

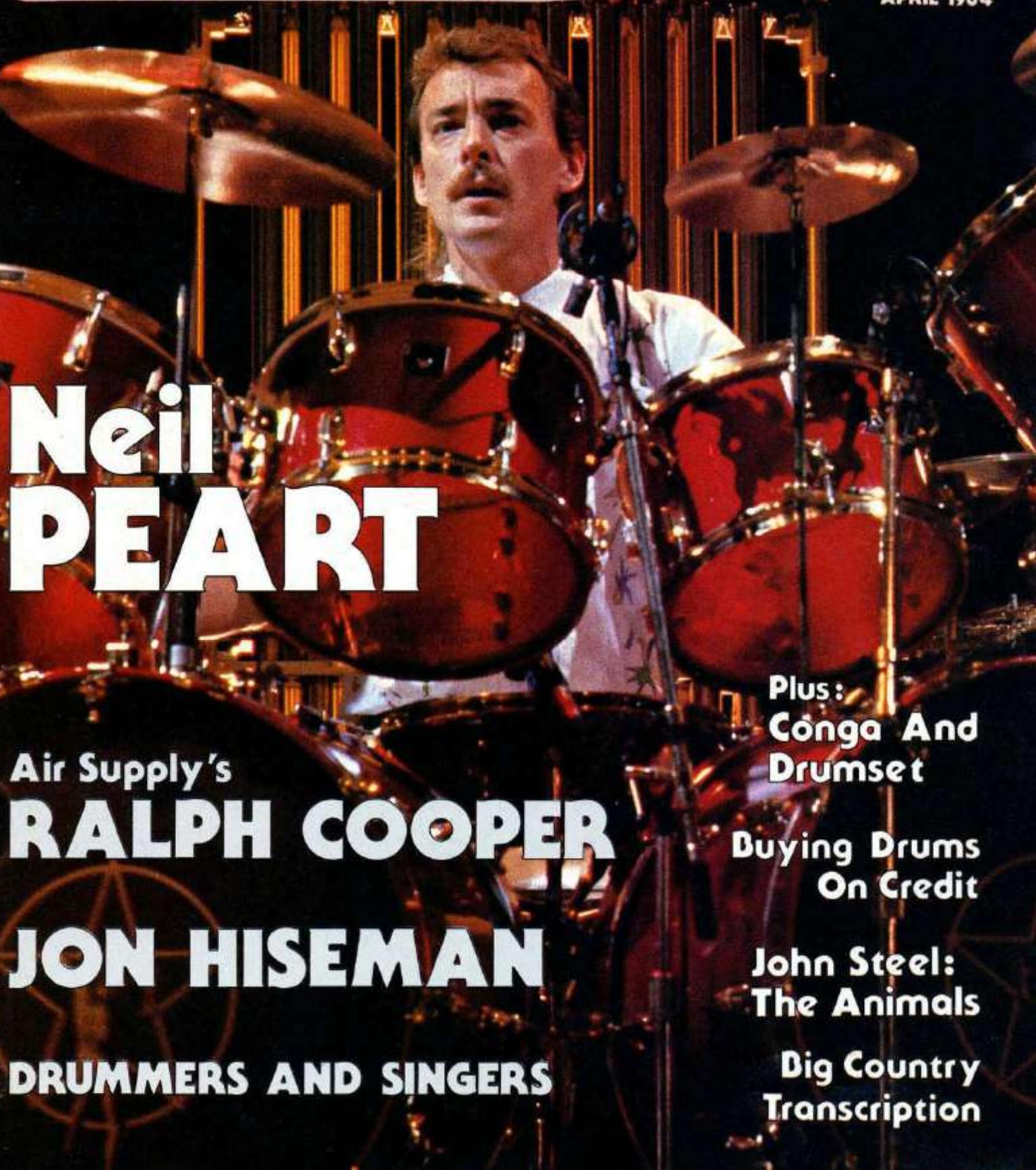


MODERN DRUMMER™

The International Magazine Exclusively For Drummers

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(In USA)

APRIL 1984



Neil PEART

Air Supply's

RALPH COOPER

JON HISEMAN

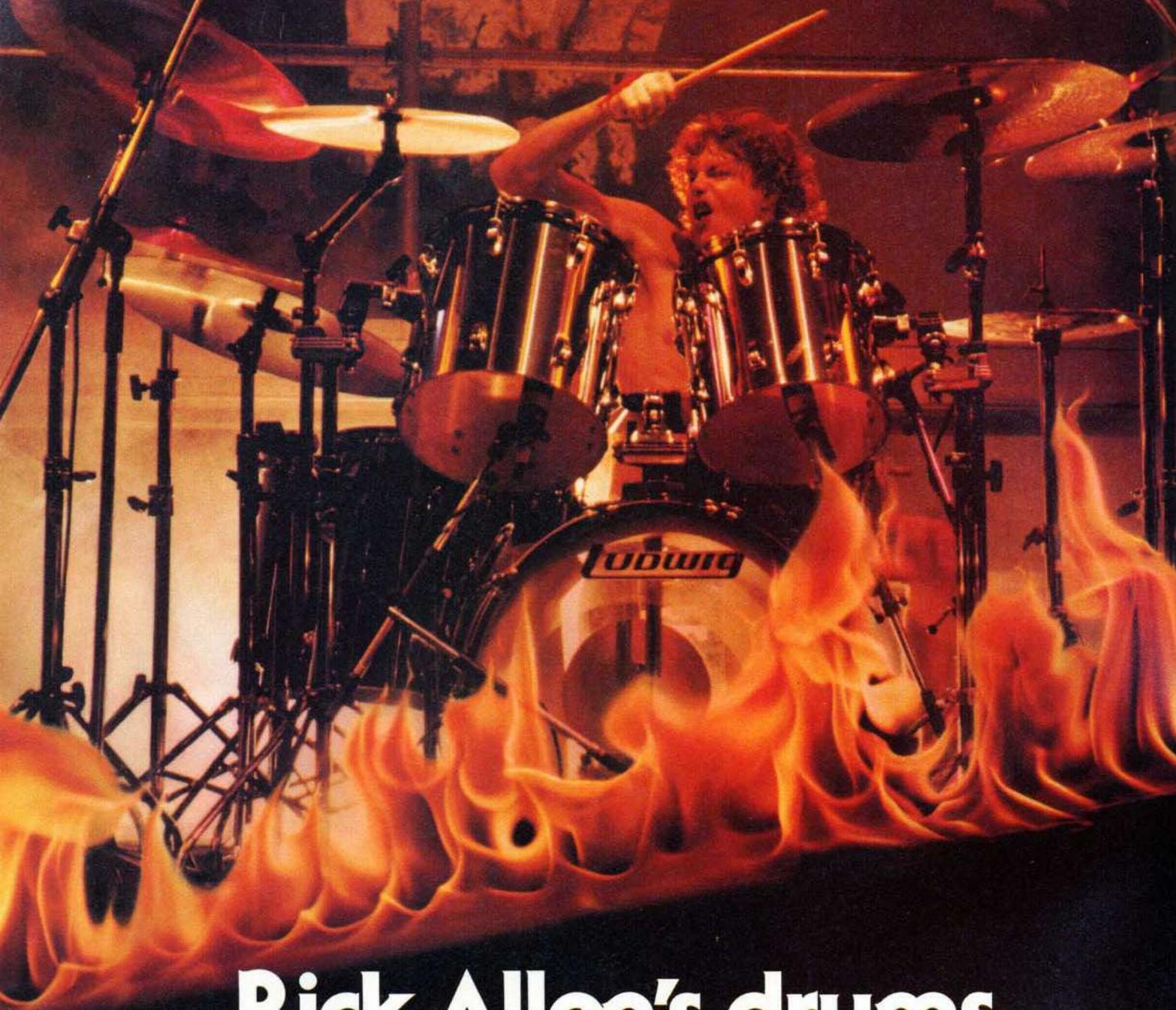
DRUMMERS AND SINGERS

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Drumset**

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**John Steel:
The Animals**

**Dig Country
Transcription**



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NEIL PEART

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RALPH COOPER

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Photo by Jaeger Kotek



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EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

Questions And Answers



It's Questionable, the question and answer department which runs in every issue of this magazine, is one of MD's most popular columns. A considerable amount of mail is directed to this department each and every month.

Unfortunately, time does not permit us to reply personally to questions, and since we can only answer a limited amount in each issue, you'll probably encounter a delay between the time you write and the time we respond. Rest assured, however, that if you have a legitimate question, we'll do our best to research it for you and to answer it through the column.

If you do write, keep in mind that, though we *are* concerned with answering individual questions, for the most part, letters are selected on the basis of general interest. We're more inclined to answer a question which will be of help to the widest possible segment of the readership.

A great deal of the letters we receive are from readers requesting the mailing addresses of their favorite drummers. Although this is understandable, I think this is a good time to reiterate a point made in a previous editorial. Part of the responsibility we feel towards the artists featured in *MD* is the protection of their privacy, so we've made it a general policy to avoid releasing home addresses. However, *Ask A Pro* is available to any reader at all times for a published answer to a specific question. Or you can simply send your letter to the artist *c/o Modern Drummer* and we'll gladly forward it.

Oddly enough, many readers write asking for the addresses of certain manufacturers so they can send for equipment catalogs or other information. This type of question will rarely get priority treatment from the editors when you take into account that the information is readily accessible through the advertising in the magazine. Writing to *It's Questionable* for this kind of information is really a waste of time, effort and postage. A very similar situation exists with drum books. Many publishing companies run ads for one or more of their publications. In some cases, entire catalogs are available. Surprisingly, we still seem to receive inquiries asking where to locate these items.

Besides the advertising in *MD*, another source you should take full advantage of, before you consider writing to *It's Questionable*, is your local music dealers or drum shops. Along with their role in the areas of sales and service, your local shops should be prepared to assist you in obtaining the equipment information you're looking for.

The point of all this is really quite basic: By doing a bit of research and leg work on your own before writing to us, you may be able to save yourself some time. The answer to your question may be right at your fingertips. If you're unable to come up with anything, then by all means, feel free to write. We'll do our very best to find out what it is you need to know. We're here to help if we can, and you shouldn't hesitate to write when it's warranted.

RS

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READER'S PLATFORM

JO JONES

My compliments to Chip Stern on the article about Jo Jones. The article was fantastic. Jo Jones talks as a musician, not as a drummer. It's nice to see an article with half of it not on the musician's equipment. It's good to see one of the jazz greats is still up and around. I hope to see more articles like this. Keep up the good work.

Amir Ziv

Rishon Le Zion, Israel

SLIM JIM PHANTOM

During the anxiety, depression, and hustle and bustle of the holiday season, I turned to *MD* for some interesting reading. I picked up the January issue and started paging through. I turned to the article on Slim Jim Phantom and began laughing hysterically. After the laughter stopped, I began to feel disgusted. I thought *MD* had professional standards. What kind of credentials does this tattooed individual have? He plays with a band that doesn't belong. He can play only one shuffle rhythm that is probably creatively dubbed in the studio. Surely a magazine that displays the likes of Neil Peart, Phil Collins and Steve Gadd is doing the right thing. Even good magazines goof up once in a while. Let's hope this is the last time. The article on Gina Schock of the Go-Gos was bad enough, but this one takes the cake.

Tom Stalowski
Madison, WI

IN DEFENSE OF ART

Today's overproduced digital high-tech music makes few demands for skill on a drummer. Young drummers coming up don't get much of a chance to really get down and play anything deep. It's pretty much all just boom-tap, boom-tap, etc. I don't know if it's just the recording industry (with its cocaine-consuming, mindless, clap-track mentality) that is responsible for the mediocrity of today's music, but it has just about taken the drumsticks away from the drummers.

Sometimes I think there's a conspiracy designed to quell the voices of creative music, because perhaps it's a threat to the sanctity of small-minded people who cannot deal with truth, honesty, spontaneity, beauty, wisdom, or anything that has depth, history, or meaning. The only thing these people give a damn about is power and money—to hell with art! I see a lot of beautiful musicians out here busting their asses playing the top-40 pop music and getting nowhere with it—doing it just because it's either play it or starve! There is no justice when a loudmouth neophyte with vir-

tually no musical roots or knowledge can go out with a video and an album, and make more money in a week than I'll see in a year.

Perhaps I'm touching on a controversial issue: Must mediocrity win out? Is the outcome of it all that the loud and ignorant should prevail? If so, then all the reasons I have for being a musician are futile. I've spent 16 years playing, studying the masters, learning when to play on top, when to lay back behind the beat, how to use dynamics—in essence, how to be a musician instead of just a drummer bashing out a crude beat. I keep hoping for an awakening. I pray to God that someday I'll find a place where creative thought is encouraged—where artists are not looked upon as freaks—a place where an artist can create uninhibitedly for the eyes, ears, minds and souls that still have the capacity to feel.

Randy Marsh
Grand Rapids, MI

THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

I recently received my first issue of *MD* and as I read it I noticed something in both the Jackie Santos and L.A. Studio Round-table articles. All of these fine musicians spoke of drummers needing the right attitude towards drumming. I also believe drummers need a certain attitude. In fact, I noticed that much of the magazine is devoted to developing an attitude towards drumming. As it was stated in the interview with the great Jo Jones, it's his attitude that sets him apart from many trap players. These interviews have helped me gain a better understanding of the drums, and they've given me a new way to approach the instrument. I'm glad I began reading *MD* and congratulate the authors of these interesting and informative articles.

Brad Shafer
Des Moines, IA

OLDIES BUT GOODIES

I want to compliment you on the last two issues of *Modern Drummer*. Though I always enjoy reading your magazine, I sometimes find that there is not much in it for people like me who no longer drum for a living, but continue to play as an avocation. Though I do understand that your publication must be directed toward the working young drummers, you may not be aware of a large potential audience for your magazines. More and more of us, who used to be pros when we were young, have returned to play in community bands and orchestras, dance bands and combos. We play for the fun of it, but now need tips on the current scene, on equipment, etc.

We also spend a lot of money on new equipment.

I especially appreciated the article in the December issue on Anthony J. Cirone. For the first time in my life I am playing in a symphony, and I needed the helpful advice. I would like more—on how to play mallets, and on playing in large concert groups. The article in the January issue on "Papa" Jo Jones was also super. I can relate to him. He is of my era.

Hopefully, you will add things for us oldies who want to stay hip—and people who are in school music, or who just gig around town playing weddings, dances, and VFW or Elks halls. There is a lot of good stuff going on out here in small towns.

Glenn Martin
Willmar, MN

RESPONSE TO SWANN

I'm writing in response to Stanley C. Swann's letter in the January '84 issue. Mr. Swann stated: "... why so much 'Rock?' Rock drummers are not the only people who read this magazine." He also went on to say "Please give other drummers a break. Get rid of the labels and include all forms of drumming." Stanley, where have you been? I've been receiving *Modern Drummer* since 1980, and I've seen things written about jazz, fusion, country, rockabilly, avant-garde, symphonic, marching, new wave, Latin, R&B, big band, African, studio, Broadway, reggae, funk, Dixieland, Gospel and military drumming . . . along with rock. *Modern Drummer* is not a rock-oriented magazine, so don't be so angry. I'm not challenging Mr. Swann's personal viewpoints or opinions. I'm just giving Mr. Swann a little historic background.

Brian Mikulich
Golden, CO

MD AS EDUCATIONAL TOOL

Just a note to let you know how much I enjoy reading *Modern Drummer* magazine. Your features on Mark Herndon, Simon Kirke and Phil Collins were all great. Rick Van Horn's tax article was also very good. It will help me in 1984. Two other articles that really drew my attention were by James E. Murphy: One dealt with teaching and the other was about drum anchoring. Both were right on!

Your magazine is "the item" for drummers who wish to further their education and drumming knowledge.

Kirk Brown
Cedar Grove, IN



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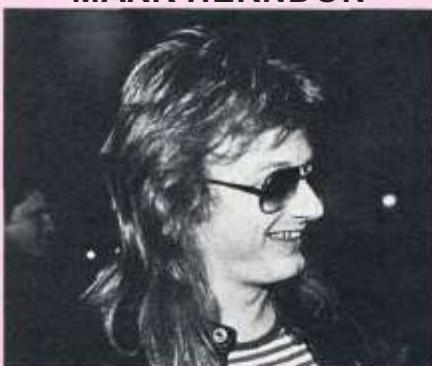
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ASK A PRO

MARK HERNDON



Q. What kind of heads do you use, and what tuning method do you use on your snare drum? Also, I would like to know what effects device was used on the snare on the song "Very Special Love."

Tony Nobles
Scotland Neck, NC

A. Starting with the last question first: that is not an effect. It sounds like the snare's been run through some kind of an echo system, but it hasn't. It was done by bouncing the left stick with 16th notes, while playing an 8th-note ride pattern. It's very simple to do. It sounds like there's a whole lot more going on than there actually is. It's just that the left hand is playing every other beat with a 16th note, like a ricochet, and the right hand is playing a straight 8th-note ride pattern. That gives it the feeling of bouncing, like a ping-pong ball under the paddle. David Teegarden did it on Bob Seger's "We Got Tonight," but he did it on a hi-hat. That's where I got the idea.

As far as heads go, my toms and bass drum are Evans Black Rockers, the snare top head is a Remo clear CS, and the bottom is a clear Ambassador snare head. The snare is basically tuned by my drum technician in the afternoon before I get to the hall, using a torque wrench. He torques everything to about 20 psi on each lug. Then I'll come in and take it from there, after the head has had a chance to stretch for a couple of hours. I like a real firm, cracking snare; so I'll probably tweak it up a bit more. We don't tune it to any particular note; I just like a full, resonant snare with a lot of crack to it, and we achieve that by tuning the bottom head slightly tighter than the top. About every three shows we'll change all the top tom heads. A snare head will usually go for four.

BUTCH MILES

Q. Recently you recorded two LPs which were tributes to jazz legends Count Basie and Gene Krupa. On both albums you had at least one cut where you were vocalizing. My question is: Did you sing while drumming or was your voice overdubbed?

Doug Light
Los Angeles, CA

A. On the Krupa album, I sang while playing. We didn't have the facilities to overdub a vocal so I sang through one of the drum mic's while playing softly. You can hear the difference in volume levels before, during and after the vocal if you listen to the drum sound. The Basie tribute was recorded with a vocal overdub. We had the facilities to use more tracks, and it was felt that a vocal overdub would result in a cleaner separation of sound. We recorded the track with me singing along, then erased the vocal and I overdubbed the vocal again on a



Photo by Denis J. Williams

different channel. The sound on the Basie album was, I felt, much better than the vocal sound on the Krupa album. In matters of choice, I would always record the music track first, and then dub in the vocal. The sound will generally be much clearer.

MYRON GROMBACHER

Q. Being that your roadie, Jeff Chonis, plays such an integral part in your role as a drummer, is he paid by you or by the band as an expense?

Bob Myron
Cranston, IL

A. Jeff is an independent contractor,

OMAR HAKIM

Q. I recently saw you in concert with Weather Report, and I would like to know what sort of cymbals you use, the type and sizes of your drums, and how you tune them.

Tim Ross

Beaconsfield, Quebec, Canada

A. I'm using Zildjian cymbals. They include a 22" heavy ride, which I sometimes switch with a 20" K. ride, a 17" crash next to the ride on my right, a 19" crash on the left, and I'm using a 13" splash. I use two China Boys, without rivets. The one on my left is a 16"; the one on my right is 22". I also use some Crotales on the gig, and a garbage can lid I got out of Joe Zawinul's back yard! The drums are Yamaha, with 10", 12", 13" and 14" rack toms and three floor toms: 14x14, 16x16, and 16x18. The bass drum is a 22", of normal depth. I use Yamaha 9000 series snares; one is 5 1/2X 14, and the other is around 7x 14. All the hardware is Yamaha, except

for the Drum Workshop double pedal, which is really great. DW just made me an extension rod for hat, since my legs are so long and I couldn't reach the left pedal footboard with their regular model. I also use Yamaha's pedal on other occasions.

As far as tuning, since with Weather Report I'm working with a percussionist who uses tom-toms, we had to choose actual notes, so there wouldn't be a musical train wreck. So I tuned my highest tom to "F" and then tuned it all down to the lowest rack tom in fourths. I think what I had was "F", "C", "G", "D", and then I went a third down to the first floor tom. Then I tuned those on down in fourths again. The bass drum I just tune for the best sound. I tune the bottom heads either in unison with the top heads, or in sympathetic intervals, depending on the drum character I want. When I'm not playing with Weather Report I just tune the drums based on the situation; just what sounds good.

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I'm all for heroes—people noted for their special achievements. Heroes are inspiring, and there are too damned few of them around today. To steal a phrase from Studs Terkel, today seems to be the "period of the pipsqueak"—a period of small and insignificant people. The pipsqueaks elevate a select few to the status of idol or demigod. They take heroes and turn them into halfmen/halfgods or into Golden Calves. Rock 'n' roll heaven is loaded with musicians who have succumbed to the pressures of being demigods and idols. Starting in the '50s, I made a list of 74 dead "rock stars." Their average lifespan: 31 years. The youngest on the list was 18. The oldest was 47.

In many ways, Neil Peart has been put on that dangerous pedestal and he's not real excited about it. Neil is excited and grateful, however, that he's respected for his drumming, songwriting, and his contribution to Rush.

In a 1977 interview, Bob Dylan was asked about heroes. He said, "A hero is anyone who walks to his own drummer." The interviewer asked, "Shouldn't people look to others to be heroes?" Dylan replied, "No: When people look to others for heroism, they're looking for heroism in an imaginary character."

In Neil, I sensed a strong resistance to becoming an imaginary character. He wants to remain Neil Peart: the guy who plays drums, writes songs and goes home—just another guy doing his day's work to the best of his ability. The problem with pipsqueaks putting people on pedestals is that soon the adulation turns to chants of "Jump. Jump."

I've known Neil for about three years. I should say I know aspects of Neil. We've conversed on the phone many times. I edited his articles for MD and helped coordinate the Neil Peart Drum Giveaway. During this interview, which was done on the last day of Rush's five-concert series at Radio City Music Hall, it was Neil, my wife and I in a room backstage. Neil, in his last MD interview, said, "You don't have conversations with your friends about metaphysics, the fundamentals of music and the fundamentals of yourself really." Well, we spoke about all three of those and it was fun because we disagreed on some fundamental issues. I asked him if he ever asked himself the fundamental question, "Why am I here?" He responded, "You can ask those questions, but what's the point? The point is I'm here and making the best use of it. There's a further qualification to that. It's not 'why am I here?' It's 'why am I here this way?' The meaning of why I was born is a simple biological fact. Why am I spending my life in this particular manner? Most times that tends to be a combination of circumstances and drive. The fact that I wanted to be a successful drummer was by no means a guarantee that I was going to be. But circumstances happened to rule that I turned out to be one."

I'm not a great believer in circumstance. I'm more inclined to agree with what Longfellow wrote in his poem "The Singers." He wrote, "God sent his singers upon earth/ With songs of sadness and mirth,/ That they might touch the hearts of men,/ And bring them back to heaven again."

Neil Peart's lyrics and spoken words are excellent launch pads for further study. I think he'd be the first to encourage anyone to study the writers, philosophers and musicians who have inspired him. All artists, it seems to me, would sooner provoke thoughts in their admirers, than attract a group of people who take everything they do or say at face value, or don't think about it at all.

SF: I was re-reading the lyric sheet from *Signals* today. Much of what you wrote about made me think of you as the Mark Twain of rock lyrics—writing about Huckleberry Finn or Tom Sawyer-type characters.

NP: Well, that's certainly something that I relate to strongly. I basically come from a standard background like that. I grew up in the suburbs, but at the same time, most of my relatives had farms. So every summer or holiday I'd be out at the farm.

I always had a very simple outlook on life as a response to that. When I first got into the big time, I did, and still do, find it very hard to relate to. I love playing drums and I love traveling. But I find a great deal of difficulty dealing with everything that surrounds that. Fame, for me, is embarrassing. It's not something I get arrogant about. I don't feel like people are bothering me. But, at the same time, I get embarrassed if strangers walk up to me on the street who think they know me. I just get embarrassed, tense and uncomfortable.

SF: Why?

NP: Because it's *unreal!* But it's something that I can never hope to tell people or convince them of. They think they know me. They *don't* know me. They don't know anything about me. They're strangers. It just makes me defensive.

I like meeting people. I like people. One of my favorite subjects to think and write about is the human race. So I'm not any kind of a misanthrope—a person who hates human beings. I'm not reclusive to that extent. But I am a private person and I'm basically shy with people I don't know, especially when I can't meet them on equal terms. If I can meet someone's friend, or even a stranger, person to person, I get a kick out of that and I enjoy it. But I feel differently when somebody comes up to me with an attitude that I'm something special, or thinks that they know something about me or that—as I read so often in letters—"You and I have a lot in common." How do you know? I

N E I L



P E A R T

APRIL 1984

by Scott K. Fish



Photo by Dimo Safari

struggled a long time to figure out why it bothered me so much. When I first joined the band, nobody knew who I was because I wasn't on the first album. There'd be kids hanging around backstage to see Alex and Geddy and not paying any attention to me. But still, the situation would make me feel uncomfortable because it's not a real relationship. It's not any kind of a situation you can base a friendship on. You can't start a friendship with somebody who thinks you're a plastic figure on some kind of pedestal.

SF: You don't think that you've changed from the kid who was on the farm?

NP: Certainly, in that I've broadened. But I don't think that I have changed my essential nature. I still get excited by and enjoy the same things. I understand things a lot better now, I guess. Thirty years of experience gives you a greater understanding. But I don't think I've become any of the dangerous things that this situation can make you become.

That's something that was a conscious effort for all three of us. We didn't want to become rock 'n' roll clichés. We didn't want to become isolated people who would feel totally alienated from the human race. That's what the song "Limelight" is about—the alienation that fans try to force on us. People force us to protect ourselves. They force us to check into hotels under false names. They force us to have security guards to keep people away from us.

**"PEOPLE FORCE US TO
PROTECT OURSELVES.
THEY FORCE US TO CHECK
INTO HOTELS UNDER FALSE
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HAVE SECURITY GUARDS
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FROM US. THAT WAS A REAL
SHOCK FOR US AND IT WAS
A REAL HARD THING FOR
US TO GIVE IN TO."**

That was a real shock for us and it was a real hard thing for us to give in to.

In the first four or five years that we were on the road, if I wanted to, I'd walk out of the hotel, walk through the city to the gig and walk in the back door. After the show was over, I'd walk out the back door and walk back to the

hotel. I'd get up in the morning and go to work. Then I'd finish work and go back home, just like a normal person. I love that. I love it more because I can't do it anymore. I resent the fact that I can't do that now. It's all because of an unreality that, I guess, was started in the early days of Hollywood, where they created these people who were supposed to be demigods. Then rock 'n' roll picked up on that as a marketing tool to make musicians larger than life. It's something that I try

to fight, but you can only fight it so much, because it's such an ingrained thing in society that somehow entertainers and celebrities are different from everybody else. It's something I detest. I really hate it. It's totally unnatural, it's totally unreal, it makes everyone uncomfortable and it makes everyone alienated.

SF: Do you think that's what killed Keith Moon?

NP: He's a bit of a special case. Jimi Hendrix might be a better example of someone who pushed and pushed, and alienated so greatly. For a lot of these people it's a weakness of character that they possess. A lot of people feel uncomfortable about fame. Fortunately, when we were first starting and opening for different bands, we saw the ways that people dealt with it. There are basically two ways: You can either try to avoid it or you can play it as a role. We saw bands play it as a role. They'd walk out after the show and say, "WE LOVE YOU! YOU'RE WONDERFUL! YOU THINK I'M GREAT? I THINK I'M GREAT TOO!" That's the choice you have for dealing with it without going crazy. I try to hide from it, basically. I stopped having my picture taken. I stopped being a public figure because I don't want to have a famous face. I spent all my life learning how to play drums and loving it. Having famous hands is okay, even though that carries its own set of pressures and insecurities. But having a famous face? That's nothing. I mean, what's your face? I didn't work all this time for my *face*. I don't think about writing songs for the sake of my *face*. And I didn't spend the last 17 or 18 years playing drums to make my *face* famous. I resent that whole mentality.

I remember saying out loud one day, "I hate being famous." That was the crux. Yes, you want to be successful in any profession, but take professional architects or doctors. They don't have thousands of people chasing them around all the time and people they don't know running up to them on the street. Yes, you want to be successful for the sake of independence. There was a point we reached that was successful enough for the record companies to leave us alone because we were selling enough records. And there's a certain balance you reach when all of these things become equal. And that's wonderful; that's a great period.

But when it goes beyond that, people expect and demand so much of you because you're not human anymore. "What do you mean you don't feel good today?" It's so frustrat-

Photo by Dino Salari

ing. Maybe eight days out of ten you don't mind meeting people and signing autographs. But maybe one night you don't want to deal with strangers, you don't want to see people, or you feel sick. You're physically sick and you're only doing the gig because you're a professional. You're only going to the gig to do the job. Period. Do you think people understand that? No. If you come out and say, "I don't feel well. Please leave me alone," they react with, "Oh wow. Mr. Bigshot. Mr. Big Star. You're too good to deal with us." I just don't understand that. I don't have that alienation from my side. I still get a pleasure out of answering letters from people. It's a thing I can do on my time, on my terms and I can feel good about it. When I'm home I'll write 15 or 20 postcards usually, and answer the mail which I mostly get forwarded from *Modern Drummer*. It's a positive thing on both sides. I feel good about it and the person who receives it is going to feel good about it.

In England, where life is even more narrow and circumscribed than here, and those people have nothing to live for but their favorite group, you can't even open the curtains in your hotel room. You cannot walk out of the hotel. I wouldn't dream of going for a walk in the afternoon because there'll be 50 people outside the hotel. If you open your curtains, there'll be people staring in at you—shamelessly staring into your life. And that's the kind of thing that infuriates me.

SF: Was there ever a time where you were at a crossroads of pursuing either your writing or your music?

NP: I verge on that from time to time right now. I started as a lyricist totally by accident. I'd literally written two songs just for fun before I joined this band. When I joined Rush, it was actually my predecessor who had written most of the lyrics in the past. Neither Geddy nor Alex was very interested in doing it. I thought, "Well, I've always been inter-





Photo by Dino Safari

ested in words and reading and so on. I'll give it a shot." I did a couple of things that the guys liked, so it encouraged me to keep going. Now I really enjoy it and get a lot of fulfillment out of it. Over the years, I've developed a stronger and stronger interest in prose writing. I've pushed myself as a lyricist, just as I did as a drummer, to constantly explore new areas and use different constructions, rhyming patterns and rhythms. There's a lot really in common between being a lyricist and being a drummer. You're dealing with mathematical rhythms and phrasing, and you can use the same freedoms of stretching bar lengths. All of that comes into play in writing lyrics. It's a thing that I still enjoy doing very much. But I have found myself a bit constricted by verse. Lyrics, or any kind of versified poetry, is very concentrated. You have to take things, filter them down and filter them down. Every word has to be of very strong value. The better I've gotten, the fewer words I use, because those words become of greater value. I've seen that reflected in the best of the modern prose writers too—specifically the American writers of the '20s and the '30s.

My favorites of that era are, first, Theodore Dreiser and Sherwood Anderson, and then F. Scott Fitzgerald and William Faulkner. Hemingway is one of my very favorites, and I like John Steinbeck and John Dos Passes. It's the Golden Age of Literature, I think, as recognized by most people. If it's not, it certainly is by me. That's what I respond to; I would really like to emulate that someday as a prose writer. But I realize that, as long as I'm in Rush, Rush is the first commitment. There's no way that I can split that 100% commitment.

I've tried to devote a week or two every year purely to being a writer. That's when I've done some of the articles for *Modern Drummer*. I've also worked on short stories and started on theoretical novels and so on, just to see what I'd like to do and to see what I do best. I've done enough now to know that I would like to give it a stab. And if I could complete one good short story, I'd feel like a

real writer. But to do a novel or a series of short stories takes a 100% commitment, and I don't want to compromise what I'm doing as a musician by any means. But at a certain point as a musician you reach the law of diminishing returns. To me, improvement has always been the measurement of how well I'm doing. At the end of every tour I can say, "Okay, I've learned this and this specific rhythmic idea, and I've improved this much." Then we do an album and that's like final exams. A record defines you at your absolute best. With everything that you can do technically, the studio can represent you at a better-than-human perfection. So, for me, on the tour following an album, I'm trying to live up to *that* set of standards. And every night I go on stage trying to play every song as good as it is on the record. That's just a totally involved commitment.

But, with the law of diminishing returns, I've gotten to the point now where my level of improvement has slowed down. It was easy when we first got together. We weren't that good and I wasn't that good. So it was easy for us to improve, and we improved by leaps and bounds. Every album was a major step in terms of progressing as a band and as individual musicians. We've gotten to the point now—no false humility or arrogance—where we are pretty good as musicians, and we've gotten good at writing songs and interpreting them. We can take a particular mood or emotion that we want to express, and we have enough technique, empathy and pathos now that we can do it. I find that, at the end of the tour now, where I used to have five or six new rhythmic areas that I would explore during that tour, now I might have one or two. And I might only learn one or two new things because of that law of diminishing returns. So it has become a little less fulfilling in terms of progression.

I'm still very satisfied when I walk offstage thinking that I played well. And I'm still very unhappy and frustrated when I walk off stage thinking that I haven't played well. But the progression isn't as vast now. Consequently, the gratification isn't as immediate and it isn't as constantly renewing. So I think there will come a time when I'm as good as I can ever be and I'll have to say, "Okay, I can live on this for a while"—like a lot of musicians do. They work themselves up to a certain level and then they survive on that level for as long as they can. I don't think I would work that way because I have another goal. Writing has become another

goal for me. I can measure my improvement in writing as I used to be able to do with drumming five or six years ago, and that's exciting. I get that buzz from writing now that drumming has always provided me with. So there's a bit of a conflict now, even though my commitment is really 100% as a musician. But in the back of my mind there's a future goal: I really want to, one day, write just one good short story.

SF: What would you like to write about?

NP: I want to write about being a musician, because it's never been done. People outside music, who are good writers, have tried to write about it. But because they are writers and not musicians, they

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don't really understand the essential mentality of it and the gears that make it move. They don't know what it's like to really be a musician. So I would like someday to refine my ability and technique as a writer to be able to express what it's like to be a musician. I would like to write about being a young musician playing at a high school dance, and I would like to write about a really successful musician in the middle of a tour at this level. It's a hard thing to be able to find a way to write about that in a literary sense. I don't want to write popular "pop" stories as a musician. I want to be really great at it. I want to reconcile my experience. When you start, the only thing to write about is what you know. Then, as your technique develops, you can try to write about something you don't know anything about.

If people could understand what it's like to be a musician—if they would understand that a musician is someone who gets up in the morning, goes to work, finishes work and goes home—it would get rid of that alienation. There's that elemental thing. I've done a lot of other jobs. I wasn't born with a silver spoon in my mouth, and I didn't become a professional musician overnight. When I was 18, I went to England with musical motivations and goals. But when you go out into the big

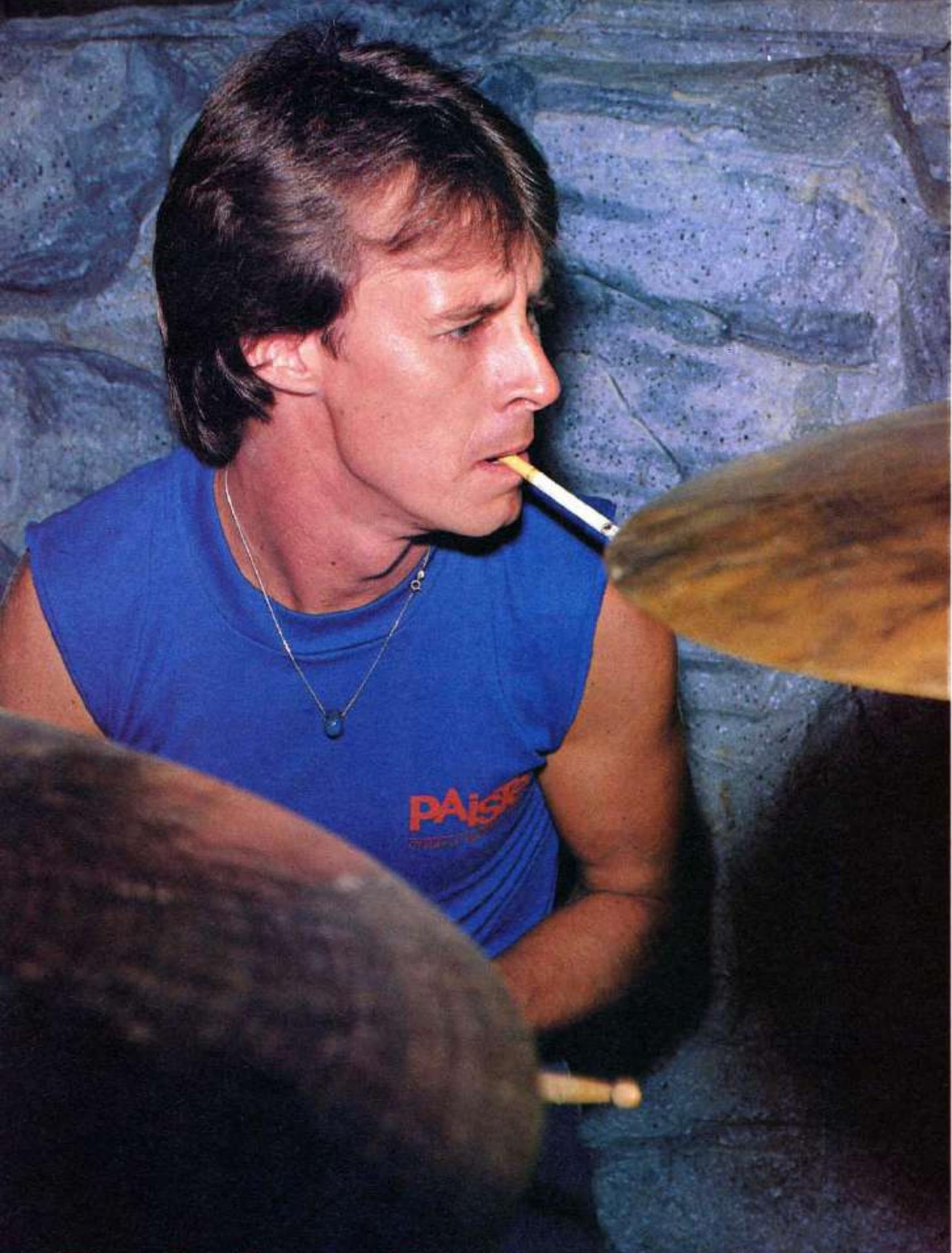
world, as any adult knows, you're in for a lot of disillusionment. So while I was there I did a lot of other things to get bread in my mouth. When I came back from there, I was disillusioned basically by the music "business." I decided that I would be a semi-pro musician for my own entertainment, would play the music that I liked to play, and wouldn't count on it to make my living. I did other jobs and worked at other things, so that I wouldn't have to compromise what I liked to do as a drummer. There's a choice there. If you're a musician you can say, "I don't care what I have to do. I'm going to make my living as a musician." Therefore you'll be happy to play in any kind of band as long as you're playing your instrument. I know musicians like that and I don't knock it. There are two different kinds of personalities at work there. I know people who want to be session musicians because they don't like to travel. They like to stay at home, and they like the familiarity and the security of that. So consequently, yes, that's the perfect place for them to be.

Conversely, there are people who think that it's incumbent upon them as a matter of pride to make their living as musicians. To me, it's a matter of pride to play the music I love. That's the essence of it. So I never felt that it was a compromise to have

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E A R T H



Ralph Cooper

"If you describe me as emotional, that's fine because it's the truth," Air Supply's Ralph Cooper admitted midway through our interview. "Anybody who divorces emotions from music has got the wrong attitude. Emotions play a big part in music. I always have to believe, and have commitment, and that involves being emotional about it. I can't just be mechanical about what I do. So I try to provide an emotional aspect to the music through my playing—something that will come across to people."

Co to an Air Supply concert for listen to the group on vinyl) and you will hear Ralph succeed with all the sensitivity and lush dynamics the music requires. There is a total commitment to his role and one can sense the intense involvement created by the honest, open, warm and very communicative person he is.

Determination is another key aspect to Ralph's personality. Musical opportunities have never been plentiful for the native Australian, and only just now have the talents of that country (with a population just a little larger than that of New York State alone) been recognized. But Ralph has never been one to sit still and allow the fates to decide his destiny.

After being inspired by The Gene Krupa Story at age five (he made his mother sit through four performances, and each time she tried to leave, he "either threw up or went blue") he played drums all through his teenage years. At age 19, he made a decision that ultimately changed his life: He left Australia for England. "I had to get out of Australia to really get my eyes opened to what was going on in the music industry around the world. So I just up and left. Of course nobody understood what I was doing, but I had to."

The two years spent in England were invaluable to Ralph as he had the opportunity to see drummers such as Buddy Rich and Tony Williams while playing in the trad jazz bands of the day. He returned to Australia with newfound determination and immediately started a group called Stepps. While he and the bass player worked for EMI in Sydney, the group recorded an album themselves.

"Quite literally ourselves," Ralph laughs. 'I mean, pushing 'record' and 'play' on the machine, then running into the studio, counting four and playing the track, and then running back in and stopping the machine. We did all the overdubs at about 5:00 or 6:00 in the morning on weekdays, and all the rhythm tracks over a period of a couple of weekends. You see, Friday at 5:00 P.M., the people who ran the studio would put a lock on the door until Monday morning, but unbeknownst to them, we used to hide in the closet. As soon as everyone cleared out, we'd figure out how to defeat the security code, and we'd let the other group members in. Then we'd eat and sleep there."

Stepps dissolved two-and-a-half years later and Ralph was offered a job with Windchase, which he describes as symphonic rock (much like the group Focus). The job lasted until the group's dissolution a couple of years later. A succession of gigs followed, including a country-rock band, sessions, and some commercial and jingle work. In 1978, Ralph was called to audition for Air Supply.

"Along the way, I had done three years of mastering nothing but hit records, so I was definitely able to hear a song and say, 'Yes, it's a hit,' or 'No, it's not.' The first two songs that Graham [Russell] played for me were 'Lost In Love' and 'All Out Of Love,' and I thought, 'Gee, this is going to work.' They asked me to join the group and four days later we were in the studio. The first track we cut was 'Lost In Love,' and it took off."

RF: I would imagine there are advantages and disadvantages to living in Australia. Do you ever feel frustrated that you are living so far away from the hub of the music industry?

RC: For a long time, I did feel frustrated because Australia had, by comparison, a small industry and it was difficult to set your sights on any goals higher than what the local industry had to offer. Right now, I'm not at all frustrated by being in Australia, because it's become obvious to a lot of people that there's a lot of talent in

Australia and there's a lot of attention focused on Australia now. Australia isn't a bad place to be in the music industry these days at all. In actual fact, I feel very good about being in Australia now. I can be in Sydney at the time you get to bed, and by the time you wake up, I can almost be arriving in Los Angeles. So it's not that far away.

RF: Do you feel that being there keeps your psyche healthier?

RC: It's great being in Australia because I can go back to my home and put my feet up, go to the beach, or watch a movie. I can think about things, get a bit of inspiration, get some more enthusiasm, and go back and attack it all again. I think it's a matter of balance. Nothing is given to you. You only get what you create. Most of the time for me, it's all music, so consciously, I do devote a little bit of extra time to nonmusical activities. I find that inspires me to make better music anyway, which is my goal in life.

RF: What is demanded of you as the drummer for Air Supply?

RC: All at once, that's a very simple and a very complex question. Speaking in simple terms, what I do in Air Supply is play drums, help with the arrangements, try to be inspirational to the other people in the group so the music keeps progressing and getting better, and inject as much enthusiasm, love and energy into the situation as I can. That's on a simple level. On a complex level, I think my injection of talent, or whatever, into Air Supply acts as a buffer between the people in the group, both musically and emotionally, because everybody's consistently questioning what he's doing musically, and also, everybody is questioning himself emotionally. I think, in my own way, I've added a certain direction to the band with my playing and my personality, and I've obviously contributed to the feel of the band. I think I contribute a certain amount of that unique blend of people that make up Air Supply. It's not necessarily the individuals, but the blend that makes it unique.

RF: But by the same token, what you're dealing with is a situation where there are two front guys and a band behind them. How do you deal with that situation in terms of contribution? Are you allowed to contribute as much as you want to? How do you deal with the relative anonymity?

RC: The first part is easily answered: Yeah, I'm allowed to contribute a lot. I wouldn't feel comfortable in a situation where somebody came along and said, "Play, this, this, this, shut up and go home." I wouldn't do it, and it's as simple as that. If I'm not contributing what I feel to be an equal part of the sum of the parts, then I won't be interested in doing it. I have a lot of say in arrangements and what I play. It even goes further than that sometimes into words of songs and ideas for melodic progressions. This does not happen all the time, but I have dabbled in that as well.

I've done a reasonable amount of session work and everybody is after basically the same goal on a session. Everyone wants a good piece of music, and if you go in with that philosophy and try to construct your drum part with that in mind, it will be accepted. You won't have anybody telling you what to play because you will be playing the right thing.

The second part of the question—dealing with being anonymous—is not difficult for me. I have a big ego in terms of my level of playing and what I'm trying to achieve with the drums in anything I do musically, but my ego starts and stops right there. Really, I'm concerned with doing my job and playing drums as best as I possibly can. That's where it starts and stops for me. I'd much rather be known as a good drummer than as a star or anything else. Drummers do tend to get pushed into the background a bit in most groups. There have been plenty of groups where people will recognize the singer, but if you ask who played drums in that group, most people wouldn't be able to tell you. I think that gives drummers a kind of workmanlike attitude to what they do anyway. Drummers are really more concerned with the music, their role in the music and how to make it sound good. They have an incredibly important role in a group. If the drummer falls off the stool in the

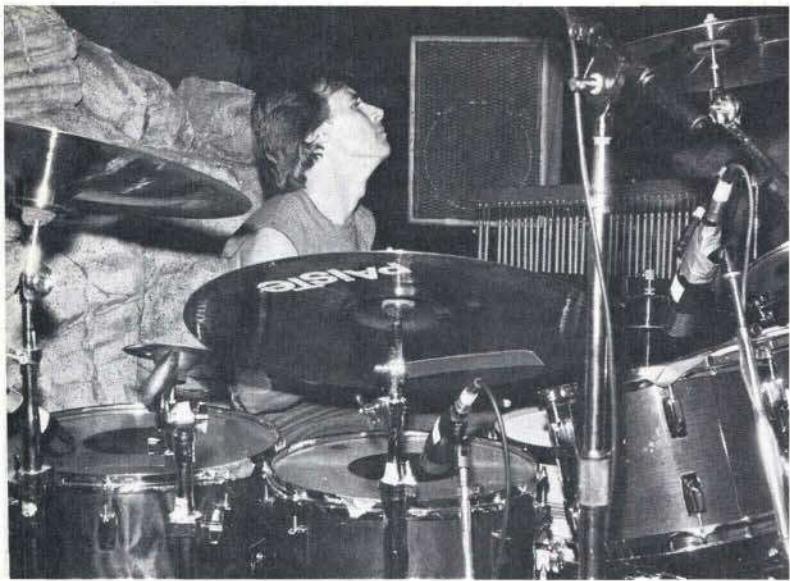


Photo by Rick Malkin

middle of the show, the whole show stops.

You've got to take care of business and look after your responsibility. If you're busy doing that, you can't be concerned with being fabulous to the first three rows. There are other people who are designed to be fabulous to the first three rows and they do that very well.

RF: I find Air Supply's music to be very emotional.

RC: Somebody called it "romantic pop/rock music."

RF: Technically, there's so much drama with dramatic cymbal crashes, or there's a break and suddenly a push. A lot of that comes from the drums.

RC: Air Supply is a difficult role for any drummer, I would think, because, as you said, the songs are pretty emotional and you can't play songs like that without putting your heart and soul into them. Otherwise they don't work. They're fake. Also, from a drummer's point of view, it's a really dynamic band. In all the big, heavy rock 'n' roll bands, you start out at triple volume and stay there for the whole show. That's great, because I like rock 'n' roll, but with a band like Air Supply, you have to be brutal sometimes and delicate at other times. Keeping a balance of the dynamics makes the music work better emotionally.

It was very difficult for me to approach this band at first because they used to play a lot of really dynamic ballads, going from the complete range of whisper quiet to a roar. It was really hard for me to adapt to that. Basically, I had been playing a lot of jazz/rock, some jazz, and some rock 'n' roll. Playing that kind of stuff doesn't prepare you for a group like Air Supply because you have to put that emotional content in the music, and the dynamics are so critical to what this group does. I had to find the key to what I had to do in this group. I think overall, the biggest key to the situation is to provide the emotions, the dynamics and the feel. Dynamics was the one element that wasn't right there from the word go. I had to work that out and it took a little time. Then when I hit upon that and really worked at it, I brought it up to the point where I am now. I feel pretty good about what I do in the group now.

RF: Can you share any dos and don'ts to working with a vocal-oriented group?

RC: Yes. There are a lot of specific dos and don'ts. You have to remember that the three critical areas that convey the music to the people are the lyrics, the melodies and the dynamics. Those three things are what make the group work and what make the songs work within the group. When you're playing, you have to be careful that you allow people to get the message of the words. You've got to make sure that you're not cluttering up things all the time, because people have to get the communication of the words. The

melodies are also critical. You can't interfere with the melodies. You've got to support them as a player, and you've got to provide the emotion in the situation through dynamics.

RF: Do you think you almost have to be more in tune with the vocals and lyrics than, say, the bass player?

RC: As much. You establish the relationship with the bass player, because that's really one of the big keys to any band. If you've got a problem there, you've got a serious problem. I focus a lot of attention on the rhythmic, melodic situation between bass player and drummer. Once you've established that relationship and rapport, then you can examine what you're trying to put across in terms of melody, lyrics and dynamics.

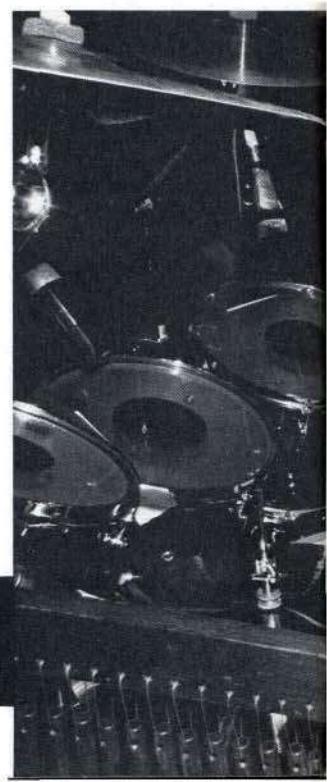
RF: You've done 99% of the recording with Air Supply. How do you feel about click tracks for that kind of music?

RC: For a group of this nature, I don't like click tracks, because with the amount of dynamics and stuff going on in the group, I think the music has to breathe. Sometimes that might mean sliding into a chorus rather than acutely going, "One, two, three, bang, chorus." Click tracks can't give you the option of sliding into a chorus rather than just abruptly going into it. With this group, I don't think click tracks are right. If you're doing film-score music, obviously you have to use a click track. If you're doing advertising jingles where you're set to an exact time, then you must use a click track. I have nothing against it from that point of view. But with a group like Air Supply, I feel it would make everything become incredibly metronomic. Everything would happen right on the beat every single time, which would detract from the group sound and feel. I don't like click tracks for other personal reasons also. Who wants to sit with a pair of headphones and have this thing going "bang, bang, bang" in your ear while you're trying to be creative? Some people can do that really well. There are musicians in Australia who do sessions and they don't mind working with click tracks at all. In fact, they enjoy it. I tend to feel like I'm being robbed of my rhythmic capabilities sometimes by following another thing when I'm so used to setting the standard for the rhythm. We've tried using a click track once or twice, but I never really felt comfortable with it and at that point I said, "I don't think we should use it. Let's try a couple of takes, get into the feel of the thing and it'll happen." And of course it always does, so there hasn't been a click track on a single Air Supply track.

RF: What things have to be taken into consideration in the studio which don't have to be taken into consideration live?

RC: When we do a track in the studio, we just accept that as a piece of music. We do whatever it takes to make it sound as best as we can in the studio. This includes overdubs, and using real string sections and 70-piece orchestras. We use 70-piece orchestras a lot

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because there's nothing that sounds more incredible than 70 musicians wailing behind the out chorus of a huge ballad we've just played. I know that when we go out live, we're not going to have 70 string players behind us, but we do have some very talented synthesizer players in the group who can achieve pretty much the same kind of sound, and I just adapt myself to that. In the studio I'm very conscious of the sound of the drums. I'm always working at getting the best possible sound, whether that means hitting a snare drum hard or soft. That's pretty much what I do live too, but live I tend to experiment a bit more and change things around a bit more.

RF: What does your live equipment consist of?

RC: This is all going to be changed, because about every 12 months, I dramatically change the sizes of the drums and the sizes of the cymbals. The setup I'm using now is basically what I've been using, give or take a drum or a cymbal here and there, for a couple of years now. It's about time I added some new things and made a few changes.

RF: Another way of keeping inspired?

RC: Exactly. My drums are Tama, and at the moment, my tom-toms are 10", 12", and 13". I have 16" and 18" floor toms, and a 20" bass drum. Most people go into shock when they think of doing big gigs in large halls with a 20" bass drum, but the reason for that is simple. To me, it's a matter of acoustics. I used to use a 24" bass drum. When I started playing bigger halls, I found that, because more air was moving out of a 24" bass drum every time it was struck, I had that much more space where air was just being pushed around and not necessarily doing much. You put a mic' in front of it and sure, it's going to pick up the sound, but there's so much air rushing out of the drum that a lot of it isn't going to even be picked up by a microphone. A 20" bass drum has a really contained sound. It's a very punchy, small, contained sound. Put a mic' in front of that and go out into a big boomy auditorium, and you'll find that a 20" bass drum will sound much better because it's more direct.

RF: What about heads?

RC: At the moment I'm using CS Black Dot heads on the top and bottom of all of the tom-toms. I've seen a few drummers using the CS head on the top and an *Ambassador* head on the bottom. The sound isn't bad, but I started thinking about it and thought surely, if the textures of the two heads are going to be different, then obviously they are not going to vibrate as much in sympathy as they would if they were both the same. So I tried it and found that you can pull a pretty nice tone out of the drums doing it that way. If you don't have two heads vibrating in sympathy, there are no vibrations built up in the shell of the drum, which is what gives you the sound. On the snare drum I just use a plain *Ambassador*.

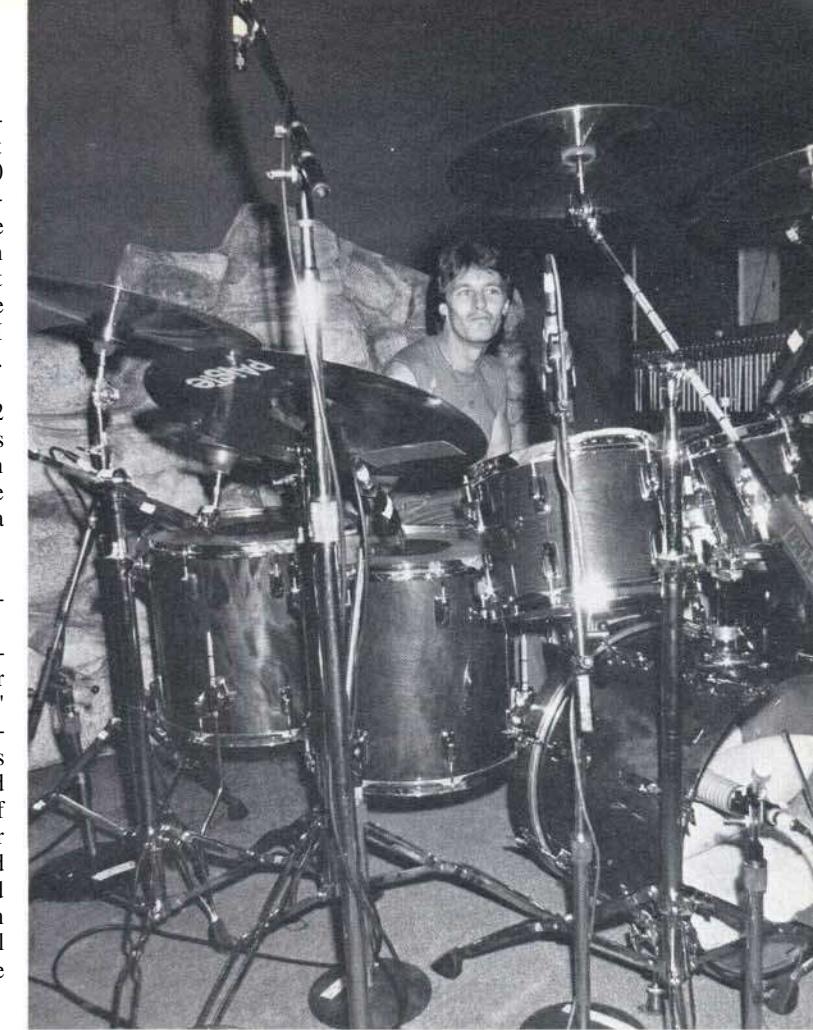


Photo by Rick Malkin

RF: What about tuning?

RC: There's one approach that was impressed on me at an early age by a very good friend of mine—a very good drummer in Australia named Mark Kennedy. In the early days when I was starting out, drum tuning was always a bit of a problem. I think tuning on any instrument for a young player starting off is difficult when you're trying to find one solution to what will give you the best possible sound. Mark said something to me that makes a lot of sense, which is basically what I adhere to. He said not to treat a drumkit in terms of the balance between all the toms starting from the high one down to the low. Don't listen to them all in one go. His approach, which is my approach, is to treat each particular drum as a separate instrument in itself. Take your first tom-tom away from all the other ones and just listen to it. He taught me a little system of harmonically tuning the top and bottom heads. The key is that there will be a point on each drum where the drum will sound the best. That's the point you want to work towards. Tune it like that, and when you put it all together and play, it will sound right.

RF: Cymbals?

RC: All Paiste. Because I've been moving around the world so much, a lot of times I don't have the time to go out and listen to the cymbals. I have to get my drum roadie to go out and buy them. Paiste cymbals are very consistent in their sound quality, and when you buy one, you know exactly what it's going to sound like before you even get it on the drumkit. And I really like the sound. They're bright. I tend to use them pretty dramatically. Unfortunately, the art of playing cymbals seems to be a dying art these days. That's a little bone I've got to pick with most drummers I see. Now, the hi-hat is just something you bash in 8th notes in between what you're doing on the snare drum and the toms. It's just used kind of like a metronome. A pair of hi-hats have an unbelievable sound. You can get a dozen different sounds out of them if you work at it, and

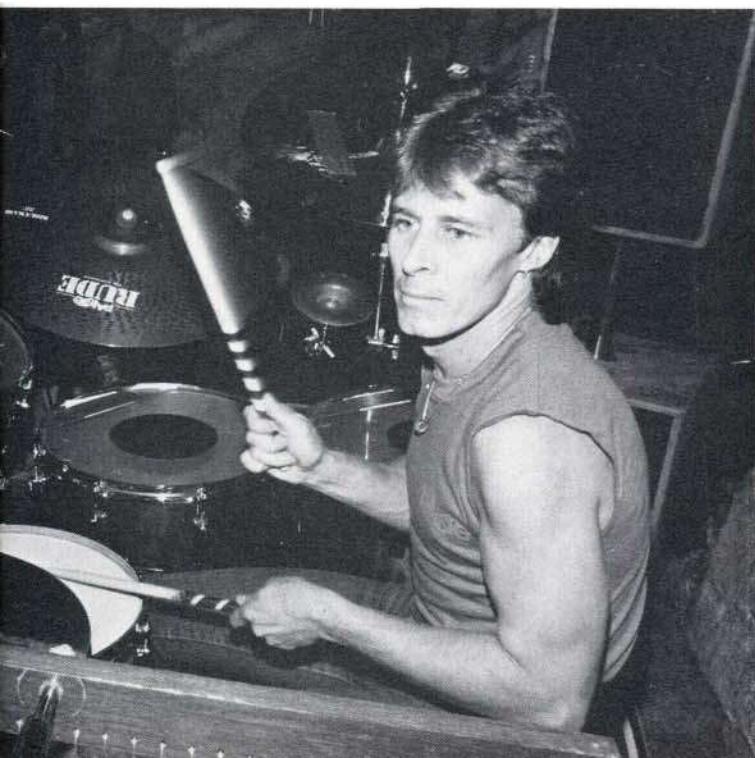


Photo by Rick Malkin

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As drummers, we tend to focus our attention on musical situations in which drummers are in the spotlight, to an extent. While drummers are seldom the focal point of a band, still there are plenty of groups where the drummer is certainly a large part of the total group identity. However, there are also a great number of musical acts who are built around a singer, and the musicians come and go in total anonymity. Despite that, working for a successful singer can be very rewarding, and can provide steady work. Who are these drummers who make their livings backing up singers? How did they get their gigs? What do singers look for when auditioning drummers?

To answer these questions, MD spoke first with some of the drummers themselves: Evan Caplan (Charo), Bill Severance (Toni Tennille), Jim Varley (Neil Sedaka), Mel Brown (Diana Ross) and Alex Acuna (Al Jarreau). We then spoke with Jim Ganduglia, who was the former drummer for Johnny Mathis and who is now Mathis' conductor, and Joe Lizama, who currently drums for Mathis. Finally, we spoke to a number of singers themselves, to find out what qualities they feel are most important for their drummers to have.

Part 1: The Drummers

by Jim Dinella



Evan Caplan (Charo) and Bill Severance (Toni Tennille)

JD: Do you tune your drums any differently when you play for a singer?

EC: It basically depends on the type of music. When I play with Charo, I tune my snare drum a little higher than I normally would for a rock gig or a studio date. Other than that, my toms and bass drum basically remain the same.

BS: The style of music dictates the tuning more than the fact that you're playing for a singer.

JD: Have you ever been in a situation where a singer didn't like the way you tuned your drums?

BS: I haven't run into that myself, but I've heard drummers say that a singer with perfect pitch may ask them not to use a certain tom-tom in a particular place because the singer felt it was clashing with a certain chord.

JD: Do you use particular sticks, cymbals or drums when you're working with a singer?

EC: I'll alternate snare drums occasionally, but it's basically because of my personal feelings at the time, not because of the singer. The cymbals remain the same. I'll change cymbals more often on a recording date than I will playing with a singer.

BS: It depends on the singer. You've got to get to know what different singers like to hear. For instance, a couple of years ago I played for Diahann Carroll. She doesn't really like the sound of a ride cymbal ringing behind her when she's singing. So with her I played a lot of closed hi-hat.

JD: Does Toni Tennille have any preferences?

BS: No. At certain points in a tune I'll be carrying the time on a cymbal, and other times I'll use a hi-hat, but she's never really stated a preference. Once in a while Daryl [The Captain] will state a preference.

JD: How much musical freedom do you have when you play behind a singer?

BS: Very little. When I play for The Captain & Tennille or even The Toni Tennille Show, I'm nailed down pretty tight. In general I would say that, for all of the singers I've worked with, I've kept the fills simple, and I don't play fills too frequently. In the body of the tune, I stick to simple, basic time. If you play too busy, it tends to compete with what the singer is doing.

EC: We're there to support the singer.

BS: Yeah, to focus attention on the singer, not to detract.

JD: So you have to keep the rhythms and fills simple?

BS: Definitely, unless there's a point in the tune where a big fill is appropriate, and it is an important part of the music. Other than that, if you play too much, it will sound like you're trying to compete with the singer.

JD: You are basically hired, then, as a backup player. How do you feel about playing the same songs every night, and not having any say in things?

EC: Well, playing the same material over and over again can eventually get boring, no matter whose material it is or what style it is. I'm lucky to be in a situation where I've got more freedom than a lot of people, because I'm the only musician that Charo carries, except for the conductor. So I can change things here and there if I get a little bored. I can do something like change the fills around, as long as I stay within certain limits. Again, you still have to keep it simple and together—nothing too crazy.

BS: In my situation, Daryl Dragon has said

that he really prides himself on being able to provide his audiences with the same sound that they hear on the records, at least as close as humanly possible. So for that reason, it's up to me to play what Hal Blaine or Ed Greene or whoever played on the original records. I may add a little something or subtract from what they played, but I will play the important beats and fills exactly the same way. Even when I add or subtract here and there, I have to stay very close to what was on the record.

JD: Evan, do you have to repeat what someone else did on Charo's albums?

EC: I do some of her recordings myself. But on stage, I don't really have to repeat what's on the record, and I usually don't. I can do my own things, but I still stay simple.

JD: Bill, do you find it difficult to imitate someone else's playing, instead of playing what feels natural to you?

BS: Yeah, it wasn't easy at first, but it was part of the gig. So I got a handle on it real quick, and I don't complain about it.

JD: Is it common for a singer to use a different drummer on the road than in the studio?

EC: With a lot of acts that is true, but with Charo it isn't, because she found me in the studio.

BS: That is true with The Captain & Tennille. Daryl likes to use musicians who have played on a lot of hit records. I did get to play on the album *Keeping Our Love Warm*, and I felt very lucky because Daryl usually hires drummers like Hal Blaine or Ed Greene. In general the feeling is to go with the "winners." Hal Blaine has been an integral part of a lot of hit records, so producers and singers want his magic on their records too. Actually, the singer often has no say in it.

EC: Right. Most of the time the singer just sings and the producer decides who will play.

JD: What were the requirements you had to meet to obtain a job backing a singer?

BS: Usually the first requirement is a recommendation. In order to get a recommendation, you have to impress somebody with your ability to play a steady tempo, to play appropriate styles, and to play in a

drumming for singers

way that supports, rather than detracts from, a singer. Other than that, I can't give you a step-by-step method for getting work.

EC: When I started with Charo, the only requirements were to be a very strong drummer, and to be able to read fairly well, because there's a lot of reading on her gig.

JD: So in general, there aren't any set things you have to know to specifically work with a singer?

EC: Basically, you are there to support the singer. You don't want to get in the way of the singer, or steal the show. You're working for the singer; the singer is not working for you. You're just there to make the singer sound better.

BS: You've got to know how to play fills that won't clash with what he or she is singing. You've got to be supportive—know when to play strongly and when to lay back. You only learn this by actually working with singers. These things are important, and can be viewed as requirements, but I don't know how you master these requirements, other than by having experience. It's kind of a Catch-22, I guess.

JD: Do you think that a drummer who has some knowledge of singing would have more confidence about playing behind a singer?

BS: Confidence, yes, and maybe a little more understanding. If a drummer gets a chance to sing once in a while, it will give the drummer an idea of what a singer needs to hear from the drums.

EC: I think that if drummers sing to themselves, they will tend to play more simply.

JD: Who do you watch for cues, the singer or the conductor?

BS: That depends. For things that are set in the music, you watch the conductor. But you also have to catch things that the singer will do spontaneously.

EC: I watch both Charo and the conductor. I'm constantly moving from the chart, to the conductor, to Charo.

BS: There is no conductor with The Captain & Tennille. Basically, the show moves from one song to another, so there isn't a whole lot that I have to watch for. At certain times I have to watch Daryl or Toni for cues, or for a certain ending, but not very often.

JD: Do you ever feel that you are functioning as a conductor, as far as pushing the

singer and band in a certain direction?

EC: This past week our conductor got sick and couldn't make the gig, so I could give a certain amount of myself to try to create a certain feel. But I can't really take over the situation.

BS: I think that any time the tempo has to be steady, the drummer is, in fact, the conductor. A drummer who has the knowledge to dictate the tempo and feel has the authority, at that point, to be the conductor.

EC: Yeah, but a lot of times you still have to watch the conductor for dynamics.

BS: That's true, but if the drummer doesn't make the dynamic changes, the dynamics of the surrounding musicians will be discounted.

EC: True.

JD: You guys are constantly playing with different bands, and often even different bass players. Do you find that you have to play a couple of shows before it gets in the groove?

EC: It depends on the level of musicianship. You can go to a place like Atlantic City, where they have very good bands, and get into a groove right away. In other places, the orchestras are not so hot, so you have to work a little harder to get a groove happening. I like playing with a lot of different musicians all the time because I'm constantly learning something different. Each time I play, I get new ideas.

BS: With The Captain & Tennille, I play with the same bass player all the time. We play real well together and there are no problems. With other singers, when I play with different bass players, it depends on the chemistry. Sometimes, with one player, it'll click right away, while with other players, you would never hit a groove if you played for an eternity. So when I play with somebody new, I try to be extra conscious about the tempo. I'll play it right where I feel it should be, and I won't do any odd fills. I'll play in such a way as to make it feel as good as possible the first time through. Generally, that means playing simply and being extremely careful with the tempo.

JD: Do singers generally want you to play ahead of, right on, or behind the beat?

EC: It depends on the singer. Charo has never really said that she wants it one way or the other. With her, I tend to play right on it or slightly ahead. For other people, I

usually play way behind it.

BS: Toni generally likes to hear things played pretty steady. Daryl, especially in live performance, wants to hear things more on top to build excitement. He feels that live performances should be exciting, and he wants things to pick up more.

JD: What advice would you have for a drummer who is playing for a singer?

EC: Listen to the singer.

BS: Yeah, listen to the singer at every possible moment. Also, strive to play steady, because playing on top can easily turn to rushing. You should play in a way that enhances a singer's style. By the way, a fact that we haven't brought out is that most drummers who are making a living by playing are backing singers.

EC: Right. Even when you're in a band, as opposed to backing an artist, there are usually vocals in the band. So when someone in the band is singing, you're backing a singer.

BS: So there are good reasons to learn how to back a singer. That's mostly what drummers do.



Photo by Paul Jonason

Jim Varley (Neil Sedaka)

JD: Do you tune your drums any differently when you play for a singer?

JV: I don't think that playing with a singer has anything to do with it. The kind of music I'm playing would determine that. With Neil, there are a lot of ballads and straight-ahead rock feels. Simple playing usually sounds best. Keeping that in mind, I tune each drum to the lower part of its pitch range, and try to get a nice round sound with a certain amount of decay and bend after the stick hits it. I always use two heads on my toms, which gives me more control over the pitch and decay. Fast sin-

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drumming

Part 2: Drummer and Conductor

Joe Lizama and Jim Ganduglia

by Susan Alexander

Many singers are not well versed in the art of drumming. They know what they like when they hear it, but cannot describe it well enough to communicate their likes and dislikes to a prospective drummer. Many times these singers will leave the job of hiring a drummer up to their conductor.

The following is a conversation with Jim Ganduglia, former drummer and presently conductor for Johnny Mathis, and Mathis' current drummer, Joe Lizama.

JG: Speaking for John, we've got four styles that any drummer coming into this job has to be familiar with—ballads, disco, rock, and Latin, especially samba and a little swing. Insofar as John's concerned, over the years, the things that he likes in a drummer are the ability to play dynamically and correctly, with clean and precise articulation. I think those are the two most important things.

JL: I remember John saying, about a month ago when we were in Northern California, sensitivity was real important to him. Since he's the one who's singing and the words are so important to him, he doesn't want to be covered up by the drummer. So in addition to what you said, I think that's important.

JG: Regardless of whether you're a drumset player or a percussionist, I think probably the most important prerequisite is that you can read. Especially in a percussion situation, if you come in to play our job as a percussionist, your reading has got to be the most important thing that you concentrate on. It's a lot easier as a drumset player to get by without reading well. You can fudge, and by just listening to things, they'll lead you. But when you're sitting there playing mallets and those little dots are on the page, if you can't read, forget it. There's no amount of fudging that will get you through it.

Aside from the playing aspect of it, you've got to be a nice person or pleasant to be around. If you're jive, like a lot of musicians are—a lot of people in general are that way, not just musicians—it's extremely difficult to deal with you on a day-to-day, off-the-stand level. At the auditions that we've had in the past, we've usually told the people auditioning that once we've played with them and said, "Okay, we'll take you out," we will usually give them about a month or two just to go out and hang out with the other musicians. We evaluate them, not only from their playing standpoint, but from their personal standpoint.

If a personality problem arises, or anything like that, we won't deal with them even though they may be the greatest players in the world, because we deal with the people more off the stand than on the stand. So, there's got to be a happy medium there, and if you can't cut it personality-wise, then it could be a real pain in the butt to live with you. We travel approximately six months out of the year, so if you've got to deal with a person for about six months out of the year who's a jerk, it gets on your nerves real fast.

John doesn't like a drummer who plays loud. You can play loud within the context of the music, but when you exceed the context of the music and you do it even when he's said, "It's a little too loud," then he gets real angry. He will never show it to you. He will keep being real nice and saying, "It's a little bit too loud." He'll never flip out and jump all over you like some entertainers who I've come in contact with. He'll be real nice and keep telling you. Then if it doesn't happen, he'll find somebody else.

Most entertainers don't have a real background in percussion

and they are not able to communicate in percussion language, especially with a younger player. This happened the first time I played drumset with John. He asked me to play loud, but soft. The first time I heard that, it just freaked me out. I thought, "My God, how can I play ..." It's obviously a contradiction, but what he was trying to convey to me was to play forcefully and yet not loud. I had a real difficult time dealing with what he said because I didn't think past the verbalization of it. We were in a rehearsal and it was the first rehearsal that I'd ever played on drumset. I was nervous and he said that. I thought, "Oh God, what am I supposed to do now?"

Communication is a good skill. You should have a variety of styles in your own library, and within those styles, a variety of different beats, if you want to call them that.

JL: Even textures. Sometimes in a Latin tune, he won't really want you to play the bell of the cymbal, so you have to go to a cowbell or to the rim.

JG: If the artist says, "No, that's not it," you have to be able to try a bunch of different things without letting it freak you out. If you only know one style or one area of that specific feel or style and the artist is not capable of describing exactly what it is, you might be boxing yourself in.

In my situation as a conductor talking to a drummer, I can communicate and I can write it out, if necessary. It makes it a little bit easier because I can act as a buffer between the drummer and John. I can say, "Well yeah, but how about if we do this? Will this get it?" So we can pool our knowledge with my knowledge of John, and we can make the thing work out a lot easier. Since I've had a great deal of experience with him, it's easier for me to kind of smooth over the rough spots and make them flow than it would be for someone else who has to deal with him one on one, who is a conductor but not a drummer, and who falls into the trap of not being able to verbalize exactly what's going on. The public relations between the drummer and the singer or the drummer and the conductor is as important as how you actually play. That kind of a thing is important.

We're in a situation where, between the two of us, we can usually nail anything that John needs. John has gone through a lot of changes where the instrument is concerned. Obviously, styles have changed. But because Joe and I are willing to take the time to explain things to him, he's developing a better understanding of the instrument and of the terminology. So when he deals with us, he deals with us on a more educated level.

I know that some people are unwilling to do that—like, "Why don't you know this?" Some people just don't and if you're not willing to spend the time, they never will. You'll just keep rehashing the old wounds and old problems, and you'll never get anywhere. So John has developed a vocabulary. Sometimes it's just singing a specific pattern, but that suffices. I have been to Brazil several times with him. We listen to the same groups, and when I see him smile, I memorize that specific thing that I heard. Sometimes he'll say, "You remember when . . ." and that's enough to tell me what he wants. So you throw all those things together. When John discusses things, we can all throw our ideas into the pot and it usually comes out. At least, we're within the ballpark and then we just kind of have to juggle or add.



for singers

Part 3: The Singers

MEL TORME



Number one, obviously, is time—more than anything else because I write all my own orchestrations. I write very good drum parts; at least, that's what drummers tell me. What I really need is good, but I don't mean rigid, time. I don't like things to be mechanical, but if I count something off, I want it to be right there when the last note of the arrangement is played. So, over and above all things is really good, solid, accurate time.

Also, I happen to like technique. I admire drummers with technique and ideas rather than just people who can play time. I've had some drummers like that who kept very good time, but who didn't catch the brass licks and the nuances that I wrote. They didn't work out for me. I like drummers who play the bass drum. I don't like drummers whose basic drumming is ephemeral. It's all up in the cymbals and the snare drum range with an occasional explo-

sion beat on the bass drum.

I like a Buddy Rich-style drummer—quite simply that. A drummer who plays for a band, never mind a singer, is essentially an integral part of the band, and for a singer, he is an accompanist. He's as much of an accompanist as the pianist is an accompanist.

My current drummer, Don Osborne, who's been with me for almost eight years now, is a perfect example of what I like in a drummer. He keeps superb time. And he has absolutely, other than Buddy Rich, the best technique of any drummer I've seen in years and years and years. Donnie has what I look for in a drummer. He has great self-assurance and sensational technique, but he is not out for self-aggrandizement. He's there to play for me and that's why he functions beautifully for me.

What I'm saying is that, to be an accompanying drummer for a singer, you've got to subordinate your ego and say, "My job in life is to make the singer look good. If I make the singer look good, I'll make myself look good."

Donnie is my drummer. He's played on my last several albums and he plays with me in the symphonies, in the small

clubs and with the big bands. He plays Carnegie Hall. Whatever I do, there goes Donnie. Some people use different people in the studio than they do on the road. I don't like that, because I don't think there's a sense of continuity and credibility in that. If a drummer is good enough to play for you on the road, that drummer should be good enough to play for you anywhere.

Being a drummer, I'm probably harder on drummers than any other singer. I don't know of another singer who's also a genuine drummer, who has played with bands and who operates as a drummer as well as a singer. So, you can imagine how good Don Osborne is if he plays for me, because I'm not merely grading him as a singer grades a drummer. I'm grading him as a drummer grades a drummer.

If I write a new arrangement and there's something I want to hear that maybe I haven't even written in the chart, I can say, "Gee, we're having a hell of a time hearing the drummer." Donnie may be pounding away. So, I'll say, "Donnie, you go out front and I'll play this chart. Tell me what you think." We can really help each other that way. It's a big plus.

our material is somewhat diverse in style. It's important for us to have a drummer who is equally as schooled, if you will, or familiar with all of those styles, which sometimes can be tricky. You get a drummer who can play a swing groove real good, but who doesn't play rhythm & blues very well. So, we require a drummer to be completely familiar in all the styles that we sing.

The second criteria is time. We've had some experiences with drummers who have great chops, and can play a lot of hip fills and this and that. But when it comes to just playing straight

by Susan Alexander

MARILYN MCCOO

I look for a good sense of timing and some imagination.

FRANK SINATRA



I've been working with Irv Cottler as my drummer for the past 27 years—since I recorded the *Songs For Singin' Lovers* album, which was a pretty classy affair.

Drummers do more than just hold the tempo, although that's an important part of the business. They have to give me the freedom to take a few chances as well. I don't think in our long association I've ever told Irv how to play or what to play. He's a natural musician and does his job for me so well that there's a feeling of comfort, security and never being left out on the hook.

Irv paid me a nice compliment once. He called me another lead instrument—not really leading the band, but adding to it. That's how I feel. I don't think I ever sing a song the same way twice and I guess Irv has the instinct to second-guess me. It certainly feels that way out in front of the band. He has to know my moves.

KENNY ROGERS

I look for someone who has the precision of a studio drummer and flexibility of a concert drummer. That's one of the rarest things to find, but Bobby Daniels gives me both. He's one of the best.

TIM HAUSER MANHATTAN TRANSFER



As far as the four of us go, I think there are just two very basic things that we look for in drummers. The first thing is, because of the fact that we sing,

Jon Hiseman

Yosser was a character in a British T. V. serial called The Boys From The Blackstuff. Unable to come to terms with being unemployed, Yosser used to go around watching other people doing their jobs and saying, "I could do that!" As drummers we often tend to suffer from the same feeling. We see other drummers playing, and if we think we can play the same licks we say, "I could do that," without considering that it might require more than a basic ability to copy.

Jon Hiseman is a drummer to whom this feeling could not be applied. Very few other drummers would feel themselves capable of playing the things he plays, and even if they did, it would still leave the whole vast area of Jon's highly individual musical approach. Before doing the interview with Jon I would have said that he has phenomenal technique. Now, I must amend that to say that Jon has a phenomenal ability to play the drums.

Jon came to prominence as part of the British jazz and blues scene in the late 1960s. He took over from Ginger Baker in two bands, and the two players were often mentioned in the same breath. Actually they were poles apart. Whereas Ginger was the wild man—the "Animal" figure—Jon was the thoughtful, sensitive, highly articulate all-around musician who had had training on piano and violin before turning to drums.

It was as the leader of three highly individual bands—Colosseum, Tempest and Colosseum 2 (between 1969 and 1978)—that Jon really made his mark. He was one of the people who truly put the jazz into jazz/rock (a convenient phrase, but a very accurate one!). Since 1979 Jon has been a member of Paraphernalia, a band led by his wife, saxophonist, flute player and composer, Barbara Thompson. More than just the drummer in the band, Jon is also the manager, the producer and the publisher—all jobs which his past experience and training qualify him to do. Both Barbara and Jon are founding members of the United Jazz & Rock Ensemble. This is an international, elite band of European bandleaders who play and compose in the jazz/rock style.

The Hisemans live in South London with their two children, Marcus and Anna. At the back of their house they have a 24-track recording studio. Jon is as serious about his skill as a recording engineer as he

is about his skill as a musician. It was in his studio that Jon sat and talked with me for more than three hours. Jon told me many interesting things about himself, his career and the people he knew. But most fascinating of all, he told me his opinions about music, musicianship and drumming, which really got me thinking for a long time afterwards.

SG: You were once quoted as saying that too many drummers don't play drums, but rather cymbals with drum accents. How would you define the function of the drummer and the drumkit?

JH: Well, first I tend to separate players into "cymbalers" and drummers, and with a couple of exceptions, I prefer to listen to the drummers. The second thing is that the drumkit, for me, has always been a catalyst. It has also been a means to an end rather than an end in itself. I don't have a very high regard for what I do on drums and I'm not actually very interested in drumming at all. I know that I have a reputation for being a technical drummer. That's probably because I have done a lot of drum clinics, but I prefer to think that I do the clinics because I speak well.

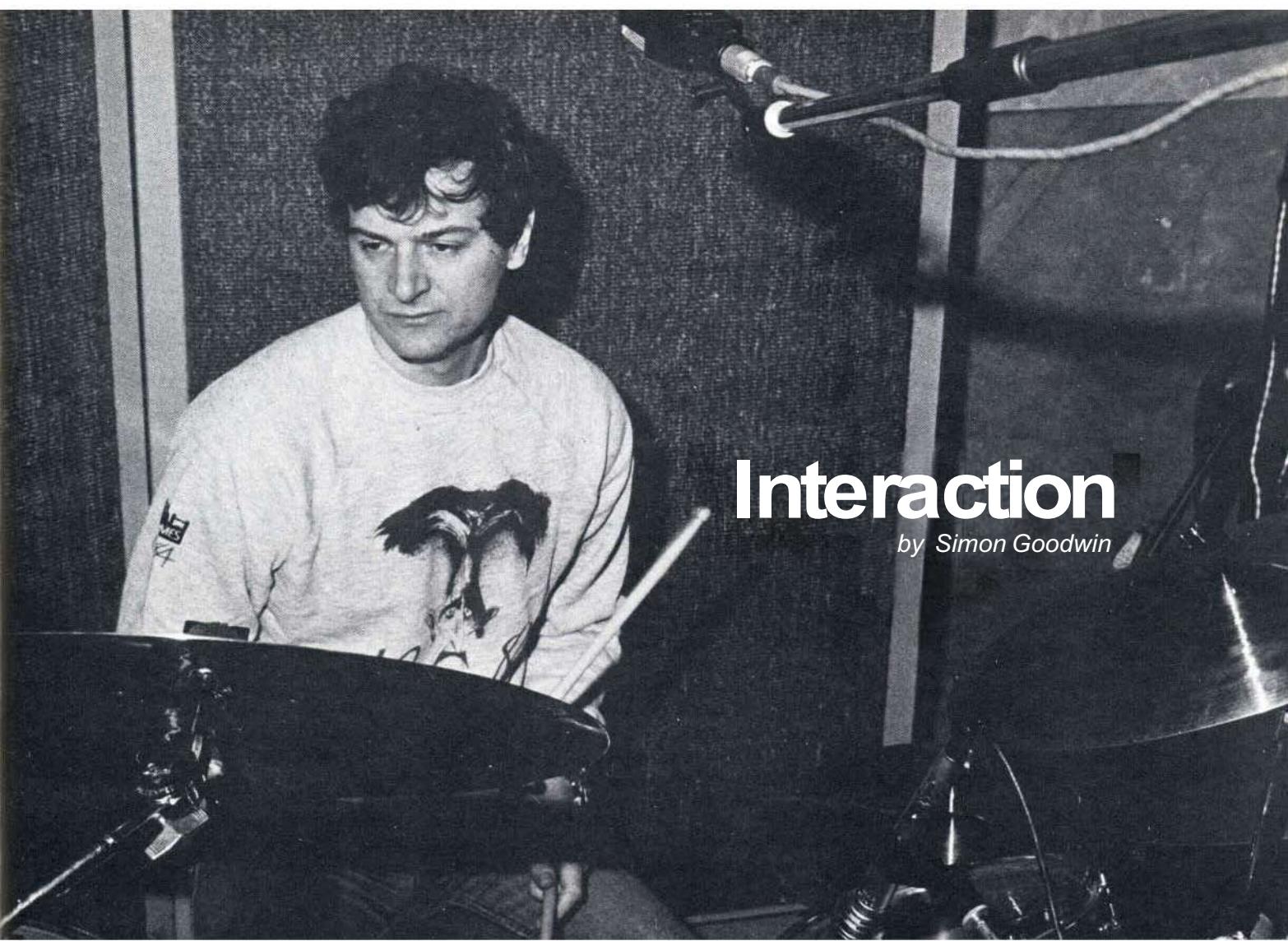
I see the drums as the catalyst in the band. They have the ability to draw performances from people. That is why, whatever I happen to play, my first love is what I call "interacting" drumming, which you could call jazz drumming. But as soon as you say the words "jazz drumming," you throw up just about everything that I don't like about drumming. So jazz drumming, by the usual definition, is not what I actually mean. Interactive drumming occurs when, instead of just being a rhythm machine, you are creating a backdrop for whatever else is going on. It might be a theme, it might be a soloist, it might be a texture, but whatever it is, you are creating a backdrop to it, which is shifting all the time. That, to me, is most important. Machine drumming is something which I am not particularly interested in. Interactive playing is the key area for drums and the area in which drums have made their greatest contribution. That's apart from keeping time on pop records, which is fine, and you get some lovely feels.

It's the drummer's ability to inspire people, to drag performances out of them, to give them the feeling that they can do anything, and to push them beyond what they

consider to be the limit of their own ability. We have so much power, and it is greatly misused, in my opinion. It is misused most by "drummers." I don't mean drummers as distinct from "cymbalers"; I mean drummers who are into drums and drum techniques, and who grossly misuse the position of power they have and render 60 or 70 percent of modern creative music musicless. They take the music away. I think that drums are used too much. I spend a lot of time touring, and I get a chance to hear a lot of bands. I reckon that an awful lot of music is lost in the drumming! Drums are used too much in modern jazz/rock, funk, or any kind of instrumentally based music in which musicians are trying to give a performance based on interaction and improvisation. The music doesn't speak because of all the "drummage" which is going on. A combination of bad acoustics and the inability of musicians to hear themselves properly causes the whole thing to degenerate. That is why there is a very small audience for modern creative playing compared to the audience that there was for jazz in the early and middle '50s. There was an enormous audience. Jazz and interactive, improvisational music were the only alternatives to Pat Boone in the '50s. That music has been killed off by a peculiar kind of technocracy which has been brought to the music and has destroyed it. An awful lot of the blame lies with the drummers, who have developed fantastic drumming techniques at the expense of the music.

I find the whole drum instrument an extremely painful thing, quite frankly. It's a rotten sounding instrument, on its own. If you sit at the average drumkit and knock the drums and clash the cymbals, the noise is dreadful. Having said that, there is a trick, and this is what has hooked me on drums for the past 23 years. It is like a magician with nothing up his sleeves. Anybody, including me, can just sit behind a drumkit and go "flabba-flabba-bang" and it is just not a good sound, compared to a good violin or a Bosendorfer grand piano. But when a magician sits behind them and makes them dance, it's a gift from the gods; it comes from nowhere. That's the fascination of the drumkit, because there is nothing there.

SG: Surely there is even less there initially with a violin. It depends much more than a drum does on the skill of the musician who



Interaction

by Simon Goodwin

will bring the correct sounds from it.

JH: Well, the violin itself is a beautiful instrument. I don't hear that from the drums. I think that a tom-tom going "ughh" or a bass drum going "whump" is an offensive sound. Cymbals, out of context, can be offensive when they are a few inches away from your ear while you are playing them. It's offensive compared to the way it can sound when it is done right, in a musical context. Something that thousands of drummers never get to understand is what their drums sound like to other people who are distanced from them. This results in a whole lot of dreadful drum sounds. There are too many drummers who play a lot of drums and very little music. And that is getting worse all the time. When I come into contact with young drummers today I am *horrified* at their unmusical approach.

SG: You mention the continually shifting backdrop for the music which you think that a drummer ought to supply, but you are not knocking players who just "lay it down" when that is what the situation dic-

tates, are you?

JH: Oh no, not at all! Cozy Powell, for instance, is one of my favorite drummers. There is an inner life in Cozy when he plays. I enjoy hearing him, in spite of the fact that his style is a million miles away from my own. Stewart Copeland is an astonishing player on records, though I've never heard him live. But, in a way, I am less concerned with the great players, of which there are about 20 in the world, than I am with the hundreds and thousands of people who one meets and hears about who are actually floundering about not understanding at all what it is that these good drummers are doing. It is *not* a physical thing, but they all think that, if they can get the licks off, they can do it. I'm afraid that a magazine like *Modern Drummer* is culpable because it spends all its life printing snippets of licks from famous drummers.

SG: If you are dealing with an interesting player, the next best thing to allowing readers to *hear* what that drummer does is to give them some written samples.
JH: I don't think that is a problem at all.

What I am saying is that young drummers take *that* four-bar segment out of context. That is the problem; they fail to understand the motivation which led that drummer to play those four bars in the first place. Drum magazines and the drum business are full of people who spend their time transcribing things from records and, I think, doing a disservice in many ways to a lot of the young players. In a weird kind of way they get bogged down in all this stuff. Which brings me on to the next point: We are not producing nearly enough individualistic players anymore.

SG: The recording industry must take a share of the blame for that.

JH: Perhaps this isn't what you mean, but I would say that the recording industry is to blame because it is too good. When I was a kid and I started playing, you could not hear what the drummers were doing on the records. That was pre-1965. The drums were so badly recorded that you had to imagine a lot of what was going on. So you developed your own style based on what you thought you heard. Today, if you lis-

ten to a record, you can hear every single beat that is played. But again if you don't look beyond a particular four bars which has caught your ear, you are missing the point. We have a whole generation of young drummers whose playing is made up of a series of snippets they have caught, and who have not developed their own voices.

SG: What I had in mind is that the recording industry has standardized things. A young drummer who goes into the studio for the first time is under pressure, first from the engineer, who wants to make the drums sound like all the other kits you hear, and second from the other musicians, who want the drummer to sound like the drummers they like to hear on records. They are not generally looking for individuality from their drummer.

JH: That is absolutely true. I know from talking with young drummers that they spend a lot of time going through this business of having musicians saying to them, "Play that thing that so-and-so does on such-and-such record ..." One of the things I have been doing at the drum clinics is telling the drummers, in a rather joking way, that unless they get their backsides off the floor and get it together, they are going to be put out of business by the drum machine. I am very pro drum machine. I use one here all the time, and as far as I am concerned, it is a marvelous tool for someone like me. I don't use it in final performance, but I do use it to help my own creativity when I am planning what I am going to do.

What I tell young drummers is this: They must realize that the drum machine is going to get more and more sophisticated, and for musicians it is a wonderful tool. It doesn't get drunk, they don't have to provide a lot of transport for it, it doesn't leave its cymbals at the previous gig, it's never late, and above all it plays with a good feel. That's a shocking thing to say, I know. It doesn't play with a good feel compared with a great drummer, but it does play with a good feel compared with 99 percent of drummers who totally misunderstand what they have been hearing on records and have been totally misled by what they read in magazines about what they should be practicing—the four-bar-snippet syndrome. So when other musicians turn to the drummer and say, "Listen, you know that thing that Steve Gadd plays? Well, couldn't you do something like that?" They're not asking you to play like Steve Gadd. All they are saying is "Make me feel good when I play! At the moment you are making me feel terrible." They don't know that that's what they're saying. All they know is that when they hear Steve Gadd they get a good feeling, but their drummer is not giving them that feeling.

What I say at the drum clinics is, "If you



Photo by Peter Goodwin

don't get it together you're going to be out of business, because most of you aren't taking care of the things that matter. You are getting all tied up with the flashy runs that you hear people do, but if you can't make other musicians feel comfortable, you are going to be put out of business by a drum machine which will do exactly that. In fact, you had better buy a drum machine, start working with it rather than against it, and find out what it is that all these musicians love about these things. Let's face it, shops are selling more drum machines than they are drumkits."

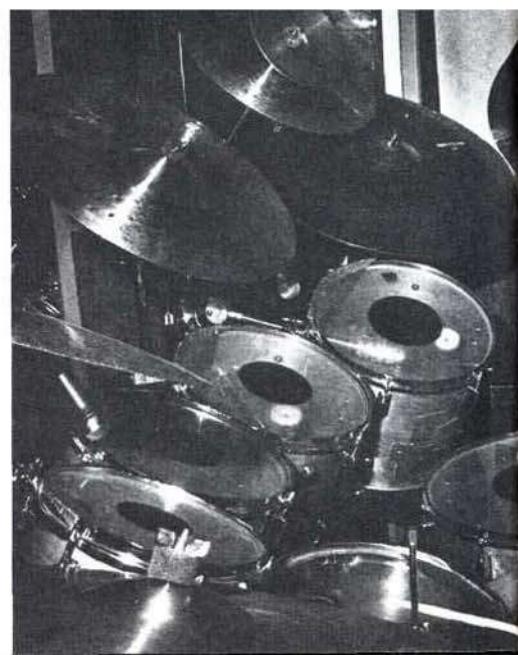
SG: Coming around to your own style of playing, you manage to play some very complex things which are continually shifting and flowing, and yet you manage to drive the band and enhance the music at the same time. How did you develop this?

JH: When I was a young drummer in London there were a lot of other young drummers around, and I was able to compare styles and approaches to all this sort of thing. I realized then that I had a problem: I couldn't reproduce licks at will. I can read anything, given time. I'm not first-time perfect, but give me three goes at anything and I will read it. The problem is that I am not actually playing the *drums* when I play music. This has been with me ever since I can remember. At first I thought that I would never become a drummer because of this. I couldn't coordinate the "drummy" things at all when there was music going on. I only played the music, and often that wasn't what was wanted from the drums. It made my early playing too busy. I heard everything, and wanted to play everything with everybody, but what I couldn't do was play "licks"—drum patterns.

What I learned as the years went by was

this: On any instrument there are quasi-technical devices which give you a superficial facility. With the violin, for instance, you don't have to breathe, which means that you can play continuously. Eighth-notes and triplets are easy because of the way the bow works. With an instrument like the drums you have got a great many of these quasi-technical devices—almost machine rhythms. So if you move your hands in a certain way, you get certain rhythms. I discovered that I wasn't any good at that at all. I found that the music I heard going on around me never allowed that to go on for more than half a bar if I reacted to the music. So I developed a style which does not depend on continuing machine rhythms, which means that what I play appears to be changing and flowing all the time. It is not tied into any technical devices.

SG: You seem to be able to flow in odd-time signatures and make them sound so natural that a listener wouldn't realize that



it was in odd time.

JH: If you can get used to playing the beats you feel, rather than stringing patterns together, you can play anything you want. This means that odd-time signatures cease to be a problem, because when you are playing odd-time signatures in this way, you are not playing drums at all. You are playing the *cadence*. The cadence is anything you have in your head. So when you play an odd-time signature, you don't play the drum part. You play the riff. If it doesn't have a riff, there is little point in putting it in an odd-time signature. So these odd-time signatures aren't odd for any other reason than that somebody wrote a melodic line, which we will call a "riff," and then discovered to their surprise that it was *that* long.

"IF YOU CAN GET USED TO PLAYING THE BEATS YOU FEEL, RATHER THAN STRINGING PATTERNS TOGETHER, YOU CAN PLAY ANYTHING YOU WANT."

What I do is play the melodic line, *not the drums*. I am playing the riff, often a bass part, and my hands and feet are playing the drums. That is the only way I can describe it. I am thinking the bass part, and my hands and feet fit a drum part into it. When we do that solo on the *Paraphernalia Live In Concert* album, and Dill Katz keeps the bass line going, all I am playing is that bass line. I don't know what my hands and feet are doing at all. They are improvising on the bass line that I am playing. You might say, "A drummer doing that? What an interesting thought!" But what do wind or keyboard players do? They think chord sequences while actually play-

ing the melodies, and improvising on them. They concentrate on the sequence as the bars go past, but their fingers are playing their improvisations.

Drummers' problems are mental, not physical. The instrument is easy to play. It is the mental side of it which is totally misunderstood. In fact you *don't* play the drums! You play the music which the rest of the group is playing and the drums will play themselves. If you can get into that mental trick, suddenly everything changes for you. I did it naturally. That is why you could say that I am a natural drummer. However, when I started playing, it was much harder for me to get started. I was a *disaster* for the first two or three years, as any of my friends who knew me then would tell you. I could not play, because I didn't have the facility of separating the drums and making them work independently from everything else.

SG: What *had* you achieved at this stage? Were you a good rudimental player?

JH: No. I didn't even know about rudiments until two years after I had turned professional. Then I met an American drummer named Eric George. Eric was a rudimental drummer. I used to meet him on Saturday afternoons at Drum City on Shaftesbury Avenue, when he could get off his American Air Force base, and he would teach me rudiments. That changed my life. I had been pro for two years, and I thank the Lord that I knew nothing of what he taught me before that, because it would have ruined me. I was a totally self-taught player who just did what he thought was right for the music at the time. When I met Eric I began to realize that there was a facility that I was not able to achieve without some proper drum study, but by then I had learned the art of keeping practice quite separate from performance.

The art of drumming is very much the art of learning to achieve a mental balance with your body. I'll tell you something which has never ceased to amaze me, but which once I realized what had happened, led me to begin to understand just how clever the mind is and just how much of this whole thing is mental. I had a practice room with a practice kit. When I started working with Eric George, he advised me to get the heaviest military drumsticks I could buy. He told me that, in his opinion, my hands weren't working at all, and to get them working I would have to work with those sticks for nine months or so. What you would expect to happen happened; the heavy sticks in the practice room felt very heavy, and when I went out on a gig, the normal sticks felt like matchsticks. After a while, the heavy practice sticks felt normal, and then I could put them down, drive for half an hour to a gig, pick up the standard weight sticks, and they felt perfectly normal too. That went on for two or three months and I didn't think anymore of it; it didn't occur to me that I was using

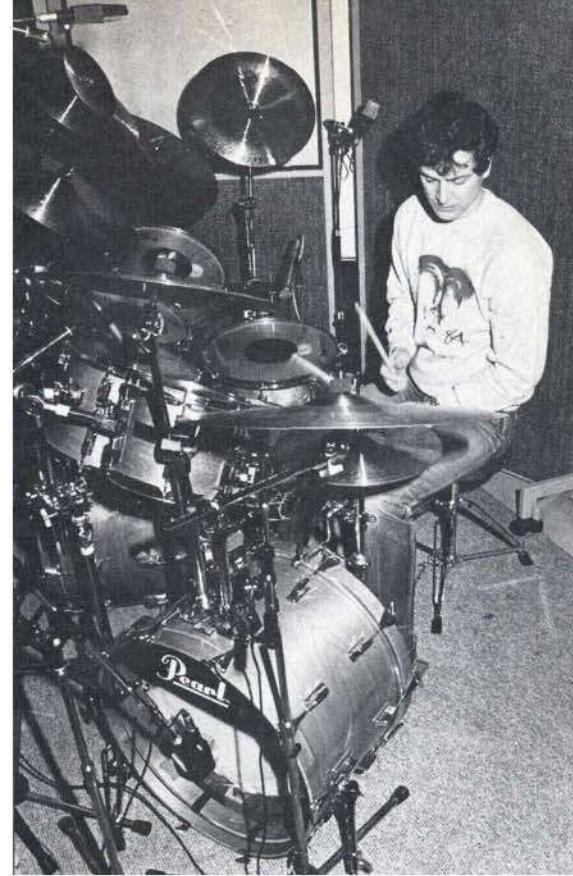


Photo by Peter Goodwin

different weight sticks. One day I picked up a pair of the lighter sticks in the practice room. They felt incredibly light! I thought that they shouldn't have, because I was working with them all the time on gigs. So I decided to take a pair of the heavy sticks to the real kit. I did some practice in my practice room, then I went to the car with the same sticks, drove for less than an hour to the gig, sat down with the heavy sticks and I just *could not* play! In the practice room the heavy sticks felt perfectly normal, and on the drumkit the light sticks felt perfectly normal, but swap them over and I couldn't play with either. Suddenly I realized that the whole thing is a mental trick. There is nothing physical about it at all. We are simply being conned by our brains all the time. So if you begin to realize that you can play what you hear in your head, regardless of your physical abilities, then all you do when you practice is try to give yourself the best chance possible.

At the only drum clinic I have seen Billy Cobham do, he said that he hadn't practiced for ten years, because he lived in a flat where he couldn't. He would work out the feels and things he was going to play on busses and airplanes. Then he would sit down at the kit and play them quite naturally.

SG: Or he would sit behind the drums looking at them and imagine how things could happen.

JH: Right. So he's learned the same trick. If you can play it in your head ... So many drummers imagine that if they practice for three hours a day, one morning they will fall out of bed and it will all be

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Photo by Peter Goodwin



Percussionist Michael Carabello, an original member of the Santana band, has always played with raw power, poetry, and the confidence and simplicity of an old master. He has played with a "Who's Who" of music greats, including the Rolling Stones, Slyve Wonder, Miles Davis, Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Herbie Hancock, Lenny White, Jefferson Airplane, Sly Stone, and Al DiMeola. After leaving Santana, he dropped out of the national music scene for a few years to lay back in his home state of California. But now he has come back—with a vengeance. A relocation to New York City has been a pivotal move for him. Based in

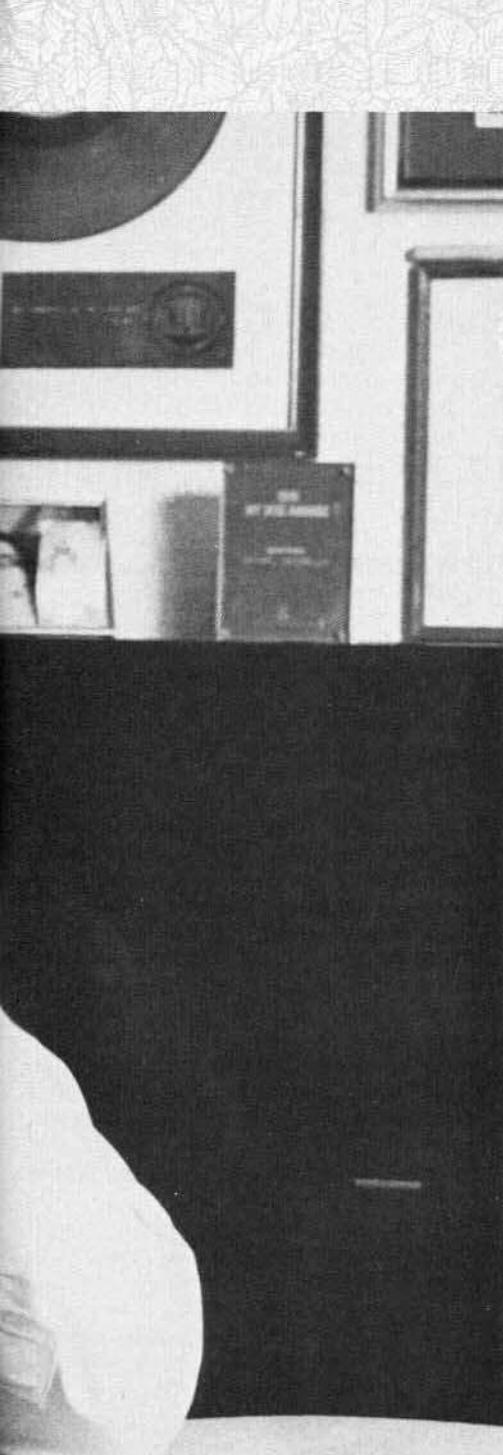
New York, he has done percussion work on the Stones' *Tattoo You* and Irene Cara's first album. His latest studio work has been greatly varied, ranging from George Benson to the Jim Carroll Band to a cooperative effort with Ahmet Ertegun of Atlantic Records for a new artist named Casper McCloud. Recently, he was featured at a Manhattan club on a bill with Tito Puente. He has also enrolled in the Juilliard School to study piano, and he's been auditioning musicians and working on material for a new group of his own.

Michael is not one given to rambling discourses or philosophical musings. He is a man of action rather than a man of words.

Still, when he has something to say, he states his opinions strongly and goes right to the heart of the matter. He has a great zest for life and he likes to have a good time. This Woodstock survivor has been through it all, and he faces the future with a smile.

CF: Why did you leave California for New York?

MC: Because New York is a jungle, and I'm a drummer. And there's not a lot of work out in California. That's why they've got Disneyland out there! [laughs] For me, there's more music, more talent, and more energy in New York. In California, I was afraid of becoming a Valley Boy. I'm



Michael Carabello

by Connie Fisher

get so laid back that, when I return here, I have to remind myself to get back into it—fast. It's like I say, New York is a jungle. And when you're out in the jungle, you must always be aware that there are a lot of things out there that can get you, but you can come on a meal at any minute, too.

CF: You're studying piano at Juilliard. Why would a natural musician like you, who's already had great success, want to go to a formal music school? Musicians who've studied want to play like you.

MC: It's another instrument—another goal—to conquer. I want to see what the other side's like. And learning to read music will help me in communicating with other musicians who read, because I'll be able to convey more quickly what I want to hear. A lot of players in New York read music. If you don't, you're at a disadvantage. It's like overcoming a language barrier. I'll probably be there a term or two.

CF: You've played piano before, particularly on "Singing Winds, Crying Beasts," which you composed for the early Santana album, *Abraxas*. Does playing piano influence your percussion work?

MC: It influences my song writing. I'll go to the piano for the melody when composing a song. If I want to compose a *rhythm*, I'll go to my congas—although I can sometimes do the same on the piano for a rhythm. A lot of people forget the piano is a percussive instrument by definition. Maybe that's why I can play it. I don't know.

CF: Recently, I heard an album released in 1978 called *Giants* which you and drummer Greg Errico played on and produced. Herbie Hancock, Carlos Santana, Neal Schon, Gregg Rolie and Lee Oskar play on it, among others. I was especially moved by a song you wrote, and played organ and congas on called "Pancho Villa." It has your stamp all over it, written with a simple, haunting melody, as in "Singing Winds, Crying Beasts." By naming it after Pancho Villa, were you trying to make a political statement?

MC: Not really. I personally don't try to put messages in my music; I wouldn't write lyrics about a war going on, for instance. I don't do that. I write moods. I set a mood and write to that. Whatever it sounds like—whatever it makes me feel like—becomes the title of the song.

After I recorded "Singing Winds," I

took it home and listened to it for two or three days, and the sounds in it gave me the title. With "Pancho Villa," I listened to it and a visual picture, kind of like a scene from a movie, came to me of a hillside in Mexico where you could see thousands of horsemen lined up. That's how I do it. Moods come to me. Musically, besides being a conga player, I'm at my best as a mood writer.

CF: Your composing seems to be very important to you.

MC: It is. A lot of drummers can write songs; they can write their *tails off*, but people don't think of them that way. People think of them as musicians up there just beating with their hands or sticks on a drum, but it's not that way at all. A lot of drummers are very creative and complex. Like Michael Shrieve—he's a great composer, great drummer, and underrated as both. In the past, you've seen guitarists and keyboard and horn players writing all the songs, but a lot of drummers have gotten tired of sitting back and just being taken for granted.

CF: What do you think about the state of music today?

MC: A lot of people in music have *lost* it, man! They've lost the root of music—the basic rhythm—the true sound. So much music is too slick now; the truth has become airbrushed. Some players know it. That's why they've gone to Africa to study. That's why they're playing the more primal sounds, and getting back to what it was like when the first caveman got a sound from an animal skin stretched over a hollow log. Miles Davis has always been there. Also, Peter Gabriel, Mick Fleetwood, Steve Winwood, and the Stones are trying to get back to the root in their own way.

CF: So you see drum and percussion work, in its natural state and its primal aspects, as an important part—if not *the* most important part—of that root to which we have to return in music?

MC: Right. That's why I hate drum machines. A drum machine is like a pacemaker, as compared to a real heart. It doesn't surge when you need it. It's a very robotic sound. It's another example of how people in the business have lost the root—lost their humanity. Remember, the drummer—the percussionist—provides the pulse, the rhythm, and the heartbeat of

proud to be a member of vintage Santana, but I don't want to stop there. I want to do it all. In New York, everyone who's in the music business is just as good and has worked just as hard as you. Some make it; some don't. It depends on how badly you want it. I've been very fortunate to be in the right place at the right time for all my life just about—especially in music. And that's part of this business, man—luck, fate. I've learned not to question it.

Here in New York, opportunity can present itself at any given time. You always have to be ready. You've got to stay disciplined. You never know. Sometimes when I go back to California to visit my family, I

Photo by Greg Toland



MC: You can't ask what it would be like without music, because if you're quiet now—do you hear that? [claps his hand] That's music. Sound is music. There's music in your voice. Music is everywhere.

CF: Even the hum of that air conditioner?
MC: Even the hum of that air conditioner. That's a waterfall.

CF: Obviously a percussionist, by nature, is attuned to the sound possibilities of a wide variety of instruments. You've already incorporated a pretty large arsenal into your playing. Are there any other instruments you'd like to try?

MC: Oh yeah, lots of them. I'd especially like to find the time to try out more drums and other percussion instruments of native cultures worldwide. Not just the Latin ones, but all of them. If you listen to some native drum or native rhythm that's used only in one place in the world, it will tell you something about *that* particular place. It's like a historical record. And if you get into it and you absorb it, you've enriched yourself and your sound a little more. You carry it with you. You become more universal. People all over the world can relate to your music.

Even if it's whalebones used by Eskimos or reindeer bells from Lapland, I'll try it. I don't want to be known as just a Latin percussionist. I can play Latin music, and I love to play it, but that's not all. I play rock 'n' roll and more classical moods. I can fit into anything. I try to stay open and keep my pores open.

Like Airto—he's what you could call a forefather in bringing native percussive instruments to modern music. I'd like to take it a step further. I'd like to break down the wall of groups that do not want to experiment with percussionists and with different sounds.

CF: Speaking of Latin percussion, I recently heard Tito Puente say in an interview that although rock and disco music employ many Latin-oriented instruments—congas, bongos, timbales, cowbells—he didn't think Latins have received sufficient credit for their contribution. He even said most rock groups who want a conga drum sound will use an American drummer instead of a Latin one. Do you agree?

MC: I don't know if I would say they won't use a Latin drummer, but I know what Tito's talking about. When Tito Puente plays on a Latin album, you can *hear* him clearly. It's there. Whereas on most albums, if there's percussion it's like a token thing. You have to *bend forward* to the speaker and *strain* to hear it in the background. It's very faint. That's the way it's produced.

From my experience, very few producers today know how to get a true conga drum sound. It hasn't even been *tapped* for what it can bring to music. Only those

the music. If you lose the heartbeat, it all dies—just drops dead on the spot. It's not the drummers' fault. It's the producers, like "Robby The Robot," who have gotten a million gold records, having their way over the musicians too much these days.

CF: You seem to be echoing some of Armando Peraza's criticisms of studio producers' work with percussionists (*Modern Drummer*, October, 1982).

MC: He's right. Drummers are human beings. Some producers are into their machines so much that they want *you* to be a machine.

CF: Then do you really feel threatened by the increase in electronic music—electronic drums—the synthetic sound? Do you see the day when a more natural sound like yours could be obsolete?

MC: No.

CF: You think the humans are going to survive?

MC: I have to. I've got no choice. I'm a drummer. I use my hands. But I try to stay open to new instruments, like the Linn machine. It's a great machine if you want to go home and work on something, and not have to set up a whole drumset or get somebody to play something for you. You can set up your own rhythm, and that's good.

CF: Can you see, though, where maybe in the future musicians will stop even bothering with all the paraphernalia, like when they go on tour and just do everything with little boxes?

MC: No. I don't think it will last. I think it's good for what it is. It serves its purpose for experimenting and recording in a little room while you're writing something on the piano or guitar. It's great for that.

CF: Expediency.

MC: Yeah. But then it comes to the point

where those machines can't do any more. They go far, but they only go to a certain point, and then they become boring. A Linn machine won't kick a guitarist in the ass when it's necessary. There are an infinite number of rhythms in percussion. I don't think they can put that, truly, in a machine.

You can get the Linn, set it for some wild rhythm, and get a conga player to play against it. You may come up with something, like a new kind of sound. But you won't have anything if you just set up the Linn to a rhythm and have a guitar or piano play over it alone.

CF: So you're saying it's okay if you use the old and the new together—future primitive—but you really don't want to see the new replacing the old.

MC: Right. Keep the root. I'm willing to coexist with the new technology. I like it because it's a challenge. I'm not *that* much of a purist.

CF: How much do you think about rhythm and music when you're not playing?

MC: All the time—when I walk down the street, when people talk, when I see a little kid playing on the playground. Rhythm runs the whole universe. It has to. When it doesn't, we have wars. There's no harmony. If everyone were truly into the harmony of music, wars would end.

CF: I've thought, when I've been a part of the crowd at a rock concert, immersed in the consuming energy of the music, that rock music is a substitute for war. Do you believe that's true?

MC: Well [laughs] between musicians, yeah, for sure! No, I agree. It drains you in a positive way. It takes away your aggression. And for me, personally, playing the drums provides a tremendous release.

CF: What would it be like without music?

who've worked with Latin or African bands know how to set it up properly. Like Glenn Kolotkin, who got us the really good percussion sound on the early Santana albums—he's a wizard. He came to California after working in New York with players like Mongo Santamaria.

Most groups, with the exception of a few, like those I mentioned before, are scared to go the distance with percussion. I don't know why—if it's because they're so wound up in the formula and what's safe, or it doesn't match their Mercedes, or what.

CF: You mentioned the sound from a hollow log a while back. I take it you prefer wooden congas over fiberglass.

MC: Let's put it this way: Drink some wine that's been aged in wood, and then drink some that's been "aged" in plastic. When drums originated, there was no fiberglass. Drums have to be grown as trees, not manufactured as glass.

When you play wooden drums, you return to the earth. You can close your eyes and feel it, taste it, smell it, and see it. They're starting to realize it, too, in the drum-making business. Things are changing. Latin Percussion came out with a wooden conga. I've played wooden congas that were terrible, but in general, a wooden conga gives a truer sound. Trap drums, the old Gretsch drums, and the old jazz drums are wood. Some drummers today use fiberglass and they sound good for loud bands and that type of music, but they're not for me.

CF: What about heads? How do you care for them?

MC: When I get new skins, I rub dirt on them, spit on them, get a little blood on them, and let them get real rank for about a week. I break them in like that. A good skin can last years if I'm really careful, and I remember to loosen it up after playing.

CF: How do you tune them?

MC: I always tune them myself before I play. When I'm playing for myself, I tune to the same sound I've had since the beginning, basically no matter what the song. But if I'm doing session work, it's different. I tune them to suit the music. For example, for the Stones on *Tattoo You*, Mick liked them tuned very high.

CF: There's no doubt that your playing maintains that link to the primitive beginnings of music that you speak of. I understand that you're very interested in the American Indian. Is there any connection there?

MC: Maybe so. I've got tons of Indian stuff in my house. I just think they are a powerful, determined race of people. I want to keep their cosmic spirit and rhythms alive. When I was growing up, watching cowboys and Indians on TV, I was fascinated by the Indians. I was always into their drumming and dancing.

CF: What made you get into percussion in the first place?

MC: I used to hang out on Grant Street where all the "beatniks" sat on the corner playing bongos. I thought it was just the greatest sound I ever heard! Also, my step-father would take me fishing in Muni Pier. I thought fishing was boring, so I would sit with the beatniks, and one day they let me play. I went home and made some drums out of Folger's coffee cans put together with nuts and bolts. It was all I could afford. I didn't buy my first congas until I was about 16. Then I started hanging out with Carlos Santana when I was 17. He and I started the band, playing in garages and stuff. We went to the Fillmore all we could. One day I asked Bill Graham how bands got to play there. He answered, "By audition." So we auditioned as the opener on a bill which included Paul Butterfield and Charles Lloyd.



Photo by Connie Fisher

CF: Quite a bit has been written about your departure from the Santana band, which wasn't on the friendliest terms. We won't go into that here, but can you tell me what your current standing is with the original band members?

MC: Sometimes I play tennis with Carlos. I hate to admit it, but so far he's won more than me. He goes for the jugular vein on the courts! He's also the godfather of my little girl, Aisha. I love the guy. What more can I say? And I see a lot of Michael Shrieve. He lives in New York City. We're very close.

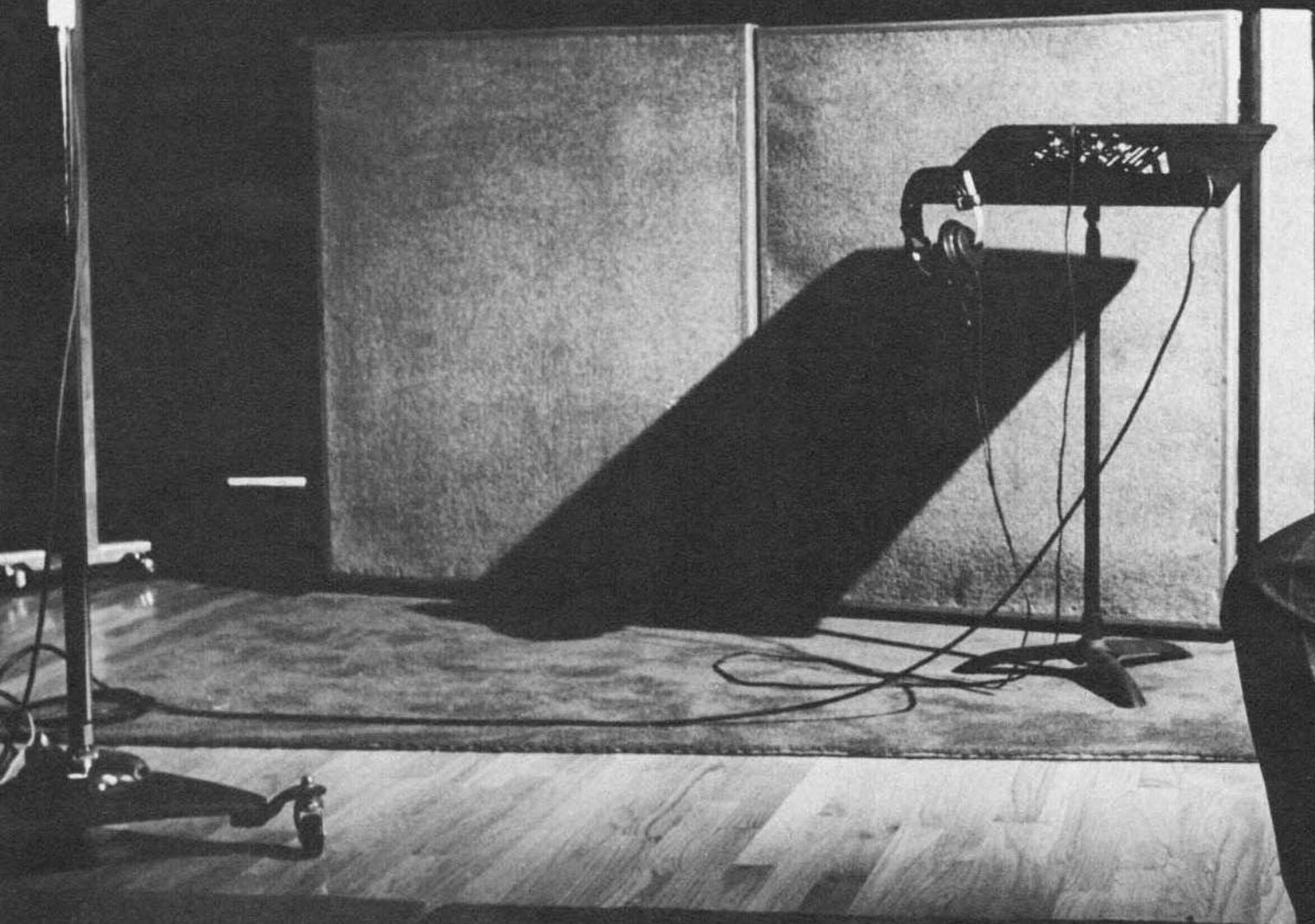
CF: Michael Shrieve and you went on stage to play "Soul Sacrifice" with Santana during their concert at Madison Square Garden in the fall of '82. You were almost un-

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Photo by Greg Toland

Jeff Porcaro



PAISTE

Jeff Porcaro
with David Paich, Keyboards

Slipping Away (part II)
by David Paich

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SCHNEIDER 45
33 1/3 RPM
STEREO
833025X5

Jeff's Paiste set-up:
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802 12" Paperthin
602 20" Electronic Ride
2002 20" Heavy Crash
Flude 14" Hi-hat with sizzles
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and the Incredible Percussion Set

Engineered by Tom Knox and Greg Lowrance
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PAiSTE



MODERN DRUMMER
April 1984



"My first big influence was my dad, who plays everything from symphony percussion to big band and bebop jazz drums. He made me appreciate the incredible variety of percussion around the world—I mean, every civilization has their own sounds. That's what really grabbed my interest.

"I had one big advantage growing up in the projects. We had basements where you could practice, and there was always a drum set down there. Of course, when I started, I couldn't reach the bass drum pedal!

"I'm not a fanatic about my playing—it's just something that feels great to do and lets me express myself while I'm making a living.

"What impressed me first about Paiste was the sound—for example, they've got crash cymbals that you can feel comfortable with—yet the sound isn't the usual sound that you take for granted. It's just slightly different and maybe a taste more musical.

"When you have cymbals that let you get into pitch things, and they're made that consistent, to me it kind of blends with some of the synthesizer technology that the band is getting into.

"Paiste has so many different cymbals, bells, gongs, etc., that you're not limited. I can literally go to one company for anything with the sounds of metals."

Between Toto and his studio work, Jeff has left a lasting mark on popular music. Of all the cymbals available, he plays Paiste exclusively. So do more and more leading drummers and percussionists around the world.

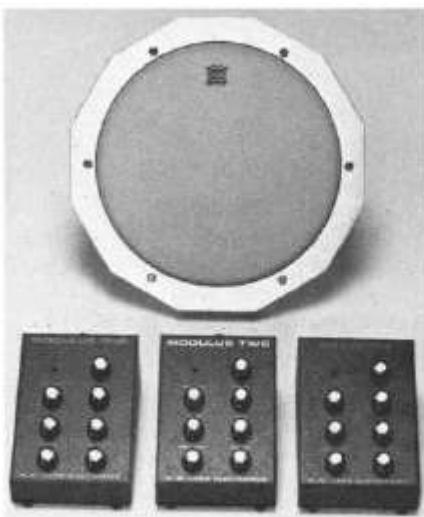
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PRODUCT CLOSEUP

by Bob Saydowski, Jr.

Cano Modulus Electronic Drums



H.W. Cano is a new company on the electronic percussion scene, based in Colorado. They have recently introduced their line of *Modulus* electronic drums.

The *Modulus* drums are available as a five-piece setup: bass, snare, and three toms. The shells are 1 1/8" deep and appear to be made of aluminum. Cano uses 10" Remo practice pad heads for a genuine, comfortable drum feel. These heads are tensionable with a screwdriver, just like on Remo's own practice pads. However, I cannot find any means for replacing the heads, since the shells are one solid piece.

Each pad mounts on its own snare drum stand, which has double-braced tripod bases and incorporates the traditional basket design. From what I can gather, these stands are from Maxwin's 700 hardware series. They are sturdy and fully adjustable, but do not go high enough for my liking when used to mount the tom-tom pads. Perhaps Cano would consider offering op-

tional concert-height stands for drummers who require more height than a standard snare stand can give.

The bass drum pad mounts vertically on a special metal post which stands separately in the kit. It has a large lip for pedal mounting along with spurs (actually screws) at its sides. The post holder keeps its position very well.

The pads hook into separate modules which are arranged in a console format, housed inside a foam-lined case. *Modulus One* controls the snare drum; the *Modulus Twos* are for the toms and bass drum. The five modules are all linked together with numerous patch cords, allowing the far left module to handle output line and power supply. Mini phono plugs are used to connect each pad into its module. All the pad-connecting cables are tied into a snake for a neater look. The modules each offer the following controls:

On/Decay—Decay time can be set anywhere from 10 milliseconds to 10 seconds. Bend—This gives a downward pitch sweep ranging to two and a half octaves.

Frequency—This controls a five-octave tuning range.

Noise—This controls a relative mix of oscillator-to-white noise. On the *Modulus One*, this control is used to provide the wire snare sound; on the *Modulus Two*, low frequency noise is used for degrees of head rumble, as well as for special effects. Strike—This gives variable head impact sound.

Pan—Allows left/right stereo imagery. There is also a volume control on each module, plus an LED which indicates module-on status. When the corresponding pad is hit, the LED brightens.

Two 1/4" phone plugs supply stereo output. Each module has a sensitivity control, and the modules can trigger from pulse outputs of sequencers, drum machines, click tracks, etc. It is also possible to separate the module outputs for input to a studio mixing console.

The sound of the *Modulus* kit is a cross between *Syndrum* and Simmons, depending on your settings. At high tunings, the toms sound like *Syndrums*, in that they have a clear pitch similar to a keyboard synthesizer. At lower tunings, the sound comes closer to acoustic tom-toms, but it is still obvious that the sound is electronically

reproduced. They're not as punchy as the Simons, but they are a lot more synthesized. I found a bit of decay "growl" when the sound died away. The bass drum has good punch when set for a flat sound. (It seems that bass drums are always easiest to reproduce.) In order to get good depth, it's best to run the system through good-quality amplification.

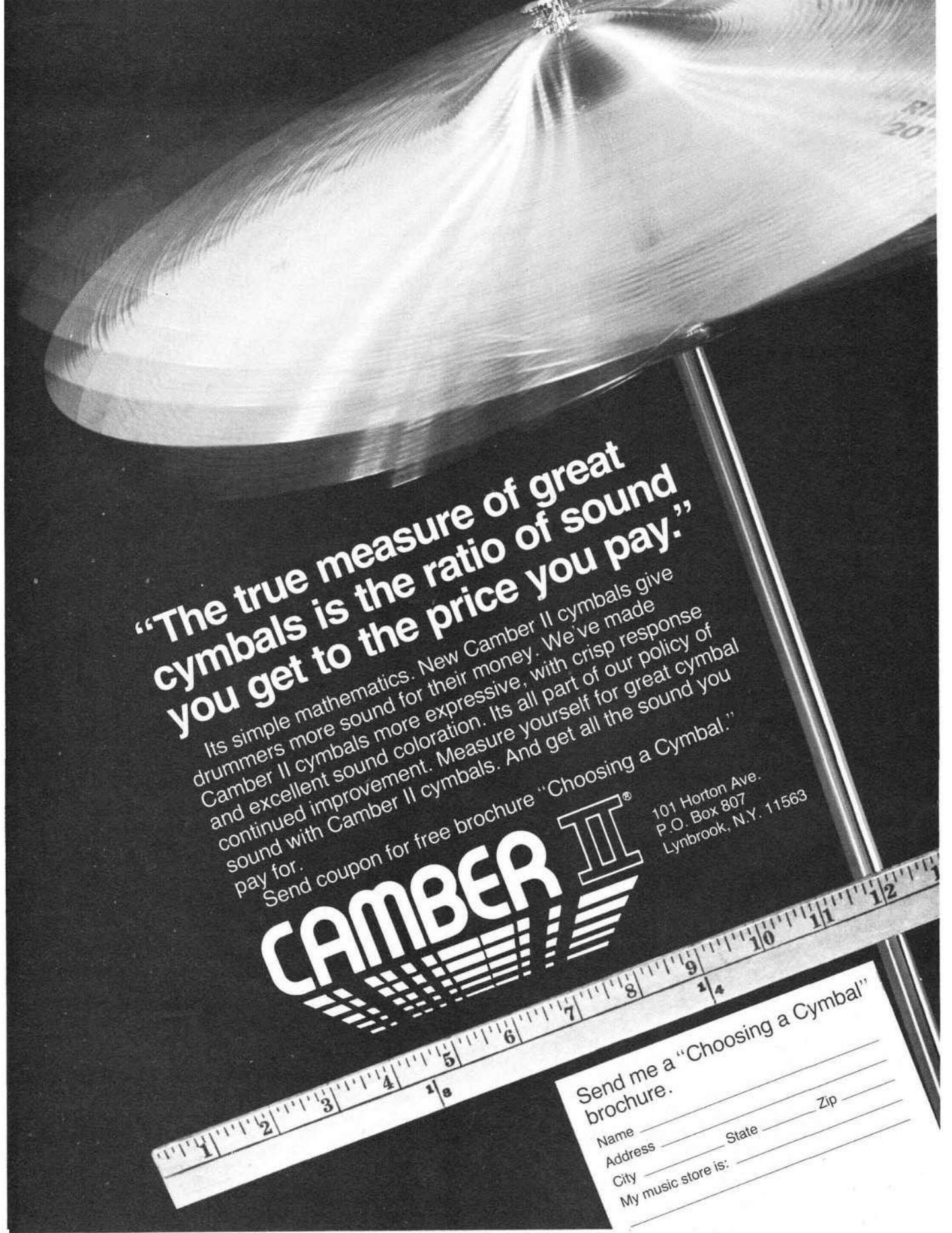
I do have complaints with the snare drum sound. After hearing the Simons and all the current digital and analog machines, the Cano snare reminds me of the sound offered on cheap rhythm boxes. It is very thin sounding and too "rat-a-tat." They should try different types of oscillation and noise to fatten up the snare sound, since, in its present form, it is *too* synthesized sounding, due to an overabundance of noise generation.

Unlike the Simons, there are no stored preset sounds; all sounds and tunings must be set up by the player by dialing the different controls. I do like the concept of real drumheads. It felt very natural playing them, and the pads will respond as fast as you can play them.

The entire *Modulus* kit retails at \$2,495, and this includes five pads, five modules, four stands, one bass drum pad post, and all cords, plus a case for the pads and a case for the modules. The system is powered by a nine-volt AC adaptor, which is also included. The pad/module sets are available separately at \$400 each.

Cano is also offering the *Graviton* module, which is capable of producing synthesizer sound effects a la *Synare* and *Syndrum*: bird calls, gongs, bells, space sounds, etc. It, too, is available at \$400 retail (for pad and controls).

If Cano is shooting for a piece of the Simmons market, they should tweak their sound controllers a bit for a purer, more natural sound. As they stand, the *Modulus* drums are more electronic sounding, and different from the SDS5. The construction is good and the basic premise is sound. A few minor changes would make the *Modulus* setup a good addition or even alternative to an acoustic drumkit. A demo is available. For more information write: H.W. Cano Electronics, 7057 Vivian Court, Arvada, CO 80004, 303-425-4010.



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Drumming And Information

I met a young man at a clinic recently who told me that he had just purchased a \$3,000 drumset, and he had only taken two lessons. I commented, "You sound like you are proud of the fact that you have only had two lessons. Why is that?" He replied, "Taking lessons makes you less creative." I asked him, "How do you know that if you have only taken two lessons?" He replied, "Taking other people's ideas limits you." I asked him if he practiced with records and he said yes. I asked him if he ever took beats and licks off records. He smiled and said, "Oh yes, all the time." I said, "Those are other people's ideas. What is the difference between taking them from a record and taking them from a qualified teacher?" He laughed and said, "Perhaps you have a point."

In fact, I do have a point and it is simply

that you should not cut yourself off from information. You can learn from listening to records, from watching and listening to someone play in person, and from taking lessons. Going to music school and playing in a band on a regular basis are other very good ways to learn. It can also be very informative to read interviews with established drummers, books about the music business, and magazines that specialize in recording, management, or industry news.

Taping rehearsals, practice sessions, concerts, and club gigs can be an eye-opening experience. Learning to listen to yourself objectively is one of music's more difficult tasks. However, it is also one of the best ways to improve. Listening to yourself playing on tape will help you gauge your progress. If you are attending a clinic, ask the artist or the person managing the event if it is alright to tape the clinic. In this way, you can listen to it later in case you missed something. You can also learn by listening several times to what the artist played during the clinic, which can be very worthwhile.

You should listen to styles and types of music other than what you personally enjoy. The influence of Indian, oriental, reggae and South American music is well documented in our culture. If you need stimulation musically or feel that you are in a rut, listen to something different. Sometimes you will be inspired to try some new ideas. Taking ideas and rhythms from one form of music and using them in another style is both creative and enriching.

Listening to and reading about the musicians from earlier eras can be a great experience. Learning what preceded your era often lends a new understanding to the present. In fact, you will most likely be amazed at how well musicians played in the '30s, '40s and '50s. They were just as dedicated and hard working as the musicians of today.

On the other hand, if you have been playing for a number of years, I suggest you spend some time listening to the younger drummers of today. Their rhythmic flexibility can be astonishing. Even if you are not into their music, it is good to listen to these great up-and-coming young artists just to keep your view balanced. The past was great, but so is the present. We can all learn from each other.

If you are unsure about drum lessons or if you have had a bad experience, remember that teachers are as different as drummers. Talk to other students about their teachers. Take a few lessons from several teachers and decide which one is best for you. There are many fine teachers. Sometimes you have to seek them out.

Hanging out with other drummers can also be helpful. Getting together to practice helps you avoid boredom and can be a lot of fun. If you read music, play some duets. They are great exercises in learning to read your part while listening to someone else play theirs. Coordinating both parts of the duet helps you learn to play with others while reading. Study vibes, timpani or take ear-training lessons. Try to play a tambourine musically, not just on 2 and 4. Try to play congas, bongos or timbales. Attempt to play something interesting on a triangle. Each one of these experiments will help you to develop more respect and understanding for these instruments and for music.

Admittedly there are only 24 hours in a day. Even the most dedicated student probably could not pursue every suggestion in this article. In fact, some suggestions might help your situation and some might not. However, they are intended to help you develop an attitude towards learning that will help you progress. Don't reject an idea without careful consideration. If possible, try it out before making a decision. Keep your eyes and ears open. Read an entire interview before making up your mind about what the artist has to say. Listen to an entire clinic before deciding if it is worthwhile or not.

Above all, don't brag about a lack of education or a lack of training. It's not *how* you learn that counts as much as it is *how much* you learn. For example, you can't be proud of never having learned to read. You can't be proud of something you haven't accomplished. You can only be proud of what you have actually done. If you haven't accomplished all that much yet, be proud of all the effort you have made to play as well as you do now. Combine that effort with new information and keep growing. If we all can keep growing just a little each day, we will all play a little better and music will be a more rewarding business to be a part of.

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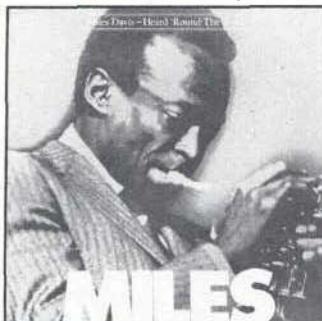
ON TRACK

Reviewers: Rick Van Horn, Mark Hurley, Rick Mattingly, Timothy D. Richards



STEWART COPELAND—
Rumble Fish. A&M SP-6-4983. Stewart Copeland: pno, gtr, banjo, bs, kybd, synth, rhy synth, perc, typewriter, dr, kazoo. S. Ridgway: vcl, hmca, str synth. M. Martin: sx. S. Friedman: trp. B. Neidlinger: db bs. Pavel Strings: str. *Don't Box Me In / Tulsa Tango / Our Mother Is Alive / Party At Someone Else's Place / Biff Gets Stomped By Rusty James / Brothers On Wheels / West Tulsa Story / Tulsa Rags / Father On The Stairs / Hostile Bridge To Benny's / Your Mother Is Not Crazy / Personal Midget / Cain's Ballroom / Motorboy's Fate.*

Drummers are sometimes accused of not knowing anything about music, but that accusation will never be made about Stewart Copeland, and this soundtrack recording proves why. Stewart not only demonstrates his abilities on drums and tuned percussion instruments, but also proves himself to be accomplished on a number of other instruments, in addition to being an imaginative and melodic composer. Although this music was written as background music for a film, a lot of it stands up very well on its own. (Here at the *MD* office, the combination typewriter/drum solo was a big hit.) On the back of the album jacket, Copeland is credited as "The Rhythmatist," and while he is certainly that, he is also more than just that. Francis Ford Coppola (who hired drummer Mickey Hart to compose music for *Apocalypse Now* a few years ago) deserves credit for once again allowing us to see another side of one of our most influential drummers. *RM*



MILES DAVIS—*Heard Round the World.* Columbia C2 38506. M. Davis: trp. S. Rivers or W. Shorter: tn sx. H. Hancock: pno. R. Carter: bs. Tony Williams: dr. *If I Were A Bell / My Funny Valentine / So What / Walkin' / All Of You / Theme / Milestones / Autumn Leaves.*

This double album, which presents two Miles Davis concerts from 1964, provides an interesting transition in the recorded documentation of Davis' groups. Here we have the classic rhythm section of the '60s playing the basic Davis repertoire of the '50s. Tony Williams has repeatedly stated that his innovations were possible only because he had a thorough understanding of what had already been done, and this album proves that Williams could handle the earlier Davis material as well as any of his predecessors. But he's not merely imitating someone else here; his playing is assured, inspired, and definitely his own. *RM*



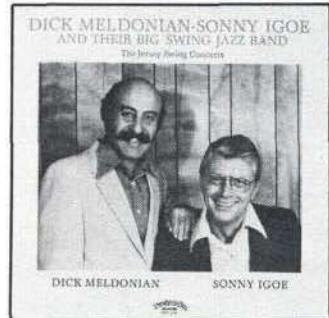
SAKHILE—*Sakhile.* Arista/Jive-Afrika JL8-8190. S. Gu mede: bs, vcl, perc. K. Mahlangu: tn sx, sp sx, vcl, perc. T. Mkhize: kybds, vcl. M. Mathole: gtr, vcl. Madoda Mathunjwa: dr, vcl. Mabi

Thobejane: perc. *Sakhile (We Have Built) / Idhayimane (Diamonds) / Ubuhebakho (You're So Beautiful) / Mantombi (A Girl's Name) / Isililo (A Mourning Song) / Beautiful Feeling (Isimo Esimnandi) / A Night To Remember (Ubusuku Obumandzi) / Dusinwa Dude delwane (It's My Turn Now).*

Sakhile means "we have built," and what this African group has built is a promising American debut album. This is not African heritage music, but rather contemporary music being performed by African musicians. The tunes feature lush vocal arrangements and solid musical work, especially the drumming and percussion work of Mathunjwa and Thobejane. There is a comfortability (and certainly an authenticity) here, that just isn't present even in the best American players. After all, these fellows come from the place where funky, syncopated rhythms originated in the first place. The grooves are incredible—smooth and flowing, yet inescapably moving. The fact that the vocals are in an African language will probably prevent the group's getting any commercial airplay, which is regrettable. *RVH*

as well as those with a classical orientation, will appreciate the creative force present in this recording. Sharda Sahai has achieved a musical feat which is often sought after by master percussionists: the abstraction of melody on a drum. Mr. Sahai hails from a famous lineage of tabla players, the exponents of which are rarely heard outside India. His distinctive improvisational style and selection of material are welcome changes from other recordings of this genre which contain only condensed versions of a traditional tabla solo recital. The entire solo is rendered in a 16-beat cycle (Teental), which means that the Western listener can relate his or her understanding of 4/4 time to many of the symmetrical compositions contained herein. The solo is elaborated as a continuous melodic piece of music with memorable emotion and climaxes. The continuity is sustained by Bob Becker's accompaniment on harmonium.

The recording is available only by mail from Xylomusic, P.O. Box 406, 250 St. George Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5R 3L8. *TR*



DICK MELDONIAN & SONNY IGORE—*Big Swing Jazz Band.* Progressive Pro 7058. Saxes: D. Meldonian, G. Cappuccio, E. Wasserman, D. Bagni, V. Riccitelli. Trpts: L. Ball, F. Jacobs, S. Davis, G. Manieri, P. Cohen. Trmbs: J. Pugh, G. Hessler, D. Kirkland, M. Flanzman. Piano: G. Syran. Bass: L. Milliman. Drms: S. Igoe. *Jump The Blues Away / You Gotta Try / In A Mellotone / Love For Sale / I'll*

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Fine, straight-ahead big band jazz performed by a worthy group of New York City area players. Though basically a rehearsal band, the arrangements by Gene Roland, Nat Pierce, Frank Foster and Chico O'Farrill are executed with precision and enthusiasm. No mistaking the seasoned drumming of ex-Hermanite Sonny Igoe, now a prominent New Jersey teacher, whose drive and meticulous taste are a pleasure to listen to. Big Band Jazz—alive and well on this one! MH



THE BOB FLORENCE LIMITED EDITION—*Soaring*. Bosco Records, Cat. Bosco 3. B. Florence: elec piano. J. DiBarolo: bs. Nick Ceroli: dr. L. Morgan: al sx, sp sx, fl. K. Richmond: al sx, sp sx, fl. P. Christlieb: tn sx. B. Cooper: tn sx, fl. B. Eford: br sx, bs cl. J. Lowe: br sx, bs cl. G. Graham: trp, flg. C. Davis: trp, flg. W. Luening: trp, flg. S. Huffsteter: trp, flg. N. Hatt: trp, flg. C. Welsch: trb. C. Loper: trb. H. Harper: trb. D. Waldrop: bs trb. *Afternoon Of A Prawn/Jeff N' Jeff/Soaring/Nobody's Human/A Soundsketch/Misbehavin'.*

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spired. Nick Ceroli's drumming is an education in style. He plays with fire, imagination and drive, yet remains totally musical and supportive at all times. The record is available through selected dealers, or by writing Bosco Records, P.O. Box 2085, Canoga Park, CA 91306. Charts for all the arrangements are also available by contacting Campus Music Service, P.O. Box AA, Hawthorne, CA 90250. RVH



VARIOUS ARTISTS/VOCALISTS—*Singin' Till The Girls Come Home*. Columbia FC 38508. This is an interesting record for a couple of reasons. First, it presents a number of different singers and groups, providing insight on how to play tastefully behind vocalists. But more important, it gives us a chance to hear several classic drummers, in situations we are not used to hearing them in. For starters, there are three tunes with Tony Bennett, backed by Elvin Jones on drums. Those tunes are followed by two cuts featuring Carmen McRae and Louis Armstrong, backed by Joe Morello. Other cuts feature Gus Johnson, Stu Martin and Louis Bellson. This material is all previously unreleased, and is a worthy addition to the CBS Contemporary Masters Series. RM

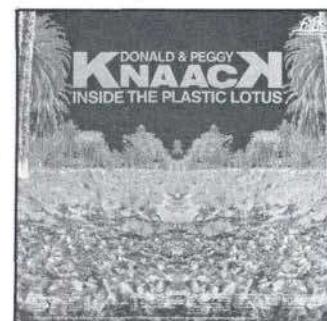


TORNADO—*First Alert*. Forbidden Records RF2001. S.

Frazier: gtr, vcl, kybds. D. Worley: gtr, vcl. R. Raker: vcl. B. Kelly: bs. Cliff Greeson: dr, vcl. J. Wilkins: tn sx, sp sx. *Love's Cruel Getaway/California/Bye And Bye/Shake It Off/Don't Go Below/Soul Bop/Didn't I Believe In You?/Greatest Show On Earth/Twelve O'Clock High.*

This young group's music is at once fresh and historic. Fresh because it gives us a funky R&B sound, which is cleaner and more basic than most of the slick, high-tech productions that are currently on the airwaves. Historic because their sound harks back to the formative days of jazz-influenced R&B horn bands, when groups like Tower of Power and Cold Blood were showing us what syncopation and groove were all about. Cliff Greeson offers some tasty patterns that serve to remind us that a drummer doesn't have to play a 2-4 backbeat and let the bass player have all the fun to make the music funky. The band is at its best with rhythmic kickers, and weaker when going for ballads or mood pieces. But the total sound is solid, enjoyable and extremely refreshing. RVH

ous members of the band, and each seems to have contributed something in his own personal favorite style. The selections range from cool funk to sambasque fusion; avant-garde to traditional small-group jazz; techno-pop to afro. It's as if the band wanted to say, "Look at all the things we can do!" That might have been presumptuous on their part, were it not for the fact that they really can. The playing is good, and Welch's drumming skills obviously extend over a wide range, since he gives us interesting work on every piece. The overall production is a little ragged, but the ambitious nature of the album is commendable, and the versatility of the players admirable. It's a good, quick trip through contemporary jazz. RVH



MICHAEL WELCH—*Illegal Radio*. World Records NR 15081. Michael Welch: dr, mar, vbs, xyl, perc. J. Rakestraw: vcl, gtr. E. Columbo: perc. J. Dunlap: sp sx, tn sx. D. Jordan: tn sx. G. Lee: kybds, Synth bass. R. Miller: bs. R. Pedley: pno. M. Sensiper: gtr. *Euphrates/Afrobot/Why Do You Take So Long/It's O-K/Phone Home/Once You Get That Started/Safari Blues/What You've Given Me/Wheaties/Retro Con Carnel/Illegal Radio.*

This album is a jazz sampler. The compositions are by vari-

DONALD & PEGGY KNAACK—*Inside the Plastic Lotus*. hat MUSIC 3517. D. Knaack: perc, syn, voice. P. Knaack: vcl, pno, syn. *Introduction/Cash Flow/Echo Park/Deja Vu Lullaby/The Fast Lane 1/The Fast Lane 2/What's Your Sign?/Waiting For the Big Break/Hoo Ray/Fine.*

Don Knaack has always been interested in multi-media forms of expression. His concerts combine music, sounds, visual images, and whatever else he can work into the presentation. Given the limitations of a record, he has had to forgo the visual elements, but he has compensated for that by combining a wide variety of musical influences ranging from Frank Zappa, to John Cage, to top-40 pop, as well as a few things that defy comparison. Holding it all together is Knaack's considerable ability as a percussionist. If you're looking for something unique, this is it. RM



Peter Erskine



Harvey Mason



Steve Smith



Vinnie Colaiuta



Denny Carmassi

**"What do
these
great
artists
have in
common?"**



Akira Tana



Omar Hakim



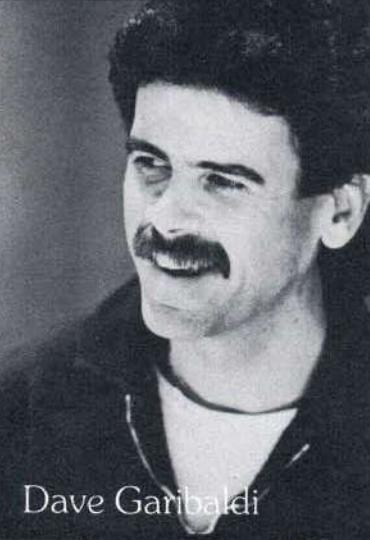
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by David A. Mason

Percussion Colors- Part 1

You've been cooking on the traps in the studio and you're listening to the playback now. It's great, but there still might be room for improvement—more color, more spice. How? With the addition of a layer or two of hand-percussion instruments—simple ingredients like cowbells, maracas or tambourines—you can add new textures and rhythms to your music without investing your life savings. Depending on the genre and the groove, you can pack more drive, excitement, texture, or just good old energy onto your tracks for a fraction of the cost of a new cymbal or electronic drum machine.

Cowbells and tambourines are still the workhorses of the Latin, rock, and funk world, but over the past 15 or so years, jazz has imported percussion instruments from all over the world to broaden its sound spectrum. Eventually, these colors will find their way into more situations as musicians get tuned in to their expressive possibilities. For the present, let's see what keeps some of the less exotic hand-percussion instruments—"toys," as they're called in the jazz world—working.

To begin, let's isolate the instruments that will be most useful, and go from there. In ten years of playing many different styles of music, I've found five or six that are to hand percussion what the primary and secondary colors are to painting: essentially, your foundation. These instruments have the virtue of being both inexpensive and versatile. They are cowbell, afuche, claves, tambourine, maracas or shakers, and sleighbells.

With this basic pallet, you can cover many different styles, provided you exercise some taste, imagination, good time and technique. Knowing how to get the right sound is as important as putting it in the right place. If that's 100% true for other instruments, it's 200% true for percussion. The first consideration, of course, is does this instrument sound musical? So keep your ears open when you buy. Don't assume that all cowbells or whatever sound alike. Hand-percussion instruments may look a lot alike, but you should be as particular in choosing one as you would a cymbal.

Cowbell

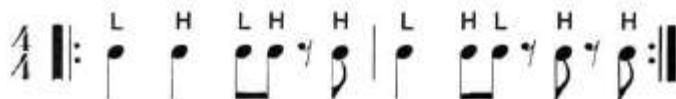
The number one toy in musical usefulness has got to be the cowbell. Latin music isn't Latin without a cowbell. Rock and funk have used it extensively. Jazz and reggae have waxed and waned on it, but it's still a voice to be reckoned with in the percussion world. You can find a musical part for it in almost any groove where volume is not your number one concern. It won't work in bop or ballads, but in many rock, funk, reggae, or big band tunes, you can make use of the cowbell's inherent fire and drive. When you look for a bell, consider the music you'll be playing most, and what kind of bell sound will be most complementary to the other instruments and your drum sound.

You want a sound that will deliver musical authority but will not conflict with the rest of the band sound in terms of timbre and pitch. You can modify the sound with tape, moleskin, foam, or a combination of how you hold the bell and how and what you hit it with. However, the bottom line is, it has to sound right for the band to begin with. You'd think that would go without saying, but I've heard people playing awful sounding bells, primarily I think, because they didn't take the bell seriously as a musical instrument. It is however, and when played with fire and precision, it can really

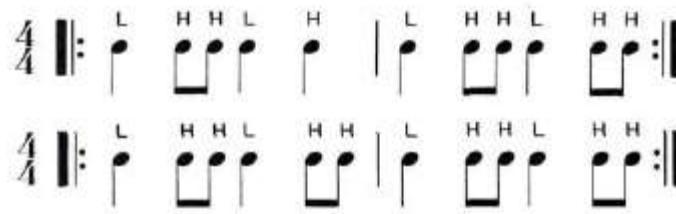
push a groove.

A variety of sounds can be derived from a cowbell: You can choke the tone if you hold it in your hand, or you can open it up by relaxing your grip. You can hit the mouth dead on or at several places along the center or side to vary the pitch. You can glance the stick off at the tip, or use the shoulder to lean on the mouth to vary intensity. You can play straight quarter notes for get-down drive, or more complicated off-beat rhythms for a sly funk feel. Whatever you do, in whatever style, it's a good idea to be a hair ahead of the beat. The tension created by a good bell part is one of the keys to making people want to dance. Listen to Latin music to get a feel for how these masters of the cowbell use it. Here are three useful cowbell rhythms. The first derives from the mambo, but it can be used in funk, fusion, or rock forms. It sounds best on medium to fast tempos.

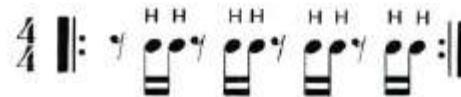
L = low note, mouth of cowbell with shoulder of drumstick
 H = high note, center of cowbell with bead of drumstick



These are variations on the cha-cha cowbell part which can work well on rock tunes.



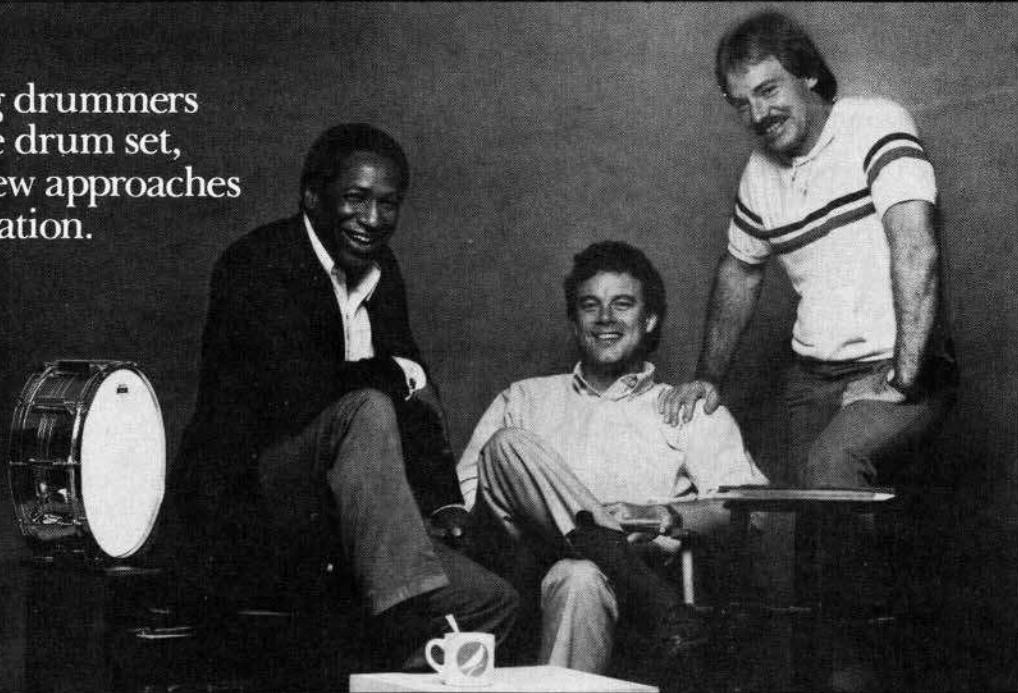
This is a bell part that's found in several different African rhythms; it propels the music like a stone skipping over water. It's a very effective counterpoint to any music that emphasizes the downbeats.



What most cowbell rhythms have in common is that they're composed of two measures that are repeated as a phrase and not varied much, if at all. The first 1 is usually a low note struck on the mouth of the bell. Thereafter, the high and low pitches generally alternate on the quarter-note pulse.

It should be mentioned that the cowbell functions well as an alternative to a hi-hat or cymbal ride. Let's say you're building up to a big crash on 1 and you want an immediate change of texture that maintains the excitement but doesn't obscure the vocal. The cowbell is tailor-made for this situation.

Three leading drummers on teaching the drum set, Yamaha and new approaches for music education.



Left to right: *Horacee Arnold* teaches and has performed with Chick Corea, Stan Getz and Kenny Burrell.

Ed Soph teaches and has performed with Clark Terry, Woody Herman and Joe Henderson.

Steve Houghton teaches and has performed with Woody Herman, Freddie Hubbard and the Toshiko Akiyoshi/Lew Tabackin Big Band.

Ed Soph: The drum set is an improvisational instrument. That makes it exciting to teach because there are no rules. It's a chance to establish your own identity. Just imitating others defeats the whole purpose of the instrument. Hopefully, drum set teaching will never become codified. It's constantly evolving. The repertoire is the music and it's constantly changing. It's the newest teaching field.

Steve Houghton: A teacher should be in touch with what's happening. I have a view on studio work and going out on the road and I share that with my students. I have an educational background and was fortunate enough to have a good music ed program all throughout my schooling. When we did high school clinics with Woody Herman's band, I was young enough and my college experience was real fresh so I could communicate directly with the students. There was no gap. I'll never stop playing because it reinforces the teaching. Playing keeps me fresh.

Ed Soph: A lot of the ideas I get for my teaching come from my playing.

Horacee Arnold: Basically, I want my students to understand the possibilities of the drum set and mechanically be able to deal with it and explore. What I bring to a student is my twenty years of experience playing the instrument. Every musician, particularly every jazz musician, is a composer so I see things very compositionally. Music has to do with making complete "statements."

Ed Soph: A teacher's purpose is to get the students to think for themselves. A teacher cannot teach a student to be creative. You can only give them the tools.

Horacee Arnold: It's also important for a student to start out with good equipment because then they can realize their full potential on the instrument. Students hear the quality of a drummer's sound and they equate that with the quality of the instrument. There's a lot of quality control built into Yamaha drums. Yamaha is really a thinking company because they consider design aspects you might never have thought of.

Steve Houghton: Now there's a new trend with young drummers who want to be studio players. They used to want to get into big bands. Maybe Yamaha, with its new direction, can show the kids that if you want to be a studio drummer, it's very hard work. We're all working drummers, but we're also teachers and we're aware of the problems. Also, there are a lot more clinics nowadays, it's a real trend.

Ed Soph: The thing about clinics is that students are exposed to ideas they don't get anywhere else. I'm talking about a real clinic, not some guy getting up there and playing a solo at a million miles an hour, then saying, "any questions?" New tools like educational videos give students the chance to see a wide variety of drummers play, and they can learn from that.

Steve Houghton: Yeah, the better teachers are going to take videos and run with them. Yamaha is definitely striving to break new ground in this area.

For more information and to receive Yamaha's *Drum Lines* newspaper, write to Yamaha Musical Products, P.O. Box 7271, 3050 Breton Rd. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49510.  **YAMAHA**

YAMAHA SYSTEM DRUMS

Tambourine

A tambourine is probably the next most useful toy you can buy. A mainstay of rock, folk, Gospel and samba styles, it can be creatively applied to a good many more. A tambourine with a head is more versatile than one without, but again, consider your situation. If you're not playing sambas or classical music, you won't need the head because you're mainly after the jingle sound. But do your ears a favor and try a bit of tambourine research. Listen to what Airto can do with a tambourine. He sounds like an entire samba band by himself.

If you anticipate playing a complicated pattern over a long section, check out the new *Rhythm Tech* tambourines. They're designed to expedite playing and the design does make a difference. A note of caution should be inserted here: Don't assume that your chops on a tambourine, cowbell, or afuche are automatic because you've been playing traps. You'll be using different motions and therefore different groups and combinations of muscles that may not be in the same shape as your expectations. Practice using these instruments before going to the gig or studio, or you may find yourself cramping up and/or dragging the time in the middle of a take.

Tambourines are useful to push a groove because they have a unique characteristic: They alternate precise and sloppy sounds. You get a pronounced accent on the beats you hit with your hand, and jangling fills between those accents. The tambourine has a cool timbre, so it cuts across lower tones and warmer timbres but it doesn't seem to interfere with higher pitches. It's relatively simple to play, but it adds a lot of energy. You can just play quarter notes in time and sound good. For these reasons, many bands have centered their entire venture into percussion on this instrument, but you don't have to stop there.

You might consider, for example, the possibility of using two sounds at once to create a nice groove by using the tambourine to strike a cowbell—on quarter notes, or just on the & of 4, or whatever makes it feel right.

Using the rim of the tambourine to strike accents on the cowbell

Tam. C.B. 4 ||: A: | : B: | :||

You could play continuous 16th-note patterns on the tambourine and just strike your accents or downbeats on the cowbell.

Tam. C.B. 4 ||: A: | : B: | :||

Or you could play just the jingles with your fingers for a more delicate, precise, or subtle groove.

Hold tambourine with both hands, play 1 pair of jingles with middle fingers.

4 ||: - :||

You can also mount the tambourine on a stand and play the rim with sticks to get an "aftershock" effect. The jingles will sound just a hair after you strike the rim.

Afuche

An afuche can be a real asset due to its precision and durability. I've had one for almost ten years now, and it's as good as the day I got it. Better, in fact, because the beads have loosened up, making it easier to play. The afuche has been used mainly in funk and jazz to create gravelly sounding grooves. It can also function as a precise sounding shaker. You can play fairly complex phrases with it or use it to provide a nonstop layer of texture. Beware of this toy though. It takes a little woodshedding to get it going. It'll wear you out fast if you haven't developed a good technique for playing it.

You should hold it as loosely as possible and cup the beads in your left hand (assuming you're right-handed), press them against the "sound surface" and twist the handle back and forth with your right hand to move the body of the instrument. You can also hold the afuche steady with your right hand and use your left to move the beads. You can alternate these approaches and save one hand from doing all the work. (Relaxation is important on this instrument, since playing it can be hard on your forearm.)

Insofar as the afuche has the ability to sound precise, you can use it in subtle ways on quiet sections, but when you want to get louder, remember it can also sound sloppy because of the dragging motion of the beads. So you want to be pushing the time a bit or you'll sound like you're dragging. Playing patterns with a lot of space is one of the best ways to utilize this instrument. A fringe benefit: The spaces will allow your muscles to rest.

Slow

4 ||: :| :||

Medium

4 ||: :| :||

Medium

4 ||: :| :||

Fast

4 ||: :| :||

Next time, I'll introduce maracas and shakers, claves, and sleigh bells, along with some comments and technique suggestions for each. Then we'll put them all together and come up with some truly "colorful" percussion patterns.



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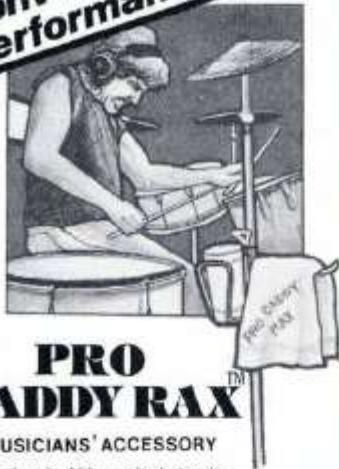
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Pearl continued from page 13

a day job in order to pay my bills, and at night, to work in a bar band that played the music I liked to play or just to put a band together in my spare time that played music I liked. I don't care about being a professional musician necessarily, because there are other things that I can do, and other things that are satisfying to do. Music is something that I would never stop doing.

I'm sure I'll never stop playing drums. But at a certain period in my life it will not be the focus. It'll be a hobby. And in some ways it's a nicer thing to play drums for the joy of it rather than because you're obliged to.

Let's face it: Out of a tour of 150 or 200 shows, not every one of those is going to be exactly where I want to be that night. There have been times where I've been on

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stage thinking, "I'd rather be anywhere in the world than here." And other times when I've been sitting on stage saying, "I'd rather be here than anywhere else." There are extremes. Again, as with any job, some days you like it and some days you hate it. That's another thing people don't understand. They think it's always a wonderful joy, everything is looked after for you, you don't have to worry about a single thing, and it must be wonderful to sit in front of people who love you. It just doesn't work that way. No one's life is perfect. There is no paradise.

I worry about a lot of things. I carry the world on my shoulders sometimes. It's almost like the joke Woody Allen made in *Annie Hall*: "As long as I know there's somebody in the world suffering, I can't be happy." It's true. There's a compassion in that. Sometimes I think about a city like New York. There's an exciting, glamorous aspect to New York and there's a tremendously sordid, horribly brutal, disgustingly inhuman side to it too. And when I go by those buildings I think, "Okay. Here's a building where 500 people live or work. What are their lives like?" They come here every single morning and fight their way through the war of rush hour. They go to that little office and do meaningless things all day. Then they fight their way back home again at night and watch TV, or go to a bar and get drunk. Then they come back the next morning. You have to re-

spond to that. You have to be compassionate about that. You have to say that time, as a moving, circular thing sometimes runs people down and ruins people's lives.

One of the new songs that we've done, "Between The Wheels," says, "The wheels can take you around/ or the wheels can cut you down." There are those two things. A lot of people aren't run down by time, and they aren't pushed by time. They're just in the middle. Everything rolls right by them.

SF: But isn't that their choice?

NP: Well, it'd be nice to think so. If you take a hardline, libertarian mentality about it—yeah. You could say that. But a lot of times it's circumstances, or whatever intangible thing you call it. Fate. There's a thing I'm fond of quoting that's been attributed to Ernest Hemingway, although I've never been able to nail it down, and I've read all his books. "There are no failures of talent, only failures of character." It refutes that statement that "There are a thousand good musicians in the world and you just happened to get lucky" or "There are probably drummers in India who are better than you, but because they're in India, they'll never get anywhere."

With a lot of the great musicians that I know who didn't get anywhere, there's a reason why. Either they can't live with themselves, or no other musician can stand to work with them. It's a flaw of character. It's not the fact that they're not talented.

They're great. They're emotive, they move people and they have everything that great musicians need to have. But nobody can stand to live with them in the way that a professional musician has to live with other musicians. It's a tremendously insular, familial kind of world.

SF: If they realized the character flaw, could they change it?

NP: Do you think that's possible if someone has a little pool of poison in their mind, that causes them to take it out on someone else whenever they're feeling a little insecure?

SF: I think they could do it. It's more difficult for some than for others.

NP: There's always a price to pay, too. I have a little poison pit like that: temper. When I was a teenager, I recognized that I had a bad temper, and set out consciously to control it and keep it back. Consequently, yes, I do that. When I get angry I don't yell at people. I don't freak out. But I pay for that inside. I carry that with me and I get knots of tension through the course of a tour—through the course of any situation where I have to deal with people on a daily basis and there's constant interaction. And it hurts me. It makes me uncomfortable where I don't need to be uncomfortable. It makes me nervous when I don't need to be nervous. But I probably wouldn't have been together with these two guys for nine years if I hadn't learned to control that. You can't just build the

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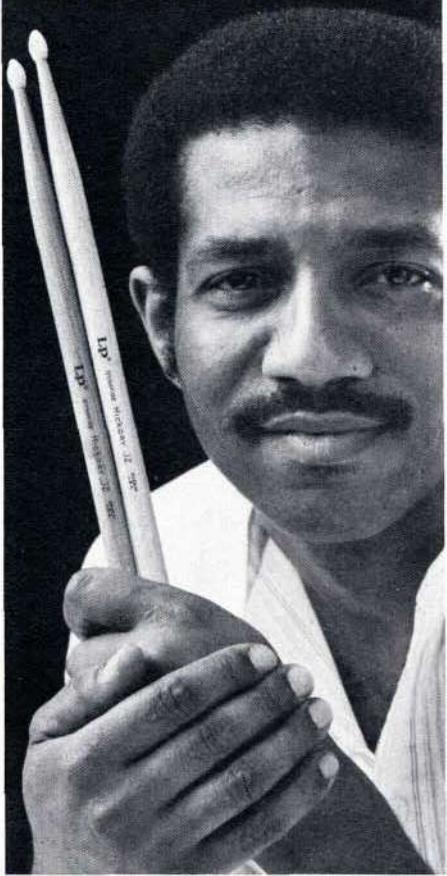
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foundation for the kind of relationship that we have, based upon swearing at each other. You have to base it on respect and you have to maintain that respect. You can never afford to lose control at somebody. You might feel remorse for it and say, "I'm sorry I did that." It doesn't matter. It's always there.

Our band has a very special relationship. I see a lot of other bands at our level, and they literally are never together except when they have to be. They'll even be recording an album and never all be in the studio at the same time. And when they're on the road, they don't travel together. They have different dressing rooms. I couldn't go on in a relationship like that. We have an equal share in everything. We collaborate on the arrangements. If I write something they don't like, they say so. If I can fix it so they'll like it—fine. If I can't, I keep it in my notebook. You have to open yourself up. When I bring a new idea to those guys, it's a very vulnerable thing. I'm a bit tense about it because I'm baring my soul. "Here's something I worked on and believe in. What do you guys think?" If they like it—great. But if they have doubts of any kind, there's a bit of insecurity and vulnerability involved there. It's incumbent upon them—or me in the opposite circumstance—to be very careful about that. You have to say, "There's something about this that doesn't ring true." It's important to be *specific* too. They can say, "I like what you're trying to say here, but a couple of lines are a little bit obscure or could mislead people. A cynical person could read something totally different into it." I have to respond to that and say, "Yeah, that's true," and I go back to the drawing board. There's a give and take that's really critical to us. We're very rare in that respect.

Almost every successful band you can think of has *one* person. That person either writes all the songs, or if that isn't admitted and they say that the songs are written by the whole band, there's one member who really is the original essence of that band. That person gives them their character, direction and originality. That's got to be really hard to live with. That's where all these solo albums, musical differences and euphemisms of modern rock 'n' roll come about—because of that ego conflict of, "I'm not happy to be *just* a guitar player, drummer or whatever. I want to be *the* main one." So the democracy that we've been fortunate enough to have is a real democracy in that sense. Majority does rule, but it's always the majority of interested parties. It's never one person. It's always a congruence of different people's ideas. Then you can say, "No, that's not a good idea," throw it away, and no one's feelings are hurt. Everyone has agreed upon it. Everyone has given something to it, and everybody agrees that it's no good. That's fine. But when one member brings some-

thing in and everybody else is negative about it, that causes tremendous conflicts. In a lot of bands today, the problem is that they all don't have equal abilities or equal input.

SF: And yet in some bands the whole is greater than the parts.

NP: The synergistic idea—that's certainly true of us. The important thing about that, again, is that we are all equal as musicians. We all make the same number of mistakes. We've all grown at the same pace. We've all been very, very concerned about progressing. We all want it to get better and better. Fortunately we all get better at the same pace. I've been in other bands where everybody *wanted* to get better, but half the band was getting better a lot faster than the other half. That causes a tremendous rift. We've all had an equal input in the writing and in the day-to-day business of running the band, and we've all improved at the same rate. But we make enough mistakes to be human—enough that we can be equal and we can all laugh about it. That's important because I get embarrassed when I make a mistake. I hate making mistakes. It's the worst thing. When I make one, I can't laugh about it immediately. At first it's like, "Oh shit." And then I have to try to get myself back into the flow and try not to overconcentrate, because that makes you overcompensate, and that just makes you make four or five *more* mistakes. When we walk on stage, we try to just set the flow. The thing should just flow out of you in a natural sort of way. In the middle of that, if I do something by accident—like a drumstick breaking at the wrong time which puts me in the wrong place—that just makes me uneasy and embarrassed. Then suddenly I do another stupid thing and then another stupid thing. Then it's like, "Get me away from here!" But in the normal course of things, each of us has breakdowns. And it's not hard for any of us to admit it because it's not always the same guy. It's not always me saying, "Oh, I made a stupid mistake again. Sorry guys. Let me play again tomorrow night and I'll try to do better." It's important that none of us feel downgraded by it. That equality is very important.

SF: A lot of your lyrics are said by many to be inspired by Ayn Rand.

NP: Yeah. That's sort of a convenient post to latch on. It's like the science fiction label. I'm not as big an Ayn Rand fan as I'm made out to be. Our album *21/2* happened to be based around, in a coincidental way, the circumstances of one of her stories. I gave due credit to that. I realized that, as our story progressed about the rediscovery of creative music in the future, her story happened to be about the rediscovery of electricity in some totalitarian future. I didn't set out to adapt that story into a musical format. But the story of *21/2* developed, and *then* I realized that it paralleled the circumstances of her story.

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So it's an easy thing for people to fix on. The song "Science Fiction" happened to be set in the future. I happened to have done two or three other pieces that were set in the future. Out of all the pieces we've written and out of the ten albums we've made, perhaps a total of two-and-a-half albums have had to do with the future or anything that could be called science fiction. If people aren't really into your music, but they're forced to write about it, then they pick up on what they can get easily: superficially. It's the whole labeling aspect that any number of musicians of whatever school have complained about.

SF: In Harry Shapiro's book called *A-Z of Rock Drummers*, he eluded to many of your lyrics as being "fascist."

NP: I've never written anything political. I'm an apolitical person really. If I'm interested in anything, I'm interested in the philosophies that bring about those political schools of thought. I don't write about politics. Sometimes I write about philosophy. Ayn Rand, for instance, has been categorized as being a fascist writer. Consequently, if I admit any influence from her . . . John Dos Passos was known as a radical left-wing writer in the '20s. "The Camera Eye" was directly influenced by him. But at the same time, nobody calls me a Communist. I'm influenced by these people because they're great writers, not because of their politics. I am an Individualist. I believe in the greatness of individual

people. That's not anti-populist or anti-human. When the lights come on behind us and I look out at the audience and see all those little circles, each of those circles is a person. Each person is a story. They have circumstances surrounding their lives that can never be repeated. In the song "Entrepreneur," the introduction says, "We are secrets to each other/ Each one's life a novel that no one else has read." That's the essence of it, really. All those people have a whole novel about their lives—the time they were born, how they grew up, what they did and what they wanted to do, their relationships with other people, their romances and marriages—all those things. And they *are* individuals. That's what I respond to. They're not a mob. They're not a crowd. They're not some lower class of degenerates. They're individuals.

I'm always playing for an individual. I don't play for the crowd—for some faceless ideal of commerciality of some lowest common denominator. It's a person up there every night, who knows everything I'm supposed to do. If I don't do it, that person knows it. It's like I have a judge on my shoulder, in the old Anglo-Saxon way, who watches everything I play. If I play it right, my judge says "Not bad." And if I play it wrong, it's "You jerk." That individual is the person I play for every night.

If you play for a crowd, then you pander, basically, to a mentality or a lowest common denominator. You basically say,

"If I play something simple but make it look good, then these people are going to be impressed. We'll shoot off a bunch of pots and wear flashy outfits and all the other stuff." That's fascism, basically. The rest of the world is a mob and you're the only individual. But if you have the values of any decent musician, you could never play for "a mob." Then you don't become a musician. You become some kind of entertainment marketing director. It's not musicianship anymore.

SF: How do you feel about the kids who come to your concerts wasted?

NP: Well, it's sad. I don't know. You can never really understand the reasons for it. I can't say that I could sit with those people and necessarily carry on a conversation. It's a sad thing.

SF: You don't feel that your music contributes to that?

NP: No, I don't think I can take that responsibility. I have the responsibility subsequent to that judge on my shoulder. If I walk off stage thinking that I haven't pleased that objective standard, I feel bad. If I walk off stage feeling that I haven't played very well or didn't really live up to any set of standards, then I feel very badly indeed. On the other hand, regardless of whether the whole audience is wiped out of their minds, if I go on and know that I'm really living up to my own standards and playing to the standards I go on stage with every night, then I feel good about it. I can't judge by the fact that somebody in front of me is really drunk, but thinks it is great. You can't go by that.

SF: When a person listens to your albums or attends your concerts, do you have an ideal that you hope they can walk away with?

NP: Sure. You have the ideal listener. The person I play for every night is *that* person. We make a record for the person who buys it, goes home, puts on headphones, sits there with the lyric sheet, follows along with every word and hears every note that we do, understands what we're trying to do, and understands whether we've achieved it or not. Yes, there is an ideal listener who probably doesn't really exist. But he or she is the person that you aim for. It ties exactly back to the standard we aim for. I think it does have a subliminal effect on people. The fact that we are so well regarded as a live band has to reflect that set of standards. Regardless of whether we're playing in Igor, Indiana, or if we're playing at Radio City Music Hall, the same amount goes into that show every night. I walk on stage with the same mentality and the same urge to really do well. It's a fundamental truth about us, and I think it has to do with the fact that a lot of people consider Rush first and foremost a *live* band. That's wonderful. The essence of a musician is a live performer—a person playing an instrument on stage.

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only one performance. But when you try to duplicate that performance, that can be hundreds and hundreds of times. Some of the songs that we're playing now are five, six, seven, eight and nine years old. You have to bring something fresh to them every year. And you have to play that with true conviction every night. We've dropped songs that were very popular and people expected us to play forever. There comes a day when we have to say, "We have nothing to say with this song anymore. We can't play it with conviction." Otherwise, it becomes like a joke—like we're taking advantage of people or we're pandering to them. We can't do that, so we drop the song. And we take a lot of flak for it. People say, "Well, why didn't they play more *old* songs?" It's because we can't do that honestly. We can't play "Fly By Night" or "Workingman" anymore with any conviction.

There are some songs that do survive. They are challenging enough or self-representative enough that we can say, "Yes, that song still represents how we feel as musicians, as people, and we're still proud arid happy to play that." But there are other things that you grow out of. There are things on our last album that we've grown out of already and we'll never play again. It stands to reason that there are things we did six or seven years ago that are still relevant to us and we still get joy out of playing. Consequently, the audience gets pleasure out of it. So there's both truth and beauty there. And that's the important thing. You can't say, "Well, these people have been listening to this song for eight years and they expect you to play it. You've got to play it." That's a lot of people's mentality. We get that pressure, sometimes, directed right at us. "Why didn't you play that song?" Because we can't *honestly* play it for you anymore. If we played it, it would be a lie. And you don't want us to lie to you. We don't lie to our audience on any level. When we make our records or play in concert, that same set of standards comes to the stage with us. We're not there to play a role.

SF: You've mentioned Keith Moon, Michael Giles and Bill Bruford as influences. Have you ever met any of those people?

NP: No, actually I never met any of my real drumming idols.

SF: If you had the opportunity to sit down and speak with them what would you ask them about? Would you ask about equipment?

NP: Probably not. I might discuss it with somebody I work with on a regular basis, such as the drummer from a band that we tour with. Drummers automatically seem to have some kind of affinity for each other, so we might talk about equipment and technical things, given an already existing personal relationship. But if I met another drummer I respected, we'd probably talk about books, movies, sailing, or

any point of interest that we had in common, because at a certain point, especially when you do become well known, you get tired of it. There was a time when I was happy to sit and talk about drums all day and all night. But you can only say the same thing so many times. When you already have a friendly relationship with someone, you wouldn't talk about the prosaic everydayness of, "Yes, I use a Clear Dot Remo head on my snare." You'd talk about, "Well, how do you think it would affect my snare sound if I used a different type of head?" You'd talk about *theoretical* things, or you'd talk about other things. One of my very best friends is a drummer who's very classically schooled, and also grew up in Africa, so he has that whole different input on things. He can give me a whole different insight, and we'll talk about that in theory. We don't talk about what kind of pedals we use, but we'll say, "Well, I've been trying *this* lately and it didn't really work for me. You try it and see what you think." Equipment will become a fact of everyday life, like dishwashing detergent or car wax.

There was a time, like I said, when I'd always be glad to talk to a drummer anytime. But you can only hear so many times, "Hi, I'm a drummer like you." And from the way people say it, you're supposed to be impressed by that and you're supposed to welcome them into your life—invite them home for supper and all that—just

because they're drummers.

SF: I think statistics have shown that there are three million drummers.

NP: There you go. I'm supposed to have a brotherly affinity with three million people. And that ties in perfectly with the fact that I'm also supposed to have some kind of affinity with the two million people who buy our records.

A lot of people think that the equipment is an integral part of the style, when really the equipment is only an expression. It's not an influence. It doesn't affect the way I play. It's an expression of the way I play. I choose my drums and equipment because of a vision I have inside—because of a goal I'm trying to achieve in expression. It's not what kind of hammers and nails you use; it's the vision you have of the perfect thing you want to build *with* those tools. I can't imagine that carpenters spend much time talking about different hammers and nails, or that doctors talk about scalpels, or auto mechanics talk about different wrenches. That's got to be pretty limited. I have to think that, when auto mechanics get together, they're more interested in the completed car.

That's an essential analogy that really holds water. If I met one of those drummers, we might talk about reggae music. I'm not interested in becoming a reggae drummer by any means, but it happens to be a rhythmic area that I respond to strongly. If I met another drummer who

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said, "I love Bob Marley, Jimmy Cliff and Third World," then we'd have something to talk about right there. We wouldn't talk about what kind of snare stand is the strongest.

I've just come to understand that recently because equipment was always very interesting. I've always had an affinity for drums as a physical thing—the combination of circles and lines; the way drums look; the way they're made. There is something about that that's good. I've always been really interested in hardware. I try to always investigate new things, and I try to be interested in new equipment.

SF: What was your role in the creation of

Tama Artstar drums?

NP: Basically, when we were mixing our live album, we had a lot of spare time. I don't like just sitting around. They had an old set of Hayman drums sitting around the studio. I thought, "I'm going to restore those." I took them all to pieces, cleaned all the crud off and put them back together, got new heads for them and tuned them. Once I had restored them, we recorded a couple of demos and they just sounded so great. They had so much pure tonality. I put the heads on them that I normally use, and I tuned them the way I normally tune. The only difference was that the shells were very thin. I equated that

with violins or guitars. It's the thinness and consistency of the wood that gives the character of the sound, its resonance and the true quality of a classical instrument.

I started thinking about why drums keep getting thicker. Why does it give you status to say, "I have 12-ply drums"? That was just people barking up a tree. It was saying that more is better—that thicker is better. That's wrong. When you have a resonant acoustical instrument, the wood has to resonate. Therefore, the thicker and more dense it is, the less it's going to resonate. So I wanted to get a thinner-shelled drum. I knew Tama didn't make one, so I talked to Neil Graham at The Percussion Center. He's kind of my equipment mentor as far as that goes. I talked to him about my theory that thin drums will sound better. We talked about it a bit and I thought, "Well, I could go to Gretsch or the other traditional companies that still make thinner shells." Neil said, "Well, I'll talk to Tama and see what they'll do." They were cooperative enough to make me a four-ply version of their normal six-ply set, and asked me to keep quiet about it. They did have the quality I was looking for. They were more resonant and their voice was more throaty somehow. "Voice" is the operative word. They had more of a voice; they were more expressive.

I expressed my gratitude to Neil Graham, talked to Ken Hoshino at Tama and said, "These are great—just what I was looking for. You really should consider making them for jazz players. The jazz purists have stuck with Gretsch and the old-style thinner shells for that reason. They want that. They don't want big, thick, heavy, dead-sounding drums." We talked back and forth a bit, and then I heard that they were going to market them as a series of special shells. Ken Hoshino brought me the basic layout of that ad with the picture. The copy hadn't been written. He asked, "What do you think we should put there?" I said, "I've run into problems with that with other companies. I've given them a quote to work from, and they misquote it or twist it around to make it a little more favorable. This time I'll write it myself." I thought I'd try writing an advertisement about why I wanted this kind of drum, why I think they're great and how it all came about. They were glad to have me do it, I guess.

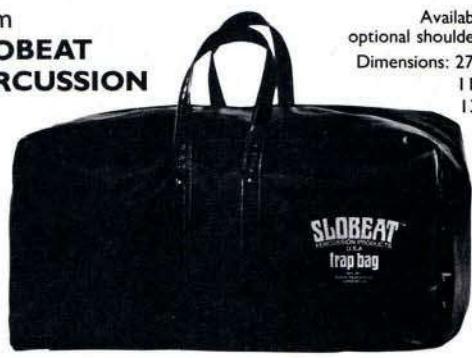
One of the statements I made in that ad copy was about listening to old big band drummers and the old records, where they were basically recorded with only one microphone. That microphone was also picking up the whole rhythm section and probably half of the horns. There is a character to those drums. You can hear when they hit it hard, as opposed to when they hit it quietly. You can hear the energy in there. With modern close miking and noise gating, you lose all that. The difference between me hitting my snare drum quietly



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and whacking it to death in the studio gets minimized. The dynamics get lost and it's frustrating. I hear my drums a certain way. It's the sound I'm trying to get on records. It never seems to be captured by microphones regardless of different techniques we've tried.

On *Moving Pictures*, I had a PZM microphone taped to my chest to try to capture my perspective of the drumset. Yes, it added to it and it helped to apply that special dynamic that I hear. But still, I've never heard my drums recorded the way I hear them.

SF: Did you change the miking techniques in the studio when you used the *Artstar* drums?

NP: No. In the studio we try to cover all angles. We use close miking, but usually there are also several different types of ambient miking. When it comes down to the mixing stage, we'll try different combinations of the close miking and a bit of the different ambiances from all of those other mic's.

SF: Have you ever tried no close miking—just room mic's?

NP: We've done that for special effects. On one of our earlier albums, there was a part that was just drums. We used one microphone about 30 feet away from the drumset. It sounded great, but we couldn't blend it with other instruments. It's so ambient and so big sounding that there was no room for anything else. In that case, it was okay because it was just drums; the other instruments were *incidental* to the drums. But there's just no way, when you create that big of a sound, that you can squeeze other things in there as well and still maintain the integrity of that sound.

It's generally acknowledged that drums are the hardest thing in the world to record. That's almost a cliche by this point, but it's true. It's so hard to get drums to sound like they really sound.

SF: Are there any drummers you've heard on record where you've thought, "I wish my drums could sound like that"?

NP: No. I think that we have achieved as good as what I've ever heard from anybody else. But that doesn't mean that it's the ultimate. On *Moving Pictures* or *Signals*, at its best, the drum sound is as good as I've ever heard anywhere, given the character. If you have a dinky little guitar and keyboards and stuff, and nothing to interfere with the drum sound, then yeah, the drums sound more present. But then it's just a matter of what else you're including them with. See, my drums always sound wonderful on basic tracks. When they're first recorded and there's just bass there and a guide guitar, the drums sound incredible. But as soon as you start putting in a big guitar sound, a big keyboard sound, a big vocal sound and try to make everything work together, which obviously is the most important thing . . . See, the crucial, number one point is not to make

the drums sound good. It's to make *everything* sound good. When it comes to that point, the sound gets lost.

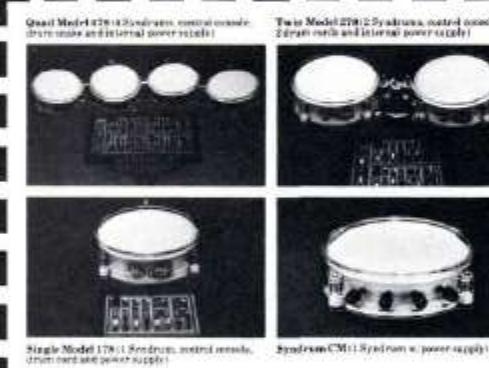
SF: Why?

NP: Because there are so many things fighting for the same space. In modern music, a big guitar sound covers a broad frequency range, from the high end to the very bottom. Consequently, a good guitar sound will mask all of that from the drum sound. It's a bit of a struggle, really. When you hear a band that has a small guitar sound or a narrow keyboard wash over the top of the drums, then yes, the drums can speak through, perhaps closer to their true representation.

SF: Are you still using your Slingerland wood snare with the *Artstar* drums?

NP: Yeah. It's ironic, because it's not even the top-of-the-line Slingerland. It's their second one down. I don't know what it's called. I bought it secondhand for \$60.00. It was the first wooden snare I ever owned. I'd always used metal ones before that and had never been totally satisfied. Then we picked up this wooden snare and it was perfect. It was *the one*. Then I thought, "Well, if this isn't even the top-of-the-line wooden one, I must be able to get something better." So I got the top-of-the-line wooden Slingerland, and I've tried several of the wooden Tama ones. I even have the

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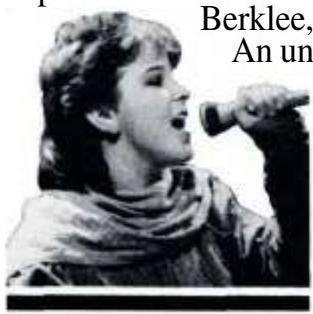
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twin to that \$60.00 snare behind me for the other kit. Everything's identical, but it just doesn't sound the same.

I think somebody who had this snare before me did a modification on the bearing edge of the snare side. Someone filed the bearing edge where the snares go across. It's murder on snare heads because it makes the tension very uneven, but the snare never chokes. I can play it however delicately or however hard, and it will never choke.

SF: Have you ever had Tama try to duplicate that drum?

NP: No. Basically I've just tried what Tama makes. They either sound good loud or they sound good soft. None of them have the versatility that my snare has. I haven't pursued it that much because my snare makes me happy as it is. I'm not looking for something better, really.

SF: Is the inside of the snare *Vibrafibed*?

NP: No. I've never fooled around with it. I was even afraid to get it painted. For a long time it was copper colored. When I had the black drums or even when I had the rosewood Tamas, it didn't matter so much. It looked okay. When I got the red drums, the copper started to look a bit tacky, but I was even afraid to get it painted because disassembling it, painting it, and putting it back together might have affected it.

I think Slingerland probably still makes that snare. I still have one of their top wooden snares too. It's good. I have a Gretsch wooden snare, and it's also a good wooden snare.

Whenever I've had a set of wooden drums, of course, because they're wood, no two drums are exactly the same. Drums number one and number two would be great, but number three would be a little bit dead. With the *Vibrafibing*, I don't lose the tonality or expressiveness of wooden drums, but it evens out these inconsistencies. Consequently, my four closed tom-toms all have the same timbre to them. They have the same effect when I hit them. That's the big advantage. It doesn't really change the sound so much as it makes all the drums sound like they belong in the same drumset.

This summer, I introduced an alternate drumset into my regular drumset. I'm using Simmons drums, but I didn't want to incorporate them into my regular drums. I didn't want to get rid of my traditional closed tom-toms because they *arc* a voice. Those speak in a way that the Simmons do not. While the Simmons have a certain power and a certain dynamic quality that I like, I wasn't willing to sacrifice my acoustic drums. So I hit on the idea of having two complete drumsets. I can turn around and I have a little 18" bass drum back there, another snare drum, another ride cymbal and the Simmons tom-toms. It doesn't interfere with the basic relationship I have with my acoustic drums, but it

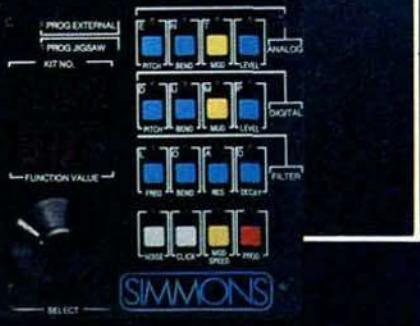
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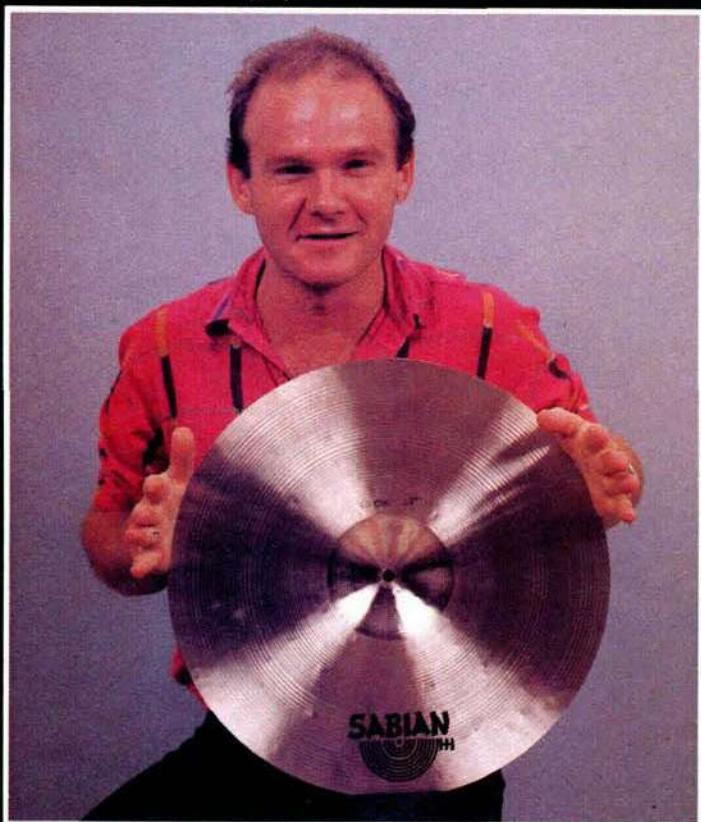
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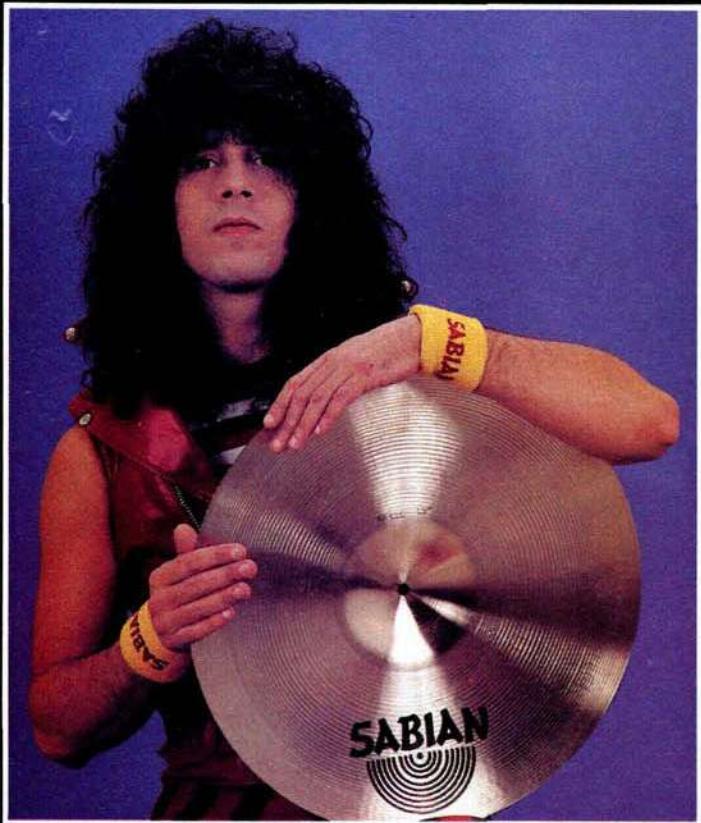


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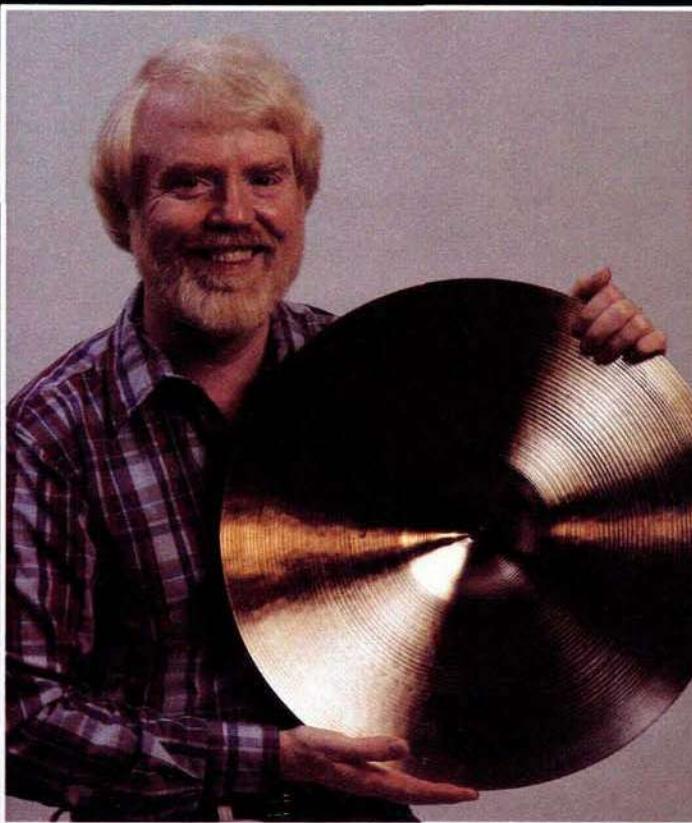
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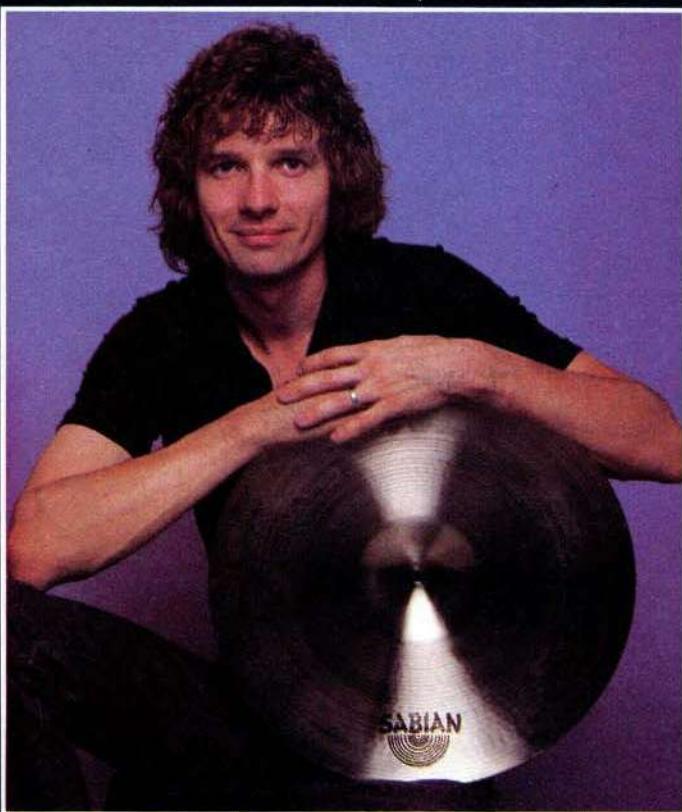


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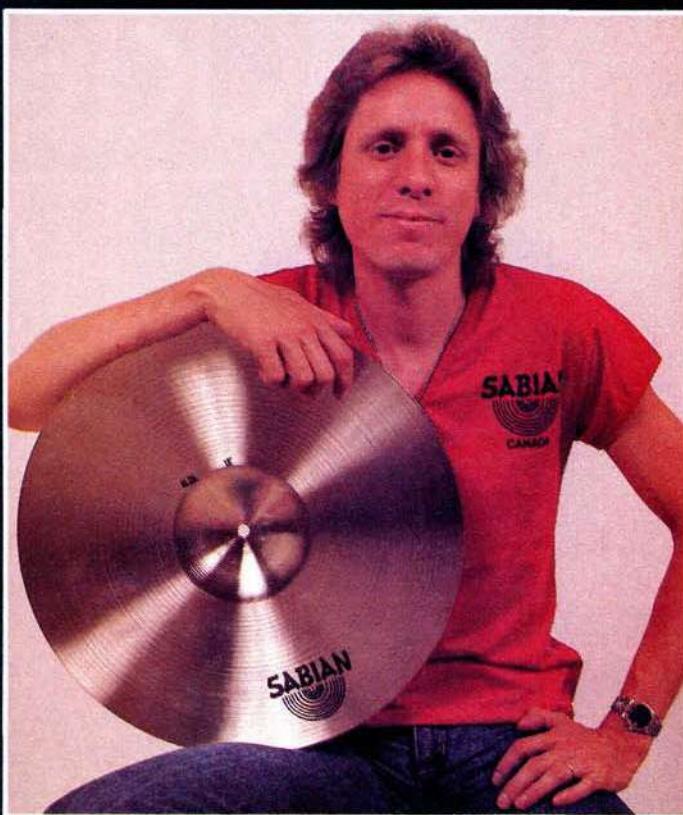
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gives me a new avenue of expression. And I've come to realize the limitations of the Simmons as far as expression is concerned. There are certain things they *can* do and certain things they *can't*. So when I'm playing with that little drumset, I have to play, necessarily, in a different sort of way. I can't play some of the kinds of patterns that I would normally play because they don't work. Those drums will not speak in the same way that I can make a 9 x 13 double-headed tom-tom speak. With the Simmons I can get a roar. I can get a whisper and a roar out of a 9 x 13 tom-tom.

SF: The Simmons won't respond to touch?

NP: They have a sensitivity control. You can turn it down or up. If you hit it light, it will make *the* sound; if you hit it hard, it will make *the* sound. But it's still *that* sound. With a regular tom-tom, the harder I hit it, the more that head is going to stretch, and it's going to detune itself. They have that in the Simmons. They call it "bend." But once you put that "bend" in there, it's in there. With the regular tom-tom, there are subtle gradations of physical input depending on how much I put that stick into the head. I can see the marks on my drumheads sometimes where literally four or five inches of that drumstick are making contact with that head. I'm hitting it so hard and stretching that head so much that the stick *literally* goes right into it. But that was the sound I was after and it's the sound that the Simmons drums try

to imitate. It's that *throaty* quality of tuning the drum high and then hitting it hard so that the head stretches and detunes. You, in effect, get several notes at once. You get the initial high impact and then it descends. That's the essence of the Simmons sound. You can tune that "bend" in and you can tune sensitivity in, but you can't have it all at once. On an acoustic drum you have all of that there. I can play a triplet on an acoustic drum and have three different sounds by altering the attack. If you play a triplet on a Simmons, the three notes will all sound identical.

But for me it's a positive thing. I approach the Simmons knowing that. I can tune them the way I would like them to sound and I can play them with that limitation in mind. So I play a different way, and that's healthy too. I like the idea of having two completely different drumsets, because the reverse drumset is a basic small bass drum and snare drum. I always used 18" bass drums until I joined this band. I've always loved them and the cannon-like punch that they have. An 18" bass drum is a very, very expressive instrument. I've found that, for the greatest range of expression, for me, a 24" bass drum has more voices. It can go literally, again, from a whisper to a roar, and everything in between. An 18" bass drum has one neat sound that I like—a sort of nice, real strong gut punch.

So when I turn around I have a single

bass drum, hi-hat, snare, four Simmons tom-toms and a few cymbals. It's a very simple, basic drumset. What people sometimes fail to realize about a large drumset like I use is that drumming *always* revolves around bass drum, snare drum and hi-hat. And your fills *always* revolve around two tom-toms and your snare. For anything else, you take those patterns and transfer them to some little drums, or translate them to some different voices. It gives you something different out of the same old patterns, or the same rudiments of set drumming. That's basically the reason why I expanded my kit, especially being in a three-piece band. The more voices I have, the better. By the same token, I always understood the fact that all my drumming does revolve around a very small set of drums. Being able to have that little, concise set of drums behind me has proved invaluable, even in rehearsals. If we're going over a song again and again and again, instead of getting tired of it and just cranking it out, I can turn around and play the other set. It changes the whole thing and makes it fresh again. It's been a revitalizing thing for me. It's something that I think I will pursue further.

SF: What have you been using headphones on stage for?

NP: The headphones are basically for when we use programmed sequencers or the synthesizers that are driven by arpeggiators. They're basically triggered by a drum machine with a click-track pulse. Then the arpeggiator picks that up. The song on *Signals* called "The Weapon" is based around an arpeggiator. Ironically, usually drummers are used to a band that follows them. If I tend to feel that something should be pulled back a bit or anticipated a bit, the band follows me. When you use something that's as mathematical as a sequencer or an arpeggiator, there's no way those machines are going to follow you. You have to follow them. I can use the headphones to give me that trigger with a sequencer in "Vital Signs" and with an arpeggiator in "The Weapon." I have to hear that and follow it, basically. I have to swallow my pride and be a little subservient to the machine.

Playing with headphones is not the same as playing without them. I have to use my imagination. The essence of having an imagination is that sometimes I've recorded a song all by myself, such as "YYZ" from our *Moving Pictures* album. When we did the basic track, it was just me. I went in there and played the drum track. The other guys' parts were very difficult. We figured it would make more sense if I recorded my track and then gave them a chance to work on their parts without the pressure of all of us having to do it at the same time. I had to have enough imagination to hear the song in my head and respond to all those dynamics and nuances.

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sound like drums. Period. That's certainly a fact. But the essence of it is that I know what my drums sound like, and I know that if I play a certain pattern it has such and such an effect on people—a certain excitement, drama or whatever. And when I have the headphones on, yes, I have to use my imagination. It is, in a sense, a limitation, that in order to be able to follow those things effectively, I have to be able to hear them well. And the most sensible way to do that is through headphones. I just decided that it's not going to make me play worse. It's just going to make me have to work harder, because when I have those headphones on, I'm going to have to think about what my playing *really* sounds like. I can't be lazy and just hear it. I have to think about it and imagine it. It is a hard thing. But at the same time, it became a whole series of progressions that we had to make, so as not to add another musician.

SF: I was going to ask if you'd ever considered adding more musicians.

NP: Certainly we have, as a band that wants to keep improving and changing our sound. But the interpersonal chemistry among us happens to be such that we didn't want to tamper with that. We didn't want to take a chance on adding another person because we get along well. We have a good balance of responsibilities. Also, we basically like being a trio. I think that our audience likes us being a trio and they're proud of—as we are proud of—how much music we can create and how different we can sound being just three guys. That's something that we have to live with. We're going to have to make certain allowances for that; we're going to have to use sequencers and all kinds of interphased keyboards. We're going to have to have Alex and Geddy rooted to certain things at certain times for them to be able to cover all those bases. And anything I can do to help that along is just icing. It's the least I can do.

An example is when I added tuned percussion to my drumset. I'm by no means a classical percussionist. I can't say that I have any kind of understanding of tuned percussion. But I can learn a part and play it. It adds something to the overall texture of the band. It's been the same thing in the last few years with electronics. It would be easy for me to say, "Oh well, I don't work with headphones on." That contradicts the whole purpose of what we are as a band. I can't take that kind of a hard line. I've said before, too, that I don't like the idea of electronics as in electronic drums. I was a bit of a purist, in a sense, saying that I like acoustic drums. But I found a way to incorporate that without compromising acoustic drums. I didn't have to throw them away or replace them. It's a balance.

It's like the old extreme of musicians wanting to be technical or emotional—saying that *only* feel is important or *only* technique is important. Well, hell, they're *both*

important. Not only that, but they're both good. I want to be technical, but I also want to be really instinctive and emotional. I want to play things that are exciting and I also want to play things that are difficult. I get a buzz and a satisfaction out of both of those.

Acoustic drums are my first love. My first relationship with things is to hit them with a stick. That still remains true. And everything that I've said about electronics in the past is still true. They *don't* replace acoustic drums. They can never hope to do so any more than an electric piano will replace an acoustic piano. Any person with a halfway open mind realizes that fact. But at the same time, it doesn't mean that it has to be one or the other. That's a mistake I fell into for a while, figuring that you had to be either going towards electronics or be a purist and stay with acoustics. Now I've found a way to have both, where I can move forward into electronics, but not have to sacrifice anything that I think is important.

That's an essential truth that people tend to wander to extremes about. A lot of people have written to me saying, "It's great that you don't want to have electronics. I'm the same way." And I'm still true to that just as I'm still true to the other thing about how headphones are a limitation. They do change your perception of what you play. It's the same thing that you have to do in the studio. Anybody who's

been in the studio knows that you have to wear headphones. And that's difficult. I have to imagine a lot in the studio because I don't hear my cymbals right. I don't hear my snare drum right. I don't hear the inter-kit dynamics among snare, bass drum, tom-toms, and cymbals. Acoustically, all those things have an interrelation that's really subtle. I can move from my snare to a certain tom-tom, and I'll know that they have a certain relation to each other. I know what I can do. But, for instance, I know that I *can't* go from my snare to my 8x12 tom and come back again. I know that acoustically it doesn't work. But I know that I can go to my 9x13 tom and come back to my snare, and that works. It's just a matter of the subtle inter-dynamics of the way I tune things and the characteristics of a particular drum of any given size. It has a certain voice about it and a certain characteristic to it. I've come to know all those things from a long familiarity—night after night of hearing what they can and will do.

The drum solo is my fundamental source of research and development as far as which voices will work together. None of that has changed. I still hold to all those principles, but at the same time, I've found a way to use headphones as a tool as I've been able to use electronic drums as a tool—without negating anything else.

SF: Gary Chester wanted me to ask you if you play flat-footed on your bass drum



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pedals or with heels up?

NP: I play with heels up all the time. I have a lot of equipment and I like it all under me. I don't like things too far away. Consequently, my bass drums are very close to me. Even drummers who are smaller in stature than I am find it very uncomfortable to have things closed in that much. But I like to be able to have as much leverage as I need on any given drum. I like to be able to put my weight in the right place so that I can put whatever degree of force I want on either my left or right side, regardless. I want all my leverage there and it's important to have everything in close. My bass drum pedal is practically right under my knee. I've noticed that drummers who sit further back with their legs more extended tend to play flat-footed.

I use my ankle a lot. It's not a question of playing from the thigh, although a lot of my pivoting comes from the hip. But anything fast has to come from my ankle. The same with my wrists. I play a lot with my arms, but when it comes to playing anything subtle or really quick, my wrists, my fingers or some smaller muscles definitely have to do that. Long muscles can only take care of so much. So basically I play with my toes, but I use my ankles. Whereas with a lot of drummers who play tiptoe, a lot of their pivoting comes from the hip. I use my ankle for pivoting as well.

My two bass drums are tuned the same. But my legs aren't the same because of the

long muscles which are the easiest to get in shape and, for me, the first to go out of shape. Towards the end of a tour, I start to lose the tone of my long leg muscles. My arms and my wrists just continue to get better and it becomes easier for me to play throughout a tour. The long muscles are the easiest to get back into shape when I start, but there's something very touchy about them. For instance, when we used to open shows I had a lot of problems with my foot because we'd only be playing 40 minutes a night. There'd be no warm-up or soundcheck. The extent of my playing every day was only 40 minutes, which wasn't enough for those muscles. I used to have a lot of problems with my feet and my leg muscles stiffening up and developing a kind of paralysis and a feeling that they were working against me. I've spoken to other drummers in the same circumstance who would ask me, "Are you familiar with this problem?" Or I'd ask them if they'd noticed it as a phenomenon. It's definitely true that if you're not playing enough every day, those muscles suffer the most. That's the reason why my two bass drums tend to sound different. My right leg gets a lot more exercise than my left one does.

Whether or not someone else should play either on the toes or flat-footed depends on the individual. I can't believe that some people have two feet of distance between them and their snare drum, and then another foot over to their bass drum. It's

so far away. I suppose you can get just as much power from your bass drum if it's that distance from you. The same with your snare drum. You'd probably have to use your arms a lot more. But it probably does average out that you're getting as much impact into it. It's got to be a very individual thing. I feel better if things are in close to me. I have a lot of drums and cymbals and I want them where they're usable. A good part of my drumkit is underneath me. I have pretty long arms so a lot of it can fall within the scope of being right under my center of gravity. It's important for me to feel like I'm on top of the kit. Some people play behind their drums in a physical sense. Their kit is in front of them. I know lots of very good drummers who play that way. I don't think there's a qualitative difference there. It's just probably a matter of what you're comfortable with or used to.

SF: Your song "Losing It" seemed to be about Ernest Hemingway.

NP: Good. Yeah. Not a lot of people have caught that.

SF: I also wonder if that is a fear you have for yourself sometime in the future.

NP: Of course. But fortunately for me, as we covered before, I have another set of goals. When I start to feel as though I'm not improving any more as a drummer—not even getting worse, just not improving—I have another thing that I can go to work at and improve on. The two avenues that were explored in the song were, with the dancer, physical deterioration, and with the writer, mental deterioration. Actually, my original plan for that song was to carry it a little further into the area of musicians. I wanted to cover the idea of someone like Bob Marley, for instance, who loses it through a disease—an internal thing that you have no control over. Or in the case of Keith Moon, in a self-destructive sense, where someone loses it, but they don't really lose it. They throw it away. It's a bit too much to accomplish all in one song, but the concept I'd envisioned was all the different ways there are to lose something special. The essence was whether it was worth losing something great or whether it was worse never to have known it.

There's a pathos I feel with people who have an unrealized dream of any kind. When you talk to an older person who says, "Well, I always wanted to be such and such, but I never really gave it a shot," that's sad. But to me it's not nearly as sad as someone who was great at something and who has to watch it fade.

SF: Did Hemingway, towards the end of his life, feel like he couldn't write anymore?

NP: It was really a sad case with him. He was trying to respond to an invitation from President Kennedy, I think, just before he died. He slaved for days just trying to write a little paragraph. The physical part of his

Pictured: Tommy Snyder from "Godiego"

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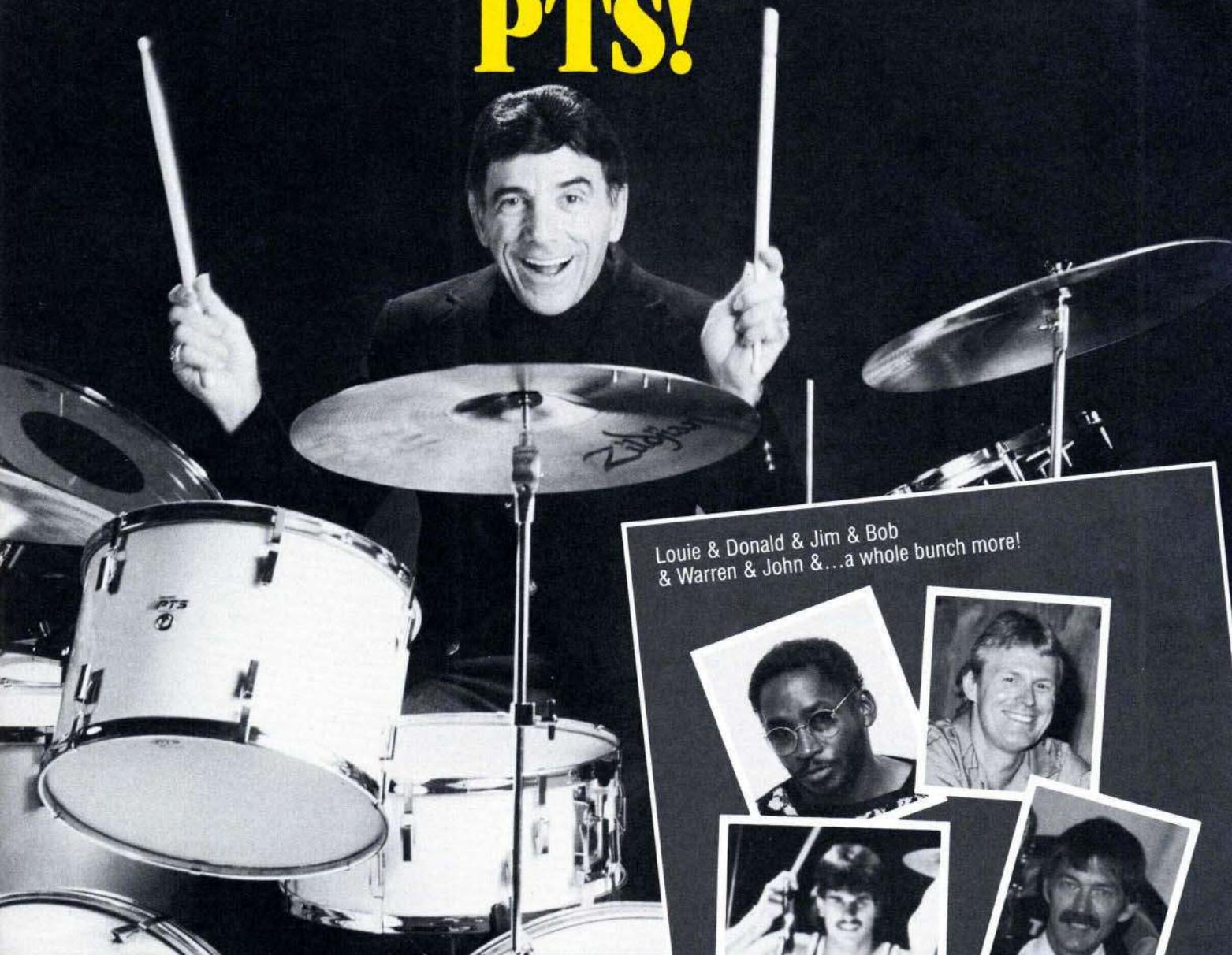
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deterioration was tragic too, because he was a very vital person. I can relate to that strongly, because I've also lived life in a very physical sense. I love physical expressions of things. And when you've depended on your brain as an instrument, and all of a sudden it doesn't respond to you ... I read a biography of John Steinbeck recently. It was the same thing. He realized that he had lost it. He knew that he couldn't do it anymore and it was a source of tremendous sadness to him and frustration. And he never stopped trying, either. That's even more sad, somehow—to see somebody trying to do something that they know they can't do.

SF: Was the dancer in "Losing It" about anyone in particular?

NP: Not specifically. It drew a bit from that film with Shirley MacLaine called *The Turning Point*. It was about two ballet dancers. One of them had continued on and was getting to be a bit of a has-been. The other one had given it up to get married and raise a family. I was a bit inspired from that, but it was also about the physical side of doing things as an athlete. There's a sadness to that.

Geddy's a great baseball fan. He's told me about batters, for instance, who have been beaned a couple of times, and all of a sudden, lose their nerve. You have to respond to that kind of tragedy compassionately. It's a horrible thing. You spend all your life learning how to do a thing and

then because of something beyond your control, all of a sudden you can't do it anymore. It's very sad. There's an essential dynamic to life that you have a prime, and you have something leading up to that prime. Unfortunately, you also have to have something leading down from it.

SF: How do you feel about MTV and the effect it has on kids?

NP: It's really neat that MTV has become another avenue of exposure for some bands. It's been proven by a few different bands who wouldn't have gotten exposure on the radio, but their videos were interesting. MTV has the same flaws that radio has in terms of being too programmed and too easy to try to find a formula for. Music is enough all by itself. Anyone who loves music knows that already. When you listen to something, you see pictures and it puts images in your mind, regardless of whether it's abstract designs or good images that good music and lyrics make you see. They make you visualize a whole cinematic thing. We have written in the past from a cinematic point of view. We have a theme in the lyrics, or sometimes even before the lyrics, we have something that we want to create. We work at it cinematically in that we create a whole background and then we put the center focus of action, or the character, in the middle of it. We work at it just like a movie.

There's no way that music means anything else. It doesn't really need a lyric

sheet and it certainly doesn't need a video to express it. It's two media mixing together, just like you could put poetry into a play, or you could put a novel into a song. But it doesn't take away from either of those. Nothing's going to take the place of a good book. Nothing's going to take the place of a good record. Nothing's going to take the place of a good movie. They are each separate unto themselves. I don't have a strong relation to video or film as a medium. I don't get any satisfaction out of making a video. I get a lot more satisfaction out of writing and recording, or playing a concert.

Another thing I find frustrating as a musician and a music fan is that I really like to see people playing their instruments. If you can't get to see them live, but you see them in the *old* context of seeing a band on TV—seeing a band come on and play their song, or *pretend* to play their song at least—they have their instruments there and you can see how they look when they play. It gives you a whole new insight into the nature of that band. In a lot of modern videos, it becomes too obvious just to take a picture of the bands playing their songs.

When we've done interpretative videos where we take something *beyond* just us playing the song, we still maintain a balance of us playing the song. We'll film ourselves playing the song and then we might add some other images. The ones we did for *Signals* were "Countdown" and "Subdivisions." For "Countdown" the choices were obvious. We were there. We had friends at NASA and had access to these NASA films. Of course we're going to use those. "Subdivisions" reflects each of our upbringings. All of us were brought up in the suburbs. It reflects each of us as being a misfit and not quite fitting into the fabric of a high school society. And we wanted to express that. But at the same time, both of those show us playing the song. We'll cut away to something like in "Subdivisions" where we had a kid representing the misfit, and we showed his life, his parents and his school. That was the thrust of writing that song. That's important. But it's not so important that it should override our playing the song. It sometimes seems too facile to break things down to basics, but for me, you have to. You have to come down to the basic fact of, "What is it to be a musician?" It is to play your instrument. Therefore, when you're playing it on a stage in front of people, that is the essential reality of being a musician.

Humphrey Bogart said that the only thing he owed the public was a good performance. You can add all kinds of caveats and possible exceptions to that—which we do respond to—but fundamentally, we are there to make the best records we can make and to play the best concerts we can play. We don't always do that. But if we *can* do that, or at least even *try* to do that, that's our responsibility.

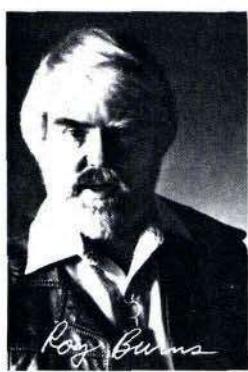
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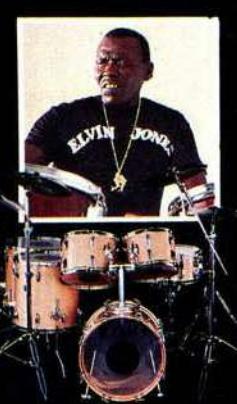
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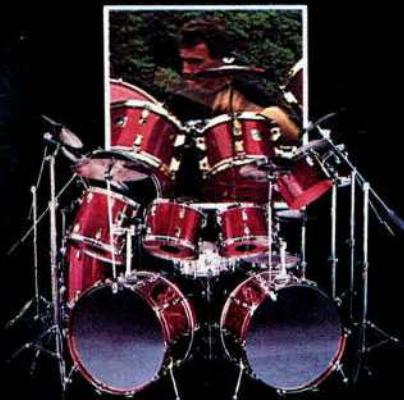
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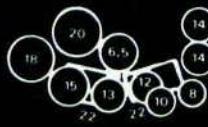
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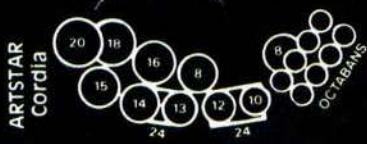
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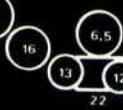
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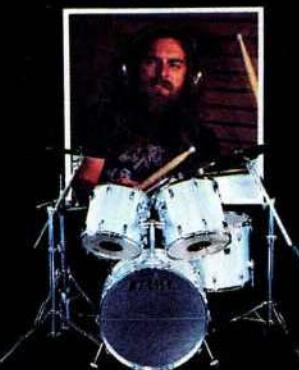
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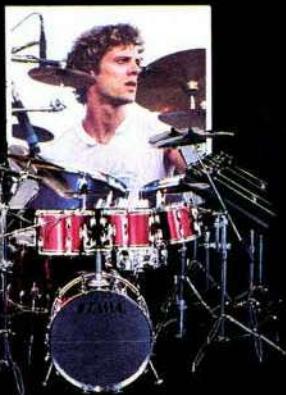
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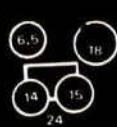
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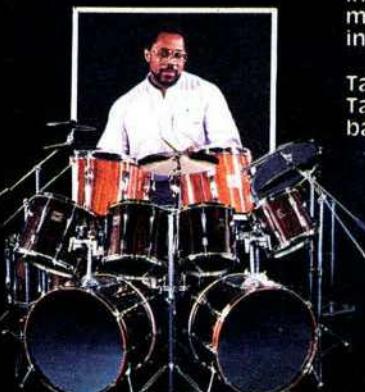
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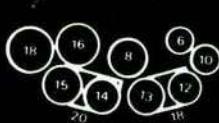
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by James E. Murphy

Buying Drums On Credit

When the time comes to buy new equipment the drummer often faces a much larger goal than any other musician. Even the most basic of drumsets will run upwards of \$1,000.00 by the time all the extras are added in (i.e., cymbals, cases or covers, and hardware). Unless you have a substantial amount of cash saved from past drumming jobs or a steady gig now that pays well, you will have to face the fact that a loan or credit will be necessary in order to make your new equipment purchases.

When you consider taking out a loan, you must base your decision on several variables. 1. Will you be able to pay it off? Is your job steady and secure enough to warrant a loan? 2. Will the payments be too high? Even with a good job, a high monthly installment will make it hard on you and your budget. 3. Do you have adequate credit established to get a loan? Many banks and loan institutions won't

grant a loan without prior established credit. If you've never borrowed before, you have no established credit, so until someone grants you a loan, credit card or open account, you won't have any credit record. Someone has to have enough faith in you to trust you with a loan. 4. Do you have a certain percentage in cash to put down against the total amount you need? Most banks, savings & loans or finance companies will require you to put up a certain amount of your own money.

After all these details are thought out and dealt with, you must decide *where* to obtain your loan. The lending institution you choose should be a reputable, established business that you can count on to be around for a while. Places charging super-high interest rates, operating out of store fronts, having flexible hours, sketchy loan contracts or an unfamiliar name should be avoided. Check with the Better Business Bureau or the Chamber of Commerce if in

doubt. Most responsible banks and loan companies will display their credentials, explain their loan contracts and policies, and answer any questions clearly. If you have any doubts, take someone with you who is familiar with loan procedures and able to understand loan contracts.

Banks and Savings & Loan Companies

If you have an established account or good credit rating, a bank or S&L is the place to go. If you are a minor or have no prior established credit, it is likely that you will need a co-signer (someone over 21 who will assume financial responsibility should you not be able to make payment for some reason) and at any age you will probably need some type of collateral (something of value to put up against the loan).

Banks and S&L's tend to offer lower interest rates and monthly payments than other lending institutions, and are usually more understanding if you have trouble making a payment. They may, however, require more money down or more collateral. If you already have a savings, checking or similar account at a given bank or S&L, it may be easier to get the loan there, or you may be able to put part of the balance of one of these accounts against the loan total. At any rate, a bank or savings & loan should be your first choice for a loan.

Finance Companies

Your next choice will probably be a finance company. All the items discussed under Banks and Savings & Loans apply. There are, however, a few important differences. Your interest rates and payments will be higher and the amount of collateral will be higher too. Also, *some* finance companies have a nasty history of hidden clauses and repossession. Not all are this way, so check them out as you would any loan establishment.

Music Stores

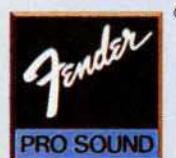
Music stores often carry their own accounts, but most of these are through a finance company or collection agency. If the music store does, however, have its own account and time payment system, you may want to check on this. Policies will vary from store to store so get as much information as possible. One distinct advan-

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tage of going through music stores is that they may be more understanding and sympathetic to your musical needs. They will also be more willing to let you buy on credit if you are a regular customer whose bills are paid. If the store owner knows you play regularly for money and have a steady paying job, the owner may trust you more than a bank or finance institution would.

Pawnshops and Private Sources

These are both possibilities, but may be "high-risk" sources for a loan. A pawnshop will ask you to put something up for security against the loan (put something in "hock"). This is quite different from putting up collateral. You will be given a pawn ticket and the amount of money agreed upon between you and the pawnbroker in exchange for whatever you put up. Rings, watches, jewelry, T.V.s and cameras are all popular items. The shop will keep whatever you put up until you return with the ticket and the amount loaned, usually plus interest. Most shops have a limit on how long you can keep an item in hock. After this time limit expires, they are allowed to sell the item to anyone. Unless you need equipment badly or your other loan sources have been completely exhausted, I would shy away from pawnshops or brokers.

As for borrowing from private individuals or friends, the choice is up to you, but I have seen many friendships go down the tubes over money. Don't risk friendship or reputation for the sake of a \$1,000.00 loan. A friend can often be your worst enemy when you meet in court to settle over money. If you have a very close family member who has enough faith in you and your musical career to help you out with some new equipment, you may want to consider this option. If you do borrow from friends or relatives, treat them as you would anyone to whom you owed a debt, by paying them regularly and on time.

No matter where you borrow the money, or from whom, there are several basic facts you should know about contracts and clauses. Any loan contract or agreement should be read carefully before

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you sign. Anyone who seems pushy or wants to rush you into signing is probably trying to hide something. Ask to be given time to read your contract or take a copy home to go over. Any item that seems sketchy or incomplete should be questioned or clarified. If the loan agent denies you time to read a contract or won't clarify items, take your business elsewhere. Anyone who's in a legitimate loan business will make every effort to make your agreement clear *before* you sign on the dotted line. Don't be caught up in the excitement of buying new drums and forget to thoroughly read your loan contract.

That Sticky Clause

Recently many loan companies and some banks have been offering lower interest rates to borrowers, but they have what is called a default clause. Basically what a default clause does is state what action can be taken by your lender should you be unable to make a payment on time. Some may simply invoke a small penalty of a certain percentage over the original payment. Some may let you just pay the interest due on the payment and add the missed payment on at the end of the loan term. Others may invoke harsh penalties or state in the clause that they have the right to repossess after any payment is late or missed. They may also demand payment in full of the remaining balance. This clause is mainly

included in larger loans such as cars, houses, or real estate, but may also be included in some small loans. The default clause may result in a loan company listing you as a bad credit risk on its records, which are often held in a central computer that many other people and institutions could have access to. These include banks, employers, landlords and real estate agents, utility companies, unions and even police—basically anyone who is authorized to run a check on you.

Remember, financial institutions and banks are going to do everything they can to ensure that they get their money. After all, that's why they're in business. And you should do everything you can to ensure that they do get their money. This is how good credit gets started! You must also remember that these institutions often stereotype musicians as being unreliable or irresponsible. You will have to work hard to prove you are an employed individual who is dependable and a good credit risk. Make payments on time or early, give references as to your reputation and work record, and do your best to handle debts maturely and with common sense. If you handle your loan well and work with your creditors, it will make it much easier to get money the next time you need it. And above all enjoy your new drums!



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ROCK CHARTS



Transcribed by James Morton

"In A Big Country"

This month's *Rock Charts* features Big Country, the British group who recently hit the charts with their debut album, *The Crossing*. "In A Big Country," featured here, is a prime example of drummer Mark Brezicki's pleasantly surprising blend of new wave and funk (note the syncopated hi-hat punches one measure before letter A). There was some overdubbing of drums on this cut (for instance, a tom fill on the eighth measure of section A), but the basic drum track is presented here.

Open H.H. H.H. w/stick
H.H. choked w/foot

Crash T.T. S.D. F.T. B.D. H.H.
closed w/foot

A

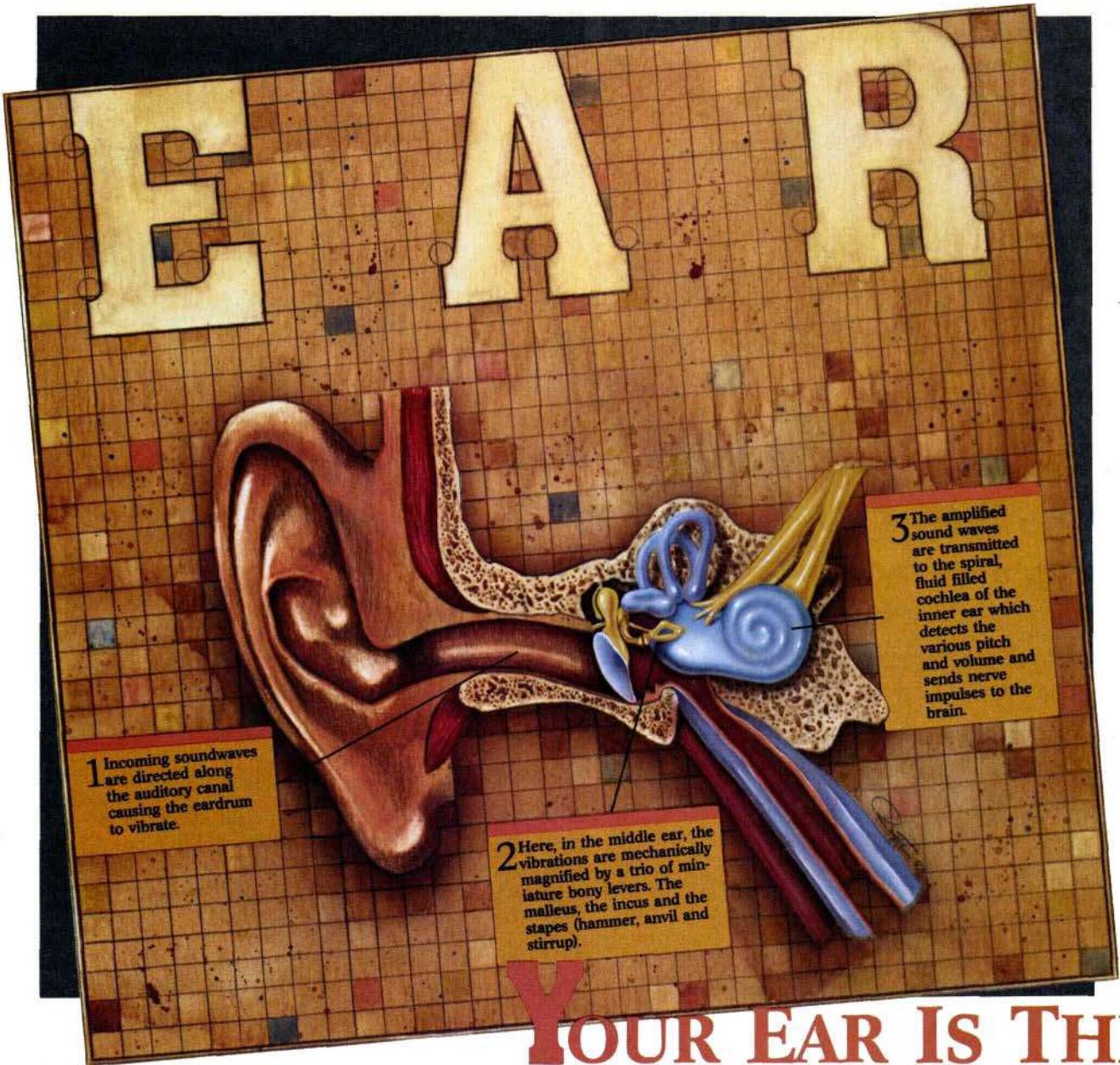
4 6 8 9

B

This image shows eight staves of rhythmic patterns for a snare drum. Each staff consists of five horizontal lines representing the drum's surface.
 - Staff A: Features a continuous pattern of sixteenth-note strokes (x) and eighth-note strokes (o).
 - Staff B: Similar to A, with a slight variation in the eighth-note stroke placement.
 - Staff C: Labeled 'C' at the beginning, it features a similar pattern to A and B.
 - Staff D: Labeled 'D' at the end, it includes a measure with vertical strokes (|) and a measure with sixteenth-note strokes (x).
 - Staff E: Features a pattern of sixteenth-note strokes (x) and eighth-note strokes (o).
 - Staff F: Similar to E, with a slight variation in the eighth-note stroke placement.
 - Staff G: Features a pattern of sixteenth-note strokes (x) and eighth-note strokes (o).
 - Staff H: Similar to G, with a slight variation in the eighth-note stroke placement.

continued on next page

Sheet music for a single melodic line, likely a flute or piccolo part. The music is organized into eight staves, each consisting of five horizontal lines. The notes are represented by various symbols: solid black dots, open circles, and open squares. Some notes have small diagonal strokes through them. Above the notes, there are several types of markings: upward-pointing arrows (>), downward-pointing arrows (<), and small circles (o). The first two staves begin with a solid black dot followed by a series of open circles and open squares. The third staff starts with an open circle. The fourth staff begins with a solid black dot. The fifth staff starts with an open square. The sixth staff begins with an open circle. The seventh staff starts with a solid black dot. The eighth staff begins with an open square. The music concludes with a repeat sign and the instruction "Repeat 3 times and fade".



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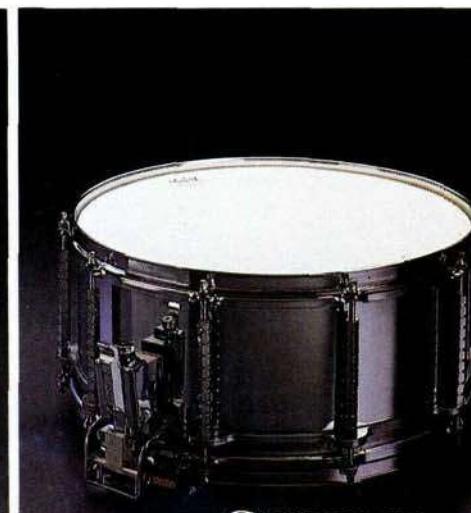
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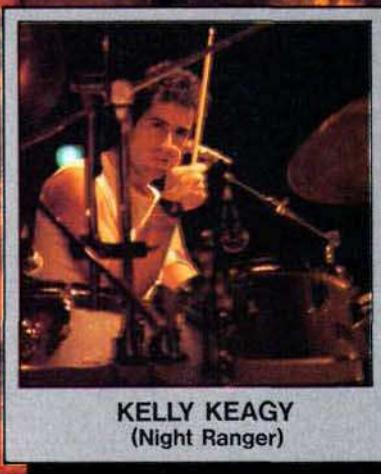
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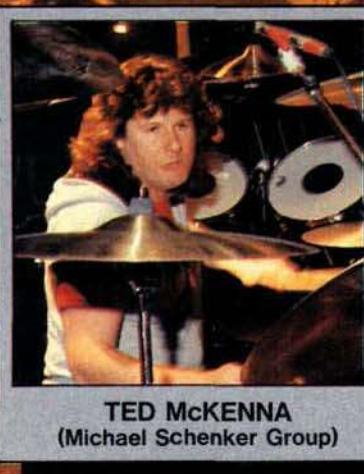
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Cooper continued from page 17

that's just one pair of cymbals. You see these drummers with so many cymbals, but basically all they do is hit them at the start of each bar. I think drummers pay too much attention to drums and not enough to cymbals anymore. I love the sound of cymbals and I love playing them. I think they are an integral part of the sound, feel and everything you do on a drumkit. Stewart Copeland is somebody who hasn't forgotten his hi-hats. He amazes me. Sometimes I don't even listen to what he's doing on the drums; I listen to what he does on the hi-hat. There are a bunch of rhythmic patterns going on there that are complementary to the music and totally different from the drumkit. That's a great sign and I appreciate that in his playing. Buddy Rich is a wonderful cymbal player. I've seen him hit three consecutive crashes, each one slightly different, in order to match up with a trumpet line that was being played in the band. That's a very subtle thing. We're not talking about just bashing on a cymbal. We're talking about three totally different styles of hitting the cymbal in order to achieve three different sounds out of one cymbal in the space of three beats, and that's really something. One of my greatest joys is listening to Tony Williams. His drums are phenomenal, but he's another great example of someone who can really use a set of cymbals; the sounds he gets out of his cymbals and his playing are phenomenal. Especially in contemporary music, though, there isn't much attention placed on cymbals anymore. Everyone is going for that huge drum sound, and if there's a crash at the end of the bar or the start of the chorus, they're content with that.

RF: How many cymbals do you use live?

RC: Not all that many. I'm using a pair of 14" hi-hats, a 22" heavy ride, two 16" medium crashes, an 18" crash ride, and one 22" 2002 China—turned upside down of course! I also have a little antique Chinese cymbal, upside down, that I got out of an old antique shop years ago. Occasionally I find a little space that needs a little chimey sound, like a ship's bell. I also have a Mark Tree.

RF: There are some visual effects going on during the live show. There was a point where I wondered if you could even see through the smoke.

RC: The answer to that question is no, I can't see a lot of the time. How can I when we're covered with smoke? We have a big laser setup that fires laser beams directly out on either side of me. I could end up getting a 100-mile-an-hour haircut if I walk the wrong way off stage through a laser beam. It's kind of great, though. That's one of the magical things about performing, for me. There are moments when I look up from the drums and there's smoke billowing out across the stage, laser beams firing out over the audience's heads, and I'm wailing away on some number. That's pretty exciting stuff for me. Hopefully the audience feels the same way, so I don't mind that at all. When we get small errors in the production, which happens from time to time, we never know what to expect and that's half the fun of it. I would hate to be in any musical situation where it was like clockwork every night. That would be boring. An important thing for me in music is fun.

RF: Let's talk practicalities. How does one survive on a six-month tour physically, emotionally and musically?

RC: Physically, you survive a six-month tour by being moderate with everything you do in terms of health. You try to eat as well as you can and you don't stay up too late. From a drummer's point of view, I think it's very important not to overdo it in the party department. I have a few late nights, but on the whole, I try to get the rest that I need. I play tennis almost every day, which wakes me up in the morning. It makes me feel terrible after I've finished, but at least it keeps me in condition. Also, drumming itself keeps you in condition, if you're up there every night playing, sweating and working, which everyone does.

We have a ridiculous live schedule. It's a lot for a group that most people consider a recording band. We've been touring pretty solid for three-and-a-half years. On this tour we've already been to China, Japan, Thailand, the Philippines, Canada, and all over America. We'll go home for a couple weeks, maybe record an album and then they're talking about having us tour Europe and Australia almost straight away. It's good. I enjoy working hard and being on the road as long as I get enough breaks.

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It's not really the playing that makes me tired. The playing is the icing on the cake. Performing is what it's all about. It's the part I enjoy the most out of every day and it's the whole reason for my being here. I think the really exhausting part of touring is just being on the road. It's long hours and lots of travel, getting on a plane, getting out at the other end, getting on a bus, going somewhere, getting out, rushing around into a hotel room, having a quick shower, getting down to the gig, having something to eat and then walking out on stage. And then as soon as you walk off stage, you get back into the limo and you go back to the hotel. The next day you're in a totally different town and doing it all again. You do that nearly every day for six months. I think more than anything it's actually the travel that tires you out. The playing is the fun part.

Plus, when you're on the road, you get into this incredible routine. You know you'll be performing at a certain time every night, you know you'll be traveling from the early hours of the morning until late afternoon, and you know you're going to have dinner at 6:30. The same kind of routine goes on every day. It's hilarious when you stop touring because you go home and wake up at 6:00 in the morning for three weeks, not knowing why, and you start getting hungry at exactly 6:30 every day. It takes weeks to break that cycle.

RF: How do you survive emotionally, not having the time alone and not being able to be with your loved ones?

RC: You have very expensive phone bills, first of all. When you're part of a successful group, you always get intense adulation from a lot of people, which is very nice. I'm not sure sometimes whether it's for the right or wrong reasons, but it's only love and adulation from a distance. It's not firsthand and it doesn't help you solve your emotional problems. It just means that a lot of people supposedly like you, which, like I said, is not harmful or anything, but sometimes it does get a bit confusing. You do wonder at times why you might get lonely or frustrated, behave strangely or get intensely bored very quickly. You tend to get extreme versions of what your normal reactions are when you're on the road because you are missing a lot of personal contact. You only get this long-distance contact with an audience or people who are very devoted to you. It's a wonderful thing to see, but you have got to recognize that for what it is and not confuse the two things. You've got to switch off and realize that you're out there earning a living. It's your business, your livelihood, your profession and it's one of the loves of your life to do this. In order to work intensely at something, you have to sacrifice a certain other area of your life. Sacrifice isn't a good word, but you just have to try to create a balance and say, "Okay, I'm going to go away, and we are going to be distant or apart or whatever." You're going to miss that personal contact, but you go out and do it. When it's finished, you go back and re-establish everything.

RF: Is there a period of adjustment when you go home?

RC: Definitely. You can't just walk in the door and pick up where you left off. You have to realize that the other people have been there for possibly six months, have set up the house the way they want it, have their own routine, and it has nothing to do with what you would necessarily want or like. It is a period of adjustment. I think that, if the people involved communicate as often as possible and make sure that they're aware of all those things, the adjustment will be easier.

RF: And just as soon as you've settled back into it, you're off again.

RC: That's the way it's been over the last three or four years. It's part of the business. If you're a jet pilot, you've got to think, "Well, hell, the engines might stop and I might crash and die." Part of the music business is being away and traveling a lot, and it's part of the risks in terms of relationships. If you want to do it, you have to be prepared to put up with a certain amount of that.

RF: And your partner has to be willing to put up with it too.

RC: Exactly. It's a deal. If the people aren't cooperative and they're not geared for it the right way, then it's very difficult for them to understand it. Musicians are notorious for broken relationships, except maybe this one! Musicians always have that dilemma in life—the love of what they're doing on one hand, com-

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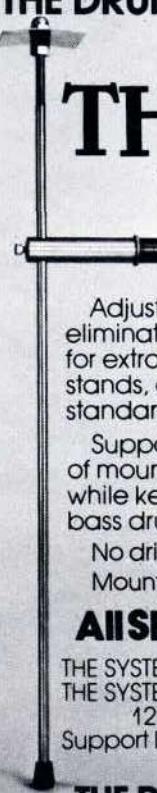
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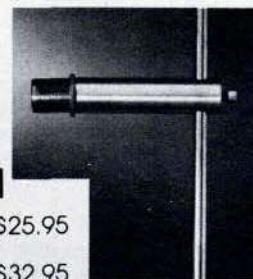
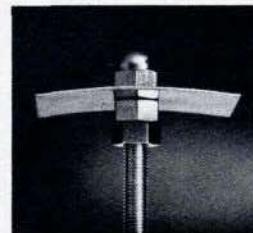
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pared with the love of their relationships outside the music business. The ones who survive are the ones who try to pay equal attention to both and make both things work. And you *can* make both things work. You just have to work at it.

RF: What about keeping the music fresh for six months?

RC: Good point. First of all, it's real difficult to do that. What I do, before I play at any time, is try to consciously clear my head of everything I've been doing. I might have been on a plane for six hours or driving all night, and I might feel terrible, so the first thing I do is clear my head of all of the travel and all the problems. Then I go out with the attitude that it's day one and make it as fresh as I possibly can every night. I just try to keep it as interesting as possible by changing things here and there, within bounds, of course. I think the key to keeping things fresh is to try to keep yourself inspired and try to be as inspirational as you can within yourself, because then it will be a little fresh each night and you'll achieve new things.

RF: How do you keep yourself inspired?

RC: I just think it's a matter of attitude and working at it. For me, just being in a happy state of mind keeps me inspired. I have a pretty positive outlook on things and I work really hard at what I do. Knowing that I'm putting some effort into it keeps me happy.

RF: But let's be realistic. How do you keep yourself inspired when you play "All Out Of Love" for the 100th time?

RC: I know what you're saying. Another aspect of that is the feedback you get from the audience, of course. You can tell by their reaction that their favorite song, whichever one that is, is the big moment for them. You can see it on their faces and hear it in their applause, and that is a very inspirational thing. If I'm ever feeling short on inspiration, I just look at the audience and I can see all the different reactions in people. Although, there are times when there's nothing that can make you inspired. There are moments when I get up there and no kind of audience reaction or dedication on my part will make me feel inspired. Those are the times when you probably reach your lowest points on the road, and you do hit low points on the road. There's nothing you can do about that. If you're a human being, you just have to go through them, and I'm a human being. You just have to get past that point.

RF: How do you live with six other people for six months? Are there certain dos and don'ts—certain things you understand about living with people in those close quarters?

RC: Anybody will tell you that a band is like a marriage, and it is. You spend 99% of your time with the people in the band, and it basically gets back to whether you really like them or not, I suppose. That's a big part of it. Obviously if you really can't stand being around someone, then it's not going to work. I think it's a matter of trying to give everybody equal space, and respecting them as people and musicians. I'm very much into being a part of a team and trying to collectively pull something off. I try to instigate a kind of team thing so that we have one goal in common. I think that it helps a lot if everybody tries to keep sight of that goal. It's like any relationship. You have to work at it to make sure it survives, musically and on a personal basis. Like any relationship, if you ignore it, it will fall apart.

RF: How does a private person become a public person?

RC: I have a need to play my instrument, to perform, and to be involved with music. It's the one longest motivating love of my life and I have an instinctive basic survival need to do that. Also, I have a need to be private and have my life away from work. I need both those things, so I have them. I just create them both. You can have your cake and eat it too if you really want to. I think a lot of people spend a lot of time trying to figure out which one is the most important and making a decision between them, but I don't necessarily think that's a winning attitude. I think a winning attitude is putting both of them into a realistic perspective and working at both to make sure both work.

RF: There really has to be a lot of dedication to put yourself through all of this.

RC: Being a musician is very much being a part of life because you're so in touch with people's emotions. The music that you play, when it's accepted by people and they respond to it, is a very distinct emotional communication between the musician and the

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audience that is listening. It's probably the only way that human beings can communicate without necessarily speaking with each other. You can just play four bars and lock into something straight away, and instantly, bam, you've got them. They're into it. I think it's a real distinct communication. Music is such a powerful force because you have that communication. And bearing that in mind, in order to provide that communication, you have to go through a lot to get there. You have to do so much traveling, and put up with hassles, people bothering you, no home life and all the pitfalls. Obviously the job of being able to communicate that accurately and quickly to other people makes up for it. I think there's a balance there. I'm just persistent enough and enthusiastic enough to see something through and make it work. I've always been pretty motivated from the time I was a kid. Other people were content to sit around and move in smaller circles, which is fine if that's what they want to do and what makes them happy. However, I know that I was never happy doing that. I've always had the distinct need to go out the front door and check out what's happening. I think that attitude goes with me through everything I do and especially through music.

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**MOVING TO A
NEW ADDRESS?**

SOUTH OF THE BORDER

by Ernie Cordy

Combining Conga And Drumset

As drummers, our roles as explorers and innovators are vigorously challenged by the vast field of percussion and the potential lying within each instrument. I direct this article to everyone who enjoys the endless flavors and dimensions of percussion instruments, in an attempt to share a few things I've learned through experimentation. The idea involves two percussion family members: the drumset and the conga drums.

Since I am a drummer, my curiosity drove me to investigate the roles of these instruments in music. The more I learned, the greater my fondness and respect for the field of percussion became, especially toward the conga drum. I tried to find as many opportunities as possible to use congas instead of the drumset. A problem arose, however, when I moved off the set to play the congas. The warmth of the conga drum could not fully compensate for the absence of the bass drum's punch and the complementary hi-hat foundation.

In an attempt to continue playing the congas and still compensate for a drummer's absence, I started to experiment with the idea of utilizing the bass drum and hi-hat with the congas. My percussion teacher, Ned Lyons, helped me enormously by offering suggestions and direction. Through our mutual efforts, we believe we have merged the best of both worlds. When you find yourself doubling as both the drummer and the percussionist, you can still enjoy the richness of the conga's rhythms and contra-rhythms, without losing the dominant presence of the bass drum and hi-hat.

Application

If you wish to experiment with this setup, we'd like to suggest some guidelines concerning the position of the drums, tuning and finally a few rhythm exercises.

In the arrangement I use, the hi-hat and bass drum are positioned as they normally would be in relation to a drumset. However, where the snare drum would be, the Quinto (approximately 11" in diameter) takes its place. The Tumbadora or Tumba (approximately 12 1/2" in diameter) occupies the floor tom position. In relation to each other, the congas are as close as possible without restricting the freedom of the right leg to play the bass drum in a sitting position.



In this situation, the bass drum will project best if the shell is small (18" or 20"), and the batter head is tuned loose to give a flat sound. (The flat sound of the bass drum replaces the bass function of the Tumba.) This flat sound will be enhanced, of course, if the front head is removed and padding is placed inside the shell. The buffer could be a blanket or foam rubber.

Of the three types, the congas we recommend using are once again, the Quinto and the Tumbadora. The third type, the Conga drum (approximately 11 3/4" in diameter), could be mated with the Tumba but the contrast between the highs of the female drum and lows of the male drum will not be as pronounced. To make the contrast between Quinto and the Tumba even greater, tune the Quinto to its maximum tension while leaving the Tumba at a mid range.

If you follow the suggested tuning, the final balance will be as follows: hi-hat—soprano; congas—featured mid ranges; and bass—low. This tuning is preferable because it allows the individual instruments to complement one another and bring out the unique flavor of each.

After experimenting with the setup, you've probably already guessed that, although it has a place in many different musical styles, it works best with wooden music and funk. (By wooden music, I'm referring to a sound where acoustical guitars and an upright bass are accompanied by strong vocal harmonies and perhaps a wind instrument such as the flute.)

Now that the congas and bass drum are ready, you can start having fun. The following are a few rhythms we've tried. (Note: When the "V" appears above a note, you have the option of playing it as an open tone or a slap. For these exercises, the slap recommended is performed by cupping either hand in a vertical position and executing the actual slap with the other on the edge of the conga's head.)



A-B-C) These are very common and versatile conga patterns used in many different styles of music. In exercise A, the beat is supplemented by the addition of the hi-hat on 2 and 4. As soon as you're comfortable with A, proceed to B, which incorporates a simple bass drum line with the hi-hat. Exercise C takes the concept of B a step further.

A

Quinto
Tumba Dora
Bass Drum
Hi-Hat w/foot

R V L R (or RR)

B

R V L R (or RR)

continued on next page

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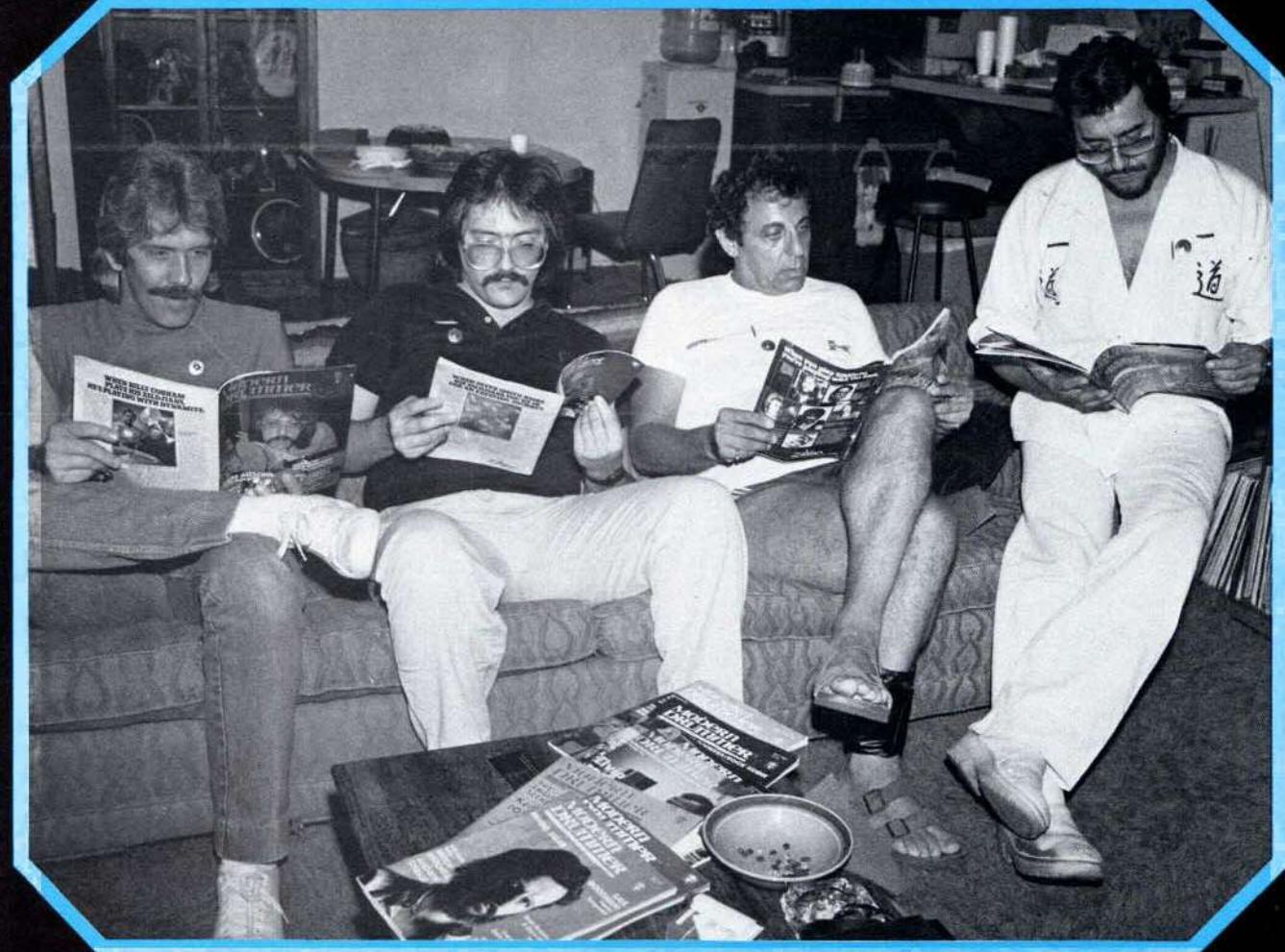


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C

R V L R (or RR)

D) This pattern would find a home in funk and soul music.

D

R L R L L R L R L L L

E) The exercise presented here is for rock. As it is written, the pattern has you playing the bass drum on all four beats. An alternative to this walking line is to play the bass drum on the first and third beats only, with the hi-hat remaining on the second and fourth beats.

E

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

F) Here we have a walking conga beat that is a modified rhumba beat. The bass drum and hi-hat are also playing a modified pattern: the clave beat.

F

R L R L R L R L

V V

R L R L R L R L

V V

G) This is simply a Latin beat with a syncopated bass drum.

G

R L R L R L R L

3

H) This is a basic funk beat with a hi-hat splash added on the & of 4. The splash is executed when the closed hi-hat is opened and attacked with an accented stroke, and then leisurely closed again. The splash is incorporated with the conga pattern simply by using your hand instead of a stick. For the best results, the attack should be done with an abrupt snap of the wrist. The fingers should be the only portion of the hand coming in contact with the edge of the open hi-hat cymbals as illustrated in the photograph. (The exercise

can be performed with either hand. If it looks painful, relax. We guarantee that your hands go through more abuse playing the congas.)

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

H

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

V V



Since this pattern is somewhat demanding, the easiest way to approach it is to take one portion at a time. The first portion to try would be the conga pattern itself. Forget about the slaps. Where the hi-hat splash is indicated, play the same note value on the Quinto drum. After you have the pattern down, add the hi-hat first, then the bass drum, then the slaps, and finally the hi-hat splash.

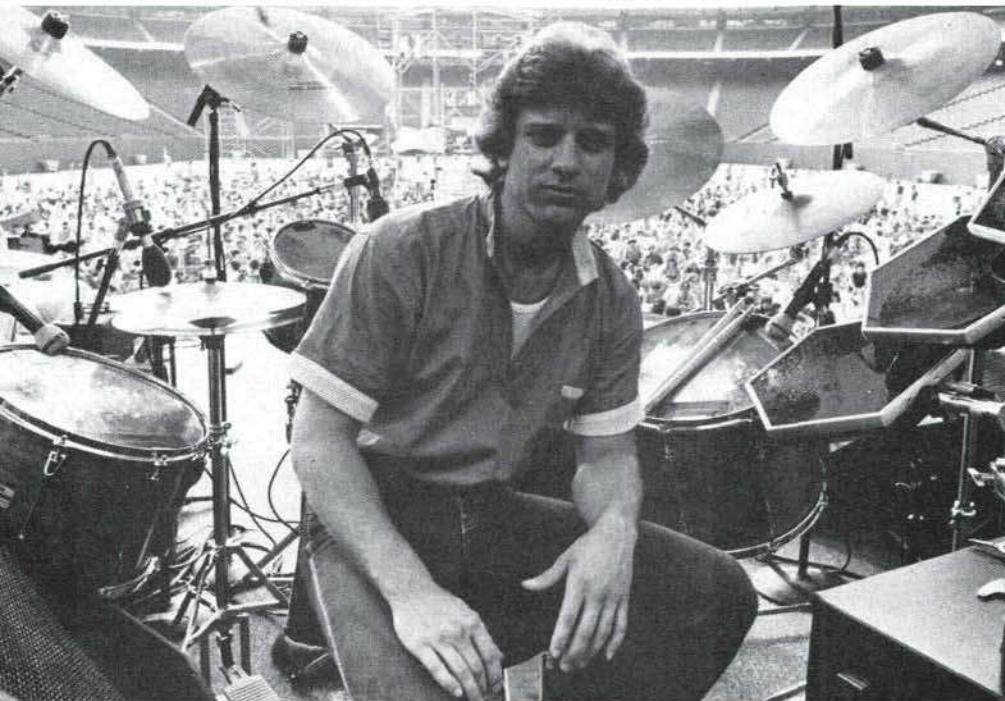
Conclusion

The above rhythms are only a beginning—*your beginning*. If you pursue the ideas in depth, you have an obligation as an artist to incorporate your own individuality and sensitivity, further developing the concept.

You should keep in mind the limitations of this approach as well. Even though this setup creates possibilities, the absence of a set of drums will be felt to some degree in all music formats. There are also restrictions to your conga playing. Let's be realistic: No matter how proficient you are, it's going to be tougher to play the congas with the bass drum and hi-hat, as opposed to playing the congas alone.

In spite of these limitations, there is much to be gained by at least trying this approach. When you attempt it, you will be rewarded by a very subtle change in perspective. This altered perspective is important, because it will broaden your understanding and appreciation of your role as a musician and how you fit in synergistically with other musicians. As with all unfamiliar areas that are tried and explored, this experience will increase your sensitivity, and make you a more effective and well-rounded musician.

UP AND COMING



Everyone dreams of the Big Break—the situation that changes you from unknown to star overnight. In reality, of course, no one actually becomes a star that fast. That is something that must be earned and worked up to over a period of time. However, often there is a single incident that can mark the turning point in a musician's career, and which can earn recognition for that player.

Dave Weckl went from playing small, New York clubs to backing the recent Simon & Garfunkle tour, alongside such players as Airto, Richard Tee and Anthony Jackson. For many, a gig like that would be a dream come true, but for Weckl, it wasn't so much a dream as a logical conclusion to the hard work he's been putting in since he was a kid growing up in St. Louis.

Shortly after completing this interview, I had a call from a drummer who wanted to know if MD could refer him to any teachers. As it turned out, this drummer had grown up with Dave Weckl. He was verbally kicking himself for not taking his craft as seriously as Dave had, and now he wanted to make up for lost time by studying with a rock star. But as Dave Weckl told me: "There are a lot of people who say, 'Yeah, tomorrow I'm going to practice for ten hours.' It might be too late by then."

SF: What brought you from St. Louis to Connecticut?

DW: I was in St. Louis playing in show bands and top-40 bands. I've been working six nights a week since I was 16. My best friend, Jay Oliver, and I were always

in bands together. He left St. Louis to go with Maynard Ferguson. When he split, there was nothing left in town for me to do. I was 18 and I wanted to go to school somewhere. I mainly wanted to get where some action was—either New York, the West Coast, or somewhere close to those places. I wanted to go where there were some connections—where I knew some people. I went to Bridgeport University because of Neil Slater, who was the jazz director. I had sent him a demo tape, and he responded, "If you can read as well as you can play, you can have the spot in the band. I'll also help you try to find some work," which he did! He got me into Sal Salvador's band right away.

SF: Joe Morello's old chair.

DW: Right. I got to meet Joe because of that, which was great. Another reason I chose Bridgeport was because Ed Soph was teaching there. I was really interested in studying with him. When I got there, I found that Randy Jones was also teaching, which was real nice too. Randy is great. He's not the book-type teacher like Ed. He was real good for my head. If I had some problems, whether it was with playing time or with a member of a band, he'd always have something to say that was very helpful. And he showed me a lot of things about straight-ahead playing which were real good. I studied with Randy about a year, and then I got a chance to study with Ed. That was a nice learning experience too; Ed's a great teacher.

SF: When you went to Bridgeport, were you already well-rounded in all styles of music?

Dave

DW: Yeah. I started learning about different styles when I was about 13. Bob Metheny and Joe Buerger were responsible for my foundation. They taught me how to read, and taught me all the basic styles. From there I took it upon myself to do a lot of listening and copying from records. That's how I had started when I was eight. I would play to rock 'n' roll records like the Monkees. My dad was always turning me on to Pete Fountain, with Jack Sperling on drums. Jack was my number-one influence when I was first starting to learn straight-ahead drumming. I listened to him and then, of course, came Buddy.

SF: Did Sperling's playing ever inspire you to use double bass drums?

DW: I attempted that once, but I've got enough to do figuring out the coordination and technique to play one drum. Also, I like to do interacting rhythms between the bass drum and hi-hat. If I want a double bass drum sound, I use my floor tom and bass drum, which has a lot to do with what Gary Chester is teaching. You can get that sound happening by working up fast singles between the floor tom and bass drum, and you still have your other foot free to play the hi-hat.

SF: Would you say that you are a "natural" drummer? Did drumming come easy for you?

DW: At first it did, yeah. When I was eight, my dad got me a drumset—a little cheap snare drum, bass drum, one tom and a cymbal. I just started playing to records, and it was sort of easy for me to pick up and copy these things. I loved the challenge of figuring the stuff out. I was always really into that. But it became frustrating when I was about 12 or 13. I was in a rut. I was practicing the same things, and not really advancing. Then I was thrown into a situation where I had to get it together. I was 14, and in the eighth grade. The teacher at my high school, Al McCuen, was really great. He really loved kids, and if he saw a talent, man, he went after it and really tried to push it. I wasn't even in high school yet, but he asked me to come down and audition for the high school jazz band. I'd been reading little snare drum things since I was in the fourth grade, but to sit

Weckl

down and actually read a chart and play with a big band—forget it! But I did a good job of faking it, I guess, because he said, "Yeah, I want you to do it." So I thought, "I'd better learn how to read—fast!"

That's when I started seriously taking lessons. I'd first started lessons when I was 13, and my dad bought me a new set of gold-sparkle Gretsch drums. When I got into this high school band, my teacher was Bob Metheny. He got me into the Roy Burns *Big, Bad And Beautiful* package. That's really excellent material for learning to read charts. Roy plays well on the album. It's good to listen to what he's doing if you've never played big band material before.

SF: Did you copy the fills that Roy played?
DW: At first, yes, to understand where he was coming from style-wise. Jim Petercsak—who taught me everything I know about left-hand finger control—collaborated with Roy on that, and wrote out a lot of Roy's fills. That really got me started. After that, I was fortunate enough to always have an outlet to read, all through high school. We would also have little "kicks" bands, where the teacher would just throw charts at us and we'd play. That was a great learning experience.

People come up to me and ask, "How do you interpret that? How can you read

that so well the first time?" So I ask them, "How much reading experience have you had? Did you ever play with a big band or read charts?" They'll say, "No, nobody ever does that around here." That's a drag. I always had that outlet. Once I started reading, I loved it. I didn't even want to play in a band unless there were charts. That's not to say that I don't rely on my ears, because that's a lot of it too. But reading was important because when I got to college I was always reading.
SF: Did you graduate from the University of Bridgeport?
DW: No. After one year of full-time studies, I went part time, because I wanted more time to practice. I had started working quite a bit. My first summer there was great. I was practicing 10 to 15 hours a day. I'd get up early and practice drumset for three or four hours. Then I'd spend a lot of time learning Maynard's charts, because this was during the time that my friend was in Maynard's band, and I really wanted to get on that band. So I spent a lot of time listening to that type of music and concentrating on all of those aspects. Then I would work on the reading, and the technical end of it. Studying time was always important to me. Starting at age 19, I didn't do anything without a click track. I had started listening to myself on tape, and I noticed that, although it felt great while I

was doing it, when I listened back it sounded frantic. So I started working with a click track a lot, trying to make sure that everything was perfect.

SF: What was the band you were in called Nite Sprite?

DW: Nite Sprite is still going on. That was pretty important to me in terms of my progression. That band started happening late in '79 in Connecticut. The bass player, Paul, was going to school with me in Bridgeport. Fred, the sax player, was going to school there too. That band was a whole different thing for me. When we first started, the band was very fusion oriented.
SF: Was it a copy band?

DW: Actually, no. There were a lot of original tunes written by the keyboard and guitar player. It was fusion oriented, but it was good. That turned me on to a whole different thing by making me listen to Weather Report, since we did a few of their tunes. Nite Sprite was good for me. It was a good outlet for me to hear myself in situations where what I was playing didn't fit. It made me play simpler.

SF: You must have taped yourself a lot.

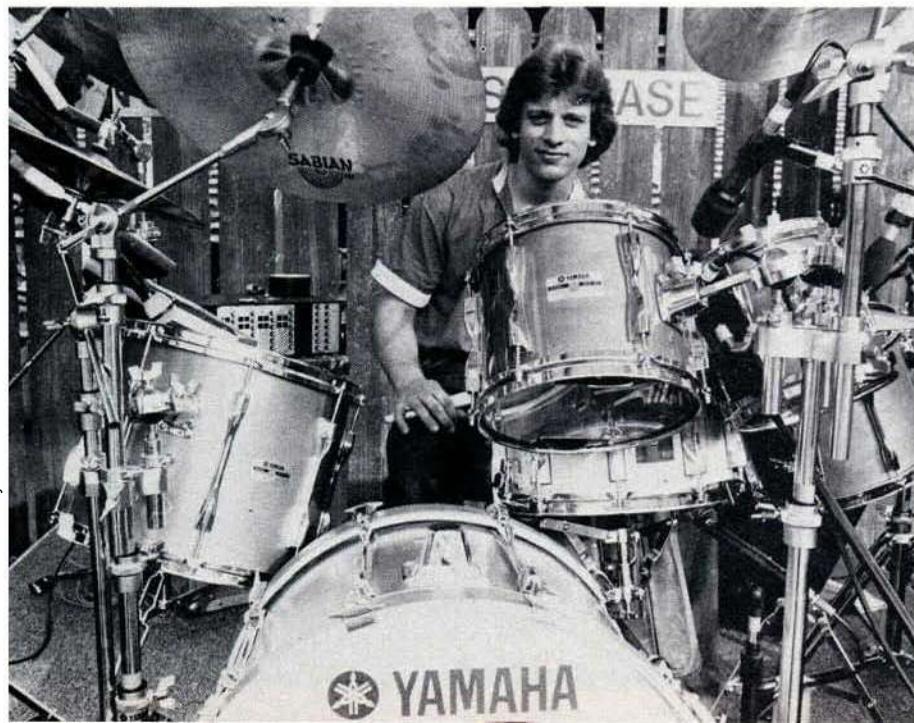
DW: That's the best way to learn. And you've got to be objective about it. You've got to listen and say, "Well, how does it feel? Does it groove? How am I locking in with the bass player? Is that really the right groove to play?" That's what that band gave me the chance to do. I took those tapes and analyzed them to death. I was with Nite Sprite for three-and-a-half years. We were playing at some jazz clubs like Seventh Avenue South, Mikell's, and The Other End, and that led to the band I'm working with now.

See, I've been in contact with Peter Erskine for years. A friend of mine was pretty close to Peter, and he was always telling me that Peter was such a nice guy. So I just started calling Peter, and he'd always talk to me.

SF: What kind of questions would you ask him?

DW: I just wanted to know what he was doing, if he was going to move to New York, and when Weather Report was going to be in town. Then, of course, I'd ask the stupid questions about tuning and that sort of thing. I didn't really like to ask too

Photo by John Lee



many questions like that.

We were in touch for a couple of years, and then he moved to New York and started playing a lot. One night I went to Seventh Avenue South to hear him play with somebody. He had broken a snare drum head and didn't have another one. I happened to have a new head in my car, so I brought it in and gave it to him. It was fun to be able to do that.

To make a long story short, he came to Seventh Avenue South to hear me play with Nile Sprite. He really enjoyed the show and we hung out a little. After that, I lost contact with him for a while. But then I called him up one day and we were talking about everything from telephone bills to the music business. He asked me if I was interested in playing with a group called French Toast. Steve Ferrone usually did the gig, but he was getting real busy and was out of town a lot. Peter had done the gig a couple of times, but he didn't want to do it anymore because it was too loud for his taste. French Toast consists of Anthony Jackson on bass, Michel Camillo on keyboards, and two percussionists: Sammy Figueira and Gordon Gottlieb. There are three horns: Lew Soloff, Jerry Dodgion, and Peter Gordon, who's the leader and french horn player. So I said, "Yeah, great," because I'd always wanted to play with a band of that caliber.

I got to sit with the charts for about three days, and then did the gig. That was some experience. It's a very diversified book—a lot of Latin and funk, with enough straight-ahead things to balance it out. Everybody's part is really important. Musically, it's incredible, and so much fun to play. All three of us in the rhythm section basically have the same ideas and concepts about phrasing. Anthony Jackson has taught me so much about groove. I've never played with anyone like him. He's amazing. The grooves are so fat. He has the tendency to play a lot of notes sometimes, but it always fits and there is never a question as to where the time is.

SF: You were lucky to get into a situation like that. The main focus in music education is on playing your instrument. But once you've accomplished that, then what? How do you go about selling yourself and your talent?

DW: That's a question that was going through my head as recently as six months ago. How do I go about meeting these people without sounding like some little kid who's just saying that he wants to play? Getting to know somebody is such a touchy situation. When I first came to New York, I went to all of the clubs and saw all of these great players. You tend to put them on a pedestal and look up to them. They are great, but they're people too. So I figured I'd just show my face, let them know who I was, and not push the music thing too much. How many times does somebody hear, "Hey, I'm a drummer too! Wow, you sound great! Here's my phone number if you ever need a sub."

SF: You wouldn't do that?

DW: I don't know. Who can say what you should or shouldn't do? People are people and you have to find out what they are first. I've heard a lot of musicians talking about other players. They'd say, "Yeah, so-and-so plays great, but what a terrible attitude." That's so important; you've got to have the right attitude. You've got to have enough sense to know how to act around people in the business, and also around your audience.

SF: You got the Simon & Garfunkle gig through Anthony Jackson, who you met on the gig with French Toast, which you got through Peter Erskine. So, in a very real sense, knowing how to act when you first made those phone calls to Peter led to the Simon & Garfunkle gig.

DW: That's what I'm saying. Through those phone calls, I was trying to get to know Peter as a person. I was calling him because I loved the way he played, not because I was trying to get work.

SF: Do you think that attitude is as important as, or even more important than, technical ability?

DW: It all works hand in hand. At times, attitude can outweigh talent. There will be these outstanding players who are not working. You ask why, and the answer is,

"They've got a strange attitude." On the other hand, once people get to know you, and they see that you're not a jerk, then your ability has to be able to back you up. When other people put their own reputations on the line to recommend you, that's when your playing has to back up what everyone's talking about.

SF: What was the Simon & Garfunkle audition like?

DW: Well, Anthony Jackson had recommended me to Paul Simon. His office then called, said that they were looking for a drummer, and there were a couple of people they were interested in. They asked if I was playing anywhere so they could check me out. I was working downtown with Barry Finnerty. Paul actually came down himself. I was expecting somebody, but I wasn't expecting Paul. It was funny, because I didn't even say anything to him. He was there to see if I could play. I figured that, if he liked me and wanted me to work for him, then I'd get to know him.

SF: How did you feel when you saw him walk into the club?

DW: I felt good about the fact that he showed up. I didn't want to scare him away by playing a lot of stuff, because that's not what his thing is about. I concentrated on playing for the music. We were playing some funk stuff, and a little bit of fusion, so I concentrated on groove, feel, time, and sensitivity.

SF: And Paul didn't say anything to you that night?

DW: No, we never exchanged one word. I felt weird about it, but I figured that, if he liked what he heard, then I'd hear from him. I was walking around in nervous anticipation trying to figure out what was happening. I talked to Anthony, but he didn't even know yet if he was going on the tour. About a week and a half later, the office called and said that they wanted to use me for the tour.

SF: Can you formalize the transition from being a qualified unknown musician to getting a big break?

DW: Well, don't have any bad feelings about your playing at all. Before you even attempt to make the scene, you've got to have your act together and you've got to be real confident about it. The other thing to do is try to get in front of people who are playing all of the time. Hang out at the clubs; get to know them. That's not always easy to do because, unfortunately, it costs money to go to clubs and hang out.

SF: But it's necessary if you're serious about making it?

DW: That's where it becomes a matter of making sacrifices elsewhere. I started making sacrifices when I was real young and I was practicing while all of my friends were outside goofing around. As far as money goes, you've just got to decide what you want to spend it on and what's more important to you. You've got to have a balance. You've got to have things that will

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SF: You were four years old when Simon & Garfunkle released "Sounds Of Silence," and now you are in a drumchair that has previously been occupied by people like Steve Gadd, Hal Blaine, Gary Chester and Roger Hawkins.

DW: And on the last album there were Gadd, Steve Ferrone, Jeff Porcaro, and a Linn machine. I didn't even know who was playing on "50 Ways To Leave Your Lover" until a couple of years after I started getting into Gadd.

SF: How much leeway did you have to create your own parts for songs?

DW: Basically a lot. After Paul gave us his basic idea on a tune, we would come up with our own grooves. We had chord charts, but I basically just took the tapes and listened to them to see what was going on. I listened to the Central Park concert album, and tapes of a tour they had done in Australia with Carlos Vega on drums. We were taking all of the older tunes and revamping a lot of them by putting different grooves in. Paul always wants to do something different if it fits and if it works. He's really a great musician, and a lot of fun to work for.

SF: Did you find any of the music challenging?

DW: All of it. I'd never played in a situation like that. The style of some of the music was actually different for me. Even though some of it was very simple, it was a challenge because I wanted to play it right. It didn't call for a lot of chops, but the feel, sensitivity and time still had to be there. I really learned a lot from Richard Tee. He always knows what to play and how to make grooves work.

SF: Were there any technical challenges?

DW: No. I had to work out something new on "Allergies," because there are two drummers playing the track on the album—Steve Gadd playing the beat under Simmons drum fills played by Steve Ferrone. I had to take the main ingredients from both parts and come up with a groove. I ended up playing a left-hand hi-hat part, fills with the right hand, and I kept the groove happening underneath. It was all stuff I had learned from Gary Chester. I had been studying with him for about seven months, and if I had to do something left-handed, it was no longer a big deal.

SF: How had your playing changed from studying with Gary?

DW: My level of concentration had changed. It had gone up considerably towards what I was actually playing. I was actually hearing what I was playing, instead of letting little ghost notes go in here or there. Every time I'd walk into a lesson, he'd come up with a different system, and I'd feel retarded. Then I'd go home, practice it, and get it down to where it was cooking. When I'd go back, he'd tell me

something else to do with it, and I'd feel retarded all over again. It was great though; his lessons are such a challenge.

SF: Did Gary teach you about the music business too?

DW: Oh yeah. He would always answer any question I had about the business, and try to direct me in a way that was good for me, based on knowledge he's acquired from mistakes he's made. There were things he told me he'd do over again if he had the chance. One of the aspects we covered was money management. I was never into spending money foolishly. I don't have to worry about things like having a drug habit because I've never done any of that stuff.

A lot of musicians coming up now are not into drugs at all. I've met so many people who are real straight ahead; they're just into making music. I really want to stress that for younger players who are coming up. You definitely don't need that, and you don't have to worry about whether you're going to fit into the social scene. I used to worry about whether I was going to be able to hang out with everybody. It doesn't work that way. You're there to do your job. You're there to make music to the best of your ability, and you're respected for that. You can still hang out and have a good time without getting wasted.

SF: Can you give me a rundown on your current setup?

DW: I just became connected with Yamaha before the tour, and I'm very happy with them. Right now my toms are 8x8, 10x10, 11x13 and 13x15. The 11x13 is on my left side near the hi-hat. A lot of my setup is based on Gary's teaching, because he teaches a lot of left-hand floor tom things. I'm using a 22x16 bass drum, and a 7" wood snare drum. I'm also endorsing Sabian cymbals, and I really like them. I've got 15" and 17" AA crashes, and an 18" HH ride. I've got a 16" HH crash with a rivet in it for this tour, because Paul likes that sustain. I've got a regular set of hi-hats on my left, and a set of heavier rock hi-hats closed on my right. The right-hand hi-hats are set up on a boom stand with a little device that a friend of mine engineered to screw on top of a cymbal stand. I can angle it any way I want. So it's a closed hi-hat over the floor toms. I think that's going to be standard in the future. It just doesn't make sense to play with your hands crossed over. It limits the stroke of your backbeat. I still cross over if I want to use a lot of little open hi-hat sounds, but for loud playing with a

closed hi-hat ride, having a set on the right opens up a lot of things. I'm also using a set of Simmons in conjunction with my regular setup. I have a Simmons bass drum, snare, three toms and a cymbal effect set up on my right.

SF: Did you feel a lot of pressure on the Simon & Garfunkle tour?

DW: Not at all. It's what I want to do. I've wanted to play with people of this caliber for a long time.

This business is so unpredictable. Who knows what anybody's future is going to be in this business? Generally, it's said that you last 10 to 15 years. It's just a cycle; somebody new is always coming up. So I just want to start it right. I get a natural high from doing what I want to do, and from playing with these people. I don't know where the self-destructiveness comes from in so many musicians, but I've never really known musicians like that. I've always associated myself with non-self-destructive people. That's real important. You've got to make up your mind about what's right for you. I've never been the type of person who has to do what somebody else is doing.



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Varley continued from page 19

gles and double-stroke rolls tend to run together with the toms tuned that way, but the simpler fills sound great. I tune the snare on the low side, because I like a fat, meaty sound for the backbeat—and this is definitely backbeat-oriented music. I use a little muffling on all of the drums, and I put a pillow and a sandbag in the bass drum.

There are other reasons for tuning this way. We work with orchestras quite often, so my sound needs to be tight and clean in order for the soundman to mix all of those instruments properly.

JD: Does Neil have a preference about your sound?

JV: No, he knows nothing about it. As long as I do my job, it's okay.

JD: How much musical freedom do you have playing with Neil?

JV: I'm not really told what to play, but over the course of the gig, I've learned that some things work better than others. You can't make a gig into something that it isn't. We have a singer who is the focal point. So, even though nothing is dictated to me, because of the type of songs we do and the way they are structured, a certain feel and certain types of fills are expected from me. You find what works, and therein lie the restrictions.

With other singers—Seals & Croft for instance—Jimmy Seals was very particular about what went on with the drums. He would sometimes sing fills to me the way he wanted them, and he was a real stickler on time and feel.

JD: Do you find that your rhythms and fills have to be simple?

JV: Absolutely, because you can't throw a curve to the singer. Singers are the ones who throw curves. For example, some nights Neil will feel differently than on other nights, and will want some songs faster or slower. He kicks off most of the tempos because he's a player as well as a singer. His piano parts pretty much dictate the feel of the songs, and I have to play with that.

JD: Since you are basically a sideman, how do you feel about playing the same songs night after night, and having no say in it?

JV: It's just something you accept when you take a gig like this. We do have some say in it, to an extent. If we have ideas, we do have a little input. But for the most part, you just have to resign yourself to it and do a consistent and professional job night after night. That's the challenge of it.

JD: Do you have to duplicate the parts that are on the albums?

JV: Not really, except for a few key things like the basic feel of the song, or a certain fill that sets up a section of the tune or brings in a vocal part. So I don't have to copy the record, but I can't change the basic feel of the tune.

JD: I understand that a lot of singers do not use the same musicians on a record that they use on the road.

JV: It all depends on the artist's attitude

towards the band. Hall & Oates are a good example of an act that records and tours with the same band. However, it's often true that the road band isn't used on the records. I'm sure that there's not one definitive answer as to why that happens, but I think I can give you a couple of reasons why that happens fairly often.

First of all, if you're touring with an artist who has had hit records in the past, and who feels that a particular group of players is part of the sound that's needed to have more hits, you can't expect to jump right in there and take their place. Even if you could do a good job in the studio, another player was there first. Another reason is that, in the studio, producers bring in the musicians that they like to work with. Unfortunately, there are producers who aren't exactly musical geniuses, and who can't express themselves musically. If they have a certain sound in mind, they have to get players they've heard on other records and say, "Give me the feel you played on so-and-so's album." You've also got to consider the pressure a producer is working under, in light of the economic problems that the record industry has been having. That makes them more inclined to use players who are already associated with hit records. That situation makes it hard for players who aren't firmly established in the recording scene. The studio scene is a tough nut to crack, and going on the road does nothing to improve it. You have to

stay in town and be available.

Playing in the studio is different than playing live in some ways. If you are hired to go on the road, and you are working with an artist you never worked with in the studio, the artist may always consider you a road drummer. That sounds absurd, but it's just a stereotype that is seldom justified. I, myself, can't complain because I've done some recording with most of the people I've worked with. But when you take a road gig, you usually can't expect to be recording with those people too.

JD: What would you say are the requirements for landing jobs with singers?

JV: I think that, when you are recommended or you audition, they either like you or they don't. I've found that, as long as I played what they wanted, I got the gig. A lot of singers have conductors who do the hiring and firing. The singer comes in expecting the music to be there. If it's not, the singer will speak to the conductor, who will channel it back to you. In this job we don't have a conductor. Neil made the decision to hire me when he heard me playing with Kim Carnes, and members of his old band recommended me.

JD: Do you think that a drummer who has some knowledge of singing will be able to back a singer with more confidence?

JV: I don't know if confidence is the issue. Sensitivity is the thing. Someone who has been in the singer's position will be much more aware of what the person up front is

going through. Singers are entertaining crowds in all kinds of situations, and they have a lot on their minds. If they're having a bad night and something different happens, the drummer has to be able to hold things together and not be swayed by the difference.

JD: Do you get your cues from the conductor or the singer?

JV: On this gig, the conductor is getting his cues from Neil. I know the show to the point where, if the conductor gives a downbeat too soon, I'll wait. In most situations, the conductor will follow the singer and the drummer will follow the conductor. When there are 30 musicians, the conductor has to lay down the law. Although most conductors are the leaders on stage, some merely inform the orchestra where the rhythm section is going. When everyone has to change tempo, we have to watch the conductor. If there is no conductor, the drummer is responsible. In tunes where there's just a straight-ahead rock feel, there's not much that a conductor has to do. In that case, the rhythm section serves as the conductor. But during tempo changes, the conductor is critical.

JD: Do singers want you to play behind, right on, or ahead of the beat?

JV: It would definitely vary with the singer, and the mood he or she is in. It would also depend on how close the singer stays to the time, and the singer's phrasing. It could even depend on the song, or

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change within a song. Neil changes from night to night. In general, he has no aversion to being on top of the beat, so I have to go with that.

JD: Do you have any advice for drummers who play with singers?

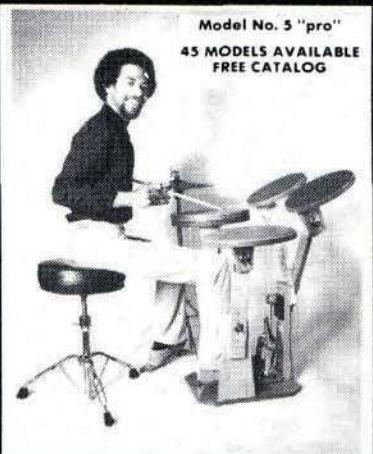
JV: When anything goes wrong, it's your fault! [laughs] Play good time, watch your

dynamics, listen to what's going on around you, and *don't overplay*. A demonstration of chops isn't going to impress the singer or the other band members. Don't let singers who take liberties with phrasing throw your time off. You have to stay in charge and not let them run away with things. It's the singer's artistic license to take liberties with the time, but don't let that sway you. You are responsible for the time. The more you play for a singer, the more you will learn about what your job is. Just follow the same principles you would follow for playing good music in any other situation.

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JD: Do you tune your drums any differently when you play for a singer?

MB: I think I do. I try to get as close as possible to a studio sound because that's what they're used to hearing. I tune the drums a lot flatter when playing behind a singer.

JD: What do you mean by "flatter"?

MB: Cutting down the overtones. I may muffle the sound of the drums by putting tape or a *Deadringer* up underneath the head.

JD: Have you ever had singers object to your tuning?

MB: I don't feel that the tuning of your drums should be that much of a problem for them. For the most part, they're only going to be bothered with what's happening with their voices. If there's something specific that they want, they should sit down and discuss it with the drummer. Maybe you don't like the tuning, but if it's giving them what they want to hear, then that's what you have to do. That's happened to me quite a few times. Sometimes they want the drum tuned almost totally flat, and I just hate it that way. I had to do that with Diana. When I first got on the gig, all of my drums were tuned real well, and I loved the sound. But she didn't like it because she was accustomed to that flat studio sound.

JD: Do you use different types of sticks, cymbals or drums when playing for a singer?

MB: It depends on what type of material the singer is doing. I've played behind jazz singers, and that's just like playing a regular jazz gig. I don't really change my cymbals around much. For this gig I'm using a 20" Pang that I don't use for straight-ahead jazz gigs, but for the most part everything is the same.

JD: Sound-wise, does Diana have any preferences?

MB: She likes a real big, heavy sound. She's really into heavy bass drum—the pulsating, disco-type sound.

JD: How much musical freedom do you have?

MB: I'm allotted, you might say, a certain amount of freedom, but I can't just go crazy. You know, singers get going and they get pumped up because of the audience. Sometimes they'll forget where they are in the song. So there are certain little licks that I have to make sure are there all the time, to kind of keep the singer from going too far out.

JD: Do you have to keep your rhythms and fills simple?

MB: I think that's probably the best thing to do when you're playing behind somebody, because you're supporting that person. To get really crazy with a lot of fills can be incongruous with the rest of the rhythm that's happening. Also, I have 12 or 15 musicians, plus a singer, that I have to keep together all the time. A lot of fills would make that job a bit more difficult.

JD: Do you ever get tired of playing the same songs night after night?

MB: That doesn't really bother me. It helps me a lot with discipline, actually. I try to psych myself up every night so that I can be as fresh as possible. Sometimes I'm just on automatic pilot and go through it. But I do try to psych myself up to the point of saying, "Hey, this is brand new. Get into it!"

Besides just playing the music, I watch the singers a lot and try to get a certain feel. Some nights, they'll come out with the adrenaline flowing, so you have to raise the tempo a little to stay in sync with them. If they're a little tired, you have to lay back. There are times when they might not be feeling good, they're laid back, and the band is laid back too. Then you have to put a little edge on the tempo to wake everybody up and say, "Hey! Let's get a little life going here."

JD: Do you have to duplicate the parts that are on the records?

MB: Sometimes I do. I have a process for getting them to come around to my way of thinking. First, I play something very similar to what's on the record. Then I'll begin to twist it a little, until they're comfortable with it.

JD: Do you find it difficult to try to imitate someone else's playing?

MB: Sometimes it can be a little bit of a problem, but for the most part it's not.

JD: It is true that many road drummers are

not used on the records?

MB: Yes, it is. There are several reasons for that. A lot of times, while the instrumental tracks are being done, the singer and the band are out on the road working. When they get back, the singer can just go in and do the vocals, because the tracks are already done. That's the main reason. Also, there's that thing where they want musicians who have names from being on other hit records. They want to use those people to help sales.

JD: What would you say are the requirements for getting a gig backing a singer?

MB: It depends on the grade of singer. A singer usually wants somebody who has had some experience playing behind singers—someone who knows when to lay back and when to get things going. Being flexible is probably the most important thing.

JD: Do you think that a drummer who has a knowledge of singing could back a singer with more confidence?

MB: I think so. I don't sing, but I hum a lot. [laughs] I've messed up some recording sessions doing that. "Where's that humming coming from?"

JD: Do you watch the singer or the conductor for cues?

MB: You're supposed to watch the conductor, but I end up cueing off the singer. I'll keep an eye on the conductor, but I know the show so well now that I really have to watch Diana. There are times when

she'll want to change something, and if the conductor's not watching . . . man! If something changes, then he might turn around and take a look, but by that time I'll already have a new groove established.

JD: Do you sometimes feel that you're the conductor, in terms of leading the band in a certain direction?

MB: Yeah. I think a lot of singers like to have a drummer who will help dictate that sort of thing to the band, because conductors can only move their arms, and it may take two or three bars for everything to lock in. If a drummer can take charge, the band can lock in a lot faster.

JD: You often work with different bands and bass players. How long does it usually take to get into a groove?

MB: It depends. I'll usually find out what's happening with the bass player after just a few tunes.

JD: Does Diana carry a whole band?

MB: Yeah, the whole band is the same all the time. The bass player is new to her band, but that bass player, the piano player and myself have a trio together back home, so I know them like the back of my hand. That makes it real comfortable. But in the past, there have been bass players who were just reading the notes without putting any feeling into it. When you work with players like that, you feel like you're just pulling them along.

JD: Do you find that singers prefer you to play ahead, right on, or behind the beat?



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MB: That's going to vary with the singers. With Diana I find myself playing a little more ahead of the beat. It just depends on how she feels. If it's the weekend, it may be ahead of the beat because there are so many people there. In the middle of the week, she might be more laid back.

JD: What advice would you give a drummer who is playing behind a singer?

MB: It's kind of hard to give advice. The main thing is to listen. Find out what's happening with that singer, and then find out what's happening with the overall thing. You really have to study some singers for a little while. They may have a laid-back feeling, but don't want *you* to lay back. They might want you to keep everything up, and they'll catch up whenever they're ready. But you have to play around with that until you find out where they're coming from.

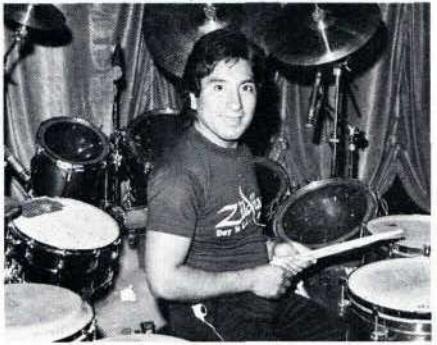


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Alex Acuna (Al Jarreau)

JD: Have you ever had a singer object to the way you tuned your drums?

AA: At one time in my life, I was one of those drummers who didn't have any experience in tuning. But now, the people I work for have heard my work, they've seen me play, and they know who I am. They respect me and they feel very secure when I'm backing them up. Whatever I do for them is fine, and they never say anything about tuning because they trust me.

JD: Do you ever get bored playing the same songs night after night?

AA: Lately I've been very lucky because I've been getting calls from a variety of people who want me to play and record with them. Therefore, I have the opportunity to choose who I want to work with. So, in a way, I chose Al Jarreau and he chose me. The reason I chose to play with Al—to answer your question—is because I know I won't be bored. Even though the song titles might be the same every night, we always play them differently.

JD: Do you ever have to duplicate what was on the albums?

AA: No, we don't have to. I always think of it this way: When I hear a record, I don't just hear the notes the drums are playing. I also hear the feeling that the drummer has put into it. That becomes part of the song, just like a trumpet lick or a synthesizer

part. It gives personality to the song. So duplicating that is good, and improvising around it is even better, especially if you can improve it.

JD: Do you find it difficult to imitate another drummer's style or feeling?

AA: I used to, but not now. Being from South America, I've had to learn to imitate a lot of music that I wasn't raised with. I imitated every type of player, from backup musicians to jazz musicians. Musicians who love music as I do try to keep up with what's happening, because there is so much new talent and new sounds from one day to the next.

JD: A lot of times, the road drummers for singers are not used on the albums.

AA: That's not true in my case, because I'm a studio musician in Los Angeles and I do a lot of recording. I haven't been on all of Al's albums, but I was on one three years ago, and I'm playing on the one he's been working on recently.

JD: What would you say are the basic requirements for working with a singer?

AA: You have to play well.

JD: Would a drummer who had a knowledge of singing be able to back a singer with more confidence?

AA: Definitely. Grady Tate is a good example. There are a lot of singers who play drums, too. Sammy Davis used to play drums, and Mel Torme is a good drummer.

JD: Do you sing?

AA: I used to sing in Spanish when I was in Puerto Rico. I don't sing in the U.S. because of my accent. But I sing everything I listen to—not with words, maybe, but with notes.

JD: With Al, do you get your cues from him or from the conductor?

AA: Both, because Al is giving the sign to the conductor and the band, and then the conductor keeps everyone together. With Diana Ross, her conductor already knows where to cue, because they use a big band and the conductor has to cue 40 musicians at the same time. But with Al there are only five players, so it's easier.

JD: Do you find that singers want you to play ahead of, right on, or behind the beat?

AA: Playing live, it actually depends on the songs. They usually want it a little more on top because during a live performance the show has to be up. But they do ask for down, or center time too.

JD: Do you have any advice for a drummer who wants to play for a singer?

AA: I think a drummer studies to be a drummer—not necessarily to specifically back up a singer. I like to think that I'm versatile, and this is just one of many things that I do. I don't have the specific goal of backing up a singer; my goal is playing music. I'll go with any singer who is a good musician. I've worked with a lot of singers, but when I work with them, I'm not just focusing on the singing. I'm focusing on the whole spectrum of the music.

Woodblocks, chimetrees, cuckoo call, drum sticks, timpani sticks, cymbals, leg rests, bongos, gongs, cowbells, rubber feet, temple blocks, tambourines, drum keys, mallets, pop gun, snare drum stands, Roto-toms, mufflers, crotales, tuning forks, brushes, cases, ratchets, congas, music stands, metronomes, sistrum, almglocken, tabors, maracas, stick totes, sirens. REALISTIC ROCK—Appice, RUDIMENTAL COOKBOOK—Cirone, COOKBOOK—Pickering, RUDIMENTAL JAZZ—Morello, RHYTHMIC ANALYSIS—Albright, PROGRESSIVE STUDIES—Gardner, FUN WITH TRIPLETS—Rothman, PORTRAITS IN MELODY—Cirone, TRANQUILITY—Houllie, SUITE FOR SOLO VIBAPHONE—Lepak. Woodblocks, chimetrees, cuckoo call, drum sticks, timpani sticks, cymbals, leg rests, bongos, gongs, cowbells, rubber feet, temple blocks, tambourines, drum keys, mallets, pop gun, snare drum stands, Roto-toms, mufflers, crotales, tuning forks, brushes, cases, ratchets, congas, music stands, metronomes, sistrum, almglocken, tabors, maracas, stick totes, sirens. REALISTIC ROCK—Appice, STICK CONTROL—Cirone, COOKBOOK—Pickering, RUDIMENTAL JAZZ—Morello, RHYTHMIC ANALYSIS—Albright, PROGRESSIVE STUDIES—Gardner, FUN WITH TRIPLETS—Rothman, PORTRAITS IN MELODY—Cirone, TRANQUILITY—Houllie, SUITE FOR SOLO VIBAPHONE—Lepak. Woodblocks, chimetrees, cuckoo call, drum sticks, timpani sticks, cymbals, leg rests, bongos, gongs,

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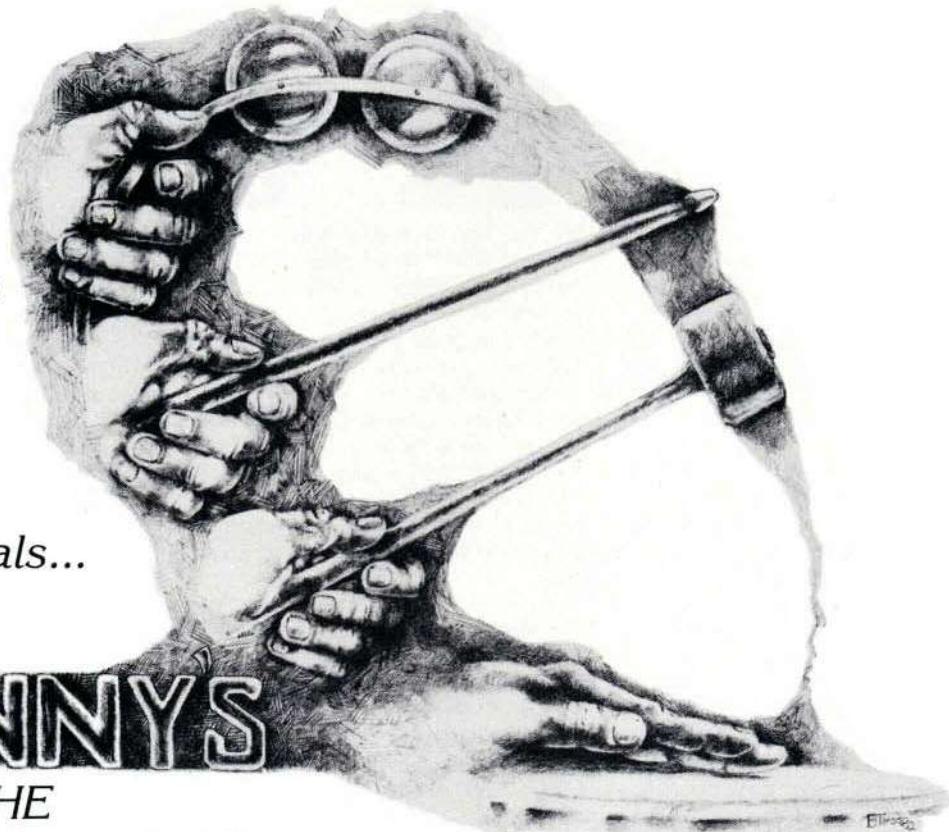
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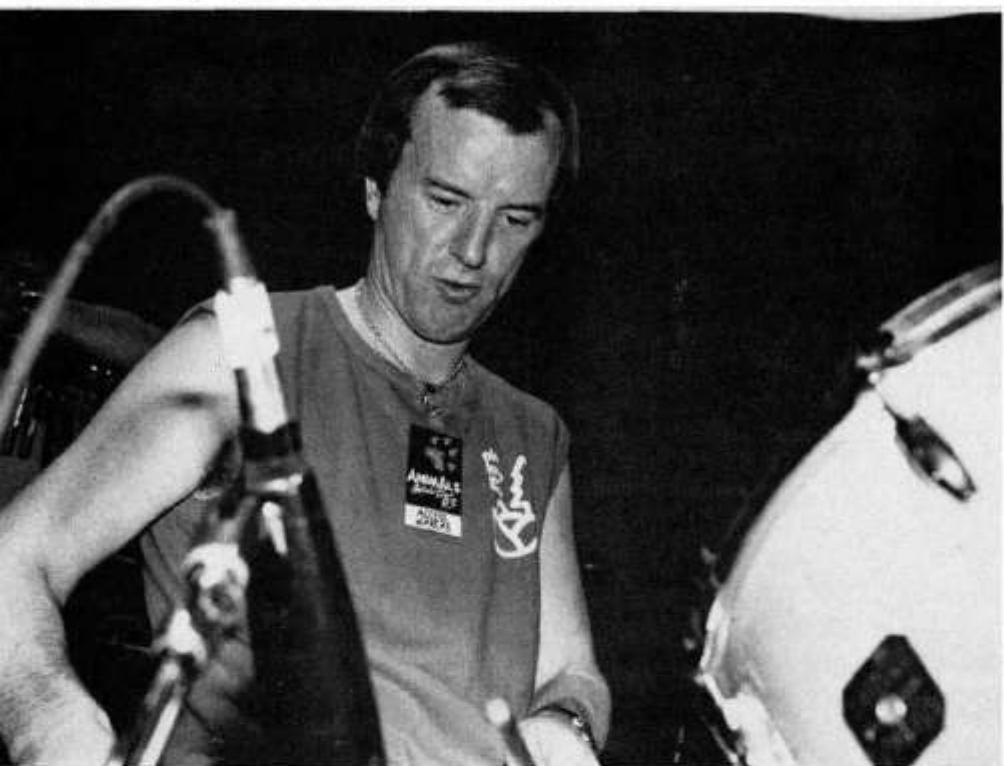


Photo by Lissa Wales

It was June, 1964. People were still trying to get used to four mop tops from England who had taken the country by storm when the radio began blaring a new sound. "There is a house in New Orleans they call the Rising Sun," the singer screamed. His voice sounded as if it were equal parts sandpaper and acid. It was gritty. It was angry and full of hurt. It was close to authentic. And in this case, authentic meant black and very, very blue. Ultimately, it sold more than four million copies—a quarter of a million in its first week in England alone—and became the first non-Beatles English single to end up at the top of the charts. The story goes that it helped inspire Bob Dylan to "go electric" himself the following year.

By then, the Animals had arrived. From the start, they were seen as part of the British Invasion that changed the way America has heard pop music ever since, but the Animals were different from most of the Invasion groups. Like the Rolling Stones, they wanted to be true to the blues that had formed them. Eric Burdon, in fact, wanted badly to be black and finally did lead a black band (*War*) later in his career.

The Animals were also not "pretty boys" like the Beatles. They were definitely in the Stones' scruffy-and-so-what mold, only maybe even a little further off the beaten path. And they were continually posed as animals, literally—paws up, tongues out, with expressions as nasty as they could muster between attacks of the

giggles. The songs didn't hurt that image one bit, either. "Rising Sun" was followed by "I'm Crying," certainly one of the more emotional tunes of the period. Then came "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood," which was as much a threat as an entreaty. It continued that way, with each song more hard-edged and more gut-wrenching than the last. But it was not all easy or fun, and by May of 1965, organist Alan Price, the very core of the Animals' sound, had left, to be replaced by Dave Rowberry. By the end of the year, drummer John Steel left, too.

The group held together through the fall of 1966, when bassist Chas Chandler announced that he, too, was leaving. After that blow, Burdon decided to disband the group altogether and to re-form a whole new Animals which would sound a lot more like San Francisco than Newcastle Upon Tyne, where the group began.

The original members all got together again at Christmastime 1968 for a single concert in England at the Newcastle City Hall, but by that time, Burdon had fallen from grace in his homeland, and his latest album, *Every One Of Us*, which contained a heart-twisting "St. James Infirmary," hadn't even been released in England. So the Animals played the old tunes for the crowd, and then forgot about it. In 1977, they regrouped again for a single album, *Before We Were So Rudely Interrupted*, which didn't sell well at the time, but is certainly no embarrassment today.

The

Drummer John Steel told *Goldmine*, a record collector's magazine, about that reunion: "That was just a half-hearted, on-off thing. Circumstances were that I was working with Chas, and Eric came over to Europe for the first time in a while. Alan happened to be free. I think it was the head of Polydor Records who dropped the idea and it took root. We got Hilton [Valentine, guitarist] in from California and borrowed the Rolling Stones' mobile recording studio. But nobody was committed to going out and promoting it, so we made it and flung it out there to see if anybody would buy it, and then went back to what we were doing before."

The current reunion has been a bit different. Eric Burdon continues to tell various publications what a bunch of old hackers he's got for a band, but by all reports, the shows have been special—filled with energy, honesty, and feeling, and not a little hysteria. What's more, the album has gotten pretty fair reviews, and I.R.S., the Animals' new label, wants another one—this time a live, tour album. That means everyone has to be committed to sticking it out for the recording and for the tour. "I got a phone call," John Steel told *Modern Drummer*. "The idea was put to me—and I think to everyone else, too—as simply as that. But everyone had the same condition—not if it's a nostalgia trip, and not if it's the same old hits. The first thing, really, from day one, was to get together and see if we could play. It had to be something we were proud of. Everything we tackled was brand new. But we kept at it, straight away with the new stuff, and it just kept working, much to our amusement and amazement, I think. We didn't even practice the old stuff."

But Steel and probably the rest of the Animals were wary. They'd been through it all before, and had never made the kind of money the Beatles or the Stones, once they got organized, did. There is still a lot of bitterness in some of the Animals from that time, Steel said. But this time, it all seemed so easy. "No matter how many people shake your hand and say 'Wow!' you know if you're on a bummer," Steel said, adding that he felt good about the Animals, their album and the tour, which has since wound its way across America

by Laurice Niemtus

Animals' John Steel

and is next headed for Japan and Europe. "When you're hot, you've got to strike," he said.

Steel noted that he has been out of music for some time, adding that he would have been just as happy to go home to northern England and take up where he left off—managing a plastics factory. After the Animals broke up the first time, he had stayed in the business, more or less, playing small club gigs in England and then going to work for Chas Chandler, who had discovered Jimi Hendrix just before leaving the group. "Chas was in full flight. He was having great success with Hendrix, and after he stopped working with him, along came Slade, who never broke in the U.S. but were fabulously successful worldwide. So when he asked, I went to work for him in artist relations. I was really a well-paid gofer. But I kept playing, too, because I enjoyed it in the clubs and bars.

"It was just four years ago that I got fed up with living in London, and that's when I went north to a friend who owns this plastics factory. He signed me on as production manager. But even up there, I played with an R&B band. That was alright for me, because generally, I'm the low-key type. I'm not ambitious—chewing me knuckles all the time. Just playing pleases me, because it's no bullshit. That's just the way I am—generally quite easily pleased. After all, it's a tough business to get into at the national or international level. Therefore, there are lots of good groups that aren't great. But the overall standard is very high, and it's very, very competitive, of course," Steel said. He has kept up musically, though, in his low-key way. And he seems not to have worried about whether the Animals would be seen as out-of-date or as purely an oldies group. He said he doesn't think the record label worried too much about that either, despite I.R.S.'s reputation as a "new music" label.

"I've been married to the same girl for 19 years, and we have an 18-year-old daughter who has a tremendously broad view of music. She's very conscious of what's going on now, but she's also fascinated with Dylan and the Stones. She's quite critical musically, but what was rubbish has already disappeared for the most part, and the rest has stood the test of time.

She keeps saying, 'I was born too late,' though.

"But I think there's a lot of good stuff going around now musically. And [this time, among the Animals] we never did say, 'We have to play this.' We tried Eric's songs—he had 40 or more—and we did the arrangements the way we liked. There was no desperate need to be current or up-to-date. The timing was also right. We learned later about others regrouping—Simon & Garfunkel, for instance. So our timing was great, but it wasn't planned. I was quite happy as I was. There was no 'have to' about this.

"In 1976, it was very, very different. There was a business meeting in London where someone threw out the idea of doing a record [which became *Before We Were So Rudely Interrupted*], and again we said,

'Why not?' But it was so half-hearted. Everyone had commitments, and it turned out to be how *not* to do a comeback. Nowadays, people keep turning up with it for autographs, but this one is on a different planet. We're all so committed; it's really very organic. And by the time this tour is finished, all of us will have six months invested. So it's very different now, 18 years on," Steel said.

But how does he feel about it? Can a middle-aged man really find happiness playing rock'n'roll on the road? "I know. People aren't supposed to play rock'n'roll when they're middle-aged. Rock'n'roll is just now 25 years old itself. And if you'd asked me at 20—and they *did* ask Mick Jagger—"Will you still be playing at 30 or even 40?" I'd have said 'Absolutely not!' Yet, you find yourself at 40 still enjoying it.

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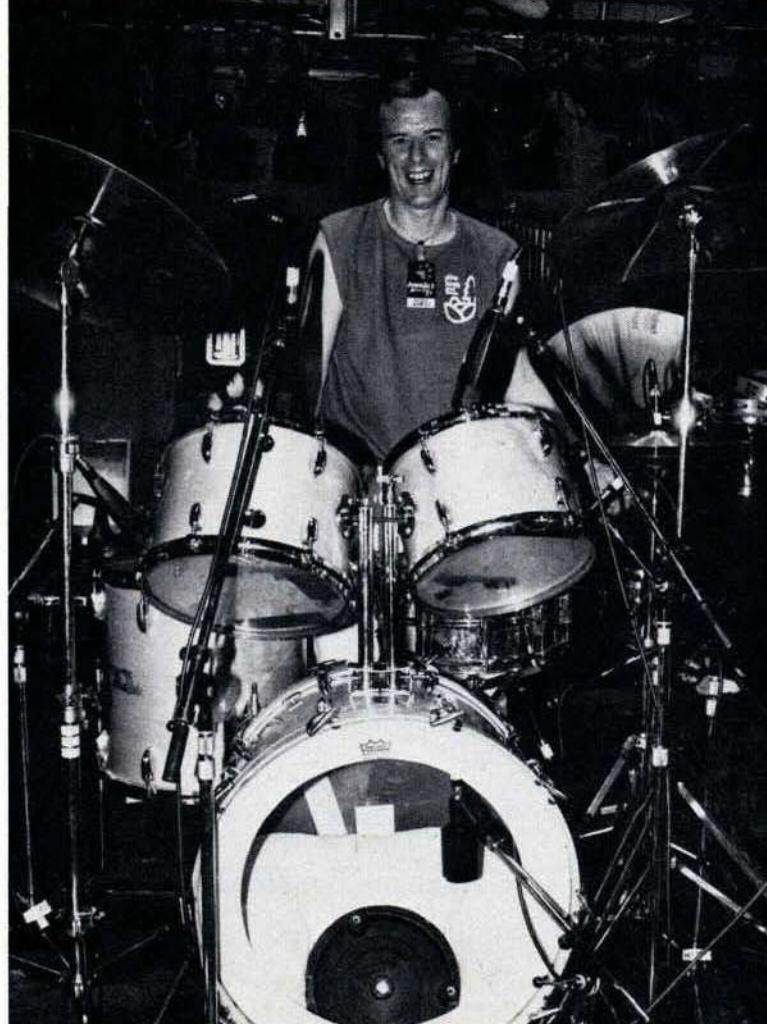


Photo by Lissa Walds

And if you can do it and you enjoy it, well, why not?" he asked. But there are doubts about bringing the Animals into the modern age, especially since the group hasn't really worked together in more than a decade.

"Back in the dark ages, it was every man for himself. You were flying by the seat of your pants and you knew it, because you always have to be ready with Eric. When he goes 'Oooohf,' and takes off in a different direction, you have to be ready for it. He comes on stage in red, but in 15 or 20 minutes, he's black with sweat. It runs off him, because he's always giving 200%. But even with four extra musicians on stage now, it's the logical extension of where we left off. And the technology we have now makes it a bit easier; at least you can hear what's going on. When we first toured, there were no mic's on the drums. Now I have nine mic's, but since it's not complicated, there's not a hell of a lot to look out for."

"On the other hand, with Eric, you always have to be ready, and it's a hell of a responsibility, especially with a nine-piece band. Anyone else can make a mistake, but if I do, it's TILT! I still get a tight knot in my stomach before we go on stage, but that's good, because you're really on. The last time around, there were a certain number of mechanical performances. There had to be, because we were so overworked.

So, ultimately this is more satisfying, because this has that extra little bit of effort in it. When we finish, I get the feeling that it was good, you know? And there's nothing like that. Afterwards, it's total exhaustion. We go into the dressing room and just collapse. We see no one for at least half an hour, but it's a complete feeling."

Talking to Steel, you get the feeling that, regardless of what he says about being happy in a plastics factory, there's nothing more fulfilling, more challenging or more a mystery to him than the music. Having remained fascinated with it, he's kept up and can rattle off the names of groups otherwise known only to today's young music audience. However, he hasn't really changed anything about his style or his equipment as the years have passed. "I don't know a thing about synthesizers or other modern advances. I'm playing much the same way I always have. In fact, my playing is probably less cluttered now. I use a very simple Gretsch kit—just two toms and a floor tom, a crash and a ride. There are no *Roto Toms*, because I wouldn't know what to do with them. I've always said, 'Take me as I am,' because that's all there is."

"I really feel, anyway, that with synthesizers, a certain amount of it is for show. If they'd been around in the '60s, I'm quite sure we'd have used them, but I don't feel that I've lost my craft or that I've fallen

behind without them. That Simmons electronic kit sounds like a marvelous little toy, but I've never gone near one. Perhaps somewhere on this tour, when we have time in between shows, I'll go and have a look. But I'm not reactionary. I use what I use. If someone brought something to me, fine, I'd have a go at it. But basically, I'm just lazy, I suppose."

"I always see myself as being very much like Charlie Watts. I'm just after a solid, simple back-up for the band. And I've never had formal training, you know. I go by instinct, and I feel that I've been playing better now than in the past. I can't fall asleep, of course; there's no autopilot in this band." No autopilot, indeed. In fact, John Steel is like the generator in the Animals. Without his driving, precise timing, the rough edges Burdon so loves would quickly make the group sound like any other garage band. And without his taste, the basic blues orientation might sound much more stale and plodding.

Where did that taste come from? Is John Steel a blues player, too? How did he become a drummer in the first place? "I was always an enormous John Coltrane fan, all through the '60s—and Charlie Parker, of course. I remember once we were playing a week at the Paramount Theater in Brooklyn, New York, and I wanted to go to Birdland. I couldn't get down there fast enough to hear for myself. I also went to see Dannie Richmond with Charlie Mingus. We talked and he asked, 'Who's the drummer on "Rising Sun"?' I was just knocked over; it was such a thrill—such a compliment.

"Elvin Jones has always been mind-boggling to me, too, but I never even dared to try to play the way he does. He's one of my idols. But again, what I do is just instinct. I listened to jazz from the time I was 14—Bix, Jelly Roll, Louis Armstrong's Hot Five. I was a die-hard jazz fan and wouldn't listen to anything else. But I really do think there's been a tremendous fusion between jazz and rock'n'roll, and the jazz people have taken what they wanted without taking it very seriously."

"At the end though, we're finding that what we've done has stood the test of time very well—however you define it and wherever it came from. We all had various influences, and they came together in the music we did. Now, when we do 'We Gotta' Get Out Of This Place,' the reaction is simply astonishing. Young kids who were hardly born when we recorded it just go crazy, and then there are the Viet Nam vets who'll say afterward, 'That song got me through the war.' Perhaps it's all a question of taste, and maybe we're all simply in possession of taste. I know I'm risking sounding conceited, but we're just very instinctive, and that's stood us in very good stead over time."

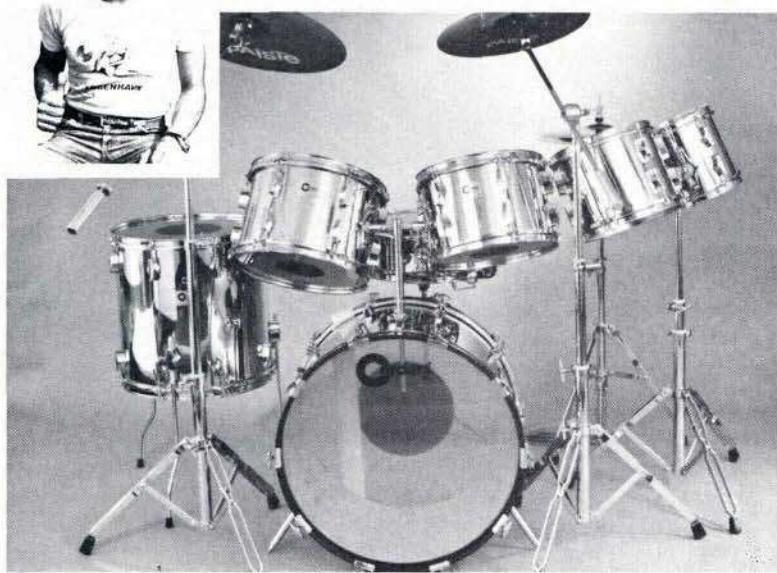


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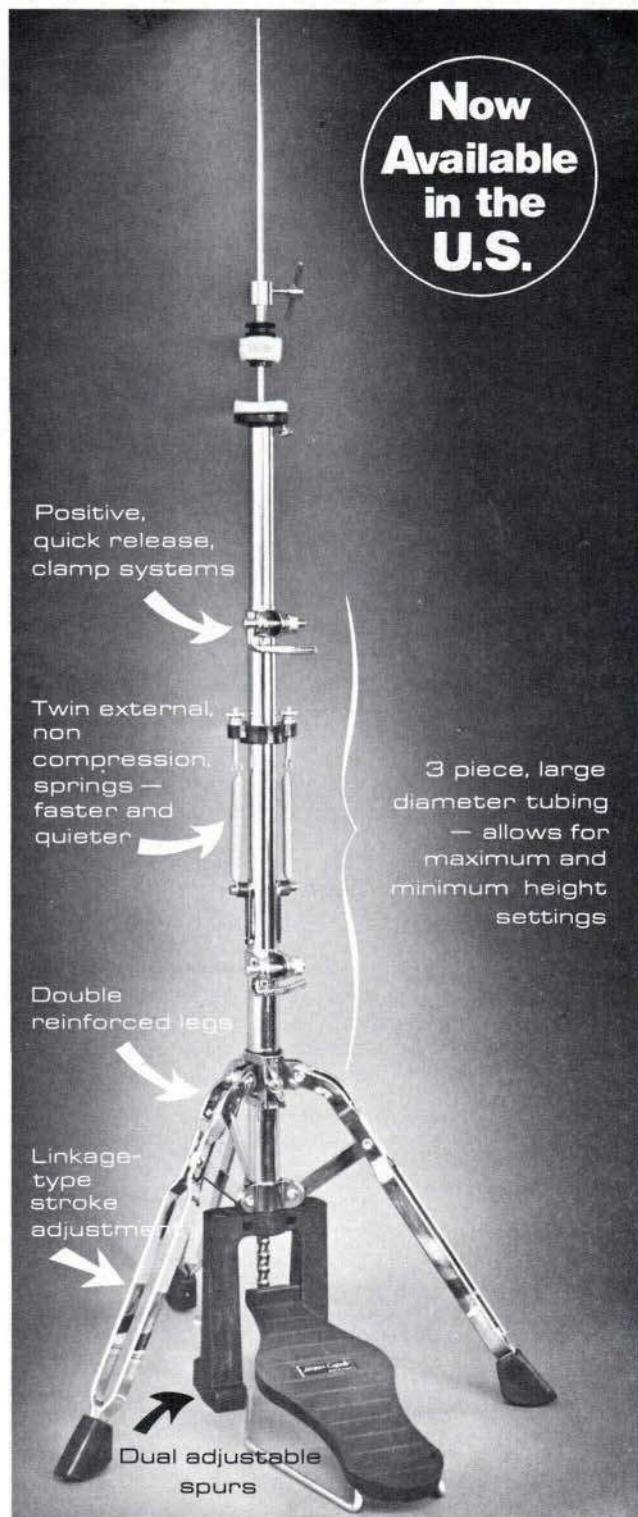
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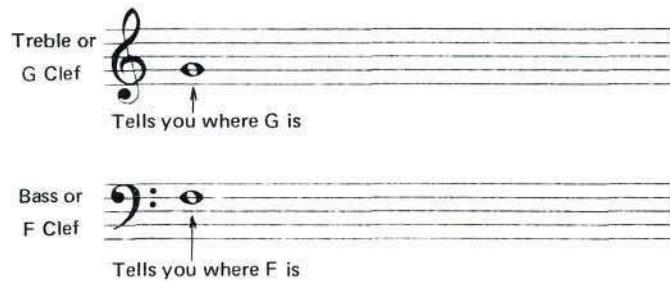
THE MUSICAL DRUMMER

by Bill Molenhof

The Scale

One common denominator shared by all of the truly great drummers is their ability to imply, imitate and contribute to the melodic context of the music they perform with such high artistry that you forget they are using nonspecific pitch instruments. This skill of melodic playing is one of those essential aspects which allows the finest drummers to make such a strong, lasting musical statement, and I thought this would be the best point of departure for our discussion on incorporating musical awareness into your drumming.

The first concept we will look at is one of the basic ingredients of all music: the scale. The tools we use to write the scale down are the staff and the clefs.



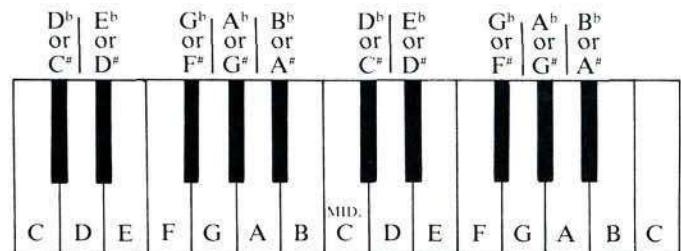
The staff and clefs together fix the pitch of the notes, showing whether they are high or low. A series of notes on the staff forms what we call a scale. To name the notes of the scale, we use the first seven letters of the alphabet: A, B, C, D, E, F, G. Easier than school so far—right? Scales are named after the note on which they begin, which is called the root. The root is the keynote of the scale: D is the root of a D scale, B is the root of a B scale, etc. The simplest scale (which you may know already) is the C major scale.

C Major	two octaves	or two	units of 8
---------	-------------	--------	------------

Scale tone #	#1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C

One important factor in learning a scale is knowing the combination of whole steps and half steps. The half step is the smallest unit of measure in our system of tuning. It is the closest sound that can be produced between two pitches. Go to your keyboard and try playing C-C#, D-D#, E-F, and B-C, first in sequence and then each pair simultaneously. Try to learn the clashing, close sound the half step makes. If you play all of the white and black notes on your

keyboard, strictly in order, you are creating a *Chromatic scale* (C, C#, D, D#, E, F, F#, G, G#, A, A#, B, C, etc.).



The other building block of the scale is the whole step. This step is a broader, less dissonant sound which comprises the majority of the step sequence in a major scale. A whole step is made up of two half steps. What could be easier—right? Two equal halves of anything make a whole. C to D is a whole step, and the two half steps that build this unit are C-C# and C#-D. D to E is a whole step made up of D-D# and D#-E. All major scales have this formula: two whole steps + one half step + three whole steps + one half step.

In C:	C-D	D-E	E-F	F-G	G-A	A-B	B-C
	whole	whole	half	whole	whole	whole	half

Go to your keyboard and play the C major scale and then sing it until you have the sound memorized. Now try the major scale starting on F. As an experiment play F, G, A, B, C. How does that sound? A little different, because we need a half step between 3 and 4 (notes on a scale are often referred to by their numerical sequence, so that easy comparisons may be made between the notes of different scales) instead of the whole step A-B. Try it again using a B as the fourth tone and complete the scale. This kind of close listening is very important to your learning and improving; practice this as much as you can.

The symbol \flat means you lower the pitch one half step.

F Major	Scale
---------	-------

F	G	A	B \flat	C	D	E	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

The symbol \sharp means you raise the pitch one half step.

G Major	Scale
---------	-------

G	A	B	C	D	E	F \sharp	G
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

The reason we use the sharps and flats is to accommodate this exact placement of half and whole steps to create the specific sound

we wish to produce. As you become a better listener through studying music, you will notice the color or contour various whole/half step combinations create. Your ability to contribute to these musical expressions will increase dramatically in direct relation to your ability to hear music more comprehensively, accurately, and with greater awareness.

Review: The major scale has two whole steps, one half step, three whole steps and one half step. The Chromatic scale has twelve half steps (it is *all* half steps). Congratulations! You have just learned two important scale types.

Practice playing and singing these scales from any note on your keyboard and compare the sound to the C major scale. Notice the different shape, contour or color you create, and try to use this expanded listening concept whenever you hear music. Once you start getting the sound of these steps and scales in your ear, you can produce several half-step or whole-step pitch differences in each of your drums by using hand or stick muffling pressure applied to the head. This is excellent ear training. For example, a common tuning of a four-piece drumset approximates this pitch relationship:

(Snares off)

S.D.
F.T.

G C E C G

Scale tone
5 1 3 1 5

Play the following example on one drum, using hand/stick pressure on the head to change the pitch. C = no pressure; D = light pressure; E = medium pressure; G = strong pressure.

E D C D E E E D D D E G G

Scale tone
3 2 1 2 3 3 3 2 2 2 3 5 5

This one's for the holidays:

E E E E E E E E G C D E

Scale tone
3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 5 1 2 3

To maximize the learning experience from these examples, first play each on your keyboard, then sing the melody, and then play it on the drums.

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there. It won't be, because 99% of drummers spend 55 minutes of every practice hour practicing what they can already play! If you have only got half an hour in which to practice each day, you *must* spend that half an hour practicing what you can't do.

I don't think that my attitudes are dissimilar to those of many good players. It's just that I have thought about it and put it into words. This is partly because I am writing a book about the mental attitudes to drumming, which nobody has ever done. There is not a note of music in the book. It is all about the mental attitudes to drumming, because I think that that is where the problem lies. I've got 40 drum books if I have got one. I doubt whether I have done more than four pages of any of them, apart from Charles E. Wilcoxon's *Finger Stroke Control*, which is a very thin book. Any three of those books will teach you all you are going to learn from drum books. It is the mental side of playing which separates the pros from the amateurs.

SG: What do you think that a drummer should expect to get out of lessons?

JH: I meet quite a few young drummers, and the big question is always, "Should a young drummer have lessons and learn to read?" I don't believe it's possible to learn to read drum music on its own. If you learn piano music, violin music, or recorder music, then when you come to read drum music, what you see is a pattern which can be related musically to phrases. So for every hour spent having lessons on the drums, you should have lessons on the piano. If you can only afford one set of lessons a week, don't go to the drum lessons—go to the piano ones. Find a working drummer—not necessarily a teacher—who will give you a lesson every six weeks. That is all you need on drums.

SG: You formed your own band quite early in your career. What gave you the inspiration and impetus to do this?

JH: It relates to my point about the drums being less important to me than the musical context. When people ask me what I play, the usual answer is "the drums," because that is the instrument, but what I would like to say is, "I play the band." That is what I am interested in. That is why I am deeply into the technology of recording. To me that is an extension of drumming. I am simply playing the band again. It used to annoy me to find that my participation was limited to laying down the basic tracks on the drums. Very early on I realized that I had to get very heavily involved. I spent the two years previous to doing the *Colosseum Live* album learning, asking questions, and being a bloody nuisance in the studio until I was able to produce that record on my own. There was a certain amount of input from the others, but I was responsible for the way it sounded and what it was. I'm very pleased with that.

Forming a band was, for me, an extension of all this. I had worked with some of the best people there were. Graham Bond was an inspiration. Mike Taylor was the most original of British jazz composers. He tragically died and therefore hasn't had the recognition he deserves. He taught me an enormous amount. It was about '63, and I was just out of school. He asked me to be his drummer. The drummer before me had been Ginger Baker. Because Mike Taylor was totally unknown in rock and blues circles, people tend to only mention that I followed Ginger in Graham Bond's group. In fact I followed Ginger twice. I was several years younger, and I was the guy who kept taking over when he moved on.

Mike Taylor is still a source of inspiration to me. He was doing things nobody had ever done before. That's what I'm interested in—people who don't sound like other people. They are the strong voices and the people with vision. Graham Bond was a lunatic, a fool, and a drug addict, but he was a wonderful musician. He had a vision. He never realized that vision, but verbally he communicated it to those who were close to him. A few years later that vision came to fruition without him, and I think that is probably what killed him.

SG: Could you explain that vision?

JH: When I formed Colosseum, everybody told us we were mad because we didn't have many vocals. It was instrumentally based music. When I was with Graham Bond, Georgie Fame, and John Mayall, we had played to a predominantly dancing audience. I have seen The Who playing for dancing! Graham had a vision that one day his type of music would be presented to concert audiences. I remember when we played at Enfield Tech about four months after Colosseum was formed. They were all dancing to records, and when the band came on they sat on the floor. We all looked at each other in disbelief! That was our first seated audience, but within three months everybody was seated. I'll never forget that. The change happened so quickly.

When I formed my own band it was because I felt that I had played with some really good people as a sideman, but I couldn't see where I was going to go once I had left the people I was with. I remember telling John Mayall, "You don't need a drummer. You misuse a drummer, and your music would speak better without one." While with him I had reduced a ten-piece drumkit, which I had used with Graham, to a snare drum, bass drum, hi-hat and one cymbal. The music dictated what I did. There were whole evenings with John when I never used most of the drums. It surprised a lot of people. If I wanted a tom-tom fill I flicked the snares off with my left hand, played the fill, and flicked them on again. People couldn't get that together. But I had reduced the drums to

what John needed. Finally I told him he didn't need a drummer at all. He didn't have the courage to do it then, but 18 months later he did. He had one more drummer after me, and then spent two or three years without one.

SG: The sound of Colosseum was unique. When you find a drummer coming along as leader of a band that doesn't sound like any other band, it is most unusual.

JH: Battles were fought! That was a very hard band to work with. I was immensely relieved when it was over. It lasted three years and I had to fight all the way. It was tough. I had to drag performances out of the guys.

SG: You mean that your expectations were different than theirs?

JH: Dick Heckstall-Smith wanted to play blues. Dave Greenslade had never been in a decision-making band before. In fact he found his feet with Colosseum; he found a compositional talent in Colosseum which has blossomed and developed since then. He found his feet in that band, but the talent that he found, I didn't want. I didn't think it was right for the band. While the material you hear on the records is right for the band, there was an awful lot of material which was developed but not used. So what you hear on the records was the result of a lot of pain. The band broke up because we were trying to make another album and couldn't get the material together at all. It finally killed it stone dead, because we were all moving in different directions. I don't believe that you can achieve much in the way of creation without a lot of pain, and I don't regret a moment of it. All the torture was probably worth it because it was a unique voice at the time and it influenced a lot of people. The problem was that we didn't realize it at the time; we thought that we were failures. We have sold a million records since breaking up, but back then we were bewildered and thought that nobody recognized what we were doing. We are all still very good friends, in spite of the fact that we spent a lot of time shouting at each other. That is the sort of bond you can have with people.

SG: What about the business headaches of being a bandleader and a creative musician when you were relatively young?

JH: There are two routes to go. One is don't get involved in business at all. Hire lawyers to make sure that you are not ripped off. The other way is to do what I did, which I wouldn't wish on my worst enemy, but I got lumbered with it, and still am lumbered with it. When I left school, I attended a business-trainee course, where I studied law, accounts, business and organizational methods. So right from the beginning, two and two made four. When I joined John Mayall, I began counting the audience and finding out how much they were being charged. I'll never forget coming home in the van after a gig and saying to John, "Do you know how many people



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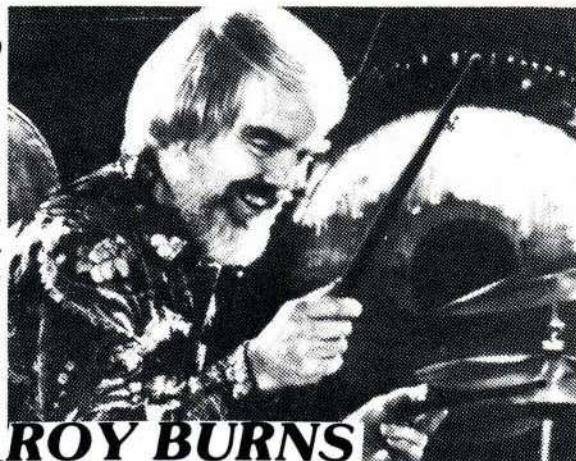
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we had tonight?" He didn't, so I told him. Then I said, "Do you know how much the club was charging?" He didn't, so I told him. All I could see of his face was two incredulous eyes reflected in the headlights of the car behind us. He had suddenly realized that he was getting nothing! He went into the office the following morning and canceled every gig in the book. They said, "You can't do that. They are contracted." He said, "Put them back in at double the money." They said, "You're mad. People won't stand for it." But, do you know, *not one* promoter complained.

That is typical of our business. The agency hadn't bothered to send a representative out to the gigs. They didn't know the crowds John was pulling. The promoter would be on the phone the next day and say, "It wasn't that good. I had to spend a lot on advertising. I didn't make much on it." So next time, the band would go back for the same money or a bit more, and these people would make fortunes. Right from the early days that sort of thing happened to me, and I got involved, whether I liked it or not. It's the way my brain works, I suppose. But I've got to tell you, you lose an awful lot of life that way, and it is getting worse, not better.

SG: When you formed Colosseum 2, were you trying to create what, in your opinion, you had failed to create with Colosseum 1?

JH: Colosseum 2 was quite a different thing, but it was where I thought Colos-

seum I would have been if it had kept going. But my predominant memory of Colosseum 2 was that it was too loud!

SG: Surely you, as leader, could have had a say in this?

JH: No. Not possible, I'm afraid. I couldn't control the level of sound from where I was. If there is a guitarist who decides to turn up, the only thing the sound man at the desk can do is turn the other instruments up to match the guitar. That was the biggest problem. I couldn't stand the volume. There was just no listening going on with the people involved; it was just hammering through. *Electric Savage* was a great record. It was recorded very quickly—more or less live. Once that was done the operation went very quickly downhill, in my view. I was lucky to get out when I did.

I can't help feeling that one of the reasons why nothing I have ever done has lasted is because I get bored easily. I feel that any relationship between *most* people has only got just so much creative potential, beyond which they start repeating themselves. So, long relationships can be stultifying. If you look at drummers who have had very long relationships with one operation, they often become caricatures of themselves. They cease to become working entities in a creative sense. So I keep moving on because I like fresh challenges all the time. I like the fight more than I do the result. I am not a good bet for some-

body who wants to build up a long-term operation to retire on.

SG: I imagine that you would have a long-term operation in view now, working with Barbara in Paraphernalia.

JH: No. When I speak, I sound a lot more organized than I am. I never do have any plans. I drift from project to project, and from idea to idea. While I do hope that my marriage with Barbara lasts, because we are very happy and have been for many years, I wouldn't say that either of us has a lifetime commitment to only play with each other, or to the continuation of Paraphernalia. We will do the best for each other and for ourselves, as far as that is compatible. If she wants to get another drummer, she knows that she could tell me tomorrow, and if I wanted to leave, I know I could tell her tomorrow.

SG: Barbara is very much the leader of Paraphernalia?

JH: She is the leader. It's a deal. I handle the business, I record the albums and I drive the band as far as the drums are able. But without her I am useless, because she has got this extraordinary talent for composition, which is the best I have ever met. We have got enough material already written for several albums. She has done a sonata for T.V.S., there is a feature film on the go, two T.V. series, and more Paraphernalia material than I know what to do with. The current show is a complete suite, which will be the whole of the next album, probably with Paraphernalia augmented to a ten- or eleven-piece band. I would be just as happy producing Barbara and not playing, at the moment. The music is more important, and if I could get better results sitting in the control room and *not* behind the drums, I would get another drummer in to do that.

SG: But would another drummer match up to your expectations?

JH: I would probably be knocked out with the person. You might listen and say, "Oh, it's not the same thing at all!" But I wouldn't hear that. I hear good in others and bad in myself.

SG: Barbara must have an affinity with you as the drummer.

JH: She thinks I'm rotten as a drummer, but very good as someone who plays the right things behind her. I'm the most "undrummy" drummer she has ever worked with, which I think is the greatest compliment.

I would like to be thought of as the ultimate nondrummer. I actually believe that my drum style is totally uncopiable. I hear people playing and sounding like Bill Bruford. We have got three very good Steve Gadd surrogates in London at the moment, and I have heard half a dozen excellent Billy Cobham copies. I would like to think that a young drummer couldn't put on headphones and "get me off." A guy came up to me in Sweden recently and said, "I have been listening to *Colosseum Live*

and *Electric Savage*. Do you know that no two bars are played the same on those albums?" I suddenly realized that that is probably my achievement. You can't reach out and touch me.

Let me say then that my favorite drummer is the *only* drummer with whom I have never been able to understand what is going on either technically or mentally. That is Elvin Jones. I've got most of the records he has ever made, but I just don't understand what he is doing. You give me *anybody*, and after ten minutes I would be able to play it back to you. That's in terms of listening to four bars on a record and then getting it off physically. But with Elvin, I can't even put the beats in the same place. He's so far ahead of everybody else, nobody is even beginning to catch up. And that is with the music he played in 1965 with Coltrane. It may be that he is not ahead or behind. He is just very special and nobody will ever get close to him. He is untouchable; that is what I admire most. There is a nuance in there that is unwritable. It's hearable, but it isn't reproducible unless you can play *that*, and only he can. He is one of the great nondrummers of all time.

Dick Heckstall-Smith and I used to have a running joke. We used to try to think who our favorite drummers were. In answer to *that* question, we would say things like "Duke Ellington," "John Coltrane," and "Miles Davis." The idea was that the great drummers are not the drummers, but

the people who make drummers sound great by the environment which they give them. So the great drummer was not Billy Cobham. The great drummer was John McLaughlin, because he gave Billy the musical environment to be truly inspired and creative. The great drummer was not Elvin Jones. It was Coltrane. The great drummer was not Sam Woodyard. It was Ellington. You see the point? If you are a drummer who plays the way I play—simply as an extension of the music—you are not playing at all. You are being played! You might be playing the band, but you are not playing the drums. That sums it all up.

SG: You talk about American players. Do you think that British jazz musicians tend to look to the Americans for their inspiration?

JH: We never did!

SG: Not you personally, but . . .

JH: Well, yes. That's what's wrong with Britain. We have got an awful lot of talented musicians here who refuse to find their own voices. They are besotted by the front cover of *Modern Drummer* with well-known American drummers on it. The trouble is that the rock drummers do fine. People like Bill Bruford and Stewart Copeland are original voices. They don't play like Americans. But when it comes to the jazz drummers, they are still walking around in a dream, knocked out by the American drummers. They just have not developed. It may be that all the talented

drummers in this country have said to themselves, "I'm not going to hang around playing jazz in pubs. I want to get out there where the action is." So all the talented people have gone to play rock. It is a cruel thing to say, but it may well be that that is what is going on.

We've got Trevor Tomkins and Martin Drew, who are both beautiful jazz drummers. Then we've got the crossover drummers like John Marshall—one of my favorite drummers. He is a very original player, but I don't think that he has ever found the musical environment in which to develop. Over a long period, drummers are only as good as the people they play with. I feel very strongly about John. He needs the music to make him heard, but he just hasn't found it yet.

By and large, the majority of jazz drummers in this country sound loose and old-fashioned to me. The worst thing you can do is to take an old drummer's style and try to re-create it in a young drummer. A young drummer who wants to play jazz has got to understand what jazz is. Jazz is *not* the re-creation of Philly Joe Jones or Art Blakey. People don't go to *hear jazz*; they go to hear certain personalities. When I was a kid I wasn't interested in *jazz*, but I was interested in John Coltrane, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Miles Davis, Art Blakey and so on. The worst thing that a young drummer can do is to try to re-create the old jazz records. We need jazz music which is alive and is reflecting what is going

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SG: Is there a market for it though?

JH: That's not important. There is always a market if there are enough people generating something, but people aren't going to pay to hear music done second-hand. I will always go to hear Art Blakey or Elvin Jones play. They are the originals. I don't want to hear a young drummer trying to play like them. There are not enough young drummers prepared to find their own voices, because they have been told by too many other people to play like Steve Gadd, [laughs] So we are back in a full circle to where we came from.

SG: Your recent solo album, *A Night In The Sun*, was recorded in Rio with Brazilian musicians. How did that come about?

JH: We have our own publishing company in the U.K. and a subpublisher in America and Europe. He is also a publisher for many of the key session musicians in Brazil. They write material which doesn't get issued much in Europe and North America. I told him that the trouble with being a drummer is that you are always in search of good writers. He suggested the project because he had some really good tunes written by these Brazilian people. I said, "Okay, but I'm not going to make a drum solo album. I'll play the music, and if you want to call it a Jon Hiseman album, fine. But I don't want to do any drum solos on it." In fact, there is one four-bar solo on it. I did the whole thing in four, six-hour sessions. That included learning the material as well. For me it was an enormous challenge and incredibly exhilarating. It was a wonderful experience because the musi-

cians were so nice. Marcio Montarroyos, who also plays lead trumpet and wrote two of the numbers, did a great job of producing and mixing. He got something out of it that I would never have done, and I am grateful for the experience. I would like to do another one. I chose the material. They presented lots of stuff and I made the final choice. I had a say in how it was organized, but in fact Marcio Montarroyos is the man who is responsible for that record, and I am very grateful to him.

SG: You have been a member of the United Jazz & Rock Ensemble for many years. Could you tell us about that?

JH: The United Jazz & Rock Ensemble was formed in 1975. The members of the Ensemble are all bandleaders who run operations in their own right. The band only comes together for four weeks in every year. Before we record, we usually have a couple of days' rehearsal and four or five gigs. It's a marvelous release for everybody concerned. We come together away from our individual problems and play charts which we haven't seen before. We have good nights and bad nights. There have been times when I've played the best I ever have. Although sometimes after a bad night, I wonder why they stick with me. There must be an awful lot of drummers who could cope technically with that gig better than I do. I find that band an enormous strain because each of the bandleaders who contributes a piece of music is writing in a different way, involving a drum style which somebody else has made a career out of. I play ten of them in a night, and I don't find it easy to switch styles.

SG: You have spoken about going into the studio and learning new material, apropos of *A Night In The Sun* and the United Jazz & Rock Ensemble. Presumably you are able to take longer with *Paraphernalia*.

JH: Oh yes. There is plenty of time to develop the material. Barbara writes things, and we rehearse them and demo them. We take them out on gigs and maybe change them. Then we might shelve them for a while and bring them out again. I often worry about drum parts for six months—worrying away, wondering how to do it—then suddenly it's there.

SG: When you are learning fresh material, you must be much more involved with the melody line than a drummer would be who plays a rhythm and is only concerned with stops and starts and bits of phrasing on the first run through. Do you work from a piano part rather than a drum part?

JH: Barbara gives me what she calls a short score. It consists of the lines that she would play together with any other lead line, like keyboard or even bass guitar if that happens to carry a lead line. I will work off that for the first two or three times through. After that I put it on the floor, and from that point I begin to make mistakes. But I don't learn a piece of music until I am doing it

from memory. When I am reading it, it doesn't register at all.

I did an album with John Dankworth last year. We did a complete album in eleven hours. At the end of one six-hour session, we had done five numbers. After that I went into the control room and they were playing something which I just did not recognize *at all*, but they told me it was the first thing we had done that day. I couldn't believe it. When you are working in a situation like that you actually concentrate everything on your reading. It goes straight in and comes straight out again. You react to what you see, but you don't learn at all. Take the music away and you make mistakes, but you don't make the same mistakes twice. You remember how things go. I work without music at all times when I perform.

SG: Playing with the melody lines and cadences, as you do, do you tune the drums to suit the music?

JH: Yes. I often tune the toms to the key of the piece. Sometimes I've thought they sounded right, but when I've heard them back I've found that it isn't the same note, but it is still in tune, as the mic's are picking up a different harmonic. So, yes. If the tom-toms are going to play anything more than a passing role, they will be tuned to the track. Just a quick twist and they come in. My toms are tuned about a third interval apart. I don't make a big deal out of tuning.

SG: You only see drums as valid within a relevant musical context, but it must be said that you do some pretty amazing solos.

JH: Someone said it was my "claim to fame"—that I am probably one of the three or four best drum soloists in the world. If that's true, I would put it down to the things we spoke of before. I treat the solo as a continuation of the music, and getting into the solo is everything for me. What kicks me in is vital. I have to be very careful about the piece of music I choose to solo on, because unless it is right for me, I can't get started.

SG: I was slightly surprised to find you soloing on "Aliyah" on *Paraphernalia In Concert*.

JH: "Aliyah" was my creation. Pete Lemer wrote it, but I persuaded Barbara that we should do it. We spent four months working on it. We just couldn't get it right at all.

SG: The Middle Eastern concept of the thing doesn't say "drumkit" at all.

JH: Writing the drum part to that was my greatest challenge. It took about three months. We ditched it a couple of times. I just couldn't find a way to play the drum part. The drum part I actually created is based on playing the hi-hat with the left hand, which I had never done before. I had to say, "Look, give me three months to work on it." So we stopped rehearsing it, and I practiced and got my left hand work-

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ing. It was great. It made me do something I had wanted to do for some time, and that has pushed me on into other areas.

SG: Why did you and Barbara wait a relatively long time before starting to work together?

JH: Barbara and I married in 1967, and she was not a jazz musician. She had come up in the classical tradition, and was getting into jazz and rock as a result of the records which were lying around the house. She was slowly making a crossover and also getting into composition. Then in 1971, we started a family. Once we had done that, it was not possible for us to work together because of the traveling involved. So we waited until 1979 for the family to be old enough for us to get a live-in housekeeper, and then we could travel together.

SG: And in the meantime Barbara was still composing?

JH: Yes. As you know, I'm always interested in original people, and I am proud to say that my wife has developed into just about the most original voice in the area of jazz/rock music. The major German daily newspaper said, "Only Barbara Thompson knows the way forward." And I think that that's right. She is a real original. She is now producing the most extraordinary compositions. The Paraphernalia experience has been the most exciting experience because it has been the biggest challenge for me. It has changed my playing more

than any other band. I've had to change a lot of aspects of my playing to cope with what Barbara has written.

SG: The band on *Ghosts* with Barbara and Rod Argent is a studio band only, isn't it?

JH: Yes. Apart from Andrew Lloyd-Webber's *Variations*, which I was only the drummer on, I've never had to view the music purely from the point of how the studio can treat it. In other words, what I have done before is to take a band on the road, and then go into the studio to try to re-create the same thing. I've spent most of my life failing miserably at this, because it just can't be done. People buy albums of live working groups as souvenirs of the live performance, but seldom do you get the same thing. Barbara's live album with Paraphernalia, the United Jazz & Rock Ensemble's live album, and Colosseum's live album have all been the most successful albums for those bands.

Ghosts was my first studio project ever. It only scratched the surface, but I think it was a good record. We are going to do another one, even more studio oriented. You can do things in the studio which you couldn't do live. Numbers take on a different life in the studio.

If anybody asked me now why Colosseum, Tempest and Colosseum 2 were not more successful, I would say that the budgets I was given to make the records, based on the company's expectations of sales for instrument music, were usually only 15, 20

or 25 percent of what most rock bands were spending. We had to go in with ready prepared music and simply play it. Twelve days to make a record was the longest I ever spent. You know how long people like Yes and Jethro Tull spent making records? Months! We didn't have the success because the material wasn't recorded for the studio. It was watered down versions of live material. If we had been able to develop things in the studio, get the material right for that medium, spend some money doing that and then go out and do it live, we might have had more success. But I blame myself, because at any stage I could have turned round and said, "Right! We are going to do it differently." But I didn't.

SG: Jon, you have given us a great deal to think about here. Your opinions are likely to influence people's thinking.

JH: There is no such thing as right or wrong. I believe that these are opinions and must be presented as such. I also think that a big problem with magazines over the last ten years is that they have spent most of their time presenting opinions as fact, particularly in editorial. It can be misleading. I like the idea of the in-depth interview that *Modern Drummer* does, for instance. You get the impression that these are the drummers' opinions, and because they are good players, you are interested in their opinions. One never gets the idea that any of it is fact. And that's crucial because, in fact, there is no fact!



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by Rick Van Horn

The Resume

If you are anything like me, when you find yourself out of work the situation becomes very serious very quickly. If music has been your full-time career—your entire source of income—you need to re-establish that source as soon as possible. You don't really have time to make a connection with other out-of-work players, form a band, rehearse, and then seek employment as a new group. What you are looking for is an established, working band that for some reason or another needs to replace their drummer. The trick is to make a connection with that band, sell them on your ability to fill their requirements, and thus get yourself into a paying situation immediately.

Last time, we discussed various methods you might employ to help you find a new gig. I mentioned the importance of communication—letting the musical community in your area know of your availability—and gave several suggestions on how to facilitate that communication. Most of these suggestions were based on the assumption that you were seeking *local* work—that is, with a band in your own home area. But I've received several letters in the past few months that say something like: "I'm a drummer looking for work with a good traveling band. How do I make contact with people who might need my services, but are on the road?" I also get letters from the players who are themselves traveling, find themselves out of a gig, and want to know the best way to make contact with a working group that needs a drummer on short notice.

The method I've found most successful has been the preparation and distribution of a resume package. The beauty of a resume is that, although it works very well on a local basis, it works even better on a national basis, since you can mail a resume to a heck of a lot more places than you could ever hope to visit for a personal interview. The catch is that the resume must be complete, attractive, and effective in selling you to potential employers. It has to make *them* want to contact *you*, in order to gain further information, set up an audition, or in some cases, offer you a job immediately.

Where To Send It

On a local basis, contacting band-leaders, booking agents and club owners generally isn't difficult. But if you plan on distributing your package on a wider basis—especially if you hope to approach

traveling acts—how do you reach them? The answer is: You don't. That is, you don't reach the acts directly. It simply isn't possible; you don't know who they are or where they are. So you do something better. You send your package to an address that is not only permanent, but which will allow you to reach several groups at once. You send it to booking agencies and management companies across the country, especially in the major entertainment cities (L.A., Vegas, New York, Chicago, Nashville, etc.). The beauty of this system is that you send only one resume to an office that might handle dozens of groups, any one of which might be in need of a replacement. Remember, when a working band suddenly needs a new member, they're just as desperate as you are, if not more so. They're out of work too, and may actually have bookings that they can't fill until they find a new drummer. They'll be counting on their agent or manager to help them find a replacement quickly. This is what you want to take advantage of.

When I'm preparing a mailing list of agencies and management companies I go first to the trade papers, like *Billboard*, *Variety*, and the newspaper of the musicians' union, the *International Musician*. Their classified sections contain ads for many different agencies, all seeking talent to sign. Granted, the ads say they want complete acts, bands and shows, but at least it gives you the name and address of the agency. If they handle bands, they need a line on single players too, for those situations I've already described.

Another source of names and addresses is as close as your nearest library. Go to the largest one near you, and ask for the telephone directories for the cities you wish to approach. Turn to the Yellow Pages (headings like "Entertainment," "Talent" or "Booking Agencies," "Theatrical Agencies," etc.) and you'll find several potential candidates. The larger ones are likely to have ads; the smaller ones just a phone listing. If an address is shown, just copy it down and you're on your way. If not, you'll have to call the office and ask for their address. If zip codes aren't shown, it's a simple matter to go to the post office and use the national zip code directory. (The library may have one, too.)

Using this method, and selecting only ten cities that I wanted to concentrate on, I have been able to create a mailing list of over one hundred addresses. Each was a

major entertainment management office of some kind, representing several different acts or bands. Thus my line of communication ultimately led to over five hundred prospective employers. Not a bad return for an afternoon in the library.

A good resume package should have several carefully prepared parts, in order to maximize its effectiveness. Those parts include: 1) a cover letter; 2) a data sheet; 3) a photo; 4) a demo tape; and 5) a protective mailer. Let's take a look at what you might include in each of these parts.

Cover Letter

The cover letter is what introduces the package (and you) to the addressee. It makes the entire resume a little more personal, adding a human touch to your presentation. Without it, the package will more or less appear like a list of ingredients on a cereal box—informative, but not very interesting.

The letter (and everything else of a written nature in your resume package) *must* be typewritten. This is simply a fact of business; nothing else looks professional enough to do the job you want your resume to do. Individual copies can be photocopied from the original letter, and then each address typed in later. Be sure to allow enough space on the original letter for lengthy addresses, and when typing the addresses on the individual copies, align your margins to conform to those of the original, so the fact that you're using a pre-printed form letter isn't made more obvious. If possible, use the same typewriter (or at least the same type style and size) that the original letter was typed with. If you do not type, ask a friend to do it for you, or hire someone. You can find typing services (and, in fact, resume-preparation services) in the Yellow Pages. Remember, any money you spend in an effort to obtain employment can be tax deductible, so be sure to keep your receipts.

The cover letter should briefly introduce you, outline what it is you do, explain what kind of work you're looking for, and list any special facts or considerations that you think might be of interest to a potential employer. Don't go into a lot of detail. That will come later on the data sheet. And don't give a lengthy biography. They can get that when they call you back. Keep the letter nonspecific in terms of reference to places, since you'll be sending the same letter to many areas of the country. The fol-

lowing is an example of a successful cover letter format:

John Drummer
1234 Cymbal Street
Hometown, CA 92001
(619) 555-5309

(space for date)

(allow five lines for address)

Gentlemen:

I am a professional drummer and vocalist seeking employment in your area commencing April, 1984. I have experience in all forms of musical performance, from hard rock concert bands to studio work; from 15-piece stage bands to duos. I've been performing professionally for some 18 years.

My drumming style lends itself best to groups of four or more, playing high-energy dance or show music. I work well with tight rhythm and horn sections. However, I have had success with piano-bass-drum trios, and for over a year was a member of the house band in a major hotel resort, backing up different entertainers each week for their own acts. I read show charts, work quickly into new material, and make an excellent short-notice replacement for a group needing a drummer. I also have experience as a stand-up vocalist fronting a band.

My vocal range is second tenor, with a strong high falsetto for harmonies. I can handle all styles of lead vocals, from power rock to the dramatic ballads of Barry Manilow or Neil Diamond.

My road experience includes a national tour with The ShowMen, a show group featuring contemporary, variety arrangements, as well as comedy dialogue and dance routines. I have also toured the Pacific Northwest with a lounge trio.

Most recently I was the drummer and lead male vocalist for The Hot-Shots, completing a nonstop run of seven years in the Los Angeles area at the end of February '84.

I will be available as of April '84, and am looking for a solid club band or act, or a remunerative concert act or show. If your agency represents an act needing a drummer [or in the case of a letter to a band-leader, "if your group needs a drummer"] or is putting together a backup band for a lead entertainer, I would appreciate your consideration.

Circumstances prevent my being able to travel for audition purposes outside the L.A. area. However, if you are interested, I can provide a cassette demo of my most recent group, featuring my work on drums and vocals. A brief request from you will suffice for me to send the demo. Personal information accompanies this letter.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from

you soon.

Sincerely,
(signature)
John Drummer

Naturally, you have to prepare the letter with information that applies to your situation. You may not be a vocalist. You may play other instruments, or have something else to offer. This letter is an overview, designed to get the addressee interested enough in you to read the entire resume package. The letter should be polite but professional. You are a business person selling a product—your services as a drummer—through the mail. This should be a business letter.

Data Sheet

This is where you can really give detailed information. But this time, you don't use the letter format. Instead, you use a brief outline format, so that you can give a lot of information without making the addressee do a lot more reading. As an example, here is a typical data sheet, with a few brief comments about the items on it:

- 1) Name: Give your complete name, and any nickname or stage name by which you are known.
- 2) Age: Don't fib; being young is no particular advantage when you're writing to unknown employers. You don't know how old they or their group may be. You can't do anything about your age anyway, so you might as well be straight about it. List your birthdate, too. Believe it or not, some musical employers are heavily into astrology. I have a friend who got a job over two other candidates because he was the right "sign" and they weren't.
- 3) Marital status: Again, being married or single could each be either an advantage or a disadvantage. Some traveling groups prefer single members, since there are no problems with loved ones left behind, and the leader doesn't have to worry about someone yearning to get off the road and "back home." On the other hand, some groups prefer married members on the grounds that they are more mature and more stable. Groups that are co-ed often have problems unless personal attachments are clearly defined, and married members make that a lot easier.
- 4) Travel availability: Naturally, if you are sending this resume all over the country, we assume you are able to travel. But does that mean you are willing to go "on the road," or that you will relocate your residence for a steady gig in another city? How flexible are you? Are there some areas you don't want to work in, due to health or other personal reasons? This is the place to outline any traveling conditions you may have. Don't go into too much detail; that comes later in contract negotiations after they've called you. But if you do have anything to say here other than "free to travel," do so, and clearly.
- 5) Drumming experience: How long have you been playing drums?
- 6) Professional experience: How long have you been getting paid for drumming?
- 7) Reading ability: If you are a monster reader, by all means say so, and try to make clear what you are capable of reading. I can cut a simple show chart—one that is basically a road map for the arrangement and doesn't really go much into specific drum parts. I am by no means a great studio-quality sight reader. Don't just say "can read." You should say "strong sight reader," "heavy reading experience," or something along those lines if that is the case. If you don't read, it's no shame. I'd say the majority of club players aren't strong readers if they do read at all. We usually don't need to read, and unless you use it constantly, your reading skill deteriorates rapidly. But by no means should you say "cannot read." Never state what you can't do in a resume. State what you can do. Substitute a positive comment like "very good ear—can pick up parts readily."
- 8) Vocal range: If you sing, state your range (i.e., tenor, baritone, etc.) and whether you sing leads, backgrounds, or both. I include the fact that I can sing high falsetto harmonies as well, and that I can sing lead or background equally well from behind or in front of the drums.
- 9) Additional instruments: If you double on anything else, say so.
- 10) Additional talents: If you write music, arrange, do artwork, have experience operating or repairing sound equipment, or work with lights, costumes or other elements of show business, be sure to add that. I did a show on the road for ten months where, in addition to drumming and singing, I portrayed a character all night, in complete costume and makeup, with a partially prepared script and the rest of the show totally improvised. It was as much theatrical as musical. I got the job because I was a theater major in college, and had experience in the areas of acting, makeup, handling lights and improvising dialogue. My resume said as much, and it helped me land that gig.
- 11) Equipment: Briefly list what you normally play on stage. Assume that your prospective employer isn't a drummer. The employer is not likely to care about individual pieces of equipment by brand, dimension or catalog number. Just list the size of the kit, the number of cymbals, and any other special equipment you normally use. My list would read like this: Nine-piece drumset (single bass); ten cymbals; two *Synare 3* drum synthesizers; wind chimes; headset microphone; 6' x 6' portable drum riser; self-contained monitor amp and speaker system.
- 12) Additional equipment: If you have anything that you might be able to contrib-

ute to a band, you might list it here. Examples would be P.A. equipment, lights, microphones, or additional percussion instruments for other people to use (congas, timbales, hand "toys," etc.).

13) Educational background: This is optional. I list my attendance at the University of California, Irvine, as a theater major in lighting design and acting. Other drummers I know like to list the teachers they've studied with. Obviously if you're a Juilliard or Berklee graduate, you'll want to show that.

14) Union affiliation: State whether you are a member of the musicians' union, and if so, with what local. If you are not, say so, and indicate whether you would be willing to join the union if required for a job.

15) Physical description: Since a photo is not likely to give a complete indication of your physical appearance, it's a good idea to list your height, weight, hair color, eye color, etc. In some cases you may be taking the place of an individual who wore certain costumes, and you may literally have to fit the same size. Some bands and acts are very image-conscious, and how they blend together physically is a big part of that.

16) Permanent mailing address: This is very important, since you may not always be at home. You may get a short-term gig and be on the road for a brief time when a really good offer comes your way. Use the address of some relative or friend, or even a paid P.O. Box, where the mail can al-

ways get to you. This is also good insurance for the future. Agencies and management offices often place resumes on file, and pull them out a year or more later when the need arises. Who knows where you'll be when they want to contact you?

17) Permanent message phone: Same idea here. List your current phone number so they can reach you now, because you're obviously eager to hear from them as soon and as directly as possible. But include a permanent message number, where they can reach you at some time in the future when you may no longer have your current phone listing.

18) Date available: Give the date on which you could actually start work. If you need a certain amount of advance notice, then state that as well.

The Photo

No resume is complete without a photo. Your letter has introduced you, and your data sheet has fleshed out the details. Now the employer can put a face with all that information and come up with a person to consider. There are two ways to go when including a photo in a resume package. You can enclose a separate photo print (the traditional 8x10 black & white glossy) which adds bulk to the package and costs quite a bit for reprints, or you can take a good, clear snapshot to a photocopy shop that has the capability to do color Xeroxing. Prepare your data sheet with a layout that will allow you to place the photo on it

as well, and have the whole thing photocopied at the same time. On my last resume I was able to include a color snapshot on the data sheet, at a cost of 75¢ per sheet. When you figure that I would otherwise have had to pay for an individual reprint (in addition to a data sheet copy) for every package, this method was more economical, and certainly looked professional. As an additional benefit, I could have it all prepared at one time in one place, rather than having to deal with a photo lab for the reprints and a copy shop for the cover letter and data sheet copies.

Whichever method you choose, be sure that the photo itself is a good likeness and has been taken close enough to show your face clearly. A playing shot is fine, as long as your expression isn't unpleasant and you aren't obscured by cymbals or microphones. The idea is to show you as a person, not necessarily to capture your spirit on the drums.

Demo Tape

It is critical that you have some sort of demo available, because no matter how good your resume makes you sound on paper, the employer needs to know how good you sound on the drums. A tape of your drumming with your most recent band is your best bet. It need not have been done in the studio. A decent-quality "live" tape should suffice. Of course, that means that you had to have made it while you were still working. If you're already out of work and have no tape, you've got a problem. You can make a tape of just you, drumming alone, but that certainly isn't as desirable as a tape demonstrating how you work with a group. Perhaps you could get some friends together, jam a little, and come up with a few tunes which you could record. I've also heard of drummers playing along with recorded music. What they did was record the song entirely on one stereo channel, and themselves entirely on the other. Then the listener can bring the balance up on the "live" drum channel, and get an idea of what the drummer is doing.

Of course, if you have the money, the facilities, and the opportunity, the video demo is highly in vogue these days. But

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that's usually for entire bands trying to sell their act. They can pool their resources, and they are usually very selective about who they send the tapes out to. Since you want to saturate your potential market, a videotape isn't really very practical, due to the expense of preparation, duplication and distribution.

Assuming that you have a demo made on a standard cassette, you certainly don't have to include a copy with every resume you send out. In reality, you can expect not to get any reply to at least 50% of your packages, and a polite "Thank you. We'll hold you in our files" from another 25%. If you're lucky, you'll get responses from the other 25%, so what you should do is state on your resume (in the cover letter, and again on the data sheet if you wish) "cassette demo available upon request." At least this way someone has to contact you in order to get your demo, and that establishes a line of communication. It also lets you know how many cassettes you actually need to have duplicated. It's likely that your responses won't all come in at once, so initially, all you need is a high-quality master tape, from which you can have dubs run off as you need them. Once again, remember that the cost of making a demo, and the subsequent costs of duplication and distribution, are tax-deductible items, so keep track.

Protective Mailer

You've gone to a lot of trouble to pre-

pare your resume package, so you should give some thought to its protection while going through the mail. I recommend the use of the padded envelopes available at office supply stores or the post office. By the time you put in a cover letter, a one- or two-page data sheet, possibly a photograph with a couple of sheets of protective tagboard, and a cassette tape in its plastic box, you'll have a fairly bulky package, yet one that contains items of a fragile nature that you don't want crushed or bent. The padded envelopes are available in various sizes, and offer plenty of protection to their contents.

Just before you put your items inside, think about the outside of the envelope, which is the first thing the addressee will see. You should either use typewritten, adhesive mailing labels (you won't get those envelopes into a typewriter) or you should hand print, neatly and with waterproof ink, all the pertinent address information. You should also print, on the front and the back: "fragile—do not bend or crush," to further prevent damage to your precious contents.

Following Up

A procedure I've employed in the past is to follow up on my mailed-out resumes within two weeks. If I have had no reply at all from the addressee, I make a brief phone call, simply inquiring as to whether they received the package. This reminds them about it (and me), and may get some-

one to look it over another time. If I get a form letter stating, "We'll hold you on file," I send a thank-you note to the person who signed the letter. This again brings my name to their attention, since they have to go back and find my original letter, in order to file my new one. (Working in several business offices has given me a little inside information about things like that.) Naturally, if I get a note or a call asking for further information, or requesting a demo, I respond as quickly as possible.

The greatest resume in the world will not guarantee you a job. But I do guarantee that the larger the market that you can cover, the better your odds will be of making your "sale." A resume package, professionally prepared and presented, can cover an infinitely larger territory in a much shorter time than even the most enterprising individual.



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JAZZ DRUMMERS WORKSHOP

by Chuck Kerrigan

Expanding The Paradiddle - Part II

In Part I we used different placements of accents to expand the paradiddle. In this article, we will expand the paradiddle rhythmically. As I explained in Part I, you must keep your muscles relaxed and concentrate while playing these exercises.

In the first section, we will begin with a basic paradiddle and add one stroke at a time until we reach a time signature of 3/4, as follows:

(a) 4/4 R L R R
L R L L

(b) 5/16 R L R R R
L R L L L

(c) 3/8 R L R R R R
L R L L L L

(d) 7/16 R L R R R R R
L R L L L L L

(e) 2/4 R L R R R R R R
L R L L L L L L

(f) 9/16 R L R R R R R R R
L R L L L L L L L

(g) 5/8 R L R R R R R R R R
L R L L L L L L L L

(h) 11/16 R L R R R R R R R R R
L R L L L L L L L L L

Repeat each exercise at least 16 times and then proceed directly to the next one. Stay relaxed and strive for an even sound. Next, replace each consecutive right-hand beat with a triplet (RLL), and each consecutive left-hand beat with a triplet (LRR). (The letter above each exercise below refers to the bar in which it was originally played in the previous exercises.)

(a) 4/4 R L R R L L R
L R L R R L

(d) 7/16 R L R L L R L L R L L R L L R
L R L R R L R R L R R L R R L R R L

(i) 3/4 R L R L L R L L R L L R L L R L L R
L R L R R L R R L R R L R R L R R L

Using these ideas, try the following drumset routine: 1) All accented notes on the snare drum; 2) all unaccented right-hand beats on the floor tom; 3) all unaccented left-hand beats on the small tom; 4) bass drum and hi-hat (or second bass drum) play alternate 16ths. Thus, exercise (c) from our original group would be played as follows:

T.T.
S.D.
F.T.
B.D.
H.H.

(c) 3/8 R L R R R R
L R L L L L L
x x x x x x x x

The same exercise, using triplets, would be played:

(c)

T.T.
S.D.
F.T.
B.D.
H.H.

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

> 3 3 3 > 3 3 3

As another example, exercise (f) would be played on the set in the following manner:

(f)

T.T.
S.D.
F.T.
B.D.
H.H.

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

> 9 >

Using triplets, exercise (f) would look like this:

(f)

T.T.
S.D.
F.T.
B.D.
H.H.

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

> 3 3 3 3 3 3 > 3 3 3 3 3 3

In Part III we will conclude this series with some ideas on using paradiddles to play polyrhythms.



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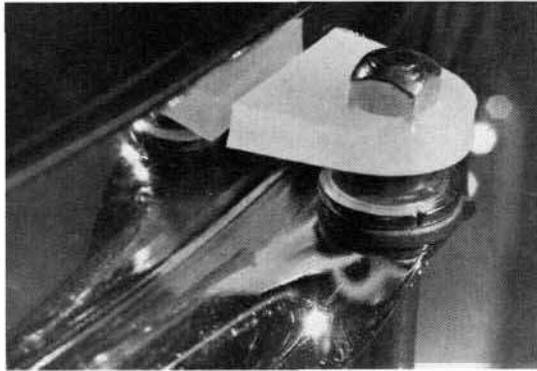
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recognizable from the man who played at Woodstock. You beamed with the pure joy of a child. You seem more positive and more mellow than you were in the early days. Do you feel your playing has changed too?

MC: It's changed a lot. The old Michael Carabello is dead. I'm a new man. I'm more disciplined now. I practice at least three hours a day now. I never used to practice when I was in Santana [laughs]—never by myself, just the band kind of thing. You'd go because you had to go. I've grown up a lot. I don't smoke and drink anymore. I meditate [laughs]—just kidding. No, I'm married now and have children. I have a wife who supports me 100%. I know what I want to do and what I want to be. I'm more serious.

CF: Looking back on what were the "wild days" in the late '60s and early '70s of the original Santana band—the drugs, women, money squandered on fancy cars, etc.—a life-style that was too much for the best of them—Morrison, Hendrix, Moon—do you have an explanation for all the excesses? Was it because of the pain of the times, your poor ghetto background, or what?

MC: When you make it big so fast and so young, it's like a tidal wave hits you. It's like having it all at once. What do you do when you're a poor Hispanic kid and all of

a sudden you become famous without even planning it? It just happens. Somebody gives you millions of dollars. You spend it. You buy all the candy you can and all the cars you can. You just go for it, man. Any normal person in their right mind would do the same thing. We spent a lot of money, but we saved some and made some good investments. *Everything* we did wasn't stupid.

What I did then wasn't because of having pain on me. Why say *that's* why I did it? The *whole world's got* pain as far as I'm concerned. On the impact of fame in the music business, I think David Lee Roth of Van Halen summed it up best: It's like a big parade with everything going on at once; it's like New Year's Eve 24 hours a day. What do you do? You go for it. You deal with it the best way you can. I survived it.

CF: Rock 'n' roll hasn't been around long enough for us to see the early stars make it to old age. How will it be for you survivors to grow old together? For example, what will Mick Jagger be like when he's 70?

MC: Mick Jagger will be doing it till he's an old man—till the day he dies—and then he'll be doing it in his coffin, when he's underground, too.

CF: What about Armando Peraza? What's his secret?

MC: I've never seen the man smoke or drink.

CF: Is he married?

MC: No. Maybe *that's* what it is. [laughs] Mick Jagger isn't married, either. Maybe *that's* what it is! No, but speaking of Armando, he's a master percussionist. He sits up there like a Buddha. He's taught me that you can still be hot when you're 60, or however old he is. Nobody knows for sure.

CF: Can you name any other favorite drummers?

MC: Well, like I said before, Michael Shrieve is one of my favorite drummers. Nobody—*nobody* plays like him. He's unorthodox. When you think a drummer would do a fill, he doesn't do a fill. He catches you off guard. He's unpredictable. He keeps you fresh. It's magic—Michael "Magic" Shrieve. And Charlie Watts—he plays so simple, but he does stuff you've never heard drummers *try*, let alone play. He's a one-of-a-kind drummer.

CF: Does *he* compose?

MC: Well, he plays in a jazz band in London. I haven't heard it, but I know he plays in a club with some other guys, kind of like Woody Allen does in Manhattan. I don't think many people in London know about it except musicians.

Other drummers I like are Robby Gonzales, who used to play with Al DiMeola. He's real fast—solid. And Greg Errico is a real solid drummer. Then there's Terry Bozzio. He's in a league of his own.

CF: Can you pinpoint any influences on your playing?

MC: Nowadays, Beethoven—I'm very interested in him. And Gabor Szabo, the guitarist who recently passed away—no one played like him. He made me play differently. I plan to dedicate an album to him some day.

There's this one album I was brought up on. My grandmother fed it to me. It's called "Cuban Jam Sessions," or "Des-cargas," which means "an unloading or letting loose" and has become the Latin term for jam session. There's this hot Cuban conga player on it named TaTa Guines, and a great bongo player, too named Rogelio "Yeyo" Iglesias. I still listen to that album. I never get tired of it.

When I was a teenager, I used to play along with the early Marvin Gaye records—they had the first war drum sound of any band out—and Smoky Robinson, who used bongos and maracas early. Other influences were Herbie Mann, Cal Tjader, Patato, Los Papines, and the Abreu brothers. All were innovators in percussion. I was also influenced by Stevie Wonder, who hasn't even reached his potential, and Steve Winwood—the only white rock 'n' roller from the days of peace and love that played R&B, and still does. Any time you hear him, you know it's him. Jose Feliciano is a genius. He is underrated to death. He doesn't only play guitar. He also plays percussion and nobody knows it.

CF: What is your reaction to the impact of video on the music industry?

MC: I think it's good. It's a new direction. It could have its negative points. At times, it can stop the growth of imagination. When I listen to music a lot of times, I like to close my eyes and conceptualize my own thing of what *I* think the song is about. With video, you're in front of the TV and you see what they want you to see. That's what stays in your head. But done right, they can be stimulating.

CF: Have you done any video work?

MC: Yeah. The *Abraxas* album cover, with the woman flying on the conga drum, was actually taken from a much larger painting—a mural really—that an artist named Mati painted to cover a whole room in Greenwich Village. Then he moved to Paris, and some rich guy from Austria bought the room and had it shipped overseas. Before the room was dismantled, a filmmaker named Peter Harron made a video of the mural, and I did the soundtrack to it. It's about 15 minutes long. I enjoyed doing that soundtrack. I'd like to get into that type of video work more.

CF: Musical expression is such a personal, emotional thing, and yet so often nowadays you hear musicians talking about how important it is to have a "professional" attitude and to be flexible. Can you play with people you don't like, personally or musically?

MC: No, I can't play with them, but I can work with them. There's a difference be-

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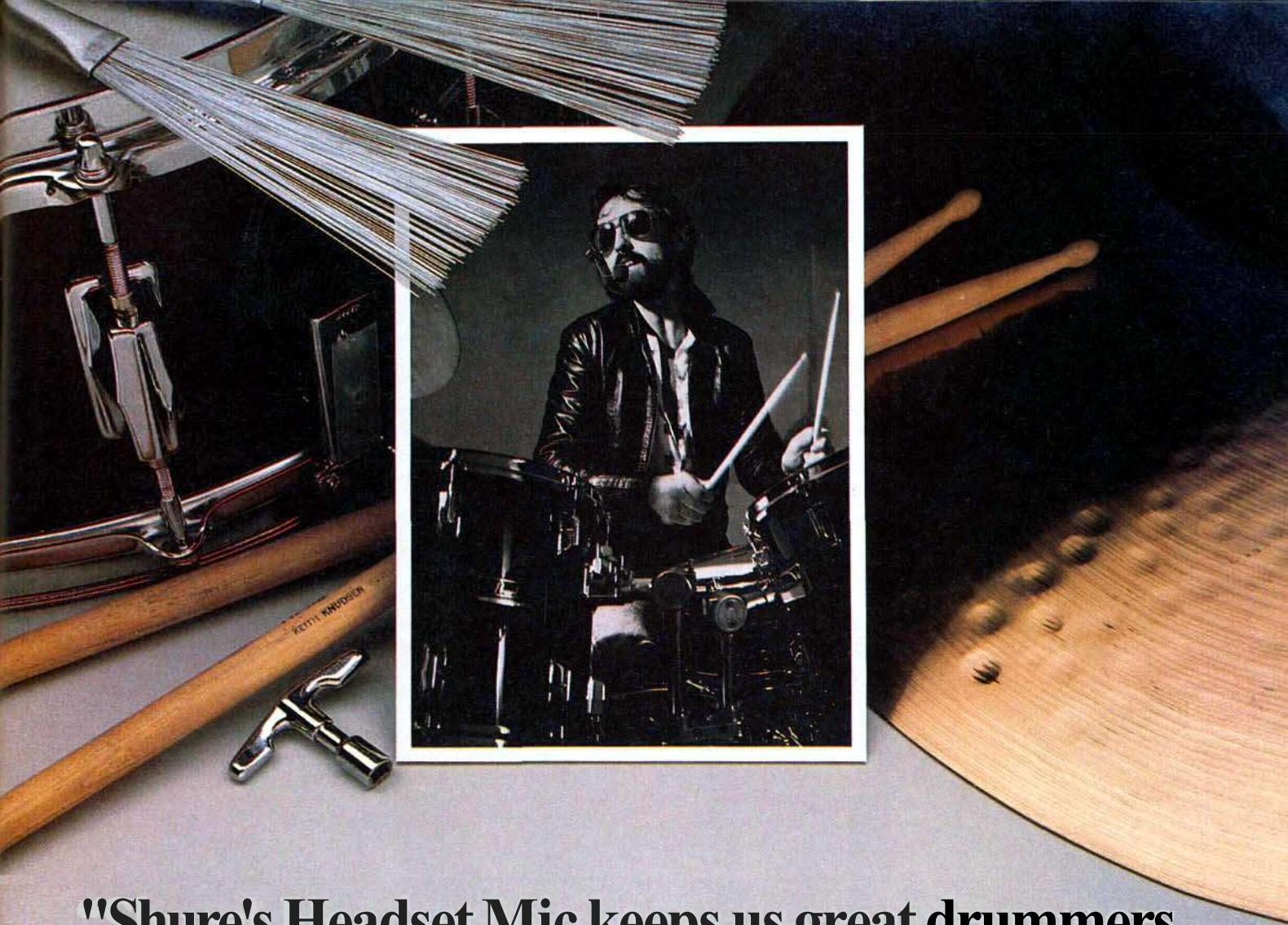
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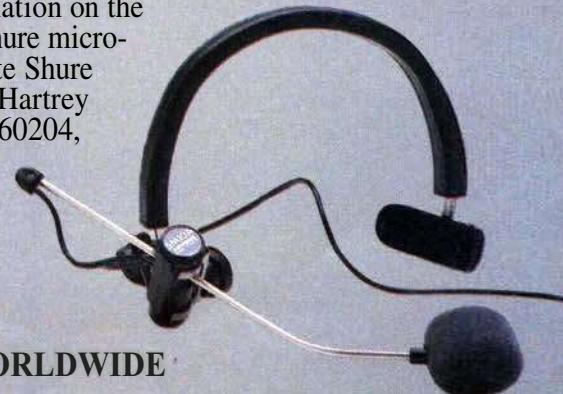
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tween the two. If it's a job and I need the money, I can "work" with other people and give them what they're looking for. But "playing" is like when you're a kid, having fun.

CF: You've done quite a bit of session work lately. Can doing too much session work be a trap, in that it can threaten your own identity as a percussionist?

MC: Definitely. Definitely. To some extent, that's what's happening to me right now. I love just playing. I love doing session work to a certain degree, but at times it can be very unfulfilling. Somebody calls you up, you go in and do it, they tell you what to play, and you're finished. You don't get a tape when you leave; you have to wait until it comes out on the album and you don't even know if it's going to be on. You are *paid* well, but it's kind of like being in a catalog. They see your name, you go in, and they say, "Thankyouthere'syourcheck—bye!"

That's the trap of it that I don't like. It's not the good therapy that playing what's in you can be. It's not real freedom as an artist. I've worked with the best of them in the studio and I've enjoyed it—don't get me wrong—but I couldn't do just that forever. You just never get to be in on the creative process from beginning to end that way. You don't see something through to the finish. I've played on three albums already where my name didn't even appear

on the album, because I'm the last person who comes in, right at the end. I'm the percussion doctor. I'll come in and clean up somebody's mistakes, because they have a certain date they've got to have the album finished by.

CF: Could you explain the function of a "percussion doctor" in the studio?

MC: If somebody messes up the time on a song when they cut it, they'll get a percussionist to come in and *overpower* it so it won't sound like it's off time.

CF: Can you say that you've learned anything from session work for your own playing?

MC: I've learned how to be patient for one thing. [laughs] If I'm not, I can cut myself right out of a gig! I've learned to listen to others and do it *their* way, even though I may think it won't work. But I try it and sometimes it surprises me. So that has probably encouraged me to be a little more experimental when I'm playing.

CF: Even though you're a well-known musician, in demand for both studio and live performing, have you ever been shot down for a gig that you really wanted?

MC: Sure.

CF: How do you handle that?

MC: You can either let it do you in or you can learn from it. If you don't, you just suffer a little more and a little more. I've had several things fall through on me that I really counted on. The first time was like,

oh, the end of the world! "Why did I ever get in this business?" The second time, I disciplined myself and got all psyched up again. It fell through, but I didn't feel as bad as I did the first time. The third time it happened, I just went, "Well, that's show biz!" It's either *that*, or it's nothing; the alternative is to pack it up. You don't belong in it.

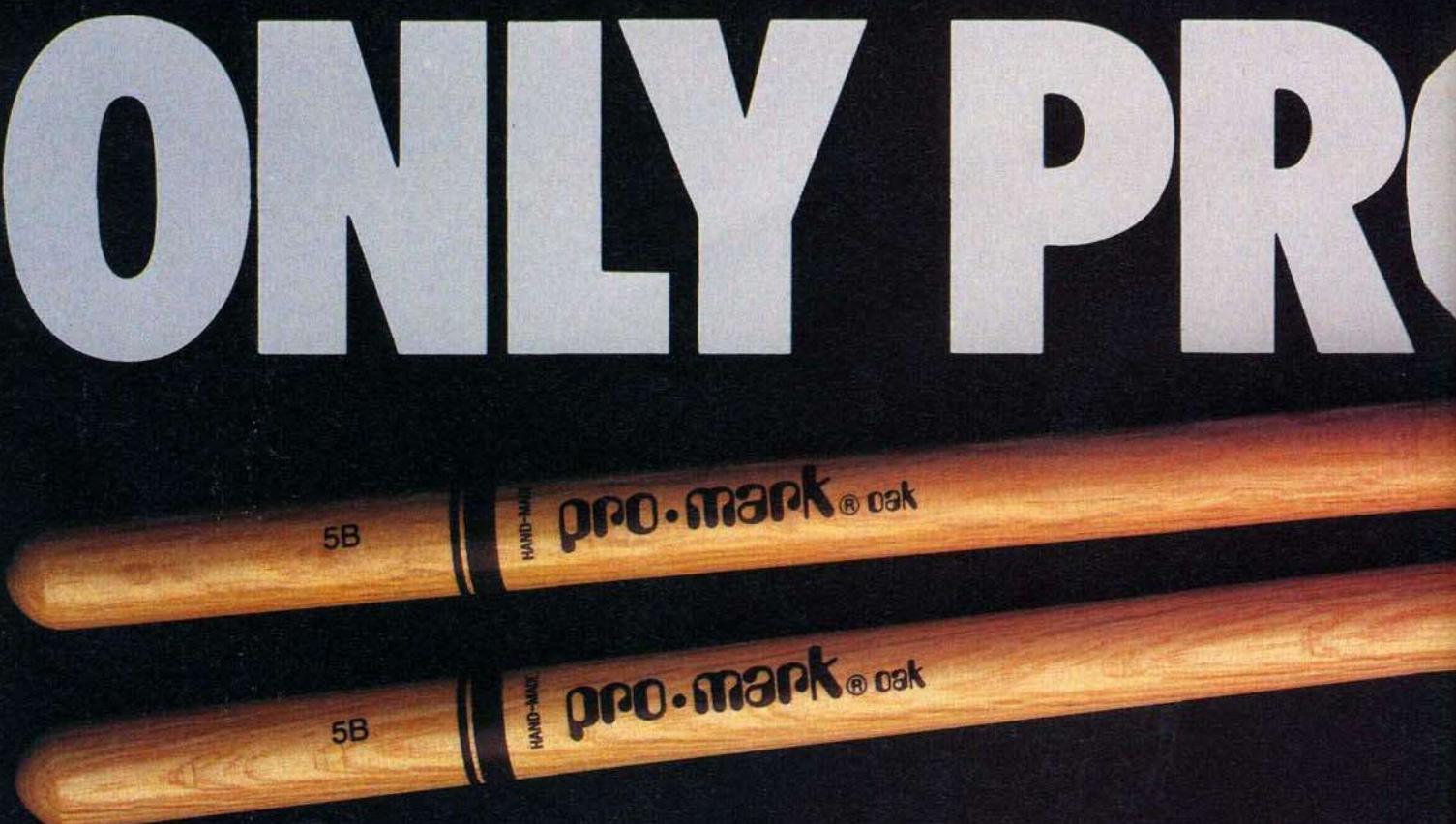
CF: That's a good attitude.

MC: You learn to accept it after a while and you try to keep sight of that. There's the stage over there, and this is reality.

CF: And you don't take it personally.

MC: You *can't*—you *can't*. If you do that, you start dying. In other words, it's been said before, but it's very true: If you stop dreaming, you die. I don't ever want to see the light at the end of the tunnel. If you start seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, you think, "Oh well, I don't have much farther to go." That's bullshit. You always have to reach for something. You *can't ever* have it made. And if you start getting sidetracked by what could have happened but didn't, you won't get anywhere. If you stay around long enough and learn from it, entertainment is a great career—one of the best. But you have to learn how to handle rejection, and it's *tough*.

CF: It seems like it would be especially hard for people who are accustomed to having things their way to start out alone



again and have someone tell them that they can't do something.

MC: Yes, it's a shock. Your first reaction is, "How dare they!" But it doesn't work that way. Everybody has to learn humility. As Bob Dylan said, "Even the President of the United States sometimes has to stand naked."

CF: You're putting a group together right now. Can you tell us something about it?

MC: Everyone must be able to sing, play two instruments, and write. We'll collaborate, although I'll have the final word. But I don't want to be a "boss."

CF: What type of music will you play?

MC: I can't give it a name. It will be danceable—not disco, but danceable music that people will like to move to. It will be different. But it's not something I want to contrive—to plan ahead of time, like a busi-

ness. I hate to say it, but too many artists are caught up in what someone else is playing on the radio and what's on the charts, whereas before they just played because it was fun, it was real and it was in them. It was happy. It was positive energy. It was good just to play. Now they want you to sound like Joe Schmo, because he's #1 on the charts.

You can't market your sound. Bob Dylan never did it. When you have to use your brain instead of your heart, and you have to stop and think about what you're playing, you're inhibited. You'll never do anything creative or different.

Take the Police. They didn't market their sound. They didn't start out to be a #1 band. They just played what was in them. Joe Jackson's different, too. He didn't start out to make a Top-Ten album with

Night and Day, but it was a success because it was fresh and original. The same thing with Genesis. Peter Gabriel and Stevie Wonder are also different. You can be yourself and still be a success, and you'll have staying power. That's why when you ask me what kind of music am I going to play, I don't like labels. I hope I'm beyond that.

CF: Do you ever worry about drying up—that you wouldn't have any more songs?

MC: No. I don't think I'll ever run out of ideas. When you stop listening to the young, that's when it all stops. Your whole conception of music dies. Little kids give you ideas, like my two-year-old daughter. She has all this energy. She's open to life. She goes for it, whether it's right or wrong. That's the way you've got to be all your life.

Drum Market continued from page 111

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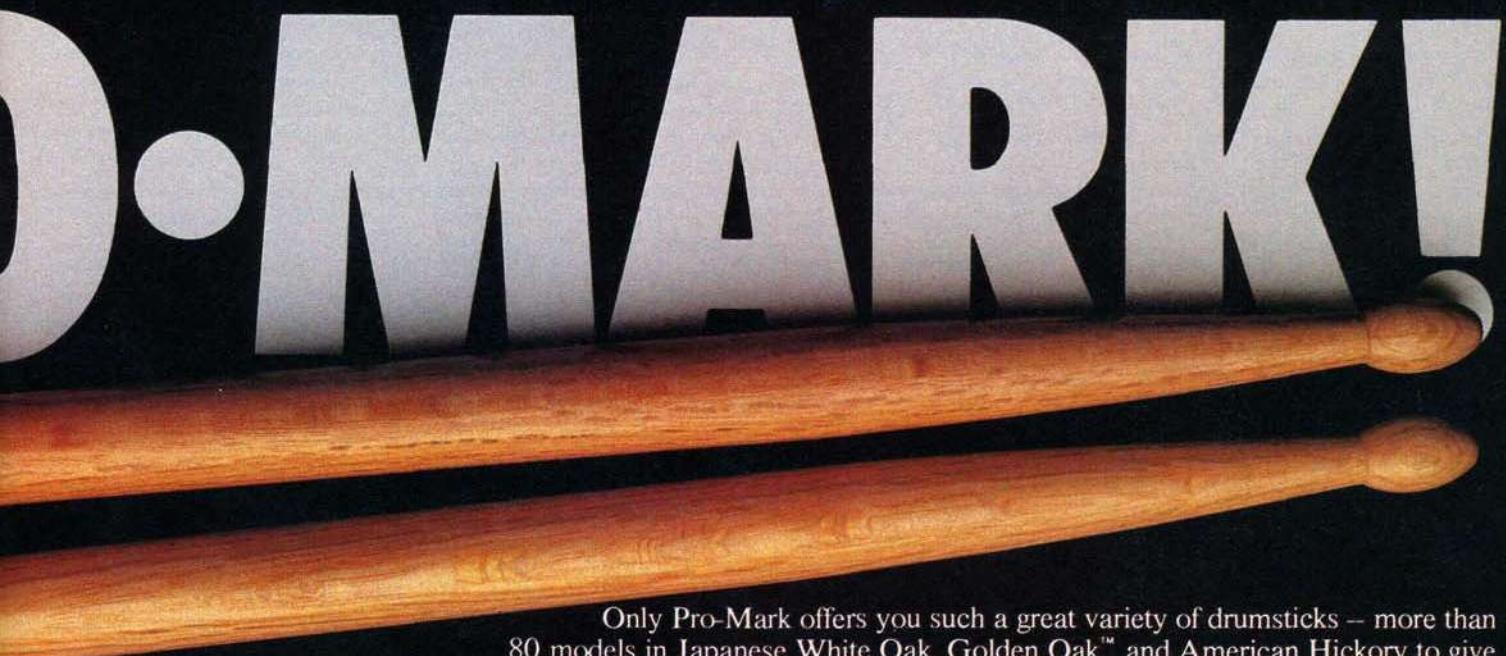
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IT'S QUESTIONABLE

Q. I recently read an article about Steve Smith, and just read your article about Rick Allen, and both performers mention that they supplement their drums with Simmons electronic drums. My question is, how do you hook up this kind of system? I love the sound that Steve and Rick get from their drums, both live and in the studio. The band I am in is starting to record and play out, and I would like to try the Simmons drums with my own set.

M.R.

Harrisburg, PA

A. The following answer comes from Robb Davenport, Sales Manager for Simmons Electronic Drums: "You can use an acoustic drum to trigger the Simmons by using a microphone, but that's not very good because the Simmons needs a very 'spiky' signal. A microphone gives a very round, woolly signal that doesn't trigger very well—nowhere near the effectiveness of the actual Simmons pad. As an alternative, a pickup on the head itself (i.e., a Barcus-Berry) is 25 to 30% better than a microphone; it's much more efficient. Simmons is now distributing a piece of equipment called the TS101 Trigger, which will take an external audio source, like a microphone, 'spike' the signal, and then take it into the brain, giving the Simmons a sufficiently 'spiked' signal to trigger it properly. That unit has eight channels, so it could mike eight acoustic drums to the eight modules." So you have the choice of using available technology or stepping up to the Simmons Trigger if you wish to use both acoustic and electronic drum sounds simultaneously.

Q. Can you explain the hi-hat device between the tom-toms on the Tama Artstar ad with Billy Cobham?

H.H.

Reykjavik, Iceland

A. The device is Tama's X-Hat, which is a secondary, nonpedal-operated hi-hat used in conjunction with Tama's Multi-Clamp unit. It allows a drummer to mount two hi-hat cymbals in a preset position almost anywhere on the drumkit. The standard method is to clamp them close together for ride work when both feet are occupied with double bass drum work. However, even single bass drum players sometimes like to have a second hi-hat to ride on their right side, facilitating more fluid drum patterns.

Q. I would like to know what records I can hear Simon Phillips and Steve Gadd on. Thank you.

B.D.

Kansas City, MO

A. A discography of either of these men would fill volumes. Simon is perhaps best represented on Jeff Beck's *There And Back* album. Steve can be heard on Simon & Garfunkel's *Concert In Central Park*, on Steely Dan's *Aja*, and on Chick Corea's *Leprechaun* and *Three Quartets*.

Q. Can you tell me where I could pick up a 14" rim with only six holes instead of eight? The drum is a Morris. No dealer in Ireland can help me on this one. Is there any company still doing such a rim?

N.O.

Dublin, Ireland

A. We are not familiar with the Morris brand of drums. However, you don't necessarily need a rim of the same brand as the drum. Checking past catalogs indicates that Pearl made six-hole, 14" rims at one time a few years ago, as did Ludwig. You might go back to your music stores and ask them to check their current parts lists to see what companies (whose products they can order) currently show the type of rims you need. Failing that, you might check in pawn shops where used musical equipment is often sold, for older drumkits that just might have the part you need.

Q. I'm 14 and considering joining a drum corps. My brother is negative about the idea, but I'm persistent. Are drum corps for superior musicians?

T.S.

Oak Forest, IL

A. Like any other form of training, what you get out of a drum corps will depend a great deal on what you put into it, including attitude. Drum corps are noted for developing rudimental technique, reading ability and coordination between the hands. It is not likely to give you a sense of musical freedom or an ability to improvise, because corps playing is very structured. Obviously, with rare exceptions, corps drumming will not be on drumset, but on the other hand, more and more corps are expanding their instrumentation to include timpani, tuned percussion and even mallet instruments. A wide variety of opportunities and a lot of education can be gained in this manner. Steve Gadd and Billy Cobham both come from strong corps backgrounds.

Q. Have you published an issue with a list of all the drums available and their prices ... a sort of guide list? I will be buying a new set shortly, and I think this would help me in selecting my price and quality range.

P.O.

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

A. Modern Drummer did publish a "Buyer's Guide" some years ago. Since then the industry has expanded at such a rate that a comparable guide today would be virtually impossible to create. There are just too many new products, as well as changes to established ones, and they are happening too rapidly. What we do try to offer in the pages of MD are various Equipment Reference Charts, giving brief descriptions and list prices of various products, along with Bob Saydowski's Product Close-Up series. We also feature the latest advertisements from all the major percussion equipment manufacturers, giving you up-to-the-minute ideas of what's available. As far as price goes, list prices from the manufacturers change often, and the retail prices you might pay are further affected by the discount policies of your local retail store. Thus, it's best to get a good idea of your choices, and then see your retailer about the best deal.

Q. I'm looking for a company that makes a double bass pedal for someone like myself who sets up the kit left-handed. Is there such an animal? My local Drum Workshop dealer told me that the 5002/5002CX wasn't available for the southpaw. This is the type of pedal I am looking for. Any help would be appreciated.

S.C.

Haughton, LA

A. We spoke with a representative of Drum Workshop, who informed us that a left-handed version of the 5002 series is in fact available by special order, at no extra charge. Simply ask your dealer to order it on your behalf, and to stipulate that it must be the left-handed model.

Q. Where, oh where does one obtain the following records, listed in the *On Track* section of the December '83 issue: *I've Got You Under My Skins* by Irv Cottler, and *Hail To The Chief* by Butch Miles?

A.B.

Orlando, FL

A. Irv's album is on the Project 3 label, (catalog #PR5111). The record was manufactured and distributed to retailers by Arista Records, Inc., 6 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019. Butch's album is on the Famous Door Label (catalog #HL 145 Stereo), and if not available in stores, can be obtained by mail from Harry Lim Productions, P.O. Box 92, Station A, Flushing, NY 11358.

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It looks like it's going to be a good year for **Mel Lewis**. In January, his big band celebrated its 18th anniversary of Monday nights at the Village Vanguard in New York City. Right after that, the band made a trip to Hong Kong. The band is also negotiating a new record contract, and there should be a new album out soon. Mel is delighted with the way things have been going. "It seems like this is the year that people are realizing that we're not the same band that we were before. This band is really built around me more than it was in the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis days. Even though we're still playing a lot of the old music, this band really has its own identity and a whole new feeling. Through the help of Bob Brookmeyer, Bob Mintzer and Bill Hallman, who have been writing for the band over the last few years, it seems that we're finally being recognized as a new

unit."

In an effort to expose more people to the group, as well as generate some work, Lewis and the Jazz Orchestra are starting to get involved in the dance field. For Mel, this is a natural environment for a drummer to be in. "I've always felt that as far as drumming is concerned, everything comes basically from playing in the dance field. To play for dancers, there has to be a strong emphasis on the rhythm section. A drummer has to be able to keep up an intensity for the band without being bombastic. There should be a feeling of rhythm coming from the band that makes the dancers want to move their bodies in a smooth, floating fashion. If the beat is too heavy—like in disco—people aren't dancing; they're jumping. The beat has got to be there, but it doesn't have to be banged into you."

Jamie Oldaker is currently recording with Eric Clapton at Island Records' Compass Point Studio in the Bahamas. Phil Collins is producing the album which also includes guitarist Albert Lee, Chris Stainton on keyboards, and Duck Dunn on bass. "It was exactly ten years ago last month when we released *461 Ocean Blvd.* and I'm back with him [Clapton] ten years later."

During the three years since Jamie left Clapton's band in 1979, he worked with Peter Frampton, the Bee Gees and Marcy

Levy until joining Clapton mid-tour in January, 1983 when Roger Hawkins left the band. The tour took him throughout the U.S. and Europe where riots broke out at the concert in Rome. "The place holds 30,000 people and there were about 20,000 outside who thought they should get in," Jamie recalls. After a break, Jamie went back on the road with Clapton for some shows in the States. Rehearsals resumed this past January for a short European tour in February, taking him to Italy, Egypt, Israel, Yugoslavia and Romania.

Michael Shrieve is on the Neal Schon/Sammy Hagar live LP, *Through The Fire*, released a few months ago. **Bobby Daniels** is on tour with Kenny Rogers. **Hal Blaine** can be heard on Tom Petty's *Streets Of Fire* soundtrack and LP. **Willie Wilcox** on the road with Utopia. **Mike Radovsky** with Tony Newton. **Larrie Londin and Craig Krampf** on Steve Perry's solo project. **Max Weinberg** on Bruce Springsteen's new album. **Carmine Appice** has been working with Ozzy Osbourne. R.E.M. release this month with group member **Bill Berry** on drums. **Myron Grombacher** working on Pat Benatar's album due out in July. Look

for second Columbia offering from **Steve Smith**'s group, *Vital Information*. He's recording that as well as working on next Journey album. **Alan "Chip" White** is featured percussionist with John Shaw's Jazz Sextet as well as with Shaw's 14-piece jazz ensemble, *Assemblage*. **Denny Carmassi** on *Cafe Flesh* soundtrack. **Sandy Gennaro** has been working with Cyndi Lauper. **Alex Van Halen** is on a world tour with Van Halen. Congratulations to **Steve Gadd** and his wife Carol on the birth of their son, Stephen Kendall Richard Gadd. **Bill Molenhof** and **Ed Thigpen** were featured at the Tuebingen (Germany) International Percussion Days.

William "Bubba" Bryant has had a busy year doing a variety of studio dates, including Ronnie Laws and touring with George Benson. "George Benson seems to be a perfectionist and is very demanding," Bubba explained. "As far as I'm concerned, that's great. Drummers are only as good as their surroundings a lot of times. That holds true of any player. The fact that George is so demanding makes you do things you probably would never do otherwise. I have to play more consistently and be more on top of things with him than I have with anybody else I've ever played with. Most people believe that a drummer's duties are to keep time and be the foundation. I think that's true; a drummer must be able to do those two things. But George demands so much more. He demands a certain amount of musicality. We play a lot of different types of music. At a soundcheck, we'll play some bebop and standards, which require a different style of drumming, so that brings out a certain amount of musicality within me. The show is about two hours and 15 minutes of consistent playing and a variety of tempos. George has also helped me a lot in learning about playing behind someone."

"Also, there is a drum solo every night. Prior to George, I'd never played with anybody where that was a prerequisite. It seems he expects the solo to be different every time, have a certain format, but be creative, because he's a very creative musician himself. Everybody on the bandstand is an incredibly accomplished musician and that, in itself, makes it more demanding."

"To me, a good solo has an intro, a middle section that has continuity and makes sense, and an ending. It should make a complete statement. A solo shouldn't be too long where it can bore people and it should have some flash—some type of excitement that will catch people's eyes. I personally try to play very melodically during solos, as well as rhythmically."

Recently Bryant has been becoming more involved in production, and at the beginning of the year, co-produced one of his tunes performed by vocalist/percussionist, Ronald "Doc" Holiday. "There are other aspects of me that most people don't know anything about. Most people don't know that I play keyboards, write and sing. When I tell people I do other things, it does kind of surprise them. 'You're a drummer and you can do these things?' There does seem to be a stigma involved, but I see that it's changing."

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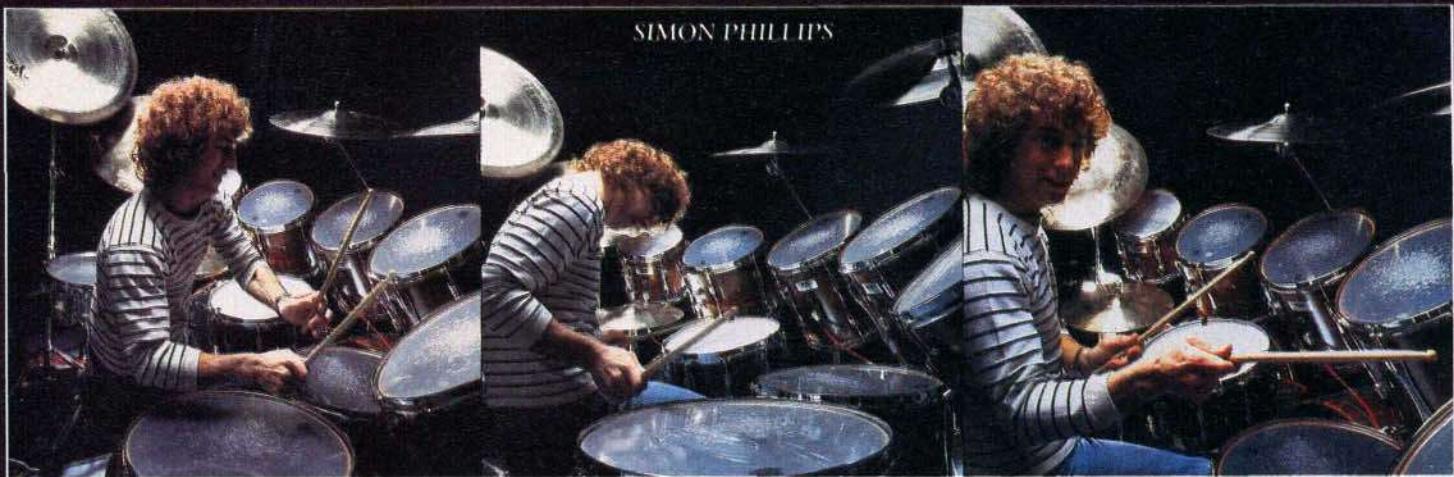


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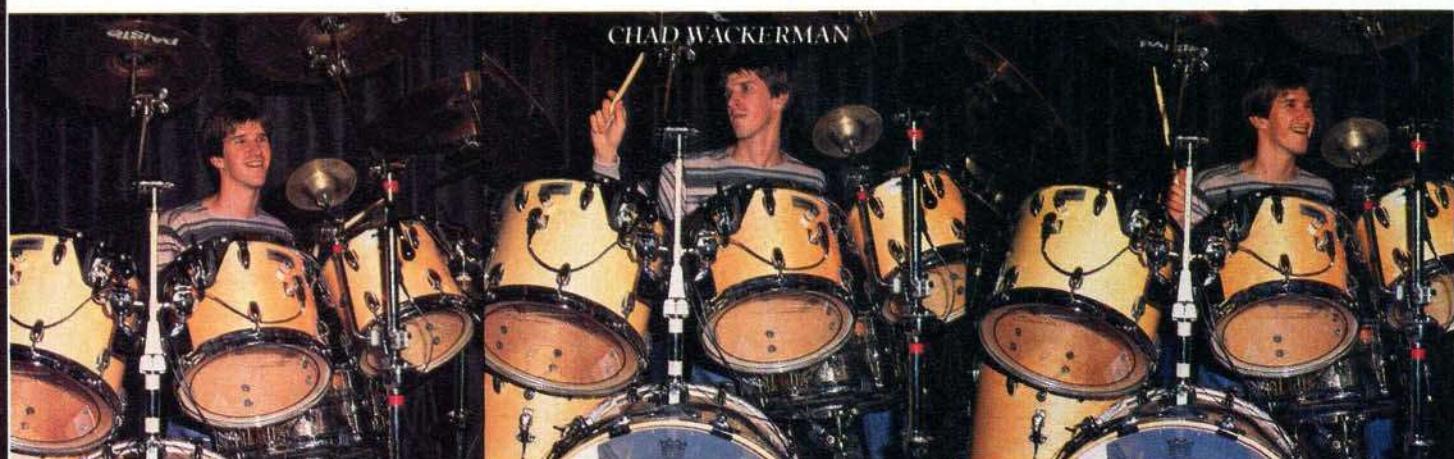
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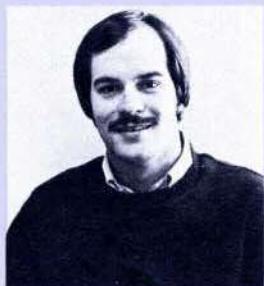
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INDUSTRY HAPPENINGS

YAMAHA DRUM LINES NEWSPAPER

The second issue of Yamaha Musical Products' newspaper *Drum Lines* has recently been published. Scheduled for three issues per year, *Drum Lines* includes features, interviews, and educational and technical columns, written by leading percussionists. The newspaper, available from either Yamaha drum dealers or directly from Yamaha Musical Products, also contains previews of new products, as well as reviews of existing drums. Jim Coffin, Percussion Marketing Manager, serves as editor of *Drum Lines*, along with respected educator Jim Petercsak as consulting editor.

WANAMAKER TO HEAD OLYMPIC PERCUSSION



Jay Wanamaker has been named by the Los Angeles Olympic Committee as Director of Percussion for the "Olympic All-American Band." The band will consist of approximately 800 students from various colleges and universities from across the United States. The percussion section will be one of the largest percussion ensembles ever assembled. They will perform at the opening and closing ceremonies of the 1984 Summer Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

Wanamaker is the percussion instructor at the University of Southern California, and is Director of Percussion with the McDonald's All-American High School Band. He is also the Instrumental Music Editor for the Alfred Publishing Co. in Los Angeles, CA.



(Left)
Drummers Collective
directors Paul Siegel
(seated) and Rob
Wallis.

Since *Modern Drummer's* last visit, in June of 1981, Drummers Collective, New York City's noted professional percussion school, has been undergoing some major changes. They've recently moved, enlarged, and expanded their program, all in the space of a few months. According to directors Rob Wallis and Paul Siegel, "Drummers Collective is a learning center for drums, mallets, Brazilian and Latin percussion and guitar, bass and keyboards as well. Our program is designed to give the student/player a blend of book knowledge and simulated performance situations which expose the student to elements we feel are basic to becoming a complete performing musician."

When asked their reason for moving, Siegel said of the old address (seven floors up above the heart of Times Square) "We were not nuts about the old location." Rob Wallis added, "Besides, our lease was running out, and we were told the owners planned to raze the building. No new leases were being granted." A frantic search ensued for several months to find a large enough space, at an affordable price, with a landlord open to the idea of a drum school. The search seemed fruitless until finally a space was found, four floors up in what had been a machine shop. The building was owned by the McDonald's fast-food chain, and they were pleased to offer the space to the school.

The next few months represented a monumental effort on

DRUMMERS COLLECTIVE EXPANDS

(Right)
Top New York session
and show drummer
Hank Jaramillo gives a
lesson on studio
drumming.



the part of Siegel and Wallis. Unable to afford the services of a major architectural firm, they worked directly with the contractor, laying out how the empty space would be converted to include nine soundproofed studios, office and lobby space, air conditioning, and as Wallis put it, "everything down to where the light switches would go." The first step involved the removal of over nine industrial dumpsters worth of trash from the premises before construction could even begin. By April of '83, the school was ready to open.

The new, larger space allowed for an expansion of the program. Siegel said, "The level of intensity and activity has tripled since the move." In addition, a recently concluded association with Yamaha Drums and Zildjian Cymbals has provided the school with state-of-the-art equipment for students. A full-time technician is on staff just to maintain the equipment, which also includes all the Latin, Brazilian and other percussion instruments, keyboards, mallet instruments, amplifiers, etc.

When asked to describe the general program, Wallis and Siegel agreed that it was a combination of academic and vocational instruction. According to the school's catalog: "Ensemble and private lessons are set up to prepare the student for whatever musical situation he or she may encounter. Expert instruction is provided at every level from beginner to professional by a staff made up of some of New York's top musicians, all of whom are active

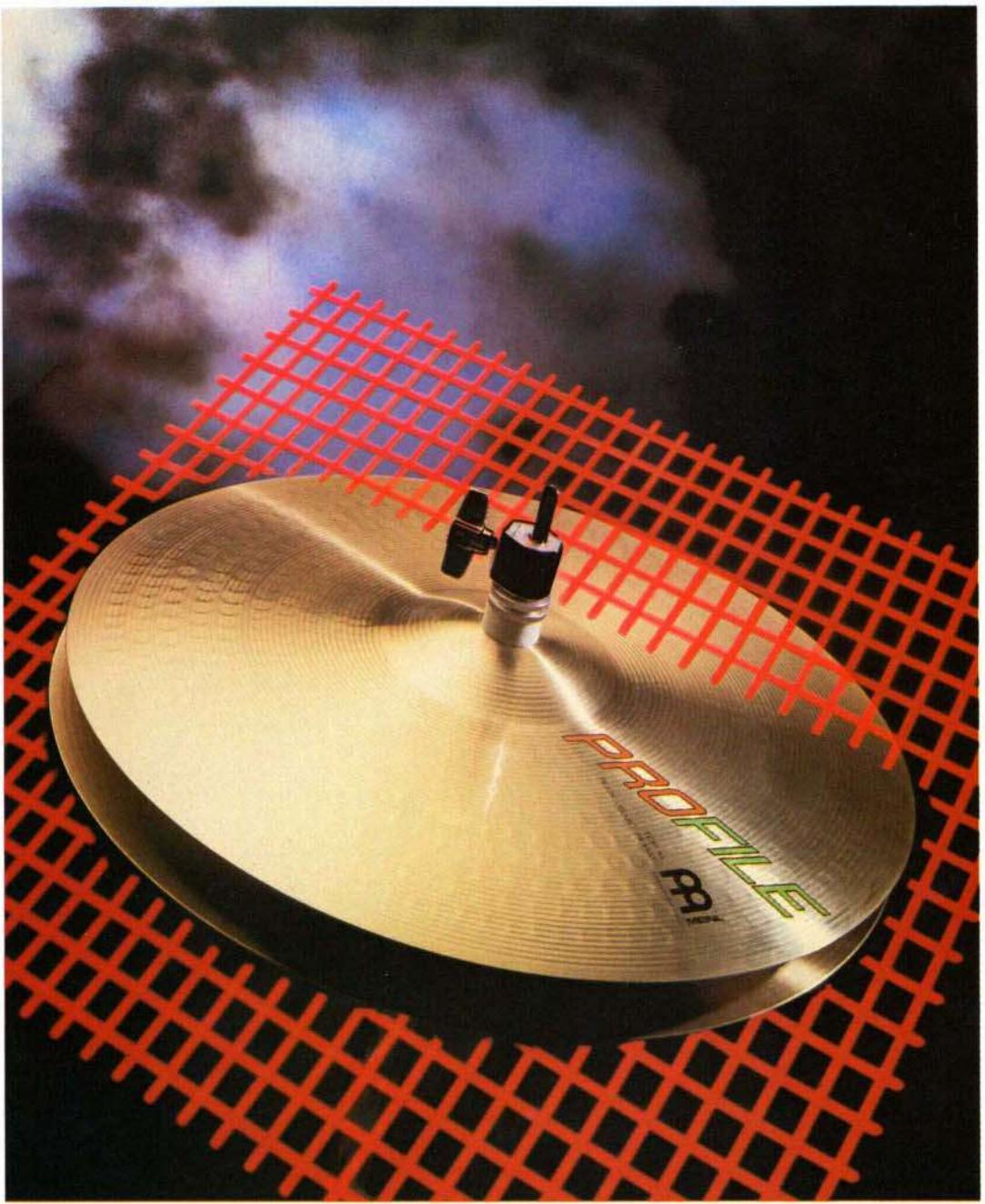
pros involved daily in today's music scene."

The programs are flexible as to content and schedule. Students first counsel with Wallis and Siegel. Then they select the schedule of private lessons, master class sessions, ensemble sessions, etc., that best suits their needs. Fees fluctuate depending on the instructor, length of session, etc. The school program stresses the benefit of a total exposure to all styles of playing, but does not impose a set curriculum. If a student wishes to study only jazz or rock, that's fine. Top instructors are available in every conceivable area. Wallis pointed out that, "All our teachers are active players, as well as quality instructors. They show a real dedication to the program, keeping track of the progress of each individual student. As far as student proficiency goes, we have something for any level. Our only real requirement is a serious commitment to practicing and wanting to learn."

In addition to a veteran staff, including Hank Jaramillo (noted New York session player and pit drummer for "A Chorus Line"), Frank Malabe (top Latin performer), Horacee Arnold (jazz drummer/composer/arranger) and others, Drummers Collective has recently featured clinics by Peter Erskine, Narada Michael Walden, and Ed Thigpen. New additions to the staff since the move include Lenny White, Rod Morgenstein and Andy Newmark, who will offer three- to six-week master classes.

continued on next page

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Drummers Collective *continued*

Students are encouraged to participate in ensemble groups, combining drums, bass, guitar and keyboards in rhythm section classes, using charts brought in from actual sessions by instructors. These 12-week sessions stress different styles of playing, and incorporate recording techniques and chart interpretation, using the school's four-track recording equipment for playback and evaluation. The emphasis is on an up-to-date, career-oriented musical approach, as opposed to the purely academic thrust of some other music schools. An electronic music class, open only to drummers, is currently being developed, exploring the use of Simmons and Linn equipment, as Wallis put it, "to overcome the 'threat' some drummers feel about electronic technology."

Siegel sums up the school's philosophy by saying, "We're like a university of drumming, but with a hands-on approach toward a vocation as a drummer." For further information, contact Drummers Collective at 541 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY, 10011 or call (212) 741-0091.

SLINGERLAND CONTEST WINNER



R.J. Richardson, President of Slingerland Drum Company, recently presented a \$200 U.S. Savings Bond to Susan Kramp, of Downers Grove, Illinois, for winning the Slingerland "Name The Drumset" contest. Susan's entry name, *Odyssey*, was selected over hundreds of names submitted. Susan is a freshman at Downers Grove South High School, and is very active in sports, music, and drama.

The *Odyssey* series is Slingerland's entry into the student-model drum market, combining PTS heads with regular tuning lugs on a lightweight composition shell.

PETER DONALD NAMED TO DICK GROVE SCHOOL STAFF

Drummer Peter Donald has been added to the staff of the Dick Grove School of Music. A frequent *down beat* poll winner and respected studio drummer, Donald has recorded and toured with the Toshiko Akiyoshi-Lew Tabackin Big Band,

among others, and is a graduate of the Berklee School of Music. He joins the Grove School's percussion program, along with such professionals as Victor Feldman, Dave Garibaldi, Jerry Steinholz and others, under the direction of Richie Lepore.



PIECES OF TIME:

It's not styles that clash, just people. At a point in American musical history where nearly every style of rhythm, jazz and blues from the last 60 years has a living practitioner, the challenge for creative percussionists is no longer to come up with something "new," but rather to reconcile the innovations of one generation to another. Such was the motivation of Andrew Cyrille when he organized an historic date for Soul Note Records, pooling the talents of four drummers so skilled, yet so different, that Cyrille had to wonder if he could actually pull it off. But he did. The result: *Pieces of Time*, featuring Cyrille, Milford Graves, Don Moye, and their musical father, Kenny Clarke.

"That's something I thought about when I got the individuals together," commented Cyrille. "Even though Milford and Moye hadn't played together before, I'd played with them both, so I knew how comprehensive they could be and how much variety we could create together. The only person I wasn't sure about was Kenny Clarke, but man, he had a ball. It was something that just rejuvenated him because he got into some things that I'm sure he had never been involved in. And, of course, Kenny was the progenitor of bebop and most of the rhythms we all play—evolving the ride beat, moving it off the hi-hats and up onto the ride cymbal, and developing independent coordinated syncopation. For all those reasons I wanted him on the date."

"It was a fantastic experience for all of us to play with Kenny Clarke, because it allowed us to hear where so many of the things that I thought were indigenously Max or Philly Joe had actually come from. A friend of mine and I were talking to Kenny. My

A CLASSIC ENCOUNTER

by Chip Stern
friend asked Kenny who his favorite drummer was, and he said Big Sid Catlett. Kenny learned from Sid. Max and Philly learned from Kenny and Sid, and the rest of us took it from there. The most beautiful thing about this date was to see the connecting links between all of these musicians."

Certainly the atmosphere of the recording date was charged with a feeling of experiment and communion. Clarke in particular seemed fascinated by the radical technique of Graves, with his double bass drums and swirling matrix of textures; by Moye's elaborate array of bells, shells and swells; and by Cyrille's ability to link all those swing, bebop and post-bop rhythms into a cohesive whole.

On his own composition, "Laurent," Kenny's march-like cadences were shared by the ensemble for four bars, and then passed round-robin style for solo statements by each drummer. It was fascinating to hear Clarke begin his variations in tempo, and then create the illusion of free time before passing the baton to Graves, who sounded for all the world like a New Orleans parade drummer prior to taking the rhythm into pure pulse time, at which point Moye brought the tune inside again.

On Moye's "Milbaldi Isle," Clarke played brushes on a calfskin tambourine, as Moye, Graves and Cyrille used water, bells, talking drums and mridangam to create primordial visions of Indonesian rain forests before launching into a ragaih rave up (with Clarke playing ting-a-ding on crotales).

Cyrille sums up his own composition, "#11," by pointing out how he "wanted to create a clarity for each individual to be heard. Moye was playing in three, Kenny was playing a bright 4/4, and Milford impro-

vised a six against Moye's three. That triplet feeling gave it another kind of polarity, and I soloed in and out of that."

"Graves' 'Energy Cycles' was totally improvised in terms of the way he arranged it. He had Moye play an ostinato on the pan-African drums in six, which was like a bass line; then he had me play in five and told Kenny to play what he heard. There were several spontaneous interludes, one by Kenny in that beautiful swing/bebop feeling, and then the rest of us came in on kits. We got to this tremendous density, which could have been a natural ending, but then Milford began singing and chanting, and Moye picked up on that. They were really dealing; it sounded like an Ivory Coast kind of feeling. Then with Milford and Moye in six and Kenny in four, I had to fill that space and began playing balafon with sticks. That led to a real natural ending."

The session concluded with individual statements by each drummer, and Cyrille's arrangement of "Drum Song For Leadbelly." "It reminded me of 'hambone' rhythms when I heard it," Cyrille confided. "It sounds like a street beat, a folk rhythm, the country blues, and in rehearsal Milford put a beat on congas against it which suggested a beat they dance and march to in Jamaica. And if we'd put hi-hats in there, it might have ended up sounding like Jo Jones or Baby Dodds. But you see, all of that is in everything all of us play, and that's what the solos were about, too. If we'd had more time to practice and mix we might have gotten to some different things, but overall I was very satisfied, and I think perhaps we came up with a classic date. That's what Max Roach thought when he heard it, and he's going to do the liner notes."

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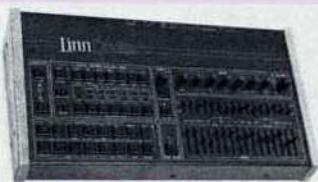
JUST DRUMS

REMO INTRODUCES NEW PTS CATALOG



A new 12-page catalog containing updated listings and descriptions of pretuned percussion products is now available from Remo, Inc. Included are the firm's *PTS* drumsets and individual drums, marching drums, snare drum kits, bongos, tambourines, specialty percussion, *Junior Pro* drums and *Muffl* sound control products. Available from Remo distributors, or write to Remo, Inc., 12804 Raymer Street, North Hollywood, CA 91605.

NEW LINNDRUM FEATURES



Linn Electronics, Inc. has announced the addition of several new features and options to the *LinnDrum*, the programmable digital drum machine that utilizes studio-quality digital recordings of real drums and percussion stored in computer memory. New *LinnDrum* features include: an increased synchronization flexibility, allowing the *LinnDrum* to sync directly to most popular sequencers; single-step programming, allowing the user to step through rhythm patterns note by note when programming or editing; and an increase in the number of steps available in song mode from 99 to 250.

Linn Electronics has also announced a new memory upgrade option which increases the memory capacity from 2,600 events to over 5,200 events. Also, many new sounds have been added to the *LinnDrum*'s library of alternate sound chips. There are now over 60 different conventional studio-quality drum sounds available and over 50 different musical sound effects such as Dog Bark, Gun Shot, Glass Break, Bass Guitar, Human Vocals, etc. All sounds are production quality and carry a suggested retail price of \$40.00 to \$60.00.

ZILDJIAN INTRODUCES "FOCUSED-ENERGY" AMIR/IMPULSE CYMBALS



New "focused-energy" *Amir/Impulse* cymbals have been added to the already extensive Zildjian cymbal lines. These have been designed to project through the sound of amplified instruments while retaining their tight definition and focused tone. The *Impulse* cym-

bals produce a sound with a quick decay and limited overtones, much like the standard *Amir* cymbals, but with even more stick articulation and control, allowing drummers to play harder without the buildup of overtones. *Amir/Impulses* are rugged, and can be played extremely hard with minimal risk of breaking the cymbal. The specific frequency range and overtone threshold of the cymbals allow them to retain the tight definition of the drummer's initial stick attack

and project that sound clearly out to the audience.

The *Amir/Impulse* hi-hats have several semicircular "notches" cut out of the edge of the bottom cymbal to produce a much bigger "chick" sound and more volume. Like the *Amir* cymbal line, *Amir/Impulse* offers crash, ride, hi-hat and special effects (*China Boy*) cymbals in a variety of popular sizes. For more information, contact Avedis Zildjian Company, Longwater Drive, Norwell, MA 02061.

NEW STICK BAGS FROM DW

Drum Workshop and Sticks Pack have combined forces to produce two new stick bags for drummers and percussionists. The oversized bags feature double-stitched seams, large pockets with *Velcro* fasteners, heavy-duty zippers and a convenient shoulder strap. Both bags are made of high-strength nylon which is stain, dirt and tear resistant. Each has three stick or mallet storage compartments, one of which is large enough for books and maga-

zines.

DW's *Basic Black* bag can be used by drummers and percussionists for sticks, mallets, keys, tools and small accessories. The *Camouflage* bag is designed for heavy-duty situations, will hold dozens of pairs of sticks, and is extremely sturdy and durable. Contact Drum Workshop, Inc., at 2697 Lavery Court #16, Newbury Park, CA 91320 (805) 499-6863.

SHER MUSIC OFFERS NEW FAKE BOOK

Sher Music Co. has just published *The World's Greatest Fake Book*, a legal, totally accurate, contemporary fake book containing 484 pages (over 200 tunes) of composer-approved transcriptions. Included are recorded jazz and fusion compositions by Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, George Duke, McCoy Tyner, John Coltrane, Wayne Shorter, Bill Evans, Josef Zawinul, Freddie Hubbard, Jaco Pastorius, Dave Grusin, Richie Beirach, Charles Mingus and many others. It also has fea-

YAMAHA UNVEILS NEW POWER SERIES DRUM OUTFITS



Jim Coffin, Percussion Marketing Manager for Yamaha Musical Products, recently announced the introduction of new Yamaha *Power Series* drum outfits. These deep-shelled drums will be offered in the *Recording Custom, Tour and Stage Series*.

The bass drums in this series initially available will include 22 x 16 and 24 x 16 sizes. All of the double-headed tom-toms will have a depth of two inches less than the diameter, with the exception of the 8" and 10" sizes. These two drums will have an equal diameter and depth (8x8 and 10x10).

The new *Power Series* shells are made of the same woods as the regular Yamaha drum series. The bearing edges on the *Power Series* drums have a sharper angled bevel. A 14x8 *Power Series* snare drum will be available in the *Recording Custom* series only. Floor toms will be offered in the traditional sizes. For more information, contact Yamaha Musical Products, P.O. Box 7271, Grand Rapids, MI 49510.

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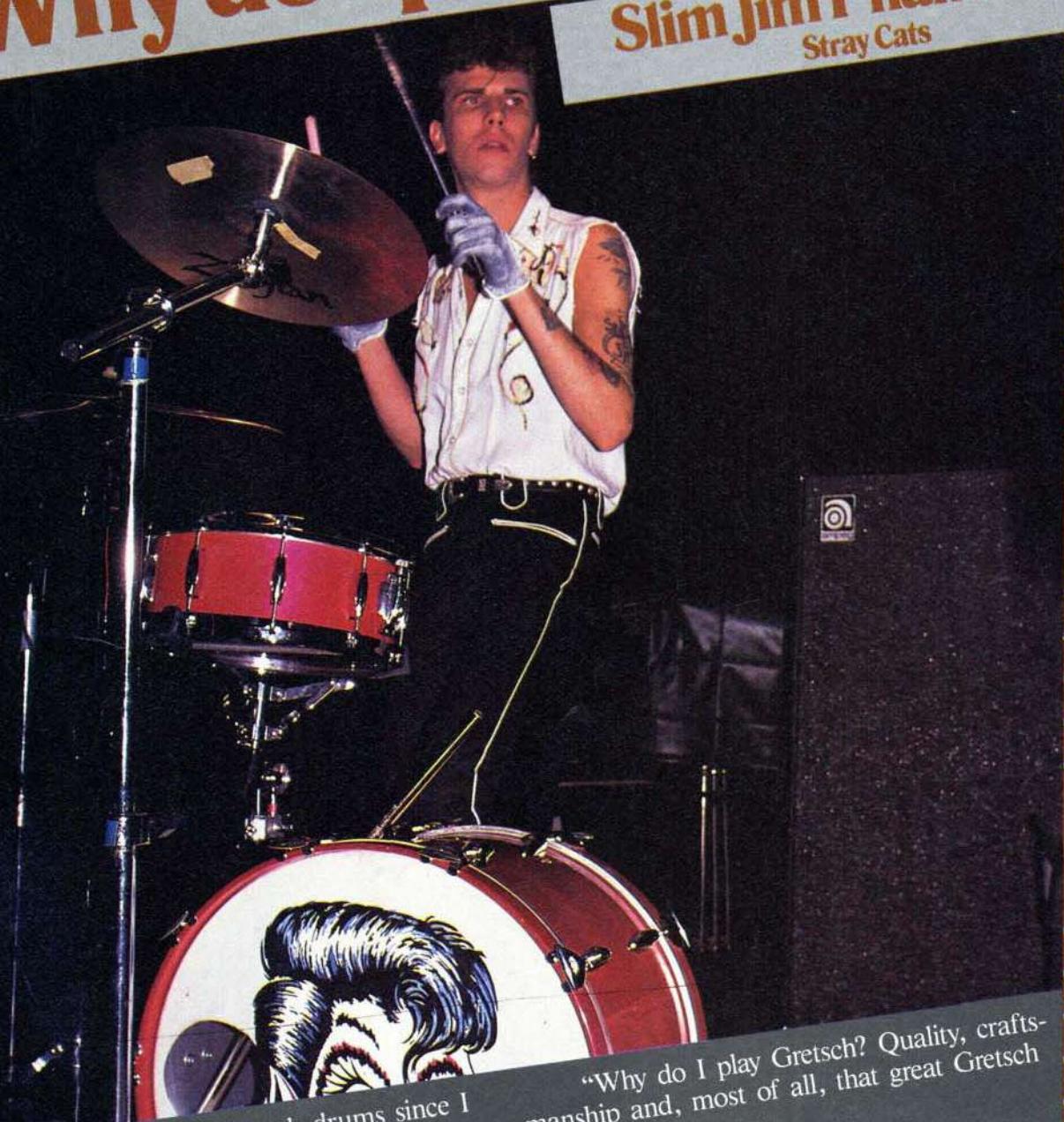
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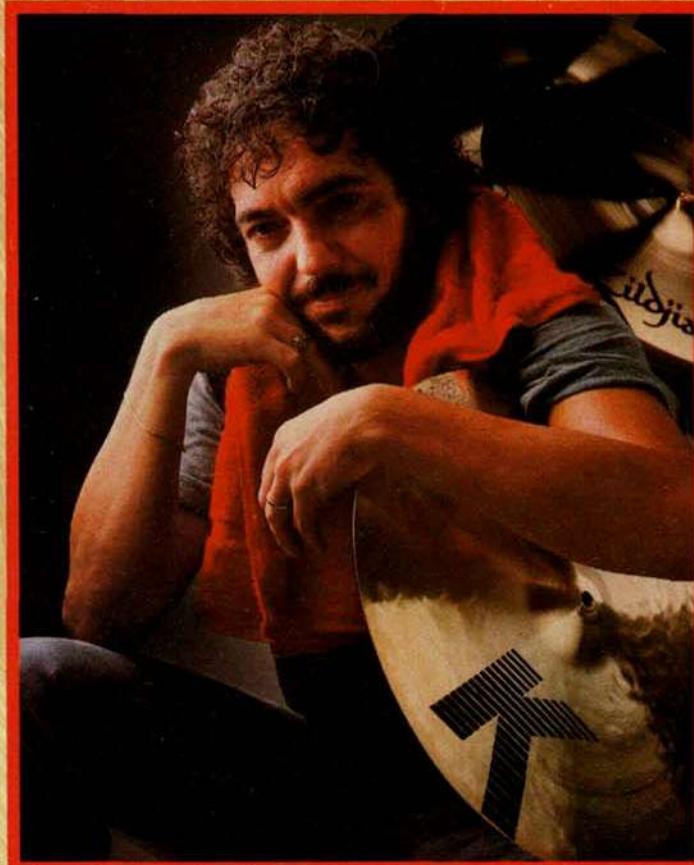
STEVE GADD. HOT ON ZILDJIAN.

The man is hot! And he should be. No less than Chick Corea put it this way: "Every drummer wants to play like Steve Gadd because he plays great. He plays everything well. He could very well go on to become one of the greatest drummers the world has ever seen." As you can imagine, between his touring and recording, Steve's not the easiest guy in the world to pin down. But he did stop for a breather the other day and we got a chance to talk with him.

On Practice. "I've been playing since I was a kid. As long as I keep my muscles loose, I don't have to practice a lot every day. When I do practice, I just sort of let things happen naturally and then later on try to work it into my playing. Like on '50 Ways to Leave Your Lover... I used my left hand on the high hat for the whole section – it was a little thing I'd been practicing and it just worked out."

On Control. "Sometimes I use light, medium and heavy sticks to do the same drills because the sticks affect my muscles in different ways. You have to use your hand and arm muscles differently to control your playing. It's a subtle thing but it helps me tremendously."

On Effects. "After I graduated from Eastman, I played in a rock 'n roll band. It was keyboard, bass, drums and a lot of homemade stuff. I bought 6 big artillery shells, sawed them into different lengths and hung them on



Steve Gadd, one of the world's most innovative musicians, has paved the way toward new playing techniques for today's drummers.

a rack that I built. I'd use them for the free sections in the music."

On K's. "Art Blakey gave me my first set of K. Zildjian's a long time ago. I love the feel of them. There's something about the way the stick reacts to the surface... it almost becomes part of the cymbal. They're not cold or edgy. They have a very warm and deep feeling. They've got real character. I use a 20" Ride and an 18" Crash Ride with 14" Hi Hats for recording and live sessions."

On A's. "I love to use A. Zildjian's when I play rock 'n roll. When I want to play louder, I add a 16" Thin Crash and an 18" Crash Ride for a full crash sound. The bells on the A's really project the sound in a clear natural tone."

On Zildjian. "Zildjian to me is the foundation. I play Zildjians because that's what's in my heart. I love the sound, the feel, the history... I love the quality and the status of a Zildjian."

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