

# MODERN DRUMMER™

The International Magazine Exclusively For Drummers



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OCTOBER 1985

## CHRIS PARKER

Plus:

Neil Peart:  
Style & Analysis

Sandy Gennaro  
On Electronic Drums

Studio Drumming:  
A Producer's  
Perspective

The Latest Drum Gear

The Firm's  
**CHRIS SLADE**

**Mickey Roker**

**THE DRUMMERS  
OF ATLANTIC CITY**



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# FEATURES

Cover Photo by Robert Santelli

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## CHRIS PARKER

Parker, one of today's most in-demand studio drummers, has recorded with a wide variety of musical greats, including Miles Davis, Aretha Franklin, Gladys Knight & The Pips, James Brown, Bette Midler, and Rod Stewart. He has also been the drummer for such bands as The Brecker Brothers, Stuff, and most recently, his own group Joe Cool. Here, Chris discusses the qualities of a good studio drummer, the role of electronics in the studio, and his work as a songwriter.

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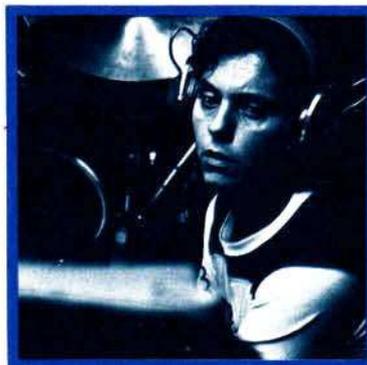


Photo by Charles Stewart

## CHRIS SLADE

When Jimmy Page decided to return from his self-imposed five-year exile from the music business, he wanted highly talented musicians for his new band, The Firm. His choice on drums was Chris Slade, who in Page's words is "an extremely powerful and technical drummer." In this *MD* exclusive, Slade discusses his prestigious and varied career, including his work with Tom Jones, Manfred Mann, Uriah Heep, and Pink Floyd's David Gilmour, as well as his most recent success with The Firm.

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## MICKEY ROKER

To have held the drum chair in Dizzy Gillespie's band for a number of years would be a sufficient achievement for most drummers, but for Mickey Roker, it is only one of many accomplishments. In his first *MD* interview, Roker recalls his years as one of the regular drummers for Blue Note Records, and talks about his current gig with Milt Jackson.

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Photo by Michael S. Jachles

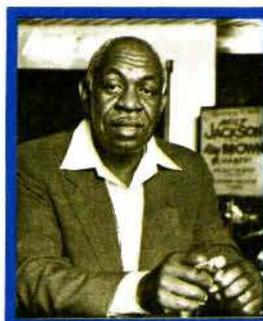


Photo by Rick Maikin

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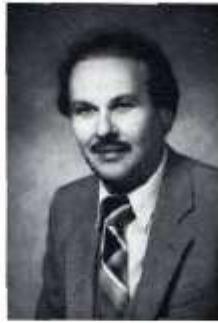
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# EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

## MP: The First Year



The September/November issue of *Modern Percussionist* marks the magazine's first complete four-issue year. I'm very glad to report that the response from readers, the music dealers who carry the magazine in their shops, and the percussion industry as a whole has been extremely positive and supportive. As a result, we're raring to forge ahead into our second exciting year.

If you've been a regular reader of *Modern Percussionist* throughout the past year, you're undoubtedly aware that the magazine focuses on the specialized needs of four separate factions of the percussion world, all of which are not covered in the pages of *Modern Drummer*. Those areas are orchestral percussion, Latin and ethnic drumming, keyboard percussion instruments, and drum & bugle corps performance. As I mentioned in my introduction to *MP* last year, the magazine was designed to deal with these complex and unique styles of drumming on an in-depth basis. Though we always felt an obligation to cover the different facets of percussion in *Modern Drummer*, it was something we found difficult to do without disturbing the editorial direction of *MD*, which is focused on the contemporary drum-set player. And so, separating these distinctly different areas of drumming seemed to be the only logical solution. Judging from the response, we think our decision was a good one.

The first four issues of *Modern Percussionist*, thoughtfully edited by Rick Mattingly, delved into the musical world of percussion artists such as Emil Richards, Ralph MacDonald, Gary Burton, Ray Barretto, Chris Lamb, Bobby Hutcherson, Dale Anderson, Ralph Hardimon and Fred Sanford, and offered columns from experts like Dennis DeLucia, Vic Firth, Gordon Gottlieb, Arthur Press, Dave Samuels, Montego Joe, and many more. You might also be interested to know that, though *MP* comes complete with many of its own contributing writers and columnists, the magazine itself is edited and produced by the same in-house staff responsible for every issue of *Modern Drummer*.

Obviously, it would be foolish for me to suggest that every *MD* reader will be interested in the content of *Modern Percussionist*. This editorial was not intended to be a subscription solicitation for our sister publication. However, I do think it's important for all *MD* readers to realize that, if they are currently involved in other areas of drumming, or are planning to widen their scope by branching into orchestral, keyboard, or marching percussion, then *MP* is certainly worth investigating. You're not likely to find all the relevant information you'll need regarding these highly specialized areas in the pages of *Modern Drummer* alone. Of course, if your interests have always run the gamut from rock and jazz, to keyboard percussion and timpani, then both publications truly represent essential reading.

My thanks to the readers, dealers, and advertisers who have accepted and supported *Modern Percussionist* throughout its first year. We promise all of you an even more dynamic second year.

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# READER'S PLATFORM

## RESPONSE TO MACDONALD

As a fan of Duran Duran for the past three years, I appreciated your cover story on Roger Taylor. I was sorry to read the letter about Roger, written by Mr. Charles MacDonald, in your June issue. It is obvious that Mr. MacDonald has a closed mind. Yes, Neil Peart and Bill Bruford are excellent drummers, and I enjoy listening to them. But there is more to drumming than throwing in as many fills as you can and seeing how many times you can change the time signature! The role of the drummer is to *keep the beat!* Fills are just the icing on the cake. I feel that Roger Taylor is one of the most talented drummers I have had the pleasure to hear. His fills are clean and tastefully done, and he has a superb bass drum foot. I've learned a great deal from him, and look forward to more Duran Duran albums. The beat's in time, and it's Roger who makes the noise. Let's hope Mr. MacDonald opens his mind a little, and sees that drummers like Roger Taylor, Gina Schock, and Charlie Watts are very important drummers in our industry.

Chris Bennett  
Scranton, IA

In your June issue, Charles MacDonald seems to believe that, because Roger Taylor "just has a steady beat," he does not well represent the art of drumming. It seems to me that Roger has done a fair job of backing one of the most popular bands today. Maybe, Mr. MacDonald, if you would quit criticizing other drummers, you could take time to go to a record store and buy an old Ringo Starr album with Steve Gadd on it. You may be surprised at how simple a nice groove really sounds. Paradiddles are great, but they don't keep a fine group of musicians grooving!

Matt Frazier  
Crestwood, KY

## MORE FEMALE DRUMMERS

I have been reading *Modern Drummer* for the past year, and find your magazine very educational. I enjoy the interviews you present of great drummers from every musical style. I never miss an issue. There's just one request I'd like to make. I would like to see a few more features on female drummers. It doesn't really matter if female drummers don't make the cover story that often, but for the sake of up-and-coming female drummers reading *MD*, I'm sure a little more coverage would be appreciated.

It is quite obvious that every drummer is unique, and much can be learned from the advice given in your magazine. For this reason, I'd like to hear about how some female drummers got started, as well as

what pros and cons they have encountered in respect to playing drums and in touring. I'm also interested in hearing about their styles and kit setups, just as much as the male drummers. It could also be a source of inspiration to other hard working female drummers who plan drumming careers. I hope you will work on this soon, and provide an interview of good length, rather than a two- or three-paragraph article in the back of the magazine.

Cynthia Knight  
Los Angeles, CA

*Editor's note: Modern Drummer is sensitive to the issue of adequate coverage of female drummers. To that end, in the past one-year period mentioned in the letter above, we have featured Update items on Gina Schock, Sheila E., and Terri Lyne Carrington, each of whom has had feature coverage in past issues. In that same period, we presented stories on Denise Dufort of Girlschool, and on Then And Now's Joan Peteani. Barbara Borden, on whom we have also done a previous story, was featured in Industry Happenings. While it is our intention to cover any and all noteworthy female drummers actively participating in our industry, the fact of the matter is that there simply are not many who are currently in the public eye to any degree. While we are happy to feature new artists who may qualify as "up-and-comers," a certain amount of professional credibility must be established on the artist's part first. We also use our Update department to introduce a new drummer on the scene to our readers, with an eye to following that artist and seeing how his—or her—career develops. To that end, we featured Roxy Petrucci of Madame X in the July, '85 issue, and The Bangles' Debbi Peterson in January of '84.*

## RICK ALLEN UPDATE

Thank you so much, *Modern Drummer*, and Mr. Bill Ludwig III, for the information on Rick Allen of Def Leppard in the June, '85 issue. Many publications provided me with often distorted details of his tragic accident, but your magazine was the first to inform me of the present condition and playing status of Rick, my favorite percussionist. The news of his recovery was so encouraging! Rick is a truly talented musician and his courage should be admired.

Marina Ann Parascenzo  
Fombell, PA

Since I started reading *Modern Drummer* five years ago, I have learned many valuable things. The most important was that every drummer has something to offer. I have also come to regard the readers, staff,

and the drummers who are interviewed as sort of a "family." We share a mutual bond that makes us all equal: the love of music and the love of our instrument.

I don't know how many times throughout my career I have wondered what I would do if I were put in a situation that physically restricted me from ever playing a drumkit again. I am sure most drummers have asked themselves this question at least once. Well, Rick Allen has had to face up to that question. From the information in your June *Update*, it appears that Rick has decided to try to conquer his new impairment. I am not a big fan of Def Leppard, but I do feel that we should all stand behind Rick and give him as much support as possible. It will be a long, hard road for him in the future, but with all of us rooting him on, it might be a little less painful.

Kane Furey  
Sacramento, CA

## HELPFUL HINTS

I enjoyed your interview with Alan Dawson very much, and can relate to the use of metal practice sticks on a pad and brushes for rudiments. I've been using the sticks for 20 years. I don't need to use them as religiously as at first, but the result is equal dexterity in my wrists. Using brushes on a magazine forces you to try harder, because of the lack of bounce. I highly recommend these procedures.

Also, thank you for the library of information you bring me each month. My perspective on the instrument has grown. However, with the growing number of magazines in my collection, I started finding it hard to locate specific articles. So now I file the magazine from cover to cover on index cards, by subject of article. Now, to find any name I want, or any double-bass exercise or product close-up, etc., all I do is look it up in my file cards. It really makes it a lot easier to use and reuse the information you provide. Others might find this useful, too.

Jay Berlin  
Peabody, MA

## MICKEY CURRY

Regarding Robyn Flans' interview with Mickey Currey [June '85 *MD*], I have two questions: (1) How can a person who just wants to bash on drums—never did his lessons—never studied—has someone else tune his drums—can't keep time without a machine—and uses double bass drums because he likes the way they look, call himself a drummer? (2) Whatever compelled you to devote nine pages of "The International Magazine Exclusively For Drummers" to him?

Ed Quinn  
North Hollywood, CA

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# ASK A PRO

## JIM KELTNER



Photo by Rick Malkin

**Q.** Recently, I was listening to Ry Cooder's *Bop 'Til You Drop* album. I would like to know how you got the snare drum sound used on this recording. Please detail heads, tuning, muffling, miking, and the size and type of drum, as well as any other factors affecting or contributing to this sound. Incidentally, your playing on this work is impeccable.

**V. Tracey Sullivan-Wright**  
Warrenville, SC

**A.** Thanks for the kind words; I really appreciate them. I used two different snare drums on Ry's album. One was a 6" deep Ludwig Black Beauty with a Remo coated Diplomat fop head tuned fairly tight, and just a little piece of plain tape towards the edge—no other muffling material at all. The other snare was a Yamaha 15" tom-tom with snares fitted to it, which I called a "snom." Stan Yeager at the Professional Drum Shop in Hollywood put a regular Ludwig snare strainer on it for me, and made it into a real snare drum. It had a coated Ambassador batter, tuned medium tight, with a piece of cloth and tape on the edge. That was a novelty; it worked okay for a while, but stopped sounding good a while later and got to be a real pain to use. So I stopped using it.

Lee Hirshberg, who engineered the album, used either a Telefunken or a Neumann KM-84 on the snare drums. The album was digitally recorded as well, which may have had something to do with the snare sound being a little crisper.

Since that album was recorded, I have replaced both those snares with a 6" Pearl Free Floating System snare, with shells of copper, brass, and maple. These drums are very versatile, and sound great on stage as well as in the studio. They give me all the sounds I could get with the other drums.

## DAVID ROBINSON

**Q.** I saw the pictures of you in the May '85 issue of *Modern Drummer*, and was confused by the way you set up your drumkit. You seem to play right-handed, but your toms started out larger on the left and got smaller as they moved toward the right. I wonder if you could explain this unusual setup to me?

**Doug Lufkin**  
Tulsa, OK

**A.** My first rack tom is a 14 x 14 and the second is a 10 x 14. They are arranged this way because the 14 x 14 would sit too high if placed on the right side above the bass drum, and also because I prefer a deeper drum first, since I use it more than the others. The depth of a shell doesn't always make a given drum deeper, and I pre-



Photo by Eber Roberts

fer to tune toms to the pitch at which they sound best naturally, rather than in any particular order.

## DOM FAMULARO

**Q.** I had the pleasure of seeing you perform at a Tama clinic in Ann Arbor, MI, recently. At that clinic, you demonstrated your double-bass technique. How did you develop your feet to play at such fast tempos? Can you recommend any study materials for developing the double bass?

**K. Hines**  
Columbus, OH

**A.** I have been playing double bass drums for approximately two years, but have always been concerned with developing my feet evenly. I practiced exercises from George Lawrence Stone's *Stick Control*, flat-footed, off and on the drumset. Practice each

exercise one minute, nonstop, and then go directly into the next one. Work on one page a week. I found a comfortable metronome marking, because I wanted to develop speed, control, and endurance. I practiced flat-footed in order to stretch and strengthen the ankle muscles. This made it easier for me to raise my feet to get power, and not sacrifice speed and articulation.

I also apply the Moeller technique to my feet and legs for relaxation, and I have practiced some personal exercises that I developed. Think of developing your feet as you would your hands, and your double-bass technique will surely improve. Thanks for showing interest.

## BILL BRUFORD

**Q.** On the song entitled, "Elephant Talk," from the King Crimson *Discipline* album, your snare sound is unique; it almost sounds like a "snareless" snare. How did you achieve that?

**Patrick Weaver**  
Plymouth Meeting, PA

**A.** The sound you mention was not deliberately set up that way; it was just the product of about 15 minutes' work on the drum and the way all the variables hit it off that day. Tuning, microphones, the room sound, snare tension, natural or artificial echo or reverb, the way in which the drum is struck, the type of heads, compression, limiting—all these and a hundred other factors go into producing the sound you hear; it's not an exact



Photo by Rick Malkin

science. Every time is different from the time before, and the sound on "Elephant Talk" is the sound we got that day. It was a Tama deep chrome snare drum with the snares on, with an Ambassador coated head. The only advice I can give is the only thing I know: Move things around a bit until it sounds good!

# WILLIE WILCOX

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**W**HEN Chris Parker was an aspiring young drummer, he figured that if he could play with Miles Davis, Aretha Franklin, and Ray Charles, well, he'd have accomplished something truly special in his career. To be sure, it was a tall order for some white kid from Upstate New York. But all three legendary artists, you see, were big influences on Parker. Had not Duke Ellington and Thelonious Monk passed away, they too would have been on the list, for they too had left their mark on him.

As it turned out, Parker got to record with Miles. The LP was *The Man With The Horn*. He also got to record with Aretha Franklin on *La Diva*. And a few months ago, on the Radio City Music Hall stage, he backed up the great Ray Charles.

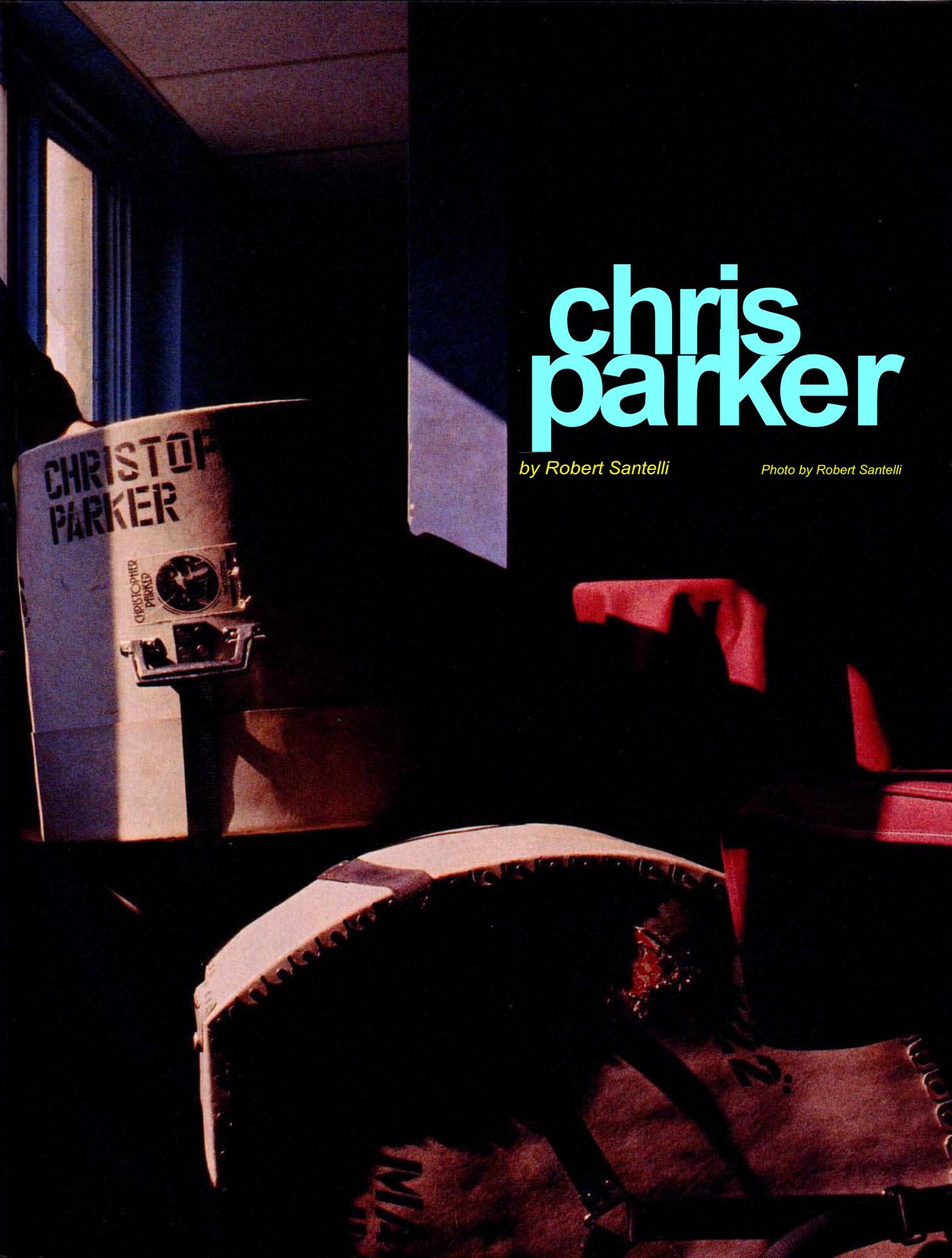
We're sitting in Parker's New York City loft talking about how very fortunate he's been to have already achieved three of his most important career ambitions when suddenly it occurs to me that none of the artists he's mentioned as really big influences are drummers. I bring it up, and it's as if Parker knew I'd confront him with the anomaly sooner or later.

"That's because, for as long as I can remember, I've always tried to branch out and cover as much ground in music as I possibly could," says Parker. "I never really wanted to be just a drummer, although playing drums is something I obviously treasure very highly. It's also something I love to do, not to mention that it's the instrument I make a good living playing. But I really love music in the broadest definition, which is something much bigger than just drums."

Parker's love of music prompted him to learn to play the trumpet, euphonium, bass guitar, and piano, in addition to, of course, the drums. It's also been the reason why, as a drummer, he's played everything from jazz to jingles, including rock, rhythm & blues, soul, country, pop, Gospel, and commercials.

Says Parker: "I guess you can say being a musician rather than simply a drummer has helped my career significantly. I think I view things with a larger perspective than other drummers. It's also given me the ability to become pretty versatile and flexible as a drummer, because I've always enjoyed the challenge that goes with recording with different artists in different musical genres. The challenge is what makes it really fun for me."

The challenge perhaps is what also has led Parker to become one of the busiest and most respected studio drummers in the business. That's not to say, though, that being a meticulous timekeeper, as well as having a beautiful knack for flair and color whenever he sits down behind a kit, hasn't helped his



# chris parker

*by Robert Santelli*

*Photo by Robert Santelli*

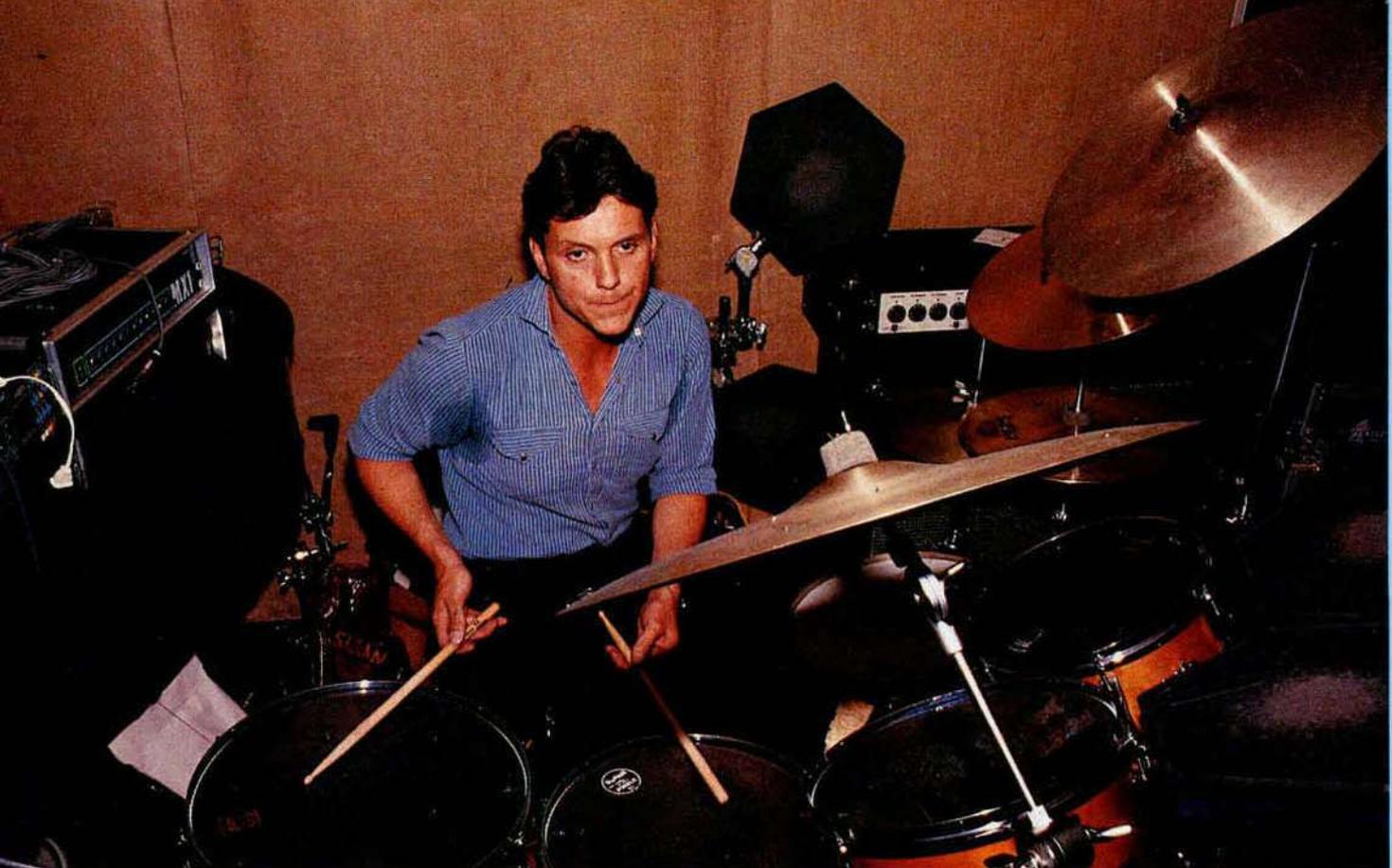


Photo by Robert Santelli

career—quite the contrary. But even without Miles Davis and Aretha Franklin on the long list of artists he's recorded with, it would still be a formidable one. Here's a sampling: Gladys Knight & The Pips, Teddy Pendergrass, James Brown, Ashford & Simpson, Laura Nyro, Michael Franks, Melba Moore, Peaches & Herb, Peter, Paul & Mary, Deodato, The Brecker Brothers, David Sanborn, Barry Manilow, Paul Butterfield, Bette Midler, The Spinners, Rod Stewart, Luther Vandross, and Esther Phillips.

Don't forget what Parker has said about wanting to cover as much ground as he could, either. In addition to all the session work he's done (and still is doing, I might add), Parker was also a member of that super-fine, supersweet unit, Stuff, back in the mid and late '70s. That's the group that contained the likes of musicians such as Cornell Dupree, Gordon Edwards, Richard Tee, Eric Gale, and Steve Gadd.

Presently, Parker has his own band, Joe Cool, which released a delightful record last year called Party Animals. The band toured Japan this past summer and achieved high marks across the board. "I'd like to do it all," laughs Parker. "I only wish there was more time in the day."

Parker is indeed eager, ambitious, and perhaps even driven, when it comes to music. With that in mind, I was sure there must be other goals—other accomplishments—he wished to see realized, and so I presented him with the question. Essentially, he said what any serious drummer would say—to play better, to learn even more about his instrument, to become more adept at programming electronic drums. But then, suddenly, he smiled and looked away from me. "Okay, there is one other goal I had in the back of my mind for some time now." "Oh? What is that?" I pressed. Parker blushed. "To make the cover of Modern Drummer."

**RS:** You're known in music circles primarily as a session drummer, even though you've done tours with a

number of artists. Was it always your ambition to be a successful studio drummer?

**CP:** Not really, no. I mean, I didn't start out playing drums with the idea that I'd someday become a successful session drummer. I started out to play music and be an artist. I was, however, intrigued by the idea of doing a lot of different things as far as drumming was concerned. That ambition, I think, has been realized.

**RS:** Where did that ambition come from?

**CP:** Probably from listening to my father play all different kinds of music when I was a kid. He had a tremendous record collection—all different kinds of music could be found in it. He was, and still is, a drummer, and he always had his drums set up in the house. He also played clarinet and soprano. As early as I can remember, he was putting me on the drum stool with blocks on the pedals and everything. So I'd play along with all these records that he'd play. And in the process, I was exposed to many, many artists and lots of types of music, although jazz was perhaps the dominant music heard in my house. As I got older, I began to acquire my own taste; then I really wanted to hear and play everything. There are very few music forms I don't like, with the exception of opera. Yet, there are even some operas I like listening to.

**RS:** A lot of session drummers ultimately find the "gun for hire" concept that's frequently applied to session work tedious. Have you ever felt that way?

**CP:** No, not yet. So far, I've always taken each session as a challenge to my abilities as a drummer to give whomever I'm working with the best I can possibly give.

**RS:** What are the elements that make up, say, a respected, solid session drummer?

**CP:** Big, big ears. That might take up two or three elements right there. A good studio drummer is always listening to what's going on, musically. Reading is definitely very important; a drummer today has to be a good reader. So what do we have? Ears, being able to read, and I guess, a sharp sense of musicality and versatility. But of all of them, I think having good ears is the most important. If you hear what the artist you're working for wants, you can translate it into something

from your musical and rhythmic vocabulary.

**RS:** It's no secret that breaking into the inner circle of session work—the money gigs, so to speak—is quite difficult to achieve. How did you do it?

**CP:** When I was teaching a class recently to drummers at the Drummers' Collective here in New York, that question came up a couple of times. There are a lot of ways to do it, of course. The way I did it, and the way I'd suggest for any aspiring session drummer to do it, is to go out and hear everybody play live that you can. And play live yourself as much as you can. You never know who might be in the audience listening to you. See, when you're playing live, you're performing. And in reality, when you step into a studio, that's exactly what you're going to be asked to do—perform. You should also practice at home as much as you can. Play with a metronome; use headphones. The more prepared you are, the more successful you're going to be, for that first break will come. You simply have to be ready to give one thousand per cent when you're called.

**RS:** Can you remember back to the very first session you did?

**CP:** Yeah, it was back in 1970. I had left school in New York and moved to Woodstock to join this band, Holy Moses. We got a record deal and went back to the City to record at Electric Ladyland. It was the first serious recording I ever did. It was definitely a thrilling experience for me. This was right after Jimi Hendrix had died. In fact, Mitch Mitchell and Noel Redding were still hanging around. Mitch Mitchell and I swapped cymbals. It was at Electric Ladyland that a lot of stuff I mentioned to you in response to the last question hit me in the face—things like: "Do you mean that I have to wear headphones, I have to do this performance again, and I have to tune my drums a certain way?" It was a grand education, and it really got my appetite going. I wanted to do a lot more recording, and I wanted to make sure that the next time around I was more prepared.

**RS:** What happened to Holy Moses?

**CP:** We made that record and then toured. We opened for the Jimi Hendrix film, *Jimi Plays Berkeley*. Then things kind of dissolved; the record company didn't pick up its option to do another album with us.

**RS:** Were you still living in Woodstock?

**CP:** I was still living in Woodstock and hungry to do a lot more playing than I was doing at the time. So I started playing with anyone, anywhere. I think I was in five different groups simultaneously. My goal with all of them was to get back into the studio to record.

**RS:** At the time, Woodstock possessed a strong music scene.

**CP:** Oh, yeah. It was great, not only musically, but it was also where I met my wife. She's been a great help and a great source of inspiration ever since. But you're right about the music scene. There were people like Paul Butterfield up there, whom I eventually hooked up with—The Band, Jackie Lomax, and Happy and Artie Traum. And there were always a lot of people coming up there to record—Bonnie Raitt, Maria Muldaur, and people like them. They recorded at Bearsville Studios, where I eventu-

ally began to do a lot of session work. People who came up there to record would see me playing in any one of the five bands I was working with. Since they usually liked what they heard and might have needed a drummer, I often was asked to play on their records.

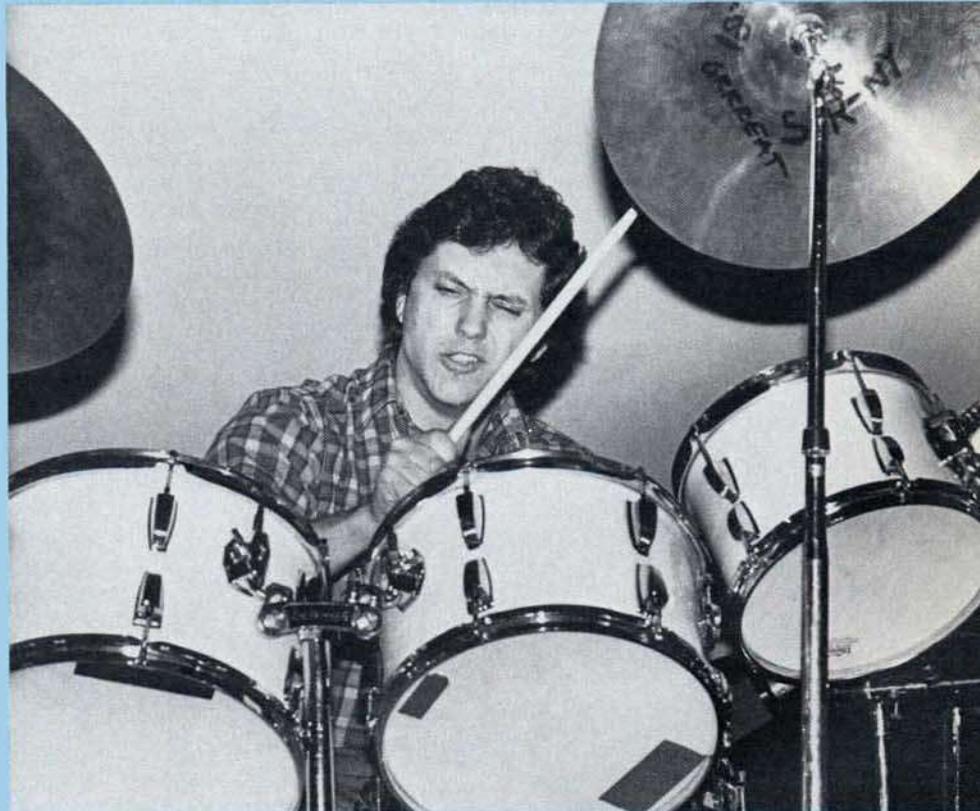
**RS:** Given the rapid rise of recent drum technology in the past few years, do you feel that the demands of a session drummer are greater now than ever before?

**CP:** Definitely. Session players must really open up to all the advances in electronics that are rapidly becoming tools of the trade. Today's session drummers are being asked to do a whole lot more than they were asked to do, say, 15 years ago. If drummers don't own drum machines of their own, for instance, well then they should at least get hold of the drum machine manuals and read them so that they could at least begin to learn to program. The Linn is here to stay; Simmons and DMX are here to stay. Things are crazier than ever. Technology is moving so fast. New equipment comes out today, and it's obsolete next week. I'm exaggerating, of course, but I'm not too far off the mark. Then, you have to remember that all the other standards—having good time and good feel, being able to read and adapt to various recording situations, and the elements we discussed before—are all still as important as they ever were. I don't think any drummer should feel threatened by all this. I know drummers who'd like to blow up the Linn factory. [laughs] They want to put an end to electronic drums, but electronic drums are here to stay. So it's up to each drummer to stay on top of them. You obviously can't buy every machine that comes out or every item that these companies make. But stay current, and most importantly, understand what the possibilities are for as many of these new instruments as you can. The bottom line is that electronic drums have their place in music, like it or not.

**RS:** How have electronic drums affected your career as a session drummer?

**CP:** Well, I was one of the first drummers, I think, to get the Simmons SDS-7 when it came out. I liked the idea behind the Simmons drums. I had tried the SDS-5, but didn't like the playing surface. To me, the kit wasn't right yet. I kept saying to myself, "Gee, why didn't they take the idea one step further?"

photo by Ebet Roberts



Then they came out with the *SDS-7*, which is really beyond just electronic drums. It's really a drum synthesizer. I thought that was great. The whole concept was extremely intriguing to me. The very next day after I got my *SDS-7*, people were calling me up and wanting to know all about it. I had to learn how to use the *SDS-7* properly and learn how to program, because almost at once, I started getting calls for dates where I was asked to bring the kit. It opened up a whole new type of session work for me. It's a completely new instrument, and now that I've spent enough time with it, I'm really quite comfortable playing it. But I was up night and day learning the possibilities of it. To this day, I'm still intrigued by what Simmons has done. I truly love playing their drums.

**RS:** Is there a difference in the meaning of the terms "drummer/programmer" and "drummer"? Or are all programmers, whether they play acoustic drums or not, essentially drummers in an indirect sort of way?

**CP:** That's a very interesting question. But I'm not sure I have an answer to it. I think a drum programmer and a drummer are one and the same in a certain way. It's true that anyone who has a knowledge of synthesizers or computers can program a pattern or a beat. But drummers who can program are going to come up with programs that are much more musical. Drummers are going to program drum machines as if they were playing the drums, not just pushing buttons. This, in turn, will make for much more interesting, realistic records.

**RS:** How far do you think electronic drums will penetrate contemporary music?

**CP:** I don't know. I'm starting to see more and more people interested in the sound of acoustic drums again. I think some people are starting to miss the idiosyncracies of a fat tom-tom or a fat snare drum. But going back to what I said before about electronic drums, a drummer is going to use both drum machines and acoustic drums in the recording studio and up on the concert stage. I think electronic drums have established themselves to such a point that their use will grow according to the way music grows. They'll meet the demands—whatever they are—but without fully dominating a song's rhythmic needs.

**RS:** What weaknesses, if any, do you see in the current assortment of electronic drums available today?

**CP:** I don't think anyone as of yet has come up with a good,

sound electronic cymbal or hi-hat. More work needs to be done with pedals, too.

**RS:** What kinds of electronic drum equipment do you own?

**CP:** The Simmons *SDS-7*, the Oberheim *DX*, and the Linn.

**RS:** Which one do you find yourself using most in the recording studio?

**CP:** The Simmons. Most of the people I work for either have someone they prefer to handle drum programming or don't use them. Often I'll be called to come in and play fills on the Simmons. Other times, I'll be asked for a drum machine sound without using a drum machine and programming, which I can get on my Simmons. My time is good enough so that I can play a pattern that's mechanical-like and similar to what you'd get out of a drum machine.

**RS:** Are there any specific guidelines you use in determining when to use your Simmons kit and when to use your acoustic kit, aside from what the artist or producer you're working for asks you to play?

**CP:** I usually just relate to my experiences as a drummer. Although the Simmons kit is much more dynamic and much more sensitive than one might think, there's still a dynamic range that really doesn't allow for them, at least in terms of attack or execution. For instance, if the song I'm recording demands a light, very sensitive style of playing, I'm going to have to think twice about using my Simmons. I'm sure, however, that I could come up with exceptions if I put my mind to it. But generally speaking, if I'm asked to play much, much quieter than usual, or only up to a certain level of volume, I'll probably use my acoustic kit. But let me think of an exception to this, because I know there are some. [pauses] Okay, I've got one. There's stuff on the Michael Franks record, *Skin Dive*, where what was needed was something very, very light. So I programmed very, very light sounds with the sensitivity all the way up. I was still playing the Simmons, but it sounded as if I were playing on a small jazz kit.

**RS:** You mentioned the Drummers' Collective before. Could you tell me what you did there?

**CP:** The Drummers' Collective is right down the street on 15th Street and Sixth Avenue in Manhattan. Rob Wallace and Paul Siegel run it. Essentially, it's some space—13 or 14 practice rooms—where drummers can go, meet other drummers, and practice. Whenever I get the time, I go down there and practice, because it's a bit too touchy to play here in my apartment, if you know what I mean. It gets loud and people get annoyed. The room I like at the Collective has two sets of drums in it, plus an electric piano and a bass amp. I can bring my Simmons in there and also practice piano. It's a very conducive atmosphere for practicing and sharing ideas with other drummers. Whenever I practice there, I'll stop for a few minutes, and I can hear what the other drummers are playing. I listen, and I am often inspired by what I hear.

**RS:** Haven't you led seminars and given clinics at the Drummers' Collective?

**CP:** I taught a master class there. I had six or seven students, and we met for five weeks for two and a half to three hours each week. I spent a lot of time organizing a course outline. The classes usually ended up dealing with the aspects of reading. I'd bring in the charts I had worked on that day, whether they were jingles, television shows, or record dates. I'd set up a drum machine or metronome, and then we'd go around the room, with each drummer taking a turn playing. All the students surprised me. Most of them were much further along than I had anticipated. I think they learned a lot, and so did I.

**RS:** Let's talk equipment for a minute. Can you give me an overview of your present acoustic kit?

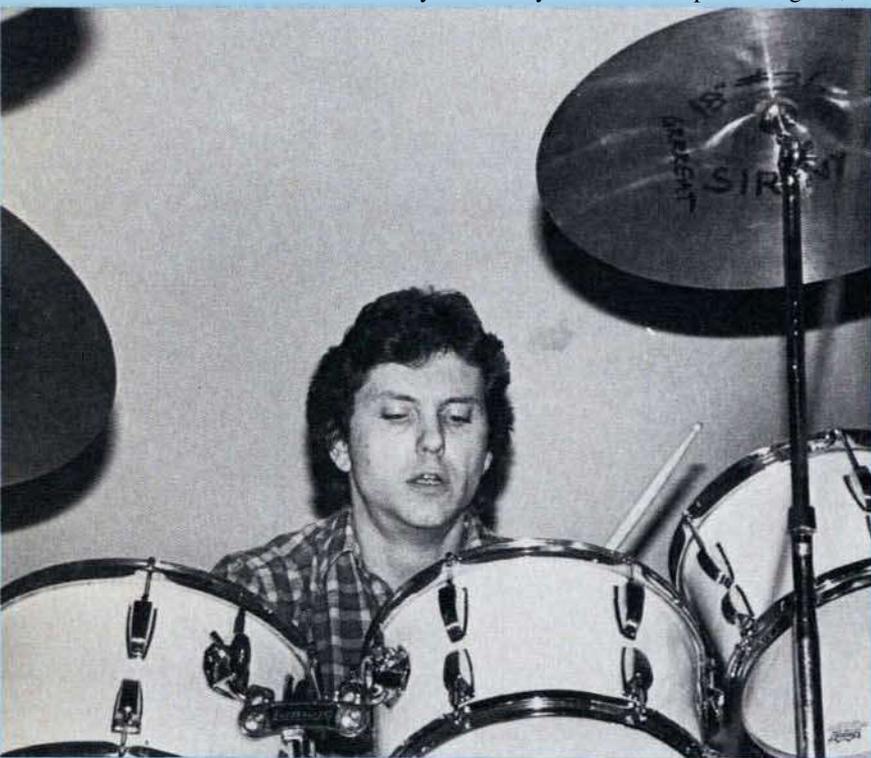


Photo by Ebet Roberts

**CP:** I have a Yamaha *Custom Recording Series* kit. I use a *Radio King* snare drum or a *Pioneer* model Ludwig snare drum. Actually, the set combines acoustic and electric drums. So I have the Simmons setup, an acoustic snare drum, a double bass drum, five acoustic toms, and three electric toms.

**RS:** You endorse Yamaha, right?

**CP:** Yeah, I do.

**RS:** How long have you been using them?

**CP:** Since the first time I went to Japan, which was in 1976.

**RS:** Before Yamaha, what kinds of drums were you using?

**CP:** Before Yamaha, it was Gretsch and Slingerland, and before that, Ludwig. I've always had a *Pioneer* model bass drum and snare drum around. I've always bought old drums and refurbished them.

**RS:** Are you a collector of old drums?

**CP:** Yeah, I'd say so, although I didn't set out to be. But I couldn't resist certain snare drums when I saw them, as well as other great old drum items.

**RS:** What are some of the more interesting drums in your collection?

**CP:** Well, I have a Ludwig *Super Sensitive* model that's from 1938, which I found at a flea market. I bought it for \$1.50. I always check out flea markets and pawn shops. You can pick up some amazing things if you get lucky. I found a *Radio King* snare recently through a friend, Artie Smith. He's the guy who moves my drums and sets them up.

**RS:** What kind of cymbals do you use?

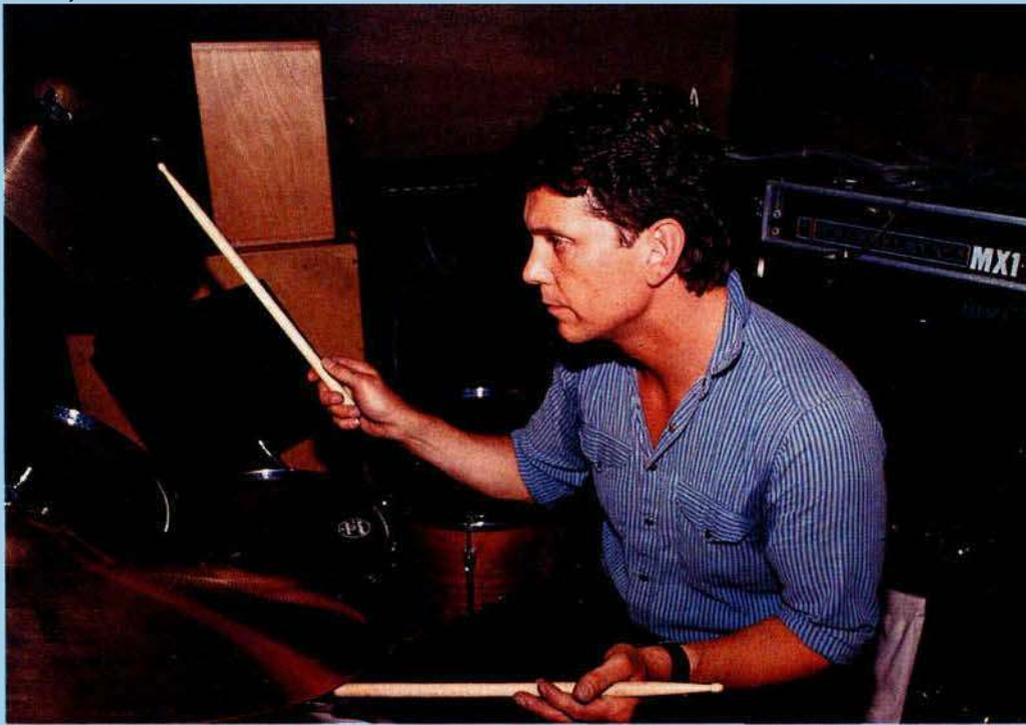
**CP:** I have a stack of cymbals in my storage room that I pick and choose from. Lately I've been using a 20" A. sizzle, an A. or K. crash-ride, and a 16" crash. I also use 13" or 14" K. hi-hats. Then I use a Sabian hi-hat, one cymbal of which is flat with rivets in it that I use upside down. That's permanently closed on the cymbal stand. Then I use 6" and 8" A. Zildjians that were supposed to be splash cymbals, but came out heavy. Nevertheless, they sound great. I also have some old A.'s and some really old K.'s that my father used back in the '50s. They were made in Istanbul. I also have cymbals that came with toy drumsets. I use them in conjunction with a small splash cymbal or a small crash-ride. I sit the toy cymbal right on top; it has a great dampening effect. I get a nice, clean ride, but the overtones don't build up as much. I also bought a cymbal that was supposedly Mel Lewis's sizzle. It must have about 40 holes all around it. I gradually lost all the rivets, but it still sounds great.

**RS:** When was the first time you ever sat behind a set of drums?

**CP:** Oh, I guess it was when I was about three years old.

**RS:** Since your father was a drummer, was there any pressure for you to follow in his footsteps?

**CP:** There wasn't any pressure that I



noticed, just encouragement. The drums were always there. My father always had some kind of drum setup at the house for as far back as I can remember. Somewhere I have a recording my parents made of me playing along with my father's Benny Goodman records. In the background you can hear my mother and father encouraging me, "Go on Chris! Go on!" And there I am crashing away. So the interest to see me play drums was definitely there, but my mother and father never forced me to do it.

**RS:** Does your father still play?

**CP:** Oh yeah. He works every weekend. He's a painter, but he has a standing band.

**RS:** You also have other drummers in the family, right?

**CP:** Yeah, I have four younger brothers, three of whom are playing drums professionally. Eric, the middle brother, is touring with Joe Cocker. Tony plays with Tom Pacheco and a

couple of funk bands out of Woodstock. Nicholas, my youngest brother, has been playing with Orleans and a group called Moodring. The only brother who doesn't play is Jeff. He's a graphic artist. He does, however, play the dobro. But as far as he's concerned, there simply are too many drummers in the family as it is. The other interesting thing about my brothers is that they all live in Woodstock.

**RS:** It seems as if you had a fairly large influence on your brothers. Three of them became drummers like you did, and all four of them live in Woodstock where you used to live.

**CP:** Well, Woodstock is such an idyllic place to live; it really is. I'd still be there, except that I became a big fish in a little pond. I needed bigger, more demanding challenges and more variety of experiences. Those are about the two biggest reasons why I moved here to Manhattan.

**RS:** Over the years, you've grown up with and played various kinds of music. Which one do you enjoy playing most?

**CP:** I'd have to say jazz. It's the most rewarding in terms of expression and creative output. I like the involvement it requires with the other players in the band. I also like the way the drummer needs to empathize with the soloists. There are not that many other musical forms where that's a given. I enjoy the camaraderie that is usually present in a good jazz outfit.

**RS:** Speaking of camaraderie, there was a good deal of that when you first moved to New York City and met Will Lee, the bass player, along with other players like the Brecker brothers.

**CP:** That's really true. I met Will through my sister-in-law. There was a gig in Woodstock, in which the band I was playing with all of a sudden didn't have a bass player. I mentioned it to my wife and her sister. It just so happened my wife's sister had met Will Lee. So she said, "Hey, I know a bass player." We got in touch with Will. He did the gig, and he and I really

**"DRUMMERS ARE GOING TO PROGRAM DRUM MACHINES AS IF THEY WERE PLAYING THE DRUMS, NOT JUST PUSHING BUTTONS."**



# Chris Slade Tech- nique And Heart

by Teri Saccone

OCTOBER 1985

**I**NSIDE one of New York's most elegant hotels, the new rock conglomerate, The Firm, has taken up residence, calling the place "home" for the last leg of its first U.S. tour. In the hotel's bar, I'm waiting for Chris Slade's arrival for our long-anticipated interview. After several minutes slip by, three guys file in: Two wear silver outfits resembling space suits, and the third, wearing a jacket and trousers, dangles a cigarette between his lips. The trio is, respectively, Chris, Tony Franklin, and Jimmy Page. Chris greets me with a hearty hello, explaining that he and Tony had been at a photo session on a nearby rooftop that day for a Nike endorsement, hence the "astronaut" costumes. He apologizes for being late, and then dashes upstairs for a quick change of clothes before we get things under way.

Meanwhile, Jimmy Page is playfully darting back and forth between the piano bar, lounge, and lobby, while a few of The Firm's road crew start to converge in the lounge, unwinding from the rigors of the tour before finally heading back to England for the last dates. Tony Franklin has retired to a table in the bar with some friends, still dressed in that outrageous getup and dark sunglasses. None of the guests seem to notice this carnival-like scenario around them; in fact, the businessmen in the bar barely divert their attention from their wheelings and dealings.

At one point, Page drops by my table. He talks about the new band and I elicit his sentiments on his new drummer: '7 was in the rehearsal studio in England for about six weeks in search of a drummer," Page replies. "There were people coming in for jams that I had known about in the past, and there were others that I had never met or heard of before. The spectrum ranged from Rat Scabies to Bill Bruford, with everything in between.

"Chris—I just warmed to him immediately because he played with so much heart, and technically was able to handle everything and anything that was presented to him, riff-wise as well as any abstract things. I was so impressed with him that I waited for him to come off a three-month tour, and after working with him on the album and on this tour, I'm even more impressed with him."

It's only recently that Chris Slade has been generating the recognition and exposure from audiences that he's long received from accomplished musicians familiar with his tremendous scope of talents. A native of Ponty-Pridd, Wales (born October 30, 1946), Slade's initial professional experience grew into a seven-year tenure in fellow Welshman Tom Jones's highly visible band (originally named Tommy Scott & The Senators in the early '60s). Eventually, he moved on to co-form Manfred Mann's Earth Band in 1971, then played with Uriah Heep, Gary Numan, and Pink Floyd's David Gilmour, finally becoming The Firm's visual and propulsive spearhead in the autumn of '84.

Slade's onstage persona carries a double-edged sword: He emerges as a highly kinetic force—ravaging the drums and cymbals that surround him, breathing flames into every fill—while he equally reveals a penchant for playing sublime, jazz-oriented grooves and complex textural patterns with expressive sensitivity.

In the ensuing conversation, Chris talks about his relationship with the drums over the last 20-odd years, and some of the "basics"—the vital proponents sustaining a very vital career. Midway through the interview, Chris made a comment that was similar to what other drummers have stated on these pages: "I'm only doing this because it's for Modern Drummer. I really believe that it's important for drummers, especially young ones, to read about the experiences of accomplished drummers. There's a lot to be gained by that."

Besides his enthusiasm for sharing his ideas about drumming and his modest feelings about his accomplishments, I was struck by Chris's general feeling of well-being and contentment that he radiates openly, similar to the passion he visibly projects on stage towards his drumming.

**TS:** Starting with The Firm, how did you initially hook up with Page?

**CS:** December 15, 1983, was a red-letter day for me. Dave Gilmour called me that morning and said, "I'm putting a tour together. Do you fancy playing drums?" I told Dave that I was very interested,

## "GENE KRUPA BROUGHT FRONT OF THE STAGE, BUT THEM TO THE FRONT



Photo by Paul Natkin/Photo Reserve

but I was involved in a project with Mick Ralphs [Bad Company] at that moment. Dave said, "Oh, that's alright. Mick's doing it too!" So I said, "Great." That very afternoon I received a call from Phil Carlo, Jimmy's tour manager, who said, "Jim would like you to come down for a blow at Nomis Studios in Shepherd's Bush." I literally could not believe getting calls from both Gilmour and Page on the same day. I said to myself, "I just wish I could do both projects."

**TS:** Your wish was granted. Page even ended up waiting for you to finish the Gilmour tour because he wanted you in The Firm.

**CS:** I'm definitely a positive thinker. I kept believing it would all work out. I had my first meeting with Jimmy, which really was just a jam, and he was coming up with ideas right on the spot. Jimmy did play an instrumental version of "Midnight Moonlight," which he had done with Paul Rodgers on the A.R.M.S. tour, but the rest of the pieces were hard-to-define, complicated instrumentals. You can't think in terms of time signatures for that kind of music; you just have to feel where the beat goes. We'd play some really simple things and maybe a blues number. Then Jimmy would say, "How about this, fellas?" and he'd come off with something really difficult. I immediately thought, "What the hell was *that*?" In that kind of situation, you have to react quickly. You have to listen to the music and try to understand what's happening. Then you have to come up with the goods.

While I was rehearsing with Gilmour for his tour, every chance I had I would organize a jam with Jimmy. In between Dave's European and U.S. tours, we had our first jam with Paul Rodgers.

**TS:** Wasn't The Firm going by the pseudonym The MacGregor Brothers at that time?

**CS:** That's right. When I got that initial call, I started to think about who the lead singer would be. I had known vaguely about Paul and Jimmy's association on the A.R.M.S. tour, and I thought, "I bet Paul Rodgers is going to be the lead singer in this band." Sure enough, we eventually had a blow with Paul. It all just fell together so well.

People keep asking us if this is going to be a long-term project, and if there's going to be another album and another tour. Initially, nobody in the band looked that far ahead, but now we're planning our second album, which will probably be recorded by the time this article is published.

**TS:** With Page's long and strong association with John Bonham, did you initially expect comparisons? Did you ever feel you were playing in his shadow?

**CS:** I honestly was concerned *only* with playing the gig. I wasn't, and still am not, aware that I'm in any way connected with Bonham. I was never trying to emulate him in any way at all, nor did I feel that that was expected of me. The comparison is made because he died, and he's always been legendary. He was one of the greatest characters in rock music, just like Keith Moon; both were bigger than life, on stage as well as off. I wish I could offer more on Bonzo. I've heard some amazing stories about him.

*[Jimmy Page overheard what was said, and commented, "As far as John Bonham is concerned, any comparisons are unfair. It's got nothing to do with Chris, and it's unfortunate that people would even suggest it. The similarity between them is that they're both extremely powerful and technical."]*

**TS:** So there were no preconceived notions on your part as far as what was expected of you?

**CS:** No, not at all. I didn't have any idea of what was in Jim's mind at first. It could have very well been a jazz project, film score, or a number of different things.

**TS:** Is it easier to be heard in a three-piece band like The Firm in comparison to playing in bands where synthesizers, more than one guitar, and maybe horns are competing for a portion of the sound?

**CS:** I know this will sound very strange—here comes one of my contradictions—but, as far as I'm concerned, there isn't a vast difference in playing with Count Basie or in Uriah Heep, and I've played with both. You've got to let people know where the beat is at a certain volume level. That's your primary function. If the other musicians can't hear you, they are not going to feel comfortable. So you have to play at the volume level that's necessary. With the advancements and efficiency of monitors these days, it's really not necessary to play all that loud, although I do tend to hammer the hell out of my equipment. But when it's appropriate, I play some softer, quieter things, as you've probably noticed. For instance, in "Midnight Moonlight" I play only the edge of the cymbals, and that's in an 18,000-seat stadium. I do those types of things when I know it's relevant to the music.

**TS:** On *The Firm* LP, there's a segue connecting "Make Or Break" and "Someone To Love" with you playing some involuted time. How did you come up with those intro bars?

**CS:** That's one of those instances that I'm pleased to have recorded. I stole that from Narada Michael Walden. It's not an exact copy, but I had heard him do something like that a while ago and it captured my attention. When the segue begins, it sounds as if I'm playing four on the beat, but I'm not. I'm playing on the &'s of the beat. When the bass drum kicks in, I'm doing a disjointed thing that I love.

The guys in the band said, "Chris, why don't you come up with

## THE DRUMS TO THE PHIL COLLINS BROUGHT OF THE MIX."

an intro for this one." I said, "Okay. Try this," and Jimmy went straight into it. It was great. I also break up the intro of "Closer" like that. I don't come in straight until the vocals start. On stage, we change it: Paul comes straight in singing because Jim plays the intro, and that's the start of the show. Since Paul has got to start singing straightaway, there's no time for me to mess around.

**TS:** How did you record *The Firm* LP? Did you overdub or was it live?

**CS:** We played the backing tracks and vocals live, standing in the room together. Paul didn't even sing inside a booth. We couldn't take anything off because the music was put on with his master vocal. I figured that we would work just as most bands do: Paul would come in and do a bit of guide lead vocal for us chaps to play to. Instead, he came in and sang his heart out, which inspired us to play, of course. But later, we couldn't subtract anything, only add. I prefer the feeling you get from recording live, plus there's the eye contact everyone transmits. There are times that you look at each other like, "Okay, here comes the bridge fellows," and we'd all just nod and smile.

**TS:** There's also a lot of nonverbal communication on stage among the band members. You all certainly seem to be smiling a lot, using eye contact to play off one another.

**CS:** Yeah, all the time. Tony and I often crack each other up on stage with some of the sounds we're getting. It's great, because when something we do unexpectedly works out, it's often a big laugh. By just looking across at each other—we don't say a word—it's like, "Oh, that was pretty good, wasn't it?" After the gig, nobody even mentions it; it's just something special that happens on stage.

**TS:** Is there a "Chris Slade sound" that's easily definable?

**CS:** No, not really. I'm a bit of a chameleon, actually. I tend to play to whatever's going on around me. You can tell it's Phil Collins when you hear him, just as you can tell Buddy Rich, Tony Williams, and a lot of other people. I don't think I do that. I tend to blend more. I'm very prominent *within* the music. Also, I can play heavy rock as well as jazz. I'm proud and pleased that I have that versatility. I realize that the other drummers that I mentioned certainly do that too, but they tend to play themselves—to play a certain recognizable way—whereas my "sound," if you like, changes as the bands and musicians change. The situation where I've liked my drum sound on record the most would be with *The Firm*, and that was because of the engineer.

**TS:** How much of a role did you play in getting that sound down?

**CS:** I'm not very technical where equipment is concerned. I do know what a basically good-sounding drum is like, and I might suggest things like, "Take the EQ down" or "Can you bring this up," but the whole sphere of technology is becoming very complicated. That's how Phil Collins gets that incredibly distinctive sound. He really knows the technological side of it.

Gene Krupa brought the drums to the front of the stage, but Phil Collins brought them to the front of the mix. I always thought drums should have been more up front anyway. It's the most basic element of the music. I know that being a drummer myself might make me a bit biased, but drums should be up front, and many bands have begun to realize that.

**TS:** Let's go back to how it all started. How did your involvement with drums come about?

**CS:** When I was about 13, my brother started me off. He brought a drum home one day—he was in a street marching band with the Air Training Corps—and he showed me a few things. Soon after, I began to borrow his drum and started practicing. It was one of those side drums that you wear—the type with the rope on the side

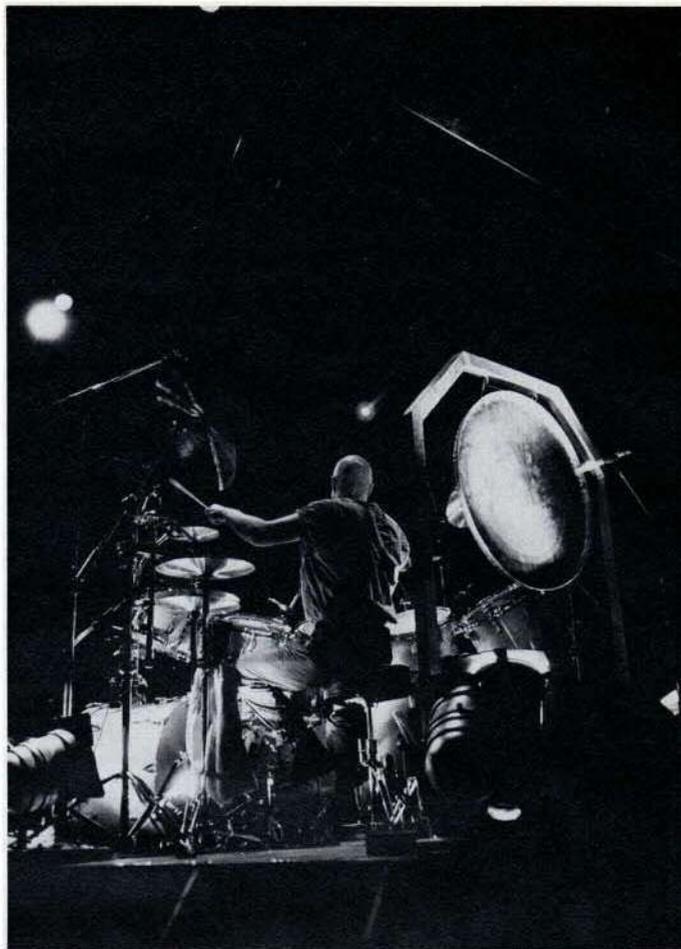


Photo by Lissa Wales

to tension it, with a calfskin head.

After I had a few things together through practicing, I became a drummer in the Boys Brigade—Britain's version of the Boy Scouts—and I learned that marching-type drumming. It was sort of a bugle band. Every Sunday we'd march through the streets playing, and that teaches you time, too. It's hell moving that drum with your leg and playing at the same time. [laughs] But that was

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Photo by Lissa Wales

# Mickey Roker

by Jeff Potter

**T**HE City of Brotherly Love, Philadelphia, lays claim to a set of freedom-founding parchments, a legendary local kite flyer, a big cracked bell, and a roster of incredible jazz artists, including a fiery drummer who proved himself on these historic grounds. The kite flyer, Ben Franklin, made a name for himself by drawing electricity. The drummer, Mickey Roker, made a name for himself by generating electricity to jazz fans all over the globe.

Mickey was born in Miami on October 3, 1932, but he was raised in Philly, and that's where he developed into a musician. In 1959, he began commuting to New York in order to play a gig with saxman/composer Gigi Gryce, and that became his career springboard. The rising drummer performed throughout the '60s on successive one- to two-year stints with a lineup of top jazz names. But his greatest exposure was gained as being the man who held the drummer's chair with Dizzy Gillespie through the '70s.

Dizzy demands versatility from a drummer, and especially a mastery of Latin rhythms as well as swing, bebop, funk, and blues. Being the first leader to introduce congas into a jazz band, a pioneer in the mixing of Cuban and jazz sounds, and a conga player himself, Dizzy is a consummate professor of rhythm, and his drummer must be no less. In addition to traveling with Gillespie in a frantic schedule of world tours, Mickey was the man providing the pulse on several of the trumpet master's fine albums on Pablo Records, such as Dizzy Gillespie's *Big 4* (1974), *Dizzy Gillespie y Machito: Afro-Cuban Jazz* (1975), *Dizzy's Party* (1976), and *Carter, Gillespie Inc.* (1976, featuring Betty Carter).

Album dates were also frequent when Mickey was one of the regular drummers on the classic Blue Note Records sessions of the '60s—a prolific period for the label that set a standard for recorded jazz of the time. The Blue Note catalog is a testimony

to Mickey's talent and versatility. You can hear him burning through straight-ahead jazz on *Live At The Lighthouse with Lee Morgan*, swinging a big band on any of Duke Pearson's many albums, or firing up a mixture of Latin, jazz, and R&B feels on a Horace Silver disc. Whatever the style, it all boils down to a driving and cleanly defined rhythmic foundation with a frosting of finesse. Other artists that Mickey has recorded with include Herbie Hancock, Joe Williams, Junior Mance, Mary Lou Williams, Zoot Sims, McCoy Tyner, Art Farmer, Nat Adderley, Gigi Gryce, Ray Bryant, Sonny Rollins, Frank Foster, Stanley Turrentine, and Count Basie.

After the whirlwind Dizzy decade, Mickey swung into the '80s with Ella Fitzgerald for a six-month period that included a European tour. Various freelance engagements ensued with Oscar Peterson, Sam Jones, Zoot Sims, and others. Presently, his prime music-making is with his longtime comrade Milt Jackson. They first met during the early '60s at a Newark, New Jersey, club where Mickey was working with Wes Montgomery, and they "have been good friends ever since," says Roker.

"In fact, I just spoke with Milt on the phone today. He just got back from Japan!" Mickey beams. That kind of enthusiasm is a key to Mickey's manner. An amiable and energetic makes-you-feel-at-home person, Mickey walks with a bounce and seems to be restraining stores of reserved energy. When responding to my technical questions about his drumming, Mickey slows down a bit, ponders the whole, but sometimes doesn't quite muster the enthusiasm for getting analytical about his approach to the drumset: "I'm not sure how to put it. Billy Taylor and people like that are good at explaining jazz in words." But just ask him about the musicians he has had the honor of playing with, and he pops into high gear, praising them with a glow reflecting the inspiration he draws from his talented peers.

He has the positive spirit found in naturals. Except for short periods of formal training, Mickey is basically self-taught, and to hear him talk or see him grin when recalling some fine music, you gradually glean the simple purity of his motivation: When he first heard good music, he "just wanted to play," he learned by "just playing," made a name for himself by "just playing," and the final reward is, of course, "just playing."

While I was driving home out of the historic city, Mickey's voice came over the FM radio by amusing coincidence. "Hi, this is Mickey Roker. I listen to radio station . . . Support jazz by listening . . ." and so on. This seemed like a fitting farewell to Philly. I had just left the center of the city minutes before via the Benjamin Franklin Bridge. It was too bad that I didn't get the chance to see the cracked bell. But I did spend time with one of Philadelphia's bonafide cultural monuments. **JP:** Can you tell me about your latest musical venture?

**MR:** Lately, I've been working with the Milt Jackson Quartet, along with Ray Brown on bass and Cedar Walton on piano. We work in between the times that the Modern Jazz Quartet is working. Other than that, I've been working around Philly. Since I moved out of New York, I don't travel as much anymore. I just want to stay with one band, and I want to see my son's baby now. I didn't get to see my kids grow up, but I would like to spend some time with my grandbaby.

I've been playing with Milt Jackson for 20-some-odd-years, off and on, but now we're getting a steady thing going. We work for maybe four months. Then he works three months a year with the MJQ, and the rest of us are free to work with other people.

**JP:** During the course of an interview that I did with Chico Hamilton, we were discussing the idea of "dividing" a note—the concept of laying behind, on, or in front of the beat, depending on who you're accom-



**A T U R A L**

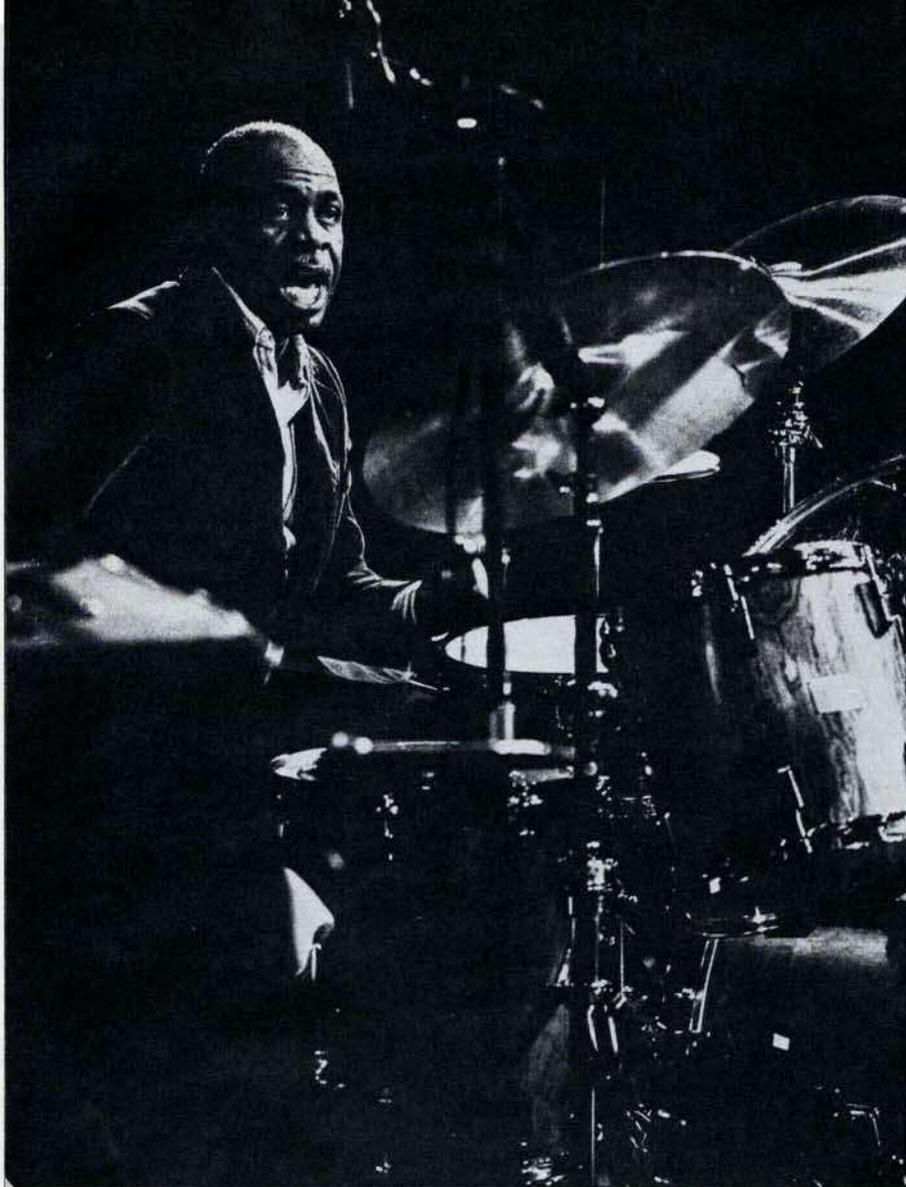


Photo by Joost Leijen

panying. We compared different examples, and Chico commented, "Can you imagine playing behind Milt Jackson?" He was referring to the fact that Milt is a prime example of someone who lays phrases beautifully with the "behind the beat" feel. Now that I've got you here, you're the man who can tell me just exactly what it is like.

**MR:** Milt depends on the rhythm to be right there for him. Sometimes he's on top, and sometimes he lays back. But his feeling is right down the middle. When you feel his playing, it might sound like he's back there, but he's right in there. It's like Billy Eckstine, who influenced a lot of musicians who played with him—Dizzy Gillespie and so forth. You know that instruments imitate the human voice. Billy Eckstine's musical phrasing was so hip that a lot of instrumentalists would try to duplicate his sound and phrasing. That's why the "lay behind the beat" feeling is so strong in jazz rather than the staccato feeling in rock. In jazz, you can play on top or behind, instead of right on it all the time. I guess that's the difference between jazz and rock.

**JP:** One of the biggest news bits in the jazz world today is the resurrection of the Blue Note record label. You were a part of the stable of players for Blue Note during the '60s—a period now considered to be a golden era. What was it like recording during that productive period?

**MR:** Each record date we did was fun, but it was also serious business. We would rehearse for two days first. But then when we went to the record date, it would be like a party. They would have food and a few drinks. It would be beautiful if everything went well. It usually did because everybody was so friendly. And Rudy Van Gelder, the recording engineer, really knew how to get a good sound from people. He really made it sound like you were listening to jazz live in the clubs. It was a beautiful experience for me, and I got to play with a lot of musicians. That was partly through the help of Duke Pearson.

Duke Pearson, Bob Cranshaw, and I had a trio together. We would record with a lot of musicians who came to New York and didn't have a band. We would be the rhythm section—maybe write out a couple of arrangements. The main thing was just

to *swing*—to get a good feeling. Alfred Lion and Frank Wolff co-owned Blue Note. They didn't care about anything as long as you swung, because that's what our music is. You've got to play it from your heart. So you could take a simple arrangement and use your creative ability to make something out of it. That's what was so good about Blue Note recording sessions; it wasn't all uptight.

**JP:** I heard that Blue Note was one of the only jazz labels at that time which paid for your prerecording rehearsals. That's creatively encouraging.

**MR:** Right. And that was good for the musicians. You would get maybe \$25 for a rehearsal. Boy, that \$25 was a lifesaver back in those days. We were young musicians and weren't making a lot of money in those days, but the music was *someh'n' else*.

**JP:** Could you pinpoint any of your favorite Blue Note album dates?

**MR:** One of my favorite ones was *Speak Like A Child* by Herbie Hancock. And I did a Duke Pearson record with Joe Henderson and Freddie Hubbard called *Sweet Honey Bee*. Oooh, that's a superb album. When you record, you're so busy working that you've got to bring yourself up to play, especially because there are no people there. You have to be up mentally, because sometimes you don't have a chance to listen to everything so closely. Sometimes you don't get a chance; you've got to go from one tune to another. But the fact that you're playing with great musicians like that is what's special. You just hope it all comes out so that you make a beautiful record.

**JP:** In contrast to recording with leaders like Lee Morgan who are highly spontaneous in the studio, you have worked with leaders like Horace Silver who are very arrangement/composition minded. Did that cramp your style?

**MR:** It's much more confining; they don't leave much to your creative ability. They want you to play a certain thing in a certain place all the time, which is good for your discipline. And it's also good to be able to make up your own rhythm. It's all good according to what you like best musically and financially. I prefer playing freer. Any musicians who study and are dedicated want to be themselves.

But sometimes you have to be somebody else, because you're a sideman and not a leader. You have to be able to give leaders what they want, or you won't work. One thing about Horace is that he knows *exactly* what he wants, which is good. There are a lot of leaders who depend on you to give them what they want, but they don't even know what they really want. So it puts a hard responsibility on a drummer.

A lot of people who write good music don't know what to write for the drums. They don't know about rhythm. A lot of leaders might say, "On these eight bars, give me a real church feeling—real Gos-

**"IF YOU DEMAND A CERTAIN STANDARD FROM YOURSELF, THEN YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THE BANDLEADERS. THEY'RE GLAD TO HAVE YOU THERE."**

Photo by Joost Leijen



pel." So you really have to know rhythm to play drums. You've got to know a rhythm authentically. You can't just be talking about playing one way if you're going to be a good sideman. I like being a sideman. I enjoy the challenge of being able to play something different. As for putting it together and being a bandleader, I never thought that way.

What made Herbie Hancock's date special was the great musicians who were involved. During that time, Hancock was working with Miles and Tony Williams. When I got to the studio, I asked him, "Why are you using me on this record?" because Tony had done *Maiden Voyage* and other great records with this group, and everybody was there except Tony. I had so much respect for Tony that I had my mouth hanging open at the fact that Herbie called *me* to make the record. He said, "I called you because you're the guy I wanted." It made me feel so good. Those guys are much younger than me, but musically they were much more advanced, because I had just started playing in New York a couple of years before.

**JP:** How do you feel about the material that Hancock's doing now? The role of the drums has sure changed in that.

**MR:** The rock stuff? I like it. If he plays it with conviction, I like it. I don't care as long as there's quality.

**JP:** He got a lot of flack from jazz musicians when he crossed over into funk, rock, and especially dance records with drum machines.

**MR:** People always have something to say. If you're a listener, of course you can criticize, because all you're doing is sitting and listening. But as a player, you've got a right to play what you want to play. There's one thing about musicians: They're criticized from the time they sit down to the time they get up. You can't play and not expect to work hard. Most people go to work and look for a way for the day to go easy. But you can't do that as a musician, because every ear is on you every time you play. Even when you practice, you're going to hear something from somebody—even from your own family: "Oh, you didn't practice for very long today!" [laughs]

**JP:** Everyone associates you with jazz. A lot of people don't realize that you started in Philadelphia by playing with rock/rhythm & blues groups.

**MR:** Yeah, it was more rhythm & blues than rock. I've been playing drums since I

was a baby. I could play naturally. I never had anything but a parade drum, and I played with marching bands until I went into the army. While I was in the army, I decided I wanted to play the set, so I practiced. I got out of the army in 1955 and played my first paying gig in 1956.

We used to have sessions right here in this house where I was raised. Lee Morgan, Reggie Workman, McCoy Tyner—all those guys used to come right here and my grandmother would be back there cooking. We would be in here all day. Each guy would have a jam session on a different day at his house; Sunday was my day. So we played every day when we were young—Kenny Barron, Arthur Hopper, C Sharpe, Jimmy Vance—a bunch of Philadelphia musicians.

I learned how to play jazz, but the only gigs I was getting were R&B gigs, because there were so many musicians around Philly that you had to prove yourself. For about a year, I played with a guy named King James, and he had a tenor player named Rudy Jones—meeaaann! Boy, this guy could swing. Then I played in another group called The Hi-Fives. We were all young guys trying to learn, so we played rhythm & blues. We didn't understand

jazz; you need a chance to do it. My chance was when I started playing with Sam Reed, an alto saxophone player. And then I started getting gigs with Jimmy Oliver and then with Jimmy Heath. He's from a few blocks from here.

In '59, I got a chance to go to New York to play. I had a day job all that time. I didn't *dream* I would ever be a full-time musician. Reggie Workman, who I knew, called me up. He was much younger than me but was into music more heavily, knew all the musicians, and he had been playing longer. He asked me if I wanted to come to New York to play with Gigi Gryce. So I

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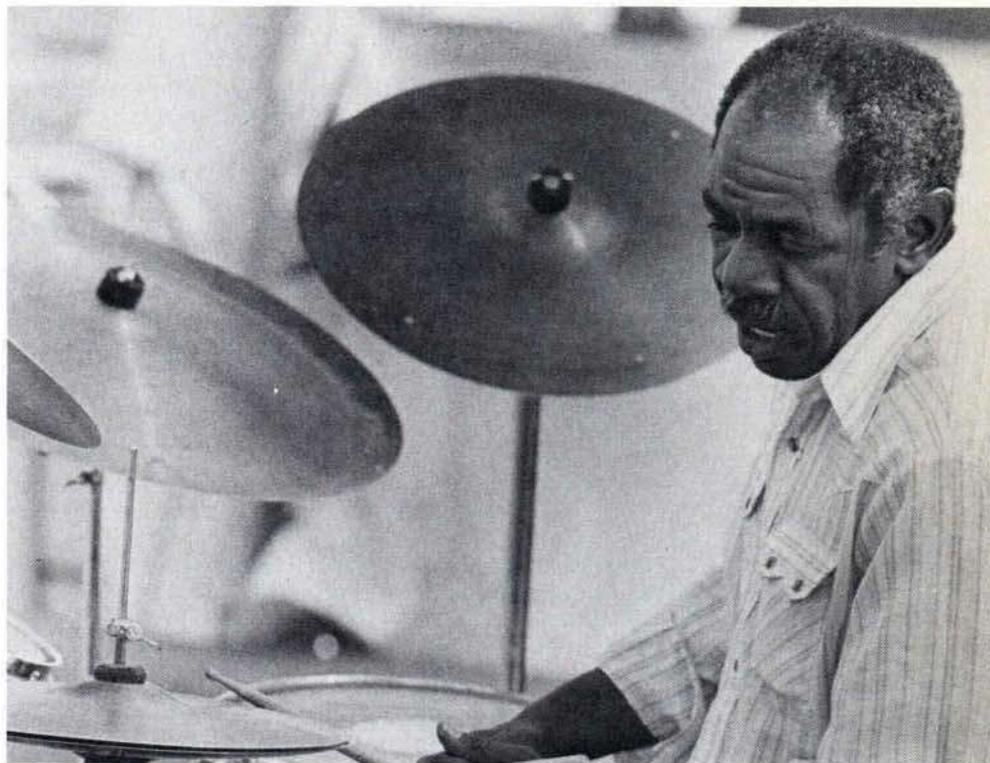


Photo by Veryl Oakland

# Eddie Bayers

by Robyn Flans

## OVER-COMING THE OBSTACLES

**W**HILE growing up, Eddie Bayers dug R&B and the likes of Wilson Pickett, James Brown, and Aretha Franklin. It seems like a far cry from his position as one of the primary drummers in Nashville, recording with such notables as Alabama, T.G. Shepard, Deborah Allen, Anne Murray, Ricky Skaggs, the Whites, the Judds, Lacy J. Dalton, Mel Tillis, Barbara Mandrell, Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Willie Nelson, Michael Murphy, Karen Brooks, Shelly West, Dottie West, Vince Gill, and Gary Morris. But to Bayers, music is music, and making music revolves around feel.

Born in Maryland, Eddie spent his early years moving around, since his father was a test pilot for the U.S. Navy. In 1958, however, the Bayers settled in Nashville. There are no early stories about banging on pots and pans or elementary school marching bands, for Eddie's training was on keyboards. He didn't begin playing drums until he was 25 years old. Now, ten years later, Eddie has proven that it's not how long you've played, but how you play. On break during a Karen Brooks session at Music Mill (Alabama's studio) in Nashville, Eddie candidly shared stories about his life of great difficulties and his current victory.

**RF:** I understand that someone else was supposed to be doing the Karen Brooks dates, but the consensus was that his playing wasn't "country" enough. Since you were hired for the gig, can you define what country drumming is?

**EB:** Not really, because the song and the way the other people on the date handle the situation usually dictate that. It might just be simplicity, or maybe it's something that isn't in a certain drummer's mind or heart. Maybe that drummer hasn't done a lot of country dates and really isn't able to understand what that is. Usually, that's more a matter of feeling than anything. My feeling comes from when I first started.

I did a lot of pop and country sound-alikes. So after doing that many things, maybe that's something I can subconsciously look back at, and it comes out when it's supposed to.

**RF:** What exactly is a sound-a-like?

**EB:** All the licks are copied in the music, and the voice is matched. Everything is legitimate as far as pay goes, and the company who does them is supposed to take care of royalties for writers.

**RF:** Is this like the K-tel stuff?

**EB:** We used to have the K-tel account, but that dealt with a whole different situation. That was the original artist, like we brought in John Kay from Steppenwolf and did all his stuff. We also did Faron Young.

**RF:** So you recut the old tunes?

**EB:** Right, because from what I understand, after five years, you can recut the hit. If the artist is not signed with the label again, they can pay the artist a flat fee to come in and sing over the tracks you recreated. In some cases, you couldn't even tell it wasn't the old track. We did the Gary U.S. Bonds song "Quarter To Three," and they literally had the FBI come in to hear the track with our count-off, our licks, and everything, to prove we hadn't bootlegged it. It was a great experience, because we did such a range of people from the Box Tops to Frankie Lane.

**RF:** So how did a classical pianist become a country drummer?

**EB:** Most musicians have a sideline instrument that they mess around with. That's pretty much what I did with drums, even while I was playing piano and studying. There were groups I was in that you would call show groups where everybody would switch up, but it wasn't anything I did seriously.

**RF:** When did you start playing keyboards?

**EB:** When I was about five years old. It was pretty much a situation where I picked it

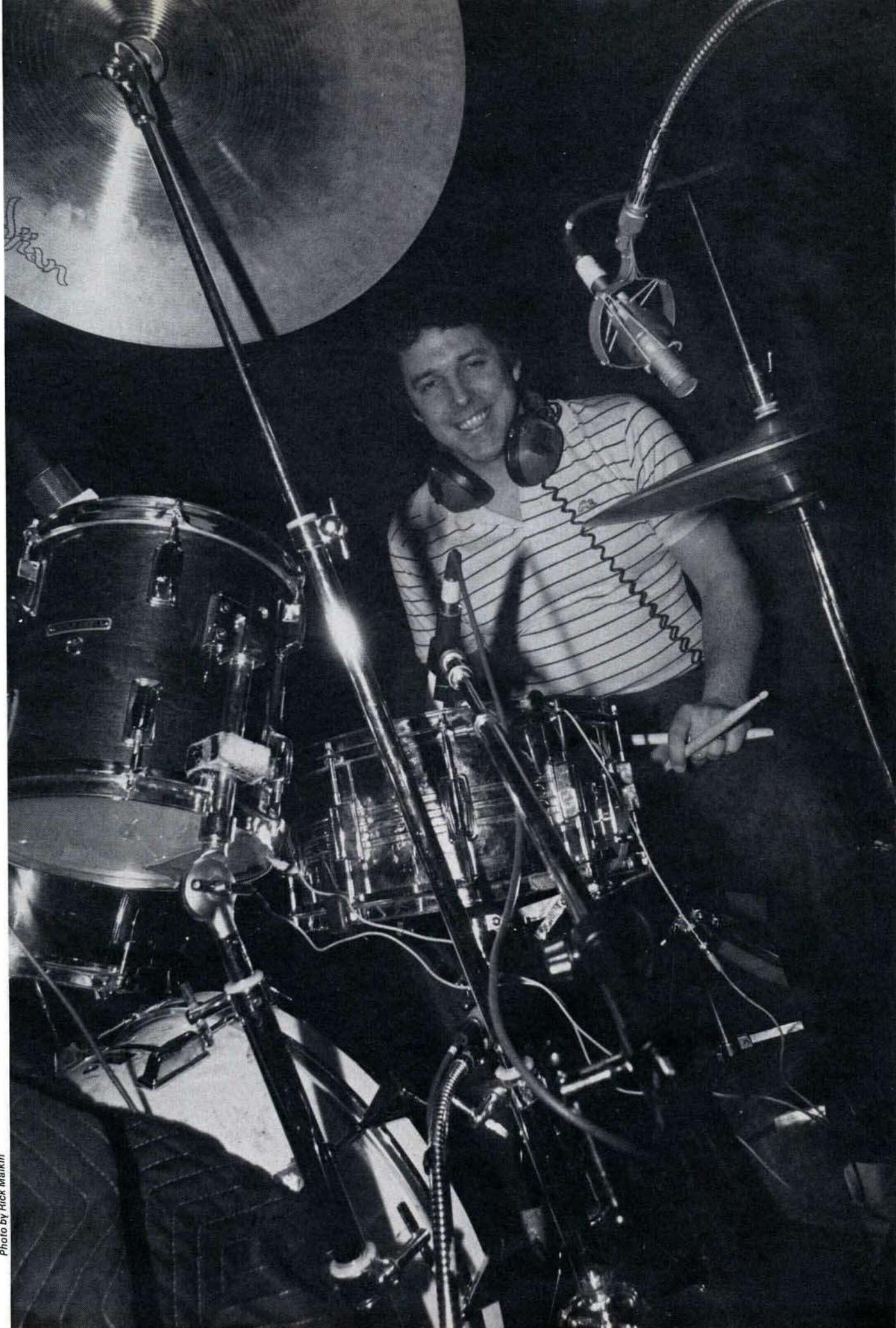
up by ear, pounding out melodies on the piano. My parents noticed, so they allowed me to get schooling. I studied until about my second year in college and then quit. In 1966, I lost my mother and sister in a car wreck. From that, I just sort of flipped out, went on the road, and played with groups. I never really got anywhere. Then I ran into Bobby Stevens of the Checkmates who saw me one night. They said they wanted me to join their organization, which was based out of Las Vegas at the time, so I went out there. I stayed there for a while and finally said, "This doesn't feel right," so I came back to Nashville in 1973. That's where I had my first encounter with Larrie Londin. He was working in a little group down at the Carousel Club, and they were looking for a piano player. I auditioned and got it. At that time, Larrie was still going out with other people whenever he could and was doing some sessions. He helped me get a few sessions on piano. But watching him was such an inspiration. He would do things that just flipped me out. Boots Randolph owned the club at the time, and while Boots was on, we had an hour and a half. So Larrie had his practice pad set up, and I did a lot of talking and working with him. I was there for about seven months, and during that time, I was working on drums.

**RF:** Why?

**EB:** I don't know, other than just the fact that I felt I was already comfortable in one situation. Maybe watching Larrie was such an inspiration that I wanted to do it. About six months later, I auditioned on drums for a top-40 band called the Mersey Blues, and I got the job. That was five nights a week, and it just kept going further.

Also, during that time, some friends of mine—Paul Whitehead, Jack Jackson, Pat Patrick and Doug Yoder—had started a studio, Audio Media, which is where the sound-a-like situation started. They were really struggling in the beginning, so at

Photo by Rick Maikin



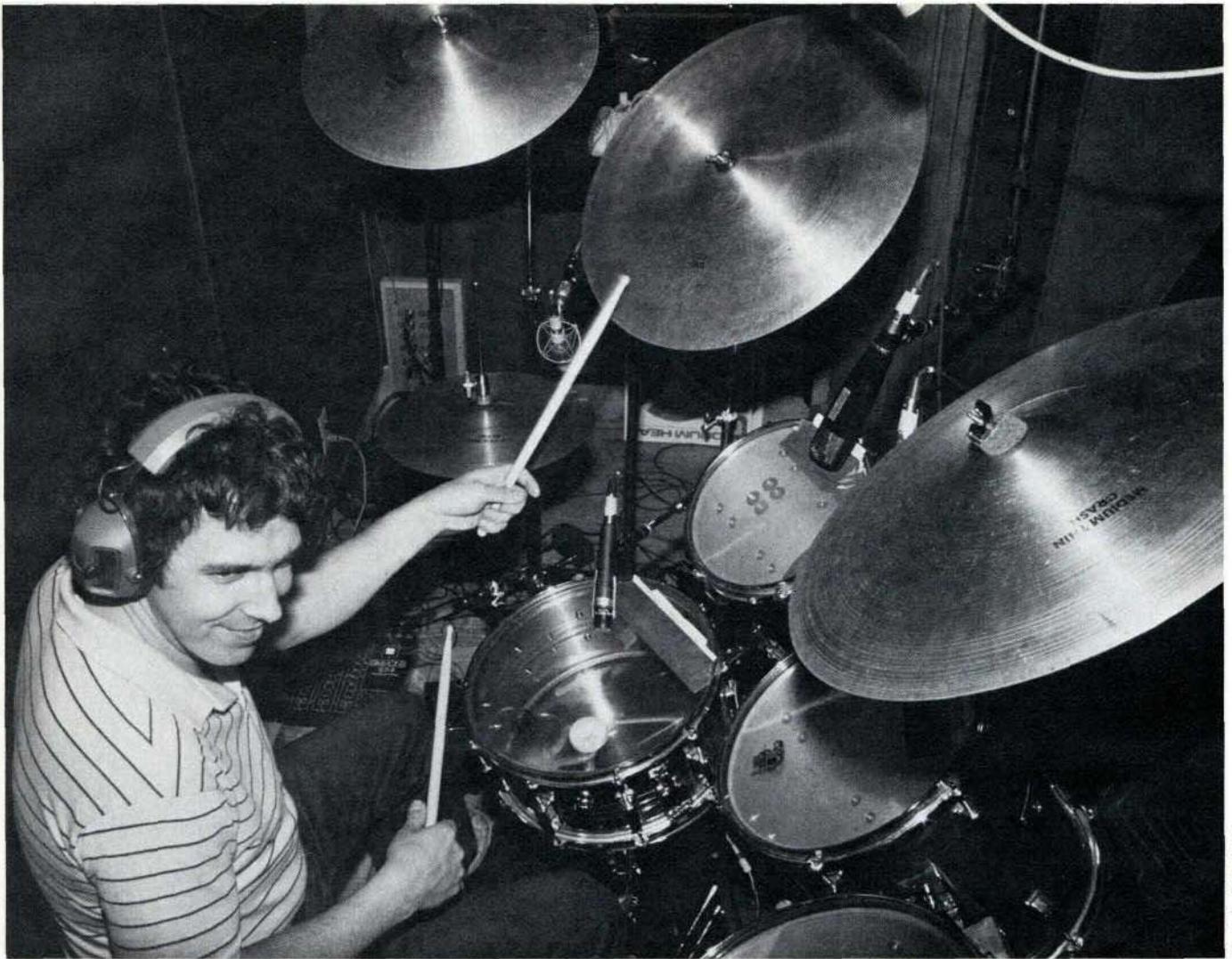


Photo by Rick Malkin

that time, we pretty much donated our services in engineering and playing. As it grew, we got some better accounts, like Walt Disney's account. Then, Paul Worley, one of the staff engineers, had a friend, Marshall Morgan, who had just finished engineering with the Eagles on the road. Marshall needed a job, Paul said to come over, and they hired him at Audio Media. Marshall knew Jim Ed Norman, of course, through the Eagles, and asked him to come hear the rhythm section they had in-house. Jim Ed liked it, and while he was still based in L.A., he would do his country stuff in Nashville. So we started with Mickey Gilley, went to Janie Fricke and Johnny Lee, and from that it became really successful. Our crew became known around town, and accounts came from that.

**RF:** When and why did that go from a staff situation to a more independent situation?

**EB:** It happened in about three years from the time I got here in '73, and it pretty much grew out of necessity. All of a sudden, calls started coming in, which I couldn't refuse. I kept having to work it out with the people at Audio Media, and it wasn't fair to them.

**RF:** How old were you when you started

playing the drums?

**EB:** I was about 25 years old.

**RF:** That takes a lot of courage. Most people, when they reach a certain age, won't start something new.

**EB:** It's not a thing I can say that I *did*. It just happened. The love of it was there, and I think that has everything to do with anything you want to do. I think that, if you really want it that bad and love it that much, all the obstacles will be overcome, just from positive thinking, and you will achieve. I think that, if there's any doubt in your mind, then that's your obstacle and that's the worst enemy.

**RF:** What did you actually do to learn the drums?

**EB:** I think a lot of it had to do with the fact that I was in that top-40 band at night. When you work in a band like that, you have to work up the songs, so you have to work up the licks you hear. The situation in the studio helped, too, because we were doing sound-a-likes, so you really had to be more precise about what you heard off the records. My knowledge of music helped quite a bit, because I was able to notate whatever I wanted to and learn from that. I think it was just the fact that I

was doing it every day. I was playing during the day and at night, as well.

**RF:** You never practiced at home?

**EB:** I didn't really have to. I was practicing and being paid for it, which was an opportunity that a lot of people don't have. It wasn't a situation where I had to say, "I've got to sit down and practice six hours a day." A lot of times that will cause you not to do it, because it becomes monotonous. This was just a "right place, right time" situation for me.

**RF:** Recording is very different from playing live. It came so naturally to you that I don't know if you can answer any questions as to how you do it, but can you give any tips for being a recording drummer as opposed to a live drummer? What do you have to know?

**EB:** Just listen to what's out there. That has everything to do with what you've got to do to keep up. Listening and playing to the music helps a lot. That's no different from when I practiced my classics. Playing to a metronome has everything to do with accompanying and getting that clock in my head. If young drummers can have their drums set up, put on music and play to it, it would help a lot. These are certainly not

things that any professor in college will tell you to do, but these are things that are necessary for a basis in the studio.

As far as drum tunings and things like that are concerned, I think that's where all of us help each other. This is not a town where you have to worry about people stealing your sound just because they come over to ask you something. That's where Larrie and the people at DOG Percussion have been such a help to me. When I would acquire a new set, I could go down to DOG and say, "Look, I've got these new 9-ply maple-shell toms. What would work best for them?" Larrie or Debbie [Gallant, owner of DOG and Larrie Londin's wife] would be able to tell me things that I would try. At first, the only problem I had was trying to make up my mind on things like that. I would try what other people suggested, but then after a while, I became more confident at what I was doing. Like I said, because of the opportunity I had every day, I could listen to what one thing did and hear it back on tape. Through that, I found the combination that I know works for drum tunings and what heads to use.

**RF:** Can you be specific?

**EB:** I use *Ambassador* clears on the toms, and on the snare, I use an *Emperor* clear. That doesn't work for brushes, but . . .

**RF:** What does?

**EB:** An *Ambassador* coated head. The coating will always make the brush sound brighter. Also, for a good, tight snare sound, that's the best head to use.

**RF:** To me, your snare sound is very identifiable. When I first heard "Between Two Fires" and "Second Hand Heart" by Gary Morris, I could tell that it was you. What is it that you're doing that is different from other people?

**EB:** I use a lower tuning and a looser snare than most. I also found that it's important to know your snare, as far as the mic' combination goes. I automatically know that, if somebody puts a condenser microphone on my snare, it's not going to work—not on the one I use most often, which is a brass snare. On my conventional snare, which is a regular 6 1/2 X 14, 9-ply maple shell, with a coated *Ambassador*, pretty much anything will work.

**RF:** When do you use that?

**EB:** I use that on a lot of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band stuff where there is a lot of brush work. I didn't use it on the first two hits that they had—"I Love Only You" and "Sharecropper's Dream." But that was the same combination that I like with an *SM-57* microphone, which is the all-purpose drum microphone. I think the rest of it is just me—the way it comes out when I play. When I get it to where I want it, it's hard to be explicit about why it comes out the way it does. So much of that is feeling. I don't really think it has a lot to do with the drums. The way they're being manufactured, I think you can take any set, get it

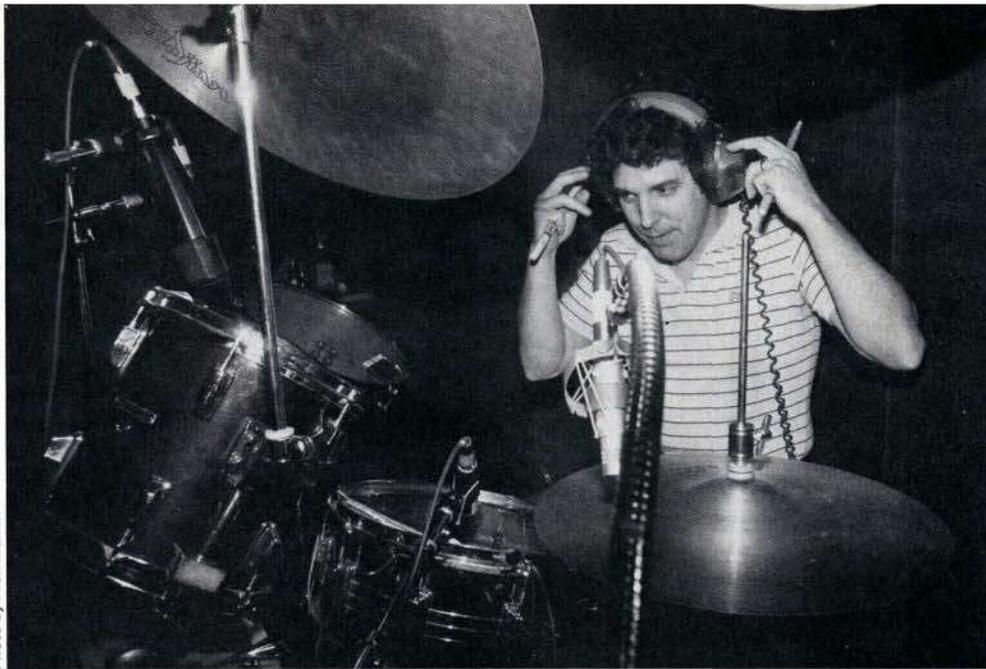


Photo by Rick Malkin

where you want it, and they'll all be good.

The other thing might be the environment it's in. The Gary Morris tunes were done at Bullet Studio, which has an extremely high ceiling. That has a lot to do with ambience. That also accounts for the difference. You can use the same combination, but the fact that the studios are different changes things.

**RF:** How do you compensate for that?

**EB:** It just took a while to find what works. You learn very quickly. As soon as you hit your drums, you go, "Ooooh, this needs something else." The accounts I have now are situations where the combinations of microphones are just about the same. The only difference is usually the toms, and that's the difference between a Sennheiser 421 and 414. The 414 is brighter because it's a condenser microphone, whereas the 421 is a dynamic microphone, which I'll always favor. I use a loose snare on a lot of things, which can cause a condenser microphone to break up. It can't handle the information and distorts. I have used it because I've had to, but it's not particularly to my liking.

**RF:** I'd like to name some artists and have you tell me what it's like working for them—Gary Morris.

**EB:** I've been doing his stuff since his first top-ten record, "Headed For A Heartache." That was Marshall Morgan and Paul Worley producing, so it was like being at home because it was the crew I started with. The most collaboration in that situation was between the artist and producer. We all already knew what to do. Of course, with arrangements, a lot of times they would leave it up to everybody in the room. They'd say, "Let's wait until we get to the session to decide what we ought to do with this instrumental part." We used the number system on that. It

wasn't explicitly written out to where I had to stick with one thing.

**RF:** Are there any projects that have been totally written out that come to mind?

**EB:** The only one I did was on the *9 To 5* album with Mike Post. He pretty much wrote everything out. And of course, a lot of the Gospel things and jingles are written. I think they don't write out the rest of them because you don't want to inhibit the musicians in any way. Whatever made someone else's project successful—which is why they booked you—is what they want on theirs, so they let you go. They'll always have little fine tunings for you, and of

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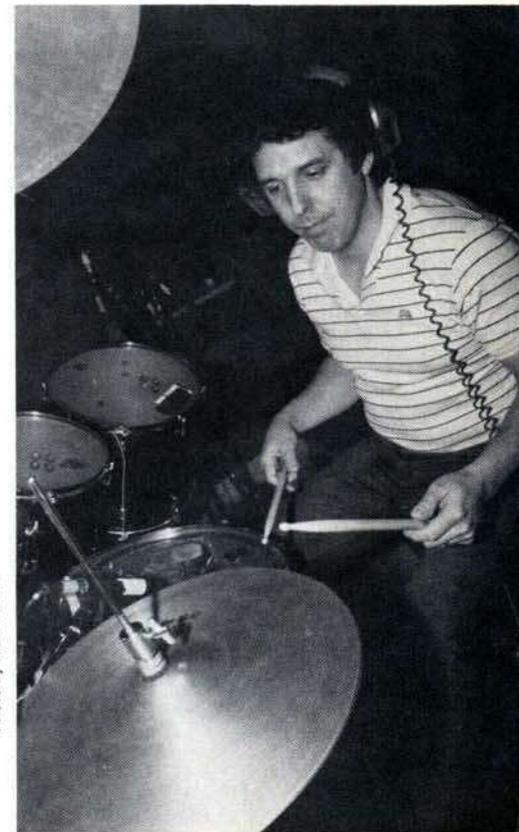


Photo by Rick Malkin

# THE DRUMMERS

## A ROUNDTABLE

**F**OR some strange reason, show drumming seems to be relegated to a position of secondary status in the eyes of young, aspiring professional drummers. It's an often overlooked phase of the music business, despite the fact that the drumming itself requires specialized skills, extreme musicality and versatility, and an incredible ability to adapt to any musical situation, often at a moment's notice.

Just who are these relatively unknown drummers who hold down the hotel and casino jobs in the nation's entertainment capitals? Most likely, they're people whose names you've never heard before and who you're not likely to read about in music magazines very often. Nonetheless, these are skilled players who, night after night, earn their livings playing elaborate production shows, spectacular revues, and backing many of the major stars in the music business.

In an effort to learn more about them, MD decided to pay another visit to Atlantic City, New Jersey, the major showplace of the East Coast. This time, seven of the town's busiest drummers and percussionists were asked to take a few hours from their heavy schedules to meet with us.

Paul Goldberg, Larry Iatarola, Billy Jones, Ted Greenberg, Harry Himles, Mike Pultro, and Dean Witten have collectively played the lounges and major showrooms of Resorts International, Caesar's Palace, Bally's Park Place, The Sands, The Tropicana, Harrah's Marina, The

Claridge, and The Playboy Hotel Casino. The round table discussion that follows offers a revealing glimpse at the demanding world of show drumming through the eyes of seven gentlemen who have literally seen and done it all—The Drummers Of Atlantic City.

**JD:** The first thing I'd like to know is how each of you landed your job in Atlantic City.

**Greenberg:** I was playing drums in a lounge here when a contractor hired me.

**Goldberg:** Actually, I was spotted by one of the musicians who got the job for me. He was familiar with my playing from having heard me at various lounges. When the opening came, he contacted the producer for me.

**Iatarola:** I had to get my union card first—you know, that route. The way that works is, after you get your union card, you play the lounges and play with the right people until somebody sees you. You hang out and try to play as much as you can. Then, if somebody gets sick, you might sub. Before you know it, that drummer might leave, and you've got the gig.

**Jones:** I already had my card, and there weren't too many musicians in Atlantic City at that time. I started to get calls to work club dates. One thing led to another just from being down here. Just the fact that there was really nobody here helped a lot. I've been down here about four years, and I've done a lot of diversified work.

The work you do here is either stars or

production shows. I did a production show at Playboy. Then after three months, one of the cats in the band became musical director at Harrah's, and he asked me to go over there with him. I was fortunate. A lot of people came to see the show. Then Harrah's went to a star policy, and I was just playing for opening acts. I guess I got my reputation because I've been working a lot, and I got to the different hotels when acts would come into town and request me.

**Wilten:** I've always made it a policy, when moving into a new area, to call all the people who've done the work I'm interested in doing. I'd introduce myself, which often meant going to somebody's house to do some duets, sight-reading, and talking about music in general. I did that when I came here. Two hotels had just opened, and when I called them, there was only one guy ahead of me who had applied. When Harrah's opened, he got the job, and when the Claridge opened, I managed to land that one. Before that, I'd sometimes get opportunities to sub.

When we started, it was all seven-day weeks. After a while, people went nuts and had to take subs. Most of the musicians, including myself, began by subbing for someone else. Then, when a new hotel would open up, you were recognized as either a player or a nonplayer. That's how it works.

**Himles:** I had worked for Paul Mann, who was the contractor for all the conventions in the area. I started with him when he got

Paul Goldberg



Photos by Robert Marriner

Larry Iatarola



# F ATLANTIC CITY

## DISCUSSION

by Jim Dinella

the contract for the show at Caesar's Palace. Before that, I was at Resorts subbing for the house drummer. When Paul opened Caesar's, I went with him and stayed for two years. Then we moved to the Sands, where I stayed for two-and-a-half years. Now I'm back at Resorts.

**JD:** Did you ever have to audition for a job?

**Witten:** No, I didn't. I knew that some of the contractors had been calling rehearsal bands together and using *that* as a means of listening to people. But I never participated in that, because my instruments are too cumbersome. Nobody could ask me to come to a rehearsal and bring a thousand pounds of equipment. Musicians would go down and play, and they never knew why they were playing. They didn't know if they had a chance of getting a job or not. But they went because those people were very powerful. If they said, "Come down and play," you went.

Also, a lot of the musicians coming into Atlantic City were very young, and *they* were really the ones being tested. People like Harry and myself had been working a lot of places before this, and reputation served in place of auditions as far as we were concerned.

**Himles:** Recommendation and past record of experience did it.

**JD:** Could some of you give a brief description of the type of rooms you play in?

**Iatarola:** Mine's a real big ballroom. It has

nothing on the walls to soak up the sound, so they really have a serious problem doing the mix. That's why they put me in a booth. I'd rather be in a booth like the one Paul's got—all the way up to the ceiling. It should be sealed off. My cymbals leak into the trumpet and violin mic's, and that's why they put the *Plexiglas* up in the first place. But when the glass isn't there, I get a much better feel for what's going on around me.

Lots of times the conductor will play horn up front. Well, while he's playing, man, I can't even feel what he's doing. I can't hear, because they never give me enough of him in the monitor. And when they do, they take the rest of the band out. Paul's situation is a little bit different.

**Goldberg:** Mine is a small cabaret theater that seats maybe 350. The dancers are on the stage, and the band is set up on the side of the stage at the same level. It's a rhythm section consisting of piano, bass, guitar, and drums, with the drums sealed off from the rest of the section. That has its pros and cons. Sound-wise it's better, but if I want to communicate with the guys, it's tough. I mean, I can't yell out, "Hey, what's next?"

**Greenberg:** At Atlantis [formerly Play-boy], I'm on stage. I'm fortunate to have a good sound man and good acoustics in the room, and *no Plexiglas*. I'm open, live—string section to the right, band to the left. We're pretty much on top of one another, but it's a good listening situation.

**Goldberg:** Every room is different. I'm fortunate that I don't have to move and

readjust to different sounds. We have a Prophet synthesizer doing the horn and string parts. In the larger situation, you have to be very supportive, because you have all those people who have to be in constant sync. So, you have to play a lot simpler. In this group, we get to stretch out because the dancers are used to the way we play. We have to fill up the spaces because we aren't a large orchestra. So, the playing is different.

**JD:** When Atlantic City first opened up, wasn't it common for drummers to assume that all the jobs would be filled by drummers from Vegas and other places?

**Greenberg:** Not true. Your playing ability and your connections could get you in.

**Goldberg:** When the casinos were new, a lot of the acts were from Vegas. And a lot of the local musicians were getting annoyed wondering why all these out-of-town acts were coming in. But I'll be honest. They were tight, and they had been for years. Atlantic City musicians weren't groomed well enough. Now, the local musicians are represented by agents who are grooming them. Now our bands are just as good as the West Coast bands.

**Jones:** When this town was starting up, the majority of acts came in from out of town. They still do, but so many entertainers are moving here now. People who originally came in from, say L.A., for a three-month engagement now work here all the time, and they're using local musicians.

**JD:** Would you say that the drummers who play the lounges make more money, not just because they do more nights, but



# THE DRUMMERS ○

because they're working the lounges?

**Himles:** Their scale isn't as high as the shows.

**Witten:** The benefit lies in having the option to do both, like Mike does. He works a star show doing percussion and does an afternoon gig at a lounge. You could do that. So could I. You augment your playing in the lounges. It's difficult to get consistent work to the point where you can stop looking.

**Jones:** Actually, the lounge situation is pretty good here. There are at least two lounges in most of the casinos. This place has three; the other Harrah's has two, and the bands rotate. There's a lot more lounge work than theater work.

**Greenberg:** Sometimes, when you're just playing an opening act, it's like 11:30 and you're done. You usually do two shows a night, about an hour and a half each. If you wanted to, you could do a date between shows. There were times when I was done at three or four in the morning, and I went right to the studio to finish up some acts. I'm sure everybody here is trying to get as much work as possible. It really just depends on your schedule.

**Pultro:** I just finished working a lounge at Resorts. That was in the afternoon. I was done at 7:00, and I had an 8:00 show at the Tropicana. So I was able to go over and play.

**Iatarola:** If you don't do it, somebody else will.

**Goldberg:** You never turn down a gig, no matter how busy you are. If you can't do it, you send a sub. But you never turn down a gig, because the contractor may never call you again. Contractors go with the musicians who make themselves available. So you do everything possible—even jamming. You can't stop just because you have a steady gig. You should always keep looking for other things.

**JD:** Are any of you ever asked to switch between a revue and the main headliner upstairs?

**Goldberg:** Not at this hotel. If the drummer upstairs got sick, the contractor knows I'm here and that I could find someone to do it.

**Iatarola:** That's pretty much how it works.

**Jones:** You frequently have to fly from casino to casino. I've thrown \$20 at cab drivers and said, "Get me to Harrah's in ten minutes!" One time, I was working over at Playboy and had to get to Harrah's in 20 minutes. It was raining the night of the show, and there were no cabs when I came out. I finally got a cab and got over to Harrah's. Crystal Gayle was there, and I was supposed to play the overture for the opening. I got there two minutes before the show and jumped right on the drums. It's weird psychologically because you're so up trying to get to the gig on time, and then you have to wind down in order to play the show. It's strange.

**JD:** Is there more of a call for a percussion-

ist in a house band, since outside acts seldom bring in their own percussionists the way they bring in drummers?

**Pultro:** Most places have a house drummer and percussionist. It seems that the percussionist works more because of the outside acts bringing in drummers. Of course, you could be lucky enough to be on a retainer, if the contractor works the deal out for you. That guarantees that a drummer gets paid whether or not the act comes in with its own drummer.

A couple of places tried to work it out where the drummer for the headliner would also play the opening act, which would save having to pay the house drummer. Fortunately, that hasn't been done too much.

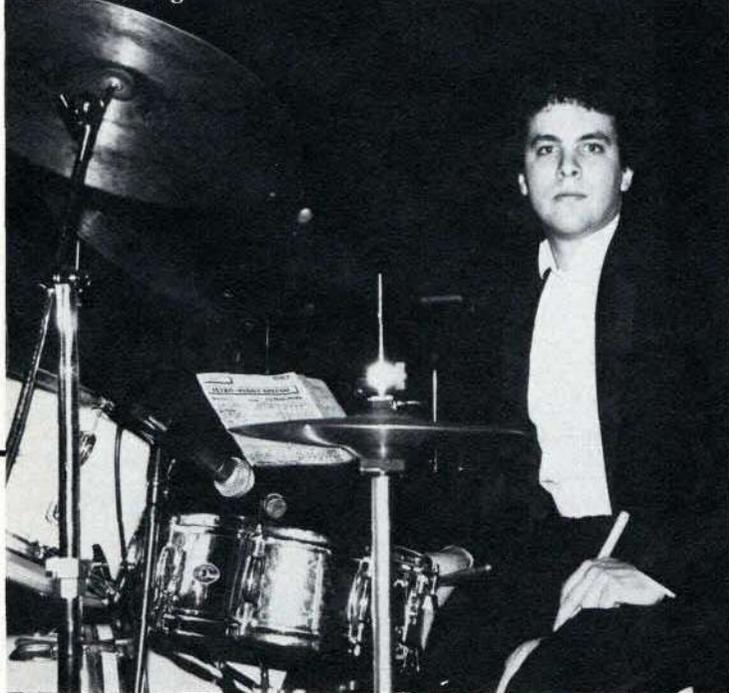
**Himles:** I think the general picture in this town is that house drummers are playing less and less, unless you're talking about a production show. But the acts are becoming more sophisticated. It's also probably due to their lack of trust in the local players because of what they find in the various cities they play.

**Witten:** They tend to be *overly* cautious.

**JD:** Do you think they feel that they shouldn't take a chance because there's only one day of rehearsal?

**Himles:** No, that's not it. Back in '79, when I opened Caesar's, Sammy Davis's drummer got sick. The night before, someone said to me, "Hey Harry, I hear you're doing Sammy tomorrow!" Well, I didn't

Ted Greenberg



Harry Himles



Photos by Robert Marriner

sleep all night. I had three hours to rehearse, but I did it.

**Witten:** Another big problem here is the inconsistency. We do the star shows, but it's never really that steady because of the number of artists coming in with their own players—self-contained acts. For example, this year we have Tom Jones coming in, self-contained. Sheena Easton is coming in, again self-contained. Melissa Manchester is self-contained; Julio Iglesias is self-contained. The list goes on and on.

**Jones:** One casino was using tapes for a show—no live music whatsoever. Luckily, that's changed, and now they have all live music. I worked Playboy for four months before going to Harrah's, and after I left, they put tapes in that they had done in New York someplace. They had a revue with all taped music. It lasted about eight months, but it didn't go over that well. People like to see live musicians.

**Greenberg:** I think that, if you interviewed every person on every instrument in town, most of them would tell you that they're dying to get on a production show. It's six nights a week, and you generally sign a two- or three-month contract, with options. That's really where the security is for a person doing this type of work.

**JD:** Mike, have you found it difficult to get work as a drummer, since you do a lot of percussion?

**Pultro:** Yes. That was a dilemma I found myself in. When I first came to Atlantic

City, I landed a job doing percussion, and it was the first time I'd ever played percussion on a job. Unfortunately, I was labeled a percussionist, just like a drummer is labeled as *only a drummer*. There are very few cases where a drummer can play percussion well and vice versa. I know a lot of people who play just percussion, and there are people who spend their whole lives on the set. That's all well and good, but people like myself who can do both get stereotyped. So it has been a little difficult for me to find work as a drummer. But the more work I do as a drummer, the more people hear me and, hopefully, remember me.

**JD:** On Broadway, subs are called to sit in the pit for a few nights to read the book, without playing. Then they take over without actually rehearsing the show. How is that handled down here?

**Greenberg:** Well, there's nothing to watch, really, because at Atlantis the acts change every week. There's a rehearsal on the day of the opening.

**Jones:** It depends on the situation. When you're playing for stars and you sub for someone, you go in at rehearsal and everyone gets to see the music and meet the conductor. When you sub for a production show, you have the opportunity to see the book and maybe even take the tape home with you. Sometimes you don't. Recently, the drummer at the Sands got sick and called me on a Wednesday morning for a Wednesday night sub. So, I didn't see the

book at all. But it was with a click, so I just went in and did it.

**Greenberg:** As far as I'm concerned, subbing makes the world go 'round. It enables you to have the freedom to do other things while you cover yourself with another player.

**Goldberg:** You just have to be certain that the subs you get are dependable, because you're putting your name on the line. When you're offered a gig that you can't do and you throw it to a friend, if your friend doesn't keep up the standard, it reflects on you.

**Greenberg:** And when you go in to sub, you have to establish a rapport, not only musically, but attitude-wise as well. You also have to make sure that, when the person you're subbing for comes back, everything will still be at the same high standard.

**Jones:** I used to go to Resorts to look at the book in order to make myself available for subbing. But there wasn't that much work for subs at the time. The cats who were here working were glad to be working, because before gambling, Atlantic City wasn't exactly the entertainment capital of the world. The drummers here scuffled for years, and then all of a sudden, they had this chance to make a lot of money.

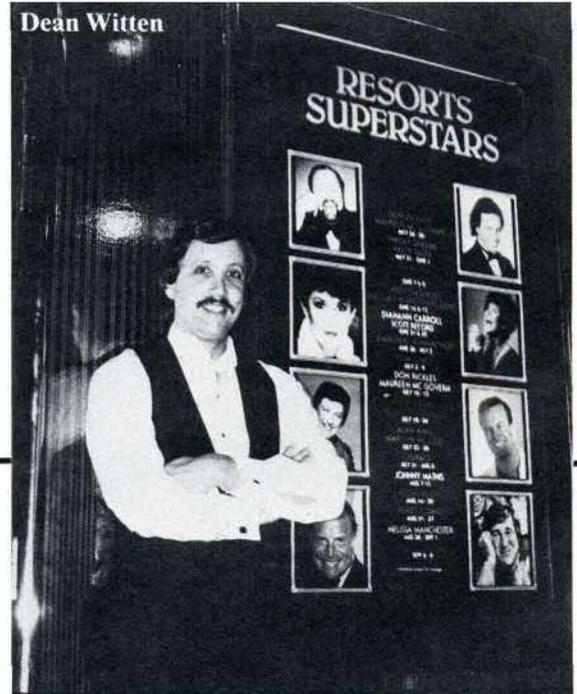
There's more work for subs now, but when I first came down here, the contractor wouldn't let me take time off. I was working seven nights a week. It got to the

*continued on page 102*

Mike Pultro



Dean Witten





# Roli Garcia, Jr.

*Roli Garcia, Jr., is a drummer from Laredo, Texas, with an unusual string of accomplishments to his credit. In just eight years of playing the drums, Roli has jammed with Vinnie Colaiuta's band, appeared as a guest artist at several NAMM shows, picked up endorsements with drum, cymbal, and stick companies, been featured on the cover of Jazz Educator's Journal after winning the National Association of Jazz Educator's Young Talent Award, and appeared at that organization's convention. Most recently, Roli performed a "drum battle" duet with Louie Bellson at Zildjian Day in Dallas. Not a bad collection of achievements in the career of any player—and more remarkable when you consider that Roli Garcia is only ten years old!*

*Roli was born on June 4, 1975, and began playing drums almost immediately. His father, Roli Sr., who is also a drummer, was attending North Texas State University. Fusion was the popular musical style at NTSU at the time, and by the age of two, Roli Jr. could sing and play along to Chick Corea tunes from the Leprechaun album. As a toddler, Roli Jr. spent his first few years on and around the campus, associating with the many drummers there. He would also attend his father's practice sessions (as well as those of various lab bands), playing on a small set of his own, which consisted of a 10" snare, 10" tom, 16" bass drum, a cymbal, and a pedal.*

*In 1978, upon his father's graduation from NTSU, Roli Jr. and his family moved to Laredo, Texas, where Roli Sr. opened a drum shop in 1979. This gave "Little Roli" the opportunity to be around drum equipment of all kinds. The store was next to the family home, so Roli Jr. spent most of his time there, and eventually he pieced together a large, full-size set of his own. With this kit he practiced constantly, along with a music collection that numbered 50 albums, 40 cassettes, and over 15 reels of tape. He also recorded himself constantly*

*to gauge his own progress. And there's no denying that that progress has been remarkable.*

*Modern Drummer spoke with Roli Jr. and his father about the development of this young drummer's abilities, and his goals for what looks to be a very promising future. Shy and polite, Roli Jr. was content to let his father do most of the talking. He lets his drumming speak for itself.*

**RVH:** Do you remember how you got started playing drums?

**Jr:** I started when I was one and a half. My dad plays, and I just walked over to the set one day and started playing on it.

**RVH:** You're ten now, so you've been playing for just over eight years. Who do you study with?

**Jr:** I study with my father, but I listen to a lot of other drummers.

**Sr:** We tend to interact together and exchange ideas. We have two kits set up, which we'll play together. Or sometimes I'll play keyboards and he'll play drums, or he'll play keyboards—which he does as well as drums—and I'll play drums. I'm not a keyboard player per se, but I can get around it well enough that we can get a time thing going—just steady time. That's important, because drumming is not all soloing. It's not all flash and chops. That's what I emphasize when I play with him on keyboards. What I teach him on the set is the technique to allow him to build up his ideas. And he has a lot of ideas; they just come out and come out, like a chain reaction. I try to teach him how to get around the set with ease, in order to make it easy for him to produce his ideas.

**RVH:** Roli Jr., you mentioned that you listen to a lot of drummers. Which ones do you particularly like?

**Jr:** Vinnie Colaiuta, Billy Cobham, Tony Williams, and Steve Smith.

**RVH:** Do you ever go back a little farther and listen to players like Buddy Rich, Louie Bellson, or Mel Lewis?

**Sr:** He never really went back that far in his personal interests. We've kind of pushed the fusion thing, in order for him to have

that ability to flow and improvise at the same time. I think that's what helped develop his style a lot. I think that, if he had tried to be more bebop-ish, he wouldn't be able to play half the way he plays now. It's two different techniques altogether. Where the more traditional jazz style involves riding with other players, the stuff Roli plays—although of course it also involves other players—is freer. It also involves rock influences at the same time, so it's more contemporary. That's what I fed into him when I was studying at North Texas State.

**RVH:** How much time do you put in each day on your drums, besides what you do with your normal schoolwork?

**Jr:** Two or three hours.

**Sr:** I think it's a little more than that. When he gets home from school he goes straight for the drums, and he'll play till 10:00 or 11:00 at night if we let him. He plays, records himself, and plays along with other tapes. He's got a little two-year-old brother who fights him for the set now, though.

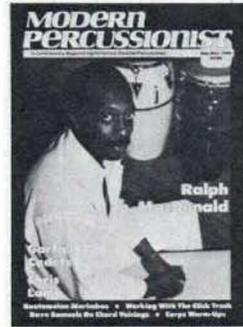
**RVH:** You're playing on a regular-size set now, aren't you?

**Jr:** Yes. It's a Drum Workshop kit, with two 16 x 22 bass drums, 8 x 8, 8 x 10, 10 x 12, 11 x 13 toms, 14 x 14 and 16 x 16 floor toms, and a 6 x 14 wood snare. I'm also endorsing Zildjian cymbals and Pro Mark drumsticks.

**RVH:** What would you like to do with your drumming?

**Jr:** Be in a fusion band.

**Sr:** We're working on a couple of projects that we're going to try to get off the ground this year. It's a hard thing to find musicians his age. Even among 18 year olds, there aren't many fusion players right now, especially in our area of Laredo, Texas. That makes it even harder. I was talking to Tom Coster recently. He said that keyboard artists often get a bass guitar and drummer, prerecord them, and then play keyboards over that as a solo act. But there's never been anything like that for a drummer—at least not in Tom's type of



## *Thank You*

We would like to thank the following artists who made significant contributions to *Modern Percussionist's* first year:

Dale Anderson, Ray Barretto, James Blades, Gary Burton, The Garfield Cadets, Forrest Clark, Dennis DeLucia, Vic Firth, George Gaber, Gordon Gottlieb, Ralph Hardimon, Marty Hurley, Bobby Hutcherson, Donald Knaack, Chris Lamb, Morris Lang, Ralph MacDonald, Montego Joe, Greg & Judi Murray, Nexus (Bob Becker, Bill Cahn, Robin Engelman, Russell Hartenberger, John Wyre), Louis Oddo, Olatunji, Arthur Press, Emil Richards, Tim Richards, Dave Samuels, Fred Sanford, John Santos, Carol Steele, Leigh Howard Stevens, and all of our fine writers and photographers.

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music. There are *Music Minus One* drummer records, but they're mostly bebop-type things. There really hasn't been anything in odd-meter or fusion-style situations available for a drummer. Tom was very interested in what might be developed from that idea. So one thing we'd like to do with Roli Jr. is to put the music together on tape and present a show. I mean, look at Menudo. They sing to pre-recorded music and are doing very well at that. Nowadays, you can just touch a button, everything goes on, and you can just play along with it. There are synthesizers and sequencers that you can feed all that stuff into and play it back. So we've got something like that in mind for Roli Jr., until other players his own age mature in that style and can play along with him. We want to keep the same size level: little kids playing hip music.

We've also been approached by several elementary schools to do some clinics for them, where Roli Jr. would go in and demonstrate a drum unit, either electronic or a drumset, and show the kids his age what it's all about.

**RVH:** That could really help encourage kids to become interested in drums at an early age.

**Sr:** That's right. One fault of the school systems is that, up until now, the only outlet for music at the lower grade levels has been marching band. You can't make a living playing a marching snare drum. I think the music departments in schools should have a more contemporary approach to music, especially with all the equipment available now that didn't exist when I went to school.

**RVH:** Roli Jr., do you enjoy all the traveling you've been doing, making appearances at shows and concerts?

**Jr:** Yes!

**Sr:** I brought him out to the Anaheim, California NAMM show for the first time in 1982, when he was six. That's when Vinnie Colaiuta saw him play and invited him to the club where Vinnie was playing that night. So Roli sat in with Vinnie's band that night at the Flying Jib in L.A. We still talk to Vinnie once in a while on the phone. Billy Cobham's been down to our store in Laredo a couple of times. He has sat down and talked with Roli, and played with him a little bit. That's been a tremendous experience for Roli.

**RVH:** Getting involved with endorsements and public appearances is exciting, but also involves a lot of pressures. Do you think this might all be a bit much for a ten-year-old boy?

**Sr:** I think he should have had this exposure when he was five or six. He's been playing like this all his life. I've never seen another player like him, and I've been around pretty much. My father and I go back a long time in the music business. I've seen kids who play drums, but not at the level that he's been able to reach.



# TRIUMPH

## GIL MOORE

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Another time a stick nearly tore off my ear—blood was coming out all over the place. So I finally decided that I had to use a synthetic stick. I tried them all, and the problem was that they felt too heavy; plus, of course, they didn't feel like hickory sticks, which is what I'm used to. So I looked around and found that Aquarian Accessories Corp. (1140 N. Tustin Ave., Anaheim, CA 92807, 714-632-0230) solved the problem. Their sticks feel and sound great. I'm using the Formula X-10™ Combos with Shock Grips™ as pictured.

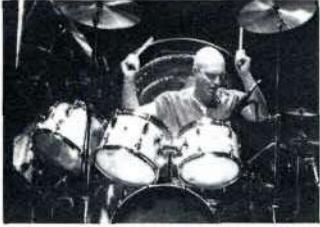
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# ROCK CHARTS

Photo by Michael S. Jachles



**Chris Slade:**

*Transcribed by Richard DeCarlo, Jr.*

# "Closer"

This month's *Rock Charts* features the opening track from the debut album by The Firm (*The Firm*, Atlantic 7 81239-1, recorded 1985). Chris Slade charges through this cut, combining the aggressive feel of hard rock with some well-placed fills and cymbal punctuations.

♩ = 144

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HH TT SD FT BD HH TT w/foot Rimshot

This page of musical notation is for a bass instrument, likely a double bass, and consists of ten staves of music. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. There are numerous accidentals, including flats and naturals, and dynamic markings like accents (>) and breath marks (circles). The music is organized into measures, with some measures containing repeat signs (double bar lines with dots). In the fifth staff, there are four measures with repeat signs and numbers 2, 3, 4, and 5 above them, indicating a sequence of variations or a specific technique. The notation is dense and detailed, typical of a professional musical score.

The image displays ten staves of musical notation for a bass instrument. The notation is complex, featuring a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are several accidentals, such as flats and naturals, scattered throughout. Performance markings are present, including accents (v) and breath marks (o). The music is organized into measures, with some measures containing multiple notes beamed together. The notation is written in a single system across ten staves.

*Gold Record Drummer, Studio Owner, Producer*

# STEVE MISSAL



Steve Missal, Billy Idol's "White Wedding" drummer, says, "No other cymbal records better and is as durable as Profile. It's my choice and the choice of other leading professionals around the world."

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by Robyn Flans



## Studio Drumming: A Producer's Perspective

*Sitting with Val Garay in his office at his studio, Record One, it is easy to see why artists enjoy working with him. He's easy-going and warm. Even with all the hubbub and demands of the studio, he still puts his total concentration into this interview about drums and drummers.*

*Having engineered and/or produced such classic albums as Linda Ronstadt's Heart Like A Wheel, Prisoner In Disguise, Hasten Down The Wind, Simple Dreams, Living In The U.S.A., Mad Love, and Get Closer, James Taylor's J.T. and Flag, Jackson Browne's The Pretender, Kim Carnes' Mistaken Identity (from which came the Grammy Award-winning "Bette Davis Eyes"), and the Motels' All Four One and Little Robbers, Val has worked with an extensive amount of musicians. Drummers on his projects include Ed Greene, Russ Kunkel, Jeff Porcaro, Jim Gordon, Jim Keltner, Chuck Blackwell, Ringo Starr (on projects with Richard Perry), Charlie Watts, Craig Krampf, Chester Thompson, Hal Blaine, Nigel Olsson, John Guerin, Rick Marotta, and Andrew Gold, who drummed on some of Val's tracks. Since drums are the crux of all records, in Val's estimation, it is no surprise that he has definite ideas about the instrument and what he needs from a drummer.*

**RF:** What do you require of a drummer in the studio?

**VG:** Primarily that the drummer hit the drums hard. It's very important that drummers attack the drums. And time—

I'm a fanatic for time. Some people who make records don't realize it, but the layman is very accurate in terms of feeling time. There's a clock that's built into everybody, and if the time starts to get strange or differs from the front to the back of the song, people feel it. I work on getting drummers to play at the same speed at the end of the track as they had at the beginning. Craig Krampf is real good at that now, although he wasn't when he first started working with me. I just sent him home with a metronome and told him to figure out where I come once you play a fill through a bar. That's the big mistake that drummers make. That's the way they lose it. They usually don't have any trouble playing straight time, but when they go to do a fill, that's where the time starts to fall apart. If you play a fill with a metronome and you don't end up on the click, you understand what's happening. Craig worked at it real hard and got real good at it. He can play with a drum machine better than just about anybody I know.

**RF:** How do you feel about drum machines?

**VG:** I love them for a lot of reasons. One reason is because they are something new—new toys, new technology. You get bored doing the same thing over and over. Also, they open up a whole new world. I don't think drum machines eliminate drummers, though. My favorite combination is a drummer playing *with* a drum machine. The drum machine plays, say, a cabasa and a tom-tom fill, and the drummer plays the kick, the snare, and the hi-hat against it. Or the drum machine plays just the kick and the snare, and the drummer plays the hi-hat figure, the tom fills, and the cymbals, which is a great combination. It's funny how people are afraid of new technology sometimes. Craig Krampf once made an interesting comment about it. He said that, when they first came out, he was afraid of them, because he was worried that they might threaten what he does for a living. He said, "I figured out that I had to learn to work *with* them, not against them." It's true because there is a mentality that a drummer has. A keyboard player like Steve Goldstein, who works with me on almost everything, can program drum parts real well, but as a keyboard player, there is a certain mentality that he misses sometimes. A drummer is usually the only person who would have it.

**RF:** You're not one of those producers who programs them himself?

**VG:** No, I let drummers play drums. I don't expect them to do my job, and I won't do theirs. To me, that's what the role of a strong producer is—finding what people's strong points are and using them.

**RF:** Some people feel that non-drummers present more options, because they *don't* have the drummer's mentality and aren't confined by preconceived drum ideas.

**VG:** But I don't work with drummers who are confined. I work with drummers who come up with something new every time they do something. To me, that's the ticket. Not only do you get the layman's concept—because that's what I am since I don't play drums every day—but you also get something new.

**RF:** How do you feel about the Simmons?

**VG:** I use them all the time. I like them, too.

**RF:** You don't feel they may be overused on studio products?

**VG:** No. I'm sure that they could be overused, but when we use effects, we try not to use them as "effected" effects. When I get a drum sound with a Simmons drumset, I try to make them sound like real tom-toms, just stronger, which to me is their advantage.

**RF:** The SDS5 was analog, and Simmons supposedly wasn't really going for real tom-tom sounds.

**VG:** They weren't at all, but I got the real sound. I got in there with a screwdriver and started tweaking until we got a sound we liked. Craig didn't even have a set of Simmons drums. The studio bought them when we were doing the last Motels album. The brain was in the control room, and we tuned them while someone else hit them. Craig bought them from me when the album was finished and started using them all the time.

**RF:** How do you get your very unique drum sound?

**VG:** That's a very complex question. It always starts with the drummer hitting them. If you have a real strong drummer who hits the drums real hard, then you can make them sound like they've been hit. If the drummer doesn't hit them real hard, I don't give a damn what you do; they're never going to sound like they've been hit. One of the things that is very interesting about the records I've made is that the drums are a feature, in the sense that they

## DW Remote Hihat Pedal Takes Drummers A Step Further

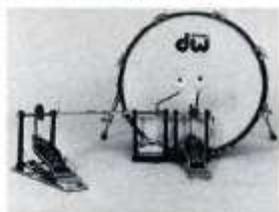
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Danny Gottlieb

## Josh Freese Plays DW Pedals

Josh Freese, 12 year old drumming sensation from southern California, is now playing DW bass drum pedals and hihats. A student of drumming great Vinnie Colaiuta, Josh frequently sits in with "CRASH" a top 40 dance band at Disneyland. He, along with Roli Garcia, Jr. (9) and Brooks Wackerman (7), is part of a new generation of drummers who are choosing to play DW.

"I first got interested in Drum Workshop pedals when I noticed that all the hot drummers were using them," Josh said. "The Double Pedal's really cool. It allows me to play anything with my feet that I can think of in my head. I really like the Hihat, too. Like all of DW's hardware it's very sturdy. Now I see why so many pros play DW—if you want to be the best using the best equipment makes it a lot easier."



Josh Freese

## Tommy Lee, #1 Heavy Metal Drummer, Picks DW 5000 Turbo Pedal

Motley Crue's Tommy Lee was rated the number 1 Heavy Metal drummer in *Circus* magazine's recent reader's poll. "I like to M.A.S.H.!" said Tommy. "That means Massive Action, Super



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Jonathan Moffett

Brent Brace (freelance), Bun E. Carlos (Cheap Trick), Tommy Ellis (club) and Phil Ehart (Kansas) are just a few of the many top drummers playing the pedal.



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really light up speakers because their sound is that awesome, "you've been hit" kind of sound. I've been very fortunate to work with drummers who create that kind of sound. It's not magic on my part. It starts with that, period.

**RF:** But you choose those drummers to work with you.

**VG:** Now I do. In the early days, I didn't. In those days, I worked with a producer who requisitioned whomever *he* wanted. I was just fortunate that Peter Asher and I had the same taste in just about everything. Getting a drum sound is different in every instance, though. Drum sounds are suited to an artist, to a tune, and to a specific situation.

**RF:** Can you give me some examples?

**VG:** Sure. Craig Krampf, playing drums on the Motels record. How do I get a drum sound? On all the acoustic drums, I use Telefunken tube microphones, which I find to be more effective than just about anything on the market now. The only exception is a mic' that AKG started manufacturing called *The Tube*, which is a replica of the old Telefunken with the *C-12* capsule. I bought one right away, and they sound very close. Those are used on most of the drumsets. On snare drums and hi-hats it varies, depending on the kind of track. If I want a real bright, clicky cross stick, a Sony *C-500* works. It is that old gold-foil capsule microphone they made.

For a more rock 'n' roll sound, you can use a Shure 55 or 56. For a tubby snare drum, I use a Neumann *KM84* or something similar. On kick drums, I always use a Sennheiser *421*.

**RF:** How much of the drummer's opinion do you take into account in getting his or her sound, as well as ideas for the playing of the tune?

**VG:** In relation to getting a drummer's sound, most of those I have worked with in my career like the sounds I get on their drums, so there's very little question in that area. Nobody's ever come in and said to me, "The kick drum doesn't sound very good," or "The snare sounds tinny." When it comes to ideas in terms of playing, I listen to everything. Anything they want to tell me, show me, diagram, or play, I'll listen to. I think that, if you don't check out all the options, you're only cheating yourself. If I didn't want their input and ideas, I wouldn't have hired them to start with.

**RF:** You could use a machine.

**VG:** Right, and I have. The Motels' "Suddenly Last Summer" was a drum machine, for instance, but even on records where I use a machine, I'll still have a drummer playing with it, because it gives it that little bit of human element. The only thing I didn't like about the Human League records was that they were totally nonhuman, which was a complete contradiction of their name.

**RF:** Have there been any difficult times getting a drum sound?

**VG:** [Laughs] I have spent three days getting a drum sound. It's not really that it was a problem. It's just that you're chasing something. You're chasing that thing in your mind that says, "This can be phenomenal, and this is what it sounds like." You start trying to assemble in reality what your mind has assembled in the abstract. Sometimes it takes only two or three hours to do that, and sometimes it takes days. The most I've spent was three days. The track we were working on at that time was one of Linda Ronstadt's songs on the first album I did with her, *Heart Like A Wheel*. The song was "You're No Good," and I think that the reason was because we were trying to find a drum sound that really fit and we were trying to decide how to cut that track. I must say that Peter was very patient, because we hadn't really worked together before that.

**RF:** Do you recall the drummer on that track?

**VG:** There were about four. We did it about four different ways in that three-day period and ended up doing it with Andrew Gold playing drums. At that time Andrew wasn't a drummer, but he played drums and we did it with just drums, guitar, and bass. Andrew overdubbed everything else on the track.

**RF:** What about initially conceptualizing something that you eventually realize is

wrong?

**VG:** I have definitely done that. Usually you start about noon. By eight or nine that night, when you're still pounding away at this track, and you haven't gotten it so everybody is sitting around kind of depressed, you listen and suddenly realize that you may have taken a left turn when you should have taken a right in terms of the concept of this track. I'll say, "I think everybody should go home, and we'll start again tomorrow." Then you come back with a fresh approach and a fresh attitude. In my experience, it has usually worked out for the better. We spent five days cutting one song with Kim Carnes on *Mistaken Identity*, and the song never made the record. It's kind of an in joke with those people. The song was called "Here Comes The Bad One Again." We spent four or five days, and never got it. The song wasn't right. You go through a lot of emotional changes: "Does the bass sound right? Do the drums sound right? Is the keyboard part right?"

**RF:** I know it's hard just to think in terms of drums when you're used to looking at the overall picture, but . . .

**VG:** No, it's easy for me to do, because the basis of all records is the drums. I build them all around the drums. Drums are it. The first thing I do is get a drum sound I like and add each piece as I go along. Next is the bass because those two go together, and then whatever we're in the mood for.

**RF:** Do you deal with a lot of drum overdubs?

**VG:** No. My records are made 99.9% totally live. There are very few overdubs, if any. There are little vocal fixes once in a while, but virtually live solos, background singers—everything. I'd rather make records that way. It's a little more difficult, but the end result is usually worth it.

**RF:** Can you think of any particular tracks that you favor, drum-wise?

**VG:** I did a track with James Taylor on his album *JT*, and the song was called "Whenever I See Your Smiling Face." That was one of my favorite drum sounds. It was just one of those things where all the combinations were correct. I loved the drum sound we got on "Bette Davis Eyes," and I thought the drum sound we got on "Only

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**RF:** Was there anything you did differently to obtain that drum sound?

**VG:** Yes, but I don't remember what it was at this point. It's like somebody asking you how you wore your hair three years ago. You remember you wore it differently, but you're not sure how. It's very aesthetic at that point. If I listen to it, I can hear what it sounds like. I got a great drum sound on one of Linda's albums called *Simple Dreams* on a track called "Poor, Poor Pitiful Me." It was the first time anyone had ever used those electronic drums called Syndrums. The guy who designed them happened to bring a set over for Rick Marotta to use. That was a great sounding drum track. I did a song with Bob Gaudio on a Four Seasons record called "December '63, Oh What A Night," which had a very interesting drum sound. Another record on that same album called "Who Loves You" had a very unique drum sound on it. "Suddenly Last Summer" on the Motels album was a very interesting drum sound, which was a combination of drum machine and drummer.

**RF:** Are there any other tracks that you might recall that were interesting to record?

**VG:** I recorded some tracks with Peter Asher where we wanted a very light drum sound, so we nailed the bass drum pedal to the floor on the drum riser and had the pedal hitting a cardboard tape box. We had the drummer play a different size cardboard box for a snare drum. You can use effects to make just about anything sound like a drumset. Once you understand what a drumset sounds like, you can go into deep space on certain things and take things to a whole other place. We were looking for a very soft kind of drum sound, and when we used a real drumset, we couldn't get it.

**RF:** Do you remember the track?

**VG:** I believe it was on one of James's records, although I don't remember which track. Russ Kunkel plays percussion as well as he plays drums and is unbelievably great on congas. Sometimes we would put up different setups where, at the end of the song, he would turn around in his stool and play congas. We had to have them all set up, and then shut off so the mic's from the drums didn't leak into the congas and vice versa. At the end of the song, he would also have a shaker, so we had to have another special little mic' for that. There were some complicated setups, because basically a lot of those records were done live, too.

We did some pretty bizarre things with Andrew Gold in the period of time I was working with him, because he was a real drum fanatic and Beatle freak. We tried just about every conceivable concept of making drums sound like anything but drums.

**RF:** Can you deal with the nontechnical

drummer?

**VG:** Sure. I'm not a technical person.

**RF:** A lot of drummers you've worked with are studio players.

**VG:** Now, but they weren't when they started. Krampf was in a group called the Robbs. Jeff is still in a group. They became studio players because they're great, and once you're great and people recognize that, they want you to play on their records. It's not, "I'm going to be a studio drummer." It's the drummers sitting in clubs in the Valley—which is where I met Jim Keltner when he was playing with Delaney & Bonnie—who beat their brains out for years, and from that, suddenly, everybody recognizes their talent and wants to use them.

I don't look at studio drummers as hatchet men you bring in to mow down the people who couldn't cut it. Those drummers played every dive and paid their dues; they learned their craft, and they're good at it. I don't mind using them.

**RF:** How necessary is reading for you?

**VG:** Not terribly.

**RF:** And yet, you're so into the perfection of a track.

**VG:** Perfection in the sense that it should feel the same from beginning to end. Mistakes are often better than planned pieces. I've made a lot of records with mistakes in them that we kept because they were great. They weren't planned as part of the arrangement.

**RF:** How open are you to new drummers in your camp?

**VG:** Very. I found a drummer named David Plashant not too long ago when I was still working with the Motels. They needed a drummer to go on the road, because Brian had decided at that point to play percussion, which he is phenomenal at doing. We auditioned about 20 drummers, and the next to the last guy who came in was a knockout. We used him on the road, and then I used him to play drums on Dolly Parton's album. If I hear somebody I enjoy or I like, I'll use that person.

**RF:** What does someone growing up in the Midwest have to . . .

**VG:** The same thing everybody else did. You go out and play in every bar. If you manage to work your way to New York or L.A., or somewhere, you'll be heard. If you stay in the Midwest, you can almost forget it.

**RF:** What are some of the things you feel a young drummer should be concentrating on?

**VG:** Sound and time. When I say time, I don't just mean how many beats to the bar. I also mean feel. There are a lot of different ways to interpret that. It's difficult to explain other than to say that some drummers play on the backside of the beat, some drummers play on the front side, and some play right on top of it. I like all types, but I really like the ones who do it the best.



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by Sandy Gennaro

# Approaching The Scary Monster

Drummers who have been playing only acoustic drums all their lives tend to look at the whole electronic revolution as "one big, scary monster." I certainly did! I would say to myself, "I'll get into it someday . . . someday . . ." People are, by nature, often intimidated by what they don't understand. But like it or not, electronic drums are here to stay. They have become an integral part of drumming in both live and studio situations. And the surprising thing to many drummers is, when technology is viewed one step (i.e., one machine) at a time, in a curious and fun way, the entire electronics picture comes into focus and is readily understandable.

Electronic percussion is a drummer's ally, not an enemy; sound enhancement devices, such as Simmons, are designed to *make us sound better!* Playing with computers, such as the *LinnDrum*, inherently improves our meter! Machines are made, in my opinion, to supplement drummers, not to take their place.

We all know that there is a certain "magic" and "feel" in hitting acoustic drums. For this reason, it is my belief that electronics will *neverfully* replace acoustic drums—especially in live situations. In their simplest use, acoustic drums can and will play a vital part in "triggering" electronics, whether it be a module, chip, or a disc. Therefore, it is possible to reap the benefits of electronics, and at the same time, satisfy one's need to hit "real" drums. Technologically speaking, we can "marry" electronics and acoustics, because they complement one another. As I see it, if acoustic drums are the "cake," then electronic drums are the "icing."

Electronic percussion should be approached with a feeling of curiosity and excitement. To use the analogy I used in my previous article, getting into electronic drums should make you feel like you're about to open a Christmas present, not create in you the negative apprehension of a visit to the principal's office.

When I initially decided to experiment with electronics, I found myself experiencing a renewed excitement and enthusiasm towards drumming—and towards my career in general. I felt as if I had started playing "drums" all over again. It's a whole new field, and the possibilities are endless. One might say, "But Sandy, it's

not for everybody, is it?" Well, it may not be for every drummer as it relates to his or her band—especially in a live situation. But in light of the fact that 90% of all albums recorded today utilize one machine or another, and that more and more major acts are using technology live, one should at least *learn* about it. If you turn your back on electronics, you just might become the Edsel of the rock 'n' roll world! What? You've never heard of an Edsel? Well, that should tell you something right there!

Check out the machines that are available. Go to music stores and ask for a demonstration. Send for the free literature offered by manufacturers in their ads. Become aware of what's available and the purpose it serves.

Of course, technology costs money. However, there are many electronic percussion products that are relatively inexpensive. It's your decision as to which one suits your needs and the needs of your band. The Simmons *SDS-1*, for example, is a nifty, self-contained unit that utilizes chips as a sound source to produce virtually any desired sound. It has many other features that are worth checking into. A few other companies offer similar devices.

## My Current Setup

On tour with Cyndi Lauper, I use a mixture of Ludwig acoustic drums and Simmons *SDS-7* electronic drums. My setup consists of an acoustic bass drum on my right and an electronic one on my left. The acoustic snare is in its normal position, with the electronic snare and three tomtom pads mounted above the acoustic bass drum. To the right is my 16 x 16 acoustic floor tom with an 11 x 13 power tom mounted above it. I also use a 26" timpani as a second floor tom.

In terms of execution, I usually "double" my acoustic drums with the electronic ones. I do this by physically striking each one. Sometimes I "double" my acoustic snare with my electronic snare and/or the acoustic bass drum with the electronic bass drum. When doubling is done, say, during the chorus or the "tag," it creates a nice uplifting effect, as in the case of the live video version of "Money Changes Everything." In the choruses, I double my real snare drum with the low electronic tom, and my real bass drum with the electronic

one. When I hit all four drums simultaneously on 2 and 4, the sound is awesome. Sometimes I play all electronic drums except for the real bass drum ("When You Were Mine"), and at other times, I play all acoustic drums ("Time After Time"). Another way to experiment with doubling is: When playing a simple fill, play an acoustic drum with one hand and an electronic one with the other. You can even double an acoustic bass drum pattern on an electronic tom. With the advent of triggering systems such as the *MX-1* by MARC Electronics, drummers are now able to get the acoustic/electronic "double" effect by just hitting a single acoustic drum. I'm presently assembling a "drum system" that will include Ludwig drums, a Simmons *SDS-7*, a *LinnDrum*, and the *MX-1* to tie it all together. I'll elaborate on that in a future article.

A technical advantage gained by using electronic drums live is that they go "direct" into any mixing console, thus alleviating leakage problems caused by open miking. Going direct also adds dramatically to the presence of the sound, whether playing in a small club or a 50,000-seat stadium. When combined with the natural ambience of the room and the effects of a mixing console, this presence can result in a sound that is quite devastating.

Among the aesthetic advantages of electronic drums is the fact that you can tailor the sound to fit the mood and style of any song. I won't elaborate on my sound selection, because programming sounds is a matter of personal preference. I will caution you, however, to take special note of decay time. In up-tempo songs, a long decay will overlap the sounds, resulting in a "wash" of drums. In ballads, where there is plenty of space, too short a decay will result in a "wimpy" sound.

## How To Avoid "Simmons Elbow"

Throughout my career, I've been pretty successful at avoiding *any* physical pain as a result of drumming, electronic or otherwise. I attribute this pain-free existence to stretching *all* my muscles, rehearsing at home, "air drumming" (see my article in MD's Sept. '84 issue), and a general overall workout (aerobics or jogging) three to four times a week.

It's important to stay limber. Drummers



Photo by Eber Roberts

should warm up prior to a gig just like athletes do prior to a game. After all, we're the only musicians who use our whole bodies when we play. While stretching, pay special attention to your fingers, wrists, arms, legs, and ankles. (Consult a stretching guide available at your library or bookstore.)

When rehearsing at home on a practice pad, play it with the same intensity as you would a real drum or an electronic drum pad. (Start lightly and increase intensity daily.) Do it consistently for an hour or so. Cramping and/or "Simmons elbow" is your body's way of telling you you're not warming up properly. Keeping our precious, one-of-a-kind bodies in good shape not only prepares us for drumming, but gives us a feeling of physical and emotional well-being.

### Other Opinions

In order to get a wider perspective on the use of electronic drums in professional situations, I asked a few friends of mine for their comments on the subject. Here are their replies.

**Michael Shrieve** (*Santana, Novo Combo, Mick Jagger*): "I like electronic drums, because they provide me with a vast variety of colors to choose from that go beyond that of the acoustic drumset. People's ears are being attuned to the sound of electronics. They're present on the radio all the time. If straight acoustic drums are used, it won't sound contemporary to the listener."

**Mickey Curry** (*Hall & Oates, Bryan Adams*): "I use them for effects, and I frequently trigger the Simmons with real drums. I think the development of technology with regard to drums is still in its infancy, but the seed is there."

**Andy Newmark** (*John Lennon, Roxy Music, Roger Waters*): "I don't think technology will ever replace acoustic drums entirely, especially as far as the stage is concerned. You can embellish the sound of acoustic drums with electronics, but you can't do away with real drums altogether. Technology impels drummers to play with more discipline—more to the point—because machines expose those who have meter problems. Electronics have changed the face of pop music and have provided us drummers with a new, alternative direction."

**Jimmy Bralower** (*studio drummer, electronic percussion specialist*): "Electronics are not going to take the place of real drums, but they are here and part of the percussion family now. With the new technology, drummers can create sounds that

until now have not existed. I think that's what it's all about—finding new territory to roam in. Look at the world 20 or 30 years ago, and then look at how fast it's changing today. By holding on to traditional values, you're running the risk of being left in the dust."

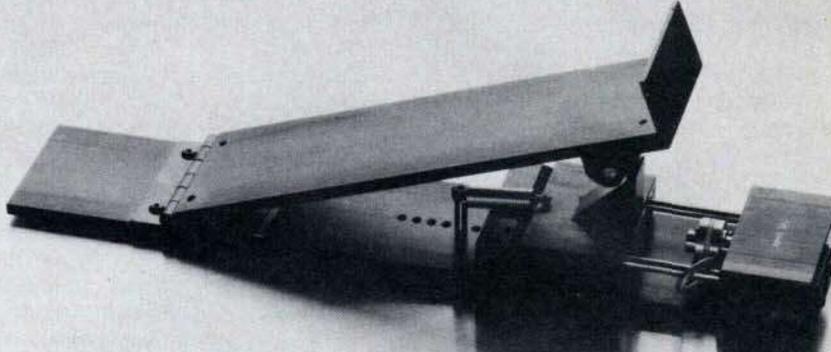
**Danny Gottlieb** (*Mahavishnu, Al Di Meola*): "It's up to everyone to find out how heavily they wish to investigate and invest in electronic percussion. I believe electronics are a tremendous tool for creating new sounds and for growing musically. Many people believe that there is a danger that acoustic drums will be forgotten in favor of electronic. However, I believe that, in order to go forward, you must have a knowledge of tradition, and that the

joy and beauty of acoustic drums will never be lost—just enhanced by these new devices."

Finally, speaking from *my* drum throne, electronic *and* acoustic drums are both here to stay. The art of drumming will never come down to only programming, pushing buttons, or playing on what feels like a practice pad. That would be comparable to Reggie Jackson hitting home runs with a "joystick"! But there is no question in my mind that electronic drums are a valuable new tool to be added to a drummer's arsenal. The world of electronics is a vast new territory just waiting to be explored. Remember, a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, so take that step today.

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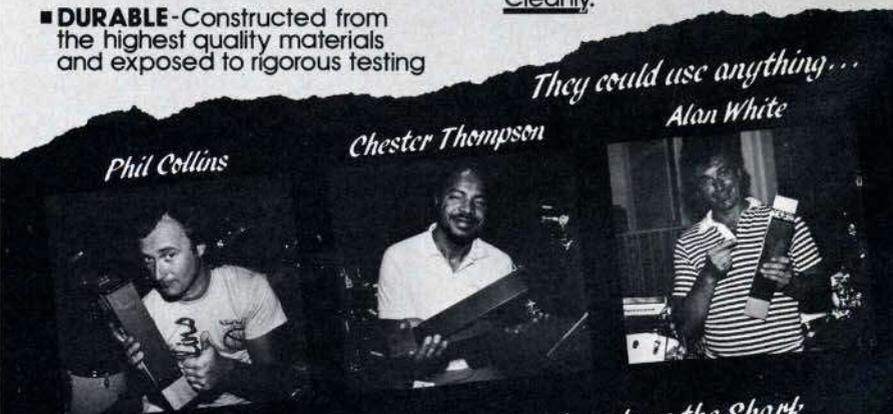
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## Drumming And The Big Move

by Roy Burns

Every now and then, I receive a letter from a frustrated young drummer. Many of the letters say something like: "I have been playing for X amount of years. I've taken some lessons, but my reading needs improvement. I play two nights a week in a Top-40 band. I would like to be playing original music with a top rock (or jazz) group. Should I move to L.A. or New York? I feel stuck where I am now. Signed, Frustrated."

Another version of this is: "I have been playing for X amount of years. I can read, play all the rudiments and virtually all drumming styles. The problem is that I am stuck in a town with no one to play with. I've tried forming a group, but I haven't been able to find people who play well and who are willing to make a serious commitment. Should I move to L.A. in order to make it? Signed, Serious."

Another type of letter is: "I live in such-and-such town. I play most or many of the good gigs in the area. As a rule, I am working with the best musicians in town. The work is varied and stimulating. I also teach at my home in the suburbs. My question is, am I copping out? Should I move to L.A., San Francisco, or New York? Please write soon. Signed, Undecided."

In one instance, the person who wrote this type of letter was a friend of mine, so I phoned him. I asked, "Are you unhappy?" He replied, "No, I'm not unhappy. It's just that maybe I have it too easy. What if I left home and tried to make it as a professional player in a major city?" I said, "Suppose you move to L.A., make it big in the studios, become well known, and make a lot of money. What would you do then?" He thought for a moment and said, "I guess I would get myself a nice house in the suburbs and teach a little." I couldn't help laughing as I said, "But you already have a house in the suburbs and you already teach a little. Why tear up your life when you are already in a great position?" Fortunately, he said, "Wow—you're right!"

Many of us grow up with the childhood dream of going to the big city and "making it." This dream, coupled with perseverance, has helped many of us launch careers. However, at a certain point, we may outgrow the dream. If you are thinking about packing up your drums and going to the big city, consider the following points.

1. Go while you are young and preferably single. The ordeal is tough enough without subjecting spouses and children to it. Some spouses are very understanding about music careers. Others see it as a

hardship, and more than one divorce has happened because of the big move.

2. Save some money before you hit the big town. Work is hard to come by in a new town where people have never heard of you. Unless you are *very* lucky, it will take time to establish yourself and/or land a good job playing music. (Quick success does happen, but it's the exception rather than the rule.)

3. Be prepared to work at something else if need be. Have you ever worked in a music store? Can you earn a living on a day job if you have to? Can you teach? Many good young musicians teach to supplement their incomes.

4. Can you read music? Don't expect to get a lot of studio work if you can't read; there are a lot of top drummers already established in each big city who read well.

5. Be prepared to play some more Top-40 if you have to. It might keep you going until you land something better.

6. If possible, talk to other musicians who may have information about various music cities. Ask if there is much work available for musicians. Find out if there is an active club scene. Attend clinics given by top professional players, and ask them about the work situation in several of the big music towns such as Nashville, Toronto, L.A., and New York.

7. If you are well situated, think twice before moving. If you are playing a lot, making a living, and enjoying yourself, the big move may simply not be worth the sacrifice involved. This is especially important to consider if you are married and have a family.

Remember that each career has a lifestyle that goes with it. For example, if you hate nightclubs, you will find a career in music difficult, especially early in your career. If you hate to travel or are really afraid of flying, being in a top rock or jazz group is not for you, since any "name" group or band will have to travel extensively. This can be a hardship if you have a family. It *can* be worked out successfully, but dealing with the traveling will take a serious adjustment and a lot of understanding by both marriage partners.

I received a letter recently from a drummer who asked about a resort area recommended to him by his drum teacher. This drummer wanted to leave his hometown to do more playing, but was very realistic about his experience and abilities. New York or L.A. would be more than he could handle. As luck would have it, I knew of the resort area in question. I advised him to try it, because there is a lot of work there for musicians. His teacher had given him

good advice.

This brings me to another point. If you do have a good teacher, discuss your proposed move with him or her, and ask for suggestions. Of course, you will have to make your own decision, but the more information you have, the better your chances are of making a *good* one.

If, after some careful soul-searching, you have decided to pack up your drums and head for the big city, here are a few suggestions.

1. Be prepared for a long, hard struggle. Unless you are very lucky or have established friends, it will take time for people to hear of you.

2. Contact the musicians' union. It can be a source of "help-wanted" information.

3. Take some drum lessons from several teachers in a new city. Many teachers are also working drummers and can offer suggestions for auditions, clubs where you can sit in, and places where other musicians hangout.

4. Locate the favorite musicians' hangouts, and spend some time there. There are often one or two clubs or bars frequented by successful musicians. Such places can be good for making contacts and picking up information on auditions, rehearsals, and jobs.

5. Be careful in a strange city. Don't go wandering around at night by yourself. Ask a cab driver or the hotel clerk about various parts of the city. If you are going to a club to hear music or make some contacts, get some information on the neighborhood before taking off for the club.

6. Be prepared to return home if things don't work out. And if that should be the case, don't be discouraged. At the very least, you will have picked up some valuable experience; you might reap some other benefits as well. For example, a good friend of mine struggled in L.A. for about 18 months. Although he didn't make a lot of money, he did get some good publicity. A friend of his in his hometown offered him a job running the drum department in a very successful music store. The point is, the exposure and publicity my friend received in L.A. made him more valuable to the store owner, who may also have realized his ability after observing his efforts in L.A. So, even though my friend didn't stay in L.A., he feels that it was well worth the effort.

One last thought: If you are not sure what to do, visit the city you are considering. Check out the clubs, the drum shops, drum teachers, and so on. A week or two in a big town might help you to decide. If you decide to go for it, good luck!





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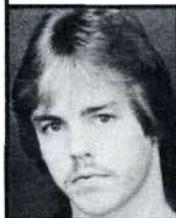
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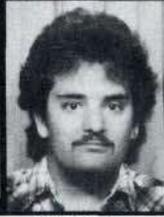
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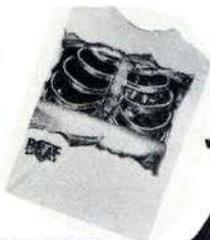
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Photo by Charles Stewart

*Parker continued from page 13*

hit it off. We've been best friends ever since. After that gig, Will convinced me to move to Manhattan. This was in 1975, I believe. So my wife and I found an apartment in the same building where Will lived. He was the only person I knew in New York, so we started playing together. As it turned out, Don Grolnick also lived in the same building. Then we found out that Steve Khan, the guitar player, lived nearby, and so did Mike and Randy

Brecker. So we all started rehearsing together. We called the band the Carmine Street Band. When the Brecker brothers invited David Sanborn over to play, we eventually became known as The Brecker Brothers Band.

**RS:** Those must have been good days for you.

**CP:** Absolutely. They were great days. I'd rehearse with these guys during the day, and then at night, I'd head uptown and play with what became known as Stuff. So I was playing all the time and loving it.

**RS:** Stuff was a first-class act. Did you feel perhaps in awe of the talent you shared the stage with?

**CP:** I was definitely in awe of the musicians who played with Stuff.

**RS:** How did you manage to fall in with the group?

**CP:** I was doing a jingle at a local studio, and Gordon Edwards happened to be on the same date. He said to me, after it was over, "You sounded good. In fact, you sounded so good, why don't you come up to this club where I have a band and sit in?" I was thrilled, so, of course, I accepted his offer. I couldn't believe Cornell Dupree was there along with all these other great players—I mean, Richard Tee, Gordon Edwards, Cornell Dupree. Well, I'll tell you, I couldn't wait to play each night. I'd be the first guy there every single night. I'd set up my drums and just anxiously wait for the others. I was especially excited to play with Cornell Dupree, since I knew his work with King Curtis and Aretha Franklin. I mean, the whole time I was in Woodstock, it was King Curtis and Aretha Franklin records that I'd listen to. The drummers were Bernard Purdie, Roger Hawkins, and Al Jackson, Jr. They were great records.

**RS:** Stuff, or the Encyclopedia Of Soul, as the band was first called, had even more great players, namely Eric Gale and Steve

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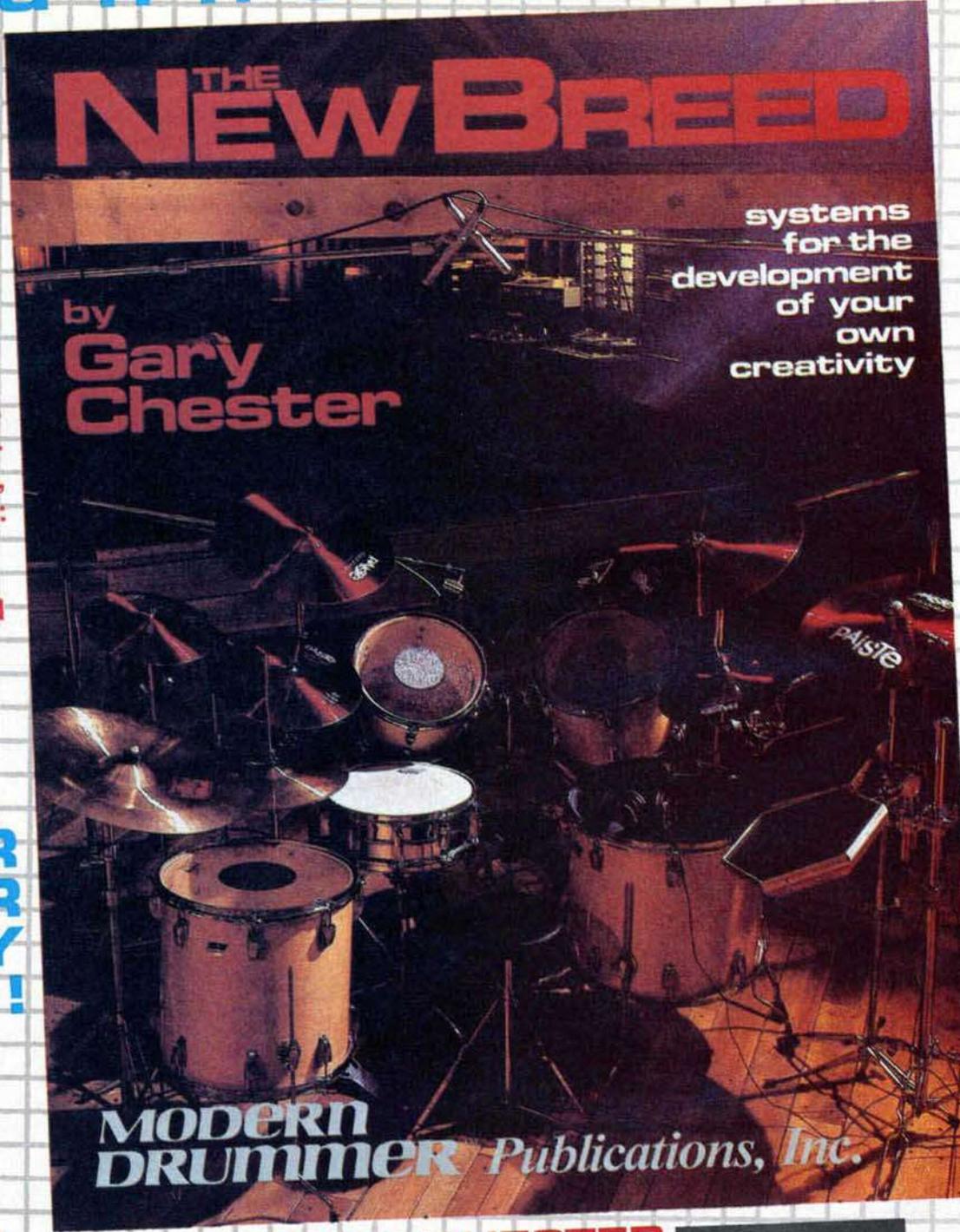
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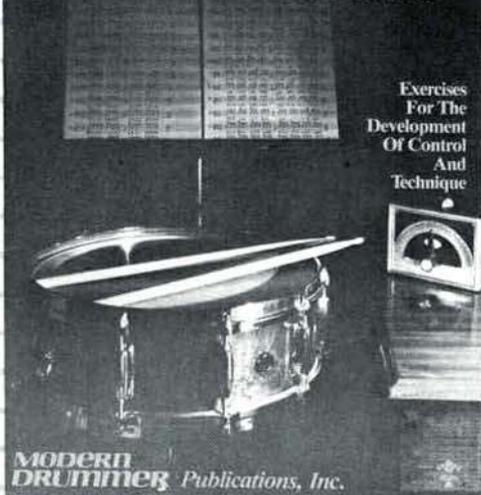
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Gadd.

**CP:** Of course. Gale and Gadd were two very important players in the group.

**RS:** Weren't you kind of responsible for bringing Gadd into the fold?

**CP:** I ran into Steve and asked if he would sub for me, because The Brecker Brothers thing was beginning to take off. For a while, it was either me or Steve on drums with Stuff. But then it got to the point where people in the audience or people who bought our record—we had already recorded by then—kept asking where the other drummer was, so we began playing together. That was a lot of fun. Steve Gadd is an amazing drummer.

**RS:** Looking back, what was the best thing about your experience with Stuff?

**CP:** I think there were two things. One was having the opportunity to participate in this incredible dialogue Steve and I would have whenever we played together. And the other was the opportunity to have such great, great players play some of my compositions. The tunes that I brought into the group always started out, as Gordon Edwards used to say, like "ugly ducklings." But as Stuff got to play them and find out what was possible to do with them, the songs became much, much better. And that inspired me to keep on writing more material.

**RS:** Do you miss Stuff?

**CP:** If there's one thing I really miss, it's playing live with the band, especially with Gadd. We had some incredibly hot nights on stage in those days.

**RS:** After your stint with Stuff, what was next?

**CP:** Well, I was still doing loads of sessions, and I went on the road with Boz Scaggs and Joe Cocker, and also Ashford & Simpson. But I wanted a band that would play my songs. So I formed what first started out as the Chris Parker Band. Later, the name was changed to Joe Cool. I also began studying harmony, theory, and composition during this time, in addition to seriously studying the piano.

**RS:** What musicians presently comprise Joe Cool?

**CP:** Will Lee plays bass, Jeff Mironov plays guitar, Rob Mounsey plays keyboards, and I, of course, play the drums. It's a nice little band. I'm very happy with the way things have turned out for us so far. *Party Animals* was recorded in 1983 here in New York and released last year. We got pretty good reviews. The record was put out on a Japanese label called Canyon Records.

**RS:** The band has a fairly large following in Japan, from what I gather.

**CP:** Yeah, we do okay over there. As a matter of fact, we're about to go over there and tour.

**RS:** Go back, for a moment, to songwriting. When and how did you get into writing your own songs?

**CP:** I began writing as a kid. I used to write songs for some of the real early bands I played in, but I was writing really basic stuff. I'd write songs exactly like the kind I was hearing on the radio at the time. If nothing else, the writing of those early songs provided me with good practice and discipline. I didn't write at all when I lived in Woodstock. It wasn't until I moved to New York City that I got back into songwriting again. I started to hear things in my head that I liked and thought enough of them to write them down. Also, my wife was writing lyrics and leaving them around the house. I'd pick up what she wrote, read the words, and say, "Hey, there's a song here." So then I would compose some music for them, all the time trying to capture the emotion that was packed in her words. Obviously, playing with Stuff and having those guys play what I wrote was just too good an opportunity to miss. So, I began to write tunes like "Sometimes Bubba Gets Down," "The Way I Feel At First," and "You're A Great Girl." A lot of different things inspired the tunes. But knowing that there was a band like Stuff that would play them if I persisted long enough was perhaps the greatest incentive I could have.

**RS:** How many of your songs did Stuff record?

**CP:** Four that I wrote alone or collabo-



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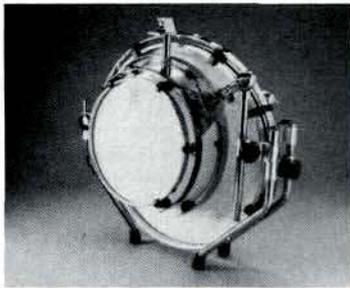
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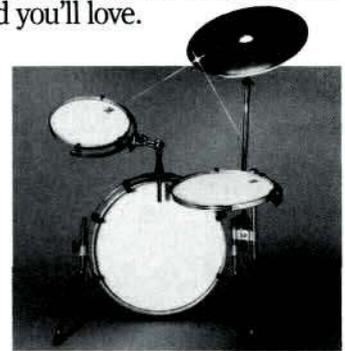
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rated on with other members of the band.  
**RS:** And how many of your songs are on the LP, *Party Animals*!

**CP:** There are, let's see, two of them. The opening tune on side one is mine, "Turn Around, Relax," and "You're A Great Girl" appears on side two. The other tunes on the record were written by Rob Mounsey and Jeff Mironov.

**RS:** I know *Party Animals* was produced by the whole band. Are you interested in doing more producing in the future, perhaps even on your own? I ask that question because it would seem like that's the most logical or natural step for you to take.

**CP:** Oh, I'd love to produce records in the future, no question about it. I've been there in the control room so many times, and I've seen so many different projects turn into records. I feel very capable and know that I can do a good job. I'm not saying I can handle the technical aspects of recording—the engineering part of it—but keeping the attitude and the atmosphere right and keeping the energy level up are things I'm sure I can do well. I'm good at keeping people motivated and focused, and making sure that they have the incentive to bring out their very best talents. Plus, I think I have good ears. I've logged a lot of studio time—a lot of listening time—in the last ten years or so. I know when something that's been recorded sounds good. I have the ability to realize when the attitude and the energy are right in the

recording studio. The experiences I've had producing Joe Cool and all the demos that came before *Party Animals* have all been very rewarding. Producing a record is quite a challenge. I think that's why it appeals to me so much.

**RS:** Some musicians I know are literally obsessed with their instrument. It's almost as if there's an insatiable thirst to play or an addiction that prevents them from taking on anything else in life with nearly the same intensity. Would you put yourself in that category?

**CP:** Music is an extension of me, and I must say that it's a very, very comfortable extension. But I don't have just one, but two of them—two extensions of myself. The first is music, like I said, and in particular, the drums. The other is painting.

**RS:** Like your father.

**CP:** Yeah, like my father, [laughs] I guess I've emulated my father on both counts. But painting and music are two things that I've always done and always enjoyed. They are both two very important outlets for my creative impulses and expression that I couldn't live without. When I come home after a full day, I knock off. I throw the cymbal bag in the closet, cool out, and possibly do some painting. But by the time I've had some dinner and spent some time with my wife, I'll go in my little studio and start programming or think of how what I played that day in the studio might be played better the next time. I don't mind

practicing or working things out at home, unlike other musicians. I know some drummers don't want to see a pair of sticks or a drum once they leave the studio after a day's work. But I don't fit in that category. I mean, when we go on vacation, I really start to miss my drums. I have a good example of what I mean. When my wife and I got married, we went away for six weeks to the British Virgin Islands. I started to go a little crazy after a week or so there. Eventually, I started sitting in with the local bands down there. It was really hard to say, "Excuse me, sir. Can I play your drums now?" The drummer and the rest of the band would look at me funny, but once we started playing, they were glad to have me. And when they didn't want me to play anymore, my wife and I would still hang around. We'd dance then.

**RS:** Do you enjoy West Indian music?

**CP:** Oh yeah, I really like it. Reggae, calypso, and all the stuff that comes out of Brazil have been a very big influence on me. One place I've always wanted to visit is Brazil. The place and the music that's down there totally intrigue me.

**RS:** Thus far, are you happy with the way things have gone in your career?

**CP:** I feel so lucky and so fortunate in a lot of different respects. My time, my sound, and my feel, as far as drums go, are all enough so that I'm still getting plenty of calls to come to the studio and record. I have the opportunity to play with great musicians day in and day out. I get to play my Simmons kit, which I love doing. I get to tour and travel with top-notch artists and performers. I think the only thing I want more out of my career is the time to do my personal projects. Sometimes, for example, I don't have enough time to practice piano as much as I should be practicing for my lesson each week. There are usually too many recording dates. It's not that I'm complaining. It's just that the time conflicts can become so frustrating. I want to accomplish so much. But when I stop to think . . . like the other day I was getting frustrated over something, so I sat down and thought back to what had consumed my time. Well, I did the 50th Anniversary Show at the Apollo with all the Motown stars, plus Rod Stewart, Luther Vandross, and Boy George, and was around other stars like Billy Preston, Al Green, the Temptations, Patti LaBelle, Diana Ross, and Stevie Wonder. Then the following Sunday, I played with Ray Charles at Radio City. He didn't yell at me, so I think I played alright. Then Yamaha had me demonstrating their new line of electronic drums. Michael Jackson was sitting about three feet away from me and said, "You sound nice." When I realize how I spend my time and what company I'm usually in, then suddenly, the frustration goes away and I feel very happy and very proud.





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# THE JOBBING DRUMMER

## Auditioning

by Simon Goodwin

Depending on your luck and your personal circumstances you might, at some time, audition for anything from a band made up of beginners to an established big-name band. During the "psyching-up" period, which is likely to start from the moment you know that you have the audition, it is helpful to examine your motives in wanting to join that particular band. The band might offer the ideal musical setting, or there might be an opportunity to earn good money, regardless of musical considerations. (In an ideal situation, it would be both.) Whatever your motives, an interest in and respect for the music that is being played is essential. It will also be to your benefit if you approach the audition fully informed as to what auditions are all about, and as prepared as you can possibly be.

### Selling Yourself

One of the prime rules of selling any product is to get inside the heads of the customers, so that you can understand what they want and give it to them. When you

audition, you are trying to sell *yourself*—and your musical skills—so it follows that you will need to know what the band is looking for in the way of a drummer. They might want someone who will just keep time, or they might want someone who will be soloing continually, even while the rest of the band is playing. They might want someone who will sound as close as possible to their last drummer or to their favorite drummer on record. They might want someone who will play parts exactly as written (or recorded) or someone who will help them to create an original sound. The possibilities are almost endless.

It may be that you have your own particular way of playing, which you are offering to the band. If they don't want it, it's their problem, because you have no intention of changing. If this is the case, the situation is more or less black and white: You just go to the audition, play, and see what they think. Otherwise, you are faced with the fact that no two bands are absolutely identical. Therefore, you will, to some extent, need to adapt to the needs of the particular

band. Whatever ideas the band members might have about the sort of drummer they need can likely be summed up by saying that they'll want a drummer whose playing will make them feel good while they play.

It sometimes calls for a snap judgment on the part of the drummer being auditioned to decide exactly what the band wants. There you are sitting behind your set, never having seen or heard this band play before, and the leader says, "It's sort of a rock-shuffle bebop tune, and it goes rather like this . . . Okay? One, Two, Three, Go." You are in there playing, like it or not. This situation should be avoided, if possible, but a lot depends on the way the band chooses to conduct its auditions.

### The Cattle Call

One of the worst, and most common, types is the "cattle-call" audition. The way this happens is that the band books a hall, and invites all prospective drummers to come along and play a couple of numbers each. If the band members are sensible, they will only use this method as a preliminary to making a short "call-back" list of three or four drummers. Those drummers will be invited back to play longer, and perhaps to give the band the opportunity to get to know them as people as well. We'll discuss that more a bit later.

I once made the mistake of being the first person to arrive at a cattle-call audition. This meant that I was invited to play first. They were using parts that I had to sight-read, while the other candidates could sit back and learn from my mistakes. The moral of this story is: At this type of audition, don't be in a hurry to get up there and play; make all you can of the chance to listen to what's going on. You'll usually find that the band will play the same two or three numbers with each drummer, in order to get a direct comparison.

I have just warned against being the first to play, but I don't advise you to avoid this by turning up late. This can give a bad impression of your reliability before you have even played a note. On the assumption that you have spoken the truth on the phone or in your advertisement, the band might have decided to devote an hour or more to you at the first meeting. Making them wait around for you will do nothing for your popularity and your subsequent chances of joining them. If you decide not to do the audition or something prevents you, *always* phone and let them know you won't be coming. A black mark against your name for unreliability could quite easily count against you at some time in the future when you least expect it.

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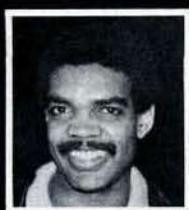
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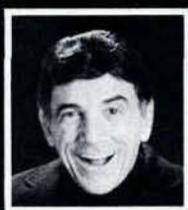
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## Individual Auditions

If you are being given a longer audition, you have the opportunity to really find out about the band and what they are looking for in you. You should also get more than one "shot" at playing things. There will be a chance to discuss the music, *but remember*: Do more listening than talking. If suggestions are made, do your best to follow them and try not to argue about them. (The time to start trying to influence things in your own way is after you have passed the audition and joined the band.) Listen to what you are told to do, *and above all*, listen to the music. A songwriter friend told me, after auditioning drummers for his local band, that many of them were just thrashing away regardless of what was going on around them, and when suggestions were made and numbers repeated, there would be no change at all in the drummer's approach. This is not the way to win friends and influence potential employers. If the atmosphere seems right, why not ask the band to play without you, so that you can listen? Hopefully, this will let the band know that you are *interested* in approaching things their way, while giving you the chance to become a little more familiar with their material.

Of course, it is not always possible to have this sort of informal give and take; some auditions are conducted along extremely formal and rigid lines. You wouldn't be able to ask a symphony orchestra or a big band to play a number without you so that you could listen. On the contrary, you are likely to find yourself playing on your own, or with a pianist, sight-reading for all you are worth—and being judged on that sight-reading as much as on your playing. Bandleaders have even been known to uncover a candidate's part directly prior to counting in, not even allowing the drummer time to scan the part before playing it. This attention to reading is quite logical for big bands and orchestras. Unfortunately, you can find some club bands that will ask people to sight-read at an audition when the job they are auditioning for doesn't actually involve any *sight-reading* at all, since the band works from a regular "book," and any

additions to it are rehearsed.

If you are auditioning for a rock band, it is unlikely that there will be any written arrangements. You must rely on what you are told and on your ability to "fake" as you hear the arrangement developing. You will be using your ears to the maximum. This being the case, it is a good idea to demonstrate to the band that you are doing just that—not only through your playing, but visually as well. You will need to watch them for cues, so make this obvious. Don't give the impression that you are in a little world of your own and happen to be achieving a tight sound through sheer brilliance; the musicians might assume that it is sheer *luck*, which might not be repeated. While watching the members of the band, you should appear to be reacting positively and enjoying the music being played. This is very important; if the band gets the feeling that you like what they are doing and are sympathetic towards them, they will feel happy about inviting you to join them.

If you are auditioning for a rock band or combo that doesn't use written arrangements, it is not always necessary to rely on faking at the time you audition. Go and see the group performing on a gig *prior* to your audition; this will give you a very good idea of what to expect. If you are making this effort, let the band know about it. (It is always a good thing to appear conscientious.) You can introduce yourself at the gig, or mention that you were there when you go to the audition. If the band has had a record release, get it and give it a very thorough listening; they will expect you to have done this. In the case of an obviously successful band with a series of records to their credit, it is usually better to concentrate on their more recent material. That is what they are likely to be playing themselves; it also gives you a clearer idea of their direction.

## Nerves

Nerves can play a crucial part at an audition. You will feel that you are under critical scrutiny, which is never pleasant. You might want the job very badly, and feel that *if only* you don't blow it now your future career and happiness will be assured. These thoughts—in the correct

proportions—can help you to concentrate your mind and do a good job. But let them loom too large in your consciousness and they can spell disaster. A little bit of adrenaline flowing through the system is a natural and healthy thing, but don't allow yourself to concentrate on worrying rather than on playing. In the first place, this can mean that your mind isn't on the job. Secondly, it can also cause actual physical tension, which will prevent your limbs from responding to the commands of your brain as smoothly as they should.

That's the problem—now, how to overcome it. Different people have different ways. I would suggest that being aware of the possibility of this happening to you can often be sufficient in itself to combat it. You tell yourself, "Relax. Don't tense up. Concentrate on the music. You're doing okay." Sometimes if you make a mistake, you worry and tense up, which usually means that, if you can't get yourself under control at once, you will create more tension, and things will go from bad to worse. A reason for this tension is usually that you stop breathing regularly. Insufficient oxygen to the brain and muscles prevents them from working at full capacity. So, take a few deep breaths, and *tell* yourself that you are in control again.

Something that I sometimes do when I make a mistake is to curse softly, under my breath, and have a little chuckle to myself. I am not laughing at my mistake, but rather at my own irrelevant reaction to it. This makes me relax. I have never discussed this with anyone, but I imagine that other people do it as well. You often see musicians, as well as sportspeople, smiling to themselves after making a mistake, and it is seldom the mistake itself which is funny.

## Your Image And Your Gear

Bill Bruford once published an article in a British music paper about drummers auditioning. He advised—with tongue very much in cheek—that the best thing you can do is to paint your set black and stick logo transfers from a top drum manufacturer all over it. Okay, it's a joke, but the very valid point that Bill was making is that people *will* be influenced by the appearance of your equipment as well as by its sound. Certain musicians (though by no means all) will be impressed by the drummer who turns up with this year's set in this year's color. People who don't look *beyond* these sorts of considerations probably won't be worth joining anyway, but there can be no escaping the fact that, given two good drummers—both nice people, but one with a good set and one with a rough one—the band will probably choose the one with the good set. (Unless, that is, they go in for some sort of inverted snobbery!) Anyway, there's no point in getting paranoid if your set isn't all you would like it to be. If any eyebrows are raised in the direction of your apparently inadequate set at the audition, you can always tell

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You might find that there is a set supplied for you to play on at the audition. Bands often do this so that they will be able to save time between drummers. If you find yourself having to audition on a strange set, you *must* take your time before starting—within reason—to make sure that everything is adjusted to your liking. If you are told in advance that a set will be supplied, it is usually worthwhile to have your own with you anyway. You might find that some item on the other set, such as the bass drum pedal, is impossible for you to use; if you can make a quick substitution, it could alter the whole outcome of the audition in your favor. It is sometimes possible to analyze the situation when you get to the audition and conclude that you won't be doing yourself any harm if you insist on bringing your own set in. I'm not boasting, but I was once chosen at a cattle-call audition when I was the only drummer there to use my own kit. The band told me afterwards that one of the things that had impressed them about me was that I was the only person who had turned up his nose at the rubbishy old set they had borrowed for the occasion!

Taking your own set to a cattle-call audition, particularly one at which everybody is taking his or her own, can be risky business from the security angle. Take one reliable friend with you if you possibly can. He or she can take a lot of the worry off your shoulders, just by keeping an eye on your property. This will leave you in a relaxed frame of mind and allow you to concentrate on the important issue, which is playing your best.

There is a famous story about a well-known bandleader in the 1930s who told a prospective drummer, "I don't care how well you play, just as long as you look good behind your set!" Hopefully, people have become more aware of the musical value of a good drummer since then, but looking right is still an important factor. I am not suggesting that you should change your image totally in order to fit in with a band you want to join (although, if you are able to do so, it will probably increase your chances of acceptance). There is an old saying that "birds of a feather flock together." I would apply that in this context to mean that, if you are a certain type of person who dresses a certain way, it relates directly to your outlook on life, and quite probably your age group as well. You are more likely to get on—musically and socially—with people to whom you are acceptable *as you are*, rather than if you have to change to suit them. *Alternatively*, if you are acceptable as you are to a group of people who are different from you (and maybe from one another as well), it could indicate a healthy toleration that could lead to a satisfying blending of ideas. But having once been rejected on sight (without playing a note) at an audition, I would advise you to check out the band you are

going to audition for, and if you suspect that your image or your age might be an obstacle, tell them about yourself so that they can decide. Image-conscious bandleaders and managers are likely to interrogate you over the phone about these sorts of points anyway.

If you happen to be the proud possessor of an unofficial fan club, I would advise you *not* to take them along to auditions with you. You are being tested and it might be embarrassing for you, but more importantly, the band members are less likely to be impressed with you for having your fans than they are to consider you a pest (possibly a conceited pest!) for bringing them along.

## Conclusion

Music is an art form, and we don't usually like to think of it in competitive terms. But auditions *are* competitive; you are competing against your fellow drummers for jobs. In most cases, the person who wins is the person who plays the best for the band, and does the most to enhance the band's music and make the band members feel good. We all know that being successful in music is often a case of being in the right place at the right time. But it is not all luck; being able to "cut it" when the opportunity presents itself is equally important. So why not start preparing yourself *now* for when your big break arrives?



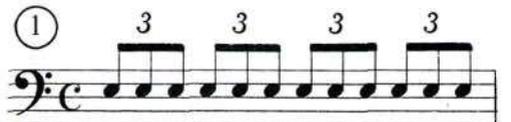
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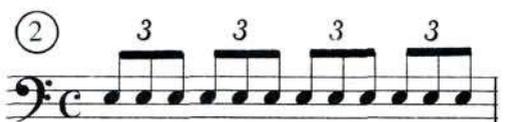
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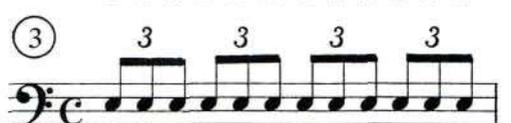
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The following 13 exercises should prove beneficial as a quick, daily warm-up. Each exercise should be repeated four times. Also, try playing each exercise consecutively from 1 to 13, without stopping.

The stick playing level should be 6" to 8" from the drum or practice pad, and the exercises should be played at a moderate tempo and in a flowing manner. The sound and feel should be consistent and devoid of any muscular tension. The purpose of these exercises is to enable you to warm up in a relaxed fashion.

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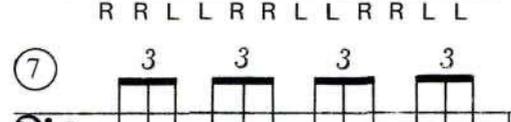
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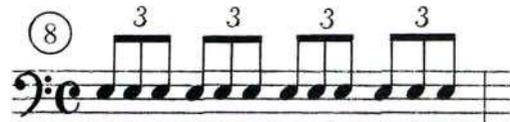
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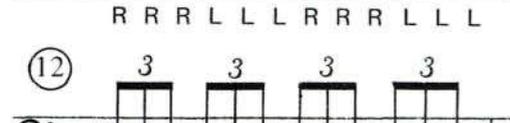
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⑨  R L R L R R L R L R L L

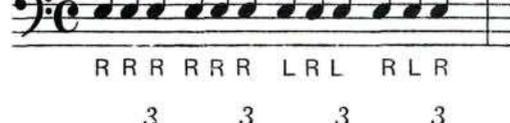
⑩  R R R L L L R L R L R L

⑪  R R R L L L R R R L L L

⑫  R L R L R L R R R R R R

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

⑬  R R R R R R L R L R L R

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



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# DRIVER'S SEAT



More than 600 people pack the Glen Island Casino; others are being turned away at the door. Trumpeter Lee Castle, who's been leading the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra since JD's death in 1957 (and before that was musical director of the mid-'50s combined band that Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey had), calls out a medley. For the next

ten minutes, the band rips through choruses of hits of *both* Dorseys, taken from the original arrangements: "Tangerine," "John Silver," "Amapola," "Green Eyes," "Marie," "On The Sunny Side Of the Street," "Song Of India," "Opus One." Thirty-five-year-old drummer Tim Laushey is beating it out with a zest that

## Tim Working

belies the fact that he's played this particular medley several hundred times. Laushey is heir to a rich tradition. When Jimmy Dorsey first recorded "John Silver," his drummer was Ray McKinley. When Tommy first cut "Song Of India," his drummer was Davey Tough, and on "Opus One" it was Buddy Rich. At other times, Jimmy Dorsey used Ray Bauduc, Buddy Schutz, and Barrett Deems; Tommy used Cliff Leeman, Moe Purtill, Gene Krupa, and Louis Bellson—the cream of the swing drumming crop.

The numbers in the Dorsey medley are swing-era classics. Simplified versions of the original charts are in the libraries of small-time dance bands all across the country, and one hack drummer after another has unthinkingly copied that famous eight-bar drum-solo intro to "Song Of India," just the way Davey Tough first did it on the record. When Castle's Dorsey Band gets to "Song Of India," though, you notice Laushey, because he's avoiding cliches. He's *not* doing the intro exactly the way Tough did; he has his own, subtly different way of accenting it. It's not easy to bring your own sound to something that well known. You notice Laushey again on "Opus One," driving the ensemble hard, as the whole band rises to its feet to hit the final chorus. There's a request; the band swings into "In The Mood." And you note Laushey doing his own thing on the tomtoms. It fits, of course, but it's *not* just what Moe Purtill originally did. Laushey's *not* just going through the motions. He's working hard to make even something as overly familiar as "In The Mood" come to life.

During a break, Laushey comments, "I really care about what I'm doing. Some musicians put down what we're doing, because we're playing 40-year-old music. I'm *proud* to play what we play. I can't see much of today's music lasting 40 years." Laushey's been a big band buff since childhood. He takes his work seriously, and it shows.

The big band business has actually grown stronger in recent years, and Tim Laushey is at the center of the renewed activity. His first loyalty is to Lee Castle and the Jimmy Dorsey Band, but he also plays drums for Warren Covington, Art Mooney, Sammy Kaye, Myron Floren, Tex Beneke, and Bob Crosby on much of their East Coast work.

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# Laushey: The Big Bands

Laushey, who makes his home in Wilmington, Delaware, also serves as contractor and road manager for Lee Castle in the East. (Castle uses a different crew of musicians for his West Coast Dorsey Band bookings.) He serves in a similar capacity, on a less active scale, for Covington, Mooney, Kaye, Floren, Beneke, and Crosby. When those bandleaders (some of whom are semiretired) work in the East, they turn to Laushey to make sure the right musicians are on hand, to iron out hotel accommodations, and so on. (Only a handful of big bands—Buddy Rich's, Artie Shaw's, the Tommy Dorsey Band, the Duke Ellington Band, the Glenn Miller Band, and the Count Basie Band—are full-time road bands, in which the same musicians play all gigs, from coast to coast.)

Laushey plays perhaps 50 eastern U.S. engagements with Castle's Jimmy Dorsey Band a year. Usually, they're one-night

stands (everything from New Year's Eve at a Chicago hotel to a New Haven Jazz Festival that drew 25,000 people), but there are also things like cruises to Bermuda or occasional prolonged stays at places like New York's "Rainbow Room" (five straight weeks the last time). When Castle's out West or laying off, Laushey works with other bandleaders, besides occasionally taking out big bands and small groups under his own name. Often he is managing different bands simultaneously. (At Reagan's 1985 Inaugural, for example, Laushey was responsible for 48 musicians in four bands.)

Being a contractor as well as a drummer has given Laushey a different perspective on the music business. He's come to respect professionalism. "When I'm hiring musicians, a key thing is dependability. Are they going to show up? Are they going to have the right stuff on? Are they reliable? These are important things, and I

didn't think about them so much when I was just a player. There are so many musicians out there who can do the parts."

Sometimes, Laushey notes, young musicians might take lightly the less-than-ideal jobs they get. "Don't," he stresses, "because no musician's going to make a living getting only ideal jobs. The people out there are paying money to see you play. You should look like you appreciate it. You can give it your very best, even if sometimes it's boring."

Sure, Laushey admits, he does find some gigs more musically satisfying than others. "Maybe I'm a cabinetmaker who once in a while has to make shelves," he says. "Still, I figure I'm lucky to be playing drums."

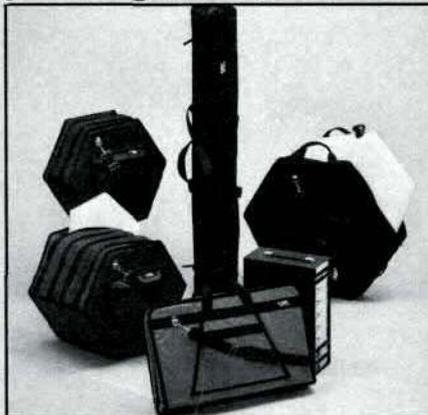
Laushey says that the first time he drummed for many of the name bandleaders he's worked with—including Lee Castle, Ray McKinley, Lionel Hampton, Sammy Kaye, and the late Charlie Spivak—in each case, there'd be some

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older musician in the band warning him that *this* leader was notoriously tough on drummers. "But you know, I never had any problems. You do whatever the job calls for, you play what the leader wants you to play, and you gain a reputation, not just as a good player, but as a cooperative one.

"Each leader wants you to play a different way. Ray McKinley says, 'Make it danceable.' Lee Castle likes a lot of cross sticks on snare drums and closed hi-hat behind his solos. Sammy Kaye likes a lot of backbeat—a little corny, in keeping with the music. You have to play 2 and 4 loud enough for dancers to hear. For dancing, that has to be there.

"Big band drumming comes naturally to me," he adds. "But it *can* be hard, if you get a bass player who's not right with you or if the sax section as a whole rushes. If the lead alto rushes, the whole section will rush."

Laushey has some favorite things to play. "I like doing 'Sing Sing Sing' when I take out my own band; I use a record copy of Benny's arrangement—20 minutes, not the chopped-down thing everyone has. I like playing that Dorsey medley with 'Song Of India,' etc. I like to play behind the Pied Pipers with Warren Covington's Band, doing those Sy Oliver arrangements. Not every drummer likes accompanying somebody else, but I like to lay down time behind someone who's really cook-

ing. Some drummers get a job with a band, and as soon as they get there, they want to turn everything around—play a lot of solos. You have to remember what you're there for. You're there to play time first, not drum solos. Lay the time down. Let them *like* you first."

A bandleader has to gauge what the audience wants, Laushey says. A lot of times, Laushey may play a four-hour dance with the Jimmy Dorsey Band and never really get to take a solo. Castle might sense that the audience is more interested in dancing slowly to ballads such as "Deep Purple," "Maria Elena," and "I Hear A Rhapsody," than in listening to the drummer—or any other member of the band—cut loose on hot jazz numbers. For concert dates, Castle will generally call out more of the faster numbers from their book, with more solo space.

Castle had been a close friend of Gene Krupa—he was, in fact, best man at Krupa's wedding—and when Krupa died, Castle inherited Krupa's big band library. Laushey, a lifelong Krupa fan, gets a great kick when he can solo within the context of an original Krupa big band chart, such as "Disc Jockey Jump," "Leave Us Leap," or "Drumboogie." Once in a while, the band will play "Don't Be That Way," and there—as a remembrance of Krupa—Laushey does one two-bar drum break *exactly* as Krupa originally did it.

Laushey credits Krupa with inspiring

him to become a drummer. Hanging on the wall in his studio are "Gene Krupa Jazz Association" (fan club) membership cards that he acquired in his boyhood. He first discovered Krupa when he was about 10 or 11; by age 15, he was catching Krupa performances live. He spent four or five days at Atlantic City's Steel Pier in 1965, watching Krupa's quartet. Krupa grew friendly towards the youth who kept showing up day after day, and gave him his address. Laushey visited Krupa at his home in Yonkers, New York, shortly afterwards, and again several years later.

"Krupa was the best," Laushey insists. "Buddy Rich was faster, but Krupa was more musical. From watching Krupa, I got the simplicity of the way he kept time and how you explode when you have to." Laushey's record collection includes a stack of Krupa albums more than a foot thick. He also has plenty of audio tapes of Krupa, plus videotapes of Krupa's movie appearances, which he still studies.

Laushey recalls one day on the Steel Pier, when a big band played opposite Krupa's quartet. It was Lee Castle's Jimmy Dorsey Band. "I remember watching the drummer set his drums up and saying, 'Wouldn't it be neat to play in a band like that.' Now I play drums in and handle that band. Not many people get to come full circle like that."

Exhibiting another Krupa influence, Laushey uses a Slingerland set—a standard four-piece. He uses a *FiberSkyn* snare head; his other heads are Evans *Hydraulics*, which, he says, give him about the closest sound he can get to Krupa's without using calf heads (which would not be practical for all of the touring he does). His cymbals are mostly old Zildjians: a 16" thin crash, an 18" medium-thin crash, a 22" medium sizzle cymbal with no rivets for his ride, and an 8" splash. His hi-hats are 14" Paiste *Sound Edge*.

After studying drumming for a year at Berkeley when he was 19, Laushey returned to Wilmington to get married and began working in a trio at a supper club. When an opening for a show drummer turned up at another club, he immediately declared he could handle show drumming. "I had never done it in my life, but in this business, you *never* say you can't do something. They let me sit in, as a kind of test. The singer, Ada Cavallo, came out. I accidentally knocked my glasses off with one drumstick, right at the start. I couldn't see the music, the conductor, or Ada Cavallo. I was late for every downbeat and cutoff. But still I was hired."

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Laushey worked shows with Johnny Ray, Tony Martin, Phyllis Diller, Bobby Rydell, Ricky Nelson, and Charlie Callas, as well as groups such as The Drifters, The Coasters, and The Flamingos, developing a reputation for being versatile and a good reader. When alto saxist Lloyd Johnston (who was then doing the Jimmy Dorsey solos in Castle's Dorsey Band, as well as serving as the band's contractor) hired him for his first gig, he was ready. Laushey found quick acceptance from Castle, Covington, Kaye, and the rest. Johnston invited him to share contracting and managerial duties when Johnston became sick; Laushey assumed full responsibility after Johnston died.

Laushey also teaches. As he puts it, "Unless you become a really big star, you've got to have an ace in the hole such as teaching. And besides, teaching keeps me young. My students tell me who the new drummers are that I should check out."

Laushey can also teach aspiring drummers the realities of the big band business. They may see just the glamour. Some of Laushey's students enjoyed seeing him recently with Castle's Dorsey Band, on the CBS *Morning News*. He lets them know that to do that 10-minute spot, the band rehearsed for four solid hours. And touring, Laushey says, can be grueling. "One time, we drove 14 hours to do a one-nighter in Macon, Georgia, played the date, and didn't check into a hotel afterwards, but drove directly back. Usually, you line up gigs closer to each other. If you're playing Florida, you can go down one coast and up the other, without having to go too far between dates. The members of the Jimmy Dorsey Band live in Delaware, New Jersey, and New York. If we've got a date north of New York, say in Rhode Island, we'll start driving north from Delaware, picking up musicians along the way in New Jersey and New York. If we're playing a date south of here, say in Washington, D.C., the process reverses: The guys in New York start driving south first, picking up the rest of us in New Jersey and in Delaware. We travel in three or four cars. All of the cars have CBs and radar detectors. We have musicians in the band who are paid extra to be drivers as well as musicians. It can be tough. I remember one morning, when I got in from Virginia at 6:45 and was teaching a student at 8:15."

Sometimes though, Laushey says, it *does* seem like a dream job. He remembers the final night of a recent cruise. "The band was on the Q.E. II, Helen O'Connell was singing with us, and it couldn't have been better. But you always have bills to pay, and you can't count on bookings like that every day of the year. Where was I the next day? Playing a wedding reception with my own group in Hockessin, Delaware."



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good for me, and I enjoyed being part of it.

It sounds corny now, but I remember when I was 14 or 15 someone telling me, "You've got to get a 'real' job." I said, "All I want to do is play drums." That person said, "Look, you're just being crazy. That's no job." I said, "Well look, if I can earn my living playing drums, I'll be happy for the rest of my life." I'm so pleased that I'm able to be a drummer. I'm doing something that I really love—something artistic and creative.

**TS:** What was the musical environment like in South Wales when you were growing up?

**CS:** I grew up listening to Buddy Holly, not Presley. I suddenly slipped into jazz, too. The first record I ever bought was jazz. It was the soundtrack from a movie called *All Night Long*—Patrick McGooohan played a drummer in the film, and if I remember correctly, the film was a jazzed-up version of *MacBeth*. The drummers on the soundtrack were amazing. They were mainly English guys, but I think Joe Morello made a guest appearance on that, too. I know it had all the best session players in London at the time: people like Alan Ganley and Barry Morgan, who are still on top.

In Britain and in Wales during the time I was growing up, Gene Krupa was often on the Sunday afternoon movies on TV, so everyone was into him. But I heard Buddy Rich on record and thought, "Who is this guy?" Of course, in America he was already a phenomenon. So Rich was always my favorite drummer—and still is. His sound was crisper, plus he had power and drive. Then Tony Williams came along, and I had two favorite drummers. I'd also have to include Ian Paice as being a major influence on me. To me, he is the definitive rock drummer. He's got everything—technique and heart.

**TS:** Listening to your solo last night, it was apparent that you were drawing on Rich's influences.

**CS:** Most definitely. It was hip to be into Gene Krupa, but I went for Rich because I could relate much more to what he was doing.

Although rock 'n' roll was the big music scene where I grew up, I

also used to listen to Radio Luxembourg because that was mainly top-20 pop, which exposed me to a variety of music. Now I love all kinds of music—even classical. I went to see *Carmina Burana* by Carl Orff at Carnegie Hall the other day. I also listen to free jazz. I enjoy a diverse musical outlet—any type of music. I think it was Duke Ellington who said, "There are only two kinds of music: good and bad." That's a beautiful quote.

**TS:** How did you make the transition from amateur to pro?

**CS:** I was 16 when I heard that Tom's regular drummer had gotten the sack. I had been working in a shoe store, and this guy came into the store to buy some shoes one day. I realized that he was the lead guitarist with Tommy Scott & The Senators [Tom Jones's band]! After a lot of deliberation, I walked up to him and said, "I hear you need a drummer." He said, "Yeah." It took a lot of courage on my part, especially since the guy was 20, and I was 16. An age difference of four years is a lot when you're a kid. I said, "Oh, I live close to Tom," and he said, "Tell you what: I'll bring the band down, and we'll play right at your house." I had my kit set up in my front room, you see. Soon after, I joined the band, and I remember taking my drums on the public buses. The whole Premier kit—a floor tom, a mounted tom—no covers on the drums, plus all the cymbals that were in a box. Mind you, I loaded the *entire* kit onto the bus. [laughs]

We started going up to London for the odd audition and recording job, and then we finally made a permanent move there in about '63 or '64. Our first date was supporting the Rolling Stones after their first record, "Come On," had just been released.

**TS:** That experience must have been unforgettable.

**CS:** It was incredible. I've never seen so many sweaty people jammed into a cellar in all my life. It was so hot on stage that we couldn't breathe. That was our first London gig.

**TS:** You mentioned that you played with Count Basie. How did that come about?

**CS:** Tom had switched from being a rock 'n' roller to being a cabaret performer, so we started using a band called the Ted Heath Orchestra, which was a really outstanding big band. Tom had held over the rhythm section from his rock days, so I stayed in the band when he changed. The change was initiated by the management agency. We had been a rock 'n' roll quartet, but most of our audiences were made up of people over 25, and most of those folks were not into rock music. Because of that, the move was made into the cabaret circuit as opposed to the rock circuit.

When we first moved into cabaret, Tom's manager wasn't sure if the rhythm section could cut this big band thing. They hadn't known that I'd been listening to big band music ever since I was a kid. They had sort of an audition, and I remember being extremely nervous the night before. I went 'round to Tom's house twice that night to talk to him, and he was just as nervous as I was. I hadn't realized it at the time, but they had Kenny Clare sitting in the wings in case I couldn't cut the gig. He took over for me when I left that band. He was a great player and a very nice man. He just died this past January. Anyway, Kenny was sitting in the next room just waiting for me to fall on my ass, but luckily, I didn't. I stayed with Tom for another four years after that, and when we came to the States, he used the Count Basie Band, which was great.

**TS:** So Basie's band was added onto Tom's rhythm section for his set?

**CS:** Right. The Count would do his bit, and then his band—except for the rhythm section—would stay on after he finished. Everybody says the same thing to me: "Wow! You played with Count Basie!" Then I have to explain how it actually occurred. I *did* have the chance to play a few numbers with him. That was fantastic. They were great players to work with—really incredible musicians.

By the way, Ronnie Verrell was the drummer for most of Tom's records, but I did play on one Tom Jones album called *Thirteen Smash Hits*, which also had bass player John Paul Jones on it. This was around 1967—pre-Led Zeppelin days. He was probably one of the best bass players in all of Britain at that time, doing all kinds of sessions.

**TS:** What were the circumstances that led to the formation of Man-

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fred Mann's Earth Band in 1971?

**CS:** In the '60s, Manfred had a band called Chapter III with drummer Mike Hugg. It was a free-form jazz project—some very way-out things. I was playing a jazz gig in London with Derek Wadsworth, and Derek recommended me to Manfred when Mike Hugg left and a new drummer was needed. I ended up doing the third Chapter III album, which was never released. A few months later, Manfred phoned me and asked if I'd like to help him form a new band, which eventually developed into Earth Band. I brought in Colin Pattenden [bass], who I had met when we had both auditioned for a West End show as the rhythm section. Manfred brought in vocalist/guitarist Mick Rodgers, and that lineup lasted for five years. When Mick left, he was replaced by Chris Thompson and guitarist Dave Flett.

Earth Band was a great situation, because it was quite free. There was plenty of room for improvisation, especially on stage. I was very involved in that band. Manfred was very much in charge of the business aspects of it, but the rest of us always had our say in everything. Of course, we had our arguments as well, but we all got on okay.

After Earth Band, I had a group called Terra Nova. That consisted of the bass player from Earth Band, Colin Pattenden, Chris West on guitar, Pete Cox—who's the singer in Go West—myself, and several different keyboard players. It was a very good band, but it didn't last because we had some difficulties in getting a deal. It was precisely at the time when punk hit Britain, and Terra Nova had a lot of musically complicated things going on. The songs themselves were straightforward rock, but the solos and time signatures were rather unusual.

**TS:** You also played with Gary Numan. It's surprising that Numan, known primarily as a techno-pop artist, had a flesh-and-blood drummer.

**CS:** Yeah, that was me. In fact, Ced Sharkley was the original drummer, so I wasn't the first. I only did it for a year, but it was a

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challenge because it was a fresh situation for me.

It all came about because Gary and I had been partners in a recording studio near Shepperton at that time. He was planning to tour and was in the process of making an album on which he wanted a "real" drummer. I decided to do it. Gary asked me if I knew any fretless bass players, so I recommended the best I knew at the time—Pino Palladino. We both did the tour and the album called *Music For Chameleons*. It was interesting to be able to play with backing tapes, knowing you're really playing in time.

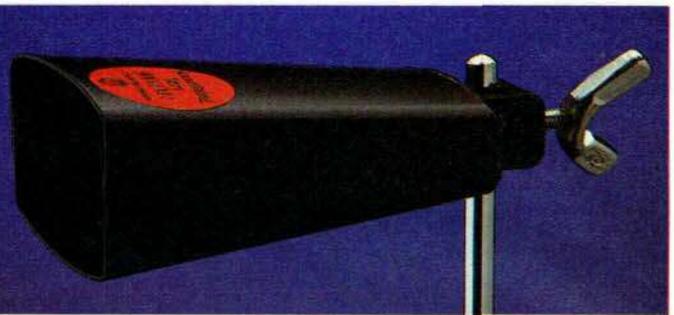
On some cuts I played to a click track, while on others I played over the top of an already existing *LinnDrum* track. The only way that I can play with a machine of any kind is to sit right on top of it and almost push the time on the machine. I can't lay back on it. I have to be ahead of it, telling *it* where to go. I'm very lucky in that I've got very good time. It seems so obvious, but the importance of keeping good time is the most essential and basic element in drumming. Everybody else in the band is falling back on *you*. I know drummers who sit in their cellars all day long and just solo. They think, "Great. I'm doing well here." Then they sit in with musicians and they can't keep time, which is the primary function of any drummer. Look at Neil Peart: He's playing all those elaborate time signatures, but he plays them *in time*.

**TS:** It seems inconceivable that there are professional drummers who don't keep accurate time.

**CS:** It is inconceivable, but it's true. It's not built into them; they haven't got an inner "clock." You can practice timekeeping, but I think that timekeepers are born and not built. Again, it's not impossible to learn, but you have to feel it inside.

**TS:** You've been able to play with a variety of artists—from Tom Jones to David Gilmour. Was there an intentional pursuit on your part to play in all those diversified musical climates that you've been a part of?

**CS:** No. It's just called working. [laughs] It was just a matter of going along with the offers that came in. I've never turned anything



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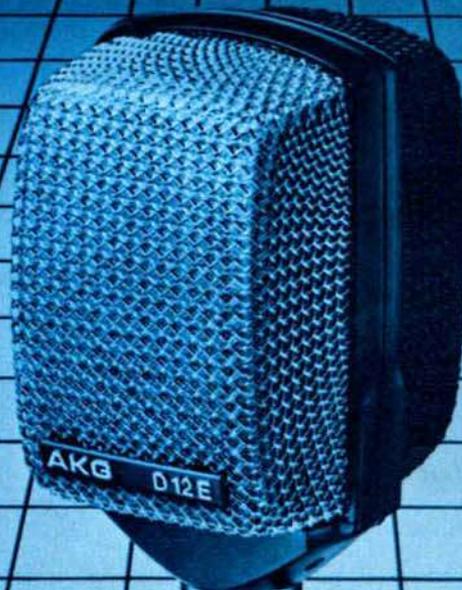


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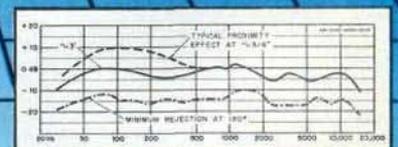
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down. If I was already working and had a commitment to another artist, then I had to turn down some projects, but that was just due to logistical problems. I played with Gary Numan, which was a complete about-face from a gig like Tom Jones. I like to have a broad musical outlook. I'll try anything at all. I think it's very important for young drummers to realize that. They shouldn't think, "Oh man, I'm into heavy rock. I'm not going to do this jazz gig." Whether it's an orchestra, a punk band, or whatever, you should play drums in a variety of different situations so that you'll be well-rounded in your musical approach. Young drummers who turn down the opportunity to play outside of their own particular interests are limiting themselves, and I think that's very wrong. You've got to keep a broad perspective.

**TS:** In retrospect, are there any gigs that you are sorry you had to turn down?

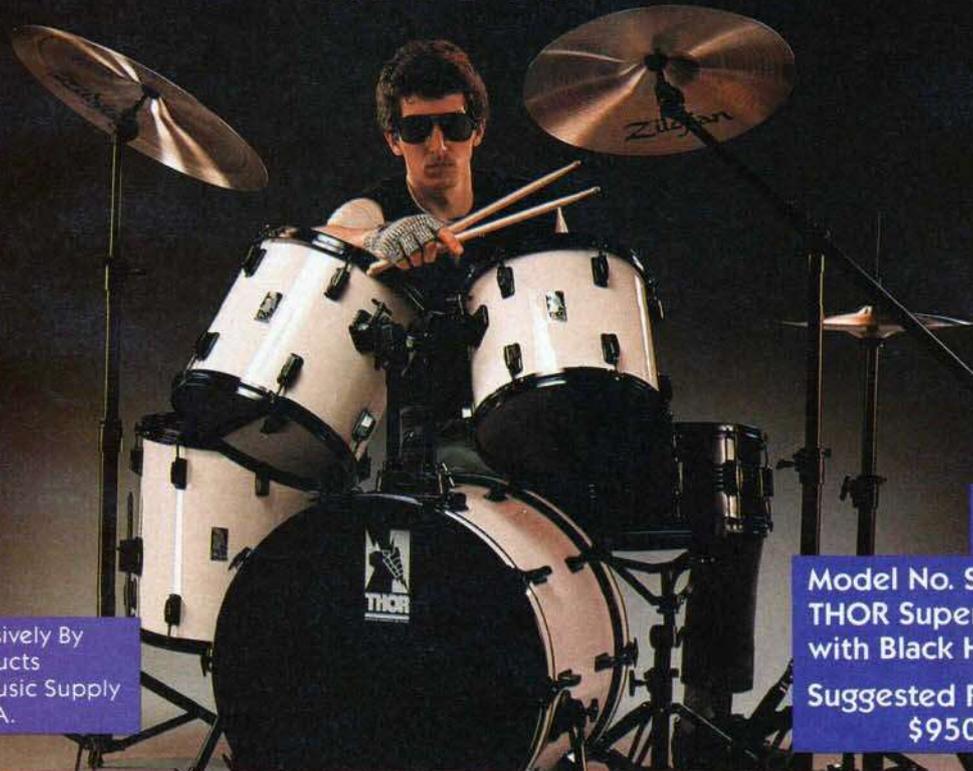
**CS:** My biggest regret was having to turn down Elvis Presley when he asked me to play with him. Presley hadn't been performing for a while—he was making all those movies at the time—and he saw me playing with Tom in Hawaii in '68. It was Presley seeing Tom perform that made him want to get back into it. Tom and Presley were friends, and we had met Presley several times on that tour—Vegas, Hawaii. Then Elvis's tour manager, Joe Esposito, phoned me up one day and said, "Elvis is going to start doing gigs again, and he'd like you to play drums for him." I had to decline because I was contracted to Tom. What an experience that would have been!

**TS:** Does playing still offer you challenges after all the years you've been doing it?

**CS:** Always. The challenge lies within yourself and having your body work the way you want it to. That's very important, especially for drummers. It's your body that's playing just as much as your mind. It's an extremely physical thing, and it takes a certain type of person to be a drummer.

It wouldn't be fair to stereotype, but I will say that a good amount of drummers are into martial arts. I read the interview in *Modern Drummer* with Ian Wallace, and he mentioned that he

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does Aikido. I practiced Aikido and Karate for seven years, and the benefits of both really helped me to be a better drummer. They taught me breathing, how to use my body, coordination, and how to work hard. That was an excellent learning experience for me. Aikido and Karate almost taught me more about playing a drumkit than actually playing the kit itself. It brings out the inherent energy—called Ki energy—in you. I know it sounds a bit hippy-ish, but it's really great and it's a big part of the whole practice of martial arts.

**TS:** While we're on the subject of physical performance, how do you approach your drum solos? Aside from pushing yourself physically, you seem to stretch yourself artistically. You step out of the stereotypical limitations of the rock drum solo.

**CS:** Well, for one thing, I don't like long drum solos. There's only one man who can play a long drum solo and get away with it, and that's Buddy Rich. That's my view. When I'm soloing, I've got to be turned on by what I'm doing; if I'm bored, then the audience is likely to be bored, too. The key is keeping yourself interested while retaining the element of excitement, which is integral. During last night's solo, I was playing in an 18,000-seat, filled-to-capacity arena, but I played my solo as though I were in a jazz club.

**TS:** So you're not compromising your own tastes or style just because you happen to be playing in front of 18,000 hard-rock fans who may not have had previous exposure to jazz?

**CS:** Right. I might do some dramatic things, like kick the gong, but that's just show biz. We met Les Paul the other night. The man's a genius—an absolutely beautiful player. He must be 70 years old, one of the greatest guitar players in the world, and he's still a showman after all these years! It's no use sitting in your room and playing all these incredible licks. You've got to get out and take it to the people. Then you've got to keep them entertained. Otherwise, they'll walk out! I don't throw sticks or anything, mainly because I can't throw them. [laughs] People like Carmine and Dino Danelli have got all that down to a "T."

**TS:** Did you like those drummers in their heyday?

**CS:** Yeah, very much. In fact, I learned how to do the syncopation bit on the bass drum through Dino Danelli. He didn't teach me; he taught Tom Jones, who later taught me. This was in the '60s, when Tom came over without his group to do the Dick Clark Caravan Tour. It was around 1965, because I remember that the song "What's New Pussycat" had just been released. The Young Rascals were on that same bill. In those days, we used to do a lot of Little Richard and Jerry Lee Lewis numbers—all that '50s rock 'n' roll. Everything was straight fours on the bass drum. Then, Tom came over here and did that tour. Dino Danelli was doing all this syncopation on the bass drum, and Tom asked him to show him how to do it. Danelli himself had picked that up from all the jazz players. Rock drummers in New York and other parts of the States were working on that at the time, but we'd never heard it in Britain. So, Tom came back and said, "Instead of going boom, boo boom, you can go boom boo boom, boo boo boom boom." It was quite a revelation at the time.

**TS:** So you just expanded on that?

**CS:** I just developed it through practice. I also developed independence with each hand. And that's interesting too, because I can now play left-handed or right-handed, yet I'm not naturally ambidextrous. I just worked at gaining equal facility by picking up cups of tea, opening doors, or drinking mugs of beer with either hand.

**TS:** Cozy Powell once commented that, although many drummers have two bass drums in their kits, few actually utilize their left drum, except to double up at the very end of a song. You have two bass drums in your live setup. How often do you actually incorporate both in your playing?

**CS:** I didn't use double bass drums on *The Firm* LP at all, although I did have them. That was due to a problem with sound; we couldn't get the second one to sound right. In the live concert, I only use them three times. I'm starting to use them a bit more—just a flam on the bass drum, or towards the end of some numbers where I'm playing two bass drums together instead of one. I have

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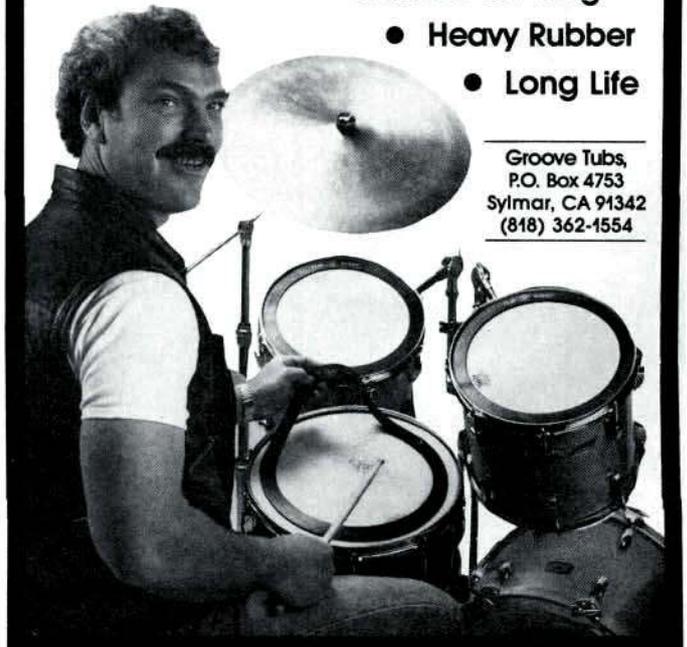
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to develop that, and I'm working on it.

Now Cozy is a great double bass drum player, and I must say that he's a helluva pool player. [laughs] Besides being a great drummer, he's a very nice guy. Other great double bass drum players are Simon Phillips—who's brilliant—Louis Bellson, of course, and a real rock player like Alex Van Halen.

I find that the easiest thing to play on double bass drums is the fast shuffle, which you can play at any tempo you want. Some drummers can do that really well, but I find it difficult to play straight 8th notes on double bass drums properly.

**TS:** Since we're on the subject, would you give a rundown of your equipment?

**CS:** I'm using Pearl at the moment: I've got six rack toms—6", 8", 10", 13", 14", and a 15", plus 16" and 18" floors. They're all power toms. My bass drum is 22", and the kit itself is from the Pearl *DLX* Series. All my drums are double-headed. I'm really pleased with this new *DLX* Series; they're really very good.

My cymbals are all Paiste—mainly *Rudes*: 16" and 18" crashes, a 21" ride, a 22" Chinese, and also on my left-hand side there's a 22" medium ride with an upside-down splash on top of it. My hi-hats are 14"—heavies.

As far as heads go, I use Remo *Pinstripes* on the top of the toms and clears on the bottom. Now here's a really great tip that I use: Remo has just put out a power snare head that is mainly used in marching bands. There's a rubber ring around the edge of the snare head, which, when you place it on a marching drum and put the rim down on the rubber washer so to speak, it holds the head in place and prevents it from ripping off, since marching drummers use a lot of tension. Now what I've done is taken that rubber ring off, put the head on normally—actually, it works well with any head; it doesn't have to be a power head—place the rim on, and then afterwards, fit the rubber washer around the inside of the rim so it cuts out all the ring. It works great for recording as well as live. It gets a lot of the ring out of the drums, and it also retains the same feel as if it were a normal head without any damping on it.

**TS:** Do you use any type of muffling/damping in your kit?

**CS:** No, none at all. I try to avoid it like the plague. Engineers usually look on with horror when you say that you're not going to use any gaffer's tape or dampers, but if the drums are tuned correctly and as long as the sound isn't bouncing around too much, you can get a great live sound.

**TS:** About your tuning procedure, do you usually tune all the lugs to an equal tension?

**CS:** Yes, basically, to start with. I usually alternate tension screws, always going to the one diagonally opposite, all the way around. As for fine tuning, you just have to adjust it half a turn by half a turn until you achieve the sound you want. It will always be different, but you should basically start off with an even tension all around.

Steve Croxford, my drum roadie, tunes them really well, and he's not a drummer! He just tunes them the way I want them. Many drummers use drummers as their roadies, but I don't think that always works out. Roadies who are drummers themselves tend to put their own tastes and influences upon the tuning of your drums, whereas a non-drummer like Steve will do it the way you want it. He can change all the heads, and they'll sound almost identical to the ones he's just removed, which is a great help on the road. It means I don't have to go up and check what he's done.

**TS:** How do you usually tune your snare?

**CS:** The same as the toms, really. Basically, I usually have the bottom heads as loose as possible without the lugs falling out—just tight enough to hold them—while the top heads can be tensioned as tight as I want them.

**TS:** You've credited Dave Gilmour as being responsible for your switch from single- to double-headed drums.

**CS:** That's true. Dave made the initial suggestion. Actually, the first kit I used with Dave was an old Ludwig kit that once belonged to Pink Floyd's Nick Mason. It was lent to Dave for that tour. That whole experience is what really got me into double-headed drums again, and I'm glad I made the change. They sound great in the studio.

**TS:** At one time, you were involved with a company that had its own idea about how drums should look. What were the circumstances that led you to form Staccato Drums, Inc.?

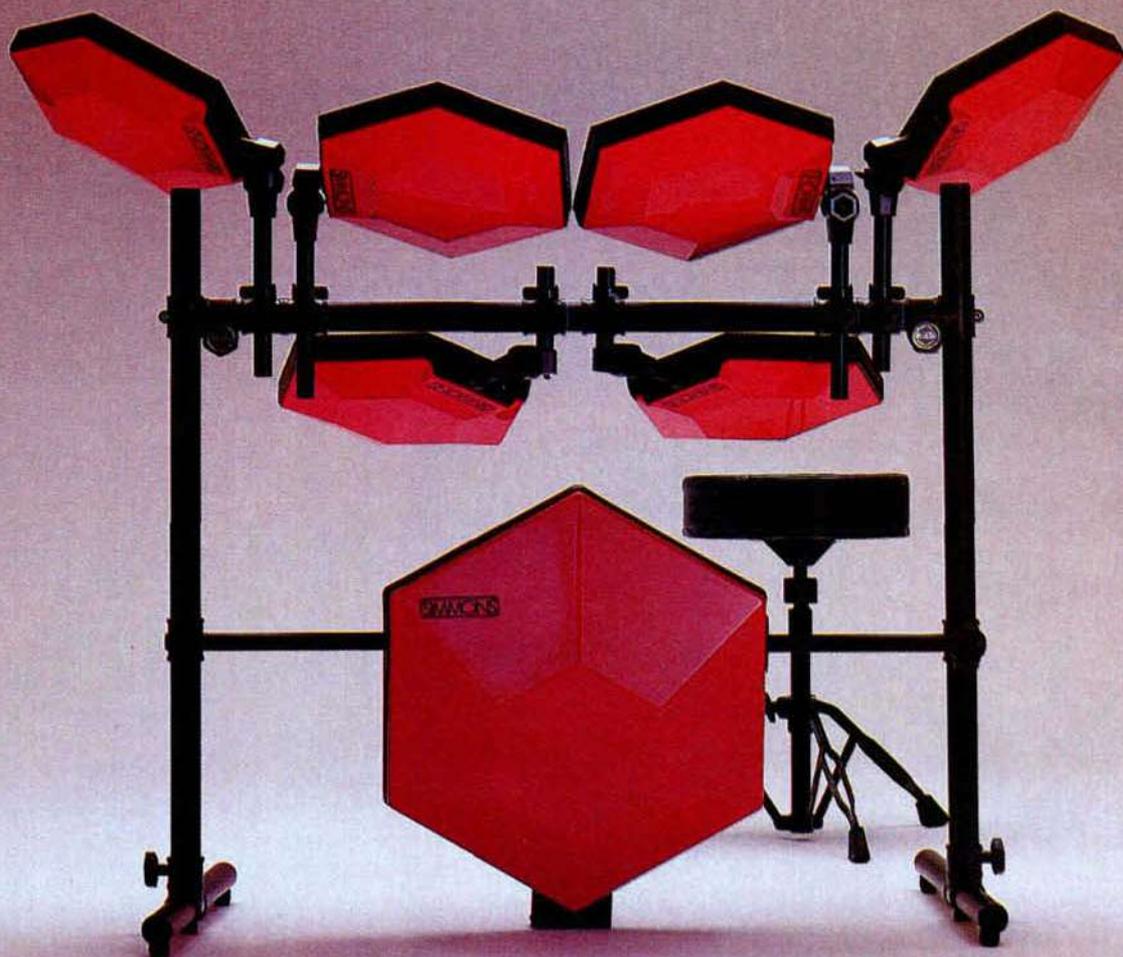
**CS:** Well, I met Pat Townshend [co-founder and engineer] at his home one day, and he showed me a 6" drum with that Staccato horn shape. I was interested in buying one myself, so I figured that other drummers would be interested in them as well. I think, for a lot of people, the North drums just didn't quite make it; I don't think they were heavy-sounding enough. Anyway, we got into production for a while and did quite well for a few years, but now it's on hold for the moment. That's not to say that we won't be going into production at some future date, but right now it's on hold.

**TS:** What is the advantage of the horn-shaped shell?

**CS:** The horn shape projects the sound extremely well. It acts much like a bass bin would throwing the sound *out*. It's far more powerful than most other drums—than any other drums, in fact. The reason I've switched to double-headed drums recently is the benefit of more tone. Of course, double-headed drums are not as powerful as single-headed drums, but no single-headed drum is as powerful as Staccato. It has to do with the way they're constructed, which allows them to react the way wood does; the whole body of the drum resonates within itself, if you like. They're made of fiberglass rather than wood. Overall, the Staccato drums are really the loudest drums ever made. I think they're even louder than metal drums.

**TS:** Do you view drums as an instrument without constrictions? Do you see drummers taking drums far beyond their present capabilities?

**CS:** I'm not very much of a technical person regarding the actual technology behind equipment, but I do hope to become more involved with electronics very soon. Basically, I hit things, and if they go "boom" or "bash," that's all I really care about. Of course, it's got to fit within the whole musicality of what's going on. But as far as the electronic side of things go, drums will definitely go even further in the future. It's still going to take a while for



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people to get into electronic drums *properly*, but the sky's the limit as far as the potential of the drum as a percussive instrument is concerned.

**TS:** How has your approach to drumming evolved since you first got started?

**CS:** Well, in the beginning I had to practice like hell just to get the simplest things together. Now, all I do is play. I don't have to think about what I'm playing; it just flows out. After playing for 25 years, I can say that it's only been within the last ten years that it's all just come naturally from inside. I no longer have to think, "I'm going to do this fill here," or "I'm going to play that there."

I learned to play a flam paradiddle about 12 years ago, but when I first tried it, it was impossible; I couldn't get anything together on it. Then I just broke it down and played it very, very slowly until it worked. Speed comes with practicing time, and if you try to rush things, that's when your timing is likely to go wrong. You have to

relax your whole body. If you're tense, you cannot play properly. So if you're practicing and you find your forearms getting tense when you're trying to do a fast roll, you've got to stop for a while, then start up again even more slowly, and just build it and build it. It takes a long time, but it's worth it in the end because you'll end up with a smooth technique.

I know that one of the basic faults of a lot of young drummers—I'm referring to real beginners now—is that, when they go around the toms, they start off on the snare drum and do a roll around the toms. By the time they get to the floor tom, they seem to run out of steam, and they don't hit the floor tom as hard as they hit the snare. So I feel that you've really got to practice going around, hitting them progressively harder in order to make them sound uniform. Another thing that some people don't realize when they're first beginning is that, whenever you do a cymbal crash, it always sounds better when you hit the bass drum simultaneously with the



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crash. So instead of just going "splash" with the cymbal, you've got to go "bash" with the bass drum and the cymbal together. A lot of really young drummers don't seem to realize that. They think you can just hit the cymbal, but it's always best to accent it with the bass drum as well.

**TS:** You said that your playing all came together for you within the last ten years. Do you think you've hit your peak?

**CS:** I hope not. I think it's always important to learn and to improve constantly. I like to keep an open mind about anything that's going on, whether it be in electronics or a new lick that I might hear. I'm terrible in that I don't practice—ever. I haven't done it for years, but I used to sit down occasionally and practice.

**TS:** Yet you come across with a strong technical orientation, especially live. Page, for one, considers you to be technically proficient.

**CS:** What's of paramount importance to me is playing with soul and feeling. I consider myself an emotional player, and I believe that you have to transcend technique. You just have to play. Technique is a tool that you use to express yourself. It's the expression that counts—how you express your own personality or musicality.

I would like to be able to play in a highly technical manner, and in some respects, I do. Time signatures are not a problem for me. I probably even play better in odd time signatures than I do in 4/4. As long as I can work it out, then it's okay. For instance, the ending of "Midnight Moonlight" is in 5/4. There was a tune we used to do in Earth Band that was in 13/8 called "Starbird" from *The Roaring Silence* album, which, incidentally, I wrote the lyrics for. It was just a line that came up, and after we had been playing for a couple of weeks, we decided to figure it out and discovered it was in 13/8.

Mainly, I would like to be thought of as a good drummer who can cut the gig, but I guess it's true that some people would consider me to be somewhat of a technical player, because I can handle the intricate aspects of playing.

**TS:** When we were talking earlier, you mentioned that your son is a drummer and that you're very proud of him.

**CS:** Yes, my 14-year-old son is a drummer himself, and he's actually a pretty dynamite guy. His music teacher at school recently told me that he's really brilliant for his age because he's reading everything. I'm really pleased about it, but I don't believe in pushing my kids into anything. He's chosen it for himself, and being a drummer as well as a father, I couldn't be more pleased.

**TS:** Have you given him any lessons?

**CS:** I haven't given him all that many lessons, but I have shown him a few pointers like telling him to play open-handed, riding with his left hand as well as with his right. That's something I would tell any young drummer. I know teachers might disagree with me because they may argue that it's best to learn to play the hi-hat with your hands crossed. I play open-handed as well, which took me years to learn.

**TS:** Why the preference for open-handed playing?

**CS:** There was a Springsteen tune called "Spirits In The Night" that we covered in Earth Band, where I discovered that I played with a better feel by playing open-handed. It really worked better for that particular piece of music. Now I can play almost everything that way. When I play jazz, sometimes I've got a 20" ride on my left as well as my right, and if I play a little jazz lick, I'll do it with my left hand. That goes for playing with The Firm, too. I'll play "ting ting ti-ting" with my left hand and mess around on the snare with my right, and then maybe I'll switch it around, too. But it's taken me years to learn that, and I've shown that to my son, who I'm sure will be able to do it a lot better than me in a few years.

**TS:** What kind of a reaction do you get from him concerning your work?

**CS:** He comes to all the gigs that I do around London, and he loves it! Besides drumming, he's very interested in lighting and stage design, which he's learning about in school at the moment. He's only 14, but when he gets a bit older, he's going to be seeing and hearing different types of bands in a variety of places. He's really quite knocked out by it all; he likes the fact that his dad is a drummer.




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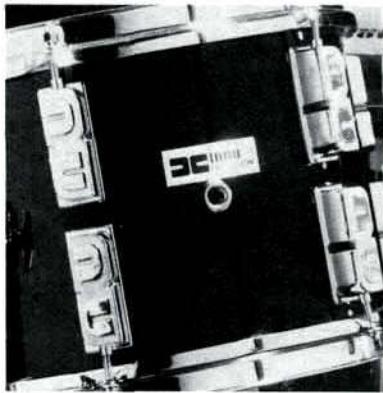
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## Style & Analysis: Neil Peart

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One of Rush's most popular records is *Moving Pictures*, from 1981. Example 1 is the opening section of "YYZ" from that LP. The rhythm is based on the Morse Code for the letters Y, Y, and Z. Within this two-bar pattern, Neil shifts the feel between the bass and snare drums. This is Neil at his best.

① Crotale ♩ = 200

H.H.  
T.T.  
S.D.  
F.T.  
B.D.

Cr. Cym

Ride Cym.

China

Choked Crash

From the same LP, Example 2 looks at "Tom Sawyer." Starting after the first chorus, Neil lays down a heavy beat in 4/4. In bar five, he drops the last 8th note, shifting the beat to 7/8. This is a subtle but effective change.

♩ = 86

②

Moving on to the *Signals* LP, Example 3 is from "Losing It." Taken from the break after the first verse and into the second, these three phrases show Neil "building up" the rhythm. Starting with rimshot and hi-hat, he adds bass drum, and then snare drum and open hi-hat.

③  $\text{♩} = 122$

Example 4, "Chemistry," is also from the *Signals* album. This shows Neil catching the accents with his crash cymbals. Even with the crashes and fills, he keeps the beat right on target.

$\text{♩} = 125$

④

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<input type="checkbox"/>	Session C	23.95

(choked)

The last two examples are from the *Grace Under Pressure* LP. Example 5 is the beat from "The Body Electric." The two-bar phrase is first stated on the toms and snare. He then shifts it to the ride pattern. The offbeat accents help make this simple beat very effective.

⑤  $\text{♩} = 135$

Example 6 is from "Distant Early Warning." This again shows how Neil builds up a rhythm. Verses one and two use rimshot and bass drum. Verses three and four add the snare drum accents.

⑥ 1st Verse  $\text{♩} = 144$

S.D. Rim

5 times

3 times

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3rd Verse

5 times

2 times

by Bob Saydlowski, Jr.

## Remo Drumkits

4501 kit components are: 16x22 bass drum, 11x12 and 12x13 tom-toms, 16 x 16 floor tom, and 7 x 14 snare drum all with standard flanged metal hoops. All shells have beveled bearing edges.

### Bass Drum

The 16 x 22 bass drum has 16 separate lugs with T-style tuners, plus channeled metal hoops with plastic inlays that match the drum finish. Disappearing spurs with convertible tips (from rubber cone to spike point) are fitted to the shell. These spurs are easy to use and work well to keep the drum in place. A felt strip is included for use behind the batter head. The drum is fitted with *Pinstripe* heads on both sides.

The bass drum had a lot of power and volume, but no "boominess." It did need a bit more dampening to compact its sound. After installing a *Muff1* ring, the resulting sound was tightened up and was perfect for live use, with a good amount of punch.

### Mounting System

The tom-tom holder is the "new, improved" model also used on all the other Remo drumkits. The base block is mounted near the front of the bass drum, and had separate chambers for each tom-tom arm. T-screws are used to secure heights indirectly for the tube arms. Angle adjustment for each arm relies on a concealed ratchet, operated by a T-bolt. The arm passes through the bracket and drum-shell and is secured with a T-screw. Memory rings are provided on the holder arms for both the drum and base plate ends; these are set with a drum key. This holder has enough length for a comfortable setup of deep toms, and is extremely sturdy and twist-free, while providing a variety of angles.

### Tom-Toms

Both the mounted toms have 12 lugs each; the floor tom has 16 lugs, plus three legs. (Some of the floor tom's rods were prone to binding up, due to defective lug nuts.) None of the drums have mufflers installed. If dampening is desired, one can use external dampers, or Remo's internal *Muff1* rings (MD: Aug. '84). All three toms have *Pinstripe* batters and clear *Diplomat* bottoms (the now-popular combination). The drums can all be tuned to a deep pitch, with no tonal loss. They have good volume and come pretty close to a real wood sound.

### Snare Drum

Remo has 5 1/2 x 14, 7 x 14, and 8 x 14 snare drums available. This particular kit comes with a 7 x 14 that has 16 lugs, a side-throw strainer, and no internal damper. The strainer works quite easily and holds 20-strand wire snares via glass-tape strips. All snare drums have a chrome *Quadura* covering. The drum is fitted with a coated *Ambassador* batter and *Ambassador* snare head. The snare drum I tested was "buzzy" and needed some adjustments, but had a snappy, crisp sound, and a clear rimshot. Response was even throughout the playing surface—a good, overall drum.

### Hardware

All of Remo's kits are sold without hardware, but they do have four different tripod-based hardware packages available, made by Remo Taiwan, and ranging from lightweight to extra-heavy-duty. The *Dynasty 100* series package includes one single-braced cymbal stand with two adjustable tiers and C-style tilter, a tri-arm snare stand, chain-pull hi-hat, and bass drum pedal. Both pedals feature split footboards. The *300* Series stands are also single braced, but a bit heavier than the *100*. Components are the same, with the exception of a basket-style snare stand. All height joints have black, recessed nylon bushings (reviewed in detail later on). Remo's *310* package incorporates heavy-duty, double-braced tripods, and adds a boom cymbal stand. The top-of-the-line hardware is the *Dynasty 500* series. All stands in this group are extra-heavy-duty with double bracing, plus a lever-operated quick-lock feature at all height joints (somewhat similar to Tama's *Touchlock* [MD: Nov. '84]).

The *100* package retails for \$103.50, the *300* for \$169.50, the *310* for \$280.50, and the *500* retails for \$337.50. Hardware pieces are also available separately. The *300* and *500* series include double tom-tom stands, and all four lines offer drum thrones. Here's a closer look at the *Dynasty 300* hardware.

The *300* bass drum pedal has a split footboard, chain linkage, and double springs stretched downward. It clamps to the drum hoop via the common T-screw/claw plate method. Two sprung spurs are at the pedal's base. Both springs are tensionable at the bottom of the pedal, and stroke angle is also adjustable. The pedal is light



Remo has reached beyond the realm of *PTS* drums, and is now manufacturing four distinct series of drumkits. All the Remo drums incorporate resin-treated, non-warpable *Acousticon* shells, made famous by the *PTS* drums and percussion. (For *PTS* reviews, see MD: Dec. '82 and Aug. '84.) The *Acousticon* shells have changed a bit. The new *SE* shell is a lamination of wood fibrous material bonded with different resins. By changing the resins and processing, Remo can vary the acoustical qualities of each shell (i.e., a bass drum's formulation is not the same as a shell for a snare drum). The kits are available in white, blue, red, or black *Quadura* covering—a laminate that will not scratch or wrinkle.

The Remo *Innovator* kits are the original *PTS* kits, with *PTS* coated *Ambassador* heads. The concept has been taken one step further with the *Liberator* drums. These kits have pre-tuned heads also, but allow lug tensioning via a rod and claw at each latch. Remo's *Discovery* kits are regular lug-tuned drums with conventional drumheads, and the *Encore* series (the top of the line) features standard lug tuning, regular drumheads, plus a quick-change capability a la Pearl's *Super Gripper* (MD: Jan. '85) by way of Remo's *Power Snap* lugs. These snap open to release the drumhead and hoop for replacement, and then snap closed for tuning/tensioning. I raved over these on Pearl's kit, and these Remo lugs operate just as well. The *Liberator* kits also feature *Power Snaps*, by the way.

I recently tested the Remo *Discovery* kit. Although the various Remo kits differ in their types of heads used, types of lugs, etc., they have basic similarities. In the *Discovery* series, three five-piece drumkit configurations are available, ranging from jazz, to standard, to power-sized. The *DS-*

in weight, and has decent action, although a little too stiff for my own tastes.

The 300 hi-hat has a split footboard, chain link, and an internal spring that cannot be adjusted. Its top rod is knurled for 1/3 of its length, and the stand base has two sprung spurs for surface gripping. Getting the stand to fold up was a bit tricky; the particular one I tested bound up tight. The action of this hi-hat stand has a springy feel, but is okay for being an intermediate level of hardware.

One single-braced 300 cymbal stand is included in the package. It has two adjustable-height tubes and a concealed ratchet tilter. The stand can go high enough for most players and is very sturdy. The 300 snare stand has a concealed-ratchet angle

adjustment, and uses the common basket grip with carriage nut to close the arms. This stand is well made, but doesn't go low enough to comfortably seat the 7" snare drum. The 500 might be better, with its dropped basket.

### Cosmetics

Besides the four standard one-color finishes, Remo also has "Designer" kits consisting of wide color bands in either white, chrome, red, blue, black, or gold *Quadura*, plus large Remo logo decals in white, red, or black. When these bands are applied to the exterior of the shells, the drums have a contrasting two-color (or three-color) look. The bands and logos can be applied at the factory at the time of

drumkit manufacture or are available for do-it-yourselfers. Complete *Quadura* re-covering kits are also available.

It was just a matter of time before Remo enlarged upon their drum manufacturing capabilities, and from what I've seen, they've had excellent results. These new kits can suit all levels of players, from beginner to on-the-road pro. Prices vary with the size, type, and series of kit selected, and range from a five-piece, single-headed *Innovator* kit (without hardware, remember) at \$282.50 to a five-piece *Encore* in power sizes at \$844.50. To give you an idea of how the kits are priced, including hardware, the price of the *Discovery* kit with 300 hardware, as reviewed, is \$826.00 retail.

## Five Years Of Close - Ups

This issue marks the fifth anniversary of my *Product Close-Up* column in the pages of *MD*. Before I cut the cake, opened the gifts, and took my typewriter out to dinner, I compiled the following directory of all *Product Close-Ups* since the inception of the column. We've certainly seen some great things, and let's hope we'll see even more in columns to come. Many thanks are due to all the manufacturers for their assistance, and also, thanks to you, the reader!

For the statistical maniacs out there, in 46 columns, you've seen 24 drumkits, 26 bass drum pedals, 14 drum accessories, 13 electronic drums, kits and effects, seven drum machines, five synthetic-stick brands, four miscellaneous drums, four practice-pad kits, three miking systems, and two cymbal brands!

October 1980

Pedals In Perspective, Part 1: Ludwig *Speed King*, Sonor *Z5317*, Tama *6755 King Beat*, Slingerland *Yellow Jacket*

December 1980

Pedals In Perspective, Part 2: Ludwig *Ghost*, Briko/Magadini *Power Rod*

February 1981

Sonor *XK925* drumkit

March 1981

Pearl *ET-Series* drumkit

May 1981

Premier *PD206T Resonator* drumkit

June 1981

Yamaha *YD-9022 WD* drumkit

July 1981

*Clap Trap* handclap synthesizer

August 1981

Aquarian Accessories: *Cymbal Spring*, *Kwik-Key*

October 1981

Gretsch *Nighthawk II Plus* drumkit

November 1981

Simmons *SDS5* electronic drumkit

December 1981

Slingerland *69T Magnum Force* drumkit

February 1982

A Look At Drumheads

April 1982

Synthetic Sticks: Aquarian, RiffRite, Duraline, Lastics, Hi-Skill

May 1982

Pearl *Extender* drumkit

July 1982

Practice Pad Kits: Calato 305PS, Remo *RPS10T*, Pearl *TD-5*

August 1982

Bass Drum Pedals II: Drum Workshop *5000C*, Pearl *910*, Zalmer *Twin*, Rogers *Supreme*, Rogers *SwivOMatic*

October 1982

Ludwig *Modular Trio* drumkit

November 1982

Tama *Superstar X-Tras 50* drumkit

December 1982

Remo Pre-Tuned Percussion

January 1983

Accessories: *Lug Lock*, *Blastics*, *Staway*, *Cym-Set*, *Buzzbuster*, external mufflers, *Drum Muff*

February 1983

Pearl *Export 052* drumkit

April 1983

Mattel *Synsonics*, MXR *The Kit*

May 1983

*Set-The-Pace* practice pads

June 1983

Yamaha *RSI92 Recording Series* drumkit

August 1983

Slingerland *Magnum/May-EA* drumkit

September 1983

Semi-Pro Drumkits: Cosmic Percussion *CP-P5*, Gretsch *Blackhawk*, Ludwig Standard 986, Yamaha *S252*, Hondo *HP525*, Slingerland *Spirit 1000*

October 1983

Migirian bass drums, Drum workshop 5002 double pedal

November 1983

Percussive Potpourri: *Stand-Off*, L.P. *Claw*, Wuhan *Jing* cymbals, Keplinger snare drums

December 1983

Drum Computers: *LinnDrum*, Oberheim *DX*, E-MU *Drumulator*, MXR 185, JTG *SR-88*, Korg *KPR-77*, Yamaha *MR-10*

February 1984

MPC Percussion Computer, Electro-Harmonix *Instant Replay*

March 1984

Rogers *XL5 Londoner* drumkit

April 1984

H. W. Cano *Modulus* electronic drums

May 1984

Pearl *Drum Rack*, SOTA snare drums

July 1984

Aquarian *Hi-Energy* miking system

August 1984

Remo *PTS Update*

September 1984

Corder 5000 *Series* drumkit

October 1984

Yamaha *Power Stage* drumkit

November 1984

Tama *Artstar* drumkit

December 1984

Simmons *SDS8* electronic drumkit

January 1985

Pearl *GLX Series* drumkit

March 1985

CB-700 *CC-9P* drumkit

April 1985

Electronic Kits, Part 1: Pearl *Fightman*, Tama *Techstar*

May 1985

Electronic Kits, Part 2: Gretsch *Blackhawk*, Ultimate Percussion *UP-5*

June 1985

From The Ground Up: L.T. *Gig Rug*, *Collarlock*, Profile Cymbals

July 1985

Electronic Kits, Part 3: *Cactus* drums, Ultimate Percussion *K2X*

September 1985

*C-Ducer* contact mic's

More to come!!! All reader correspondence is encouraged. Send your ideas, questions, or criticisms to Bob Saydlowski, Jr., c/o *MD*.

*Roker continued from page 21*

went to New York. In about 1962, I moved there to stay, until I moved back to Philly about six or seven years ago.

**JP:** Is it hard to keep contact with the New York club circuit now that you have resettled here?

**MR:** Yeah, I miss New York. There's no place in the world like New York. Philadelphia used to be a good town, but now there are not too many places to play. I lived in New York for 18 years. If you leave it, you can only go downhill, musically speaking. I don't care where you go. You go to heaven and it ain't like New York, man. It's hard for me to commute back and forth now. When Milt Jackson travels, I travel.

You've got to know rhythm if you're going to play drums and live in New York, because all of your gigs in the City are not going to be jazz gigs. Did you know that I worked with Muddy Waters years ago? I think it was at the Village Gate. You've got to listen to the players who do various styles authentically and keep an open mind. You can't be a musical snob. I enjoy all kinds of music. I played Dixieland, blues . . . . I prefer playing bebop jazz, but in order to make a living, you have got to be able to play anything. You never know when you're going to be called upon to play something other than what you like yourself.

**JP:** You were one of the first drummers ever to mount timbales onto your drumset.

**MR:** When I worked for Dizzy, we used to play all these Latin tunes. I wanted to get that sound for the Latin frame of music.

**JP:** Dizzy's gig must be incredibly demanding for a drummer.

**MR:** Oh man!

**JP:** Dizzy is a drummer himself, so he must know exactly what he wants from you.

**MR:** He loves the drums.

**JP:** About his particularity with drummers—I've heard the story about his favorite bag of cymbals that he requires all his drummers to use.

**MR:** [Laughs] Most trumpet players are drummers at heart. They love it. I always call it the drum & bugle corps. Dizzy is always beating on something. Lee Morgan was the same. So it is hard. But no matter

what you do, it's hard. There's no easy way to play the drums. Dizzy's always giving directions and coming back whispering things in your ear. You can't let it offend you because it happens. If you understand him, then you will understand that sometimes he can't think of something until a couple choruses go by.

He likes you to try things. He will give you a rhythm, and man, let me tell you, this guy is a *master* of rhythm. He will give you a rhythm, but he wants you to take that rhythm and wring it out—put the accent here, put the accent there—so that you exhaust the possibilities. And each time you play the rhythm, then you find something new. You don't just want to find a rhythm and stay on the same rhythm for the rest of your duration with the band.

**JP:** So Dizzy depends on his soloing inspiration from the drummer?

**MR:** His inspiration *or* his depression from the drummer. [laughs]

**JP:** So he might throw the evil eye occasionally?

**MR:** Of course! This guy has played with the greatest drummers in the world. So it's like going to school. You can't satisfy that savage beast in *him* with every beat. But he's cool. He accepts you if he basically digs you. He's not down your throat all the time.

**JP:** Well, I guess if you stayed with him for nine years, then you passed the test.

**MR:** Yeah, we had some good times, man. We really had some good times. About the cymbals—he just has one cymbal, a swish, that he likes you to play. When he's soloing, he likes that cushion under him. I don't mind using it.

**JP:** Do you know why Dizzy wants that certain cymbal sound? That swish has a dark sound. I always wondered if it was because of the timbre factor. A lot of trumpet players feel that bright, brassy cymbals can clash with their range.

**MR:** I never asked him the reason. All I know is that he liked the cymbal and I liked him, so it doesn't hurt me to play the cymbal. As long as I'm playing, I don't care. Sometimes a different sound is necessary for a little inspiration. A lot of drummers were offended by playing that cymbal. They might have thought it wasn't hip.

What's hip is being able to get along with your fellow musicians.

**JP:** Dizzy's gig is just as physically taxing as it is musically challenging. He's notorious for constant globe-hopping. With jet-lagged schedules, how did you keep in shape to deliver your energetic drumming from stage to stage?

**MR:** He travels *all* the time. That's one thing that I really regretted. I loved it at first—say, the first five years or so. It was beautiful; we went all over the world, man. We went to Cuba playing a concert on a ship. We sailed all up and down the Mediterranean. We covered Europe, all over Africa. . . . But then I'm not a young guy, and playing drums and traveling like that is not the same as playing trumpet and traveling like that. That's why I don't do too much now. I'm still trying to come down from that gig. But it's beautiful for a young musician to get that experience for a couple of years or as long as you can take the traveling, because Dizzy *loves* to travel. That's his life. It's the life of every musician that's as famous as he is. He has to; it's the only way. Of course, Dizzy is making enough money so he *can* love it. [laughs] But he deserves every penny he gets; he is something else. Working with Dizzy is not easy. You have to be in good shape, and you have to keep an open mind. I made sure I exercised every day on the road, even if I only had the chance to jog in place in my hotel room.

**JP:** Jazz recording has changed greatly since the Blue Note days. How do you feel about the overdub format in jazz recording?

**MR:** What I like about music is that you can take three or four, or even 10 or 15, musicians and they try to get together. I like that feeling of being able to play *with* somebody. If I have to play by myself, I'm terrible, man. [laughs] I feel like I'm practicing, not playing. I like family.

**JP:** Then have you always found it hard to practice alone, too?

**MR:** It has always been hard for me to practice, because I get bored if I don't hear music—if I'm just hearing the drums. I still practice. I do some teaching, too. So I have to practice to be ready for those students, because they're sharp. I practice for stamina. But for ideas, I go from one thing to the next to keep me from being bored. When I was young, it was different because everything was new to me then.

**JP:** Then you don't sit down to figure out specific patterns?

**MR:** I learn all the rhythms basically. Then you learn how to create—how to improvise. If you can think, then all you've got to do is think. I learned the rhythms in their basic form—the calypso, bolero, reggae—but then you *need* music. You learn how to do things when you're on that bandstand or rehearsing with other musicians. But as for sitting there, I just think about playing. That's my gift. When I

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practice, I don't say, "I'm going to get this or that lick together." What I like is change. Once you make a statement, you can't keep saying the same thing over and over.

But I don't discourage my students from formal practice or using books. There are great things in drum method books—as long as you can make it sound *natural*. You want to sound natural, not mechanical. I have the natural ability, so I appreciate what is in the books. I appreciate the technical, and even if I might not be able to do it, I appreciate it when I hear it. But I don't teach it, because that's not natural to me. I just teach basics, because I know I can give that to students. They might end up going a little further than me, because I'm not the ultimate drummer.

**JP:** What is the most common initial problem with a new student?

**MR:** It's overplaying. They want to be like what they hear on records. They're too fast without having the bottom together. They want to be stylists. They're very influenced by their favorite drummer with a distinctive style—which inspires them to play at first. But what I stress is to get the basics, and then you can be the one to inspire other drummers. The ice is too thin to be somebody else.

In order to get a good gig, you've got to be out there. It's luck or fate, because there are a million musicians. There are thousands and thousands of good musicians. But you have got to have an open mind and be ready to play anything. It might not be exactly what you want on the first gig you play. But if you play a gig, it gets you exposure. If you're playing your buns off, somebody's going to hear everything you do. So, in order to get a good gig, you have to have yourself together. You don't have to worry about getting a gig. If you get yourself together, you will *get* a gig. It might not be tomorrow; you have no control over time. There's no *set* time. If you say, "I'm going to practice six months and get a gig"—life ain't like that! Life is ready for you if you're ready for life. That's the main thing. Get yourself together: Be clean, don't use drugs, and exercise every day. You have to do that when you are young, because when you're older, you have too many other things on your mind. Know the basics of every rhythm—Indian music, Chinese, whatever. You don't have to be the creative genius on every rhythm you play but at least *know* it.

**JP:** You have played for many vocalists including Ella, Nancy Wilson, Carmen McCrae, and Joe Williams. Like most vocalists, these performers are very arrangement oriented, especially when a big band is involved. What did you have to change in your playing to approach the vocalists' gigs?

**MR:** It's the same. You just have to be a good musician. The only difference I see is the length of the music. When you are

playing with horns, there is more stretching out; you play longer. With a singer, it's shorter; you don't get to stretch out. But certain things you do within the chorus are the same. You don't have to play a different way. You just play the music. The intensity and the dynamics should be the same. I don't care who you are playing with, whether it be a vocalist, Sonny Rollins, John Coltrane, a small band, or a big band.

**JP:** Speaking of Sonny Rollins, tell me about the experience of working with him from a musical standpoint.

**MR:** It was a beautiful experience. He and McCoy Tyner are two of the strongest people I know. Sonny might play one tune and

utilize every rhythm that you can imagine. We would rehearse with Sonny, and when we got to the gig, we wouldn't play anything that we had rehearsed. At least, that's how it was when I worked with him. We rehearsed for two days to do the *Sonny Rollins On Impulse* album. Then, we got to the recording studio and did not play one thing that we had rehearsed. [laughs] **JP:** Did he do that consciously to keep the band fresh, giving the recordings a spontaneous feeling?

**MR:** I don't know. When you're the band leader, you can do what you want to do, and you just have to have enough faith that your band will listen to you. That's one of the things that I like about jazz music: It's

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personal. You're playing with your friends most of the time. And they have *faith* in you; they know what you're capable of doing. They will stretch out on you sometimes to make you go a little further than your capabilities, and you're not going to get your fingers cut off if you make a mistake.

**JP:** Can all of these pro situations be so easygoing? It sounds a bit ideal. After all, there are a lot of leaders who are notorious for their iron fists.

**MR:** If you demand a certain standard from yourself, then you don't have to worry about the bandleaders. They're glad to have you there. If you're giving leaders what they want, or as long as you're trying, they should be satisfied.

**JP:** In giving the leaders what they want, how can you strike that delicate balance between satisfying their demands but still keeping your playing, as you said, "personal"?

**MR:** I like to be open-minded. I would like to be able to play anything. I *can't* do everything. But I like to *think* that way. I don't always know how it will come out, but I like to *think* that way. Tony Williams can play anything. Al Foster can play anything, and that's the way I like to think. To me, that's being a better musician than just being a hell of a stylist.

**JP:** Dizzy has that kind of open mind. He must be one of the first bebop-era players to enthusiastically incorporate funk and

rock grooves into his band's regular repertoire.

**MR:** Yeah, Dizzy really knows rhythm. There are a lot of good players who know music but don't understand rhythm. It's amazing, man. You can't play with them, because they just don't understand *rhythm*.

**JP:** Here's a slightly unfair question: What do you like to think of as being your drumming trademark?

**MR:** [Laughs] Just a groove, man! People say they like the feel of my cymbal beat.

**JP:** Is that the defining center of your pulse?

**MR:** Yeah, I think so. And the sock cymbal—that separates me from other drummers. Certain drummers will play a certain lick, and you know it's them. But people *can feel* my playing, and they know it's me. That's what I want. That's what I *try* to do. I don't think about soloing, because soloing doesn't last long enough. To me, a good feeling lasts much longer. A good solo is beautiful, but if people feel good when they leave there, they come back for more.

**JP:** If your feel is your trademark, how do you keep your trademark intact when the chemistry of a certain group of musicians is forcing you to adapt to *their* feel? One example might be the shifts in pulse definition in a big band.

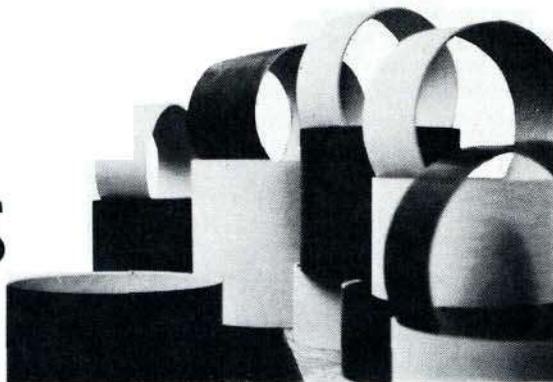
**MR:** You've got to make a mark with the bass drum. Yes, having your own feel is

when everything is relaxed—when you're *playing*. But when you've got to go to *work*, that's a different thing. If things get a little off—a little weak—then you've got to go to *work*. But when you're *playing*, everything is cool so that you *can* play. When things get shaky, it's up to the drummer to get it cool time-wise.

When that happens, I'm just going to *be* there. You can get with me if you want to. If you don't want to, you can be over there. But time-wise, I'm going to be right here, right or wrong. I can't make you come *with* me; all I can do is be there for you. Music is just an expression of life and drumming is like being a father: "I'm here for you, man. If you want to talk to me, I'll be here for you. If you need me to take you somewhere, I'm here for you. If you want me to pick you up and bring you back, okay, I'll do it. But if you want to go off on your own, you've got it. I'm going to be right here."

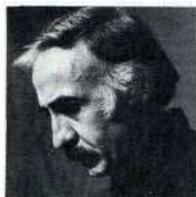
My favorite types of albums to play on are the ones that have more than one rhythm on them. I would hate to do an album that is rhythmically all the same style, because all a drummer has is rhythm. That's why I never worked with a funk band. I enjoy the rhythm, but if you play with a funk band, you've got to play funk all night. If you work with a Latin band, it's Latin all night, and so forth. But what's so beautiful about jazz is that you get to utilize all the rhythms.

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**JP:** Was there any particular band that you enjoyed working with most?

**MR:** Any band that I stayed with for a length of time, I had a good time with. But I must say that the band I had the most fun with—and it didn't last too long—was Duke Pearson's. I loved him, man. And it was new for me, too, because at that time, I was just really learning to read music well. That gig, for me, was like going to school. At first, when I started, I could hear what soloists were going to do right before they did it. But with a big band, it's a different type of discipline. You have to be really simple and very correct. At first, Duke wouldn't write any music for me. So I said, "Look, man, if you don't write some music, then it won't help me." I had to force myself to learn how to read.

The gig with Duke Pearson enabled me to get the gig with Nancy Wilson, who always had a big band. I stayed with her about two to three years. If I hadn't had the experience with Duke Pearson's big band, I wouldn't have been ready to take that gig. That was one of the best gigs I ever had in my life. That was the only time I had ever been paid when I *didn't* work. Everything was first class. That's the most respect I had ever had in my life, musically speaking.

**JP:** Dizzy is internationally popular—even to the layman. Weren't his tours set up nicely?

**MR:** Dizzy's was a good job. But when you work with singers, everything is financially much better per week, because singers make much more money than instrumentalists. Singers are much more respected by the layman than instrumentalists. You've seen what happens on the Grammys. How many instrumentalists do you see?

**JP:** True, because the Grammys are biased to rock, pop, and record sales. But in terms of jazz, I would think Dizzy is as well known and respected by the public as most jazz vocalists. He's one of those rare jazzmen who is a household word, partly because of his entertaining stage personality. He adapts to *The Tonight Show* just as well as a small nightclub.

The Blue Note comeback is good news to that part of the public that *does* respect instrumentalists. Despite the label's quality, it folded the first time around. Do you think that the golden-age status of the newly reissued recordings will give the albums a new boost the second time around?

**MR:** I have no way of knowing how Blue Note will do. You have to make money if you are going to open up a business. If you're going to do creative things like they did in the '60s—well, the music was newer then. That's 20-some years ago. Things are so different now. People don't go to clubs that much anymore, because they just can't afford it. They buy records or videodiscs. I just don't know what will happen.

When I speak of jazz, I think of Charlie Parker, Dizzy, Miles, Sonny Rollins, John Coltrane. I don't think of the concept of some of the new stuff. I'm not putting it down. It's just that, in my way of thinking, it's not the same thing as jazz. It's hard to put in words what I mean by "jazz." In order to play it, you need to know a little about all the rhythms. *But* the feeling of the music is extended from the blues. Now, *the feeling* should be in whatever harmonies, changes, and so forth you use. That type of intense feeling—from the church, Mahalia Jackson—should be *in* anything you play as far as jazz is concerned.

**JP:** A lot of "new" players love and respect jazz but they grew up with rock in their blood also. The combination can make for a different feel.

**MR:** But when I hear that backbeat—to me, it's not "jazz." I'm not saying I don't like it. I don't know how to put this feeling into words; I'm really interested in *playing* it.

*After the interview, Mickey led me down to the cellar, where his drums and timbales stand in the corner and the walls are lined with his favorite framed photos. I was treated to a guided tour of the collection. As with the interview, Mickey showed a penchant for bringing my attention to his fellow musicians—his inspirations.*

*"Look—there's Junior Mance and Ray Bryant. Oh, man, they're beautiful musicians. And here's Papa Jo Jones with Gene Krupa. And this is one from my first date at The Apollo." There was a circular collage, and I quickly scanned the pictures, searching for the young Mickey Roker. Before I could locate the shot, in his enthusiasm, he directed me to others. "There's Joe Williams—what a talent! And there is..." My eyes detoured to a photo of Mickey with the Gillespie band being greeted by Jimmy Carter at their 1977 White House performance.*

*"Over here is one of my all-time favorites..." I walked over, anticipating an impressive shot of, perhaps, Mickey driving Dizzy's band in Cuba with a huge percussion section or thrilling an arena full of fans in Japan. Instead, it is an old black-and-white shot given to him by a photographer friend showing a young black man leaning over his drumset in intense concentration. The setting is informal—possibly a jam session. Surrounding the kit is a smiling circle of men with all eyes riveted on the drummer. Among the faces can be seen jazzmen J.J. Johnson, Kenny Dorham, Wilbur Ware, and sitting directly across from the floor tom in rapt attention is Max Roach.*

*Mickey is glowing, "See that? I'm not even sure of who that drummer is. I think it's Specs Wright. But I like this picture, because whoever it is, he must be playing some amazing drums."*

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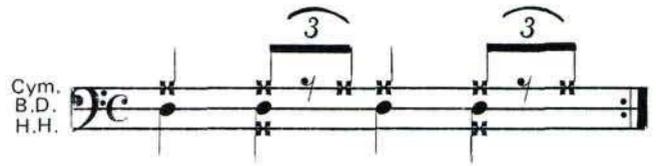
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## Developing Independence: Part 1

In its simplest form, four-way independence in jazz drumming is the ability to maintain a continual, unbroken ride-cymbal time pattern, and a steady 2 and 4 on the hi-hat, while simultaneously executing various rhythmic figures with the left hand on snare drum and the right foot on bass drum. The objective of this three-part series is to help you to develop the independence needed to perform effectively in a jazz situation. Let's start with the standard time pattern in the right hand, plus bass drum and hi-hat.



### Basic Left-Hand Independence

We're now ready to begin working out various left-hand rhythmic figures against the time. Each exercise that follows will utilize only 8th-note figures and syncopations, written with a jazz triplet interpretation for the sake of simplicity. Be sure to note how the left-hand figures line up with the time beat in each example. Once you're absolutely certain that you are playing the pattern correctly, repeat each one a minimum of 20 times before progressing to the next. Play bass drum on 1, 2, 3, 4, and hi-hat on 2 and 4.

### Bringing The Bass Drum Into Play

After you've mastered the previous exercises with the left hand, you can now begin to work on bass drum independence. Here, we eliminate the left hand, but maintain the ride-cymbal pattern and hi-hat while the figures move to the bass drum. Here's an example.

Musical notation for a drum exercise. The staff is labeled with 'Cym.', 'S.D.', 'B.D.', and 'H.H.' on the left. The notation shows a bass drum line with four groups of three eighth notes, each marked with a '3'. Above the staff, there are cymbal and hi-hat patterns consisting of eighth notes and rests, also marked with '3' above each group.

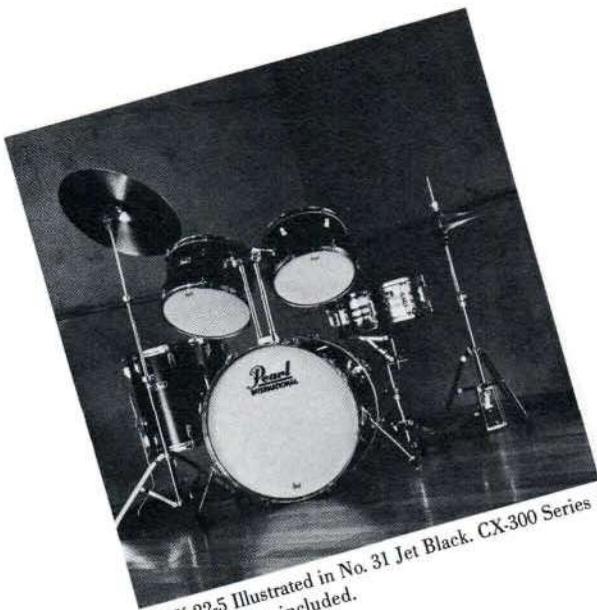
In an effort to conserve space, we have not reproduced all of the exercises for bass drum. Simply go back to exercises 1 to 18 and play each line with the bass drum against the ride cymbal and hi-hat, in place of the left hand. Be certain of the accuracy of each pattern before repeating each one at least 20 times.

### Combinations

The following exercises are combinations of snare drum and bass drum independence, and are based on the same rhythms as above. These patterns can be tricky, so take your time and strive for accuracy. Repeat each exercise 20 times before progressing.

Two rows of musical notation for combination exercises. The first row contains exercises 1, 2, and 3. The second row contains exercises 4, 5, and 6. Each exercise is numbered in a circle. The notation shows snare drum (S.D.) and bass drum (B.D.) patterns. Exercises 1, 2, 4, and 5 show snare drum patterns with groups of three eighth notes. Exercises 3, 6, and the second part of 1, 2, 4, and 5 show bass drum patterns with groups of three eighth notes. The exercises are separated by double bar lines.

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course, I'll take care of the rest of that by asking questions: "Do you want this to be half-time? Do you want the snare on 4? Do you want a fill over here? Do you want a broken-up fill?" I get their feedback to find out what their likes are initially, and after that, I pretty much lock into what they like.

**RF:** I assume you ask those questions of the producer.

**EB:** Yes. I recently did George Strait's album with Jimmy Bowen. Bowen is starting a situation where he is collaborating with the artist and letting the artist produce, too. He pretty much gets together with the artist in preproduction time, and they work out their material. When we cut that album, though, Bowen just said, "Look, I'm going to be on the other side of the glass. If it gets to a situation you can't work out, then contact me. Other than that, contact George." His theory was that George knows his public, because he plays for them all the time. Things like putting a tag on a song or having instrumental overlapping become a matter of the artist's taste. A lot of the things we do in the studio—as far as rearranging this or that goes—don't really make it a hit or not a hit.

**RF:** What's it like to work with Mel Tillis?

**EB:** Harold Shedd is the producer. That's a lot of fun just because Mel is being himself. When he's there, the jokes he'll tell or the way he handles himself is just so homey. He'll keep you in stitches.

**RF:** What does Mel demand of you as a player?

**EB:** Nothing. I think that's because, when I first worked with him, there was a really good rapport, and everything we did came off really good. He was totally happy, and Harold was totally happy. Of course, Harold already knew his crew, because we had all worked with him before. Under those circumstances, people like Mel just really have respect for the producer, because they know the person's work—especially Harold's work. Harold would ask him what he thought and Mel would say, "Do you like it?" They'd settle it that way.

**RF:** Certainly, it's not that easy with a band like the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band. You've got five very strong personalities.

**EB:** Right. The only way I can explain it is you break it down to the common denominator. You have a demo, or somebody in the band just comes out and plays it for you. Then it becomes a situation where Marshall, Paul, Jeff, John, and everybody will discuss it. Usually, the only outsiders in that situation are me, Joe Osborne, and Steve Bigson.

**RF:** So you'll listen to them argue?

**EB:** No, I don't remember anything like that happening. There might be a stand-up-for-what-you-think-is-right discussion, but it never gets out of hand. Usually, it's a situation where one will let the other

try his idea. There's a quote from Jim Ed Norman: "It sounded good until I heard it." They even give me that right. If I think something should be a certain way, I'll ask to try it and they let me. That's the only time-consuming part of it, but it's still a thing that doesn't get boring because everything is valid. There are some sessions where they're obviously fishing, nothing is coming out of it, and you know they're bad ideas to begin with. But every idea that we've ever gone through, especially on the Dirt Band's stuff, has been necessary and valid to get it down to where it got to. It's a lot of work, but it's so well worth it when I listen to the product. I'm proud of being involved with them. If people could be there from the beginning and see what we started with, they'd be amazed at how dynamically it was formed into what it is. A lot of that has to do with chemistry, because the Dirt Band was obviously with other people before they came to Marshall and Paul, but it wasn't working. Maybe they were inhibited and were told what to do when, in fact, they are pretty valid in what and who they are and what they need to do. It's a beautiful marriage of producer/artist there where everything is open. There are situations where we'll do a song, get down to the common denominator, and realize that's not the right song. I never lose interest because it's interesting to see how everything works. When it goes by and everybody says, "Yeah! That is it!" it's great. And then there are some that just fall together.

**RF:** Tell me about working with Ricky Skaggs.

**EB:** It's wonderful. It's a very small group. The only difference between that and working with a larger group like Nitty Gritty is that Nitty Gritty is a band, and they're all so good. A lot of times, when you're in there with a big crew, you're not in a band. You're in there with six or seven people who are waiting to be told what to do. Of course, a producer can only handle so much at a time, so it can be chaos for a little while. In Ricky's situation, we use five people—acoustic guitar, maybe a dobro and/or steel, piano, bass and drums. On the Whites' stuff, we used four—Ricky, piano, Joe Osborne, and me. Ricky is such a solid rhythm player.

**RF:** When it is a group, like Alabama, do you ever feel outside of it—like a man for hire?

**EB:** On Alabama's stuff, of course, we're talking about Harold Shedd again, and the only other thing to deal with would be the guys. They pretty much swap in and out. One will come in and do something, and then another will. Of course, Randy Owen sings all of them. I have never felt that way. It is always a homey feeling. They all have different techniques on how to get what they get. Randy concentrates on his vocal so much that you sort of go along with him, and try not to peak before you



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see that that's happening, since he is so explicit about his vocals.

**RF:** What are Anne Murray's sessions like?

**EB:** They are wonderful, too. It's just one of those situations where you hear that voice in the 'phones, and you're ready to play because it's *soooo* good. That's Jim Ed. It's hard to explain, but it's just that, after so many years, things just kind of merge into each other. You just look forward to making good records.

**RF:** Were you nervous when you started, feeling out everybody and getting comfortable?

**EB:** I don't think so. I'm trying to remember, because it's been four years. The only nervousness I would feel would be if the producer would say something about a snare sound, when I was still searching for what I felt was my sound. The producer might say, "Can you do anything about this and that?" And that might be intimidating, initially. Once you lock in and know yourself, it's fine. Experience takes care of that.

**RF:** One of the most crucial elements of studio recording is communication and personality. Do you ever feel, after three sessions a day, that those things wear thin?

**EB:** No. Of course it depends on what you're doing. If you're into some project that is obviously boring, and you're dealing with somebody who is fishing and doesn't really have valid ideas—and you

just know that because of the experience you've had working with people who *do* know—or it's just a situation where that person's style is not your style, then it can become tiring. However, you know it's only for two or three days and then it will be over with, so you go on. But I love every minute of it. And every time a song comes on the radio, I'm thrilled. The people I work with are so song oriented, and the song is always good. If it wasn't for the family, I'd fill in every slot, because it's just a joy to work in the studio and watch something develop.

**RF:** What about that issue of realizing that your family needs you, too?

**EB:** Obviously, the first thing that ever happens to musicians is the statement they make of, "Nothing comes before this." Usually that is because people become musicians before they have families. They've worked at it all those years and paid their dues. It's been with them so long that they don't want to let anything conflict with that. But it just depends on where your priorities are, and I think the correct word for that is balancing it out.

**RF:** When you're doing three sessions a day, how do you manage to live a healthy, balanced life?

**EB:** That is actually something I wanted to talk about. I went through a period thinking that I could sustain myself with drugs. If you're going to work two or three sessions a day, obviously, when you start

burning out, what better way to rejuvenate yourself than to get some drugs, speed, or whatever. The burn-out factor comes a lot quicker that way, though. It could possibly even be a permanent burn-out, as far as your career is concerned, because you lose total perspective. You can rely on your technical ability, but you can forget the gift that you have for whatever feeling you can put in. It just cancels that out. You have to take some time off. I take the time off because of the family, even though I literally would not need to. Now I can keep going on just pure energy.

**RF:** How did you know you had a problem?

**EB:** I would get into situations where things wouldn't lock in. I'd get into a session and things just wouldn't click. Obviously, I still get into sessions, even now, where there might be a mismatch of people, and somebody might be pushing or pulling. But when you're in your true state of mind, you know exactly what is going on.

The drugs can really hold you back, though. I'll tell you the truth: My whole situation here didn't develop until I took care of my problem. When I was getting high all the time, there was something inside me telling me that it was bothering me, though. But the difference it made was incredible. Instead of seeing a straight line in a rhythm, I was able to see the hills and valleys and the feel of making things do

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what they're supposed to do, and the feel of the control I had. Unfortunately, initially, it did make me feel like I was playing my butt off. I'd take a hit of speed and just dazzle myself, but it catches up with you so quickly.

**RF:** Do you recall certain difficult or challenging sessions, or particularly creative ones?

**EB:** Not really. The only thing out of the ordinary about the Judds' situation was that I met producer Brent Maher through a situation where I was doing jingles and he was engineering. He liked what I did, and I liked what he did. He found these two women when his daughter was in the hospital. He had met this nurse who said she had a daughter who sings. They weren't signed with RCA yet, but that's what they were looking at. It was one of those situations where I saw what we did turn into a monster. Awards, Grammys—it's just incredible, and so quick. That excites me to have seen all that.

**RF:** Do you do a great deal of overdubbing in the Nashville studios?

**EB:** I don't at all. If a project calls for that and I am using a computer—the Linn and the Simmons—of course, I have to do that. But usually, the only overdubbing I've had to do has been in a situation where a producer has had second thoughts and wanted to have a deeper snare or something. Other than that, most of the stuff I do just goes down as it is.

**RF:** How much electronics are you working with?

**EB:** Right now, quite a bit. On Deborah Allen's recent record, *Let Me Be The First*, there is pretty much full-fledged Simmons mixed with my drums, and a Linn combination with that. We clicked a lot of it. On Alabama's record, I used electronics, and I also used them on Glen Campbell's recent record and on the one prior to that, *Faithless Love*. In those situations, though, I don't exaggerate them. I use them to support what I have, just to make the tom big.

**RF:** Do they use click tracks a lot down here in Nashville?

**EB:** I try not to use them, but there are some people who would rather have them because they do spend a lot of time on a track. When you get tired of a song, you're not going to put as much into it. The only time I really like using them is to take the edge off or put an edge on. Everybody is just as important as the other, as far as getting a feel is concerned. It's not just the drummer who keeps the time. That's who obviously has the feel, but it's important for everybody else to play with the drummer. Of course, with the crews that I play in now so much, there's no problem and that "chemistry" happens in the room. But under certain situations, it might be a thing where the click helps to slow it down a couple of beats per minute. You can use that for two rundowns. Then it gets locked, and everybody's there. You can

shut it off, and it has some feel to it.

**RF:** So you feel that the click inhibits you?

**EB:** Well, I don't think it inhibits the drummer. I think it inhibits the other people. It depends on the people who have worked with it. Obviously, the people who are hip to it know that, unless it's absolutely necessary, you don't have to play right with it. You can play along with it and work it out so, if you want the chorus to still have a laid-back feeling, you can lay behind the click. As soon as it's turned on, so many people think, "Oh, it's a test of my skills," and all of a sudden you don't have their feel. You have them listening to a click. In some situations, I may have them just feed me the click, which is what I

did on Deborah's album, unless it's a situation where there's a lot of a cappella work in front, which everybody has to do before I come in. But I'd say that's about 35% of what I do. We just let the rest of it happen.

I was working with John Hobbs, a piano player from L.A., and we were talking about the situation out in L.A. and the percentage of stuff that comes out of L.A. that's real anymore. Sixty-five percent is either self-contained bands or computer records. They're good, but it's so different. I love the way it is in this town. It would be hard for me to imagine Ricky's stuff, the Judds' stuff, or the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band's stuff being done like that. I just don't know how that could come out of a

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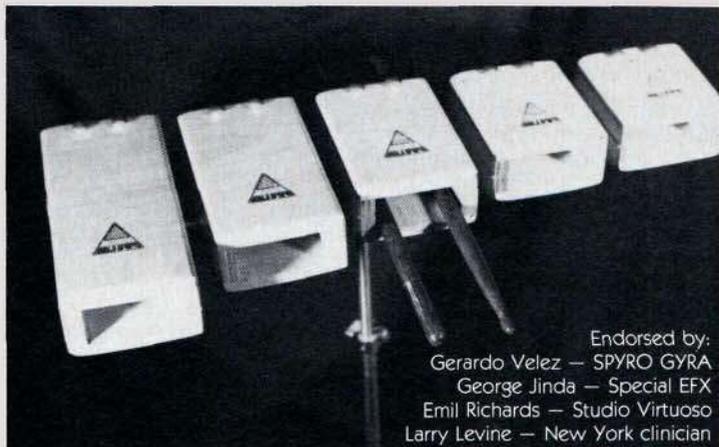
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**RF:** There seems to be an attitude about country drummers because people think country music is so easy to play.

**EB:** I've heard statements where they've said you have to lower your intelligence to play country music. I couldn't believe it. It was a drummer who said he was getting tired of having to lower himself to do this kind of stuff. I think it was a statement pertaining more to him, because he is so capable of doing other things. But then I think, "Go for it. If you have to do other things, do them."

**RF:** I think people tend to think that something simple, musically, is easy to do. Simplicity in drums can actually be harder. Watching you out there working on Karen

Brooks' material was like watching a metronome. It's easier when you're dealing with a lot of music and a lot of instruments.

**EB:** Oh yeah, because it's all there. You're hearing it, instead of having to imagine what will sound good after everything is on it. In a lot of situations, you'll work with a vocal and you'll hear the way they sing a chorus as opposed to the verse. The chorus may be less wordy than the verse, but still, you work off of that. Then you'll come back in, shut the vocal off, and listen to the track. Once I hear it, I know what to do even without the vocalist there.

**RF:** Do you tend to work more off the vocal?

**EB:** Yes. There are some people I work

with who I know will have to go back in and do their thing again, because they're really not putting everything into it. But a lot of those I work with do, such as Anne Murray, John Connelly, and the Judds. Under those circumstances, you pretty much know what you're going to have to do.

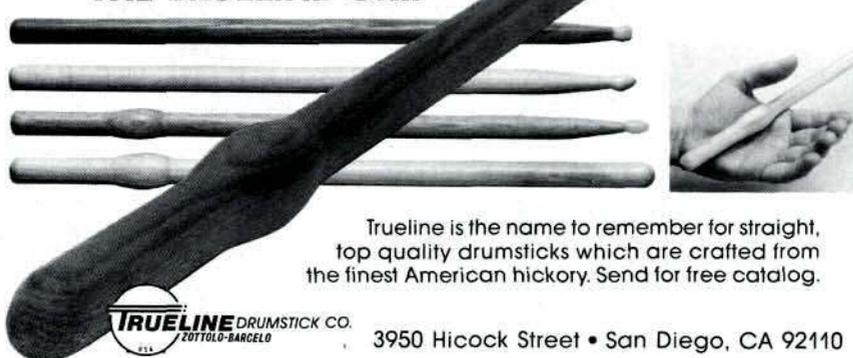
**RF:** What about working with bass players? You mentioned Joe Osborne, who is almost legendary.

**EB:** Yes, he is. I definitely work more off the bass, bottom end-wise, because it has so much to do with the kick and the bass. That might just be the first thought, though, because obviously acoustic guitars or rhythm pianos have everything to do with your feel. Those definitely have to be considered.

**RF:** Do you feel that your classical piano background has helped your approach to the drums?

**EB:** Definitely. I feel it makes me more musical. I don't look at a chart as a rhythm chart. I look at the music as music. Before, I felt like I just played drums. Now, I feel that I play songs. If somebody plays me a song, I know what to do immediately. A lot of that has to do with the training I got from Jim Ed Norman, because he's such a song man. I would watch him get down to the common denominator, and I saw how it was done. I think a lot of that has to do with the fact that I allowed that, because

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there are a lot of people who get into a situation where they don't want to be told what to do. Once they've achieved a certain place, they feel "I am who I am. Let me do it, and it will work." To a certain extent, I might agree with that, but then to the other extent, I would say that when you're dealing with people like Harold Shedd, Jim Ed Norman, Bud Logan, Brent Maher, and everybody else who is a good producer and song person, you want to work with them. You want to find out what they want to do. To me, that is the bottom line. They hired me; I didn't hire them, and I think that's a concept that a lot of people lose when they go in.

**RF:** When you initially walk into a session, what happens? Do you see the music first; do you sit with the producer; do you confer first? How does all that work?

**EB:** The first thing is the sound. I work with the engineer. The producer mostly relies on the engineer for the sound, unless there's something the producer specifically heard on a demo that I have to go for in that particular song. Most of the people I work for now have the music already written, so I've got it. Then they play the demo, or the artist plays it, and I'll work off of that. After that's learned, the next thing is usually going to the piano with the artist and producer. They run it down, because usually the music is changed from what we're hearing on the demo, unless it

is exactly what they want. And they'll say, "Don't worry about this one part. It's not there." So I'll hear the artist do it with just one instrument, and the next thing is going in and running it down for blend. Usually on the rundown, I'll have first impressions from everybody, which will give the producer a lot of alternatives. The producer will come back and say, "Hey, what you were doing there—do that. I didn't think about it that way, but do that." I try to do basically what just comes out on the first rundown and then start toning it down.

**RF:** You've mentioned a lot of producers in the course of this conversation. Are there any you've left out that you've particularly enjoyed working with?

**EB:** Barry Beckett. He's one I certainly looked forward to working with, because of his notoriety in R&B and all of us being raised on that. Barry is so groove oriented. He can really get a section to do what it's supposed to do. It always helps me to put down a rough after running it down because there are types of feels that are delusions in the mind. When you're playing them, you might be right on the money with the tempo and everything, but there's an attitude where the snare has to be put on the backside. The drums might need to be laid back, but you don't really know that while you're playing it. I've done enough of them where I know that, when I come across that kind of song, I have to go in

and listen to it once just to hear it. Then I get the attitude in my mind, and it becomes clear how much further to come back on the backbeat. Barry's good at communicating that.

**RF:** On a more personal level, being a session player isn't always secure. What about planning financially for the future?

**EB:** When some money starts coming in, many say, "I've got some money coming in; I'll go ahead and buy a house." If you happen to jump into a group like Duran Duran, it's different. There, you know you're going to have an incredible future, and you're going to have some money in a couple of years which will make you set for life. In my situation, I'm just working sessions and building a future. We bought a duplex first and lived in one side while renting out the other. We did that for six-and-a-half years before we were able to save the money up to get a house. Of course, we kept the duplex and then bought the house. In general, the best thing to do in a situation like that is real estate. It's the only safe investment that I know of. So many people look for the quick investment and ways to double their money. I've always looked more at the long-term. I used to live in my car, so I think I starved long enough to think about these things. My advice is that there should be no illusions about this business. It can be fleeting, and you must be prepared.

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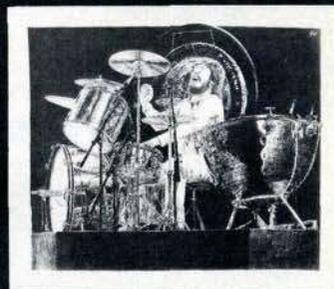
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## Riding The Roller Coaster

Every so often, I like to stop and reflect on some of the aspects of a career in music—with club drumming particularly in mind. Naturally, I use my own career as a sort of standard by which to evaluate a club drumming career in general, along with comments I've received over the past several years from colleagues in the field and readers of my column. I've come to the conclusion that being a professional musician who specializes in performing popular music is very much like riding a roller coaster: It has its ups and downs, it can be exciting, it can be frightening, and it costs you something to ride.

I don't necessarily mean that having a club drumming career is going to cost you money; on the contrary, you're in it to earn a living, which requires that you make a profit. But it is going to cost you in terms of

that classic music-biz cliché: paying your dues. And this is where my recent reflections have been focused. I think we all understand that a young player entering the business is going to have to spend some time "paying dues." Most of us came up through the various stages of garage bands, teenage dance bands, semipro and wedding bands, and ultimately, full-time professional club bands of one style or another. Many of us have spent time playing in bands that performed music we didn't personally like, in order to keep playing, and in order to keep body and soul together. This type of dues paying is pretty much recognized as a necessity in order to establish a career.

But what some of us fail to recognize, sometimes, is that the dues *never stop*. Unless you get off of it entirely, a roller coaster ride is *always* going to offer both ups and downs, not to mention some unexpected turns. And while I'm sure all of us would like to think that our career moves will always be made in an upward direction, the fact of the matter is that there is a lot of lateral movement in the club scene, and not infrequently a few steps back that must be taken in order to survive the many challenges that the business throws at us.

Let's use a bit of my own career as an example. When I first started playing full-time, I was a member of a typical top-40 club band, playing weekend gigs on a strictly local level. I was working regularly, but not gaining much in the way of personal esteem or career advancement. My next opportunity came when I got the call to join a traveling show group on a national tour. This was the big time: nice hotels, paid transportation, seeing the country and getting paid for it! And for a while, that's what it worked out to be. But then a few bookings fell through, and the profit margin declined dramatically. Personality problems added to the tension of the situation, and ultimately I chose to leave. Despite the fact that I had a pretty impressive track record, when I returned home, I had problems finding work. I wound up in a polka trio, playing weekends at a local Polish restaurant. Although that turned out to be one of the most enjoyable gigs of my career, at the outset it seemed like a major step backwards, professionally speaking.

A change of residence caused me to

leave that gig, and once again, I was at the ultimate low point on the "roller coaster": I was totally unemployed. I went into the casuals market, playing with a pickup band for weddings and parties. Luckily, this was a group of pretty talented people all in the same boat as I was, so we had nothing to be ashamed of musically. But I did feel that my talents were being wasted to a certain extent, since I wasn't working steadily in a club situation. After about six months of casuals, I got another call to go on tour. My ride was on the upswing again! I joined and toured with a lounge trio doing class hotel gigs over a Christmas season. We made good music and good money, and had a good time. But what goes up, must come down, and in our case, the booking agency handling our group folded quite suddenly. Before we could find another agency and get a booking schedule going, financial considerations forced each member of the group to seek more immediate employment elsewhere. So it was back to the casual market for me.

About a year later, my career took a major step up. I joined a top-40 band booked full-time on a local club circuit. We worked six nights a week, 50 weeks per year, in a series of very nice rooms—and we never left town. This, to me, was a gig made in heaven. My wife and I had two children and bought a house during the four and a half years I was a member of that band. But all good things come to an end, and that good thing ended when the other band members decided to retire, after some 11 years together. From a position of having had a considerable, regular income, I was once again at the bottom of the roller coaster.

I had taken unemployment fairly lightly in the past; it was a temporary inconvenience that more or less came with the job of being a musician. But after having been steadily employed for so long—and with the additional responsibilities of home and family—I experienced a new attitude. I was discouraged, and a little bitter. After a career now into its 18th year, I found it difficult to get work. The disco scene had wreaked havoc on the job market in San Diego, where I was living. The number of clubs that employed live musicians was smaller, and younger bands—willing to work for less money than I could afford to—were filling those clubs. I found myself



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jumping at the chance to play in a "novelty" band: a '50s rock 'n' roll revival act. This act eventually broadened its musical scope and appeal, and went after a wider market, but never attained full-time bookings or a regular, predictable income. In effect, I was back to working casuals, albeit with the same band on each gig. I wasn't meeting my family's financial needs, and I considered taking a day job—something I hadn't had to do in the previous ten years.

As fate would have it, I was spared that necessity, in a totally unforeseen—and pretty drastic—manner. I received a call from a friend with whom I had played in a previous band. He was now playing in Hawaii, and his band needed a drummer. They were the house band in a very popular rock club in Waikiki, with a long-term contract. I would make more money than I had ever made before, work only five nights a week, and play music that I enjoyed. The only kicker was, I would have to lease out my home in San Diego, cut all ties, and move my family to Hawaii—for good, as far as could be seen at the time.

This was a monumental decision for me, involving emotions, finances, and a host of other considerations, and calling for the cooperation and understanding of my family. In the end I did take the gig, we did move, and it turned out to be a very good situation in most respects. I was working well with the group, the money was coming in, and generally speaking, everything looked good for a long run on this gig. It was at this point that one of those "unexpected turns" on the roller coaster took place. I received a call from *Modern Drummer*.

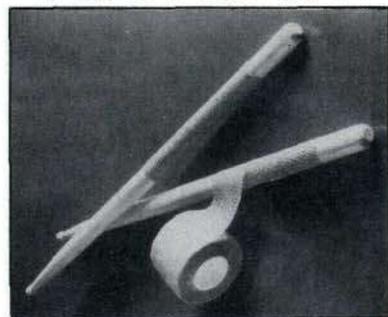
I had been a free-lance columnist for *MD* for three and a half years, playing actively in the club market during that time. When the call came, offering me the job of Managing Editor here, I was faced with another major decision. I was coming up on 20 years of playing in clubs. I had what looked to be a pretty solid gig in Hawaii, but it was still a club band; I hadn't become a "star" (as I had told myself at 20 that I would be by 25), and I was facing my 33rd birthday. Was it time for a career move? Could I be happy working for a drum magazine, instead of drumming full-time? How would my family feel about picking up stakes again, and this time moving from Hawaii, back to San Diego for a brief period, and ultimately to New Jersey? All I can say is, when you have to make decisions like this one, you're paying some dues, psychologically speaking.

I came to *MD* in November of 1983, and although I was thoroughly involved with the magazine, it didn't take long before I began to miss drumming full-time. Unfortunately, it *did* take me a long time to be able to get back into playing *at all*. As an

"immigrant" from the West Coast, I had no contacts in the local music scene, and it took me quite a while to link up with a band here. But when I did, an interesting thing happened—something that demonstrates how different a person can feel about the same situation under different circumstances. I've become a member of another '50s-'60s "oldies" band, playing local clubs on a weekend basis. But this time, instead of being discouraged, I'm enjoying myself immensely. I'm playing regularly enough to feel professional about it; the level of musicianship in the band is excellent; I'm playing tunes that I first played as a teenager myself (so there's a certain amount of youthful nostalgia in it for me); and I remain active in my chosen field: the club scene.

I'm not sure that every club musician has had a career with as many ups and downs as mine has had. But I do know that keeping a realistic attitude about the ongoing nature of those ups and downs—the fact that the dues never stop—has helped me to weather the hard times, because I've always known that better times would come. That same attitude has also helped to keep me from taking the good times for granted, because I've learned that they aren't infinite either. I'm still riding my roller coaster, and I'm going to keep on riding it, as long as I've got the fare. 

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point where I finally said, "Look, I have to take some time off," and I finally managed to get a couple of subs to watch the book. They wouldn't allow me to take off, because the job was new and they wanted everything to run smoothly. It was a production show and everything was set. The people were a little paranoid. Now, it's no problem. But getting someone back then to come down, look at the show, and then sub the following night was rough, because there hadn't been that type of work around before. Nowadays, the musicians here are familiar with this type of thing.

**JD:** In a production-show situation, the drummer and percussionist must learn to work as a team. How do you manage to do that?

**Witten:** I have to get into a groove with a different drummer every week. Not only do I play the opening act with Harry, but 45 minutes later, I have to play with a different drummer who changes every week. But that's my job, and making adjustments is part of it. The key to it is not to *overplay*. You have to listen to what the drummer is doing. I've found that most drummers will play what they play at rehearsal. The people coming in with the shows very seldom change what they play. It's my job to learn as much as I can about what the drummer is going to do during rehearsal. Then I know how much room is available, and where I'll be able to play without getting in the way.

**Pultrio:** Everybody has a different idea of where I is. I have my idea of where it should be, and they have an idea of where they think it should be. Sometimes you don't get a chance to meet with the other drummer during rehearsal, and you don't have time to talk or to get to know each other's playing.

**Witten:** I remember the first day that Harry came on. It was an immediate groove. I had heard from everybody in town that, if I wanted to play in a big band, I would be missing something if I didn't work with Harry. So I'd been looking forward to it. Even when Harry first came over to me, I knew we'd become friends. That was because I knew he was listening to me, and he heard what I was playing. There are a lot of drummers, including the ones who come in with the stars, who never hear a note I play. They're so involved with what they're playing that they don't listen to anyone else.

**JD:** One of the advantages all of you have is the opportunity to play for some major acts, not just the lounges and production shows.

**Pultrio:** I've played for Dionne Warwick six or seven times. That sticks out in my mind, because it's one of the most *musical* acts around. The rhythm section is very good, and she knows exactly what she wants. I've always enjoyed playing for her for that reason. Even though her book hasn't changed all that much over the

years, it's always a challenge because of the difficulty involved in pleasing her.

Mitzi Gaynor also has an extremely hard show—a very busy book. Steve and Edie's show is probably the hardest I've ever played. There are two percussionists: a mallet book, and another book for cymbals, bass drum, and sound effects. From the minute that show starts, you don't stop once. The mallet book is extremely difficult—a lot of fast tempos, xylophone things, four-mallet chord changes on vibes. For the other book, I had to play every small percussion instrument I own—shakers, cowbell, tambourine, woodblock, slapstick, congas, bell plate—all of it. And I was *busy!*

Part of the difficulty is knowing how to set up. We had two days of rehearsals, but I must have changed the setup three or four times. I had to figure out where to put everything, so I could get to it in time. I've only got about six feet of space, and I have to walk back and forth, keep my eye on the conductor, the music, turn the page . . .

**Greenberg:** Good time is also very important.

**Goldberg:** And you've got to have a feel. You'll find that some of the well-seasoned musicians sound real authentic. If you start when you are young, and play with rhythm & blues records, when you get older, you're going to have a good ear. You won't just read and play without feel.

**Jones:** If you're playing one week for Sammy Davis and the following week for Mickey Gilly, it's a challenge to cop those feels.

**Greenberg:** And to sound authentic. It's also real important to keep your eye on the conductor at all times. That comes with practice.

**Jones:** That's another whole topic altogether. It's an intricate thing.

**Greenberg:** It's a *skill*.

**Jones:** Sometimes the band is set up in a manner that's not particularly comfortable for you. At times, it can get out of hand, especially when the conductor is too far away. You just have to tell the stage manager, "Look, I *have* to see the conductor."

**Goldberg:** You've got to watch. Sometimes a vocalist will change things. Someone like Diana Ross might change something depending upon how she feels that night. If the conductor misses it, you have to keep your eye on things. You can't just close your eyes and space out. You constantly have to be aware of what's going on around you.

**JD:** I assume that each of you has played for dancers. Is there anything that pertains specifically to that?

**Greenberg:** You have to remember two things: Number one, sometimes they're not watching the conductor. Number two, they don't always have the greatest time, and things can go off. Most of my previous experience with dancers was in theaters in

Philly. I found that, on any given night, the dancers would go into their own thing, and either I had to catch it, or the conductor had to catch it and bring everything back into sync. It's a very sensitive thing, especially when it's a group of dancers.

**Goldberg:** Say one night they're tired. They might say the band was too fast. When they're energetic, then you're *draggin'!* On this gig, after a few rehearsals, the choreographer will come over and say, "I want a crash here and a kick there," and although it might not be very musical, you kind of take it and *make it* musical. You have to give them what they want, because it's a visual thing. I can't play anything that conflicts with them visually.

**Iatarola:** Cymbal accents are important. That's the only type of thing that's been requested of me—things that I can't see on stage because I'm behind the *Plexiglas*. When the lights hit it, I can't see what the performers are doing, and if the accents aren't written, they may still want certain kicks.

**Jones:** When dancers get accustomed to a certain drum fill, it acts as a cue for them. If you want to change that fill, it's difficult to do. They're so used to hearing it that, if you alter it, they could be thrown off. It shouldn't be that way. I mean, if you have a one-bar fill, and it's within the context of the music, it should be okay to change it. But sometimes dancers get accustomed to a certain fill.

I've had producers write drum fills in, like triplets around the drums, and that's exactly what they want. So that's what you play. When you do a production show, you get into a set pattern, and it usually stays that way. I've varied things occasionally. You learn where you can take liberties and where you can't. You know, it's like doing a record date—the same date twice a night, six nights a week. The challenge is to keep it fresh, keep the energy up, and not go to work thinking, "Oh God, I have to do this *again*." The discipline is the challenge.

**JD:** What about the importance of reading?

**Himles:** No question about it; it's unbelievably important. You can't do without it.

**Witten:** As far as I'm concerned, that's the most important thing. Anybody thinking about a career who does not sight-read well can eliminate this avenue of employment. Everybody talks about playing shows, but it's important to remember that, for any show, we only get a three-hour rehearsal. In the four years I've been here, there was only one show that had two rehearsals, and that was Mitzi Gaynor.

**Himles:** They had several at the Sands. If the music was newly written, the conductor had to become acclimated to it. It wasn't really necessary for the band. It was more for the artist and the conductor than it was for the musicians. The band can pick

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**Witten:** Sight-reading is what this is all about. Every time I play an act and make a good impression on the conductor, the conductor takes notice of me. And that doesn't happen on the fourth or fifth night of the run. Conductors either like you or dislike you on the very first night.

**Pultrio:** You should also be prepared to read the mallet things, Latin percussion, timps, chord changes, and single-line melodies.

**Goldberg:** It's getting the little things together too, like repeat signs and codas.

**Pultrio:** I know some drummers who have trouble reading from the left side. Well, you have to get used to reading from the left side, the right side, and the middle, while watching the conductor right over the music stand. That's key.

**Witten:** One of the first shows I did when I came here was Anthony Newley's. We started the rehearsal with a guitar player who was gone by the first break. He just didn't sight-read well enough to give the conductor the impression that he was competent.

**Jones:** Intense concentration while you're playing is another one of the most important things. That took me a while. Sometimes my mind would wander a little while I was playing, but you can't allow that to happen, not even for a second.

**Pultrio:** Somebody like Dionne Warwick has very good ears. Her parts are all written out, and she wants to hear those parts with no changes. Even if you're playing

something as simple as 2 and 4 on a tambourine, artists like her can hear whether it's right on the 2 and 4 or not. With somebody else, I can choose whether to play congas, cowbell, or shaker. It's up to me. If the conductors don't like it, they'll tell me.

**JD:** Are there any opportunities here for a creative playing outlet?

**Jones:** Within the structure of the work that's available in Atlantic City, I think it's totally up to the individual. You can be as creative as you like, within the proper framework. You have to approach it as a musician. You can be creative by adding more to what's going on and understanding what's happening. I find that most of the acts feel pretty positive about you when you understand what they're doing. If you add things that complement the music, as long as it's within the context, it's probably better than what's written. When I played for Michel Legrand, I understood what he wanted, and I played basically what I wanted to play, within his framework. It was beautiful. Sure, it can be difficult, but you can be creative.

**Himles:** Sometimes it tends to get boring, musically. It would be a lie to say that it doesn't. But I don't get a constant diet of that. I get a chance to play other places. I occasionally play with a jazz trio on Monday nights.

**Witten:** When I first got here, I wanted to play stars. I thought that doing production shows would get boring. When we opened at the Claridge, we had 13 burnin' musicians on that band. The book was all funk, with some "show biz" in it, too. Playing was nonstop for me—xylophone, congas, timpani, improvising—everything you could want in a show, all in one night. Your playing reaches a level where you don't even think about the things you used to consider very difficult. Then, when you don't play any new music, you say, "Damn, I'd like to sight-read something for a change." In a production show, I put my music away after a while. You memorize the charts, and you start playing without the book. You go on automatic pilot.

The most creative freedom we ever had was with Delia Reese. They came in, and I have no idea what they expected, but I think we gave them a whole lot more. The conductor just freaked out and said, "You're making her sound great."

**Himles:** We rehearsed nine tunes, but she wound up only doing five. Most of the guys were saying, "Oh good, we're cutting down the show," but Dean and I, the guitar player, the bass player, and Delia's conductor were burnt because we didn't get a chance to play the rest—seriously.

**Witten:** It was just starting to cook. That was the best communication I've ever experienced in a rhythm section. It was strong, and she loved it.

**Himles:** When you get that kind of communication going, you keep on trying to

do better each time.

**JD:** What about the times when you just get to play for 20 seconds or so, and then you have to wait around to play again? Doesn't that frustrate you?

**Jones:** Yes, that can be quite frustrating. Even for those 20 seconds, there's really not enough time to warm up or do anything. But you've got to be on immediately. It's got to be happening.

For example, over at Harrah's, the bow music is a tune called "Milestones." It starts as a funk thing, and then it goes into a swing. It lasts for maybe 25 or 30 seconds, then boom, it's over. I just sit at the drums sometimes and say to myself, "Man, I don't believe it; that's it." I mean, you're playing with 40 great musicians, and in 30 seconds, it's over.

**Iatarola:** You could've phoned it in!

**Jones:** Right. [laughs] I'll tell you though, it's better than when they had the star's drummer play the bow music. They don't do that anymore. At least now they keep us working. You get the same money as everybody else, and sometimes the other musicians get on your case, because they may have to play two whole shows. You're there for 20 seconds at the front of the show and 20 seconds at the back, and you're getting the same bread they are. But if contractors want to keep good rhythm sections, that's what they have to do. It's a business, and we're all here to make money. Sometimes you play for 20 seconds, and sometimes you play an entire act. Everything kind of balances out. As far as the other side of creative playing is concerned, where you have the opportunity to play with an original band, well, that doesn't really exist in Atlantic City.

**Goldberg:** There aren't any good jazz clubs. All the musicians are forced to go to the casinos.

**Greenberg:** There are a few rehearsal bands around, but they're not really getting the response and support, and that's a shame.

**Jones:** There was a club called The Last Resort, but they turned it into a Chinese restaurant about a year ago. It was the only jazz thing happening in the city. It's really sad, because at one time, Atlantic City had some good jazz rooms. But now, there's really no place to play.

**JD:** Since most of you move around from job to job a lot, what do you do about equipment and tuning?

**Jones:** I use the equipment that's at the hotel. They're both Yamaha *Recording Series* drumsets. When I play the other hotels, I use whatever's there. The other situation, which can be a drag sometimes, is to use the drums that belong to the drummer with the act. I'm 5'6". If the drummer is 6'3" and we have 30 seconds to make a change, I'm really limited in what I can change. That bothers me a little. If I only have 20 seconds of music to play, it doesn't, but if I have to play an opening act

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and a half hour of music, then something has to be worked out. You have to take a stand and say, "You know, the snare drum is too high; you have to lower it, and you're just going to have to wait a few minutes between acts." I didn't do that when I first came down here. But you have to be concerned with how you sound. You need to feel comfortable at the set. Sometimes it's a big problem when the other drummers don't want their stuff touched. When it gets to that point, then the hotel has to set up another drumset.

**Goldberg:** As far as tuning goes, I basically tune the same, unless of course, the person I'm working for doesn't like the sound and wants something different. I mean, I'm working for *them*, so I do what makes them happy.

**Greenberg:** I find that it depends on the situation. If I'm doing a jazz-type thing, I'll definitely use different drums or have them tuned a little tighter than if I'm doing a pop thing. I'll have a deader, wetter sound for that. Even the sticks will change. I'll go from maybe a Regal Jazz to a 5B wood tip for the pop things. Sometimes, when the style changes, my grip will even change.

**Iatarola:** For a jazz thing, I'll use a smaller set of drums, higher pitched, with different cymbals and sticks. With a big band, I'll use a heavier pair of sticks and a bigger set, with the heads tuned deeper.

**Goldberg:** You use lighter sticks for a jazz gig, because you don't want to offend anybody. And if you're doing a rock thing, you use your A's instead of your K's, because you can play harder.

**Jones:** Sometimes you don't have enough time to change cymbals, so you have to use the cymbals that are there. I've switched snare drums occasionally, but it depends on what I'm playing and who I'm playing for. When I played the opening act for Sammy Davis, his drummer preferred that I use my own snare drum, because I had to dig in and play heavy. I used my own drum for that, and then we switched off.

A lot of the casinos are beginning to use the hydraulic drum thrones. They're perfect for this kind of work. They've got a lever on the side, and when you want to lower them, you just pull the lever. That's great, because you can switch in a matter of seconds. Both Harrah's and Atlantis have them now.

**JD:** Do any of you have problems at all with monitor systems?

**Pultrio:** Yeah, always. I don't have problems hearing myself, because they put baffles around the rhythm section, which eliminates the problem of bleeding into the voice or horn mic's. The problem I do have is hearing the artist and hearing the rest of the orchestra.

For example, Susan Anton does the theme from *Best Friends*, and the intro is done in unison with the bells and flutes. If the flutes are 20 or 30 feet away, I never know if I'm locking in with them. I assume

I am, since the conductor never says anything. But that's usually a problem.

**Jones:** A lot depends on where you're playing. If the house audio department is working the sound system, and you know them, you tell them what you want in the monitor and they'll set it up. But many times you're dealing with the sound men who travel with the act, and then you can run into problems.

This past weekend, I did the opening act for Crystal Gayle and the drummer was set up so that, if the monitor wasn't on, the bass drum wouldn't work. The mic' was pressed right up against the head. It was tuned real loose, and I couldn't hear the bass drum unless the mic' was on. He didn't have the monitor on for the first and second shows. I was playing, and there was no bass drum. I couldn't hear it, and the band couldn't hear it. I had to talk with him about it a few times. If you don't get what you want the first time, you keep asking. You can be diplomatic, but you must have the kind of mix you want. I usually use a rhythm section mix—guitar, piano, bass, and front vocal mic'. I don't have drums in my monitor. I don't need a drum mix. If the brass are set up far away, I might ask for some brass in there, but normally I can hear them. The other musicians have rhythm section monitors.

Lots of times, the stage is set up more for looks than acoustics, and that's when you get into acoustical problems. Sometimes there's even a time lag between the brass and rhythm sections. That's *really* weird. That's why it's very important that they also have monitors. Sometimes the drums have *Plexiglas* around them. Over at Resorts, you're practically in a whole *Plexiglas* room, so you depend totally on the monitors.

**Goldberg:** Oftentimes, you'll find that your monitor might sound a little "trebly," because it's so big and it doesn't hold the frequency. It may sound bad in your monitor, but it sounds good in the house. Monitors can be deceiving.

**Greenberg:** Sometimes you have to get over the sound of the monitor and not let it affect your playing. I just did a radiothon at Bally's, and there were five or six sound technicians there. First, there was nothing in the monitor, and we were on a dead stage. I asked for some things to be brought up. Well, they brought up the piano so loud that I had to turn the monitor away. It depends on who's running the board.

**Jones:** You go to the gig and introduce yourself to the contractor. Then you immediately find out who's running the board, and tell that person what you want in your monitor—with a five dollar bill in your hand! [laughs]

**Goldberg:** True. There was a lot of that happening when I was at Bally's. There were five sound people on the board, and they changed all the time. If I didn't like the

sound, I'd run over to the sound person and say, "Come on man, I'll give you a couple of bucks if you give me a little bass drum." He'd say, "I don't know man. They'll yell at me." They really can't mix the way they want to because of the casino pressure.

**JD:** How do all of you like the *Plexiglas* booths? Even some of the main acts have them now.

**Greenberg:** Everybody's using them.

**Iatarola:** They have me in a booth at the Tropicana, but it's only halfway up.

**Goldberg:** Mine was halfway up for the old show; now it's all the way. In the old show, it didn't do anything. The musicians sitting next to the drums would always say, "Oh God, your cymbals killed me during the show." It wasn't good, because vocals and everything came through the mains, and live drums came through and ruined the mix. I convinced them to seal me off, like they're doing at Bally's. They get a great sound over there. They sealed it off and took all the highs out. Everything is going through the mains, and it sounds a lot better.

**Jones:** Personally, I don't like the sound, because I don't use a drum mix in the monitor. I like to hear the drums acoustically. I don't like to hear the music hit the plastic and bounce back. It changes the sound of the drums. But you have to get used to it, because it doesn't sound that way in the house. You have to work in a lot of situations where your drums don't sound the same in the house as they do to you. So you have to forget about it. You just have to play and do the best you can with what you have. That's the bottom line.

**Iatarola:** Some weeks I'm playing with the glass, and some weeks I'm playing without it. I'd much rather play without it. Shekey Greene came in one time and refused to play with the *Plexiglas*. He wanted to hear the band and he couldn't. He's not even a singer; he's a comedian!

**JD:** What about click tracks?

**Jones:** The first time you work with a click track, it's a funny sensation. You have the sound in your ear, and you're reading the music. Many times, you have a tendency to lay back or pick up. I think it was Peter Erskine who said, "You have to approach the click track as your friend, not your enemy." When I read that, it really hit home, because I was using it at the time. That's exactly the way you have to approach it. You have to play relaxed. Don't fight it, and don't worry if something happens where you get off a little bit. Once you become familiar with the show, you'll be more comfortable.

**Greenberg:** It depends on how the click is made. I've worked with it when it was put on after the music, and it was not done by a machine, so it varied. It didn't go along with the music, so in that situation, you have to go along with the track.

**Goldberg:** Most of the time the click is

there, because there's a tape in the show that's synchronized with the dancing and the band has to be in sync with the tape. Most of the time the clicks have been pretty good. When you first start working with them, you think that they speed up or slow down. They don't. It's you. The click I'm using on this show wasn't loud enough, so I got pre-amped headphones, and that made it more than loud enough.

**Jones:** They had it hooked up in reverse on me one night, so I was hearing it backwards!

**All:** WHOA!! [laugh]

**Jones:** I said, "Well, what am I going to do with *this*?" The whole band was playing, so I just threw it off.

**Greenberg:** That's the best thing to do if something's wrong, and the music's going one way while the click is going another. Just throw it off!

**JD:** Do any of you feel that personality plays an important role in the kind of work you all do?

**Greenberg:** Of course. There are some great players around, but it's how you deal with people and your attitude that keep you working.

**Goldberg:** A lot of it is personality. There are a lot of people who could do the gig. You have to get along with people, just like any other job. You've got to get along with your conductor. There's got to be a good rapport.

**Iatarola:** Your dress is important. The way you talk is important. The way you handle yourself with other people is important, even before they've heard you play. It's all in how well you handle yourself.

**Goldberg:** You might really be into it the first month, but if you become bored, you become inconsistent, and that's not good. No matter how bored you get—and revues can get boring—you have to keep it fresh, play with energy, and psych yourself up before a show, even though you're bored. Keep a good attitude. You have to work at keeping the gig politically as well as personally; know what the people you're working for are like. You might not like them, but you've got to keep things mellow, because a personality conflict could snowball.

**Himles:** Don't tune your drums a lot right before the show. That gets on everybody's

nerves. You might think you're getting your toms to sound great, but everybody around you is getting annoyed. The sound engineer is freaking out, and it's always the drummer's fault.

**Goldberg:** When *anything* happens, it's the drummer's fault!

**Greenberg:** That's true. It's the hot seat.

**Goldberg:** If the bass player rushes or the piano player drags, and the guitar player doesn't have any time at all, it's always your fault.

**Iatarola:** It's important to get along with everybody. I had some problems with the sound crew at the Tropicana. My first reaction was to strangle somebody. No matter what I asked for, I got just the opposite. They'd tell me, "Well, you don't play like the headline drummer; he plays much lighter. If you'd play lighter, we could do more with your sound." But I'd be hearing something different than the other drummer, so I'd be forced to play a little louder. It was important for me to calm down, and to express my needs in a way that didn't cause bad vibes or dissension. Otherwise, they could have said, "Look, let's just get somebody in here who'll shut up and do the gig!"

**JD:** Getting back to the business aspects for a moment, how does a good drummer actually go about finding work here, besides the obvious things like getting a union card and having a connection or two?

**Iatarola:** Well, when I was real desperate, I'd call Billy. [laughs]

**Jones:** Yeah, I get desperate phone calls all the time. [laughs]

**Iatarola:** Billy told me to come down, and hang and hang and hang some more—in the clubs, the lounges, or anywhere where there were other musicians. You pass your name around and do as much as you can to promote yourself, without coming off like, "Hey, here I am." You have to watch that. I took his advice and it worked. Fortunately, I had someone in my corner to help me out. Without him, I wouldn't have had a chance. Billy's advice was right on the money, and if anyone asked me what to do, that's the same advice I would give.

**Goldberg:** Hangin' out; that's it. The musician who got me this gig was in a bar right near Bally's. I was in the bar, hanging

out, and said, "Hey, do you know anybody who's looking for a drummer?" And the guy said, "Yeah, I know of a show that's coming up."

**Greenberg:** Sometimes you'll find that a good reputation and some experience with other musicians who have settled in this area will get you in. They'll remember if you did a good job, and you'll get another shot.

**Iatarola:** Being in the right place at the right time has an awful lot to do with it.

**Jones:** Let's say you're from New York, and there are a couple of people in a house band here who are from New York. Just get in tight with them. If they respect you as a player, they'll introduce you to a contractor and give you a recommendation. It's good to have friends who know what's happening, like where there's an opening or if a drummer needs a sub.

**JD:** But many young drummers don't want to hang around other drummers, because they feel that everyone's after the same work.

**Jones:** That's true, except for drummers who are already working and established. Keeping in touch with them would be good. Then, if something came up that they couldn't handle, they might give it to you.

Another way to do it is just to come down and treat it as a project. Survey what's happening, check out the people who are doing these things, and talk to them. It's just like if you went to New York or L.A. to get into the studios. You'd try to meet and talk with the people doing the work, in order to find out what's involved and who you have to see. The bottom line, though, is that you *do* have to be a player, and handle the job when it does come up.

**Pultro:** And make sure you do things like show up on time for rehearsals and shows. If the show starts at 8:00, you can't show up at 8:30. That would be horrendous. The show is at 8:00, and there may be a thousand people in that audience. It's different from a rock concert. A concert can start late, but a casino really keeps a *strict* watch on the time. They don't want the opening act to go over a half hour, so it won't.

**Witten:** You have to remember that everything in this town is geared towards casino gambling. If the show starts at 8:00 and it's

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over at 9:30, they want the people out in that gambling casino at 9:30. If you hold up the show for a half hour, they can probably calculate how much money they're losing!

**Jones:** Not to say that it never happens. I was 15 minutes late for a show one time. I just couldn't get into town because of closed roads. They held the show six or seven minutes, but they couldn't hold it any longer, so the percussionist just started playing drums. He played about ten minutes before I came in. I didn't even get dressed. I just finished the show in my street clothes. It can happen, but normally, you can't be late.

**JD:** What type of training would a drummer need to do the job that you guys do?

**Iatarola:** Good, basic reading chops. That's three-fourths of the battle right there.

**Pultro:** You should have good ears, a good understanding of all the percussion instruments, and certainly, you must read well. You only get to go over a tune two or three times at the most. Then you have to play it that night—correctly.

**Himles:** I think you have to be able to do almost everything, because that's what you're called upon to do—*everything*. A conductor with a class-B vocalist, or even a comic, will ask for things. If you don't play what they're hearing your rep is at stake. You've really got to know almost everything in this particular end of the business.

**Witten:** On a trumpet part, all the notes are written and the musician plays it exactly that way. When Harry gets a chart, it may say, "Medium Basie." So, not only does he have to read his ass off, but he's also got to be a music historian. I mean, what the hell does "Medium Basie" mean? A drummer has to know *all* that stuff.

**Himles:** The feel, the time, the whole thing.

**Witten:** Drummers have to know all the feels, and be masters of all styles. It's important for drummers who are thinking about doing show work to be able to interpret music. I also think that anybody coming to Atlantic City who expects to work in production shows should be able to play timpani, tune at lightning speeds, and know how to play xylophone, bells, and

vibes. You really have to play all of them, in addition to all of the sound-effect instruments. And never underestimate the importance of sight-reading.

I'm a firm believer in a good college education for musicians. All college music students who think they know what they want to do frequently get called for jobs that are not exactly what they want to do. Some drummers dream about playing with Miles Davis, and they practice and learn that style. Then they get out of school, and Miles doesn't call. The first person to call needs someone to play a show at a neighborhood community theater. The secret is never having to say, "I can't take that job, because I can't play that style of music." The key to a successful career in music is never having to turn a job down because you're unprepared. You practice drums and percussion, because it makes you more marketable when you start looking for work—especially if you're considering this type of work.

**JD:** Do any of you have aspirations of going beyond doing lounge and show work here? If a star came into town and asked you to go out on the road, would you go?

**Goldberg:** I got over that. For a while I thought, "Yeah, I'm going to get picked up." But now I'm just thinking about the music, not where I'm going to go. I was hung up on it for a while, wondering where I was going in the future. "Is a headliner going to come down and hear me?" Now I don't really care. I'm just happy to be working.

**Iatarola:** I'd like to play for more stars—the main acts. I'm doing a lot of production shows at the Trop. When I first started, it was all comedians. Now we have a new schedule, and I can see that I'm going to have more chances to play. That's all I want. Playing for four minutes and 56 seconds is a drag. It's a good job and all, but you have to get all psyched up to play one tune. Then you're out, and you have to hang around until the next show. Sometimes I want to play for two hours, man.

**Goldberg:** I've played in a lounge act where the guitar player turned down a road gig with Roy Clark, which was \$1,000 a week but for only three weeks. He turned it down for a \$400-a-week job with more longevity.

**Greenberg:** These are good jobs down here, and it's a heavy decision.

**Goldberg:** It depends. It really does. Some of these stars take advantage of the players. If somebody wants you, you shouldn't be too quick to jump on it.

**Greenberg:** Remember, if you leave one of these jobs, it might be a long time before you get another one. You've got to remember what your goals are. Is it worth it? What are you going to get out of this?

**Witten:** I have a nice job at Resorts. Personally, I'd have to think *real* hard if an act asked me to go on the road.

**Himles:** It would have to be pretty special.

**Witten:** A special act and a lot of bread. You know, I have little kids. I've been asked a few times. Vicki Carr asked me, and I thought about it. Tony Orlando's synthesizer player asked me if I was interested in traveling. I told him I still had a lot to learn here and that I wasn't ready to leave yet.

**Himles:** I personally would only go out one week every two months or something like that—just for a change of pace—not as a steady diet. I had no use for the road even when I was a kid. I traveled with a big band from Canada—the bus, the whole bit. I could never sleep.

**Witten:** If I were single and meeting all the biggest acts in show business down here, I'm sure the thought would occur to me. But I'd want to make some real big money, and work my way up to a big act like Sammy Davis.

**Jones:** Every musician I know wants to play or record with the finest musicians in the world—you know, the creative things. But you can't force that to happen. Honestly, all I want to do right now is play drums and make a comfortable living. After you do that for a while and maybe make more money than you ever thought you'd make, you can forget that aspect of it. Then, you can get more into music and growing musically. That's one of the advantages of making money; it takes the pressure off a little bit, you know. Then you can start to concentrate on musical endeavors. So as for staying here or going somewhere else . . . I don't know. I'll just go with the flow, I guess.



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# IT'S QUESTIONABLE

Have a problem? A question? Ask MD. Address all questions to: Modern Drummer, c/o It's Questionable, 870 Pompton Ave., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Questions cannot be answered personally.

**Q.** I am a junior in high school and have been playing drums for eight years. I want to make a tape of my playing to send to colleges (not necessarily music schools) with my application. In addition to my high school jazz ensemble, I am in a jazz band and a rock band outside of school. Should I make a recording of myself alone, or with any or all of these groups? I also play mallets, and would like to know if a timpani or xylophone solo should also be included.

A.L.

Armonk, NY

**A.** A tape recording, like any other form of "audition," is most valuable when it displays your talents to their best advantage. Your tape should therefore include some brief examples of your jazz and rock playing, preferably with the musical groups in which you play, and also some solo work. Since most schools are interested in how well-rounded a player you are, some work on mallets and timpani would be beneficial as well. It might be difficult to include timpani work with an orchestra, unless you have the opportunity to tape a school orchestra performance in which you play timpani. Instead, select a timpani etude that demonstrates your facility on that instrument; perhaps something primarily in the higher registers would record best. In terms of your entire tape, remember to keep whatever material you decide on as concise as possible, so that the listener will not lose interest.

**Q.** I have Ludwig 12 x 13 and 13 x 14 Power Toms with coated Ambassadors top and bottom. I tune the bottom heads pretty loose. When I get the drums to where I think that they sound good, I find that the pitches are almost identical. How can I get a decent pitch relationship between the two toms without sacrificing the sound of one or both?

C.C.

Altoona, PA

**A.** Drums similar in size will achieve their individual "optimum sound" at a similar pitch. Try to achieve the best possible sound on each drum. Then adjust the smaller tom slightly higher and the larger tom slightly lower. Don't try to go too far with either one of the drums. This should give you the best pitch differential possible between the drums, while still retaining the greatest possible percentage of the "optimum sound" of each one.

**Q.** Do any electronic sets have a bass drum alternative to the foot pedal hitting a vertical surface? You can execute foot rhythms far more rapidly and naturally by tapping your foot on the floor than by using a pedal. It seems, then, that a simple, horizontal foot-plate of some kind would ultimately be a far more "playable" design than a traditional pedal slapping against a disc. If no horizontal/plate design exists, are there any apparent technical/electronic problems that would be insurmountable in developing such a design? Compared to the potential benefits of unimpeded foot-to-plate action, the traditional bass drum pedal, with its great bulk and numerous levers, looks like a Rube Goldberg invention.

C.S.

Urbana, IL

**A.** While to our knowledge nothing exists on the market that is as simple as you describe, there is one device, called the Shark, which is in fact a means of triggering a bass drum sound with other than a traditional bass drum pedal. You can contact Magnesium Guitars, 9500 Oso Ave., Chatsworth, CA 91311 for further information.

There is probably no technical impediment to creating a device such as you describe; the only requirement would be a switch of some sort (either mechanical or a purely electronic pressure-switch) that could withstand the repeated heavy impact of a drummer's foot. A more likely explanation for the lack of such a device is that a new product must not only be feasible, but it must also be marketable. Bass drum pedals are the standard tool in our industry for creating bass drum sounds—whether on an acoustic or an electronic drum. They are what drummers know. Many players would have trouble "unlearning" standard foot-pedal technique, in

which the action, throw, weight, etc., of the pedal are all incorporated into the player's timing, coordination, and dynamics. In the case of a new approach to an existing technology, it is sometimes considered beneficial by product designers not to try to be too revolutionary. In other words, you introduce your product in some sort of familiar format, so that even though it may be totally new in concept, it won't be too alien to the consumer. Then you can either continue to adapt the product to consumer tastes (i.e., improved playing surfaces on electronic drum pads), or try to gradually educate and "lure" the consumer over to your "different" way of design thinking. A case in point is Drum Workshop's new bass drum trigger, which involves their familiar pedal in an inverted-beater configuration. It plays and feels like a standard bass drum pedal, yet incorporates a totally self-contained triggering system and requires no bass drum pad.

**Q.** I am interested in buying the drum music for current rock and pop songs. Do you know of anyone who transcribes professionally, and offers this service to the public? Also, I have heard a lot of sharp drum beats and fills on cartoons and TV show themes. Is there any way I can obtain the music that the studio drummers used on these songs?

T.J.

Toledo, OH

**A.** To answer your first question, try checking the Drum Market department of MD for advertisements by professional transcribers. You might also call local music schools or music stores for drum teachers who might be able to provide such a service. Another source might be the office of the musicians' union local in your area. Ask them about copyists and transcribers. There are a very few books on the market that contain selected transcriptions as well. Watch the Printed Page department in MD for reviews and information on those books as they appear.

Studio charts are generally not published for public sale, and thus are very difficult to obtain. They are generally created just for use at the session concerned, and are more or less owned by the composer or producer. It may be possible to contact individual drummers who played certain tunes you are interested in (if you know their names), by writing to them in care of MD.

**Q.** I would like to know what companies are making tilting hi-hats.

D.B.

San Anselmo, CA

**A.** Several companies are now making tilting hi-hats of various designs. Here are some models to check out: Tama's model 6895-TL, which hinges in the middle of its vertical pipe; Drum Workshop's DW-5502 Remote Hi-Hat, which can be adjusted in any position to suit the user; Slo-Beat Percussion's model R-HH-2, which is another remote hi-hat design; and Trak's HS-450T hi-hat, which tilts from the base by using an extending leg. In addition, there are auxiliary hi-hats, which are designed to be used in a closed-only configuration. These include the Tama X-Hat, and Ludwig's auxiliary hi-hats, the L-3021 in their Modular series, and the L-2918 in their Atlas series.

**Q.** I am in the process of lining up parts to put together a custom drumset. So far, I can get everything I need except Pearl's Super Gripper lugs. The dealers I've talked to here on Okinawa say they can't get them. I'm really hoping to be able to use these particular lugs. Do you know where I can get them?

M.B.

Okinawa, Japan

**A.** According to a spokesman for Pearl, the Super Gripper lugs are currently only available as original equipment, installed on Pearl drums. Although they may become available as separate parts at some time in the future, there is no particular time currently scheduled for that to happen.

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# UPDATE

In the past couple of years, **Alan Childs** has worked with the likes of Eddie Martinez and John Waite. During the recording of Waite's album, however, Alan got the call to tour with Julian Lennon. It was a chaotic time for Alan, rehearsing from noon to 8:00 P.M. with Lennon, and then traveling two hours on the Long Island Expressway to record with Waite. Luckily, that schedule only lasted a week.

"During the first five days with Julian, we were kind of feeling each other out in New York. Then we flew to Dallas to the Communication Center, where we rehearsed on the sound stage with a sound company for two weeks," he says, having toured with Lennon throughout the summer. "It's fun working with Julian. When we started rehearsals, I really didn't concentrate on the record that much. I listened to the songs and the kind of feels they

Someone else with a very interesting setup is Howard Jones' drummer, **Trevor Morais**. With Jones, Trevor stands in the midst of two Simmons *SDS7* kits and a total of 14 pads (including two small percussion pads). "I thought it looked quite good and would be a change. With a lot of the stuff I do now, and because of electronic drums, I don't need to sit, anyway. When the *SDS7* kits came out, because they're all digital and I can sample all my own sounds, it just opened it wide up," he says, adding that he changes the kit sound from song to song.

Like Jones, who until this year did an effective one-man show with sequencers, Trevor is a master at electronics. But feel is the priority for this drummer. "The machines don't do anything until we work them. You can make them groove and get everything out of them, providing you know how to work them. Also, they're so accurate. When they first came out, everyone said that, with the accuracy, you lose the feel. But most of the drummers I like who have great feel are also incredibly accurate. I spent all my life trying to be accurate, so I don't think it follows that, if you are accurate, there's no feel. Howard has good feel with his songs, and I can get in there and get a good groove going, which is the way I like to play."

Trevor also plays to a click track on stage and prefers doing so. "I play to a click track, so when the sequencers are not playing and then come back in again, I'm in time with them. You just get used to it, and it makes everything very accurate. It takes the responsibility off of me, too. In a lot of bands, when the tempo is going up or down, it's always assumed to be the drummer's fault. A lot of times that is just not so, so the good thing about playing with a

were, but I tried my own things within the song. He never once said anything like, 'Stick to the record . . . ' From Julian's album to the live show, I think there's a big difference. It's still pop, but it's a little more aggressive and powerful. It's well rounded, actually. There are brushes involved on 'Space,' which is very light and airy, and there are some funk-oriented things. I had been accustomed to playing rock, so I have to be a little more versatile to cover it."

While on tour, he uses two complete sets—one electronic, the other acoustic. "There are a couple of tunes that are very electronic-drum oriented," Alan explains. "I didn't want to get the usual setup and I didn't want to trigger from the acoustic drums, so I had the luxury of being able to get two different sets." Alan is currently in the studio with Lennon. — *Robyn Flans*

click track is that, if anybody loses it, it's not me. I've been playing with click tracks and machines for ten or 12 years now. In the early '70s, we used a *Rhythm Ace* with Sly & The Family Stone. And it's great for my time, because when I go off and play with other people who don't play with click tracks, my time is very precise because I've been doing it every day."

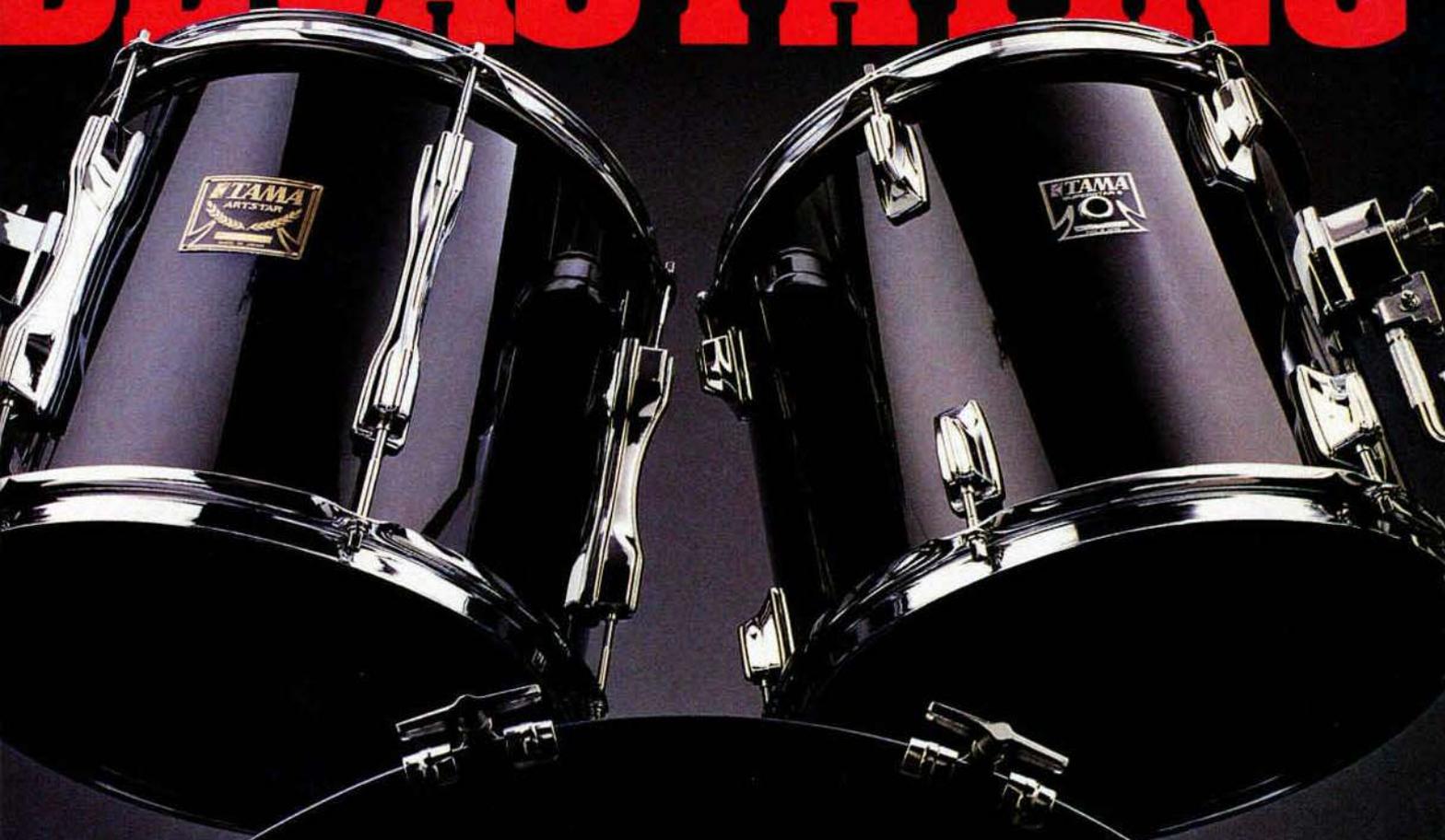
Trevor is also the co-owner of Farmyard Studios with producer Rupert Hine. This past year, he worked on Chris DeBurgh's album, and did two tracks on Tina Turner's smash LP, in addition to Jones's album. Although electronic drums are primarily required in the studio, Trevor does play acoustic drums occasionally. When going from one format to the other, what kinds of things does he have to take into consideration?

"I have to find out where my legs have gone," he laughs. "When playing electronic drums, you have to change your technique, because if you hit the pads really hard, it makes your arms ache. It's like digging in the garden, and all of a sudden, coming across something hard. The shock runs right up your arm. When you go back to playing an acoustic kit, you change the way you hit them and also play a lot differently. Rolls and fast things on the *SDS7* don't really sound all that good. On the acoustic kit, of course, it sounds fine. But it's all drums. That's how I look at it. It is nice not to do the same thing all the time, because in four or five months, I'm sure I'll be playing acoustic drums again, and it will make it that much fresher for me. I don't like the idea of playing one particular style all the time. I try to play as many varied things as possible because it keeps my interest up. I like it. It's all good fun." — *Robyn Flans*

As usual, **Steve Schaeffer** is keeping busy. Since January, some of the films he's worked on include *Sylvester*, *Touch And Go*, *Fletch*, *Slugger's Wife*, *Police Academy II*, *Big Trouble*, *Moving Violations*, *Gotcha*, *Badge Of The Assassin*, *Goonies*, *Back To The Future*, *National Lampoon's European Vacation*, *Natty Gann*, *A Fine Mess*, *Summer Rental*, and *Maxie*. He also worked on the first musical made for TV, *Copacabana*, in addition to doing some clinics in Hawaii. We wish Steve and Shana congratulations on their recent marriage. **Chad Wackerman** has been working with Men At Work on the road. A new Toto album is due out shortly, with **Jeff Porcaro** on drums. Jeff also worked on a live-to-two-track LP for Scott Page. **Jim Keltner** recently participated in the Japan For Africa benefit. He also has recently done work with Bob Dylan, Rosie Vela, and William Lee Golden down in Muscle Shoals. You can also hear Keltner on the film *Crossroads*, with music by Ry Cooder. **Craig Ostbo** worked on the recent Peaches & Herb LP, in addition to LPs by Joshua, Luke Garrett, Kirc Heiner, Rick Kelly, and some concerts with Leslie Phillips. Recent TV shows **Nick Vincent** has done include *NFL '85*, *Jim Henson's Muppet Babies*, and *The Bob Newhart Show* with Nelson Riddle, for whom he also did some live dates. Recent films include *Deadly Force* and *The Galav-Ants*. Nick worked on an LP by Gloria Loring, as well as doing some live gigs with her, and recorded jingles for Hunt's *Snack-Pack* and Lawry's *Season Salt*. In between gigging, **John Shearer** has recently opened a drum studio, as well as offering practice space rental in L.A. **Marvin Kanarek** worked on an album by new Motown artist, Pal. He also did tracks with Dan Hill and EPs with Mark Anthony and Derek Vivaretta, as well as a jingle for McDonalds. **Jim Blair** worked on an LP by Alex Gibson, and you can see and hear him this month backing Appollonia on *Falcon Crest*. **Butch Miles** at the Midland Jazz Party this month. **Gregg Bissonette** doing some gigs with Tania Maria, as well as working on an album by Pat Kelly. **Greg Errico** and **Michael Carabello**, along with such artists as Nicky Hopkins, Frank Stallone, Stanley Clarke, and Edgar Winter, recently performed at the Crusade For Religious Freedom, held in Portland, Oregon. **David Allen** spent the summer touring with the Marshall Tucker Band. **Warren Benbow** recently recorded with Junko O'Hashi, and is currently working on a solo album for C.B.S. Sony. **Kenny Aronoff** recently in the studio with former Stray Cat Brian Setzer. — *Robyn Flans*



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# INDUSTRY HAPPENINGS

## DERANIAN AND SWAN TAKE NEW POSTS AT ZILDJIAN

The Avedis Zildjian Cymbal Company recently announced the appointment of David Deranian to the new position of Corporate Communications Manager. Deranian, who was formerly the Director of Marketing and Artist Relations for Zildjian East, will now supervise advertising, public relations and press contacts at the company. He will also assist Lenny DiMuzio, Artist Relations Manager, with artist and customer relations. Deranian's former post will now be filled by Douglas Swan, who will be responsible for dealer support and for the coordination of endorser activities in the east-

ern U.S. Swan is a graduate of the Hartford Conservatory, where he majored in jazz and pop performance as a drummer. He has appeared in the U.S. and in Europe with a variety of ensembles ranging from a youth symphony to Top 40 and heavy metal bands. He began his retail career at Bryan's Guitars in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1983, where he built the drum department literally from nothing into the largest outlet in the state. Swan looks forward to sharing his techniques for successful retailing with other stores in his new position with Zildjian.

## KOSAKA NAMED PRESIDENT OF PRO-MARK (JAPAN)

Tat Kosaka, longtime agent and supplier of Pro-Mark drumsticks, has been named president of Pro-Mark (Japan), Ltd. The announcement was made recently by Herb Brochstein, president of Pro-Mark Corp. (USA).

Kosaka has been involved in the Pro-Mark operation since the formation of the company, 28 years ago. He has worked

closely with Brochstein in the design and manufacture of Pro-Mark drumsticks from his own company, Toyo Tsusho, in Japan. As Brochstein comments, "Tat has always been a vital part of our organization. Without his dedication, help, and ingenuity, we never could have become the successful company we are today."

## PEARL DRUMS AT OPRYLAND AND KIDD VIDEO

Pearl International, Inc. recently announced that, for the fifth consecutive year, Pearl drums have been selected as the official drum to be used at Opryland USA theme park in Nashville, Tennessee. In addition to various musical stages throughout the park, a new feature this year is the "General Jackson" showboat, for which

Pearl supplied a new *MX Professional Series* drumkit on stage.

Pearl also announced its selection as the official drumset on *Kidd Video*, a weekly Saturday-morning TV show designed for today's youth. The show combines animation and music videos for an enlightening and entertaining half hour.

## PREMIER ANNOUNCES NEW SALES REPS

Premier Percussion USA Inc. recently announced the appointment of new sales representatives in 30 states. Tom Meyers, Premier USA vice-president, noted that the appointments have been made to offer dealers improved service, particularly during the current rapid expansion of Premier activity in the U.S. market.

Representing Premier in New York, New Jersey, and eastern Pennsylvania are Bob Brennan and John McFadden. Scott Monette will be servicing the

New England states. Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Kentucky, and West Virginia will be handled by Rick Parent and Rich Godinez. Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Alaska, and Hawaii will be serviced by Rick Smith. Dealers in Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming will be serviced by Mike Stobie. For further information, contact Premier Percussion USA Inc., 105 5th Ave., Garden City Park, NY 11040.

## JUSTIN PAGE NAMED PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLAR

Seventeen-year-old Justin Page of New York City is the first jazz musician and first drummer ever to be named a Presidential Scholar. Justin was one of 20 students selected each year by the Secretary of Education for this honor. He is a student at the High School of the Performing Arts in New York, and is active both as a drummer and composer. All the Presidential Scholars were recently honored by President Reagan in Washington, D.C.

## DURALINE RELOCATES, REORGANIZES

Duraline Industries, Inc., makers of Duraline products and *Syndrums*, recently announced a relocation and reorganization. The new address of the company is 9624 Alpaca St., South El Monte, CA 91733. The change of location is to bring about a more streamlined operation. The new president of Duraline Industries is Steve Griego; the telemarketing division is headed by Dottie Rogers.

## LOUIE BELLSON HONORED



"Doctor" Bellson is helped into cap and gown by wife Pearl Bailey.

World acclaimed jazz drummer Louie Bellson recently received an honorary doctor of humane letters degree from Northern Illinois University. The Illinois State Board of Regents and the Faculty Assembly at NIU unanimously approved the recommendation to recognize Bellson "as a person who has given so much to Northern Illinois University and provided such an excellent example for our students," according to John E. La Tourette, NIU vice president and provost.

Ron Modell, director of the NIU Jazz Ensemble, describes Bellson as "drummer extraordinaire; musician compleat; human being ultissimo. Louie Bellson is more than a performer. He is also an innovator in drum technology, an author of instructional materials, a dedicated and inspired teacher, and a noted composer—both in America's very own musical idiom, jazz, and in the classical field, too."

Louie Bellson has been associated with the NIU Jazz

Ensemble almost from its inception, as a guest performer, as a clinic leader, and as an inspiration, always giving of his own incredible talent and pushing the students to be the best they can.

Bellson exhorts young musicians to take their music seriously, to put in the hours of necessary practice time, to polish and refine. That the rewards will follow was evidenced in a TV documentary about the NIU Jazz Ensemble, *One Year In The Life Of The Greatest College Jazz Band In America*. The hour-long film featured a drum battle segment between Bellson and Vern Spevak, a student in the ensemble, that won a Chicago Emmy for "outstanding achievements for individual excellence: for persons who appear on camera."

Bellson's professional career began with the big band era. He played with Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, Duke Ellington, Harry James, and Count Basie. When he talks about the early years and the opportunity to work with those great talents, it is difficult not to compare his tone of respect and admiration with how NIU students today feel about working with Bellson. "He's one of the sweetest guys you'll ever meet," says former Jazz Ensemble saxophonist Craig Roselieb. "You play better with him. You want to, because the better you play, the better you feel about yourself, because you know you're pleasing Louie."



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# JUST DRUMS

by Rick Mattingly

Perhaps the key word for the summer '85 NAMM show was "confusion." To begin with, the layout of the show itself was less than ideal. All of the exhibits would not fit into the New Orleans Convention Center, so a number of manufacturers had their displays at the smaller Rivergate Expo Center, which was located a few blocks away. Although it was within walking distance, and although there was shuttle-bus service between the two locations, quite a few people told me that they never made it over to the Rivergate. Even at the Convention Center, several dealers found themselves set up in the entrance hall, rather than in the main room. And finding the private rooms that some of the manufacturers were in took a considerable amount of walking. All in all, getting around to everyone took a great deal of effort.

On a more positive note, the overall atmosphere was pleasant, due in large part to the sound level being kept under control. The entire convention area was carpeted (in Chicago, where the summer show is usually held, the aisles are only covered with paper), and companies who wanted to make noise were required to have soundproof booths. (One of the advantages of electronic drums was obvious at the show: I frequently saw drummers beating the daylight out of electronic pads, but because the sound was being channeled into headphones, people in neighboring booths were not being annoyed.) Keeping the sound at a reasonable level definitely contributed towards a more relaxed feeling at this year's NAMM show.

As for the new products, which is what a NAMM show is all about, there were plenty of them—maybe too many. On one hand, having a wide choice of instruments and accessories is a positive thing for drummers. But on the other hand, the average music dealer is not in a position to stock absolutely everything that comes out. The dealers have to try to predict which items are going to be in demand by their customers. At the moment, there are two factors that are causing a sense of confusion.

The first is the fact that many of the "new" features are merely cosmetic, and no one seems to be quite sure where the trends are going. Some dealers worry that colored cymbals and custom drum finishes are only a passing fad, and they don't want to be stuck with these items after the fad passes. But by the same token, those items may not be a fad but rather the new direction, in which case it will be the "traditional" instruments that will look like antiques in a year or so. So a lot of dealers seem to be holding off from building up a lot of inventory at the moment, until they see where this is all going.

The other problem is electronics. Everyone agrees that electronic drums are here to stay. The problem is that the technology is moving so fast that what was state-of-the-art equipment last year may already be obsolete this year. As one drummer told me, "I'm knocked out by some of the electronic drums I've seen here, but I'm going to hold off from buying anything for as long as possible, because who knows what somebody will come out with six months from now?" Electronic drums are selling very well, according to the manufacturers, but again, many of the smaller music stores are being very cautious about investing in a lot of electronic inventory until things start to stabilize a little bit.

For drummers, it is exciting to have so many options when it comes to equipment. But within the industry, opinion is divided about the future. Some people contend that the days of a few large companies controlling the bulk of the market are over, and that more and more small, specialized manufacturers are going to claim their share of the pie. Others feel that this glut of companies and products is merely a reflection that a transition is going on within the music business, and once a new direction is firmly established, the market will again be dominated by only a few major manufacturers. Time will tell.

## DRUMS



GRETSCH—RIMS mounts are now offered on Gretsch kits.



SONOR—The *Phonic Plus* Hi-Tech finish caught many eyes at this year's show.

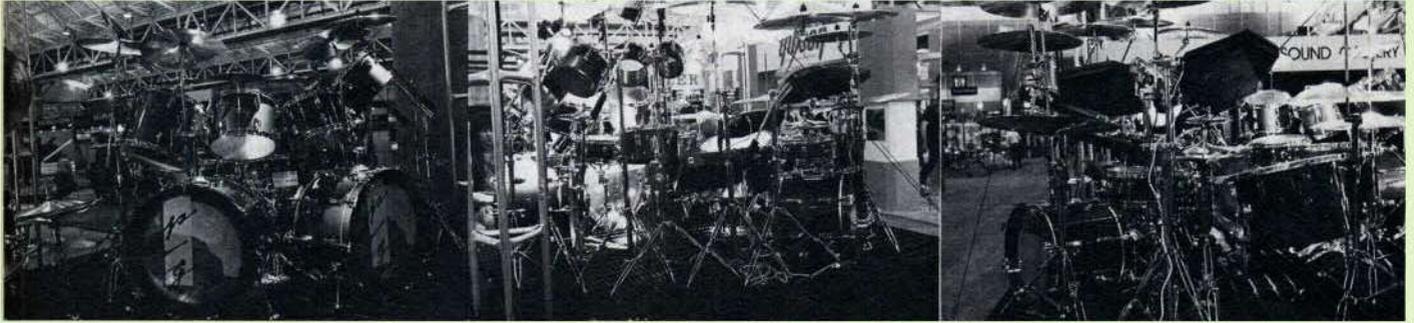


REMO—The drumhead company has now entered the drumset market with a kit that's several steps above the *PTS* drums, but still economically priced.



LUDWIG—The *Thunder* bass drum comes apart for easy movability.

# NAMM '85 in New Orleans



**TAMA**—Three views of the 360° Neil Peart drumset on display at the Tama booth.



**NOBLE & COOLEY**—A piccolo snare drum is the new addition to this line.



**YAMAHA**—New finishes are now available on Yamaha drums.



**PREMIER**—Tommy Price and Rod Morgenstein were both in attendance at the Premier booth.



**SLINGERLAND**—The look here was conservative and traditional.



**JUGGS**—Another company who is offering new finishes.



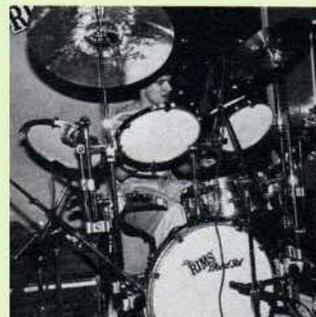
**IMPACT**—These shells are fiberglass and are very lightweight.



**IRAK**—Several new finishes are on display.



**L.P.**—The Cosmic Percussion *Supreme* kit was shown in a modern finish.



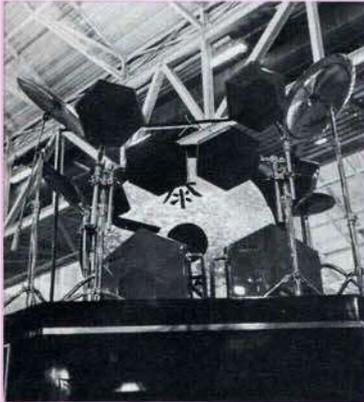
**PURECUSSION**—The *RIMS Headset* (Remo *PTS* drumheads mounted on *RIMS*) has electronic possibilities when used with triggers.



**R.O.C.**—A "towering" display of drums turned a few heads.

# NAMM '85

## ELECTRONICS



**CB 700**—Electronic drums made by Simmons are now offered by CB700.



**SONOR**—The *Citec* kit by Sonor was new at this show.



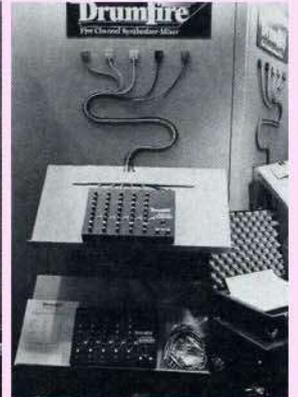
**ROLAND**—This new electronic kit was receiving a lot of attention.



**SIMMONS**—John "J.R." Robinson appeared on behalf of Simmons, as did Chad Wackerman and Josh Friese.



**E-MU**—Reek Havok was on hand to demonstrate the *E-Drums*.



**MUSIC PEOPLE**—*Drumfire* is a five-channel synthesizer/mixer.



**MAGNESIUM**—The *Shark* bass drum pedal was designed by Arndt Anderson, who helped Terry Bozzio with his pedal.



**ULTIMATE PERCUSSION**—The UP kits are now available in white, as well as black.



**GOLDLINE**—Perry Nelson showing a personal mixer designed especially for drummers.



**EMERALD**—This relatively new company has wasted no time getting into the electronic drum market.

# NAMM '85



**COUNTRYMAN**—The *Isomax III H-12* mic' is designed for use with tom-toms.



**DYNACORD**—Danny Gottlieb appeared at the Dynacord booth to discuss his use of electronics.



**C-Tape**—The *Acoustic Percussion Trigger* works from *C-Ducer* contact mic's that are mounted inside the drum shell.



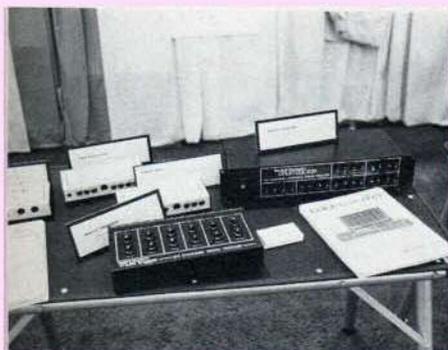
**PAUL REAL**—*Klone* electronic drums feature eight-sided pads.



**PEARL**—The *DRX-1* electronic kit has a new shape and can be used with Pearl's *Rack*.



**LINN**—Roger Linn calls the *9000* "a combination drum machine and multi-track tape recorder."



**GARFIELD ELECTRONICS**—The *Multi-Trigger* and *Drum Doctor* are six-channel drum triggers.



**SUZUKI**—*Roadworks* are yet another entry into the electronic drum market.



**WERSI**—The *Drum Composer* and accompanying pads offer digital sounds.



A. J. Pero and Tommy Aldridge

# NAMM '85

## CYMBALS



**ZILDJIAN**—Twisted Sister's A. J. Pero checking out Zildjian's new *Platinum* series.



**ISTANBUL**—Mel Lewis and Jack DeJohnette were both on hand to demonstrate the Istanbul line.



**SABIAN**—Willie Wilcox was one of the many who were intrigued with Sabian's latest additions to their line.



**LP**—Latin Percussion, Inc. is importing *Rancan* cymbals from China.



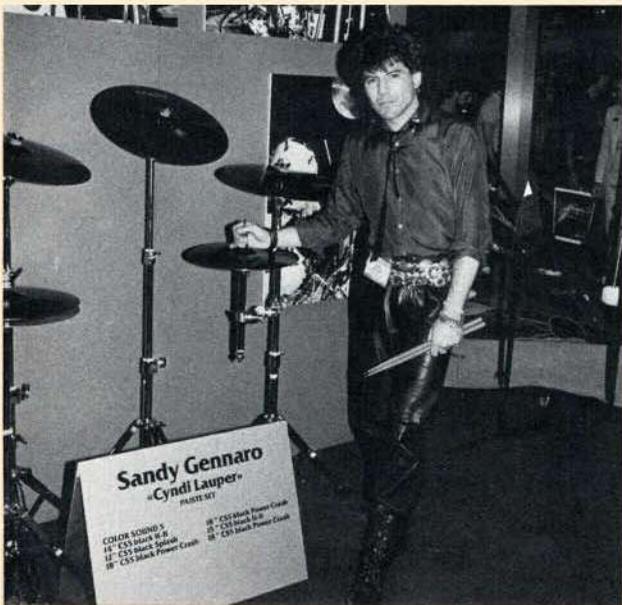
**MEINL**—Laser cymbals are now offered in red, blue, and black.



**AVANTI**—Also offering colors is Avanti, who features blue and red.



**ATLAS**—*Tiger* cymbals have stripes that resemble, well, tigers.



**PAISTE**—The cymbal setups of several Paiste artists were displayed, including that of Sandy Gennaro.



**VADER**—"Rainbow Vaders" come in black and red.



"Zigaboo" Modeliste and Jack DeJohnette

# PEARL HARDWARE

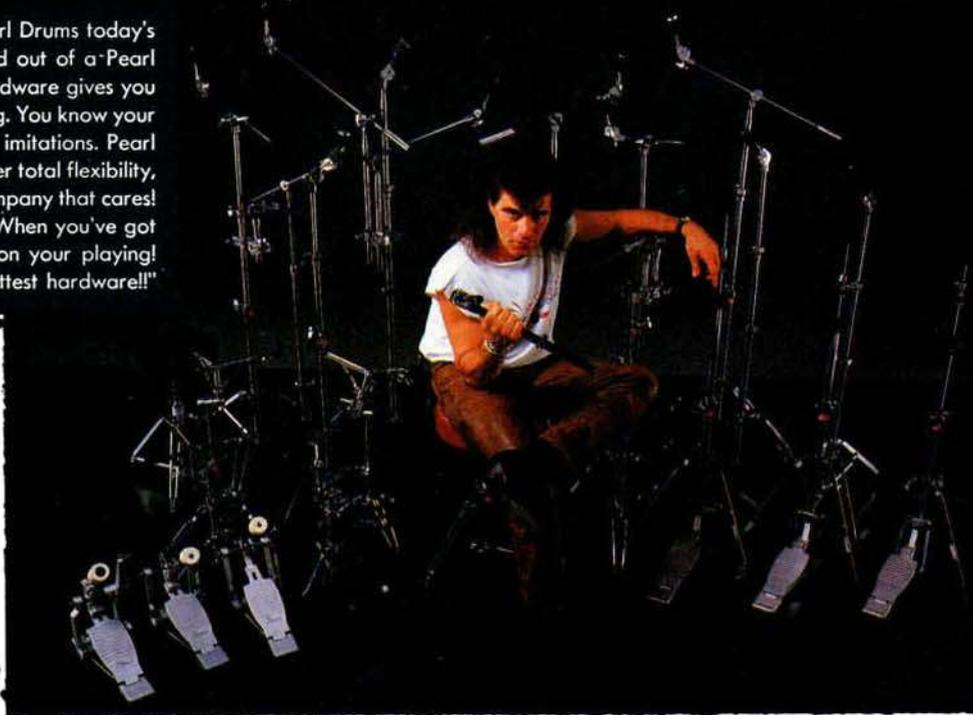


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**Tico Torres**  
(Bon Jovi)



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# NAMM '85

## ACCESSORIES



**ULTIMATE SUPPORT SYSTEMS**—This company featured a rack for mounting electronic drums and cymbals.



**MECHANICAL MUSIC CORP.**—Stick Handler Spray is now offered, in addition to this company's other stick-handling products.



**HOT STICKS**—Kevin Pokallus, Sandy Gennaro, and Chris Torgersen at the Hot Sticks booth, where a *Sandy Gennaro* model stick was being shown.



**DRUM WORKSHOP**—The Remote Hi-Hat has a variety of uses in today's multi-drum setups.



**SAMSON**—A variety of tom holders, cymbal stands, and bass drum and hi-hat pedals were shown



**CYMBAL SOX**—Designed to protect cymbals from dirt and fingerprints.



**EVANS**—The UNO 58 is the first single-ply head offered by Evans.



**PRO-MARK**—The Cymbal Sizzler, the Jumbo Stick Bag and various new models of sticks and brushes are all new.



**POWERGRIP**—A number of prominent drummers are now using this product to avoid slippery sticks.



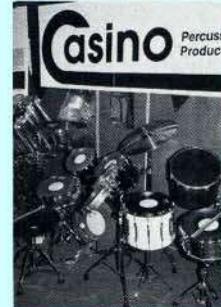
**DCI**—New videos by Steve Gadd and Louie Bellson were shown at the show.



**CALATO**—Carol Calato Simon showed the latest *Regal Tip* sticks and her father's favorite pedal.



**VIC FIRTH**—Even Vic Firth is making multicolored sticks, called *Starbursts*.



**CASINO**—*Canasonic* drumheads were featured in a variety of colors.



**POLYBEAT**—This company offers synthetic sticks in two models: flexible, for use on electronic pads, and regular, for a wood-stick feel. They also offer *Brites*, which glow in the dark.



**CYMBAL SAFE**—New this year was the Electronic Drum Safe, for transporting electronic drum pads.



**D&F**—Duke Kramer with the synthetic *MaxStiks*.



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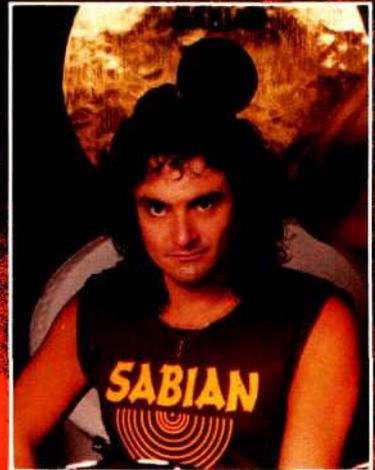
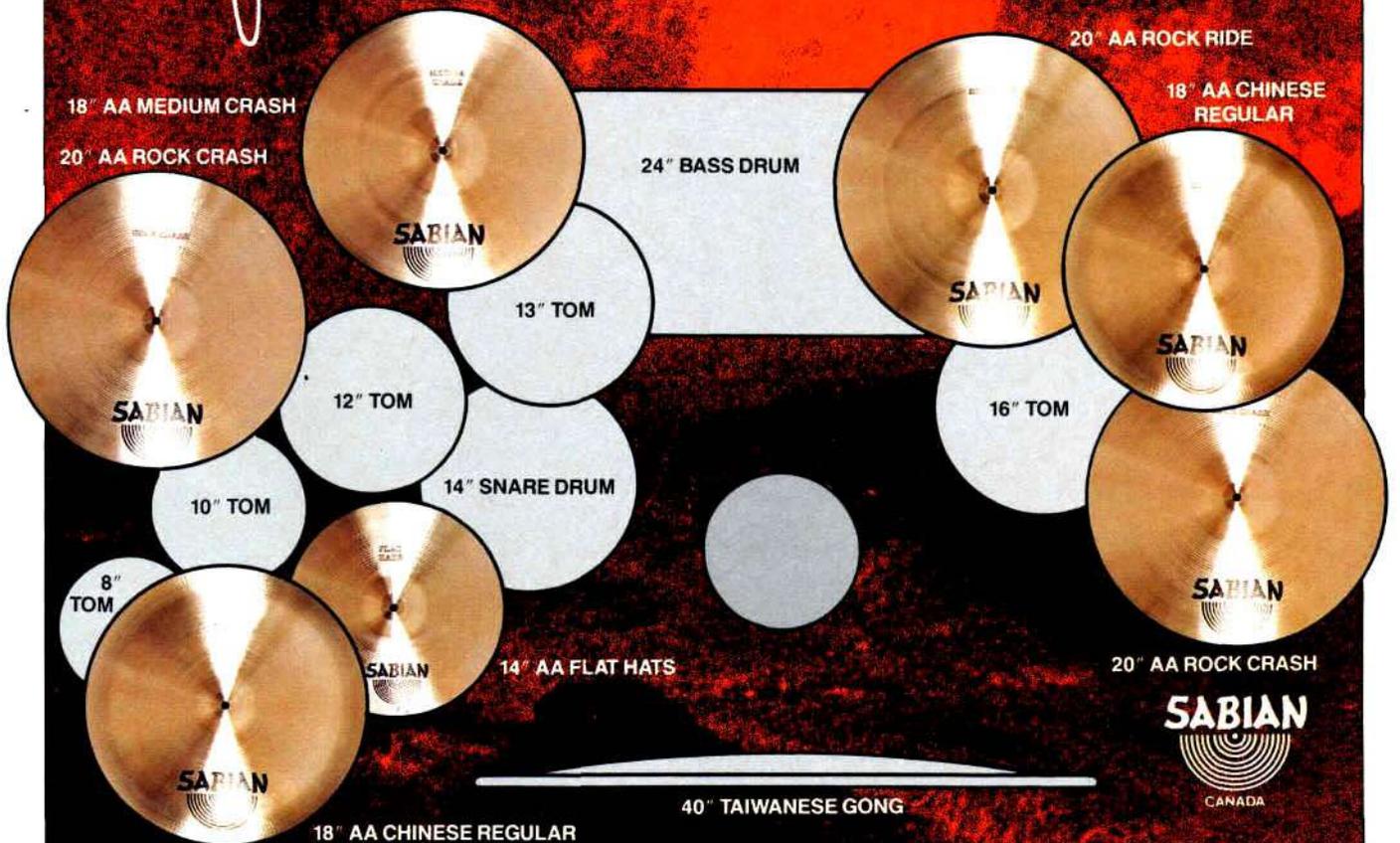


Photo: Ron Lee

Vinny Appice of Dio

*Vinny Appice*  
DIO

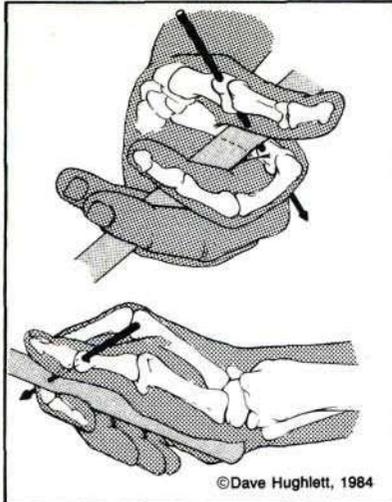


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## NOVEMBER'S MD

# Bernard Purdie



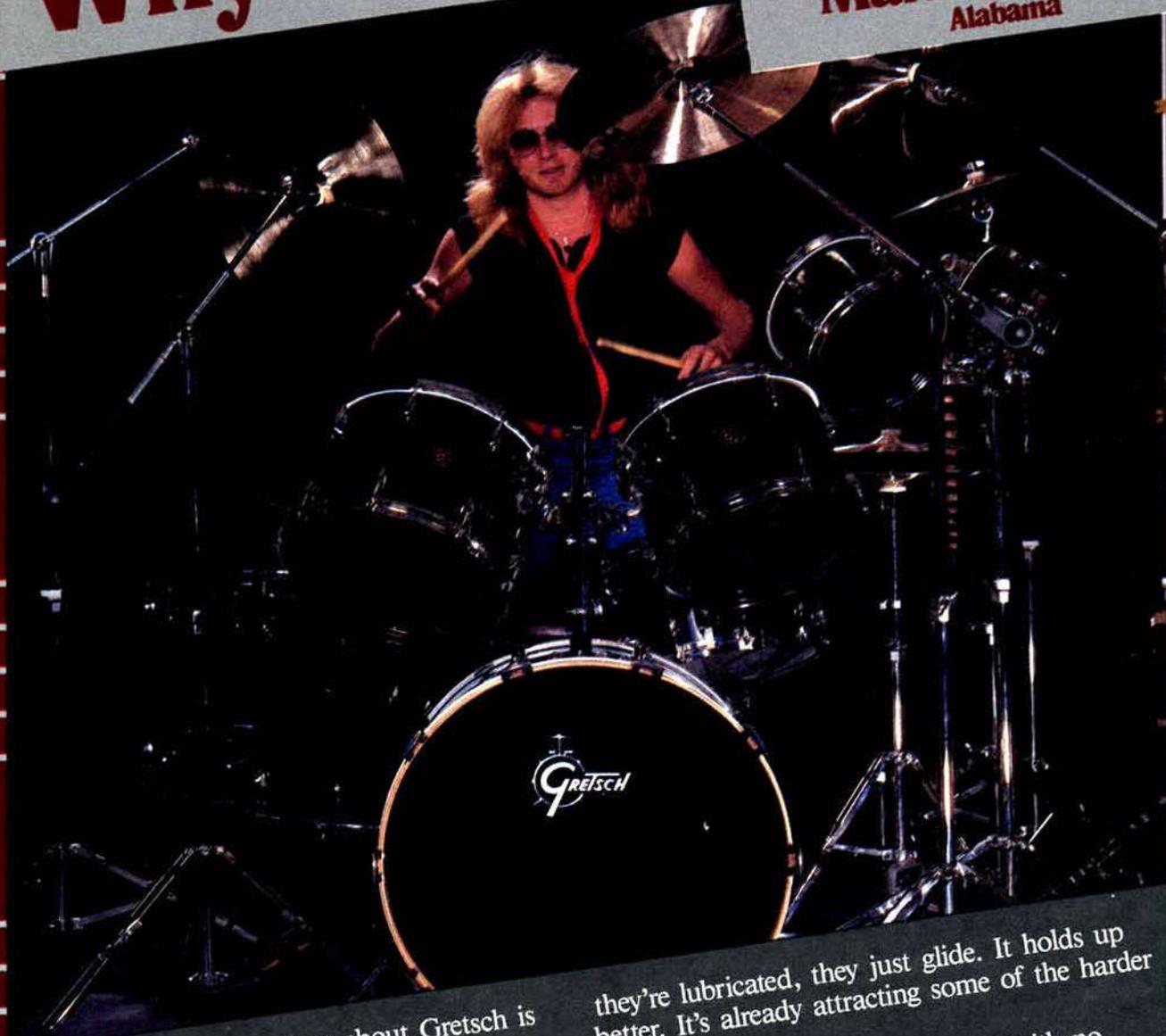
Plus:

# Bobby Chouinard Ed Soph Inside Paiste

**AND MUCH MORE... DON'T MISS IT!**

# Why do I play Gretsch?

Mark Herndon  
Alabama



"The thing I like best about Gretsch is its overall sound...it's tremendous.

"The shells *breathe* with the sound when you impact. It's a reverberation coming from the head that you can actually feel in the shell ...you can feel the wood of the drum.

"And the shells are light but they don't sound thin; it may have something to do with the coating they have on the inside.

"Gretsch hardware is now state-of-the-art, my drum tech just flipped out over it. All the moving parts on the tubular stands are like

they're lubricated, they just glide. It holds up better. It's already attracting some of the harder players.

"I like that big concert sound with no sacrifice in crispness or clarity. From gig to gig, the Gretsch sound remains the same."



**Mark Herndon**

**Someday, you'll own Gretsch.**

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For a color poster of Mark Herndon, send \$3.50 for postage and handling (check or money order) to Gretsch Poster #2, 1 Gretsch Plaza, Ridgeland, S.C. 29936

# PLATINUM FIRE



AJ Pero / Twisted Sister

Now from Zildjian, the new Platinum Series. High-impact visual with high-impact sound. Mirror-silver, they pull the energy from stage lighting. The sound is tight, explosive. Every decibel, pure Zildjian. The Platinum finish isn't "painted" on. So it won't scratch or chip off. Zildjian high-voltage plating builds the look into the cymbal without choking the sound. The Platinum effect remains. Shine on brightly.

**Zildjian**  
PLATINUM