

MODERN DRUMMER™

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MARCH 1985

ROGER TAYLOR Of DURAN DURAN

Plus:

Rod Morgenstein
On Practice

Nick Ceroli
On Big Band

Henry Adler

Cross - Sticking
Tips

THE ENGLISH
REGGAE DRUMMERS

JOHN VONOHLEN

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Drummer Roger Taylor's first professional performance was with the incredibly successful British band Duran Duran. Here, Taylor discusses such topics as his simple playing style and why it suits Duran Duran's music, songwriting, his first recording experience, and the group's videos,
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ENGLISH REGGAE

Reggae may have developed in Jamaica, but these days you're likely to hear as much of it in England as in its birthplace. To find out how English reggae differs from its Jamaican cousin, we spoke to several of the drummers who are involved in it: Matumbi's **Jah Bunny**, Steel Pulse's **Steve Nesbitt**, Aswad's **Drummie Zeb**, and UB 40's **Jim Brown**.
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JOHN VON OHLEN

One of the most distinctive features of the Stan Kenton band of the early '70s was its drummer, John Von Ohlen. But instead of going with other big-name bands after he left Kenton, Von Ohlen went back to Indianapolis to pursue his career there. Here, he talks about his work as a big band drummer, and discusses his philosophy that good music doesn't only exist in New York and L.A.
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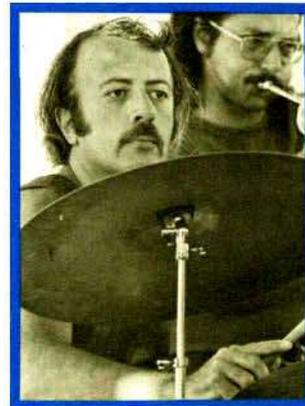


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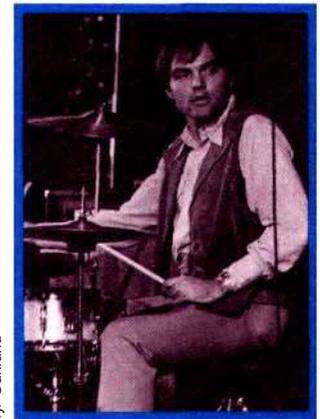


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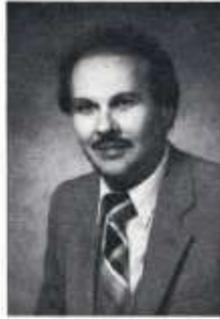
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EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

Inside MD



Several months ago, I wrote about *MD's* network of Contributing Writers. Of equal importance to the success of every issue of *Modern Drummer* are those individuals listed to the immediate right of this column, with Editorial and Art Department titles. These are the people who comprise our in-house editorial staff.

Though balancing the feature section of each issue is a group decision, the department is basically under the direct, daily supervision of Features Editor, Rick Mattingly. Rick coordinates the assignments of the field writers, and painstakingly tailors every feature story to the needs of the *MD* reader. Following the progress of each article from initial assignment to press is only one phase of a job that also includes writing feature interviews, reviews, and updates. Rick is also the Editor of *Modern Percussionist*, our new sister publication.

MD's Managing Editor is Rick Van Horn, and one of his key roles is to screen and edit much of the monthly column roster. Along with the many managerial duties required to keep this segment of *MD* efficient, he also pulls photographic material together for each issue, checks all proofs, and is directly responsible for *MD's* columns *On The Move*, *Ask A Pro*, *It's Questionable* and *Just Drums*, among others. Rick also writes occasional features for the magazine, as well as his monthly *Club Scene* column.

Susan Hannum is one of *MD's* two Associate Editors and is also Managing Editor of *Modern Percussionist*. Articles for both magazines must pass across her desk for final copy editing. Careful scrutiny of all manuscripts, galleys and page proofs, with an eagle eye for misspelled words or misplaced commas, is an important part of this phase of the operation. Finally, the material is forwarded to Editorial Assistant, Elaine Cannizzaro, who types every manuscript into our word processing system, and sends it via telephone lines to our preproduction printing service.

MD's newest Associate Editor is William Miller. Along with a host of diversified writing and editing projects, Bill is responsible for checking every note of music appearing in both *MD* and *MP*, and also handles the preparation and formatting of *Printed Page* (book reviews), *On Track* (record reviews) and *Setup Update*.

Perhaps you're wondering how all these bits and pieces of magazine content come together. Well, before any of it leaves the office, every article, photograph, headline and advertisement ends up in the Art Department under the supervision of Art Director, David Creamer. It's Dave's job to sort it out, design the layouts, and present it all in magazine format. It starts with sketches of story layouts, photo selection and line art design, through to the placement of all editorial and advertising material, and the checking and double checking of all these elements from concept to completion. The fact that it's not unusual to have three issues, at various stages, moving through at the same time may give you some indication as to why the Art Department tends to be one of the more *interesting* spots in the building.

Everything I've mentioned is really an oversimplification of the work performed by the in-house staff, but I think it may give you a general idea of the overall process. It's a rather complex procedure that requires the skill and hard work of a dedicated team, and I consider myself fortunate to have one of the best editorial teams around.

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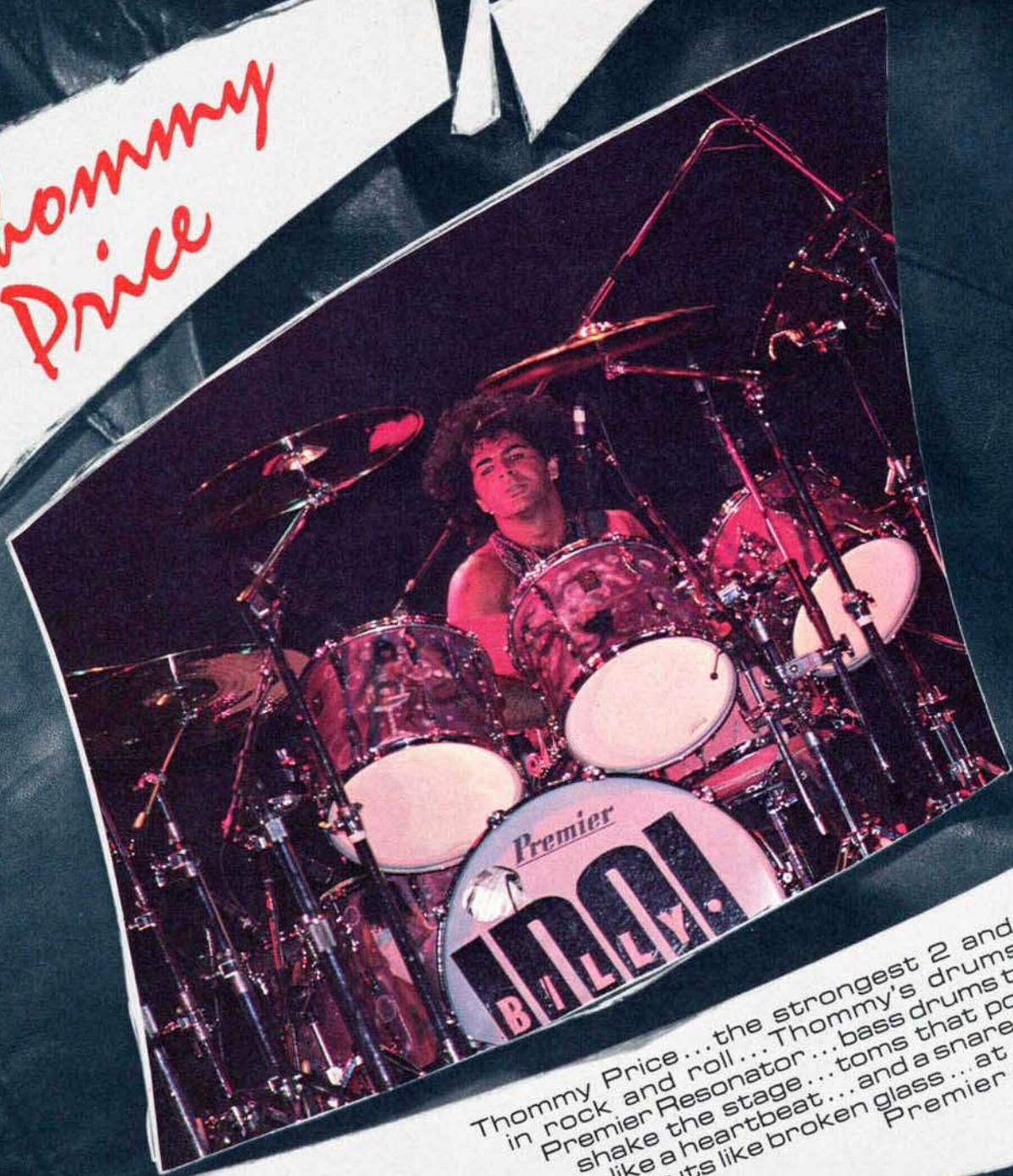
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READER'S PLATFORM

TERRY BOZZIO

Sincere thanks to *MD* and Rick Mattingly for the insightful interview with Terry Bozzio in the December issue. Mattingly's intelligent questions and Bozzio's very thoughtful replies made for one of the best interviews I have read.

I owe my renewed interest in playing drums to Terry Bozzio. I had been playing since I was a child, but by 1979 or thereabouts had lost interest and had sold my drumkit. Then along came *Spring Session M* in 1982. I had never heard drumming like Terry's before, even though my musical taste was fairly catholic. Each time I listened to *Spring Session M* I found myself tapping my feet and "playing drums" with my hands upon any available surface. So inspired was I by Terry's creativity that I decided to rejoin the drumming fraternity and bought a drumkit (and started reading *MD* again, by the way).

It is indeed unfortunate that some rock critics and fans can't seem to see beyond the surface "flash" of Missing Persons; it is truly a musician's band. Terry's innovativeness with drums and percussion is unique in rock. I had never before heard cymbal sounds like his until I began listening to Missing Persons. His blending of acoustic and electronic percussion is a prime example of what makes today's drumming more exciting. Thanks, Terry, for the inspiration you have given me and, I'm sure, to countless other drummers.

Bruce R. Beaman
Stevens Point, WI

SHELLY MANNE

I have had the pleasure of performing at a few jazz festivals that also featured the participation of the late Shelly Manne. Shelly's attitude and playing, and of course not least of all his spirit, were always of the highest level. He always had a smile and a good word for all the other musicians, especially the other drummers like myself—always an encouraging word. He generally had a joke or quip of some sort to "crack up" the other "cats." He was the perfect example of what being a great musician/human being was all about. He made everybody play better, no matter which instrument or group you played in. But the drummers always played better, not out of "competition," but because Shelly set such high musical standards. I know I always played better, and sitting or standing in the wings (as you always should when in the presence of really great musicians) and checking the other groups, I could see and hear the other drummers playing much better than usual. Shelly always played *music*, not just the drums. Not only was Shelly a wonder-

ful drummer, he was a marvelous and versatile musician.

I was pleased to be present at the tribute that the city of Los Angeles (along with a wonderful organization called Musician's Wives) gave in Shelly's honor on September 9, 1984—just two weeks before his untimely death. Louie Bellson, Carl Barnett and I played for Shelly, along with other wonderful musicians. Some had played at one time with Shelly, others were there just to demonstrate to Shelly the love we all felt for him. Ed Shaughnessy, Armand Zildjian and Leonard Feather (the noted jazz critic/historian) all made very eloquent speeches. It was a great day! I said to a number of the musicians that it was great that Shelly was "given the roses when he could still smell them."

I'm sorry this letter could not be in your offices in time to be included in your Shelly Manne Tribute, but I would like very much for the "drum world," and anyone else who is interested, to know of the love I felt, and will always feel, for Mr. Shelly Manne. Thanks, Shelly!

Sherman Ferguson
Los Angeles, CA

PAPA JO

Among your readers, many friends and fans of Papa Jo Jones may not know that he has been in the hospital since early December with a broken hip. It would surely cheer up this great guy and drummer to know he is remembered. Perhaps mail sent to the magazine could be forwarded to him?

Audrey Hutchins
Montclair, NJ

Ed. note: MD joins the drumming community in wishing Papa Jo a speedy recovery, and will be happy to forward all get-well cards and letters directly to him.

LEFTY LAMENTS

I would like to express my thanks to everyone involved in the Sam Ash Drum Expo '84. It was a very interesting and informative experience. However, I was very disappointed in the fact that not one drum manufacturer at the Expo had a drumkit set up for left-handed drummers. This simple task would not have been a problem, since most of the displays contained multiple setups. I, myself, fall into the "lonely lefty" category, and I couldn't try any of the wonderful equipment without discomfort. I felt like an outcast. There were many left-handed drummers I met at the Expo who felt the same way. I truly hope that more consideration will be given at such industry shows in the future.

Allen Goldstein
Brooklyn, NY

IT'S QUESTIONABLE: REBUTTAL

Referring to the *It's Questionable* page in the November '84 *MD*, and in particular the response to the letter from L.W. of Elgin, South Carolina ("Are there any study books for those who play by ear?"), several excellent points were made by *MD* in reply. However, I was sorry that the writer did not mention *ChoomBoook* study books, which allow the study of rhythmic concepts and four-limb coordination without conventional notation.

In complete agreement with *MD's* reply to L.W., the text of *ChoomBoook* states that being literate in standard notation is essential for the serious musician. Nevertheless, *ChoomBoook* study materials, being in phonetic notation, can be effectively utilized by any person able to read printed words, irrespective of music-reading ability.

All in all, this writer's feeling is that *It's Questionable* is admirably executed, and I expect to enjoy the many authoritative responses that it always contains.

Jack Van der Wyk
Author, *ChoomBoook*
Oakland, CA

BRUFORD STYLE & ANALYSIS

Thank you so much, Michael Bettine, for your accurate job on the Bill Bruford "Style & Analysis" article that ran in the October '84 issue. There is one point I would like to clear up though. It has to do with transcription #1 from the opening section of "In The Dead Of Night" by U.K. On measure 9 there should be an open hi-hat indication on the & of 2, and on the & of 7. Measures 10 and 11 should each have an open hi-hat indication on the & of 6. Otherwise, you did prime! I would like to see more of this type of work.

John Perrine
West Linn, OR

DRUMMER IN UNIFORM

I have subscribed to *Modern Drummer* for many years. I always recommend it to younger drummers, and I thought I'd finally write to tell you how much I think of your magazine. I am a Gunnery Sergeant in the United States Marine Corps. There are about 30 working drummers stationed on Okinawa, and we all eagerly await the latest issue of *Modern Drummer*. I have been a drummer for over 20 years, and I'm grateful for "our" magazine. I particularly enjoy the interviews with famous drummers. I'd just like to thank *MD*, along with all the drummers you have interviewed over the years.

(GnSgt) Marcelino Luna, Jr., USMC
Okinawa, Japan 

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ASK A PRO

ELVIN JONES



Q. What suggestions can you give for developing independent coordination?

Mike Pandino
Miami, FL

A. First of all, a person has to realize that, as soon as you say "independence," you've lost the concept of coordination. There really is no such thing as independence as far as the body is concerned. Coordination is a natural part of the body's function. When you walk, that's coordination.

You could say that it's independent because the feet do not come down together at the same time, but it's all coordinated. It's all part of the same thing, just like the drumset is all one thing.

To learn coordination effectively takes a great deal of practice. You need to start by doing things that are very simple—even ridiculously simple. That helps you to understand what you are doing, because the simple things develop into the more complex things. There are any number of books that address this problem. The main thing you have to do is start simply and put in a lot of time.

Not knowing you personally, it's difficult to advise you except in general terms. A teacher/student relationship is more appropriate for addressing topics such as this. But there's no secret about the theory and philosophy.

MATT FRENETTE



Photo by Lissa Wales

Q. I recently saw you filling in for Bryan Adams' drummer, and you sounded great! How are you miking your drums to get that rich, deep sound? Also, from your own experience, what advice could you give me concerning getting a good start in the music business? I've been playing for about 10 years with bands that played the club circuit, but the "chemistry" just wasn't right. I'm a rudimentary drummer, like yourself. What should I do? Where should I go? It's frustrating!

Jeff Azar
Nacodoches, TX

A. Firstly, the sound you heard was achieved by Bryan Adams' audio engineer, Jody Perpich, by using the following microphones: bass drum, Electro-Voice RE20; rack toms, Shure SM57s; floor toms, Sennheiser 421; snare, Shure SM56 (on bottom) and SM57 (on top); hi-hat and overheads, Beyers 101s.

As for getting ahead in the business, there is no easy way to the top except through hard work, practice, and a "stroke" of luck. I spent 10-plus years doing the club circuit myself, wondering when it would end! Finding the right band to work with can be frustrating. I played with four bands over the course of 12 years before joining Loverboy. The best you can do is look for musicians you respect, and a sound and style that inspire you. Good luck!

LARRIE LONDIN



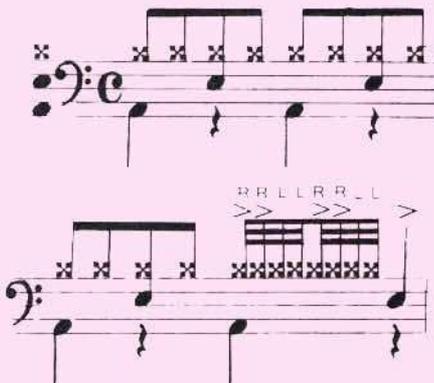
Photo by Lissa Wales

Q. Your drumming on Steve Perry's *Street Talk* is phenomenal. Did you make up the parts yourself, or were you given charts? Also, what exactly is that little hi-hat "trick" in "She's Mine"?

Joey Villareal
Houston, TX

A. Thank you for liking the album. I really like it myself, but I can't say that the drum parts are all mine. You may or may not know that Steve Perry plays drums too, and he would show me and the band the way he wanted a part to feel, and then we would play it

as close to that as we could. The extra hi-hat parts and all the little fine-tuning things that we did really came from our playing around with some great music and a great singer, and just having fun. I've outlined the "trick" I think you mean below. By the way, I also did some of the same things on the toms and snare, such as one-handed ruffs and triplets from the toms to the snare, which is an Ed Greene lick that I worked out to fit me.



BILL BRUFORD

Q. On your tour with Patrick Moraz, I heard your solo cover version of Max Roach's "The Drum Also Waltzes." Can you tell me about the structure of that piece; is it based on polyrhythms of 3/4 time? Is a transcript or recording commercially available?

Paul E. Kunert
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

A. "The Drum Also Waltzes" is one of Max Roach's classic recordings of the

mid-'60s; it's the sort of thing that makes you understand why he was elected to the Percussive Arts Society Hall of Fame. The feet have a continuous 3/4 ostinato throughout and the tune played on top (and it is a tune) is concise, painfully elegant, simple and musical. Like most jazz tunes, the playing of the "head" or main tune is not a particular problem; the fun starts with, and the drummer's expertise is judged by, the skill and grace of

the embroidery or improvising. I play the tune (1) because it is friendly and conversational, (2) because it demonstrates the musicality of the drumset, (3) because it has tradition and makes me feel plugged into, and a part of, that tradition, and (4) because the crowds love it to death. I have the original solo on Max's Drums Unlimited album (Atlantic ATL 1467). Rush out and buy one now!



ROGER TAYLOR AND DURAN DURAN ... POWER, PERFORMANCE AND STYLE

If you've heard the sound of Duran Duran on albums or video's, you've heard the driving pulse of Roger Taylor. As the drummer for Duran Duran, his steady sound has forged the dance beat that has become that band's trademark. We all know how great Roger's drums sound, but their appearance as well, has played a key role in establishing his on stage identity.

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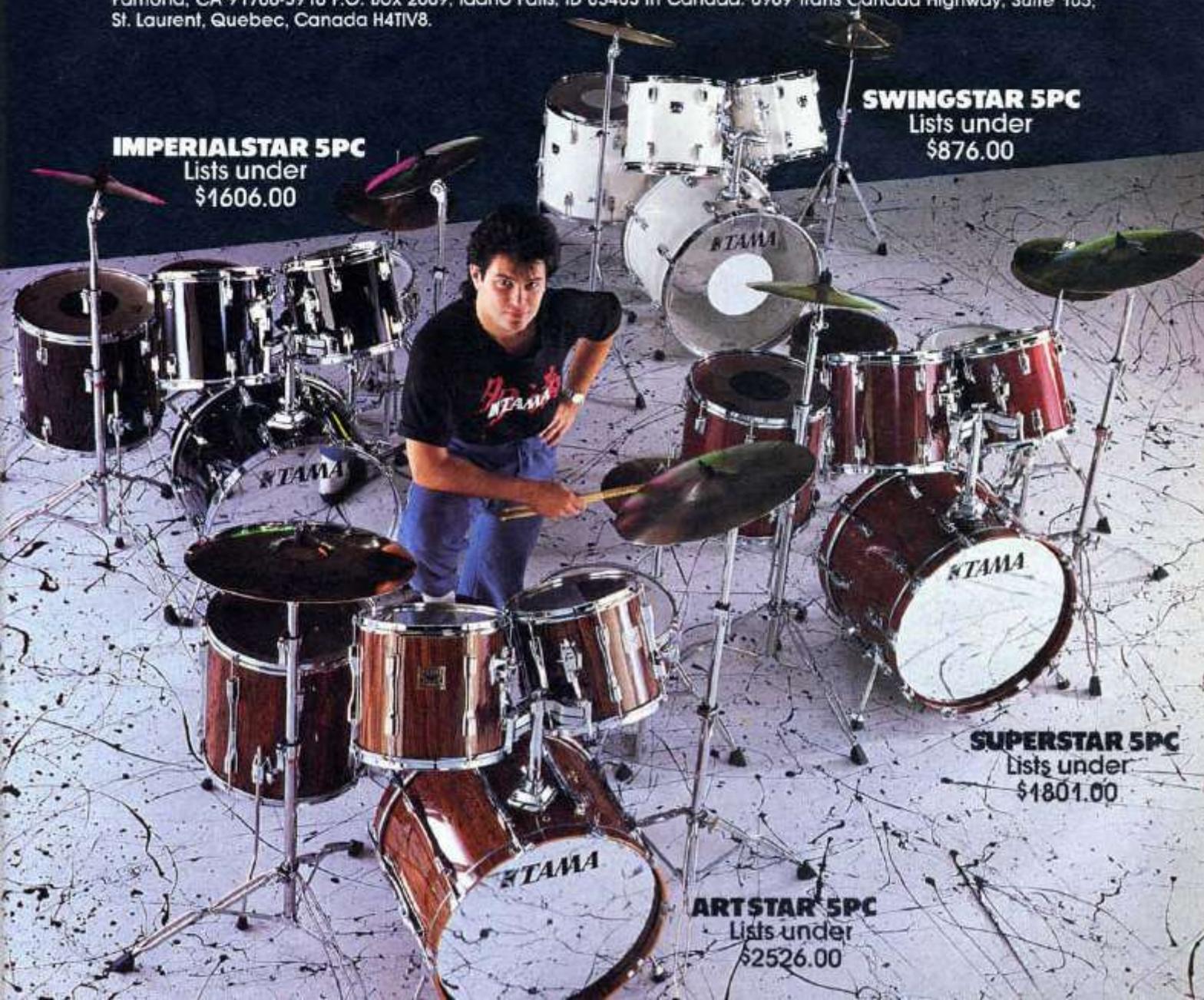
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ROGGER

BEING a pop star isn't easy. Twenty-four-year-old Roger Taylor breathes a sigh of relief as he says, "It's so nice to be talking about drums." It's probably the first time that he's had the opportunity, despite the countless interviews he's done over the last few years.

Duran Duran began in 1978, and by 1981, their first single, "Planet Earth," rose to Number 12 on the English charts and reached Number One in Sweden, Portugal and Australia, holding chart positions in most other European countries as well. By 1982, they had invaded the American shores and went from local favorites to national heroes. In just the three years in which they have had such monster hits as "The Wild Boys," "The Reflex," "Girls On Film," "Rio," "Hungry Like The Wolf," "Union Of The Snake," "Is There Something I Should Know?" and "New Moon On Monday," as well as many video awards, the band has achieved an incredible superstardom. The press has clamored for their most idle of comments regarding information ranging from the members' personal lives to their extravagant videos. And today, in the midst of a six-month tour, Roger, seated in his hotel suite, is giving his only L.A. interview because this one is going to be about music for a change.

by Robyn Flans

RF: What prompted you to start playing drums?

RT: When I was at school, I used to listen to the radio and records a lot. When I was younger, it was sort of the start of the techno-rock thing. I was brought up on groups like Yes, Genesis, Jethro Tull and that sort of thing. I listened to those drummers a lot. I got some drumsticks because I was attracted to the drums and liked the sound. I would play along with records and think, "This is quite easy." I used to sort of know what was coming next. I knew when there was a roll coming and I could keep in time with it.

RF: How old were you?

RT: I must have been about 13. Then somebody at school needed a drummer, so I saved up my money and bought my first drumkit, which cost about \$100 I suppose. I just started playing with the band straightaway and I never stopped. I never had teachers; I just always played in a band and learned that way.

RF: Was that out of choice or because there were no teachers available?

RT: It was mostly out of choice. I never really felt like sitting down and learning how to play paradiddles and all that stuff. I suppose I was impatient. I wanted to go straight into playing drum solos and playing with a band. I bought a few books, but I got bored after the first two pages. I think, in a way, it's been good for me, though. I've been able to develop my own style. I basically learned off records and things like that, instead of being taught by somebody else.

RF: What was the Scent Organs?

RT: [groans] That band has really been blown out of proportion. I think I mentioned it once to somebody, and in everything I pick up, it's been mentioned. It was nothing more than a silly band with school friends. Punk was coming about at that time, so we got involved in that a bit. We played a couple of clubs, but it was nothing much. It was actually new wave oriented, not like the Dead Kennedys or anything like that.

RF: What was your first professional gig?

RT: The first professional gig I did was with Duran Duran. Before that, I had never been in a band that actually got money. The gig with Duran Duran was at a club called the Rum Runner in Birmingham. I think we got about 50 pounds between the lot of us.

RF: When did you get involved with Duran Duran?

RT: It was about '78, I think. There was a whole scene going on in Birmingham which was all based around the Roxy Music and David Bowie sort of scene. We were all into that and I just got involved with the band through friends of friends. I was asked by a guy who used to sing

for the band to come along and audition. I sat in for the audition and the music was exactly the sort of thing I was into at the time—sort of a cross between funk and rock. John was playing very funky bass guitar, and at that time, I was getting into black music just by hanging around clubs. It just sort of gelled because it felt right and sounded good. So I stayed.

RF: Simon was quoted as saying that they chose you as the drummer because of your "disco rhythms." Who were your influences and drum idols?

RT: When I was young, I was very much influenced by a guy who used to play for Roxy Music, Paul Thompson. He was very funky in a rock/funk sort of style. He was very powerful, but he had a groove as well, which I was always into. I was influenced by Charlie Watts as well. I was always into people who were quite simple, but who had a good groove. Then I started listening to black music. One guy I idolized was Tony Thompson who played with Chic. I really got into Chic, and I think he was probably my biggest influence. That's when I really started playing in a funk style.

RF: What qualities do you admire in a drummer?

RT: For me, power and feel rule over technique. I'd rather listen to somebody who has a lot of power than somebody who can do a lot of paradiddles and all that. Overplaying can become messy, so I'd rather underplay. It feels natural for me to do that. I don't think I could ever be a Bill Bruford. I just haven't got a feel for that. I think power is a lot more important.

RF: Simplicity is evident in your playing. In your fills, particularly, you seem to leave very deliberate and significant holes.

RT: I think the spaces I leave are more important than what I actually play. I think it suits the band because it's very synth oriented and quite ethereal. There's quite a lot going on. I like to act against that by contributing something very definite that holds it together.

RF: So you joined Duran Duran and you really didn't starve for long.

RT: No, it wasn't a long time. With this lineup, the band was together for about six months before we got a record contract. We actually spent more time talking about what the band was going to sound like, how big we were going to be, and where we were going to play when we were famous than actually rehearsing together. We had some really big ideas.

RF: Have you fulfilled those ideas?

RT: It seems to have paid off. We used to dream of playing Madison Square Garden and the Forum. We put a lot of thought into it and sort of created our own luck. We were just all so positive about everything that it had to pay off. Everyone was very single-minded and positive.

RF: You were quoted as saying that it's important that one never reach one's goals. It's important, instead, to reach new heights. Does that apply to your instrument as well?

RT: Oh yes. Obviously you just have to keep striving to better yourself with your instrument. It would have been very easy for us to re-create the *Rio* album by doing an album that was very similar and in the same style. But with the new album, we tried to develop ourselves as musicians and go into a whole new field, which I think we've done. We're going to keep trying to do that.

RF: Do you practice?

RT: It depends. When we're on the road, obviously, I don't have the time to

taylor



B.L. GRAHAM PRESENTS

Duran Duran
in
Reno 

practice on my own. It gets to be a bit of a bore sometimes because you become like a full-time pop star and a part-time musician, which holds you back a bit.

RF: It must be difficult when that starts to overshadow the actual playing aspect. How do you deal with that?

RT: A lot of people do tend to forget that you're a musician and just think you're a pop star. The fact that you're a musician doesn't matter anymore. You just have to make up for it when you're not on the road, I suppose, by getting together, playing a lot and practicing on your own. On the road, I try to listen to a lot of records and stock up on things that I like. Sometimes we get to try things out in soundchecks. We have an hour sound-check every day. But it's just one of the drawbacks, I suppose. You gain so much experience just by being on the road and playing every night that it does sort of make up for it in a way.

RF: Everything I've read says you're very shy. How does a shy person handle being on stage and being such a public figure?

RT: It's not very hard, actually. I sort of got used to it. I was a bit nervous about it when we first started, but we've had a lot of experience doing different things and I cope with it now. I'm still not that happy with being a public figure, but I cope with it because I enjoy the other side of things so much. The other four guys make up for me, I think, because they're all so talkative. They're a lot more outgoing.

RF: I guess it becomes a good lesson.

RT: Yeah, it is a good lesson, for me, particularly because at school, I was always the quiet one who sat in the back and nobody really took any notice of me. So it really has brought me out of myself, and it's one of the best things in life that I could do to get myself out of that. It's the opposite of what everyone expected of me, so it's a great lesson. If you're thrown into it, you can't do much about it, so you just have to go with it.

RF: John has said that you and he work on the bass guitar/bass drum patterns together when creating a song. Take me

from the inception of a song to its completion.

RT: The three albums have been recorded very differently. The first album was a collection of two years' material. We went into the studio for about six weeks and just slammed everything down that we knew. John and I went in and put down the bass guitar and drums. Then everyone went in and overdubbed his stuff. It was all done very quickly. The next album took quite a bit longer—about eight weeks to write and about eight weeks to record. But the last album was basically written in the studio. I'll tell you how we recorded that one. It's very complicated.

A lot of the songs were written around drum and bass tracks because the songs were changed so much. We'd have a song, John and I would put down the bass guitar and drum tracks, and the guys would put the song down on the top. Then maybe an hour later they'd say, "I'm not sure about that bit. I'm not sure about this bit." Then they'd try something else on the same track. Two days later, the whole track on the top would have changed and the only original things would be the bass guitar and the drums. The whole song would have changed around the same backing track. It's quite weird when I listen back

now, because I put the drums down to another song. Also, on some tracks, we actually changed the drums. I'd put the drums down and the song would go over the top. Then I'd think, "I don't really like the drum track on that," so I would play along to the song and have a new drum track. There was a lot of chopping and changing on this album. The way we did it was very unorthodox.

RF: When you say the songs were written in the studio, can you be more specific?

RT: It's very hard to put my finger on that process. It can come from anything. We can be sitting in the studio and Nick will say, "I've got this really nice keyboard riff." John and I will say, "Oh, we've got a really nice rhythm that could go with that," and we'll start jamming around in the studio. Then Nick might say, "I have this other chord," or Andy will say, "I've got some more chords that would go with that for a chorus." We'll just keep jamming and keep recording it. We'll go back, listen to it and say, "Oh, that sounds good. Let's change that bit." We'll go in and do it again. Then Simon will come in and say,

**"I THINK THAT IT'S VERY
IMPORTANT TO SOUND LIVE
WHEN YOU'RE PLAYING LIVE,
AND NOT SOUND LIKE
A RECORD."**



Photo by Lissa Wales

"Oh, I've got some good lyrics for that and a good vocal melody." Then he'll start singing over the top of it and we'll record it. Simon will then probably change the actual vocal melody and lyrics about five times before it's done. It's all very complicated. There's no one person who comes in and says, "I've got a song. The drums go like that; the guitar goes like that." We all just sort of chip in. It's very exciting.

RF: When you and John work together in creating these rhythm patterns, what are you thinking of?

RT: A lot of things actually come from songs we've heard, whether they're subconscious or conscious. Sometimes we'll say, "What about trying the rhythm that was on such and such," and we try that and change it. I think everybody does that—sort of pinching things. But apart from that, we just get a groove going. John will work out the notes and I'll work out little fills. It just builds like that, I suppose. It's very hard to explain how we work in the studio because there's no one technique that we use. Even a synthesizer could go down first. We've changed a lot of the way we record. We always used to put the bass and drums down. Now we could put a rhythmic synthesizer down with some chords over the top, and then put bass and drums over the top of that. Studio techniques have advanced so much over the last three years that we're changing the way we record all the time.

RF: You don't use a drum machine?

RT: That's something else again. Although we don't use actual drum sounds like bass drum sounds or snare drum sounds because they're sterile and horrible, we use a lot of Linn percussion. What happens is that John and I put our tracks down usually to a Linn click track. So we've got the bass and drum track, and now we've got the click going all the way through. Once we have the click, we can start putting percussion in manually over the top of things. But we don't actually use the percussion as percussion. We use the percussion to trigger synthesizers. It's quite a new technique that's come about, which means you can actually press a keyboard and the percussion that's gone down on the track will trigger the keyboard. Instead of hearing percussion, you'll hear synthesizer playing what the percussion originally played. So that's how we use the Linn percussion.

RF: There is actual percussion on your tracks.

RT: Yes, but that's manually played percussion. We have a percussionist come in.

RF: Do you feel that with the advent of all these synthesizers you have had to alter your playing any?

RT: No. The band is so synth oriented that I think it's important for me to retain a natural feel and a natural drum sound. It would be very easy to start using drum computers. It would have been so much easier with all the synthesizers, but we've always held that back because the band would have become very cold and one-dimensional if it were all computerized. So we've made sure that we've kept natural guitar, natural bass and natural drums.

RF: What exactly is that on the opening of "Rio"? It doesn't sound like Simmons, but it doesn't sound like real drums either.

RT: It's just concert toms. I don't really know a lot about studio gadgetry, but it was done through the

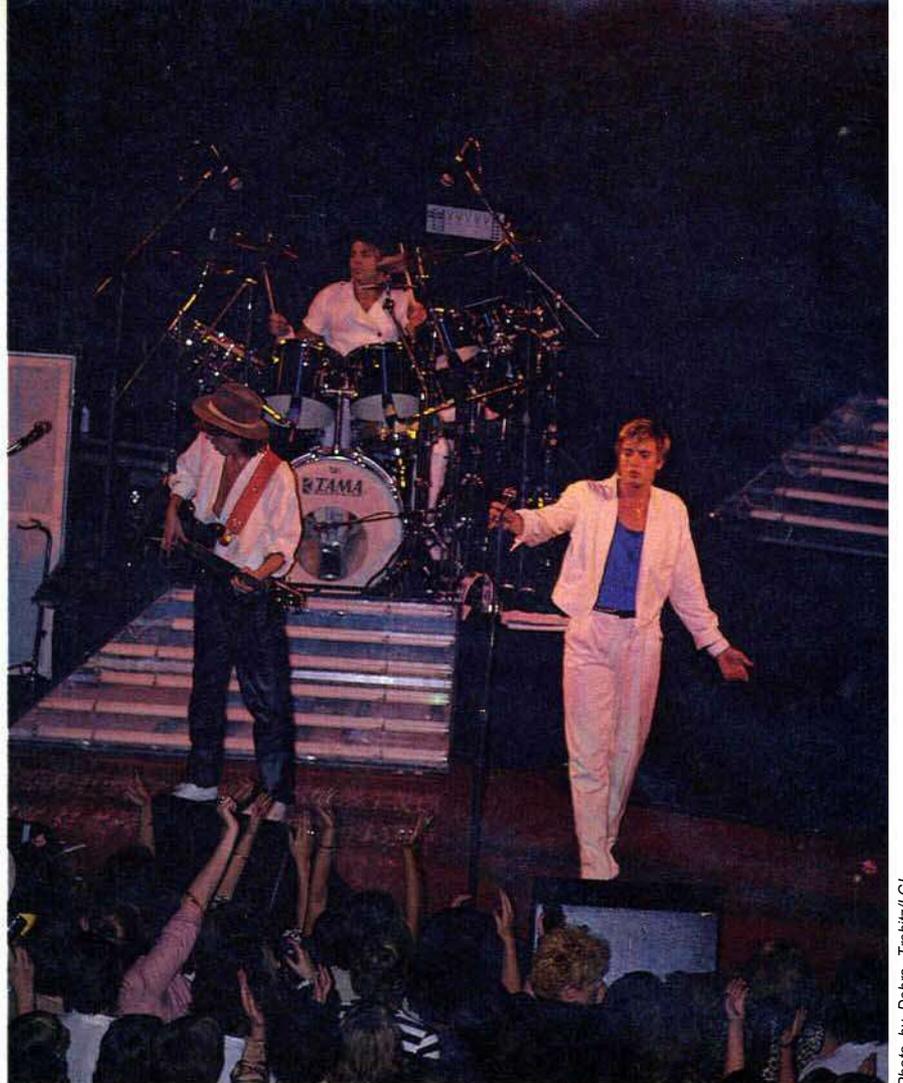


Photo by Debra Trebitz/LGI

board by [producer] Colin Thurston.

RF: How do you duplicate that live?

RT: I don't try to duplicate it exactly. I think that it's very important to sound live when you're playing live, and not sound like a record. If that were the case, someone might as well just listen to the records at home. So there are a lot of effects and things that we don't bother with live. Live is a totally different thing for us.

I think we're a lot more powerful live. A lot of people have said we sound a lot more like Van Halen than Duran Duran live. The guitar is a lot more up front. We go for more power and everyone projects a lot. It's basically a rock show. We're not a synth band.

RF: On one hand you say live is a separate experience from the record, yet you stay pretty true to the record during the show without much deviance or stretching out.

RT: In a sense, I think it's very important to stay true to the record, because it should never be worse than the record. I think we have stretched out a bit, and I think we've made a lot of the stuff a lot better than the records. That comes naturally when you've been playing the song for a few weeks on the road. You start to put in little extra things, and it starts to improve naturally. We don't improvise that much, but I think it's very important to deliver to the audience what they know. I don't think the audience would like it if we went into a ten-minute guitar or keyboard solo in the middle of "Hungry Like The Wolf."

RF: Going back to electronics for a moment, there are Simmons in the middle section of "Hungry Like The Wolf."

RT: Yes.

RF: You mentioned once that you were going to exchange all your toms for Simmons.

RT: I decided against that. I went a bit crazy over the sound of the Simmons when I first got them. They were like a new toy, but actually now I find that they're a bit limited. You can get one good sound out of them and that's it. I think it's important to retain the sound of real tom-toms. I like to have the Simmons just as an additional sound. It's like having a Chinese cymbal as well

ENGLISH

by Robert Santelli

MENTION the word reggae and immediately visions of sun-soaked Jamaica come to mind. Reggae is, after all, a Jamaican music form. Its birthplace is the back alley recording studios and steamy streets of Kingston, the island's major city.

But ever since the death of Bob Marley back in 1981, Jamaican reggae has wandered in a cloudy, shapeless limbo. Marley was reggae's king and Rasta prophet, its most acclaimed spokesman and recording artist, and its most compelling live performer. Along with his band, the Wailers, Marley tirelessly set about introducing the rest of the world to reggae. He was both reggae's and Jamaica's favorite son, and that's why when he passed on, a victim of cancer, the island and the music went into a state of shock. Kingston's most prominent recording artists seemed stymied and unable to carry on with the same "everything cool man" attitude that had previously encompassed their music. Without Marley they seemed lost as to how to continue his work—the merger of reggae within mainstream pop music.

Eventually, artists such as Peter Tosh and Bunny Wailer, newcomers like Yellowman and Eek-A-Mouse, and groups like Black Uhuru—featuring the indomitable Sly Dunbar on drums and Robbie Shakespeare on bass—began to step out of the gloom. But the lack of consistent and truly good reggae emanating out of Kingston in these post-Marley years has prompted people to search elsewhere for reggae. That place was England.

England was a logical choice. Ever since the early '60s, there has been a steady influx of Caribbean immigrants to Great Britain in search of work and a higher standard of living. They settled mostly in London and the industrial cities to the north. Many of these immigrants came from Jamaica. With them came their culture, and with their culture came reggae.

Today, England is reggae's largest market, meaning that more reggae records are bought in Britain than anywhere else. In addition, there's a better black/white balance within reggae music circles there. There's also a much larger music press to address and promote reggae than in Jamaica. There are even more venues and opportunities for reggae artists to perform in London than in Kingston. Finally, the vibes may not be tropical, but in cities like London, Birmingham and Bristol, they're a heck of a lot mellow than those in the Kingston ghetto where most of the Jamaican recording studios are located.

Since 1981, English reggae has made steady strides towards respectability. In the absence of any notable Jamaican reggae artists assuming the role vacated by Marley, British reggae artists have quietly taken up the slack in the music. As a result, UB 40, a black/white reggae band out of Birmingham, scored with a major album, *Labour Of Love*. *Steel Pulse*, another Birmingham-based band, completed its most successful world tour ever in 1984, and currently ranks as the most popular reggae band in the United States and England. *Aswad*, a London band left for dead by Island Records a few years ago, re-signed with the label, and last year released a critically praised LP, *Live And Direct*. Even Linton Kwesi Johnson, the creator of the reggae offshoot, dub poetry, is back touring and recording. What all this means is that reggae's future may indeed be in England rather than Jamaica.

On a recent trip to England, I spoke with the country's four top reggae drummers. Jah Bunny, Steve Nesbitt, Drummie Zeb, and Jim Brown have all played significant roles in the recent development of Unionjack reggae. But more than that, they have helped define and, in some cases, redefine the boundaries of reggae drumming.

J A H

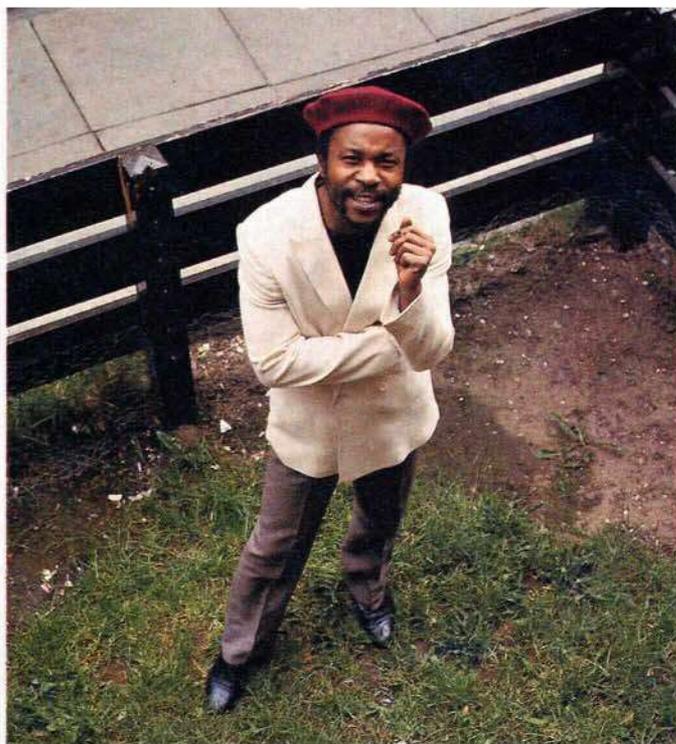


Photo by Robert Santelli

S T E V E



Photo by Robert Santelli

R E G G A E

B U N N Y

Lloyd Donaldson, aka Jah Bunny, is the dean of British reggae drummers. Having played with such important English reggae outfits as the Undivided, Matumbi, and the Cimarons, not to mention countless dates as a session drummer, Jah Bunny has probably logged more studio and stage time than any other reggae drummer in England. "If there is anyone who knows about reggae and drums here in Britain, it's Jah Bunny," says ace producer/musician/songwriter Dennis Bovell. "You have to talk with Bunny before you talk with any other reggae drummer here in England."

Bovell knows all about the talent of Jah Bunny. Matumbi, perhaps the first great British reggae band, was the brainchild of Bovell. And when he decided to tighten up its rhythm section, the drummer he sought—and landed—was Jah Bunny.

These days, however, Jah Bunny isn't as active as he was in the early and mid-'70s when British reggae was just coming into its own. But he says his inactivity is about to change. Bunny resides in the Clapton section of London where he's recently built a small recording studio in the bottom floor of his apartment. His goal is to begin recording and producing local reggae acts, in addition to keeping up with his session work. There's even the possibility that the Cimarons might re-form, he says enthusiastically.

"There's a whole new generation of reggae drummers here in London and up in Birmingham, but there's still plenty of room for me, too," he smiles. "I think the time has come for English reggae to finally sprout up, y'know. The time is right and the music is right."

RS: You played drums with one of England's earliest and finest reggae bands, Matumbi. How did you get involved with the group?

JB: Well, after I stopped playing with the Undivided—which was one of the very first reggae groups around here, and one that used to back all the great Jamaican artists who would come to England to play—Dennis Bovell of Matumbi rang me. I went to his place and we had a little talk. He asked me to play in his group. I give it a thought and say, "Yeah, I will do it."

RS: Back in the early and mid-'70s, British reggae had a difficult time gaining recognition not only in Jamaica and the U.S., but in England, too. About the only British band to achieve recognition was Matumbi. Why was that so?

JB: British reggae back then was underrated and not given a chance. The people who had come to England from Jamaica—well, all they wanted to hear was music from back home, y'see. Some of the records made by English groups were good, but some weren't so good. Some weren't mixed tight or professionally recorded. The music sounded too loose. The engineers didn't know how to EQ the music. But people like me, Dennis Bovell and some others overcame that by engineering and producing our own tunes. Dennis Bovell was a good one for that. Back in the early days, he was the best producer and engineer.

RS: Were you born in Jamaica?

JB: Yeah, mon. I come to England with my family in 1965, but before that I lived in Kingston. That's where I get the feel for the drums. As a kid I used to get two sticks and bang on the table, or two boxes or just some wood. I never take no lessons—no money for that. I listen and train myself. I watched the military bands and the Boy Scout bands, especially the drummers.

RS: But you also spent time working with the legendary Jamaican

N E S B I T T

Steel Pulse might very well be the most exciting reggae band in concert since the days when Bob Marley & The Wailers stomped and shanked across stages the world over. Lead guitarist and lead singer David Hinds, whom some compare to Marley, and who readily admits to being greatly influenced by him, is a multi-talented frontman and a gifted songwriter. But without the sturdy drumming of Steve "Grizzly" Nesbitt, the Steel Pulse sound would lack perhaps its most vital rhythmic muscle.

Nesbitt was born on Nevis, a tiny island in the West Indies, and played with local Birmingham funk bands like Penny Black and Force before joining Steel Pulse in 1977. "It's really kind of strange that I'm playing with a band like Steel Pulse," says Nesbitt. "Despite my West Indian heritage, my early influences as a drummer and musician are not what you'd expect them to be."

"Highly respected among reggae and rock fans alike in England, Nesbitt is a classy, often aggressive and unpredictable drummer. 'If you asked me to describe one of the main things about my drumming, I'd say that I really try not to play the same thing twice. I like fresh beats—fresh sounds.'"

RS: Unlike a lot of other British reggae drummers, your drum roots are almost exclusively rock and funk, correct?

SN: Pretty much so, yes. Believe it or not, I used to be into bands like Black Sabbath and the Jimi Hendrix Experience. I also listened a lot to the Meters. But in the beginning, I never listened to reggae or reggae drummers.

RS: When did you begin to play the drums?

SN: When I was about 16 years old.

RS: And when did you begin playing reggae?

SN: When I joined Steel Pulse. Before Steel Pulse I was playing rock and funk, like you mentioned. I was in Force and the band split up. I just sat at home doing nothing for a few months. Then David [Hinds] came down and told me that he and the band needed a drummer to record their first single. So he asked me if I would do the session. I had nothing going then, so I did the gig. I had never played reggae before, so it was a challenge for me. From that point on, we just stuck together.

RS: Did you find it difficult to make the transition from rock and funk to reggae?

SN: Yes, it was difficult and it still is. [laughs] Reggae drumming, in comparison to rock drumming, is a totally different feel all together. The action is different; the mode of thinking is different. Rock drumming is like straightforward energy. Reggae is like pushing, but you can't push it too far. You've got to hold back, but not too far. It's a delicate feel that you have to master. After playing reggae for a number of years, the urge to play a rock style still creeps in, especially when Steel Pulse plays live. Sometimes I really want to open it up.

RS: As a youth, did you ever take drum lessons or study music?

SN: No, no lessons. I just played. I watched other people and learned whatever I could. When I play, I play what I feel coming from the rest of the band. I free-play, if you know what I mean. The bottom line is, if it works, play it.

RS: How would you describe your style of drumming? How is it different from say, other British reggae drummers?

SN: I'm not a patterned drummer. I don't like to get bogged down. The way we write most of our songs is David will write the lyrics

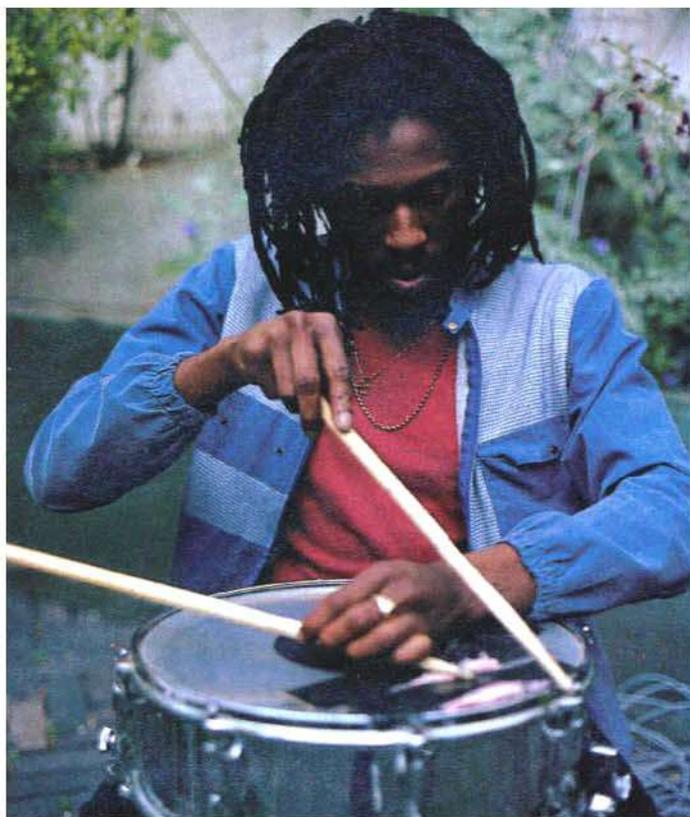


Photo by Robert Santelli

D R U M M

Angus "Drummie" Zeb is England's most noted reggae drummer. He's warm and affable, outgoing and chatty, appears on TV talk shows, and is as much a spokesperson for British reggae as anyone else.

Zeb is also one very fine musician. A stylist who's never been afraid to break new ground, Zeb is a routine winner of 'England's Best Reggae Drummer' award in both fan and critic polls alike. "There's a special feel that Drummie Zeb brings to reggae music," says a fellow musician. "He's energy, excitement and enthusiasm all wrapped into one."

"Drummie Zeb has the charisma and class that all drummers should have—reggae and otherwise," says another.

Although Zeb's band, Aswad, is just now becoming known in the States, the band has been together for some ten years. In fact, Aswad was the first English reggae band to be signed to a major label (Island). But due to a number of things, not the least of which was plain old bad luck, Aswad stalled and stuttered whenever it attempted to broaden its base of appeal beyond Great Britain.

Things look much brighter, however, since the group's release of *Live And Direct*, a live LP recorded at the Notting Hill Gate Carnival in London. "We're real happy to be able to get another chance at recording and touring on a serious level," says Zeb. "We're out to do it right this time around."

RS: Not many people realize that Aswad has actually been together in one form or another for a decade.

DZ: I know. It is amazing. When we started, there were only a few reggae bands around, like Matumbi and the Cimarons. Jah Bunny was playing drums with those bands back then. But those bands

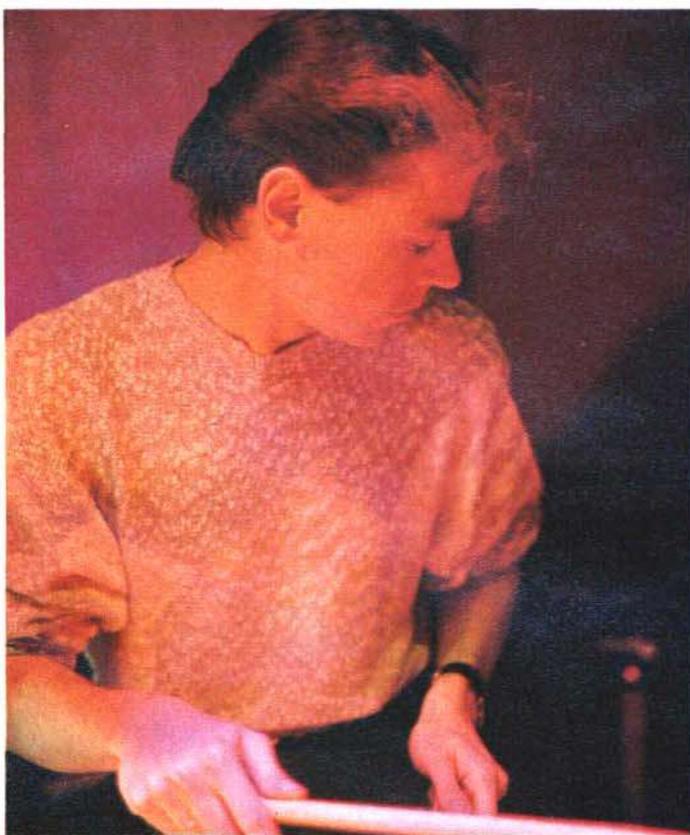


Photo by Robert Santelli

J I M

UB 40 decided to be a reggae band before any of its members knew how to play music. "The way the group got together, quite frankly, was we all simply decided that we wanted to make music together and form a band," says Jim Brown. "Next, we decided what its name would be [UB 40 is a British unemployment form], and finally, we decided who would play what instruments." Brown considers himself the lucky one in the group. He got to be the drummer.

Now this was back in 1978, mind you. UB 40 struggled playing clubs and pubs in and around Birmingham. Then, they got a break and toured with the Pretenders. When the records Brown and company made regularly worked their way up the British charts, UB 40 began focusing its attention on the States. The LPs sent across the Atlantic didn't exactly bomb in America, but they didn't raise any rooftops, either. Then along came *Labour Of Love* in 1984, and all of a sudden, UB 40 had a best-selling album on the U. S. charts.

The LP was a departure from UB 40's previous records; it contained the band's interpretation of a batch of classic reggae songs originally done in the early '70s. "They were songs we all had grown up listening to and loving as kids," says Brown. "The name of the record is right on the mark; it really was a 'labour of love.'"

Brown has been in UB 40 since its inception. A direct, open person, he isn't afraid to talk about UB 40's not-so-glorious formation or his rather limited experience behind the drumkit. But by being straightforward and eager to learn about his instrument, Brown has become a wonderfully capable drummer and the most successful of England's new breed of reggae drummers.

RS: How did you approach the drum parts for the songs on *Labour Of Love*? Did you try to approximate the original drum sounds

I E Z E B

would listen to Jamaican reggae and then try to copy what they heard. From the start, Aswad tried to be an original band.

RS: Wasn't Aswad, like Steel Pulse, heavily influenced by Bob Marley & The Wailers?

DZ: Yes, but in a strange sort of way. You see, Bob Marley inspired us to seek our own path in reggae music. And that's what we've tried to do for the past ten years. Maybe that's why it's taken us so long to get noticed outside England, [laughs]

RS: Listening to old recordings and demo tapes of Aswad, it's easy to hear the originality of the band. Some of the bass and drum patterns are quite unique.

DZ: That's right; that's right. Back in 1977, we were writing and recording reggae songs that had hardly any rhythm, but instead were very percussive.

RS: How did that come to be?

DZ: As far as the drumming went, I used to play drums for a steel band. I used to go to this youth club where this steel band would play, and one day I just starting playing with them. My parents come from Grenada, not Jamaica. I was born in England, but I was influenced by other Caribbean music forms besides reggae—things like calypso and soca. I think that has a lot to do with the way I approach playing my drums.

RS: When did you begin to play the drums?

DZ: I started to play the drums seriously in 1975. It was that year that I thought I might have a chance to make a career out of being a musician. But before that, you know, I just fooled around. That was the year I started playing with the steel band. Then, in 1976, I met Brinsley Forde [vocals and rhythm guitar player for Aswad]

and Aswad came to be.

RS: Who were some of the drummers who had a profound influence on you at the time?

DZ: Carly Barrett of the Wailers! I'll tell you a story: Bob Marley & The Wailers had come to London to play the Lyceum. I didn't have a ticket to the concert, but I went just to hang out. There was a bit of violence going on there because a lot of people wanted to see Marley perform, but most of them didn't have a ticket. Well, I was standing by a door and all of a sudden some people smashed it down. A lot of people started to run into the Lyceum, so I did as well. But when I got into the place, I ran in a different way than they did. I ran through some corridors and landed up right on the bloody stage! I mean, Carlton Barrett was playing not ten feet away from me. I couldn't believe it; I really couldn't! I saw the whole show from there, and I watched every move Carly Barrett made. That was the most important thing that had ever happened to me. He left such a big impression. He really inspired me. That was the very first concert I had ever been to. It was an amazing thing for a 15-year-old kid who was thinking about becoming a drummer.

RS: I know that you played drums on some Delroy Washington tracks back then, in which the influence Carly Barrett had on you is extremely obvious.

DZ: Yes. [laughs] I tried to copy everything from Carly as a youth. He was my main influence, no question about it. When Carly heard those tracks you're talking about, he told me that was the closest he had ever heard anyone sound like him. I was really touched by that.

B R O W N

heard on the early renditions of the songs, or did you decide on brand new interpretations?

JB: I went after totally new and different interpretations of the drum parts I heard on the original records. The thing about reggae is that it's really developed over the past 10 or 12 years, and in the process, has completely changed in style. There was a time when reggae was just one-drop rimshots. Then Sly Dunbar came along and opened things up, especially the use of the bass drum. He'd come in with a rimshot every third beat or something. As a result of Sly's innovations, there's a lot more bass drum work in reggae these days. I wanted to reflect this on *Labour Of Love* because I get my inspiration from what happens in Jamaica, to be quite honest. I think Sly Dunbar and Style Scott are two of the greatest drummers I've ever heard.

RS: Is there any one track on *Labour Of Love* that you're especially fond of or proud of due to your playing?

JB: I think the one song that worked best for me was probably "Cherry Oh Baby." The way it turned out was exactly the way I had hoped it would turn out. I played a real standard reggae beat. Everything I do is really dead standard. I don't really invent anything, and I don't really try to invent anything. All I try to do is reproduce a musical idea.

RS: Growing up in England in the early '70s, were your musical influences a combination of rock and reggae?

JB: Strictly reggae.

RS: That seems to me a bit odd, especially since you're not a West Indian.

JB: Well, you have to remember that England has a lot of reggae, and where I was born and lived—a working-class, inner-city area

in Birmingham—my family was one of the very few white families in the neighborhood. Our area was a big immigrant area. So if I went to a local dance, there were Asian, Pakistani and West Indian people there. It was sort of natural that I'd be influenced by reggae, because as a kid, that's all I ever heard, really.

RS: I read somewhere where you remarked how competitive the reggae scene is in England these days. Could you be a bit more specific?

JB: It is competitive. It's that way because reggae is not a mainstream music. The music is so young and there are no real traditions yet, so all of the musicians are trying to establish themselves while they can.

RS: One of the things UB 40 has done for reggae, I think, is open it up. Since UB 40 is mostly a white band, and since the band hails from England rather than Jamaica, there seems to have been more rock radio stations in the States that were willing to play selections from *Labour Of Love* than any other reggae album released in the past couple of years.

JB: If anyone can break new ground, I think UB40 can. We have a commercial sound and an accessible sound, yet at the same time, we're a reggae band. Plus, the songs on *Labour Of Love* are simply great songs. Whether you're into reggae or not, you can't deny the brilliance of, say, Eric Donaldson's "Cherry Oh Baby" or Jimmy Cliffs "Many Rivers To Cross."

RS: Was *Labour Of Love*, then, a calculated move by UB 40 to break open as a commercial act in America?

JB: It wasn't a calculated commercial move, because it was something we always wanted to do. But if you were going to try to make hits out of reggae songs, you'd do it the way we did it. It was the

continued on page 57



John VO
NATURAL

SINCE World War II, music lovers have been asking if big bands will ever come back. But big bands never really went away. Their ranks just thinned out—survival of the fittest. There was a time when the big band drummer was the role model for aspiring drummers. Swing music was the popular music at a time in history when kids and their parents both liked the same music.

John Von Ohlen, like all of the best big band drummers, is a special character. He can swing hard and fast; soft and fast; hard and slow; or soft and slow. John has that special ability to lead an average of 18 or 19 musicians by keeping time, catching accents, playing fills, lighting the fire under a soloist, holding back an overzealous soloist, coloring an arrangement, playing with dynamics and playing musical drum solos. And these are only the requirements for big band drumming. Add to that his ability to play shows, rock 'n' roll, funk, and Latin, along with his expertise on both trombone and piano, and you've got one accomplished musician.

John's most visible years were spent with Woody Herman and, more notably, Stan Kenton. After initially developing himself for a career as a studio musician, Von Ohlen scrapped that idea. After leaving Kenton in the mid-'70s, it seemed that John Von Ohlen had disappeared and, in a sense, he had. He disappeared from the road into the "sticks" of Indiana, and formed one of the best big bands on today's scene, The Blue Wisp Big Band. Blue Wisp is an amalgamation of some of the best musicians in and around Cincinnati. Beginning their sixth year together, Blue Wisp and John have been visible mostly at The Blue Wisp Jazz Club in Cincinnati on Wednesday nights. But Von Ohlen is extremely grateful to two entrepreneurs—Helen and Fred Morr—who believed in the band enough to sign them to their record label, MoPro Records.

Blue Wisp has recorded four super albums. The first is currently out of print, but will be re-released soon on the MoPro label. In 1982, MoPro released *Butterfly*. The *Smooth One* followed in '83, and in '84, *Blue Wisp* came out with a live recording called *Live At Carmelo's*. Von Ohlen, like everyone in the band, plays wonderfully, through standards like "Love For Sale," to bebop tunes like "Nica's Dream" and "Evidence," to show tunes and the excellent arrangements of otherwise campy tunes like "Yes Sir, That's My Baby."

John Von Ohlen is a sincere, dedicated and gregarious musician. He takes his work very seriously, but never loses his

sense of humor. Beforewarned that John is as straight-ahead in answering questions as he is in his playing. Even in discussing his work or sound on records, John is the first one to tell you when he's not happy with the results. I hope everyone learns as much from reading this interview as I did in conducting it.

SF: Why did you get into the music business in the first place?

JVO: In 1945 or '46, my dad and his friend used to always go to see big bands in Indianapolis, where I grew up. When I was four years old, I distinctly remember my dad and his friend giving me a bunch of 78 rpm records, and saying, "Listen to these." Among other people, Basie and Ellington were on those records.

I also started on a little accordion when I was about four, switched to piano when I was five, and took piano lessons every week for about 10 years, playing recitals, Chopin and all that. In the midst of all that, when I was about 10 years old, I took up trombone in grade school and played it until I was 17 or 18. When I was about 17, I started playing drums in a high school big band. It was just a bunch of pretty talented guys who got together and copied charts off records. At the time, I was playing trombone, but one week the drummer couldn't make it to rehearsal. I always had a fancy for the drums, especially the ride cymbal, so I just sat down and played time. Our drummer wasn't very good, so I was probably making the band feel better than he did. I never took any drum lessons. I just kept fooling with it. I started with the ride cymbal, then went on to the hi-hat, got a little kick here and there on the bass drum, moved a little with my left hand, and kept working at it. I basically learned from records.

I always had an affinity for drums, but I never really got turned on to drums until I saw Stan Kenton's band in 1955. Mel Lewis was the drummer. The first thing that really hit me right between the eyes was that ride cymbal. That was the first thing I heard, and I kept hearing that burning ride cymbal. I just couldn't get it out of my mind.

I'll tell you about the guy who really taught me music. His name is Bob Phillips. To Indianapolis musicians he's like the guru/sage/teacher. He taught all of us just about everything we know. You can graduate from Indiana University or from Bob Phillips. He's into everything. I believe he had the world's foremost collection of chamber music.

When I was in the eighth grade, I was in a contest playing trombone. I was supposed to play the simplified version of "Ave Maria" in B, but my accompanist didn't show up. This old guy—Bob Phillips—was sitting in this classroom, looking for new, young talent. When they called my name to perform, I said, "Well, my accompanist is not here. I can't play." Bob asked, "What are you playing?" I showed him the sheet music, and he said, "Well, I'll play for you." We went up there and faked it. He played a little jazz lick in there, real quick, and I responded with a little jazz slur on the trombone. Here we were doing this in "Ave Maria." Anyhow, I won second prize.

Bob invited me to play trombone in his "B" band on Saturday mornings. He taught all of us how to play in the ensemble, and he had a beautiful way of teaching figures. First of all, it was the real thing. There was no time for mistakes in reading. He made you play as if you were on a national television show, even when you were just a little kid. He wanted it out there and he wanted it right now.

SF: What was his reaction when someone did make a mistake?

JVO: He'd stop the band, single you out and make you feel terrible, right in front of everybody. And he'd never compliment you, week after week. Then, when you were just about fed up with him, he'd compliment you highly in front of everybody. Boy, you'd feel like a million bucks.

He never had drums at rehearsals. He didn't believe in it. He'd say, "The band ought to swing by itself." I'm very grateful for everything I've learned from him. In addition to the jazz ensemble, we'd play all kinds of classical literature, like trombone trios and quintets. He'd take us to perform in brass choirs at different churches and things, and we always played great material. Bob wasn't playing this music just because a congregation wanted it. He was doing it to further good music.

SF: When your father took you to see big bands, did you ever have the opportunity to speak to any of the musicians?

JVO: No. I'm 43 years old now. I always liked Duke and the bands from the actual big band era, but I didn't really get lit up until I heard Kenton's band, and the bands that were on the radio in the post-big band era in the '50s. What lit me up about what we called "modern" big bands was that they didn't use much vibrato in their horns, and their voicings were different. Their voicings and harmonies were more daring, especially Stan Kenton. Those big bands played their tones real straight, whereas all the big bands in the '40s used a

n o h l e n

STYLE

by Scott K. Fish

Von Ohlen with Stan Kenton



Photo by Veryl Oakland

lot of vibrato. So, I *really* got turned on when I heard that clean, straight modern sound.

SF: Did any of the small jazz groups in the '60s have an effect on you?

JVO: Yeah. The real groundwork is small-group playing. Then you get into the big band itself. But I was still a big band nut. When I was 16 or 17, I was into big bands and classical music. I had friends—really good musicians—who were always trying to turn me on to small groups. And if a small group was really swinging hard with a bebopper in there, I loved that. Most jazz musicians are into small groups more than big bands. I really started getting into small groups like Miles' on the *'Round Midnight* album, and especially *Kind Of Blue* with Jimmy Cobb on it. That was a great album—a classic. But the person who really lit me up in small group playing was Coltrane. I like that harmonic thing he was into. I have as much of a harmonic interest as I do an interest in rhythm and melody. Coltrane made me smile.

SF: After you graduated high school, you went to study at North Texas State.

JVO: Yeah. I went to North Texas State because I was coming out of 12 years of school, and I thought I *should* go to college. Prior to going, Bob Phillips had said to me, "Think about your favorite players. How many of *them* went to school?" I couldn't think of any—not *one*. Bob said, "You don't need to go to school. Just start working. You already know what you

want to do." That was back when all kinds of work was available. Now, with very little work around, school is at least a place to play.

But I went down to North Texas State, and right away, I found out that I didn't want to go to class. I just hung out down there, got into a couple of bands, and met a lot of really great players, like Marvin Stamm, who later on got me jobs. Then I got a call to play trombone in a road band that was starting up in Shreveport, Louisiana. Once again, the drummer had to leave, so I took over on drums.

"SOME OF THE BEST MOMENTS IN DRUMMING HAVE BEEN THE SIMPLEST LITTLE THINGS."

SF: And the first name band you were with was Ralph Marterie?

JVO: I came home to Indianapolis first and played nightclub shows. Then I joined his band and went to Chicago for rehearsals. Marterie was a tyrant. He was from that old school, but he had a good swinging dance band. The whole book was great. All the charts were by Bill Potts and

Manny Albam. Ralph wasn't afraid to play fast tempos or anything. So, you lose on one end and gain on the other.

SF: When and how did you learn to read drum charts?

JVO: I always had drum charts in the band. I could probably read better than the drummers, because I spent all that time playing piano and trombone. But I still believe that the drum part is the part that composers feel they need to put the least amount of effort into, especially on jazz tunes. They either give you nothing or so much that you don't know what's up. All you want is a road map. You basically want a miniature score on punctuation—*especially* who's doing the punctuating.

Around here, the composers know I don't like standard drum charts. I ask them to write me the actual line. For instance, if it's a tutti section where the whole band is playing, give me the lead line of whoever is playing the melody. Write the actual notes down, so I know the shape of the melodic line. In a standard drum part, all you've got are static notes, written straight across like they were done by a typewriter, and you don't know the shape of the melodic line.

If the lead player had a series of eight 8th notes that start on a D in the staff, and in the middle of the line it goes up to high B, then you can figure that it's going to get stronger. Then, maybe the melodic line will come back down. That's how you'd shape it. But if it's written like a standard

drum part, you don't know where it's going. Give me everything the melody player has. Now, that's best for me, but it may not be for another drummer. Since I've played horn all my life, I can feel what the band is going to get into just by the shape of that line. Sure, if you're on a road band, it doesn't matter. In seven days, you've got the chart down anyway. But I like to get a chart the first time.

SF: How do you feel about charts that have parts written for all four limbs?

JVO: That's totally out of it in jazz swing. You can't play that way. First of all, you know that you're going to be playing a lot of time. So describe what you want the drummer to do in English words like "swing." That's better than trying to write everything in. Bill Holman's drum parts are real good. He uses a lot of English words like "bust in." That makes more sense to me than writing out the fills and cymbal crashes. Just tell me what the *band's* doing. Then it's up to my taste and expertise to do what can't be written down in a practical manner anyway.

SF: In a 1972 interview, you said that you once had aspirations to be a studio musician. Did you want to be a studio drummer, or were you considering breaking into the studios on piano or trombone?

JVO: In 1963 I made a decision. I played piano, trombone and drums. I felt that I should stick with one. I did not feel that I should give up the others, but *professionally* I should stick with one. So I made a decision to stay with drums.

I grew up in an era when the studio scene was all jazz, particularly what was coming out of New York and L.A. So my aspiration was to be a studio jazz drummer. By 1968, the studio scene had switched over to rock so much that I wasn't interested anymore.

SF: Did rock 'n' roll influence you at all?

JVO: Rock 'n' roll started when I was in high school. I liked some of it. I thought Fats Domino was real. But most of it—especially the white rock 'n' roll—as musicians, we just thought it was a funny little fad. We didn't really put it up or down. We went about our business playing what we considered *real* music, and let the kids get into the rock 'n' roll.

Back then, rock 'n' roll was just *part* of what you would hear on the radio. Disc jockeys had their own programs and could do their own thing—even the AM disc jockeys. It was great. They would play what was current in *all* areas of music, not just rock.

SF: What about the Beatles and the rock music that emerged in the '60s?

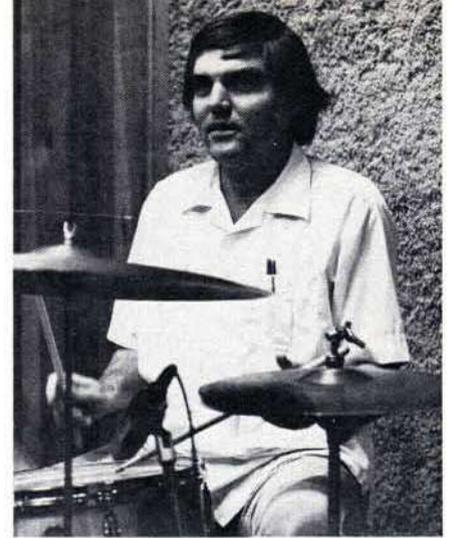
JVO: It didn't phase me a bit. To this day, I still consider most of it—not all—pretty naïve and lacking in depth. I kept an open mind to it though. When I was a professional drummer in the early to mid-'60s, I always had to keep up on the latest thing. It was true that jazz was our base, but if a

new thing came out, we learned it. When rock really started hitting with hard rock, acid rock and everything else, I kept an open mind to it. I lived in San Francisco during the acid days. I lived with the hippies out there. I played in a couple of acid bands. *They* were actually on acid. I wasn't. I was just slugging away a beat for them. They were freaking out, and I was just putting in my time.

Then one day I said, "I've been at this rock thing for seven years. I still don't really hear anything happening in this music for what I'm looking for." I wasn't judging it for anybody else but myself. I said, "It's just not in that music for me." So I gently closed the door, and I've never opened it again.

I have always liked harmony and chords. That's why I liked Coltrane and Kenton so much. A harmonic sensitivity separates the pros from the amateurs. In rock bands, all they know is triads, if that. The bass is piledriving the root, and that's about it. They don't have any voicings; they're not into harmony. Harmony is the color of music, and it's highly sophisticated. The way many rock cats get their color is through new gadgets on the amplifiers. Most refined musicians—if they're looking for color—will do it within the harmony structure.

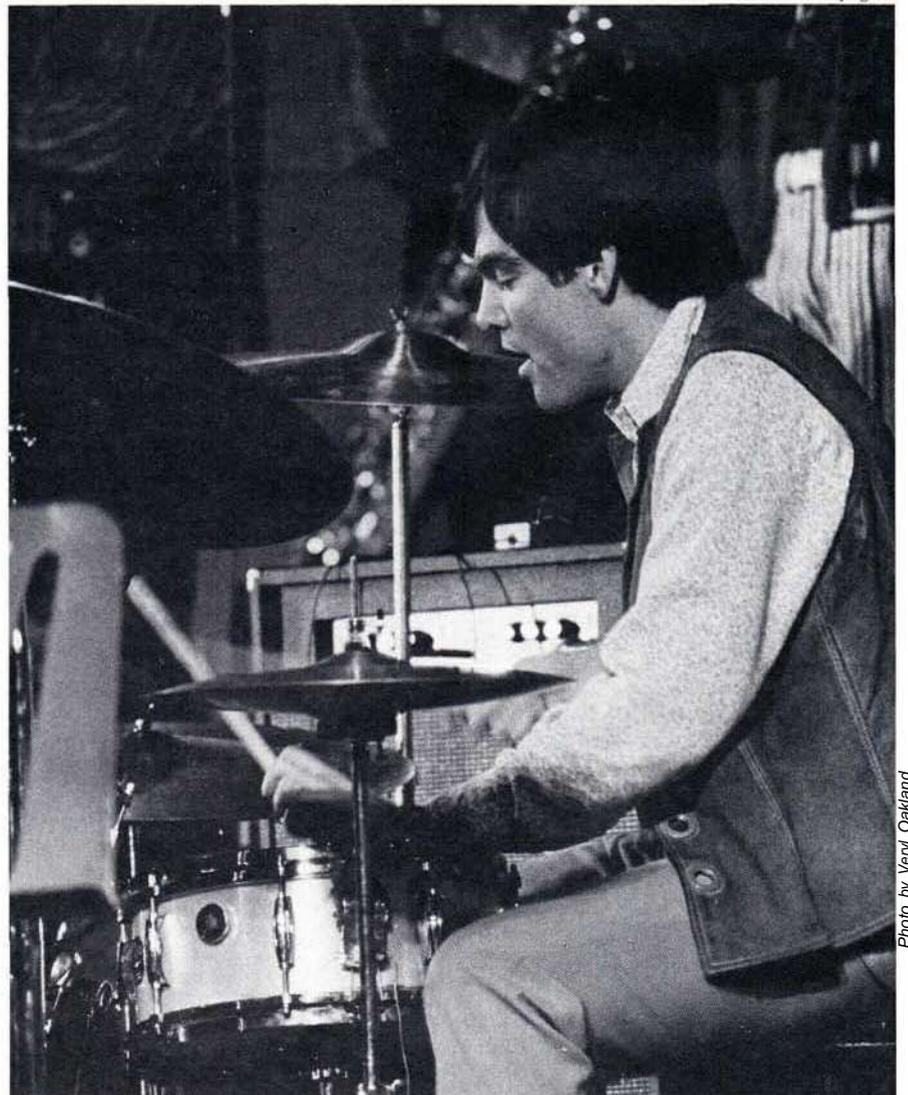
SF: John, you're sounding like Mel Lewis.



JVO: I'm calling it like I see it. I will say that, in the rock world, Frank *Zappa* is a fine, complete musician whom I respect highly. He's a man who understands the intricate workings of harmony. Crosby, Stills & Nash had wonderful harmony. It was simple, but it was so smooth.

I liked some of the hard rockers. But the very thing I like about hard rock bored me after a while, because that's all it was—just that one, slamming thing. I like it strong, too, but if that's all you do, it can be deadening rather than enlightening. The cats I liked more than the rockers were the funk cats, like Harvey Mason, and I really love

continued on page 70



IT seemed unthinkable that Premier drums would no longer be made; they had been around since 1922, they had been played all over the world, and in Britain (until the influx of imports during the '60s, after which they *still* maintained a strong position) they were the drums played by the majority of professionals, and the drums which all youngsters with drumming ambitions dreamed of owning. And yet in October 1983, it looked as if all that was about to come to an end. The bank wanted to foreclose on Premier to recover the company's debts. The Board of Directors resigned, and the company was in the hands of the Official Receiver.

Mick McLoughlin, who was then Production Manager and is now Managing Director, takes up the story. "The Receiver called the management team together and told us that we could do it the easy way or the hard way. He told us what he wanted to see from the company and asked for our views. We looked at things and decided that, *as a team*, we could run this company in a reasonably effective and profitable way, which we did." It was from this time that "The Team," as they like to think of themselves, first began to take shape and to emerge as a force to be reckoned with. They started to trade profitably almost as soon as they were given the opportunity to do things their way.

But this was only a start; they were not working for themselves; they were working for the Receiver, whose job it was to realize as much as he could of the money which was owed to the bank, as efficiently as possible. He could do this in one of two ways: sell off the company's assets, or sell the company as a going concern. Obviously this latter course was preferable; a going concern, with all that it implies, should be worth more than a collection of items and property, *providing* a prospective buyer can have faith in the company. The Team had a lot of faith, they were in an ideal position to know, and they decided to form a consortium to buy the company. But between the decision and the deed there were some quite horrendous problems to be overcome. A figure had to be arrived at which the Receiver would accept and the Team would be able to raise. Collectively they had to find financial backing, and individually they had to raise money to put up as their own stake in the venture. News of Premier's problems had spread through the music business, but the Team had to dispel all doubts and to "reinforce the image of the company, and the people's confidence in it." Therefore, in order to ensure, what they hoped would be, their own future, they had to work to improve the company's viability. An ironic twist was that, while no con-

tracts were drawn up and signed to enable them to buy the company, they were increasing its value, and thereby increasing the price they were eventually going to have to pay.

Financial details belong in a financial publication rather than in a drumming magazine; suffice it to say that the Team eventually found backers, and put up the balance of the money owed themselves. According to Mick McLoughlin, "We got to the point on March 30 [1984] where we sat down with the Receiver and about 20 other legal and financial people. The old company was wound up and the new company started up four days later."

In 1922 the picture was rather different. Albert Delia Porta was a young professional drummer in London. At a time when gigs seemed scarce, Albert—who had some engineering experience—took a temporary job with The Boyle Drum Co., whose drums he used to play. Albert obviously saw this involvement in a drum company as a golden opportunity to have some of his ideas (exactly what these ideas were is, unfortunately, lost in the midst of time) for improving the drums introduced. The Boyle Drum Co. didn't seem very impressed, but Albert's ideas must have had considerable merit, because George Smith, the Production Manager at Boyle's, was sufficiently impressed to want to start making drums independently with Albert.

Albert and George rented a basement on Berwick Street, London, and Albert worked there during the day producing drums. George Smith joined him in the evenings, after a day's work at the Boyle Drum Co. Within a few weeks, Albert's younger brother Fred (a sax player) also became involved. Two years later, their initial successes necessitated a move to larger premises, also on Berwick Street, and Fred Delia Porta had embarked on his career as Sales Director for the Premier Drum Company.

They called themselves the Premier Drum Co. from the start, but it was a few years before drums started to appear with the Premier name on them. They were supplying drums to wholesalers who would put their own names on them. The reason for the change of policy is an interesting one. Fred Delia Porta explains, "It was a seasonal trade in those days. You would go along to the wholesaler in March or April to get an order and to find out what they wanted for delivery in August. Then the question would be 'What's the discount this year?' They wanted a lower price than they paid the previous year. In these inflationary times, that is hard to understand. This went on for two or three years, and this constant demand for a lower price



Albert Delia Porta, the founder of the company.



Fred Delia Porta.



The "Team" leaders, l-r, Mick McLoughlin (Managing Director), Ian Hearn (Sales Director) and Ray Brown (Financial Director).

MIER

by Simon Goodwin





Some Premier Drums from the '20s and '30s.

every year caused us to switch to our own Premier label. What happened was that my brother went along to the John E. Dallas Company, our biggest customer at the time. They asked how much lower the price was going to be that year and my brother said that it was as low as we could make it. They said that he had better go away and think about it. So he came back, we discussed it and decided that, from then on, we wouldn't sell anything that didn't have our own name on it."

Premier's new premises had space for a showroom, so they started selling drums with the Premier name on them direct to the drummer. At this stage, the factory section at the back was producing the shells, and they were "buying in" the fittings. The calfskin heads were lapped by Premier. It was the "Jazz Age" and there

was a great demand for drumkits, which were a relatively new thing anyway and were going through a popularity boom in the '20s. The majority of the kits were rather basic. Fred Delia Porta says that most people wanted a large single-headed bass drum which could house the rest of the kit stacked inside it, so that the drummer could carry it on buses and trams. The average portable kit of this kind was usually only comprised of a bass drum, a snare drum, a stand, a pedal, a cymbal arm, a small cymbal, and perhaps a small tom-tom and a couple of woodblocks.

Throughout the '20s and '30s, Premier continued to grow. There were some "downs" as well as "ups," like the time, towards the end of the '20s, when the cinema changed from silent films to "talkies." Premier had been supplying an incredible 50 pairs of timpani a month to a dealer who rented them to cinemas all over the country. When cinemas no longer needed live music to accompany films, they no longer needed timpani, and Premier lost a very large order. The "ups," which clearly outweighed the "downs," meant that they needed still larger premises. The production side of the business moved, first to a factory at the Elephant and Castle in South East London, and later to Park Royal in West London, while their sales were handled from a showroom, with a suite of offices above it, in Golden Square.

One thing that the company did as it expanded in size was to increase the products they made. For example, Premier made a solid-body electric guitar before any other European company. That was back in the '30s. Also, towards the end of the '30s, they started producing the Higham-Premier line of brass instruments. Their symphonic percussion was being used by most of the major orchestras in the country, and the armed forces were beginning to adopt Premier's marching drums.

Another thing they did was to start developing their own engineering. By the end of the '30s they were doing their own pressing and turning, but not the die casting. World War II brought about a lot of changes, which ultimately led to the company expanding even further. Production of musical instruments ceased, and Premier started making gun sights for anti-tank guns, and plugs and sockets for radar equipment. "What the war taught us," says Fred Delia Porta, "was accuracy. We used to laughingly talk about making drums to plus or minus 1/8"—although I like to think that, in reality, we were more accurate than that—but when we were making these other things, they usually had to be made to plus or minus nothing. We had to be very accurate." One of the engineered parts which Premier had to produce during the war needed to be die cast, so they gave this job to a subcontractor. It was this subcontractor who, one day, suggested to Fred that Premier should start doing their own die casting. So they made the necessary investment in machinery and never looked back. After the war, they were making their own die-cast drum fittings.

Not only did the war give Premier accuracy and die casting, it also gave them Wigston, or to be more accurate, it gave Premier *to* Wigston. The Park Royal factory was destroyed by enemy bombing in September, 1940. Since Premier did important war work, they were relocated by the Ministry of Supply to the small town of Wigston, near Leicester. Wigston proved to be a happy location for the company. It is, more or less, in the center of the country, which is convenient for transporting instruments to all the U.K. distributors, and to ports at all points of the compass for export. It is also close to sources of raw materials from England's industrial Midlands. At one time, there were three Premier factories in Wigston, but in 1976 the present, Blaby Road, building was constructed, and this has more available floor space than the other three had put together: 100,000 square feet as opposed to a combined total of 86,000.

So when the war ended, the company found itself with plenty of potential: Not only was there the new Wigston base and the increased engineering capability, but also a market for drums which was about to expand. Fred Delia Porta, who always had an eye for exports, started using his ingenuity to exploit fully the postwar markets. "If you want to build up something like exports, you've got to be imaginative and think up the ways you might do it. Take America, for instance; after the war the pound was worth about 4.8 dollars, so it was pretty expensive to sell direct to shops. I made up parcels containing our flush-base cymbal, snare drum and hi-hat stands, and I sent them to 10 drum shops in the States. The parcels were preceded by



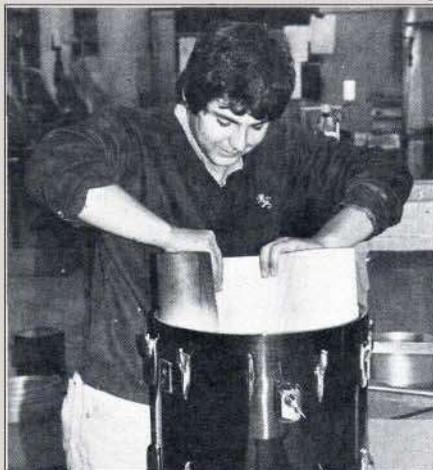
'30s Dominion Ace snare drum.

A Visit To The Premier Factory

My first sight of the Premier factory was, for a drum enthusiast, a romantic image through the early morning mist on what was to turn into a sweltering August day. From the road, you have to drive down a ramp to the parking area at the front of the building; this means that as you turn off the road, before beginning the descent, you are confronted with a beautiful, big, *Black Shadow* drumkit, which is situated at roof level at the top of a circular, glass-walled stairwell which is beside the main entrance. That, and the enormous Premier logo on a drum-shaped turret above the stairwell, left me with no doubt that I had arrived.

The visitor can look at the building and truthfully say that *this* is where it all happens. The company manufactures a comprehensive range of percussion products: drumkits, marching drums, timpani, timbales, bongos, tuned and mallet percussion, tambourines, triangles, drum seats, sticks, brushes, beaters, mallets, maces, stands, pedals, cymbals, soft covers and five different types of drumheads. All these items are produced in the Premier factory. The company does very little "buying in" of items from the outside. The Premier list does include some products that are not made in the company's own factory—notably fiber drumcases and slings for marching drums—but it can be seen that these are the exception, not the rule. Consider, for a moment, the components which go into the average drumkit: the shells, the heads, the nut boxes, the rims, the tension bolts, tom-tom holders, stands, pedals, snares, dampers, a drum stool, the rubber "feet" for stands and spurs, and the sticks, brushes and beaters which are required for playing the kit. With the exception of the rubber molded feet and brush handles, and the tension bolts, *all* of these items are manufactured on the spot, under the Premier roof.

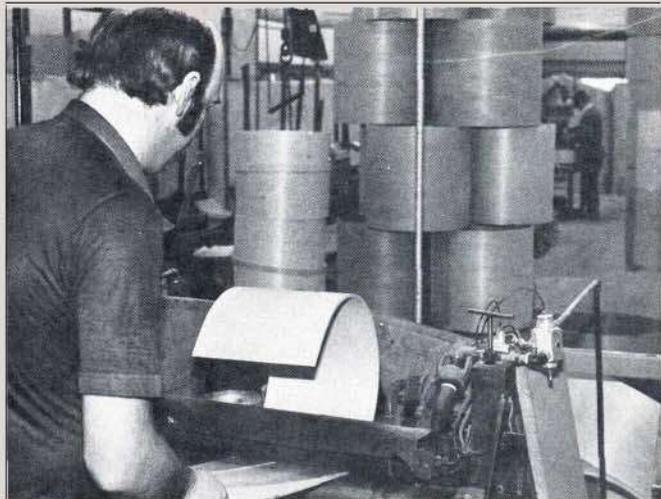
The two floors at the front of the building house Premier's full administration, marketing, and design and development departments, while the 100,000-square-



Inserting Resonator liner.

foot factory area at the back is all on ground level. Managing Director Mick McLoughlin pointed out that, with the height of the building, they would have the available space to put in a mezzanine floor which could give them an extra 16,000 square feet of floor space, and therefore increased production. I asked about the cost. Mick quoted an estimated figure and added, "If we did it, we would reckon that it would pay for itself within about four months." Like many factories, this one is laid out very much on an open plan. The main division is between the woodworking and metalworking areas. There are a few rooms, such as the lacquering and casting areas, and the tuning room for the tuned percussion, that are separate from the main floor areas so that dust, noise and temperature can be controlled according to the particular needs of the department.

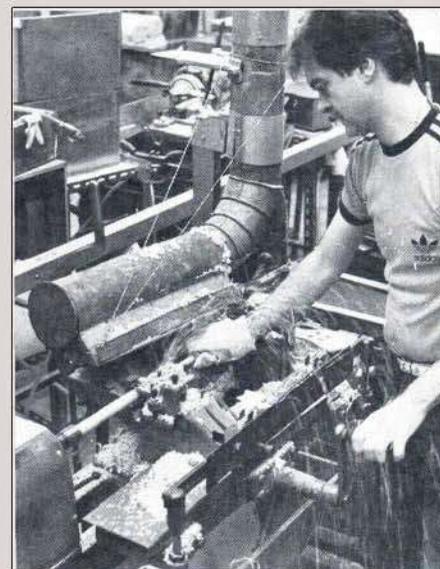
My guide on the tour of the factory was Advertising and Promotions Manager Roger Horrobin. For an advertising man, and in fact by almost any standards, Roger has an amazingly detailed knowledge of all the processes that go on in the production department. He is an engineer, and his interest in the product goes much deeper than the best way to present it to the cus-



Drumshell bending and forming.



Manufacture of drumheads.



Turning a drumstick on a lathe.



JOHN RAE

by Charles M. Bernstein

IN this culture there is an adage that goes, "Jack of all trades, master of none." John Rae is the exact opposite of that statement. In truth, Johnny is one of the San Francisco Bay Area's busiest and most versatile musicians. That is because he is an excellent drummer, vibist, and all-around percussionist. John is also, incidentally, a teacher, clinician, author of *Jazz Phrasing For Mallets*, and *Latin Guide For Drummers*, a contributing columnist for *Modern Drummer*, contractor, disc jockey, gourmet cook, and a professional "yenta" (talker). John is an amiable, humorous, outgoing individual who has performed in a wide variety of musical situations. As a vibist, he has performed with, among others, George Shearing, Herbie Mann, and Cozy Cole. Some of his drumming credits include Cal Tjader, Charlie Byrd, Joe Pass, and Stan Getz. For the last few years, he has concentrated on theater work and has played for musicals such as the *National Touring Company's* renditions of *Sweeney Todd* and *Chorus Line*. In the area of recording, he has performed on numerous backup dates and jingles, and is credited on over 40 albums. Regardless of what type of musical situation he is performing in, John Rae is always tasteful, imaginative, complementary, and above all, swinging. To put it succinctly, he is a consummate musician.

CB: Would you describe your musical background?

JR: When I was a kid, I started on piano. That was because both of my parents were classically trained professional musicians, and they thought that that was the way for me to start my musical education. My father was not only a conductor, but also a teacher in Boston, and he knew George Lawrence Stone, who wrote *Stick Control*.

CB: How old were you when you began to play the drums?

JR: I guess I was about nine or ten when I began to study the drums with Stone. Unfortunately, I only studied with him for six months, because when I was a kid, I had rheumatic fever three times, and that interrupted my studies with him. I never did go back to him directly, but studying with George Stone gave me a taste of the drums. Anyway, after I got out of the hospital, I started back on my piano studies at the Schillinger House, which is now the Berklee School of Music. During this time I started playing the vibraphone on a self-taught basis. I also studied timpani for two years at the Boston Conservatory with Carl Ludwig, the former timpanist with the Boston Symphony. In addition, I studied harmony and theory for two years in adult

night school while I was in the eighth grade through my first year of high school.

CB: When did you start studying drums again?

JR: At the Schillinger House there was a fellow named Sam Tully, who was a basic drumming instructor. I first studied with Sam when I was about 16 and ready to go out on my own. I also studied with him later, after I had been playing awhile. Later, I wound up studying with Stanley Spector for six months, because Terry Gibbs had turned me on to the fingers as part of my vibraphone technique. So I figured, "Here's a guy right in my hometown who is supposed to be an 'ace' finger-coordination teacher."

CB: During the middle '50s to early '60s, didn't you stop playing the drums for a while and just concentrate on playing the vibes?

JR: Yes, basically, I just let the drums go for a while. That was because, at the time, the vibraphone was a reasonably rare instrument, and there were only a few players around of national prominence. However, I always considered myself a drummer.

In the mid '50s, I moved from Boston to New York and lived there for about seven years. From 1955, when I joined George Shearing as a vibist, to the middle of 1961, when I came out to San Francisco as Cal Tjader's drummer, with the exception of occasionally sitting in on drums, I concentrated mainly on playing the vibraphone. When I was with Shearing, and later with Herbie Mann, I not only played the vibes, but also the timbales and other hand percussion. Over the years while I was playing the vibraphone, I was also developing a sense of musicality which then carried over to the drumset.

CB: In what ways did playing the vibraphone influence your drumming?

JR: Because I actually had to stand in front of a rhythm section, night after night, playing a melodic instrument, I developed an awareness of the drummer, the bass player and everyone else in the band. So when I am playing drums, I have a lot of knowledge of where a tune is going, when the bridge is coming, and where the interludes are coming up.

CB: As a drummer, you have backed up quite a variety of jazz artists. Who are some of those musicians?

JR: My drum thing really started going when I joined Cal Tjader's band. The way that it happened was that when I left Herbie Mann I went up to Toronto. For about four months I had been playing with the Peter Appleyard group. He's a Canadian vibe

player who has played with people like Calvin Jackson and Benny Goodman. He and I had a group in which I was basically the drummer and he was the vibe player. Occasionally, we did some double vibe and drumset routines—"show biz" stuff. Anyway, one day I ran into Willie Bobo and Lonnie Hewitt [piano player] on the street. Cal and the band were playing at the Colonial Tavern. I couldn't get by to see them during the week because I was working with Peter, but I was finally able to sit in at an afternoon session and play some jazz drums. In those days, Cal split the band into two sets. There was the quartet set, which was MJQ-oriented bebop, and there was the quintet set, which was straight-ahead Latin. Well I sat in, and everything worked out real nice. Fortunately, my Latin thing was going pretty well because I had not only been playing timbales in Herbie Mann's band, but also George Shearing's Quintet. So even though I hadn't been playing drumset very much, at the time, I had the concept.

A couple of months later, when I was playing with Peter's band down in Indianapolis, Cal called me on the phone and asked me if I would like to do the gig because Willie Bobo would be leaving shortly. I said, fine, and he sent me a pile of records. When I received them, I copied the basic drum arrangements off the records. My wife and I arrived in L.A. on a Monday, and I opened the next day with Cal at the Summit. The following day, Wednesday, I had a recording date with Cal, and I was the only member of the band who did it. It was a studio date with Claire Fisher, and it was one of Cal's latest recordings for Fantasy Records. I did a total of seven years with Cal—five years in one shot, and then later, another two years. During those years with Cal, I did a total of 16 albums.

During that period with Cal, I also played on the Stan Getz *Big Band Bossa Nova* album. I did that in 1964; that's when bossa nova was first popularized in this country. At that point in time, bossa nova was so new that there weren't too many American drummers who understood the style.

CB: Drummers, for the most part, seem to be better prepared these days to play a variety of music. It seems that 20 years ago, you were either a jazz drummer or a Latin drummer.

JR: This is basically what I'm saying; the lack of experience on the part of the American drummers is what got me the gig. During the process of recording the Getz album, arranger Gary McFarland finally said, "There's only one drummer around who



Photo by Very Oakland

John Rae with Armando Peraza, congas; Jim McCabe, bass; Cal Tjader, vibes, in 1969.

knows both ends of the stick," and that happened to be me. As it turned out, that was a five-star album in *down beat* magazine; it's a lovely album. However, if you listen carefully to the album, you'll notice that I'm not playing the double bass drum beat. That's because I hadn't worked it out yet. I had just done my first bossa nova album several weeks before. At the time, there wasn't the Latin or rock 'n' roll cross-over happening like there is now. Today, you can get virtually any experienced drummer to play a good bossa nova. At the time, I hadn't developed the bossa nova and samba concept the way we all did in later years.

CB: What happened after you left Cal Tjader the first time?

JR: After I left Cal, I was with Gabor Szabo for about a year, but I never recorded with him. In that band, I took Jim Keltner's place, because he didn't want to leave L.A. From a drummer's point of view, playing with Gabor was a funny bit. Gabor called me and asked if I wanted to join the band. I said great, because I wasn't doing anything at the time. I had known Gabor when he was a student at the Berklee School of Music, and I had heard a few of the things he did with Charles Lloyd. But I hadn't heard any of Gabor's records under his own name. At the time he was into his psychedelic feedback routine—which he did marvelously—utilizing light rock rhythms. So, I got my drums and flew to Shelly's Mannehole in Hollywood. I got to the gig early and

set up Pretty soon, the guys in the band started showing up one at a time. I was asking them, "What kind of music are we doing? Are there any kinds of charts?" And they were saying, "Don't worry about it, man. Just get up on the stand and play." Even after Gabor showed up, I asked him, "I want it to sound as tight as possible. Can you give me an idea of what the style is?" He said, "Don't worry; just play." I said okay and that's what I did—just played.

**"YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE
THAT YOU HAVE GOOD
TIME. IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE
IT, THEN THE REST OF THE
BAND WON'T BELIEVE IT."**

Over the years, I developed a mental technique for dealing with that type of musical situation. For example, as a kid, I played twice with Charlie Parker—once on vibes and on another occasion I played drums. I was working in the house band opposite him at the High Hat Club in Boston. It was a great experience. Now the only way to get over the obvious pressure of

being on the same bandstand, or, for that matter, even being in the same room with somebody like Charlie Parker, is that you've pretty much got to play mental games with yourself. You might tell yourself that he's not there, or that you're listening to a record. What I used to do was, if I was on the bandstand playing, I would pretend to put myself out in the audience, and watch and listen to the band. I would project myself into the audience so that I didn't really have any conscious connection with what I was actually doing at the moment. I'd hear things in a musical way and get the total picture of what was happening. I'd hear the phrasing, the spaces in between, and when I'd hear a familiar figure coming up, I then had the option of playing it, playing between the phrases, or complementing it in some way. Anyway, that's the method I used at the time that I played with Gabor when I didn't know exactly what was happening. I just closed my eyes, listened to the band, and allowed myself to play. In other words, I did it entirely on intuition.

CB: A lot of times, in playing situations, your mind and body know what to do, even though consciously you might not think that they do.

JR: If you have to think about playing figures like, "left-right, left-right," or say to yourself, "I'll do this figure over here," then it can hamper the fluidity of your playing. Sometimes when you relax in a group, you know what's happening, and you are familiar with the group and its music, then you

can take for granted the form that the band is taking—the interludes, tempos, and little things that go on during someone's solo. I used to be able to do that with pianist Lonnie Hewitt in Cal's band. I would be able to think right along with him. That was because he was such a phrase player that I could almost always sing his solos a bar ahead. If you can do that in a band, it gives you a good sense of cohesion and group playing. I like to hear a band instead of a group of individuals playing on a bandstand.

After Gabor, I was with Vince Guaraldi for a while. I did a TV show [*You're In Love, Charlie Brown*] and two albums with him.

CB When did you start playing with Charlie Byrd?

JR I started playing with Charlie Byrd in late 1973, and I was with him until September, 1975. For the most part, I played with him on the West Coast. I only did one East Coast trip with him. His manager wanted me to move to Annapolis, but I really didn't want to because I was really happy being in San Francisco, particularly because of my musical position in town. I was also, at the time, just starting to expand into theatrical work.

CB Didn't you also play with Great Guitars?

JR Yeah, while I was with Charlie, his manager had come up with the Great Guitar concept. It was basically the Charlie Byrd trio with Herb Ellis and Joe Pass. Later, because of Joe Pass' commitments, he left and Barney Kessel joined Great Guitars. I did the first live album with them at the Concord Jazz Festival.

CB What drummers have influenced your approach to music?

JR I would like to say this in large capital letters: KENNY CLARKE IS MY FAVORITE JAZZ DRUMMER.

CB Why?

JR He just swings, and it's also the way that he senses the spacing of time. His drumming, as far as solos and fills are concerned, is what you might call a little old-fashioned, but that's because he's basically a snare drummer and he hates to use toms.

CB I can remember that, on a lot of recording dates in the '50s, all he used was a snare drum, bass drum, hi-hat, and one ride cymbal.

JR Yeah, particularly on all those Savoy record dates. He'd just swing his ass off on any recording that he did. Because of his age and influence, he's the guy that Max Roach and a lot of other drummers were listening to when they were kids.

CB Most musicologists consider him to be the daddy of bebop drumming.

JR Yeah, pretty much. Historically, Kenny Clarke—as mentioned in many books and jazz encyclopedias—is given that position, particularly for his off-beat independence figures with his left hand and bass drum. I like a full-sounding set of drums and Klook

always played a very rich sounding set.

CB Are there any other drummers that have influenced you?

JR Aside from Klook, I particularly like Roy Haynes and Philly Joe Jones. I particularly like Roy's phrasing and his solos. I also like him because he's from Boston, [laughs] There are so many good drummers out there—people like Mickey Roker, who has played with Diz. If Dizzy Gillespie and Bags [Milt Jackson] like a drummer, then that drummer is okay with me. I also like Connie Kay, even though when he started with the MJQ I thought he was a bit too conservative in terms of how Klook had approached music. I was such a Kenny Clarke fan that it took me a little while to reorient myself to Connie's playing. As far as big band drumming goes, I've always been a fan of Don Lamond, Dave Tough and Mel Lewis.

CB It seems that the main factor that ties together all these drummers that you've mentioned is that they are all excellent time players.

JR There isn't a single mold. All of these drummers I've mentioned sound like individuals, particularly Klook. You can tell him a mile away because of his interpretation of time. I've sort of analyzed his style, and been able to reproduce some of that feeling. In order to explain what I've learned, I'll give you a comparison of his style with Art Blakey. Blakey's style, particularly in the early days of the Jazz Messengers in the '50s, had quite a heavy emphasis on 2 and 4. It was not only the strength with which he played the hi-hat, but it was also

recorded in a certain way. A lot of drummers dug what Art was doing and locked into that style. Heaven forbid that anything should happen to the hi-hat, because the time would fall apart. Anyway, when I compared Art's style of playing with Kenny Clarke's, I found that Kenny emphasized 1 and 3 on the ride cymbal, and 2 and 4 on the hi-hat balanced his rhythm. Kenny's rhythm is a sort of left-right, left-right, walking-down-the-street feeling.

CB Kenny's a very fluid player.

JR I think that's because of his emphasis on 1 and 3. Recently, I was explaining this point to drummer Steve Mitchell. We were talking about time concepts, particularly when playing slow tempos. I told him that I thought drummers have a lot more flexibility when accompanying a soloist at medium and slow tempos if they put the emphasis on the quarter notes, and de-emphasize the middle note when playing a ride-cymbal rhythm. The reason you do that is because it gives you the option of playing the same kind of time that the soloist is playing. In other words, if soloists are going to play with an 8th-note feeling, double up, or go to a triplet feeling, then you can accommodate them and play the same kind of time. Again, as far as the middle note is concerned, there are three options: You can play it either with a triplet, 16th, or 8th-note feeling. In an accompanying situation, you should phrase with the soloist. When you emphasize four to the bar, you have the flexibility of going whichever way the soloist goes, and then there's no clash. There is

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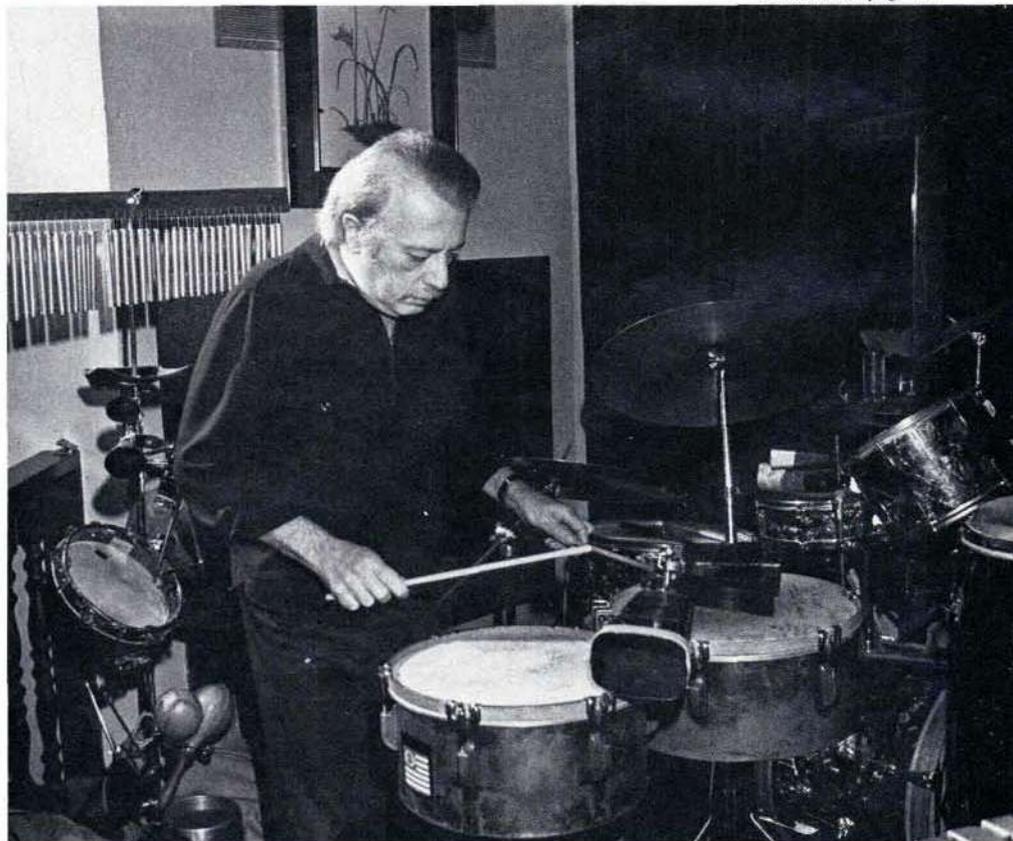


Photo by Tom Copi



The World

planned to go. Who ever thought of asking my father if he could pay the tuition? I just assumed he could send me, but he couldn't afford it, so I ended up *not* going to college, but thank God I was able to play. Not that I was a good player! That's a problem for some teachers. With some kids, you put drumsticks in their hands, and they'll play. Other kids have talent and tremendous ideas, but they can't play. They're talented, but they haven't got the means to bring it out. I was one of them.

JD: How did you go about getting the means?

HA: By going out and looking for teachers. I went to the top, nationally known players and they would say, "Great, let's start with 'mammy-daddies.'" Well, after a half dozen or so teachers, you get tired of 'mammy-daddies' and paradiddles. I'd say, "Look, I know how to play those and I can read, but I just can't play as well as I'd like." Finally, I realized that wasn't going to work and I became very frustrated. The frustration is even greater when you go on the job and are told you're doing great, but when the tempo picks up, you start to sweat. So, I began to observe, and I think that was my greatest teacher. I started to watch the professionals. I'd go to the Edison Hotel, for instance, where there were 15 affairs going on at the same time, with 15 bands. After a while, you get to know everybody. I'd watch all the drummers, good and bad, and I began to see similarities and discovered why different drummers who studied with the same teacher played differently from one another. When most drummers see someone who plays great, they feel unhappy and think they'll never be that good. Fortunately, for me, I reveled in it.

One time, a former student of mine, who happened to live near Buddy Rich, brought Buddy down. The kid told me he played better than Krupa. Buddy was only in his teens at the time and his friend was my first pupil. Buddy played and I watched his hands. Well, he knocked me right out. He did everything I wanted to do, and he did it with such ease. When I met his folks, I asked them who his teacher was. "He never studied," they told me. That made me feel *very* good. I realized that it was something physical, not only mental, that you had to have.

JD: How did the rumor that you were Buddy's teacher get started?

HA: I had nothing to do with that. That

JD: How did you start playing drums?

HA: Both my brother and sister played instruments. I was the youngest, I loved music, and I had a feeling for drums. I grew up during the Depression, so it was very tough to get an instrument or to pay a teacher. In those days, music stores would come to the school and give demonstrations. Then they'd give you something to take home to your parents which allowed you to buy your instrument for two dollars a week. I was 13 or so, and in order to get the two dollars a week, I worked at a carousel in Coney Island for the summer. I was paid a dollar a day, plus tips. With that, and with the help of my father, I bought my first snare drum. We didn't know anything about practice pads, so I wasn't allowed to play anywhere except in the basement of the apartment house we lived in.

JD: You had no teacher up to that point?

HA: No formal teaching. When I was 15, a saxophone player friend of mine said to me, "I have a job in Belmar, New Jersey. Do you want to play?" I said, "Of course I'll play." So we went down for a rehearsal. I only brought my snare drum and a pair of sticks. The orchestra leader said, "Where's the rest of the stuff?" I had no conception of what a drummer needed.

So, I went out and bought a bass drum, a foot pedal, and a cymbal with a holder. That's how it all started. We got the job and worked the hotel in Belmar. I don't know what the hell I did, but I *thought* I was the greatest drummer in the world. We probably sounded pretty bad. We used to go to Asbury Park to a big ballroom where the name bands played every night. Every band drummer had timpani and vibes. They never played them, but they always had them. That was the first time I ever saw a big band.

When I got back from Belmar, I realized that I didn't know very much. But I was fortunate that a friend of my folks happened to be the bass player at the Palace Theatre. He suggested that I take lessons with the drummer in the pit band. He was a great show drummer. The first thing he showed me was how to twirl the sticks.

I learned to play timpani in the high school orchestra with a very wonderful teacher. Believe it or not, I was accepted at a college in New York called The Savage School of Physical Education. Music was an avocation. I loved it, but in those days, how could you go into the music business? We were in the Depression. I was playing and making money, but you panic a little. So, I was accepted at the college and I

of Henry Adler

was a result of Tommy Dorsey's introduction to the Buddy Rich book. Have you ever seen me quoted as saying I was Buddy's teacher? Never. In fact, I used to go around denying it, knowing that Buddy was a natural player. Sure, he studied with me, but he didn't come to me to learn how to hold the drumsticks. I set out to teach Buddy to read. He'd take six lessons, go on the road for six weeks and come back. He didn't practice. He couldn't, because wherever the guy went, he was followed around by admiring drummers. He didn't have time to practice.

Tommy Dorsey wanted Buddy to write a book and he told him to get in touch with me. I did the book and Tommy wrote the forward. Technically, I was Buddy's teacher, but I came along *after* he had already acquired his technique.

People always ask me to explain about the book. You see, when Gene did his book, he had a rudimental drummer collaborate with him. But Gene didn't play that way. In Buddy's book, we actually teach the way he does things. If you see any of the kids who used Buddy's book correctly, you'll see that they play the same way, technically.

JD: Why did you put out a Book Two?

HA: Well, Buddy came to me and said, "We ought to do something else." I said, "Fine, what do you want to do?" We decided to publish *Buddy Rich Today*. It's a book of little things we've taken from his recordings. We give the name of the record, the title of the tune, and we state that it's a very, very small part of what Buddy does. It's not a new interpretation of how to play drums. It's things that Buddy did, that's all. There are probably a lot more things that we could do, too. Most drummers don't have Buddy's technical prowess. They could watch him all night and still *never* do what he does.

JD: You've developed quite a reputation in the drum publishing field over the years. Were your books the outcome of having noted a lack of something?

HA: I went into the publishing business inadvertently. I never intended to go into it. Humberto Morales, from whom I learned Latin drumming, had a brother named Noro who was a leading Latin piano player. He wrote a lot of tunes and was a very successful man. Humberto was the "Buddy Rich" of Latin drumming, but he resented the fact that his brother had so much of the limelight. Humberto

was popular with the musicians, but he hadn't received the acclaim of the public, like his brother, Noro. Well, Noro came to me and said, "You've got to do me a favor. My brother is driving me *crazy*. Write a Latin drumming book with Humberto and I'll give you the money. You handle everything, and after you pay me back, you and Humberto split the book." He was willing to do anything to enhance his brother's name. I agreed and I started to write. Every so often I'd call Humberto in to show him what I'd written. When I finished the book, I gave it to the printer. I had collected about \$2,700 from Noro's lawyer toward the publication of the book. I presented his lawyer with the bill for the photographs. There were over fifty in the book. The lawyer said to me, "We've got a problem, Henry. Noro hasn't paid his income tax in three years." He was making over \$150,000 a year when the government tied into it. "I don't know what to tell you," the lawyer said. So, I had to pay the bills. The guy was in debt for thousands of dollars. Finally, Noro said, "You handle the whole thing and pay back what I put in when you can." So, I became the publisher. I paid Noro back, bought Humberto's royalty, and all of a sudden, I was a publisher.

JD: That was your first book?

HA: Yes. And at the time, Latin wasn't that big, but I took out a few advertisements for the book. I really didn't want to spend that kind of money because I had a retail drum business, and I had just bought a building on 46th Street in New York City.

Alfred Friese, the timpanist, was in our building, and he was a marvelous teacher. Friese asked me if I'd do a book with him and I asked Al Lepak, a former student of mine and a tremendous drummer, if he would collaborate with Friese. I knew that Friese would never write the book alone. We put out a hell of a good book, too. In fact, it sells as much as Saul Goodman's book does now. That was our second book. Everyone thought I was crazy to put out a timpani book to compete with Saul's book, but I didn't have anything planned. I didn't plan what I was going to publish. If something came along that I thought was good, I would do it. That's how I worked.

Are you aware of the fact that we published more rock books than anyone else, up until the time I retired temporarily?

Even though I never played rock, I knew some of the best rock drummers in the business. We also came out with both the Roy Burns and Sandy Feldstein Elementary and Intermediate Drum Methods. They both studied with me. I decided that we needed a good elementary book, so I just said, "Here's what we're going to do." We wrote it. We published it and sold over 40,000 books the first year.

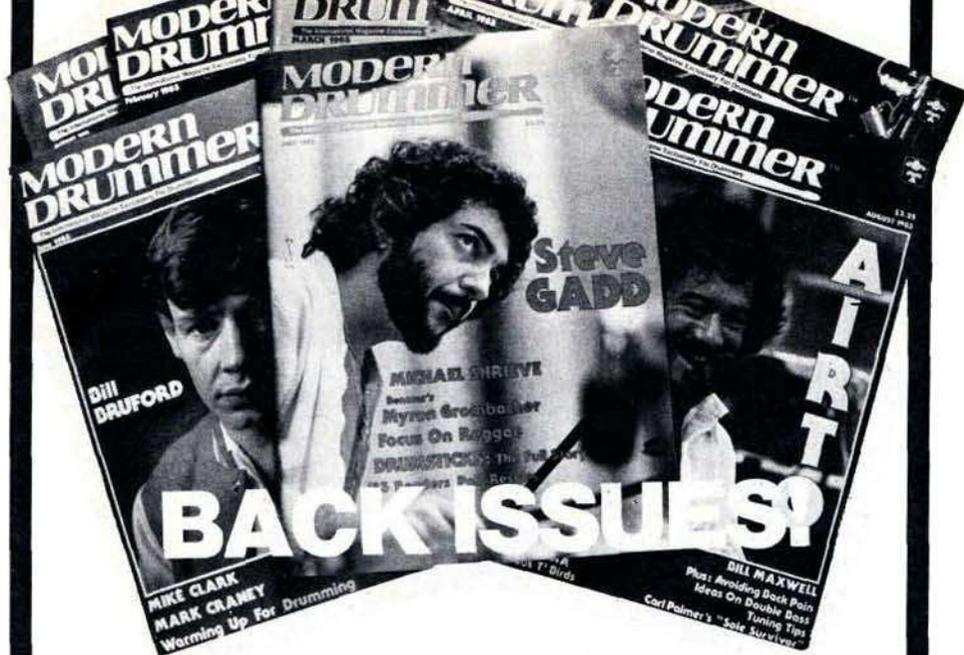
I've been very successful as a publisher—probably one of the most successful educational percussion publishers in the world. One of the advantages I had was working with some of the best drummers and percussionists who played and taught. I always asked them what was lacking, and they'd tell me. Then we'd see if we could do something about it.

Clyde Brooks, who is one of my former pupils, wrote *The Recording Drummer*. Clyde worked for Elvis Presley and Dolly Parton. Today he makes a lot of money, but at one time he couldn't play. He was studying vibes with Bob Tilles, and Bob sent him to New York to study drums with me.

Years later, I went to Chicago to a big Midwest band conference and Clyde invited me to dinner. I asked him how he was doing. "It's different," he said. "Completely different. You know, I don't have a drumset now; I have four of them. When I get a call, I find out what kind of recording it is, what the arranger wants, who the artist is and what drums to bring. I have a rock set, a country & western set, a six-tom set and a ten-tom set." I asked him if he'd ever thought of writing about it. "It's very simple," I told him. "The next time you have a recording date where you know the people involved, get a tape of it. Make a copy of the arrangement and write out what you did." We now have a lot of the things they do down in Nashville in that book. If you don't like the way Clyde did it, that's your problem. But if he's making a fortune interpreting drum parts that way, I'd say it's worth looking into.

JD: What about the Phil Kraus mallet series?

HA: When Phil was studying with me, I said, "Why don't you write a book? The books out today are not meeting the needs of today's player. Just write what you teach." He asked me, "How long should it be?" "Keep writing," I said. "When you're finished, we'll decide what we're going to do with it." So he wrote it and



- #12 - AUGUST 1979
Billy Cobham, Elvin Jones, Jimmy Cobb.
- #13 - OCTOBER 1979
Gene Krupa Tribute Issue, Michael Shrieve.
- #17 - JUNE 1980
Carl Palmer, Derek Pellicci, Great Jazz Drummers—Part 1.
- #18 - AUGUST 1980
Chet McCracken & Keith Knudsen, Ed Greene.
- #22 - APRIL 1981
Hal Blaine, Gil Moore, P.I. Close-Up.
- #23 - MAY 1981
Jaimoe Johnson-Butch Trucks, Roger Hawkins, Buddy Harman, Paul T. Riddle.
- #25 - JULY 1981
Harvey Mason, Alan Gratzner, Bassists: On Drummers.
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Billy Kretzmann, Mickey Hart, James Bradley, Jr.
- #27 - OCTOBER 1981
Shelly Manne, Tommy Aldridge.
- #28 - NOVEMBER 1981
Jim Keltner, Terry Bozzio, Ed Blackwell.
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John Panozzo, Graham Lear, Martin Chambers.
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Charlie Watts, Ed Mann, David Dix.
- #36 - OCTOBER 1982
Stewart Copeland, Ed Thigpen, Drum Book Reference Guide.
- #37 - NOVEMBER 1982
Vinnie Colaiuta, Barry Altschul, Liberty DeVitto.
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Elvin Jones, John Densmore, Miking & Recording Drums.
- #39 - JANUARY 1983
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- #40 - FEBRUARY 1983
Jeff Porcaro, Clem Burke, Billy Higgins.
- #41 - MARCH 1983
Kenney Jones, Kenny Clare, Ginger Baker.
- #43 - MAY 1983
Earl Palmer, Chad Wackerman, Eli Konikoff.
- #44 - JUNE 1983
Bill Bruford, Mike Clark, Mark Crumey.
- #45 - JULY 1983
Steve Gadd, Myron Grombacher, Drumsticks: The Full Story.
- #46 - AUGUST 1983
Airtio, Mark Herndon, Fran Christina.
- #47 - SEPTEMBER 1983
M'Boom, Eric Carr, Denny Carmassi.
- #48 - OCTOBER 1983
Alex Van Halen, Phillip Wilson, Frank Beard.
- #49 - NOVEMBER 1983
Phil Collins, Joe LaBarbera, Inside Sabian.
- #50 - DECEMBER 1983
Carl Palmer, Simon Kirke, Guide to Drum Computers.
- #51 - JANUARY 1984
Papa Jo Jones, Slim Jim Phantom, Studio Drummers Roundtable.
- #52 - FEBRUARY 1984
Andy Newmark, Stan Lynch, Kenny Clarke, Drumset Tuning.
- #53 - MARCH 1984
Matt Frenette, Joey Kramer, Focus On Teachers.
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Neil Peart, Ralph Cooper, Drummers and Singers.
- #55 - MAY 1984
Larrie Londin, Chris Frantz, Inside Gretsch.
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Tony Williams, Tris Imboden, Willie Wilcox, Dino Danelli.

said, "This is ridiculous. Who's going to buy all this?" Well, we broke it into three books. We didn't take out *anything*. And when the books came out, Roy Knapp called me and said, "When you see Phil, congratulate him for me. They're marvelous books."

It was the same thing with Buster Bailey, percussionist with the N.Y. Philharmonic. He said, "Henry, nobody's going to buy this book." "Write it," I said. He told me, "All I want out of this book is enough money to buy another lens for my camera." Well, he'll tell you he got a little more out of it than that.

JD: You've always been known as a strongly rudimental-oriented teacher. What do you feel is the importance of rudiments?

HA: I once went to a seminar at a percussion club. A fine drummer who I happened to know got up and said, "I strongly recommend that the rudiments be eliminated and that we no longer endorse them in the teaching process. They're unnecessary. The basics we do are *not* rudimental." I was asked to comment. I got up and said, "Well, I agree with so-and-so, because the way he teaches rudiments, I wouldn't want to learn them either." Like the song says, "It ain't whatcha do, it's the way thatcha do it." Anything that you do on drums or on any instrument is rudimental, basically. What does rudimental mean? Basic. If you want to learn trumpet, for example, the first thing you learn is not how to play a note, but how to put the mouthpiece on your lips. You learn how to breathe along with the rudiments of music. The last thing you do is start playing. The rudiments of drumming are certain *basic* strokes. As soon as you make one stroke, that's a rudiment.

JD: Do you enjoy working with beginners?

HA: I love beginners. I've had professional musicians come to me and say, "Gee, I would have brought my kid to you first, but I didn't think you took beginners." I'd rather have beginners and get to them before they develop any bad habits.

JD: How long do you tell your students to practice each day?

HA: It depends on their physical, mental and emotional capabilities. It depends on the individual student. The biggest question I get from parents is, "How long is the lesson?" My response is, "Well, if the student is stupid, it takes an hour and a half, but if the student is smart, it takes less than an hour. Do you want to pay me by the hour, or by what your child learns?"

There are times when a very bright kid will have a block. In that case, I allow more than an hour. I don't want to kill myself. I don't want the kids to be rushed, so I space my lessons out a little more. If I spend a little more time, I can be a little more accurate. Right now, I only teach three days a week. I can't even squeeze anybody else

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into my appointment book, and I have a waiting list.

One thing I always tell my students is, "When you come here every week, you've got to learn something vital. You don't come here, open a book and just start playing. You've got to learn about things that are important." One of the people who came to me was a very dear friend who had done Broadway shows for many years. He's starting to teach now and he's in his 60's. He doesn't want to go out anymore, but he plays good timps, good vibes and good drums. He asked me what books I use. "I use the Buddy Rich book," I told him. "But I can use any book because it's all in the way you use it." The Buddy Rich book is laid out the way I like to teach, and it sells so well today because everyone I taught, and who teaches now, uses it as well.

JD: Do you have any set outline that you try to stay with in teaching?

HA: Every drummer has to go through every step, but no two people are the same. So you have to teach them the *same thing*, but not necessarily the *same way*.

The object is to teach kids to practice, so that they will be able to play with a group. The music should be selected so that they are being prepared to play professionally, if that's what they want to do. Where does a kid learn how to play a show nowadays? Why is it that, when you watch TV, you see young kids wearing T-shirts and playing hard rock, but when you watch *The Tonight Show*, you see musicians old enough to be your parent? Who else can they get to do that type of work? Who has the background? Who can accompany Jan Pierce on an excerpt from an opera? Who can play a ballet, rock, or anything you want? That requires experience. But before you venture out to get experience, you'd better have the background. If you don't start with the background, you're not going to absorb anything, and experience will not do you any good at all.

I tell all my students that, if they don't study mallets, I'll throw them out. I tell them, "If you want to take a chance and just be a drummer, you're crazy. I will only continue to teach you if you go on to study the other instruments when you're ready. Otherwise, you'll only know enough to play a wedding or a club date." I play matched grip as well as traditional, and so do all of my students. Every one of my students has to do that. When they go to xylophone or timpani, it's a pleasure for those teachers, because the students already have the hands to do it. It's a matter of knowing how to teach, what to teach first, and what to do with someone who comes to you with a problem. When professionals come to you with a problem, it's not because they can't play. Most likely, they have technical or emotional problems. They are frustrated. I've been through it

myself, so I know.

JD: Besides teaching drumming technique, do you also talk to them about what's out there?

HA: Of course. I remember when the Paramount Theatre in N.Y. was open and I used to teach kids how to play brushes. Afterward, I'd say, "Do you want to learn more? Go down to the Paramount. Every time a new band comes in, sit in front and watch the drummer. You'll learn a lot."

JD: Do you think that part of a teacher's job should be to help a student gain experience?

HA: How can teachers do that? Sure, if private teachers have some connections, they can recommend kids who can play, but how can they recommend kids who don't have any experience at all? The schools are sadly lacking. They always complain that they haven't got the money. They've got the most beautiful facilities and everything to go with it, but they aren't doing the right thing for the kids. When you talk to some of the teachers, they say, "Well, what do you want from us? It's the system." The system stinks! You have situations where drummers who become successful in a specialized part of the music business give the impression that *that part is the business. I'm in the music business.* I'm probably one of the few people who have taken advantage of the entire music business. I've played, taught, manufactured, published and sold retail and wholesale. Recently I was involved in the making of a new movie called *Desperately Seeking Susan*. They needed someone who could portray an older drummer, and they also needed someone to actually cut the drums on the film. I was able to do both. So that's one other aspect of the business to consider. It all has to do with music. Playing is just a small part of the business. After all, when you're young, you don't mind going out and working until four in the morning. But when you get a little older, you want to be able to come home earlier at night. Does that mean the end of the music business for you?

JD: Can you give me a rundown of some of your former students?

HA: Well, in the educational field there's Jim Petercsak, Al Lepak and Tony DiNicola at Trenton State. George Devon is in the studios all the time doing transcription dates. Sonny Igoe studied with me for a few years. Doug Allan. Lou Gatti is at The Sands in Atlantic City. Lou is a hell of a drummer. Another one of the kids I taught recently is Glen Sorgey. He is a marvelous drummer who's playing with the Walt Disney Ice Show. Some other established and up-and-coming drummers are Bob Yeager, Chico Guererra, George Shepard, Jim McCall and Danny Perez. It's funny. I met this guy four years ago in California. He came over to me and said, "Henry, don't you remember me?" I

asked him how old he was. He was 56 and he had studied with me when he was 17. "How the hell am I supposed to remember you," I said. Anyway, he's the biggest drummer in Pontiac, Michigan. He gets any show that comes through. He plays all the instruments.

JD: Any other names?

HA: Joe Morello came to me one time, but I was too busy to teach him at the time, so I sent him to Al Lepak. I never asked Joe if he ever studied with Al. Then there was Alvin Stoller. He practically lived in the studios. He did a lot of the things that came out of Desilu.

I told Roy Burns he played well, but he didn't have any strength at the time. He said to me, "How do you know?" I told him I could see it. That's my business. He was playing at the Metropole in New York with a jazz group and he played very well. I gave him his first lesson and he said, "This isn't going to work." I said, "Look, you paid for the lesson; if you're not happy, don't take the second lesson. Meanwhile, shut up, listen and do it." Roy came the second week and said, "You know, I don't know whether it was the lesson, but I *do* feel better." "Fine," I said. "Now let's go on."

I went through the Latin book with Louie Bellson. Most of my students know how to play timbales. When I showed Louie, I saw that he played just like Buddy. Two seconds after I showed him the technique, he did it twice as well as I could because his hands were far superior. He had the right grip and the right turns. He did it with ease. I hardly had to tell him what to do.

Louie used to come down to my store and practice in the basement when all of our studios were taken. He'd go down by the boiler and practice between shows. He could play right-handed or left-handed, but he still practiced. Most people don't practice correctly. Natural drummers play correctly no matter what they do.

I once had a pupil who was in an accident. He had stopped at a gas station, got out of the car, and slipped on some oil. He fell into a glass cabinet and cut his left hand badly. It was terrible. All of the nerves and tendons were cut. He was just about ready to give up drums when he came to me. Today he's doing very well in the recording field in California. I showed him how to play a different way with that left hand, and he plays fast and powerful, too. It was very hard for him, and at times, he wanted to quit. But I told him he'd be a fool to quit, and he kept at it. That's a very satisfying thing for me. I've always had a ball teaching, and I've enjoyed every aspect of this business. I think I can say that I've been successful at it because I've got a fistful of friends who are former students. That's the only way you can really judge success—by what you've accomplished.



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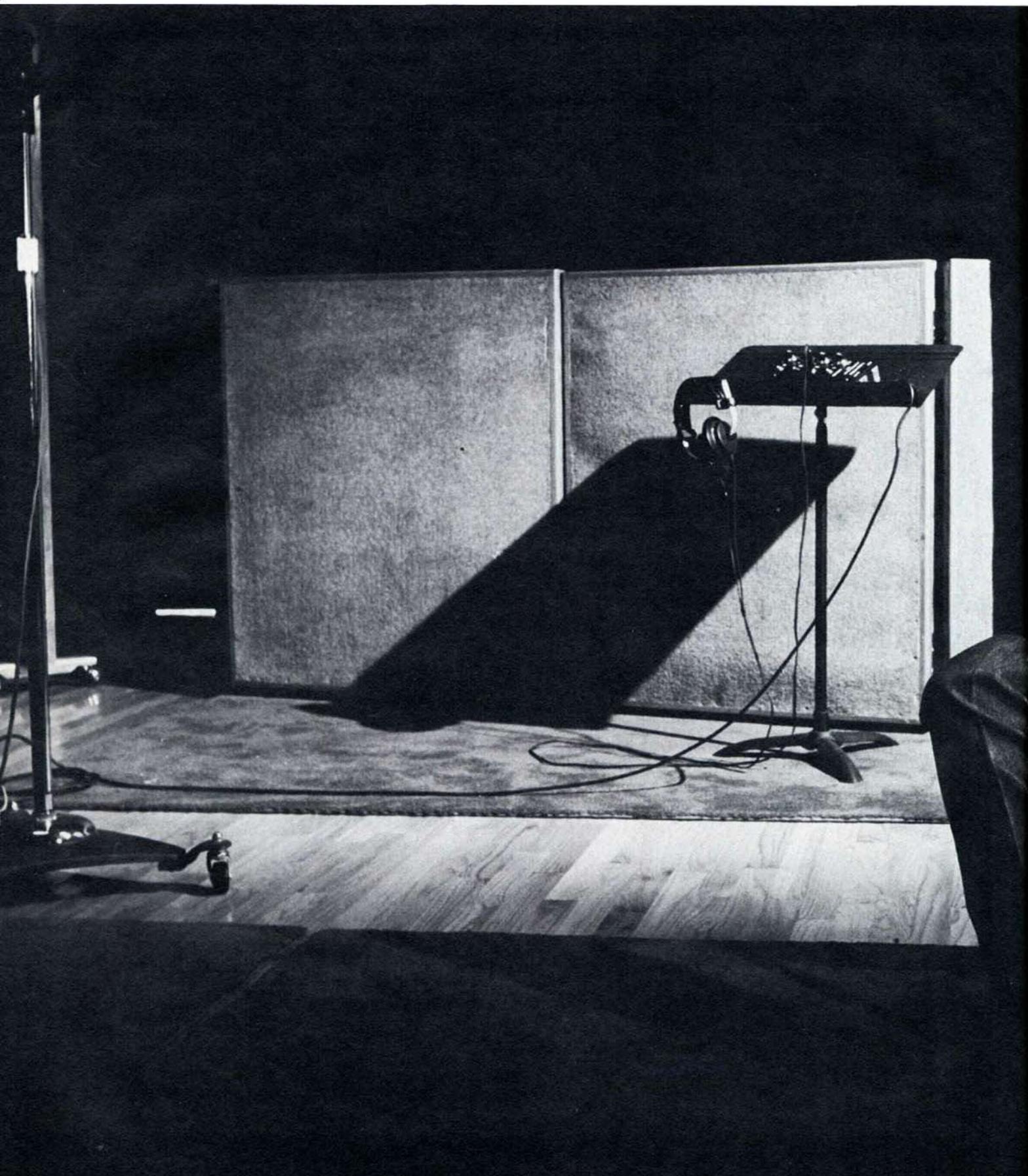
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"I had one big advantage growing up in the projects. We had basements where you could practice, and there was always a drum set down there. Of course, when I started, I couldn't reach the bass drum pedal!

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as crash cymbals. I just like having it there as an effect, but not all the way through because it gets really boring. Somebody will one day come up with an electronic drum that you can get an actual tom sound out of, along with a Simmons sound and 20 other sounds as well.

RF: There is a real contrast in your music with the synth/high-tech sound and your strong feeling about the drums being acoustic. Have any of the other guys tried to pressure you into becoming electronic?

RT: I definitely do feel that way and everybody in the band feels that way. We don't want to become a computerized band. In a day when everything in the world is becoming computerized, I think music should be the last bastion. It should not become totally computerized, and we want to retain the natural sounds in the band.

RF: How many Simmons toms do you use live?

RT: Just two. I also use one as a counting pad as well. When we started playing big venues, everyone started complaining that they couldn't hear the stick clicks, so I had to set one up for that.

RF: Is your kit the same live as in the studio?

RT: It's a lot bigger. When I'm in the studio, on one track I'm just using toms, and on another track, I'm using Simmons. Live, I obviously have to set up everything at the same time, so that on "Hungry Like The Wolf" I can use the Simmons toms, and on "Rio" I can use the real toms.

RF: Describe the acoustic drum setup you're using for this tour [84].

RT: I play a jet black Tama *Imperial Star* drumset. The bass drum is 14x24, the floor tom is 16 x 18, and the concert toms

are 8x 12, 10x 14, 12x 15, and 16x 16. I use a 5 1/2X 14 brass snare, and # 5, 6, 7, and 8 *Octobans*. I use *Titan* hardware, and a *King Beat* kick pedal. My drumsticks are unlacquered Pro-Mark hickory *5A's*.

RF: What about cymbals?

RT: All my cymbals are Sabian. I have 20" and 18" Chinese, a 17" thin crash, a 16" thin crash, a 14" Chinese and a 14" hi-hat.

RF: You used to use Paiste. Why did you switch to Sabian?

RT: I was really into Paiste at one time, but Sabian approached me and asked me to try their cymbals out. I hadn't heard of Sabian before, but I tried them. The one thing about Paiste that I never liked was that they are very light, and especially for live work, they crack very easily. I could never get a deep tone. I always thought Zildjians were too heavy. But I tried Sabian and they seemed like a cross between the two. They have the nice crispness of the Paiste, but they also have a body like Zildjian. I tried them out for a few weeks, they sounded good and they didn't break, so I switched.

RF: You seem to utilize your hi-hat extensively and don't use a ride cymbal.

RT: That's true. The concentration on the hi-hat basically goes back to the funk thing. You can get into a really good groove by playing on the hi-hat. All my favorite drummers have played like that.

RF: Is that a technique you spent time perfecting?

RT: Not really. It just came naturally, I suppose, by getting into a groove and copying a lot of funk records. I've never really liked the sound of ride cymbals. The thing I used to hate about Beatles records was that "Shhhhhh" going through the whole track—that sort of messy, horrible noise. From then on I decided I didn't

want to use a ride cymbal. I much prefer the delicate sound of a hi-hat.

RF: What kinds of heads do you use?

RT: Remo *Pinstripe*. I use them on everything because I get plenty of body in them, but I also get real power—a good whack as well as the depth.

RF: How often does your roadie change the heads on a tour?

RT: He changes the snare drum head every night, because after the show there are always big dents in it and it doesn't sound too good. He probably changes the tom-tom heads every three gigs. It's a bit extravagant, but it's worth it if you can afford it. It sounds so much better.

RF: How does your studio equipment differ from your live kit?

RT: When we record, I use the bass drum, the snare drum and just three toms—two mounted and one floor—cymbals and that's it. I just overdub anything else. It's a lot more basic in the studio.

RF: But something I read said you preferred to overdub all the tom fills.

RT: I used to, when we first started out. On the first album, it was very much more disco. The idea then was not to break from the backbeat, so there was a solid rhythm going throughout. I never used to play any toms at all so that I could keep it up all the way through. I just used to play the toms over the top. Now, we've sort of veered away from that. I think it's better to play it all as a kit because I get a more natural feel, and it actually sounds like a kit rather than a sort of computerized sound. Originally, too, when I was playing the toms separately, that's how our producer liked us to work. Unfortunately, he wasn't that good at getting drum sounds. It was very hard for him to get the toms and the kit sounding right, so he did it in two stages. A lot of it has to do with what producers you work with and how they like to work. Alex Sadkin [producer of *Seven And The Ragged Tiger*] likes to have the whole kit set up. I'm happy with the drum sounds on the latest album. I wasn't really happy with the first two albums. It was a bit too synthetic for my liking, playing-wise and sound-wise. I think I used to play very much like a drum machine. It was very rigid and the sound Colin used to get was very mechanical. Now I think we've gotten away from that a bit with a more natural sound and more natural playing.

RF: What was it like doing the first album, which was your first recording experience?

RT: It was awesome. The first time anybody goes into the studio is very frightening. When you've never been recorded before, you think, "What am I going to sound like?" You've never actually heard yourself before so you're terrified. You sit there shaking and the producer says, "Okay, go." For us, the first time we really recorded was for an album with a major record company. We had done demos, but we had never been in a big studio. The pro-

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ducer relaxed us though, and told us not to worry about it. We just went for it and it came out okay.

RF: Many times a producer won't deal with it and just brings in a studio player. Any tips on dealing with your first studio experience?

RT: You've just got to put everything into it. There's no use being half-baked about it. The advantage a young kid can have over a studio musician is energy. A studio musician can probably come in, lay it down and be quite laid back, having done it a thousand times before. But a young drummer can put everything into it. The producer should be able to capture that energy and put it on tape. That will be better than anything a studio person could ever do. Just don't worry about it. If you worry, it's going to affect your playing, so you just have to try to relax and get into it.

RF: Did you find that, all of a sudden, everything you did went under a microscope? Did you find yourself working extra carefully?

RT: For sure. Everyone notices every little thing. It's very hard, but you just have to apply yourself and make sure you get it right. The studio thing is the most important. It's the basis of everything. The videos come from the studio thing. You go out and play live, but it all relates back to the record. As long as you get that right, you're on the way.

RF: How many nights a week do you work when you're on tour?

RT: We always do three nights on, one off and then two nights on and one off. It's always two or three days on and then a day off. We play five nights a week.

RF: That sounds pretty hectic.

RT: Yeah, it's quite hard, especially when you're traveling long distances as well.

RF: You're so pressured and busy all the time. I wonder if that can't affect you musically or in a live show?

RT: It has on the odd occasion where other things have become a bit overbearing. We did a show in England last year when we were just going back for a week. We got to the airport and there were about a thousand kids going crazy. We went straight to an interview and straight to another interview, then to a photo session and suddenly we were on stage. It was a bad show because we were just sort of thrown into it. We had been doing so many other things that it affected the music and we said, "We're never doing that again. The show is the most important thing. Anything that distracts us from it is just going to have to go." So we put the brakes on a bit and said, "Hang on. Forget it if it's affecting the music."

RF: Do you find you ever hit burn-out syndrome?

RT: Sometimes. You tend to go in waves. Sometimes you get really bored playing the same stuff every night. You go on and think, "Oh God, I've got to play this

again!" Then the next night you come back with a renewed enthusiasm. It just changes every night. I haven't reached the burn-out syndrome yet on this tour. I probably would if I went out and got drunk every night, but I've been trying to look after myself and pace myself because it's a long tour.

RF: Is there a list of dos and don'ts while you're on tour, as far as sleeping and eating habits go?

RT: I eat as much as possible and as often as possible because I have to keep my energy reserve well stocked up. That's bad sometimes, because when you get off tour, you're still eating the same amount and you can put on two pounds in the first week. Personally, I can't party too many nights, because if I'm not feeling in really good shape when I go on stage, I find it really difficult and I start to drag a little bit, which is not good. So I have to keep myself pretty together. You learn that very quickly.

RF: How do you keep the same material fresh every night?

RT: It's very hard. I suppose you just become a professional after a while. The way you feel about the material really doesn't come into it. If you're really bored, that really shouldn't enter into how you play. You should play the same every night whether you're really bored with the stuff or you're really into it. You just become a professional and you're able to play the same every night after a while.

RF: Does the audience help charge you?

RT: Sure. If you get a great reaction and you've got a lot of people in the front who are really cheering you on, that can spur you on, but you just have to get used to going on and playing great whether you feel like doing it or not. You can't be enthused when you go out there and do the same thing every night. There's no way to really do that, so you have to discipline yourself to go out and do it.

RF: With the reaction you get, do you find the screaming and such distracting at all?

RT: It's very rare that we actually hear the audience during numbers. We have our monitors quite loud and I wear headphones anyway, which cuts out a lot of the crowd noise. Sometimes, if they really cheer loud, we might hear them once in the middle of a song or something, but we don't generally hear them.

RF: What are the advantages to wearing headphones?

RT: It's pretty essential for me. We use a lot of things like rhythm units, rhythmic synthesizers and sequencers on stage which are actually a part of the out-front sound and I have to keep in time with them. It's essential to me to hear every beat that's going on there and keep in time with it. I think if I just had it monitored on a small speaker, it would probably get drowned out by a vocal or something else, and I would probably go out of time with it. It

can become disastrous if you do go out of time with it. There are actually only about three numbers in our set where I don't have to keep in time with some sort of thing that is almost like a metronome. I don't think many drummers have to do it. A couple of bands just have a couple of numbers with a rhythm unit playing, but our whole set is more or less based around that.

RF: That must be good preparation for working with a click in the studio.

RT: For me, playing live is almost like a studio situation, because I'm boxed away with my headphones on and almost playing to a metronome all the time. It's very good, actually, because I never have to worry about timekeeping. I prefer playing with things like that. I don't have to worry about speeding up or getting a bit tired and slowing down. It sort of regiments me and I can't go out of time with it.

RF: Do you normally warm up before a show?

RT: Not really.

RF: What about pacing a rather hectic set?

RT: I don't really get a break for about an hour and 40 minutes, so I definitely have to pace myself. I could go crazy in the first ten minutes and play like a maniac, but I'd be burned out halfway through the show. I do have to hold myself back and think ahead to, "I'm going to get a rest after this one, so I can go for it in this one." I have about a minute's rest in the middle of the set, so I pace myself towards that rest.

RF: A lot of the tunes start out with very dominant, powerful drums too.

RT: Yes. It's quite fast all the way through. When we're rehearsing, I'm sort of half dead by the end of it, but I get used to doing the show. I work up to it, I become fit and I find that I can get through it easier. When I first started, I used to think, "God, I could never play for an hour solid," but obviously I built up to it and it became quite easy, apart from all the blisters.

RF: How do you get a good drum sound in those arenas that I tend to call garbage cans?

RT: They are like that. In order to get a good sound out front in a garbage can, as you call it, I find it essential first of all to make the drums as dead as possible. Otherwise, you can imagine the sound I'll get if I hit a drum and it rings. We always make sure each drum is as dead as possible, so it's almost like a box. We spend about an hour every day working on the drum sound. I sit there and hit every drum individually, and the guy out front works on it with me. He puts all the depth and tone on the board, rather than trying to get rid of the ringing the other way. He can add all the things we need out front.

RF: Can you be more specific about your tuning methods?

RT: I don't have any method really. I don't tune them to notes or anything. I just tune them to what sounds good to my ear.

So I get them to where they sound right and then damp out all the ringing. It's the old Marlboro box and a bit of gaffer's tape method—just getting it really dead sounding. That's more powerful. Then my roadie, John, will sit up there and play the kit for a while, and I'll go out front to hear what it sounds like.

RF: You tune your heads pretty tight.

RT: Yes. If you have a very dead drum and it's loose, it's very hard to play. So I tend to tune them up quite tight. Then I can deaden them and they're still quite easy to play because I have a good, tight head to play off. I also still get quite a hard sound rather than a sloppy sound.

RF: Do you find that in a large hall you might tend to forget about playing the subtleties because they get lost?

RT: No, I don't think I ever do that. I've got a lot of faith that our sound man will pick everything up. It's always good practice to keep on playing all the subtleties, because when you get into the studio, you're going to be rusty if you just start bashing away live. It's better to keep on playing them. There's always somebody out there who is going to be listening and picking up on something.

RF: Did you work out parts beforehand with the percussionist?

RT: He's playing more or less what he wants to play, really. I'm not very good at playing percussion. I've played percussion in the past, but I don't really rate myself very high. Playing drums is totally different from playing percussion and I end up just playing percussion like I would a

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drumkit, with rolls and such. So we just invited the percussionist along to the rehearsals and told him to play what feels good. There were a couple of things we asked him to change that we didn't really like, but all in all, he just did a great job. I haven't really changed anything that I've ever done, so he just plays around my fills and crashes and things like that.

RF: How do you feel about drum solos?

RT: I've always found them interesting, but I've always felt sorry for all the other people in the audience. It's interesting for me because I'm a drummer, but I don't think I would subject an audience to a 20-minute drum solo. It must get really boring

for about 98% of the audience. I've been bored by drum solos and I'm a drummer, so I don't think there's really any need for that.

RF: How do you feel about all the video work the band is doing?

RT: People have begun to place a lot more importance on the videos than I think should actually be placed on them. For us it's always been like the icing on the cake. We probably spend about two weeks a year on videos. Six months of this year we spend recording, and we're doing a world tour for another six months. So when you look at the comparison, it's a very small part of what we do, really, but it's become

overinflated. Really, it's nothing more than a commercial that's promoting the single. That's all there is to it.

RF: You've certainly seen some interesting places with some of the videos you've done. Did you ever think, while you were growing up, that you'd be visiting all these exotic places and doing all the things you are doing?

RT: Not really. It's very much a surprise to me. I never really thought I'd become a pop star or whatever. I always wanted to play and become a professional, but I never really thought this would happen. I sort of take it for granted because it happens so much, but sometimes it's quite hard to believe. It's difficult to relate it back to how I used to be. It's quite unreal sometimes.

RF: Do you enjoy the touring?

RT: Oh yeah, definitely. Obviously, it has its down points, but there are the up points as well.

RF: That's difficult home-wise. Do you have a home?

RT: I have a home, but the only time I've seen it was with the real estate agents. It's very hard on my home life, but I've got the rest of my life to have a home life, so I'm not complaining.

RF: Do you have family?

RT: Yes, I have family back in Birmingham. They're really into it. I think they're going to come to New York. It's going to freak my parents out. They've never been outside England, so I'm going to fly them over and freak them out.

RF: Were they supportive of the music while you were growing up or was it the typical, "When are you going to get a serious job?"

RT: Oh yeah. It was, "You're 18 now. When are you going to stop playing those silly drums and get a proper job?" But as soon as we had a bit of success, they saw how serious I was about it and they were behind me. Before that they never really thought I was serious and that I was just bumming around. They're into it now.

RF: Did they let you practice at home?

RT: They used to, yes. They used to give me half an hour every night before they came in from work. Then it was, "That's it. Stop now." They were quite understanding in that way, though. It's every parent's nightmare, I suppose, that their child becomes a drummer.

RF: When your parents wished you would outgrow the drums, how did you know it was more than a hobby?

RT: Instinct, I suppose. When you stumble upon the thing you really enjoy doing and you're talented at, I think instinct leads you on. I wasn't really interested in anything else. I was terrible at everything else. I tried a few different jobs and used to get the sack. It was the only thing I could ever do. When you find the thing you really enjoy doing and are talented at, you should just grab hold of it and go for it. 



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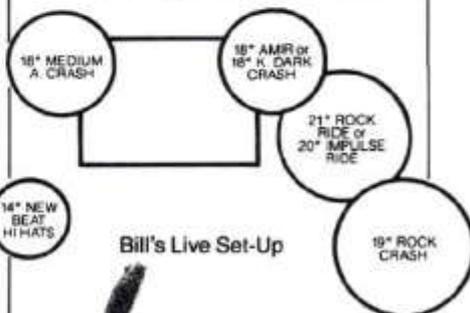
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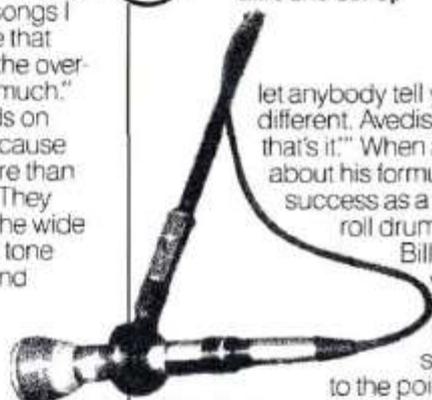
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This musical score is written for bassoon and bass guitar. It consists of several systems of music, each with a bassoon staff on top and a bass guitar staff on the bottom. The bass guitar staff uses a six-string bass clef and includes fretted notes indicated by 'x' marks on the stems. The music features complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, often beamed together. Dynamic markings such as accents (>) and breath marks (0) are used throughout. Section markers 'B' and 'C' are placed at the beginning of their respective systems. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs.

This musical score is written for guitar and consists of ten systems of staves. Each system contains a bass staff and a treble staff. The music is characterized by a complex, rhythmic pattern of sixteenth notes, often beamed in groups of four or six. The bass staff frequently features a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The treble staff contains the primary melodic and rhythmic material, with many notes marked with an accent (>) and some with a circled '0' above them. A key signature change to one sharp (F#) is indicated by a 'D' in a box at the beginning of the second system. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

This musical score is written for guitar, featuring ten systems of two staves each (bass and treble clef). The music is primarily in 4/4 time, with some sections in 6/4 and 2/4. The notation includes complex rhythmic patterns, often with sixteenth-note runs, and various articulation marks such as accents (>) and slurs. Fingering is indicated by numbers 0, 1, 2, and 3. A key signature change to one flat (F major) is shown in the sixth system. The piece concludes with a 'Fade' instruction and a final double bar line.



Jim Brock

Jim Brock is a rare individual. At 32, he's a successful and busy session drummer, and he has his own album out, featuring virtuoso performance on a multitude of traditional and obscure percussion instruments from around the world. He's also a recording engineer and a producer, so he knows the studio scene from both sides of the booth. But the thing that makes Jim most unique is the fact that his base of operations is not L.A., New York, or Nashville, but Charlotte, North Carolina, a medium-sized city in the Mid-South that seems to be emerging as a new hub of recording activity and music production. We talked to Jim about his work as a session player and recording artist, about his album, and about the studio scene in Charlotte. Outspoken and refreshingly candid, Jim offered some surprising opinions regarding his profession.

RVH: If someone were to say to me, "Recording studio in the Mid-South," I would immediately think, "Country music—offshoot of Nashville." Is that what's primarily happening in Charlotte?
JB: It's funny about the South, because people think that, but there's a wide variety. Sure, there's a big country market, but there are also some of the finest jazz players in the world. The South is a real artistic area, with a lot of painters, writers and dancers. It's big on schools, and that draws a lot of people. Charlotte's a pretty good sized city. There are a million people in the area—people from all over the world—all different cultures. Artists and producers are finding out that, since there are so many good players and facilities there, it's nicer to record there than it would be, say, in New York, because they can relax a little bit. Of course, in *any* studio, time is important; time is money. But

in Charlotte, you can kind of disregard that a little bit, and just walk in, relax and do your thing; everybody there is working together to get a good product.

RVH: It doesn't have the high-pressure atmosphere that exists in the big studio markets like L.A. and New York?

JB: Or like Nashville. I can tell a Nashville recording in two bars.

RVH: How so?

JB: Because most of it is real sterile. I'm not saying that everything Nashville turns out is sterile, but there are nine million studios in Nashville, and there's a Nashville formula that they've been using for years. A lot of artists I've talked to who have recorded there are tired of that Nashville sound. When they go in to do an album, they know what it's going to sound like before they do it, and that bothers a lot of them.

RVH: Is there a large community of studio musicians in Charlotte?

JB: Well, most studios tend to have their own little clique of musicians, for those artists who come in without their own bands. For instance, at HMC, where I recorded my own album, the bass player and I do just about all of the stuff. Then there are three or four guitar players and three or four piano players for the rest of the rhythm section—basically the same people.

RVH: How many studios are there?

JB: About six.

RVH: It seems that a lot of things are happening in the South right now, not only as far as the studios go, but the performing acts as well. New music acts that are getting a lot of press, like R.E.M., Let's Active, and some other groups, seem to be coming out of that same area.

JB: R.E.M. records in Charlotte.

RVH: Do you have any thoughts on why this is happening in the South now?

JB: One of the reasons is the quality of the sound that a couple of the studios around that area can give. You would think that a group like R.E.M., from Athens, Georgia, would record in Atlanta. I'm sure there are some fine studios there. But they don't; they go to Charlotte. They like the sound they get, and they say that, when they walk into the studio, they don't feel intimidated.

RVH: Is there any mainstream jazz being recorded in Charlotte?

JB: Not as much as other music, of course, but it's probably that way anywhere. There's quite a bit though—perhaps 40%,

which I think is pretty good.

RVH: What about Gospel or inspirational music?

JB: Well, Charlotte is the home of PTL [Praise The Lord], and there are a lot of black churches with choirs and things, so we do some of that too. There's also a lot of new wave. I don't do much of that because those acts are generally self-contained. Besides, there's a certain feeling and attitude for that music that I don't have. I can try to play it, but it just doesn't sound legit. I like pretty music; I'm a sucker for it.

RVH: You did your *Lion Song* album at HMC studio, which is tied into HMC productions. Are you associated with that as well?

JB: Yeah, the whole thing is operated by HMC productions. Having its own studio keeps production costs down on the projects we want to do.

RVH: HMC also has records out by Mel Lewis and Buddy Rich. That's illustrious company.

JB: The records by Buddy and Mel are the direct-market type of thing; you'd get them through *Reader's Digest* or *TV Guide*, rather than in a record store. Of course, we also advertise the records in *Modern Drummer*.

RVH: Your production company includes a record label for commercial release, but there aren't really many labels based in Charlotte, are there?

JB: No, HMC is the only one that covers a lot of ground. There are a couple of real small ones, and that's it.

RVH: Is the studio scene in Charlotte pretty much closed to anyone but the group of musicians there now?

JB: To get studio work *anywhere*, you have to work at building a reputation. Since time is money in the studios, people are afraid to use someone they don't know. If they get themselves into a bind, then it's costing the client money; it's costing the studio money. The best drummer in the world will still have to prove himself or herself; you have to build some sort of track record.

RVH: How did you break in?

JB: I moved to Charlotte just because I like the place. I had been working there in the club scene, and I got to know some people; they'd come in the club, so they got to hear me. When a date would come up, they'd call me. If they were satisfied with it, they'd call me back.

RVH: So once you get your foot in the

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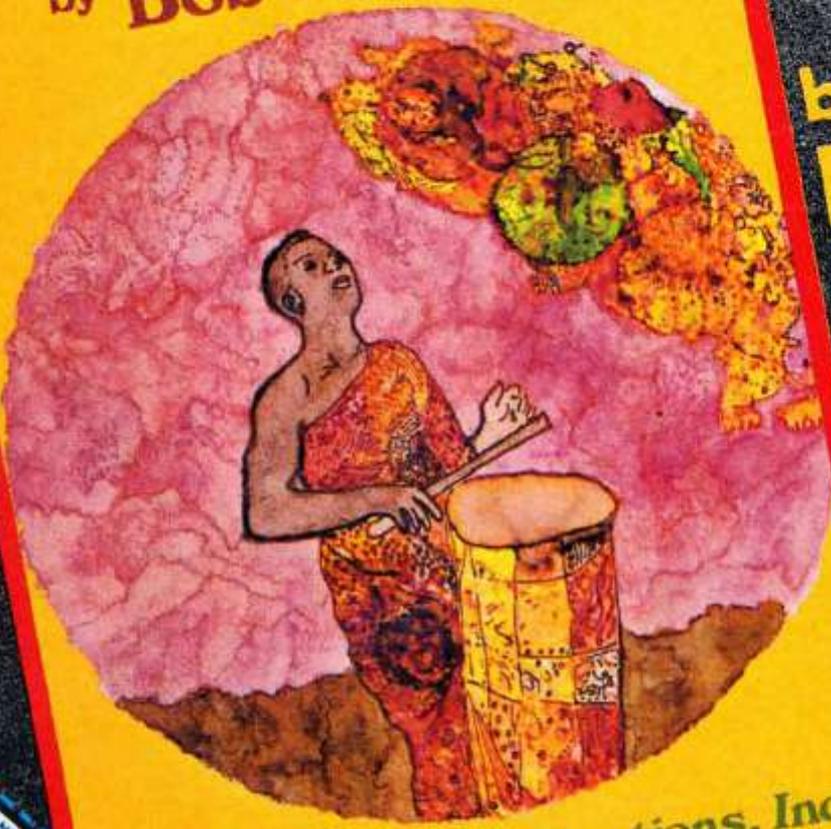
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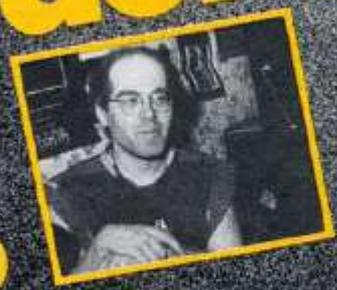
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JB: In Charlotte, if you can play, you can do studio work.

RVH: You do session work, and you also have recorded your own album. You obviously enjoy doing many things in the studio.

JB: I probably like playing in the studio more than playing live.

RVH: Why is that?

JB: Because you're building something. You don't have as much of the interaction between players as you would live but, to me, it's still real exciting. And you certainly have more control over your final product.

I guess I'm a successful studio drummer because I sound good on tape, while a lot of drummers don't. They may be excellent club drummers, but to play for a tape machine is a whole different ball game, because there are a lot of problems. You have to watch yourself a little more. When you have music coming at you but you can't see the person playing it, it comes across a whole lot different. And with some music, you have to play for the engineer, especially on a pop tune. You have to play so that the engineer can do his or her job right. If it's a real hard 2-4 backbeat, those backbeats have to be the same; they can't differ in intensity. You have to make sure that the stick hits the same part of the drum every time; that's one of those little things that people don't think about but that you can really hear. Hearing things is very important to me. I play totally by ear; I've never had any lessons and I don't read that well.

RVH: Do you mean that you can make a good living and keep working steadily in the studio if you're not able to read everything cold the first time?

JB: Sure—you don't need to read.

RVH: You're certainly the first studio player I've ever talked to who said that.

JB: It's musicianship that counts. If you know how to play, and you've got good ears, you can do it. I do albums, demos, commercials, jingles, and I've done three movie soundtracks. The last soundtrack was written by Dee Barton, who did all the music for all the *Dirty Harry* movies, and tons of TV scores. He walked in to do this horror film soundtrack and handed me a book that was about two inches thick, all notated and everything. I said, "Dee, this means nothing to me." He said, "Don't worry about it; just play what you hear." So I did that, and he loved it. He'd tell me to punch certain things when they came around. Otherwise, it was left up to me.

RVH: Working without music is certainly atypical of a studio player. How do you feel about working with a click track?

JB: Click tracks are weird. You'd be surprised at the number of people who can't stay with them. And you always have the situation where everybody wants the click

loud enough that you can't deny it, and then you have problems with bleed through the phones into a mic'. Once you get a click track onto the tape, you can never take it out. You can't hide it; you can't get rid of it. I had to use one for the last soundtrack because of the sync to film, but usually I don't want to use one. I've got good time, so I generally don't need one.

RVH: Are you kept really busy with session work in Charlotte?

JB: Last year was the hardest year I've ever had; I was working constantly. Sessions usually start around 9:30 or 10:00 in the morning, and there were days on end, for two or three weeks at a time, that I would work 18 to 22 hours a day. I'd have three or four sessions every day: a country session in the morning, a rock session in the afternoon, and something else at night. I lived in the drum booth for what seemed like forever. This year I've kind of backed off a little. I engineer and produce too. Sometimes I play and engineer both, which is tough, but occasionally people do want me to do that. It's difficult, and you run your legs off.

RVH: Which do you enjoy more, doing a quick in-out session for a 30-second TV jingle, or working with an artist on a complete album?

JB: A complete album. I like to go in, lock myself in the room, really get down with the artist, and try to make it happen. You walk out feeling good about it.

RVH: Would you rather work with an artist who is very organized and prepared—who comes in and says, "Here are the tunes"—or an artist who sits down with a guitar, strums a few chords, and says, "Let's make some music"?

JB: It depends on who's producing. If the producer has done his or her homework, and spent time with the artist in pre-production, things can go quickly. But if the producer doesn't do that, then you find yourself almost writing the tunes in the studio, which isn't good. It's good to the degree that you get feedback from everyone involved, but it works a lot better when there is some structure coming in. But a lot of artists bring demo tapes of the tunes, and that's kind of weird. I'd rather have them just sit down and strum it on a guitar, because then I find my own part. If you listen to a demo, then you find yourself doing what the other drummer did, or being influenced one way or another. Sometimes it's a problem because the drumming on the demo is exactly right, and there's no reason to do anything different. Yet if you play exactly like the demo, the producer wonders why he or she hired you for this session. You're almost forced to play something different. I don't like doing that, because my philosophy is "You can't fix it if it's not broken." What's really tough is when they bring in a mastered product that's finished, but they

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RVH: How often does that happen?

JB: I've only done it three or four times, luckily.

RVH: You did a lot of exotic percussion on your own album, *Lion Song*. Do you do as much of that type of thing for other session work?

JB: It depends on the gig, of course. Some people like me to incorporate those sounds into their music, and sometimes you can. I did a country thing with Jeannie C. Riley on which I played some African drums, and it worked real well. It depends on the color of the tune, and how open the artist is to something different. Some of them look at a percussion instrument and don't even know what it is.

RVH: You didn't use any electronic percussion on *Lion Song*. Why not?

JB: I don't like them! They wouldn't have fit the concept of that album, for one thing. I've used them on some pop things here and there, using a Simmons sound that was triggered off the snare. But on an album like *Lion Song*, it'd be like whipped cream on steak; it just wouldn't work. I don't like electronics to start with, because, to me, a drum is a log with a piece of hide stretched over the top. Drum machines are pretty neat for a songwriter who lives in an apartment, or for people with four-track machines who want to make their own demos. But they're not for me.

RVH: A lot of current studio production seems exactly the opposite of how you feel. Do you find people coming into your studio wanting drum machines or electronic drum tracks, and then asking you to "sweeten" the track with live drums over the top?

JB: Not too often. Those that use electronic drums tend to use only that. I may add some percussion over that, but I won't play a kit with it. I've had some people bring in programmed rhythm tracks, on a DMX or something, and play it for me, saying, "This is the pattern I want you to play." So the drum machine is acting as my teacher. I don't mind that; I'll play what was programmed.

RVH: Since you work primarily by ear, that actually seems to be a pretty valid way of communicating an idea to you, rather than handing you a thick chart.

JB: Well, sometimes it isn't easy, because drum machines are capable of doing things a human being cannot do.

RVH: Do you feel threatened by drum machines? Have you, in fact, lost any work to them?

JB: It's happened to me a few times. It keeps me from getting work with quite a few people who have been using them religiously. They can't take my percussion

work away, and they probably never will because I don't believe a drum machine will ever have software for a berimbau, and so far even the conga drums don't sound good. A lot of studio drummers program the machines; I've had to program them for people. I don't know that much about them, but I know what it should sound like, and I fiddle with them until I get that sound. That is work—sort of. Drum machines have grabbed some jingles from me. A producer with a limited budget to work with can program a drum machine at home, bring it into the studio, push a button, and there's a track. It's taken some work from me, but I'm not really worried about it, because I think there are more people who don't like drum machines than do.

RVH: Speaking of what people like, what is your bag as an artist? Can you describe your style?

JB: R&B; Latin; I'm a lover of a good backbeat and a good pocket. Latin music has that, but in a different way; it's not such a hard 2 and 4, but the pulse is there. I'm not a swing player. I like it, but it's not for me.

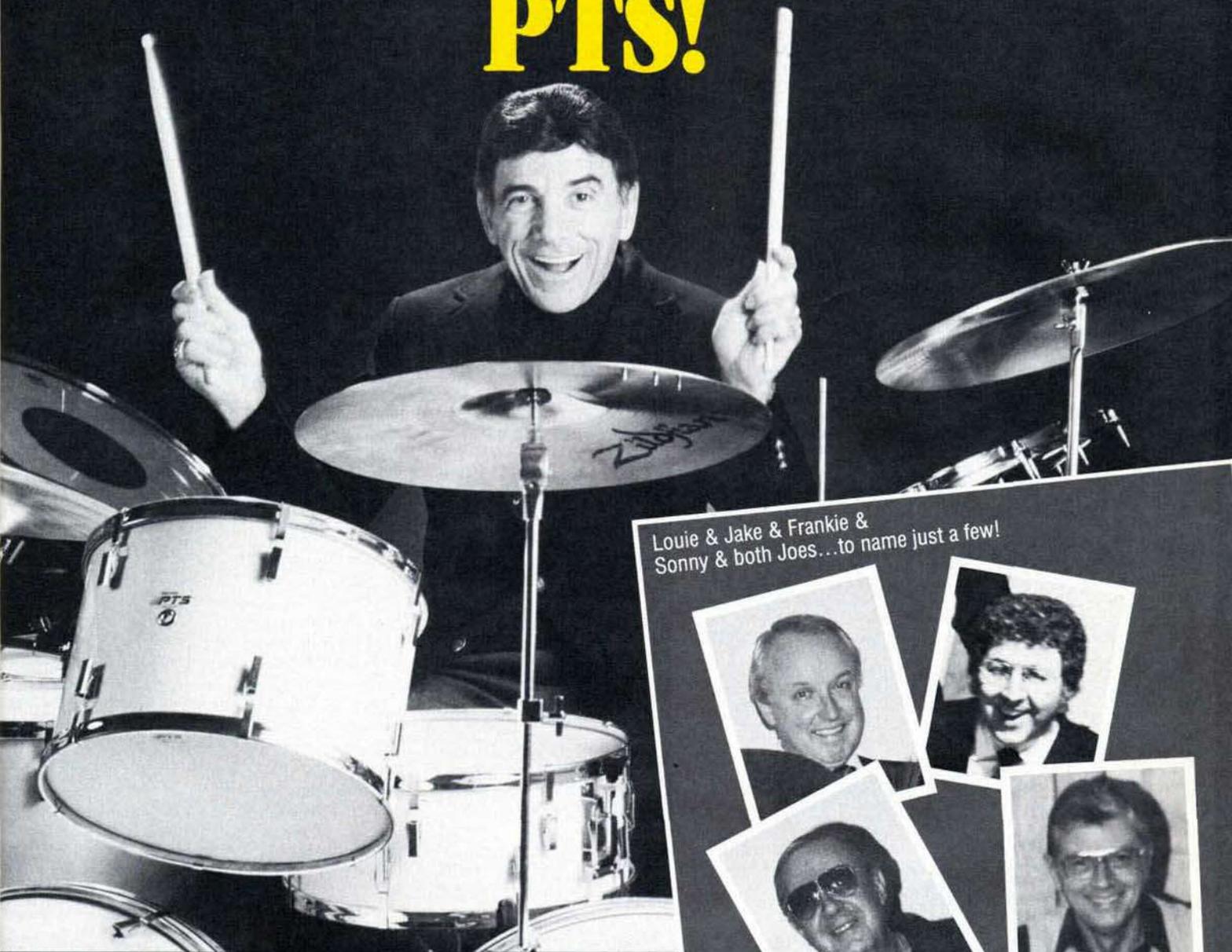
RVH: What were you listening to as a kid? What were your musical and drumming influences?

JB: When I was real young, the Ventures were happening. Jim Chapin was cooking, too. Where I was raised, in Ohio, I was really sort of deprived of a lot of culture. The radio was just about it. But then I was always one to go out and buy an album by someone I'd never heard before. So that's about the only way that I was exposed to anything different—sort of on a bet. And most of those bets were pretty good. I listened to a lot of Motown, but you never knew who any of those drummers were at the time. By the way, James Brown cut all of his hits in the studio I'm working in now. It used to be called Arthur Smith studios, up until about three years ago. That's a kick for me now. James cut "Papa's Got A Brand New Bag" here, and I was listening to the tapes the other day. It was recorded on three tracks, and it still sounds good—real spontaneous. It's funny to think of how long ago that was and how things have changed.

RVH: How many tracks are in the studio today?

JB: 24 tracks. I kind of feel that 24-track or more recording is one of the things that have hurt the performance of music today. Good isolation and good recording techniques and things like that aren't the reason for hits. In the old Motown days, they had a billion-dollar sound, and that was live on two tracks: come in, do a good performance and cut it. Performances were real good then. They are now too, but I think multi-tracking has cut down that quality some. A lot of times you'll do an album date, and the rhythm section will go in and do all the rhythm tracks to all the

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tunes. Then the strings and the horns will be put down later, and a lot of times the horn and string arrangements aren't even written until after the rhythm tracks have been cut. After you hear it all put down together, you say, "I wish I had known what the horns were going to do, so I could have punched it here or there." They might even have written the horn line around the drum track, but it's not the same.

RVH: As both a session player and a producer, give us your ideal method of recording a drumset.

JB: It depends on the type of music it is. If it's real radio-oriented pop stuff, I close mike it. If it's something a little freer—something like Mel Lewis, for instance—I'll use a couple of overheads to pick up some space around the kit.

Nowadays, engineers tend to mike the instrument, instead of miking the player. That's a big difference. When you close mike a drum, you're miking the drum. But at the same time, the room is being filled up with drums; the room is alive with sound. I notice it especially with conga players. I listen to old recordings of Chano Pozo or Ray Barretto, and you can tell that they are miking them and their drums as a whole. A lot of times now, they put the mic' right down on the drumhead. In that case, you're not picking up any of the energy the drummer is creating; you're just getting the sound of the drum. You miss the ambi-

ence that you would hear if you were sitting in the room listening to the drummer play live.

RVH: In our review of *Lion Song* [On Track, August '84], your list of percussion credits is longer than some of the other whole reviews! How did you come to get involved playing all the exotic African, Oriental and Latin instruments featured on the album?

JB: I like sounds. Even on a drumset, you have the tone of the drums themselves, which is real nice, but there are also sounds around the drums. There are the rims, the shells, and rimshots, which can differ according to how far up on the stick the rimshot is played. I'm into stuff like that. When you get into ethnic percussion, it's really interesting, because the drumset is actually a composite of all these different instruments. For instance, in legitimate Latin music they don't use a drumset, but all those sounds are there. The drumset was put together as a composite of those different tones. The hi-hat is like the shaker part, the toms are reminiscent of the timbales or the conga, the bass drum is the cudo, and so on.

RVH: How did you choose the combination of instruments for each track on *Lion Song*?

JB: That's kind of a hard question for me to answer, because I'm so close to it. Every sound has a color, and you can combine sound colors just like a water color wash

on a painting. Some colors go together, and some don't. The ones that you combine make another color. On *Lion Song*, there's a tune called "Portrait" that has an Indian motif, and what started that was an autoharp. It was real old and ragged, and very out of tune, but that's what made it beautiful—that dissonance. Then putting the tablas on top of it, and adding a sitar here and there completed the picture.

RVH: Tabla is not an instrument that anybody can sit down and play on—not even a skilled drummer. It takes a very special technique. How did you come to start working with it?

JB: Well, I haven't had any training, and I don't know the instrument that well. Of all of them, that's the one I don't know. I've only seen them played a couple of times, actually. But I know how they sound. I can get the different tones, and I just make them sound the way they sound to me when I hear them played by others.

Most of the sounds of the exotic percussion instruments come from the environment of the people who made them. Like the cuica: It has that vowel sound that sounds like a monkey. In Africa it's called an etwe, which means leopard, and it has a sort of growl sound to it. These people are taking the sounds that are around them, and that's their music.

RVH: Going back to your album, you had multiple-layered percussion tracks on every cut, due to the fact that you played so many different instruments on each track. Did you find that to be difficult, or was it a lot of fun? Could you be as spontaneous and creative as you wanted to be when going back over the same song time after time?

JB: It was a lot of fun, for sure. It's not hard to be spontaneous, because I know how I play pretty well. Sometimes I would find myself being repetitious, playing a lick on one instrument that I had played on another instrument. I had to be careful about that. I stack up pretty well with myself because I've had a multi-track machine in my house for a lot of years. Anytime I practice, I use a tape machine so I can listen back to hear what I'm doing and if it feels good or not. I can track easier with myself than I can with other players.

RVH: The trap drumming on *Lion Song*, although solid, was not really the focus of what you were doing. There seemed to be more interest shown in the percussion playing. Is that the way you feel in general?

JB: Well, on the album, I kind of wound up using the traps just as a foundation for the rest of the percussion. I've been playing the set for about 22 years, and percussion for about 12. So at this stage of my life, I'm finding that my percussion playing is really moving ahead, and my trap playing is kind of following behind. There'll probably come a day when I'll use another trap drummer to make an album, but I wanted this first one to be all myself.

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producer, Coxsone Dodd, before leaving for England, right?

JB: Yeah, Coxsone ran my favorite sound system [portable disco]. I used to go along with him to all the street dances. Then he built Studio One [Kingston's most prestigious recording studio]. I'd hang out there and watch the Skatalites lay down some tunes.

RS: Then Lloyd Knibbs, the great Skatalites drummer, must have been a big influence on you.

JB: Yes, yes! Lloyd Knibbs is the root of all reggae drummers. I used to sit and watch that man play. He showed me a lot of rudiments and how to find the right feel of the music. He would give me drumsticks to practice with. When he and the other Skatalites took a break, I would sit behind his kit and play. He was big influence, yes. At 3:00 or 4:00 in the afternoon in Jamaica, there'd be a program on the radio called *Ska Time*. I'd listen to that program and hit the table with the sticks Lloyd Knibbs gave me and thump my foot on the floor. This was in the early days—the ska days, before reggae and before rock steady.

RS: When you migrated to England in 1965, what was the music scene like for West Indians like yourself?

JB: The scene was low. It was not bright like today. But you could see that it was building. I couldn't earn enough money as a drummer back then, so I started to work as a car mechanic and car-paint sprayer. I was doing that for two years. Then I told my father I wanted to get involved in music and become a professional drummer. So he buy me my first drumset. I played drums and worked for Trojan Records. Then my first big opportunity came up. I played drums for Bob [Andy] and Marcia [Griffiths], who had a big hit in Jamaica at the time called "Pied Piper." A little while after, I started the Undivided and we backed up everybody—Hep-tones, Max Romeo—everybody from Jamaica who come to play England.

RS: You also played with the Cimarrons, another notable English reggae group.

JB: That's right, the Cimarrons. Matumbi and the Undivided were two popular home-style reggae bands in England in the early days, and the Cimarrons was another. I played with all three.

RS: So many of today's young English reggae drummers claim you as one of their main influences. How does that make you feel?

JB: Pretty good, y'know. I've been around and played a lot of gigs.

RS: How would you describe your drum style? Unlike some of today's more prominent English reggae drummers, you're really from the old school, so to speak, since you go back to the days of ska and rock steady, before reggae was even born.

JB: My style comes from the traditional style of reggae drumming—upbeat, very tight, clean. A lot of the young drummers in London and Birmingham listen to a lot of rock and that affects their drum style. They are creating new beats and have more accents in their playing. Not too many young drummers can be called strictly roots drummers. They improvise more, too. I improvise a lot, but I try to keep the roots feel.

RS: Tell me about your recording studio.

JB: Well, it's a good little recording studio. It's called Must Dance, and it's where I work with some local groups from the neighborhood. See, I'm lucky because I have a good reputation as a drummer. People used to know me as the heaviest one-drop drummer in England.

RS: Explain your interpretation of a one-drop drummer, if you will.

JB: The one drop is the snare and the foot drum coming in on the third beat. They drop together. The one drop came to be when the

reggae took over from the ska beat. Ska was much faster than reggae—much quicker. So they slow the tempo down and they get the one drop. In Jamaica, the people would say the ska beat was too fast. They couldn't really dance to it. That's when I left Jamaica. So between 1967 and 1968, the ska slowed down into rock steady, and then it fell into reggae. The organ and the guitar started shuffling in between the rhythm. That's how we get the reggae sound. It took shape over the years until now you got the stepper's beat, too. Sly [Dunbar] created the stepper's beat. On the foot drum it's straight fours, and they call it the stepper's beat. And there's also the one step, one kick, on the bass on the beat. The snare comes on the third, and straight fours on the hi-hat with your accents in between. It's a laid-back feel and a laid-back beat.

RS: Have you performed in Jamaica since the '60s when you left the island?

JB: No mon. I haven't been back even to visit, y'know. I want to go sometime, but I'm always busy. I haven't even been to the States, and I want to go and play there, too. There's a good market for reggae in America. A lot of English reggae bands are getting popular there. Steel Pulse and . . . what's that kid group, Musical Youth? Well, they big in the States now. That's a good sign for reggae.

and have a basic idea of what the melody is supposed to be. Then everybody chips in with ideas. I'll come up with a drum riff, and if it sounds right, we'll keep it.

RS: Steel Pulse used to work quite frequently with the Police before they broke big and became a super act. What was your relationship with Stewart Copeland?

SN: Well, we talked a lot, you know. I'd show him different things and he'd show me different things. We became good friends and exchanged ideas.

RS: What would you say is the main difference between the way English reggae drummers play and the way Jamaican drummers play?

SN: There's not a whole lot of noticeable difference, I don't think. But British reggae drummers, because of their life-style and environment, will probably play an accent—the same one a Jamaican reggae drummer would play—a bit more up-tempo. In Jamaica, everything is a bit more laid back as far as drumming goes—as far as life goes, too, for that matter. In England, life is faster and it shows in the music. Plus, Jamaican drummers take on a more roots feel and a more conscious attempt to link up with African roots.

RS: Steel Pulse likes to tour and does so perhaps more than any other English reggae band. Has so much road work affected your drumming one way or another?

SN: It definitely has affected it, because I've come in contact with many drummers I would have never met otherwise. I've been able to compare my abilities with other drummers and pick up different ideas and different arrangements. Before we started to tour a lot, there were many things about reggae drumming that used to baffle me. Talking to other drummers—reggae drummers—has helped me tremendously. Another thing that has helped me is your magazine.

RS: Back to touring for a minute, I remember the very first time Steel Pulse played Jamaica. It was at Reggae Sunsplash '81. That was a very important gig for the band, since it helped you get a new American recording contract and gain mass acceptance in Jamaica.

SN: Yeah, that was a great gig. To be honest, the band, including

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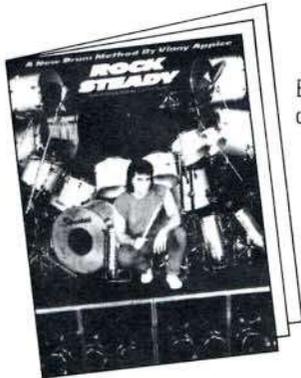
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myself, was very, very nervous about that gig. We just didn't know how we'd go over. Playing reggae in Jamaica, the place where the music was created, was a big highlight and a big test for us. At that time British reggae wasn't really respected in Jamaica, and our brand of reggae was very different from what was coming out of Jamaica at the time.

RS: In what way?

SN: Our stage show was much more up front and active than any Jamaican reggae group. We heard that, when you play for a Jamaican audience, if you're not playing their brand of reggae, they don't want to hear it. And we weren't doing their brand of reggae. We were all warned about what was going to happen until we just said, "To hell with it. We're going to do our thing and enjoy ourselves." The reaction we got was tremendous. Our strategy worked! [laughs] But it was a total surprise to us, and every time we've gone back to play Jamaica, it's gotten better and better.

RS: Which Steel Pulse record contains your best drumming? Which LP are you most proud of?

SN: I'd say *Tribute To The Martyrs*, our second album, and in second place, *Earth Crisis*.

RS: Why those two?

SN: Because I was very relaxed for those sessions, and that helped me drum better. Normally, I'm a pretty intense guy; I'll walk around and squeeze tennis balls or something. When I'm relaxed, drumming is more enjoyable for me.

RS: Does the fact that you're in a very popular and very successful reggae band put any kind of pressure on you?

SN: Oh yeah, sure. I always feel that I have to outdo myself and play better than I did the previous night. Being in that position, a lot of people look up to you and expect certain things from you. Drummers ask me for advice and things, and follow my example. I have respect now as a reggae drummer, but with respect comes responsibility. See, I'm doing what a lot of people would like to be doing—playing drums in a successful reggae band. So not only do I play drums for myself and Steel Pulse, but for all those others who wish they were in my shoes.

RS: With the success of bands like Steel Pulse and UB 40 in America, do you think British reggae is about to be more widely heard around the world?

SN: Yeah. A lot of British reggae bands are more adventurous today than they were five years ago. They're willing to try new things *before* they happen in Kingston. Bands like Steel Pulse, UB 40, Aswad and others are making a mark because we are different. Because of our success, other bands are following in our footsteps. That makes us feel like we've accomplished something.

Zeb continued from page 15

RS: Did Sly Dunbar have any impact on you? I know you think quite highly of him, too.

DZ: That's what I was going to say. In 1976, Sly was playing drums for the Mighty Diamonds on their tour of England, and Delroy Washington, whom I was playing drums for, was on the same tour. So I really got friendly with Sly. The thing that struck me was how little effort he seemed to put into his playing. It always seemed as if he was thinking of something else. I couldn't come to grips with that. But eventually I realized that he looked that way because he was so relaxed when he played. One day, I asked him to tune my drums and he did it. He also gave some tips. From then on he became a big influence on me, too.

RS: It's a fact that most Jamaican drummers of note—Carly Barrett, Sly Dunbar, Horsemouth Wallace—grew up listening to American rhythm & blues, whereas over in England, there seems to be a greater association with rock. Would you agree with that?

DZ: Yes, it's true. But I don't think it's a conscious thing. The reason why it's so is because British reggae bands do gigs with rock groups all the time. There's an integration when it comes to rock and reggae that I don't think you'll find anywhere else except in England.

RS: Aswad has played Africa a few times over the years. What was it like the first time you played there?

DZ: A funny thing happened to me the first time we played Africa. I was playing a few beats, just warming up, you know, and the drummer from the African band who was supporting us came up to me and said, "Do you know what you just played?" I said, "What do you mean?" He laughed and said, "That's my tribe's beat!" I couldn't believe it. I mean, talk about roots! I had never heard the drum beat of his tribe before, and there I was playing it. In Africa, reggae is *the* music. They've adopted it as their own, and really, it is their own. The roots of reggae are in Africa. When Africans listen to reggae, they hear things they've been hearing since they were kids.

RS: What African countries has Aswad toured in?

DZ: Kenya, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Zimbabwe. We were the first reggae band ever to play Senegal. I was glad about that. As a Rasta, it was like going home for me.

RS: Besides Sly Dunbar, you're one of the few drummers who successfully works electronic drums into reggae.

DZ: Well, I try to, anyway. I've gotten into the Simmons sound. At first, I didn't really like Simmons drums because they were so totally different for playing reggae. But after a while, I said to myself, "Well, if reggae is to progress and if I'm to progress, we both have to go forward." So I tried a Simmons kit again and realized its potential. The weird thing is that, since I've been using Simmons, my control has gotten better. You can hear it on the latest tracks Aswad recorded. On about half of them I used the Simmons, and the other half, my acoustic kit. But my playing is stronger regardless of what I play now. I think the Simmons kit will be a part of reggae's future, no matter what.

RS: If this is so, why aren't other reggae drummers experimenting with the Simmons?

DZ: In reggae, things are not as up-to-date as they are in other music forms. It shouldn't be that way because reggae is music, like rock or jazz or whatever. But conditions are hard for many reggae musicians, especially in Jamaica. That's why only Sly Dunbar has mastered the Simmons kit. Few reggae drummers in Jamaica, and even here in England, can afford to own a Simmons kit. It's too bad. I feel lucky that I have all that experience with the Simmons.

RS: You're about the only reggae drummer I've ever heard do a solo. Why isn't soloing popular with other reggae drummers?

DZ: I don't know. I do it all the time. I'm known for it. I like to start my solos slowly and then work up into a frenzy. One of the reasons why I think I became interested in soloing is because I went out of my way to see and listen to drummers like Phil Collins play live. I had to see them live because, as a drummer, I want to be just as good as they are. Maybe this is part of the reason why, for the last four or five years, I've been awarded the title of the best reggae drummer in England.

RS: Do you have any other ambitions as a drummer?

DZ: I'd just like to reach the peak, wherever that peak may be for me. I never want to stop learning about the drums. I want myself and my band to be appreciated. We've had a lot of problems with record companies. We were with Island Records, then we weren't, then we were with CBS, and then we weren't. Now we're back with Island. We haven't been the most fortunate band in England. Our first gig in Jamaica was a fiasco, but it had nothing to do with us. Certain things happened backstage, and that sort of thing. But Aswad hasn't been without its problems. Still, we're continuing to push on. We want to be successful just like any other band. As for me, I want to be respected the same way Sly and Carly are, or Stewart Copeland and the Police are. Actually, I'd like to be better than those drummers. Everyone is born with a talent. I was born with the ability to play drums. I don't want to forget that.

Brown continued from page 15

perfect way to do it. There's an untapped source of great songs in reggae.

RS: When LJB 40 began as a band, you volunteered to learn how to play the drums. Why the drums?

JB: Why not? Keeping the beat sounded important, and it was a

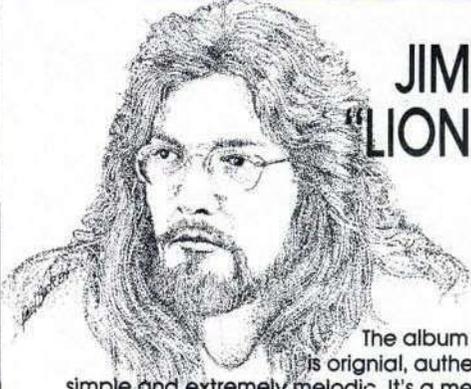
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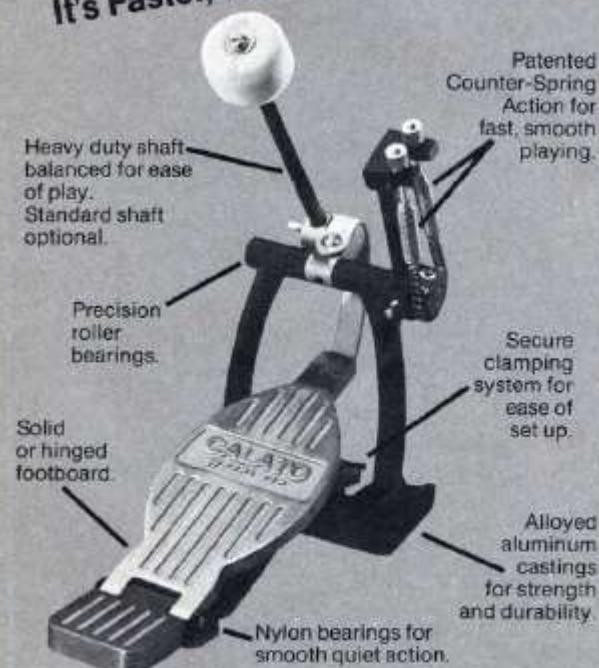
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RS: You mentioned before that you grew up in a racially integrated neighborhood. Was there ever any resentment that centered on the fact that here were a bunch of white boys trying to play reggae?

JB: Not really. The people who used to come to hear us play when we were a pub band were mostly black. Any negative reaction or resentment has been since our success. But what can I say about that?

RS: How do you personally handle such resentment?

JB: I say that we're the second biggest selling act in England, and we're number one in various places. The thing is, we've used pop rules to get where we are. We push ourselves to a pop audience, we market ourselves as a pop band, and we use pop recording techniques. That's why we've been successful. We haven't used any of the reggae cliches. We've stayed away from them. I think a lot of reggae artists want to do that as well. It's mainly the purists in the audience who don't want them to do it. I'm sure Gregory Isaacs would be really happy if he could get his records in the top ten in the States.

RS: Despite being white and British born, you were brought up on reggae. Have you embraced any of the cultural and religious elements that go along with the music such as Rastafari?

JB: No. I find Rasta philosophy hard to understand. I mean, I see the reason for, say, growing dreadlocks. It's an identity thing; it's something Rastas can actually call their own. I can understand that. But as far as the religious doctrine is concerned, it just doesn't mean much to me. Rasta, to me, just seems like bastardized Christianity anyway. I have no involvement with it at all.

RS: How would you compare the drumming styles of British reggae drummers with those from Jamaica?

JB: I was arguing about this the other day with friends of mine. I think the English style is a bit, I don't know, thicker. I think there's a lot more work done in the English style of reggae. There are usually a lot more rolls, and a lot more cymbal crashes. There's more punctuation in the music, generally speaking. The Jamaican style is just dead straight, which is what I like about it. Most Jamaican reggae drummers do little punctuation. They just keep the beat. Style Scott is a perfect example of this. If you get one cymbal crash in the whole song, you're lucky. It's more of a circular pattern: It always comes back to that same original pattern. Whereas in English reggae, there's more striking out. I don't fit this generalization, though. I've made a conscious effort to play as simple as possible. On *Labour Of Love*, for instance, you'll find hardly any tom rolls. Most of what I play is just timekeeping.

RS: Did you always strive to play so simply?

JB: Well, with the other albums, I tended to do too much.

RS: Do you plan to continue to structure your drum style around simplicity?

JB: I don't know. I mean, one of the reasons reggae doesn't sell to the mainstream audience is because it's too repetitive. I personally love the repetitiveness of the music, but I think it might be a bit too narrow sounding for rock audiences. I think Sly Dunbar is doing some interesting things on drums these days. He's not doing dead straight reggae. He's adding things. He has a beautiful style.

RS: A couple of years ago, there was a ska revival in England with bands like Madness, the Specials and others doing quite well with the music. Since ska is actually the forerunner of reggae, did the revival have any effect on you?

JB: No. Ska never interested me that much. To me it's just nostalgia—kind of like watching Humphrey Bogart movies or something. The way a lot of bands worked it out in the late '70s was as a perfect companion to punk. It was right for England at the time, and I suppose that's why it was so popular. But it's not happening anymore.

RS: You've toured America a couple of times. What's your impression of the American reggae scene?

JB: It's real diverse and underground, which is a shame. In England, reggae is much more accepted because it's part of our culture. But in the States that's not true. It's not really accepted, is it? I'm disappointed that it's not stronger than it is. Hopefully, some day things will be different over there.



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by Bob Saydlowski, Jr.



CB-700 GC-9P Drumkit

The CB-700 name has been around the drum world for a while, and they have recently released a new full-line catalog. Their drums have nine-ply wooden shells, and are constructed in Taiwan. Components of the *GC-9P* kit tested here are: 16x22 bass drum, 8x8, 8x10, 10x12, 11x13, 12x14, 14x16 double-headed tom-toms, 16x18 floor tom, 6 1/2X14 snare drum, plus *Gibraltar* hardware.

Bass Drum

The 16x22 bass drum has 20 lugs with T-style tuners, except at the bottom, where the T-rods have been replaced with square-head drumkey-operated rods. Metal hoops are used on the drum. These hoops are channeled on the inside, and the batter hoop has an adhesive rubber strip at its bottom to build up the channel for pedal mounting. The hoop exteriors are inlaid in plastic, matching the drum's finish.

CB-700's spurs have ratchet angle adjustment, along with telescopic inner legs and threaded tips which can be easily converted from rubber to spike point. The spurs work quite well in keeping the drum stationary, and for packing, they fold flush to the shell.

Fitted with Remo coated *Ambassador*

heads, this "power" bass drum had good depth, but did need some dampening, as there was no felt strip included.

Tom-Toms

The 8x8 tom-tom has eight lugs; the 8x10, 10x12, 11x13, and 12x14 drums have 12 lugs each; the 14x16 tom and 16x18 floor tom each have 16 lugs. There are no internal mufflers on any of the drums. The floor tom has three legs which are held in their brackets by T-screws. All the toms have *Soundmaster C.S.* heads top and bottom, with the exception of the floor tom, which for some reason, came through with Remo coated *Ambassadors*. Their tone seemed a bit thin at some tunings, but all in all, the drums had good resonance and punch. One can certainly get creative with all those pitches!

Mounting System

There is no tom-tom holder installed on the bass drum, since in this particular kit, all toms are stand-mounted. CB-700's *Gibraltar* stand has elliptical-tube legs set in a double-braced tripod base. The stand has one adjustable-height tier with an internal black nylon bushing, and it also has a memory lock covering the joint.

Atop the height tube is a three-hole platform. Each hole is split, and operated by a T-handle nut on one side, and a hex nut on the other. The split clamp closes around the tom-tom arm to secure its position. The third hole can be used for another tom-tom, a cowbell, cymbal, etc. The holder arms utilize a concealed ratchet angle adjustment. Both ends of the arms have hose clamps serving as memory locks. On the stand end, the hose clamp lip fits into a notch at the split clamp. I found that the hose clamp gets in the way of the T-nut on the clamp, making it difficult to firmly tighten up the holder. Hopefully, CB-700 can modify this.

The other end of the tom-tom arm passes through the drum. The drum bracket has a notch to accept the lip on the memory hose clamp, and the arm is secured in the bracket via a drumkey-operated screw. When the holder arms are locked in securely, this tom-tom stand is quite sturdy. It affords enough height to satisfy any drummer, and offers a good variety of angles. Three tom-tom stands are included in this kit.

Snare Drum

Packaged with this drumkit is CB-700's basic 6 1/2X 14 metal-shell snare drum. The drum has ten double-ended lugs, a knob-operated internal muffler, plus a chrome finish. A side-throw strainer is used here, having a fine-tune knob, as usual. The snares attach to the throw-off and butt via glass filament tape strips. This no-nonsense strainer works just fine, and is pretty silent. With the coated *Ambassador* batter, the snare drum had a good crispness at higher tunings, and a nice flat rock sound at lower pitches. Changing to a *Pinstripe* gave an even fatter sound.

Hardware

The *GC-9P* kit incorporates the new line of *Gibraltar* hardware. The *Gibraltar*

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stands combine two concepts: elliptical-tubed legs *plus* parallel bracing on the bases. Extra-large rubber feet are used to minimize "creep."

Two boom cymbal stands are included with the kit. They each have one adjustable-height tier with a memory lock, and use a concealed ratchet for boom arm angle adjustment. The boom arm itself is knurled for the most part, and has a threaded counterweight. The cymbal tilter uses a concealed ratchet, and is able to fold tightly against the boom arm. The boom stands have lots of height, and are able to hold large cymbals easily without tipping over. (Each boom stand retails at \$74.50.)

The *Gibraltar* snare stand pictured in the

new catalog has a ball clamp adjustment and a dropped basket. The one I saw with this kit had a concealed ratchet angle adjust and used the regular basket design with a threaded upper post and carriage nut—perhaps a hybrid of the old-style and the still-to-come style. The stand also has a memory lock at its height tier. Like the boom stands, the snare stand was sturdy, while delicately gripping the snare drum in place.

The best stand in the *Gibraltar* line could easily be the 7207hi-hat. It has a split footboard with an adjustable toe-stop, along with a direct-pull chain linkage. A memory lock is fitted onto the height tube, and there are two sprung spurs at the frame

base. Tension of the hi-hat is achieved by a pair of externally mounted parabolic springs which are conveniently adjusted via lock nuts at the top of the spring holder. This stand reminds me very much of the Orange/Capelle and Premier *Trilok* designs. The stand has superb action, and for its retail of only \$79.50, may be the best in its price range.

A new addition for CB-700 is their *Wedge* bass drum pedal. It has a maroon (!) frame with a single expansion spring stretched upward. Tension is adjusted by a wing bolt. Length of stroke is adjustable, as is beater height. The pedal uses a fat chain for linkage. Clamping is done by a long T-screw at the side of the pedal, which moves a spacer block along the width of the frame to either lift or lower the clamp plate. However, the focal point of this pedal is the footboard. It is of split design with an adjustable toe-stop, but the heel plate is 2 1/2 inches in height. This design places your foot parallel with the floor, rather than the 25° to 35° angle we are used to. I must say that I find this pedal somewhat uncomfortable, as it's comparable to playing with one platform-heeled shoe on all the time. If the hi-hat's pedal were the same, it wouldn't be so different, but the wedge design underneath only one foot can sometimes fool with your balance.

Cosmetics

CB-700 offers eight different finishes: wine wood, walnut, black, white, wine red, plus metallic silver, red, and blue. All the drums have tacked gold-and-black logo badges. CB-700 also offers sheets of re-covering material in eight colors.

CB-700 is getting into the total percussion market with mallet instruments, Latin percussion, marching percussion, etc. Their overall aim seems to be affordable equipment for the student, as well as semi-pro and pro players. The *CC-9P* kit tested here is a good example of that goal. For the price, the drums have quality sound and construction, and the hardware is truly professional in every respect. CB-700 is quite a value for the budget-minded player. The *GC-9P* drumkit retails at \$1,669.50. It is also available with *Mark Series* hardware (*MC-9P*) at \$100 less.

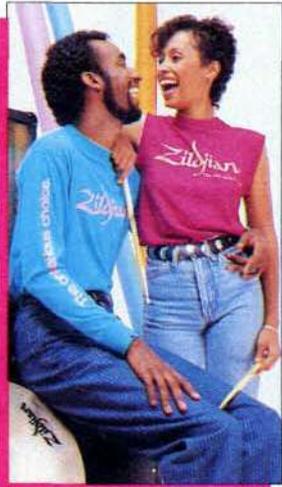
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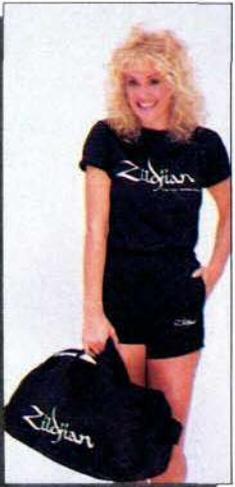
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Correction: In the December '84 Product Close-Up on the Simmons SDS8, the statement was made that "Stands are now included with the SDS8 . . ." Stands are in fact available from Simmons at extra cost; they are not included in the SDS8 kit.

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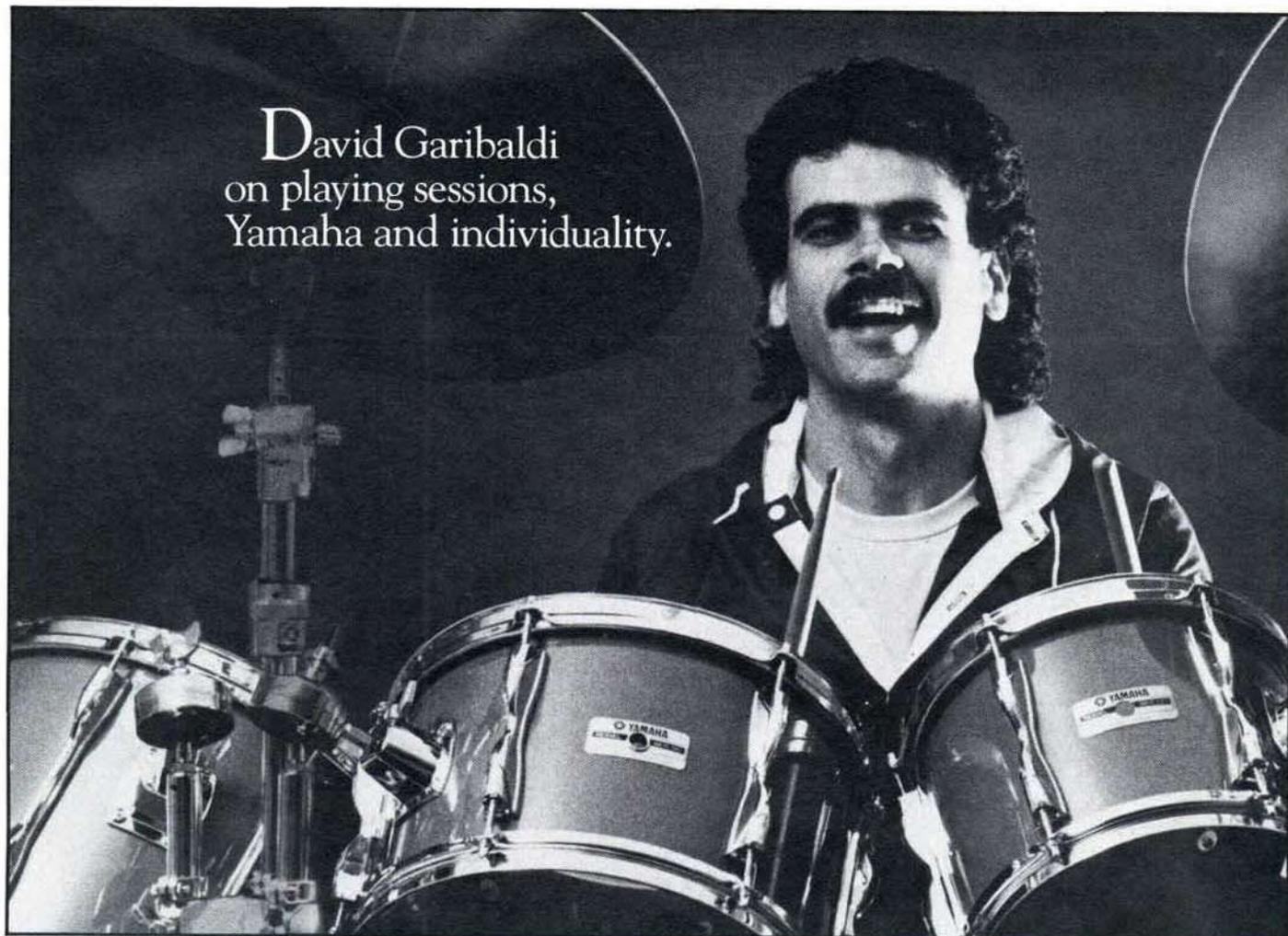
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"Of course, there're fundamental skills you should have: you should be able to read really well and it's also important to know how to make your instrument sound right. Getting a good recording sound with your instrument is almost more important than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

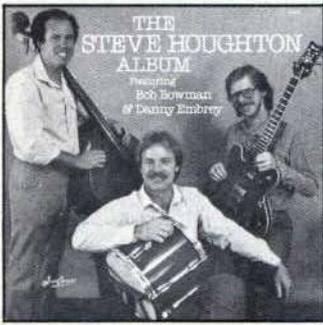
"I really like the quality of Yamaha's drums.

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

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

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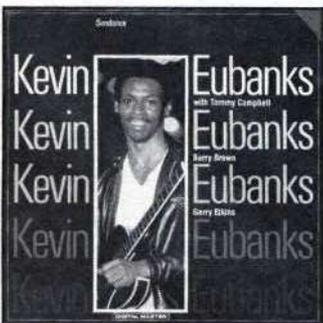
Reviewers: Rick Mattingly, William F. Miller, Rick Van Horn



STEVE HOUGHTON—*The Steve Houghton Album*. Seabreeze SB2018. S. Houghton: dr. B. Bowman: bs. D. Embrey: gr. *Blew Bo/I Can't Get Started/Lament/Medusa/I Hear A Rapsody/Proud As A Peacock/Door Prize/Amazons*.

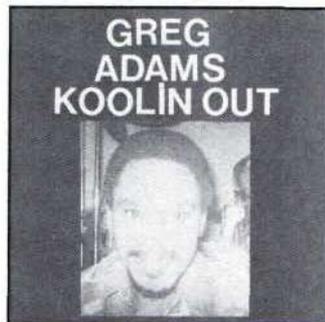
Musicians performing in a trio situation generally have the advantage of being able to have more freedom in their playing. However, the trio setting can also be very revealing, and on this album it reveals some fine drumming by Steve Houghton. He plays these jazz compositions with a great deal of taste, never failing to add the right touch.

The compositions on this album cover the spectrum of small-group jazz—from straight-ahead to Latin; from ballads to up-tempo works—and a drummer interested in playing those styles can learn a great deal from this album. Houghton has the small-group sound (including bass drum with tone), and each tune offers an excellent example of playing in this genre. Check it out. *WFM*



dance. GRP-A-1008. K. Eubanks: gr. Tommy Campbell: dr. B. Brown: bs. G. Etkins: kybd. *The Sting/Ever-Blue/Who Knows/It's All The Same To Me . . . /The Sundance Began/Mellow Fellow/Farm In My Heart/Distant Focus*.

Drummer Tommy Campbell, who has previously been featured with John McLaughlin, Sonny Rollins, and Dizzy Gillespie, could very well be one of the next rising drum stars. On this album, he is required to play through some intricate meter changes, some extreme tempos and some very tight, unison ensemble lines: He handles it well. Campbell has a great deal of technique and, unfortunately, there are moments when he overplays a bit, but he does have a "lot to say. This album is (for lack of a better term) fusion. If you enjoy the mid-'70s playing of Cobham, White and Mouzon, then the drumming on this album will be agreeable to you. *WFM*



GREG ADAMS—*Kaolin Out*. Hip City Records (no cat. #). G. Adams: dr. D. Komolafe: al sx, fl. R. Kelly: vbs. J. Williams: cor. B. West: pno. K. Ruzadun: pno. A. Threats: bs. *Little Bee's Poem/Moment's Notice/Mr. P. C. / Armageddon / Recordame*.

An independent production by Adams, this album is an ambitious effort from some talented L.A. jazz players. The album was recorded "live" in the studio—no overdubs—in an effort, according to Adams' liner notes, to avoid sacrificing

"pure music" to "modern technology."

Side 1 opens with "Little Bee's Poem," a nice jazz waltz that the entire band seems to gel on. Adams keeps the groove happening while adding some nice colorations of his own. He seems to be subtly in command of this tune more than on side 2, which has some ragged moments. All the instrumentalists solo in turn, which adds up to almost 14 minutes, but it never gets dull and never loses energy. This cut is a solid piece of work.

Side 1 closes with "Moment's Notice" (a Coltrane piece), a brief upbeat swing that again sees Adams in the supporting role, behind the fine instrumental work of Kaef Ruzadun on piano, and then the ensemble as a whole—quick and tasty. This album deserves a listen if you like live, ambitious jazz offered by some young men who live it. The record is available by mail from Hip City Records, Inc., 419 S. Robertson Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA90211..KK//



GEORGE MARSH And JOHN ABERCROMBIE—*Drum Strum*. 1750 Arch Records 1804. G. Marsh: dr, thumb pno, *RotoToms*, congas. J. Abercrombie: elec grt, elec mandolin. *My Scottish Heart / Muchacha Dorado / Upon A Time / In The Woods / Demi-Saison / Baby Lucille / Vincent / Count / Chuck Man Rivers / Camel Walk*.

George Marsh is an outstanding jazz technician on drums, as John Abercrombie is on guitar, and on this album

both men demonstrate virtuosity second to none. For example, on "Muchacha Dorada," Abercrombie supplies us with a grooving Latin bass line, thanks to a device called the MXR *Pitch Transposer*. This gives Marsh something to work against, and he responds with some beautiful rhythms played on a nice variety of drums and cymbals, while Abercrombie goes on to solo hauntingly. On tunes of this nature, which comprise the greater part of the album, Abercrombie is able to provide us with all the "band" necessary (thanks to heavy reverberation and other electronic enhancements of his guitar) and Marsh is, in himself, one of the finest and most versatile percussion sections in jazz. This album is a demonstration of what can be achieved when two masters combine their talents with state-of-the-art production technology. It's a fine accomplishment, and good listening. *RVH*



PHILIP BAILEY—*Chinese Wall*. Columbia 39542. P. Bailey: vcl. Phil Collins: dr and vcl. N. East: bs. D. Stuermer: grt. L. Wilson: kybd. P. da Costa: perc. *Photogenic Memory / I Go Crazy / Walking On The Chinese Wall / For Every Heart That's Been Broken / Go / Easy Lover / Show You The Way To Love / Time Is A Woman / Woman / Children Of The Ghetto*.

Philip Bailey, lead vocalist and composer for Earth, Wind & Fire, has (with the help of drummer-producer Phil Collins) put together an interesting

work for his second solo LP. *Chinese Wall* combines many of the R & B licks that Earth, Wind & Fire are known for with Collins' own English pop-rock style. Although some may be surprised at this performance, Collins' drumming works well in this style and it is interesting to hear how he interprets these compositions.

The tunes range from slow ballads to heavy funk-rock, and throughout Collins' drumming is thoughtful and exciting. One of Collins' trademarks is his ability to play time feels incorporating his toms in patterns. On "Walking On The Chinese Wall" Phil's patterns propel the music with a percussive framework that weaves in and out with the other instruments without being obtrusive. Also, since Collins did produce this work, the rhythmic ideas performed by the entire ensemble have obviously been carefully scrutinized and are very tight. The single "Easy Lover" is a good example of a rhythm section working together with partial unison licks. This album shows some of the reasons why Phil is so in demand. *WFM*



JACK DEJOHNETTE'S SPECIAL EDITION—*Album Album*. ECM 1280. J. Purcell: sx. D. Murray: sx. H. Johnson: tb. sx. R. Reid: bs. J. DeJohnette: dr, kybd. *Ahmad The Terrible / Monk's Mood / Festival / New Orleans Strut / Third World Anthem / Zoot Suite*.

One of the hardest things for many aspiring artists to deal with (or to admit) is that great art is often sparked by sadness or tragedy. It also requires a

willingness on the part of the artist to let personal feelings be revealed. It's not an easy thing to do. This is obviously a very personal album for DeJohnette; the pictures of his family on the cover attest to that. And in the liner notes, Jack explains that the record is dedicated to his mother, who recently passed away. But Jack isn't asking for sympathy; he goes on to state that this record is intended to be a celebration of her life.

Whenever I read something like that on a record sleeve, it makes me expect more of the music, as the artist has gone to extra trouble to let me know that the record is supposed to be special. Generally, in such a case, the record does not equal my inflated expectations. But in this instance, it does. Previous Special Edition albums have all had great moments, and revealed tremendous potential. On this record, it has all come together. Perhaps the main point is that here the horn players are working more as a band, and less like three soloists who happen to be on the same gig. The selection of tunes is well balanced, too. The emphasis is mainstream, and DeJohnette continues to represent the state of the art in that genre.

Yes, art is often sparked by sadness, but great art transcends that sadness and stands on its own. This album does that; it's a celebration alright. *RM*



RONALD SHANNON JACKSON — *Pulse*. Oao/Celluloid CELL 5011. R. S. Jackson: dr,

voice. M. Harper: voice. O. A. Gumbs: pno. *Circus Of Civilized Fools / Richard III, Raven / Puttin' On Dog / Hottentot Woman / Last Affair: Bessie's Blues Song / Geronimo, On The Run / Slim In Atlanta / Tears For The Earthbound / Those Winter Sundays / Lullabye For Mother*.

Poetry and drums share the important element of rhythm; neither works very well without it. And when poetry and drums are combined, as they are on five of this album's ten tracks, they can reinforce each other dramatically. On "Richard III, Raven," Shannon's drums reflect the turmoil of Shakespeare's Richard, and the weariness of Poe's narrator. "Puttin' On Dog" is a funky, swinging New Orleans groove. In "Last Affair," Shannon reflects the various moods of the text—sometimes gentle, sometimes frantic, sometimes silent. "Slim In Atlanta" is aggressive and jazzy, while "Those Winter Sundays" is a quiet tribute to the writer's father.

These pieces are separated on the record by solo drum tracks, and Shannon proves himself a master of form. If the goal of music is to express emotion, and to reveal something of the player's personality, then this album has succeeded. The drums are so musical and expressive throughout that, when a solo piano appears on the final track, it almost sounds harsh in comparison. *RM*



PAQUITO D'RIVERA—*Why Not!* Columbia FC 39584 P.

D'Rivera: al sx, cl. T. Thielemans: har, gtr. C. Roditi: tpt, flghn, trb. M. Camilo: pno. L. Goines: bs. Portinho: dr, perc. Dave Weckl: dr. Sammy Figueroa: con, perc. Cucho Martinez: perc. Manolo Badrena: timb, perc. *Gdansk / Brussels In The Rain / Waltz For Sonny / Manteca / Samba For Carmen / Como Fue / My Last Farewell / Why Not*.

After hearing the first tune on this record, "Gdansk," I was ready to write the review, in which I would declare that it didn't matter what the rest of the album sounded like, because Dave Weckl's drumming on that one tune alone was worth the price. Fortunately (for me) I continued to listen, and I was rewarded with even more great drumming—both from Weckl and from Portinho.

First there's Weckl. He plays on three of the tracks. Because of the different feels required and the way he handles them, you begin to see why Dave has become the drummer to keep an eye on. The first track defines current funk. Listen to it several times and you'll gradually become aware of all the little subtleties. "Brussels In The Rain" gives Dave a chance to show off his jazz skills—first on brushes, and then on sticks. Weckl's third track, "My Last Farewell," has a "Gospel-y" 16th-note groove. Throughout, Weckl employs chops, feel, and taste.

The balance of the album features Portinho's drumming, and it is a perfect complement for Weckl's. Portinho gets those Latin feels the way they're supposed to be, ably supported by Figueroa, Martinez, and Badrena.

This isn't just a drum album, by the way. In fact, the drums and percussion are supporting the melodic players throughout, as they are supposed to do. Overall, this is a joyous, cookin' album. Highly recommended. *RM*



LISTENER'S GUIDE

Michael Shrieve

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

Album	Artist	Label	Catalog #
Caravanserai	Santana	Columbia	KC31610
Welcome	Santana	Columbia	PC 32445
Abraxas	Santana	Columbia	PC 30130
Santana III	Santana	Columbia	KC 30595
Go—Live In Paris	Yamashta / Win wood/Shrieve	Island	ISLD-10
Automatic Man	Automatic Man	Island	ILPS-9397
Novo Combo	Novo Combo	Polydor	PD1-6331
The Animation Generation	Novo Combo	Polydor	PD1-6356
Transfer Station Blue	Michael Shrieve	Fortuna	FOR-023
In Suspect Terrain	Michael Shrieve	D.E.M. (Import)	DEMLP 004
Audentity	Klaus Schulze	I.C.	RR 9923



Photo by Rick Malkin

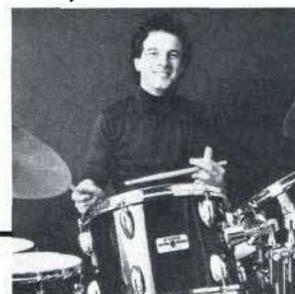
Q. Which records do you listen to most for inspiration?

Album	Artist	Drummer	Label	Catalog #
Miles In The Sky	Miles Davis	Tony Williams	CBS	CS 9628
And Then Again	Elvin Jones	Elvin Jones	Atlantic	1443
The Freedom Book	Booker Ervin	Alan Dawson	Prestige	7295
The Leon Thomas Album	Leon Thomas	Roy Haynes	Flying Dutchman	FDS132
M'Boom	Max Roach	Various	CBS Mastersound	1C 36247
Look-Ka-Py-Py	The Meters	Zigaboo Modeliste	Josie	4011
East Bay Grease	Tower Of Power	David Garibaldi	San Francisco	SD204
Can Your Heart Stand It!!	James Brown	Various	Solid Smoke	8013
Spring Session M	Missing Persons	Terry Bozzio	Capitol-EMI	ST-12228
Plays Live	Peter Gabriel	Jerry Marotta	Geffen	2GHS4012F
Remain In Light	Talking Heads	Chris Frantz	Sire	SRK 6095
The Leprechaun	Chick Corea	Steve Gadd	Polydor	6074

Ed Soph

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

Album	Artist	Label	Catalog #
Giant Steps	Woody Herman	Fantasy	9432
Woody & Friends At Monterey	Woody Herman	Concord Jazz	170
Clark Terry's Big Band	Clark Terry	Vanguard	VSD 79373
Live At Buddy's Place			
The Opal Heart	David Liebman	Inner City	1C 3037
Barcelona	Joe Henderson	ENJA	ENJA 3037



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

Album	Artist	Drummer	Label	Catalog #
Baby Dodds Drum Solos/Improvisations	Baby Dodds	Baby Dodds	Folkways	FJ 2290
Now He Sings, Now He Sobs	Chick Corea	Roy Haynes	Pacific Jazz	LN 10057
Sweet Rain	Stan Getz	Grady Tate	Verve	V6-8693
Aretha Live At Fillmore West	Aretha Franklin	Bernard Purdie	Atlantic	SD 7205
Live At The Plugged Nickel	Miles Davis	Tony Williams	Columbia	C2 38266
Infinite Search	Miroslav Vitous	Jack DeJohnette	Embroy	SD524
Beethoven's 8th & Mendelssohn's 4th Symphonies	Conducted by Paulo Casals		Columbia	MS 6931
In Concert, Bruxelles 1958	Sidney Bechet	Kansas Fields	Disques vogue	CLD827

In addition, any records of Charles Mingus with Dannie Richmond on drums, any Miles Davis albums with Philly Joe Jones, and any John Coltrane recordings with either Elvin Jones or Rashied Ali.



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Von Ohlen continued from page 19

the original James Brown music. I can listen to good funk all day. I also love the true blues cats like B.B. King. Their harmonies really make you feel the blues. They know how to keep it simple and what to leave out. That's not the same as playing simplistic harmonies because you don't know harmony in the first place. I can hardly regard many of the big names in rock as musicians because of that, although it's kind of nice that that type of music came along, because it's a type of music that nonmusicians can play. You *can't* play classical music or real jazz without some genuine talent. But even the nice farmer boys across the road started a heavy metal rock band and worked a lot. They aren't musicians in any sense of the word. So it's nice that they got to play their instruments.

My only gripe is that this form of music has pulled the wool over the public's ears to higher forms of music in this country, and the wonderful types of folk music the world over. I'm not trying to abolish rock at all. I'm just saying that there are vistas of music beyond rock that are never heard or even thought about.

SF: You took a year off from playing to go on a world-study tour. What was that all about?

JVO: Some people I knew in San Francisco and I had an opportunity to visit all the cultural places in the world—especially the Orient. We went to India, Japan, Russia and a little bit of Europe, and saw the folk musics of those countries. I was an American who'd only been exposed to American music, and when I heard these folk musicians, it was so real and ancient—generations and generations of people playing this *pure* folk music. I'm not talking about Appalachian-style folk music, although that music is great. I'm talking about some really *mystical* stuff—so soulful and coming from such a deep place that I couldn't believe it. I had a different feeling about music in general when I got back. After that, I didn't want to be a studio musician anymore. I was just interested in traveling around and playing good music for an audience that wants to hear it. I wasn't so interested in name and fame anymore. All young drummers probably want to—and should—make their mark. If they can play the drums, they probably want everybody to know it. But, for me, there came a time when that feeling fell away, and I just wanted to play.

SF: You joined Woody Herman's Herd in '67 and left about one year *before* your world-study trip. Did you feel comfortable in Woody's band?

JVO: I loved it for the first three days, but then they got a new bass player, and he and I weren't compatible when it came to playing. We were *very* compatible personally. I loved the guy. His name was Carl Pruitt. He died recently.

So I didn't enjoy my tenure with Woody too much. I didn't realize back *then* what I

know *now*. If a drummer isn't compatible with the bass player, there's got to be a change, because everything the drummer does comes off the bass player.

When I was with Kenton, the band was huge. He used to spread all 19 musicians across the bandstand from one end to the other, no matter how big the concert hall was. He loved that stereophonic crap, but we couldn't hear anything. Out front it sounded great. But the baritone player and the bass trombone player *never* heard each other. I had to sit in the middle and hold all that together. I didn't waste too much time trying to get a nice, subtle feel with the bass player. I was just trying to hold it together. When Kenton's band set up in a block formation, as we did at dances—and that's the way a band should be set up—then the band would swing; then we'd get into playing some jazz.

SF: Did you make any recordings with Woody Herman?

JVO: I did one record called *Live At Monterey: Concerto For Herd* on the Verve label. The concerto was written by Bill Holman. It's a great work—a testimony to Bill Holman's genius. Somebody ought to re-release it.

SF: Did you ever speak to Woody about any of the other great drummers who played with him?

JVO: He loved Dave Tough. He wouldn't downtrod anybody else, because he had some great drummers, but Dave Tough was always the magic in his eyes. I know Woody loved Don Lamond and Jake Hanna. He loved *all* those guys. Jake Hanna was probably *my* favorite.

I always felt that my scene with Woody was a training ground—like I never really did him justice. It's almost like I should have come back later on. Then I would've played the hell out of the band. I was really cutting my teeth, and my head was in a funny place because I wanted to be a studio drummer. The only reason I was in Woody's band—although I loved big bands—was to get credits to go to L.A. and be a studio drummer. See, being a studio drummer is the big dream. Nobody wants to play in front of people anymore. They all want what they call the "romance" of studio life. I found out that it isn't all that romantic.

SF: How did you get the drum chair in Kenton's band?

JVO: When I came back from India I was loose, didn't have any attachments, didn't care about anything, and didn't have the ambition to be a studio drummer. I was back in Indianapolis, playing some gigs, hanging out with my friends, and having a good time, I *wasn't* depressed. For the first time in my life, probably, I felt real loose, relaxed, and I was playing better. Then somebody told me that Kenton was going on the road again. I knew Stan, very slightly, from years ago. He was going to have me on the band in '63. I told Kenton's



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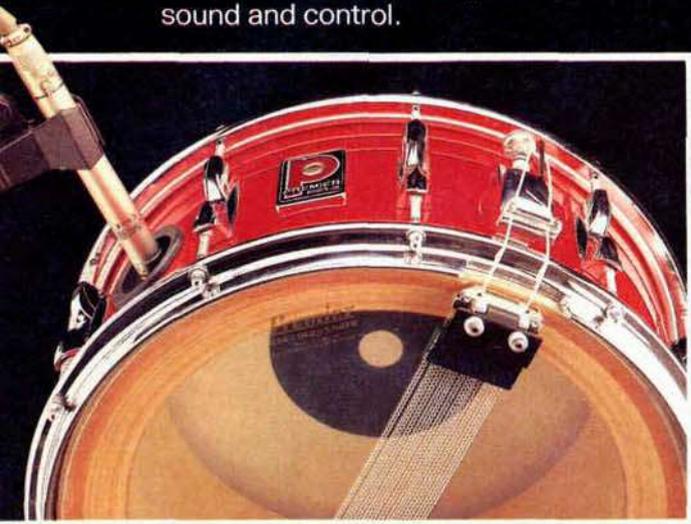
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friend to let Stan know that I would be angry if he didn't ask me to go on the road with him. I got the call.

SF: Did you feel comfortable right away in Stan's band?

JVO: Oh yeah. Jake Hanna said something that was very true: The last thing a drummer gets is confidence. You pay your dues, you try your best, but it's not coming out right; then the last thing you acquire is confidence. Once you've got confidence, even if you're screwing up a little bit, you'll make something out of it. If you *don't* have confidence, every time something goes wrong, the bottom drops out. By the time I went on Stan's band, I had my confidence. I'd paid my dues.

I used to get really depressed on Woody's band, because I just couldn't play good. It's the same thing that any young player will say. You know you've got it inside you, but you can't get it out. And I'd been playing constantly—some bad gigs, some good gigs—almost every night for about eight years. I was going through something that Elvin Jones mentioned one time. He said something that made me feel a lot better, which was that as a young drummer, you'll go through a period where you can't play too well, but don't let it bother you. It happens to all of us. Hell, I felt like I played better in high school than I did with Woody. I was just starting to get it and I quit Woody's band. I couldn't make the road anymore. I just wanted to go home and relax. You might as well play the way you play, because you're going to get criticism anyway. When I am criticized now it doesn't shake my foundation out from under me, but it used to.

SF: Would you agree that Mel Lewis is your main influence in big band drumming?

JVO: Oh, by all means. I love the rest of them too. I've been listening to Mel since '55. I took up the drums because of Mel. I don't understand a guy like him. He's like perfect, yet he plays loose, relaxed and natural. All of us have natural qualities, but Mel is a *stone* natural. He's always been real good to me. I call Mel about once a year, and always learn a lot when I do.

SF: Mel's always had a fantastic, deep sound to his drums. You do too.

JVO: The way I tune my drums is pretty natural. On my tom-toms, first I tune the bottom head to about medium. It should be a new head with no dents in it. Next, I tighten the top head tight. Then, as I'm tapping on the head, I start bringing it down. As you bring it down, you'll start hearing that drum open up. Keep tapping it as you're loosening it, and finally, it will get to where it's booming as much as it can. If you loosen past that, you'll start getting a duller sound, so tighten it back up until it's booming the most. Usually it's tightened medium-low at that point. So when you get the bottom head tuned medium,

and the top head tuned medium-low, that's when you reach the point of *maximum resonance*. A good drummer named Jack Gilfoy, from Indianapolis, came up with that term. Tune the drum for maximum resonance where it's wide open.

I use regular coated *Ambassador* heads, top and bottom, on my drums. I would love to use calf, but I'm not going to mess with them. And I apply that same tuning principle to my bass drum. Sometimes, if I'm playing a bop gig, I'll tighten the back head up a little, just a little higher than maximum resonance. I like a boom sound. With a big band, sometimes I'll lower it a little more than the natural boom of maximum resonance.

SF: When drums are tuned for that low sound, don't you have to sacrifice something?

JVO: Yeah. You may sacrifice some speed and technique. But even so, you're getting a great sound. You're really getting those drums to boom and rumble. Personally, I can play as fast as anyone, with natural low tuning. I'll take one shot on the tom-tom that far surpasses a single-stroke roll on a drum that doesn't have the sound. I use Gretsch, and Gretsch is one of the best drums for getting that extra little crack on it that I don't hear in other drums. My drumset is about seven years old, but I've played newer Gretsch sets and they're still good. If you hit a Gretsch tom-tom softly, it gets a nice sound. But if you whip it just a little bit, it'll put a cracking sound on it. I don't know any other drum that does that.

SF: Did your drumset change from Billy Maxted through Woody Herman, Stan Kenton, and now the Blue Wisp Big Band?

JVO: I've always used just four drums—a bass drum, two tom-toms and a snare—but I did change the sizes. With Maxted, Woody and Kenton's bands, I used a 22" bass drum, 9 x 13 and 16 x 16 tom-toms, and a 5 1/2 x 14 snare. And I had a couple of cymbals. Now I'm using a 14 x 18 bass drum, 8 x 12 and 14 x 14 tom-toms. There's nothing like an 18" Gretsch bass drum. It's real fat sounding and real wide sounding; it resonates like crazy, and it's easier for me to tune than a 20" bass drum. Kenton's band was like playing football seven nights a week—an athletic event. The 18" would have sounded foolish in that. The Blue Wisp Band is a nice, strong band, but the 18" is just right. One gun is all you need if you know how to use it.

SF: Can you give me a listing, and your assessment of the recordings you did with Stan Kenton?

JVO: Well, *Stan Kenton Today: Recorded Live In London* was the last record I made, just before I left the band. The recording job was all messed up. They didn't bring any baffling for the drums, and they just couldn't control the sound of the drums in that ringing hall. So I had to play with a cramped touch to cool out the sound of the drums. The drums sound too strong on

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that record anyway, but you can imagine what it would have been like if I'd been going full tilt.

SF: But, in general, that album was well received.

JVO: I know. I've never understood it. When I don't like what I've done, everybody likes it, and vice versa. The first record we made was *Live At Redlands*. That was pretty good. The recording job was so-so. The album *Live At Brigham Young* is the best one for the sound of the band and the sound of the drums. Bill Putnam recorded it. He's a master.

SF: *Redlands* and *Brigham Young* were issued on Kenton's Creative World records. Didn't Creative World also release a small-group recording under your own name?

JVO: That was an electronic group I had in Indianapolis. After I left Kenton, I wanted to live in Indianapolis and we needed to work, so I started a group. Indianapolis isn't New York. You wind up working the Hilton and Holiday Inn lounges, and we had to do some Top-40 things that we didn't really want to do. But our vocalist, Mary Ann Moss, had a way of picking tunes that we could live with as musicians, and we also played jazz.

But I found out that it didn't work to do both rock and jazz like that. You have a group of jazz musicians who are just trying to work. They figure that they'll play some pop stuff so that they can get gigs, and then

they'll play some jazz along with it so they can get their jollies. What happens is that you don't get either one. You don't attract the people who want to hear pop, because they don't want to hear jazz. And the jazz people sure as hell aren't going to sit there and listen to the pop. It just didn't work. Now, maybe somebody else can prove me wrong, but I haven't seen it work yet. It was a wonderful group, but the electronics got to my ears and I had to disband it. I think we did that bag about as well as you're going to hear it.

Many jazz musicians—myself included—after much experience with electronic sound production have made a decision to keep the acoustic sound as a home base. We prefer that electronic technology, as impressive and current as it may be, take a backseat to our love of playing acoustically. This is classic and timeless. Titillating gadgetry will have its say, but it can only go so far. In the end, acoustic sound dives far deeper—right to the soul.

SF: I've heard many favorable comments about the Kenton clinics. What were you expected to do there, and how did you feel about doing them?

JVO: Well, they were wonderful experiences. There was only one thing that might have been a detriment. Teaching should be done by someone who knows. We were going into all these clinics, and a lot of guys in the band were just learning themselves, but we were put in teaching positions. The

kids looked up to us because we were with a nationwide touring band. So you're spouting out all this crap that is probably erroneous. I was guilty of that sometimes, but there were guys in the band who were in a lot worse shape than I was, and they were giving dissertations that were wrong. They were into how to play loud and nothing else. What the hell kind of clinic is that?

I always stressed that drummers shouldn't take it too seriously and should relax. Keep your physical body as relaxed as possible while you're playing. Right away, you get a better sound, and your time will probably be better because you are relaxed and free in your mind. Every time you get a bunch of drummers together, they're so *serious*. They're thinking about all of this crap they've got to do because of all these heavy drummers around the country. Man, some of the *best* moments in drumming have been the simplest little things. Don't worry about trying to be complicated. Bob Phillips used to tell me, "John, if you never remember anything else I ever said, don't be afraid to play simple. Don't be *ashamed* to play simple." I like to play as complicated as the next guy, but you don't *have* to do that. Your base should be a simple perspective. Harvey Mason can play complicated, but he lays down some pretty simple things. It's got *that feel* on it, so what the hell. You don't need to do much when you've got the

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feel. Why blow the feel for some brainy idea?

SF: The word technique gets thrown around quite a bit. Define good technique, and do you feel that good technique is all that's necessary to become a good drummer?

JVO: It's pretty hard to disassociate the two. Technique is simply how you do what you hear. But let's not put the cart before the horse. You don't work on technique first, in hopes that technique will bring you ideas. I worked on a fast single-stroke roll for a while. It bound me in such a knot on the gig that I couldn't play. I had to give up on it. It should come from your natural ability, and each person has a different physical body. I try to do what's natural for *my* physical body. If it's too unnatural, I'm not going to force it. I'm about six feet tall and I've got real long arms, real long legs and a short torso. I used to say, "Boy, I'm built strange. I'm built weird. I wish I was built more like Buddy Rich or Tony Williams." Many times the shorter musicians have *great* technique. But you make your physical body work for you by simply doing what's natural for you.

I like a nice *long* stroke with my right hand on the ride cymbal. A lot of people tell me I should have a short stroke. I tried that. It isn't natural, so I don't do it.

All of us are born with different amounts of genius or without genius—different amounts of talent. There will always be somebody who is better than you are and somebody who is not. You have to live with that. Know your limits and then you'll be happy. Go beyond your natural limits and you'll suffer. Inside of me, my time feel has basically never been any different. I listen to something I did in high school and it's the same old thing. But today I have a different perspective on it. I'm more conscious of it. I dig as deep as I can now.

SF: Are you aware of any means—outside of normal drum teaching methods—that could teach a technically good student how to feel?

JVO: There are a lot of players, but there are only a few *great* players. Teachers are the same way. There are some teachers—and Bob Phillips is one of them—who can see through you. They can see what's inside you, no matter what you've done. You might be a student who's built a wall of technique that's actually inhibiting your feeling, because you have built up a grid work of technique that's unnatural for you. A really great teacher will strip all that down and make you start over with things that are more natural for you—more in tune with nature. I had to do that with a couple of my students.

It takes a long time and a willing student. The student has to understand what's happening. I had students from universities who had worked on books and other ways of technique that had nothing

to do with what they had to say. And they were very frustrated. I'd start them at the beginning with a simple beat, and they'd throw in a lick that they'd been programmed with. I'd stop them right there and tell them to leave the lick out, because it wasn't natural for them. It's a difficult task, but it can be done.

SF: I gather that you don't feel too favorably about drum method books?

JVO: I'll tell you a story that's reportedly true about a wise old Indian sage. A German came to this sage's village to find the truth. The German was in a bookstore one day when the sage walked by and saw him. The sage picked the guy up by the collar, threw him out of the bookstore and said,

"It's not in books, you fool." That's the way I feel about drumming.

I know it's nice to have a book. These teachers who put out books are well meaning. But it's not really *in* books. What book did Mel Lewis study out of? What book did Elvin Jones study out of? You might study rudiments. Okay, that's a good foundation. Formal classical study is always good. But once you're past the rudiments, don't become too steeped in the book knowledge of drumset playing. You need to go out and work. That's where you get it—on the job. If you are working, and you are right in there pitching, these things will come to you anyway. Experiment at home with your natural

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SF: Should drummers study harmony and melody as well as rhythm?

JVO: Sure. Get as many tones in your subconscious as you can. Drummers like Jack DeJohnette seem to play different when they've been brought up with a horn or piano. A lot of these really hot drummers have tones in their heads too, not just beats. I don't mean that they're just singing the melody. They're into harmony and everything else. I think of the total spectrum of sound vibration—harmonies, colors and everything—all at once. The only reason I do that is because I grew up with tonal instruments. When I play drums, I enter the tonal world, instead of just rhythm and chops.

SF: You're also an excellent brush player, and you've done some nice work on the drumset with mallets. How did you

develop the ability to express yourself with brushes and mallets?

JVO: Brushes are beautiful. I never really tapped into brushwork until I played them for quite a while on the job. Then one day, I opened up into the real world of brushes. I softened my hands a bit, and let the brushes drag across the drum *by their own weight*, rather than trying to scrape them across. The most important thing with brushes is to come in from the side, instead of coming down on the drum like you do with a stick. Brushes have more of a horizontal motion than vertical. Right away you get that sweep.

I don't think of the mallets as demanding any specific technique. I use matched grip with the mallets. Basically, with sticks I use the traditional grip. I get much more subtle nuances with the traditional grip. If I'm doing a big concert drum solo where I have some time, and I'm not worrying about trading fours or song form, when I want to create a sound solo, I almost always go to the mallets first. Man, what you can do with mallets, especially with sounds and cymbals.

Stan Kenton always had to have huge, oversized cymbals in his band. If you used regular cymbals, it just didn't make it. Kenton loved an ocean of cymbals all the time, coming through everything. To him—and I adopt the same philosophy in bebop—the cymbals set up an atmosphere around the bandstand of jazz heat, like you're in a jazz furnace. Stan's thing was to have the cymbals roaring, and he liked them loud too.

SF: On the Blue Wisp recordings, you sound as if you're playing lighter than you did with Kenton.

JVO: Well, playing with Kenton was not a light drumming experience. I like the *strong* concept of drumming. I know that there are different ways to go on the bandstand, and I sure am in love and sympathy with all types of music. But when I play with a big band, I don't like to get too cerebral or esoteric, even though I love that kind of music. When I play, I love to hear the drums go right out there. *Only, I like it relaxed*. That might be the difference. I know that some young drummers are into power and they want to really put it out there, but they do it with their muscles. I very seldom hit the drum with my muscle. I do what Ed Soph suggested in one of his articles. If you want to hit the drum softly, lift your hand up a little ways and drop it. If you want to play louder, lift your hand farther back and drop it. But you're always dropping it. It's a law of gravity. There *are* times when you have to mash it, but I try to keep the groundwork of my drumming based on dropping the sticks. It really relaxes your body, you get a great sound, and you can play loud without bothering the other band members. When a drummer starts hammering, the other musicians will get bugged. But if you want to play strong the way I like to, then it's an

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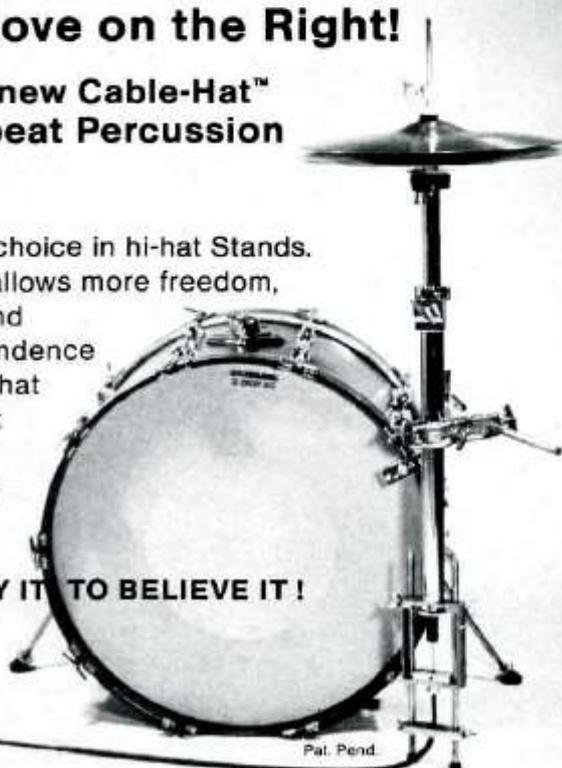


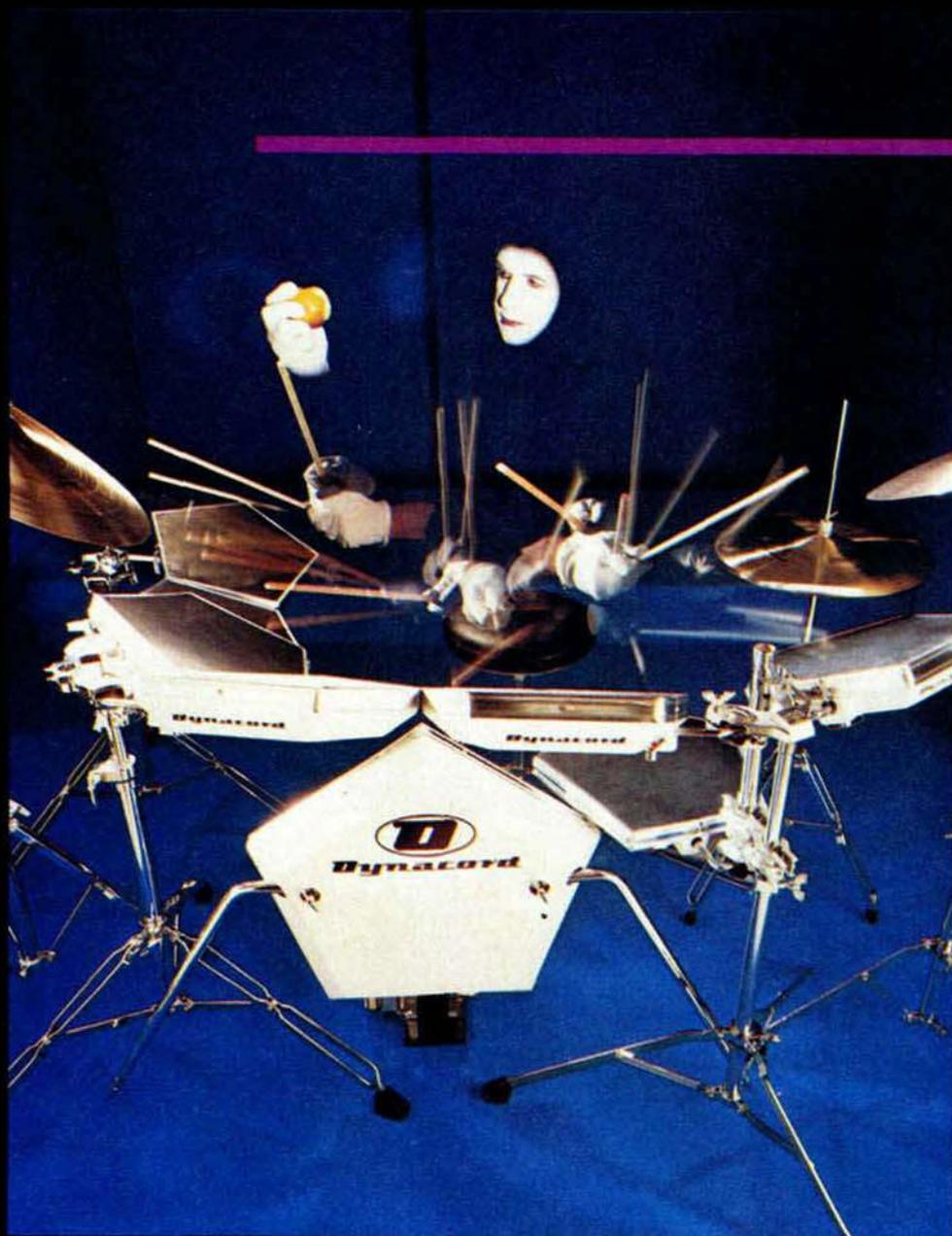
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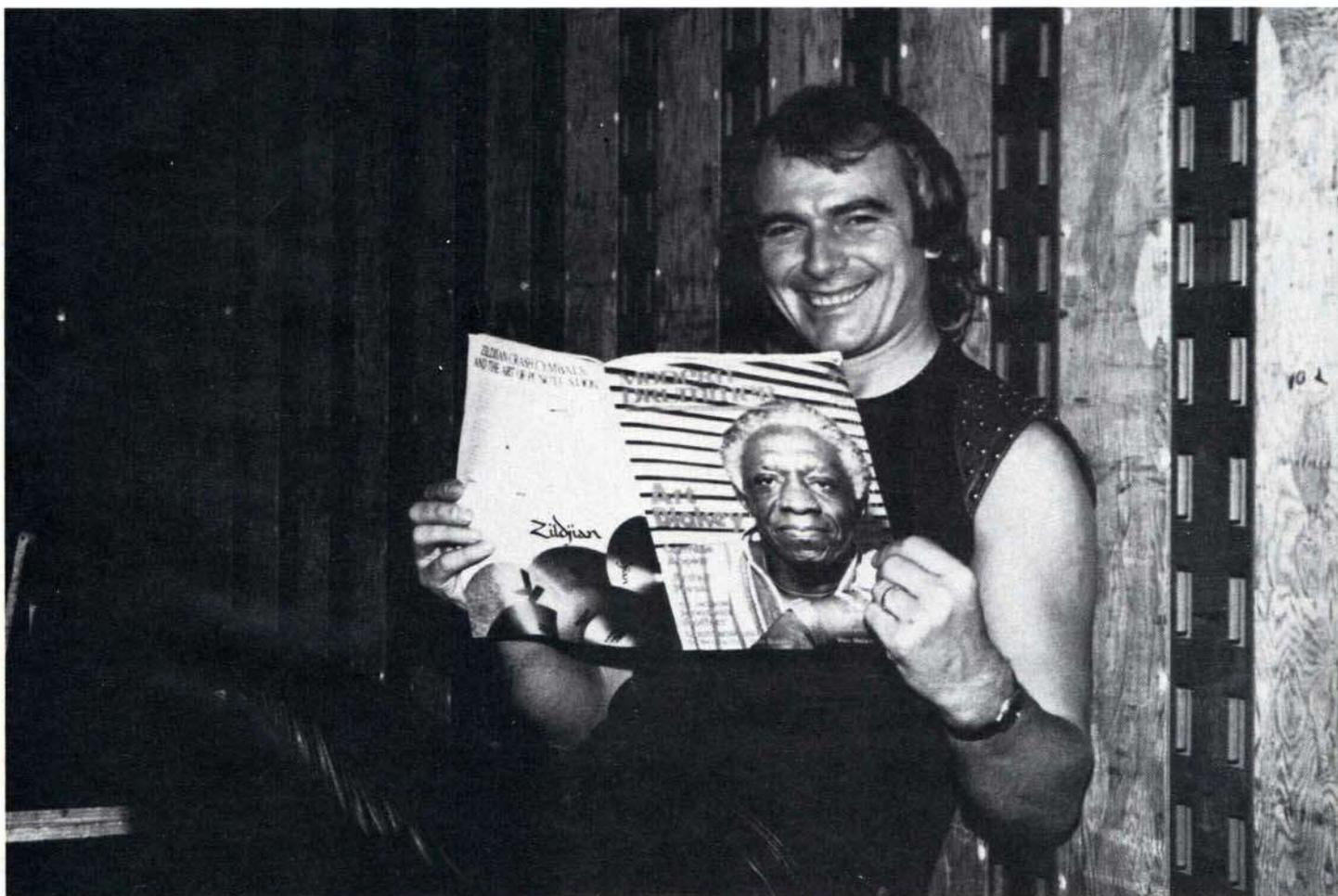


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all-embracing sound, rather than a *hurting* sound. I like to get a nice, enveloping sound all over the bandstand.

SF: After you left Kenton, you gave up life on the road?

JVO: A lot of things changed when I left Kenton. First of all, he was such a great influence on everyone around him. Half the time I liked his music; half the time I didn't. When it was right, it was some of the greatest big band music that ever came down the pike. When it was wrong, it could be most pretentious. But he had an element of *drama* in his music that I miss in other big bands. He was into composers.

When I left Stan, I had to drop that concept, because it was his and not mine. I spent a long time thinking about how I felt about music. You get a lot of time to do that, living out here in the country in the Midwest.

SF: From living in the Midwest, and from letters I used to get at *MD*, my experience was that many musicians living there had a mystique about New York City. Many of them didn't feel that they were good enough to compete there.

JVO: That's too bad. Urbie Green told me that, in the old days, you could go to Louisville, Kentucky, and those cats had a definite way of playing jazz. There was no mistaking it. In Indianapolis, they had a totally different way of playing jazz. And in Columbus, Ohio, *those* cats had a jazz concept that was totally different. Today, everybody's so homogenized into New York and L.A. That's *bullshit*. New York is still the most active jazz town, but I don't have to sound like a New Yorker. We've got a Midwestern way of doing things. The feel is different. The rhythms and harmonics reflect that feel.

I fell in love with country living. As long as I can play good music in the Midwest and live in the country, I'm happy. I don't need to make a splash out on the road. As long as you're playing music, why hit the road? Usually you do that because there's nothing going on in your area.

SF: How did the Blue Wisp Big Band get started?

JVO: Well, we've got fine players in Cincinnati. All these guys were doing was playing shows, which is a drag if that's all you're doing. I came up with the idea of starting a band in which we would play what we like to play, and then interest a club owner. You can usually interest a club owner very easily by playing for the door. So, we got the best players in town and started Wednesday nights at the Blue Wisp Jazz Club. We've been together, with the same guys, for about five years. This band is real natural and fun to play with.

SF: Would you encourage musicians in other areas to organize big bands?

JVO: Try it. And get rid of this idea about New York and L.A. They've got all the music they need. There are good musicians everywhere. Don't think about having to go to New York to make it big. It's just

super dues, and you can live a fairly nice life-style out in the fields here. Just get the good musicians, and keep it on a simple level. The Blue Wisp Band is marvelous. Different guys take care of different aspects of the band. We keep it very simple; therefore, it's fun. And if you're lucky enough to get a good band, you might even make a statement in jazz. It's not a question of our band being better than anybody. Just get your own thing going in your own area.

The most important thing for people to do is to dig what they do naturally. Young drummers think that they've got to do it all. Some drummers can do that naturally, like Shelly Manne. Well, maybe some drummers *can't* do everything. But spend as much time as you can playing what you do naturally, and then you can dig deep. It's like Thelonious Monk. You didn't see him doing studio dates. He dug into his own world.

If you play rock and have an especially good feel for rock, but you don't do everything else, don't worry about it. Just dig into your rock playing. That's why I'm playing jazz almost exclusively. I don't take rock jobs anymore. I don't mind going out and *visiting* rock, but you've got to know where your *home* is. I try to play my home music, jazz, as much as possible, and I find that I can go deep that way. You can't really go deep if you're just skimming around doing everything. Someone once said, "Do what you do naturally, everyday, for the rest of your life." That's how you can advance.

At first, you usually emulate the master drummers. They're usually older than you, but not always. You imitate them because you haven't found your own way yet. Then one day you'll hear, for the first time, your *own natural style*. Every drummer has a different style that couldn't be conjured up. It's just there naturally and always has been. The day that you first begin to become aware of it is your day of liberation. From that point on, instead of trying to sound like Steve Gadd, Buddy Rich, Mel Lewis or Elvin Jones, you begin the real work of mastering your own natural style, your own way. It's a lifelong study and I love it.

Distribution of Blue Wisp's albums is still growing. If you can't find them in your area, write to MoPro Records, 5950 Beech Dell Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45238.

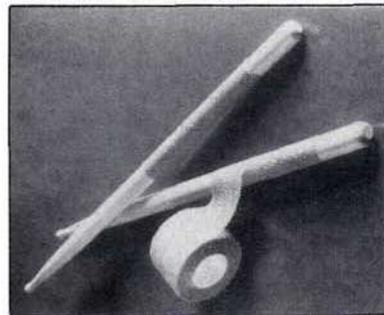
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by Nick Ceroli

Fills- Part 1



If one had to come up with a basic definition of what a drummer's job is, it would probably sound something like "to play with a steady beat, or to keep good time." However, this is only the starting point. Along with this basic job, drummers must be sensitive. They're not *just* keeping time; they're involved with the music, too. They must be aware of the mood of the piece, whether it's a ballad, a jazz tune, or a rock tune. They shade the band by using dynamics, and interpret the drum part the way the writer intended it to be played. Drummers are not metronomes. On the contrary, they are very important participants in the making of the music. They can spark a band or they can bury it; that's the kind of power they have. So as important as it is to play with good time, drummers must "play the band" too, and make it swing, through the use of lead-ins, setups, drum breaks, and accents. These all fall under the heading of "fills."

A fill means what it implies: filling an empty space. In music, these empty spaces are called rests. What a drummer puts into those spaces are rhythmic patterns that lead into, or set up, the next phrase that the band will play. Playing the right thing will kick a band and make it play more together than what would normally be expected.

Please don't misunderstand me. This *doesn't* mean that you are supposed to fill up every opening there is in the chart. Many young drummers try to do just that. They catch every lick that is going on, including rhythmic patterns that a soloist is playing. What the young drummer is saying is "Dig me!" It's natural. After all, we wouldn't have taken up the drums if we didn't have the egos for it. But for the sake of the music, the drummer should use good musical judgment, picking and choosing where a fill should or shouldn't be played. The job can easily be taken advantage of; instead, it must be handled with sensitivity and taste.

Let's apply this concept to a jazz solo. Suppose you're playing with a jazz quartet and the tenor player is the soloist. Jazz solos are made up of phrases, which are improvised lines played in one breath. A phrase can be as short as a few beats, or as long as several measures. At the end of a phrase, the soloist takes a breath, and the space thus created can be any length the player chooses. This space is where the drummer has the option of filling or not. Most jazz tunes are laid out in four-bar or eight-bar patterns. The soloist will usually play in the same manner as the tune is constructed, taking a breath at the end of a four-bar phrase, or possibly at the end of an eight-bar phrase. If you choose to fill there, keep in mind that it's the soloist's moment to shine.

Playing jazz is a musical discussion; it is the same as people talking. Notes simply replace words; it's not that different. When people are sitting around talking, someone will talk for a while, and by the sound of his or her voice, you can easily tell when that person is finished. Then someone else will jump in to agree or disagree. The first person may continue to speak, and at the end of his or her next statement someone else may agree or disagree, or maybe take over and speak for a while, without interrupting anyone. Now let's go back to the jazz quartet: It's the same situation. The tenor player who is playing the solo will make a musical statement. The drummer may play a fill when the tenor player takes a breath, or the

piano player may interject an interesting chord change that the tenor player could play on. This is all musical dialogue. The players are communicating with each other. That's what jazz is all about, and that's what fills are all about. Your instinct and your ears will tell you how you can participate in the discussion. Remember that phrases in music are like sentences. There are short and long musical phrases, just as there are short and long sentences.

Now let's apply all this to a written big band chart or arrangement. The same rules apply except that now you are dealing with written notes and you must be more specific. You are filling behind an entire ensemble, not just a soloist; therefore, you must be more conscious of the phrases that are being played. There is much less room for error.

Keeping in mind what we discussed earlier, in big band playing, think of the writer as the main soloist. The writer wrote the charts, creating the phrases that the band will play right down to what notes are short and what notes are long. The phrases and lines are carefully thought-out, and should be interpreted the way the writer wants them played. Unfortunately, this is easier said than done. Many writers don't know how to write a drum part. They don't understand that it's a guide and shouldn't be played note for note, but that you should play the notes *and* the rests. Therefore, you are apt to run into all kinds of drum parts that look totally different from each other. You have to figure out what the writer really wants, by "reading between the notes," so to speak. Remember that the drum part is the only music that the writer doesn't have full control of. This is why the drum chair is so very important. The better writers know this, and they will go out of their way to get a drummer who understands the problem. When this situation is right, it can really be a ball for the drummer, but when it isn't right, drummers catch most of the flack even when it's not their fault. It's a big responsibility and you should always be aware of it.

Some writers try to solve the problem by overwriting the drum part and actually writing out drum fills. This can really be disastrous, because what you have to read is usually not very drumistic and is often uncomfortable to execute, if not impossible. This is because most writers are not drummers, and they don't understand that drum fills should be improvised. There is one exception to this rule. Sometimes you will run into a written-out drum fill that is supposed to be played because it's being played along with other instruments (perhaps a bass line or an orchestral passage that's meant to be played exactly together). In this case, a good writer will use the term "as written" on that part of the music.



Some writers who don't understand drum parts will go to the other extreme and give you no information at all, except a part with repeated measures and, perhaps, breaks.



Whenever you run into a part like this, go to one of the trumpet players for help. Almost any figure you will want to catch will involve trumpets. Ask to see a trumpet part and then copy what figures you need from that part to yours. (Always have a pencil with you.) Write the figures above the staff on your part.



A good drum part should already have this information on it, written either above the staff or inside the staff. The more information you have, the better you can play the drum part.

A good drum part should also include dynamics, breaks, band figures, and an indication of the feel of the song. The bass drum line usually tells you if the feel is in two or in four.

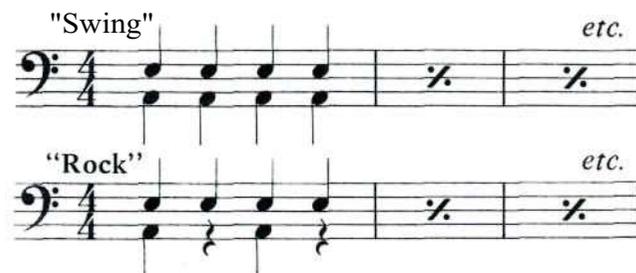
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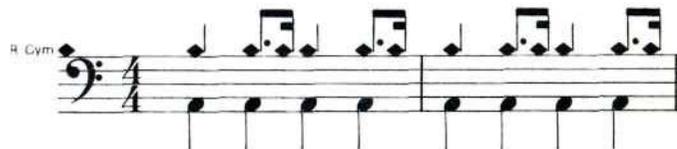
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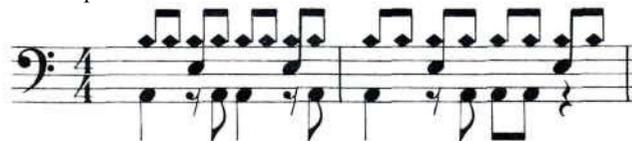
Another important thing on every drum part is the concept of the tune; usually it is either jazz or rock. By that I mean is it swing or straight 8ths? Surprisingly, the concept of the piece is one of the things most commonly omitted from drum parts. I think that's because it is assumed that you already know, which is not always the case.



Notice that the example above is very basic—just quarter notes. Keeping in mind that the part is just a guide, you have to supply the required beat necessary for the song, as opposed to literally reading the quarter notes. For example, if it's a swing tune, you would play a jazz beat while reading the quarter notes.



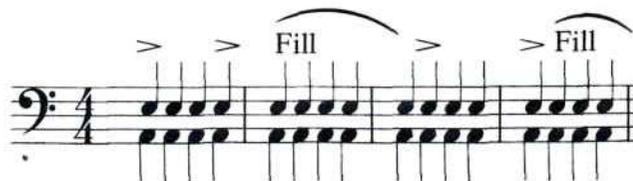
If it's a rock tune, you would play a straight-8th pattern while you read the part.



There is no correct formula for writing drum parts, especially when it comes to fills. The most common way to let the drummer know where to play a fill is to write the word "fill" over the designated beats to be filled.



The best writers will keep a drum part fairly simple. They will count on you to interpret it correctly.



Another method of writing commonly used for drum parts is the use of slashes instead of notes. Technically, a slash means "repeat the previous beat." It's just a shorthand method of writing quarter notes, so treat slashes as if they were quarters.



Because a drum part is a guide, many drummers tend to overplay a chart, trying to catch too many things. This is why writers use the term "no fill" to make sure a passage in the music isn't going to be trampled on by a drum fill.



A drummer who understands the concept of filling will invariably play them in his or her own style. The "no fill" term is not there to suppress the drummer. It's there to give the drummer more information. Quite often, a drummer will choose to play a fill where there isn't one indicated, which can be tricky if you don't know what you're doing. A Count Basie chart always leaves a lot of room for the drummer to fill, as opposed to a Bill Holman chart where there are often two or three lines going on at the same time.

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If you try to fill into a brass figure, you might be overplaying. You have to use your ears. For example, let's say you are reading a chart for the first time and there is a big, loud brass figure coming up in two bars. Those two bars appear to be open for you to play a big fill leading into that loud brass figure. However, those same two bars might just have a sax section line going on that isn't marked on your part. If you don't use your ears, you could be stepping all over that sax figure.



Now let's talk about fills themselves. You must keep in mind that fills are treated differently than drum solos. Fills are used to set up the band figures that are being played. You are *playing the band*. Granted, you get to improvise within a certain number of beats or bars, but it's not an extended solo. Therefore, your attitude towards a fill should be directed in favor of the band as opposed to yourself. Your job is to make the band swing. A band is not supposed to struggle through a drum fill. Sure, it's fun to play spectacular fills, but they'd better come out in time or you're in trouble. Worse than that, the *band* is in trouble.

Music is like a lot of other things. If you are on a band for a while, you get used to how someone plays and they get used to you. Therefore, if you have that luxury you can take more chances with fills, because the band will probably be there for you when you need them. Keep this tip in mind: "Think music, not chops." Next time we'll discuss big band playing, with specific examples of band figures, lead-ins, setups, breaks, and fills.

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by Rod Morgenstein

Thoughts On Practicing



Photo by Lissa Wales

"I hate to practice!" How many of us have made this statement at one time or another, either muttered under our breath or screamed at the top of our lungs? I certainly have, and on more than one occasion. However, after giving it more careful thought, I've come to a few realizations, some obvious and some not so obvious, about the special nature of practice and how it fits into the total picture of playing the instrument we love so much.

The thing that struck me initially was the fact that, when you practice, it is probably the only time you're actively alone with your drums. This is very important because you can work at your own pace and experience a comfortable and relaxed feeling. When you're alone, one-on-one, you are free from the external variables which can cause problems. These external variables include live performances, such as concerts, club dates, and recording sessions which also involve musician interaction and relating to an audience in some manner. In such situations, it is by no means uncommon to experience stress-oriented feelings, such as fear, intimidation, uptightness, nervousness, and the feeling that the bottom is about to drop out. Of course, a certain level of ability and competence is expected in live performance situations. What we're faced with is the need to have it together, in so many ways, *before* we find ourselves in frightening predicaments. Practice is a marvelous way to help prepare for the challenges that await us.

We hear time and time again that it's important to maintain a well-balanced diet to ensure strength of body and mind. I believe that practice should be approached in the same manner. Just as combinations of different food groups make up our daily food diet, so should different musical ingredients form our drumming diet. Some of these musical ingredients are hand development, stick control, hand and foot coordination, sight-reading, chart reading, soloing, odd time signatures, endurance, playing grooves, versatility, listening, and transcribing. My intention here is not to overwhelm you with problems, but rather to point out how many different things there are to absorb. And through absorption, we become—hopefully—stronger, more capable, more confident,

more aware, and more musical drummers.

There are a limited number of hours in a day and even fewer practice hours. It's necessary, therefore, to make intelligent use of our time. Spend some of it thinking about the musical ingredients that are important to you, and try to incorporate them into your daily practice routine. To me, every musical ingredient is important and creates an overlapping effect. For example, by practicing hand and foot coordination, you expand your musical library of patterns. In turn, this can enhance your soloing and grooving potential. I've found, for example, that studying odd time signatures has opened my ears to new approaches to 4/4 time. The point here is that many musical ingredients have tremendous value and deserve their share of practice time. Remember that quality is more important than quantity. A great deal can be accomplished in a relatively short period of time if it is well thought-out and organized.

Learning through books is a very popular form of drum practice. With books, we can experience different approaches to playing drums and have our eyes and ears opened to concepts we may never have thought of. However, it's important to put book learning into perspective, and to understand that it's a means to an end and not an end in itself.

About the time we were completing our studies at the University of Miami, Danny Gottlieb and I were talking about all the years we had spent learning via drum books. We concluded that the time had come to put the books aside and to determine the extent of our assimilation of knowledge. The point here is that, when you're in a perform-or-die situation, you certainly can't call time out to search through your drum books for the correct solution. Obviously, you won't remember all the exercises, patterns, and beats you've learned over the years. But chances are that the general concepts will consciously or unconsciously remain with you and be part of your drumming vocabulary forever. The ultimate purpose of books, of course, is to stimulate the creative element inside all of us and to achieve our own unique styles of drumming.

After the books have been put aside, it is important to think about tapping the

source of our own creativity. One thing I find effective is to play a relatively simple beat over and over to see where it takes me. By doing this, several ingredients are at work simultaneously. For one thing, I'm relaxed and able to work at my own pace; I can play the beat endlessly until it feels perfectly comfortable and hopefully it will soon be grooving along. I try to concentrate on being a human metronome, because a good sense of time is a must as a drummer. Sometimes I'll pretend to be playing with a band and sing melodies in my head or aloud, trying to "lock in" with my imaginary band mates. Or I'll try to visualize the beat in my mind in order to get a clearer picture of what I'm doing. When the beat is comfortable, I solo around it in different ways. For example, think in four-bar phrases and play a fill on beats 3 and 4 of the fourth measure. Or think in four-bar phrases, play the beat for the first three measures and solo in the fourth measure. Another method is to solo in measures three and four. You might even think in two-bar phrases, playing the beat in the first measure and soloing in the second. Sometimes this leads to all-out soloing—with the original beat still implied—which can become almost meditative or trance-like. It is at this point that some of my most creative ideas come to life.

Assuming that you play the exercise above for several minutes without a break, there is also an endurance factor at work. And speaking of endurance, you should make a mental note of how physically hard you play the drums in live performances. Oftentimes there is a tendency not to hit the drums as hard when you practice as when you perform. This can cause problems if (1) you are a relatively hard hitter and (2) you do not play live on a regular basis. You can avoid a potentially embarrassing moment the first night back on the gig if you practice at the same volume and intensity as you play in live performance. So, you see, different factors are at work through this one basic exercise. I encourage this kind of spontaneity along with the more disciplined study of books.

Another topic worthy of mention is practice as it relates to the traveling drummer. When I was in college, much of my time was taken with non-music-related

studies, and a good deal of the music studies did not deal specifically with drumming. I came to the conclusion that, once I got out of school, there would be a great deal more time to practice and to get it together. Well, what I thought and what actually happened were two different things. Suddenly, the tests and term papers were replaced by the need to make a living and to get a newly formed band off the ground. Once the band started traveling on a regular basis, doing one-nighters, the problem of practicing became a serious matter. The moral of the story is that, if you plan to be a road musician, get it together before you hit the road. On many occasions, the only time you'll be sitting behind your drums is at the gig itself.

The intent of this article has been to shed some light on the importance of practice, different ways to approach it, and the qualities that make it so special. Its benefits encompass numerous aspects of drumming. Earlier we spoke about the interrelationship and overlapping of various musical ingredients. This can also carry over to the emotional aspect of drumming. As they say, "A healthy body, a healthy mind." The way you think and feel are very important. If you play well, you'll feel good about the way you played; this, in turn, will inspire confidence and an overall positive outlook. So, the next time you're alone with your drums, stop and think about how very special it is to practice!

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Drumming And Automatic Learning *by Roy Burns*

Why is it so difficult to break a bad habit? Why is it so difficult to learn a new skill after some years of playing? Why do players get "stuck" on certain patterns, and play them over and over again even when they would like to play something new? The answer is something I call "automatic learning," which simply means that any physical action that is performed over and over will become "automatic" or an ingrained "reflex."

The best example is probably driving a car. When you begin to learn to drive a car, there are many skills to acquire: First, there is the problem of coordinating your hands and feet in order to effectively operate the steering wheel, brakes, accelerator, and possibly, a clutch and gearshift. You may step on the brakes too hard in order to stop the car, or oversteer when turning. You may have trouble judging distance when in traffic, or overreact when another vehicle comes too close to you. You may simply "freeze" when faced with a potential crisis, forgetting what you are supposed to do.

However, one year later you are zipping down the highway, thinking about the upcoming job or rehearsal, getting something to eat, or picking up your clothes at the cleaners. Suddenly, something happens in traffic ahead of you. Your body reacts reflexively; you step on the brakes and/or steer yourself out of trouble. You may then realize that, if you had stopped to think about what to do, you might have also been a part of the accident. In other words, your body knew how to react "automatically" without waiting for you to consciously think about it. What a difference one year can make. A year earlier, you might have become totally confused while driving at 20 miles an hour. Now, you are reacting automatically at highway speeds with little or no problem. This is a

result of "automatic learning."

Here is how it works in drumming. The first time you attempt to play a paradiddle, you will most likely struggle with the sticking pattern. However, with practice and repetition, the pattern becomes somewhat easier to perform. After a longer period of time, the paradiddle becomes automatic. You think paradiddle and your hands perform it automatically without strain. Your body and your subconscious have learned it. The paradiddle is now at the reflex level.

All rhythms, sticking patterns and poly-rhythms are learned in this way. However, this can be positive or negative, since they can be learned in an accidental or hit-and-miss manner. By this I mean that your body reacts to repetition whether you want it to or not, which is how so-called bad habits are created. If you perform a certain act over and over again, even without thinking much about it, it will still become automatic. It's much like the saying about computers, "garbage in—garbage out." Whatever you put into it is what you get out of it. The key to consciously using this concept to your advantage is patience. If you are in such a hurry to play fast that you practice the patterns unevenly, your body will learn them unevenly. The way in which you present information to your body determines how your body gives it back to you. If you have a good teacher, or if you naturally have the patience to practice things slowly, you will acquire control over whatever you are attempting to learn. It will become automatic, or a reflex, and will be easier and easier to perform. This is essential to good playing. You cannot consciously think about each stroke and play well at a concert. You want to concentrate on the music and on playing it with feeling. Your body knows what to do because the mechanics of playing are now automatic. It's just like driving the car: Your body

knows what to do so that you can concentrate on where you are going.

Once you know about this concept, consider how well you could play if you practiced the necessary skills on purpose! If you have the patience, you can learn virtually anything. You can acquire any skill if you are willing to practice, and improve any part of your playing. Any skill you want to acquire can become part of you. Many of the martial arts, such as karate, use a similar approach. Students of martial arts are taught the "form" or the basic movements of the arts, until these movements become automatic.

If this is true, why do some people stop learning and become "stuck" in a certain style or way of playing? It's simply because, for whatever reason, they no longer want to make the effort. Remember, without patience and effort, this concept takes on the hit-or-miss approach mentioned earlier. By effort, I do not mean a blind, "workaholic" approach to practicing. Mindlessly thrashing a drumset for hours without thinking about what you are doing will not yield results. Remember the computer, "garbage in—garbage out."

What I mean to suggest is this: Decide on the skills you want to develop or improve. Consciously practice these skills with patience every day over a long period of time. For example, if you want to improve your sense of tempo, play along with records or practice with a metronome. Tape yourself and monitor your progress. If you want to improve your technique, study with a teacher with good technique. Practice with patience and your technique will improve. The same goes for reading. Study with a good teacher, and you will develop the skills necessary for becoming a good reader if you practice these skills daily.

If you want to have a healthy body, you must put good food into it. Your body cannot function at its best on junk food—neither can the mind. You must develop good thinking habits and attitudes in order to maximize your ability to assimilate information and to learn. You can always improve if you really want to.

The line between the mind and body is perhaps not as clear as I have indicated in this article. It is really a mind/body approach I'm talking about, and this approach can yield real results. All it takes is good information, effort, patience, repetition and some time. You can learn, improve, develop and grow, and you can do it all on purpose. Best of all, there is no limit to learning. You can do it all of your life. It's all up to you.



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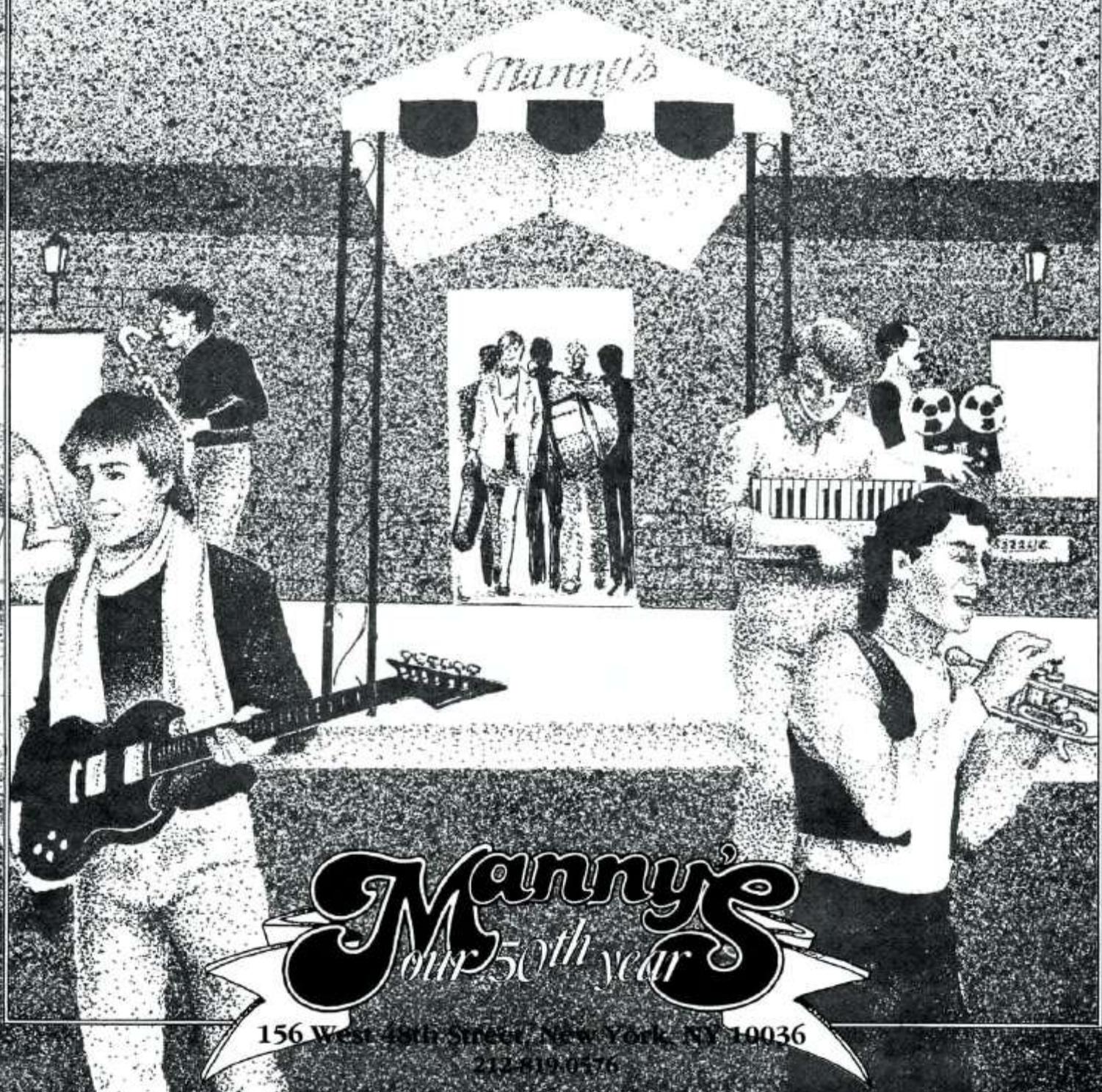
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Second Review

In this article, I would like to highlight the major points we have discussed over the previous five months. One of the major ideas was how to go about interpreting a musical composition. When listening to a given rhythm section ostinato pattern (as in figure 1), there are a few key concepts that should be kept in mind to determine the overall musical "picture." Some of these ideas include the harmony which is being stated, the harmonic rhythm of the figure, what the melodic line is doing, and the overall phrasing and form of the tune.

① $\frac{12}{8}$ feel ($\text{♩} = 132$) etc.

From studying the bass line in figure 1, we can see and hopefully hear that B is the root, F is the fifth, A is the dominant seventh, and that C is the flat nine. The rhythm of this pattern strongly suggests a 12/8 style and feel. To complete this study of the overall picture, we need to study the melody (see figure 2).

②

By listening carefully to the bass and the melody, you should be able to identify a B7 altered chord. The F sharp in the melody is the augmented fifth, D is the major third, and D is the minor third, also called the sharp nine. From the bass figure we also have the flat nine. The chord is determined as an altered chord because of all the sharped or flatted pitches against the B7 chord. You should also be aware of the G triad long note. Melodic activity must be balanced with rest or sustain.

What type of drum part can you create for this section that would be interesting and yet fit the music? Figure 3 is a suggested pattern which works for this section of the tune.

③ $\text{♩} = 132$

Try to play the bass and the melody on your keyboard before you create your own drum part. As you work on these parts, examine what you feel are the important points that the drum part should enhance, and then come up with your own drum part.

Figure 4 is the bridge of the tune we have been working on.

④ Swing ($\text{♩} = \frac{3}{4}$)

Taking a look at the release or the bridge of this tune reveals that the time feel shifts to swing. When changing from the 12/8 feel to the swing feel, be sure to subdivide the pulse. Hearing the triplet in your head and in the music will help the shift from one section to the other be as smooth as possible. Notice the syncopation in the melodic line and how these offbeats propel the tune along to the dominant-tonic, cadence resolution (the last two bars of the bridge F7, which is the V7 of the B).

Figure 5 is the bass line and drum part to the bridge. Notice that the main concern at this point is for the bass and drums to lock in and really listen to each other, without having to play figures together. The last two bars of each do have the bass and drums playing a rhythmic figure together.

⑤ Swing (♩ = $\frac{3}{7}$)

Bass

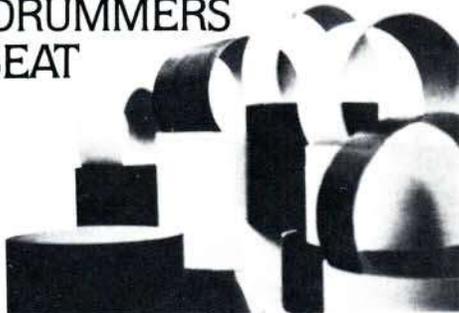
Drums

Finally, here is a brief quiz to check your understanding of what we have been working on. Considering your improving skill with chords, scales and melodies, can you create a melody to the repeated chord sequence in figure 6? What key is this sequence in? As the chords change, what chord scales are available? What is the visual shape or picture of the scale you can use to play through this pattern? Can you play it in other keys?

♩ = 80 C G A- E- F C F G

Here are the answers to the quiz. The sequence is in the key of C. The scales available include: C Ionian, G Mixolydian, A Aeolian, E Phrygian, F Lydian, which are all derived from the C major scale. The visual shape is a straight line—all naturals. I hope you will be able to play this sequence in other keys with a little practice. Congratulations to all of you who continue to work on expanding your musicianship as well as your drumming.

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letters in which I told them that they would be getting the parcel and that, if they didn't think that ours were the best drum stands they had ever seen, then they could, please, just give them away. Most people paid for them and ordered some more. In fact, someone who was to become one of our biggest agents, Bill Hall from New Orleans, came over last year, and he still had the original letter I had sent him."

During the '50s and '60s, a new generation gradually took over the running of Premier. George Smith retired in 1956, and Albert Delia Porta died in 1965. By the time this sad event occurred, Albert's three sons were well established in the business. They had worked under their father for some years, and the variety of positions which they had held within the company structure gave them an all-around knowledge. When they became established at the head of Premier, Gerald was Managing Director, Raymond was Production Director, and the eldest son, Clifford, was Chairman, a position held for many years by Fred after the death of his brother.

Clifford had, in fact, joined the company in the late '40s. A drummer with a degree in engineering, for many years he headed the design and research department. It is difficult to pinpoint *exactly* who was responsible for particular designs and ideas, but it was Clifford's department which came up with some products that made significant contributions to the drumming world. In 1958 (within a few months of Remo, and quite independently of them), Premier started producing their *Everplay* plastic drumheads. The flush-base stand concept reached a peak in 1967

with the *Lokfast* range, and the 2000 snare drum was, and still is, their ultimate refinement of the parallel-action snare mechanism. (The snare is stretched at its set tension all the time. Both ends are lifted, simultaneously, against the head by a single lever which operates a bar that goes across the inside of the drum.) Premier's *Zyn* and *Super Zyn* cymbals were very popular, and when they came up with the 5 *Star Super Zyn*, it was accepted by many professionals as a reasonable alternative to the American, Swiss and Turkish cymbals which everyone depended on. Unfortunately, in the early '70s, Premier found that the cost of raw materials and production meant that they could no longer be competitive with their pricing of quality cymbals, so they stopped making them. The Premier cymbal produced today is only a cheap one aimed at the educational and student market.

Other products that were very successful include the 2505 bass drum pedal, the cowbell which automatically gave the dead sound—which most people were trying to get at the time by taping up "ringy" ones—and the tripod stool, which, in the '60s, almost every drummer in Britain was using. (This stool is actually one of the few Premier "winners" of the past that seems sadly inadequate to today's standards.)

Premier's position in the British market seemed virtually unassailable until the mid-'60s when British rock (we called it "Beat" at the time) music took the world by storm, and the world (principally America) started flooding the British market with imported musical equipment to supply the "boom" in demand. Speak to any three drummers who were playing at that time and you are likely to get three different opinions: Some will say that American drums *were* actually better than Premier (for "better" sometimes read "louder"), some will say that the difference was in the heads, and that a Premier kit with American heads was the best combination to use, while others will maintain that Premier drums were always as good, if not better, than anything else. A lot of it must be put down to fashion. The Premier name was associated with older players and the older styles of music, and many of the rising stars of the '60s wanted something new and different. Trends play such an important part, and you remember which drums The Beatles were using! At first, Premier didn't actually suffer because of the trend towards imported drums, because the demand was so great. The cake was very large, and although more people were having a slice, there was enough for everybody. However, the problem which had to be faced in the long term was that, once the Japanese had established themselves on the scene, the boom in demand was going to fall away, while the number of drumkits being imported into the country was going to increase.

It would be a ridiculous oversimplification to suggest that competition from imported drumkits on the home market was the cause of Premier's later problems. The company was, itself, exporting to other countries; an average of 55 to 60% of production was for overseas markets. Also, drumkits only represented part of Premier's output: There were the marching and pipe-band drums, the symphonic percussion and the *New Era* educational range. Although the markets for these ranges might have been slightly affected by imports to Britain, the trends which we have considered would have had hardly any bearing.

Premier continued to trade profitably throughout the '70s. (Remember that their new factory was built in '76.) To give a balanced picture of why things were going so wrong by 1983 would require a thesis, and it would also involve the unpleasant business of trying to apportion blame. It must be stated that the Delia Porta family had all left the company well before the crash came in September to October 1983. Fred Delia Porta had retired 11 years earlier, but he is still involved in the music business as Chairman of Chas. E. Foote Ltd., Premier's main London retail outlet. Albert Delia Porta's sons still own the chromium-plating plant that used to belong to Premier. They now do all Premier's "diamond chrome" as subcontractors.

Mick McLoughlin is interested in the future rather than the past. While accepting that things did go wrong, he stresses that it is now a new company. The name has been changed from "The Premier Drum Co." to "Premier Percussion" to emphasize this fact, and also to give a clearer indication that they produce a wide range of percussion instruments. The word "drum" in the title recognizes the drumkits, marching drums and timpani that they make, but it would seem to be ignoring their xylophones, vibraphones, marimbas, glockenspiels and tubular bells. The "old" company was wound up by the Receiver, and when The Team restarted things in April 1984, it was a new beginning. "The company has had a good name and reputation, and many of us were involved in making sure that that reputation was maintained. Now we've gotten rid of all the bad bits, we've taken all the good bits and we have an image suited to the music scene of today. We should know where we are going. We enjoy what we're doing, we enjoy working together, and we have the determination to survive and to develop."

The Team consists of 11 dedicated people, including Al Betts, who handles Premier's distribution in Canada and who pledged his full support to the Team; Jim Kilpatrick, three times World Pipe Band Solo Drumming Champion (last time was in 1983); and Johnny Dean, a top all-around session player and author of two

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drum books. John's position in the company is that of consultant, and the company's newest idea in drum design—the *Project One* snare drum—is his brainchild.

Advertising and Promotions Manager Roger Horrobin talks about Premier's traditional approach to the basic drum: "We have always believed in relatively thin-shelled drums with strengthening rings. Other acoustic instruments that are made out of wood don't have thick-walled bodies, so why should drums? A thin shell with strengthening rings in it is stronger and more resonant than a thicker shell without the strengthening rings anyway. Another thing we have had for a long time is the flush-braced tension system [a one-piece tension bracket with a nut box at either end of it, so that the top and bottom heads are tensioned from either end of the same bracket]. Now this became unfashionable for a while, and there was a time when we stopped using it on some of our lines, in order to satisfy the people who wanted the standard sort of American/Japanese appearance. But just recently a major Japanese drum company had decided that the thing to do is to use thin shells and a flush-braced tension system, and another company is producing drums with a flush-braced tension system, which looks very much like ours. Suddenly, we are respectable again; we are back in the mainstream. The thing is that, in a way, we never left it; it left us. Now, other companies are believing in principles of drum design and manufacture that we've believed in for years! It's very flattering."

But make no mistake about it, Premier can produce really *strong* drums when required. Marching drums have to stand up to many more atmospheric changes and extremes than the drums that are only used in clubs and concert halls, and while the trend has moved away from tight, high tensioning of "set" drums, marching drums have been going up and up. Britain is the home of pipe bands, and it is natural that Premier, as the British drum manufacturer, should lead the field in pipe-band percussion. As the pipe-band drummers have been looking for higher sounds and more tension on the heads, the company has been adapting its designs and specifications to give them what they want, such as the *Super Royal Scot* snare drum and the new *Fibreline* heads.

With the increasing popularity of drum corps, the range of marching percussion instruments that are being produced has increased, and the outlets for it have also increased beyond the military and paramilitary organizations that were once the only users of musical instruments while on the march. However, while moving into this exciting and lucrative market, the company has retained its links with its traditional customers, the armed forces. Premier's factory houses an impressive display of the badges, crests and coat of

arms which have graced, and in most cases still grace, the company's marching drums. For the very traditionally minded organizations the company still makes rope-tension drums to order, and Premier's catalog lists a rope-tension snare drum which, although functional, is recommended as an ornament or as a base for a glass-topped coffee table.

There are two new drumkit ranges which the company is now producing. The *Projector* kit is the equivalent of the "top of the range" from many companies. It has all the points of quality of manufacture associated with the *Resonator* range. It is at the "budget" end of the market, however, where drum companies have been competing particularly keenly in recent years, that the company is attacking with a new approach. Premier's budget kit of the past was called an *Olympic* kit and had the image of a poor relation. The new *Royale* kit is providing good appearance with quality of manufacture and sound at a lower price. This range includes the *APK* (Advanced Power Kit) line. This is a budget-priced power kit that has an extraordinary cosmetic quality. A dark front head bearing the legend "APK" is fitted as standard, and with so much care taken over the visual quality, the company is quite confident that the *sound* will satisfy people just as easily. Perusal of various catalogs shows that, in Britain at least, the company is able to retail the *Royale* and *APK* kits at prices that are competitive with Japanese kits aimed at the same slot in the market.

So the company that has produced drumkits with the quality to satisfy jazz drummers like Kenny Clarke, Philly Joe Jones and Sam Woodyard, and the power and tone to satisfy rock drummers like Clem Burke, Rod Morgenstein and the late Keith Moon is still very much in business—now maintaining the reputation for quality but with a new image and a fresh approach. The company intends to exploit the uniqueness of the top-of-the-line kits more than was done in the past, but it is the drummer who will benefit. Good products are only really good if they are used and enjoyed—if they are seen and heard, and receive the recognition that they deserve. Mick McLoughlin has the last word: "We are a drum and percussion specialist workshop; we are not a big corporate entity. We have to have a balanced business approach together with being practical and understanding our consumers. That means understanding what the trade wants and, above all, understanding what the drummer wants."

Premier Factory continued from page 23

tomers. Occasionally, Roger does the work on customizing for special orders himself: An example of his work is the Tartan covering on the kit that Kenney Jones used when he was working with Rod Ste-

wart.

There was a great deal to see, but I pointed out to Roger that, as I was writing for *Modern Drummer*, the subject matter of my article would be primarily the manufacture of drums. So we started off by concentrating on this aspect.

The main feature of any drum is the shell and this company makes its shell out of the best quality of birchwood ply from Finland. Roger emphasizes the quality of the initial wood. "It's B/BB quality, which is top-quality, water-based, bonded ply. It is strong, there is no chance of delamination [the plies separating], and it is mark free and scar free, which means that it doesn't need filling and it is good for applying a finish to. We tend to talk in overall wood thicknesses rather than in the number of plies, because (a) that's how we buy wood these days and (b) different types of ply vary in thickness. So when you talk about the thickness of the shell, the number of plies really doesn't mean much. For *Resonator* and *Projector* drums, we use three-ply shells throughout, but the wood we use for the toms is four mm (1/8") thick, and for bass drums it is five mm thick. The same applies to the *Royale* drums where again we use three-ply timber, but it is different wood (lauan rather than birch) and it is a different form of ply that has an overall thickness of six mm. I think that is a good illustration of why we don't talk about the number of plies, and how meaningless that sort of description is. The final thickness of the shell may be slightly less than this after it is sanded smooth, but the final shell may also be thicker when its lacquering and plastic covering or a veneer have been added."

The wood is bought in large sheets and is cut, by hand, to the sizes for the individual shells before anything else is done to it. (The only shells that are made by being sliced "bread fashion" off a long piece of plywood which has already been bent into shape are for tambourines.) At this stage, as at every other stage in the process, the shell is checked for possible defects. Roger explains, "We often get people asking us whether we have drums that we are selling off cheaply because of small faults. The answer is always no, because we are checking all the time, and if a fault is found, it is

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rectified. If it can't be rectified, the drum is scrapped. We wouldn't waste time by putting a faulty drum through production. Something with our name on it has to be worthy of it."

I referred to the piece of ply that has been cut to size as a "shell" because, once it is bent to shape, it will be recognizable as such, but there is an important job to be done between the cutting and the bending: This is known as "skarfiging." When the shell is bent and the two ends are joined together, there is an overlap of the ends where the glue is applied. Skarfiging is the process of shaving down the ends of the piece of ply—outer edge at one end, inner edge at the other—to ensure that where the overlap occurs the combined thickness of the two ends overlapping is going to be equal to the thickness around the rest of the shell. The amount by which one end is going to overlap the other has to be added to the length of the wood when it is first cut: A drum which is 14" in diameter will have a circumference of approximately 45", and if you need a 3" overlap, the plywood sheet is cut to 48" in length.

The cut and skarfiged piece of plywood is now placed in a machine where there is one roller above it, which is heated with a gas flame, and two rollers underneath. As the wood is passed between the rollers, the heated one on top extracts some of the natural moisture from what will become the inside of the shell. This causes the wood on that side to shrink, causing the sheet of wood to curve. The amount of the curve, depending on the size of the shell, can be controlled by the relative positions of the three rollers. The shell is now glued together and held in clamps which ensure that the exact proportions are maintained. Beechwood strengthening rings are glued into place at the top and bottom of the shell. The shell is put on a slow conveyor belt that allows it to pass through an oven with gentle heat for about 20 minutes to dry and "fix" the shell.

With a recognizable drumshell to work with, the next job is to make sure that the surfaces are in perfect condition to receive lacquering or covering. Each shell is hand finished, receiving individual attention. What Roger describes as "all the usual woodworking machinery" is available, but there is no suggestion that any drum is just passed through a machine and then onwards. By the end of this stage the shell is a perfectly Crafted piece of wood, with the exception of the bearing edge, which is finalized after the covering has been put on.

Between the finishing and covering processes, the shells receive two coats of lacquer which are sprayed on at 24-hour intervals. The *Royale* drums, which don't have strengthening rings, are given a thick coat of black paint on the inside, instead of lacquer.

Whenever I try measuring and cutting

something so that it will be an exact fit, it never comes out quite right, so I am always impressed when I see somebody else doing it well. I missed actually seeing a piece of wood being cut to size for a drumshell. Therefore, my first opportunity to be impressed with someone's measuring and cutting skills was when I saw a craftswoman, Pauline Deacon, covering a drum. The piece of covering material was measured and cut by hand on a guillotine. The shell is placed, for a few seconds, inside a circular wooden box that has high-powered light bulbs on the inside that heat up the outside of the shell. It is then suspended with a roller through the center, a line is drawn across it at right angles to the edge, and glue is applied along that line and on the surface area—particularly near the edges. Glue is then put on the covering sheet, which is lined up on the shell, the end having to be true to the line across the drum. If it is slightly out at one end, the covering material would be a long way out after being passed around the drum, and the two ends which are supposed to meet parallel, with a slight overlap, wouldn't actually meet up along their full length. The end of the covering sheet is now pressed into place, and shell and sheet are slowly revolved by hand between two rollers that press them together. The warmed-up wood of the shell helps the plastic covering to bend smoothly against it, the heat actually causing the plastic to shrink slightly as it goes on, giving a tight fit. The overlap is stuck down with some acetate glue that slightly dissolves the two surfaces it is sticking, in effect welding the two ends of the covering together.

I was unable to see any work being done on Premier's new natural-wood and wood-grain finishes during my visit, but Roger explained the process to me. "For a wood finish, we take a 0.8 mm birch liner and laminate it to the shell. It has been found that this is a more stable surface for staining and veneering than the ply of the shell, because when the ply is bent into shape, it becomes stressed and the grain opens up slightly. The glues on the joints and the resins that are part of the ply-making process also affect the nature of the wood, and its ability to take stain and varnish in an ideal way. Stress in the plies can cause the molecular structure of the surface to shift and cause a crazy-paving effect, which spreads through the inner coats of lacquer. So we use the birch veneer to give us the best possible grain effect and a surface which isn't under stress. Once the veneer is applied to the shell, it is stained (except, of course, the Natural Birch, which is exactly what it claims to be) and then it receives six coats of varnish. Now, we have to leave each coat for at least 24 hours before we sand it down and put on the next coat. We do that six times, and then we leave the shell standing for three or four weeks to let it harden off naturally

before giving it its final polishing." Although I didn't see any of this happening, I did see some drums finished in Natural Birch, Super Walnut, Red Flame and Black Shadow, and they really are the nicest looking wood finishes I have ever seen.

After having the covering, or wood finish, in place and completed, the shell is put on a former, which allows it to be turned evenly and checked by craftsmen as they cut the bearing edges by hand. The drum is given a final clean and polish before having holes cut so that the fittings and attachments can be fixed in place. Machines called fly presses are used. Metal rings are placed around either end of the drum. The rings have locating pins on them that correspond with the line across the drum where the holes are required. When the drum is laid on its side in the machine, the pins rest in slots to ensure that the holes go in straight. The operator pulls a lever and small cutters, which have been preset to the required positions, descend under pressure and punch holes in the drum. The drum can then be turned so that the next pair of pins are resting in the slots, and the next station (for tension brackets, for instance) is assured. In this way, holes to take tension brackets, snare strainers, Premier badges, etc., can be punched in on different machines that have the setting to suit the different drums.

After a drum has been along the small assembly line where the fittings are fixed to it, it only remains for the heads and rims to go on for it to be complete, except, that is, in the case of the *Resonator* shells. Seeing Steve Scotton putting an inner shell inside a drum was my second opportunity to be impressed with someone's measuring and cutting skills. The liner, or inner shell, is 2mm 1/16") thick, or 4mm 1/8") for a bass drum; it is sprung into place, being held in place by its own tension (no glue is used) against the strengthening rings at either end of the shell, and some small wooden supports halfway down. When the liner is in place, its two ends have to meet up exactly. Roger estimated that they have to be cut to the nearest/32". The actual operation of inserting the liner was interesting to watch: Steve formed a circle with the liner and then squeezed it in at the middle to form a figure 8; he was then able to bend the two halves of the figure 8 to get the liner inside the drum, and then he slowly released, a bit at a time, so that it was eventually resting against the strengthening rings all the way around.

When talking about Premier's rims, we need to define our terms: Roger refers to the projections on the outside edge of the rims which contain the holes through which the tension bolts pass as "lugs." (We often hear *tension brackets* being referred to as "lugs" too; both uses are accurate.) Premier produces three types of rims: the triple-flanged, pressed-steel rim, which is the international standard rim;

the die-molded rim, made from zinc-based alloy known as "Mazak" (these are the types of rims used traditionally by Premier and Gretsch; they don't "ring," don't rust, and are kinder to the sticks on rimshots. These two companies have, obviously, always considered them to be the best choice), and now Premier has come up with a special new rim, the "stress-ring hoop." This one is molded in aluminum, and its special feature is that there are no lugs on it; the flange, which goes outwards, away from the drum, is wide enough for the holes to be drilled in its main body. Roger said, "We actually developed this for the pipe-band drum. With some of the extremely high tensions some of these drummers have been trying to achieve, the lugs on the rim could be a point of weakness. They would bend downwards, changing the angle of the tension bolts, and we would get angular distortion and all sorts of problems. From a manufacturing viewpoint, the rim without the lugs is easier to make. It also means that we can do one hoop that can take eight bolts, ten bolts, or—as the American drum corps people want—12; all we do is drill more holes. If you want to produce a new rim with a different number of lugs on it, you are looking at about 15,000 pounds worth of extra tooling."

A company like Premier has a large investment in tooling, and some of their most valuable tools are the molds (or dies)

into which the liquid metal is poured to produce castings (molded metal units). The fittings on Premier drums are produced in this way, in the factory. The chrome plating (for which Premier is world famous) is the one major operation which isn't carried out under the Premier roof. In fact, the factory in which it is done used to belong to Premier, but is now independently owned, working for the company on a subcontractual basis, so the continuation is there. The high quality of chrome plating is achieved by having a layer of copper plate, a layer of nickel plate and a layer of chrome plate on every plated item, and by each layer of plate being polished to give a perfect finish before the next layer is applied. The steel tubing for the stands is bought in the various thicknesses and diameters required, and is cut, drilled and riveted in the factory before being sent out to be plated.

The manufacture of plastic drumheads is deceptively simple, but it is hard to describe in words. There is a press that presses the plastic sheeting down into the circular U channel, which will become the hoop. A support ring is pressed into the U channel on top of the plastic, and as the three components are pressed together, the size of the collar on the head is established by the distance that the machine is set to press down on the U channel. Then the U channel is closed by a rolling machine, so that the plastic is gripped in the U channel

and the support ring is gripped between the two layers of plastic in the U channel, making it impossible for the plastic to move out of place.

I also saw sticks being individually turned on a lathe, brushes being assembled by hand after the wires had been automatically cut to size on a machine, and the incredibly skillful job of fine, hand tuning the notes for mallet instruments. "Virtually everything in the factory is done by hand," Roger told me. "Now, that seems highly outdated and highly inefficient, but while different drummers around the world want permutations of drums as they want them, with different sticks and different accessories, rather than one five-piece drumkit made to exactly the same standard, and while we have to be competitive with all the other manufacturers, we are going to be continually faced with this problem of making lots of different things, rather than a lot of a few things."

He left me to make up my own mind that a handcrafted instrument is nearly always preferable to a mass-produced one, and that this company, which in a way is setting out to prove itself all over again, seems to have gotten it right. Having seen and heard the quality, both during manufacture and of the finished product, I have been suffering strong twinges of guilt that I am one of the all-too-large band of British drummers who play imported drums when there are such good homegrown products available.

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The Broken Drumhead

Have you noticed an inordinate amount of drumheads breaking lately? With the cost of heads today, drummers have every right to show concern over breakage. It's quite possible for a typical drummer to have between \$150 to \$200 invested in heads alone. If the drummer plays regularly and changes heads frequently, that cost could be much higher. Each unexpected replacement cuts into profits and causes aggravation and frustration, as well. However, the problem of breakage may not entirely be the fault of the product. Many drummers resort to changing models or companies before researching the real root of the problem. There are various factors involved in drumhead breakage, and each should be looked at closely before drawing any conclusions.

Normal Wear And Tear

As much as we'd like things to last forever, they don't. If a head is simply worn out, the problem is simple. Wear and tear cannot be stopped. Weather, bright lights, moisture, dents, extended playing, retensioning and retuning all add up. Think of your heads as you would car tires. Depending on driving habits, terrain, and mileage, they will either last a long time or wear out more rapidly. Heads are the same. It depends on your playing habits, playing frequency, and the wear and tear described above.

The best way to avoid breakage from wear and tear is a regular inspection of your heads' condition. If the playing surface is getting thin or heavily dented, it's time to change the head. Likewise, if you have to tighten the tension rods fully into the lugs to get proper tuning, it's likely the head is stretched from tensioning and is about to go bad. A head that is pulling out of its epoxy or counterhoop is also close to breaking. Familiarity with your playing habits and conditions will help you decide how often your heads need inspecting and changing.

Age

Following along the lines of wear and tear is the aging process. It, too, cannot be stopped. Even heads not played, or played infrequently, can eventually age beyond their usefulness. Epoxy glue can become old and brittle, and cause the head to release from its counterhoop. Extremely tight tension on an unplayed or stored

drum may also cause a head to split or break. While a drum or cymbal may improve with age, a drumhead will do just the opposite.

Anytime drums are stored or left idle for long periods of time, all tension should be taken off, or better yet, the heads should be completely removed and stored separately. Either way, heads should be stored so as not to warp, and both the drums and heads should be stored away from dampness, extreme heat and cold, dust or dirt.

The Bearing Edge

If the edge of the drumshell that comes in contact with the head (the bearing edge) is rough or splintered, it can cause the head to break when tensioned up. This condition can also cause premature breakage soon after tensioning. Also, if the bearing edge is uneven or improperly beveled, the head can be put under excessive strain in certain areas.

Another problem directly related to the edge of the head is caused by drumsticks. Splinters and chips from the sticks can get between the bearing edge and the head, or the head edge and the rim. If left there to build up, they can puncture or weaken the head. These splinters and chips should be vacuumed out of the rim area periodically and wiped off the bearing edge during head changes.

Tension

An unevenly tensioned head (half the tension lugs tightened down tighter than the other half) will cause unnecessary strain on the head. Make every effort to tension each lug as close to the others as possible. This will make tuning much easier, and put less strain on the head surface.

Another tension problem related to head breakage is tensioning the head too tight. Tensioning a head super tight, just to get that high tom-tom pitch, may be causing your heads to break faster. You may have to compromise and go for a lower pitch, or purchase a smaller tom which can reach the higher pitch easier.

Head Type

Choosing heads can become quite involved, but common sense should always prevail. Obviously, heavy metal drummers are not apt to choose symphonic- or jazz-type heads, unless they really love the sound and don't mind the

added cost and aggravation of frequent breakage. Likewise, jazz or lounge drummers will seldom use heavyweight or rock models. Here again, a compromise may have to be made to cut down on breakage. If you use a fairly thin head on your snare, but you tend to whack it at times and break quite a few, you may have to use a slightly thicker head and compensate for the sound a little. Once you know what heads are right for you, you can add a hydraulic here, a *Pinstripe* there, or a sound centered head to smooth out the rough spots.

Beaters And Sticks

Wood or acrylic beaters can give you added volume and attack on your bass drum head, but continuous direct contact between beater and head can cause the head to wear out very quickly. For this reason, many drummers prefer to use a beater pad of some sort, placed on the head where the beater strikes. As well as the various manufactured types, there are several household materials used for this: moleskin, leather, duct tape, foam rubber and even margarine lids have been employed for this purpose. If the padding procedure doesn't appeal to you, you may have to switch back to cork or felt beaters.

Sticks can cause head problems as well. Too heavy a stick, combined with a heavy player, can wear a head out pretty quickly. Use only as heavy a stick as you need to get your sound and still feel comfortable. If you *have* to use a fairly heavy stick, and you break a lot of heads as a result, you may have to use a heavier head.

Faulty Product

Even though manufacturers inspect their products rigidly, occasionally a bad head may find its way into the market and onto your drum. If this is the case, and you honestly feel the product is at fault, you do have some alternatives.

First, you should take the head back to the dealer where you bought it. If the product is at fault, the dealer will probably give you a replacement and then settle up with the manufacturer. If the dealer won't help you, but you still feel that the product is at fault, call or write the manufacturer. You'll probably be asked if you've contacted the dealer, what the trouble is and the details of what happened to the head. If you write, include all these details in your letter. If you call, be prepared to

by James E. Murphy

answer these and other questions on the phone. The manufacturer may even ask you to ship the head back to the factory for evaluation before they settle up. Manufacturers also like to see these problems in order to correct or improve stages of their manufacturing process. Many companies rely on customer feedback for improving their quality control and production procedures.

Finally, you must remember that drumheads are like drumsticks and cymbals. They have a *limited* guarantee. Most companies simply cannot warrant these products for extended periods because of the severe punishment they must withstand. However, if you feel that the product is definitely at fault, by all means contact the dealer or manufacturer. They will usually go out of their way to work with you on product problems. It's their business, and you're their customer.

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Cross-Sticking

Cross-sticking has long been a form of show drumming. While many drummers fail to use this technique to its fullest potential, it proves to be useful when you look for that right drum but it happens to be in the wrong place. Previously inaccessible drums are now within reach via the cross-stick.

Subsequently, the ability to cross-stick will provide a limitless array of combinations around the entire drumset, that is, the toms, snare, and even the cymbals. Depending upon your cymbal setup, cross-sticking on the cymbals can lead to an aesthetic approach to soloing and give you a good example of why cross-sticking is often considered show drumming.

In these exercises, make note that the right hand crosses over the left hand and the left over the right. When cross-sticking from the small tom, the left hand can either go under or over the right hand. Be sure to play each note as evenly as possible, since it obviously takes more effort to play a cross-stick note than an ordinary one. Here are some one-bar patterns for you to try.

①

cross stick under
cross stick over

R L R L R L R L

②

R L R L R L R L

③

R L R L R L R L

④

R L R L R L R L

⑤

R L R L R L R L

⑥

R L R L R L R L

The following patterns are more complex and employ cross-sticking around the entire drumset. An interesting variation with these exercises involves substituting the cross-stick notes and replacing them with cymbal crashes, depending on the position of your cymbals. With this technique, add the bass drum to accent on the cross-stick cymbal notes.

⑦

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

⑧

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

⑨

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

⑩

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

⑪

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

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Jack DeJohnette's brilliance as a composer, bandleader and multi-instrumentalist has earned him international acclaim. A virtuoso behind a set of drums, his versatility and imagination have proven him one of the true inovators of modern music. The Down Beat Readers Poll recently named Jack as the number one drummer for the fifth consecutive year. The latest ECM release from Jack DeJohnette's Special Edition, "Album Album", is his eighteenth album as a group leader. His recorded

works, as a collaborator and sideman, number in the hundreds.

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The Tools Of Our Trade

Modern Drummer often gets letters directed to the *Ask A Pro* column, asking various artists what equipment they use. Also, the *It's Questionable* department gets letters containing questions about what drums or cymbals are best for a given style of music, whether synthetic sticks are better than wood, what heads give a "deep" sound, etc. And as author of the *Club Scene* column, over the years, I've received my share of inquiries about what percussion products and equipment best suit the needs of club drummers.

It seems obvious from all this reader mail that the choice of equipment is important to a lot of drummers, and I don't find this surprising. I'm passionately fond of browsing through drum catalogs (not to mention the advertising pages in *MD*) and putting together fantasy drumsets. But when it comes to actually going out and purchasing new or replacement equipment, I'm faced with the same dilemma as the readers who send in all those letters I mentioned: There's an awful lot of drum-related merchandise out there, so which items are right for my needs?

Let's stop for a moment and examine just exactly how much is involved when we speak of a drummer's "equipment." Many instrumentalists, such as pianists, guitarists, bass players, and most especially horn and string players, can adequately fill their professional needs with the purchase of a single instrument, a case and perhaps a few accessory items. (This is not to suggest that *all* such players have it so easy.) But a drummer with even an average-size kit is faced with the purchase of many *component* items that collectively are referred to as a "drumset." These may total around five drums (as an average figure), six cymbals, at least five separate stands of various types, a drum throne, bass drum pedal, a multitude of various large and small accessory items (cases, cymbal bags, mufflers, cymbal sleeves, drum keys, polish, tools, tape, etc.) and then such crucial items as sticks, mallets, and brushes. All of this must be accumulated before the drummer can even begin to perform, and yet the number of choices that the drummer is faced with when purchasing even *one* of these items is staggering.

When we refer to the "percussion industry" in a general sense, we sometimes lose sight of what that refers to on a very specific, item-by-item basis. Just as an informal survey, I leafed through the January '85 issue of *MD*, and found that when I

combined the advertisements and the new products featured in the *Just Drums* column, there were 12 companies advertising acoustic drums, nine electronic drum companies, seven different brands of cymbals, three companies specifically advertising their hardware, ten different stick manufacturers, two drumhead companies, three manufacturers of stick-grip products, and one drum-cover company. By no means was this an accurate compilation of all the companies making each type of product, but it gives you an idea of how many choices a drummer has when contemplating the purchase of even a minor piece of equipment, let alone a new drumset. And when you stop to consider that most of the companies mentioned offer several styles and models of their various products, the selection becomes even more extensive.

This is, of course, a healthy situation, since the law of supply and demand dictates that the greater the supply, the better the demand can be served and, hopefully, the lower the prices can be maintained. I'm not here to go into the economics of the drum industry. But the other side of the coin is that such a large selection of products makes choosing the best one for your personal needs a little more difficult. The equipment customer naturally would like to obtain the best possible answer to his or her particular problem, but the knowledge that there is so much equipment out there to choose from plants a seed of doubt: "I've only been able to try brands A, B, and C . . . what if brand X is better?"

There is no hard and fast answer to this problem. There are a few points I'd like to make in the way of advice, but as usual, the final decision must be yours, based on your own situation, budget, opportunity to experiment, and preference.

1. *Research the ads.* A simple fact of economic life is that larger companies have more to spend on advertising. This doesn't mean that their products are any better, but it might mean that their company is in a little better position to finance a service department and maintain a backlog of spare parts. Naturally, this applies mainly to drumset companies, but it carries over to other products. Larger companies can generally back up their products a little better, in terms of free replacements, complimentary samples, etc. (This by no means casts any aspersions on the integrity of smaller companies or the quality of their merchandise.) You might take note of which companies are doing the most advertising, and which companies have

reduced theirs. It can sometimes be a clue as to a given company's stability, which, in turn, might be something to take into account when contemplating a large, high-cost purchase that will carry a lengthy warranty or require long-term service. Naturally, a short-life item, such as a pair of sticks, wouldn't require such attention.

2. *Check the endorsers.* There is absolutely nothing wrong with judging equipment based on who endorses it, as long as you keep a realistic attitude about endorsements in general. We know that many artists have shifted their endorsements over the years, for a variety of reasons. But the endorsement that an artist gives to a drum-related product can at least give you an indication of that product's usefulness in the type of music performed by that artist. If you play in a heavy metal band, it behooves you to note how many heavy metal drummers are using Brand X sticks, or stomping on the Brand Y pedal. If you play acoustic jazz, the endorsement of a drummer whose playing you respect might go a long way towards affirming the musicality of a given brand of drums. In other words, don't play a brand of drums *just* because so-and-so does, but realize that, if it works for so-and-so, it should at least be considered as one of your choices.

3. *Check out what's available.* This is another consideration based on simple practicality. There's no sense wondering what exotic product might be "the best" for you, if you can't get hold of it to try. I don't believe in buying anything sight unseen or sound unheard. I wouldn't buy a pair of shoes through a catalog, and I wouldn't buy a drum, cymbal, or pair of sticks that way either. I certainly *would use* a catalog to determine what's on the market to serve my needs, but then I'd go to the nearest major pro music store and see what was available for me to try. If I didn't think the selection was adequate, I'd bring that to the attention of the dealer, and ask if certain items from the catalogs I was interested in might be obtained (by the store) for trial purposes. If not, I would simply limit my selection to what I could actually put my hands on when I needed it.

In the club scene, the general buying situation is one of immediate need, that is, the replacement of broken sticks, heads, and perhaps even cymbals, along with accessory and maintenance items. New drumsets or major electronic additions tend to be one-time purchases that generally can be considered and researched over a period of time. In any well-stocked pro

music store, the selection of regular necessities is usually very good. After all, with all those companies I listed earlier, the music store is generally besieged by manufacturers to carry their lines. It behooves the store to stock as many choices as possible, in order to give the customer the widest selection possible, thus keeping the customer satisfied and willing to return to the store for future purchases. If the store has such a large selection, by all means avail yourself of it. When it comes to sticks especially, don't be afraid to experiment. With over ten stick companies, each offering many models, there are literally hundreds of different sticks for you to try. The same goes for cymbals, bass drum pedals, and other items that can be considered "personal" to a given drummer.

4. *Don't forget to write.* If you have equipment questions that your retailer cannot answer or a need that your retailer cannot fill, don't be afraid to write directly to manufacturers for help. Most of the percussion industry companies have people on their staffs to handle such inquiries; often you can get very specific help or advice regarding the company's products that is not contained in the generalized information printed in the catalog or promotional material. Once again, be practical. Don't expect Company A to try to solve your problem by suggesting a Company B brand product, and don't write to Company B about a problem you're having with your Company A brand drum. But if you can pose your question succinctly, you can often obtain very helpful information; after all, these companies need to keep drummers happy and well-informed in order to sell their products to those drummers.

5. *Trust your own judgment.* While there's nothing wrong with listening to the advice of friends, the suggestions of dealers, and the promotional claims of advertisements, the final arbiter on any equipment purchase must be you. If you're a working drummer, earning a living in the club market, you're a professional. Respect yourself as such, and trust your own judgment when it comes to the sound of a drum, the usefulness of a stick or stand, and the quality of a product. If you are experimenting with something new, take that fact into account, and evaluate the new item objectively based on previous experience with other similar products. If you are trying to determine whether or not to make a change or addition to your equipment, do some of the research I've already outlined, combine that with your own expertise and judgment, and then make the most reasonable decision possible. If it's a good one, you're set; if not, learn from it and chalk it up to experience. As we've already seen, you have a tremendous amount of "second choices." 

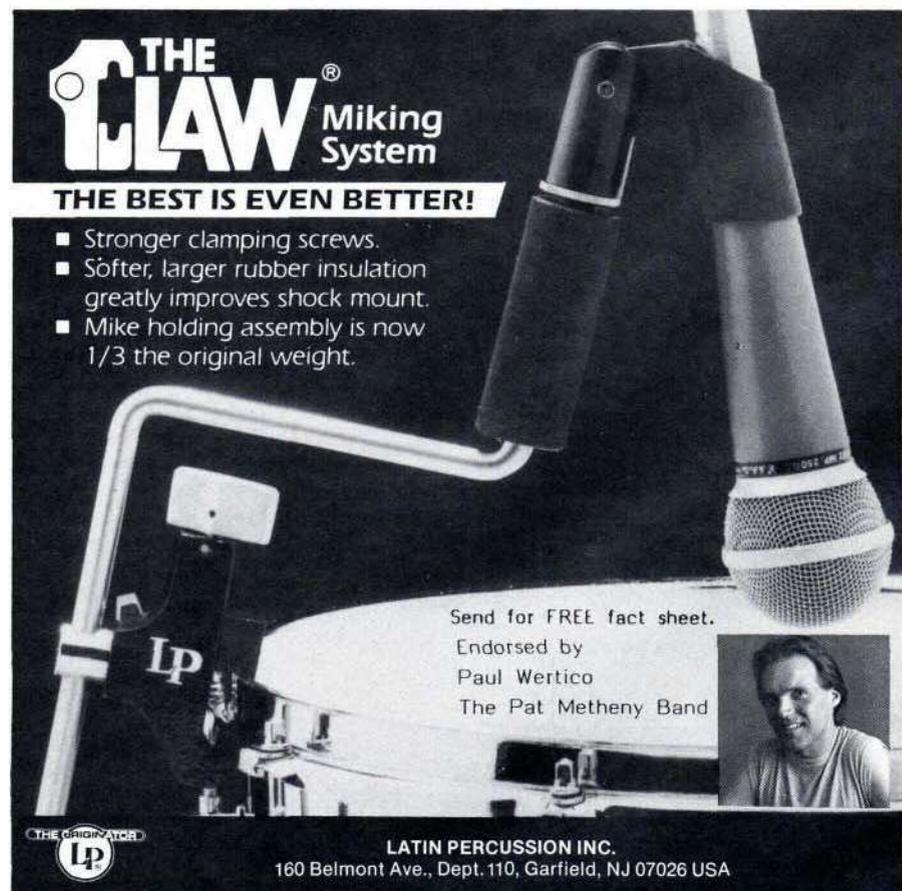
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Rae continued from page 27

nothing worse than listening to a drummer play a 32nd-note concept on a ballad, while the soloist is playing something lyrical. By the way, I'd like to mention that the type of drumming we've been discussing is what you might call "middle of the road," or the bebop style of playing, and not the more avant-garde stylings or the impressionistic school of playing as exemplified by Elvin Jones and Tony Williams.

CB: Is there something that some drummers do that is a pet peeve of yours?

JR: Cymbal switching is something that I hear done by a lot of drummers who are otherwise playing just fine. Some of them will switch a cymbal in what I consider to be the wrong place. You don't switch cymbals in the middle of an eight-bar phrase. I'd rather hear a consistent cymbal sound over a period of a chorus. If you're going to switch cymbals, do it at the beginning of a chorus.

CB: What about changing cymbals on the bridge?

JR: That's okay sometimes, particularly on a ballad because of the slower tempos. Again, if you listen to the band from the outside, there is a complete tonal coloration that changes when you switch cymbals. If you're going to switch cymbals, you might want to change the tonality to a higher pitch, or you can change to a cymbal with rivets in it. Also, you can play the hi-hat where it is open just wide enough to let the cymbals ring together.

CB: Is that so the cymbals get a "sizzle" effect?

JR: Yeah. Drummers don't do that anymore. I remember back in the early '50s, when I started playing, that was considered a very viable way of using the hi-hats.

CB: Many bebop drummers would sometimes use that effect behind piano solos, and for the beginnings and endings of tunes.

JR: Right. Also, drummers shouldn't be afraid of switching brushes. Of course, it's helpful if you have some brush technique, particularly if you play them at medium and up-tempos. Philly Joe Jones is probably one of the best practitioners of that art form, and so was Shelly Manne.

CB: Speaking of brushes, you have a bizarre style of playing brushes. How did you develop your unique technique for playing them?

JR: I'm right-handed, and I hold the sticks or brushes right-handed. However, when I play brushes on the snare drum, I play the beat with the left hand, and I do the "swish" with my right hand. I started doing that when I was a kid, before I took drum lessons from George Stone. You see, I could read a little music because of the piano lessons I had from my father, and because of my desire to play drums, I bought a copy of the *Gene Krupa Drum Method*. Well, I didn't know my left from my right very well; I just looked at the pictures that showed how to hold the sticks, and I started to hold them left-handed or backwards.

A while later, I was playing drums at a band concert my father was conducting, and one of the other drummers turned to me and said, "Oh, you're left-handed." And I said, "No, I'm right-handed." Of course, I'm sitting there, calm as anything, holding the sticks left-handed. Then he said, "You're supposed to hold them the other way." I replied calmly, "Oh, really?" Anyway, I think that's partially the reason I play brushes the way that I do.

CB: In what other ways do you define the role of a drummer in an accompanying situation?

JR: I think it's imperative that you be a good time player, and in jazz situations, you have to be able to swing the music. There also has to be a certain amount of looseness and fluidity to the music. Also, your playing style should bend so that it matches the style of the group you're in. For example, there are some groups that swing with a four-to-the-bar feeling, others swing with a lighter feeling, and some swing to the 2/4 side. You should be aware of those factors.

One of the main points I try to keep in mind when playing the drums is that I try to "psych out" the bass player. For instance, does the bassist have a tendency to play on top of the beat or underneath it? Some of them, when playing in a certain range, play the time in a particular place. Sometimes, when they get to the low end of the bass,

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their time will go a little under the beat. Maybe that happens because of the fact that the strings respond more slowly on the lower end of that particular instrument. Even some of the best players, when they're starting to go up the scale and use their thumb on the G string, tend to get way on top of the beat. You've got to be aware of these tendencies on the part of bass players and you've got to balance them. At the same time, you can't get on their case too heavy. You don't have to hit the bassist over the head with a stick, but you do want the rhythm to settle in the center. You should have that kind of control over the beat. You should be able to play on the dead center of the beat, on the "down" side without slowing down, and on the "up" side without speeding up.

Of course, there are always variations, particularly in a jazz group. The time and the music will sometimes center in the first four to eight bars, or maybe it will settle on the down side. Sometimes, on a particular tempo, it might get exciting, and the time will climb towards the high end. You're not necessarily looking for metronomic precision.

CB: The music has to be able to breathe.

JR: Yeah, sure. You can name some of the best groups in jazz who, on the basis of straight time, are ridiculous. As for speeding tempos up, the old Oscar Peterson trio used to climb the damn walls. That happened in that band because of the prodigious technique of Peterson, Herb Ellis, and Ray Brown. The Art Blakey groups also used to have a tendency to speed up. It didn't take away from the swing or the basic groove, but it would occasionally happen. So metronomic time is not necessarily the criteria, but you should always keep the best possible time you can.

CB: Do you have any techniques that you can recommend to drummers to improve their timekeeping ability?

JR: If you're playing a standard tune, you can sing the words to yourself, or if it's an instrumental, you should have some recall of where the melody was when you played the first chorus. If you sing the melody, it allows you to check your position within the

harmonic framework of the tune and, at the same time, you can check to see if the tempo has changed.

I think that the ability to keep time is a combination of natural and acquired skills. One facet of playing time has to do with your attitude. For example, in a band situation, once the tune starts, the drummer is really in charge. You have to believe that you have good time. If you don't believe it, then the rest of the band won't believe it.

Another way you can think about time-keeping is to imagine that you have a metronome right between your eyes going "tick, tick, tick." If you drop a stick or the stool falls apart—no matter what emergencies arise—this little independent sense of time keeps going during the course of that tune. So once you get to the point of keeping good time, you better start believing it, and play like you believe it.

CB: You're known for your light touch and sensitivity in backing musicians in a variety of musical circumstances. Do you have any techniques that you can recommend to drummers for developing a lighter touch?

JR: When I was with the Charlie Byrd trio, I developed—through my Latin playing—a technique called "dead sticking." This means that you play into the cymbal with some sort of pressure. You use a wrist action with no fingers involved. You can only do it up to a certain tempo; it's a little difficult on real up-tempos. I developed this technique because the Charlie Byrd trio was acoustic guitar, amplified by the house mic' and acoustic bass. Now that is about as soft a group as anyone is going to play with. I still had to play with intensity, but not the volume on the sambas and the jazz tunes. Dead sticking gives you a lot of intensity, and it can cut down your volume by almost two-thirds when you're really leaning into the cymbal. It also cuts down the overtones quite a bit on cymbals. If you wish to expand the volume as you're playing, all you do is loosen up your fingers as you go along, and before you know it, you're playing full out. At the same time, don't forget about controlling the volume with your feet on the bass drum and the hi-hat. They can be played loud or soft. Of course, there are

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some types of Latin beats, like sambas and bossa novas, where the bass drum should be a little more dominant because it's more of an integral part of the beat. On those rhythms, it should be heard but not overbearing, as opposed to playing straight-ahead 4/4 jazz time. In that situation, it should be felt more than heard.

CB: As long as we are discussing volume control, would you say that one of the best criteria to use is, if you can't hear everything, then you're playing too loud?

JR: Yes. You should hear the band as a total musical entity. The idea of volume control should be automatic. If you get to a point where you can't hear some of the notes, then you're playing too loud. Or if you're backing up a vocalist and you can't hear the words, you're playing too loud. You're always a lot better off being "waved up" in terms of volume than being "waved down." You can always give it a little more if you have to come up.

One of the toughest things I find with my students is that, when they are playing soft with their hands, their feet are still loud. This is, of course, also a problem for the experienced players.

CB: In other words, in terms of volume, all four limbs should be consistent with each other.

JR: Definitely. Through teaching I came across this theory: It seems that, initially, we learn the drumset as separate components.

First we learn the snare drum, and then we add the bass drum, hi-hat, and expand to the tom-toms. So it ends up that most drummers still think unconsciously of the drumset in terms of separate components rather than a total sound. If you're a piano player, you don't think of the C as being different from the D or E; it's all one instrument. One of the areas I work on with my students is getting their minds to tell them to do the right thing. In other words, getting them to hear the set as a total sound, and not as toms, cymbal, snare drum and bass drum.

As I mentioned earlier, I have the experience of playing in front of rhythm sections, and I find that even some of the fine drummers that I work with have some volume-control problems. Sometimes, when they are either backing a singer or vibraphone, a drummer will be playing at a *mezzo-forte* level, and then the breaks or fills will be *fortissimo*. When you're playing in front of a drummer who does that, it's like getting "zapped" out of the clear blue sky.

CB: In other words, there should be more consistency of volume level.

JR: Yes. If you want to emphasize a musical idea, it should be one notch up, and not three notches up.

CB: Would you relate your introduction to Latin music?

JR: When I joined George Shearing in 1955, I didn't really know that much about

Latin music. Fortunately for me, joining the Shearing band was probably one of the greatest strokes of good fortune I ever had in my career. Bassist Al McKibbon and drummer Armando Peraza were still with the band. Al is probably one of the best Latin bass players around. When I joined the band as a vibist, Bill Clarke was the drummer. He was a swing type of drummer who had worked with Duke, Lester Young, and other people of their caliber, but he really wasn't into Latin. So George asked me if I would like to play timbales in the group. My initial reaction was, "What are timbales?" As it turned out, Armando had a set of brass-shell Leedy timbales, so I learned to play on his set. He told me what beats to play behind him. For the first couple of months on the gig, I just used my right hand, even though I had enough coordination to play the left hand. Later Armando and Tito Puente taught me to use my left hand, rather than to use a stick on the timbales. There's a "dead" stroke and there is an open stroke that you play with your fingers. That's the traditional method of playing the instrument. I also learned from these guys all the basic Latin rhythms and a sense of clave.

CB: Isn't it true that even Latin players don't always agree on where the clave should be placed on a particular tune?

JR: You're right. I have a great story that deals with this particular point. All the time

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as if they were playing jazz music. Latin rhythms have got to be more solid and settled because there's more syncopation going on. Also, when you're working in a multiple-percussion section, there are more things that are slotted around what you're doing. You have to play your part in the correct place so that there is that space on either side of your beat for that bongo part, cowbell beat, or whatever.

Also, American drummers should be aware of their tonality. That means being aware of when to use the cymbals, the sides of the toms, the closed hi-hat, and the cowbell. Those types of effects are important, and they are best worked out in the arrangement, depending on the type of tune it is and who is soloing. If you're working with a conga drummer, you should try to stay away from the toms, because you don't want to get into the conga's tonality. Armando Peraza showed me a way of playing a mambo on a set that works very well with conga drummers. With the snares in the "up" position on your snare drum, and playing with both hands in unison, you play the mambo beat on the snare drum and cymbals. At the same time, you play a variation of the bass figure on the bass drum; the tone of the bass drum will be below the conga drum. What I usually play on the bass drum is a "spacy" clave figure. That means I play only the two notes in the second bar and I don't play anything on the

bass drum on the first bar. It's a simple bass drum figure, but it's solid.

CB: Who in Latin music would you recommend that drummers listen to and appreciate?

JR: There are probably a lot of new people around that I don't have any firsthand knowledge of, but the individual I listen to is Tito Puente. He is still considered the absolute monarch of Latin music, not only because of his natural talent and his wonderful swing feeling as a soloist, but also because of his total musicianship. He is a graduate of the Manhattan School of Music and most of the arrangements for his big band were done by him. He plays a variety of instruments and he's a very good Latin vibe player. There's no way around it; he's about as good as you're going to hear in Latin music.

CB: How important is it to be familiar with not only percussion, but what the other instruments are doing in a Latin band?

JR: Very important. You should familiarize yourself with the patterns that the other instruments are playing in the rhythm section. For example, you should learn some of the basic Latin piano patterns, so you will know what kind of complementary figures to play with them. In particular, you should be very aware of the bass player. On any of my gigs, whether it's jazz or Latin, I lock in with the bass. Unless something goes wrong, it always seems to hold most of my

attention. In Latin music, you and the bass player have to lock together.

CB: Before we finish, is there anything else you'd like to stress?

JR: What we've really stressed in this interview is musicality. That is what we're talking about when we're discussing the drummer as an accompanist. The drummer is also the person who gives the music that extra push when it's called for. Lester Young always used to say that the only way to really play a tune is to know the words. If you're working with a vocalist, then you'll know that there's only a certain tempo that makes those words intelligible. For singers, in most cases, it's a question of mood and being able to articulate the words. Also, you've got to be able to play a combination of volumes and tempos. Total musicality—that's what makes a good accompanist.

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Q. I want the thinnest, most resonant head I can find for the bottom of my tom-toms. I've been using the regular Remo clear *Diplomats*. I know that there is a thinner *Diplomat*, the *Mark V*, but it has a white coating. Would this coating cancel out the effect of the head being thinner?

B.M.
Montclair, NJ

A. According to Rick Drumm at Remo, the coating does muffle the head somewhat, so you would be better off using a regular, clear *Diplomat*. Remo will, however, make a clear *Mark V* for you, but it's not a catalog item and must be special-ordered.

Q. Every time I play with metal brushes, a kind of black/brown dirt surface appears on the snare head after a short period of time. Later, as I play with sticks, this dirt causes a black, greasy surface on the tips of the sticks, which further transfers to the cymbals and tom heads. This has all had a bad influence on my stick response and cymbal sound, unless I clean my cymbals and replace my drumheads every week. I have tried plastic brushes, but they don't sound as good as metal ones. Can you offer some advice?

T.v.d.H.
Maanderbuurtweg, Holland

A. We researched your question with Joe D. Calato, president of Calato Manufacturing, and a fanatic about brushes. Joe informed us that the build-up of black material on your snare head is normal, and comes from the oxidation of the coating on the brush wires. Most quality brushes are made of oil-tempered steel wire, which is then cadmium-coated to prevent rust. Over a period of use, the coating oxidizes, and this oxidation leaches off onto the head. While there isn't anything you can do to prevent that, it does not mean that you have to replace your heads on a weekly basis. Joe recommends that you take a mild detergent and a damp rag and simply clean the drumhead periodically. He also suggests that, if cleaning leaves the head a little slick, you might carry a piece of fine sandpaper (150 to 200 grit) to rough up the head surface very slightly, and make it more responsive to brush playing. As far as the transfer of the oxidation from the snare head to the stick tips and cymbals, if you keep the snare head clean, this won't happen. Plastic heads do not absorb moisture readily, and if you are careful about the cleaning, you should have no problem using the brushes you like, and keeping your equipment free from dirt.

Q. I have tried in vain to find out what type of coating is used on Paiste cymbals, and how it is applied. My Paistes have the coating worn off now, and they tarnish very quickly, affecting their sound and appearance. Can I put this coating back on or have it done? If so, could I do the same for other brands?

D.E.
Pensacola, FL

A. We spoke to Steve Ettleson, of Paiste America, who told us that the coating is a special wax formula, which is applied at the factory. It is put on the cymbals, which then get a further treatment to keep the coating on. Paiste spent a great deal of time developing a coating that not only improved and protected the appearance of the cymbals, but also left the sound unimpaired. Steve also told us that the coating will last quite a long time if drummers will polish the cymbals using only a clean, dry towel to remove grease and fingerprints. If they do this, the coating will last and the shine will remain on the cymbal. Drummers who use a cleaning compound to clean the cymbals are actually removing the coating from the cymbal. Once it's gone, it cannot be replaced, and the cymbal becomes like any other uncoated cymbal—subject to tarnish. The wax coating material is not available to consumers, nor can it be replaced by the factory. Steve's main advice is to take care of the cymbal, coating and all, and thus maintain the shine that came from the factory.

Q. I am interested in purchasing a SOTA snare drum shell, but would like to sample the different types to see which wood is "my sound." Where can I go to audition their product?

A.H.
Greenbelt, MD

A. In order to find the nearest retail distributor of SOTA drum shells, we suggest you contact the manufacturer directly. They in turn can inform you of their nearest dealer in your area. Write or call State Of The Art Percussion, P.O. Box 528064, Chicago, IL 60652, (312) 737-0439.

Q. Approximately 12 to 15 years ago, I purchased a 20" ride cymbal manufactured in Italy. The stamp on the cymbal indicates it was manufactured by UFIP. I have since been attempting to purchase other UFIP cymbals, but none of the dealers in my area has any idea of where this brand of cymbal can be obtained, or even if UFIP is still in existence. I would greatly appreciate any information you could provide as to how I could obtain UFIP cymbals, or whether this company still makes them, or even exists.

M.V.
McKees Rocks, PA

A. The UFIP cymbal company originated in Italy in 1931, when several family groups of cymbalmakers banded together to form the *Unione Fabbrianti Italiani Piatti (UFIP)*—the Italian Cymbal Manufacturing Association. The factory was located in Pistoia, Italy, and manufactured UFIP cymbals exclusively until about 10 years ago, when some of the partners left to create the Tosco cymbal company. UFIP then continued in competition with Tosco (which was partially owned at that time by the Zildjian family). In recent years, Robert Zildjian of Sabian bought the entire family interest in Tosco, and ultimately the balance of the company as well. So at this time there are three major lines of Italian cymbals (UFIP, Tosco and Sabian's B-20 line) all of which can trace their "ancestry" to the original UFIP cymbals.

For a number of years, UFIP cymbals were distributed in this country by Gretsch, which still has a certain amount of inventory on hand, although the company is not actively marketing them. You can contact Gretsch directly to inquire about particular cymbals they may have available. More recently, the On-Site Music Co. has begun to distribute cymbals made by UFIP, but marketed in the U.S. under the trade name *Abraxis*. You can contact them at 3000 Marcus Avenue, Suite 2W7, Lake Success, NY 11042, or call Andy Esposito, Director of Marketing, at (516) 775-5510.

Q. I have a question regarding the approximate age and value of two Rogers drums I own. They are in very good to excellent condition. Both are 8x12 *Luxor* models, manufactured in Cleveland, Ohio, and carry the serial numbers 7039 and 11752. I realize you cannot pinpoint an age or value without seeing them, but an approximation would be appreciated. Furthermore, can you tell me how long ago Rogers was located in Cleveland, and then in Dayton, Ohio?

D.L.
Brunswick, OH

A. According to drum historian and collector Ken Mezines, the two toms that you have, even with all the original parts, are worth from \$65.00 to \$75.00 each.

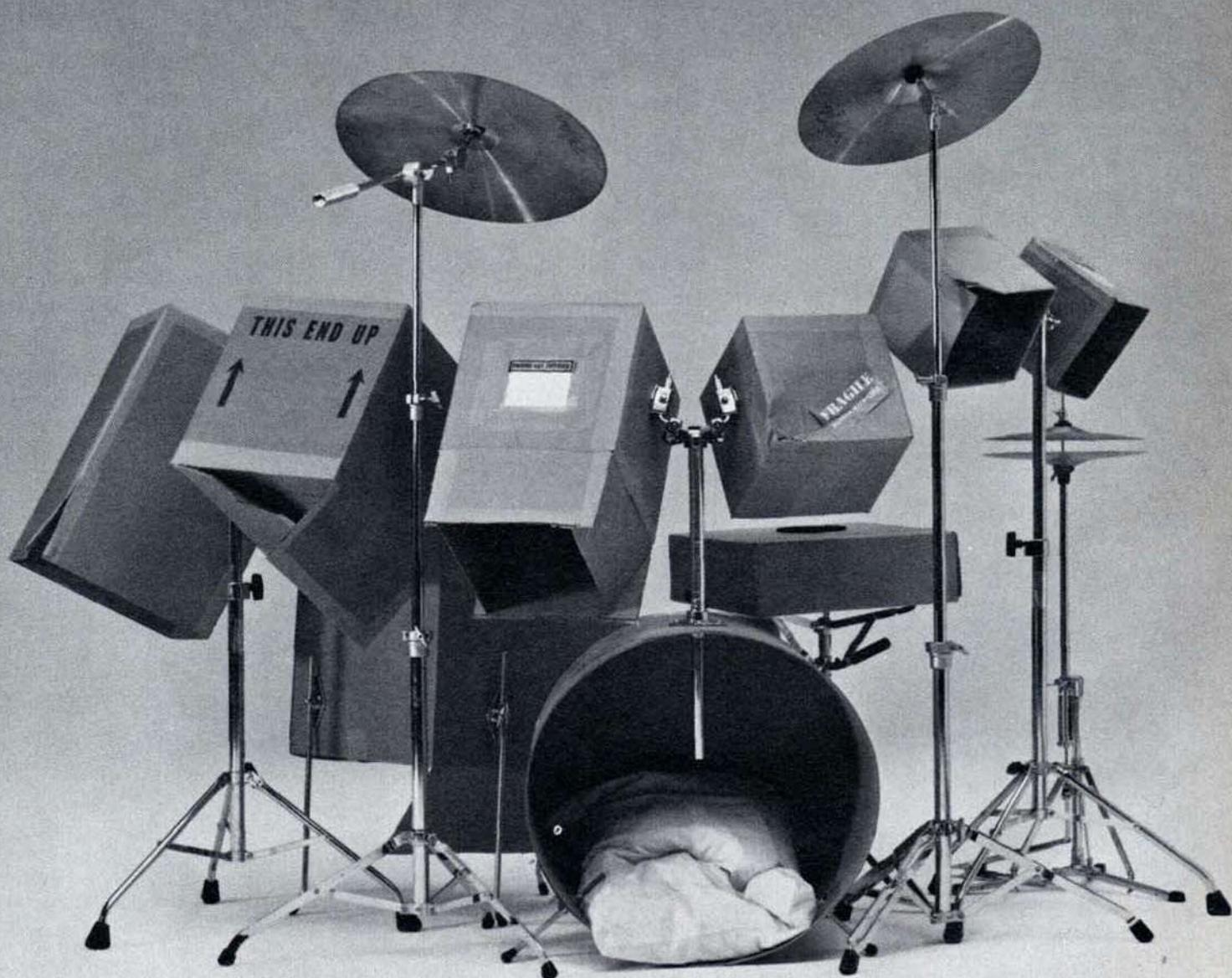
About the Rogers Drum Company: In 1953 Henry Grossman purchased the Rogers Co. from Cleveland Rogers. Grossman Music was based in Cleveland, Ohio; the drums were actually made in Covington, Ohio. The administration offices and warehouse moved to Dayton, Ohio, in 1966, when CBS purchased Rogers Drums from Grossman. In 1969, the company moved to Fullerton, CA, as a division of Fender, Rogers, Rhodes, which in turn was a division of CBS Musical Instruments, Inc.

continued on page 118

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UPDATE



Within the next couple of months, **Ralph MacDonald** plans on having his second Polygram album out (his first being last year's *Universal Rhythm*) and being on the road, hopefully with his all-star recording cast. "Working with Steve Gadd, Eric Gale, Richard Tee and Marcus Miller is a joy. We always have lots of fun when we work together."

These days, Ralph is concentrating on his own career—writing, producing (Grover Washington, Jr., Roberta Flack and Sadao Watanabe) and now recording his own albums. There's little time, or inclination, to do much other recording anymore. "It's very hard for me to spend hours in the studio playing as a musician on somebody else's record. It's not economical, it takes a lot of my time, and I don't really enjoy it like I used to. There are certain people I will always play for, like Billy Joel, Paul Simon, Ashford & Simpson, George Benson and Quincy Jones. I'll always do those special things. Like I did the Frank Sinatra album [*L.A. Is My Lady*] last year; I made the time to do that. I had to cancel one of my own things in order to do that, but how many

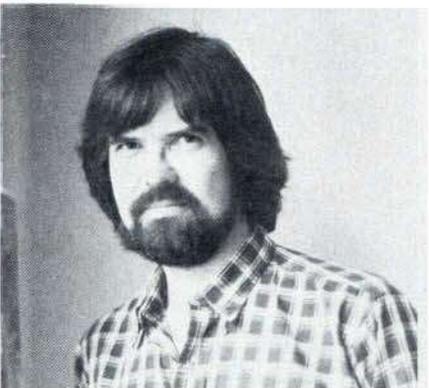
times do you get to be on a Frank Sinatra album? When you do so many things and get into the industry, you can begin to do the things you really like as opposed to what's necessary for money."

In fact, one project he really enjoyed was an album he made with Steve Gadd, that is yet unreleased. The mention of that spurred Ralph's feelings about his experience in the industry. "We completed the project, but didn't get quite as much reaction from different companies as we had anticipated. It's only because it's different. Most people think of drums as being only rhythm instruments, but we used them as rhythm, melody, and background. It sounds like a rhythm section and then it sounds like a drum & bugle corps. But for a drummer and a percussionist to do an album is pretty different. Steve Gadd is considered the number one drummer, and I'm considered the number one percussionist. To me, when you put one and one together, you get eleven. Some people are only looking to get two, and if something doesn't sound like what's already in the top ten, the record companies can't hear it, they can't see it and nobody goes out on a limb anymore. We got good vibes back, but it just wasn't what we were expecting. The song that is the title track of Grover Washington, Jr.'s album, *Inside Moves*, was one of the tunes on Steve's and my album that the record companies couldn't deal with. It was exactly the same track; I just sold the track to Grover Washington. Why is it not acceptable from Steve Gadd and Ralph MacDonald, but it can be the title track of Grover Washington's album? The album is still laying somewhere, and hopefully, at some point in time someone

will say, 'What about that album you did?' So I went ahead and did my own album. To be honest with you, my album was made in 1981 for another record company that sat on those tapes for three years. Finally, a guy who works at Polygram—who used to be at the other company—asked me what happened to that album. So he said to get it back and he'd put it out. That's how those things happen.

"It's just lucky for me that I have my hand in so many pots that I'm able to sustain myself and can deal with all the bullshit that goes on. If I had to depend on being an artist, I'd be in a much different situation. As long as you know what you're up against, and know the people you're dealing with, you should be able to make your own way and know where you're going. Unless you know who you are and where you've been, there's no point in even trying to go anywhere because this industry changes so much. I remember that, at one time, they were looking for six- and seven-minute songs. Then, all of a sudden, it changed back to where, if you had anything over three minutes, there was no way they were going to play it. And then, all of a sudden, disco died and slowly but surely here came this dance music and they wanted long versions again. Hell, we just cut everything too short!

"I've been in this industry 23 years and I've seen it change 1,000 different times. I've seen people come and go, and other people stay around. There's a reason for that. It's not just being lucky. Mostly, if you get a good seven-year run in the industry, you've had a good time." —*Robyn Flans*



Drummer **Bill Berg** has plenty to keep him busy. Musically, last year was filled up by two bands: The Wayne Johnson Trio (Zebra Records) and Flim & The BB's (DMP). Both bands are currently working on new albums and will soon be performing. About Flim & The BB's, Bill says, "Two of the guys live on the East Coast

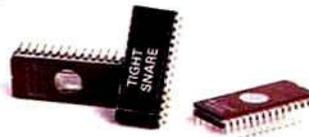
and two live on the West. It's interesting because we all get away from each other, and then we come back with new ideas so that everybody has different things to draw on. I definitely think we grow together, even though we're growing in different places."

When he isn't playing music, Bill is an animator who works for Disney Studios. He loves doing both, but every once in a while it presents a problem. "Every so often I will do a lot of animation and I'll start to feel, 'Geez, that's looking nice.' Then we'll have a string of gigs. We'll have a double billing with Vinnie Colaiuta, and I'll think, 'Man, I'm just barely warming up this set of mine here. I really need to get back in the shed and play.' It's a blessing and a curse. Anytime it gets a little rough in animation, I can say, 'Well, enough of this stuff for a while. I'll play music,' or vice versa. If the band isn't booked or the album isn't selling and not much is hap-

pening musically, I can start looking around for an animation project, so I have to watch myself. I can get lazy and just go to a certain plateau at either end, and not push for the next level of competence.

"I can see it eventually coming together to the point where I will start to animate some of the music that we do either with the BB's or with Wayne. I really like doing both. They are a great balance to one another. There's a tedium to animation—the singularity of each drawing, one on top of another, doing hundreds of drawings and then flipping them in my hands. Then I think, 'Gee, I need to make that arm move quicker, this blink is not right, or the head is cocked too far.' The balance of that is going from Disney and setting my drums up. It's spontaneous. I hit the snare drum and there goes the sound. In animation you can correct what you're doing, but you can't do that in a live music setting. The balance is real nice." —*Robyn Flans*

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It always seems that the best players are extremely busy. For example, take **Mike Clark**. Since his *MD* interview in June of '83, Mike has been a very busy man. He toured Japan with Shunzo Ono's group, Quarter Moon. He has recorded an album with Jack Walrath entitled *Live In Persia*, and subsequently toured Europe several times with Jack. Mike was also touring with Tony Bennett for a while last year. "I enjoyed that gig a lot. Tony toured with a rhythm section that burned. The horn sections were hired in the cities where we worked, so with new people coming in the gig stayed fresh." Recently, Mike also finished working with Benny Russell's big band, The New York Association, featuring some of the brightest talents in the area.

As if all of these situations weren't enough, Mike has begun working with Drummers Collective. He enjoyed teaching in the master class there so much that he has decided to take on a few students. Commenting on Drummers Collective, Mike says, "Drummers Collective is very conducive to practice. They have room after room of drums, and it's easy to just forget the world, concentrate, and get to work. The attitudes on teaching are very open, and because of this, I think I'm learning as much as the students."

A project that Mike is very excited about is a quartet he co-leads with pianist Neal



Photo by Rick Mattingly

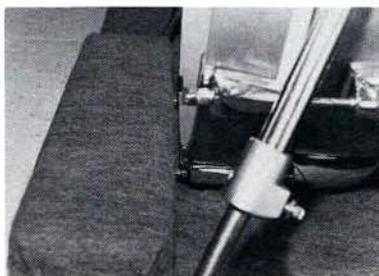
Kirkwood. Along with Clark and Kirkwood the group features Manny Boyd on woodwinds and Anthony Cox on bass. "This is the type of situation I really enjoy. The quartet is all acoustic and straight-ahead, yet the ideas and concepts we are after are different and very much our own. There is a real chemistry between us and it is inspiring." The quartet has just finished recording an album and they are hoping to have it released shortly. —William F. Miller

Denny Carmassi on Stevie Nicks' newest. **Craig Krampf** on the film score of *The Breakfast Club*, which came out last month. Krampf wrote and played on the title track for the film *Better Off Dead*. He can also be heard on Amanda Miguel's album and is working with Crazy Horse. **Tony Coleman**, who has moved to Dallas, is no longer working with Bobby Blue Bland, and is with Johnny Taylor now. **Bobby Daniels** is on the road with Kenny Rogers. **Kenny Aronoff** is recording with John Cougar Mellencamp. **Jackie Santos** is just off the road with Tavares and has moved to Los Angeles. **Vinnie Colaiuta** has been working with Chaka Khan. **Eddie Bayers** is on John McEuen's solo LP just out as well as the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band's upcoming album. Among Eddie's other recent projects are Michael Murphy, Gus Hardin, Marie Osmond, Sylvia, Johnny Lee, Lane Brody, Eddie Raven, Riders In The Sky, and Gary Morris. In recent months, **Emil Richards** has worked on such TV productions and films as *Glitter*, *Call To Glory*, *Remington Steele*, *Cover Up*, *Mike Hammer*, *Supergirl*, *Body Double*, *Bob Newhart Show*, *Baby*, *For Love Or Money*, *Catholic Boys*, *Falling In Love*, *Mickey And Maude*, *Love Boat Protocol*, *The Execution*, and *Port Alamo* (with Jim Keltner), as well as Linda Ronstadt's most recent release. Our condolences to **Victor Feldman** who recently lost both his mother and his wife. Late last year, **Carl Allen** completed a tour of Seattle, Alaska and Canada behind Freddie Hubbard. Following a new album recorded in January and February of this year, Carl went out again with Freddie to tour Europe in February. Carl is also featured on a new recording by trumpeter John Allmark, and will be in the studio with trumpeter Frank Gordon this month. **John Hartman**, founding member of the Doobie Brothers, is currently cutting tracks with former Santana percussionist **Michael Carabello**, with Neil Schon producing. Hartman has also pieced together his own band, called Ipso Blasto, together with former The Edge guitarist Rick Wilson. **Lloyd Herrman** has been busy holding down the drum chair with Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown's recording and touring band for the last couple of years. Based in New Orleans, the band has been on the road nonstop, crisscrossing the U.S. and Canada, with a high-energy act combining, as Lloyd puts it, "everything from big band tunes to Cajun tunes to blues to funk, along with country and calypso—to name a few. 'Gate' puts on a really good show. He's 60 years old and wears me out!" Lloyd played on Brown's album *Alright Again*, which won a Grammy Award in 1983 for best traditional blues recording. **Razzle**, drummer for Hanoi Rocks, was killed last December in an automobile accident. —Robyn Flans and Rick Van Horn

NEW! GIG RUG™

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L.T. LUG LOCK from

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Send \$49 (US) for GIG RUG (includes handling)
NY State residents add 7%. No C.O.D.'s
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EX-5500
DEEP-FORCE SERIES



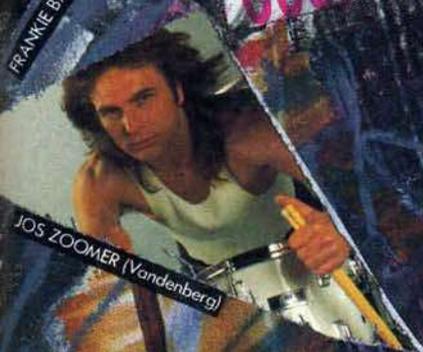
EX-22D-5 Illustrated in No.33 Pure White
Cymbals not included

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INDUSTRY HAPPENINGS

MODERN DRUMMER MOVES INTO NEW OFFICES



The entire Modern Drummer operation, from editorial, circulation and advertising departments, to shipping and receiving, is now housed in the company's new 7,500 square-foot facility, located in the Canfield Office Park in Cedar Grove, New Jersey. According to President/Publisher Ron Spagnardi, "The move to larger, more efficient quarters was necessitated by the tremendous growth of Modern Drummer Publications over the past ten years. We certainly hope to continue serving the ever-widening Modern Drummer and Modern Percussionist audience even better during the coming years from our new home base."

PROFILE CYMBAL T-SHIRT PROMOTION



Profile Cymbals has just launched a T-shirt promotion to introduce their new line of professional cymbals. A handsome four-color-on-black Profile T-shirt will be given, free of charge, to all percussionists who test Profile cymbals at their local retailer. They feature a distinctive dragon design on the shirt front.

According to Profile Vice President Martin Cohen, "The point of the promotion is to emphasize the professional quality of the entire Profile line." To qualify for a free T-shirt, all a drummer must do is

fill out and send a validated Profile T-shirt coupon, after taking the Profile sound test at his or her favorite pro drum shop.

The new Profile line includes crashes, splashes, rides, crash rides and hi-hats in all popular sizes. All offer sounds and textures designed to appeal to the professional in search of a new means of expression. For more information, contact Mr. Martin Cohen, Vice President, Profile USA, 4 William St., P.O. Box 807, Lynbrook, NY 11563, or call (515) 887-3531.

STEVE SMITH AND FREDDIE WHITE AT NINTH ANNUAL DRUM FEVER



Journey's Steve Smith and Earth, Wind & Fire's Freddie White drew more than 1,000 Chicago drummers recently to Bill Crowden's Drums Ltd.'s ninth annual "Drum Fever" percussion clinic. This year's event was cosponsored by the Avedis Zildjian Company.

"We were very fortunate to get two musicians of such high caliber for Drum Fever this year," said a beaming Bill Crowden as he surveyed the packed house at the 21st anniversary celebration of his store. "Steve Smith has been driving Journey for years; Freddie White, along with his brothers, has been leading Earth, Wind & Fire for over a decade. It's quite a coup to score two drummers from bands with several platinum-plus albums. Only a company of Zildjian's stature could have secured such a lineup, and I'd like to thank Lennie DiMuzio and the others from Zildjian for helping to make this year's Drum Fever such a success."

White, a Chicago native, recruited a couple of friends on keyboards and bass to help him open the show, then demonstrated his amazing skills in a solo context, offering the many students in attendance some top technical tips. During his brief biographical sketch and the question-and-answer session that followed, White's advice to young drummers emerging from the same background as his own really hit home.

During the intermission, more than \$2,000 worth of door prizes were presented,

including Zildjian cymbals, a Drum Workshop bass drum pedal, ABS trap and attache cases from Humes & Berg, dozens of T-shirts, and more.

Smith, bereft of backup band, opened with a powerhouse "machine-gun" rock solo, along with some of the jazz-oriented licks he displays with his own Vital Information band. Then he shared some super warmup and practice techniques, before entertaining the questions from the floor. For developing sticking skills, he recommended the *Patterns* series by Gary Chaffee; for solos, he credited Bob Moses' *Drum Wisdom* for improving his attitude and listening. Steve was momentarily stumped when asked to break down his famous fill from the Journey hit, "Separate Ways." "I can play it fast, but I can't play it slow!" he confessed, before working it out to the delight of the crowd.

Freddie then joined Steve onstage for a spirited "drum battle." Easily settling into a groove, the two soon started trading solos: first Smith echoing the funky bass drum/tom-tom lines of White; then Freddie answering the rudimentary rocket attacks of Steve. The consensus of the crowd, split between funksters and rockers, was that the two battled to a draw.

Drums Ltd. is located on the eighth floor at 218 South Wabash Avenue in Chicago. For more information, call (312)427-8480.



WORTH ALL NINE LIVES.

Martin Chambers will go to any length for the perfect drumstick.

Martin's powerful drumming drives the phenomenally successful Pretenders sound. But a bad drumstick is enough to make him climb walls. With the Pretenders success, and his own reputation as a fine drummer, Martin can play any equipment he chooses . . . and Dean Markley's 2S is the only stick he'll use.

Dean Markley drumsticks are made from only the finest select hickory, slowly dried to a low moisture content to deliver maximum durability.

Our special sealing process penetrates and protects the wood without a lacquer coating. The result is a natural wood stick that feels great and won't slip out of your hand, even in the middle of a tricky caper.

So remember, you don't have to turn to a life of crime to find the right stick, just buy a pair of Dean Markley's premium hickory drumsticks from your dealer today.

Then go out and steal the show tonight.

Dean Markley
D R U M S T I C K S

LUDWIG PHOTO SESSION

by Donald Quade



All of the endorsers—tuxed, propped and posed—surround Bill Ludwig III and William F. Ludwig, Jr.



Socializing in the lobby of the Barclay Hotel in Chicago, awaiting transport to the photo studio.



Each drummer was custom fitted in a tuxedo, then encouraged to "individualize" his look with props and accessories.



Joe Morello (center) was in this year's photo for the first time.



Bill Ludwig III and Pete Ryan (Selmer Vice-president) discuss details of the photo session.

You will soon see Ludwig's new ad, which will feature a single photo containing over 50 of their endorsing artists. A poster of this same shot will also be released. The theme is "A Class Act," and the ad portrays all of the various drummers in formal attire (individually modified to suit individual personalities, of course), grouped around William F. Ludwig, Jr., and Bill Ludwig III seated at a table, toasting Ludwig drums. The background looks for all the world like a festooned ballroom on New Year's Eve, complete with balloons and falling confetti.

The story behind this ad has some unique features of its own. This is the fourth year that Ludwig has presented an ad campaign of this sort. (Remember the "Stable Of Stars" that listed a horse as "independent," and last year's flatbed 18-wheeler carrying all the drummers with the caption "Ludwig Delivers"?) While most major drum companies run ads that prominently feature their endorsing artists, only Ludwig has been able to regularly produce such an ad featuring nearly *all* their endorsers at one time. And in this particular instance, it must say something for the loyalty those artists feel towards the company, because they all traveled to Chicago this past August at their own expense, some coming from as far away as England and the European

Continent. The Ludwig company provided accommodations in Chicago, where the photo session took place, along with a welcoming party on Saturday August 25, and a dinner after the shoot on the following day.

As Bill Ludwig III, who coordinated the event, put it, "It means a great deal to us that this many drummers would bear the expense, and take the time out from their schedules to take part in this session. Many of them had to fly in the night after a major show, and leave immediately after the session to do another show somewhere else. But they still made it, and that makes us feel really good."

Ludwig went on to explain, "Since 1984 marked the 75th anniversary of the Ludwig Drum Company, we wanted to do something particularly special with this year's ad photo. The theme of 'A Class Act' seemed to be appropriate, with all our endorsers gathered to 'toast the success' of the company. I'm very happy to say that my father, William F. Ludwig, Jr., was in the ad for the first time this year, helping to personify the tradition of the Ludwig company. Also for the first time this year, we were able to include artists from outside the pop or rock fields. In addition to top rock, pop and country artists, this year's photo features jazz great Joe Morello, studio percussionist Terral Santiel, and classical marimbist Leigh Howard Stevens. We

wanted to illustrate that Ludwig is a *total* percussion company."

Vice-President Pete Ryan and Marketing Manager Jim Catalano, representing the Selmer company (Ludwig's parent corporation) were on hand lending their expertise. Ryan commented that, "Selmer is very pleased to be a part of this Ludwig campaign. We think that the personal relationship enjoyed by the Ludwig Drum Company and all these drummers represents an attitude that cannot help but be beneficial to all of Ludwig's customers. Ludwig is a company that *cares*, and I don't think all these people would have come here at their own expense if they didn't believe that."

The drummers assembled at the Barclay Hotel, in Chicago, between Friday, August 24, and the following Sunday morning. At the hospitality party on the evening of August 25, and indeed all through the weekend, the atmosphere was extremely social. One could hear drummers from well-known acts questioning each other about mutual acquaintances, equipment choices, touring schedules, and other items of interest. Perhaps most often heard was the comment, "Do you know who that is over there?" It was amusing to note how a big-name drummer can become a "typical fan" when seeing another drummer for the first time. In that context, Bill

Ludwig III commented, "It's particularly gratifying to me to see so many rock drummers—both big names and the not-so-big—coming to me and saying, 'Is that Joe Morello over there? He was a *huge* influence on me! Would you introduce me?' It makes me especially glad that Joe was able to make the trip, and pleased that he's been associated with Ludwig for so long."

On the morning of Sunday, August 26, all the drummers gathered in the hotel lobby, and were bused to Rah Producers Center, a production and photo studio in downtown Chicago, there to be fitted for tuxes, select props and accessories, and be placed in the photo staging. Naturally, with so many people involved (including the photographers, costumers, stagehands, makeup people, etc.), the logistics became cumbersome, and delays were encountered. The entire shoot took six hours, and by the end of the day all concerned were ready for a good dinner and some relaxation. This was provided by the Ludwig company at the Como Inn, where a sumptuous Italian meal was served to the endorsing artists, the photo crew, and everyone else connected with the event.

Bill Ludwig III concluded the weekend with the statement that, "This is definitely the best ad we've come up with, and the most successful photo shoot. Now all we have to do is start thinking about next year!"



TS500 (Lenny White)
Tama breathes new life into the 5 piece electronic drum set. Snare, Rim shot, 3 Tom Toms and Base Drum form the nucleus of today's drum sounds.

TS600 (Roger Taylor)
Powerful, percussive, performance can be added to any acoustic bass and snare with the complete TS600 arsenal. 4 thundering Tom voices. Synth drum for bizarre space sounds and a rousing chorus of Handclaps make this set "one of a kind."

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The most cost effective way to add the power and punch of electronic drums to your present set up. TS200 dual voice

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SANLAR CORP. BUYS SLINGERLAND DRUM COMPANY

In a joint statement to the press by Sanlar Corporation and C.G. Conn, Ltd., it was announced that Sanlar has purchased the Slingerland Drum Company, including its Deagan Division. Lawrence R. Rasp has been named by Sanlar as the new president of Slingerland. The 70,000-square-foot brick Slingerland building,

with its modern facilities, is located on a 6.1-acre site in Niles, Illinois.

Sanlar has expressed its desire to continue in the Slingerland tradition of producing the finest quality percussion instruments, and to service its dealerships in the best possible manner.

JAZZ SOCIETY HONORS ALAN DAWSON



The Boston Jazz Society, Inc. will honor Alan Dawson, one of the nation's outstanding percussionists and music educators, on April 21, 1985, at Anthony's Pier 4 Restaurant in Boston. It is the Society's policy to pay homage periodically to those musicians from the Boston area who have significantly contributed to the history and development of jazz.

According to the Society's Richard T. Hollyday, "For more than 30 years Alan Dawson has been, and continues to be, one of music's great contributors, performing world-

wide with most of the" major jazz artists of the era. He remains a consistent influence on emerging new talent in the art form. His teaching is extensive, and his students include many of today's foremost drummers."

Proceeds from the Alan Dawson Testimonial will provide funding for a scholarship in the percussionist's name. Additional information about this event may be obtained by writing the Boston Jazz Society, Inc., at P.O. Box 178, Boston, MA 02134, or calling (617) 762-8322.

12TH ANNUAL DIXIELAND JAZZ JUBILEE

Sacramento's 12th annual Dixieland Jazz Jubilee will be held over the Memorial Day weekend, May 24-27, 1985. This festival is unlike most musical events, as there will be some 40 bands performing at the same time in locations throughout the downtown area, rather than at one performing center. The Jubilee is performed in individual locations, thus minimizing crowds and allowing the more than 200,000 attendees to select the musical group of their choice for each performance. Courtesy bus service is provided to allow music lovers to move about with ease and without driving worries.

The bands performing at the festival will include groups from two Iron Curtain countries, Japan, Australia, and throughout Europe. Some 70 U.S. bands will perform, along with a dozen youth and college groups. The Jubilee is conducted under the auspices of the Sacramento Traditional Jazz Society, and is dedicated to continuing the tradition of American jazz, as well as providing scholarships to young musicians. For more information, write Sacramento Dixieland Jubilee, 2787 Del Monte St., West Sacramento, CA 95691.

Questionable continued from page 108

Q. I have the Simmons SDS5, and I am trying to find a hi-hat module for it. I have been to several dealers, and have even called the Group Centre in Calabasas, CA, only to have been told that Simmons is no longer manufacturing the SDS5, or the modules. If this is true, can I special order one, or am I out of luck?

J.R.

Seal Beach, CA

A. According to David Levine, Director of Marketing for Simmons Group Centre, Inc.: "Although the SDS5 was discontinued to make room for the introduction of the SDS7 digital/analog and SDS8 five-piece sets, Group Centre does have an ample supply of spare modules and parts for the SDS5. The difficulty you encountered in locating the hi-hat module is due to a temporary shortage created by an unexpected surge in demand for SDS7 modules. Please check with your local authorized Simmons dealer, or call Group Centre, Inc., at (818) 884-2653.

Q. Recently I bought a used bass drum to add to my set and make it a double-bass setup. The problem I have is, after setting up the two basses, I couldn't get my hi-hat stand as close to my snare drum as I like it to be; the left bass drum was in the way. How do I go about solving this problem? Is it an equipment change or is there a trick I'm missing?

J.M.

Cromwell, CT

A. The problem you're faced with is one of simple physics: two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time. You're used to having your hi-hat pedal in a comfortable position for your left foot. The addition of a second bass drum generally places the left bass drum pedal in that position, forcing the hi-hat to move a bit further to the left. There's just no escaping that, and it's something that you'll have to get used to.

How much that hi-hat must move to the left is something that can be varied, however. If you use a regular hi-hat stand, the legs can often prevent your placing the pedal as close to the left bass drum pedal as it might otherwise go. You need to obtain an adapter which will allow you to clamp the hi-hat stand to the left bass drum hoop, with the stand legs folded up. Such adapters are offered by Pearl (HA-9Q), Sonor (Z5515), Yamaha (HSAT-910), Tama (6323) and Ludwig (L-1121). Tama and Sonor take it one step further, and offer legless hi-hat stands exclusively for use with their clamps in a double-bass format.

Q. I purchased a Tama Royalstar drumset approximately five months ago. Lately, I have been noticing that the inner coating of lacquer seems to be wearing off the shells. It looks as if the wood is drying out. They have not been exposed to excessive heat or light. I am pleased with the sound I am getting from the drums now, but if all the lacquer wears off the insides, it will inevitably make the sound more dull. Can you give me any advice?

J.C.

Atlanta, GA

A. We referred your question to Bill Reim of the Tama drum company, who provided us with the following information: "What looks like the inner coating of lacquer wearing off the shells is merely the nature of that particular grade of wood when finished. You may have had the opportunity to examine a set of Artstar drums while in a local drum shop, and noticed that they're 'as hard and smooth as the barrel of a gun.' The reason is twofold: First, the grain of Cordia wood is much tighter than most other woods (which means less sealing is involved) and second, the process used to finish the interior of Artstar shells is more time-consuming (and ultimately more expensive) than any other finishing process used on other Tama drums. So, in this case, it's a matter of cost in relation to production. If you're happy with the sound of your Royalstars, don't worry. That's the sound you've got, and it won't change unless you do something to change it yourself."

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Performance: Earl Hamilton/New York Flyers

JUST DRUMS

NEW STANDS FROM COSMIC PERCUSSION



From the Cosmic Percussion division of Latin Percussion, Inc. come two new stands. The first, a double-cymbal boom, represents an economical way to mount two cymbals while only costing a little more than a single boom stand. It features an extra clamp for accessory placement, offset tilters, and double-braced stand. The sec-



ond new stand is CP's *Supreme* boom tom-tom stand, which is a heavy-duty, double-braced stand with a sturdy boom to provide a convenient way to mount toms when there isn't much room around the kit. For further information, contact Latin Percussion Inc., 160 Belmont Ave., Garfield, NJ 07026.

STICK HANDLER II DRUMMER'S GRIP TAPE



without creating any skin irritation or blistering.

Easily applied for a custom grip on all sticks, both *Stick Handler* products greatly increase stick control, but the original product is more oriented towards "bashers" and heavy metal type drummers; the tape's "stickiness" increases as you perspire more. In contrast, *Stick Handler II* is appropriate for use by all drummers, minus the stickiness/perspiration equation.

Mechanical Music Corporation has introduced a new addition to its *Stick Handler* line of drummer's stick-control tape. Dubbed *Stick Handler II*, the new tape provides a soft, dry grip on all types of drumsticks

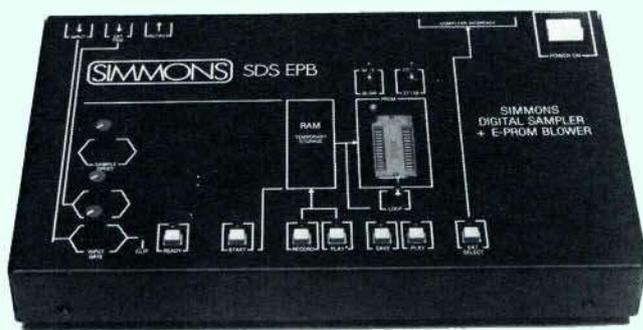
Available in brown, red, black, blue, green, and white, *Stick Handler II* can be purchased at fine music stores everywhere, or you may contact Mechanical Music Corporation, 622 Hickory Drive, Buffalo Grove, IL 60090.

COSMIC PERCUSSION ASCEND PRACTICE KIT

Cosmic Percussion has recently offered a new practice pad drumkit, featuring five rubber pads that have real drumhead feel and response. The set is easy to assemble, and includes a foot pedal. Contact Cosmic Percussion at 160 Belmont Avenue, Garfield, NJ 07026.



SIMMONS INTRODUCES NEW SAMPLING UNIT



Simmons Electronics has just introduced their latest technological breakthrough, the Simmons *Digital Sampler/E-Prom Blower (SDS EPB)*. Designed for use with the *SDS7* digital drumkit or *SDS1* digital drum pad, the *SDS EPB* allows its user to program his or her own memory chips from virtually any acoustic or electric sound source. A drummer, for example, will now be able to digitally store the sound of a favorite acoustic set on a handful of memory chips; a percussionist might carry a trunk full of percussion effects in a briefcase. The *EPB* can also be used to store the real sound of other musical instruments, the human voice, and a wide variety of natural sound effects which can be loaded into the *SDS1* pad or *SDS7* voice module and triggered by Simmons pads or *SDS6* sequencer. The *SDS EPB* greatly expands the range of sounds available, as

well as the creative options of its users.

To store a sound, the user selects the correct blank memory chip: 8K for shorter sounds, 16K for longer ones. Then the sound is "sampled" via a microphone or line source and held in RAM storage to allow audio inspection of the sample. Once the proper sample is produced, the E-PROM (erasable programmable read only memory) chip is inserted and the information is transferred to it. The programmed chip can then be put into the *SDS7* or *SDS1*, where it will be fully adjustable for all functions. In addition, by exposing a programmed chip to ultraviolet light for 30 minutes, its memory can be erased and the chip reprogrammed.

For further information, contact Simmons Group Centre, Inc., 23917 Craftsman Road, Calabasas, CA 91302, or call (818) 884-2653.

QUICASE DRUM MACHINE BAG



Quicase is a new, adjustable gig bag for drum machines. A unique design enables the case to securely fit most of the drum machines now on the market. It also provides for quick and easy unloading of instruments. The lightweight case has a front zipper pocket for chip and cord storage, and a handle and shoulder strap for carrying

ease. Quality materials and craftsmanship go into *Quicase* to provide long-lasting durability. The case is adjustable from 16"x10" to 2P/4"x13", while the zipper pocket measures 10" x 8" x 2". Contact *Quicase*, 3952 Lyceum Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90066, or call (213)306-7313.



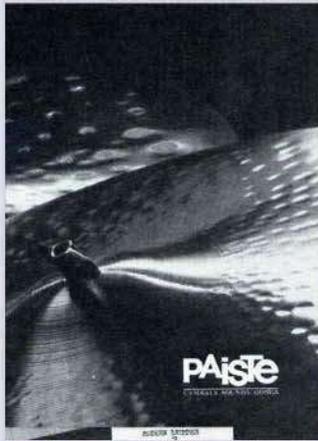
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PAISTE RELEASES NEW CATALOG



Paiste has recently released a new color brochure detailing their full line of cymbals, sounds and gongs. The 30-page brochure features brilliant photography and descriptions of all products released through 1984. It also includes information on cymbal sound characteristics, selection and care. The brochure is now available through Paiste Sound Centers or retail dealers, or through direct inquiry to Paiste America, Inc., 460 Atlas Street, Brea, CA 92621.

TELEX PH20 HEAD-WORN MICROPHONE



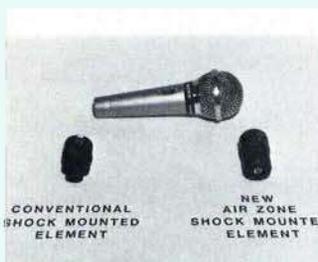
180-degree adjustable boom provide a custom fit for proper mouth-to-microphone distance and the option of wearing the mic' on the right or the left side of the head.

Included with the *PH20* mic' is the *PS10* power supply, which supplies inline power to the *PH20* through a 1.4-volt calculator-type battery or phantom power from an external source.

Designed for hands-free vocal delivery, the Telex *PH20* head-worn microphone utilizes a close-talking, wide response, electret microphone, with an excellent frequency response curve for a variety of applications, including musical performance. The *PH20* has a stable, split-piece headband that mounts securely on the head for a comfortable, dependable fit. Slip-proof foam temple cushions provide long-lasting comfort while averting fatigue. A reversible swivel mount and

The matte black finish and slender design of the *PH20* give it a subtle appearance, allowing professionals on stage to look their very best at all times. Also available are the *PH21* head-worn mic' without power supply, and the *PH22* head-worn mic' that connects directly to Telex wireless mic' systems. For more detailed information, please write or call the Telex Professional Audio Department, at 9600 Aldrich Ave., So. Minneapolis, MN 55420, (612) 884-4051.

SONY MUSICIAN SERIES MICROPHONE UPGRADE



Technologically superior air-zone shock mounts have been designed for the elements in all Sony *Musician Series* microphones. This is in keeping with the demand for more durable, moderately priced professional microphones capable of being

used by groups such as electronic-oriented bands and heavy metal musicians.

The growing useage of multi-miking onstage, such as with drum setups, has created the need for newer standards in microphone construction and design. Mic's equipped with the new air-zone shock-mounted element were shown to have an overall noise level reduction of up to 10 dBspl versus conventional shock-mounted element mic's, in recently documented laboratory tests.

Sony *Musician Series* mic's are available from all leading music dealers.

PAISTE INTRODUCES COLORSOUND 5 CYMBALS



Paiste recently unveiled a new line of colored cymbals, to be known as *Colorsound 5*. According to Ed Llewellyn, president of Paiste America, the company has been developing the new products in their Swiss facilities for the past year.

"Cosmetics in the percussion industry have been gaining rapidly in importance. Drum and hardware manufacturers are responding to this trend with multi-colored sets, black hardware, colored heads and so forth. Now Paiste is entering this whole new realm. We believe a combination of factors have evolved which will make our colored cymbals a popular product very quickly. For instance, the importance of visual impact in the new medium of three-minute videos

has driven musicians to look for more than just good sound when choosing instruments. And, of course, today's audiences expect more 'show' at live performances. Fact is, our advertising theme for our *Colorsound 5* cymbals is 'More than meets the ear.' "

Llewellyn indicated that the colored cymbals will be available in red, blue, green and black, and each color will be offered in 12" splash, 14" hi-hat, 16" and 18" crashes, 18" China-type, and 20" and 22" rides. He also stressed that "Paiste has gone to great lengths to release a product that *sounds* good. We didn't just add color to one of our lines. We want to encourage the players to listen for themselves. We think they'll be pleased."

POWER SHOT DRUMSTICKS



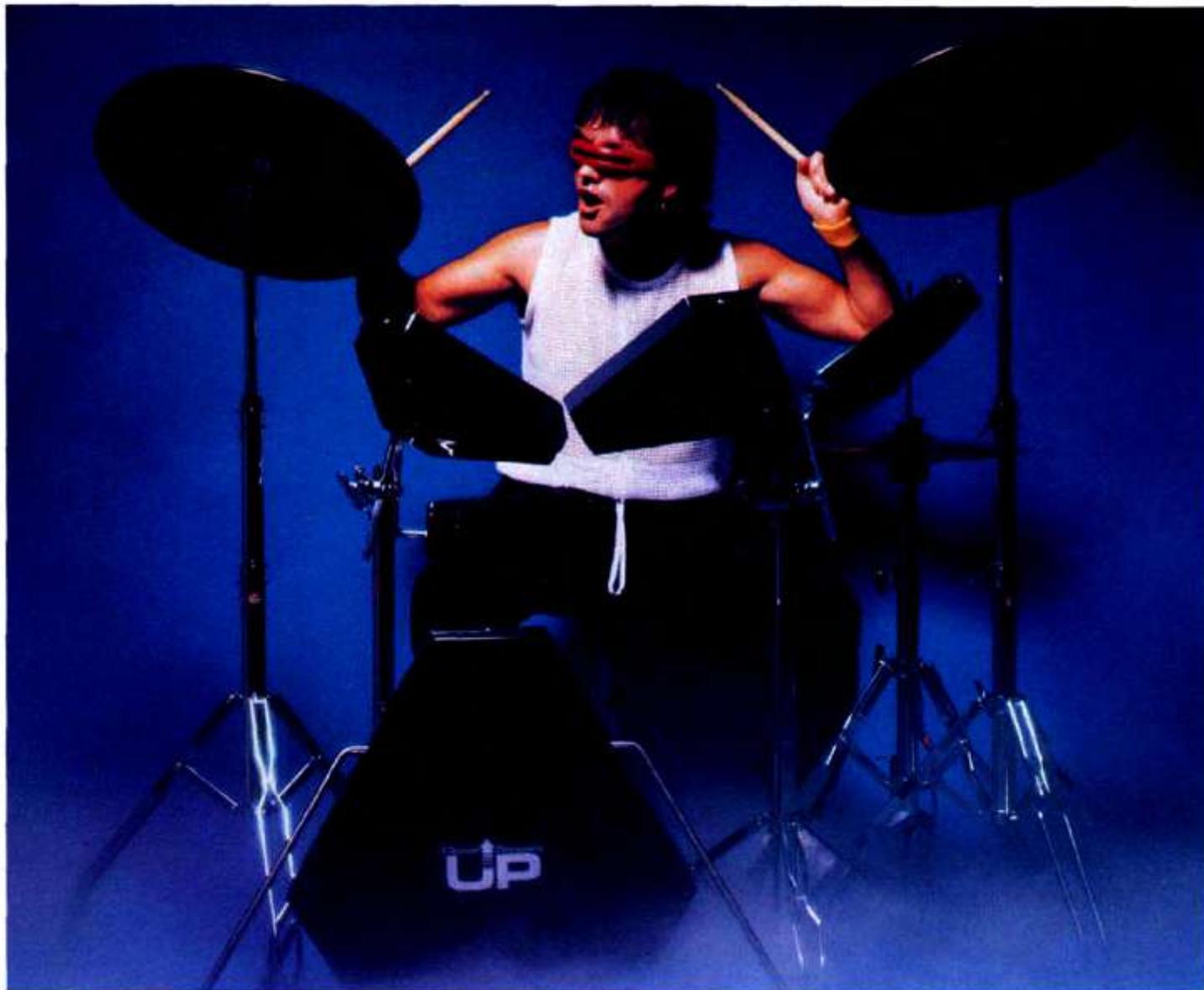
Steve Clayton, president of Clayton Products, recently announced the addition of *Power Shot* drumsticks to their accessory line. The sticks are unique, for within the nylon tip of each of these hickory drumsticks is concealed a small lead insert. More weight up front is thus provided, for extra power and leverage. For further information, contact Clayton Products, Box 1725, Cave Junction, OR 97523.

NEW GRETSCH DRUM FINISHES

Gretsch recently displayed their new finishes: Candy Red, Ice Blue, and Kool Green, which are being introduced as a simulated "covered shell." These three finishes are solid colors with Gretsch's normal high-gloss lacquer finish, without a wood-grain appearance. The acoustical advantage to these finishes is that the shells are allowed to "breathe" and resonate like natural wood finishes, yet the appearance is that of a solid-color seamless "covered shell." A metallic effect adds dimension to the Candy Red, while the Ice Blue has a rich, deep appearance. Kool Green matches the official color of the 1984 Kool Jazz Festival, for which Gretsch was the official drum supplier. Further details may be obtained by contacting Gretsch, 1 Gretsch Plaza, Ridgeland, SC 29936.



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The new UP FIVE electronic drum set lists for only \$995. And if you think that's amazing, wait until you hear the incredible range of sounds it can produce.

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Clearly, the UP FIVE is today's best value in quality electronic drums. So if you're looking for rock solid percussion, try them out at your local dealer or contact us for more information.

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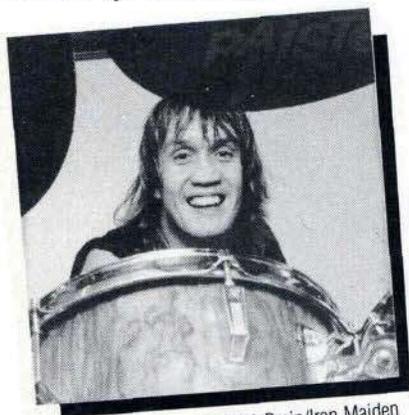
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Cymbalism

In last December's issue we disclosed the best kept secret in the cymbal business. Ever since **Nick Mason** came to us in 1979 requesting black cymbals for the set of **Pink Floyd's** "The Wall," we have been attempting to color cymbals. Various methods were tried, until finally we perfected what is now **COLOR SOUND 5**.

An exciting time lies ahead for visually conscious drummers. Now you can style your cymbal set-up with high gloss colors giving visual excitement with real cymbal sounds.



Nicko McBrain/Iron Maiden

Here are just a few of the drummers who have already added Paiste COLOR SOUND 5 cymbals to their set ups: **Ron Tutt** with Neil Diamond; **Bobby Blotzer** with **Ratt**; look for the colors in **Steve Jordan's** set on the David Letterman show; **Jon Hiseman** has added black and red rides to his regular set-up of **Paraphernalia's** autumn Euro-tour. You can also see some extra color on **Nicko McBrain's** and **Tommy Lee's** kits during the **Iron Maiden/Mötley Crüe** Euro-tour.

Add some color to **your** set. Available in red, black, green and blue.

COLOR SOUND 5—more than meets the ear!

For more details write: Paiste Drummer Service, 460 Atlas Street, Brea, CA 92621.

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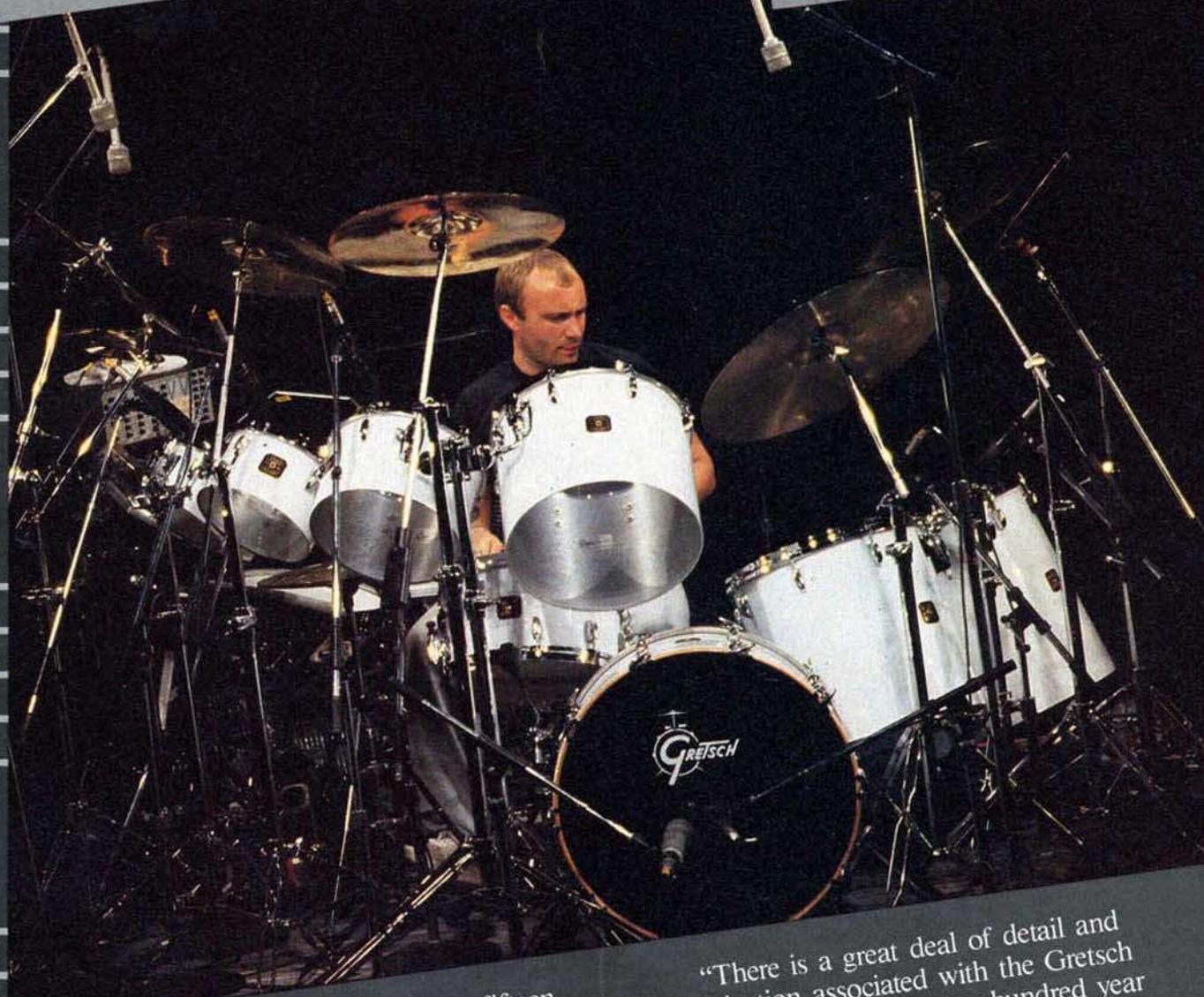
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Why do I play Gretsch?

Phil Collins
Genesis, producer & solo artist



"When I was about fourteen or fifteen years old, a good friend of mine who played drums in Joe Cocker's grease-band was playing Gretsch. I persuaded him to sell me his kit. From that moment, I was a Gretsch player. I still own that kit and it still sounds great today."

"Gretsch has always been 'a drummer's drum' and when the opportunity developed allowing me to play Gretsch again, I jumped at the chance."

"There is a great deal of detail and sophistication associated with the Gretsch product, name and over one-hundred year heritage. Sometimes I wish I did everything as well as they do."

"How do I like my new drums? They're beautiful in sound and looks...And most important, they're Gretsch."



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ZILDJIAN CRASH CYMBALS AND THE ART OF PUNCTUATION

Punctuating the flow of the music with crashes is based on drawing the sound *out* of the cymbal. It doesn't matter whether you get your crash sound by cuffing the cymbal on the side, glancing it or popping it on the shoulder or bell.

But using different playing techniques to get the full variety of possible crash effects is only half the story. You need a crash cymbal with all of those sound possibilities built into it. Each Zildjian crash has a totally individualized tonal blend that responds to *all* of your playing techniques so that you can express yourself better as a drummer.

Zildjian

You can choose from six different types of Avedis Zildjian crash cymbals for an unparalleled variety of tonal ranges and attack/decay characteristics. Each Zildjian crash is painstakingly crafted to the world's most exacting standards — our own.

Ranging from the super-fast, sensitive response of the Paper Thin Crash to the powerful and cutting projection of the Rock Crash, every A. Zildjian cymbal produces a rich "musical" sound with shimmering overtones.

Depending on the particular blend you're looking for, take the time to *listen* to a variety of cymbals. Like Zildjian's Medium Thin Crash, the world's most popular crash cymbal, which provides exceptional pitch flexibility, high end response and sustain. Our popular Medium Crash produces a robust, full-bodied sound with a higher pitch.

K

The legendary reputation of K. Zildjian cymbals comes from their deep, dark sound and dry tonal character. The K. Dark Crash epitomizes this classic sound and works extremely well in tandem with Zildjian A's to widen the dimensions of your overall sound.

amir

The Amir Crash has a crisp, bright, fast-rising sound with a smooth decay and controlled overtones. Both

the 16" and 18" sized Amir Crashes can blend in well with any Zildjian set-up.

IMPULSE

The new Zildjian Impulse line's raw explosive attack and long range projection of the rhythmic pulse is embodied in the Impulse crash. Its focused overtone threshold allows repeated crashes without overtone build-up.

The limitless sounds, tone colors and textures implicit in Zildjian crash cymbals are an important part of developing your individual drum sound. If you really *play* your crash cymbals, you can't help but hear the differences that exist among them. And those differences are what make Zildjian the only serious choice. For a white paper on Zildjian Crash Cymbals, please write to the Avedis Zildjian Company, Longwater Drive, Norwell, Mass 02061.

Zildjian®

The only serious choice.

