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AUGUST 1985

Larry Mullen Jr.



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**GEORGE
GRANTHAM**

FRANKIE DUNLOP

INSIDE SONOR

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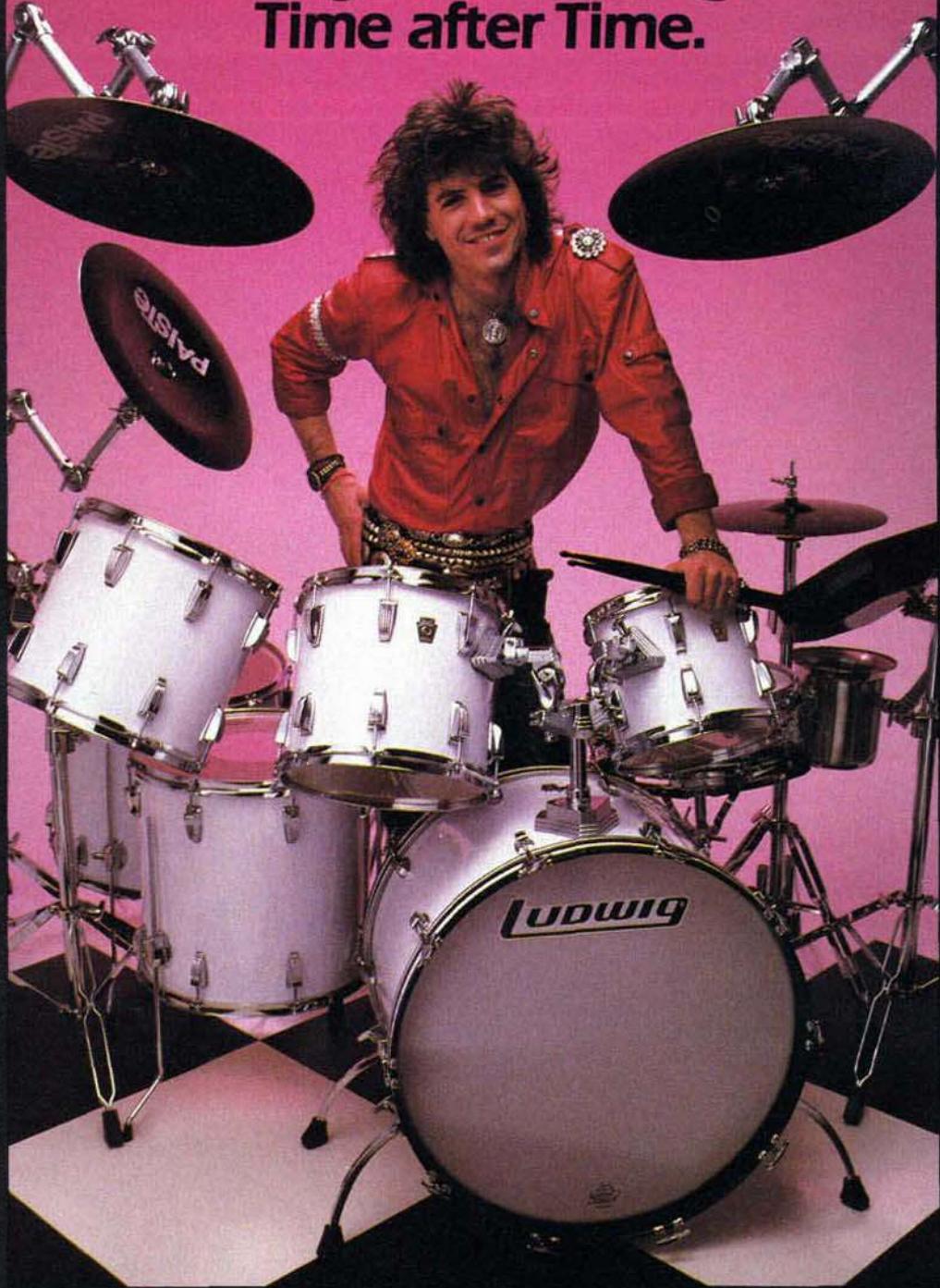
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CONTENTS

FEATURES

LARRY MULLEN, JR.

In this exclusive interview, the drummer for the Irish rock band U2 discusses how his native country has influenced the group's music. Mullen also covers such topics as light and shade in his playing, the importance of leaving "gaps" in music, and his plans for future growth and experimentation, both as an individual musician and as a member of U2.

by Connie Fisher 8

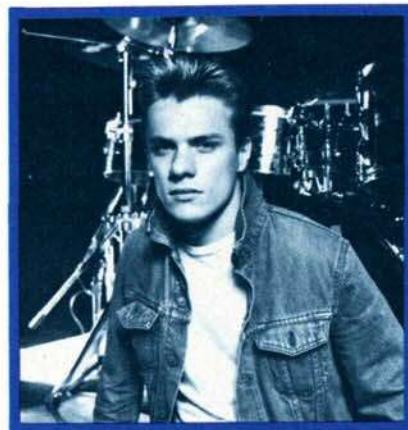


Photo by Jaeger Kotos

GEORGE GRANTHAM

Poco, the rock group of the '60s and '70s, has recently re-formed as a country-rock band based out of Nashville. Here, the group's drummer, George Grantham, discusses his work with the original group, his interim position as the drummer for Ricky Skaggs, and the difference between being a member of a group and the drummer for an individual performer. Grantham also covers such topics as being a singing drummer, live versus studio playing, and his views on electronics.

by Robyn Flans 14

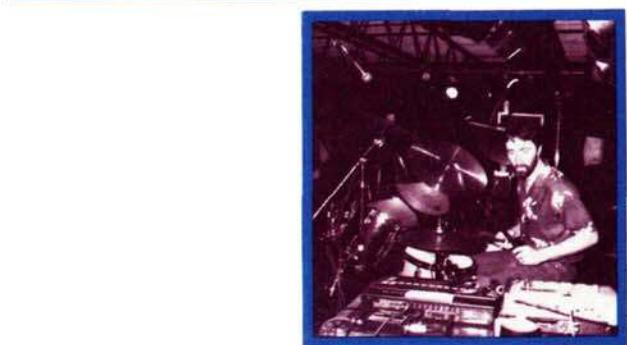


Photo by James Elliott

INSIDE SONOR

by Simon Goodwin 18



Photo by Michael S. Jachles

FRANKIE DUNLOP

This accomplished jazz drummer has performed with such legendary figures as Thelonious Monk, Sonny Rollins, Charlie Mingus, and Lionel Hampton. In this interview, Dunlop describes his early years as a drummer in Buffalo and in the army. He also talks about the effect playing with Monk, Mingus, and Rollins has had on his drumming, as well as the challenges involved in changing from small group to big band playing.

by Scott K. Fish 22

HERMAN RAREBELL

Keeping The Basics Together
by Susan Alexander 26

COLUMNS

EDUCATION

JAZZ DRUMMERS WORKSHOP

Rhythmic Displacement
by Gil Graham 56

IN THE STUDIO

Bob Christianson: On Working With
Drum Machines
by Rick Van Horn 58

CLUB SCENE

Unlimited Perspectives
by Rick Van Horn 72

THE MUSICAL DRUMMER

Examination And Review
by Bill Molenhof 74

CONCEPTS

Drumming And The Big Break
by Roy Burns 80

ROCK PERSPECTIVES

Study In 8th-Note Triplets
by David Garibaldi 82

PORTRAITS

Chuck Riggs
by Chip Deffaa 34

DRUM SOLOIST

Roy Haynes: "Think Of One"
by Karl Sterling 88

ELECTRONIC INSIGHTS

Defining Terms
by Reek Havok 96

EQUIPMENT

JUST DRUMS 106

PROFILES

UP AND COMING
Platinum Blonde's Chris Steffler
by Steven Peterson 30

REVIEWS

ON TRACK 98

NEWS

UPDATE 102
INDUSTRY HAPPENINGS 104

DEPARTMENTS

EDITOR'S OVERVIEW 2

READER'S PLATFORM 4

ASK A PRO 6

DRUM MARKET 94

IT'S QUESTIONABLE 100

EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

MD Scholarships



MD is once again proud to announce the winner of the *Roberto Petaccia Memorial Scholarship*, coordinated through the Berklee College Of Music in Boston. Our winner this year is 18-year-old Jay Bellerose, from Old Orchard Beach, Maine. Jay is currently studying drumset and mallet percussion in his local area. He is an active member of his high school marching band, concert band, and jazz ensemble, and has participated in community theater programs as a percussionist in the pit orchestra. Our youthful scholarship recipient has also performed at numerous jazz festivals, and has won several state and district musicianship awards, along with five National Association of Jazz Educators (NAJE) awards. Three of the NAJE honors were for Most Valuable Musician, for both solo and ensemble performance. Jay has also been presented with the prestigious Louis Armstrong Jazz Award, and in 1984, was selected from among hundreds of applicants to perform with the McDonalds All-American High School Band. Our congratulations to Jay Bellerose, along with our very best wishes for a successful drumming career, which he plans to pursue following his studies at Berklee. We're hopeful that MD's scholarship will aid this fine young talent in the achievement of his musical goals.

I'm also pleased to announce that, this year, MD decided to make another scholarship available on an annual basis. The *Shelly Manne Memorial Scholarship*, in memory of the late Shelly Manne, who passed away in September of 1984, will be coordinated through the Percussion Institute of Technology in Hollywood, California. Drummers who are interested in applying should submit a complete resume of their musical background, along with a performance tape that demonstrates their abilities in a solo and ensemble format. All materials or requests for further information should be directed to the Percussion Institute Of Technology, c/o Scholarship Committee, 6757 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood, CA 90028. Pre-screening of all applicants will be handled by PIT'S Scholarship Committee, and the final winner will be selected by *Modern Drummer*. The deadline for scholarship applications is October 15, 1985.

Perhaps you're curious as to what MD and the scholarship committees of both schools look for in an applicant. Well, along with a well-rounded, diversified musical background, we're basically looking for drummers who demonstrate a high degree of potential for a professional career, evidenced by good basic skills in technique, coordination, time conception, reading, ensemble playing, solo performance, and general musicianship. Versatility is also key in the evaluation of an MD scholarship applicant. Obviously, a player who can perform fluently in several different areas of drumming will be given more consideration than one who is comfortable in only one type of musical setting.

One final note: My sincere thanks to Laura Martin of the Berklee College of Music Scholarship Committee, for her ongoing assistance in the coordination of the *Roberto Petaccia Memorial Scholarship*, and to Pat Hicks, President of the Musicians Institute, who was instrumental in helping MD structure the new *Shelly Manne Memorial Scholarship*.

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READER'S PLATFORM

D.J. FONTANA

The interview with D.J. Fontana that you published in your May issue was great! I have been playing drums for 12 years this month, and D.J. Fontana was without doubt my first influence. His backbeat on Elvis' classics was what started me out and made me want to play the drums. Elvis will always be the king, and I still love to put on those old records and truly rock 'n' roll. Thank you, *Modern Drummer*, and thank you, D.J. Fontana, for the inspiration, for the influence, and for the memories.

Ian Cunningham
Guilford, CT

STICK/SKIN PROBLEMS

I was very interested in the article entitled, "Losing Your Grip," in your February, 1985 edition, in which Mr. James E. Murphy suggests the sanding of sticks to make them less slippery. I warn drummers to be very careful about this. Approximately 20 years ago, I faced this problem. Let me first say that I always have used the traditional grip. I also tried sanding a pair of sticks, and almost immediately, I developed dermatitis on both hands at all points of stick contact. I finally wound up in the care of a skin specialist. After extensive inquiries and tests, it was found that the sticks were made of cocobolo wood from South America. Many people have an allergy to this wood. I re-varnished the sticks, and the condition finally disappeared.

Although I am elderly and only drumming now for pleasure, I always appreciate your magazine.

Graeme Knuckey
Ringwood, Victoria, Australia

CONTRASTING APPROACHES

I write re: your April '85 issue. It was most interesting in the contrast set up between Steve Schaeffer's world and the worlds of Chico Hamilton and Sly Dunbar. Mr. Schaeffer describes a life of studying, intense gigging, and high-tech equipment. Messrs. Dunbar and Hamilton undoubtedly have spent some time gigging, but their approach seems decidedly more spiritual, with equipment taking a back seat to their individuality. Particularly ironic were the troubles described by Chico Hamilton in dealing with engineers, compared with Mr. Schaeffer's willingness to shape his sound for recording. Dunbar was also inspirational with his closing wish for things "to move a little more slowly in the future." In this hyped-up world, too few people can be so honest. Lastly, the description of the awesome array of equipment and skills at Steve Schaeffer's com-

mand, and all the talented engineers, composers, etc., he interfaces with, still left me with one question: Why does so much of the music cranked out by the studios sound so bland, unoriginal, and uninspiring? Could it be that the engineers have separated the musicians from their souls in their quest for efficiency? The drummer, more than any other musician, embodies that place where intellect and soul intersect, and it's noteworthy that the standardization of drum sounds, the introduction of click tracks, and finally, rhythm computers are defended mainly by those who've made their peace with this "brave new world." Schaeffer cites Philly Joe Jones, Tony Williams, and other highly individualistic drummers as his influences. Who—or what—will tomorrow's drummers be influenced by? And how will they even tell which of these gifted chameleons they're listening to?

Michael McGettigan
Philadelphia, PA

MORE ELECTRONICS

In your February '85 issue, the *Editor's Overview* column about drum computers quoted Jim Bralower as saying "Those who see the future have no problem with it. Those who want to wear blinders are going to have trouble." I challenge *Modern Drummer* magazine to lead us into the future by dedicating a column to the electronics involved in modern drumming. I find myself reading keyboard and recording magazines to find information that should be included in *MD*. A column which could cover anything in the spectrum, from the explanations of basic terminology ("triggering," "interface," etc.), to studio and live applications of any electronic equipment (to include reverberation units, delays, phase shifters, etc.) would be most beneficial to those of us who use the vast array of electronic technology available to us today.

Angel Luv
Washington, D.C.

Editor's note: In recent months, MD has presented interviews with drummers actively involved in the electronic scene, such as Jim Bralower and Steve Schaeffer, and we will continue to bring our readers the advice and experience of such top players. In addition, our Electronic Insights column will be running more frequently, with information offered by some of the experts in electronic percussion. Due to the nature of our business, the subject of electronic percussion is also likely to appear from time to time in such other columns as In The Studio or Show Drummers' Seminar. Watch for them!

SLINGERLAND PROBLEMS

Three years ago, I purchased a set of Slingerland drums. About a year after I purchased them, the plastic covering started coming loose at the seams and peeling up on several drums. Within the next year, all six drums were in the same state. Since Slingerland had a five-year warranty, I thought I had no problem. But three months after returning my drums to Slingerland for repair, I still don't have them back. First, there were problems with the color I wanted. After choosing an alternative color, I went through a series of phone calls (all at my expense) during which I was put off, put on hold, or lied to. I considered taking my problem to a lawyer, but I had a lot of faith in the American name of Slingerland. I know they've had some problems, but I shouldn't be the one to suffer.

Sonny Dryer
Overland Park, KS

In April of 1982, I purchased a Slingerland chrome drumkit. Recently, I noticed some of the drums starting to rust and pit. I talked to the dealer from whom I had purchased the kit, and we decided to send a drum to Slingerland for evaluation. After waiting two months and having Slingerland avoid our numerous phone calls, we did finally manage to get through. Their answer? "Well, it really doesn't look that bad, and besides, it's not on the audience side." My drums are supposedly guaranteed for five years. Shouldn't a bad finish be covered under defective materials?

Mike Schneider
Jackson, MI

Editor's note: Figuring that these problems may have occurred during the recent takeover of Slingerland by the Sanlar Corporation (which could have affected customer service responsiveness by Slingerland), we referred both these cases to Slingerland's new management team. Our assumption proved to be correct, as the following letter from Slingerland Vice-President Spencer Aloisio attests:

"Thank you for forwarding the letters from Sonny Dryer and Mike Schneider. I am happy to report that the problems they had experienced with their Slingerland drums have now been satisfactorily resolved. It is certainly unfortunate that Sonny and Mike had to get caught in the middle of the company's transition period. Larry Rasp, the new owner of Slingerland/Deagan, has demonstrated to them both his commitment to the quality and service of our product with great expediency. Larry and I thank Modern Drummer for providing us with the chance to set matters straight."

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ASK A PRO

BILL BRUFORD



OMAR HAKIM

Q. When King Crimson was in Montreal recently, you did some Octoban mallet work during your solo, which had an African rhythmic kind of texture. Could you explain what you were doing? It truly sounded great!

Jeff Michaels

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

A. Since the solos were improvised nightly, I'm afraid I cannot explain exactly what it was that I was doing in Montreal. But generally speaking, you're right; because of their melodic and liquid sound, pitched Octobans do have the smell of Africa. I also make use of the "call-and-response" device—much evident in traditional African music—in which a simple rhythmic statement or tune on the higher pitches (the "call") is answered by the chorus in the lower drums (the "response"). This is effective not only within the Octobans themselves, but also using the Octobans for the call and the heavier electronic Simmons drums for the response. Often, I find that this kind of simple device provides a rich source of material for a solo, and helps in keeping some sense of form—thus preventing the thing from degenerating into an athletic event.

NICK MASON

Q. Could you please outline the drum and cymbal setup you used for Pink Floyd's *The Final Cut* album? I really liked the sound of the drums on that record.

Nathan Garard
Portsmouth, NH

A. The drums were all Ludwig, and included a 16 x 22 bass drum, 12 x 13 and 13 x 14 power rack toms, 14 x 14 and 16 x 16 Classic floor toms, and a brass-shelled Supraphonics snare with die-cast rims and Ludwig heads. The cymbals were all Paiste, and included 15" Sound Edge Formula 2002 hi-hats, a 16" 2002 crash, an 18" 2002 Bright medium crash, an inverted 20" 2002 China crash, and a 20" Sound Creation Dark Ride.

As you can see, I used a fairly standard setup, but the drum sound credit goes partly to a lot of time spent in the studio "playing about," and partly to James Guthrie, our engineer. He's very fastidious about drum sounds!

Q. I was lucky enough to catch you at the Ritz with Sting, and even luckier to have a connection that allowed me to watch you backstage. You really are amazing, but the thing that blew me away most was your bass drum technique. For a person who only touches the pedal with his foot, you have amazing speed. My questions are: How tight is the tension on the pedal; do you keep it the same when you practice; and do you do special exercises to keep your foot that highly developed?

Mike Toal
Maplewood, NJ

A. As far as any special exercises go, the answer is "no." I guess that from playing so long you just develop your reflexes. The best chops you can get come from playing. There's something about playing out with people that inspires you to improve, where exercises on your own won't gain the same results.

I also think that you should search for pedals that are very comfortable. When you do get a pedal, sometimes the springs that come with it are not the ones you need to use; sometimes a smaller one or one with different tension will be better. Spring adjustment, beater height, and a lot of other factors all contribute to the speed of a pedal's action. You really have to



experiment, and sometimes it takes years to lock into it. I experimented with that for a long time.

When you find a pedal that has a nice, smooth throw and a fast return, it's easy to play fast; the fast return makes it easy. My best luck with pedals so far has been with the DW-5000 chain-drive. I just started working with the DW double pedal, and I can also recommend the Yamaha 700 Series pedal, which is a very simple pedal that does the job.

I believe absolutely that a smaller, simpler pedal lends itself best to fast playing. I tried a Yamaha 900 Series pedal; it was too bulky and had too many things going. With the 700 Series or the DW-5000, you've got a nice, simple pedal, and you can see all the components. It's easy to adjust and fix, and there's not so much mass to move.

TERRY BOZZIO

Q. Where can I buy the J.L. Cooper pedals and *Sound Chest* you talked about in the December 1984 MD? Also, when might we expect to see your own bass drum pedals and electronic pad setup on the market?

Dan Genrich
Plant City, FL

A. Cooper doesn't make a pedal. The updated *Soundchest II* is now available through Europa Technologies. Contact them at 1638 W. Washington Blvd., Venice, CA 90291, or call them at (213) 392-4985. My own bass drum pedals and electronic pad setup will be on the market soon.

Q. I love the sound of your *RotoToms* on both the UK *Night After Night* and the Missing Persons *Spring Session M* albums. For live or studio playing, did you use any muffling whatsoever? The Rotos have a deep sound that I can't get out of mine. I've tried everything, and they sound too flat or too dead. Any advice?

Peter Hammoura
Piedmont, SC



A. If I used any muffling at all, it was just a small piece of gaffer's tape, but I don't recall having used any muffling whatsoever. I used Remo Black Dot heads. Concerning the RotoToms, mine always rang just fine. As for the flat and dead sound you're experiencing, maybe you need new heads. Also, make sure that they are tuned evenly.

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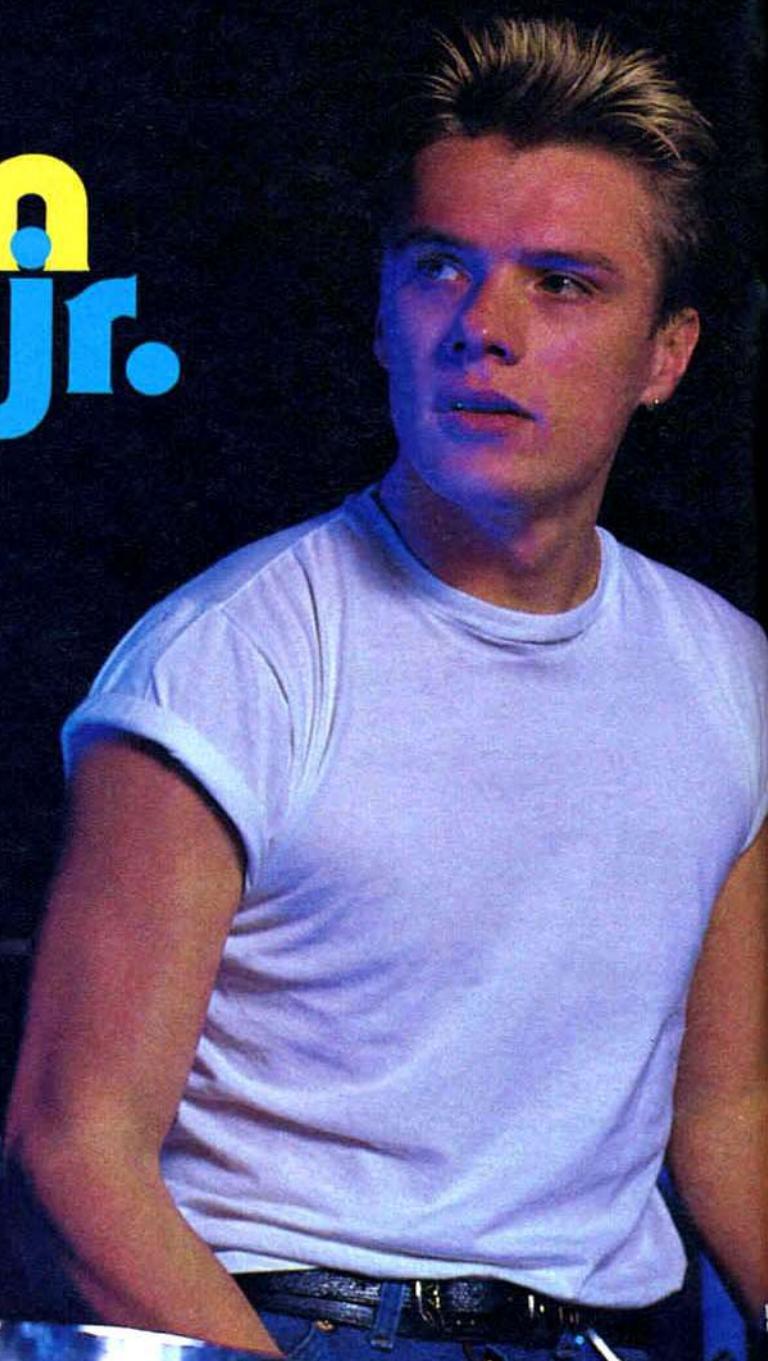
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larry mullen jr.

by Connie Fisher



SINCE ancient times, the sound of drums has prevailed at human rites of passage: war drums, funeral drums, marching drums, drums of life, and drums of death. It was the call of a "different drummer" that guided Henry David Thoreau. Martin Luther King asked to be remembered as a "drum major for peace."

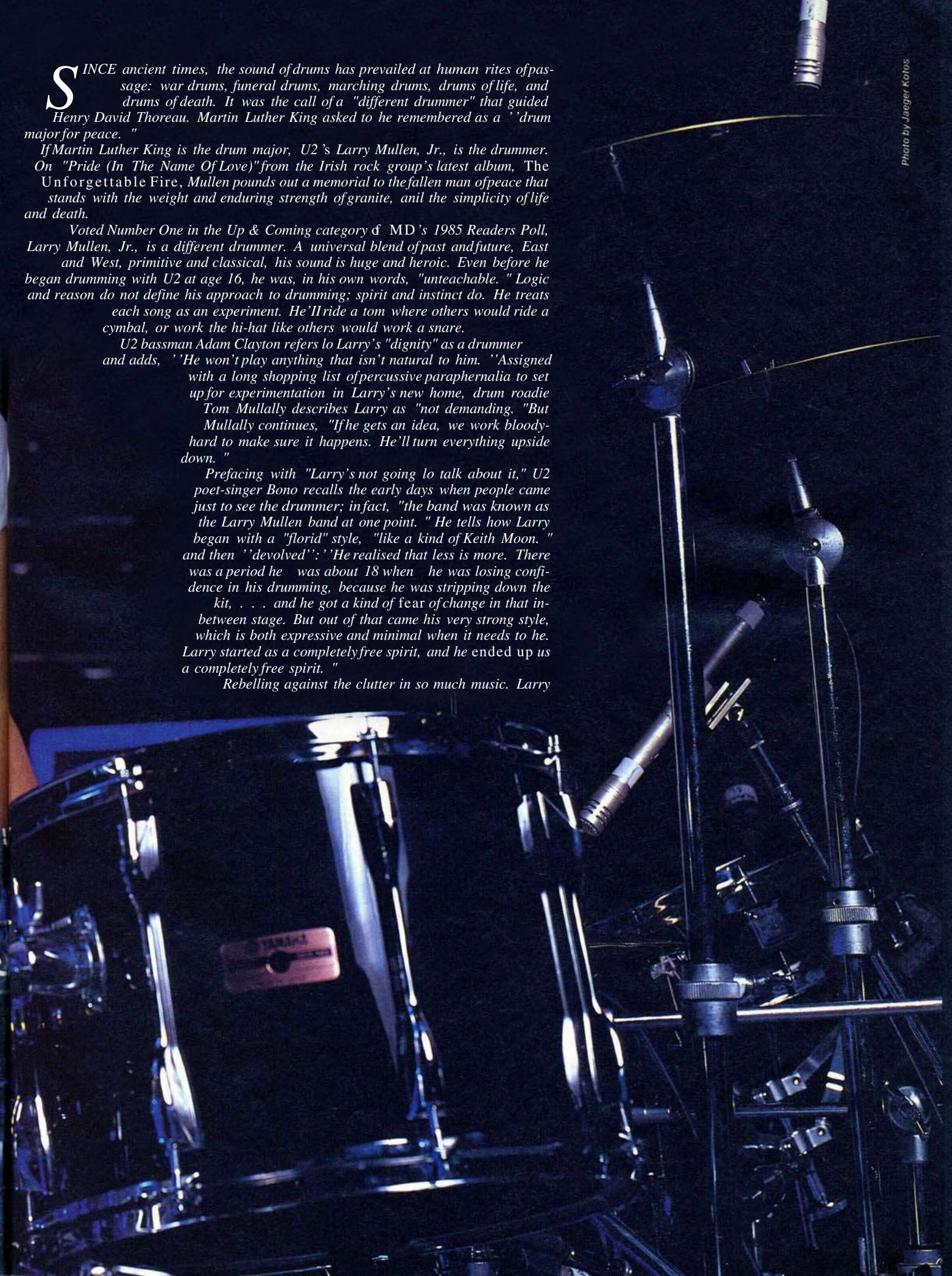
If Martin Luther King is the drum major, U2's Larry Mullen, Jr., is the drummer. On "Pride (In The Name Of Love)" from the Irish rock group's latest album, *The Unforgettable Fire*, Mullen pounds out a memorial to the fallen man of peace that stands with the weight and enduring strength of granite, and the simplicity of life and death.

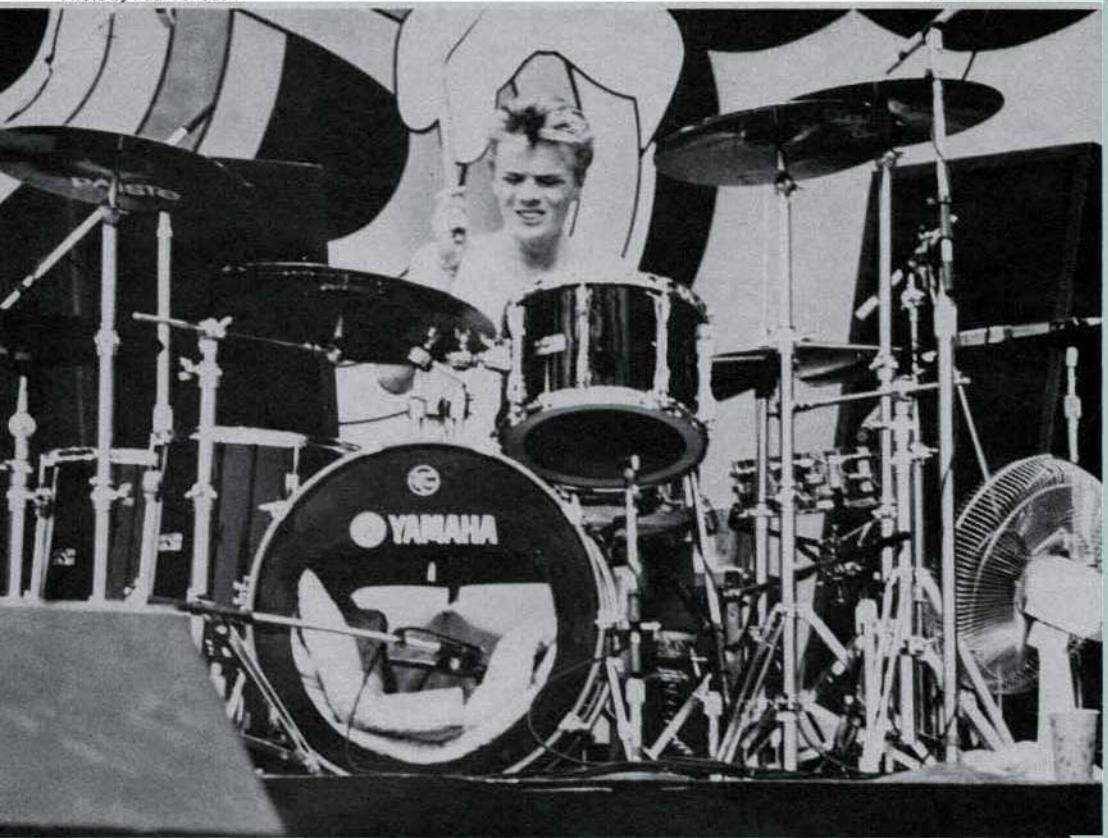
Voted Number One in the Up & Coming category of MD's 1985 Readers Poll, Larry Mullen, Jr., is a different drummer. A universal blend of past and future, East and West, primitive and classical, his sound is huge and heroic. Even before he began drumming with U2 at age 16, he was, in his own words, "unteachable." Logic and reason do not define his approach to drumming; spirit and instinct do. He treats each song as an experiment. He'll ride a tom where others would ride a cymbal, or work the hi-hat like others would work a snare.

U2 bassman Adam Clayton refers to Larry's "dignity" as a drummer and adds, "He won't play anything that isn't natural to him." Assigned with a long shopping list of percussive paraphernalia to set up for experimentation in Larry's new home, drum roadie Tom Mullally describes Larry as "not demanding." But Mullally continues, "If he gets an idea, we work bloody-hard to make sure it happens. He'll turn everything upside down."

Prefacing with "Larry's not going to talk about it," U2 poet-singer Bono recalls the early days when people came just to see the drummer; in fact, "the band was known as the Larry Mullen band at one point." He tells how Larry began with a "florid" style, "like a kind of Keith Moon," and then "devolved": "He realised that less is more. There was a period he was about 18 when he was losing confidence in his drumming, because he was stripping down the kit, . . . and he got a kind of fear of change in that in-between stage. But out of that came his very strong style, which is both expressive and minimal when it needs to be. Larry started as a completely free spirit, and he ended up as a completely free spirit."

Rebelling against the clutter in so much music, Larry





allows the freshness and freedom of the open space to be important, and in the drummer's dangerous world of time and space, he knows when to hit and when not to hit. At 23, he's a young master.

This has been a year of growth for Larry—the year he faced the trials of his first arena tour and all its trappings—the public eye that never shuts, the spotlight of a million watts. He met the challenge. In concert, he leads the band into the arena and takes his place at the drums. Like a fighter, he bears down over the kit, and he never gives up. He knows the fancy footwork, but he goes for the knockout punch. With unflinching control, he thrusts his arms skyward and comes down with a blistering slam to the snare that meets with the force of a shot heard 'round the world—revolution, apocalypse, eternity. He attacks the toms, and the rumble of artillery fire assaults the crowd. Then with Mullen's powerful bass drum as the buttress, the band transforms the battlefield into a cathedral, and the cymbals that blazed before with the burst of a rocket flare become celestial light.

The real world is Larry's daily bread. He has dealt with death, the terror in Northern Ireland, and The Bomb, yet he retains an innocence and a child's sense of wonder. Unlike most musicians his age, he seems to have already lost his taste for "stardom," if he ever had it. He instinctively senses the pitfalls. He's wary around strangers (it's a well-known fact that he shuns interviews), but once he opens up, he holds nothing back. He speaks with conviction and passion, mixed with genuine humility and a gentle smile.

This interview explores the thoughts of a drummer who holds his ground. Whatever it took for Larry Mullen, Jr., to become himself, he made it. And he is truly one of the most gifted and innovative drummers in the world today.

LM: Let me say first of all that I don't do interviews, ever. I did them when the band started, and then I stopped because I didn't enjoy them. I've seen issues of *Modern Drummer*. I like what the magazine does, so I decided to do this. But I'm not a talker; I hope you can make sense of what I say. I saw a piece on Russ Kunkel about how musical he is and all that. I don't deserve that kind of praise in a technical sense; I don't consider myself great by any means. I wouldn't want the magazine to make me something I'm not. But what I do feel is that, if

I'm going to do an interview, I want people to know that you don't have to be a technical drummer. You can follow your own rules and be in a successful band.

CF: I think you're underestimating yourself.

LM: Maybe. There's no harm in that. It means that I'll continue to grow, hopefully.

CF: Your music projects a global consciousness, but your roots are firmly in Ireland. What was it like to grow up there?

LM: There's no comparison with America or even Europe. It's a very isolated country—a totally different world. Things like abortion, contraception, and pornography don't exist. You have to fight—very hard—if you want to do anything different. To be in a band is really, really difficult. There's nowhere to play. But it's an interesting and beautiful place, too. I live there now; I wouldn't live anywhere else. It doesn't have the pressures of rock 'n' roll. Somebody says, "There's the drummer from U2." Another person answers, "So what?" In America or anywhere else, you

come out of the hotel, and people want to take bits out of you. In Ireland, people have respect, and they leave you alone.

CF: Did you spend much time by the ocean? Sounds of the ocean come across in some of your bass drum and cymbal work.

LM: Yes, I grew up in Dublin. You've always got the sea. From where I lived, it's about 500 yards down the road. Dublin has about a million people, but if you go just a mile outside the city, it's very peaceful, with green trees, and all the things you'd imagine are in Ireland.

CF: Were you into native Irish music?

LM: Well, obviously, I listened to it. When I was growing up, there wasn't one rock 'n' roll station in Dublin. There was a station that played an occasional Beatles song, but if you wanted to hear rock 'n' roll, you had to tune in to a pirate radio station or a British radio station like Radio Luxembourg. I'd have my pocket radio under my bed, trying to tune in Radio Luxembourg so I could hear the charts. It wasn't until around the last five years that new bands would come to Ireland; before that, very few came.

The Stones came about two years ago, which was the first time since '76 or '77. Now, rock 'n' roll is big in Ireland. It's just that very few can survive playing it or doing anything original.

CF: How did you become a drummer?

LM: I started at about nine; I used to play piano. The teacher was really a nice lady, but one day she said, "Larry, you're not going to make it." [laughs] She suggested that I try something else. I was delighted, because I had wanted to say the same thing to her a year before that.

CF: But your parents were making you take lessons?

LM: Well, they thought it would be good for me to be

exposed to music, and since I liked music, I went along with it. But I wasn't good at piano; I didn't practice much. So, as I walked away from my last piano lesson at the College of Music, I heard somebody playing drums. I turned around to my old lady and said, "You hear that? I want to do that." She said, "Okay. If you want to do that, you'll pay for it yourself!" So at nine years of age, I saved up a bit of money and I got nine pounds for my first term of drum instruction. I wasn't very good at learning or technique; I didn't practice much, because I was far more interested in doing my own thing. I wanted to play along with records like Bowie and the Stones. I didn't want to go through the rudiments—paradiddles and all that stuff, you know. I carried on with this teacher for about two years, and I just got bored. This is terrible, but he passed away, and [pauses] I mean, I was only a kid: I said, "Wow, Divine Intervention! I don't have to do this anymore!" [laughs] So I joined a military-style band: fife and drum—all that sort of stuff.

CF: Why did you want to join that? It seems like more regimentation.

LM: It was more of a goof, because there were girls in this band, in the Color Guard.

CF: I've seen some of those bands in competition. They can be quite sophisticated in their musicianship.

LM: Not this one. It was more "Let's have a good time and march in the St. Patrick's Day parade in Dublin." They would try to make us read music as well, and I could read, but this other guy and I said, "This sounds too drab off the sheet." So we just threw the sheet music away and invented our own things. I was in that band for two years, including the early days of U2.

CF: I've read that you got kicked out of a military band.

LM: That was another band, the Artane Boys' Band. The band I was just telling you about was a bit more loose—a little freer. The Artane band was too rigid for me. I was in for three days, and they told me to get my hair cut. And at the time, it was my pride and joy—you know, shoulder-length golden locks. So I got it cut a few inches, and they told me to cut it more. So I told them to stick it, and I left! [laughs] I'd forgotten about that.

I had a stage, too, when a guy tried to teach me jazz drumming, but again, the same problem. This teacher was really into Steve Gadd; Steve Gadd was his idol. I think Steve Gadd is a great drummer, but this teacher would play Gadd's records and tell me to play like that. I was rehearsing with U2 as well then, so I gave it up. I just couldn't sit there and imitate someone else.

CF: The story has it that you founded U2.

LM: Yes, and I was in charge for about three days! [laughs] We were all in the same school, and the prospect of leaving school and getting a job wasn't there.

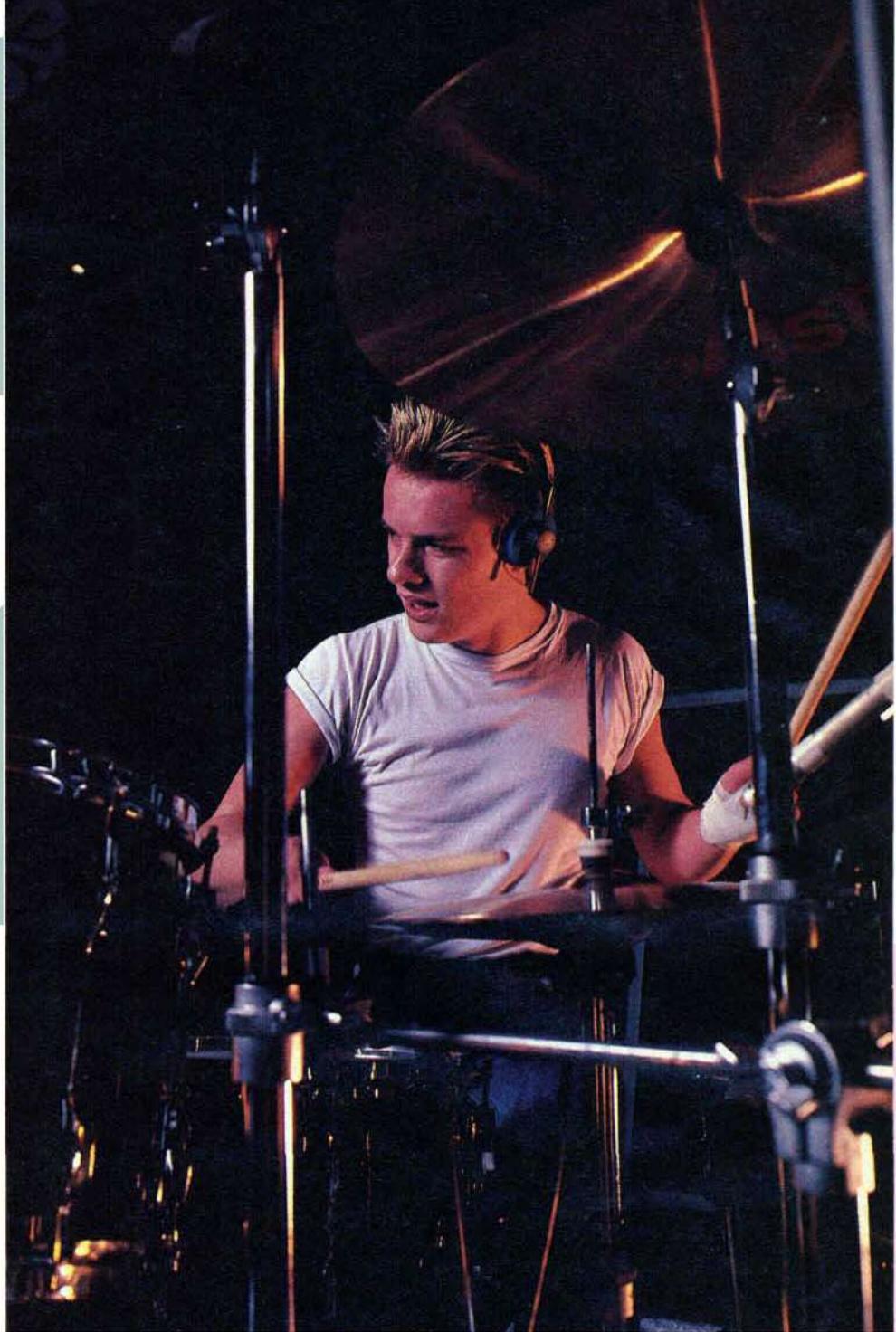


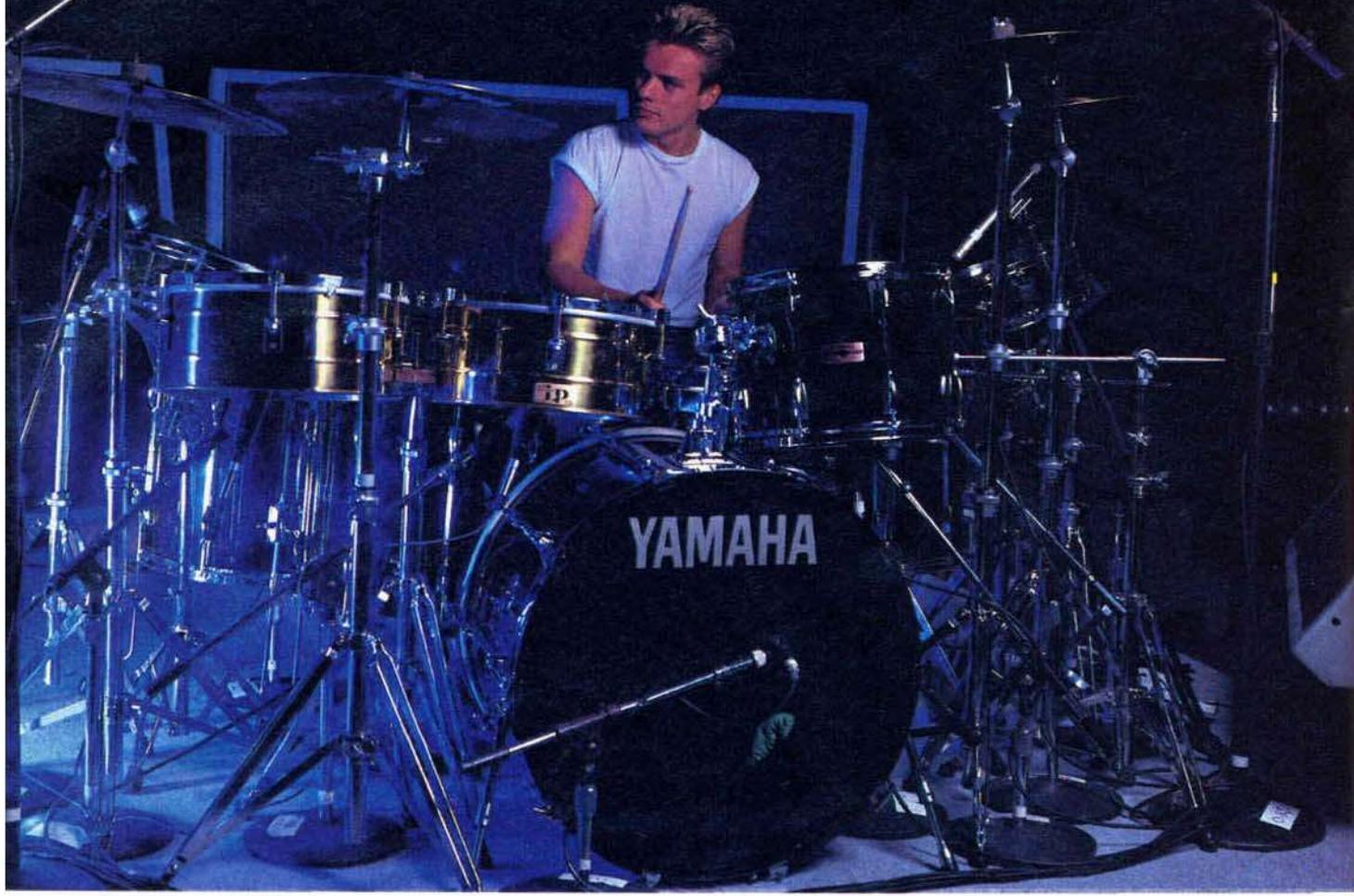
Photo by Jaeger Katos

There were no jobs to get. It was like we were all going nowhere, so we decided to go nowhere together and form a band. Our school was an experimental, interdenominational school, quite liberal and open. We had to do our work, and if we were interested in sports or music, for instance, we were actually given time. They gave us a room to practice in. There were very few schools in Ireland like that. Most were Christian Brothers schools where you studied, did your work, and that was it.

We started the band as punk rock was bursting on the scene, and when we heard it, we said, "Wow, this is amazing. This is energy!" Music was getting so boring. There seemed to be so much conveyor-belt rock where they'd just take the money and run, but punk rock had raw power. A lot of the bands couldn't play, but they had something to say. They gave us inspiration.

CF: Did you ever think that the isolation, and maybe even the adversity, you experienced in your formative years in Ireland was an advantage?

LM: Yes. I don't honestly think a band like U2 could have come from anywhere else. We had time to grow at our own pace, protected and away from the circus of the rock 'n' roll culture. We never got involved in that. We live in Ireland; we record there. It's home; it's freedom. We can be ourselves, be with our families,



and do all the things *human beings* are meant to do. Our music comes from being around real people in the real world. The title *The Unforgettable Fire* comes from a book we saw of paintings that were done by survivors of Hiroshima. And if you listen very closely to Bono's lyrics in "Bad" from that album, he touches on the huge heroin problem, especially in Dublin, and everything that surrounds it. We're very aware of those things. But go to London, and what some people are influenced by is the fantasy "scene"—the clothes, the dancing girls, how many drugs you can take. We just leave that behind. That's not what this band is about.

CF: You talk to the public about clean living and spirituality, but you manage to walk a thin line: You're not wimps. You're still legitimate rock 'n' rollers.

LM: All the sex and drugs in rock is so old, so boring, and so pretentious. I suppose some people think you have to go along with that old image to be a legitimate rock 'n' roller, but why should we pretend? If you actually meet a lot of big name rock 'n' roll bands as human beings, you find they're a lot straighter than you think. It's a big game, and we don't play it. People can make up their own minds about U2. People who see us live know it's not "wimp rock."

CF: How would you describe your drum style, Larry?

LM: Well, I never thought of it as a *style* until somebody said, "You know, you have a really unique style." And I said, "Oh really, what's a unique style?" It's hard for me to articulate what I

do. Other people have to tell me what *they* think. Once, there were two professional session drummers on Irish TV who took the drumbeats from "Pride," and explained what they were in great musical terms, and explained how this technique was used, [chuckles] I mean, they *could* be right, but *I* never thought of it like that! I just do what I do. I've developed into something myself. Sometimes people ring me up, or write and say, "We think you're fab. Can you give us hints on how to drum?" The only thing I can think of is something I learned myself and that is, "Hit 'em hard!" Just put everything into it; don't hold anything back.

CF: But you know when to hit 'em soft, too. You're capable of subtlety in your drumming.

LM: Yes, we like to put light and shade into the music as well—not always hammering away. There are times to be lighter, but still it's strong. There are times to come down and to go back up again. I don't hit the drums at the same intensity all the time.

CF: Of course, one of the standard critiques of rock drummers is that they know nothing about dynamics.

LM: It may be true of a lot of drummers, but certainly not of all of them. You can't generalize, especially now. There are so many new drummers with new ideas. It *could* be said, though, that in the

past I was sometimes just heavy-handed, but I think that, over the last few years, I've started to listen to music a *lot* more in terms of light and shade. It's a question of maturity—of actually listening to more music and seeing other drummers. I was never interested in other drummers until about two or three years ago.

CF: "Drowning Man," on *War*, comes to mind as an example of light and shade. The bass drum resonates as if from the depths of the ocean, with a stirring sense of ebb and flow.

LM: That song just evolved spontaneously. I did it with a 24" marching-band bass drum that I put up on a chair, and just hit with a mallet and with my hands. It was recorded in Windmill Lane, the studio in Dublin that we use. It's an *amazing* place, with its own character. You can get an *immaculate* drum sound in the hallway,

"I THINK DRUMMERS ARE ON STAGE TO KEEP THE BEAT TO THE BEST OF THEIR ABILITY."

which is solid stone walls with a really high ceiling. I set my kit out there, and they put mic's all the way down from the very, very top of the stairwell. I've recorded many songs out there.

CF: You also use brushes on "Drowning Man."

LM: Yes, and on "Bad," too, among others. A while back, I started to use brushes on different songs, and it seemed then that it was catching on. Are you familiar with the band Echo & The Bunnymen? They did a complete album with just brushes; I really like it. The only thing is that so many drummers are using brushes now that I've sort of stayed away from it slightly.

CF: There seems to be an Oriental streak in your playing, which I noticed first on "Drowning Man."

LM: Oh, did you get Oriental flavors in that? In *The Unforgettable Fire*, there are many Oriental touches, even in the design of the album cover, with the rich purplish color and the calligraphy. When we went to Japan, we avoided all the "touristy" trappings. Most bands stay in rock 'n' roll hotels there; we stayed in traditional Japanese hotels and ate at traditional Japanese restaurants. Everywhere we went, we heard the traditional music, and it was fantastic. Obviously, we were all influenced by it.

CF: You must also be aware of the marching-band influence, evident especially on *War*.

LM: Oh, yeah. I see it, although it's not something I cultivated. It was just there. It was very, very natural. Again, it was a case of someone asking me if I were ever in a marching band, because they could hear it in my style, and I said, "Oh really, can you?" I didn't realize it, because it wasn't a conscious decision on my part.

CF: The sense of open space is prominent in your drumming. There are times when you allow the absolute maximum space between beats; you hold it to the last fraction of a second.

LM: Yes, I like gaps; I like to be able to *feel* the music—not to clutter the songs. Lots of new drummers tend to fill in all the gaps and not leave space. Technically, a lot of drummers leave me standing miles away, but they don't leave gaps. It may sound good for their bands, but it's just not me. I've really been getting into R&B drummers. They're right down to earth—simple. All those jazz-head drummers are just so complex. It's like going to college. It's like "How intelligent are you? How many big words do you know?" It doesn't really matter, ultimately.

CF: There are some who would say that the technique—all those big words, if you will—gives you a greater vocabulary to convey the musical message.

LM: Well, to me it's like the difference between a novel and a poem. Sometimes, you can say everything in one line or even one word. I don't mean to knock anybody; there's room for everyone. But what happened to the whole punk thing—just getting up there and doing what you feel? I'm into the *spirit*, not into the musicianship. I'm a big fan of Sandy Nelson. I remember trying to play with "Let There Be Drums" as a kid and thinking, "This is great! I can actually do what this guy is doing." It had

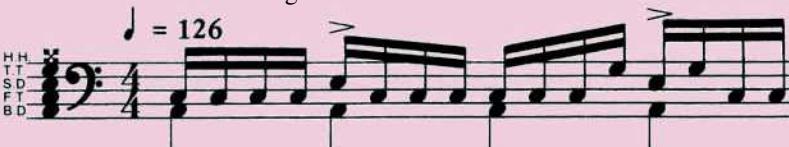
continued on page 38

DRUMMING: MULLEN STYLE

Larry Mullen, Jr., has an interesting and driving approach to drumming. Any-one who has witnessed a U2 performance can attest to Larry's power and intensity.

The examples below demonstrate Larry's dynamic style from U2's most recent album, *The Unforgettable Fire* (Island Records, 90231-1). The examples are excerpts of the basic patterns he performs and embellishes on.

1. "A Sort Of Homecoming."



2. "In The Name Of Love."

Verse

Chorus

3. "The Unforgettable Fire."

4. "Promenade." Larry performs this song with brushes.

5. "Bad." From the closing sections of the song with the snares turned off.

104 BPM

For further examples of Larry's playing from earlier U2 albums, see Michael Bettine's Style And Analysis on his playing in the *MD* January 1984 issue.



GEORGE GRANTHAM

by
Robyn
Flans

*I*t was the '60s—an exciting time—and Southern California was developing its own answer to the "British Invasion," San Francisco's psychedelia, and Detroit's Motown. L.A.'s scene was creating country/rock/folk with exciting newcomers like Jackson Browne, the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, the Byrds, Gram Parsons, and Linda Ronstadt & The Stone Poneys. The Eagles were soon to enter the picture, and Poco was paving the way.

What a band! There were Jimmy Messina and Richie Furay, fresh from their monstrously successful Buffalo Springfield, Rusty Young, steel's new wonderboy, Randy Meisner on bass (soon replaced by Tim Schmidt), and George Grantham on drums. The music they were making was some of L.A.'s best.

George stayed with Poco through 11 years and just as many albums. In 1980, however, he parted their company and moved to Nashville. Not long after his arrival, he got the gig with Ricky Skaggs, one of country's hottest tickets. George not only enjoyed Skaggs' traditional country music, but appreciated the fact that Skaggs, like himself, is a Christian. It was an ideal working situation, until the only possibility that could drag George away from Skaggs materialized.

"Rusty and Paul [Cotton, who joined Poco in 1971] had been talking about coming here, basing out of Nashville, regrouping with me, and being a country group, which today isn't much different from what Poco was as a country-rock group. We auditioned bass players and found the right fourth person [Jack Sundrud]. We're going to tour, make records, and be Poco in Nashville.

"I had to leave Rick to do it, which was kind of hard. This was about the only thing I could do for. I can't think of anything more exciting I could leave to do. Rick and I are friends, and I really hope we remain friends. I think that, when you're friends and something like this happens, it just takes time before wounds heal, even though no one was trying to hurt anybody. I want to be as close afriend as ever, or closer. I hope that happens.

"It feels good to be back with Poco. It's going to take some time to get readjusted to it, because I've been doing something else for a while. I haven't forgotten it, though. When we're playing a song I did years ago with them, it feels like it was just yesterday."

RF: I remember Poco when they still called themselves Pogo.

GG: The change happened within the first eight months. We probably would have kept it if we hadn't been served papers from Walt Kelly, the creator of the cartoon strip. You'd think he would have been flattered to have someone out there to help him promote the name. However, he didn't want us to use it, and we had to stay as close to the name as possible because of our following. So Rusty, who is into Spanish, suggested we change the "g" to a "c" and call the band Poco.

RF: As I was listening to the *Pickin' Up The Pieces* album recently, I wondered what goes through your mind when you're listening to that album?

GG: That's the first album we did, and when I listen to it, I have a lot of fond memories—a lot of nostalgia. Then I listen to it as a drummer and vocalist and think, "Boy I'd like to do this again today." For that time, it was really good. A lot of people think it was not only right in there with what was happening musically, but maybe ahead of some things. I listen to it today and think, "I'd change this and change that, rearrange this . . ." An artist always wants another chance. If you ever become satisfied, you

have nothing to strive for.

RF: Do you have any particular favorite songs from back then?

GG: One of my favorite songs that we did has no instruments except an acoustic guitar on it—"Keep On Tryin'." Tim Schmidt wrote it, and it's one of my favorite studio memories. I sang on every song. It was either Tim and Richie or Paul and Tim, but whatever combination it was, I was always up on top. That was one of our marathon sessions—24-hour-straight things—and it just came together so nicely. Tim is such a sweet guy. As it developed, he got excited, then we got excited, and I like that a lot. I have a lot of favorites. It's hard to pick one or two songs when you're talking about 11 albums or more.

RF: Even just taking that first album, there are so many different musical influences on it. "Nobody's Fool" was almost blues/jazz, *a la* Blood, Sweat, & Tears.

GG: We were trying to find our identity at one of our rehearsals at the Troubadour, and we just got into this jam. Jimmy Messina had only been playing guitar a short time. He played guitar a lot before that, but then he fell into engineering and playing bass with Buffalo Springfield. When Poco formed, one of the desires Jimmy had was to be on guitar again. He was kind of finding himself again through these jams, and we were all kind of figuring out how to play together. It just started, and all of a sudden it was, "This sounds kind of neat." Richie [Furay] had a song with a kind of shuffle/country feel called "Nobody's Fool." We changed it completely and made it into a song that led into a jam. Everybody just stretched out, and we learned to play together. We had some fun, and we found an identity as a group. That was like doing a live concert in the studio with all the mistakes or all the wonderfulness.

RF: It seems that, in those days, perfection wasn't as important as it is today. Sometimes I think that accounted for some of the excitement in the studio.

GG: Yes, I know what you're saying. Today, it's not accepted. I miss a lot of the spontaneity and a lot of the creativity that came out of the human element that was very present then. People weren't afraid to take chances and let it stay on that record. Today, everyone is so concerned about everything being so precise. I can appreciate that, but at the same time, I wish it didn't have to be quite so strict. I listen to *Toto IV* and just appreciate the heck out of it, and yet old Beatles or Hollies records came off great, even though they weren't perfect.

RF: Did you have any drum idols when you were growing up?

GG: The Dave Brubeck Quartet once played on campus in Boulder, and I got together with Joe Morello for an hour before the show. He was the nicest man I'd ever met. He didn't know me, and I was standing there watching him rehearse, just drooling. We got together with sticks and pads back in the dressing room, and I was just up on a cloud. Joe Morello was my favorite jazz drummer. Jazz doesn't even describe Joe Morello that well. He's one of a kind. When I got heavily into rock 'n' roll, I found myself leaning towards the session players like Jim Keltner, Russ Kunkel, and Hal Blaine. When I first went to L.A., Hal was doing everything. He was right next door at the old CBS recording studio in L.A., and he would come over to listen to us. Also, I would go over and listen to whatever he was doing. He gave me a compliment one day, and I don't think I was worth anything the rest of the day. I had done some fill or something that was kind of fast, and when I went into

D E D I C A T I O N

AUGUST 1985



the control room after the keeper take, he said, "Man, what you did out there was great." This guy was somebody I idolized, so it meant a lot to me. I really respect people like Steve Gadd—the drummer's drummer, to me—and Jeff Porcaro. Russ Kunkel is incredible. Now I've learned about the Nashville drummers, like Larrie Londin and many more, who I didn't know much about in California, and I appreciate them as well.

RF: You seem to have adjusted right into Nashville life.

GG: I was born in Oklahoma, so it wasn't a big adjustment for me in life-style, or even musically, really. For a lot of people, like my wife, it's a big adjustment to live here, but I'm used to it. I grew up on cornbread, beans, and sweet-potato pie. I'm a country boy myself, really.

RF: What kind of music did you grow up playing?

GG: I started in high school and immediately fell in love with jazz. For a drummer, that's the ultimate creative area.

RF: This was in Cordell, Oklahoma?

GG: No, in Cordell I learned to play, did the marching bit, the concert bit, and the competitions. But I got into jazz in Denver. I would practice jazz things like crazy. All I bought were big band albums, and whenever those bands came to town—which was rare—I'd go to see them. When I was 16 until I was about 21, jazz was all I really loved. I listened to the Beatles, and their music was enjoyable and fun to play, but that was a lot easier for a drummer than doing intricate solos, one-handed rolls, and 5/4-time things. I enjoyed the rock and I played it, but the challenge was jazz.

RF: When did you move from Oklahoma to Denver?

GG: I've lived just about everywhere. We moved a lot. I don't think I was ever in one school for more than a year until I was in 7th grade. My stepdad was in the navy. When he left the picture, it was just my mom, my sister and I, and we moved quite a bit. Finally, I stayed in Oklahoma from 7th grade to 10th grade. That was really when I had a chance to solidify, and form some goals, dreams, and ideals.

RF: What were those?

GG: To be a great drummer, to try to be a good person, and to figure out if I should play football or not. I figured I shouldn't, especially in Oklahoma. Don't do that unless you're much bigger than I am. I was trying to find my identity. The drums came so quickly and easily to me that I just jumped on it. My grandmother, bless her heart, who I was living with in Oklahoma, never complained once. I know I had to be driving her nuts. I would practice three to four hours a day. I loved it.

RF: What kinds of things would you do during your practicing?

GG: I started as a rudimental drummer, so I would always spend a good 45 minutes on the rudiments. Then I would try to do other rudiments besides the 26—other stickings—and reverse some things, just to get warmed up. That way, when I sat down behind the set, I wasn't stiff. I could do something and not drop a stick. If you're not ready to sit down and practice, you should warm up some more.

RF: Do you warm up before concerts now?

GG: Yes. I carry a practice pad and sticks around, and a metronome. If nothing else, I go off to a room and do some stretches. I'll



spend 45 minutes on that practice pad. I think it's become a psychological dependency for me. When I don't do it, I don't play as well, so there's something to it.

RF: Do you still practice at home when you're off the road?

GG: I do, and when there's a little break, it gives me more time to settle into my practice room and really use it like I used to. I love practicing.

RF: Do you still do the same kinds of practice routines?

GG: When I was young, it was mostly reading and different stickings. Now the most fun thing I do is play with the radio or tapes. I play the part and learn how they thought when they played it. If I can tell another drummer anything, it's to listen more. Don't play so much; don't jump in; don't assume. Listen. You'll learn a lot more that way. I'll play with records and then, instead of playing that part, I'll try to play a different part and take it in a different direction. I've done this for about the last ten years.

RF: What made you pick up the sticks originally?

GG: I think it was to get away from the accordion, which my mom had me take. I never could become good on the accordion. I sat with it for a few years and never did like it. I always loved the drums. I remember seeing *The Gene Krupa Story*. I wasn't a drummer yet, but I said, "That's great!" Something turned on in me, but I forgot about it until I got in the school band. The drums came so quickly and so easily to me. It's hard to explain why, but when they said, "What do you want to play?" I said drums. I went from just hitting the bass drum on all the beats in 4/4 time, to playing first-chair snare drum in a matter of months. I'm not trying to pat myself on the back, but it came real easily.

RF: When did you decide that drums were what you wanted to do with your life?

GG: In Denver we had a band together, and we were playing all the sock hops and dances. Then we branched out, went to bigger halls, and started making some money. I said, "Wow, this is not only fun and I love it, but I can make money at this." Then I slept through the 12th grade. I don't recommend this for anybody reading this article since I didn't make it through the 12th grade because of that. I was playing late every night and wasn't getting adequate rest. During my senior year, I was playing six nights a week in clubs in Boulder, or Denver, or anywhere in Colorado, and it was my profession then. I said, "This is what I want to do." My mom had to give up a professional career in music because she had kids, and she had to support us. I think somewhere in me, I wanted to do it for that reason, too.

RF: Was there any other training besides school?

GG: Very little. I had a few lessons just to learn how to read, but once it was explained to me, I just took it upon myself to do it. I believe that lessons are wonderful. With them, you probably can go further than you can go on your own. I was so busy, though, and just didn't have time. I would have loved to have branched out and gotten into the other percussion instruments if I'd had the time.

RF: You went from the six-nights-a-week gig to the group Boenzye Creque?

GG: And then my first recordings. There were a couple of studios in Denver, and we had a producer who came out from Los Angeles. We thought this was the big time. We recorded a couple of Beau Brummel songs—"Still In Love With You Baby" and another one. We did the Beau Brummels and Hollies the best. That was my first experience recording.

RF: What was that like?

GG: I remember hearing the recording back and not knowing that the drums sounded like that. That was what I learned: You have to tune differently when you record. You have to play less. You can't play everything you know. You have to simplify it, you have to use different mic's and different drums, and you have to separate yourself from this instrument. All this was new to me.

RF: Can you expound on what you mean by tuning differently?

GG: There are a lot of different ways to tune. Most people in the studio want a fat snare drum sound and a real punch in the bass drum. If you have a double-headed bass drum, you have to put a

hole in the outside head, put a pillow inside, use a wooden beater, and tune it down a little bit to get that sound they want. You have to de-tune the snare and pad it with some tape. I used to use a wallet to deaden the ring and then tune it down to try to get a real thick sound. Jazz sounds are not like that, and that was what I was used to. In jazz, the drums are real tight and live; they ring. So when I went in, learned all these things, and had to change, it took me by surprise.

RF: Have you found that the recording technique and what they want from you today is different from what it was back then?

GG: I've found that people doing your recording are a lot more knowledgeable now. They not only know that board, but they know music, too. In the beginning, the musicians knew the music, and the people inside the booth knew the technical aspect of it. Now both sides have come together. The musicians know a lot of technical stuff. I don't know a lot of it, but Rusty Young does, and the engineers and producers know music, too. It had to happen for music to be as good as it is today.

RF: You met Rusty Young in Boenzye Creque.

GG: Yes. He brought the country influence in. We were a rock 'n' roll band. We were in the group together for about two or three years. He had been playing steel guitar in Denver since he was a kid. It's funny, but he didn't play steel guitar with us because people weren't ready for it. He stood up and played regular electric six string. But he did play the steel towards the end of the group, and



Photo by James Elliott

I'm sure we had to be the first rock 'n' roll group with a steel guitar. It was an experiment. He was kind of afraid, but he finally did and it was really something.

Rusty left that group to go out to L.A. He realized that he had much broader horizons to aspire to. He had a friend working with Buffalo Springfield, and they were doing *Last Time Around*. He was recommended on steel to do "Kind Woman." That's how Poco started, because out of the album, Richie and Jimmy wanted to start another group immediately. Rusty became the third member right away. Then he called me, because they wanted a singing drummer. It worked out great. We auditioned bass players and practiced at the same time for about six months. We couldn't get Tim Schmidt, because if he had joined us, he couldn't have gone to school, and he might have gotten drafted. Then we got Randy Meisner, who I knew from Colorado. And as they say, the rest is history.

RF: What year did you move to L.A.?

GG: The early part of '68. We rehearsed and got things together. By the end of '68, we played at the Troubadour in front of all these record-industry people. We were scared to death. The talk was all over town about what was happening. We got our deal that night, and then we started recording. I was having a great time.

RF: L.A. was alive in those days, too.

continued on page 64

inside SONOR

by Simon Goodwin

TAKing an extremely simplistic view of the development of the percussion instruments that make up our modern drumset, we think in terms of the cymbals originating in Turkey or China, the tom-toms in Africa, and the bass and snare drums, as we know them today, developing in Europe. These were the instruments of military bands and symphony orchestras, and nowhere were these movements stronger than in Germany. It was the German classical composers writing for bigger and better percussion sections whose members, in turn, demanded bigger and better drums who were largely responsible for the increased use of drums outside a military context. There is, therefore, a tradition of drum-making in Germany that goes back a very long way.

The country's leading drum manufacturer today is Sonor, a company that has been run by the same family for 110 years. It was founded in 1875 by Johannes Link, who had previously been a wood turner and tanner. Johannes Link started by producing military drums and drumheads, but within the next 25 years, his factory at Weissenfels expanded in size and in the range of instruments that it produced, so that by 1900, the company was manufacturing a full range of top-quality percussion instruments. The 1899 catalog shows items like pedal timps, a snare drum with independent tuning for each head, and a snare drum stand all of which we take for granted today, but which were up-to-the-minute new ideas then.

Johannes Link died in 1914 and was succeeded by his son Otto. The company continued to prosper in Weissenfels, under Otto Link's guidance, for the next 36 years. Strangely enough, however, it was another, quite separate, career he had that indirectly made the company's present situation possible. Otto Link, as well as being an industrialist, was Honorary Consul to Sweden. In 1946 Otto's son, Horst, decided to move out of the Russian-controlled sector of Germany, because the Russians were arresting ex-officers and imprisoning them in Eastern Siberia, "which I wouldn't have liked," he now adds dryly. He moved into the British sector, and rather than having anything to fear from the British Army, he was actually able to buy a disused barrack hut from them, which was to become the first Sonor factory in West Germany. So it was that Horst Link started doing business in the company's present location of Aue in

Westphalia. He started by only making drumheads. The Sonor factory at Weissenfels was now in East Germany, and so were Horst's mother and father.

When the border was closed in 1950, it was clearly only going to be a matter of time before the original Sonor factory would be expropriated and taken over by the State. Preparations were made for Otto Link and his wife to escape to the West, but nothing was done until the police were sent to arrest Otto at his home. It was the family's maid who saved Otto, by saying that he had already left for the factory. Otto, meanwhile, climbed through a window at the back of the house and made good his escape. Frau Link was able to follow her husband a few months later, but not without having some adventures of her own. She had to pretend to be visiting a cemetery near the border, where some friends were standing by with a fast car to whisk her away.

So father and son were reunited in the West, but at this stage, they had nothing except Horst's barrack-room drumskin plant. They needed land on which to build, skilled labor, and capital. The local community in Aue welcomed them; the community was interested in the possibility of encouraging fresh industry in the area and it was relatively easy for the Links to obtain the land they needed. The capital was to come from an unexpected quarter. A Swedish noblewoman, the Princess of Sayn-Wittgenstein, lived and owned land (and still does) near Aue. The then King of Sweden liked and respected Otto Link since his period as Consul in that country. Hearing about Otto's escape to the West, the King contacted the Princess and suggested that she might be able to help his old friend save his family business. So the Princess became a partner in the company, and remained so until the late 70s.

Building up the company again from nothing was hard work. The family managed to keep the "Sonor" trademark, which had been registered by them in 1907, but they had very little to show for two generations of successfully building up the business in Weissenfels. (Owned by the East German government, the factory is still producing percussion instruments under the name of Tacton.) Even the experience that had been developed during this time was mostly lost. Two craftsmen from Weissenfels managed to escape to the West and join Sonor in Aue, but otherwise they had to start training new people in an area where, previously, there had not been any manufacturing industry, only agriculture.

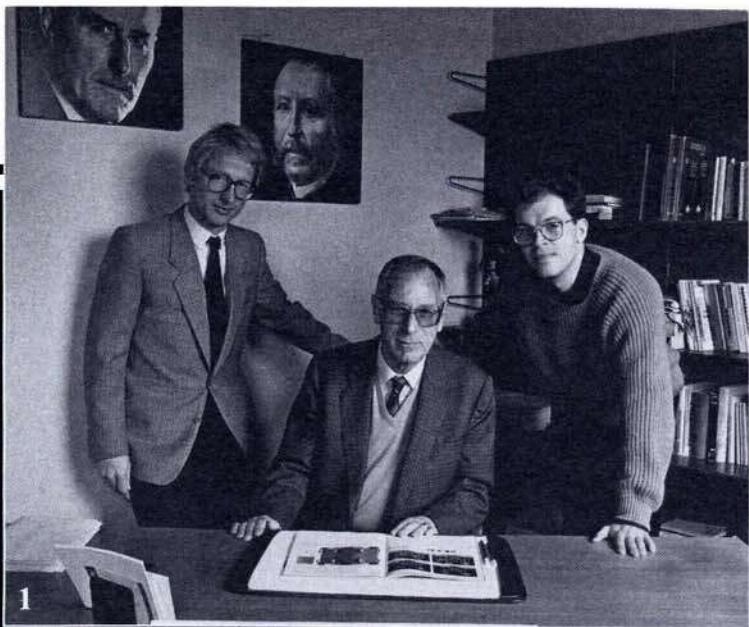
It was another ten years before they had sufficient skilled craftspeople to develop the company in the way they wanted, but sadly, halfway through this period, Otto Link died.

Horst Link intimates that his father's death came as a double blow to him, because when it occurred, he didn't feel ready to take over the reins of the company, which was struggling to reestablish itself. But as so often happens in these situations, the son had no choice. Under his leadership, Sonor slowly and successfully grew until, in 1975 (100 years after his grandfather had founded the company), Horst Link had achieved what he had set out to do 20 years before.

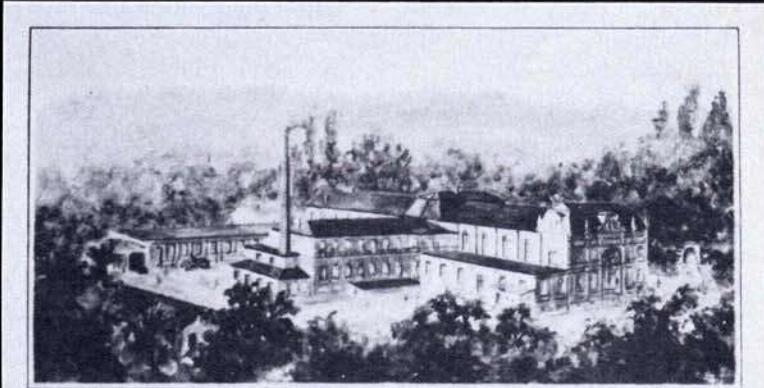
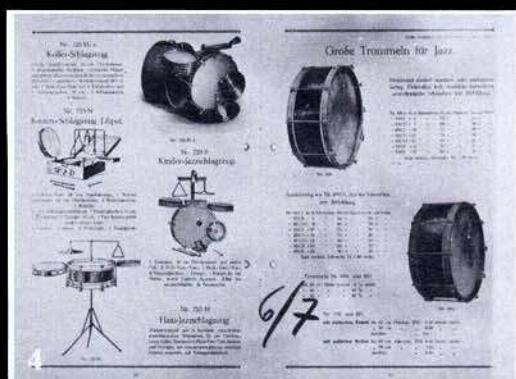
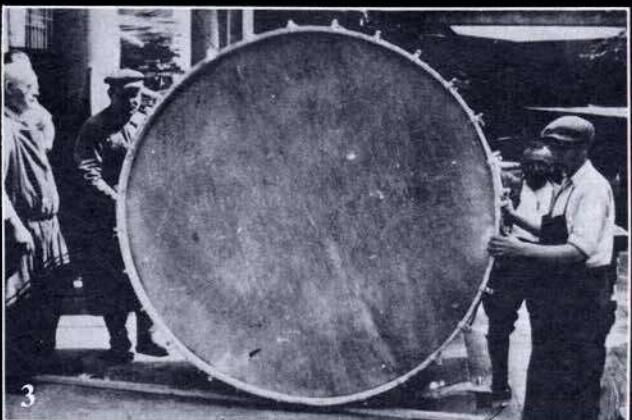
There is now a fourth generation involved in the family firm. Andreas Link is currently understudying his father and acting as his assistant. I suggested that this makes Andreas the Vice-President. This amused him, and he said that if *Modern Drummer* wanted to give him this title, he would accept it. The younger son, Oliver, is a keen drummer and artist; his talents are put to good use in his job as Advertising and Promotion Manager. At 25, Oliver is very aware of, and interested in, today's music scene. The company's *image* is in his capable hands; he has some first-class products to promote, but they have to be presented to the drumming community in the right way. Oliver Link wrote and designed the recent Sonor catalog, *The Drummer's Drum*. I think anybody who has seen it will agree that it is quite an achievement.

While Horst Link is head of the drum division of Sonor, his wife Elizabeth runs the side of the company that produces the excellent educational range of instruments. This is no small sideline, because 50% of the company's business is represented here. They started making the educational instruments in 1950, at the same time as they started manufacturing drumkits in Aue. It was with the educational instruments that Sonor first started to make inroads into the American market in 1960. Part of the success of the range, apart from its undoubtedly quality, must be put down to the fact that Sonor makes educational instruments to supply the needs of a particular system of music teaching. The Orff system (pioneered by professor Carl Orff, the composer of *Carmina Burana*) calls for a wide range of instruments that can be used constructively by children of all ages. Elizabeth Link not only heads this side of the company, but she also runs

continued on page 76



1. Horst Link with his sons, Andreas (left) and Oliver (right). Photos on wall are of Consul Otto Link (left) and founder Johannes Link (right).
2. Cover of the 1899 catalog.
3. Sonor's big bass drum of 1930.
4. Two pages from the 1930 catalog.
5. The Weissenfels factory in 1919.



Johs. Link, Kom. Ges.
Trommel u. Trommelfell-Fabrik
Weissenfels

inside SONOR

A VISIT TO THE SONOR FACTORY

by Simon Goodwin

It just isn't the sort of setting in which you would expect to find a factory. The village of Aue, near the town of Bad Berleburg in Westphalia, is in one of the most beautiful rural areas of West Germany. The district's main industries are agriculture and tourism, the neighboring hills being very popular with hill walkers. You might imagine that the Sonor factory is out of place and detracts visually from the rustic surroundings, but this isn't the case at all. The plant is a small collection of modern buildings set in fields well away from the road and the rest of the village. As you approach the factory, it seems to be dwarfed by the pine-covered hills behind it, thus blending fairly unobtrusively into the landscape. There is work in progress to build more and extend the amount of factory space, but at the time I visited, there was the main factory building, which also houses the company's administration, the Signature Building where the top-of-the-range drumkits come to be finished and assembled, and Horst Link's original 1946 ex-British Army hut, which is now used for storing educational books, catalogs, etc.

There are 195 people working at the Sonor factory: 155 in production and 40 in administration and distribution. *Everything* with the Sonor name on it is manufactured here, with the exception of the drumsticks, which come from England, and the magnificently coopered conga and bongo shells, which come from Austria. (The cooper who makes these shells used to work for Sonor at Aue, but he now lives in Austria and supplies the shells as a subcontractor.) Sonor buys a few small components such as screws, threaded bolts, small pressed items, and the rubber feet for stands. Three thousand different raw materials come into the factory, and they are used in the manufacture of 2,000 different parts. As certain parts are used for more than one item, they actually produce 2,800 different finished products. It is part of Sonor's policy to manufacture "in series," in order to ensure that they always have enough manufactured items in stock to meet any orders that come in. This means that they will produce enough of the items that they have to tool up for at any one time, so that the relatively straightforward procedure of assembling them can be done quickly and efficiently on demand. This also means that a customer won't have to wait months, until the next time the production line is making a drumshell of a particular size. The shell can just be taken from stock, covered if necessary, and assembled.

Three people took me around the factory: "Vice-President" Andreas Link, Rolf Lukowitz, who is one of the production managers, and Steve Gardner of Sonor UK. Andreas and Rolf obviously know the factory like the backs of their hands, and Steve has visited it on many occasions, but all three of them displayed a remarkable enthusiasm and pride in everything they showed me. I saw various manufacturing processes that are unique to Sonor and that they described as "our little secrets." After this had happened a few times, I was beginning to get worried. Was I going to have anything to write about, or was I being sworn to secrecy? Steve laughed at this and said, "We don't really mean *secrets*. Call them special tricks of the trade if you like. We don't have secrets; there's nothing to hide. For instance, we make a seamless metal-shell snare drum; we are proud of this product and pleased to show people how it is made. Other firms *claim* to make a seamless metal shell, but they won't *show* you the shell being made. The fact is that they usually buy them in from outside and often there is a join, but you can't see it because it is very cleverly disguised." "You can see it," said Rolf. "If you really know what you're looking for, you can usually see a join if it is there."

Sonor's metal-shell snare drums are actually spun out of large

discs of top-quality ferro-manganese steel, which have been manufactured specifically for that purpose. Amazingly, this spinning process is carried out with the metal cold. To heat and then shape the metal can alter the molecular structure and weaken it, but the cold spinning process used by Sonor ensures that the shell is perfectly round and completely consistent in every way. The machine that performs this feat is a large lathe with some fittings that have been developed at the Sonor factory specifically for the job. The ferro-manganese steel disc is spun at great speed against a cylindrical former. As it spins, a flywheel is brought to bear against the side away from the former. As the spinning disc is pressed by the flywheel, it slowly curves and then begins to assume the shape of the former. The flywheel moves slowly along the length of the former, pressing the steel against it and smoothing it down. After about eight minutes, the steel disc has been transformed into something that looks like a bucket with straight, rather than conical, sides. The "bucket" base is then removed, the edges are trimmed and beveled, for some models the bead is pressed around the middle of the shell, and then the drum is ready for the next process, which is the preparation for the plating.

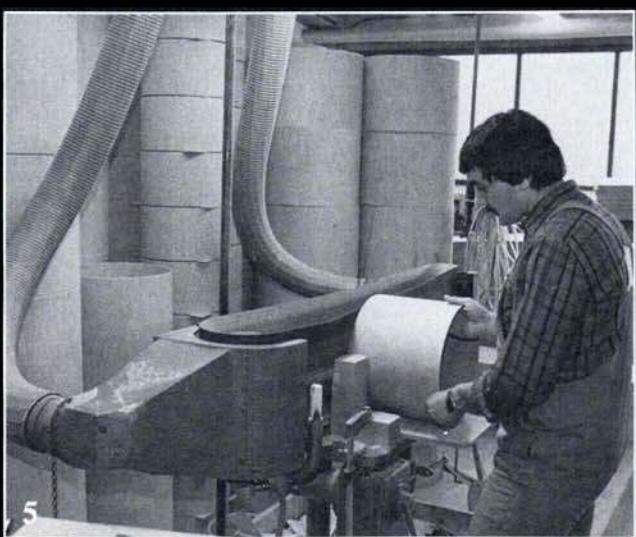
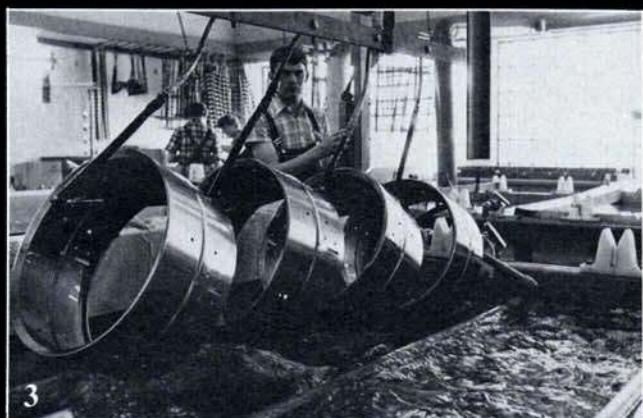
We visited the department in which the metal parts, such as rims and nut boxes, as well as drumshells, all receive individual attention to make sure that they are without blemishes of any kind before they are plated. Andreas said that he used to work there during the school holidays, when he was a boy. "You have to be very careful," he said, indicating a workman sitting very close to the fast-spinning buffing wheel that he was using. There was a row of copper-colored snare drum shells on a rack. I commented that I hadn't seen any like that before and was told that those shells were one-third of the way through the plating process. They had received their first coating, which was copper, and they were going to be polished before going back for the second coating, which was nickel. All chromed parts have a coating of copper and a coating of nickel under the chrome. The drumshells and the larger items are always polished, by hand, between each coat, which is what gives them the excellent high shine.

The plating is done in a series of tanks. There is a special pulley system above the tanks, so that the items for plating can be lowered into the tanks, raised out of them, and moved forward without the operator needing to handle them. In addition to the copper, nickel and chrome tanks, there are four tanks that contain cleansing liquids (in two cases clear water). The metal items have to be dust-free and de-magnetized before the plating goes on; they are also washed between the copper and nickel stages, and again between the nickel and the chrome. I saw a collection of small items like wing nuts being plated. These were not removed between each of the plating stages to be polished. Although the whole process takes about two hours, there were items at each stage of the process, so that all stages could be pointed out to me. Small items like these are not lowered into the tanks individually; they are attached to a small "tree" made of rubber that is lowered into the tanks and can be reused. It is interesting that, when the finished chrome comes out, it looks more yellow than silvery. The silver color appears at the final polishing.

Not all metal items are chromed; some are sprayed: chime bars, for instance, and the black hardware on the new *Phonic Plus* "Hi-Tec" drums. The lacquer is sprayed onto the metal, and then the parts are put into a heat chamber where they are baked at a temperature of 200 degrees C. The finish that is produced in this way is as hard as, if not harder than, plating.

On to the wood: We visited the storeroom in which the stacks of

continued on page 78



1. Spinning a metal-shell snare drum.
2. Buffing the rims.
3. Metal-shell snare drums being plated.
4. Inside the Signature building.
5. A wooden shell being finished on a sanding belt.
6. Tuning a snare drum on the oscilloscope.

I first heard Frankie Dunlop's drumming in the best way possible. When I was about 17 years old, I was visiting a friend who had Two Hours Of Thelonious on the turntable. The drumming on that record went straight to my heart, and my enthusiasm for Frankie's drumming has never lessened over the years.

I owe a big thanks to Mel Lewis for putting me in touch with Frankie. The first part of this interview was done in October '84 in New York City. Part two was taped at my home in Connecticut. If I'd had Frankie's energy, we possibly could have pulled an all-nighter, and wrapped this up in New York City. He doesn't smoke, and he rarely drinks. He came to Connecticut armed with bottles of spring water and apple juice, and gave my wife and I some excellent tips on the health benefits and proper preparation of papaya juice.

Frankie Dunlop is as good an actor/impersonator as he is a drummer. When he was speaking about Monk, he became Monk. And when he spoke about Sonny Rollins or Charlie Mingus, he became those people. One of my biggest challenges was translating a facial expression, a body motion, or an accent into the printed word.

This interview is a glimpse at a great person and a funny man, who has earned the right to perform and record with Thelonious Monk, Sonny Rollins, Charlie Mingus, Maynard Ferguson, Duke Ellington, Lionel Hampton, and many other jazz greats. Frankie has also played in hotel and theater bands, backed some of the best singers in the music business, and even done some stints with rhythm & blues bands. You can almost say he's done it all. If you ever have the chance to see Frankie in concert or clinic, do it!

FD: My earliest influence was Gene Krupa. I used to skip school to catch Gene Krupa's band. All the big bands used to come through Buffalo—Cab Galloway, Lucky

Millender, Billy Eckstine. But on the Gene Krupa shows, I'd skip school and stay in that theater all day. I'd darken my mustache with a pencil to look older. The lady at the theater knew I wasn't of age, but she must have seen by the anxiety in my eyes that I really wanted to hear this music. The band would play four shows a day. The first show would go on about 11:00 or 12:00. After the show was over, I'd hide in the ladies' room, because the ushers would never look there. They were supposed to clean out the theater, so new people could come in for the new admission. They'd just knock on the ladies' room door, or maybe just stick their heads in and yell, "All clear." Then they'd let the new people in. I'd come out of the bathroom and catch the next show. Sometimes I'd do that and catch all four shows.

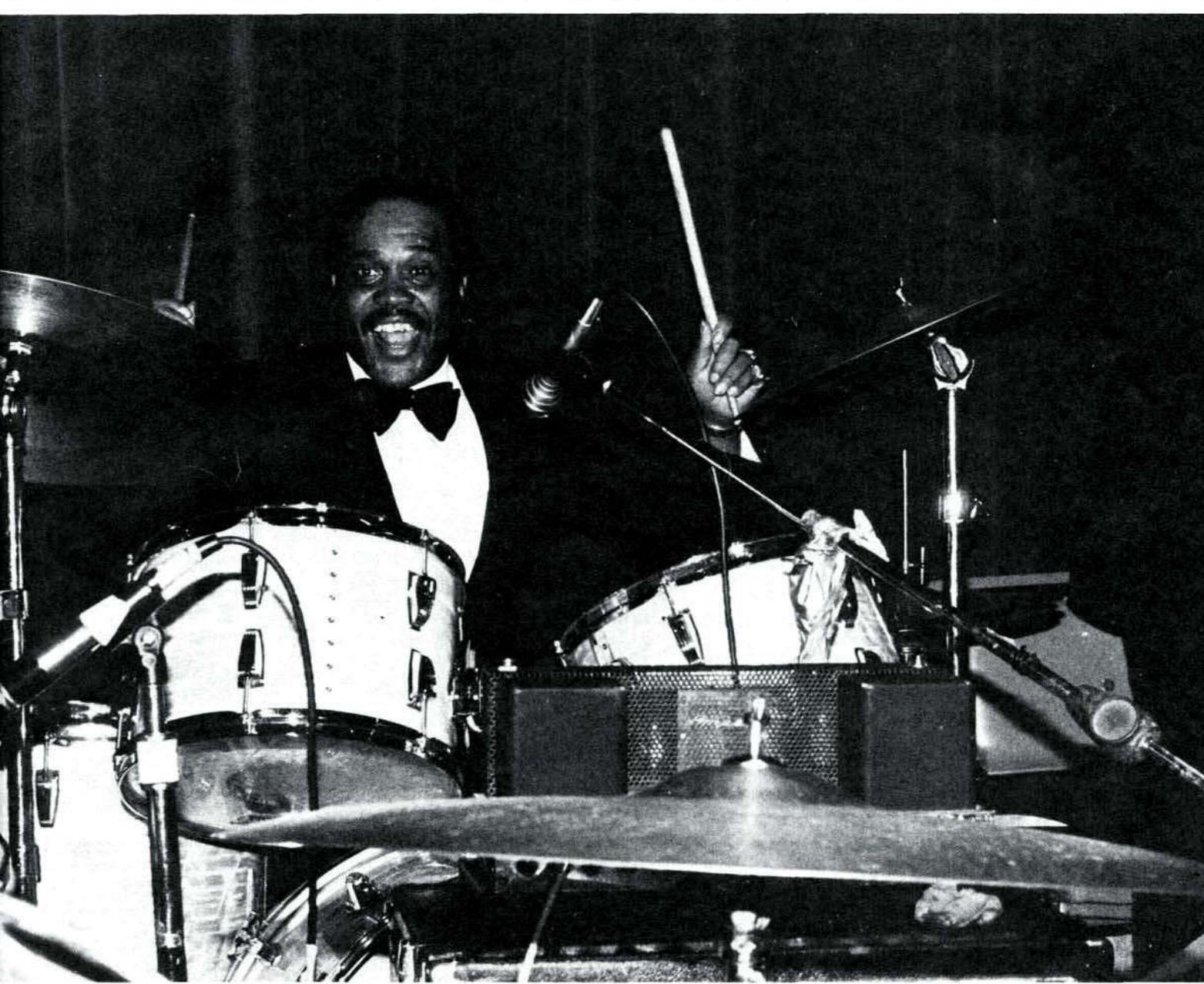
My early love in music was the big bands. I think Lionel Hampton and Gene Krupa were the best at that swing style. I'm not saying that Hamp was the soloist that Gene Krupa was, but he was a good swing drummer. I admired Krupa for two reasons. When I was a youngster, he inspired me. The second reason had to do with something that happened, years later, when I was playing in Great Neck, Long Island, with Maynard Ferguson's band. Gene Krupa was on the bill with us. We had played two or three numbers, and Gene was behind the curtain watching me. I wasn't aware of it.

After the set was over, Gene asked Maynard if I liked Slingerland drums. Gene was on the Board of Directors of the Slingerland Drum Company, and they were looking for drummers to endorse the drums. My drums were these rattletraps that I'd brought from Buffalo. Any drum-set would've been an improvement. Gene said to me, "I think you play great." I would never have expected that. For him to say that and to ask me to endorse Slingerland was the biggest turning point



Frankie dunlop

by Scott K. Fish



**making
it
swing**

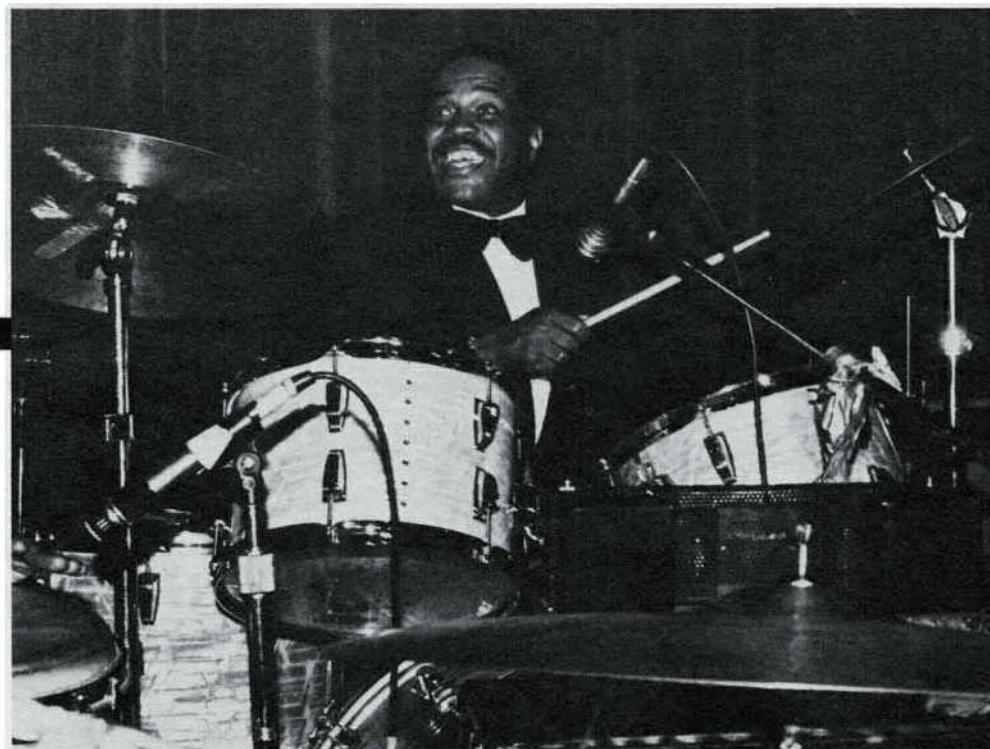
AUGUST 1985

for me. The compliment was great, and so was the fact that I was going to get a new set of drums and advertise for Slingerland. I could never have continued to play with Maynard on the rattletraps that I was playing. So I stayed with Maynard for three years, and advertised for Slingerland and Zildjian during that time. Those were exciting days.

SF: Mel Lewis suggested that I ask you about George Clark, and some of the other bands you started with in Buffalo.

FD: Mel and I are both from Buffalo, we're about the same age, we came up around the same time, and we *both* played with George Clark. In the '40s, I had this steady job with George Clark in Buffalo. He had a quartet. Mel Lewis and I would go to the union and keep our chops up by working with a local rehearsal big band that was run by Lenny Lewis. But it turned out to be a very good band, and Mel Lewis went with that band. That was one of Mel's first experiences on the road. Mel had more big band experience than I did, but both of us learned how to take care of business, not just in our playing, but also so that we could work the good jobs. We both got the same knowledge from the old-timers. Both of us would come to New York to see the drummers who influenced us. Mel was the only drummer that George Clark would let take my place when I wanted to come to New York. He'd say, "Well Frankie, if you can't get Mel, you can't go."

I'd come to New York to see what was happening and to try to introduce myself to the people I looked up to. I heard all these drummers playing with all of this coordination. Max Roach and Kenny Clarke had the bebop style. Ed Shaughnessy and Charlie Persip were doing it with two bass drums. Charlie had two bass drums when he started with Dizzy Gillespie's sextet. I used to say, "How can you do that?"



Even with Max Roach, I'd be saying, "How can he keep that beat going with his right hand, and do all that other stuff with his left hand and bass drum?" I was growing up right at the beginning of the bebop era. That's what excited me.

SF: Is it true that you studied with Max Roach?

FD: Max had come to Buffalo with Charlie Parker, and he didn't have a bass drum. The Secretary of the Union was calling around looking for one. I happened to have two bass drums, so I loaned my drum to Max. One or two years later I saw Max on 52nd Street, and he remembered me. That made me feel so good, because, just like Krupa, Max had influenced me, and I had a great admiration for him.

Max had never heard me play. All he knew was that I was a drummer who had loaned him my bass drum in Buffalo. When he saw me that night at the Three Deuces, he came over and said, "How are you doing?" He couldn't remember my name. When I told him, Max said, "Oh yeah, Buffalo. You did me a great favor, man. Look, come hang out with me. Where are you staying?" He knew it was my first time in New York, and I ended up staying at his apartment for three days.

He got his drums out and a practice pad, and started to do a few things. I started to

play a single-stroke roll and a double-stroke roll. Max was correcting me on my hands—showing me how to get more power. It wasn't a case of my staying in New York and actually studying with him. He showed me some things that helped my coordination.

But the one who really showed me the key to coordination was my teacher in Buffalo, Johnny Roland. When I left Buffalo to move to New York, he'd been percussionist with the Buffalo Symphony for 30 or 40 years. I've been in New York for 25 years, and Johnny's still with the Symphony, so he's got to be 75 or 80 years old. He's a very good instructor. He had that love in his heart and a will to share his knowledge for a small amount of money. He didn't have to do that. Even though he was involved with symphonic pieces and the classics, he knew just what to teach new drummers, so they could play jazz or whatever they wanted to play.

If you asked 1,000 young drummers if they wanted to study with the percussionist from the Buffalo Symphony, they'd say, "No. I can't get what I want out of a cat who's playing in a symphony. I'm a jazz drummer." But my experience was the complete opposite. I learned more about coordination from Johnny Roland, at a time when even the *average* drummer in

"I GREW UP IN AN ERA WHERE IT WAS TAKEN FOR GRANTED THAT MUSICIANS COULD PLAY ANYTHING."

Photo by Michael S. Jachell

Buffalo thought it was a drag that I was studying with him. He showed me all the intricacies, and gave me the kingpin lessons in all the things that would lead me to coordination and independence—how to be able to play modern. I realized from one simple little exercise that I could practice on my knees that this was the same kind of stuff I heard Persip and Shaughnessy playing.

SF: How did you land the job with Maynard Ferguson in 1959?

FD: I knew Maynard Ferguson from Buffalo. We're about the same age, and he had a big band that played Crystal Beach in Canada, when he was 14 or 15 years old. Crystal Beach was about 70 miles from Buffalo, and it was like Coney Island. At that time, they called Maynard "The Harry James of Canada."

There were two union locals in Buffalo at that time—the colored musicians and the white musicians. The colored musicians had a club where they'd have open jam sessions every week, and everyone was invited. I met Maynard at one of those sessions. He asked me then to come hear his band at Crystal Beach, and he also asked me if I was interested in big band work. I was afraid of big bands, because I had no experience. And I had very little experience with reading, outside of the reading I did with the musician's concert band at the local, which was basically march music for snare drummers.

Studying with Johnny Roland helped stretch my reading ability, but then I was drafted into the army. If the army hadn't drafted me, I'd probably be playing with Leonard Bernstein right now. I'd be that finished a player on the whole percussion scene, because Johnny Roland would have taken me all the way. I'm not the only musician who was drafted, but I had daggers in my eyes for Uncle Sam, for taking me from my music studies.

SF: Did you play drums in the army?

FD: I didn't get with a musical outfit until I was shipped overseas to Korea. I was assigned a position in an anti-aircraft unit. First, I spent 14 weeks of basic training at Fort Dix, NJ. Nelson Boyd, the bassist who was recording and playing with people like Max Roach and J.J. Johnson at that time, was taking basic training at Fort Dix at the same time I was. But on Monday nights, I'd turn on Symphony Sid's radio program—which was a live broadcast—and I'd hear him say, "This is Symphony Sid, and I want to tell you, we've got a crazy lineup here. We've got some swinging cats. We've got J.J. Johnson on trombone, and we've got my man, Sonny Stitt. Yeah. He's going to play some alto and a little tenor. And we've got my man here, Max Roach, on drums. And we've got a real cooking bass player—Nelson Boyd."

I would wonder how Nelson could be in basic training and playing jazz in New York City on Monday nights. He must have known somebody. When I shipped out to Fort Bliss for anti-aircraft training, Nelson Boyd stayed at Fort Dix. Every Monday, I'd turn on the radio to catch the jam session at Birdland, and Nelson played three Mondays out of every month. Monday wasn't even a pass day!

I cried on so many shoulders in the army. I was determined that I was going to get into that band. There was a piano player at the Service Club, and there was a little raggedy drum on stage. I'd get up there and play, because I wanted to be heard. Man, the army had taken me when I was so inspired and doing so well with my lessons. It was like a break in my life. I knew I had to be in the army, and I was determined to make the best of it. I didn't want to go A.W.O.L. But I wanted to use my talents, and I felt like nobody understood me. I never did get in the army band.

Two officers knew about my enthusiasm for playing, so they had me lead a little drum corps. Every time we'd have forma-

tion, they'd have me give the military beats, and we'd all march out. That was great. My concert training from Buffalo came in handy there, and so did my lessons with Johnny Roland. He used to show me the standing up technique of playing snare drum. You know those old method books, where you see those pictures of old drummers, standing up with the sticks held up high over the drums? I used to think, "What the heck do I need this for? That's corny." But I never would have been effective in leading 250 to 300 men out if I didn't have that power.

When I was shipped from Fort Dix to Fort Bliss, Texas, that was the end of my drumming again, and I finally gave up. Then I got my orders to go to Korea. I remember taking that long ride over to Korea on the ocean. I was thinking, "My God. I'm in the army. I'm not going to be in Special Services." I was thinking about Nelson Boyd and all the guys stateside who were going to continue their music. I'm talking about a long, dreary ride across the Pacific. It was 14 days going over there. I was so torn up inside that I lost about 20 pounds on that trip. Man, when I was crossing the Pacific on that boat, they had put me on garbage detail. I'd put these bags on a conveyer belt that would dump them off the stern. Sharks would follow that boat to eat the garbage. I was seriously thinking of going right off the back of that boat with the garbage. That's how deep in the dumps my mind was. I thought it would all happen in the States, but it didn't.

When I got to Korea, my musical experience was still on my military records. There was a Sergeant Brown, who had requested that all musicians be sent to his Battery. When I first got there, they sent me out into the field with a gun unit, only ten miles from the front lines. I had no idea that the sergeant was a musician. I thought I was going to go crazy without music, but

continued on page 84

by Susan Alexander

HAVE you noticed how more drummers seem to be getting involved in writing? Many people regard this as a very healthy thing. Drummers are becoming more than just the people in the back who keep the time happening. The obvious examples of this new-found role for drummers are Phil Collins and Neil Peart. Another man who should be included on this list of multi-talented drummers is Herman Rarebell.

Besides holding together one of the world's most successful heavy metal bands, *The Scorpions*, Herman is a very proficient songwriter and lyricist. He has written or co-written most of the lyrics on *The Scorpions* records. He has also recently produced his first solo album under the name of Herman Ze German. The name illustrates Herman's dry wit. He is a man who doesn't take himself too seriously.

Herman's soft-spoken and unassuming friendliness, and warm sense of humor are immediately apparent. For our meeting, Herman was dressed casually in sports coat and slacks—not in leather. Image is only for the stage. A man off few words, Herman nevertheless was willing to discuss anything and everything concerning his successful career in *The Scorpions*. Subjects of our conversation ranged from why he switched from double bass drums to single and then back to double, to his relationships with his recording and P.A. engineers.

Herman has found himself becoming more interested in maintaining a healthy body and staying in shape. The rock 'n' roll road has taken its toll on many a musician, and it seems that only the strong survive—not just the physically strong, but the mentally strong as well. Heavy metal playing is especially hard work as the drummer has to play full out for two hours or more every night.

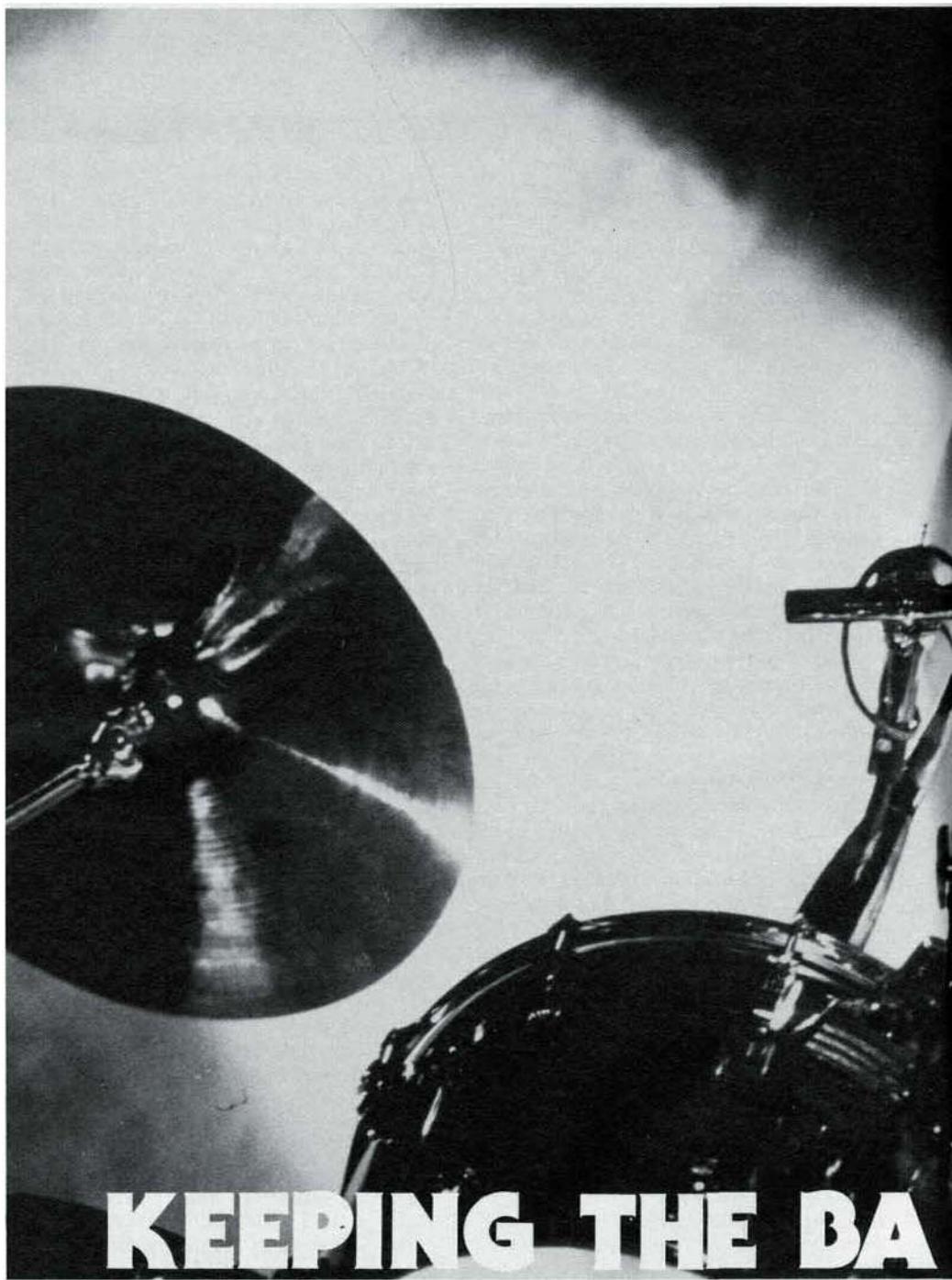
The Scorpions are one of the most musical bands playing heavy metal rock. Unlike so many metal singers who tend to scream constantly, Scorpion Klaus Meine has a good singing voice, and he is not afraid to display his melodic tendencies.

The band has grown together as a unit over their 14-year existence. This is reflected in their playing, and it's clear from the outset that Herman Rarebell is a team player. He is all business behind his drums. The music doesn't require it, so Herman does not add many frills, but he is oh-so-steady on the beat. He is there to support the other players and not necessarily to glow in the dark by himself.

Hard rock is heavy-handed, and Herman pile-drives his band ahead with an energy and force that is incredible. Most people find themselves getting tired just watching him work.

The Scorpions first saw life in 1971. Guitarist Rudolph Schenker and singer Klaus

HERMAN



KEEPING THE BA

Meine have been with the band from the beginning. Rarebell came on board in 1977. Bassist Francis Buchholz joined the band in 1974, with guitarist Matthias Jabs signing on in 1979. The lineup has stayed the same since that time.

The Scorpions started to gain popularity slowly in Germany, and then went on to conquer the rest of Europe and England. The States slowly submitted to *The Scorpions'*

brand of hard and heavy rock 'n' roll. After three years of supporting other acts all across the States, they finally secured their first headlining tour, and they haven't looked back since.

The band has worked with producer Deiter Derks since their *In Trance* LP in 1975. In addition to that, they have been working with the same sound-reinforcement people for most of their touring

RAREBELL



SICS TOGETHER

Photo by Paul Jonason

years. One can feel a sense of loyalty within the band's extended family.

A few years ago, Germany was not known for its rock 'n' roll bands. German artists have occasionally surfaced in the American charts, but never have they made any lasting impact until The Scorpions. They have consistently been in not only the American charts, but record polls all over the world. They have been called

one of the most important hard rock bands of the '80s.

Oddly enough, even though The Scorpions are all German and Herman himself was born and raised in Germany, he met and auditioned for the band while he was living in England. But I'm getting ahead of the story. Let's start from the beginning with a young Herman Rarebell.

HR: When I was about four or five years

old, I used to play in the kitchen on all the dishes, making a lot of noise. Everybody kept saying, "Shut up." The next big encounter I had with drum playing was when I was about 12 or 13 years old. I went to a wedding, and there was this old drumkit standing there. They had a typical dance band playing, and I was sitting behind the drumkit. I had a natural feeling for it. That got me involved in drumming. Then, one year later, my mother gave me my first drumkit.

SA: So, your parents were supportive?

HR: No, my father wasn't actually for music at all. My mother is a musician herself, so she bought me an old Trixon. Remember Trixon? I don't know if they have them in the States. I had one bass drum, snare drum, one cymbal, and one small tom. I didn't even have a hi-hat. That's it.

SA: What does your mother play?

HR: She plays guitar and she sings. She used to play for the American soldiers in Germany. After the war was over, she used to play for the bases there.

SA: Where were you born and raised?

HR: Saarbrücken, which is on the French border. That's near Luxembourg/Frankfurt—right on the French border.

SA: Is that a good area for musicians?

HR: It is like Birmingham, England. It's an old, working-class, industrial area, which always creates good heavy metal drummers, I believe.

SA: Did you ever take lessons?

HR: I was self-taught. I started listening to the Beatles when I was 14 years old, as well as to the Stones, the Kinks, and the Yardbirds. I listened to what those drummers did. Then, when I was about 20, I studied music for two years at the music academy in Saarbrücken. I studied drums there, but all they taught me was classical drums—you know, snare drum, rudiments and the cymbals, where you [slapping hands together] put your cymbals together. I got pretty bored with it after three years, and I moved to England in '71. I lived there for six years and really got into rock 'n' roll.

SA: Did you play with a lot of bands once you arrived in Britain?

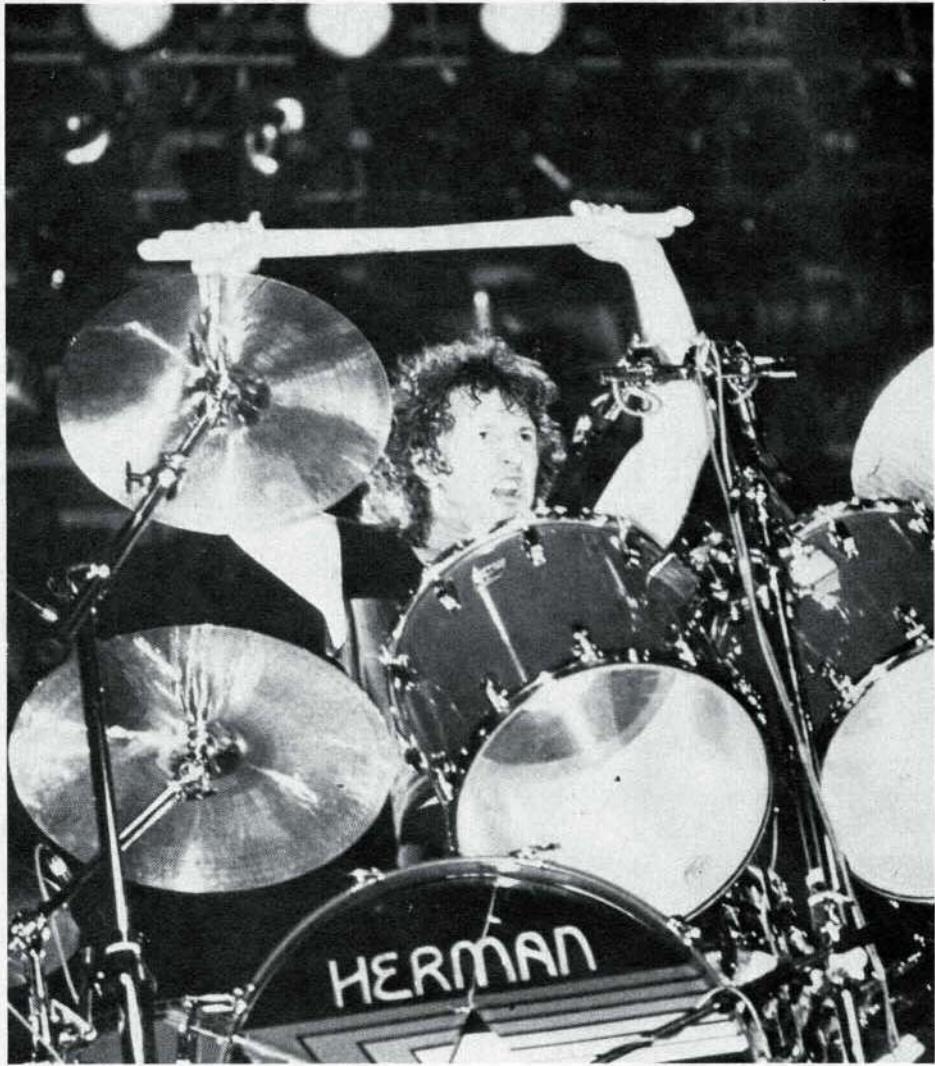
HR: Well, a lot of bands, but none of the bands were big. None of the bands made it. There was the occasional famous musician from other bands, like Lee Jackson of The Nice or Michael Monarch of Steppenwolf. But none of those bands ever took off. In 1977, I met Michael Schenker in a club called The Speakeasy in London. He told me that The Scorpions were looking for a drummer. I went for the audition in London, and they asked me to join. The next day, I was in Germany.

SA: That's really a nice coincidence.

HR: I don't believe in coincidences in life. I believe that certain things in life are meant to be.

SA: How did you develop your technique?

HR: Well, as I said, when I was about 20, I



started really getting into the rudiments—the snare drum—so I learned all the mama/dada's—the paradiddles. I went through the whole Buddy Rich school of snare drum rudiments. So, I have classical training on the snare drum. I don't use any of that nowadays in rock 'n' roll. It's more like a feeling. When I feel something, I play it. It's good to know this technique, because then you can use it whenever you feel it's necessary.

SA: I know people who never had any training, and looking back, they think of all the things they could do. Now, they'd have to retrain themselves and break their bad habits.

HR: I know. That's true. I was a very heavy rock drummer then, and I had played already for six years—Kinks, Stones, Beatles, and Zeppelin material. When I went to school there, they taught me, first of all, how to hold the sticks differently. They said, "You're going to play like this. This is the exact way, and you have to be 100% precise."

SA: Did they teach you just the traditional grip?

HR: Yes, how to hold the sticks properly and the rudiments. I was rehearsing all those all day long, but it was boring. I

couldn't do that anymore.

SA: Do you do much practicing now?

HR: Yeah, on the road I do every day. I've got a small Ludwig drumkit, which is a 24" bass drum, one 13" small tom and an 18" floor tom, three cymbals, and a hi-hat. My roadie puts them up in my dressing room every night. I usually do soundchecks, and after soundchecks are over, I play for an hour on the kit. Then, I go back to the hotel and change my clothes to do the show. But on the road, I try to play at least something between half an hour and an hour on the kit every day.

SA: That's great. Many drummers don't do that. They say that you can't really practice on the road.

HR: When I'm off the road, I sometimes don't touch the kit for two months. That's sometimes very good, because it clears your head for fresh creativity. Then, when I sit down again after two months, I may be a little bit stiff in the hands, but my head is so clear. After eight days, I have the blisters on my hands, and everything is okay again.

SA: When did you start playing double bass drums?

HR: The first time I bought myself a double bass drum was when I was 18 years old.

Cream just came out; you remember "I Feel Free." I saw Ginger Baker playing double bass drums and I freaked out. I said, "This is a double bass from now on." I went out and bought myself a Premier drumkit with double bass drums. I was always fascinated by Keith Moon playing double bass drums, too. When The Who came out with "My Generation," it was the first time I saw double bass drums and that fascinated me.

SA: When you started playing them, what was the hardest thing for you to learn?

HR: The difference is with doing something different with your feet than you would do with your hands. But I practiced. I played the double bass drums from the time I was 18 until I was about 22. Then I went back to single bass drum again for about five years, until I joined The Scorpions and bought myself a double bass drum kit again.

SA: Why did you go back to one bass drum after playing two?

HR: I wanted to do the same things on one bass drum that I did on two bass drums. I think that double bass drums nowadays are a variation. They should be used tastefully in the music. I don't play double bass drums all the time. In fact, when we go into the studio, I play single bass drum. For *Love At First Sting*, I used a single bass drum on the whole album. But on *Blackout*, on a song called "Dynamite" I used double bass drums.

When I play live, I like to use double bass drums in my solo, because they sound good there. I like to use them in certain parts of the music, as I said, when it comes to middle bits. When Matthias plays solos, I double them up. But if you use them all the time, I think they become boring.

SA: How would you define your role in The Scorpions?

HR: I would say that I'm the foundation of the band. I'm the heart in the band. I'm the man who keeps the basics together. It's like when you build a house. I'm the basement. Without the basement, the whole house would fall in.

SA: How do you think the role differs for a drummer who is playing in a heavy metal band as opposed to other types of rock music?

HR: A drummer in a heavy metal band is very important. All the great heavy metal bands always had great drummers, starting with Led Zeppelin. It's very important that the rhythm section, especially, sounds like heavy metal, which means solid playing. If you have other kinds of rock 'n' roll, the playing doesn't have to be that solid. They can fiddle about much more. A jazz drummer or a jazz/rock drummer plays lighter, too.

SA: More top kit, maybe.

HR: Yeah, that's right—where I concentrate my playing more, like backing up the voice. If I want to show technique, I do that in my solo.

SA: Getting back to that, when you're playing live, who in the band do you listen to most?

HR: I have Rudolph Schenker, the rhythm guitar player, in my monitor system. I have Matthias, the solo lead guitar player, too. I orient myself on rhythm. I know every word that Klaus sings, so I don't need him behind me, as well. But Rudolph is my main point. If he's bad, I just turn him off. [laughs]

SA: I'm sure that he appreciates that.

HR: You can't have a good night every night, you know. I don't think that people actually realize the difference, but Rudolph and I do, because we know each other very well.

SA: At a live performance, the atmosphere itself is exciting, so the listeners may not hear things that they would hear at home on the stereo.

HR: That's right. When they are seeing live excitement, they don't even care anymore. If you don't play 100% like the record, they forgive you because they say, "Well, this is live." But we try always to play our songs live as we play on the album. Many people have told us, too, that we are very, very close. A lot of people actually say we are just like the album.

SA: There's not too much improvisation in concert, then?

HR: No. We have it totally worked out. Sometimes on the guitar solos or on the drum solos, the improvisation comes in and we play all night. We just let loose and play longer.

SA: But you really are more interested in recreating what is on your records because of the audience.

HR: Yeah, because the people buy the album, and then they come to the live concert. They want to hear what they hear on the album at home. If people buy a certain album because they like "Rock You Like A Hurricane," and they come to the concert and hear a version of "Rock You Like A Hurricane" that doesn't even sound close to the version on the album, they're going to be angry.

SA: When you're recording, how much do you think about the fact that you are going to have to play the song live?

HR: Again, everything we play in the studio, we want to play the same way live. You can do that or come very close to it. We try to capture the momentum of the song. Once we have this, that's the take that we keep. There are some bands who overproduce in the studio, and they can't play live anymore. I never overdub any drums. I play the drums the way they are. I don't even overdub cymbals. I just take them live. I try to make the first, second, or third take. That's it.

SA: For The Scorpions' music, you have to play pretty powerfully. Do you think that it takes away from your finesse?

HR: Yes, definitely. It takes the fine finesse away. When I was at the music academy, I

was doing very fine rolls. I mean, nobody hears that live, anyway. I just make my drumming very solid and I make all the rolls solid, too. If I do fast rolls, I do them basically at the end of the song when all the decay is just there or in the solo. But when I play inside The Scorpions' music, I try to keep it simple, heavy, and basic, in order to lay down a heavy foundation.

SA: Since you play so hard, do you tend to go through a lot of drumheads?

HR: Yeah. On the road, I change my snare drum head every day.

year just to endorse them, plus as many drumkits as I wanted for nothing—but I believe in Ludwig because they really withstand my pressure. I'm a heavy player, and I can't afford for the drumkit just to fall apart in the middle of the tour. The stands have to be good, the bass drum, the heads—everything—and Ludwig gives me that. Plus I like the sound. It's big and fat.

SA: Are you meticulous about the tuning of your drums?

HR: I like my drums to sound deep and fat. I like my snare to have a crispy,



SA: What kind of heads do you use?

HR: *Silver Dots* by Ludwig. I do an endorsement for Ludwig. That makes it easier, especially on the cost because they give me all the skins for nothing.

SA: What do you think about endorsements?

whippy, snappy sound. I don't like taping my drums, because I believe in the natural sound of the drums. I have a blanket in my bass drum, but that's it.

SA: How about for the studio?

HR: The studio's the same thing. In fact, in the studio, I even put the front skin on the bass drum.

SA: So many engineers want to record the drums their way. When you go into a studio to record, how do you work with your engineer?

HR: I tell him what to do. I don't make any compromises. If he doesn't want to do what I want to do, I'll get another engineer. I'm the drummer, and I know how my instrument should sound. If my instrument sounds good in the studio the way I tune it, the engineer should be able to make it sound like that over the speakers. If he doesn't have that finesse, then I get another engineer. It's very simple.

If the engineer has to use tape and all different things to make that drum sound good, then that's not the way. The mic's just like an ear. If a drum sounds good in the studio by itself without any mic's and if the engineer has good ears, he will know how to place those mic's so the drum sounds exactly the same over the speakers

continued on page 90

"ALL THE GREAT HEAVY METAL BANDS ALWAYS HAD GREAT DRUMMERS . . ."

HR: I think you only should do an endorsement if you believe in the product. Actually, I bought a Ludwig before I endorsed them. I love Ludwig kits. I had many offers from different companies. They even offered me a lot of money to go with them. I mean big money—\$50,000 a

Platinum Blonde's Chris Stef

In setting up this interview with Chris Steffler, drummer of the hugely popular Toronto band, Platinum Blonde, I was impressed by how easy he was to reach. After only two calls to his management, I was able to talk to the lean, lanky percussionist for one of Canada's most promising and impressive new bands.

My ease in contacting Chris is surprising if one considers the recent overwhelming success of Platinum Blonde. After touring extensively with a number of big-name bands, their recent headlining concert at Toronto's City Hall attracted some 25,000 fans. Their debut album, *Standing In The Dark*, has sold well, both in the States and overseas, and has gone appropriately platinum in Canada, edging closer to double-platinum status.

In his comfortable Toronto apartment, Chris and I discussed some of his childhood experiences, his learning to play the drums, his period as a drumming instructor, and his newfound success with Platinum Blonde. He also talked excitedly about his most recent "toys and outboard gear," referring to his array of sophisticated gadgetry.

He is a unique fusion of solid, versatile playing and keen, technical insight in dealing with innovative electronic percussion. About Simmons, drum machines, and other synthesized percussion, Chris comments, "It's a 1980s approach to entertaining." Chris Steffler, complete with his complex electronic equipment and a dynamic southpaw style all his own, is certainly a drummer of the '80s.

SP: How and when did you get your first drumset?

CS: Actually, when I was in seventh grade, my aunt played drums in a C&W band. I walked upstairs to her room one night and saw this set of drums. The drums just seemed so ominous, and they were so big and sparkling. They were really cool, and I thought, "Man, these things are so huge compared to a mouth organ or a guitar."

They were a ninth-hand set of Olympics, but they had reasonably good cymbals. I remember that they were an English drum, and I broke the head on the tom-tom after I owned them for a while. Nobody had a metric head for it, so I had to get one made out of calfskin. It sounded like garbage, because it didn't match up to the plastic ones.

SP: Who were your earliest influences?

CS: Probably Keith Moon, Ringo, John Bonham—'70s types—and a dash of Gene Krupa. I tried to retain something that was

interesting from everybody. But it was mostly the heavy glitter-rock thing, because that was what was happening when I became interested in music, while I was in high school.

SP: Who do you listen to today?

CS: I like everybody—rock and jazzish. I tend to go for more of a new music sound, because those are the records I buy. But I'll buy a Buddy Rich or a Louie Bellson album, just so I can see if I can steal something, [laughs] Not really, it's more the new music.

SP: What made you become a professional musician? Can you remember when you made that decision?

CS: Actually, the one thing that really made me decide that drumming was the thing for me was when I was working for a ship-building company. I was welding in the bottom of a ship in a frozen harbor. You could hardly stand up in this thing, and it was pitch black down there. I came up for lunch, and my face was black with soot. I walked up onto the deck—it was freezing out—and I just said to myself, "I think I'm going to practice more." [laughs] I knew it could be better for me, if I put my mind to it. I just threw myself into a major scene and moved to Toronto from this small town.

SP: Did you get a lot of encouragement from your family in the beginning?

CS: I have to thank both of my parents a lot. Without them, I couldn't be what I am now. My mom would drive me to drum lessons and would pay for them when I was a kid. Not only that, but my parents would put up with endless hours of excessive "crash-boom-bamming" levels.

SP: Aside from formal lessons, how did you learn?

CS: I would play my stereo, put sweaters over my drums, and beat away at them to get the feeling of playing along with other musicians.

SP: Did you work with a metronome as well?

CS: I would suggest that every drummer bow to the metronome. Playing time is really important. I would say that the metronome is one of the gods of drumming. Anybody can play tons of notes and do all kinds of fancy things, but you have to be able to sit down, put the chemistry of a good arrangement together, and play it right in time, especially in a studio situation. That's when it really counts.

SP: Would you consider yourself a "natural"?

CS: I had to work at it. I taught for about

five years. What I saw was that some people are gifted with a natural ability, but I think that everyone has to work on it a bit. No one is just going to walk in and expect to play time well without playing with a metronome.

I guess I'd consider myself a natural to a degree, but I've seen studio players who do things I wouldn't even walk out of the control room to try. Some people have got it so together that it's scary. It's good; it's amazing; it shows you that you can do it.

SP: Do you think teaching drumming influenced your own playing at all?

CS: Yes, it helped me to read and to understand music more on a mathematical basis. It helped me to understand where I was making mistakes when I would watch other people make mistakes. And there were some students who were learning so fast that I had to keep up with them. So it pushed me to get my act together faster.

SP: Would you recommend teaching as a practical alternative to the up-and-coming drummer who can't find work right away?

CS: It depends. You have to have experience to teach, and most of all, you have to have patience. Like a doctor has to have a "bedside manner," you have to have a "drumset-side" manner or else your students won't stick around. You have to take the people you're teaching in the direction they want to go, because if you don't take them in that direction or you bore them with mundane, routine drum stuff, they'll leave. You have to be very versatile.

SP: You play your hi-hat with your left hand, hitting the snare with your right, yet your setup is right-handed. How and why did you develop this unique style?

CS: When I got this set of drums, I sat behind them and thought, "How in the hell do you play these things?" I was playing rock with my buddies who had these loud amplifiers, and I said, "Man, the snare drum isn't loud enough." So I started hitting it with my right hand, [laughs]

Actually, it wasn't a good way to learn. When I started getting into more serious playing, I found that your strong hand should divide the time. The finer the time division, the easier it is to hold the time. On the hi-hat, you have finer time happening, but on the snare, you have greater time divisions, so theoretically, it's my weak hand that's holding time. That was kind of a drag, but then I started getting my timing together and I realized, "Hey, I've got a different approach from other drummers." So it helped me develop more of an

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by Steven Peterson

individual style.

There are drummers who use the traditional style of grip that can do things I can't do. I have trouble doing a cut-time shuffle, for instance. But then there are these off-side beats I can do solidly. So it has kind of worked out for the best.

SP: Did you ever try the conventional grip?

CS: I got into it for a while, but I just wasn't strong enough with it. It's hard to teach an old dog new tricks. I became so settled in my way that it felt the best and the strongest. To feel strong and commanding is what it's all about when you're laying it down. You *have* to feel that way, or else the rest of the band won't feel that way.

SP: Yours is a right-handed set. Do you find that your style affects your coordination?

CS: Yes and no. At first it did, but I worked it out. I had to set my ride cymbal in a place that was convenient, almost dead center in the middle of my bass drum. I sacrificed my tom setup a bit, but it was worth the physical balance when playing to do it.

SP: How do you work out your fills?

CS: Usually, the tune will dictate the nature of the fill. What I'll do sometimes to get an original fill is do a rudiment, but take one hand over a practice pad and play the rudiment, with my other hand on the kit. All of a sudden, I'll get this off-side sounding feel that helps give me original ideas.

SP: What are some important aspects of drumming, in your opinion?

CS: A lot of people reading this article already know this, but as I was learning, I found that less is more. I used to want to put in a lot of notes and have a busy bass drum, but I think that I've gotten over that now. I also think that arranging is important. Drummers should get into thinking, arranging, and building a tune, as the producers do.

I found that even having fewer drums helped me. I used to have tons of stuff, but I saw what some of the jazz greats were doing on those little sets and I thought, "They're making those drums sing!" I realized that I would sometimes have to reach too far to play something, which could make me come in too late for a change. So I dumped the cymbal, or whatever it was, and all of a sudden, I felt like I was right on top of things. Even equipment-wise, having less is more sometimes.

SP: Let's talk about your current setup.



Photo by Dino Safari

What are you playing right now?

CS: I have a Ludwig 8" deep *Coliseum* snare drum now. My three toms are all Simmons; I don't use any acoustic toms. I have a Ludwig 28" bass drum, which is in front of my Simmons kick drum, and holds up my ride cymbal and my stick-holder. [laughs] I also have a timbale, which is basically an old Stewart snare drum with the bottom head taken out. I had a real timbale, but I wasn't getting enough crack out of it and I wanted a weird, more different sound. So I tried this thing and cranked it to really get a crack.

SP: What about cymbals?

CS: I use mostly Sabian. I have a 21" ride, 15", 16", 18", and 20" crashes, and 14" hi-hats.

SP: Why Sabian?

CS: It's a solid cymbal. I bought a pair of Sabian hi-hats recently, and I'm really happy with their feel.

SP: Aside from Simmons, have you tried any other types of electronic percussion?

CS: I'm getting into more technical aspects of music, experimenting with my drum machine unit, the Sequential Circuits *Drumtracks*. I'm also using MIDI, Musical Instrument Digital Interfacing, which allows me to use my drum machine unit to trigger a keyboard to get some percussive keyboard sounds in unison with me and my *Drumtracks*. It's interesting and great for filling the gaps, but you can run into problems with tuning and interfacing the units.

SP: Do you think Simmons will take the place of acoustic drums?

CS: At first, a few players were saying, "Oh my God, these drums are fantastic! They're the best thing since sliced bread!" Now they're a sound of their own. I think it will be many moons before something takes the place of conventional drums.

Actually, I didn't like them at first. They were good for the stuff we did on the album, but for the other stuff where I had all these traditional feels, they didn't feel right. They took some getting used to, but now I'm spoiled. The rebound is incredible, and the sounds are versatile. They feel great for me for the time being.

SP: How would you feel if critics said that all your electronics are a shortcut or a compromise in your playing?

CS: It's a compromise, but it's not taking away from me at all. With all the toys to make you sound good, it's an art in itself. I don't feel as if I'm slacking off, because the rest of the time I'm slugging it out with just a trio, giving 115%. So I need a break, especially if I'm doing an hour-and-a-half show, plus encores. And some nights, I don't feel like I want to be up there, because I'm burnt out from being on the road, or I'm sick or I just need sleep. And if I'm entertaining my audience by doing something visually entertaining, while the electronic units cover the technical aspects, I'm still doing my job.

SP: How did Platinum Blonde come together?



#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.T.
Close-Up.

#23 — MAY 1981
Jaime Johnson-Butch Trucks,
Roger Hawkins, Buddy Har-
man, Paul T. Riddle.

#25 — JULY 1981
Harvey Mason, Alan Gratzer,
Bassists: On Drummers.

#26 — AUGUST 1981
Billy Kreutzmann, Mickey
Hart, James Bradley, Jr.

#27 — OCTOBER 1981
Shelly Manne, Tommy
Aldridge.

#28 — NOVEMBER 1981
Jim Keltner, Terry Bozzio, Ed
Blackwell.

#30 — FEBRUARY 1982
Philly Joe Jones, Stix Hooper.

#31 — APRIL 1982
Max Weinberg, Narada,
Michael Walden, Danny Gott-
lieb.

#32 — MAY 1982
Aynsley Dunbar, Alex Acuna.

#33 — JUNE 1982
Max Roach, Keith Moon, Vic
Firth.

#34 — JULY 1982
John Panozzo, Graham Lear, Martin
Chambers.

#35 — AUG / SEPT 1982
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.

#38 — DECEMBER 1982
Elvin Jones, John Densmore,
Mixing & Recording Drums.

#39 — JANUARY 1983
Peter Erskine, Chester Thompson,
Jim Gordon.

#40 — FEBRUARY 1983
Jeff Porcaro, Clem Burke,
Billy Higgins.

#41 — MARCH 1983
Kenny Jones, Kenny Clare, Ginger
Baker.

#43 — MAY 1983
Earl Palmer, Chad Wackerman,
Eli Konikoff.

#44 — JUNE 1983
Bill Bruford, Mike Clark, Mark
Crane.

#45 — JULY 1983
Steve Gadd, Myron Grombacher,
Drumsticks: The Full Story.

#46 — AUGUST 1983
Arito, Mark Hemdon, 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.

#53 — MARCH 1984
Matt Frenette, Joey Kramer,
Focus On Teachers.

#54 — APRIL 1984
Neil Pearl, Ralph Cooper,
Drummers and Singers.

#55 — MAY 1984
Larry London, Chris Frantz,
Inside Gretsch.

#56 — JUNE 1984
Tony Williams, Tris Imboden,
Willie Wilcox, Dino Danelli.

#57 — JULY 1984
JOHN BONHAM TRIBUTE
Phil Ehrt, Inside Simmons, Readers
Poll Results.

#58 — AUGUST 1984
LEVON HELM
Thommy Price, Bob Moses, Focus on
Atlantic City.

#59 — SEPTEMBER 1984
ART BLAKEY
Carmine Appice, Arthur Press, Joey
Franco: On Double Bass.

#60 — OCTOBER 1984
QUEEN'S ROGER TAYLOR
Jerry Spieser, Les DeMerle, Namim
Update.

#61 — NOVEMBER 1984
RUSS KUNKEL
Cozy Powell, Horace Arnold, Focus
on Teachers: Part 2.

#62 — DECEMBER 1984
TERRY BOZZIO
Omar Hakim, Ian Paice, Inside
Calato.

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CS: One day, I just looked in the paper and saw an ad for a band looking for a drummer. I saw the name, "Mark" and it said, "established." I thought it might be Mark [Holmes], an old circuit buddy—and it was.

I was basically there for an audition, but he didn't look at anybody else. He'd seen me play with other bands and knew what I could do, but we had to see if we could gel together. Mark had a list of about 50 guitar players who had phoned about the ad, but things seemed to work out well with Serge [Galli], who was the first guitarist he auditioned. So we were basically the first two guys he checked out. It just felt good from day one.

SP: Why a trio?

CS: The chemistry felt good with three. We almost did go for a fourth member. We auditioned some bass players, so we could put Mark up front, but the feel didn't work. Plus, management wanted us to keep it to a three-piece group, because they saw we had our act together and that musically it was good. Also, it was cheaper in those days, so they convinced us to keep it a three-piece group. Instead of paying another musician, we put the money toward equipment that would help us fill out our sound.

SP: How did the band arrive at the name Platinum Blonde?

CS: Mark was into hairdressing for a while, and all these women were coming in, asking for hair colors. One lady said, "I'd like blonde hair," so he pulled out this tube that said, "Platinum Blonde." He thought, "What a great name for a band!" So he went for it. I guess it wasn't such a bad idea.

SP: What does the future hold for Platinum Blonde?

CS: We will record our next album this fall in England or L.A. We also have some Canadian and European dates.

SP: Are there any goals to attain before you can tell yourself that you've made it?

CS: Just being independent and being a musician is a goal. To be a professional musician is something I've always wanted, and I feel really good about that. I've always wanted to support myself by making music.

At first, it was the Gasworks, a local club, that was a goal. Once I reached that, there was Toronto's Massey Hall, the Kingswood Music Theater, and Maple Leaf Gardens. After that, I really wanted to hit New York. We went there, and then it was London. Also, our international release is extremely gratifying. But really ... a good band, talent, the material, screaming fans, and all the equipment are worth next to nothing unless you have that other "real world" as a part of it—your managers, the network of people at the record company, and the support of your loved ones. I'll never take any of this for granted.

BILL GIBSON

CYMBALS AT THE HEART OF ROCK & ROLL

"The kind of music we play has a lot of 'punches.' It's real visual when we play live. Huey likes to lead the band by 'accenting' with physical movements, so I'm looking for something that has an edge to it, some crispness. The cymbal sound has to stand up to the electronic stuff and not wash out, it still has to have that edge."

"Heart of Rock & Roll" is a sharp, punchy song with 8th notes on the Hi Hat all the way through and four sharp crashes halfway through the verse. For me, the whole song is those 'punches' right there. I use my K. 18" Dark Crash for that song and it's just a killer. It punches like crazy and it suits that part perfectly."

Bill Gibson plays with Huey Lewis & The News.

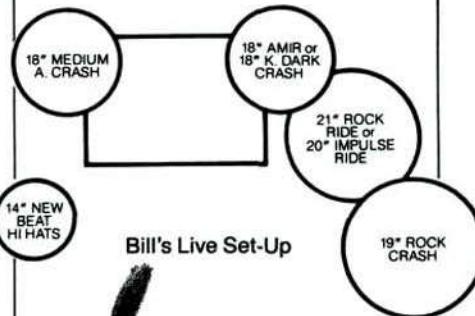
"For Crashes, I like a sharp attack. Something that's really gonna 'splash,' that isn't gonna sustain long. That's why I love my 18" Crashes. They speak quick. The Dark Crash is nice 'cause it'll 'rise' for a second. Which is good for when we end tunes. I'll just sustain on the cymbals and keep them going. They sustain real smooth straight through."

"I'll use my 21" Rock Ride when parts of the song open up, like in a solo section where I'll either be commenting on the beat or just counting straight four on the bell, like on 'Heart of Rock & Roll.' On other songs I use it for color. I also like that Impulse Ride because the overtones don't build up as much."

Gibson depends on Zildjians because they do more than just "cut." They give him the wide variety of tone colors and

textures he needs to expand far beyond strict timekeeping.

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Bill's Live Set-Up

let anybody tell you any different. Avedis Zildjian, that's it." When asked about his formula for success as a rock & roll drummer, Bill's advice is typically straight to the point:

"Don't play too much. Less is more. Keep it simple, make it mean something. Save the cymbals for those important accents during the song, so that when you hit those accents, they'll mean more. Make it work. Make it sound dramatic."

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Chuck Riggs

Eddie Cantor used to say, "Sometimes it takes ten years to become a star overnight." Chuck Riggs, 34, knows the feeling. He had been working with tenor sax player Scott Hamilton for a full ten years before the release of the album, *Close Up: The Scott Hamilton Quintet* on Concord Records in 1982. "That's the record that really put the band on the map," Riggs recalls. "That record basically got us Japan."

The Scott Hamilton Quintet (Hamilton, Riggs, guitarist Chris Flory, bassist Phil Flanigan, and pianist John Bunch) wowed 'em on its first Japanese tour in 1983, playing its contemporary swing everywhere from tiny, packed jazz clubs, to vast—but also packed—concert halls. "The Japanese really know how to treat an artist. You know, doing one-nighters is very hard for a drummer. Not only do you have to keep your energy up night after night as you tour, but every place you go, you have to set up your drums and take them down again. In Japan, they set up and took down the drums for me, night after night. All I had to do was play."

Close-Up proved a solid hit in the U.S. and abroad, garnering great reviews, strong sales for Concord, and air play on jazz stations, which, in turn, helped to get the band new bookings. From tapes of the band playing in Japan, Concord has released two follow-up "live" albums, *The Scott Hamilton Quintet In Concert* and *The Second Set*, which have been equally well received. As Riggs discusses his career, he is getting ready to leave for another (1985) tour of Japan with the band. "It's only really been good for the band for the past two years," he reflects. "It was hit or miss before then. Oh, there were albums coming out. We'd work places like Eddie Condon's and fans would ask why we weren't working more. Now we're hoping that somebody will realize that the band is here to stay. There's no other group of people I'd rather play with for the rest of my life."

Riggs has drummed for such greats as Bob Wilber, Bob Haggart, and the "King of Swing" himself, Benny Goodman. Riggs also did the drumming for the film *The Cotton Club*, and says he looks forward to doing more film work. But his first love, he stresses, is playing in the Scott Hamilton Quintet.

Riggs sees a great value in musicians staying together in an ongoing, organized group. They get to know each other's strong points; they can bring out the best in

each other. Of the current Scott Hamilton Quintet, four members (Hamilton, Riggs, Flanigan, and Flory) have been playing together, off and on, since at least 1976. That kind of continuity is extremely rare in the jazz world these days, and Riggs believes it's an important factor in the group's success.

Riggs was nine and a half or ten, he recalls, when a neighbor took him to see Gene Krupa. "I saw him flashing around, playing unbelievably, and I said, 'I want to play like that guy.' The very next day, I bought a big pair of sticks and put them in my back pocket. I took maybe a week of drumming lessons. I learned from records, radio, TV, and going to see everybody."

Riggs loved jazz, but found that he was the only jazz musician in his native Pawtucket, Connecticut. He wound up playing a lot of rock, funk, and soul. He took a factory day job and gigged at night when he could. He'd go across the border into Rhode Island to jam with guitarist Duke Robillard and players that eventually formed the band Roomful of Blues.

"Duke turned me on to blues and R&B. I learned real 4/4 blues," he notes. "I'd play at a club in a country-rock band and then get up at eight to work my day job. But I wanted to play jazz or R&B; I didn't want rock. Finally, I locked myself in a room, and listened to Basie, Ellington, and Krupa. I also tried to learn that Jo Jones thing. I stayed in the room, playing along with records, trying to get a jazz feel."

He was 20 or 21, he says, when he first heard Scott Hamilton, who was then only 16 or 17, but was already playing an impressive swing tenor, in the tradition of Ben Webster and Illinois Jacquet. "I thought, 'Wow, this guy's playing some horn.' He had a quartet then, the Hamilton-Bates Blue Flames. I kept calling Scott, saying I wanted to audition for the band. A year or so went by. Finally, we sat in a taproom in Providence, Rhode Island, where he lived, and we both had that natural feeling that we wanted to play together. And we did. We were making that ESP kind of music, where everything he knew, I knew. I kept telling Scott: 'You play so good, you should definitely go to New York.' But he'd say, 'I'm not ready for New York'"

But jobs were hard to come by for this band playing its own kind of swing and blues. The older members of the band left. In 1976, the Scott Hamilton Quartet, as the band was then being billed, consisted of Hamilton, Riggs, Flory, and Flanigan.

The latter two, then 20 and 23 years old, respectively, had come to Providence from upstate New York, sharing an interest in the swing tradition.

Riggs took an offer to tour for a while with a more commercial big band in order to make some money. "I told Scott, 'No hard feelings; you're definitely my favorite.' But I couldn't pay my rent in Providence." One final gig, though, foretold the success Hamilton's group was eventually to enjoy. They were booked to play at Sandy's in Beverly, Massachusetts, backing up Roy Eldridge. The legendary trumpeter had been a key element in Gene Krupa's big band and had also been Krupa's relief drummer, drumming sometimes when Krupa chose to conduct. "Roy taught me a lot in just one week," Riggs says. "And he kept telling Scott, 'You have to come to New York.' "

When is a musician *ready* to try New York? There's no way of knowing for sure, Riggs says, adding that, if there's any advice he'd give a musician seriously interested in making it in the business, it is simply: "Anybody who really wants to play should go to New York."

Riggs toured with the big band until he had saved up enough cash, he recalls, to get him to the City. "I came to New York with \$500 in my pocket in late '76. Scott and Chris were already there; Phil followed me." And the Scott Hamilton Quartet was soon finding dates in New York.

"When we weren't working, I went to every club that would let me sit in. I played with Earle Warren, Tiny Grimes, Roy Eldridge, etc. Roy would say, 'Come over here, baby,' and we'd talk until four in the morning. He taught me a lot, and he's still my favorite trumpet player," Riggs says.

With Eldridge as a strong backer, the band nailed down a steady Sunday night gig at Eddie Condon's that lasted more than two years (and they have continued to work periodically at Condon's since then). Equally as important, top players such as Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, Joe Turner, and Dave McKenna appeared as guests with them. Being in New York (where they could meet and work with top people regularly) made things happen, and for Hamilton, fame within jazz circles came almost instantly.

The band was getting dates out of town. They traveled to Europe. They played at Waterloo Village as part of the Kool Jazz Festival. And Hamilton was sought after for recording dates.

But far more attention was focused ini-

tially on Hamilton as an individual than on the band as a whole. To record and concert producers, it no doubt seemed obvious that, if Hamilton was great with his own band, he would be even greater on concert and recording dates if he were thrown together with bigger names in jazz. But in reality, things didn't always work out that way. Musicians can develop an interplay working night after night in New York or on the road that can't always be equaled by a band that basically exists only for a recording session.

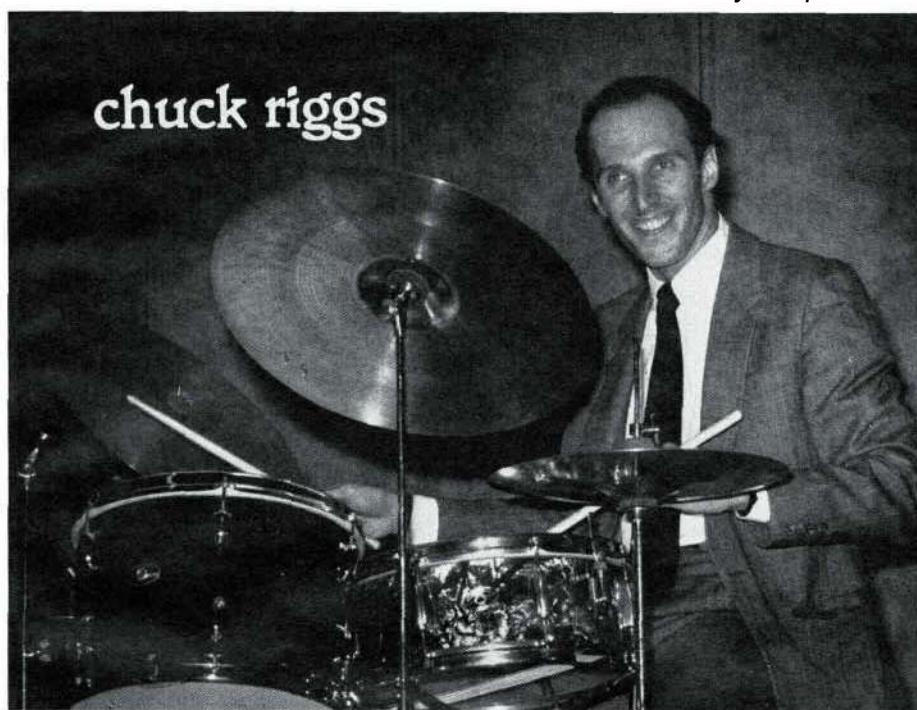
Hamilton made albums both with thrown-together groups and with his own band. And some of the most successful—in the opinions of both the musicians and of reviewers—resulted from Hamilton recording with his own band: Riggs, Flory, and Flanigan, with pianist Norman Simmons and later John Bunch, added when the quartet expanded to a quintet. They also recorded with guest cornetist Warren Vache, Jr., who had often played with the band in New York or on tour, and who would sometimes borrow members of the band for his own engagements.

But there were dry spells when the band simply wasn't getting much work. Riggs recalls often going across the street to Flory's apartment to commiserate. The band was getting top write-ups from reviewers. They could turn on the radio and hear cuts from their latest Concord albums. "So how come we're not working?" Riggs would ask. The big breakthrough for the band as a band, according to Riggs, came with the release in 1982 of the album *Close-Up*.

Riggs used his free time to improve his playing, and to develop his own sound. "I took little pieces from Connie Kay, Jake Hanna, Ed Locke, Jo Jones, Davy Tough, Big Sid, and Krupa, of course." Jo Jones became his favorite drummer, and every Wednesday night that he was free, he would head for the West End Cafe to hear Jones play and to talk with him about drumming.

As for his equipment, Riggs settled upon a set of folding drums for touring use, and had a set custom-made for New York use. "Folding drums are easier to carry," he explains. "Jake Hanna and Bobby Rosengarden told me about them; I called up Slingerland and got a set. Everything opens up. The ride tom goes in the floor tom and both go into the bass drum. It opens up like a hatbox."

His New York drumset is "a small bop set, made by the Modern Drum Shop in



New York. It's made the way I had wanted for a long time: custom-made, done by hand. There's an 18" bass drum, a 12" tom-tom, and a 14 x 14 floor tom-tom. I use calf heads on the top and plastic on the bottom. I was told by Jo Jones: 'If you can't feel the drums in your stomach, you're tuning the drums wrong.' You have to really feel the vibrations. Calf heads make the sound resonant. I use a small drumset, but I tune the drums to get a low, big sound. I like hearing the overtones. I used to take days, experimenting with tuning each side differently. And I'll tighten or loosen up during the night on a job. I don't tune to a note; I tune it until I like the sound and feel.

"I have two snare drums: a 1950 solid maple 5 1/2" deep snare drum and a '47 that I play with now. If you're going to play a wooden snare drum, you should use a solid maple, and they're not really making them anymore. The wood was so much better back in the late '40s.

"I have old K. Zildjian cymbals: 19", 18", 13" hi-hats, and a *China Boy*. That was my influence from Davy Tough; he'd play that cymbal better than anybody on the face of the earth. He'd play that cymbal with Woody Herman and the whole band would lift.

"I wanted to find my own cymbal sound—somewhere between that of Big Sid, Jo Jones, and Philly Joe ..." Mostly, Riggs kept watching the greats. "There are so few teachers who can teach

swing drumming nowadays," Riggs says, "that the best way to learn is to see the cats who are still playing that way." And to listen to records. "My favorite records are still Basie, Jo Jones, Illinois Jacquet—both big band and small group stuff. The new Modern Jazz Quartet with Connie Kay is really nice. I like some of the stuff Jake Hanna is on. I listen to the airchecks of Woody Herman with Davy Tough. And *The Essential Jo Jones* is an album I listen to all the time," he adds. Riggs notes, too, that he's always liked to practice about an hour a day, mentioning that one practice aid he's found valuable is Stone's *Stick Control* book.

How did Riggs keep going through the dry spells? "If you're going to make it as a drummer, you have to be able to play every avenue within the style you play," Riggs declares. Riggs played good swing drums—which not many younger drummers do—and he studied the whole of the territory. He found he could blend well with older musicians. Riggs played in concert with The World's Greatest Jazzyband of Yank Lawson and Bob Haggart. Haggart later hired him for a band he put together for an engagement at the Rainbow Room. Bob Wilber hired him for the Smithsonian Jazz Ensemble, which recreates jazz classics from the days of Jelly Roll Morton to Thelonious Monk. "The jazz repertory thing really saved me. I could fit into Dixieland. I could play woodblocks or temple blocks, choke cym-

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bals, play like Baby Dodds—all those things. Financially, it helped me out." Wilber also used Riggs often on his "Bechet Legacy" concert dates and on several albums.

In 1981, Wilber hired Riggs, Flory and Flanigan as the nucleus of a group that did a month-long tribute to the Benny Goodman Sextet at Michael's Pub in New York. And that gig had unforeseen consequences. One night Goodman himself showed up, borrowed Wilber's clarinet, and sat in with the others. By now, the band was really tight and familiar with the Goodman repertoire. Goodman, Riggs recalls, decided he wanted the band. Riggs soon found himself playing concert dates all over the country with Goodman, often with Flory and Flanigan, and occasionally with Hamilton and Vache as well.

"He is without a doubt the greatest," says Riggs of Goodman. "Nobody has such natural time. He's a nonstop swinger from the moment he puts his clarinet in his mouth. We'd rehearse at the Wellington Hotel in a big room with a Steinway. I learned a lot from that guy about swinging; he's like one of the strongest cats around." Riggs says Goodman expects to return to concert work shortly, and that he hopes that he, Flory, Flanigan, and Hamilton will be able to work with Goodman once again.

For *The Cotton Club*, Bob Wilber wanted to recreate the sound of Duke Ellington's 1928 band. Wilber speaks highly of Riggs' contribution. Riggs, Wilber says, made an actual study of Sonny Greer's drumming with Ellington to prepare for the film. Says Riggs, "I know a lot about Sonny Greer and that's my favorite period of Duke. You know, I taught myself basically how to play by ear—so as soon as I hear a tape or record, it's imbedded. But for *The Cotton Club*, I listened steadily for four or five days. I can *read* music, but you really have to know what the stuff is, in order to prevent the jazz from sounding like you're just reading."

But Riggs makes it clear that, given a choice, he would be happy to be working steadily with the Scott Hamilton Quintet. "The members of the band are compatible, and we're making our own music, rather than trying to recreate anyone else's music. It's not at all confining playing with Scott." As for the band's newfound commercial success in the wake of the last three albums, Riggs says, "There were some tough times over the years, so I'm especially glad to see the band breaking through now."



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Mullen continued from page 13

such a joyful spirit—such a great feel. And there were mistakes on the record, which I really liked because I thought, "This drummer makes mistakes as well!" [laughs]

CF: Are there any other drummers that you listen to?

LM: I don't listen to *drummers* as much as

I listen to *music*. I do like Andy Newmark a lot.

CF: Why?

LM: I don't know. He reminds me of myself in some ways. He doesn't mess around that much. His stuff on the Roxy albums impresses me. It's got a great feel and yet it's technical, but in a very subtle way—some of the most unique and modern drumming I've heard. I met him once, and I asked him how to do different things I didn't know. He's a nice guy—just an ordinary guy.

I'm into simple drumming and simple things. I think drummers are on stage to keep the beat to the best of their ability.

And if they want to be flashy, they can be flashy as well, but I hate "star" drummers. I hate it when drummers come off and throw out their drumsticks every night. I really hate that. It really bugs me! [laughs]

CF: You don't want to be a cliche.

LM: Never.

CF: I notice on many songs that you'll be putting down a steady 2 and 4 rhythm, and then you throw in little off-the-groove licks. It keeps things off balance; it's unpredictable.

LM: Yeah, music to fall over to!

CF: I'm thinking of "Indian Summer Sky," for instance. You "hit 'em hard" on that, but there's some creative off-the-beat coloring in the bridge and intro.

LM: That's on a piccolo snare. I've never

thought of it as anything special. I just do it. But if you tell me it's good, then I'll agree with you!

CF: Some of your lines have tribal, African sounds—for example, the powerful two-minute, drum-and-rhythm-guitar coda on "Like A Song."

LM: Yes, I suppose lots of drummers are getting into the African beat. Actually, because of that, I try to avoid it, but it's there. Again, that was done totally off the cuff on the first take; it wasn't rehearsed at all. I just got into the groove of it and kept on playing. There's much more to it than what went on the record. I mean, it went on and on.

When we did that song, Windmill Lane didn't have an ambient room. We were having problems because we couldn't record out in the stone corridor, since it was daytime and there were lots of people around. We always recorded in the corridor late at night. So we just surrounded the kit with corrugated iron and put mic's around the top, trying to get an ambient sound, because I don't like using the technical ambience at all. I don't think it's very natural. But the idea of actually constructing for yourself: I'm into *that*.

CF: Do you do any percussion work on the albums?

LM: I play bongos, and I do a lot of the weird percussion. In "Gloria," there's a part during the break near the end when I was just doing some simple percussion overdubs. Out in the hallway there was a table with a cowbell, a broken cymbal, and a saucer on it, and I just went over to the table and hit the saucer with my drumsticks in time with the beat. If I had it here, I could explain it to you better, but that's what I especially like: experimental percussion, not the really traditional percussion effects. In "I Will Follow," we had the sounds of breaking bottles and a drumstick clicking through the spokes of a turning wheel. Edge, our guitar player, actually did that one, but we were all involved in it—all standing around and improvising. There's a band called Collapsing New Buildings, and they use things like chain-saws and industrial equipment to make records, which I think is a brilliant idea.

CF: I would imagine that your songs are written in an improvisational way.

LM: Yes, most times we don't actually go into the studio with written ideas. Adam and I might sit down, and I might have a drum line. He might have a bass line. We get it together on tape, and give it to Bono and Edge. Then we all come together and thrash it out. It's very much a democratic process. Everything is split four ways, and it's quite demanding. You've got to get involved from the very beginning; there's no room to be laid-back. Sometimes it can be boring for a drummer, because you've set down your drum lines and they're working on guitar bits, so you've got to sit around and wait for them to get it

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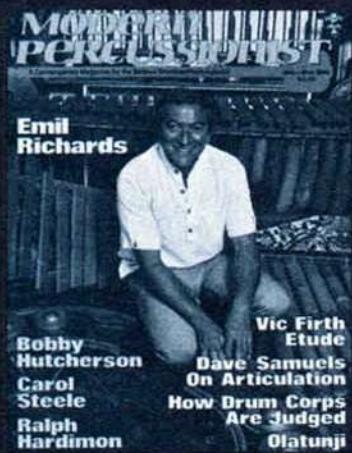
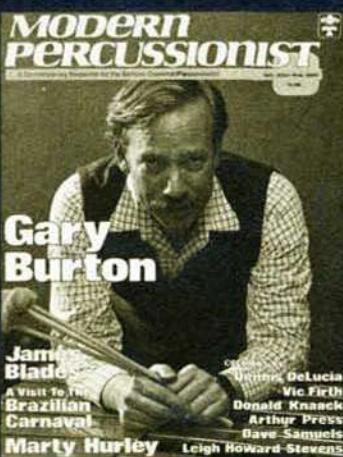
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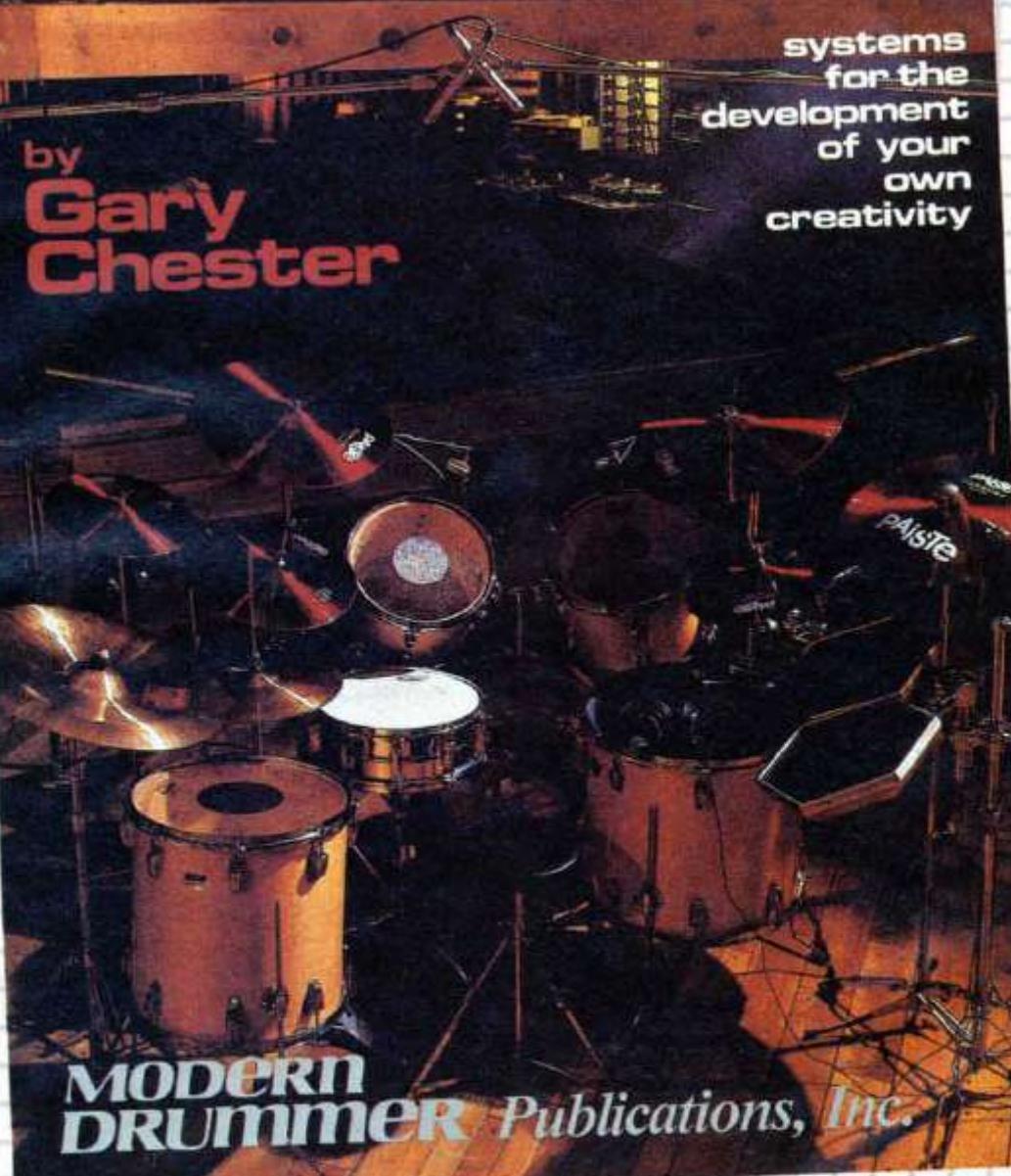
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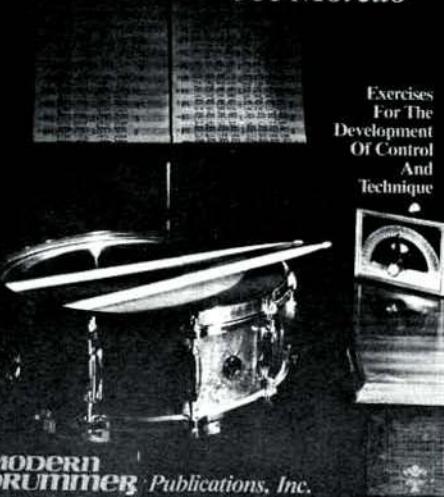


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The FIRST YEAR

Volume 1 - Nos 1-4

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together.

CF: Sometimes with four strong individuals, there can be heads butting against each other.

LM: Oh yes, we have our moments! But it's like the old story of the arrow: Unless you're chipping and pushing against it—unless you're going metal against metal—it stays blunt. The friction makes it sharp. Another way to explain how we write music is that it's like sculpturing. It's like a big chunk of granite with four different individuals chipping away at it, each trying to shape it into some sort of form. Sometimes what we end up with is very odd because of that, but it's U2.

CF: That granite image makes me think of Slane Castle, where you recorded some songs for *The Unforgettable Fire*.

LM: We recorded in a huge ballroom of the castle, with old paintings all around. We set the kit in the middle of the room, with mic's all around, just sort of *breaking down* all those barriers of the normal things to do in recording—find the "right" place to put the kit, get the "good sound," and all that sort of stuff. Instead, we just all went into the ballroom together and played. There was no separation; lots of the tracks were put down live. And when we wanted to remix some things—when we actually put up the tracks and tried to separate things—we couldn't; everything was all over the place! [laughs in delight] All the guitars on the drum tracks, and every-

thing like that—that's what made it special.

CF: So you have a positive feeling about the album.

LM: Absolutely. I was very much involved—a lot more than I was on the other records—in the writing, in the sounds, and in making sure the drums were right. I don't know if you're familiar with Brian Eno, or if you know anything about his work. He's prepared to take risks. He's ambitious. He's brilliant.

CF: Some people were critical about the choice of Eno as producer on *The Unforgettable Fire*.

LM: Yes, because they thought it would be much easier to make an album that would be *huge* in America—a sure thing. But it was important to us to take some risks.

CF: Can you tell me more about the production of the album?

LM: Danny Lanois, who worked with us for a week as coproducer, was very interested in drum patterns. We spent a long time listening to music, and talking about drums and how they fit into the construction of our songs. Danny and Brian hadn't worked with a band like U2 ever, so they were learning something new as well, and there was a real vibe going. Everyone was fighting for something new. It was great, I don't really understand exactly what it was, because you always see producers as people sitting *behind* a mixing desk, but they were out front; they were playing with

us. We would spend afternoons just playing: Edge on guitar, Brian on keyboards, Danny on percussion, just having fun, just being musical. And that was the difference. They were being musicians as well. They weren't *producers*. They became part of the band, and I hope that we will work with them again. I would really look forward to it. I learned a *hell* of a lot from them both.

CF: What did you learn?

LM: It's hard to articulate. It was just the way they worked. They were unstructured. Some days we'd come in for 12 hours; some days we'd come in for three hours. In some ways, that's a bad thing if you're thinking about deadlines and all that stuff, but we just treated it very much in an experimental way: trying different things out and not cramping up people's styles, going into big rooms, playing the kit and seeing what happened. And whereas a lot of people would say, "Let's not waste time doing this," we said, "*Let's waste a bit of time* and maybe we'll get something out of it." Nine times out of ten, we came up with some really great ideas. I'm sure other bands have worked like that, but I've never experienced it before. It was like a breath of fresh air for the whole band.

CF: Being able to spend the extra time in the studio seems like somewhat of a luxury nowadays. I wonder if you'd get that kind of freedom in a New York studio. If you did, you'd really pay for it.

LM: Windmill Lane is not like other recording studios; there aren't dollar signs everywhere. There's just a good vibe in the place. There are studios in New York or London that are better from a technical standpoint, but that's secondary. And now that we've seen other studios, we've taken some ideas back to Windmill Lane. We're not *afraid* to make a few changes.

CF: What about you, Larry? Several months ago I saw you at Radio City Music Hall, and you were literally out of the spotlight, hidden in the shadows. In just a few months, you seem to have come out more, on stage and off. Do you feel you've changed?

LM: Yes, I've had to.

CF: Because you wanted to?

LM: I *had* to, and now that I've done it, I'm glad. There were people paying money to come in and see a band, but they weren't seeing a band. They were seeing three members *and* a drummer. When we were playing in theaters, the lights were a lot lower and they burned me. I said, "Forget this. I don't need the spotlight."

CF: And you didn't need the spotlight from the standpoint of ego?

LM: No, I didn't. But I can live with the spotlights now. It's okay. It's . . . interesting.

CF: It's fun sometimes.

LM: It *is* fun. It feels good, [laughs] But what we have is a *band* ego; it's not an individual thing, and it never has been. If someone in our band gets more interviews

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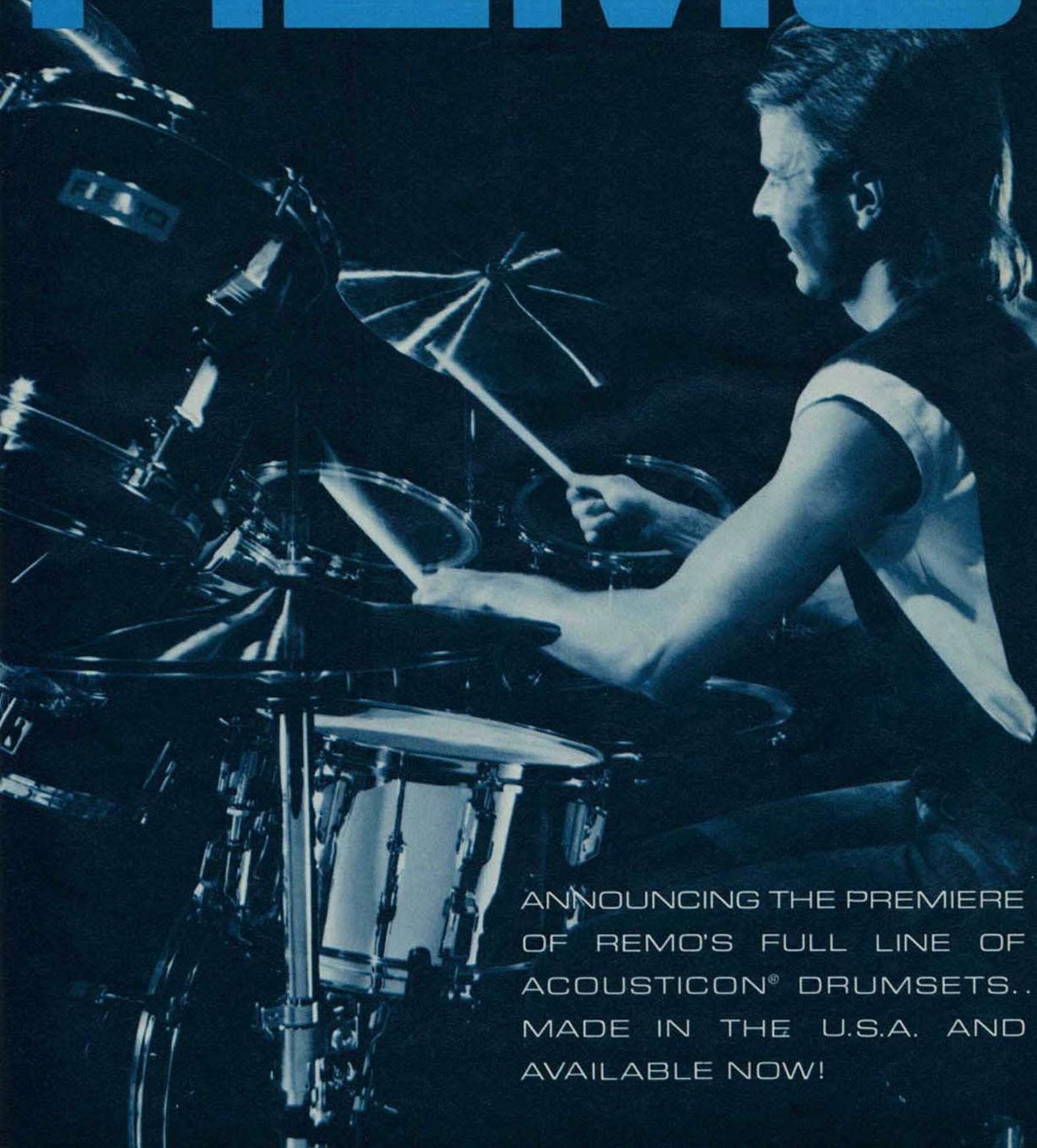
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and more photos in the paper, it's not a question of his ego being bigger. It's that he's best at that job. We all do what we can. I know that, in a lot of bands, there's so much bitching going on. I've talked to some rock musicians and just hearing them discussing fellow band members is so *sad*. We're actually good friends, and if that ever ends, then what's the point in continuing? As far as interviews are concerned, I'll stay in the background, but as far as the music is concerned, I plan to take a much bigger interest. It's too easy to become *just* the drummer. I was falling into that trap. The rest of the guys were moving along, and I was sort of staying behind. I want to

move ahead. It's not like I'm being paid a wage. I'm a member of the band; I've got to pull my own weight. If I don't, the rest of the guys start screaming, and that's fair enough.

CF: You certainly wouldn't want to be kept around for old time's sake.

LM: Absolutely. And I *won't* be. I'd never let myself. I want to be a continuing force in U2. That's why, thank God, I've finally got a place of my own, which I've never had before. As soon as this tour is over, I'm going home where I'll have time to myself. I'm going to get a four-track recording system, bring in instruments, and play to my heart's content. I want to

learn the guitar. I want to do composing. I'm just going to *learn* things—learn how to play with other people—not necessarily other bands, but just people who know music.

CF: Can you see yourself doing solo projects, in the way that Phil Collins does, for instance?

LM: I've never really thought about it. I've never looked at myself that far ahead, but I'm open to anything. I really want to work with other musicians, just because I've never done it before. I'd love to actually go into a studio, work things out in a new way, and *be* a session drummer. I'd find it incredibly challenging.

CF: Are you talking straight session work, because, given your independent nature, I'm wondering if you could do that.

LM: I'm sure that, if I had to do it, I could. I don't think I'd compromise myself.

CF: But session drummers often have to just do what they're told.

LM: Well, I would *not* do that.

CF: Then, you wouldn't get any jobs!

LM: What I'm saying is that I would not do work where somebody says, "Play that." I'd much prefer to go in as a guest and work with people on the writing of the songs—that kind of relationship. If they just want to tell you what to do, they might as well use a machine. Another thing I'd like to do someday is build my own studio to my specifications.

CF: What would it be like?

LM: I'd have a big room. Everything would be big and ambient—wood and concrete. Although I'm not a big Zeppelin fan, I'm a John Bonham fan, and I know all those Zeppelin records were made in big rooms. So were many of the early Stones records—great sounds, great ambient sounds.

CF: You speak a great deal about continuing to experiment and grow, both as an individual and with U2, but it's surprising how much innovative drumming you did on your first album, *Boy*, which was cut when you were only 18 or 19.

LM: The funny thing is that it's because I didn't think about it that much. I just went into the studio in absolute innocence. You know: first album, "I can do what I *want*." As you get on, you start to slim down. You don't want to be too experimental; you want to "keep the backbeat" or whatever. In the mid-period, I got a style together. I like *October* and *War*, but I built my own little walls on those albums. It was sort of a safety thing, because I was unsure of my own position as a drummer. But now I'm breaking out of that, and I hope to *stay* in the experimental stage. I'm free, and the band is very free as well.

CF: The battle every artist faces is to be free to go in every direction. A lot of people want to pigeonhole you; they don't want you to change.

LM: But it's an amazing thing, and we're very thankful for this: Many bands make experimental records, and they're put

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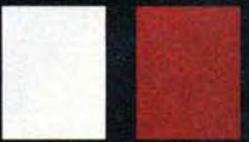
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down for it. You know, "This is a departure." We've made four studio records, Our last one, *The Unforgettable Fire*, is our most experimental and also our most successful. There are few bands who are lucky enough to be able to do that. We've set our own standards, and we can move in whatever direction we want. Nobody's going to say, "This is a departure." They'll expect something new.

CF: Then there's the problem of always having to come up with something new.

LM: Yes, but that keeps *the fire*. If we go stale, then it's no good. We can't actually sit down and say, "We've got to come up with something new." You can't think. You've got to listen to music and be *hungry* for it. You can't create all the time, but if you take time off and say, "I'm not going to think about drumming," that can be dangerous as well. You've always got to be listening and always looking—not forcing it, but always open to learning something new in every situation. I'm preaching to myself here, because sometimes I do fall into that trap of just sitting back and saying, "Wouldn't it be easy if I just had this style and left it at that?" I am preaching to myself, because I fully admit that I can be really lazy. I suppose that everyone can, but that's *so* dangerous, especially in this position where we're becoming very successful at the moment, and it's so easy just to sit back and say, "Wow, we've done it!" We've got to *fight* with ourselves,

because this is the most crucial time for us. Unless we're on fire for learning new things, we'll go under. And I hope we *do* if we get lazy. I hope a young band comes along, kicks us in the ass and says, "You're old farts!"

There are *no excuses* for me coming up with average lines. If you don't have equipment, you can blame it on that. But now I have all sorts of snare drums here and there, and I can experiment all over the place—at the soundchecks and at the gigs themselves.

CF: So you find that you might use a snare, cymbal, or whatever in a spot that you didn't use it the night before.

LM: Oh, yeah. Just take a chance. Sometimes it falls flat on its face, but there are things in the set now that started out that way. At the end of "Bad," Bono does a rendition of "Ruby Tuesday" that goes into "Sympathy For the Devil": "Pleased to meet you, hope you guess my name," and I just come down and *whack* on the snare.

CF: Yes, it shows the impact of one hit, well timed. It's very dramatic.

LM: I just did that *totally* by accident one night. I could feel the power of the moment; it was in Bono's voice, and I was just compelled to do it, absolutely off the cuff. In most of the gigs I do, there are always little things I'll try. If they work, great. If they don't, it doesn't matter. It's great to have that sort of freedom, because

nobody turns around and says, "You shouldn't have done that; it sounded lousy." They turn around and say, "That was really strange. What was it?" So at the next soundcheck, I'll explain what I was trying to do, I work it out, and I've got a really good drum line or a really good piece for a new song. It would be nice to actually play songs live before we record them, because after we play them on the road for three or four months, they're different songs.

CF: Have you ever really made a mistake on stage, like totally losing the time?

LM: I've totally lost it a few times. I don't know if it's the same for all drummers, but where I sit on the stage, I see everything that happens—every single movement in the audience—the bouncers, everything. And I find that if there's any sort of hassle, like somebody jumping on stage, I can lose my rhythm. I find that, since we've moved into arenas, I'm much more conscious of security and how the audience is being treated. At times, I've started to concentrate a lot more on what *they* were doing instead of what *I* was doing. I found myself making just simple mistakes—dropping drumsticks, missing out on beats.

CF: Lack of concentration.

LM: Yes, and there's a balance to be struck that I'm still working toward in these bigger arenas, because I like to see the audience.

CF: You don't look like you're looking around that much; your head is down.

LM: It's funny, because I sort of peer up with my eyes.

CF: How do you keep up on stage with a singer like Bono, who is so intense, emotional, and I assume, unpredictable at times?

LM: I just watch him all the time. He gives me a signal, looks at me a certain way, makes all kinds of gestures with his hands behind his back—speed up, slow down, one finger up for one more verse. Or I might say, "Let's do another verse of 'New Year's Day' at the end;" it changes all the time. I've been on the road for seven months now, and I must admit that I'm a little tired physically, but I'm not bored at all.

CF: Is your playing different in an arena?

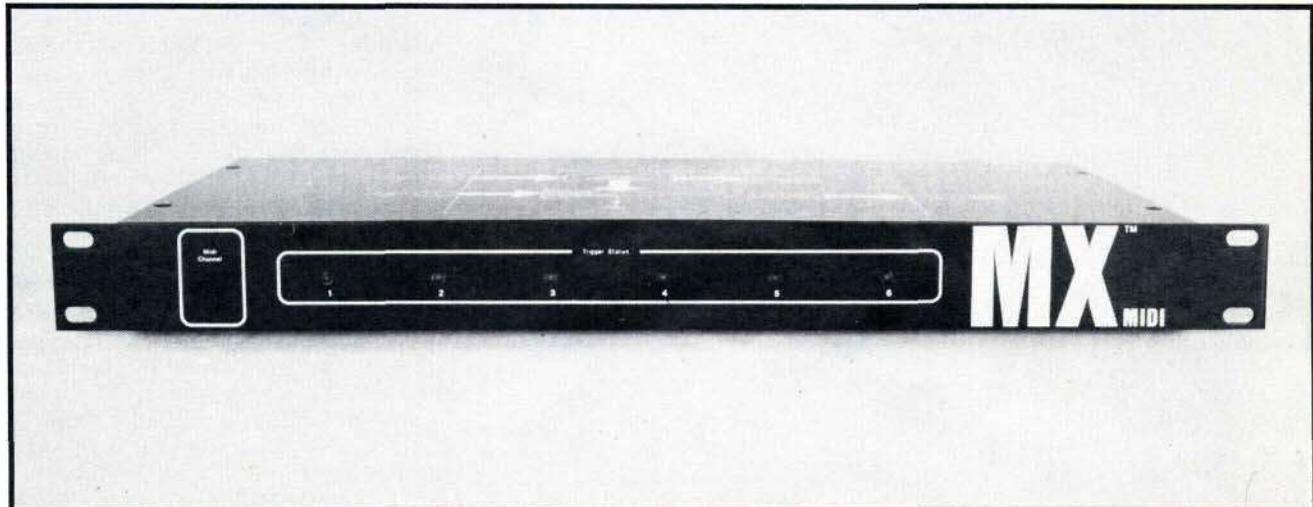
LM: I've got to be a little more precise. There's no room for sloppiness in my overall approach. I was talking before about concentration. I can relax more in a small place; in an arena, I've got to be on the ball all the time. The lights are on me continuously. Before, I might have turned around and talked to Tom, my roadie, but I can't do that anymore, because the audience notices it and it doesn't look "professional."

CF: Does that bother you?

LM: No, it's good discipline. I realize that people aren't paying to see me talking to my drum roadie. Again, it's that thin line. Sometimes, I'm not as concerned with the



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audience as I should be; I sort of isolate myself. I'm more interested in my own gig. I've got to break out of that. It's not just how well I play; it's the spirit. It's easy to fall into that thing of how good a drummer I am, but that's not important. It's got to be the band: How do I support the band? CF: Do you find, being a supporting force on stage, that it carries over into your off-stage relationship with the band?

LM: It's funny. On stage, I treat my gig very seriously. We're not there just to shake our ass in front of the people. We're not preaching, but we have something to say in addition to playing good rock 'n' roll, and it can be a strain sometimes get-

ting up there. I don't mind that because I know what we're trying to do, but when we come off the stage, I tend to loosen up all together. If there's a laugh happening, I'll be there. In that respect, I'll do the silliest things. I'll go jet-skiing. I'll fall down and break my arm. [laughs]

CF: You broke your arm?

LM: Two days before our first gig in school, I got into a row with someone. He kicked me in the arm and broke my hand, so I played my first gig with my hand in plaster. And before my first demo, I fell off a motorbike and broke my ankle, so I couldn't open and close my hi-hat. But I haven't broken anything lately.

CF: Do you consciously try to protect your health?

LM: [Deadpans] No, I do the opposite. I do karate, [laughs] It helps build up my muscles, especially in the stomach and back. I like it as a sport, although I'm not interested, obviously, in the violence of it. I don't do it when we're on tour, though, to be careful.

CF: Karate provides a good release of aggression. You show a lot of aggression in your drumming.

LM: It doesn't really come from within. I'm not really an aggressive person. I just feel I've got to hit 'em hard for the people to hear. I've set my own standard now, and I can't come down from it. I've got 22,000 watts behind me. We use a lot of monitors—not for volume, just for sound quality. I like to hear what I'm doing.

CF: You wear headphones in concert.

LM: Yes, two different sets. One has got the bass drum and Bono's vocals in it; the other has a click track, which I use when we do "Bad" and "The Unforgettable Fire." We use a sequencer on those songs. I can't hear the sequencer through my monitors, so I listen to a click that is triggered by the sequencer. I really enjoy playing to a click. Some people say it takes away from the feel because you can't hear the rest of the band. I know it can, but I've avoided that by doing it differently. I don't just have the click loud and everything else down very low. I make sure that I can hear the band in my monitors, so I can keep the feel. As a result, I must have the click very, very loud, and after I use it my ears pop, but I won't sacrifice hearing the band.

CF: Do you ever worry about your ears?

LM: I just had my ears tested two days ago—fine. I get my ears tested all the time. I do it on my own.

CF: So you take care of yourself. You're not self-destructive.

LM: No, I'm not. If I wanted to kill myself, I'd get on a motorbike and do it properly, [laughs] I'm not interested in the rock 'n' roll trip—be a hero, take a lot of drugs and die. No way.

CF: There's nothing wrong with living to an old age.

LM: Certainly not!

CF: Every hard-working drummer gets a few battle scars, though. I notice that you have your thumb wrapped in a kind of splint when you're off stage now, which you didn't have the last time I saw you.

LM: Yes, it's tendonitis. I sprained the ligaments and tendons in the thumb area.

CF: Do you know how?

LM: God knows. It's probably just an occupational hazard. Tom thinks it could be from some drumsticks I had. The weight distribution wasn't as good, and the shock didn't travel to the sticks. I've got some new sticks by Pro-Mark, and they're just masterpieces.

CF: What are they called?

LM: They're designed specifically for me; they're not for sale. They're built with

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extra weight in the tips. When I hit with them, they take the shock and stay solidly in my hands. At the moment, they're made of hickory, but Pro-Mark is experimenting with different types of wood for us, including some Japanese wood.

CF: Tell me about your kit setup.

LM: The drums and hardware are Yamaha. We're always changing things, but right now I've got my usual 24" bass drum, an 18" floor tom, and a 14" rack tom on the left, one 16" floor tom on the left and one on the right, and an 8 x 14 snare. I've also got two Ludwig piccolo snares and another piccolo snare custom made by Eddie Ryan in London. The drumheads are Evans *Black Golds*. I've got two Latin Percussion timbales and assorted Latin Percussion instruments. All the cymbals are Paiste: an 18" 2002 heavy crash, two 18" *Rudes*, a 20" *Rude*, a 20" 2002 China, and 14" *Sound Edge* hi-hats. On this tour, I've been getting some different ideas for hi-hats; Tom and I will work on it when I get home. Our setup is basically the same in the studio as it is on the road, and we don't do any special tuning for the album recording.

CF: What is your tuning method?

LM: By ear. A while back, we played with some big name bands, and I'd see the drummer out there tuning his kit—you know, getting all the "right notes." I did feel a little intimidated by it, so I tried to do it. I got this torque kind of thing and my

drums sounded *so bad*, so I went back to tuning by ear. There's nobody else who can get the sound like you yourself. Tom is a really fine roadie, and even *he* can't get it just right. If it were tuned to a *note*, there would be a way, but it's to a *sound*.

CF: You obviously have a strong preference for the natural approach to things. Have you tried any of the electronic drums?

LM: Yes. I don't like them much, although I don't want to limit myself and say I'll never use them. For arenas, we've started using a Simmons SDS7 triggered by the acoustic drums, just for sound reinforcement. I'm not really into it, but if we rely on the mic's too much for the up-front sound, there's too much ambience and the drum sound gets lost. The Simmons just tightens up the sound. We don't use it on every song, and there's no Simmons sound as such.

CF: How do you prepare yourself for a performance?

LM: I don't warm up. I used to do some physical exercises, but now I just like to relax and take it easy with the band. The four of us come together with nobody else in the dressing room for about 15 or 20 minutes before we go on stage. We just chat about the show, nice and peaceful; it's not like we're trying to pump ourselves up or anything.

CF: U2 concerts can be very spiritual. Do you think rock 'n' roll has become a new

religion, as John Lennon once suggested?

LM: I don't know about calling it a new religion, although maybe it *is* that for some people. But I think music is a very spiritual thing; it always has been. You find that musicians are a lot more spiritually aware than many other people. *I hope* the people can see the spiritual side of U2. I hope people see our music as a positive thing. But we're not into preaching. I can't put my standards on somebody else. People come to concerts for different reasons. Some people come to hear the lyrics for their heads, some come to hear the music for their hearts, and some come to hear the music for their feet, and that's fine.

CF: Some people don't even care; they just want to make the scene.

LM: Absolutely. And I'm prepared to accept that. You know, without dropping names or anything, we met Springsteen one night, and Bono and I were saying, "All those AOR bands are so contrived. There's no soul. There's nothing to it." Bruce turned around and said, "You know, you're probably right, but people go to listen to that music, and it makes them happy." So you can't knock it. You may not necessarily like it, but at least it's not destructive. It's *positive* in what it does because it brings people together, and that's what music is meant to do. It's meant to break down the barriers—break down all those walls.

CF: The performance in Belfast of "Sun-

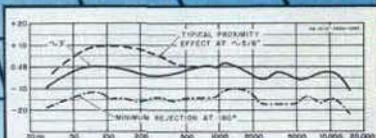
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day, Bloody Sunday," which laments the futility of war and the religious conflict in Northern Ireland to a military snare beat, has been described as a turning point for the band—your first political statement. Can you describe it?

LM: It was quite amazing. We had kept the song quiet, because we knew we would be playing it in Belfast. When we got there, we said, "This is not a rebel song; it's not on anybody's side. And if you don't like it—if you don't want us to play this song ever again—we won't play it." Since it was about them, we gave them the option.

CF: It was defiant to throw the conflict right back into their faces that way.

LM: It was; we took a risk. They could have done anything, but they realized what we were trying to say.

CF: Do you feel that you have changed any minds or hearts with your music, in Ireland or around the world?

LM: I think it would be really arrogant of me to say, "Yeah man, we're going to change the world." We're not saying we've got the answers by any means. I think what we do is make people think and let them make up their own minds.

But I believe that music says more and can do more in 90 minutes than politicians can do in years—in centuries. It can unite people, and that's something that politicians will never be able to do, because music can be pure. It can be absolutely,

straight-down-the-line honest, and I think a lot of music is. Yes, I think music has got a huge power, especially in influencing people—not influencing as in deceiving people, but influencing people to see the truth. Music can change history. The Beatles changed history. The Rolling Stones changed history, in a positive or negative way; you've got to make up your own mind. Dylan stopped the Vietnam War, no matter what anybody says. I really believe that. Springsteen's made people aware in America.

CF: And politicians on both sides tried to draw him in to support them in the 1984 presidential election.

LM: And he said, "Absolutely no way."

CF: President Reagan is of Irish descent and proud of it. Do you mean that, if he asked you to the White House, you would decline?

LM: I would say, "Sure." I'd meet the people in the White House and tell them how I feel, whether they liked it or not.

CF: You probably won't get invited.

LM: [laughs] Absolutely.

CF: People don't know much about you. Is there any one thing about yourself that you'd like them to know?

LM: That's a difficult question. I guess it would be that I'm human. The audience sort of makes musicians out to be stars or something special. It's flattering, but we are just ordinary people. I don't see myself

as a star. I'm not just a poster on a wall. I'm a drummer as well, in case you didn't know, [laughs] People don't know too much about me, and I quite like it that way. Some people have put things in the papers about my personal life—not my love life, but things that have happened in the past—people in the family that have died—and that actually hurts a lot.

CF: It invades your privacy.

LM: Yes, it does. It really does. One magazine in particular put in details of how my mother died, and I don't want to hear that. It's private—absolutely personal—and I get very upset about it. And when a 16-year-old writes to you about it like they were there—like they know how it feels—I'm not saying they don't know how it feels, but it's a private matter. Actually, I'm going to be meeting that journalist who wrote the piece tomorrow night, and, um . . . I'm going to send him a rocket! [laughs]

CF: Well, don't hurt your hands!

LM: No, I won't hurt my hands, [laughs] I'm a drummer, and I enjoy it. I wouldn't do anything else in the world. Lots of people in the music business want you to talk, they want you to be a part of the scene, and the rest of the guys in the band are good at that. They're able to do it and keep their dignity, but I can't be a part of it. I can't pretend to myself. I don't enjoy it, and what I don't enjoy, I won't do. When I go on that stage, that's my time, and I give it 100%. If I give it any less, I know and everybody else knows, and I'm not prepared to risk that; so when I come off stage, I don't want to spend too much time philosophizing about the music. And even today, in talking to you, sometimes you can philosophize about the music and its meaning, but ultimately it's in the music. Ultimately, it's there. You can talk and talk and talk, but people hear it in the music. You don't have to jump around and wave banners and say, "Yoo-hoo, here we are. We're for peace!" People know. Ultimately, they know.

CF: You speak, Larry, like you drum—simply, but eloquently. May I ask one last question: You've been written up as Larry Mullen and Larry Mullen, Jr. Which do you want to be called in this interview?

LM: [smiles] Larry Mullen, Jr. It makes my old man very, very proud.

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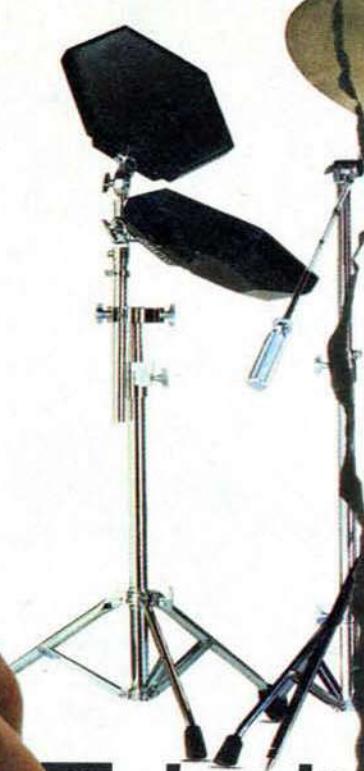
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JAZZ DRUMMERS WORKSHOP

by Gil Graham

Rhythmic Displacement

The term rhythmic displacement is defined as a rhythmic segment with a different relation to the meter in which it is found. I will begin with the dotted quarter note in 4/4 time and present variations of that basic rhythm. All variations are presented with a jazz setting in mind, conducive to their development within an improvising rhythm section.

The most important goal for a rhythm section should be to support and inspire the soloist. The manner in which this is done is peculiar to each individual musician; however, sensitivity, communication, and interaction must always be present. Each musician will act and react to the stimuli offered by the other players, and feed off that constant stimulation. Melody, harmony, and rhythm are inherent elements of this interaction, with rhythm being the element most affected by the drummer. Oftentimes, a recurring rhythm will evolve from this process.

One of the most common of these rhythms is the dotted quarter note or its equivalent value (three 8th notes). The following exercise shows how this value will repeat itself every three bars.

Different stickings, drums, and cymbals can be used to create many variations. Tempo and groove will also influence how the rhythm is played. For our purposes, let's begin with a medium swing groove. The pattern in Exercise 2 shows the dotted quarter note pattern played on the snare drum while time is kept with the cymbal, bass drum, and hi-hat.

After this rhythm is thoroughly mastered on the snare drum, try playing it with either the bass drum, hi-hat, cymbal, or any combination. Count *out loud* to increase your independence and concentration. Always use a metronome.

The pattern in the preceding example is a three-beat phrase that repeats itself every three bars. Popular music, however, contains phrases that are usually four or eight bars in length. In order to have complete control of this rhythm, practice playing it within the four- and eight-bar phrases so prevalent in the music of today. The following exercises are geared toward increasing your comfort with this rhythm. Try these possibilities: (1) Repeat Exercise 2 starting on the second or third bar. (2) Play two bars of time and then two bars of Exercise 2. Begin on the first, second, or third bar. (3) Play four bars of time and then four bars of Exercise 2. Begin on the first, second, or third bar. (4) Play eight bars of time and then eight bars of Exercise 2. Begin on the first, second, or third bar.

In the following exercise, the snare and bass are used to expand on Exercise 2. The practice methods used for Exercise 2 will also apply to Exercises 3 and 4. Play the hi-hat on 2 and 4 throughout.

A musical score for a bassoon part, featuring four measures of music. The score is written on a bass clef staff with a 2/4 time signature. Measure 1 starts with a dotted half note followed by a sixteenth-note group (two groups of three) with a '3' above it. Measure 2 starts with a sixteenth note followed by a sixteenth-note group (two groups of three) with a '3' above it. Measures 3 and 4 follow the same pattern. The bassoon part includes dynamic markings such as 'f' (fortissimo), 'mf' (mezzo-forte), and 'p' (pianissimo). Measures 1 and 2 end with a repeat sign with a '3' below it, indicating a repeat of two measures.

Exercises 5 and 6 are designed for the practice pad, with different stickings suggested for each. Keep your right foot playing quarter notes, and your left foot playing two and four. Begin on the first, second, or third bar. When you are comfortable with each exercise as it is written, try accenting the single strokes instead of the flams.

(5)

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

3 3 3 3 3 3

(6)

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

3 3 3 3 3 3

(6)

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

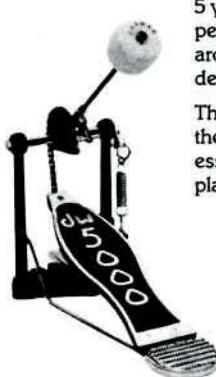
3 3 3 3 3 3

Gaining control of this principle will result in a greatly improved sense of time. Also, always remember to apply this concept with taste and sensitivity. Don't force the creative process. Your job is to support, not crowd, the soloist.

Gil Graham is currently on the faculty at the Berklee College of Music.

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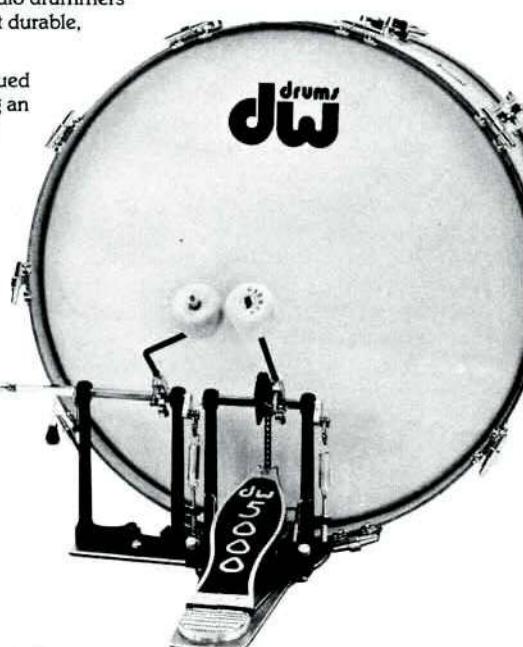
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Bob Christianson: On Working With Drum Machines

Bob Christianson is not exactly a drummer, although he can and does play a bit of drums occasionally, and programs drums frequently. He's primarily a keyboard player, producer, composer, and arranger whose credits include touring and recording with Jan Hammer, Rupert Holmes, and Judy Collins, scoring for films, TV, and commercials, and conducting TV's Saturday Night Live and the Broadway productions of Godspell, The Magic Show, and Gilda Radner—Live From New York.

Bob is also the guiding force behind Great Immediately Recording, his 24-track studio located in the Chelsea district of New York City. Great Immediately is a demo-oriented facility small in size, but ambitious in scope. Bob has fitted it with much of today's hottest electronic gear, including an array of keyboard synthesizers, soundprocessors, and of course, various drum machines. Bob has a great respect for what an electronic device can do along with a musician, not as a substitute for one. He is very concerned with the survival of the musician and has various thoughts on how musicians can adapt to the changing scene. Specifically for drummers, he has ideas on how they can utilize drum machines as allies, rather than approaching them as "the enemy." In his own studio, Bob employs an Emulator II, a Dr. Click, a LinnDrum LM-2, and a Yamaha DX-7. A Linn 9000 is on its way.

In this interview, Bob touches on the value of drum machines to the accomplished studio drummer, as well as to the novice concerned only with a first-time demo. He also addresses the musical potential offered by the machines, and the economic impact they can create on a drummer's career.

RVH: When drummers see how much of today's electronic equipment has the capability to replace them in the studio, they're terrified. But you have some ideas on how drummers can work with these machines.

BC: Absolutely. I'm basically a studio musician. I work with drummers like Alan Schwartzberg, Buddy Williams, Chris Parker—the top drummers in New York—and electronics is a constant topic of discussion. Some drummers are embracing it wholeheartedly, while others are trying to ignore it. One of the players I just mentioned told me that he called a friend of his on the West Coast who said that, if he

didn't get into drum machines real quick, in two years his career was going to be vapor. I don't think that's quite the case, but I must admit that I do a lot of drum machine work as a keyboard player. With equipment like the *Emulator* and the new *Linn 9000*, everything, including dynamics, accents, and the tuning of the drums, is programmable, so the machines are getting away from just being machines, and getting even closer to a real "drummer's feel." That, to me, is even more reason why drummers need to deal with this.

I recently did a lot of work on the West Coast, and the attitude there is very different than it is in New York. Drummers out there seem to have embraced the drum machine technology a lot sooner than have their East Coast counterparts. In fact, for the sessions I did—film score work and commercials—the usual kit that a drummer would bring would include a regular set, a *Linn* drum machine, and a set of Simmons. Most of the drummers I worked with out there have the attitude that: "Well, these machines are going to be used; I might as well be the one programming them."

To me, the best of all possible worlds would be to have drummers doing *all* the drum programming, rather than keyboard players. I can't program a drum machine as well as a real drummer can, even though I think like a drummer and can sort of play the drums. My attitude is that drummers should just look at drum machines as "the next thing," just as piano players had to look at synthesizers.

As for drummers being "replaced" by electronics, that isn't necessarily the case. For example, Gary Burke (who did the last Joe Jackson album, and the Rolling Thunder Revue with Dylan), is in the process of buying an *Emulator II* rather than a *Linn 9000*, because he's got an extensive collection of snare drums, different toms, percussion, etc. He doesn't want to just go into the studio with the typical *LinnDrum* sounds—even though they have quite a few chips. He wants to have totally his own sounds, including those that involve room sounds. For example, he wants to go into the Power Station and record all his snares—first dry, and then with the sound of the Power Station room, which is a very famous rock 'n' roll drum sound room. One of the reasons people say you have to keep using real drums for recording is that,

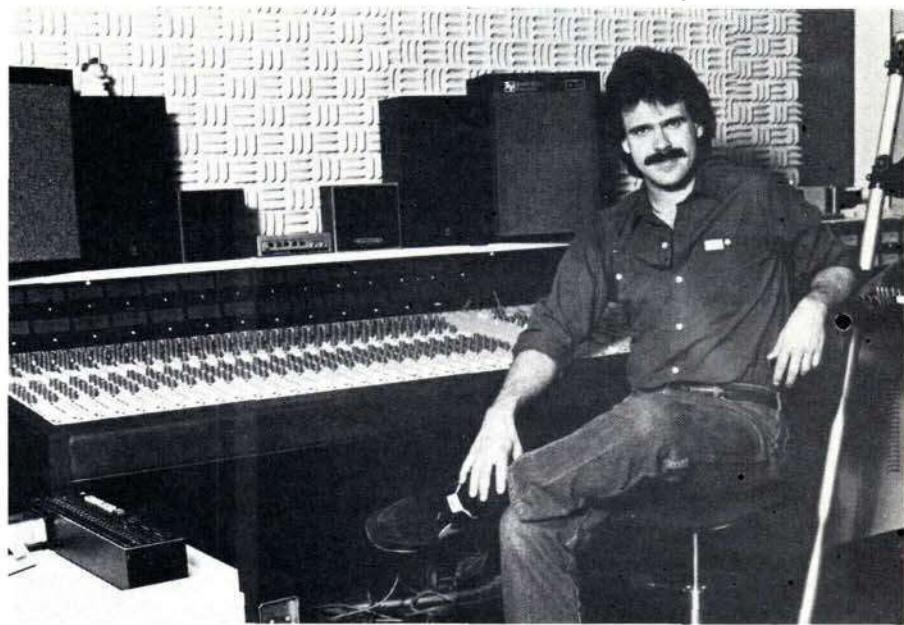
when you're working with electronics, you can't get the sound that happens due to the acoustics of a room. But if Gary can record the sound of his snare drum *with* those acoustics and put it on a floppy disk for the *Emulator*, he'll get his sound, plus that unrelenting rhythmic accuracy that is becoming commonplace today. Drummers just don't play like drum machines—nor should they. But people are getting used to that feeling of absolute rhythmic accuracy. Recording live sounds into a machine is one way for real drummers to achieve that, and still retain their own musical identities.

Another drummer, named Savron Hudson, has a *Linn* machine. He just went through the time and expense to make recordings of all his own percussion and drum sounds, which he then sent to *Linn*, saying, "Burn in these chips." Now when he comes to a date, he brings his *Linn* machine with the front cover screws off—so that he can constantly lift the cover up and pop in new chips—and he just plays the *Linn*. Here's a guy who has embraced the technology and, consequently, has an edge, because he not only plays real drums very well, but has this whole *Linn* system which, when plugged into a board with processing gear and stuff like that, gives him even more of a unique identity.

The *Linn 9000* is going to be a great tool for drummers, because it comes with a card that can be put in for you to burn your own sounds in. It also comes with an Apple-sized floppy disk that you can put in to save sounds. So if you're playing your real drums somewhere and get this incredible tom or bass drum sound, you can sample it immediately, and then have it for future use. Now, instead of drummers just having the sound of their one kit—which they're constantly having to tune—they can have the sound of a *Yamaha* set, or a *Gretsch*, or a *Ludwig*, with any combination of 30 or 40 different tom sounds and tunings. In one measure, they can have one tom sound and tuning, and then right in the middle of the song they can change it. Such machines give drummers more flexibility and creativity, rather than just a single, set kind of thing.

RVH: Hasn't all of this electronic production and processing—of all instruments, not just drums—led to a certain amount of sterility in the final product?

BC: In a lot of ways it has, because in many



cases—especially with synthesizers—it's easy just to push a button and get a preset. Electronics gives people easy solutions; it becomes easy to get something that's "okay"—that's commercially acceptable—and go with that. You really don't have to be a drummer to use a Linn drum machine out of the box, because it comes preprogrammed with feels, and if you use all of those, you *can* get a song. But they're the same preprogrammed feels that *everyone else* has in his or her box. When I got my Linn, the first thing I did was erase all the factory programs, in order to create the memory space to make my own. If people just use the preprogrammed stuff, then yes, it does add to the sterility.

However, I think what has contributed more than anything to the sterility of the sound achieved with drum machines is the fact that keyboard players are programming them, instead of drummers. They don't think like drummers, in terms of all the little subtleties that a drummer might do with a hi-hat—even in a simple 2-and-4 situation—that will give the song a character that a drum machine just repeating a pattern can't give it. I agree that there's been a lot of sterility, and what has happened as a result is that people have accepted that sterility as a sound in itself. That's become the commercial norm. Listen to the Eurythmics, and a lot of these new wave bands from England, in the school of minimalism. That's not among my favorite stuff, because to me it's not exciting. I'd rather listen to what Michael Jackson and Quincy Jones do with a drum machine, such as on the *Thriller* album. That was part drum machine and part live drummer, which, to me, is the most acceptable combination.

I've done a bunch of stuff where I'll have the Linn doing bass drum and snare, and perhaps a shaker so the drummer can hear 8ths happening—and that's it. Then, the drummer can play along on the snare, forget about the bass drum, and do all the tom fills and the hi-hat. You get that absolute, right-on-the-money rhythmic accuracy, yet the drummer is free to do fills without worrying about keeping the 2 and 4 going with his or her left hand. Things don't have to be sterile; there are people doing things out there with drum machines that are really amazing.

RVH: One of the first advantages claimed for drum machines was that drum sounds

could be obtained instantly, drum tracks could be programmed perfectly, and thus, a great deal of studio time and cost could be saved. But with so much potential for variety and flexibility with these machines, I wonder if that claim is valid? The example you gave of a drummer programming a certain tom sound for a few bars, and then changing chips to get another sound for a few bars makes it sound as though it could take twice as long to create a track—using machine technology—as it would if a talented drummer just sat down at an acoustic kit and said, "Let me try this."

BC: A talented drummer—such as Alan Schwartzberg, who makes his living being able to do stuff on the second take—can walk into the session, play the drums once for the engineer, and then boom, cut the take. So the time-saving thing has never been a point for me. It's getting a different sound that's important. The sound of a drum machine is different from that of a real drummer—no matter who it is. It's cleaner. The time saving that you mentioned—and that the drum machine people hype—comes more in the mixing than in the actual recording of original tracks. In mixing, with a drum machine you just hook it up, change the EQ, and do whatever you want. For example, I can get many different tom sounds with the *Emulator* or the Linn 9000. But once I sequence either one up, the output of my cable to the board is going to be the same for each sound, so the engineer doesn't have to make any adjustments. With real drums, you have to get into gating; you have to think, "Well, the drummer is doing a tom fill, and the snares are rattling too much, so

let's gate the snare. But we don't want to gate the snare too much and lose the heavy backbeat" That's where I think drum machines save time. On the other hand, that's no reason to use a drum machine over live drums *exclusively*, because live drums are another different sound.

RVH: Do you think drum machines lend themselves to all styles of music?

BC: No. In jazz, for example, there are just too many nuances. To try to achieve the ride cymbal feel in a fast bebop would be ridiculous; you'd be spending your whole life trying to program it. On the other hand, having a real set of drums or a set of Simmons to trigger a Linn for playing bebop is not out of the question. You'd have that style of jazz playing, but with new sounds.

Drum machines are definitely more for pop and rock 'n' roll. Things have gotten so simple, ever since disco, that drummers are told, "Just keep the beat. Don't do fills every four measures. Sit there." The drum machine is definitely made to serve that purpose. But I've done film scores that have been quasi-classical or quasi-jazz, and used drum machines.

RVH: Hard rock and heavy metal drummers refuse to use machines on principle. And yet, the playing in hard rock is still minimalistic: just a basic 2 and 4 with bigger drum sounds. Could successful, big-sounding hard rock be made on drum machines?

BC: A lot of big-sounding rock drums are the result of electronic processing right now—not necessarily drum machines, but live drums enhanced by such devices as the



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AMS Digital Reverb. I just did a song at the Power Station where I was able to get close to the Phil Collins sound using an AMS gated reverb. And you could get a great rock sound with a drum machine by sampling the sound of a good live drum, putting that into a Linn or *Emulator*, and then through an AMS. As far as heavy metal goes, what some drummers are doing now is getting little mic's to use on their sets as triggers for the electronics. In that way, they don't even have to deal with playing anything electronic; their roadies can set it up for them. They can then have the feeling of playing the real set—which is a very physically gratifying thing—and yet get the modern sounds that are becoming very important in terms of hits. Record companies are only interested in getting something that they heard *yesterday*, in terms of sounds; if it sounds like a hit that's on the radio now, they're interested. Heavy metal bands aren't excluded from that any more than any other musical style. I think that there is a place for electronics in heavy metal, in a different sense than like with Devo or Human League. I don't think there is a programming, "set-up-the-pattern-and-push-the-button" kind of thing, but I do think heavy metal groups could certainly get into using electronics in the tuning of their *sounds*. For instance, if you take the snare sound in the Linn, and tune it all the way down, you're going to get a snare sound *This Big* and *This Fat*.

But if you physically tried to tune down a real snare, the head would be so floppy that you'd break it on the first beat. If drummers want to get inventive with that sort of thing—rather than take a "Hey, I've been doing this for 20 years and I'm going to do the same thing for the next 20, and nobody's going to stop me!" sort of attitude—there's a lot of stuff to be done.

RVH: Earlier, you mentioned record companies, and what they wanted to hear in terms of "hits." What about demos? How can drum machines help drummers when it comes to making demos?

BC: Because of studio costs, record companies aren't as generous as they once were, in terms of demos, or as open-minded about listening to rough demos. It used to be that, if they heard a piano/vocal demo of a good song, they'd say, "Go ahead and cut it." Now, production has gotten so slick that, if they don't hear a finished product, they're not interested. Whatever you can do to cut your costs to get your music out there is a good idea, and that's where drum machines come in. There are a lot of eight- and 16-track demo-oriented studios right now where it's just a small room, with no drum booth and no place to set up real drums. More and more places are being built like that now; I'm definitely not unique in terms of having a small recording studio. Even if I wanted to put in a drum booth—which I would have loved to have done—I don't have the room. So my only choice is to use a drum machine or a set of Simmons. And there's no denying that it is easier and quicker to get drum machine stuff up. Also, a funny thing sometimes happens with demos that are done on drum machines. Once you get into the real studio to cut the final recording and start to put real drums on, things sound a little different. That's when people start mixing drum machines and real drums, because the drum machine might be part of the sound they're looking for.

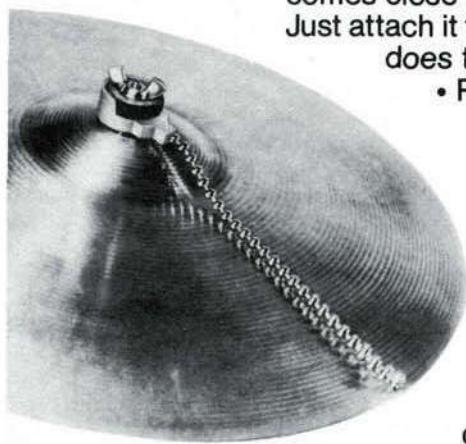
RVH: But can using drum machines on a demo actually save a group money? In many cases, a studio provides only the room, the board, and the microphones; any other electronic gear either costs extra or must be rented from an outside company. This represents an increased cost on the demo, even though some money may be saved in terms of reduced studio time.

BC: Well, part of what I have to offer in my own studio is the availability of electronics at either a very low extra cost—or *no* extra cost, depending on the total package—and a lot of the smaller studios in this area are like that. Things are a bit different—from my experience, again—between the West Coast and New York. A lot of studios that I've worked in in California don't even have a drumset set up all the time. Everything is done from scratch. In New York, a good portion of the studios I work in—and especially the smaller, lower-priced ones,

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where demos are likely to be made—have every drum machine ever made. And one of the things that I see small studios doing is buying the drum machine equipment to use as a selling point, saying that "You don't have to go out and rent everything."

On the other hand, another reason for drummers to learn how to program this stuff, and buy it themselves, is so that they can charge other people for the use of it. That helps pay back the initial investment. Most of my stuff is in the process of being paid back by the rental fees I can get, and it's a lot easier to bill a producer for a set of Simmons than for a regular drumset, because producers still look at Simmons as a specialty item, where a drumset is considered the drummer's personal instrument. Drummers who are just starting now have a better chance of seeing their investment recouped—in a rental sense—by buying a Simmons or a Linn than by buying a regular set of drums. It's become more accepted, in my experience in New York, for drummers who walk into sessions with just their drumsets to receive just the minimum cartage fee established by the union local. But if those drummers walk in with drum machines, they can submit bills for the rental of those machines to the producers. Producers are used to having to pay rental houses for sets of Simmons drums or drum machines.

The same thing applies to doing demos. I've done some demos at Mastersound on

Long Island where the producer said he wanted to use a *Linn Drum*. I said, "Fine, that'll be a \$75.00 rental fee." If the studio doesn't have the machines, they're more likely to rent them from the drummer, so even if you're not sitting there playing the equipment, it can be making money for you. And most people I know who are making demos would rather have a drummer program the machine. It's only when the drummer says, "Hey, I don't understand this machine" that the producer says, "Okay, we'll have the keyboard player do it." If drummers knew how much work they're losing to keyboard players by *not* jumping in and learning how to do this stuff, they'd be working on it a lot more, and realizing that they can. And they'd be *better* at it, because they're used to thinking about the relationships of hi-hats to bass drums and snare beats that are used to create patterns, where keyboard players aren't.

Of course, it's a little bit different when we're talking about being a club player, or someone who just plays out in bands. I admit I'm talking more from a studio standpoint, because that's what I do most. But if you look at the sounds that are happening now, so much of them are electronic drums that it would seem to be crazy for kids who are just starting out *not* to think seriously of investing in the stuff, because that's what people want to hear. A top-40 drummer trying to play contempo-

rary music—that was originally created on a drum machine—on his or her acoustic kit is going to wonder why the sound isn't right. And if you look at comparative prices, drum machine prices have plummeted dramatically. You can get a top-of-the-line drum machine for under a thousand dollars—one of the Yamaha machines, perhaps, which are really good, with touch sensitivity and all sorts of features. They don't have the expandability and flexibility of say, a Linn 9000 at \$4,500, but they're still good drum machines. And what does a good acoustic set cost now? At least two grand. If you want roadcases, and other stuff, you're talking a lot more money. But you could choose to spend \$1,500 on a drumset, and then only \$500 for, say, an E-Mu *Drumulator*, with a few hundred more for a triggering device. Pads aren't expensive now, and you don't need to buy that many to be in the ball game; if you had a real set of drums, and perhaps just three pads, you could have the sounds that you need. You can hook up those pads to the *Drumulator*, and instead of hitting 2 and 4 on your snare, you can hit it on one of the pads, and still have the 2 and 4, but get that electronic sound. So it doesn't have to be as expensive as it used to be.

Drumkits themselves have gone through phases. Drumsets today don't even resemble what they were when they first appeared in the early 1900s. After double bass drums appeared, if you didn't have a double-bass set or ten toms, you couldn't work. All musicians are going to be faced with having to put more money into the equipment necessary for their careers; nothing is ever going to stay static in terms of instruments. I think that drummers, as well as other musicians, are going to have to reevaluate their setup constantly; that's nothing new. Keyboard players went through it most recently, with the trend toward synthesizers. Before that, it was the stand-up bass players who were faced with the pressure to go electric. For young drummers, it's just a matter of expanding their possibilities and giving themselves more chances to work—giving themselves the edge over other drummers who don't have the inclination or who don't want to spend the time learning it. Another reason for young drummers to get into electronics is simply because that's what people are using right now. The business changes, in terms of what is wanted from musicians. You've got to stay on top and current, and still get your own identity and musicality to come through. To me, it doesn't seem to be a huge risk at all for drummers to jump into this electronic thing, because they're broadening the things for which they are valuable. And the more things a player can do, the better chance that player has of getting hired.

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Granham continued from page 17

GG: I had led a sheltered life to some degree. When I got there, it just took me in. [laughs] I couldn't believe a lot of things.

RF: What made you leave Poco in 1980?

GG: The time was coming. Tim had an offer from the Eagles, and I think that individuals started thinking about what was around the next corner. When Tim decided to go with the Eagles, it just kind of happened. We were doing our last album with Tim, and I remember having a meeting with Rusty and Paul about what the future was. Rusty and Paul had decided they wanted to try some things outside of the group. They had my blessings, of course, to do that, and I had time to figure out what I was going to do and to put some feelers out. Their experiment didn't work. People still wanted Poco, I believe, so they called me and asked if I wanted to do it again. We had been separated for only six or eight months, so I said sure. We started rehearsing for the *Legend* album, and then something happened that I'd just as soon not remember, but it did happen and it's all fine now. We had a meeting one day at our manager's office, and some personality differences went down. When they had tried their own thing, it changed the way things ran—some of the business workings. I came back expecting things to be like they were, but they had changed. We were friends, so we realized we didn't want to jeopardize that. We worked out an arrangement where they could keep the name and I would go on to do other things. I was a partner, so we negotiated. It was time for that part of Poco to stop and for our friendships to continue, which was more important anyway.

RF: When did you move to Nashville?

GG: Shortly after that. My wife and I settled in Santa Cruz for a while to think things over, get some direction, and pray about it. I didn't really know how to do what I wanted to do. We kept hearing, "Nashville, Nashville ..." but it seemed so far away. I kept trying to put groups together and get deals in L.A., but they kept falling through. Finally, I realized the Lord was trying to tell me, "You know that Nashville thing you're hearing? Go." It took about a year for that decision to happen. I got in my car with my drums and came out here, without my family, to blaze the frontier. My family followed about nine months later. Once I was with Rick, I said, "Come on out. It's okay now."

RF: It was only nine months later that you joined Rick?

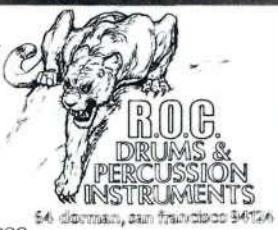
GG: And I thought it was an eternity. I'm used to things happening quickly. But now I understand it better. To break in somewhere, I don't care what reputation or background you have, you have to give yourself a year to two years.

When I first came to Nashville, I was a singing drummer. I came



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here to do both. The strangest thing was that I got more calls here in the beginning to sing than to play. I did some background vocals on some recordings with Barbara Mandrell, Steve Warner, Sylvia, Joe English—who is a great drummer by the way—and various other things. I probably would have developed both areas given a little more time. I remember talking to Larrie Londin, because I was discontented with how long it was taking. I said, "I've got some kind of background here. Why aren't I getting as much work as I want?" He said, "How long have you been in town?" I told him a few months. I told him what I'd done, and he said, "You're doing great. What's the matter with you? It took me a long time. I have no sympathy for you." I sat back and looked at it again, and I didn't feel sorry for myself anymore.

RF: Nashville had to be a pretty big commitment for you, since your roots were in jazz and you ended up with country-rock. That was certainly a far cry from pure country. What was the plan here?

GG: I started listening to country music, and I had talked to people about it while we were up in Santa Cruz. I realized that country music was changing. There weren't a lot of people like Ricky Skaggs doing what he was doing, and it was progressing. What I had been doing all those years was where it was going. Country rock or pop, or whatever you want to call it, was what I had been doing all the time. I wanted to be part of that change. I didn't want it to become rock 'n' roll, but the evolution of Poco and the changing of country seemed to mesh. It was hard just to pick up, go out on my own, and do something like that, because I was married with a family. Things worked out great and I'm real thankful.

RF: Considering the fact that you have the same moral beliefs, you were lucky to have met up with Ricky.

GG: When he called me for the first four-date gig, I had seen him, but he didn't really know me. He was trying to tell me in a very polite way that he didn't allow people to do certain things. He was treading lightly. I said, "Rick, you're a Christian, aren't you?" And he said, "Yes, I am." And I said, "I am too." He just about dropped the phone and said, "Praise God. I've been praying for

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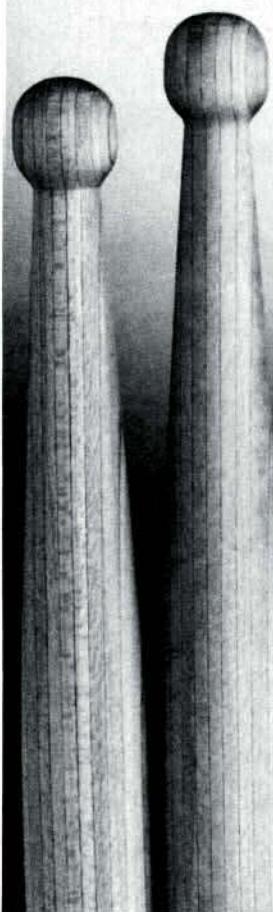
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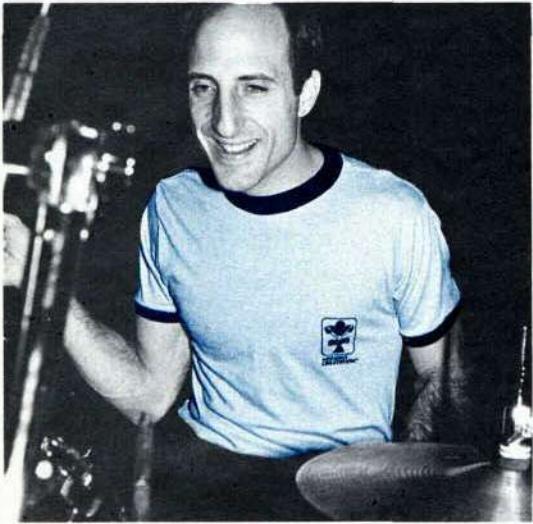
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this and wanting this," and he felt okay after that. That's a neat memory that I have.

RF: How did you actually get the gig with Ricky?

GG: It was really by chance. I met Ray Flacke, who is no longer with the group, at a demo session. Three days later, Rick called me because he needed a drummer. I did not come here to get back into a group and go on the road; I came here to get into the recording community. After Poco, I had been trying to form three other groups. I wanted to do it again, but every time we would get the right combination and get the record deal, one of the guys would leave. I finally got fed up and thought, "I can't do this anymore. I want to pursue a recording career." I had always kind of wanted to, anyway. Then, a few months later, I met Rick and went out on the road. I did it because I had seen him on a television show, and I respected the person I saw there, although we'd never met. I remember that image of seeing him and knowing that he was Christian; it meant a lot to me because I'm a Christian too. So I was looking forward to it. After four days, I became part of the group, and I stayed for nearly three years. I wasn't in town much since we averaged 200 days plus on the road a year, so needless to say, I wasn't able to do much recording. It was good, though.

RF: It must be difficult to be away from your family over 200 days a year.

GG: Yes, it is. You have to have the most understanding family in the world to be in this business and to be touring a lot. It's hard. It's almost harder on the family than on me. You get out there, you may get sick a lot, you may be tired and not sleeping, but they're sitting back there holding down the fort and having to go on with things that you're not there to do. I do wish that could be changed somehow. Just make sure you have a real understanding with your family. Hopefully, before you have a family, you'll have worked that part out.

RF: Did you miss singing when you were with Ricky?

GG: Yes, I did. I understood why it was better for the other guys to do the vocals with Rick, though. I didn't grow up with bluegrass, but Lou Reid, the guy who sings most of the harmonies, did. I understood it, but, of course, I missed singing.

RF: Did you find it difficult when you first began to sing and drum?

GG: I can barely remember when I first started doing it. I vaguely remember it being hard in the beginning. Harmonies have always come easily to me, because my mom was a singer and I'd hear that. Luckily, I had the high range that was needed. It's coordination. It's another part of being a drummer. If you can coordinate your two hands, your two feet, and your thinking at the same time, why can't you sing? It's phrasing your vocal against a different rhythm with your hands and feet, but it's just one more thing. It's real simple. People would come up and ask, "How do you do that?" I would have loved to have made it sound very difficult, but it's really not if you work at it. It might have taken me a few months to get comfortable with it, but it's just another coordination thing you have to work out.

RF: Many drummers tend to speed up or slow down when they sing.

GG: You're definitely concentrating on more things. Let's say you learn it and get to where you can do both. Then you have to do both well and not sacrifice your playing for your singing, or your singing for your playing. Most importantly, don't sacrifice the tempo, because the whole band revolves around you. I think you have to accept some speeding up, and I think sometimes there's some slowing down. If it's a real slow two-step, you might tend to slow down a little bit. If it's an upbeat thing, you might tend to speed up. That is the one area I have yet to say I've conquered in live performance, but I'm certainly working on it.

RF: Was it difficult going from a partnership, as in Poco, to being an employee with Ricky?

GG: I'm sure it was a good growth area for me. It was humbling to be an employee. I had never been one. I had always been a partner in a group, and then I became an employee. It was hard at times, but I can't think of a better employer to work for than Rick. Even with that, though, it was still difficult to adjust. It was good for me,

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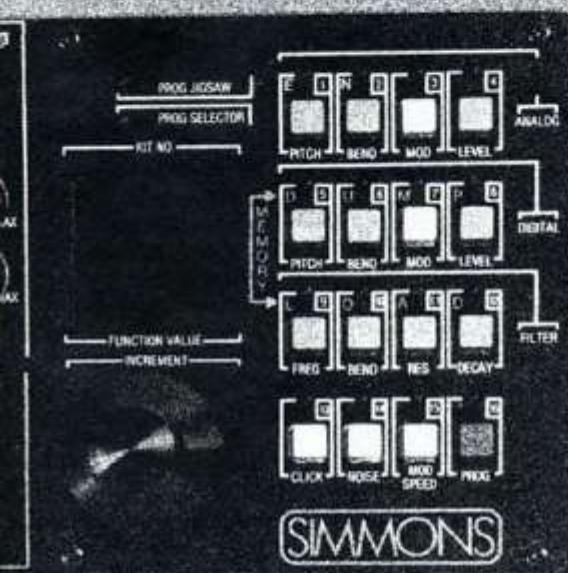
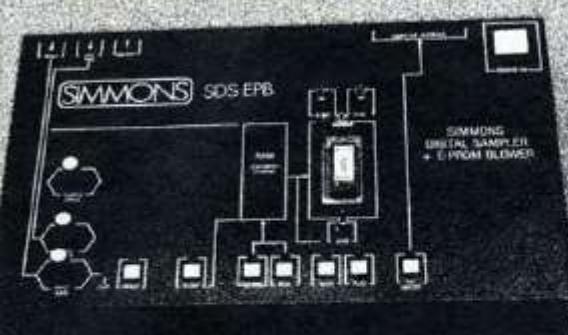
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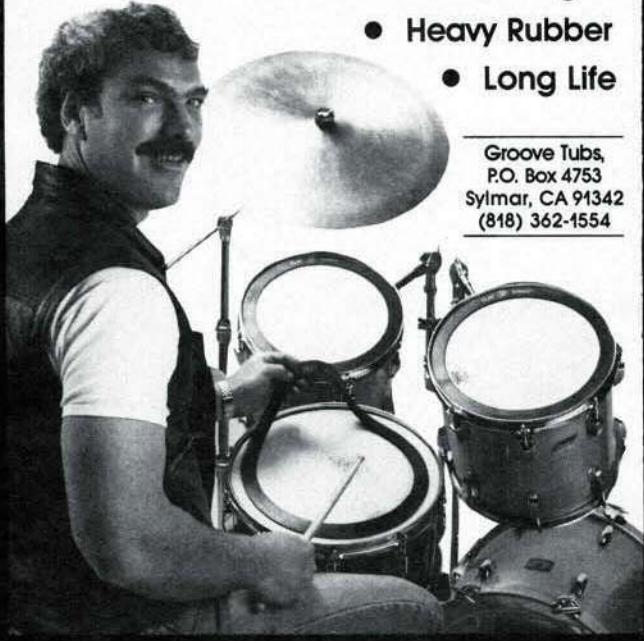
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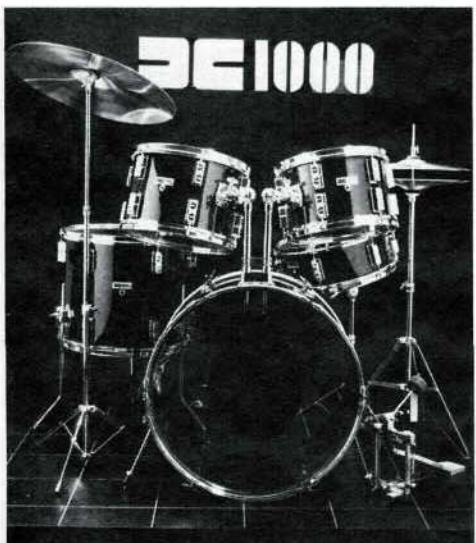
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though. I needed to see that and learn that. It's different. I kept wanting to say things, and I couldn't. It was a little frustrating at times. Rick did want a lot of feedback and input, and he gave us the freedom to create. He would draw a line at a point, but he wanted the guys in the group to create. I'm not saying he put any limits on it, but it is his thing. There are a lot of gigs in town—in any town—where you can't be any part of it. They don't want to hear from you. Thank God that was not what this was. I wouldn't do that. While learning how to be an employee, I couldn't have asked to be put in a better situation.

RF: How did you learn to be a good employee?

GG: If I had gone from school into a normal work situation, like most people do, which is being an employee somewhere, it would have been easier. I never knew that, so the hard part for me was to come from a situation where I was equally involved in all the decisions for all these years into a situation where it was Rick's career. He expected things from me, and I wanted to give him what he expected. I want to do the best job I can for who I am too, but I had to allow him to draw lines and to make decisions. In order to be a good employee, you have to please your employer, and you have to realize that the most beneficial thing is not necessarily saying everything you feel about how things should be done. Be supportive if you are asked. Otherwise, do your job as well as you can.

RF: What does Ricky's music demand of a drummer?

GG: Simplicity without being boring. You have to create excitement there, but you definitely can't overdo it. Doing that with Rick helped me a lot in tuning in to tempos more than I ever did before. Mainly, it's the simplicity. But when you do that one thing that's a little different, it really stands out, whereas otherwise you could be playing a lot all the time and nothing would stand out.

RF: What about some of the bluegrass things you played with him? That's really different from your background.

GG: Most of the bluegrass things were brush tunes, and usually they were *fast* brush tunes. I had a lot of fun with them, and I've learned to play with brushes real hard, too. In jazz, you don't play brushes hard. It's touch. And in rock 'n' roll, they don't use brushes. So for bluegrass, I tried to do what Larrie or anybody does who is a good drummer. If you're playing a "train" brush thing, make it solid. If you're going to create something, you can't get too far away from it, as far as the brush technique is concerned. But think about it. Don't just start doing some sort of jazz-riff thing that is going to throw the band off. It's not going to work. There are some accents you can do that aren't just the regular backbeat thing, and it'll still sound good. It works well, and it's a little different. I thank God for *Blasticks*. I used to go through brushes like crazy; I'd go through a pair right through the outside to the inner core at almost every show. *Blasticks* came out, and they worked great.

RF: Can you explain what a train pattern is?

GG: A train is a pattern of 16th notes. Depending on how fast the tempo is, it can be fast or it can be medium. It's hardly ever slow. It's just a rhythm thing with brushes: 16th notes in 4/4 time. The backbeat is in the same place as it would be normally. It's just that you're playing a lot more beats on your drum.

RF: You did some of the recording with Ricky as well. Do you know why you were asked to do certain songs and not others?

GG: On his newest album, *Country Boy*, he did some different styles, and we had never played songs like that together. We had played mostly two-steps and the bluegrass things, so he didn't know I had done those other styles before. I just think he needs to get to know someone well. I didn't mind sharing the record with Eddie Bayers.

RF: How many of Ricky's albums were you on?

GG: I did a little bitty vocal thing on "Heartbroke" when I first joined. On *Don't Cheat In Our Hometown*, I recorded "Uncle Pen" and "Wound." On his last album, I think I'm on six tracks.

RF: Did you have favorite tunes you liked to play with Ricky?

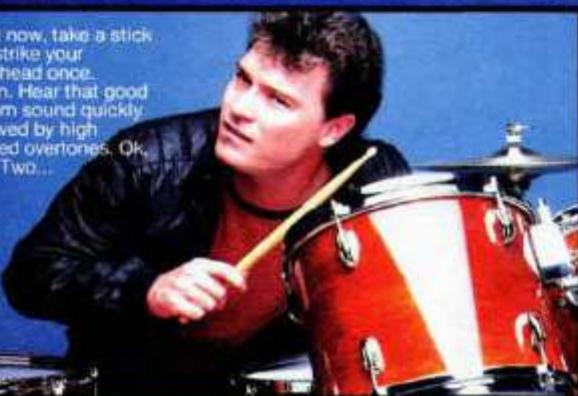
GG: I liked "Country Boy," because that was about the fastest thing I've ever played in my life. And all of the other musicians were playing their little tushes off. Drummers are used to playing

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MODERN DRUMMER MAGAZINE

fast, but these soloists are not, and I loved watching them. It was a lot of fun.

I liked "Head Over Heels" a lot. We hadn't worked that into the show, but I liked that song. There's a fine line there between country-rock and rockabilly. It's a fun place for a drummer to be playing. That reminded me a lot of Poco, and it felt at home to me. I liked "Rendevous" and a lot of the stuff off his newest album. There were things there that I liked for reasons that had nothing to do with the drumming part of it, like "Brand New Me," which I liked for the message. It's a beautiful song. There were a lot of fun things, like "Heartbreak" and "Uncle Pen." I could get off on playing a good medium-tempo two-step, too, like "Something In My Heart." It felt good. Those weren't demanding drum parts, but I enjoyed them.

RF: Would you still like to get into recording more?

GG: I will. It's a plan I have and something I pray about. As I mature as a Christian, I've learned that, if I wait, the Lord tells me and guides me when it's time. Whenever I try to push something to make it happen, it doesn't. So I just listen a lot and try to be content where I am. I spent a lot of my life being discontent with who I was, and I realize that I wasted those years. I don't want to waste any more time.

RF: Have you still kept up with reading?

GG: I'm not as dedicated as I'd like to be, mainly because of the demands of touring. You don't have your practice set in your hotel room, there's no time, and all this other stuff. I do it when I can, but I do try to keep up with what is new and current.

RF: How do you feel about electronic stuff, having played with the most traditional of artists?

GG: At first, it was a threat to me. When the electronic drum was a little box, and anybody could push a key to play the snare drum or the bass drum and that became the drummer, that was a threat to me. I was really put off by it. But then I realized that, if you're going to keep up with the times, the best thing you can do is take hold of it, so just anybody can't be called to do it. Let a drummer do it. I'm real excited about the Simmons, because it takes a drummer to do it. It's the best thing I could ask for in electronics for a drummer. There's a set, and the drummer plays the part. That excites me. Who knows what is going to come next? As long as the drummer is not passed over, I'm fine, because no one is ever going to convince me that a machine can replace the player.

RF: What does your equipment consist of?

GG: My basic equipment is a Pearl set with a 22 x 14 bass drum, 10 x 8, 12 x 10 and 14 x 12 mounted toms, a 16 x 16 floor tom, and a 14 x 8 maple-shell snare. I use the Aquarian mic' system, which makes it so much easier. My cymbals are a combination of Zildjian and Paiste.

RF: Have you any advice for young drummers?

GG: It's so easy to get sidetracked. You've got to be so determined and make up your mind that you're going to stick with it when the practicing isn't fun. You have to sacrifice going out to play ball every now and then. This is old stuff. We've all heard it, but it still happens. I see it in young musicians today, and they need to know that they've got to put in those early years of dedication. In the end, you may be a professional or you may not, but you'll be the best at what you're doing. If you don't do that, you may as well not do it at all.

RF: Speaking of dedication, do you find it difficult being a Christian in the music business?

GG: Yes, I do. Although I've met some wonderful people and made some great Christian friends in this business, it leans toward a very worldly, hard, demanding life, because it's just that kind of animal. You're talking about one-nighters, and you're talking about not eating or sleeping right sometimes. You're dealing with people who are so concerned about the business, and dollars and cents. Some people will sacrifice ideals to achieve a certain goal. If you're a Christian, you've got to base every act you do and everything you say on that. You have to be there all the time. You have to be responsible for your actions. It is hard in this business, but I do the best I can.

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Unlimited Perspectives

I'm going to do something a little different this month, and direct this column to the younger players out there—those of you who aren't yet playing steadily in clubs, and who, in fact, may not even be playing professionally at all—yet. I'd like to talk to you now, before you establish the direction you wish to take towards your eventual careers as drummers.

I'm concerned with something that has been happening among the young drummers I've seen and heard lately, and that was illustrated even more clearly for me recently, when I was asked to be a judge for a drum solo competition. Let me briefly describe what took place: The competition was held by a local music store, and was open to drummers of all ages. In order to make the contest fair, age categories were established, so that drummers ages 10 to 15, 16 to 20, and 21 and over competed only against each other. (As a matter of fact, I don't think there was any drummer in the contest over the age of 22 or 23.) Each drummer had five minutes in

which to make any adjustments necessary to get comfortable on the set that was provided, and to play his or her solo.

I was tremendously excited at the prospect of seeing what some of the "drummers of the future" had to offer, and I was not disappointed when it came to technique, power, and energy. All of the drummers displayed abilities that reflected a high level of enthusiasm and a definite dedication to the art of drumming, which led me to believe that these young people really cared about being drummers and about working at their craft.

What did disappoint me was that, with only a few notable exceptions, all these young players seemed to feel that "drumming" really meant "loud, power rock drumming." One drummer did display an affinity for Buddy Rich-style snare work, while another showed the influence of Steve Gadd and David Garibaldi on snare-and-hi-hat funk patterns. But these two were so unique as to be conspicuous. The rest of the players tended to concentrate on power, speed, double-bass and round-house tom patterns, and *extreme* volume. What was missing was a sense of musical variety in terms of dynamics, different rhythms, the use of all the subtle nuances of the drums and cymbals, and most especially, an awareness that there were, in fact, *other types of drumming that could be performed*. Basically, what all this confirmed to me was that today's young drummers—and I'm speaking primarily of the teenage players here—have a very limited grasp of how multifaceted the drumming profession truly is. Instead, they have an image of arena rock, national tours and immense sound systems. (The comment I heard most often when the drummers first saw the five-piece drumkit for the contest was: "Gosh—it's so small! What am I going to do with so few drums?") One can't really fault them for having this image, because that's the most visible level of the music business where young people are concerned. The "music press" tends to concentrate on the glamorous side of the top touring groups: the outlandish costuming, the staging, the screaming fans, and all the other attractive elements that come with that musical genre. But the fact is that that level of the business represents only a tiny fraction of how most professional drummers make their living. And while the young drummers that I saw in this solo competition may indeed go on to become tomorrow's professionals, many of them will do so in

clubs, in wedding and bar mitzvah bands, or in studios, playing other people's music and commercial jingles. Those areas of the business require a solid foundation in a multitude of musical styles, or at least an awareness of the evolution of music from age to age and artist to artist.

We all learn by listening to what has gone before. Every drummer interviewed in *Modern Drummer* has mentioned the drummers that he or she listened to for inspiration and influence. When we're talking about drummers less than 20 years old, it's not surprising that their influences are all drummers from the rock era. When I asked the participants in the solo competition for the names of some players that they admired, they cited—almost as a litany—Neil Peart, Alex Van Halen, John Bonham, Carmine Appice, and a host of other arena rock notables. When I asked about such luminaries as Buddy Rich, Tony Williams, Max Roach, and Ed Shaughnessy—all very visible and active (but non-rock) drummers—I was again not surprised to hear that, although most of those names were known to the young drummers, it was due to advertisements; few had ever heard any of those gentlemen play. What did surprise me was that even much more recent drum stars, such as Steve Gadd, David Garibaldi, Danny Seraphine, Bill Bruford, Larrie Londin, Russ Kunkel, and Bernard Purdie, were almost equally unknown. I was astounded at how limited a focus these young people had on the profession they hoped to enter.

It's not my contention that every person who plays drums must study every musical style that has ever existed, nor need they be able to cite the contributions of every drummer since Baby Dodds. But a truly competent, professional drummer today needs to be aware of how much the music business has diversified in recent years. In the early days, drumset players were playing "traditional" or "Dixieland" jazz almost exclusively. Later on, the era of the big bands added swing playing to the drummer's repertoire. Those two styles continued on (and produced derivatives of their own), while pop and rock made their appearances. Then those two styles each further diversified into sub-categories, such as R&B, funk, progressive rock, melodic pop, fusion, and any number of other musical labels. Also, let's not forget C&W, foreign influences such as reggae and salsa, and the influence still felt from all the various forms of jazz. All of these styles are in evidence today, in the widely

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by Rick Van Horn

varied medium that is loosely termed "commercial music."

What this means to the aspiring young drummer is that there is a wealth of information available out there. The situation today, in terms of learning how to play the drums through the examples of other drummers, is better than it has ever been. And while there's nothing wrong with having an idol, and perhaps concentrating on a particular area of music that is a personal favorite, I think there is something very wrong with limiting your perspective to *only* that one area. A drummer today needs to look no further than the current charts or the bins of the local record store for examples of top-notch work in virtually every style of music. In other words, Neil Peart is unquestionably a drummer to admire and study, but so are Steve Gadd, Omar Hakim, Larrie Londin, Sly Dunbar, Buddy Rich, and a host of other innovative drummers who are represented on records that are commercially successful right now. Keeping in mind that the vast majority of professional drummers play previously recorded music in clubs or at private functions, it's critical for a drummer to gain insight into what makes commercial music successful, no matter what style that music might represent.

An advantage possessed by today's drummers who *do* have an interest in the history of drumming is that there is so much of it! It's rare for any profession to be able to trace its exact origin, yet that of drumset playing can be pinpointed somewhere just around the turn of the century. The drummers of the 1920s had less than 20 years of history to draw on, the drummers of the big band era less than 40. But today's drummers have over 80 years of history, and countless artists to study. The beauty of that is that, due to the nature of our profession, much of that history has been preserved on recordings and is readily available.

Today's music, whether it be a Top-40 single, a hot jazz album, a heavy metal anthem, or a new wave dance track, represents the culmination of many years of musical evolution. And any young drummer, whether dreaming of stardom or planning a local career, needs to draw from all of that evolution in order to perfect his or her craft. Keep your ears—and your mind—open, and realize that the more you know, the more complete—and thus more valuable—a musician you will be.

THE DRUM IS A MACHINE. THE DRUM SET IS A COLLECTION OF MACHINES

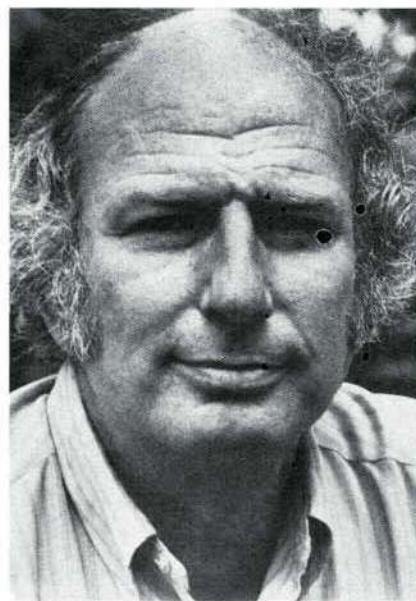
Conditioned as you are to believe that a drum set is a musical instrument, it may come as a surprise (to put it mildly) to be told it is only a collection of machines. When the drum set is played by an accomplished drummer who is also a musician then it does become instrumental in the making of music. But the music is coming from the musician and not from the drum machines. But for the majority of students who aspire to play the drums and make music, not understanding exactly what a drum set is and what negative effects it can have may cause the drummer to become more like a machine than a musician.

It is obvious that the bass drum and hi-hat pedals are machines, but why are drums and cymbals a collection of machines? The reason is that they meet all the definitions of a machine. First, the machine transforms one form of energy into another form of energy. When the drum or cymbal is struck with the stick a physical form of energy is being transformed into sound energy. Second, all machines operate with parts that work in sequence, one after the other: the drum head is struck, causing it to vibrate; that causes the air within the drum to vibrate; this in turn causes the bottom head to vibrate; next, the bottom head vibrates the snares; then the air vibrates outside the drum, which causes us to hear the sound.

When you grasp the reality that the drum set is a machine (even when they are made with dedication and care by all our marvelous manufacturers of drum sets and cymbals) you are better able to deal with the falseness of the goal of "MASTERING THE INSTRUMENT." I have trouble with that because musicality comes from the individual and not the instrument. I notice that when a musician learns a tune he hears it as a totality and then when it sinks in he is able to sing it or play it on an instrument. Several players have told me that, in effect, they never "mastered" their instruments; they played the first time they tried.

"MASTERING THE INSTRUMENT" implies that one will become better able to express one's musicality, ideas, and feelings. What is the evidence for such a belief? My own observation is that those who strive to fulfill such an ambition end up sounding more like a machine than before the attempt. Yes, through compulsive mechanical repetitions you come to "believe" that by conforming to those patterns you are accomplishing something. What is actually happening is that in attempting to "master the instrument" you attempt to build a super machine as the only way to master the drum machine and you call this super machine "TECHNIQUE," which comes from the word **technology**; which has to do with machines.

"TECHNIQUE" is a concept taught to us by the music machines. We observe a musician playing in fragmentation. We observe how his hands and limbs move as something entirely detached from the content and form of his musicality. We conclude that the lesson to be learned is in moving the hands and limbs with the same apparent ease. We never guess that the apparent ease may have more to do with



the artist being in touch with his talent, producing a spontaneous relaxation. But not being able to see this, we fall into the trap of fragmentation in an attempt to develop this "TECHNIQUE" so that we may "MASTER THE INSTRUMENT." All we are actually doing is becoming more and more like the drum machines.

Manufacturing drums and cymbals requires the highest degree of knowledge, skill, and experience. I used to believe that in order to play the drum set, knowledge, skill, and experience were required. But eventually I caught on to the fact that the machines themselves were feeding me with inappropriate knowledge, skill, and experience.

What I learned was that my students played well because of their talent. They played even better when they began to become aware of the things they did when they were playing their best. That meant they could pay attention better after my instruction. In musical performance talent is everything only when the performer can pay attention, and at the same time place the attention in the correct position. That position is at the brain. But because most players are unconscious of the fact that the drum is a machine the attention is incorrectly placed in the auditorium or outside the head. The drummer knows that something is wrong but in trying to solve the problem he conforms more and more to the patterns of the drum machine and less and less to his talent and attention, and gets worse. There is a solution to this difficulty and it is to be found in private instruction or my cassette home study course.

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THE MUSICAL DRUMMER

by Bill Molenhof

Examination And Review

This month, I thought it might be a good idea to review some of the musical concepts and terms we have worked on to see if you can readily identify them. The following questions will provide you with a means of testing what you have already learned. Again, my congratulations to all of you who incorporate melody and harmony into your regular routine. Even if you have only spent a short period of time on the material presented in this column, you may have dramatically improved your compositional and improvising skills on both the drums and in keyboard situations. Thank you very much for reading my ideas and trying the musical games: I hope they are as much fun for you as they are for me!

What two chords are illustrated in Example 1?

1

G7 A7

The two chords are G7 and A7.

What is the harmonic rate in Example 1?

The harmonic rate, or when the chords change, happens every measure on the downbeat of the bar.

Examine the following drum patterns in Examples 2a and 2b. If you saw one of these written on a drum part, which would you play for a jazz feel and which for a rock feel?

2a

2b

Example 2a best represents a jazz feel, and 2b a rock feel.

How would you describe the difference between a jazz and straight-8th time feel?

One way to think of it is that the straight-8th feel is tighter, more up and down, and often heavier, with the pulse divided into equal 8th notes. Jazz is smoother, lighter, more flowing, and the pulse is divided into triplets.

In Example 3, do the guidetones show syncopation and anticipation, or do they resolve directly on the downbeat?

3

Example 3 shows syncopation (stressing weak beats) and anticipation (early chord resolution).

Frequently, composers will use motivic development to communicate an idea to the listener. In Example 4, is this phrase an illustration of how the composer repeated the idea?

4

In Example 4, the two-bar melodic idea is restated with no alteration, one whole step lower.

In Example 5, can you describe the bass activity? Does the harmonic rate change? Would the drums play the same beat under this entire phrase?

5

The bass playing has moved from one whole-note attack per bar, to two half-note attacks per bar, and then to four quarter-note attacks, giving the effect of speeding up. The basic pulse remains the same, as does the harmonic rate: one chord per bar. It would be more effective if the drumming accurately shifted with the increased rhythm of the bass.

6

C | G/B | A- | A-/G | F | E- | D-7 | G7:

In the preceding chord progression, is there a turnaround and a cadence?

In measures seven and eight, there are turnarounds, and every time you return to the C chord after the turnaround, you create a cadence.

The last question should be simple for you. Can you name the notes that make up the following chords: D-7b5, G7b9, C-7b5 and F7b9?

The D-7b5 chord is spelled D, F, Ab, C. G7b9 is spelled G, B, D, F, Ab. C-7b5 is spelled C, Eb, Gb, Bb. F-7b9 is spelled F, A, C, Eb, Gb.

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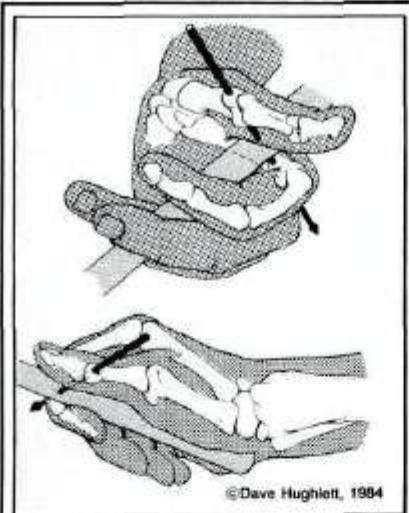
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Inside Sonor continued from page 18

IGMF, an "international society for music in education," and organizes courses that she sometimes also teaches. For many years, Sonor has been concentrating on drumkits and Orff-system instruments. The company hasn't been making marching drums or professional orchestral instruments, but this is changing. It has recently started making marching drums again, and the rest is likely to follow.

It is Sonor's range of drumkits and the company's dedicated, but possibly slightly controversial, approach to drum design that will be of most interest to readers of *Modern Drummer*. Sonor makes five different ranges of drums. They are, starting at the top: *Signature* (Heavy and Light), *Sonorlite*, *Phonic*, *Phonic Plus*, and *Performer*. For the purposes of instant recognition (the other differences will be dealt with as we go along), the *Signature* series has the gold badge, the *Sonorlite* series has the black badge, the *Phonic* series and *Phonic Plus* series have the silver badge, and the *Performer* series has a silver badge with a yellow flash below the logo. There would be a tendency for any potential customer to line up, in his or her mind, this range of drumkits alongside the products of any other company that makes a range of four or more different-quality kits and start thinking in terms of equivalents. Sorry, but this just can't be done! In Europe, Sonor's *Phonic/Phonic Plus* range (the third one down!), which the company describes as the "foundation" of their program, is slightly more expensive than most British, American, or Japanese kits aimed at the professional end of the market. This means that they have two ranges that go beyond this level. The *Performer* is cheaper, but it is hardly a budget kit, being priced somewhere between anybody else's professional and mid-range kits. In America, Sonor drums are even more expensive, so the ratio becomes even more extreme. You could almost say that Sonor starts at the point where other drum companies leave off. Why?

I had a round-table discussion with Horst, Andreas, and Oliver Link, and also Steve Gardner, Director of Sonor UK, the British marketing operation, who gave the salesman's viewpoint. Horst Link explained their approach to quality in manufacturing. "We don't try to compete with the big manufacturers, like the Japanese, in terms of *quantity*; we compete with *quality*. We maintain a quality that is better and has a higher standard than anything else. Our drums are expensive—there's no doubt about that—but we have no intention of making compromises. We will never sacrifice quality for a cheaper price. You might suggest that, if we brought the price down, we could sell more drums, but we can't bring the price down and maintain the quality. We would rather sell fewer drums than compromise in this

way. The idea of the *Signature* series was for us to come out with a drumkit that couldn't be made better. It should really be the best! Forget the price. Even if it was so expensive that nobody could afford it, we just wanted to build the best. We never intended it as a big seller, but as it turned out, it exceeded all our expectations. For the home market, we sell more *Phonic*, *Phonic Plus*, and *Performer* kits, but in other countries where we are 'in the lions' den' and the competition is greater, like America and Japan, the *Signature* is the best-selling kit in our whole range. There is also the fact that we sell more kits in America than anywhere else, so you can see how successful it has become."

The *Signature* (Heavy) series shells are made of 12-ply beech and are 12mm (nearly 1/2") thick. The natural-wood finishes (which are the only ones in *Signature*) are African bubinga and Indonesian Makassar ebony. The bass drums have twin, upright, internal muffling strips of lambs wool, which can be moved (not stretched) against the batter head by means of an external control. The mechanism is guaranteed not to rattle when the mufflers are in the "off" position. There is a choice of wood- or metal-shell snare drums 8" or 6 1/2" deep, with parallel-action snares. The adjustment mechanism is guaranteed not to wear or to go out of alignment, and Steve Gardner estimates that you can go for at least five years without needing to make any adjustments. The rack toms in the *Signature* series are all "power" sizes, being as deep as they are wide, and there is an interesting choice of floor toms: the 14" is 16" deep, the 15" is 17" deep, the 16" is 18" deep, and the 18" is 19" deep. The *Signature* series is also available with lighter shells made from birch; these are still 12 ply but the thickness is down to a more usual 7mm. All *Signature* drums are fitted with "Snap Locks" on the nut boxes: The thread housing (into which the tension bolt is screwed) has a small section cut out on one side, a clamping ring around the outside of the housing comes into contact with the thread of the tension bolt at this point, and as the bolt is slightly flattened on two sides, the clamp locks the bolt in position at every half turn. It is easy to turn it with a drum key, but it will not slip accidentally during playing, allowing the drum to detune.

Like the lighter *Signature* drums, the *Sonorlite* series has bass drums and snare drums made of 12-ply birch with 7mm shells, but the tom-toms are 9 ply and 6mm. The available finishes are Scandinavian birch (natural wood), creme lacquer, and onyx lacquer. The tom-toms are one or two inches shallower than their *Signature* counterparts, and the choice of snare drums includes ones with direct-pull snare levers. It is actually when we come to the *Phonic* that we are looking at something like the average, traditional, top-quality,

professional drumkit. The *Phonic* has the non-power sizes, like 8 x 12 and 9 x 13. The *Phonic Plus* series consists of *Phonic* drums in "power" sizes. The shells are 9-ply beech and 9mm thick with a wood finish, 10mm with a plastic covering. *Phonic* and *Phonic Plus* are available in red mahogany (natural wood), or black, white, or red plastic. There is also a new *Phonic Plus "Hi-Tec"* kit with grey shells, and black fittings and hardware. The *Performer* kits are only available with plastic finishes and traditional drum sizes. They have 6-ply beech shells that are 7mm thick.

To explain why Sonor favors heavier, more solid drumshells, even in its lighter models, it is easiest to quote Oliver Link—not from anything that was said during our interview, but from what he says in *The Drummer's Drum*. Research has been carried out at the German Federal Institute of Physics into "how the materials, form and size of a drum interrelate and affect the sound quality of the instrument." It was found that the drumshell doesn't contribute to the sound of the drums. It should be passive. It is the volume of air contained within the shell that reacts with the vibration of the heads to produce the sound. Oliver's conclusions are as follows: "The shell must not vibrate, in order not to deprive vibration energy of the drumhead by its own vibration. The shell must have a high frictional resistance; the higher the frictional resistance, the less chance of the shell producing its own vibrations. The shell must have a great mass, thus making the decay of the drum sound to a large extent independent from the way it is fixed to holders or stands. Furthermore it favors an efficient projection of the fundamental tone." So a drumshell *shouldn't* vibrate, but once free of vibrations, the thickness of the shell can still affect the sound of the drum. According to Oliver, "The basic frequency will be more muffled when the shell has a thin wall, so that the upper frequencies emerge. The sound seems to be more brilliant and sustaining. Shells with thicker walls and equipped with the same type of heads have the same spectrum of overtones as thin shells. However, the projection of the fundamental tone is better. The sound seems softer and fuller."

According to Horst Link, "The sound of a drum comes only from the heads; the shell only gives the volume of the resonance space. The shell shouldn't take away any vibrations from the reaction of the heads to the space inside the shell. If the shell vibrates, it takes power from this process. The sound of a drum will improve as you put more on a shell—even with weights; you could cover a shell in concrete; it cannot be heavy enough for the ideal projection of the head sound. This is with regard to the basic tone of the head. But we do make lighter drums. This is because the overtones can be an important consideration in the overall impression of

the sound. Some people want to hear some overtones, so with the *Sonorlite*, you get a reduced basic tone with more overtones. It is a livelier, more colorful sound."

Steve Gardner said, "The whole idea of vibrating shells was in somebody's mind. Research wasn't done to see whether a vibrating shell really did give you a better sound. Even this company used to advertise shells as being 'full vibrating,' and it wasn't until somebody said to them 'Hang on a minute. It's only when you stop the shells from vibrating that you put the energy into the head,' that they changed. If you have a vibrating shell, you are taking energy away from the heads, so you lose volume—and more importantly, you lose tunability. You lose the potential of tuning a certain size of drum to its optimum highest pitch or its optimum lowest pitch; you are stuck with this thing that most drums of the '60s had, where you had a set sound that you couldn't get away from. I think that a lot of companies have been having trouble with their power toms. Again, it's all in the mind. Someone has an idea, and goes to the drum company, and says, 'I want a tom-tom *this* deep.' So the company makes it without doing any research into the way it sounds. Very often, the sound that comes off the bottom head on a power drum is nothing like what drummers think they're getting when they hit the batter head. This company has not only taken note of the research done by the Federal Institute, but it does its own research. If the basic tone of a deep drum is going to be ruined by overtones, Sonor will beef up the shell to counteract it, because Sonor cares about the way its drums sound. As percussion manufacturers, the people at Sonor know that, with a chime bar for instance, it isn't only the note that the bar itself is tuned to that matters, but it is the proportions and material of the sound chamber underneath it which have to project the note accurately. Otherwise, it will sound wrong. All these things are researched and carefully worked out. The same methods are applied in designing drums. The research that has been done, and is still being done, at the Federal Institute wasn't commissioned by Sonor. It is available to everyone, but nobody else has taken it up!"

Oliver Link continued, "We don't want to have a situation where we are telling people that they have to use heavier shells, because it is always the better sound. The reason why we offer so many different shell sizes and combinations of thicknesses is that we want to give the drummer the largest possible choice of sound. Some people want the livelier sound, so we give it to them."

"There is another very important point," Horst Link added, "and that is the bearing edge on the shell. The point at which the head touches the shell is crucial to the sound. It must be absolutely

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straight, of course, and narrow with as small an amount of shell material touching the head as possible. The type of material used to make the shell is important at this point, too. The difference in sound from shells made of different materials comes mainly from the edge: The harder the edge is, the crisper the sound. So you get a crisp sound from a drum with a metal shell, but you won't get one from a drum made with a soft material. Our drums have got hard, thick shells, but we make sure that the bearing edges are narrow. They are cut at 45 degrees inside and out. Also our shells are slightly smaller than the hoops on the heads, so that the heads 'float,' which means that there is no clogging up of the sound with the hoop rubbing against the shell."

According to Andreas Link, "We used to make thin shells with reinforcing rings top and bottom, but we realize now that there needs to be a free passage of air between the heads on the inside of the shell, and anything close to the heads only serves to block off the sound." Horst Link agrees. "Yes. This point close to the head is where the vibration starts, and if you put an obstacle in the way right next to the head like that" Andreas Link concluded, "It's the worst thing you can do."

I raised the point about the rims on Sonor drums: I had been led to believe that cast rims were better than the pressed steel

variety, particularly when it comes to cutting down overtones, and yet I had only seen cast rims on the *Signature* snare drums. Steve answered, "You get a choice. The standard pressed rim is 1.5mm thick, but the *Signature* pressed rim is 2.5mm thick. That helps cut down on the overtones. They cost as much to produce as a cast rim. They are pressed out on the same machine that is used for making the metal snare drums; this means that they are seamless. They are *not* a cheap option. With a normal pressed rim, you have more flexibility with the tuning. A cast rim is so solid that you can very nearly put one on a 14" drum, put four tension rods on it, and tune it. If you tighten it down in four places, the rim is so rigid that it will pull the head down evenly all the way around. The pressed steel rim won't do that, so you need all the tension bolts to be brought into play to tune the drum. If Sonor uses pressed rims, it isn't for cost; it's for tunability—the customer has a choice anyway—at the same price."

We know that there are quite a few top drummers, like Steve Smith and Jack DeJohnette, who use Sonor, but we don't open *Modern Drummer* and find advertisements showing pictures of dozens of big names who use the drums. The marketing policy for the world's most expensive drums seems to be much more subtle. Why is this?

According to Oliver Link, "We have

never paid a drummer to play Sonor. Other companies actually pay people regularly every month to use their products, but that isn't completely convincing. If you're paying them, they are not doing it from their own free will, are they? The endorsees that we have are convinced ones. They don't switch around very often. They stay with us."

Andreas Link added, "There's a very simple reason: If you make a drum for top drummers, you have got to sell it to top drummers. If you give them to top drummers, who are you going to sell them to?" Oliver Link stated, "We do give a limited number of kits to certain drummers, but they always do something for us in return—clinics, that sort of thing. They don't get kits just because they are 'names,' and they never get money from us. Endorsement policy, as I regard it, is only one part of our marketing strategy. You can't have an endorsement policy without having an advertising policy and a product policy. It is all interconnected. The most important thing is the quality of the product; when people are paying a lot of money, they expect you to maintain good service, good delivery, and so on. You can't afford to compromise on the product or on customer service. But as far as marketing goes, this is where our advantages lie. We can't compete with the cheap kits that are imported from the Far East, and we don't want to. We have to keep the

level high, and although it is a hard task, we are succeeding."

According to Steve Gardner, "What we have found is that, if people are prepared to pay a high price for a top-quality drumkit, they are prepared to pay the *highest* price for the best possible drumkit." Horst Link added, "The most important point for us is the quality, next comes availability, and third, the price. You might ask, 'What can you—a small company with only 195 people—do to compete against the really big drum manufacturers?' But I say that we are more flexible than the big companies. We are faster when it comes to adapting to changes in the market. We can take better individual care of our customers. If customers come here, I, as head of the company, can welcome them. In larger companies, it would be the head of a division. The contact is greater. I personally know most of our customers. We get our orders out to them quickly. We give service and value for money. That's what we are in business for, and that's what keeps us in business."

You may remember that Sonor advertisements of a few years ago featured what is probably the most expensive and prestigious car in the world. This stopped, because the car company objected to it. If they had known anything about drums, they would probably have featured Sonor drums in their own advertisements and claimed to be the "Sonor" of cars!

Inside The Sonor Factory continued from page 20

wood are kept. Sonor drums are made from two, three, or four layers of three-ply wood, depending on the model. "It is most important," said Andreas, "that we keep control over the quality of the wood. So we buy the wood ourselves before it is made into three ply. We supply our subcontractor with the raw materials for making the plywood, and this way we guarantee the quality." The sheets of ply are stored in a cool room until four days before they are needed for the manufacture of drumshells, at which time they are taken into the much warmer room in which the shells are made.

It is necessary for the wood to have time to become acclimatized to the temperature of the shell room, because when the shells are made, the pieces of ply are pressed together at a high temperature. Wood is sensitive to temperature, and after the ply sections are cut to size, there is no room for error if the ply happens to expand or contract during the process. The inner pieces of ply are cut at an angle to give a diagonal join where the two ends meet. The outer layer is cut straight. The cut sheets are then placed between special rollers that coat them evenly with glue. The sheets that are to become the inside and outside of the drumshell are only coated on one side, while the ones that are to be sandwiched between them are coated on both sides. They are now ready to go into the shell machine. There is a different machine for each diameter of shell size that Sonor makes. The machines are very sophisticated molds, for molding sheets of plywood together. There is a cylindrical outer casing, the inside of which is the same size as the outside of the required drumshell. The plywood sheets are bent by hand, so that they can be placed in the machine in the position in which they are to be pressed together. The outer layer goes in first, so that it rests against the inside of the "mold," then the next layer goes in with the join in a different place, and so on. When all the plywood is in place, an inside former is moved into position on the inside of the shell. This former is not only heated, but is able to expand, thereby pressing the sheets of plywood together against the inside

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of the "mold." The drumshell is left under heat and pressure like this for about 12 minutes to allow it to "set." When it is taken out of the machine, the shell is as strong as any wooden shell of a given thickness could possibly be. It is also perfectly round. Each plywood sheet has been stuck, under pressure but free of tension (without being pulled), around the sheet next to it, so there is no overlap of any sheet against itself, and no possibility of the plies being out of true. In the case of wood finishes, the outer ply is the finish. It isn't a piece of veneer that is added on later. "It is all done at once," said Rolf proudly. "That's a specialty of Sonor."

The shells are finished by hand with the help of a sanding belt, and the bearing edges are cut on another of Sonor's special machines. Each shell receives the individual attention of a craftsman, but to ensure an accurate bearing edge, the drum is slowly turned against a revolving cutter, which is set at exactly 45 degrees. As the shell is resting on a flat metal surface during this process, there is no possibility of error. The largest 45-degree cutaway is on the inside of the shell, but it doesn't go straight inwards from the outside edge. There is another 45-degree cutaway on the outside, but this is much nearer to the outside edge. This double cutaway gives a very narrow bearing edge indeed. "Even though our drumshells are very thick," said Steve, "the amount of the head that actually touches the shell is less on our drums than on anybody else's. They are beautiful—the best shells in the world!"

The next stage is the spraying room, in which the shells are sprayed with lacquer. Andreas explained, "The wood finish which you see on our shells is the *natural* color of the wood. There is no dye added to give an even color. That is in the quality of the wood we use. The clear lacquer coating is to protect the shell's surface and to seal it against moisture." The cream and onyx finishes that are available as alternatives to the Scandinavian birch in the *Sonorlite* series are also applied in the spraying room, because they are lacquered finishes. These lacquered *Sonorlite* finishes take longer and are more expensive to produce than plastic coverings, but research has shown that the lacquered finish gives the drumshell a character so close to that of a natural wood finish that the difference in acoustic properties is negligible. These finishes are "highly durable, and resistant to light and fading." Rolf underlined the care that is taken with the lacquering. "There are normally four—sometimes five—coats of lacquer that go on: two undercoats, and two or three top coats. Between each coat, the shell is rubbed down and polished, and before the final coat goes on, it is rubbed down with special, fine, wet sandpaper. Of course, all of this is done by hand, and each shell is carefully checked so that it is visually, as well as acoustically, perfect."

With the exception of the natural red mahogany, the finishes on the *Phonic*, *Phonic Plus*, and *Performer* drums are plastic coverings. Three machines are used at this stage in the process, and each of them is unique to Sonor, but each shell is worked on individually by a craftsman. There is no element of mass production. The shell is first hung on a roller with the covering material on top of it so that the material's underside is facing upwards for gluing. Another roller comes down from above and rolls the covering material along its length. As the material passes beneath the roller, an even covering of glue is deposited on it by the roller. After the material has passed through, the top roller tightens against the drumshell, so that it can be revolved on the roller it is hanging on. As the shell revolves, the top roller deposits an even coating of glue on the shell in its turn. In this way, both shell and covering are glued by the same machine, one after the other. After being left for about 15 minutes to allow the glue to set, the shell is placed on another machine, which actually does five jobs all at once: The covering material is lined up against the shell, the shell is slowly revolved, the material is passed forward and pressed against the shell, and while all this is happening, the covering is being trimmed by "running knives" at either end of the shell. There is a slight overlap of the covering material, which is stuck down by hand, and then the shell is placed on a press, which holds this overlap in place for a few minutes while the glue dries. With the covering stuck all the way around with a complete covering of glue, there is no chance of the

covering "bubbling" in extreme heat or direct sunlight, which can happen with some other drumshells. The surface of the covering material is protected throughout with a layer of something like "cling-film," which is removed later.

Sonor even manages to do something special when it comes to drilling the holes in the drumshells to receive the fittings. Unlike most drums, Sonor's tension brackets don't have lugs that project right through the inside of the shell. The lugs slot into the thickness of the shell about halfway, and the screws come through from the inside of the drum to meet them. This means that they need to have a thicker hole on the outside to take the lug, and a thinner one on the inside to take the screw. This is achieved by having drill bits that have two thicknesses. As the drill goes through from the outside, a thin hole is made all the way through, and then a thicker hole is made part of the way through. For this to be done, the shell is placed in an upright position on a turntable, and the mounted drills pierce it horizontally. Settings are available on the machine for every size of drum that Sonor produces, so that the height of the drills can be adjusted according to the shell size, and the shell is turned the correct amount between hole stations. After this, the drums are ready to be assembled.

The next stage in the production of snare drums seemed, at first sight, to be carrying perfectionism to the point of eccentricity, but Steve was quick to justify it. "You go into most shops where they have a shelf full of different snare drums of different sizes; go along the shelf tapping each one in turn and you will find that they all sound more or less the same, regardless of size and thickness. The reason for this is that the person in the shop has tuned each of those drums to *his or her* idea of how a drum ought to sound. This means that, in many cases, the drums are not going to be sounding their best. There is no point in having drums with different characteristics if they are all going to be tuned to sound the same. We know, from the research that has been done, what the ideal tuning is for our different models of drums, so we tune them before they are sent out. What the customers do with the drums when they get their hands on them is up to them, but we make sure that the drums leave here sounding right." But do they stay in tune? "Oh yes. With the *Snap Lock* system on our tension bolts, there is no way they are going to move. The drums stay in tune until the heads begin to stretch after being played for a while; when that happens, they need to be brought up a bit."

The tuning is carried out on a workbench that is specially equipped with a snare drum cradle, mounted in the middle of it so that it can revolve, and an oscilloscope. This is an electronic machine that can be set to be receptive to a specific note. There is a line across a small screen that will show an uneven pattern when the note that the machine hears is wrong. The operator can read the patterns on the screen and judge how to tune the drum to get the even pattern, which indicates the true note. He turns the drum so that each tension bolt, in turn, is under the microphone. Rolf pointed out that, if you want this sort of accurate tuning, this is a very time-effective way of doing it; it takes three or four minutes only, as opposed to half an hour or more if it were being done by ear. As a matter of interest, the drum I saw being tuned was a *Sonorlite* 7 1/4" x 14 wooden snare drum. The batter head was tuned to D and the snare head to G.

Eccentric, perhaps. Most drummers just fiddle around with their drums until they get a sound they like, but the scientific research conducted by the people at Sonor has led them to consider the "perfect" sound for their drums—and they don't want anything short of perfection to leave their factory. It is this sort of attention to detail, which one sees at every stage of their production, that makes Sonor what it is. The people at this company are not afraid to say that they make the best drums in the world, and they are not afraid to admit that their drums are the most expensive. The one justifies the other. Sonor's policy would seem to be justified also by the number of drummers who are prepared to ignore trends for particular makes of drums and heavily endorsed advertising campaigns of certain of Sonor's competitors, in order quite simply to go for the best.

Drumming And The Big Break

by Roy Burns

Young drummers often ask the question, "How did you get your big break?" In my own case, it started when I met Louie Bellson in Kansas City. Louie was visiting the drum studio where I was taking lessons. He played for us, answered questions, and then listened to each student play the drums.

Later that day, Louie gave me the following advice: "You are as good as you are ever going to be if you stay in Kansas. Go to New York or Los Angeles, and study." I was only 17 at the time, but I took the advice to heart, and when I was 19, I did indeed go to New York.

When I arrived in New York, I contacted Jim Chapin and began studying with him. Jim helped me get my first jobs, which gave me some experience and helped me to survive. After about a year and a half, I auditioned for Woody Herman's band and got the job. Later the same year, I auditioned for Benny Goodman's band. I stayed with Benny for about three years. It was through Benny's band that I met many musicians who also did a lot of studio work. These contacts were a great help to me in the years after I left Benny's band, when I started to do free-lance studio work.

When I look back, I suppose the job with Benny was my "big break." I received a lot of attention, met a lot of musicians, and learned much about the music business. However, this "big break" was preceded by hours of practice, years of lessons, playing jobs of all kinds, and a good deal of sacrifice.

Even though "big breaks" are the ones that are talked about in interviews and such, they are usually preceded by a number of smaller breaks. In my case, meeting Louie Bellson was a real turning point. Studying with Jim Chapin was also a key. All the playing jobs, situations, and people that I met were part of a chain that launched my career as a professional drummer.

Today, the business is very different. For one thing, there are fewer places to play. Live music is more difficult to find than it was at one time. Nightclubs today often play records instead of hiring bands. (The

last five years of economic recession have added to this problem.) Yet drummers today are better than ever before. They are expected to have a lot of quality equipment and to be very versatile, because there are so many styles of drumming. In other words, the standards are high, and unfortunately, there are fewer jobs.

If you want to be a professional drummer, you must prepare yourself to take advantage of any "breaks" that come along. For example, learn to read music. Even if you do not intend to become a studio drummer, reading will help you to understand rhythms. It will help your understanding of music and speed up your progress. I can remember getting many jobs because I could read. A lot of talented young players miss out, because they never learned this skill.

Take drum lessons, and develop some control with your hands and feet. Learn the rudiments, even if you do not intend to join a high school or college marching band. Rudiments are part of the history of drumming. They are based on some very practical sticking patterns that are used in virtually every style of playing, so they can help you to become more flexible.

Listen to different styles of music. You never know what may come up at an audition. You could be asked to play reggae or a samba. If you can't play what is needed, the producer, manager, or bandleader will find someone who can. Prepare yourself to play whatever is needed, even if it isn't your favorite style of music.

If you are fortunate enough to be working in a traveling group, you will most likely work clubs for several weeks at a time. Find out who some of the local teachers and players are. Take some lessons in each city you travel to. If there are no top drumset teachers available, contact the local symphony (if there is one), and try to schedule a lesson with one of the percussionists. At the very least, you will spend a very interesting hour or two with a professional drummer. I have found conversations with a person such as this to be worth the price of a lesson. This will also help you to understand that, in music, there is always more to learn and there are many ways to play.

Attend drum clinics. This is an opportunity to see and hear some top pros close up. It is also an opportunity to ask questions. Sometimes it is possible to meet the artist after the clinic, and receive advice or an answer to a personal question. It is also a chance to learn about new equipment,

such as electronic drums, or cymbals, or the latest in drum hardware. Most clinics are free and most will contain some valuable information, even if you are an experienced drummer.

If you are in college studying music, take a few business courses. At some point in your career, you may be asked to sign a contract. An understanding of business might help you to make a better decision. Business courses can also teach you to organize your time more effectively. They can help you to realize that, although music is an art, it is also a business. This applies more today than ever before.

Seek advice from experienced people. Henry Adler helped me to negotiate my contract with Benny Goodman. His business experience helped me to arrive at a contract that was fair to both sides. I was happy and Benny was happy. Later on, Henry helped me to avoid signing some contracts with other artists that could have been unwise. His advice prevented me from making a couple of youthful mistakes. Ask advice from more than one person before making a decision. This will help you develop a broader view of the situation before deciding upon a course of action.

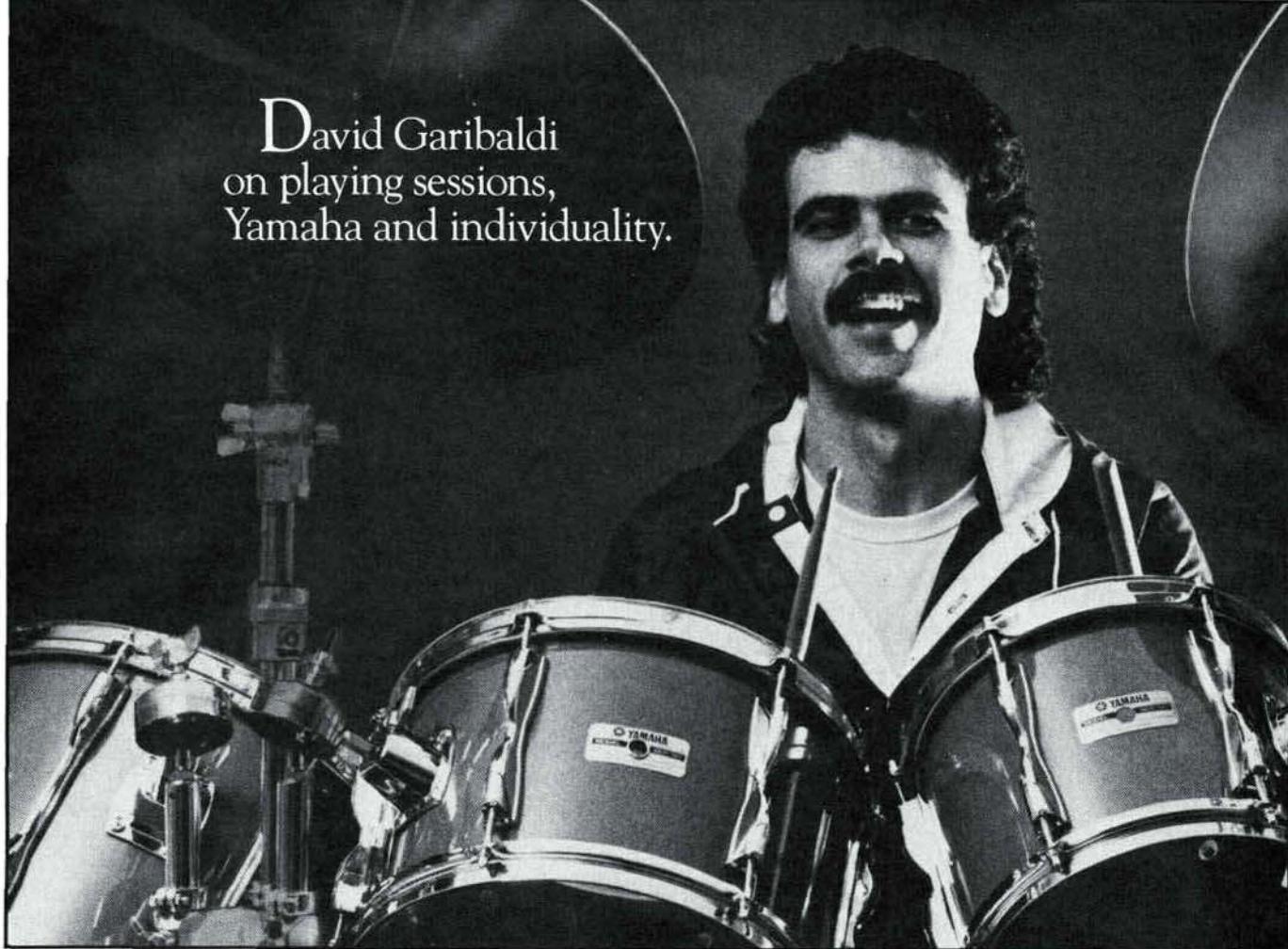
Sit down with a pen and paper, and write out your goals. Make a list of things you would like to accomplish in music. Next, make a list of the things you feel you will have to do in order to achieve your goals. Then, make a list of the things that you can do—starting today—that will put you on the way to developing the skills and attitudes necessary for success.

Read! Read interviews with famous musicians of all types. Learn some of the things that helped them in their careers. Learn about what they like and expect in a drummer. Discover how their "breaks" came along and how they made the most of them. Read articles and interviews with record company executives to understand their view of the music business. Subscribe to several music publications as well as *Modern Drummer*. There is much that can be learned by reading about the successful people in our business.

Prepare yourself for success. The ideas in this article are just some of the things you might consider. Breaks come in all shapes and sizes, and at unexpected moments. Your first "big break" might come today or tomorrow. Be ready to make the most of it. It is up to you.

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David Garibaldi on playing sessions, Yamaha and individuality.



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

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"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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ROCK PERSPECTIVES

by David Garibaldi

Study In 8th-Note Triplets

This month's *Rock Perspectives* examines some time feels involving the use of the 8th-note triplet. When practicing these examples, remember to concentrate on the two sound levels (dynamics): Accented notes should be played *forte* (*f*), and unaccented notes *pianissimo* (*pp*).

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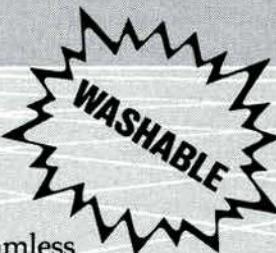


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Dunlop continued from page 25

again, I decided to make the best of it. I took a corporal's suggestion and acted like I wanted to be there, even though I didn't. Eventually, Sergeant Brown formed a group called The Seven Dukes Of Rhythm, and he asked me to join.

We traveled all over the Far East in our own plane. I probably would have cracked up if not for that group. We weren't just a jazz band. We also did some group singing. We did choreography in 1952—years before Motown. So, the place where I thought I was going to lose my mind, because it broke up my musical training—the last place on earth where I thought I'd continue my music—was the place that pulled my mind together.

After I got out of the army, I moved to New York City. I didn't have enough time in the union to play the New York clubs. You had to be a New York City resident for three months. You could play one night a week, I think, or you could play in the City if you were in a traveling group.

At this time, Thelonious Monk was starting a group, after having been idle for about seven years, when he didn't have a cabaret card. He heard me play at a jam session and asked me to join his group. I was with Monk at The Five Spot for two or three weeks at the most. Then a union man pulled me off the job, because I hadn't been a resident long enough. The group

was John Coltrane, Wilbur Ware, Monk, and me.

It was funny when the union man pulled me off the job. Monk said, "What are you doing pulling my man off?" The union man said, "This man can't work. This man is on transfer from Buffalo." Monk said, "I don't understand. Can you play drums, man?" The union man said, "What do you mean? I'm not even a drummer. I'm a trumpet player. I haven't touched my horn in 20 years." Monk replied, "That's something, man. You're going to pull this man—my drummer—off and you can't play?" The union guy said, "Well look, the man is on transfer. He knows about it." So Monk said, "Oh, that's a drag, man. You come and mess up my group. Can you swing like he can?" The union man said, "Don't give me a hard time. Look, I'm a delegate here. I could fix it so this man won't even get his card." So, Monk danced around and he said, "Aw, damn. This is something else, man. You're going to pull the man off who can play drums. You can't play. You can't find me anybody who can play. Now, who looks stupid? You or me?"

Shadow Wilson took my place. I had to leave the group because I wanted to get my union card. Monk was kind of down on the union anyway. I mean, here it was, his first job in seven years, and a union man came in and took his drummer away! So, I left

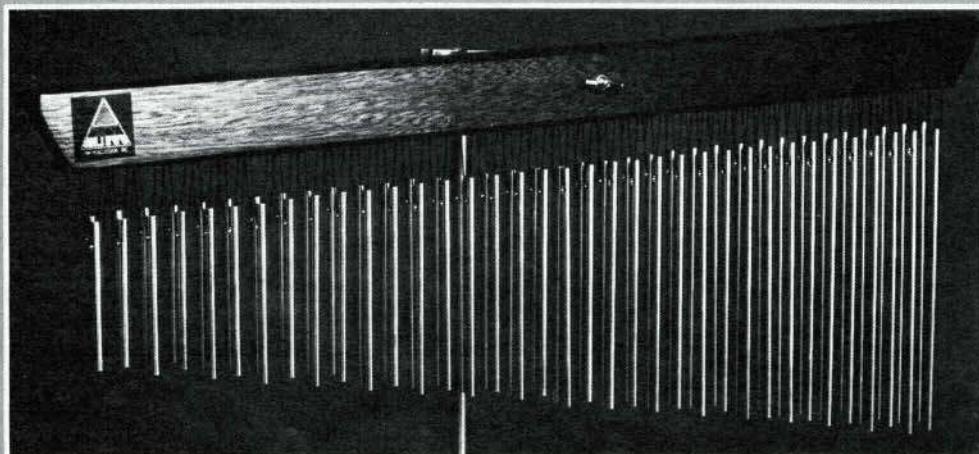
and went with Charlie Mingus, only because he was traveling outside of New York. If he had only been working in New York, I couldn't have worked with him either.

SF: How did you get in Mingus' band? What happened to Dannie Richmond?

FD: This was for a job in Washington, D.C. Dannie couldn't make it. I knew that I was basically filling in for Dannie. But I knew that if Mingus liked my work, later on I might be recommended for other jobs, which did happen. Mingus recommended me to Sonny Rollins, who I did go with. But playing with Mingus was an experience. It kept me together.

I remember one time when I was playing with Mingus at The Half Note. We were in the middle of a tune like "Salt Peanuts" and Mingus said, "Hey Frankie, keep playing. I have to go over here and talk to Joe." Joe owned The Half Note. Well, the tempo was way upstairs, and I wasn't adjusted to playing that fast. I'd just gotten into New York. Playing at that tempo was bad enough with the bass. Here I was with just a piano player.

Mingus finally came back on the bandstand after several minutes, picked up his bass, and started playing the same tune. He turned to me and said, "Hey man, the tempo has gone down. That's not the tempo I started!" And I guess it had gone down. I was scuffling. That man was a per-



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fectionist. He didn't tell me that because he disliked me. If he didn't think I could've made the gig, he wouldn't have hired me. But Mingus was such a perfectionist that he wouldn't let things slide that the average musician or bandleader would say to hell with.

All of the geniuses are like that. They may be eccentric, but deep down inside, they're concerned about their music. Monk, Mingus, Rollins, Miles Davis—they didn't want any substitutions for what it was really supposed to be. I'm glad I came up under the guiding lights of those cats.

SF: You did some recording with Mingus, too. On his *Tijuana Moods* album, you're listed as the percussionist, and Dannie Richmond is listed as the drummer.

FD: There were several tracks where I played tambourine, or I shook something. That's why they listed me as a percussionist. Dannie Richmond played drums on most of the tunes, but I played drums on a few. That was in 1957—a long time ago. If I heard the record, I'm sure I could tell you what tracks I played on.

I did another record date with Mingus that was released on Bethlehem records, called *Tales Of The City*. I don't care how long the world stands, that particular record will be a collector's item. The original lyrics were written by Langston Hughes, and it's the story of a jazz musician who's just moved to New York. I was playing a garbage-can top on the session. There's a section in the music where the musician is in his apartment trying to sleep, and he hears the garbage men in the alley. He yells down, "Who is that?" "It's the garbage man." And right at that moment, Mingus cued me. "Okay, Frankie!"

I threw the garbage-can top down, and Mingus said, "Wait a minute. Cut. Cut! Hey Frank, you didn't throw the can down on time. You're behind. Hey, do that take over." Here I was at my first recording date in New York, throwing a garbage-can lid in the RCA Victor Recording Studios! The A&R man was looking at Mingus, thinking, "What in the hell are we doing? Who is this cat? What kind of record date is this?"

Mingus' music was very accurate, and you had to get used to his method. He might not be angry with you, but he'd jump up and holler instructions at you. Mentally, if you're not geared toward receiving that kind of approach, you might take offence, which most musicians did. That's why I give Dannie Richmond so much credit for staying with Mingus for so long.

SF: Did your concept of drumming change after you'd been with Mingus?

FD: Well, sure. It changed from three giants of jazz that I was with: Sonny Rollins, Mingus, and Monk. After Mingus, I went with Sonny, when he didn't have a

piano player. The trio was Sonny, Henry Grimes, and myself. I have great admiration for Sonny as a great tenor player and for his humanity. He actually got me into the union, and he took a chance on hiring me to play with him at Birdland, when I still had three weeks to go to complete my residency requirement. When we played at Birdland, Maynard and his band had a chance to hear me.

SF: Did you get a chance to record with Sonny and Henry Grimes?

FD: No, not with the trio. I recorded a big band date with Sonny, under the direction of Oliver Nelson, on an Impulse album called *Alfie*. *Down beat* gave that album a five-star rating.

SF: Did you like playing in the big band better than the small group?

FD: Well, going with Maynard was like a dream come true, but I didn't really know if I was going to be accepted. I don't know what the guys in Maynard's band heard in my playing with Sonny's trio, but they heard something that made them say, "That's the drummer to get for our big band."

My first challenge was learning to play harder in order to get the drive I needed. And I had to sharpen up my reading. I hadn't been playing any music that required reading. In Maynard's band, everything was charts, and the two key writers at that time were Slide Hampton and Don Sebesky. They both wrote demanding arrangements.

I had to take Jake Hanna's place, and I almost didn't make it. When a drummer is reading, it's not like a horn player reading. Horn players have the music right in front of them. I had to set the music up to my side. I was nervous about learning the songs and about trying to find the charts on the bandstand. The music would fall over and I'd miss a beat. All of that tension was on the drummer. With the music set up to one side or the other, you can't give your full attention to the director; you've got to watch the director for tempo, and you've got to watch the music. But the drummer has to be the one who's playing from start to finish. Once that beat starts, the drummer's time carries the band.

Jake Hanna was in the audience the night I opened with Maynard at Birdland. The stage at Birdland was very compact. All the musicians were on top of one another. The audience was buzzing with, "Oh, my God. They've got a new drummer." We opened up with "Humbug," and I was able to get through that—more or less—without looking at the music. They say that your first impression is your greatest. I believe that, if I'd really dropped the egg on that first tune, it would have pulled my courage down.

But, after that, we started playing some standard charts with simple figures, and these were hanging me up. I had relaxed because they were standards—songs that

people danced to all the time—and I was thinking of the original melody lines. But these charts were arranged so that I should have been accenting in places that were different from the phrasing in the original melodies. Man, I was missing half of them. I wasn't looking at the charts. I heard the melody in my head, assumed where the accents should fall, and they came in just the opposite.

The whole thing came to a controversy between Maynard and the band's pianist, John Bunch. John convinced Maynard that I should stay. John later told me about it. He said, "Knowing how you were at rehearsal, and knowing that you had the motivation, will, and determination, I knew you were going to get it. I told Maynard to stick with you, and you were going to turn out to be one of the best drummers he's ever had." And that's just what Maynard did.

SF: Can you recollect the moment you felt totally comfortable in the band?

FD: It was when Ann Marie Moss joined the band with a few of her own charts. Up until that time, we'd never had a regular singer in the show, and Maynard had really only heard me play musical arrangements. Following a singer is a different concept; following a dancer is too. When I was 16, I started out playing floor shows, and I used to think that that wasn't important, but following an actor helped me relax in following the hands of a bandleader.

Ann Marie had charts of show tunes, where I had to get loud and soft—tunes like "Almost Like Being In Love" and "Taste Of Honey." When Maynard asked her how she liked my drumming, she said, "He kicked it right in there where it should be." She shook my hand and said, "Frankie, I'm glad you're here. I've had a lot of problems with drummers who get loud when they should be soft and soft when they should be loud. They don't kick it at the right places."

SF: What's your answer for learning to play loud, but not physically hurting yourself?

FD: Well, I played rhythm & blues with Big Jay McNeely. One day he took me into the cellar of a house we were staying at in Philadelphia. He had a little four-inch snare drum. It was the first one I'd ever seen. It was his own personal drum, but basically, he was a saxophone player. He took me under his wing and showed me the rhythm & blues approach to the drum, because I wasn't giving him the right beat. Big Jay showed me how to play a shuffle by turning my wrist over to the left and snapping my hand. Instead of hitting up and down, I'd snap my hand over on every second and fourth beat. That way, I learned how to play loud without killing myself.

You use the same principle with your right hand. When you hit a cymbal in a big band, you've got to hit those dynamics. Learn to snap the right hand, and you can

catch those dynamics on those cymbals. If you're not snapping, then you're using your whole arm, and it's going to tire you out. You're going to work twice as hard.

What Big Jay McNeely taught me was a big help, but I was so angry with him at the time. Everybody has his or her own personal way of approaching you. When you're young and playing something new from an era that's new to you, you sometimes think that people are jumping down your throat. And sometimes that can happen.

After I left Maynard, I went with Lena Home. I thought her husband/musical director was jumping on me, but Lena was satisfied with my work. I've worked with a long list of performers. No matter what idiom the bandleader was playing in—whether it was rock, calypso, jazz, rhythm & blues, or whether it was a trio, a singer, a dancer, or a floor show—I would always go. That's the reason I have my versatile knowledge. I never turned down any work. When I was coming up, the people who wanted to hire me would never ask, "Can you play Latin music?" They'd always say, "Hey, you don't mind playing a little Latin." I could've messed up my chances for getting the job if I'd said, "Hey, I don't know." I grew up in an era where it was taken for granted that musicians could play everything. It wasn't like it is now for certain musicians. "Man, I can't make that. That ain't my stick, baby." That's not the attitude. I'm glad I came up in a time when older musicians gave me such direction that, sometimes when I was called for a job, they didn't have to tell me what they were playing at all! They'd say, "Hey, I have a job for you. Can you make it? Wear a dark suit and a bow tie. I'll pick you up." Sometimes you wouldn't know what the hell you were playing. It might be a floor show, a juggler, shake dancers, a chorus line, or rhythm & blues. I might get a job where a guy would say, "Hey, they told me you knew how to sing." They weren't always looking for you to be Frank Sinatra or Billy Eckstine. But even if you couldn't sing lead, sometimes they'd tell you to sing background parts. And I'd have to play my drums while I was doing it. That automatically opened my eyes to versatility.

SF: After you left Lena, you rejoined Monk.

FD: Well, I took Sam Woodyard's place with Ellington, and then I went with Monk in '61, starting at The Jazz Gallery. That was with John Ore on bass and Charlie Rouse on tenor. I was with Monk for three-and-a-half years. After a while, John Ore left and Butch Warren joined the band.

SF: Monk's bassists always seemed to be restricted to straight timekeeping, more so than his drummers. Even during solos, Monk's bassists rarely broke out of a walking bass line.

FD: That's right. Monk always liked an exceptionally strong bass man and drummer. The reason you heard so much straight playing was because Monk didn't consider it a rhythm section—even though it was a quartet—unless it had the driving sound—the dynamics and the attack of a heavy, hard-driving section like those of Count Basie or Duke Ellington. That was the way Monk thought. Rhythmically, his conception was not like the average quartet. From the first beat, Monk's quartet would be just like the rhythm section of any good big band—just like Woody Herman stomping off "Woodchopper's Ball" or "Northwest Passage." We played a little louder than the average quartet, but basically we played with a lot of dynamics. We were just four pieces, but all of Monk's things would be hard-driving.

SF: Monk's music was usually called experimental, but I can hear a lot of tradition in his music. When he was relaxing at home, do you know what kind of music he enjoyed listening to?

FD: He would listen to Duke Ellington. Monk was inspired a lot by Duke. Eventually, you heard him do Monk, but if you listen especially to his ballads on the trio or solo piano albums, you'll hear Duke Ellington. Monk would also listen to Jimmy Lunceford. He thought that no one in the world could swing like Jimmy Lunceford.

SF: And Monk played with that same two-beat feel.

FD: Right. I remember one Monday night in the wintertime, Clark Terry had his big band up at The Baron. Monk ran out of the club and saw me. He said, "Hey Frank, I want you to sit in and play with Clark. Go in and swing one. Man, you can make that band swing like it's supposed to." Then Monk went back in and went up to the bandstand. He said, "Hey Clark!" Clark knew Monk. Clark said, "For those of you who are not aware, that's Thelonious Monk—The High Priest of Bop—over there hollering at me. What do you want?" Monk said, "I was just outside talking to Jimmy Lunceford and his band. They want to sit in and play one. Is that alright with you?" That was the way Monk would give you a message. He was comical, but he had a message. He said very little, but what he did say made sense. It would make you

laugh. He didn't want you to feel bad. He thought you'd get the message if he told you in a humorous way. He never even fired anyone. He used to say to me, "Frank, as long as you're swingin', man, I don't care what you do. You know what? On intermission, you can go out and kill a cat if you want to, as long as you swing when you come back and hit the stand with your drums." His point was that the main thing was to concentrate, swing, and play your instrument.

He was giving Clark Terry a message that night at The Baron. He was saying, "Look, I've been listening to you guys up there. I've been in this place for a whole hour, and you cats aren't doing anything for my ears tonight. You cats aren't really making it."

I learned so much from Monk—things that he told me about his philosophy on life that have helped me—things that I laughed about. He used to tell me that it's easier to play fast than slow. When he first told me that, I thought, "Oh no. There's no way in the world." But Monk was right. It's harder to play slow and accurate. He proved it to me. I'd been playing fast with all these groups. Man, there was no way anyone could tell me that some of the upstairs tempos I played with Maynard weren't the end all to drumming.

Monk proved it to me on my first night, when I rejoined him in 1961 at the new Five Spot. We were in the back room and Monk said, "You want to solo and play fast all the time. All drummers are that way. When you're playing fast, soloing, and throwing your sticks, you think you're really playing. In your estimation, that's the hardest. Well, you know, it's really harder to play slow than it is to play fast, and to swing and create something while you're doing it."

Monk finished talking to me, and we went up to the stand. Monk had his hat on. The place was packed. He started off the tune with an extra-slow tempo. I wondered what was going on. Charlie Rouse came in and played the ensemble; Monk jumped off the piano and started dancing during Charlie's solo. He danced over to me and said, "Okay. Get to me now. Swing it, pal." I was wondering if I was doing it. I had to concentrate so hard on the music that I couldn't look at the audience. I couldn't look at the door. I couldn't even look to see what time it was. I had to swing. I thought, "Oh, my God." I was playing slow, which was the hardest thing for me. Monk would dance up to me and say, "Okay Frankie, come on now. Let me see you swing now. Shit. I told you it ain't easy to swing when you're playing slow. I told you that, didn't I? Come on."

I said to myself, "Well, I'll just keep the time and get with John Ore. I know I'll never get a solo." Monk played his little solo after Charlie. Then he jumped up and said, "You got it. Drum solo." And John Ore was still playing the bass. Monk said,

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"It's a solo, John. Frankie's got it. Go on, Frank. Wail." And John stopped. The tempo was way down here. I thought, "What do I do?" I'd been used to playing all this fast stuff. It was so fast that, even if I'd miss a beat or lose my ideas for two measures, it wouldn't mean anything because the people wouldn't know it. But the tempo was way down. Monk said, "Drum solo. Let me hear something, Frank. Don't be *bullshittin'*!" I was trying to do things that I couldn't do. Monk said, "And keep the time. Here's the tempo. Don't play some shit that you don't know nothing about." I didn't even know how to put a paradiddle in there, because I'd never played a paradiddle that slow. And whatever I played, Monk said that he wanted it to make sense. I couldn't do any of my rudiments.

It's a different musical approach that I'd never attacked. And all these people were looking at me. Tony Williams, Tootie Heath, Clifford Jarvis—all these drummers were out there, because they'd heard me play a little on the first gig I had with Monk. They knew I'd been with Maynard and Duke. Here I was coming back with Monk. They figured that I was going to be wailing. I was thinking the same thing, and Monk put this on me. Do you know what? It not only made me look like an ass, but I also played like an ass, and it really showed me how handicapped I was. Monk sensed it had me stumped, and he got back on the piano.

When the set was over, I was so embarrassed that I went right to the back room with Monk. He pulled out a cigarette and said, "Hey, Frankie, you got a match for me?" I said, "Yeah, Monk." He said, "Hey, didn't I tell you, Frank, that it was harder to play slow than to play fast? You dig it? You thought I was going to play all that fast stuff that you did out there with Sonny and Maynard. That's cool, but drummers don't think that the stuff can swing when it's slow. They think that that shit is easy to do, you dig?"

I couldn't say a word. Do you know what it taught me? Monk used to say that, when you played that way, you got the whole scope. He said that, if you were swinging in jazz, it could go with any tempo, even a ballad. Monk said he liked to double up. He considered Lunceford to be so rhythmically great because of the two-beat. And you can hear Monk use that long meter, even on a tune like "These Foolish Things." In the second chorus, you can hear him double up the tempo in his right hand, over the two-beat/long meter in his left hand. He was showing me that the real concentration comes with the slow concept.

SF: You always played very melodic solos.
FD: That basically came from working with Monk. With Monk's conception, a drummer is almost forced to think of the drums as a melodic instrument, in order to play something and have it make sense,

too. If you're going to play something on the drums, but Monk leaves you out there by yourself, and you have to keep the beat going and the concept of the tune going so that Monk can come back in, then you've got to play melodically.

Playing with Monk was the greatest challenge of my melodic playing. For power, my greatest challenge was Maynard. For stamina, my greatest challenge was with Lionel Hampton's big band. Just let him stomp off "Flyin' Home" and that song will be going for 30 minutes. If I wasn't in 100% physical shape, I'd be biting the dust right now. I was with Hampton for seven years. There have been quite a few drummers that Hamp worked to death. Wilbur Hogan and George Jenkins come to mind. I'm not saying that those drummers were taking care of themselves physically, with proper food and rest.

When I went with Hamp, my attitude was different. I drink very little. I continued my sports: handball, paddleball, swimming, weightlifting, and skating. I do this to keep up my stamina. In Hamp's band, the drummer is a workhorse. In any Lionel Hampton set, you can look for five tunes: "Sweet Georgia Brown," "Basin Street," "Flyin' Home," "Hamp's Boogie Woogie," and "In The Mood." Those are five songs that you're going to do every night, come rain or come shine. And those are the back breakers.

SF: Did you rehearse much with Monk's quartet?

FD: I played with him for three years, and we never rehearsed. The first night Monk asked me to join his band, I was anticipating a couple of months of rehearsal, but I played my first job with him the following night. He said, "All I want you to do is swing like you're swinging tonight." He also said, "Cats come in here with their new horns—their new shiny trumpets. Usually I find that the shinier and the more beautiful the horns are, the sadder these cats sound—the less they can play. Even you, Frankie—when I first saw you play, if you had had cymbals that were sparkling and blinding me in the eye, I wouldn't have hired you. You wouldn't have had a chance to get into them to make them mellow. Look at Kenny Dorham. As much as he played, his horn needed an overhaul. It had turned green, and he *played* that horn." He was talking about musicians having a chance to age and develop with their instruments.

SF: Of all the other drummers who've played with Monk, do you have a favorite?

FD: I liked some of the things that Roy Haynes and Art Blakey did. Blakey was one of the first drummers to record with Monk on those early Prestige and Blue Note records. Some of those tunes, like "Wee See," had some swinging arrangements. Some of them aren't that popular, and some of the ones that aren't played now, to me, were more swinging than a whole gang of them that they do play. But

Blakey's style was more appropriate for Monk because he had a hard swing: a hard, definite beat. You felt Blakey's bass drum, but you didn't really hear it. It felt like he was playing constant quarter notes, but he wasn't. He was playing in a bebop style, alternating between his hands and his feet.

There are so many drummers who have forgotten what the drums are basically for. Before all the solos, the rudiments, the flashiness and the twirling sticks, which is good, the basic thing is timekeeping. That's one of the things I loved about Monk. He used to say, "Keep that time. If you're going to play something, make sure you play it within the meter." And if something comes to mind during a concert that you're not sure you can pull off, don't do it. That's why they have the woodshed. Monk said he'd rather have a drummer play strictly time than to bust in with some flash and mess up the time.

I was influenced by Art Blakey from the early Monk records, and I knew that Monk played his chords and voicings over the old swing beat that Ellington and Lunceford had. That beat was nothing new. But I had a nice compliment recently from Monk's son, who's also a drummer. I saw him at the dedication of a street in New York City to his father. He said, "Of all those cats who wailed with my dad, I always dug you. You always fed that beat and made that stuff swing."

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Transcribed by Karl Sterling



Roy Haynes: "Think Of One"

This month, *Drum Soloist* spotlights the playing of master drummer Roy Haynes. This solo was transcribed from the tune "Think Of One," off Chick Corea's *Trio Music* album (ECM-2-1232, recorded 1981).

f

R.Cym Cr.Cym
H.H. T.T.
S.D. F.T.
B.D. H.H.
w/foot TT

mf

mf ————— *ff*

Musical score for Roy Haynes' drum solo "Think Of One". The score consists of six staves of music, each representing a different drum or cymbal. The first staff shows a bass drum (B.D.) and a snare drum (S.D.). The second staff shows a ride cymbal (R.Cym) and a crash cymbal (Cr.Cym). The third staff shows a hi-hat (H.H.) and a tom-tom (T.T.). The fourth staff shows a floor tom (F.T.). The fifth staff shows a bass drum (H.H.) and a bass drum with foot (w/foot). The sixth staff shows a bass drum (H.H.) and a tom-tom (TT). The music is in 4/4 time at a tempo of 144 BPM. The score includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth-note groups, sixteenth-note groups, and triplets. The dynamics range from *f* (fortissimo) to *ff* (fuerzamente).



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Rarebell continued from page 29

as it sounds there.

SA: How do you mike your drums in the studio?

HR: I mike my bass drums with three mic's. I put one in front, one from behind, and one on the side. For my snare drum, I have two mic's—one underneath and one from the side. I have two big room mic's about five meters away. Then, I have one mic' on each tom-tom about six inches away.

SA: Do you change that for live playing?

HR: Yes. Live, there's only one microphone in the front of the bass drums. The snare has two mic's. But each of the tom-toms has one mic', and two overhead microphones for the cymbals. Also, I don't do the tuning every day anymore, because my roadie's very good. He does the tuning for me. He knows exactly what I

want. Plus, our sound engineer is a drummer himself and his assistant is a drummer, too. So, we have three drummers in the road crew, which is wonderful for me, because when I come to the gig, my drums are tuned perfectly. I just sit down and play.

SA: How do you tune your bass drums? Do you tune them the same?

HR: Yeah, low. Very deep so that I get this "poom"—a fat sound.

SA: What is your current setup as far as sizes go?

HR: I have two 26" bass drums. I have the 15" and 16" small toms. I have 18" and 20" floor toms, and I have eight cymbals, all Paiste 2002 and a 2002 hi-hat.

SA: Is the 20" tom hard to tune?

HR: It is hard to tune, but once you tune it right, it sounds great. It really gets you to your bottom end.

SA: Do you do any session work when you're not playing with The Scorpions?

HR: No session work. I just finished mixing my solo album in Los Angeles. It will come out next year. It's by Herman Ze German—like Germans speak, "Herman Ze German." It's probably going to be called *Hot Sensations*. That's the only outside work I've done from The Scorpions since I've been with them. I have people like Steve Marriot and Don Dokken singing on the album.

SA: Is there a different type of music on the solo album?

HR: Yeah. It is a mixture between heavy music and kind of, I wouldn't say black music, but it's more rhythmic oriented—towards the heavy funk side.

SA: Why did you decide to do a solo album?

HR: I have many songs that would not fit The Scorpions' style. That's why I decided to do it. I didn't want to waste those songs.

SA: That's good, because that way you don't have a lot of tension within the band. You can do it on your own. Where did you record it?

HR: I recorded all of it in a very small studio on an eight-track machine in the countryside of my hometown in Germany, Saarbrücken. A friend of mine has a studio in his basement, and that's where we recorded it. I came over here to America, and I gave Michael Boddicker the tapes to mix. He mixed them down at Total Access here in Los Angeles.

SA: You still live in your hometown, then?

HR: I moved away from there to Hannover where the rest of The Scorpions live. But right now I'm buying a house out there again.

SA: Which do you prefer, going on the road or recording?

HR: Going on the road, definitely. I don't like it in the studio because it's too sterile for me. I like playing to an audience. I need the applause of the audience. I need the reaction. In the studio, you think, "Okay, this is fantastic," but the next day you lis-

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ten back to it, and you're not happy. Then, you do it again or whatever. The studio's just too sterile for me. I'm definitely a man who likes to play live. I don't like being in the studio. I love it on the road. I really do.

SA: Your concerts have a certain theatrical flare. How much do you think about showmanship?

HR: Totally. Rudolph and I had this idea about the opening. It's similar to a spaceship landing at the beginning of the show and lifting off during my drum solo. I think about showmanship quite a lot, because visual entertainment and auditory entertainment go hand in hand for me. You have to entertain. It's not just good enough to play good music. You have to go out there and provide good showmanship, as well.

SA: How do you arrange your material?

HR: Rudolph Schenker always comes up with the basic songs, and then we make the group arrangements of those songs. Then Klaus and I sit down and write the lyrics for the songs. That's how it works with us.

SA: Where do you get your lyrical ideas?

HR: On the road. I mean, where else would you get an idea like "Rock You Like A Hurricane"?

SA: Have you always written?

HR: I've written since I was 14 years old.

SA: What got you started writing?

HR: Just the inspiration, the ideas, and having melodies and loads of things in my head. I just write them down on a piece of paper, sing them to the guitar player, and say, "Rudolph, I've had this riff in my head for days now. It goes like, 'do, do, do'—something like this." Then he'll play it, or I sit down at the piano and just play the notes.

SA: I take it that there's a lot of your material on your solo album?

HR: That's all my material. I wanted to get Dave Cooper, a brilliant guitar player, on the album. He lives in London. We wrote it together; I wrote all the lyrics on it and produced it. It was quite fun.

SA: How long did it take you to do all that?

HR: I wrote them during the last four years, on and off. Finally, it's ready and I will release it.

SA: Did you find that, since you did it over such a long period of time, you may have

gone back to something you already recorded and said, "Oh, I can do something different on that"?

HR: Yeah, yeah. That's exactly what I found out over the years. Listening back to it, I say, "Oh, I can do this and that . . . this, this, this and that." I finally said, "This is the time to stop now. It's going to come out, and then I'll make the next one." It was always a question for me of not having the time to do all those things.

When there was time off the road, I took holidays and just got my body back into shape. But I can't lie around for too long. After eight days, I get really bored. That's why I started working.

SA: What's your schedule like with The Scorpions? Take a typical year.

HR: Well, let's take last year. We were in the studio until January 20, finishing *Love At First Sting*. I left at six o'clock in the morning, and I played that same night in Birmingham, England, starting last year's world tour of *Love At First Sting*. The band did not rehearse; we just went on stage and played. It was a horrible show [laughs], and all the British press was there the first night.

Then we played three weeks in England, three weeks in France, took two weeks off, and then we played March, April, May, June, and July in the States. We played two weeks in Japan in August, then came back here to play another two weeks, and finished in the beginning of September. We took off five weeks, and we started again in October and played until December 4. We took off the whole month of December and started again in January in South America, going back to Japan for eight more days in February. That's the end of that tour.

SA: What do you do next, record?

HR: Make the next album. As you can see, there is not much time left for solo things. That's why it took me four years.

SA: There's not much time for anything, including a social life.

HR: No, there isn't.

SA: That's got to be hard to deal with.

HR: Well, that's why you lose all your girlfriends. [laughs]

SA: Do you write your lyrics in German and then translate them?

HR: No, in fact, you know, I dream in English nowadays. It depends. I've been

here now since March. When I go back to Germany and I hear German people speak German around me the whole time, I get back into that thinking. But now in the States, I'm the only Scorpion over here. I don't have anybody to talk to in German anymore. I hear English all day around me, so I start thinking in English.

SA: What instruments do you play on your solo album?

HR: Just the drums. I'm not a good enough guitar player to put on the guitars. I got people like Dave Cooper to do that, and he's a brilliant player, I can assure you. I got excellent singers. I got the best singers I could find for each song. When you do an album, sometimes the song is not suitable for a singer. So on my solo

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album, I made sure that each song was suitable to that singer. There's a ballad on there that is sung by Steve Marriot called "Having A Good Time." There's another ballad on there that fits Don Dokken's voice better. It's called "I'll Say Goodbye," and he sings on that one. There are songs done by Charlie Huhn, who sang with a band called Victory before he signed with Ted Nugent. There's a song called "Junk Funk," which is done by Jack Russell from the Great White Band. I chose the singers individually. I said to myself, "Why sing if those people sing better than I do."

I saw myself producing my own songs, which I'd written a long time ago. I just wanted to hear them the way I heard them inside my head. So, I picked different musicians. I got the bass player of Ratt to play four songs on my album. I have good combinations of interesting musicians on there.

SA: One of the luxuries about a solo album is that you get to work with so many different people.

HR: Yeah, that's right. That's why I wanted to do it. I just wanted to have an experience outside The Scorpions. We will never split because the marriage has been for too long now. We still get on tremendously. In fact, we get on better than before.

SA: Do you have ambitions in music outside of The Scorpions?

HR: Yeah, oh definitely. In the future, I'm probably going to go into producing. I really had good fun producing my album myself. I could experiment with different drum sounds, you know, and make sure that they sounded the way I heard the drums. I like producing a lot.

SA: You like producing more than you like recording in the studio, then?

HR: Oh, yes. I mean I like recording, as well. What I'd like to do is, maybe, if the drummer isn't good enough, I'll play the drums myself.

SA: Where do you see yourself at age 60?

HR: Age 60? Well, if I'm still alive, I'll probably be involved in video or movies in some way, not necessarily as an actor, but definitely somehow. As I said, I'd like to start now with getting into producing. So, that's probably what it's going to lead to.

SA: What do you think about music videos?

HR: That's going to be the future. That's why I want to be involved in it.

SA: When you do videos, does the band think of the ideas for the video, or how does that work?

HR: The band has a great say about the videos. We always talk with the director about what we want to do. We tell him our ideas, he writes down his ideas, then we work something out, and then we do it together.

SA: It must be hard to find someone you like. It's sort of like finding a producer to record with all over again.

HR: It's very hard to make it visually.

SA: Speaking of video and record production, there seems to be quite a difference in the production between *Black Out* and *Love At First Sting*. *Sting* seems to have a cleaner kind of sound, especially with the drums.

HR: Yeah. Well, *Black Out* was an album where I went in, and the producer and the engineer taped the whole drumkit. On *Love At First Sting*, I nearly killed them both, because they tried the same thing again. I said, "No tapes." I would not record unless they had the sound I wanted. I said, "You can get this sound without tape." So, we fiddled about and fiddled about, and we got the sound without tape. I, personally, like the sound much better on *Love At First Sting* than on *Black Out*. It's clearer.

SA: I guess you always have that war between the engineers and the drummers.

HR: Well, not any more. Now the engineer I was working with in Germany realizes that we can get a sound without taping the drums. I said at the start that the drums sounded great in the actual room where we were standing, so I couldn't see any reason why they shouldn't sound great again on tape.

SA: Do you always record at the same studio?

HR: Yes.

SA: What kind of surfaces are in the studio?

HR: The room I have is like a room with four stone walls. I use a little wooden stage, and that's all there is to it. It's like a big garage.

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SA: Really hard surfaces.

HR: That's right. It's kind of a hard sound.

SA: On a personal level, what are your plans or desires for the future?

HR: To be happy.

SA: Do you think that you'll be traveling as much?

HR: No. I don't think that we have to travel as much anymore as we used to in the last five years. I think, in the future, people will come to us. I mean, instead of doing, let's say, 150 concerts in the States, in the future, we will do 50.

SA: Just hit the major markets.

HR: That's right. Instead of doing 50 concerts in Europe, we can do 20. That way it will be less live playing. That way we will have more time for our personal lives.

SA: That will be a refreshing change.

HR: After 20 years on the road, yeah.

SA: You might find that, after a while, you miss the road.

HR: But if I really would miss playing terribly, I would just phone up my agent and say, "Come on, book a tour for me for about two months. We'll go to the clubs and small halls. I just want to get out there." At the moment, I don't miss the road because I've been out there for eight months. I'm quite happy to have this little break right now. Then again, I know myself. In about two weeks from now, I know I will have to go out again.

SA: Would you describe yourself as a person who has a lot of energy?

HR: Yeah, I normally have a lot of energy.

SA: Do you get a lot of young drummers coming up to you on the road asking all sorts of drum questions?

HR: Yes, all the time. Drummers seem to be the people who are very interested in small things, like "How did you get this?" and "What bass drums do you use?"

SA: They really get into the technical aspect of it.

HR: Yeah, and that's good.

SA: Do you notice a difference in the American kids who come up to you from the people in Europe or Japan?

HR: No. Drummers are the same everywhere. They want to know the same things in every country around the world. There is a difference in the audiences. American kids are the wildest in the whole world. We love America. We really do. America is rock 'n' roll.

SA: You've played in big arenas. Do you like that better than small clubs?

HR: Yeah, because it's not as hot as a small club. But sometimes it can get really hot because of the lights in the big arenas, especially when my drumkit goes up in the air, which makes me very close to the lights.

SA: Since the music is so loud, do you have any problems with hearing loss?

HR: Pardon? [laughs] I'm always doing this joke. I say to people, "Did you hear that the best drummer in the world lost his hearing?" They ask, "What's his name?" I say, "What?" [laughs] No, I haven't lost

any of my hearing, and my monitor systems are loud.

SA: Where are your monitors placed?

HR: They are about a meter behind me. I mean, it's loud. I like to feel my drums going right through my body.

SA: Your live sound is so clean that you can hear everything so well. How long have you worked with your engineer?

HR: Eight years. He's been with us from day one. He knows me inside and out. He is a great guy, too. His name is Achim Schulze.

SA: It sounds as though you have a good crew.

HR: Oh, yeah. We always work with the same people. We have the best people. I really love everybody. I miss everybody. I look forward to going back to Europe, now.

SA: Do you have any advice for young musicians?

HR: They should be aware of not signing away their publishing too fast. Whatever they do, they should always talk to a lawyer about it.

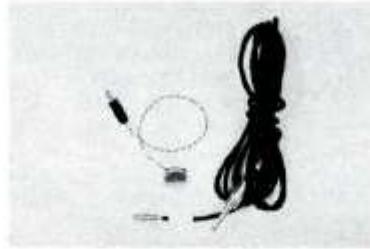
SA: How about drummers specifically?

HR: Well, if you really want to achieve your goals and your dreams, there's an old saying, "Practice makes perfect." That's what it is. But if you don't have the talent, you can practice as much as you want, and it won't make any difference. But practice is always the key.



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Defining Terms

I think a lot of the mystery surrounding electronic percussion is due to the fact that most drummers are not familiar with the terminology associated with this new field. With that in mind, I thought I'd devote this article to defining some of the key terms a drummer is likely to run across when getting involved in electronics for the first time. Please note that I have put these definitions into brief, layman's terms. The definitions I've used are tailored to the subject in question, and may have slightly different meanings in other contexts.

1. *A to D converter*. (Not to be confused with A.C. to D.C. converter.) A to D stands for Analog to Digital converter. A device or circuit used to change an analog input voltage or signal into binary or digital code for memory storage in a digital processor.

2. A.C. Abbreviation for Alternating Current of electricity. Common household electricity is A.C., which means that the current flows back and forth between positive and negative, or "alternates."

3. *A.C. to D.C. converter*. Usually a small box, external of the unit or device being powered, containing a small electrical transformer which transforms—or "converts"—the A.C. current to a set D.C. voltage (6, 9, or 12 volts, etc.).

4. *Analog*. In this application, "analog" means electronically produced (synthesized) sounds, as opposed to digitally produced sounds, which are real sounds recorded through computer memory.

5. *Audio output*. The jack or plug where the output or sound produced by an electronic device is coming from.

6. *Circuit board*. The panel or plate to which electronic parts are attached. In some cases, these are removable and/or interchangeable in order to change the function of the electronic device in question.

7. *Crash*. Each instrument has its own type of crash, but basically, when a system crashes, it is due to a hardware breakdown or a software malfunction. A crash is when a system is left inoperable or is locked in a certain mode or function.

8. *D.C.* Abbreviation for Direct Current, meaning that the electricity flows in one uniform direction.

9. *Decibel (or dB)*. A unit of measurement for gain in voltage or sound. What is commonly known as "volume" is measured in decibels.

10. *Digital*. "Digital Recording" is the recording of a specific sound on computer

memory, as opposed to analog recording (see Analog).

11. *Dynamic*. Capable of expressive qualities in volume in relation to force or impact or trigger signal.

12. *EPROM*. Erasable Programmable Read Only Memory. Used to describe a type of I.C. chip (see I.C.).

13. *Equalizer (or EQ)*. A device used to modify frequency response.

14. *Function*. A certain characteristic, purpose, or action.

15. *Gain*. "Gain" equals current or voltage amplification.

16. *Hardware*. Any piece of equipment, electronic part, box, or assembly used for processing data.

17. *Headroom*. The region between the maximum acceptance level of input and the actual input voltage.

18. *Hertz*. The unit used to measure sound frequency. One hertz is equal to one cycle per second.

19. *I.C.* Abbreviation for Integrated Circuit. An electronic component or logic circuit etched on a tiny crystal, made of ceramic or other semi-conductive material.

20. *Kilohertz (or K-hertz or K.H.Z.)*. One kilohertz equals 1,000 cycles per second.

21. *Module*. An independent unit that constitutes either a self-contained apparatus or a particular unit of a total structure, whether it be structural or electronic.

22. *Pad*. The striking surface of an electronic drum or triggering object meant to be struck.

23. *Peak (or Peak Power or Peak Voltage)*. The maximum value reached by an A.C. voltage, 1/2 cycle or pulsed voltage.

24. *Pitch*. Frequency or set tone of harmonic resonance. In terms of audible sounds, whether a note sounds "high" or "low."

25. *Port*. The opening or entry channel for receiving either a physical hookup (such as a 1/4" phone plug, XLR connector, or mini-plug) or for receiving data (such as the slot for a floppy disk, or the receiving cavity for cassettes or RAM cartridges).

26. *Potentiometer (or Pot)*. A variable resistor used to restrict the flow of current or a specific signal. A volume-control knob is a typical potentiometer.

27. *Pre-amp*. An amplifier operated ahead of a main amplifier to boost the input signal to an acceptable voltage. Also, any signal processing such as EQ or other effects is done at the pre-amp stage.

28. *Program*. A list of called instructions in a set routine or function.

29. *Programmable*. Having the ability to be programmed.

30. *PROM*. Programmable Read Only Memory. A type of I.C. that can be used for one-time-only programming—non-erasable.

31. *RAM*. Random Access Memory. A memory source that has been preprogrammed with a variety of data that can be selected at random by the user—not user-programmable or erasable.

32. *Real drum*. The term used to describe a true, acoustic percussion device.

33. *R.M.S. voltage*. The effective voltage or "Root Mean Square" value of A.C. voltage.

34. *ROM*. Read Only Memory. A type of memory source that has been preprogrammed with a single specific piece of data—not user-programmable or erasable.

35. *Signal-to-noise ratio*. The ratio or percentage of true signal to signal distortion and/or inherent noise.

36. *Software*. Software is basically a program or programs used in a system, device, or instrument. The term is also applied loosely to the products that are used to contain those programs, such as floppy disks.

37. *Synthesized* (pertaining to sound). The mock reproduction of an instrument or analog sound signal.

38. *Terminology*. A technical name or a special term used in a specific subject. What you are reading now.

39. *Touch sensitive*. The characteristic or ability to respond to pressure or impact at a parallel. With "touch sensitive" pads, an electronic drumkit will produce a louder sound when struck harder, and a softer sound when struck more softly. In some cases, pitch and other variable sound characteristics can also be modified by touch sensitivity.

40. *Transducer*. A device which converts motion into an electrical signal. Transducer contacts or crystals (Piezio is a common crystal) are what are typically found in most pads or electronic drums.

41. *Trigger*. A device or signal that activates or "triggers" a certain item, effect, or characteristic.

42. *User*. The person or persons operating, using, or controlling a certain device. For our purposes—you.

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Considering Max Roach's prestige and list of accomplishments, no one would think less of him if he took things a little easier. After all, most of his contemporaries (Art Blakey and Elvin Jones, for example) are still basically playing the same type of music that they've always played. That's not to imply that they're merely doing nostalgia acts, but just that their major innovations are behind them. Max, however, has never stopped exploring the possibilities of his chosen instrument, and this album presents two of those explorations.

Side one is devoted to "Survivors," which combines Peter Phillips' classical-style framework with Roach's improvisation. The string quartet's part was, obviously, composed, and it provides the structure within which Roach is free to improvise. And yet the final result sounds as if it is the strings who are responding to Max's solo statement with their short interjections.

Side two features six of Roach's compositions for solo drumset. These are not improvisations but, rather, well thought-out, composed pieces that could be used to convince even the most diehard cynic that the drumset is indeed a musical instrument. It is also clear why Roach refers to his

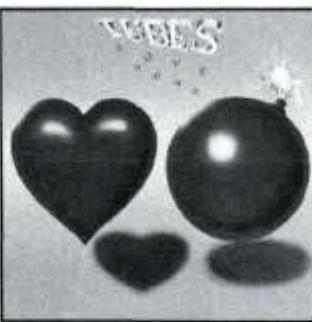
drumset as a "multiple percussion set," as many of the compositions sound similar to something that a percussion ensemble might play. This album is a must for anyone who is interested in exploring the potential of the drumset. —*Rick Mattingly*



WEATHER REPORT—*Sporin' Life*. Columbia FC-39908. J. Zawinul: kybd. W. Shorter: sx. Omar Hakim: dr. V. Bailey: bs. Mino Cinelu: perc. *Corner Pocket / Indiscretions / Hot Cargo / Confians / Pearl On The Half-Shell / What's Going On / Face On The Barroom Floor / Ice-Pick Willy*.

Omar Hakim seems to be all over the place lately. He keeps turning up on all sorts of recordings, and there's no wonder why; he can play. *Sporin' Life* displays some dynamic and confident drumming from Hakim. There is a sense of freedom and creativity in the performances of these tunes: a feeling that is normally reserved for live performances, and which is many times lost in the studio.

The album opens with "Corner Pocket," which is a spirited tune that Hakim really shines on. He is solid throughout, and his fills are tastefully executed. Other noteworthy tracks include the Latin-esque "Hot Cargo," the funky "Pearl On The Half-Shell," and the electronic "Ice-Pick Willy." There is a lot of good information on these tunes. This album also marks Mino Cinelu's recording debut with W.R., and his percussive techniques add greatly to the compositions. —*William F. Miller*



TUBES—*Love Bomb*. Capitol ST-12381. R. Andersen: bs. M. Cotten: kybd. Prairie Prince: dr. B. Spooner: gtr and vcl. R. Steen: gtr. F. Waybill: vcl. V. Welnick: kybd. *Piece By Piece / Stella / Come As You Are / One Good Reason / Bora Bora 2000 / LoveBomb / Night People / Say Hey / Eyes / Muscle Girls / Theme From A Wooly Place / For A Song / Say Hey (Part 2) / Feel It / Night People (Reprise)*.

The Tubes seem to have a problem: Since their live shows are somewhat controversial and normally border on being a "spectacle," the general public is taken in by the show, and the fans don't realize the high standard of musicianship the band actually has. For example, take the drumming. Prairie Prince is one of the finest drummers in rock today. He combines a solid rock-drumming nique (with both hands and feet), a touch of funk, and an excellent drum sound (not the typical plodding-vanilla bore of many rockstars). The result: a drummer you should check out.

On *Love Bomb*, Prairie's performance works to enhance the songs. He doesn't overplay; he gets away with as much as possible without disrupting the flow. The careful listener will catch some of the subtleties in Prairie's playing. Side one contains more commercial-oriented material, with the exception being the percussion-drum interlude "Bora Bora 2000." The rest of the material on the first side is good commercial rock, especially the title track, which contains an exciting instrumental section.

Side Two could be considered more "Tubes-ian," with its production effects and comic overtones. One interesting point is that all of the songs on this side segue into one another, without a break. The feel changes, but the tempo remains the same—an interesting idea. If intelligent rock drumming is what you like, this one's for you. —*William F. Miller*



GEORGE ADAMS-DON PULLEN QUARTET—*Live At Village Vanguard*. Soul Note SN 1094. G. Adams: tn sx. D. Pullen: pno. C. Brown: bs. Dannie Richmond: dr. *The Necessary Blues / Solitude / Intentions / Diane*.

This record was made the way a jazz album should be made: live, in a club. The musicians are interacting with each other, and there's a certain excitement that comes through—even when listened to in a rather cold room. Sure, there are little things that could be criticized: The piano is somewhat out of tune, the drummer tends to be a little too busy at times, the soloists sometimes run out of inspiration before the end of the solo—but that's all part of a live jazz gig. It is balanced by the energy of the session, the excitement of discovery (for both the musicians and the audience), and the excellent music that results when the inspiration clicks in and the explorations lead to that special place that overrehearsed studio sessions never get to. Oh yeah, Dannie Richmond plays very well, too. If you're not familiar with his spirited, mainstream style, then you should definitely check him out. —*Richard Egart*

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I.C.

Hackensack, NJ

A. "Better" is a relative term; better than what? If you mean better than with a felt beater, the answer is: possibly. You will most certainly play louder, because the harder beaters produce more attack, and the heavier weight tends to make you throw the beater into the head with more force. On the other hand, until you get used to that extra weight, a heavier beater can slow down your playing. In some cases, the weight of a beater can affect the balance and overall feel of a pedal, throwing off the action that you've become accustomed to. This can generally be overcome with some pedal adjustments and some practice, but unless you need the additional attack and volume, the need to go through all of that is questionable.

Q. I have a set of Simmons drums and have noticed that the rubber covers of the pads have started to come loose. How can I prevent them from coming off? Also, how can I clean the plastic "shells"?

M.R.

Gainesville, FL

A. Christopher Ralles, Simmons product specialist, recommends that a high-quality plastic polish be used to clean Simmons plastic shells. He suggests Novus Plastic Polish #1 for cleaning and Novus Plastic Polish #2 for removing light surface scratches. Follow the directions on the bottle.

As for regluing rubber playing surfaces, Chris recommends a floor tile cement. Peel back the loose area and spread a thin layer of cement evenly on the wood. Then press the rubber to the wood and apply pressure for about ten hours to ensure a tight, secure bond and maximum pad sensitivity. (He figures the weight of 12 to 15 copies of Modern Drummer will be enough pressure to do the job.)

Q. I recently switched my size of stick from a 5B to a 2S. I like the extra length the 2S gives me, but there is a small problem. I play all kinds of music, and even though I find the 2S good for rock 'n' roll, it is a little heavy for lighter music. I was wondering if there is a certain brand of sticks that might offer different weights in one certain size of stick?

B.B.

Owatonna, MN

A. Although you didn't mention the brand of stick you have been using, by checking the various drumstick catalogs for their size designations, we assume that you've been using Calato (Regal Tip or JoJo) sticks. The length of their 2S stick is 17". You mention that you like the length of the stick, but find the stick a bit heavy for multipurpose use. No other company makes a stick in a 17" length, other than a marching stick similar in size and weight to the Calato 2S. However, Calato itself makes a line of sticks called Saul Goodman models. They are, in fact, also 17" long, and were designed by Mr. Goodman for Calato as multipurpose, symphonic/concert drumsticks. They come with a wood tip, and are made of maple, which is a bit softer and lighter than the standard Calato sticks made of hickory. The diameter of the Saul Goodman sticks falls somewhere between a 5B and a 2B, so after working with 2S sticks, you should find them lighter and easier to work with by comparison.

While the Saul Goodman models are regular catalog items, they are not as widely stocked by drum stores as are the other Calato models. If you have difficulty finding them at your local music dealer, you can ask the dealer to order you a pair to try, or contact the Calato Company directly at 4501 Hyde Park Blvd., Niagara Falls, NY 14305.

Q. I have been playing snare drum in my school band, and am thinking about taking up the entire drumset. How many pieces should I get? What brand? What kind of hardware? I intend to play rock and other contemporary music.

D.C.

Louisville, KY

A. While there is no absolute answer to any of your questions, there are some guidelines to follow. The advice of most teachers regarding how large a set to start on is: Start small and build up as your ability increases. This will help you in the budget department, as well as give you a chance to appreciate and develop the basic skills necessary for drumset coordination before you launch into multiple-drum assaults. All you really need to begin with is a bass drum, a snare, a hi-hat, a ride cymbal, and perhaps a tom-tom or two. These will be enough to work on four-limb coordination and independence, as well as provide you with the opportunity to apply the single-drum sticking skills you now have to a complete drumkit. In order to perform more musically, a crash cymbal or two and an additional tom or two are desirable additions.

The brand you should choose depends on your budget and on what you want in a drum. A quality name generally is backed up by a warranty, and parts are available for repairs or future expansion. However, the price tag is higher than that of a "budget brand" kit. While perhaps not providing the highest quality in sound or durability, the budget kits offer a low initial cost, and perhaps more importantly, provide you with the opportunity to see if you really want to play the drumset before you invest a lot of money.

With hardware, the considerations include budget (again), quality, and function. Get good, solid hardware that will hold up, but don't buy massive stands for a lightweight, budget kit (unless you're already sure that you'll be stepping up to higher-quality, heavier drums quite soon.). Make sure that tom, cymbal and hi-hat stands can all provide enough height for a comfortable setup. The one purchase you should not skimp on is the bass drum pedal; get the very best one that you can afford. Look for a smooth, quick and quiet action, with both power and responsiveness. The operation of the bass drum pedal can often affect all the other playing you do on a kit, so it's important to be completely comfortable with your pedal when you are just beginning to study drumset playing.

Q. I recently sat in at a jazz gig and was really impressed with the drummer's Abex flat ride cymbal. It was a 20" medium, I believe, and to my taste it felt and sounded better than any of the Zildjian or Paiste flat rides I have tapped on at the drum shops. Do you know if anyone still carries these, or how to contact the company? I believe the cymbal was Italian-made.

D.B.

Seattle, WA

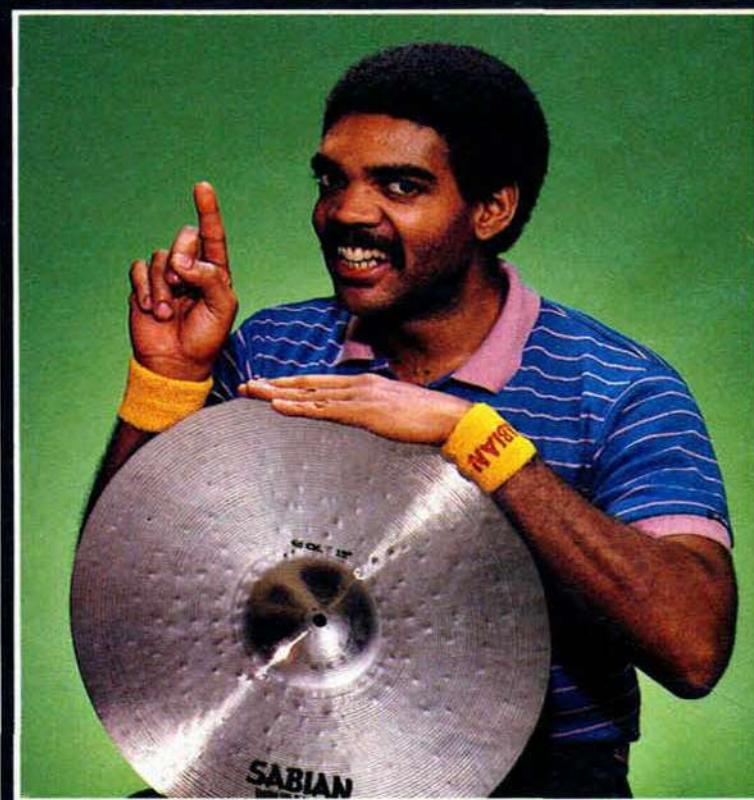
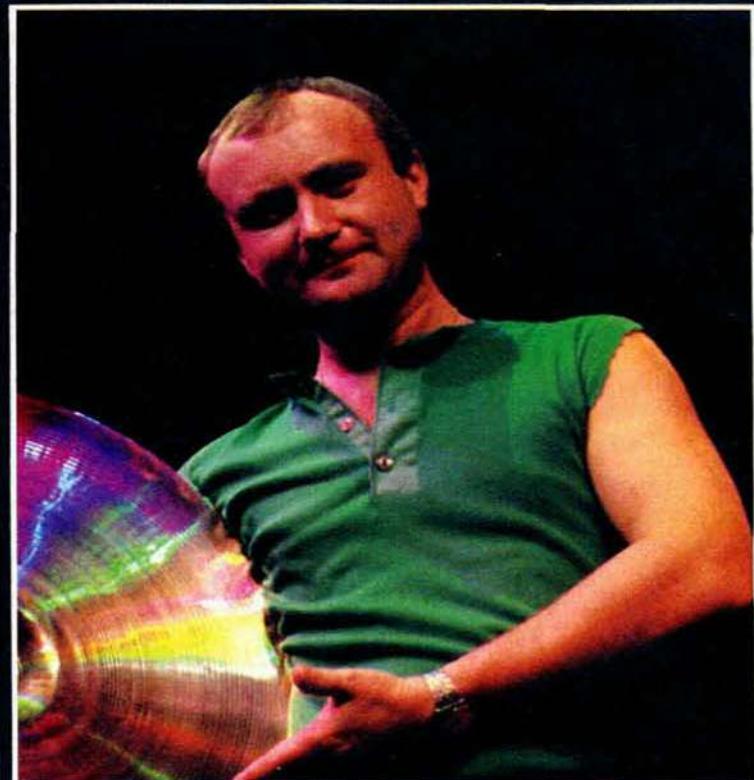
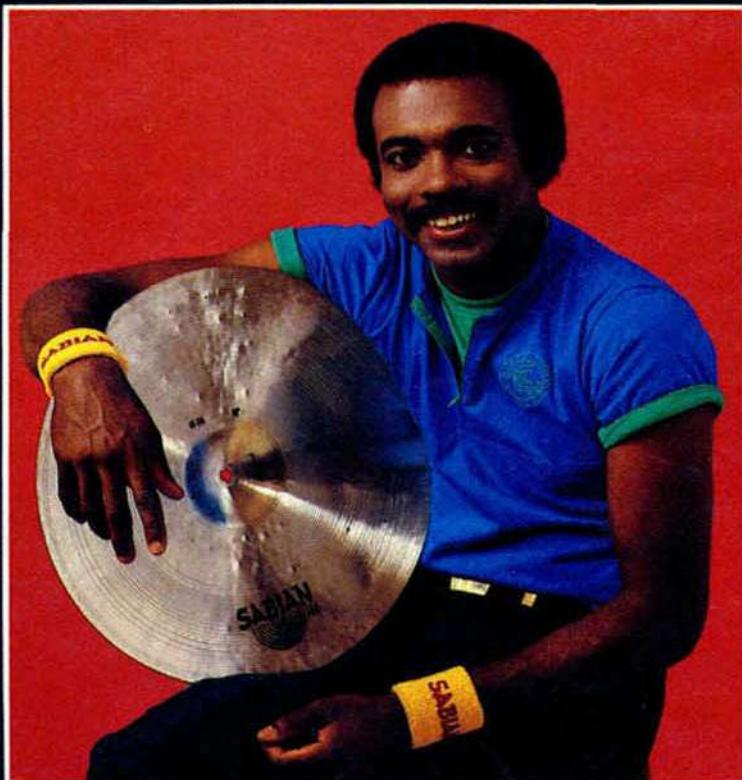
A. You are correct in your belief; Abex cymbals were manufactured in Italy by the Tosco cymbal company, for distribution by the C. Meisel Music Company under the Abex name. In December of 1983, C. Meisel phased out their percussion marketing operation in favor of electronics, and the Abex cymbals went off the market. However, the company does have a certain amount of cymbals left in stock, and would enjoy hearing from you in regard to their purchase. You may contact Bob Pinto, Sales Manager, C. Meisel Music Co. Inc., 32 Commerce St., Springfield, NJ 07081, or call (201)379-5000. Since the cymbals have not been off the market very long, it is also possible that some drum shops across the country might have some in stock as well; check the ads in MD and try corresponding with a few. A third alternative might be to check the current offerings of the Tosco company being marketed in the U.S. by Sabian.



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SABIAN

UPDATE

Phil Collins isn't the only drummer who sings as well as drums. One of last year's biggest hits was Night Ranger's "Sister Christian," which was sung by the group's drummer, **Kelly Keagy**. On Night Ranger's recently released third album, *7 Wishes*, Keagy once again demonstrates his dual talents as a drummer and a vocalist. According to Kelly, performing in both roles came very naturally to him. "When I first became interested in playing drums, I was also a big imitator of all the rock stars at the time, like Elvis and The Beatles. I tried to copy them, and when I started to pick up on drums, singing was a part of that."

Keagy feels that his singing gives more depth to his drumming. "I think it's important for drummers to develop their ears to things other than the drums. I know some drummers who play in bands, and half the time, they don't know what the other members are playing; they just hear themselves. It's important to develop your ears to things such as the melody. I was such a great fan of all the melodies that were going on back in the '60s that I developed my ears really well to that, in addition to the drumming." Keagy also believes that, for songs in which he performs exclusively as a drummer, his experiences as a singer help him better complement the singing of Night Ranger's other lead vocalist, Jack Blades.

Singing has also had a direct effect on Keagy's drumming style. "When I'm singing, I always simplify," he explains. He wasn't always into playing simply, however. "When I was 21 or so, I was listening to Tony Williams' Lifetime and fusion. I was really into it and wanted to learn all those chops. But the bands I was working with were playing R&B grooves, and Billy Cobham licks didn't fit in with that. So now, when I need a charge, I listen to those records and practice those rudiments, but I don't necessarily apply them to what I'm doing with Night Ranger."

When performing live, Keagy does most of his singing from behind the drumset. "The drums are all the way up front turned sideways towards the center of the stage. When I'm singing, I turn to the left and sing to the audience that way." Kelly has no trouble at all playing and singing at the same time. "There are certain rhythms in vocalizing that complement the drums," he says. "A lot of times, Phil Collins will accent the vocal line and be singing the same rhythm." And does Keagy identify somewhat with Collins, who also performs a dual role? "Oh yeah," Keagy agrees, "he's the best!" —*Susan Hannum*

Alan Kerr is currently on the road with Ronnie Milsap. Presently, they'll be appearing at some of the many fairs that this time of year has to offer. Then it's back to the variety of gigs Milsap does, through November.

It's that variety that Alan enjoys so much. "Being on the road can sometimes become a job, just like anything else. It is exciting because we're not stuck in one place all the time, though, and we meet lots of interesting people. We play a lot of big halls and small places too, so it's a nice mixture of concerts. We'll play a large club, like Billy Bob's in Fort Worth, and then turn around and play the Ohio State Fair with 35,000 to 40,000 people. It's quite diverse, so it's never boring.

"Fortunately, with Ronnie there's a great diversity of music, too. He does rock 'n' roll, R&B, soul, and country, and he does it all well. His roots are in R&B, which is where my heart is, and he's classically trained, so he even does a little classical thing. As for the music end of it, it's never boring. The reason it can become a 9-to-5 type of feeling is because you're on the road, and you have to spend a lot of off

time sitting in a hotel. You do whatever you can to entertain yourself, and then you play. The show is what keeps you going, while the traveling is tiring. To be able to do something you love is great, but unfortunately, like anything else, if you do it long enough, you slip into a job-type feeling. Then you pinch yourself and say, 'Hey, I'm doing what I love to do the most, and I'm being paid for it. This is great!'

While Alan does a smattering of Milsap's recording, he accepts the fact that he is primarily Milsap's live drummer. "I was hired to play on the road. I've done a lot of session work, so it's not like I don't have any experience, but I really haven't played on any of the big things. When it comes down to doing an album, they want to have people in there who they've worked with in the studio before. Time is always of the utmost importance. It's just a matter of having the chance to get in there and show people that you can do it. I'm not too worried about it." Recently, in fact, Alan played on Jimmy C. Newman's latest album, and has been getting into some production work. —*Robyn Flans*

Congratulations to **Larrie Londin**, who won the Association Of Country Music's Drummer Of The Year award. Needless to say, Larrie has been keeping busy with the current projects of such artists as Barbara Mandrell, Brenda Lee (with collaboration from Cyndi Lauper), Lee Greenwood, Ronnie Milsap, and Linda Clifford (which was produced by **Bobby Daniels**). In June, Larrie was in England recording with the Everly Brothers, and he is now touring with them through September. **Jerry Marotta** on Marshall Crenshaw's latest, as well as having just finished a few months in England working with Paul McCartney. **Michael White** is now a member of Maze, and in the process of European and U.S. tours. **Bobby Chouinard** (along with Alan St. John) has been producing Scarlet Rivera. **Marvin Kanarek** is on an EP for Jerry Breiner, Walter Egan tracks, and the Bone Daddies' EP, as well as having programmed the *Linn 9000* for a McDonalds jingle. **Rick Marotta and Stan Lynch** on Eric Martin's latest LP. **John Ferraro** doing some local gigs with Mike Hamilton, as well as studio work with Dean Crawford. On the heels of stints with Badfinger and New Language, **Jay Schellen** has joined Hurricane, who is currently recording. In June, **Danny Gottlieb** and **Airto** finished a recording project with Al DiMeola. During the second week of this month, Danny will be working with John McLaughlin, and on the first of September, he begins a 12-week tour of Europe, the U.S., and Japan with DiMeola. **Narada Michael Walden** recently released

his debut Warner Bros. album, *The Nature Of Things*. Concurrent with the completion of his album, he has been working as producer, arranger, and composer for upcoming new releases by Aretha Franklin, Larry Graham, and Clarence demmons. **Kevan McKenzie** has been keeping busy with a variety of films including *Woman Of Wilmar*, *Undergrads*, *One Night Only*, and *Les & Bes*. He continues to work on the syndicated T.V. series *Bizarre*, as well as on albums with such artists as Frank Mills, Tim Ryan, Tony Kosinec, and Hugh Marsh. He and fellow musician Jimmy Dale have recently written a data-base computer program for musicians to keep account of job records and have been working on marketing it. **Jerry Carrigan** on John Denver's latest release. **Mike Porter** on second leg of Emmylou Harris' tour, while **Keith Knudsen** resumes responsibility with Southern Pacific, the group of which he is a member; look for their debut album on Warner Bros. **Myron Grombacher** is on Robert Tepper's recent release, as well as Pat Benatar's upcoming fall release. Look for Myron on tour with Benatar in the fall. **Tom Donlinger** recently toured with Van Morrison. **Les DeMerle** has been appointed national drum chairman for the National Association of Jazz Educators. **Vincent Dee** recently appeared on TV show *The Stooge Tube* with Jump 'N' The Saddle Band. The group has also performed recently in support of country star Gary Morris. —*Robyn Flans*





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D R U M S T I C K S

INDUSTRY HAPPENINGS

ZILDJIAN DAY IN DALLAS



Louie Bellson and Roli Garcia, Jr.



Simon Phillips



Tony Williams



Vinnie Colaiuta

The Avedis Zildjian Cymbal Company recently held another in its series of "Zildjian Days," featuring performances by some of the leading drummers in the profession. The site was the Majestic Theater in downtown Dallas, Texas. The audience was comprised mainly of enthusiastic young drummers, eager to see and hear the playing of the exceptional artists that the Zildjian Company had assembled.

The event opened with a performance by a quartet from North Texas State University, featuring Dan Wojciechowski, a winner of *down beat* magazine's Student Music Award

this year, on drums.

Tommy Aldridge was the first of the name artists to appear, and he opened with a "bang"—literally—as he demonstrated his brand of power rock soloing. His playing featured his excellent double-bass work, along with bare-handed techniques. Tommy fielded questions pertaining to his footwork, his reason for keeping all of his cymbals level—a personal trademark by now—and details of his recent career.

Kenwood Dennard then astounded the audience with his one-man "Meta-Rhythmic Orchestra" performance. Kenwood performs on a set com-

prised of 30 or more drums, and percussion devices, along with two keyboard synthesizers, electronic processing devices, and a headset microphone for vocals! The kit itself took over six hours to assemble, and Kenwood's amazing facility on the finished product delighted the crowd.

Kenwood was followed by the highly popular Vinnie Colaiuta. Vinnie demonstrated polyrhythmic techniques for both soloing and time patterns, as well as sticking techniques and hand/foot coordination for fills and funk patterns. Combining his acoustic kit with Simmons equipment, Vinnie played along with a sequencer pre-programmed with various rhythm patterns, and later invited the North Texas State rhythm section to join him for a series of jams.

Jazz great Tony Williams changed the tone a bit, demonstrating melodic jazz feels in contrast to the power rock and fusion-esque playing that had gone before. He also discussed the influences of past drummers on his playing, the value of the traditional grip in terms of left-versus-right individual characteristics, and the tuning of the drums. In response to questions from the audience, Tony demonstrated how he played very fast ride tempos, how the bass drum pedal could be played with control and speed, and how he uses brushes.

Simon Phillips followed with an enthusiastic display of large-

kit playing. He demonstrated multiple rhythmic concepts and musical patterns, all with incredible speed and precise execution. Simon discussed his work with Pete Townsend, Frank Zappa, Jimmy Page, Jeff Beck, and others, then quickly outlined his cymbal choices, before returning to the kit to play again.

The event was capped with the appearance of Louie Bellson, who proceeded to treat the audience to a display of the big-band-style solo pyrotechnics for which he is famous, incorporating rudimental sticking, brush work, jingle-stick and double-stick playing, and of course, the *original* double-bass setup. Many of the youthful drummers in the audience knew Louie only by reputation, and many were totally unfamiliar with his style of soloing. But at the conclusion of his performance, the entire audience rose as one to cheer.

Louie then introduced nine-year-old Roli Garcia, Jr., saying, "This is our future." Louie joined Roli in a drumset duet, "trading fours" for a short time before relinquishing the spotlight. Roli proceeded to impress everyone with his power, skill, and imagination on his large, double-bass kit. After concluding his solo, Roli was rejoined by Louie. The veteran and the youngster played together, bringing the solo—and the entire day's performance—to a thunderous conclusion.—Rick Van Horn

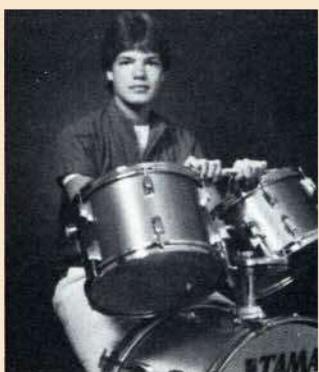
KAMAN TO DISTRIBUTE SIMMONS DRUMS

Keith Drewett, Vice President of Kaman Music Distributors, announced recently that Kaman and Simmons have concluded a distribution agreement. Drewett commented, "Kaman is very pleased to announce that our subsidiaries, Coast Wholesale and C. Bruno and Son, will distribute the Simmons SDS1 digital drum pad. In addition, the agreement provides for the joint development of an entirely new range of Simmons electronic drumsets aimed at the beginning

drummer, and priced accordingly. These will be distributed exclusively by Kaman."

Glyn Thomas, of Simmons Group Centre, added, "This new distribution agreement makes our SDS1 electronic drum pad available to virtually every music dealer in the USA; Simmons will continue its exclusive distribution of the SDS7 and SDS8 models through its already established network of Simmons Group Centers."

ROBERTO PETACCIA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP WINNER



Eighteen-year-old Jay Bellerose, from Old Orchard Beach, Maine, was recently

selected as the winner of *Modern Drummer's Roberto Petaccia Memorial Scholarship* to the Berklee College Of Music in Boston, Massachusetts. A past winner of five National Association Of Jazz Educators awards for his solo and ensemble performances, and a member of the 1984 McDonalds All-American High School Band, Jay was selected from among numerous applicants for the prestigious *MD* award.

Modern Drummer extends its congratulations to Jay Bellerose, and its very best wishes for a successful career in music.



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drummer. "Because the drummer's bare hand is insulated from the stick by the gum rubber grip, sound is allowed to flow unhampered, and the stick produces a more resonant tone.

The grip also has the advantage of absorbing 'stick shock,' thereby making it more comfortable to play with. Stick slippage is reduced, even when a drummer's hands become sweaty, and even twirling the sticks is easier. Because the grip (made of surgical rubber tubing) is fitted into a slot in the wood stick only $1/16$ " deep, the stick remains strong, perfectly

balanced, responsive and comfortable."

Resonant has recently added *Densiwood* sticks to their hickory line. *Densiwood* sticks are manufactured by a compression process, and are heavier and more durable than hickory sticks of comparable size. For further information, contact Resonant Drumsticks, 3426 Temescal Avenue, Norco, CA 91760, or call (714) 734-0666.

BARCUS-BERRY MIXER

Barcus-Berry, a company known for its musical instrument transducer technology, recently announced a new, ultra-compact, professional-quality mixer that is ideal for use with multiple-pickup drumkits. Identified as Barcus-Berry *Model 101*, it provides 10 input channels with independent, non-interactive controls, plus a master control. The inputs can handle any signal level without clipping and each provides an impedance of more

than one megohm. The mixer can thus accept program from virtually any high-impedance source, such as Barcus-Berry transducers, electronic keyboards and high-impedance dynamic microphones. In addition, four of the ten inputs can be switched to accept signals from Barcus-Berry electret-type transducers, such as those specifically designed for cymbals and hi-hats. The output of the mixer is compatible with any input having an impedance

of 10K ohms or more, and can be readily adapted for connection to a low-impedance mic' input by means of a line transformer. All input and output connectors are standard 1/4" phone jacks.

Typical applications for this new product include drum and PA submixing, monitor mixing and multi-track recording. The low-drain circuitry of the mixer operates on power supplied by two 9-volt batteries; this assures total absence of line

noise and provides complete freedom to become immediately operational anywhere in the world. The unit is extremely compact—the overall dimensions being comparable to a carton of cigarettes. The rugged, all-metal chassis is constructed of black anodized aluminum and is built to withstand the rigorous stresses of professional use. For further details, contact Barcus-Berry, Inc., 5381 Production Drive, Huntington Beach, CA 92649, 1-800-854-6481.

SIMMONS INTRODUCES SDS9

Simmons Group Centre, Inc. has announced the introduction of the Simmons SDS9, an instrument designed to give players the facility and control of conventional, acoustic drums plus the creative possibilities of modern technology. The SDS9 features improved playability, sound generation, programmability and MIDI interface. According to Simmons, the SDS9 "may truly be the first electronic drumkit capable of replacing acoustic drums."

The newly developed injection molded drum pads represent a major step forward in both feel and technology. Along with rimshot capability on the snare drum pad, all the pads have a soft rubber surface that is mounted on a specially formulated synthetic surface, to provide a more natural feel without any loss of sensitivity. The actual trigger signal is read by a microprocessor that logarithmically expands the signal before instructing the voice to sound. The result is tremendous increase in playing com-

fort and dynamic control not previously associated with electronic drums.

In terms of sound generation, each drum voice on the SDS9 has a separate, specific method of sound synthesis. The bass drum sound is a software-generated replica of a perfectly recorded bass drum, with fully adjustable controls for the pitch, click, and "thump" components of the sound. The three tom-tom voices are analog-synthesized with a unique "second skin" feature which, when used, modulates the drum pitch and emulates the harmonics created by the interaction of two vibrating drumheads. The tom-toms also have individual controls for pitch, bend, decay, noise, click, and filter pitch and sweep.

According to Simmons, the SDS9's snare drum channel is "the biggest advance since electronic drums were first switched on." In addition to rimshot and cross-stick features, the SDS9 snare drum utilizes three independent samples of a snare drum, rimshot and cross-stick

sound, which are studio-quality recordings that have been digitally stored on EPROMs and then placed into the SDS9's brain. These EPROMs are user-changeable, and with Simmons' extensive Library Of Sounds or the SDS EPB unit, the snare drum's sound can be quickly and easily changed. Full program control over filter pitch and sweep, drum pitch and bend, rimshot pitch and bend, drum and rimshot decay, choice of rimshot or cross-stick sounds, balance between rim and drum, filter resonance and noise level makes the SDS9 snare drum as versatile and creative a drumkit centerpiece as any drummer could ask for.

Programming of the SDS9 is straightforward. The kit has 20 factory programmed drumkit memories and 20 user-programmable ones with an "Auto Trigger" that can be activated to automatically trigger during programming. This facilitates programming without playing the pads and also allows each program change to be monitored. A second function of the

"Auto Trigger" plays each voice consecutively, allowing the full drumkit to be reviewed. Drum shop owners should especially like the auto demonstrator function, which is factory programmed to automatically demonstrate the sounds and features of the SDS9 at the touch of a button.

Program switching and the sequence of kit memory selection can be entered into the SDS9's memory and can be accessed manually or by the heavy-duty footswitch that is included. On-board digital delay (which can be programmed for a "slap back" effect or long repeat echo), headphone output for silent tuning and practice, and easy cassette tape dumping for external memory storage are also standard on the SDS9, as is a fully assignable MIDI interface function that allows triggering voices of other MIDI synthesizers from the drum pads or real-time recording via a MIDI recorder and computer.

For more details, contact your local authorized Simmons drum dealer.

PEARL HARDWARE



Carmine Appice
(King Kobra)

"Pearl only makes Professional hardware. They offer three distinctly different weights to perfectly match ANY style you play. From sensitive to brutal... or anywhere in between... there's a Pearl pedal or stand to meet your specific needs. And, Pearl's attention to detail means your investment in genuine Pearl hardware will give you longer, worry-free use. There's a lot of look alikes available... but if it's got the Pearl name on it, you know you've got the BEST!" "

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(Bon Jovi)



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AKG Acoustics, Inc.	51	MMO Music Group	87,92
Andersonix	77	Musician's Institute	93
Bamo, Inc.	71	Om Percussion	84
Buckaroo Cymbal Cleaner	92	O.U. Products	52
Calato	36	Paiste Cymbals	108
Casino Percussion Products	64	Pearl International	54/55,107
CB-700	53,61	Percussion Center	91
Corder Drum Co.	52	PMI	91
D & F Products	65	Precision Drum Co.	80
DC 1000 Percussion	68	Premier Drums	3
Chet Doboe Drum School	91	Promark	60,75
The Drum/Keyboard Shop	Houston	Romo	43
Drum Workshop	65	Resonant Drum Sticks	71
Drums Ltd./Frank's Drum Shop	57	Rhythm Tech	115
Duraline	48	RIMS	69
Dynacord	60	ROC Drums	42,64
Emerald Drums	63	Rolls Music Center	78
Freeport Music	99	Sabian	7,101
Gold Line	86	Sam Ash Music Stores	90
Gretsch Drums	72	"Set-The-Pace" Pedal Practice Pads	91
Groove Tube	68	Simmons Electronic Drums	67
Hybrid Cases	89	Sonor	105
Imperial Creations	36	SOTA	90
Innovative Percussion Products	83	Stanley Spector School Of Drumming	73
Kendor Music	100	Tama	5,46/47
L.T. Lug Lock	95	UDT Publishing	76
Ludwig Industries	Inside Front Cover	Ultimate Support Systems	62
Manny's Music Store	65	Valley Drum Shop	92
MARC	37	Vic Firth	44,50
Dean Markley Drum Sticks	49,93	Steve Weiss Music	91
MD Back Issues	103	The Woodwind & The Brasswind	92
MD Library	32	Yamaha	81
MD T-Shirt	40/41	Zildjian	33, Outside Back Cover

SEPTEMBER'S MD

**Jeff
Watts**



Plus:

Jon Christensen

Vinnie Appice

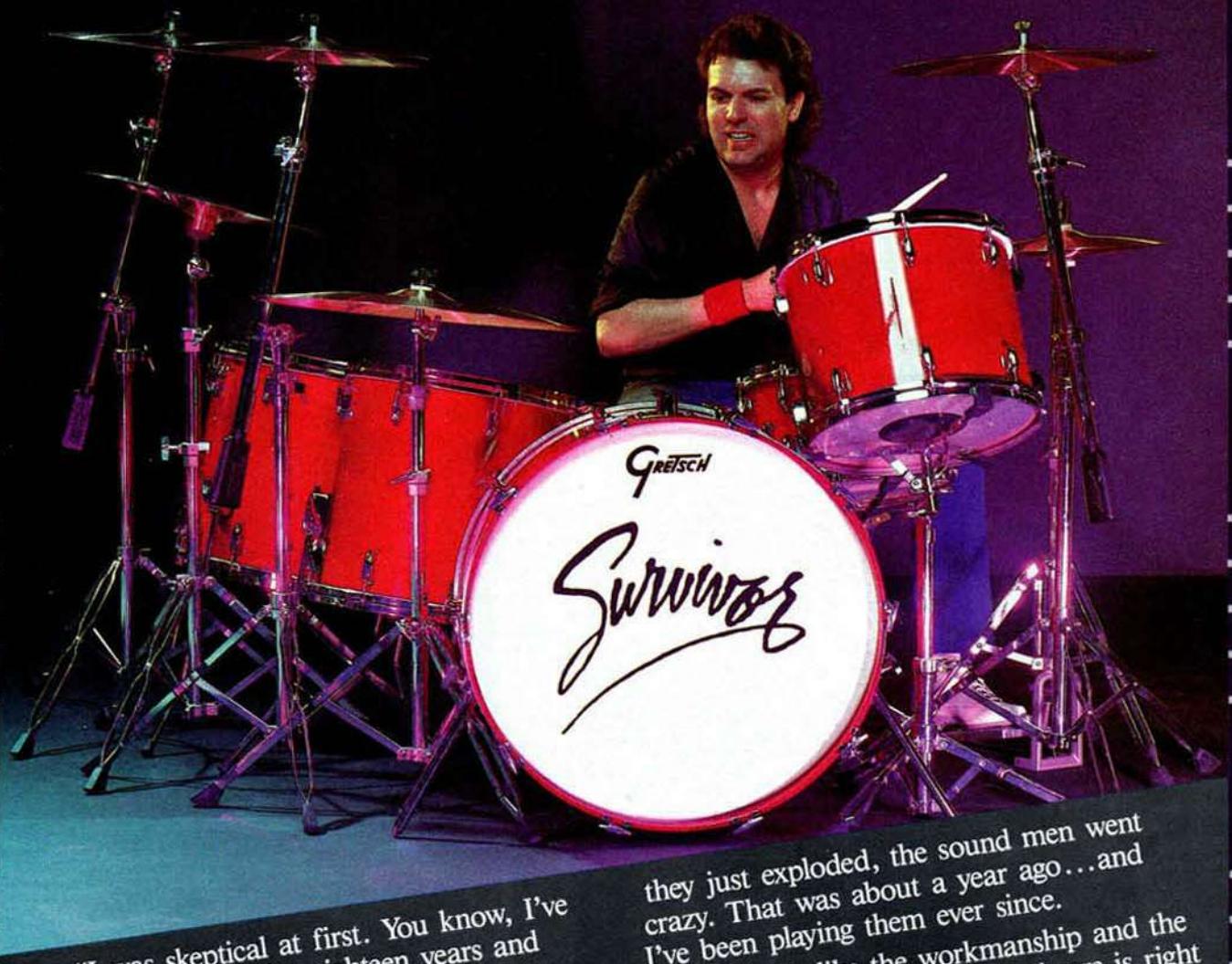
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Survivor



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