, and even some management aspects of the group. Since leaving the group in '80, he has done two solo albums, as well as performing as a sideman around the Washington, D.C. area, involving himself in the production of local artists, and doing some songwriting of his own. There are plans under way to reunite the Blackbyrds sometime in 1984.

As far as his educational involvement goes, Killgo is the author of a drum instruction book, called simply *The Book*, and is currently teaching a class at Towson State University, in Maryland, entitled "Studio Percussion." He uses his own book in the class, and employs the philoso-



phy that 20 years of experience (in his own case) can teach you something that rudiment routines can't.

MR: It seems, from talking to you before, that you've learned from every experience you've ever had. Do you believe that experience is the best teacher?

KK: Well, I started as a self-taught player. When I was eight, I would practice along with records, 12 hours a day. I heard *feeling*, and played that. I was never conscious of educational concepts until I was a teenager, and heard criticism. When I started gigging with some heavier jazz groups, I learned about endurance. I took Lenny White's place with Joe Henderson in 1971, and I found out how strong you had to be to play "Caribbean Fire Dance" for 20 minutes [laughs]. The clue came when I remembered Joe Chambers, and how he sat. He never moved the top of his body, whereas I was wrung out from wriggling around. He never told me; I just watched and learned. Later, when I started touring with the Blackbyrds, I learned a lot about playing live—how to use dynamics to get across to people. It's problematic, so it's nothing anyone can teach you; you just have to be aware of acoustics. For example, when we work Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center, I just play at one dynamic—consistent, steady—and that's all I need to keep the people *dancin'*.

So, in my book, I've tried to express the one idea I found to be true in all these experiences: What actually happens to you as a drummer—what you can hear or see and then go to work on—is what's important. Forget about the abstract. It doesn't teach you anything.

MR: Okay, so in your book, how do you teach rudiments?

KK: You can cut your rudiments' time to an hour a day, if you understand how you really learn in life. When you're playing on

the stand, do you learn one thing one night and then another thing the next? No. You learn gradually. Each night, you remember a little of what you learned the previous night. In essence, you *review* it, by incorporating it into your playing. So, if you keep reviewing, say, rudiment number eight until you feel sure you can go on to nine, you'll really learn better and quicker. And nine will be a lot easier than eight. Also, this becomes a lot clearer if you tape your lessons, but how many drum books ever tell you that? Or let's say you're trying to learn how to play dynamics. You can sit there and play the drums and look at a book, but how can you relate dynamics to that? But if you have a tape of a familiar song that illustrates dynamics, you're going to learn a lot quicker, because teaching and learning are all recall, and recall is something you're familiar with.

When I teach, I want to bring out what you know, not impose what / know. Otherwise, once you've learned Haskell Harr, then what? So in my book I try to provide original transcriptions of pieces that people are likely to have heard, or that are easy to find on record—some of Harvey Mason's things, for example. Then, you take the excerpts and you mix them: the right hand of Harvey Mason with the kick of Louis Bellson, and maybe some kind of strange African snare drum beat. Then, you take it a step further. You write out the complete pattern you play, and then you tape it. Then you write out a bass line, and you put the piano part to it, add some vocals, and you've written a song. That's how it ends up.

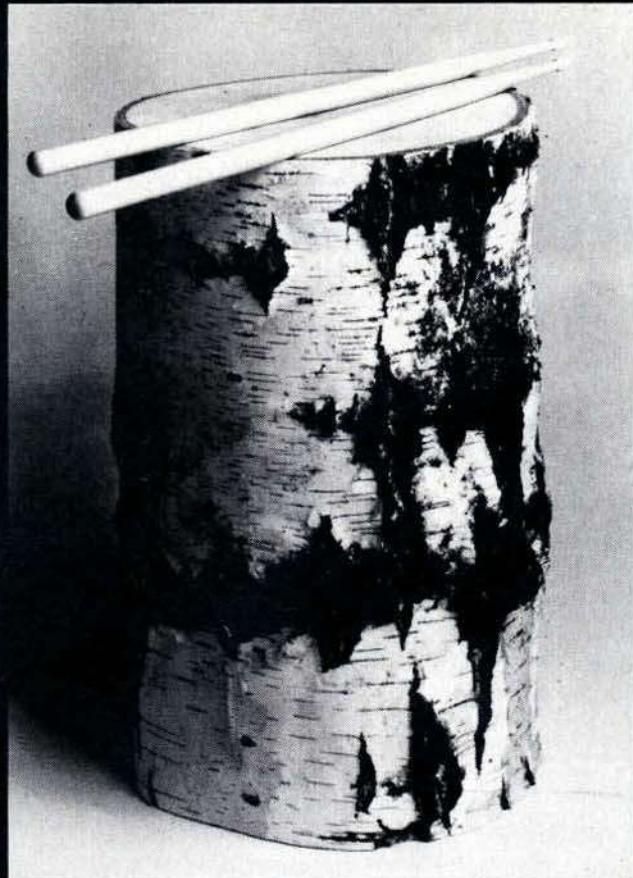
MR: You don't seem too favorable towards most traditional drum instruction.

KK: It's just that most drum books don't teach you things you'd really benefit from. For example, have you ever wondered—or seen addressed in a book—why drummers have slow feet? Why don't the books teach that you *can* play paradiddles, or single-stroke rolls, with your feet? You can, you know. You use the same muscles as in your wrist. I talk about that in my book too.

MR: You did go to music school, though, so how do you feel about formal education?

KK: It all depends on what you're trying to accomplish as a drummer. For example, I remember the piano lessons I took when I was in junior high. Roberta Flack was my teacher—she was just Mrs. Novosel, back then. One night I skipped my lesson and went to see Miles. She was there too, at which point she saw me and terminated our student-teacher relationship [laughs]. But I learned from seeing Miles. Now, if you want to learn how to read, there are obviously certain steps you have to take,

continued on page 99



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Terry Bozzio





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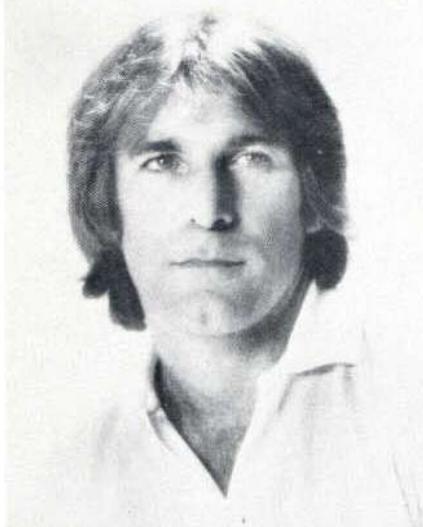
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IN MEMORIAM

by Rick Van Horn



Dennis Wilson

Dennis Wilson, drummer and vocalist with the legendary Beach Boys, died in a tragic diving accident in Marina del Rey, California, on December 28, 1983. He was 39.

As a member of the Beach Boys, Dennis was instrumental in creating the sound that represented a California life-style and philosophy to fans for two decades—begin-

ning with their first hits in the early '60s, and continuing through periods of declining record sales but sellout personal appearances during the '70s, and finally enjoying a resurgence with a fresh, second-generation audience in the early '80s.

The Beach Boys were created by Brian Wilson, along with Dennis and younger brother Carl, and additional members Mike Love (a cousin of the Wilson brothers) and neighbor Al Jardine. At that time, all of the members were in their teens. The sound they created was a combination of early Chuck Berry-influenced lyrics and vocals (mainly the nasal drive of Mike Love) and the twangy guitar stylings of the

Ventures. The Beach Boys did not invent "Surf Music" (Dick Dale & the Deltones and the Ventures laid claim to that), but they came to personify it. Ironically, Dennis Wilson was the only real surfer in the group, and it was he who suggested the name in order to capitalize on the "Surf Sound" the band was producing.

In later works, the group would be redirected by Brian Wilson into more introspective lyrics, carried by haunting melodies and close-harmony work heavily influenced by the Four Freshmen. Ballads such as "Surfer Girl" and "In My Room" would stand along with the good-clean-fun anthems such as "Surfin' Safari" and "I Get Around."

As the group progressed into more sophisticated material under the direction of Brian, the singles became less frequent, and album sales tended to drop off. During the late '60s, the group had only a few major hits, with the surfing-cum-psychadelia "Good Vibrations" standing as perhaps their greatest success.

Although the record sales were less than optimum for several years, the Beach Boys continued to reign as a sellout attraction on the concert circuit, playing to hard-core '60s/surf fans, and an increasing number of new fans—young people who had not been present when the California sound was represented by "Surfin'" and cruising in your "Little Deuce Coupe," not "Life In The Fast Lane." The Beach Boys had found an entirely new generation, somewhat depressed by the emptiness and lack of optimism represented by the bleak music of the late '70s and early '80s. Not surprisingly, two albums of pre-1965 Beach Boys material, re-released recently as "Endless Summer" and "15 Big Ones" both went gold, selling over two million and one million copies, respectively.

Dennis was a contributor to all this musical history, and perhaps the greatest contributor to the sincerity of the Beach Boy image. Whether or not the group will carry on without him is yet to be seen, but his presence will be felt whenever happy songs about good times, pretty girls and the California sun are heard.

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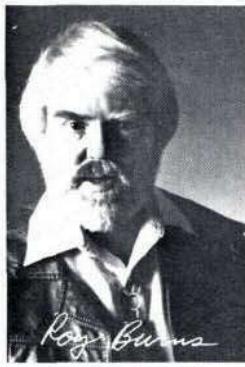
Gary Mullen, concert sound manager for McCune Audio/Visual says: "We tested the Hi-Energy Miking System for over a year live, on tour, in all situations against every mic on the market. All of our sound engineers raved about the great sound, compactness, convenience and durability of the system. For drum miking, no other mics come close."

Chet McCracken, veteran drummer of hundreds of recording sessions with groups like the Doobie Brothers, America and Rare Earth says: "There are no phasing problems with the Hi-Energy System because all of the mics are the same. This eliminates a number of problems for the drummer and the sound engineers. And the kick sound is so solid I am truly impressed."

Rik Shannon, Sound Engineer for the Hollywood Palace, Tina Turner, Berlin and others says: "I can get a great drum sound in minutes instead of hours. If the drummer tunes his kit properly, the system does the rest and every drummer has loved the fact that there are no mic stands to get in the way."



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PRODUCT CLOSE-UP



The Rogers *XL5 Londoner* is part of the *XP-8 Series*. All shells are eight-ply rock maple (the snare is 10-ply), with each ply of equal thickness. Each shell receives seven coats of lacquer during the construction process. Components are: 18 x 22 bass drum, 12 x 12 and 13 x 13 tom-toms, 16 x 16 floor tom, and 8 x 14 snare drum plus hardware package.

Bass Drum

The 18 x 22 bass drum has 20 lugs and has key rods instead of T-handle tensioners on both playing and audience sides. Its hoops are maple, and a single venthole is located on the side of the shell. Two felt damper strips are included for the drum.

Rogers uses large satin-finished steel tubing for their spurs, which pass through the shell. One end has the usual rubber tip, while the other end (inside the drum) is capped flat. The spurs utilize Rogers' famed *Memri-Lok* system to keep themselves in place, along with a small T-screw. *Memri-Lok* started the rage on positioning locks. Basically, *Memri-Lok* is a steel ring, set with a drumkey, that surrounds a height tube, spur leg, tom-tom leg, etc. The ring interlocks with a recess on the joint or bracket, and allows position to be locked in securely with no twisting or turning. I have always thought Rogers' spurs to have an imposing look due to their bulky size, but they do hold position quite well when playing.

Inside the bass drum is a shell-support tube, spanning the drum's height. This tube interfaces with the tom-tom holder, and besides giving the shell more structural strength, makes a great place to wedge

padding material behind.

The drum is fitted with a transparent front head, and a *Power Dot* batter (a C.S. head with a *white dot*). Truly a "power" bass drum, it is loud and full, and has the projection to cut through. From the factory, the sound approached a *concert* bass drum, but a little padding tightened the sound right up.

Mounting System

Rogers' tom holder utilizes a single satin-finished down post, which, as I said, fits inside the bass drum's support tube. The post locates through a large casting on the bass drum. A *Memri-Lok* ring locks in the post's position, along with a small T-screw. Atop the post is a large triangular casting which accepts the holder arms and locks them in place using drumkey-operated set screws. At all three locations, Rogers has inscribed numbered rings to serve as reference marks for setup. Surprisingly, there are no corresponding grooves on the arms to match up with the numbers. (By the way, the third hole is capped, but I suppose it could be used to fit another tom-tom arm, or cymbal post.)

The holder arms use large ratchets to adjust the angle of the toms. The arms pass through brackets on the drums which exactly resemble the holder's base plate. They are each set in place by a small T-screw, and use *Memri-Lok* fittings. Rogers has shortened their holder arms from 8" to 6", which reduces the amount of tubing inside the drums. They have also capped the ends of the arms to stop air flow. The holder is rock-solid, and has a good range of angle and height adjustments, even with the kit's large tom-toms.

Rogers XL5

Tom-Toms

The 12 x 12 and 13 x 13 toms have 12 lugs each; the 16 x 16 floor tom has 16 lugs. None of the drums have internal mufflers, but instead, are packaged with Rogers' *Super-X* mufflers. These round felt dampers clip onto the hoop, will swivel for different locations on the head, and are adjustable for degree of muffle (via a tiny wing screw). The *Super-Xs* do a nice job in cutting down annoying over-ring.

The floor tom has three lightweight tubular legs which locate into *Memri-Lok* brackets. Thanks to the locking system, there is no chance for sinking or twisting.

Power Dot heads are fitted on the batter sides, while transparent *Ambassadors* are used on the bottoms. Because of their square dimensions, these "larger-than-normal" drums sound big and powerful. *Pinstripe* batters might contain the sound better, but nevertheless, these are good rock 'n' roll drums.

Snare Drum

Included with this kit is an 8 x 14 wood-shell *Super Ten* snare drum. This drum has 20 lugs, a *Super-X* external muffler, 20-strand wire snares, and a simple cross-throw strainer with fine adjustment knob. Unlike the more complicated strainers of today, the *Super Ten* strainer is very efficient and very easy to set up. Fitted with a coated *Ambassador*, the *Super Ten* has just amazed me with its capabilities. It can go from delicate to fat sounding quite easily, and allows a wide range of dynamics. At only \$233 retail, I'd recommend checking this drum out if you're in the market for a deep snare. Rogers also offers wooden-shell *Dynasonic* snare drums, which have the innovative "floating" snares held in a metal frame. *Dynasonics* feature a more exacting snare sound—more orchestral in nature. They now have been fitted with brass lug-locks, and a nylon conversion kit for a gut-type sound has recently been made available.

Hardware

The new *R-380* line of hardware was with the *XL5* I tested—something which Rogers is very excited about. The entire line is imported and is quite powerful looking. The stands all have clamps that fit over the height joints to lock in desired

by Bob Saydowski, Jr.

Londoner Kit

height (which also means they have to be completely dismantled when packing up). Also, all height joints utilize inner nylon bushings.

The *R-380* cymbal stand has a double-braced tripod base and two adjustable height tiers. The tilter is a spring-loaded concealed ratchet. The *R-380* boom stand is also double-braced with one adjustable tier, and an extremely long telescopic boom arm. Both stands are well balanced and sturdy.

The snare stand has a double-braced tripod as well, and uses the common basket design with carriage-ring grip adjustment. Angle is adjusted with a concealed ratchet. The base folds from the bottom, which may make things difficult if you're cramped for space. Nonetheless, the stand works well and will comfortably seat the 8" snare with no worry of tipping over.

Rogers' *R-380* bass drum pedal has a split chromed footboard with adjustable toe stop, and a single expansion spring stretched upward. Beater angle is set by two drumkey operated screws, which in turn, adjust the footboard angle. (This could be compensated for by using a different length strap.) There are two sprung spurs at the pedal's base, and a synthetic strap is used for linkage. The pedal's clamping system uses a long threaded T-screw set off to the side of the frame which raises or lowers the clamp plate—one of my favorite methods, since you can mount the pedal without getting down on your hands and knees!

This pedal has good action with a pretty natural feel, and is virtually noise free, except for one small problem: The connecting rods from the footboard do not fit tightly into their frame holes, thus making them clatter around when played. All in all, though, the pedal is pleasing to play.

The hi-hat stand has a double-braced tripod like the others. It has a sandblasted split footboard with adjustable toe stop, sprung spurs, and a chain linkage. Double external compression springs are used for tension, and they are adjustable at the tops of their cylinder housings. I found the *R-380* hi-hat to be smooth and quiet.

Cosmetics

Rogers offers five finishes for their *XP-8* kits: white, silver, black, midnight blue,

and natural maple. I saw the maple finish, and was impressed with the overall quality and workmanship on both interior and exterior. The kit tested here retails at \$1,795 (\$1,654 for covered shells). Rogers still offers the *Memri-Lok* hardware line (which would be an extra \$85), but the new *R-380* hardware package is as good, if not better. The line can easily compete with other pro hardwares, and yet is affordable. Rogers has not increased their prices much at all for the longest time, and in these times, I think that's pretty remarkable. Rogers has other kits, of course, in standard sizes, but the *XL5 Londoner* kit is a great high-volume rock drumkit.

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Photo by Randy Bachman

Frenette (continued from page 15)

actual performance shots of the band playing to the track, it was at night, so it was a little cooler. But a wind storm blew up with 60-mile-per-hour winds. It was unbelievable. People think we were using wind machines, but we weren't. We were on the desert until 5:30 in the morning filming. And here's Paul Jamieson looking at his poor drumset while sand is filling up the bass drum. I was using one of his snare drums. Even while I was just playing to the track, the snare drum sounded like a million bucks. Thanks, Paul! I think it was an old Gretsch drum with the die-cast rims and wood shell—a great sounding drum.

SF: There have been a lot of letters coming

in to MD from drummers who are hurting their arms and legs from overexertion. Is there a technique for learning to play hard?

MF: Playing hard just came naturally. I'm using 26 sticks, which are fairly heavy. It took me a while to go from the marching 3S sticks to 2B's.

SF: Did you play drumset with 3S sticks?

MF: No. They were too heavy. I didn't like that sound. I play with a plastic tip for a nice ping on the cymbals. At the beginning of tours, my arms get sore. As we get going, they get more in shape. I lift about 80-pound weights to stay trim, and for toning. Maybe the people writing the letters are all

learning real heavy metal songs and playing over real loud amps, just wailing away. SF: So, basically you're using Ludwig drums now?

MF: Yes. I started playing in Loverboy with my pink champagne set. It was single-headed 6" and 8" tom-toms, 9x13 and 10x14 mounted toms with bottom heads, 16x16 and 16x18 floor toms, a 14x24 kick, a Supra-Phonic snare, a timbale, three or four crash cymbals, a ride cymbal and a cowbell.

When we started headlining in '82, I bought the maple Ludwig set with power toms. I love that kit. Drums Only in Vancouver had four double-kick Ludwig sets in their shop. I mixed and matched the drums with the nicest tones. I spent a week and a half playing them in a studio in the back of the shop. I changed the heads from lightweights, to rough coats, to heavyweights. In a week and a half, I had the set I wanted. The owners said, "Finally! Are you going to buy the damn things?" I said, "Yeah."

From left to right, the drum sizes are 8x6, 8x8, 10x10, 12x12, 13x13, and 14x14 mounted toms, a 16x16 and 16x18 floor tom, and a 16x24 kick. I've got a front head on the kick drum with a ten-inch hole on the left bottom corner. I use a Remo coated Emperor on the front; on the batter side I have a clear Black Dot head.

I have a 6 1/2" Supra-Phonic snare with an Emperor rough coat on top. I have a 14" chrome timbale that I've had for years. It's real funky. It's an old Silvertone or something. It's got a real cheesey sound, and I really like it. I have a Diplomat rough coat on it. It doesn't have a real traditional sound, but I like that. I've tried better-made timbales, but the sound is a bit too Latin American. My timbale has a real nice bite for rock playing. It doesn't ring as long either.

I've played Remo heads for years and years. In the studio, I use Ambassador rough coated on my toms. I play clear Ambassadors live, with clear Diplomats on the bottoms of all the toms. On our first album, I used rough coat Ambassadors on the tops of the toms. The bottom heads were rough coat Diplomats. Again, I used the Emperor rough coat on the snare.

SF: Did you use your pink champagne drums on the first album?

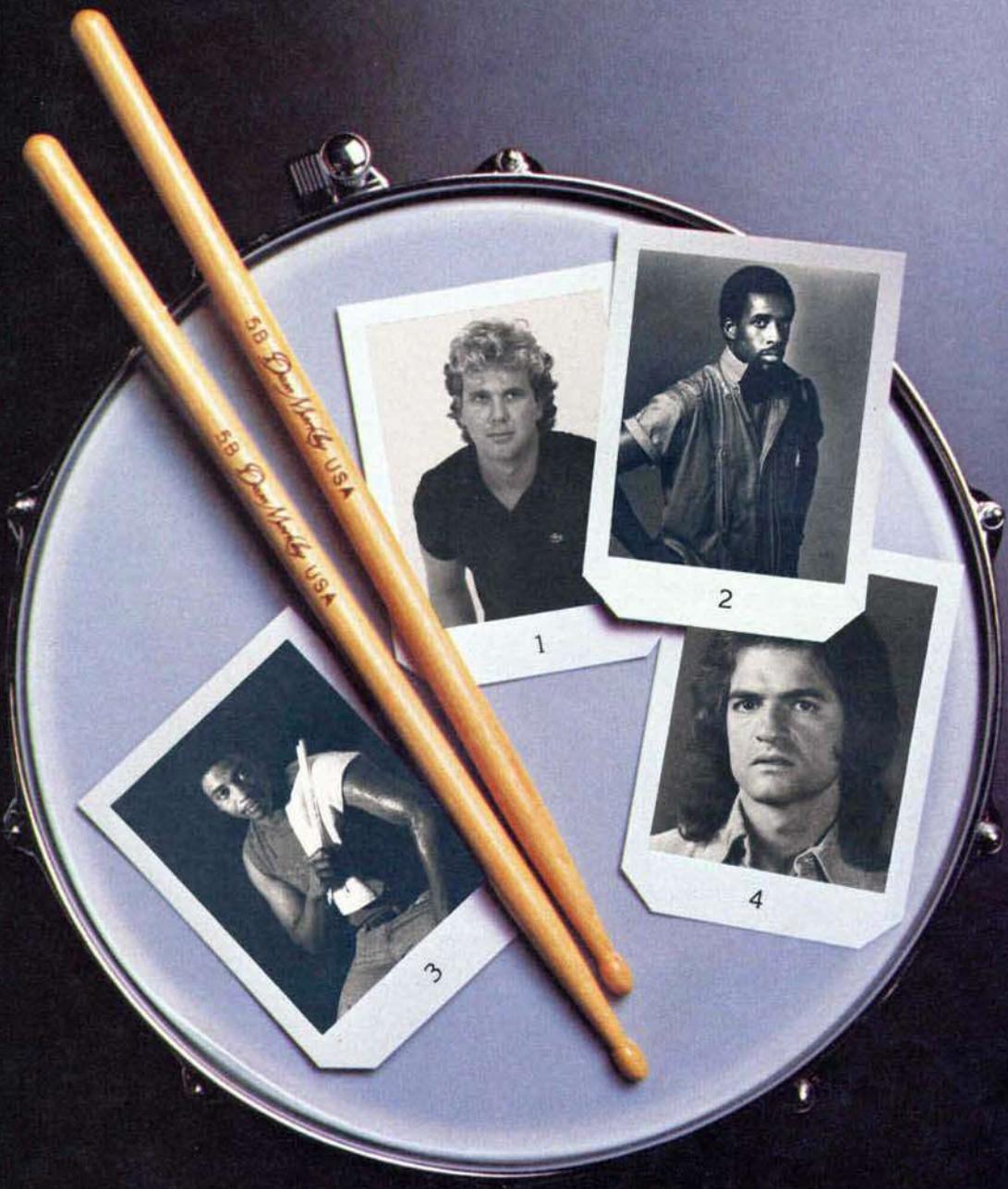
MF: Right. I had a few troubles. I'd had those drums for so long and they'd been through so many Canadian winters that the floor tom-toms were going a little out of round. I didn't have proper cases in those days. I had the fiber cases, and I'd haul the drums in the back of some old pickup truck. They'd be warping from going from the cold into the heat. On the second album, I used my maple Ludwig set and had a lot of luck with them.

SF: Did you notice a difference in the drums with the pearl finish and the drums

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with the natural wood finish?

MF: It was hard to tell with the pink champagne set. I got the original set in '69 and added to it in '74. Ludwig sprayed some kind of real weird stuff on the inside of the shells—it was gray with black spots. That made the drums real bright. I always found, when I used those drums, that I needed more tape to dampen them down, especially in the studio. The maple drums are a little warmer, a lot more consistent all around, and real good for tuning.

SF: When you bought those drums, none of the shells were out of round?

MF: Nope. My maple set is the most consistent set I've ever played. For the two years that we've been using it for all the road work and everything, it's stayed good all the way. As a matter of fact, at the beginning of the tour last June, I bought a set of Sonor drums. I really got turned on to Steve Smith's sound and I liked the Sonor people. I flew to Boston, talked to the people at Alden Music and bought a set. I didn't do an endorsement. I bought a big kit with double bass drums and power toms. Sonor power toms are even deeper than Ludwig's. My set had 9-ply shells—not the 12-ply Bubinga-wood shells.

After the first two weeks of the tour, I had a lot of problems. I almost fired my drum tech because of it. He just couldn't tune them. I said, "Sandy, is this kit too much for you? What's the problem?" We'd spend hours trying to get the heads on. Three or four of the drums went out of round. It was such a struggle with that set and they were great drums—real good hardware. Sonor is a good company. It was just that the drums didn't fit and the sound was a bit too dead.

We got to Seattle about two weeks into the tour. I was still struggling. The band was getting edgy, and I was dumping all over Sandy. I said, "Well, what are we going to do?" Sandy said, "Let's bring the Ludwig drums down from Vancouver." We did, and he set them up in the back of the room where we had the Sonors on stage for the soundcheck. I went to the back of the room, sat behind my Ludwig set, played one roundhouse fill around the kit, and just freaked out. I said, "There it is. There it is." And Sandy said that it only took him five minutes to tune them. They pulled the Sonors down and put up the Ludwig drums.

But I have nothing against Sonor. Really. When and if I ever get off tour, I'm going to go back and look at the drums again real closely. I'm going to see what the problems are, and maybe talk to Sonor about it, rather than saying, "Well, your drums sucked." No. That's not the case at all. All I had time to do was make a change on the road. When you're touring every night there's no time to mess around. It's got to be right. In rehearsal, the Sonor drums sounded fine. But after a week of playing them in the hot lights and the tem-

perature changes, they changed. The metal hoops on the bass drum created a lot of problems with ringing in the kit. We took a long time to try to find a kick drum sound. Paul and our engineer up front went nuts, pulling their hair out. We went through four different mic's. The Ludwig drums took no time at all. It's just a real natural sound. Live, I play open drums with just a little bit of masking tape on the bigger toms, from the 13" down to the 18"—just a strip of tape. The bottom heads aren't muted at all.

SF: Many readers have asked how they can get that "heavy metal deep thud tom-tom sound."

MF: Well, what they're hearing through a P.A. and what the drum is actually sounding like are sometimes two different things. You'd be surprised at the sound you can get through a P.A. from a drum that sounds lousy. I've had snare drums that I could hardly play on because they were tuned down, and two or three of the lugs were taken right off the drum.

SF: Can you name specific tracks where you used a snare drum like that?

MF: Yeah. "Jump" and "Gangs In The Street" on the second album. On the new album, we were trying to get a specific snare drum sound for "Prime Of Your Life." They were doing all this EQ and everything. I had four snare drums that I'd rented from the drum shop. We tried different tunings; padding; no padding; different mic's. After about five hours of this, the second engineer came over and grabbed a snare drum out of the corner. It was just a beat-up old *Supra-Phonic* Ludwig in really rough shape. It had a couple of holes in the bottom head, there were a few snares missing, and it had a Black Dot head on it that was really used. The engineer said, "This one usually works pretty good on our sessions." He plunked it down and I just hit it once. Everybody went, "Yaaaaaaa," and I went, "Nooooooo." They said, "Don't move. Let's go to the track right now." That snare sounded like a million bucks, and we hardly had to do anything to it.

We usually don't change too much or mess around. Once we get a good sound, we try to stay fairly consistent and just watch the tuning on the snare drum. If you run the track down two or three times, and you're getting it real honed in and real close, then you go back, check the tuning on the snare, and go for it. We don't really go from track to track trying a lot of different drums, because you can really use up a lot of time. We go for the energy and the consistency of playing the track. So that "heavy metal deep thud" can come out of anything.

SF: Can you define EQ and explain what it does?

MF: Well, with EQ you can add a lot of bottom, tone and depth to a drum that doesn't have those qualities naturally. A

lot of times, snare drums tend to sound boxy. Usually that's due to the drum not being tuned properly, or the snares being too tight so that they don't have a chance to respond. Or maybe the bottom head is too tight. As soon as you hit the top head, the bottom head goes down from the impact. If the snares and bottom head are too tight, they won't respond to give you that fat, heavy metal sound. If I need that sound, I like to detune the bottom head and let the snares off a little bit. It sounds a bit garbaggy, but for the song or track it sounds pretty good. I'd rather do that than detune the top head and lose the action. I like to try that way of tuning before we use EQ, and then add a bit of the bottom. We

use two mic's on the snare in the studio—one on the bottom and one on top. I don't know if they're out of phase. The bottom mic's picking up the snares and the garble that adds that real nice heavy metal sound, and the top gives you the attack and the stick click, so if you're hitting a rimshot, you can get that snap from the top and real guts from the bottom. We do that live, also.

One of the best drum sounds I've heard is from Stan Lynch with Tom Petty. Our bands did some shows together in Germany. I asked Stan if I could see his drums, because I always admired his sound both live and on record. He had a simple little kit, and the heads were all beaten. I would

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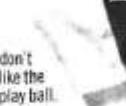
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never have heads on my drums that long. The toms were rough coats—*Ambassadors*, I think—and they were all pitted. The snare was pitted and kind of detuned. I hit the snare and it sounded garbled. I had expected this great big, huge snare drum—6- or 9-ply deep wooden snare drum. But he just has a normal snare.

Then I heard his drums from out front and they sounded like a million bucks. They were so fat, just like the records. They have a good engineer and he knows how to get good sound out of the drums. He also knows the right mic's for those particular drums. It also has to do with the way Stan plays with Tom. There are so many variables. By the way, we have their soundman now!

SF: When you're recording, what's the relationship among you, the producer and the engineer? Is it a give and take among all three of you?

MF: That's the way we work. It's very open. I know of a lot of situations, from talking to other people, where the producer is running the show. With us, it's give and take. If they have an idea, we have to be open about it and look at it. Maybe it will come down to a vote, but that rarely ever happens with us.

The engineer usually gets the good sounds, and works around and between the producer. We don't go in and just have the drums play, and then everybody else overdubs. That's pretty sterile. We don't normally use click tracks, but we did do something similar to that for the first time on "Strike Zone," which was quite a challenge. It wasn't actually a click track. It was a Fairlight keyboard—a computer keyboard that plays perfect time. We set up a drum program on it that was playing almost the same pattern as I was, and we pumped that through my headphones. It was like playing to double drums. I jammed with it for a couple of minutes to get in the groove with it. Then I played to the bass and guitar, and we left the keyboard line out. When they laid down the sequence stuff for the keyboards, there were planes and helicopters that came in in perfect time. When they come up later in the song, it's all punched in. It had to be done that way or the music wouldn't have been in time when the helicopters came back in.

SF: Gee, it's not like the old Sun recording sessions.

MF: No kidding. And I'm kind of a traditionalist; I was a bit opposed to it. But finally I said, "I really want to make this work." It was quite a challenge, especially when the song started taking off at the end and we really wanted to surge with it. But we could feel the Fairlight track keeping the time, and it held us back. We played close to two thirds of the song with the track. Then, in the control room, they just faded it out in my headphones and let us cruise from there. It's got that tension so

that the song can build. We felt that it would be too sterile to just stay in that real rigid groove.

When the producer and I go in to cut tracks, he puts a lot of demand on the drums, so there's that pressure when we start the session. The producer is almost like the coach on a team who walks out to the mound and asks the pitcher, "How's it going?" After you've worked all day and you're a little tired, the coach walks out, and rather than pulling you out of the game, he gives you a little pep talk. A lot of times we work that way with our producer, Bruce Fairborn. He'll come out and ask, "How are you feeling, Matty? Are you doing alright? Do you want to take a coffee break or get some air?" Then he'll add some suggestions, like "Just loosen up on that one spot. It's real good, but that one fill just before the second guitar solo is a bit busy. If you want to, play maybe half that much, or just lead up to part of the busyness. That would probably sound a lot cooler."

I like that kind of rapport. It's a real good thing for a producer to keep tabs on a drummer's energy; to see when the drummer is tired. Bruce might say, "Matty, go home. We've got enough out of you today. Come in tomorrow about one o'clock. We're going to do guitar solos tonight." That's healthy. That's the way people should communicate. I don't know if I could work in the situation where a producer comes in and says, "Okay, we're doing it my way and you're going to play the song like this. And when you get to the drum fill, I want a straight roundhouse fill. That's going to be best for the song and that's it!"

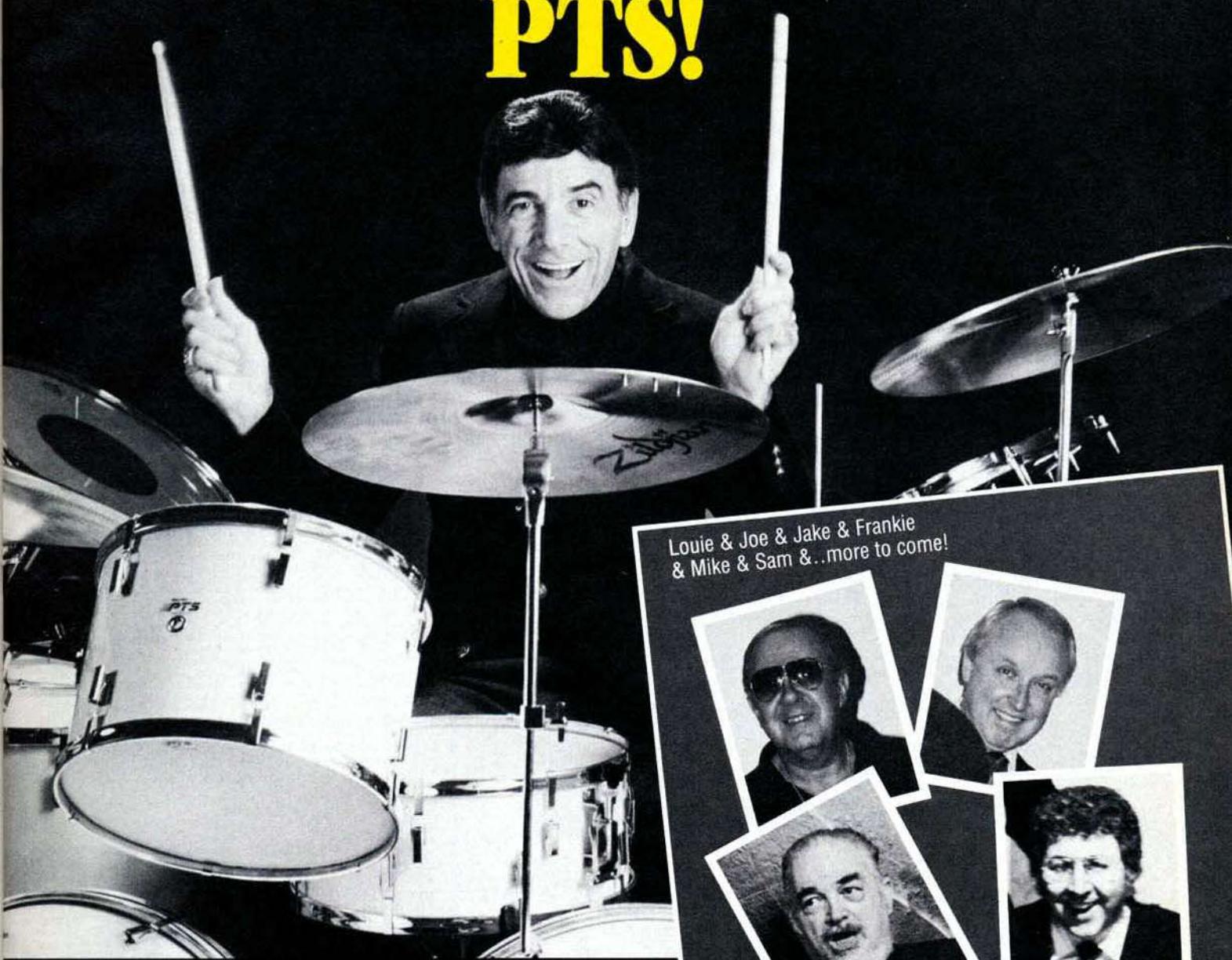
SF: How about a rundown on your cymbals?

MF: I've played Zildjians forever. They're a great company. I have a 21" Rock ride, 15" Quick-Beat hi-hats, then from left to right I have a 16" medium crash, an 18" medium-heavy crash, and an 18" medium-thin crash. In the middle of my 13" and 14" tom-toms is a 10" splash cymbal. Then there's a 17" medium crash—I like the odd sizes—then a 20" China Boy Low and an 18" China Boy Low on top. I mike the cymbals with two overhead mic's, but we have a separate ride cymbal mic' and hi-hatmic'.

SF: How do you feel about drum solos?

MF: It's an obligatory thing in a round-about way. I like them; they're fun. But not with the concept of this band. I have enough spotlights during the night through the songs; I'm not just playing stock "2" and "4." I play my solo right after our second song of the night. It's real quick—it's a flurry and a few little dynamic things. I don't like to get into a long solo where I play every lick I've ever learned. I like to play the tonal spectrum of the drums—from the 6" to the 18", and also the different cymbals. My solo is like a shot in the

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arm, more than anything for the set. It catapults that next segment into the next level dynamically, so the set will lift. I used to do a lot of solos in the old days—real long things—but the bands were not as flashy as Loverboy.

SF: You wanted to mention your monitor system.

MF: The sound system we use is by Audio Analyst out of New York. We've used them for three years now. We're using one of their monitor mixers, Rocky Hohlman. Even when we go to other countries and use rental P.A. systems, we take Rocky. He mixes us wherever we go.

I run a pretty extensive mix. I run just about everything that you would get on a

record. I have my kick, snare, toms and enough leakage for any cymbals I need. You don't really want to put cymbals in there. I get enough leak from the snare mic' to pick up the hi-hat. I have bass guitar, guitar, all of the keyboards, vocals and sax, when the sax break comes up. The vocals are on top; snare and kick are nice and fat, then the bass guitar just above that, with guitar around the same volume as the bass. I can hear everybody's instruments. We sometimes take two hours at soundchecks and go for a good sound.

In key parts of songs, Rocky will boost my monitor. In the middle of "Strike Zone" there's a little glockenspiel part that Dougie has a setting for on one of his key-

boards. There's just drums and glockenspiel going on, so I need that booster. There are a lot of intricate things going on, so I'm really playing off my monitors a lot.

I have two 18" speakers, a horn and a tweeter. I get a nice fat kick drum sound. It's important for me to have the bass drum soft but hard. I want the attack of the beater, but I want a round sound—a bit of a pillow sound with tone—rather than just a "whack." I don't find a "whack" sound very inspiring. You don't have a dynamic range with it. It's like a coffee table.

I don't run the monitors very loud. I know a lot of drummers who just have drums in their monitors, louder than anything. I can't see how they can direct the band, or be part of the band, without having all the instruments in their monitors.

I like to listen to Michael's vocals in my monitor, because if I feel that the band's getting real loud and I feel that Michael's straining, I'll pull back, and that brings the band back. I still believe that in a big concert situation, you should have dynamics, even with the loud music that we're playing. With our rock 'n' roll, there's a little bit of class and a bit of finesse that we like to try to keep in the music. I try to keep a grasp on dynamics, no matter what. I always ask my monitor mixer how loud I am. If he says, "Fairly loud," I'll say, "Bring it down."

SF: Can you tell from your monitor mix how well you're blending with the other instruments from the audience's perspective?

MF: Yeah. I can feel the P.A. The mixer has a sub-mix. He'll have all my tom-toms patched to one mix. When there's a big drum fill, he'll boost that fill and I'll feel that out of the P.A. Then he'll pull that back again for normal playing.

SF: Are you using noise gates on your tom-tom mic's?

MF: Yeah, which is real good. That cuts out any noise problems just like in the studio, especially with the big floor tomtoms. My 18" tom will ring for a moment and then the noise gate will suck it in. That took a while to get used to. They had the noise gates too tight. In my solo, I start off light and build. I got the tape back from the first night and there were no drums. I was playing a 16th-note triplet thing between the kick and the tom-toms, and all I heard on the tape was the kick. I asked, "Where are the toms?" He said, "Well, they're there." I said, "Why don't we open the gates up?"

I'll play the same patterns in concert that are on the albums, but maybe I'll throw in slight variations because I'm interacting with the other musicians. I've got to hear them in order to interact with them. That's what keeps the songs spontaneous so that they don't sound the same every day when we're on the road for ten months. Then it could just turn into a job. I never want it to be that way.



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LISTENER'S GUIDE

LOUIE BELLSON



Q. For readers who'd like to listen to albums that most represent your drumming, which ones would you recommend?

Album	Artist	Label	Catalog #
Basie, Ray Brown & Bellson	Count Basie	Pablo	2310712
Basie Jam	Count Basie	Pablo	2310718
Oscar Peterson In London	Oscar Peterson	Pablo	2620111
Explosion	Louie Bellson's Explosion	Pablo	2310755
Sunshine Rock	Explosion	Pablo	2310813
Dynamite	Explosion	Concord	CJ 105
London Scene	Explosion	Concord	CJ 157
Side Track	Explosion	Concord	CJ 141
Note Smoking	Explosion	Disc Washer	Out of Print
Intensive Care	Explosion	Disc Washer	Out of Print

The album entitled *Skin Deep* has always been a plus for me, because it was recorded in a ballroom in Seattle, Washington, rather than at Columbia Studios. It was used for hi-fi demonstrations in 1951. Bert Porter really did a job capturing all the beats with his Ampex equipment.

Q. Which records do you listen to most for inspiration?

A. I listen to everyone. I can't list individual records, but some of the particular artists I listen to include: Buddy Rich, Mel Lewis, Elvin Jones, Jeff Porcaro, Larrie Londin, Steve Gadd, Billy Cobham, Lenny White, Art Blakey, Max Roach, Tony Williams, Woody Shaw, Phil Woods, and recently Vinnie Colaiuta. I've been influenced by legendary drummers like Jo Jones and Baby Dodds. As far as groups go, I like to listen to Weather Report and Earth, Wind & Fire, and I also listen to all the drum corps, percussion ensembles and symphony orchestra percussion sections that I can.

BILL BRUFORD



Q. For readers who'd like to listen to albums that most represent your drumming, which ones would you recommend?

Album	Artist	Label	Catalog #
Fragile	Yes	Atlantic	19132
Close To The Edge	Yes	Atlantic	19133
Red	King Crimson	Jem	EGKC8
One Of A Kind	Bruford	Polydor	PD 1 6205
Discipline	King Crimson	Warner Bros.	3629
Beat	King Crimson	Warner Bros.	23692

Photo by Laura Friedman

Q. Which records do you listen to most for inspiration?

Album	Artist	Drummer	Label	Catalog #
Extrapolation	John McLaughlin	Tony Oxley	Polydor	5510
Fresh	Sly Stone	Andy Newmark	Epic	Out of Print
Deer Wan	Kenny Wheeler	Jack DeJohnette	ECM	1102
Sonata for Two Pianos & Percussion	Bartok		Various Recordings Available	
Peter Gabriel 4	Peter Gabriel	Jerry Marotta	Geffen	2011
7 Steps to Heaven	Miles Davis	Tony Williams	Columbia	PC-8851

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by Rod Morgenstein

An Approach For Playing In Odd Time - Part 3



Photo by Lissa Wales

In the previous two articles, we've concentrated on executing written exercises which have been designed to facilitate the playing of odd time. Another effective approach to learning is through listening and transcription. The following songs have one thing in common: They deal, in some way, with seven. However, the application of odd time can vary from one song to the next. For example, a song may be in 7/8 or 7/4 from beginning to end with one dominant feel throughout. This is evident in "Spectrum," the title cut from Billy Cobham's first solo album. Here, the musicians sound as comfortable playing in 7/8 as they do in 4/4. The melodic syncopations are further heightened by the way they are phrased to tailor fit the 7/8 context.

Billy Cobham: "Spectrum"

A musical score for drums (H.H., S.D., B.D.) in 7/8 time. The transcription shows a continuous pattern of eighth and sixteenth note strokes. A circled 'C' with '(w/foot)' indicates a bass drum stroke. Measures 1-7 are shown, followed by a repeat sign and measures 8-14. Measure 14 ends with a fermata over the bass drum part.

"Dawn," from the Mahavishnu Orchestra album *The Inner Mounting Flame*, is an example of a song which is also in seven throughout. However, it clearly establishes two very different feels. The A section is mellow and relaxed, and definitely in 7/4. The feel is established by the bass guitar line which the drums, in turn, play off. In contrast, the B section is aggressive and raucous. The meter is still seven, though due to the apparent doubling up of the time and the phrasing of the last three beats of each measure, there are probably varying opinions on how to count it. (For those of you who are interested in the unlimited possibilities concerning time concepts, this is a remarkable album. If I had to name one album which had the most profound effect on me as a musician, this is the one!)

Billy Cobham: "Dawn" (very basic transcription; each measure is varied)

Two musical scores for drums (H.H., S.D., B.D.) in 7/8 time. The top section, labeled '(A SECTION)', shows a steady eighth-note pattern on the hi-hat and a simple bass line on the snare. The bottom section, labeled '(B SECTION)', is more complex, featuring sixteenth-note patterns on the hi-hat and a more active bass line on the snare. Both sections include a repeat sign and measures 8-14.

"Space Boogie," from the Jeff Beck album *There And Back*, consists of three sections in three opposing time signatures, yet all are very closely related. This shuffle, which combines a dazzling show of physical endurance with very musical drumming, alternates between 4/4, 7/4 and 6/4. The six and seven feels are derivatives of the 4/4 shuffle. The effect of the 7/4 groove is heightened by the grace notes in the snare drum part. By lightly filling in the middle note of the triplet, the groove is further intensified.

Simon Phillips: "Space Boogie"

A musical score for drums (Cym., S.D., B.D.) in 7/8 time. The transcription shows a shuffle pattern with grace notes on the snare drum. Measures 1-7 are shown, followed by a repeat sign and measures 8-14. Measures 14-15 are marked with a '3' under the bass drum part, indicating a change in time signature.

(derived from:)

A musical score for drums (Cym., S.D., B.D.) in 4/4 time. It follows the same general pattern as the 7/8 transcription but with a simpler snare drum part. Measures 1-7 are shown, followed by a repeat sign and measures 8-14. Measures 14-15 are marked with a '3' under the bass drum part.

"Tom Sawyer," from the Rush album *Moving Pictures*, makes use of 7/8 in the instrumental sections of this otherwise 4/4 song. Rush has done quite a bit of experimentation with odd time signatures, and this song displays the effectiveness of mixing odd and even meters together.

Neil Peart: "Tom Sawyer"



A musical transcription for three drums: High Hat (H.H.), Snare Drum (S.D.), and Bass Drum (B.D.). The notation is in 7/8 time. The H.H. part consists of a continuous pattern of sixteenth-note strokes. The S.D. part features eighth-note patterns. The B.D. part has eighth-note patterns with accents. Measures 1 through 6 show the pattern, followed by a measure of 4/4, then measures 7 through 10 in 7/8 time.

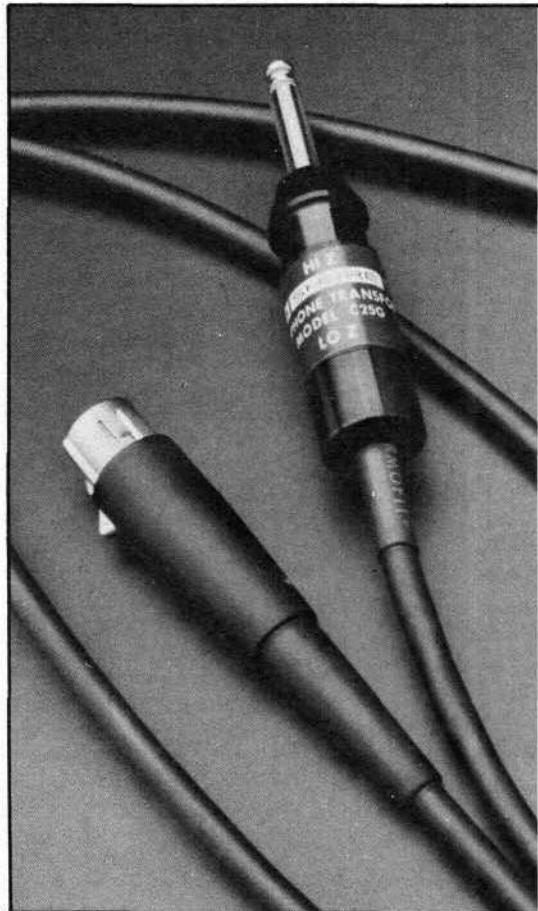
"The Ocean," from Led Zeppelin's *Houses of the Holy*, demonstrates the application of seven as part of a two-measure phrase. This phrase, which makes up the song's instrumental hook, is composed of one 4/4 measure followed by one 7/8 measure. Aside from this part, the rest of the song is in 4/4 (with the exception of a 7/8 measure lead-in to the hook). This clever use of the 7/8 measure heightens the already ultra-heavy metal intensity prevalent in this as well as many other Zeppelin songs.

John Bonham: "The Ocean"



A musical transcription for three drums: High Hat (H.H.), Snare Drum (S.D.), and Bass Drum (B.D.). The notation is in 4/4 time for most of the piece, indicated by a '4' in a circle. It then changes to 7/8 time, indicated by a '7' in a circle. The H.H. part has a steady eighth-note pattern. The S.D. part has eighth-note patterns. The B.D. part has eighth-note patterns with accents. Measures 1 through 6 are in 4/4, followed by a measure of 7/8, then measures 7 through 10 in 4/4, and finally a measure of 7/8 at the end.

The preceding songs have been chosen to show different applications of seven through actual recorded performances. The transcriptions are not necessarily exact. They are intended to map out the basic odd-time drum beats of each song in the hope of providing a general overview of playing in seven. Also, the songs are representative of different musical styles in an attempt to demonstrate the effectiveness of odd-time playing throughout the musical spectrum. From jazz/rock to pop, from fusion to hard rock to progressive rock, it really works!



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by Rick Van Horn

Between Engagements

A while back I did a column entitled "It's Your Move" in which I outlined several different sets of circumstances that might cause you to leave a group. Some were based on your decision; some were not. When it was your decision to leave, I stressed that you should have something already lined up to go to, so as not to be out of work. Unfortunately, often the choice is not yours, and the termination of your employment comes unexpectedly. Or you might be a player just entering the steady club field, and looking for your first job. At any rate, you are currently "between engagements," as it is so delicately put in the entertainment industry. So the big question is: Now what do you do? How do you go about finding the work you want, for the money you'd like to make, in the location you prefer, etc.? This column will give you some suggestions to help you get yourself on the market.

The primary item is communication. You have to communicate to the music-employment market that you are currently available. Along with that, you must be able to communicate your abilities, special talents, and any pertinent data that might make you more attractive as a potential group member. (Once again, we drummers are faced with the one major limitation placed on us by our choice of instrument. We *have* to find a band to work with—a drummer just isn't going to cut it as a single.)

There are several ways of approaching this communication process. Some ways might be more effective than others, varying from person to person and situation to situation. My advice is to look over the list of suggestions, and then employ as many of them as appeal to you. The more methods you employ, the better your chances of success.

1) *Making The Rounds* (also known as "hanging out"). This is the old, time-honored method of going from club to club, meeting with the working musicians, sitting in if possible, and just getting the word out among the musical community that you are available. In the "old days," when individual players tended to shift around a lot from group to group, this was an effective method. The various bandleaders and sidemen came to know you, and if somebody needed a sub quickly, you could very possibly get a call. This, in turn, might lead

to a permanent position with that group. In other cases, musicians from one group might recommend you to the leader of another group that they sat in with, and thus your name would be spread around.

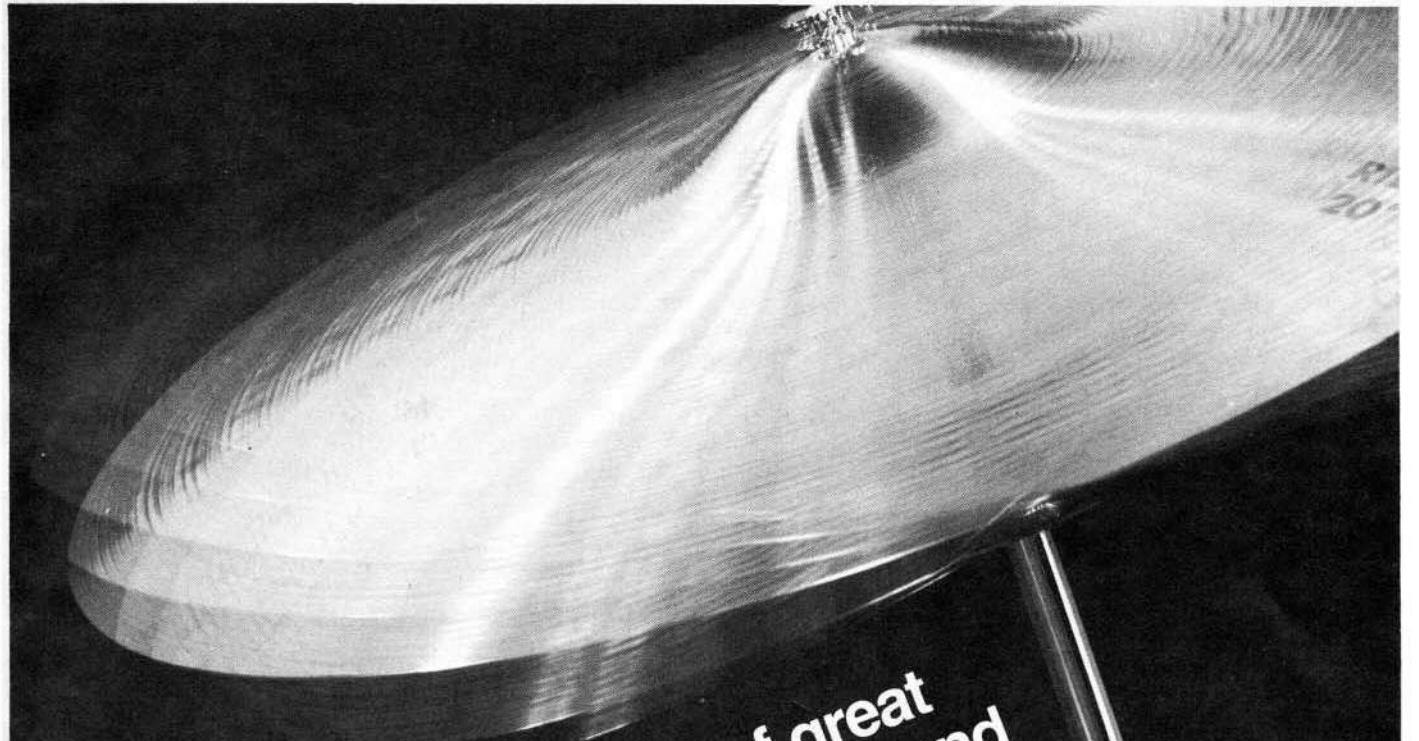
Unfortunately, I don't really think that scene exists much anymore. Groups tend to be more permanent in their lineups, and individual players don't "get around" as much. Speaking from my own experience, when I was working five or six nights a week in California and someone would come in and ask me, "Know anybody who needs a guitar player?" I'd have to say no, simply because I never got out to hear any other bands or visit with other players. All of the other groups worked the same nights and hours as I did, and thus we didn't have much interchange between us. When I lived in Hawaii, I discovered that there were a lot of after-hours clubs, and there was more of a musical community happening. However, the majority of the working bands were traveling groups, and weren't likely to have openings to fill while in Honolulu.

I do want to stress that it is important to make the rounds if you are a well-known player, with a pretty solid local reputation. If you've been with one successful group for quite some time, people automatically assume that you can step right into another gig. (Sometimes you fall into the trap of assuming that, too.) So what happens is everybody either thinks you're still with the old group or you've already found new work (since you're so hot), so they don't see any point in calling you for their gig. You need to let them know that you would, in fact, be *very* interested in their offer. Therefore, making sure that the "grapevine" knows about your availability is very important. Just don't spend what money you have left going out "clubbing" night after night. Drop in once, speak to the bandleader, sit in if you can, and then leave. Go to as many clubs as possible, once each. Constantly hanging out in the same clubs will not do you much good.

2) *Music Stores*. In many large cities, the pro music stores are centers of communication. In many cases, there is only one such shop in a given town, and thus *all* the local pro players have to come in there at some point or other. If you make your availability known to the salesmen who can pass the word personally, and espe-

cially if you can place a notice on a bulletin board, it can be a simple way of reaching a very large group of people with very little effort on your part. As far as the notice goes, try to make it attractive and professional looking. Obviously, you should include vital data, such as name, phone number, instruments played, style of music preferred, travel availability and years of experience. But don't go overboard with biographical data. Let an interested party call you and ask for that data if they want it. They don't need it just to decide whether or not to audition you, and a cluttered notice does not attract attention. Be sure to type the notice or print clearly, neatly and boldly. A scribbled note on a torn-off sheet of notebook paper does not project a serious desire to obtain work, nor does it represent a professional player. The kind of note (and I've seen them scrawled in crayon) that reads, "I play drums. Looking for serious dudes to jam with. John. 555-5309" does not seem as effective to me as one that is neatly prepared and might read: "Professional drummer seeks steady employment. 18 years of experience. Free to travel. Prefer top-40 or lounge group. John Jones, 555-5309." That isn't too formal, and it tells prospective employers what they need to know before they decide to call you for an audition. I've employed the music store/bulletin board method each time I've been looking for work, and I've never failed to receive some calls from that source.

3) *Musicians Referral Services*. This is a relatively new method available to unemployed musicians, and to groups who are seeking replacement people. The basic idea is that the service puts those two together. You list with them, telling them your name, instrument, traveling status and certain other required information. They put your information in their file, and supposedly give your name to bandleaders who call in looking for people to contact. The service screens the callers to determine the type of people they need, and then matches them up with prospective players from their files. Some charge a percentage of your first couple of weeks' salary, while others charge a flat rate when you first subscribe to the service. If you are a member of the American Federation of Musicians (the Union), they now have the AFM Referral Service available to members at no

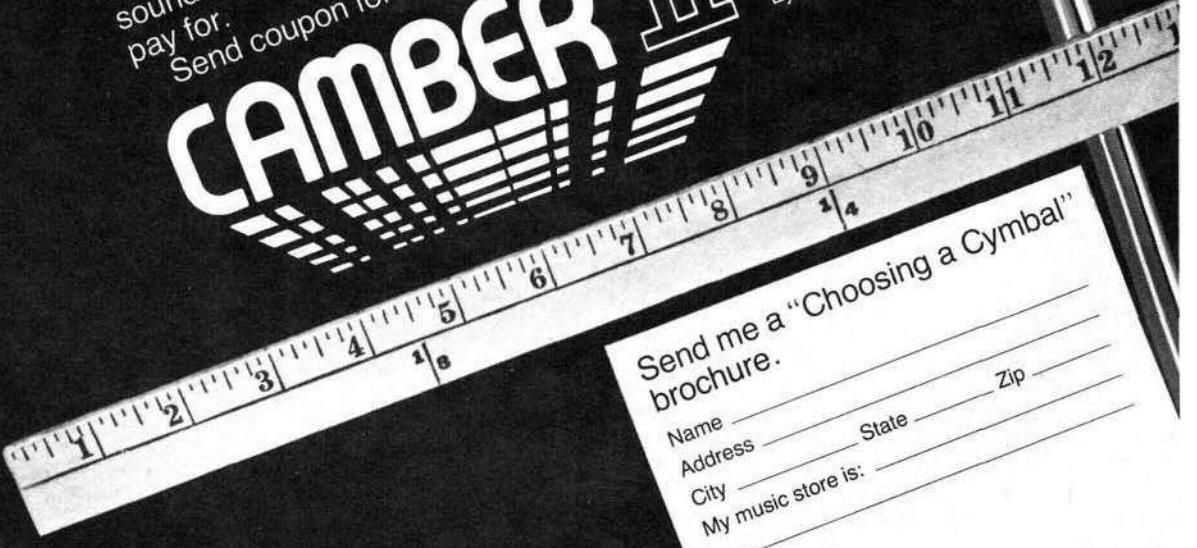


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charge. (See their application form in the *International Musician* newspaper.) Most of these services deal on a local basis, but there is at least one advertising in the classified section of MD on a national basis. I subscribed to such a service (local only) in San Diego many years ago. I did not ultimately get a job through the service. However, I did get calls, and I did go out on auditions. I would caution you to investigate any service thoroughly before you lay out money up front. A service that charges only after you get a job through their assistance seems a little more legit.

4) *Union Local Offices.* The offices of your AFM local are not booking agencies, and they'll be the first to tell you that. It is not their responsibility to find work for you. However, if you are a member, it is recommended that you let them know of your availability, since they will occasionally receive calls from leaders asking about musicians available to sub or available for casuals. At the very least, you stand to make a little pocket money while you're waiting for something steady, and you always have the chance of picking up a replacement spot in a working group. Once in a great while a traveling act loses a member while on the road in your town, and they need someone to fill out the current engagement. This can sometimes lead to a full-time membership, if you are free to travel. I went on the road with a show group based in Southern California. We

had to replace our keyboard player while in the tiny town of Las Cruces, New Mexico. Since there was no one available locally, we had to send back to L.A. to find a suitable person. Unfortunately, illness forced him to leave some months later, while we were in Kansas City, Missouri. We were able to pick up a replacement for him right there in K.C. This was infinitely easier on us, since we could audition the new man on the spot. The previous replacement keyboardist had been auditioned only by our agent in L.A., and we actually took him on without ever having heard him play. In both cases, however, it was a matter of our calling the Union to ask about talented players who might be available for our special kind of gig. Keep your local posted on your situation. Don't expect them to find you work, but make sure they have the information that might encourage them to pass your name along.

5) *Use Your Time Positively.* This isn't really a method of finding work, but it is a method of keeping your sanity and your good spirits while you're looking. A very serious problem that occurs during "between engagements" periods is the depression that can set in as you look for work unsuccessfully. It takes time to find a new gig, no matter how good you might be. And if you're used to working steadily, it is a very uncomfortable feeling to be unemployed. It seems a blow to your self-esteem and musical ego, to say nothing of the fi-

nancial distress it causes. The most dangerous thing is that this depression can lead to a sense of apathy. After a while, you just begin to say, "There's no point in looking for work today; there's nothing out there," and so you reduce your efforts. This, in turn, reduces the possibility that you will find work, and the whole thing spirals downhill.

My suggestion for overcoming this depression is to make the off-time productive. When I am off work, I employ the time in maintenance work on my equipment, which I cannot do when the drums are set up on a gig. I break down the kit completely, cleaning and making minor repairs where necessary. I polish my cymbals; I patch cases. This is also a terrific time to get out the method books and do some serious woodshedding. I try to remember the times when I was on the bandstand and was telling myself, "Your chops are going from playing nothing but this top-40. Gotta get in some serious practicing soon." I never did, because the hours I spent at work and band rehearsals seemed enough. I wanted the rest of the time with my family. Well, here's a golden opportunity to do the practicing you wanted to do, without losing family time to do it. The additional benefit is that not only does it prevent that sense of apathy from setting in, but when you do find work again, your skills will be as sharp as ever, if not improved!

All of the job-seeking methods I've mentioned so far have focused on obtaining work locally. There is another, very successful method I have employed in the past on a national basis, and that is the distribution of resumes. Of course, these work on a local basis too. In my next column I'll describe a successful resume format, and give some tips on where to send it and how to obtain the addresses you'll need.



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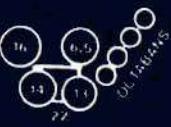
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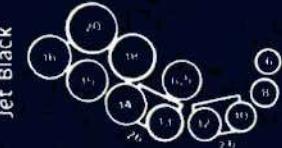
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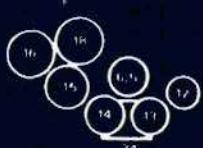
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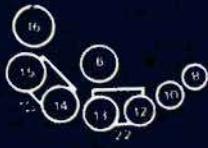
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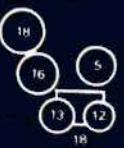
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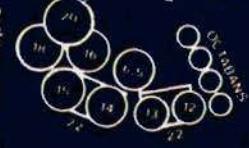
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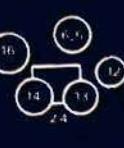
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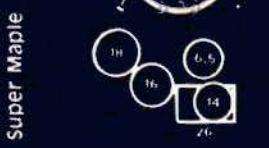
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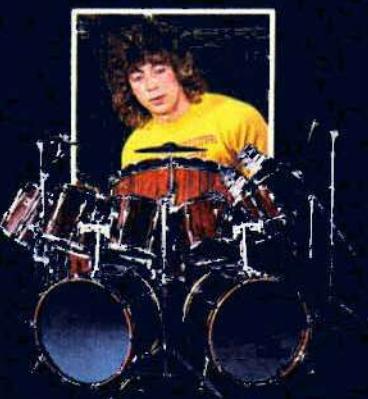
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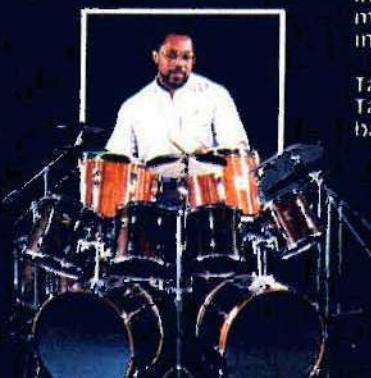
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cause I play the drums,' or if there are a couple of drummers in the house, a drummer will be thinking, 'Wait until I come off of the sock and play this flam figure—it'll blow their minds.' That's consciousness talking, but after playing with Albert, I began to get a sense that real drumming is about transcending all of that—about making the music jell, so the band functions as a unit. Of course, it helps to play with musicians who are strong and who don't have to depend on the drummer to tell them where the rhythm is. Something drummers have to be aware of—and all musicians for that matter—is that regardless of what's going on around you, you have to be in control of what's happening on your instrument melodically, harmonically and rhythmically. That way you can be in tune enough to hear and incorporate what's going on around you, but you will not have to be influenced or swayed by it. That's the way Charlie Parker always played. He sounded like a band unto himself. The way Ornette plays saxophone, you could dance to it even without the drums being there. It's the same with Coltrane—Elvin and Garrison could be playing or not playing, because he had such a strong rhythmic sound. It was the same thing with Hendrix—they could all be up there playing music by themselves. That's something all drummers—all musicians—should strive for: to be-

come totally accomplished on their instruments—not just part players."

Being accomplished on his instrument is what made Shannon such a valuable addition to the ensembles of Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor, and Blood Ulmer; spontaneous situations where the drummer had to play as if he'd written all the music himself, orchestrating complexity so as to make it sound simple and preordained. "That was the situation with Ornette alright. He'd never tell me what to play, and his music afforded me total freedom to play what I wanted. He'd just sort of play the 'cool observer game' and see what you'd come up with for each song. He expected you to come up with an appropriate part to complement his thing—before he played it. Playing with Ornette taught me how to anticipate quickly. No one can rattle me.

"Cecil Taylor's music came to me at a point in my life where I'd parted with Ornette, and I was working on playing and developing my own rhythmic ideas. I'd been getting up every day and just writing rhythms. Every day has its own rhythm, so I'd do exercises where I'd compose rhythmic series based on the date, time of day ... all kinds of things. I was trying to find my own personal life rhythms. Working with Cecil gave me a lot in terms of structuring my ideas and structuring music, because that was really the last step I needed to get to writing the way I am now. And

Cecil's music has such a highly developed rhythmic structure—he's really worked that out. So because I'd been working on a similar concept, it was easy for me to hear his. Cecil would play things in 5, 7, 9, 11, and all these other complex rhythmic structures, and if you weren't listening, you'd think he was just playing a lot of energy—a flow. But after rehearsing with him for two weeks, I was able to incorporate my own rhythms into his thing and enhance what he was doing.

"Playing with Blood was easy, because we both instinctively understood what the rhythmic concept was. It was while I was with Blood that I began getting concepts for my ideal drumkit, and I began to come down off of the cymbals onto the drums for the rhythms, which is something really hard for drummers to do.

"See, it's hard for drummers to get off the cymbals and onto the drums because cymbals are like a mini-orchestra. We could play cymbals all day long and be satisfied, because there are so many melodies and textures you can derive from the overtone series and because each cymbal has so much color within it. I remember how turned on I was by the K. Zildjian sound to begin with. Then when I heard Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, that was really it. I've played A. Zildjians. My mother bought me a set of Slingerlands when I got out of high school. That set came with a 22" medium ride and a pair of 14" hi-hats,

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so I've played A.'s all along. But when I was coming up, all the hip guys used K.'s and Gretsch. Every month in *down beat* there'd be these ads, and everyone looked so clean and sharp in their suits and ties: Max, Philly, Blakey, Art Taylor, Elvin and all of them.

"Basically I find the differences between A.'s and K.'s to be a matter of taste. A.'s aren't bad. I just prefer the warmth of a K., but a K. can be a lot worse if you don't get the right one. I'm talking about the old cymbals, now. I used to be able to go across the bridge to the Gretsch factory when they were in Brooklyn. They'd warehouse all the K.'s, but man, after Elvin and Tony and those guys had picked their way through, there wasn't much left. I couldn't believe how many bad cymbals there were, but I figured somebody's got to be buying them. In fact, some of those warped, funny belled cymbals really work for cats. I've got a 22" K. I bought from Frank Ippolito for \$70, from his last shipment of Turkish K.'s. Nobody wanted it because it was messed up with a bad dip in the cup, but you can get some beautiful sounds out of it . . . sometimes. To me, the tones of a K. allow for a variety of inflections, whereas an A. doesn't change that much. You can get a great sound, but it's always going to have that distinctive A. sound: bright, high pitched; with that big cutting bell sound.

"But see, there are all kinds of K.'s. Some of them were so metallic that by the third set of a gig you'd be tired of listening to it. That's why you have to find the right one. That's how me and Tony Scott fell out. We were playing a gig at a club in the Village, and I had two K.'s: a crash and a ride. Right in the middle of a tune, Tony Scott came over, took my cymbals off the stands and reversed them, putting my crash where my ride was and my ride on the crash stand. He was basically right, because that ride was just too hard, especially for clarinet. But it was the principle of the thing. So Steve McCall was there, and I asked him if he wanted a gig. I packed up and he finished the job."

Upon inspection of Jackson's cymbals, I noticed a groove cut into the cup. "That has to do with the way a cymbal sets," he explained. "Any cymbal you put on a stand will tell you where it wants to set. You can turn it around any which way you like, but after you've been beating on it, it will turn around. I use a little round file to cut a small channel in the bell, so that cymbal will set right on the stand once I know where I'm going to be playing it. I've been doing that for a long time."

Currently, Shannon's extensive cymbal arsenal is stocked with Paistes, in an ever-changing setup drawn from the *Sound Creation, 2002* and *Rude* series. "The first person who turned me on to Paistes was Bruno Carr, who's not only a beautiful drummer, but a beautiful man. He got me

back into the jazz scene after basically no one would touch me anymore, because I was messing up as a person. Anyway, he gave me a 16" 602 China, and that was a really nice cymbal—it just fit right in with my K.'s. After that I was playing with a singer named Juanita Fleming. I bought a 20" 602 flat ride, because I discovered you could swing your ass off without overriding the vocalist."

Shannon's latest setups have varied greatly due to the demands of room acoustics and temperamental P.A.'s, but one theme remains the same: his preference for faster, quicker cymbals to complement his hard, funky, crisscrossing leaps in register. "That's because I'm playing mostly drums . . . and I couldn't have made that state-

ment 20 years ago. The cymbals aren't for duration; they're mostly for punctuation and beat. Also, when the cymbals are smaller, you can go back and forth between them so much faster and sharper, playing double shots and rebounds without extended overtones. For a sock cymbal sound, I prefer them on the heavier side so I can get a nice solid 'chick-chick' with just the foot. I could never really use that splashy 'shook-shook' sound; it isn't solid enough.

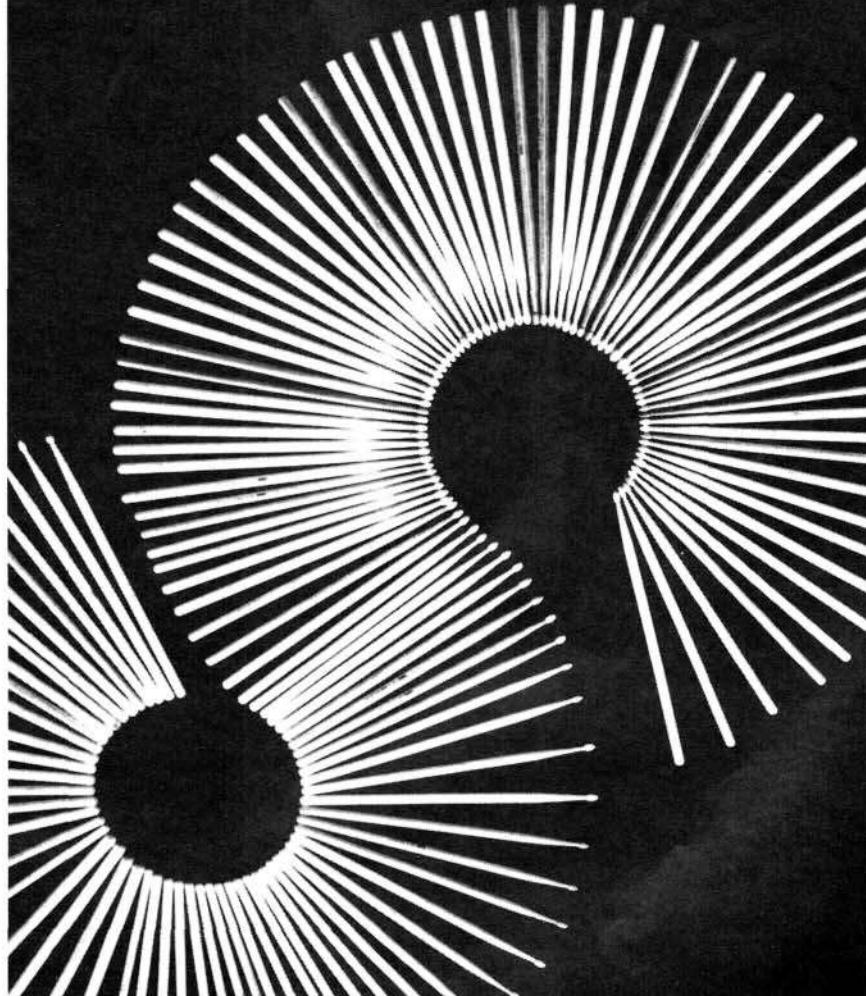
"For crashes, Paiste's *Rudes* are really something else; they'll cut through anything, although sometimes they'll cut through so rudely that *that* can be a problem. But for really loud electric situations, they're excellent. I suspected the 2002s

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might not cut as well, which was confirmed when I saw the Police at Shea. I couldn't always make out a lot of Stewart Copeland's cymbals, but he had this little 14" *Rude* crash. I realized during one song that it was projecting like crazy, and it wasn't the sound system cutting through—it was that cymbal."

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"The *Signature Series* drums I'm playing are constructed entirely of Indonesian Ebony, and the shells are 8-ply, so the sound is direct and cutting. Other than the fact that I had them built without any internal mufflers, they are a stock kit. The bass drum is 18 x 24; the mounted toms are 10x10, 12x12, 13x13 and 14x14; the floor toms are 14 x 16, 15 x 17 and 18 x 19. On my *Barbeque Dog* album, I had another floor tom off to the side of my hi-hats for cross-sticking effects, and even though you can't always hear it, you can feel it subliminally. Also, I've got a 6 1/2 X 14 snare that's just too much—everybody wants to take it from me. It cuts through anything, and even when it's tuned down, it still sounds just as warm.

"Where tuning is concerned, it took me a long time to get used to plastic heads—I just hated them, but eventually circumstances dictated that we come to terms, and I've experimented with just about every combination. Right now I have clear *Ambassadors* top and bottom on the Ebony set. To me, the difference between the

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coated and clear *Ambassadors* is that the coated ones give you more of the sound of the head, while the clear ones give you more of the sound of the shell itself, which I prefer. There's no muffling on any of my drums except the bass drum, where I have a mirrored Evans on the resonating side with a hole cut out for microphones, and a clear Evans on the beater side with a Danmar rock pad in the center. The combination of that pad and a wooden beater with the internal muffler in the bass drum gives me a nice flat sound, but with some warmth. On the toms I play the most—the 14 x 14 and the 14 x 16—the bottom head is very firm, while on the smaller drums the bottoms are all looser and the tops are tighter, so you have a similar feeling coming off the snare. On the two big floor toms, both the top and bottom heads are fairly loose."

Yet for all the sounds and colors available to Shannon from his Sonors and Paistes, he almost never solos—maybe because, within the music, he's always soloing. But when he does take a solo turn at the drums, silence is every bit as important as his melodic figurations, which often echo the '30s in scope.

"I was brought up on cats like Art Blakey, Max Roach, Philly Joe and Tony Williams—they were very big influences. But lately I've been working much more consciously on the older cats like Chick Webb and Sonny Greer. I hope I'm able to pro-

ject that through the music, because a lot of times, as a drummer, I want to take a solo, but as a composer/bandleader, I have a responsibility to structure the music so it comes out right. Often I'm not even thinking in terms of being a drummer. I'm thinking about orchestration, flow and the organic concept that has to be completed. Sonny Greer was a master of that. He hardly ever soloed, but it's like Ellington said: 'He made everything sound bigger and prettier.' He played music on the drums; he was the conductor.

"When I compose, I start with this internal rhythm, and I work on ideas based on that rhythm. After playing the rhythm on the drums for a while, I'll hear what melodies evolve on top of it. By then, my rhythmic thing is so ingrained, I don't even have to play it; I can just play the thing I'm hearing on top of it. The same is true of the melody. Once I hear the rhythms on top of my basic pulse, the melodies just naturally fall into place—they just come up through my throat. When that happens, I go to the flute and the piano. Maybe 90% of my music has been composed on flute, because I can hear the notes real clearly and I love the sound. I just got a piano in my studio, which will make things easier.

"But even with piano, I'm not conscious of European cycles of harmony or any of that. I'm trying to be as true to what I hear as possible—to the pulse which brings about all these elements. It's not like,

'Well, if I put a C-minor 7th in there, I'll get this effect.' Hopefully I'll never think in those terms, because that puts something in your mind that you don't need. What I hear comes from what it is. It's like you're carrying on a conversation with someone, and a cat comes in and joins you, and what he has to say just fits right in."

"That's what I think about when I say 'swing'—that sense of cooperation. I don't even think of it in musical terms like 'syncopation' or 'equilibrium' or whatever. What it represents to me is a particular era in our history; a particular release of the consciousness. That period up through the war and beyond it was a period of exuberance, like, 'Oh yeah, we can do this; we can all work together and come together as people and work towards something. We can fulfill goals and dreams.' That was a time when people had a physical relationship to music, too. They really danced, and America hasn't seen dancing like that until recently."

"Swing is the rhythm, movement and joy that's on top of the suffering, the economics and the social workings of the environment. It's riding with it, but it's above it. Musically it's representing the positives and negatives going on in our actual lives. It's what we can be and what we enjoy doing, as opposed to what we're normally doing. That's what I call swing, and that's what I'm trying to decode for people through my music."



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DRIVER'S SEAT

by Tim Smith



Photo by Rick Malkin

During a recent trip to California, I had the opportunity to lure Ed Shaughnessy away from his hectic schedule to talk about something virtually every musician experiences: going on the road. No freshman to the pavement, Ed's career and extraordinary talents have taken him around the world with the likes of Count Basie, Doc Severinsen, Duke Ellington, Stan Getz and Benny Goodman. His experiences read like a book, drawing lessons from the past and providing visions for the future. Ed pulls no punches; the road is not always easy. In fact, many times it is one of the most difficult experiences of a musician's life. Here, Ed offers some candid insights and advice about the road from which we all can learn.

TS: What is a typical day on the road like for you?

ES: Most of the traveling I do now is by myself—doing clinics at colleges and high schools around the country. I've been doing a lot of that for the past 15 years. One of the disadvantages for me is the fact that most of the time I'm traveling from west to east, so right away I lose time on the clock. I usually start out around midnight, after doing the "Tonight Show" on a Friday. I get to my destination usually two planes later, perhaps nine or ten A.M. It could be Illinois, Indiana or further east, but the reason I'm mentioning this is because I have to get geared up to being tired. I would gladly take Friday off and give myself a flying day, but Doc [Severinsen] has asked me to do as many Fridays as I can, since we usually do a band number. He is very nice about letting me off at various times, so I try to do that for him. Upon my

arrival, the band director, or some representative, meets me at the plane. Often we don't have time to go to the hotel. My visit begins with a morning rehearsal. So let's say from ten until noon we rehearse my music, which I have sent out at least a month ahead of time. The bands usually have it down very, very well. Once the music is all set for the concert, there might be time to grab a little lunch. At around one or two P.M., I start a two- to four-hour clinic. Some people want me to do a lot more. When I was first out as a clinician, I wasn't smart enough. I didn't say no enough times. Most people are very nice, but some are merciless. Their attitude is, "I've got you and I'm going to use you for 12 hours straight. I want you to educate six bands, do a two-hour clinic, meet with the faculty, do a separate clinic for them, and then go to the dean's office to sign some pictures"—all between eleven A.M. and four P.M.! So now I'm more careful. I have a high energy level, and I'm happy to work and do the very best job I can for them. They're also paying a good fee. But nobody is a superman; there's a limit to what anyone can do.

TS: When you're very tired, what motivates you to keep your energy level up?

ES: I think that the students or audience you're coming in contact with deserve the very best that you can give them. They shouldn't know that you left at midnight the night before. I don't go into a lot of chest-beating about it. In fact, I don't tell anyone. Lack of sleep is your problem. Don't make it theirs!

TS: Being tired seems to be a popular subject among musicians.

ES: Yeah, this no-sleep thing is something that plagues everyone on the road—bands, single performers, whoever. When Doc used to take the *Tonight Show* band on tour, I was doing all his road dates—ten weeks in Vegas, a two-week southern tour, then ten to fourteen days in the Midwest—all one-nighters. I found out that the people who were 20 years my junior were just as tired as I was—not bored or burned out, just tired. For those with a low energy level or who tire easily, the road is very rough. You have to be on the road, however, to know what the road is about. Someone can sit and tell you about it, but you sort of

have to experience it for yourself to understand it. The biggest secret on the road is learning how to relax when you have time to relax. Have something you can get into for an hour or two—a good book maybe—just something to break up the monotony of a long plane or bus ride. Sometimes when I'm real tired, I'll run a hot bath and sit for ten or fifteen minutes; it's amazing what that does for you. I'll carry a pair of swim trunks and do some laps in the pool. Sometimes when you're tired, a little exercise is the best thing for you.

TS: Going on the road can often mean getting psyched up for things to go wrong—for hassles to arise.

ES: Definitely. You have to be prepared for that. For an eight o'clock show, you come in at four o'clock for soundcheck. If there are no hassles, you're out of there in 30 to 45 minutes. On the other hand, you could be there for two-and-a-half hours, and not get supper. Two other problems are bad weather and bad business. After being out with Doc and then taking my own band on the road, I'd find myself walking up and down, and looking out the window, as Doc used to do, to see if the weather had knocked business down in the club. (Many times we would be working for a percentage of the door.) I'm not real "antsy" about things like that, but it's normal.

TS: How do you relate this to a younger player or a road rookie?

ES: I'm not always successful at doing that. I try to be, though. Musicians have to have some degree of maturity, even if they're still in their early 20's, to understand the bumps—the ups and downs of the music world. I just try to tell it the way it really is. Sometimes I feel it goes in one ear and out the other, but usually I can tell if I'm being understood by the attitude of the player.

TS: Do you find many musicians torn between school and the road?

ES: Yes. I get people who are on the fence. They say, "I have a chance to go on the road. Should I stay in school or go?" I generally tell them to stay in school; the road will still be there when you get out. You can say that in reverse, but it's hard to pick up the learning process again after having left it for two or three years. I never went to

the next step



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college myself, but my students say that it's very difficult to get back into that "learning rhythm" again after leaving school. I don't mean to say they were unsuccessful at it, but just that they had a hard time of it.

TS: Would you suggest that a player who's never been "on the road" seriously "get into shape" first?

ES: Yup, and not only playing-wise, but physically. At home I run and play tennis three to four times a week. Since I started running, years ago, I've never "run out of gas" while playing. My physical endurance level went way up. I didn't have a problem with it before, but now it is even easier. I can be soaking wet after the second one-hour concert, and still feel like I could go out and play another.

TS: How about developing playing endurance?

ES: I very much endorse working difficult rhythms with records and tapes. Find a fast samba—a three-minute tune—and play it three or four times in a row. Then get a high-energy rock tune, a fast bebop, a mambo, a salsa or a cookin' big band chart and do the same thing. May I tell you something? There's this idiotic thing that so many people do—Or don't do—when they practice. They don't spend time doing what they have to do on the gig. They spend it on everything else. What do you do on the job? You play rhythm to music. I don't care how fast you can do this one

thing with one hand, or how you can invert your paradiddles. What do you do on the job? Can you keep up a hard rock tune, with feeling, for 12 minutes? Can you play a fast bop tune for eight to ten minutes? That's what's going to tire you out!

TS: How do you practice on the road?

ES: I try to be in as good shape as I can before I even go out. Playing on the gig really builds up your "road chops," but I still like to warm up before I play. I carry a Gladstone pad and a pair of sticks. I usually throw a towel over the pad, a couple of layers thick, and do a good 15- to 20-minute workout on that. Sometimes I carry a light foot pedal and a 4" x 8" piece of plywood. I attach the pedal to the wood and slide it under a chair or the end of the bed, until the beater is lined up vertically with the flat facing. I use a practice pad for the snare, a couple of pillows for tom-toms, the telephone book for a cymbal, and I can do a lot of practicing.

TS: How do you feel about recording live while on the road?

ES: I think the important thing is not to be aware of it. I prefer to record live. I'm kind of burned out about studio recordings. It doesn't hold what it did for me several years ago.

TS: What do you find are the worst habits of road musicians?

ES: They get in a rut. The gig gets to be the same, night after night, so they stop thinking creatively. You must fight that. Even if

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you just sit in the hotel room with a pad and pair of sticks to work out a few creative ideas, you can't let your mind go to sleep.

TS: When you bring your own band out, what do you expect of your fellow musicians?

ES: I expect them to have a sober head while on the bandstand. I couldn't care less what they do afterwards. Also, if I say we're going to start at nine, that's when we start. You'd better be there or we'll start without you. And I'm like Vince Lombardi: I don't like whiners or complainers. If I can play with a good attitude, I want you to also. Otherwise don't be here. You should play and give 110% all the time. Don't phone your performance in. You're either proud of trying to be a good player or you're not. It's as simple as that. I've learned that from older players. I didn't invent it. Buddy Rich is a great example. I've seen him in a back brace, in acute pain from a slipped disc, and he still gets up there and plays the best he possibly can. I admire that attitude a lot, and I try to emulate it.

TS: How do you adjust, personally, to being away from your family?

ES: Not very well. I'm a family-oriented person, so I can't say that I enjoy it. It's sort of a paradox: I like my work, but I don't like being away from my family when I do it. But it goes with the territory, so I try to make the time I spend with them mean something.

TS: Is it a hard adjustment for your family?

ES: Not really, because I think they're used to it. My kids have been used to dad being away some of the time since they were born. I think it's hardest on my wife. I have two teenage boys, and their dad should really be there at times to kind of keep the ship on a straight course. She does a great job, though.

There is one thing I think young musicians should be aware of. I'm not a good example, because I got married for the first time at age 21, but with the rigors of the road, it's hard to maintain a decent relationship. I think it takes people who are a little special to bear up under it. The loneliness is hard to deal with. It is sometimes more difficult for the person left behind than for the traveler. You have to solve that for yourself. I don't want to sound like Ann Landers, but I think that young players might give some serious thought to devoting some years toward their career without too much commitment to another person, simply because it's so difficult. Once in a while, I'll meet a musician who's thought about it and says, "I think I'm going to just concentrate on music, wherever it takes me for the next few years. Maybe I'll think about settling down and getting married around age 30." Personally, I think that's a better plan for most people. I don't pretend that it's going to work for everybody, but I think it's not a bad idea.



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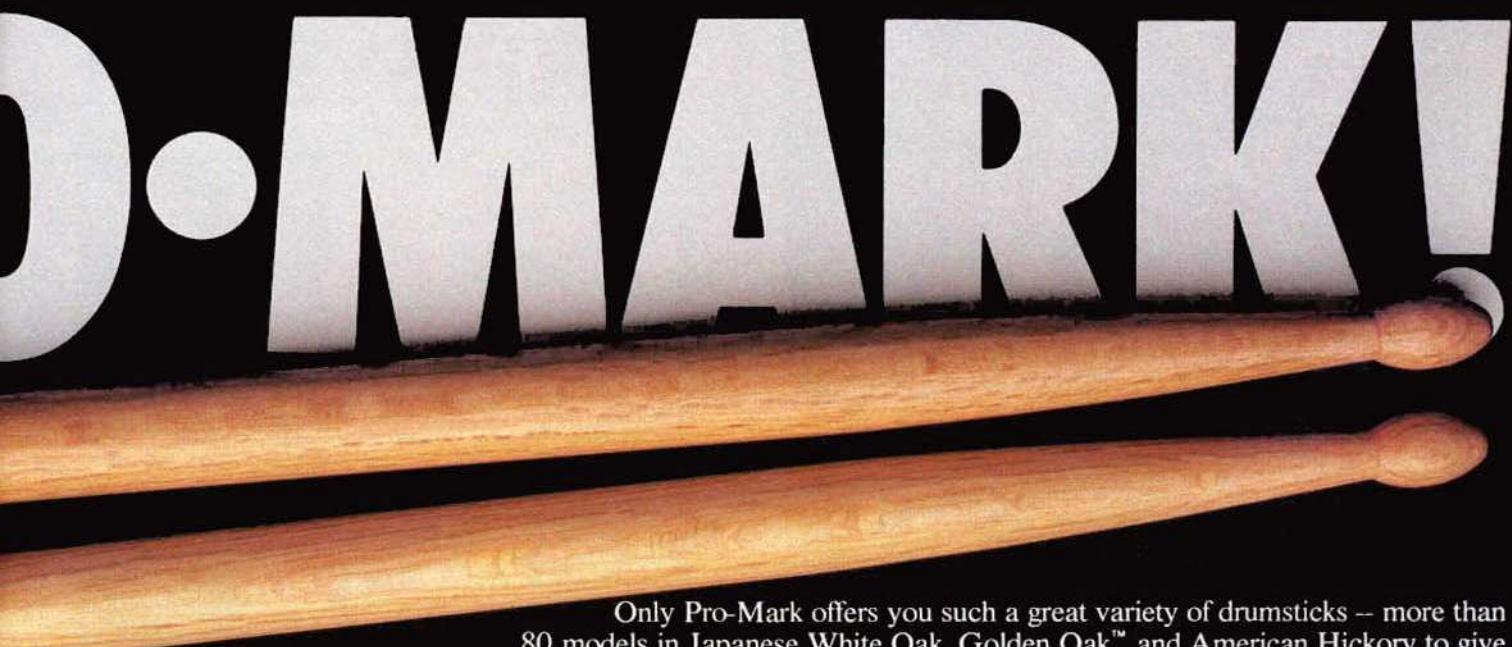
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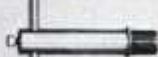
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Drummers And Auditions

I recently had the pleasure of spending an afternoon talking with Allen Carter. Allen is a top professional drummer whose credits include the Les Brown Orchestra, The Captain & Tenille and The Kansas City Philharmonic. Currently he plays professionally in the L.A. area and teaches at several local colleges.

We happened to get on the subject of auditions. Over the years, Allen and I have both had to audition for school bands, commercial groups and jobs of various kinds. Being in educational situations, we have both had to conduct auditions for young drummers. We made up a list of observations that we felt might help young drummers handle this difficult situation.

School Auditions

An audition for the college jazz/rock ensemble (big band) is, in some ways, the toughest of all auditions because many facets of playing will be required. For example, you will be asked to read music fairly well. If you can't read, you can't get into a good college band. They simply don't have time for you to memorize the arrangement. Also, the music being played by bands of this type is fairly complicated, so the ability to read *well* is a must.

The second problem is one of styles. The college drummer will be asked to play swing, funk, bebop, rock sambas and ballads. Some concert arrangements will include several of these styles, as well as tempo changes and unusual time signatures.

Commercial/Professional Auditions

Usually people will ask other musicians for a recommendation. "Can this drummer play what is required?" "Do you know a drummer who would be good for

our type of band?" In other words, your word-of-mouth reputation with other musicians must be good, or you will never get the chance to audition.

In a commercial rock band, "feel" and steadiness of tempo become the key factors. Bands or groups usually do not require a lot of sight reading. However, even in groups of this type it is useful to be able to read, because it helps you to understand rhythms.

Occasionally, a group or band will ask you for tapes or recordings of your playing before granting an official audition. For this reason, it is good to have tapes of rehearsals and concerts. School concerts, night-club engagements and rehearsals are ideal situations to record. Make the effort to obtain these tapes or recordings, and keep them in good condition. You never know when you might need them.

Attitude—Preparing For An Audition Mentally

1. When preparing for an audition, it is important to remember that there is always someone better than you . . . someplace! If you play your best and someone else wins the audition, it serves no purpose to be critical of the other drummer. Try to understand what the other drummer does well and learn from it. After all, there will be another day. Learn from everything you can, even the situations where you don't come out on top. If you keep learning, you will get your chance . . . sometime.

2. Do not tell the people conducting the audition your life story and "how you got to be so great." They don't want to hear it. Let your playing speak for you. If you sound good, they will tell you. If you don't sound so good, at least you will feel less

embarrassed.

3. Be on time! If you show up late, the decision may have already been made. Also, if you are late, it will probably make you more nervous. Give yourself the best possible chance. In addition, being late makes a negative impression even before you begin to play.

4. Play the music at hand the best you possibly can. Don't show off by overplaying or by trying to be impressive. Try to make the band or group sound good.

5. When in doubt, play time! When I was on Lionel Hampton's band he told me, "I don't care if you miss a figure or a break. Just keep the time straight. As long as the time is together, everyone else can play." If the chart or arrangement is a little difficult for you, concentrate on keeping good time and listening to what the other musicians are playing. If you continue to do this, you will improve. More importantly, the other musicians will enjoy playing with you.

The Unexpected

No matter how much preparation you do, there will always be something you didn't plan on. In fact, some directors will purposely throw an extremely difficult part at you just to see how you react under stress. The rule is, don't panic! Other people have had trouble with the same part too. Do the best you can and keep cool. You will make a better impression by remaining calm.

Last but not least, don't make excuses if you make a mistake. Just ask for an opportunity to try it again. Remember, the people conducting the audition want you to do well. This is why they are giving you the chance in the first place.

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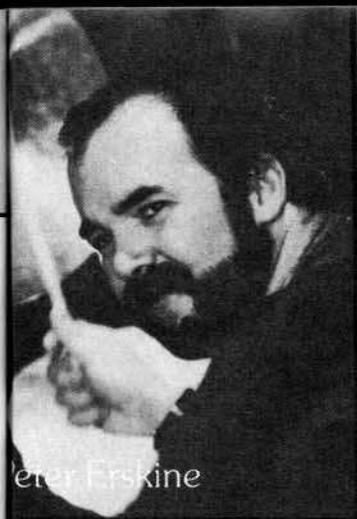
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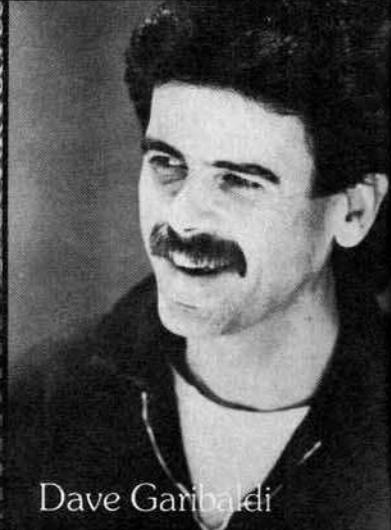
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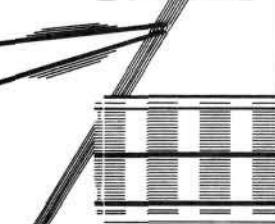
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Kramer continued from page 21

advice. A lot of musicians aren't.

JK: I'm open to comments, and I'll try what other members in the band have to say about a particular song, or part of a song. The only way to judge it is to play these suggestions, and then listen to it back. I'm not afraid to admit it if what I'm playing is wrong and what someone else has suggested is better. But when somebody criticizes what I'm playing, I'll say, "Okay, that's fine. Do you know a way to play it better? If you don't, keep your words to yourself."

RS: Steven Tyler is an ex-drummer. Do you have a special relationship with him because of that?

JK: Yeah. I have to give Steven a lot of credit because he had a lot to do with the style that I picked up when we started as a band. He turned me on to a lot of things. At the time we began I wasn't interested in playing all that simple, because I never knew what it was like to fall into a pocket and make the band cook. Steven made me realize that I was the one who was responsible for making the band feel right. I'd go to rehearsals and practice just with my feet one day, and just my hands the next. Steven turned me on to his style until I picked up on it and advanced it, and ultimately took it over myself. Steven and I have a pretty good relationship because of this.

RS: Do you work off each other in the studio?

JK: Steven is very astute and tuned in to the drums. So when we go into the studio to work, I depend on his ear a lot. I depend on it when we play live as well. For instance, during soundcheck I'll rely on him to go out and work with the soundman to get the sound that he knows I want out of my drums. And when we're in the studio, he'll do the same with the engineer. Steven is simply tuned into the same things I like in a drum sound. On the song that we were just talking about, "Nobody's Fault," the bass drum pattern is so simple. It's just a one-shot note and it's real wide open. Steven took the bass drum and made it sound like a house, so every time I hit it, it was like, BOOM! And the figure on top was real busy. The strange thing is that I wasn't even there when he did that. But he knew that, since it was so wide open, he had the space to make it sound the way it did. And when I heard it, I thought it was just great. Today I use those same ideas on stage to make my bass drum sound pretty much the same way.

RS: How do you get your bass drum sound on stage?

JK: It's something nobody else really uses because you need to do a lot of work with your foot. But on stage I have a big monitor system behind me which a lot of people think is for vocals. The only thing that comes through those monitors is my kick drum. They mike the bass drum for the P.A. right off the drum itself. But these monitors allow the rest of the guys in the band to hear it. Many times, guitarists, keyboard players and vocalists hear their drummer's kick drum, but it's flat and sounds like cardboard. With the monitors I get a real deep "thud" that you can feel in your gut. On stage it really fills things out and rounds out the bottom of the band. It's been great. Drummers come up to me all the time and ask how I get my bass drum to sound like that. It took a long time to get the details right.

RS: Did Steven Tyler ever play drums on any Aerosmith records?

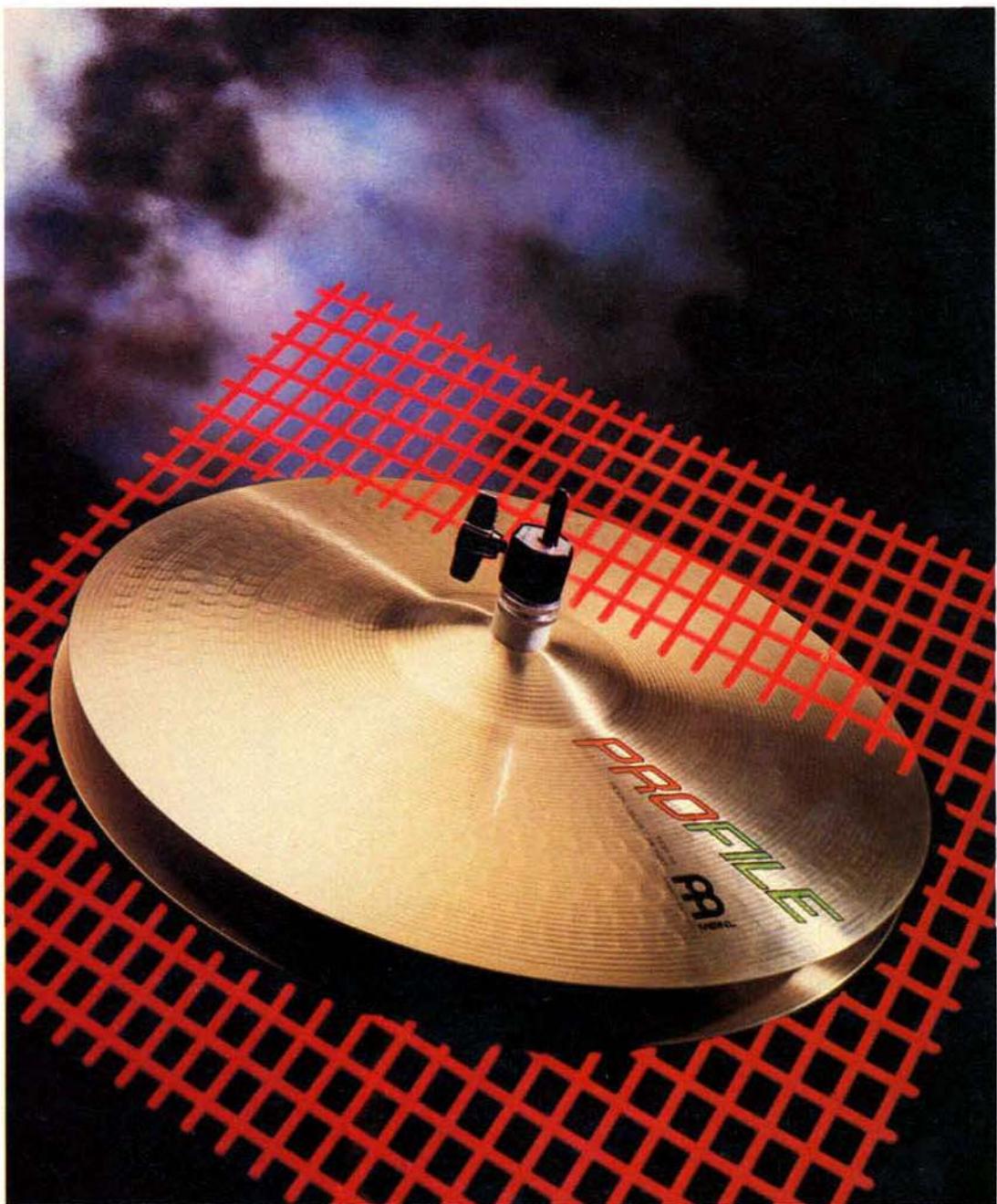
JK: Yeah, as a matter of fact he did.

RS: What songs did he play on?

JK: All I can say is that he did, because you asked. To tell you the truth, he didn't even take credit for it on the record. I don't really want to get into this, but it was a song I was very much opposed to. So I said, "Look, if you want to do it, do it yourself." And that's exactly what he did. It really sounds like it. I don't even have to mention the song. People who know my playing will be able to pick it out right away.

RS: You and the other members of the band like to consider Aerosmith a touring band. Judging by the number of shows the band did in the '70s, I'd say that was a pretty accurate description. How

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JK: So much of our show is the spontaneous excitement that's coming off the stage, and a lot of that I bounce off the audience. There's a point in the show where I do a ten- or twelve-minute spot by myself. My drum riser is motorized and on wheels. It puts me out in the front of the stage where a huge circle of lights comes over me while I do my drum solo. The way you can make your drums sound fresh and exciting is really surprisingly easy. As long as the band is playing well, that's pretty much all it takes. Halfway through the first song I can tell pretty much how the show is going to go. If it's right, my drum playing is right; if something is weak, then I take it upon myself to change it and make it right. I kind of play the mother hen role in the band, because as soon as anything goes wrong, everybody looks to me to fix it. Somebody once told me that the drummer in the band is the heartbeat, the bass player is the blood, and everyone else, the extremities.

RS: That's an interesting way of looking at it. And of course if the blood doesn't pump through the heart the right way, it's just not happening.

JK: That's right.

RS: Do the drums still mean the same thing to you as they did when you were a rebellious young kid?

JK: I still enjoy the drums very much, and I enjoy playing the way I play because I love the physical aspect of it. I like to perform as well as play. Most drummers either go one way or another—they perform or they just play. I like to incorporate both, which, by the way, took me a long time to do. It's not an easy thing to do. But eventually you find that you perfect the combination enough so that you have a good time doing it. And as long as you have a good time doing it, everyone else in the band and in the audience gets off on it too. It's not the kind of thing where you say to yourself, "Gee, I hope everybody is picking up on it." You don't have to cram it down their throats.

RS: Few drummers do extended solos in concert anymore. Do you consider a solo an important element?

JK: As far as soloing goes, I don't consider myself an outstanding soloist, but what I do is take the best of what I can do and take advantage of it. And yeah, I think it's important because of the reaction I get from the people listening. I may be sitting behind my kit doing something fairly simple, but I have the ability to put it across to the audience in such a way that they really get off on it. It's the audience that we're playing for. Those are the people who really count. They buy the albums and the concert tickets. They're the ones who support the band. I do a little thing at the end of the solo where I play with just my hands. The people love it; they go nuts. That's the highlight of the solo.

RS: Where did you get the idea to include that in the solo?

JK: In truth, it's one of the things Bonzo used to do. He always amazed me whenever I saw him do it because he'd get his hands going so fast. I could never understand how it was humanly possible. Then I would listen back to my version after I had done it in a show, and I'd hear the same thing I heard with Bonzo. That's a great feeling.

RS: How have your drum sound and style of playing matured over the years?

JK: Well, when I first came into Aerosmith I was a very busy drummer, but what was called for within the context of the music was a more simple approach. When we did *Aerosmith*, our first album way back in 1972, it was the first time I'd ever been in a recording studio. We set up all our gear in this studio where they used to do television commercials. Then we played the songs once or twice live, with microphones set up in front of the amplifiers and the drums, and that was it. That's how we did the first LP—live in the

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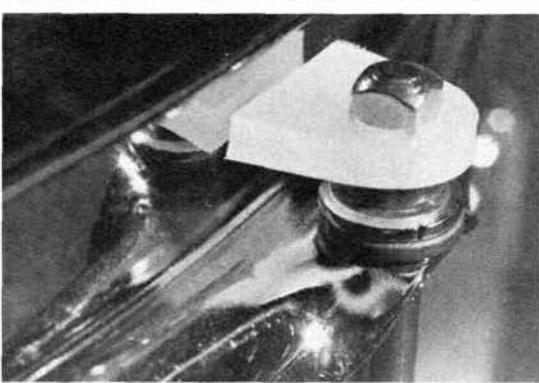
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RS: Did being in the studio for the very first time intimidate you or overwhelm you?

JK: Yeah, it did—it really did. For the first album and partially through *Get Your Wings*, our second, I really didn't have a handle on getting things just right. I definitely found it a lot more difficult than playing live. For one thing, I didn't like being in such a confined area. That took a lot of getting used to. On stage I felt free. There's a lot more space around me.

RS: What other problems did you encounter in the studio?

JK: I had problems with my timekeeping, because I was so conscious and aware that everything had to be picture perfect. Finally, it got to the point where we all realized that it can't be like that. We used to go for tracks and do them over and over and over again until everything was perfect. But it took a long time.

RS: Do you think that when you do tracks like you described it—"over and over and over again"—you make records instead of music?

JK: Yeah, that's a good way of putting it. But back then everybody else in the band was in the same situation I was in; no one had any studio experience except for Steven, and even he didn't have much. But yeah, that was pretty much the case. We didn't know any better. We figured that you had to do it again and again, because that's the way you got the song to sound better and better. Now I'll go in the studio and do a song with Steven, Tom and Jimmy [Crespo] and do two, or maybe three takes' of a song. If it doesn't happen the way it should, we'll go on to something else. After the second or third take, it starts to go downhill. I like to go in, do the song and get as much spontaneity out of it as I can. A lot of times you can get a song picture perfect, but the feeling isn't there. Then what good is it?

RS: What do you do to keep in shape when you're off the road?

JK: I run and I work out at the gym. One of our security guys is a real close friend of mine. He takes me to the gym and tortures me three or four times a week.

RS: Do you practice when you're not touring or recording?

JK: No. When Aerosmith isn't touring or recording I rarely look at my drums, unless it gets to the point where the band is off for some ridiculous amount of time. Usually after I get done with a tour, I don't do anything for two or three weeks. Then after that, the band usually starts to rehearse again. Sometimes we'll rehearse two days a week just to keep in touch. I find that such a large part of my drum playing is physical that I just have to keep on top of my endurance and keep myself in shape. As far as the chops go, after we do three or four shows, it all pretty much comes back.

RS: Do you do much session work?

JK: I haven't done much recently, but I just moved back to New York and I'm ready to do more session work since I'm closer to the recording scene now. I want to play with different people and get my name around more than it presently is.

RS: What kind of kit are you playing these days?

JK: I'm still using Ludwig drums, which I've endorsed now for the last seven or eight years. I've used basically the same set for a long, long time. I use three rack toms and two floor toms. The rack toms are 8", 10" and 12" across the top—power toms. I use all Zildjian cymbals. The rest of the kit is pretty standard.

RS: Drummers hate to be told that they're overplaying their instruments and getting in the way of the music. How do you make certain you don't overplay your drums?

JK: When the band isn't happening, it could very well be because the drummer is playing too much. I'm very conscious of not overplaying because that's the kind of thing that can kill the sound of my band. It's not what's called for in Aerosmith. Aerosmith is definitely a guitar-oriented band. So what I need to do is keep good, solid time for the most part. When I do put in a little more, I try to make sure I put it in the right places. You can be a busy drummer and not overplay, as long as what you play needs to be

played and you play it in the right spot.

RS: So many of the new bands today are using drum machines. Does that bother you?

JK: Yeah, but only because much of what they're getting out of the machine is very sterile sounding.

RS: Have you ever used one?

JK: Yeah. I use it occasionally to practice with. I'll stick it through an amp and headphones, and use it as a click track. I'll play along with it or around it as if another drummer is there with me keeping time. But I never use it when we record.

RS: You mentioned before that you'd like to begin playing with other musicians in addition to those who make up Aerosmith. Does that come from a need to broaden your musical horizons, so to speak?

JK: My first and foremost allegiance will always be to Aerosmith. The band has always been my first love. However, as a drummer and musician, I'm ready to spread myself out a little bit more and work with different musicians whenever I have the time. I just want to be recognized by my peers as a drummer who does his job. I'm not really interested in being a rock star. I just like to be known as a real good, solid drummer. I truly enjoy what I do. I work hard and get a lot of gratification out of it.

RS: How would you feel if your son turned out to be a drummer in a rock 'n' roll band?

JK: He already is a drummer! He's two years old and that's all he can think about. He's got this thing for Animal, the drummer in the Muppets. The funny thing is, I never encouraged him at all, although I have to say that I had a little kit made for him after he showed interest in the drums. He's just banging things all the time. I guess he's on his way to becoming a drumming fool, just like his old man.



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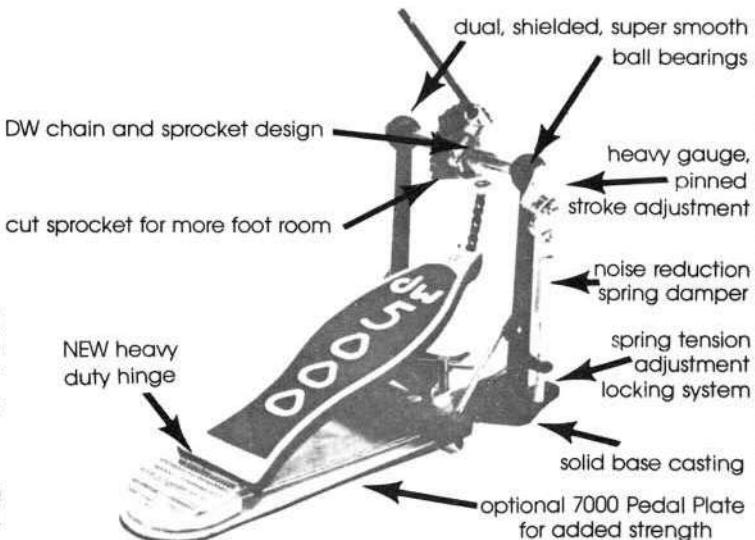
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Mark

At only 28, Mark Sanders is a veteran. He started playing at a young age, and went right to work. Amid the usual career ups and downs, Mark has toured with major acts and free-lanced in the L.A. megalopolis, recorded critically acclaimed albums, and done demo and jingle work. His most recent major accomplishment was a three-year stint with the legendary funk band Tower of Power, filling the seat vacated by David Garibaldi. Some drummers might have found that intimidating, but Mark took it on as a challenge, and in the following interview describes how he approached that challenge musically and mentally. Mark also explores the subtle infusion of funk into the "new music"—from technopop to hard rock—being played today.

RVH: Fill us in on a little of your early background.

MS: I was born July 8, 1955, in L.A., California. The first time I fell in love with drums was when I saw a drummer doing a casual in the condos we were living in. I must have been 10 or 12. When I saw a cymbal with rivets shaking in it, I was fascinated—I just loved drums. I got a job in an Orange Julius stand at 13, working to get enough money for some drums. My mother took me to the local music store drum teacher, who was pretty good, and I studied for a while. Then I started teaching myself through just playing to records and listening. I got in a few garage bands and I was having fun. The first songs I ever played were "Sunshine Of Your Love" and "Wipeout." I used to practice to the Doors' first record, with "Light My Fire" on it, just constantly. I have to admit I wasn't hot out of the gate, but I was a determined kid, and the neighbors put up with me.

When I got into high school I was totally into rock—a hippie type. I did play in the orchestra, though, because I could read and play well enough. But then I changed to another high school—Van Nuys High—which was really a very good thing, because that's where I really started to round out my musicality. At Van Nuys High I was in the concert band. When we'd play some Chicago tunes that required a set drummer, I would play drumset. Somebody asked me why I didn't try out for the jazz band, so I did, and made it. I met some really great people who I want to talk about. One was Larry Klein, who was the

drummer in the jazz band the year before I was in it. We were different types; he was into jazz and cruising Van Nuys Blvd., and I was into rock music and having long hair. But we became real friends. I'd teach him rock beats, and he'd teach me how to play jazz and swing, and how to read charts. I had another close friend there, a trumpet player named Bill Lamb, who's since played with all the greats in the business. He's a fabulous player and also a good drummer, and that's how we became friends. And of course, there was Sid La-saine, our band teacher. What he did for us kids was incredible—teaching us phrasing and swinging; getting us to play when we were all into fooling around. I think all band teachers should be commended for putting up with high school kids, and somehow getting them to sit down and study enough to play charts and sight read. I can't say enough good things about that big band experience in high school; what it does for musicians in general is a great thing.

I met the Porcaro family, including Joe, Jeff, Mike and Steve, when I was playing with Steve and Mike in a band. They were my age. The Porcaros were very instrumental in my growing as a musician; I can never forget the faith they had in my playing and what they've done for my career.

RVH: How and when did you first become interested in funk music?

MS: Before I graduated high school, I heard Tower of Power on a live radio broadcast from San Francisco. All I could hear was this very syncopated open-and-closed hi-hat, sticking out from the music. I remember thinking, "What is that? What is going on here?" Of course, it was David Garibaldi playing drums. I'd been into rock 'n' roll drumming, but what was happening here just totally turned my mind around. I immediately became a Tower of Power fan. I started telling everyone in L.A. about them, and they were my favorite band. From there I became a soul and funk fanatic, listening to Sly Stone, Larry Graham, Donny Hathaway, James Brown and Aretha Franklin. Of course, Bernard Purdie with Aretha was like an idol, as was Fred White, who at the time was playing with Donny Hathaway. Fred did a live record with Donny back in the early '70s that is so incredible. Stevie Wonder was a big influence on me musically, because he's such a musical drummer—especially the *Music Of My Mind* record. To this day, these records are still inspirations to me. They have some of the most soulful, exciting foundations for all the funk music in the world, as far as I'm concerned. That's how I got turned on to soul.

RVH: How did your professional career develop prior to Tower?

MS: After I graduated high school, I went on the road with Michael Franks, with



by Rick Van Horn

Photo Courtesy of Veneman Music

Sanders

Mike Porcaro on bass. I came back from that gig, and I was setting up music stands for Earl Palmer—a great drummer and nice guy. Earl had to go to Europe, and he asked me to sub for him one night! I was a nervous wreck. It just so happened that the Jackson Five came in, heard me play, and asked me to be their drummer for a while. So I was their drummer, off and on, for two and a half years. That was, of course, an incredible experience.

We were all so young, and we had all of this energy that we used to do these shows with. But during this period, none of the older musicians told me about the music business—how you can be up one day and down the next; how you're supposed to save your money because you're not always going to have a gig. What happened was, after the Jackson Five, nothing else really came in, so I wound up free-lancing in L.A., and working the Nevada lounge circuit. Harvey's Inn—how many drummers can relate to a little light that goes on over the stage that says "too loud" because people are trying to gamble? It's quite a way to make a living. Even though I loved soul as much as I did, my roots were in rock drumming, so I did a lot of rock 'n' roll gigs: Spencer Davis, Al Stewart, and a lot of different rock 'n' roll bands around L.A.—clubs and top-40 bands. It'd be like, I'd get a gig with Al Stewart, tour the U.S., come back, do casuals and freelance; then I'd go to Japan with Al Stewart again, come back, and do club gigs and casuals. What I'm really trying to say is, living in L.A., there are so many great drummers that to survive you really have to play a lot of different stuff. So I'd be in a rock band, a soul band, a jazz group, I'd do a jingle, I'd go on the road with a group, I'd be in a disco band, then boom—I'm in a new wave band called Sumner, playing the L.A. club circuit and signed with Elektra/Asylum.

RVH: So how did you get from there to auditioning for Tower of Power?

MS: During my time with Sumner, I decided that I wanted to further myself and take lessons. So a friend of mine—Carlos Vega—recommended a teacher named Murray Spivack. He's an incredible man. I started studying with Murray, and he just turned my head around. He gave me the basic training I never really got when I was a kid, because I had never really studied or

practiced heavily. When I started taking from him, I started losing my desire to only play rock 'n' roll. I was looking for a change, because I felt that I had gained all this new technique, chops and beats, and I was looking for a place that I could utilize them. Then what happens? My friend Bill Lamb, from Van Nuys High, was playing with Tower of Power off and on through all these years, and he told me that they were looking for a drummer—David had left again. I said, "Well, I've loved this band since 1970." Just to play with them at the audition was going to be fine with me. So I flew up to San Francisco to audition. When I was walking through the Oakland airport, I must have seen three or four drummers with cymbal bags. I really couldn't believe it, but drummers were flying in from all over the country to audition for this band. I tell you, I was scared to death.

RVH: How did you go about actually learning the tunes for the audition?

MS: I had 11 songs I had to learn. I got the records from Bill Lamb and wrote out the beats. I sat on my patio for hours with a tape recorder, rewinding and transcribing on my own, songs like "On The Serious Side" and "Soul Vaccination"—really hard beats. I wouldn't have been able to transcribe these Tower of Power beats if I hadn't studied with Murray Spivack. He helped me with my reading tremendously, to the point where I could understand beats like David Garibaldi played. When I finally got the actual transcriptions of these beats, I was amazed at how close I really was. Anyway, I auditioned and I played pretty well. I got to listen to my audition tape a couple of years later, and you could tell I was pretty nervous, but I was playing. I got home and told my girlfriend, "I don't know what's going to happen, but I spent a hundred bucks and I've played with my favorite band, and it's cool." Right when I was talking to her, the phone rang and it was Emilio [Castillo—leader of Tower]. He said, "I want you to play in my band"—just like that. I just about hit the ceiling; I couldn't believe it. I didn't even know what to say to him. I told him I'd have to call him back to talk about the money and what I was going to do about the other band. That was August 5, 1980.

RVH: Coming from a new wave rock group, how did you adjust musically and



mentally to the funk style of Tower?

MS: I think the main thing that I had to get used to was hitting the hi-hat in the middle of the top cymbal with the tip of the stick, as opposed to hitting it on the edge with the shoulder of the stick. In rock, you dig into it at an angle. I had to learn to tighten up my playing so that everything was executed very cleanly. There's hardly any open hi-hat playing—everything's very exact. That took me a while to get used to. Mentally, it was really just a confidence thing of knowing that it was a musicians' band, that people were coming to see this band really play, and knowing that every guy in the band was a great musician in his own right. There's no room for slack. You have to really take control of Tower. You can't be timid, because no one is timid in this band.

Another thing I had to think about was being myself. I didn't want to imitate David. You have to believe in yourself and want to project your own personality on your instrument. If you're a drummer replacing David Garibaldi, or you're playing with Chick Corea where Steve Gadd used to play, sometimes you'll have to play a specific beat to a particular song, but you have to play something that is your own for you to believe in it. For instance, some nights I might do the intro to "Squid Cakes" the way David did it, but some days I might change the bass drum or hi-hat. On our direct-to-disc record, I transcribed the part and wrote it out with a lot of different possibilities. I chose one that I liked and I learned it, which happened to be the bass drum part played with my right

hand on the hi-hat, and the hi-hat part played on my bass drum. Some nights I'll just improvise a four-bar drum intro. If you're up there just copying something, and it isn't the way that you would approach the song, then you have to think about it. Are you getting paid enough money to play this, no matter what? I'd have to say it wasn't so much my physical playing that was hard in Tower, as it was getting mentally prepared for this position.

RVH: You can't escape the fact that you're filling the seat of David Garibaldi, who "wrote the book" on the Oakland style of funk drumming. Is that in itself a particular challenge or pressure?

MS: Yes it is, and the particular challenge is that he can do things that no other drummer can do. To this day he can play stuff that just blows my mind. At first, it was a pressure because I'd be playing and thinking to myself, "He'd be playing nine over twelve, as opposed to just a nice funky pattern. He'd be playing this with his left hand only, or playing it on his bass drum." No one else gave me that pressure in the band. It was my own pressure. When I first joined the band, I felt it was my *duty* to play these great drum beats. I remembered when I used to see Tower and they'd have other drummers. I'd say, "Well, he's not playing what David played." Now, all of a sudden, / was the other drummer playing

in Tower, and I was saying to myself, "Well, now *you* have to play what David played, because that's *what you* wanted to hear." But what I had to realize was that David is David, and I'm Mark. I sound much better when I play what I play best, which is not the way David Garibaldi plays. I can play *what* David plays, but I don't play it the *way* he plays it. There are some parts that I play of David's that feel natural to me, and I like playing them. As our keyboard player says, they're the signature of the tune. I love what David Garibaldi did with the band. But I'm a different player.

RVH: What about the band? What do they want to hear from you?

MS: As long as the time stays straight and it's funky, they don't really care. The band needs to be kicked in the ass, as Steven Kupka [baritone sax] says. They want to hear what any band wants to hear: a solid reinforcement; an exciting drive behind them.

RVH: What do you do in your practicing to help you create what the band needs?

MS: Mostly I just keep my chops up and practice things that interest me. I *practice* things that I'm not *playing*. I'm playing funk every night, so at home I'm practicing brushes, jazz, reggae and Latin music. I love salsa. Sometimes I play with Luis Conte or Lenny Castro. When you play with these guys in a blowing situation,

you'd better understand something about Latin music or these cats are going to waste you! I've also been working on independence. I couldn't play these Steve Gadd or David Garibaldi beats without a certain amount of chops, and my teacher gave me that. It takes a lot of practicing, knowledge and understanding of pressure, squeezing, grips, sticks, heads, all that stuff, before you can really play these beats and *keep 'em under control*.

RVH: In light of the popularity of heavy metal rock, new wave, etc., how do you see audience reaction to funk as performed by Tower?

MS: Funk, as I knew it in the '70s, is pretty much history. AWB, Sly, Tower—very few bands are still holding in. The *new* funk is mostly techno-funk. I hear AC/DC playing funk beats. Jackson Browne's bass player is popping strings now. Even pop music now has drummers playing neat little 16th-note things off the snare. Look at the Doobie Brothers—that was funk in a pop sense. Earth, Wind & Fire seems to be hanging in there. They're real good at what they're doing.

RVH: Do you feel dated, or do you feel that Tower's music has relevance and appeal right now?

MS: No, I don't feel dated. As I said, everyone's learning off this, and getting it into the new music.

RVH: Is Tower a nostalgia act, or a contemporary performing act?

MS: In the sense that we do the old tunes, yes, we're a nostalgia act. But we're also contemporary because we do a lot of new tunes that we approach with a different style—a more contemporary funk sound. So it's half and half. When you come to a show you're going to hear the old Tower of Power, with some of the great old rhythms and syncopations, but you're also going to hear some real nice tunes with a good groove for the newer stuff. You're really getting both.

RVH: What equipment are you using with Tower?

MS: I have a Gretsch set. It's red rosewood, and it's beautiful. Gretsch drums have a light, singing resonance that's incredible. With some drumsets, you really have to dig a sound out of it. Gretsch drums respond to how you hit them—if you hit lightly, it's going to come out lightly. I'm just in love with the sound of these drums. My current setup starts with a 22" bass drum. I love all sizes of bass drums, but for what I'm doing, a 22" is the hip size. It's just a regular depth—not an extended shell. I've got a deep 6 1/2" rosewood snare that's probably the best snare I've ever had, and a 5 1/2" eight-lug chrome snare. I have two power toms to my left over my hi-hat—an 8" and a 10". On top of the bass drum I have a 12" and a 14", and then I go down to 14" and 16" floor toms. I wanted all my drums to be two inches apart, but I went to a 14" floor tom be-

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cause I've always known how great those sound. All my drums are double-headed except the bass drum, which has a hole cut out in the front head. I use Gretsch *Floating Action* pedals. I've used them for years.

I'm thinking about doing clinics for Gretsch; they're getting a nice program together. I'm also looking forward to working with Charles Perry, with his Percussion Enterprises program. I'm not really in any hurry to do clinics, but I'm looking forward to becoming a good clinician one day. It is something I want to do.

I'm using all Zildjian cymbals: 14" *New Beathi-hats*, a 16" medium-thin crash over my concert toms, a 22" K. ride, a 17" medium-thin to my right, and a 10" splash right in the middle of my two rack toms. I've recently added a *China Boy*, upside down. I've grown up playing Zildjian cymbals. They have a personality of their own that I just love—especially the K. ride. When I was growing up, I used to listen to Joe Porcaro, Jim Gordon, Jim Keltner, and Johnny Guerin. These were drummers who I heard play K. ride cymbals and they used to love them. They had this warm, great sound—especially a jazz sound. They're beautiful cymbals and I feel there's no reason in the world why you can't use them for rock bands or pop music—especially the new ones, because I

guess they're made a lot stronger. I wouldn't suggest them for AC/DC or Iron Maiden, but they're fantastic for what I'm doing. The bells really have a nice kind of oriental sound to them, without going so far as a China or Pang type. I also love the hi-hats, and I'm interested in getting the *Quick Beats*. I haven't tried them yet, but I want to talk to Lennie DiMuzio about them.

I'm also endorsing Calzone Cases, which simply are better cases than any that I've investigated, and their prices are very, very competitive. They have an aluminum type—which I've got—that costs a little bit extra, but they're much more protective than the fiberglass or the other coatings that are used. We take these grueling tours of one-nighters, and these cases are *happening*. Speaking of touring, Jerry Manuel, my equipment manager, is really a big help to me. If we can't do a soundcheck, I can still sit right down, and know my equipment and sound will be right.

RVH: What's in the future for Mark Sanders?

MS: The future is all about growing. I read in *Modern Drummer* about Max Roach, who is still studying to this day, and about all these drummers who always keep learning. Even in their 40's, 50's and 60's these people are still growing, and that's my goal—to always grow. I think about Louie

and Buddy, and how at their age they're still just wailing—playing gigs—and that's my main concern.

Hal Blaine talks about how you need a balance in your life, and I've never really had that. I was always so wrapped up in practicing and playing that I never really had any other hobbies to take my mind off work. And it becomes work, once you start making your living at it, even though I love it. So I'm volunteering some of my free time working for the Teenage Alcoholism Program. It's been very rewarding. I've also been getting into swimming and exercise.

Career-wise, playing with Tower is a very good experience, and I'm looking forward to playing with many people in the future. I also want to do some producing. I produced a demo tape for Vonda Shepard here in L.A., and it was quite an experience. I really enjoyed it, and I feel I have a good knack for it. I'm looking forward to more producing later on in my career.

I just feel that it's great doing something that I like. I want to grow, keep playing the best I can, and I look forward to a future of always playing.

Just before this story went to press, Mark informed MD that he had left Tower of Power, and was once again pursuing a very busy schedule of free-lance performing and recording in L.A.



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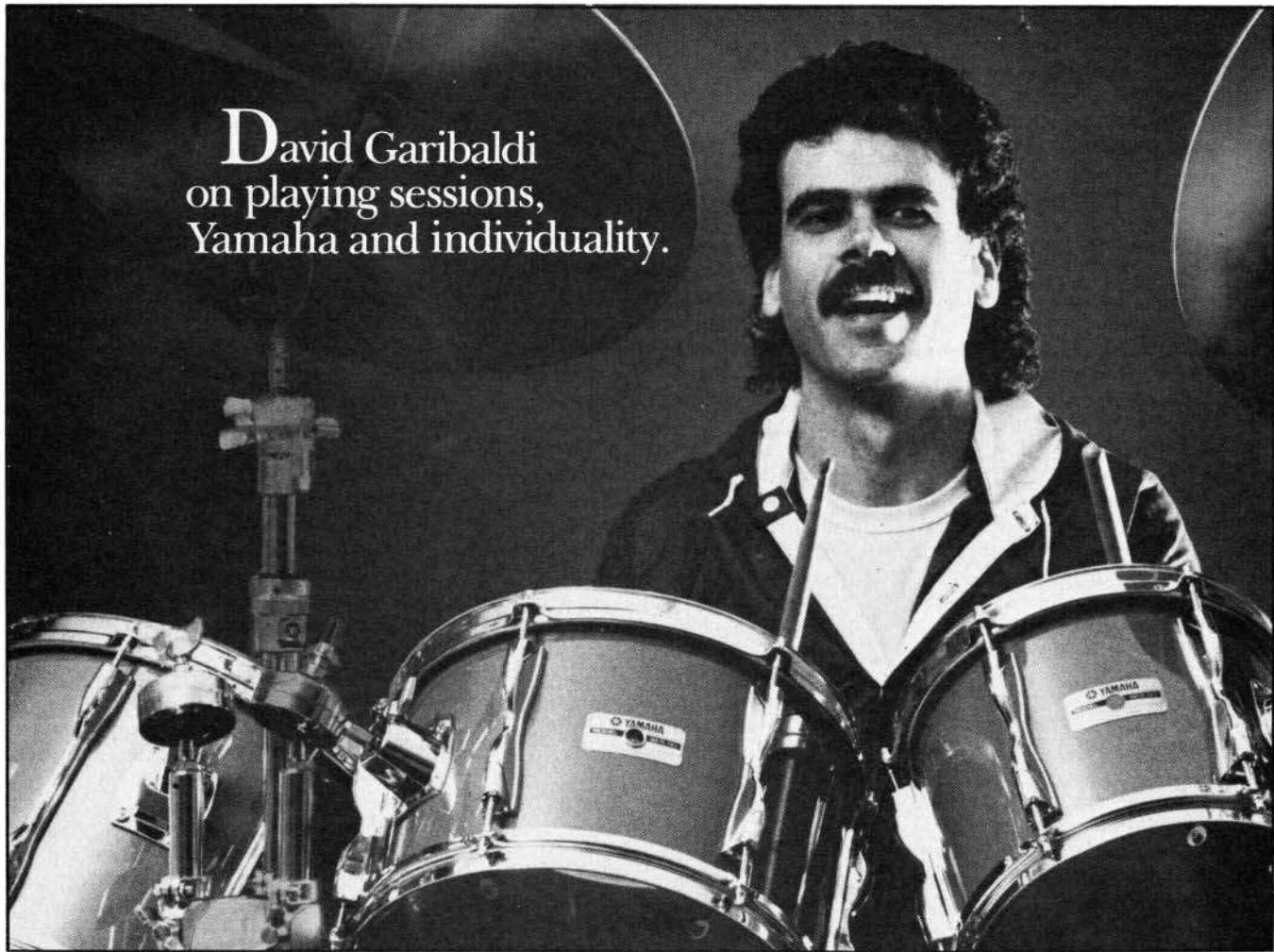
STRICTLY TECHNIQUE

by Ron Jordan

Sextuplets: Variations On A Theme

Practice Exercise 1 to develop a base pattern for sextuplets. Exercise 2 doubles each note into 16ths to form sextuplets, or an accented single-stroke roll. Double-stroking, as in Exercise 3, produces an unaccented long roll which is very efficient in triplet-based feels and quick tempos. Exercise 4 applies double-paradiddle sticking with the appropriate accent. Another variation is shown in Exercise 5, this time using paradiddle-diddle sticking. Exercise 6 utilizes an alternated single-paradiddle sticking and is sometimes called a para-triplet. The last exercise produces a double-stroked four-stroke roll by dropping the last two notes in each grouping of six. Exercises 4 and 5 are particularly effective when played around the drumset with cross-sticking. All of these variations are great for warm-ups and flexibility practice.

David Garibaldi on playing sessions, Yamaha and individuality.



"There's a way to play in the studio and there's a way to play live. When I first moved to L.A. and started doing sessions, guys would tell me that I sounded like a 'live' player. It's in the approach, because with live work you can play a lot busier than you can on tape. You have to get right to the point when you record, especially for the commercial type of recording that goes on out here. They want you to play the right stuff and that doesn't mean playing a lot."

"Tower of Power was built to a large degree on the way that I played. Working with people here, I had to learn to turn that kind of stuff off and play what the *music* required."

"Of course, there're fundamental skills you should have: you should be able to read really well and it's also important to know how to make your instrument sound right. Getting a good recording sound with your instrument is almost more important than reading these days. And you have to spend a long time working on different things so you can get comfortable with your abilities. You have to persevere and stay faithful to what you're doing."

"I really like the quality of Yamaha's drums."

The sound of the snare and bass drum works for everything I do. The wood snare drum is a knockout. It combines the warmth of the wood sound with the brightness of a metal drum — so you get the best of both worlds. The bass drum is fantastic, really thick-sounding, with a lot of punch. Very nice for recording and I've also been using the drums for playing live around town."

"You're going to reach a point where you get tired of playing what everybody else can do, and you're going to have to come up with some things of your own if you want longevity. Music is an art form and it's expressive in that you can say whatever you want. You should never feel boxed into a corner where you have to play a certain way just to work. There's a handful of drummers everybody wants to play like, and they are the 'individuals.'"

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SHOW DRUMMERS' SEMINAR

by Simon Goodwin

The Drummer As Musical Director

In the *Show and Studio* column in July '83, I wrote about backing the club show. This time, I would like to discuss the situation in which the two vital roles of show drummer and show musical director (hereafter referred to as the M.D.) are combined in the same person.

Taken in the widest possible context, the responsibilities of the M.D. can be numerous and varied. An M.D. might help to produce the show, or choose and arrange the material. The M.D. might also be a permanent feature of the show, traveling to all the locations and looking after the musical side of things for the artists. You will come across M.D.s like this when you do show-backing jobs.

What we are concerned with now is the situation when the show does not carry its own M.D. and you, the drummer, are asked to assume the role for the occasion. This can happen for a variety of reasons. You might be the bandleader, or you might do the count-ins at the beginning of numbers when your band is doing its own spot. In these cases, it is often assumed that you will be show M.D. (usually without people stopping to consider how much weightier a job this can be). It might be that you have had experience in backing shows and the other members of the band haven't, or you might know this particular show very well while the other musicians don't. Sometimes you find that an act is particularly rhythm/percussion oriented. In this case, you are playing the major backing instrument and it is logical for other people to take their lead from you.

If for any of these reasons you are chosen as M.D., it means that you are the leader while the show is in progress. *There can be no half measures.* There are often other people in the band who figure that, because you are "only" a drummer, you are less of a musician than they are. They might even be right, but they still must understand that their responsibility is to follow you. You must take the line that you are in charge; if they disagree with you, they have to go along with you anyway. If you go wrong, then everybody is wrong. Even that is preferable to half the band being right and the other half being wrong! Having said this, it must be remembered that any musical performance with other people is teamwork. You need the cooperation of the other musicians. Be diplomatic; don't be a dictator. If you cause re-

sentment, you are not helping things along. In extreme cases, you might even find somebody who is prepared to screw things up just to bring *you* down—a situation to be avoided at all costs.

A drummer/M.D. can be at a disadvantage in certain cases. You might find artists who don't actually understand their own charts, so that if any questions come up at the rehearsal, it is up to the M.D. to sort them out. If you are a drummer with a knowledge of a melody instrument, you can probably step in and tell people what chord to play, etc. However, if (like so many of us) you are "only" a drummer, you are relying on the other musicians to sort out these problems among themselves. If during the show someone gets lost, a keyboard or guitarist/M.D. can call out a few chords to get that person re-oriented. It is unlikely that a drummer/M.D. will be able to do this; the drummer can only help by calling out landmarks on the chart. Therefore, if another member of the band can help someone who is lost, so much the better. As I said—*teamwork*.

The Artist And The Artist's Parts

In the July '83 article, I said that many club drummers who are not strong readers manage to back shows by keeping their ears open and bluffing. If you are thinking of being an M.D., forget that. You can't direct other people if you don't know what you're doing yourself. I once directed a show when I could barely read, but I had been backing the show every night for weeks, and I was subbing for a keyboard/M.D. who was ill. This is an exceptional situation, but it does happen. Otherwise, the drummer/M.D. must be a good sight reader. You must be good enough, in fact, to be able to take care of the drums while keeping an eye and ear ready to catch warning signs of things going wrong around you.

The "show" might be one act, involving one or more people, or a series of acts. To simplify things, we will use legal jargon and lump the whole lot together—hereafter known as "the artists." Artists depend on you as their link with the rest of the band. You must establish a good relationship with them. If they are relaxed and have confidence in you, the show is likely to be that much better. Most artists have fairly straightforward parts, because they understand the risks of trying to be too am-

bitious when using musicians who don't know them. However, if you find that a particular number seems to be causing insurmountable problems at a rehearsal or talk-through, diplomatically suggest that it be dropped in favor of something safer.

Assuming that there are no problems during the performance, your responsibility can be defined as tempos and continuity—both vital ingredients. Make *absolutely* certain that you are in no doubt about anything. Know all the cues for starting numbers, know which numbers are segued, and know when the tag (play-off music) comes. Remembering tempos can be difficult if you are doing the show for the first time. Get the artist to tell you the tempo for each number, and then try it at that tempo to make sure there is no mistake. At a talk-through, this can be done by clicking your fingers and singing a few bars. Once you have established the speed for a number, don't expect to be able to remember it during the performance, unless it is a number that you play regularly anyway and the artist wants it at the same tempo at which you usually play it. The artist will give you a tempo. Equate this tempo, in your mind, with *any* other number which you play regularly and can pick up the right tempo for automatically. Now, write the title of this other number in *pencil* at the top of the part, and you have a fail-safe device for getting the number started at the correct speed.

It sometimes happens that, with the adrenaline flowing during the performance, artists will tend to speed a number up, perhaps unconsciously. Be sympathetic, and allow this to happen—with reason. Remember, though, that in some cases the artists might be great personalities and great entertainers, but not good musicians. In this case, there is always the danger that, if you allow them too much freedom, they will reach a stage where they can no longer fit in their words or their dance steps. They rely on you to hold them in check. Some artists are honest enough to point this out to the drummer before the show.

You will often find times when there is music being played, but the drums are not part of it. This might be a whole number in which the drums are "tacet," or it might be an out-of-tempo section. In either case, as M.D., you can't relax. You might need to conduct, but even if this isn't necessary,

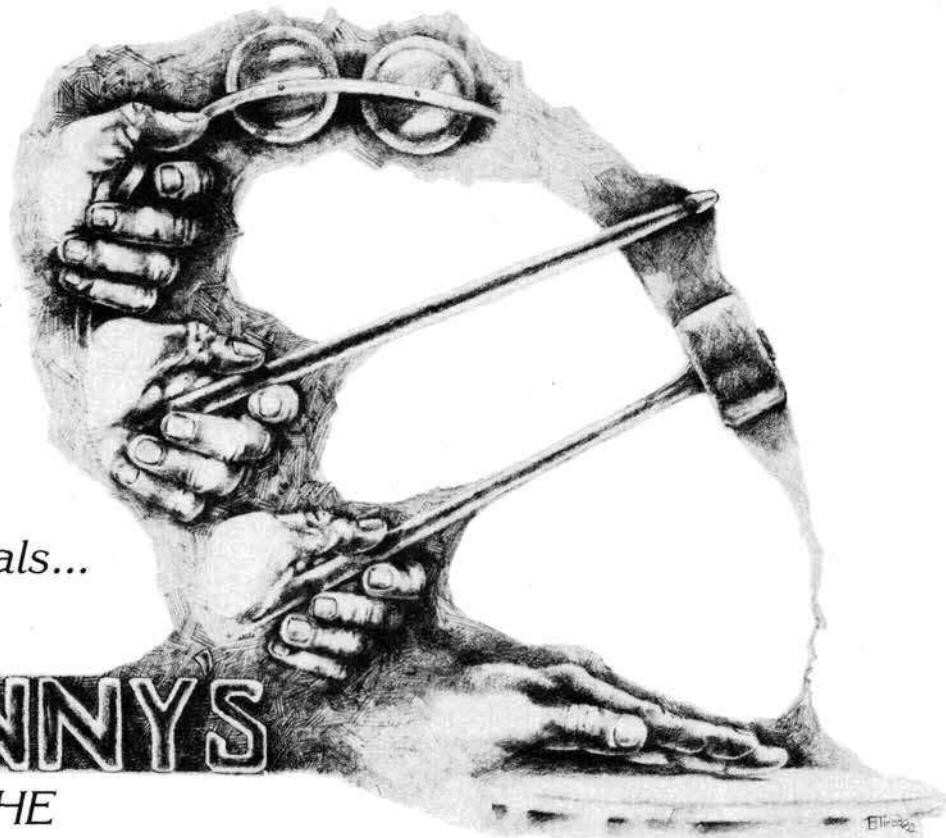
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you must know what is going on. At the end of an out-of-tempo section there might be musicians, apart from yourself, who have also been "faced" and who need to be brought in again. When a section has no tempo, counting bars can be a risky business. As M.D. you need more information than, for example, the "16 bars rest" marked on your drum part. Many drum parts carry the phrasing of the melody line above the top line; others have the words written in, which makes the part very easy to follow. If, on the other hand, your drum part contains no more information than what the drums are playing, it is wise to get hold of a score (conductor's copy) or a spare melody instrument part and have it on a separate music stand next to the drum part. A pencilled arrow pointing to the place at which you start following the other part allows you to get your eyes onto the right place immediately.

Positioning

In order to be effective as an M.D., you must be seen by the other members of the band and you must be able to see the artist. The club show often takes place on the dance floor, in front of the stage. Quite often the club drummer is placed towards the back of the stage with other musicians obscuring the dance floor from view. If you find yourself in this position and about to M.D. a show, you must insist on the stage being rearranged. It is possible that the other players can position themselves so that they are not in your way, and at the same time, they can swivel themselves around so that they can see you. Remember that it is not always essential that they should be able to see the artist. It is usually enough for them to see you and for you to see the artist. If necessary, the drums should be positioned at the front of the stage. Your music stand, or stands, should be placed so that you can look at the music or the artist by moving your eyes only, not your head.

Getting The Show Started

When a club show starts, the order of events is usually as follows: The bandleader is told that the artist is ready, and the leader in turn asks the audience to clear the floor because the show is about to begin. Microphones are placed on the floor, the lighting is set, the band starts the play-on music, and either during this music or directly preceding it, the artist is announced. This all sounds simple, but unless properly coordinated, every step in this sequence can go wrong. I know—I have seen it happen. The artist is waiting to enter, but the bandleader can't see this, and nobody tells the bandleader that the artist is ready. When the audience is asked to take their seats, they just mill around. Nobody remembers to put a microphone where the artist can reach it. The individ-

ual doing the lighting has disappeared. Even if somebody is ready to make the announcement, the person designated doesn't know when to speak or what to say. And then, when the artist finally appears, all the lights go out except for a single spot, and the musicians can no longer see to read their parts.

"Hiccups" in the smooth running of the show right from the start can get everyone off on the wrong foot, and that makes your job as M.D. even harder. Unless you know that the club has a reliable machinery for getting all these things organized, I suggest that you organize them yourself. It is only a matter of having a quick word with each of the people concerned and making sure that their idea of what is going to happen corresponds to yours.

Drummer/M.D./Emcee

There is often a regular club emcee or an unoccupied singer who can introduce the artist, but if not, this job can also fall to the M.D. There are two usual places for the announcement to come: one is directly before the play-on music; the other is at a prearranged point during that music. A "timp" roll on the floor tom is a popular, atmosphere-building accompaniment for an introduction. Whether you or someone else is making the announcement, you should try to lead into the music so that it will start at the same second the announcement finishes. You should be able to establish in rehearsal the point where you need to start counting in the music, in order to get it properly synchronized with the introduction. If you are announcing, obviously a verbal count is impossible. If you are not playing, clicking your sticks together is the answer. If you are rolling on a drum, then either rimshot accents or some nice, loud bass drum beats (or both together) will do very nicely. But you must warn the other musicians that this is what you intend to do. Otherwise if they hear you announcing, they might expect the count to come after the announcement and not during it. If you are announcing, there are other things to remember: Make sure that you have a suitable microphone and stand, remember to speak during the intro vamps and tag music, and most important, *don't forget the name of the artist!*

Conducting While Playing

Assuming that the show parts are clearly written and that the musicians are good readers, you shouldn't need to do much more than make sure the band starts and finishes each number properly. Pass cues and tempo information to the other musicians as clearly as possible. If you hear a cue coming up, warn the other players that the next number is about to start. A stick raised above your head where they can all see it is as good a method as any. Don't start looking around at everybody, be-

cause this can break your own concentration. When you start the number, make sure that your count is clear to everybody. Clicking your sticks together as well as counting can be helpful. Your count needs to be loud enough to be heard, but be careful not to overdo it. Keep in mind the mood of the number. A loud, fast, rock number can be started with a shouted count, but if it is a soft, gentle ballad, the count needs to be in keeping with the piece. If a number is segued straight after the one before, don't wait to check that the other people are ready. Go straight into your count as soon as the previous number finishes.

Numbers tend to end either on a staccato note, with everybody automatically cutting together, or with a long chord which is held until the M.D. stops it. In the case of the staccato note, it is a good idea to conduct it just to make sure that everyone stops together. You can lift your head back and then jerk it forward as you hit the last note. If you have a free hand, a stick held up where it will be seen striking the air on that note won't do any harm either. When ending a sustained chord, conduct with your head and with a free hand, if you have one. The chances are that you will be playing a roll so it is easier to accompany the head movement with an audible signal, like a rimshot or a cymbal crash. While the final chord is being held, watch the artist for some sort of visual signal for you to cut the band off. The same method of conducting with the head can be used, if necessary, during a number. You might find that a number needs to have a slight shift in the tempo, or that the band hasn't settled down properly at the tempo you are playing. You will, of course, emphasize the correct tempo in your own playing, but a visual guide can also be a help.

A few other signals might be required during a performance, and it is a good idea to have some up your sleeve. The most likely mistake for an artist to make is to miss a repeat and go on to a second-time bar after going only once through the section. To make sure that everybody can reorient themselves, two fingers raised for all to see can say "second time." The same signal is sometimes used to herald a key change (in this case "two sharps"), so it is advisable to let the musicians know that you won't be signaling any key changes. Unless they have one on their parts, they shouldn't assume that you mean a key change anyway.

Changes in dynamics can be reflected in your playing. However, here again a visual signal can also help. If you are reducing the volume, you can put your head forward and try to give the impression of shrinking. Large, slightly exaggerated movements can convey an increase in volume. If this doesn't work and you need the change in dynamics which just isn't happening, you

must resort to a hand signal. The hand going up, palm upwards, means "increase volume"; going down, palm downwards means "reduce volume."

Conducting While Not Playing

This is something that only experienced M.D.s feel comfortable doing. Fortunately, you are unlikely to find artists turning up at your club with a string or brass section (to augment the regular band) and no M.D. of their own. In most cases, the numbers or sections in which the drums are "tacet" have just one instrument (usually the piano) accompanying the voice. When this comes up, you can usually leave it to the keyboard player to feel the nuances of the singer's performance. Often artists will sing a line out of tempo while the accompanist plays some chords behind them and fills in—also out of tempo—between that line and the next. Put very simply, this is a musical meeting of two souls, and they don't need the help of a conducting drummer. But it might just happen that more than one instrument is playing. Where an individual player can be free to improvise, two or more will be playing specific parts, and (particularly if they haven't played them before) they will need a point of reference to keep them together. As M.D., you must provide this. This is where your conductor's score or spare melody part (mentioned earlier) is essential. If you are only used to reading drum parts, this can

be rather intimidating. You can prepare yourself by getting hold of some scores which go with records. You can follow the phrasing of the melody line on the chart while listening to it.

Like all the other directions you give, your conducting must be clear and easy to follow. Probably the easiest thing to do is to simply beat time in the air, making each quarter note a downbeat, coming up on the 8ths between them. I have come across M.D.s who, on slow, short, out-of-tempo sections, conducted each note. There is an approved method, which is to conduct in a "frame." This means that in a 4/4 number your hand describes a square: down on the first beat, across on the second, up on the third and across to where you started on the fourth. The square can be larger for slower numbers and can be adapted for different time signatures (3/4, for instance, would be a triangle). To cut the band, either at the end of the section or at the end of a note which is held, use a short, circular motion (counter-clockwise is best) to differentiate from a beat of the bar, and finish with a flick of the wrist out to one side. It sounds strange described like that, but you've probably seen people do it. Your conducting is likely to cause some amusement at first among the other musicians, but don't be put off by this. As a drummer, you hold the band together. As an M.D., you hold the show together. Conducting while you are not playing is a logical extension of both jobs. The musicians will usu-

ally admit that it is necessary.

Some Final Thoughts

This is a very complex and specialized subject. I don't want to leave you with the impression that you can assimilate the points made in this article and be a great show M.D. Emergencies crop up, and you will only be able to cope with them calmly and efficiently with experience. Unfortunately, there is an element of being "thrown in at the deep end" here. You either M.D. a show or you don't. There is no halfway point for easing yourself into it. Top drummers/M.D.s like Bobby Rossen and Lee Gurst probably (but I don't know) gained their experience by working with club acts who turned up without M.D.s of their own. After gaining experience in this way, you can put yourself in line for being a regular M.D. with an artist or show.

In all humility, I must point out that my own approach to musical directing was sufficiently tentative for me to feel the need for a second opinion before committing my ideas to paper. I enlisted the help of Phil Solomon, a very experienced drummer/M.D. Phil is currently in the process of writing a book entitled *Show Drumming Starts Here*, in which the points made in this article will be covered in greater depth.

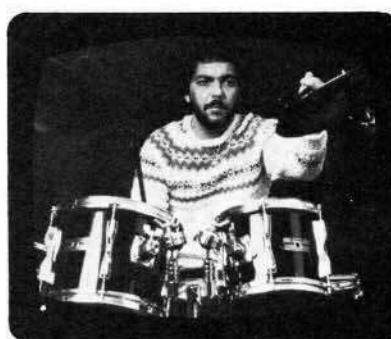


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Stacey continued from page 25

of the drums to be part of the sound. The old way was to mike the drums with the mic's at a high level. You really had to be clean and precise in your playing, but with virtually no dynamics. Buddy Harman was an expert at that. That was one style.

Now they cut the levels down on the mic's. You're in the drum booth with baffles and everything around you so that you're not going to leak onto other tracks. The levels are cut down on the mic's so you can play harder, but then all of the sympathetic ring and any little overtones that come out of that room are not going to pick up on the mic's, because of the low levels. This makes the engineer and producer happy, and still gives me the freedom to play with expression. Noise gates are also used, but I prefer not to use them.

I've used the old-style method where they'd have the mic's level so hot that, when you'd play a tom-tom fill and end up on the floor tom, the note from the floor tom would "sweep" through a bass guitar note. It would sound like the bass guitar player was out of tune. After checking the tracks, they found, to their surprise, that there wasn't a tuning problem after all. The tom tone, which just happened to be in the same register, was sweeping through the bass player's note, making the intonation problem.

SF: Who are some drummers whose sound you admire?

JS: Billy Cobham, Steve Gadd, Jeff Porcaro, Steve Smith, Kenny Malone, Jerry Kroon, Jimmy Hyde, and Larrie Londin,

to name a few.

SF: What do you consider the difference in playing live and playing in the studio?

JS: When I play live, I feel that everyone is inspiring each other. I may play something to inspire the pianist, who will, in turn, play something to inspire the bass player, and so on. Then, on really good nights—not every night—there are times that you remember when, man, everything was perfect. Everybody's one, just like we all thought alike.

In the studio, you go in and they've got you secluded in a room. The producer is in the engineer's booth. They've got a talk-back and everybody can hear them. But if I have a question, I'm in this drum booth bending over, hollering through my snare mic, trying to get somebody's attention. Of course, the guitar player is running down lines with the steel guitar player or the strings. It seems like the rhythm guitar player is always tuning. The piano player is playing chords. I'm really excluded from the rest of the band. Then there's a little glass window that you try to look through, that's got reflections on it. You look to see if they're looking back, but you can't even tell if their heads move. It's an uncomfortable situation, to say the least. And when you play, you're basically doing rhythm tracks of charts that they already have ideas on. You can be creative to a certain extent.

When you start running the song down, usually the artist is there, but they're not really trying to do the voice part. The artist

is just putting a reference vocal down. Everybody's decided where they're going to fill and what licks they're going to do. They run through the basic rhythm track, but you don't usually know what the string, vocal or horn section may be doing later at an overdub session. The days of full sessions, where everyone is doing their parts at the same time, are few and far between.

I hear records that I've done and think, "Gee, if I'd known that the strings were going to do that, I'd have played something different." You have no control over it because they're not there at the session to influence you.

SF: Do you have specific albums that you enjoy listening to over and over again?

JS: Yeah, I go through phases where I listen to current rock or country albums. Now I'm more into jazz—Oscar Peterson. I guess I didn't listen enough to him while I was growing up. You're talking about someone who has complete knowledge and control of his instrument. This guy amazes me.

SF: Knowing the respect you have for the great jazz players like Rich and Bellson, do you think they could do the type of session work that you do?

JS: Well, knowing how those guys play, the natural thing is to think, "Of course they can do it." But after talking to those kinds of players, most seem to feel that they couldn't. They're just not geared for that. Another point to consider is whether those players would want to do it. What we're doing in Nashville is a lot harder than you would think. It's deep concentration and making yourself not play, maybe, everything you feel. You never can second guess producers; just when you think you know what they want, that's what they don't want. The same way with the engi-

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neers—just when you think that's what the sound should be, they change it. It's funny that way. It's harder for the jazz players to restrict themselves to playing certain lines and basic rhythm patterns. In turn, it would be technically impossible for someone like me to do what the jazz musicians are doing. Knowing your limitations is important.

SF: What is your basic studio drum setup?
JS: I'm now playing Ludwig drums. My bass drum is 16x22, and my concert power toms are 9x8 and 9x10. Also, I use the 11x12 and 12x13 power toms mounted on my bass drum, and two floor toms—14x14 or 16x16—according to what I need. I'm using three snare drums: the *Colliseum* snare, which is 8x14 with a P87 strainer; a 5x14 *Rock Concert* snare with a P70 strainer; and a 6 1/2 X 14 *Rock Concert* with a P70 strainer. These are all four-ply wood drums. I use a variety of sizes of sticks.

SF: How about your cymbals?

JS: All of my cymbals are either medium or heavy Avedis Zildjians. I'm using a 20" ride, a 13" and 16" splash, medium weight, and then another heavy pair of 13" and 16" splash cymbals. My hi-hats are 14".

SF: Have you ever broken a cymbal?

JS: No, not exactly. I've got a cymbal that cost me—you'll like this—about \$900. I bought a ride cymbal when I was about 19. I was working in a club at the time. They had just come out with the sizzle cymbals. I'd tried hanging a bathtub chain, taping

pennies, and the whole bit. But when I saw the rivets in the cymbals, I knew that was the thing to do. A friend of mine said, "Look, you can put rivets in a cymbal yourself." He marked them off for me and showed me how to use a rivet gun. I took the cymbal off the stand and went to the club where I was working that night. The club had a lighted dance floor. I was so excited about the fact that I could put those rivets in myself that I was really anxious to start working on it. I turned the cymbal over and drilled the holes, and at the same time, I was drilling holes into that lighted dance floor. The club owner held it out of my salary. I think it came to about \$900 that I had to pay for that floor.

SF: That's a good story. How about the drumheads you use in the studio?

JS: I use several combinations of heads. I like the Ludwig heads because they come in several thicknesses. I like the heavy clear *Rockers* on top because they're a little thicker than a *Pinstripe* head. I use Ludwig's *Ensemble* medium coated on the bottoms of my toms. On top I'm using the clear heavy *Rocker* heads. I get that gutsy tone I like with this combination.

SF: Are there any technical exercises that you would suggest for anyone pursuing a career as a studio drummer?

JS: First of all, you've got to practice and think time, because if you can't play time, no matter what your technical abilities are, you won't work in the studio. Also, I'm a rudimental freak; rudiments come up so

many times in all types of playing. Those are two of the most important things I would tell anyone interested in studio playing. I learned to play certain licks when I was a kid, before I had any technical training. Hell, my sticking patterns were wrong, and when I went into the Air Force, I had to go back and redo just about everything I'd learned as a kid. My teacher would show me something and I'd say, "I've been doing it like *this*." He'd say, "Well you can keep doing it that way, but the *correct* way is *this*." I was so thick headed. My attitude was, "Well, what's the difference if I do it my way, as long as it sounds the same?" But I soon realized that without the correct sticking patterns, your playing will definitely suffer. Now I am especially aware of how important it is, because in the studio, where everything is microphoned individually, your mistakes become very obvious!

SF: What's ahead for John Stacey?

JS: Musically speaking, I've reached some of my goals. I always want to be a better player; I play and practice every day. I want to be as good as I can be in my profession. I don't feel like I am yet. I learn more each day. I'm continuously calling cohorts who do the same thing I do, and they give me input on their side of it. I try to do the same. I'm also learning more about the business end of music. My goal now is mainly to try to keep doing better and better—not materially, but musically. That's where I'm headed.

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by Chuck Kerrigan

Expanding The Paradiddle - Part 1

The exercises in this article should be practiced with relaxed muscles and control. Playing the exercises with tense muscles, lack of concentration and no control will be a waste of time. The hands, arms and fingers should be relaxed, so as not to hinder the free actions and reactions of the stick.

One way of expanding the paradiddle is by changing the accent placement, as follows:

1. > R L R R
L R L L

2. > R L R R
L R L L

3. > R L R R
L R L L

4. > R L R R
L R L L

5. > > R L R R
L R L L

6. > > R L R R
L R L L

7. > > R L R R
L R L L

8. > > R L R R
L R L L

9. > > R L R R
L R L L

10. > > R L R R
L R L L

11. > > > R L R R
L R L L

12. > > > R L R R
L R L L

13. > R L R R
L R L L

After these basic accent permutations have been mastered, any two (or more) of them may be combined for some interesting patterns.

(a) > R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L
R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L

(b) >> R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L
R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L

(c) > > R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L
R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L

(d) >> > R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L
R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L

For practice on the drumset, try these suggestions:

I. Right-hand accents on floor tom

Left-hand accents on small tom

Unaccented notes on snare

Bass drum on 1,2,3 and 4

Hi-hat on 2 and 4

II. All right-hand strokes on closed hi-hat

All left-hand strokes on snare drum

Bass drum plays any of the following:

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

(iv)

(v)

After mastering all of the above exercises, you may further expand these paradiddles by replacing all right-hand accents with right flams and all left-hand accents with left flams.

(a) > R L R R
L R L L

(b)

RRLL R RRLLR LRL R L RLR LLRLR L

(c) and (d) use drumset suggestion I.

(c)

R LL R R L L R L L L R L R L R L L R L R L

(d)

RR L R R R L R LL R R L R L R L R L L R R L L

Finally, using this same idea, replace all right-hand accents with right-handed drags, and all left-hand accents with left-handed drags.

(a)

LLR L RLLR L RRR L L RRR L R R
RRL R LRR L R LLL R R LLL R L L

(b)

R L R RLR L L RLR R L RL L
RR LL RR RR RR LL LL RR LL RR

(c) uses drumset suggestion I.

LLRRRL R RRR LLLR L L RRR LLLR R

(c)

RRLLL R L LLL RRR L R R LLL RRR L L
> > > > > > >

In part 2, we will explore additional methods of expanding the paradiddle.

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Playing on the pads with drumsticks is good for an overall drumset effect or for practicing, but the bass drum and hi-hat controls are difficult to use at first because they are not pedal-operated as we drummers are accustomed to. The hi-hat open/close device is a manually operated switch on the control panel and the bass drum is operated in either one of two ways: by an automatic straight-four beat from the built-in computer, or by a manually operated switch on the control panel.

For those who have a *Synsonics* drum and would like a pedal-operated hi-hat and bass drum or double bass, the following procedure describes how you can make them yourself, without any knowledge of electronics required.

The *Synsonics* is already equipped with an accessory jack on its side panel. This is the input for the foot pedals. The following materials listed are readily available at an electronics supply store for under five dollars, and for the pedal bases, any aerosol can lid will be sufficient, as long as it is made of metal (for strength purposes).

Materials Required

- 1) Single-pole, normally open, momentary-contact push-button switch. Two will be required for a single bass drum and a hi-hat; three for a double bass drum and a hi-hat. Remember that these are going to be activated by your foot, so get a switch that is strong enough to take it. (Each switch should come with one hexagonal lock-nut. Getting an extra one for added security would be a good idea.)
- 2) A five-pin DIN-type connector plug.

- 3) Two-conductor hookup wire.
- 4) Two metal aerosol can tops (three for double bass setups).
- 5) Small rubber grommets (one per can top).
- 6) A drill and a soldering iron.

Procedure

First, drill a hole the size of the switch body in the top center of the aerosol can lid, and another one on the side, large enough for the two-conductor wire to pass through.



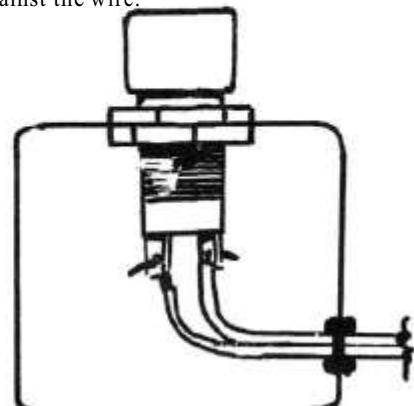
This will be the homemade pedal base. You will need one for the hi-hat and one for each bass drum.

Next, cut off a five-foot length of the two-conductor wire and strip off about a half-inch of insulation from each of the ends. Solder the two bare leads on one end of the wire to the two terminals on the switch.

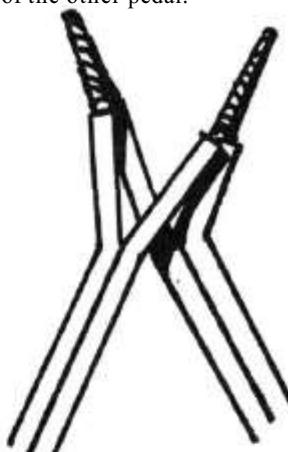


Mount the switch into the top hole of the pedal base (aerosol can top) and thread the wire through the side hole. Use a small rub-

ber grommet to prevent the sharp edge of the drilled hole from cutting through the insulation and possibly shorting out against the wire.



If you want two bass drum pedals, take the opposite ends of the two wires of two completed pedals and connect them in parallel. That is, solder one lead from one pedal to one lead of the other pedal. Then take the other lead that is remaining from one pedal and solder it to the remaining lead of the other pedal.

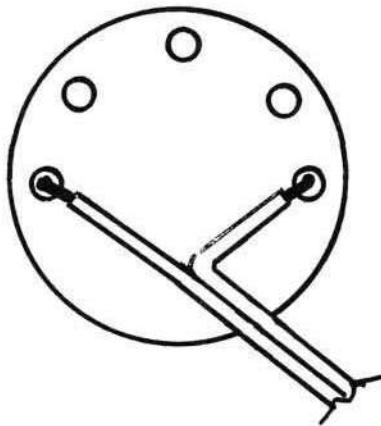


Now, both bass drum pedals together will use two leads instead of four. From now on, I will refer to the bass drum pedal(s) as singular, because the same procedure is used for connecting up single and double bass drum pedals.

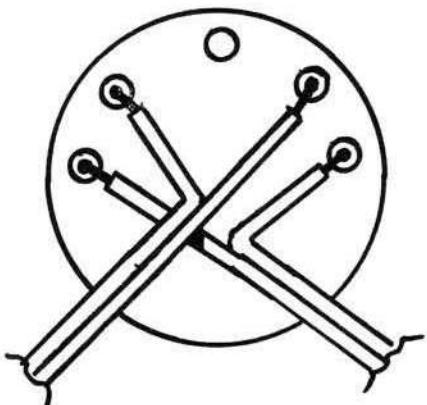
The next step is to solder the leads from the pedals to the five-pin connector. Looking at the back of the connector, there are five inputs going across the top of it in a semi-circular pattern. The bass drum pedal will have one lead soldered to the input on the left, and the other lead soldered to the input on the right. This leaves the three middle inputs open.

by Michael Lauria

Synsonics



The hi-hat pedal will have one lead soldered to the second input from the left and the other lead soldered to the second input from the right.



The middle input is not used.

Make sure that the soldered connections on the switches and the five-pin connector are secure and not touching each other (shorting). The five-pin connector can now be plugged into the accessory jack on the *Synsonics* drum, and if the pedals slide excessively on a smooth floor, a small piece of carpet can be used, which should restrict forward movement while playing. If a more permanent mounting surface is desired, a small piece of plywood lying flat on the floor with the pedals screwed or nailed on gives good results. Or, possibly, you could attach an angled "footboard" for each pedal to the plywood, giving a more natural pedal-type feel. In any case, use your own judgment and set up an arrangement that feels comfortable to you.

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but to work on their hands so that they can come back to him and be able to play what he shows them.

"I give my students the basics whether they like it or not, and I couldn't care less what they like or don't like. I never know where a player might wind up 10 or 15 years down the road, so it's my job to give a student the whole thing."

The "whole thing" is a comprehensive, disciplined approach that Murray developed over the years from his own teaching, from watching others, and from being analytical. Much of the study is spent perfecting the stroke and most of the instruction takes place on a single drum pad. The Spivack philosophy is that only by gaining absolute control of the speed, force and direction of a drumstick will the player be able to master the instrument. It's relatively easy to understand the logic of that philosophy. Applying it is another matter.

"Drumming is the single stroke—the double stroke and the flam. This is all we have," says Murray. "The rest of it is just a series of sequences: what follows what and what precedes what."

Books are used to reinforce and support the continuity of the student's progress. Spivack takes what he feels is the best from each book. "The 'nitty gritty' is not in the back of the book. It's usually in the first three pages," he says. "I like the older.

simpler books. I have most of the newer ones, but for me, they move too fast."

Accents & Rebounds and Slick Control by Stone; *Standard Snare Drum Method* by Podemski; *The Flocton Method* by White (out of print); *Portraits In Rhythm* by Cirone; *Modern Reading Text In Odd Times* by Bellson and Breines; *Rudimental Swing Solos* by Wilcoxon; *Kleine Trommel* by Eckhardt Kuene (not available in the U.S.); and *Rhythmic Patterns* by Whaley and Mooney are the texts that Murray draws from.

Murray hasn't written his own books because, "You teach by observing. The teacher should be able to recognize what's wrong with each student and correct it for that student. It's impossible to put that into book form."

Instruction starts with the rolls—two wrist strokes on each hand with 16th notes starting at quarter note equals 72, and working up to a maximum of 152 to 160 beats per minute. The rebound is taken as a separate exercise, starting and ending at the same metronome settings.

Between the maximum speed of the wrist strokes and the slowest speed of the rebound are "transition points" where the drummer switches from wrist to rebound at the same rate of speed. The development of these transition points is very important in helping to facilitate stick control.

The concepts of up and down strokes are

introduced with flams. Actually, the student has already been doing them with rolls, but isn't aware of it because the concept hasn't been explained yet. "You don't need to tell the students any more than they are ready to know. Sometimes, what you don't tell them is just as important as what you do," explains Murray.

Ruffs and drags are taught in terms of their relationship to the seven-stroke roll. Up strokes are taught as a way of reducing the number of wrist movements, and as a means of increasing overall speed.

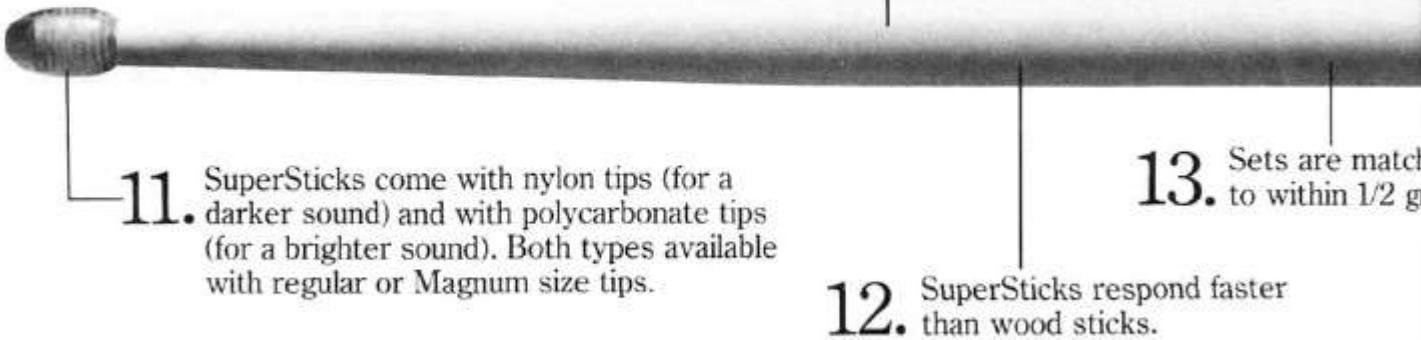
When students reach exercise one on page 10 of Stone's *Stick Control*, they begin to work on the single-stroke roll. Gradually they'll work up to playing 64th notes with 16th notes equalling 208. Later, the finger method is taught, "as a supplement, not a substitute, to the wrist method."

As each stroke is perfected, the underlying principles are explained. An integral part of Murray's approach is his belief that the part of the body most in need of development is the brain. "If I just wanted to build up my arms, I'd go out and get some barbells and weights," he jokes. "I wouldn't try to do it with a puny pair of drumsticks. You teach the brain; you talk to your head, and your head tells your hands what to do."

Murray feels very strongly that students should be encouraged to question and challenge what teachers tell them. A

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teacher should be able to prove the value of each student's course of study. Respect between the student and the teacher is a product of the student's insistence on proof, and the teacher's capacity to provide it. Murray explains, "Drummers should have better reasons for the things they do. If it doesn't make common sense, then you can't sell it to me. It has to make sense to me and it's got to make common sense to the students before I can teach it to them. I've got to prove everything I tell them."

"A teacher says, 'Do this,' and the student doesn't dare question it. That's as stupid as if I told you to go up on the roof and jump off. You would have every right to say, 'Before I break my neck, what the hell do you have me jumping off the roof for? At least let me know why I'm doing it.'

"I've found that most students are very bright. They're searching for information. If a student doesn't play something right, then I blame my explanation. The presumption is that the students understand, but that isn't always true. If they understand, then they begin to do; if they don't understand, then they don't do. It's that simple.

"This is why I have to show as much enthusiasm as if each lesson were the first one I had ever taught. I have to make the students believe that each lesson is the most important lesson they've ever had. Otherwise, I can be talking to them and they

won't have heard a word I said."

Murray sees each student for about an hour every other week. He places a large share of responsibility for improvement on the student. If the students don't practice, "I get rid of 'em." If they don't intend to improve at least 75%, "I don't take them." If they're unwilling to go back and work on the basics, "Hey, I didn't send for them." The tough, uncompromising line has worked for better than 50 years.

Due to his career in the movie business, Murray never had to play or teach drums to earn an income. He hasn't made much of an attempt to keep up with what other teachers and players have done. He doesn't go to see his students perform and he rarely listens to any of their music. In fact, he doesn't even keep a pair of drumsticks and a pad at his home.

But these are not flaws or failings. Somehow, by avoiding the changing trends of the drum business, Murray has managed to keep his system current, or perhaps ageless. He continues to be successful because, by his own admission, the only measure of a teacher's success is the ability to communicate knowledge to the student.

"Whether or not the student goes on and has a successful playing career doesn't matter at all," Murray concludes. "The only satisfaction that I can have as a teacher is that the students understand

what I've taught them. A teacher is successful if the students learn."

Gruber continued from page 27

sing—they approach whatever they're performing. The key word is approach. That's technical. Phrasing is something else—that's the hearing process.

As the students continue to play, I'm able to estimate what they're doing, and assess how they're hearing. Then I might say, "Invent something simple based on what you just played. Don't try to play fast just for the sake of playing fast. Just relax and invent something."

Now this may or may not be relevant, because we're sitting together for the first time, and you might not be doing what you can actually do. But I'm getting an opportunity to view what you're doing at that moment, which gives me the opportunity to estimate where you're at. Then I'd try to instill some confidence and have you do it again. I'd point out some bad habits—if they existed—where you're not utilizing fundamentally correct natural principles. I'd make you aware that you could do what you're doing a lot easier. When people ask, "How do you do that?" the best answer is: *easily*.

That's how I'd approach a first meeting—trying not to get too complicated. Then I'd have you play the drumset. Ac-

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cording to what music you're into, I'd have you play something you're comfortable with, so I could see how you phrase, move, and what it is that might be prohibiting you from accomplishing what you may or may not be hearing. At that point, I can see where I have to go with you to help you make the best music you can on your drums.

SF: We were once discussing the concept of time as it relates to rhythm, harmony and melody.

FG: That's called "hearing."

SF: Is that something you had to develop, or did it come naturally?

FG: Any person who wants to achieve is always asking questions and is open to answers. I've been privileged—at different times in my life—to be around some of the best players in the world, and I've always asked questions and learned from the answers.

Having grown up in New York City around a lot of people who didn't speak English, and having gone to school in East Harlem, it was necessary that we speak somehow. One of the things we used to do to communicate and have fun in the schoolyard was to play on soup cans with nickels, or on trash cans with dowel sticks from shop class. In that way I could develop a relationship with kids I might otherwise not have been able to talk to. It was relatively easy to sing back the things they were playing, and it made me feel really good. It was another language. It wasn't anything mystical. It was the language of sound. It had sequence, logic and movement. It was the same as kids playing ball in the street—only we didn't play ball; we played rhythms. In that way we talked to each other.

As I grew a little bit, I found myself around persons who were more formally trained and I'd ask questions. The process of communicating this to students is a learning process for the teacher also. You learn from your students. They provoke you and teach you to teach, because they ask questions and make you look into yourself for answers.

It doesn't mean that when you come up with an answer it's always going to work. But if you find that you're coming up with an answer and it is working, before you know it a sequence evolves. It's not mechanical. It's a creative process. You find yourself able to answer questions more readily as the years go on. You find that

you're in a position to solve problems faster than you formerly could. As you teach, you continually learn. It's endless and it's a true joy.

As far as hearing goes, that's God given. If that gift is present, then all things are possible. It wouldn't hurt for drummers to learn a keyboard instrument. It would aid in their harmonic and melodic development, and the understanding of the music they're trying to play. Another way of approaching that is to listen a lot and expose yourself to all kinds of music. Also, to develop a fuller concept and play sympathetically for the music you're playing, you should learn the lyrics. Most great players usually know the lyrics. Lyrics affect your conception and phrasing if you understand them correctly.

Study a lot to learn harmony. For learning rhythm, if you're creating, then spontaneously sing everything you play. Say what you play; play what you say.

SF: What do you do with a student who has an excellent concept of rhythm and has four-way independence down, but the knowledge of melody and harmony falls just short of being tragic?

FG: Who has anything down? The growth process is forever. You want to find out if this four-way independence is developed along mechanical lines. How can we make this function in a way where it produces music? I'd find out if the students have built a cage for themselves with all these mechanical goodies.

SF: Might you back away from drumset teaching, and work on song forms and song interpretation?

FG: No, because every song writes its own form, and the only place where form comes before song is in music school. As to interpretation, it's really down to *hearing and feeling*. It isn't technical. It's in a gray area. It's like a thumbprint. You really have to deal with the individual on that one. As far as backing off drumset teaching—why? That's what I do. I teach an approach to the drums based on natural principles. Breaking those principles creates stress. That means the person is going to be trying forever, and trying is never doing. You've got to get the person to the point where, when others watch, they say, "Wow. This drummer is doing it." There's a vast difference between trying and doing.

SF: Is it necessary to know the rudiments?

FG: Let's ally drum rudiments to other instruments. You wouldn't start to learn piano or violin by playing parts from a Stravinsky octet. It's just ridiculous. You first have to learn touch and control so you don't abuse the instrument. You have to get familiar with the instrument to the point where you can really make some music. And there has to be some way or means for arriving at these objectives. Instruments other than drums utilize the scales.

So let's call the rudiments the scales of the drums. They can be deleted, creatively utilized, or thrown away in total later on. This is the decision of the individual players. They have the option on this as they grow and develop.

SF: Are there specific drum method books that you teach with?

FG: I don't use drum books as such. I make my own book as I go along. I take those things that I feel are valid from the available literature, and I tie them together into something that produces players who can make it in any area they choose.

In the George Lawrence Stone book *Stick Control*, just to learn the stickings is ridiculous. It proves nothing. George Lawrence Stone had *control* in mind. He didn't have in *mind stickings*. They are just a vehicle to achieve control. You have to have some decent guidance in order to do that. I don't want to sound too strong, but *Stick Control* and all of those kinds of books to date have been, from my point of view, misused. And I'll even say abused. Prior to getting into any particular book, I set up exercises for my students that prepare them for the difficulties ahead in these books. I know I have succeeded when they say to me, "This is too easy! It feels like it's playing itself!"

SF: What do you feel is the greatest disservice that a drum teacher could do to a student?

FG: To sit there looking at the clock in a mechanical way, tick off the 30 minutes or the hour while the student runs it down, and then to say "Go on to the next page." I really don't know what to say about this kind of approach. It's too prevalent all over the world. It's very disappointing to a lot of young students who are trying to realize their ambitions. I would, in plain English, call that highway robbery.

SF: Who did you study with formally?

FG: When I was very young I had an opportunity to study with the great Henry Adler. I studied with Freddie Albright, who was the snare drummer with Toscanini. He was a marvelous musician and snare drummer. I studied with Moe Goldenberg up at Juilliard. He was wonderful and he wrote the bible, I guess, on mallets.

SF: Do you apply any of their teaching methods to your own students?

FG: It's almost impossible to just erase all those things that you're exposed to throughout a lifetime. They appear at a subliminal level.

SF: Are there methods you've learned that you purposely don't use because they're not valid in your practice?

FG: It was all valid. In my own teaching, I like to spend a little more time with the *how* as opposed to the *what*. I'm only interested in *what* you're doing after I see the way you do it.

SF: Do you see character flaws in students

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that will hurt their chances for a successful career?

FG: You mean character flaws in motivation? Or do you mean a guy who's career oriented for the sole purpose of wanting a lot of girls and what he thinks is going to be the good life of whoopee and za-za-za? Hopefully, for his sake, he has scads of talent accompanying all these crazy motivations, because then maybe he can achieve his objective. But that's going to wear thin after a while unless he's a nut.

SF: How about a shy person, or a person with an abrasive personality?

FG: Abrasive? There are many players, as you well know, who can be abrasive, but again, this may be just in defense of not permitting people to get close enough to abrade *them*. Before this occurs *they* may become abrasive. This may not always be the case, but in many instances it might be. And *many* great players are actually extremely shy. It's interesting that their openness extends beyond their playing so that they find themselves being open in social circumstances. Being open equates with being vulnerable, and if you're vulnerable, sometimes you *shy* away. It appears to the onlooker to be shyness. However, you are actually in the act of *shying away* in defense of that vulnerability, because you're incapable of creating a mask or of being abrasive, or whatever other persons use to protect themselves against the external world.

SF: Let's switch gears and talk about your role in DW Drums.

FG: Don Lombardi, who's the president of DW, was my student some 20 years ago. During that time, I was also teaching Don Ellis, who had a publishing company. He was saying, "Fred, you should write a book because I feel that you have enough material to do one." But I was at a time in my life where I wasn't ready to do something like that. Don Lombardi was saying, "I'll organize it and edit it." That never came to pass, but he always said we should do something. He was always getting drum parts for my students. Little by little, without any effort, he found himself in a position where he was in business in an informal way. Then he approached me about doing something on another level. Out of that came the first DW product: a drum seat called the Royal Throne. I brought that seat and brochures to New York. My first teacher, Henry Adler, helped to place the seat in many of the stores around town. That was the way we started.

As the years went by, Don ran with the ball. I said to Don at that time, "I'm the least business-oriented of anyone you'll ever know. I will never get up at 6:30 in the morning, but I *will* do what I did with Henry. I will call people. I will run with products. I will suggest to my students that they play DW products if I believe in them. But I could never get on the phone and talk

The advertisement features a large blue vertical banner on the left with the word "REMO" written vertically in white. To the right of the banner is a black and white photograph of Matt Frenette, a young man with curly hair, wearing a white tank top, sitting behind a drum set and looking upwards. Above the photo, the word "MATT" is printed in large, bold, white letters. To the right of the photo is a blue vertical bar containing text. At the bottom of the ad is a dark horizontal bar with text.

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about nuts and bolts."

Later on, Camco tooling and dieing was up for grabs. We were not that big a company at that time. We only had a few products. We obtained the tooling and die equipment. Slowly DW grew and hopefully will continue to grow. I hope, and I hear it alleged from other players, that we are the *American* drum company of substance in terms of *quality*. I really feel very strongly about that. I'd like to see something that represents this country competitive with the rest of the world's products. I would like very much to see America back on the map.

SF: In construction, DW bass drum pedals are sparse when compared to some of the pedals now on the market. Does construction make a difference in the way a bass drum pedal performs?

FG: Naturally, it has an effect because of the weight factor. When you deal with a lot of metal and bulk, it's sometimes very difficult to achieve the kind of *fluidity* that drummers require. The simpler the construction, the better. Drummers really do like that feeling where the pedal almost bends with them and responds *right now*, rather than having to push so much weight around. A heavier pedal, for me, feels more cumbersome.

I've developed an approach that allows me to set my foot down on the foot pedal so I'm, in a sense, floating above the floor

board, and almost dancing on the pedal. When volume is needed in live playing situations, a slightly different approach is called for. It's often necessary to play heel up and slightly back to create the volume, especially if the foot isn't fully developed. That is not to say that this is the only way of arriving at volume, but it is one of the most current ways of doing it.

Many young players use the word "power." They are not really saying what they truly mean. They're really trying to say that they need *volume*. But they always say *power*. The word "power" confuses me; it makes me think of General Patton. "Power" is probably not the word. The word is control. That should produce all the volume you need.

I blend the two during the development stage so you can go either/and/or. You don't even have to think about it.

In the near future, there will be some instructional tapes put out with Buddy Rich and myself for the purpose of enabling ambitious players to feel so at home with their instrument that ultimately they will be able to say what *they* hear and feel as individuals. In addition, a school is in the planning that will be geared towards the further education of drummers, who will be taught by some of the major players in the world.

SF: Will the approach be the same as you use in your own teaching practice?



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FG: Well, without getting into it too much prior to doing the project, let me just say that natural principles will be the key to the approach. For me, the most natural player in the world, aside from his obvious musical, rhythmic and inventive genius, is Buddy Rich.

It's funny how things turn out sometimes. I had no intention of ever teaching. But slowly, it worked a miracle in terms of my general health and life, and it taught me a lot. It was probably the best thing that ever happened to me, and it's grown and grown. Good things are happening from it. Certainly, today I'm more than pleased. And now, for the first time, more than ever, I really feel good about myself and what I'm doing. My greatest satisfaction is in watching my students grow and staying in touch with them out in the real world of music.

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notes on the cymbal, / want them playing from the beginning. I tell them that, if they get a call to play while they're practicing, they should throw the books in the garbage, and go out and play!

TBW: Do you find that kids who have grown up listening to nothing but rock 'n' roll have a hard time relating to jazz?

JB: I don't find anything negative about the kids who have grown up playing rock 'n' roll, and R & B; I find that it has been an excellent stepping stone for introducing young players to jazz. It gives them the opportunity to perform with other human beings, and that's what it's all about. We should be thankful for rock 'n' roll and R & B because they introduce young people to performance.

Let's be very frank about it: The artistry needed to be a top-flight jazz player overshadows the musicality needed to be a rock player. On the other hand, to me, the most important things to be captured in any aspect of playing are the feeling and the groove. If you can't get the groove, you might as well stay at home and phone it in. It's sad, but the majority of drummers just don't swing. It's not that they're not capable of swinging; it's that they don't understand the elements of swinging. It's not too intangible to discuss. There's been so much nonsense through the years about how you either have it or you don't, and that no one can teach you to swing. That's absolute nonsense. Swinging is not an accident; there are definite ingredients in swinging that have to be understood.

First of all, there are far too many drummers playing jazz who are not playing with a jazz feeling—they're playing with an 8th-note feeling, instead of off the triplet. The triplet feel is basic to jazz performance, and the perfect example of that is Elvin Jones. His playing is rooted in the blues. From the first time I heard him, I found his playing so basically simple and so beauti-

ful. The problem is that very few people know how to listen to Elvin Jones. His whole playing is centered off the anticipation of I and 3. Listen carefully, and you'll discover this. When you can hear that in his playing, it makes it so simple.

Very soon I will be publishing a book which will explain the essence of jazz drumming through the years. It will be a whole study of jazz time and jazz rhythm to show how musical lines are developed, and how all the figures come from the time. Any young player interested in playing jazz should investigate the triplet very, very thoroughly, because therein lies the essence of jazz time. One of the biggest faults I hear with many jazz drummers in their playing of the ride cymbal rhythm is the accenting of the cymbal on 2 and 4. The feeling should be one of 4/4, because the main duty in playing the cymbal in this manner is to complement the walking bass line. The 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the bar should have equal stress. The hi-hat will stress the 2 and 4 as much as is necessary. Forward motion comes from the quarter notes being played with an even pulsation. The minute you start leaning on 2 and 4, as most books instruct you to do, it will sound like someone walking with a wooden leg. Already I can hear someone saying, "Elvin Jones doesn't play with a feeling of four." Ah, Elvin Jones doesn't play his *cymbal* off that particular concept, but if you listen closely to the embellishments that Elvin does around his cymbal rhythm, you will find that this creates a feeling of four and gives it forward motion. His cymbal, which plays off the anticipation, gives it that feeling of going back, and that's why Elvin's time has that laid-back feeling. The message you get from Elvin depends on which part of his line you are hearing.

One of the most confusing things that we can encounter is a transcription of a drum performance because, when put down on paper, it gives a completely false impression of what's being played. What you see is a single line, not the totality of what is being played.

A most difficult aspect of playing is to play a straight ride beat devoid of any accents or variations. Some horn players like the time behind them to be very straight and simple. If you have not developed the control to handle this type of playing, it can be very embarrassing. Mastery of this concept will give your playing a solid foundation from which to grow, although this is certainly only one approach to playing time. Jake Hanna is an excellent example to listen to. As I mention often, you should listen to the right people, and one of them has to be Tony Williams. Tony definitely brought his own sound to the instrument, coupled with outstanding musicality. When it comes to big band playing, I feel that Mel Lewis is one of the

top exponents. His ability to play the musical line knocks me out. He understands the difference between the horizontal and the vertical, and hears and responds to consonance and dissonance. A very musical drummer indeed.

TBW: Do you feel that for the time to feel good, it has to be metronomically perfect?

JB: When we are involved in musical performance, there is such a thing as emotional rushing or dragging. This is musically acceptable as long as it's something that the band feels and does collectively. When only one member is doing it, it becomes a tug-of-war. But if it is stemming from the whole concept of the music and the emotion that's coming through the music, then it's beautiful. You'll find that with some of the great players, ballads will tend to get slower—within reason, of course. When you're playing a moderate or bright tempo, there is nothing wrong with the tempo moving up slightly. But when you find performances where they practically double the time by the end of the tune, then I don't consider that emotional at all. That's really just a lack of control.

TBW: Do you ever recommend the use of a metronome?

JB: Of course I recommend the use of a metronome. I've never met a player in my life who couldn't benefit from the intelligent use of a metronome. But don't become a slave to it. The metronome should be used to check out your time. What you will find is that you have three or four tempos that you feel very comfortable and natural with. What the metronome is good for is making you play through the other tempos—the "blind tempos," as I call them—to make yourself persevere and master tempos from one end of the metronome to the other. The hardest thing is playing slow. The essence of my teaching is built from that premise. I never talk to a student about playing fast. The slower you can learn to play, the happier you will make me. You will never be able to play slow enough to satisfy me. The essence is in the space. Once you can hear the space with confidence, you can start to do unbelievable things from within that space, and the up tempos become very easy to play. Naturally, you have to practice playing fast as well. But the stress is on playing as slow as we possibly can. Usually, quarter note equals 40 is where I have my students practice their material. We build it up from there. To me, the whole conception and feeling for space comes from the art of playing slow.

TBW: What led you to write your book, *Syncopated Rolls*?

JB: Back about 1959, Charles Mingus came to Vancouver. From the first moment, I was fully aware of what was going on in that band, and what Dannie Richmond was doing. Dannie and I struck up a beautiful friendship, and I invited him to

my home. When he came over, I played him some solo pipe band drumming records that were made in the '40s, and after Dannie heard them he said, "I don't care what you call that, man. That's jazz." I then proceeded to show him some of the ideas and concepts I had developed for drumset. When I finished playing, he threw his arms around me and said, "You're the first white drummer I've met in my life who plays *black*." His enthusiasm for my concepts resulted in my writing *Syncopated Rolls*. You know, it's interesting to see the way things go, for it seems that many players are just beginning to realize the depth of musical material in these books. It goes way beyond what the title suggests. The new two-volume edition seems to be hitting the right spot.

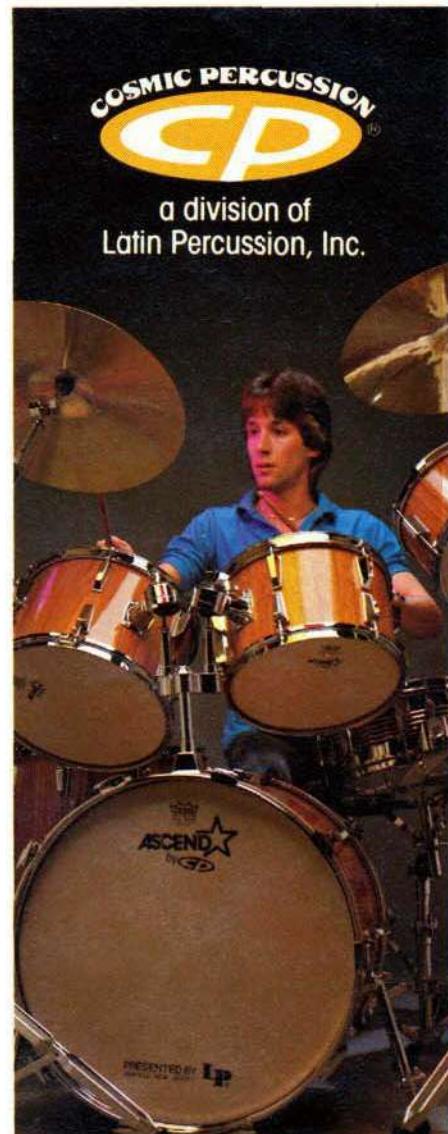
TBW: What are your personal goals as a player, a teacher, and a person?

JB: Being a top musician is no big deal; being a true human being is a very, very big deal. That's what it's all about. The more true human beings we become, the more that quality will emanate from our music. There's no such thing as gaining spirituality from the music. The spirituality comes from within as we develop the qualities of God and surrender to that power. The thing is, I'm not someone who just sits here teaching. I only teach one student a day, and I only take each student one day each month. I could have hundreds of students if I wanted, but I'm not interested in making money. I'm interested in helping to contribute, through God's grace, something to another human being's life. If I do my duty to God properly, then I'll do my duty to every human being I encounter. If I can bring something to someone else's life, then that's really good.

Now don't misunderstand. I spend hours every day playing and practicing. I'll never be satisfied with my playing! I was down in my basement the other night for three hours practicing something I was trying to get. I made a comment in my book that developing time to a state of perfection and feeling is like polishing the heart to a state of spotless purity. It's an endless endeavor.

My students are not just people who come here and pay me a few dollars. No. They are very important people in my life. They contribute so much to my development. I learn so much from every student who comes here—not only about music, but about life. It's like a family relationship with all of the students I've had over the years.

We get together as a group three or four times a week to play. It isn't a tea party; we play. They work their butts off. We don't just play dance music; we play jazz. A lot of what I hear is well played, but there is no improvising. There are no chances being taken, and that's not what jazz is all about. If you're going to improvise you cannot be



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right all the time. Miles Davis is one of the classic examples. He turns what people would call wrong into a musical gem. That's the thing that I've always liked about Elvin's playing: There's that raw, jungle-type of sound and feeling. There's a roughness to it, but although there's a roughness, let me say that Elvin has one of the finest touches of any drummer playing. People talk about Elvin playing loud, but he is one of the most sensitive and delicate drummers I've ever heard in my life. Listen to some of the ballads he plays—that lovely, loping feeling he gets from these slow blues things that he did with 'Trane. He's been playing the same things for the past 20 years, but every time he plays them, he makes them sound as if he's inventing and creating them at that particular moment. He has such a brilliant and fluid way of using his drumset that it always sounds fresh. Now that is artistry.

Improvising is the ability to take a two-bar motif and play it throughout a composition and have no one know. Or being able to take simple ideas and turn them inside out, upside down, move them around, and make a total composition from a simple two-bar phrase. That's what Max Roach was a master of; he could develop a whole composition from a two-bar phrase.

When you're talking about top players, it's nonsensical to pit one against the other. If you cannot go out and listen to Elvin Jones, Tony Williams, Max Roach,

Jake Hanna, Philly Joe Jones, Mel Lewis, Terry Clarke, Keith Blakley, Claude Ranger, Shelly Manne or Dannie Richmond and enjoy them for what they are, then you're not interested in music. You're going for some other reason.

In every type of music there is a groove. It doesn't matter if you're playing country, funk, rock, Viennese waltzes, or polkas—there's a groove. The thing is to find out what really creates the groove. That's the thing that must be investigated, and that's what's not being investigated enough. To be sure, there are various ways to generate the time, and the swing within the time, but it seems to me that swinging is being confused with excitement, and excitement is being confused with getting excited. The aim is to become a musically exciting and swinging performer, irrespective of the idiom.

Artistry is not an accident. Artistry is not built on ignorance. It's built on wisdom.

Magadini continued from page 29

with it for now. I would like it if he'd perhaps get into some keyboard playing. These days especially it's important for drummers and percussionists to expand into many areas.

KA: Do you play any other instruments?

PM: I play all the percussion instruments, but quite frankly, my reputation is mainly as a drumset player. I've never been a full-

time mallet player. I love it when somebody plays mallets well. Whenever I hear somebody like Leigh Howard Stevens play, I'm glad I didn't spend those three or four hours a day practicing mallets, because I never would've gotten there anyway. I did play the mallets enough to get through school. I also studied timpani with a wonderful timpanist, Roland Kohlof, who is now the timpanist with the New York Philharmonic, but again, that's a lifetime job. You can't be a great timpanist like he is and play set as a full-time career as well. I think I was always a drummer at heart, and it took a lot of hard work and practice for me to get there. I also have to give a lot of credit to Don Bothwell, my first teacher.

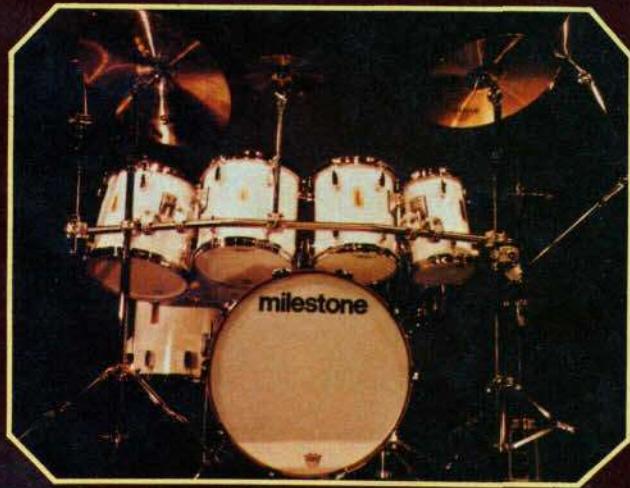
KA: Of all the things you've played, is jazz your favorite?

PM: Yes, but I try to enjoy whatever style I'm called on to play.

KA: How much of your time now is spent teaching?

PM: I don't have a lot of time for teaching right now, because my playing career keeps me so busy. I do have some advanced students, and I've had a lot of really good students who want to go on to teaching. I have a new drum school concept. So far, I've opened schools in Phoenix, Montreal and Toronto. I've been doing quite a bit of traveling and clinics lately; a lot more rock-oriented players are getting into polyrhythms, so I'm getting

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people coming from other cities for lessons. I don't know how much of the teaching at the schools I'll be able to do, but it will be my concepts and techniques. There are so many drum studios in North America that don't really offer the quality that they should be offering. They get the parents in there, and right away they want them to buy an expensive set of drums. Then these people who have never played a gig in their lives get up there to teach. It just turns a lot of kids and their parents off to drums and drummers. So in my school I hope we're going to have a lot of students enjoying themselves at all levels. I even have a course called "Drums for Fun," for people who always thought they'd like to play the drums a little bit at a party or something. Why not? It's an instrument that you can learn to play something on fairly quickly. If it brings more people into our profession or helps people enjoy it more, then it's better for everybody.

KA: What was the first book you ever wrote?

PM: I wrote *Musician's Guide To Polyrhythms*, Volume I in 1965 in San Francisco, and Volume II in 1971 in Los Angeles. These two deal with polyrhythms for all musicians. At the time that I wrote them, I was studying East Indian tabla drums. I realized how rhythmically advanced East Indian music is compared to ours, and that we really didn't have anything to teach us how these concepts work. Bob Yeager originally published these two. They've sold relatively well, but Bob's getting out of the publishing business, and I had a chance to get in with Jerry Ricci and Drum Center Publications of Long Island, New York.

KA: When did you write *Poly-Cymbal Time*?

PM: *Poly-Cymbal Time* was written in 1973 in Toronto, and that covers polyrhythms at the drumset between four limbs. I originally published this one myself, but we've revised it. It's coming out again with a larger publisher, so it'll be going international as well. Then there are the two I've written in the last three years: *Learn To Play The Drum Set*, Book One and Book Two. Both were published with Hal Leonard Publishing, and I'm proud to say that Book One has gone into six languages. I have an African rhythm in Book Two, and if you learn to play that, you will have traced the roots of jazz and the roots of Latin American music right back to the source. You'll hear it all in one transcription of a tribal piece. Jazz comes from Africa, as does Latin American music. The European influence, of course, brings us our notation, tonality and our instruments, but rhythmically the root is Africa.

Of course, the big project has been *Music We Can See And Hear*. It was designed primarily for five- to nine-year-old children, but it is really for anybody who wants to learn a little more about music.

We need more people believing in and enjoying music to keep this business alive and healthy. There's obviously no problem with pop radio, pop music and television; that's a healthy business. But the art music has long suffered the pains of ignorance. I've worked with some of the greatest artists in the world. When I worked with Diana Ross, of course we had huge crowds, because Diana Ross is a very well-known star. But I can remember working with a tenor saxophone player in San Francisco in a roadhouse somewhere for six customers, and it was some of the most beautiful music I've ever played. Huge crowds of 50,000 people filling a stadium is not the music business. That's an important facet of it, yes. But there's a lot of beauty that people are missing in music, because if it's not loud or hyped, then it's somehow not popular.

KA: And you hope to help change that?

PM: If things work the way I want them to, I think a lot more people will be enjoying a broader scope of music. I believe that if children are exposed to music at an early age, it may be an experience they'll remember the rest of their lives. They may not become musicians, but they will be better listeners, because they will be open to all kinds of music.

Killgo continued from page 30

no matter who you are. But if you're going to be a working, worldly musician, you have to be part of a knowledge and self-discipline [that goes beyond school]. My experience at Bradley showed me both sides of the issue. I got there with *no* technical training, and they had me sight reading in a year. Clark Christenson, the timpani instructor, was tremendous. He showed me how to break everything into ten patterns, and then just start permutating. If you can do basic math, you can read music. On the other hand, the school—like a lot of schools—was not designed to handle a *feeling* player. I was the odd man out, with my jazz background. And they certainly didn't teach jazz drums. And at Howard—though this may surprise people—it was even worse. The first day I went to class, after spending the previous summer working with Donald [Byrd] and the band, an instructor said—really sarcastically—"Ah, here comes one of The Blackbyrds . . ." like he was going to put me in my place. And he sure tried.

In the end, my attitude towards formal education is that you should pay for what you want, and everything else should be free. While the colleges would scream that a policy like that would bankrupt them, I think home computers are going to do that anyway.

MR: What do you think of younger players today?

KK: Well, when the same five or six keep working over and over, you know the

younger ones are doing something wrong. I know a student with incredible chops, who practices all the time. His rolls are awesome. But he can't read, play with a band, or work. You know, a lot of young cats get into the *ego* of drumming—the t-shirts, the muscles, the headbands. But that won't keep you working. Look at Buddy Williams, the "workingest" drummer around. Sure, he can play funk, but he can also play the drum like a flute. He'll *always* work. Since I was nine, I've seen more drummers turn into has-beens, just because their egos kept them inflexible. But obviously, longevity is the key.

MR: What's the best advice you can give students if they want to become drummers who work?

KK: Listen to other drummers because the idea, again, is to stop kidding yourself. Deal with what's real, not the abstract, or some manifestation of your ego. One drummer who's very underrated, and well worth studying, is Gerry Brown. He can play some of the most incredible multi-rhythms—not like Narada Michael Walden or Billy Cobham, but his own kind. On Stanley Clarke's *School Days* LP, there's a little Latin thing he plays that's so *tight*. The way he hears the beat almost seems sloppy, but it's so *on* the beat. Listen to where he places the tom. It may come in anywhere, but it's what keeps the whole song together. It almost sounds like one big drum roll with accents. It's great.

Then, for time, listen to Bernard Purdie, on "Babylon Sisters," from Steely Dan's *Gaucho*. Check out the right hand and the bass drum. It sounds like a regular 6/8 shuffle, but it's really so much more. He plays *on* the beat, too. Or listen to my main man—the late John Bonham. He played behind the beat, but it's the inner stuff he did that I love—the feet; the rolls. He would start with a single roll, then go to a double or a triple. Then he would weave in cymbals, colors and attitude, and he always sounded like he was in some big field house. And then there's Buddy Miles. The world's fastest foot! I never could understand how he could play so straight on top and so complicated with his foot.

MR: Aren't you going to include Keith Killgo?

KK: [laughs] Well, I'm an objective person. If there are some young kids who have got the thing, let them play. I can only learn from them. I'll just listen to what they're doing until / hear it.

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Q. I've been playing professionally since 1966, and during that time I've been able to interpret words frequently used to describe sound that I was required to produce (i.e., crisp, tight, flat, open, fat, dead, live, jazzy, funky, and more recently depth, brittle, roll-off and boomy). I carry three snare drums for my work, and lately no matter which snare is being used, someone has come up and said, "Hey, great snare drum sound . . . nice and 'warm.' " I suspect from reading *Modern Drummer* that "warm" must be the hip new buzz word. Could you set the record straight for everyone and print a definition of the term "warm"?

K.S.

Old Hickory, TN

A. *Very few definitions of drum sounds are "for everyone." "Warm" could be a description of the reaction to the sound; the feeling it gives the listener, rather than the actual tonality of the drum itself. It would simply mean a sound that is pleasant to listen to, and fairly mellow, as opposed to abrasive or piercing. A very crisp and cutting snare would not be called "warm," nor would a deep and boomy rock snare. A snare pitched more in the middle, with a clear—but not sharp—attack sound would be more likely to exemplify this definition.*

Q. I've always thought that one of the all-time great drum classics on record was "Fever" by Peggy Lee. A great drum performance! But who played drums on that session? (I'll take a guess and say it was Shelly Manne.)

B.M.

Fairfax, VA

A. *Good guess! Shelly told an interesting story about "Fever" in the "L.A. Studio Roundtable" feature in the January '84 issue of MD.*

Q. I have a set of black Tama drums. I want to add four Octobans. Is Tama the only company that makes them? Are the clear ones better than black fiberglass? N.W.

New York, NY

A. *Octobans are exclusively a Tama product. There are other small-diameter, deep-shell acrylic drums available, notably from Dragon Drums. See your retailer for further information on similar products. As far as whether clear acrylic shells are better than black fiberglass shells, that would be a question you'd have to decide for yourself, based on acoustics and cosmetic appearance factors.*

Q. I'm writing in an attempt to obtain a record which will assist me in playing congas. I've searched all over my city and I've had no success. I really want to learn to play the congas, so I'm hoping you can direct me.

R.C.

Columbus, OH

A. *There may not be too many recorded "How to . . ." works for beginning conga drum. There is a home-study audio tape, with study booklet included, available from the New Jersey School of Percussion, 14 Northfield Avenue, W. Orange, NJ 07052. You can write to them for further information. There are several beginning conga books, which are tailored to the inexperienced player. These are all available through the catalog of Drums Unlimited, 4928 St. Elmo Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20814. Call their service staff at (301) 654-2719 for the exact titles and descriptions. Latin Percussion offers two albums that feature beginning instruction on a variety of Latin instruments, and congas are included. Those albums are entitled Understanding Latin Rhythms, Volume I (catalog #LPV337) and Volume II (#LPV422). These are available from L.P. dealers, or directly from Latin Percussion Inc., 160 Belmont Avenue, Garfield, NJ 07026.*

Q. I work in a very small nightclub that gets very crowded when my band plays there. The dance floor is extremely small, and dancers are constantly tripping on the edge of the stage, thus falling into my drumset. This happens all the time, and each time I almost get my drumset demolished. I have told the club owner about this several times, in front of the other band members. They have also had their microphones shoved into their faces on several occasions. We have suggested to the club owner that he build a small rail around the stage, but so far he has ignored us. I have two questions in regard to this situation. First, if I get injured as a result of this, or if my drumset gets damaged, what is my recourse? Second, can I be held liable if one of the dancers gets hurt falling into my drums?

S.B.

Phoenix, AZ

A. *We referred this question to our legal advisor, Stuart Eisenberg, who offered the following information:*

In answering the first question, the status of the drummer and the band in the work environment has to be determined. The band would probably be considered independent contractors and not employees of the nightclub; therefore, they would not come under the Workmen Compensation statutes but would come under the principles of tort law.

"By falling under tort law, the band would be able to sue the owner for 'negligence,' and the band could probably be sued for negligence if their negligence was a proximate or legal cause of any injuries to the dancers.

"If the drummer becomes injured or if the drumset becomes damaged as a result of a dancer falling, the drummer should be able to sue both the dancer and the owner of the club. This would be based on the premise of an invitee-invitor relationship. The drummer and the dancers are both considered to be invitees, while the nightclub owner would be considered an invitor. As an invitor, the club owner has the duty to provide a reasonably safe place for customers to dance and is held liable for conditions he either knew about or should have known about. In the fact situation that we are discussing in this instance, this duty would extend to the owner of the club because the drummer had told the owner about the problem.

"In answering the second question, liability would be based upon the same invitee-invitor relationship. If a dancer became injured, the owner of the nightclub could be sued for negligence. The drummer could also be sued on the premise that he continued to set up his drumset even though he was aware of the dangers of the situation."

Q. I recently purchased a set of used Ludwig clear Vistalite drums, which were in good shape except for a few scratches. Is there anything available on the market which can get rid of these scratches? Also, does Ludwig still make Vistalite drums?

J.S.

Randolph, MA

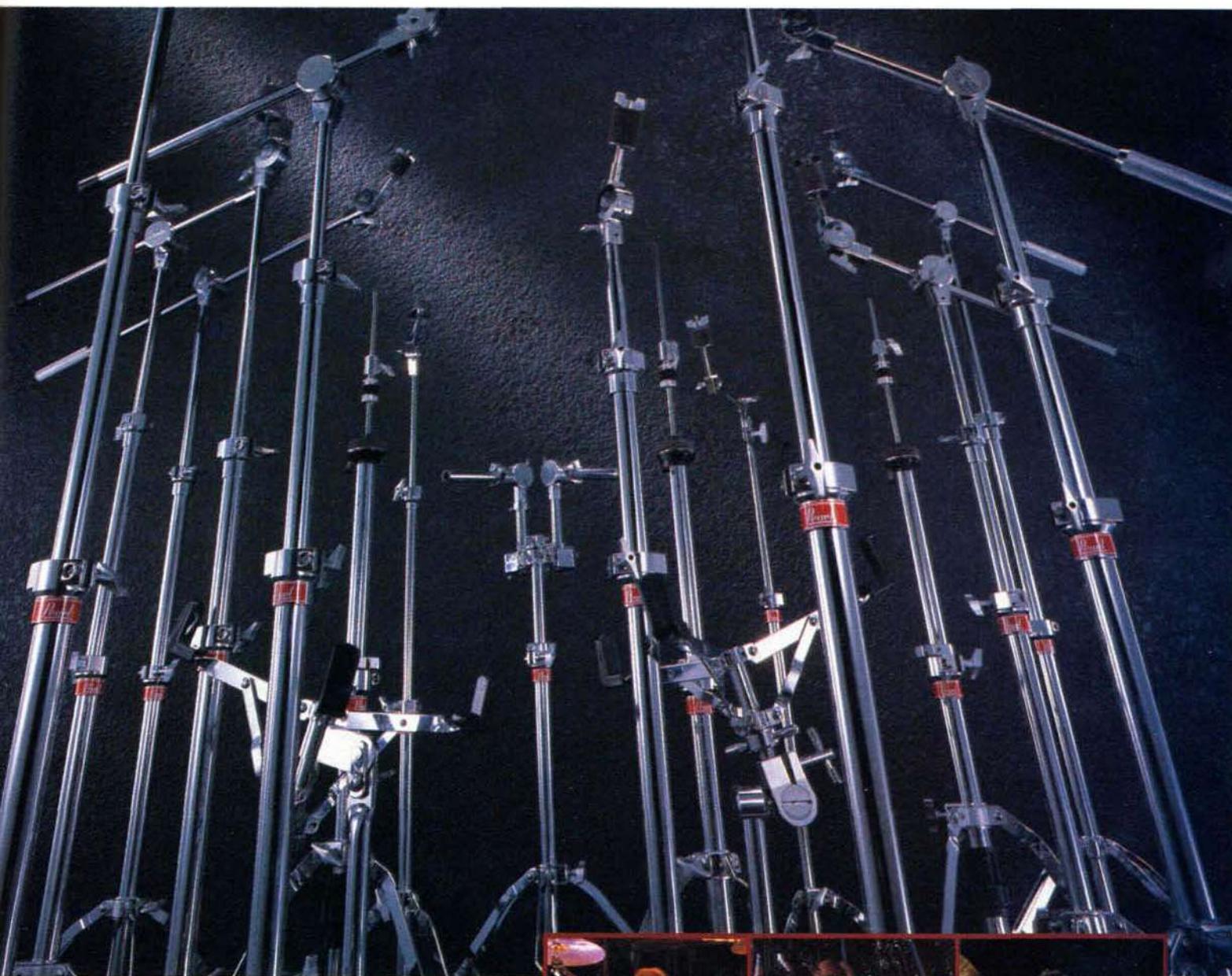
A. *According to Mr. Leon Gloziers, dealer service manager for Ludwig, you can clean the shells using just water and a mild detergent. Avoid any product that contains ammonia, as it will discolor the shells. The best way to get advice on removing the scratches is to contact people whose business involves the use of plexiglass, which is used in such products as storm windows and industrial panels. They can give you the most expert advice. There are techniques involving the use of emery cloth to smooth out tiny scratches, or the use of some wax products to fill in larger ones, but you should first get instructions from people who do that sort of work professionally.*

Ludwig no longer makes Vistalite and has not for several years.

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Pearl

Kansas' **Phil Ehart** is activating a first this month, taking the First Airborne Rock 'n' Roll Division overseas. He put together a band comprised of members from various other groups, including Ambrosia, Pablo Cruise, Survivor and other Kansas members, to do a tour including Hawaii, Korea, the Philippines, Japan, Okinawa and some aircraft carriers. "It's kind of like a rock 'n' roll Bob Hope," Phil explained. "Hope hasn't done one of these things in about ten or twelve years, and they never get any rock music. This was my idea and I approached the USO about it because I thought it would be a neat thing to do. We're going to be playing some places that are going to be pretty remote and tough, up around North Korea, near the DMZ where a lot of the Marines are on 24-hour duty. Heading out to the aircraft carriers ought to be an experience too. After you've been doing this for 11 or 12 years and you've been playing around the

U.S., Europe and Asia, it's kind of neat to do something out of the ordinary. I'm going to make it a yearly thing where every year I'll put together a different band. What was great was that, when I asked the guys to do this with me, not one of them asked, 'What's in it for me?' Everyone just said, 'Hey, it's a great idea.' And when I said there was no money in it, they said they didn't care; it just sounded like something they wouldn't have the chance to do otherwise."

From September to the first of this year, Kansas was on the road supporting their most recent LP, *Drastic Measures*, and in May or June, the group will be doing some concerts in Saudi Arabia, another first. After ten years in the same band, does Phil still enjoy it? "You have to remember that four of us grew up and went to high school together, so we've grown up together and have gone through our careers together. I feel real fortunate. Kansas isn't a boring

band. There are a lot of different styles and different things that we do. It keeps changing. Some people change with us. We lose some fans, and sometimes we gain fans.

"Being in a band is like being married. You have to like each other. I love the guys in the band and you have to like them too. It's tough at times. We definitely have our arguments and our fallings out—somebody will want to change his style or get into something another guy isn't into. When you are friends, it makes it easier to sit down and say, 'Look, you're a real jerk.' It rounds off some of the sharp edges—just the fact that you respect each other, have been together for so long and have been through so much. I think it does help to have a close relationship with the people you work with. There are other bands who feel that, the farther they can get apart, the better they get along. You have to do whatever works to keep the band together."

Al Jarreau was forced to cancel his summer tour due to tonsilitis, but he is supposed to be back on the road this month with **Ricky Lawson** on drums. Last month, Lawson returned to the studio with the Yellowjackets, the band of which he is a member, to record an album which will be a spring or summer release. As far as outside album projects, '83 was a very busy year for Ricky, whose playing can be heard on such artists' albums as Jennifer Holiday, Teena Marie, Philip Bailey, DeBarge, Bette Midler and Lenny Williams.

Lawson believes that it's important to maintain a balance between live gigs, his

own projects, and session work. "A lot of times, if you do the same thing at any job, it's very, very boring. By my doing different things, it keeps all of the situations fresh. I'm learning things in other situations which I can bring to my own projects, and I learn things from my own projects which I can take to the others. The more I do, the wiser it makes me, because I learn how to deal with different music, and different people's personalities and attitudes. I learn how to play different ways because George Duke plays one way, George Benson plays another, and Al Jarreau and The Yellowjackets play another. It really keeps

me on top of my instrument, because most of the people I've been blessed to play with are top-name people in the business who are setting a lot of trends for today's music. It keeps me aware and musically fresh.

"It's also important to do both studio and live work because studio would drive you bananas all the time. Being on the road is great, because it's really nice to get out and see the people who buy the music. It's really nice to get in touch with the people who make what you do possible. I like going out and playing for the people, and I like going in and recording because I can reach more people that way."

Mike Baird is on some of Rick Springfield's *Hard to Hold* soundtrack, as well as Rod Stewart's next album. **Eli Konikoff** has finished his solo project, completed a European tour, and is currently in Japan with Spyro Gyra. Expect a spring or summer release of their new album. **John Shearer** has been with the re-formed Iron Butterfly; **Lynn Coulter** with the re-formed Strawberry Alarm Clock.

Hugo Burnham has exited the Gang of Four. **Guy Femia** is the new drummer for Family Stone (minus Sly) and they are currently recording in Nashville and touring. **Martin Chambers** is on tour with the Pretenders supporting their latest release *Learning to Crawl*. Yes has reunited with drummer **Alan White**. **Simon Wright** is new AC/DC drummer. **Roger Taylor** is on tour with Duran Duran. New April Wine album out last month with **Jerry Mercer** on

drums; new Missing Persons album out with **Terry Bozzio** on drums. **David Platschau** is now the Motels' drummer, while **Brian Glascock** is now playing full-time percussion in the group. Dream Syndicate album in recent release with group member **Dennis Duck** on drums. **Airto** can be heard on a recent release by Darius & The Magnets called *Intercourse*. **Tris Imboden** can be heard on *Torch Light* soundtrack. **Gina Schock** on new Go-Go's album.

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INDUSTRY HAPPENINGS

ZILDJIAN DAY IN BOSTON



From left are: Armand Zildjian, Vince Colaiuta, Steve Smith, Peter Erskine, Steve Gadd, Louie Bellson, Ralph MacDonald, Larrie Londin and Rab Zildjian.

For the third time, the Avedis Zildjian Company assembled six of its finest endorsers for a day-long percussion festival. Zildjian Day in Boston, hosted by the Berklee College of Music on October 9, 1983, was called "the biggest and the best of the

Zildjian Day series" by rock and fusion recording star Steve Smith. "I was honored to be a part of it."

The event was timed with the official celebration of the cymbal manufacturer's 360th Anniversary. President Armand

Zildjian said, "We received many forms of congratulations—I even met with Governor Michael Dukakis, who declared October 9 the official "Zildjian Day" in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts—but seeing these players today was our biggest thrill." Performing during the sold-out show were Larrie Londin, Peter Erskine, Steve Smith, Vince Colaiuta, and Steve Gadd and Ralph MacDonald.

An unscheduled appearance by jazz legend Louie Bellson was one of the day's highlights. "I just wanted to add a little something to Zildjian Day," he said, "and pay tribute to one of the greatest families in the world." His extended solo brought the crowd to a standing ovation.

Zildjian Day lasted well into the evening with a separate

two-part concert. The program was kicked off with a set of jazz by Erskine and an ensemble of New York studio sessionmen that included Don Grolnick on piano and Will Lee on bass. That group was followed by Steve Smith's Vital Information, the group he recently formed and leads in addition to his work with Journey. Vital Information ended Zildjian Day in Boston with a set of high-powered fusion.

Rab Zildjian, vice president of sales/North America for the company, said, "We've developed the series to stimulate interest in drumming and music. Today, the audience was able to talk with and learn from the best in the business. It's an exciting and very successful program; one we'll definitely continue in 1984."

PAISTE ADDS FOUR PERCUSSION SPECIALISTS

Paiste America, Inc. announces the addition of Rob Wood, Marc Vulcano, Jeff Neuhauser and Ted Wasser to their staff of Percussion Specialists. Their primary responsibilities will be to serve as a support network for Paiste Sound Center dealers by performing Paiste cymbal seminars throughout the United States.

Both Wood and Vulcano are percussionists with backgrounds in sales at the drum shop level, bringing to the seminar team a distinct working knowledge of the day-to-day needs of the dealer. Neuhauser, a previous drum shop owner, currently teaches in the Bloomington, Illinois, area and performs regularly with the Peoria Symphony. Wasser will continue to work in the Dallas area as a studio musician in addition to performing his duties as a Paiste Percussion Specialist.

Paiste Sales Coordinator Greg Perry relates, "The seminars are available to Paiste Sound Centers as a gesture of

our commitment to these dealers. The program is in its third year, and due to the rapidly expanding number of dealers, the addition of the four Percussion Specialists was made to meet their needs. We are also finding that drummers are showing more interest in the actual quality of their sound than ever before. This is why we believe these seminars are so vital to cultivating a more knowledgeable drummer and industry as well."

Perry continues, "There are so many products in the stores right now, and so many new products being introduced, that it's very difficult for the dealer and player to be adequately informed before making a sale or purchase. We believe that through these seminars, the dealer and percussionist can familiarize themselves with the characteristics of the individual cymbals and gongs. We strongly believe that, armed with this information, the drummers can then make purchases that will be truly to their best advantage."

GINGER BAKER RETURNS



When we last heard from Ginger Baker (March '83), he was in the process of moving to Italy. He recently turned up in the States, doing a short tour with a blues trio. A few days before the tour started, he spoke with MD by phone from Italy, and talked about his new life.

"I live in a part of Italy that's famous for its olive oil," he said. "So I've got some olive trees and I'm getting into olive oil. It's pretty relaxing, actually, and it's interesting. I'm also playing, and I've got quite a few pupils. I'm playing with two really good musicians. It's not my band; I guess it's *our* band really, because we all like each other and enjoy playing together. The guitar player and singer is Roberto Ciocci, and the bass player is Enzo Pietropaule. We've done a few gigs around here and we're enjoying it musically. We're doing blues,

which is what I've always played. A lot of people call me a rock 'n' roll drummer, but I've never really played rock 'n' roll. People like to put things in bags, and I seem to have been put in that bag. I don't know quite why.

"I'm still using two bass drums. A few years ago I was using a single bass drum, but people would come up and say, 'Why aren't you using two bass drums? You've got to use two bass drums.' So I put another bass drum back in my kit.

"We're doing a lot of old Cream tunes, because they were also blues tunes—'Crossroads,' 'Rollin' and Tumblin',' 'Spoonful,' 'I'm So Glad,' and all that stuff. I really get off on it. There are no plans to make a record at the moment. Things that happen, happen. I don't believe in pushing for things to happen. I'm really laid back."

DETROIT DRUM SCHOOL DRUM ENSEMBLE

by Susan Borey



One functioning arm of the Detroit Drum School, an inner city-based learning center, is the Detroit Drum School Drum Ensemble. A unique performing group, the Ensemble is composed of 14 members, 11 of whom play identical drumkits. Under the direction of Charley Bannister, the school's founder, the group is enjoying increased exposure and acclaim.

Bannister's Detroit Drum School, in operation since June 1980, offers instruction in a number of instruments, including keyboards, guitar, bass, woodwinds and voice. The school's rapid expansion caused Bannister to search for a way to accommodate the increasing number of performance-ready students. "Every year I hold a recital at which everyone performs, and the re-

citals were becoming so long that I had to re-group some of the students in some way," recalled Bannister. "I have an abundance of percussion students, and the Drum Ensemble was my answer to this situation. After the group started performing, we received such a tremendous response that we decided to keep the group together and develop it even more."

Since the Ensemble's debut in June 1983, performances by the group have been in demand. The group has already played numerous concerts in the Detroit area, appearances at several arts and craft festivals have taken place, and a summer concert at a playground drew and delighted many young people and adults. Additionally, the Ensemble has participated in fund-raising performances for

such organizations as the Jazz Research Institute. The group was recently featured on a regional television magazine, and may be appearing on an upcoming segment of *That's Incredible*.

Witnessing a performance of the Drum Ensemble is rather incredible. Eleven drumkits impressively line the rear of the stage, with a vibraphone, congas and timbales occupying a position in front of them. A beat is established by Charley Bannister on melodic cowbells and, one at a time, the members of the Ensemble enter the stage, each adding a polyrhythmic layer to the swelling sound with Latin, African and various other hand-percussion instruments. When all members are on stage, the Ensemble begins a piece. The 11 drummers on kits create a synchronous background, while the three instrumentalists up front provide shifting melodic and textural lines. The group performs with the determination and precision of a military unit on parade; listeners with closed eyes could easily be led to believe they were hearing a single drumkit, not 11. In some pieces, the drums are sectioned

into differently grouped components, with up to five different patterns being played simultaneously.

Bannister makes good use of both the uniformity and flexibility of his group. "There are so many groups around that use many different percussion instruments. I wanted this ensemble to be unique, and I was aware of the potential of this setup." Bannister arranges and often writes the music for each piece. The group first learns a song by reading it from charts. Then the sheet music is put away and the song is performed from memory.

Although many of Bannister's students take musical instruction for pleasurable or self-developmental reasons, some of them have also used their experience at Detroit Drum School as a springboard for professional musical careers. Noted alumni include Ollie Brown, who currently plays with Quincy Jones, formerly toured with the Rolling Stones, and played with Stevie Wonder and Billy Preston; Andrew L. Smith, who has toured with Herbie Mann and Roberta Flack; and Carl Graves, percussionist for Freda Payne.

MAX ROACH IN CONCERT WITH BREAKERS, RAPPERS AND SCRATCHERS by Chip Stem

Youth is not the exclusive province of the young, and as if to prove it, there was legendary jazz drummer Max Roach on stage at Manhattan's Kitchen with rapper Fab 5 Freddie, two scratch DJs, and the New York Breakers, in a cross-generational celebration of inner-city expression. Within the explosive electronic flow of speech, song, found art, and body language, Roach inserted his own personal rhythmic inventions, and carried on a musical dialog between himself and the break

dancers. It was a daring theatrical event, like a modern American version of African talking drummers and tribal dancers.

Max himself felt that the event was far removed from any type of "manufactured" multi-media event. "This whole phenomenon is a purely American innovation to me—a phoenix that rose out of the community. These kids did it all on their own, and it's beautiful—a total theatrical experience. It has a scenario; it has text; it has movement and a vi-

sualization that comes out of the graffiti. They have their own way of dressing. They've created their own instrumental sound with their use of the turntables, and snippets of music from the most unlikely sources."

Max Roach explains that he wanted to be part of something like that because, "The kind of relationship that existed between me and these young people, just because of music, was beautiful. My thing is to prove that Max Roach can work with

these kids, or Cecil Taylor, or Andy Summers, just as well as I worked with Charlie Parker or Coleman Hawkins. This attitude isn't new to me. Hawk had me and Miles in his band when we were kids. The problem is that people have a very narrow conception of sound. They think that music has to have harmony, melody and rhythm in a certain structure—only. But that's not what today's world is all about. It's about sound, and sound takes in music, not the other way around."

LOUIE BELLSON NAMED VICE PRESIDENT

Louie Bellson, world renowned as a percussionist-bandleader-composer-arranger-recording star, has added a new "hyphen" to his list of credits: business executive. He has been named Vice President-Product Evaluation by Remo, Inc. The announcement by company president Remo Belli hails the appointment as "a significant move for the long-term growth

of Remo, Inc. that cements our close friendship and association with Louie over the past 20 years. Louie Bellson is universally admired not only as a performer and student of percussion, but as a genuinely warm human being who is deeply committed to furthering the percussion arts," Belli stated.

"We're looking for Louie's input on product design,

-PRODUCT EVALUATION OF REMO, INC.

sound, cosmetics—every aspect affecting the professional acceptability of our products," Belli continued. "We also plan to increase our use of Louie as a spokesperson, clinician and worldwide ambassador of goodwill in our behalf." Bellson plans to continue his busy performing schedule, but will also play an active role in promoting Remo products to

the professional market. "I've used and endorsed Remo's products since the early '60s, and have developed tremendous respect for the entire organization," Bellson stated. "With the advent of pretuned percussion instruments there's a whole new ballgame out there for drummers and for drum manufacturers, and I'm glad to be part of the company that's leading the way."

JUST DRUMS

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Samson Music Products announces the introduction of their new *DT-140* hydraulic throne. Using a hydraulic air-column compression system, the *DT-140* is infinitely adjustable. Since the user is sitting on a cushion of air, it allows the seat to "give," adding extra comfort to your back. The four-legged base makes it an "un-rockable" seat. For more information, write to Samson Music Products, 124 Fulton Avenue, Hempstead, NY 11550.

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Paul Real Sales, Inc. is now the exclusive U.S. importer of the famed Capelle hi-hat from France. It was formerly known as the Orange or Pro-Mark hi-hat when it was distributed by Pro-Mark from 1974 to 1980. The stand features quick-release clamp systems, a three-section large-diameter tube, twin external springs (adjustable; non-compression), double-reinforced legs, dual spurs and a link-type pedal connection which allows for stroke length and angle adjustment. For more information, contact Paul Real Sales, Inc., 745 Oak Knoll Circle, Pasadena, CA 91106, 1-800-722-0558 (in California 213-792-6847).

MXR JUNIOR



The MXR *Junior* is a portable sound box designed to generate many popular drum and percussion sounds, as well as special audio effects. It includes a laser blast, hand claps, shaker, and drum. In addition, many digitally recorded sounds will be available through replacement chips, part of *Junior's*, extensive library of sounds. Mod-

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Tan Enterprises has introduced a new concept in bass drum beaters. The *Slammer* offers a larger contact surface with the bass drum head, which results in more attack, increased volume, and less bass drum wear. The large, flat contact surface of the *Slammer* is precisely angled for over three square inches of contact with the bass drum head. The *Slammer* is a direct replacement for ordinary bass drum beaters. For more information, send \$1.00 to Tan Enterprises, 2794 12th S.E., Salem, OR 97302.

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Drum Workshop, Inc. has expanded their best-selling 5000 series with the addition of the DW 5000 *Turbo* bass drum pedal. The 5000 *Turbo* features the original "made-in-U.S.A." chain-drive pedal, the DW 5000CX, and also sports a unique (patent pending) one-piece pedal plate, a heavy-duty hinge, shielded ball bearings and "Fast Black" custom finish. For more information, contact DW at 2697 Lavery Court #16, Newbury Park, CA 91320, (805)499-6863.

eled after MXR's *Series 2000* pedals, *Junior* can be used by itself or incorporated into the effects chain for user convenience. While not affecting an incoming signal, *Junior* mixes in the selected voice for down-line amplification. At a fraction of the cost of a drum computer, *Junior* offers an economical way to create drum and percussion sounds and other special audio effects. It is backed by MXR's one-year full warranty. Contact Debra Alley, MXR Innovations, Inc., 740 Driving Park Ave., Rochester, NY 14613, (716) 254-2910.

REMO EBONY DRUMHEADS AND UPGRADED PTS LINE

Remo, Inc. premiered a new line of black-film drumheads, and also introduced major improvements in its *PTS* drumset series at the NAMM Winter Market in January. The new *Ebony* series heads, designed to complement the new trend towards all-black and black-and-gold drumsets, will be available in *Ambassador*, *CS White Dot* and *White Pinstripe* models in all standard sizes. *PTS* innovations on display for the first time included upgraded pedals and hardware for all pretuned sets, a line of *PTS/CS* heads incorporating Remo's *CS Black Dot* reinforcement, and a new double tom-tom floor stand which allows multiple rack tom setups to be added to *PTS* drumsets. For more information, contact Remo, Inc. 12804 Raymer St., No. Hollywood, CA 91605.

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Grover Enterprises is proud to introduce snares designed for power, response and projection. The *Wolf* snares feature nylon-covered stainless-steel cable cast into a plastic resin, 12 individually tensioned strands, and quick mounting onto any 14" standard snare drum. For additional information, contact your local dealer or write Grover Enterprises, 78 Hibbert Street, Arlington, MA 02174.

BALTER INTRODUCES NEW PRODUCTS



Mike Balter Mallets is happy to announce two new lines of percussion products. Mike Balter Timpani Mallets feature hard rock-maple shafts along with seamless felt heads. There are five models from which to choose: *Ultra-Staccato*, *Staccato*, *General*, *Legato*, and *Wood*. Mike Balter Hickory Drumsticks are guaranteed to be straight and warp-free. List price: wood tip \$6.00 per pair; nylon tip \$6.50 per pair. Models available are 3A, 5A, 7A, 2B, 5B and *Rock* in wood tip; 5AN, 7AN, 2BN, 5BN and *RockN* in nylon tip.

DEEP FORCE SERIES FROM PEARL

Pearl announces the all-new *DLX/DX 7500 Deep Force Series*. Features include *Deep Force* toms, *Super Hoops*, Remo *Pinstripe* heads on the batter sides, and Pearl's new clear heads on the bottom sides. The *Deep Force* shell is of seven-ply cross-laminated construction, consisting of mahogany, lamin wood, and birch. The bass drum is fitted with a 100% birch hoop. The basic five-piece setup starts at \$1,650.00, either covered or wood-grain finish.

NEW CONGA BOOK

Brass Ring Enterprises has recently published *Conga Come Alive!*, a 64-page book, introducing a completely new method for learning to play congas. It includes the history of congas, maintenance, travel tips, techniques, and traditional and up-to-date rhythms. For free information write: Brass Ring Enterprises, Dept. I, P.O. Box 1312, Toms River, NJ 08753-0307.

Readers Poll

The purpose of MD's annual poll is to recognize drummers and percussionists in all fields of music who have been especially active during the past year, either through recordings, live performances or educational activities. It is in no way to suggest that one musician is "better" than another, but rather, to call attention to those performers who, through their musicianship, have been inspirational to us all.

Here's your opportunity to make your opinion count. Your vote will help MD pay tribute to the leading drum and percussion artists in the world today.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) You must use the official MD ballot. No photocopies.
- 2) Please print or type.
- 3) Make only one selection in each category. (It is not necessary to vote in every category. Leave blank any category for which you do not have a firm opinion.)
- 4) Mail your ballot to: MODERN DRUMMER READERS POLL, 1000 Clifton Ave., Clifton, NJ 07013. Bailors must be postmarked no later than April 10, 1984. Results will be announced in the July '84 issue of MD.

NOTES:

a) **Hall of Fame:** Vote for the artist, living or dead, who you feel has made an historic contribution to the art of drumming. Previous winners (Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, John Bonham, Keith Moon and Neil Peart) are not eligible for this category.

b) **Mallet Percussionist:** Please limit to performers who specialize in vibes, marimba and/or xylophone.

c) **Classical Percussionist:** This category is limited to artists performing with symphony orchestras, operas, percussion ensembles, etc.

d) **Up-and-Coming Drummer:** This category is reserved for the most promising artist brought to the public's attention within the past 12 months.

e) **Recorded Performance:** Vote for your favorite recording by a drummer as a leader or as a member of a group. Limit your selection to recordings made within the last 12 months. Please include the artist's name, the complete title of the song, and the name of the album from which it came.

HALL OF FAME^a

ALL-AROUND DRUMMER

ROCK DRUMMER

JAZZ DRUMMER

COUNTRY DRUMMER

BIG BAND DRUMMER

FUNK DRUMMER

REGGAE DRUMMER

STUDIO DRUMMER

MULTI-PERCUSSIONIST

MALLET PERCUSSIONIST^b

UP-AND-COMING DRUMMER^d

LATIN/BRAZILIAN PERCUSSIONIST

RECORDED PERFORMANCE^e

CLASSICAL PERCUSSIONIST^c

ARTIST'S NAME _____

SONG TITLE _____

ALBUM TITLE _____

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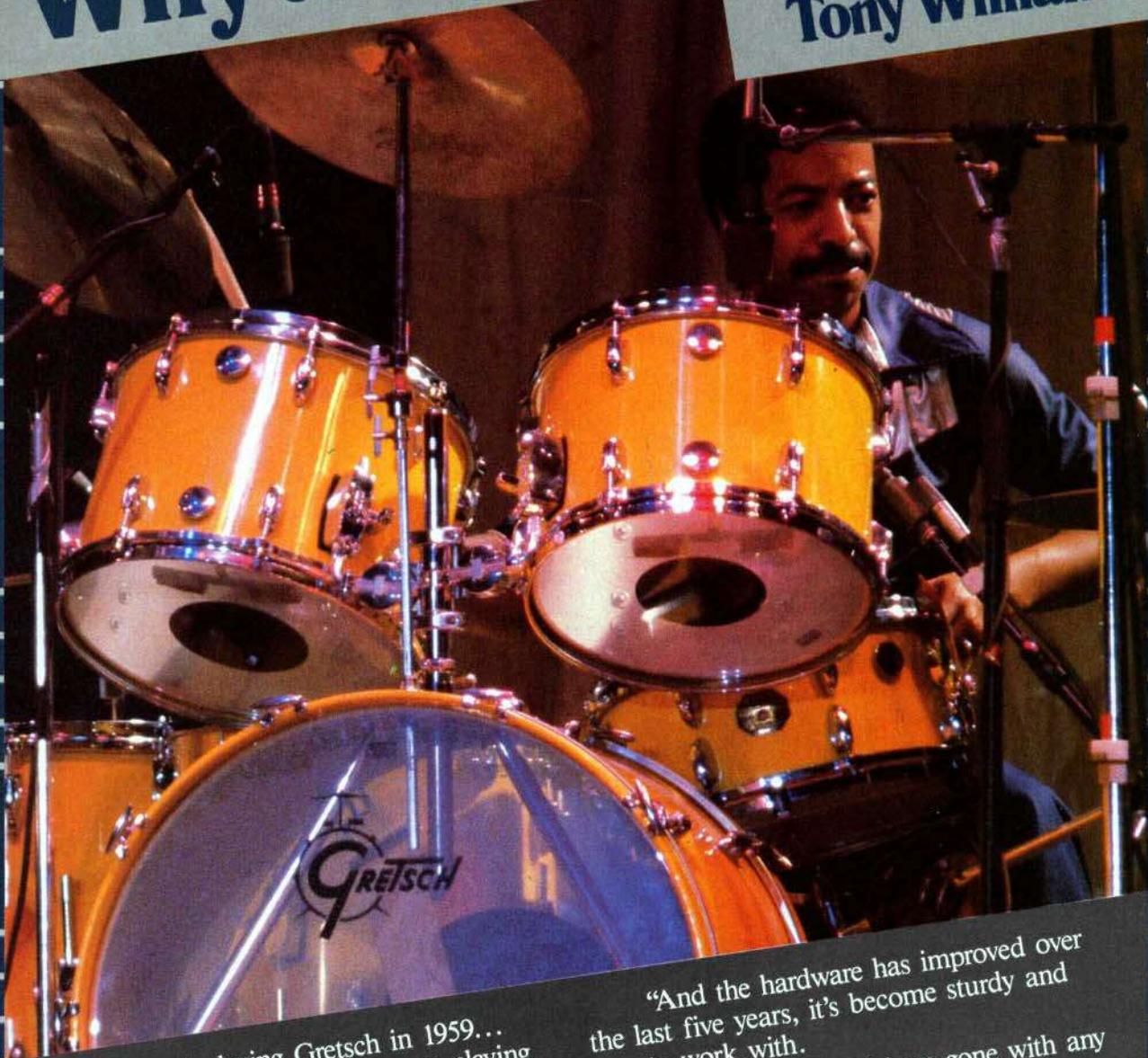
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Dave Weckl

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Why do I play Gretsch?

Tony Williams



"I started playing Gretsch in 1959... because my favorite drummers were playing Gretsch: Max Roach and Art Blakey.

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"It's a very identifiable sound—very round, it carries a lot of tone color.

"And the hardware has improved over the last five years, it's become sturdy and easy to work with.

"You know, I could have gone with any drum company over the years—but staying with Gretsch meant more to me than anything anyone else had to offer.

"The sound is there."



Tony Williams

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For a color poster of Tony Williams, send \$3.50 for postage and handling (check or money order) to Gretsch Poster TW, P.O. Box 1250, Gallatin, TN 37066.

STEVE GADD. HOT ON ZILDJIAN.

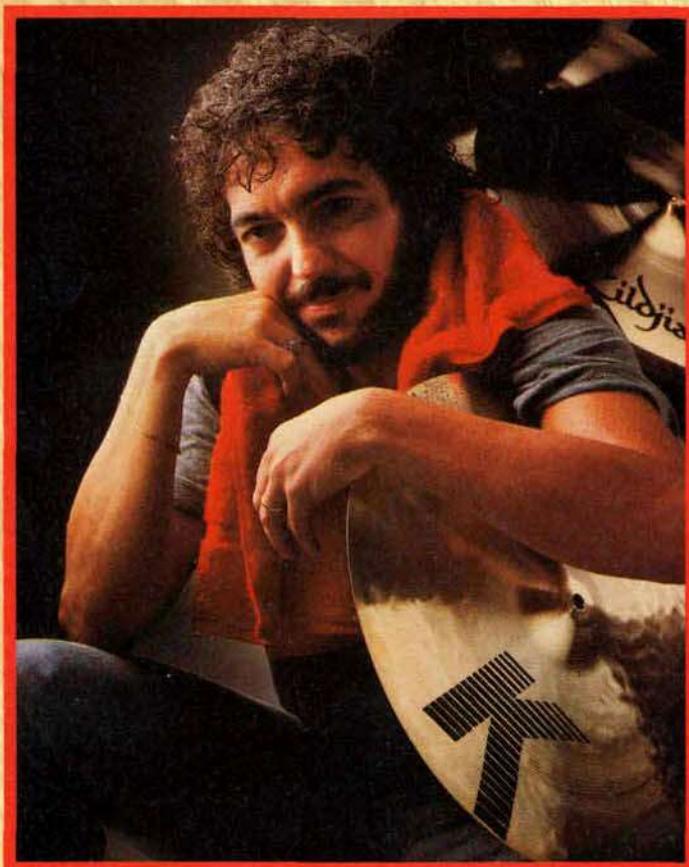
The man is hot! And he should be. No less than Chick Corea put it this way: "Every drummer wants to play like Steve Gadd because he plays great. He plays everything well. He could very well go on to become one of the greatest drummers the world has ever seen." As you can imagine, between his touring and recording, Steve's not the easiest guy in the world to pin down. But he did stop for a breather the other day and we got a chance to talk with him.

On Practice. "I've been playing since I was a kid. As long as I keep my muscles loose, I don't have to practice a lot every day. When I do practice, I just sort of let things happen naturally and then later on try to work it into my playing. Like on '50 Ways to Leave Your Lover... I used my left hand on the high hat for the whole section—it was a little thing I'd been practicing and it just worked out."

On Control. "Sometimes I use light, medium and heavy sticks to do the same drills because the sticks affect my muscles in different ways. You have to use your hand and arm muscles differently

to control your playing. It's a subtle thing but it helps me tremendously."

On Effects. "After I graduated from Eastman, I played in a rock 'n roll band. It was keyboard, bass, drums and a lot of homemade stuff. I bought 6 big artillery shells, sawed them into different lengths and hung them on



Steve Gadd, one of the world's most innovative musicians, has paved the way toward new playing techniques for today's drummers.

a rack that I built. I'd use them for the free sections in the music."

On K's. "Art Blakey gave me my first set of K. Zildjian's a long time ago. I love the feel of them. There's something about the way the stick reacts to the surface...it almost becomes part of the cymbal. They're not cold or edgy. They have a very warm and deep feeling. They've got real character. I use a 20" Ride and an 18" Crash Ride with 14" Hi Hats for recording and live sessions."

On A's. "I love to use A. Zildjian's when I play rock 'n roll. When I want to play louder, I add a 16" Thin Crash and an 18" Crash Ride for a full crash sound. The bells on the A's really project the sound in a clear natural tone."

On Zildjian. "Zildjian to me is the foundation. I play Zildjians because that's what's in my heart. I love the sound, the feel, the history... I love the quality and the status of a Zildjian."

If you're a serious drummer, chances are that you, like Steve, are already playing Zildjians. For 360 years, they have been the overwhelming favorite of drummers worldwide.

For your copy of the Zildjian Cymbals and Accessories Catalog, along with a Steve Gadd poster, send \$3.00 to Dept. 16.

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